



BRISTOL & WEST ARCHAEOLOGY

Nos 12 - 22 High Street, Weston,
Bath, Bath and North East
Somerset

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Client: Lancer Scott Ltd

08 April 2014

Bristol & West Archaeology

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**Bath and North East Somerset
Council**

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on land located between Nos 12-22 High Street and Crown Road, Weston, Bath. This revealed up to 1.5 metres of man-made deposits that filled a possible cellar and sealed several walls, all probably of late 18th or early 19th century date that probably formed part of a building terrace. No features, deposits or finds of an earlier date were found.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by Lancer Scott Ltd. Thanks are owed to Richard Denoon, Richard Baker and Ian Staley of Lancer Scott, William Amphlett, construction engineer for his assistance and enthusiasm, Noel O'Donnell of E. C. Harris, Richard Sermon, Senior Archaeological Officer for Bath and North East Somerset Council and the staff of Bath Record Office.

1. INTRODUCTION

Project Background

- 1.1 Planning consent (12/02848/FUL) was obtained from Bath and North East Somerset Council to enlarge an existing retail unit and construct extensions to provide apartments at first floor level. Attached to the consent was a planning condition (Condition No 11) for the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) to provide a controlled archaeological watching brief during groundworks within the previously undeveloped areas of the site, with provision for excavation of any significant deposits or features encountered.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (BWA 2012) approved by Mr Richard Sermon, Archaeological Officer for Bath and North East Somerset Council. 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 between 24 October and 9 December 2013.
- 1.4 This report was written by Bruce Williams. The project archive will be deposited with Roman Bath and Pump Room Museum, Bath under the accession number BATRM 2014.29. Paper and digital copies of the report will be provided to Bath & North East Somerset City Council for inclusion in the Historic Environment Record database.
- 1.5 The project has been entered in the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) as bristola3-171049.

Site Location

- 1.6 Weston is situated to the northwest of Bath city centre. The watching brief was centred on NGR ST 372970 166323 and occupied a former car park serving a retail unit behind Nos 12-22 High Street, Weston, Bath. It lies in a Conservation Area within the designated Bath World Heritage Site and Bath Archaeological Character Zone 30.

Geology, Topography and Land use

- 1.7 The British Geological Survey 1:50,000 scale map for the area indicates the natural strata to be blue limestone of the Triassic period. No superficial deposits are indicated.
- 1.8 The area of the watching brief was a tarmacadam car park located between Crown Road and High Street. There is a height range between 2.7 and 3.6 metres in ground levels as a cross section through the site, reflecting the fact that High Street sits at the base of a valley.

2. OBJECTIVE AND RECORDING METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The watching brief followed the methodology outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (BWA 2013) and involved monitoring all groundwork for the survival of archaeological deposits or features.
- 2.2 All deposits were recorded on standard pro-forma record sheets. Photographs were taken as colour digital images. The project records have been prepared as a standard archive which will be stored at Roman Baths and Pump Room Museum, Bath.

3. BRIEF HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The site is situated in Weston, historically a parish in its own right, in the Hundred of Bath Forum in the county of Somerset. The parish is not yet covered by the Victoria History of the Counties of England.
- 3.2 The village of Weston is situated on the route of the Roman road (MBN 10177 & MBN 30147; Margary 54) linking Bath (*Aquae Sulis*) and Sea Mills (*Abonae*). The place-name Weston means ‘western settlement’ (perhaps in relation to Bath itself).
- 3.3 The village and part of the parish of Weston was incorporated into the City of Bath in 1879. The remainder of the parish lying outside the revised boundaries of the city was then transferred to the neighbouring parish of Charlcombe. A further revision of the city/parish boundary was made by the Bath Extension Act in 1950.
- 3.4 There is evidence of Prehistoric activity in the wider parish but not in close proximity to the site itself.
- 3.5 There is ample evidence of Roman activity in Weston, ranging from finds of pottery, masonry walls, a cemetery, isolated burials and a stone coffin, though nothing from the site itself.
- 3.6 There is no evidence of medieval occupation within the site. However, the church of All Saints, dating from the 12th century, lies just a short distance to the north east.
- 3.7 The High Street was already well developed by the early 19th century as indicated by the Weston Tithe map of 1846.
- 3.8 Crown Road was constructed in the 1960’s to relieve traffic congestion on High Street.

