

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**AT**

**BURNHAM ABBEY,**

**BURNHAM,**

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**NGR SU 93060 80460**

*On behalf of*

*Roderick MacLennan Architects Ltd*

**MAY 2011**

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<b>FIELD WORK</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> September 2010-30 <sup>th</sup> November 2010
<b>REPORT ISSUED</b>	May 2011
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<b>JMHS Project No:</b> <b>SITE Code</b>	2261 BMBA 10

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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services conducted a Watching Brief during alterations at Burnham Abbey, Buckinghamshire (SU 93060 80460). This included alterations to the sewerage and drainage systems (Areas 3 and 4), the moving of a fire escape (Area 1) and the cutting of a foundation for a lift shaft (Area 2). In all locations any medieval archaeology that had previously existed on the site would appear to be destroyed. The most significant layers were destruction layers associated with the post-medieval period.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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

Though not recorded at an early date, there are certain aspects to the settlement of Burnham that indicate that the town may have been of some significance pre-Domesday, although the centre of the town is located someway to the north of the abbey. Burnham Abbey (SU 6381 9670) was located on the Thames flood plains to the south of the town, but on land adjacent to the major manorial centre at Hunterscombe. The underlying geology is alluvial deposits of the Lambeth Group an old Quaternary formation (BGS sheet 269) that overlie the glacial gravels containing flint of the Shepperton Gravel. The OD is approximately 22-24m.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

South Buckinghamshire District Council granted planning permission for alterations to the listed building (ref. 09/01061/LBC). The archaeological advisors are *Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Services (BCAS)* and a stipulation placed on planning consent was that a watching brief should be carried out during the period of work to assess what remains underground of the abbey complex.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

#### **1.3.1 Archaeological sites**

Archaeological material has been found along the Thames terraces and islands of the previous braded river courses to the south of Burnham dating broadly from the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, and early medieval periods (Foreman, Hiller *et al.* 2002, Ford, Entwistle *et al.* 2003).

The settlement of Cippenham lies to the east of Burnham. The place-name was originally interpreted as *\*Cippa's* homestead (Mawer and Stenton 1925, 217-8). This relied on an unsubstantiated personal name, and it is generally considered that the name developed in the same way as Chippenham, Wiltshire, from *cīeping*, a market. Excavations at Cippenham, 1995-7, recovered the remains of a late Bronze Age cremation and significant Roman settlement of the second to fourth centuries AD (Ford, Entwistle *et al.* 157-66). The market could, therefore, be early. A findspots has been described as near Burnham Abbey, where a Roman pot was recovered (HER 0155900000). The cremation may be an outlier to the Roman settlement at Cippenham.

