

**LAND AT BLACKSWARTH ROAD,
ST. GEORGE,
BRISTOL.**

NGR: ST 6179 7320

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

September 2007
Report No. 558

Quality Assurance

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Author: A. Hood

Date: 12/09/2007

Approved: Tracy Michaels

QA Checked: Diana King

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SUMMARY

In June 2007 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at Blackswarth Road, St. George, Bristol (NGR: ST 6179 7320). The project was commissioned by Bovis Homes.

The evaluation required the excavation and recording of three trenches within the proposed development area.

The archaeological works revealed well preserved archaeological deposits, in the form of a gully, postholes, stone built walls and cobbled/paved floor surfaces. The identified archaeological remains predominately date to the Post-medieval period.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project, archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CBM

Ceramic Building Material.

Medieval

The period between AD1066 and AD1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site, in this case Pennant Sandstone overlaid by alluvial clay.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level. (AOD Above Ordnance Datum).

OS

Ordnance Survey.

Post-medieval

The period between AD1500 and AD1900.

Roman

The period traditionally dated AD 43 until AD 410.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology during June 2007, on land at Blackswarth Road, St. George, Bristol (NGR: ST 6179 7320). The project was commissioned by Bovis Homes.
- 1.2 The project was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2007), based upon a brief issued by the archaeology section of Bristol City Council (BCC, 2007). The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with IFA *Standards and Guidance on Archaeological Evaluation* (1994, revised 2001) and Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: *Archaeological Evaluation: (guidelines)* issued by English Heritage (London Region).
- 1.3 This report constitutes the results of the archaeological works. The code of conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists was adhered to throughout.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A planning application has been made for the residential development of the site (Application number 06/05532/F). An archaeological desk-based assessment had previously been produced for the study area (Foundations Archaeology, 2004) and archaeological field evaluation was required to inform the design process and the determination of the current planning application.
- 2.2 The site is located on the eastern side of Blackswarth Road, near its junction with Beaufort Road to the north. Immediately to the east lies Avon View cemetery. The site comprised a number of 'Phoenix' type prefabs, together with their associated gardens.
- 2.3 The archaeological assessment noted the presence of burials some 300m to the west of this site, relating to late Roman or possibly sub-Roman activity.
- 2.4 The Medieval settlement of Pyle Marsh may lie in this area, although the precise form and extent of this settlement is uncertain.
- 2.5 In the 18th and 19th century, the area became increasingly industrialised, with pottery, lead and brass manufacture being carried out in the general vicinity. The current site contained a number of houses by the date of the Tithe Map (1845). The date of construction of these houses is unknown, but they may relate to the expansion of industry in the 18th century. The houses broadly survived, with modifications, until the early 20th century. By 1918, all the housing in the southern part of the site had been removed and in 1946, plans were put forward for the construction of prefabricated housing.
- 2.6 The study area therefore contained the potential for significant archaeological features and deposits, predominantly associated with the Post-medieval period,

although Roman and Medieval deposits may also be anticipated. This will not prejudice the evaluation against the recovery of data relating to other periods.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits, in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains. In turn this would allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed development.
- 3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:
- i) To define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;
 - ii) To attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;
 - iii) To recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The WSI required the excavation of three trenches, measuring 10.5m x 2.5m, 5m x 5m and 7m x 3m. Due to on-site constraints it was necessary to amend the size and location of Trench 1 and the location of Trench 3. All of the trench amendments were agreed, on site, with the City Archaeologist. The final trench locations are shown in Figure 2.
- 4.2 Non-significant overburden was removed, under constant archaeological supervision, to the top of the archaeological deposits or the underlying natural deposits, whichever were encountered first. This was achieved through the use of a JCB type mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket. Thereafter cleaning and excavation was conducted by hand. Spoil tips were scanned for finds.
- 4.3 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 **Trench 1** (approximately 20m² at the base) was excavated onto the top of archaeological deposits at an average depth of 0.97m (36.95m OD) from the

modern ground surface. The archaeological deposits were sealed beneath a layer of dark brown clay sand (102), up to 0.90m thick, which contained frequent modern artefacts. Layer (102) was overlaid by context (101), up to 0.11m thick, which comprised a dark brown humus topsoil. Numerous archaeological features and deposits were present within the trench.

