



Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
PRESDALES SCHOOL
WARE
HERTFORDSHIRE**

NGR: TL 3584 1338

on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council



Martin Cuthbert BA

May 2009

ASC: 1102/WPS/2



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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	WPS	<i>Project no:</i>	1102
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	archaeol2-49698	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Ware		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Ware		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 3584 1338		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.15ha		
<i>Present use:</i>	School grounds		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Erection of a sports centre, accommodation and new netball courts		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	3/1232-08		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	East Hertfordshire District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	16 th February - 2 nd April 2009		
<i>Client:</i>	Hertfordshire County Council Mace Ltd. Stag House Old London Road Hertford SG13 7YY		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Hellen Stevens – Mace Ltd		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Martin Cuthbert BA	<i>Date:</i>	19 th May 2009
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<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
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<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>	David Fell	<i>Date:</i>	19 th May 2009
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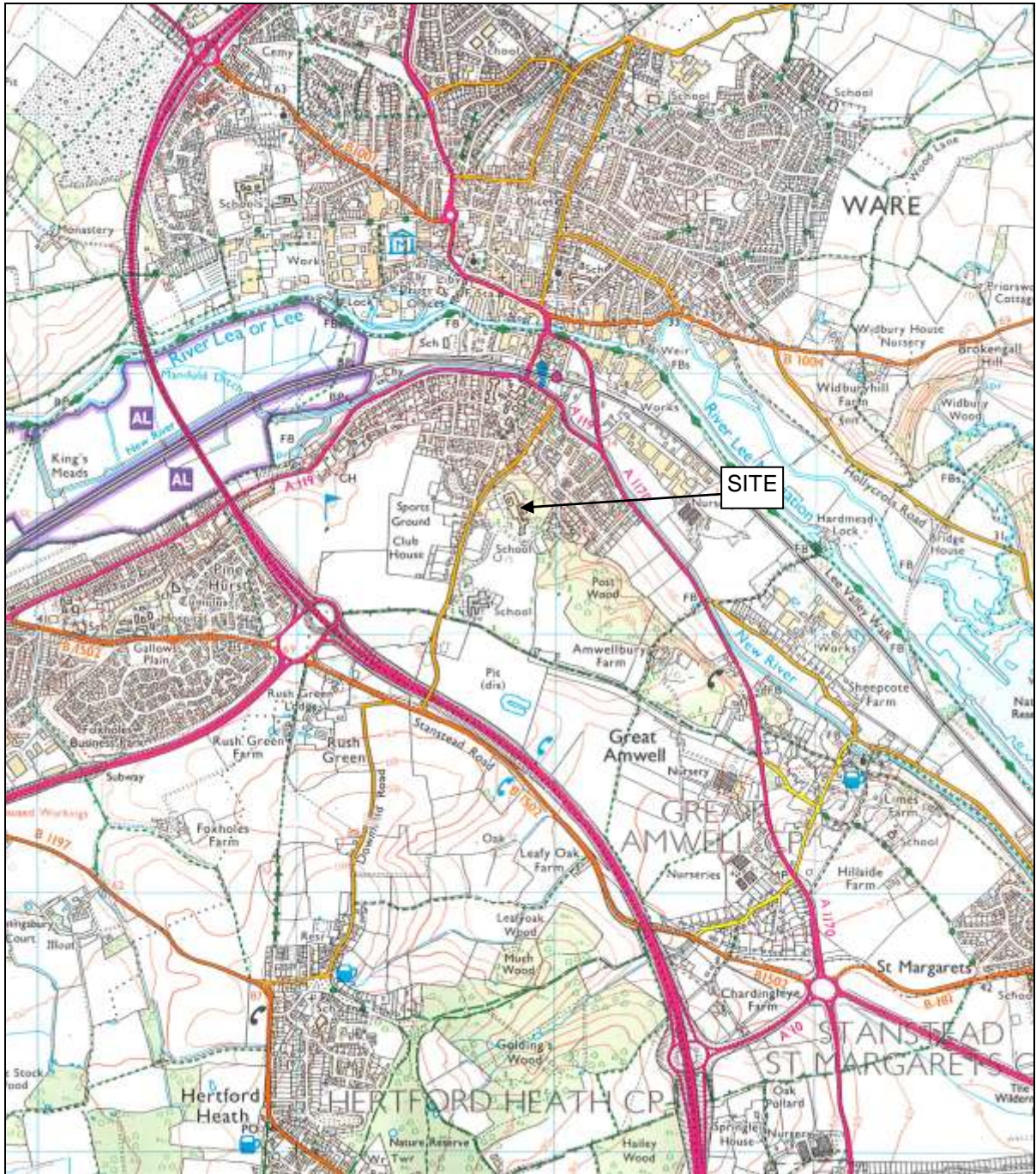


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

Between February and April 2009 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out a watching brief during the groundworks for a new sports centre and netball courts at Presdales School, Ware, Hertfordshire. No significant archaeological remains were discovered during the groundworks for the sports centre. Only a wall, soakaway and an area of dumping were revealed, and all are thought to be modern in date. No deposits or finds were revealed during the works for the netball courts.

