

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
ON
LAND TO THE REAR OF 7 & 9 TEMPLE STREET,
BRILL, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

SP 65465 14030

On behalf of

Mr. D. Harding

APRIL 2009

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) conducted an archaeological field evaluation by one trench on land to the rear of 7 and 9 Temple Street, Brill on the 17th March 2009 as part of a pre-application programme. Seven features were identified; five pits including two shallow examples, one small pit/large posthole and one posthole. Only two of these were dated to the 13th to mid or late 14th century. Of the five remaining undated features, four of these are thought to be after 17th century or later in date.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

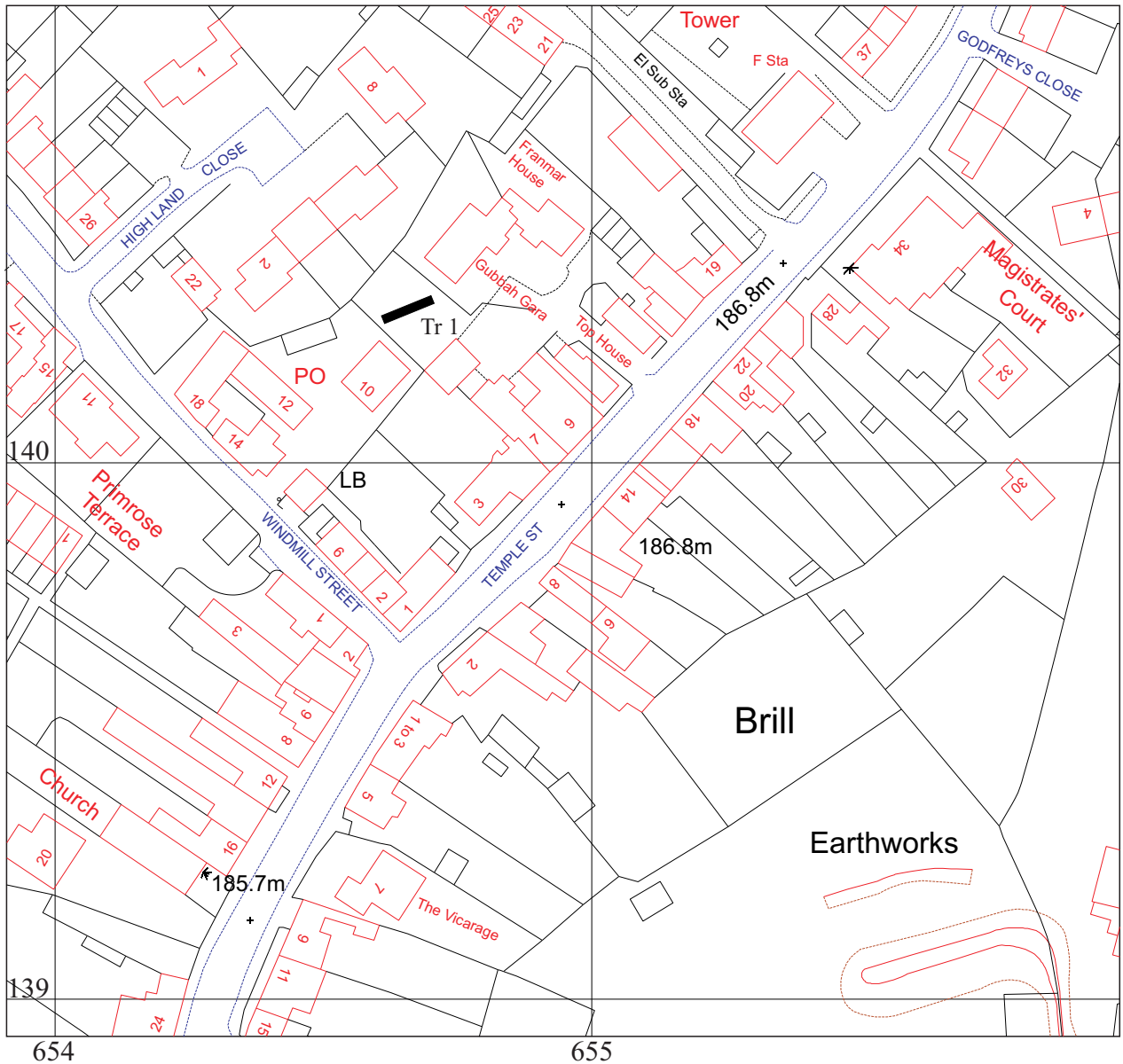
The proposal consists of a rectangular parcel of land *c.* 104 sq metres in size to the rear of properties 7 & 9 Temple Street, Brill (NGR SP 65465 14030). The site consists of a relatively flat open area of grassland bordered by various trees and bushes at an approximate height of 186.8m above Ordnance Datum. Geologically the site is situated on Whitchurch Sand Formation. This was confirmed in the evaluation.