4. RESULTS

- 4.1 Immediately prior to excavations mini-piles were sunk across the proposed building footprint and a retaining wall of contiguous piles inserted along the Crown Road frontage. This was followed by bulk excavation between the piles for the enlarged retail store to create a floor slab at lower ground floor level. Owing to the slope of the tarmac car park, the depth of bulk excavation varied from 2.16m opposite Crown Road to only 0.4m immediately behind the retail units fronting High Street, but the general level of excavation was to an ordnance datum of 48.70m aOD.
- 4.2 Bulk excavation commenced with the excavation of a NW/SE trench 4 metres wide along the Crown Road frontage. Removal of the modern car park surface and sub-base (201)

revealed, at the NW end of the trench, made-ground deposits to a depth of 1.5 metres comprising compact, black ashy material, soil, clay and rubble limestone (202,203,204) overlying the natural clay and limestone substrate.

- 4.3 Within the made-ground deposits and sealed by the car park was a limestone wall (205) oriented NE-SW that survived to a depth of at least 1.3m and was not bottomed. The wall's SE face was coated with a layer of white limewash. Against the face of the wall was a deposit (206) of loose, mixed brown and black ashy material in excess of 1.5m deep that contained much limestone rubble concentrated along the side of the wall, interpreted as wall demolition. Deposit 206 was not bottomed. Another, narrower NE-SW oriented wall (207) lay 1.8m to the south east but it was not clear if the two walls were related.
- 4.4 Built against the southeast face of Wall 205 was an oven (210), circular in shape and consisting of a limestone superstructure with a brick lined base, flue and domed roof, all the bricks displaying signs of heat damage. External diameter of the oven was 1.2m, internal diameter 0.8m. No chimney/flue to vent the structure was visible.
- 4.5 Southeast of Wall 207 lay a further two walls (208, 211) on the same orientation as the other two, though 211 was slightly curved.
- 4.6 Wall 212 lay just outside the footprint for the enlarged retail store within the excavation for a drain inspection gully. It was on the same orientation as the other walls and utilised similar building materials.
- 4.7 The only artefacts unearthed were sherds of English stoneware, late whiteware and window glass that came from fill 206. These were not retained.

5. DISCUSSION

- 5.1 The earliest occupation revealed during the watching brief appears to date from the 18th or the early 19th century and consisted of made ground and a few masonry walls that were probably connected with a building/buildings that are depicted in this location on the 1846 Weston Tithe map. As revealed, the whitewashed wall (205) may have been a cellar wall. It was not bottomed and localised digging by hand to a depth of 0.3m beneath the exposed level of the wall failed to find a floor, which probably lay lower still.
- 5.2 An attempt has been made to superimpose the exposed walls and oven on to the first edition OS, but with only limited success. The building/buildings shown in this location on the tithe map appear to form part of a building terrace between what is recorded on the map as *Frugal Place* and *High Street*. The terrace is unnamed and is numbered 442 in the Schedule that accompanies the map, but no detail is recorded in the Schedule. The building terrace is also shown on the first edition 1888 OS, surveyed in 1884; however, by the time of the second edition OS in 1903, surveyed in 1901 the terrace is no longer shown.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

BWA (Bristol & West Archaeology) 2012. *Written Scheme of Investigation for a Controlled Archaeological Watching Brief at Nos 12-22 High Street, Weston, Bath.*

