Air Balloon Primary School, Hillside Road, Bristol: A Historic Building Record Report

Planning Application Number: 11/04571/FB
National Grid Reference Number: ST 6325 7345
AOC Project No: 32100
Site Code: BRSMG:2012.3
HER Event No.: 25093
Date: February 2012
Air Balloon Primary School, Hillside Road, Bristol:

A Historic Building Record Report

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

National Grid Reference (NGR): ST 6325 7345

AOC Project No: 32100

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Date of Record: 17th February 2012

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

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Report Stage: Draft Date: February 2012

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Non-Technical Summary

A programme of Historic Building Recording was conducted on the Grade II Listed Buildings associated with Air Balloon Primary School, Hillside Road, Bristol. The work was undertaken prior to planned refurbishment work in order to record any original fabric of the building present.

Externally, two limited elevations were recorded, as well as a 1950s single storey brick extension and a short section of a stone boundary wall.

Internally, the fittings and fixture of eighteen rooms within two buildings were investigated with the majority of the rooms containing low key original features such as panelled doors, decorative mouldings, and glazed bricks. The most distinctive features identified were associated with a central hall which contained a hammer beam roof and arched internal windows. Multiple alterations have been made to facilitate its function as a school with only limited impact to the fabric of the building.
1. Introduction

1.1 This document presents the results of a Historic Building Record undertaken during the refurbishment of the Air Balloon Primary School, Hillside Road, Bristol. The recording included field notes, photographs, and scaled plans and cross-sections. The building was accessed prior to the anticipated refurbishment to allow recording to take place. The areas of the school which are to be affected by the refurbishment were recorded to Level 1/2 of the published guidelines (English Heritage 2006).

1.2 The scheme of refurbishment to be undertaken at Air Balloon Primary School is to consist of the construction of a link building between Building A and B resulting in the obscuring of two sections of external elevation; the light to moderate refurbishment of 18 rooms located in two separate buildings (Buildings A & B); the demolition of a small 1950s extension to the northern elevation of Building A; and the demolition of a short section of the northern boundary wall to facilitate improved access. The development entails work that is intended to have minimal impact on the existing fabric of the building.

2. Site Location

2.1 The site is located between the arterial A420 and A431 roads in the eastern suburb of Bristol known as St George, at National Grid Reference (NGR) ST 6325 7345 (Figure 1). The school is bound to the south by Hillside Road; to the north by allotment gardens; to the west by residential development fronting onto Kenn Road and by allotment gardens; and on the east by residential development which fronts onto Belfry Avenue, Bude Avenue and Bellevue Road (Figure 2).

3 Planning Background

3.1 The local planning authority is Bristol City Council. Archaeological advice to the council is provided by Bob Jones, Bristol City Archaeologist.

3.2 The Junior School (Building A) and Infants School (Building B), in association with front railings and piers, are all Grade II Listed.

3.3 The draft planning condition relating to the existing building had been applied to the planning application (Application Reference: 11/04571/FB). It reads as follows:

6. To secure the recording of the fabric of buildings of historic or architectural importance

No redevelopment or refurbishment of the existing buildings shall take place until the applicant/developer has recorded those parts of the building which are likely to be disturbed or concealed in the course of redevelopment or refurbishment. The recording to be carried out by an archaeologist or archaeological organisation approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological or architectural importance within a building are recorded before their destruction or concealment.

3.4 The city conservation officer has since indicated that a historic building record is required to record any historic fabric that may be uncovered, disturbed or concealed during the course of the refurbishment / redevelopment works.
3.5 The first stage of investigation was the production of a Desk-Based Assessment for the Air Balloon Primary School complex (BARAS 2011). More recently a Written Scheme of Investigation for recording of the Air Balloon Primary School during the current programme of refurbishment was produced by AOC Archaeology (AOC 2012). This conformed to the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS 5) (DCLG 2010). The methodology was formulated in consultation with Bob Jones, Bristol City’s Archaeologist and was designed in accordance with current best archaeological practice and local and national standards and guidelines:

- Institute for Archaeologists – Standards and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures (IfA 2008).
- Institute for Archaeologists – Code of Conduct (IfA 2010).
- Department of Communities and Local Government – Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning and the Historic Environment (DCLG 2010).

