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**DESK-TOP ASSESSMENT OF THE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF  
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT  
CHURCH LANE,  
ANCASTER,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(CLA95)**

Work Undertaken For  
Mr S. Ballaam

June 1995



**A P S**  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECT  
SERVICES

LINCOLNSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL  
12 JUL 1985  
CITY AND COUNTY  
MUSEUM

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	SUMMARY .....	1
2.	INTRODUCTION .....	1
	2.1 Planning Background .....	1
	2.2 Topography and Geology .....	1
3.	AIMS .....	2
4.	METHODS .....	2
5.	RESULTS .....	2
	5.1 Historical Data .....	2
	5.2 Cartographic Data .....	2
	5.3 Aerial Photograph Data .....	3
	5.4 Archaeological Data .....	3
	5.5 Walk-over Survey .....	7
6.	DISCUSSION .....	7
7.	ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE .....	7
9.	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	9
10.	REFERENCES .....	9
11.	ABBREVIATIONS .....	9

## List of Figures

- 1 General Location Plan
- 2 Site Location Plan
- 3 Area of Proposed Development
- 4 Extract from the Inclosure Award, 1770
- 5 Extract from Bryant's Map of the County of Lincolnshire, 1828
- 6 Extract from the Tithe Award, 1846
- 7 Extract from 1905 Ordnance Survey Map
- 8 Plan of known Archaeological sites in the vicinity

## 1. SUMMARY

*A desk-top assessment was undertaken to determine the archaeological implications of proposed development to the east of Church Lane, Ancaster, South Kesteven District, Lincolnshire. Several archaeological sites and findspots are located in the vicinity of the development. Evidence for prehistoric activity in the area is represented by stone artefacts of neolithic date (c. 4000-2000 B.C.) and later settlement during the Iron Age (c. 700 B.C.-A.D. 50).*

*Romano-British (50-400 A.D.) occupation of the region has been identified in the immediate vicinity of the site. To the south lies the Roman town of Ancaster, overlying a 1st century military camp. To the north is a marching camp, or temporary fort, whilst to the south and west a large cemetery has been discovered. To the east of the investigation area is Ermine Street, a major Roman road that ran between London and the Humber estuary. A further Roman road lies to the south and it is probable that the proposed development site encompasses some of the northern ditches flanking the road.*

*Anglo-Saxon (450-650 A.D.) activity is limited to the find of a cemetery which overlies a Romano-British burial ground to the south of the village.*

*Medieval activity is scarce and Ancaster does not appear in the Domesday survey of 1086 A.D. The parish church of St Martin is the only evidence of this period with the earliest parts dating from the 12th century. A small medieval chapel, dedicated to St Mary is believed to lie in the field opposite the church.*

*The first maps of Ancaster dating from 1770, show the area defined by Ermine Street, Water Lane and Church Lane to*

*have been largely undeveloped. Little change occurred until the latter half of this century, whereupon development has occurred all around the village.*

*Present ground conditions suggest fair preservation of any surviving archaeological deposits. No recent intrusion into the site was observed. Ground conditions were considered to be suitable for a geophysical survey.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services were commissioned by Mr S. Ballaam to undertake a desk-top assessment of land to the east of Church Lane, Ancaster, South Kesteven District, Lincolnshire. This was in order to determine the archaeological implications of proposed development at the site, as detailed in planning application SK.95/0430/62/17. The archaeological assessment was undertaken in accordance with a brief set by the Community Archaeologist for South Kesteven District Council.

### 2.2 Topography and Geology

Ancaster is situated 10km west of Sleaford and approximately 10km northeast of Grantham, in South Kesteven District, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). Local topography describes Ancaster at the base of a valley formed when the River Trent flowed through the Lincoln Ridge at this point.

The proposed development is located c.300m to the north of Ancaster village centre as defined by the parish church of St Martin (Fig. 2). Situated at a height of c. 40m OD on land to the southwest of The Beck, a small watercourse (National Grid Reference SK98254389), the proposed

development site covers approximately 0.56 hectares (Fig. 3).

Local soils are predominantly of the Blackwood Association, deep permeable sandy and coarse loamy soils in glaciofluvial drift with Ruskington Association gleyic brown calcareous earths, and with Elmton 1 Association, shallow brown rendzinas (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 127; 179 and 304). Beneath these deposits is a solid geology of Great Oolitic Limestone and Upper Lincolnshire Limestone.

### 3. AIMS

The aims of the desk-top assessment were to locate and, if present, evaluate any known archaeological sites in the vicinity of the proposed development area. Such location and assessment of significance would permit the formulation of an appropriate response to integrate the needs of the archaeology with the proposed development programme.

### 4. METHODS

Compilation of the archaeological and historical data relevant to the area of the proposed development site involved examination of all appropriate primary and secondary sources available. These have included:

- historical documents, held in Lincolnshire Archives
- enclosure, tithe, parish and other maps and plans, held in Lincolnshire Archives
- recent and old Ordnance Survey maps
- the County Sites and Monuments Record
- the files of the South Kesteven District Community Archaeologist

- aerial photographs
- archaeological books and journals
- place-name evidence

Information obtained in the literature and cartographic examination was supplemented by a walk-over survey of the proposed development site. This walk-over survey investigated the present land use and condition; the extent of hardstanding and other firm surfaces; the presence, or otherwise, of dumped materials; and the appropriateness for geophysical survey. Results of the archival and field examinations were committed to scale plans of the area.

