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Position:

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Checked by:

Stuart Foreman

Position:

Senior Project Manager

Date:

23rd December 2010

Approved by:

Nick Shepherd

Signed.....

Position:

Director, OA South

Date:

23rd December 2010

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Leo Heatley

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Oxford Archaeology

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Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800

f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk

w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

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Whitstable Community College

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

During January, February and March 2009 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Whitstable Community College in Kent. Kent County Council commissioned the work in advance of works carried out by Willmott Dixon Group PLC. The watching brief formed the last phase of archaeological investigations at the site during part of Wave 3 of the Kent Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme and revealed no archaeological features.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 Between January February and March 2009 as part of the Government's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, OA carried out a watching brief at Whitstable Community College, Kent on behalf of the construction contractor Willmott Dixon and the developer, Kent County Council. The watching brief took place in accordance with an archaeological specification prepared by OA, which incorporates standard requirements for archaeological watching briefs in Kent, issued by KCC. The present watching brief is the last stage of the fieldwork and is one of a series carried out in compliance with archaeological planning conditions attached to each of the Wave 3 BSF Schools (CA/08/271).

1.1.2 The Wave 3 BSF programme includes redevelopment of 11 schools in the County of Kent. Through the BSF programme, significant investment in buildings and in Information and Communication Technology is being made to support the Government's education reform agenda. Funds are intended to be devolved to local authorities and schools throughout England to spend on maintaining and improving their schools buildings and in some cases for major rebuilding and remodelling projects. The redevelopment at Whitstable Community College included foundations for a new school building and associated works including access, services and landscaping.

1.1.3 The development site is centred on grid reference TR 116 657, within the parish of Whitstable and encompasses 5.3 hectares of school buildings and recreation areas.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The underlying geology of the site is Eocene blue grey clay (GSGB, 1974, Sheet 273) and is located at an approximate height of 30 m OD. The site slopes slightly from west to east.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief has been the subject of a separate archaeological desktop study in 2007 (OA/PB 2007). OA was commissioned to undertake the A walkover survey of the development area formed part of the

assessment strategy. The archaeological assessment examined a study area of 1-km radius around the school and included a gazetteer of known archaeological findspots/investigations and historic buildings in the vicinity of the development. Each of these was allocated an OA gazetteer number in the assessment document (OA/PB 2007). This established that there were no listed buildings, registered parks or gardens, or scheduled monuments within the school site.

- 1.3.2 The archaeological potential was considered uncertain. There have been two previous archaeological investigations within the vicinity of Whitstable Community College. One of these recorded no remains of archaeological significance, while the second recorded limited Iron Age and Roman activity. In August 2008, OA conducted a third archaeological investigation comprising six field evaluation trenches, on behalf of Willmott Dixon, as part of the present development. These trenches revealed a small shallow undated discrete feature and two modern features, none of which were archaeologically significant.
- 1.3.3 In April 2008, a rapid assessment survey and photographic record of the existing school buildings was carried out. The survey was carried out as part of a wider programme of assessment of eleven Kent BSF Schools. The buildings are considered to be of no particular architectural merit, but may have some local interest from a social historical point of view. A report covering 11 schools was prepared and submitted to KCC Heritage Conservation, and no further building recording work was recommended (OA 2008a).

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief are to contribute to heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of any archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks. Particular attention should be made to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The watching brief monitored the excavations for the groundwork comprising foundations for the proposed new school buildings and associated works including access, services and landscaping. The groundworks were monitored regularly during the initial excavation of the building footprint, and then as required during the remainder of the construction process.
- 2.2.2 Excavation was undertaken by a mechanical 360 degree excavator using a flat bladed bucket to reveal any archaeological remains. If possible archaeological remains were encountered, machine excavation was to cease to allow the remains to be investigated further.

- 2.2.3 The archaeologist on site inspected the surfaces revealed. Any archaeological structures or features revealed were to be recorded in plan and section as appropriate to Section 6 of KCCs Specification for Archaeological Watching Brief Part B.
- 2.2.4 A general photographic record of the work was maintained and any excavated features would be photographed using colour slide and black and white print. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 No archaeological deposits were observed during the watching brief.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No archaeological finds were recovered from the site.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits were encountered which were considered suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The groundworks monitored during the watching brief did not reveal any archaeological features.
- 4.1.2 Due to the absence of any archaeological remains with the construction footprint, it is recommended that no further archaeological work is required in relation to this planning application.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>
100			-	-		
101			-	-		
102			-	-		

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson)

OA/PB 2007 *The Community College, Whitstable, Kent. Desktop Assessment. Oxford Archaeology on behalf of Parsons Brinckerhoff*

OA 2008a *Kent Schools BSF Programme. Historic Buildings Assessment and Recording.*

OA 2008b *Whitstable Community College, Whitstable, Kent. Archaeological Evaluation Trenching Report.*

OA 2008c *Northfleet Technology College for Boys, Northfleet, Kent. Specification for Archaeological Watching Brief. Parts A and B.*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Whitstable Community College, Kent.

