LAND AT 623 AND 625 BATH ROAD BRISLINGTON BRISTOL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

For

WOODWARD AP LTD

on behalf of

BRISTOL MEETING ROOM TRUST

CA REPORT: 05037

APRIL 2005

LAND AT 623 AND 625 BATH ROAD BRISLINGTON BRISTOL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

CA PROJECT: 1921 CA REPORT: 05037

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SUMMARY

Site Name: Land at 623 and 625 Bath Road

Location: Brislington, Bristol

NGR: ST 61570 70983

Type: Evaluation

Date: 17-23 February 2005

Location of Archive: Bristol Museum and Art Gallery

Accession no. 2005-9
Site Code: BBR 05

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in February 2005 at the request of Woodward A P Limited on land at 623 and 625 Bath Road, Brislington, Bristol. In compliance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation six trenches were excavated across the development area, which lay to the west of the Brislington Roman Villa.

In the south-west corner of the site a possible boundary ditch containing a partially articulated adult horse skeleton was located around 0.75m below the existing car park surface. A pit cut into the backfilled ditch contained quantities of 3rd-century AD pottery, suggesting the ditch was Roman or earlier. Post-medieval soil horizons and features in all likelihood relating to the 19th century gardens of Lynwood House were also recorded. Reduction of ground level removing these soil horizons and any archaeological features was, however, evident along the southern tip and east side of 623 Bath Road, probably due to the cutting of the railway which bounds the western extent of the site, as well as the construction of Bath Road which bounds the southern limits. Material resulting from both these schemes is likely to have been deposited on site and was identified in the north-west of the site where rubble deposits were recorded.

The evaluation demonstrated the potential for archaeological remains, possibly outlying elements of the Roman Villa complex, to survive on the western side of 623 Bath Road, whilst the eastern side appears to have been severely truncated in modern times. No archaeological remains were exposed in the garden of Lynwood House (625 Bath Road), although this area did not appear to have been affected by modern truncation.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In February 2005 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Woodward A P Limited, on behalf of Bristol Meeting Room Trust, on land at 623 and 625 Bath Road, Brislington, Bristol (centred on NGR: ST 61570 70983; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to accompany a planning application for residential development of the site.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief for archaeological recording prepared by Mr R H Jones, City Archaeologist, Bristol City Council (BCC 2005), and with a subsequent detailed WSI produced by CA (2005) and approved by Mr Jones. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999), and the *Management of Archaeological Projects II* (EH 1991). It was monitored by Mr R H Jones, including a site visit on 23 February 2005.

The site

- 1.3 The 623 Bath Road site is currently occupied by a modern building (a Christian Meeting Hall) and surrounding car park, surfaced with tarmacadam. The 625 Bath Road site comprises Lynwood House, a Grade II Listed building, and its grounds. The site slopes down gently to the north, from approximately 43m AOD to 40m AOD.
- 1.4 The underlying geology of the area is mapped as Sandstone of the Triassic era (BGS 1962). The natural substrate was identified in all six trenches comprising weathered sandstone and occasional outcropping sandstone bedrock.

Archaeological background

1.5 Archaeological interest in the site arises from its proximity to a Roman villa discovered in 1899 immediately east of 623 and 625 Bath Road during the construction of Winchester Road (BSMR no. 1390). It is conceivable that occupation or activity associated with the villa may extend into the garden of Lynwood House.

1.6 Lynwood House was built in the early 19th century, at which time the grounds of the house probably covered the majority of the area of 623 and 625 Bath Road. Glass houses associated with Lynwood House are depicted on the 1880s Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan across at least the northern part of 623 Bath Road, with an orchard shown in the area now occupied by the meeting hall. The glasshouses appear to have survived at least until the First World War (BCC 2005). A watching brief undertaken at 631 Bath Road recorded a pit containing pennant sandstone, together with Romano-British and later pottery from a subsoil horizon (BSMR no. 20031).

Archaeological objectives

1.7 The objectives of the evaluation were to establish the character, quality, date, significance and extent of any archaeological remains or deposits surviving within the site. This information will assist the Local Planning Authority in making an informed judgement on the likely impact upon the archaeological resource by the proposed development.

