

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
ROUNDWOOD PARK SCHOOL
HARPENDEN
HERTS**

on behalf of Mace Ltd



David Kaye BA PIFA

January 2008

ASC: 1017/HRP/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> | HRP | <i>ASC Project No:</i> | 1017 |
| <i>Event No:</i> | N/A | <i>Accession No:</i> | N/A |
| <i>County:</i> | Hertfordshire | | |
| <i>Village/Town:</i> | Harpenden | | |
| <i>Civil Parish:</i> | Harpenden | | |
| <i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i> | TL 1229 1470 | | |
| <i>Present use:</i> | Playing fields | | |
| <i>Planning proposal:</i> | Construction of additional teaching block | | |
| <i>Planning application ref/date:</i> | 5/1279-07 (CC0076) | | |
| <i>Local Planning Authority:</i> | St Albans District Council | | |
| <i>Date of fieldwork:</i> | 3 rd January 2008 | | |
| <i>Client:</i> | Mace Ltd 3 rd Floor, Stag House Old London Rd Hertford SG13 7YY | | |
| <i>Contact name:</i> | Mark Whitworth | | |

Internal Quality Check

| | | | |
|---------------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| <i>Primary Author:</i> | David Kaye | <i>Date:</i> | 23 Jan 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 | 6 |
| 3. Archaeological & Historical Background | 7 |
| 4. Results. | 8 |
| 5. Conclusions | 11 |
| 6. Acknowledgements | 12 |
| 7. Archive | 12 |
| 8. References | 13 |

Appendices:

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| 1. Trench Summary Tables..... | 14 |
| 2. List of Photographs..... | 15 |
| 3. ASC OASIS Form | 16 |
| 4. SMR Summary Sheet | 17 |

Figures:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. General location | 3 |
| 2. Site plan | 5 |

Plates:

Cover: General view of site, facing northeast

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Machining trench, facing west | 8 |
| 2. General view, facing northeast. | 9 |
| 3. Machining trench, facing northeast..... | 9 |
| 4. Machined trench, facing south..... | 9 |
| 5. Machined trench, close-up | 10 |
| 6. Trench section, facing east..... | 10 |

