

FORMER GRANBY HOUSE, ST JOHN'S ROAD,
BEDMINSTER, BRISTOL

Centred on NGR ST 58456 71321

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

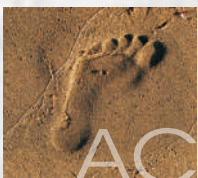
Bristol City Council Planning Reference: 14/00307/F

Prepared by:
Will Smith

On behalf of:
Woodstock Homes Ltd

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AC archaeology

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Appendix 1: Descriptions of trenches

Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology during August 2014 at the former Granby House, Bedminster, Bristol. An historic environment assessment prepared by AC archaeology in 2014 highlighted the potential for prehistoric, Romano-British and early medieval archaeology on the site.

The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of 3 trenches totalling 39m in length, with each trench 1.8m wide. These were located within the footprint of the development blocks and also within the footprint of the demolished house. The work has demonstrated the potential for the survival of buried archaeological features and deposits that pre-date the construction of Granby House is variable and limited to the gardens to the north-east and north-west of the former house. Within the footprint of the building any pre-existing archaeological features or deposits were entirely removed during its construction. A single archaeological feature (a probable drain) probably pre-dating the construction of Granby House was exposed, and it is concluded that it is unlikely that the site contains any evidence for earlier settlement activity.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1, Plates 1 and 2)

- 1.1** This document presents the results of an archaeological trench evaluation on the site of the former Granby House, St John's Road, Bedminster, Bristol (ST 58456 71321; Fig. 1) carried out by AC archaeology on 27-28 August 2014. The evaluation was required under Condition 11 of the grant of planning permission (Bristol City Council reference 14.00307/F) for a new residential development, and was commissioned by Woodstock Homes.
- 1.2** The application area comprises the site of the demolished Granby House and its surrounding gardens to the northeast, southwest and northwest (Plates 1-2). It occupies an area of approximately 0.22ha, situated on the south side of St Johns Road, and lies at approximately 17m aOD. The underlying solid geology consists of the Redcliffe Sandstone member, a sedimentary sandstone formed 200-251 million years ago in the Triassic era.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1** An historic environment assessment, produced in support of the planning application, was prepared by AC archaeology during February 2014 (Rainbird 2014). This concluded that no below-ground archaeological deposits are currently recorded in the site, although Granby House lies within the Bedminster Conservation Area.
- 2.2** The assessment identified that within the study area excavations had produced evidence for prehistoric and Romano-British activity. In addition the proximity of the former Saxon Minster site at St John's Churchyard located on the east side of St John's Road was also highlighted.
- 2.3** It was considered that there was potential for the presence and/or survival of below-ground deposits associated with prehistoric, Romano-British or early medieval settlement to be present within the site.

- 2.4** Previous geotechnical work within the site has identified up to 1.3m of 'made ground' overlying the natural geology (Ground Investigation (South West) Ltd 2014). This may well include archaeological deposits, although their descriptions indicate they are probably of modern (i.e. 20th-century) date.

3. AIMS

- 3.1** The aim of the trial trench evaluation was to establish the presence or absence of any archaeological remains within the site, and to record their character, date and survival. The results of the work will be used by the Bristol City Council Senior Archaeological Officer to determine whether there are any remains present of sufficient significance, and whether any further archaeological investigations or recording work are required, and if so, where.

4. METHODOLOGY (Fig. 2)

- 4.1** The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by AC archaeology (Passmore 2014). The WSI proposed the machine excavation of three trenches totalling 50m in length, with each trench measuring 1.8m wide, however due to on-site constraints the total length was shortened to 39m. The trenches were positioned within the footprints of the proposed new development, and partially within the footprint of the former Granby House (Fig. 2). The removal of soil overburden within the trenches was undertaken under the control and direction of the site archaeologist.

- 4.2** All features and deposits revealed were recorded using the standard AC archaeology pro-forma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2* (revised August 2012). Detailed sections and plans were produced at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate. All site levels relate to an arbitrary datum height of 17m aOD.

5. RESULTS (Fig. 3; Plates 3-9; Appendix 1)

5.1 Introduction

A single possible pre-late 19th-century archaeological feature was exposed. This and all exposed later 19th-century and modern deposits and features are discussed in detail below, with a tabulated summary provided in Appendix 1. No finds were recovered from any of the trenches.

