

Archaeological Watching Brief  
at  
**ASHTON PARK SCHOOL,  
LONG ASHTON, BRISTOL.**  
for  
Bristol City Council



Report No. 2113/2009  
NSHER No. 47396



Bristol and Region Archaeological Services

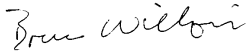

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Archaeological Watching Brief  
at  
**ASHTON PARK SCHOOL,  
LONG ASHTON, BRISTOL.**

Centred on  
N.G.R. ST 561136 713306

Client: Bristol City Council  
Agent: Skanska of Bristol

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<i>Date Issued:</i>	July 2009 

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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		

### Adopted Chronology

Prehistoric Before AD43	Palaeolithic 1,000,000 – 10,000 BC
	Mesolithic c. 10,000 – 3500 BC
	Neolithic c. 3500 – 2000 BC
	Bronze Age c. 2000 – 600 BC
	Iron Age c. 600 BC – AD43
Roman	AD43-410
Anglo Saxon/Early Medieval	AD410-1066
Medieval	AD1066-1540
Post-medieval	AD1540-present

### 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.

July, 2009.

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## **SUMMARY**

An archaeological watching brief and rectified-photography survey at Ashton Park School, Long Ashton, Bristol (NGR ST 561136 713306) was commissioned from Bristol & Region Archaeological Services by Skanska of Bristol.

The work was undertaken in relation to the formation of a temporary site-access in the masonry boundary wall on the southern boundary of the school premises.

Following dismantling operations and subsequent ground-reduction works, a foundation cut for the wall was observed on its northern side, although no cultural material was recovered from the fill. The total length of wall dismantled was approximately 20 m.

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### Plates

- Cover General view of southern side of boundary wall taken from Ashton Road, from the south-west
- Plate 1 General view along boundary wall during dismantling phase, from the east
- Plate 2 View of bagged-up stone and set-aside slag coping-stones during dismantling phase
- Plate 3 General view of sondage excavated on northern side of boundary wall following dismantling phase, from the north
- Plate 4 General view of sondage excavated on northern side of boundary wall following dismantling phase, from the east
- Plate 5 Rectified photograph of south elevation of wall, from the south, scale as indicated (Cotters Photography)
- Plate 6 Rectified photograph of north elevation of wall, from the north, scale as indicated (Cotters Photography)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological watching brief and rectified-photography survey at Ashton Park School, Long Ashton, Bristol (NGR ST 561136 713306) was commissioned from Bristol & Region Archaeological Services by Skanska of Bristol (**Figs. 1 & 4**).
- 1.2 Ashton Park School forms part of the Ashton Court Estate. The school lies within an area designated a Registered Park & Garden and is within the Bower Ashton Conservation Area (DBA 2007, 4.1.1). The Ashton Court Estate comprises a Grade 2\* Historic Landscape.
- 1.3 The work was undertaken in relation to the formation of a temporary site-access associated with the redevelopment of the school and entailed photographing a 20-metre-length of wall and subsequently monitoring its base archaeologically during groundworks (**Fig. 1**). Following completion of the school-redevelopment project, it is proposed to rebuild the wall to match existing using materials previously set aside during the dismantling phase (**Plate 2**).
- 1.4 Prior to the present work, an archaeological desk-based assessment (NSHER 47397; DBA 2007) was undertaken for the school premises as a whole, including the area of the present length of boundary wall.
- 1.5 The archaeological monitoring took place in response a condition included in a listed building consent granted by North Somerset Council (Ref: 08/P/2523/LB).

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

- 2.1 The work was undertaken in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2001).
- 2.2 The rectified-photography survey was undertaken by Jerry Cottignies ABIPP of Cotters Photography of Bristol in February 2009 (see § 4).
- 2.3 The excavations at the base of the wall were archaeologically monitored by Richard Coe of Bristol & Region Archaeological Services (see § 5).
- 2.4 The archaeological monitoring took place between 9th March and 11th March 2009 under the management of Bruce Williams MIfA of Bristol & Region Archaeological Services.
- 2.5 An archaeological desk-based assessment of the Ashton Park School was undertaken in 2007 (DBA 2007) and on which the present report is based, although the latter provides supplementary evidence such as the Long Ashton tithe-commutation map of 1842 held at the Somerset Record Office.
- 2.6 The project has been included in the North Somerset Historic Environment Record: NSHER 47396, and registered with the English Heritage Oasis Project reference: bristola1-58993.
- 2.7 The project archive will be deposited at the City Museum & Art Gallery, Queens Road, Bristol under BRSMG 2009/33.

