

Land at Prewett Street, Redcliffe

Heritage Impact Assessment

NGR ST 59307 72220
Planning Reference 17/04925/PREAPP24



On behalf of

Urban Tranquillity Developments Limited

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Avon Archaeology Limited
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Historic oblique aerial photograph of Redcliffe and the surrounding area, 1920s-30s. View from the north-west, looking south-east. St Mary Redcliffe in the centre of the image, and the still-extant Redcliffe glass cone, on Prewett Street, at this date surviving to its full height, is seen behind the church. BRO 44819/3/10.

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ABSTRACT

Avon Archaeology Limited were commissioned by Urban Tranquillity Developments Ltd, to undertake an Archaeological and Heritage Impact Assessment relating to proposals to develop a site occupying a plot at the corner of Prewett Street and Somerset Street, Redcliffe, Bristol. A full Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for the site has already been completed by AAL, and submitted to Urban Tranquillity Developments.

The former Bell Inn pub has in the past been the subject of an application for formal listing, but this was rejected. There has never been any similar application for the former Taviner's Auction Rooms which historically was the Redcliffe Adult School building, and for which the original building plans survive in the Bristol Record Office. As to archaeological mitigation, we consider it unlikely that the local authority would require any level of intervention above an evaluation (ie trial trenching). We think that full excavation, for example, is not very realistic, but it should be noted that it would nonetheless remain an option open to the local authority.

By far the principal consideration for the local authority is likely to be the proximity to the site of the church of St Mary Redcliffe, to its north-west, which despite the fact of being a Grade 1 listed building, lies very close to the eastern boundary of the Redcliffe CA. However, despite their apparently massive and, on the face of it, generally unprepossessing appearance, the modern residential tower blocks in the vicinity of the site, were carefully designed, being long and narrow, so as to present the smallest possible intrusive mass when looking from the south and south-east, towards St Mary's church. This is especially true of Proctor House and Patterson House, which actually frame, very carefully, the tower and spire of St Mary's when viewed from the south-east, looking north-west along the eastern limb of Somerset Square.

The overwhelming built context of the site is of modern, post-war buildings, of mostly unprepossessing character, and at least one of highly negative character. The main historic assets nearby subject to potential impacts are the listed Ship Inn, the listed terrace of houses on the southern side of Colston Parade, the listed glass cone remnant on the opposite side of Prewett Street from the site, and most importantly, the church of St Mary Redcliffe. These assets aside, there is very little surviving in the immediate environs of the site which expresses the heritage characteristics, in terms of architecture and materials, which led to the original designation of the Redcliffe Conservation Area in the first place.

We consider that, from the client's own photographic viewshed study, and other considerations, the proposed development, and most notably the main residential block, which is of a similar scale and massing to the existing taller residential blocks framing the site, has, however, the potential for intermittently negative visual impacts in both its

immediate setting, and within Bristol's wider urban landscape; this includes impacts within and around the vicinity of St Mary's church. It is likely that this will represent a material consideration for the local authority in its assessment of the development proposals.



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NOTES

Whereas Avon Archaeology Limited have taken all care to produce a comprehensive summary of the known and recorded archaeological evidence, no responsibility can be accepted for any omissions of fact or opinion, however caused.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAL	Avon Archaeology Limited
aOD	Above Ordnance Datum
BHER	Bristol Historic Environment Record
BRO	Bristol Record Office
NGR	National Grid Reference
OS	Ordnance Survey



1 INTRODUCTION

Avon Archaeology Limited were commissioned by Urban Tranquillity Developments Ltd, acting through their agents GVA Architects Ltd, to undertake an Archaeological and Heritage Impact Assessment relating to proposals for the development of a site at the corner of Prewett Street and Somerset Street, in the Redcliffe suburb of Bristol. The site has recently been the subject of an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment, also undertaken by AAL (Corcos 2018).

The site is currently under mixed land use, and contains within its boundaries two historic buildings, open amenity space (including playground areas and other open green space), an electricity sub-station, and a set of modern garages. It is roughly trapezoidal in shape, and is bounded on its northern side by Prewett Street, to its north-east by Somerset Street, and to its west by a narrow, unnamed access lane. Also immediately to the west of the site is a modern block of residential flats known as Proctor House. To the south, the boundary is drawn along a path within the amenity area, and the eastern boundary runs northwards, immediately to the west of Broughton House (another modern block of residential flats), to the south-western side of Somerset Street (**Figures 1 and 2**). The site centre is at OS NGR ST 59307 72220, and the postcode for the site is BS1 6PB. It occupies an area of about 0.59Ha, and its measurements (maxima) are 85m south-west/north-east, and 85m north-west/south-east. The general, overall state and appearance of the site is, by any objective measure, pretty negative and unprepossessing.

The site is currently the subject of a pre-application proposal submitted to the local planning authority, Bristol City Council, and involving the construction of a mixed-use scheme of building intended to contain private residential apartments, with at least one ground floor commercial/retail unit, and with the provision of multi-use community/recreational space. The local authority planning reference is 17/04925/PREAPP24. There are no listed buildings on the site, and while the south-eastern boundary of the formally designated Redcliffe Conservation Area runs only 100m to the west of the site, along the line of Pump Lane, the study site itself falls outside the boundary.

The proposal as currently framed would involve the complete demolition and removal of both of the historic buildings currently on the site, the former Bell Inn Pub and the adjacent building, the former Taviner's Auction Rooms. The latter structure was built in the 1930's and was known historically as the Redcliffe Adult School, and is described as so throughout the remainder of this text. Both building front onto the south-eastern side of Prewett Street. An application in 2008 to English Heritage to list the former Bell Inn Pub was rejected, chiefly on the grounds that it had suffered too much debilitating and unsympathetic alteration in the 20th century.

Because this project is, at the time of writing, at the pre-application stage, in the specific context of the historic built environment, and potential impacts on the setting and character of existing heritage assets within the immediate orbit of the site, there is by definition as yet no formal input from the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in respect of this plan. As already noted, there are no listed buildings within the site boundary, and neither does it lie within a Conservation Area, although we would reiterate that the eastern boundary of the Redcliffe Conservation area runs north-south less than 100m to the west of the westernmost boundary of the site.

Potential *impacts* in relation to both the archaeology, and the wider heritage resource, are, though, a different matter, and they have as yet *not* been formally reviewed as part of the planning process. Following a brief review of the physical context of the site, this report will consist of three principal elements:

- An examination of the archaeological potential of the site, and the potential archaeological impact resulting from the proposed development as *currently framed* (as presented in **Figure 3**).
- An assessment of the potential impacts of the proposals on the historic built environment.
- A brief examination of possible mitigation strategies for any potentially negative issues highlighted in either of the two foregoing sections.

This report will be accessioned into the Bristol Historic Environment Record under the reference **BHER 25720**.

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The study area is situated in the lower Avon valley, on rising ground around which the river meandered to the north. Levels generally fall across the site from north-west to south-east, so that the highest points are those at the south-western end of the Prewett Street frontage, centring on values just under 18m aOD, falling to around 14m aOD at the extreme south-eastern corner of the site, a drop of about 4m in a distance of 85m, representing a gradient of roughly 4.7%, or 1:0.047. Within this, however, modern artificial terracing has made some of the amenity space effectively level, and this is especially true of parts of the playground areas. Although the detailed levels at the northern edge of the site centre around 18m aOD, the site itself actually sits within a closed contour of 15m aOD which encompasses a local topographical high which extends westwards as far as the western end of Redcliffe Parade West, and eastwards as far as the eastern side of Somerset Street. Within this contour are localised highs of, as we have seen, up to 18m. This means in theory that multi-storey buildings also within

this contour will overlook the immediate environs in all directions, and that those buildings will be prominent when viewed from the surrounding, rather lower ground which lies *outside* that contour, on the premise that views are not blocked by intervening buildings; which in fact, from many points around the site, they actually are.

