

Archaeological Watching Brief
at
SITE H4,
JUNCTION OF AVONVALE ROAD & BEAM STREET,
BARTON HILL, BRISTOL.
for
Leadbitter



Report No. 2022/2009
BHER No. 24758

By Richard Coe



Bristol and Region Archaeological Services

St. Nicholas Church, St. Nicholas Street, Bristol, BS1 1UE. Tel: (0117) 903 9010 Fax: (0117) 903 9011



Archaeological Watching Brief
at
SITE H4,
JUNCTION OF AVONVALE ROAD & BEAM STREET,
BARTON HILL, BRISTOL.

Centred on
N.G.R. ST 61080 73035

Client: Leadbitter

CONTENTS

Summary	
List of Illustrations	
1. Introduction.....	1
2. The Site.....	2
3. Archaeological and Historical Context.....	3
4. Aims and Methodology	4
5. Results.....	5
6. Conclusion.....	5
7. Project Team.....	6
8. Bibliography and Sources Consulted.....	6
9. Acknowledgements.....	6
Appendix 1: Policy Statement	
Appendix 2: Context Descriptions	
Illustrations and Plates	

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.

April, 2009.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE:-

Bristol and Region Archaeological Services retain copyright of this report under the *Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act*, 1988, and have granted a licence to Leadbitter and their agents to use and reproduce the material contained within, once settlement of our account has been received.

Plans reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Bristol City Council, Licence Number LA090551, 2009.

SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks associated with the construction of four retail units and twelve flats on the north side of Avonvale Road, Barton Hill, Bristol.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed during the intrusive groundworks, other than parts of 19th century brick foundations associated with one of the terraced houses on Corbett Street and Great Western Street (now Avonvale Road) that occupied the site between the 1830s and 1960s.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures

- Figure 1 Site location plan with plate directions, 1:1250
- Figure 2 St George Tithe Map, 1842
- Figure 3 Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan, 1883 (reduced)
- Figure 4 Proposed development (not to scale)

Plates

- Cover Ground reduction work in progress near Avonvale Road frontage, looking west towards Ashmead House
- Plate 1 East-facing section showing brick foundation of Victorian house
- Plate 2 South-facing section showing demolition deposit and made up ground
- Plate 3 General view of site showing the natural Redcliffe Sandstone

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by Leadbitter to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of 4 commercial units and 12 flats at the junction of Avonvale Road and Beam Street, Barton Hill, Bristol (Site H4).
- 1.2 The watching brief was commissioned to comply with the condition of planning consent B.C.C planning reference 08/00700/F and in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (2009).
- 1.3 The fieldwork was undertaken between 9th February and 9th March 2009 under the supervision of Richard Coe who also compiled this report.
- 1.4 The project archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery under the Accession Number 2009/12. The project has been entered in the Bristol Urban Archaeology Database as: BHER 24758 and in the OASIS Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations as: bristola1- 54710.

2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The site (centred on NGR ST 61080 73035) lies on the north side of Avonvale Road at its junction with Beam Street. It is bounded north by Corbett House
- 2.2 The site is not located in a conservation area. There are no listed buildings on or adjoining or affected by the site; no Scheduled Ancient Monuments exist in the area.
- 2.3 The geology of the study area comprises Redcliffe Sandstone of the Triassic period (British Geological Survey 1962).

