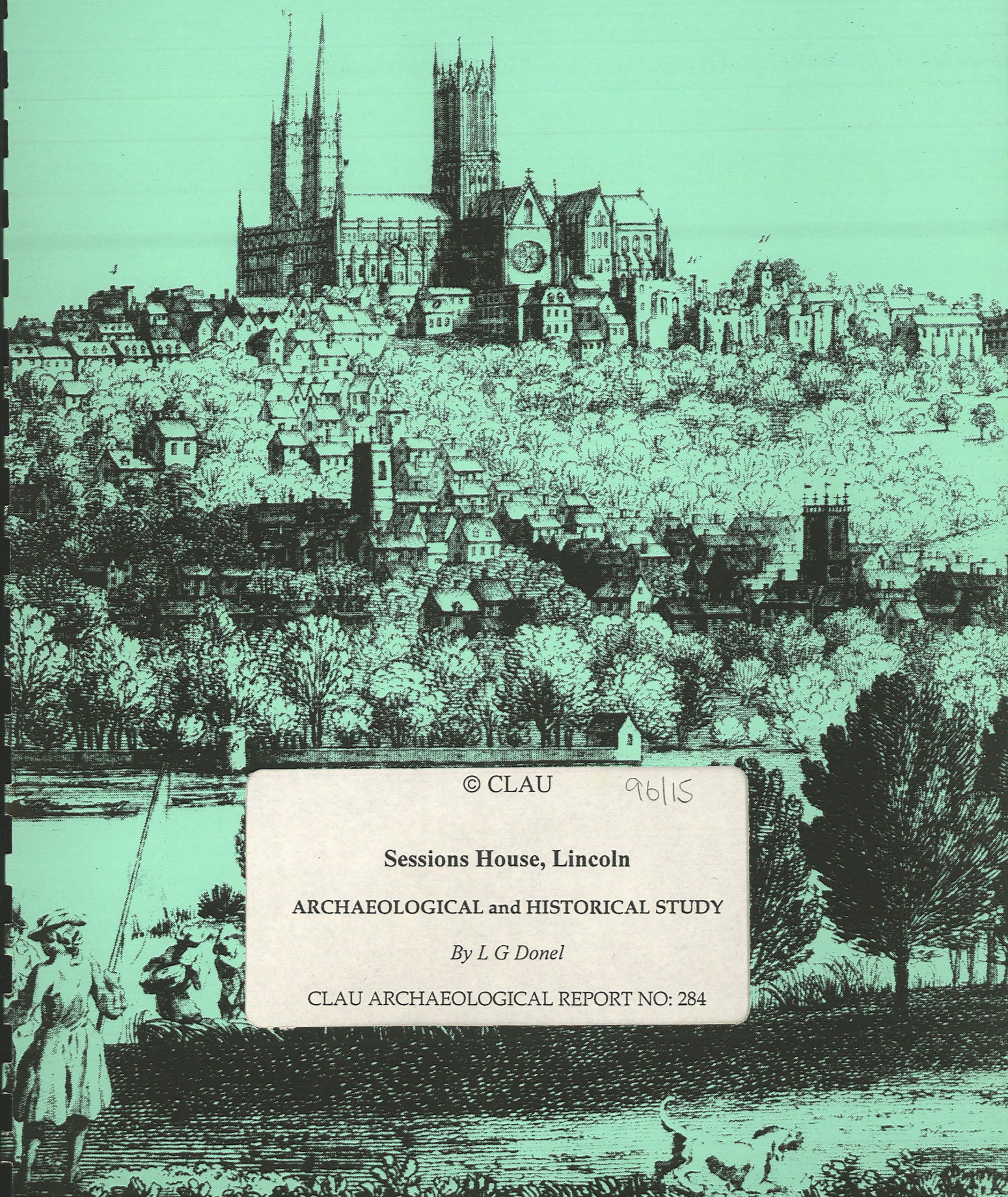


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96/15

Sessions House, Lincoln

ARCHAEOLOGICAL and HISTORICAL STUDY

By L G Donel

CLAU ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT NO: 284

A
Report to
Benoy, Architects & Design Consultants
on behalf of
North Lincolnshire Technical College

November 1996

Prepared by

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit (CLAU) was commissioned by Benoy, Architects and Design Consultants, on behalf of North Lincolnshire College, to prepare a Desktop Assessment of the archaeological importance of the site of Sessions House, Monks Rd., Lincoln (henceforth the Site). This report is in support of an application for Scheduled Monument Consent for the proposed development at that site.

The purpose of this document is to draw together readily available archaeological and historical information for the specific scheduled area (Scheduled Monument 269) which might be affected by the proposals in order to facilitate the preparation of appropriate strategies for both the preservation and/or recording of any important buried remains within the site (Fig.1). This document does not deal with conversion work to the Listed building, only with work affecting buried archaeology.

The information in this document is presented with the proviso that further data may yet emerge. The Unit, its members and employees cannot, therefore, be held responsible for any loss, delay or damage, material or otherwise, arising out of this report. The document has been prepared in accordance with the terms of the Unit's Articles of Association, the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and *The Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage, 1991).

2.0 SCOPE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH

As no previous archaeological investigation has been carried out on the Site, the evidence contained in this study is derived from the information produced from examination of the results from archaeological investigations carried out near to the Site and from historical records and other documentary sources.

The archaeological excavations previously undertaken in the immediate locality are as follows (Fig.2):

1936 - recovery of Roman kiln during work on the Technical College.

TC93, TCA94 - North Lincolnshire Technical College - evaluation and watching brief during construction work for the new student accommodation on the north side of Cathedral Street. These revealed remains of a late Roman cemetery, and late Saxon and Medieval occupation (see below for further details).

CLAU Observation Nos.:

68(Monks Rd./Rosemary Lane) - loam deposits

141(Monks Rd. w. end) - human bone

180 (Monks Rd./Friars Lane) - service trenching revealed human bone

203 (Old City School) - Trenching revealed cellar disturbance down to natural deposit

219(Lincoln Technical College) - Saxo Norman and early medieval pottery recovered

231 (Technical College) - Roman and medieval pottery recovered

241 (Lincoln Technical College) - Roman pottery and crucible discovered during work on extension

383 (St Hugh's Church) - 19th/20th century disturbance of deposits

418 (Monks Rd.) - Roman black/grey ware urn with inhumations found

Also, A Roman lead coffin was recovered during building work for the college extensions in the mid/late 1970's.

In compiling this study the following principal sources have been consulted:

i) Sites and Monument Records (SMRs)

The Lincolnshire SMR was searched for records of Sessions House. Details of entries are described in the text.

ii) Archive and other Documentary Sources

Reference has also been made to cartographic and other material held in the Lincolnshire County Archives, Central Library, Lincoln (Local History Collection), The Usher Gallery, Lincoln and the archives and library held by the City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit.

iii) Land Use Survey

The Site was visually examined to record current use and any extant features of antiquity.