Methodology

- 1.8 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of six trenches; five 7m by 2m trenches, and one hand-excavated trench measuring 3m by 1.5m (Fig. 2). The position of trench 3 was altered due to the presence of buried services, with the approval of Mr R H Jones (BCC).
- 1.9 All trenches, other than trench 6 which was hand-dug, were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with the CA Technical Manual 1: Excavation Recording Manual (1996).
- 1.10 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential, however, none were deemed suitable for sampling and processing in accordance with the CA Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other samples from Archaeological Sites (2003). All artefacts recovered were processed in

accordance with the CA Technical Manual 3: *Treatment of Finds Immediately After Excavation* (1995).

1.11 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the site archive (including artefacts) will be deposited with Bristol Museum and Art Gallery under accession number 2005-9.

2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-5)

2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively. Details of the relative heights of the principal deposits and features expressed as metres Above Ordnance Datum (m AOD) appear in Appendix 3. Ordnance Survey co-ordinates for trench locations are given in Appendix 4.

Trench 1 (Figs 2 & 3)

- 2.2 The natural substrate 119 was identified at 1.12m below present ground level. A single small, shallow, post-medieval/modern pit, 118, cut through the natural substrate and contained a dark charcoal-rich deposit. This was overlain by 0.23m of former subsoil 116. Within deposit 116 a post-medieval/modern ceramic land drain was visible, which in all likelihood relates to the former gardens and orchards of Lynwood House dating to the 19th century.
- 2.3 Cut through subsoil deposit 116 was what appeared to be the remains of a structure with an associated rough surface 112. The cut itself, 115, was near vertical with a flat base signifying a shallow foundation cut. The structure had been demolished and quantities of redeposited natural substrate, 114, filled the foundation cut. Fragments of unworked stone and brick were also present, and the crushed tile and compacted ash surface, 112, was visible in section, but did not survive across the trench. This structure was probably also associated with Lynwood House and may have been a small outbuilding.

2.4 Further layers of demolition debris and rubble sealed the structural deposits to a depth of 0.8m, and possibly resulted from the cutting of the late 19th century railway directly to the west. These in turn were sealed by modern car park surfacing.

Trench 2 (Figs 2 & 4)

2.5 The natural substrate 205 was identified at 0.4m below the current ground level. It was sealed by 0.2m of rubble 202, which in turn was sealed by 0.18m of modern surfacing. A single feature 204 was identified which appeared to be some form of garden terracing extending southwards beyond the confines of the trench. The single light brown silty fill contained post-medieval clay tobacco pipe fragments and a residual sherd of Roman pottery.

Trench 3 (Figs 2 & 5)

- 2.6 The natural substrate 304 was identified at 0.8m below the current ground level. This was sealed by 0.5m of former subsoil 303, which contained many sherds of late Roman pottery amongst later post-medieval finds. This in turn was sealed by a further 0.32m of former topsoil 302, hardcore/compacted rubble 301 and tarmac surfacing.
- 2.7 The earliest feature encountered was a ditch 307 cut into the natural substrate. The ditch was aligned approximately east/west, turning northwards within the trench to a north-east/south-west alignment. It contained a single fill 308/309, which was not clearly defined due to the extremely soft nature of the natural sand substrate which had blurred the edges of the cut. Water action, presumably during the period of use of the ditch had also contributed to an indistinct profile which appeared to be broadly U-shaped, although the base may have originally been V-shaped.
- 2.8 The partially articulated skeletal remains of a horse were found within the ditch to the western end of the trench. Small sherds of Roman pottery were found in a further section excavated across the ditch, but may have been brought in through the cutting of a later pit 305, or by rooting from the trees close to the trench. The ditch could therefore potentially be early Roman or even pre-Roman in date.
- 2.9 A sub-circular pit 305, cut the ditch on its corner. It contained several sherds of 3rd-century pottery and some iron nails within a dark fill 306. The pit appears to have

been used for the disposal of domestic refuse but the positioning of this material in the corner of the ditch, along with the articulated horse burial may be indicative of the site going out of use and hold more significance than simple disposal of waste.

