

# Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:  
REDBOURN YOUTH CENTRE  
THE COMMON  
REDBOURN  
HERTFORDSHIRE**

NGR: TL 1067 1207

*on behalf of Redbourn Youth Centre*



Carina Summerfield-Hill BA MSc

April 2009

ASC: 1151/RYC/2



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## Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	RYC	<i>ASC project no:</i>	1151
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	archaeol2-58442	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Redbourn		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Redbourn		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 1067 1207		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.1000 sq m		
<i>Present use:</i>	Youth Club		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Demolition of current building and construction of replacement		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	5/07/0565		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	St Albans District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	15/04/09 – 16/06/09		
<i>Commissioned by:</i>	Cannon, Morgan and Rheinberg 38 Holywell Hill St Albans Herts AL1 1BU		
<i>Client:</i>	Redbourn Youth Centre		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Geoffrey Cannon (Cannon, Morgan & Rheinberg)		

## Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Carina Summerfield-Hill	<i>Date:</i>	22/04/09
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

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

## Summary

*In April 2009 an evaluation was undertaken at the Redbourn Youth Centre in advance of redevelopment of the site. No archaeological features or deposits were identified, and it was not possible to complete excavation of all the proposed trenches, due to the presence of a large number of buried services.*

### 1. Introduction

1.1 In April 2009 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at Redbourn Youth Centre, The Common, Redbourn, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by *Cannon, Morgan & Rheinberg* on behalf of *Redbourn Youth Centre*, and has been defined in discussion with *St Albans District Council's* Archaeological Officer (AO) and in a project design prepared by ASC (Rouse 2009). The relevant planning application reference is 5/07/0565.

#### 1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation 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 Organisation* by the Institute for 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 site is located in the district of St Albans, in the parish and town of Redbourn, at NGR TL 1067 1207 (Fig. 1).

The site is roughly rectangular in shape, and is bordered to the north and east by Hemel Hempstead Road and The Park, respectively. There are houses to the south of the site, while a common forms the western border (Fig. 2). The area of the site covered by the current Youth Centre has been subjected to terracing, as has the area directly to the south of the building.



### 1.5.2 Geology & Topography

The site lies in the valley of the river Ver at an elevation of *c.*100m OD. Soils in the site area belong to the Charity 2 association, described as ‘Well drained flinty fine silty soils in valley bottoms’ (Soil Survey 1983, 571m). The underlying geology comprises Upper Chalk (BGS 1991, ktkc).

### 1.5.3 Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the demolition of the present building and the construction of a new Youth Centre (Fig. 3).

