

Archaeological Watching Brief
during Test Pit Excavations in
**LITTLE THOMAS LANE,
REDCLIFFE, BRISTOL.**

for
Mr. Rob Gregory



Report No. 2097/2009
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Centred on
N.G.R. ST 59086 72775

Client: Mr. Rob Gregory

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NOTE

Notwithstanding that Bristol and Region Archaeological Services have taken reasonable care to produce a comprehensive summary of the known and recorded archaeological evidence, no responsibility can be accepted for any omissions of fact or opinion, however caused.

January, 2009.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by Rob Gregory to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of four test pits at Little Thomas Lane, Redcliffe, Bristol. The fieldwork followed the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999), with the aim of recording any archaeological features or deposits revealed during the course of intrusive groundworks.
- 1.2 The site (**Fig. 2**), centred on NGR ST 59086 72775, lies within the Redcliffe Conservation Area at a height of approximately 8.5m aOD. It is bounded by a car park to the north and to the east by Beckett Hall and The Church of St. Thomas the Martyr. Thomas Lane lies to the south of the site and a construction site bounds the west side of the lane. The geology of the study area comprises estuarine alluvium of the Pleistocene and Recent periods (British Geological Survey 1962).
- 1.3 The project archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery under the Accession Number BRSMG 2009/2 and a copy of the report will be made available to the National Monuments Record maintained by English Heritage. The project has been entered in the Bristol Historic Environment Record as: BHER 24711 and in the OASIS Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations as: bristola1- 53783.
- 1.4 The fieldwork was undertaken on the 14th of January 2009 under the supervision of Heather Hirons who also wrote this report. Ann Linge (Design & Production Officer) compiled the report and prepared the illustrations and Bruce Williams (BaRAS Manager) managed the project.

2. RESULTS

- 2.1 Test pit 1 (**Plate 1**) was 2.10m long by 2.00m wide and dug to a depth of 1.30m where it reached natural alluvium. The test pit revealed the western wall (101) and footings (102) of Beckett Hall cut through a series of possible mortar surfaces and made ground layers (contexts 105 to 112). The fill (104) of the cut (103) for the footings of the wall produced one sherd of 18th-century salt-glazed stoneware (BPT277), which was not retained.
- 2.2 The second test pit (**Plate 2**) also revealed the wall footings for Beckett Hall although the step in the footings was narrower than in test pit 1. Test pit 2 measured 1.76m by 1.76m by 1.42m deep. A layer of degraded brick (203) was revealed below the cobbled lane surface, and was possibly a previous lane surface. This was laid on a deposit of made ground (206), which was overlying natural clay (207).
- 2.3 Test pit 3 (**Plate 3**) revealed a layer of made ground (309) beneath the cobbles (300) at the south end of the pit. This abutted a roughly made, Pennant, corner infill (306), filling the corner between the church and Beckett Hall. The infill was built directly on top of a brick drain (307). The drain was in turn built on the medieval footings (308) of the church tower, which were also abutted by the footings of Beckett Hall (302). In the north section of the pit three layers of made ground were also visible, contexts 309 to 311, below which was natural clay (312). Test pit 3 measured 2.24m long by 1.45m wide and was 1.4m deep.
- 2.4 The last test pit was heavily truncated by the cut for an iron water pipe (401) running north-south right along its length. Where the ground was not disturbed two layers of made ground (402 and 403) were revealed in the south end of the trench. Possible stone vaulting was revealed in the north of the western section (**Plate 4**), however very little of this was visible. A

small section of the medieval footings of the church tower (405) were also visible in the west section of the pit. Test pit 4 was 2.20m long by 1.36m wide by 1m deep.

2.5 Full details of all the contexts are contained in Appendix 2.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The test pits revealed possible stone vaulting, previous lane surfaces and the medieval footings of the tower of the Church of St. Thomas the Martyr, the footings for Beckett Hall, and a brick-built drain associated with Beckett Hall. Unfortunately, such small amounts of these were visible, and some were so disturbed, that very little can be said about them. They do, however, indicate a likelihood of further archaeological remains beneath Little Thomas Lane.

4. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES CONSULTED

Published Works

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1999 *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

Unpublished Material

Bryant, J., 1994, *Archaeological Desktop Study of 25-31 Victoria Street, Beckett Hall and St. Thomas Churchyard, Bristol*, (BaRAS Report No. BA/C090; unpublished client report).

Burchill, R., 1994, *St. Thomas' Burial Ground, St. Thomas Street, Bristol, Avon*, (BaRAS Report No. BA/D132; unpublished client report).

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

BaRAS would like to thank Rob Gregory and the Millers site engineers for their assistance and co-operation, and Bob Jones (BCC Archaeological Officer) for his advice.

APPENDIX 1: Policy Statement

This report is the result of work carried out in the light of national and local authority policies.

