

Florence Brown School, Leinster Avenue, Bristol An Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Planning Application Numbers: 08/03734/FB, 08/04181/F & 09/02223/FB

National Grid Reference Number: ST 5865 6972

AOC Project no: 30362

HER Event No:24700

Date: October 2009



Florence Brown School, Leinster Avenue, Bristol

An Archaeological Watching Brief Report

On Behalf of: **Skanska Construction**
200 Woodlands Court Road
Ash Ridge Road
Almondsbury
Bristol
BS32 4LB

National Grid Reference (NGR): **ST 5865 6972**

AOC Project No: **30362**

Prepared by: **Paul Harris & Ian Hogg**

Illustration by: **Jonathan Moller**

Date of Excavation: **February/September 2009**

Date of Report: **October 2009**

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

Author: Paul Harris

Date: October 2009

Approved by: Andy Leonard

Date: October 2009

Draft/Final Report Stage:

Date:

Enquiries to: AOC Archaeology Group
Unit 7
St Margarets Business Centre
Moor Mead Road
Twickenham
TW1 1JS

Tel. 020 8843 7380
Fax. 020 8892 0549
e-mail. london@aocarchaeology.com



www.aocarchaeology.com

Contents

	Page
List of illustrations	iii
Non-Technical Summary	iv
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. PLANNING BACKGROUND	1
3. GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY	2
4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	3
Prehistoric (Before c.AD 43)	3
Roman (c.AD 43 – 410)	3
Anglo-Saxon (c.AD 410 – 1066)	3
Medieval (c.AD 1066 – 1485)	3
Post-Medieval (c.AD 1485 - Modern)	4
5. AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION	4
6. STRATEGY	5
7. METHODOLOGY	5
8. RESULTS	6
9. FINDS	7
10. CONCLUSIONS	8
11. BIBLIOGRAPHY	8
Appendix A: Context Register	13
Appendix B: Oasis Data Collection Form	14

List of illustrations

Figure 1 – Site Location Plan

Figure 2 – Development Plan Showing Watching Brief Areas

Non-Technical Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at the site of Florence Brown School, Leinster Avenue, Bristol on behalf of Skanska Construction. The fieldwork was carried out between February and September 2009. Ground reduction works were monitored within turfed areas to the east and south of the previous Courtlands Building and within the building's footprint post demolition. Subsequent watching brief work was also undertaken during machine stripping for a new residential block to the west.

The excavations extended no deeper than 450mm below the existing ground surface and consequently the natural geology was only reached within two of the observed areas. Deposits of topsoil and turf were found overlaying recent made ground deposits containing glass, ceramic building material and pottery. No significant archaeological remains were encountered during the watching brief.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document is a report detailing the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken during enabling and construction works at Florence Brown School, Leinster Avenue, Bristol (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The site is located off Leinster Avenue, Knowle, Bristol. It was previously occupied by the grounds and buildings of Florence Brown School and Courtlands School. The site is bounded by the back gardens of residential housing to the north, south, east and west. The grounds and buildings of Knowle West Early Years Centre and Knowle Park Community Centre bound the site in the northeast. The site is centred on NGR ST 5865 6972 and measures approximately 4.16 hectares (Figure 2).
- 1.3 The development proposals incorporate the complete demolition of the current Florence Brown School and construction of a new school building with a temporary accommodation block in the southeast area of the site and a new all weather pitch in the west of the site (Figure 3).

2. PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The local planning authority is Bristol City Council. Archaeological advice to the council is provided by the City Archaeologist, Peter Insole.
- 2.2 The first stage in the archaeological investigation was the production of a Desk Based Assessment (AOC 2007), which indicated that there was potential for archaeological remains within the development site.
- 2.3 In accordance with the recommendations of the Desk Based Assessment and Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning (PPG16), issued by the Department of the Environment in 1990 (DoE 1990), an archaeological watching brief was carried out as a condition of planning consent (Ref. No's.: 08/03734/FB & 08/04181/F) to record any archaeological remains that might be destroyed by the development.
- 2.4 Prior to commencing work on site a Written Scheme of Investigation (AOC 2008) was prepared by AOC Archaeology and subsequently approved by the City Archaeologist.
- 2.5 During the course of the fieldwork a third application (Ref. No.: 09/02223/FB) required a watching brief on groundworks relating to a new residential block in the west part of the site. Discussions with the City Archaeologist agreed that this should be undertaken under the remit of the original Written Scheme of Investigation.
- 2.6 This document reports on the results of the archaeological watching brief for all three planning consents.

3. GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 3.1 Terra Firma (Wales) Ltd were commissioned in August 2007 to conduct a geo-technical and geo-environmental assessment of the site, by Skanska Integrated Projects. The report concluded the following:
- 3.2 The geological map of the area (BGS Sheet 264) shows the northern area of the site to be underlain by a bedrock of mudstone of the Blue Anchor, Westbury and Cotham formation with the rest of the site underlain by Wilmcote Limestone of the Blue Lias formation.
- 3.3 There are no superficial deposits shown underlying the site.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The following information is taken from the Desk-Based Assessment for Florence Brown, Leinster Avenue, Bristol (AOC 2007).

Prehistoric (Before c.AD 43)

- 4.2 Settlement in this region of Avon dates back to the prehistoric periods. In the settlement area of Bristol itself, archaeological evidence includes examples of early prehistoric flint artefacts, through Bronze Age sites and onto a number of Iron Age Forts that dot the area such as Blaise Castle, just south of Lawrence Weston and Clifton, west of the Cotham district of the City.
- 4.3 The HER does not contain any records of prehistoric features within 500m of the site, although four flint flakes were noted at Merrywood Girls School.

Roman (c.AD 43 – 410)

- 4.4 Archaeology also proves a strong Roman presence in this area, primarily directed to the large settlement at Sea Mills, but with numerous Villas and farmsteads in the surrounding 'catchment' area such as Knowle West, Lawrence Weston, Avonmouth, Brislington and Kings Weston.
- 4.5 There are no recorded features within 500m of the site of dating to the Roman period; however, an archaeological investigation at Inns Court to the south of the site recorded Roman settlement activity.

Anglo-Saxon (c.AD 410 – 1066)

- 4.6 In the Saxon period the settlement grew to the south of the main Roman settlement of Sea Mills, between the rivers Avon and Frome. The situation of the site, by a river crossing, gave Bristol its original name, *Bricgstow*, meaning 'the place by the bridge'. There is a lack of information on Saxon Bristol partly because Bristol does not have its own entry in the Domesday Book, and partly because there are a lack of Anglo-Saxon charters relating to the settlement.
- 4.7 The settlement developed into a defensive settlement with a ditch and rampart possibly dating to the time of Offa around the end of the 8th century, before a larger, stronger, fortification was built at the end of 9th/beginning of the 10th century, mainly in response to the Danes in the east. The HER contains no records of Saxon features within 500m of the site.

Medieval (c.AD 1066 – 1485)

- 4.8 The settlement at Bristol continued into the medieval period, with the earlier ditch and rampart being replaced by stone fortifications in the Norman period. The town grew through trade to become one of

the most prominent towns in England, and its growth continued into the post-medieval period with its important maritime ship building industry.

- 4.9 There are no medieval entries recorded within the HER, although the archaeological investigation at Inns Court recorded some evidence of medieval settlement activity.

Post-Medieval (c.AD 1485 - Modern)

- 4.10 The city developed during the 19th and 20th centuries to cover a wider area, although by the 19th century the port began to decline.
- 4.11 There are three features dating to the post-medieval period in the HER. Within the bounds of the development site is located the site of the 19th century Fever Hospital for Women, which was situated to the immediate east of the current Florence Brown School, and the site of Novers Hill Isolation Hospital, which was situated to the north of the school.
- 4.12 A post medieval quarry pit was located on the northern side of Leinster Avenue, and was extant in 1916.
- 4.13 The earliest map of the site is the 1884-6 Ordnance Survey Map of Bristol. This shows the site being primarily occupied by fields with the Fever Hospital for women in the south central part of the site.

5. AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

- 5.1 The aims of the watching brief were defined as being:
- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.
 - To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
 - To record and sample excavate any archaeological remains encountered.
 - To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological features and deposits.
 - To determine the extent of previous truncations of the archaeological deposits.
 - To enable the archaeology advisor to Bristol City Council to make an informed decision on the status of the condition on the planning permission, and any possible requirement for further work in order to satisfy that condition.
 - To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation in order to inform the mitigation strategy as part of the planning process.
- 5.2 The specific aims of the watching brief were:
- To determine the presence of any remains of Roman date.

- To determine the presence of features relating to medieval settlement activity.

5.3 The final aim is to make public the results of the investigation, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

6. STRATEGY

6.1 A unique site code (Accession Number 2008/89) was obtained prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

6.2 The watching brief was monitored by Peter Insole, Bristol City Archaeologist on the behalf of Bristol City Council and Andy Leonard and Catherine Edwards for AOC Archaeology. The on-site archaeological supervision was carried out by Ian Hogg, Project Supervisor.

7. METHODOLOGY

7.1 An experienced archaeologist was present to observe all ground works, positioned outside the working area of the mechanical excavator, in the normal working arrangement. When access an area was required the machine would cease operations and if necessary relocate to ensure safe access while the Supervisor entered the excavation area to carry out close inspection or record limited sections.

7.2 Archaeological recording, where not precluded by Health & Safety considerations, consisted of:

- Limited hand cleaning of archaeological sections and surfaces sufficient to establish the stratigraphic sequence exposed.
- The collection of dating evidence from *in-situ* deposits and spoil scans.
- A scaled photographic recording of representative exposed sections and surfaces, along with sufficient photographs to establish the setting and scale of the groundworks.

7.3 Records were produced using pro forma watching brief record sheets and by the single context planning method and were compatible with those published by the Museum of London (MoL 1994)

7.4 A record of the full sequence of all archaeological deposits as revealed in the watching brief was made. Plans and sections of features were drawn at an appropriate scale 1:10 or 1:20, with sections drawn at 1:20.

7.5 Staff present on site wore the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

8. RESULTS

Area 1 (Figure 2)

- 8.1 Area 1 was located towards the eastern limits of the excavation area and was topsoil stripped in order to provide temporary car parking facilities on site for both the school site and the construction works.
- 8.2 The natural horizon was not exposed during the works as the depth of excavation was limited to approximately 0.35m. The excavation revealed a natural subsoil deposit of mid yellow brown slightly clay silt (103) located towards the northern extent of the area. Two deposits of made ground (102 & 104) overlaid the subsoil deposit. Layer (102) was composed of mid light yellow brown pebbly silty clay with inclusions of pebbles, cobbles, concrete, red stock brick, glass and plastic. Made ground layer (104) was recorded as light greenish grey soft, clay with moderate inclusions of modern building materials (including red stock bricks and fragments of unfinished stonework). Both layers were limited in their excavation to approximately 0.10-0.15m deep.
- 8.3 Overlying both areas of made ground was a 0.20m to 0.35m thick layer of topsoil (101), comprising mid brown, soft, silty clay with moderate inclusions of sub rounded gravel and pebbles, and occasional CBM, pottery and charcoal flecks.

Area 2 (Figure 2)

- 8.4 Area 2 was located on the southern side of the road which splits the development site in two (Figure 2). Topsoil removal was conducted within this area ahead of the creation of the site compound for the development team.
- 8.5 The natural horizon (206) was a light grey yellow clay sand with frequent angular and sub-angular stone. This was overlaid by a subsoil deposit (204) of 0.15m thick mid orange brown clay sand with moderate sub-angular stone. This layer has been interpreted as subsoil.
- 8.6 Overlying the subsoil was made ground layer (205), a light brown clay sand silt with patches of dark black grey gritty clay sand. The deposit contained angular stone, brick fragments and china pottery. Layer (205) is likely to have been deposited as a levelling layer either for the previous ground surface.
- 8.7 Along the north-eastern edge of Area 2, set 1.2m back from the road and overlying layer (205) was a cobbled path (202) and (203) aligned parallel to the dividing road. The path was formed by two parallel rows of cobble stone. Row (203) measured 0.50m wide and was formed of cobbles laid

northeast-southwest whilst row (202) measured 0.35m wide with the cobbles arranged northwest-southeast. Row (202) was slightly raised possibly demarcating the limit of the path. The cobbles measured approximately 220mm x 100mm x 70mm. The total length of the path exposed during the excavations measured 12.0m.

