

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY L I N C O L N

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT;
FORMER TYRE DEPOT, SWAN STREET,
SPALDING, LINCOLNSHIRE**

NGR: TF 2461 2275
SITE CODE: TDSS03
LCNCC ACC. NO: 2003.2

*? pre-planning
there is
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Conservation
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Highways & Planning
Directorate

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Report prepared for
Thistle Moor Estates Ltd.
by Chris Clay
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Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln)
61 High Street
Newton on Trent
Lincoln
LN1 2JP
Tel. & Fax. 01777 228155

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT, FORMER TYRE DEPOT, SWAN STREET, SPALDING, LINCOLNSHIRE (TDSS02)

By Chris Clay



Fig.1: General site location (scale 1:25,000)
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1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) was commissioned by Thistlemoor Estates Ltd. to undertake a desk-based assessment of the archaeological potential of a proposed development area on land off Swan Street, Spalding, Lincolnshire. This is a requirement of South Holland District Council, to be undertaken to inform a subsequent phase of intrusive archaeological investigation, and any further mitigation.

The site is located in the core of the town, to the north of the Sheep Market, and to the south of Swan Street. The site centres on NGR TF 2461 2275.

2.0 Archaeological and historical background

In the prehistoric period, the coastline was considerably further inland, and Spalding was situated on an island of land, subject to frequent periods of inundation (Simmons, 1993). As a result, for long periods the area was either under water or unsuited for sustained human occupation. However, the County Sites and Monuments Record for Spalding parish lists an unlocated prehistoric stone axe (SMR ref. 22367) and a stone axe hammer (22368). Pre-Roman salt-working sites have also been found close to Spalding (Simmons, 1993).

During the Romano-British period salt production continued to be an important industry in the area, and it has been argued that a number of fishing and trading centres emerged on the Wash creeks. A major phase of settlement expansion took place early in the 2nd century AD, probably as a result of large scale drainage and reorganisation of the Fenland as an imperial estate (Hallam, 1970). In Spalding itself, Romano-British finds have been recovered at depth from the modern ground surface (eg Spalding Grammar School). The Sites and Monuments Record lists a number of isolated find spots of coins and pottery scatters. Other finds include a probable statue of Venus (22372), a female ragstone bust (from beneath the Gentleman's Society Meeting House) (23610), and a votive bronze horse figurine, the exact provenance of which is unknown (22394).

The Fenland Survey has recovered Saxon pottery from the 6th century onwards from the west of the parish (Sawyer, 1998), and historical sources suggest Spalding emerged as a Royal Estate Centre, perhaps in the middle Saxon period (7th or 8th century AD) (Palmer-Brown, 2000). At this time, the area was still subject to seasonal inundation, and there was no well-defined coastline around the Wash. However, the falling sea level had resulted in the island on which Spalding stood becoming attached to the mainland, although it remained a coastal settlement.

The name is believed to derive from the *Spalda*, a group listed in the Tribal Hidage, a 7th/8th century document assessing the lands of 35 peoples owing tribute to the king of Mercia (Cameron 1998, Sawyer 1998).

The Saxon period development and exploitation of the area around Spalding owed much to monastic establishments. Numerous grants of land in the area were given to Crowland Abbey, by Count Aelfgar in 810, and by the kings of Mercia in 833 and 851 (Sawyer, 1998).

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. Subsequent evidence has suggested the priory has an early post-Conquest date (Sumner, 1988). Regardless, Crowland Abbey was a major landowner at the time of the Domesday Book, along with Ivo Tallboys and Guy de Craon. The Domesday Survey lists a market, fisheries, and salt houses in Spalding (Morgan & Thorn, 1986). The priory expanded its influence throughout the early medieval period, leading to frequent disputes with its founding abbey at Crowland.

Despite an abundance of documentary evidence, archaeologically the Priory is not well represented. 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 (eg Abbey Passage, Priory Road), some 250m to the south of the site.

The town also received a castle in the early post-Conquest period. This was established by Ivo Tallboys in 1074, the year after becoming Lord of Spalding and all Holland (White, 1856). Nothing remains of this castle, but the earthworks were said to be visible in 1746 at Coney Garth, c.400m north-east of the site.

By the Middle Ages Spalding had developed into a small town and port. This was largely thanks to its position controlling all shipping on the River Welland, exporting wool and woad to Europe, and importing wine and other luxury goods bound for Crowland (Palmer-Brown, 2000). The 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.

The A151 (Westlode Street), immediately to the south of the site, was originally an artificial channel of uncertain, but possibly Roman date, which was designed to drain the waters of the fens west of Spalding, as well as being the principal transport route linking Spalding to Bourne, and acting as a conduit for the agricultural produce of the intervening landscape (Gooch, 1940). 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, approximately 100m south-west of the site). Following the erection of steam pumps at Podge Hole in 1824, the significance of the Westlode as a drainage channel diminished, and silt from the Welland was used to fill the channel (*ibid.*). The route of the former channel is now preserved as New Road and Westlode Street, which joins Albion Street to the east.