Table of Contexts						
No	Type	Description	Length	Width	Depth	Date
201	Surface	Tarmacadam and scalplings	All excavation area			C20
202	Deposit	Grey/black ashy soil containing abundant coal dust and some brick frags.	Western half of reduced dig.		200mm	C19/20
203	Deposit	Dark brown crumbly, slightly clayey soil containing charcoal, mortar, limestone frags.	Western half of reduced dig		300mm	C19/20
204	Deposit	Grey/brown clayey soil, charcoal, red silty flecks, limestone frags.	Western half of reduced dig.		120mm	C18/19
205	Wall	Limestone with light-brown bonding mortar. Orientated NE-SW. Whitewash on SE face.	Western half of reduced dig. Width .0.95m.			C18/19
206	Deposit	Mixed black and brown ashy material containing limestone rubble.	Western half of reduced dig against SE face of Wall 205.		>1.66m	C19/20
207	Wall	Same construction and orientation as 205.	Western half of reduced dig. Width 0.55m.		<1.6m	C18/19
208	Wall	Same construction and orientation as 205.	Western half of reduced dig. Width 0.55m.		1.6m.	C18/19
209	Deposit	Loose, friable, dark-brown ashy soil containing abundant flecks of buff mortar, small angular limestone, pan tile frags.	Western half of reduced dig. SE side of Wall 208.		1.6m.	C18/19
210	Oven	Circular construction with a limestone outer wall. Base, interior and domed roof are of brick. Brick opening on north side.	Western half of reduced dig. External dia 1.2m, internal dia 0.8m.			C18/19
211	Wall	Same construction and orientation as 205.	Width 0.55m.		1.6m	C18/19
212	Wall	Same construction and orientation as 205	Width 0.5m.		0.8m	C18/19

Table 1 List of contexts

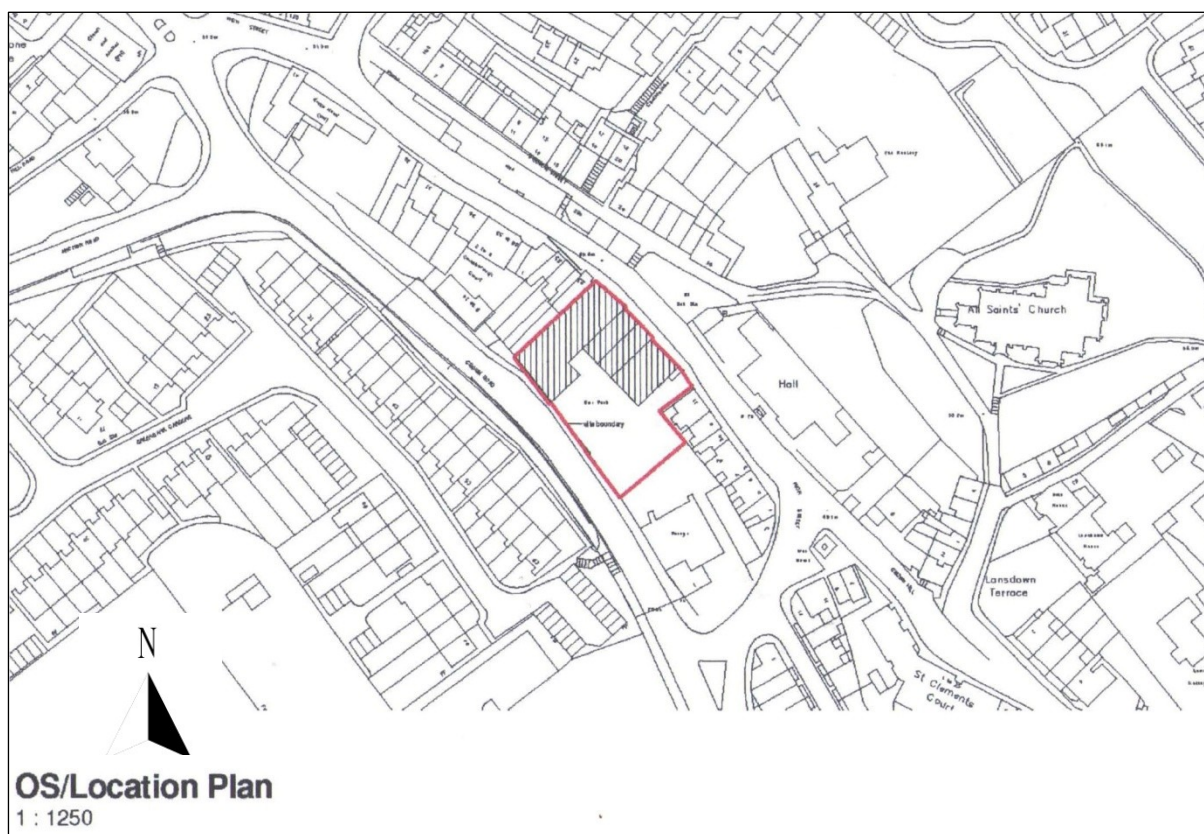


Figure 1 Site location, Scale as shown.

