



# BRISTOL & WEST ARCHAEOLOGY

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Land South West of Ashley Down  
Road, Bishopston, Bristol.

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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Client: Wotton Donoghue Architects

19 January 2016

# Bristol & West Archaeology

**Planning Authority:**

**Bristol City Council**

**Planning Ref: 15/01700/F**

**National Grid Reference:**

**NGR ST 59399 76181**

**Author: Raymond K Ducker**

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**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

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**Land South West of Ashley Down Road, Bishopston, Bristol.**

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**Summary**

A programme of archaeological monitoring (watching brief) was carried out by Bristol and West Archaeology on a site off Ashley Down Road, Ashley Down, Bristol.

Initial ground works involved the removal of surfaces and foundations of post-medieval date, after which standard strip foundations were excavated for three blocks of nine residential dwellings.

Features recorded during the work comprised post-medieval/modern walls and an inspection pit. A soil layer present across the site appeared to represent the original ground surface of the site prior to its post-medieval development.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were recorded during the groundworks.

**Land South West of Ashley Down Road, Bishopston, Bristol.**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The project was commissioned by Wotton Donoghue Architects. Additional thanks are owed to Martin Kelly of Sharemills Ltd for his co-operation and assistance during the project.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Planning consent (15/01700/F) was granted by Bristol City Council for the construction of 9 No dwellings and associated works located on a site on the south west side of Ashley Down Road, Bishopston, Bristol, close to its junction with Gloucester Road. Attached to the consent was a planning condition for an archaeological watching brief during development groundworks.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (BWA 2015) approved by Bristol City Council and followed the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (CIFA 2014) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE: The Project Managers' Guide)* (EH 2006).
- 1.3 The fieldwork was conducted by Raymond Ducker on three site visits between 15 December and 12 January 2016. This report was written by Raymond Ducker. The project archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery, with the accession number 2015/68. The project is included in the Bristol Historic Environment Record database as BHER 25529 and in the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database as Bristola3-221800.

## **2. LOCATION AND GEOLOGY**

- 2.1 The site is centred on NGR ST 59399 76181 and was occupied by No 1a and Nos 3-5 Ashley Down Road, close to its junction with Gloucester Road. The site does not lie within a Conservation Area nor is it occupied by any listed buildings or anything of known archaeological interest.
- 2.2 The British Geological Survey 1:50,000 scale map for the area lists the natural strata as Charmouth Mudstone Formation - Mudstone. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 183 to 197 million years ago in the Jurassic Period. No superficial deposits are recorded.

## **3. OBJECTIVES AND RECORDING METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1 The Watching Brief followed the methodology outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (BWA 2015) and involved monitoring all intrusive groundwork.
- 3.2 All archaeological and non-archaeological features and deposits were recorded on standard BWA Ltd pro-form recording sheets with scaled plans and section drawings as appropriate. All records, drawings and photographs have been prepared as a standard archive according to English Heritage MAP2 standards and will be stored eventually at Bristol City Museum.

## **4. HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 No previous archaeological work has been undertaken on the site but it is located close to the road to Gloucester, which is reputed to have its origins in the Roman period, and finds from the Roman and medieval period have been found in the area.

## 5. RESULTS

- 5.1 The monitoring involved watching the excavation of standard strip foundations for 3 blocks of flats.
- 5.2 Excavation of foundations for Block A reached a maximum depth of 1.8m and revealed a simple stratigraphic sequence. The uppermost deposit (101) comprised a badly disturbed and mixed soil layer that was probably the original ground surface (103) prior to development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This layer (103) lay over interbedded deposits of clay (104) and limestone bedrock (106). Other than a 19th century wall (102) in the east facing section of the west side of the block, no features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified.
- 5.3 Block B was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.9m into a similar stratigraphic sequence. Below the modern surfaces were made-ground and dump deposits (105) which overlay the former ground surface layer (103) which in turn overlay interbedded deposits of clay (104) and limestone bedrock (106). Like Block A, the only features were post-medieval wall foundations. Walls (105) and (106) were exposed in the north facing section of the south side of the block whilst wall (109) was partly removed along the northern side of the foundations.
- 5.4 Block C was located in the north of the site on the Ashley Down Road street frontage. The area of the block was reduced in level by up to 500mm prior to the excavation of footings. After removal of Layer (103), all excavation occurred within clay (104) and interbedded limestone (106) of geological origin.

## 6. RESULTS

- 6.1 Archaeological monitoring was undertaken over a period of three days for the excavation of foundations for three blocks of residential properties comprising nine dwellings.
- 6.2 During the monitoring, other than the foundations of former buildings/site boundary walls (102, 107, 108 & 109) and a modern vehicle service pit, the only deposits observed comprised made-ground deposits (105) and a probable buried topsoil horizon (103) that appeared to have been largely preserved in situ below the post-medieval development of the site.
- 6.3 Deposits of archaeologically sterile clay and limestone bedrock were exposed and partly excavated throughout the foundations. No features or deposit of archaeological significance were exposed during the watching brief.