The underlying geology consists essentially of the Redcliff Sandstone series, the physical characteristics of which the BGS describes as

distinctive fine- to medium-grained, deep red, calcareous and ferruginous. Commonly decalcified at shallow depths below the surface, giving rise to an uncemented sand (BGS).

These strata were laid down throughout the entire duration of the Triassic Period, from about 250 to 200 million years ago. The geological map shows, however, that the sandstones actually comprise a small 'island' surrounded on all sides by First Terrace Gravels of Quaternary date, originating in the flood plain of the River Avon, and representing its original depositional regime, flowing in a channel that was far wider and more braided than it is today. The site, unfortunately, lies just outside the southern boundary of the study area that was encompassed in the research giving rise to the recent major report on the location and archaeological potential of waterlogged deposits in the immediate environs of the city centre; but LIDAR data used for the study does bring strikingly home the locally elevated position of the site, and its position at the eastern end of an oval shaped 'island' of higher ground, with its long axis running east-west (Cotswold 2013, Figure 2). Notably, the LIDAR shows that although notionally at a slightly lower level than the proposed development site, St Mary Redcliffe church is part of the same 'island' feature as defined by the 10m aOD contour.

3 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The most important element of the proposed development in terms of the present state of the site, is the intention to demolish and remove both of the historic buildings which stand on it – namely The Former Bell Inn Pub, and the former Taviner's Auction Rooms, the latter of which was constructed in the 1930s, and the original building plans for which were identified, for the first time, during the course of research for the preceding desk-based assessment (Corcos 2018). The unsightly, former garages at the northern corner of the site are also to be completely removed. The existing structures will be replaced by two buildings – a main residential building of apartments, and a rather smaller, so-called 'community' building, immediately to the south of the larger building, and in a 'staggered' relationship to it (**Figure 3**). At the time of writing, the buildings are intended to provide the following facilities (*pers comm* Mr Tom Sadler):

:

Main Building

- Residential units
- Private and communal amenity space (main podium garden at first floor, garden terraces, top roof communal amenity area)
- Gym and private cinema room (for residents)
- Small convenience retail unit located on the ground floor on the corner of Somerset Street

The main building is intended to extend vertically from a lower ground floor up to twelve levels, of which the twelfth level is actually the roof. The total maximum height on the north-western elevation, fronting onto Prewett Street, and measured from street level, will be something in the order of 35m. The total ground footprint of this building will occupy 1,919m².

Community Building

- Flexible recreation/sport/community space at ground floor
- Residential units above, over three storeys

The community building contains six separately identified levels, and then the roof, which is effectively a further level. The maximum height of the north-western frontage, which faces the south-eastern elevation of the main residential building, extends vertically from ground level for a distance of about 20m. The footprint of the community building occupies an area of 694.27m².

It is intended to construct both of the proposed new buildings on piled rather than trenched foundations.

4 NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

Between March 2010 and March 2012, national planning guidelines as they related specifically to the historic environment, were outlined in the document known as PPS (Planning and Policy Statement) 5, *Planning for the Historic Environment*. However, in March 2012, PPS5, and indeed all the other Planning Policy Guidance and Statements which underpinned the operation of the national planning process, was replaced by a single, greatly simplified, overarching and integrated document known as the National Planning Policy Framework (Dept for Communities and local Government). Within this document, matters relating to archaeology and the historic environment generally are dealt with in section 12 (pages 30-32), *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*. A detailed examination of the implications of this framework for the specific site being reported on here, is outside the scope of this study. Section 12 of the NPPF is by definition a much shorter excursus on national planning policy, as it relates

to the historic environment, than was contained in its predecessor PPS5, although it is at least in principle underpinned by many of the same basic tenets.

By far the majority of the document consists of guidance to local authorities in how they should handle matters relating to the historic environment in their own areas, and some local authorities have already chosen, as a matter of conscious policy, to take the explicit position of interpreting the provisions of the NPPF as devolving directly to them, at the local level, *all* decision-making in matters of planning as they relate specifically to the historic environment, including, of course, archaeology.

In summary, in the case of the City of Bristol, the various planning policies both local and national which may have direct implications for the site under consideration here, are as follows:

- *National Planning Policy Framework*, March 2012, Dept of Communities and Local Government. See especially Section 12, Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, 30-32.
- *Archaeology and Development – Bristol Local Development Framework, Supplementary Planning document No. 7*. Adopted March 2006. While concerned chiefly with the archaeological resource, nonetheless this document does also include Listed Buildings in its general discussion of factors which may impact on the general heritage resource, including matters of setting – Section 3, p6.
- *Bristol Development Framework: Core Strategy*, adopted June 2011. See especially summary policy BCS 22, 127:

Development proposals will safeguard or enhance heritage assets and the character and setting of areas of acknowledged importance, including:

- Scheduled ancient monuments;
 - Historic buildings both nationally and locally listed;
 - Historic parks and gardens, both nationally and locally listed;
 - Conservation areas;
 - Archaeological remains
- *Bristol Development Framework: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies*, adopted July 2014. See especially Policy DM31, Heritage Assets, 64-68.

Separately, the Bristol Urban Archaeological Assessment will set out a framework of general guidance, will outline the present state of knowledge across all periods of the city's archaeological and heritage resource, and will present a pathway for what are perceived to be the main research priorities into the foreseeable future. This important

resource has not yet been published, but is expected shortly (Baker, Brett and Jones, forthcoming).

In addition, many of the city's formally designated Conservation Areas have, since their original designations, been the subject of more recent general surveys called Character Appraisals, and this indeed has been the case with the CA which relates closely to the site under consideration here, the Redcliffe CA (Bristol CA No. 19). This was originally designated in 1976, but was the subject of a far more recent Character Appraisal in 2008.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL OF THE SITE, POSSIBLE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

This aspect has already been dealt with in detail in the preceding Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment which forms the other half of this project (Corcos 2018), and it therefore need not be examined at any length again here. The basic suggestion of that earlier report was to raise the possibility that vestiges of the earlier terrace housing which once occupied the site, may survive in situ below ground, and the local authority might well consider that such remains would constitute a material heritage resource. The removal of the two historic buildings on the site would entail considerable ground disturbance, as would the construction of the two proposed new blocks and their attendant necessary services. At present however, the extent of any surviving archaeology is entirely unknown, and neither is there any information on the nature and depths of the foundations which the developer intends to use to construct the two new blocks. The survival of what is almost certainly a historic masonry boundary wall, identified in the course of the site visit for the Desk-Based Assessment and even though only a badly damaged vestigial remnant, may also, in the eyes of the local authority, constitute a material consideration. The DBA recognises that the Former Bell Inn Pub building was rejected for formal statutory protection by Historic England, but it also identified, at the Bristol Record Office, the original building plans for the Adult School building, during the course of research for the DBA by Emma Ings of AAL. It should be noted also that the Redcliffe Conservation Area Character Appraisal presents a map outlining the perceived archaeological sensitivity of both the CA itself and, importantly, an area immediately around, but outside the formally designated boundary, extending as far south as Clarence Road, and therefore including the footprint of the proposed development (BCC 2008, Figure 9, p9). And while this suggests that the north-eastern part of the site falls within an area considered to be of low archaeological potential, the very western part melds into a zone of medium to high sensitivity, even though still outside the eastern boundary of the Conservation Area itself.

In view of the completely unknown extent of any potential archaeological resource on

the site, it may well be that the local authority will deem it necessary to require that it be characterised in some way. There are a number of possible, but closely interrelated options which are open to the local authority in this respect:

Watching Brief

This would be the lowest form of archaeological field intervention, and would be a condition which would be invoked only when full permissions and consents had been obtained, and groundworks had actually started on the site. It requires the production, by the archaeological contractor, of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), which is essentially a method statement for the work. This kind of project would require that *any and all excavation* works should be fully monitored by a competent and qualified archaeological contractor, *at the time that the works are actually being carried out*. The use of toothless buckets unless absolutely unavoidable by virtue of ground conditions, would be a requirement, and the archaeological contractor would have full authority to stop work to record anything of archaeological significance to a proper standard. By definition, because they take place only when the development is actually underway, watching briefs rarely lead to any expansion in the scope of the archaeological work, although this is not unknown, depending on the approach taken by the local authority, and the perceived level of significance of any archaeological discoveries.

