

**Cabot House, Deanery Road,  
Bristol:**

**Archaeological Investigations in 2008**

*for*

**Ray Holt & Roger Leech**

*With contributions by  
E. R. McSloy and Keith Wilkinson*

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## ABSTRACT

'Cabot House, Deanery Road, Bristol: archaeological investigations in 2008'

By Ray Holt and Roger Leech

Archaeological investigations on the site of Cabot House and the adjacent car park comprised excavation, a borehole survey and a watching brief in advance of the redevelopment for offices. Evidence from the borehole survey showed that rising sea levels affected the environment at the Cabot House site at a slightly later date in the Neolithic period than other sites in the central Bristol area, but there was no direct sign of human impact from this period. In the post-medieval period, the area was part of the 'Bishop's Park', which was infilled and levelled in advance of suburban streets and housing development in the late 18th-century. Excavation revealed the plans and internal details of some properties on St George's Street, Deanery Road and College Street, and these are supplemented by documentary research into the character of the properties and their later histories.

# Cabot House, Deanery Road, Bristol: archaeological investigations in 2008

By Ray Holt and Roger Leech

With contributions by Mary Alexander, E.R. McSloy and Keith Wilkinson

## INTRODUCTION

Between June and August 2008 Cotswold Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological investigation comprising excavation, a borehole survey and a watching brief at the site of Cabot House, Deanery Road, Bristol (centred on OS Nat. Grid ST 581 726) (Fig. 1). Work was carried out at the request of Westmark Developments ahead of the redevelopment of the site for offices within the area formerly occupied by Cabot House and its car park, bounded by College Street to the east, Brandon Street to the north, St George's Road to the west and Deanery Road to the south. College Street and Brandon Street were re-located when Cabot House was constructed in the 1950s but previously lay within the development area (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is of the Redcliffe Sandstone Formation, part of the Mercia Mudstone Group (BGS 1996). The site occupies part of a steep dry valley, infilled before the late 18th century; the ground surface now lies between 9.5m above OD and 13.84m above OD, and slopes upwards towards the north-west.

### **Archaeological and Historical Background**

Borehole surveys previously undertaken at the nearby sites of Deanery Road and the Harbourside Development (Fig. 1) revealed Neolithic organic strata containing pollen evidence for human manipulation of the early Holocene woodland (Wilkinson *et al.* 2002; Wilkinson and Tinsley 2005). There is no other material evidence for activity pre-dating the medieval period.

In the medieval period the site belonged to the abbey of St Augustine and lay approximately 200m to the west of the abbey precinct. At the Dissolution in c. 1540 the abbey church was retained to become the city's cathedral. The abbey lands were divided, most passing to the Dean and Chapter of the new cathedral but some passing to the Bishop (Leech 2006, 67) including the 'Bishop's Park', which encompassed a steep valley to the west of the cathedral over which the Cabot House site lay. Excavations to the south of the site at Deanery Road, also within the former Bishop's Park, revealed the remains of a possible medieval dovecote beneath 2m of 18th-century deposits (Cox *et al.* 2006).

The area was developed for housing in the later 18th century, and the area of archaeological investigation revealed remains of the streets and houses of College Street, Brandon Street and St George's Road (formerly Limekiln Lane) of this 18th-century

development. An Act of Parliament obtained in 1770 enabled the Bishop of Bristol to grant a 'Lease or Leases of a Close of Ground, commonly called The Bishop's Park, in the Parish of Saint Augustine otherwise called Saint Augustine the Less, within the City of Bristol, or the Suburbs thereof' (House of Lords Library, Private Act, 10 George III, c. 5). In 1772 the land was leased for 99 years at £63 p.a. to Samuel Worrall, a gentleman property developer living in Clifton and Town Clerk to the Corporation of Bristol from 1787 until 1819, when he resigned on the failure of the Tolzey Bank, in which he was a partner (BRO 12149; EP/E/5/1). The lease stated that 'Samuel Worrall had formed a plan for covering the said ground with buildings' (BRO 34631(6)a). It would have been of great interest to locate this plan, but it does not appear to survive in any of the relevant archives.

Several surviving building leases show that individual plots were leased to building craftsmen, such as Benjamin Tucker, a house carpenter, who in 1788 mortgaged his plot to Mr Joseph Blatchley, a banker, who was probably intending either to live in the house or to speculate on its onward sale (BRO 34631(6)a). Edward Rosser, a mason, took out a lease on a plot extending from College Street back to Lamb Street. His source of finance for a subsequent mortgage was another mason, William Lamb, who possibly gave his name to this street on the estate (BRO 05492(1-26)). Thomas Stocking, a tyler, and Thomas Sims, a carpenter, took leases on the plots which became nos 34–36 and 38–40 College Street, within the excavated area (below). The street nos 34, 36, 38, and 40 first appeared in the street directory for 1888; prior to this the houses were numbered consecutively from 55 to 58 in descending order from north-east to south-west, and no. 54 College Street occupied the corner plot with Brandon Street. These earlier street numbers correspond to those on Ashmead's map of 1828 (Fig. 7), nos 34 to 40 are the left-hand four properties shown on a photo dating to 1954 (Fig. 9).

The construction of the Deanery Road viaduct in 1869 across the valley between Hotwells and College Green involved the demolition of some 18th-century housing on College Street (including the property next to no. 40 College Street, no. 54 on Ashmead's map of 1828) and in the adjacent streets. Archaeological evaluation of the Cabot House site in 2005 identified the remains of structures relating to the 18th to 20th-century buildings, as well as deep dumped deposits below (BaRAS 2005), confirmed by the results of three boreholes which recorded 4.5–6.8m of 'made ground' infilling the natural valley (Wilkinson 2006).

The 20th and 21st-century use of the area included garages and car parking, with extensive and progressive demolition of structures across the site. This also saw the re-ordering of the street pattern in the area, with alterations to the position of Brandon Street and College Street. The office block of Cabot House, constructed in 1957, occupied the south-east corner of the site, and the rest of the site area was used as car parks (Fig. 2).

## **Methodology**

The surface deposits of tarmac and rubble were stripped to identify the areas of greatest preservation. Two areas measuring 270m<sup>2</sup> and 288m<sup>2</sup> (Areas 1 and 2) were selected for further investigation in accordance with written methodologies approved by Bob Jones, Bristol City Council Archaeologist (Fig. 2). The structural remains in both areas were hand-cleaned and recorded following the removal of demolition infill deposits by machine. Two dwellings typical of the 18th-century development were selected for more detailed examination in Area 2, where limited excavation took place within the former nos 38 and 40 College Street. Two small hand-dug trenches were also excavated to the rear of no. 40 College Street and beyond its garden wall at the back of the properties fronting St George's Road. A machine-dug trench was also excavated into the upper levels of the valley infill to the rear of no. 36 College Street (Fig. 4).

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks associated with the removal of the Cabot House foundations, and also during various piling operations and in the car park area to the north of the new building during the installation of services.

Two boreholes were drilled during the excavation of Area 2 to augment information derived from an archaeological borehole survey undertaken during the 2005 archaeological evaluation (Fig. 2, GPS BH1–3) and the examination of the records of previous geotechnical boreholes (Wilkinson 2006). The initial borehole (ARCA BH1) was unable to penetrate the sequence below the 2m of deposits removed during the archaeological investigations. A second borehole (ARCA BH2) successfully penetrated these deposits and cores were recovered from the underlying stratigraphy. Cores were investigated under laboratory conditions; sub-samples were analysed for palynological and diatom analysis and for sedimentological testing. A single radiocarbon date was also obtained to resolve chronological problems raised by the dates obtained from the evaluation stage. Full details of the methodologies employed and a full report of the results are available in the archive.

## **RESULTS**

Based on analysis of the structural and stratigraphic relationships and dating evidence, the results of the evaluation, excavations, boreholes and watching brief have been phased into three broad periods of activity:

- Period 1, pre-c.1770
- Period 2, c.1770–c.1930
- Period 3, c.1930–2008

There was overlap between Periods 2 and 3 in the 20th century, as there was no single event across the site which allowed chronological differentiation within the complex structural remains. The division between the two periods is therefore essentially functional. Period 2 represents the construction and use of the buildings on the site with a sub-period 2a associated with the construction of Deanery Road and adjacent properties in 1869, while Period 3 is the disuse, demolition and redevelopment of the site in the 20th century.

