

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

STRIP AND RECORD EXCAVATION: HERTFORDSHIRE SHOWGROUND REDBOURN HERTFORDSHIRE

NGR: TL 0932 1418

*on behalf of the
Hertfordshire Agricultural Society*



J Richards BA PIFA and
D Fell BA MA MIFA

June 2008

ASC: 1069/RHS/2

Letchworth House
Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall,
Milton Keynes MK6 1NE
Tel: 01908 608989 Fax: 01908 605700
Email: office@archaeological-services.co.uk
Website: www.archaeological-services.co.uk



Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	RHS	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	1069
<i>OASIS ref:</i>		<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Redbourn		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Redbourn CP		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 0932 1418		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c. 450 x 40 m		
<i>Present use:</i>	Showground		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of an acoustic barrier		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	Unknown		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	St Albans District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	27 th -29 th May 2008		
<i>Commissioned by:</i>	Bidwells Faulkner 49 High Street Kings Langley Hertfordshire WD4 9HU		
<i>Client:</i>	Hertfordshire Agricultural Society		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Lucie Stone (Bidwells Faulkner)		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	J Richards BA PIFA	<i>Date:</i>	10 th June 2008
------------------------	--------------------	--------------	----------------------------

<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
-------------------	--	--------------	--

<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
---------------------------	--	--------------	--

© Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

No part of this document is to be copied in any way without prior written consent.

Every effort is made to provide detailed and accurate information. However, Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd cannot be held responsible for errors or inaccuracies within this report.

© Ordnance Survey maps reproduced with the sanction of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
ASC Licence No. AL 100015154

CONTENTS

Summary.....	4
1. Introduction	4
2. Aims and Methods.....	7
3. Archaeological and Historical Background.....	8
4. Results.	9
5. Conclusions	13
6. Acknowledgements	15
7. Archive	15
8. References	16

Appendices:

1. Context Register	17
2. Photo List.....	17
3. ASC OASIS Form	18

Figures:

1. General location	3
2. Site plan.....	6
3. Plan of the excavated Features	10
4. Profiles of Gully [101] and [103]	11
5. Extract from the 1884 edition Ordnance Survey six inch scale map	14

Plates:

Cover: View of site from east

1. Section across Ditch/Gully [101]	11
2. Section across Ditch/Gully [103]	12
3. General view of the site, from the north.....	12