Evaluation

This involves the excavation of usually several trial trenches, is imposed as a condition at *pre-application* stage, and is designed to inform any subsequent full planning condition. It also requires the production of a WSI (see above). It is extremely important to understand that evaluation is *not* a mitigation strategy in and of itself. Rather, it is carried out prior to any development on the site, and its overwhelming imperative is to inform the planning process. Following on from an evaluation, and always presuming the submission of a formal planning application, there are usually two possible alternative routes, and they will be depend almost entirely on the level of findings from the trial trenching. In the case of little of archaeological significance being revealed, the local authority may either require no further work at all, or, more usually, would require a precautionary watching brief (see above) during the groundwork phase of the development. In the case of significant archaeological discoveries however, arising out of the evaluation, there are two main possible options for the local authority: the first is to request the developer to change the design of the building, usually in terms of its foundation layout, so as to minimise its impact on the archaeology. It is generally (but *not* always) the case, for example, that a piled foundation with concrete ring beams will, overall, have less of a detrimental impact on in situ archaeological deposits and features than 'conventional' trench foundations. Alternatively, depending on the exact circumstances, the local authority may at the extreme end of the spectrum impose a condition for an archaeological excavation.

Full Excavation

This is the process whereby the *entire* area that is to be impacted by the development is stripped, excavated and fully recorded. As before, a WSI would be produced by the archaeological contractor. By definition, it is the most time-consuming and costly of the available options. The rationale is usually that if important archaeology is to be destroyed by the development, then it must be subject to 'preservation by record'. It is *extremely* important to understand that, in an excavation, the fieldwork itself is only the *start* of the process. The archaeological contractor will then be expected to produce what is known as an Updated Project Design (UPD), which is a full piece of work in its own right, and represents a *separate* cost. The UPD is an interim report (it is *not* the final site report, although that may well draw on the UPD) which lays out the findings from the excavation, and in the light of initial assessments from specialists, and a range of other criteria, lays out what *further* work, if any, may need to be done on the material from the site, including an idea of costings and a timetable for projected completion. The UPD is then submitted to the local authority archaeologist, who has the final say on whether he/she will require any further work on the material from the site, or indeed any other kind of work, such as documentary research. If so, then that work is done, and the *final* report is produced. If the local authority decides that, as a result of the UPD, no further work is necessary, then the UPD can, relatively easily, be turned into the final report. From excavation to production of the final report can, depending on the size of the site, run into many months, or even longer. We consider this option unlikely or very unlikely in the case of the present proposal.

Please note that it is our view that the local authority, while it of course will retain the right to pursue this strategy, is pretty unlikely to do so in the specific case of this site. This judgement will be made on the basis of an assessment by the local authority of the likely extent, nature and state of preservation of sub-surface archaeological assets lying within the site boundary.

Strip, Record and Sample

This is essentially a somewhat lower level of excavation project, for characterising surviving archaeological assets. In this process, the site is stripped down to the top of any archaeological levels, the surface is cleaned back manually, and any features are 'mapped'. This involves marking the features, photographing them and then drawing them. The drawings are compiled on to a site plan so that all the remains can be looked at in relation to each other and any patterns identified. Decisions are then made as to which features to excavate and how much. This part of the excavation is the 'sample' process. The features are hand-excavated, redrawn, and photographed. Full record sheets are also filled out for each feature. There is a full post-excavation process in the case of any finds requiring specialist examination, radiocarbon dating, environmental analysis etc etc, but there is no requirement for a UPD, and the final report would ultimately just come straight off the back of the fieldwork and post-

excavation analysis. Depending on the results, it can in some specific circumstances lead to full excavation. This technique is, however, usually only deployed on large sites that have to be recorded quickly.

Foundation Design

By definition, the major impact of any development will arise first and foremost from the *foundations* of the structure being erected, and secondly, from the requirement to provide underground services to the new facility. As already noted, there is much that can be done quite easily from the outset, at the design stage, to mitigate against the potential impacts on in situ archaeology – and again as we have already intimated, this comes down chiefly to a consideration of the relative merits and demerits of trenched or piled foundations, and in the present case, it is intended that the proposed project at Prewett Street should use piled foundations. In terms of services, there are also strategies that can be deployed in this respect – such as keeping any new trenching both as narrow and as shallow as reasonably possible, within, of course, the constraints of building regulations, and also, wherever possible, re-using *pre-existing* trenches and trunking for new or additional services. The detail of this would be a matter for discussion with the local authority archaeologist, and in the absence of archaeological knowledge for the site, at the time of writing, this would turn on the perceived *likelihood* of the survival of significant, in situ archaeological deposits and features. We would reiterate that at present, this is a complete unknown.

Considering all of the above, it is our view that, for the site which is the subject of this report, the local authority is unlikely to consider that its archaeological potential would warrant full excavation.

6 POTENTIAL IMPACTS: VIEWS, CHARACTER AND SETTING

The place of setting in the context of heritage assets which may be impacted, on whatever level, by proposed new development, is considered important enough to be dealt with under its own heading in the National Planning Policy Framework (2012). Paras. 128 and 129 of the NPPF explicitly note that:

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

In its Glossary, the NPPF defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Rather more formal guidance, based on but also greatly reinforcing and expanding on the broad framework as outlined by the NPPF, is provided by HE 2015. There is a great deal of information in this source, and much detail about the nature of the settings of heritage assets, the assessment of the significance of setting and its implications beyond individual sites, and ways in which the potential negative impacts of new developments might be mitigated. This level of detail is outside the scope of this study, which is intended to provide only a basic overview of the main issues relating to the present site which may be a material consideration for the local authority. Detailed viewshed and intervisibility analyses, for example, would require much more extensive, specialist input. However, the document summarises the main issues, and suggests a simple staged approach to dealing with the issue of setting, as follows:

All heritage assets have significance, some of which have particular significance and are designated and the contribution made by their setting to their significance also varies. And, though many settings may be enhanced by development, not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without harm to the significance of the heritage asset. This capacity may vary between designated assets of the same grade or of the same type or according to the nature of the change. It can also depend on the location of the asset: an elevated or overlooked location; a riverbank, coastal or island location; or a location within an extensive tract of flat land may increase the sensitivity of the setting (ie the capacity of the setting to accommodate change without harm to the heritage asset's significance). This requires the implications of development affecting the setting of heritage assets to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Protection of the setting of heritage assets need not prevent change; indeed change may be positive, for instance where the setting has been compromised by poor development. Many places are within the setting of a heritage asset and are subject to some degree of change over time. NPPF policies, together with the guidance on their implementation in the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG), provide the framework for the

consideration of change affecting the setting of undesignated and designated heritage assets as part of the decision-taking process.....

Amongst the Government's planning objectives for the historic environment is that conservation decisions are based on the nature, extent and level of a heritage asset's significance and are investigated to a proportionate degree. Historic England recommends the following broad approach to assessment, undertaken as a series of steps that apply proportionately to complex or more straightforward cases:

- Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected
- Step 2: Assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s)
- Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance
- Step 4: Explore the way to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm
- Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes (HE 2015, 6).

Part of the problem with all of this formal documentation, is that while there are technical definitions of setting and character, so much of the conceptual framework underpinning it is subjective, and frequently comes down to matters of opinion and perspective. However, developing and reinforcing some of these themes in the explicitly local context, the Redcliffe Conservation Area Appraisal highlights certain issues which might admit of being 'pinned down' to specifics. The Redcliffe CA is divided into three sections, or 'Character Areas' – North, South and Temple, with the latter in fact forming the most northerly of the three (BCC 2008, 17, Figure 19). St Mary's church lies in the South Redcliff character area, which is described as having

.....a more varied topography with the ground rising south of Redcliffe Way. St Mary Redcliffe Church defines the character of the area, having a magnificent presence and stands on relatively high ground; it even dominates the busy road network that now surrounds it.