The town continued to prosper throughout the later medieval period. After the priory was dissolved by Henry VIII, the manor of Spalding initially passed into the hands of the crown, then the Duchy of Lancaster, the Buccleuch family, and Sir Sampson Gideon in the later 18th century. His estate was gradually sold off in portions during the 19th century (Wright, 1973). The Industrial and Agricultural revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries saw further expansion. Enclosure and drainage of the fens opened huge areas to agriculture, much of the produce being exported through Boston and Spalding to London. This rapid expansion saw the population double in the first half of the 19th century, with the necessary building work extending the town beyond its medieval core, to occupy both banks of the Welland.

3.0 Cartographic evidence

John Grundy, a local mathematics teacher, produced the earliest available map of Spalding showing the proposed development area, in 1732. The map extract (fig. 3) shows the core of the town was largely contained within the confines of the medieval town, to the south of the Westlode. At this time, the Westlode was still in use as a drainage channel and canal. The proposed development area is to the north of this, bounded by Deadman's Lane (later to become Swan Street). The site is largely devoid of buildings at this time, although two structures fronting onto Westlode Side encroach on the south end of the development area.

Fig. 4 is an extract from the first edition Ordnance Survey map (1888). In the 150-year gap between the two maps, considerable development had taken place in the vicinity of the site. The Westlode was filled in, the course being marked by New Road, and the block of development south of Chapel Lane. Development also intensified between Chapel Lane and Swan Street, with buildings occupying the north and south ends of the site. It is possible that deep foundations or cellars associated with these buildings may have truncated underlying archaeological deposits. Figure 4 shows open space between the buildings where the archaeological deposits may be less disturbed however, unless affected by more recent development.

4.0 Conclusion

The subsequent phase of archaeological intervention requires the excavation of a single trench, measuring 3m by 3m, in order to assess the archaeological significance of any deposits likely to be disturbed by the proposed development. The 1888 Ordnance Survey map indicates structures existed along the north and south sides of the development area. As a result, the suggested location of the trench is central to the site, where the likelihood of the archaeological deposits being preserved in situ is the greatest (fig. 2).

5.0 References

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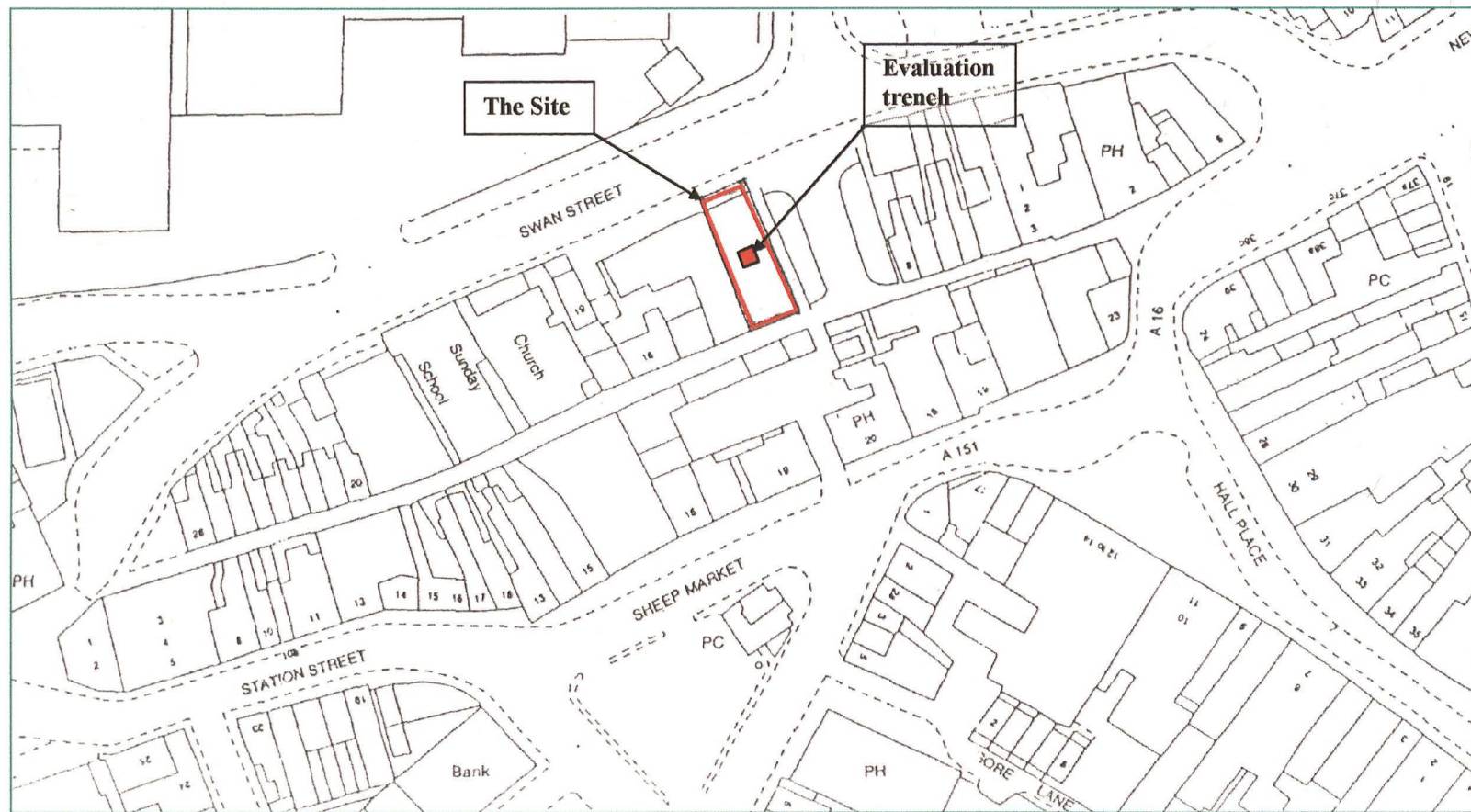


