



BRISTOL & WEST ARCHAEOLOGY

Land on the South Side of Wilder
Street, St Pauls, Bristol

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Client: Leigh Homes

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Bristol & West Archaeology

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Parkfield House, Parkfield, Pucklechurch, Bristol BS16 9NS. Tel. 0117 9372450

Email bruce.williams@bristolandwestarchaeology.co.uk

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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Bristol and West Archaeology during development of land located on the south side of Wilder Street, St Pauls, Bristol.

This revealed a simple sequence of modern surfaces sealing made-ground deposits and a former topsoil/subsoil horizon overlying archaeologically sterile deposits of sandy clay. The modern surfaces sealed several 19th-century walls, brick and sandstone paving and a well that represented the remains of terrace houses (Brunswick Terrace) that stood on the site until it was destroyed during a bombing raid in 1940.

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Land on the South Side of Wilder Street, St Pauls, Bristol

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Marcus Leigh of Leigh Homes. Thanks are owed to Bob Jones, Senior Archaeological Officer for Bristol City Council, David Cahill, design architect, staff of Bristol Record Office and to the groundworkers for their patience.

1. INTRODUCTION

Project Background

- 1.1 Leigh Homes received planning consent from Bristol City Council (App ref. 12/020292/F) to construct a block of nine dwellings on land located on the south side of Wilder Street, St Pauls, Bristol (NGR ST 59266 73769). Attached to the consent were three planning conditions (Nos. 3, 8 and 9) for the implementation of a programme of archaeological work including an archaeological watching brief during groundworks. Following discussions between the developer and the Senior Archaeological Officer for Bristol City Council, it was agreed that the 'programme of archaeological work' would be limited to the archaeological watching brief since there would be no reduction of ground levels on the site, only excavations for strip foundations, with drainage contained within a void above current ground level.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by Bristol City Council (BWA 2012). It followed the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (IfA 2008) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): The Project Managers' Guide* (EH 2006).
- 1.3 The fieldwork was conducted by Bruce Williams and Raymond Ducker between 20th January and 3rd February 2014.
- 1.4 This report was written by Raymond Ducker. The project archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery under the accession number 2013/33. A digital copy of the report will be provided to Bristol City Council for inclusion in the Historic Environment Record database as BHER Event No 25235. The project has been entered in the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) as bristola3-152810. A paper copy of the report will be provided to Bristol Record Office and Bristol City Museum.

Site Location

- 1.5 The site is a rectangular plot centred on NGR ST 358726 169963, measuring approximately 49m by 12m (5888 square metres). It is bordered southeast by a boundary wall to Brunswick Cemetery, northeast by a three storey residential building, southwest by a single-storey garage workshop and it fronts Wilder Street on the northwest. The site lies within the Portland and Brunswick Square Conservation Area (designated in 1974).

Geology, Topography and Land-Use

- 1.6 Recently used as a private car park, the site occupied level ground at an elevation of about 14m aOD and was surfaced with gravel and tarmac. Site boundary on the southeast is a stone rubble wall (Listed) beyond which lies Brunswick Cemetery. The published British Geological Survey (BGS) 1:50,000 scale geological map of the area indicates the site to be underlain by Redcliffe Sandstone of the Triassic Formation. No superficial deposits are recorded.

2. OBJECTIVES AND RECORDING METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The watching brief followed the methodology outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (BWA 2013) and involved monitoring the excavation of foundation trenches for the survival of archaeological deposits or features connected with the terrace of 19th-century dwellings that had occupied the site, or evidence for earlier occupation of the site.
- 2.2 All archaeological and non-archaeological features and deposits were recorded on standard BWA recording sheets. All records, drawings and photographs have been prepared as a standard archive.

3. BRIEF HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The following is taken from a Heritage Statement for the development site (Evans 2012) and desk-based assessment for the adjoining Brunswick Cemetery (Townsend 2009).
- 3.2 No significant archaeological discoveries of any date have been found on or in close proximity to the site.
- 3.3 The earliest cartographic depiction of the site is Roque's 1742 map which shows it as a narrow strip of land bordering a road and thinly planted with trees, suggesting it was then in agricultural use. Benjamin Donne's 1773 map of Bristol also suggests the site was in agricultural use. But by Benjamin Donne the Younger's 1826 map of Bristol, the site is shown as containing at least one building and possible gardens.
- 3.4 Plumley and Ashmead's 1828 map shows two parallel blocks of buildings and a separate building within the site, while Ashmead's 1854 survey of Bristol and the first edition Ordnance Survey both show the site occupied by a single terrace of buildings, Ashmead's survey identifying it as Brunswick Terrace.

4. RESULTS

- 4.1 Groundworks involved the excavation of thirteen standard strip foundation trenches (Trench 1 – 13) to varying depths depending on how deep the natural substrate lay, anything from 1.3m to 1.7m, utilising an 11-ton, 360⁰ mechanical excavator. The width of each trench averaged 0.8m. Once excavated, health and safety considerations prevented access to the trenches.
- 4.2 Trench 1 was excavated along the rear of the site to an average depth of 1.4m. Gravel and concrete surface 100 overlay a mixed made-ground deposit (101) up to 200mm deep which sealed a small paved surface of Pennant sandstone slabs (102), delineated on two sides by a limestone rubble and brick kerb. The paving was probably a yard surface behind one of the former terrace houses. Surface 102 overlay a deep deposit of loose, mixed soil, ash, brick, limestone and re-deposited natural (103). This had been cut by a well (119) which was partly filled in and had a corbelled sandstone cap. Deposit 103

sealed a layer of topsoil (104). This in turn overlay subsoil 105 above the natural clay (139). Trench 1 revealed two NW-SE walls connected with the terrace houses. These walls (121 and 125) were built in random coursed Lias limestone and grey mortar.

