



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT  
BRILL SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB,  
CHURCH STREET, BRILL, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**SP 6560 1392**

*On behalf of*

*Brill Sports and Social Club*

**SEPTEMBER 2012**

**REPORT FOR** Brill Sports and Social Club  
c/o Mr Phil Parker

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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services conducted a watching brief during the ground reduction and excavation of foundation trenches within the footprint of a new extension at Brill Sports and Social Club, Church Street, Brill, Buckinghamshire. No archaeological finds or features were found.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)**

Brill Sports and Social Club (NGR SP 6560 1392) is located off Church Street and is NW of All Saints Church, Brill. The proposed extension is on the south-west corner of the Sports and Social Club. The site is situated on Calcareous Grit of the Coralian Beds.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Planning consent has been granted by Aylesbury Vale District Council for an extension to the Sports and Social Club (09/01731/APP). The site is located within a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Bu 143) – Earthworks near All Saints Church. Scheduled Monument Consent has been granted (Reference S00005114) subject to conditions. Due to the possible presence of remains of archaeological interest in the footprint of the extension a condition has been attached requiring a programme of archaeological works to be carried out.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

Brill is of considerable archaeological interest with evidence for Iron Age occupation adjacent to the church associated with an earthwork (CAS0106), which may be the remains of a hillfort rampart (Farley 1989). The earthworks survive in two parts; one just north of the churchyard consisting of a bank, and a further section west of the track to the playing fields as a bank with a ditch on the north side. In 1977 the bank averaged 2.5m in height and 14m in width (OS records). Farley's report (1989) recorded ditch deposits comprising homogenous loam to at least a depth of 1.65m at the south extent of the foundation trenches. At the north end 500mm of loam was recorded over ironstone, in turn over sand. It is therefore probable that the north side of the ditch may lie within the area of the proposed excavation. Pottery of Iron Age date was obtained from the ditch deposit and Farley concluded that the earthwork could be the remains of a hillfort rampart. A further sherd of Iron Age pottery has been picked up in the churchyard. Burnt grain was found 4ft down in a grave dug in the churchyard in 1977. It lay 2cm above the natural ironstone, which suggests that it was in the base of a pit.

An excavation for an extension on this site was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services in September 2005. An area 3.75m by 5.90m to the east of the Club House was

