

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

THRAPSTON

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Funded by English Heritage

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BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

This is one of a series of reports compiled by Northamptonshire Heritage as part of the English Heritage funded Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) of Northamptonshire, which is intended to provide an effective information base and research framework to guide the management of the county's urban archaeological resource. The survey encompasses all urban settlements and others that may have had some urban attributes, from the Roman period to the 1930s. The only exception is Northampton, which is the subject of an Intensive Urban Survey in its own right.

Each report comprises three distinct sections: a detailed description of the town in each major period; an assessment of potential and definition of a research agenda; and a strategy for future management. The Roman small town at nearby Titchmarsh is presented in a separate report. The Thrapston report is presented in two parts: the first covering the Roman small town at Titchmarsh, prepared by Jeremy Taylor; the second covering the medieval and post medieval town of Thrapston prepared by Glenn Foard; the third covering Thrapston during the industrial period, from 1750 to the 1930s by Jennifer Ballinger. The report draws upon research previously conducted by Glenn Foard on the medieval and post medieval towns of the county; from the survey of historic buildings and land use in selected towns conducted by the Archaeology Unit in the late 1970s, and has benefited from the specialist advice of Dr Barrie Trinder on industrial period. Other contributions to the EUS on digital mapping, database input and related work have been made by various individuals including Christine Addison, Chris Jones, Paul Thompson, Rob Atkins and Phil Markham.

The first objective of the report is to determine layout, character and chronology of development of Thrapston from its rural Saxon origins up to the 1930s. An attempt has been made to identify the various components of the town which are likely to have left identifiable archaeological remains and, as far as practicable, to define the exact location and extent of these buried or upstanding 'monuments'. They have also all been assessed for likely current survival and their potential to contribute to research objectives. The relationship of the town to its hinterland has also been considered and the potential for study of that interaction has been assessed. In this way the report aims to provide a well founded research framework, establishing the current state of knowledge of Thrapston history and defining a research agenda which can guide future archaeological investigation within the town. Conservation objectives have also been defined. This report should be viewed as a starting point rather than a definitive study, which it certainly is not. If this report serves its purpose then it will need to be regularly reviewed and substantially revised in future years as archaeological investigations, and hopefully also further documentary research, is undertaken.

Given the limitations of time, which inevitably must guide the conduct of a countywide project, it has been necessary to limit the depth of investigation. No original archaeological earthwork or other such field survey has been conducted, but all available existing archaeological data has been consulted. Mapping from aerial photographic sources in the Northamptonshire SMR, CUCAP and the NMR has been completed. Although each town has been visited to examine the topography of the town and an assessment attempted as to the general state of archaeological survival, no attempt has been made to conduct cellar survey comparable to that undertaken for Northampton as part of the Intensive Urban Survey of that town. This is due to the absence of detailed mapped evidence comparable to that which exists for Northampton and the very poor results achieved in 1979 when a cellar survey was attempted in Thrapston and Towcester. Nor has it been possible to examine all

documentary sources, even for the medieval period. However, an attempt has been made to assess the overall potential of this crucial part of the record of the urban past and to examine in detail the most documentary important sources. An index has been compiled from various list and indexes in the Public Record Office, Northamptonshire Record Office, National Register of Archives and British Library. Given the vast quantity of documentation, particularly for the last 200 years the limitations in the documentary assessment, especially regarding the industrial period must be acknowledged. Attention has focussed on those sources which might contribute significantly to the reconstruction of the historical topography of the town and to the broader characterisation of the various ‘monuments’ within the town.

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SUMMARY

MEDIEVAL & POST-MEDIEVAL

There were 43 settlements in Northamptonshire in which a market was or was intended to be established during the late Saxon and medieval period. Thrapston was one of only 11 that were successful, developed into true towns, survived the economic recessions of the 14th century and continued to thrive through the post medieval period. It was one of the smallest of Northamptonshire's medieval and post medieval towns, and significantly was described by Leland in the mid 16th century as Thrapston village.¹ It was however consistently successful in its local marketing role, surviving right through to the present, filling a small but important niche sufficiently far from its main competitors, Kettering, Oundle and Higham Ferrers.

Both the medieval town and its nearby Roman precursor in Titchmarsh parish seem to have owed their existence to the crossing of the Nene by a major east-west road and its junction with the main route running along the Nene Valley. Their function may also have been similar, to provide marketing and other services to local communities, and even seeing approximately similar hinterlands, in both cases filling a gap halfway between the apparently more important medieval and Roman centres at Higham/Irchester and Oundle/Ashton. The reason for the shift in site between Roman and medieval periods is probably a response to the shifting road pattern. This was determined by the decay of the Roman bridge across the Nene and presumably the establishment of a ford at a more suitable location which was only replaced by a bridge in the early medieval period. There is certainly no continuity of urban function and at present no evidence that might suggest continuity of any administrative functions. Rather one must assume that similar factors were working in both the Roman and medieval periods to produce an urban site in this area.

Thrapston was a small village in the 11th century. The construction of the castle at Thrapston, probably in the late 11th or 12th century and on or adjacent to the site of an earlier manor, was presumably determined, at least in part, by the settlement's position on the major road from Huntingdon to Leicester where it crossed the Nene, so controlling the communication route. The town also probably owed its existence to the same factor, the market place perhaps being laid out at the same time as the castle was built and certainly in existence by 1205. The laying out of the market is likely to have involved the re-planning of a significant part of the pre-existing village.

The relatively high population and wealth of Thrapston, in relation to the area of the township, and the presence of the castle, suggests that even by the late 11th or 12th century, the settlement may already have differed significantly from its neighbours. In addition to its market (with its shops, stalls and market cross), fair and castle, Thrapston also acquired a leper hospital and, just across the bridge in Islip parish, a hermitage. It also had a substantial number of inns and alehouses in the 17th to 19th century, compared to rural settlements. This is a significant but relatively small range of urban attributes. Equally significant, the

¹ Leland, f.6.

settlement was always small, which can only in part be accounted for by the small size of its township and hence the relatively low number of agricultural households. It is however clear from documentary and topographical evidence that it served as a significant local marketing centre in the medieval and post medieval period. It may be that Thrapston represents an example of a town which, apart from its agricultural tenancies, was almost solely based on commercial activity serving a local hinterland without any significant industrial production. The success of Thrapston compared to later attempted market foundations at Lowick and Titchmarsh must relate both to its strategic location on the road network as well as the relatively early date of its market foundation.

Thrapston would appear on present evidence to be of no more than county importance. The potential of the town to contribute towards research objectives in urban studies and the overall study of the economy of the county is severely limited by the inadequacy of the documentary sources. The archaeological and historic building potential remains undetermined at present and required field investigation through PPG15 & 16. The castle and manor sites and their precursor would appear to have a high research potential, despite the relatively poor state of preservation to be expected as a result of modern redevelopment. There would appear to be a low potential for the study of the interaction of town and its hinterland in the medieval and post medieval periods.

INDUSTRIAL

The town of Thrapston developed little in the 18th and 19th centuries. It retained its status as a market and commercial centre for the local area and gained a number of urban facilities such as Poor Law Union Workhouse and County Police Station. However it did not experience industrialisation and thus underwent little expansion and comparatively limited growth in population. By the end of the 19th century Thrapston was smaller than many former villages in the county which had grown as a result of the boot and shoe trade. There was a small boot and shoe trade in Thrapston, but it was not a major industry. The main industrial development in the town was the establishment of Smith and Grace Nene Side Iron Works. This had a substantial impact on the local economy, but was also of wider importance in terms of the development of innovative products.

Thrapston is important as a town whose basic function and status continued from the late medieval period onwards with little development or expansion and the research potential for the town is focused upon this aspect. The urban topography for the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries survives remarkably intact.

I DESCRIPTION

TOPOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY

Thrapston lies adjacent to the alluvial floodplain, primarily on a gravel terrace and Northampton Sand and Ironstone, on the south side of the river in the middle Nene valley. Thrapston's medieval and post medieval township extended from the riverside meadows on the floodplain up onto the higher boulder clay between the Nene and the Ouse, though not reaching as far as the watershed. The town lies largely on level ground but at its eastern side it extends along a small slade or valley running back towards the clay land.

A PRE MEDIEVAL

1.0 EARLY HISTORY

1.1 Prehistoric and Roman

Lying in the Nene valley, which contains some of the most extensive areas of permeable geology in the county, it is inevitable that the Thrapston area saw intensive occupation during the prehistoric and Roman periods. There are a number of settlement and other sites from the Neolithic and Bronze Age through to the Roman period in the immediate environs of Thrapston. The area may have had a significance over a long time period, for there is limited evidence for some form of central place function in the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age, with the possible 'ring fort' recently recognised on the higher ground just to the east of Thrapston.² Then from the Roman period there is the un-walled Roman small town just over a kilometre to the north.

Roman activity has been recognised beneath the medieval town itself but the character and significance of these remains are not currently understood.³ These remains comprise late Roman pottery found within pits or ditches in Manor Close and from soil sealed beneath the castle motte. The row of burials found in Manor Close may prove to be of Roman date but are perhaps more likely to be Saxon.⁴ There are several other finds of Roman material within or in close proximity to the town and a major collection of Roman metalwork from the floodplain on the opposite side of the river. Given the existence of a major Roman road crossing of the Nene just a mile to the north it seems unlikely that another significant road would cross the Nene at Thrapston itself and so it is perhaps more likely that this hoard was associated with the Roman villa in Woodford parish, on the west side of the river a short distance to the south west. (Question for Jeremy - what is the likely significance of the hoard? IS it any kind of 'ritual' deposit and if so what likely association? Is there any chance it might indicate the presence of a river crossing?). The failure in the past to observe development elsewhere in the town means it is impossible at present to suggest the extent or character of the Roman settlement beneath Thrapston. There is however no reason at present to suggest a significant relationship between the Thrapston Roman settlement and the Titchmarsh Roman small town, but it is possible that the Roman road from Durobrivae to Irchester, which appears to cross the Gartree Road in the Titchmarsh Roman town, continues southward through or close to Thrapston. The presence of such remains is not surprising given the high density of Roman settlement along the Nene valley and it need not necessarily represent evidence of significant

² SMR site events 0078017 & 0078012; monument 8060 and 8061.

³ Various records in the SMR.

⁴ They are identified as probably Roman by RCHME, I, 96, 4.

continuity with the Saxon and medieval settlement.

1.2 Saxon origins

There is as yet no evidence of early Saxon occupation from within the town. Even if there was continuity of occupation with the Roman settlement beneath the town there was certainly no continuity of urban functions between the Roman town at Titchmarsh and the medieval town at Thrapston. Neither is there any indication from medieval or later sources to suggest continuity of administrative function comparable to that which can be suggested for settlements such as Oundle and Kings Sutton. The proximity of the Roman and medieval urban settlements is likely to be a result of the combination of the high productivity of the agricultural land along the Nene and a degree of continuity in road pattern with the Roman and medieval Huntingdon/Godmanchester to Leicester/Ratae roads crossing of the Nene within one kilometre of each other. It may be that the Roman small town is of a somewhat different character and function to other un-walled small town sites such as Ashton or Kings Sutton. It does lie on the main Gartree Road and might perhaps be expected to have originated as a posting station or other official settlement rather than reflecting the presence locally of a central place of the Iron Age and hence of local administration which might have persisted through the Roman period and reasserted itself in the post Roman period.

It appears likely that Thrapston was a peripheral part of the Brigstock royal estate in the late Saxon period, as its church was within the parochia of the old minster church at Brigstock.⁵ However as with some other of the late Saxon royal estate centres it is possible that there was a migration of the estate centre to the woodland zone from the heart of the original early-middle Saxon estate in the late Saxon period. This may have happened in the case of Fawsley and such shifts, if they occurred, may in part have been related to a desire to create a residence to exploit the hunting potential of woodland. In the case of Fawsley the transfer may originally have been from an important early Saxon central place at Daventry and the urban function when it developed in the medieval period was at Daventry. It is possible that a similar shift and return happened in the case of Thrapston, but insufficient information is currently available from the apparent middle site beneath the manor site in Thrapston to determine the character or function of the site at that time.

1.2.1 Saxon and Medieval village

The earliest evidence for occupation is the presence of two large middle Saxon Ipswich ware sherds, found in the spoil from a drainage trench when the manor site was being developed in the 1960s. Ipswich ware is rarely recovered in Northamptonshire and typically from high status or presumed high status sites, though interpretation is particularly difficult where such small quantities of sherds are present.⁶ This might indicate that the manor at Thrapston has middle Saxon origins. The etymology of the place-name, first recorded as 'Trapeston' in 1086, offers little help though it is suggested that it 'may contain elements of great antiquity'.⁷

There is a little more evidence for late Saxon occupation beneath the manor. Most significantly, a line of inhumations, laid in charcoal and apparently laying approximately east/west, were found in a drainage trench immediately north of the old Manor House.⁸ This is from the same general area

⁵ RCHME Northamptonshire Churches Survey, Notes in SMR.

⁶ Blinkhorn, pers. com.

⁷ Gover et al, 1933.

⁸ Despite the published report to the contrary, D. Jackson reported in 1979 that the burials were aligned east-west. D. Jackson, pers. com.. BNFAS, I, 1966, 12; 4, 1970, 42. RCHME, I, 96, 5 & 4.

where in 1849 human skeletons were discovered, in the garden to the rear of the manor house.⁹ They are perhaps most likely to be Christian burials, perhaps of late Saxon date. The implications for the nature of the site are considerable for they are too distant from the medieval Church to simply represent part of an early and much larger graveyard.

