

Archaeological Observation

Bullock Construction Limited

Nos. 144 – 152 York Road

Bristol BS3 4AJ

HER No. 195253

February 2015



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Cover: View of the site to the northwest from St. Luke's Road

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1 Executive summary

Border Archaeology was instructed by David Cartwright Esq Assistant Design & Build Coordinator Bullock Construction Limited on behalf of Knightstone Housing Association Limited to carry out a programme of Archaeological Observation at Nos. 144–152 York Road Bristol, which took place between December 2014 and January 2015.

- *The archaeological programme of work related to the construction of 10 apartments on land to the rear of Redcliff Crescent 144-152 York Road Bristol BS3 4AJ (NGR: ST 59460 71935).*
- *The engineering ground works comprised continuous foundation trenching which attained depths of 0.73-3.2m to reflect variations in ground levels across the site.*
- *An extensive demolition layer was revealed across the entire site overlain by a sequence of modern levelling layers beneath a car park surface.*
- *Wall foundations were encountered beneath the levelling material and these are considered to represent a terrace of early 20th –century dwellings built shortly after 1902 and shown on the Ordnance Survey 3rd edition 1918 along the southwest extent of St Luke's Road.*
- *The results of the ground works observation suggest that the likelihood of encountering earlier structural remains is low based on the intensive nature of development activity on the site.*
- *Natural geology was not encountered during the course of the ground works excavations.*

2 Introduction

Border Archaeology was instructed by David Cartwright Esq Assistant Design & Build Coordinator Bullock Construction Limited on behalf of Knightstone Housing Association Limited to carry out a programme of Archaeological Observation of ground works relating to the construction of 10 apartments on land to the rear of Redcliff Crescent 144-152 York Road Bristol BS3 4AJ (NGR: ST 59460 71935) (fig. 1). This Report outlines the findings made during the course of the ground works observations, which were carried out between December 2014 and January 2015 and has been compiled by Claire McGlenn BA.

The aim of the programme of archaeological work was to locate and record any archaeological finds, features or deposits within the ground works area and to confirm that no impact on the archaeological resource occurred during the course of the ground works without the implementation of a programme of archaeological recording.