1. Introduction

1.1 Between February and April 2009 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at Presdales School, Ware, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by *Hertfordshire County Council*, and was carried out according to a standard brief, following discussions with the local archaeological advisor (AA), the *Hertfordshire Historic Environment Unit*, on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *East Hertfordshire District Council*, and a project design prepared by ASC (Rouse 2008). The relevant planning application reference is 3/1232-08.

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

1.5 *The Site*

1.5.1 *Location & Description*

The proposed development site is located within the district of East Hertfordshire, in the parish and town of Ware, at NGR TL 3584 1338 (Fig. 1).

The school site covers an area of c.15ha, and the proposed development is located along its eastern side. Access to the site is from Hoe Lane, which forms part of the western boundary of the site. The proposed development areas are located to the southeast of the main complex of school buildings, and are flanked by the school playing field and Post Wood (Fig. 2).

1.5.2 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area are of the Ludford Association, which comprise *deep well drained fine loamy, coarse loamy and sandy soils, locally flinty and in places over gravel. Slight risk of water erosion over glaciofluvial drift* (Soil Survey 1983, 571x). The underlying geology consists of recent and Pleistocene glacial gravel with Bunter pebbles (BGS, Sheet 239).

1.5.3 *Proposed Development*

The proposed development comprises the erection of a sports centre with ancillary accommodation, replacement netball courts, and the use of the existing netball court as a car park (Fig. 2).

