

41 STOKES CROFT, BRISTOL

ST 59071 73819

Results of historic building recording

Bristol City Council planning reference 14/04413/LA

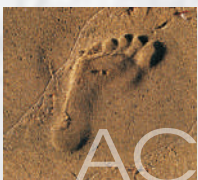
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On behalf of:  
BCB Properties

Document No: ACD1077/2/0

Date: March 2015



AC archaeology

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## Summary

*An historic building record of 41 Stokes Croft, Bristol (ST 59071 73819) was prepared by AC archaeology in March 2015. The survey was required prior to the demolition and rebuilding of the property that suffered a serious fire and is currently unoccupied. It forms part of a terrace of five Grade II Listed Buildings.*

*The site lies within an area of post-medieval urban development probably undertaken by speculative builders from the early 18th century. The surviving terrace of houses in Stokes Croft is one of the earliest of these developments and may date from c.1740. These buildings were originally residential properties forming a long terrace, but were converted for commercial or retail use in the late 19th century, a process which involved the removal of front areas and some alteration of internal floor levels. On the upper floors the original layout can be partially reconstructed. In the second half of the 20th century the building was used as a printing works, which also occupied the rear yard and part of the rear of No. 43. It was latterly used as restaurant and club when alterations were made to the upper floors.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

1.1 This document presents the results of historic building recording carried out by AC Archaeology on 3 March 2015 at 41 Stokes Croft, Bristol (ST 59071 73819). The survey was commissioned by BCB Properties, and was required by Bristol City Council (planning reference 14/04413/LA) for "proposed demolition of the existing shop and flat; restoration and rebuilding of the existing shop and flat; and extension to accommodate an additional flat". Guidance on the scope of the recording was provided by the Bristol City Council Principal Historic Environment Officer.

1.2 The site occupies a plot of ground on the north-west side of Stokes Croft, close to its junction with Hillgrove Street, within the Stokes Croft Conservation Area. It is terraced into the ground, which rises towards the north-west, and faces south-east towards Stokes Croft. The property forms part of a group of Grade II Listed Buildings (National Heritage List number 1292924) that has the following description:

Terrace of 5 houses and shops. c1780, altered mid C19, C19 shop fronts. Brick with limestone dressings, party wall stacks and hipped pantile roofs. Double-depth plan. Late Georgian style. Each of 3 storeys, Nos 39 & 43 of 4 storeys; 2-window range. An irregular terrace articulated by banded pilasters to moulded copings, coping missing from No.39; C19 shop front to Nos 35 & 37 has large consoles to a fascia and plate-glass windows, and to No.43 with panelled pilasters, consoles, fascia and a dentil cornice, continued to the right return with a corner doorway; C20 the rest. Segmental-headed windows, with 5 stepped voussoirs and C19 fluted keys to Nos 37-41, keyed lintel to No.43, and keyed architrave to the second floor of No.37, to plate-glass sashes. INTERIOR not inspected.

### 2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Figs 2-5; Plate 1)

2.1 A heritage statement for nos 35 and 37 Stokes Croft was prepared by AC archaeology in August 2013 (Parker 2013). The historical background set out in that report has been adapted here.

