



LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

**20-32 Bridge Street, Gainsborough, Lincs.**

NGR: SK 8145 8962

Site Code: GBSH 03

LCNCC Museum Accn No.: 2003.258

**Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment**

**Report for Franklin Ellis**

**(on behalf of Gainsborough Riverside Developments Ltd)**

**by G. Tann**

**LAS Report No. 679**

**July 2003**

Conservation  
Services

22 JUL 2003

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## **20-32 Bridge Street, Gainsborough, Lincs. Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment**

NGR: SK 8145 8962

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### **Summary**

*The application site lies alongside the river, on ground known to have been densely developed after the late eighteenth century. The surviving derelict building is apparently of eighteenth century date, and many original details survive. Other parts of the site have been cleared, but cellars and foundations can be expected below ground level.*

*The site lies next to a medieval raised road, but probably lies over an early course of the river. No medieval or earlier occupation features are anticipated on the site, but the site has the potential to contain the full sequence of development for this riverfront location.*

### **Introduction**

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned in July 2003 by Franklin Ellis (on behalf of Gainsborough Riverside Developments Ltd) to prepare an archaeological desk-based assessment of land between Bridge Street and the River Trent, Gainsborough, Lincs. (Figs. 1-3). The site occupies the sites of Nos. 20-32 Bridge Street, between the DN21 discotheque (with V Bar to the north) and Whittons Mill, opposite Hickman Street.

### **Planning Background**

No planning proposals have been advised.

### **Aims and Objectives**

In general terms the purpose of the desk-based assessment is to

- collate available information relating to previous use of the site (both documented and reflected in physical remains) which would indicate archaeological potential and/or areas where previous activity has probably removed any potential
- gather sufficient information to enable an assessment of the potential and significance of any archaeological remains to be made and the impact which development will have upon them
- enable an informed decision to be made regarding the future treatment of any archaeological remains and consider any appropriate mitigatory measures either in advance of and/or during development.

### **Methods and Sources**

A desk-based assessment of the site, within a 0.5km surrounding area, was undertaken in order



to identify and assess all archaeological constraints. Research for the assessment was conducted by G. Tann between July 4th - 9th 2003. The following sources were consulted and available information researched:

- Lincolnshire County Council County Archaeology Office (Sites and Monuments Record; National Mapping Programme overlays)
- Lincolnshire Archives Office (Enclosure map, Ordnance Survey maps, manuscript maps and other documentary and published sources)
- Lincoln Central Library Reference Department, Local Studies Collection (Ordnance Survey maps and press cuttings folder)
- Site visit

### **Topography and Geology**

The historic core of Gainsborough town is sited on boulder-clay deposits, overlying Jurassic lias clays. Lower land to its west and south, including Bridge Street, is on alluvial deposits associated with the River Trent. The river is now about 55m wide (as in 1885), and flows alongside the site in a northerly direction.

The site occupies the space between the new riverside walk and Bridge Street, sloping slightly up to Bridge Street at about 20m OD. Previous names for Bridge Street include 'The Causey' in 1659, which probably denotes an artificially raised causeway; the nineteenth century course of Bridge Street may have been aligned along an early flood bank, although no evidence of such a feature has been recorded (Beckwith 1988, 86). This would imply that none of the site is on a natural contour.

Further evidence of probable reclamation along the riverside has been obtained from previous archaeological investigations on sites to the north and south of the application site. An evaluation at Silver Street (opposite Chapel Staithe) identified sloping bands of apparently waterborne silt, sands and clay, rising to the east (Holbrey 1996). This supported the conclusions of a small excavation in the cellar of the Baltic Oil Mill which found a probable former river bed extending from the east to about 10m west of the present Bridge Street, 0.9m below the cellar floor (Field 1989). An illustration in the site archive suggests that the river bed was about 3m below the level of Bridge Street, which places it at about 3m OD. West of this, the deposits fell away abruptly, into a later and deeper river channel.

To the south of the application site, observations along the eastern side of Bridge Street have also only revealed deposits of silts and sands to depths of over 1.6m below the modern ground surface, i.e. to at least 4.5m OD (Palmer-Brown 1994).

Although no geotechnical investigations are known to have been conducted within the

application site, information from the immediate vicinity suggests that it lies within natural silting deposits of successive previous channels of the River Trent, which has moved westward over time.

### **Archaeological and Historical Background (Fig. 4)**

Previously recorded sites and findspots are listed in the Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record. These have been allocated Primary Record Numbers (PRNs) and these are used in the text. A summary list of entries in the vicinity is provided in Appendix 1.

#### ***Prehistoric and Roman***

No prehistoric sites or artefacts have been reported from close to the site, although a few Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age worked flints were found during excavations at Gainsborough Old Hall in the 1980s (Field 1988; N. Field, pers. comm.). On the opposite river bank, similar artefacts have been found close to Dog Island, including a flint scraper and a possible hammer-stone (Notts. SMR 05867).

A small number of Roman pottery sherds were recovered from the Old Hall excavations, but these were not associated with contemporary features (Field 1988). As with the prehistoric finds, their presence indicates early occupation of the areas of higher ground beyond the Trent flood plain.

It is probable that the application site lay within a river channel during this period. A remote chance exists of prehistoric features or artefacts associated with the river being present in deep deposits on the site.