Trench 4 (Fig. 2)

2.10 The natural substrate 408 was identified at 0.4m below the current ground level, sealed by 0.2m modern rubble layers 403 and 402, and subsequently by 0.2m of modern surfacing. No archaeological features were identified in this trench.

Trench 5 (Fig. 2)

2.11 The natural substrate 502 was identified at 0.26m below the current ground level. This was sealed only by modern surfacing. No archaeological features or deposits were identified within the trench.

Trench 6 (Fig. 2)

2.12 The natural substrate 602 was identified at 0.78m below the current ground level. This was sealed by 0.54m of subsoil 601 which contained frequent fragments of pennant sandstone and 19th-century pottery sherds. A fragment of a possible tessera and sherds of Romano-British pottery were also retrieved from the subsoil. A pit 603 cut subsoil 601 and contained 19th century material within its single ashy fill. The pit may have been for the disposal of rubbish, or dug for the planting of a tree or shrub within the gardens. It was sealed by 0.24m of topsoil.

The Finds

- 2.13 Quantities of pottery, ceramic building material, glass, clay pipe, oyster, slag and metal artefacts were recovered, along with animal bone including a near complete horse skeleton.
- 2.14 A total of 24 sherds of Romano-British pottery was recovered. Condition is generally good with few instances of abrasion and a high average sherd weight of 17.9g. Sherds of Dorset Black-Burnished ware and local BB1 imitations, which include plain rim dishes and everted-rim jars with obtuse lattice decoration dating to the late 3rd to 4th century AD, were recovered from fills 303 and 306. Small quantities of local type

greywares and oxidised wares were recovered from fills 203 and 309, these are broadly dated to the 2nd to 4th century AD. Further sherds of Dorset Black-Burnished ware were recovered from fill 601, these however are certainly residual occurring alongside post-medieval and modern material. Sherds of 17th to 18th century glazed red earthenware and tin glazed earthenware were recovered from fills 114 and 601. Modern white china was recovered from fills 117 and 601.

2.15 Animal bone was recovered from three deposits, including single pig and sheep bones from 303 and 306 respectively. The presence of dog gnawing on some of the bones indicated delayed burial after discard and root etching on bone surfaces suggests burial at a relatively shallow depth. In addition a partially articulated adult horse skeleton was recovered from ditch 307. Most parts of the skeleton were represented including the skull, mandible, vertebra, hip and shoulders as well as both fore and hind limbs. The only parts under-represented or missing were the thoracic vertebra and ribs, and the feet. The lack of the former may be the result of the acid nature of the sand as well as the extensive bioturbation due to the root system of a large tree; the latter may simply be within the deposit but beyond the limit of the trench. This context did not produce any dateable material, but stratigraphically it is likely to be early Roman or Late Iron Age. This partially articulated skeleton is likely to be the result of the disposal of the carcass of a single individual. Explanations for why a complete horse carcass might be placed in a ditch vary from functional, such as the disposal of a diseased animal, to the possibility it might be a ritual deposit.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Post-medieval features in all likelihood relating to the 19th century gardens of Lynwood House were recorded in trenches 1-3 and 6. Archaeological features dated to the Roman period were confined to the south-western area of the site within trench 3. These features are likely to be contemporary with the villa situated directly to the east of the site. The ditch and pit features may be reflective of the wider villa estate, perhaps of associated farming activities, or indeed of other, lower status settlement activity. The positioning of the partially articulated horse burial, and the later pit with high numbers of pottery sherds, may signify abandonment of the site

indicated by deliberately placed deposits. The survival of features within this area can be attributed to the survival of former topsoil and subsoil horizons, and hence a lesser degree of truncation than that elsewhere on the site.