- 2.2** The site lies to the north of the historic walled city within an area of post-medieval urban development characterised by terraces of row houses arranged in formal grids of parallel streets and squares. Rocque's map of the area, dating from 1750 (Fig. 2), shows that many of these streets had already been laid out but that at that time they remained undeveloped. These streets include Kings Square (laid out in c. 1742 by George Tully), Dighton Street, Dukes Court, Carolina Court and 'Dove Coat Lane' later Dove Street. All these areas appear to be shown by Rocque as vacant ground. Stokes Croft, and Moon Street to the south east, lie on an different alignment and seems to be an earlier development. Rocque shows the block bounded by Stokes Croft, Hillgrove Street, Jamaica Street and King Square Avenue as fully developed, the densely built-up areas being represented by stippling.
- 2.3** Later maps provide more detail; Ashhmead's map of 1828 (Fig. 3) shows the housing on the north-western side of Stokes Croft as a long terrace of buildings, all of a similar footprint, each with a small rectangular front block fronted by a railed or enclosed area, and larger strips of gardens to the rear. The form of the terrace strongly suggests an 18th-century speculative development. For all its apparent regularity, the terrace does not seem to have been constructed to a uniform plan; some of the buildings toward the centre of the terrace and at its south-western end have long rear extensions, others are without these structures. These minor variations in plan are typical of post-medieval speculative developments, where the houses were typically constructed in small groups, perhaps in pairs, as and when finance allowed, or fitted out to the specifications of particular clients with differing requirements.
- 2.4** The terrace does not seem to have changed significantly until the late 19th century, when a general migration of wealthy residents to new suburban developments left the individual houses of these older developments ripe for conversion for commercial use. The 1880s 1st-edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map sheet (Fig. 4) captures this process of change by showing how the small front areas between the house and the street were progressively removed. No. 41 is shown on this map without a front area and with a much longer footprint than previously, indicating that the accommodation on the ground floor had been extended backward beyond the original house. This included a large greenhouse or glass-roofed conservatory. The only other building within this terrace to be depicted with such an extension is marked as a Public House.
- 2.5** The 1910 OS 2nd edition map (Fig. 5) depicts the same footprint, but does not show part of the rear structure as glass roofed. Between the surveying of these 1880 and 1910 maps the adjacent No. 43 had been rebuilt. The area was very substantially damaged by the Bristol blitz during the Second World War, at which time the entire terrace to the south west of No. 35 was either destroyed or removed in the post-Blitz clearance of damaged structures, and five houses of the original terrace now remain. Beyond Hillgrove Street a short length of a comparable terrace remains, though here, rather than truncating the house plots in order to exploit the premises as commercial buildings, the shop fronts were extended over the areas to project out from the frontages. These houses together represent an important fragment of the 18th-century streetscape of Stokes Croft (Plate 1).
- 2.6** Post-war mapping depicts the property as a Printing Works, with the rear of the site continuing into the rear of No. 43 and extending to Hillgrove Street. This use appears to have continued until the 1980s when the rear of No. 43 was redeveloped as 1-5 Hillgrove Street. Modern mapping still through depicts the site as partially extending into the rear of No. 41 behind the main building, although the boundary is currently straight.

### **3. AIM**

- 3.1 The aim of the investigation was to prepare an historic building record of the property prior to demolition and rebuilding.

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 The recording was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation prepared by AC archaeology (Passmore 2015) and approved by the Bristol City Council Principal Historic Environment Officer.

- 4.2 Due to the unsafe nature of the building, which includes a collapsed roof structure, burnt-out floors, and deformed internal structural support scaffolding, the property was not entered. The survey was made from scaffolding set up along the façade of the structure, and against the rear elevation, as well as from within the rear yard.

- 4.3 The recording methodology comprised:

- A photographic record using a colour high-quality digital camera illustrating in both detail and generally the setting of the property, the facades, and the principal surviving architectural features,
- A written description of the surviving remains of the property, including a description of the façade, the party and surviving interior walls, fireplaces, and surviving evidence for other fireplaces, the floors including staircases, and the roof structure/layout.

### **5. THE SURVEY (Plates 2-19)**

#### **5.1 Front elevation**

The ground floor of the front elevation is a late 20th-century shop front. However the original quoins of the party walls have been retained. These comprise blocks of Bath stone finished with rusticated joints. The ground floor quoins adjacent to no. 39 are plastered with lower section finished with vertical fluted decoration (Plate 2). The main entrance is offset to the west side of the elevation (Plate 3). The remainder of the ground floor masonry is plastered and scored to imitate ashlar stonework (partially visible on Plate 2). The main material is also obscured internally but is probably brickwork or concrete blocks replacing an earlier shop window. Some of the quoins on the eastern side have been repaired, probably when the adjacent masonry was rebuilt. The first-floor level is defined by former wooden shop signs that extend across the whole elevation. The earlier sign is attached directly to the wall, and has been replaced by the most recent restaurant/club sign than projects out from the façade.

The masonry of the first and second floors is red bricks laid in stretcher bond using very hard cream slightly gravely lime mortar (Plate 4). This has been painted yellow, and more recently this finish has been overlaid with 'pebbledash' concrete render, which has partly come away due to the heat of the fire. On the second floor there is evidence that the interior face has been rebuilt using concrete blocks and concrete lintels over the windows. On both floors there are pairs of window openings offset towards the east side of the elevation. These contained sash windows that have been destroyed by the fire. On the first floor parts of the frames, set flush to the

elevation, survive including parts of the brass roller mechanism for the sash cord. The frames have applied bead moulding. These are set below segmental arched window heads with expanded radiating stone voussoirs typical of the vernacular classical architecture in Bristol and northern Somerset. On the first floor the arch is infilled with a pair of Bath stone lintels (Plate 5). The details of these window heads are the same as the adjacent Nos 37 and 39, although the latter do not contain the infilling stone blocks.

