



Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
THE PINES SCHOOL
HAMELS DRIVE
HERTFORD**

*on behalf of Hertfordshire Property,
Hertfordshire County Council*



Nicholas A Crank BSc AIFA

December 2004

ASC: 628/HPS/02

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 site code:</i>	HPS	<i>Project no:</i>	625
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>District:</i>	East Herts		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Hertford		
<i>Parish:</i>	Hertford CP		
<i>NGR:</i>	TL 3453 1318		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.4900 sq m		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Former School		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	Pre-planning		
<i>Client:</i>	Hertfordshire Property Hertfordshire County Council County Hall Hertford SG8 8DQ		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Ruth Gray (Vincent and Gorbing)		
<i>Telephone</i>	01438 316331	<i>Fax:</i>	01438 722035

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Nicholas A Crank	<i>Date:</i>	1 st December 2004
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	1 st December 2004
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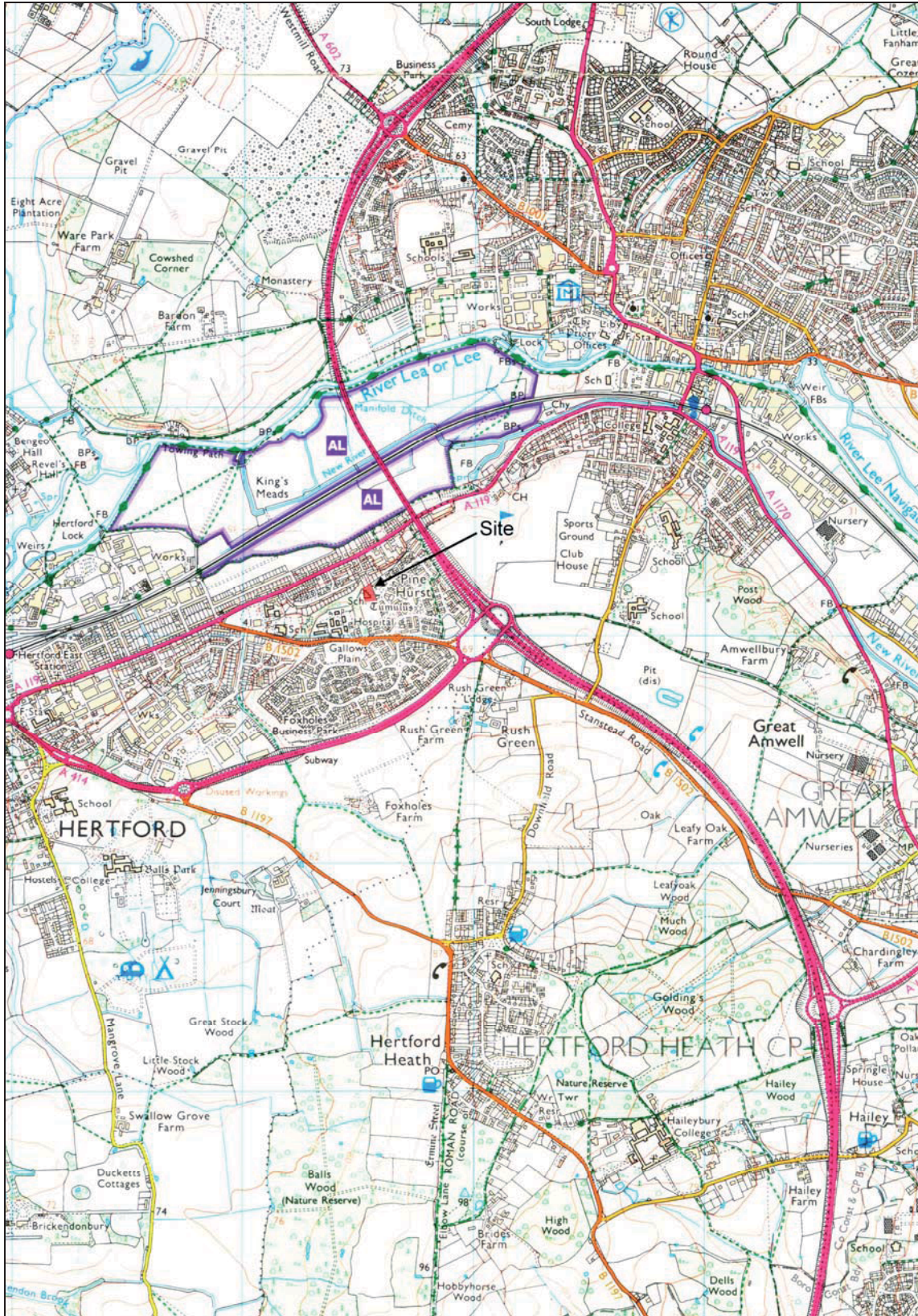


