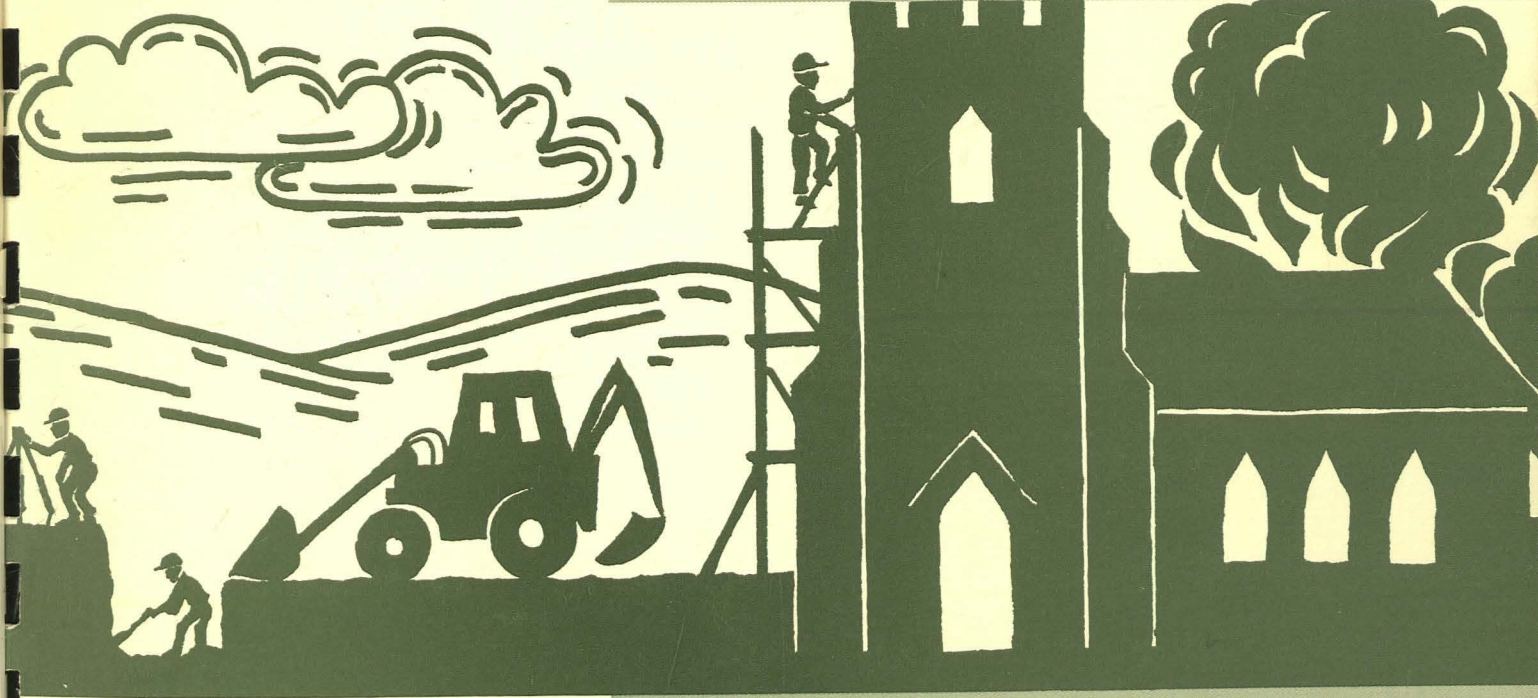




ADVANCING LINCOLNSHIRE'S PAST



**DESK-TOP EVALUATION FOR
CONGING STREET,
HORNCastle,
LINCOLNSHIRE**

Work Undertaken For
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July 1993

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Heritage Lincolnshire was commissioned by Mr B Riddle, Mr P Riddle and Mr P Goodrum to undertake a preliminary desk-top assessment of the archaeological impact of the proposed development of land between Conging Street and High Street, Horncastle. This work was undertaken in accordance with a brief set by the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council.

2. METHODS

- 2.1 Information on the archaeological sites and finds in the vicinity of Conging Street, Horncastle was obtained through research and analysis of all appropriate secondary sources available. These have included: Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record; all Ordnance Survey maps; tithe, enclosure and parish maps; historical documents; archaeological and other books and journals; and unpublished reports and archives. Additional information was kindly provided by the staff of the City and County Museum, Lincoln, and Mrs Margaret Vincent.

3. LOCATION

- 3.1 The town of Horncastle is located approximately 29km east of Lincoln in the civil parish of Horncastle, East Lindsey District, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). It is situated at the southwest corner of the Lincolnshire Wolds at a point where the Rivers Bain and Waring meet. A natural boundary provided by the main river (Bain) confines the town to north and west.
- 3.2 The investigation area is located to the northwest of both St Mary's Church and the Market Place, between the Rivers Bain and Waring. The evaluation area lies centrally within a block of developed land whose boundaries are described by Conging Street on the north, High Street on the south, North Street on the east, and St Lawrence Street on the west side (Fig. 2).

4. TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 4.1 Horncastle lies on river terrace gravels close to the 30m contour in the valley of the River Bain near the southwest corner of the Lincolnshire Wolds. Upper Jurassic clays provide the solid geology. The main soils are the Swaffham Prior series, coarse loamy brown calcareous earths, though soils of the Fladbury 2 association are developed on the river alluvium (Hodge et al. 1984, 196; 316). The area immediately to the south of the investigation site is crossed by the River Waring, which flows west to meet the River Bain at a point approximately 0.5km to the southwest. From there, the Bain flows south for approximately 10km until it joins the River Witham. Urban development forms the present land use of the town.

5. THE ARCHAEOLOGY

5.1 The information assembled is considered and discussed by period and is illustrated on Figs. 3 - 5.

5.2 Prehistoric (Figure 3)

5.2.1. Evidence of prehistoric activity at Horncastle is limited, though excavations on Bridge Street, approximately 150m west of the present investigation area, revealed pits containing Early Neolithic flints (Field 1985, 69; CCM SMR 42711). Additionally, excavations on the High Street, approximately 150m to the southwest of the present investigation area, produced a mixed flint assemblage of predominantly mesolithic date (Denham 1984, 76; CCM SMR 42691).