The township morphology gives the impression that Thrapston may have been carved out of an earlier and much larger land unit incorporating Titchmarsh. However the only administrative link is with Little Catworth. That small fragment of the Huntingdonshire community of Catworth was recorded in Northamptonshire in 1086, was included, like Thrapston, in Navisford Hundred in the 12th century Northamptonshire Survey, and paid its taxes in 1720 to the collector at Thrapston.¹⁰ The antiquity and significance of this link is at present unclear.

B MEDIEVAL & POST-MEDIEVAL

1.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The small village of Thrapston was probably promoted as a town in 12th century and was certainly a market settlement by 1205. It is likely that the castle was constructed by the lord of the manor in the 12th century. The presence of a castle may point to an important strategic significance but also implies this was a significant manorial residence. This may be one reason why a town was promoted outside the castle gate. The promotion as an urban centre may well have involved the re-planning of part of the settlement with the laying out of a market place between the main road and the castle. The development of the castle and the town owes something to its position on a major route between the county towns of Huntingdon and Leicester where it crossed a main road along the Nene valley. However it is the town's position half way between the more important Domesday towns of Higham Ferrers and Oundle that enabled it to grow into and survive as a significant local marketing centre.

The relatively high population and wealth of Thrapston, in relation to the area of the township, and the presence of the castle, suggests that even by the late 11th or 12th century, the settlement may already have differed significantly from its neighbours. In addition to its market (with its shops, stalls and market cross), fair and castle, Thrapston also acquired a leper hospital and, just across the bridge in Islip parish, a hermitage. It also had a substantial number of inns and alehouses in the 17th to 19th century, compared to rural settlements. This is a significant but relatively small range of urban attributes. The settlement was always small, which can only in part be accounted for by the small size of its township and hence the relatively low number of agricultural households. It is however clear from documentary and topographical evidence that it served as a significant local marketing centre in the medieval and post medieval period. It may be that Thrapston represents an example of a town which, apart from its agricultural tenancies, was almost solely based on commercial activity serving a local hinterland without any significant industrial production. The success of Thrapston compared to later attempted market foundations at Lowick and Titchmarsh must relate both to its strategic location on the road network as well as the relatively early date of its market foundation.

⁹ Whellan, 1849, 778.

¹⁰ Domesday Book, f.222a; VCH, I, 357-392; Bridges, 1791, II, 379.

2.0 TOPOGRAPHICAL DEVELOPMENT

The original focus of Thrapston may lie in a manorial site of the middle Saxon period underlying the site of the medieval castle and manor. However the primary element of the town plan may prove to be the Huntingdon to Leicester road, along or to the side of which the settlement was laid out. The Huntingdon road enters the town along a small valley running off the higher ground straight down to the flood plain. Only when the road reaches the south west corner of the market place does it turn slightly south westward to approach the bridge. This step in the alignment of the road might suggest that in the early medieval or late Saxon period, prior to the construction of the bridge, the road ran straight on to a ford on a slightly different location to the later bridge. The way in which the castle and manor lie set well back from the main road may indicate that the castle and market were constructed at the same time. The market place seems to have extended between the castle and the main road leading to the bridge and from the churchyard to Chancery Lane. It is possible that a tenement row was inserted between castle and market place, fronting south onto the market, but equally the curving boundary of the close, which was occupied in 1782 by an orchard, may represent the southern edge of a larger eastern bailey. If there was a major re-planning of the settlement with the creation of castle and market place in the late 11th or 12th century then the church may itself have been part of the re-planning, the churchyard forming the eastern quarter of the rectangle which comprises the market place.

Whereas the properties on the northern part of the presumed market place may represent late infill, the tenement row fronting south onto the High Street may have originated in the row of medieval stalls and shops, probably called the Draperie, which extended from the market cross south eastward. From the evidence of the 1782 map one might even argue for a relatively standard plot width of 32ft or multiples thereof. Various shops are recorded in surviving 14th century deeds, as is a cottage in 'le Draperie' in 1386.¹¹ It is unclear how far east the shops and stalls will have extended but such infilling would explain the isolated location of the church as seen in 1782, surrounded by properties on all sides and only accessible by three small lanes or footways. On the west side of the market place a row of three or four large tenements of similar width form the frontage. The tenement row on the south side of the High Street adjacent to the market place shows a high degree of irregularity compared to the other intact rows and seems to have suffered a degree of subdivision and reorganisation by 1782. The tenement row to the south side of the churchyard, fronting onto the Huntingdon road, can be confirmed in the early 16th century when tenements are recorded between the cemetery on the north and the kings highway on the south.¹²

There was also apparently development in at least one of the lanes leading off the main street, for in 1395-7 there was a messuage, with 8 acres of field land, in Titchmarsh Lane.¹³ The tenements on the west side of the lane, as seen in 1782 were very short and appear to represent infilling either of a wider street or from the subdivision of property extending back from the main road. On the east side of the lane other closes may also represent the site of medieval tenements abandoned by 1782, but the presence of ridge and furrow in the closes to the east may indicate that, like them, these narrow closes are simply an area of enclosed field land and were never built up. Encroachment onto the lane does however seem to have happened at a later date with several buildings and small properties extending out onto the road.

¹¹ NRO, Drayton, ch.45.

¹² NRO, SS3731, 1518, tenement in Thrapston.

¹³ NRO, SS537-8.

Opposite Titchmarsh lane Horton=s Lane led south from the main street, possibly continuing to the south of Back Lane. There is no evidence to suggest that it was built up with medieval tenements. There is also the possibility that one or more other lanes extended back from the main road, based on the evidence of the 1782 map, but the evidence is equivocal.

Back Lane serves only the tenements on the south side of the town. The irregular alignment of this Backside road, and the existence of an odd >L= shaped access way which coincides with several other property boundaries may suggest an earlier alignment of this back lane.

The majority of the tenements in the town fronted onto the Huntingdon road, in rows on the north and the south. Where the main road extends south west from the market place the tenement rows are somewhat irregular on both north and south and may represent expansion during the medieval period. The northern frontage in this area has been lost beneath the modern road, and the area immediately within the rear of the tenements has already been redeveloped.

A clear break also seems to exist between the tenements to the west of Titchmarsh and Horton=s Lanes and those to the east. It is possible that the former represent part of the initial laying out of the settlement whereas those to the east represent expansion over open field during the medieval period. There is certainly good evidence for ridge and furrow within the closes behind the frontage which would support an origin for the northern row as an encroachment onto open field strips. The lack of development of the properties to the east of the lanes may be explained partly as a result of late medieval contraction of the town. In the case of Kiln Close however the trees depicted on the 1782 map would suggest that the absence of buildings is a result of direct clearance for the laying out of a formal garden in front of Thrapston House, which lies immediately opposite on the north side of the road. The tenements on the north side had been largely encompassed by the buildings and closes of the House by 1782.

On the south side of the Huntingdon road there were three terraces of houses representing encroachment onto the lane, possibly quite late in date.

The enclosures to the north of the manor appear to represent relatively late enclosure of open field land, with the northernmost close certainly containing ridge and furrow aligned east/west. Fair Close probably has a similar origin. The presence of several structures at the south west corner of Fair Close may be late development in some way related to the Fair. The old inclosures to the south of Back Lane also seem to represent late enclosure of open field, those towards the eastern end of the lane having a reverse >S= form and containing evidence of ridge and furrow. Similarly the closes to the west of the town represent enclosure from the open field though in this case, as can be seen from the names and position on the flood plain, enclosure of meadow.

3.0 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

3.1 MANORIAL

In 1086 there were two manors in Thrapston, which remained separate until the 17th or early 18th century.

3.1.1 Manors

3.1.1.1 The De Veer manor

In 1086 Oger held from the King 2 □ hides at Thrapston. There were 2 ploughs in demesne and 1

slave, implying the presence of a hall in the village. This was not apparently part of a larger estate, however in c.1125 when held by Ralph Fitz-Oger it is described as being 2 hides and 1 virgate of the fee of Bourne, Lincolnshire. The honour of Bourne was by the mid 12th century in the hands of the Wakes. In the reign of Henry III (1216-72) Baldwin de Wake held a knights fee at Thrapston of the honour of Bourne.¹⁴ Overlordship thence passed by 1244-5 to Robert his son. Later the overlordship was to pass to the Earls of Kent.

After 1168 the vill of Thrapston was conveyed by Baldwin de Wake to Robert, younger son of Aubrey the Chamberlain, also known as de Veer. Thereafter it followed the descent of Great Addington, where the de Vere's lived, while the records are often combined with both Addington and the other de Veer property in Raunds.¹⁵ Ranulph de Veer held the manor by 1329-30 and by 1346-7 John de Veer held half a knights fee at Thrapston. Thence it passed to Richard and then by 1480-1 to Henry de Veer. In his will in 1493 Henry de Veer assigned a third part of the manor to his daughter Ethelreda and this third was later subdivided between various persons. In 1548 Lord Maudant, later Earl of Peterborough, acquired part of the manor and by the end of the 16th century all were reunited under the Lords Maudant, of whom in the earlier 16th century Robert Terringham held certain lands.¹⁶ The manor was sold in the early 18th century to Humphrey Morice, who held it in 1720,¹⁷ and thence in 1770 to the Burton family.

In 1335 the manor comprised a capital messuage worth 6/8d with two gardens adjoining with a demesne of 100 acres of arable worth 33/4d and 10 acres of meadow worth 15/- at 18d per acre, while the profits of the court were worth 20/-. In all with tenants, mill, market and fair the manor was worth £29/16/8d.¹⁸ In the second half of the 14th and the 15th centuries the manor and its appurtenances, including the manor and fair were leased out to various tenants. Hence in 1354 the capital messuage, rents, profit of the market etc were granted out for life.¹⁹ In 1414 Robert de Veer leased the manor to William Moltons of Ringstead, but previously it had been held by William Daundelyn.²⁰ Then in 1449 Richard de Veer leased the 'site of the manor' at Thrapston to John Kyngston, late of Ringstead. John was to keep the property in good repair and to find a bed for Richard whenever he came to Thrapston and also for the lord's steward.²¹ Other property by the late 14th century had also been granted out to the Holt family (see below).

The manor court was held in 1720 in the manor house north of the church, as was the Navisford Hundred court held by the Duke of Montagu.²²

3.1.1.2 Gales Manor

The second manor in 1086 was that of Odelin, who held 3 virgates at Thrapston of the Bishop of Coutances. This had been freely held by Burgred in 1066, part of his extensive estates in the

¹⁴ Bridges, 1791, II, 379.

¹⁵ Bridges, 1791, II, 379, quoting Quo Warranto Rolls, 3 Ed III, n.5. VCH, 1930, 3, 156-8, for details of descent of de Vere manors.

¹⁶ VCH Notes, Inquisition Post Moretem of Robert Terringham, 24 Hen VIII.

¹⁷ Bridges, 1791, II, 380.

¹⁸ Inquisition at Thrapston 9th Oct 9 Ed III, 1335. Extent of the manor of Ranulph de Veer de Thrapston and Addington, held from Thomas Wake as half a knights fee. 1 capital messuage 6/8d with 2 gardens adjoining; 100 acres arable land 33/4d; 10a meadow 15/- per acre 18d; 10 free tenants 7/4d; 10 nativi 46/8d; 7 cottagers 15/- pa; profits of the court 20/-; 1 water mill ,7; 1 market with 1 fair ,13/6/8d per annum. Sum ,29/16/8d. Thereafter follow details of the Gt. Addington manor. NRO, SS2229.

¹⁹ NRO, SS2190. The rents are specified. Also see NRS vol. IV , p.86 re grant of Thrapston manor - check this

²⁰ NRO, SS2029.

²¹ NRO, SS2037.

²² Bridges, 1791, II, 379.

Higham, Navisland and Huxloe Hundreds. In the 12th century Robert Fitz-Odelin held one hide and 1 virgate of the fee of Clare. In 1285 Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester held a third part of the town of Thrapston. Overlordship passed from the de Clares to the Audele family and thence by 1286-7 to the Earls of Stafford, who held two courts leets annually in Thrapston of fee of Gloucester. In 1521, following the execution of the Duke of Buckingham, overlordship passed to the crown but by the 18th century it was held with the other property of the Gloucester fee by the Montagu family, who held the Hundred Court of Navisford in Thrapston.

In the reign of Henry III (1216-72) the manor, or part of it, together with Denford was held from the Earls of Gloucester by William Hay as an eighth of a knights fee and by 1329-30 it had passed to High Lucas when it was purchased by Bernard de Bons. Although the manor appears to have been fragmented amongst various tenants sufficient survived intact to be recognised as a distinct manor, for in 1574 a small manor called Gales is recorded, named after an earlier 16th century lord, though no capital messuage is referred to at this time.²³ By 1706 the manor of Gales had been united with the main manor.²⁴

3.1.1.3 Holt manor

In 1387-8 John Holt held a toft and a dovecote with appurtenances in Thrapston worth 4/- per annum.²⁵ This was presumably part of the property of the de Veer manor for in 1418-19 John Holt died holding certain lands and messuages in Thrapston of Robert de Veer. This property passed in 1451-2 to Richard Holt, at which time it was called Geyton or Holt manor of Thrapston.²⁶

3.1.1.4 Rectory manor

The Rectory of Thrapston was granted to the Abbey of Bourne at its foundation, but the abbot only ever drew a pension from the Rectory, never instituting a vicarage. This arrangement was in place in 1254 and persisted until the dissolution.²⁷ The Rectory was thus held directly by the priest responsible for Thrapston church. In 1849 the Rectory House was described as 'a good commodious residence' standing in the principal street.²⁸ It is located on the first edition 6" Ordnance Survey mapping on the south side of the Huntingdon road.