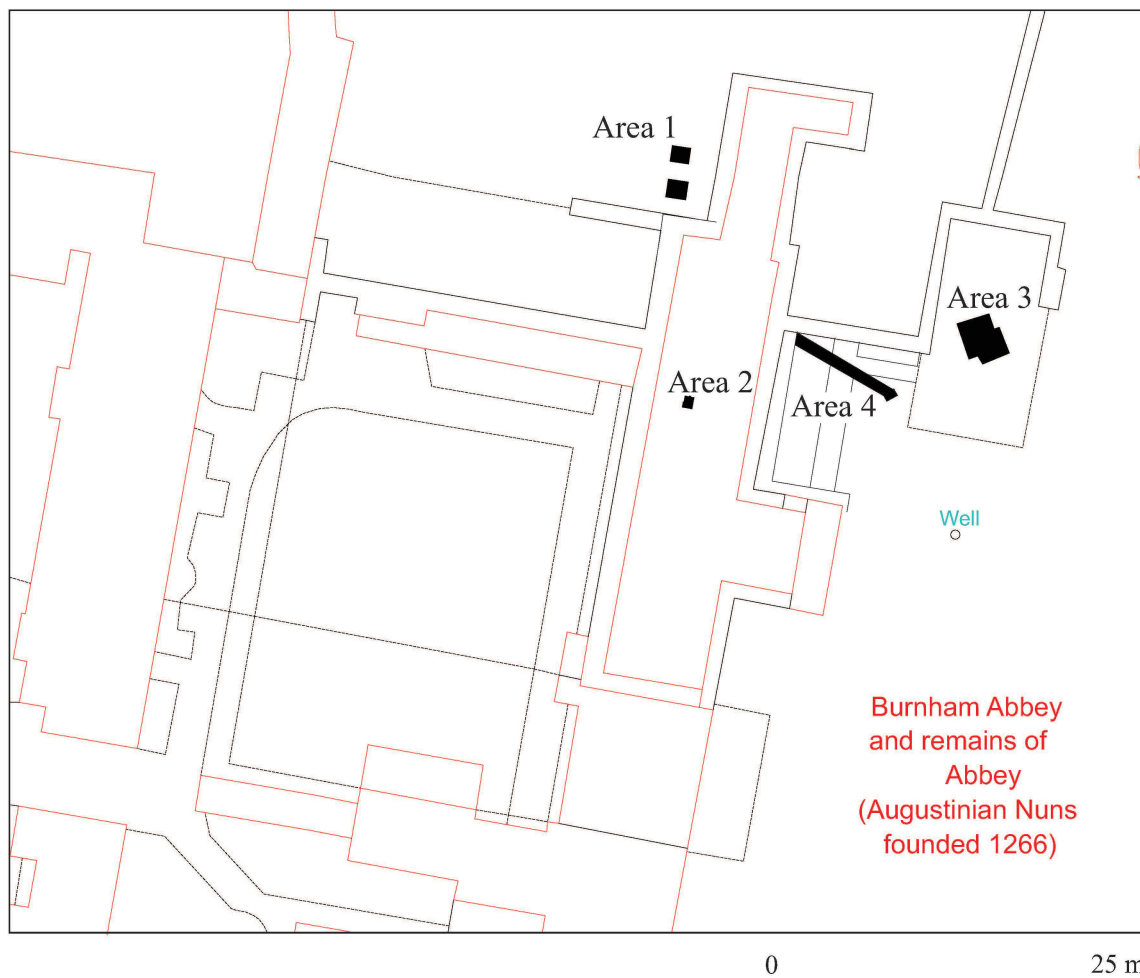
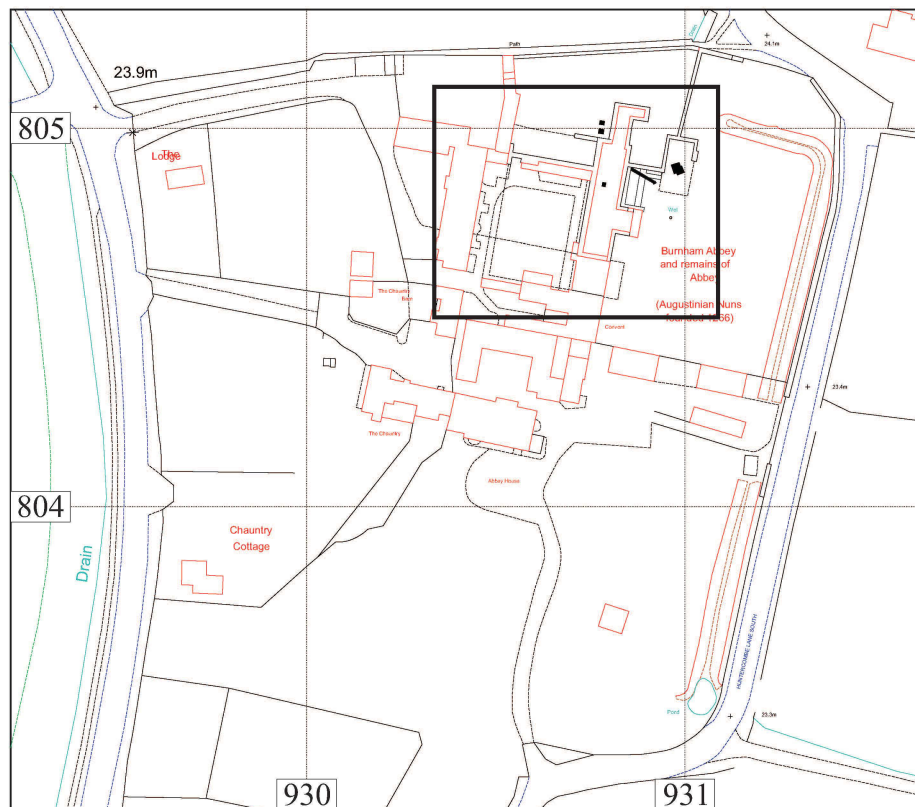


Figure 1. Site location

Excavations at Dorney have found the remains of early medieval activity of about the 7<sup>th</sup> century (Foreman, Hiller et al. 2002). The site consists of a number of discrete features that are considered to be the location of a fair or market positioned on the gravel terraces in the braded river.

Burnham church has surviving architecture from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and is first attested in historical documents in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century (VCH 1925, 179, 182). There are certain aspects known about the churches parochial holdings that indicate it may have originated in the early medieval period. The church at Burnham was the mother church of a number of recognised chapels: Beaconsfield, Cippenham, Calbrook, Boveney, and probably Dorney besides others (VCH 1925, 157, 162-3, 182-3, 225), a large territory extending from the Thames on to the Chilterns. This church became one of the most important possessions of the later abbey.

### 1.3.2 Historical Account

The manors of Burnham and Eton are mentioned in *Domesday Book* of 1086 as a holding of Walter Fitz Other (Morris 1978, 29.2-3). Burnham manor was of 18 hides (of which 3 were in lordship), with land for 15 ploughs (3 of which were in lordship). There were 28 villagers of which 7 were small holders with 12 ploughs. In 1066 Aelmer, a thane of King Edward the Confessor, held the manor.

