

**Breadsall Priory, Derbyshire  
A Heritage Impact Assessment**

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Prepared on behalf of: Breadsall Priory Marriot Hotel & Country Club

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For John Smith,  
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Date of compilation: January 2015

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*Archaeological Research Services Ltd was commissioned by Breadsall Priory Marriot Hotel & Country Club to produce a Heritage Impact Assessment of land at Breadsall Priory, Morley, Derby, prior to the submission of a planning application for the proposed golf course development comprising one silt trap and two balancing ponds.*

*The Heritage Impact Assessment 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 these fishponds was initially thought to have been within the area of proposed development, but this has been proven otherwise. The assessment concluded that there is a low probability of there being buried archaeological remains within the boundary of the proposed area of development.*

*No further evaluation is recommended as the development is unlikely to have any substantial harm on significant heritage assets. A watching brief during ground works would enable any potential buried archaeological remains to be investigated, and the hollows to be recorded and put on public record.*



## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

Archaeological Research Services Ltd was commissioned by Breadsall Priory Marriott Hotel & Country Club to produce a Heritage Impact Assessment for the proposed dredging and construction of one silt trap and two new balancing ponds on the southern portion of the hotels' golf course, along Moor Road, Morley, Derby, Derbyshire, DE7 6DL. In consultation with the Derbyshire Development Control Archaeologist regarding the specification for this assessment, documentary research and a walkover survey were carried out to assess the impact that the proposed development would have on any heritage assets to accompany the planning application.

### **1.2 Site Description**

The site is located c.1.8 km 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.

### **1.3 Geology**

The underlying geology of the proposed area of development 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).

## **2 CULTURAL HERITAGE SYNOPSIS**

This section draws on the documentary research to provide an archaeological background to Breadsall Priory and any heritage assets that may be impacted upon by the proposed development. The study also focuses upon the multiple water features of the property, with a specific focus on one possibly medieval pond that currently exists on the southern portion of the property, as it is within the proposed development site.

### **2.1 Prehistoric - Romano-British**

There is no known evidence of prehistoric activity within the proposed area of development. A fragment of a Late Bronze Age spearhead was found in a ploughed field c.800m north of Breadsall Priory (HER 17305). The Romano-British period is represented by the course of the Roman road (Rykniel Street), which ran north-south c.15m to the east of the subject area (HER 23413 & 99016). This particular stretch of road is well marked, and is currently overlain by the modern Moor Road,



which runs parallel to the site. A Roman coin, depicting Gallienus, was found in a field 1600m north of Breadsall Priory (HER 22327).

## 2.2 Medieval - Post-Medieval

The current buildings and grounds at Breadsall Priory are built upon medieval and post-medieval foundations. Breadsall village appears in the Domesday Survey of 1087 as 'Braideshale.' The priory itself was established in Breadsall some time in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by one of the Curzons of Breadsall. Many sources mistakenly refer to Breadsall as being a house of Austin Friars, due to an error made on a Patent Roll in 1266 when in fact, Breadsall was home to Austin Cannons. Breadsall Priory was always a small house. The Taxation Roll (*Taxatio*) of 1291 reveals that the priory had an annual income of £5 19s., while the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535 reveals the income of the priory at only £10 17s. 9d. Breadsall Priory was dissolved in 1536 under Henry VIII during the dissolution of the lesser monasteries, as it had revenue of less than £200 a year.

Soon after its dissolution, the land around the Priory was leased for farming, and the buildings disused. Around 1595, the property was purchased by Sir John Bentley, who constructed a tall E-shaped house on remains of the Priory. It is unknown how much of the old Priory was still standing at this time, but it is evident that some remains were still visible, as it is visually apparent portions were incorporated into the new building design (Cox 1905).

In the succeeding years, numerous alterations were made to both the house and grounds at Breadsall by multiple owners. A 1790 plan of the Priory shows a large pond directly south of the estate, with a smaller pond to the east (Figure 2). A stream flows towards the south to 'Smale Close', where a red circle indicates the possible presence of a pond (it is unfortunately impossible to determine whether the red writing is dated with the map, or was added at a later time).