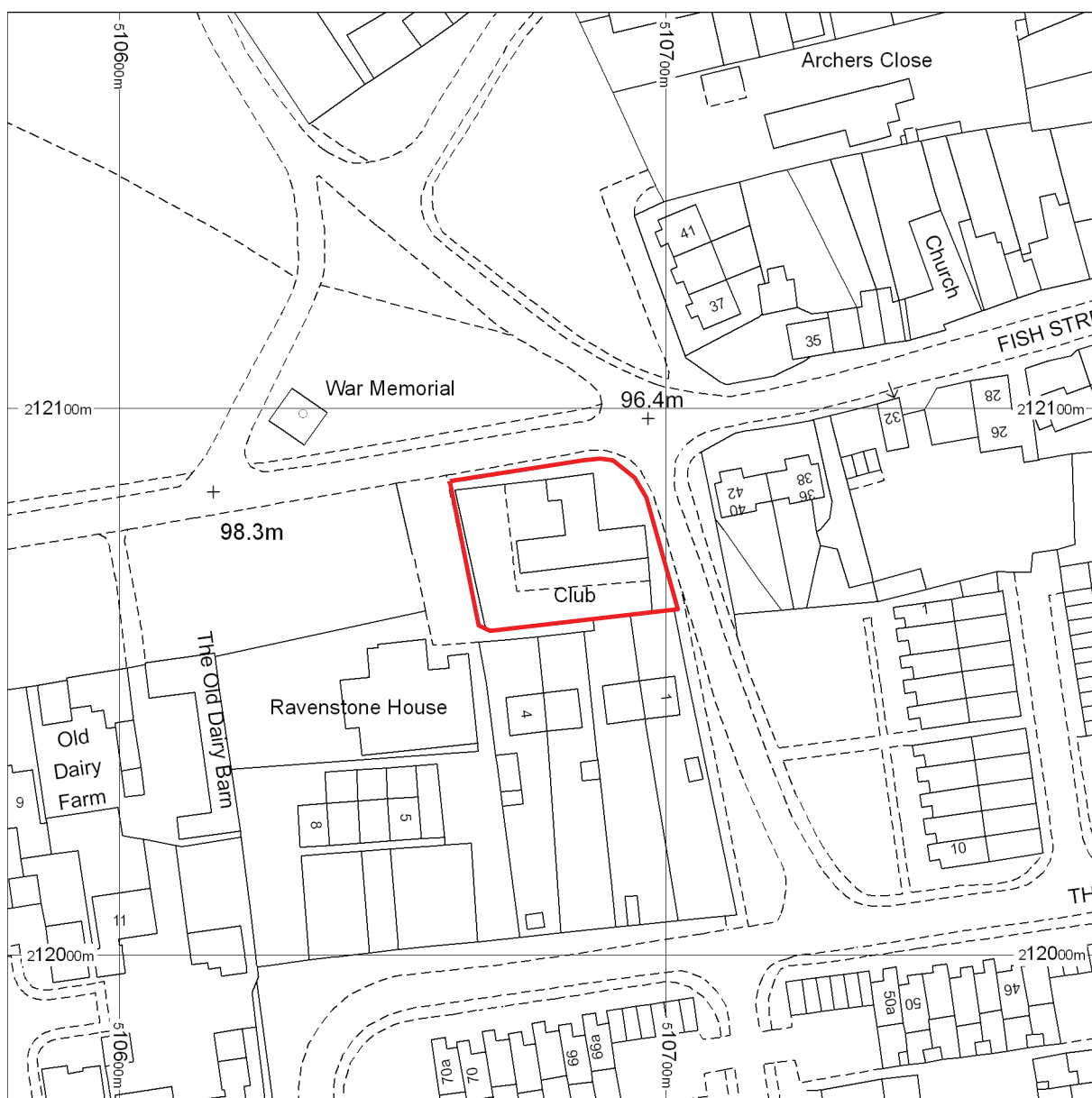


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)