The manors of Eton and Burnham remained with the Fitz Othere family until 1204 when the manors were divided; the Huntercombes obtained part of Burnham Manor at this time (VCH 1925, 170-3), hence the original manor of Burnham eventually became Hunterscombe Manor. The other manor retained the name Burnham Manor and passed to the Lascelles Family in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The Hunterscombe Manor passed to George Skydmore in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (VCH 1925, 170-2). In 1488 the manor passed down the Skydmore line to Anne, a daughter, who married John Skydmore, a presumed relative. The manor continued in the Skydmore family until 1606 when the manor was sold to Sir Marmaduke Darrell, but there was a quitclaim over the possession of the manor by Luke Skydmore in 1614. In 1649 the manor passed to the Evelyn family, in 1705 the Eyre, and in 1810 was left to a relation, Sayer, who gave it to further relations John and Annabel Popple. Lady Grenville purchased the manor in 1831 and in 1864 the manor passed to the Fortesue family.

Richard Earl of Cornwall (King of the Romans) founded Burnham Abbey by charter on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1266 (VCH 1905, 382-4, VCH 1925, 173) and at that time bestowed upon the abbess and the nunnery the church of Burnham (see above), along with their appurtenances (chapels, tithes and oblations), and some manorial holdings. Richard was the second son of King John (Rutton 1878, 51-4) who along with Burnham abbey founded Hales Abbey in Gloucestershire on which he spent 10,000 marks. In 1257 he became king of Germany and had a coronation at Aix-la-Chapelle and also one at Rome. The position King of the Romans was an elected title and not hereditary, at this time he was considered to be the richest prince in Christendom. After the battle of Lewes in Sussex Richard was imprisoned and on his release in thanks to god he founded the abbey at Burnham. He spent his final years 1286-72 at Berkhamstead Castle, and on his death was buried at Hales Abbey.

The seal of the abbey portrayed the coronation of the Virgin Mary (Brakspear 1903, 518-9), reflecting the dedication of the Augustine Nunnery. The first abbess was Margery of Aston *c.* 1265, who was formerly sub-prioress of Goring Priory as accounted in the Register of the Bishop of Lincoln (Rutton 1878, 67). In the foundation charter the abbey received lands of the manor and also the revenue from the markets held at Burnham (Rutton 1878, 54-5). The abbesses after Margery were Maud de Dorkcester in 1273, Joane de Audeley in 1314 and Joane de Somerville in 1324 (Sheahan 1862, 816). There was a dispute over secular women residing at the nunnery *c.* 1300 and another over part of the abbey's holdings in 1330 (VCH 1905, 382-4, VCH 1925, 173). The names of the abbesses are known down to 1539 but the other history of the abbey through this period is relatively obscure until the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with only a few periods where there is an exception.

The suppression of 1539 saw many of the buildings at Burnham Abbey destroyed. From this time the abbey was leased. In 1539 to Willaim Tidesley obtained the abbey, when it was described as the location of barns, stables, dove house, orchard and garden (Brakspear 1903, 518-9, VCH 1925, 172). William died in 1563 leaving the abbey to his wife. The widow remarried Paul Wentworth in 1594, and the Wentworth heirs sold the lease in 1610. It is Paul Wentworth who is attributed as the person who transformed the abbey buildings into an L-shaped manor centred on the east and north range of the cloister buildings (Rutton 1878, 54-5). The lease of the manor was sold to a series of people until 1692, when Edward Lord Villiers obtained it. The Villiers family continued to hold the manor until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

A number of textual sources survey which enables some of the abbey's land to be located (Mary, Miller *et al.* 1985, 95). These include a Dower settlement of 1368 of the Lady Margaret de Huntercombe. There was a parliamentary survey of the estate in 1649, which contains some useful descriptions of the surviving abbey and its estate. In the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it seems apparent that the crown had kept the abbey lands together, with only a few losses. Maps survive of this estate for the years 1800 and 1804. This information shows that the land of the abbey and that of Huntercombe Manor were interlinked and adjoining each other, and that the focus of this land was in the open fields vicinity of the manor and the abbey.

### **1.3.3 Previous Archaeological Assessments**

Archaeological recording at Burnham Abbey has taken place, planned excavations and building and service trenches have been reported on, unfortunately the detail recording or writing up has not occurred (HER 0522). The relationship of Burnham Abbey, Burnham Church, and Hunterscombe Manor, are of interest but remain largely unresolved. In medieval villages there is often an important juxtaposition between the manor and church. The establishment of Benedictine or Augustinian Houses are complex issues; sometime the mother church remained on the site of the older church; with other cases the monastery was established on the site of the older mother church and a new church built to serve as the mother church. The architecture in Burnham Church dates to the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Pevsner and Williamson 1994, 205), a date contemporary with the foundation of the abbey. Little archaeology has been identified in Burnham to date the town's foundation before its charter; this may be due to lack of work.

Illustrations and surveys were carried out of the site from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century; these were not carried out in a purely archaeological context, but are descriptive of the remains. An initial survey of the buildings and estate was carried out in 1649 when the grounds were described as covering 5 acres and 2 perches and containing two principal buildings (VCH 1925, 165-170). The buildings were described as a grange or farmhouse (to which other buildings such as barn and dovecote were attributed) and also the Abbey Buildings.

