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Professional Archaeological Services



Goldney Gardens, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 4TA

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Contents

	Non-Technical Summary	v
1.	Introduction	1
	Background	1
	The Project Location and Study Area	3
2.	Methodology.....	5
3.	Baseline Survey: The Archaeological Recording	6
	The Recording.....	6
	The Finds	10
4.	Baseline Survey: Archaeological and Historical.....	11
	Introduction	11
	Statutory Constraints	11
	Non-Statutory National Constraints	11
	Non-Statutory Local Constraints.....	12
	HER Events.....	12
	HER Monuments	12
5.	Historic Development of the Project Site	12
6.	Summary.....	13
7.	Conclusion	14
8.	Bibliography	15



List of Figures

Figure 1. Location of the Study Area (indicated in red).	1
Figure 2. The Study Area in the Historic Environment: red crosses mark listed buildings, while shading indicates the registered garden area. NB the entire area depicted lies within the Clifton Conservation Area.	2
Figure 3. Location of the trench in relation to the Tower and path in Goldney Garden.	7
Figure 4. Detailed excavation plan of the trench showing feature 104 and part of the rockery. B=Brick L=Limestone. Heights are in metres aOD.	8

List of Photographs

Photo a. Goldney House and gardens, looking north from the foot of the tower.	3
Photo b. View of the Gothic Tower, looking north.	3
Photo c. The location of the study area (between 2x1m scales), with the Grade II* listed Gothic Tower in the background, looking west.	3
Photo d. the location of the study area within the rockery, before excavation, looking south. Scales 2 x 1m.	6
Photo e. Feature 104 exposed, looking north. Scales 2 x 1m.	6
Photo f. North facing section of the trench looking south, at the conclusion of the excavation. Scales 2 x 1m.	6



Non-Technical Summary

In March 2018, Heritage Planning Services Ltd was commissioned by the University of Bristol External Estates Office (the client) to undertake archaeological recording on a site in Goldney Gardens, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 4TA (the study area).

This project was generated following a proposal to erect a new sculpture in the Grade II* listed gardens, in close proximity to the Grade II* listed Gothic Tower and Grade I listed grotto, all within the Clifton Conservation Area, as there was the potential for archaeological remains to be present.

In preparation for the installation of the bronze statue of *The Castaway* within the Victorian sunken rockery, it was necessary to hand excavate the footing for the statue plinth, necessitating a trench over 1m square by 500mm deep. This was undertaken by the author on Friday 24th and Wednesday 29th August 2018. Limited survey of the trench and surrounding area was undertaken on Friday 31st.

The rockery consists of contoured lines of water-worn limestone on either side of a meandering sunken path. As directed by the representative of the artist, the footing was excavated at a specific location on the south side of the path; between two rows of limestone, but necessitating the removal of stones from an intervening row. The footing was dug to over 500mm below the level of the lower row of limestone.

The limestone rows were set in topsoil that overlies an extensive and thick deposit of loose sandstone chippings. These were probably deposited here during 18th century garden landscaping, then cut through in the later 19th century to create the sunken rockery. At one point an alignment of reused brick and stones was encountered; too rough and uneven to have been a path, this may have been created as a temporary soakaway during the construction of the rockery.

Artefacts retrieved from the topsoil represented Prehistoric, Medieval and Post-Medieval activity in the vicinity, but the 19th and 20th centuries were surprisingly unrepresented, although it is known the rockery was a later 19th century creation.

Although important information about the make-up and construction of this part of the garden has been recorded, no significant archaeological deposits were encountered during the excavation of this trench; the exposed soil profile is thought likely to represent the overall profile of the rockery.

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1. In March 2018, Heritage Planning Services Ltd was commissioned by University of Bristol External Estates Office (the client) to undertake an archaeological recording exercise (watching brief) on a site in Goldney Gardens, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 4TA, NGR ST 57469 72735 (hereafter referred to as the study area).
- 1.2. Planning and Conservation Area consent has been granted by Bristol City Council for the erection of the statue of a castaway within the grounds of Goldney House and gardens (planning ref. no: 17/01799/F and Conservation Area ref. no: 17/01800/LA).