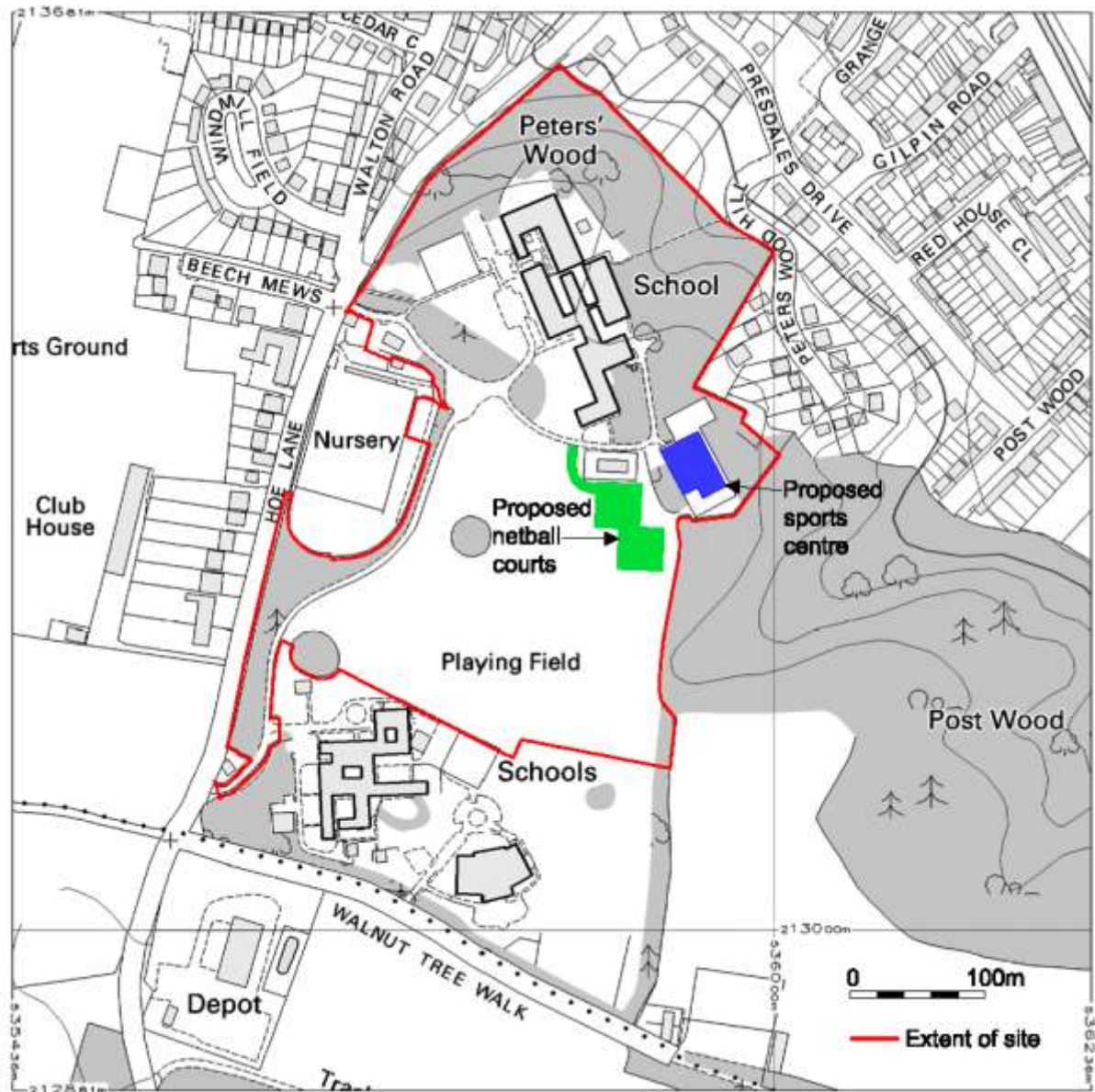


Figure 2: Site plan with proposed development (*scale 1:5000*)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 *Aims*

As described in the project design (Section 3.1), the aims of the watching brief were:

- To ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to affect archaeological remains
- To secure the adequate recording of any archaeological remains revealed by the development programme
- To secure the analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site.
- To provide an adequately detailed project report that will place the findings of the monitoring and recording of the development programme in their local and regional context.

2.2 *Standards*

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute for 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 project design (Section 3.3), which required:

- Soil and overburden stripping under archaeological supervision
- The inspection of the sub-soil for archaeological features, deposits and artefacts
- The rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features or deposits
- Sub-soil stripping under archaeological supervision
- The examination of foundation trenches etc., and the subsequent recording of any exposed archaeological remains
- Rapid examination of spoil-heaps for archaeological material
- A programme of post-fieldwork analysis, archiving and publication.

2.4 *Constraints*

2.4.1 **Netball Courts**

Excavation and construction of the access route had already taken place prior to the first visit on site.

2.4.2 **Sports Centre**

The speed of the construction team meant an area of dumping (below, section 4.2.2) revealed within the footing trenches could not be recorded in detail. Following consultation with the AA, it was agreed that as modern made ground covered the whole site the excavation of the internal footing trenches for the sports centre need not be monitored by the archaeologist.

2.4.3 No other constraints were encountered and the work took place in dry sunny weather conditions.

3. Archaeological & 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 offered the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods.
- 3.2 Excavations have shown that an Iron Age settlement in Ware, to the north of the river Lea. A large Iron Age ditch was discovered below *Ermine Street* in excavations that took place in the late 1970's by Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust (Frere 1985, 293). The amount of pottery recovered suggests a community of significant economic importance (Niblett 1995, 60).
- 3.3 During the Roman period, a settlement was established close to the point where *Ermine Street*, the major Roman road linking London, Lincoln and York, crossed the Lea. Ovens and furnaces have been found associated with more elusive traces of buildings along the line of *Ermine Street*, and the archaeological remains suggest that by the late Roman period, the settlement at Ware and the surrounding area was an area of some importance and affluence (*ibid*).
- 3.4 Ware is mentioned in the *Domesday Survey* of 1086 where it is referred to as *Waras*. It was valued at £45 at the time of the survey, and £50 in 1066 during the reign of King Edward (Williams and Martin 2003, 383).
- 3.5 Ware Friary was founded in 1338 by Thomas Wake, Lord of Liddell. In the early 15th century it underwent substantial reconstruction (Page 1912, 382), and since this time it has been known as Ware Priory. Parts of the Priory are still in use today and are home to Ware Town Council.
- 3.6 The school itself was founded before 1633 (exact date unknown), when Humphrey Spencer left £100 to the trustees for teaching four of the poorest children of Ware to read and write. It was built on part of the site of Corpus Christi Barn in Dead Lane. The school was rebuilt in 1747, and in 1834 it was classed as an elementary school. In 1889 it was amalgamated with the Chuck Memorial School, founded by Mrs. Elizabeth Moore Chuck in memory of her husband. A grammar school was then established under thirteen governors appointed by the Hertford County Council. This was converted into a girls school in 1906, and Amwell House was bought for its accommodation (*ibid*). It was then moved to its present site at Presdales in 1964.
- 3.7 The Presdales house, where the school is now based, was built in the mid 19th century in the gothic style. It is thought to of been built for Albert George Sandeman who was Chairman of George G. Sandeman, Sons & Co, Limited, the specialist sherry and port manufacturers.

4. Results

4.1 Netball courts

- 4.1.1 A c.0.23 ha area to the south of the school is to be developed as netball courts (Fig. 2, Plates 1 & 2).
- 4.1.2 The stratigraphy comprised topsoil made up of dark brown silty clay loam, which was 0.15m deep. Six coins were discovered in the topsoil. All were post medieval in date, the earliest being that of William III (1694 – 1702) and they were not retained.
- 4.1.3 The subsoil comprised orange brown silty clay with frequent gravel inclusions and was stripped to a depth of 0.15m (Plate 2). The underlying natural strata was not reached.