5.2.2 Stray finds from the area include Neolithic polished stone axes from about 200m east, and 75m to the west (CCM SMR 42222) of the present investigation site. Additionally, a Bronze Age perforated basalt hammer (CCM SMR 41867) was found south of the River Waring.

5.2.3 Although without accurate location, several chance finds of broadly contemporary date have been recorded. These consist of a third Neolithic stone axe, a stone hammer (CCM SMR) and a bronze flanged axe of Bronze Age date (Davey 1973, 58; Fig 3, no 20).

5.3 Roman (Figure 4)

5.3.1 Horncastle was identified with the Roman settlement *Bannovallum* in the 18th century by William Stukeley, who considered that the Roman name signified the fortification on the River Bane (Stukeley 1776, 30). The Roman place-name was recorded in the Ravenna Cosmography, an early 8th century AD geographical compilation of places and their names. Within the list, which follows Roman routes in apparently arbitrarily defined areas of Britain, *Bannovallum* occurs between Lincoln and Brough on Noe in Derbyshire (Rivet and Smith 1981, 208). However, the identification of *Bannovallum* with Horncastle is disputed (Robinson 1983, 26).

5.3.2 The modern town now covers two Roman sites. A late Roman military enclosure is situated on a tongue of land formed by the confluence of the Bain and Waring. To the south, on the opposite side of the River Waring, is an extensive area of Romano-British civilian occupation. The expansion of Horncastle from the 19th century onwards has yielded much of the evidence for this latter site. Artefacts and aerial photography have indicated that this area was probably occupied from the Late Iron Age through to the 4th century AD.

5.3.3 The present investigation area is located to the northeast and east of the northeast corner of the stone-walled late Roman military enclosure (CCM SMR 00044). This area of Horncastle, while having been the original centre of antiquarian interest, has had comparatively little previous archaeological examination. Small scale excavations

and watching briefs have consolidated the information on the circuit of the stone wall so that this is now accurately known (Field and Hurst 1984, 49-50; CCM SMR 41873, 41880, 42712). These walls define an approximately rectangular area of two hectares. The enclosure walls possess circular external bastions at the corners, a type of military architecture introduced in the late third century.

- 5.3.4 Excavations within the confine of the walled circuit have shown that the Roman intramural structures are generally insubstantial in nature (Field and Hurst 1984, 85). Artefacts recovered from these excavations generally date from the late 3rd century and later (Samuels 1984, 63-4; White 1984, 74-5).
- 5.3.5 Sherds of Romano-British pottery and a coin of the Emperor Probus (276-82 AD) was recovered from an Early Saxon grave (see below) located just outside the northeast corner of the Roman enclosure (White 1981, 72; CCM SMR 42732).
- 5.3.6 Referring to the northeast corner of the Roman wall, Pevsner and Harris noted that twelve handled jars had been found in the same area during the 19th century (1973, 278). No corroboration has been found for this reference however.
- 5.3.7 The arrangement of High Street, Manor House Street, Bridge Street and Chapel Lane may suggest that these fossilise the pattern of the Roman road system through, and exiting, the stone-walled enclosure.

5.4 Anglo-Saxon (Figure 5)

- 5.4.1 Evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity is limited but displays a predominantly funerary nature. The material encompasses an Anglo-Saxon inhumation, with grave goods including a bronze annular brooch, glass and paste beads and an iron knife, discovered at the rear of properties on the High Street (CCM SMR 42214). Another inhumation, only 2m away from the first, had previously been found but removed by the police and considered by them to be relatively recent. These burials lay outside the confines of the Roman stone-walled enclosure. Additionally, an unlocated Anglo-Saxon warrior-burial accompanied by spear, sword and shield-boss was discovered in 1918 (White 1981, 71-2)
- 5.4.2 Within the Roman walled circuit on the High Street, archaeological excavations recovered finds of Anglo-Saxon metalwork, including a fragment of a small-long brooch, a strap-end and a hairpin (Everson 1984, 73; CCM SMR 42714). Sherds of Late Saxon pottery, including Torksey-type and Stamford wares, were retrieved from the same site (Hayfield 1984, 69-71).

5.5 Medieval and Later (Figure 5)

- 5.5.1 The investigation area lies within the medieval core of the town. The structure of the buildings and properties stretching northwards from High Street suggests their origins as burgrave plots in the medieval period. Posthole constructions dated to the medieval period were revealed during excavations on the High Street, opposite the Market Place (Field and Hurst 1984, 62; CCM SMR 42715). A ford of medieval date (CCM SMR

41868) was located on the site of the present bridge over the River Bain.

- 5.5.2 St Mary's Church is medieval in date (CCM SMR 42209). A Priest's House, also of medieval date, was situated approximately 100m northwest of the church (CCM SMR 42710). Additionally, an undated though probably medieval cross was located on the north side of the Market Place (CCM SMR 42208).
- 5.5.2 Immediately southeast of the investigation area at the junction of the Bull Ring and High Street are two coaching inns. The southern of these, the Bull Hotel (B on Fig. 5), has a 19th century frontage but to the rear are buildings dating from the 16th century. Opposite, on High Street, and stretching northwards to bound the investigation area on the east side, is the Red Lion (A on Fig. 5). This possesses a history older than the Bull Hotel, and has extensive livery stables in the courtyard (ELDC 1993, para. 11).
- 5.5.3 Documentary evidence refers to flooding, and attempts to counteract its effect, at Horncastle. Byelaws made in 1673 caused gravel to be laid as part of drainage works (Clarke 1988, 48). The course of the River Bain was extended and looped, probably in the 17th century, to supply water to tanners on West Street, on the north side of the Bain (Clarke 1990, 9).
- 5.5.4 Stukeley's 1722 map of Horncastle shows the present evaluation area to have been largely open at that time, except for a building that was situated approximately central to the investigation area (Fig. 6). Almost a century later, Weir's 1819 Plan of Horncastle suggests that the area was entirely built over (Fig. 7). Additionally, the plan notes that Conging Street was then known as Mill Lane, probably in reference to the nearby water mill on the River Bain (Fig. 3).
- 5.5.5 Excavations on the High Street, opposite the Market Place, revealed the remains of a double-fronted town house constructed *c.* 1800 (Field and Hurst 1984, 62).
- 5.5.6 A theatre dating to the 18th and 19th centuries had been located adjacent to the investigation area at the bottom of St Lawrence Street, in Dog Kennel Yard. The building had operated as a barn, threshing floor and finally a warehouse, prior to its use as a theatre. In 1859, the theatre was purchased to serve as the new British School, and subjected to rebuilding and decoration for that purpose. The school was closed in 1877 and sold for use as a malt kiln. A century later the building was functioning as a vehicle repair workshop (Clarke 1976, 93, 96). A photograph of the theatre (Robinson 1983, 164) reveals that the building retained its barn doorway well into the 20th century.