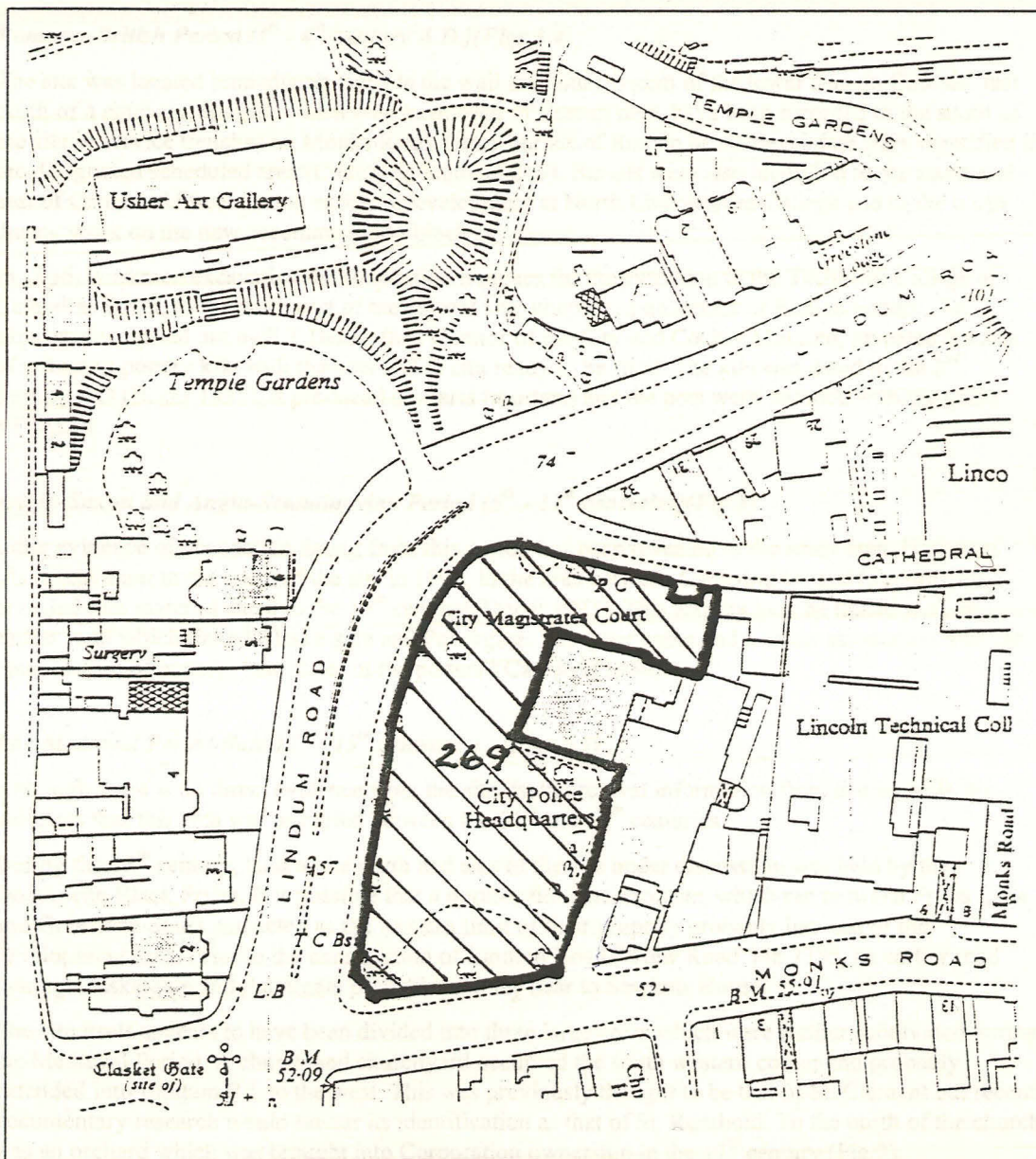


Fig.1 - Site Location showing scheduled area

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF AND BACKGROUND TO THE SITE

The Site, located within the Local Planning Authority's Zone of Archaeological Interest, lies in an area between Cathedral Street to the north, Lindum Road to the west and Monks Road to the south forming the northern fringe of the medieval suburb of Butwerk. The land slopes moderately gently from north to south although parts of the slope have been landscaped more steeply. The site has previously been used as a Magistrates Court, prison, police station and offices for the Lincoln Archaeology Unit. (Fig. 1).

The chronological development revealed by previous archaeological excavations (Fig.2) in the vicinity of the site is as follows:

Pre-Roman (1st century B.C. and earlier)

No definite evidence for prehistoric settlement has yet been revealed during the investigations in proximity to the site.

Romano-British Period (1st - 4th century A.D.) (Figs.3,4)

The site was located immediately outside the wall and ditch system of the lower Roman Colonia, just north of a gateway. Burials, which may have been of Roman date, have been recorded to the south of the site in service trenches on Monks Road. Other burials of Roman or medieval date were identified in the designated scheduled area (County Monument 269). Burials were also identified to the south and east of Cathedral Street during earlier redevelopment at North Lincolnshire College and to the north during work on the new accommodation block.

In 1936, workmen excavating the foundation trenches for the extension to the Technical College at Cathedral Street, to the north east of the current site, uncovered quantities of Roman pottery. An excavation, carried out by F.T.Baker, then Curator of the City and County Museum, revealed the site of a Roman pottery kiln with the pots still in situ ready to be fired. The kiln was dated to the 2nd century AD (Baker 1937). It produced mortaria (mortars) and the pots were stamped with the name VITALIS.

Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian Period (5th - 11th centuries) (Fig.5)

Little evidence of occupation dating from this period has been revealed in the study area. However, trial excavation to the north of the site in 1993, in the area between Cathedral St. and Lindum Hill, revealed kiln material dated to the 10th century (Donel 1993). This activity may be linked with an earlier road which linked Clasketgate and Pottergate. The latter name had a direct association with the manufacture of pottery: "the street of the potters" (Cameron 1984).

The Medieval Period (late 11th - 15th centuries) (Figs.6,7)

Although there is no direct evidence from the site itself, archival information from deeds, wills, etc., indicates that this area was occupied between the 11th and 15th centuries.

During the 13th century, land to the north and east of the site under discussion, was held by the Dominican Black Friars. It is possible that a north-south lane, Holgate, which ran between Friars Lane and Greestone Stairs and acted as the western limit of their property probably lies east of the development area. Prior to the construction of Lindum Road ("New Road") in 1785, an earlier road linking Clasketgate and Pottergate probably also lay near to Sessions House.

The site itself appears to have been divided into three large areas which were further subdivided during the Medieval Period. A church and churchyard occupied the south western corner and probably extended into Lindum Rd. to the west. This was previously thought to be that of St. Clement but recent documentary research would favour its identification as that of St. Rumbold. To the north of the church was an orchard which was brought into Corporation ownership in the 17th century (Fig.7).

To the east of the orchard and the church was a tenement and orchard which became Corporation property in the 16th century or possibly earlier. The area is described as open land, but there is the

strong possibility that there were more tenements built on the southern end of the parcel, facing on to Monks Road (Fig.7)

The eastern third of the site was occupied at the south-western corner by the School House or Schoolmasters house between the 14th -16th centuries. The land was part of an endowment of Markby Priory but became disused by 1520 and was demolished in the late 16th or early 17th century. The rest of the eastern area was the school itself in the Middle Ages (Fig.7).

Post-Medieval (16th - 19th centuries)(Figs. 8, 9, 10, 11)

It is during this period that the first maps of the city began to be produced, and several of these are reproduced below. As mentioned above, most of the land was held by the Corporation from the 16th and 17th centuries onward.

The western part of the the area under discussion appears to have been left as open ground after the demise of the church in the 16th/17th century and its subsequent ownership by the Corporation in the 17th century.

The central parcel of land was used for the City Gaol, built in 1809. The prison construction is very reminiscent of the prison at Lincoln Castle which was completed a few years after the initial construction of the City Gaol (Fig.7).