At eaves level is a cornice of bath stone blocks, slightly projecting from the façade, finished with ogee and hollow mouldings (Plate 6). The top face slopes back in towards the building, presumably to a former gutter that has been destroyed by the fire. On the west party wall the Bath Stone quoins continue up to the extended eaves level of no. 39, with the rear of the blocks being infilled with brick. The quoins have also been extended up on the raised eaves level of No. 43 where they terminate in a cornice with curved and straight-edged mouldings.

## **5.2 Rear elevation (Plate 7)**

This elevation is constructed of rubble lias, red and yellow sandstone and bricks, which has been finished with plaster and cement renders. On the ground floor there is a doorway on the west side under a rolled steel joist. To the east there is a further large opening. On the first floor there is a primary window opening at the west end that has been reduced in width using concrete blocks to form a doorway, possibly a fire exit. To the east there is a central window that has been infilled using concrete blocks; this extended up to the ceiling level. On the second floor there is a doorway at the west end. This is at a lower level than the second floor, and may be another inserted fire exit. A chase for the floor and stairs down to the doorway are visible in the plaster and masonry of the adjacent elevation (Plate 8). To the east there is a deep window that extends down from the eaves level.

## **5.3 The party walls (Plates 9-11)**

The plaster finish of the west party wall largely survives intact obscuring the masonry. Where visible, towards the rear of the building, this is rubble lias and red sandstone.

The east party wall, with the contemporary No. 43, is brickwork laid in stretcher bond finished with plaster. It incorporates two projecting chimney stacks, formerly serving fireplaces in the front and rear rooms of the property. On the ground floor the fireplace and flue of the front chimney stack have been infilled. On the first floor this chimney stack has been chopped black and the flue infilled. A rolled steel joist has been inserted to support the masonry of the stack above. The second floor fireplace opening survives although the grate has been removed. Scars in the adjacent plaster appear to indicate that the opening has been altered, perhaps for the insertion of a smaller Victorian or Edwardian cast-iron grate. The stack above the roof apex has been repointed.

The fireplaces of the rear chimney stack on the ground and first floors have been infilled, but the flue remains open on the second floor. As with the front fireplace on this floor the grate has been removed. On the ground floor the stack only slightly projected into the room, and the first floor masonry rests on lias corbels – one partially rebuilt in brick – that support reused rails onto which the hearth stone (now lost) must have been placed. Above the roof apex the stack has been rebuilt in brick.

#### **5.4 The ground floor (Plate 12)**

The ground floor is currently a single open place. A central dividing wall has been removed, with the masonry above now supported on a single long rolled steel joist. The building may originally have had a corridor along its west side, probably incorporating the staircase, and this arrangement may have continued until the fire.

#### **5.5 The first floor (Plate 13)**

This floor is divided by a central brick partition in the centre of the property that incorporates a primary doorway at its west end, and an inserted opening under a concrete lintel towards its eastern end. Beyond, the masonry has been rebuilt, in the late 20th century, using concrete blocks and brickwork. Sockets for the burnt-out joists of the floor have been exposed at the base of the wall. The front of the property has been reconfigured in the 20th century as a single large room. The walls have been replastered, to which the skirting board has been attached.

#### **5.6 The second floor (Plate 14)**

This floor is divided by a central brick partition in the centre of the property that incorporates a primary doorway at its west end. The eastern end has been rebuilt, in the late 20th century, using concrete blocks and brickwork. A scar on the south side of this wall indicates that the front of the building was divided into two rooms. The partition must have been staggered since its projected course conflicts with the western window opening. The scar may therefore represent a doorway at the end of a corridor that gave access to two front rooms of unequal size. Sockets for the burnt-out joists of the floor have been exposed at the base of the wall.

#### **5.7 The basement (Plate 15)**

Below the property is a basement or cellar. The extent of this is not clearly visible due to debris from the fire, but it may be present under much of the building. There is however no evidence in pavement for former entrance steps, a lightwell or coal chutes. There is an opening into the cellar, probably via an internal flight of steps, at the northwest corner of the building.

#### **5.8 The roof**

The roof has been entirely destroyed by the fire and no timbers survive *in situ* or as debris within the building. Evidence for the rooflines can be observed in the east elevation, which displays two pitched roofs aligned along the façade of the building (Plate 9). Across the whole elevation a break is visible between the original brick masonry and the later brickwork associated with the newer third floor of no. 43. Scars of the rooflines are also visible on the original chimney stacks that project up above the rooflines. In the west party wall there is a row of closely-set sockets at eaves level, which, given the alignment of the roofs noted above are probably for joists supporting the second-floor ceiling (Plate 16). Plaster on the wall of no. 43 indicates that the roofspace was utilised, perhaps, given the low apex height, for storage rather than accommodation.

