

Land at the Corner of Prewett Street and Somerset Street, Redcliff, Bristol

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

NGR ST 59307 72220
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BHER 25720

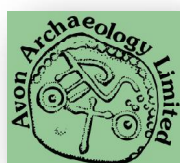


On behalf of

Urban Tranquillity Developments Limited

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ABSTRACT

Avon Archaeology Limited were commissioned by Urban Tranquillity Developments Limited, to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment of a site encompassing an area of former historic buildings occupying a large plot at the corner of Somerset Street and Prewett Street, Redcliff, Bristol.

The land as it is today consists of chiefly open space used for amenity, in the form of playgrounds and greened-over public open space. The north-eastern quadrant of the site is occupied by a set of 18 vacant garages, all in a fairly poor state. There are only two historic buildings now left standing on the site, the former Bell Inn, recorded from the mid-18th century, and, immediately to its south-west, a building latterly used as an auction house, but originating as a charitable adult school, and dating from the inter-war period. Neither building is listed, and indeed an application to list the Bell Inn was recently rejected by Historic England. In its totality, the site is most generously described as unprepossessing, and indeed parts of it are outright unkempt. The two surviving historic buildings are both long abandoned and in a very poor state of repair.

The Study Area was formerly within the manor of Bedminster and the ancient parish of St. John, Bedminster. It was therefore in Somerset and not part of the original City of Bristol. Archaeological and historical evidence indicates that settlement developed in Redcliff from at least the early 12th century onwards, and the church of St. Mary Redcliff was founded c. 1150. From the mid-13th century much of Redcliff and Temple were enclosed with a defensive wall and ditch known as the Portwall, and in 1373 Redcliff was formerly incorporated into the City and Borough of Bristol. The Study Area lay outside the Portwall on an area of raised ground known as Redcliff Meads.

In the 17th century traditional industries based around the wool trade gave way to newer industries based on trade with the New World. The backs of several tenements were given over to glasshouses and sugar bakers. A glasshouse was noted on Red Lane, later Redcliff Mead Lane in the early 18th century. A lane along the line of present Prewett Street was extant by 1673. By this date the study area had been enclosed within an orchard, which had been developed by 1750, and by which date the general area was known as Cathay. The Bell Public House, Cathay, is first mentioned in a trade directory for 1752, and indeed it is likely that by that date, the entire, square-shaped block which essentially comprised the area of the study site, was built over with houses. In terms of post medieval archaeology therefore, there ought to be no remains on the site much earlier than the early 18th century.

The Bell Inn, sometimes the Blue Bell, was mentioned regularly in directories from c.1770 onwards. The earliest detailed map of the Study Area, which dates from 1828, shows much of Cathay and former Redcliff Meads developed with tenements and industry. The



glass cone opposite the study site had been established by 1780, and what appears to be the present Bell Inn building was extant, with a small extension in a long yard to its rear. Prewett Street was first named in a directory for 1833. Until that point it had merely formed the western end of Red Lane.

Late 19th century maps and plans show little change in the development of the site and its surrounds from 1855. By that date, a longer extension had replaced the short extension behind the main building of The Bell. This was described in an 1849 advertisement for a tenant as a brewery and skittles alley. To the west of The Bell, a set of tenements, at least part of a group of modest houses, on either side of a narrow access lane known as Prewett Place, had been established by 1828, while on the inn's eastern side were tenements known as Harris's Cottages. Prewett Place was replaced in the mid-1930s by the present, surviving building, constructed as the Redcliff Adult School, and for which the original building plans survive in the Bristol Record Office; while by 1949 Harris's Cottages had been replaced by a sheet metal works, itself demolished by 1976. The current garages now occupy the site of the former works.

This area of Redcliff was completely remodelled in the later 1950s, 60s and into the mid-70s, following extensive aerial bombardment of Redcliff in 1940-1941. The majority of tenements and workshops were removed and replaced with residential tower blocks on a new street alignment. Also, Somerset Place, which originally bounded the southern side of the entire block on which the study site stands, no longer exists, and was replaced on that side by the present unnamed, narrow access lane at some point after the mid-1960s, and which was laid out on a line rather further to the north. The former line of Somerset Place itself now lies under the open space at the southern side of the site.

There has been little archaeological investigation or intervention within the vicinity of the study site, and none within its boundary, apart from two previous desk-based assessments. Work which has been undertaken is not sufficient to characterise the archaeological potential of the site, which cannot be ascertained from the documentary evidence alone. It is at least possible, however, that some of the footings of the houses and other buildings which once effectively covered the site, may have survived the extensive clearance and remodelling which took place in the post-war period, and if so, some of these features may be of at least mid-18th century date. A standing wall identified in the course of the site visit, although fragmentary and in poor condition, is of clearly historic masonry fabric, and may be a surviving remnant of a pre-existing boundary wall.



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NOTES

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ABBREVIATIONS

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



1 INTRODUCTION

Avon Archaeology Limited were commissioned by Mr Tom Sadler, of GVA Planning Consultants (Bristol), to undertake an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of an area in Redcliff, Bristol, which is currently under mixed land use, and which 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 vacant modern garages. The site 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 0.52Ha, 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 Redcliff 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 Bell Inn and the former meeting house, both of which front onto the south-eastern side of Prewett Street. An application in 2008 to English Heritage to list the Bell was rejected, chiefly on the grounds that it had suffered too much debilitating and unsympathetic alteration in the 20th century.

2 METHODOLOGY

Searches were made of the indices of the collections of the Bristol Record Office, the Somerset Record Office, and the main Arts and Social Sciences Library of the University of Bristol. A variety of online bibliographic resources, most notably COPAC, BIAB, The Archaeology Data Service, and Google Scholar, were used to identify potentially useful



sources of information, whether published or otherwise¹. In addition, information was utilised from a trawl of the City of Bristol Historic Environment Record, conducted on behalf of AAL by Peter Insole, Archaeological Officer for the local authority. A visit to the site was made by the author on Friday 23rd February, 2018, and a digital photographic record was made, a selection from which is presented here (**Cover**, and **Plates 1 to 6**).

3 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. 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.

4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

As we have already noted, historically, the study area lay (although just) in the ancient ecclesiastical parish of Bedminster, in northern Somerset, and in the Hundred of Bedminster and Hartcliff. The site lay at the extreme northern edge of the parish, very close to the boundary with the group of small, central city parishes for which there are no tithe maps, and which therefore represents a large and regrettable 'hole' in the early large-scale mapping of the city. There is no *Victoria County History* covering this part of Somerset as yet, but an early account can be found in Collinson (1791, II, 280-288). Bedminster has also been the subject of an Extensive Urban Survey, carried out by the

¹www.copac.ac.uk; www.biab.ac.uk; <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/>; www.scholar.google.com



former Avon County Council (La Trobe Bateman, 1999), and a far more recent Conservation Character Appraisal, carried out, and adopted by, the local authority, in December 2013. As already noted however, the site itself, and its immediate environs, lies outside both the Bedminster and the Redcliff Conservation Areas.