5.2 Trench 1 (Plates 3-4)

Trench 1 was located along the strip of land to the rear of houses on the south-west side of St John's Road. It was excavated onto natural subsoil (102) at a depth of 0.73-1.04m below current ground levels. The overlying layer sequence consisted of 0.35m of mid reddish-brown silty sandy clay loam with sparse tabular limestone pebbles, and sparse remnants of building debris (101), which was overlain by a thick modern cultivation soil (100) consisting of a dark greyish-brown sandy clay loam with sparse small gravel inclusions. The level of the natural subsoil dropped away towards the north-west and also slightly to the north-east towards the rear of the housing on St John's Road.

Two modern pits were exposed (F103 and F104), located towards the south-east end of the trench. Both pits contained traces of asbestos, and were therefore not excavated.

5.3 Trench 2 (Fig. 3, plan a and section b; Plates 5-7)

Trench 2 was located in the south-west part of the site. Due to on-site constraints it was necessary to move this trench from its proposed location approximately 4m to the north-east, to within the footprint of Granby House. The trench was excavated onto natural subsoil (222) which was present at a maximum depth of 1.10m below current ground levels. At the north-west end of the trench ridges of solid sandstone bedrock were present below the subsoil.

The trench uncovered substantial remains of the foundations of Granby House, together with associated 20th century additions to the building and services (Plate 5). The house had been constructed within a terrace cut F220/F221 that truncated the natural subsoil across the full length of the trench.

At the south-east of the trench, the south end of the south-west wall of Granby House was located (F207), following the length of the trench for approximately 7.50m before turning in a westerly direction, to form the southern edge of a bay window (Plate 6). The wall footing was constructed of Redcliffe sandstone with some brickwork bonded in a pinkish white mortar. Remnants of a small internal partition wall (F211) aligned south-west were also present (Plate 7). This footing was constructed using a mixture of faced and un-faced Redcliffe sandstone with some limestone blocks of varying sizes, laid in horizontal courses bonded with a white sandy mortar mix. It measured up to 0.80m wide by 0.60m high. The top course of this footing consisted of one large piece of Redcliffe sandstone measuring 0.60m wide and 0.14m thick, providing a solid base for the (now largely demolished) wall. Above this was a remnant of a mortared surface (208) consisting of a hard grey sandy mortar with abundant smaller mortar and CBM flecks and coarse gravels, topped by a single squared block of Redcliffe sandstone.

Wall F211 was abutted to the south-east by a deposit of made ground (212), c. 0.50m thick, consisting of a mid brown sandy clay loam with sparse limestone fragments of varying sizes, mixed gravels and remnants of CBM. This was overlain by a small deposit of soily made ground (209) and a broader thicker deposit (210) of the same mortared material as 208, measuring up to 0.20m thick and likely to represent a sub-base for the internal floor of the house.

To the north-west a small remnant of concrete paving slab topped F211 and was sealed by a deposit of mid reddish brown sandy loam made ground (206). This deposit was truncated to the south-east by another probable construction cut F219, which was filled by a mixture of soil and gravel (216). This deposit was in turn truncated to the north-west by another construction cut F224. Within this cut, which reduced the level of the natural subsoil to below that of the original terrace cut, were the remains of a brick wall F217, consisting of up to five courses of header-bonded brickwork. The upper courses of this structure had been damaged during demolition work and were sealed by a series of rubble-filled demolition deposits.

In the north-west end of the trench, terrace cut F220 contained a thick deposit of made ground (213) which was very similar in nature to deposit 212 recorded at the other end of the trench. Deposit 213 was disturbed by two service trenches (F214 and F215). These features were sealed by modern demolition deposits (200). Approximately 4m from the north-west end of the trench, cut F223 contained a

modern concrete blockwork wall running north-east to south-west which turned through 90° and continued parallel to the south-west trench edge. F223 was backfilled with a mixture of pea-gravel and bricks. All of the upper deposits at this end of the trench had been thoroughly disturbed and re-worked during the demolition process.

5.4 Trench 3 (Fig. 3, section c; Plate 8-9)

Trench 3 was located parallel to St John's Road in the former front garden of the house. Due to the presence of possible asbestos-containing materials within the footprint of the demolished house, as a precaution the north-east to south-west aligned extension of this trench, proposed to investigate the impact of the construction of Granby House on surviving deposits, was not dug. The trench was excavated onto natural subsoil (303), present at a depth of 0.89-1.41m below ground level. This was overlain by a mid-reddish brown silty sandy clay subsoil (302), which in turn was overlain by a made-ground deposit (301), measuring up to 0.40m thick, consisting of light-mid reddish-brown silty sandy loam with very sparse sub-angular gravels. This deposit was sealed by modern cultivation soil (300) consisting of a mid greyish-brown silty loam with sparse sub angular gravels (Plate 8).