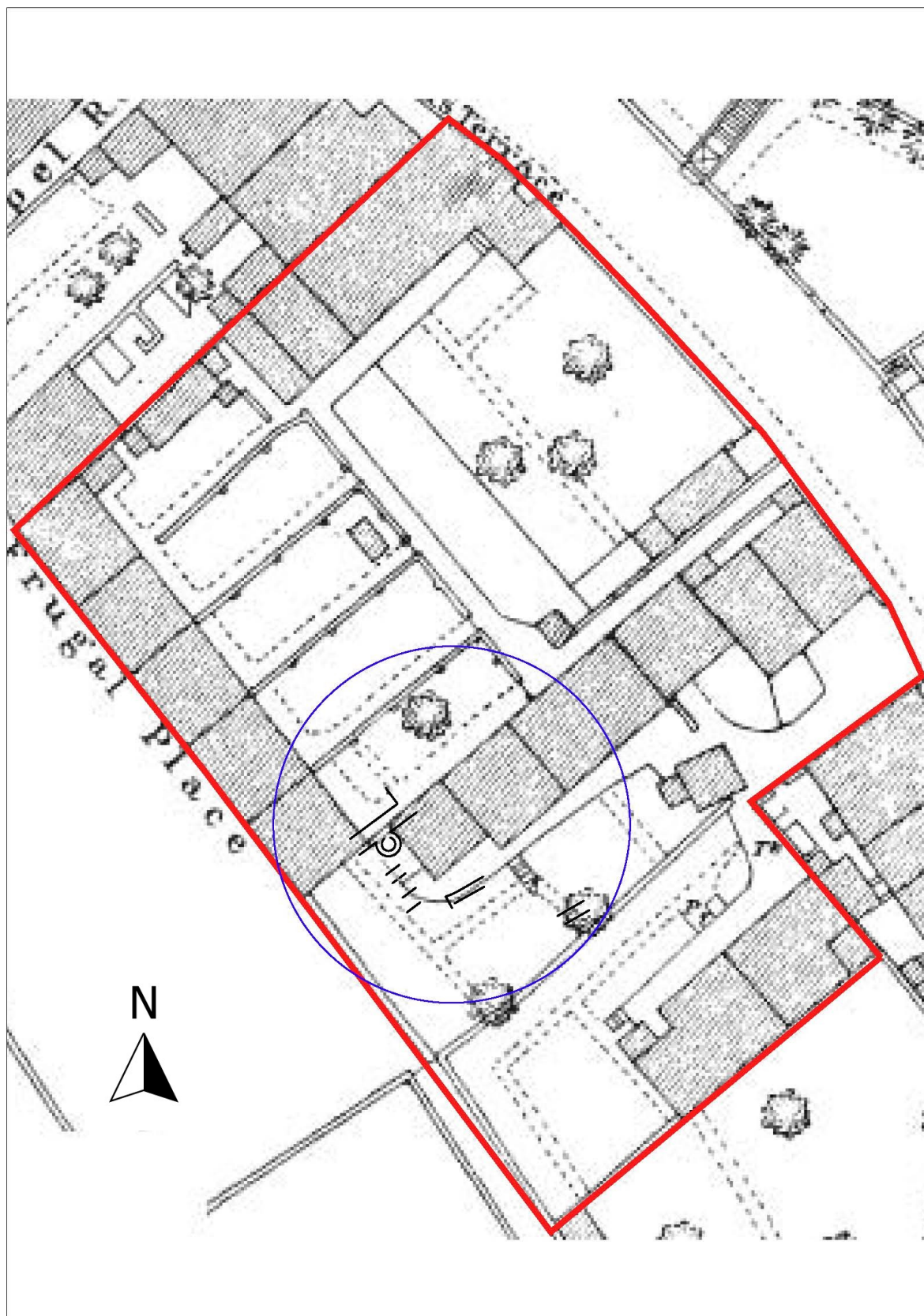


Figure 2 Detail from First Edition 1888 (1:1250) OS plan (surveyed in 1888) showing roundel with archaeological features superimposed. Courtesy of Bath Record Office.