4. Geology and Topography

4.1 The British Geological Surveys’ online 1:50,000 Scale geology map shows that underlying bedrock geology of the Air Balloon Primary School site is formed by the South Wales Middle Coal Measures Formation of Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone. No superficial deposits are recorded on the online mapping.

5. Archaeological And Historical Background

The following information is referenced from an archaeological desk based assessment compiled for the site by Bristol and Regional Archaeological Services (BARAS) in May 2011.

5.1 The Prehistoric (c. 500,000 BP – AD 43) and Roman (AD 43 – 410) Periods

5.1.1 There is some general evidence of prehistoric and Roman period evidence within a study area surrounding the proposed development site; however no evidence has been previously recovered from within or adjacent to the site itself.

5.1.2 Evidence recorded from the wider surrounding area, noted on the Bristol HER, includes an 18th-century account of a hoard of Roman coins and pottery vessels in the area of Church Road / Clouds Hill Road / Summerhill Road; occasional coin finds in other parts of St George; and unconfirmed accounts in the mid 1930s of discoveries of Roman roads in St Georges Park and King Dick’s Lane (BARAS 2011, 8).
5.2 The Early Medieval & Medieval Periods (c. AD 410 - 1536)

5.2.1 As with the preceding periods, there is no evidence dating to the early medieval period within the site boundary and or surrounding study area. The site lies outside the focus of early medieval activity at Bristol (Bricgestow) which was established by the later 10th century, and by the end of the period it lay within the bounds of the former Royal Forest of Kingswood, a part of the extensive Royal Manor of Barton Regis. The western boundary of Kingswood Forest probably lay at or near the modern junction of Church Road / Summerhill Road / Clouds Hill Road (BARAS 2011, 3).

5.2.2 The Kingswood Forest passed from the Crown around 1228 and came to be known as Kingswood Chase. There was some piecemeal progressive encroachment of the forest during the medieval period, however settlement within the chase was generally very dispersed and scattered. There is no evidence of medieval activity within or adjacent to the Air Balloon School site.

5.3 The Post-Medieval & Modern Periods (c. AD 1536 – Present day)

5.3.1 Encroachment and development into the chase / forest continued into the post-medieval period. This included the exploitation of the Kingswood coalfield areas. This included Air Balloon Pit, located 110m to the south of the site (BARAS 2011, 1); although this had ceased working by 1871 (BARAS 2011, 8).

5.3.2 The site lay within the parish of St George, which was created from the parish of St Philip and St Jacob in 1751. The Air Balloon Hill area of St George derives its name from a hot air balloon which landed in this part of St George on the 10th January 1784 (BARAS 2011, 8). The area was gradually developed through the 19th century and was described in the Bristol street directories under Adjacent Villages as Air Balloon Hill, St Georges. Hillside Road was created when Air Balloon Lane was partly renamed for the sake of house numbering and is first listed in the 1907 directory (BARAS 2011, 3).

5.3.3 The plans for the Air Balloon Council School were drawn up in May 1903 and the school itself opened in 1905. The school originally comprised three separate blocks; - boys, girls and infants - and the site included playground areas, latrines, a caretaker’s house and instruction workshop, all enclosed within a precinct wall (BARAS 2011, 3).

5.3.4 There were various changes and additions to the school during the 20th century. It became a secondary modern and by the 1960s there were separate infants’ and juniors’ schools. A number of temporary classrooms were constructed within the school site between 1990 and 2011 and a permanent extension to the former boys’ school block was constructed in 1997 (BARAS 2011, 4). The phases of development in and around the school buildings are shown on Plate A, below.
6. **Aims of the Investigation**

6.1 The aims of the Investigation were defined as being:

- To determine the presence of, and record any remains relating to the original 1903 – 1905 fabric.
- To enable the Archaeological Advisor to the Bristol City Council to make an informed decision on the status of the built heritage condition and the possible requirement for any further work.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation in order to inform the mitigation strategy as part of the planning process.