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1 Historical Data

Ancaster is first mentioned in a Danelaw charter of Henry II (1154-1189 A.D.) and again in a Feet of Fines of 1196. Referred to as 'Anecastre' the name derived from 'The Roman fort of *Anna*' (Ekwall 1974). No mention of Ancaster is found in the Domesday survey of 1086. However, West Willoughby is recorded as having two churches, one of which may have been located at Ancaster. The land was owned by St Peter of Burg (Peterborough), Colsvain and Robert De Vici (Foster and Longley 1976).

A fair had been granted to Ancaster during the medieval period and was in existence until at least the mid-18th century.

White's Directory of 1842 mentions that the village had a population of 480, not indicative of a large settlement.

### 5.2 Cartographic Data

The area to be developed is situated on the northwestern side of Ancaster village.

Appropriate maps of the vicinity were examined.

An enclosure award plan of 1770, indicating the enclosure of Sudbrook parish (Fig. 4), shows the site to be located within an area of open ground and divided east to west between two properties fronting Ermine Street. Ermine Street is here referred to as the High Dyke Road and Church Lane and Pottergate Road are also marked.

Bryant's *Map of the County of Lincoln* (1828) portrays the area under investigation as largely undeveloped land with a wood to the northwest on the other side of the stream (Fig. 5).

Dating from 1846, a tithe award map shows the northern part of Ancaster to have remained relatively unchanged since the enclosure award of 1770. Ermine Street appears for the first time as the name of the principal thoroughfare through the village (Fig. 6).

The first edition six-inch Ordnance Survey map of *c.* 1905 shows Ancaster only slightly larger than in 1846. The same field boundaries exist aligned east to west across the site. Development had occurred alongside the route of Ermine Street to the north and Ancaster's first village school had been built at the west end of Water Lane. The first recorded archaeological finds are also recorded on this map and indicate the presence of a pottery kiln to the northeast and finds of Roman coins and tessellated pavements to the southeast of the development area (Fig. 7). The same edition twenty five-inch map differs little but for Wilsford Lane referred to as Cote's Lane.

Later maps show the gradual increase in size of the village specifically since the 1940s.

### 5.3 Aerial Photograph Data

Aerial photographs, including those published or transcribed in secondary sources, were examined for evidence of archaeological remains.

A photograph in the parish files of the South Kesteven Community Archaeologist shows the general area of the site as it was post 1965. The altitude that the photograph was taken does not show features of Ancaster very well. The site appears as an area of open ground. Development has taken place at Angel Court and along Water Lane. Further development is visible to the north alongside the railway line (*ref:* PF EAV F3 14). Of interest are some hitherto unobserved cropmarks. A double rectangular shaped enclosure lies 200m to the north of the site and a series of cropmarks are visible in the field between Wilsford Lane and Sleaford Road, approximately 600m to the southeast (Fig. 8).

### 5.4 Archaeological Data

Records of archaeological sites and finds held in the Lincolnshire County Sites and Monuments Record and the files of the South Kesteven District Community Archaeologist were consulted. Other, secondary, sources were also examined. Details of archaeological and historical remains falling within half a kilometre of the proposed development area are collated here and committed to Fig. 8.

County Sites and Monuments Code	Description	Grid Reference	South Kesteven Community Archaeology Code
30301	Roman town with medieval chapel (SAM 105)	SK984435	SK02.73
30321	Silver penny of Edward I	SK983440	SK02.49
30322	Roman temporary fort (SAM 295)	SK980445	SK02.34
30328	Sculpture, <i>Deae Matres</i> , with stone incense altar (within SAM 105)	SK984435	SK02.51
30332	Foundations of Romano-British building revealed by ploughing	SK98594361	SK02.58
30333	Romano-British hare brooch with enamel decoration	SK98494362	SK02.53
30334	Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery (SAM 105)	SK983433	SK02.44
30341	Skeleton, 4th century date	SK98614432	SK02.63
	Clay coin moulds of Severan date (217-260 AD)	Unlocated	SK02.2
	Romano-British coins	Unlocated	SK02.03
	Excavations of 1967 (within SAM 105)		SK02.04
	2 Samian pottery bases	SK981435	SK02.36
	Iron Age pottery	SK981436	SK02.37
	La Tene (derived) Iron Age brooch	SK981437	SK02.38
	Romano-British stone relief fragments (within SAM 105)	SK98284356	SK02.41



	Small excavation of Roman cemetery, 1st and 2nd century material	SK98214363	SK02.42
	Late Iron age hut beneath Roman cemetery	SK982437	SK02.43
	Medieval chapel of St Mary's (within SAM 105)	SK983425	SK02.45
	<i>Deo Viridio</i> inscription (within SAM 105)	SK983436	SK02.46
	Town wall footings (within SAM 105)	SK983437	SK02.47
	Coin, bronze commemorative <i>folles</i> of Constantinopolis	SK98364384	SK02.48
	Stone battle axe fragment	SK9844	SK02.50
	2 Constantinian <i>folles</i> (coins) and a greyware flagon neck	SK98484352	SK02.52
	Possible neolithic flint blade	SK984438	SK02.54
	Romano-British greyware	SK984443	SK02.56
	Flints, including scrapers and arrowheads and a Bronze Age macehead	SK985435	SK02.57
	Fragments of 2 greyware vessels from outside the Roman town	c.SK985437	SK02.59
	Fieldwalking, Iron Age, Romano-British, Anglo-Saxon and medieval pottery	SK986433	SK02.60
	Trefoil headed short long Anglo-Saxon brooch	SK98614352	SK02.62
	Romano-British bronzes including enamelled brooch	SK98614352	SK02.68