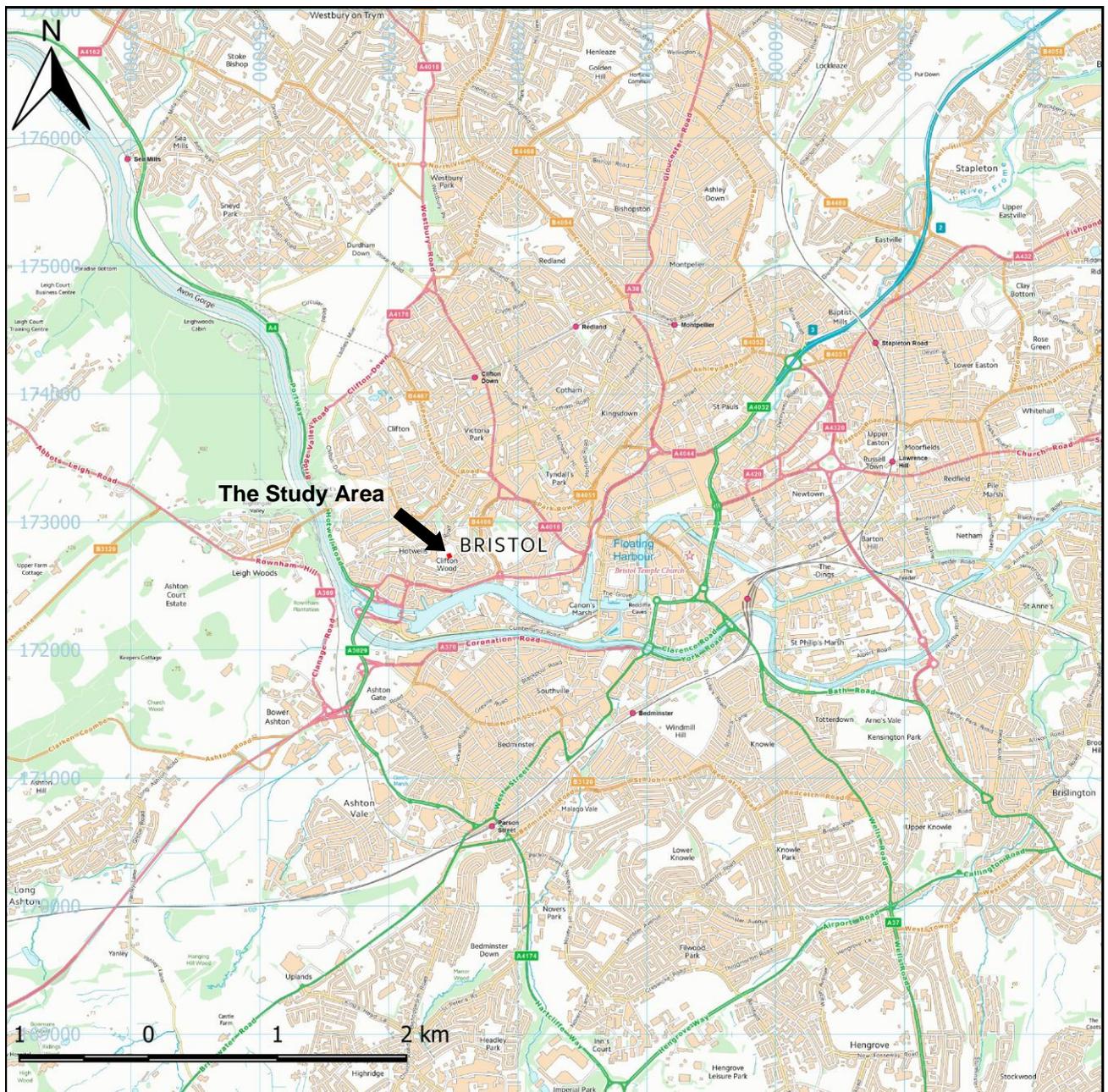


Figure 1. Location of the Study Area (indicated in red).



1.3. This work was undertaken following a request from Alan Stealey, Head, University of Bristol External Estates Office, due to the possible implications of undertaking excavation in a Grade II* listed garden close to a Grade I listed grotto and Grade II* listed building; no historic environment planning constraints were imposed upon the proposed works.