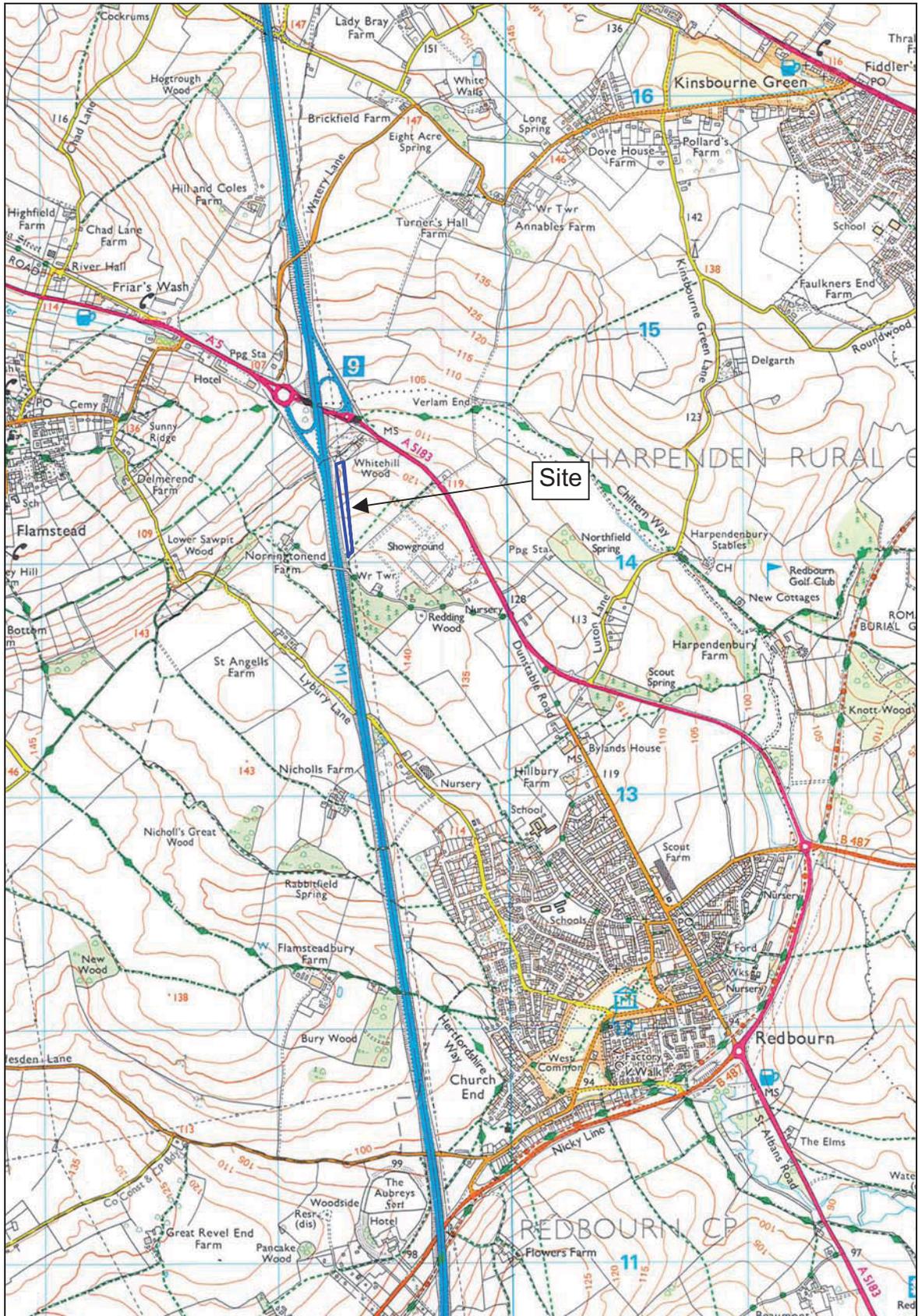


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In May 2008 ASC Ltd undertook an archaeological excavation at the Hertfordshire County Showground, Redbourn, prior to the construction of an acoustic barrier. A number of linear features, interpreted as post-medieval field boundaries and shown on 19th century Ordnance Survey maps were present. No other archaeological features were present and the archaeological impact of the development is considered to have been minimal.

1. Introduction

1.1 In May 2008 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a strip and record excavation at the Hertfordshire County Showground, Redbourn, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by *Bidwells Faulkner* on behalf of the *Hertfordshire Agricultural Society*, and was carried out according to a brief (Instone 2008) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *St Albans District Council*, by the *Historic Environment Unit* (HEU) of *Hertfordshire County Council*, and a project design prepared by ASC.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This watching brief was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site.

1.3 *Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd*

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd (ASC) is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Archaeological Organisation* by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

1.4 *Management*

The assessment was managed by Karin Semmelmann BA MA AIFA, and was carried out under the overall direction of Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

1.5 *The Site*

1.5.1 *Location & Description*

The site is located north of Redbourn, in the administrative district of St Albans, Hertfordshire (Figure 1). It comprises a strip of land measuring c.430m from north to south, between the Hertfordshire Showground and the M1 motorway, centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference TL 0932 1418 (Figure 2). Access was from Dunstable Road, to the east of the site.

1.5.2 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area comprise the Batcombe Association, which consist of *Fine silty over clayey and fine loamy over clayey with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal water logging. Variably flinty*" (Soil Survey

1983, 582a). This overlies a geological base of clay with flints (BGS, Sheet 238). The site is flat and lies at a height of c.130m OD.

1.5.3 *Proposed Development*

The proposal is for the construction of an acoustic barrier between the showground and the motorway (Figure 2).

