



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

FOR

CHAPMANS LANE RISING MAIN.

CHAPMANS LANE AND TRAM HILL, BRILL

SP 6547 1495 to 6561 1438

On behalf of

Thames Water Utilities Ltd

AUGUST 2006

REPORT FOR

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Summary

A watching brief was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services during the renewal of the Chapmans Lane Rising Main. No archaeological remains were disturbed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The replacement rising main ran along the east end of Chapmans Lane from SP 6547 1495 to the junction of Tram Hill and then northwards along Tram Hill to a point just south of the junction with the lane to Norcotts Kiln Cottages at SP 6561 1438. Except for the new pumping well at the western end of the length along Chapmans Lane the work was within the highway, on the north side of Chapmans Lane and the west side of Tram Hill.

1.2 Planning Background

Thames Water laid a new rising main along the part of Chapman's Lane and Tram Hill. Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) advised that an archaeological watching brief should be carried out during the work. Along Chapmand Lane the geology was Kimmeridge Clay capped by Portland Formation limestone at the west end thinning out to nothing c. 25 west of the junction with Tram Hill. The Kimmeridge Clay continued up Tram Hill to SP 6556 1467 where it changed to Portland Formation clayey sands and gravels. By SP 6556 1437 the geology had changed to clay (presumed Purbeck Formation) before Whitchurch Sand Formation at the extreme south extent of the line.

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). 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, claypits and kilns. 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). During the Civil War Brill was briefly garrisoned by Parliament during the winter of 1644.

Little 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).

Several sites of medieval and post-medieval pottery, tile and brick kilns are known adjacent to Tram Hill and Temple Street. The most notable are designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument – Buckinghamshire 144 Brill Pottery Kilns. This site includes CAS 0576 centred at SP65661428 where 4 medieval pottery kilns were originally excavated. Three dated to the 13-14th centuries while the fourth was thought to be from the mid 14th century although magnetic dating by the Oxford Research Laboratory dated it to the first half of the 14th century. Magnetometer survey of the rest of this field (Side Field, Temple Farm) indicated the presence of other kilns and waste dumps. The site includes CAS 4394 (SP65651431) a further excavated pottery kiln.

At the bottom of Tram Hill on the west side were post-medieval brickworks (CAS 4192, SP65551489). The present house is substantially the main works building. On the opposite side of the road was a further brickworks that was started in 1922 and only lasted one season (CAS 4653, SP65621487). At SP65431436 was a brick and tile works (CAS 2498) known from the Tithe Map of 1839 and owned by Robert Hubbocks. Brickyards and sheds, kiln, sheds and brickkiln are mentioned. The 1st edition OS map marks 2 kilns. It was known as Norcotts Kiln. Again on the west side of Tram Hill at SP65591423 post-medieval pottery kilns were recorded by Mike Farley (CAS 2235). At Temple Street a watching brief and small excavation revealed parts of two medieval and post-medieval kilns. While a lot of pottery wasters were present indicating a pottery kiln works, one of the kilns appeared to be designed for roof tiles (CAS 5293, SP65521413). A further kiln has been found but not excavated on the west side of Tram Hill immediately opposite the entrance to the field containing the Scheduled Ancient Monument. This pottery kiln is of post-medieval date (CAS 6760, SP65551425).

Possible pottery kilns are thought to exist south of Temple Farm on the east side of Tram Hill where an extensive scatter of medieval sherds, including a possible waster, have been found in molehills (CAS 5681, SP 6558 1427). Fieldwork found a medieval pottery kiln, a tile kiln and 18th century ha ha. Building work in Temple Farm Yard found further probable kiln remains of medieval (14th century) and later medieval (?15th and late 15th/early 16th) date. Wasters and saggars were recovered (CAS 5678, SP6564414170 and SP6562614164). East of Temple Farm a sand pit is recorded on the 1st edition 6'' map (CAS 9052, SP6577214257). On the same map at North Lodge is a clay pit at SP655514866 (CAS 9056).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

To identify and record any archaeological remains revealed by the excavation of the pipe trench, paying particular attention to the potential for medieval and post-medieval deposits, including evidence for pottery, brick and tile manufacture.

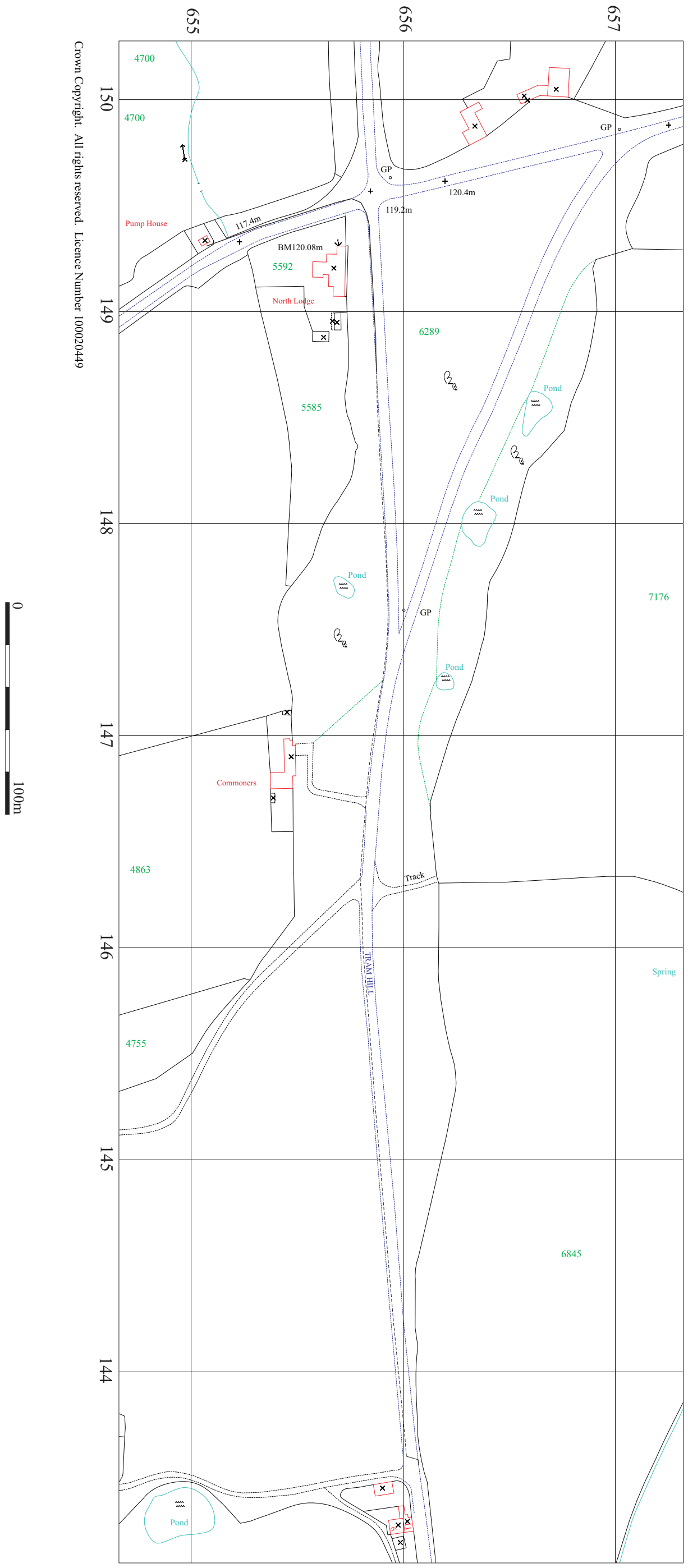


Figure 1. Site location