Fig. 2: Location of proposed development area (outlined in red), showing the suggested position of the evaluation trench (scale 1:1250)

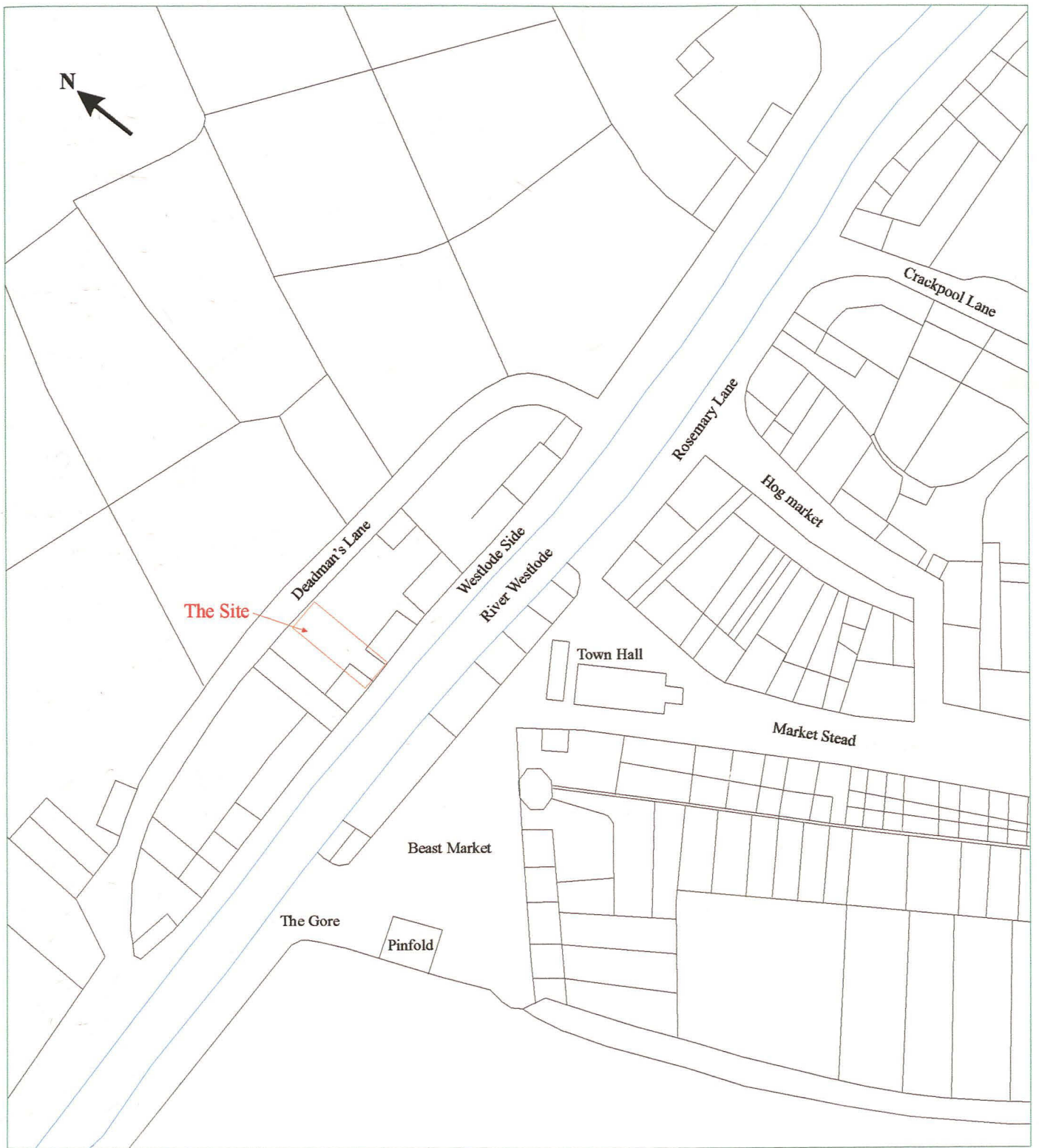


Fig. 3: Map of Spalding, dated 1732, showing the position