3.1.1.5 Thorney Abbey property

Thorney abbey appears to have held some property in Thrapston in 1291 when income from Thrapston is included in the 333 shillings from Twywell, Islip and Clopton listed in the ecclesiastical taxation.

3.1.2 Manorial Appurtenances

3.1.2.1 De Veer Castle and Manor House

The de Veer manor, though probably leased out for much of the medieval and post medieval period, had a capital messuage in Thrapston. The castle may have been constructed by the lords of the honour of Bourne themselves in the late 11th or earlier 12th century, the de Veer family only acquiring it in the second half of the 12th century. The castle was probably constructed on or close to

²³ VCH Notes, Feet of Fines.

²⁴ VCH Notes, Feet of Fines, 4 Anne.

²⁵ NRO, FH 426, m.5.

²⁶ Bridges, 1791, II, 380.

²⁷ Bridges, 1791, II, 380.

²⁸ Whellan, 1849, 779.

the site of the late Saxon manor and it will have served as the capital messuage in the early medieval period.

Bridges recorded in 1720 that ‘to the north of the church are two mounts, where a castle is supposed to have stood.’²⁹ According to Cole in the early 19th century the castle mound extended 74 yards in length. Bridges also records that stone foundation of buildings had been found in Paradise Close.³⁰ Earthworks and other archaeological features have been recorded in the area of the former Paradise Close and of the later manor which confirm the existence of a medieval castle.³¹ The motte, although severely mutilated by modern, Victorian and earlier building, still survives to a height of about 2 metres. Limited observation during the construction of two houses on its south side in the early 1970s provided evidence of large stone footings on the top of the mound at its southern edge. Although partly robbed out, two distinct phases were distinguishable. These structures were sealed by a 13th century pit. No obvious features were observed during cutting back of the mound, although a massive disturbed area was revealed on the south side, cutting onto natural gravel, which probably represented a defensive ditch. The published section is not located or orientated, but it is suggested there that the layers of the mound are dipping inward to the centre of the mound and it is suggested that this may indicate a ringwork rather than motte. This information is, however, contradicted by D. Jackson who claims the layers in fact fell towards the exterior of the mound.³²

A bailey may have existed on the west side of the motte, because a second earthwork still survives towards the western side of the area formerly encompassed by Paradise Close. When examined in the late 1970s the linear bank at the western side survived to a substantial height and appeared possibly to have been a remnant of an outer bailey. There was however no evidence of any earthwork connecting it to the motte, although this and the hollow between the two earthworks could be explained as the result of quarrying, perhaps that which led to the discovery of the stone foundations recorded by Bridges. There is however the possibility, in the light of the contiguity of the manor site and the name ‘Paradise’ recorded in 1782, that this earthwork was simply a landscape garden feature associated with the manor, though one might have expected Bridges, writing in 1720, to have been aware of any such garden feature.

A bailey almost certainly existed on the east side of the motte in the area occupied by the manor in 1782. The 18th century map depicts a curving linear pond arcing around the north side of the manor site which might represent the remnants of a bailey ditch, with the moat perhaps being fed from a spring in Spring Close, or more likely simply penetrating the water table which is relatively shallow in this low lying situation. A deep disturbance containing medieval pottery at a depth of about 4-5 ft was recorded in this approximate area during housing development in the 1960s. The curving boundary on the south side of the manor may also preserve the line of a defensive ditch. The absence of any reference to ramparts in this area could be explained by the continued use of the site by the manor into recent times, involving the levelling of any earthworks.

It is unclear when occupation ceased on the motte, but a pit containing 13th century pottery was reported sealing the stone foundations. The demise of the castle may have been related in some way to the granting out of the manor to the de Veer family in the first half of the 13th century, for they had their residence in the nearby village of Great Addington. After the castle ceased to serve defensive

²⁹ Bridges, 1791, II, 379.

³⁰ Bridges, 1791, II, 379.

³¹ BNFAS 1 1966; *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 10, 1975, 175; 12, 1977, 190-1.

³² CBA 9 Newsletter, 18, 1977, 18-19. D. Jackson, pers. com. 1979. RCHME, I, 96, 6.

functions the capital messuage seems to have persisted in what may have been the eastern bailey. Medieval pottery has been recovered from this area when the site was developed in the 1960s and it is certainly here that the main manor was to be found by the early 18th century.³³ In 1335 the manor comprised a capital messuage worth 6/8d with two gardens adjoining, though whether this incorporated the area later known as Paradise, the site of the castle motte, is not clear.³⁴

Though by the later 18th century Chancery Lane cut through the manor and castle site, running through what must have been the location of the motte ditch and severing the motte on the west from the manor and possible bailey on the east, in the medieval period it seems likely that this road simply gave access through the market place to the castle and manor, which will have fronted directly onto the north side of the market place.

Extensive buildings existed on the manor site in 1782 but by 1849 large portions of the manor house had been taken down and by the 1880s it was a much more modest property.³⁵ The site was comprehensively redeveloped in the 1960s.

3.1.2.2 Gales manor house

Though there may have been two manor houses in Thrapston in the later 11th century, judging from the evidence of the Domesday Survey, it seems likely that the manor later known as Gales did not incorporate a capital messuage in Thrapston for much of the medieval and post medieval period, but that it was held with other property of the Gloucester fee, for which the adjacent village of Denford was the local administrative centre.³⁶ Certainly there was nothing in the topography of the town in the late 18th century to suggest the site of a second manor.

3.1.2.3 Fishponds

There is no record of any fishponds in the township, though it is possible that the large pond recorded on the northern edge of the manor site in 1782 was a fishpond. There were however ponds associated with the Hermitage (see 5.2).

3.1.2.4 Watermill

In 1086 there was a mill appendant to the main manor, worth £1.³⁷ There are various references to the mill in leases and other documents in the 14th and 15th centuries.³⁸ A watermill existed to the south west of the town on the river Nene in 1782, in a small area of old enclosure, which may well be on the site of the medieval mill.

3.1.2.5 Windmill

There were windmills on at least two separate sites in the township, one possibly being a replacement for the other. The earliest site may be that to the east of the town where there was a Windmill Hill field name in 1932. A circular cropmark feature exists in this area which may represent a ploughed out mill mound.

The second and later mill stood to the south of the town in Windmill Close in the 18th and early 19th

³³ Bridges, 1791.

³⁴ NRO, SS2229.

³⁵ Whellan, 1849, 778.

³⁶ VCH, 1930, 3, 193.

³⁷ Domesday Book, f.228a.

³⁸ VCH, 1930, 3, 140. Lease of mill to Wm. Wombe of Thrapston, 1420, NRO, SS2030; also SS2191 and SS2025-6 in 1409-35.

century. It is shown on Eayre's map and was still standing in 1782 and 1827 but had gone by the 1880s.³⁹

3.1.2.6 Bakehouse

The bakehouse appears to have been situated on the market place for it is included in various leases of the market in the 14th and 15th centuries.⁴⁰

3.1.2.7 Park & Warren

There is no evidence for a park or warren in Thrapston.

3.2 CHURCH

3.2.1 Church of the St. James

The burials discovered on the northern part of the manor site in the 1970s would suggest that there may have been a cemetery on a separate site to the north west of the present church in the late Saxon period. However the church was apparently within the parochia of Brigstock in the Saxon period and it is possible that a church was not established here until the late Saxon or even early medieval period. It is possible that the original church was on this site though, unlike many other manors in the county, no priest is referred to in 1086. It is possible that the present church was established on a new site when the castle was constructed, involving a reorganisation of the northern part of the settlement, perhaps also associated with the laying out of the market place.

The advowson of the church was granted to the Abbey of Bourne by Baldwin son of Gilbert (Wake?) at its foundation in 1138.⁴¹

There was a chantry chapel in the east end of the south aisle.⁴²

The nave and aisles were rebuilt in 1842-3. The tower survives from the 14th and the chancel possibly from as early as the 13th century.

3.2.2 Chapels

There is no record of any separate chapels within Thrapston in the medieval period (but see 5.2 below).

3.2.3 Vicarage

Although the Rectory of Thrapston was granted to the Abbey of Bourne, a vicarage was never instituted. (See Rectory above)

3.3 MONASTIC & OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS

3.3.1 Hospital of St. Leonard

A leper hospital existed in Thrapston in the 12th to early 14th century.⁴³ In 1235 John de Nevill gave

³⁹ NRO, Inclosure map of Thrapston; Bryant=s Map of Northamptonshire; 1st editions 1:10560 Ordnance Survey map.

⁴⁰ NRO, SS2192 and SS2024.

⁴¹ Bridges, 1791, II, 379.

⁴² Bridges, 1791, II, 380.

⁴³ VCH, 1930, 3, 139.

to Baldwin de Veer fifteen oaks for his hospital there.⁴⁴ It is mentioned again in 1246 and 1305.⁴⁵ Being a leper hospital it may be expected to have been sited on or beyond the edge of the town,⁴⁶ but it cannot have been the same as the hermitage on the bridge (see below), for in contemporary sources that was described as dedicated to St. Thomas the Martyr. The only isolated old enclosures in Thrapston in 1782 lay on the south side of the Huntingdon road near the eastern extremity of the township, called Pen Close, and a tiny enclosure on the north edge of the township called Round Close. However both may prove to have been a late pieces of enclosure and not to have medieval origins. If so then the hospital is perhaps most likely to have lain at the eastern end of the town. It is possible that it may incorporate a cemetery, but no burials have been found around the town other than those from the site of the manor, which are most likely to date from the late Saxon period. The demise of the leper hospital before the dissolution is typical of such hospitals, which generally were small and poorly endowed and are regularly seen in decline in the 14th century. In some cases, as at Brackley, the chapel of the hospital remained in use as a chantry chapel, surviving in some cases until the dissolution of the 16th century chantries, but there is no evidence of this at Thrapston.

3.3.2 Hermitage or chapel of St. Thomas the Martyr

In the medieval period a hermitage or chapel stood in Hermitage Close at the foot of the bridge on the west side in Islip township. The hermitage probably owed its existence more to the importance of the bridge than to the presence of the town of Thrapston, for significant bridges on major roads often had hermitages or chapels associated with them, though this is most often seen where the bridge was in association with a town.

The hermitage or chapel of St Thomas the Martyr existed by 1231-2 at the end of Chapel Lane in Islip, next to Thrapston bridge. It was one of two chapels to Islip church and lacked burial rights or tithes.⁴⁷ There are further 14th and 15th century references to the chapel. In 1400 it was described as the king's free chapel or hermitage at the end of the Islip and it was still in existence in 1492 when Henry Veer of Addington gave 10/- to the chapel in his will. According to Leland, writing in the mid 16th century, it had only recently been suppressed. He records ruins of a very large hermitage 'and principally welle buildid' at the end of the bridge.⁴⁸ These ruins were, according to Bridges, at the right hand side coming from Thrapston, ie the north side, in Hermitage Close which also contained several fishponds or 'stews'.⁴⁹ However the Hermitage Close is recorded in 1800 on the south side of the bridge while the newly enclosed meadow and former open field immediately to the south are at that time called Chapel field and Chapel Meadow closes.⁵⁰

3.3.3 Almshouses

A poor house was created in the town from a charity established in the late 17th century.⁵¹

3.3.4 Schools

No school is recorded in Thrapston in the medieval or post medieval period.

⁴⁴ Calendar of Close Rolls, Henry III, 1234-37, 209.

⁴⁵ VCH, 1930, 3, 215.

⁴⁶ Prescott, 1992, 3.

⁴⁷ VCH, 1930, 3, 215

⁴⁸ Leland, f.6.

⁴⁹ Bridges, 1791, II, (Islip entry); Bridges notes, e2, p.92; VCH, 1930, 3, 215.

⁵⁰ NRO, SS3921.

⁵¹ VCH, 1930, 3, 142.

3.3.5 Town Houses

No town houses are recorded in Thrapston in the post medieval period.

3.4 TENEMENTS

In 1086 the two manors had a combined total of 21 tenants. This had probably at least doubled by the high medieval, with the 16 on the de Veer manor in 1086 having increased by 1335 to 27, while the 5 in the Gloucester fee in 1086 had grown by 1574 to 16, possibly 20 if the four tofts represent abandoned tenements. These tenements must all have lain within the town itself for there is no evidence of any other substantial areas of old inclosures which might represent the site of any other settlement within the township.

The de Veer manor in 1335⁵² comprised 10 free tenants at 7/4d, 10 nativi at 46/8d and 7 cottagers at 15/- per annum. The de Veer manor also included tofts, presumably unoccupied tenements, in the 16th century as well as messuages with varying amounts of field land, implying some degree of decline in the 14th and 15th centuries.⁵³ Unfortunately, though some medieval sources specify a number of tenants holding messuages and cottages it is impossible to establish the exact number in the manor as a whole.⁵⁴

In 1574 Gales Manor comprised in Thrapston 10 messuages, 6 cottages, 4 tofts, 12 gardens and 10 orchards, 300 acres land, 30 acres meadow, 40 acres past, 6 acres of woodland and 13/4d in rent.⁵⁵ The manor must have comprised most if not all of the Gloucester property in Thrapston, because in the 18th century the Gloucester property comprised 27 houses, of which 11 included some arable land. The latter may accord with the 10 messuages of 1574, whereas the number of cottages has clearly increased, though whether this represents tenements in the Gloucester fee but not in the Gales manor or simply the result of growth in the settlement in the 17th and 18th centuries is unclear. The arable attached to 11 of the 27 houses was in all just under 113 acres of which three had approximately 24 acres each, which might represent virgate tenements.⁵⁶

3.4.1 Population and Wealth

Though the population and wealth of Thrapston was not large compared to surrounding settlements, if one takes into consideration the small size of the township this situation is reversed and Thrapston stands out as having a high relative population and value. Indeed such analysis places Thrapston very clearly within the small group of medieval and post medieval small towns in Northamptonshire.