- 3.2 Truncation was particularly evident in trenches 4 and 5 situated on the highest point of the site to the south-east, and reflects what was an uneven ground surface, now substantially levelled for modern car parking. Variations in ground level are likely to have occurred many times due to the cutting of the railway, which bounds the western extent of the site, as well as Bath Road, which bounds the southern limits. Material resulting from both these schemes is likely to have been deposited throughout the area occupied by the site and was identified particularly in trench 1 where a deeper sequence of rubble layers was recorded overlying the natural substrate. Similar rubble layers covering the archaeological deposits of the villa were also recorded, and were attributed to the construction of the railway and Bath Road (Barker 1900, 291-292).
- 3.3 The evaluation indicates that at 623 Bath Road archaeological deposits across the eastern part of the area, within trenches 2, 4, and 5, have either been totally removed or at least severely truncated by alterations of ground levels in recent times. Downslope, and to the west, ground levels have been raised in recent times, preserving archaeological remains within trench 3 at 0.75m below the present ground surface. A large part of this area is covered by the Christian Meeting Hall, which will have truncated archaeological remains to an unknown degree. In the garden of Lynwood House, trench 6 revealed 0.78m of topsoil and subsoil, suggesting this area has not been substantially altered in recent times. However, the trench provided no conclusive information on the archaeological potential of this part of the site.
- 3.4 In conclusion, the evaluation demonstrated the potential for archaeological remains, to survive on the western side of 623 Bath Road, whilst the eastern side appears to have been severely truncated in modern times. The archaeological potential of 625 Bath Road was unclear.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Kate Cullen, assisted by Mark Brett, Andrew Loader, Jon Webster and Allen Wright. The report was written by Kate Cullen, assisted by Allen Wright. The illustrations were prepared by Liz Hargreaves. The archive has been compiled by Kate Cullen, and prepared for deposition by Sam Inder. The project was managed for CA by Simon Cox.

5. REFERENCES

- Barker, W R. 1900 'Remains of a Roman Villa Discovered at Brislington, Bristol, December, 1899.' *Trans. Bristol Gloucestershire Archaeol. Soc.* **23**, 289-308
- Bristol City Council 2005 Nos. 623-625, Bath Road, Brislington, Bristol: Brief for archaeological field evaluation
- BGS (British Geological Survey) 1962 Bristol District: Parts of Sheets 250, 251, 264, 265, 280, 281 Scale 1 inch to 1 mile
- Branigan, K. 1969/1970 'The Romano-British Villa at Brislington' *Somerset Archaeol. Natur. Hist.* **114**, 78-85
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2005 Land at 623 and 625 Bath Road, Brislington, Bristol, Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1

100	Tarmac car park surface. 0.07m thick.
101	Pink hardcore chippings. 0.1m thick.
102	Rubble levelling of brick and stone. 0.2m thick.
103	Light grey hardcore chipping. 0.1m thick.
104	Grey hardcore chipping. 0.06m thick.
105	Black loose silt sand with chippings. 0.1m thick.
106	Fill of 107. Concrete for pipe. 0.3m thick.
107	Cut of field drain. 0.18m deep.
108	Rubble levelling of brick and stone. 0.1m thick.
109	Redeposited mid-pink red compact sandstone. 0.44m thick.
110	Mid pinkish brown compacted silty sand. 0.32m thick.
111	Redeposited mid-pink red compact sandstone. 0.22m thick.
112	Possible former floor surface. 0.12m thick.
113	Possible wall remains. 0.2m thick.
114	Fill of 115. Redeposited mid-pink red compact sandstone. 0.62m thick.
115	?foundation cut. 0.62m deep.
116	Mid brown silty sand with charcoal flecks. A former subsoil. 0.26m thick.
117	Fill of 118. Mid grey brown silty sand. 0.1m thick.
118	Cut of pit/ hollow. Shallow, irregular. 0.1m deep.
119	Natural Light brownish pink compact sand.

Trench 2

200	Tarmac car park surface. 0.1m thick.
201	Pink hardcore chippings. 0.08m thick.
202	Rubble levelling of brick and stone. 0.2m thick.
203	Mid brown sandy silt with sandstone fragments. Fill of 204. 0.7m thick.
204	Large ?terrace cut. >2m wide, >5m long, 0.7m deep.
205	Natural Light brownish pink compact sand.