1.2 Planning Background

A planning application has been submitted for the erection of garaging to the rear of the current properties with a residential flat on top. Due to the potential of archaeological remains to be present on the site, Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) advised that a per-determination programme of archaeological works should be carried out in order to formulate any future mitigation strategies, if necessary. This work was to take the form of an Archaeological Evaluation designed to establish the presence/absence and condition of any archaeological deposits thought to present within the site and is in line with PPG 16 and Local Plan Policies. BCAS prepared a Brief for the work. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by JMHS and agreed with BCAS and the applicant.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Brill is of considerable archaeological interest with evidence for Iron Age occupation adjacent to the church associated with an earthwork (Historic Environment Record Number 0106), which may be the remains of a hillfort rampart (Farley 1989), but are likely to be later (JMHS 2005). 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, clay pits 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



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Figure 1. Site and trench location

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 approximately 300m to the southeast (HER 2053). Similarly limited Roman finds are known from Brill and include a coin 200m southwest (HER 216) of the proposal site and a 1st century coin from the parish (HER 0582).

A timber royal hunting lodge (HER 2310) was constructed in the 11th century somewhere within Brill. The building prospered and grew with royal favour and the later parish church (HER 2192) may have functioned as a royal chapel to the palace. Royal presence had economic implications as under its patronage, the pottery industry may have been established by the end of the 12th century (Mellor 1994, 111). Evidence for the industry is found throughout Brill and medieval pottery is often found in conjunction with later brick, tile and pottery kilns (e.g. HER 5712), indicating longevity and continuity of use.

A mound considered a medieval castle motte lies approximately 100 to the south (HER 0528). This mound is recorded on the Bateson map of 1590.

Extensive remains of the medieval and post-medieval pottery, tile and brick industry are known in close proximity to the proposed development site (Farley 1979). Medieval pottery kilns have been found in the vicinity of the site (HER 5058, HER 4394, HER 0576, possible HER 5681, HER 5293 and HER 2195).

Post-medieval brick and tile works are known 1km north of the proposed development site (HER 4653 and HER 4192). Pottery kilns of the post-medieval period occur within 200m of the site (HER 5293, HER 2129 and HER 2499). Another closer one (HER 2153) was excavated directly to the rear of the site at Prosser's Yard (Cocroft 1985).

An evaluation at the east end of Windmill Street, to the rear of the Sun Inn, produced traces of post-medieval pottery production, including dumps of clay, pottery wasters and kiln furniture (Murray 2001).

The Solent Thames Historic Environment Resource Assessment for post-medieval Buckinghamshire has noted the heavy concentration of excavated pottery kilns at Brill. There is considerable research potential of this isolated industrial community to serve as a model for other early industrial settlements and settlement patterns in the region (Taylor-Moore and Dyer 2007; Green, Giggins and Welch 2007). Detailed investigation of the village might fill in the picture of the distribution of kilns through time and space. It would be interesting to know, for example, whether little Brill had an 'industrial quarter' as might be superficially suggested by the concentration of known sites in the northern half of the settlement. This pattern might usefully be related to known settlement patterns and evidence of the standards of living across the village through the study of pottery or other material (Green, Giggins and Welch 2007).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site areas.
- To aim to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of important archaeological remains within the proposal area.
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits.
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation.

In particular

- To establish whether medieval or post-medieval settlement, tile, brick or ceramic manufacturing remains are present.
- To establish whether any pre-medieval remains are present.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service's brief, a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS and agreed by the BCAS and the applicant. The work was carried out by JMHS.

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (1999) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

The trenching sample required was achieved through the excavation of one 10m long and 1.6m wide trench across the footprint of the proposal site (Fig. 1).