One linear feature, F304, was recorded aligned perpendicular to the trench (Plate 9). F304 consisted of a cut truncating original subsoil deposit (302) with steep to moderate sloping sides and a flat to sub-convex base. It contained a single fill (305) consisting of mid reddish-brown silty sandy loam with common sandstone cobbles. Against the south-western edge of the trench these cobbles appear to have been laid deliberately towards the base of the cut. It was sealed by deposit 301.

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1** The evaluation has demonstrated that survival of potential archaeological deposits varies across the site. The land behind the houses to the south-west of St John's Road presents the area with the highest potential for the survival of archaeological features or deposits. However even here, the presence of modern building materials in what is likely to be a heavily re-worked subsoil (101) and the underlying pits (F103 and F104) indicate that this area of the site has undergone reasonably significant landscaping during the 20th century.
- 6.2** The small area forming the front garden of Granby House also contains archaeological potential, although this is restricted to the south-east half where the only archaeological feature, ditch F304, was encountered. Services from Granby House are known to be present in the north-west half of the garden.
- 6.3** The excavation of trench 2 has demonstrated that Granby House was constructed within large terraces, and the level to which the natural subsoil was reduced during construction of the original phase of house construction has truncated any pre-existing deposits or features within its general footprint. The subsequent construction cuts of later phases of alteration have further reduced these levels.
- 6.4** Possible ditch feature F304 represents the only potential archaeological feature that pre-dates the construction of Granby House. However being cut from the level of the buried subsoil deposit (302), it is unlikely to be older than post-medieval in date. The character of its fill may indicate that it is a land drain.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The trench evaluation has demonstrated the potential for the survival of buried archaeological features and deposits that pre-date the construction of Granby House is variable and limited to the gardens to the north-east and north-west of the former house. Within the footprint of the building any pre-existing archaeological features or deposits were entirely removed during its construction.
- 7.2 A single archaeological feature probably pre-dating the construction of Granby House was exposed – a drain of probable later post-medieval date. No evidence (including artefactual evidence) for earlier activity was encountered, and on the basis of the results of the evaluation it is unlikely that the site contains any settlement activity pre-dating the construction of Granby House.

8. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

- 8.1 The paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. This will ultimately be deposited under a museum-allocated accession number at the Bristol Museum.
- 8.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier **184510**, which includes a digital copy of this report.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 The evaluation was commissioned by Woodstock Homes Ltd, and managed for them by Peter Hurst, and for AC archaeology by Andrew Passmore. The site works were carried out by William Smith and Chris Blatchford. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Sarnia Blackmore. The advice and collaboration of Bob Jones, Bristol City Council Senior Archaeological Officer, is duly acknowledged.