- 4.3 Trench 2 revealed similar stratigraphy to that in Trench 1 and truncated a limestone wall (106) that was probably the rear wall of the building terrace. Towards the base of the trench was a continuation of the topsoil from Trench 1 (115).
- 4.4 Trench 3 was excavated to an average depth of 1.7m but was reduced to 1.3m towards the NE corner of the site where the natural clay lay at a higher elevation. Surface deposits of tarmac, granular material and made-ground (110, 112, 118, 113, 114) overlay four limestone walls (107, 108, 111, 116) aligned at right-angles to Wilder Street. Trench 3 also exposed different sections of what appeared to be a single limestone wall (numbered 109 and 127) that lay parallel with Wilder Street and ran the length of the site. The above walls were all probably part of Brunswick Terrace. They lay over buried topsoil 115.
- 4.5 Trench 3 also exposed two, possibly circular, limestone structures (123 and 124) beneath rubble and clay deposit 134, and lying just 0.5m apart on the edge of the trench close to the pavement edge. These were shallow founded over a thin layer of black silt and mortar (135), but their function is unclear although they appeared to have the same grey mortar matrix as that in the limestone walls connected with Brunswick Terrace.
- 4.6 Trench 4 revealed similar stratigraphy (110, 112, 118, 131) to the other trenches and more of walls 106 and 107, overlying topsoil 115, subsoil 117 and natural clay 139.
- 4.7 Trenches 5 and 6 were initially dug as separate trenches but were then joined together to form Trench 7.
- 4.8 Trench 7 revealed similar stratigraphy to the other trenches and more of walls 106, 108 and 109), overlying topsoil 115, subsoil 117 and natural clay 139.
- 4.9 Trench 8 was an extension of Trench 4 and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.7m., revealing similar stratigraphy to the other trenches. Wall 106 continued in a north-westerly direction as far as Trench 11, where it stopped. Immediately south of this point, in Trench 8, another wall (126/147) appeared to lie against the northwest side of wall 106 and was recorded to the northeast end of the excavation where it continued beyond the limit of the excavation. There was a NW-SE return (138) at the SW end of the wall, which possibly joined on to wall 127. A brick floor (150) revealed 1.3m down in the base of the trench and also recorded in the base of Trench 13, extended between wall 127 and wall 126/147 and continued north beyond Trench 13.
- 4.10 Trench 9 was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.4m through the same deposits as those observed in Trench 7. Wall 109 which was recorded in Trench 7, was also recorded here, where it appeared to have been truncated by another wall (122) on a different orientation.
- 4.11 Trench 10 was excavated to a depth of 1.3m through an identical sequence of deposits to those observed in Trench 1. A NW-SW oriented wall (121) revealed in the SW facing section was noted to cut Wall (106) but was not observed in Trench 1.

- 4.12 Trench 11 revealed a sequence of deposits identical to those observed in Trench 1. A 2m length of wall (125) crossed the trench, continuing in a south-westerly direction beyond the trench edge.
- 4.13 Trench 12 revealed a sequence of deposits identical to those observed in the NE part of Trench 3. The trench was crossed by Wall 127, which was probably a continuation of Wall 109.
- 4.14 Trench 13 was the last foundation trench dug. Beneath tarmac surface 140/110 lay upper made-ground deposit 141 which overlay three parallel SW-NE aligned walls - 142 and 147 being continuations of walls 127 and 126, and wall 148 lying a couple of metres to the southeast, apparently to the rear of the building terrace. Deposit 141 overlay at least two Pennant slabs (143) that appeared to abut the west side of wall 142. On the other side of the wall, over a metre of make-up was revealed (149 and 151). Within 151 lay a narrow, brick and Pennant drain (145) that appeared to run parallel with wall 142. Layer 151 overlay a brick floor (150) which extended up to walls 142 and wall 147.

5. THE FINDS

A small assemblage of finds (12 items) was recovered from made-ground deposits and are listed below. None of the material was retained.

Pottery

Six post-medieval pottery sherds were collected from made-ground deposits 112, 113 and 118.

Animal Bone

A large number of animal bone fragments were present in the made-ground deposits. A small number of these were recovered and identified as cattle or horse. Three large horn cores were also identified as cattle.

Clay Tobacco Pipe

A small number of stem fragments were noted in the machine spoil but these were not retained.

Table of Finds					
Find Type		Context	Count	Weight (g)	Date
Pottery	North Somerset Glazed Red Earthenware (BPT 285)	112	1	112	1550-1800
Pottery	Late White China (BPT 202)	112	1	44	1770-2000
Pottery	Bristol Staffordshire Ware (BPT 100)	113	2	56	1650-1800
Pottery	N Devon Sgraffito Ware (BPT 222)	118	1	28	1650--1900
Pottery	Flower pot	130	1	17	C20
Bone	Cow/Horse	112	3	420	-
Bone	Horn Cores - Cow	118	3	178	-

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Natural substrate was overlain by a deposit of subsoil or topsoil observed in several of the foundation trenches, some 1.3 metres beneath the present day site ground level. Substantial deposits of made ground burying the land surface incorporated some of the walls and a possible external paved surface that formed part of a building terrace that fronted on to Wilder Street. Plumley and Ashmead's 1828 map of Bristol appears to depict two blocks of buildings on the Wilder Street frontage, with a terrace of buildings to the rear, adjoining Brunswick Cemetery. However, Ashmead's survey of Bristol made just a few years later in 1854 depicts quite a different picture as it clearly shows a single building terrace fronting on to Wilder Street, which it names 'Brunswick Terrace'.
- 6.2 The terrace frontage clearly lies beneath the current Wilder Street footpath. All the observed walls, except for 125, were constructed using identical materials and appeared to be contemporary, although in most cases it was not impossible to ascertain relationships between them. Internal ground floor levels were probably higher than current ground levels at the site as there was no evidence for internal floors (either suspended or solid), except for a brick surface, possibly a sub-cellar floor, located in the rear of one of the houses at the northeast end of the site.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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LIST OF CONTEXTS

