

A town-plan analysis of Birmingham before 1800

Nigel Baker, 2008

Research undertaken as part of the Life, Work and Death in Birmingham project, funded by Historic England (PN1611)

Project documentation and reports available:

https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/bufau1611_2017/index.cfm

Full reference:

Baker, N, 2008 *A town-plan analysis of Birmingham before 1800*. Unpublished report. Accessed March 2020: <https://doi.org/10.5284/1046277>

Introduction

While any town or city is, in theory, susceptible to the techniques of town-plan analysis (by which it may be hoped that stages in the process of urban growth may be discerned in the existing or recorded physical structure of the settlement), cities such as Birmingham that have experienced massive growth in the last two centuries present a particular challenge. Whereas much smaller urban places may have escaped radical morphological change associated with economic growth and industrialisation, so that their townscape still displays characteristics associated with their initial, medieval, urbanisation, the prospects of this in a place such as Birmingham are clearly much reduced. Moreover, where, as here, even the earliest available detailed maps show a place that had already been substantially transformed by outward growth and inward infilling, the prospects for recovering details of the earliest centuries of urbanisation diminish still further. Nevertheless, even 21st-century central Birmingham is still – to some extent – a prisoner of its 12th-century form. This is apparent not just from the continued existence of a framework of streets that historical evidence show to have been present from the medieval period, but from the persistence in the townscape of property boundaries shown by excavation to have been established at the outset of the urbanisation process.

This report is therefore an attempt to reconstruct some stages in the growth of Birmingham up to c.1800, using a variety of sources but – fundamentally – the cartographic record of the townscape, as surveyed and published from 1731 on. Because of the inherent problems, a number of different but complementary approaches have been adopted.

For any study of Birmingham's earliest centuries, a crucial historical milestone is provided by the manorial survey of 1553 which, while not comprehensive (properties that paid no rent to the manorial lord are omitted and some groups of houses are not enumerated), provides an almost plot-by-plot account of the town at the time of the manor's confiscation by the crown and thus gives a sound basis for an approximate estimation of the extent of the built-up area (Bickley and Hill 1890). Within the built-up area thus defined there are no contemporaneous historical sources that directly

and unambiguously describe stages in the extension of the town or the creation of new, identifiable, townscape; we must instead turn to the form of the townscape itself, but as recorded two centuries later. The principal sources for this are three 18th-century maps: William Westley's Plan of Birmingham surveyed in 1731, Samuel Bradford's Plan of Birmingham, surveyed in 1750 and Thomas Hanson's Plan of Birmingham Survey'd of 1778. Bradford's plan, more detailed than Westley's, has been used as the base plan for fig.1, from which the more conservative (slow to change) plan elements – streets and property boundaries – have been extracted. In the analysis no reliance is placed on the form of individual plots; instead, attention is directed towards the general characteristics of groups or series of plots and, in particular, their common, shared, boundaries, where one series abuts another. Wherever possible, details shown by these cartographers are verified from other, later, sources. The much more reliable plans of the 19th-century Ordnance Survey and Board of Health which would normally form the base-plans for such an exercise have not been thus employed here because of the degree of change in the townscape in the century before they were surveyed.

The progress of urban development for a century and a half after 1553 must similarly be reconstructed primarily from topographical evidence, with some support from historical and archaeological sources. From the 1690s on, written evidence becomes available, particularly in the form of building leases issued by landowners to prospective developers – mostly builders, bricklayers, masons and carpenters – often specifying the dimensions of new streets and plots, the form of the new buildings (generally three-storey brick), and sometimes placing restrictions on the occupations that could be pursued there (butchers and smiths were often forbidden). The growth of Birmingham from the 17th century has recently been charted in detail by McKenna (*Birmingham, the building of a city*, 2005) using this historical source material, and extensive use has been made here of this work to identify town-plan components that would otherwise remain anonymous. From 1731 on Birmingham was surveyed and mapped with increasing frequency and accuracy. The plans of 1731, 1750 and 1778 were followed by Snape's plan of 1779 which, although lacking detail within the built-up area, usefully shows the surrounding fields that were then being built over. New maps followed in 1810 (Kempson), 1819, 1824-5 (Pigott Smith) and 1849. Urban developments after the 1730s can therefore be identified within a maximum thirty-year bracket, and many individual growth episodes or 'town-planning events' in this period have been identified by McKenna (2005) and by previous historians.

This analysis

The old urban core of Birmingham, built up before 1750, has been analysed using Bradford's plan of 1750 as the primary base map. Within this, the extent of the built-up area by 1553 is indicated approximately, and across the whole area shown the town plan is disaggregated into individual town-plan components, or plan-units in the terminology of M R G Conzen (1969). These may simply be individual plot series, defined by common boundaries, that may be the outcome of a single design, or of development over a short period of time, or they may be more complex areas of townscape with, for example, a common orientation or unifying grid-plan that distinguishes them as individual designs or single-phase developments that are recognisably different from neighbouring areas. Wherever possible other independent sources are brought in to illuminate each area. This generally means archaeological evidence for the old, industrial core streets (Edgbaston Street,

Digbeth, Deritend, Moor Street and Park Street) and documentary evidence for peripheral areas developed after c.1690.

For the latter, and particularly for areas built up after 1750, the emphasis placed on the use of historical evidence increases decisively as details of land ownership, private Acts of Parliament to enable developments, and leases determining what builder-developers would build and where, become available. Figure 2 covers the study area as a whole and offers a schematic guide to the development of major landholdings around the old urban core in the course of the 18th century. It is schematic in the sense that further detailed research will be required if the agency behind the building of each and every street developed before c.1800 is to be determined, though the approximate extent of the larger estates is fairly clear. Town-plan analysis still has an application in this period, as discontinuities in the fabric of the built-up area (for example, changes in grid orientation or deflected boundaries) can predict where one landowning interest ended and another began, in advance of the more detailed historical investigation that is still required and that this chapter cannot provide. The map sequence also, as discussed, provides a series of snapshot views of the overall extent of the built-up area at increasingly frequent intervals.

Town-plan components are numbered sequentially below and in figs. 1 and 2 from the core outwards, but no detailed chronological implication is intended.

A cut-off date of 1800 has been adopted because it was around that time that the study area was first almost fully urbanised. After that date the town continued to expand ever more rapidly outwards while, within the study area, development intensified within the recently-built-up estates and the old medieval core alike, within individual plots and by the insertion of new streets – most famously exemplified by the construction of Corporation Street in 1879 right through the centre of the pre-1800 town. The multiplicity of small-scale changes after c.1800 is well beyond the scope of this chapter and again requires more detailed research (e.g. Digbeth and its environs: Baker 1999).

Part I: Town-plan components within the pre-1553 built-up area

1. St Martin's churchyard and encroachments

In summary, the origins of St Martin's church can at present be traced back to the 12th century, on the basis of a stone fragment with chevron ornament reported in the 19th century. Direct documentary evidence is much later, the church first recorded only in 1285 (Brickley et al 2006, 12). How far the church actually pre-dated the 12th century is contested. Steve Bassett (2000, 16) has suggested that St Martin's was a 12th-century foundation associated with but secondary to the creation of the market place, while the pre-Conquest parish was served by a different church, possibly one on the site of the Priory or Hospital of St Thomas. Hodder, however, has rejected this view, suggesting instead that St Martin's was the first and only parish church, one, moreover, occupying a circular churchyard and potentially, therefore, of much earlier date (Hodder 2004, 79).

The date at which the churchyard became ringed by buildings is also uncertain. 15th to 16th-century pottery from the churchyard excavations probably derived from surrounding buildings (Ratkai, finds

overview); they do not identifiably appear in the 1553 survey as presumably they paid rent to the parish. They may, however, have been established much earlier, perhaps contemporaneously with the adjacent market-place encroachments, as the church sought to profit from its market-place frontages. Removal of the houses began in the late 18th century and was completed by 1810 (Brickley et al 2006, 9)

2. The Market Place

The first reference to Birmingham's market place is the royal charter of 1166 granting to Peter de Birmingham and his heirs a market 'to be held at his castle in Birmingham'. Two questions immediately arise from this. The first is whether this was a genuinely new development or a legal recognition of a long-standing situation. The second is how literally 'at his castle' (apud castrum) should be understood. Did the phrase mean merely 'in the general vicinity of the castle', (being the most prominent landmark), or was it much more precise, meaning at the gate of the castle – the manorial moated site – in the Edgbaston Street/Moat Lane area? Either seems possible, though Mike Hodder (pers. comm.) has recently opted for the more precise meaning, arising from the presence of the 'lower market' to the south of St Martin's. The 1189 market confirmation charter referring to the market 'in the town' rather than at the castle could similarly be read either to suggest that marketing activity had shifted north, or that it was the town – the rapidly-growing built-up area – that was already by then the most striking landmark (Buteux 2003, 51).