- 5.2 Feature [103] was 0.32m in diameter, 0.26m in depth and consisted of a sub-circular posthole with steep sides and a flat base. The feature was only partly visible within the excavation area. Posthole [103] cut the natural deposits and was sealed by layer (108), which was in turn overlaid by wall (110)/(111). Fill (104) comprised a tan clay sand, which contained occasional charcoal flecks and a single un-diagnostic pottery sherd.
- 5.3 Layer (105) was up to 3.6m wide, 0.30m thick and extended across the southern part of Trench 1. The context comprised a layer of dark orange brown gritty clay, which contained frequent charcoal flecks. Layer (105) overlaid the natural deposits and features [113], [117] and [119], was overlaid by contexts (106), (107) and (108) and was cut by feature [115].
- 5.4 Context (106) was 3.4m long, 2.3m wide and consisted of a highly truncated cobbled surface, which occurred at the western end of Trench 1. The individual cobble stones were up to 0.30m long, 0.17m wide and 0.08m thick and were set, as a single course, into the top of layer (105). Surface (106) was overlaid by layer (108).
- 5.5 Feature (107) was 1.20m long, 1m wide and up to 0.40m in depth and consisted of a north-south aligned dry-stone wall base, which occurred immediately to the east of surface (106). The feature extended beyond the northern limit of excavation and terminated within the trench. It was unclear if the terminus represented an original structural feature or was due to later truncation. The individual stones were up to 0.36m long, 0.30m wide and 0.25m thick and were roughly shaped to form sub-square blocks. Wall (107) survived to a maximum depth of two courses, was set directly on top of layer (105) and was overlaid by context (102).
- 5.6 Layer (108) was up to 1.4m wide, 0.27m thick and extended across the northern part of Trench 1. The context consisted of a dark brown gritty clay silt, which contained frequent charcoal flecks and occasional chalk lumps. A single sherd of pottery, datable to the 17th – 18th century was recovered from layer (108). Context (108) overlaid the natural deposits, posthole [103], contexts (105) and (106) and was overlaid by surface (109) and contexts (110)/(111) and (112).
- 5.7 Context (109) was 1.3m long, 1m wide and comprised a highly truncated cobbled surface, which occurred at the north of Trench 1. The individual cobble stones were up to 0.20m long, 0.11m wide and 0.07m thick and were set, as a single course, into the top of layer (108).
- 5.8 Feature (110)/(111) was 3m long, 0.60m wide and up to 0.27m in depth and comprised an east-west aligned mortar bonded stone wall. The feature

occurred at the north of Trench 1 and extended beyond the west and east limits of excavation. A 1m wide gap in the wall, at the western end of the trench, clearly formed an entrance and was associated context (112). Stones (110) were of varying sizes, up to 0.55m long, 0.30m wide and 0.15m thick, and were faced on both sides of the wall. The stones were set to a maximum of four courses and were bonded by context (111), which consisted of an orange beige friable mortar. Wall (110)/(111) overlaid layer (108), was abutted by context (112) and was overlaid by fill (102).

- 5.9 Context (112) comprised three sub-square stone paving slabs. The individual slabs were 0.50m long, 0.50m wide and 0.06m thick. Two slabs were located in an entrance gap in wall (110)/(111) and one was located immediately to the north of the wall. It is probable that context (112) represents an internal floor surface associated with wall (110)/(111). Paving (112) overlaid layer (108), was abutted by wall (110)/(111) and was overlaid by fill (102).
- 5.10 Feature [113] was 1.40m long, 0.37m wide and 0.12m in depth and consisted of a northeast-southwest aligned linear gully with an uneven base. The feature extended beyond the east limit of excavation and dissipated at the west. Fill (114) comprised a tan clay sand, which contained frequent stone and two pottery sherds datable to the 17th – 18th century. Gully [113] cut the natural deposits, was overlaid by fill (105) and was cut by feature [115].
- 5.11 Feature [115] was up to 0.20m wide and consisted of a cut, which occurred at the eastern end of Trench 1. The feature was only partially visible within the trench and contained fill (116), which consisted of a loose black cinder. Feature [115] cut the natural deposits, gully [113] as well as layer (105) and was overlaid by fill (102).
- 5.12 Feature [117] was 0.26m in diameter and 0.35m in depth and consisted of a sub-circular posthole with vertical sides and a round base. Fill (118) comprised a dark brown clay sand, which contained rare charcoal flecks and two pottery sherds datable to the 17th – 18th century. Feature [117] cut the natural deposits and was overlaid by fill (105).
- 5.13 Feature [119] was 0.37m in diameter and 0.53m in depth and consisted of a sub-circular posthole with vertical sides and a flat base. Fill (120) comprised a brown clay sand, which contained frequent large stone. Posthole [119] cut the natural deposits and was overlaid by layer (105).
- 5.14 **Trench 2** (4.5m by 3.5m at the base) was excavated onto the top of archaeological deposits at an average depth of 0.28m (36.67m OD) at the west and 0.79m (36.70m) at the east from the modern ground surface. The archaeological deposits were sealed beneath a layer of dark brown clay sand (202), up to 0.89m thick, which contained frequent modern artefacts. Layer (202) was overlaid by context (201), up to 0.15m thick, which comprised a dark brown humus topsoil. Numerous archaeological features and deposits were present within the trench.