In 1799, Breadsall Priory came under the ownership of first Erasmus Darwin, and then his father, Dr. Erasmus Darwin. Dr. Darwin, in a letter to a friend, mentions that the "good gardens, ponds full of fish, and a pleasing valley, deep, umbrageous and with a talkative stream running down it" are to his liking (Redman 1998). The 1817 award map shows that the two fishponds behind the house still exist, with the smaller pond being now horseshoe shaped (Figure 3). The small stream carries water to a small pond at the bottom a portion of 'New Close.' The lake suggested in the 1790 map in 'Smale Close' is not pictured, though that piece of land has now been renamed 'Pool Close', possibly indicating that some type of waterworks is present. An 1823 plan of Breadsall Priory shows much of the same, with a fishpond existing towards the bottom of 'The Wilderness', and an 1860 pencil addition showing the location of the lake mentioned in the 1790 map and an adjacent boathouse (Figure 4).

Drawing from the information above, the small fishpond featured at the bottom of 'The Wilderness' is probably one of the medieval fishponds that are associated with the priory. It is inconclusive whether the large lake at the bottom of Breadsall Estate is medieval as well, but it is certainly at least post-medieval.



## 2.3 Modern

Upon his inheritance of Breadsall priory in 1832, Sir Francis Sacheverel Darwin (Dr. Darwin's grandson) invested much time in the estate, assisted by his gardener, Joseph Heathcote. Two of the old Priory fishponds, the Horseshoe pond and a circular one adjacent to it, were cleaned out and repaired. Below these, the area known as 'The Wilderness' followed the stream from these ponds down the valley, to the lake, with the boathouse on its northern bank.

Upon Sir Darwin's death, Breadsall priory and its lands were sold to Francis Morley in 1860. Morley made extensive changes to both the house and the grounds. To the south of the house, a series of terraced lawns were cut, which sloped down to an ornamental lake, which had been created out of the old circular Priory fishpond. The Horseshoe pond, to the east of the new ornamental lake, was reshaped to form a circle with a central island. This work is reflected in a map of Breadsall Priory Estate dated between 1890 and 1915 (Figure 5). In total, Morley spent about £4,000 laying out the grounds (Redman 1998).

Following Francis Morley's death, the Breadsall Priory Estate was put on the market again. The 1883 Sale Particulars mentions "...Adjoining the house are a Flower Garden and Pleasure Grounds, with Ornamental Ponds and Shrubberies. A picturesque walk called the 'Wilderness,' leads down from the Pleasure Grounds through a plantation of trees and shrubs, having a rivulet running through the same into a large fish pond or lake containing Perch and Pike" ( 1883 Sale Particulars)

Ordnance Survey Maps from 1881, 1887 and 1900 show the presence of both the small fishpond at the bottom of 'The Wilderness' and the larger lake at the bottom of the Estate. A small stream is shown from the bottom of this pond, connecting with another stream from the east below the medieval fishpond, and flowing down to the top of the lake.

The property was eventually purchased in 1897 by Sir Alfred Seale Haslam, who also continued to make changes to both the house and grounds. In 1909, new pleasure grounds and a rose garden were laid out. His son, Capt. Eric Seale Haslam, continued the work, planting many trees around the estate. In 1948, the ornamental lake developed a leak and emptied, and remained that way for many years. After his death in 1967, the estate was eventually sold in 1971. Purchased by Charles Harper-Crewe, the house had since been vandalized and the grounds and garden overgrown. Permission was eventually granted in 1974 for David Cox to turn Breadsall Priory Estate into a hotel and golf course. The grounds were cleaned, and the ornamental lake put back into working order. Finally, in 1988, Whitbread PLC became the new owners of Breadsall Priory, with Breadsall estate officially becoming the Marriott Breadsall Priory Hotel and Country Club in 1996.

Since 1996, much work has continued both on the house and the grounds of Breadsall Priory. The small old Priory fishponds in 'The Wilderness' were cleaned up in 2000 and restored to their original working order (Smith 2015). Breadsall Priory is currently a Grade II listed building (HER 17304), while the stable block north-west of



the Priory is also a Grade II listed building (NHL 1141231). The park itself is also listed (HER 17325), as the suggested extent of the medieval parkland at Breadsall Priory.

## 2.4 Summary

While the small fishpond within the bottom of 'The Wilderness' is probably medieval, it is unlikely to be affected by the proposed development. It seems that since the early 1900s the two streams that connect beneath this fishpond have either naturally formed a small pond, or a pond has been constructed in recent times but has not been shown on any maps. This would therefore classify the existing pond in the proposed area of development as a modern or natural formation.