The market place as a whole covered a triangular area measuring about 250 metres long north to south by about 100 metres across at its base, formed by Edgbaston Street and St Martin's Lane, curving around the churchyard perimeter. The geography of the market place has often been described and need only be summarised here. Its western side was formed by Spicer Street (home to the town's wealthiest merchants in 1553), its eastern side by Corn Cheaping, a section of the continuous, sinuous, High Street/Digbeth road running NW-SE through the town. As usual, such street-names reflect the segregation of functions within a large urban market place, the Shambles occupying the northern apex of the triangle with livestock markets along the main street to the north: the Beast Market or English Market from the Tollbooth at the New Street junction to Carrs Lane; beyond, as far as Dale End, was the Welch Market, dealing with sheep and wool. In 1553 this part of town was characterised by sheepfolds (e.g. Bickley and Hill 1890, no.87, xviii).

The manorial survey of 1553 also shows clearly that the market-place encroachments recorded by the 18th-century town plans were then in place. The Bailiff and commonality of the Borough were paying 8 shillings per annum for 'divers stalls for the fishmongers, butchers and tanners there in the market' (Bickley and Hill 1890, no.90, xviii). Encroachments out from the principal frontages appear to be represented by entries such as that for the 'parcel of a shop' measuring 5 feet by 10 feet in front of William Budges' shop, or one shop and one 'standing' at the outermost end of the Shambles (Bickley and Hill, *ibid*, nos.93, 98, xix, xviii). The origins of the main encroachments are not recorded, but a row such as the Shambles is most likely to have been a manorial initiative, most probably of the 13th, or at latest 14th, century. The market place encroachments were gradually demolished by the Street Commissioners in a process that commenced in 1784 (Brickley et al 2006, 9).

What of the origin of the triangular market-place itself? The 'village green' hypothesis is now widely discredited – the green being a feature most characteristic of nucleated settlement, for which in this instance there is absolutely no evidence (see Bassett 2000, 1). So, to what extent is there evidence of design – of town planning or 'higher-order decision-making' – in the form of the market place; was it, in Steve Bassett's words, 'the product of a formal act of creation'? It has to be said that the case for this may have been overstated (Bassett, *ibid*, 2 and n.11). While there is abundant evidence for the careful laying-out of the surrounding plots and, in the Moat Lane/Digbeth block, a possibly more intensive re-design of a plot series with a back lane (see below), the possibility that the triangular market place evolved from an informally-used open space at a three-way junction of major routes, on the lines of Swaffham (Norfolk) or Ross-on-Wye (Herefordshire) cannot yet be ruled out. Nor, however, can deliberate seigneurial creation. One distinct possibility is that the necessary open space was created around the existing church by 'pulling back' the south-western frontage of the primary through-route, the Dale End – High Town – Digbeth – Deritend road, to a new line represented by Spicer Street, possibly already there as a short-cut through to Edgbaston Street. A similar process may be envisaged in the creation of the 12th-century market place at Leominster (Herefordshire) in the space between an ancient main road and Leominster Priory's precinct frontage.

3. The Manorial Moat and 4, the Parsonage Moat

Again, these features have been extensively discussed by other writers (Watts 1980, Buteux 2003, Hodder 2004) and no more than a short summary would be appropriate here. The manorial moat is fairly certainly identifiable as the *de Birmingham castrum* of the 1166 charter, having yielded an architectural fragment of probable 12th-century date, a cooking-pot rim of 12th or 13th-century date, and a wall pre-dating the very fine 13th-century masonry that was the most striking feature of the salvage excavations of 1973-5. Its circular form suggests that it may have originated as a ringwork (Hodder 2004, 89; Watts 1980). The origins of the Parsonage Moat to the west are more obscure. It may simply have been a moated rectory contemporaneous with St Martin's church, or the *de Birmingham* family's home farm, though Mike Hodder has suggested the possibility that it could be the site of the pre-Conquest manor house (2004, 79).

5. Edgbaston Street south plot-series

A short series of watered plots, each ending at the watercourse linking the Parsonage moat to the Manor House moat, their appearance on Bradford's map assumes a degree of apparent regularity from the alleyways that penetrate the series from the frontage down the slope to the watercourse, between (approximately) every second or third individual plot. The Edgbaston Street frontage was fully built-up in 1750 with ranges of buildings extending part-way or intermittently down the alleyways towards the rear. The alleys were evidently developing at that time, Wesley's map of 1731, though somewhat schematic, showing fewer of them, though building development behind the street frontage was already by then well advanced.

The Edgbaston Street excavation provides crucial archaeological evidence. The plots (probably the series as a whole but certainly the plots towards the western end) appear to have been laid out and

occupied before the end of the 12th century, and to have accommodated both domestic and industrial functions, having produced a 'genuine domestic group' of late 12th to early 13th-century pottery (Rátkai 2008, finds overview) – rare in Birmingham at this date. Tanning, however, was the most archaeologically well-represented activity on the excavated plots, being present from the 13th century or earlier through to the early 18th century. The necessary water supply would have been provided by the watercourse, running between the two moats, that formed the common rear boundary. Where excavated, this channel was seen to have been kept open into the late 18th century. Thus provided, these plots would have offered an unusually advantageous topography for industrial exploitation, in that a supply of running water was present at the rear while the plot heads – the occupied frontage – were up-slope, well-drained and clear of the Rea floodplain.

It has been suggested that the triangular market place originally extended south to the edge of the de Birmingham's moat (see Demidowicz 2002, fig.3) and that the easternmost plots of the Edgbaston Street series were later extended over it. It must be said that there is no supporting topographical evidence for this. The plot series appears to have been completely homogenous in character right up to the short, regular plots facing east onto Moat Lane. They appear to have been regular, watered strip plots of standard type, with no sign of the plot-less buildings characteristic of market-place encroachments.

The mapped plots need not necessarily have been precisely coeval with the plots as first established, though there appears to be no hard evidence for discontinuities in their occupation that might suggest re-planning. McKenna (2005, 14) refers to new tenancies created after the Black Death by Fulk de Birmingham in Edgbaston Street and at the Smallbrook Street – Horsefair junction. This appears to refer to an entry in the 1553 survey to a burgage and garden held by Richard Hamon by the terms of a charter dated 1352, interpreted by the survey's editors as evidence that Fulk de Birmingham parcelled out the south side of the street at that date (Bickley and Hill 1890, no.84, p.xvii); this, however, seems to be taking the evidence too far. The archaeological sequence also shows a major reorganisation of the excavated plots c.1700-1720 represented by the formation of a widespread dark cultivation-type soil following the disuse of the back-plot industrial infrastructure developed over the preceding centuries (Buteux 2003, 75-6). Whether this represents actual abandonment of plots may, however, be doubted. The frontage, from Westley's plan of 1731, remained fully built up. And McKenna, in discussing the rapidly increasing population of Birmingham in the late 17th century, gives an example of the infilling of tenements in the urban core from Edgbaston Street where, in 1674, a piece of land only 2 yards and 4 inches wide was purchased with the right to build up against the neighbours' buildings (McKenna 2005, 23).

6. Edgbaston Street north plot-series

By 1750 the clarity of layout still visible in the plot series on the south side of the street had long disappeared from the north side, as plots had been developed facing east onto Spicer Street (plan-component 7) and, to a lesser extent, west onto Worcester Street, resulting in a confusion of property boundaries – some running north-south belonging to the Edgbaston Street plots, others west-east. Because of this dense and confused pattern, no chronological relationship can be determined between the Edgbaston Street plots and those facing east onto Spicer Street and the market place. While it is most probable that the latter were the earlier plots – belonging to the market place and the main axial street – this cannot be demonstrated, the workings of the property

market in this area having by the 18th century already confused the junction of the two series. It is possible that the Edgbaston Street north plots were initially formed at the expense of earlier east facing plots that had originally run all the way back to Worcester Street, as some still did (plan-component 7) north of Bell Street. Lease Lane (Lea Lane in 1731) extended north to Bell Street through the middle of the Edgbaston Street series and may represent a secondary alleyway developed up the length of a plot, though it was present by 1553. The series as a whole may originally have terminated on Bell Street, though that, by 1731 and certainly by 1750, had already been developed with its own short plots on both sides, further confusing the pattern in this very densely built-up central area.

