

Numbers 670 to 686 Fishponds Road and 4 to 18
Hockeys Lane, Fishponds, Bristol

Archaeological Watching Brief and Standing
Building Recording

Bristol HER 24945 & 24947
NGR ST 6305 7560



On Behalf of:
Craddy Pitchers Davidson Limited

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SUMMARY

Avon Archaeological Unit Limited were commissioned by Craddy Pitchers Davidson, acting as agents, on behalf of Aldi UK to undertake archaeological recording and monitoring works prior to and during a development to construct a new supermarket (planning ref 09/00094/F) on land at Nos. 670 to 686 Fishponds Road and 4 to 18 Hockeys Lane, Fishponds, Bristol.

The recording work comprised an English Heritage level 2 archaeological building survey (BHER 24947) of the former Methodist chapel and Sunday school at No. 16 Hockeys Lane and an archaeological watching brief maintained during the demolition of the chapel building and subsequent excavation of concrete surfaces and concrete foundations (BHER 24945).

The survey made a photographic record of the chapel and Sunday school building, both internally and externally. In addition it encompassed a rapid photographic survey of neighbouring No.18 Hockeys Lane, which was attached to the chapel. The survey indicated that the Sunday school was a later addition to the already extant chapel and that when the chapel was extended to include the Sunday school large scale renovations, including the installation of a first floor were undertaken. No historic records for either the chapel or the school could be traced but they both appear on the 1882 first edition Ordnance Survey plan.

The watching brief stage monitored the demolition of the Methodist chapel and the subsequent excavation of concrete slab surfaces and foundations across the site. No archaeologically significant features or deposits were identified. The development of the site has been temporarily suspended by Aldi UK. Further monitoring of ground works will be necessary once the development restarts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Avon Archaeological Unit Limited would like to thank the following for their assistance and cooperation during the project; Mr Steve Harding of Craddy Pitchers Davidson Limited; the archaeological planning officers of Bristol City Council, Messrs Pete Insole and City archaeologist Bob Jones.

NOTES

Whereas Avon Archaeological Unit Limited have taken all care to produce a comprehensive summary of the recorded archaeological evidence, no responsibility can be accepted for any omissions of fact or opinion, however caused.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAU Avon Archaeological Unit Limited
aOD above Ordnance Datum
BCC Bristol City Council
HER Historic Environment Record
OS Ordnance Survey

1 INTRODUCTION

Planning consent has been granted for the construction of a new Aldi Superstore at Nos. 670 to 686 Fishponds Road and 4 to 8 Hockeys Lane, Fishponds Bristol. As a condition of planning consent (planning ref 09/00094/F) a programme of archaeological work was required comprising a building survey of the former Methodist chapel and Sunday school building at No.16 Hockeys Lane and an archaeological watching brief monitoring all intrusive groundworks related to the development.

The building survey work was undertaken on Thursday the 8th and Friday the 9th of October 2010 and the watching brief during October and November 2010 under the supervision of Kevin Potter who subsequently compiled this report.

2 METHODOLOGY

The project was conducted in accordance with an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation (AAU 2010) produced by David Etheridge in response to a brief specified by Mr Bob Jones the archaeological planning officer for Bristol City Council.

The recording was conducted to English Heritage Level 2 specifications (English Heritage 2006, 14). Photographs were taken in digital format and detailed notes and observations, including a measured survey, were made and used to produce ground plans. A search of the Bristol Record Office was made but no building plans for the Methodist chapel could be found.

The project archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery and an entry for the project will be made in the Bristol City Historic Environment Record under the reference BHER 24945.

3 HISTORIC BACKGROUND

The site covers a large area (4165sq m) of land on the west side of Hockeys Lane, Fishponds. It is bounded to the north by Fishponds road and to the south by Lower Station Road. The western boundary comprised the sides and rear gardens of terraced properties fronting both Fishponds Road and Lower Station Road. The Methodist chapel is located in the south-east corner of the site (**Fig 2**). The nearest recorded height was a spot height in the centre of Fishponds road, roughly 10m north of the northern site boundary, which has a recorded value of 57.00m aOD. The underlying geology of the study area is recorded on the British Geological Survey map of 2004 as being Mangotsfield Coal Beds of the Carboniferous period.

