

**Penn and Tylers Green Lawn Tennis Club,
Elm Road, Penn, Buckinghamshire**

**An Archaeological Recording Action
For Penn and Tylers Green Lawn Tennis Club**

by Andrew Weale and Steven Crabb
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code PTB 08/90

October 2009

Summary

Site name: Penn and Tylers Green Lawn Tennis Club, Elm Road, Penn, Buckinghamshire

Grid reference: SU 9083 9394

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 15th September 2009

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andrew Weale

Site code: PTB 08/90

Area of site: c. 212 sq m

Summary of results: No deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were recorded in the stripped areas.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Buckinghamshire County Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 06.10.09 Steve Preston✓06.10.2009
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Penn and Tylers Green Lawn Tennis Club, Elm Road, Penn, Buckinghamshire An Archaeological Recording Action

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Report 08/90

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Penn and Tylers Green Lawn Tennis Club, Elm Road, Penn, Buckinghamshire (SU 9083 9394) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Chris Whiting on behalf of the Penn and Tylers Green Lawn Tennis Club, Elm Road, Penn, Buckinghamshire.

Planning permission has been granted from Chiltern District Council (CH/2007/1346/FA) on appeal (APP/X0415/A/07/2059067) for the construction of a new tennis court and club house on the site. The consent is subject to a condition (2) requiring a programme of archaeological works; in this instance this was determined to take the form of an archaeological recording action of an area strip.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Radford, Archaeological Officer of Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Weale on the 15th September 2009 and the site code is PTB08/90.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Buckinghamshire County Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located between the football and cricket grounds in Penn village, behind the houses on the eastern side of Elm Road (Fig. 1). Penn is a village to the south of the larger village of Tyler's Green and lie to the east of High Wycombe. The site lies near the top of a ridge that slopes down to the south-west into the River Wye valley. The site lies at the junction between Elm Road, which runs along the top of the ridge, and Church Road to the south-west. The site is currently covered by grass and scrub. The site is bounded by a public footpath to the north, a sports pavilion to the west and a football pitch to the south (Fig. 2) and is at an elevation of c.170m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is mapped as Head (gravel and sand) above Chalk (Seaford and Newhaven formations) (BGS 2005). The natural observed on site was yellow silty clay with flint nodules and rounded flint pebbles.

Archaeological background

During the Medieval period Penn was an important production centre for decorated tile and is recorded in a 1332 Subsidy Roll. Production continued into the early post-medieval period (Green 2003; Taylor-Moore in prep; Alqassar 2009). The tiles were traded across southern England and have been documented for use in the Royal Palaces of Windsor, Westminster and the Tower of London as well as Waltham Abbey (Green 2003).

A post-medieval tile kiln together with a building constructed from tile has been excavated at Rose Cottage, 2 Elm Road, 50m to the south-east of the site (HER 06869). Medieval decorated floor tile of the Penn type together with pottery and roof tile wasters were recovered during the excavation. The Historical Environment Record also records 13th century pottery from Younder Cottage 90m to the north east (HER 92165), decorated 15th and 16th century floor tiles and wasters at Puttenham Place (HER 00164) and tile fragments from Pugh's Wood (HER 05449). It is thought that the tile industry was centred to the north of the site at Tyler's Green (Radford 2008). As such, much recent development within the area of Penn and Tyler's Green has been subject to watching briefs and evaluations such as Cotters Barn, Elm Road (Anthony 2002); Old Reading Room Cottage, Church Road (Anthony 2003a); The Vicarage, Hammersley Lane, Tyler's Green (Anthony 2003b); Glenmore, Church Road (Anthony 2004); The Summit, Witheridge Lane (Hindmarch 2003); Marigold Cottage, Beacon Hill (Pine and Oram 2005); and Victoria House, Elm Road (Weale 2009). Recent excavation at 2 Elm Road produced evidence for medieval and post-medieval kilns (ASC 2008)

Objectives and methodology

The general purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the areas threatened by the proposed development. General aims were to:

- produce relative and absolute dating and phasing for deposits and features;
- establish the character of these deposits in an attempt to define functional areas on the site such as domestic, industrial etc.; and to
- produce information on the economy and local environment and compare and contrast this with the results of other excavations in the region.