### **Period 1: Geology, environment and archaeological deposits pre-1770: borehole survey results by Keith Wilkinson**

The deeper stratigraphy of the site was recorded by borehole investigation and a full report is available in the archive. Basal Triassic deposits of the Redcliffe Sandstone Formation (part of the Mercia Mudstone Group) were recorded at or below 7.0m above OD across most parts of the site, but with a valley running through the centre of the site recorded at below 4.35m above OD. This palaeovalley was infilled and overlapped on its southern flank by deposits of the Wentlooge formations found in ARCA BH2 between 5.65m and 4.35m above OD (4.10–5.40m below ground surface). Two local pollen assemblages zones were noted from individual analyses of ten palynological sub-samples from these sediments. Analysis of pollen grains from the lower zone indicates the presence of damp woodland growing within fen carr and/or on the margins of flowing water, but also the presence of dry woodland species. Pollen from the upper zone suggests an increase in pollen taxa representative of ground flora and aquatic vegetation as wetter conditions prevailed. Some species suggest a saline influence. Unfortunately diatom preservation was too poor to determine whether these fine-grained deposits of the Wentlooge formation were deposited in intertidal or freshwater conditions. A radiocarbon date from organic-rich sediments demonstrates that strata of the Wentlooge formation at Cabot House began to be deposited around 2870–2500 cal. BC (Wk 25622, 4100±31 BP) consistent with the Middle/Late Neolithic period (Table 1). This date range is slightly later than the radiocarbon dates obtained for equivalent deposits from the Deanery Road site and Harbourside Development (Wilkinson *et al.* 2002; Wilkinson and Tinsley 2005). Previous radiocarbon dates obtained for these deposits from GPS BH3 during the evaluation stage indicated a late medieval/early post-medieval origin. The dates obtained from ARCA BH2 demonstrated that the earlier radiocarbon dates were erroneous. Sedimentological analysis suggests no effects of human activity on these deposits, although some species from the upper pollen zone that are indicative of disturbed ground possibly reflect some impact from human activity.

Above these deposits ARCA BH1 and BH2 recorded 'made ground' consisting of silts, sands and ash containing frequent mortar, brick and ceramic structural remains, as well

as pottery and bone fragments. Measurements from ARCA BH2 and earlier geoarchaeological and geotechnical investigations show up to 6m of 'made ground' existed below the current ground levels, representing a significant effort to level a substantial area in which the 18th-century housing development took place.

The earliest deposits encountered during the excavations were revealed within two sondages excavated in the rear yards of nos 36 and 40 College Street in Area 2 (Fig. 4). A series of dumped deposits lay immediately beneath garden soils and represent the upper levels of deliberate infilling of the natural valley prior to the construction of the Period 2 properties. Similar deposits of late 18th-century date were recorded in Trenches 1 and 3 in the evaluation (Fig. 2; BaRAS 2005).

### **Area 1 Period 2: c.1770 – c.1967, (Fig. 3)**

Within Area 1, remains of upstanding walls, drains and surfaces of properties at nos 46, 48 and 50 St George's Road, and nos 3, 5, and 7 Brandon Street were recorded; also the edge of the original alignment of Brandon Street. Some later alterations to the properties were noted. Those that can be related to the construction of the Deanery Road viaduct are discussed in Period 2a below.

The surface of Brandon Street was revealed aligned northwest-southeast along the northern edge of Area 1, as well as part of the pavement, kerb, and cobbled guttering. Bounded by Brandon Street to the north and St George's Road to the west, no. 7 Brandon Street consisted of two rectangular stone-built cellar rooms with a dividing brick wall between. Accessed via doorway 476 from room 483 of this property was a narrow L-shaped alleyway running behind room 482 (no. 46 St George's Road) which could also be entered from no. 48 St George's Road to the south, and may have led to a communal area 459 behind nos 3 and 5 Brandon Street.

No. 46 St George's Road consisted of a single cellar room in plan (482), with a wall separating it from the alleyway behind to which there was no access at this level. No. 48 St George's Road consisted of two cellar rooms with a dividing wall 467 between. The northern room 446 had a mortar, brick, and stone floor. Doorway 505 led into the alleyway behind no. 46 St George's Road, and two further doorways (503 and 504) were located in the rear property wall. All three doorways had later been blocked. The blocking of doorway 504 occurred before wall 462 was constructed in Period 2a (see below). The southern room 481 had a small stone-built structure 465 in its south-east corner and a stone-built drain in the north-east corner. No. 50 St George's Road consisted of a single room. Two small remnants of internal walls were identified on its north side and probably represent the side walls of a fireplace.

Part of room 417 was identified immediately to the south of no. 50 St George's Road. This is depicted as the location of the Ship Public House, at the intersection of St George's Road and Deanery Road, on the 1951 OS 1:1250 map, and room 417 was probably part of that building. Two small sections of wall were revealed and have been interpreted as the side walls of a fireplace.

At the north end of the site, the cellar (491) of no. 5 Brandon Street was accessed by a doorway and steps from the street, which was subsequently blocked (475). The room had a flagstone floor and a spiral stone stair in the south-eastern corner leading to the ground floor of the property. Alongside this, in the south-eastern wall 437 were two corbels 486 and 487, which may be interpreted as the supports for a chimney breast on the floor above.

To the rear of room 491, was a single room, 493, with a central drain 455 and fireplace. Although the demolition backfill within these rooms was not removed during the archaeological works it would appear that there was no doorway between the two rooms. Room 493 was tentatively interpreted on site as having a higher floor level than room 491 and so could potentially be accessed from the room above 491. This would suggest 491 and 493 were part of the same residential property, if we assume the rooms above 491 and 493 were connected.

With a similar plan to rooms 491 and 493, rooms 492 and 494 represent the cellar and adjacent room of no. 3 Brandon Street. They shared party walls, had similarly positioned spiral stairs and corbels, and shared a dividing wall. The door leading onto Brandon Street from room 492 was also blocked (477). The hearth in room 494 was slightly larger than that in 493. In contrast to the adjoining property, a doorway 488 (later blocked) linked the two rooms and confirmed they originally formed part of the same property.

To the rear of rooms 493 and 494 was a small probable washroom 515, with steps 458 leading down to an adjacent property. This washroom projected into a polygonal area of flagstone flooring 459, which probably represents a yard. Before wall 462 was built (see below) this area may also have been accessed from no. 48 St George's Road.

### **Area 1, Period 2a: c.1869 – c.1967, (Fig. 3)**

Walls and surfaces revealed on the south side of Area 1 can be related to the alteration of the back end of existing properties fronting St George's Road and the construction of properties on Deanery Road in 1869. Parts of nos 3 and 4 Deanery Road were identified.

No. 3 Deanery Road consisted of a single-room cellar 419 formed by walls 404 and 409 which abutted the rear of nos 48 and 50 St George's Road. Within the eastern wall 409 a doorway opened into the adjacent structure 420; this had been subsequently blocked in by an additional wall 490 built over the flagstone floor surface of the cellar. A stone-built drain was identified in the north corner of the room.



No. 4 Deanery Road consisted of an irregularly-shaped cellar, (room 420) with walls abutting no. 48 St George's Road to the north. As with no. 3 Deanery Road, this indicated a reconstruction and realignment of properties subsequent to the construction of Deanery Road. A ceramic drain cut through the surviving flagstone cellar floor. The addition of wall 462 at the back of no. 4 Deanery Road built against the blocked the rear door (504) of no. 48 St George's Road created a small triangular yard area 463 with a new flagstone floor. This wall cut off any access there may have been from no. 48 St George's to the yard space behind nos 3 and 5 Brandon Street. Access to yard 463 from the room 446 may have been through doorway 503, although this too was subsequently blocked. A doorway from room 481 of no. 48 St George's Road appears to have been a later alteration and may have been added at this time. A flight of brick steps (414) led up from the rear of no. 4 Deanery Road into the small yard. It would appear that no. 4 Deanery Road shared this yard with the household at no. 48 St George's Road.

#### **Area 2, Period 2: c.1770 – c.1967, (Fig. 4)**

Demolition deposits were fully removed within 38 and 40 College Street in Area 2 to reveal upstanding walls and surfaces and the complete plan of these properties. To the south a small area of Brandon Street was recorded, and to the north of nos 38 and 40 the incomplete plans of nos 34 and 36 College Street were also identified.

A section of the northern pavement and kerb of Brandon Street was revealed similar to the southern pavement revealed in Area 1. A small area of concrete surface 550 between this and no. 40 College Street is thought to represent the remnants of a later garage or similar non-domestic structure. Historic plans and documents show that this area was originally occupied by a house identical in plan to no. 40 College Street, which was demolished in 1865 for the construction of Deanery Road (Fig. 8).

#### *No. 40 College Street*

The complete cellar plan of no. 40 College Street was revealed, with two main basement rooms, each extending to the full width of the property, with a narrower single room extending into the back yard. As with all the recorded properties, the initial wall build consisted of rough red sandstone blocks, rendered with plaster internally and un-rendered on all external surfaces. These walls formed the original structure. The southern boundary wall was a continuous extension of the southern house wall 520 and therefore contemporary, as was its return at the end of the garden, which formed the rear boundary wall to this and the adjacent property.

The cellar was entered from College Street via stone steps 524, down into a narrow alleyway in front of the buildings, with a small alcove across the alley opposite the front door. The alcove would be accessible from the street for the delivery of coal.

The internal floor surfaces in all rooms predominantly consisted of thin flagstones, probably original. A small area beneath the stairs had a concrete surface, 621, contemporary with the adjacent flagstones leading to the back door. Near the edge of the concrete surface the flagstones had a shallow square cut 648, consistent with the use of wooden support posts for the stairs which led up to the next floor. Fragments of the wooden staircase structure were still adhering to the exterior wall. In the front room, built against the south wall was a large central fireplace with some surviving ironwork of the range, supplemented by a bread oven (a smaller subsidiary oven used to bake bread), and a brick-built curving recess 528 that may have held a water-heating copper. This was subsequently plaster-lined and showed coal staining, suggesting the space was re-utilised for fuel storage. The middle room contained a smaller central fireplace with a bread oven, also built against the south wall. Two windows were identified, still containing remnants of wooden window frames. One looked out the front of the property into the small alleyway, the other (534) from the middle room into the garden at the rear. Garden soil banked up against the rear window sill was heavily stained with coal dust.