No	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Date
100	Deposit	Modern surfacing deposits of loose pale yellow gravel, sand and concrete in two bands at the front and rear of site.	Front 1.5m wide Rear 4.5m wide x length of site		Avg 200mm	C20
101	Deposit	Soft, loose, very dark grey- black mixed sandy silt and mortar deposit. Frequent inclusions of brick and tile fragments, small limestone fragments and lime flecks. Recorded along Trench 1, immediately below modern surfaces and in Trench 2 to SE of Wall 106.	Recorded along Trench 1 and SE parts of Trenches 2, 7 10 and 11 to SE of Wall 106		Avg 200mm	C20
102	Surface	Partly exposed surface of dressed and squared Pennant sandstone slabs with limestone and brick edging kerbs. Brick Size 230 x 100 x 70mm Slabs 610 x 400 x 42mm maximum No bedding or bonding material visible beneath slabs but kerbs bonded in pale grey lime mortar. Kerbs form edges on NE and SW sides and NE kerb is 2 courses high.	2.8m	400mm	42mm	C19
103	Deposit	Loose, mixed made ground deposit with varied bands of material within it. Dark greyish brown, brownish red and mid – brown equivalent to topsoil, subsoil and sandy clay. Occasional small brick, tile and limestone fragment inclusions and lime mortar from flecks to lenses. Similar to/or same as (113 118, 131, 149 and 151).	Recorded along Trench 1 and SE parts of Trenches 2, 7 10 and 11 to SE of Wall 106		Avg 500mm	-
104	Deposit	Soft, mid- brown, clayey silt with occasional charcoal and rare lime fleck inclusions. Buried Topsoil.	Recorded along Trench 1 and SE parts of Trenches 2, 7 10 and 11 to SE of Wall 106		Avg 200mm	-
105	Deposit	Soft, strong brown, silty clay with no obvious inclusions. Subsoil.	Recorded along Trench 1, 7, 10 and 11 and part of Trench 2, to SE of Wall 106		Up to 200mm	-
106	Wall	Random coursed Lias limestone bonded with grey lime mortar with frequent lime and charcoal flecking. Orientated SW – NE Material sizes average 160 x 140 x 90mm.	c.22m	500mm	1.4m max	C19
107	Wall	Same as 106. Orientated NW – SE. Material sizes average 200 x 170 x 90mm.	1m+	500mm	1.1m max	C19
108	Wall	Random coursed Lias limestone bonded with grey lime mortar with frequent lime and charcoal flecking. Orientated NW –	1.8m	500mm	700 mm max	C19

		SE. Material sizes average 200 x 170 x 60mm. SW facing elevation has lime-washed face.				
109	Wall	Random coursed Lias limestone rubble bonded with grey lime mortar with frequent lime and charcoal flecking Orientated SW – NE. Probably. Material sizes average 300 x 180 x 180mm.	c.10m	500mm	1.6m max	C19
110	Deposit	Tarmac surface	Forms band along centre of site between (100) bands		Avg 50mm thick	C20
111	Wall	Random coursed Lias limestone rubble bonded with grey lime mortar with frequent lime and charcoal flecking. Orientated NW – SE. Material sizes average 190 x 160 x 80mm.	c.1m	400mm	1m max	C19
112	Deposit	Loose, mixed, pale grey and dark greyish brown with reddish brown lenses. Re-deposited topsoil, sandy clay and mortar lenses. Occasional small limestone, brick and roof tile fragments. Increases in depth from SE – NW.	Area of site NE of Tr.9 and NW of Tr. 8		Up to 700mm	C19
113	Deposit	Loose, mixed deposit with varied lenses of dark- greyish/ brown, brownish/ red and mid – brown. Occasional small brick, tile and limestone fragments, flecks and lenses of lime mortar. Similar to/or same as 103, 118, 131, 149 and 151.	Between walls 106 and 109.		500mm	C19
114	Deposit	Loose, pale brown sandy silt and lime mortar. Small limestone fragments and brick/tile fragment inclusions.	Forms deposit NW of Wall 109 NE of Wall 111 and SW of Wall 116		500mm	C18/19
115	Deposit	Soft, mid- brown, clayey silt with occasional charcoal and rare lime fleck inclusions. Buried Topsoil. Same as 104	Most of site except where recorded as 104		Avg 200mm	-
116	Wall	Random coursed Lias limestone rubble bonded with grey lime mortar with frequent lime and charcoal flecking. Orientated NW – SE. Material sizes average 180 x 190 x 77mm.	c.1m	450mm	1m max	C19
117	Deposit	Soft, strong brown, silty clay with no obvious inclusions. Subsoil	Whole site except where recorded as (105) or (137)		Avg 200mm	-
118	Deposit	Mixed loose made-ground deposit. Similar to/or same as 103, 113, 131, 149 and 151.	5m	2m	1.1m	-
119	Well	Lias limestone	1.0m diameter		1m+	C19
120		Number not used				
121	Wall	Random coursed Lias limestone rubble bonded with grey lime mortar with frequent lime and charcoal flecking. Orientated NW – SE. Material sizes	c.4.2m	420mm	500mm	C19