Trench 3

300	Tarmac car park surface. 0.12m thick.
301	Pink hardcore chippings. 0.13m thick.
302	Deep grey silty sand. Former topsoil. 0.09m thick.
303	Mid pinkish brown compacted silty sand. Former subsoil. 0.5m thick.
304	Natural substrate. Light brownish pink compact sand.
305	Cut of Pit. Rounded but irregular.0.57m long, 0.5m wide, 0.18m deep.
306	Fill of 305. Deep grey silty sand. 0.18m deep.
307	Cut of ditch. Regular cut SW-NE. >7m long, 0.7m wide, 0.36m deep.
308	Fill of 307. Light orangey grey silty sand. 0.36m deep.
309	Same as 308.

Trench 4

400	Tarmac car park surface. 0.07m thick.
401	Gravel hardcore. 0.13m thick.
402	Light grey hardcore chippings. 0.2m thick.
403	Rubble levelling of brick and stone. >0.2m thick.
404	Cut for ?lamp post base.
405	Metal lamp post base. Circular.
406	Brick rubble within 405. >0.25m deep.

407	Redeposited mid-pink red compact sandstone.
408	Natural substrate. Light brownish pink compact sand.

Trench 5

500	Tarmac car park surface. 0.12m thick.
501	Pink hardcore chippings. 0.14m thick.
502	Natural substrate. Light brownish pink compact sand.

Trench 6

600	Topsoil. Deep brown sandy silt. 0.24m thick.
601	Subsoil. Mid brownish orange silty sand. 0.54m thick.
602	Natural Light brownish pink compact sand.
603	Cut of pit. Circular, flat base. 0.25m deep, 0.71m diameter.
604	Fill of 603. Light greyish brown with charcoal flecks. 0.25m deep.

APPENDIX 2: FINDS

Context	Description	Count	Wt (g)	Spot-date
114	Pottery: Glazed red earthenware	1	7	C17-C18
	Clay pipe	1	2	
117	Pottery: White china	1	1	C19+
203	Pottery: Misc oxidised ware	1	13	C2-C4
	Oyster shell	1	3	
302	Clay pipe	1	3	Post-medieval
	Fe nail	1	10	
303	Pottery: Dorset Black-Burnished ware, greyware	14	331	LC3-C4
	Animal bone	1	17	
	Stone tile	1	81	
	Ceramic building material	1	23	
306	Pottery: Dorset Black-Burnished ware, greyware	2	69	LC3-C4
	Animal bone	1	7	
	Ceramic building material	1	1	
	Fe nails	2	16	
308	Animal bone; horse skeleton	241	10218	
309	Pottery: Greyware, imitation BB1	5	7	C2-C4
601	Pottery:	7	113	C19+
	Dorset Black-Burnished ware, glazed red			
	earthenware, tin-glazed earthenware, china	3	107	
	Ceramic building material	2	39	
	Stone tile	3	8	
	Clay pipe	2	13	
	Vessel glass	1	11	
	Slag	1	207	
	Fe object			

APPENDIX 3: LEVELS OF PRINCIPAL DEPOSITS AND STRUCTURES

Levels are expressed as metres below current ground level and as metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), calculated using the benchmark located on Bath Road (38.59m AOD).