7. Spicer Street plot-series

The plots lining the western frontage of the market place (Spicer Street, extending north into the lower end of High Street) were quite distinctive, the series as a whole exhibiting a curved formation, their boundaries leaving the main frontage perpendicularly but bending towards an east-west alignment further to the rear. This distinctive formation may simply have been to accommodate the plot-series within the angle formed with Edgbaston Street but may also perhaps reflect the underlying grain of pre-existing fields, the curve perhaps even continuing across Worcester Street to be reflected by Dudley Street and later infill development (Colmore Street) to its north (see below).

The longitudinal penetration of this block of properties by Bell Street, Philip Street and other minor alleyways, appears to be related to the 'ladder-pattern' phenomenon so often seen in English towns in the medieval and post-medieval periods. This occurs where properties running between a principal frontage (usually a market place) and a secondary through-street to the rear become intensively sub-divided by minor lanes – the north side of the market place in Nottingham providing a good example – to service infill housing in the back-plot areas with connections to both frontages. This process is actually documented for Philip Street where, in the late 17th century, the landowner Roger Phillips leased land on the High Street frontage to a London haberdasher for building four houses, followed in 1692 by a further lease to a Birmingham bricklayer and others for the construction of a new street and houses behind (McKenna 2005, 23).

The Spicer Street market-place frontage was occupied by the wealthier merchants listed in the 1553 survey. No archaeological evidence is available from this area but it would be surprising if this was not part of the primary 12th-century settlement core, probably accommodating trading functions that did not require watered plots or a down-wind marginal position on account of fire-risk. The intensity of later development precludes any chance of reading a designed origin from the recorded characteristics of the plots other than, as already discussed, the possibility that the frontage line was the most 'designed' component of the formation of the market place itself.

8 and 9. High Town south-east and east-side plot-series

Two areas have been distinguished here simply on account of the different form of the plots on the curve of High Town and further north along the street, though it is probable that they formed, and may well have been conceived as, a single series. Their unifying characteristic appears to have

been a common back boundary to the plots at a distance of 60-80 metres back from the High Town frontage roughly mid-way between it and Moor Street behind. On purely topographical grounds this might be taken as being indicative of a single planned origin for both streets, though this was fairly certainly not the case. Archaeological evidence from the Moor Street and Park Street excavations indicates that this boundary line in part fossilises the line of the ditch demarcating the boundary between the town plots and the manorial deer park known as Little Park or Over Park. Where it was examined at Moor Street, the ditch was found to have been backfilled by c.1250, then sections were re-cut, only to be backfilled again by c.1300. Towards the north end of the plot-series, as Moor Street converged with the main street, the plots became shorter and shorter. The plots at that end may still have been bounded by the park ditch though Demidowicz reconstructs it converging on the Dale End frontage some way south of the Moor Street junction (Demidowicz 2002, 149). As seen on the 18th-century plans the plot-series rear boundary was not continuous, being bisected by the lanes running through to Moor Street but also occurring at slightly different distances back from the frontage from block to block; this may reflect a process of departure from an originally continuous ditched boundary as, with the workings of the property market over time, some main-street plots were extended back or were curtailed by developments on Moor Street. The lanes that run through the series (Castle Street, Carrs Lane, New Meeting Street) may be post-1553 insertions and archaeological or documentary research should be able to establish their origins.

In the absence of archaeological evidence there is no way at present of dating the laying-out or the first occupation of these plots. Those at the south end, fronting the Market Place, are likely to have been built up before the end of the 12th century, but those at the northernmost end were, at the time of the 1553 survey, either unoccupied or contained only sheepfolds. It may be that occupation never extended north to the Moor Street junction in the medieval period, or that the plots at that end were subject to post-Black Death depopulation, reverting to gardens and grazing: this is a key area for future archaeological investigation.

10. High Town west plot-series

This was a short series of plots covering a frontage length of c.160 metres from New Street north to Crooked Lane at the junction with Bull Street (Chapel Street). The series was fairly certainly truncated by the insertion of New Street (see below) and probably by post-medieval infill developments behind. It is difficult to reconstruct the original rear boundary but it may have been about 70-90 metres west of the frontage, running south from the right-angle bend in Crooked Lane. To the south the development of plots facing New Street seems likely to have further truncated this series (see below).

11. Dale End north plot-series

Divided into two blocks by Lower Priory, established c.1700, this plot-series lay at the outer end of the built-up area in 1553. It seems probable that only the south-western block preserved the full depth of its plots by 1750, those of the north-eastern block having been truncated by the development of Westley Street at the rear. The plots of the south-western block lay at an angle to the Dale End frontage, parallel with the diverging course of Bull Street (Chapel Street). Lower Priory

may have been built along an existing thoroughfare or passage as the main street space – particularly as seen on Westley’s plan of 1731 – differed in character either side of it. Westley labels the south-western part as Broad Street, with Dale End to the north-east. The frontage line too was quite different in each part, that of Broad Street having a distinctive bulbous appearance characteristic of an extra-mural market street. The frontage itself, as shown in 1731, was staggered, suggestive either of encroachment or perhaps of a less-intensive use of the frontage that might be expected towards the margins of the settlement.

12. Corn Cheaping plot-series

This series occupied the eastern Market Place frontage between Moor Street and Park Street. But, given that both these streets appear to be additions to the town plan, the series should be seen as originally part of a much longer series stretching without interruption from High Town to the Rea. Their rear boundary was the ditch separating the town and the manorial deer park to the north-east. The ditch was accumulating rubbish from the early 13th century, offering a terminus ante quem for the occupation of the Corn Cheaping plots, though in reality they are likely to have formed part of the 12th-century settlement core. Despite the medieval infilling of the ditch it persisted in the landscape as a property boundary, to be mapped in the 18th century by Bradford and others, and survived into the 20th century.

13 and 14. Digbeth north plot-series

This long (nearly 500-metre) plot-series extends eastwards and downhill from Park Street, but, as discussed above, may be considered to have been, in origin, part of the much longer continuous series extending down Dale End, High Town and Corn Cheaping, bounded at the rear by the Hersum Ditch, the series as a whole extending over 1100 metres (though it must be repeated that the northern end of this was not built up in 1553 and may not have been earlier). The rear ditch which, for at least part of its length, carried a minor watercourse ran more or less parallel to the Digbeth frontage, bounding plots that were between c.60 and 70 metres long. A distinction has been drawn here between the main Digbeth plot-series (13) and that at the bottom (14) adjacent to the Rea and surrounded by its subsidiary channels, the plots here being longer and more irregular in form. This area was known as Deritend Island, and excavation here has demonstrated activity in the form of pottery waste dumping in the early to mid-13th century and possibly in the 12th. The presence of a roadside ditch illustrates the fundamental need for drainage in this location and would almost certainly have bounded a raised, causewayed, carriageway. The first property boundaries too were also ditched. Use of these appears to have ceased in the later 13th century (a response to a deteriorating climate?) before resuming with industrial activity in the later 15th or 16th centuries (Hodder 2004, 91).

Excavation has shed light on the main plot-series (13) at two points. At the top of the series, the Park Street excavations explored the boundary ditch at the rear of the Digbeth plots and found that it contained potting waste, possibly from industries located over the boundary in the park, or even in the rear of the Digbeth plots. This raises an interesting town-planning issue, in the sense of the apparently central location of a fire-hazardous and polluting activity. In particular, if the potting waste

really was from the Digbeth plots (and not from inside the park), it joins the tanning industry on the Edgbaston Street plots as an 'anti-social' industry found within a 150-metre distance of St Martin's, arguably the central focus of early Birmingham. The explanation may be that, given the small size of settlement in the 13th century, it was felt acceptable to 'zone' potting to a down-wind but nevertheless fairly central location, as seems to have been the case in late pre-Conquest Stafford.