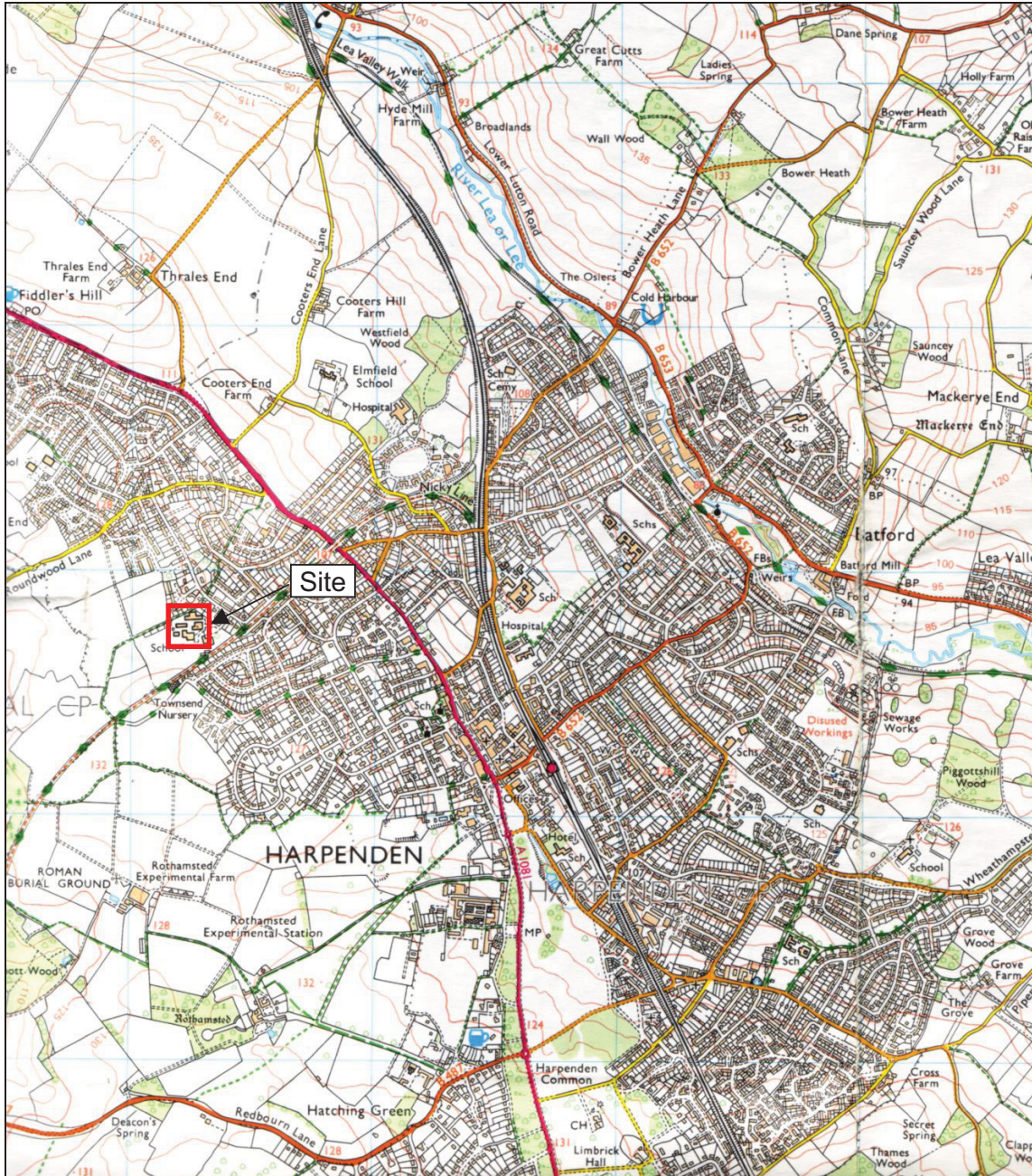


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In January 2008 ASC Ltd conducted an archaeological evaluation at Roundwood Park School, Harpenden, in advance of the construction of a new teaching block, to be located on the existing playing field. One archaeological trench was excavated within the footprint of the proposed building. The stratigraphy of the trench consisted of topsoil overlying modern made ground and a clay natural geology. No archaeological cut features, layers or deposits were encountered during the present project.

1. Introduction

1.1 In January 2008 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at Roundwood Park School, Harpenden (NGR TL 1229 1470: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by *Mace Ltd*, and was carried out according to a brief (Instone 2007) prepared by the *Historic Environment Unit*, of *Hertfordshire County Council*, and an approved project design prepared by ASC (Barclay 2007). The relevant planning application reference is 5/1279-07 (CC0076).

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the construction of a new teaching block to be located on existing playing fields.

1.3 *Location*

The site is located within the administrative district of St Albans, on the northwest edge of Harpenden (Figure 1). It is situated on the Rothamsted plateau on the southern side of the Upper Lea valley. The site is bounded by urban development to the north, east and south, with open arable farmland to the west. The footprint of the proposed building is rectangular in shape and approximately 450m² in area (Figure 2; Plates 1-3).

1.4 *Description*

The evaluation area forms part of the existing playing fields, and is on ground that rises from the southwest to the northeast, by up to 2.46m.

1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The site is situated in an urban area and the natural soils have not been surveyed, but they are likely to comprise the *Batcombe Association*; namely fine silty and clayey soils over chalk (Soil Survey 1983, 582a). The site as a whole is generally flat and lies at an elevation of c.130m OD.

