

**Breadsall Priory, Derbyshire.  
An Archaeological Watching Brief.**



**ARS Ltd Report No. 2015/25**  
February 2015

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### ***Executive Summary***

*In February 2015, Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd) was commissioned by Breadsall Priory Marriot Hotel and Country Club to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with various emergency works to lakes within the grounds, the formation of three balancing ponds and the replacement of the penstock sluice at Breadsall Priory in Morley, Derby, Derbyshire. The work involved the archaeological monitoring of the groundworks associated with the construction of one silt trap and two balancing ponds along the southern portion of the golf course.*

*Two areas of potential interest were found during the groundworks: a possible former culvert and the remains of a probable old trackway. Otherwise, no significant archaeological finds or features were encountered during the watching brief.*

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 In February 2015, Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd) was commissioned by Breadsall Priory Marriot Hotel and Country Club to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with various emergency works to lakes within the grounds, the formation of three balancing ponds and the replacement of the penstock sluice. The requirement for an archaeological watching brief was outlined as Condition No. 3 of the approved planning permission (Planning No. ERE/1214/0035). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by ARS Ltd, which was approved by the Derbyshire Development Control Archaeologist prior to the commencement of site works.

## **2. Location and Geology**

- 2.1 The site is located *c.*1.8km to the north-east of Breadsall town centre and is centred at NGR 438102, 340947 (Figure 1). The golf course itself has been formed from multiple smaller arable fields into a single large agglomerated field. The site of the proposed development is to the south of the area known as ‘The Wilderness’, and follows the course of a small stream for *c.*120m through a sloped valley to the large lake at the bottom of the property. Along the northern bank of the lake are the stone foundations of a boathouse that once stood there. The entire site of the proposed development is surrounded by the golf course.
- 2.2 The underlying geology of the area of the watching brief comprises Mudstones, Siltstones and Sandstones of the Ashover Grit, Bowland Shale, Nottingham Castle and Pennine Lower Coal Measures formations, and this is overlain by superficial deposits of till and alluvium (BGS 2015).

## **3. Historical and Archaeological Background**

- 3.1 A historic impact assessment was carried out by ARS Ltd and was submitted with the planning application for the various emergency works to lakes within the grounds, the formation of three balancing ponds and the replacement of the penstock sluice. It focused on researching the fishponds that have been present on the property since the establishment of the priory in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. These features are considered historic, as they probably date to the medieval period. One of the fishponds was initially thought to have been within the area of proposed development, but this was proven otherwise. The assessment concluded that there was a low probability of there being buried archaeological remains within the boundary of the proposed area of development (Burpoe 2015).

## **4. Methodology**

- 4.1 Prior to the groundworks a long, shallow trench, *c.*1.2m in width, was dug from the bottom of ‘The Wilderness’ to divert the water from the two streams emerging from this area along the eastern edge of the proposed development area (PDA) to the lake at the bottom of the property (Figure 2). The area of the PDA was aligned

north-east to south-west, and was approximately 100m in length by 35m in width at the northern extent and tapering off slightly towards the southern extent (Figure 3).

- 4.2 All relevant groundworks were undertaken with a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. The digging within the PDA was monitored under archaeological supervision down to the upper horizon of the natural substrate.
- 4.3 The deposits were recorded according to the normal principles of stratigraphic excavation. Each context was recorded on pro-forma context sheets which included the following: character and contextual relationships; detailed description (dimensions and shape; soil components, colour, texture and consistency); interpretation and phasing as well as cross-references to the drawn, photographic and finds registers.

## **5. Results**

- 5.1 The golf course turf was removed prior to the start of the works, along with the silt build-up within the existing pond. Monitoring began with balancing pond 1, with the removal of dark brown mixed topsoil (101) that formed a spongy layer of the low-lying marshland between the area known as 'The Wilderness' and the large lake (Figure 4). This layer was between 0.04m and 0.21m in depth, and included broken sandstone chunks and broken pieces of the modern land drain present at the time of the works. Below this, a thin layer of blue-grey silty clay (102) was encountered, which was observed across the site (Figure 5). This layer had a maximum thickness of 0.05m, and was evidently well disturbed through modern interventions such as where services and land drains had been inserted. Finally, a red-brown/yellow-brown loamy clay (103) natural substrate was encountered (Figure 6). This substrate was deepest at the northernmost extent of the PDA, and was encountered below (101) towards the southern extents of the PDA across balancing pond 2.
- 5.2 Two areas of potential interest were noted during the groundworks. A line of broken rocks (104), running north-east to south-west within the proposed balancing pond 1, was possibly a former culvert and was uncovered along with a stretch of ceramic pipe within the blue-grey silty clay (102) (Figure 7). The possible culvert was collapsed and degraded, and it was not possible to follow or plot its course within the soil. The ceramic pipe was likely a former replacement pipe for the drain that ran through the centre of the PDA. At the northern extent of the proposed balancing pond 1, a spread of broken stone and rubble was observed (105) (Figure 8). This was probably an old trackway down as a levelling-up deposit for farmers to cross the marshy area. This context, covering  $\approx 2\text{m}^2$ , was observed within (102), overlying the natural substrate (103).

## **6. Discussion**

- 6.1 Besides the possible former culvert and probably old trackway, both which are likely to be post-medieval items, the watching brief at Breadsall Priory did not encounter any significant archaeological finds or features.

## **7. Publicity, Confidentiality and Copyright**

- 7.1. Any publicity will be handled by the client.