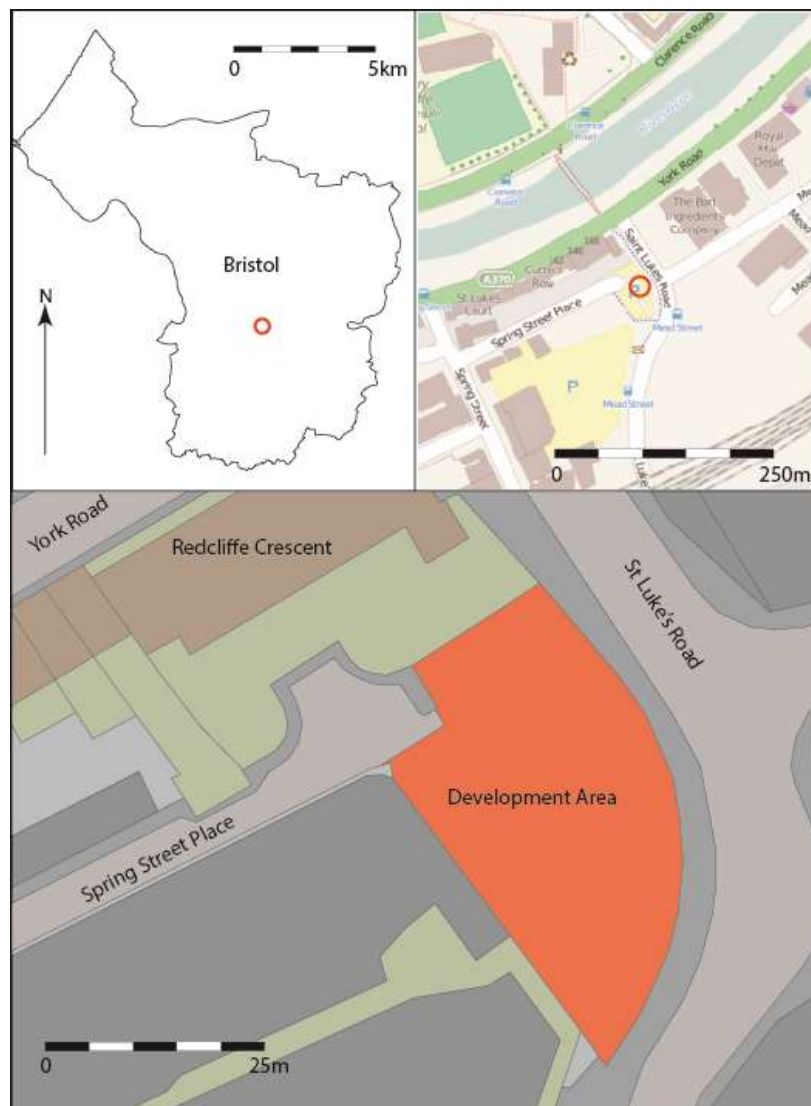


Fig. 1: Site location

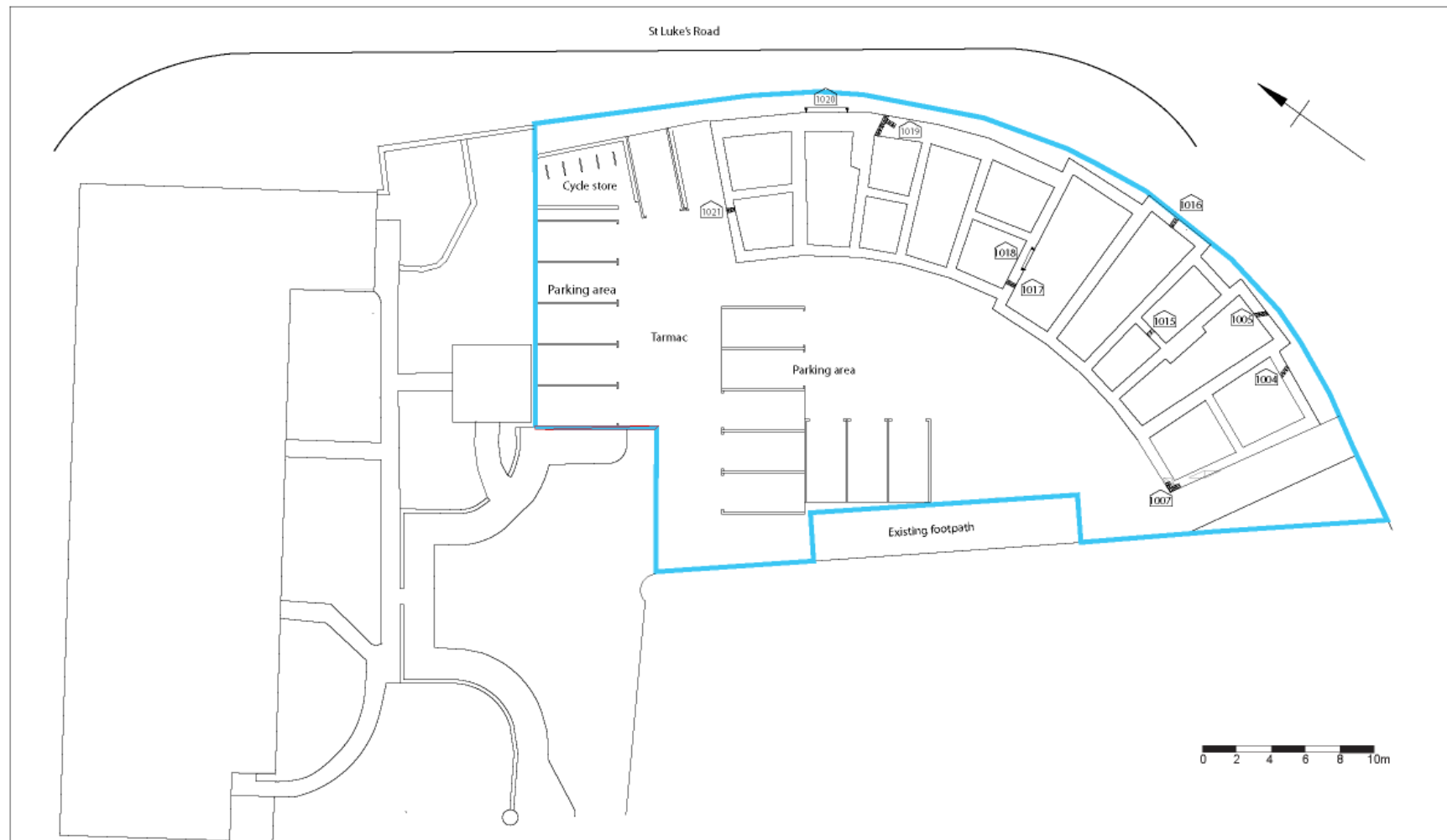


Fig. 2: Site plan showing location of trenching

3 Soils & geology

The Soil Survey of England & Wales (SSEW 1983) classifies Bedminster as an unsurveyed urban area; however, its geology comprises mixed Keuper Marl (Mercia Mudstone), Redcliffe Sandstone and an Estaurine Alluvium with pockets of Carboniferous rock, the Lower Coal Series also present.

4 Brief historic & archaeological background

The site to the rear of Nos. 144-152 York Road (A370) is located within the eastern extent of the historic parish of Bedminster and lies at a height of approximately 10.0m OD to the S of the River Avon on low-lying land N of the Dundry Plateau. The site at York Road runs parallel and to the S of the Avon New Cut and the eastern and southern perimeter of the site extends along St Luke's Road.

Bedminster lies within the floodplain of the Malago and is largely flat, although flanked by hills and escarpments. No archaeological evidence for Iron Age or prehistoric activity has been recovered within the investigation area and no archaeological records relating to Roman activity have been identified in the immediate locality of Nos. 144-152 York Road, although it should be noted that relatively little archaeological fieldwork has been undertaken in this area.

The site lies within the parish of Bedminster, an extensive territorial unit of pre-Conquest origin. The Royal Manor of Bedminster comprised land S of the Avon, which, in 1130, was acquired by the Berkeley family, who retained possession for over 300 years. The Manor of Bedminster was sold to Sir Hugh Smyth of Ashton Court in 1605 and the area subsequently suffered a considerable level of destruction as a result of hostilities during the Civil War period, when much of Bedminster was laid waste by Prince Rupert, who sought to prevent it falling into enemy hands.