Some secondary features were apparent. In the front room the flagstone floor to the north of the small internal brick dividing wall 541 was covered with linoleum. A later brick extension 614 had been added to the rear of the property and contained a toilet. Beyond this a short length of wall and a stone kerb divided off a small part of the back yard where a drain was located. This area probably served as a washroom. A hand-dug trench excavated across the rear yard revealed garden soils extending to the rear boundary wall. Modern domestic pottery and coal was recorded within the garden soil.

#### *No. 38 College Street*

No. 38 College Street shared a party wall with and was a mirror image of no. 40, including later alterations and additions, and was contemporary in construction. However there were a few minor changes and additions that differentiated the two properties.

Beneath the narrow rear room of no. 38 a brick-vaulted water cistern was revealed within a hand-dug sondage. This was a primary feature of the house and had been included within the foundations. The walls of the cistern were constructed of red sandstone blocks of a similar type to the main structural walls above; the interior was concrete-rendered and still held a large volume of water. A cast iron drainpipe brought in rain water from the roof into the cistern and this was subsequently pumped towards the front of the house through a large diameter lead pipe, perhaps to the brick tank or sink 554 found in the front room. The vaulted

roof of the cistern was covered by a series of levelling deposits and finally flagstone flooring. An entry hatch into the cistern appears to have been concreted over at a later point and re-covered by the original flagstone floor. No. 40 College Street may have had a similar cistern but this was not investigated.

The fireplaces and associated features in the front and middle rooms followed the same arrangement as in no. 40 College Street but were better preserved and showed minor differences. Built against the party wall with no. 36 College Street, the main fireplace 557 in the front room was narrower, and the bread oven 558 and curved recess 575 assumed to be for a water heater were of slightly different design (Fig. 5). A sample of brick from oven 558, dated to the 19th or 20th century (McSloy, this report), is from later alteration. The bread oven in the middle room had been blocked in with brick and a later quarry tile floor 565 was laid in front with a small area of the original flagstone floor 579 remaining between the fireplace and wall 568. The brick extension 608 containing the toilet at the rear of the property was of slightly different design to that in no. 40, although the bricks did appear to be of the same type suggesting broadly contemporary construction. Remnants of a wooden staircase were revealed on the interior face of wall 603 leading to the ground floor with two rectangular notches, 655 and 657, for a stair supports cut into the flagstone floor. A flagstone garden path with integral drain led to the rear property wall. Kerbing along the edge of the path retained the garden soil.

To the west of the rear garden wall of no. 38 College Street, short lengths of stone and brick walling were identified (walls 634 and 639). These did not relate to any structures on the 19th-century mapping and may date to the later use of this area of the site as a garage (as depicted on the 1951 OS map).

#### *No. 36 College Street*

The front room and most of the middle room of no. 36 College Street had been truncated during the construction of Cabot House. Only the western part of the middle room, the narrower rear room and back garden illustrated on the 1951 OS map were visible.

The property shared a dividing wall on its south side with no. 38 College Street and is considered broadly contemporary. The remaining walls were built against this, also in red sandstone blocks. The internal floor surfaces predominantly consisted of thin flagstones, contemporary with the initial build. This property differed from nos 38 and 40 in some internal details, the most notable of which was the absence of a fireplace in the middle room (although the north wall of this room was largely absent). In an area next to the south wall in this room two rectangular notches (666, 668) cut into the flagstone floor 662 may indicate an internal staircase, as they were similar to those found with other evidence for stairs in the back extensions of nos 38 and 40.

Later alterations included the brick blocking 592 of a door into the rear garden area from the narrow back room, and a fireplace and bread oven 594 built against the blocking. A brick sample of 19th or 20th-century date from 594 (McSloy, this report) suggests a date for these alterations. A further doorway with steps 589 led out through the north wall of the rear room onto a flagstone courtyard surface 600 with integral drains (not shown). However it was not possible to ascertain whether this doorway was contemporary with the initial construction, or a later addition compensating for the blocked doorway, although the latter seems more likely. A brick extension had at one time been added to the rear of the property covering the blocked doorway and contained a toilet, however few remnants of the structure remained. Access to the toilet would have been via the paved back yard. Rough brick walling within the back garden suggested a degree of terracing or a garden feature.

Underlying the dividing garden wall between nos 34 and 36 College Street and covered by flagstones, a brick-lined well was noted, but not excavated. This potentially supplied water to both properties but was subsequently capped and wall 641 built over it.

#### *No. 34 College Street*

This was a mirror image of no. 36 and of one build, sharing party wall 669. Only the narrower rear room and back garden of no. 34 College Street was visible, the rest of the property had been removed during the construction of Cabot House. A brick extension with a toilet 688 had been added to the rear of the property; access would have been via the paved back yard. The initial flagstone yard surface 643 had a later concrete surface 602 added; the rear end of the property was a garden.

#### **Period 2: c. 1770 – c. 1967, watching brief areas 2, 3 and 4**

Remnants of the street frontage walls pertaining to nos 42, 44, 46 and 48 St George's Road were recorded during a watching brief for piling works along the north-east limit of the site (Fig. 2: WB 4). In the interests of safety the trenches could not be accessed to allow detailed recording and the walls were not planned.

#### **Period 3: c. 1930– 2008**

The demolition of properties fronting Brandon Street, including nos 3 and 5, can be related to slum clearance in the 1930s (Leech, this report). Demolition waste was dumped within the cellars and basements of the properties in Areas 1 and 2 in order to level the area. Properties fronting College Street were purchased in 1957 for the construction of Cabot House; the remaining buildings on Deanery Road and St George's Road were also demolished in the late 1950s (Leech, this report). The most recent use of the site as car

parking adjacent to Cabot House was shown by rubble and hardcore levelling deposits and tarmac surfaces sealing all the earlier deposits.

A number of brick-built walls were revealed during a watching brief on geotechnical pits (Fig. 2, WB 2 and 3). Along with quantities of building rubble backfill, these deposits and features were of 20th-century date and probably relate to the use of the site for garages. Modern pottery was recorded within the rubble deposits but not retained.

FINDS SUMMARY (pottery, glass, metal finds and ceramic building material) by E.R. McSloy

A small assemblage of 63 sherds of pottery and porcelain (2726g) was derived from cellar backfills in Area 1. This material was scanned by context and quantified by sherd count and weight. The medieval and post-medieval pottery fabrics have been matched against the Bristol Pottery type series (Ponsford 1988/Ponsford 1998). It would seem that the bulk of material dates to the earlier 20th century and probably relates to the last use or demolition of the buildings.

A single sherd (44g) of residual medieval pottery was recovered from cellar backfill 454. This is a wide strap handle fragment from a jug in Bristol glazed ware type BPT118, dating to between the later 13th and 15th centuries. Post-medieval pottery was also recovered from cellar backfill 454. The fabrics represented, North-Devon gravel tempered ware (BPT112), Bristol or Staffordshire yellow slipware (BPT 100) and tin glazed earthenware (BPT 99), are commonly seen from among Bristol groups between the later 17th and later 18th centuries. Identifiable forms comprise a press-moulded plate in type BPT 100 and a bowl in type BPT112.

The majority of the ceramic assemblage is modern, consisting of flatwares and cups in refined whitewares, and stoneware bottles.

A total of ten complete glass bottles and a glass marble were recovered from cellar deposits. All bottles are fully mould-made in clear or green-coloured glass and all are modern, considered to date to the 1930s or later.

A total of 11 metal items were recovered. The majority were not identifiable but derive from modern deposits and probably date accordingly. Identified items include a copper-alloy coin (a halfpenny) of post-medieval or modern type, and thimbles of pressed sheet metal (brass) from deposits 443 and 616, dated to after the mid 17th century and probably to the 18th or 19th centuries.

Complete bricks taken as samples from within individual properties or associated with structural alterations were quantified and measured. With the exception of frogged bricks associated with no. 38 College Street (from oven 558) and no. 36 College Street (from

oven 594), which probably date to the later 19th or early 20th centuries, the size and other characteristics of the bricks suggest broadly consistent dating, within the 18th or early/middle 19th-century range.

## DETAILED HISTORICAL BACKGROUND *by Roger Leech*

### **Development of Area 1**

#### *No. 7 Brandon Street and nos 46–52 St George's Road*

This plot (no. 19) was leased by Samuel Worrall on 30 May 1772 to John Crouch of Hanham, quarryman, for 96 years commencing 24 June 1772 at a rent of £11 8s 6d p.a., 100ft wide against Limekiln Lane, bounded on the north-east by Brandon Street and on the south-west by part of the Bishop's Park not yet granted for building (BRO EP/E/4/3 fol.21); the location is identified from the measurements and abuttal to Brandon Street; building leases from Samuel Worrall to Roach, Marriott, Hobbs and Willis in BRO 05503 are now mislaid but listed in the schedule BRO 06495(1)). By 1839 the properties on plot no. 19 (occupants in parentheses) were in Limekiln Lane: a public house (R. Kethro), a house and another public house (A. Miller) and a smith's forge (Wm Haydon); and in Brandon Street: two houses with shops (John Isles and Thomas Searle) and a public house (James Fedden) (BRO EP/E/4/3 fols.230). The excavations provided evidence for a row of three houses of identical depth fronting Limekiln Lane (later re-named St George's Road), one of which was at the corner with Brandon Street, also for two houses of identical plan in Brandon Street, each of two rooms in depth and set at right angles to the street. These were probably the two shops of John Isles and Thomas Searle.