- 5.15 Feature [203] was at least 0.80m long, 0.60m wide and 0.16m in depth and consisted of a north-south aligned linear cut, with steep sides. The feature cut the natural deposits and formed a level terrace in the natural slope. Cut [203] contained wall (204)/(205).
- 5.16 Feature (204)/(205) was at least 0.80m long, 0.21m wide and 0.30m in depth and comprised a north-south aligned mortar bonded stone wall. The feature was set along the eastern edge of terrace cut [203] and extended beyond the north and south limits of excavation. Stones (204) comprised rectangular blocks, up to 0.30m long, 0.30m wide and 0.21m thick. The stones were set to a maximum of one course and were bonded by context (205), which consisted of a compact white chalk mortar. Wall (204)/(205) overlaid the natural deposits, was abutted by contexts (207) – (212) and was overlaid by fill (214).
- 5.17 Context (206) was 0.03m thick and consisted of a layer of soft white chalk. Layer (206) formed the earliest deposit in cut [203], to the west of wall (204)/(205). Context (206) was overlaid by layer (207), up to 0.04m thick, which comprised a friable tan clay sand. This was sealed by (208), up to 0.05m thick, which consisted of a layer of black ash. Fill (208) was overlaid by (209)/(210), up to 0.09m thick, which comprised mortar bonded bricks. The individual bricks (210) were orange brown, measured up to 0.17m long, 0.11m wide and 0.07m thick and were set to a depth of one course. Context (209) comprised a compact beige mortar. Context (209)/(210) was sealed by (211), up to 0.02m thick, which consisted of a layer of concrete. This was overlaid by (212), which consisted of a single course of square and rectangular stone blocks. The individual blocks were up to 0.26m long, 0.23m wide and 0.11m thick. No mortar was associated with the stone blocks. Context (212) was overlaid by (213), which comprised a single course of square stone slabs. The individual slabs were up to 0.14m long, 0.14m wide and 0.04m thick. No mortar was associated with the stone slabs. Context (213) was overlaid by fill (215).
- 5.18 Context (214), up to 0.30m thick, comprised a dark brown gritty fill, which contained frequent clinker, charcoal, vitrified material, chalk lumps and two fragments of CBM. Fill (214) overlaid wall (204)/(205) and the natural deposits to the east of wall (204)/(205) and was overlaid by fills (215) and (216).
- 5.19 Context (215), up to 0.12m thick, consisted of a brown clay silt and brick rubble mix, which contained frequent charcoal flecks and lumps. Context (215) overlaid (213) and (214) and was overlaid by layer (216).
- 5.20 Layer (216), up to 0.07m thick, comprised a loose grey grit, which occurred across the majority of Trench 2 and was overlaid by fill (202).
- 5.21 Context (217) was 0.95m long and 0.57m wide and consisted of a rectangular stone paving slab. The relationship between slab (217) and layer (216) was not determined. Context (217) was overlaid by fill (202).

