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FORMER PETROL FILLING STATION,
ALBION STREET, SPALDING:

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK TOP STUDY



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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK TOP STUDY**

Report prepared for Sadd Estates on behalf of the Swan Motor Company Ltd.
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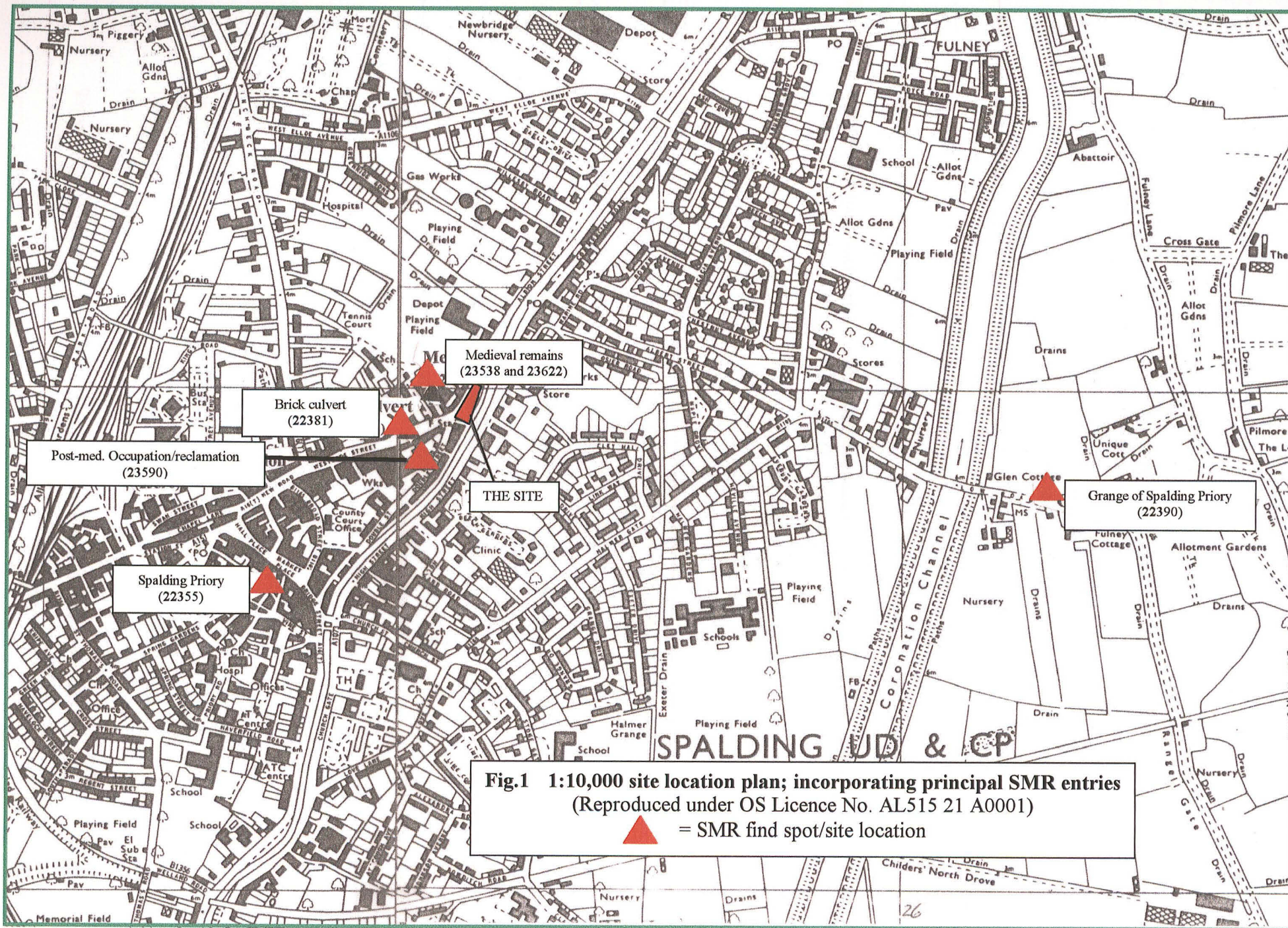
Summary

- * *This archaeological assessment has been prepared for Sadd Estates, who act on behalf of the Swan Motor Co. Ltd. in respect of a proposed residential development on the site of a former petrol filling station at Albion Street, Spalding, Lincolnshire*

- * *It has been prepared to fulfil a planning requirement issued by South Holland District Council, and it will form the basis for a decision making process that will seek to address the needs of the developer, whilst ensuring that archaeological resources are not needlessly destroyed as a result of redeveloping the site*

- * *The results of this report suggest that the archaeological potential of the site is moderate to moderately high, but it also suggests that a significant proportion of the archaeological resource will already have been destroyed as a result of developments during the 19th and 20th centuries*

- * *It is suggested that a protracted scheme of archaeological investigation may not be appropriate, given the scale of destruction that has resulted from past developments: however, it is a conclusion of this report that a relatively low-level investigation involving a selective watching brief and/or auger survey may be an appropriate means of recovering information in advance of/during the intended development.*



1.0 Introduction

This desk-based study was commissioned by Sadd Estates on behalf of the Swan Motor Company Ltd. Its purpose is to assess the overall archaeological potential of a redevelopment site, without the use of intrusive fieldwork, and to assess the potential impacts which may be posed by redevelopment of the former petrol filling station at Albion Street, Spalding. The report will assist South Holland District Council with its decision-making in relation to archaeological matters, and will likewise inform the client of any archaeological constraints which may be of relevance to the application.

The report was researched and prepared by Colin Palmer-Brown of Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) (hereafter PCA) in September 2000.

2.0 Location and description

Spalding is the principal town within the administrative district of South Holland, and is approximately 19km south-south-west of Boston, 10km north of Crowland.

The site is a redundant petrol filling station that lies close to the town centre on the west bank of the River Welland (Fig. 1). It fronts Albion Street, and the central national grid reference is TF 2513 2294.

The land comprises a sub-rectangular unit of approximately 1550m². To its north lie terraced houses of 19th century construction, and to its south lie commercial properties. On the west side of Albion Street in the vicinity of the current site is further terraced housing, incorporating a recent (sympathetic) residential development.

The entire ground surface within the site area is obscured by buildings, tarmac and concrete:

offices, workshops and car washes on the east side

a south-central covered forecourt incorporating four petrol/diesel pumps

various (deep) sumps and drains.