#### *Nos 3–5 Deanery Road*

These were plots of land sold freehold for building by William Tanner in 1874, following the construction of Deanery Road (Fig. 6). Both plots, nos 13 and 14, were sold to George Cooke, a carpenter and builder of Canon's Marsh close by; the allocation of plot numbers may indicate that Tanner had sold these at auction (BRO 20940-1).

The house built as no. 3, together with a cottage at the rear, all then in the occupation of Joseph Pelling and William Matthews, was then sold in 1880 by Cooke to a Mary Phillips of Brixton, Surrey, most probably for letting. In 1903 no. 3 and the cottage at the rear were then sold to Adelaide Ellen Kynaston wife of John Kynaston, a furniture maker living at no. 3 (BRO 20940).

The first occupants of no. 4 are not identified, but from 1897 and in 1904 it formed part of the slaughterhouse and stables of William Jocham in St George's Road (BRO 20941).

## **Development of Area 2**

*Nos 38–42 College Street (originally nos 54, 55 and 56)*

Nos 55 and 56 College Street were re-numbered nos 38 and 40 in 1888. No. 54 was demolished in 1865.

(The author's comments are in square brackets).

Nos 38–42 were built as one row of three houses by Thomas Stocking, a tyler, whose lease from Samuel Worrall was dated 24 December 1784, for 84 years at an annual rent of £14 5s (BRO 05502). Stocking's lease was of a plot 'containing in front next College Street aforesaid sixty-two feet or thereabouts, be the same more or less, and extending from thence backward to a certain street commonly called Limekiln Lane [i.e. St George's Road] bounded on the north-eastward side by other part of the same close of ground [i.e. the Bishop's Park] lately granted by two several indentures of lease [i.e. a conveyance by lease and release] to Thomas Sims, carpenter, and on the south-westward side by other part of the said close of ground laid open as a Street and called Brandon Street, together with the walls bounding the said ground towards College Street, Brandon Street and Limekiln Lane'. The width of 62ft corresponds exactly to the width of the three plots 38–42 College Street, as numbered by 1888. The total width of College Street was to be 40ft, there being reserved for Stocking 3ft in which to place an area and/or bow windows, and 5ft within which Stocking was to provide a footway.

The lease to Stocking made stipulations concerning the houses to be built, that he should enclose the ground within six months and complete within three years 'one or more substantial messuage or tenement with proper offices' and expend £600 in the building of these, and 'that the front of each messuage or tenement ..... towards the said street shall be built in conformity to the plan hereinbefore mentioned for laying out the said ground and shall have no bow window or other projection above the ground floor thereof neither shall any bow window which may be made on the first [perhaps a mistake for 'ground'] floor nor any area [i.e. the railed in area in front of the house] extend further forward than three feet from the front of the said ground and that the said buildings towards College Street shall not be dessightly [i.e. disagreeable or unsightly] toward the said street but as much as can be consistent with such buildings ornamental to the said street and at least uniform'. Other conditions were that businesses dependent upon fire must be sited in 'some back building under a different and distinct roof which shall have no timber therein communicating direct with such front building'.

Thomas Stocking retained the ownership of at least no. 54 until 1820 when it was sold to a Mr Greenwood. Accompanying the deed of sale was a plan of the property showing the location of the dwelling house, the privy, the rear court and a passage to a pump, which lay behind no. 55 (later no. 40) (BRO 05502) (Fig. 8). By 1853 the plot no. 20 as allocated in

1770, was subdivided as five plots (20a-e), and was leased by the freehold owners William Tanner and Thomas Urch to Thomas Carlile, grocer (no. 54), to John Stratford esq. of Ross in Herefordshire (no. 55, later no. 40) and Henry Clarke of Bristol, baker (no. 56, later no. 38) (BRO EP/E/3/1). It was Mr Carlile (the name of the owner by 1837) who sold no. 54 to the Bristol Local Board of Health for the construction of Deanery Road in 1867 (BRO 05502).

As renumbered in 1888, nos 38 and 40 remained part of the Tanner estate until sold at auction in 1950, and were then purchased in 1957 by the City of Bristol for the construction of Cabot House (BRO 12054(18); 11284).

### **Details of the College Street Properties**

The sources available for the study of the houses built in the Bishop's Park are the account by Ison (1952) and photographs, principally by Reece Winstone and Aerofilms. There is an absence of detailed plans, none being included in the plans deposited with the Urban Sanitary Authority.

Ison's account reads as follows (Ison 1952, 210–11):

#### *'College Street*

*An advertisement addressed to builders, published in Felix Farley on 29th September 1770, stated that the ground was 'to be laid out for building. The principal street to be 40 feet wide, of which the road level will be 6 feet higher than the level of the houses now in the occupation of Mr Vaughan and Mr Patty. A frontage also to Limekiln Lane, and proper sewers. Builders will be permitted to make cellars under the streets as in the new buildings in Bath'. On 17th November 1770 Sarah Farley was able to report that 'this week was finished the main Sewer in the Ground called Bishop's Park, lately laid out for Building'. The streets were planned, and the general lines of the design for the house-fronts were laid down by Thomas Paty and Sons, who were to be closely associated with Worrall's building promotions.....*

*Apart from a few which are double-fronted, the houses are generally of moderate size. The original layout of their accommodation is described in a contemporary sale advertisement 'The Premises consist of Two Parlours, a China Pantry, Kitchen and arched Cellar, with a spacious Outlet or Garden Plot behind the whole; a Dining-Room, Bedchamber, and light Closet on the first Floor, and two Bedchambers in the Attic Story.' The fronts, which are three stories high and generally have two windows to each upper story, are built of red brick sparingly dressed with freestone. This is used for the pilasters that define the party-walls, generally plain but sometimes of channel-jointed stones; for the flat or segmental arches of stepped and projecting voussoirs to the upper story windows; and for the rather insignificant crowning cornice that forms a coping to the walls. Bay-windows of wooden construction, occasionally segmental but usually angular on plan, project boldly from the ground-story, and the doorways generally have surrounding architraves surmounted by triangular pediments resting on consoles.'*

Nos 32–40 College Street are shown on photographs published by Reece Winstone (1969, plates 37–40), most clearly on plate 40 (Fig. 9) taken January 1954. Nos 32–36 and 38–40 appear as two separate rows, with parapets and second-floor windows of equal and distinct



height, all with entrance doorways to one side of the front room, all of which had bay windows. The doorway positions for nos 38 and 40 correlate with the plans obtained from excavation, indicating that at cellar level the spaces below the ground floor entrance halls were separate rooms.

The same houses are shown on two photographs by Aerofilms (P5447 and 52883), of 1921 and 1957 (Fig. 10). These are of value in showing the roofs and overall structure and especially in showing that the projecting wings behind nos 38 and 40 were lit by windows on the same levels as the principal floors. These could be originally constructed for privies serving the rooms on the same floors, rather than projecting stairs turrets which often have had staggered windows to light the stairs as they ascended between floors.

### **Later history of nos 34-42 College Street**

The occupancy of these houses can be traced through the use of the 1837 survey, the 1851 street directory and the census returns of 1851 (the houses could not be identified in the return for 1841), 1871 and 1881. The return for 1861 for College Street appears to have been misplaced. The occupants of Nos 36, 38 and 40 College Street have also been traced through the 1911 census return.

#### *No. 54 (would have been renumbered no.42 if not demolished)*

By 1837 the occupier was F. Virtue. By 1851 it was occupied by four separate households, a total of 20 persons, the largest family being that of the police constable Joseph Way, other families headed by a clockmaker, brightsmith (two related trades) and a lawyer. Way's household included an 80-year old visitor from Devon, perhaps his mother-in-law. By 1871 and in 1881 the house was evidently empty or demolished, pending the construction of the new Deanery Road.

#### *No.40 (previously no. 55)*

By 1837 the occupier was W. Batchelor, the occupier in 1837 and in 1839 as listed in the schedule attached to the renewal of the lease (see above). By 1851 it was occupied by the household of John Wills (Willis in the street directory of the same year), the owner in 1837. Wills was a colonial broker, and in contrast to his neighbours was able to afford to use the entire house for his family, his wife, two adult daughters and their servant. By 1871 Wills's family had left and the house had been given over to multiple occupation like its neighbours, now occupied by four separate households, a total of nine persons, the largest family that of James Norman, a coach trimmer. By 1881 the total had increased to 11 persons, with only the two lodgers from 1871 now remaining. By 1911 the three households at no. 40 totalled 17 persons. The households were headed by a greengrocer dealer, a coal dealer and

Harriet Ranahan, wife, for whom no occupation is listed, and who occupied the premises with four daughters and her mother.