At the former Mail Marketing site (West Street), there is evidence from a series of archaeological investigations, beginning in 2003, of multi-period activity which includes prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval remains, just to the south along West Street. The Romano-British phase here may represent a 3rd-4th century rural farmstead (Williams 2005, 128: Mail Marketing Site, West Street; BHER 22159; 24797; 21730; Young, forthcoming), and although this site is the best part of one km to the south-west of that under examination here, nonetheless these discoveries indicate that even in seemingly unprepossessing areas of Bedminster, archaeological survival may be better than one may first think. It has, indeed, been suggested that West Street may also follow the line of a Roman road between the Chew Valley and Almondsbury. The line of the road is known to follow the modern Bishopsworth and Bedminster Down Road (A38), before vanishing, only to reappear in the north of the city. The most obvious route for the road on leaving Bedminster Down would be along the line of West Street. In addition, the name *Chessel* appears as a street name, and this is generally regarded as an archaeologically highly indicative name, especially with regard to Romano-British occupation, and the more so if an early spelling is available. In this case the name is indeed recorded in the mid-14th century, but it does not appear that any material of Roman date is known from that area at the present state of knowledge (Russell and Williams 1984, 25; BHER 10903).

This area lay well beyond the limits of the Anglo-Saxon settlement of *Bricg Stowe* (Sivier 2002, 13), and activity of that date on the south side of the River Avon is as yet unattested *archaeologically*. However, the witness of Domesday Book suggests very strongly that there ought to be high-status occupation in this area at least by the late Anglo-Saxon period (Thorn and Thorn, 1980). In 1086, Bedminster was a large, royal manor held directly by the king, having previously been part of the Anglo-Saxon royal demesne. Its sheer size, as it emerged into the post-Conquest and modern periods as an ecclesiastical parish, is an indication that it was by no means of 'ordinary' origin. In the mid-19th century, its total tithable area amounted to 4,115 acres (1,665 ha), excluding only 44 acres (18 ha) which were counted as exempt from tithe (Bedminster Tithe Survey 1841-43, BRO EP/A/32/7). Domesday notes that in the late 11th century, the estate was unhidated, that is, it was not rated for geld, usually taken as a diagnostic indicator of a status as ancient, core royal land. However, even though there is no record of the number of hides at which Bedminster was rated, an indication of its size and agricultural potential is given by the number of *ploughlands* which Domesday records there, and at 26, this amounts to a very large estate (Costen 1992, 166, and notes 1 and 2)². In

²It is also worth pointing out that of Bedminster's 26 ploughlands, only some 14 appear actually to have been cultivated (three in demesne, 10 by the customary tenants, and one by the priest). The



addition however, Domesday notes the presence of a priest holding land, and although it is not explicitly stated, it can be presumed that this priest was attached to the church at Bedminster, again a relationship that is usually taken to indicate at least an origin as a mother church of high status, the land being a remnant of an original endowment, and the priest himself all that remained of a formerly collegiate institution (Blair 2005, 366-367).

Indeed, the place-name itself makes this much clear: Bedminster appears to derive from Old English *Beda*, a personal name, together with *mynster*, possibly commemorating either the church's founder, or the name of a priest attached to the church there (Costen 1992, 154). It has been suggested that the minster was in decline by 1086 (La Trobe Bateman 1999, 7), and in general terms, for a wide variety of reasons, this is indeed likely to have been the case (Blair 2005, 364-367); but even so, it is important to consider current ideas about the *physical* nature of high-status, pre-Conquest churches. These are now seen far more as sometimes dense *complexes* of buildings, which may well have had several churches, dwellings, workshops and other ancillary structures. Important middle Anglo-Saxon monastic sites, which Bedminster may well represent, seem to have been not only religious but also economic and political central places, and may in fact have had far more the appearance of somewhat sprawling, proto-urban settlements in their own right; indeed, John Blair has described such places as the nearest thing to towns that the period had to offer (Blair 2005, 246-290)³. This has direct implications for our view of these places in terms of the potential archaeological resource which they may represent, and in particular, for the possible existence of contemporary, *multiple* churches (Blair 2005, 199-204). In addition, modern ideas about the close relationship between early minsters and royal halls would point very strongly towards the possibility of there having previously existed a substantial timber hall, perhaps rather like that excavated by Philip Rahtz at Cheddar (Rahtz 1979), somewhere in the vicinity of the former medieval parish church of St. John Baptist, which lay just to the south-east at New John Street. Relationships with major Roman sites, and especially villas, are also a well-known part of this overall occupation mix (Blair 2005, 183-191 and 271-275; Bell 1978). It is likely that St John's represents the site of the original minster which gave its name to the settlement and its estate (Morris 1989, 131; for the specific local example of Cheddar, Blair 1996; and for the site of St John's, Dawson 1979). The church itself, especially in the post-medieval period, underwent a series of misfortunes. It has now gone, although probably

inference is that there was scope for an expansion of agriculture amounting to something a little under a half the total size of the estate. The exact nature of the Domesday ploughland, and what it denotes in real terms, remains problematic, however: see especially Higham 1990.

³Bedminster does not appear in Dr Costen's list of major Somerset churches which may have been in existence by AD 750, applying a range of different criteria initially established by John Blair. However, this is by no means an absolute bar to its actually having done so; and indeed, it does appear to satisfy the basic requirements of attachment to a large, probably ancient royal manor, and possession of a priest at Domesday (Costen 1992, 105-107). It was also the mother church of the (admittedly post-Conquest) foundation of St. Mary Redcliffe (Ponsford 1987, 145-146), and, according to Collinson, of St. Thomas, in the city of Bristol, and Abbot's Leigh (Collinson 1791, II, 285).



very little original medieval fabric remained in it anyway, having been rebuilt once in the later 17th century following damage sustained during the Civil War, and again in the mid-19th century (Latimer 1970, 197, 244). In April 1941, the church then fell victim to a major enemy bombing raid, but the location remains a small, public open space, and lies about 600m to the south-west of the proposed development site. It cannot be doubted that the area around the original minster church would have marked the historic core of early medieval and medieval Bedminster, but it is not entirely clear how far permanent occupation had extended away from it, in all directions, by the late medieval period. Certainly the historic map evidence (see further below) suggests very strongly that the area of the study site was pretty much fully built on by the mid-18th century, probably due to its far closer proximity to Bristol, and the Redcliff suburb, than the main part of Bedminster itself, much of which outside of the core historic settlement area, even as late as 1800, remained as open farmland.

Bristol's rapid rise in the post-Conquest period to the status, intermittently, of England's second largest town, meant that Bedminster became overshadowed, and by the 18th century, it had become effectively a village suburb of its much larger neighbour. The somewhat complex descent of the manor through various landlords, with occasional reversions to the crown, is described by Collinson (1791, II, 280-288). However, a key date which should be noted is 1605, when it was bought by Sir Hugh Smyth, and by virtue of its size alone, its acquisition made that family, later of Ashton Court, among the most eminent landowners in the region. Most of the core settlement area of Bedminster village was deliberately razed in the Civil War period, reputedly on the orders of Prince Rupert (Latimer 1970, 197, 244). Coal-mining established itself as a major industry in south-west Bedminster from the 18th century onwards, and by the 19th century there were 15 pits in or close to the core settlement area. Other notable industries included tanning, rope-making, brick and tile-making, cigarette manufacture, printing and packaging (La Trobe Bateman, 1999).