- 5.22 Context (218) was 1.5m long and 1m wide and comprised a complex of stone, brick and concrete built walls which appeared to form a corner. The feature extended beyond the west and south limits of excavation. Only the top of the feature was visible and therefore, in the absence of further investigation, interpretation remains limited. Complex (218) was associated with features (227)/(229) and (228) and possibly interacted with the southern extent of wall (219)/(220). It was not possible to establish the relationship between wall complex (218) and layer (216). Context (218) was overlaid by fill (202).
- 5.23 Feature (219)/(220) was 0.90m long, 0.45m wide and at least 0.30m in depth and comprised a north-south aligned mortar bonded stone wall. The feature interacted with stone wall (221)/(222) at the north, possibly interacted with wall complex (218) at the south and was truncated by a service trench. Stones (219) were of varying sizes, up to 0.35m long, 0.20m wide and 0.20m thick, and were shaped to form regular rectangular and square blocks. The stones were set to at least two courses and were bonded by context (220), which consisted of a white gritty mortar with frequent charcoal flecks. Mortar (220) was similar to context (224). Layer (225) abutted wall (219)/(220) at the east. Wall (219)/(220) was overlaid by fill (202).
- 5.24 Feature (221)/(222) was 1.70m long, at least 0.40m wide and at least 0.40m in depth and comprised an east-west aligned mortar bonded stone wall. The feature extended beyond the west limit of investigation, interacted with stone wall (219)/(220) at the south and was truncated by a service trench at the east. Stones (221) were of varying sizes, up to 0.30m long and 0.17m thick, and were irregularly shaped. The stones were bonded by context (222), which consisted of an orange gritty mortar. Wall (221)/(222) was overlaid by topsoil (201) at the west and fill (202) at the east.
- 5.25 Feature (223)/(224) was 1.15m long, at least 0.50m wide and at least 0.40m in depth and comprised an east-west aligned mortar bonded stone wall. The feature extended beyond the east limit of investigation and was truncated by a service trench at the west. Stones (223) were up to 0.50m long and 0.35m wide and 0.10 thick and comprised irregular stone blocks which were faced on their southern edge. The stones were set to at least five courses and were bonded by context (224), which consisted of a white gritty mortar with frequent charcoal flecks. Context (224) was similar to mortar (220). Wall (223)/(224) was overlaid by fill (202).
- 5.26 Context (225), up to 2.40m long and 1.50m wide consisted of a layer of red grit, which occurred at the north of Trench 2, immediately to the east of wall (219)/(220). Layer (225) was associated with frequent patches of charcoal. It was not possible to establish the relationship between layer (225) and fill (216). Context (225) was truncated by a service trench and was overlaid by fill (202).
- 5.27 Context (226) comprised two stone paving slabs, the largest of which was up to 0.40m long and 0.40m wide. It was not possible to establish the relationship between context (226) and layer (216). It is possible that contexts (217) and

- (226) are equivalent and represent a truncated floor surface at the southeast corner of Trench 2. Floor surface (217)/(226) was overlaid by fill (202).
- 5.28 Context (227) was 0.50m long, 0.45m wide and comprised the stone built top of a brick built flue/drain, which was associated with wall complex (218). Four stones, which measured up to 0.30m long, 0.17m wide and 0.11m thick, were set around the top of a brick built flue/drain channel (229). Brick built flue/drain channel (229) measured 0.15m by 0.15m and extended beneath the top of the feature by at least 0.40m, sloping downwards to the east. It was not possible to describe the individual bricks or their bonding material. Flue/drain (229) extended beneath layer (216) and context (227) was overlaid by fill (202).
- 5.29 Context (228) was 0.12m in diameter and comprised a vertically set glazed ceramic drain pipe, which was associated with wall complex (218). Context (228) was overlaid by fill (202).
- 5.30 **Trench 3** (6m by 2.85m at the base) was excavated onto the top of archaeological deposits at an average depth of 0.97m (35.82m OD) from the modern ground surface. The archaeological deposits were sealed beneath a variable layer of soil, stone, tile and brick rubble (303), up to 0.36m thick, which contained occasional modern artefacts. Context (303) was overlaid by fill (302), up to 0.72m thick, which consisted of a of dark brown clay sand with frequent modern artefacts. Context (302) was overlaid by context (301), up to 0.19m thick, which comprised a dark brown humus topsoil. Numerous archaeological features and deposits were present within the trench.
- 5.31 Feature (304)/(305) was 2.20m long, 0.40m wide and at least 0.29m in depth and comprised a north-south aligned mortar bonded stone wall. The feature extended beyond the north limit of excavation, was cut by a service trench at the south and abutted context (306) at the west. Stones (304) were of varying sizes, up to 0.60m long, 0.40m wide and 0.40m thick, and were shaped to form regular rectangular and square blocks. The stones were set to at least three courses and were bonded by context (305), which consisted of a friable white mortar. Mortar (305) was similar to context (308). Wall (304)/(305) was overlaid by fill (303).
- 5.32 Context (306) was at least 2.60m long, 2.60m wide and consisted of a partly truncated stone and brick cobbled surface, which occurred between walls (304)/(305) and (307)/(308). The surface extended beyond the north and south limits of excavation. The individual cobble stones were up to 0.30m long, 0.10m wide and 0.08m thick. A group of large, flat stones (311) at the west of surface (306) possibly represent subsequent repairs to the cobbled surface. Surface (306) was cut by two service trenches and was overlaid by fill (303).
- 5.33 Feature (307)/(308) was 2.10m long, 0.40m wide and at least 0.20m in depth and comprised a north-south aligned mortar bonded stone wall. The feature extended beyond the north limit of excavation, was cut by a service trench at the south and abutted context (306) at the east. Stones (307) were of varying sizes, up to 0.50m long, 0.40m wide and 0.30m thick, and were shaped to form

regular rectangular and square blocks. Wall (307)/(308) had been highly disturbed and was only visible to a depth of one course. Stones (307) were bonded by context (308), which consisted of a friable white mortar, which was similar to context (305). Wall (307)/(308) was clearly equivalent to wall (304)/(305) and was overlaid by fill (303).