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 No archaeological desk-based assessment has been carried out on the site, Prior to the present watching brief, a desk-based assessment had been conducted for the nearby Barton Hill Settlement, concentrating on the area around the south end of Ducie Road (Burchill 2001).
- 3.2 There has been no evidence of any Iron Age, Romano-British, Anglo-Saxon or medieval activity recorded within close proximity to the site.
- 3.3 Historically, the site lay within the manor of Barton Regis in the Hundred of Swinehead in the county of Gloucestershire, later the Hundred of Barton Regis. At the time of the Domesday Survey (1086), Barton was spelt Bertune Regis.
- 3.4 King William held Barton Regis. The estate was later passed onto the Berkeley family, and in 1608 the estate was acquired by Thomas Chester of Knolle park (ancestor of the Chester Master family of The Abbey, Cirencester, Glos.). The estate was gradually broken up and sold off to a number of local noble families.
- 3.5 By 1800 Barton Hill was a rural hamlet with a number of large houses mostly owned by Bristol merchants: two well know example being Tilly's Court and Royal Table House, the latter now St Luke's Vicarage. The area changed in the early 19th century with the construction of the Feeder Canal in 1809, and the opening of a railway line in 1839 brought rapid industrialisation to the area.
- 3.6 In April 1837 the joint-stock company Clarke, Acramans, Maze & Co from Manchester was established in Barton Hill with the aim of opening a new cotton factory in Bristol. Construction work started on the new mill later that same year and the Great Western Cotton Works opened in June 1838. It consisted of '*an immense range of spinning, weaving, bleaching and repairing shops, with all the appliances for employing 2000 hands*' (Knight 1851).
- 3.7 To ensure a regular and reliable workforce for the mill, rows of terraced houses were built in the surrounding area by the company to accommodate the workers, along with a day school, Sunday school and church. Many people moved to the area from neighbouring localities, but some came from as far away as Lancashire to work in the mill.
- 3.8 The cotton works closed, after 87 years of production, in 1925. By the 1930s much of the local housing stock was in very poor condition and in 1945, at the end of the Second World War and with the election of Clement Attlee as Prime Minister and leader of the new Labour Government, the city council condemned large areas of two up two down terraced housing in Barton Hill and other parts of the city.
- 3.9 Many of the 19th-century terraced houses and streets in Barton Hill were demolished in the 1950s including not only Great Western Street (Avonvale Road) but others including Corbett Street and Beam Street. The former terraced houses that stood on Great Western Street, Corbett Street and Beam Street were replaced by two tower blocks (Ashmead House and Corbett House), landscaped grounds and areas for car parking.

4. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork complied with the methodology contained within the Written Scheme of Investigation (J. Bryant, BaRAS January 2009.) The aim of the watching brief was to record any archaeological features or deposits revealed during the course of intrusive groundworks.
- 4.2 The watching brief involved the monitoring of all excavations, comprising a topsoil strip/ground reduction for the piling mat and foundations for a 3-storey block containing four commercial units and 12 flats.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1 All groundworks were carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator using a toothless grading bucket/tooth bucket.
- 5.2 No features or deposits of archaeological significance, other than part of a brick foundation for Victorian houses in Corbett Street were observed and no artefacts predating the modern period were recovered during intrusive groundwork at the site.
- 5.3 A turf layer and topsoil layer (100) was removed which exposed a deposit of dark brown sandy clay with the occasional fragment of red brick (101). This deposit was part of the landscaping which surrounds Corbett House.
- 5.4 Underlying 101 was deposit 102, a mid red-brown clayey sand with fragments of brick and fragments of mid grey mortar. This deposit was associated with the levelling of the ground in the 1950s after the Victorian houses were demolished.
- 5.5 Deposit 102 overlay 103, a dark reddish brown clayey sand with large amounts of red brick and mid grey mortar. This represents the demolition of 198 Avonvale Road, which was situated on the corner of Corbett Street and Avonvale Road.
- 5.6 Underlying 103 was a layer of reddish-yellow brown clayey sand, the natural geology, which was truncated by the foundations of Victorian houses and service pipe trenches.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The watching brief identified little in the way of archaeological remains within the area of the intrusive groundworks. The lack of archaeological deposits indicates that the remains related to the former terraced houses on Avonvale Road were largely truncated by subsequent development of the site, particularly landscaping.

7. PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1 The fieldwork was undertaken by Richard Coe who also produced this report. The illustrations were prepared and the report compiled by Ann Linge. The project was managed by Bruce Williams.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES CONSULTED

Maps

- 1883 Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 1:500 scale (Surveyed 1883; Published 1884 Gloucestershire Sheet LXXII.13.24.
- 1971 Ordnance Survey 1:1250 Edition (Surveyed 1949; Levelled 1956; Revised 1971; Published 1972) Plan ST 6072 NE.

Unpublished Works

- Bryant, J 2009 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief at Site H4, Avonvale Road, Bristol.*
- Burchill, R 2001 *Archaeological Desktop study of Barton Hill Settlement, Ducie Road Barton Hill, Bristol* (Unpublished client report; BaRAS Report No. 914/2001).
- Knight, C 1851 *Knight's Cyclopaedia of all Nations.*
- Longman, T 2008 *Archaeological Watching Brief of land at Avonvale Road, Barton Hill, Bristol* (unpublished client report; BaRAS Report No. 1825/2008).

9. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

BaRAS would like to thank Mr Anthony King and Mr Ken Elworthy of Leadbitter for their assistance and co-operation and Mr Pete Insole of Bristol City Council 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

Context No.	Description
100	Turf and topsoil 0.05m thick
101	Deposit of dark brown sandy clay 0.40m thick
102	Deposit of mid red-brown clayey sand 0.50m thick
103	Red brick and a mid grey mortar with a reddish brown clayey sand 0.15m thick
104	Layer of reddish-yellow brown clayey sand natural geology 1.05m thick

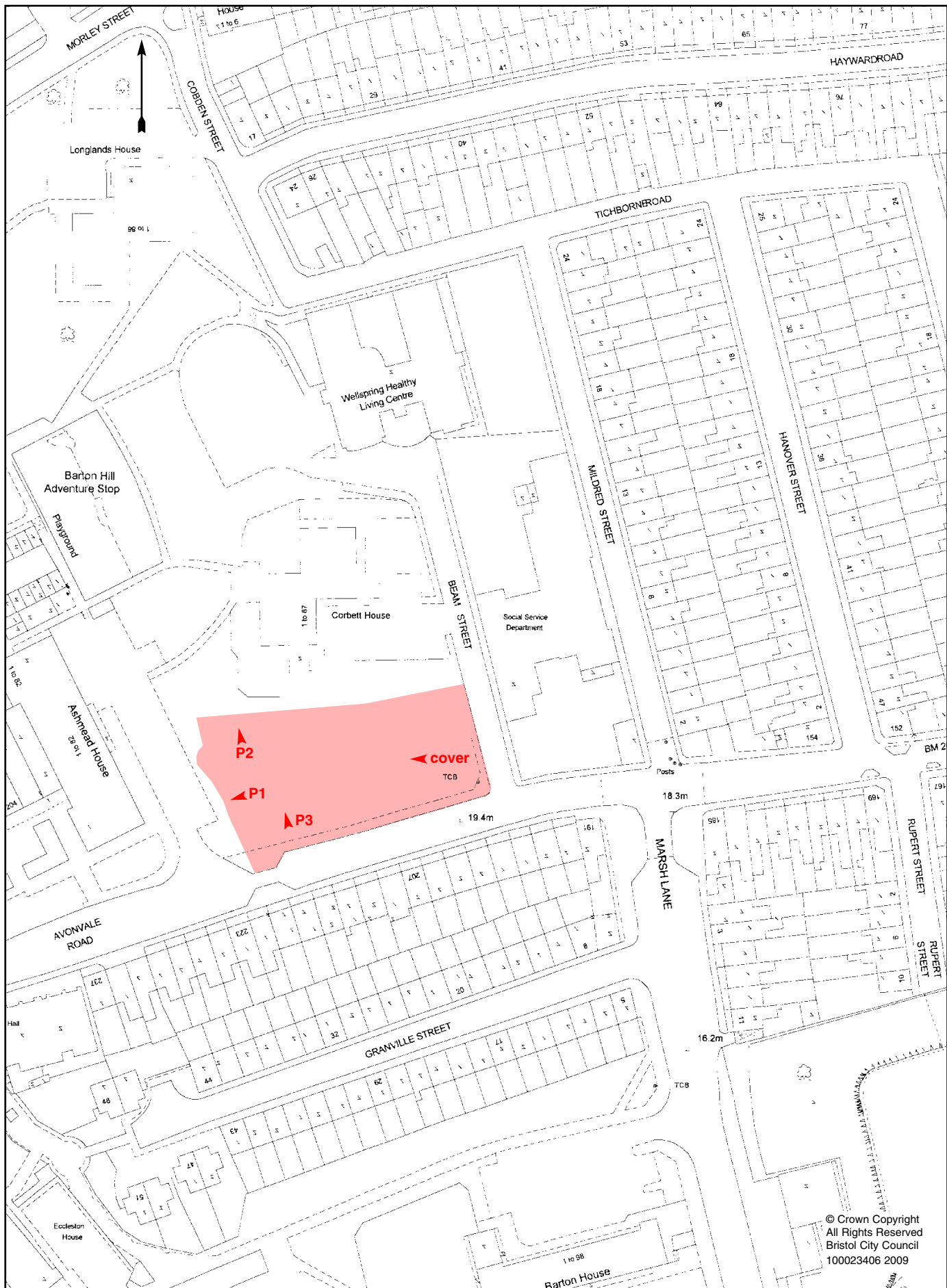


Fig.1 Site location plan with plate orientations, scale 1:1250



Fig.2 St George Tithe Map, 1842



Fig.3 Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan, 1883 (reduced)

