

Archaeological Watching Brief
at
**NOS 345 - 347 CHURCH ROAD,
ST GEORGE, BRISTOL.**
for
Mansell Partnership Housing South West



Report No. 2511/2012
BHER No. 25016

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ST GEORGE, BRISTOL.**

Centred on
N.G.R. ST 62020 73555

Client: Mansell Partnership Housing South West

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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.	Bibliography and Sources Consulted.....	6
8.	Acknowledgements.....	7

Appendix 1: Policy Statement

Appendix 2: Context Descriptions

Illustrations and Plates

Abbreviations

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

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.

September, 2012.

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks associated with the construction of a mixed-use development at Nos 345-347 Church Road, St George, Bristol.

The work revealed a post-medieval clay or coal-prospecting pit, a post-medieval well and the foundations of a mid-19th-century terraced house. No significant archaeological features or finds were observed during the watching brief.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures

- Figure 1 Site location plan, scale 1:1250
- Figure 2 Modern plan with location of features and plate directions
- Figure 3 Maule's 1803 *Map of St George*
- Figure 4 St George Tithe Map, 1842
- Figure 5 1888 Ordnance Survey plan (surveyed 1880-1), original scale 1:500
- Figure 6 1904 Ordnance Survey plan (revised 1902), original scale 1:2500

Plates

- Cover The northern half of site with the fenced-off well visible to the right, looking north-west
- Plate 1 View of footings showing layers of natural geology underlying topsoil, looking north-west
- Plate 2 Detail of the remains of well 118 in the centre of site, looking south
- Plate 3 Wall 103 in the service trench at the southern boundary of site, looking north-west
- Plate 4 Wall 121 in section, looking east

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) on behalf of Mansell Construction Services during groundworks associated with the construction of a mixed-use development at Nos 345-347 Church Road, St George, Bristol (Planning Application No. 09/04923/F).
- 1.2 The fieldwork was undertaken between the 10th February and the 13th September 2012.
- 1.3 The project archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery under the Accession Number BRSMG 2011/23 and a copy of the report will lodged at the English Heritage Archive. The project has been entered in the Bristol Historic Environment Record as: BHER 25016 and in the OASIS Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations as: bristola1-104356.

2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The site (centred on NGR ST 62020 73555) is situated in the Bristol suburb of St George about 3.25km to the east of the city centre, and is bounded by No. 343 Church Road to the west, Church Road to the south, No. 349 Church Road to the east, and St George Park to the north. The site is near level at a height of *c* 43m aOD (**Fig. 1**).
- 2.2 Prior to the present works the site was occupied by large late 19th century villa (No. 347 Church Road), with yards and derelict outbuildings to the sides and rear, which were until recently used as a car repair workshop.
- 2.3 There are no designated heritage assets on the site.
- 2.4 According to the British Geological Survey (2012) the underlying solid geology is Late Carboniferous sandstone (Pennant Sandstone) of the Downend Member. This rock unit also contains bands of conglomerate, pebbly sandstone, sporadic fissile mudstone beds and workable coal seams.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 No previous archaeological studies of the site have been undertaken.

3.2 Historically the site lay within the outparish of St Philip and St Jacob until the new parish of St George was created in 1751. St George remained part of Gloucestershire until it was incorporated into the City and County of Bristol in 1897.

Prehistoric and Roman

3.3 In the late-18th century a Roman coin hoard (BHER 1392) is reputed to have been found about 350m to the north-east of the site. There is, however, no definitive evidence of any prehistoric or Roman activity on or near the site.

Saxon and medieval

3.4 There is no evidence of any Saxon occupation in the immediate vicinity of the site. At the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066 the site lay within the Royal forest of Kingswood, which formed part of the extensive Royal manor of Barton, in the Swineshead Hundred.

3.5 Kingswood Forest survived as a legal entity until 1228. Although the word Forest does not necessarily imply woodland, later maps show that much of Kingswood was in fact wooded. Despite its legal protection there are records of small illegal clearances and enclosures, or 'preprestures', in the forest from the 12th century onwards. By 1260 the new Hundred of Barton Regis was carved out of the old Swineshead Hundred, incorporating various members of the manor of Barton, such as Bitton, Hanham and Hambroke (Smith 1964). This area provided timber and agricultural produce for Bristol Castle.