Redcliffe Wharf and Alfred Wharf lie at the centre of the waterfront. From behind these Wharves rise the steep red cliffs, which contain Redcliffe Caves. Redcliffe Parade East and West surmount the partly masonry-faced cliff, which forms a strong backdrop to the Redcliffe dockside.

The green spaces of the St Mary Redcliffe Churchyard and Quakers Burial Grounds are both historically significant and important in the setting of the Church (BCC 2008, 16).

The CAA also lists what it describes as the Dominant Characteristics which have been used to define the 'specialness' of the South Character Area for the purposes of the document:

Scale

- 3 storeys over basement
- 6+ storeys in the 1960s flats

Material Palette

- Redbrick, sometimes stucco rendered
- Limestone dressings
- Timber joinery
- Clay pantile
- Roof coverings
- Pennant stone boundary walls

Proportions and architectural treatment

- Roofs pitched, set behind parapets
- Flat roofs on 20th century buildings, steel and concrete framed structures

Especially in respect of the second and third of these headings, the surviving historic structures on the site have to varying degrees, elements of these features within their fabrics, but they will not, of course, survive the development. As already noted, a short stretch of surviving historic masonry boundary wall, constructed of rubble Pennant, was identified during the course of the site walkover for the DBA, but because this has been incorporated into modern brick additions to the former Adult School building, it too will by definition be removed for the development. The issue of 'material palette' is especially telling. The local building stone is overwhelmingly Pennant Sandstone, which is ubiquitous in the Bristol area, and is part of the Carboniferous Upper Coal Measures. In the immediate vicinity of the site, there is now very little of this stone surviving in situ as a building material, and we include free-standing boundary walls in that statement. Street-facing walls are now of brick. The lower elements of the surviving 18th century glass cone on the northern side of Prewett Street, notably the buttresses and the massive plinth on which the structure stands, are of Pennant (**Cover**). That structure is of course now Grade II Listed. It is likely that the Bell Inn Pub is at least partially, if not completely constructed of rubble Pennant, but render over all the external elevations precludes certainty in this respect. The former Adult School building is also completely rendered, and so likewise the material of its fabric cannot be determined from simple external inspection, although because of its 1930s date, it is perhaps rather more likely to be of brick construction. Indeed, within the environs of the site, and discounting the two surviving historic buildings *and* the glass cone, there does not appear to be a single surviving element of building materials, technique or vernacular architecture inherited from periods before 1945. The closest full expression of this repertoire of earlier construction styles, materials and techniques is represented by the Ship Inn and, running away to its west, the terrace of housing on the southern side of Colston Parade. The Ship is Grade II Listed, and all the houses in the terrace are separately listed at Grade II – they constitute 1-12 Colston Parade, and 51 Redcliff

Hill. All of these structures fall within the south-eastern boundary of the Redcliffe CA, and indeed the boundary is drawn very tightly around the eastern boundary wall of the Ship Inn, as represented by its rear car park wall.

In this specific sense therefore, the environs of the development site are almost (although not entirely) now devoid of historic fabrics, street surfaces, and building styles. The local authority may therefore take the view that the surprising survival of a historic, albeit damaged, Pennant rubble masonry wall actually on the site, reused in a modern structure, may be a material consideration.

Interestingly, the CAA explicitly notes in this section that

Properties sitting on top of the ridge behind Redcliffe Parade are up to three storeys, enabling views of the pointed spire of St Mary Redcliffe. As the land falls away beyond Guinea Street towards the Commercial Road taller structures have appeared (BCC 2008, 21).

Although these latter streets are rather away to the west of the proposed development site, nonetheless this consideration has implications for its own position on the locally prominent ridge of Redcliff Sandstone immediately to the east of the CAA's eastern boundary.

The Character Appraisal is clear about the nature and extent of the damage that has already been done within the Conservation Area as a whole, mainly but not entirely prior to its formal designation, and it seems worthwhile to lay these out in full, to provide appropriate context:

Negative features are elements that detract from the special character of an area and therefore present an opportunity for change. This can include both small features and larger buildings and sites. It may be that simple maintenance works can remedy the situation or, in some cases, there may be an opportunity to redevelop a particular site.

There are a number of disused or significantly run-down buildings, which have a negative effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The lack of a current use and dilapidated appearance of the former Cheese Warehouse detracts from the appearance of the Conservation Area and represents an opportunity for enhancement through appropriate reuse.

Gap sites also fail to make a positive contribution to the character of the locality; and present an opportunity for appropriate redevelopment.

The Conservation Area also has some buildings that are identified on the Council and English Heritage Buildings at Risk Registers:

- Huller House, Redcliff Backs • 4 & 6 Victoria Street

In their current condition, these buildings fail to make a positive impact on the character and appearance of the area and their urgent repair and sensitive restoration is needed.

The gradual erosion of small-scale architectural details can have a significant negative impact on the character of an area. Windows and doors are frequently replaced with powder coated aluminium or glass non-traditional examples. Where they remain, traditional architectural details should be preserved and restored; and reinstatement of lost features sought where possible.

Redcliffe has been greatly affected by post-war schemes that fail to respect the traditional character of the built fabric or urban grain. The 20th century road intrusions have had the most significant impact, which greatly detract from the setting of the Grade I listed St Mary Redcliffe Church.

Other 20th century developments have sometimes ignored the dominant material palette, proportion, scale or the continual building line. As such these buildings sit out of context with their surroundings and undermine the cohesiveness of the area.

Redcliffe has retained many of the traditional street surfaces, such as Pennant setts and kerbstones; however, these are frequently removed or overlaid with modern materials. This creates a hotchpotch of materials that not only undermines the character of the street scene but also creates tripping hazards for pedestrians.

The brutal 20th century road intrusions through the centre of Redcliffe have created serious issues for traffic and pedestrians. The volume of traffic, particular at peak times, conflicts with pedestrian amenity and hinders easy pedestrian circulation around the area. This is a particular issue around Redcliffe Way and Redcliff Hill where the traffic dominates over easy pedestrian movement.

The over-wide road layouts have also severed the links between portions of the Conservation Area, making it disjointed and extremely difficult to access in parts.

The Redcliffe CAA expresses particular concern for the area around St Mary's church, the threats which it has faced in the past, and the potential threats which it continues to face in terms of its character and setting:

The setting of the Grade I listed St Mary Redcliffe Church has been seriously undermined by the 20th century road layout creating a sense of isolation.

The main routes through the area contain a high degree of street furniture; which collectively is creating a cluttered street scene. This detracts from the visual aesthetic of the Conservation Area, but also hinders physical movement and navigation.

At night the 'motorway' scale of the street lighting on Redcliff Hill, creates a situation of intense illumination with pockets of shadows. This hinders clear visual perception

and creates the sense of a negative threatening atmosphere for pedestrians (BCC 2008, 32-33).

The local authority is likely to be concerned about the possible impact(s) of the proposed new blocks on the character and setting of both their immediate surroundings, and a rather wider radius around. In this respect it is very clear that the main focus of its concerns will be the church of St Mary Redcliffe, whose eastern churchyard boundary wall, marking the western side of Pump Lane, is only about 115m to the north-west of what will become the development's site north-western boundary, on the southern side of Prewett Street. The relative levels of the site and its immediate surroundings have already been noted, both above, and in the preceding desk-based assessment (Corcos 2018), as has the fact that many pretty unprepossessing modern buildings intervene in the space between the development site and St Mary's church. The Redcliffe CA Character Appraisal notes explicitly of the setting of St Mary's that

The elegant Victorian spire of this attractive medieval church is not only a defining feature of Redcliffe but also one of the City's most familiar landmarks. Readily visible from the Old City and in views across the Floating Harbour, it is also visible from the south from Bedminster Bridge, and east along York Road. Given its prominent location on the corner of a busy roundabout its visibility is increased, if not somewhat undermined, by its setting (BCC 2008, 12).