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

During November 2004 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on a site at the Former Pines School, Hamels Drive, Hertford, Hertfordshire. The work was undertaken in advance of proposed redevelopment of the site and was preceded by a desk-based assessment.

A total of five trenches were excavated. Trenches 4 and 5 revealed undated made ground within an area of probable post-medieval quarrying activity. Trenches 1, 2a and 3 revealed truncation and levelling probably relating to the construction of the school within the latter half of the 20th century. In conclusion it is considered unlikely that significant quantities of archaeological remains are present on the site.

1 Introduction

1.1 During November 2003 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an archaeological trial-trench evaluation on a site at the former Pines School, Hamels Drive, Hertford (NGR TL 3453 1318; Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Vincent and Gorbing Ltd on behalf of the clients Hertfordshire Property, and was carried out according to a brief (dated 05/10/04) prepared by Hertfordshire County Council, County Archaeological Office (CAO), and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ASC (Griffiths & Crank 2004).

1.2 *Reason for Work*

The evaluation has been required by the CAO at the pre-planning stage in order to provide further information regarding the possible impact of any future development on the historic environment.

1.3 *Setting*

1.3.1 The site, the former Pines Nursery School, Hertford is bounded by the East Herts Hospital to the west, Stanstead Road to the south and Hamels Drive to the east (Fig. 1). The buildings of the former Pines School are at the north end of the site, with playing fields to the south, both of which are bound by a fairly dense strip of woodland to the west.

1.3.2 The soils of the area have not been mapped, but probably belong to the Ludford association (Soil Survey 1983 571x). These are described as ‘deep, well drained fine loamy, coarse loamy and sandy soils, locally flinty in places over gravel. Slight risk of water erosion’. The site lies approximately at 70m OD and slopes down to the north towards the Lea Valley.

1.3.3 Access to the site is gained from Divot Place to the east. The site is occupied by the single storey brick former school building. A tarmac driveway leads from Divot Place to a parking area on the north side of the school and a large tarmac playground on the south side. A small area adjacent to the north west of the school is inaccessible as it is surrounded by substantial hedges. A steep

slope leads down to the area to the west of the school which is laid to grass as is the rest of the site. Service locations are not known.

- 1.3.4 A desk-based assessment (Bourn 2004) found that there are no archaeological remains recorded in the Hertfordshire HER on the site and a paucity of remains within a 500m radius of the site. However, it did suggest that there is a further potential for discovery of Prehistoric and Roman remains in the area. The findings of the desk-based assessment are detailed below:

The earliest archaeological evidence is a scatter of Mesolithic artefacts discovered during the Foxholes Farm excavation to the south and east of the site.

It is suggested that the site has a medium potential for Neolithic activity. This was largely based on a series of pits found during the Foxholes Farm excavation and interpreted as indicative of Neolithic settlement and associated ritual behaviour.

The presence of a nearby early Bronze Age barrow, c.150m to the east, along with the Neolithic possible ritual shaft pits leads to the suggestion that the area may be part of a ritual/funerary complex. Excavations at Foxholes Farm revealed the remains of an organised late Bronze Age settlement. These remains together with another possible late Bronze Age occupation site, found during the construction of the A10 Ware By-Pass, are thought to be part of a larger settlement complex representing potentially widespread occupation on top of the chalk scarp overlooking the Lea.

Iron Age settlement activity has also been recorded in the area again leading to the conclusion that that the site may contain evidence of prehistoric activity or occupation.

Roman activity has been recorded in the area. The site lies c. 400m to the west of the Roman road known as Ermine Street, also a 2nd century coin was found c.400m to the west of the site.

No Saxon or medieval finds have been found within a 500m radius of the site.