#### **5.9 The rear of the property**

The east wall of the rear yard is a brick wall, mainly laid in header bond. It incorporates an inserted wide doorway under a rolled steel joist lintel; the opening has been infilled using concrete blocks. Beyond this, there are the remains of a small outbuilding, constructed of brick and timber framing against a lias stone wall, and then a rendered brick wall that abuts the lower early boundary wall (Plate 17). Above the latter is an English bond brick wall, incorporating a blocked window opening.



The west boundary wall is almost entirely rendered but some rubble stonework is visible immediately beyond the line of the rear elevation. The overlaying plaster incorporates a chase for a pitched roof at first-floor level, as well as a vertical scar for a removed, probably timber-framed, internal wall (Plate 18). This structure appears to represent a small rear lobby, as depicted on the first edition OS mapping, which has been reused more recently as a fire exit or rear staircase. Beyond this structure some mixed brickwork, probably in header bond, is visible within the rendered boundary wall. The upper part of the wall is a 20th-century rebuild in bricks laid in various courses of header and stretcher bond. This incorporates a small window and is associated with the use of No. 39 during this period.

Attached to the rear lobby is a single storey outbuilding covering the width of the yard, which must have replaced the earlier greenhouse or conservatory depicted on the first edition OS mapping (Plate 19). This utilised the boundary walls and had three roof trusses formed from pairs of sawn timbers supported by attached cast-iron frames consisting of rods and L-shaped bar supports. The interior of the roof was lined with lath and plaster. This structure incorporates the brick outbuilding at its northeast corner. The floor of the whole yard is concrete, which within the outbuilding incorporates an infilled, possibly brick-lined, void. This may be associated with the former printing works.

Beyond, the yard is currently open. The rear wall is plastered rubble stonework incorporating a door at first floor level. This opens onto a yard at the rear of the ground floor of Jamaica Street and Hill Croft. A staircase from the yard led up to this door, but has been removed.

## **6. COMMENTS**

- 6.1** No. 41 Stokes Croft formed a part of a larger speculative development on one of the older suburban roads outside the walls of the medieval city. The surviving four of five houses at the north-eastern end of the terrace seem to have been developed in pairs, but there were possible groups of three to the south west, which have now been destroyed. No. 41 was built as a pair with No. 43, although this property has been rebuilt. The façade treatment is very similar but not identical to Nos 37 and 39, which were also constructed as a pair, and it is likely that both pairs were either constructed by the same owner and/or same architect.
- 6.2** The property was clearly in existence by 1750, when the north-western side of Stokes Croft appears as fully developed on Rocque's Map. It is typical of late 17th-, 18th- and early 19th-century speculative developments that, although there would be general agreement as to the form of the façades, the layout of the buildings and the alignment of the frontages, there might be considerable variation in detail and in the planning of the interiors. The surviving houses show some features typical of the period, including segmental-headed window openings with broad, flush-framed sash boxes and provincial Baroque detail in the rusticated piers and radiating, expanded voussoirs.
- 6.3** Although altered, particularly in the later 20th century, elements of the interior arrangement can be reconstructed. The property was constructed as a three-storey house and unlike the adjacent buildings that have been heightened to four storeys, this arrangement has been retained. All three floors were divided into two main rooms, situated at the front and back of the house, towards the east gable, and heated by fireplaces. The arrangements on the west side of the house are less

clear. On the ground floor there may have been a corridor, leading to stairs and a rear door to the yard. On the upper floors the landings and stairs to the second floor (?and loft space) were probably also located along the west side of the house. The partition scar in the first floor front room may also indicate that the front of the house was divided into two small bedrooms, or that the area comprised a bedroom along with a landing and staircase. Plaster on the party wall with No. 43 within the roof space indicates that this area was utilised as a loft.

**6.4** In the late 19th century the buildings were converted for retail or commercial use, a process which included the removal of the original front area and, subsequently, the addition of new a shop front replacing the original ground-floor façade. It is likely that the ground-floor levels were lowered, to respect the street, and that an earlier semi-basement containing service rooms and domestic offices opening off a railed basement area was infilled to the new ground floor level to enable this change. Historic mapping shows that the rear of the property was now fully utilised for further accommodation, including a large greenhouse or conservatory. Internally, there is no evidence for alterations of this period, although the brickwork in the rear yard reflects the later extensions to the property and subsequent alterations.