During the 18th century, Bedminster was characterised by orchards, brickworks, ropewalks and cottage industries; Roque's map of 1750 shows the largely rural character of 'Redcliffe Meads' the area to the SW of Bath Road containing the present site. However, thereafter the discovery of coal rapidly transformed the area and by 1815 there were some 15 pits operating in Bedminster, which, by the middle of the century, provided employment for around 50 percent of the adult working population.

The creation in 1804-09 of an artificial channel known as 'New Cut' exerted a significant impact on the topography of the area, severing Bedminster from the rest of Bristol. York Road (then known as 'Redcliffe Crescent') and Coronation Road were established along its S bank and a number of high-status town houses were built on the up-cast material from the construction works. By the time of Ashmead's 1828 map, the site occupied a series of long slender garden plots extending to the rear of Redcliffe Crescent as far S as the present course of St Luke's Road, which at that time is shown as a narrow lane leading roughly SE from its junction with Redcliffe Crescent. The properties associated with these plots included Nos. 138-142 York Road (NGR: ST59400 71954) (LB

Ref. 1282038), a Grade II Listed terrace of early 19th-century brick-built town houses with limestone dressings beneath pantile roofs, which originally formed part of a larger terrace of 15 houses. These properties were all built on a double depth plan to a height of three storeys; a date plaque attached to No 142 York Road bears the inscription: "Redcliff Crescent 1823". Many of the properties had fallen into a state of disrepair by the late 20th century and in 1991 the facades of Nos. 138 and 140 were partially rebuilt; however, despite some loss of historic fabric, they are considered to exhibit early 19th-century architectural detailing of some quality.

Ashmead's plan also shows the Langton Street Bridge of 1824 (NGR: ST5941 772015), a Grade II Listed iron and steel footbridge (LB Ref. 380940) crossing 'the new course of the River Avon' ('New Cut') directly opposite Nos. 144-152 York Road. The structure comprises an elliptical-arched bow bridge with diagonal braces and crossed railings over squared, snecked Pennant rubble and ashlar.