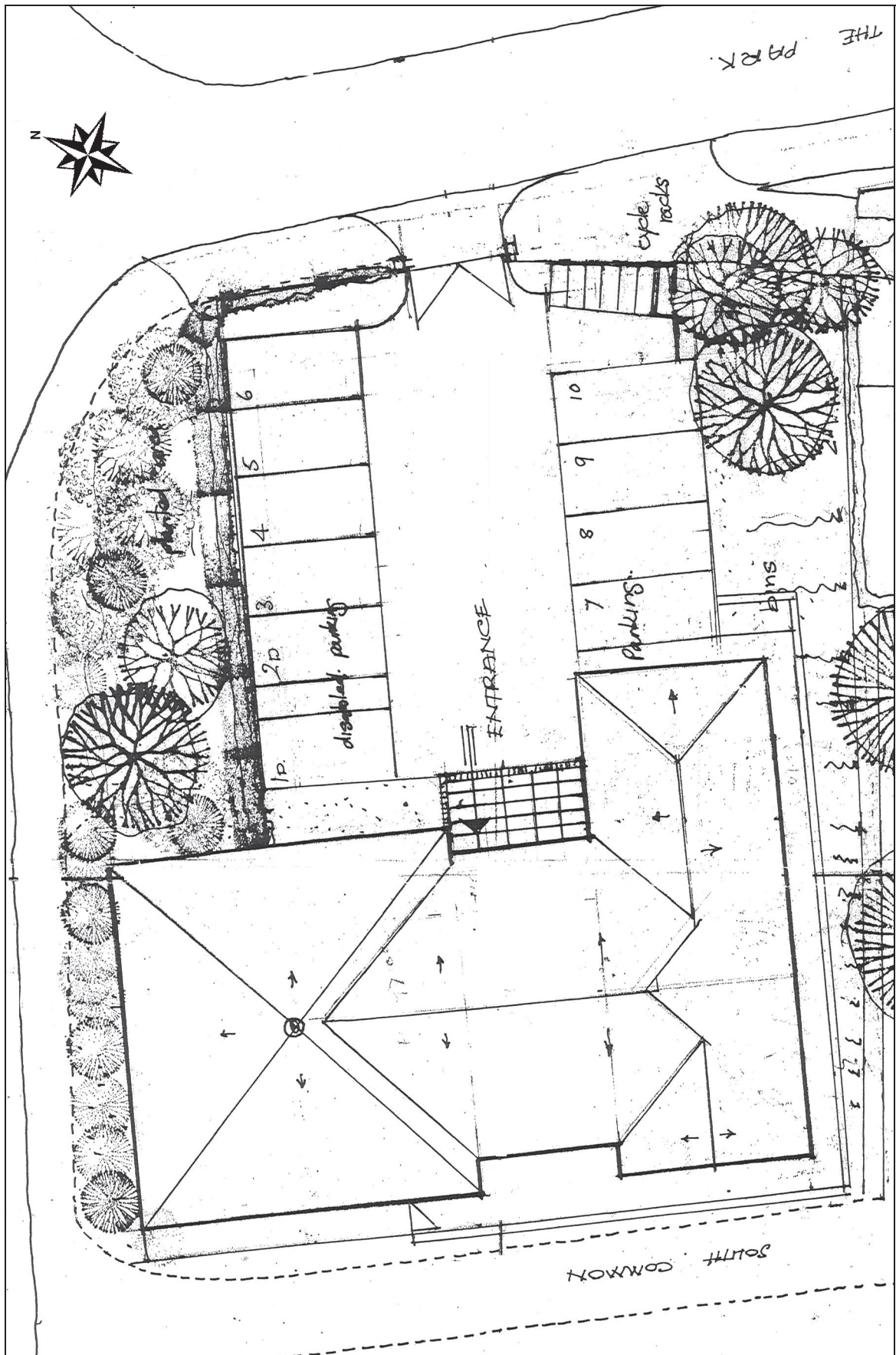


Figure 3: Proposed development (scale 1:200)

## 2. Aims & Methods

### 2.1 Aims

The aims of the evaluation were:

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

### 2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the project design, 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 methods agreed for this project were:

- c.40sq m of trial trenching located within the area of proposed development. Proposed trench locations are shown in Figure 4.

However due to major constraints (see below), only c.20sq m of trial trenching was carried out. Actual trench locations and services are shown in Figure 5.