Further work needs to be done on the chronology of plot take-up in this long series. While it is probable that the plot frontages at the top end (market-place) of the series were occupied by c.1200, the density and rate of occupation of plots further east will only be established with further sampling. The Hartwell-Smithfield garage site, about half-way down the series found pits of the 13th or early 14th century and cobbling waste from the 15th-16th centuries (Hodder 2004, 91) but the Floodgate Street excavations right next to the Rea point to activity there around 1200. There is no necessity to assume a simple process of west to east linear urban growth: the floodplain channels at the bottom of the slope may have attracted particular industrial functions earlier than plots up-slope offering more limited facilities. A really informative chronology will probably only ever be derived from an excavated sample large enough to yield dendrochronological dates from waterlogged deposits at a number of locations. This raises the wider question of the velocity of urban growth in the period after 1166. At present this question is barely approachable from internal archaeological sources. Comparison with contemporary market towns elsewhere in the region, such as the Herefordshire market-towns that had added secondary 'New Streets' to their primary single-street linear plans before c.1200, suggests that major additions to the town plan are likely to have been separated by decades rather than centuries (see Hillaby 2005, 2006).

15. Digbeth (south) and Moat Lane

This town-plan component includes both the south side of Upper Digbeth (Cock or Well Street on Westley's plan) and Moat Lane to the rear, the block separated from the plots further along Digbeth by Upper Mill Lane. Moat Lane does not seem to be specifically identifiable in the 1553 survey though by 1731 it had developed its own frontages on both sides. Bradford's map of 1750 shows short, apparently fairly regular strip-plots, those on the south side backing onto the last plot of the Edgbaston Street series.

The date at which Moat (or Court) Lane was first built up has not been established. It may have had a more significant origin than that of a simple access-lane to the manor site. Lying parallel to Digbeth, it has more the appearance of a back-access lane to the frontage plots, possibly originating as part of a small seigneurial planning scheme associated with a discrete part of the main through-street frontage close to both the moat and the market. The recorded appearance of the strip-type plots here does not however resemble market-place encroachment and there is no reason to suspect such a process operating here.

16. Digbeth (south) plot-series

The south-side Digbeth plots were generally short and irregular in their layout, and were divided into a number of blocks by access lanes to the moat, watercourses and mill behind the main-street frontage. The plots shown in this area on the earlier 18th-century maps differed in character either side of Lower Mill Lane, those to the west being short but of regular strip-plot form, those to the east

being confined to the main frontage with alleyways separating irregular blocks of development behind; the differences are more clearly apparent on the 1750 map than on Westley's of 1731. Historical evidence suggests that the south side of Digbeth was, for most of the medieval and early post-medieval period, largely given over to watercourses with only limited numbers of buildings. The Tanners Row of the 1553 survey may either have been the plots, all of which backed onto a watercourse, west of Mill Lane, or Mill Lane itself. One of the tenants in 1553 held a watercourse 'with its appurtenances in Tanners Row' (Bickley and Hill 1890, no.88, p.xviii).

17, 18, 19 and 20: Deritend

The recorded and surviving morphology of Deritend suggests a developmental history entirely separate from that of Digbeth, as indeed was the case. Lying on the east side of the Rea within the parish of Aston, it was a separate manor from Birmingham, although the lords of Birmingham owned it too by 1270. Holt (1995) has suggested that it was developed independently as a market to rival Birmingham's. Its physical separateness is marked by the difference in width and orientation of the main street either side of the Rea, and by the change in direction and constriction in width at its junction with Bordesley High Street. It appears as a simple, coherent, market-street, served by its own chapel from 1381 and with its own distinctive plot-series either side. Nevertheless, even within this small, discrete area, subtle morphological differences may be observed.

A diagonal plan-seam appears to pass through Deritend on the line of Heath Mill Lane (Cooper's Mill Lane in 1750). On the north side of the main street the plots (plan-component 17) were short and irregular, ending against a common boundary that lay, along with a number of others, at right-angles to Heath Mill Lane, defining a series of large un-built up plots stretching from the lane to the river. East of the lane the main-street plots (18) were longer, but these too ended on a common boundary at right-angles to the lane, though in this case the boundary was prolonged eastwards to form the common back-fence line to the Bordesley plot series up the hill. The plots on the south side of the street (19, 20) were more uniform in character, though here the seam was represented by a change in the frontage line and a consequent narrowing of the eastern half of the street. The seam appears to mark a terrace forming the eastern edge of the Rea floodplain and was prolonged to the south-west by a field boundary – as might be expected in such a situation. In summary Deritend may have the appearance of a discrete town-planning event, but closer examination suggests that it was slotted into a pre-existing framework of boundaries, determined both by the floodplain edge and by land parcels laid out perpendicularly to it.

Archaeologically, the area is probably best known as the area in which the eponymous 'Deritend Ware' 13th-century pottery was first found in the 1950s, since when wasters have been found not just on other Deritend sites (the Old Crown and Gibb Street) but up the hill in Digbeth as well (see above; Hodder 2004, 91, Buteux 2003, 33). The lack of 15th-16th-century material from Deritend remains an enigma: there is no question of desertion, the 1553 survey recording a minimum of 35 households and an implied population of at least 100, a statistic supported by the earliest Aston parish registers (Holt 1995).

21, 22: Moor Street and Park Street

Moor Street and Park Street are fairly certainly additions to the medieval town plan of Birmingham – extra streets created in the form two chords cutting across the arc of the main Dale End – Deritend through-street, taking land from the manorial deer park and adding it to the growing town. A deceptively simple town-planning exercise, their layout is such that neither is a cul-de-sac, both offering through traffic along the trading frontages. More striking still is their size: although neither is likely to have been completely urbanised at any point in the medieval period, as a pair they created not far short of 2000 metres of additional through-street frontage, the equivalent of a planted town the size of (for example) pre-13th-century Pershore, or of replicating the whole of the original Birmingham north-south through-street from Dale End to the Rea. As elsewhere (13th-century Leominster for example) it may be that manorial ambition to create new rents far exceeded the capacity of the local economy to generate recruits for the urban venture. Moor Street was built up for about half its length in 1553, Park Street even less, though further work will be required to identify any contraction in the extent of settlement in the preceding two centuries.

Recently discovered (by George Demidowicz) historical evidence shows that both streets had been established before 1296, a rental of that year, and another of 1344-5, recording them as Park Street and Lower Park Street. As in 1553, settlement was apparently confined to the southern (market-place) end.

Excavations on the east side of Moor Street, behind the Corn Cheapying plots, found activity from the 12th century onwards, and it is probable that Moor Street was laid out at that time. Industrial activity dominated the archaeological record for the 15th and 16th centuries. The Park Street excavations, behind the Upper Digbeth plot-series, again showed evidence of industrial activity from the 12th century onwards, though not necessarily occupation, though the ditched boundary with the main-street plots disappeared through infilling sooner next to Moor Street than on Park Street. Industrial activity on the excavated Park Street plots included metal-working (including iron smithing), flax-retting and hemp processing (Buteux 2003, 33-7). The Park Street excavations were also able to show that the plots' common rear boundary ditch, though infilled in the 14th century, persisted as a property boundary and was thus mapped in the 18th century.

The 18th-century maps also show lengths of common rear boundaries separating the west-side Moor Street plots (plan-component 21) from those on the main street (9) and these boundaries probably derive from a prolongation of the manorial park boundary. Discontinuous back boundaries also separated the Moor Street plots from those on Park Street, generally suggesting that they may have been an element of organisation in the provision of separate plots for each street, though this arrangement became eroded by the working of the property market, made more unpredictable perhaps by empty or lightly-used and cheap plots on the margin of the built-up area. The 1731 map clearly shows that, north of Freeman Street (the northernmost of the east-west lanes), Park Street was unoccupied, though its west side was by then divided into plots ready for building; these were densely built up twenty years later (Bradford's map) though the east side remained open – the St Martin's overspill burial ground being established there in 1807 and turned into a park in 1880 (Buteux 2003, 103-4).