		average 220 x 170 x 60mm.				
122	Wall	Random coursed Lias limestone rubble bonded with grey lime mortar with frequent lime and charcoal flecking. Orientated N – S on a different alignment to all the other walls. Material sizes average 170 x 150 x 70mm.	-	300mm	500mm	C19
123	Structure	Semi-circular as recorded, but probably circular, masonry structure. Random coursed Lias limestone bonded with grey lime mortar with frequent lime and charcoal flecking. Built on rectangular base of similar masonry and mortar.	1.3m diameter approx. Base is 2m across in section and 100mm thick		500mm incl base	C19
124	Structure	Same construction as 123.	1.3m diameter approx.		500mm incl base	C19
125	Wall	Random coursed Lias limestone rubble bonded with grey lime mortar with frequent lime and charcoal flecking. Orientated NW – SE. Material sizes average 230 x 170 x 100 mm.	c.2m	500mm	1m approx.	C19
126	Wall	Random coursed Lias limestone rubble bonded with grey lime mortar with frequent lime and charcoal flecking. Orientated NE – SW. Material sizes average 200 x 170 x 75 (mm) 400 x 300 x 60mm max.	5m	500mm	1.1m max	C19
127	Wall	Random coursed Lias limestone rubble bonded with grey lime mortar with frequent lime and charcoal flecking. Orientated NE – SW. Material sizes average 190 x 160 x 160 mm. Same as 109 and later recorded as Wall 142.	c.3m	500mm	1.4m max	C19
128	Cut	Steep sided, flat bottomed cut visible in sections of Trench 1.	1m across trench	2.2m in section	1.3m	C20
129	Deposit	Fill of Cut 128, very mixed but in three distinct bands of demolition rubble (tile brick and limestone), redeposited topsoil and sandy clay.	2.2m	1.0m	1.3m	C20
130	Deposit	Made-ground deposit. Compact layer of very dark greyish brown gravel, sandy silt and small fragments of Lias limestone rubble, brick and tile fragments. Inclusions of lime mortar flecking and charcoal.	Recorded in the NW Quadrant of site		Avg 250mm	C19/20
131	Deposit	Mixed loose made-ground deposit. Similar to/or same as 103, 113, 118, 149 and 151.	Recorded in Trenches. 2, 3 & 4 in SW of site		Up to 950mm	C19/20
132	Deposit	Fill of modern pipe trench cut 133, mixed dark grayish brown sandy silt, possibly redeposited topsoil, with frequent small limestone rubble and brick and tile fragments.	1m	400mm	1.2m	C20
133	Cut	Steep sided, narrow cut with ceramic	1m	400mm	1.2m	C20

		pipe at base. Only recorded where crossing Trench 3.				
134	Deposit	Loose, reddish brown silty clay and Lias limestone fragments. Occasional small brick/tile fragments.	Tr.3 NE of Wall (116)		500mm	-
135	Deposit	Soft, black silt and coal fragments with occasional lime mortar flecks.	Recorded in Tr. 3 beyond Wall 116		50mm	-
136	Deposit	Soft, reddish brown silty clay.	Recorded in Tr. 3 beyond Wall 116		100mm	-
137	Deposit	Soft, strong brown silty clay with no obvious inclusions. Subsoil.	Only recorded in NE end of Trench 3.		Avg 200mm	-
138	Wall	Random coursed Lias limestone rubble bonded with grey lime mortar with frequent lime and charcoal flecking. Orientated NW – SE. Material sizes average 200 x 170 x 80 mm. Abuts SW end of Wall 126.	c.1m	500mm	1.4m max	C19
139	Natural	Firm, red brown sandy clay.	Whole site at base of excavation		500mm	-
140	Deposit	Same as 110	Same as 110			C20
141	Deposit	Grey mortar, ash and coal fragments below 140), similar to 130 .	NE corner of site in Trenches 2, 8 & 13			C20
142	Wall	Random coursed Lias limestone rubble bonded with grey lime mortar with frequent lime and charcoal flecking. Orientated NE – SW. Material sizes average 190 x 160 x 160 mm.	1m length crossing Trench 13. Approx. 700mm high		500mm	C19
143	Surface	Pennant Sandstone paving slabs abutting N side of Wall 142.				C19
144	Deposit	Similar to/or same as 113,118 and 103.	Below 143 adj Wall 142		800mm	-
145	Structure	Brick and Pennant sandstone drain parallel with wall 142. Bonded with pale grey lime mortar with frequent lime and charcoal flecking.	Section only 160mm wide		150mm	C19
146	Deposit	Fine black deposit within drain 145.	Section only 160mm wide		150mm	C20
147	Wall	Random coursed Lias limestone rubble bonded with grey lime mortar with frequent lime and charcoal flecking. Orientated NE – SW. Material sizes average 190 x 160 x 160 (mm).	c.6m	530mm		C20
148	Wall	Random coursed Lias limestone rubble bonded with grey lime mortar with frequent lime and charcoal flecking. Orientated NE – SW. Material sizes average 190 x 160 x 160 mm.	Approx. 6m long		500mm	C20
149	Deposit	Loose, mixed made ground deposit comprising dark- greyish/brown, brownish/red and mid – brown soil, equivalent to topsoil, subsoil and sandy				C19

		clay. Occasional small brick, tile and limestone fragments, flecks and lenses of lime mortar. Similar to/or same as 103, 113, 118 and 151.				
150	Surface	Brick surface abutting Walls 142 and 147				C19
151	Deposit	Loose, mixed made ground comprising bands of dark- greyish brown, brownish red and mid – brown material, equivalent to topsoil, subsoil and sandy clay. Occasional brick, tile and limestone fragments, flecks and lenses of lime mortar. Similar to/or same as 103, 113, 118 and 149.				C19