Since it is the case that St Mary's church represents the single most iconic heritage asset in relation to the proposed development site, and with a strong visual relationship to it, it seems useful now to consider in that specific context the state of the site as it stands at present.

The Site's Present Visual Relationship with St Mary Redcliffe Church and Other Heritage Assets

By definition, as the site stands at present, matters relating to views and intervisibility can only be assessed from ground level, and this is of course not ideal. Nonetheless, as the site currently stands, views of the church and its tower *are* available from parts of the site, and crucially, from outside it, to the south. A selection of these vistas, and others, are shown in the **Plates** section at the back of this report, with explanatory captions, but there are just a few salient points that can be highlighted. The extent of views of St Mary obviously vary according to one's position within the site. At the north-eastern side of the site, one gets only occasional glimpses of the very top of the spire, the entire lower part of the building being blocked from view by a suite of modern structures on the northern side of Prewett Street, notably Magdalena Court and Dr

White's Close¹. From places on the *southern* side of the street, and especially just in front of the two surviving historic buildings, even the top of the spire is completely invisible. One of the reasons for this is that the north-easternmost (street frontage) block of Magdalena Court is four storeys high. Just beyond the south-western end of the structures in Dr White's Close, however, views of the spire begin to open up, and behind Proctor House, at the north-western end of Somerset Square, one is afforded a pretty open vista of the south-eastern quadrant of St Mary's church, with the eye being drawn along an unnamed, modern lane running between Redcliff Methodist Church on the left-hand (south-western) side of it, and the row of modern bungalows which forms the western side of Dr White's Close on the right-hand (north-eastern) side. The former of these two structures framing this view, the Methodist Church, abuts right against a south-eastern projection of the CA boundary, and is notable for its especially unprepossessing appearance. In a location which is so sensitive visually, it seems almost gratuitously negative in its visual impact.

As we have already noted, similar framing of the view of St Mary's is gained from the south-eastern end of Somerset Square, and this is enhanced by the sense of the converging perspective of parallel lines lent by the south-western elevation of Proctor House, and the north-western elevation of Patterson House; although very tall and long, both of these modern, and otherwise pretty unprepossessing blocks, are narrow, and their long axes are aligned north-west/south-east, presumably an arrangement carefully and deliberately designed to produce what landscape architects call a 'burst', the sudden and surprising opening up of an unexpected vista, drawing the eye to a distant point, sometimes reinforced by parallel features at each side, appearing to converge and to produce a focus between them (see for example Herring 2008, 82). This was, for example, a favoured device of 18th and 19th century landscape designers, with views of large country houses in their parkland setting the most frequent subject for this kind of treatment.

Further to the south, views of St Mary's, from Clarence Road, and Somerset Street, are mainly blocked by the modern residential tower blocks of Yeaman's House and Broughton House, the latter, of course, standing just outside the development boundary on its eastern side, although glimpses of the spire and part of the tower can be had, intermittently, from Clarence Road immediately to the east of the eastern elevation of the new Redcliffe and Temple School building. Rather further east, other school buildings, and a row of evergreen trees on the northern side of Clarence Road, make the church invisible. Again, as one goes north-westwards up Somerset Street, the church spire is glimpsed only intermittently, appearing briefly to the right of the Broughton House eastern elevation. Part of the 'problem' here are a series of trees standing just back from the western side of Somerset Street.

¹Dr White's Close consists of a group of bungalow-type properties which are in effect modern almshouses.

As we have already noted, only a detailed viewshed analysis, outside the scope of this review, would give an idea of the visual radius of people living on the upper floors of the proposed new blocks. It is clear, however, that at present, *some* residents above a certain (indeterminate) level in Broughton House with windows opening from its western elevation, must have reasonable views of St Mary's church. The same is not true of both Proctor House and Patterson House due to their shape and orientation, and it seems as though, ironically, residents' views of the church from those two blocks have been sacrificed for the sake of the wider, and apparently tightly designed and controlled vistas of the church to be had as framed *between* those two large buildings, to their south-east, as we have already noted.

It is possible that the local authority may want also to consider any impact on the listed remains of the 18th century glasscone which stands exactly opposite the site on the northern side of Prewett Street, and the southern arc of which will face the north-eastern end of the street elevation of the proposed main residential building. NPA 2018 does not present any perspectives which can be related directly in spatial terms to this heritage feature, probably the closest being Figure 7, which is a view looking south-westwards from towards the north-eastern end of Redcliff Mead Lane. But of course, the cone is completely invisible in this view because it is behind the street frontage. Even from this alone however, it is obvious that the new residential building will massively overlook the glasscone, although perhaps not, in this instance, visually overpower it, precisely for the reason already stated. And it is our view that the cone presents far fewer issues of impact on a heritage asset than does St Mary's church. It is far smaller in scale and crucially, presents far lower elevations to the street frontage and indeed throughout its entire circuit. It has already been heavily modified with the use of modern materials, such as black metal frames holding large plates of mirror glass in some of the brick-arched openings which originally gave access to the core furnace area. It is also the case that the spatial context of the structure, which is a little under 19m in diameter, is now heavily constrained, in both physical and visual terms, by modern accretions, most notably the eastern elevation of part of the Doubletree Hotel, to which, in fact, the western side of the cone appears to be physically attached; and the boundary wall of the hotel car park fronting onto the northern side of Prewett Street. Indeed, the only clear views, from ground level, of the full elevations of the cone are now to be had either from *within* the hotel car park itself, or within a narrow viewshed right outside the car park entrance, which is a width of about 8m. Note, however, that residents on and above about the second level of the proposed new main residential block, fronting the southern side of Prewett Street, will probably gain views of the cone in its entirety, and these will only become more striking for those residents on the upper levels, the highest residential level of the block being the 11th, in terms of the design as currently framed. The modern hotel block to which the cone is now joined is of six storeys and already severely overpowers it in visual terms, effectively closing off the vista from the cone to the west-north-west, towards St Mary's, which would otherwise be clearly seen from it;

and the hotel building is roughly only about half the height of the proposed new block on the other side of the road.

Implications of the Proposed Development – The Site Itself

The client has commissioned a comprehensive set of viewshed reconstructions from a specialist company, and these will be submitted separately as part of the planning application in due course. They will be referred to here only in so far as they have relevance from a heritage impact perspective, which means to all intents and purposes, impacts, or perceived impacts, upon St Mary Redcliffe church, and its site. References here are given in the form NPA 2018, Figure xx.

From the design drawings which outline the way in which the proposal is currently framed, the main residential building fronting onto the south-eastern side of Prewett Street, will occupy the footprint of the current garage site (north-eastern half), and the combined footprints of the former Bell Inn Pub and Adult School building (south-western half); the south-western elevation side of the structure being marked by the south-western elevations of the modern brick extensions which have been added to that elevation of the Adult School building. The new main building will therefore occupy a footprint which is already entirely developed. The smaller and lower community building is in a staggered relationship to its larger companion, to its south-west, with only a few metres between them (**Figure 3**). There are no residential window openings in the north-western elevation of the community building, so the potential issue of views on that side, and in that direction, being blocked, at least on the north-eastern half of the building, by the main residential block immediately to the north-west, does not arise. All the other elevations of the community block are provided with residential windows, but of course, the only place where one could possibly obtain views of St Mary's church, is from the balconies on the south-western elevation.