Padley's map of 1842 shows the southern part of the site as the Beast Market. During the 19th century and possibly earlier, various livestock markets were sited to the east and south of the site (Fig.9).

The land in the southwest corner of the eastern parcel was sold as a freehold garden in the 19th century and was in Corporation hands by 1850. The larger proportion of the eastern area was part of the Chancellor's endowment between the 16th and 19th centuries and became part of the Corporation holdings by 1843. The prison was enlarged into this area between 1843 and 1850.

The buildings continued to function as Police offices until 1973 when it was taken over by the Lincoln Archaeological Trust(1976 - 1989) and as a Magistrates Court until it moved to its new site in the 1990s. The site has generally retained its same appearance since the late 19th century with open areas to the west and south of the court and police buildings.

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRESERVATION

Because the western part of the area to be developed has remained as open ground from the post medieval period to the present day, there is a higher probability for preservation of archaeological remains than the area on which the current buildings are sited. The eastern and central area, on which the main buildings now stand, may have already undergone the destruction of some archaeological deposits during the construction of the gaol and court buildings in the 19th century. The presence of a basement at Sessions House would certainly have caused damage to medieval and post medieval remains, although preservation of Roman material must still be considered a possibility. A watching brief in 1976 recorded that the basement of the Old City School (now the Gibney Building of De Montfort University), to the east of the site had been excavated down to the natural clay.

Excavation to the north of the site (Donel 1993, Trimble 1995) recorded the presence of archaeological remains at c.1m below the present surface (Fig.12). However, there is still the possibility that the area to be developed may have been terraced, which could mean that archaeological remains may occur at more shallow depths depending on whether they lay near to the top or bottom of a terrace.

A watching brief on a gas trench to the south of the site on Monks Rd. (ON180) recorded skeletal material recovered at a depth of 550mm below the current road surface. There was no dating evidence for this material, which may have been part of the medieval cemetery associated with St. Rumbold's or an earlier Roman cemetery.

5.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS - IMPACT ON BURIED REMAINS

There are several areas of possible ground disturbance which need to be considered. These are:

a. New construction (Benoy Drwgs.04, 07)

The additional construction on the north side of the building may involve possible ground disturbance. However, there is nothing on the plan to indicate the extent of any possible disturbance in relation to the existing surface. Foundation information has not been provided for this assessment. Depending on the depth of any new foundation work, there could be archaeological implications associated with this work.

The creation of a bridge for the disabled at the northwestern corner of the old court building may also involve disturbance. However, the extent of disturbance is not made clear on the plans.

b. Excavation for a new lift shaft (Benoy Drwgs.04.05,08)

Using the information from excavation to the north and south of the development area, archaeological remains are appearing between 500mm and 1m from the existing surface. Although the excavation for the basement may have already destroyed some archaeological material, the excavation for the lift could quite possibly disturb deeper deposits.

c. Drainage(Benoy Drwg.07,05)

Excavation for drainage covers both the areas immediately associated with the building and with the car park. Although new drainage runs have been described as "300 at tread and falling 1 in 40 max"(Letter from Benoy, dated 6/11/96 - REF:IAS/MED/10202), the lack of finalised drawings for this report means that the client should consider that the new drainage work, connection with existing drainage and the creation of new manholes may require deeper excavation. Without sections showing the proposed depth, it is difficult to comment other than to remark again that archaeological deposits may be encountered, possibly at c.500mm.

d. Landscaping (Benoy Drwg. 07)

The last area to be considered is the removal of trees from the development area, new planting, the creation of new kerbing, the new road line at the north west corner of the car park and the lowering of the footpath on the south west side of the building.

The paving/planting work appears to require depths of between 325mm and 400mm. However, the possible disturbance of archaeological material due to removal of trees and tree roots must be considered as well as proposed planting depths for any new or relocated trees.

The new road line at the north west corner of the car park, the lowering of the footpath to basement level and the construction of steps must be considered as having potentially serious archaeological implications. However, as there is no indication from the plans/sections provided as to the depth of this proposed lowering or the foundations for the proposed steps, it is once again difficult to comment specifically on the direct implications this work might have.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is believed that the site contains important evidence and remains of all periods from the time of the Roman occupation through to the 19th century, and while development on the site over the past 100 years may have disturbed or removed some of the later post-medieval remains, it is likely that evidence of earlier occupation survives intact.

While the nature, extent and condition of such remains are unknown, the location of the site together with the documentary record and results from previous archaeological excavation in the surrounding area clearly indicate the potential for remains of several periods. Previous work also suggests that archaeological remains could be encountered at a depth of 500m to 1m. from the present ground surface.

We would suggest that the client should be aware that as the nature and survival of any remains or other possible archaeological evidence is unproven, English Heritage may require that a field evaluation is undertaken and that measures are submitted in the light of the results to preserve buried remains before recommending that Scheduled Monument Consent is issued for the development. The results from an evaluation would provide site specific information from which better informed decisions could be made.

Although the exact limits of the medieval and Roman graveyards are uncertain, it should be noted that if such remains are encountered it will be necessary to secure a Home Office licence (under Section 25 of the Burials Act 1857) and comply with its conditions to allow their removal.

7.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The CLAU would like to especially thank Mr. C.P.C. Johnson, Lincolnshire Archive Office, for his help and generosity in providing unpublished documentary information on medieval and later occupation of this part of the city.

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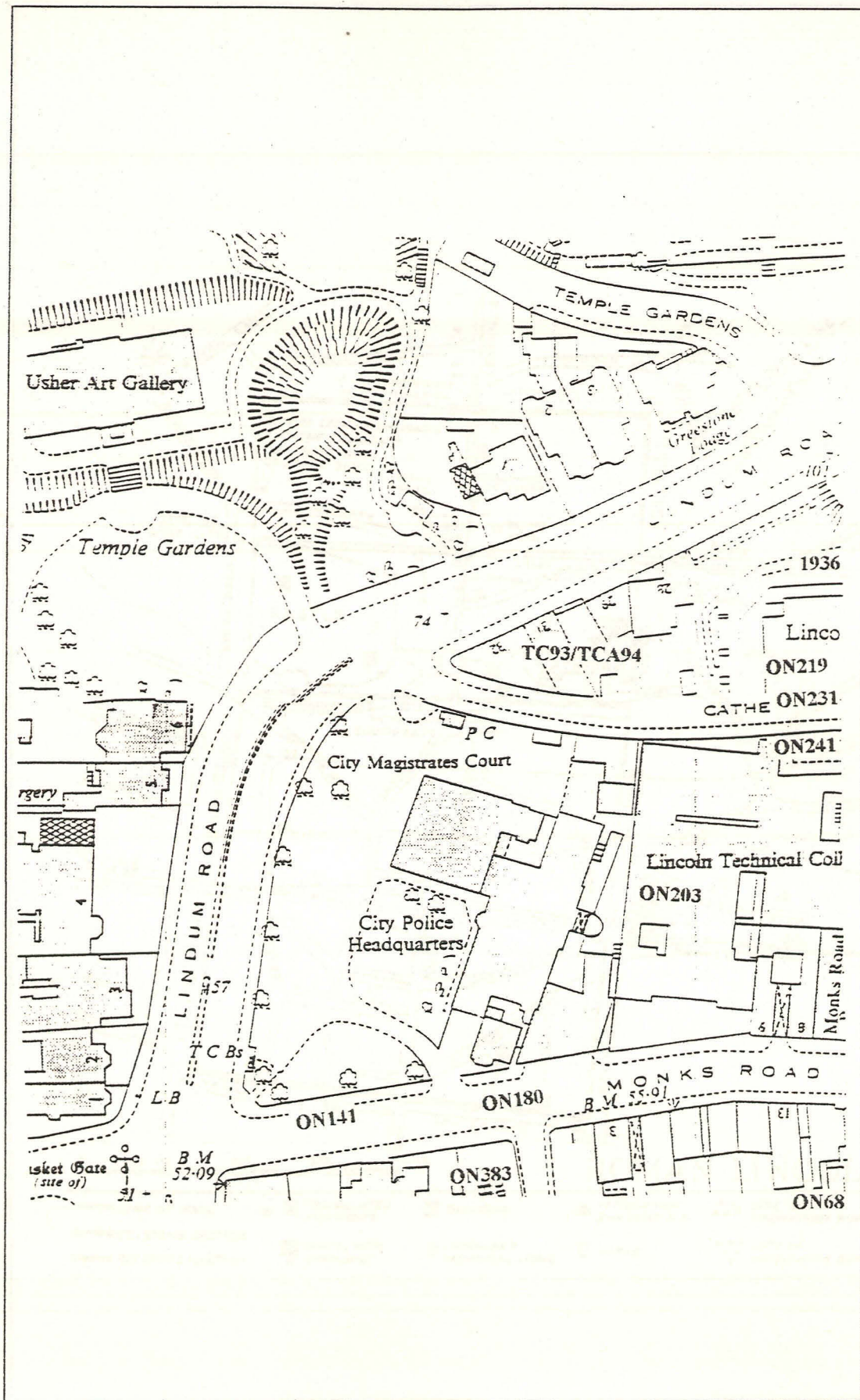


