



# BRISTOL & WEST ARCHAEOLOGY

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Nos. 64-70 West Street, Bedminster,  
Bristol

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Archaeological Monitoring and  
Recording Report

Project Ref: 14/2489

Client: Prelon Properties

26 August 2014

# Bristol & West Archaeology

**Planning Authority:**

**Bristol City Council**

**National Grid Reference**

**Centred on: NGR ST 5816 7124**

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**Nos. 64-70 West Street, Bedminster, Bristol**

**Archaeological Monitoring and Recording Report**

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## **NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

In line with current government guidelines and national legislation, the Senior Archaeological Officer of Bristol City Council has asked for an Archaeological Monitoring and Recording report of a c. 940 m<sup>2</sup> strip of land (the study area) at Nos. 64-70, West Street, Bedminster, Bristol (centred NGR ST 5816 7124).

The Archaeological Monitoring and Recording was requested as part of planning consent for the conversion of a former used car sales forecourt to residential accommodation. This work included the demolition of later 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial structures and the excavation of footings for two new residential buildings.

This survey was undertaken in accordance with a written instruction from the Senior Archaeological Officer of Bristol City Council, together with a method statement (WSI) drawn up by Bristol and West Archaeology and agreed with the senior Archaeological Officer of Bristol City Council. In undertaking this survey all appropriate guidelines were followed.

The results of this recording exercise are outlined and illustrated in the following report.

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### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Bristol and West Archaeology Limited wish to acknowledge the assistance given by the following in the production of this report: Steve Silcox and Derek Press of Praelon Properties; the site staff of Kore; and Bob Jones, Senior Archaeological Officer, Bristol City Council.

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **Project background**

- 1.1 Bristol City Council has requested an Archaeological Monitoring and Recording of selected structures at Nos. 64-70 West Street, Bedminster, Bristol, BS3 3NT (centred NGR ST 5816 7124). This work was required as a condition of planning consent (planning reference 05/01192/F), in order to record potential heritage assets prior to their remodelling or removal. The project was commissioned by Praelon Properties (the client).

### **Site Location, Topography and Land Use**

- 1.2 The study area lies on the northwest side of West Street (the A38), at the junction with Sion Road, in the district of Bedminster, City of Bristol (see Figure 1). The site occupies the part of the frontage of West Street, together with part of the southwest side of Sion Road. The study area is an irregular four-sided 940 m<sup>2</sup> polygon measuring c. 41m NE-SW by up to c. 28m NW-SE, though narrower at the northeastern end, within the larger irregular four-sided polygon created by the intersection of Sion Road and Victor Road with British Road and West Street.
- 1.3 The study area lies between the 20 and 30m aOD contours, at approximately 23.6m aOD (Mordue 2005, 1). The overall topography of the study area is flat, at or just above the level of West Street. There is a slight rise in the level of the site towards the northwest (rear) of the area. Since this does not correspond with the more significant rise of adjacent Sion Road, nor with the rise in level to the adjoining properties fronting British Road, it is reasonable to suppose there has been a significant amount of past terracing in order to achieve the present level state of the study area.
- 1.4 Previously the study area was a used car forecourt, but most of the fixtures and fittings related to this use had been removed (Plate a). The upper features of former fuel tanks from an earlier use as a petrol station were exposed and subsequently capped, without revealing anything of archaeological significance (Plate b).

### **Geology**

- 1.5 The underlying bedrock of the study area is formed of Redcliff Sandstone of the Triassic Period, dated c. 250-251 Million Years BP (BGS 2014). No superficial deposits have been recorded across the study area (ibid.).

## **2 OBJECTIVE AND RECORDING METHODOLOGY**

- 2.1 In compiling this report the standards and guidelines of the IfA (2008), DCLG, DCMS & English Heritage (2012; 2010), and Bristol City Council (BCC 2006) were followed as appropriate.
- 2.2 The author undertook archaeological monitoring of the study area between July and August 2014. This monitoring was undertaken in response to planning application 05/01192/F, consent condition 13, in accordance with local and national guidelines, and following a brief and Written Scheme of Investigation, drawn up by Bristol and West Archaeology Ltd and agreed with the City Archaeological Officer. During the monitoring exercise four pages of written and drawn notes were made and 71 digital photographs taken. A single artefact was collected.
- 2.3 The SMR record number for this report is BHER 25356. The completed archive will be stored at the Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery under the accession number BRSMG 2014/25. The project has been entered in the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) as Bristol3-177962.
- 2.4 This document was compiled using MS Word 10 with Mendeley 1.11, figures were produced using PaintShop Pro 8 and QGIS 2.4.0; photographs were taken with a Fuji Finepix HS10 digital SLR camera.