**6.5** In the post-war years the property was used as a printing works, which incorporated the rear of No. 43. Access to No. 43 was through a new wide opening in the east boundary wall. There was no additional access further to the rear, either at ground- or first-floor level. The partially surviving roof structure of the rear outbuilding may be associated with this use, although may equally have been retained from an earlier structure that replaced the greenhouse or conservatory. The removal of the central ground-floor partition may date to this period, although could be a later 20th-century alteration. When the building was converted into a restaurant and club further alterations were made to the upper floors, with a new opening added to the first floor partition, and new openings inserted into the rear elevation. These included a large window or doorway into the rear extension, and probable fire exits down from the upper floors.

## **7. ARCHIVE AND OASIS ENTRY**

**7.1** A fully integrated site archive has been prepared with reference to the English Heritage 2006 document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*. This is currently stored under controlled conditions at the offices of AC archaeology in Bradninch, but will ultimately be deposited at the Bristol Museum under a museum-allocated accession number which has been applied for and is awaited.

**7.2** Details of the project have been submitted to the OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological investigationS) database using the unique identifier 204855. This entry will be completed, along with a digital version of the completed report, on acceptance of the report by the Bristol City Council Historic Environment Officer.

## **8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**8.1** The survey was commissioned by BCB Properties, and managed for them by Jon Blackwell and for AC archaeology by Andrew Passmore. The report illustrations were prepared by Sarnia Blackmore and Elisabeth Patkai.

## 9. SOURCES CONSULTED

### *maps via the Bristol Record Office "know your place" website*

Ashmead's map of 1828

Rocque's map of 1750

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 1880 map

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 1910 map

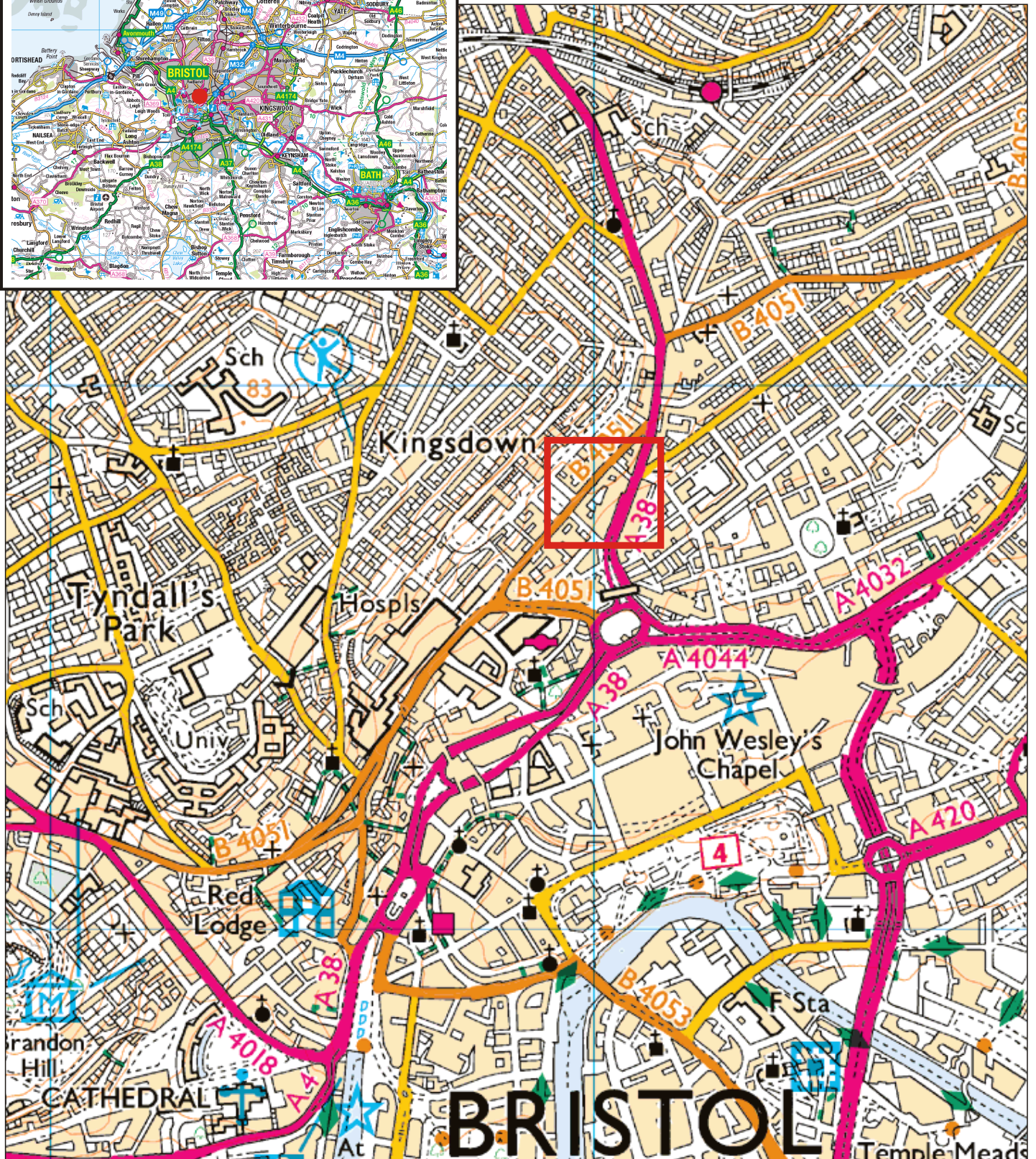
Parker, R., 2013, *35 and 37 Stokes Croft, Bristol, NGR ST 59061 73803, Heritage Statement*, AC archaeology document no. **ACD719/1/1**