The lack of early 14th century taxation statistics for Thrapston makes the assessment and comparison of its pre-Black Death difficult. In the post medieval period there was a slight relative increase in wealth but an apparent dramatic drop in population by 1525 from which there was a good but not complete recovery by 1674. This compares unfavourably with the towns which developed as the main urban centres in post medieval Northamptonshire. This implies that Thrapston did not benefit from the process of urbanisation occurring in places such as Oundle, Kettering and Wellingborough in the post medieval period but there is sufficient wealth and population increase to suggest that it

⁵² NRO, SS2229.

⁵³ NRO, SS2733 : 1541ad: cottage and close called Foster's Close and adjoining toft with appurtenances in Thrapston late Thos Woodhous also another cottage with garden and 3 acres of ground late in tenure of Henry Tichmersh.

⁵⁴ NRO, SS2190. NRO, SS3690. 1311, 1312 and 1321.

⁵⁵ VCH Notes, Feet of Fines.

⁵⁶ NRO, x884, Montague, 22/19. Undated but probably 18th century.

retained its commercial functions. By 1720 there were still just 102 houses in the town.⁵⁷

3.4.2 Borough status or Burgage tenure

There were 4 freemen on the de Veer manor in 1086 and this had increased to 10 by 1335. However there is no reason to view these tenants any differently to the freemen seen on many manors in the county in 1086. There is certainly no evidence of burgage tenure in Thrapston. However there is oblique reference in the later 14th and earlier 15th century, in connection with grants of pontage, which were made to the bailiffs and men of Thrapston, perhaps suggesting some form of corporate organisation in the town which fell short of actual borough status.⁵⁸

3.4.3 Virgate tenements

There were 7 villein tenants in the de Veer manor in 1086 and 1 in the Gloucester manor. These had increased to 10 in 1335 on the de Veer manor and possibly 10 by 1574 on the Gloucester manor. The virgate tenements, as in other settlements, certainly saw substantial subdivision in response to the growth in population in the medieval period, with some at least in Thrapston being divided into quarter virgates.⁵⁹

3.4.4 Cottage tenements

There were 5 bordars on the de Veer manor in 1086 and 4 on the Gloucester manor. By 1335 this had increased to 7 on the de Veer manor and on the Gloucester manor by 1574 to 6, possibly 10 if one includes tofts.

3.5 COMMERCE

There is little evidence for industrial production or indeed for the exact nature of the commercial activity in Thrapston in the medieval or even the post medieval period. Given the small size of the settlement it seems likely that there was not a significant population of artisans in the town. There was probably just the typical range of services available in most local market towns, as for example with the mention in 1444 to a John Holme of Thrapston, ‘barbour’.⁶⁰ It is however perhaps significant that the one reference to the nature of commercial activity, the mention in 1364 of the ‘Draperie’, implies that in the medieval period the sale of cloth was a significant component of trade in the town.

3.5.1 Market

A market was already in existence by 1205 when Baldwin de Veer gave 2 palfreys for the confirmation of his rights to hold a Tuesday market.⁶¹ Unfortunately there is no evidence as to when the market was first established, whether by the de Veres following their acquisition of the manor in the second half of the 12th century or by their precursors. It clearly filled an important gap, centrally placed between the Domesday markets of Oundle and Higham Ferrers. This market grant was confirmed later in the 13th century for in 1329-30 Ranulphus de Veer claimed the right to hold the market and fair by a grant to Robert de Veer by Henry III (1216-1272), claiming rights of view of frankpledge, market, pillory and tumbrel.⁶² The value of the market and fair together in 1335 was

⁵⁷ Bridges, 1791, II, 379.

⁵⁸ VCH, 1930, 3, 139, quoting Cal. Patent Rolls.

⁵⁹ NRO, SS2038. One messuage in 1454 leased with a quarter of land for 13/4d per annum.

⁶⁰ NRO, SS2036.

⁶¹ Pipe Rolls, 7 John, m.21d, quoted by Bridges, 1791, II, 379.

⁶² Calendar Quo Warranto, p.500.

£13/6/8d per annum.⁶³

In 1354 Robert de Veer granted to Alice de Veer, widow of John de Veer, a third part of Thrapston manor, including a third part of the profit of the market and fair.⁶⁴ Then in 1364 he granted her as a dower, for life, the profits of pleas and perquisites of his court with the profits of another two courts leet. Alice was to maintain at her cost 'le pynfold', 'le pillory' and 'le tumbrel' in good condition 'as they are at present'. With the lease of the market came the standard bushel measure and the 'potel' as well as the seal of the 'marchantie' which were to be returned to him after her death. She was also granted the bakehouse and a cottage in the 'le Draperie'.⁶⁵

Though market grants and fairs were obtained by the lords of nearby Titchmarsh and Lowick, in 1305 and 1385-6 respectively, neither of these seem to have competed successfully with Thrapston, if either grant was even actually implemented. Unlike so many of the lesser markets which did function in the 13th and first half of the 14th century, but which decayed and were extinguished in the decades following the Black Death, Thrapston market and fair continued to function, being mentioned in 1366⁶⁶ and then again in 1386.⁶⁷ In 1431-2 for six years and then again in 1437, Richard Veer leased to William Reyii of Thrapston the market and fair with the bakehouse, the toll and the shops and stalls in the market place.⁶⁸ In 1432-3 it was also leased to John Glovar, of Thrapston.⁶⁹

In the mid 17th century the market and fair were similarly leased, together with various properties and the toll of the bridge.⁷⁰ By 1706 the market was in the possession of Sir John Germaine and was in 1720 still being held on a Tuesday.⁷¹ There is no evidence to suggest that the market was ever in serious difficulties and the creation of the Nene navigation in 1761 with the construction of a wharf at Thrapston and then the arrival of the railway in 1849 ensured its continued success. Unlike some other markets in the county, such as Brackley and Rothwell, the Tuesday market at Thrapston thus continued to thrive and in 1849 the town was said to be 'famed for its good supply of corn and pigs' and also involved in the importation of coal and timber by both river and rail.⁷² A second railway line arrived in 1866 and in 1870 the Thrapston Market Company was formed by act of parliament, controlling all the profits of the market and fair. Though the general market lapsed in the 20th century the town was one of only a handful of places in the county to maintain a cattle market into the second half of the century.⁷³

3.5.1.1 The Market Place

The market place had been largely built over by 1782 when first mapped, but it may originally have extended from the church on the east to Chancery Lane on the west and from the High Street on the

⁶³ NRO, SS2229, Inquisition at Thrapston 9th day Oct 9 Ed III.

⁶⁴ NRO, SS2190.

⁶⁵ NRO, SS2192. Text in French.

⁶⁶ VCH Notes, 20 Oct 40 Ed III file 204(3).

⁶⁷ NRO, SS502 : third part of the profits of the market, fair, bakehouse, cottages etc.

⁶⁸ NRO, SS2024. Lease 10 Henry VI (1431-2) from Richard Veer to William Reyii de Thrapston. NRO, SS2031.

⁶⁹ NRO, SS2028. 11 Henry VI (1432-3) Richard de Veer of Thrapston leases to John Glovar of Thrapston the forum and fair of Thrapston.

⁷⁰ NRO, SS4289. Lease 10 Oct 1649 to William Hegons of Islip.

⁷¹ Bridges, 1791, II, 379.

⁷² Whellan, 1849, 779.

⁷³ Royal Commission on Market Rights & Tolls. VCH, 1930, 3, 141.

south to the castle and manor on the north.

3.5.1.2 Market Cross

The Market cross stood on the market place in the 15th century, at the west end of a row of shops or stalls.⁷⁴ If these shops and stalls were on the site of the tenements fronting south onto the High Street then the cross may have been situated on the eastern side of Chancery Lane near its junction with the High Street. Somewhere within the market place will also have lain the pillory and tumbrel (see above) though their exact location has not been identified.

3.5.1.3 Shops & Stalls

There was at least one row of shops or stalls in the market place which had already, at least in part, been converted to permanent residences by 1364, when there is reference to a bakehouse and a cottage in 'le Draperie'.⁷⁵ Shops and stall remained in the market place, even after the impact of the plagues, for the shops and stalls in the market place were included in a lease of the market and fair in 1431-2.⁷⁶ There was at least one row of stalls for in 1387-8 one stall 6 ft long and 7 ft wide, lying market place on the south side of stall of John Cranowe & his son John of Irthlingborough, was granted by Richard de Veer, under a lease including a requirement for repair and maintenance, to Richard Rayndon of Woodford.⁷⁷ The shops and stalls would appear, by the early 15th century if not before, to have been arranged in at least two rows divided by a footway. In 1433 Richard de Veer granted to John Glover a certain parcel of land in the market place to the east of the cross and bounded on the east by a 3 ft wide footway and then by the shop of Richard Knight, while on the north it was bounded by another footway leading into the market and then by the shop of John Gryndell.⁷⁸ It is possible that both shops and stalls had similar origin in one or more rows of stalls for the rents of both shops and stalls may each have been 2/- in the 14th and 15th centuries.

3.5.2 Fair

In 1226 Baldwin de Vere received a grant of a fair on the eve and day of St. Michael (29th September).⁷⁹ This was confirmed and a second fair granted, to Robert de Veer, in 1244-5 for three days on eve, feast and morrow of St. James the Apostle (25th July).⁸⁰ Only one fair probably continued to be held by the 14th century because the profits of just one are recorded in 1336.⁸¹ The fair is mentioned again in 1594 and in 1706.⁸² This may have been the fair on the feast of St. James as that is the only one mentioned by Bridges in circa 1720.⁸³ However in 1849 a large fair was still being held on the first Tuesday after Michaelmas, another on the first Tuesday in May, for shoes and pedlary etc, while another had been held on the 5th August but this had fallen into disuse despite attempts to revive it.⁸⁴ In the 1930s the same two fair were still being held.⁸⁵

⁷⁴ NRO, SS2027.

⁷⁵ NRO, SS2192.

⁷⁶ NRO, SS2024.

⁷⁷ NRO, SS2033. 1432, Ric de Veer leases to Richard Rayndon de Woodford 1 stall situated in the market of Thrapston.

⁷⁸ NRO, SS2027. Ric de Veer to John Glover of Thrapston: 1433.

⁷⁹ VCH, 1930, 3, 141.

⁸⁰ BL, Harl.Ch.28.I.4; Calendar of Charter Rolls, vol.1, p.288.

⁸¹ NRO, SS2229.

⁸² VCH Notes, Hist Mss Com Var. Coll. Vol.3, 103, 82; Feet of Fines, 1706.

⁸³ Bridges, 1791, II, 379.

⁸⁴ Whellan, 1849, 779.

⁸⁵ VCH, 1930, 3, 141.

3.5.3 Inns & Alehouses

One of the best guides to the relative level of economic activity in the late medieval and post medieval towns of the county are the records of inns and alehouses, which could only be sustained at a high level by a substantial number of visitors regularly entering a town. In 1456 there is reference to a messuage called The Tabard,⁸⁶ while by 1650 both the Swan and the Bell inns are mentioned.⁸⁷ The earliest overview of the number of inns and alehouses is not however provided until 1673 and 1764 when 16 and then 14 alehouses are recorded. This is significantly more than Rothwell (11 and 9), ranking 6th after Towcester, though probably 9th over all in the county as Higham Ferrers, Brackley and Northampton are omitted from the statistics. The numbers decline by 1755 to 12, so falling below Rothwell and Kings Cliffe, but this is still a large number for such a small settlement. Such levels must be a reflection not only of Thrapston's continuing importance as a local marketing centre but also its position on an important, though not nationally significant, communication route.⁸⁸

3.5.4 Hinterland

The definition of hinterlands for this study has necessarily been conducted in a relatively simplistic fashion. Firstly using Bracton's theoretical measurement of $6\frac{2}{3}$ miles as the distance within which a new market could be considered to provide direct competition to an existing market.⁸⁹ An alternative has been calculated using Thiessen polygons. The latter have just taken into account the markets towns which were clearly successful and which survived into the post medieval period. The Thiessen polygons are likely to give a closer definition of the area in which the town had the dominant impact but the former should provide a guide as to the widest hinterland from which the town will have derived the most of its trade. These theoretical constructs will of course have been substantially influenced by the road pattern. They will also have been affected by physical topography and land use, though in Northamptonshire, unlike upland counties, these are likely to have been relatively limited in their impact.

Thrapston's hinterland encompassed a section of the Nene valley with its permeable surface geologies leading to a good agricultural potential, and stretching up onto the boulder clay watersheds of the former Bromswold to the south east and into Rockingham forest in the north west. This will have given Thrapston a hinterland encompassing the full range of environmental conditions and resources available in the county. However the towns hinterland is likely to have been seriously constricted by the far larger and more successful adjacent Nene valley towns of Higham Ferrers and Oundle. The granting of late markets within the hinterland, at Titchmarsh and Lowick, probably did not have had any significant impact on Thrapston, even if the grants were actually implemented. In the late medieval period it is however likely that the new market at Brigstock will have impacted to a limited degree of the north western part of the hinterland.