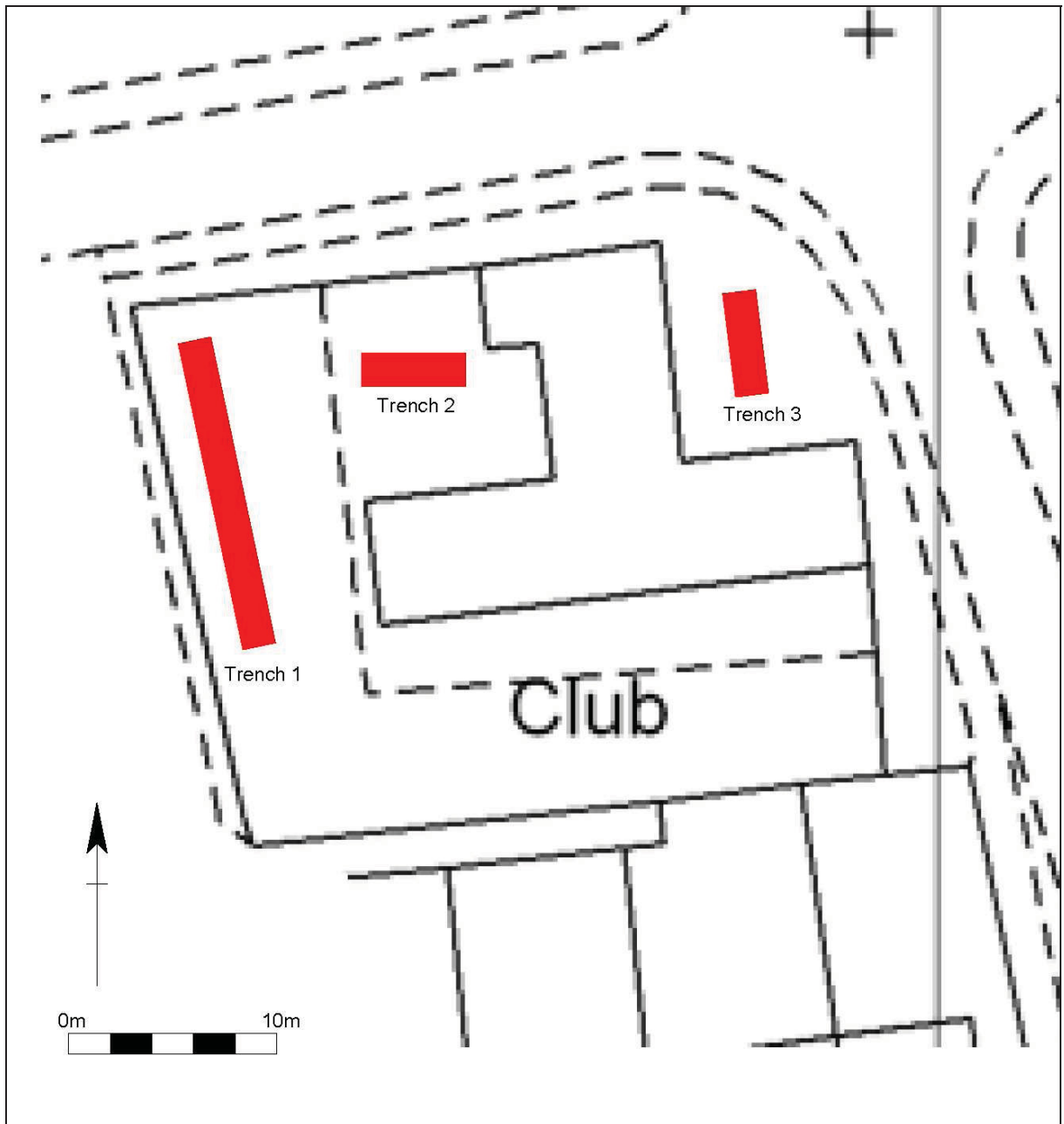
### 2.4 Constraints

During the evaluation, the proposed trench layout could not be followed, due to the high level of services present on the site. The project design stated that three trenches were to be excavated; Trench 1: 15m x 1.5m, Trench 2: 5m x 1.5m, and Trench 3: 5m x 1.5m (Fig. 4).

Trench 1 was started but due to a high level of services only 5m x 1.5m was excavated, to a depth of approximately 0.60m. To compensate for this, a new trench (Trench 4) was opened to the rear of the building. In the process, an electricity cable was severed. The trench then measured 3.30m x 1.5m, 0.85m depth.

Trench 3 was opened in accordance with the project design although a water pipe was hit, resulting in flooding of the trench. Upon consulting with the District Archaeological Officer, it was decided that due to the high level of services within the area, Trench 2 should be abandoned.





**Figure 4:** Proposed trench location plan (scale 1:300)

### 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 has the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods.

This section has been compiled with information from readily available sources, including Hertfordshire's Historic Environment Record (HER).

3.2 **Prehistoric** (before 600BC)

During an excavation of the Redbourn High Street medieval street frontage, a collection of Mesolithic flints was recovered c300m north of the Youth Centre. All the flints were found in contexts that contained later material, but were all in a 'fresh' condition, suggesting a single industry in the area in the later Mesolithic period (HER 6495).

3.3 **Iron Age** (600BC-AD43)

The Aubreys is a probable Iron Age hillfort, located c1.5km to the southwest of the development site. It has been suggested as the possible site of the main stronghold of British resistance during the Roman invasion in 54 BC, but no direct evidence has been found to confirm this theory (Niblett 1995).

3.4 **Roman** (AD43-c.450)

A small ditch containing Romano-British pottery and nails, and a cobbled area dating to the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD were uncovered c300m to the north of the site, during the aforementioned excavations on Redbourn High Street (HER 6496).

3.5 **Saxon** (c.450-1066)

A possible Anglo-Saxon cemetery is recorded c250m northwest of the development site. Two barrows were excavated by Benedictine monks in 1178, and were found to contain ten inhumations, some of which were accompanied by iron weapons, suggesting an Anglo-Saxon date for the burials.

3.6 **Medieval** (1066-1500)

In the Domesday Survey (1086) it is recorded that the manor of Redbourn was held by the abbey of St Albans prior to the Conquest (Williams & Martin 2003, 376). At this time it is likely that the parish was largely wooded, and that settlement was located in clearings in the woodland, represented today by a number of 'ends' within the parish (Munby 1977, 88-90). The principal settlement was probably originally focused on the parish church and the common, and only began to migrate to its present location on Watling Street in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, when St Albans Abbey enlarged its small chapel and grange at Redbourn to honour the newly discovered relics of the mythical St Amphibalus (*ibid*, 106). The chapel was allegedly located c250m to the northwest of the development site. The manor was held by the abbey until the Dissolution (1539).