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

7. **Methodology**

7.1 Site procedures were defined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (AOC 2011).

7.2 The site code BRSMG:2012.3 was obtained from the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery for the project. This was used as the site identifier for all records produced. The HER event number 25093 was also attributed to the project.

7.3 Prior to the refurbishment taking place, initial recording consisted of a photographic survey of the rooms to be affected corresponding to Level 1/2 of the English Heritage guidelines (EH 2006). Level 1/2 is a basic visual record consisting of photographs and sketch plans. Where more significant elements of the post-medieval building are encountered a more descriptive record, consisting of measured drawings and detailed photography was to have been made as required.

7.4 At the time of the recording visit the school was unoccupied but still in general use. As such furniture and fittings were still present.

7.5 The fieldwork was monitored by Bob Jones, Bristol City Archaeologist on behalf of Bristol City Council and Paul Mason for AOC Archaeology.
8. Results

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 The programme of Historic Building Recording focused on four key elements associated with the school’s refurbishment programme, which were the construction of a link building between Building A and B resulting in the obscuring of two sections of external elevation; the light to moderate refurbishment of 18 ground floor rooms located in both Building A and B; the demolition of a small 1950s extension to the northern elevation of Building A; and the demolition of a short section of the northern boundary wall to facilitate improved access.

8.2 External Elevations

8.2.2 As part of the refurbishment programme a link building will be constructed between Building A and Building B, obscuring central element of Building A’s eastern elevation and the southern element of Building B’s western elevation (Figure 3).

8.2.3 With reference to Plate 2, the area to be obscured to the eastern elevation of Building A extends from the large wooden sash windows located centrally to the southern gable on the left hand side of the plate, up to the northern side of the entrance located centrally to the plate.

8.2.4 This area of the elevation incorporates both one and two storeys and three bays, with the elevation built from roughly dressed, roughly coursed, grey stone blocks. Yellowish brown stone string courses have also been incorporated within the elevation.

8.2.5 The southern end of the affected elevation consists of a gable frontage which contains two centrally set wooden sash windows, flanked by two individually set wooden sash windows, with each incorporating four panes within a single frame. The two central windows are lent extra height by frames containing six panes. The casement arch to the central windows is dressed using the same yellowish brown stone as the string course, while all windows have decorative stone relieving arches and stone sills. A blocked stone dressed ocular is located near the gable apex.

8.2.6 The two storey bay to the ground floor contains three wooden frames incorporating six panes and an entrance consisting of a double set of replacement wooden doors. The three windows have decorative stone relieving arches and stone sills, while the entrance is framed by a stone hood.

8.2.7 The first floor contains a central group of wooden casement windows each containing eight panes set within a rounded arch dressed by the yellowish brown stone. Located each side of this window is a decorative window slit, framed by the same type of stone.
8.2.8 The area to be obscured to the western elevation of Building B extends from the southwest corner of the building to roughly the centre line of the elevation (Plate 3). This area of the elevation incorporates two storeys and three bays, and is constructed in the same manner as the eastern elevation of Building A.

Plate 3: Western Elevation of Building B Looking Northeast

8.2.9 The ground floor incorporates groups of both four pane and six pane wooden sash windows with decorative stone relieving arches and stone sills. To the northern side of the first floor, within the area of the effected elevation, are set large wooden four pane sash windows below six pane frames. The southern side of the first floor contains two wooden casement windows.

8.3 Internal Refurbishment

8.3.1 Room 1

Room 1 is located in the southwest side of Building A (Figure 3). Room 1 is a large room in use for teaching, with internal features consisting of wooden sash windows, wooden beams incorporating metal bracing, shoulder high decorative moulded course, wooden door with nine panes, a loft hatch, and metal radiators (Plate 4). Apart from the metal radiators, all of these features appear to be early 20th century in date. Due to the layout of the room it was noted that the original northern wall to Room 1 had been removed and rebuilt approximately 2m further north. This increased the floor space available within Room 1, and as a result decreased the floor space associated with the original floor plan of Room 2.