The trench was excavated by a 3 tonne, 360° type tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Mechanical excavation was employed to take the trench down onto the top of the first naturally occurring geological horizon, as no higher

archaeological horizons were present. The trench surface was cleaned by hand where necessary prior to hand excavation of all the potential archaeological deposits.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was produced. The trench was backfilled after recording.

Ms Eliza Alqassar, Archaeological Planning and Conservation Officer for Buckinghamshire County Council monitored the work.

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

4.1 Excavation Results (Figure 2)

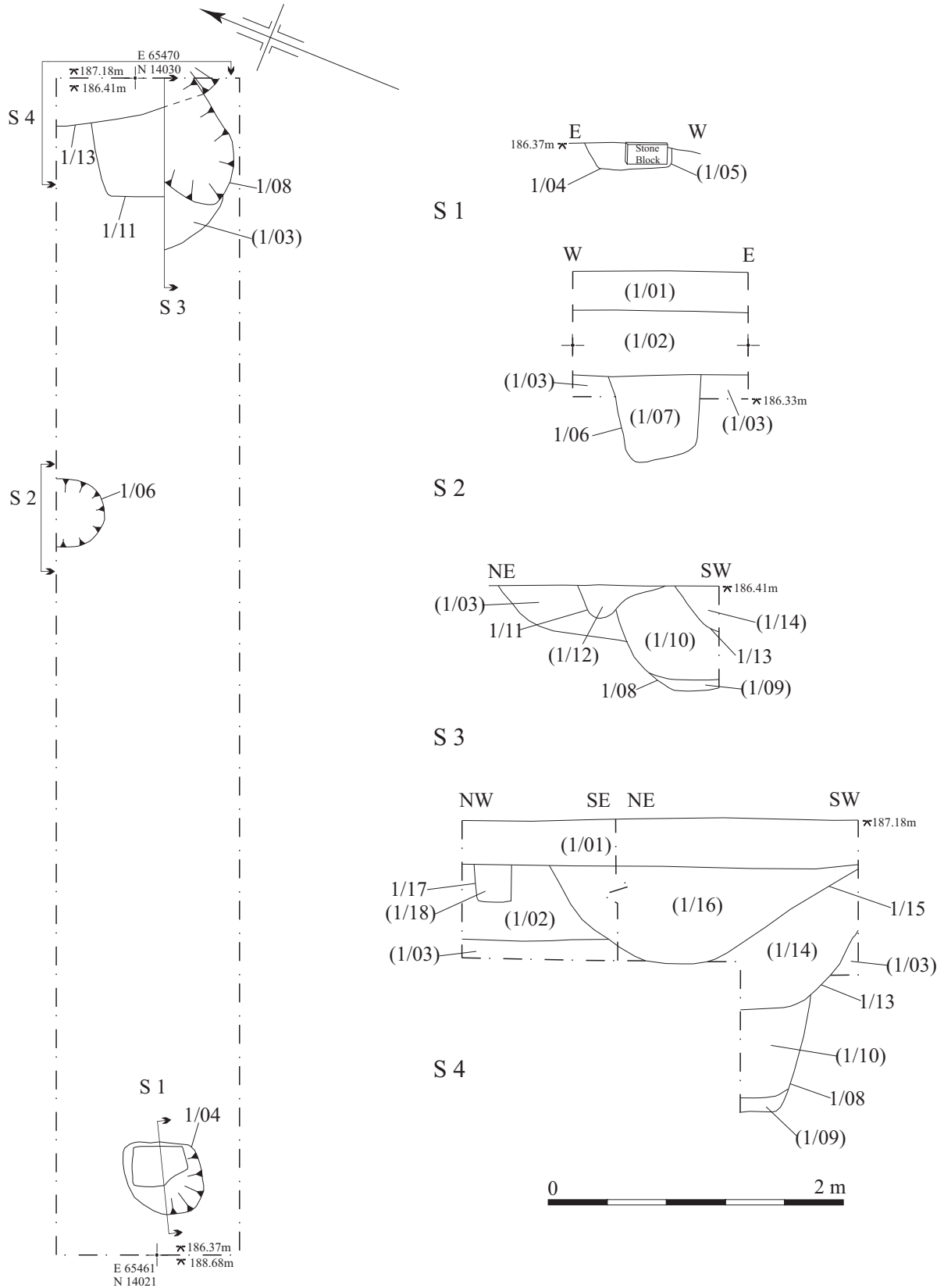
The trench was located as close as possible to the position indicated on the plan accompanying the Written Scheme of investigation. The trench was issued with a set of context numbers which, as per normal JMHS recording procedures, had the trench number preceding each context number issued. The topsoil observed as deposit (01) in the trench for example was recorded as (1/01).