1.3.5 *Nature of proposed development*

Hertfordshire County Council is looking to provide further information before an application is submitted for the site or the site is marketed. The information provided should enable a decision to be made on any future application with regard to its impact on the historic environment and, therefore, the necessary mitigation measures required. A proposed layout for the development of the site is presented (Fig. 3).

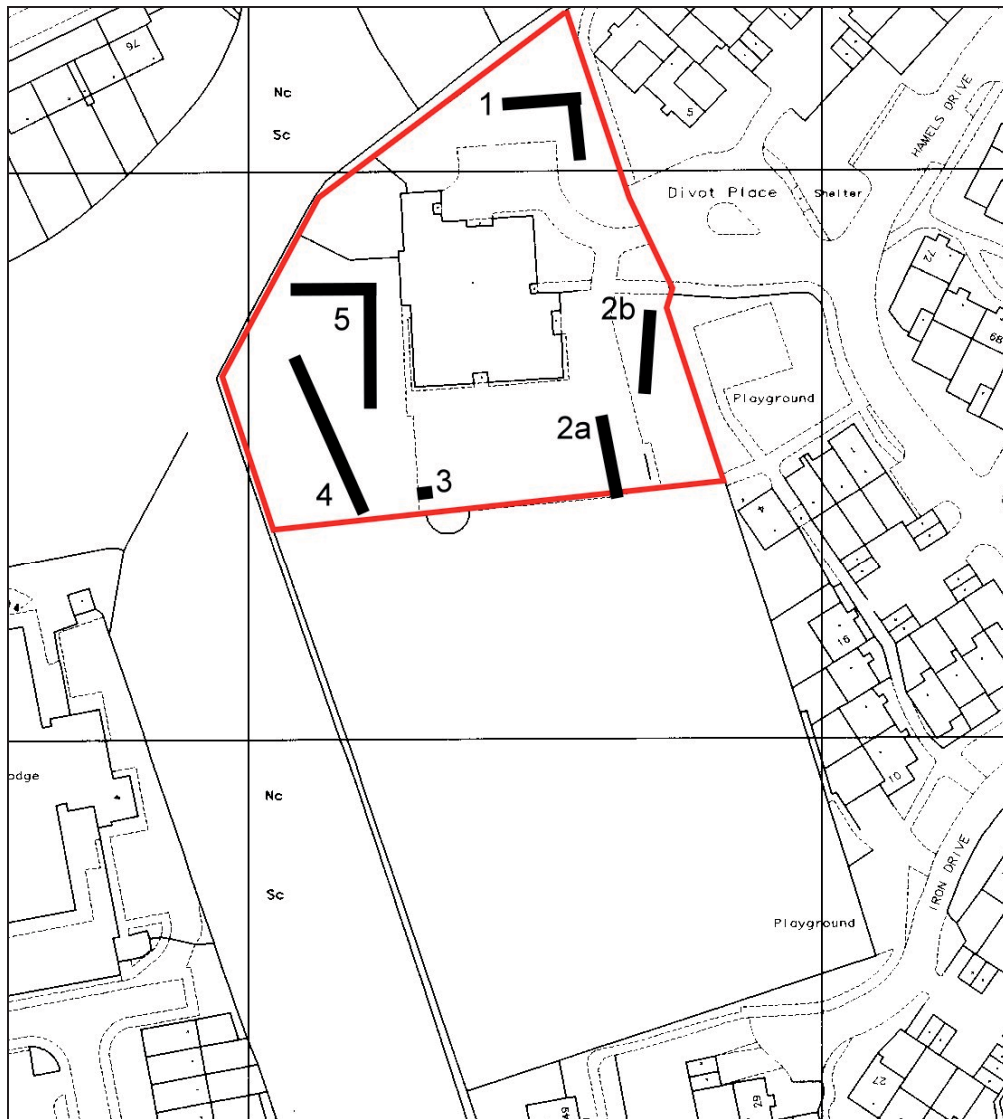


Figure 2: Trench plan (scale 1:1250)



Figure 3: Proposed Development (scale 1:1000)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

In line with the requirements of the Brief (Section 3), the aims of the Archaeological Evaluation were:

- To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development.
- A comprehensive assessment of the regional context within which any revealed archaeological evidence rests and to highlight any relevant research priorities relevant to any further investigation of the site referred to in *East Anglian Archaeology occasional paper 8* (2000).
- To provide a predictive model of the archaeological remains likely to be present on the site and include an assessment of its significance.