There is also an issue regarding whether the community building, and indeed the south-western end of the main residential block, would compromise views north-westwards, towards St Mary's church, for residents with windows in the western elevation of Broughton House. At present, it is likely that those views are non-existent anyway for residents on the first few levels of the northern unit of Broughton House, being interrupted by the Bell Inn Pub and the former Adult School building. It is not entirely clear, however, whether those residents occupying upper levels of the northern unit of Broughton House, currently have access even to partial views of St Mary's; residents in the southern unit, however, almost certainly will have, especially those in the higher levels of the western elevation – but it is possible that for residents on the lower levels, such views would be interrupted by the construction of the proposed new community building. The client's own viewshed analysis does show that in terms of the sheer size of, especially, the new residential block, there is a notable impact on a wide variety of

vistas where heritage is *not* an issue – for example looking both ways along Prewett Street itself, and north-westwards up Somerset Street (NPA 2018, Figures 4, 6 and 9). It is also clear from this work that there is an impact in terms of the vistas from heritage assets *other* than St Mary Redcliffe. NPA 2018 Figure 12, for example, shows a view eastwards along Colston Parade, with the listed terrace on the right, and the reconstructed residential block closes down a very large section, in terms of both width and height, of the currently open view to the left of Broughton House, with the proposed building overlapping the existing block.

However, potentially of most serious consideration to the local authority regarding from- and to-site vistas, is the possibility that the community building will have a significant impact on views to the north-west (ie towards St Mary's church), from the south-east, currently part of open amenity space containing a basketball area. At present, an open alleyway or driveway about 6m in width runs down the south-western side of the former Adult School, and its south-western boundary wall marks the north-eastern side of the open playground area in front of the north-eastern elevation of Proctor House. The distance between this wall, and that elevation, is currently about 26m. The construction of the community building immediately to its south-east would have no diminishing effect on that space between the south-western elevation of the main residential block, and the north-eastern elevation of Proctor House. *However*, to the south-east, the community building will reduce by over half the sight lines that are currently available *from* that direction to the north-west (**Figure 3**); since the distance between the south-eastern wing of Proctor House, which juts out to the north-east, and the south-western elevation of the community building, will be in the order of 6m. It is likely that this diminution will be most strongly felt by those residents on the lower levels in the southern unit of Broughton House, but it is likely that the level of impact on vistas from even further to the south-east, such as from the Temple Colston building, or even from Clarence Road itself, would only be effectively determined through detailed viewshed analysis, which is outside the scope of this review. An indication of the potential issues from this more south-easterly perspective is, however, well attested in NPA 2018, Figure 49, which is a view from the eastern end of York Road. At present, a clear vista can be had from this point, to the north-west, of the very top of the tower, and the whole of the spire of St Mary's, appearing just to the right of the bulk of Broughton House, and extending above the rooftops of the modern brick apartment blocks fronting the north-western side of Clarence Road, immediately to the north-east of Somerset Street. This view, partial though it may be, is completely blocked by the new residential block. More distant vistas back towards the church will also be impacted, but it should be stressed that it does depend entirely on one's location in relation to the church, and the effect on views *from* the south-east are a recurring theme. A key view of the church is that which is to be had entering the city on the A4 Bath Road. From a point immediately to the south of the main railway bridge, looking north-west, there appears a striking view of the greater part of the tower, and the complete spire, to the right of the modern bulk of both Broughton House and Yeaman's House (NPA 2018, Figure 44). This really rather iconic

view, at a crucial gateway road heading north into the city, is almost completely blocked by the proposed new residential building, so that only the tip of the spire remains visible (*ibid*, Figure 45).

Other more distant views are also affected to varying degrees. The Cabot Tower lies on an extremely prominent, elevated location to the north-west of the site, on Brandon Hill, and it, and its surrounding little landscaped park, is much visited; extensive views from this point are to be had through the entire quadrant encompassing east to south, and include St Mary Redcliffe, which from here is encumbered at present only by the bulk of Broughton House, which from this view stands immediately *behind* it, and slightly to the right of the tower. The inclusion of the proposed residential block in this view places a fairly large structure right behind the church, so that although the church itself, and especially the tower and spire, is still perfectly visible, it is now framed exactly in front of what might be perceived as a rather overpowering building which closes down the previously open view immediately behind it (NPA 2018, Figures 84 and 85).

Potential Impact on Vistas *From* St Mary's Church

It is likely that the local authority will be most keen to assess the impact of the proposed development on the character of, and views from *within* that part of the South Character Area of the wider Redcliffe Conservation Area, which falls most closely to the site; but in particular, indeed overwhelmingly, from St Mary's church, and its churchyard, the site of which is likely to represent the very earliest toehold of colonisation in the Redcliff suburb, by the mid-12th century at the latest². It is an entirely moot and subjective point as to whether this potential impact is even possible to assess in any meaningful way, but the reconstructed perspective views presented by NPA 2018 form an extremely useful basis for initial assessment.

Strictly speaking the *site* of St Mary's church, ie at ground level, in the order of about 15m aOD, lies somewhat below the level of the highest part of the proposed development site, which is marked by the Prewett Street frontage, centring around 17.5 to 18.0m aOD. However these bare figures give really no meaningful indication of what visual impact the new development will have on views from the church south-eastwards towards the development site. There is, for example, the fact that the churchyard wall on that side of the church, and running down the western side of Pump Lane, already to a large extent blocks views to an observer standing within the church enceinte. The bulk and height of the proposed residential block, however, is such that there clearly will be a visual impact from this point. NPA 2018, Figure 19 shows that looking south-eastwards, from a point within the grassed area on the south side of the church, the residential

²Although note that the earliest appearance of Redcliff in the documentary record appears to be in the early 13th century; Coates 2017, 153-155.

block is a looming presence, somewhat 'diffused' and broken up by the trees lining the path leading to the south-eastern gate of the churchyard.

Still inside the churchyard itself, but from just within the south-eastern gate, the NPA projection depicts the new residential block as a fairly massive new presence (although of a similar scale and massing to the existing taller residential blocks framing the site) pretty much towering over the eastern wall of the churchyard, and over roofs of the single-storey, bungalow type residences on the western side of Dr White's Close.

From outside the wall, in Pump Lane itself, the view to the south-east is for the most part constrained by modern buildings, but it is possible to stand quite far down (ie in the northern part) of Pump Lane, and look south, towards a focus on the Ship Inn, and to its right, the most easterly of the group of listed houses fronting the southern side of Colston Parade (which is No. 1 Colston Parade). This vista is further enhanced by the fact that Pump Lane is surfaced with cobbles, probably of Pennant, and being pretty well-worn it is likely (although not invariably the case) that they are both historic and in situ. However, in the southern section of Pump Lane, and especially as one progresses past the modern residential block of Phoenix Place, on the eastern side of the lane, the vista opens up towards the south-east, and while the buildings of Dr White's Close, and the Redcliffe Methodist Church, intervene at the lower levels, nonetheless, the upper storeys of Patterson House and Proctor House come increasingly into the frame of view. Standing outside the extreme south-eastern corner gateway into St Mary's churchyard, and immediately to the north of the Ship Inn, Patterson House becomes invisible behind the pub building, but to the south-east, the greater part of the elevations of both Proctor House, and Broughton House behind it (ie to its east), are highly visible.

From this point, it seems clear that the main impact will be the main residential building, presenting its north-western elevation to the Prewett Street frontage. Standing here, it will not be possible to see the community building at all, the view to it being blocked by Proctor House. In visual terms, the 'gap' which at present one perceives between Proctor House and Broughton House, will be filled entirely by the new residential building, and it is likely that it will also give the appearance (as indeed in reality) of towering over the much lower, sloping rooflines of Magdalena Court, on the northern side of Prewett Street. NPA 2018 does not include a perspective from towards the northern end of Pump Lane, roughly outside the eastern end of St Mary's church and looking south straight down it; but the view towards the site from that point is entirely blocked by the bulk of the Phoenix Place flats. And likewise it is extremely unlikely that neither will the new building be seen from the very northern end of Pump Lane, close to its junction with Redcliff Way, because in that position, views to the south-east are comprehensively blocked by the Doubletree Hotel building. The fundamental point anyway is that from the eastern side of the church, and with the sole exception of the Ship Inn and the houses lining the southern side of Colston Parade, the view is composed of an unremitting procession of modern buildings, at best, in terms of their

aesthetics, unprepossessing, and at worst, irredeemably insulting to the eye, and we would single out the Redcliffe Methodist Church as demanding particular censure.