- 8.8 Overlaying the entire area was (201) a 0.15m thick deposit of dark grey brown clay sand silt topsoil, with inclusions of moderate sub-angular stone, china pottery sherds and red stock brick fragments.

Area 3 (Figure 2)

- 8.9 Due to the high level of truncation caused by the former Florence Brown School Building within the southern part of Area 3, the watching brief was limited to the north part of Area 3 and the additional strip to the west for the new residential block.
- 8.10 The natural silty clay horizon was recorded as (308) a pale brown firm clay with inclusions of limestone. Overlying (308) was subsoil layer (307), a 0.30m thick deposit of firm mid orange brown silty clay with occasional limestone.
- 8.11 Cutting into (307) was [306]; a large foundation cut measuring 11.30m x 4.50m. The cut was rectangular in shape with a flat base and was filled by (305) a large concrete slab measuring 0.30m thick, representative of a former foundation for the old school building. Packed between the slab and the cut was (304), a dark brown silty clay with occasional rubble inclusions.
- 8.13 On top of the concrete slab were three brick walls (301), (302) and (303). The walls were composed of hard fired red bricks (220mm x 110mm x 70mm) mortared with a dark grey cement and measured between 1.00m and 3.00m in length and were 0.34-0.40m wide. The walls and concrete base are contemporary and represent the foundations of a previous structure possibly relating to the school formerly occupying site.

9. FINDS

- 9.1 Finds observed during the watching brief included 20th century glass, modern brick material and modern pottery sherds. The finds assemblage was recorded but not retained.

10. CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 No significant archaeological remains or artefacts were observed during the watching brief. The natural underlying geology was not exposed in all of the watching brief areas. Where the natural deposit was observed it was recorded as pale brown or yellow brown firm clay. Overlying the natural clay was a subsoil deposit recorded in all areas as mid orange or yellow sandy or silty clay.
- 10.2 Made ground deposits used for make up and levelling were recorded in Areas 1 and 2. Modern structural remains were recorded during the watching brief within Area 3. The remains are likely to belong to the previous school buildings on site.
- 10.3 A stone cobbled path was recorded at the northern limits of Area 2. The path ran parallel to the current road which suggests that is a precursor to the modern tarmac path. The path may relate to the road entrance to the Fever Hospital or the later Infectious Disease Hospital both of which had previously occupied the site in the 19th Century. Both the 1884 and the later 1903-1904 Ordnance Survey map (not illustrated), indicates that a roadway was located on site and ran roughly on the same line as the current road, leading fro the main road to the hospitals.
- 10.4 The results of the watching brief will be made public via the ADS OASIS project (Appendix B). A copy of this report will be made available to the local studies library. No further assessment or reporting is considered necessary.

11. BIBLIOGRAPHY

AOC Archaeology (2007), *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of the Proposed Redevelopment of Florence Brown School, Leinster Avenue, Bristol.*

AOC Archaeology (2007), *Florence Brown School, Leinster Avenue, Bristol; A Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief.*

Bristol Local Plan (Adopted 1997)

Council for British Archaeology (1987). *First Aid For Finds (Second Edition).*

Department of the Environment (1990). *Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning (PPG16).*

English Heritage (1991). *Management of Archaeological Projects.*

English Heritage London Region (1992). *Archaeological Assessment and Evaluation Reports (Guidelines) Archaeological Guidance Paper: 5.*

English Heritage (1998a). *Archaeological Guidance Paper 3: Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork. (English Heritage London Region).*

English Heritage (1998b). *Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: Standards and Practices in Archaeological Reports*. (English Heritage London Region).

English Heritage (2002). *Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation*.

English Heritage (2004) *Geoarchaeology. Using earth sciences to understand the archaeological record*

Institute of Field Archaeology (1992). *Standards and Guidance and Guidelines for Finds Work*.

Institute of Field Archaeologists (1997). *Code of Conduct*.

Museum of London (1994). *Archaeological Site Manual (3rd ed)*.

SPD 7: Archaeology and Development Bristol Local Development Framework (Adopted March 2006). Appendix 4.1 – North and West Bristol (Adopted Bristol Local Plan – December 1997).