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### **3 BRIEF HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment of the study area has been undertaken (King 2004). That study found there was no evidence of structures on the site before the 1820s; prior to this the land had been recorded as pasture (King 2004, 6). Available historic online mapping indicates one small structure fronting West Street, in 1855. This had been removed by 1877. By the early 1900s some rectangular structures had been added to the rear of the property (BCC). These have been interpreted as the premises of a builders merchant and contractor, recorded on the site since 1900 (King 2004, 4–5). The present rear retaining wall of the study area is thought to date from this time, and may include parts of the building illustrated on the OS map (King 2004, 5). By 1958 the site was recorded as a petrol station; the OS map for 1966 shows the former buildings had largely been demolished and replaced with a rectangular structure in the northern corner (King 2004, 5). At the time of King's survey, the study area was a used car sales forecourt (*ibid*).
- 3.2 Archaeological fieldwork from 2003 onwards has indicated that on the southeast side of West Street, locally important remains of the Roman, Medieval and Post Medieval period have been preserved (Young 2003; Etheridge 2003; Young 2005; Hume 2006). However, previous fieldwork within the study area has demonstrated that a similar level of preservation was unlikely (Mordue 2005).

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## 4 RESULTS

### The Site (see Figure 2)

- 4.1 Monitoring commenced on the 21 July 2014, during which the remaining concrete surfaces in the northern corner of the study area were removed. Immediately beneath these slabs were layers of sand and gravel that had been added to create the surface over which the concrete had been poured. Removal of these layers revealed areas of solid bedrock (Redcliff Sandstone), with pockets of 20<sup>th</sup> century demolition rubble overlying (Plate c). It was observed that along the northwestern and northeastern frontage this part of the site had previously been terraced into the bedrock (**Plate d**). From this evidence it was concluded that further observations in that part of the study area were unnecessary.
- 4.2 Work to excavate footings for the new structures commenced in the southwestern part of the study area on 5 August and continued eastward along the West Street frontage (**Plate e**). By lunchtime on 6 August excavations for Building 1 were almost complete. The stratigraphic sequence revealed in the sections of the excavated trenches is as follows.
- 4.3 At the base of the trenches, no more than 1.1m below the surface level of the present pavement, was a layer of hard red sandstone (102) interpreted as the underlying Redcliff sandstone bedrock. The depth of this layer was observed to fall steadily towards the north and rear of the site, with the deepest point located in the southernmost corner. Overlying this deposit was a layer (103), no more than 850mm thick, of loose sub-angular fragments and slabs of red sandstone, in a matrix of reddish brown clay mixed with sand. Extensive monitoring failed to produce any evidence for human agency in the deposition of this layer, which is therefore interpreted as a natural deposit of partially eroded bedrock. Above this was a layer (104), 100-150mm thick, of reddish brown sandy clay with some sandstone rubble, also interpreted as a natural deposit. This was immediately overlain by a mixed layer of brick and concrete rubble that originated from 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings with red brown sand clay mud (101), and resulted from the most recent demolitions on site. A single subterranean brick built structure (105) was observed. This had been lined with cement and backfilled with a greenish grey sand. The bricks had the appearance of those commonly used in 1960s constructions. Structure 105 is interpreted as the lining for a former storage tank, later removed. No evidence for the presence of fuel or other organic substances was observed.
- 4.4 The excavation of Building 2 footings was not monitored. The northwestern part of Building 2 extended into the area previously monitored during the removal of concrete slab, where it had been established that natural bedrock was at or very close to the surface. Inspection of the northeastern corner found the ground surface was entirely of natural bedrock (Plate f), while investigation by trowel along the line of the West Street frontage, established that natural bedrock was less than 100mm below the surface demolition rubble.
- 4.5 From these observations, had there been any evidence for earlier activity on site, that evidence had been removed at latest during the 20<sup>th</sup> century remodelling of the study area.

### The Finds

- 4.6 A single artefact was retrieved from layer 101: a small flint flake (less than 20mm diameter) of the usual greyish variety found in the UK. This flake exhibits a good bulb of percussion and regular concoidal rings on one side, with cortex on the other, commensurate with being struck off a larger nodule in preparing it for tool making. The broad uses of flint, from early British prehistory into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, make this 'waste'

artefact relatively undatable. As it was found in recent demolition rubble, the artefact is likely to have been residual and may have been transported to site at an earlier date.