Trench 1 (Figure 2)

The trench was 10m long and approximately 1.6m wide and was dug on NE-SW alignment as per the agreed scheme. Several features were noted cutting into the mid brown/orange sandy natural (1/03). Towards the SW end of the trench was pit 1/04 measuring 0.73m long, 0.66m wide and 0.18m deep with fairly steep, slightly curving sides onto a flattish base. Its fill, (1/05), consisted of a silty sand that was dark reddish brown in colour with small patches of dark grey/black. A large rectangular stone block (0.42m x 0.31m x 0.16m) was noted within the fill but no dating evidence was recovered (Fig. 2, S 1; Plate 2).

Towards the middle of the trench and running under the SE limit of excavation was a deep, steep-sided pit/posthole 1/06. This was found to be 0.60m wide, at least 0.46m long and 0.62m deep (Fig. 2, S 2; Plate 3). It contained a mid orange/grey/brown sandy loam fill (1/07). 17 sherds of pottery were recovered this fill dating the feature at the earliest to the late 15th century but see discussion. One residual worked flint was also recovered.

At the NE end of the trench a series of intercutting pits were uncovered, the earliest being 1/08. This measured at least 0.75m wide, 0.85m long and 0.75m deep and contained two fills. Its primary fill (1/09) was 0.10m thick and consisted of a mid grey silty sand and contained one sherd of pottery dating from at the earliest the late 12th century. Its secondary fill, (1/10) was 0.65m thick and was a slightly mottled mid grey/brown colour also made up of silty sand (Fig. 2, S 3 & 4; Plate 1). This fill contained 4 sherds of pottery dating the fill at the earliest to the 13th century.



Trench 1



Figure 2. Trench 1 with sections

Stratigraphically cutting into (1/10) was feature 1/11, a roughly rectangular, shallow pit measuring 0.60m in width, at least 0.65m in length with a maximum depth of 0.22m (Fig. 2, S 3). The section revealed this feature to have, a steeply sloping NE edge and a gentle sloping SW one and a curving base. It was noted to contain a mid brown silty sand fill (1/12) with occasional to moderate small chalk and charcoal flecking but no dating evidence.

Cutting (1/12) very close to the NE limit of the trench was pit 1/13 (Fig. 2, S 3). This was the first pit noted in section to also cut through the mid orange/brown sandy loam subsoil (1/02) which sealed features 1/04 and 1/06 and was approximately 0.42m thick (Fig. 2, S 4). Pit 1/13 itself measured 0.90m in depth and at least 0.35m in width and at least 1.60m in length before disappearing under the baulk. Its fill (1/14) was a mottled mid brown and darkish yellow colour and was made up of silty sand. No dating evidence was recovered.

Cutting (1/14) was pit 1/15. This feature was only seen in section. It was 0.62m deep, at least 1.60m in length and at least 0.45m in width (Fig. 2, S 4). Like pit 1/13, the majority of this feature continued beyond the arbitrary limits of the trench. Its fill consisted of a mid brownish grey clayey loam (1/16) that was noted to contain frequent charcoal fragments towards its base but no dating evidence. In the SW facing section just to the NW of 1/15 was posthole 1/17 also cutting through subsoil (1/02). This measured 0.24m wide and 0.25m deep and contained a fill (1/18), similar to (1/16), with frequent charcoal fragments towards its base (Fig. 2, S 4).

Completing the stratigraphic sequence and sealing the trench was a very dark blackish brown silty/sandy loam topsoil (1/01) with a maximum thickness of 0.45m

Five sherds of pottery and one worked flint were recovered from the surface of the natural (1/03) whilst hand cleaning the trench. Eight sherds of pottery were recovered from the subsoil (1/02) whilst machining as well as the substantial remains of one single vessel. Two sherds of pottery were also recovered from the spoil heap during inspection (u/s).