*No. 38 (previously no. 56)*

By 1837 the occupier was Mr Henry Clark, also the owner. By 1851 it was occupied by five separate households, a total of 20 persons, the largest families being those headed by Richard Williams, a seaman, and Joseph Nock, a cooper. By 1871 there had been a total change of occupants, now 16 persons in all, the largest households being those of John Webb, possibly the proprietor of the lodging house, and of Henry Arnold, a carpenter. By 1881 the number of households had reduced to four, only Arnold's family remaining and now augmented by a further five children. The three other households were headed by a boatman, tailor and sailor. In 1911 a total of 18 persons, derived from four households, occupied the premises. The largest household was headed by William Snooks, a labourer at the Gas Works who lived with his wife, two adult daughters employed in a paper bag manufactory, and seven further children.

*No. 36 (previously no. 57)*

By 1837 the occupier was Mr Cornish, also the owner. By 1851 it was occupied by six separate households, a total of 15 persons, the largest families being those headed by Thomas Shuborne, a coach trimmer, and Anne White, a seaman's wife looking after two children and a visitor, Joseph Cottle, from Yorkshire. The smallest household was that of Auguste Millien, a teacher of French and born in France. By 1871 there had been a total change of occupants, now four households and 12 persons in total, the largest household being that of George Duckham, an unemployed ship's carpenter, the other heads of households being an engineer, coachman and stableman. By 1881 the number of households had reduced to three, only Duckham's family now remaining, and he now a shipwright. The two other households were headed by a gardener and mason. The 1911 census lists four households, totalling 13 persons; the largest household headed by Edward Mortell, a blacksmith employed by the Gas Works and including a female boarder, Kate Mortell, single, aged 28, possibly a sister or niece to Edward, and employed in a printing works.

*No. 34 (previously no. 58)*

By 1837 the occupier was Henry Lawson, the owner Mr Cornish (see above). By 1851 it was occupied by five separate households, a total of 12 persons, the largest family being that of the tide waiter Edward Connelly, originally from the London Thames, other working adults including a piano tuner, two dressmakers and a laundress.

## DISCUSSION by Mary Alexander and Keith Wilkinson

### Period 1

The radiocarbon result of 2870–2500 cal. BC (Wk 25622, 4100±31 BP) from the borehole sequence from Cabot House suggests sedimentation linked to rising sea levels commenced in the Middle/Late Neolithic period. Analysis of the pollen stratigraphy suggests a wetland environment dominated by freshwater alder carr and/or riparian (waterside) woodland, that later underwent a transition towards more open herb-rich and saltmarsh communities in response to wetter conditions. These results are broadly consistent with the sequence of radiocarbon-dated strata in central Bristol at Cabot Circus, Deanery Road and Harbourside (Wilkinson and Head 2008, Wilkinson *et al.* 2002, Wilkinson and Tinsley 2005 (Table 1).

The results of the radiocarbon dating at Deanery Road suggested that peat formation ceased around 3550–3050 cal. BC, a period between c. 200 and 1000 years prior to the commencement of sedimentation at Cabot House (Wilkinson *et al.* 2002). Similarly, organic sedimentation is estimated to have ceased around 3750 cal. BC at the Harbourside Development (Wilkinson and Tinsley 2005). The difference is probably because of the higher elevation of the Cabot House site, and together, the three sites indicate a progressive rise in relative sea levels (RSL) with a dated sequence of environmental change.

The earlier sequences (c. 4200–3000 cal. BC) at Deanery Road and Cabot Circus contain palynological and sedimentological evidence that indicates Early Neolithic human manipulation of woodland on the hills surrounding those parts of the Avon and Frome valleys now occupied by central Bristol. Human activity is indirectly indicated by elm declines at Cabot Circus and Harbourside, and directly by the decline of lime species at both Deanery Road and Harbourside, by the presence of weed taxa following a reduction in arboreal pollen at all three sites, and by magnetic susceptibility evidence of burning within the catchment at Cabot Circus and Deanery Road (Wilkinson and Head 2008, Wilkinson *et al.* 2002, Wilkinson and Tinsley 2005). However, there is only equivocal evidence for human use of the ‘upland’ areas from the Middle/Late Neolithic deposits at Cabot House. Indeed the palynological data from Cabot House suggest that broad-leaved lime was an even more important component of the dry woodland than before, while there is limited evidence for the ingress of weed taxa and none at all for burning. In other words the main archaeological contribution of the new geoarchaeological and palaeoenvironmental data from Cabot House is to indicate the apparently limited nature of human activity in the catchment during the middle and later third millennium BC.

Evidence for Roman or medieval activity was not found during the Cabot House excavations; the single sherd of medieval pottery from a cellar backfill is clearly residual and could have derived from a number of sources. Up to 6m of ‘made ground’ was recorded in

borehole samples, and the upper 2m of these deposits in trench excavation at the back of no. 36 College Street. Cartographic evidence (e.g. Millerd 1673; Rocque 1742) depicts the area as open ground within a dry valley, which largely remained as parkland until the sale of the Bishop's Park in 1770 for redevelopment. The excavated sequence at Cabot House suggests that the 'made ground', derived predominantly from building rubble, ash and soils, was deposited in the late 18th century to fill in and level the natural topography in advance of construction. A similar sequence was recorded at Deanery Road to the south of the site where part of a dovecot of a 14th-century style was excavated, overlain by dumped deposits dating to the 18th century, containing 12th to 14th-century residual pottery (Cox *et al.* 2006).

## **Period 2**

The properties recorded in plan at St George's Road and Deanery Road were not subject to detailed excavation. Although the foundations were truncated by later activity, and much of the cellar infills were not removed from the buildings, it was possible to see how the construction of Deanery Road in 1869 had affected the original plan of the buildings fronting St George's Road. Most notable was the use of the triangular yard space behind no. 48 St George's Road and no. 4 Deanery Road which appeared to be accessed from both properties. These two properties were sold as a single plot (no. 14) on a sale document c. 1874 (Fig. 6) and this arrangement may be connected with the identification of no. 4 Deanery Road as part of the slaughterhouse and stables of William Jocham in St George's Road (BRO 20941) documented in 1897 and 1904.

Excavation of the earliest foundations at nos 38 and 40 College Street in Area 2 has shown that these structures were a single contemporary build, and thus consistent with the building stipulations within the lease of 1784. Sale plans of the property to the south-west (no. 54, demolished before 1869) show that this property occupied one third of the leased land and was identical to that excavated at no. 40. Excavation revealed internal details of the properties at cellar level; a sale advertisement for a College Street property would suggest that the cellar was occupied by a china pantry, kitchen and arched cellar, and this would conform to the layout at nos 38 and 40. Excavation also showed that the front and back rooms both accommodated a fireplace and bread oven, with provision for a water-heating copper in the front room. These features appear to be part of the original build, but were not fully dismantled during excavation. Bread ovens in both the front and back rooms would be unusual under single occupancy, but would be an asset when tenanted by multiple households as the 19th and 20th-century records record, although this feature was subsequently blocked off with brick in no. 38 College Street. In no. 40 the space for the water heater was re-used to store coal. There was also evidence for the ingress of coal through a window at the back of the property, and both may point to the independent storage

of fuel relating to the multiple occupancies of the building, which the census returns suggest began to the second half of the 19th century. The excavated sequence shows the addition of a privy at the back of each property, just visible in photographic evidence from the 1950s (Fig. 10). The excavated evidence could not date these additions and alterations, but it is interesting to note that the plan dated to 1820 of the demolished property (no. 54, in the old numbering system) shows the privy marked in the area where there is excavated evidence for a staircase in both nos 38 and 40 (Fig. 8). If it is assumed that nos 38 and 40 followed a similar layout, the stairs in this room in nos 38 and 40 must be a later alteration, post-dating 1820, and probably coincidental with the construction of a privy on the back of the original property.

The truncated remains of properties at nos 34 and 36 College Street suggest a similar pair of houses; no. 36 was built against no. 38 with which it shared a party wall. In no. 36 the slightly wider back room was later converted to accommodate a fireplace, and outside privies added to both properties required the blocking of the back door in these rooms. Photographic evidence (Aerofilms 52883) shows that these back rooms were not overbuilt to a second storey and there is no evidence that they accommodated a staircase; in no. 36 this would appear to have been housed instead in the middle room, the equivalent area in no. 34 was truncated by the construction of Cabot House.

The Bishop's Park Development of the late 18th century was one of a number of speculative developments that formed part of a continuum of suburban expansion that began in the mid 17th century (Leech 2006, 67). The elegant bay-fronted four-storey buildings of College Street were originally constructed to house a single family and their servants, but mid 19th-century street directories and 19th and 20th-century census returns chart the rise of multiple occupancies, supported by the physical evidence for later additions and alterations at the back of these properties recorded in the archaeological investigations. The occupations listed in the 19th and 20th-century census returns reflect the low economic status of these households. Demolition of properties in advance of the construction of the Deanery Road in 1869 may have added pressure to the existing housing stock, whilst slum clearance in the early part of the 20th century in the St Augustine's suburb including streets surrounding College Street (BRO 11172/3; BRO 12054, no 23a) is further evidence of the economic decline of the area, and may have escalated the over-crowding in the College Street properties.

