



41 Manor Road, Fishponds, Bristol

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





**41 Manor Road
Fishponds
Bristol**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Prepared for

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**41 MANOR ROAD,
FISHPONDS,
BRISTOL**

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Front cover – Machine stripping in the North-east corner of the site with St. Mary’s Church in the background. View from the north.

Figure 1 – Site, area and feature location plans.

Plates 1 to 4 - General Photographic shots of the 18th/19th century house prior to its demolition. Photographed and images supplied by Churchill Retirement Living Ltd

Back cover – Remains of north-south orientated wall foundation and paving slabs identified during the watching brief and interpreted as being part of the 18th/19th century garden design.

**41 MANOR ROAD,
FISHPONDS,
BRISTOL****Archaeological Watching Brief Report****Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Churchill Retirement Living Ltd. to conduct an archaeological watching brief at 41 Manor Road in Fishponds, Bristol, hereafter known as 'the Site'. The Site comprises a parcel of land of c. 0.32 hectares centred on NGR 363244, 176052. The development comprises the demolition of existing buildings to allow the construction of warden controlled retirement apartments.

The watching brief was conducted as part of a retrospective condition requested by the Archaeological Officer for Bristol City Council. It was conducted between the 14th and 17th January 2008, at which time existing buildings on site had been removed and approximately one third of the area had been terraced.

The scope of works comprised the identification and recording of any surviving building foundations associated with the late eighteenth/ early nineteenth century building which formerly stood on the Site, and a general watching brief to cover all other available areas.

Two wall foundations thought to be associated with the original late eighteenth/ early nineteenth century building were identified, though these were truncated, fragmentary and damaged. A further wall, on the same alignment, was identified in the east of the watching brief area. Fragments of sandstone paving slabs to the west and the remains of a hedge line to the east have been interpreted as garden features, removed whilst the house was still in use.

No other features or deposits of archaeological interest were noted on the Site during the course of the watching brief.

The archive will be deposited with the Bristol City Museum and a summary will be submitted to the Journal of Post Medieval Archaeology.

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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Churchill Retirement Living Ltd. for commissioning the project and for their cooperation and assistance during work on site.

The project was monitored by Peter Insole, the Archaeological Officer for Bristol City Council. The fieldwork was carried out by Marta Martin Belenguer and supervised by Gemma White. The report was compiled by Gemma White and Peter Reeves and the illustrations were created by Kitty Brandon. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Peter Reeves.

41 MANOR ROAD, FISHPONDS, BRISTOL

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Churchill Retirement Living Ltd. (The Client) to undertake an archaeological watching brief at 41 Manor Road, Fishponds, Bristol, hereafter referred to as 'the Site'.
- 1.1.2 The watching brief was required by a condition applied retrospectively to the planning permission for the Site at the request of the Bristol City Council Archaeologist.
- 1.1.3 The watching brief consisted of the mechanical stripping of all available areas of the Site in order to identify and record any archaeological features or deposits that may have been present. Particular attention was to be given to locating and recording surviving remains of a late eighteenth/early nineteenth century building which was recently demolished.
- 1.1.4 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Wessex Archaeology (WA 2008).

1.2 Archaeological Background

- 1.2.1 The Site is located within a Conservation Area near to the former Medieval centre of Fishponds and adjacent to St Mary's Church (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.2 A building, now demolished, thought to date from the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century once stood on the Site.
- 1.2.3 No previous archaeological works or studies are known to have been carried out on the Site.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Site Location, Topography and Geology

- 2.1.1 The Site is an irregularly-shaped, level parcel of land located to the south of Manor Road, Fishponds, Bristol. The Site is centred on NGR 363244 176052.
- 2.1.2 The Site is bounded at all cardinal points by residential properties and to the east by St Mary's Church. Until recently the Site was occupied by a large detached house with associated ancillary buildings, all of which have now been demolished, and surrounding gardens.
- 2.1.3 The solid geology of the Site is Nailsea Basin shale of the Downend group.

2.1.4 41 Manor Road lies at approximately 60m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The Site comprises an area of c. 0.32 hectares.