4.2 Sports centre

- 4.2.1 The new sports centre covers c.1.35 ha (Fig. 2 and 3) and replaces netball courts which formerly occupied the site. In addition to the footings trenches two soakaways were also excavated to the east of the main building (Fig 3).

4.2.2 Footing trenches

The footing trenches were between 0.9m and 1m deep. They were cut through c.0.5m of modern made ground and c.0.4-0.5m into the natural strata which comprised orange sand with frequent medium to large flint inclusions (Plates 3 and 5).

Two modern features were observed within the footings trenches. The remains of a modern brick wall were observed towards the north eastern end of the footing trenches, and consisted of at least one course of modern red bricks (Fig 4; Plate 5).

An area of modern dumping was observed in the south eastern corner of the footing trenches (Figs 5 and 7; Plate 6). It was 0.4m deep, and was present below 0.3m of modern made ground and 0.1m of re-deposited natural strata. There were no archaeological artefacts within this feature, and its full extent could not be recorded.

4.2.3 Soakaways

The soakaways each measured 2.6m by 2.6m, and were c.2.5m deep. Unstable ground meant that it was impossible to record the soakaways in detail, but c.0.8m of mixed subsoil was observed overlying the natural sand. An existing modern brick soakaway filled with rubble was encountered c.1m below ground level in the western section of soakaway 1. The soakaway was constructed with a mixture of modern brick types (Figs 4 and 6, Plate 3).

All the features observed were modern in date and not archaeologically significant.

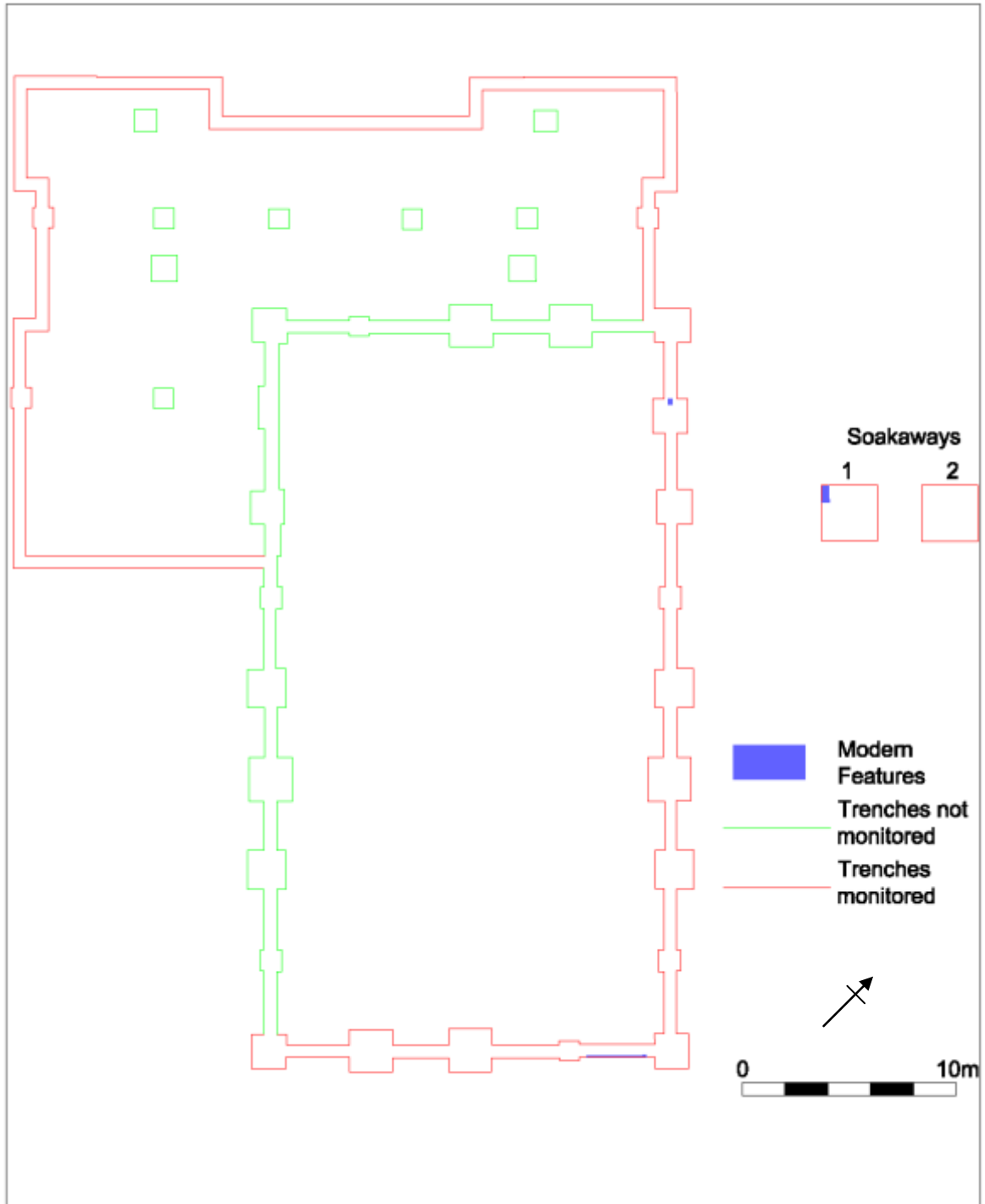


Figure 3: Sports centre, footing trenches and soakaways (scale 1:300)