The NPA reconstructions may also raise further issues for the local authority relating to impacts on vistas from fairly well outside the church enclosure, and especially to the north of the church. NPA 2018, Figure 30 shows a view south-eastwards from the north-eastern side of the Redcliff Way roundabout, with the church and its north transept, and eastern end, on the right hand side of the frame, and the northern end of Pump Lane, with cars parked in it, just visible on the church's left hand side (ie east of the church). The reconstruction shows the Prewett Street residential building representing a fairly intrusive new bulk into this vista, to the left of the church, and rising well above the modern residential and hotel blocks lying east of the church, between it and Prewett Street.

7 SUMMARY

Redcliffe emerges into recorded history in the 13th century, although we know perfectly well that the settlement of this suburb to the south of the city was initiated with the foundation of St Mary Redcliffe church about the middle of the 12th century. The part of Redcliffe in which the proposed development site lies was partially developed by the mid-18th century, and thereafter saw increased building activity through the 19th century and into the 20th. The site was subject to the progressive clearance of 19th century terraced housing after WW2, and with the exception of two surviving historic buildings, which it is intended to remove, it now consists of a mixture of open amenity space and modern, high-rise residential blocks, with a small area set aside for residents' garages. The intention is to construct two new blocks on the site, of different sizes and chiefly for residential use, and to subject part of the open spaces to new landscaping. The site has already been the subject of a separate archaeological desk-based assessment, also by AAL. It is considered a possibility that in situ remains of the earlier houses on the site may survive archaeologically, but this is entirely unknown and untested. The former Bell Inn Pub has in the past been the subject of an application for formal listing, but this was rejected by English Heritage. There has never been any similar application for the former Redcliffe Adult School building, but at least in its case, the original, historic plans survive, in the Bristol Record Office. As to archaeological mitigation, we consider it unlikely that the local authority would, at the present state of knowledge, require full excavation, *but* it should be noted that that strategy would nonetheless remain a theoretical option open to the local authority.

The overwhelming built context of the site is of modern, post-war buildings, of mostly unprepossessing character, and at least one of highly negative character. The main historic assets nearby subject to potential impacts are the listed Ship Inn, the listed terrace of houses on the southern side of Colston Parade, the listed glass cone remnant

on the opposite side of Prewett Street from the site, and most importantly, the church of St Mary Redcliffe. We consider that, from the client's own photographic viewshed study, and other considerations, the proposed development, and most notably the main residential block, which is, however, of a similar scale and massing to the existing taller residential blocks framing the site, may have the potential for intermittently negative visual impacts in both its immediate setting, and within Bristol's wider urban landscape; this includes impacts within and around the vicinity of St Mary's church. It is likely that this will represent a material consideration for the local authority in its assessment of the development proposals.

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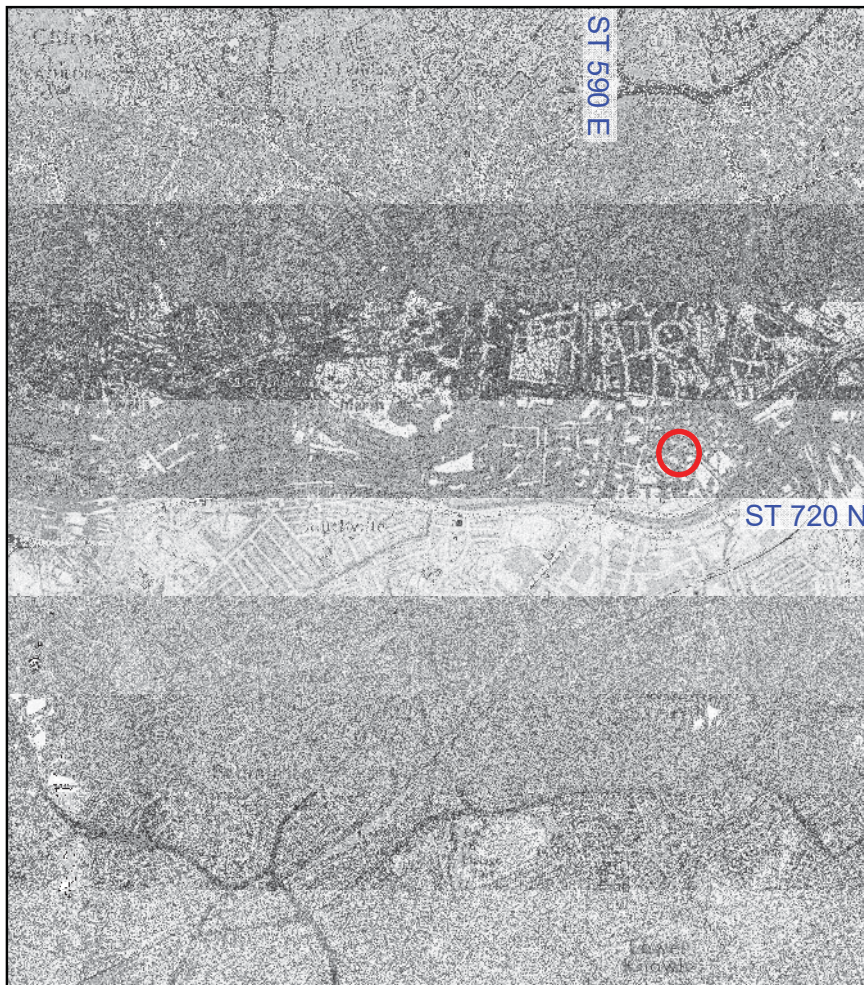
Figure 1

Location of the Site

The Site



Plans and maps based on the Ordnance Survey Sheets are represented by the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.



Scale: 1:25,000

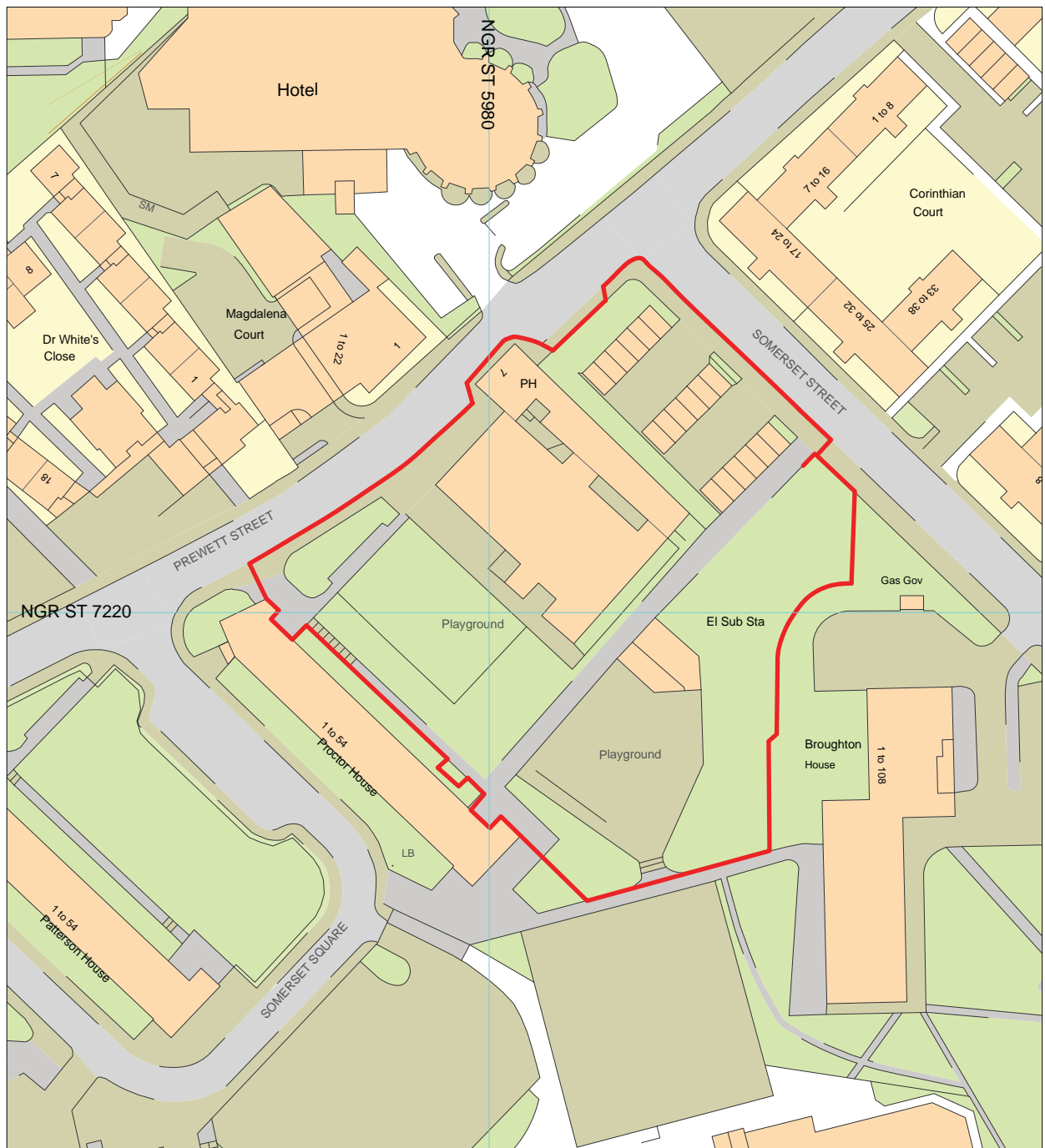
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Figure 2