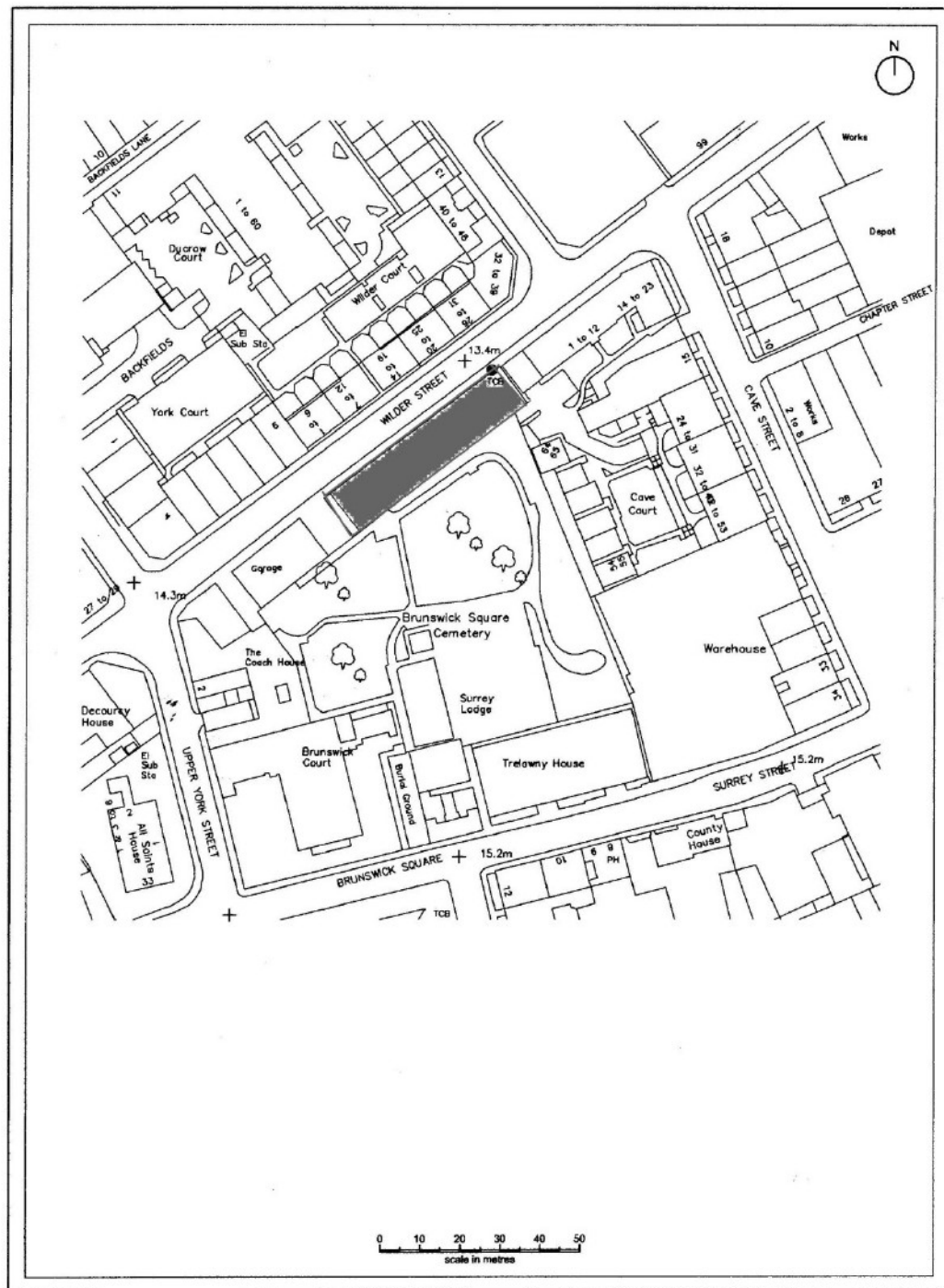


Figure 1. Site location. Ordnance Survey map reproduced by consent of the Controller of H M Stationery Office. Licence No. WL1005476. Scale as shown