3.0 Geology and topography

The town lies within the silt fenlands of south Lincolnshire, where the upper soil sequence is dominated by deposits of marine alluvium. Silts and fine sands proliferate on lands to the north, west and south of the town; to the east is a slightly different series, consisting of deep stoneless clays and silty soils that are calcareous in places. Underlying the various marine silts, the older geological formation consists of gravel (Soil Survey Sheet No. 4).

Traversing the upper geological formations are creeks, roddons and rivers. The (canalised) River Welland bisects the town from north-east to south-west. The

surrounding Fenland, which lies at an altitude approximately 4.0 - 5.0m OD is characterised by a high density of canalised natural water courses and Fenland drains; including the 'New River', which separates from the Welland on the south side of the town.

4.0 Planning background

Full planning consent is sought from South Holland District Council for the demolition of existing structures and construction of a residential development (Ref. H16/1547/00). Prior to the determination of this application, the local planning authority, acting on the advice of Lincolnshire County Council Built Environment Team, has requested the undertaking of a detailed archaeological assessment to determine the overall archaeological potential of the site, without the use of intrusive techniques. This approach is consistent with the advice set out in *Archaeology and Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16*, 1990.

5.0 Objectives and methods

The purpose of this report is to identify and assess archaeological remains which may be sensitive to construction works associated with the proposed redevelopment and, if necessary, to suggest further methods by which the site may be evaluated in advance of construction works.

The report is based on information that has been derived from a variety of sources:-

- The County Sites and Monuments Record for Lincolnshire (SMR)

- Records held at the Lincolnshire Archives Office

- Books and journals held at the Local Studies Library, Lincoln

- Books and records held at Spalding Library

- Information supplied by the client

- Published and unpublished accounts

- A detailed site inspection to verify conditions

An aerial photographic cover search was not initiated on this occasion. Cartographic and other sources show that the site itself and its immediate environment has been developed throughout the whole of the modern era, rendering this approach of little practical value.

6.0 General archaeological and historical background

Spalding will be described and discussed with reference to its origins and development in the Saxon and medieval periods. Earlier periods (ie prehistoric and Romano-British) will be summarily described.

The prehistoric Fenland is not easily defined and, for long periods, was either under water or was probably unsuited to sustained human occupation. Salt procurement and processing sites appear along the western fen edge during the pre-Roman Iron Age (Simmons 1993), and this trend continues and intensifies in the succeeding Roman period. Unfortunately, the work of the Fenland Survey did not extend as far south as Spalding (Lane 1993), although chance discoveries and development-led archaeology continues to identify prehistoric salt workings of the pre-Roman era, with some of these sites lying close to Spalding (J Rackham, *pers. com.*).

It is no surprise that exploitation and occupation of the Fenland continued throughout the Romano-British period, with an apparent settlement explosion taking place during much of the 2nd century AD, when many of the existing settlements expanded and new ones emerged (Hallam 1970). Salt production continued to be of importance, and the number of coins recovered from settlement sites would appear to confirm that life in the Fenland was operating firmly within the imperial monetary system. It has been argued that many fishing and trading centres were established on the Wash creeks, including Spalding itself which, in Roman times, was possibly a bridge point on an estuary, joined to a road on the fen edge at Baston and by canal and river to Crowland (*ibid*). Romano-British finds have been recovered at Spalding (usually at depth from the modern ground surface (eg Spalding Grammar School)).

Historical sources suggest that Spalding emerged as a Royal Estate Centre, perhaps in the 7th or 8th century AD (the middle Saxon period). At this time, there was no well-defined coastline around the Wash, and the contemporary coastline probably extended almost as far as Spalding itself (Sawyer 1998, 12) which, in this context, must be examined as a coastal settlement.

The name Spalding possibly derives from *Spalda*, the Tribal Hidage group that may also have been responsible for the naming of Spaldwick, Huntingdonshire, Spalford, Nottinghamshire and both Spaldington and Spalding Moor in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Whether or not Early and Middle Saxon pottery finds recovered from lands west of Spalding can be taken as direct evidence for associating the *Spalda* with Spalding, as suggested by Sawyer (*ibid.*, 49), would seem doubtful, especially since pottery of this date appears not to have been recovered from Spalding itself.

Early Monastic cells within the region (eg Crowland and Ely) were established in the late 7th century, although it was not until the 10th century revival that monasteries began to dominate the Fenland environment, with the recreation of existing cells and the establishment of new ones such as Thorney. The Benedictine priory at Spalding has been traditionally dated on the basis of a charter of 1051 which states that Thorold of Bucknall granted land at Spalding to Crowland Abbey in order that they could found a new cell there. This view has been challenged in recent times (Sumner 1988, 81), with evidence that the foundation was not before the late 11th century (ie post-Conquest).

Spalding occupied a commanding position within the northern Fenland, and possession of the manor allowed the French monks to 'establish' a priory that could challenge the authority of its older ecclesiastical neighbours. The Priory's dominance in the wapentake of Elloe was extended in 1111 when Picot, son of Colswain, granted the monks of Spalding two parts of the tithes in Sutton and Lutton in the eastern part of the wapentake, and this land was greatly extended in the 12th century as a result of land reclamation (*ibid.*, 88). The Priory apparently thrived following the death of Henry I and the period of political uncertainty that followed, and it continued to receive gifts of churches and land following the accession of Henry II.

There was considerable rivalry between Spalding Priory and nearby Crowland Abbey; largely over access to pasture.

Archaeologically, the Priory is not well represented, despite an abundance of documentation. Its precinct was located on the west bank of the Welland, close to the medieval market place, and its proximity is indicated by several of the street names in that area of the town (eg Abbey Passage, Priory Road), and also on early maps of the town (Abbey Yard on John Grundy's map of Spalding, 1732 - see below).

In the Middle Ages Spalding developed into a small town and port (Symonds 1988). The medieval town grew up to the north-east of the Priory, on the triangle of land bounded by the Welland, the Westlode and the circle wall of the Priory itself. This is best illustrated in Grundy's plan of 1732 (see Section 7.1).