NATIONAL POLICIES

Statutory protection for archaeology is enshrined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), amended by the National Heritage Act, 1983. Nationally important sites are listed in the Schedule of Ancient Monuments (SAM). Scheduled Monument consent is required for any work which would affect a SAM.

ODPM PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

The Planning Policy Guidance of Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16) consolidates advice to planning authorities. The Guidance stresses the non-renewable nature of the archaeological resource, details the role of the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), encourages early consultation with county and district archaeological officers and sets out the requirement for developers to provide sufficient information on the archaeological impact of development to enable a reasonable planning decision to be made.

PPG 16 also indicates the circumstances where further work would be necessary and outlines the use of agreements and conditions to protect the archaeological resource.

DISTRICT POLICY

Bristol City Council Supplementary Planning Document (2006) states (policy SPD No.7, p4):

- (i) There will be a presumption in favour of preserving any archaeological features or sites of national importance, whether scheduled or not.
- (ii) Development which could adversely affect sites, structures, landscapes or buildings of archaeological interest and their settings will require an assessment of the archaeological resource through a desktop study, and where appropriate a field evaluation. Where there is evidence of archaeological remains, development will not be permitted except where it can be demonstrated that the archaeological features of the site will be satisfactorily preserved in situ, or a suitable strategy has been put forward to mitigate the impact of development proposals upon important archaeological remains and their settings; or, if this is not possible and the sites are not scheduled or of national importance, provision for adequately recording the site prior to destruction is made, preferably by negotiating a planning agreement to ensure that access, time and financial resources are available to allow essential recording and publication to take place.

APPENDIX 2: Context Descriptions

Test Pit 1

Context No.	Description
100	Cobbled road surface; Pennant cobbles 0.14x0.16x0.12m laid on a dirty, brown sandy mortar, 0.17m deep.
101	Wall of Beckett Hall; Pennant blocks with occasional Brandon Hill Grit blocks up to 0.42x0.15m in size with grey cement mortar.
102	Footings for wall 101; Pennant blocks with occasional Brandon Hill Grit blocks up to 0.18x0.1x0.1m roughly placed with pail grey mortar with crushed stone. The footings are stepped out by 0.32m for the bottom 0.45m and then very gently slope to form the base of wall 101 at a height of 1.14m.
103	Cut for footings 102; 1.3m of the width is visible (measured to footings 102) cut into layer 106.
104	Fill for cut 103; greyish, brown mixed, sandy, silt with moderate stone, mortar and charcoal inclusions. Produced one sherd of 18th-century salt-glazed stoneware (BPT277), not retained.
105	Subsurface for cobbles; brown sandy, silt with moderate mortar and charcoal inclusions.
106	Possible surface for previous road; buff coloured sandy mortar with occasional flecks of charcoal, 0.04m deep.
107	Made ground; grey sandy, silt with occasional mortar and crushed stone flecks, 0.11m deep.
108	Possible surface for previous road; buff coloured sandy mortar with occasional flecks of charcoal, 0.02m deep.
109	Made ground; grey sandy, silt with occasional mortar and crushed stone flecks, 0.14m deep.
110	Possible surface for previous road; buff coloured sandy mortar with occasional flecks of charcoal, 0.06m deep.
111	Made ground; grey sandy, silt with occasional mortar and crushed stone flecks, 0.14m deep.
112	Made ground/mortar bump; buff coloured sandy mortar with occasional flecks of charcoal and crushed stone, 0.29m deep.
113	Natural clay; plastic soft clay with no apparent inclusions.

Test Pit 2

Context No.	Description
200	Cobbled road surface; same as context 100.
201	Wall of Beckett Hall; same as context 101.
202	Footings for wall 201; same as context 102, although the footings only step out 0.22m for the bottom 0.38m.
203	Degraded brick layer; suggesting possible degraded surface, approximately 0.10m deep.
204	Possible cut for footings 202; same as context 103.
205	Fill for cut 204; same as context 104.
206	Made ground; greyish, brown mixed, sandy, silt with moderate, mortar and charcoal inclusions.
207	Natural clay; same as context 113.

Test Pit 3

Context No.	Description
300	Cobbled road surface; same as context 100.
301	Wall of Beckett Hall; same as context 101.
302	Footings for wall 301; same as context 102, although the footings stepped out 0.18m for the bottom 0.46m.
303	Possible cut for footings 302; same as context 103.
304	Fill for cut 304; same as context 104.
305	Made ground; greyish brown sandy silt with moderate mortar stone and charcoal inclusions, 0.49m deep.