Fig.2 - Previous Archaeological Investigation

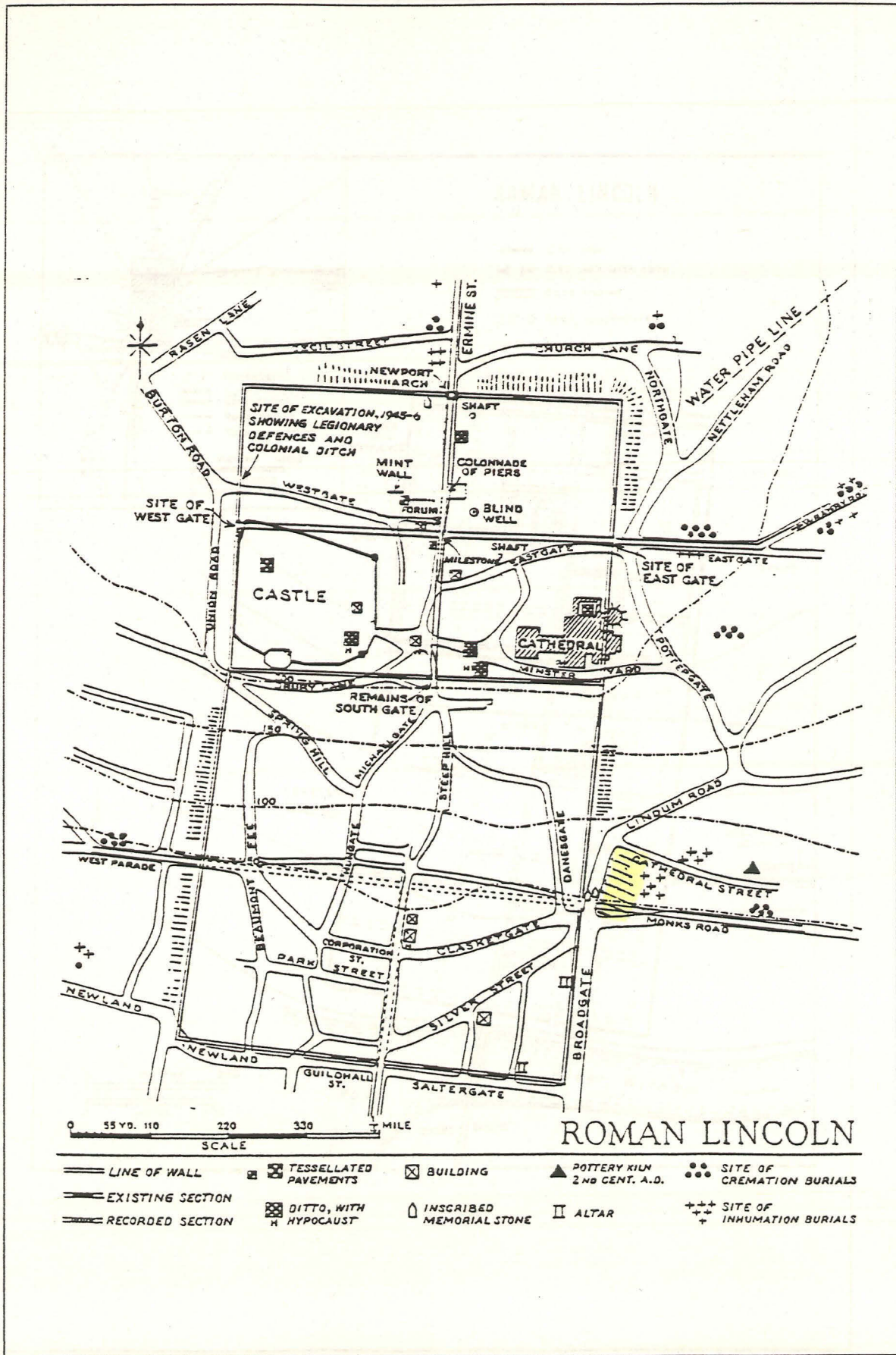


Fig.3 - Roman Lincoln (from Hill, Medieval Lincoln)