Although the Welland is a natural river that enters the sea at Fosdyke, the Westlode (now Westlode Street) was an artificial channel of uncertain, but 'ancient', date that was designed to drain the waters of the fens west of Spalding, as well as being the principal transport route linking Spalding with Bourne (Wright 1973, 2). It has (possibly correctly) been attributed to Roman engineering (Gooch 1940, 386), although this appears not to have been proven by archaeological means. Vessels using the Westlode utilised a natural creek that allowed landing via the Gore (the triangular area of land known as the Sheep Market in recent times, north of the Priory, outside the main gate). The Westlode emptied its surplus water through sluice doors into the River Welland, and also (?later) via a culvert located beneath the bed of the river near the Albert Bridge. The position of the sluice is clearly depicted on 18th and 19th century maps of the area (below). Following the erection of steam pumps at Pode Hole in 1824, the significance of the Westlode as a drainage channel diminished: silt dredged from the Welland was used to fill the channel at a cost of 1s per load. The route of the former channel is now preserved as Westlode Street, which joins Albion Street at the south-west end of the current site.

The town was a thriving sea port and market centre for much of the medieval period, and at the time of the Norman Conquest, Spalding was one of only five recorded markets in Lincolnshire: the others being Kirton in Lindsey, Louth, Barton and Partney. The value of the Spalding market, which took place on Sundays, was 40s per annum (Gooch 1940), and the medieval Market Place was in its present position, to the east of the Priory precinct.

Wool and woad were exported to Flanders in return for wine and luxuries that were destined for the monasteries at Crowland, Deeping, Stamford and Spalding. The Welland was in effect the only direct means by which communications could be maintained with the outside world, and all imports and exports to and from Crowland had no alternative but to pass through Spalding.

The medieval town occupied only a small area in the eastern half of the parish, and several crosses far out in the fens marked the boundaries that were claimed by the priors. These crosses have now disappeared, excluding part of St Guthlac's Cross at Brotherhouse Bar (TF 260 149) which marked the boundary with Crowland.

Following the dissolution, the manor of 'Spalding with its members' was, at various times, held by the crown, the Duchy of Lancaster and the Buccleuch family, passing in the latter part of the 18th century to Sir Sampson Gideon: his family sold the greater portion of their estates at various times after 1831 (Wright 1973, 2).

The commercial significance of the town continued following the Agricultural Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries. Market towns such as Spalding, Pinchbeck, Swineshead and Kirton were major outlets for agricultural produce. It was after 1765 that the parishes in Kesteven and Holland agreed to enclose and drain their fenlands (Beastall 1978), and in 1781 a link between Bourne and Spalding was established following the scouring of the Glen and Bourne Eau. Throughout the latter part of the 18th century, much of the grain that was being produced across the recently drained fenlands was sent through Spalding and Boston for shipment to London.

In the late 1970's and early 1980's, Albion Street featured in the local press following deep sewerage excavations by Anglian Water. These works, which took place in 1977 resulted in the loss of some five Victorian dwellings: some of which were listed buildings (source: Spalding Library, press cuttings).

7.0 Archaeological potential

Against the backdrop that is outlined above, there is a body of information that relates more specifically to the site of proposed redevelopment. This will be examined in greater detail in the sections that follow.

7.1 Cartographic information held at the Lincolnshire Archives Office

The earliest plan of Spalding was prepared in 1732 by John Grundy, a mathematics teacher of the Grammar School. This is a particularly useful document, as it is specific to the town centre and as such contains a considerable amount of detail, and includes the site of proposed redevelopment (see Fig. 2).

The map shows that many of the buildings in the early 18th century were concentrated around the Market Place and Bridge Street axis, to the east of the former Priory precinct. There are further concentrations on both sides of Double Street and High Street, which extended north-east from the High Bridge along the banks of the

Welland. Buildings are also concentrated along the north bank of the Westlode junction, extending onto the north-west side of the area that became Albion Street.

The port was centred on Double Street. This was the only street on the river banks with houses flanking both sides (hence the name): there are no buildings depicted on the west bank of the Welland on the 1732 map, and this includes what became the east side of Albion Street and the site of investigation. This could indicate land reclamation along the west bank of the river, where the gardens to buildings fronting the east side of Double Street appear to be elongated, as if taking in land that was formerly river or tidal mud flats.

Another feature of relevance to the current study (also depicted on the 1732 map) is the sub-rectangular inlet or quay that extends north-eastwards from the north bank of the Westlode, close to the confluence with the Welland. This feature is not named on the map, but appears to represent a ?harbour that was presumably used by watercraft prior to entry to, or following exit from, the River Welland. One assumes this feature either to have been purposefully excavated, or possibly to reflect the original course of the Welland, if it is accepted that land reclamation has taken place on the west bank of the river. This channel would appear to fall directly within the site of proposed redevelopment, and probably occupied most of its south-east side.