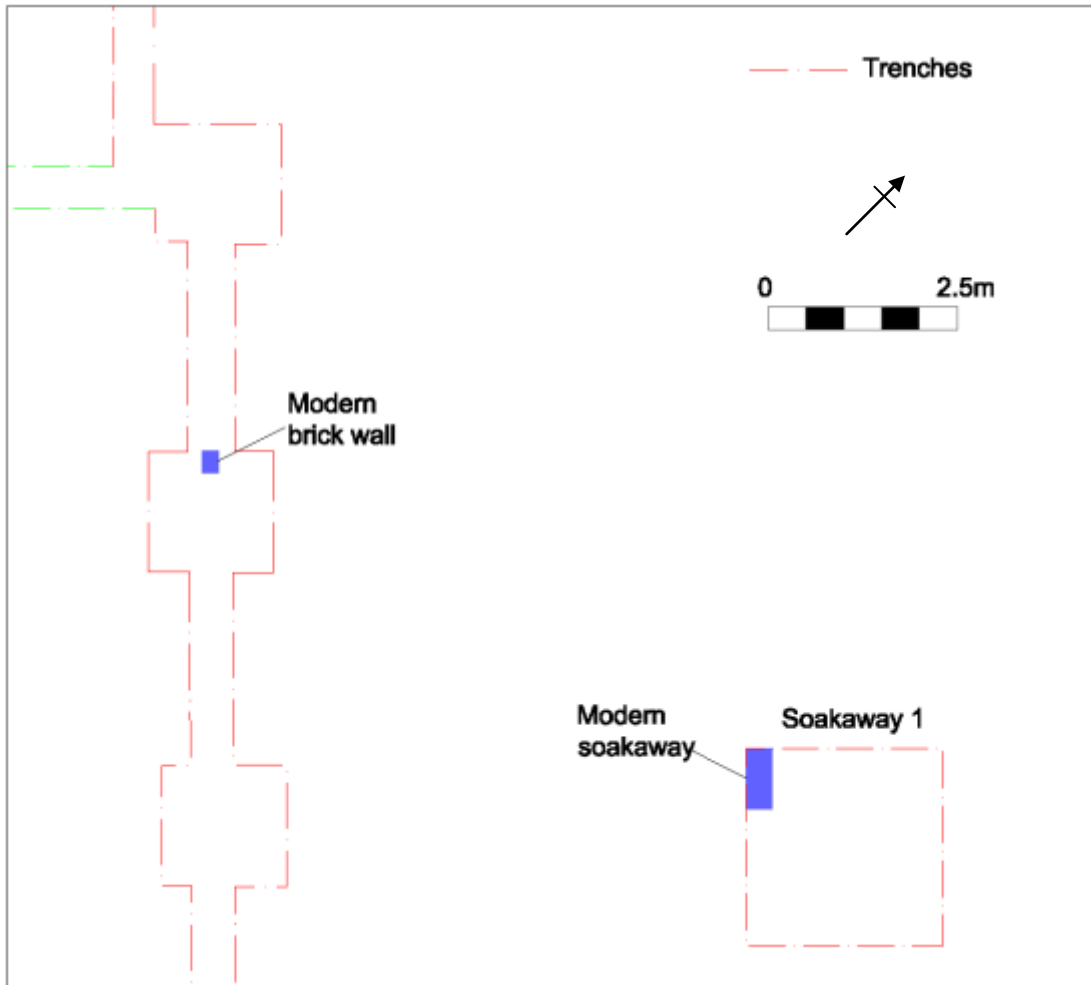


Figure 4: Modern features within trench and soakaway (*scale 1:100*)