### **3. HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

- 3.1 Historically, the site of the works is situated in the Somerset parish of Long Ashton.
- 3.2 The history of the location has been included in an archaeological desk-based assessment undertaken in 2007 (DBA 2007).
- 3.3 The Ashton Park School site was originally part of the Ashton Court Estate, at least of medieval origin, and mentioned in Domesday as *Aestune* (DBA 2007, § 5.1.12).
- 3.4 The estate incorporated an extensive deer park from the 14th century that increased in size when the estate expanded in the 15th and 16th centuries. There were formal gardens laid out within the estate in the 16th and 17th centuries (DBA 2007, § 5.1.17). Garden landscaping works also took place during the 18th century (DBA 2007, § 5.1.18).
- 3.5 The mansion house dates from the 15th century and presently enjoys Grade 1 listed status.
- 3.6 The boundary walling surrounding the estate, including the present dismantled length of wall, is considered to date to the 18th and 19th centuries (DBA 2007, § 5.1.19), although likely to incorporate elements of later rebuilding and repairs.
- 3.7 The Ashton Court Estate was in private ownership until 1959 when it was purchased by Bristol City Council.



#### **4. RECTIFIED PHOTOGRAPHY**

- 4.1 The rectified photography survey was undertaken by Jerry Cottignies of Cotters Photography. The length of wall was photographed on both sides (northern and southern) (**Plates 5 & 6**).
- 4.2 Prior to the survey, all obstructions that would create 'blind spots' (e.g. vegetation) were removed. The photography was undertaken on a bright, but overcast, day in order to show as much detail as possible of each elevation.

## 5. RECORDED ARCHAEOLOGY

- 5.1 Following the dismantling of the wall down to ground level, groundworks associated with the formation of the crossover were archaeologically monitored (**Plate 1**). The total length of wall monitored was approximately 20 m.
- 5.2 The excavation for the crossover exposed a 1.3 metre-wide foundation-cut on the northern side of the wall (southern side not exposed).
- 5.3 A 0.7 metre-wide slot, 0.8 m in depth, was excavated by hand on the northern side of the wall (**Plates 3 & 4**). This exposed a stepped-out foundation for the wall, although the base was not exposed. The step in the wall occurred at 0.3 m below the level of the footpath. The section of the slot exposed approximately 0.35 m of composite made-up ground (a layer of silty clay overlying a sandy clay) piled up against the northern face of the wall. This directly overlay a deposit of dark-reddish-brown clayey sand, the base of which was not exposed. No cultural material was recovered from any of the deposits.
- 5.4 No evidence of the linear earthwork depicted to the west of the works location on the *First Edition* (1: 2500) OS sheet (**Fig. 3**) was observed.
- 5.5 The only find recovered during the archaeological monitoring was a whetstone, although this came from surface material and is therefore unstratified.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The rectified photography survey (§ 4) was successfully undertaken and constitutes a permanent record for both sides of the length of wall dismantled. The record comprises a reference for the rebuilding of the wall that is programmed to taken place in 2010/11.
- 6.2 The archaeological monitoring of groundworks (§ 5) associated with the formation of the crossover identified the foundation cut for the northern side of the wall and the stepped foundation of the wall, although the base was not exposed. No cultural material was recovered from the fill material of the foundation cut.

## 7. REFERENCES

### Texts

DBA, 2007. *An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment of the Proposed Redevelopment of Ashton Park School, Bower Ashton, Bristol* by Helen MacQuarrie (NS HER 47397).

Bonington, M.L., 1980. *Long Ashton: Our Village*. Bristol: Burleigh Limited.