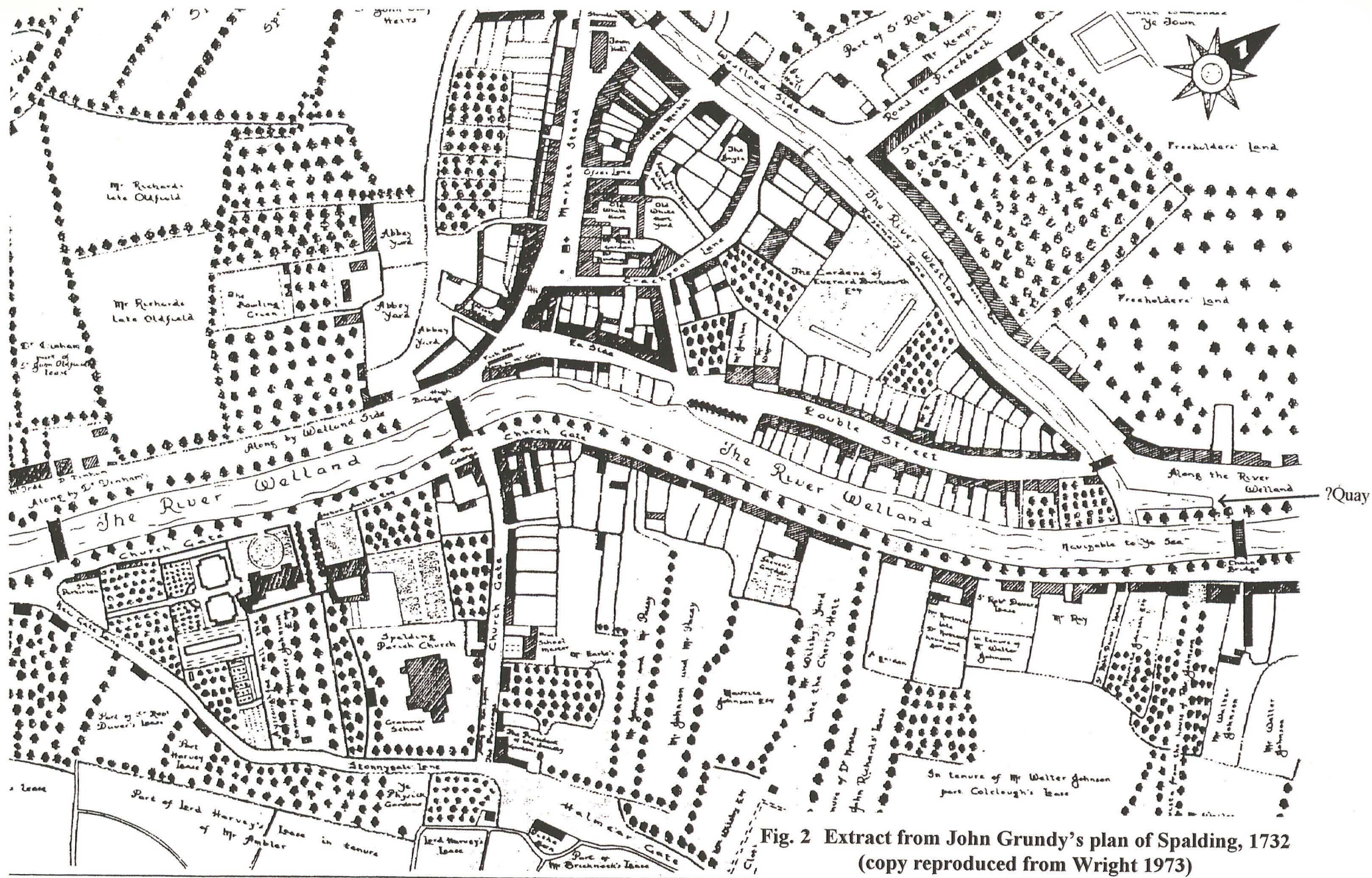
Turning to a plan showing part of the parish of Spalding after 1819 (Lincs. Archives reference HD/1/8), major changes can be reviewed for the intervening 87 years - see Fig. 3. The River Westlode has disappeared, being replaced by New Road (later, Westlode Street). A culverted drain was retained beneath the road, and a sluice is indicated at the point where the River Westlode met the Welland on the 1888 Ordnance Survey, as is a pump a short distance to the north-east. The 1819 plan shows that the water channel that extended north-eastwards from the north bank of the Westlode (?harbour) was by this time backfilled, and the site of investigation was then occupied by buildings for the first time. It is worth noting that Chain Bridge, which was previously a lifting bridge that allowed the passage of sea-going (masted) vessels is now referenced as Old Chain Bridge. Buildings situated on the south-east side of Double Street appear to have been extended over the top of what is taken to be reclaimed land (the reclamation occurring some time prior to 1732). Albion Street is not yet named, although it is named on the 1888 Ordnance Survey (see below).

An undated map was reviewed at the Lincolnshire Archives Office (Ref. Misc.Dep 23). A traced section of this has been included (Fig. 4), as it would appear to pre-date the 1819 map; on the basis that Chain Bridge was not then 'Old' Chain Bridge. Again, the area of interest is clearly shown; occupied by buildings at this time, although the south-east range that is visible on the 1819 map (the south-east side of what became Albion Street) is not here evident; again suggesting a slightly earlier date for the work.

The 1888 Ordnance Survey (Fig. 5) provides a much clearer image, and the broad building plan over the proposed redevelopment site appears to respect the earlier alignments (inevitably, some of the old structures will have been modified, and there appear to be extensions in some areas). Albion Street is now named, and the north-east corner of the site is occupied by a large building, the Aerated Water Works, adjacent to the Welland. An interconnected range of buildings extending to the south and west

of this may also have been for industrial purposes, although smaller buildings fronting Albion Street and the Albion Street/Westlode Street junction appear to be terraced houses. The centre of the site was probably a yard, within which a circular feature is depicted on the south-west side: possibly a pond, overlying the former water channel, that may have respected a former course of the Welland.

The 1906 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 6) is less detailed, but appears to respect the configuration described above: moderately substantial (?industrial) buildings fronting the Welland, with terraced houses fronting Albion Street. The sluice at the exit formed by the culverted Westlode is still evident at this time.



Scale of Feet

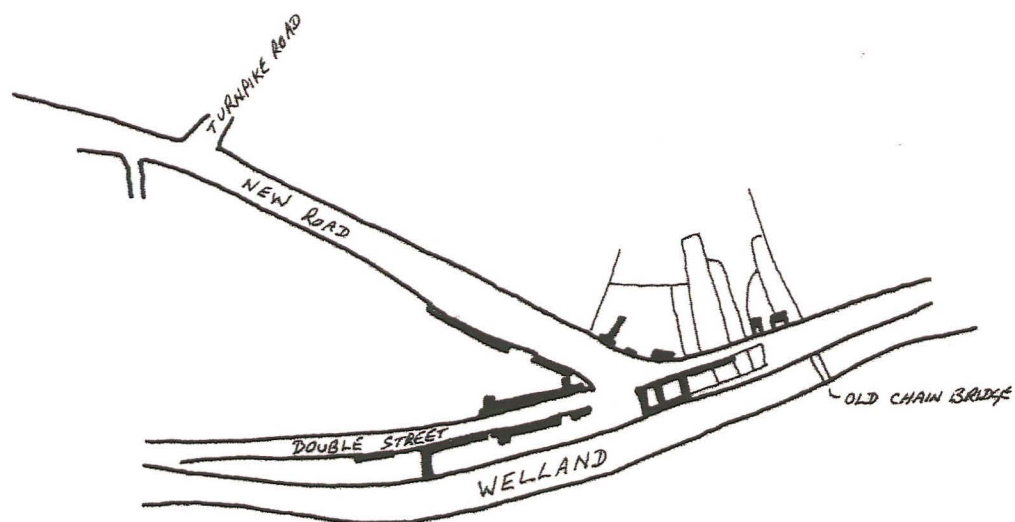


Fig.3: Plan of part of the parish of Spalding after 1819
(tracing, Lincs. Archives ref. HD/1/8)

