

No. 51, Manor Road, Fishponds, Bristol

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording Exercise

HER: 24670

BRSMG: 2008/80



For
F. D. Pike and Sons Limited

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Avon Archaeological Unit Limited

Bristol. December 2008

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording at No. 51, Manor Road, Fishponds, Bristol

NGR ST 63172 76067

HER: 24670
BRSMG 2008/80



View of topsoil removal adjacent to north side of the
site, looking east

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Summary

The following report details the results of an archaeological monitoring and recording exercise (watching brief) carried out by Avon Archaeological Unit Limited on behalf of F. D. Pike and Sons Limited. The project was undertaken in an area formerly occupied by two garages and gardens (NGR ST 63172 76067), and was undertaken as a requirement of planning permission prior to redevelopment of the site for housing.

A detailed desk-based assessment carried out on 2005 (Townsend, 2005), concluded that masonry of possible 18th century origin could be preserved on site, together with the buried remains of previously demolished buildings, reflecting earlier post-medieval settlement in the Fishponds area.

Two structures were revealed during the groundworks: a brick foundation wall aligned northwest – southeast situated along the south side of the site and a sandstone rubble built chamber with an opening on its east side that may have connected via a culvert to the properties fronting Manor Road. The exact function of the structure was unclear, but it is possible that it may have been a type of cesspit, which serviced properties on Manor Road.

The structures identified during the watching brief were exclusively of later post-medieval origin. No evidence of earlier features was identified and no important archaeological deposits or finds were revealed during the course of the development work.

Acknowledgements

The writer would like to thank F. D. Pike and Sons Limited for their co-operation and Peter Insole, Archaeological Officer for Bristol City Council, for his assistance during the early stages of the project.

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Note

Whereas Avon Archaeological Unit Limited have taken all care to produce a comprehensive summary of the known archaeological evidence, no responsibility can be accepted for any omissions of fact or opinion, however caused.

1 Introduction and Background

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording (watching brief) during ground disturbance was requested by the Archaeological Officer for Bristol City Council as a standard requirement of Planning Permission and in accordance with the guidelines set out in PPG 16 (DOE 1990, *Planning and Archaeology*). The project was required to record all unforeseen archaeological deposits revealed during intrusive groundworks associated with the redevelopment of a site at No. 51, Manor Road, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 2HX (NGR ST 63172 76067, **figures 1-3**) for two houses (Planning Reference No. 06/01942/F). At the commencement of the project the area to be redeveloped occupied a footprint of approximately 600 m².

Avon Archaeological Unit Limited were commissioned by F. D. Pike and Sons Limited to carry out the work as above and in accordance with the relevant guidelines of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, English Heritages "Management of Archaeological Projects" and the standard aims, objectives and procedures of Avon Archaeological Unit Limited.

The documentary and cartographic evidence for the site and its environs had been collated and considered previously (Townsend, 2005); the principal results of which indicate that historically the site lay in Stapleton, a parish comprising part of the hundred of Barton Regis (the 'Kings Farm') in the County of Gloucester. Stapleton is not mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086. 'Fishponds' takes its name from the two large fishponds, annotated 'the new pooles' whose first known depiction occurs on the 1610 map of Kingswood Forest. In the 17th century, the area that is now Fishponds lay on the fringes of the Kingswood Forest. During the Saxon period, the forest comprised an extensive royal hunting ground, which was reduced to a chase in 1228 by Henry III. It is thought that two royal hunting lodges may have existed within the area of modern Fishponds. Following its removal from royal ownership, denudation of the forest occurred, particularly from the early 18th century when private owners began to extract coal, stone, and timber. At this time, Fishponds was a small rural community with numerous squatter cottages both in and on the fringes of the forest, Rudder (1779) reports that during the early 18th century there were 160 houses and around 700 inhabitants in the parish of Stapleton. Cartographic evidence suggests that the Lower Fishpond was filled-in between 1781 and 1803, while historical records show that it was drained and in-filled around 1800 by order of the Duchess of Beaufort, then lady of the manor of Stapleton, following the drowning of a boy. The 19th century saw the growth of Fishponds into a suburb of Bristol up until 1887 when it ceased to form part of Gloucestershire and was amalgamated into the City of Bristol.