	Coin, <i>dupondius</i> of Vespasian	SK98364354	SK02.70
	Skeleton, of Roman date	SK98614432	SK02.71
	Romano-British town, ditch and bank. RIB 2242 milestone (SAM 105)	SK97944373	SK02.72

Generally, Ancaster is situated in an area of dense archaeological activity. Although earlier prehistoric activity has been recognised in the form of finds, no settlement has so far been found within Ancaster dating from before the Iron Age. Settlement in the later Iron Age took the form of enclosure ditches, and hut circles have been located to the south and east of the village. These may indicate the presence of a large community.

During the Romano-British period, the first impact of the Romans was to the northwest of Ancaster. A temporary fort has been identified and was probably built by the IX legion Hispania as an overnight refuge on their march to Lincoln in 43 A.D. A more permanent fort was constructed to the east of the village about two years later, primarily to house soldiers as they built Ermine Street, the main Romano-British thoroughfare between London and Lincoln, which extends to the Humber estuary (Margary 1973). This fort was abandoned as the attention of legionary activities concentrated on Scotland. The legionary fort would have attracted the attention of the local civilian population and soon became the focus of markets. Evidence suggests that Ancaster later became a small town. A second Roman highway crossed Ermine street, surviving as Wilsford Lane to the east although earthworks of this road can be seen to the west, at the rear of properties fronting Ermine Street. This road is thought to have continued west to meet the Fosse Way at *Ad Pontem* (East

Stoke, Nottinghamshire). Along the course of Ermine Street, sites and artefacts of Roman date have been found, including a possible pottery kiln close to the railway station, c. 0.5km to the north east. Located to the north of the village and beneath Angel Court a Romano-British cemetery was discovered in 1965 with further cemeteries to the south and west of Ancaster.

The defences of the Romano-British town date from 280 AD and overlie earlier structures. Buildings also occur outside the town defences. A watching brief to the south of Roman Way uncovered the remains of a Romano-British dwelling (Lane 1980), whilst further examples have been located to the southeast where an agricultural building was uncovered (Todd 1975). Ditches of a Romano-British field system were also uncovered and foundations and a yard surface possibly of the same date when building work was underway at the Parsonage on Ermine Street 350m to the northeast (T.L.A. 1989-90).

Anglo-Saxon activity is represented by a large cemetery to the south of the town. It is possible that occupation continued within the town in the Anglo-Saxon period, but no settlement evidence has so far been found.

During the medieval period (1066 - 1500 A.D.) Ancaster was a relatively minor settlement. The church of St Martin has

12th century stonework within it (Pevsner 1989) and the chapel of St Mary stood in the field opposite. Divided between the parishes of Sudbrook and Wilsford, Ancaster became a parish in its own right, sometime in the 19th century. A medieval cross erected to the north of the village incorporated a Roman milestone and still stands.

### 5.5 Walk-over Survey

In mid-June 1995, a walk-over survey of the proposed development site was undertaken. Visibility was good.

Access was limited but observations made from Church Lane revealed the site to be largely open ground, at present under scrubland. No indications of buildings were observed.

The site is suitable for geophysical survey which may indicate the presence of hitherto unknown features.

## 6. DISCUSSION

Evidence for early prehistoric activity in the vicinity is scarce, but is represented by the finds of stone tools dating from the Neolithic period onwards. Iron Age activity is well represented in the form of settlement to the south and west of the village centre. Cropmark evidence from aerial photographs suggest further activity, possibly also of Iron Age date, to the north and west of the investigation area.

Romano-British occupation is quite dense in the immediate vicinity, the nearest known site lying less than 100m to the south, centred on Angel Court. Ermine Street, the Romano-British thoroughfare is located 130m to the east and an east west Roman road has been identified less than 50m to the south of the development site.

Construction to the northeast of the investigation site has frequently unearthed Romano-British material suggesting that Ermine Street was inhabited for at least part of its route to the north.

Evidence for the medieval use of the area is likely to be scarce as Ancaster was not a significant village of this period. It is likely that field boundaries exist across the site dating from at least 1770 and these may be aligned on earlier medieval burghage plots.

At present the site is largely open ground, and seems to have been so for some considerable time. It is probable that this land has been cultivated in the past and archaeological remains may well have been disturbed. Despite this there is a high possibility that archaeological remains are present.

## 7. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

For assessment of significance the *Secretary of State's criteria for scheduling ancient monuments* has been used (DoE 1990, Annex 4; see Appendix 1).

### Period:

Iron Age settlement in the vicinity of Ancaster will have regional characteristics.

The Ermine Street thoroughfare is one of the foremost British examples of its category. Ancaster Roman town is a particular regional characteristic of the Romano-British period.