Historically Fishponds lay in the parish of Stapleton within the Hundred of Barton Regis in the County of Gloucestershire. Stapleton is not mentioned in Domesday but the historic Manor of Barton (Regis) does feature. In the 17th century, the area that is now Fishponds lay on the fringes of Kingswood Forrest which, during the Saxon period, comprised a large hunting ground later reduced to a chase by Henry III In 1228.

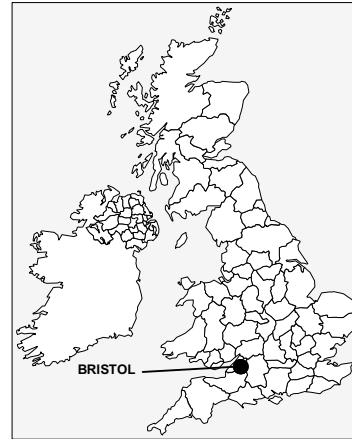
Fishponds takes its name from two large fish ponds, first recorded on Nordens 1610 map of Kingswood Forrest (BRO/04480). They were located opposite each other to

either side of what is today called Fishponds road in the centre of modern day Fishponds. An archaeological investigation (Young 2010) determined the presence of one of the ponds and confirmed the broad location depicted by Norden. The nucleated settlement, which developed to become the urban agglomeration that is Fishponds today, first appears in the cartographic record around 1750, in an undated plan book of Stapleton Parish (BRO/AC/WH/5/86/q). The subsequent sequence of cartographic evidence indicates that although the nucleus of the modern day settlement had been established it remained essentially rural in character through to the 19th century. There is

The site itself lies towards the western bounds of the Fishponds district roughly 400m south-west of the urban centre. The northern boundary of the site fronts Fishponds road which is an historic route depicted as early as 1610 (Norden).

No documentary records of the Methodist chapel and Sunday school could be traced although they both feature on the 1882 first edition Ordnance Survey plan of the area. It is likely that the chapel was established in the earlier 19th century and it was the oldest extant structure on the site. The attached Sunday school was added later probably in the second half of the 19th century but before 1882.