The earliest map depicting the site in any detail is the 1781 Jacob Sturge Kingswood Common map (BRO AC/PL 59), which shows small fields, two of which incorporate buildings. During the second half of the 18th century the site appears to comprise houses and gardens or small fields and there has been relatively little change since. Remnants of the 18th century structures appear to survive across the site at this time including the southern boundary where buildings were converted into garages in the 1940s and 1950s.

In view of the documentary background for the site the City Archaeologist requested a standard archaeological watching brief to ensure all unforeseen and significant archaeological remains revealed during the course of the preliminary development ground work were identified and recorded prior to their destruction.

Groundworks were monitored by the writer on the 24th and 25th April 2008.

The archaeological archive gathered during the project (HER: 24670 and BRSMG: 2008/80) will be temporarily stored at the offices of Avon Archaeological Unit Limited and will ultimately be deposited with Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery for long-term curation and storage.

2 Methodology

2.1 Construction Methodology

The groundworks consisted of topsoil stripping to a depth of approximately 500 mm across the whole of the site, an area of approximately 600 m².

2.2 *Archaeological Methodology*

The writer monitored all excavations and preliminary earthmoving. Once exposed, deposits and features of potential archaeological significance were examined by hand and recorded using standard Avon Archaeological Unit Limited pro-forma sheets and photographed using a digital camera.

3 **Geology, Topography and Land Use**

The site is located at NGR ST 63172 76067, bounded by No. 53, Manor Road to the north and west, Guinea Lane and garages to the south and No. 47, Manor Road to the east (**figures 1 – 3**). At the commencement of the project the site consisted of gardens occupied by two garages, now demolished, on Guinea Lane. The site was located at approximately 60 m aOD and the underlying geology comprised Pennant Sandstone of the Carboniferous Coal Measures (OS 1962 Bristol District, Geological Survey).

4 **Site Observations – Figures 3-4, Plates A-F**

Prior to development the topsoil was removed from an area measuring approximately 600 m². The topsoil consisted of dark brown silty loam, and in the west of the site was well mixed with a gradual lower boundary over the subsoil and contained occasional fragments of late post-medieval pottery. The depth of topsoil across the site varied in depth from between 250 mm to 700 mm (**plate A**).

In the central and eastern side of the site topsoil was generally shallow up to 300 mm in depth and overlaid mixed subsoil containing fragments of brick and other building debris.

Two features were encountered during the course of the groundworks. The first was the foundation base to a wall that ran northwest - southeast parallel to Guinea Lane along the south side of the site. The wall (**plate C**) comprised a single mortar bonded course of brick, laid stretcher to stretcher measuring 300 mm wide and approximately 20 m in length (see **figure 4**).

The second, a sandstone rubble masonry built chamber (**plates A and B**) with sandstone flag floor and large sandstone caps, was located approximately 300 mm below the existing ground level. Where exposed the feature measured 1.10 m wide by 1.5 m long and had an internal width of 800 mm. The sandstone blocks appeared to have no bonding and the large caps of pennant sandstone measured up to 1 m long, 500 mm wide and 100 mm thick. There was only one opening into the chamber on the east side from which a culvert appeared to run towards the properties fronting Manor Road.

Undisturbed natural deposits were not encountered.

5 **The Finds**

No archaeologically significant finds of any sort were recovered during the watching brief. Finds of modern pottery, glass, brick and other ceramic building material were observed and noted in made ground but not retained.

6 **Discussion and Conclusions**

The watching brief has been conducted in accordance with a Planning Condition issued by Bristol City Council and a Scheme of Work submitted by Avon Archaeological Unit Limited (Young, 2007) and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

The groundworks revealed two features: a post-medieval brick foundation wall running northwest to southeast along the south side of the site and a sandstone rubble built chamber with an opening on its east side that may have connected via a culvert to the properties fronting

Manor Road. The exact function of the structure was unclear, but may have been a type of cesspit that serviced properties on Manor Road.

The features identified during the watching brief were exclusively of later post-medieval origin. No evidence of earlier structures was identified and no significant archaeological deposits or finds were revealed or damaged during the course of the redevelopment work.