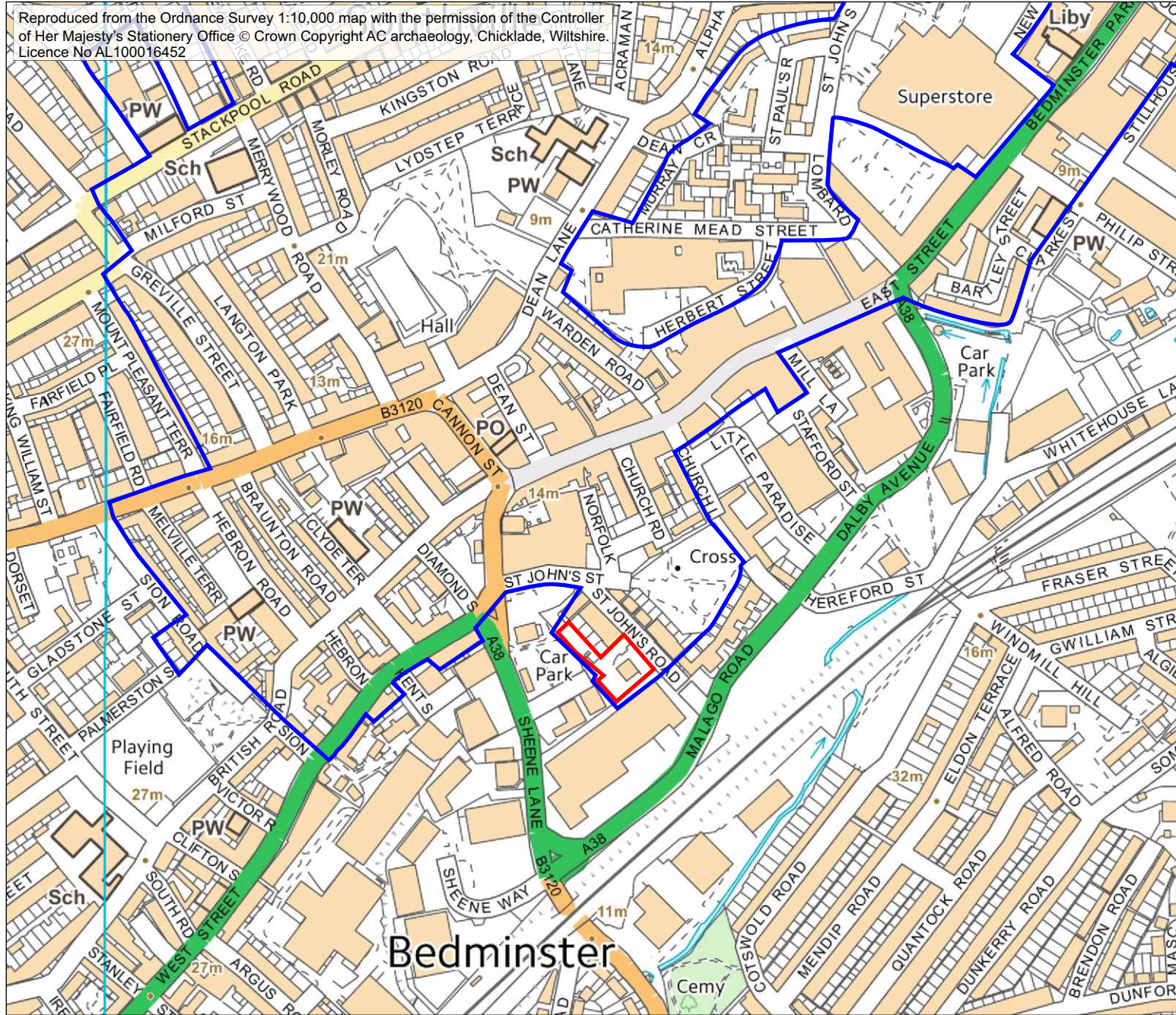
10. REFERENCES



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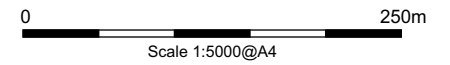
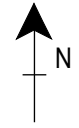
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Rainbird, P. 2014. *Granby House, St John's road, Bedminster, Bristol, Centred on ST 158556 71321, Historic Environment Assessment, Bristol City Council Planning Ref. 14/00307/F*, AC archaeology document number **ACD865/1/2**

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-  Conservation area
-  Development site



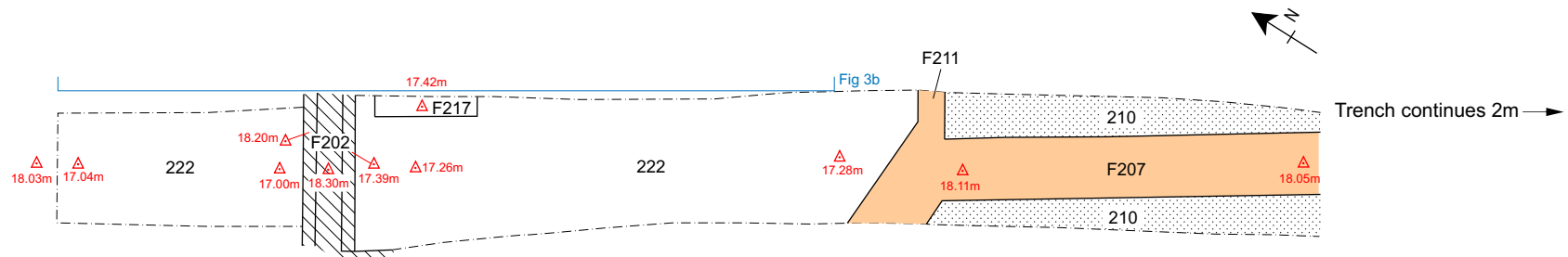
PROJECT
**Granby House, St John's Road,
Bedminster, Bristol**