Figure 1



General Site Location

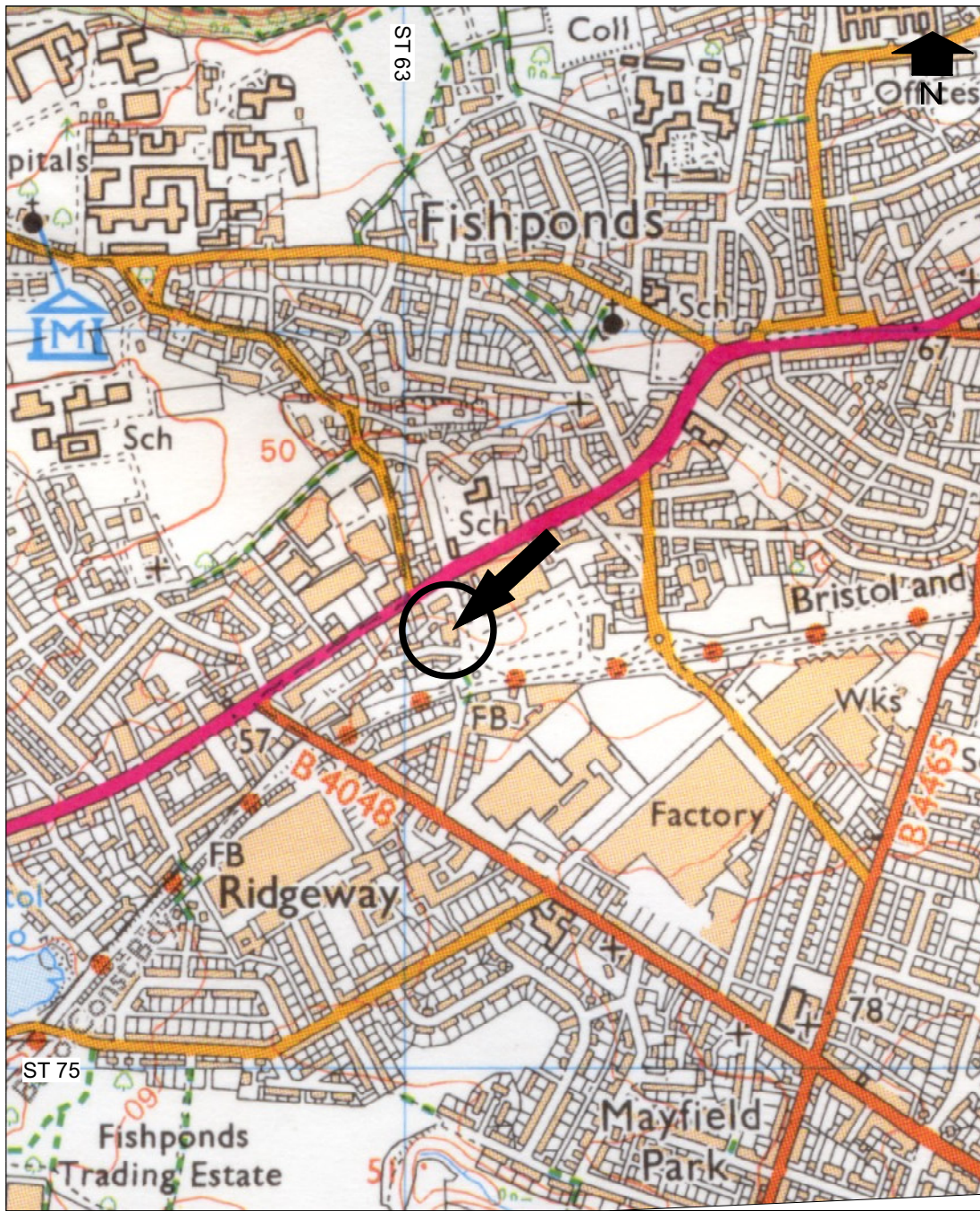
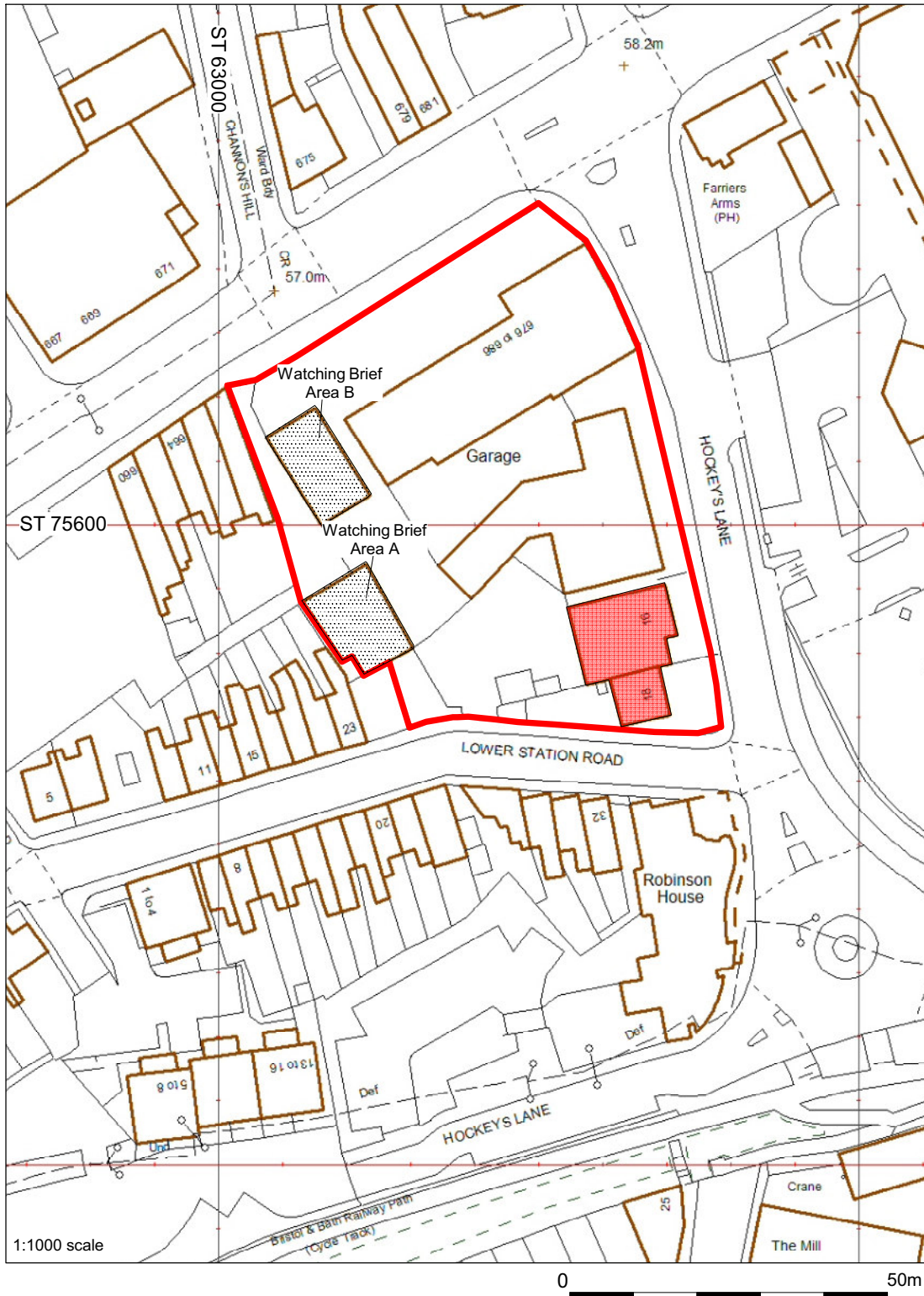