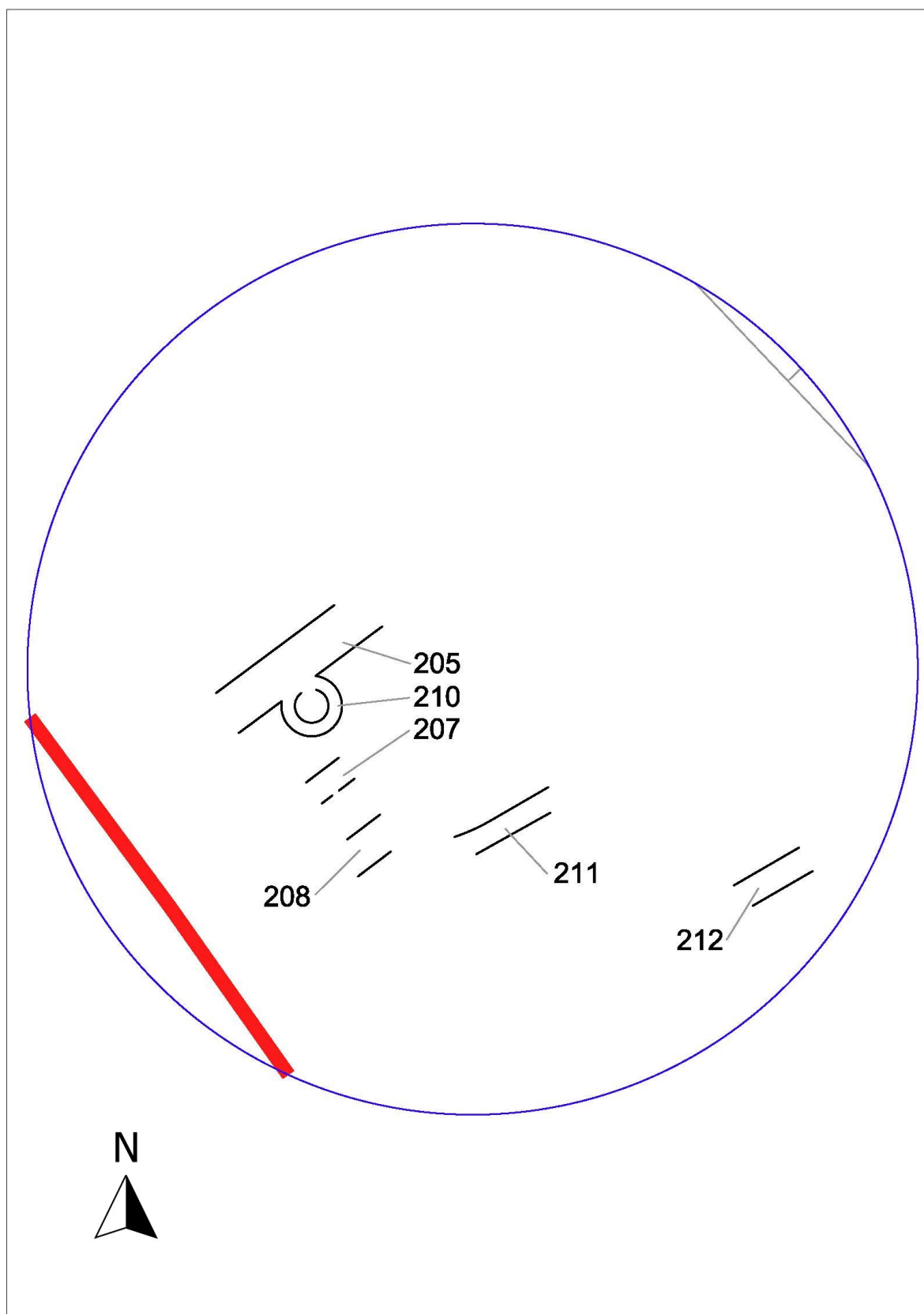


Figure 3 Roundel showing detail of archaeological features found.