#### ***Saxon and Medieval***

The place-name Gainsborough derives from *Genesburuh*, recorded in the mid-eleventh century *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. The elements indicate 'Gaegn's fortified place', referring either to the natural strategic importance of the site, or to an artificially enhanced site (Cameron 1998, 49). In the early eleventh century, Gainsborough held a regional importance, at the centre of the Danelaw area. The core of the Saxon settlement has not been located, but probably occupied higher ground. A medieval or earlier ditch, recorded in 1434 as the *Burghdyke*, enclosed the medieval town. Antiquarian observations from the early nineteenth century suggest that it may have bounded an area from near The Pillared House (north of Thornton Street), to the vicinity of the Old Hall (Stark 1817). The application site lies within this defined area.

Chapel Staithe, 75m north of the application site, seems to have been named because of its proximity to a chapel. Skeletons (SMR 52049) found in its vicinity indicate a burial ground, and associated deposits have produced a single sherd of mid twelfth/mid thirteenth century Lincoln Glazed Ware pottery (Clay 2002). The timber chapel (SMR 52061) was described by John



Leland in 1538 (Moor 1904). The contemporary river-edge, and the extent of reclaimed land, remains unclear. A few medieval pottery sherds were found in the Baltic Mill excavations, but closer dating of these is not available (Field 1989, and the site archive).

Dog Island, on the Nottinghamshire side of the river but opposite the site, has been tentatively identified as a medieval homestead moat (Notts. SMR 05031), with its eastern bank and ditch removed by flood defences alongside the river. Doubt remains about this description, and it is possible that Dog Island is entirely the product of post-medieval wharfage and ship-building yards (Notts. SMR 05045).

The medieval predecessor of Bridge Street was probably on the same line as the road marked in 1743, and presumably little changed until the realignment of 1930. The 1659 documentary reference to 'The Causey' implies that the road was raised, which is plausible considering its position close to the river edge. It is likely that a simple flood bank alongside the river may have developed into the road. Slight traces of this seem to have been visible in the late nineteenth century topography, with land rising about 3m between the Low Water Mark and Bridge Street at Chapel Staithe, and falling almost 1m between Bridge Street and 4.5m to its east in Hickman Street (OS 1886).

### *Post-medieval*

The excavations below the Baltic Mill (SMR 50723) revealed a 0.6m wide brick wall foundation 3m west of the present Bridge Street, and approximately parallel to the road. It was apparently positioned at the edge of an earlier river bed, with ground sloping down into a later channel on its western side. The wall was tentatively dated on the basis of its brickwork, and the latest date of pottery within the earlier deposits, to the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century (Field 1989). The 1866 mill building had been constructed over the demolished foundation of this wall. The excavation was not sufficiently extensive to show if this was an internal or external wall; in this position it could have been the riverside wall of a building if the river edge has moved 19m further west since the seventeenth century.

An estate map of **1743** shows the riverside south of the town (Fig. 5; LAO Bacon Plans 39). A road, aligned virtually north-south, is labelled Church Street. The western side of the road is shown as developed as far south as the river bend, with a broad gap before further buildings. The eastern side of the road is illustrated as developed considerably further south. An illustration by Nathaniel Drake in **1747**, shows dense buildings along the riverfront (Lindley 1991, 16). Identification of the application site's position is difficult as so many features have been changed, but it appears to fall within the developed area.

The destruction of the early brick building on the site of Baltic Mill reflects a phase of riverside redevelopment in the **mid-nineteenth century**, probably making use of reclaimed land and

pushing the rear walls of buildings back to the contemporary river edge. A further example of this has been recorded at Gleadall's Wharf, 200m south of the application site, where river silt deposits were sealed by eighteenth-nineteenth century horizons (Clay 2002). Ibbotson's map of **1851** is the earliest reliable indication of development of the site, although published at a small scale (Ibbotson 1851). It shows buildings on the site of No. 20, enclosing a small open central yard. Adjoining premises to the south were fully developed along the street frontage, but contained large open areas to the rear. A large building occupied the site of No. 30.

The Ordnance Survey 1:500 map, surveyed in **1885**, is at a much more useful scale (Fig. 6; OS 1886). The northernmost part of the site (equating with No. 20) was occupied by a 15m wide building (labelled as a malthouse), with a small projection into the river. A narrow passageway led from Bridge Street between this building and the narrower unit on No. 22; the yard to the rear had been progressively infilled, but part still remained open. A pump is shown in the yard, about 13m from the river edge. The map appears to show a set of steps leading from the river at the NW edge of this property.

The street frontage of No. 24 was developed, but behind it was an open area 19.5m x 9m, labelled as a wharf. The premises to the south were subdivided into four on the street frontage, (with a central access opposite Hickman Street), but linked by a single building along the western half of the plot. The next unit south was shown as a single block, with a thinner property and access at the southern limit of the application site.

It proved difficult during research for this assessment to discover the past uses of the different properties within the application site. Street directories for Lincolnshire towns did not state property numbers until about 1885, and even after then not all premises were listed or enumerated. The details were presented in alphabetical or trades order, removing the opportunity to approximate to an address. Goad Insurance Plans for Gainsborough are not available at Lincoln Central Library. It was established that most of the constituent premises (including Nos. 22, 24, 26, 28, 30 and 32 Bridge Street) had served as small shops, such as grocers, greengrocers, saddler, stationer, or 'fried fish dealer' at different dates between **1889** and **1937** (Kelly, various). The Gainsborough Industrial Co-operative Society Ltd used No. 24 Bridge Street for several years after 1930. The only consistent exception was Hewitt Bros brewer's premises at No. 20, certainly used after 1930, but Hewitt's had a brewery in Bridge Street before 1909, and this may well have been at the same address. The property coincides with the building labelled 'maltings' on Ordnance Survey maps after 1885. No changes to the 1885 survey are marked on the smaller scale Ordnance Survey revision of **1918** (OS 1921).