Figure 2

Boundary of the Study Area with
Recorded Standing Buildings Highlighted



4 THE BUILDING SURVEY

The survey identified three broad construction phases the earliest being the construction of the Methodist Chapel (Phase 1) in the earlier 19th century. This was followed by alterations made when the building was extended to include the Sunday School (Phase 2) during later 19th century. Phase 3 represents modern alterations evident throughout the building. An exact date for the original construction of the chapel has not been found but it is depicted on the 1882 Ordnance Survey so was extant by that time, also a figure 18 was just visible in the worn date stone at the top of the façade, indicating that it was built within the 19th century. In its latest manifestation the building was a twin gable ended structure, the chapel being a larger gable on the north side of a narrow gable ended extension.

Phase 1, 19th century (Figures 3 & 4)

In its original form the chapel was a simple rectangular gable ended building built from random coursed red pennant sandstone blocks bonded with a mid-grey, friable ash mortar. The gable ends of the building were both clad in pebble dash render (**Plate 1**). The original façade, which fronted Hockeys Lane, was partially concealed behind a one storey lean to porch, beyond which was a central pointed arch entrance (**Plate 2**).



Plate 1

Above the entrance was a large perpendicular style pointed arch window which had been carefully blocked in concrete so that the freestone masonry of the frame was still visible.

Only the north facing elevation of the chapel was fully exposed, the south facing side being butted by the later Sunday school extension. It contained three equally spaced rectangular windows in similar freestone masonry to that of the one in the façade (**Plate 3**). There was also a small window in the top west corner of the façade but this was a later addition and will be discussed in the Phase 3 section. The three original windows were blocked with concrete, which again, as in the façade window, respected the stone frames.



Plate 2

The rear, west facing, elevation contained only one original feature, a small pointed arched freestone window towards the top of the elevation, it also contained two doors that were later additions.

It was evident that the building was originally designed to provide a single open space. This had been divided by the addition of a second floor which was clearly not an original design feature as it bisected all of the original windows.

Phase 2 Later 19th century (Figures 3 & 4)

The original chapel building was extended to accommodate a Sunday school facility. The main focus of the extension was a narrow gable-ended structure abutting the south facing elevation of the existing chapel, it also encompassed the division of the entire building to contain a first floor. The Sunday school extension was built from random coursed pennant sandstone blocks with red brick surrounds for the windows and doors. Only the two gable ends and



Plate 3

part of the southern end of the south facing elevation were visible, the two sides either abutting, or butted by the chapel to the north and number 18 Hockeys Lane to the south. External access was via a single rectangular doorway in the eastern gable end. There was also a rectangular window at ground floor level to the north of the door and another above it at first floor level. The western gable end contained a rectangular first floor window in its centre. The visible part of the south facing elevation (**Plate 4**) displayed three large square windows with shallow arch tops spaced equally along the elevation, there were also two blocked openings, possibly more windows, at first floor level. None of the blocked windows or openings described visible from within the building.

It appeared likely that the Sunday school extension was originally divided into only two ground floor spaces. Access to the newly created first floor was via two staircases, the largest inserted through the south-eastern corner of the southern wall of the original chapel, the second, which was a later addition, was on the southern side of the Sunday school extension towards its eastern end.