306	Corner infill for church; Pennant blocks, 0.25x0.24m roughly laid with pail grey mortar, abbutts the wall for Beckett Hall, approximately 0.52m wide at the section of the test pit.
307	Brick drain wall; 4 courses deep, 1 course wide built with 0.22x0.11x0.07m red brick bonded with buff coloured mortar with crushed stone. Drain slops down slightly to the west, and is 0.30m high, 1.45m of it's length was visible. Corner infill 306 was built directly on top of the drain, which was built directly on top of footings 308.
308	Medieval footings of the church tower; 0.28x0.14x0.10m Pennant blocks bound with a soft pink mortar with occasional poorly sorted crushed stone. Mortar from the construction of drain 307 has covered the top of the footings.
309	Made ground layer; black sandy silt with stone and mortar inclusions, 0.37 deep.
310	Made ground layer; mid brown sandy mortar, 0.26m deep.
311	Made ground layer; soft, grey silty, clay with occasional mortar, 0.46m deep.
312	Natural clay; same as context 113.

Test Pit 4

Context No.	Description
400	Cobbled road surface; same as context 100.
401	Water pipe trench; cut and fill of pipe trench for iron water pipe.
402	Made ground; pail red sandy silt, 0.12m deep.
403	Made ground; dark red sandy silt, 0.32m deep.
404	Possible stone vaulting; made with Pennant blocks up to 0.45x0.26m in size bonded with off white mortar with crushed stone inclusions and up to 0.25m of mortar on the top of the blocks. Only 1.1m of the width, and 0.56m of it's height was visible.
405	Medieval footings of the church tower; pail pink mortar with frequent crushed stone inclusions, no stone blocks visible.