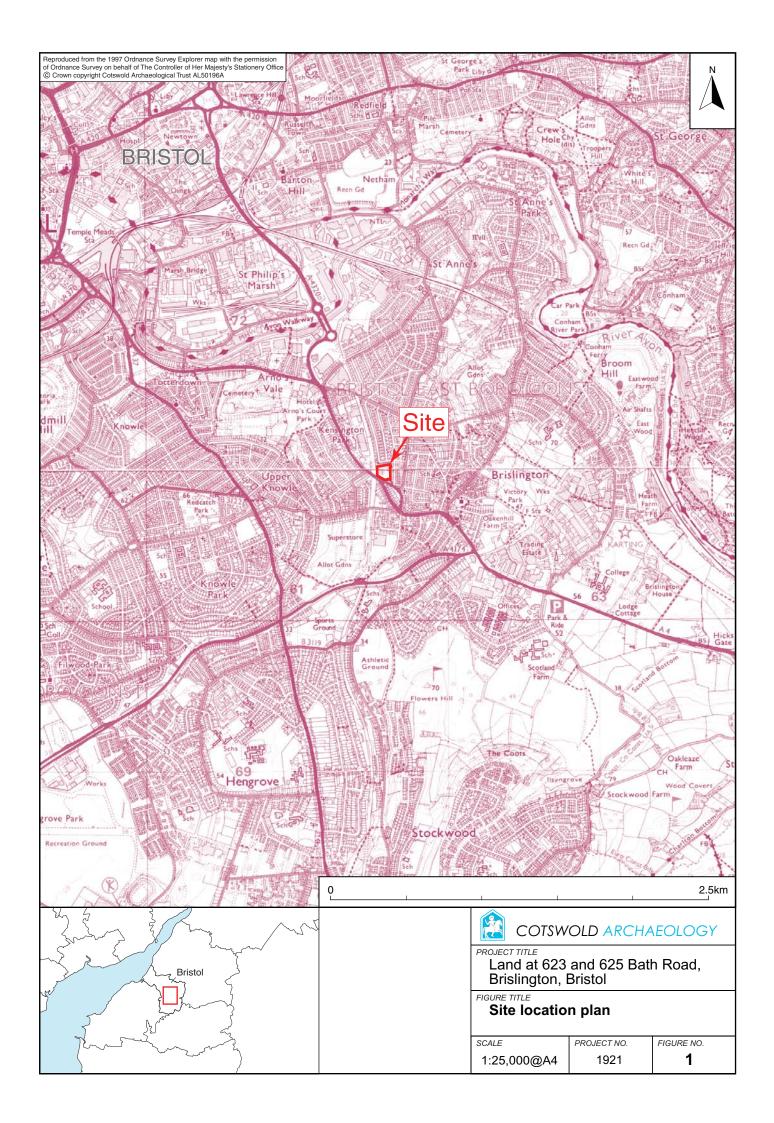
	Trench 1	Trench 2	Trench 3	Trench 4	Trench 5	Trench 6
Current ground level	0.00m	0.00m	0.00m	0.00m	0.00m	0.00m
	(40.45m)	(42.13m)	(42.27m)	(42.39m)	(43.02m)	(42.84m)
Top of archaeological deposits	n/a	n/a	0.75m (41.35m)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Limit of excavation (natural substrate)	1.25m	1.13m	0.77m	0.22m	0.26m	0.78m
	(39.25m)	(41.12m)	(41.50m)	(41.17m)	(42.75m)	(42.16m)

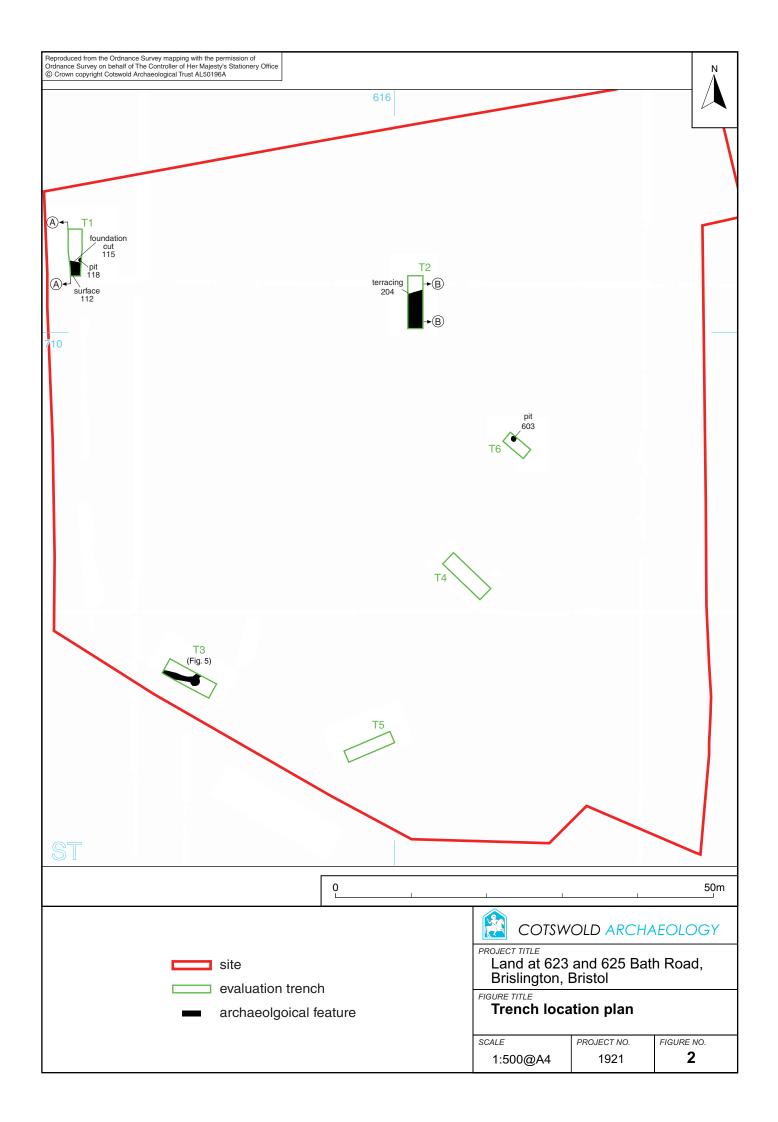
Upper figures are depth below modern ground level, lower figures in parentheses are metres AOD.