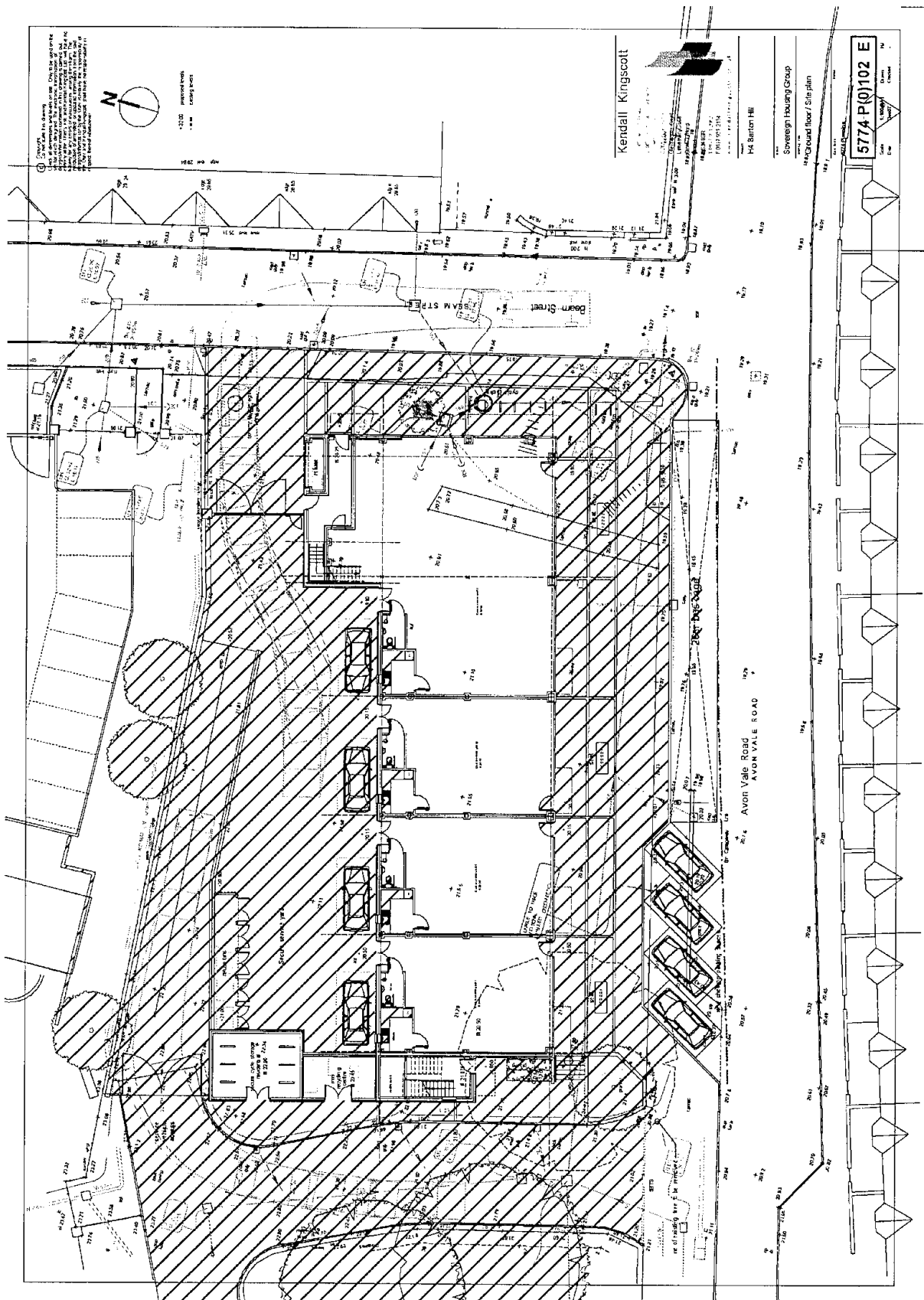


Fig.4 Proposed development (not to scale)



Plate 1
East-facing section
showing brick foundation
of Victorian house



Plate 2
South-facing section
showing demolition
deposit and made up
ground



Plate 3
General view of site
showing the natural
Redcliffe Sandstone