23, 24. New Street

New Street is but one of many examples of medieval 'New Streets' added to English market towns. The related phenomenon of 'Newlands' place-names was noted by James Bond in, for example, early 13th-century Pershore, Witney and Banbury (Bond and Hunt 1977). New Streets are also found in the Herefordshire market towns of Ross, Leominster and Ledbury, where in each case they were additions to an originally linear town plan; Ledbury's New Street can be shown to have been in place by 1186 (Hillaby 2005) and Leominster's was most probably there by c.1200 (Hillaby 2006). Birmingham's New Street can now, thanks to documentation recently unearthed by George Demidowicz, be shown to have been in place by 1296; previously the earliest documentary terminus ante quem given for the street was 1448. New Street, as Steve Bassett and others have noted, bears one distinctive sign of deliberate design in its layout: the exact right-angle formed by its north side with the main High Town frontage. And, when it was created, it introduced a new east-west orientated plan-element into the underlying general landscape grain, trending north-west to south-east (Bassett 2000, 13; see Dudley Street, plan-component 25, below).

Otherwise, there is very little sign of a 'designed' origin. The width of the street at its east end suggests that it was probably created as a street market, probably to accommodate livestock brought in from the west of the region (Prof. R Holt, pers. comm.); the eastern end was used as a swine market in the 18th century. The street tapered from east to west, except that its junction with High Town was partly closed off by the Tollbooth or town hall and what appear to have been encroachments out from the plot frontages either side of it. The depth of the New Street plots on both sides, as shown by the 18th-century maps, also diminished from east to west, though the extent to which land was acquired by the infill developments behind is not always clear. On the south side, this may however have been because the plots were created inside (i.e. stopped at) an earlier agricultural boundary, forming part of the underlying NW-SE (Dudley Street) alignment (see below).

The street was not intensively occupied in 1553, a mere ten tenants listed there (though there may have been other households paying rents elsewhere) (Bickley and Hill 1890). The impression given by the two most detailed 18th-century maps (Bradford 1750, Hanson 1778) is that the easternmost plots on the south side (plan-component 24, framed by Peck Lane to the west and Worcester Street to the east) formed a distinct group of narrow plots, contrasting with the broader plots that composed the rest of the street (component 25). This block included, in its centre, the hall of the Guild of the Holy Cross, established in Birmingham in 1392 (VCH Warks.VII, 75). How far the distinction between this block of narrow plots and the remainder reflects a pre-1553 characteristic of the street is not certain; nor, at present, is how this difference was expressed architecturally when the 1750 and 1778 maps were drawn.

25. Dudley Street

Dudley Street was at the outer end of the Edgbaston Street built-up area in 1553 but was fully built-up on both sides by 1731, by which time occupation had spread down much of Pinfold Street beyond (plan component 34).

Local urban 'grain' and the underlying field pattern

The street itself exhibited a distinct curve, lying north-west to south-east, and this was reflected by other boundaries in the area, most immediately the fragmentary rear plot boundaries to the north. These, together with the rear common boundary to the plots on New Street, determined the orientation that the infill development between the two main streets would take (Colmore Street, see below). Dudley Street appears to have been a particular curved component (most likely determined by a field boundary) of a more general pattern of roads and boundaries following a ruling NW-SE orientation, the incidence of these extending from Bull Street – Snow Hill southwards beyond the study-area, but also apparently extending across the Rea floodplain (see plan components 17-20, above). This underlying trend in the landscape has been identified by Steve Bassett, who recognised in the field pattern south-west of the 18th-century built-up area ‘a loosely rectilinear layout shared by several of the most important roads which run through the manor (Bassett 2000, fig.1). The implications of this deserve further investigation than is possible in the context of this chapter but the issue is, in summary, that there are hints here of an agricultural landscape, datable to before c.1200, possibly a co-axial system whose boundaries trended north-west to south-east and extended indifferently across the natural and the manorial geography.

Returning to Dudley Street and its immediate surroundings, it is also possible that the curving alignments north of Edgbaston Street also belong to the same agricultural landscape, specifically that the plot grain between Worcester Street and the market place reflected the same curving field strips represented by Dudley Street.

26, 27 Bull (Chapel) Street

Bull Street, named after the inn on its south side, formerly Chapel Street, was the final part of the main approach-road from the north-west, its extension in that direction down the reverse slope of the Colmore Row ridge being Snow Hill. In 1553 Bull Street was built up to half-way along its south side, the houses stopping around the inn and ending with a sheep fold and two adjoining crofts beyond the sign of the Bull (Bickley and Hill 1890, no.82, p.xvi). Opposite the Bull stood the chapel of the Priory of St Thomas, whose precinct occupied all but the south-eastern end of that side of the street. There may not have been a single, common rear boundary to the south-side plots (as shown by Westley’s 1731 plan), the later, more detailed 18th-century maps showing a number of boundaries parallel to the street roughly along the plan seam represented by the first right-angle bend in Crooked Alley at the rear of the High Town plots (plan component 10). There is no sign of anything anomalous in the plan in this area that might support the argument for some kind of extension to St Thomas’s precinct or cemetery on the south side of the street (Bassett 2000, 20).

Part II: Town-plan components outside the 1553 built-up area

Introduction

The snapshot of the built-up area that the 1553 manorial survey provides may be insufficient in some important respects as a tool for urban historians (on account, for instance, of tenancies beyond its scope and buildings not individually enumerated), but it is the last such source available

for 180 years, until William Westley's map was printed. In that time, however, Birmingham grew by roughly a third; after, it grew even faster though, as explained in the introduction to this chapter, that process was measured at regular intervals as more town maps were surveyed and published. It is entirely fitting that it was William Westley's map that opens this new era as he himself was deeply involved in the process of urban expansion, being a carpenter, architect, and, in modern terminology, a property developer. Moreover the period in which he was most active was a true turning point in the town's development, during which its centre of gravity was irrevocably shifted northwards, uphill, away from the old industrial core and its watered plots, and in which for the first time virtually all new building was in brick. Also, from that point onwards, surviving records would ensure that many of the individual stages in the town's incremental growth and the individuals who were responsible for them would be documented.

28. Bordesley

The built-up area was extended beyond Deritend along Bordesley High Street in stages in the course of the 18th and early 19th centuries, being built up on both sides by 1824 (the Pigott Smith map); in 1750 only the bottom (Deritend) end had been built up. Archaeology provides evidence of smithing activity through the 17th to mid-18th centuries from this area, though finds of medieval pottery are rare, confirming that this was not a permanently inhabited part of the town until the post-medieval period (Ratkai, finds overview).

29. Worcester Street west plot-series

Not, apparently, built up in 1553, the central location and through-traffic of this street make it highly likely that the frontage between New Street and Edgbaston/Dudley Street would have been developed soon after, sooner rather than later in the 17th century, if not before. By 1731 development appears to have been dense enough for a minor secondary street to have been developed behind its south end (Old Meeting Street). The development of the ground at the rear followed, and this is documented.

30. Colmore Street/Peck Lane and 31, Queen Street/King Street

This has the appearance of a discrete block of infill development behind the older frontages of Dudley Street, Worcester Street and New Street. Peck Lane and Colmore Street met at right-angles to form a T whose arms each connected to one of the main frontages. A minor lane, the Frogger, formed a third, shorter street off the north side of Colmore Street. This area was developed between 1690 and 1692 by a bricklayer, a carpenter and a builder on land known as School Croft, leased for building from William Colmore. The lease stipulated that the new street was to be 9 yards wide and was to lead from Peck Lane through the croft towards the new buildings of Robert Phillips (Phillip Street) (McKenna 2005, 4). The extension of Colmore Street across Peck Lane (plan component 31), as King Street, with Queens Alley, later Queen Street off its north side, took place later, between 1731 and 1750.

32, 33: Smallbrook Street

By 1750, and probably by 1731, housing extended about 280 metres south-west along Smallbrook Street from the junction with Dudley Street. This appears to represent building within two pre-existing land parcels, that to the east (plan component 32) having curved boundaries, shared with the Parsonage Moat enclosure (plan component 4) that may reflect an agricultural boundary framework. This land was leased for building by its owner, Richard Smallbrook, to a gunsmith in 1707; the latter disposed of part of it and handed the remainder to trustees who in turn subleased it for building to a bricklayer and a carpenter (VCH Warks VII, 8).

34. Pinfold Street

Already by 1731 Pinfold Street was largely built up from the end of Dudley Street as far as the junction with New Street and Bewdley Street. The 18th-century maps all show a strip of narrow, ribbon-like development comprising very short house plots confined by parallel rear common boundaries, breaks in which are suggestive of the incremental development of perhaps five or six individual land parcels. The precise period in which this development occurred has not been established, nor the agencies behind it.