3.6 Although the site itself probably remained undeveloped until well into the post-medieval period there is some evidence of medieval activity in the surrounding area. This includes Don John's Cross (BHER 1812M), which is likely to be of medieval date, and is depicted on the 1610 *Map of Kingswood* at the junction of Clouds Hill Road and Summerhill Road, about 350m to the north-east of the site, and St Anthony's Chapel (BHER 1809M), which appears to have been in existence by 1476, and remained extant as a dwelling house until the late 18th century; its exact location remains unknown, but it is likely to have been situated somewhere near the junction of Chalks Road and Church Road, about 200m to the west of the site.

Post-medieval and modern

3.7 Chester & Master's 1610 *Map of Kingswood* is the earliest map to depict the site. This shows the area to the north of Church Road, the modern A420, as mostly undeveloped, apart from a large building, which may be St Anthony's Chapel, to the west. Don John's Cross is depicted to the east of the site.

3.8 After the English Civil War (1642-49) the area devolved to a succession of non-Royal hands, and from this period onwards the rate of woodland clearance accelerated as the demand for wood, land, and coal, rose in response to Bristol's growing population and the expansion of industry. By the late 17th century coal mining and related extractive industries had become a significant industry in the area.

3.9 Donn's 1769 *Map of the County 11 Miles Round the City of Bristol* covers the site, but lacks the detail of later maps. However, it does show that by this point there had been significant ribbon development along Church Road, and there may have been buildings on the site by this date.

3.10 The earliest map to depict the site in any detail is William Maule's 1803 *Map of St George* (**Fig. 3**). This shows the site with a building, or a row of buildings, set back from the Church Road frontage. The accompanying terrier identifies the owner as 'Sevier'.

- 3.11 The *St George Tithe Map* of 1842 shows what appears to be the same building as the Maule map, but is shown as a row of three buildings; two of which are dwellings, the most easterly one is a non-domestic structure. The land to the rear of these buildings remained undeveloped. The tithe apportionment identifies the most easterly two buildings as a house and garden, owned and occupied by William Williams. The house next door was also owned by William Williams, but unoccupied. The adjacent plot to the west was divided into four gardens for a row of houses further down Church Road, all of which were owned by William Symmonds. The land to the rear of the houses was an arable field known as Brewers Ground, which was leased by Rev. James Sevier, and rented by Isaac Leonard.
- 3.12 By the middle of the 19th century numerous quarries and collieries had been established in the surrounding area for the extraction of coal, Pennant sandstone and fireclay. The largest of which were the fireclay and Pennant sandstone quarries along the north bank of the River Avon at Crews Hole, and Whitehall Colliery, which was situated about 280m to the north-west of the site.
- 3.13 The 1st Edition Ordnance Survey plan of 1888 (surveyed 1881) depicts the same three buildings as the earlier maps, but with a new row of terraced houses built over the former gardens to the west of William Williams' houses (**Fig. 5**). The nearest two of which (No. 345 & 347a) were within the site boundary. A well is marked in the field behind the houses.
- 3.14 In 1898-9 the three houses shown on the earlier maps were demolished and replaced with a three-storey villa with a stable block to the rear. This was known as Heath House (No. 347b) (BRO Building plan/Volume 35/45c), and is depicted on the 1904 Ordnance Survey plan. Heath House was built for the horse dealer Frederick Gay, who is recorded in the 1901 Census, and Kelly's 1902 and 1914 Directories.
- 3.15 The 1901 Census records Nos. 345 and 347a as unoccupied shops. Kelly's 1902 Directory records the following at No. 345: J. Williams & Son, cycle makers; Harry Emmerson, draper; Gilbert Haskins, tailor; William G. Lovell, boot maker; and John James.
- 3.16 By the late 1960s No. 345 and No.347a had been demolished. No. 347b remained standing until it was demolished in advance of the present construction works.

4. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the methodology set out in a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (Longman 2011), *BaRAS Site Manual* (2005) and the Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (IfA 2008). The aim of the watching brief was to record any archaeological features or deposits revealed during the course of intrusive groundworks.
- 4.2 The groundwork was carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with toothed bucket. The watching brief involved the monitoring of the mechanical excavation of service and drainage trenches, the deepest of which was 2.60m in deep.

5. RESULTS (Fig. 12)

- 5.1 The natural geology of the site (106-7) and (112-7) comprised interbedded clay, gravely clay and coal-rich shale (**Plate 1**).
- 5.2 The earliest feature on the site was probably the large quarry pit [110], which was cut into natural clay (107), and backfilled with dark greyish brown silt (108). The quarry was excavated to a maximum depth where coal-rich shale (109)/(113) occurred. The exact date of this quarry remains unknown, but it is probably post-medieval, and it is unclear if it was dug to extract clay, or if it was a coal prospecting pit.
- 5.3 In the centre of the site a 1.30m diameter well of predominantly sandstone lined construction was exposed following site reduction (118) (**Plate 2**). A pump marked on the 1904 Ordnance Survey plans appears to be in the right position for (118) but evidence is lacking on any earlier plans. However it seems likely that the well dates from the occupancy of the three cottages that stood on the site in the earlier 19th century rather than the late 19th century house given its construction type.
- 5.4 A 0.5m-thick wall footing (103) was identified along the Church Street frontage of the site (**Plate 3**). The wall was constructed with random un-coursed sandstone bonded with a grey lime mortar. A second wall further to the east was also identified of similar construction and width (121) (**Plate 4**). To the north of the walls the ground level had been raised 0.6m, by dumping a layer of dark greyish black silt (102). Wall (103) can be identified as the front wall of No. 345 Church Road, which was built between 1841 and 1881, and was demolished by the late 1960s. Wall (121) is likely to have been the front wall of No. 347 Church Road.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 No significant archaeological remains were identified during the watching brief.
- 6.2 A large post-medieval quarry pit was uncovered near the eastern edge of the site; this may have been dug to extract clay, or it may have been a coal-prospecting pit. The remains of a well of predominantly sandstone construction was located in the centre of the site, while the foundations of a mid-19th-century terraced house were recorded to the south of the quarry pit.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES CONSULTED

Maps, plans and documents

Chester & Master's Map of Kingswood	1610
B. Donn's Map of the County 11 Miles Round the City of Bristol	1769
William Maule's Map of St George Parish	1803
St George Tithe Map	1842
Ordnance Survey (Surv. 1880-1)	1888 1:500 plan
Ordnance Survey	1904 1:2500 plan
Census return	1901

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8. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

8.1 BaRAS would like to thank Bob Birch and Andrew McCance of Mansell Partnership Housing South West, and Bob Jones (Senior Archaeological Officer, BCC) for his advice.

8.2 The archaeological work was managed by John Bryant (Acting Manager BaRAS). Plans, figures, and plates in this report were prepared by Ann Linge (Design and Production Officer BaRAS). The archaeological work was undertaken by Cai Mason (Project Officer BaRAS). The report was written by Cai Mason and Tracey Smith (Project Officer BaRAS).

APPENDIX 1: Policy Statement

This report is the result of work carried out in the light of national and local authority policies.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY (ENGLAND)

The *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) for England published by the UK Government in March 2012 states that the historic environment, which includes designated and non-designated heritage assets, is an irreplaceable resource and, as such, should be taken into account by Local Planning Authorities when considering and determining planning applications. This is taken to form part of a positive strategy set out in the respective Local Plan to ensure the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. The assigned significance of heritage assets will be key factor in terms of their conservation.

Given their irreplaceable nature, any harm to, or loss of, a heritage asset, or heritage assets, should be clearly and convincingly justified as part of a planning application. As part of this, applicants are required to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting. Where a heritage asset, or assets, are to be harmed or lost as the result of a proposal, the applicant will be required to record and advance the understanding of the significance of that asset or assets, to include making the evidence arising publicly accessible, but this will be in proportion to the significance of the asset/assets in question.