Browne Willis provided a description of the mansion house in 1719 (VCH 1925, 165-170), which stated the following.

*'The Mansion House of the Convent seems to be entirely standing; 'tis built in the shape of an L, and made use of to hold husbandary implements, viz. corn, hay and c., the tenant dwelling in the little house near it, where probably the chief hind anciently lived. I cou'd learn no account of the church, viz. when it was pulled down.'*

Dugdale's monastic study was originally produced in the 1600s, but a later edition produced a print of the east and north cloister range by Buck in 1730 (Brakspear 1903, 520-1; VCH 1925, 165-170), which showed the buildings complete at this time. This illustration matches the contemporary description of Willis, but shows further details of the architecture, such as the gable at the end of the frater, which has a lancet window around which is portrayed a chequered brick pattern. There was a hipped roof above the vestry and the remains of three chimneystacks. Four doors can be recognised entering the east cloister range, while a central door enters the frater on the north range, the insertion of the fireplace and chimneystack in the frater suggests that a first floor has been inserted.

A further two plates exist from 1786 (sometimes given 1787) by Hooper showing the abbey appeared in Grose's Antiquities (Rutton 1878, 65; Brakspear 1903, 520-2; HER 005220). Here the buildings are shown ruined and roofless.

Watercolours of 1834 (some claim 1830) show four views of the abbey (Brakespear 1903, 534-5, 538-9), two of which have been reproduced in Brakspear. The first shows the ruinous frater on the north side of the cloisters, which was a single story building with at least five large lancet windows on the north side. This tall building had been transformed at some time into a two-story building. The second of these watercolours shows the east side of the east range of the cloister buildings and the south end of the infirmary (still standing) with lancet windows.

In 1843 an engraving was made of the abbey (HER 005220).

The first antiquarian account of the building was by Rutton (1878, 55-63) who provided a discussion of the surviving parts of the abbey. His plan and description show the buildings in an L-shape around the east and north cloister buildings. The rooms are described as follows: Long Chamber, Lady Chamber, Cloister, Domestic Building, Refectory, Dungeon, Sacristy, and Still Gardens. These seem to be the names that were given to each room and area of the buildings at the time. Rutton did not know their origins but it is apparent that some of them must refer to the time of the Tudor manor. Cottages are marked on the location of the earlier kitchen and a barn on the site of the church. The name Dungeon was applied to the reredorter. Rutton was the first person to locate the church and refers to the uncovering of walls in the



farmyard. He provided some sketches of the architectural features, much of which he recognised as 13<sup>th</sup> century Early English, but also suggested that certain features still standing between the church and the room referred to as the vestry where of a 14<sup>th</sup> century Decorated style that he suggested was of 1338. Thus the church was one of the later features to be built on the site.

The major investigation of the abbey was carried out in 1903 or before by Brakspear (1903, 517-40, Mary, Miller *et al.* 1985, 94-100). In this study the plan of the abbey was assessed and the survival of medieval and Tudor period walls established in certain places amongst the remains of the farm buildings. In some area there were little or no traces of the buildings, and in certain cases new farmyard buildings had replaced the earlier buildings. For this reason Brakspear relied heavily upon the one good example of surviving medieval masonry at Lacock in Wiltshire. Brakspear's description starts with the precinct wall described as a cobwall with tile top, and he suggested (incorrectly) that the gateway was located in the north angle of the precinct. The buildings that survived were generally of flint or a hard chalk; the surviving dressing was also in a hard chalk. The design of the church (of which very little stood) was interpreted as an aisle less parallelogram as at Lacock. The drawings he produced, though primarily of a 13<sup>th</sup> century Early English style also had some more decorated additions. One of the side altars in this church was known to have been dedicated to Saint Catherine. Bells were mentioned in the suppression survey of 1539; there was therefore a belfry or bell tower, the location of which is unknown. The cloister was described as 72ft square with the remains of a covered alleyway. The buildings to the east of the cloister were the best surviving and included the probable vestry, chapter house, parlour and warming house. Architectural features noted in the vestry included a perfect lancet window and a doorway entered from the cloisters. The entrance to the chapter house was also from the cloister, with the door containing 13<sup>th</sup> century Early English detail. Early English lancet windows also survived. A further wide doorway from the cloister entered the parlour and warming house. There was no known partition between these two rooms, but architectural features were noted that included a lancet window with splay and a further with a segmental rerearch. Over these two rooms was the dormer for which there are seven blocked windows above the cloister. The dormer was an odd L-shaped building with the lower story connected to the warming room. The architectural features that survived also contained wide segmental arches. The north range of the cloister buildings contained the frater or dining hall, the north wall no longer stood but had been recorded on a watercolour of 1830 (see above). Only fragments of the medieval buildings survived in the western range of the cloister buildings. Using Lacock as his blue print he suggested that the abbesses lodgings and a kitchen would have been located in this part of the abbey. Surviving architectural features included the remains of two lancet windows in the kitchen. Beyond the east range of the cloister was the remains of the infirmary, for which the entrance had been located in the south end of the west wall. To the east of this building it was suggested that there had been a small chapel or a kitchen.

