

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
MANDEVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL
ST ALBANS
HERTFORDSHIRE**

NGR: TL 1470 7550

on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council



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April 2010

ASC: 1272/SMS/2



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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	SMS	<i>ASC project no:</i>	1272
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	Archaeol2-72979	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	St Albans		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	St Albans		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 1470 7550		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.0.25 ha		
<i>Present use:</i>	School classrooms and playing field		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Partial demolition and construction of a classroom block		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	Unknown		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	St Albans		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	April 2010		
<i>Client:</i>	Hertfordshire Properties Hertfordshire County Council County Hall Hertford SG13 8DN		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Jacqueline Nixon		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	David Fell	<i>Date:</i>	15 th April 2010
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>	Bob Zeepvat	<i>Date:</i>	15 th April 2010

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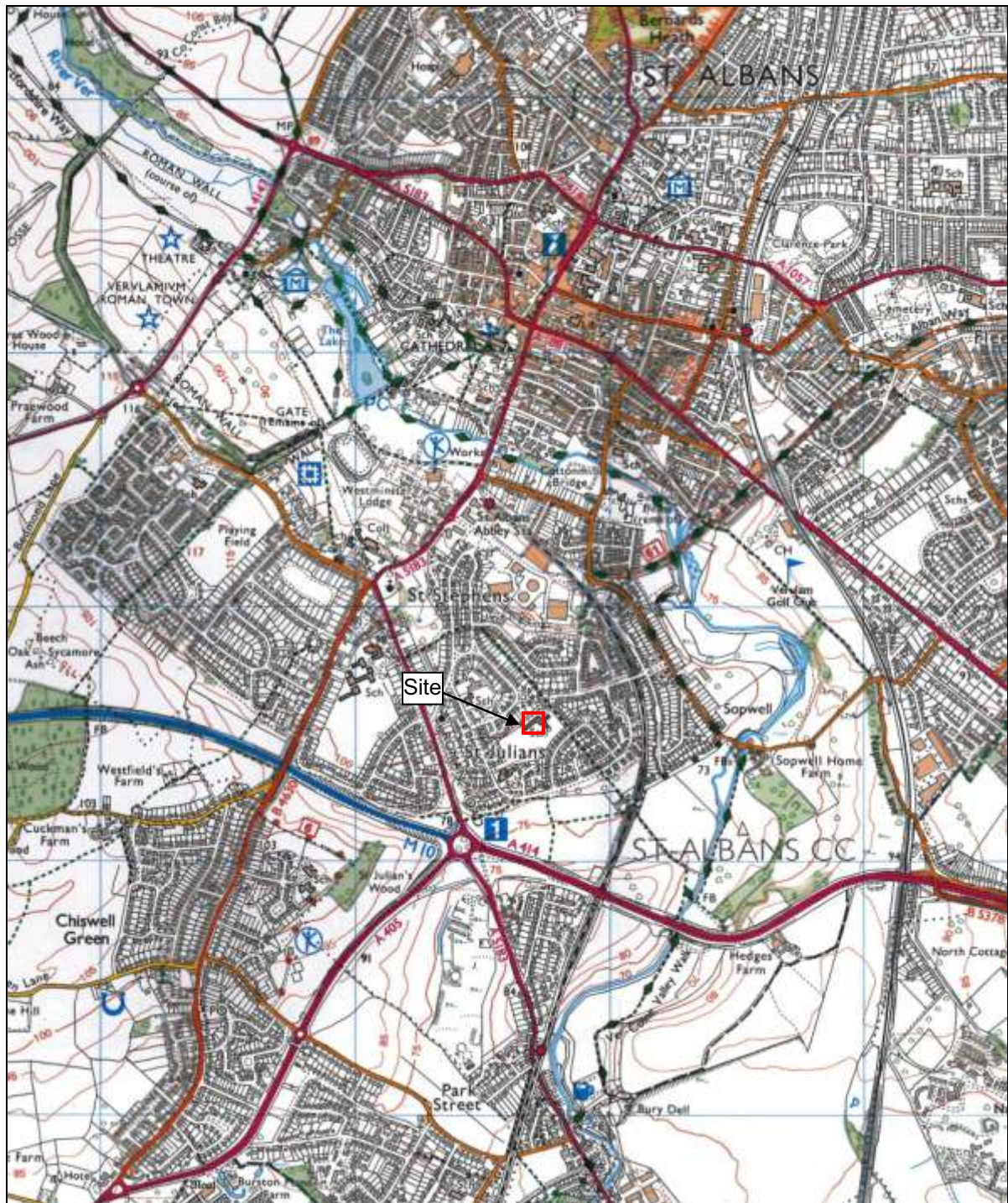