IFA, 2001. Institute of Field Archaeologists. *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Originally published in 1994; revised 2001.

### Maps

1842 Long Ashton tithe-commutation map (SRO D/D/Rt 459)

1880s *First Edition* (1: 2500) OS sheet, surveyed early 1880s

1970 1970 Edition (1:1250) OS National Grid sheet ST5671SW, revised and published in 1970

1998 Ordnance Survey (1: 25,000). Explorer Sheet 154: *Bristol West and Portishead; Congresbury & Chew Magna*, revised 1998 (Edition A)

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The above report was compiled by Andrew Townsend and produced by Ann Linge of Bristol and Region Archaeological Services.

The project was managed by Bruce Williams, MifA.

## **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**

North Somerset Council Replacement Local Plan 2nd Draft (2004) states

(Policy ECH/6 Archaeology):

Development will not be permitted where it would involve significant alteration or cause damage to nationally-important archaeological remains (whether Scheduled or not), or would have a significant impact on the setting of such remains.

Where there is good reason to believe that development proposals could affect locally-important archaeological remains, the Council will seek a field evaluation and assessment, or may formally require the submission of further information, to establish the extent and importance of the remains before the planning application is determined. Where such assessment indicates the development would affect locally-important archaeological remains and the Council considers preservation in-situ is not justified it will seek before permission is granted a formal voluntary agreement by the developer to excavate and record the remains and to publish the results, or may grant permission subject to conditions requiring an approved programme of archaeological work to be undertaken before development commences.

### **PPG 15**

PPG 15 Planning and Historic Environment (1994) provides for a full statement of Government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, Conservation areas, and other elements of the historic environment. More specific issues are raised in PPG 16 Archaeology and Planning (1990), which also indicates the circumstances where further work would be necessary and outlines the use of agreements and conditions to protect the archaeological resource.

PPG 15 (para. 2.15) recognises that some buildings are scheduled ancient monuments, but many which are not scheduled are either of intrinsic archaeological interest or stand on ground which contains archaeological remains. It is important in such cases that there should be appropriate assessment of the archaeological implications of development proposals before applications are determined; and that, where permission is to be granted, authorities should consider whether adequate arrangements have been made for recording remains that would be lost in the course of works for which permission is being sought.

Paragraph 3.23 states that local planning authorities should consider whether it would be appropriate to make it a condition of consent that applicants arrange suitable programmes of recording features that would be destroyed in the course of the works for which consent is being sought.