More specific aims were to:

- Set out the archaeological background to the site, drawing together the results of previous archaeological work in the vicinity of the site including recently documented finds from the adjacent quarried areas;
- Complete a site archive of all project records, artefacts, ecofacts, any other sample residues and summaries of the context, artefact and environmental records;
- Complete an assessment report on the site archive and its potential to answer the research questions and for further analysis; and to
- Set the site in its local and regional context.

The project would seek to address the following research questions:

- When was the site first occupied?
- When was the site abandoned?
- What activities were taking place on the site?
- What is the nature of any pottery or tile deposition on the site?
- What is the nature of any pottery or tile manufacture on the site?
- What use was made of floral and faunal resources and can these be identified and assessed from a programme of environmental sampling?
- What is the palaeoenvironmental setting of the sites during, before and after their use?

Archaeological excavation at the site was initially considered to comprise two components of work; creation of the new tennis court, and; construction of the new clubhouse. In the event, the construction of the clubhouse was to have no archaeological impact, and only the area strip for the tennis courts was monitored.

Following machine clearance, all investigation of archaeological levels would be by hand, with cleaning, examination and recording both in plan and in section. All archaeological features were to be planned as a minimum objective. Discrete features were to be fully excavated, linear features sampled to a minimum of 10% by hand but with provision for additional excavation, and any deposits relating to funerary/ritual activities such as burials and cremation deposits and domestic/industrial activity such as walls, postholes floors, middens, walls, hearths, kilns) were to be fully excavated.

Results

The area of the new tennis courts was divided into two with one area to the south-east being stripped of overburden whilst the rest of the court was built up to level the area (Fig. 3). Topsoil stripping was carried out under archaeological supervision by a 360° tracked mini-digger. The stripped area was rectangular in shape of 212 sq m in area which was reduced by 620mm at the eastern extent sloping to *c.* 100mm at the western extent of the site (Fig. 4).

The topsoil stripped after the removal of dense undergrowth was very dry and friable with modern (plastic) debris. The topsoil was 0.40m deep and the subsoil was 0.21m deep in the deepest area of the site. The topsoil was a friable light mid brown grey sandy silt, with regular rounded flint pebbles. The subsoil was a hard, firm pale grey yellow, sandy silty clay with regular rounded flint pebbles. No archaeological features or deposits were uncovered during the area strip and no finds observed in the spoil.

Finds

No finds were recovered from this site.

Conclusion

No archaeological features were uncovered on site. In particular, no evidence for the production of brick or tile was encountered within the area stripped for the construction of a new tennis court. There is no scope to address any of the research topics.