- 7.2. Archaeological Research Services Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

## **8. Statement of Indemnity**

- 8.1 Statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.

## **9. Acknowledgements**

- 9.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved with this work, in particular Steve Turner, Director of Golf at Breadsall Priory Marriott Hotel & Country Club and Steve Baker, Derbyshire Development Control Archaeologist.

## **10. References**

British Geological Survey 2015. Geology of Britain viewer. Available online at: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home/html> [Accessed February 2015].

Burpoe, M. 2015. *Breadsall Priory, Derbyshire. A Heritage Impact Assessment*. ARS Ltd Report No. 2015/15.

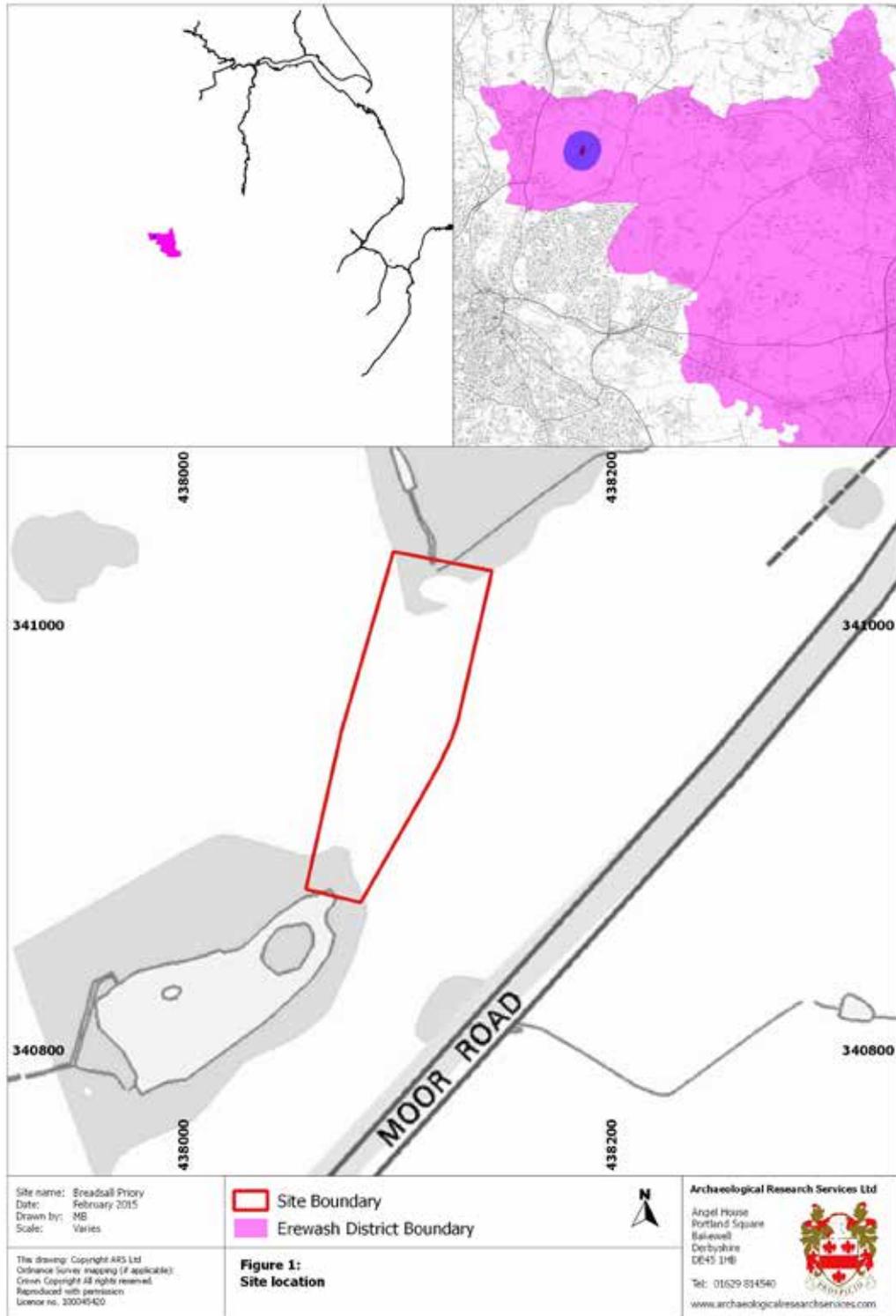


Figure 1:  
Site Location







**Figure 4:**  
View showing depth of context (101)



**Figure 5:**  
View SW showing context (102) across site before removal



**Figure 6:**  
**Working shot showing machine removing (102) down to natural substrate (103)**



**Figure 7:**  
View NW of (104), showing the possible stone culvert and ceramic pipe within (102)



**Figure 8:**  
View NE of (105) showing small area of former levelling deposit within (102) and on top of (103)

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### Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Breadsall Priory, Derbyshire
Short description of the project	Watching Brief of groundworks for proposed development of one silt trap and two balancing ponds
Project dates	Start: 23-02-2015 End: 24-02-2015
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Type of project	Recording project
Monument type	FISHPONDS Medieval
Monument type	COMMERCIAL Modern
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	DERBYSHIRE EREWASH BREADSALL Breadsall Priory
Study area	500.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SK 38102 40947 52.964219353 -1.43266039642 52 57 51 N 001 25 57 W Point

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeological Research Services
Project brief originator	Breadsall Priory Marriot Hotel and Country Club
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