A number of architectural assessments have been carried out on the surviving structures of Burnham Abbey in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but these essentially draw upon the work of Brakspear. These later studies were carried out by the RCHME (1912, 73-4), the Department of the Environment (DOE 1985, 81-86), and the Buildings of England Series (Pevsner and Williamson 1994, 206-209). The general opinion is that the structure dates from 1266, the later 13<sup>th</sup> century, 16<sup>th</sup> century, with additional 20<sup>th</sup> century phases, there is little variation in these accounts. The listed buildings on the

abbey precinct and adjacent to that include Burnham Abbey, the barn at Burnham Abbey, the boundary walls at Burnham Abbey, a barn at Lake End House, 2 barns at lake End Farm, the Tithe Barn on Lake End Road, the walls in the garden of Huntercombe Manor, Huntercombe Manor, ruins at Huntercombe Manor, and Huntercombe Farmhouse. Burnham Abbey and Huntercombe Manor are Grade I listed building while everything else is Grade II.

Further research was carried out at Burnham Abbey in 1916 and a typed written account produced (HER 005220).

A survey of medieval floor tiles from Buckinghamshire incorporated what little was known from Burnham Abbey (Hohler 1946, 1-19, HER 005220). The surviving tiles from the abbey site are located in the Maidenhead Museum and in the Duke of Rutland's Collection.

In 1963-4 excavations were carried out when a new building was inserted on the south side of the cloister garth (HER 005220). This building was located in the area where the main abbey church was believed to be located. A total of 10 trenches or sondages were located across the site. The area across the new build was levelled by about 0.3m and further trenches and sondages were cut a further 0.6m below this level. In Trench A the remains of a crumbling chalk wall was uncovered, it was near the corner of the building but it was impossible to determine if the corner had had two buttresses. Trench B produced nothing of interest. Trench C uncovered remains of the south wall of the church evident in section. Trench D produced stratified deposits within the church, the stratigraphy reads as though no surviving layers existed and that this was just a series of destruction layers. Trench F uncovered one of the walls of the church or a buttress of that building. Sondage M was excavated to take a soakaway; the deposits in the section were layers of chalk, earth, chalk and earth. Trench G crossed the wall of the church and two sections were drawn for inside and outside the church. Trench H produced two different stratigraphic sequences; one of these was concerned with the last 4ft at the western most end of the trench, which implied a different series of events. Trench J was not observed but was located in a position to be located on the corner buttresses on the west end of the church. Sondage N was excavated for a further soakaway. This also uncovered the remains of a wall. Sondages P and Q were not observed.

Further excavations in 1963 were carried out to the chapter house in the east range (Mary, Miller et al. 1985, 99). Here a number of burials were uncovered.

In 1974 work was carried out on the East Range of buildings (Mary, Miller et al. 1985, 98-99). The vestry was re-floored, and during this process a sondage 1m-1 1/2m was opened up that identified a foundation of chalk blocks laid in courses like bricks. Work in the warming room found that the fireplace was placed on blocks of greenstone, believed to have come from Reigate, which were set on tile and this was set on flint bonded by mortar.

In 1983-4 excavations uncovered the remains of burials and walls (HER 005220). A typed account and written transcript along with plans was deposited with the historic environment record (HER) at Buckinghamshire County Council. D D and D M Miller provided a summary of the reasons for the excavations and what was observed is provided. The reason for the watching brief was due to the insertion of drainage

trenches of which three runs are described and also excavations in a field called the paddock. The remains of two medieval walls and a lens of chalk were observed to the east of the infirmary, both walls were on a chalk foundation and spaced 4m apart. The chalk lens aligned with the south wall of the infirmary. The remains of a wall to the east of the infirmary wall were uncovered underneath a yew-tree hedge. Only one of the faces of this wall was uncovered but it was constructed of chalk blocks laid onto the natural gravel. Further parts of the east wall of the infirmary (medieval with Tudor rebuild) were uncovered (Mary, Miller *et al.* 1985, 98). The insertion of the new fireplace was probably required when the single-story building was turned into a two-storey structure. Medieval walls were located under the Tudor fireplace, but no medieval wall was located between the infirmary and adjoining chapel and it is probable that they were an open structure. A description of butting walls in the infirmary is given, including that of the wall between the Infirmary and the East Cloister range. No evidence of the east wall of the infirmary was found, which may be due to disturbance from previous services or the shallow nature of the trench. The remains of a moat were identified in the paddock, suggesting the original boundaries of the medieval site do not conform totally with the outline of the present land boundaries.