The Bedminster parish tithe map of 1840 shows the site within a large plot of land identified as plot no. 257, with 'New Cut' shown to the NW. The tithe map also shows an extension to the lane later forming part of St Luke's Road arcing SW around the base of Pyle Hill and following the line of what appears on the earlier map to be a field boundary. The lane terminates at the point where it meets the line of the Bristol & Exeter Railway, authorisation for which was obtained by Act of Parliament in 1835, although the line was not complete until 1844.

Ashmead's later map of 1855 shows little change; the present course of St Luke's road is shown, although it is not named as such, and further infill development to the S is shown to have occurred, along with some garden plot amalgamation and limited construction activity at the S extent of plots in the area of the present site. An extension of development along Regent St and into Regent Place and York Street is also shown. Ashmead's plan of 1874 shows St Luke's Road intersecting with Redcliffe Crescent and St Luke's Church (demolished in the 1960s) is indicated to the SW, on the corner of Redcliffe Crescent and Spring Street. The church was one of a number of public buildings introduced in the 1860s with the aim of improving the moral and physical condition of residents; other examples included Redcliffe and Temple School Board, Stillhouse Lane and the Police Station on Bedminster Parade.

The OS 1st-edition map of 1881-3 shows considerably more development within the former garden plots to the rear of Redcliffe Crescent, now renamed 'York Road'. The OS 3rd-edition map of 1918 shows residential development extending along the St Luke's Street frontage and encroaching onto the rear of the present site. These properties appear to have been built shortly after 1902. An aerial photograph of 1946 shows these properties extending further to the SE along St Luke's Road; these have been demolished and the area was occupied by car parking entered from Spring Street Place when the archaeological fieldwork was carried out.

5 Methodology

The archaeological programme of work detailed herein was carried out in accordance with recognised sources of professional guidance, including *Standard and Guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014), *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (EH 2006). Reference is also made to the relevant English Heritage Historic Environment Local Management (HELM) resources. Border Archaeology adheres to the ClfA *Code of conduct* (2014) and *Regulations for professional conduct* (2015).

Building foundations were excavated as a series of interlinking trenches of 0.73–3.2m depth reflecting variations in ground level across the site (*fig. 2*). All ground works were carried out by machine using a toothless bucket, wherever possible, under archaeological supervision.

Full written and photographic records were made in accordance with Border Archaeology's *Archaeological Field Recording Manual* (BA 2014).

The written component comprised completed numbered context recording sheets providing a detailed stratigraphic record of the site.

A photographic record was made using a high-resolution digital camera, comprising photographs of all excavated contexts and archaeological features and structures. A scale is included in each photograph and all photographic records have been indexed and cross-referenced to written site records. Details concerning subject and direction of view are maintained in a photographic register, indexed by frame number.

The drawn record was produced on gridded, archive-stable polyester film at an appropriate scale, drawings being numbered and listed in a drawing register with drawing numbers cross-referenced to written site records.

6 Results

Item	Context No.	Context type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Date
					Small Find	Pottery	Animal bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	(1001)	Layer	Former tarmac surface	Indurated, black tarmac; extended across the entire site; max thickness 0.10m. Overlies (1002)						Modern
2	(1002)	Layer	Bedding layer for (1002)	Compact, light greyish-brown gravel; extended across the entire site; max thickness 0.05-0.45m. Underlies (1001), overlies (1003) (1012)						Modern
3	(1003)	Layer	Demolition layer	Friable, very dark brown silt; abundant brick fragments & modern demolition material; visible throughout excavation area; depth > 0.60m. Same as (1012), underlies (1002), overlies (1004) (1017) (1005) (1007) (1015) (1018)						Modern
4	(1004)	Structure	Wall foundation	Masonry; aligned NE-SW; standard-gauge brick (215mm × 100mm × 65mm); cement bonded; single course visible at limit of excavation; extended 1.83m (NE-SW) × 0.38m (NW-SE). Underlies (1003)						C20
5	(1005)	Structure	Wall foundation	Masonry; aligned NW-SE; standard-gauge brick (215mm × 100mm × 65mm); cement bonded; single course visible at limit of excavation; extended 1.40m (NW-SE) × 0.38m (NE-SW). Underlies (1003)						C20
6	(1006)	Deposit	Dump deposit	Soft, light yellowish-white chalky clay; very frequent chalk flecks; extended 3.5m × 1m × 0.7m. Underlies (1012)						Modern
7	(1007)	Structure	Wall foundation	Masonry; aligned NE-SW; standard-gauge brick (215mm × 100mm × 65mm); cement bonding; single course visible at limit of excavation; extended 1.03m (NE-SW) × 0.34m (NW-SE). Underlies (1003), overlies						C20