3.6 INDUSTRY

There is specific reference to a quarry in Thrapston in 1330 but this may only have been of purely local significance. Mines and quarries are mentioned in 1770 in a sale of the manor, but again there is no indication that they were of particular significance in the economy of the town.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ NRO SS2039.

⁸⁷ NRO SS4289.

⁸⁸ NRO, Quarter Sessions Records, Alehouse Recognisances.

⁸⁹ The issue is discussed briefly in the Northamptonshire context by Goodfellow, 1987, 305.

⁹⁰ VCH, 1930, 3, 139.

3.7 COMMUNICATIONS

The major road through Thrapston was that from Huntingdon to Kettering, Market Harborough and thence to Leicester, the medieval replacement for the Roman Gartree road. Though not appearing in Ogilby's national itinerary in 1675 and only north westward from Thrapston on Morden's late 17th century map of the county, it is likely that this was a major medieval road connecting the two Domesday boroughs, for where it crossed the Nene at Thrapston a substantial stone bridge was constructed in the medieval period, while the presence of a large hermitage on the bridge implies a substantial number of travellers using the bridge.

It is uncertain exactly when Thrapston bridge was constructed but it was certainly in existence by 1224. In the 13th century the maintenance of the bridge was probably primarily through payments made to the chapel at its west end, for in 1224 there was a grant of relaxation of ten days penance to all travellers who gave alms for the repair of the bridge.⁹¹ There were various grants of pontage for the repair of the bridge in the later 14th and earlier 15th century, granted to the bailiffs and men of Thrapston.⁹² In the late 15th century Henry de Veer, in his will, granted 54/4d to the repair of the bridge.⁹³ Leland, writing in the mid 16th century, describes a bridge of 8 arches, but in 1664 the bridge, then needing repair, was described as being of 24 arches. Although the 1720 description of the bridge as being of 8 arches may simply derive from Leland's account this is unlikely for Bridges goes on to say that its maintenance was the joint responsibility of Thrapston and Islip and that a hollow stone stood on the centre of the bridge on the south side to mark the extent of the responsibility of each township. At that time a toll was still collected at the bridge, as it had been in the medieval period, for the maintenance of the structure.⁹⁴ Significantly, the document of 1664 states that upon the bridge 'depends most of the course and commerce of the neighbouring parts.'⁹⁵

The road along the valley on the east side of the Nene, probably originating in the Roman road from Durobrivae to Irchester, passed by Thrapston less than half a mile to the east. It was only replaced by a road running through Thrapston when the Oundle turnpike was constructed in 1753. Before that date the road running north east from the town, though of course it would give direct access to the town from the valley road, actually crossed the main road and led on to Titchmarsh. This must have been the road described in medieval sources as the Titchmarsh Lane.⁹⁶ Running south from the south west corner of the town was the road to Denford, which also gave access to the water mill.

3.8 LAND USE

3.8.1 Woodland

There was a small area of woodland, 6 furlongs by 6 furlongs, on the de Veer manor in 1086. This is most likely to have lain on the boulder clay watershed in the eastern extremity of the township. All of this had been cleared by the 18th century although a Gales manor included 6 acres of woodland in 1564 (see above).

3.8.2 Open Fields and Inclosure

By the 13th century the open field system had encompassed almost the whole of the township except

⁹¹ Diocese of Lincoln, Robert Hugonis de Welles 1209-35, p.207, quoted by VCH, 1930, 3, 139.

⁹² VCH, 1930, 3, 139.

⁹³ Bridges, 1791, II, 379.

⁹⁴ The toll in circa 1720 was 2d per waggon, 5d per horse and 4d for 20 sheep, hogs or other cattle. Bridges, 1791, II, 379.

⁹⁵ Calendar of State Papers, 1663-4, 326.

⁹⁶ Eayre=s map, 1791.

for the closes of the town itself and a few acres of woodland on the clayland. At inclosure in 1782 there were four great fields in Thrapston: Keyston Lane Field, Stone Hill Field, Mill Field and Little Field. The western part of the township comprised meadow land on the alluvial flood plain of the Nene: Great Meadow, Crow Meadow and Dam Furlong.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ NRO, Inclosure Map, 1782.

C INDUSTRIAL

1.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Thrapston retained its status as the smallest market town in Northamptonshire in the period following 1750 and remained relatively small through to the mid 20th century. John Bridges records that there were one hundred and two houses and four hundred and fifty seven inhabitants; by 1801 this had risen to 675. In the 19th century there was a continual, but limited growth peaking at 1836 in 1911. The size of the town was dramatically eclipsed by the ‘new’ towns whose prosperity was based on the boot and shoe trade. The settlement did however clearly retain its status as a town throughout the period, despite its small size. In administrative terms Thrapston was the head of the Thrapston Petty Sessional Division, dual centre for Thrapston and Oundle County Court District, centre of Thrapston Poor Law Union comprising 26 parishes and 62 square miles and the centre for Thrapston Rural District Council until 1934, when it lost its out of county parishes and joined Oundle Rural District Council. In association with these functions the Thrapston Union Workhouse was erected to the south of the town in 1836 and a large County Police Station was built in 1860.

Thrapston was primarily a market and commercial town throughout the period. The market was held on a Tuesday for grain, cattle, sheep and pigs and continued in use throughout the 19th and into the early 20th centuries. In the latter part of the 19th century it was described by J Cole ‘*It yet keeps up with considerable spirit, being considered an excellent mark for so small a town, much business being done in thetrade*’⁹⁸ and in 1894 it was described as ‘*extensive*’⁹⁹. There were two annual fairs (for shoes and pedlary) in Thrapston in the period following 1750 on the first Tuesday in May and on 5th August, although the latter had fallen out of use by 1849. It is also reported that the market after Michaelmas was as large as a fair.¹⁰⁰ There were a number of developments for the market and fairs in the 19th century. In 1848 a Corn Exchange was built by Mr Freeman Roe of London, although the building was under utilised as farmers preferred to conduct their business in the street¹⁰¹. In 1870 a Market Company was created by Act of Parliament which had exclusive right to levy tolls and hold fairs in the town; and in 1871 a Cattle Market was established which is still in existence today.

In addition to the market and fairs Thrapston was a thriving commercial centre throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. There were twelve public houses (including the Swan and The White Hart which also operated as hotels), a large number for such a small settlement. The Militia Lists of 1777 indicates a varied, if not necessarily numerous, retail trade with 2 butchers, 2 bakers, 3 innkeepers, 2 ostlers, 2 tailors, 2 apothecaries, 2 hairdressers and 2 shop keepers; there were also a wide variety of trades which will be discussed below. There were a substantial number of retail outlets in the 19th century; in addition to the usual shops such as butchers, bakers, drapers, grocers, beer retailers etc there were some very specialised trades such as gramophone agent, florist, bookseller, fishing tackle dealer, stationer, fried fish dealer and newsagent, as well as a marine store dealer (rag and bone man). Three banks and a central post office also operated in the town and there were a wide variety of services and professions represented including photographer, auctioneer, several solicitors,

⁹⁸ Cole J, History and antiquities of Thrapston in the county of Northampton,

⁹⁹ Kelly’s Trade Directory 1894

¹⁰⁰ Whellan’s Trade Directory 1849

¹⁰¹ Kellys Trade Directory 1854

teachers, surgeons and vicars as well as a police inspector, dentist, insurance agent and physician¹⁰². The number of commercial outlets and professional services offered in the settlement are far higher than those of many of the 'new towns' or 'industrialised villages' which had far larger populations than Thrapston by the end of the 19th century. This clearly demonstrates the way in which the town regained its function as a commercial centre for the local area whereas the 'new towns' did not generally gain such functions and were primarily industrial centres.

Thrapston clearly benefited from its good transport networks; the first of these, which clearly remained significant throughout the period, was the River Nene which was made navigable from Peterborough to Thrapston in 1737. In the early 20th century Thrapston was described as '.... a small market town, probably owing its prosperity to its situation near the bridge over the Nene towards which bridge several roads converge'¹⁰³. A number of industrial structures were located in the wharf area of the River Nene on either side of 'Thrapston Bridge' between Thrapston and Islip. The market, fairs and trade in general benefited from the canalisation of the river '*the inhabitants carry on a trade in exporting grain, and importing groceries, timber, coals etc*'¹⁰⁴. The Peterborough to Wellingborough turnpike road was established through the town in 1753, which would have undoubtedly provided passing custom for the commercial outlets in the centre. The town also benefited from two railway lines and stations - the Blisworth to Peterborough line of the London and North-Western Railway was established in 1845 with a station to the west of the town and the Kettering and Huntingdon line of the Midland Railway arrived in 1866. The general effect of these communication networks was clearly to retain Thrapston's economic position and to ensure that it did not undergo a decline, but they certainly did not create substantial economic growth or expansion for the settlement.

Thrapston had a very small agricultural basis in the 18th and 19th centuries; this was primarily due to the small size of the parish. In 1777 there were just 3 farmers and 2 shepherds listed for the town, a very small number compared to many other settlements. In 1831 just 25% of the population were employed as either farmers or agricultural labourers and very small numbers of farmers are listed in trade directories - 6 are listed in 1849, just one in 1894 and there are none recorded in 1924. The town had a thriving cattle market indicating that it was an important central location for farmers in the locality even if very few of them were based in the town or parish.

Thrapston did not have a major industrial base in the late 18th century. The militia lists do indicate a number of individual tradesmen including 6 shoemakers, 3 woolcombers, 2 basketmakers, 2 blacksmiths and one breeches maker, stay maker, brazier, skuttle maker, watchmaker and whip maker. None of these form a substantial organised industry in the town, but indicate a wide-ranging economic base to the town. The situation is similar in the early 19th century; '*There are no manufactures of consequence belonging to this town: the articles made are whips and thread lace*'.¹⁰⁵ This pattern appears to have continued from the medieval period through to the early 20th century with a number of different small-scale manufacturers operating in the town, but not forming an organised industry. Manufacturers listed in trade directories include watchmakers, pattern makers, a coach maker, stay maker, whip maker, mineral water manufacturer, fruit syrup manufacturer, woollen dress manufacturer, pulley maker, poultry appliance manufacturer and motor

¹⁰² Trade directories of 1849, 1895, 1924 and census details for 1851 and 1891.

¹⁰³ Page W, The Victoria History of the Counties of England. A History of Northamptonshire, 1970

¹⁰⁴ Pigot, 1830, Trade Directory

¹⁰⁵ Pigot, 1830, Trade Directory

body builder.¹⁰⁶ Thrapston clearly did not have a significant boot and shoe industry in the period - there were no boot and shoe manufacturers noted in any of the trade directories for the period and the town is not included in statistics about boot and shoe makers by Hatley and Rajczonek¹⁰⁷. There were, however, a number of boot and shoe makers; 6 were recorded in the Militia Lists of 1777, 10 were noted in Kelly's Leather Trade Directory in 1893 and 6 makers and three repairers were listed in 1920. The boot and shoe workers in the town were presumably contracting work to manufacturers in settlements with a larger industry, perhaps Raunds or Kettering. There was a long standing, but presumably localised, quarrying industry in the town¹⁰⁸. Pigot's Trade Directory of 1830 indicates '*There are some stone quarries in the neighbourhood, which also abound with a beautiful white sand, used for domestic purposes*'. In 1873 Thrapston Iron Ore Co Ltd opened an ironstone quarry to the south of the town, this was on the edge of the workable ironstone field and was only in operation for a short period of time. The site was re-opened between 1881 and 1900 by Glendon Iron Co, but was used for the extraction of limestone.¹⁰⁹ It would appear likely that some of the population of Thrapston would have been employed in the ironstone quarries and furnaces in the neighbouring settlement of Islip.

There was one manufactory in the town that did become a significant industry in the period - the Nene Side Iron Works owned by 'Smith and Grace Screw Boss Pulley Co Ltd'. The company was the single largest employer in Thrapston throughout its period of operation. The company was founded by Nathaniel Smith who moved to Thrapston in 1853 and became the manager of the Thrapston site for the agricultural implement maker Mr W.L. Fisher of Oundle. He opened his own business in 1860 and in 1899 a new foundry was erected on the Nene Side site. The company was responsible for a number of innovative products including the screw boss pulley and the V-drive belt, which revolutionised industry at the turn of the century. The company was exceptionally successful until the post war period when there was increased competition from overseas, but Smith and Grace continued in business until 1994 when a large fire destroyed part of the site.¹¹⁰

2.0 TOPOGRAPHICAL DEVELOPMENT

The study of the urban topography of Thrapston is hindered by the lack of an Ordnance Survey map of 1926¹¹¹; causing problems in following the usual methodology for the project. An approach has been followed whereby the 1:2500 map of 1900 has been compared with the next available map - the 1:10:560 map of 1950; this has been done both as a mapping exercise and as part of the field visit. There are however, limitations with this approach, as developments that occurred between these dates cannot be pinpointed exactly. Monuments that developed after 1900, but were demolished before 1950 are not likely to be found and the scale of the 1950 map means that monuments that were there by 1950, but have since been demolished are also likely to be lost. In contrast the early development of the town is facilitated by the detail seen on the 1781 inclosure map.

The map of 1781 indicates that the town was of a very small size¹¹² and was densely focused around

¹⁰⁶ These are listed at various times in trade directories of 1849, 1894 and 1924 - they are not continuous throughout the period.