Coupled with Bedminster's industrial expansion in the 19th century came a dramatic increase in population levels, a development which we may infer from Collinson's account, at the end of the 18th century, of how

This parish, which in ancient times consisted of only a few cottages, is now grown so populous and crowded with buildings, as to form a very considerable suburb of the city of Bristol, the principal street being the great road thereinto from the western parts of England (Collinson 1791, II, 280).

In 1801, the population is recorded as 3,278. Within a century, this figure had risen to over 70,000. In 1835 following the 1832 Reform Act, the boundaries of Bristol were extended to incorporate Bedminster (Latimer 1970d, 185, 208), and in 1881 Bedminster was incorporated in the Parliamentary boundaries of the city (Latimer 1970d, 526). The parish of Bedminster was detached from the Diocese of Bath and Wells in 1845 and

came under the authority of the diocese of Bristol and Gloucester (Latimer 1970dc, 293), later the Diocese of Bristol. Prior to the early 19th century, Bedminster Parade had been merely a part of the main road which left Bristol running south across the Avon via Bristol Bridge, and then through Redcliffe and Bedminster itself, to head south-west towards Bridgwater and Taunton. However, between 1804 and 1809, the construction of the New Cut diverted the tidal River Avon through south and east Bristol, work which was associated with the construction of the city's floating harbour. The new waterway cut an east-west swathe through the northern edge of Bedminster parish, and truncated the main road of which Bedminster Parade had once been part, although of course it did not itself then exist. In order to allow continued access from Bedminster northwards into the city, and vice versa, a new bridge was constructed over the New Cut, initially called Harford's Bridge, but by the mid-19th century, it had become Bedminster Bridge. The new bridge was so placed as to lie exactly on the line that the old road had taken before its truncation by the New Cut, and immediately to its south, a stretch of the old road towards Bedminster, now straightened, had by 1828, become Bedminster Parade. Already by that date it had become fully built up on its south-eastern side, and was on the way to full development on its north-western side.

In 1836 work commenced on the Bristol and Exeter Railway. The present section from Bristol to Bridgwater, south of the Study Area, was completed in 1841, and is shown on the parish tithe map of that year. With the exception of the railway, Bedminster was still a rural village at that time, but the detailed maps of Bristol by Ashmead in 1855 show the arrival of industry, with the Malago Vale colliery established behind the Red Cow Inn on West Street. Ashmead's map of 1874 shows further changes, with the establishment of the Malago brick and tile works. New tenements had also been built, presumably to take an influx of workers.

By the time of the first Ordnance Survey maps at 1:2500 in 1886 and 1:500 in 1891, industry had further expanded, with the addition of a colour works on the Malago, a chemical works on West Street, tanneries on East Street, and a smelter on Clarke Street. At this time Bedminster was still surrounded on three sides by fields and orchards, and probably still retained a rural 'feel'. By the second edition of the Ordnance Survey in 1903 to 1904 Bedminster had undergone rapid expansion with the present street pattern of residential tenements established. Tramways had been laid along East Street, West Street, Cannon Street and North Street, with a tramway depot established along the south side of St. John's Street (OS 1903). A gasometer in the Malago Vale indicates the arrival of mains gas (OS 1903). Latimer (1970d, 316) reports that by 1873 three miles of sewer mains had been laid in Bedminster. An important industrial arrival was H. O. Wills and Sons Tobacco Factory on the north side of East Street (OS 1903). During the Second World War parts of Bedminster were destroyed by bombing. A tram was hit on West Street, and St John's parish church was gutted (BHER 906). The church was finally demolished in 1966, without replacement (*ibid*). The churchyard was surveyed in 1980



and 1981 prior to clearance of the monuments for the creation of a public open space (*ibid*).

Redcliff

There are no known historical references to Redcliff before the 12th century AD. The origins of the modern City of Bristol appear to lie in the 10th an 11th century settlement on the north bank of the River Avon, adjacent to the historic location of Bristol Bridge, known to be in existence from around that time. The area of modern Redcliff lay on the south bank of the River Avon, immediately south of the bridge. As we have already stressed, it was therefore never originally part of the city, but part of the large Somerset manor and parish of Bedminster, (Brett 2005, 55). It has been postulated that the origins of settlement in Redcliff began with a fortified bridgehead on the south bank of the river (Brett 2005, 55). It has also been suggested that Redcliff Street and Temple Street represent the course of early routes converging on the river crossing (*ibid*).

In the 12th century the areas of Redcliff and Temple Meads were jointly known as 'the marsh' (Brett 2005, 55). Robert Earl of Gloucester gave the eastern part of the marsh to the Knights Templar between 1128 and 1147, Robert fitzHarding obtained the western part and appears to have promoted the area as a new suburb of Bristol (*ibid*). A charter of 1164-1170 granted the rights of Bristol burgesses "to those who lived in the Marsh near the bridge of Bristol" (*ibid*). St. Mary Redcliff Church was founded c.1150 as a chapel of St. John's, Bedminster (Brett 2005, 56). The church of St. Thomas the Martyr was founded in the 12th century, but not earlier than 1170 (*ibid*). These two churches formed the basis for the two historic parishes of Redcliff.

Redcliff remained outside the jurisdiction of Bristol until 1373, by which time Redcliff Street, Temple Street and Thomas Street were lined with houses (Brett 2005, 105). Part of Redcliff had already been enclosed in the mid to late 13th century by the construction of the defensive Portwall and associated ditch (Brett 2005, 105-106). Redcliff Gate, across the southern end of Redcliff Street, was in existence c. 1350 (Brett 2005, 106). In the 15th century the house of William Canynges, fronting the West side of the southern end of Redcliff Street (later No. 98), was considered worthy of note (Brett 2005, 106). It is known to have been internally painted and gilded, with a private chapel (*ibid*). Between 1538 and 1544 the various religious houses that had been established in Redcliff and Temple were surrendered to the Crown (Brett 2005, 144). During the Civil War (1642-1646) the City twice came under attack, but on neither occasion were the Redcliff defences breached (*ibid*).

By the late 17th century many industries had been established in Redcliff. The traditional industry of cloth making and dyeing was in decline (Brett 2005, 146). Sugar making and glass manufacturing were established at several sites (*ibid.*), with two glass cones alone having been established on the northern side of Red Lane (later Redcliff Mead) by the



early 19th century, with one of them, the more westerly of the two, surviving exactly opposite the study site, albeit in a truncated state. Soapmakers, wiredrawers, bakers, pin-makers, woodworkers, brewers, distillers, rope-makers and brick makers have all been identified in Redcliff from the historical or archaeological records (*ibid*). The primary focus for all this activity was the continued presence of the docks along what is now known as Redcliff Back and Temple Back. Not surprisingly the names and locations of several inns are known from this time (Brett 2005, 145-146).

Redcliff was significantly remodelled in the 18th and 19th centuries as the constraints of the original medieval layout were gradually thrown off (Brett 2005, 183). The medieval town gate on Redcliff Street was rebuilt in 1731 and demolished in 1771. Parts of the Portwall were demolished, whilst other parts were incorporated into adjoining structures. Further glassworks were established in the early 18th century, making the Redcliff and Temple area the chief centre of glass making in the city at that time. In the 18th century there were several small residential developments within Redcliff, mostly on the fringes and along the new road of Bath Street, leading to the 1760s reconstructed Bristol Bridge (Brett 2005, 183-184). The first lead shot tower was established in Redcliff during the late 18th century. Work commenced on the creation of the Floating Harbour in 1804, with the excavation of the New Cut, designed to take the tidal flow of the River Avon (Brett 2005, 184). By this date Bristol had been falling behind other West coast ports of similar stature, because of the high tidal reach and the difficulties of navigating the Avon Gorge in the increasingly larger merchant vessels.