Figure 1: General location (Scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In April 2010 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd undertook an archaeological evaluation at Mandeville School, St Albans, Hertfordshire, in advance of the construction of a new classroom. The site was situated in an area that had the potential to damage or destroy significant archaeological remains. Three evaluation trenches were excavated but no significant archaeological features or artefacts were present. It is unlikely that the development will have a significant impact on archaeological remains and the archaeological impact of the development is considered to be low.

1. Introduction

1.1 In April 2010 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at Mandeville Primary School, St Albans, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by *Hertfordshire County Council* (HCC), following completion of a desk-based assessment (Rouse 2009) and was required by HCC acting on the advice of their archaeological advisor, the *Historic Environment Office* of HCC and following completion of a written scheme of investigation prepared by ASC (Summerfield-Hill 2009).

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*

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 and is also accredited ISO 9001, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

1.4 *The Site*

1.4.1 *Location and Description*

The site is situated in St Albans, Hertfordshire (Fig. 1). It lies to the south of the historic core of the city, to the southwest of Mandeville Drive and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference TL 1470 7550 (Fig. 2).

The proposed new building and associated landscaping (below, section 1.4.3) will largely be developed in the playing fields to the southwest of the school buildings (Plate 1). The area is laid out to grass and a number of trees are present.

1.4.2 *Geology and Topography*

The site is within an urban area and the natural soils have not been mapped. It is likely that they comprise the *Marlow Association*, namely well drained fine loamy soils, over plateau and river terrace drift (Soil Survey 1983, 581e). The underlying geology comprises Pleistocene Gravel over Upper Chalk (BGS, sheet 239). The site is flat and lies at an elevation of c.85m OD.

1.4.3 *Proposed Development*

The proposed development comprises the partial demolition of one of the blocks, replacement with a new building extending to the southwest, and associated landscaping (Fig. 3).