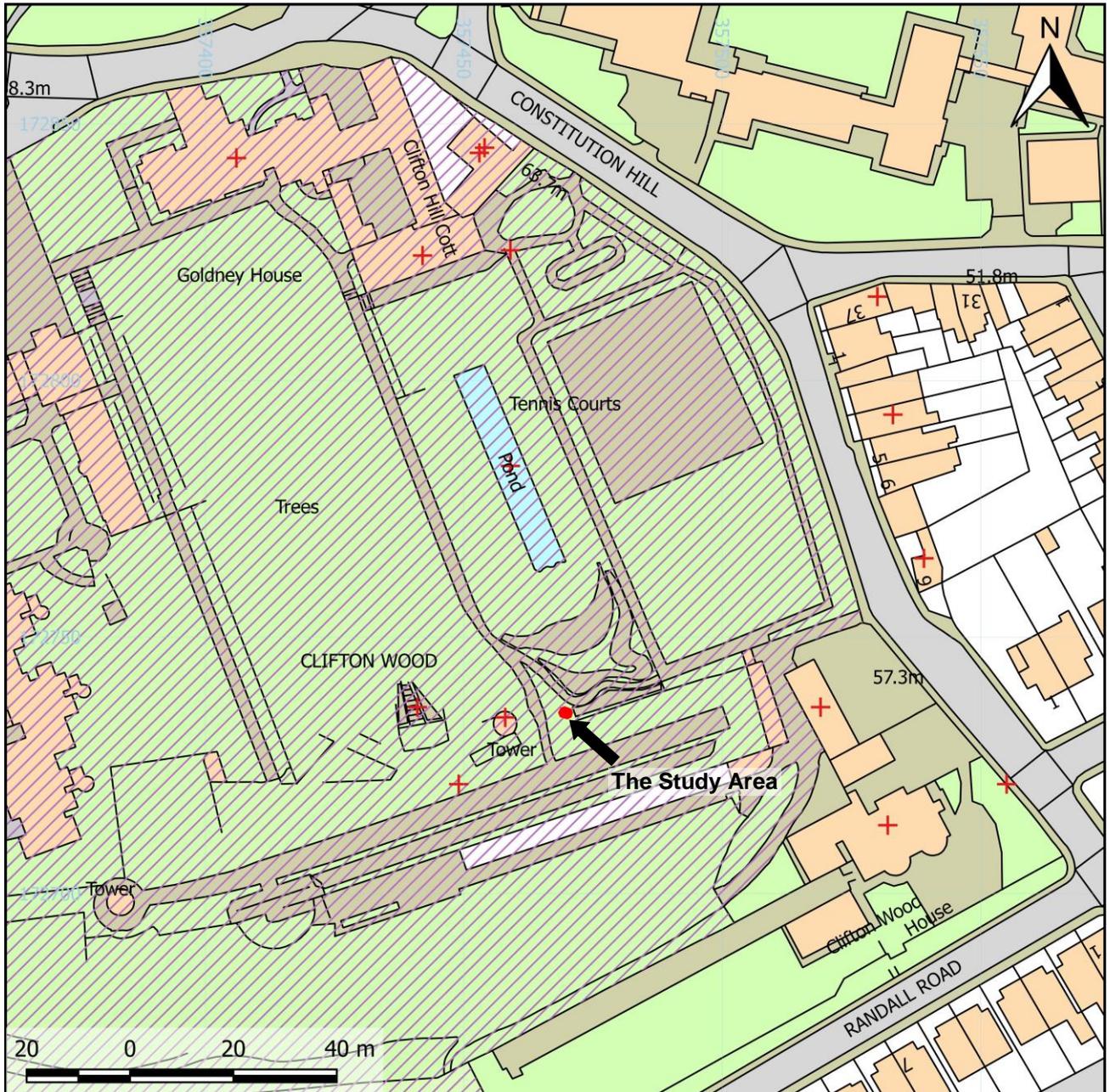


Figure 2. The Study Area in the Historic Environment: red crosses mark listed buildings, while shading indicates the registered garden area. NB the entire area depicted lies within the Clifton Conservation Area.

1.4. This report has been compiled by David Etheridge BA, MPhil. under HPS project reference HPS262/18.



The Project Location and Study Area

1.5. The study area lies within the City of Bristol unitary authority, c. 1.5km WSW of the city centre. It is located on land within Goldney Gardens to the west of Cliftonwood Road and south of Goldney House, centred on NGR ST 57469 72735, at an elevation of c. 66.0m aOD.



Photo a. Goldney House and gardens, looking north from the foot of the tower.

1.6. The underlying geology of the study area is sandstone of the Quartzitic Sandstone Formation, laid down in the

Carboniferous period; no superficial deposits (drift) are recorded (BGS 2018).

1.7. Goldney House and Gardens are owned and managed by the University of Bristol; they are not open to the general public. They stand within a parcel of land bounded to the west by Cliftonwood Road and Constitution Hill, to the north by Lower Clifton Hill and Goldney Avenue, to the west by Goldney Lane, and to the south by Amber Vale East and Randall Road.