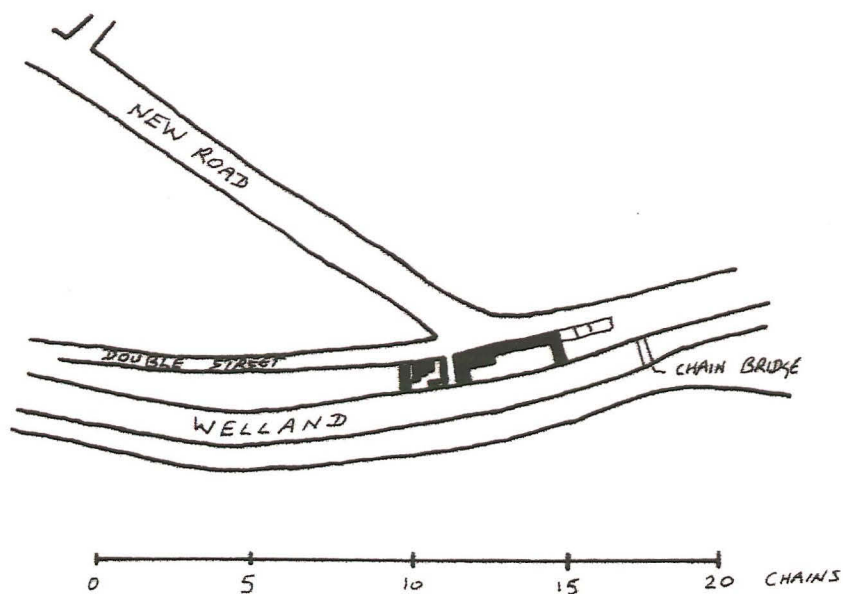


Fig.4: The town of Spalding
(tracing, Lincs. Archives ref. Misc. Dep. 23)

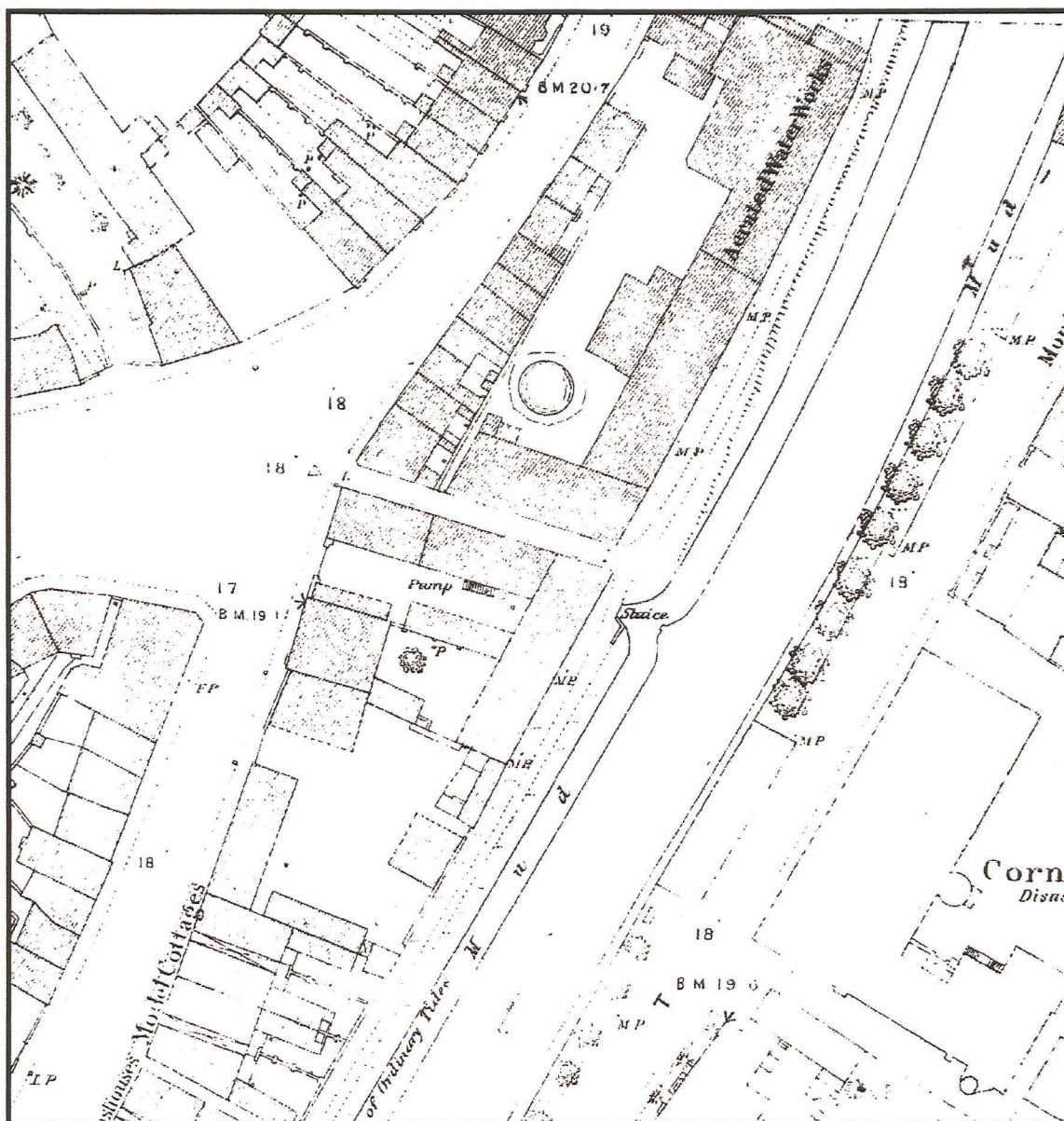


Fig.5: Extract, Ordnance Survey 1888 (1/500)