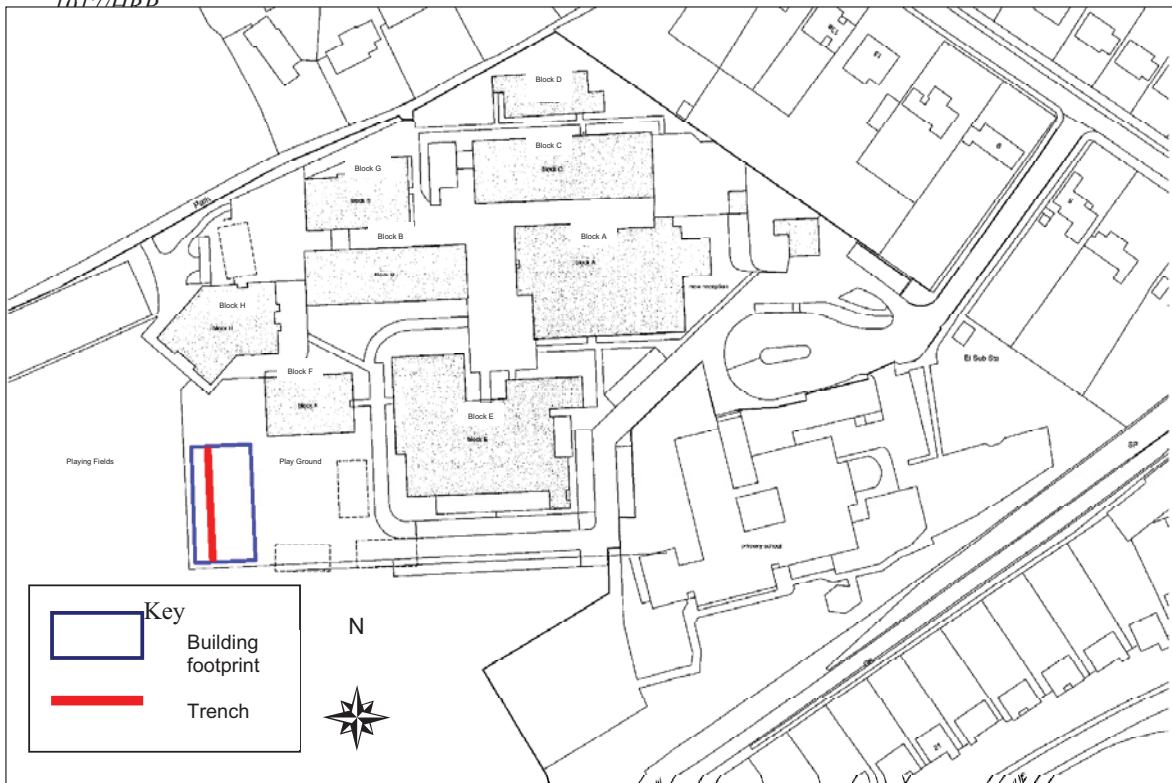


Figure 2: Site plan (Scale 1:2000)

2. Aims and Methods

2.1 Aims

In line with the requirements of the agreed brief (Instone 2007), the aims of the evaluation were:

- To determine the location, extent, date, nature, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains observed on site.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), to the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the approved Project Design (Barclay 2007), which required:

- A single trench c.30m long was excavated across the footprint of the proposed building. Its location is shown on Figure 2.

ASC's general methodology is described in detail in Sections 2.4 of the Project Design.

2.4 Constraints

There were no circumstances that resulted in any significant deviation from the proposed methods of the Project Design.

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

HER = Historic Environment Record Number

3.1 Introduction

Harpenden is an area of considerable archaeological and historical interest (Page 1908) and this has recently been defined in the *Wheathampstead and Harpenden Extensive Urban Survey* (Thompson 2002). The site has the potential to reveal evidence of a variety of periods, but the focus of interest was considered to lie in the Roman period.

3.1.1 Prehistoric (before 600BC)

Most of the known Prehistoric archaeology in Harpenden is located on the southern side of the river Lea, to the east and southeast of the present site. However, the distribution patterns may only be a reflection of where fieldwork has been carried out. Features and artefacts have been identified from the Palaeolithic period onwards. A polished axe (*HER 663*), dating from the Neolithic period, was recovered from a site approximately 1km to the north, and a Palaeolithic hand axe (*HER 9086*) was identified c.2.5km to the east.