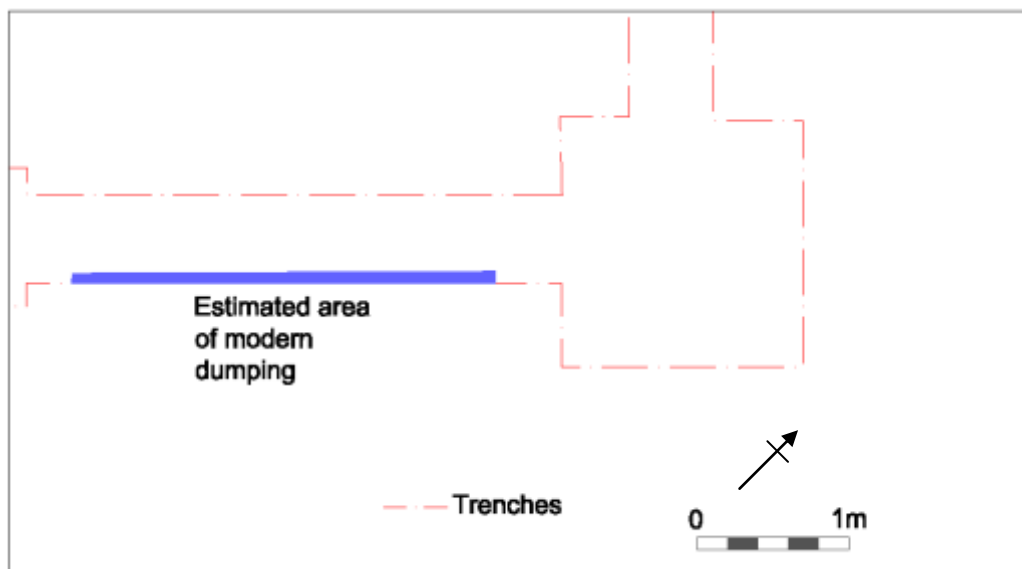


Figure 5: Estimated area of modern dumping within the trench (*scale 1:50*)

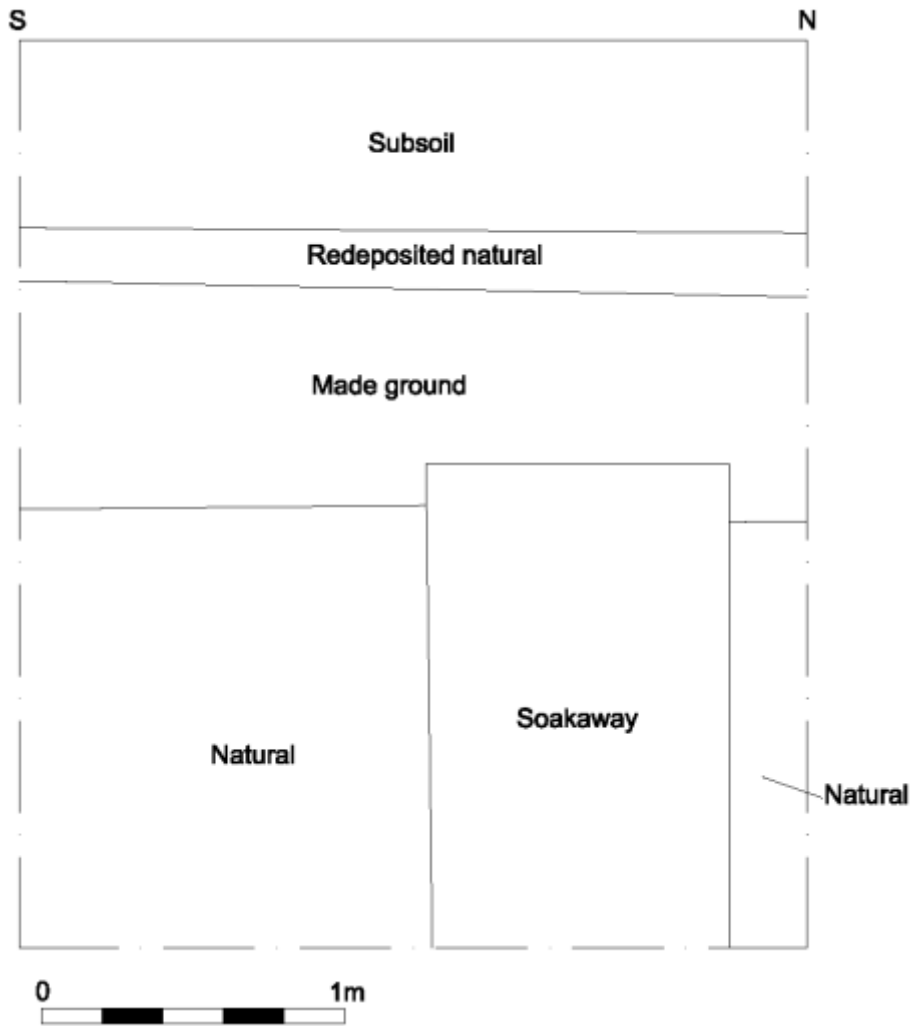


Figure 6: Representative section of soakaway 1 with modern brick soakaway (*scale 1:25*)