The southern end of the application site was occupied by an asbestos clad, steel-framed extension to the adjacent brick-built Whittons Mill, which was demolished in early **2000** (GS 10/3/00). Most of Whittons Mill has since been refurbished as extra-care housing (GRB 2001).



No other documentary material has been located which clarifies other aspects of the later development of this site.

### **Site Visit**

The application site was visited by G. Tann on July 4th 2003. Access to the site is from Bridge Street; at present much of the site is enclosed as a contractor's compound, and site offices occupy most of the street frontage (Pls. 1-3). Behind the cabins, building materials, demolition material and other rubbish obscure most of the site surface (Pl. 4).

The application site is in three distinct parts. At the northern end is a two-storey brick building, 20 Bridge Street, which has most recently served as a car showroom and tyre repair garage. The Gainsborough Development Trust website refers to this as 'Riverside Garage', but this name was not seen elsewhere. Cars were still stored within the former showroom, and no attempt was made to gain access to this building. Both the west and south elevations appear to be substantially of eighteenth century construction, although all but the two westernmost windows on the south elevation are later insertions. Part of a parapet along the south wall has been rebuilt in the twentieth century. Engineering bricks were seen at the foot of the rear wall, beside the new riverside path; these may be an inserted damp-proof course. Stone quoins survive on the SW corner, but are not present on the NW corner. The elevation facing the river has a central loading bay, with a swinging iron hoist still present, and windows to either side with brick lintel details (Pls. 5 and 6)). Near to ground level is a blocked chute, probably serving rear cellars.

The street frontage is a late Victorian or early twentieth century brick facade, with stone details around doors and windows. Much of this has survived showroom alterations. There was no evidence of any rebuilding resulting from 1930s street widening; V-Bar to the north has a date stone of 1907. Part of a basement window was visible at No. 20, close to a cellar hatch.

A stone name plate, inscribed ?IJ W. Hornby 1762, is attached above the doorway of a passage between 20 and 18. The plate has been damaged in the past, and it is probable that this occurred during removal from a previous wall and re-erection in its present position. W. Hornby was a Gainsborough merchant who leased Gainsborough Old Hall in c.1760 with the aim of making coarse linen; equally unsuccessfully he established a bank with Esdaile in the 1790s, which collapsed in 1803 (Wright 1982, 67, 71). Research for this assessment has not traced any link with these Bridge Street premises.

The centre of the site, correlating to Nos. 22-28 Bridge Street, has been cleared of all structures, leaving only small areas of concrete yard surface and the lowered part of the rear wall. Stone quoins survive at the corner of a west-east wall stub near the SW end, and outside the site near its northern end (Pls. 7 and 8). The remainder of the central area is covered with

demolition rubble, site cabins and builders' materials. A north-south brick wall foundation is visible at ground level slightly behind the site frontage (Pl. 9).

The southern part of the site has been recently enhanced as part of the Whittons Mill residential development. In addition to the refurbished twentieth century mill extension (No. 30), an external area has been laid out as a landscaped pedestrian access with a timber fence to the north.

### **Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings**

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments on the application site or in its vicinity on the Lincolnshire side of the river, but the moat and wharf at Dog Island on the Nottinghamshire bank are scheduled (Notts. SAM 59).

18 Bridge St, to the north, is a Grade II Listed Building. Any remedial works or demolition being carried out as part of the development would need to consider the setting of this Listed Building. Several riverside buildings further south are listed buildings, but none are in the close vicinity.

### **Archaeological Potential of the Site**

The site has limited archaeological potential for the pre-medieval period, as it is suspected to have lain within channels of the River Trent. The site might contain dateable environmental evidence for natural silting and movement of the river channel, which could help to establish the early topography of this part of Gainsborough. There is a possibility of early river structures, such as mooring posts and fish traps, surviving.

Dumping deposits can be expected from the medieval period as the former river channel was reclaimed. These could be associated with flood defences and revetments. Evidence of buildings is unlikely to be found before the post-medieval period, but there are indications of several phases of rebuilding along this waterfront.

Cellars and basements are known for buildings along this side of Bridge Street, excavated into the soft ground and acting as deep foundations for the structures above. The site visit showed that cellars are present at the northern end of the application site. Although the construction of these will have removed deposits, they will equally have made deeper deposits more safely accessible. Cellars may incorporate remnants of earlier buildings.

The remaining buildings on the site should be subject to a survey designed to identify any elements which predate the 1930s realignment of Bridge Street. During the site visit, cut stone masonry was seen alongside the rear wall, and further evidence of early buildings may survive within the fabric of the former car showroom. There is a chance that features dating from the nineteenth century maltings activity at No. 20 may be present.



demolition rubble, site cabins and builders' materials. A north-south brick wall foundation is visible at ground level slightly behind the site frontage (Pl. 9).