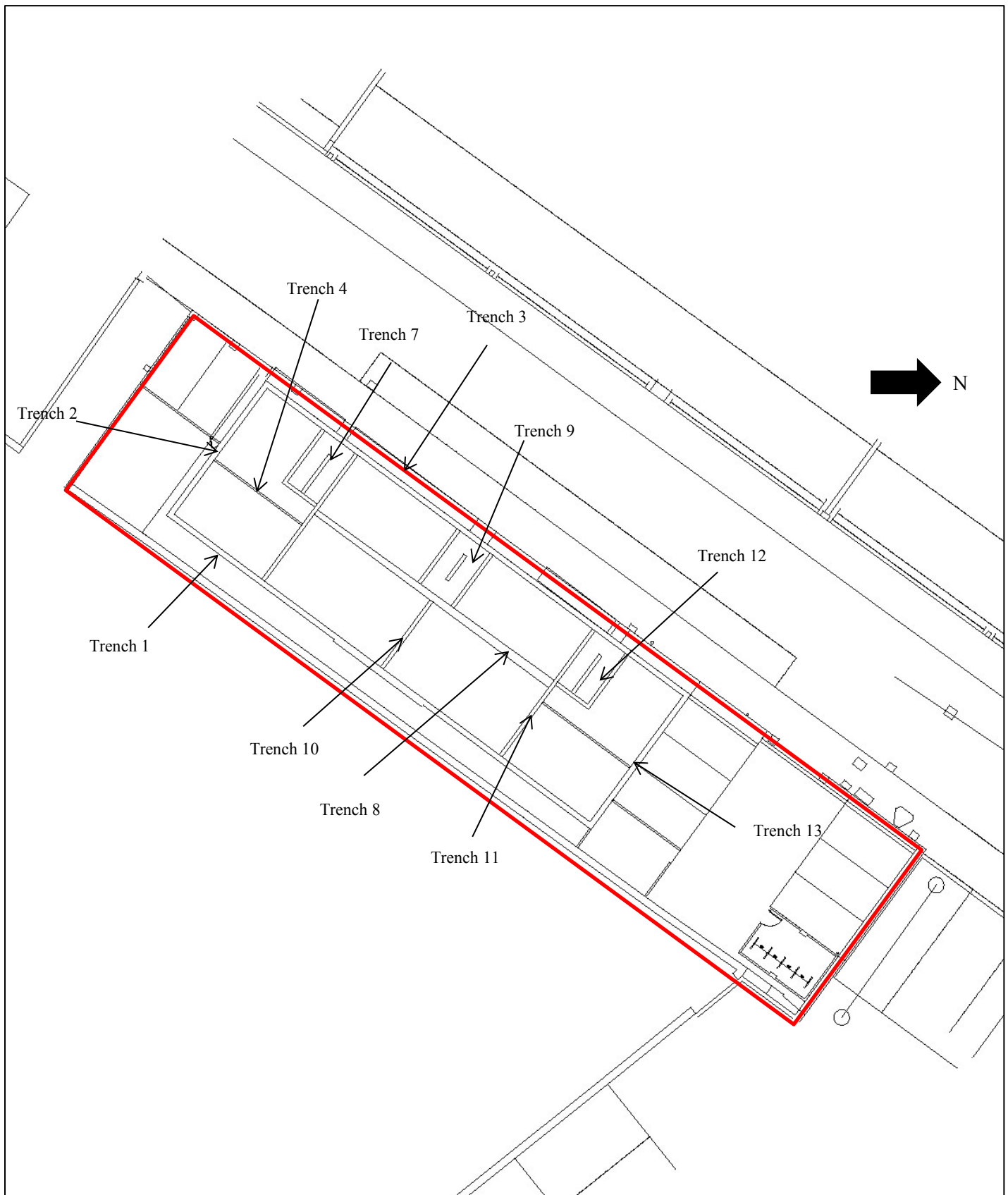


Figure 2. Location of foundation trenches. Scale 1:200 at A4.

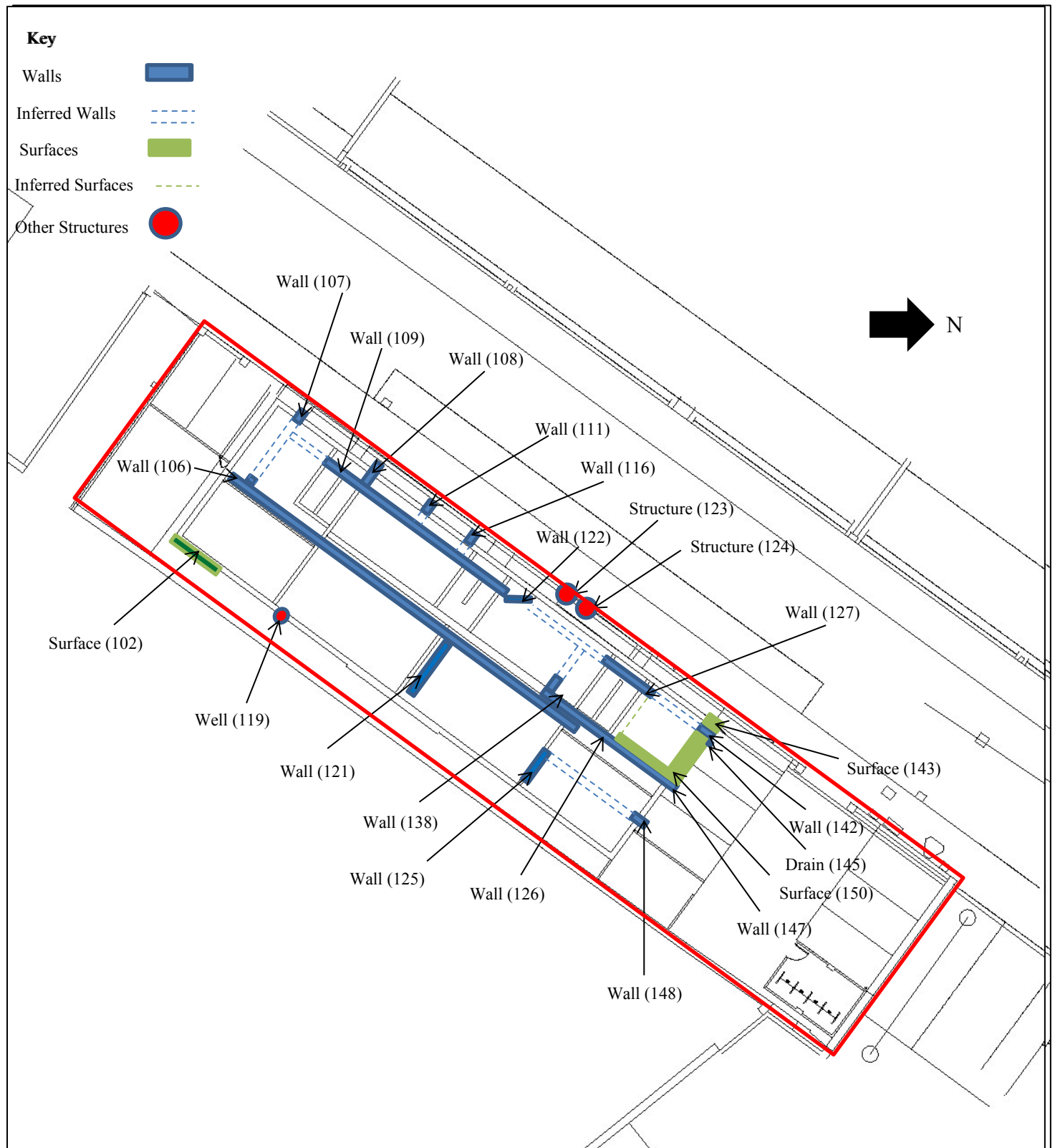


Figure 3: Archaeological features recorded within the foundation trenches. Scale 1:200 at A4.