3 AIMS

3.1.1 The watching brief had two main fieldwork aims. Initially, the area once occupied by a late eighteenth/early nineteenth century house was to be machine cleaned in order to locate surviving foundations. Where foundations were present, the aim of the project was to hand clean, record and survey them.

4 OBJECTIVES

4.1.1 A general watching brief was conducted on parts of the Site that had not already been terraced, in order to identify archaeological features or deposits. Where archaeological features or deposits were present, the objective of the project was to record their location, extent, date, character, condition, and depth, within the constraints of the watching brief.

4.1.2 A report was to be produced that will present the information in sufficient detail to allow interpretation without further reference to the project archive.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Methodological Standards

5.1.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WA 2008) and in compliance with the standards outlined in the Institute of Field Archaeologist's Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (amended 1994).

5.2 Health and Safety

5.2.1 Health and Safety considerations were of paramount importance in conducting all fieldwork. Safe working practices overrode archaeological considerations at all times.

5.2.2 The work was undertaken in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992, and all other relevant Health and Safety legislations, regulations and codes of practice which are in force.

5.2.3 A Risk Assessment was produced by Wessex Archaeology prior to the commencement of work. This was reviewed as the project progressed.

5.2.4 As part of the project briefing, all staff were made aware of their responsibilities and site specific hazards identified under the Risk Assessment.

5.3 Fieldwork

5.3.1 The fieldwork comprised the mechanical cleaning and archaeological recording of areas thought to contain building remains, followed by the machine stripping of all other available areas under constant archaeological supervision.

5.3.2 The fieldwork was conducted between the 14th and the 17th January 2008.

5.4 Finds Collection and Retention

- 5.4.1 All Finds were treated in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2001), the UK Institute of Conservators' *Guidelines Conservation Guideline No 2* and the Museums and Galleries Commission's *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (1991), excepting where they are superseded by statements made below.

5.5 Environmental Sampling

- 5.5.1 A strategy for sampling archaeological and environmental deposits was developed in consultation with Wessex Archaeology's environmental manager and was set out in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology, 2008).

5.6 The Archive

- 5.6.1 The project archive, covering both phases of archaeological work, is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in London under the Wessex Archaeology project code WA 68270.
- 5.6.2 The project archive will be prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage* (UKIC 1990).
- 5.6.3 The resulting archive will be put onto microfiche to the standards accepted by the National Monuments Record (NMR).
- 5.6.4 Following the conclusion of the project and with the permission of the landowner the archive will be prepared for deposition with Bristol City Museum.

6 RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 Approximately one third of the Site had been lowered by c. 0.7m prior to our arrival on site. This was visually inspected for features and deposits of archaeological interest and none were noted.
- 6.1.2 In the south of the Site c. one third has been retained as gardens, which will not be affected by development work.
- 6.1.3 Of the remaining third, half is covered with hardcore providing parking, entrance to the site and hard standing for site accommodation. This area, which is outside the footprint of the original building, was not stripped during fieldwork in January 2008.
- 6.1.4 The rest of the Site became the subject of the archaeological watching brief.
- 6.1.5 The machine stripping removed c. 0.4m of disturbed modern overburden to reveal shale geology. The interface between the two was highly diffuse and affected by modern intrusions.