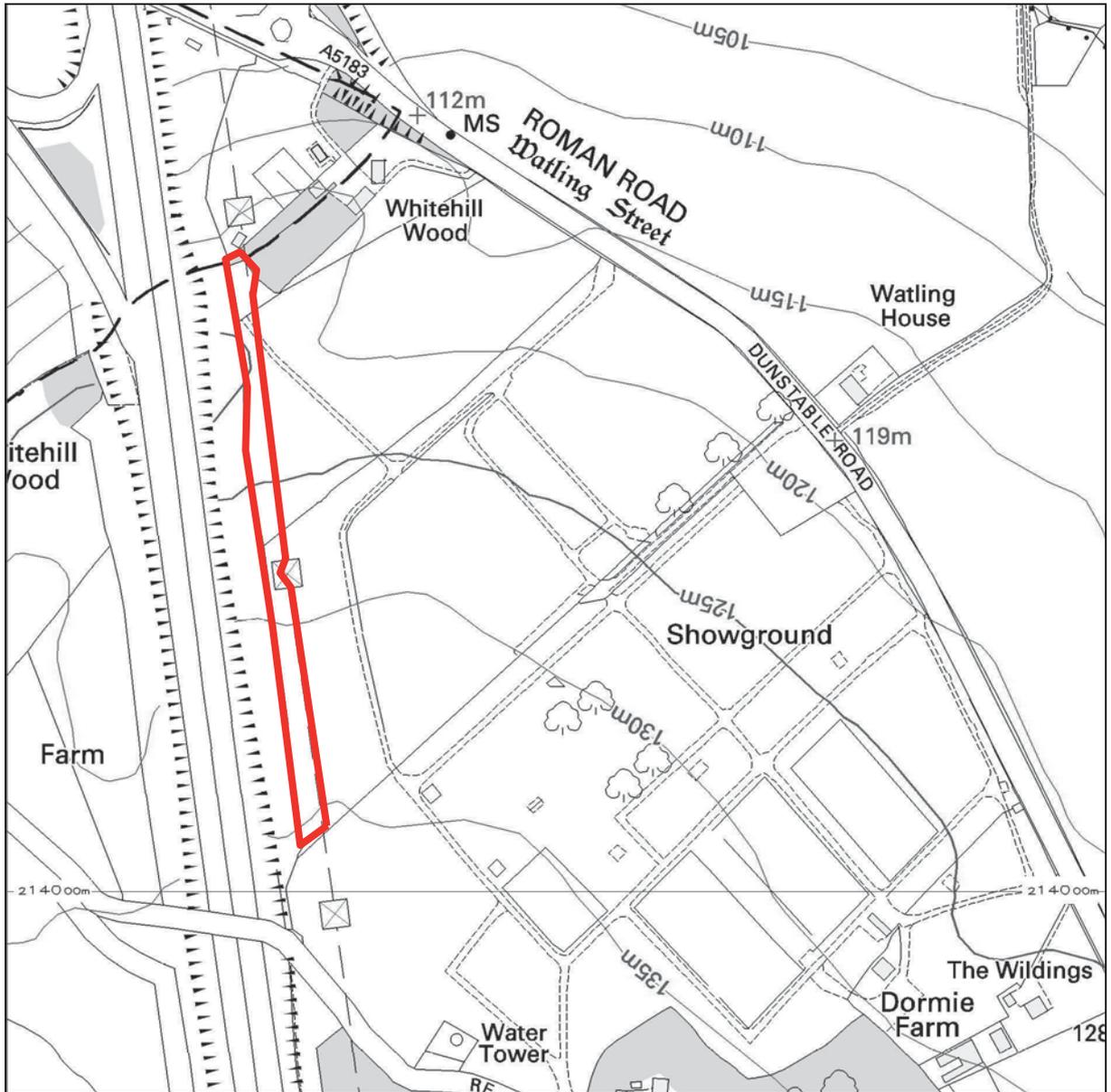


Figure 2: Site plan (Scale 1:5000)

2. Aims and Methods

2.1 *Aims*

As described in the *brief* (Section 3), the aims of the excavation were:

- The investigation and recording of any surviving archaeological remains within the areas of development
- The analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered
- The provision of an adequately detailed report that places the findings of the archaeological work in their local and regional context
- The full analysis and interpretation of the site archive to promote local and regional research

2.2 *Standards*

The work conformed to the requirements of the *brief*, the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 *Methods*

The work was carried out according to the *brief* (Section 4), which required:

- Topsoil stripping under archaeological supervision, in 10cm spits, with each surface examined and any exposed archaeological remains, features or deposits horizontally planned
- Manual cleaning and planning of exposed surfaces
- Excavation and recording of archaeological features and deposits in the agreed manner
- Palaeo-environmental sampling to be undertaken if warranted

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 The following section provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs. The site lies within an area of archaeological and historical interest, and has the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods.

This section has been compiled with information from the project design for this project (Barclay and Fell 2008).

3.2 Redbourn is an area of considerable archaeological and historical interest (Page 1908, 364-371). The site has the potential to reveal evidence of a variety of periods, but the focus of interest is likely to lie in the late Iron Age and Roman periods.

3.3 There is limited evidence for early prehistoric activity in the area and a Neolithic stone axe has been found at Redbourn (Stageman 1968). The area was of considerable importance during the Iron Age and a major Iron Age hillfort, now known as *The Aubreys*, is situated c.3km south of the site, on the west side of the motorway (Niblett 1995, fig. 3; Hunn 1992, 39-40).

3.4 A late Iron Age or Roman site, comprising triple ditches and a double ditched enclosure has been identified north of the site, adjacent to Junction 9 of the motorway. The double ditched enclosure has been interpreted as a temple (West 2008, para. 2.1).

3.5 During the Roman period, the area lay within the *civitas* (tribal area) of the *Catuvellauni* (Branigan 1987). A number of minor Roman sites are known in the surrounding area but settlement during this period was dominated by the *civitas* capital of *Verulamium* (St Albans), which was situated c. 8km southeast of the site (Niblett 2001). Communications during the Roman period were dominated by a major Roman road, now known as *Watling Street*, which passed immediately east of the showground (OS 1979), and linked *Verulamium* with *Durocbrivis* (Dunstable).

3.6 The medieval village of Redbourn developed to the south of the site and the first edition Ordnance Survey six inch map (1884) shows the site as open land, divided into regular land parcels (Figure 5). The site probably remained open land until the development of the showground and the motorway during the 20th century.

4. Results

4.1 Introduction

Monitoring of the stripping of the topsoil, in advance of the construction of the acoustic barrier, took place over three days between 27th May and 29th May 2008. The work was undertaken by three mechanical excavators, working concurrently and the soil was stripped in 10cm spits.

4.2 Results (Figures 3 and 4)

4.2.1 *The Natural Soils and Geology*

The topsoil comprised dark yellowish brown silty loam (100). It was *c.*0.3m deep and directly overlay the orange clay natural strata (107), which contained flint inclusions. No distinct subsoil layer was observed and the soil appeared relatively undisturbed.

4.2.2 Ditch/Gully [101] (Plate 1)

A linear feature [101] was present in the south part of the site. It was orientated from southwest to northeast and was 0.80m wide and 0.15m deep with a flat base and gently sloping sides. It was filled with a single deposit of orangey brown silty clay (102). No dating evidence was obtained but the feature is interpreted as a field boundary or drainage ditch (below, section 5.2).

4.2.3 Ditch/Gully [103] (Plate 2)

A second linear feature [103] was present in the centre of the site. It was aligned from northwest to southeast, at right angles to Ditch [101] and the two probably had similar functions (*ibid*). It was 0.55m wide and 0.20m deep with a flat base and gently sloping sides and contained a single deposit of mid yellowish brown silty clay (104).

4.2.4 *Ditch [105]*

The remains of a former hedge were observed in the centre of the site, immediately to the north of Ditch [103]. This was *c.* 2m wide and contained frequent woody roots and an assemblage of modern broken bricks (106). It was not excavated and is interpreted as a post-medieval or modern hedge line (*ibid*).