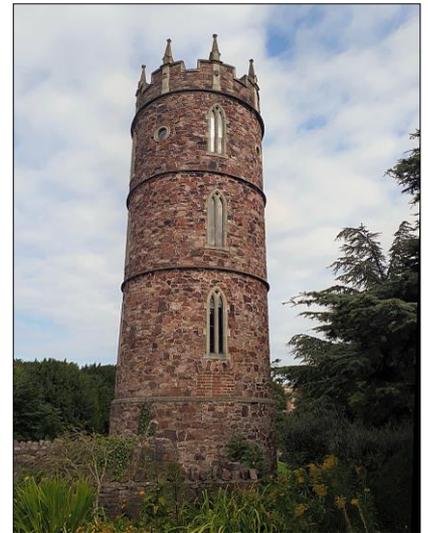


Photo b. View of the Gothic Tower, looking north.

1.8. Goldney Gardens are Grade II* listed on the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens; Goldney House is a Grade II listed structure, while the Orangery adjoining the south side of the house is Grade II* listed. The ornamental rectangular pond, or 'Canal', in the lawn south of the house, is also Grade II* listed. All these features are within site of the study area. The study area is also overlooked by the Grade II* Gothic Tower, believed to be part of the housing for the historically attested Newcomen pumping engine that supplied a flow of water to the Grade I listed grotto adjacent. South of the grotto entrance, on the raised terrace above, stands the Grade II* statue of Hercules. The gardens, house, and associated features all lie within the Clifton Conservation Area.



Photo c. The location of the study area (between 2x1m scales), with the Grade II listed Gothic Tower in the background, looking west.*



1.9. The study area comprised a single hand-dug trench up to 1.53m ESE-WNW by 1.06m wide and up to 1.08m deep (65.15m aOD), encompassing in plan 1.480 m². The trench was excavated by the author in preparation for the installation of a new work of art, a sculpture known as *The Castaway*. The trench was located in a central part of the gardens, just east of the 18th century grotto and Gothic tower, on the steep southern side of a meandering sunken way through what is believed to be a Victorian rockery. The path itself slopes down to the east. Opposite the study area the path was 2.58m below the level of the terrace to the south of the rockery, falling to 2.83m at the lowest point measured.



2. Methodology

- 2.1. This document has been prepared in accordance with the CIfA Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs (revised Dec 2014), which states that *'An archaeological watching brief will record the archaeological resource during development within a specified area using appropriate methods and practices. These will satisfy the stated aims of the project, and comply with the Code of conduct and other relevant regulations of CIfA (CIfA 2014).*
- 2.2. All work was carried out in line with the following standards and guidance-
- *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief.* The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Guidance Document, University of Reading, Reading;
 - *The Management of Archaeological Projects-2.* English Heritage, 1991
- 2.3. The aim was to produce a document that not only recorded the archaeological remains on the Project Site, but to also put these into their historical and archaeological context.
- 2.4. The primary repositories for information consulted comprised:
- Bristol Historic Environment Record;
 - National Heritage List for England (NHLE);
 - Geological Maps;
 - Ordnance Survey maps of the site and its environs;
 - Historical maps and documents held in the Bristol Record Office.



3. Baseline Survey: The Archaeological Recording

The Recording

3.1. The site was attended by the author on the following dates: 24th, 29th, and 31st August 2018. The conditions were generally warm and sunny, with occasional cloud cover and slight precipitation.

3.2. The location of the trench was originally determined by the artist and conveyed to the author by a representative of the installer on the morning of 24th August. The location was quite steep, being one side of a sunken pathway, while the trench location was sited between two horizontal rows of water worn limestone rocks placed as part of a former rockery and encompassed a third row between the two. It was agreed stones in the middle row that lay within the trench area would be removed.

3.3. Once the exact location had been determined and marked out, hand excavation of this area by the author commenced on the afternoon of 24th August and was

continued on 29th August, when the specified width and depth were achieved. On 31st August the author plotted the trench location using a Topcon Hiper SR GNSS.

3.4. All excavation was by hand and undertaken by the author using the appropriate hand tools.

3.5. At between 200-400mm below the surface of the rockery a layer (103) of loose angular red sandstone fragments and chippings was revealed. Excavation continued into this layer for at least a further 300mm,



Photo d. the location of the study area within the rockery, before excavation, looking south. Scales 2 x 1m.



Photo e. Feature 104 exposed, looking north. Scales 2 x 1m.



Photo f. North facing section of the trench looking south, at the conclusion of the excavation. Scales 2 x 1m.



without encountering the base of this deposit. The upper contours of this deposit broadly followed those of the slope, indicating that it had been truncated during the construction of the present path.