The first floor comprised four spaces with the Sunday school forming a single concourse while the existing chapel had been divided into three rooms, though it seems likely that the divisions may have been later (see Phase 3).



Plate 4

Phase 3, Modern (Figures 3 & 4)

The building contained evidence of numerous minor changes and alterations, undertaken in recent years, were evident throughout the building. Largely these comprised stud walls that sub-divided the existing spaces of the building but also encompassed the installation of fire escapes and new windows. The ground floor of the Sunday school extension was divided from two spaces into five providing a shower room and a second flight of stairs leading to the first floor. Aside from the adaptation of the lean to porch entrance to contain a toilet room and the installation of a double fire door in the centre of its western, rear, wall the chapel itself had undergone little recent alteration.

Above the rear fire escape on the ground floor, was a second, first floor, fire door leading to a flight of metal steps on the outside of the building. The layout of the first floor appeared to have remained largely as it had after its creation, when the Sunday school extension works were undertaken. A small window had been cut through the top west corner of the northern wall of the chapel, possibly replacing an earlier blocked window, and the frames of the two windows at either end of the first floor of the Sunday school building had been replaced with modern ones.



Plate 5

No. 18 Hockeys Lane

Though not explicitly required in the project brief a rapid survey of No. 18 Hockeys Lane (**Plate 5**) was deemed to be of significant enough value in understanding the development of the Methodist chapel, to which it was attached that it was undertaken as an additional exercise. A brief description is contained below.

No. 18 Hockeys Lane was a detached house, which had later been extended to abut the southern façade of the Methodist chapel Sunday school extension. It was a two storey rectangular house with a salt-box roof. The frontal facade faced east, fronting Hockeys Lane. Access was via a single door set to the northern side of the façade or via two doors in the rear elevation, though it was evident that the main entrance was formerly on the southern side of the original part of the house. There were four windows in the façade and one in the rear, west facing, elevation. Internally the layout was a simple two up two down with additional rooms, comprising a kitchen entrance area and third bedroom, contained within the extension which abutted the chapel.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

An archaeological watching brief was maintained throughout the demolition of the standing historic buildings, and during the removal of the hard-standing concrete surfaces covering large areas of the site plus the removal of underlying concrete foundations. Groundworks for the new development are not yet scheduled and will require monitoring as a separate exercise. Both the demolition and subsequent excavation of the hard-standing and foundations were undertaken by large 360° mechanical excavators.



Plate 6

The initial demolition stage provided an opportunity to observe the fabric of the walls of the Methodist Chapel (**Plate 6**). The observations confirmed the fabric recorded during the building survey, which were pennant sandstone blocks bonded with a mid grey ash mortar.

The excavation of the hard-standing surfaces had minimal intrusive impact on the underlying deposits. It revealed that across most of the site there is an undefined depth of modern made ground comprising earlier demolition rubble, containing stone, brick, concrete, stone chippings and clay (**Plate 7**).



Plate 7

Following the removal of the concrete slab the foundations of the recently demolished buildings, were excavated. The foundations were localised in two Areas, A and B (**Fig 2**). Removal of the slab above Area A exposed the surface of the underlying natural substrata, which was a stiff yellow-brown clay. All of the foundations excavated in the area were cut into it.

The foundations within Area B were again cut through the natural clay, however a deposit black industrial waste material was revealed surrounding the base of the foundations excavated in the north-east of the area suggesting that here foundations could be cut into an earlier buried deposit.

No further features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified and no finds were recovered.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The Standing Building Survey made a complete record of the Methodist Chapel and Sunday school recording all elevations and internal features and produced measured ground plans. It determined that the chapel developed in two main stages beginning in the early 19th century with the chapel building itself followed in the later 19th century by extension works related to the addition of a Sunday school facility. Neighbouring property number 18 Hockeys Lane was probably constructed sometime after the Methodist Chapel.

The watching brief was limited to demolition and selected removal of modern concrete slab surfaces and foundations. Shallowly buried natural clay was revealed in some areas of the site suggesting that there may have been previous ground reduction. The north-western corner of the site contained stratified deposits of burnt industrial material. No significant archaeological finds or deposits were located on the site during this preliminary stage of the watching brief.

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Ground Floor of the Chapel with Views 1:100 scale



Figure 4

First Floor of the Chapel with Views 1:100 scale