2.2 Methods

In line with the requirements of the Brief (Section 4), the methods to be adopted for this project were:

- Trial trenching of 5% of the site (245 sq. m or 150 linear metres of trenching @ 1.6m wide).
- Due to on-site constraints the initial trench plan was revised and a total of 122.5 linear metres of trenching was completed (Fig. 2).

2.3 Standards

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

3 Results

3.1 The following paragraphs provide a summary of the results of the trial trenches. A full description of the soils, with illustrations of the trenches, is provided in Appendix 1.

3.2 *Results*

No archaeological features were observed within the trial trenches. However, differing degrees of probable truncation and levelling were observed across the site.

Trench 1 revealed made ground containing modern brick and sealing the natural sand and gravel at a depth of 0.5m, suggesting that the area had been levelled up in the recent past.

Trench 2a revealed the natural sand and gravel directly beneath the tarmac and concrete playground indicating that the area had been stripped of topsoil prior to construction.

Trench 2b appeared relatively undisturbed with the natural sand and gravel directly underlying the topsoil at a depth of up to 0.4m.

Trench 3 revealed made ground containing plastic sheeting, and steel reinforcement bars overlying the natural sand and gravel at a depth of 1.8m.

Trenches 4 and 5 were located in the area of a substantial surface hollow suggestive of possible quarrying activity and both these trenches revealed an identical sequence of made ground deposits sealing the natural sand and gravel at a depth of up to 1.0m (Plate 2). No clearly datable finds were recovered from these deposits.

3.3 A mid orange coarse sand was revealed beneath the topsoil and made ground. It was relatively soft and contained moderate lenses of natural gravel and is interpreted as the natural strata.



Plate 1: Trench 2a under excavation (looking North)



Plate 2: Trench 4 section showing made ground (looking East)

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 Trenches 4 and 5 were located within the substantial surface hollow in the western part of the site. Excavation of these trenches revealed the ground in this area to have been raised by up to 1.0m. However, no datable artefacts were recovered from this made ground. Examination of the 1st edition 25" Ordnance Survey map sheet and subsequent map sources (not shown) reveals the presence of extensive 'chalk pits' to the immediate northeast of the site adjacent to Ware Road. In the light of this it is suggested that the substantial hollow may represent further quarrying activity of a probable post-medieval to early modern date.
- 4.2 The substantial made ground revealed in trench 3 was clearly of modern origin and it is suggested that this probably relates to the construction of the school/playground. Similarly the truncation present in trench 2a and the levelling in trench 1 may also be attributed to this source.
- 4.3 Although the prior desk-based assessment identified the site as having potential for remains from the Neolithic to Roman period, it is considered unlikely that significant quantities of archaeological remains are present on the site, although the potential presence of occasional isolated remains away from the evaluation trenches should not be entirely excluded.

5. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Ruth Gray of Vincent and Goring Ltd for commissioning the evaluation. Thanks are also due to Mr Jonathan Smith of HCC CAO who acted as curatorial officer.

The fieldwork was undertaken for ASC Ltd by Nicholas A Crank BSc AIFA assisted by Jonathan Hunn PhD MIFA. The report was prepared by Nicholas A Crank and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

6. Archive

6.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. List of photographs/slides
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. Original specialist reports and supporting information
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

6.2 The archive will be deposited with Hertford Museum.

7. References

- ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (East of England)
- Bourn R. 2004 *Archaeological Desk Based Assessment: Former Pines School Hammers Drive Hertford* CgMs Consulting Ltd
- Griffiths, C & Crank, N.A. 2004 *The Pines School, Hamels Drive, Hertford: Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation* (ASC: 625/HPS/01)
- 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)*.
- Smith 2004 *Design Brief for Archaeological Evaluation: Former Pines School, Hamels Drive, Hertford* County Archaeological Office Hertfordshire County Council. Unpublished.
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables



Trench 1							
Max Dimensions					Orientation		
Length	25m	Width	1.6m	Depth	0.5m	North to south & East to west	
NGR Co-ordinates					Reason for Trench		
NW	TL34550 13210	SE	TL34559 13200	General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation			Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
100	Layer	Topsoil – Mid brown sandy loam			--	200	--
101	Layer	Made ground – Mid orange sandy gravel, occ. Brick fragments			--	150	350
102	Layer	Made ground – Topsoil with occ. Brick fragments and gravel			--	150	500
103	Layer	Natural strata – Mid orange sand and gravel			--	--	500+

Note: A modern plastic gas pipe was revealed c.4.5m from the south end of the trench.