Further industrialization followed. Acraman's Iron Works was established on the newly created Bathurst Basin, and this later became the site of the Bristol General Hospital (1850; Brett 2005, 184). Gaslight was introduced to the city in 1816. The Great Western Railway terminus was constructed on Temple Meads by 1841 and the Bristol Harbour Railway was constructed through Redcliff in 1868 (*ibid*). Despite the redevelopment of Redcliff in the 18th and 19th centuries, the outline of medieval Redcliff was preserved into the 20th century by the fossilization of the medieval tenement boundaries along the medieval street pattern. This was altered significantly by enemy aerial bombardment in 1940 and 1941. At the time the damage caused by these air raids was played down, but RAF aerial photographs from late 1941 and 1942 indicate the full scale of the man-made catastrophe. Many of Redcliff's buildings appear as gutted shells. Post 1945 aerial photographs indicate that those buildings that could be rescued had been re-roofed, whilst those that could not had been demolished and the sites remained vacant. Subsequently the opportunity was taken to remodel much of Redcliff, with road alterations and re-development in the 1950s, followed by further redevelopment in the 1980s and the early years of the 21st century.

The study site was actually split between the former medieval parish of St. Mary Redcliff, and, as already noted, the Somerset parish of Bedminster. Prior to the establishment of



St Mary in c.1150 the study site lay entirely within the parish of St. John's, Bedminster, which had roots as a former Anglo-Saxon Minster. St. Mary Redcliff survived the Reformation and remains the parish church. As the early maps of the city of Bristol show (see further below), the study site, like St Mary Redcliff itself, actually lay outside the protective and significant boundary of the medieval Portwall. When the boundary of the County of Bristol was formalised under the terms of the great charter granted to the city burgesses by Edward III in 1373, part of the existing parish boundary of St Mary Redcliff was pressed into service to act also as the new county boundary. This left part of the site within the city, and part of it still in Somerset, in Bedminster parish. The following history of the site is constructed chiefly from the historic mapping resource and the various directories published from the 18th century onwards.

5 HISTORIC MAP EVIDENCE

Millerd's 1673 map of Bristol (Etheridge 2008, Fig. 6) shows the Redcliff area in greater detail than previous maps and plans of the city. The line of modern Prewett Street and Redcliff Mead Lane are clearly indicated, as is the line of the historic Redcliff street known as Cathay, now completely eradicated. Cathay is the only street name of the three indicated, though the open land adjoining what is now Redcliff Mead Lane is named as *Redcliff Mead*. The name Cathay is unusual in England and was historically the name for modern China. Cathay in Bristol may have originated from an early settlement or enclave of people whose ethnic origins lay in South East Asia, but no evidence has been found to support this hypothesis. We wonder if the true meaning is actually to be found in a putative field-name *Cat Hay*, with a second element from Old English *gehæg*, 'an enclosure', or its cognate, *haga*, 'a hedged enclosure'. The first element is unexplained although it is possible that it might be a literal reference to a cat or cats, which usage is attested in English place-names (the Old English word is very similar to the modern one), or the personal name of someone with some kind of association, perhaps ownership (Mills 2011, 522).

The study site itself appears to have lain on the eastern side within a rectangular enclosed parcel of land, at that date still undeveloped, possibly utilised as a paddock. Millerd's revised map of Bristol, usually said to be of 1710 but in fact the exact date of which is unknown (Etheridge 2008, Fig. 7) shows further detail. Several glasshouses are indicated in the Redcliff area. Though they do not impinge directly on the study site, they do indicate the transition of the district to newer industries. Redcliff Mead Lane is named as Red Lane, with a glass house indicated on the north side of it (*not* the present, surviving structure). The rectangular enclosed parcel of land within which the study site lay is indicated to have been an orchard by that date.

John Rocque's 1750 Plan of the City of Bristol (**Figure 3**) does not show individual tenements but it indicates that by that date the majority of the rectangular orchard had been developed, including the study site. Red Lane was named, but not Prewett Street or Cathay. Development was also indicated on the north side of modern Prewett Street. The nature of the development is not indicated on the map, but is likely to have been the usual mix of commercial and residential properties. The earliest mention of The Bell, landlord William Chatterton, occurs in 1752 (<http://bristolslostpubs.eu/page141.html>; see also McGrath and Williams 1979, 6). The Bell is subsequently mentioned in trade and commercial directories from 1770 onwards. At some time it was also known as the Blue Bell (*ibid*). Prior to 1833 the premises was referred to as The Bell, Cathay, but from 1833 onwards the address is given as The Bell, Prewett Street, Cathay (Matthews' Directory of Bristol for 1833 and following).

Donne's map of 1773 shows a similar street pattern, but again no detail of individual tenements (Etheridge 2008, Fig. 9). Present Prewett Street and Redcliff Mead Street are both named as Red Lane. Benning's 1780 Plan of the City of Bristol (*ibid*, Fig. 10) appears similar to Rocque's plan, but does show the addition of a second glass cone on the north side of Red Lane, probably the cone the remains of which survive diagonally opposite the study site.

Donne's and also Mathews' plans of Bristol were republished on several later dates but showing no greater level of detail than Donne's original plan of 1773. The main change being that plans after c.1809 show the New Cut, constructed c.1804-1809. Donne's detailed plan of the city in 1826 was rapidly superseded by Ashmead and Plumley's plan of 1828 (**Figure 4**). This was the first detailed plan of the study site and showed the putative lines of the tenement boundaries. However, no details are given on this plan of how each tenement was being used.

By 1828 the general area appeared to have been heavily developed, largely with small compact residential tenements, with the glass cone and associated works on the north side of the still unnamed Prewett Street. The square of the former orchard indicated by Millerd on his map of 1710 was broadly outlined by Prewett Street, Somerset Street, Somerset Place and Cathay, together with the parish boundary of St Mary Redcliff. On this and subsequent maps of the 19th century the eastern boundary of the study site formed part of the parish, and indeed the city and county boundary. Indeed the course of the boundary here is extremely interesting. Comparison with the late 17th century Millerd map (Etheridge 2008, Fig. 6) shows that the boundary is drawn exactly round the square orchard that formed the greater part of the site at that date. Indeed, it can be seen that the orchard enclosure forms the main part of the modern site, albeit with extensions to north-east and south-east. Assuming that the boundary must be of *at least* mid-12th century date, and was established at the same time as St Mary Redcliff church, this strongly suggests that this square enclosure was already in existence by that time,

although whether it was an orchard then is impossible to say. Land adjoining on the east side was still largely undeveloped, although there was a small court of houses at the junction of Somerset Place and Somerset Street, with open gardens fronting on to the western side of Somerset Street a little further to the north. The western side of the site, fronting onto the eastern side of Cathay, was completely built over with houses, albeit with narrow gardens stretching behind them (ie eastwards).