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 Prehistoric occupation and activity at Horncastle is indicated by a body of evidence that, at present, probably under represents the level of utilisation in this period. However, the evidence suggests that this area of the Bain Valley, and the Bain-Waring interfluvium in particular, was exploited and possibly settled from the Early Neolithic

period. It is perhaps significant that both of the excavations on this tongue of land produced flint assemblages, one apparently *in situ*. These collections emphasise the evidence of stray finds for prehistoric exploitation of this part of the Bain Valley. Elsewhere within the Bain Valley, survey has revealed both mesolithic activity, which is generally confined to the valley bottoms, and Early Neolithic sites which are located mainly at the junction of the clay-with-flints and the loess soils (Chown and Field 1985, 59).

- 6.2 Occupation of the site of Horncastle in the Roman period is confirmed by significantly more substantial evidence. Much of this evidence for Romano-British occupation of Horncastle is located south of the River Waring and testifies to an extensive settlement of long duration.
- 6.3 The evidence accumulated to date suggests that the Romano-British settlement between the Rivers Bain and Waring at Horncastle was essentially military in character. Excavations and chance finds in and around the stone-walled enclosure indicate that occupation of the area commenced in the late 3rd century, almost certainly associated with the building of the military establishment. The settlement is potentially that referred to in the Ravenna Cosmography as *Bannovallum*. However, other Romano-British sites including Caister are also candidates for the identification (Rivet and Smith 1981, 265). In fact, the Cosmography listing of *Bannovallum* between Lincoln and Brough-on-Noe may suggest that the settlement which possessed that name actually lay to the west of Lincoln. While nothing is known of contemporary extramural settlement, it is probably that, if present, it is located to the east and northeast of the walled enclosure on the higher ground away from the Bain-Waring confluence.
- 6.4 The modern main north-south roads crossing both rivers, and the east-west road through the interfluvial part of Horncastle, may fossilise the lines of Roman routes passing through the stone-walled enclosure.
- 6.5 Limited Anglo-Saxon material has been recovered at Horncastle, but the testimony of this evidence indicates funerary use rather than settlement.
- 6.6 Small quantities of Late Saxon pottery from within the Roman enclosure may suggest the advent of urban settlement of this area.
- 6.7 Medieval and later activity between the rivers at Horncastle is largely represented by the present structure of the town, and the surviving buildings. Property boundaries indicate that the land division probably originated as burgage plots in the medieval period. Medieval and early post-medieval structures are known to survive behind later facades.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The distribution maps of archaeological finds and observations represent occupation and use of the interfluvial area of Horncastle in the past. However, the maps are more

records of previous archaeological and antiquarian investigation in the area, and less a true definition of the extent of ancient settlement and activity. This is probably due to this area forming the focus of medieval settlement. Additionally, extensive Romano-British remains were revealed south of the River Waring during the expansion of Horncastle in the 19th century. These discoveries apparently led to a transfer of antiquarian and archaeological interest to this southern side of the river.

- 7.2 It is probable that prehistoric activity is under-represented. Reasons for this may lie in past archaeological research interests concentrating on the Roman period, together with limited recent development or other ground disturbing activities.
- 7.3 Potential for inhumations of Anglo-Saxon date being revealed within the proposed development area is high.
- 7.4 Located in the medieval core of the town, the proposed development area will probably contain remains of medieval and post-medieval urban occupation.
- 7.5 Post-medieval references to flooding, and gravel-laying as part of drainage works, have dual implications. One, that further ground-making may be in evidence throughout Horncastle, especially in the vicinity of the rivers. If present, such level-raising accumulations would also serve as a protective cushion between earlier archaeological deposits and later post-medieval development. Secondly, the frequency of flooding may have assisted in maintaining a naturally high water-table, and environmental material may potentially survive as a result of waterlogging.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Evaluation trenches should be opened to test for the potential survival of archaeological deposits of all periods. Such excavations should be located to provide sample coverage of the whole of the proposed development area. The arrangement of trenches recommended by the Archaeology Section of Lincolnshire County Council is ideally suited to evaluate the survival and extent of archaeological deposits across the entire investigation area.
- 8.2 The Roman practice of having cemeteries outside settlement areas and frequently alongside roads is well known. If High Street fossilises a Roman route exiting the stone-walled Roman enclosure, then the potential for encountering human burials of Romano-British date, especially toward the south side of the proposed development area, should not be dismissed.
- 8.3 Particular attention should be paid to the possibility for further Anglo-Saxon inhumations, especially on the east side of the area where at least one previous example has been recorded.

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9.1 All of the following sources were consulted in the data-gathering exercise. However, as some references duplicated information available in others, not all of them have been specifically referred to in the text.

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APPENDIX 1

This schedule records those sites and finds enumerated on the County Site and Monuments Record. Other observations and finds records have not yet been provided with codes in that numerical sequence. However, these unnumbered details are shown otherwise by letters on the archaeological period plans (Figs. 3-5). The Sites and Monuments Record uses 5 figure codes for referencing archaeological discoveries.