¹⁰⁷ Hatley VA and Rajczonek, Shoemakers in Northamptonshire 1762-1911 a statistical survey, Northamptonshire Historical Series, 1971

¹⁰⁸ Quarries are mentioned in 1330 and 1770 - see medieval section of report.

¹⁰⁹ Tonks E, The ironstone quarries of the Midlands History, Operation and Railways, Part 4 The Wellingborough Area, 1990

¹¹⁰ Belmont DW, A history of iron founding and casting in Thrapston, Northamptonshire at Nene Side Iron Works, 1998

¹¹¹ The area was not surveyed by the Ordnance Survey between 1900 and 1950.

¹¹² This is confirmed by the 1801 census evidence, which indicates that Thrapston had a population of just 675 at this date, less than any

the western end of High Street (Market Place on maps of 1885 and 1900) between Chancery Lane (Fair Lane) and Oundle Road (Titchmarsh Lane) and along the south west leg of High Street leading towards the river. There was also a more sparse development along Huntingdon Road, which appeared to include some buildings that encroached onto the road layout itself. Back Lane was clearly in existence at this date, but there was no development along this road and it merely functioned as the back entrance to the tenement plots that fronted onto High Street.

The growth of the town over the next century and a half was very limited¹¹³ and to a large extent respected the existing settlement pattern. There was a development eastward with infilling of much of the sparsely developed land at this end of the town and there was an expansion to both the south and the west, filling in the area between the early town and the new communication systems of both railway and river. By 1885 Back Lane was also beginning to be gradually infilled with buildings of all types, although this remained relatively sparse until the post 1950 period. The area which is marked on the map of 1781 as 'Kiln Close' was never built upon as it was the garden to a major house on the opposite side of the road; in 1920 it was purchased by the Peace Memorial Committee as a recreation ground.

The area around High Street (Market Place) and Huntingdon Road (High Street) retained its importance as the central area of the settlement with a large number of public houses, hotels and other commercial properties being located there. A number of higher status houses and the Baptist Chapel, Police Station and Rectory were also located in the eastern end of this central area. Some of these buildings originated in the period prior to 1781, but other important central buildings were erected in the late 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. Industrial buildings were located throughout the town including to the rear of the tenement plots leading off High Street, but were particularly concentrated on Back Lane and the area in close proximity to the River Nene including Bridge Street. The major industrial works for the town, the Nene Side Iron Works, was located to the south of the town along Denford Road. The utility buildings including workhouse, gas works, cemetery and latterly the sewage works were all located to the outer extremities of the town. There was relatively little housing erected in the town in the period following 1750. The majority of this was located to the south east of the town around Denford Road, Market Road, Halford Street and Grove Road and comprised 19th century workers terraces. These were located directly to the north of the Smith and Grace industrial complex and would appear to be directly related to the development of this complex. There were also some early 20th century terraces erected to the eastern end of town on Highfield Road. Higher status 19th century houses were located on the routes out of town at the extremities of Denford Road and Huntingdon Road.

The major development of the settlement in the period between 1900 and 1950 was to the north of the town around Oundle Road. The cemetery had already been laid out in 1895, but an analysis of the building styles indicates that the majority of houses on Oundle Road, De Vere Road and Highfield Road were constructed in the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's. The only other development was the laying out of Oakleas Road to the south of the Workhouse which was to the latter part of this period and the erection of King Edward's Terraces, which were actually situated in the parish of Islip.

other settlement covered in the project.

¹¹³ The development of the population was also very limited, although there was an expansion this was consistently lower than any other settlement in the project and even in the early 20th century never reached 2,000.

3.0 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

3.1 INDUSTRY

There were a large number of iron foundries in Thrapston in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Ordnance Survey map of 1885 indicates that there were three in the town at that time - Vulcan Foundry on Market Road, Steam Plough Works to the rear of Bridge Street and Nene Side Iron Works along Denford Road. The former had disappeared by 1900, the building for Steam Plough Works remained on the Ordnance Survey map of 1950 (although it was not possible to determine what use the building was in) and Nene Side Iron Works (latterly owned by Smith and Grace) is still standing today. The structures relating to the latter industrial works are currently very well preserved, complete with buildings from a number of different phases, although the site is standing empty having shut down in 1994. The site has been the subject of study for a University College Northampton undergraduate dissertation¹¹⁴. The land that the works occupied is due to be auctioned at the end of May 1999. The works are of both local interest in terms of their contribution to the economic development of Thrapston and national interest due to the invention of the screw boss pulley and the V-drive belt at the site.

Ironstone quarrying was limited in the town in comparison to the neighbouring settlement of Islip. The ironstone quarries which were exploited to the south of the town were later used for limestone extraction - Eric Tonks outlines remains which were left in the late 1980's, but the construction of the A14 to the very north of the town is likely to have obliterated many of these remains.

A number of small and medium sized industrial works have been located around the town, some of which are still surviving. It is likely that these would have housed some of the industries listed in trade directories for the town including the coach maker, mineral water manufacturer, brewer, woollen dress manufacture and poultry appliance manufacturer. The 'Vase Press' operated in the town between 1917 and 1951 with large premises on Oundle Road, but the buildings have been demolished and the site is now in use by a plastics factory. Despite the limited nature of the boot and shoe industry in the town a number of garden workshops have been noted in the settlement and map evidence indicates that it is likely that there were more which have either been subsequently demolished or that it was not possible to see during the field visit.

3.2 AGRICULTURE

Agriculture was of limited significance in Thrapston in the period following 1750 and this is reflected in the built evidence in the town. Just one possible farm complex was noted during the field visit which appears to be still working as a farm, it is possible that there were other agricultural buildings amongst the structures which have been demolished.

3.3 HOUSING

In numerical terms the housing of the settlement is fairly limited, primarily due to the small size and population of the town, however there is a good range of buildings. There are a number of surviving 18th century town houses in Thrapston, four of these buildings originating in the 17th century which are located in Chancery Lane / High Street and Huntingdon Road; these tend to be substantial buildings of limestone with Collyweston slate roofs.

The major development of 19th century housing was on the small parcel of land around Denford

¹¹⁴ Belmont DW, A History of Iron founding and Casting in Thrapston, Northamptonshire at Nene Side Iron works, Nene College Dissertation, 1998

Road, Halford Street, Grove Road and Market Road. Sale of the land for building began in 1878 and a number of speculative builders purchased separate plots. The first area to be developed was Denford Road spreading to Halford Street and then Grove Road.¹¹⁵ The houses in the area reflect the mixed nature of the development with a variety of styles and designs being used for the structures. There are a large number of terraced houses, but also semi-detached and detached houses - all of late 19th century date. One of the distinctive features of these houses is that a large number have carriage arches between the terraces (of much greater size / scale than the usual passageways found on terraced houses). It is likely that these would have been to provide access to the large number of outbuildings located to the rear of these plots. It was not possible, during the field visit, to be able to see many of these structures - there were one or two garden workshops and even another house located in this area, but many of the buildings appear to be slightly larger industrial buildings. There are a number of more elaborate houses in this area including premises now used by 'Thrapston Farm and Garden Shop' and 'Lindon House' and 'Levant Cottage'. Other 19th and early 20th century terraced houses are located on Huntingdon Road, Highfield Road and Back Street. The King Edwards Cottages development just over the parish border in Islip are clearly a singular planned development of terraces in the early 20th century (presumably between 1901 and 1910). They are said to have been built for Wiltshire men brought in to work at the Islip furnaces.

There were also a minority of larger 19th century villa style houses located on Huntingdon Road and Denford Road. These employed the usual wide range of styles associated with this status of housing.

3.4 COMMERCE

Thrapston was a town that was heavily reliant on trade and commerce and a considerable number of commercial buildings and structures remain in the area. The original medieval market place has been built over, but it is likely that the market in the period following 1750 was located in the junction between High Street (Market Place in 1900) and Chancery Lane (Fair Lane in 1900). The Corn Exchange building, which was converted from an inn in 1848 is located in this area and is still in existence complete with motifs of a corn sheaf and wooden plough¹¹⁶ and is located in this area. The building was however never fully utilised as a Corn Exchange¹¹⁷ and by 1924 the building was used for public entertainment; the structure is now in use as offices for an estate agents and chartered surveyors. The Cattle Market, which was established in 1871 is still in active use today; the cattle pens are located in the same position as in 1900 and a number of the small outbuildings in the area are still in existence although others have been demolished.

There were a large number of public houses and inns in the town - many of these including The Swan, Kings Head and the Red Lion were demolished in road widening schemes and re-development schemes in the 1960's and later. The buildings which have been positively identified include The Masons Arms and The Fox which are still in existence as public houses today, one building which has been converted to use as two shops and the White Hart Inn which is in use by an electricity shop. The Kings Arms was most recently in use as a public house, but is now standing empty and derelict; building works are being conducted around the rear of the building and it would appear likely that the building is to be converted. The only building recorded in trade directories that has not been identified is the White Horse, which was located on Titchmarsh Road. One other public house that may have been of importance to the town is the Woolpack Inn in Islip. This is located just over the

¹¹⁵ Belmont DW, A history of iron founding and casting in Thrapston, Northamptonshire at Nene Side Iron Works, 1998

¹¹⁶ The structure is a grade 2 listed building.

¹¹⁷ Kelly's Trade Directory of 1854 indicates that farmers preferred to conduct their business in the street.

other side of the river in the neighbouring parish and is likely to have been used by visitors to the town, particularly those coming by the River Nene. There were at least two hotels - the Swan Inn was listed as an hotel by 1894 and the White Hart Hotel was located on Market Square. It is possible that the latter building survives, but it was not possible to identify which of a number of buildings actually housed the hotel.

The central area of Thrapston, around High Street (formerly Market Place) is clearly recognisable as a commercial district with a number of properties of both stone and brick and of all sizes / scales which have clearly been used as commercial properties. There are some surviving early shop frontages, but many have been replaced with modern shops.

3.5 TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

The River Nene was made navigable from Peterborough to Thrapston in 1737 and to Northampton in 1760. It was the major communication route for heavy goods until the development of the railways in the mid 19th century. The Blisworth to Peterborough line of the London and North-Western railway was established in 1845 with a station to the west of the town. The station has now been demolished, but parts of the alignment survive. The Kettering and Huntingdon line of the Midland Railway was established in 1866 with a station to the south of the town. This station and associated goods shed are still in existence and in use as offices and as workshop / storage respectively.

3.6 UTILITIES

The gas works for the town was established in 1857, but Thrapston Gas and Coke Company ceased trading in 1950. The land is currently owned by 'Transco' and a modern utility building is located on the site. A sewage works was constructed in the town in 1902 'Sewage Works (Disused)' is shown to the east of the town in 1950 and there is nothing currently on the site. A waterworks was not established in Thrapston until 1929-35, but this has not been located as part of the survey. Prior to this public pumps were used in Huntingdon Road, Midland Road and Market Place. A cemetery was laid out in 1895 to north of the town on Oundle Road and is still in use today. The small fire station building in front of the area that is now Peace Memorial Park has been demolished.

3.7 HEALTH AND WELFARE

There were a large number of health and welfare facilities in the town showing its importance as a centre for the local area extended to public services as well as commerce. The Thrapston Union Workhouse was erected in 1836 for Thrapston Poor Law Union, which comprised 26 parishes and 62 square miles. Part of the complex, of both stone and brick, is still in existence and in use as offices for East Northamptonshire District Council. The central section of the building has been demolished, but a modern office block has been constructed in the same plan form. The Thrapston District Police Station was erected in 1860 - all other divisions of the Northamptonshire County Constabulary had been established in 1840 and the Thrapston Division was comprised of 17 parishes from part of Oundle, Kettering and Wellingborough divisions, it only remained as a division until the 1930's. The building is still in existence and comprises a number of individual structures that are interconnected, it would appear likely that the building included accommodation for police officers and cells as well as the administrative headquarters of the division. The building has been converted for use as 'The Court House Inn', although the complex is currently up for sale.

3.8 RELIGION

The parish church of St James was substantially rebuilt during the 19th century with the rebuilding of the nave and aisles in 1841-2 to a design by Browning of Stamford and the vestry was rebuilt in

1888. A grant was obtained for this work from the ‘Incorporated Society for the enlargement of buildings and repair of churches’.¹¹⁸ The church is a grade 2* listed building and is presumably designed to fulfil 19th century social, liturgical and architectural needs.

There were just two other religious buildings in Thrapston in the period following 1750. The Baptist Church is constructed of stone with a red brick facade and lead and slate roofs. The building was erected in 1787 and appears to be very plain and barn-like in construction. The original manse house attached to the left-hand side of the front of the chapel is also now private domestic accommodation. The small red brick Methodist Chapel, with use of decorative brickwork and stained glass, is still in existence and in use as a chapel.

3.9 EDUCATION

Educational provision began in Thrapston in 1845 when Mrs Montague left a subscription for the education of twelve girls in the town. This was transferred to an endowment for the National School when it was established in 1851. The building was enlarged in 1881, 1895 and 1909 and later became a public elementary school. The building is still in use as a school, but appears to have been altered a number of times in recent years with a number of blocked up windows and extensions etc. There was also a British School recorded in Kelly’s trade directory of 1854, but there was no trace of this building during mapping or the field visit. Thrapston Council School building was erected in Huntingdon Road in 1909, this would appear to be the building that is now in use as ‘Day Nursery School’.