Immediately to the west of the Bell Inn, the land had been completely built over and was occupied by what appears to be a very large, long building extending almost the entire width of the block, north to south. The function of this building is unknown, but it was possibly a workshop. The modern site extends slightly to the south of the former Somerset Place, so it includes the row of houses shown on the northern side of that lane, and to the west of the Redcliff parish boundary. The Bell Inn by this time consisted of a long narrow tenement, with a rectangular structure fronting later Prewett Street, probably the present main building of the pub. There was a short extension to the rear, followed by a larger rectangular building adjoining, but the remainder of the tenement was an open yard.

The next available map to show at least a part of the modern site is the Bedminster tithe map, dated 1843. Because of the peculiarity of the way that the parish boundary runs here, as shown on the Ashmead map of 1828 (**Figure 4**), the large square which lies at the heart of the site, and which historically was an orchard for at least a part of its life, is excluded from this map as it lay in Redcliff parish. The surrounding area was, however, mapped, as it fell within Bedminster, and it included pretty much all of the rest of the modern site (**Figure 5**). The ownership and plot details from the accompanying tithe award are laid out below as **Table 1**, and it shows, not unexpectedly, that the majority of the site consisted of cottages and other residential dwellings, although the plot known as the Mayor's Paddock, which lay outside the site, was at that time a pasture enclosure.



**Table 1: Extract from Bedminster Tithe Award, 1843, BRO EP/A/32/7,
A – acres; R – Roods; P - perches⁴**

Landowner	Occupier	No.	Name & Description	A	R	P
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (<i>unspecified in tithe awards</i>)	2	Houses and Gardens	1	1	27
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (<i>unspecified in tithe awards</i>)	3	Houses and Gardens	1		22
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (<i>unspecified in tithe awards</i>)	4	Houses and Gardens	1	1	27
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (<i>unspecified in tithe awards</i>)	5	Houses and Gardens		2	36
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (<i>unspecified in tithe awards</i>)	6	Houses and Gardens		1	19
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (<i>unspecified in tithe awards</i>)	7	Houses and Gardens	1	2	6
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (<i>unspecified in tithe awards</i>)	8	Langton Street Chapel		1	28
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (<i>unspecified in tithe awards</i>)	9	Houses and Gardens	1	2	6

⁴There were traditionally 4 roods to the acre, and 40 perches to the rood. An acre is the equivalent of 0.405ha (or just over 4,000m²), and this therefore makes a rood about 1012m², and a perch just over 25m².

Landowner	Occupier	No.	Name & Description	A	R	P
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (unspecified in tithe awards)	10	Houses and Gardens	1	1	
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (unspecified in tithe awards)	11	Houses and Gardens		3	35
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (unspecified in tithe awards)	12	Houses and Gardens		3	35
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (unspecified in tithe awards)	14	Garden			33
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (unspecified in tithe awards)	15	Garden			24
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (unspecified in tithe awards)	16	Garden			24
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (unspecified in tithe awards)	17	Garden			15
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (unspecified in tithe awards)	18	Houses and Gardens			22
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (unspecified in tithe awards)	19	Houses and Gardens		3	14
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (unspecified in tithe awards)	20	Houses and Gardens			21
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (unspecified in tithe awards)	21	Somerset Square		3	



Landowner	Occupier	No.	Name & Description	A	R	P
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (<i>unspecified in tithe awards</i>)	22	Drying Yard			25
Corporation of Bristol	Thomas Harris	23	Mayor's Paddock (pasture)	1	2	7
Sir John Smyth, Baronet and Colonel William Gore Langton as Lords of the Manor	?In hand? (<i>unspecified in tithe awards</i>)	24	Houses and Gardens	1		19

Apart from this single large plot however, there was still, even at this relatively late date, a surprising number of small, undeveloped gardens, still apparently held directly by the landowners, and also other open land (notably plots 21 and 22), which taken together must have contributed to a fairly open prospect especially to the south-west of the site. Plot 21, in particular, had already been laid out as landscaped public open space in the form of Somerset Square, a development which according to the Bristol HER dates to the mid-1750s (HER 849M), between the time of John Rocque's map and the first edition of the Ashmead map of 1828.

Ashmead's second edition map of Bristol, dated, 1855, appears to be the first explicitly to identify Prewett Street by name (**Figure 6**). The map is colour coded with red infilling indicating residential/shop premises, and black infilling indicating commercial/industrial premises. Within the boundary of the study site, the main part of the Bell Inn fronting Prewett Street appeared unaltered, but without the short extension to the rear. The yard was more fully occupied by a long covered structure. In 1849 The Bell had been advertised to let for £24 p.a. with brewery and covered-in skittle alley attached (<http://bristolslostpubs.eu/page141.html>). Small tenements adjoined most of the eastern side of The Bell, whilst the slightly larger tenements of Prewett Place adjoined the western side. Prewett Place appears to have replaced the earlier structure indicated on the map of 1828, and which was suggested to be a workshop of some description. It was typical of many courtyard type developments of the period, with tenements either side of a central courtyard or alleyway, often in-filling a former garden or other space. The notable Bristol illustrator, Samuel Loxton, drew Prewett Place around the turn of the 20th century. An archway led through buildings fronting Prewett Street, down steps to the narrow courtyard surrounded by cramped houses beyond (**Figure 11**). Each of the tenements on the east side of Prewett Place appears to have had a short yard with an outbuilding adjoining The Bell. At the north-eastern corner of the site, the formerly open paddocks and/or gardens at the junction of Somerset Street and Prewett Street were by this time completely developed.

The third and last edition of Ashmead's Bristol map, from 1874, was used in the field for laying out the municipal drainage scheme; and consequently they are in a relatively poor condition. This map appeared to show no alterations to the ground plan of the study site or its immediate environs since 1855.

The 1884 Ordnance Survey 1:500 map which covers the study site (OS 1884 Gloucestershire 76.1.6, **Figure 7**) provides the greatest detail of any of the historic maps dealt with here, excepting the more modern ones; although it appeared that in terms of layout little had changed since the second Ashmead plan of 1855. The tenements on the eastern side of The Bell were named for the first time as Harris's Cottages, although elements of this terrace had been in existence since at least 1828. By the late 19th century, the former glass cone on the opposite side of Prewett Street had been subsumed within the chemical factory of H. and T. Proctor Limited, which made artificial fertilizer. From this map we can also see that the boundary of the proposed development site is very unlikely to impinge at all on the former burial ground belonging to the Langton Street chapel, which stood on a site on the south-eastern side of Somerset Place, and which is supposed to have opened in 1828, so that it was brand new at the time of Ashmead's first map (HER 1230M). Subsequent issues of the OS maps of the study site from 1904 and 1918 (ie Second and Third Editions) do not indicate any further significant changes (**Figures 8 and 9**).

During late 1940 and early 1941 the city of Bristol was subjected to intense enemy aerial bombardment. Large parts of central Bristol were devastated and Redcliff was heavily damaged. Wartime aerial photographs from 1942 and early post war OS Maps and aerial photographs indicate the scale of the destruction. The Corporation of Bristol mapped the known and conjectured fallout from the various raids, and plotted this information on commercially available maps of the city (BRO/33779). Maps of unexploded bombs (UXBs) indicate there had been one in the vicinity of the study site, and the likelihood is that it was dealt with at the time. No maps illustrate the fallout of fire bombs, which according to contemporary witnesses were numerous. However, aerial photography undertaken immediately after the end of the war shows that while the Langton Street chapel and some of the surrounding houses were badly damaged, the buildings within the core area of the site (ie the square block bounded by Somerset Street, Somerset Place, Prewett Street, and Cathay) appeared unharmed (<http://maps.bristol.gov.uk/kyp/?edition=>). By the 1950s, as appears from maps of that time made for planning purposes, the city council had already identified large parts of the area containing the study site as requiring clearance and redevelopment, with colour coding indicating the perceived condition of the buildings (**Figure 10**)⁵.