- 3.6. Initially this layer was interpreted as the eroded upper surface of the bedrock. No artefacts were retrieved from this layer, but the occasional small fragment of lime mortar was observed; it seems more likely this layer was composed of redeposited material used in the landscaping of the garden.

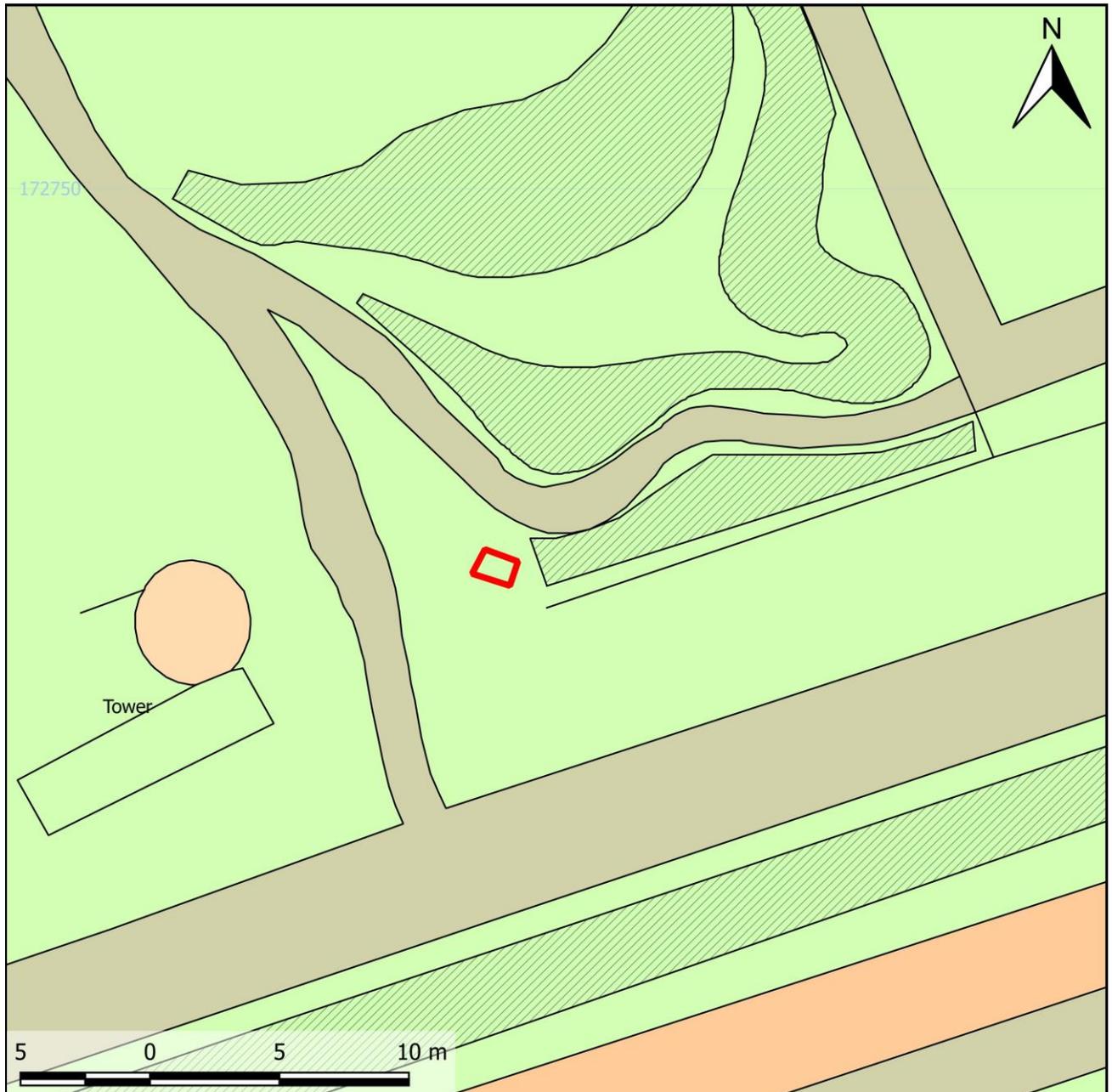


Figure 3. Location of the trench in relation to the Tower and path in Goldney Garden.

- 3.7. Above this layer, and just below the surface of the topsoil (102) a rough alignment of reused bricks and stones (104) was detected, laid in an approximate E-W direction, at variance with the



alignment of the rockery, and seemingly truncated by its construction. The feature was located towards the northwest face of the trench.