Plate 4: Room 1 Looking Southwest

8.3.2 Room 2

Room 2 is located on the west side of Building A (Figure 3). Room 2 is a high yet narrow room in use as an office, with the same internal features as Room 1 (Plate 5). Apart from the metal radiators, all
of these features appear to be early 20th century in date. A wide blocked doorway in the southern wall indicates that Room 1 and 2 used to be directly linked. The narrow perception of Room 2 has been created by the rebuilding of Room 2's southern wall reducing the overall width of the room.

8.3.3 Room 3

Room 3 is located centrally within Building A (Figure 3). Room 3 is an extensive room in use as an assembly hall. The room is dominated by a hammer beam roof incorporating wooden framed dormer windows (Plate 6). On all four sides are wooden framed windows set within three-pointed arches to share light with the adjacent rooms, one of which has been subsequently blocked (Plate 7). The northern arched window is external and incorporates a stained glass window celebrating the school’s centenary (Plate 8). Below this external window appears to be a blocked double entrance. Internal features consist of original waist high moulded course, a parquet floor, and later metal radiators.
8.3.4 Rooms 4 and 5

Rooms 4 and 5 are located in the southwest corner of Building A (Figure 3). Room 4 is a moderate sized room in use as a children's lavatory. All internal features are late 20th century in date apart from the original wooden casement windows (Plate 9). A modern stud wall has been inserted into the northwest corner of Room 4 to create Room 5, a small storage area. Room 5 contained no features of historic interest.
8.3.5 Room 6

Room 6 is located in the east side of Building A (Figure 3). Room 6 is a large room in use as a classroom, with the same internal features as Room 1 (Plate 10). Apart from the metal radiators, all of these features appear to be early 20th century in date.

Plate 10: Room 6 Looking Northeast

8.3.6 Room 7

Room 7 is located in the east side of Building A (Figure 3). Room 7 is a moderate sized room in use as a children’s lavatory. All internal features are late 20th century in date apart from the original wooden casement windows (Plate 11).

Plate 11: Room 7 Looking East

8.3.7 Room 8

Room 8 is located in the northeast area of Building A (Figure 3). Room 8 is a corridor linking the northeast entrance of the building to the main assembly hall (Room 6). The corridor is simply decorated incorporating original internal double doors, plain shirting boards, and moulded door surrounds (Plate 12). The coat hooks, metal radiator and external doors are all later alterations.
8.3.8 Room 9

Room 9 is located in the northeast corner of Building A (Figure 3). Room 9 is a large room in use as the school’s kitchen. Original features are limited, restricted to wooden sash windows and head height plain moulded course (Plate 13). Later alterations include internal partitions on the northern side of the room, a suspended ceiling, and internal and external doors.

8.3.9 Rooms 10, 11 and 12

Rooms 10, 11 and 12 are located in the southwest side of Building B (Figure 3). Rooms 10 and 11 are two small office spaces, both containing wooden sash windows, and plain dado rails and skirting boards which appear to be original fittings (Plate 14). The nine pane wooden panelled door which links the two rooms is also original. All other fittings and fixtures are later, including the metal radiators. Room 12 acts as a small on-suite lavatory for Room 10, which incorporates brown glazed bricks to waist height as part of its design.
8.3.10 Room 13

Room 13 is located on the west side of Building B (Figure 3). Room 13 is a large room in use as a class room, with internal features consisting of wooden sash windows, smaller wooden casement windows with opening mechanism, moulded wooden beams, head height decorative moulded course, wooden door with nine panes, parquet floor, and metal radiators (Plate 15). Apart from the metal radiators, all of these features appear to be early 20th century in date.