Passmore, A., 2015, *41 Stokes Croft, Bristol, ST 59071 73819, Written Scheme of Investigation for historic building recording, Bristol City Council planning reference 14/04413/LA*, AC archaeology document no. **ACD1077/1/0**

Old-maps.co.uk website, [www.old-maps.co.uk](http://www.old-maps.co.uk)



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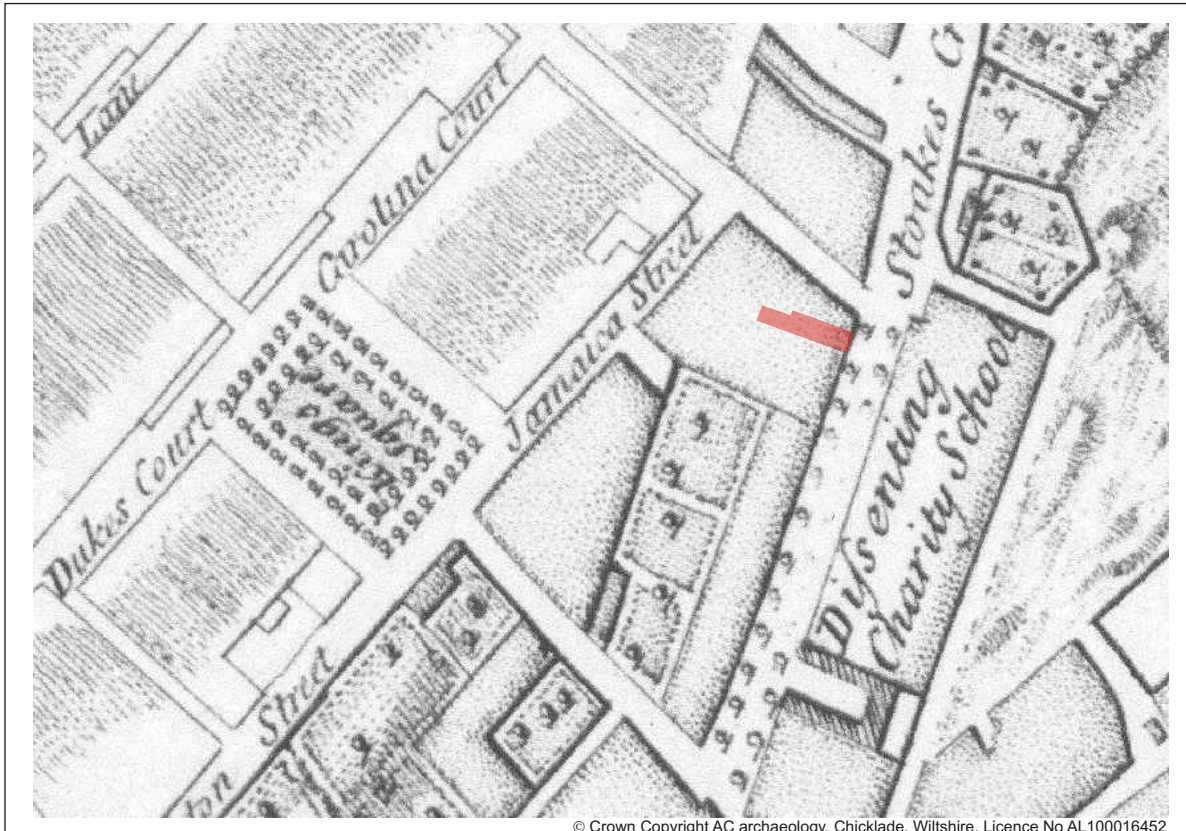
PROJECT