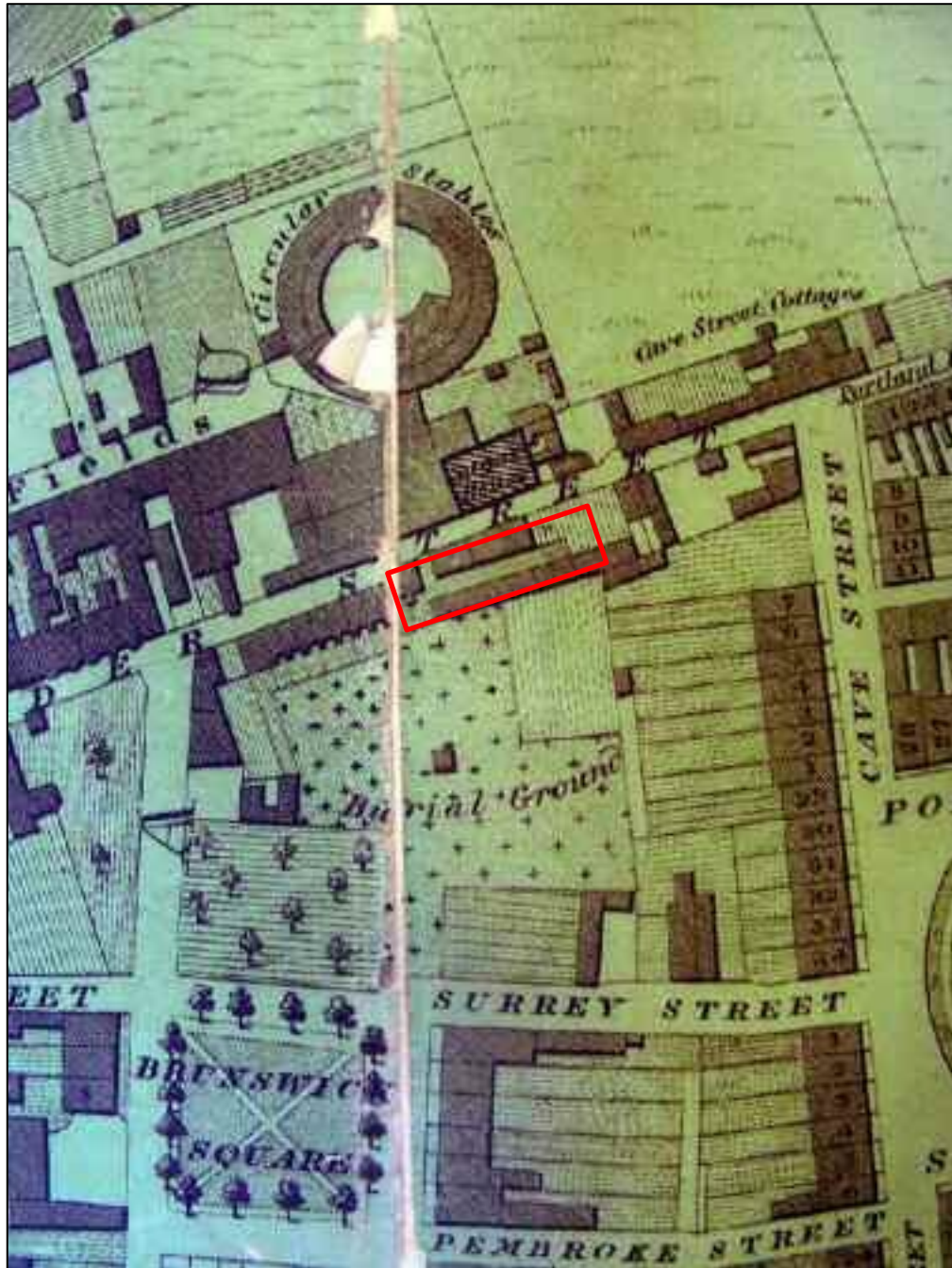


Figure 4: Extract from Plumley & Ashmead's map of Bristol, 1828 (BRO).