A brief synthesis of the sporadic trenching and sondages dug during the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was produced in 1985 (Mary, Miller *et al.* 1985, 94-100). Here accounts were made of the work in the early 1960s and the 1970s primarily on the Infirmary, the East Cloister range, the Kitchen, and the Reredorter. The major concern of the article was to correct inconsistencies in the account of Brakspear and his investigations of 1903 and before, and to hypothesise on the development of the abbey complex. This primarily concerned the apparent irregularities in the laying out of the precinct. The moat is evident on three sides of the present complex, to the east and west the precinct boundary walls runs along the edge of the moat, while to the north it is located some 15m from its northern edge. The parliamentary survey (of 1649) indicates that there was a moat to the south of the site and that the gatehouse was located in this boundary as opposed to the north boundary proposed by Brakspear. It was also noted that the Reredorter and Kitchen lie across the line of the northern part of the moat, but their axis and alignment to the rest of the building has been altered to accommodate the integration of the moat's course. This led to the suggestion that the moat was part of the earliest development of the site and predated the construction of the abbey in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It was suggested that the moat was connected into a stream system and that the moat was originally constructed for the original manor of Burnham and that this was granted to the abbey, with the new Hunterscombe manor being built alongside the abbey development. One drawback noted with this proposal is that no earlier material has as yet been recovered from the site of the abbey other than that of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

A written transcript of the work carried out in May 1992 is as follows (HER 005220):

*'A trench 0.5m wide and 1m deep was excavated from the modern offices/kitchen wall from the replacement of a leading main water pipe (laid in 1915). The base of a medieval chalk wall was exposed 5.8m from the offices/kitchen wall and 2.7m from the modern gatehouse (estimated to be 7m south of the church wall and 18m from the east end of the church). The west face of the wall had been damaged by the mechanical excavator, the exposed surface showed that the chalk blocks had been set in mortar and were probably shaped and laid in courses but a larger area would need*

*to be exposed to confirm this. (Previous work has shown that the foundations of the main range were built of regular shaped chalk blocks laid in courses whereas the foundations of the chapel attached to the infirmary were built of rubble chalk blocks of irregular shape and size). The east face of the wall was damaged by the time William Horsley built the gate house in 1962 and pieces of broken brick had been inserted to strengthen the surviving portion when they used it to support a drain pipe, robbing the bottom of the trench indicated the wall originally was 0.9m thick. The ground to the east of the wall had been disturbed in the past and back filled partly with builder's rubble (including standard bricks). Construction work in the past had revealed a number of burials including a lead coffin in the area to the south of the church leading to the suggestion that the wall may have been the cemetery boundary.'*

A small plan and section sketch are produced also.

Further sondages were dug at the abbey in 1993 (HER 005220).

An account of an exposed wall was produced in 1995 (HER 005220).

The insertion of a water and sewage treatment pipe to the north of Burnham Abbey in or before 1998 identified undated walls of structures outside the precinct (Rawlings 1998). The wall survived to a height of 0.5m while 1.5m in length was uncovered aligned approximately north to south and sealed below successive layers of road metalling. The report suggested that the wall may have been a boundary wall of the abbey or Huntscombe Manor, although part of a structure or settlement could not be ruled out as the remains were only noted in a narrow strip.

## **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.

In particular:

- In particular to record the potential for features relating to the earlier phases of the medieval Abbey.

## **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* (BCAS) the archaeological advisors to South Buckinghamshire District Council. 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 of Field Archaeologists (1994).

### **3.2 Methodology**

An archaeologist monitored the course of alterations to the fire escape (Area 1), the insertion of the lift shaft base (Area 2), the alteration to the sewage system (Area 3), and the alterations to the drainage system (Area 4). The architect ensured that with other areas proposed for below ground disturbance that alternative arrangements could be made.

## **4 RESULTS**

Renovation work at Burnham abbey saw the disturbance of the ground in four areas, labelled here 1, 2, 3, and 4. In only one of these cuts was the excavation deep and subsequently uncovered deposits of the Palaeolithic and post-Palaeolithic. Subsequent deposits are post-medieval in date relating to the destruction of the abbey and its conversion to a manor house and the re-founding of the abbey.

### **4.1 Palaeolithic**

In area 3 the earliest deposits was a Palaeolithic layer (310) a highly compact yellow sand layer of an unknown depth, which was sealed by a layer (309) with a compact yellow brown sand and gravel matrix 0.85m deep. This latter deposit had major components of flint inclusions. None of the flints were noted as being worked, although it should be noted that this layer may have the potential for worked material due to the flint contents.

### **4.2 Post-Palaeolithic**

The Palaeolithic deposits were sealed by a Holocene alluvial deposit (308) which was a highly compact yellow brown silt clay 0.5m deep.

### **4.3 Post-Medieval**

In area 3 layer (303) was a highly compact yellow brown clay deposit that sealed the top of (308). This deposit had numerous inclusions of chalk lumps, ceramic building material in the form of brick and tile, and also a mortar make-up. The deposit was 0.25m deep and must represent a destruction layer associated with the abbey in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century or construction layers of the post-medieval manor house. This deposit was also evident in other areas as (402) and (203), in the former of these the deposit was just reached and in the latter of these it was cut into by 0.1m.

The finds from these deposits included 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century brick and also blue bottle glass of a post-medieval date.