8.3.11 Room 14

Room 14 is located in the south area of Building B (Figure 3). Room 14 is a corridor linking the southern entrance of the building to the central assembly hall of Building B. The corridor contains original internal nine pane double doors, moulded door surrounds and decorative brown glazed bricks to waist height (Plate 16).
8.3.12 Room 15

Room 15 is located in the central southern area of Building B (Figure 3). Room 15 is a small room in use as the school’s IT class room. All features within the room are later additions with exception of a doorway with a moulded surround in the northern wall, which has been subsequently blocked with the recess used for shelving (Plate 17).

8.3.13 Room 16

Room 16 is located in the southeast corner of Building B (Figure 3). Room 16 is a large room in use as a children’s lavatory, with internal features consisting of wooden sash windows, wooden beams incorporating metal bracing, moulded picture rail, a loft hatch, and metal radiators (Plate 18). Apart from the metal radiators, all of these features appear to be early 20th century in date. The room has been heavily subdivided at ground level to facilitate its function as a lavatory.
8.3.14 Room 17

Room 17 is located in the northwest corner of Building B (Figure 3). Room 17 is a small room in use as a cloak room and storage area. All features within the room, including the tiled floor and coat hooks, are later additions (Plate 19).

8.3.15 Room 18

Room 18 is located in the central northern area of Building B (Figure 3). Room 18 is a small room in use as a class room. Apart from the four pane wooden panelled internal door, all features within the room are later additions (Plate 20).
8.4 **1950s Extension**

8.4.1 The 1950s extension investigated during the programme of historic building recording is located centrally to the northern elevation of Building A (Figure 3). The extension is a single storey, single bay building, with a flat asphalt roof, and made from red brick laid in regular stretcher courses (Figure 4 & Plate 21). The wooden entrance door to the eastern elevation and metal casement windows are consistent with its mid 20th century construction.

![Plate 3: 1950s Extension Looking Southeast](image)

8.4.2 Internally, a single office area occupies the majority of the space, with smaller rooms on the eastern and western side of the room containing a lavatory and storage cupboard respectively. These smaller rooms appear to be later brick built sub-divisions. All fittings and fixtures appear to be late 20th century in date.

8.5 **Northern Boundary Wall**

8.5.1 Defining the northern boundary of the school site is a stone built retaining wall. A 2m long central section of this wall was incorporated into the current programme of building recording (Figure 3 & Plate 22). The southern elevation is 1.5m in height, while the northern elevation is 2m in height. The wall is constructed from a grey igneous stone blocks, which have been roughly dressed and laid in rough courses. Edge laid stones have been used as a coping course. Analysis of the northern elevation suggests that this section of wall was built after the construction of the wall immediately to the west. At the eastern end of the wall section a modern metal gate with concrete piers has been inserted into the wall. It is likely that the wall section recorded post-dates the original construction of the school, and then was subsequently altered to facilitate access to the school playing fields to the north.

![Plate 4: Boundary Wall Looking Southeast](image)
9 Conclusions

9.1 Recording of the two external elevations associated with Building A and B identified elevations that were consistent with the appearance of the remaining buildings elevations and appear to have remained unaltered from the point of original construction. Neither elevation contained any significant architectural details.

9.2 The internal programme of recording identified that the majority of the rooms to be affected by refurbishment contain features contemporary with the original construction of the school. Most of these features are fairly low key, in keeping with institutional nature of the school, such as panelled doors, simple decorative moulded courses, the use of glazed bricks, and moulded door surrounds. The most distinctive features identified were associated with Room 3 in the form of the hammer beam roof and arched internal windows. Only Rooms 15 and 17 did not contain any original features. In keeping with its utilisation as a school throughout its hundred year history, multiple alterations have been made to continually facilitate its function. This has primarily consisted of altering the function of a room by installing partitions and new equipment, including central heating, without affecting the fabric of the building. The only location where the building fabric has been altered was when the wall dividing Rooms 1 and 2 was relocated.

9.3 The single storey 1950s extension located to the rear of Building A was identified as a building of simple design, which had undergone minor alteration with the incorporation of brick partitions to create two smaller rooms. The originally function of the extension is unclear, but it appears to have been converted into an office during the latter half of the 20th century. The only significance associated with the extension is its immediate relationship with the Grade II listed school.