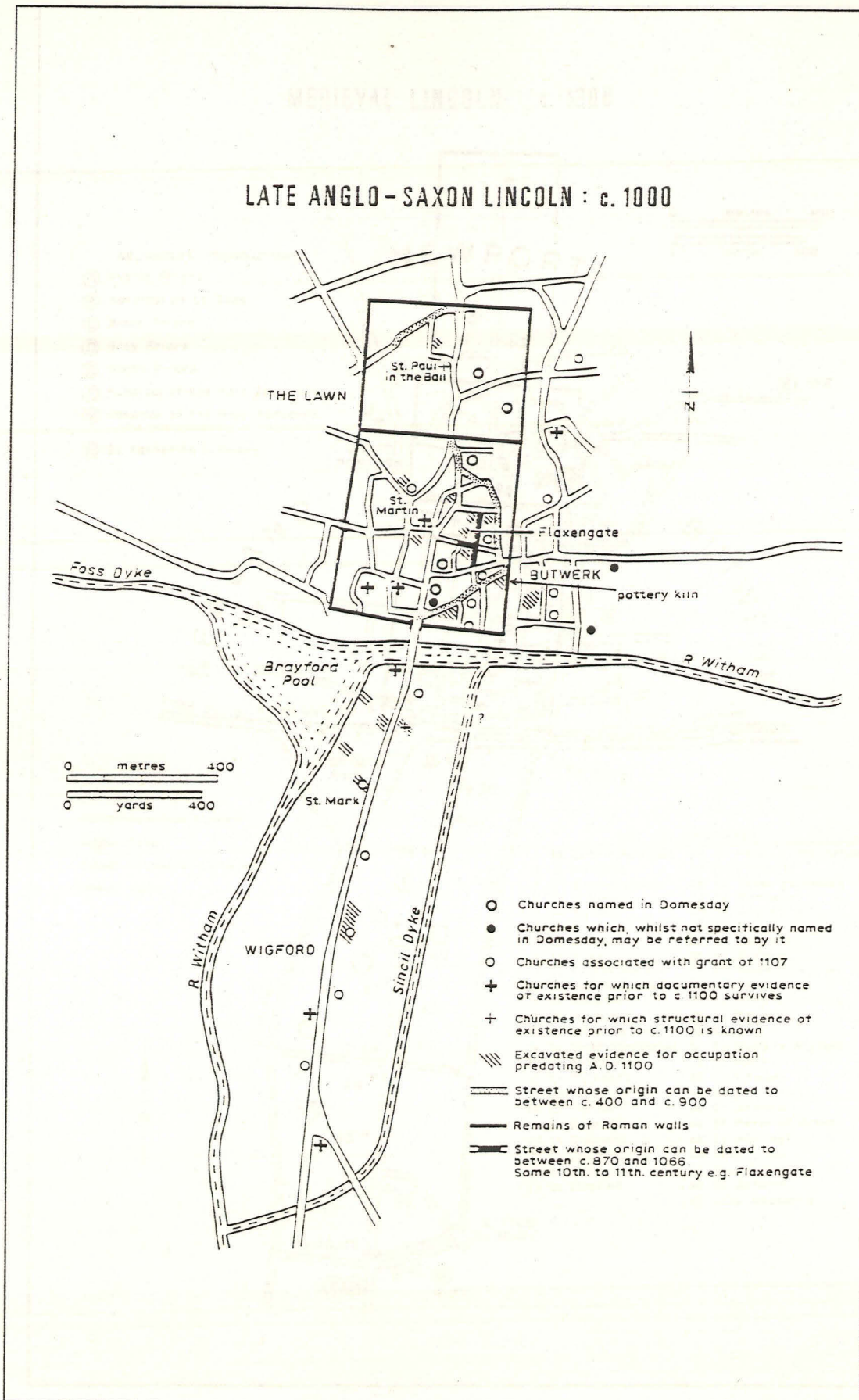


Fig. 5- Late Anglo - Saxon Lincoln c. 1100 (from Bennett & Bennett, An Historical Atlas of Lincs.)

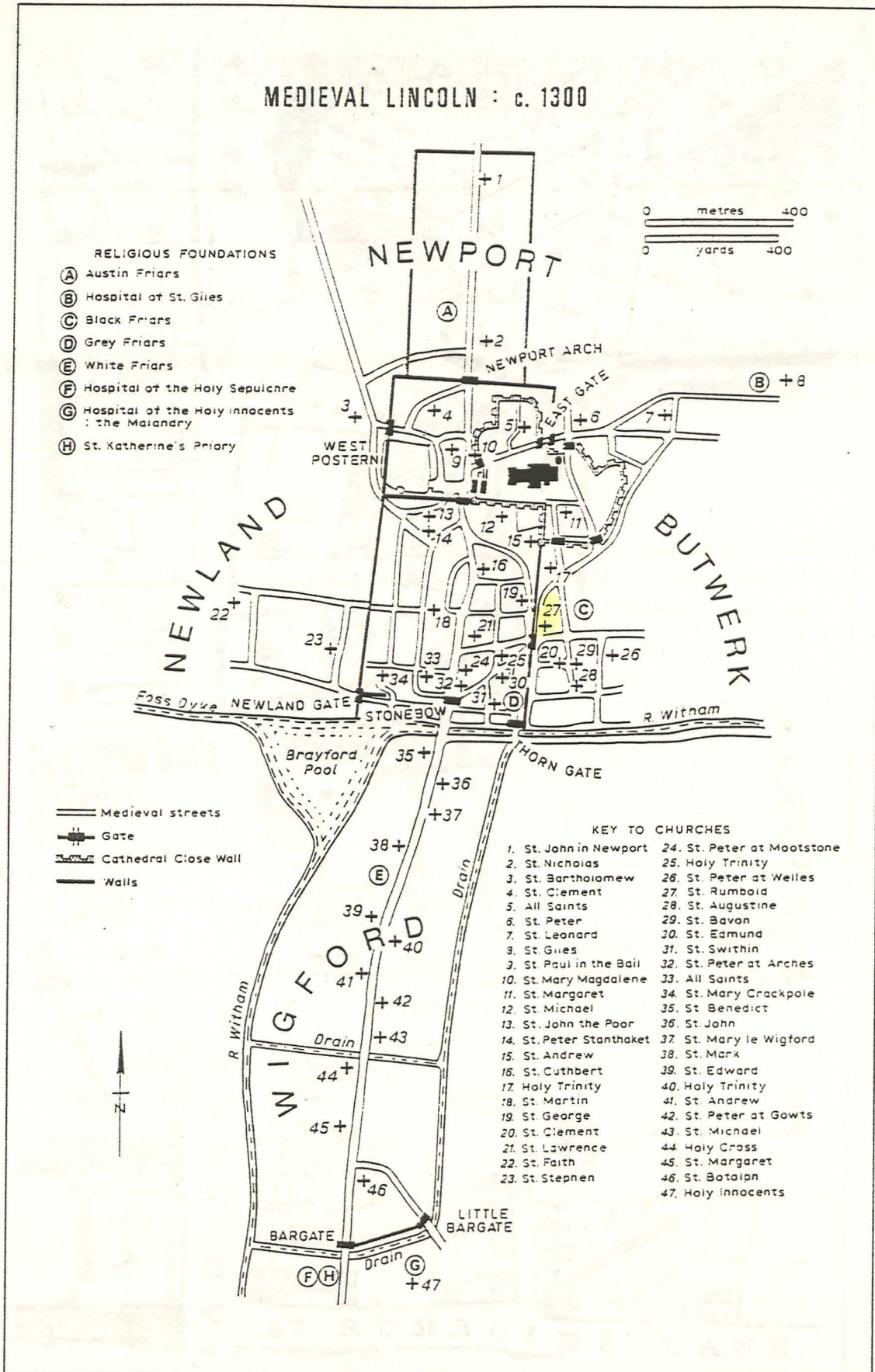


Fig.6 - Medieval Lincoln c.1300 (from Bennett & Bennett, An Historical Atlas of Lincolnshire)