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The finds and archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery under accession number BRSMG 2008/33.

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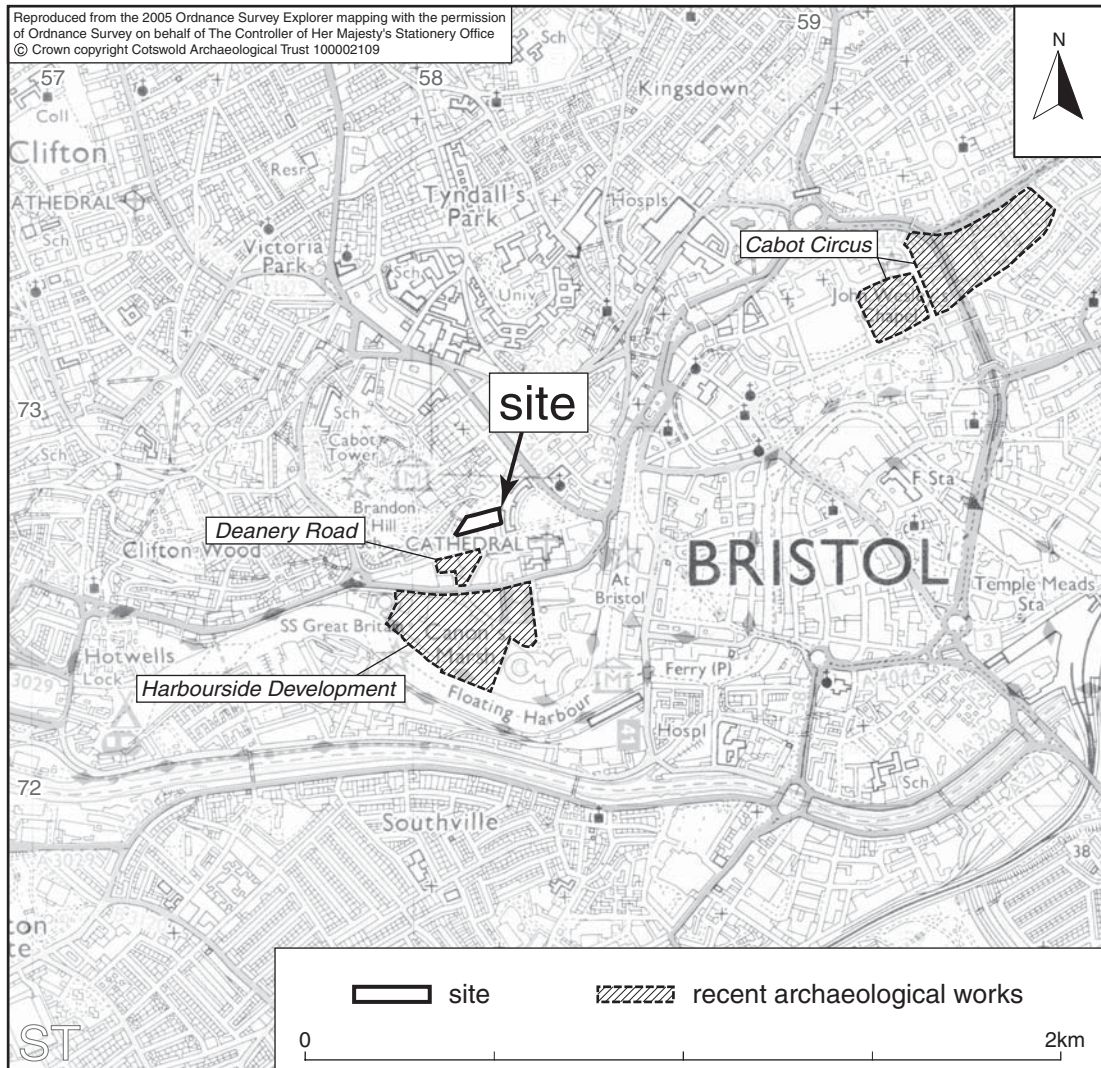


Fig. 1 Site location plan. Scale 1:20,000

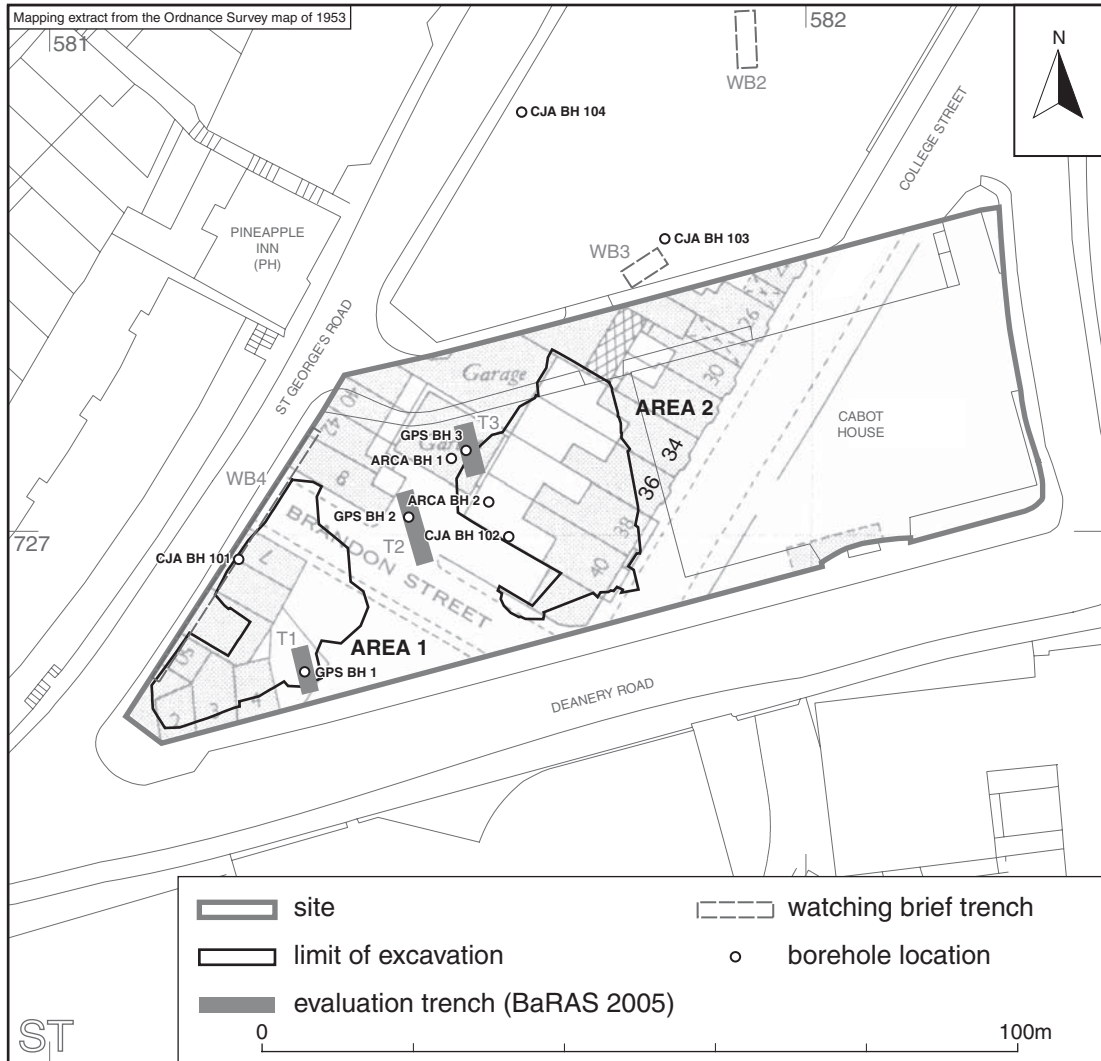


Fig. 2 Excavation areas, trench and borehole location plan, superimposed on an extract from the 1951 OS map 1:2,500, sheet 31/5872 (1951 edn.). Scale 1:1000