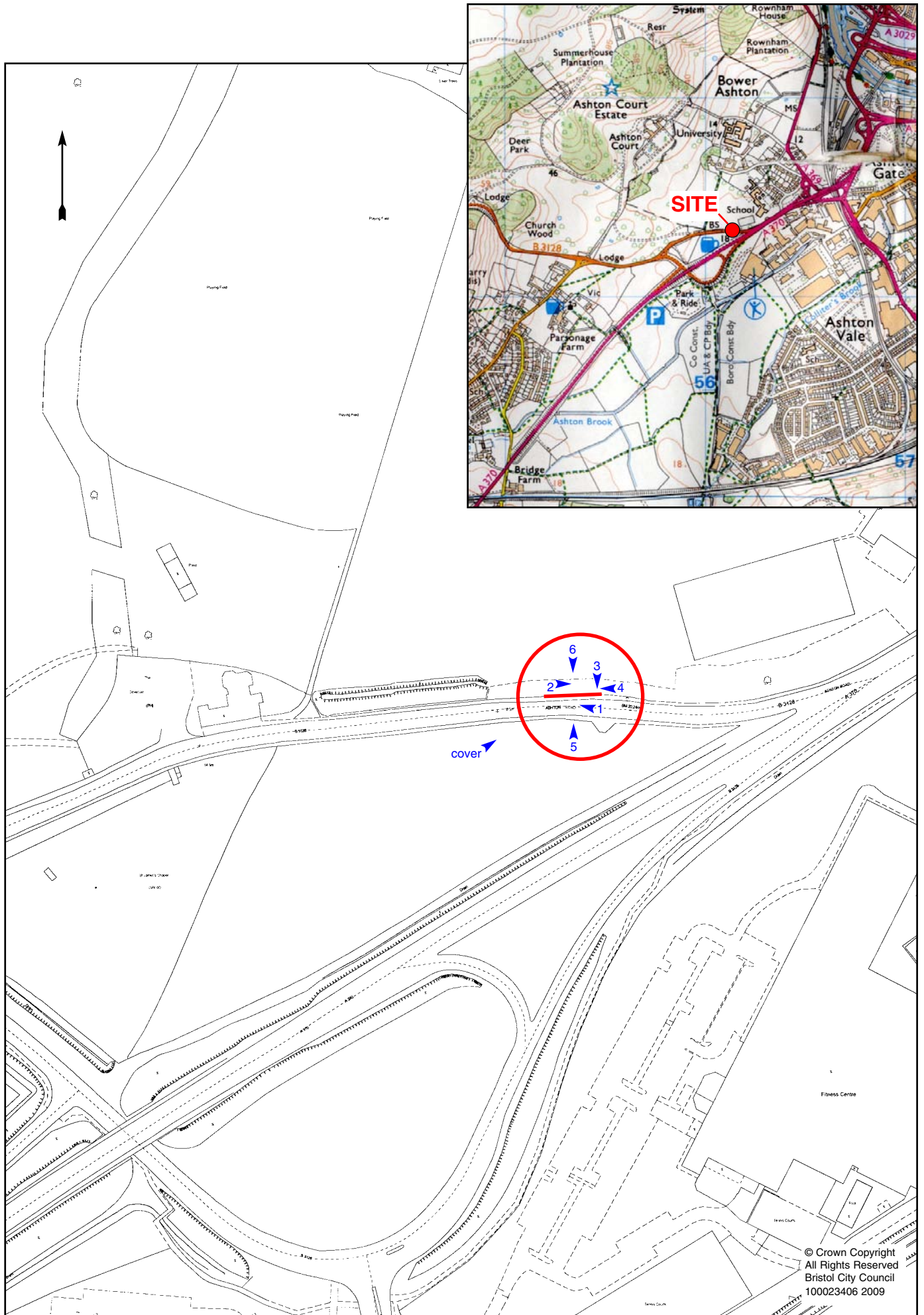


Fig.1 Modern OS map showing the location of the works with plate orientations indicated