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The excavation of the trenches took place during periods of prolonged sunshine and occasional cloud.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery By Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 39 sherds with a total weight of 3083g. It comprised a selection of medieval and post-medieval wares, mostly of local manufacture, along with a single residual Romano-British sherd. A single, near-complete post-medieval bowl made up the bulk of the assemblage by weight. Some evidence of pottery waste was present, but the evidence was far from conclusive.

Due to the site's location, the assemblage was recorded using the coding systems of both the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat

1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994) and the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as some fabrics are not recorded in the former due to their scarcity in the county. The Oxford codes are given in brackets, and prefixed 'OX':

MC1 (OXBK): *Shelly Coarseware*. AD1100-1400. 3 sherds, 332g.

- **(OX234):** *Banbury ware*, late 11th – late 14th century. 4 sherds, 48g.

- **(OXAW):** *Brill/Boarstall Coarseware*, 1180-1350. 5 sherds 48g

MS9 (OXAM): *Brill/Boarstall Ware*. 1200-?1600. 22 sherds, 143g.

- **(OXAM):** *Brill/Boarstall Tudor Green type*. Late 15th – early 17th century. 2 sherds, 6g.

PM8 (OXDR): *Red Earthenware* 16th – 19th century. 2 sherds, 2799g.

A single sherd (weight = 7g) of residual Romano-British pottery was also noted. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

Brill is well-known as a medieval and later pottery producing centre. Very little evidence of such activity was noted from this site, although a small number of sherds from context (1/07) were over-fired and slightly distorted, with one also having an over-fired, burnt glazed. It is possible therefore that there was pottery production taking place in the vicinity of these excavations although the evidence is far from conclusive.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Tr	Cntxt	RB		MC1		OX234		OXAW		MS9		OXAM TG		PM8		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
	Spoil									1	2			1	77	U/S
1	2					1	18	1	12	6	48			1	2722	M16thC
1	3			1	22			1	7	2	6	1	1			L15thC
1	7			2	10	3	30			12	83	1	5			L15thC
1	9							1	5							L12thC
1	10	1	7					2	24	1	4					13thC
	Total	1	7	3	32	4	48	5	48	22	143	2	6	2	2799	

5.2 Flint (By David Gilbert)

Two pieces of struck flint were recovered during the evaluation. The first was a blade from context (1/03) that had been damaged in antiquity. It displayed a pale grey-white patina and measured 31mm by 9mm by 2mm thick.

The second was recovered from context (1/07) and was another blade measuring 35mm by 14mm by 2mm thick. It was a mid grey-brown in colour and had been snapped at the proximal end.

Obviously with such a small assemblage it is difficult to accurately date the associated activity, but these pieces are likely to be Early Neolithic.

5.3 Bone

Two bone fragments were recovered from the evaluation weighing 8g in total. One fragment came from fill (1/07) of pit/posthole 1/06; the other from fill (1/10) of pit 1/08.

5.4 Tile

Seven tile fragments were recovered from the evaluation weighing 352g in total.

Fill (1/07) of pit/posthole 1/06. Two pieces were of orange floor tile (probably the same one) with traces of red slip. The tile was 24mm thick. Later medieval in date.

Fill (1/10) of pit 1/08. Three fragments of roof tile including one with a peg hole. All red-orange in colour with grey core. Thickness 12-14mm. Later medieval in date.

U/S 2 pieces of a roof tile. Red, 15mm thick. Post-medieval in date

5.5 Ceramic building material

Five unidentifiable pieces of ceramic building material were recovered from the evaluation weighing 10g in total. Four came from fill (1/07) of pit/posthole 1/06; the other from fill (1/10) of pit 1/08.

5.6 Metal

One domed and slightly pointed iron object weighing 10g was recovered from the spoil heap using a metal detector. This appears to be the top of a bottle with a screw thread.

6 DISCUSSION

The two flint blades of probable early Neolithic date add to the limited prehistoric material recovered from the village. Again finds of the Roman period are limited and the sherd of pottery from this period adds to the two finds of coins.