7 References

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Scheme of Work for Archaeological Watching Brief at No. 51, Manor Road, Fishponds, Bristol
Avon Archaeological Unit Limited. Bristol. Unpublished Report

Figure 1

Site Location

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Scale 1:50,000

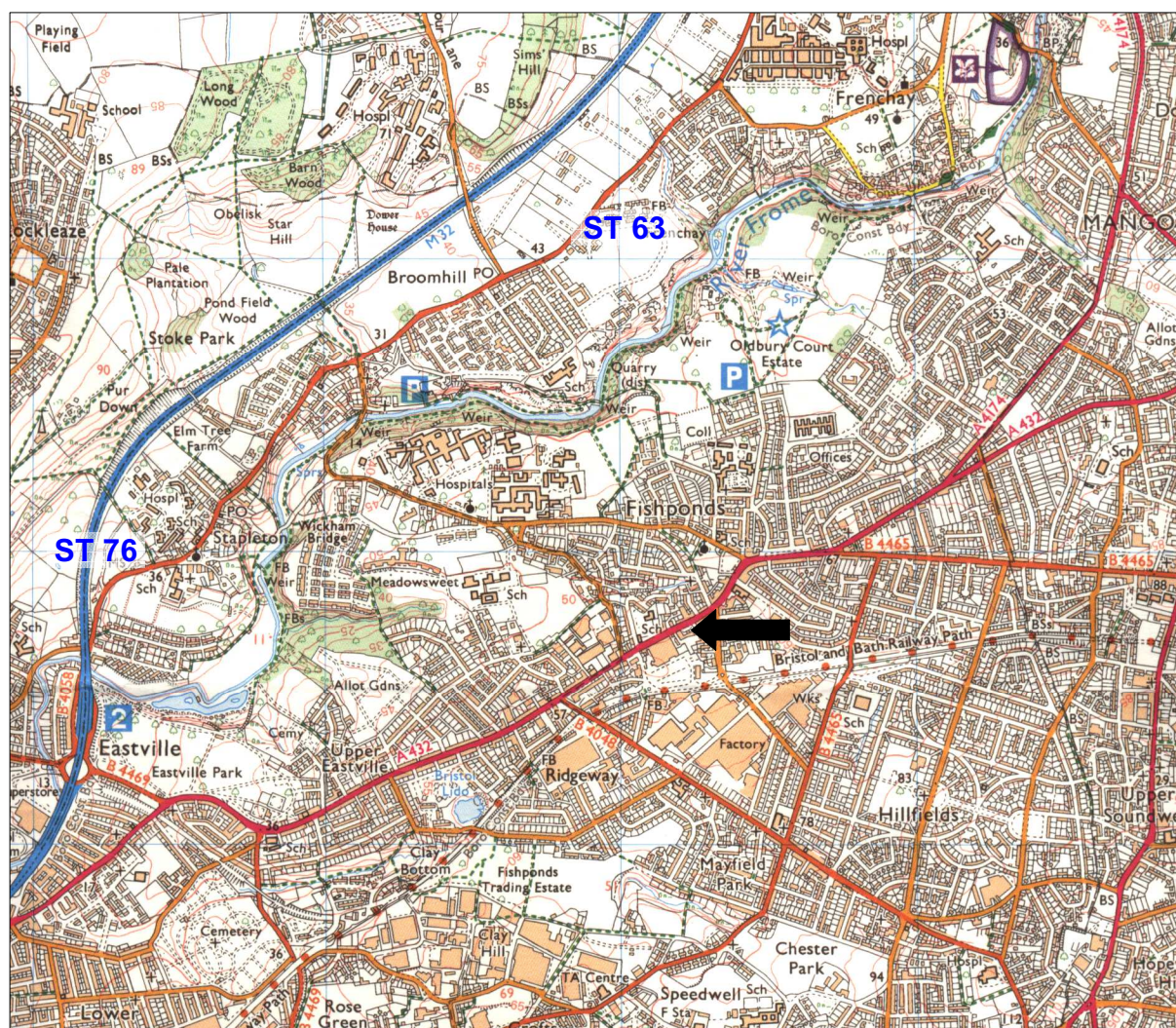
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Figure 2