9.4 The recording of the boundary wall to the north of Air Balloon School indentified a stone wall of simple construction, which is likely to post-date the early 20th century construction of the school. Apart from the later insertion of a gate, no features of interest were identified.

9.5 Following further historic building recording work, to be undertaken in association with the removal of internal features as part of the refurbishment programme, an addendum to this report will be produced.

10 Archive Deposition & Publication

10.1 The archive will be prepared in accordance with local and national guidance (UKIC 1990, Brown and AAF 2007) and the guidelines of the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery. On completion of the project, AOC will discuss arrangements for the archive to be deposited with the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery and the developer/landowner. It is envisaged that the archive will be deposited no later than six months after the completion of all fieldwork following approval of the report by Bob Jones, Archaeological Advisor to the Bristol City Council.

10.2 Due to the limited nature and results of the project, it is envisaged that publication will be limited to a short summary in the Bristol and Region Archaeological Round-up, in addition to publication through the ADS OASIS website (Appendix A).
11. Bibliography

AOC Archaeology Group 2012, *Air Balloon Primary School, Hillside Road, Bristol: A Written Scheme of Investigation for a Historic Building Record*.

Bristol and Region Archaeological Services 2011, *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of Air Balloon Primary School, Hillside Road, St George, Bristol*.

British Geological Survey, One inch Series. *Bristol District*.


Institute for Archaeologists 2010, *Code of Conduct*.


Approximate Site Location
Within England & Wales

Figure 1: Site Location
Figure 2: Detailed Site Location Plan
Walls of the Original School Building

Figure 4: Plan and Cross-section of 1950s Extension
Appendices
## Appendix A - OASIS Form

### OASIS ID: aocarcha1-119358

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<td>HBR and HBR watching brief on refurbishment of Grade II Listed School buildings and features.</td>
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<td><strong>Project dates</strong></td>
<td>Start: 15-02-2012</td>
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<td><strong>Previous/future work</strong></td>
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<td>11/04571/FB - Planning Application No. 32100 - Contracting Unit No. 25093 - HER event no.</td>
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### Type of project

- Building Recording

### Site status

- Listed Building

### Current Land use

- Community Service 1 - Community Buildings

### Monument type

- LISTED BUILDINGS Modern

### Methods & techniques

- 'Measured Survey', 'Photographic Survey', 'Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure'

### Prompt

- Planning condition
Country: England
Site location: CITY OF BRISTOL CITY OF BRISTOL BRISTOL Air Balloon Primary School, Hillside Road, Bristol
Postcode: BS5 7PB
Study area: 5803.00 Square metres
Site coordinates: ST 63058 73539 51.4591323593 -2.531785096540 51 27 32 N 002 31 54 W Point
Lat/Long Datum: Unknown

**Project creators**
Name of Organisation: AOC Archaeology Group
Project brief originator: AOC Archaeology Group
Project design originator: AOC Archaeology Group
Project director/manager: Paul Mason
Project supervisor: Chris Clarke

Type of sponsor/funding body: developer
Name of sponsor/funding body: Skanska

**Project archives**
Digital Archive recipient: Bristol Museum and Art Gallery
Digital Media available: 'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient: Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery

Project bibliography 1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title  AIR BALLOON PRIMARY SCHOOL, HILLSIDE ROAD, BRISTOL: A WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR A HISTORIC BUILDING INVESTIGATION

Author(s)/Editor(s)  CARTER, N

Date  2012

Issuer or publisher  AOC Archaeology Group

Place of issue or publication  London

Description  A4 text, 3 illustrations, 18 pages bound between plastic covers.

Project bibliography 2

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title  AIR BALLOON PRIMARY SCHOOL, HILLSIDE ROAD, BRISTOL: A HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD REPORT

Author(s)/Editor(s)  Clarke, C.

Date  2012

Issuer or publisher  AOC Archaeology

Place of issue or publication  London