⁵The current whereabouts of these crucial maps are not clear from the KnowYourPlace website, on to which they have now, very helpfully, been loaded, but Bristol Record Office staff believe them to reside at the city's central library. In the time available however, it was not possible to

The OS map of 1945 shows no significant change to the layout of the study area, *except* that immediately to the west of the Bell Inn site, Prewett Place had been completely demolished and replaced with a large, but unnamed building, shown shaded on the map. This is the surviving former auction house, which was originally conceived as a new building for the Redcliff Adult School Sick and Benefit Registered Friendly Society. Study of the local Kelly's Directories for the late 1920s and into the 1930s indicates that this body were already occupying premises in Somerset Street. But in 1931, plans for the surviving much larger, purpose-built structure, were submitted to the local authority, and those original plans for the still-standing building happily survive in the BRO (Building Plan Volume 111/35q – **Figure 12**)⁶. The directories also suggest very strongly that the building was not actually completed until 1934-35, and the reason for this may be guessed at, since the terraces of Prewett Place had first, presumably, to be cleared of residents, and then itself demolished to make way for the new building. It is completely unknown how this was actually carried out, as although the principle of and legal framework for compulsory purchase was well established by this date, it applied chiefly to local authorities and utility companies. It is possible that at least a part of the delay was due to the time it took for the Redcliff Adult School to raise the necessary funds for the wholesale purchase of the Prewett Place terraces, but this is purely speculation.

East of the Bell Inn, Harris's Cottages were still extant, but the OS metric map of 1949 indicated by that date that they had been partly replaced by a sheet metal works, with the back gardens of nos. 6 to 12 extending over the location of the remainder to abut the eastern side of the Bell Inn plot (Etheridge 2008, Fig. 18). The general area still retained the overall street pattern found on the Ashmead plan of 1828 (**Figure 4**) and many of the streets were still occupied by tenements.

From the late 1950s and intermittently up to the mid-1970s, the area of the study site underwent its most fundamental change. Prewett Street had been extended westward and widened, Cathay, its south-eastern continuation Langton Street, Somerset Place, and the entire block of buildings north of Clarence Road, including Wellington Street and the Langton Street chapel and its associated burial ground, were no more, and the tenements had been replaced with residential tower blocks surrounded with open space (Etheridge 2008, Figs. 19-21). It is a debatable point whether this amounted to necessary and long-sighted clearance and redevelopment, or wanton and gratuitous vandalism visited upon a long-established local community, and upon buildings which could with some imagination, foresight and political will, have been restored to their former, perfectly serviceable state. The only survivors of this wholesale clearance were the two historic

identify and study the original sheets at first hand, so the dating is slightly problematic, but a context in the 1950s, as suggested by KnowYourPlace, would certainly be plausible.

⁶ I am grateful to my colleague at AAL, Emma Ings, whose assiduous research at the BRO led to the discovery of these very important plans.

buildings which currently still occupy the site, The Bell Inn, and the former Redcliff Adult School.

The Redcliff Railway had been removed but the buildings of the Cathay Works were still extant. Subsequently both these sites have been redeveloped, with residential housing and a large, intrusive and aesthetically sterile hotel building (now called The Doubletree), on the north side of Prewett Street. The site of the sheet metal works which occupied the very corner plot of the study site at the junction of Somerset Street and Prewett Street, was indicated as vacant on the OS map of 1966-1976; and this area is now occupied by the group of vacant garages and car parking for local residents to which we have already referred.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The strict remit of this study is to consider the evidence for archaeological survival in the vicinity of the study site, based on current knowledge as expressed in the City of Bristol Historic Environment Record. See **Figures 13** and **14** for the HER maps.

The HER trawl carried out for the purposes of this report, and encompassing a 200m radius around it, revealed that, within the boundary of the site itself, there has been a desk-based assessment restricted purely to the site of the Bell Inn (BHER 4448 - Etheridge 2008); and a further DBA, undertaken in 2013, relating to a site at Somerset Street (BHER 25274). There has at the time of writing been no archaeological fieldwork undertaken within the site boundary.

In terms of nearby sites and buildings of archaeological and/or historic interest, a large number of records relate directly to St. Mary Redcliff Church and therefore have no direct bearing upon the study area. Other records relate to the course of the former Portwall. These too have no direct implications for present purposes. Record 604M relates to the Prewett Street glass cone incorporated into the present hotel on that site, while records 1310M and 1311M relate to a malt house and the Cathay Artificial Manure works indicated on the OS 1:500 map of 1884. HERs 1230M and 1231M refer to the Langton Street Chapel and its associated burial ground, the latter of which appears to lie well outside the extreme southern boundary of the study site.

Event records 33, 2162, and 2192 relate to the Prewett Street cone. Records 3438 and 3439 relate to the malt house and Cathay Works. Record 3507 relates to the observation of a former wall of the Cathay Works, while record 3762 refers to an archaeological watching brief undertaken in 2001 on the present site of Magdalena Court, on the north side of Prewett Street. Details of the watching brief were not given suggesting nothing of archaeological significance was observed.



Interestingly, the HER makes no mention whatsoever of those features which are in fact most likely to have direct implications for the proposed development, and that is the possible in situ remains of all that complex of buildings, both domestic/residential and light industrial, which occupied the site until after the Second World War. It is impossible to know the extent to which the clearances and landscaping from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s impacted on the foundation levels of the existing buildings, and most notably the houses. But in the spaces that currently remain open, to the west and north of Broughton House, and to the north-east of Proctor House, it is certainly possible that historic footings may survive, and likewise is it possible that, if this is the case, some of those survivals, especially on the Prewett Street frontage, and underneath the 1930s Redcliff Adult School building, *could* be of 18th century date. Remains of 19th century date at the least could possibly survive underneath the latter structure, since we know that it occupies the site of the former terraces of Prewett Place (**Figure 11**). Close study of the surviving plans of that building, which had a semi-basemented lower ground floor, may give some indication of the likely survival, or otherwise, of earlier buildings beneath it (**Figure 12**)⁷. The same may be true of the former site of Harris's Cottages, which abutted onto the north-eastern elevation of The Bell Inn.

7 SITE VISIT

The **Cover** and **Plates 1** to 6 represent part of a photographic record made by the author during a site visit conducted on Friday, 23rd February, 2018, and we hope that the captions attached thereto will be pretty self-explanatory. On a cursory inspection, we thought at first it would be the case that, obviously with the exception of the two historic buildings to which we have already referred, there were no other surviving, upstanding features, earthworks or buildings of archaeological or historic significance to be seen. On closer inspection, however, it became clear that the larger of two brick extensions built onto the south-western corner of the former Redcliff Adult School building, had reused, in its lower courses, an existing wall of masonry fabric that was manifestly of historic construction; it is fragmentary and in poor condition, but it is there (**Plates 5** and **6**). And further, comparison with historic maps suggests very strongly that this structure is likely to represent a surviving remnant of the common boundary/garden wall which separated the rear garden/yard areas of properties fronting onto the north-eastern side of Cathay, from the much smaller rear yard areas of those houses on the south-western side of Prewett Place (**Figure 7**).