Location of the Site

The Site 

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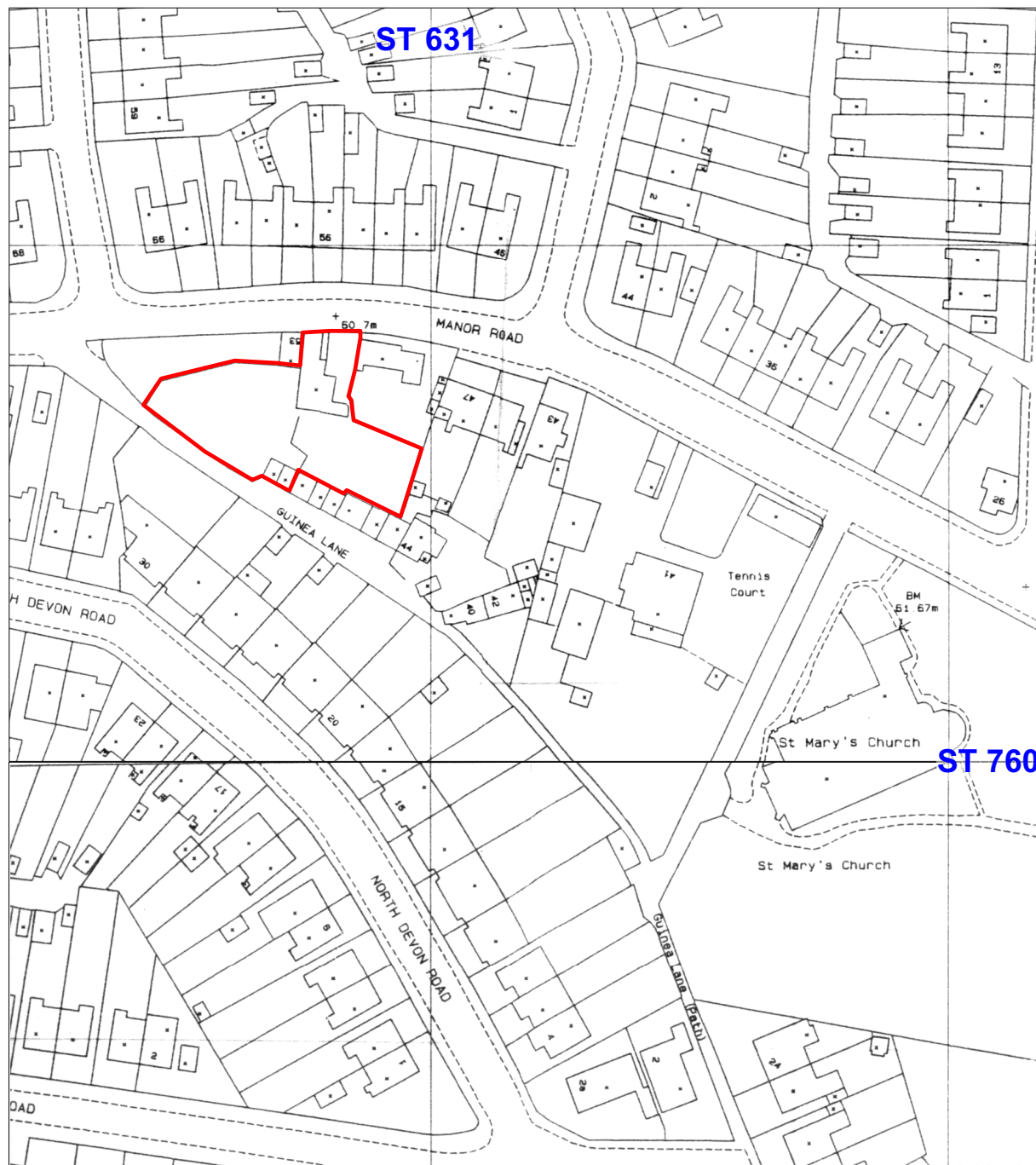
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Figure 3

Boundary of the Site (outlined in red)