Whilst no known archaeological remains have been identified by the historic documentary research within the proposed development area, Romano-British and post-medieval remains in the vicinity of the site could indicate the potential for archaeological below-ground remains of these periods to survive at the site.

## 3 WALK-OVER SURVEY

In addition to the historic documentary research, a walk-over survey of the proposed area of development was conducted in order to identify and record photographically any heritage features which may survive. The walk-over survey follows the site of proposed development from the south of the area known as 'The Wilderness' along the course of the two connecting reservoirs for c.120m along a ditch through a sloped valley to the large lake at the bottom of the property.

High resolution digital photographs were taken of the areas of proposed development and any features identified from the historic documentary research.

A small pond, c.15mx8m, currently exists to the south of 'The Wilderness'. It is currently overflowing its banks, due to the large amount of silt being brought in from the smaller ponds and streams within 'The Wilderness' (Figure 6). It is being funnelled through a pipe placed in a ditch c.100m to the large lake at the bottom of the estate (Figures 7 and 8). This pipe is a modern construct, being composed of concrete and plastic. The large lake is currently drained, as a build-up of silt from both the stream from the Wilderness, and a pipe funnelling in runoff water from the nearby Moor Road (Figure 9). Work is currently being carried out to remove the excess silt and shore up the western bank before water can be returned (Figure 10). The stone foundations of the boathouse mentioned in the Cultural Heritage Synopsis are visible along the north bank of the lake (Figure 11).

The walk-over through 'The Wilderness' showed a fishpond that better matched the location of the fishpond shown on the maps mentioned in 2.1-2.3, especially as there is a stream emerging from the bottom of that that joins with another stream at the base of 'The Wilderness' as mentioned in paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4, where the natural pond lies (Figures 12 and 13).

The proposed dredging and construction of one silt trap and two new balancing ponds on the proposed location on the southern portion of Breadsall Estate will have



no effect on the medieval fishponds, as the existing pond is not medieval, but is probably either a natural formation or a modern addition to the grounds.

## **4 IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Potential impacts to any Romano-British, Medieval and Post-Medieval remains during the construction phase of the proposed development include the following.

- ◆ Direct destruction and/ or compaction or removal of hitherto as yet unknown buried archaeological deposits during the ground works.
- ◆ Removal or disturbance of archaeological deposits and impacts upon settings during site clearance (e.g. removal of vegetation, fencing, traffic movement, topsoil stripping).
- ◆ Direct damage to archaeological deposits due to rutting from construction traffic movement.

## **5 CONCLUSION**

The ponds directly south of Breadsall Priory and those within 'The Wilderness' are medieval fishponds and are areas of heritage significance. The larger lake at the southern portion of the property, possibly medieval, should also be considered an area of heritage significance. The pond that will be affected by the proposed golf course development is not considered to have any heritage significance, and will not be harmed by the development works.

This Heritage Impact Assessment identified a low probability of any surviving buried archaeological remains being impacted upon during the construction phase of the proposed development. No further evaluation is recommended as the development is unlikely to have any substantial harm on significant heritage assets. A watching brief during ground works associated with the proposed development would enable any potential buried archaeological remains to be investigated, and the hollows to be recorded and put on public record.

## **6 STATEMENTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### **6.1 Publicity, Confidentiality and Copyright**

Any publicity will be handled by the client. Archaeological Research Services Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

### **6.2 Statement of Indemnity**

All 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.

### 6.3 Acknowledgements

Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like thank John Smith, Golf Courses Manager of Breadsall Priory Marriott Hotel & Country Club for commissioning the work and for allowing access for the site walk-over, Nicola Manning at Derbyshire County Council for providing background mapping, and Steve Baker, Derbyshire Development Control Archaeologist, for defining the scope of the project and providing advice.





## 7 References

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Redman, N. 1998. *An Illustrated History of Breadsall Priory*. Whitbread & Co Ltd.

Smith, John. Personal Conversation. 26 January 2015.