It should be reiterated here that while elements of the site are in a frankly pretty shocking state aesthetically, the open amenity and playing spaces do go some way towards

⁷ It seems at least possible that the semi-basement of the Redcliff Adult School arose as a direct consequence of the rather lower ground level in its predecessor, Prewett Place, which was entered by steps *down* from the south-eastern side of Prewett Street (**Figure 11**).



offsetting the general air of blight which pervades those parts of the site which are still built on. This is true especially of the north-eastern side of the site, containing the Bell building, the Redcliff Adult School, and the modern vacant garages. These areas are pretty disgraceful in their general appearance, and both of the historic buildings are in a pretty advanced state of dilapidation, having been abandoned and derelict for years (**Plates 1, 2 and 3**). Most seriously they have, very regrettably, become a well-known local haunt for the distribution and use of drugs.

8 NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES⁸

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, planning policies both local and national which have direct implications for the site under consideration here, cascade down in the following order of primacy:

- *National Planning Policy Framework*, March 2012, Dept of Communities and

⁸An extremely important addition to the archaeological resource and guidance framework specifically for Bristol, will be the forthcoming urban archaeological assessment for the city, the full publication of which is expected in April of this year. This will fully update Brett 2005. See Baker, Brett and Jones, 2018 (forthcoming).



Local Government. See especially Section 12, Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, 30-32.

- *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.

In addition to formal planning policies, this may be the place briefly to note a few salient comments from the South West Archaeological Research Framework (Webster 2008), which is intended to guide and underpin the archaeological research agenda, within the framework of the planning system, into the foreseeable future. In its survey of late urban landscapes, SWARF remarks how

There is a growing but unquantifiable number of reports and records of individual structures usually commissioned prior to demolition or refurbishment amongst which there are those that relate to this period [ie the 20th century]. In a few rare instances they are published, such as, Christmas Steps, Bristol, but in many cases of full archaeological activity on a particular site it is common to find that structures of this late period are not mentioned at all, or just mentioned in passing.....Buildings have been recorded in places such as Exeter but few have been published, although this is changing.....it is perhaps, therefore, not surprising that there are few published syntheses.....(Webster 2008, 222).

This could justifiably be said to be true certainly of the surviving Redcliff Adult School on this site, and at least the principle could also be applied to the Bell Inn, even though that building is from a much earlier period.

9 CONCLUSIONS

This study has found that there are no listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments within the site boundary. There are no SAMs in the immediate vicinity, but exactly opposite the site, on the northern side of Prewett Street/Redcliff Mead Lane, there are the



substantial standing remains of an 18th century glass cone, which are Grade II listed; and not far to the west, The Ship Inn, on the eastern side of Pump Lane, is Grade II listed, as is the entire block of (mainly) houses opposite it, on the southern side of Colston Parade. The Bell Inn seems to have been in existence by 1752, and the earliest map of any detail shows that by that time the site was already substantially developed with housing.

The Bell was mentioned regularly in directories from c.1770 onwards. A reasonably detailed map of 1828 shows much of Cathay and former Redcliff Meads developed with tenements and industry. The glass cone opposite the study site had been established by 1780, and what appears to be the present Bell Inn building was extant, with a small extension in a long yard to its rear. Prewett Street was first named in a directory for 1833. Until that point it had merely formed the western end of Red Lane.

Late 19th century maps and plans show little change in the development of the site and its surrounds from 1855. By that date, a longer extension had replaced the short extension behind the main building of The Bell. This was described in an 1849 advertisement for a tenant as a brewery and skittles alley. To the west of The Bell, a set of tenements, at least part of a group of modest houses, on either side of a narrow access lane known as Prewett Place, had been established by 1828, while on the inn's eastern side were tenements known as Harris's Cottages. Prewett Place was replaced in the mid-1930s by the present, surviving building, constructed as the Redcliff Adult School, and for which the original building plans survive in the Bristol Record Office; while by 1949 Harris's Cottages had been replaced by a sheet metal works, itself demolished by 1976. The current garages now occupy the site of the former works.

This area of Redcliff was completely remodelled in the later 1950s, 60s and into the mid-70s, following extensive aerial bombardment of Redcliff in 1940-1941. The majority of tenements and workshops were removed and replaced with residential tower blocks on a new street alignment. Also, Somerset Place, which originally bounded the southern side of the entire block on which the study site stands, no longer exists, and was replaced on that side by the present unnamed, narrow access lane at some point after the mid-1960s, and which was laid out on a line rather further to the north. The former line of Somerset Place itself now lies under the open space at the south-eastern side of the site, which includes small areas once occupied by housing on the south-eastern side of Somerset Place. In that direction, two entire streets, Langton Street and Wellington Street, were removed, as were all the buildings associated with them, mainly residential terraces but including a non-conformist chapel and its burial ground; the latter of which is likely to have lain well outside the extreme southern boundary of the proposed development site.

There has been little archaeological investigation or intervention within the vicinity of the study site, and none within its boundary, apart from two previous desk-based assessments. The survival of the original building plans for the former Redcliff Adult



School, is an original contribution arising directly from the research undertaken for this report. Work which has been undertaken is not sufficient to characterise the archaeological potential of the site, which cannot be ascertained from the documentary evidence alone. It is at least possible, however, that some of the footings of the houses and other buildings which once effectively covered the site, may have survived the extensive clearance and remodelling which took place in the post-war period, and if so, some of these features may be of at least mid-18th century date. A standing wall identified in the course of the site visit, although fragmentary and in poor condition, is of clearly historic masonry fabric, and may be a surviving remnant of a pre-existing boundary wall.



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Early 20th Century


Loxton Collection of original sketches, no. 1662. View south-eastwards into Prewett Place from Prewett Street.

NOTE: All other maps reproduced in this report are by courtesy of Bristol City Council, unless otherwise specified.