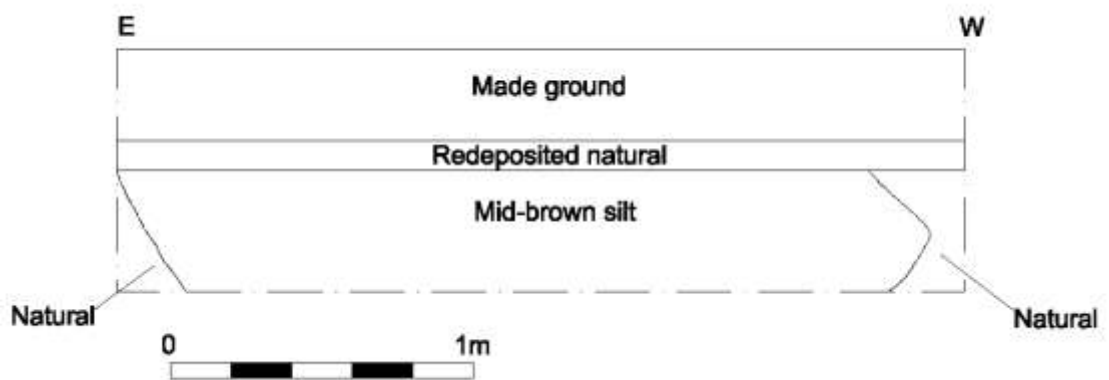


Figure 7: Representative section showing the area of modern dumping (*scale 1:25*)



Plate 1: Netball courts at finished stage



Plate 2: Section showing reduced area on the netball courts, looking south, 1m scale



Plate 3: Soakaway 1 showing revealed modern brick soakaway in section, with scale



Plate 4: Sports centre trench, looking west



Plate 5: Possible modern wall, looking east, 2 x 1m scales



Plate 6: Section showing possible modern dump, looking south, 2m scale

5. Conclusions

5.1 Netball courts

5.1.1 No archaeological features were observed within the footprint of the new netball courts. Both the topsoil and subsoil layers were present and the area appears relatively undisturbed. The shallow depth of excavation reached during the ground works does not preclude the possibility that archaeological remains are present elsewhere on the site.

5.2 Sports centre

5.2.1 The area to be occupied by the new sports centre was more disturbed than the area of the netball courts and the natural soil profile had been truncated. The brick soakaway revealed in Soakaway 1 was probably constructed at the same time as the netball courts on which the sports centre is now located and is therefore thought to be modern in date.

5.2.2 The brick wall consisted of at least one course of red bricks and was situated at the same depth as the modern made ground. Study of late 19th century and later Ordnance Survey maps indicates that no substantial buildings stood in this location, leading to the conclusion that the wall might be a small garden feature or outhouse. The dumping is also considered to be modern in date.

5.2.3 The occasional survival of isolated archaeological features, away from the groundworks, cannot be entirely excluded, it is unlikely that the site contains large quantities of significant archaeological features or artefacts and the archaeological impact of the development is considered to be minimal.

5.3 Confidence Rating

The conditions for the evaluation were good and the work took place in dry and sunny weather conditions. A reasonable standard of co-operation was received from the contractors and a high-medium degree of confidence is attached to the results of the watching brief.

6. Acknowledgements

ASC would like to thank *Hertfordshire County Council* for commissioning this report. The writer is grateful to Hellen Stevens of *Mace Group* for her assistance. The project was monitored by Andy Instone of the *Hertfordshire Historic Environment Unit* on behalf of the local planning authority. Thanks are also due to all the builders involved.

The project was managed for ASC by Karin Semmelmann MA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Martin Cuthbert BA, Calli Rouse BA PIFA and Jonathan Hunn PhD MIFA. The report was prepared by Martin Cuthbert and edited by Karin Semmelmann BA MIFA and David Fell BA MA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Project Design
2. Initial Report
3. Clients site plans
4. Site Monitoring Sheets
5. Site record drawings
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 Ware Museum.

8. References

Standards & Specifications

- 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)*.
- Rouse, C. 2008 *Presdales School, Ware Hertfordshire: Project Design for a Watching Brief*
ASC Ref :1102/WPS/1

Secondary Sources

- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Frere, S.S 1985 'Roman Britain in 1984', *Britannia* **16**, 251-352
- Niblett, R 1995 *Roman Hertfordshire* Dovecote Press (Winborne),
- Page, W 1912 *The Victoria History of the County of Hertford* Unwin Brothers (London).
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).
- Williams, A and Martin G.H. 2003 *Domesday Book: A Complete Translation* Penguin Classics (London).