- 5.34 Context (309) comprised two stone paving slabs, the largest of which was up to 0.40m long and 0.35m wide, which occurred to the west of wall (307)/(308). It is possible that context (309) represents a highly truncated floor surface. It was not possible to establish the relationship between context (309) and fill (310). Possible floor surface (309) was overlaid by fill (303).
- 5.35 Context (310) was 2.85m long, 2m wide and 0.10m thick and comprised a layer of beige brown clay silt, which contained occasional stones and brick and occasional patches of charcoal. Context (310) occurred to the west of wall (307)/(308), extended beyond the west limit of investigation, overlaid the natural deposits and was overlaid by fill (303).

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Archaeological deposits were present in all three trenches at an average depth of 0.91m below modern ground level. These deposits were overlaid and protected by a substantial modern dump layer (102)/(202)/(302). A number of service trenches, presumably associated with the former pre-fabricated housing, had caused localised disturbance.
- 6.2 Due to the complexity of the structural deposits present, only limited excavation was undertaken in order to establish the depth of natural deposits within each trench and, where possible, to recover indicative dating evidence.
- 6.3 The natural deposits were present at an average depth of 1.23m below modern ground level. No intact subsoils were present in any of the excavated sondages.
- 6.4 There were at least three stratigraphic phases represented in Trench 1; features [113], [117] and [119] were earlier than cobbled surface (106) which was in turn earlier than cobbled surface (109).
- 6.5 Features [103], [113], [117] and [119] formed the earliest stratigraphic evidence in Trench 1. Gully [113] and posthole [117] were associated with pottery datable to the 17th – 18th century.
- 6.6 Postholes [103], [117] and [119] were probably part of a linear post setting. It was unclear if this represented part of a building or a fence line.
- 6.7 No stratified dating evidence was recovered from Trench 2, however, wall complex (218) was associated with a glazed ceramic drain pipe and wall (204)/(205) was abutted by a layer of concrete (211).

- 6.8 No stratified dating evidence was recovered from Trench 3, however, cobbled surface (306) was associated with brick fragments.
- 6.9 There was limited evidence for industrial activity. Fill (214) contained a large amount of vitrified material, clinker and charcoal along with CBM fragments with a possible specialised industrial function (Appendix 1). Possible flue (227)/(229) is more likely to be associated with industrial as opposed to purely domestic activity. Red grit layer (225) may also have industrial associations.
- 6.10 The evaluation has identified the existence of well preserved, multi-phase archaeological deposits, in the form of a gully, postholes, stone built walls and cobbled/paved floor surfaces. The identified archaeological activity predominately dates to the Post-medieval period and is probably associated with the 18th and 19th century industrial activity noted in the previous archaeological assessment (Foundations Archaeology, 2004, 4.8-4.10).

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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Bob Jones of Bristol City Archaeological Service and Adrian Winstone of Bovis Homes.

APPENDIX 1 – The pottery

Roy King BA MIFA

A restricted assemblage of ceramic material was recovered during the course of the evaluation.