Item	Context No.	Context type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Date
					Small Find	Pottery	Animal bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
				(1008)						
8	(1008)	Layer	Made ground / levelling layer	Friable, very dark grey brown silt; moderate animal bone & rubble; extended 1.03m × 0.34m × 0.19. Underlies (1007)			✓			C19/C20
9	(1009)	Layer	Demolition layer	Friable, mid brownish-grey clayey silt; frequent inclusions of rubble; extended 3.04m × 1.02m (max thickness). Same as (1003), underlies (1011), overlies (1006) (1013)						Modern
10	(1010)	Layer	Tarmac surface	Indurated, black tarmac; extended along outer limit of site; max thickness 0.16m. Overlies (1011)						Modern
11	(1011)	Layer	Cement bedding layer for (1010)	Hard, yellowish-white cement; extended along the outer extent of site; max thickness 0.11m. Underlies (1010), overlies (1012)						Modern
12	(1012)	Layer	Demolition layer	Friable, dark greyish-brown silt; frequent rubble; present over entirety of excavation area; max thickness 0.45m. Same as (1003), underlies (1011), overlies (1006) (1013)						Modern
13	(1013)	Layer	Hard core / levelling layer	Firm, light reddish-brown gravel; extended 2m; max thickness of 0.25m. Underlies (1012), overlies (1016)						Modern
14	(1014)	Deposit	Dump deposit	Soft, black-dark brown silt; very frequent charcoal & animal bone; extended 1.20m; max thickness 0.55m. Underlies (1009)			✓			C19/C20
15	(1015)	Structure	Foundation wall	Masonry; aligned E-W; standard-gauge brick (215mm × 100mm × 65mm); cement bonding; visible only in plan at limit of excavation, no defined coursing; extended 1.2m (E-W) × 0.45m (N-S). Underlies (1003)						C20
16	(1016)	Structure	Foundation wall	Masonry; aligned E-W; standard-gauge brick (215mm × 100mm × 65mm); cement bonding; no discernible coursing; visible only in plan with; extended 1.25m (E-W) × 0.43m (N-S) × 0.09m. Underlies (1013), overlies						C20

Item	Context No.	Context type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Date
					Small Find	Pottery	Animal bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
				(1009)						
17	(1017)	Structure	Foundation wall	Masonry; aligned NW-SE; standard-gauge brick (215mm × 100mm × 65mm); single course visible only; cement bonded; extended 1.1m (NW-SE) × 0.39m (NE-SW). Underlies (1003)						C20
18	(1018)	Structure	Foundation wall	Masonry; aligned E-W; standard-gauge brick (215mm × 100mm × 65mm); single course visible only; cement bonded; extended 2.3m (E-W) × 0.74m max thickness. Underlies (1003)						C20
19	(1019)	Structure	Foundation wall	Masonry; aligned E-W & NE-SW standard-gauge brick (215mm × 100mm × 65mm); single course visible only; cement bonded; extent unknown as it was unsafe to enter the trench. Underlies (1011)						C20
20	(1020)	Structure	Cellar wall	Masonry; aligned NW-SE standard-gauge brick (215mm × 100mm × 65mm); English garden wall bond; cement bonded; extended 3.36m (NW-SE) × 1.42m maximum depth. Underlies (1011)						C20
21	(1021)	Structure	Wall foundation	Masonry; standard-gauge brick (215mm × 100mm × 65mm); single course only; cement bonded; extended 1.3m (NW-SE) × 0.36m (NE-SW). Underlies (1011)						C20

7 Discussion of results

The site was located at the corner of York Road and St. Luke's Road and was previously in use as a car park (*Plate 1*).



Plate 1: View to the NW of the site from St. Luke's Road

The uppermost stratigraphy encountered across the site comprised a modern car-park surface (1001) and associated bedding layer (1002) and a demolition layer (1003) relating to former early 20th -century terraced housing (*Plate 2*).

Ten wall foundations were encountered which, with the exception of cellar wall (1020), were of standard-gauge brick construction. However, due to the thorough nature of the demolition and levelling activity undertaken prior to construction of the car park, these foundation walls survived as a single course of masonry and were thus viewed only in plan.