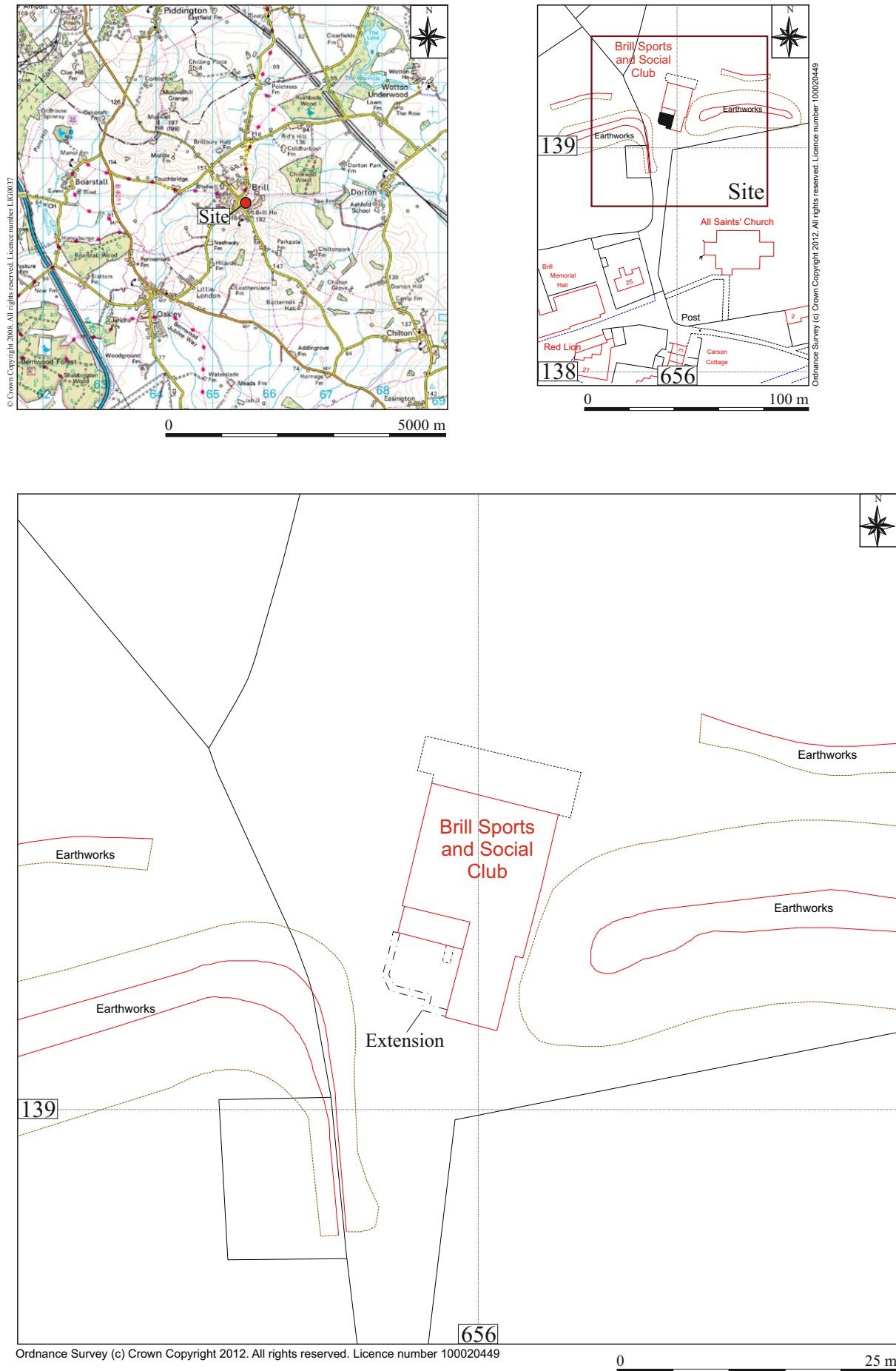


Figure 1. Site location

hand excavated to a maximum depth of 0.70m below ground level, at a height of 185.70 m OD. The excavation was too restricted both in area and depth to unequivocally date the monument. Archaeological deposits were limited. The upper fill of the ditch was excavated, which produced material of a late 18th century date and earlier residual finds (JMHS 2005).

Few early prehistoric remains have been found in Brill with a possible Mesolithic blade found 150m to the SE (CAS2053). Similarly limited Roman finds are known from Brill and include a coin 350m W (CAS5216) of the proposal site and a 1st century coin from the parish (CAS0582).

In the late Saxon period, Brill was a royal manor and the centre of an estate, which may have had its origins in a pre-Saxon 'multiple estate' (Baines 1995). Brill was the most important settlement within the medieval forest of Bernwood, which was legally established following the Norman Conquest based upon the pre-existing woodland and a hunting lodge built by Edward the Confessor. Brill was the administrative centre for the forest and hundred with a royal house, fishponds, mills, church, prison-house, market and fair, clay pits and kilns.

A mound considered to be a medieval castle motte lies 120 to WSW of the site (CAS 0528). Also, a timber royal hunting lodge (CAS2310) was constructed in the 11th century somewhere within Brill. The building prospered and grew with royal favour and the later parish church (CAS2192) may have functioned as a royal chapel to the palace. Royal presence had economic implications, as under its patronage, the pottery industry may have been established by the end of the 12th century (Mellor 1994, 111). In the 13th and early 14th centuries Brill was described as a borough but thereafter it went into decline and lost its status as a town.

Brill was the centre of an important regional pottery and tile industry, which is believed to have originated in the 12th century and continued to be active into the post-medieval period when it also produced bricks (Harvey 1997). Evidence for the industry is found throughout Brill and often medieval pottery is found in conjunction with later brick, tile and pottery kilns (e.g. CAS5712), indicating longevity and continuity of use. Extensive remains of the medieval and post-medieval pottery, tile and brick industry are known in relatively close proximity to the proposed development site. Medieval pottery kilns have been found 0.5km NE of the site (CAS5058), between 300-400m N (CAS4394, CAS0576, possible CAS5681), 200m NNW (CAS5293) and 100m W (CAS2195).