### 3.7 **Post-Medieval - Modern** (1500-present)

By the 16<sup>th</sup> century, settlement at Redbourn on its present Watling Street focus was well established, only the distant church and the common providing an indication of its previous layout (*ibid*, 106). During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the status of Watling Street as a major communication route further encouraged development of Redbourn: timebills for 1797 show that coaches to Birmingham, Carlisle and Liverpool all stopped in Redbourn, and that over seventy coaches passed through the settlement every day (*ibid*, 202). The Extensive Urban Survey for Redbourn (Thompson 2002) details the sites of 19 inns of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>-century date, nearly all on the High Street (Watling Street).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Redbourn suffered a setback in its fortunes, following the opening of the London & Birmingham Railway in 1837. In 1842 it was noted that “Barnet, Redbourn, and other towns ...are mere shadows of the past” (Thompson 2002, 16). Consequently the town, which had almost doubled in size between 1801 and 1831, saw no further growth for the following century (*ibid*).

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century various small-scale industries grew up to provide employment in Redbourn. The making of straw plait, watercress growing, a silk mill, brewing and malting, and the manufacture of jam and brushes, all provided employment in the locality (*ibid*, 18). In 1877 Redbourn was linked to the railway system by the opening of the Harpenden to Hemel Hempstead branch of the Midland Railway, a single-track branch line constructed to the east and south of Redbourn, along a similar line to the modern bypass. The line of the railway still marks the extent of the settlement on that side.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 General

Three trenches were opened using a mechanical excavator with a 1.5m wide toothless ditching bucket. Due to the abundance of services within the area Trench 3 was the only trench to reveal overall stratigraphy of the site, comprising topsoil, made ground, and natural. No archaeological features or deposits were located, although two pieces of worked flint were found within the spoil from Trench 1.

Detailed information regarding the trial trenches and their contents appears in Appendix 1.

### 4.2 Trench 1 (Fig. 5: Plate 1)

Trench 1 was orientated on a northwest-southeast alignment, situated at the western end of the site. Initially the trench was to measure 15m in length by 1.5m in width, however, due to the high level of services present the trench was abandoned, recorded and backfilled. Thus Trench 1 measured 5m in length by 1.5m in width, and *c.*0.60m in depth. Stratigraphy consisted of *c.*0.20m of a dark black/brown, silty topsoil, overlying *c.*0.40m of mottled dark black/light orangey brown silty clay made ground. The natural geology was not encountered. Two pieces of worked flint were recovered from the spoil tip these were not retained.

### 4.3 Trench 3 (Figs. 5 and 6: Plate 2)

Trench 3 was orientated on a north-south alignment, situated at the eastern end of the site. It was 5m long by 1.50m wide, and 1.05m maximum in depth. The stratigraphy was the same as Trenches 1, with *c.*0.20m topsoil, and 0.85m of made ground. The natural geology was light brown orange clay, with frequent medium flint nodules, and small/medium sub-rounded/angular stone inclusions. Whilst mechanically excavating the trench a water pipe was hit, flooding the trench. Upon repairing the water pipe the trench was recorded and backfilled.

### 4.4 Trench 4 (Figs. 5 and 6: Plate 3)

Trench 4 was orientated on an east-west alignment, situated at the southern end of the site. This trench was excavated to compensate for the reduced size of Trench 1. It was 3.30m long by 1.50m wide, and 0.85 in depth. The stratigraphy revealed was the same as Trench 1 and 3 with *c.*0.20m of topsoil, overlaying *c.*0.65m of made ground, whilst the natural geology was not reached. Due to the severing of an electricity cable, the trench was abandoned and was backfilled, following repair work and recording.