APPENDIX 1: FIGURES

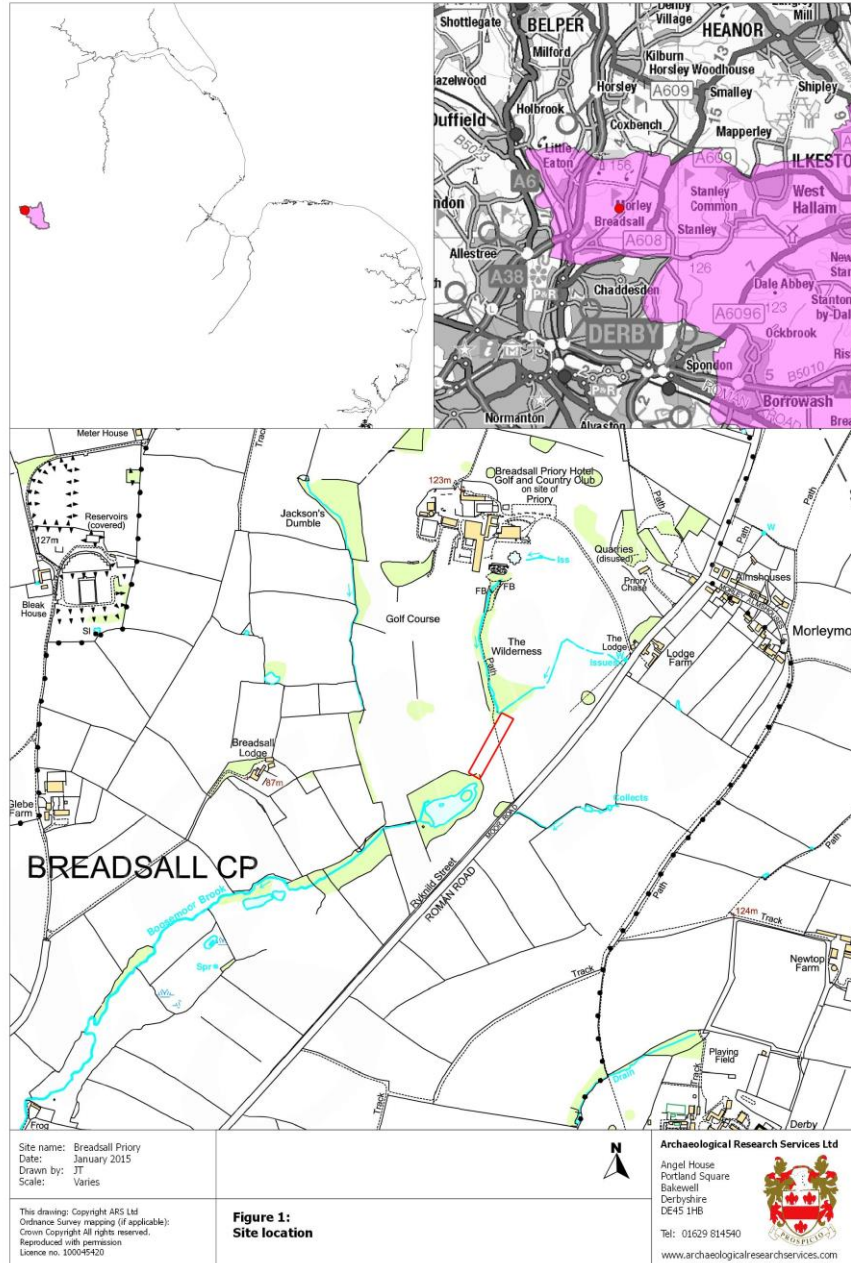


Figure 1: Site Location



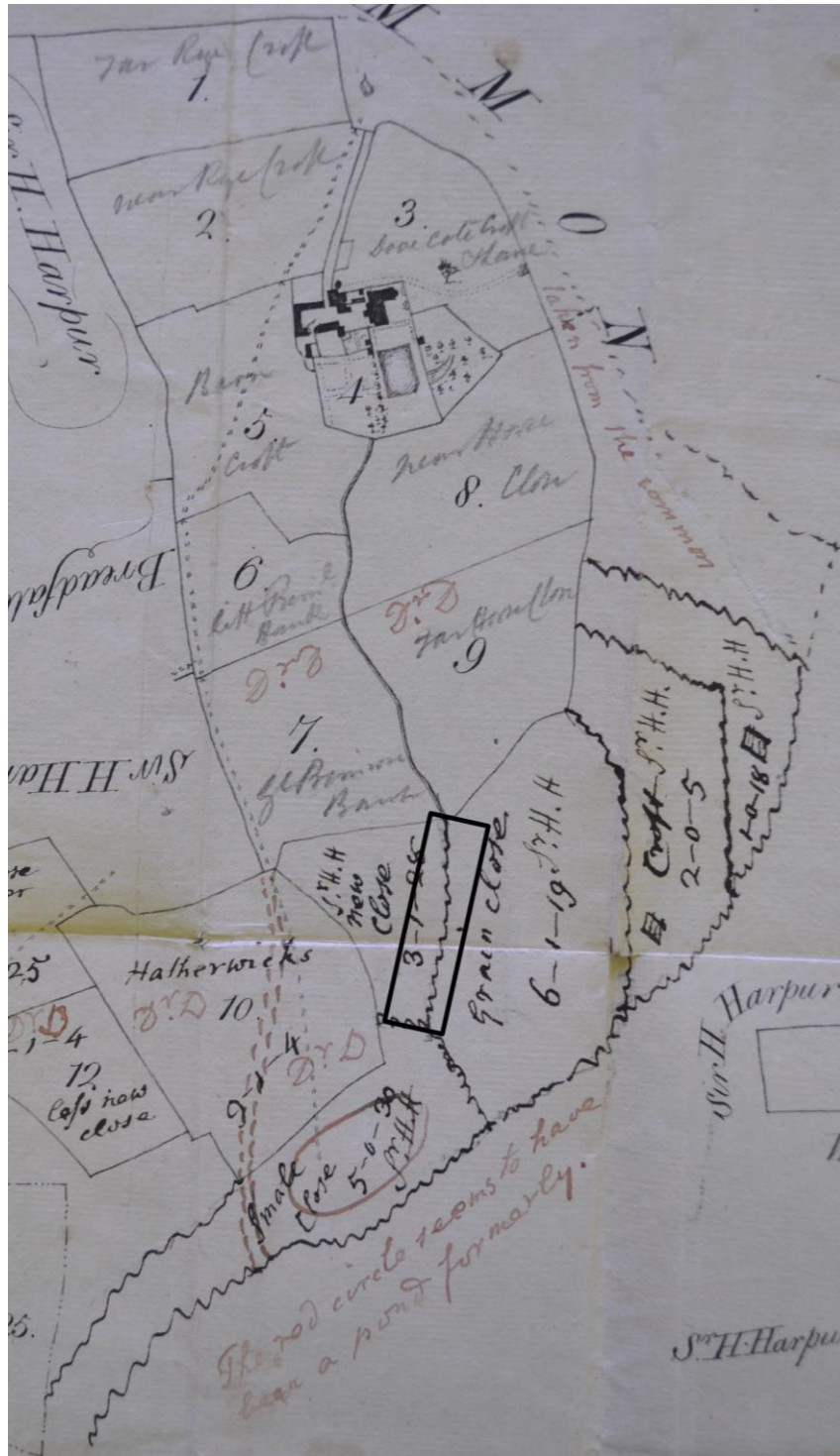


Figure 2: 1790 Map of Breadsall Priory Estate



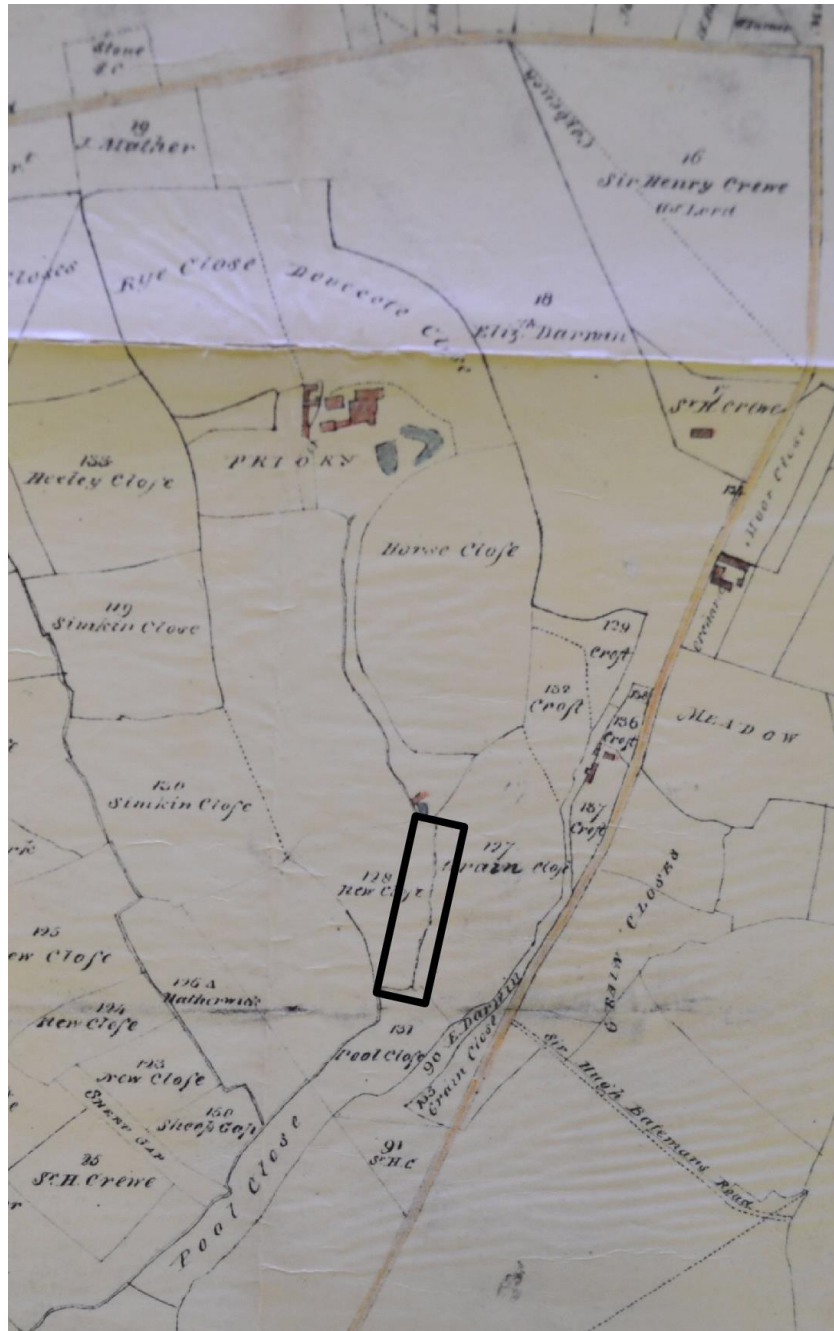


Figure 3: 1817 Breadsall Award Map