Post-medieval brick and tile works are also known 1km N of the proposed development site (CAS4653 and CAS4192). Pottery kilns of the post-medieval period occur 200m NNW (CAS5293), 200m NW (CAS2129, CAS2153) and 280m SE (CAS2499). An evaluation at the east end of Windmill Street, to the rear of the Sun Inn, produced traces of post-medieval pottery production, including dumps of clay, pottery wasters and kiln furniture (Murray 2001).

In 1644 Brill was selected as the winter quarters for a thousand Parliamentary foot-soldiers (VCH 1925, 15). The quarters may have been centred on the church and either used, created, or modified the earthwork.

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To record any archaeological remains that will be impacted on by the development
- To identify finds relating to activity associated with the earthwork.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Services. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and possible.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008).

### **3.2 Methodology**

All groundwork was monitored within the area of the extension. The footing trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator employing a toothless 0.6m ditching bucket.

## **4 RESULTS**

All features were assigned individual context numbers. This number covered the deposits, and the cut and fill of features. Context numbers in [ ] indicate features i.e. cuts; while numbers in ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material. A general description of the feature fills is given.

The surface tarmac and concrete hard standing (100) was removed to reveal deposits of sand and gravel aggregates (101), which were 0.1 m to 0.25 m thick. This deposit covered the whole of the excavation area. Excavation of the footing trenches showed this layer (101) to overlay a layer of mid-brown, sandy silty loam (102), which contained a small proportion, less than 1%, of sub-angular stones ranging from 5- 10 mm (Fig. 2, section 2; Plate 1). This layer was present to a thickness of 0.2 m but was absent from the NW area of the excavation (Fig. 2, section 1; Plate 2). It is suggested that this layer had

been partly excavated away, perhaps during the construction of the driveway and car park. Layer (102) contained no archaeological finds or features.



**Plate 1.** Section 2 showing layers (100) to (104) and the cut and fill of a modern pipe trench.



**Plate 2.** Section 1 showing layer (101) and layers (103) to (105).

Below (102) was a firmer layer of dark brown to black silty clay loam (103). This layer was between 0.3 and 0.4 m in thickness and contained less than 1% of small sub-angular stones. To the SE of the excavation area this layer clearly lay above the cut of a modern pipe trench, which cut layer (104) below it (Fig. 2, section 2; Plate 1). To the NW of the excavation area, where layer (102) was not present, (103) lay underneath layer (101). Layer (103) contained no archaeological finds or features.

Underneath layer (103) was a layer of dark orange brown ferruginous loamy sand (104) that contained a large proportion, greater than 40 %, of ironstone. Layer (104) was present in section across the whole of the excavated area and was cut by a modern pipe trench to SW of the excavation (Plate 1). Layer (104) was a natural subsoil consistent with the geology of the area and contained no archaeological features or finds.

The lowest layer was (105). This was a bright orange and yellow layer of sand that was heavily compacted and was cut though to a thickness greater than 0.2 m. The layer contained no inclusions and was identified as the natural.

The area within the footing trenches was also reduced by between 0.2 and 0.3 m. This reduction did not go below the aggregates of (101) in many places and the surface horizons of layer (101) and (102) were only revealed in patches. No archaeological features or finds were present during the reduction of this area.

## 5 FINDS

There were no finds recovered during this watching brief.