References

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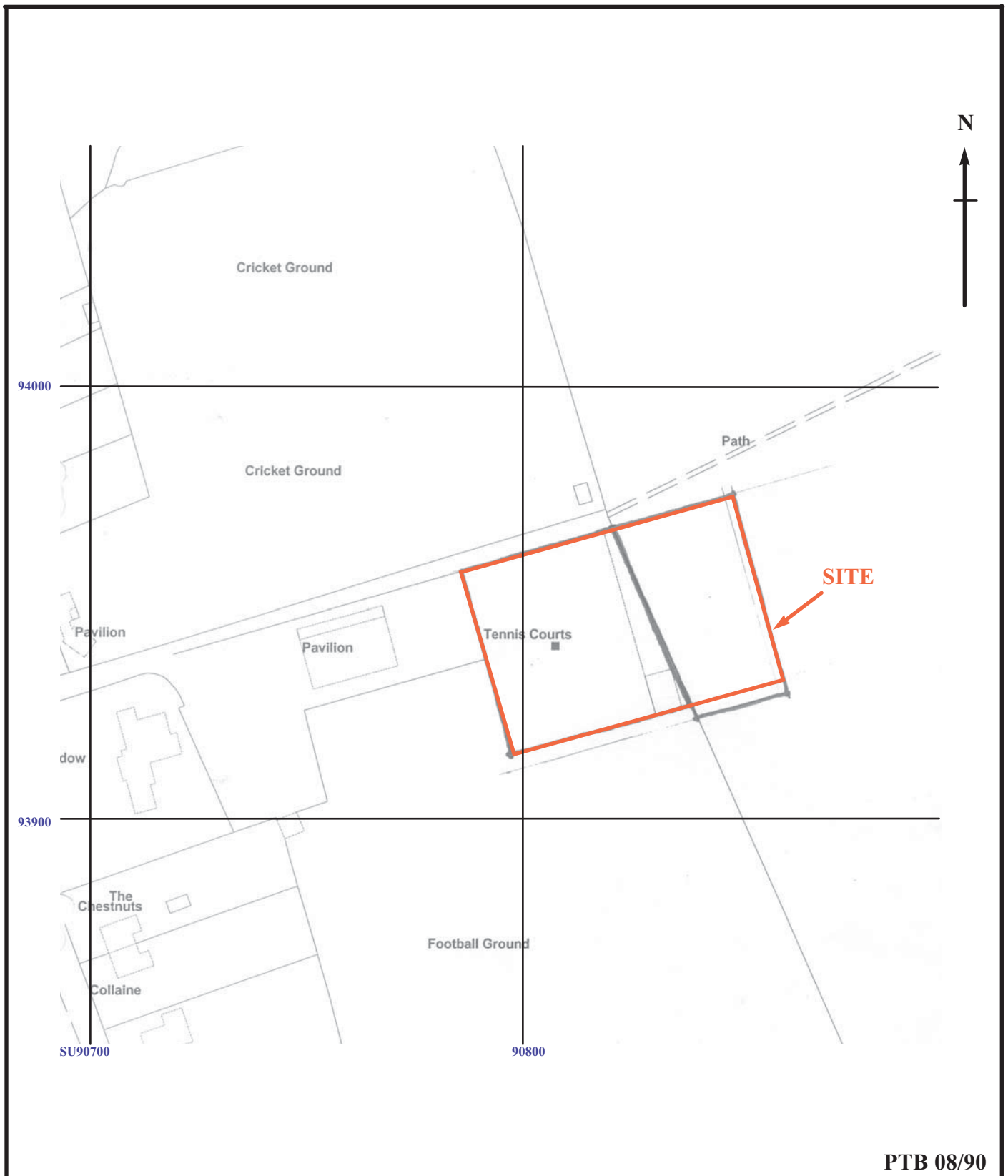


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Figure 1. Location of site within Penn and Buckinghamshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site off Elm Road.