Prehistoric Archaeology (Fig. 3)

Reference Number	Description
41852	Bronze Age flanged axe - unlocated
41854	Neolithic polished stone axe
41867	Bronze Age perforated basalt hammer
42711	Neolithic flints in pits
42222	Neolithic polished stone axe
42691	Mesolithic and Neolithic flints
unlocated	Perforated stone hammer
unlocated	Neolithic stone axe

Romano-British (Fig. 4)

41873	Stone wall - remains of
41880	Stone wall - remains of
42712	Town defence - remains of
42713	Building - site of
42732	Pottery sherds and coin of Probus (276-82 AD)

Post-Roman Archaeology (Fig. 5)

41868	Medieval ford - site of
41876	Medieval/post-medieval stone mortar
42208	Cross, undated though probably medieval - site of
42209	Medieval church
42214	Early Saxon burials
42710	Medieval priest's house - site of
42714	Early Saxon pottery and metalwork
42715	Medieval building - remains of
42716	Post-medieval burials
A	Late medieval/early post-medieval coaching inn
B	Early post-medieval coaching inn

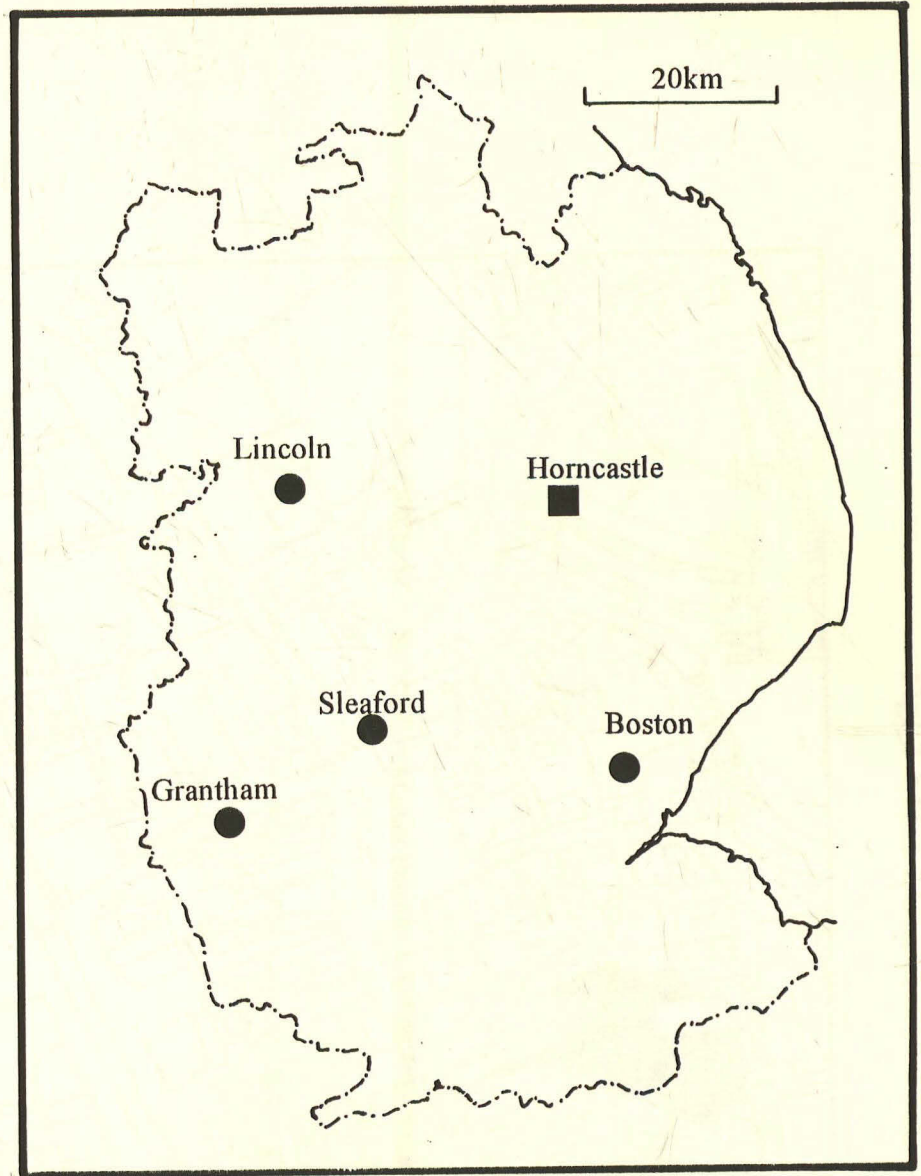
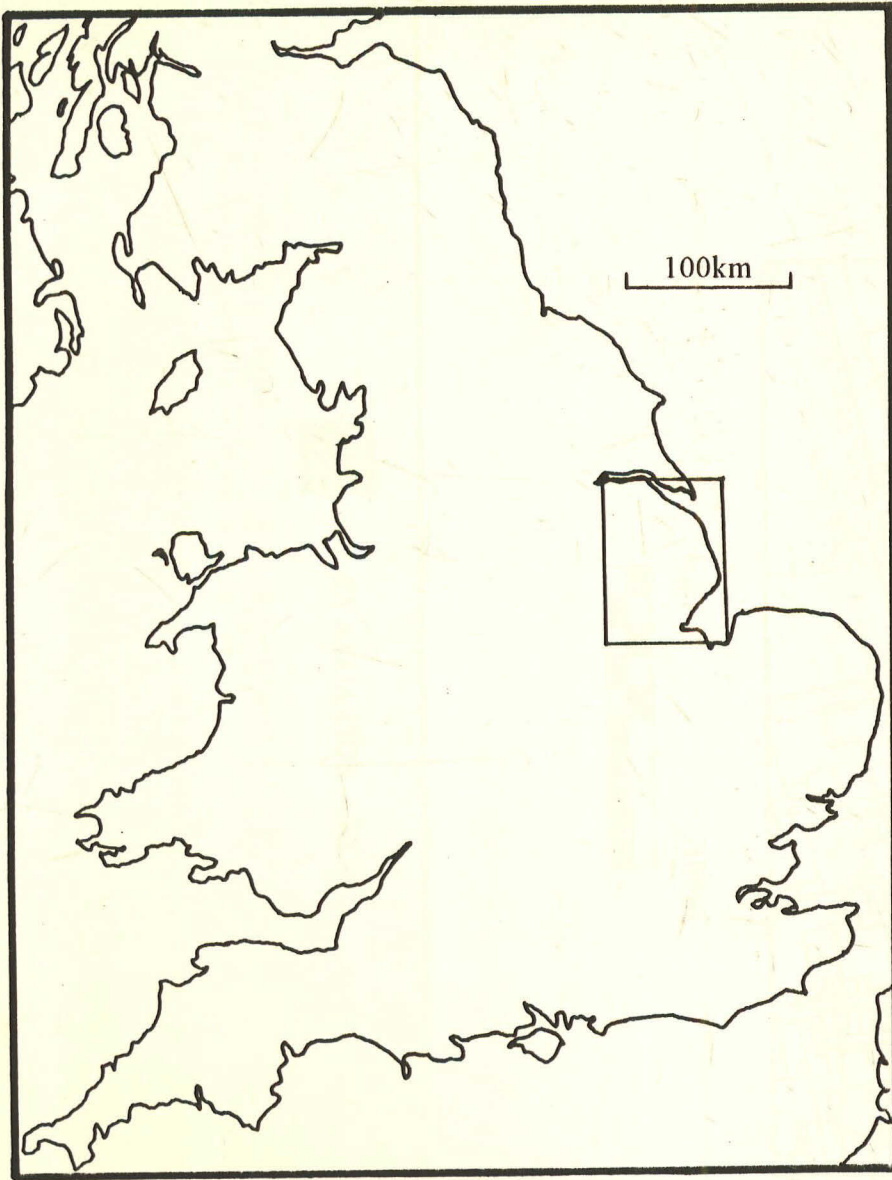
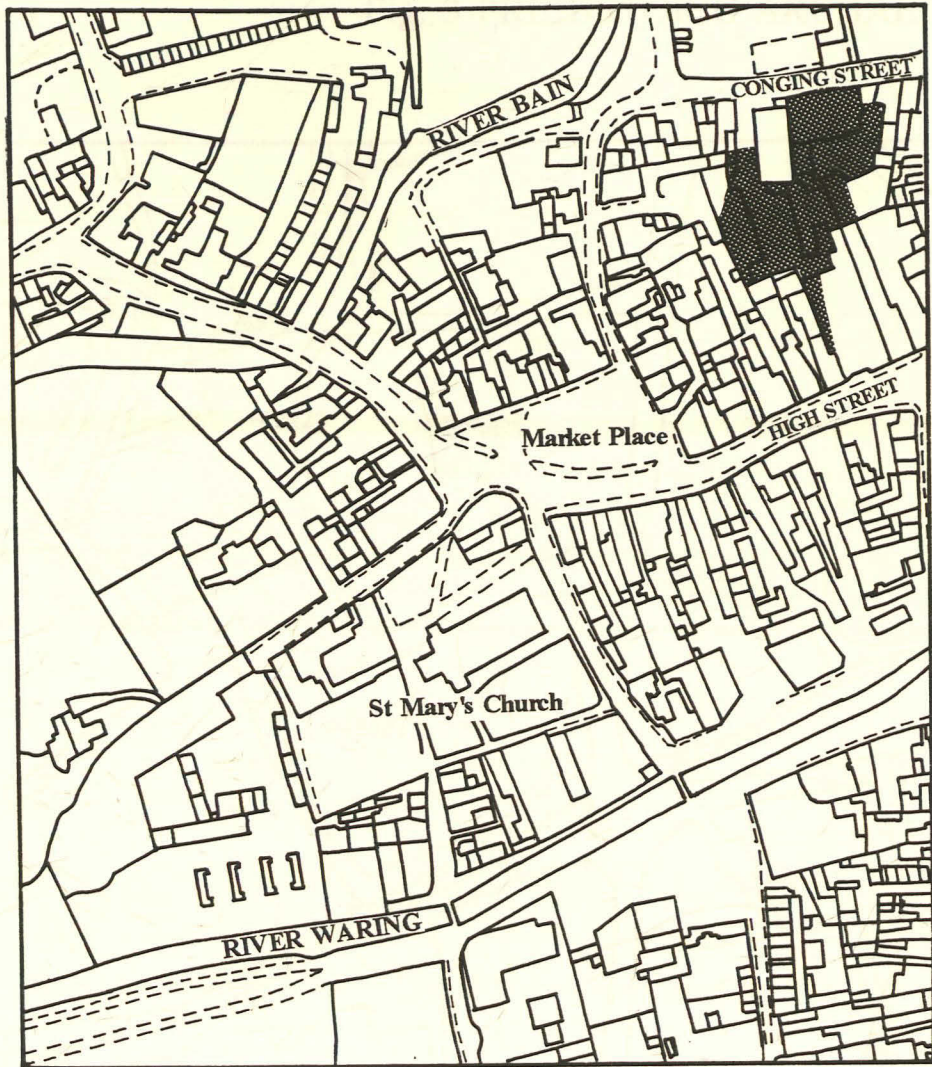