Wall (1007) was encountered at the SE limit of excavation and was visible only in the trench section (*Plate 3, fig. 2*). Of standard-gauge brick construction, the wall remains comprised a single course of brick foundation above demolition layer (1008). The foundation wall would thus appear likely to represent the remains of early 20th -century terraced housing.



Plate 2: View to the SW depicting the modern made ground and levelling layers present across the site



Plate 3: View to the W of wall (1007)



Plate 4: View to the NE of wall (1004)



Plate 5: View to the NE of wall (1005)

Wall (1004) was located at the eastern extent of the excavation and was encountered at the very limit of the impact depth (*Plate 4, fig. 2*). The wall foundation, aligned NE-SW, was constructed from standard-gauge bricks with cement bonding.

Wall foundation (1005) was also located at the SE extent of the site and was aligned NW-SE parallel to St. Luke's Road. The wall lay directly beneath the hard-core levelling layer (1003) and was of cement-bonded red-brick construction. The position and construction methodology of walls (1004) and (1005) would suggest they related to early 20th –century terraced housing development.

Structures (1015) and (1016) were wall foundations, both constructed of cement-bonded standard-gauge brick (*Plates 6-7, fig. 2*). Both sections of masonry were encountered at the limit of excavation and only a single course survived in each case; it was thus not possible to identify the type of bond. The width of both walls suggests they may relate to the external walls of the early 20th –century dwellings.



Plate 6: View to the S of wall (1015)



Plate 7: View to the E of wall (1016)



Plate 8: View to the SE of walls (1017) and (1018)

Structures (1017) and (1018) were very heavily truncated and were only partially visible at the limit of excavation (*Plate 8, fig. 2*). Both were constructed from cement-bonded standard-gauge brick; (1017) was visible only in plan whilst (1018) was visible only in the N-facing section.

Wall foundation (1019) stood at the eastern extent of the site (*Plate 9, fig. 2*). For safety reasons, the wall was not fully excavated and recording was possible only from the top of the trench. It appears possible that the foundation represents either a wall return (based on a change of alignment from E-W to NE-SW) or from two separate construction phases. However, their similarities in terms construction materials suggested they were contemporary.



Plate 9: View to the NE of wall (1019)

Wall (1020) was a NW-SE -aligned section of masonry encountered 0.21m below ground level at the NE edge of the site, directly beneath the hard-core bedding layer (1011) (*Plate 10, fig. 2*). The wall remains extended 3.36m (NW-SE) with a maximum thickness of 1.42m. The wall was of cement-bonded standard-gauge brick construction with traces of possible whitewash, although this material had degraded and was very friable.



Plate 10: View to the NW of wall (1020)



Plate 11: View to the N of wall (1021)

Towards the centre of the wall was a small recessed area which may have represented a window opening or coal chute. This section of wall was situated on the very outer limit of site and will be preserved *in-situ*. The wall is considered to represent a good example of an internal cellar wall relating to one of the early 20 –century terraced properties.

Masonry (1021) represented a small and heavily truncated section of brick foundation wall aligned NW-SE across the width of the trench, which possibly represented an internal foundation (*Plate 11, fig. 2*).

8 Conclusion

It would appear likely that intensive early 20th -century redevelopment activity had truncated much of the evidence relating to earlier building foundations and that the majority of the structural remains encountered during the course of the engineering ground works related to the terraced housing shown within the study area on the Ordnance Survey 3rd edition plan of 1918.

A number of demolition deposits were also encountered across the site potentially relating to mid-late 19th development.

The results of the ground works excavations suggest the survival of masonry and foundations relating to properties predating the 20th century may be quite limited due to the extensive re-development of this area. However, in view of the fact that natural geology was not encountered, it is not possible to determine the extent to which earlier archaeological deposits and features may survive.

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11 Cartography and Aerial Photography

Rocque's map of Bristol (1750)

Ashmead's map of Bristol (1828)

Bedminster Tithe Map (1840)

Ashmead's map of Bristol (1855)

Ashmead's map of Bristol (1874)

OS 1:500 Town Plan of Bristol (1884)

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OS 3rd Edition 25-Inch Map of Gloucestershire (1918)

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