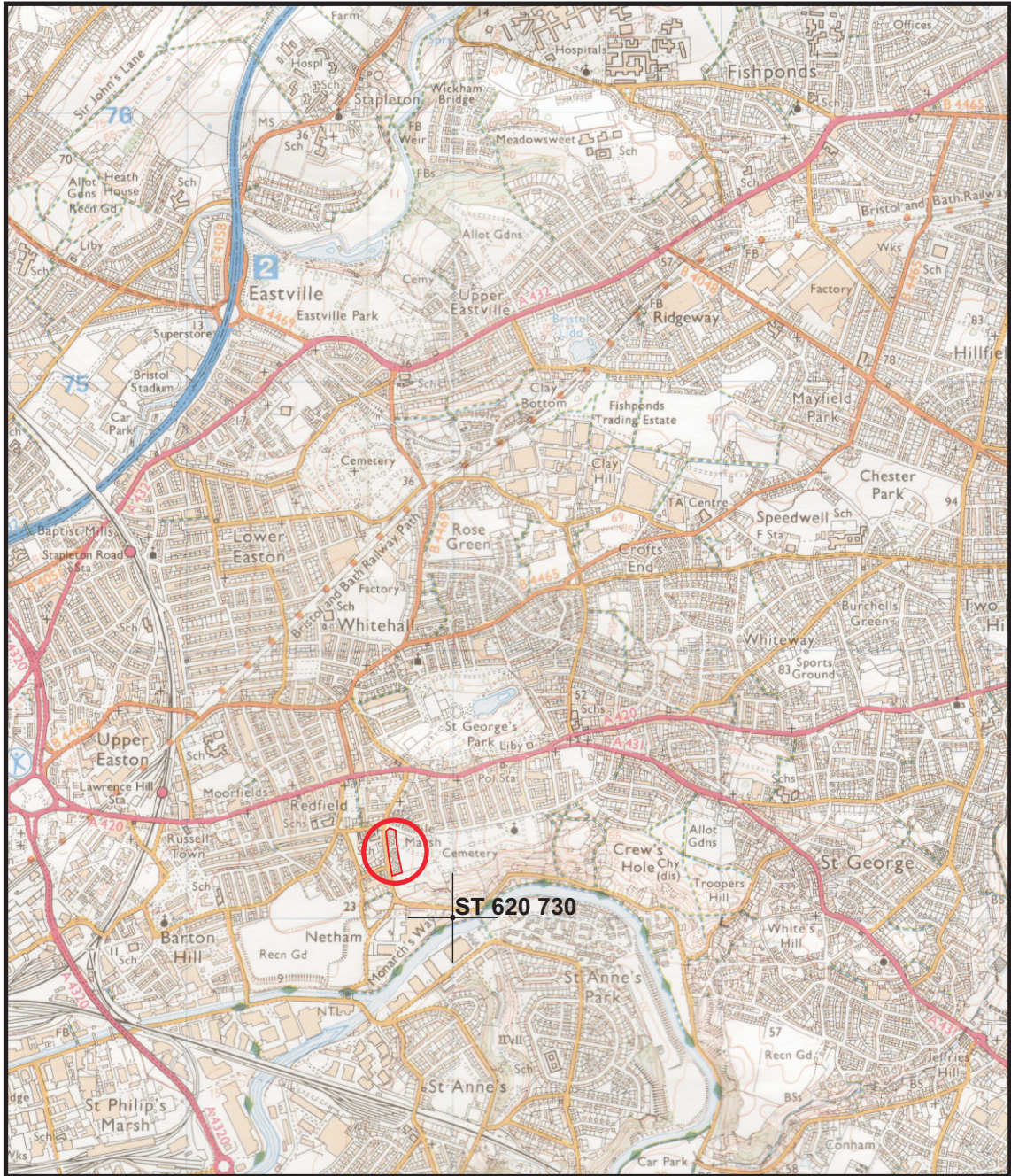
104 One body sherd of oxidised fabric with very fine quartz temper. Pale external and internal slip, with fragmentary glaze on both surfaces. Weight 2g.