of the site (scale 1^{''}:45 yards, approx 1:1635)

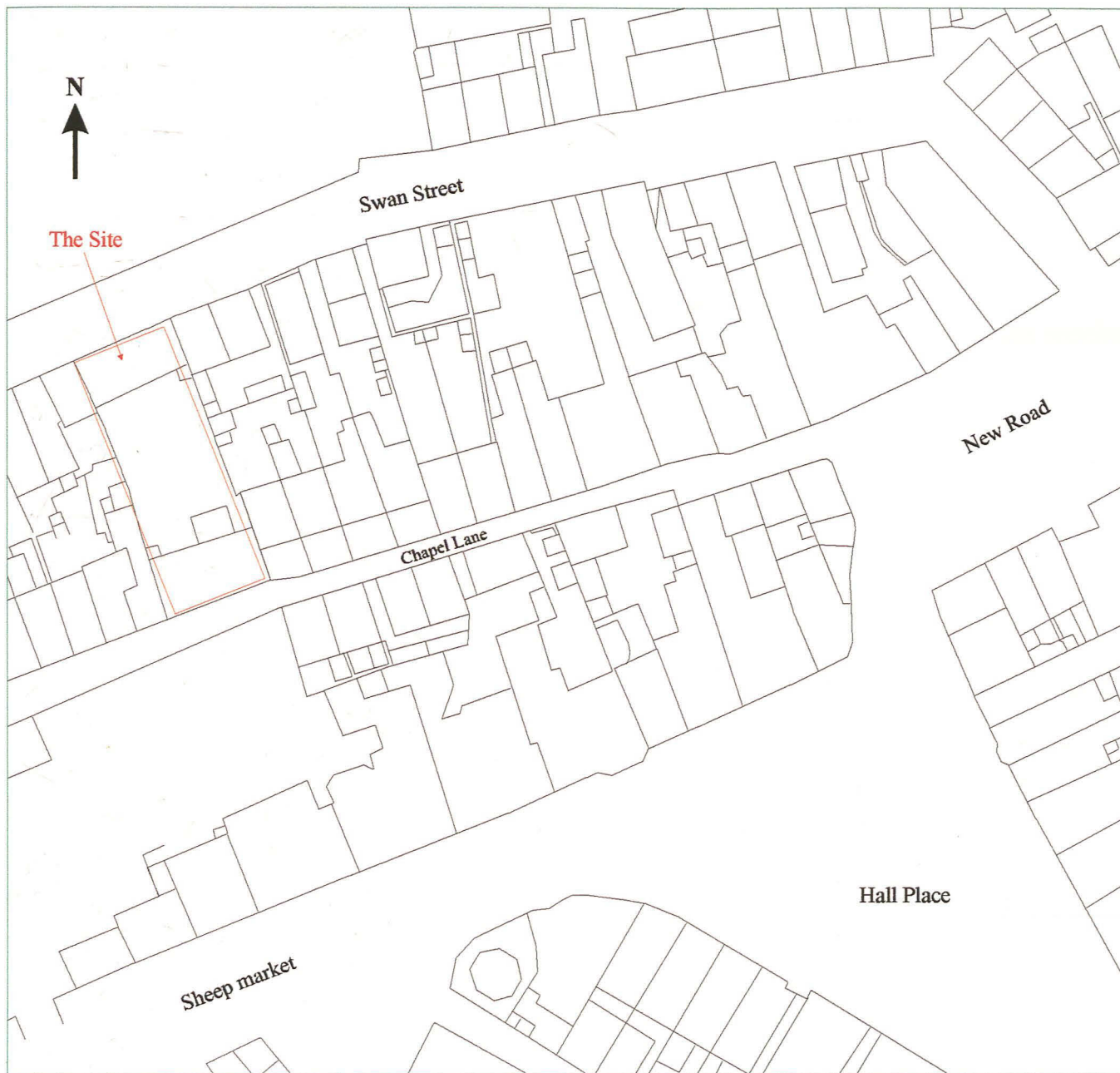


Fig. 4: First edition Ordnance Survey map extract, showing the proposed development area in red (scale 100 inches to the mile, approx 1:620)