The number of finds located on the surface of the natural might be exaggerated due to the use of a small excavator with a short reach rather than a true reflection of the actual surface. As the trench was fairly deep, spoil was continuously falling back into the trench and the machine was not always able to make a clean and efficient pull through the resulting surfaces. This meant the trench had to be hand cleaned before any excavation work could be carried out.

Although no dating information was recovered, the large stone within feature 1/04 could possibly suggest the feature performed the role of a post pad. However, this is far from certain especially as no other obvious structural evidence was seen in the trench with perhaps the exception of 1/06. If contemporary, these two features would be parallel to Temple Street.

Dating evidence implies pit 1/08 to be at the earliest 13th century in date, and perhaps up to the mid 14th century. Pit [1/06] is dated to the late 15th century by a single sherd of Brill/Boarstall Tudor Green type. However the other sherds date from earlier in the medieval period with several being out of production by the late 14th century. It is

possible that the Tudor Green type is intrusive and that the feature dates from the 13th to late 14th century. This could make it contemporary with pit 1/08.

Although pits 1/11, 1/13 and 1/15, and posthole 1/17 failed to produce any dating evidence, they were cut into the subsoil. The subsoil is dated to after the mid 16th century by the presence of red earthenware. This subsoil appears to be a thick cultivation horizon. The pits therefore date from after the beginning of the 17th century.

7 CONCLUSIONS

There is therefore physical evidence of activity sometime in the 13th to late 14th century before a period of cultivation which perhaps ended in the late 16th or early 17th century with subsequent pits dug at the north-east side of the site.

No information was uncovered to suggest the presence of an actual pottery or tile kiln on the site and the small amount of pottery waste does little to contradict this supposition. Evidence of over-fired and slightly distorted pottery is almost inevitable in such a location as Brill because extensive remains of kilns and their products have been found throughout the village, including a number of late medieval/early post-medieval examples.

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APPENDIX – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Date
Trench 1							
1/01	Deposit	Topsoil. Very dark blackish brown sandy loam.	0.45m (max)	Tr.	Tr.		Modern
1/02	Deposit	Subsoil. Mid orange/brown sandy loam.	c.0.42	Tr.	Tr.	Pottery.	Mid 16 th century
1/03	Natural	Mid brownish/orange very slightly clayey sand.	-	Tr.	Tr.	Surface pottery and struck flint	Natural
1/04	Cut	Pit	0.18	0.66	0.73		
1/05	Fill	Dark reddish brown with dark grey patches. Silty sand. Fill of [1/04].	0.18	0.66	0.73		
1/06	Cut	Deep pit / posthole.	0.62	0.6	0.46+		
1/07	Fill	Mid orangey grey/brown sandy loam. Occ fragments of sandstone and charcoal flecking. Fill of [1/06].	0.62	0.6	0.46+	Pottery. Worked flint. Bone. Tile. CBM.	Late C15 th but see discussion
1/08	Cut	Pit	0.75	0.75+	0.85+		
1/09	Fill	Mid grey silty sand. Fill of [1/08].	0.1	-	-	Pottery	Late C12 th – mid C14 th
1/10	Fill	Slightly mottled mid grey/brown silty sand. Fill of [1/08].	0.65	-	-	Pottery. Bone. Tile. CBM.	C13 th – C14 th
1/11	Cut	Small rectangular pit.	0.22 (max)	0.6	0.65		
1/12	Fill	Mid brown silty sand. Occasional chalk and charcoal flecking. Fill of [1/11]	0.22 (max)	0.6	0.65		
1/13	Cut	Pit	0.9	0.35+	1.60+		

1/14	Fill	Mottled mid brown and dark yellow. Silty sand. Very occasional charcoal flecking. Fill of [1/13].	0.9	0.35+	1.60+		
1/15	Cut	Pit	0.62	1.60+	0.40+		
Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
1/16	Fill	Mid brown/grey clayey loam. Frequent charcoal fragments towards base. Fill of [1/15].	0.62	1.60+	0.40+		
1/17	Cut	Posthole	0.25	0.24	-		
1/18	Fill	Mid brown/grey clayey loam. Frequent charcoal fragments towards base. Fill of [1/17].	0.25	0.24	-		
U/S	Spoil heap	-	-	-	-	Fe object. Tile.	



Plate 1 Pit 1/08, Section 3



Plate 2 Looking NE with 1/04 in foreground



Plate 3 Pit/posthole 1/06