### Rarity:

Iron Age settlement of the extent of the evidence from Ancaster is quite rare although individual settlement is not.

Romano-British towns, comparable in size to Ancaster, are moderately rare in national terms. However, several are known to exist in the region, including examples at Sapperton, Saltersford, Bourne and Horncastle although none of these are enclosed by walls and ditches.

Small medieval settlements are not rare, though they may possess rare or unusual features.

**Documentation:**

Records of archaeological sites and finds made in the Ancaster area are kept in the Lincolnshire County Sites and Monuments Record and the files of the South Kesteven District Community Archaeologist. A synopsis of the archaeological background has previously been produced (Todd 1981). No historical syntheses of Ancaster are known.

**Group value:**

By virtue of the conjunction of Ermine Street with the Roman settlement, the presence of military fortifications, cemeteries and the association of Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon activity, the area has a high group value in local and regional terms.

**Survival/Condition:**

No previous archaeological intervention has been made into the site to assess the level of deposit survival.

**Fragility/Vulnerability:**

As the proposed development will impact the investigation area, possibly into natural strata, any and all archaeological deposits present on the site are extremely vulnerable.

**Diversity:**

Moderately high functional diversity is provided by the localised grouping of Romano-British roads, settlement and

industrial remains. Some period diversity is provided by the possibility of Iron age and medieval occupation in the vicinity.

**Potential:**

Potential for Romano-British remains, associated with the Roman town or the cemetery beneath Angel Court, spreading into the area are considered high.

Potential of post-medieval or earlier remains are considered high in terms of boundary ditches aligned east to west across the site.

**8. CONCLUSIONS**

The concentrations of archaeological finds and observations represent occupation and use of this area of Ancaster in the past.

Early prehistoric activity is restricted to the stone tools found in the vicinity. Later Iron Age settlement has been discovered to the south and west of the village.

A Romano-British thoroughfare, Ermine Street, and an unnamed east-west road are aligned close to the investigation area. Where archaeological examinations have taken place alongside Ermine Street in the vicinity, extra-mural buildings, cemeteries and possible industrial complexes have survived and may also exist along the east to west route.

Field boundaries recognised in the early plans are likely to exist across the site.

No artefacts were recognised or recovered on the walk-over survey. Damage to archaeological deposits is limited to the topsoil only if ploughing has occurred on the field.

## 9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services would like to thank Mr S. Ballaam who commissioned this assessment. The work was coordinated by Steve Haynes and this report was edited by Dave Start. Jenny Stevens, the Community Archaeologist for South Kesteven District Council permitted examination of the relevant files. Access to the County Sites and Monuments Record was provided by Mark Bennet of the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council.

## 10. REFERENCES

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.

Bryant, A., 1828 *Map of the County of Lincoln*

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White, 1842 *Directory of Lincolnshire*

## 11. ABBREVIATIONS

Numbers prefixed by 'SK' are the reference codes used by the Community Archaeologist for South Kesteven District Council.

Department of the Environment publications are abbreviated to the initials 'DoE'.

British Archaeological Reports publications are abbreviated to the initials 'B.A.R.'