3.1.2 Iron Age (600BC-AD43)

There is no recorded early or middle Iron Age archaeology in the immediate vicinity of the site. Features from the late Iron Age consist of a chieftain's burial (*HER 0123*) c.2km to the east and Devil's Dyke 6.5km to the southeast. The dyke is 470m long is thought to have formed part the local tribal defences.

3.1.3 Roman (AD43-c.450)

A number of Roman features and artefacts are recorded within 1km of the site. Most notable is the Rothamsted mausoleum, located c.800m to the south of the evaluation area. It is likely that this early Roman structure was associated with an as yet undiscovered villa.

3.1.4 Saxon (c.450-1066)

No specific archaeology dating to the Saxon period has been recorded within the immediate vicinity of the present site. There is a possibility that a pagan burial is located c.2km to the northwest at Kinsbourne Green.

3.1.5 Medieval (1066-1500)

The study area lies almost equidistance between the medieval estates of Annables to the northwest and Rothamsted to the south. The manorial estate of Harpendenbury is located to the southwest and the Chapel of St Nicholas to the east.

3.1.6 Post-Medieval (1500-1900)

During the Post-Medieval period Harpenden's population expanded significantly, several new landowners came to prominence and industry began to flourish. The present site remained agricultural land on the outskirts of the town.

3.1.7 Modern (1900-present)

The urban development to the south of the site began sometime between 1901 and 1925, spreading to the east and north in the latter half of the 20th century. It was at this time that the school itself was founded.

4. Results

- 4.1 This section provides a summary of the results of the evaluation. Detailed information regarding the trial trench, in tabular form, appears in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 One 30m x 1.8m trench was excavated within the footprint of the proposed building, orientated approximately north-south (Figure 2). The stratigraphy consisted of 0.45m of silty clay topsoil (101) overlying 0.30m of compacted made ground (102). This consisted of a mixture of modern hardcore, concrete, rubble, and a tarmac surface that covered the eastern 1.50m of the trench. Beneath this layer was a yellowish brown (10YR 5/8) natural clay geology (Plate 6).
- 4.3 The made ground may have been associated with a former roadway that ran east-west to the south of the playground, then turned north towards Block H, through the evaluation area. The developer's compound was also located in this vicinity during the construction of Block H.
- 4.4 The trench was located on a gently sloping ground between the existing playing fields to the west and the playground to the east. This appears to be partly the natural topography and partly the result of the deposition of the material within the made ground. The level of the playing fields, and their associated sports pitches, may have been achieved as a result of the ground being truncated.
- 4.5 There were no archaeological cut features, layers or deposits encountered during the present project, and no unstratified artefacts were recovered from the spoil. While the presence of occasional, isolated, archaeological features, away from the trench cannot be specifically excluded, it is unlikely that large quantities of archaeological remains or artefacts are present on the site. It is therefore unlikely that the proposed development will significant impact on buried archaeological remains.



Plate 1: Machining trench, facing west



Plate 2: General view, facing northeast



Plate 3: Machining trench, facing northeast



Plate 4: Machined trench, facing south



Plate 5: Machined trench, close-up. (Scale = 1m)



Plate 6: Trench section, facing east. (Scale = 1m)

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Most of the known archaeology in Harpenden is concentrated to the east and southeast of the present site. This may be a reflection of where the fieldwork has taken place rather than an accurate indication of settlement patterns.
- 5.2 The evaluation trench was located within the footprint of the proposed building, on a piece of sloping ground currently used as playing fields. Situated at the northern end of the slope is Block H, a later addition to the school. The ground at this point is 2.46m higher than the level sports pitches to the west. The stratigraphy of the trench suggested that some of the difference in height could be a product of the construction of this block. A layer of compacted hardcore and tarmac may represent the remnants of a path, roadway or the contractor's compound.
- 5.3 The ground to the west of the study area may have been truncated during the initial development of the school site, resulting in the level sports pitches. More specifically, some truncation may also have occurred during the construction of Block H to the north. The layer of compacted made ground lay directly over the natural clay, the original topsoil and subsoil having been stripped away. The severity of this process will have had a bearing on the potential survival of archaeological remains.
- 5.4 The site lies within a well-documented archaeological landscape, with notable features and artefacts recorded particularly from the Prehistoric to Roman periods (above, sections 3.1-3.3). The evaluation revealed no archaeological cut features or deposits, and no unstratified artefacts were recovered from the spoil. This may be result of the ground having been truncated or that the present site lies beyond the limits of historic and prehistoric settlement.
- 5.5 *Confidence Rating*
Conditions were generally favourable for the excavation and subsequent assessment of the evaluation trench, therefore a high confidence rating can be applied to the results of the present project.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Paul Healey of *Mace Ltd* for commissioning this work, and to Andy Instone of the *Historic Environment Unit* at *Hertfordshire County Council* for curatorial advice.