108 One rim sherd of Red Glazed Earthenware weighing 11g. Dated 17th – 18th century.

114 Two body sherds of Red Glazed Earthenware weighing 11g. Dated 17th – 18th century.

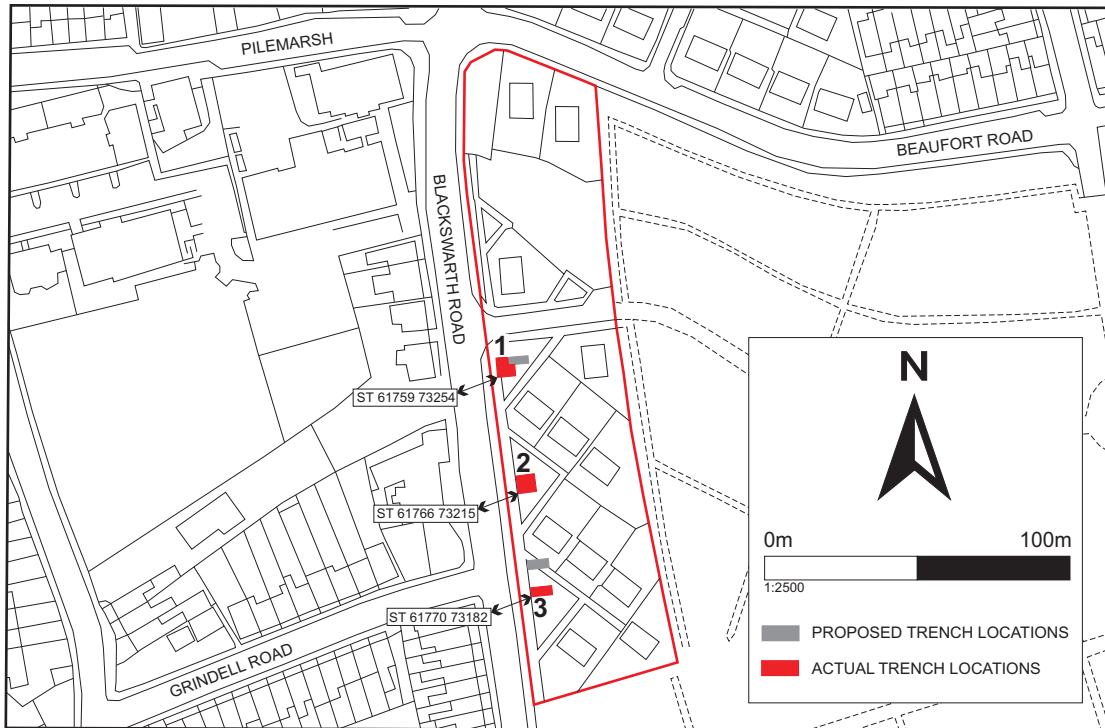
118 Two body sherds of Red Glazed Earthenware weighing 15g. Dated 17th – 18th century.

214 Two fragments of cbm weighing 110g. One fragment slightly curved with possible specialised industrial function.



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FIGURE 1: Site Location



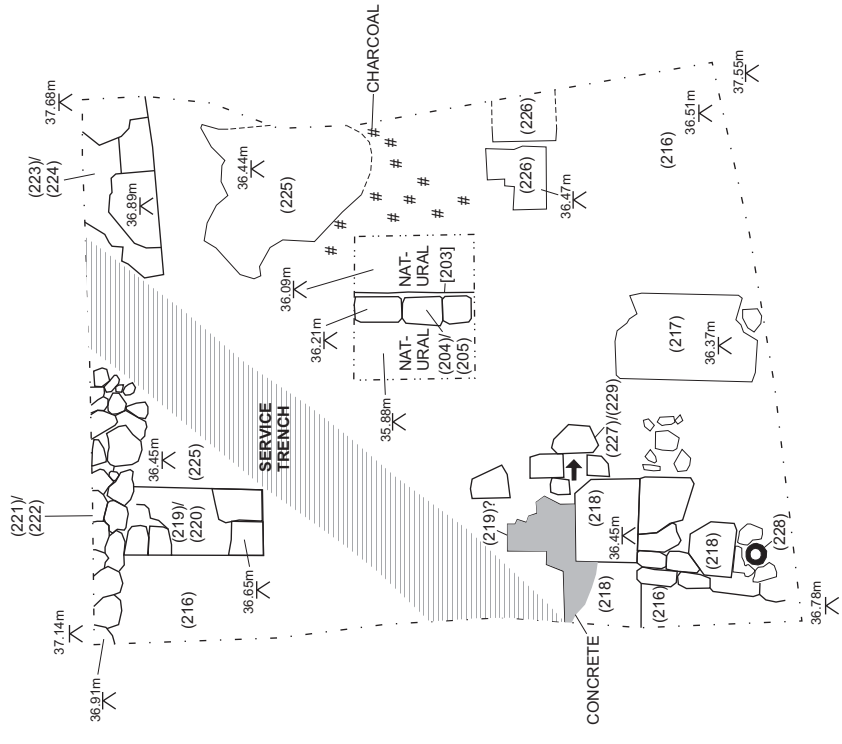
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FIGURE 2: Trench Locations