Figure 4: 1823 Plan of Breadsall Priory Estate

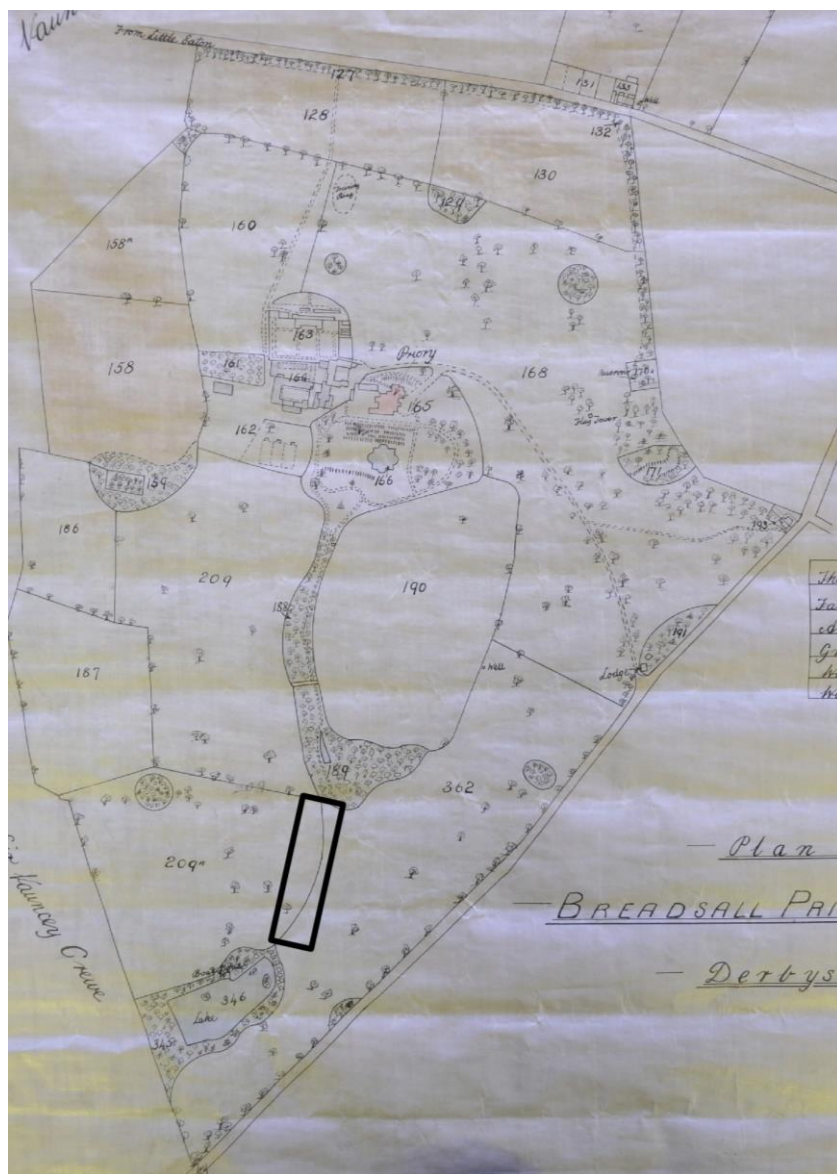


Figure 5: Breadsall Priory Estate Map 1890-1915





**Figure 6:** View SE at small pond directly south of ‘The Wilderness’



**Figure 7:** View NE at pipe and concrete