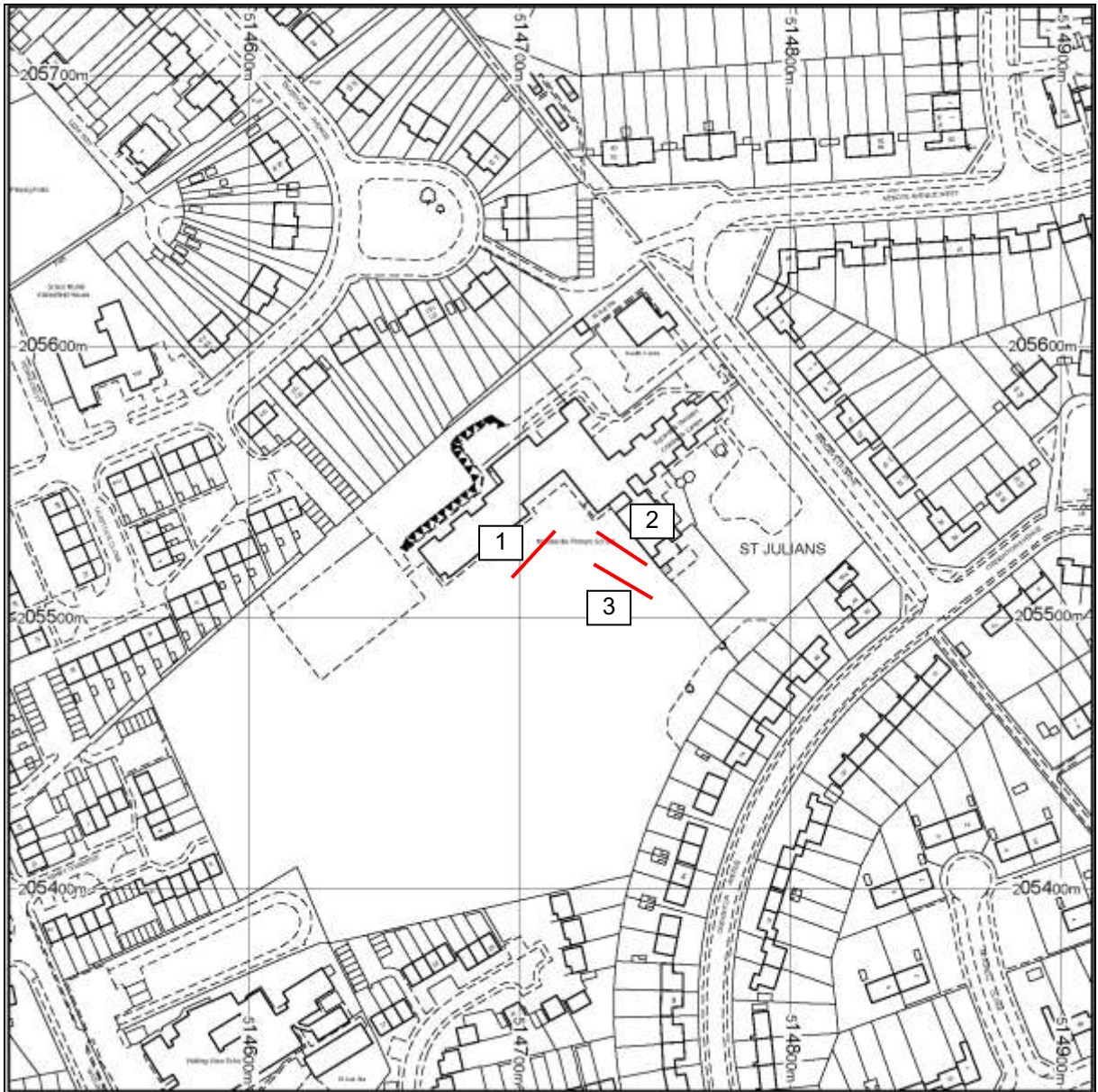


Figure 2: Site plan showing trench locations (Scale 1: 2,500)



Figure 3: Plan of the site with area of proposed new build outlined in red (not to scale)

2. Aims and Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the written scheme of investigation (Section 3.1), the aim of the evaluation was:

- to determine the location, extent, date, nature, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the written scheme of investigation, 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 written scheme of investigation (Section 3.3), which required:

- Three trial trenches to be excavated across the footprint of the proposed building and within the area of proposed landscaping (Fig. 2).
- The trenches were excavated by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless blade with a minimum width of 1.2m under continuous archaeological supervision

2.4 Constraints

2.4.1 Due to the need to minimise disturbance to the school playing field it was not possible to use a JCB. The trenches were opened with a mini-excavator fitted with a 1.2m wide bucket. The trench dimensions stated in the written scheme of investigation (section 3.3) assumed a minimum width of 1.6m and the trenches were extended, in order to maintain the size of the excavated sample.

2.4.2 No benchmarks or spot heights are present in the area and it was not possible to obtain heights above Ordnance Datum for the trenches.

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

HER = Historic Environment Record number

- 3.1 The following section provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs, based on the results of the desk-based assessment (Rouse 2009). St Albans is an area of considerable archaeological and historical interest (Niblett & Thompson 2005) and the site had the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods.
- 3.2 No archaeological remains are currently known from the development site but the school playing field comprises a significant area of open land in an otherwise urban environment and was considered to offer good potential for the discovery of sites and artefacts of the prehistoric and Roman periods. A number of artefacts have been recorded in the St Julians area (Rouse 2009, fig. 3) and the valley of the river Ver has been a focus of settlement since the late prehistoric period (Niblett & Thompson 2005, 16-40).
- 3.3 During the Roman period a major Roman city, the *civitas* capital of *Verulamium*, developed in the river valley (*ibid*, 41-165). The Roman city was situated the north of the development site but a number of smaller late Iron Age and Roman settlements are known from the plateau, either side of river valley (Niblett 2001, fig. 17).
- 3.4 During the Saxon and medieval periods the focus of settlement shifted to the north of the Roman city and the abbey was constructed on Holywell Hill (Niblett & Thompson 2005, 178-304). The development site is situated beyond the area of medieval settlement but the leper hospital of St Julian was constructed during the 12th century *c.*0.5km west of the development site (HER 2026).
- 3.5 The development site is shown on the St Stephens parish tithe map (1838), where it is depicted as open land. The 1898, 1924 and 1937 edition Ordnance Survey maps show that it remained undeveloped and the area was laid out as playing fields when Mandeville Primary School was constructed during the late 20th century.