Wall Foundations

- 6.1.6 The foundations of three walls were found within the watching brief area. Two of these are believed to have formed part of the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century house which once stood on the site and the third is interpreted as being a garden feature.
- 6.1.7 Wall foundation **107** was orientated north-east/south-west and consisted of a single layer of unfrogged red bricks set within foundation trench **105**. The nature of the bricks, the orientation of these foundations and their position within the site suggest that this represents the base of one of the original walls of the house, most likely the eastern end of the building prior to its later extension.
- 6.1.8 Wall foundation **103** was orientated north-west/south-east and consisted of a thin layer of sandstone slabs set within foundation trench **102**. This foundation, made of a different material to **107**, is believed to represent a separate building event associated with the same property.
- 6.1.9 **103** appeared to butt foundation **107**, which lies to the immediate South-east, prior to cleaning. Hand cleaning and excavation revealed that the eastern extension of **103** consisted of loose, broken sandstones, rather than fixed foundations. It could not be determined whether the wall truly extended as far as **107**, or whether these stones had been displaced during machining.
- 6.1.10 Given the positioning of **103**, in relation to the outline of the original building as seen on survey plans, it is likely that **103** represents the foundation of the front wall of the building and so it is probable that it did originally butt wall **107**. It consists of sandstone slabs, in contrast to the unfrogged brick work of **107**, and so either demonstrates that the front of the building was built in a different stone, or that this wall was constructed at a different date, possibly as part of repair work on the property.
- 6.1.11 Photographs of the house prior to its demolition, taken by Churchill Retirement Living Ltd., show that the building had been rendered, obscuring the original brickwork and making it impossible to know if the original house walls were constructed from the same materials. The building as seen in the photographs, had clearly undergone a series of extensions and adaptations before falling out of use over a decade ago (**Plates 1 - 4**).
- 6.1.12 A second wall made from the same unfrogged bricks as **107** was found in the north-east of the site and, being close in proximity, identical in orientation and similar in construction, it is likely that this once joined wall **107 (back cover)**. Wall **110/111** was situated c. 1m to the north of **107**.
- 6.1.13 To the west of **110/111** sandstone paving slabs were identified and to the east the remains of a hedgeline which runs parallel to these foundations was excavated. It is thought that **110/111** originally extended from the north-eastern corner of the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century house and existed as a garden feature with hedge planting behind it and slabs leading to the property entrance and Manor Road in front of it.
- 6.1.14 This wall was demolished at some time during the use of the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century house as it is not present in photos of the property and it is

documented that tennis courts covered this part of the site prior to Churchill Retirement Living Ltd. purchasing the land.

General Watching Brief

6.1.15 No other features or deposits of archaeological interest were noted during a watching brief conducted on the remaining part of the site.

6.2 Finds

6.2.1 The only finds noted during work on site were of obvious modern date and included porcelain, glass and animal bone. Whilst these were noted on recording sheets and examined on site, none were retained.

6.3 Environmental Sampling

6.3.1 None of the deposits uncovered during the evaluation were deemed suitable for environmental sampling.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1.1 The watching brief revealed several foundations that can be related to the late eighteenth century/early nineteenth century house which once stood on the Site. These appear to represent the north-eastern corner of the building and the foundations of an associated wall, believed to have been used to separate the garden from a paved access area at the front of the house.

7.1.2 No other features or deposits of archaeological interest survived within the watching brief area. No archaeological remains are likely to survive on the rest of the site, which has already been terraced, with the exception of the garden area in the south-east where any existing remains will be preserved in situ.

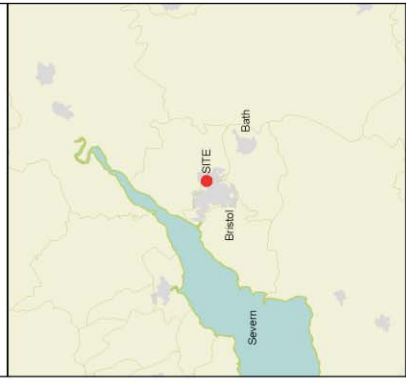
7.1.3 A summary note of the results of the watching Brief will be provided to the Journal of Post-medieval Archaeology for inclusion in the annual summary of small works undertaken on Sites belonging to this period.

8 REFERENCES

British Geological Society, 1974, *Solid and Drift Geology*, Sheet 264, 1:50,000

Institute of Field Archaeologists, revised 2001, Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Breifs

Wessex Archaeology, 2008, *41 Manor Road, Fishponds, Bristol*, Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological watching brief, ref 68270.01



- Site boundary
- Watching Brief Area
- Area covered by hardcore
- Area to be left as gardens
- Area already terraced
- Wall locations
- Tree throw
- Hedge
- Machine slot
- Geotech pit



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Site location and plan

Figure 1



Plate 1



Plate 2

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Plate 3



Plate 4

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