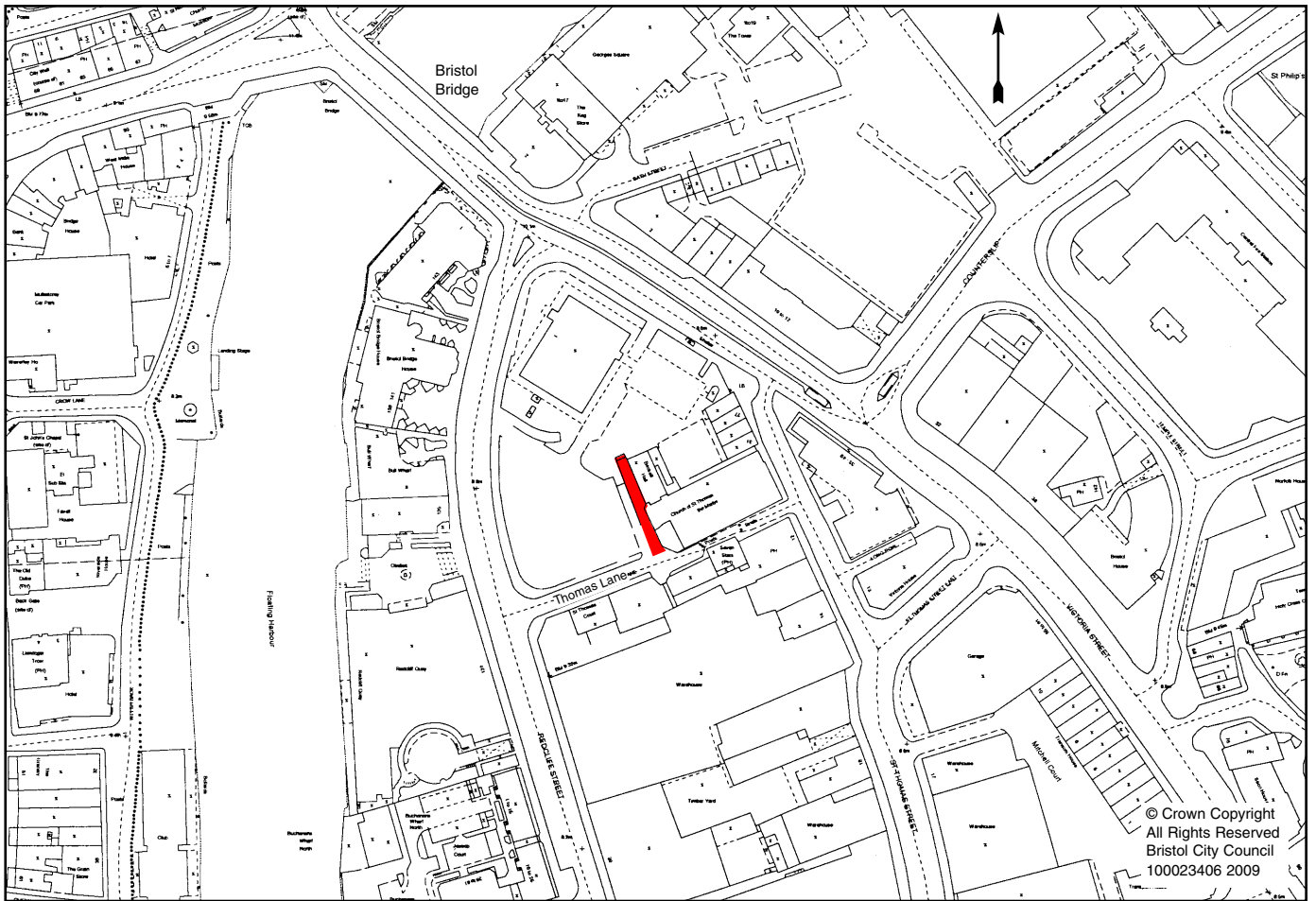


Fig.1 Site location plan, 1:2500

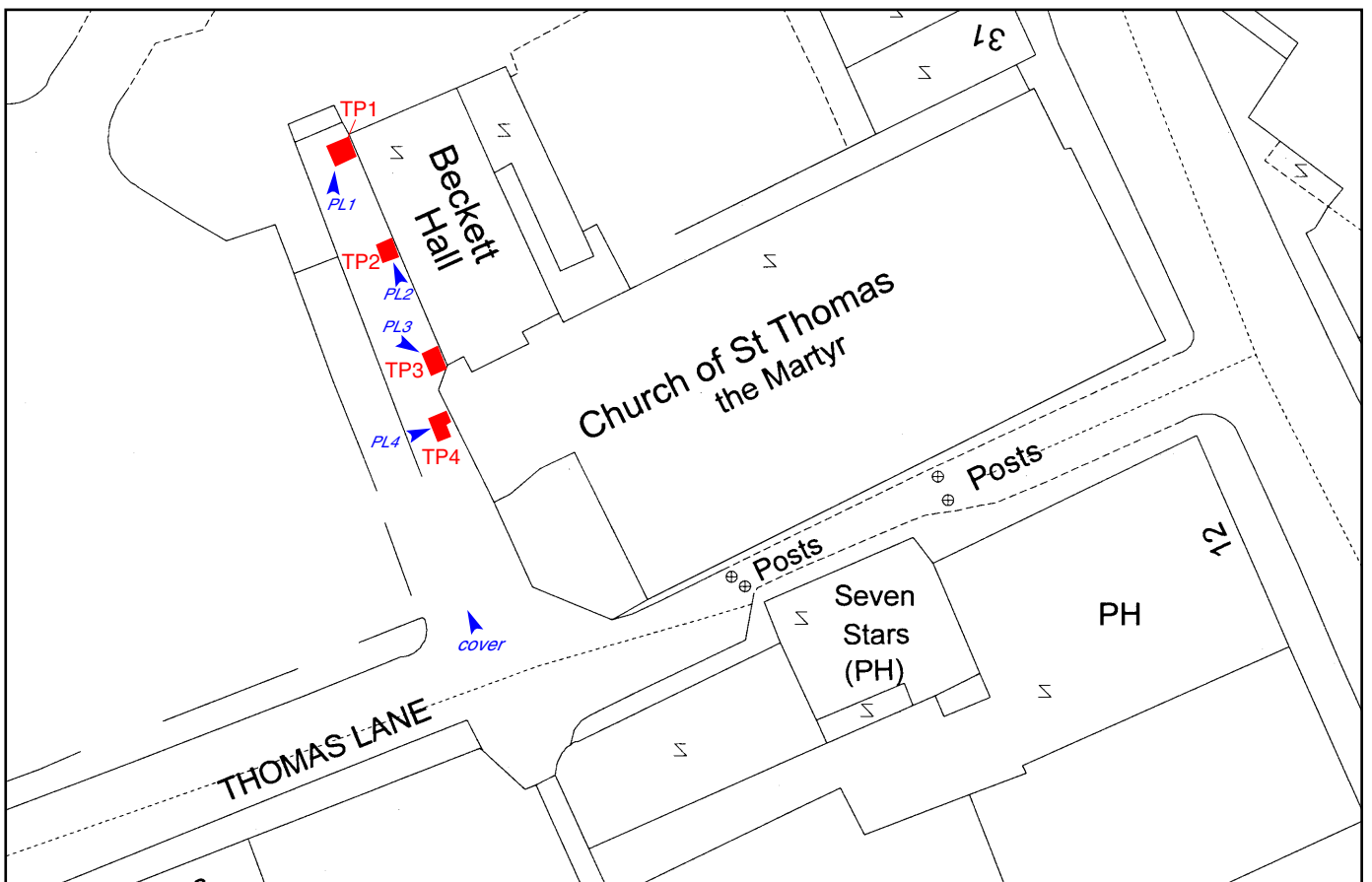


Fig.2 Plan showing study area in detail, 1:500



Plate 1 Test Pit 1, looking north



Plate 2 South-facing section of Test Pit 2, looking north



Plate 3 Test Pit 3, looking south-west



Plate 4 West-facing section of Test Pit 4 showing possible stone vaulting, looking east