

# **AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT HAZELWOOD SCHOOL, LIMPSFIELD**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Between 12th and 21st January 1999, the Surrey County Archaeological Unit carried out a Watching Brief on groundworks associated with the building of a new teaching block at Hazelwood School, Limpsfield. This work was a requirement of the planning permission granted for the new block and was necessary because the site lies in an area of general archaeological interest, being bordered by West Heath, from which prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon material has been recovered. It was thought that a watching brief would be the most appropriate strategy to mitigate against this potential.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Monitoring of the site required three separate site visits. Excavation of the majority of the foundation trenches was observed in progress whilst the remainder were observed post-excavation. These were dug using a 360 degree mechanical excavator with a toothed bucket. The sections of the trenches were carefully examined for any evidence of ancient activity, such as pits or ditches. The removed spoil was also checked for any stray, unstratified, artefacts.

## **RESULTS**

Examination of the exposed sections revealed a sequence of dirty yellow brown sand / clay (0.50m) over a yellow brown sandy clay with frequent fragmented sandstone (excavated to 2.00m). There was no apparent subsoil and only a thin turf / topsoil layer existed. No archaeological features were observed in any of these sections. Similarly, examination of the removed spoil did not produce any stray finds.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The site is located upon the boundary of three geological beds; Wealden clay, Atherfield clay and an area of river gravels / alluvium. It therefore seems likely that the two layers identified above (dirty yellow brown sand / clay and yellow brown sandy clay with sandstone) represent the interface of the different beds and are entirely 'natural' in origin. The absence of any subsoil or substantial topsoil also suggest a previous levelling of the site, probably during construction of the original school buildings. Any archaeological material that did exist would almost certainly have been destroyed in this phase. It is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work is required in respect of this site.