Appendix 1: Monitoring Visit Record Table

Date	Duration of Visit		Completed by:	Observations
	Start	Finish		
16/02/09	08:00	12:30	M.C	Removal of turf and topsoil in preparation for the construction of an access road and netball courts. Access Road stripped and stone laid down without supervision.
17/02/09	07:45	13:45	M.C	Continued levelling of the netball courts, subsoil reached at a depth of 150mm, natural soils were not reached. No archaeology observed
18/02/09	07:45	16:00	M.C	Continued levelling of the netball courts, subsoil reached at a depth of 150mm, natural soils were not reached. No archaeology observed
19/02/09	08:00	13:00	M.C	Continued levelling of the netball courts, subsoil reached at a depth of 150mm, natural soils were not reached. No archaeology observed
20/02/09	08:00	14:00	M.C	Continued levelling of the netball courts, subsoil reached at a depth of 150mm. After conversation with the project manager an agreement was reached that due to the shallow depth and lack of archaeology, monitoring would cease until the builders continued levelling at a greater depth. No archaeology observed
23/02/09	09:15	18:00	M.C	Continued levelling of the netball courts, a further 200mm of subsoil was removed from one particular area on site. Making the overall depth of excavation to 350mm, the natural soils were still not reached. No archaeology observed
24/02/09	09:10	13:00	JRH	Continued levelling of the netball courts, a further 200mm of subsoil was removed from one particular area on site. Making the overall depth of excavation to 350mm, the natural soils were still not reached. No archaeology observed
30/03/09	12:30	16:30	M.C	Footings for the sports hall were supposed to begin. After arrival the construction team decided to leave any excavation to the following day.
31/03/09	7:00	16:35	C.R	Footing trenches began on area of the sports centre. 900mm wide by 1m deep, made ground onto natural sand no archaeology viewed. 2 x soakaways excavated measuring 2.6m x 2.6m and 3m in depth. Old soakaway filled with rubble discovered. No other archaeology viewed
01/04/09	7:30	14:30	C.R	Footing trenches continued. No archaeology viewed.
02/04/09	10:45	2:45	C.R	Footing trenches continued possible wall discovered. No other archaeology viewed.

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Presdales School, Ware, Herts			SITE NO/CODE: 1102/WPS
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		√	Access route to netball courts already dug and stoned, looking south
2	√	√	Section through topsoil on the netball courts, looking east, 1m scale
3	√	√	Work in progress on the netball courts, looking west
4	√	√	Netball courts stripped area, looking west, 1m scale
5	√	√	Work in progress on the netball courts, looking south
6		√	Section showing reduced area on the netball courts, looking south, 1m scale
7		√	Netball courts at finished stage
8	√	√	Section showing reduced area on the netball courts, looking south, 1m scale
9	√	√	Close up of subsoil within netball courts, 1m scale
10	√	√	Work in progress on the netball courts, looking north
11	√	√	Work in progress on the netball courts, looking north
12	√	√	Sports centre trench, looking east 1m scale
13	√	√	Sports centre trench, looking east 1m scale
14	√	√	Sports centre trench, looking west
15	√	√	Soakaway number 2, no scale
16		√	Soakaway number 2, no scale
17	√	√	Soakaway number 2, no scale
18	√	√	Soakaway number 1 showing revealed brick soakaway in section
19		√	Soakaway number 1 showing revealed brick soakaway in section
20	√	√	Soakaway number 1 showing revealed brick soakaway in section, with scale
21	√	√	Soakaway number 1 showing revealed brick soakaway in section, with scale
22	√	√	Sports centre trench, looking south
23	√	√	Sports centre trench, looking west
24	√	√	Sports centre trench, looking north, 2m scale
25	√	√	Sports centre trench, looking south, 2m scale
26	√	√	Possible wall, looking east, 2 x 1m scales
27	√	√	Sports centre trench, looking north, 1m scale
28	√	√	Section showing possible dump, looking south, 2m scale
29	√	√	Section showing possible dump, looking south, 2m scale
30	√	√	Section showing possible dump, looking south, 2m scale

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Presdales School, Ware. Herts		
Short Description:	Between February and April 2009 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out a watching brief during the groundworks for a new sports centre and netball courts at Presdales School, Ware, Hertfordshire. No significant archaeological remains were discovered during the groundworks for the sports centre. Only a wall, soakaway and an area of dumping were revealed, and all are thought to be modern in date. No deposits or finds were revealed during the works for the netball courts.		
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	Watching Brief		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	None	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	None
Current land use:	School grounds	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	No
Monument type:	None	Monument period:	N/A
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 3584 1338
District:	East Herts	Parish:	Ware
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Presdales School, Hoe Lane, Ware, Hertfordshire, SG12 9NX		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	c. 15 ha	Height OD: (metres)	c.40m
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Andy Instone (pers com)	Project design originator:	Calli Rouse (ASC Ltd)
Project Manager:	Karin Semmelmann	Director/Supervisor:	Martin Cuthbert
Sponsor / funding body:	Hertfordshire County Council		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	16/02/09	End date:	02/04/09
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	N/A		
Paper:	Ware Museum	Site records, report, photographs	
Digital:	Ware Museum	CD-ROM with copies of all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Watching Brief: Presdales School, Ware. Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1102/WPS/2		
Author(s):	Martin Cuthbert BA		
Page nos	19	Date:	19/05/09