Fig. 1 GENERAL LOCATION PLAN

Fig. 2 SITE LOCATION PLAN

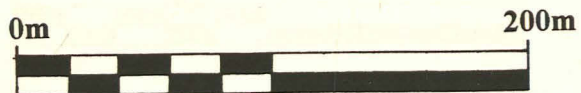
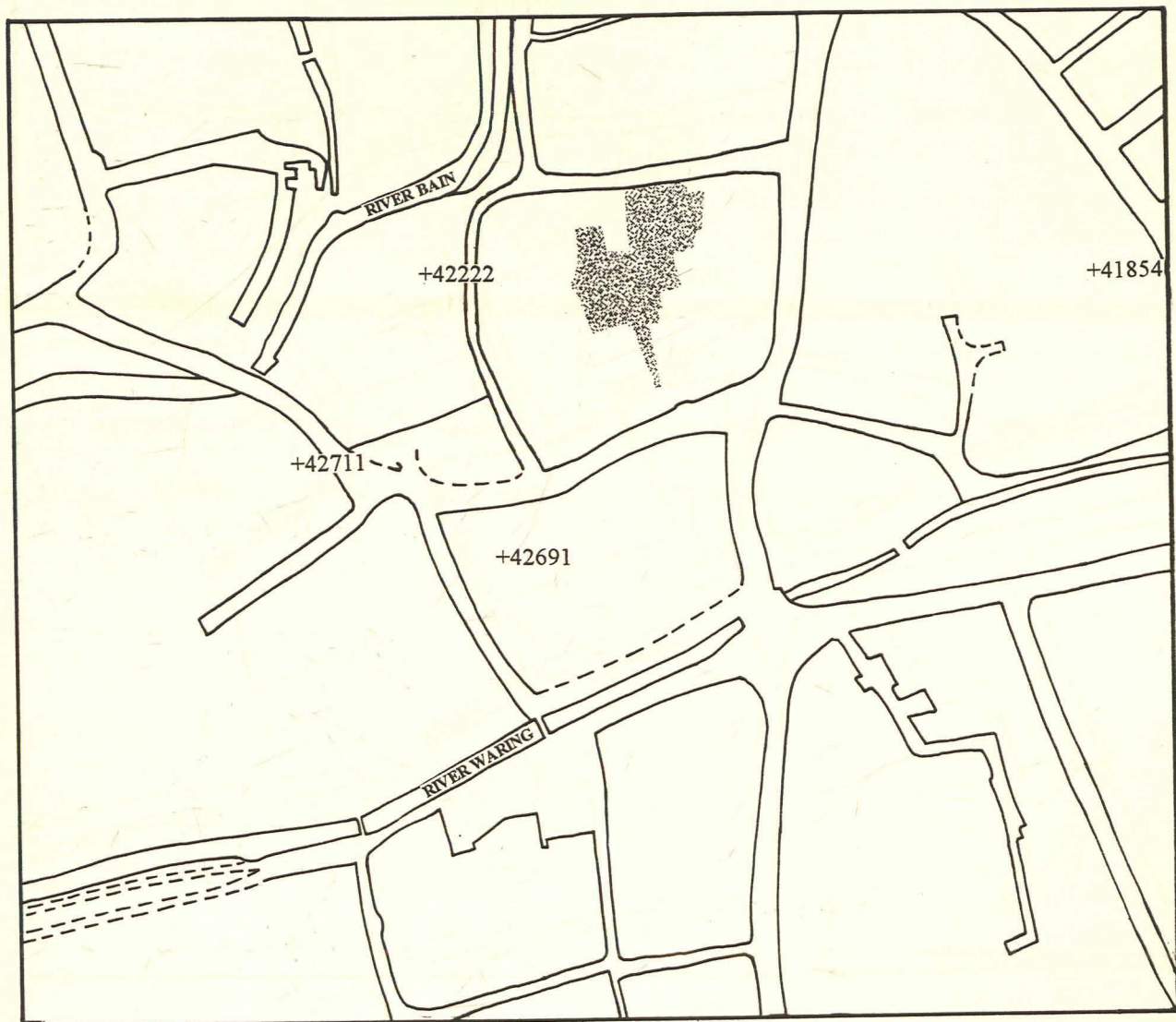


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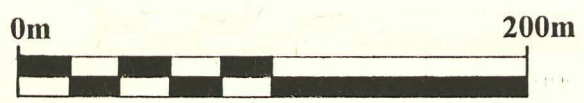
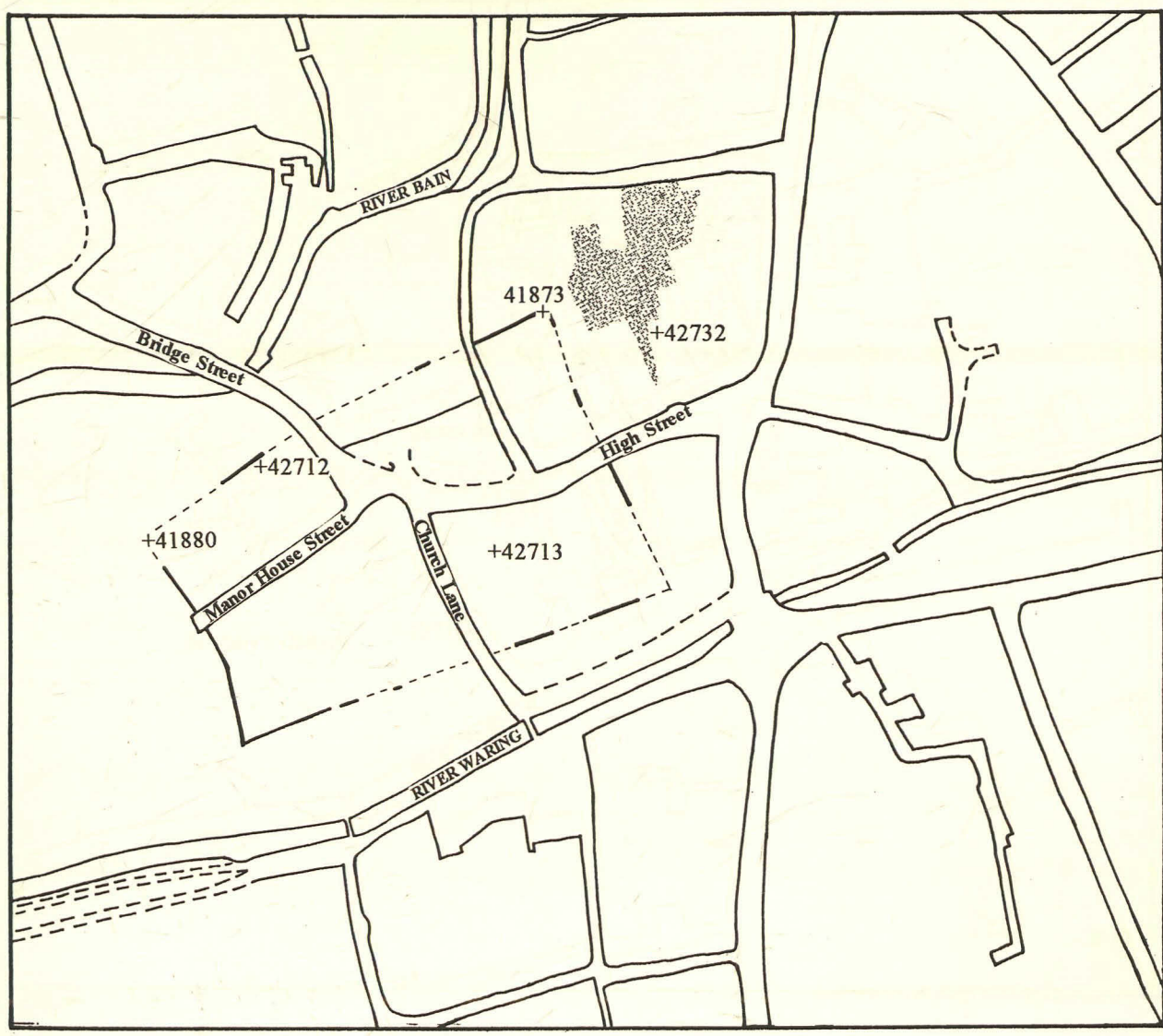
EVALUATION AREA