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### **Potential Archaeological Impact of the Proposed Development**

No details of the proposed development were available while this assessment was in preparation. Some of the extant buildings may be demolished in advance of redevelopment of the site. Elsewhere, surface deposits will be vulnerable to any development, and deeper horizons will be affected by piled or excavated foundations.

### **Options for Further Investigation**

An inspection of the standing buildings at the north end of the site could be undertaken to establish their construction date, and to check for evidence of their original function. A photographic survey in advance of any demolition would preserve a record of their appearance.

Evaluation trenching may be appropriate on cleared parts of the site, to identify and examine any possible features and confirm their date. Archaeological monitoring of contractors' groundworks might be appropriate if the development is approved.

Previous use of the application site may have produced contamination of below-ground deposits by fuel oils or other substances. The combination of derelict premises and the adjacent river produces a high risk of leptospirosis, and suitable precautions should be taken by those engaged in building survey or archaeological fieldwork on the site.

### **Conclusion**

The standing derelict building at the northern end of the site has been a maltings, and some traces of this use remain visible. The building represents the greatest above-ground archaeological interest on the application site, and close scrutiny could provide useful detail of the riverfront's development and adaptation from the eighteenth century. Lesser traces probably also remain along the rear of the site, and below ground-level in the form of foundations and cellars.

The site is believed to be sited on ground reclaimed since the medieval period. Archaeological investigation below ground level can be expected to identify reclamation deposits and the sequence of previous river channels. Archaeological structures are less likely, although some wharfrage and other river-edge features could be present.

### **Acknowledgements**

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produced by Karen Dennis (NAL). Naomi Field contributed the description of the standing building, and produced the report.

Geoff Tann  
Lindsey Archaeological Services  
15th July 2003

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#### **Air Photographs**

Aerofilms A25211 SK 814 896

Aerofilms A25212 SK 814 896

#### **Webpages:**

[www.gainsboroughdevelopmenttrust.co.uk/whittons1.html](http://www.gainsboroughdevelopmenttrust.co.uk/whittons1.html)

[www.gainsboroughdevelopmenttrust.co.uk/whittons2.html](http://www.gainsboroughdevelopmenttrust.co.uk/whittons2.html)

[www.gainsboroughdevelopmenttrust.co.uk/whittons3.html](http://www.gainsboroughdevelopmenttrust.co.uk/whittons3.html)

#### **Archive Summary**

Correspondence

Copies of developer's plans

Photographs: colour prints, LAS film no. 03/76/00-26



## APPENDIX 1



# APPENDIX 1

## Archaeological Sites and Findspots Recorded from the Vicinity

(source: Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record; Nottinghamshire Sites and Monuments Record)

| SMR PRN No. | NGR (all SK) | Description  | Status       |
|-------------|--------------|--|--------------|
| 50274       | 8143 9005    | row of almshouses, Gladstone Street  |              |
| 50421       | 8150 9036    | site of pinfold, 1851  |              |
| 50722       | 8147 8925    | Sandar's maltings, 94-110 Bridge Street  |              |
| 52049       | 8140 8980    | nine human skeletons found in sand, 1969; single sherd 12th/13thC pottery found pre 1904; possible site of chapel.                                   |              |
| 52069       | 8144 9011    | All Saints Church  |              |
| 52072       | 8155 9032    | medieval floor tile, found 1962  |              |
| 50723       | 8140 8970    | Baltic Oil Mill. Built early 19thC, about 1830. Demolished 1995  |              |
| 52051       | 8130 8990    | large sherd of green-glazed pottery, Parnell Street  |              |
| 52052       | 8132 8982    | late 16thC jetton, found 1976  |              |
| 52055       | 81340 89906  | skeleton found at corner of Lord Street and Bright Street, 1981  |              |
| 52061       | 8140 8970    | site of old Guilds Chapel, seen by Leland 1538   |              |
| 52090       | 8130 8980    | Corn warehouse, Caskgate Street. Keystones bearing dates 1787 and 1854. Two merged buildings, demolished in late 1960s                               |              |
| 51468       | 8150 8990    | Post-medieval settlement of Gainsborough; 1642 earthwork and timber defences for civil war   |              |
| 52081       | 8150 8990    | Medieval settlement of Gainsborough, initially around parish church and Old Hall   |              |
| 52088       | 8150 8950    | former malting warehouse, 1995 used as corn miller's warehouse. Built ?c1760   |              |
| 52093       | 8140 8970    | 19thC warehouse  |              |
| 54566       | 8146 8946    | 19thC brick warehouse or merchant's house with stone cladding, Gleadall's Wharf. Associated wharf or staithe, perhaps associated with Pillared House |              |
| 52053       |              | medieval brass thimble   |              |
| 52054       |              | three skeletons found 1875, ?Anglo-Saxon   |              |
| 52066       | 8215 8916    | ?small ditched enclosure, with ridge and furrow to east  |              |
| 52083       | 8150 8936    | Pillared House, Bridge Street, ?built 1670 on site of old palace. Demolished 1936  |              |
| 52089       | 8130 8940    | warehouse, 84 Bridge Street  | LBII         |
| 52091       | 8144 8907    | road bridge and toll house, River Trent, built 1787-91   |              |
| 52094       | 8140 8930    | 19thC warehouse, 92 Bridge Street  | LBII         |
| 52095       | 8147 8930    | Early 19thC granary warehouse, 90 Bridge Street  | LBII         |
| 54592       | 81748 89022  | 1882 church  | LB           |
| N05031      | 8133 8953    | Dog Island: remains of homestead moat, with remains of 19thC brick building  | Notts SAM 59 |
| N05031a     | 8133 8953    | walls of extensive wharves, c.1800, remains of grounds held by ship builders   | Notts SAM 59 |
| N05867      | 8130 8960    | Neolithic and Bronze Age flints from near Dog Island, including flint scraper and ?hammer stone  |              |
| N05045      | 8140 8920    | remains of shipyard, c. 1800   |              |