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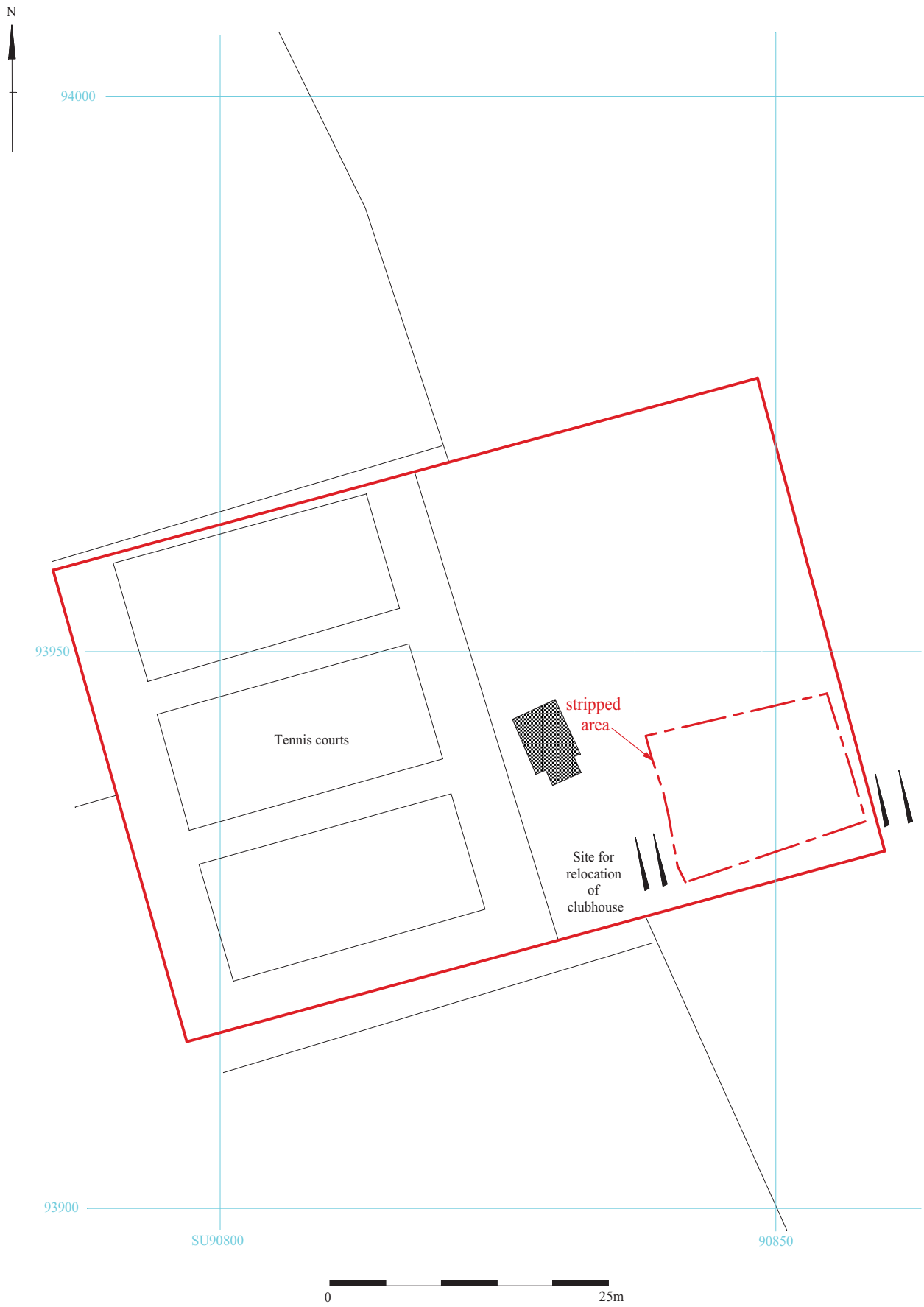


Figure 3. Location of stripped area.

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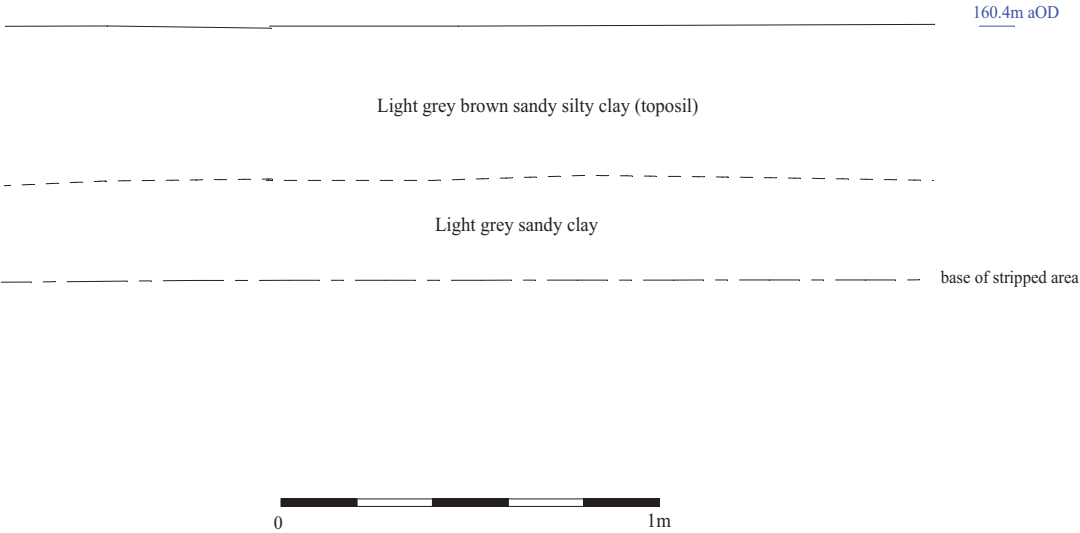


Figure 4. Representative section of southern end of site (maximum truncation).