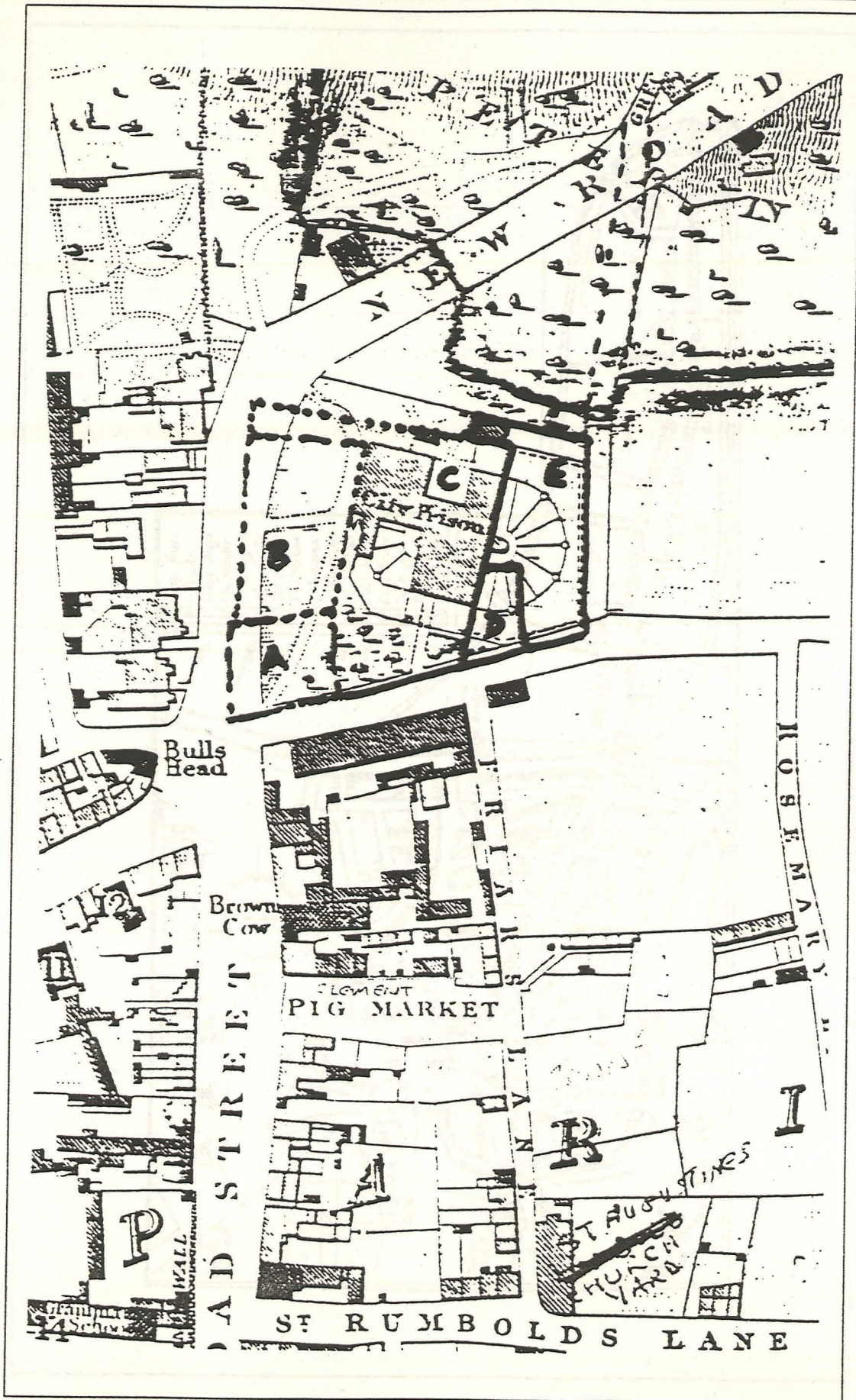


Fig.7 - Division of properties in the Medieval Period based on Padley 1842 (Lincs. Archive Office)

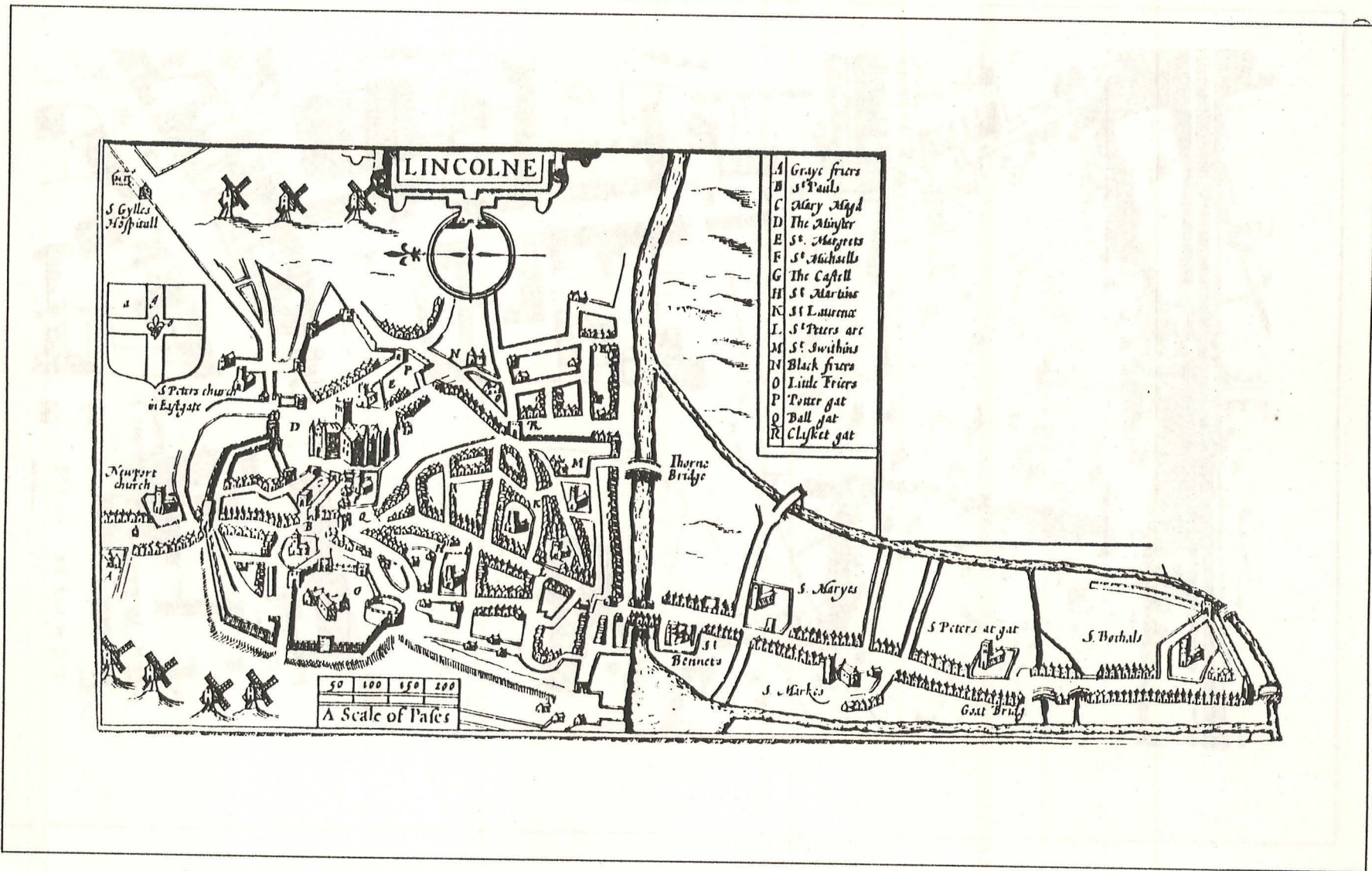


Fig.8 - Lincoln 1610 (from Speeds map of Lincolnshire)