Fig. 3 PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY



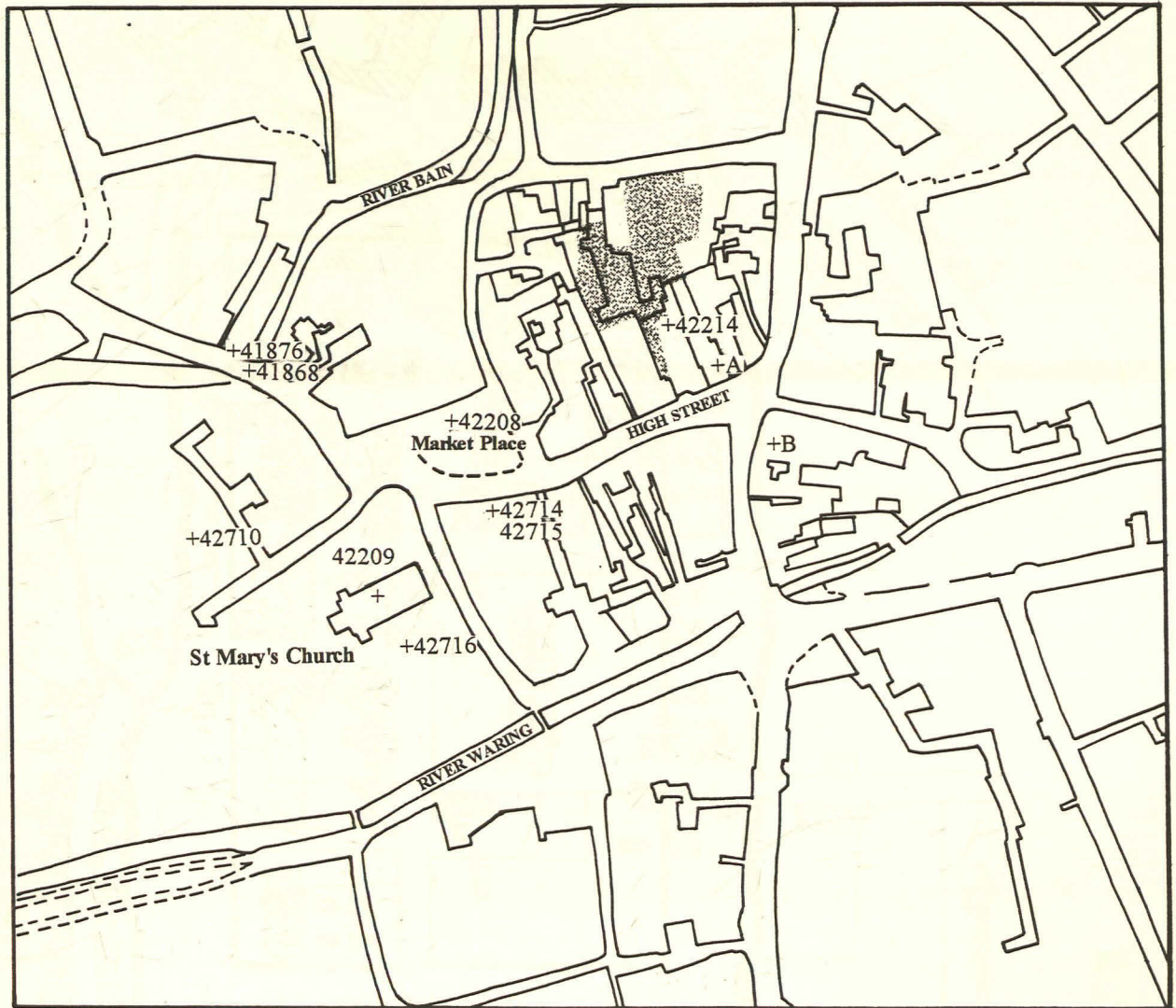
Area of Proposed Development

Fig. 4 ROMANO-BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY



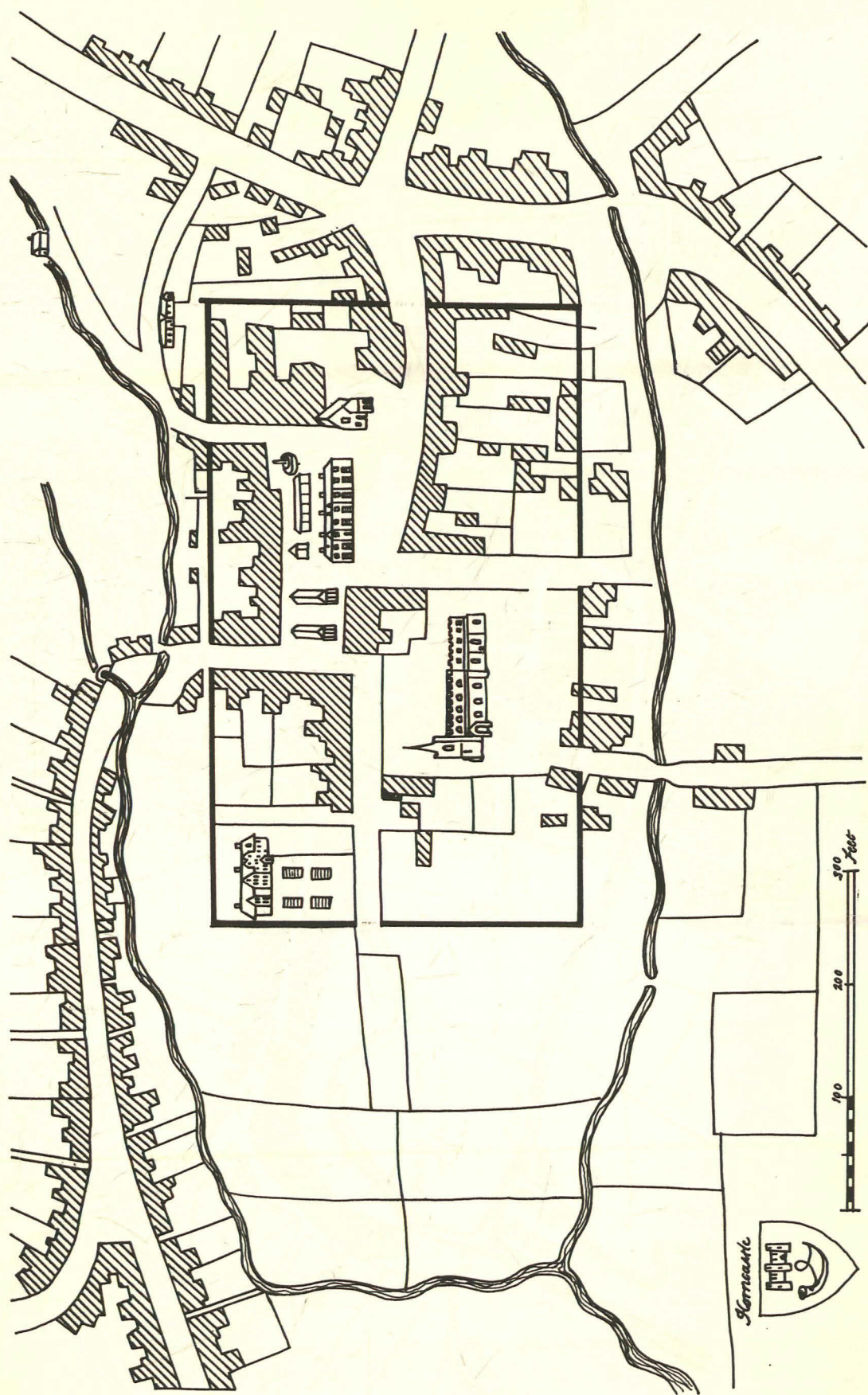
Area of Proposed Development

Fig. 5 POST-ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGY

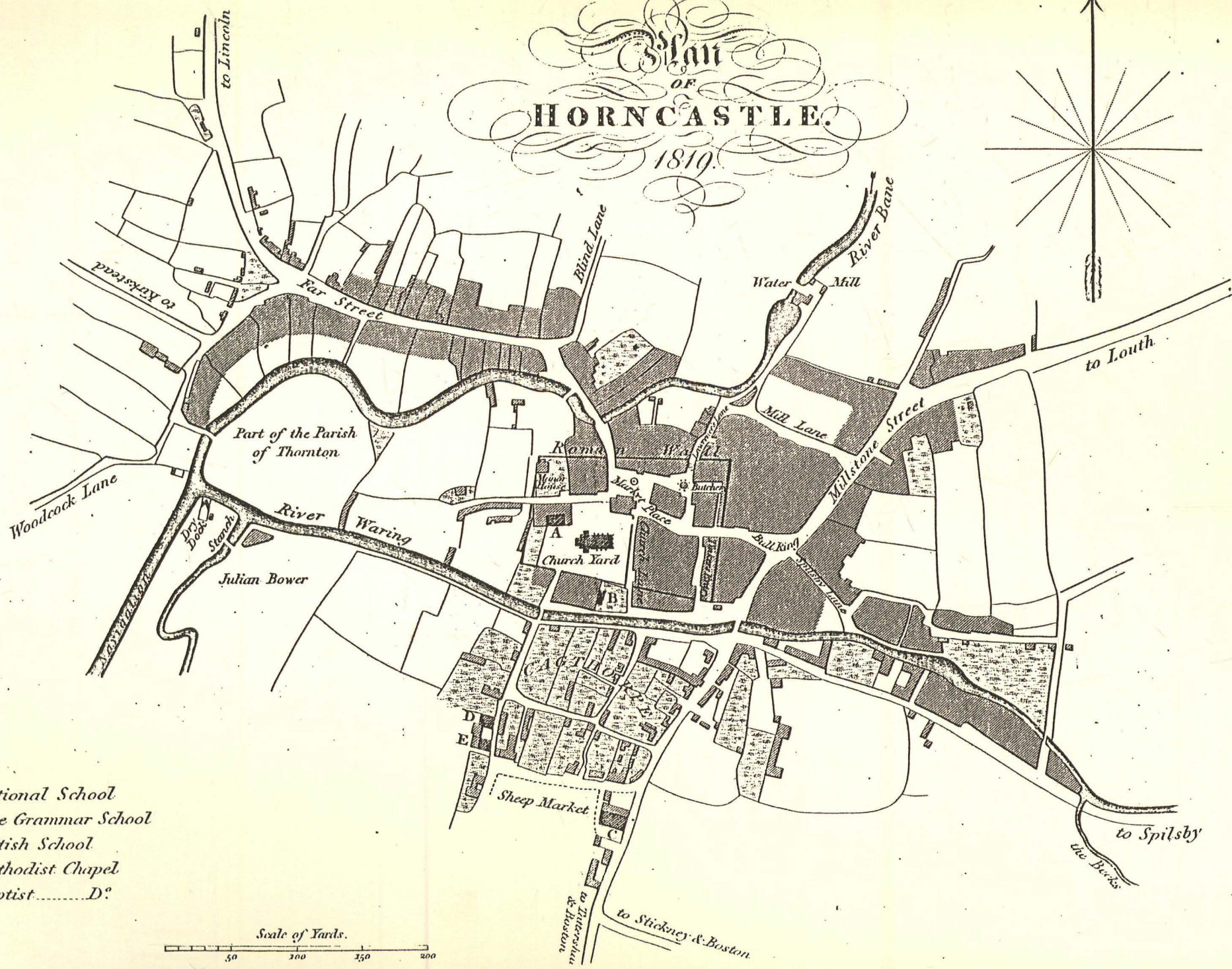
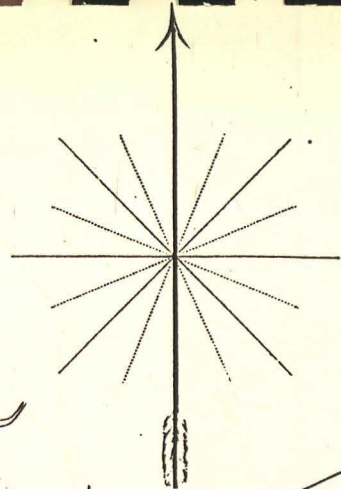


Area of Proposed Development

Fig. 6 Simplified Copy of Stukeley's Map of Horncastle, 1722



Plan
OF
HORNCASTLE.
1819.



- A National School
- B Free Grammar School
- C British School
- D Methodist Chapel
- E Baptist.....D?

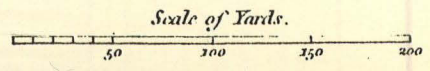


Fig. 7 Weir's Plan of Horncastle, 1819