4.2.5 *Modern Intrusions*

A number of modern intrusions were observed, notably a gas pipeline at the south end of the site and a deposit a deposit of modern aggregate *c.* 0.6m thick towards the north end. The latter was apparently deposited in 2006 in order to improve the car park at the showground.

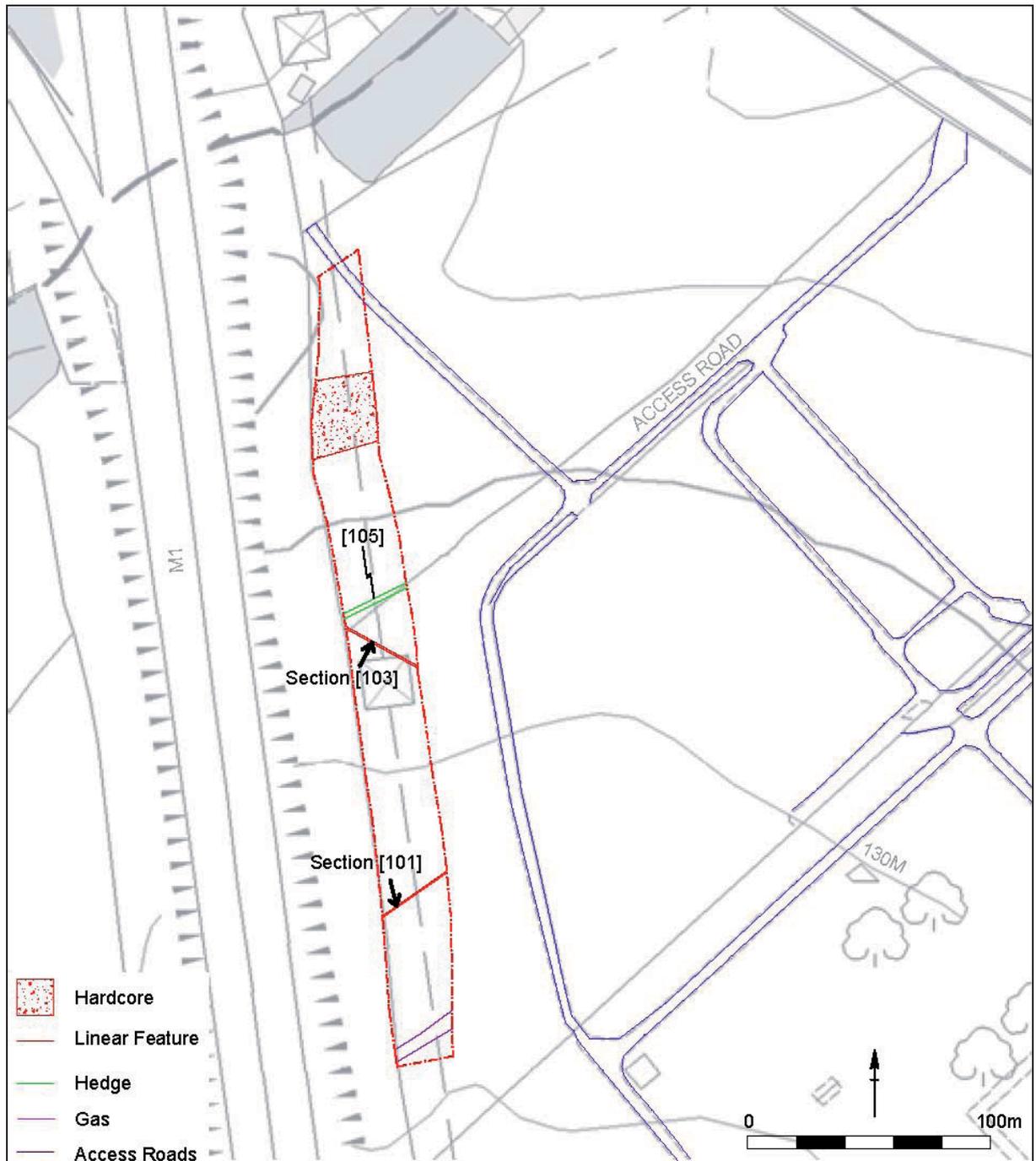


Figure 3: Plan of the excavated features (Scale 1:2500)