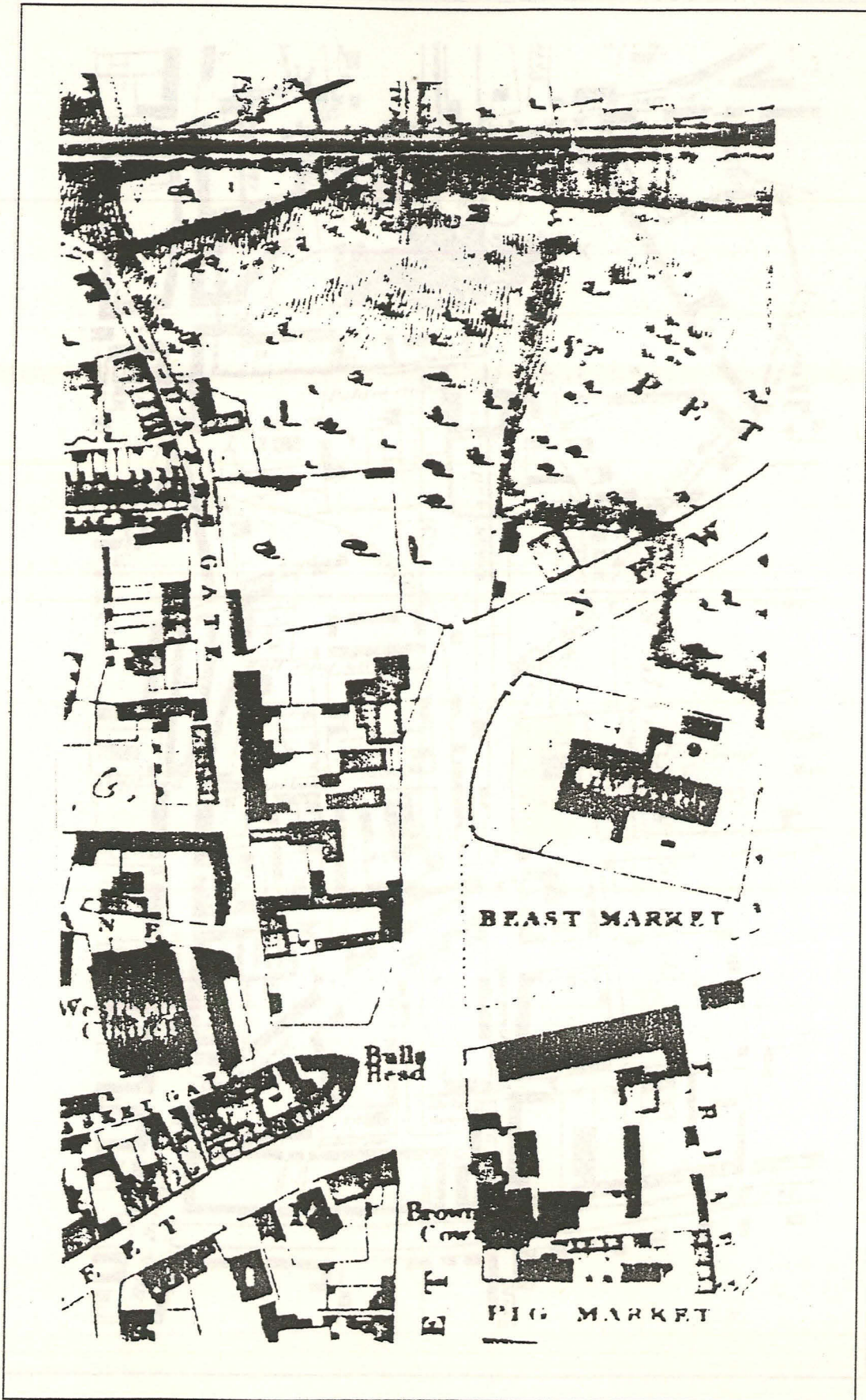


Fig. 9 - Padley 1842

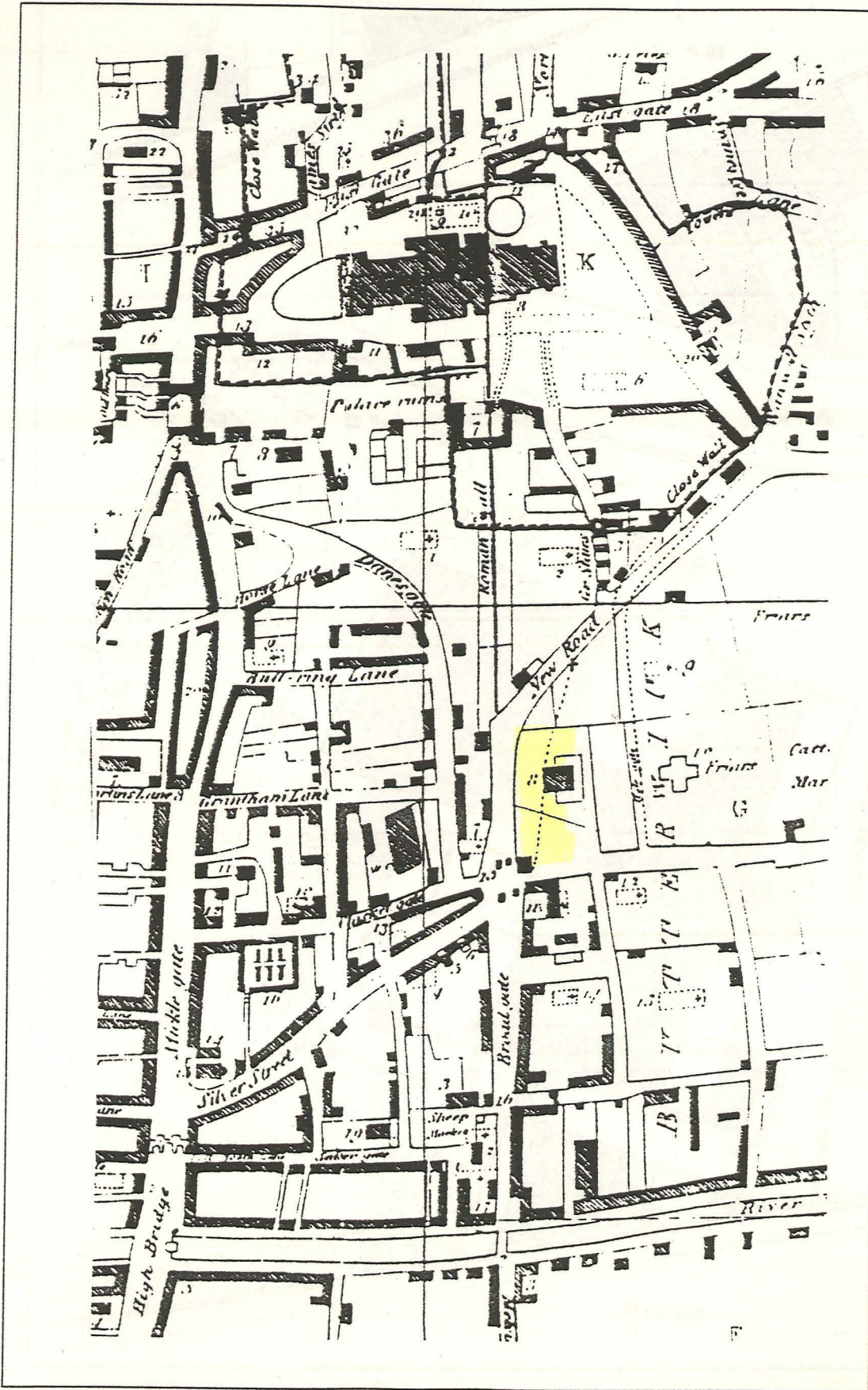


Fig.10 - Marrat 1817 corrected to 1848