4 Results and Conclusions

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section provides a summary of the results of the evaluation. Full descriptions, in tabulated form, are provided in Appendix 1.
- 4.1.2 Three trenches were excavated (Fig. 2) using a mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.2m wide toothless ditching bucket. Following excavation each trench was cleaned sufficiently to determine if archaeological remains were present. Basic trench information was recorded on pro-forma sheets and a photographic record was made.

4.2 Results (Plates 1 and 2)

- 4.2.1 No archaeological features or artefacts were present in the trenches.
- 4.2.2 The sequence of soil layers was similar in all three trenches. The upper layer comprised turf and topsoil (100, 200, 300) which was *c.*100mm thick. The underlying subsoil (101, 201, 301) was *c.*250mm thick and comprised mid greyish brown sandy silt with large numbers of rounded stones. The subsoil in Trench 1 contained a small quantity of modern debris, indicating that the area had been disturbed, perhaps during the construction of the adjacent classroom during the 1960s/70s. The subsoil in the remaining trenches did not contain any manmade material and the remaining areas are probably undisturbed. The natural strata (102, 202, 302) comprised orange brown sand and gravel and was present at a depth of *c.*350mm.

4.3 Conclusions

- 4.3.1 Three archaeological trial trenches were excavated across the development site, targeting the footprint of the new building and area of landscaping, but no significant archaeological features or artefacts were present in the trenches.
- 4.3.2 The development site is in the St Julians area of St Albans and is to the south of the historic core of the city (Rouse 2009, section 3.2; Niblett & Thompson 2005, fig. 1.3). Prehistoric and Roman remains were not present and study of 19th and early 20th maps for the desk-based assessment (Rouse 2009, figs. 4-7) shows that the site has comprised open ground since at least the early 19th century. It is likely that the area has never been subject to large scale occupation and the development of the school and surrounding housing estate during the mid 20th century is probably the first time that the area has been subject to development.
- 4.3.3 Significant archaeological features were not revealed during the evaluation. While the existence of individual isolated archaeological features away from the trenches cannot be specifically excluded, it is unlikely that large numbers of archaeological features are present on the site. It is unlikely that the proposed development will have a significant impact on archaeological remains and the archaeological impact of the development is likely to be low.

4.4 Confidence Rating

The work was undertaken in dry, warm and sunny weather conditions and full co-operation was received from the client and machining contractor. Accordingly, a high confidence rating is attached to the results of the evaluation.



Plate 1: General view of the site looking southwest. Trench 1 in the background



Plate 2: General view of Trench 2 looking southeast

5. Acknowledgements

ASC Ltd is grateful to Ms Jacqueline Nixon for commissioning the evaluation on behalf of *Hertfordshire County Council*. The assistance of the staff of the principal site contractor, *Willmott Dixon* is also gratefully acknowledged. Mr Andy Instone of the *Historic Environment Unit* of *Hertfordshire County Council* acted as curatorial monitor.

The project was managed for *ASC Ltd* by Karin Semmelmann BA MA MIFA. The fieldwork was led by David Fell BA MA MIFA assisted by Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA. The report was prepared by David Fell and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

6. Archive

6.1 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.