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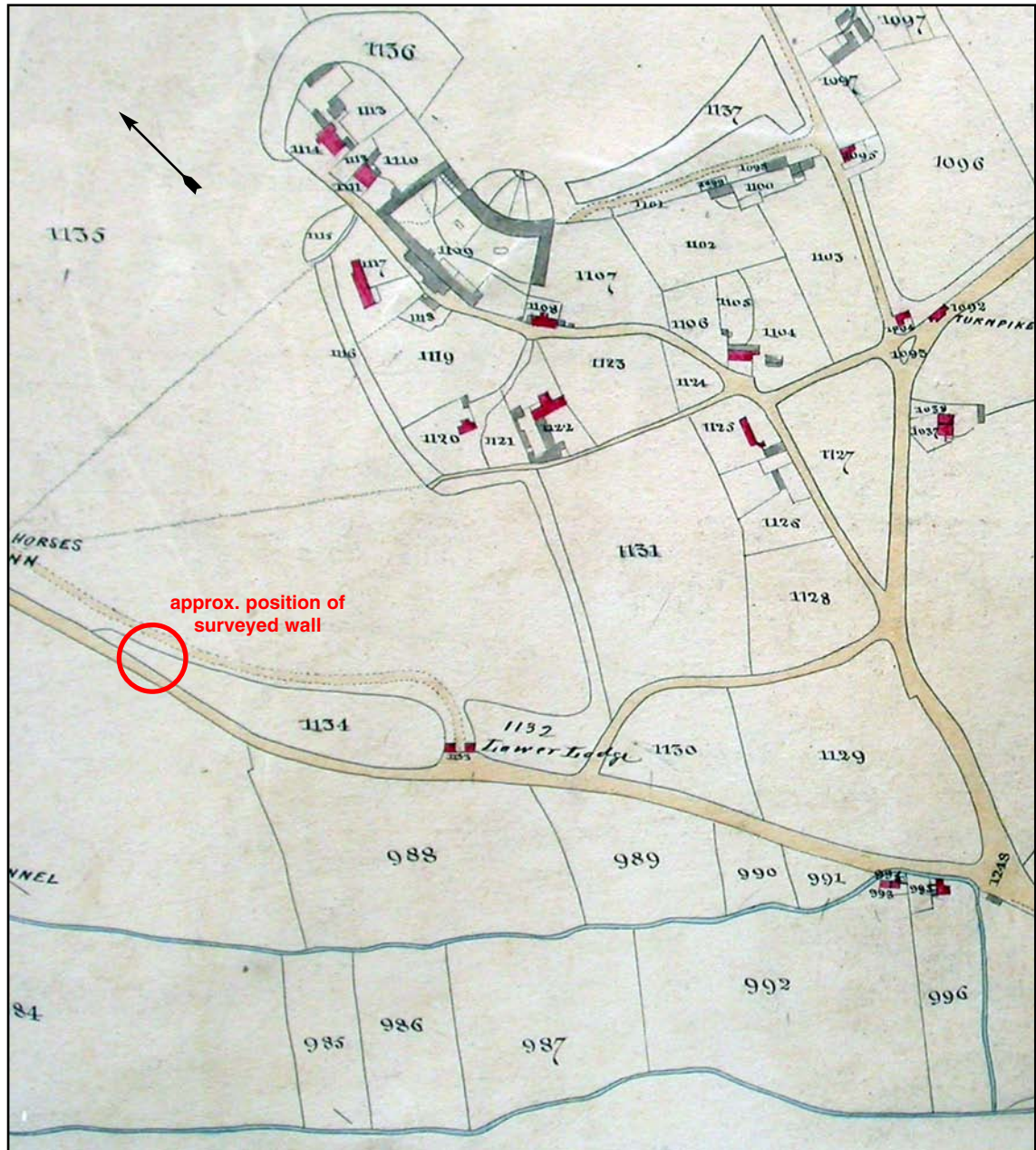


Fig.2 Extract from Long Ashton tithe-commutation map, 1842 (SRO)