APPENDIX 4: TRENCH CO-ORDINATES

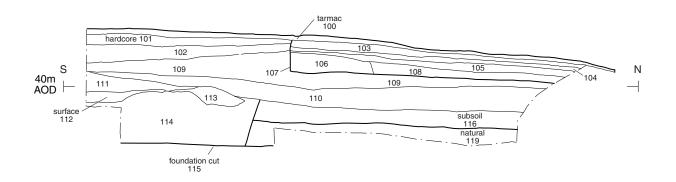
Trench 1		Trench 2	Trench 3	
SW corner	ST 61528, 71007	ST 61573, 171001	ST 61546, 70952	
NW corner	ST 61528, 71014	ST 61573, 71008	ST 61540, 70956	
NE corner	ST 61530, 71014	ST 61575, 71008	ST 61541, 70957	
SE corner	ST 61530, 71007	ST 61575, 71001	ST 61547, 70954	

	Trench 4	Trench 5	Trench 6
SW corner	ST 61582, 70965	ST 61565, 70944	ST 61588, 70977
NW corner	ST 61577, 70970	ST 61564, 70946	ST 61585, 70986
NE corner	ST 61578, 70971	ST 61570, 70948	ST 61586, 70987
SE corner	ST 61584, 70967	ST 61571, 70946	ST 61589, 70985

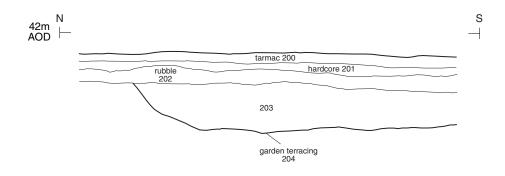




3 Trench 1; section AA



4 Trench 2; section BB





3 Trench 1; east facing section

4 Trench 2; west facing section

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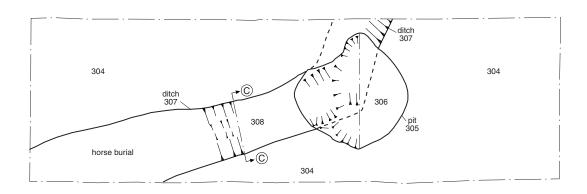
PROJECT TITLE

Land at 623 and 625 Bath Road, Brislington, Bristol

FIGURE TITLE
Sections

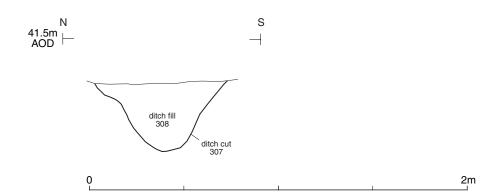
SCALE	PROJECT NO.	FIGURE NO.
1:50@A4	1921	3 & 4





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Section CC





COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Land at 623 and 625 Bath Road,
Brislington, Bristol

FIGURE TITLE

Trench 3; plan and section

SCALE @ A4	PROJECT NO.	FIGURE NO.
1:50 and 1:20	1921	5