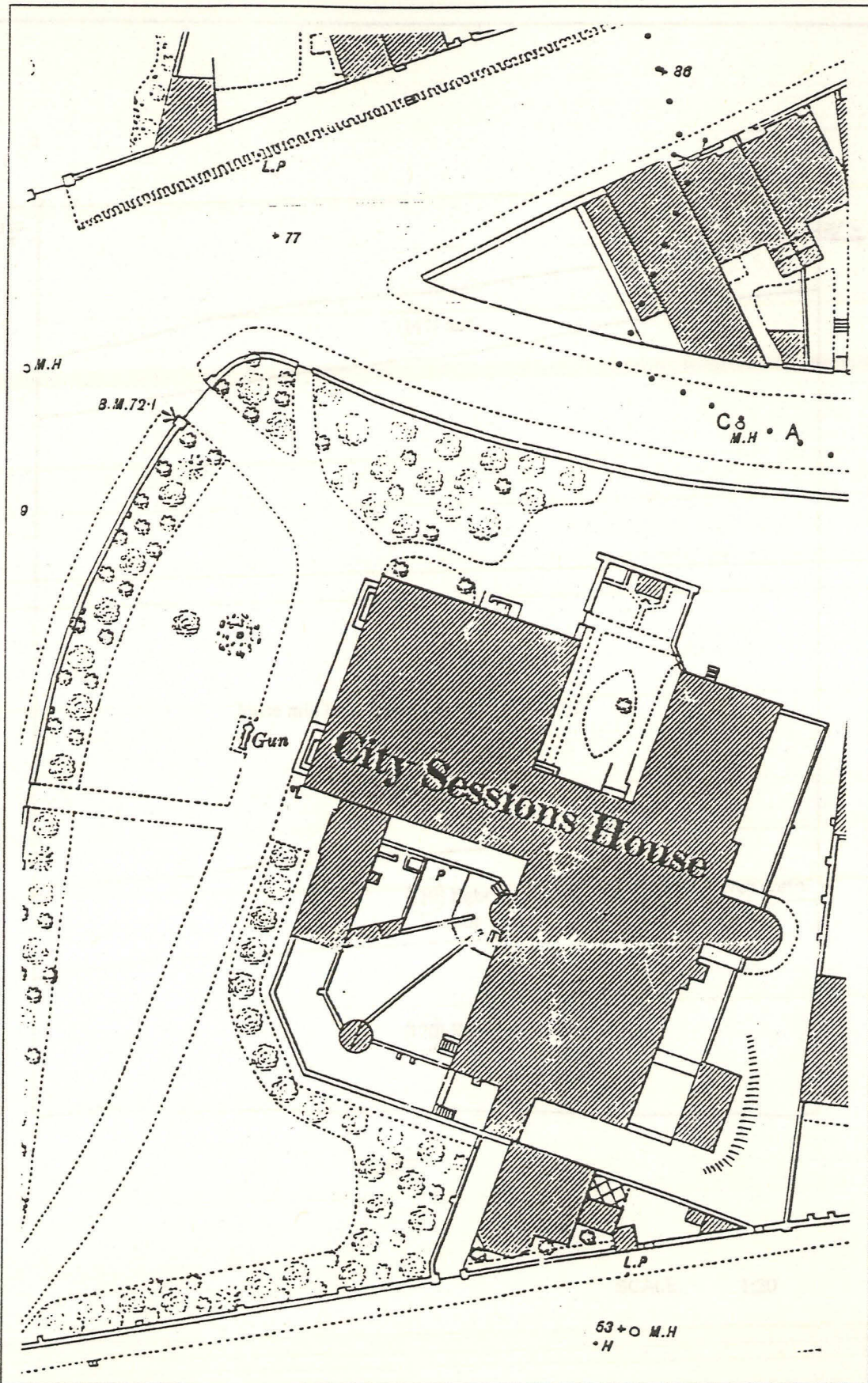


Fig. 11 - OS Map First Series LXX.7.12(1887)

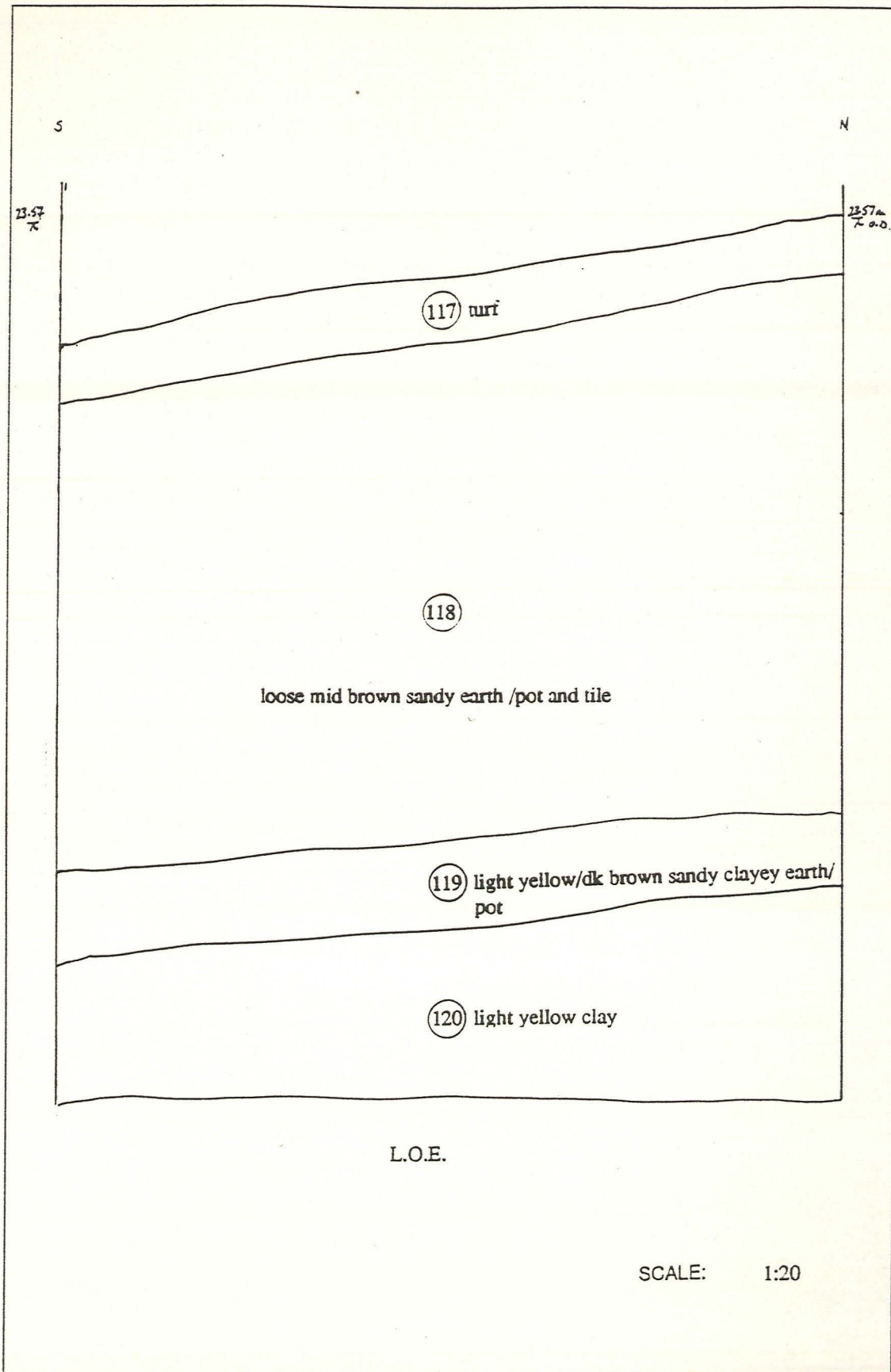


Fig.12 - Section from Trial Pit 5 - TC93