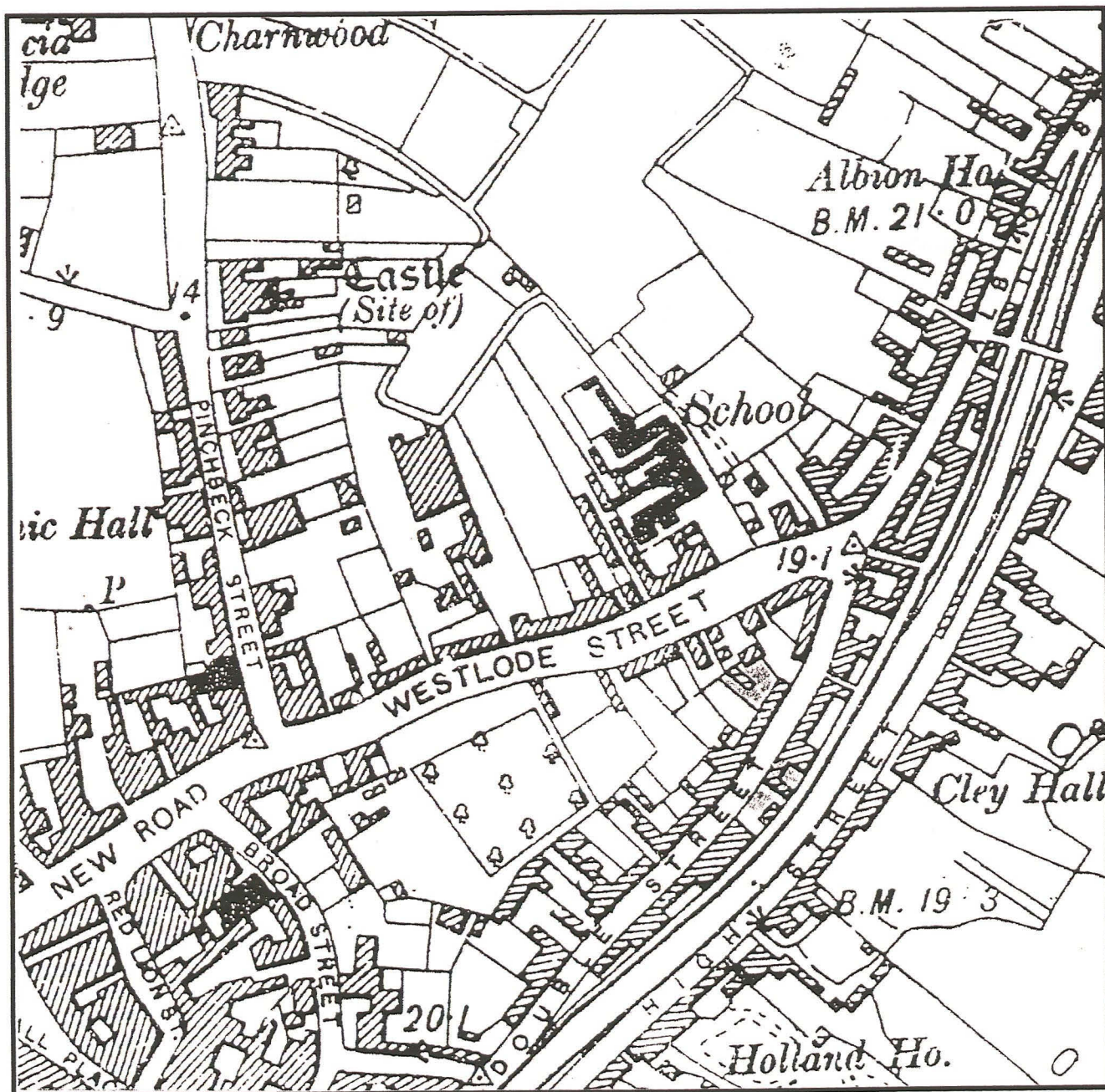


Fig.6: Extract, 1906 Ordnance Survey (6 inches = 1 mile)