Plan of Site Location and Boundary

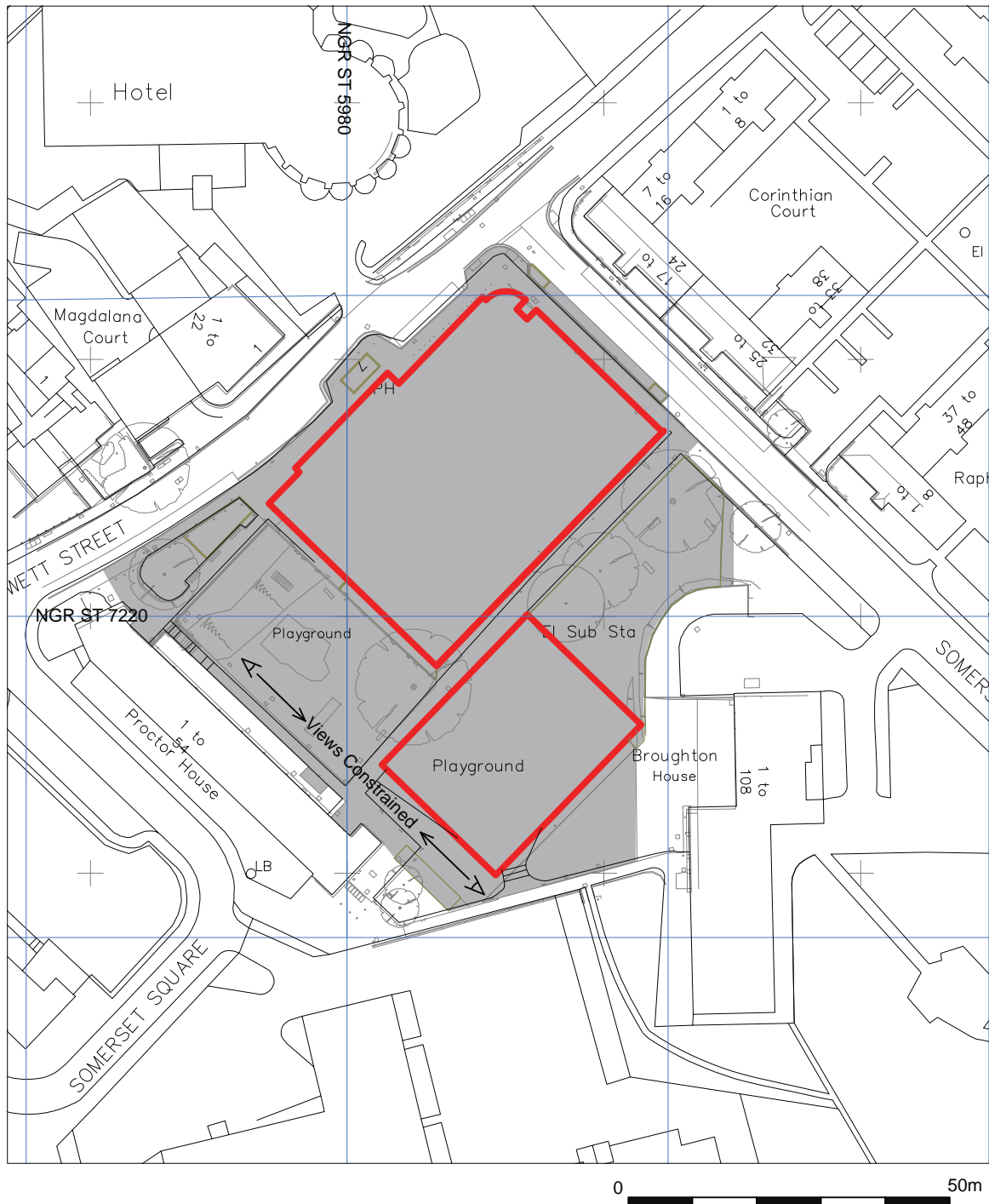


0m 50m



Figure 3

Footprints of the proposed buildings



Plates



1. Composite panoramic view close to the junction of Somerset Street and Prewett Street. The shot pans round from roughly west on the left hand side of the frame, to north on the right hand side. The Grade II listed glass cone appears centre right, and the Bell Inn building, earmarked for removal, on the left. The proposed new main residential block will rise massively above the viewer at the left hand side of this shot.



2. Composite panoramic detail of the listed glass cone, looking north. The north-eastern elevation of the Bell Inn appears on the left of the frame. From the street, the cone is partially obscured by the car park wall



3. Composite panoramic view to the west from the grassed area just in front (ie to the north-east of) Proctor House, whose north-eastern elevation appears on the left of the frame. This area will remain open under the current proposals. The view towards the Ship Inn, centre background, is partially blocked from here by the extremely negative mass of the Redcliff Methodist Church building. The spire of St Mary's church appears behind a tree on the northern side of Prewett Street, but from this point it is mainly obscured by the modern buildings of Dr White's Close.



4. Composite view to north-west from just in front (ie to the north-east) of Proctor House, with spire and upper part of the tower of St Mary's rising above the buildings of Dr White's Close.



5. Panoramic view from the north-western side of Prewett Street, and opposite the north-western end of Proctor House. East on the left of the frame, south-east to the right. The former Redcliff Adult School building appears on the left, with, to its left (ie north-east), the Bell Inn partially obscured by a tree. From this viewpoint, the proposed new residential block will occupy the entire left-hand half of the field of view, and extend above the top of the frame in terms of height.



6. Composite panoramic view north-westwards with the tower and spire of St Mary's framed between the north-eastern elevation of Patterson House (left), and the south-western elevation of Proctor House (right), and with the north-eastern arm of Somerset Square leading the eye towards the church. This is likely to have been a deliberate arrangement at the time of the construction of these buildings and the laying out of new roads in the post-war period. This iconic view will not be impacted by the proposed development.



7. Composite panoramic image looking north-west from the south-eastern side of the hard playing court which currently occupies the south-eastern part of the site, and upon part of which the smaller, community building will be constructed. From this point there is currently a pretty open prospect of the tower and spire of St Mary's church, partly obscured only by a tree at the north-western side of the court. The construction of the community building, in a 'staggered' relationship with its much larger companion the residential block, would however effectively close down most of this view, at least from ground level, leaving only a relatively narrow gap between the south-western elevation of the new building, and the north-eastern face of Proctor House, seen on the left-hand side of the frame.