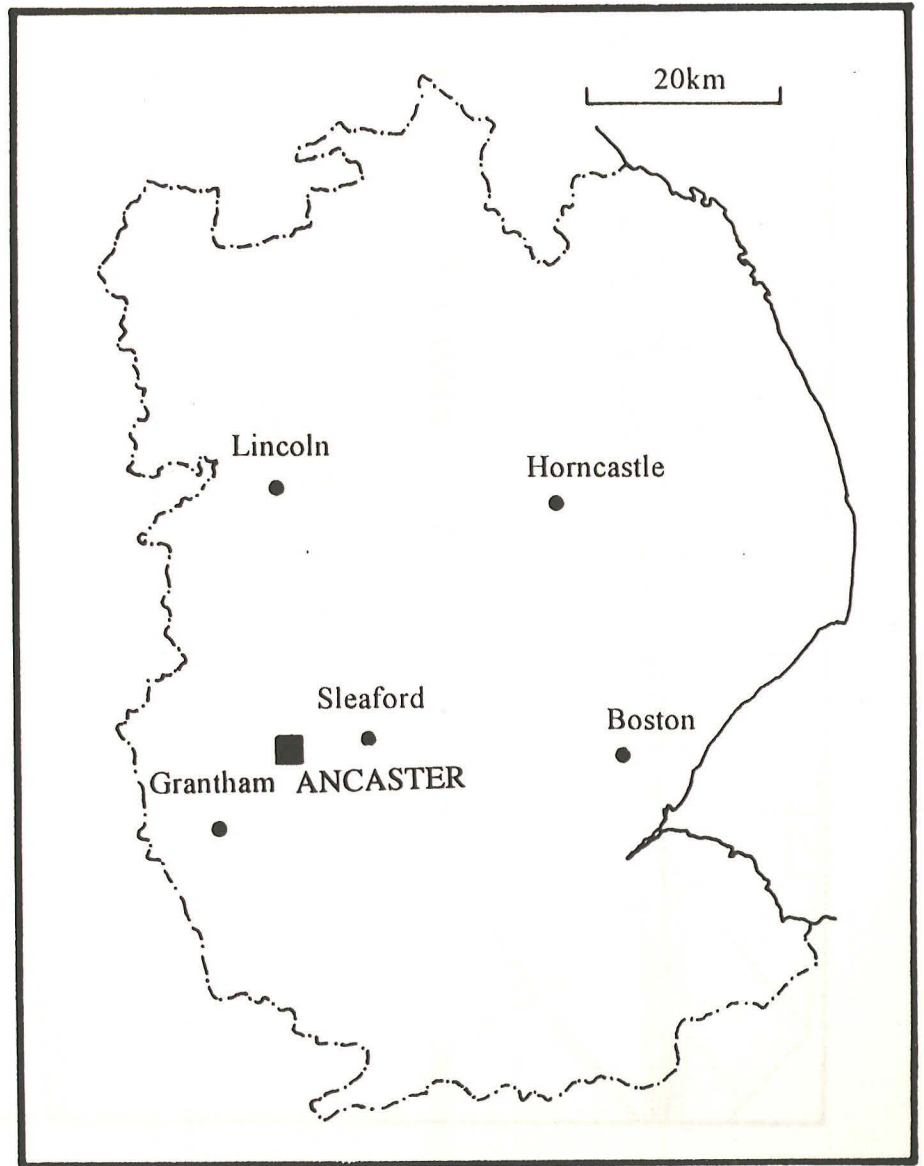
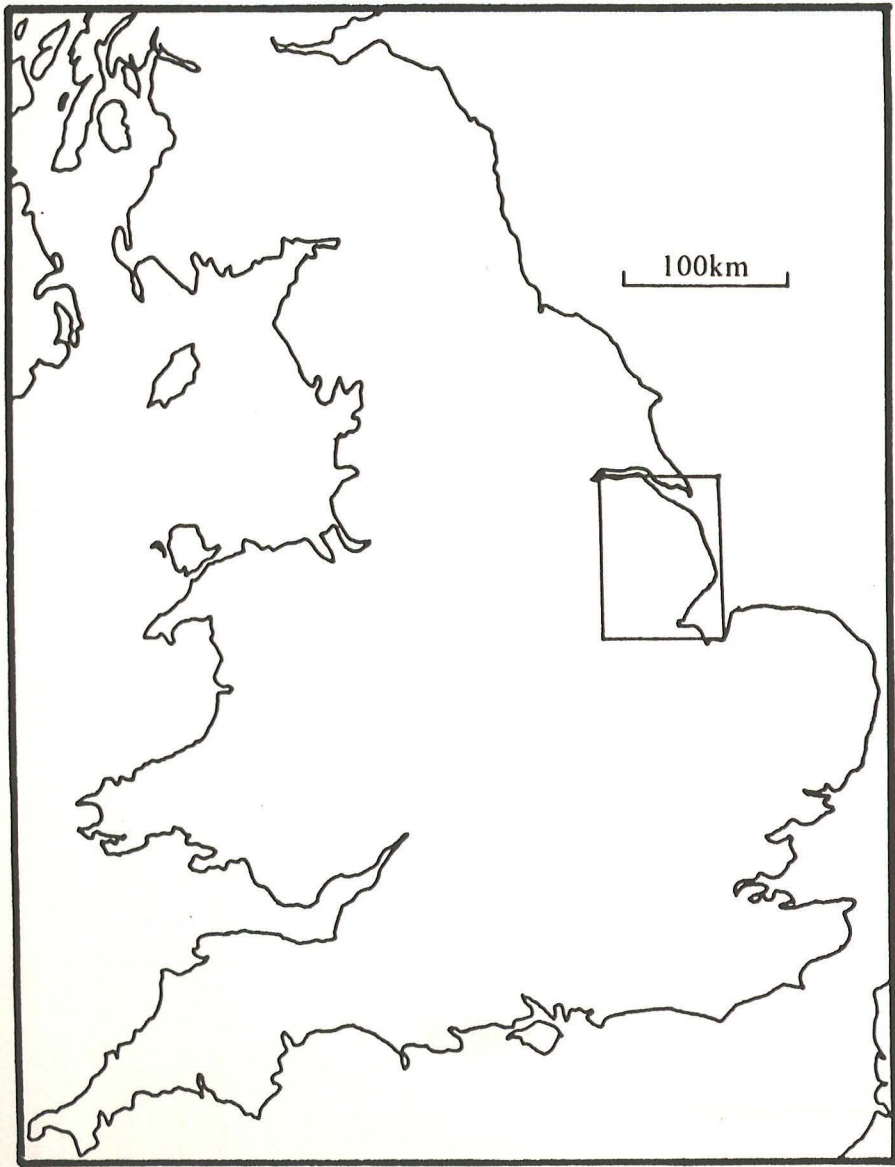