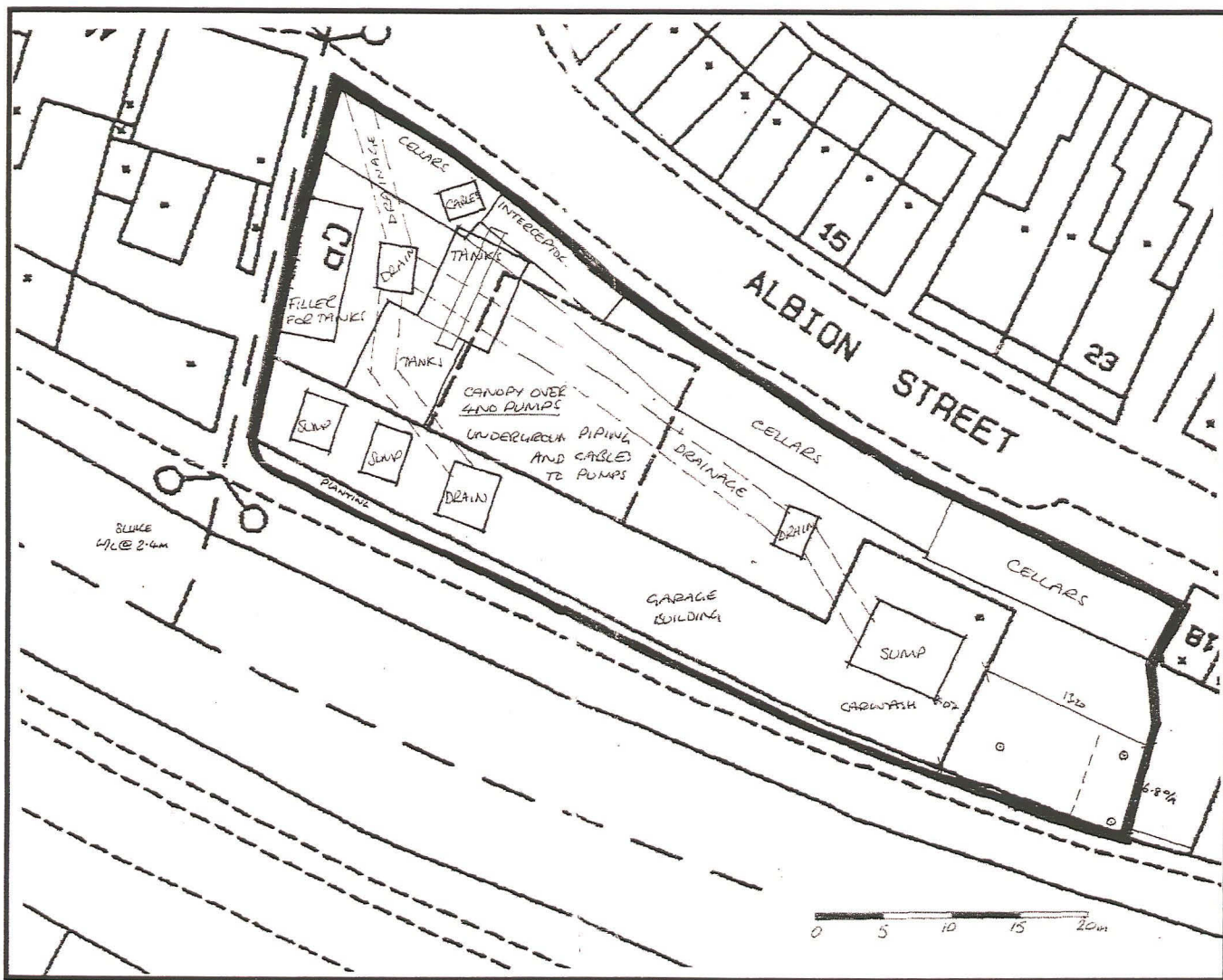


Fig.7: Details of existing structures/impacts

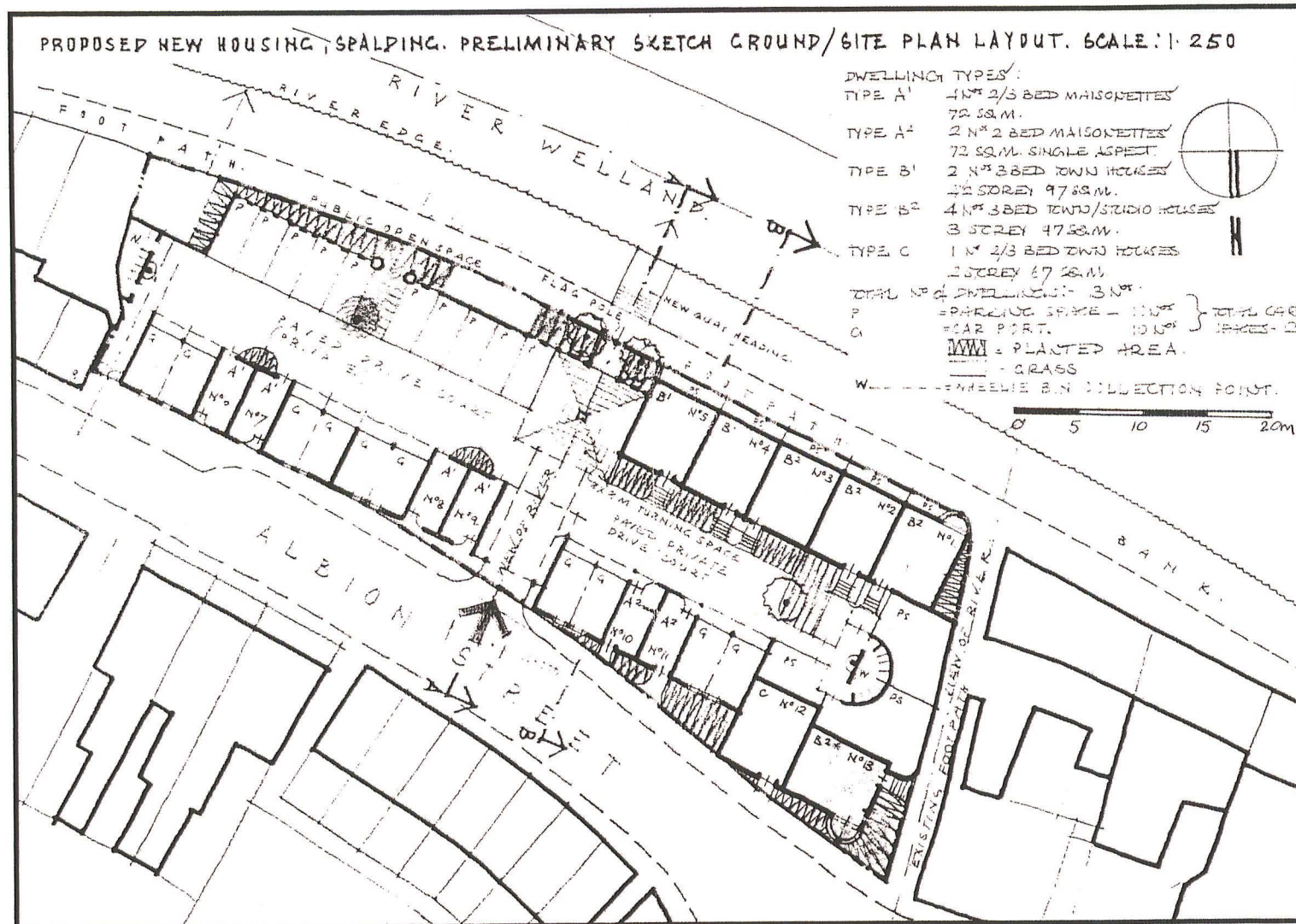


Fig.8: Proposed development footprint

7.2 The County Sites and Monuments Record

Only five records of direct or indirect relevance to the proposed scheme are incorporated as part of the SMR (locations indicated on Fig. 1). Some of these references have been variously described:-

SMR Ref.	NGR	Description
LI22355	No exact provenance	Priory of St Mary, Spalding
LI22390	TF26302280	Grange of Spalding Priory; brick medieval building, now gone
LI22381	TF25102290	Post-medieval brick culvert in Westlode Street (former channel of the River Westlode, which used to run down the centre of the street
LI23538	TF25082299	Archaeological evaluation; former school site, Westlode Street (HTL 1992). Considerable destruction from former school buildings. Fluvial and dumped deposits containing 10th - 14th century pottery, as well as cut features containing 10th - 12th century pottery.
LI23590	TF25052287	Archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to Double Street: identified a pit and a drainage ditch of 16th - 17th century date, probably representing the earliest activity on the site. Evidence also for 18th and 19th century occupation; numerous rubbish pits and rapid topsoil build (?ground raising).

7.3 General considerations

In the light of information that has been described above, it is possible to present a generalised, though incomplete, historical backdrop for the site of proposed redevelopment, before consideration is made of the impacts that have taken place in recent times, and which will have affected the quality and survival of any archaeological resources.

For the prehistoric and Romano-British periods, it is not known whether the site was being exploited at this time. It is possible that this entire area fell within a previous course of the River Welland, as there is some evidence of land reclamation prior to the early part of the 18th century. If deposits of prehistoric or Roman date do survive, then these will be at some depth from the modern ground surface: sealed beneath natural accumulations of silt/alluvium and beneath reclamation deposits of more recent date.

The site is located on the fringe of what became the medieval settlement, although its position at the confluence of the Westlode and the Welland cannot be ignored. No date

has been established for the quay on the north bank of the Westlode that features on the 1732 map, and the significance of this feature has not been determined. Its plan would suggest that it was some form of harbour, although historical sources reference Double Street as being at the heart of the traditional port. It could have been associated with trans-shipment between sea going and inland vessels using the two rivers.

