

Archaeological Watching Brief
at
**THE FORMER RED COW PUBLIC HOUSE,
NO. 113 WEST STREET, BEDMINSTER,
BRISTOL.**
for
Mr Gordon Page



Report No. 2183/2009
BHER No. 24792



Bristol and Region Archaeological Services

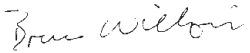

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**THE FORMER RED COW PUBLIC HOUSE,
NO. 113 WEST STREET, BEDMINSTER,
BRISTOL.**

Centred on
N.G.R. ST 58080 71060

Client: Mr Gordon Page

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<i>Date Issued:</i>	20th August 2009 

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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.

August, 2009.

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks associated with the construction of a three storey Guest House with associated car parking and services on the land formally occupied by the Red Cow Public House, No. 113 West Street, Bedminster, Bristol.

The groundworks revealed the footings of the Red Cow Public House, an earlier stone surface, possibly relating to a building shown by map evidence to predate the Red Cow, and a post-medieval drain running parallel to the site and only visible in section.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by Mr G. Page to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a three storey Guest House with associated parking and services on the land formally occupied by the Red Cow Public House, No. 113 West Street, Bedminster, Bristol.
- 1.2 The watching brief was commissioned to comply with the condition of planning consent (planning consent reference: 09/01015/F) and in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS 2009). The work was monitored by Bob Jones (BCC Archaeological Officer).
- 1.3 The fieldwork was undertaken on 23rd July 2009 under the supervision of Heather Hirons who also compiled this report.
- 1.4 The project archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery under the Accession Number BRSMG 2009/38 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: 24792 and in the OASIS Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations as: bristola1-61158.

2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The site (centred on NGR ST 58080 71060) measures 355 square metres in area and lies on the south western side of West Street, Bedminster, opposite the junctions of Rowley Street and South Road (**Fig. 1**). The north-east of the site is bounded by No. 111 West Street, south-east by No. 2 Argus Street and south-west by No. 119 West Street. The site is mostly level at approximately 29.5m aOD stepping up on the south-west side to meet the ramp for the entrance to No. 119 West Street.
- 2.2 The geology of the study area is comprised of Redcliffe Sandstone of the Triassic Period (British Geological Survey 1962)
- 2.3 No buildings on the site are listed, nor is the site within a conservation area. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments on or near the site.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Prior to the present project an Archaeological Building Survey (Bryant 2009) was carried out on the Red Cow Public House, the building that previously occupied the site. The full historical and archaeological background to the site is contained within that document. Relevant details are summarised below:
- 3.2 The site lies within the parish of Bedminster, which belonged to the county of Somerset until 1835, when it formally became part of the City and County of Bristol.
- 3.3 Occupation in the area goes back to at least the Roman period. There is evidence of Romano-British settlement a short distance to the north east of the site. West Street which bounds the site to the north west is itself thought to have Roman origins, later becoming the major road between Bristol, and Taunton and the South West by medieval times.
- 3.4 An undated late 18th-century map shows a rectangular building sitting against West Street in the location of the Red Cow Public House and a similarly dated manorial survey lists this as a House Garden and Barton and being occupied by a Mr. Young.
- 3.5 By 1796 The Somerset sessions rolls show the Red Cow Public House to be operating on the site. By 1828 a Bedminster map shows a building roughly the same shape and position as the Red Cow Public House. The 1841 Bedminster tithe map shows a long building to have been added to the rear of this, in roughly the position of the skittle alley, as does the Ashmead survey of 1854. By the first edition Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan of 1883 the stable blocks had also been added to the rear. These buildings appear to have stood until their demolition in 2009.

4. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork complied with the methodology contained within the Written Scheme of Investigation (BaRAS 2009). The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* issued by the Institute for Field Archaeologists (1999). 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 the mechanical excavation and removal of obstructions within the footprint of the proposed building.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1 All groundworks were carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator and took the form of the 'removal of obstructions' - excavation and reinstatement of all the ground within the footprint of the proposed building (**Fig. 2**) to a depth of at least 1.50m, including the cellars.
- 5.2 The groundworks revealed the footings of the Red Cow Public House - walls (001), (003), (008), (009) and (010). All the footings were constructed with roughly hewn blocks up to 0.35m x 0.24m x 0.06m in size, bonded with off white mortar (**Plates 1 & 2**).
- 5.3 The Red Cow's two barrel vaulted cellars and a brick built barrel-vaulted tunnel connecting the two were also removed (**Plates 3 & 4**). Both cellars were constructed with Lias limestone walls bonded with off white mortar, and had brick barrel-vaulted ceilings. The cellars were not entered for detailed recording as the sides were unstable and it was not deemed safe.
- 5.4 The removal of wall footings (001) and (003) revealed a section containing an earlier Lias surface (007) (**Plate 5**). The surface was constructed of Lias blocks, approximately 0.20m x 0.05m bedded on black soot.
- 5.5 The section behind wall footings (009) revealed a section of post-medieval stone built drain running along side the site (013) (**Plate 6**). The drain was constructed with lias stones up to 0.40m x 0.030m x 0.80m in size and bonded with pink mortar indicative of the 17th century. It was approximately 0.45m high and situated 0.80m below the present ground surface. This feature was only visible in section and only in patches.
- 5.6 No Romano-British features were uncovered on the site and the sections revealed by the removal of the cellars showed only disturbed natural from the construction of the Red Cow.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Watching Brief identified the footings and cellars of the Red Cow Public House and the colour of the mortar indicated an 18th century construction date. The sections revealed by the removal of the footings of the Red Cow also revealed a surface predating the public house, possibly relating to the building shown on the late 18th century Bedminster map. A post-medieval stone drain was also revealed in a section although the majority of this is probably situated beneath the forecourts of No. 119 West Street.
- 6.2 No Romano-British features were uncovered on the site possibly indicating that the Roman settlement excavated to the north-east of the site did not extend as far as the excavated area, or possibly indicating that any evidence was destroyed by the construction of the Red Cow or previous buildings on the site.

7. PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1 The fieldwork was undertaken by Heather Hirons who also produced this report. The illustrations were prepared and the report compiled by Ann Linge. The archive was compiled and prepared for deposition by Heather Hirons. The project was managed by Bruce Williams.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES CONSULTED

Published Works

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

Unpublished Material

BaRAS, 2009, *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Building Recording and Watching Brief at The Red Cow Public House, West Street, Bedminster, Bristol*.

Bryant, 2009, *Archaeological Building Survey of The Former Red Cow Public House, No. 113 West Street, Bedminster, Bristol*.

9. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

BaRAS would like to thank Mr. Page and TR Demolition 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

Context No.	Description
001	Lias Limestone front wall of Public House with off white mortar, runs north-east to south-west, blocks were roughly hewn and up to 0.35m x 0.24m x 0.06m in size. The cut for the wall was not visible.(Plate 1).
002	Disturbed layer from construction/works on the Red Cow - red/brown sandy clay with occasional mortar and stone fragments, up to 0.80m deep.
003	North-east wall of the front porch of the public house, the same construction as wall (001).
004	Natural clay – red clay with occasional beige lenses, at approximately 0.80m below ground surface.
005	Current tarmac foot path and concrete slabs to the north-east of wall (003).
006	Made ground layer – very disturbed red and black silt and clay.
007	Surface – Lias blocks, approximately 0.20m x 0.05m bedded on black soot, only visible in section abutting walls (001) and (003), predating the Public House.
008	Front wall of porch, running north-east – south-west, the same construction as walls (001) and (002).
009	South-west wall of Public House, the same construction as the other walls, with the skittle alley portion at the rear still standing.
010	North-east wall of Red Cow with the same construction as wall (001) running north-west to south-east.
011	Concrete surface for ramp to garage in No. 119 West Street.
012	Base for surface (011) – pinkish scalplings.
013	Possible drain, only visible in places when it was clipped by the section running along the south western edge of the site, behind the footings for the Red Cow. Constructed with stones up to 0.40m x 0.030m x 0.80m in size and bonded with pink mortar indicative of the 17th century, approximately 0.45m high, situated 0.80m below the present ground surface.
014	Barrel-vaulted cellar – with brick vaulting at the top and Lias walls below, a separate construction to wall (009), bonded with off white mortar, approximately 5m long by 3m wide and 2.40m high in the centre.
015	Barrel-vaulted cellar – with brick vaulting at the top and Lias walls below, a separate construction to wall (009), bonded with off-white mortar, approximately 8m long (including the hatch) by 4m wide and 2.4m high in the centre.
016	Brick built barrel-vaulted tunnel between the two cellars.