Trench 2a							
Max Dimensions					Orientation		
Length	15m	Width	1.6m	Depth	0.3m	Northwest to southeast	
NGR Co-ordinates					Reason for Trench		
NW	TL34562 13157	SE	TL34565 13142	General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation			Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
200	Layer	Tarmac over concrete base			--	300	--
201	Layer	Natural strata – Mid orange sand and gravel			--	--	300+



Trench 2b							
Max Dimensions					Orientation		
Length	15m	Width	1.6m	Depth	0.4m	North to south	
NGR Co-ordinates					Reason for Trench		
N	TL34570 13175	S	TL34569 13160	General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation			Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
202	Layer	Topsoil – Mid brown sandy loam			--	400	--
201	Layer	Natural strata – Mid orange sand and gravel			--	--	400+



Trench 3							
Max Dimensions					Orientation		
Length	2.5m	Width	2.0m	Depth	1.8m	East to west	
NGR Co-ordinates					Reason for Trench		
Centre	TL34531 13143	--	--		General evaluation		
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation			Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
300	Layer	Tarmac over concrete base			--	300	--
301	Layer	Made ground – Mid orange sandy gravel, occ. Brick fragments and modern debris			--	1500	1800
302	Layer	Natural strata – Mid orange sand and gravel				--	1800+



Trench 4							
Max Dimensions					Orientation		
Length	30m	Width	1.6m	Depth	1.0m	Northwest to southeast	
NGR Co-ordinates					Reason for Trench		
NW	TL34508 13167	SE	TL34520 13140	General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation			Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
400	Layer	Topsoil – Mid brown sandy loam			--	100	--
401	Layer	Made ground – Mid orangey brown topsoil and gravel			--	600	700
402	Layer	Buried topsoil – Mid to light brown silt loam			--	100	800
404	Layer	Natural strata – Mid orange sand and gravel			--	--	800+



Trench 5							
Max Dimensions					Orientation		
Length	30m	Width	1.6m	Depth	0.45 m	North to south & East to west	
NGR Co-ordinates					Reason for Trench		
NW	TL34507 13179	SE	TL34521 13158	General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation			Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
500	Layer	Topsoil – Mid brown sandy loam			--	100	--
501	Layer	Made ground – Mid orangey brown topsoil and gravel			--	600	700
502	Layer	Buried topsoil – Mid to light brown silt loam			--	100	800
504	Layer	Natural strata – Mid orange sand and gravel			--	--	800+

Appendix 2: SMR Summary Sheet

Site name and address: Pines JMI School, Hamels Drive, Hertford, Hertfordshire		
County: Herts		District: East Herts
Village/Town: Hertford		Parish: Hertford CP
Planning application reference: Pre-planning		
Client name, address, & tel. no: Hertfordshire Property Hertfordshire County Council County Hall Hertford SG8 8DQ		
Nature of application: Possible Residential		
Present land use: School		
Size of application area: n/a		Size of area investigated: c. 4900 sq m
NGR (to 8 figures): TL3453 1318		Site code: HPS.04
Site director/Organization: N.A.Crank/ASC Ltd		
Type of work: Trial Trenching		
Date of work:	Start: 30/11/04	Finish: 30/11/04
Curating museum: Hertford		
Related SMR nos: --		Periods represented: --
Relevant previous summaries/reports: Bourn 2004		
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: During November 2004 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on a site at the Former Pines School, Hamels Drive, Hertford, Hertfordshire. The work was undertaken in advance of proposed redevelopment of the site and was preceded by a desk-based assessment.</p> <p>A total of five trenches were excavated. Trenches 4 and 5 revealed undated made ground within an area of probable post-medieval quarrying activity. Trenches 1, 2a and 3 revealed truncation and levelling probably relating to the construction of the school within the latter half of the 20th century. In conclusion it is considered unlikely that significant quantities of archaeological remains are present on the site.</p>		
Author: N.A.Crank		Date: 1 st December 2004