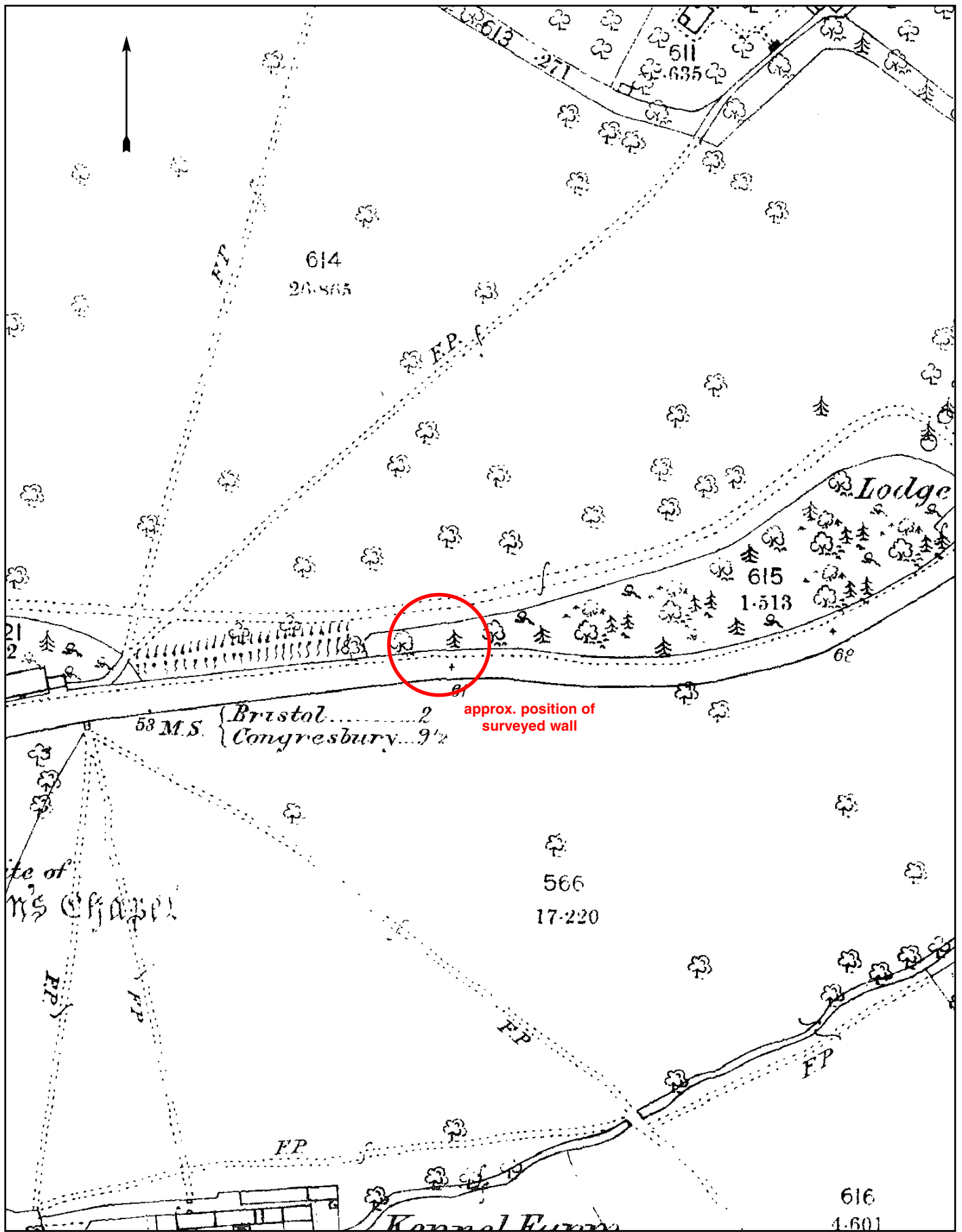


Fig.3 Extract from First Edition (1: 2500) OS, surveyed 1880s



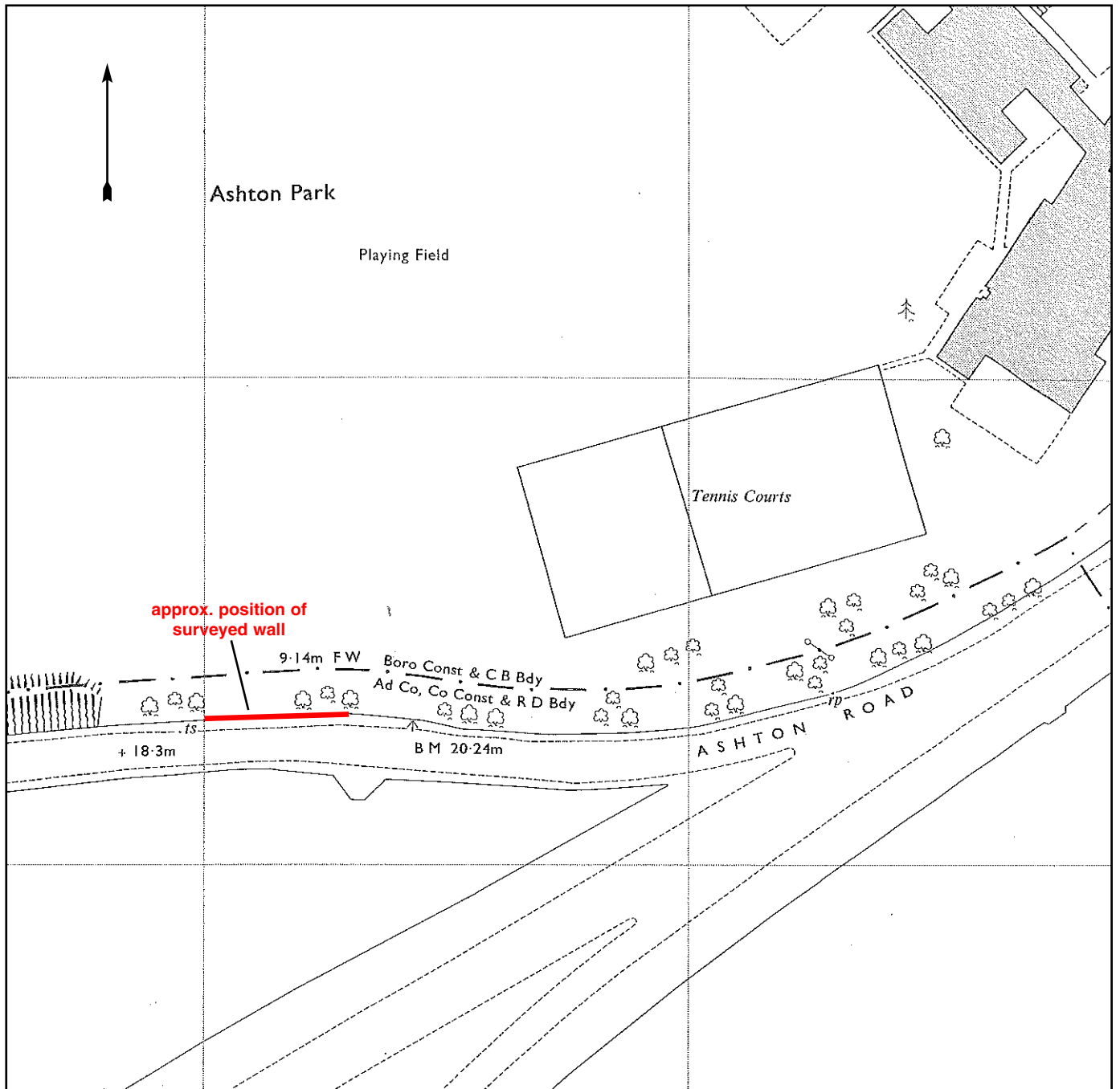


Fig.4 Extract from OS (1: 1250) National Grid Sheet ST 5671 SW, revised 1970



Plate 1  
General view along  
boundary wall during  
dismantling phase, from  
the east



Plate 2  
View of bagged-up stone  
and set-aside slag  
coping-stones during  
dismantling phase



Plate 3  
General view of sondage  
excavated on northern  