While the NPPF takes into account the historic environment as a whole, additional protection is afforded to designate heritage assets under current English Law. Any proposal that would result in harm or loss of a designated heritage asset is also required to be justified by the applicant in meeting strict criteria set out in the NPPF.

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. This report is the result of work carried out in the light of national and local authority policies.

APPENDIX 2: Context Descriptions

Context No.	Type	Description	Stratigraphic relationships	Date
101	Layer	Tarmac surface. 0.05m thick, with 0.2m thick bedding layer.	Overlies (102)	Modern
102	Layer	Made ground. Firm very dark brownish black silt containing charcoal and coal, and angular stone inclusions. Up to 0.9m thick.	Underlies (101); overlies (104) & (108)	Mid-19th century
103	Structure	Wall foundation. Constructed with Pennant sandstone rubble and occasional hand made bricks bonded with a hard grey mortar with lime inclusions. Up to 0.5m wide and 1.4m deep.	Abutted by (104); fills [105]	Mid-19th century
104	Fill	Fill of construction cut [105]. Mixture of greyish mortar, stone rubble and brown silt.	Overlain by (102); abuts (103)	Mid-19th century
105	Cut	Construction cut for wall (103)	Filled by (103); cuts (106)	Mid-19th century
106	Layer	Natural. Firm orangey-brown silty sand.	Cut by [105]; overlies (107)	Geological deposit
107	Layer	Natural. Orangey-brown gravelly clay.	Underlies (106); cut by [110]; overlies (109)	Geological deposit
108	Fill	Fill of quarry [110]. Firm very dark greyish brown to black silt with occasional brick and clay inclusions.	Underlies (102)	Post-medieval
109	Layer	Natural. Firm coal-rich shale.	Underlies (107)	Geological deposit
110	Cut	Quarry. Vertical sides with flat base, up to 0.9m deep and 10m wide.	Filled by (108); cuts (107)	Post-medieval
111	Layer	Concrete. 0.2m thick, with 0.4m thick bedding layer	Underlies (101); overlies (112)	Modern
112	Layer	Natural. Firm yellowish grey clay up to 0.3m thick.	Underlies (111); overlies (113)	Geological deposit
113	Layer	Natural. Firm coal-rich shale up to 0.3m thick.	Underlies (112); overlies (114)	Geological deposit
114	Layer	Natural. Firm yellowish grey stoney clay over 0.6m thick.	Underlies (113)	Geological deposit
115	Layer	Topsoil. Dark greyish brown silt up to 0.2m thick.	Overlies (116)	Modern
116	Layer	Soil layer. Firm yellowish grey clay up to 0.3m thick.	Underlies (115); overlies (117)	Post-medieval
117	Layer	Natural. Firm yellowish grey clay with coal-rich seams of shale.	Underlies (116)	Geological deposit
118	Structure	Well. Pennant sandstone-lined construction with some bricks at the top of remaining structure. 1.3m in diameter with a wall width of 0.15m. Well was horizontally truncated with remaining depth 1.80m.	Overlies (120)	Post-medieval
119	Natural	Clay. Natural grey clay containing a coal seam.	Underlies (120)	Natural
120	Cut	Cut for well.	Underlies (118) Overlies (119)	Post Medieval
121	Structure	Wall. Small segment of sandstone wall at the front of the site. 0.45m width, 0.35m depth remaining.	Overlies (123) Underlies (122)	Mid-19th Century
122	Layer	Topsoil. Garden soil against wall remnant (121)	Overlies (121)	Mid-19th Century
123	Layer	Natural. Firm orange-brown sandy-clay, 0.60m deep.	Underlies (122)	Geological deposit