The project was managed on behalf of *ASC Ltd* by David Fell MA MIFA; fieldwork was undertaken for *ASC Ltd* by Jonathan Hunn PhD MIFA, and David Kaye BA PIFA. The report was written by David Kaye and edited by David Fell MA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

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

7.2 The archive will be deposited with St Albans Museum.

8. References

Standards & Specifications

ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14.

Barclay, C. 2007 *Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation on behalf of Mace Ltd: Roundwood Park School, Harpenden, Hertfordshire*, ASC Ltd 1017/HRP/1

EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).

IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.

IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.

Instone A 2007 *Design Brief for Archaeological Evaluation* Historic Environment Unit Hertfordshire County Council


Secondary Sources

Page W (ed), 1908 *The Victoria History of the County of Hertfordshire*. 2

Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

Thompson I, 2002 *Wheathampstead and Harpenden Extensive Urban Survey Project Assessment Report*. Hertfordshire County Council.

Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

| Trench 1 | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|  | Max Dimensions (m) | | | | | |
| | Length | 30 | Width | 1.8 | Depth | 0.8 |
| | Levels | | | | | |
| | Trench base north | | c.131.73m OD | | | |
| | Trench top north | | c.132.68m OD | | | |
| | Trench base south | | c.130.94m OD | | | |
| | Trench top south | | c.131.77m OD | | | |
| | NGR Co-ordinates | | | | | |
| | N | TL 12160 14718 | | S | TL 12160 14689 | |
| | Orientation | | | N-S | | |
| Reason for Trench | | | Trial trenching | | | |
| Context | Type | Description and Interpretation | | Max Width (mm) | Max Thckn (mm) | Depth BGL (mm) |
| (101) | Layer | Silty clay. Topsoil | | 1800 | 450 | - |
| (102) | Layer | Concrete and rubble. Modern Made ground | | 1800 | 300 | 450 |
| (103) | Layer | Yellowish brown (10YR 5/8) clay. Natural geology | | 1800 | - | 750 |

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

| SITE NAME: Roundwood Park School, Harpenden, Hertfordshire | | | SITE NO/CODE: 1017/HRP/1 |
|--|-----|---------|---|
| Shot | B&W | Digital | Subject |
| 01 | | √ | General view, facing west |
| 02 | | √ | General view, facing northeast |
| 03 | | √ | General view, facing northeast |
| 04 | | √ | General view, facing northeast |
| 05 | | √ | General view, facing northeast |
| 06 | | √ | General view, facing southeast |
| 07 | | √ | General view, facing southeast |
| 08 | | √ | General view, facing east |
| 09 | | √ | Machining trench, facing south |
| 10 | | √ | Machining trench, facing south |
| 11 | | √ | Machining trench, facing northwest |
| 12 | | √ | Machining trench, facing south |
| 13 | | √ | Machined trench, facing south |
| 14 | | √ | Machined trench, facing southeast |
| 15 | | √ | Machined trench, facing south |
| 16 | | √ | Machined trench, facing south |
| 17 | | √ | Machined trench, close-up, facing south |
| 18 | | √ | Trench section, facing southeast |
| 19 | | √ | Trench section, facing east |
| 20 | | √ | Trench section, facing east |
| 21 | √ | | General view, facing northeast |
| 22 | √ | | General view, facing northeast |
| 23 | √ | | General view, facing east |
| 24 | √ | | General view, facing east |
| 25 | √ | | Trench section, facing east |
| 26 | √ | | Trench section, facing east |
| 27 | √ | | Machined trench, facing south |
| 28 | √ | | Machined trench, facing south |
| 29 | √ | | Machined trench, facing south |
| 30 | √ | | Machined trench, facing south |