side of boundary wall  
following dismantling  
phase, from the north



Plate 4  
General view of sondage  
excavated on northern  
side of boundary wall  
following dismantling  
phase, from the east





Plate 5  
Rectified photograph of south elevation of wall, from the south, scale as indicated (Cotters Photography)

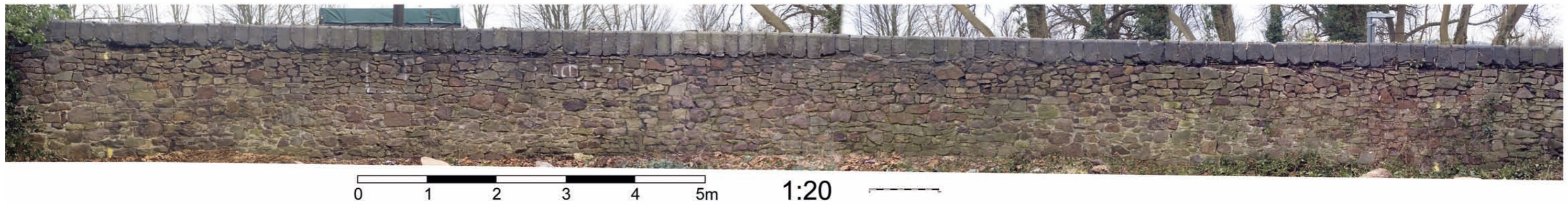


Plate 6  
Rectified photograph of north elevation of wall, from the north, scale as indicated (Cotters Photography)