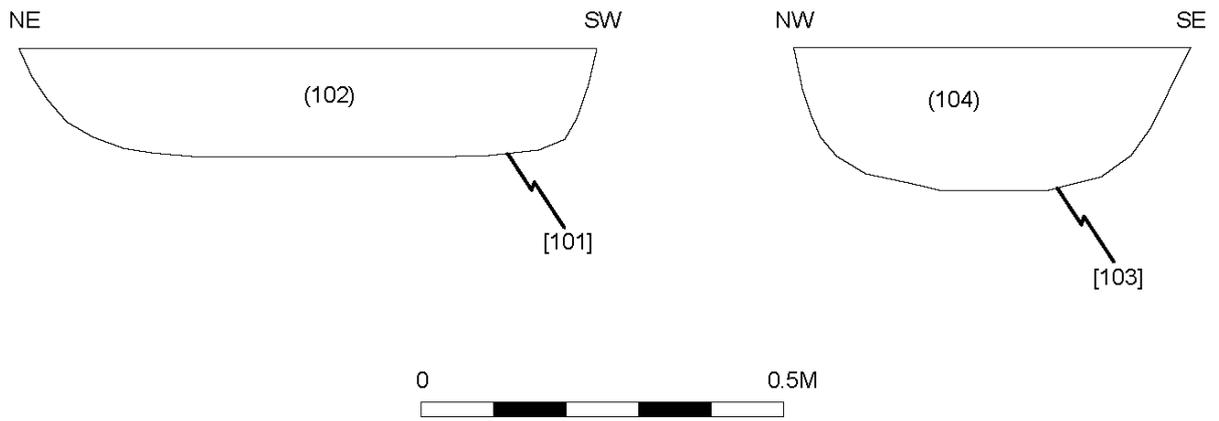


Figure 4: Profiles of Gully [101] and [103]



Plate 1: Section across Ditch/Gully [101] (*Scale = 1m*)



Plate 2: Section across Ditch/Gully [103] (*Scale = 1m*)



Plate 3 General view of the site, from the north

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 A number of archaeological features, dating to the post-medieval period were present on the site. These comprised two ditches/gullies [101] and [103] and a post-medieval/modern hedge line [105]. No earlier features were present.
- 5.2 Ditches [101] and [103] did not contain dating evidence but are probably post-medieval field boundaries. The 1884 edition Ordnance Survey map (Figure 5) shows the layout of the field boundaries in the late 19th century and both the ditches follow the alignment of boundaries shown on the map. The former hedge line [105] is also shown on the map.
- 5.3 A number of minor modern intrusions were present, but the area was relatively undisturbed. There was no evidence for former settlement activity and the presence of the ditches and the hedge line provides evidence for post-medieval and modern agricultural activity, prior to the development on the showground. Large numbers of archaeological features and artefacts were not present and the archaeological impact of the development is considered to be minimal.
- 5.4 *Confidence Rating*
The watching brief was carried out in fine weather and all topsoil was removed under archaeological supervision. Full co-operation was received from the machining contractors and a high confidence rating is attached to the results of the fieldwork.