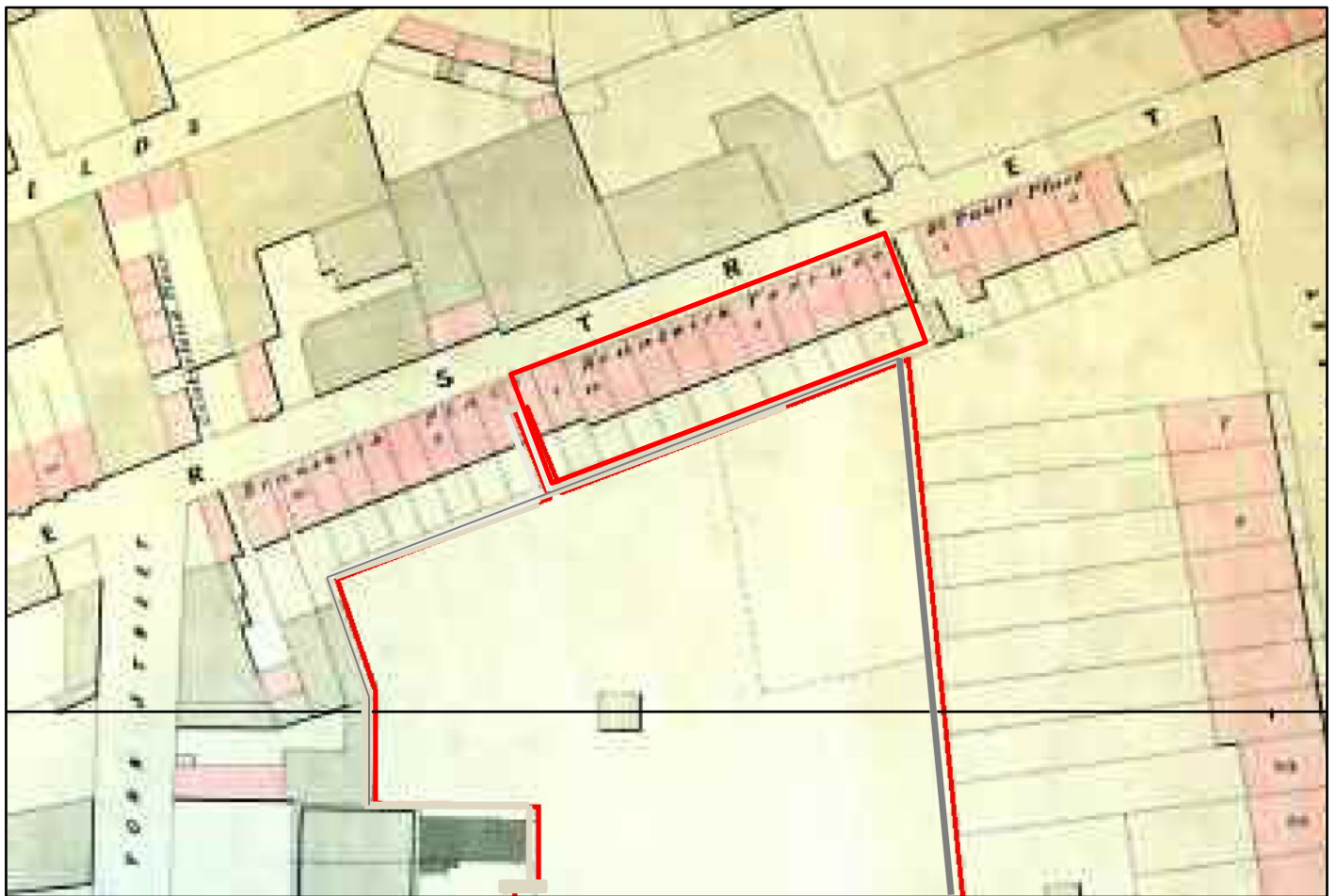


Figure 5: Extract from Ashmead's Survey of Bristol, 1854 (BRO).

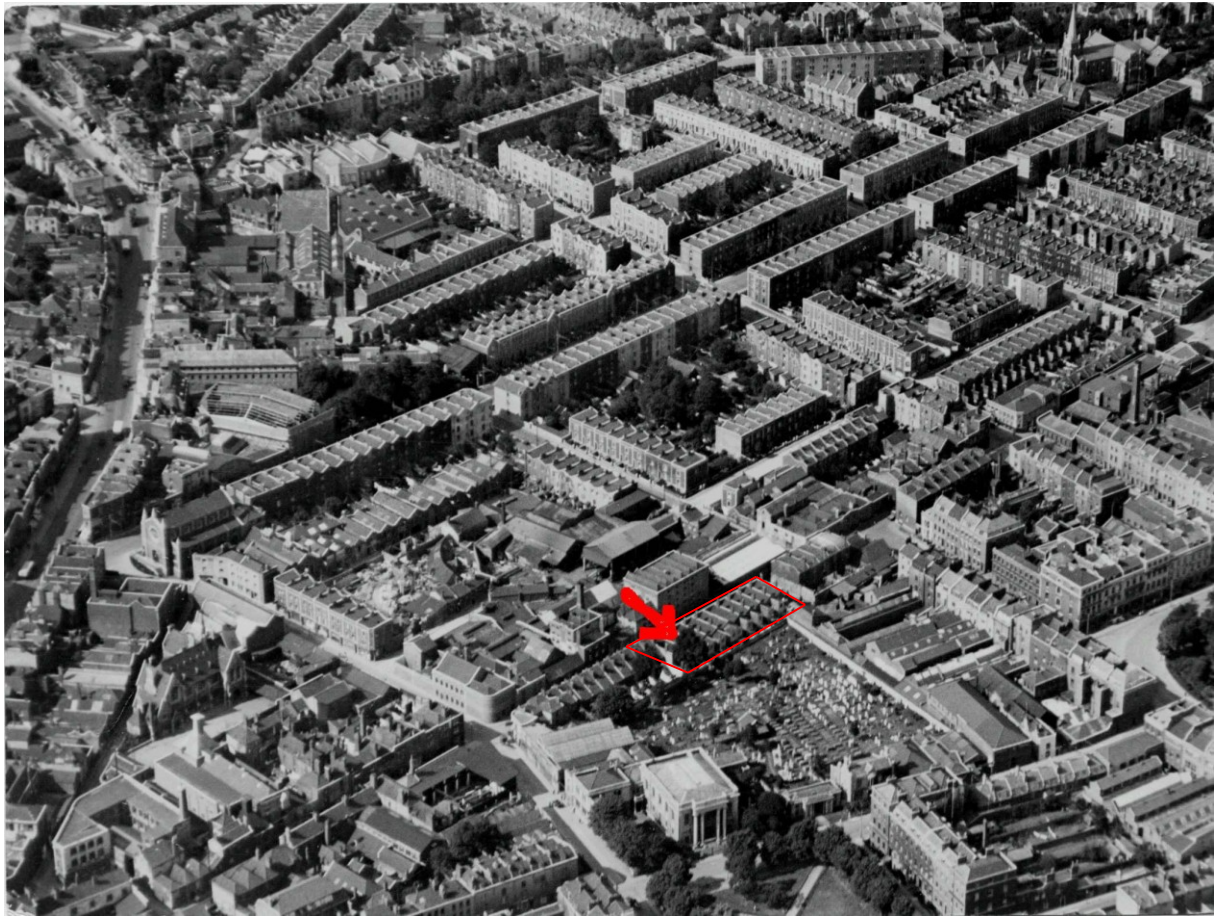


Figure 6: Aerial Photograph of St. Pauls with the study area outlined in red (courtesy of Leigh Homes).



Plate 1. General view of the southwest half of the foundations as excavated, looking SW



Plate 2. Surface 102 as exposed in the NW facing section of Trench 1, scale 2 x 1m



Plate 3. Top of Well 119 as exposed, looking ENE, scale 1m.



Plate 4. Walls 109 and 106 as exposed in the SW facing section of Trench 7 looking NE, scale 2m.



Plate 5: Structures 123 and 124 as excavated in the NE facing section of Trench 3, looking NW, scale 2m.



Plate 6. Deposit 137 in base of trench, Wall 127 in section and Wall 126 in plan as excavated in Trenches 8 and 12, looking SSE, scale 2m.