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## 5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 A programme of archaeological monitoring has been undertaken at Nos. 64-70 West Street, Bedminster, Bristol (centred NGR ST 5816 7124). The study area is generally flat, at about 23.6m aOD. This survey was undertaken as a requirement of planning consent, part of a programme of works to demolish existing structures and remodel the study area for residential development.
- 5.2 Despite extensive monitoring of the study area during the removal of concrete floor slabs and the excavation of footings for new structures, nothing of archaeological significance was found. Those features exposed were of 20<sup>th</sup> century date and related to the use of the study area as a petrol station in the latter half of that century. The area was unusually devoid of finds and features of post-medieval and earlier dates, despite the discovery of Roman and Medieval deposits on the opposite side of West Street. The only artefact worthy of note was a single un-diagnostic flint flake, found in recent builders trample.
- 5.3 Monitoring was discontinued when it was established there was no potential for the survival of archaeological deposits in the remaining areas of the site.

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## 6 REFERENCES

### Abbreviations

aOD	Above Ordnance Datum
BCL	Bristol Central Library
BGS	British Geological Survey
BHER	Bristol Historic Environment Record
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
EH	English Heritage
OS	Ordnance Survey

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## PLATES



**Plate a:** Overview of the study area from Sion Road. Looking southwest, no scale.



**Plate b:** Former petrol station fuel tanks exposed before capping. Looking northeast. Scales 1m by 1m.



**Plate c:** Machine clearance of concrete surface in the northern corner of site, looking northwest. Scale 1m.



**Plate d:** Sandstone bedrock exposed in section below the northeast wall of the study area. Looking northeast, scale 1m.



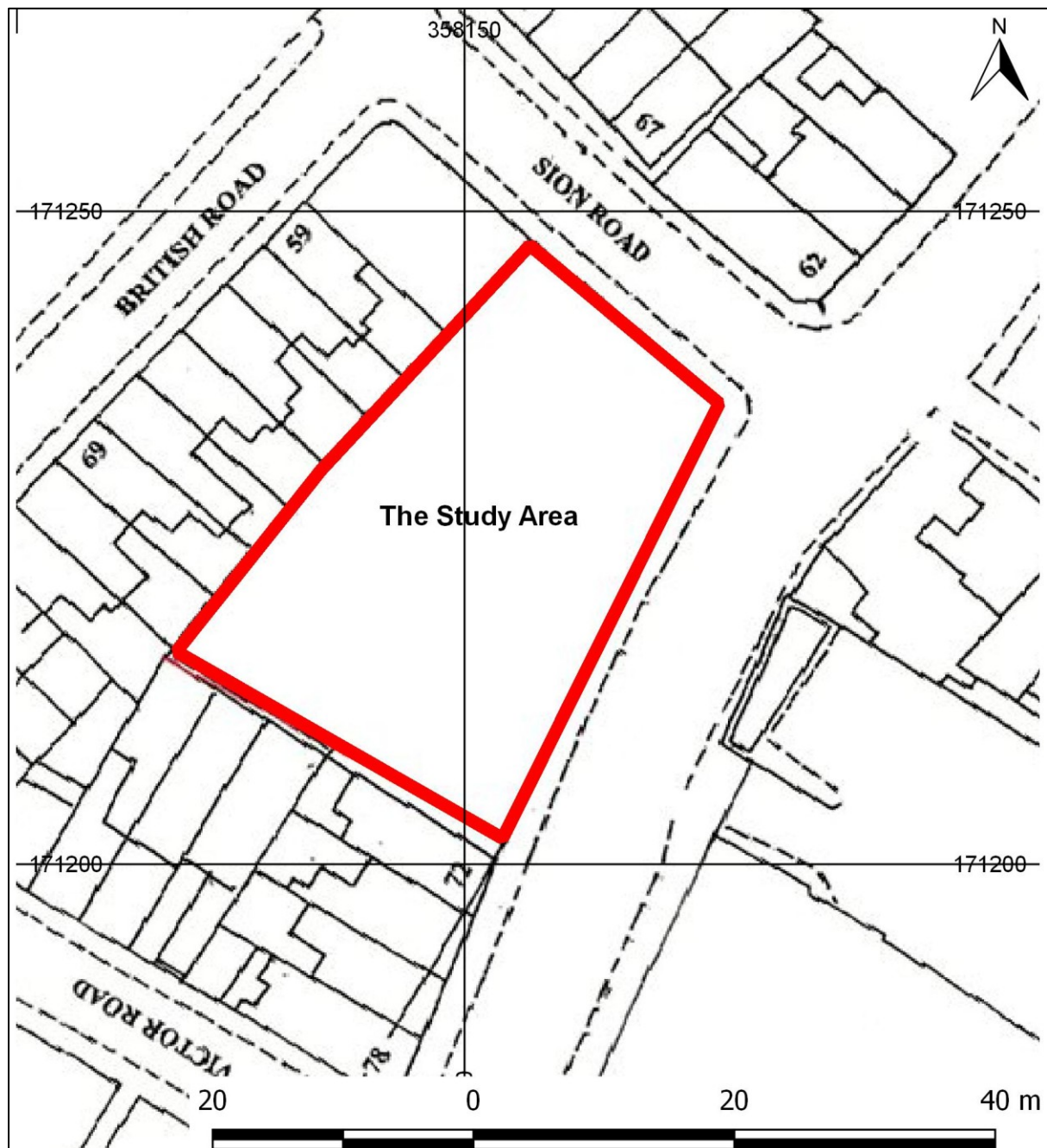
**Plate e:** Building 1. A section of trench along the West Street frontage, looking southwest. Scale 1m.