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

| PROJECT DETAILS | | | |
|---------------------------|--|---|--------------|
| Project Name: | Roundwood Park School, Harpenden, Hertfordshire | | |
| Short Description: | In January 2008 ASC Ltd conducted an archaeological evaluation at Roundwood Park School, Harpenden, in advance of the construction of a new teaching block, to be located on the existing playing field. One archaeological trench was excavated within the footprint of the proposed building. The stratigraphy of the trench consisted of topsoil overlying modern made ground and a clay natural geology. No archaeological cut features, layers or deposits were encountered during the present project. | | |
| Project Type: | Trial Trenching | | |
| Site status: | None | Previous work: | None |
| Current land use: | School playing field | Future work: | Unknown |
| Monument type: | None | Monument period: | None |
| Significant finds: | None | | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | | |
| County: | Hertfordshire | OS reference: | TL 1229 1470 |
| Site address: | Roundwood Park School, Roundwood Park, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, AL5 3AE | | |
| Study area: | 450m ² | Height OD: | c.130mOD |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | | |
| Organisation: | Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd | | |
| Project brief originator: | | Project design originator: | C Barclay |
| Project Manager: | J Hunn | Director/Supervisor: | D Kaye |
| Sponsor / funding body: | Mace Ltd | | |
| PROJECT DATE | | | |
| Start date: | 7.01.08 | End date: | 7.01.08 |
| PROJECT ARCHIVES | | | |
| | Location (Accession no.) | Content | |
| Physical: | N/A | N/A | |
| Paper: | St Albans Museum | Project Design, Report, Black and White prints and negatives, Fieldwork forms | |
| Digital: | St Albans Museum | Digital copies of reports, CD-ROM of digital photographs | |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | | | |
| Title: | Archaeological Evaluation: Roundwood Park School, Roundwood Park, Harpenden, Hertfordshire | | |
| Serial title & volume: | ASC Client Report 1017/HRP | | |
| Author(s): | D Kaye BA PIFA | | |
| Page nos | 17 | Date: | 10.01.08 |

Appendix 4: SMR Summary Sheet

| | | |
|--|----------------|---|
| Site name and address: Roundwood Park School, Roundwood Park, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, AL5 3AE | | |
| County: Hertfordshire | | District: St Albans |
| Village/Town: Harpenden | | Parish: Harpenden |
| Planning application reference: 5/1279-07 (CC0076) | | |
| Client name, address, & tel. no: Mace Ltd 3 rd Floor, Stag House Old London Rd Hertford SG13 7YY 01992 515100 | | |
| Nature of application: Construction of teaching block | | |
| Present land use: Playing fields | | |
| Size of application area: 450m ² | | Size of area investigated: 54m ² |
| NGR (to 8 figures): TL 1229 1470 | | Site code: 1027/HRP |
| Site director/Organization: J Hunn / ASC Ltd | | |
| Type of work: Evaluation | | |
| Date of work: | Start: 7.01.08 | Finish: 7.01.08 |
| Curating museum: St Albans Museum | | |
| Related SMR nos: | | Periods represented: None |
| Relevant previous summaries/reports: None | | |
| <p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p>In January 2008 ASC Ltd conducted an archaeological evaluation at Roundwood Park School, Harpenden, in advance of the construction of a new teaching block, to be located on the existing playing field. One archaeological trench was excavated within the footprint of the proposed building. The stratigraphy of the trench consisted of topsoil overlying modern made ground and a clay natural geology. No archaeological cut features, layers or deposits were encountered during the present project.</p> | | |
| Author: D Kaye | | Date: 10.01.08 |