The cartographic sources that are available tell us relatively little about this area of the town prior to 1732. Buildings are depicted on what became the west side of Albion Street, and these are quite densely clustered, and they continue north-east of the charted area.

At some time between 1732 and 1819, the quay that is depicted on Grundy's map was filled in, probably when the Westlode was filled with silts from the Welland (one assumes that there must have been an intervening period between backfilling and subsequent building). The site was then occupied by a series of buildings and building alterations, including the Aerated Water Works that is depicted on the 1888 Ordnance Survey.

A date for the construction of the existing garage buildings has not been determined with confidence. These buildings lack any definable style, except that they resemble many of the post-war poorly planned structures of their age (render and paint does not assist this process). The owners of the former garage, the Swan Motor Company Ltd. believe that the buildings were erected in the 1950's.

8.0 Impacts to archaeological resources

If the site does contain important archaeological remains, then these have, without doubt, suffered quite substantially as a result of developments in the late post-medieval and earlier modern periods.

Prior to the erection of existing structures, there has been several phases of development, the earliest of these taking place at some time prior to 1819 following the filling of the Westlode and the quay depicted on the 1732 map. By 1888 terraced houses occupied the Albion Street frontage, and these are presumed to have survived until the present structures were erected, probably in the 1950's. Unverified information supplied by the Swan Motor Company Ltd. suggest that these dwellings were furnished with cellars (see Fig. 7). These sub-structures would have removed archaeological deposits in the frontage area to depths of approximately 2.0m. Buildings on the east side of the site (eg the Aerated Water Works) will also have compromised earlier archaeological deposits in this area.

Further impacts will have taken place when the petrol filling station/garage services was erected in the mid-20th century. Significant areas within the central part of the site that were not necessarily affected by Victorian developments were excavated for the insertion of storage tanks and soakaways, and some specific information has been provided by the client as follows:-

Interceptor tanks on frontage: installed 4 - 5 years ago, 2.4m deep+

Large storage tanks: dip rods are 3.0m long: beneath the base of the tanks there is an encasement resting over a sand bed, suggesting disturbance to depths 3.5m+ from modern ground surface.

Sumps: depths vary between 1.0m and 1.2m + construction trenches.

Drains: invert (base of) drains 1.0m - 2.0m beneath modern ground surface.

In addition to the above, there will be impacts from stanchion trenches for the forecourt canopy and for the petrol pumps themselves. The author noted during an inspection of the site that there are rows of manholes, particularly on the south side, and these also will have impacted significantly on any upper archaeological deposits. There will also be sewers and drains connecting with the central sewer on Albion Street.

9.0 Conclusions

It is variously concluded that the archaeological potential of the site is moderate to moderately high, but that this potential must have been significantly compromised as a result of developments in the 19th century and more drastic developments in the mid-20th century.

The site lies at the confluence of the Westlode and the Welland, north of the traditional port. However, it incorporates within its boundaries a substantial feature that is of uncertain origin, but was still in existence in 1732. This feature, which may have been a quay, was presumably some form of holding point or possibly a harbour for vessels entering or exiting the River Welland (other interpretations are of course possible: there must have been boat building and boat maintenance areas, for example). The channel would appear to underlie a significant part of the current site: the whole of its eastern side in fact, with the western (frontage) area lying immediately outside. What forms of activity were taking place in this area during the medieval and earlier post-medieval periods is uncertain, although evidence for land reclamation has been cited for areas to the south of the current development, and it is quite possible that the western part of the current site was raised at some time to offset the effects of flooding.

Some direct archaeological evidence for land reclamation has in fact been cited towards the north end of Double Street, where an evaluation in 1996 identified an apparent rapid build up of deposits (Archaeological Project Services 1996). Residual pottery of 15th century date was recovered during this investigation.

Some form of activity to the north-west of the site during high medieval period was suggested by the results of an evaluation by Heritage Lincolnshire in 1992 at a former school on Westlode Street. This site had been significantly damaged as a result of early modern development, but cut features containing 12th century (and residual 10th

century) pottery were identified, as were ground raising deposits containing a mixture of late Saxon and medieval pottery (HTL 1992).

10.0 Mitigation

Although the site is located within an area of the town that is here considered to be of moderate to moderately high archaeological potential, the research that has taken place during the compilation of this report suggests that the quality of deposits which underlie the existing tarmac and concrete surfaces will have been significantly compromised as a result of late post-medieval and early modern activities. For this reason, it is suggested that the research potential of the site will be limited, and it is the opinion of the writer that a protracted scheme of archaeological intervention may not be appropriate on this occasion; archaeological results and conclusions may not match the expenditure that such a scheme would require.

The early modern building footprint for this site will, to some extent, be continued or re-established: the primary impact from the new development will be on the street and river frontages, with the intervening space being occupied by a private drive and parking facilities (see Fig. 8). It is suggested, therefore, that the impact from the new development will be far less than the impact of the last one.

If the site were to be evaluated by standard techniques such as trial trenching, then this would doubtless reveal small 'islands' of undisturbed strata, although any such investigation will be difficult and potentially hazardous, and it may prove relatively difficult to select areas of the site that have not been substantially affected by previous developments.

It may be more appropriate to apply a relatively low-level scheme of investigation that could perhaps take place during the demolition of existing structures and the construction of selective aspects of the new development. The removal of the large storage tanks may expose deep and informative soil profiles that could allow, for example, an identification and assessment to be made of the channel that is featured on the 1732 map. However, this will depend entirely on the nature of any removal scheme (if the void will be close-shored, or if the construction linings are not removed, then such an exercise will be of limited value).

A selective watching brief during deep excavations (eg sewers) may be appropriate, especially any deep excavations that are orientated east-west (to look for traces of former channel, to examine any associated occupation horizon(s), and to assess any medieval and/or post-medieval ground raising/reclamation activities)

Another possibility would be an auger survey following the removal of existing structures and sub-structures. This, in conjunction with a structured watching brief, could allow some form of reconstruction of the buried landscape (eg the edges of the channel), although it is accepted, given the extent of previous disturbance, that a practical application of this technique could prove difficult.

11.0 Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks are expressed to the commissioning body, Sadd Estates, acting on behalf of the Swan Motor Company Ltd. Thanks are also expressed to the staff at the Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record; the Lincolnshire Archives Office and Spalding Library.

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