- 3.8. Initially thought to be a rough path, this interpretation was rejected by the presence of one angular stone laid point uppermost. Since the materials were laid into layer (103) beneath, and sealed by topsoil, it seems more likely they were deposited to form a rough soakaway, possibly during the construction of the rockery.

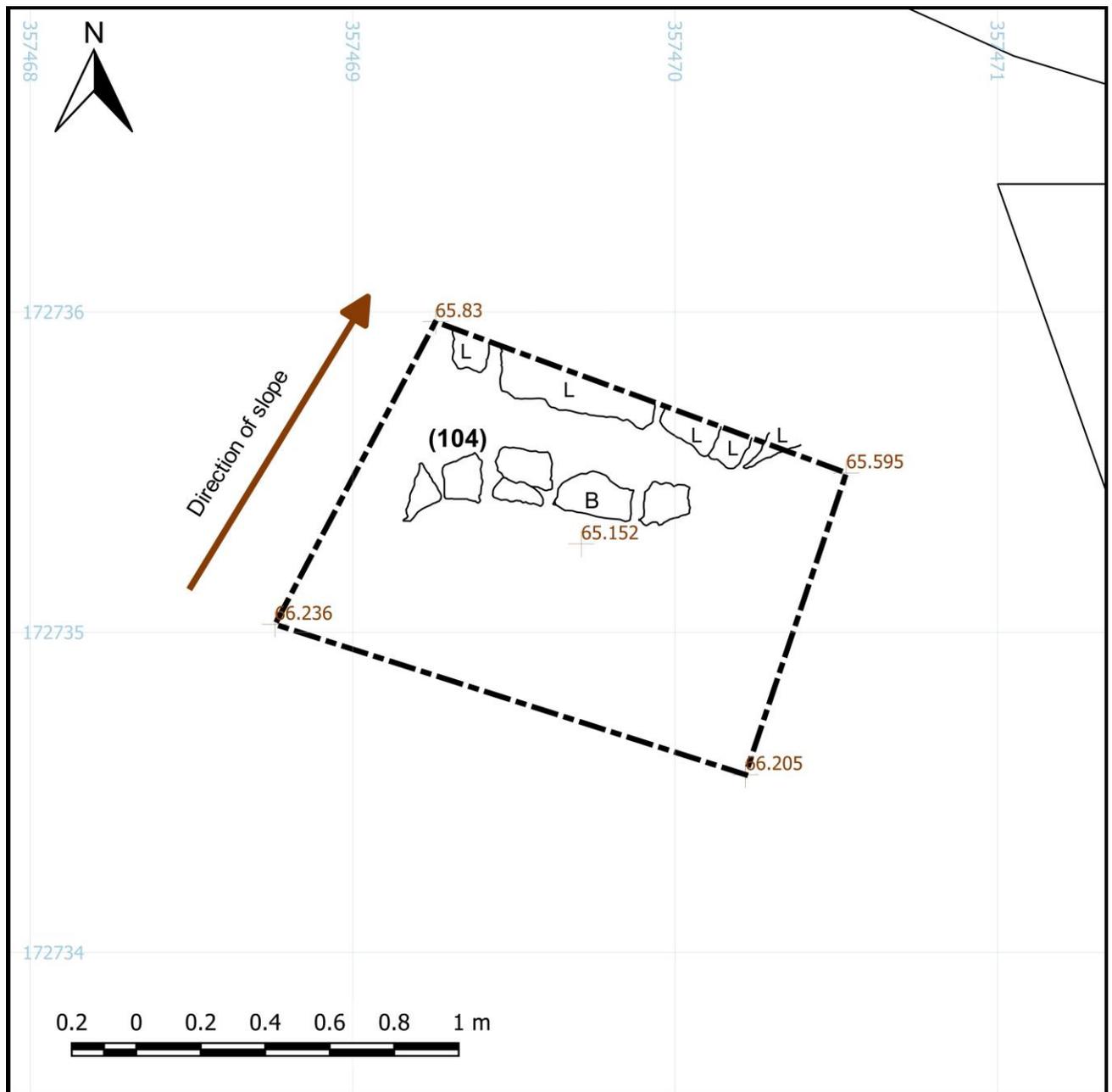


Figure 4. Detailed excavation plan of the trench showing feature 104 and part of the rockery. B=Brick L=Limestone. Heights are in metres aOD.