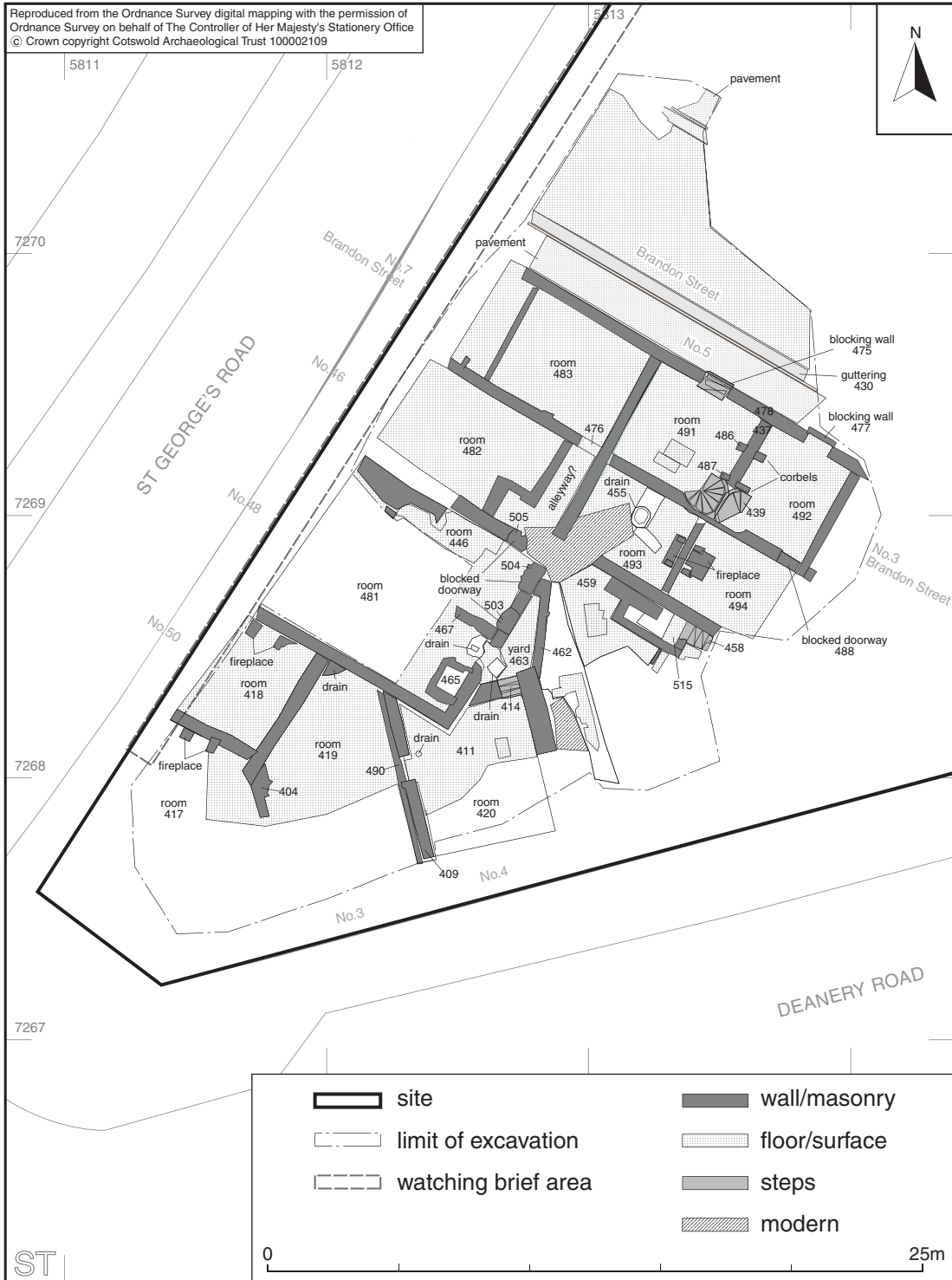


Fig. 3 Area 1, all features. Scale 1:250

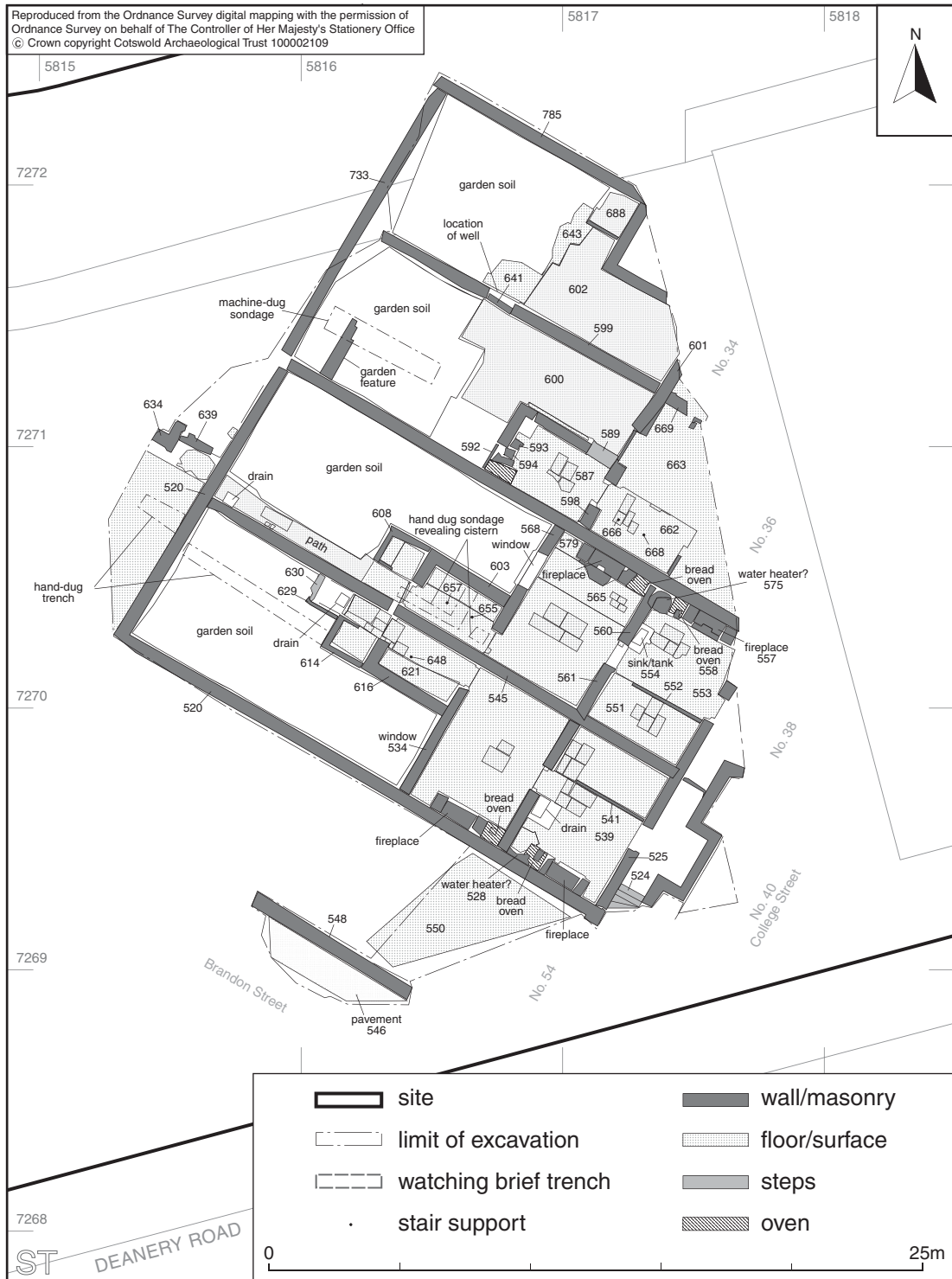


Fig. 4 Area 2, all features. Scale 1:250





Fig. 5 No. 38 College Street, front room: recess for water heater 575, bread oven 558 and fireplace 557, from south-west. Scales 1m and 2m

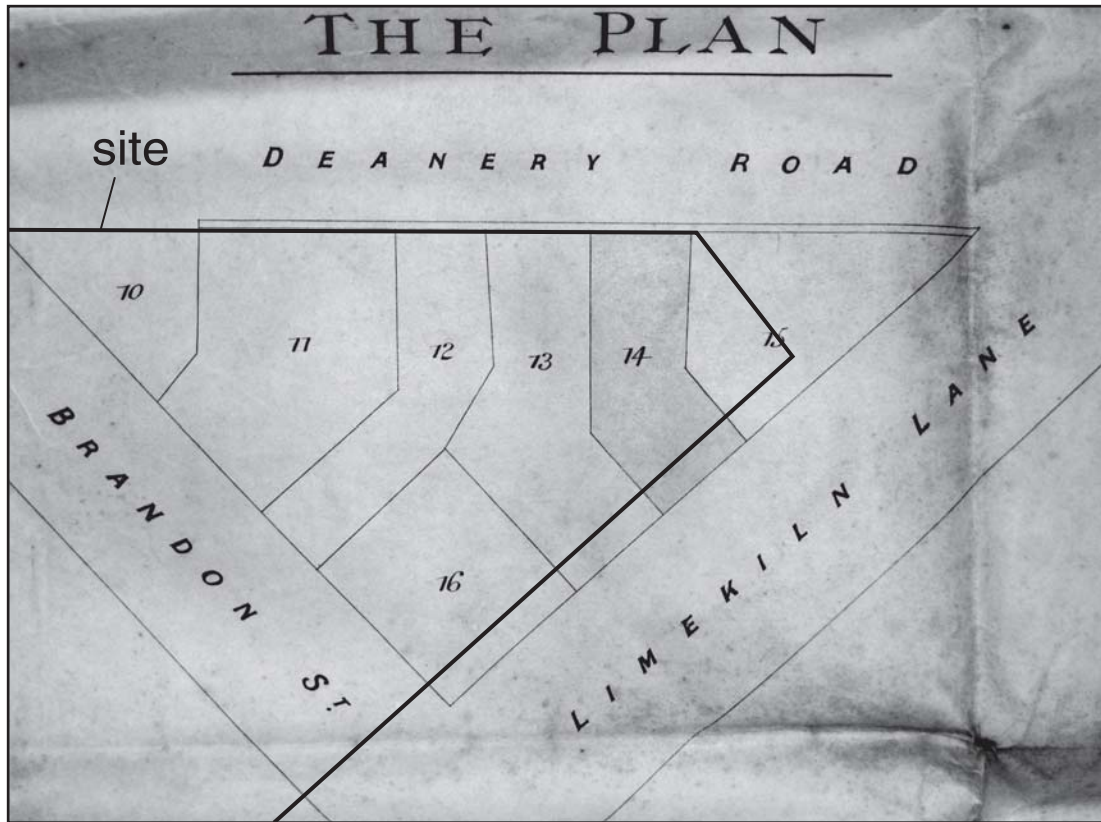


Fig. 6 Deanery Road sale plots from 1874 (BRO 20940-1)