3.10 RECREATION

The town was well provided with recreational facilities in the 19th and early 20th centuries, although it was unusual in not having an established Working Men’s Club. The Temperance Hall was constructed in 1881 and was later used as a cinema, but has since been demolished. A ‘Masonic Lodge’ was established in the town prior to 1900 and was replaced with a new structure in 1902 and re-named ‘Chicheley Lodge’. The building is still standing today, but it was not possible to determine whether it was still in use. The Corn Exchange, which had been erected in 1848, was never extensively used by the farmers in the town and ultimately became another social venue and was licensed for stage plays and public entertainment; the building is still in existence as is discussed above. A purpose built cinema ‘The Plaza’ was erected in Cosy Nook in the early 20th century this has now been converted for use as ‘The Plaza Centre’.

¹¹⁸ Department of the Environment, List of Buildings of Special Architectural or historic interest, District of East Northamptonshire, 1987 and RCHME Unpublished notes on the Church of St James.

II ASSESSMENT

A PRE MEDIEVAL

Although there is no documentary evidence to suggest that Thrapston was a central place of the Saxon period the settlement may prove to be of high importance because it is one of only a handful of the small towns sites to have produced some evidence of middle Saxon activity. The presence of burials which may prove to be of late or even middle Saxon date also suggest that this may not have been an ordinary Saxon settlement. The status and significance of the Saxon settlements which precede the small market towns of the county is an important research theme, although the survival of archaeological evidence needs to be tested given the degree of redevelopment that has taken place in the 20th century.

B MEDIEVAL & POST-MEDIEVAL

1.0 TOWN

1.1 ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE & SURVIVAL

Thrapston is one of a small group of medieval market settlements that do not appear at Domesday but for which the earliest sources indicate the market was already in existence by the early 13th century. It is also somewhat exceptional in Northamptonshire in being a successful if small market town developed by a relatively minor secular lord. Judging from its small size it is possible that Thrapston is an example of a town which was almost solely based on commercial activity serving a local hinterland without any significant industrial production. However the failure of the documentary sources to enable reconstruction of the tenurial structure of tenements within the town, including the identification of the agricultural as opposed to the commercial and industrial properties within the town, means that there are severe limitations on the potential to explore in detail the character of the settlement.

1.2 Documentary

1.2.1 Summary of Previous Investigation

There has been no previous detailed documentary study of the town.

1.2.2 Research for this Report

The indexes and catalogues to the major relevant collections in the Public Record Office, Northamptonshire Record Office and British Library have been searched as have those in the National Register of Archives. The major collection is for the de Veer manor in the well catalogued Stopford Sackville collection, with material on the other manor coming mainly from the Montagu collection. The only potentially useful collections identified but not examined are those relating Thorney Abbey which appears to have held property in Thrapston in the late 13th century, but this does not appear at the dissolution and may have been of little significance. The inadequacy of the indexing of the Montagu collection, relating to the Gloucester fee, should however be noted and it is possible but unlikely that significant additional documentation will be identified in the collection.

1.2.3 Survival

The history of the medieval town is not particularly well documented although there are several sources which provide unusual detail, particularly those relating to the market in the 14th century. There is also one useful medieval extent. No significant account rolls exist for the town, in medieval or post medieval periods, nor are the four 14th century rentals particularly useful as they cover only a few properties or give only tenants names and rents and so cannot be used for topographical reconstruction. There are just three medieval court rolls and three from the 16th and 17th centuries for the de Veer manor. There are a large number of court rolls of the Gloucester fee in the Montagu collection. Most are very brief and provide little useful, but there are various references to individual tenements being transferred to new tenants, mainly from the early 16th to later 17th centuries.¹¹⁹ The main medieval source is represented by the dozens of charters, leases and deeds relating to the de Veer manor from the mid 14th to 18th century and especially the 15th century. However neither these nor the court rolls provide a significant amount of good locational information which can be used for topographical reconstruction. Neither are there significant medieval or post medieval terriers that might enable effective reconstruction of the open fields. The only early map to survive is the inclosure map of 1782. It does not provide detailed information on tenement ownership, nor is it of sufficiently early a date to enable the two manors to be distinguished or the status and character of tenements to be distinguished. None of the medieval sources are sufficiently early to provide evidence of trades from personal names comparable to that seen in several other towns, nor any evidence which would assist in the definition of the hinterland which the town served.

1.2.4 Potential

Despite the existence of substantial number of medieval and post medieval charters, leases and other deeds surviving for the town, especially for the de Veer manor, there is relatively little topographical evidence that can be gleaned from the documentary sources. Though intensive study of these sources might enable a few topographical details to be identified there is little potential for comprehensive reconstruction of the historical topography of the settlement, particularly due to the meagre detail which is provided by the few surviving medieval and later rentals. Most importantly this means that it will not be possible to distinguish virgate, cottage and freehold tenements within the town in a way which would enable any excavated evidence to be given an adequate tenurial status and manorial context.

Unless a major, as yet unidentified, documentary collection or key documentary source is identified relating to the town, there appears very little potential for further documentary research to significantly enhance our ability to define a framework and agenda for future archaeological work in Thrapston.

1.3 Historic Buildings

1.3.1 Summary of Previous Investigation

There has been no detailed historic buildings survey work conducted in the town.

1.3.2 Research for this Report

No specific fieldwork or other data collection has been conducted for this report.

¹¹⁹ NRO, mainly Box x881 and x884.

1.3.3 Survival

Given that the town continued to thrive throughout the later medieval and post medieval period there is a reasonable potential for the remaining historic buildings to shed valuable light on the nature of the settlement and commercial and related activity within the town. Though Thrapston appears to have been largely rebuilt in the 19th century a small number of stone buildings do survive. The survival rate may not at first sight appear good but this may be as much a reflection of the relatively small size of the pre-industrial town as of recent destruction. In addition to the listed buildings, and those which from external evidence might be thought to hold some information of historical significance to problems with which we are concerned, comparison of the 1782, second edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map and modern map has shown that other early structures could be concealed behind more modern facades. However, no systematic survey has been conducted of the buildings in Thrapston, hence it is impossible at present to assess the potential of those stone buildings which do survive. Given the relatively small number of buildings concerned it is unlikely that any relating to the medieval period will survive but valuable post medieval evidence may be revealed.

1.3.4 Potential

It is not proposed that a detailed formal survey and assessment of the buildings in the town, involving examination of each structure internally as well as externally, should be conducted to establish the potential of the early buildings of Thrapston. It would be more practical to pursue the objective by the individual examination of any of the early or potentially early buildings identified in our rapid external survey and map based assessment as and when they are affected by proposals for alteration.

1.4 Archaeological

1.4.1 Summary of Previous Investigation

There was a watching brief conducted during the development of the manor site in the 1970s which revealed evidence of the Saxon burials and several other features. Also in the 1970s a watching brief was conducted on two developments on the castle mound and ditch, by D Hall and D Jackson. Plans and section drawings related to these limited investigations are in the SMR. Subsequently, during the late 1990s there has been just one field evaluation on a frontage but this demonstrated no significant survival of archaeological evidence.

Beyond the medieval and post medieval town there has been evaluation and partial recording action on a late Bronze Age defended site of national importance.

1.4.2 Research for this Report

No specific fieldwork or other primary data collection has been conducted for this report.

1.4.3 Survival

The only earthwork remains are those of the castle. Its slight earthwork remains have not been subject to measured survey. No archaeological excavation has been carried out in Thrapston, apart from watching briefs in the late 1960s and early 1970s on the castle and manor sites. Hence our knowledge of the archaeology of the town is very poor. There is the need for observation of minor developments and evaluation of more substantial developments within the medieval area to determine the actual level of survival of archaeological remains and their potential.

1.4.4 Potential

The broad topography of the settlement is simple and relatively easily understood..... The tenement rows are relatively clearly identifiable.... However a number of the monuments are unlocated, notably the Gales and Holt manors and the Leper Hospital. These lesser manors however probably played a very minor role in the fortunes of the town and so their absence may not have a significant bearing on the potential of the archaeology of the town. The windmills have been both levelled and built over and so are of low potential. The watermill remained in use into recent times and so has limited potential.

The medieval town in general may prove to have only a limited archaeological potential, given that practically the whole of the presumed medieval frontages are built up. However Thrapston may prove to be exceptional as a small town in the county in having a potential for waterlogged deposits, due to the very low lying nature of the site. This potential needs to be assessed. The castle and the area of Saxon settlement and possible late Saxon cemetery would appear to have a high potential and must certainly be considered of at least county importance. The tenements around the market place and the area of the presumed market itself are probably justify the most intensive examination archaeologically in order to confirm the extent of the market and to seek evidence for the dating of the laying out of the market place. Given the presence of a substantial number of historic buildings which are listed or likely to be conserved, any plot which does come up for redevelopment on the frontages of the market place would be valuable to carry evaluate as this would be a relatively rare occurrence. Particular attention should also be paid to the question of how the market place was inserted into the pre-existing village. This requires the extensive examination of the market place itself to determine if earlier tenements were cleared away for its laying out. The identification of tenements occupied before the laying out of the market place will be particularly important in understanding the topographical evolution of the town.

The medieval settlement area itself has not yet seen a great deal of modern redevelopment, the greatest loss being confined to Manor Close, and Paradise Close, but even here it is expected that there will be sufficient surviving deposits to warrant investigation of any future development proposals. Cellaring along the main frontage is also not thought to be extensive, although there is the possibility of unidentified cellars, while some destruction may also have occurred where buildings on the south side of the High Street have been cut back into the rising ground. In addition, several frontages have also been lost as a result of road widening; on the east side of Titchmarsh Lane, on the west side of the same lane at the southern end, the whole frontage on the north side of High Street from the corner of Fair Lane westwards, and a single tenement from the eastern corner of Fair Lane and High Street. Well preserved medieval tenements may be expected within area of gardens on the south side of Huntingdon Road which has been unoccupied since at least the late 18th century.

When there is evaluation evidence from a significant number of locations across the town the archaeological potential of the town should be reassessed.

2.0 SPECIFIC MONUMENTS

2.1 Market

The market place is identifiable but the exact location of the medieval shops, stalls and market cross are uncertain while we also lack detailed documentary information as to the numbers and character of the shops and stalls. The market place has also been intensively built over and so may have very limited archaeological potential. The recovery of basic evidence on the chronology of the laying out of the market place would be significant.

2.2 Castle and De Veer Manor

It would appear that the majority of the footings etc for the development in Manor Close were shallow, and hence a considerable amount of archaeological data may survive in the area. Any future development on the manor and castle sites should be evaluated in order that the extent, nature, and dating of the cemetery can be determined, to locate and characterise the middle and late Saxon activity, and to define the extent, character and chronology of the castle. This may be valid even on relatively small scale disturbances given the potential importance of the monuments and the very limited nature of our current knowledge as to their extent and character.

A sufficient area of the motte survives for future investigation to determine the nature and dating of the mound, including the structures set upon it. The earthwork to the west survives sufficiently to allow determination whether it was indeed an outer bailey, although the area between this and the mound is deeply hollowed and may have been at least partially quarried, hence any structures here may have already been lost. An accurate earthwork survey is required.

2.3 Rectory Manor

The Rectory manor has been located and has surviving post medieval buildings, but the likely continuous occupation of the site may mean that it has limited archaeological potential.

2.4 The Church

The church has a significance both in relation to the topographical and historical relationship of its development to the creation of the market place, and to the earlier cemetery to the north west under the manor site.

There is no evidence of existing trenching around the exterior of the church and no modern burial is taking place in the graveyard but it is already almost totally cleared. Neither is there evidence of extensive destruction of archaeological levels within the building but there has as yet been no archaeological investigation in or around the church. There was extensive rebuilding of nave and aisles in 1841 and the vestry in 1888, hence, considerable information may have been lost from the standing structure while it is unclear what damage was done to below ground archaeology. Any future extensive structural or below ground disturbance should be at least observed in order that the earliest structural phase of the church may be identified. Examination of any disturbance to the boundaries of the churchyard might also be of value in clarifying the relationship of the church to the market place, and to the cemetery in Manor Close.

2.5 Hermitage

There is some uncertainty as to the exact location of the Hermitage buildings but it may prove to have a good archaeological potential. It is significant in relation to its association with the bridge as well as with the town.

2.6 Bridge

The bridge survives as a significant structure but it has not been subject to detailed survey. It may contain or preserve in its buried archaeological deposits information relevant to the understanding of the development of this important communication route.

3.0 URBAN HINTERLAND

For the purposes of assessment of the hinterlands of the medieval and post medieval towns in the county a rapid grading of the archaeological potential of the medieval settlements of the county has been conducted on the basis of professional judgement. A documentary assessment has also been

completed, based on a systematic but far from complete indexing of the major documentary classes for each township in the county based on a search of various list and indexes in the Public Record Office, Northamptonshire Record Office, National Register of Archives and British Library. Separate scoring has been made for each document class based on the number of documents identified for each settlement in both the medieval and post medieval periods. The severe limitation of such a quantitative assessment and the incompleteness of the initial indexing task mean that this scoring has many shortcomings but countywide it may be expected to give a broad indication of potential. Details of the methodology are defined in the general synthesis report of the Extensive Urban Survey.

The historic landscape in the hinterland has been extensively affected by mineral extraction and in the immediate environs of the town itself by urban development. This development and much of the quarrying was conducted significant archaeological work and so it will never be possible to recover a sufficiently comprehensive picture of the distribution and nature of pre-medieval sites which would provide a context for the Saxon settlement and enable the evolution of the settlement pattern between the Roman and late Saxon periods to be explored in a coherent fashion.