Fig.1 Site location plan, scale 1:1250

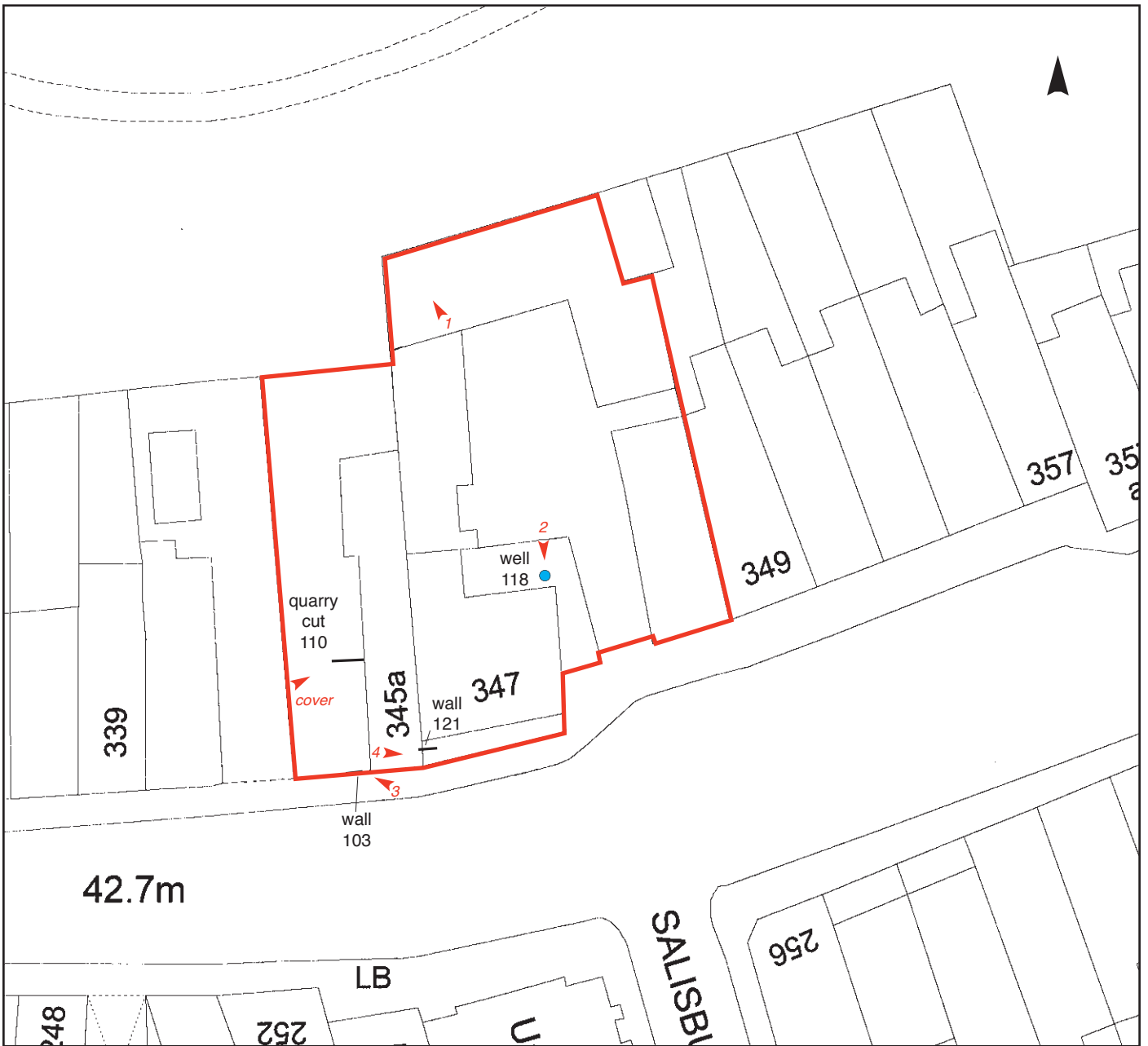


Fig. 2 Modern plan with location of features and plate directions



Fig.3 Maule's 1803 Map of St George



Fig.4 St George Tithe Map, 1842



Fig.5 1888 Ordnance Survey plan (surveyed 1880-1), original scale 1:500



Fig.6 1904 Ordnance Survey plan (revised 1902), original scale 1:2500



Plate 1
View of footings showing layers of natural geology underlying topsoil, looking north-west



Plate 2
Detail of the remains of well 118 in the centre of site, looking south



Plate 3
Wall 103 in the service trench at the southern boundary of site, looking north-west



Plate 4
Wall 121 in section, looking east