- 3.9. Sealing feature 104 was topsoil layer 102, measuring up to 270mm thick and composed of a friable brown clay/sand/silt heavily flecked with lime mortar. The alignments of rockery stones



appear to have been partially set into and partially sealed by the topsoil; this includes the alignment of rockery stones (101) removed as part of this exercise.



The Finds

- 3.10. All finds made were retrieved from the topsoil (102).
- 3.11. Pottery finds consisted of: 1 basal sherd of North Devon Gritty Ware (18th C.); 1 body sherd of Westerwald (17th-18th C.); 1 basal sherd of salt glazed stoneware with foot ring (18th-19th C.); 2 unidentified body sherds of unglazed Medieval wares (12th-15th C.) representing 2 vessels; rim sherd and body sherd of unidentified red wares representing 2 vessels, probably flower pots (18th-19th C.).
- 3.12. There was one small sherd of vessel glass, too corroded to identify the original colour, but possibly dark green, probably 18th century.
- 3.13. Building materials consisted of: one sample nodule of light grey lime mortar; one fragment of lime wall plaster, undecorated; 18th-19th century.
- 3.14. There were three fragments of clay tobacco pipe: 2 stem fragments representing 2 pipes (18th & 19th C.); one fragment from a small bowl, encrusted in lime mortar, no identifying marks or diagnostic features, but size indicates a 16th to 17th century date.
- 3.15. Five fragments of oyster shell, undated, but one has a clear puncture mark indicating it was fastened or hung.
- 3.16. Two small fragments of industrial residue; both appear to be metalworking slag. Probably of Post-Medieval date.
- 3.17. One small fragment of bone, possibly bird.
- 3.18. Two pieces of flint/chert were also retrieved. One is a small unworked flint nodule, a little too large and uneven to have been used as gravel, possibly brought in as ship ballast, then discarded. The other is a very fine intact chert scraper made for a right-hander. The edges are still sharp, with no evidence for retouch. This is unlikely to date later than the Early Bronze Age.
- 3.19. Interestingly there were no clear finds of strictly 19th or 20th century date, indicating that where a date in the 18th or 19th century is possible, the 18th century date should be preferred. However, it is likely that the finds in the topsoil are all residual, as their wide spread of dates indicates, and the presence of Prehistoric and Medieval material suggests the topsoil may well have been brought in from elsewhere in the garden or further afield.



4. Baseline Survey: Archaeological and Historical

Introduction

- 4.1. The information presented here is derived from sources including the Bristol Historic Environment Record, the Historic England National Monuments Record database (PastScape), the National Heritage List for England (NHLE), the Historic England Archive, and surviving cartographic resources, along with other published or documentary sources.
- 4.2. Trawls of the National Heritage List for England, Magic.gov.uk, PastScape, the Historic England Archive and the Bristol HER have revealed the following:

Statutory Constraints

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

- 4.3. The adjacent Tower is a Grade II* listed 18th century structure (List Entry 1282329) located 9.15m west of the study area. Twenty four metres to the WSW of the study area stands the Grade II* listed 18th century statue of Hercules (List Entry 1282327). Twenty eight metres to the west of the study area is the entrance to the Grade I listed 18th century shell grotto (List Entry 1202104). The Grade II* listed Canal (List Entry 1282326) lies 28m to the north; this is overlooked by the Grade II* listed Orangery (List Entry 1282328), some 93m to the north, and the Grade II listed Goldney House (List Entry 1205899), located immediately north of the Orangery.
- 4.4. A Grade II stable block associated with Clifton Wood House (List Entry 1202120) lies 48m to the east, while Grade II listed Clifton Wood House (List Entry 1206273) stands 50m to the southeast.
- 4.5. The study area lies within the Clifton Conservation Area.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other Heritage Statutory Constraints

- 4.6. There are no scheduled ancient monuments within or adjacent to the study area. The nearest Scheduled Ancient Monuments are the Civil War Defences on Brandon Hill (ListEntry 1006989), c. 420m to the east.

Non-Statutory National Constraints

- 4.7. The study area lies within the Grade II* listed grounds of Goldney House, on the national register of parks and gardens (ListEntry 10004444).



Non-Statutory Local Constraints

- 4.8. Goldney Gardens is also on the local list of parks and gardens, this includes peripheral areas not covered by the national listing.
- 4.9. Goldney Hall is a University of Bristol hall of residence constructed in the grounds of Goldney Garden in the 1960s, it is now on the local list, and is considered a 'building of merit' within the conservation area. the buildings lie 96m west of the study area.