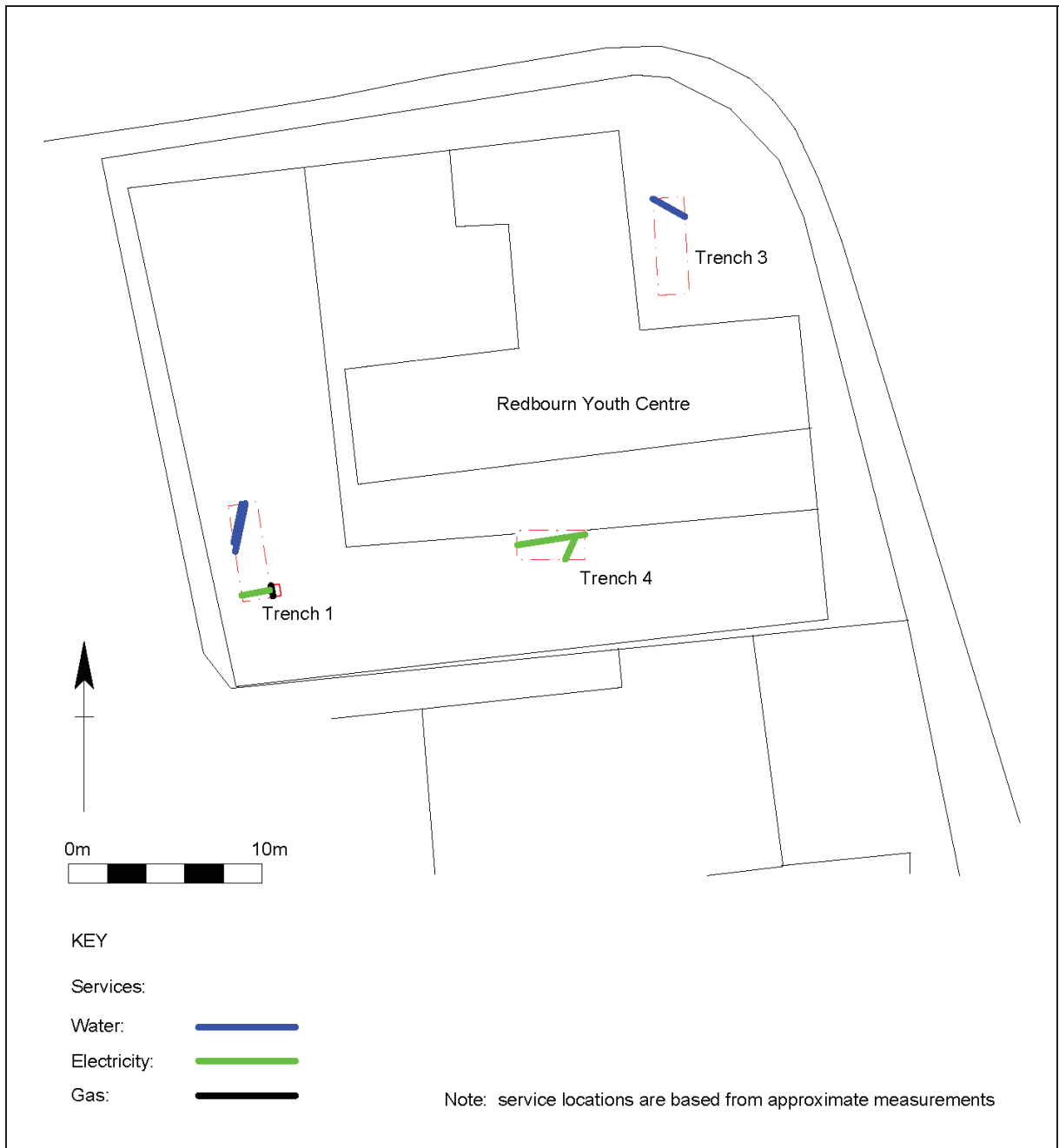
**Plate 1:** Trench 1 highlighting the high level of services within the area