## 7. APPENDIX 1 TABLE OF CONTEXTS

Table of Contexts						
No	Type	Description	Length	Width	Depth	Date
100	-	U/S Finds Number	-	-	-	-
101	Deposit	Disturbed deposit of mixed, very dark greyish-brown sandy silt with limestone rubble, gravel and brick fragments. Probably same as (103).	Whole area of Block A foundations		200mm avg.	C19
102	Structure	Linear structure, mainly brick 9.22m x 100mm x 65mm) but some limestone rubble also. Bonded with grey lime mortar. Foundation of wall.	West side of Block A foundations in section.		Up to 1.2m	C19
103	Deposit	Very dark greyish-brown sandy silt with small limestone and brick fragment inclusions. Probably the original ground surface prior to the post-medieval development of the site.	Whole area of Blocks A, B & C		Up to 500mm	-
104	Deposit	Yellowish brown/pale brown clay, deposit of geological origin.	Whole site.		Exc. to 1m.	-
105	Deposit	Mixed made-ground material. Includes coal waste, limestone rubble, gravel, brick, clay and very dark greyish brown sandy silt.	Mostly on west side of site – becoming thinner toward the east.		Up to 1.5m thick.	C20
106		Limestone bedrock interbedded in thin horizons with clay (104).	Whole site at or near base of excavations		200mm where exc.	-
107		Linear structure of brick and cement mortar. Brick bond type not apparent.	In section N facing section of Block B. 0.4m wide.		1.5m	C20
108		Concrete wall with cavity in the middle.	In section N facing section of Block B, 0.5m wide		1.5m	C20
109		Boundary wall to pub beer garden.	North side of Block B foundations		1m	C20



## **8. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

BWA (Bristol & West Archaeology) 2015. *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief on land South West of Ashley Down Road, Bishopston, Bristol.*



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Site Address: **3-5 ASHLEY DOWN ROAD, BRISTOL**  
Drawing Title: **SITE LOCATION PLAN**

A17/12/14 - PLOT NUMBERING AMENDED  
Drawing No: **768/001A** Date: **1:1250 @ A3 DEC 2**  
Status: **PLANNING** Checked by:

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Figure 1. Site Location. Scale as shown.

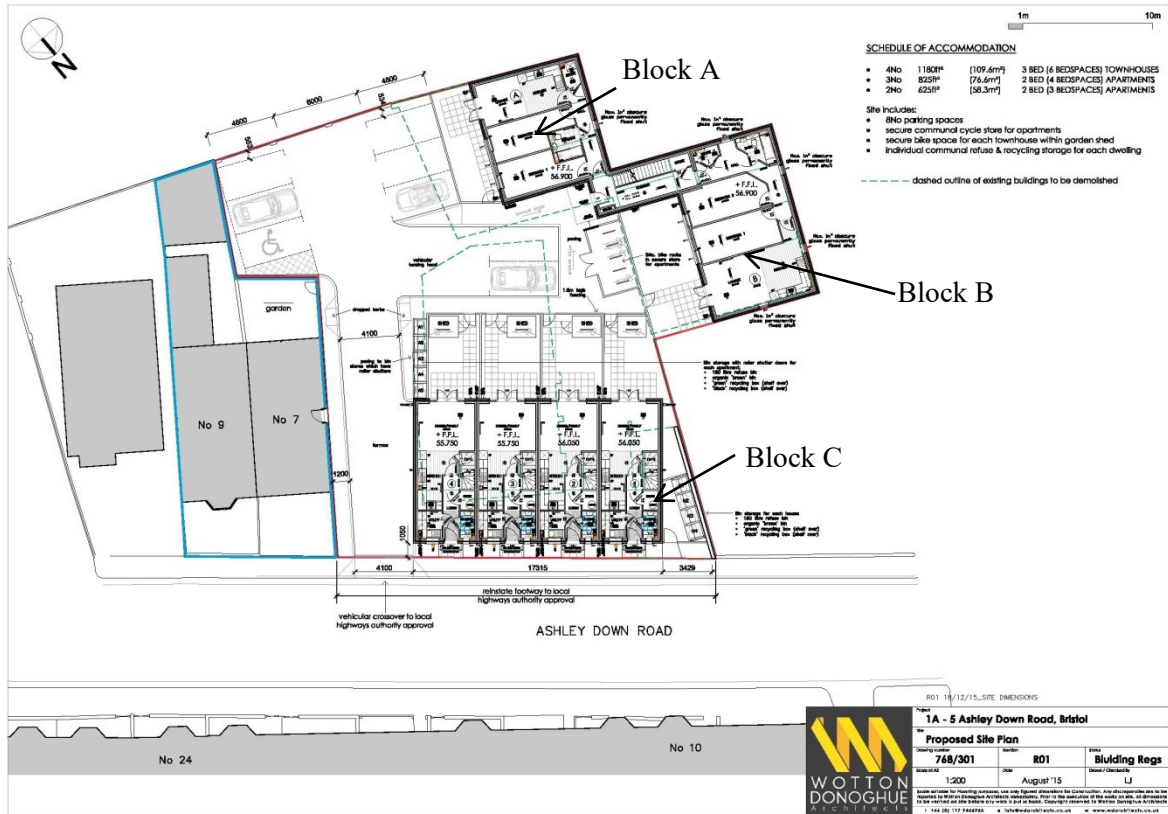




Plate 1. General view of the south half of the site at the start of monitoring, looking SW.



Plate 2. Foundation across Block A as excavated, looking west. Scale 0.5m.



Plate 3. Former vehicle inspection pit in footings on south side of Block B, looking west. Scale 0.5m.



Plate 4. General view of Block C area at start of foundation excavation, looking SW.