On present evidence the medieval settlements in the hinterland of Thrapston do not in general terms offer a high archaeological potential for the study of the interaction of town and countryside, reinforcing the tentative conclusions about the town itself. In the medieval period the documentary potential of the hinterland would appear somewhat better than the archaeological potential but a lower post medieval potential is expected. Combined with the relatively low documentary potential and uncertain archaeological potential of the town itself would suggest that overall this is not a research objective that can be effectively pursued in the Thrapston area.

No attempt has been made to examine the specific classes of documents, particularly medieval account rolls, which might yield information as to purchases made at Thrapston market, though such account rolls do exist for a number of manors in the hinterland.

One specific interrelationship can also be assessed, the relationship of the castle and manor, and the general evolution of the town, needs to be considered in the light of the development of the other estates of the de Veers at Great Addington, in Raunds and elsewhere. The Great Addington manor has not been identified but its location and archaeological potential should be sought, while the link with the Raunds area may also offer some potential. The relatively good range of documentary material for the de Veer manors in the Stopford Sackville collection may offer further opportunities for research into the nature of the economic and tenurial developments by the de Veres, enabling the development of the town at Thrapston to be placed in a reasonable seigneurial context, though the sources for the 12th century are more limited than later centuries, hence there may be limited potential regarding the associations during the period of foundation and early development of the town.

C INDUSTRIAL

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE AND SURVIVAL

Thrapston is the only town in the county that has not changed significantly in terms of its social and economic role or its physical development from the medieval to the modern

period. The town needs to be assessed against other settlements in a national context to determine how significant this is.

The basic plan form of the town has been retained and there are a large number of surviving buildings from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The documentation for the town, with particular reference to early maps and photographs is good.

1.0 DOCUMENTARY

1.1 Maps

The detailed map of the town produced in 1781 as part of the enclosure award provides a good source for reconstructing the nature and layout of the town in detail. There are a number of other maps for the period, but these tend to be narrowly focused on particular areas and include plans of the railways, quarries and utilities and a map of the Hogs estate. The lack of an Ordnance Survey map for the period between 1900 and 1950 is problematic for a full consideration of the settlement through to the 20th century, but is mitigated by the relatively limited amount of development in that period.

1.2 Photographs

There are a number of photographs and other pictorial records for Thrapston in the 19th and early 20th centuries in Northamptonshire Record Office, Northamptonshire Local Studies Library and Northamptonshire Heritage. These include street scenes, individual buildings and aerial views. The topography of Thrapston survives largely intact from the late 19th century, but photographs have the potential for providing detail about changes to individual buildings and structures; also for providing useful information on buildings / areas which have been lost, in order to provide a more detailed understanding of the town as a whole.

1.3 Documents

There are a number of official records surviving for the town including records for Thrapston Rural District Council and later Oundle and Thrapston Rural District Council and in particular the records of the sanitary inspector. The parish records include the Overseers of the Poor and the Surveyors of the Highways records, reports and accounts. Cole's 'History and Antiquities of Thrapston' written in the mid 19th century, also provides detailed information about the town at the time and includes some transcriptions of newspaper articles from the period. There are between 30 and 40 deeds for the town, which would allow for a detailed understanding of the development of the town in terms of change and continuity in the settlement. There are also documents relating to specific monuments and functions in the town including the gas works, the market company, some of the inns and individual businesses.

2.0 STANDING BUILDINGS

There are a large number of buildings in the settlement dating from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries which all contribute to an understanding of the nature / development of the settlement. There are 33 listed buildings for Thrapston, of which 27 are of 18th or 19th century date, there are no 20th century listed buildings. The Church of St James is the only listed grade 2* building and is of particular interest for the period as a large part of it was re-built in the 19th century. Other significant listed buildings for the period include the surviving part of the workhouse and the Corn Exchange building, both of which have been converted to offices. The most significant unlisted building in the town is the Smith and Grace Nene Side Iron Works structure on Denford Road. This complex is certainly of local importance in terms of the economic contribution it made to the town of Thrapston

and was clearly a major factor in the limited amount of outward expansion in the town in the late 19th century.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL

The potential for below ground archaeological investigation for Thrapston in the period following 1750 is limited as the majority of the area is built up. There may be potential for investigation of the area in close proximity to the river where a number of presumably industrial structures are shown on maps, but have since been demolished. The primary objective would be to determine what these buildings were in use for, when they were erected and whether they related to the transportation network of the river.

Thrapston's role as a market and commercial town of small size appears to have continued from the medieval period through to the early 20th century. Archaeological investigation in the medieval town should also record land use through to the 20th century in order to determine whether this was actually the case. Were buildings consistently of a size / status to reflect the use of the settlement as a town throughout the entire period? Was there an industrial base in the town that has not been determined by documentary sources? Were there a large number of commercial structures in the town throughout the entire period?

4.0 TOPOGRAPHY

The plan form of the settlement remains virtually intact. But the standing structures have a mixed survival rate. The central area of the town survives well with the vast majority of buildings shown on the map 1900 remaining in existence today. This area retains a distinctive market town appearance with a mixed range of buildings of both brick and stone and a large number of commercial structures including public houses, shops and the Corn Exchange as well as some of the high quality housing. The other area which currently survives well is the 'industrial' area to the south of the town with the Nene Side Iron Works and associated 19th century housing - this may change depending on the decisions made about the future of the remaining buildings for the iron works. The area to the west of the town leading down to the River Nene has a poor rate of survival with a large number of buildings having been demolished - some of this area is currently standing empty, but a large section has been built on. The plan form of the settlement remains largely intact, even where individual buildings have been demolished, and the basic plan form has been retained. Modern development has been limited to relatively small sections around the periphery of the town and has not infringed on the early plan form of the settlement. Although the lack of an Ordnance Survey map for the period between 1900 and 1950 for the town has hindered the methodology of the project, it would appear that development in this period was far more limited than in other settlements and that very little is likely to have been lost.

III RESEARCH AGENDA

1.0 PRE MEDIEVAL

Middle and late Saxon origins of manor.

2.0 MEDIEVAL & POST MEDIEVAL

Early medieval replacement of manor by castle.

The dating of the development of the market, whether both it and the castle were a single development and how the chronology related to the acquisition of the manor by the de Veer family.

How was the market place inserted into the pre-existing settlement plan.

The dating and nature of the infilling of the market.

What specific commerce and industries underpinned the medieval economy of the town.

The location of Gales manor.

The location of the Leper Hospital.

The relationship between the development of the town at Thrapston and other estates of the lords of the de Veer manor in the medieval period.

The development of the Hermitage and its relationship to the bridge and road, in the context of such hermitage associations elsewhere in the county.

The place of the castle within the countywide development of castles and their association with both major road networks and urban development.

3.0 INDUSTRIAL

Smith and Grace works

The Smith and Grace Pulley Works was the main form of industrial development in Thrapston. A better understanding needs to be established as to the link between the works and the settlement with particular reference to the terraced housing immediately to the north of the works.

The site is also important in national terms as a producer of the innovative screw boss pulley and V-drive belt in the late 19th century. The nature, layout and development of the site need to be fully understood with particular reference to the use of innovative technology; a detailed survey is required on the site.

Continuation of the settlement from medieval to modern periods

There is the need to determine whether the level of continuity in relation to urban functions in Thrapston, as perceived through documentary analysis, is reflected in the archaeological record. A precise understanding of the elements of continuity and change in the settlement are required in order

to determine why Thrapston did not develop into a larger market or industrial town in the period following 1750.

Impact of the river

Thrapston lies in close proximity to the River Nene and utilised the river as both a source of power (for the mill in the town) and as a communication system. The wharf area to the west of the settlement is crucial in determining what the relationship was between the town and the river. Were the buildings in the wharf area utilised for industrial production or were they used as warehousing /storage for goods coming into the town? What was the nature of the goods being brought into the town via the river?

IV STRATEGY

The assessment of the management and conservation priorities within the Extensive Urban Survey have been based around an assessment of levels of importance previously applied elsewhere in the county for management purposes. The grading falls into six categories:

Scheduled: nationally important remains that have statutory protection.

Unscheduled national importance: in some cases statutory protection is suggested while in others recording action may prove to be the appropriate response to threats.

County importance: Where significant archaeology is known or where it is likely but confirmation is required. Normally recording rather than preservation would be the appropriate mitigation strategy.

Historic buildings: Buildings known or which have the potential to contain significant pre 19th century structural remains.

Local importance: where archaeology may survive but where, on present evidence investigation does not appear appropriate.

Destroyed: where the archaeology has been wholly destroyed.

White Land: Archaeology not assessed for his report.

In addition in some cases recommendations have been made for the designation of new or the extension of existing Conservation Areas and for the listing of specific buildings.

This approach has not been possible for the industrial period, as further work on the period is needed at a county, regional and national level before a definitive assessment can be made. The town has been divided up into zones and priorities for additional research, recording and conservation measures have been assigned to each individual area.

1.0 EXISTING DESIGNATIONS

1.1 Listed Buildings

There are 33 listed buildings in Thrapston.

1.2 Scheduled Ancient Monuments

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the immediate vicinity of Thrapston.

1.3 Conservation Areas

There is a conservation area for the historic core of the town. This was designated in June 1996.

2.0 MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

2.1 SAXON MEDIEVAL & POST MEDIEVAL

2.1.1 Evaluation & Recording

On present evidence the archaeology of the whole area of the medieval and post medieval town is considered likely to be of county importance. The need for evaluation should be considered on any developments of one house or larger within the likely medieval area. All proposals on the castle and manor sites and their immediate environs should be assessed given the confirmed existence of significant archaeological remains and clearly defined research objectives. There is at present no location in the town where existing information would indicate an overriding need for preservation of archaeological remains in situ. The collection of stratified and unstratified artefacts, which may indicate the extent of the town at various dates and enable the identification of the trades and industries practised in the medieval and post medieval town should be a priority for such work. If well preserved remains are revealed then it may be appropriate to conduct more detailed investigation if it is likely to provide a good sample as to the character of urban development in the town.

All historic buildings identified within the report as having a potential for post medieval or earlier remains should be assessed in the field where they are subject to proposals for significant alteration or demolition. Any of these buildings may be shown to require evaluation through PPG15 to determine whether they contain remains which might contribute significantly to the understanding of the character and development of the post medieval or medieval town.

2.1.2 Conservation

There are no scheduled ancient monuments and none of the monuments in the town would appear to justify scheduling on present evidence. Neither are there any significant setting issues with regard to archaeological monuments.

There are a number of listed buildings. There are no recommendations for further listing.

There is no designated conservation area. The archaeological resource is of minimal visual value and, given the degree to which the most important monuments have been affected by modern development, it seems unlikely that definition of conservation area boundaries on archaeological grounds would provide significant protection to surviving buried remains. The plan form of the medieval town was very simple and has been somewhat altered by post medieval and modern changes, such as the infilling of the market place and the redevelopment of the castle and manor. There would not appear to be a high priority for the conservation of the early plan form, other than the maintenance of the frontages which are largely intact when compared to the 1782 map.

2.2 INDUSTRIAL

The main priority for Thrapston is to determine the level of continuity for the social and economic role of the town from the medieval period to the 20th century. It is important to preserve as much as possible of the built fabric of the town. The designated conservation area should preserve the historic core of the town and consideration should be given to an extending the area to include the 19th century development to the south of the town, incorporating Smith and Grace works and associated housing.

2.2.1 Zone 1 - Core area of the town

The core area of the town incorporates the majority of the commercial area of the town with a large

number of shops, public houses, hotels and other commercial buildings. The Conservation Area covers the majority of the core and there are a number of listed buildings in the central location. Therefore the upstanding fabric of the area is well protected. Archaeological excavations for the medieval and post-medieval periods in the town should also look at remains of the industrial period to determine levels of continuity and change in the settlement.

2.2.2 Zone 2 - 19th century mixed development

There are a number of separate areas within this zone which all have potential for archaeological work.

The area around the river has largely been destroyed in terms of built evidence, but archaeological excavation could provide valuable information about the nature of the wharf area and the importance of the river to the town of Thrapston. The bridge over the river is a listed structure and should be protected.

The Smith and Grace works to the south of the town should be preserved if at all possible. There have been proposals for extending the conservation area to cover this site, but these have been rejected. The site has been sold for re-development, but the retention of the site remains a preferred option. If any part of the complex is recommended for demolition or large-scale change the structure should be recorded prior to any work being carried out. The associated housing to the north of the works should be preserved if the site is to remain or work should be carried out to analyse their relationship with the industrial complex if the latter is to be demolished.

2.2.3 Area 3 - 20th century housing

The area comprises primarily 20th century houses, some of which were built between 1900 and 1950. There are no recommendations for this area.

2.2.4 Area 4 - 19th and 20th century housing

The area comprises 19th and 20th century houses that are an extension of the core area of the town to the east. There are no recommendations for this area.

2.2.5 Area 5 - 20th century mixed zone

The 20th century mixed zone to the south of the town comprises a number of houses as well as some earlier industrial buildings. There are no recommendations for the houses, but Thrapston Mill (which has been demolished) should be subject to archaeological investigation to determine the importance of the River Nene in the county and its use as a water source and transport network.

ABBREVIATIONS

BL	British Library
BNFAS	Bulletin of the Northamptonshire Federation of Archaeological Societies
Bridges Notes	John Bridges original notes for his History, from circa 1720, in Bodleian Library.
NRL	Northampton Reference Library, Local Studies Collection.
NRO	Northamptonshire Record Office
RCHME	Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England
SMR	Sites & Monuments Record
VCH	Victoria County History
VCH Notes	Notes compiled by the VCH in the early 20 th century, now in NRO.

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