41 Stokes Croft, Bristol

TITLE

Fig. 1: Location of site





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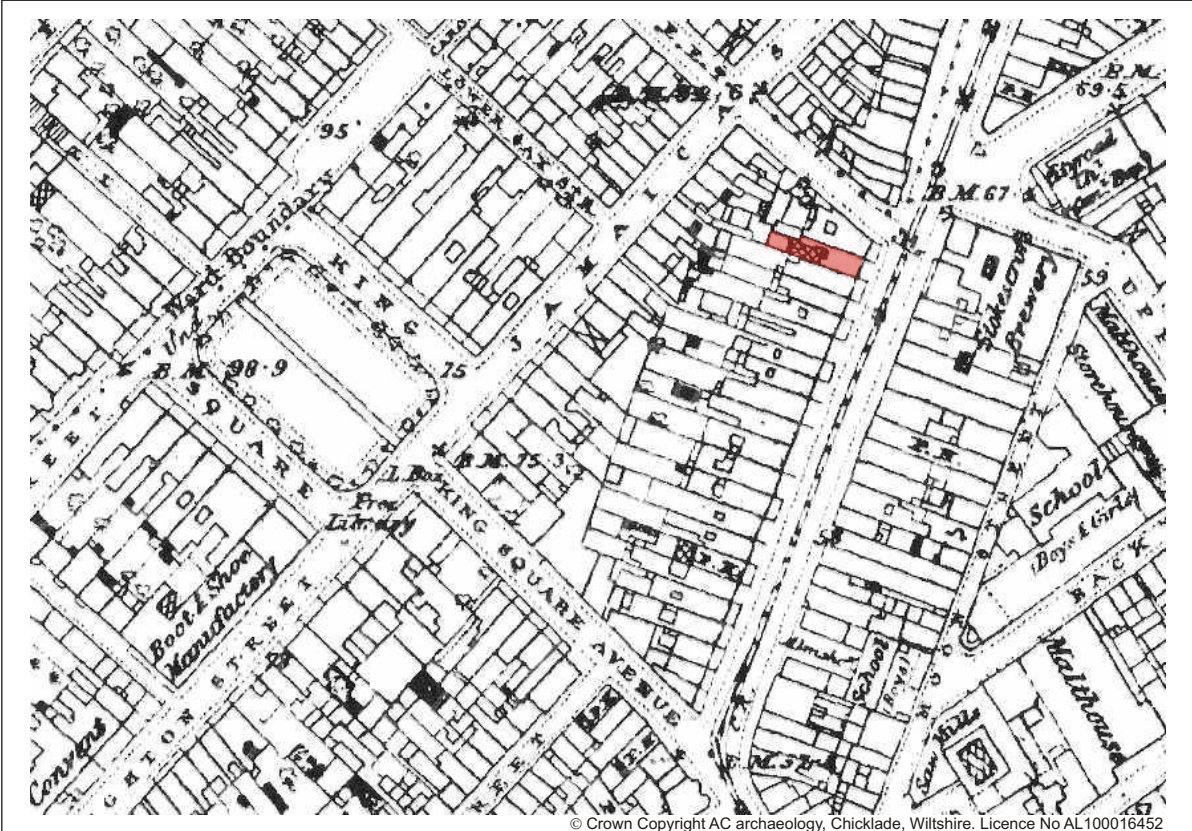
Fig. 2: Rocque's Map of 1750 showing the north-west side of Stokes Croft as a developed area