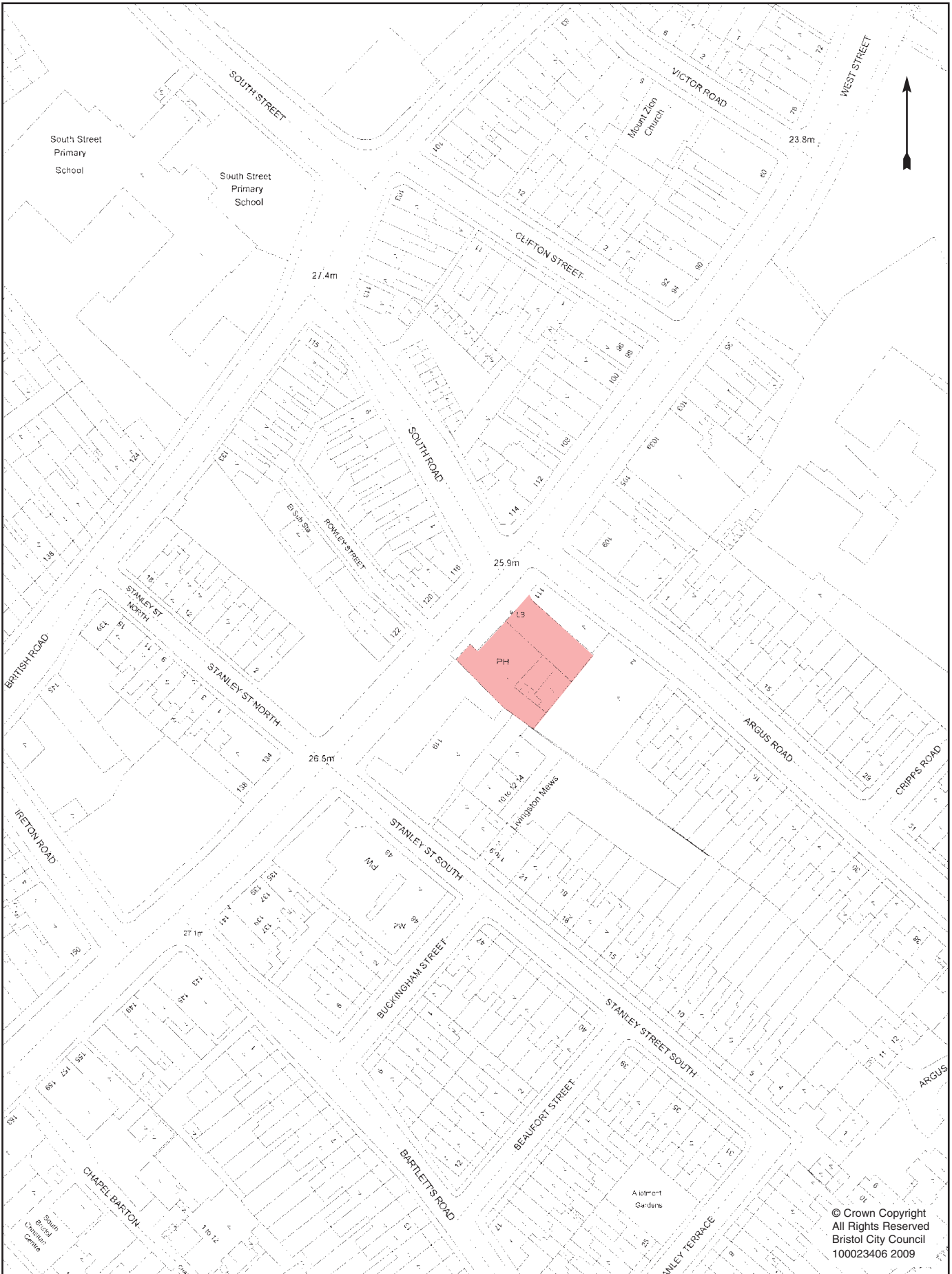


Fig.1 Site location plan, scale 1:1250

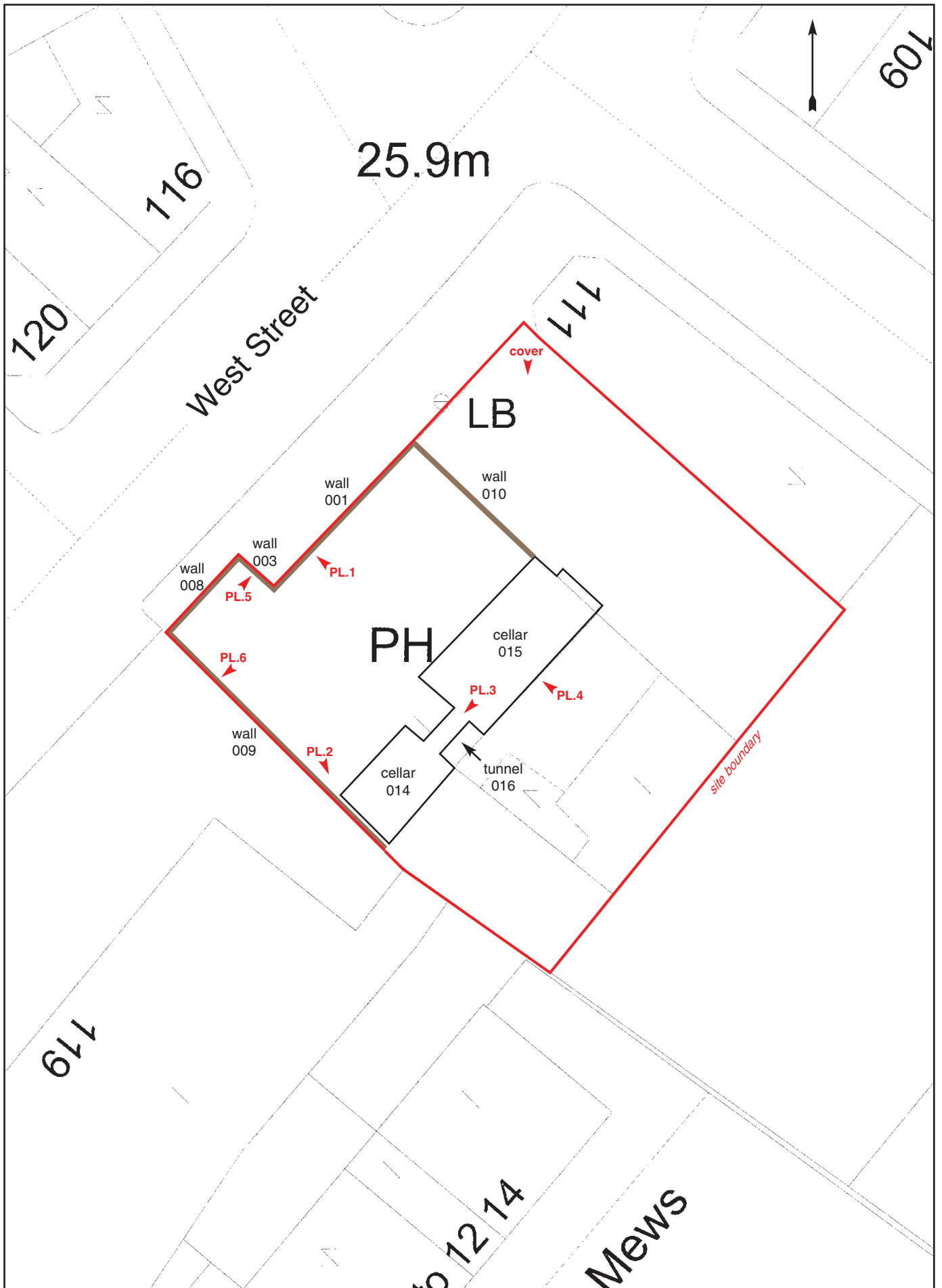


Fig.2 Plan showing study area in detail, scale 1:250, showing plate orientations in red



Plate 1
Detail view showing the
footings of wall 001,
looking north-west



Plate 2
View showing the above
ground portion of wall 009,
from north-west



Plate 3
The barrel-vaulted roof of
cellar during excavation,
looking south-west



Plate 4
The section revealed after the removal of the north-west wall of cellar 015, looking north-west



Plate 5
Stone surface (007) revealed in section after removal of wall 003, looking north-east



Plate 6
Section showing the pink mortar of drain 013, looking south-west