

Archaeological Watching Brief
at
**CUMBERLAND BASIN ENTRANCE LOCK,
BRISTOL.**
for
Bristol City Council



Report No. 2130/2009
BHER No. 24774

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at
**CUMBERLAND BASIN ENTRANCE LOCK,
BRISTOL.**

Centred on
N.G.R. ST 56761 72410

Client: Bristol City Council

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Abbreviations

AD	Anno Domini	BHER	Historic Environment Record
aOD	Above Ordnance Datum	Km	Kilometre
BaRAS	Bristol & Region Archaeological Services	m	Metre
BC	Before Christ	MoB	Museum of Bristol
BCC	Bristol City Council	NGR	National Grid Reference
BCL	Bristol Central Library	NMR	National Monuments Record
BCMAG	Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery	OS	Ordnance Survey
BHER	Bristol Historic Environment Record		
BRO	Bristol Record Office		
BSMR	Bristol Sites & Monuments Record		
c.	Circa		

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.

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SUMMARY

Bristol and Region Archaeological Services carried out an archaeological watching brief on the southern side of the entrance lock to the Cumberland Basin, where three small test pits and a borehole were sunk.

The groundworks revealed part of the back wall to the north lock and also the concrete footing for a mooring post.

No archaeological deposits or features pre-dating the 19th century were found.

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Cover View of drilling rig, looking north

Plate 1 South-west facing section of Test Pit 1

Plate 2 View of mooring post footing, Test Pit 2

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by Bristol City Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the sinking of three test pits and a borehole associated with the proposed construction of the Entrance Lock Control Building and lock gate mechanism at Cumberland Basin, Bristol.
- 1.2 The fieldwork was undertaken between 18th and 20th March 2009 under the supervision of Richard Coe who also compiled this report.
- 1.3 The project archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery under the Accession Number 2009/31 and a digital copy of the report will be sent to the National Monuments Record maintained by English Heritage. The project has been entered in the Bristol Urban Archaeology Database as: BHER 24774 and in the OASIS Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations as: bristola1-58209.

2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The site is centred on NGR ST 56761 72410, on the 'island' between the old Basin entrance lock (1809-1848) and new North (1873) entrance lock to the Cumberland Basin.
- 2.2 The geology of the study area comprises Estuarine Alluvium (British Geological Survey 1969).

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 This area beside the entrance lock lay in the historical area of Clifton parish in Gloucestershire. It was not until 1835 that that the parish of Clifton was absorbed into the city and county of Bristol.
- 3.2 In 1804 William & Josias Jessop started work on the construction of the original entrance locks and the Cumberland Basin and the project was completed on May 1, 1809.
- 3.3 The South Entrance Lock (Grade II listed) was enlarged and remodelled by Isambard Kingdom Brunel in the 1840s. It measures 262 feet long x 54 feet wide. A concrete wall now permanently seals the lock.
- 3.4 The North Entrance Lock, which was designed by Thomas Howard who was Dock Engineer between 1855-82, was built to replace William Jessop's original North Lock. It was designed to be larger and to meet the river at a less acute angle.
- 3.5 In 1870 a socketed bronze axe of Late Bronze Age date was found during deep excavation for construction of new locks at Cumberland Basin. John Pritchard reports that the axe was "found in the River Avon, about 20 feet below the river bank, opposite St. Vincent's Parade Centred on NGR ST 56768 72436" (Pritchard 1904, 330). It was presented to the Barrow Naturalists' Field Club in 1896 by then Docks Engineer. It would appear that faunal material was also found during the work although its relationship with the axe, if any, is unknown (BHER 340).
- 3.6 An undated ox skull and bones were found in "excavating New Entrance lock, Cumberland basin". The material was probably found at the same time as the socketed bronze axe (BHER 3282) although the relationship with the axe, if any, is unknown.

4. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork complied with the methodology contained within the Written Scheme of Investigation (BaRAS 2009) and the brief prepared by Bristol City Council's Archaeological Officer (BCC 2009). The aim of the watching brief was to record any archaeological features or deposits revealed during the excavation of test pits and the borehole.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1 An archaeological watching brief was carried out on the entrance lock to the Cumberland Basin, on the southern side of the lock, where three test pits and a borehole were sunk.

TEST PIT 1

- 5.2 This was located close to the river entrance lock gates and measured 1m NW-SE by 0.70m NE-SW and 1.75m deep. The stratigraphy revealed in the trench sections comprised three deposits: Context 102 was a thick layer (not bottomed) of brown-grey clayey silt. Context 101 was 0.30m deep, brown-grey gravel with fragments of red brick. Context 100 was 0.10m deep tarmac surface. At 1.75m part of the back wall to the lock was exposed.

TEST PIT 2

- 5.3 This trench was opened to expose the footing for a mooring post; the position of the mooring post was almost midway between the lock gates. The trench measured 1m N-S by 0.70m E-W and 0.50 deep. Only two contexts were exposed - 200 and 201, the same composition as contexts in Trench 1.

TEST PIT 3

Same as Test Pit 2 above.

BOREHOLE

- 5.5 A borehole was sunk to a depth of 16.90m. At every meter a 0.50m core sample was taken. See Table 1.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The result of the borehole suggests that the deposits were from the silting of the earliest course of the River Avon. No archaeological deposit or features pre-dating the 19th century were observed.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES CONSULTED

Published Works

Buchanan, R. A. & Cossons, N. 1969 *Industrial Archaeology of The Bristol Region*.

Pritchard, John E. 1904 Bristol Archaeological Notes for 1903. *Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*.

Unpublished Material

Longman, T. 2001 *Archaeological Desktop Study of land at Cumberland Basin, Bristol*. BaRAS Report No. 880/2001.

8. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

BaRAS would like to thank Martyn Duffin, ARUP, and Dennis Wright, Architecton for their assistance and co-operation, and Pete Insole, BCC Archaeological Officer, for his advice. The illustrations were prepared and the report compiled by Ann Linge. The project was managed by Bruce Williams.

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.

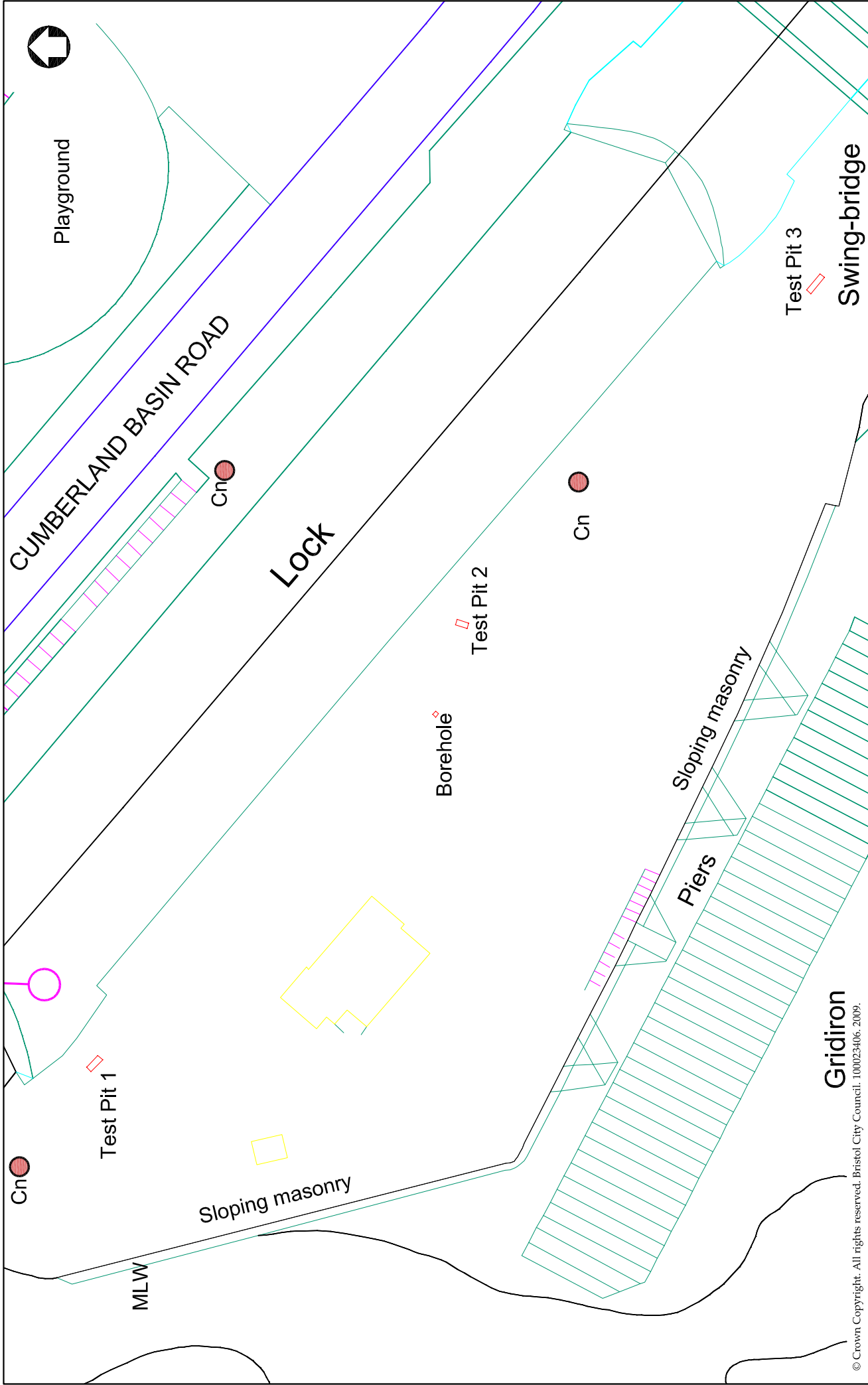
DISTRICT POLICY

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.

Table 1: Borehole Results

Depth	Description
0m to 1.80m	Made ground
1.80 - 2.00m	Mid-brown silty sandy clay
2.00 – 2.43m	Mid-grey silty clay
2.43 – 4.00m	Grey clay silty sand
4.00 – 4.50m	[not recorded]
4.50 – 6.00m	Mid-grey silty clay
6.00 – 8.00m	Dark grey silty clayey sand
8.00 – 8.45m	Mid-grey silty clay
8.45 – 8.90m	Mid-grey clayey sand
8.90 – 11.00m	Dark grey clayey silt
11.00 – 11.50m	Mid-grey silty sand
11.50 – 13.90m	Sandy gravels
13.90 – 15.60m	Rounded and sub-rounded river-washed stones
15.60 – 16.90m	Sand and fine gravels
Bottom of borehole	



Playground

CUMBERLAND BASIN ROAD

Lock

Borehole

Test Pit 2

Cn

Sloping masonry

Piers

Test Pit 3

Swing-bridge

Test Pit 1

Sloping masonry

MLW

Gridiron

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CUMBERLAND BASIN Fig.1 Location plan
LOCATION OF TEST PITS AND BOREHOLE

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drawn by	SR	drwg. no.	2009/CB/1
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scale	1:500		

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Plate 1 South-west facing section of Test Pit 1



Plate 2 View of mooring post footing, Test Pit 2