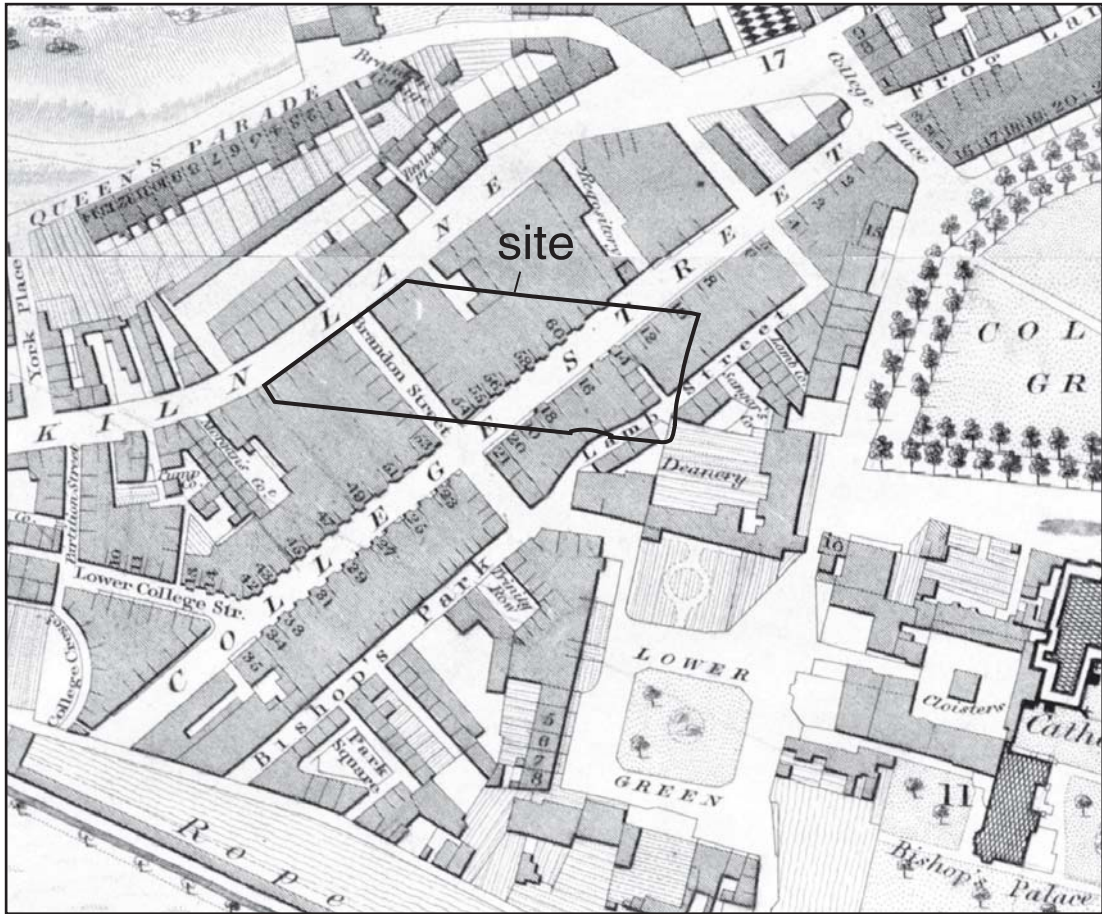


Fig. 7 Detail from J. Plumley and G.C. Ashmead 'Plan of the City of Bristol...' (1828), with the Cabot House site superimposed



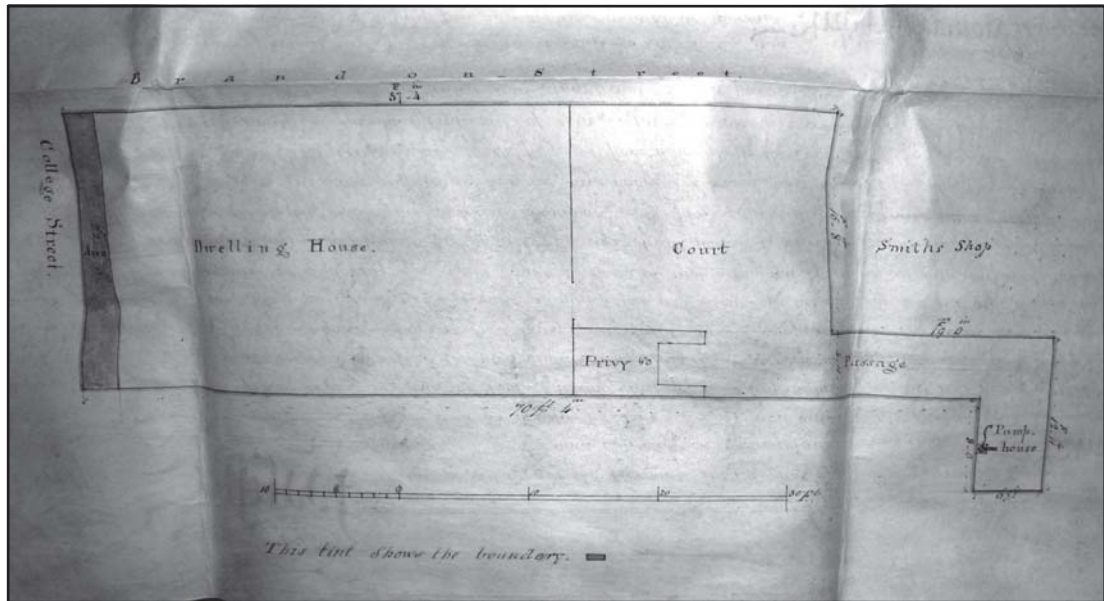


Fig. 8 House plan for no. 54 College Street c.1820 (BRO 05502)



Fig. 9 College Street frontage, historic street nos above relevant buildings, 1954 (Reece Winstone 1969)

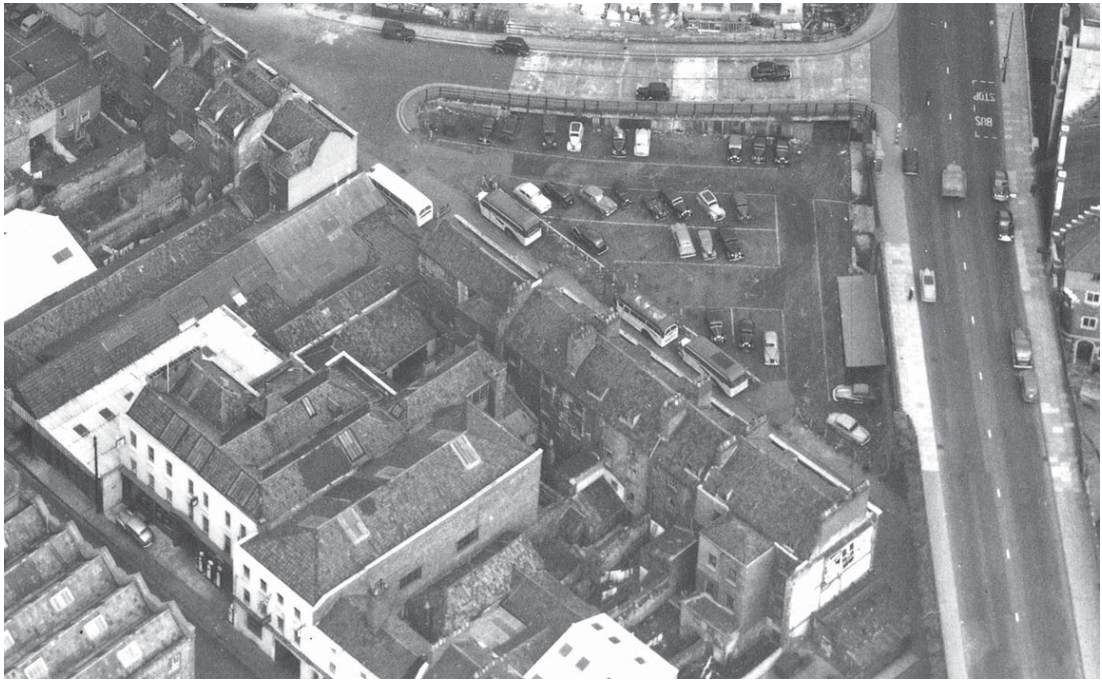


Fig. 10 Back of 38 & 40 College Street, 1957 (NMR; Aerofilms 52883)