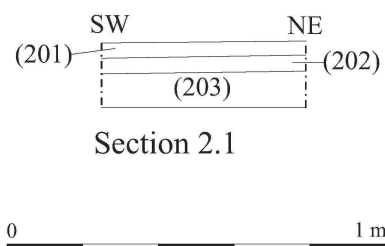


Figure 2. Area 2 plan and section

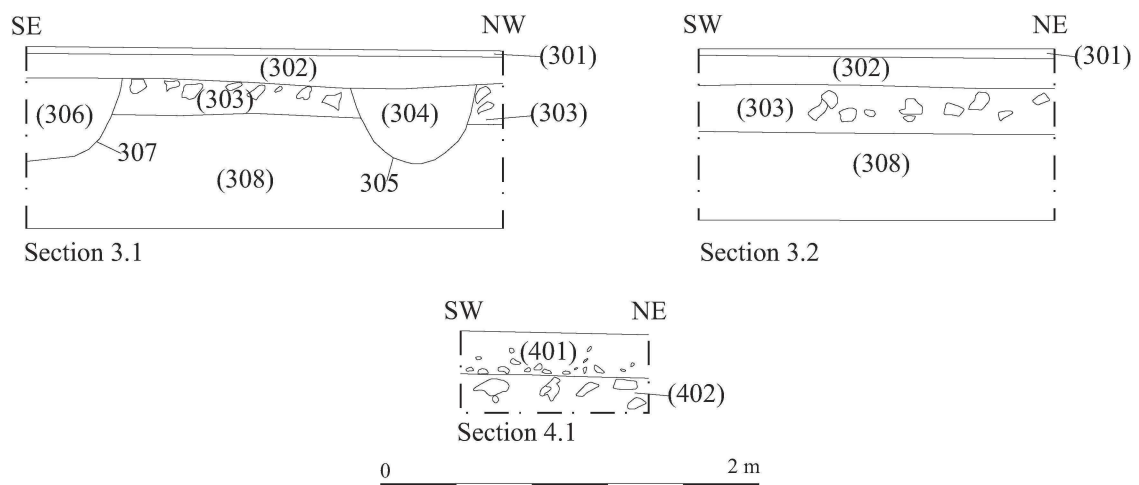
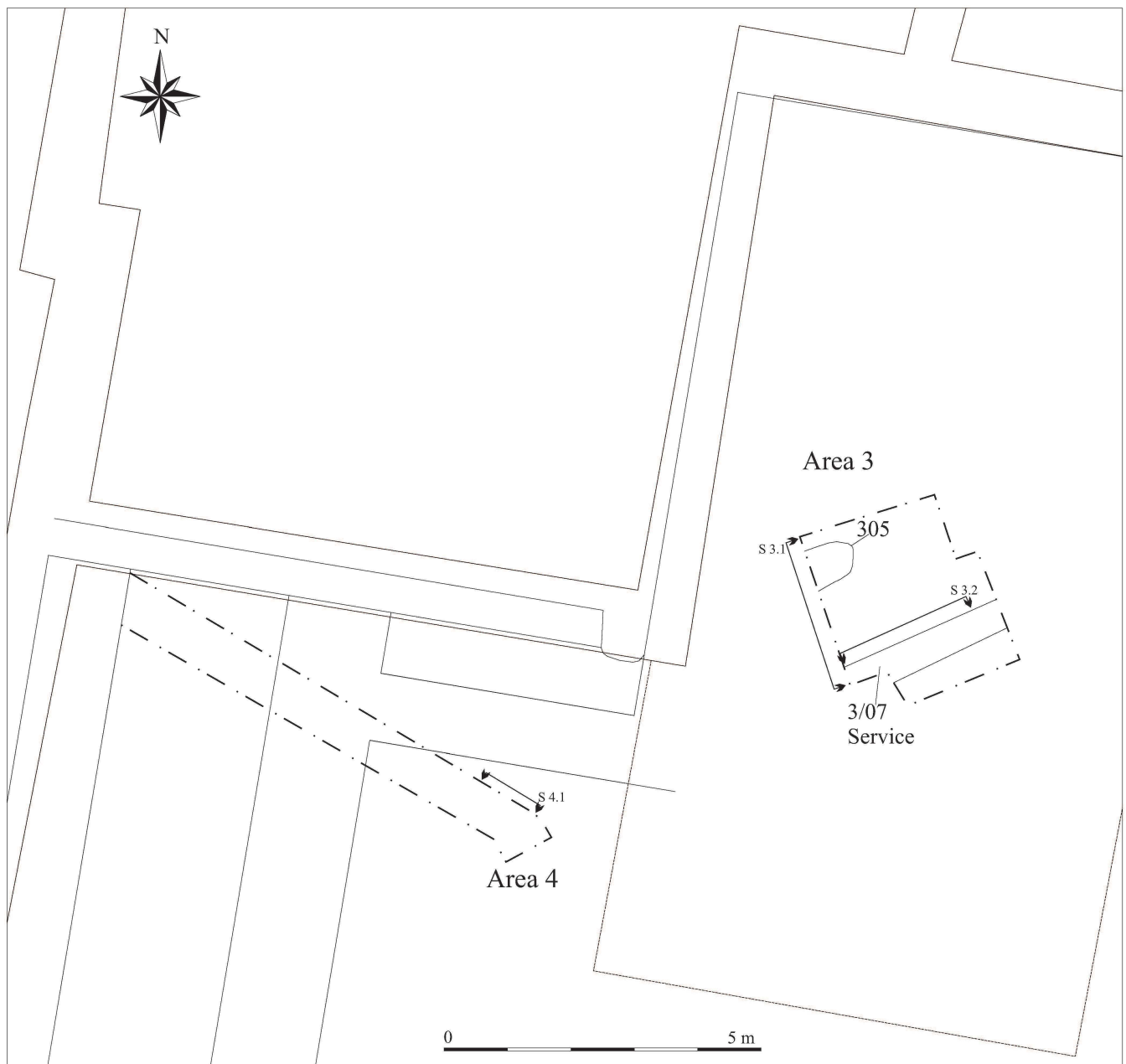