35. The Pemberton Estate: Old Square

In contrast, the development of the major block of land lying between the north side of Bull Street and Dale End is extremely well understood and documented. This was formerly the precinct, cemetery and estate of the medieval Hospital or Priory of St Thomas. The estate was purchased by John Pemberton, an ironmonger and Quaker, beginning in 1697, and he began laying out a series of narrow streets converging on a central square, possibly to the design of William Westley, but clearly closely modelled on the new squares built in west London from 1660 onwards. Plots were conveyed to builders beginning with the Bull Street frontage, and by 1707 sixteen houses had been built around the square. The first occupants included ironmasters, doctors, ironmongers and gentlemen; the exclusivity of the area was guaranteed by prohibitions on particular 'nuisance' trades (bakers, butchers, blacksmiths), on keeping pigs, and on dung heaps. The Upper Minories and Upper Priory were developed c.1707, followed by Newton Street between 1708 and 1710; the street itself was to be 10 yards wide, flanked by plots measuring 10 yards 2 feet 6 inches wide by 40 yards in length; houses were to be of three storeys. Lichfield Street was laid out by Thomas Newton (developer of Newton Street) together with the side streets to its south. Westley's Row (Westley Street in 1750), behind the Dale End plots, was laid out by William Westley c.1722 (McKenna 2005, 25-6; VCH Warks VII, 8).

36. St Phillips

'St Phillips, with its High Town parish, marked the new Birmingham, as opposed to the old medieval town' (McKenna 2005, 28). Construction of the church commenced in 1709, on a parcel of land

known as Horse Close, in the ownership of Robert Phillips, lying on the top of the ridge followed by Colmore Row, part of a long distance route between the south-west (Bewdley, Stourbridge) and the north (Aston, Lichfield) (Bassett 2000, fig.3, road 16). Like the fabric of the new High Town that it served, St Phillips is basically a brick structure behind its polite stone cladding. It was consecrated in 1715, at which time Temple Row (later sometimes called Tory Row on account of its up-market inhabitants) was under construction along the south-eastern side of the churchyard, built by the same individuals responsible for the church, possibly to a design of William Westley (McKenna 2005, 28-30).

37. Temple Street

Temple Street forms a very clear, discrete development block connecting the south-west end of Temple Row and St Phillip's churchyard to New Street to the south. Its shorter east-side plots were serviced by a narrow alley to the rear, Needless Alley. By 1731 all but three plots on its west side had been built up. This, and the alignment of the street on St Phillips suggest that they were conceived as a single scheme, Temple Street being built after 1715 and completed in the course of the following fifteen or so years.

38. Cannon Street/Cherry Street

Cannon Street is another clear and discrete planning episode and represents the final stage in the infilling of the former open ground between New Street and Broad Street, just post-dating William Westley's plan. It was developed from 1733 by William Hay, toymaker (metal-goods manufacturer) who first laid out Cannon Street to a width of ten yards from Moses Guest's Cherry Orchard through to New Street (McKenna 2005, 32). Cherry Street was laid out across its upper end formalising a pre-existing winding path shown by Westley's plan running through the Cherry Orchard to the middle of Temple Row; this path became Crooked Lane.

39. The Weaman Estate

The Weaman Estate, north-west of the Pemberton Estate, was the second of the great blocks of land in single ownership to be opened up for development from the beginning of the 18th century. Bounded to the south-east by Steel House Lane (formerly White Hall Lane) and to the north-west by Snow Hill, building had commenced by 1731 with Slaney Street and Weaman Street, progressing northwards from Steel House Lane. By 1750 building along these streets had nearly been completed and Catherine Street, the next street to the north-east had been laid out ready for building. To encourage further development, in 1772 a private Act was obtained by the Weaman sisters for the building of a new church (St Mary's) as a chapel-of-ease for St Martin's, and by 1778 a grid of streets (Loveday Street, Russell Street, St Mary's Row and Weaman's Row) framed its churchyard and were beginning to be developed. In 1782 the sisters issued new building leases, one going to Richard Newman, a button maker, for the development of houses on Loveday Street (McKenna 2005, 32-5). From 1777 the gun trade began to relocate into this area from Digbeth,

starting with new houses for wealthy manufacturers with workshops behind, and by c.1800 the estate had become known as the Gun Quarter, a process of creeping industrialisation that was closely paralleled next door as the jewellery trades colonised the Colmore Estate

As elsewhere around Birmingham (the Colmore Estate and Snow Hill, the Gooch (west) Estate and Smallbrook Street) property holdings appear to have been more diversified along the line of the old approach roads, and here another body, Lench's Trust, held property alongside Lancaster Street. The precise boundaries of this have not been established, though Lench Street offers a general location and common property boundaries to its plots are suggestive of its extent. As before, further detailed work would be required to precisely disentangle the interests here.

40. The Colmore Estate

This 100-acre estate was named after the old Birmingham family who moved out of their original house on High Street to the New Hall lying out in the countryside north of Bewdley Street and Colmore Row on the reverse slope of the ridge. In 1746 the family moved from Birmingham to Middlesex having obtained a private Act for building on their land. The first building leases were issued in 1747 (McKenna 2005, 35-6). Bradford's map of 1750 captures an early stage in the estate's development. The north side of Colmore Row, overlooking St Phillip's, had already been built up and a grid of streets laid out behind it (Newport Street, Church Street, Charles Street) with plots ready for building. Not quite all the land south-west of Snow Hill belonged to the Colmore Estate, the Pigott Smith map of 1824 showing other property interests (Inge and Vyse) along Snow Hill and Constitution Hill, the old main approach road from the north (see plan component 50, below).

Hanson's plan of 1778 shows the grid extended northwards, built up as far as Great Charles Street, with Lionel Street beyond laid out but not yet developed. Beyond it, three acres had by then been set aside for a new church, St Paul's, and its graveyard. Snape's plan of 1779 shows St Paul's standing in its churchyard insula and the streets around it laid out diagonally across the underlying field pattern. The map also catches the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal, completed up to the western edge of the Colmore Estate grid and about to be continued across it at a slight angle. It was completed across the estate before 1790 and had little impact on its plan, except that the original intention to build Water Street and Fleet Street as a continuous east-west street was abandoned and they were developed as separate cul-de-sacs, severed by the canal passing diagonally across their original line. The estate neared completion around the end of the century, and Kempson's plan of 1810 shows it built up for three blocks north of St George's, where it abutted two further distinct 'estate grids', one in the angle of Graham Street and Frederick Street, largely undeveloped in 1810, and a minor one based on Kenyon Street, already built up (McKenna, *ibid*, 36; VCH Warks VII, 8-9).

The Colmore Estate, like the Weaman Estate to the east, succumbed to more and more intensive industrialisation. St Paul's Square, at its heart, has been described as 'respectable rather than grand' but even here elegant neoclassical houses built on the frontages from c.1770 concealed contemporary workshops behind. It has been suggested that the Colmore Estate plots, laid out with five-yard frontages for largish houses, were from the beginning provided with enough ground at the rear for workshops or 'shopping' and workers' court housing. In the course of time industrial functions overtook residential functions, and many of the oldest buildings of what became the

Jewellery Quarter show evidence of conversion from the former to the latter (Cattell, Ely and Jones 2002, chapter 5).

41. The Jennens Estate

Another old Birmingham dynasty, the Jennens were High Street iron dealers who, like the Colmores, left town and let their Birmingham lands for development from 1729. Their property lay at the northern edge of town, beyond Dale End and Stafford Street. Building plots began to be taken up first on Chappell Street, but the process was slow (there is no sign of development in this direction on Westley's plan of 1731). In 1749 St Bartholomew's was founded as a chapel-at-ease for St Martin's and as an incentive for further development. New building leases were granted (for example, to John Collins, a carpenter) that specified building to three storeys in brick. Bradford's plan of 1750 shows the process already well advanced, with buildings along Chappell Street, new streets laid out and plots ready for building; the estate was completed c.1810 (McKenna 2005, 37-9).

42. The Inge Estate

This was the last stage in the infilling of the triangular block bounded by New Street on the north, Worcester Street and Dudley Street/Pinfold Lane. Private Acts were obtained for development from 1753 onwards. The most profitable element was Queen Street, developed by builder John Lewis between 1777 and 1786, the street being an extension of Colmore Street and King Street (plan components 30, 31) developed before 1750.