## THE FIGURES



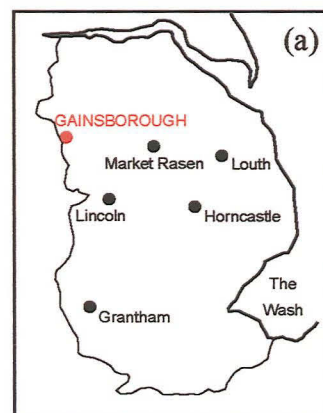
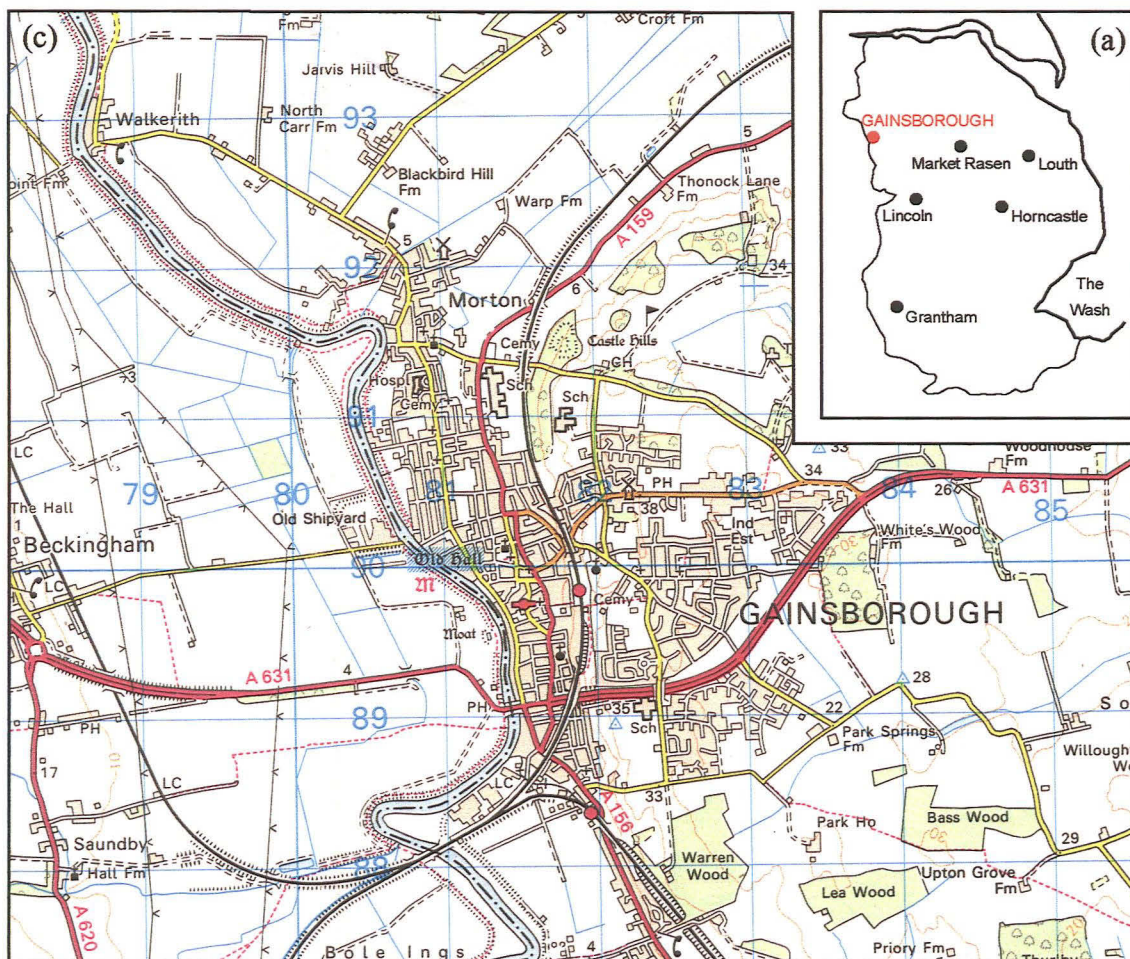
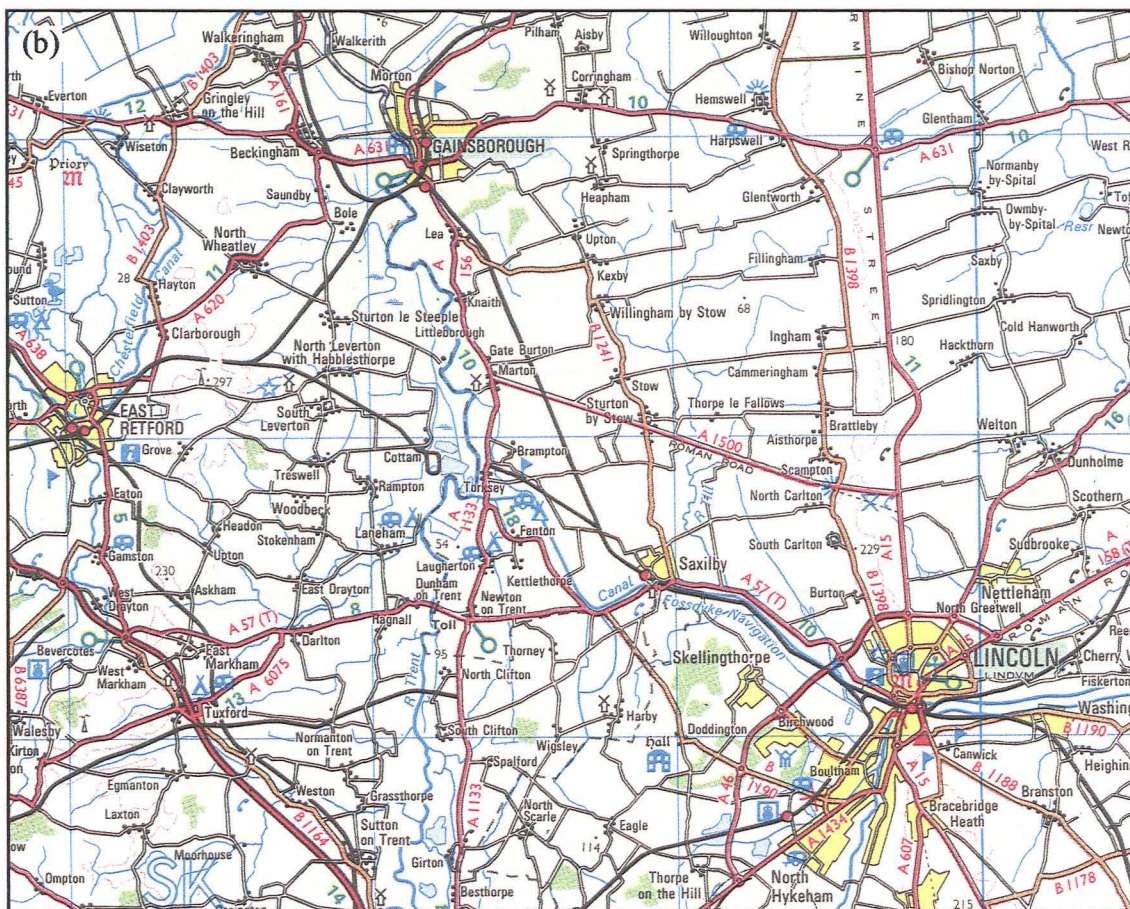