TITLE
Fig. 1: Location of site

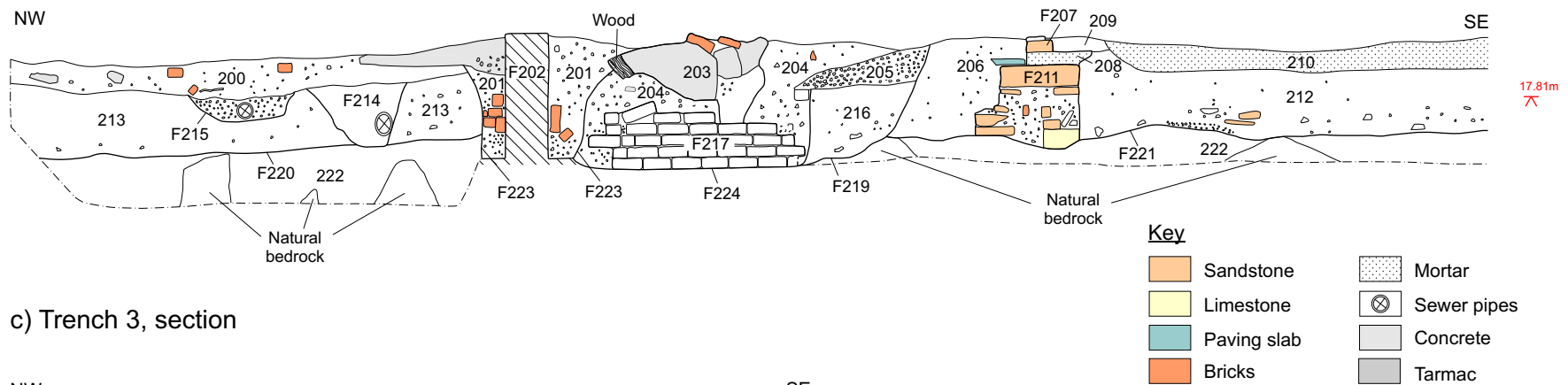
Bedminster



a) Trench 2, plan



b) Trench 2, section



c) Trench 3, section

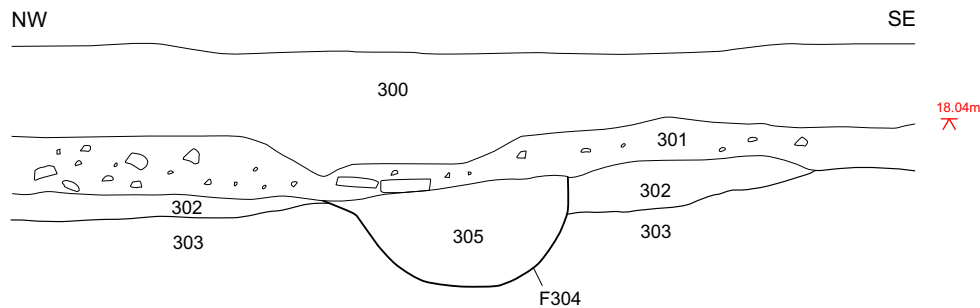


Fig 3a 1:100@A4



Figs 3b & 3c 1:50@A4

Arbitrary datum 17m aO.D

PROJECT

Granby House, St John's Road,
Bedminster, Bristol

TITLE

Fig. 3: Trench 2, plan and section and
trench 3, section



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Plate 1: General site view to rear of houses on St John's Road, view to the north-west



Plate 2: General site view, area of demolished Granby House, view to the north-east



Plate 3: Trench 1, general view to the north-west with modern pit F103 visible just beyond the 1m scale



Plate 4: Trench 1, representative section of deposits, viewed from the north-east. 1m scale



Plate 5: Oblique view of south-west facing section of trench 2 showing footings and construction cuts associated with Granby House, view to the north. 1m and 2m scales



Plate 7: Trench 2, internal wall F211 within terrace F221, viewed from the south-west. 2m scale



Plate 6: Trench 2, general view showing the south-west wall of Granby House (F207), view to the north-west. 1m scale



Plate 8: Trench 3, oblique view of south-west facing section showing made ground deposit 301 and F304, view to the east. 1m scale



Plate 9: Trench 3, section through F304 showing stones in fill 305 in the foreground, viewed from the south-west. 1m scale