**Plate f:** Sandstone bedrock at the northeastern corner of the study area, looking northeast. Scale 1m.

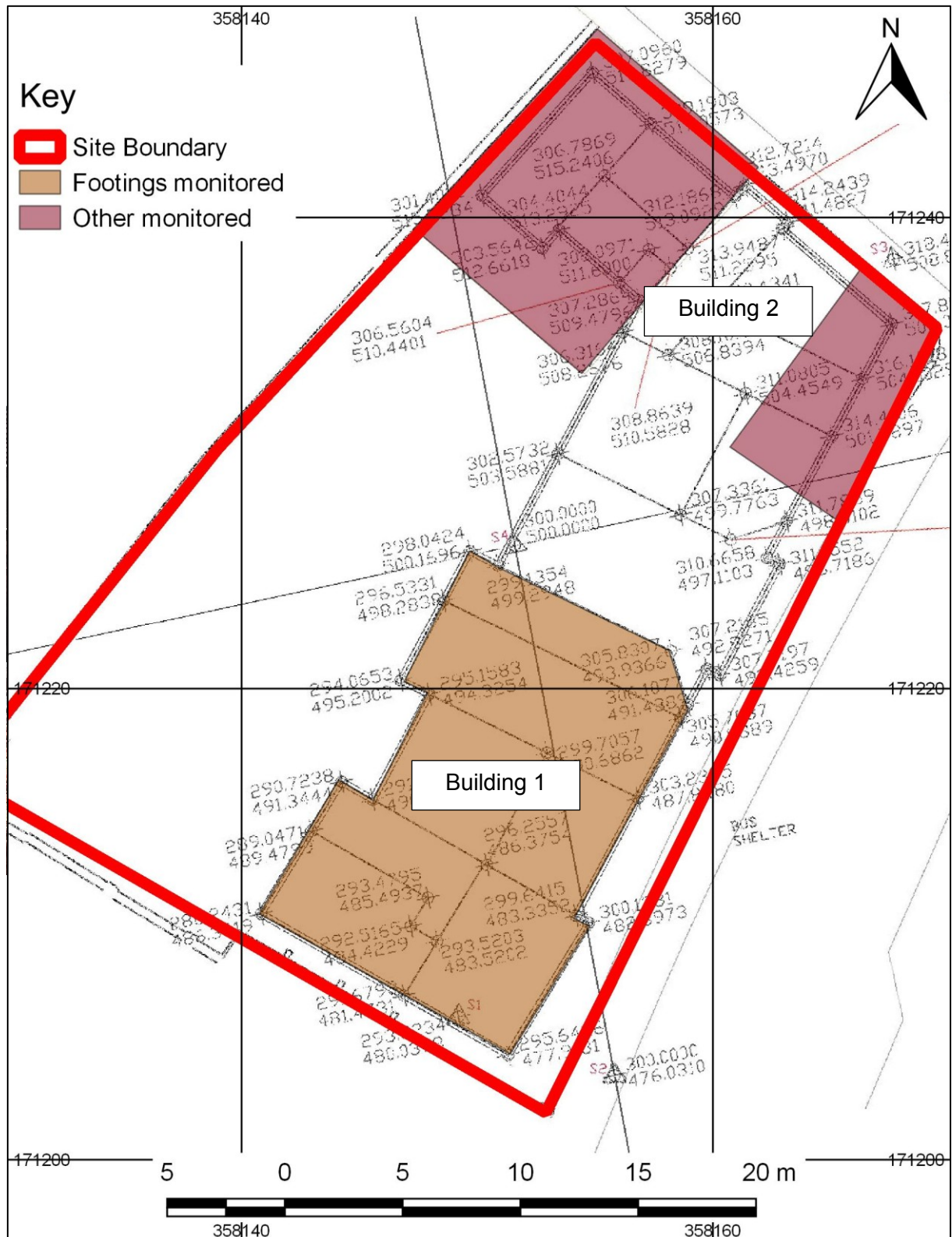


**FIGURE 1**



**Figure 1:** Detail of the study area with the approximate boundary outlined in red. Approximate scale 1:500. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2014. Licence No. WL1005476.

**FIGURE 2**



**Figure 2:** Archaeological monitoring of the study area. Based on an original survey by Mike Pringle Development Services, reproduced by permission of Preon Properties.