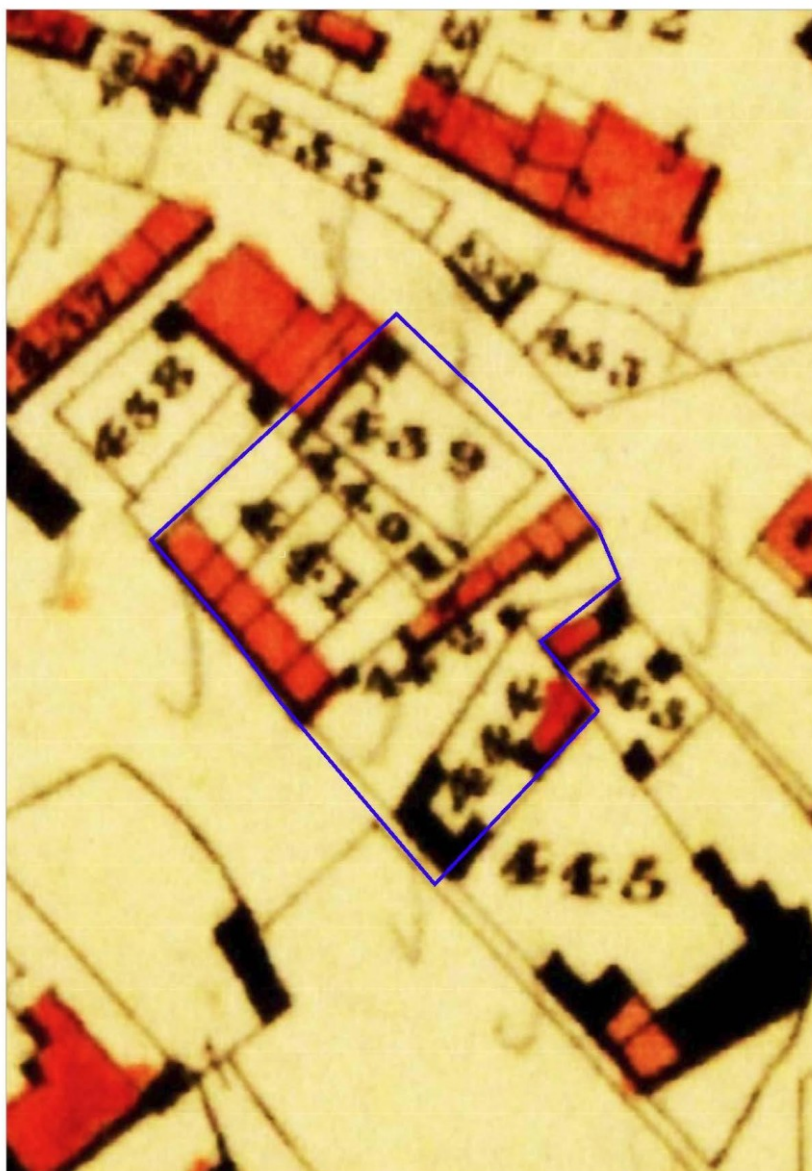


Figure 4 Extract from the 1846 Tithe Map of Weston (courtesy of Bath Record Office).