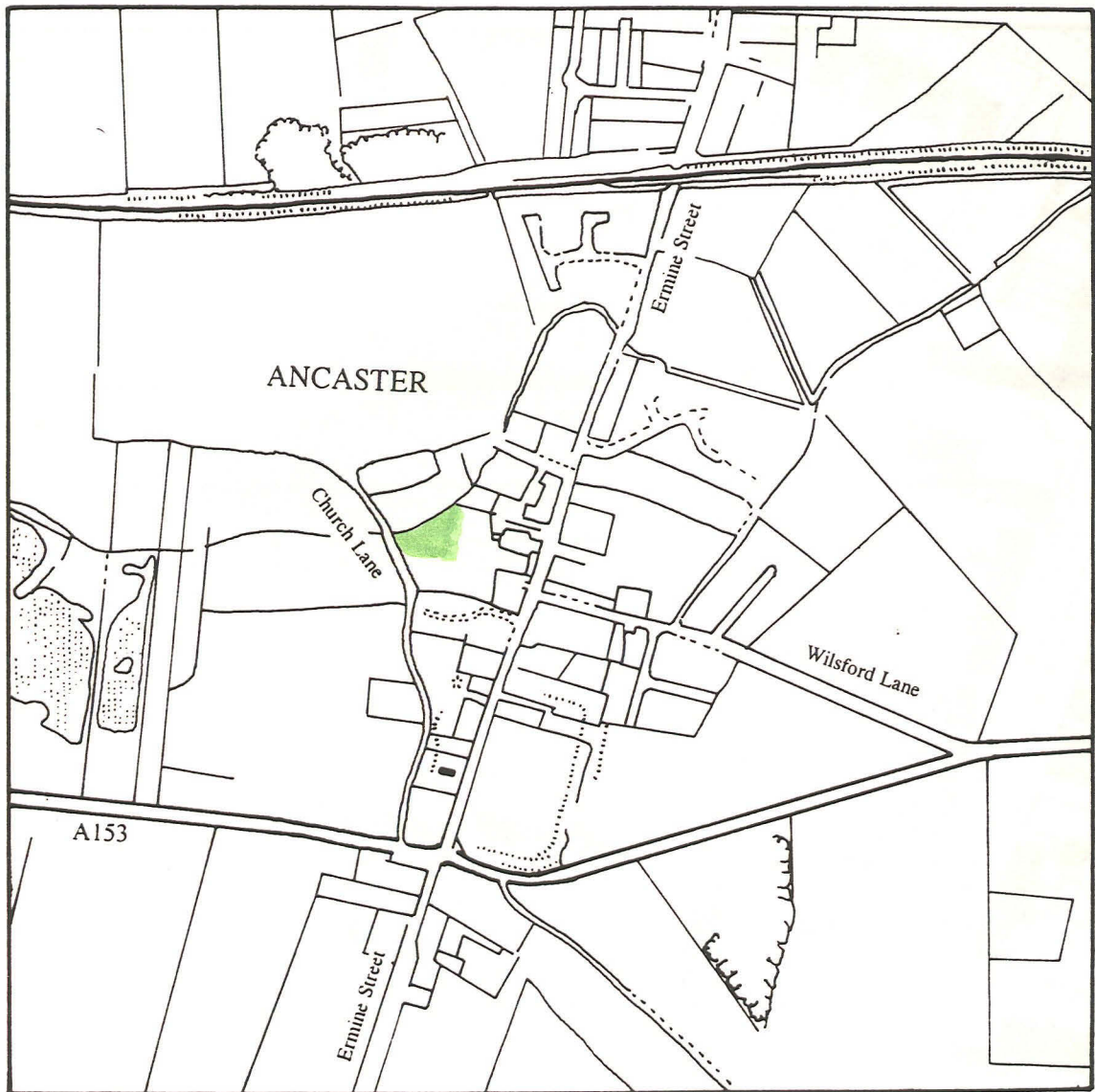