Figure 3. Areas 3 & 4 plans and sections 12

#### **4.4 20<sup>th</sup> century**

In area 3 the destruction layer (303) was cut by two linear service trenches. Trench 307 was 0.45m deep and approximately 0.6m wide. The sides were steep and the base rounded. The fill (306) was a loose black yellow pea gravel. The second cut 305 was a linear 0.45m deep and 0.6m wide with steep sides and a rounded base, orientated southeast to northwest. The fill was a compact brown black silt clay with some chalk inclusions. This cut terminated in the excavated area. This seems to have been a cut of a service trench that was later abandoned and refilled; it was probably on a wrong alignment.

In Trench 1 the top of a subsoil (102) was reached. This deposit was a moderately compact brown yellow silt clay. This subsoil was sealed by a topsoil (101) a moderately compact brown silt clay 0.28m deep. This topsoil was also apparent in area 4 as (401).

In area 4 a cut 405 was evident for the course of the present path, which cut into the topsoil. The fill of this cut was (404) that was comparable to (302) in area 3. In the latter of these cases this deposit covered the service trench cuts 307 and 305. This deposit was a red sand and sandstone aggregate. Both deposits this was sealed by a pea gravel layer (403 & 301).

The post-medieval destruction layer (203), in area 2, was sealed by deposit (202) a compact pink yellow sand mortar. This had inclusions of daub and tile and was 0.025m deep. The date of this mortar is unknown but is assumed here to be the bedding layer for the parkae tiles (201) the floor of the present abbey.

### **5 FINDS**

#### **5.1 Ceramic Building Material**

Samples of ceramic building material were taken from two contexts (303) and (402), as these were only samples no weights are given, as they would not be representative of the true content of the deposit. The three tile samples from (303) are all basically red fabrics but with variations in depth of colour and type. Two were orange red fabrics with a tile depth of 17mm and 13mm. The narrower tile had a finer and paler paste. The darker and more course fabric contained some blue vitrification. All tiles were of a post-medieval date.

The sample bricks from deposit (303) were also not particularly informative, and only in one case was a complete brick recovered. The fragmentary bricks were both hand made with the narrower brick being 44mm in depth. The fabric was a purple red with flint inclusions and a vitrified blue colour at the end. The blue colouring is associated with 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century buildings in the area, but the depth of this brick is more in keeping with the early post-medieval bricks used to rebuild parts of the infirmary. The second brick had a depth of 48mm and a width of 115mm. The fabric was a pale orange red with flint inclusions. The brick could be later medieval to post-medieval in date, but an early post-medieval date is more likely. The last full brick was 239mm x 105mm x 66mm, with a blue purple fabric becoming yellow on the exterior. There is an attempt on this brick to create an early frog, hence a 19<sup>th</sup> century date is most appropriate.



The remaining tile fragment came from context (402) and is an orange red fabric similar to the first tile described from context (303) being 13mm in width.

## **5.2 Pottery**

Pottery was recovered from only one context (203) this was a red-earthenware fabric which is difficult to date other than to a period from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The finds were only fragmentary in nature and were not retained due to this.

## **5.3 Glass**

Deposit (203) also produced a very fragmentary piece of blue bottle glass. Such glass was produced in Bristol and is again a product of the later post-medieval period and is probably not older than the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

The fieldwork by John Moore Heritage Services determined that in the areas uncovered no significant archaeological remains were identified. A proposed wall line in area D was not seen due to the depth of the drainage trench. The most significant deposits were destruction layers of the first abbey or construction layers of the post-medieval mansion. These deposits sound very much like the descriptions encountered in the early excavations, some of which were claimed to mark the line of earlier walls of the abbey. The destruction deposits cover a wide area and it cannot necessarily be assumed that these destruction deposits mark the lines of earlier walls.

## **7 ARCHIVE**

### **Archive Contents**

The archive consists of the following:

#### Paper record

The project brief  
Written scheme of investigation  
The project report  
The primary site record

#### Physical record

Finds

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the County Museums' Store.

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