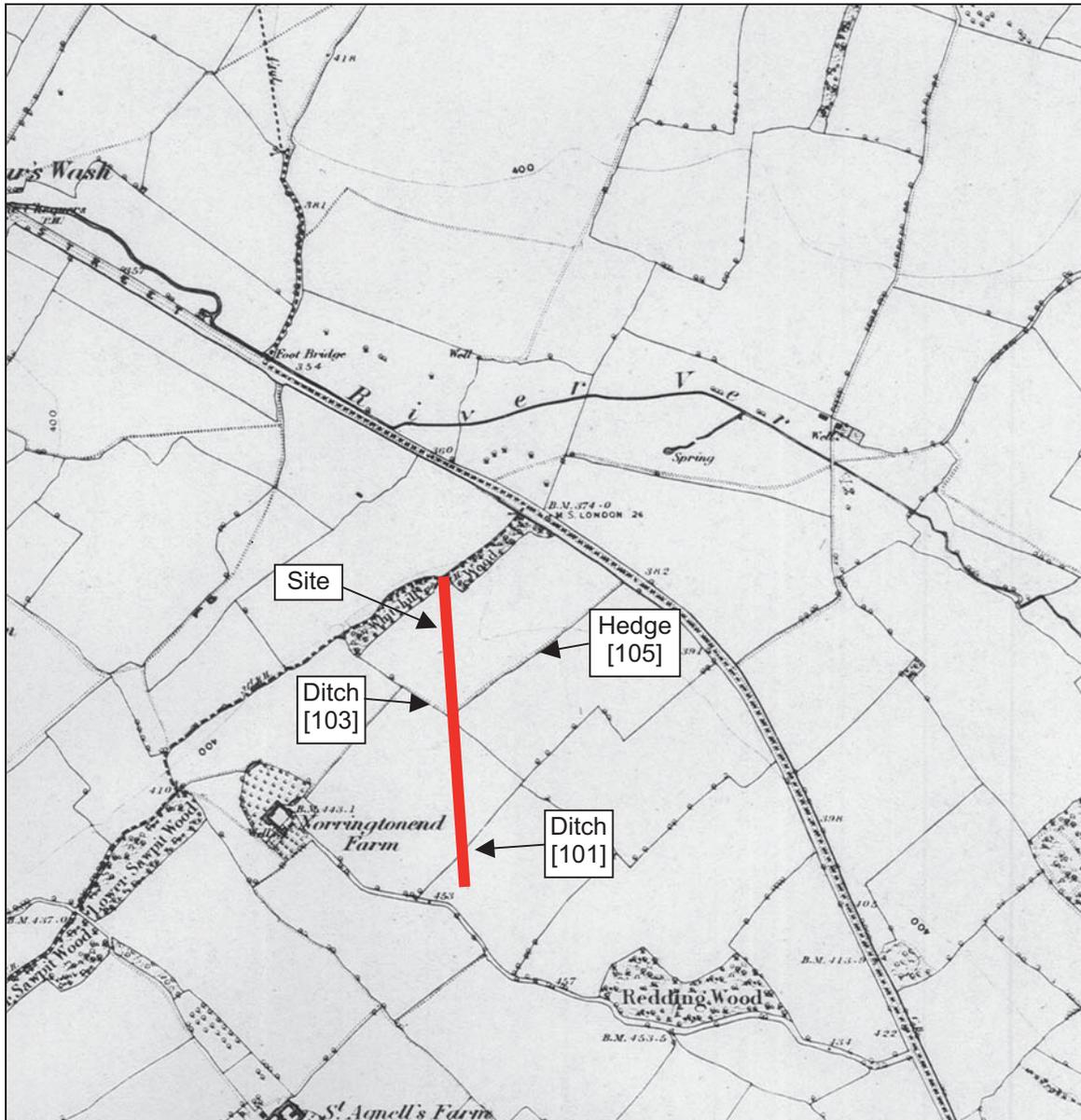


Figure 5: Extract from the 1884 edition Ordnance Survey six inch scale map, showing features identified during the excavation

6. Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to Lucie Stone of *Bidwells Faulkner* for commissioning the project on behalf of the *Hertfordshire Agricultural Society*. Andy Instone of the *Historic Environment Unit* of *Hertfordshire County Council* acted as curatorial monitor on behalf of the local planning authority.

The project was managed for *ASC Ltd* by Karin Semmelmann MA AIFA and the fieldwork was undertaken by Nigel Wilson HND AIFA. The report was prepared by Jenny Richards BA PIFA and David Fell BA MA MIFA. Illustrations were prepared by Calli Rouse BA PIFA and the report was edited by Bob Zeevat BA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site Monitoring Sheets
6. List of photographs
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with *St Albans Museum*.