TRENCH 1 PLAN



TRENCH 2 PLAN



TRENCH 3 PLAN

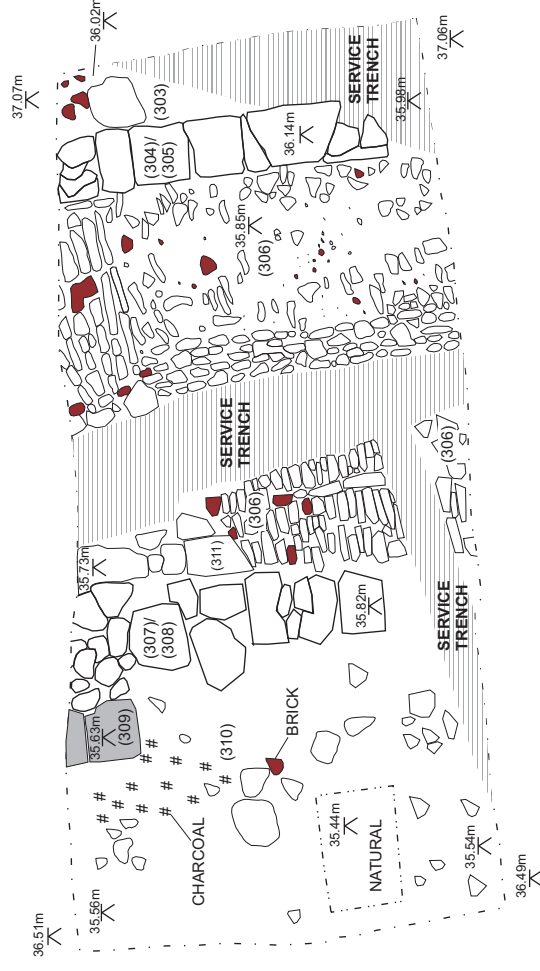
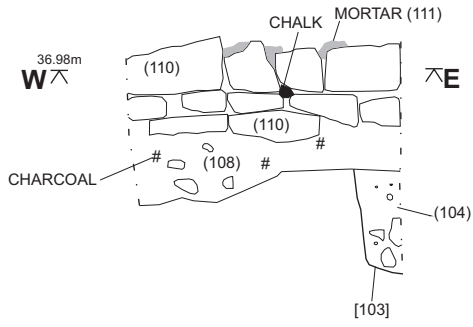
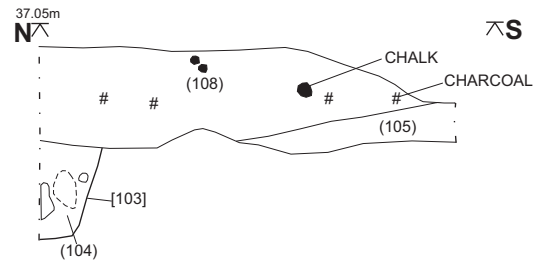


FIGURE 3: Trench Plans

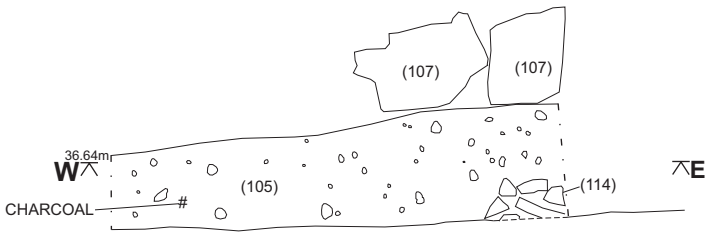
SOUTH FACING SECTION [103] and ELEVATION of WALL (110)/(111)



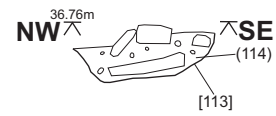
WEST FACING SECTION [103], (105) and (108)



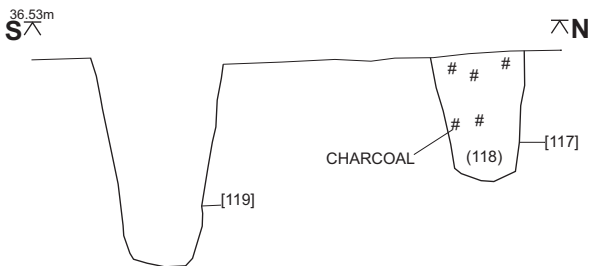
SOUTH FACING SECTION (105), (107) and (114)



SOUTH WEST FACING SECTION [113]



EAST FACING SECTION [117] and [119]



NORTH FACING SECTION [203]

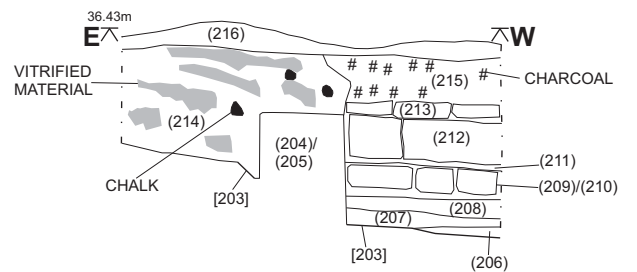


FIGURE 4: Sections