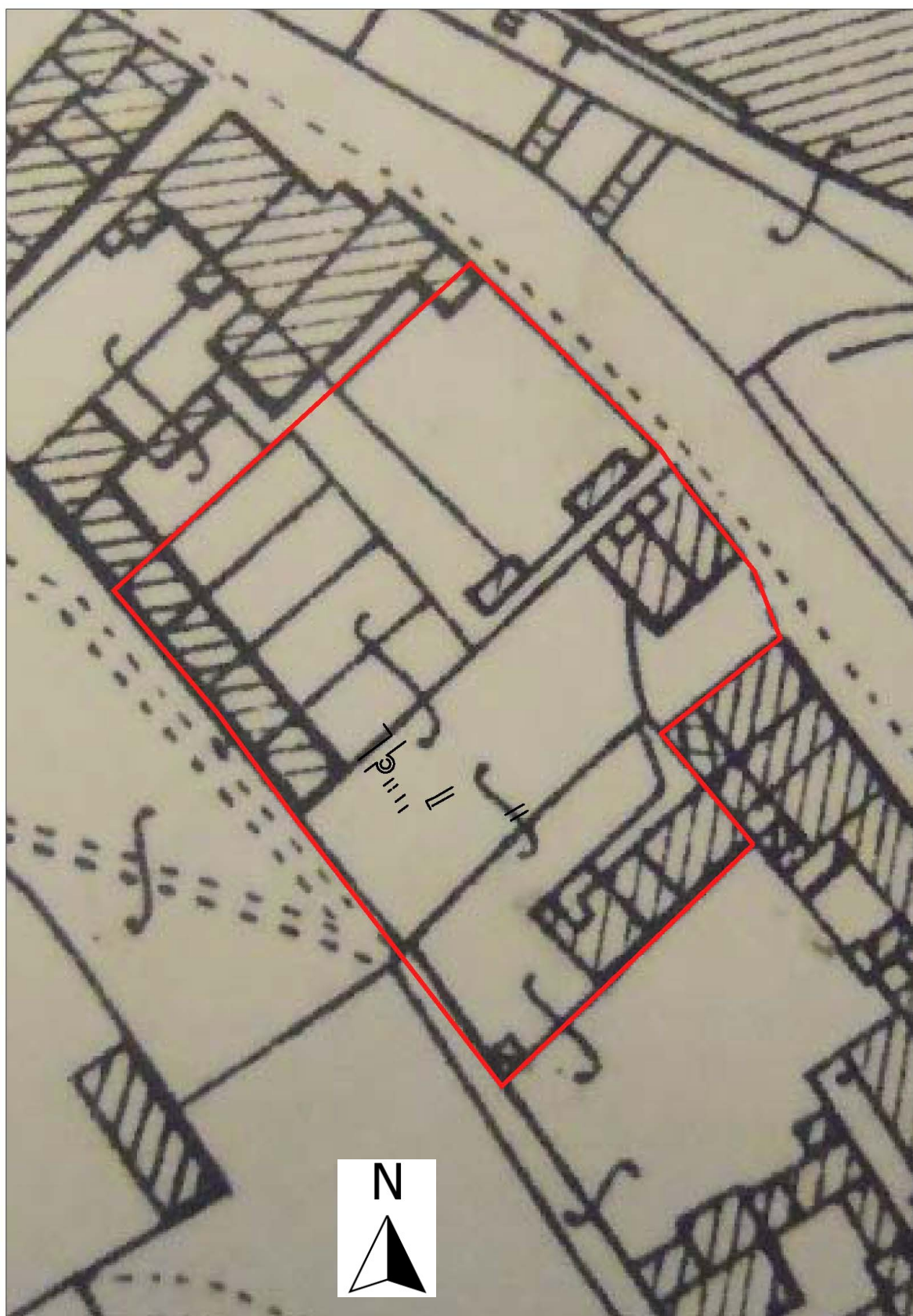


Figure 5 Extract from the Second Edition (1:2500) OS plan 1903 (surveyed in 1901) with archaeological features superimposed. Courtesy of Bath Record Office.



Plate 1. General view showing bulk excavation looking southeast. Scale 1x2m.



Plate 2. White-washed face of Wall 205 looking northwest. Scale 1x1m.



Plate 3. Detail of half-sectioned oven showing heavily burnt brick lining, viewed northwest. Scale 2x1m.



Plate 4. Slightly curved Wall 211 looking west. Scale 1x2m.



Plate 5. General view across site looking south following bulk excavation, showing completed excavations for pile caps and ground beams. Scale 1x2m.