6.2 The archive will be deposited with *St Albans Museum*: Accession number pending.

7. 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 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)*.
- Summerfield-Hill C, 2010 *Mandeville Primary School, St Albans, Hertfordshire. Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation*. Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd document no. 1272/SMS/1

Secondary Sources

- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Niblett R, 2001 *Verulamium. The Roman City of St Albans*. Tempus
- Niblett R & Thompson I, 2005 *Alban's Buried Towns. An Assessment of St Alban's Archaeology up to AD 1600*. Oxbow Books
- Rouse C, 2009 *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment: Mandeville School, Mandeville Drive, St Albans, Hertfordshire*. Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd report no. 1223/SMS
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend*

Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	19m	Width	1.2m	Depth	0.35m
	Levels					
	Trench top	n/a				
	Trench base	n/a				
	Trench top	n/a				
	Trench base	n/a				
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	SW	TL 14696 05519	NE	TL 14727 05531		
	Orientation		NE - SW			
Reason for Trench		Evaluation of area of proposed landscaping				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
100	Layer	Turf comprising mid grey brown silty clay. Turf & topsoil.	-	100	0	
101	Layer	30% mid grey brown sandy silt & 70% rounded stones. Occasional frags. of modern debris. Subsoil.	-	250	100	
102	Layer	Compacted orange brown sand and gravel. Natural gravel strata.	-	-	350	

Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	23m	Width	1.2m	Depth	0.35m
	Levels					
	Trench top	n/a				
	Trench base	n/a				
	Trench top	n/a				
	Trench base	n/a				
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NW	TL 14728 05533	SE	TL 14746 05518		
	Orientation		NW - SE			
Reason for Trench		Evaluation of area of proposed new building				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
200	Layer	Turf comprising mid grey brown silty clay. Turf & topsoil.	-	100	0	
201	Layer	30% mid grey brown sandy silt & 70% rounded stones. Subsoil.	-	250	100	
202	Layer	Compacted orange brown sand and gravel. Natural gravel strata.	-	-	350	

Trench 3							
Colour photograph not available. Refer to 35mm black & white photograph in project archive		Max Dimensions (m)					
		Length	25m	Width	1.2m	Depth	0.35m
		Trench top		n/a			
		Trench base		n/a			
		Trench top		n/a			
		Trench base		n/a			
		NGR Co-ordinates					
		NW	TL 14726 05521		SE	TL 14749 05505	
Orientation:			NW - SE				
Reason for Trench:		Evaluation of area of proposed new building					
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)		
300	Layer	Turf comprising mid grey brown silty clay. Turf & topsoil.	-	100	0		
301	Layer	30% mid grey brown sandy silt & 70% rounded stones. Subsoil.	-	250	100		
302	Layer	Compacted orange brown sand and gravel. Natural gravel strata.	-	-	350		

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Mandeville School, St Albans			SITE NO/CODE: 1272/SMS
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	✓	✓	Trench 1, looking southwest
2	✓	✓	Trench 2, looking southeast
3		✓	General view of the site
4		✓	General view of the site
5		✓	General view of the site
6		✓	General view of the site
7		✓	General view of the site
8	✓		Trench 3, looking southeast

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Mandeville School, St Albans	OASIS reference:	Archaeol2-72979
Short Description:	In April 2010 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd undertook an archaeological evaluation at Mandeville School, St Albans, Hertfordshire, in advance of the construction of a new classroom. The site was situated in an area that had the potential to damage or destroy significant archaeological remains. Three evaluation trenches were excavated but no significant archaeological features or artefacts were present. It is unlikely that the development will have a significant impact on archaeological remains and the archaeological impact of the development is considered to be low.		
Project Type:	Evaluation (trial trenching)		
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	none	Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	none
Current land use:	School classroom & playing field	Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	unknown
Monument type:	none	Monument period:	none
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 1470 7550
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	Mandeville Drive, St Albans, AL1 2LE		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	c.0.25ha	Height OD: (metres)	
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	n/a	Project design originator:	Carina Summerfield-Hill
Project Manager:	Karin Semmelmann	Director/Supervisor:	David Fell
Sponsor / funding body:	Hertfordshire County Council		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	12 April 2010	End date:	12 April 2010
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	n/a	None	
Paper:	St Albans Museum	Project design, report, client plans, etc.	
Digital:	St Albans Museum	CD with all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Archaeological Evaluation: Mandeville Primary School, St Albans, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1272/SMS/2		
Author(s):	David Fell BA MA MIFA		
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