Site code: KS6WCC 08

Grid reference: TR 116 657

Type of watching brief: General Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: January to March 2009.

Area of site: 5.3 hectares

Summary of results: The watching brief identified no archaeological remains.

Location of archive: Kent is currently lacking available museum storage space for a backlog of archaeological archives. Until this is resolved the archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2.

Server: go\oapubs2\lth\O\KENTSDBA\Community College, Whitstable*HRB*8.2.07



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Figure 1: Site location

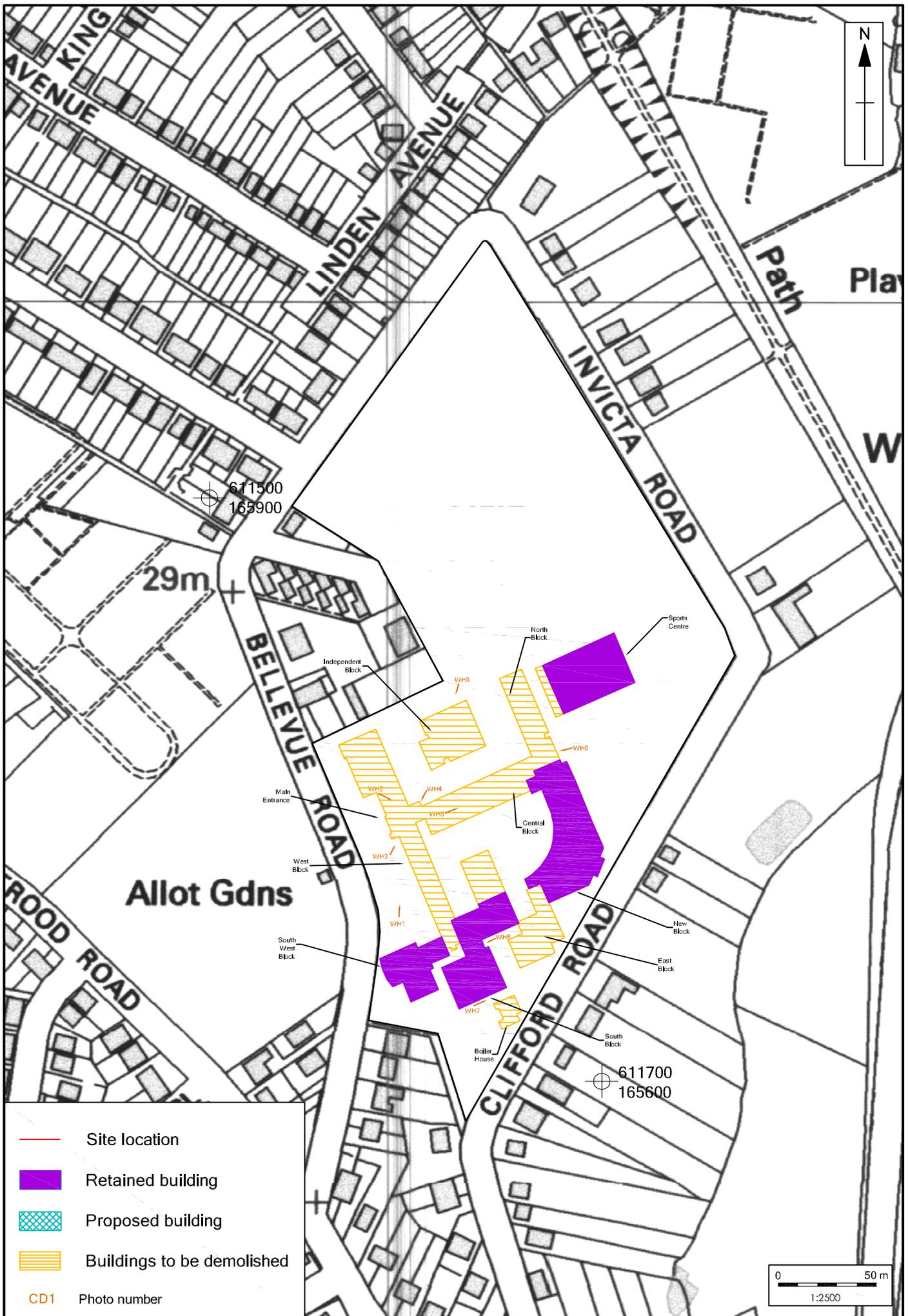


Figure 2: Whitstable Community College Proposed development of the site