43. The Gooch (west) Estate

Along with the Colmore Estate, this is perhaps one of the best known of 18th-century Birmingham's great estates. It represented the final release for building of large parts of the ancient manorial demesne, lately in the possession of the Sherlock family (VCH Warks VII, 8), and, of all the major estates around Birmingham, it was the Gooch Estate that benefited earliest and most substantially from the arrival of the canals. Three substantial parcels of land were involved; having inherited, in 1766 Sir Thomas Gooch secured a private Act for their development.

On the west side of town, south-west of Pinfold Street, an initial block of forty acres of land was laid out with a grid of ten streets servicing 209 plots; the canal wharf south of Halesowen Street guaranteeing its success (McKenna 2005, 40-1). Hanson's plan of 1778 and Snape's the year after capture an early stage in its development. They show the new grid, which adopted the NW-SE orientation of the pre-existing fields, developed north of Smallbrook Street and east of Suffolk Street, which formed the main longitudinal axis of the new grid. By 1810 the built-up area extended a block west of Suffolk Street and, by then, Bromsgrove Street had been laid out to the south of Smallbrook Street exactly perpendicular to the grid axis, connecting Bristol Road (heading south-west) with Moat Row, running around the Manor House site. Development was already spreading

south of Bromsgrove Street into the Rea floodplain. The Pigott-Smith map of 1824 shows that the early 19th-century development of the Gooch Estate may have been complicated by other landholdings around Smallbrook Street and Exeter Row, part of the pre-existing approach road from the Edgbaston direction. For example, the south-western part of the Gooch Estate grid, around Ellis Street and Blucher Street, is marked as Inge property, the south-eastern. But apart from the older plots of Smallbrook Street it is only Thorpe Street and Inge Street (off the west side of Hurst Street, part of the grid) that stand out as an anomalous planning elements. Further detailed research would be able to disentangle the development of these different property interests in this area in the early 19th century.

44. The Gooch Estate (south-east)

This part of the Gooch Estate covered the manorial deer-park, Little or Over Park, north of Digbeth and east of Park Street, extending from the latter down the gentle gradient into the floodplain and down to the bank of the Rea. This was developed from the 1780s, but the major spur to development was the building of the Digbeth Branch Canal in 1790 and the Warwick and Birmingham Canal in 1793. Thereafter, development mushroomed almost overnight, most of it taking place in 1790-1795. The new grid was laid out on a NW-SE alignment, roughly parallel to Digbeth, making use of a pre-existing lane, Lake Meadow Hill, running off Park Street, to form the new grid axis (Bordesley Street). A second, parallel street (Coventry Street) was laid out roughly half-way between Bordesley Street and Digbeth, with cross streets at intervals (Allison Street, Meriden Street, Oxford Street), some broken through to the Digbeth frontage. North of Bordesley street the grid insulae were much larger than the two-acre blocks to the south; Fazeley Street and Banbury Street were laid out roughly west-east. From this initial start the grid and the built-up area were extended eastwards down to and across the Rea, though even by 1824 garden ground remained unbuilt on down by the river north of Floodgate Street and Ann Street (Baker 1999).

45. The Bradford Estate

Henry Bradford sought to develop his land south of Digbeth, Deretend and Bordesley from 1767. Within eleven years he had established a simple grid of streets based on Bradford Street and Alcester Street, the grid lying approximately on the orientation of the underlying field pattern, roughly perpendicular to the course of the Rea (McKenna 2005, 44). Plot take-up was initially slow, though between 1778 and 1810 (Kempson's map) both main longitudinal streets, Bradford Street and Cheapside, had been extended across the Rea to link up to Moat Row and thus to Bromsgrove Street on the Gooch Estate.

46. The Holte-Legge Estate

In 1788 Heneage Legge, heir to the Holte family 100-acre estate north of Birmingham, secured a private Act that enabled him to begin issuing leases for building. The first, of May 1788, was to John

Powell, brickmaker, for a large plot at the junction of Holte Street and Woodcock Street, with careful specifications for the houses to be built there (McKenna 2005, 44). Although it has not been possible, in the context of this chapter, to determine the full and precise extent of this estate, the core grid of 1788 is readily apparent, Holte Street forming the axis with Heneage, Lister and Oxygen Streets forming cross streets. This block lay between the old approach roads of Aston Street/Road, heading north-east, and Coleshill Street/Prospect Row, heading east. On the east side it was largely confined within the Digbeth Branch canal of 1790. Beyond this, the Piggott Smith map of 1824 identifies extensive tracts of Heneage Legge land continuing well to the east, beyond the study area. On its west side however was a more extensive grid of streets, part of which was developed well before Legge's 1788 Act, which also appears to have Holte-Legge associations (see below).

47. Unidentified estate (Holte-Legge?), Aston Street

A grid of streets with a predominant NNW-SSE axis can be seen developing either side of Aston Street from 1778 onwards. South of Aston Street, Duke Street and Woodcock Street had been laid out and partly developed by 1778. Duke Street followed the line of the Birmingham – Aston parish boundary, which was continued northwards in a straight line across Aston Street, across the grain of the underlying fields. Also on this side of Aston Street, development had commenced at the Aston Street – Lancaster Street (Walmer Lane) corner with a second street laid out parallel to the latter. By 1810 the line of Duke Street had been extended by the construction of (the suggestively named) Legge Street, and the single street parallel to Lancaster Street had turned into a grid pattern of eight or more blocks. As elsewhere around Birmingham, the 18th-century street grid was a rationalisation of the pre-existing field-pattern grain, although in this case at least one extended field boundary survived and was incorporated into the built-up area within the grid (the boundary between the plots on Staniforth Street and Moland Street). Gosta Green lay on the east side of this area. It was formed as an open space on Aston Street at the awkward junction with Woodcock Street and Duke Street and, later, Legge Street as well. Further work is required in this area to determine its pattern of landownership and development in these years.

48. The Prinsep Estate

A small, single-street, development to the north of the Weaman Estate, named after the landowning family. Bagot Street continued the line of Prinsep Street on the opposite side of Lancaster Street and may have been part of the same development. Prinsep Street can be seen laid out on Snape's plan of 1779, it was omitted from Kempson's of 1810, though reappears built up by the time of the Piggott Smith map of 1824.

49. The Crescent

The Crescent was an 'exclusive development' of £500-pound houses by Charles Norton, a builder, in which no shops or factories were to be permitted and coach houses and stables were to be

provided with separate rear access. The scheme was first launched in 1788, got nowhere, but was revived in 1790-93, though only four houses were ever built (McKenna 2005, 46-51).

50. The Inge Snow Hill property

Although from the map-derived morphology alone there is nothing to distinguish the strip of land running along the south-west side of Constitution Hill, Snow Hill and Bull Street from its surroundings, the Pigott Smith map of 1824 consistently labels this as Inge property, as far north as a block of Colonel Vyse's land south of Constitution Hill. The details of the development process of this part of the Inge estate have not been researched here, though McKenna (2005, 32) describes the creation in 1766 of Brettell Street by Benjamin Bretell, who leased part of a close between Snow Hill and Groom Street (Livery Street) and cut a street 5 yards and 1 foot wide across it before building on it. Bretell, a bricklayer, was responsible for other schemes in the area (McKenna, *ibid*, 50). Development of the Inge property appears to have kept pace with that of the Colmore Estate behind it, whose main NE-SW streets were inserted through it at intervals, though north of Great Charles Street the Snow Hill frontage properties were constrained by those behind suggesting that development of the lateral (Colmore Estate) streets was preceding that of the old approach-road frontage. Again, further documentary research would easily clarify the details of the development process throughout this area, much of which was destroyed later in the 19th century by Snow Hill station and its approaches.