Fig. 1 General Location Plan  
Fig. 2 Site Location Plan

Fig. 2 Site Location Plan




 Area of Development

Fig. 3 Area of Proposed Development

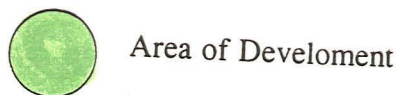




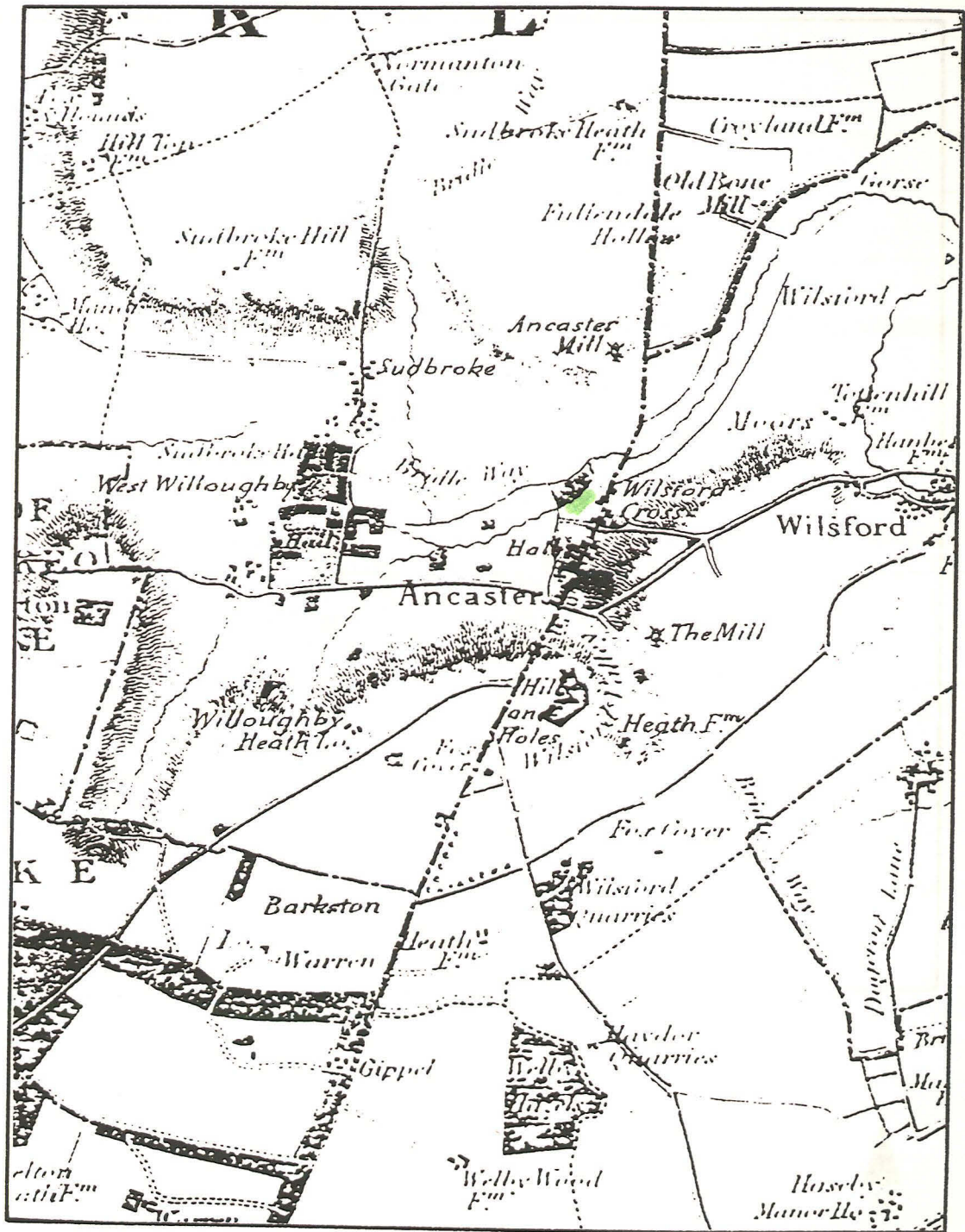
Fig. 4 Extract from the Inclosure Award, 1770



Scale uncertain



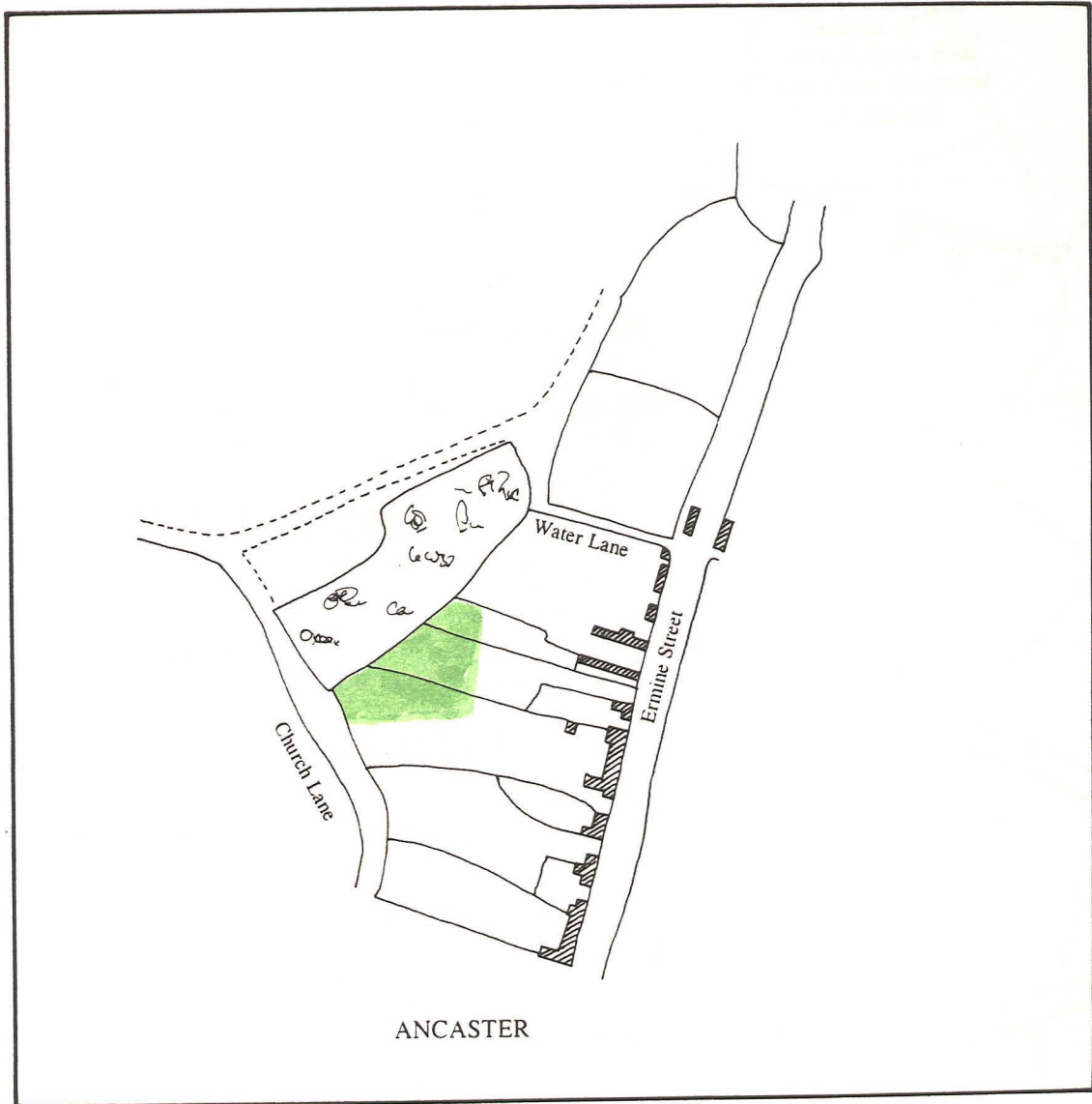
Fig. 5 Extract from Bryant's Map of the County of Lincolnshire, 1828