Appendix 1

Descriptions of trenches

APPENDIX 1: DESCRIPTIONS OF TRENCHES

Trench 1		Length 15m	Width 1.8m	Alignment SE-NW
Context	Description	Depth below ground	Interpretation	
100	Dark greyish-brown silty sandy clay loam, friable, sparse small gravels	0-0.30m	Modern topsoil	
101	Mid reddish-brown with a grey hue, silty sandy clay loam, friable, with sparse limestone gravels.	0.30-0.65m	Subsoil/made ground	
102	Light reddish-brown silty sandy clay, friable, with sparse limestone inclusions	0.65m+	Natural subsoil	
F103	Sub-circular feature, 0.20m diameter with fill of dark greyish-brown sandy clay loam, contained traces of asbestos	0.65m+	Unexcavated modern feature	
F104	Small area of modern disturbance to natural subsoil, contained traces of asbestos	0.65m+	Unexcavated modern feature	

Trench 2		Length 16m	Width 1.80m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth below ground	Interpretation	
200	Grey coarse sands and gravels with abundant concrete, tarmac, and brick fragments	0-0.20m	Modern demolition material	
201	Yellow-brown pea gravel	0-0.85m	Backfill of construction cut F223	
F202	Modern concrete blocks set in cement mortar	0-0.85m+	Modern blockwork wall	
203	Concrete and brick rubble, mixed modern hardcore etc.	0-0.55m	Modern demolition material	
204	Mid brown sandy loam with mixed gravel and CBM inclusions	0-0.85m	Construction cut backfill	
205	Well sorted grey limestone gravels	0-0.18m	Modern hardcore	
206	Mid brown sandy loam with sparse to mod mixed gravels	0-0.63m	Construction cut backfill	
F207	Wall constructed of Redcliffe sandstone	0.08m+	Wall of Granby House	
208	Grey coarse sand, hard, with abundant mortar and CBM flecks and coarse gravels	0.10-0.20m	Mortared surface	
209	Reddish-brown silty sandy loam	0-0.10m	Made ground deposit	
210	Grey coarse sand, hard, with abundant mortar and CBM flecks and coarse gravels	0-0.20m	Mortared floor sub-base	
F211	Sandstone and limestone blocks set in white sandy mortar, horizontal coursing, uneven bond	0.20-0.80m	Internal wall footing of Granby House	
212	Mid brown sandy clay loam, firm, sparse limestone fragments, gravels, CBM etc.	0.08-0.72m	Victorian made ground	
213	Mid brown sandy clay loam, firm, sparse limestone fragments, gravels, CBM etc.	0.20-0.72m	Victorian made ground	
F214	Construction cut containing modern service	0.18-0.63m	Modern service cut	
F215	Construction cut containing modern service	0-0.45m	Modern service cut	
216	Mid brown sand loam with mixed gravels	0.34-0.84m	Made ground	
F217	5 courses of header bonded brickwork	0.40-0.90m	Brick wall footing	
218	VOID			
F219	Steep sided, flat based cut	0-0.80m	Construction cut	
F220	Flat-based cut, extent of which extended beyond area of excavation	0.70m	Terrace cut for Granby House	

APPENDIX 1: DESCRIPTIONS OF TRENCHES

F221	Flat-based cut, extent of which extended beyond area of excavation	0.70m	Terrace cut for Granby House
F222	Solid sandstone geology with degraded mid reddish brown loamy sand weathered material	0.70m+	Natural subsoil
F223	Very steep sided cut	0-1.0m+	Construction cut for blockwork wall F202
F224	Steep sided, flat-based cut	0.32-0.91m	Construction cut for F217

Trench 3		Length 9m	Width 1.80m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth below ground	Interpretation	
300	Dark greyish-brown silty sandy clay loam, friable, sparse small gravels	0-0.80m	Modern topsoil	
301	Light-mid reddish-brown silty sandy loam, friable, very sparse sub-angular gravels	0.80-1-16	Made ground deposit	
302	Mid reddish-brown silty sandy loam, very sparse angular gravels	0.80-1.16m	Subsoil	
303	Light orangey-reddish-brown sandstone	1.16m+	Solid geology	
F304	Linear cut, moderate to steep sides, flat to sub-convex base	1.20-1.61m	Cut of possible ditch feature	
305	Mid reddish-brown silty sandy loam, common sandstone cobbles	1.20-1.61m	Fill of F304	

Devon Office

AC archaeology Ltd
Unit 4, Halthaies Workshops
Bradninch
Nr Exeter
Devon
EX5 4LQ

Telephone/Fax: 01392 882410

Wiltshire Office

AC archaeology Ltd
Manor Farm Stables
Chicklade
Hindon
Nr Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP3 5SU

Telephone: 01747 820581
Fax: 01747 820440

www.acarchaeology.co.uk