Fig. 1 Location of Gainsborough (c based on the 1992 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 Landranger map, Sheet 112. © Crown copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS licence No. AL 100002165).



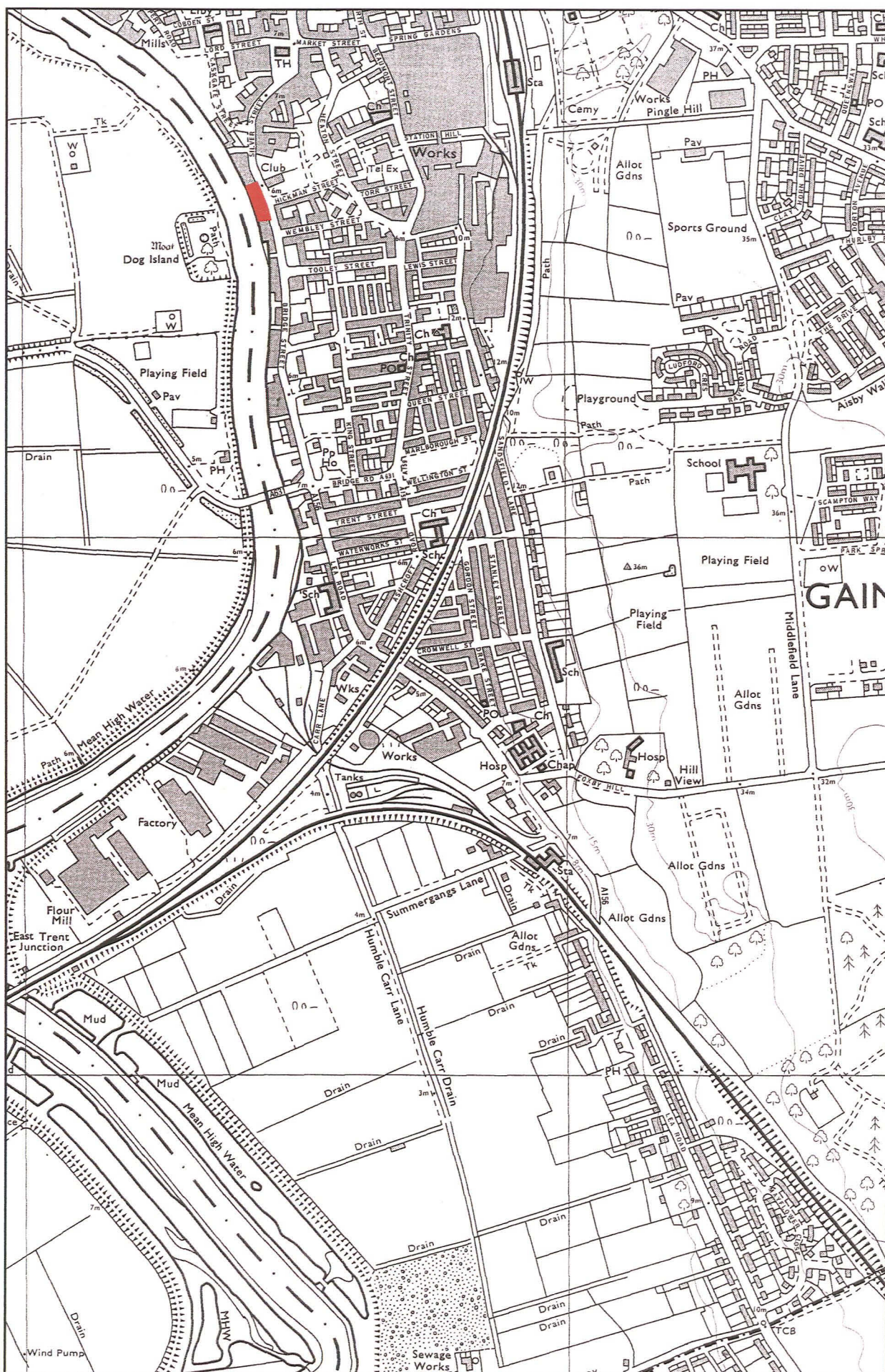


Fig. 2 Location of the application site (based on the 1973 Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map, Sheet SK 88 NW. © Crown copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 100002165).