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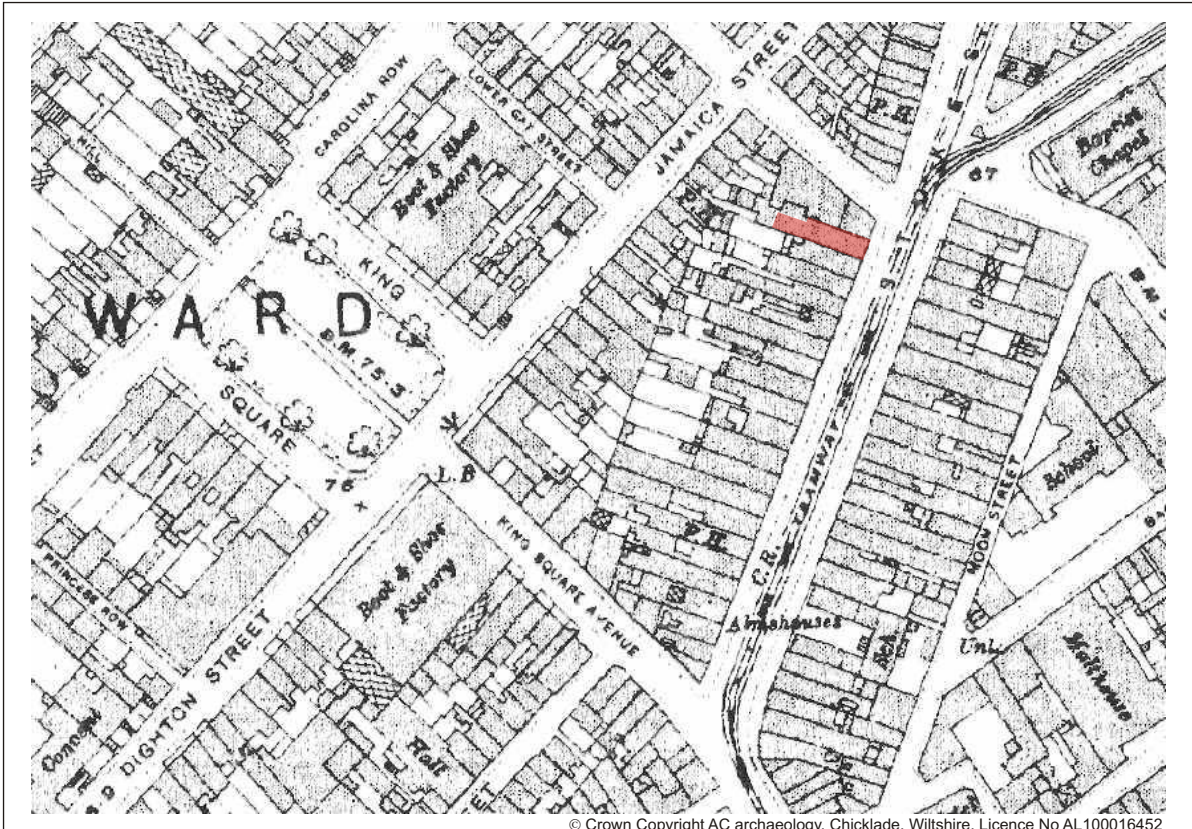
Fig. 3: Ashmead's map of 1828, showing further developments to the north west and enclosed front areas between the houses and the street

Approximate location of site



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Fig. 4: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 1st-edition map showing the plans of the houses and the gradual removal of the front areas between the houses and the street. The footprints of the houses suggest development in groups of two or three houses in each phase



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Fig. 5: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 2nd-edition map c.1910 showing the removal of all the front areas and further development of rear buildings

Approximate location of site



Plate 1: The surviving block of 35-43 Stokes Croft, viewed from the south.



Plate 2: The fluted moulding adjacent to the front door, viewed from the southeast.



Plate 3: The front elevation of the property, viewed from the southeast.



Plate 4: The first floor of the front elevation showing brickworks and window openings, viewed from the south.



Plate 5: The stone detailing to one of the front windows, viewed from the southeast.



Plate 6: Detail of the cornice at eaves level, viewed from the southeast.





Plate 7: The rear elevation, with the later extension to the front, viewed from the northwest.



Plate 8: The chase for the stairs to the rear first-floor door, viewed from the north.



Plate 9: The first-floor fireplace in the front room, viewed from the south.



Plate 10: The chimney stacks at roof level, showing the scars of the rooflines and the extended masonry of No. 43, viewed from the south.



Plate 11: The supports for the first-floor fireplace in the rear room, viewed from the west.



Plate 12: The ground-floor looking southeast along the line of the possible corridor.



Plate 13: The first-floor partition wall showing joist sockets, inserted doorway and rebuilt masonry, viewed from the northwest.



Plate 14: The second-floor partition wall showing the scar of the removed/destroyed partition, viewed from the southeast.



Plate 15: The possible rear entrance to the basement, viewed from the northwest.



Plate 16: The joist sockets of the second-floor ceiling within the party wall with no. 39, viewed from the east.



Plate 17: The rear east wall showing inserted and blocked doorway and small outbuilding beyond, viewed from the southeast.



Plate 18: Scars of the roof and stairs in the west boundary wall, viewed from the north.



Plate 19: The roof structure of the rear outbuilding, viewed from the northwest.

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