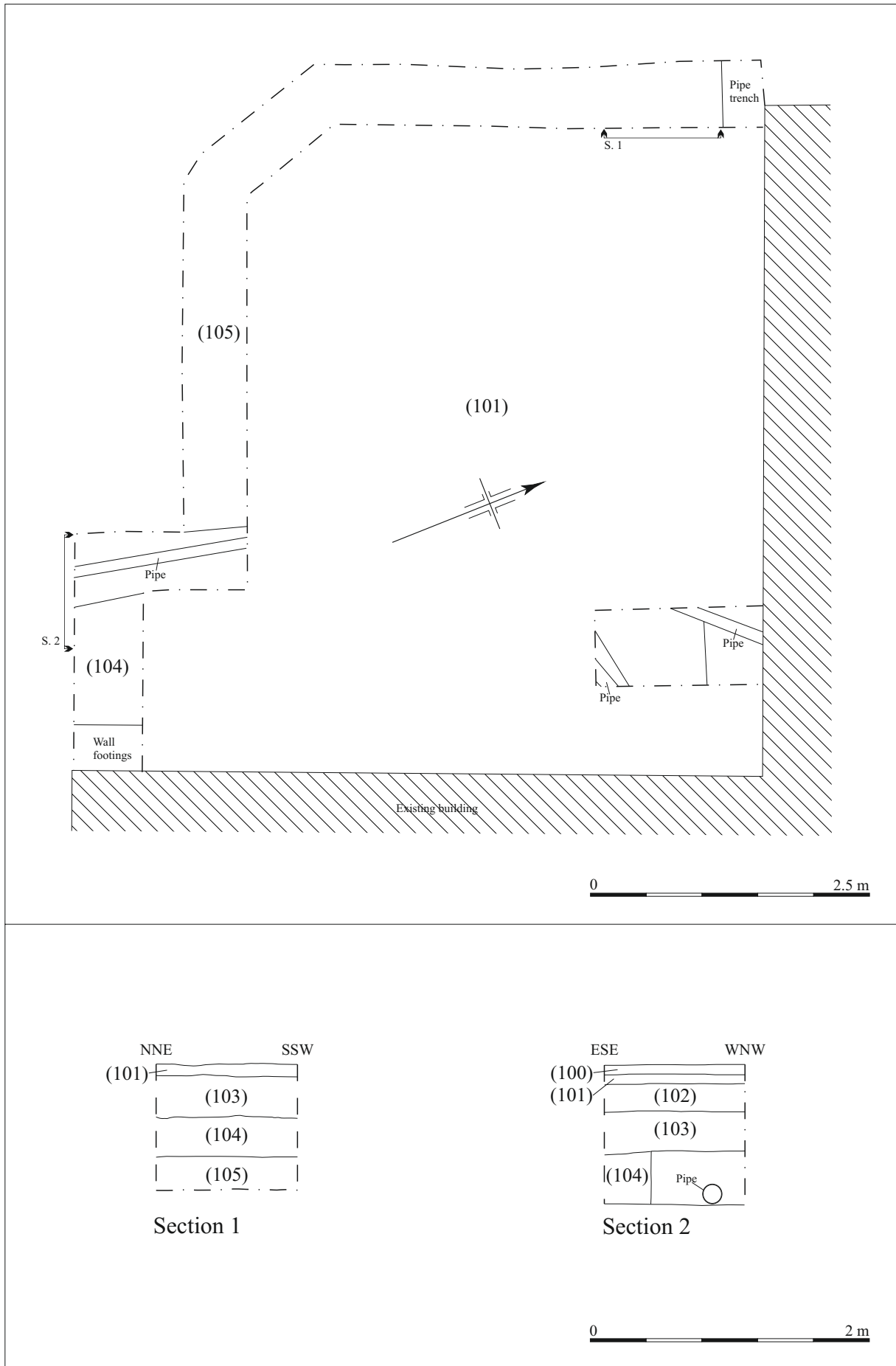


Figure 2. Plan and sections

## 6 DISCUSSION

All layers above the natural were either related to modern driveway and car park construction (100) (101), and/or lay above the cut of a modern pipe trench (102) (103) and therefore must have been deposited later than the construction of the pipe trench. No layers contained any finds, and layer (104) which lay above the natural sand was consistent with the natural subsoil of the area. No features relating to the bank or ditch were identified and all layers were identified as either modern or natural.

## 7 ARCHIVE

### Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

#### Paper record

Written scheme of investigation

The project report

The primary site records

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to Buckinghamshire Museum with accession number AYBMC: 2012.62.

## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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