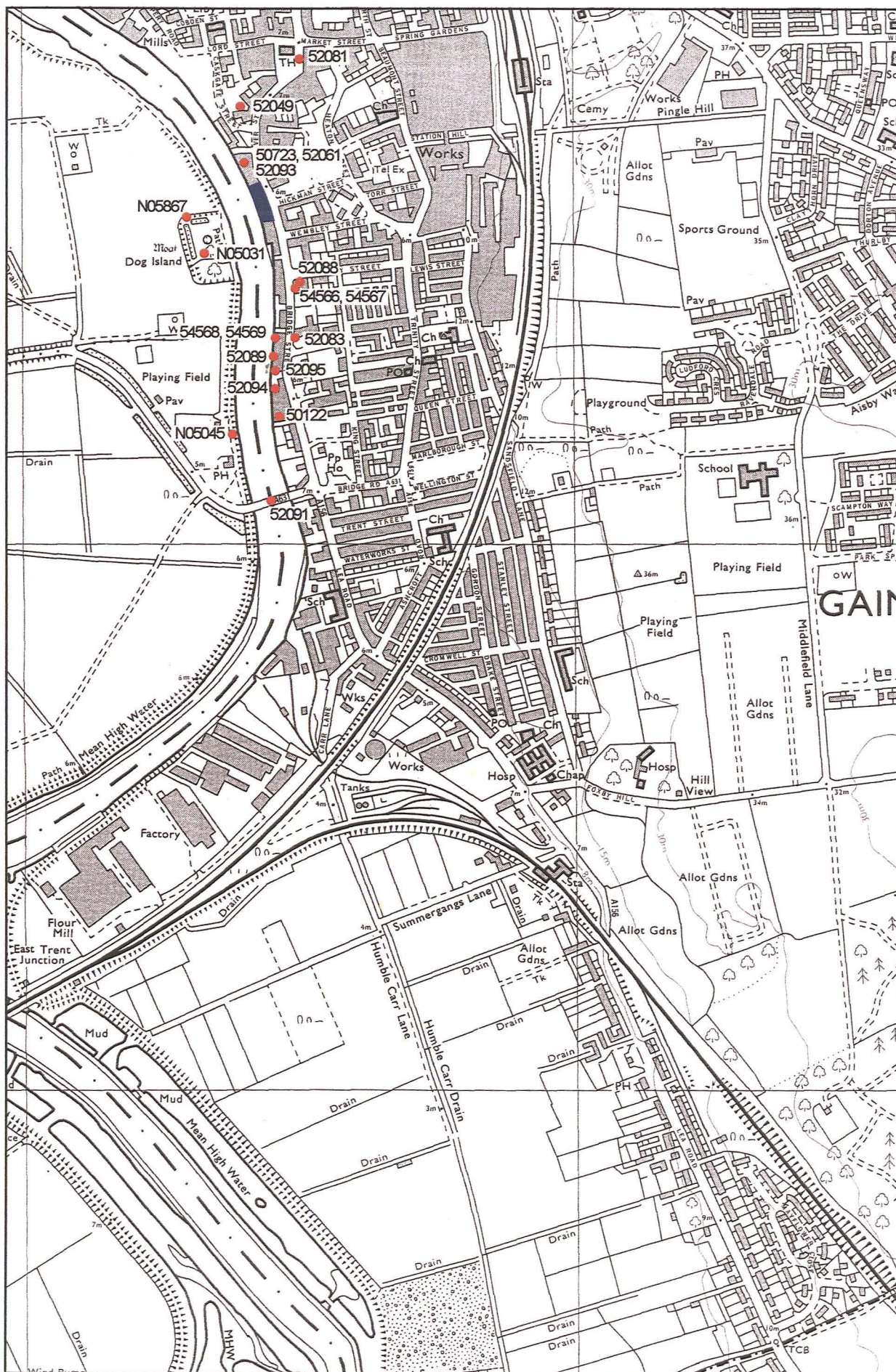


Fig. 4 Archaeological Sites and Monuments reported from the vicinity of the Application Site (source: Lincolnshire Nottinghamshire Sites and Monuments Records. Based on the 1973 Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map, Sheet SK 88 NW. © Crown copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 100002165).