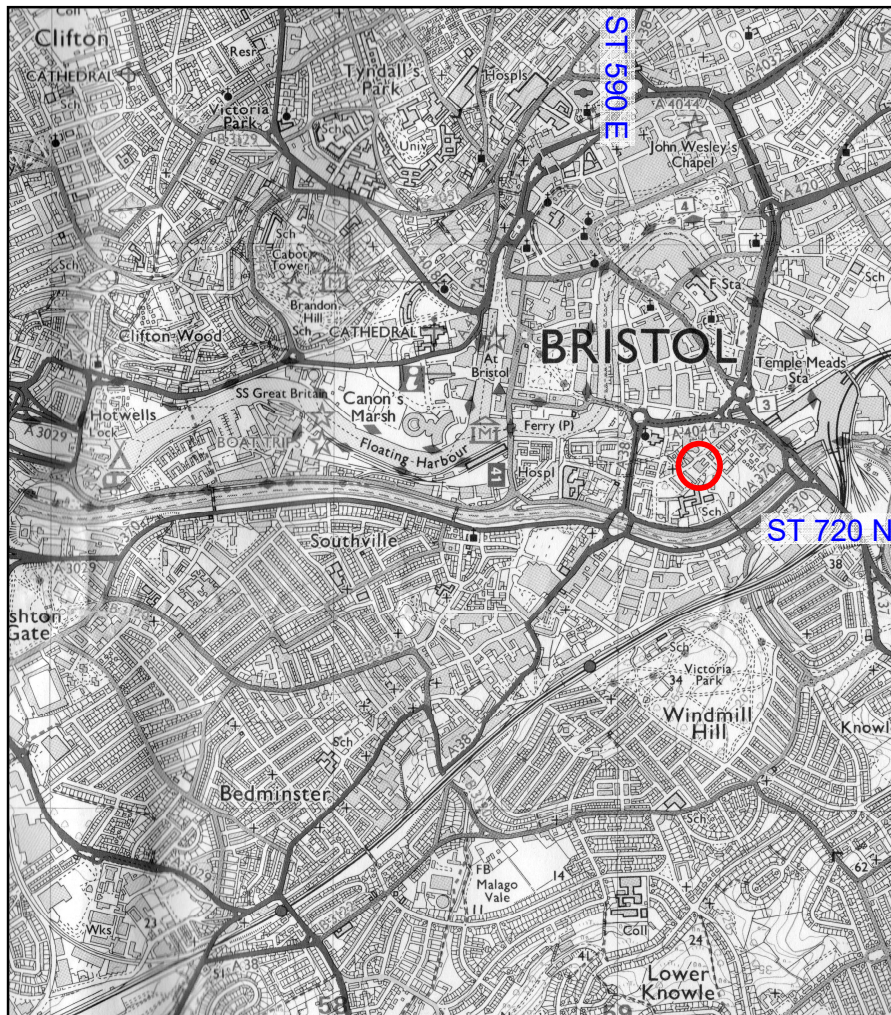
www.bristol.gov.uk/knowyourplace

Figure 1

Location of the Study Area

The Study Area 

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



Scale: 1:25,000

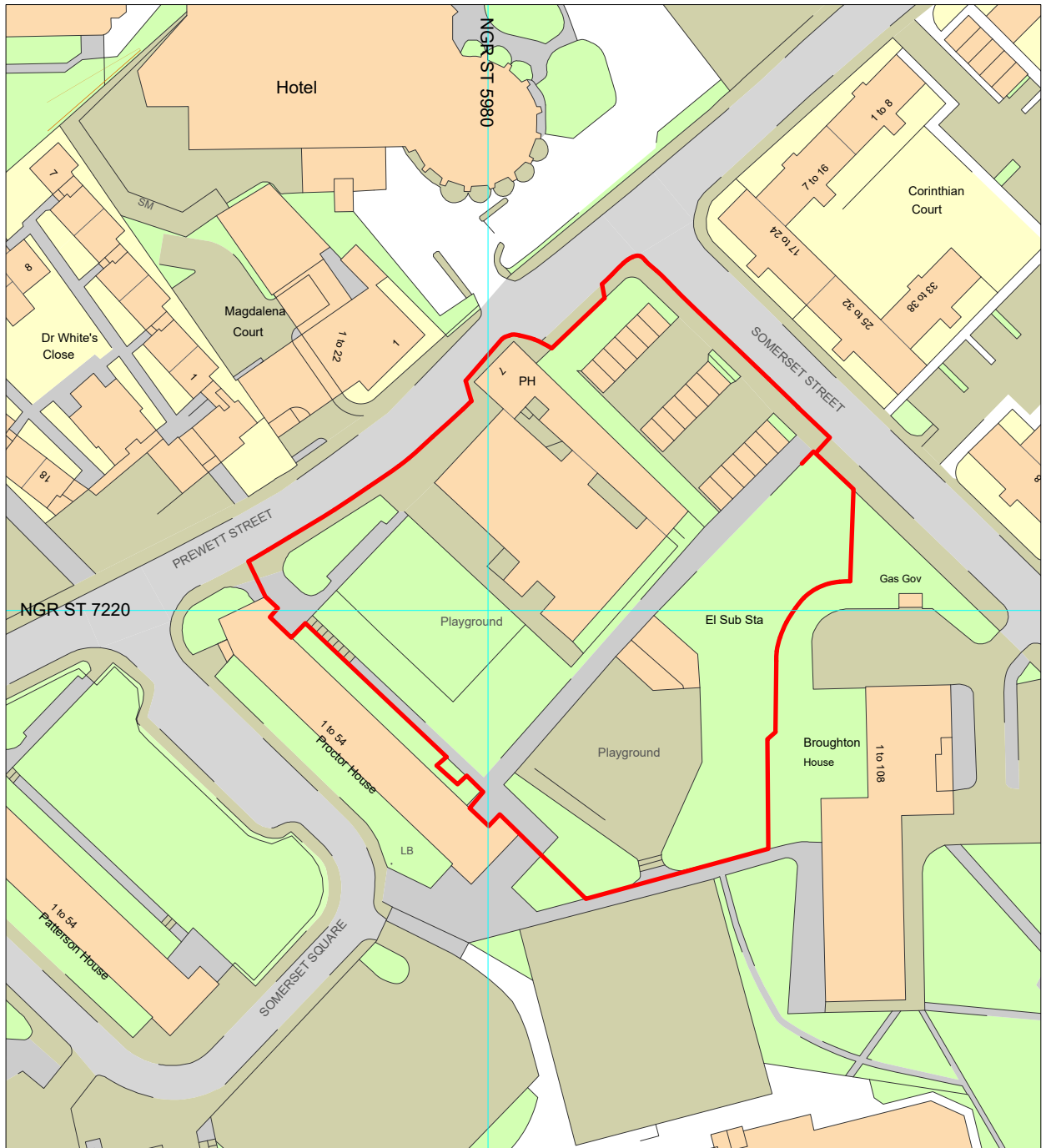
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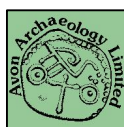
Figure 2



Site Location Plan and Boundary of the Study Area



0m 50m



Plates



1. General view of part of the site's Prewett Street frontage, view to east. Bell Inn, left, former Redcliff Adult School, right.



2. Redcliff Adult School, detail of frontage. View to south-east.



3. View from Somerset Street looking south-west. Residents' garages in foreground, the north-eastern elevation of The Bell Inn just beyond. In the background, the roof of the former Redcliff Adult School shows considerable damage. The north-eastern elevation of Proctor House towers above the Adult School building.



4. View to south-east into the upper grassed playground area fronting onto the south-eastern side of Prewett Street, immediately south-west of the two extant historic buildings. The north-eastern elevation of Proctor House on right. The boundary of the new development runs north-west/south-east a few metres in front of Proctor House.



5. General view to east from the south-eastern side of Prewett Street, towards the south-western corner of the Redcliff Adult School Building, onto which later (post WW2) brick extensions have been butted.



6. Detail of the wall shown in its wider context in **Plate 5**. The lower part is clearly historic masonry fabric, and with the exception of the two standing historic buildings, it seems to be the only small remnant on the entire site of the buildings and structures which once covered it.

Figure 13

Bristol Historic Environment Record

Results of data trawl

While every effort is made to ensure accuracy of the data supplied, no responsibility can be accepted by Bristol City Council for any errors or inconsistencies.

Extract Date: 19/02/2018