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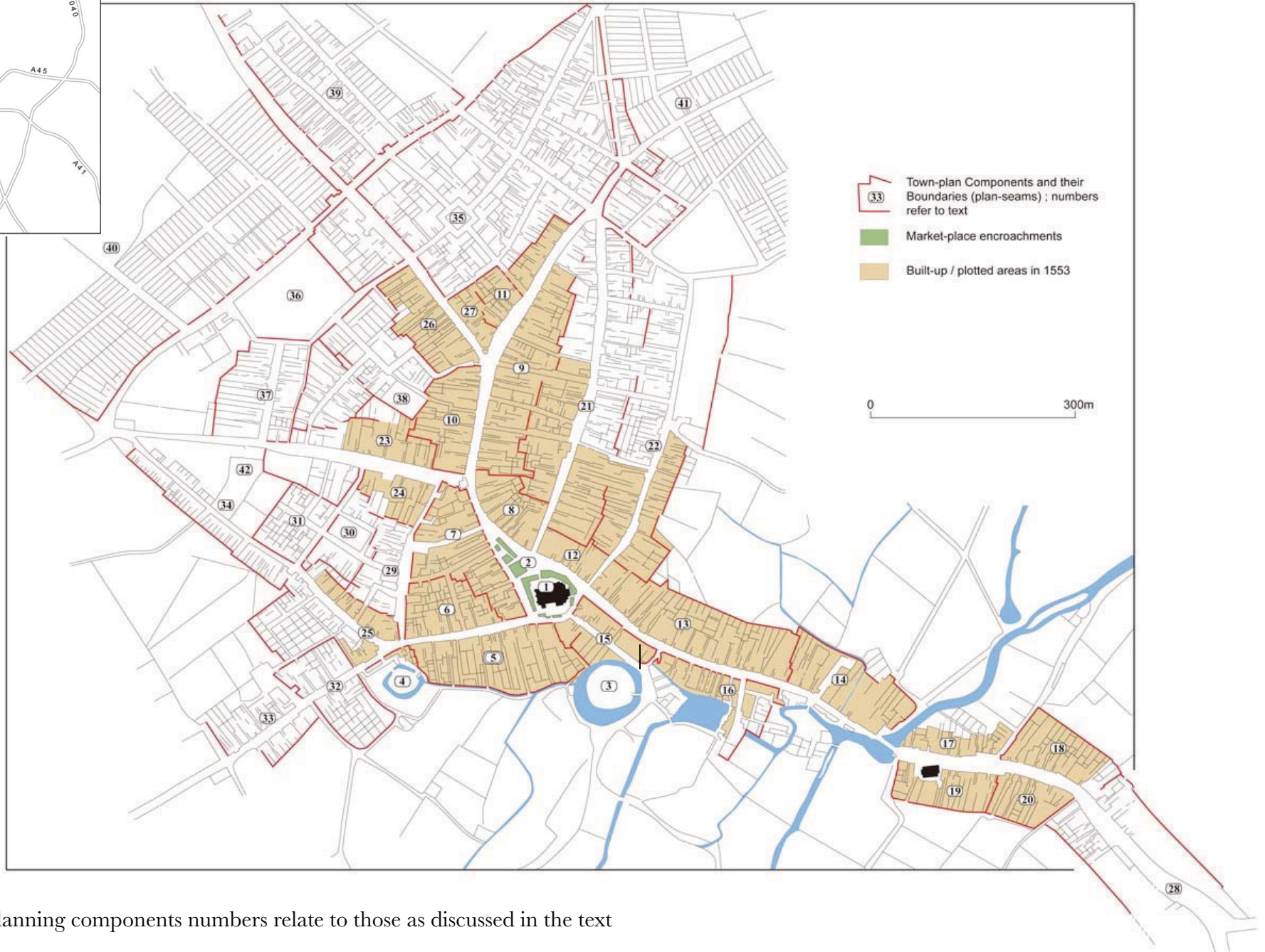
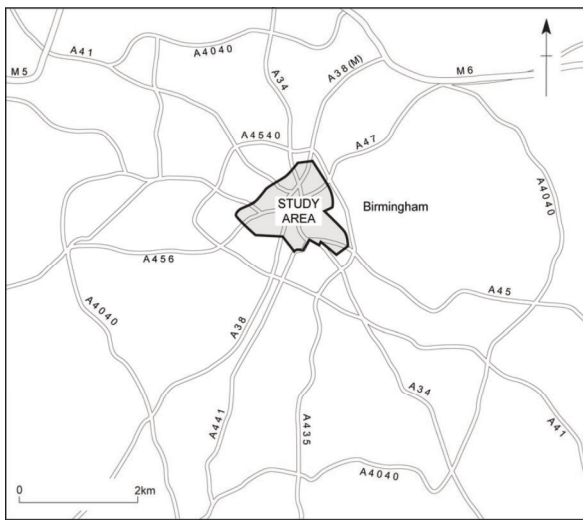


Figure 1 Main town planning components numbers relate to those as discussed in the text

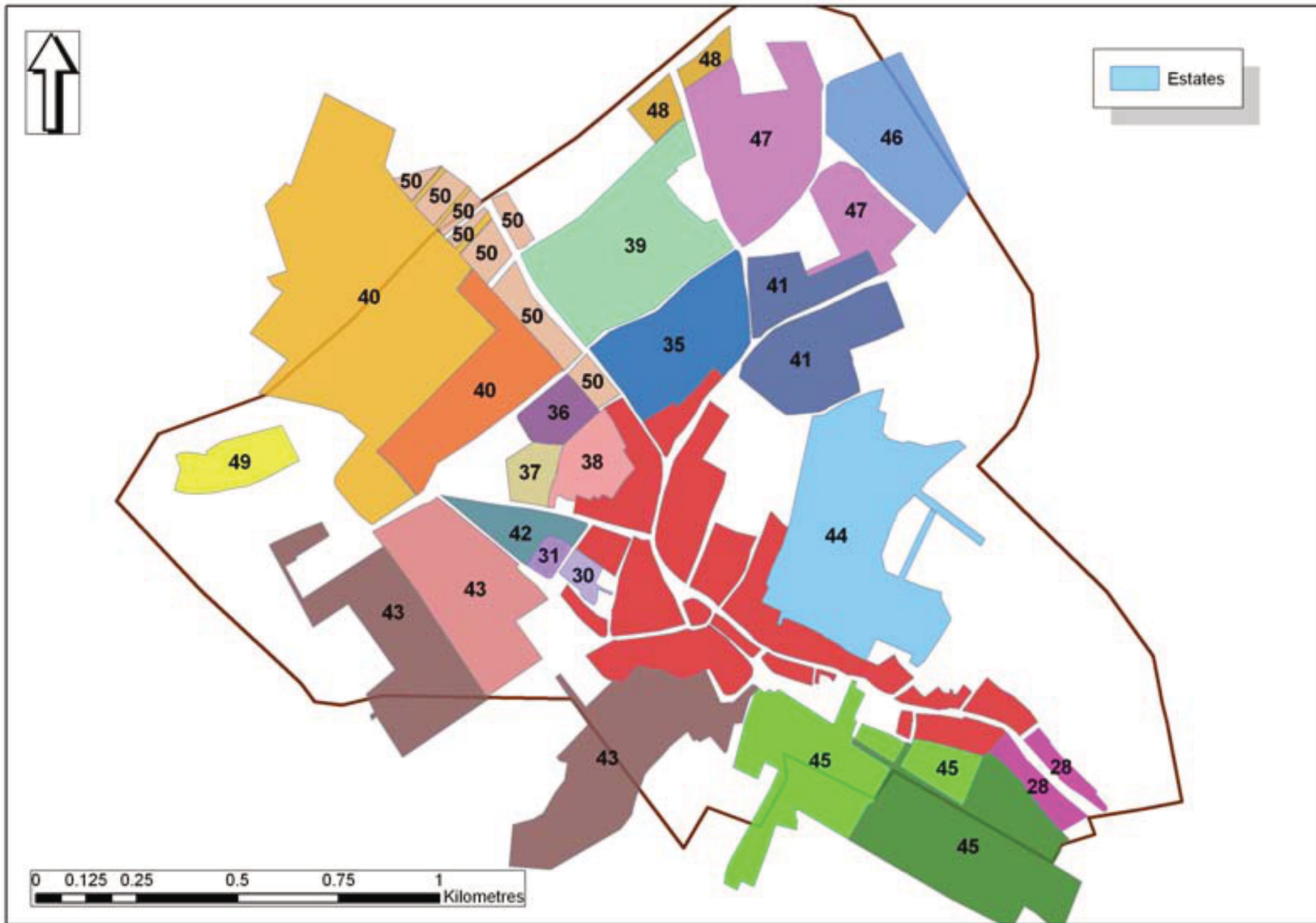


Figure 2 The study area as a whole with a schematic guide to the development of major landholdings around the old urban core in the course of the 18th century