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Scale 1:1250

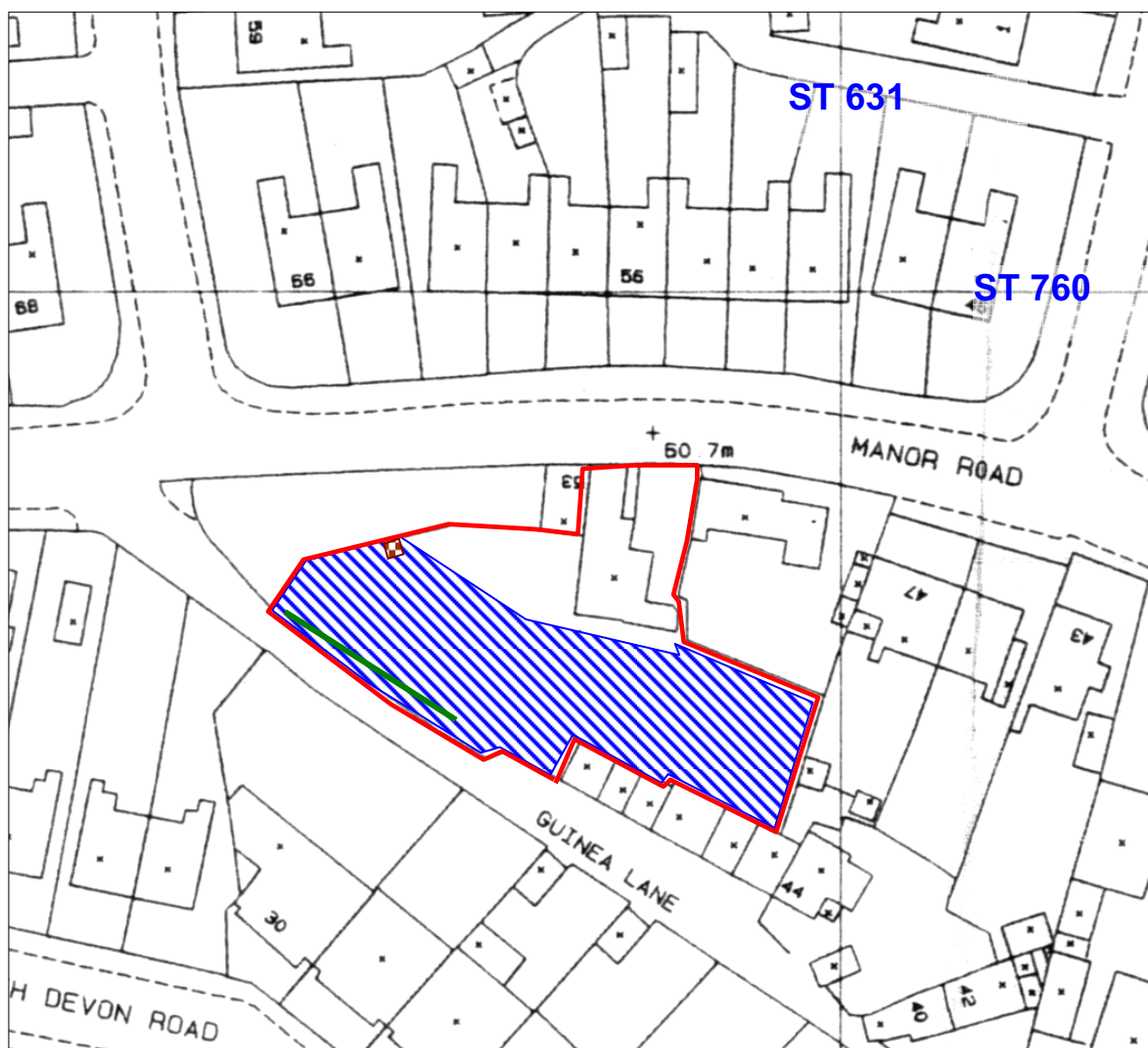
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Figure 4

Site Boundary in **red** and location of Groundworks

-  Area of topsoil stripping
-  Stone walled culvert
-  Wall Foundation



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25m

Plates



A) Sandstone masonry chamber looking east



B) Sandstone masonry chamber looking northeast, showing opening in the east side



C) Wall foundation on south side of site looking west



D) View of Guinea Lane and south side of site looking west



E) View of topsoil stripping centre of site



F) View of site looking northeast