8. References

Standards & Specifications

- Barclay, C. and Fell, D. 2008 *Project Design for Strip and Record Excavation at Hertfordshire County Showground 1069/rhs/1*
- ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper **14**.
- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition*. English Heritage (London).
- IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2000b Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*.
- IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.
- West S 2008 *Design Brief for Archaeological Investigation via Strip, Map and Record*
Hertfordshire County Council

Secondary Sources

- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Branigan K, 1987 *The Catuvellauni*. Alan Sutton
- Hunn J R, 1992, 'The Verulamium Oppidum and its Landscape in the Late Iron Age' in *Archaeological Journal*, **149**, 39-68
- Niblett R 1995 *Roman Hertfordshire* Dovecote Press Dorset
- Niblett R 2001 *Verulamium The Roman City of St Albans*. Tempus
- O S, 1979 *Ordnance Survey Map of Roman Britain*. Ordnance Survey
- Page W, 1908 *The Victoria History of the County of Hertfordshire* **2**. Dawsons of Pall Mall
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend*
- Stageman F D, 1968, 'A Neolithic Axe from Redbourn' in *Hertfordshire Archaeology*, **1**, 119-120

Appendix 1: Context Register

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation
100	Layer	Dark yellowish brown silty loam c.300mm deep. Topsoil
101	Cut	Asymmetrical gully, 800mm wide and 150mm deep, aligned northeast to southwest. Construction cut of a shallow/truncated ditch. Filled with (102). Undated.
102	Fill	Orangy brown silty clay. Silting fill of Ditch [101]. Undated.
103	Cut	Asymmetrical 'U' shaped gully 550mm wide and 200mm deep. Construction cut of a shallow/truncated ditch. Filled with (104). Undated.
104	Fill	Mid yellowish brown silty clay. Silting fill of Ditch [103]). Undated.
105	Cut	Linear cut c.2m wide aligned northeast to southwest. Former hedgeline. Filled with (106)
106	Fill	Yellowish brown clay mixed with modern brick fragments and recent roots. Fill within post-medieval/modern hedgerow [105].
107	Layer	Orange clay with frequent flint inclusions. Natural strata

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Hertfordshire County Showground, Redbourn			SITE NO/CODE: 1069/RHS
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	✓	✓	Ditch/gully [103]
2	✓	✓	Ditch/gully [103]
3		✓	General view looking north
4		✓	General view looking north
5	✓	✓	Ditch/gully [101]
6	✓	✓	Ditch/gully [101]
7		✓	General view looking west
8		✓	General view looking northwest
9		✓	General view looking east
10		✓	General view looking southwest
11		✓	General view looking south
12		✓	General view looking south
13		✓	General view looking south
14		✓	General view looking north
15		✓	General view looking north
16		✓	General view looking southwest
17		✓	General view looking southwest
18		✓	General view looking south

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Hertfordshire County Showground, Redbourn		
Short Description:	In May 2008 ASC Ltd undertook an archaeological excavation at the Hertfordshire County Showground, Redbourn, prior to the construction of an acoustic barrier. A number of linear features, interpreted as post-medieval field boundaries and shown on 19 th century Ordnance Survey maps were present. No other archaeological features were present and the archaeological impact of the development is considered to have been minimal.		
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	Watching Brief		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	None	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	-
Current land use:	Showground	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	-
Monument type:	-	Monument period:	-
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	-		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 0932 1418
District:	St Albans	Parish:	Redbourn
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Hertfordshire County Showground, Redbourn		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	18000sqm	Height OD: (metres)	130
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	A. Instone	Project design originator:	C. Barclay & D. Fell
Project Manager:	K. Semmelmann	Director/Supervisor:	N. Wilson
Sponsor / funding body:	Hertfordshire Agricultural Society		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	27/05/08	End date:	29/05/08
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	St Albans Museum	-	
Paper:		Archive box	
Digital:		CD	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Strip and Record Excavation: Hertfordshire County Showground, Redbourn, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1069/RHS/2		
Author(s):	J. Richards BA PIFA & C. Rouse BA PIFA		
Page nos	19	Date:	09/06/08