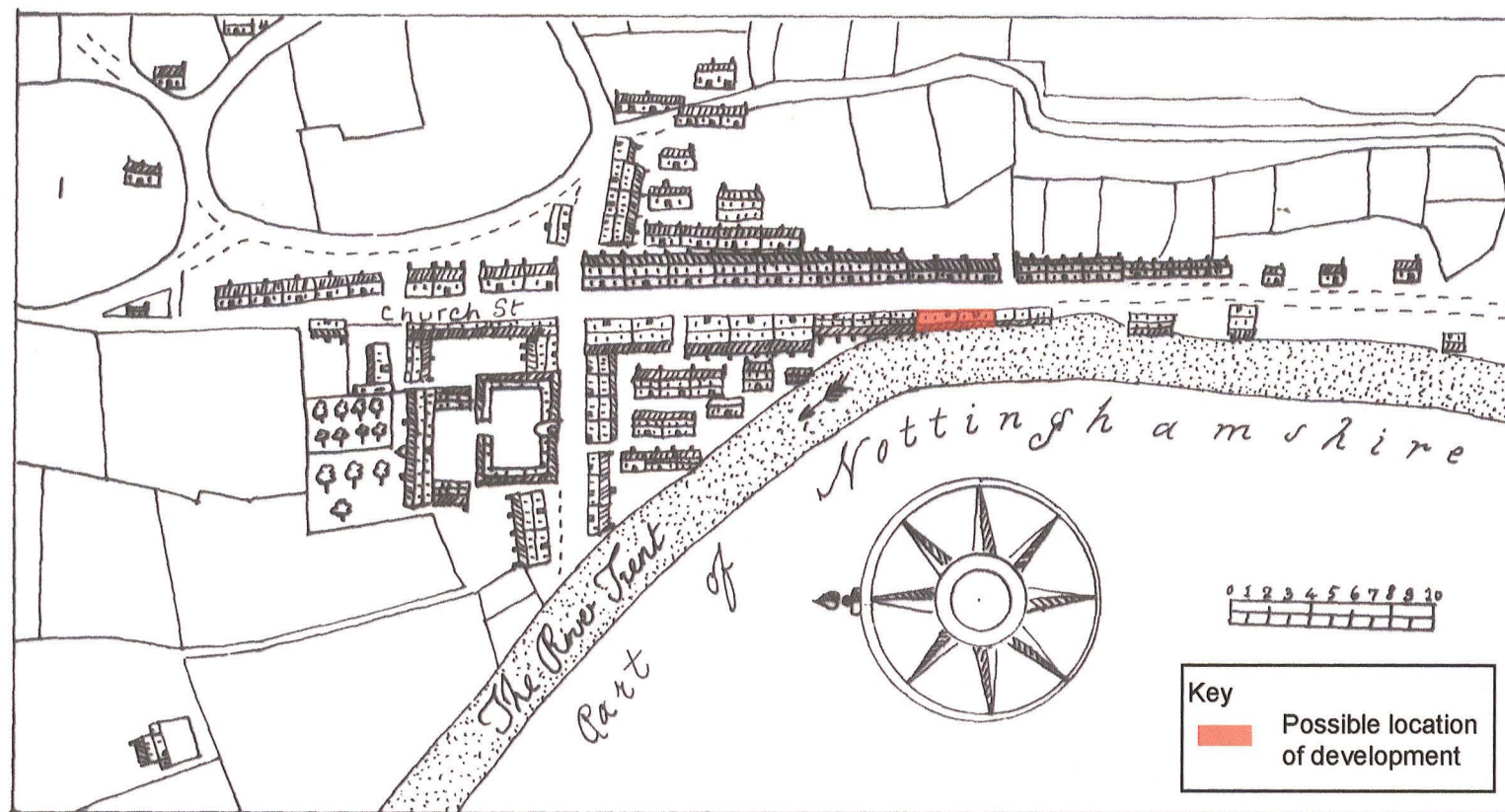


Fig. 5 Traced extract from a Map of Lands belonging to Sir Nevile Hickman, 1743 (LAO Bacon Plans 39, Lincolnshire Archives. Traced by M. Clark, reproduced at a slightly reduced scale).





Fig. 6 Extract from the Ordnance Survey 1886 1:500 plan, Lincs. Sheet 42.12.4, reproduced at a reduced scale.



## THE PLATES





Pl. 1 Bridge Street (Looking south past Hickman Street (left). The site is on the right, beyond the van).



Pl. 2 Former car showroom at the northern end of the site (looking west across Bridge Street).





Pl. 3 Recently refurbished buildings at the north side of Whittons Mill from the southern side of the site, with a broad cleared central area (looking west).





Pl. 4 Southern elevation of the former maltings building (looking north).





Pl. 5 Riverside elevation of the former maltings (looking towards Whittons Mill from the new riverside path).



Pl. 6 Detail of the iron hoist on the riverside elevation of the former maltings.





Pl. 7 Stone detail at the end of a demolished brick wall, near the southern end of the site (looking SW).



Pl. 8 Stone quoins on the riverside wall (looking SE).





Pl. 9 Demolished brick wall foundation close to Bridge Street frontage of the site (looking NE).