HER Events

- 4.10. There has been previous archaeological work in the gardens of Goldney House. In 1992 archaeological monitoring was undertaken during groundworks in the vicinity of Goldney Hall; although no buried features were revealed, a number of standing 18th century walls were recorded prior to demolition or reduction (BHER 24744). In 2001 there was a rapid desk-based assessment (DBA) of Goldney House and gardens (BHER 24569), together with geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation (trial trenching); the results of this work are not readily available. In 2003 a further DBA of Goldney Garden was undertaken (BHER 21921).
- 4.11. In 2012 a DBA and building condition survey was undertaken of the Clifton Wood House stable block, highlighting the dilapidated state of the Grade II listed structure (BHER 25168). A watching brief was held at Clifton Wood House in 2004 (BHER 22021), while a survey of the house had been undertaken in 2003 (BHER 21445).

HER Monuments

- 4.12. There are three Bristol HER monuments associated with Goldney House and gardens. The primary monument of note is Goldney House gardens, largely created by Thomas Goldney III between 1736 and 1768 (BHER 1935M). Associated with this are Goldney House, a summerhouse built c. 1720 (BHER 2801M) and the grotto, built 1737-1764 (BHER 1786M).

5. Historic Development of the Project Site

- 5.1. The study area historically lay within the ancient parish of Clifton, Gloucestershire. The earliest detailed map to show this part of the city is the De Willstar plan of 1746, (available on Bristol Know Your Place). The garden layout is quite different to its present appearance, with a formal garden to the rear of the house, and no evidence for the tower, the canal, or the sunken path through the rockery. A structure is however shown at the approximate location of the grotto, suggesting that work here was already underway.



- 5.2. The Ashmead and Plumley plan of 1828 shows the entrance to the grotto, the tower and the canal, but again there was no evidence for the sunken path and rockery.
- 5.3. Garden features are largely omitted from the Clifton tithe map of 1844, but the house and gardens are recorded as plot 41, owned and occupied by Thomas Goldney.
- 5.4. The Ashmead plans of 1855 and 1874 show the garden features in some detail, but do not show the sunken path and rockery. They do show an ovoid pond south of the canal, located in what would now be raised ground north of the sunken path. This pond is no longer in existence. The earliest plans to show the sunken path and rockery are the c. 1884 1:2,500 OS map of Gloucestershire and the 1885 1:500 City of Bristol plans. By this date the ovoid pond had disappeared and been replaced by a raised area north of the sunken path. It is reasonable to suppose this raised area was created with the spoil from excavating the sunken path, burying the ovoid pond in the process.
- 5.5. Goldney family involvement with the area commenced in 1694, when Thomas Goldney II (d. 1731) leased the house and part of the grounds from Lord Folliot, purchasing them outright in 1705 (Ross 2012, 6). His son, Thomas Goldney III (d. 1768), was responsible for most of the significant elements of the present garden, including the canal, grotto and tower; the study area may have been acquired when further land was purchased (1737) to enable the construction of the grotto (ibid.).
- 5.6. At the time when the rockery first appears on detailed plans of the study area, ownership of the house and gardens had passed to Lewis Fry (d. 1921); although they were later acquired by the Wills family, they did not become the property of the University of Bristol until 1956 (ibid.).

6. Summary

- 6.1. Archaeological recording adjacent to Goldney Tower and Grotto, in Goldney Garden, Clifton Wood, Bristol, was undertaken during hand excavation of a roughly 1m by 1.5m area for the base of a new sculpture. This exercise has identified a layer of made ground beneath the topsoil, which is probably the result of landscaping and may represent upcast from the excavation of the 18th century grotto. A short alignment of reused bricks and stones was also recorded.
- 6.2. Artefacts retrieved from the topsoil are commensurate with an 18th century date of deposition; they probably represent residual material redeposited in the later 19th century during the construction of the sunken path and rockery.



7. Conclusion

- 7.1. No features or deposits exposed in this exercise appear to be earlier than the 18th century; it is known extensive landscaping works were undertaken nearby, with the construction of the Tower and Grotto. Excavation appears to have confirmed the suspicion the sunken path was cut through an area of 18th century made ground.
- 7.2. Finds from the topsoil were unusually high in quantity, diversity and date range, for a relatively small trench in an ornamental garden. These indicate that the topsoil has been worked and used for a considerable period of time.
- 7.3. Although this exercise has yielded useful information about the makeup of the landscape features in this part of the garden, the study area was otherwise devoid of significant archaeological features, indicating that other parts of the rockery are likely to have a similar profile.



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