**Plate 2:** Trench 3 depicting the topsoil, made ground and natural geology of the site, and services

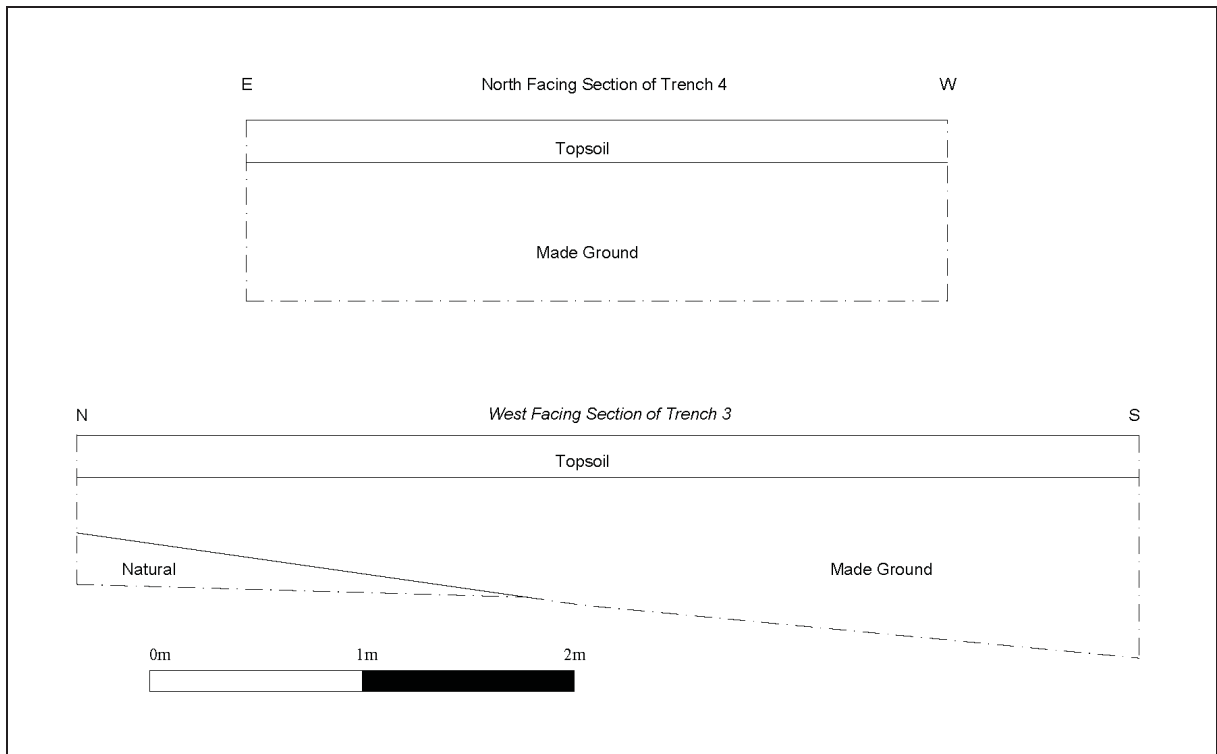


**Plate 3:** Trench 4 depicting the topsoil and made ground stratigraphy, and services



**Figure 5:** Actual trench locations and approximate service locations *(scale as shown)*





**Figure 6:** Sections of Trenches 4 and 3 (*scale 1:25*)

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 Significant archaeological features were not observed in the trench excavations, indicating that the development area is probably beyond the medieval settlement activity on The Common, which is situated opposite the Youth Centre (see historical background section 3.6).
- 5.2 Although archaeological features were not observed two pieces of worked flint were recovered from unstratified spoil in Trench 1. Further worked flint has been found along the High Street *c.*300m north of the Youth Centre.
- 5.3 The site has been severely disturbed by services and the building of the Youth Centre. Whilst the existence of individual isolated archaeological features away from the trenches cannot be specifically excluded, it is unlikely that large numbers of archaeological features were present on the site. It is unlikely that the proposed development will have a significant impact on archaeological remains.

## 6. Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by *Cannon, Morgan & Rheinberg* on behalf of *Redbourn Youth Centre*. The writer is grateful to Geoffrey Cannon for his assistance. The project was monitored by the *St Albans District Council* Archaeological Officer, Simon West, on behalf of the local planning authority. Thanks are also due to Nigel Herbert for undertaking the machining.

The project was managed for ASC by Karin Semmelman MA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by David Kaye BA AIFA and Carina Summerfield-Hill BA MSc. The report was prepared by Carina Summerfield-Hill BA MSc and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

## 7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Project Design
2. Initial Report
3. Clients site plans
4. Site records
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 *Verulamium 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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. English Heritage (London).
- IFA 2000a Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2001 Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.
- Rouse, C 2009 *Redbourn Youth Centre, the Common, Redbourn, Herts: Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation*. ASC doc. ref. 1151/RYC/1.


### *Secondary Sources*


- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Munby L 1977 *The Hertfordshire Landscape*. Hodder & Staughton (London).
- Niblett, R 1995 *Roman Hertfordshire* Dovecote Press
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).
- Thompson I 2002 *Redbourn: Extensive Urban Survey Project Assessment Report*. Herts County Council.
- Williams A & Martin GH (eds) 2002 *Domesday Book: a Complete Translation*. Penguin (London).



## Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

<b>Trench 1</b>						
	<b>Max Dimensions (m)</b>					
	<b>Length</b>	5	<b>Width</b>	1.50	<b>Depth</b>	c. 0.60
	<b>Levels</b>					
	<b>Trench base north</b>					
	<b>Trench top north</b>					
	<b>Trench base south</b>					
	<b>Trench top south</b>					
	<b>NGR Co-ordinates</b>					
	**				**	
	<b>Orientation</b>			Northwest-Southeast		
<b>Reason for Trench</b>			Evaluation			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description and Interpretation</b>		<b>Width (max: m)</b>	<b>Length (max: m)</b>	<b>Depth (BGL: m)</b>
1001	Topsoil	Dark black/brown, loose, silty		1.50	5	0.20
1002	Made ground	Mottled dark black/light orangey brown, silty clay, soft/malleable, frequent medium sub-rounded/angular stones/flint		1.50	5	0.40

<b>Trench 3</b>						
	<b>Max Dimensions (m)</b>					
	<b>Length</b>	5	<b>Width</b>	1.50	<b>Depth</b>	1.05
	<b>Levels</b>					
	<b>Trench base north</b>		95.60m OD			
	<b>Trench top north</b>		96.43m OD			
	<b>Trench base south</b>		95.43m OD			
	<b>Trench top south</b>		96.41m OD			
	<b>NGR Co-ordinates</b>					
	**		**			
	<b>Orientation</b>		North-South			
<b>Reason for Trench</b>		Evaluation				
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description and Interpretation</b>	<b>Width (max: m)</b>	<b>Length (max: m)</b>	<b>Depth (BGL: m)</b>	
3001	Topsoil	Dark black/brown, loose, silty	1.50	5	0.20	
3002	Made Ground	Mottled dark black/light orangey brown, silty clay, soft/malleable, frequent medium sub-rounded/angular stones/flint	1.50	5	0.85	
3003	Natural	Light brown orange clay, frequent flint nodules, and small/medium sub-rounded/angular stone inclusions	1.50	5		

<b>Trench 4</b>					
	<b>Max Dimensions (m)</b>				
	<b>Width</b>	1.50	<b>Length</b>	3.30	
	<b>Depth</b>	0.85	<b>Level (top)</b>		
	<b>NGR Coordinates</b>				
	<b>Orientation:</b>		East-West		
<b>Reason for Trench:</b>		Evaluation			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description and Interpretation</b>	<b>Width (max: m)</b>	<b>Length (max: m)</b>	<b>Depth (BGL: m)</b>
4001	Topsoil	Dark black/brown, loose, silty	1.50	3.30	0.20
4002	Made ground	Mottled dark black/light orangey brown, silty clay, soft/malleable, frequent medium sub-rounded/angular stones/flint	1.50	3.30	0.65

## Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Redbourn Youth Centre			SITE NO/CODE: 1151/RYC
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		√	North looking shot of Trench 1
2		√	North looking shot of Trench 1
3		√	North facing section of Trench 4
4		√	North facing section of Trench 4
5		√	North looking shot of Trench 3
6		√	North looking shot of Trench 3
7		√	South looking shot of overall site
8		√	South looking shot of overall site
9		√	East looking shot of overall site
10		√	East looking shot of Trench 4 backfilled
11		√	South looking shot of Trench 4 backfilled
12		√	West looking shot of Trench 4 backfilled
13		√	East looking shot of Trench 4 backfilled

## Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Redbourn Youth Centre		
Short Description:	In April 2009 an evaluation was undertaken at the Redbourn Youth Centre in advance of redevelopment of the site. No archaeological features or deposits were identified, and it was not possible to complete excavation of all the proposed trenches, due to the presence of a large number of buried services.		
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	Evaluation		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	None	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	None
Current land use:	Youth Centre	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	No
Monument type:	N/a	Monument period:	N/a
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 1067 1207
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Redbourn Youth Centre, Hemel Hempstead Road, Redbourn, Hertfordshire		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	c.1000 sqm	Height OD: (metres)	96.4m
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	St Albans District Council	Project design originator:	Calli Rouse BA PIFA
Project Manager:	Karin Semmelmann MA MIFA	Director/Supervisor:	David Kaye BA AIFA
Sponsor / funding body:	Redbourn Parish Council		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	15/04/09	End date:	16/04/09
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Verulamium Museum.	None	
Paper:		Site plans, site records, site record drawings	
Digital:		CD containing digital images, list of photographs, B/W prints & negatives, project design, report	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Redbourn Youth Centre, The Common, Redbourn, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1151/RYC/2		
Author(s):	Carina Summerfield-Hill BA MSc		
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