United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (1983). *Conservation Guidelines No 2*.

United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (1990). *Guidance for Archaeological Conservation Practice*

Figure 1 Site Location

Fig 2, detailed...

Appendices

Appendix A: Context Register

Context No.	Context Description	Length	Width	Depth
101	Redeposited topsoil	Area 1	Area 1	0.35m
102	Made Ground Levelling deposit	Area 1	Area 1	0.10m
103	Natural Subsoil	14m	14m	0.05m
104	Made Ground	20m	5m	NFE
201	Topsoil	55m	55m	0.15m
202	Cobble stone path	12m	0.35m	0.10m
203	Cobble Stone Path	12m	0.50m	0.10m
204	Natural Subsoil	55m	55m	0.15m
205	Made Ground	15m	8m	NFE
206	Natural Clay	15m	10m	NFE
301	Wall Foundation	3m	0.34m	0.15m
302	Wall Foundation	3m	0.34m	0.15m
303	Wall Foundation	1m	0.40m	0.15m
304	Foundation Backfill	9.3m	4.50m	0.30m
305	Concrete Foundation	11.30m	-	0.10m
306	Foundation Cut	11.30m	4.50m	0.10m
307	Natural Subsoil	Area 3	Area 3	0.30m
308	Natural Clay	Area 3	Area 3	0.80m

Appendix B: Oasis Data Collection Form

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

[List of Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

Printable version

OASIS ID: aocarcha1-55698

Project details

Project name Florence Brown School, Knowle, Bristol

Short description of the project An archaeological watching brief was conducted on a ground reduction of scheme for the installation of temporary car parks and compounds at Florence Brown School, Leinster Avenue, Bristol. no archaeological features were observed.

Project dates Start: 16-02-2009 End: 08-09-2009

Previous/future work Yes / No

Any associated project reference codes 24658 - HER event no.

Any associated project reference codes 24700 - HER event no.

Any associated project reference codes BRSMG:2008/89 - Museum accession ID

Any associated project reference codes 30362 - Contracting Unit No.

Any associated project reference codes aocarcha1-53863 - OASIS form ID

Type of project Recording project

Site status None

Current Land use Community Service 1 - Community Buildings

Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds NONE None

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country England

Site location CITY OF BRISTOL, BRISTOL, L Florence Brown School, Leinster Avenue, Knowle, Bristol

Postcode BS4 1

Study area 4.16 Hectares

Site coordinates ST 58650 69720 51.4244865065 -2.594789113980 51 25 28 N 002 35 41
W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation AOC Archaeology Group

Project brief originator Bristol City Council

Project design
originator AOC Archaeology Group

Project director/manager Andy Leonard

Project supervisor Paul Harris

Project archives

Physical Archive
Exists? No

Physical Archive
recipient n/a

Digital Archive
recipient Bristol City Museum

Digital Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Digital Media available 'Images raster / digital photography'

Paper Archive
recipient Bristol City Museum

Paper Contents stratigraphic

Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Photograph','Report' ,fiche

Project bibliography 1

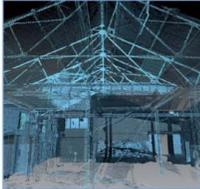
Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
 Title Florence Brown School, Leinster Avenue, Knowle, Bristol; An Archaeological Watching Brief Report
 Author(s)/Editor(s) Harris, P
 Date 2009
 Issuer or publisher AOC Archaeology
 Place of issue or publication AOC Archaeology Twickenham
 Entered by Ian Hogg (ian.hogg@aocarchaeology.com)
 Entered on 21 October 2009

OASIS:

Please e-mail [English Heritage](#) for OASIS help and advice

© ADS 1996-2006 Created by [Jo Gilham and Jen Mitcham, email](#) Last modified Friday 3 February 2006

Cite only: /dl/export/home/web/oasis/form/print.cfm for this page



AOC Archaeology Group, Unit 7, St Margarets Business Centre, Moor Mead Road, Twickenham

TW1 1JS **tel:** 020 8843 7380 | **fax:** 020 8892 0549 | **e-mail:**

london@aocarchaeology.com

www.aocarchaeology.com