housing at north end of ditch



**Figure 8:** View S of ditch running to lake, and site of proposed balancing ponds



**Figure 9:** View E at pipe draining into lake from Moor Road

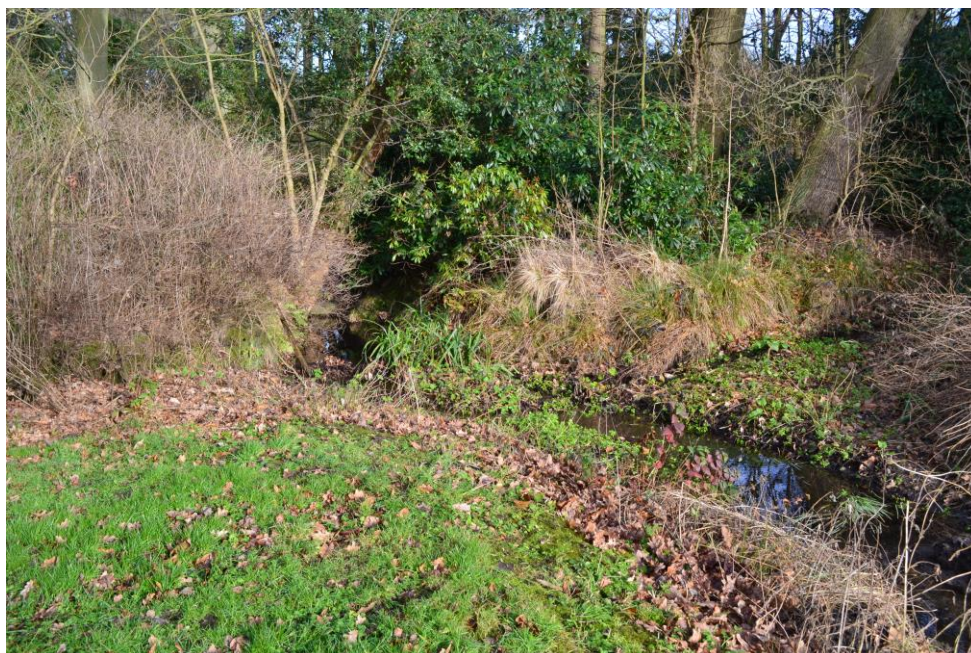




**Figure 10:** View W at emptied lake and bank reinforcement



**Figure 11:** View E of foundations of boathouse



**Figure 12:** View NE at western stream emerging from existing fishpond



**Figure 13:** View E at eastern stream at junction before reaching the proposed site of development