Scale Uncertain



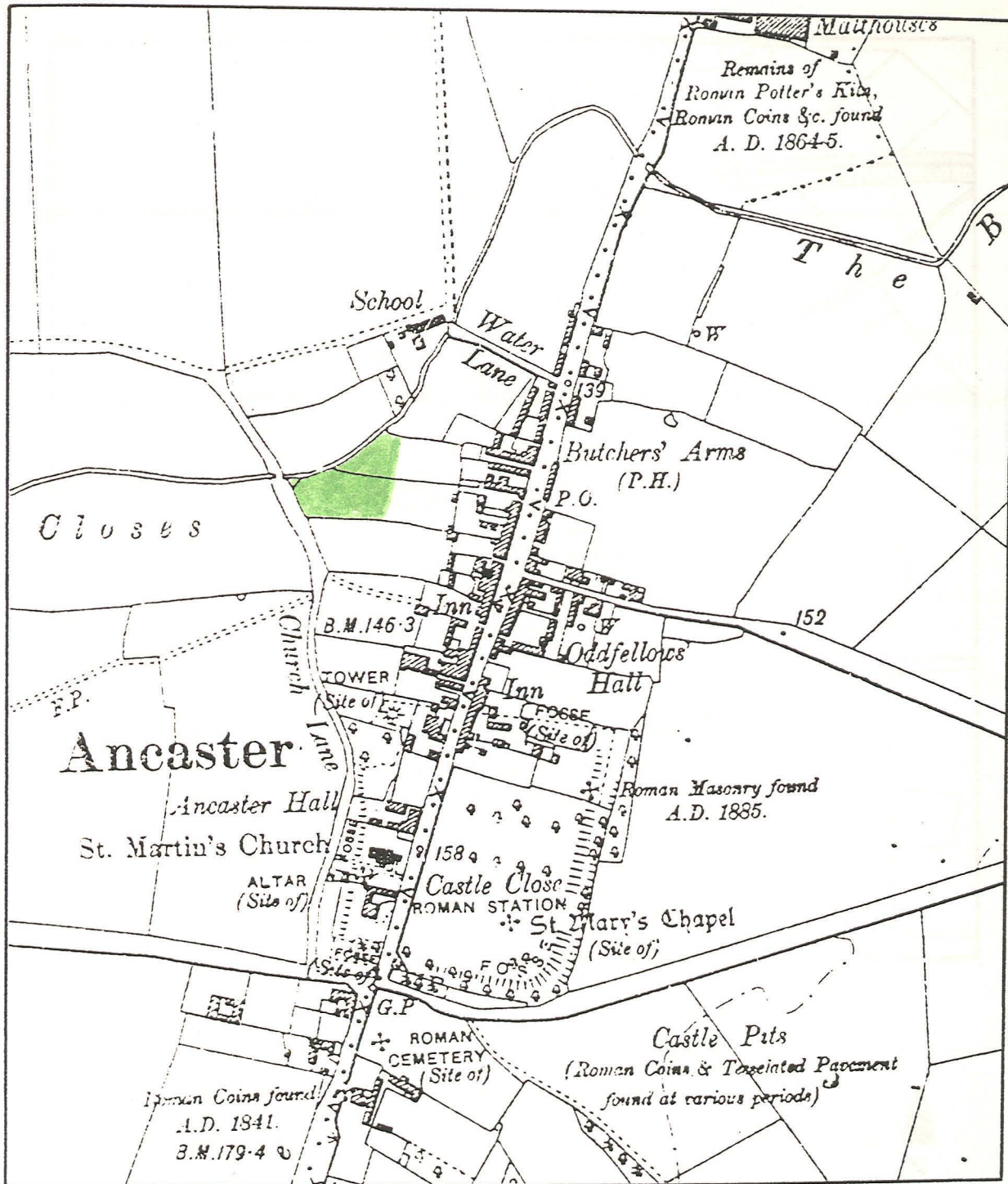
Fig. 6 Extract from the Tithe Award, 1846



Scale Uncertain



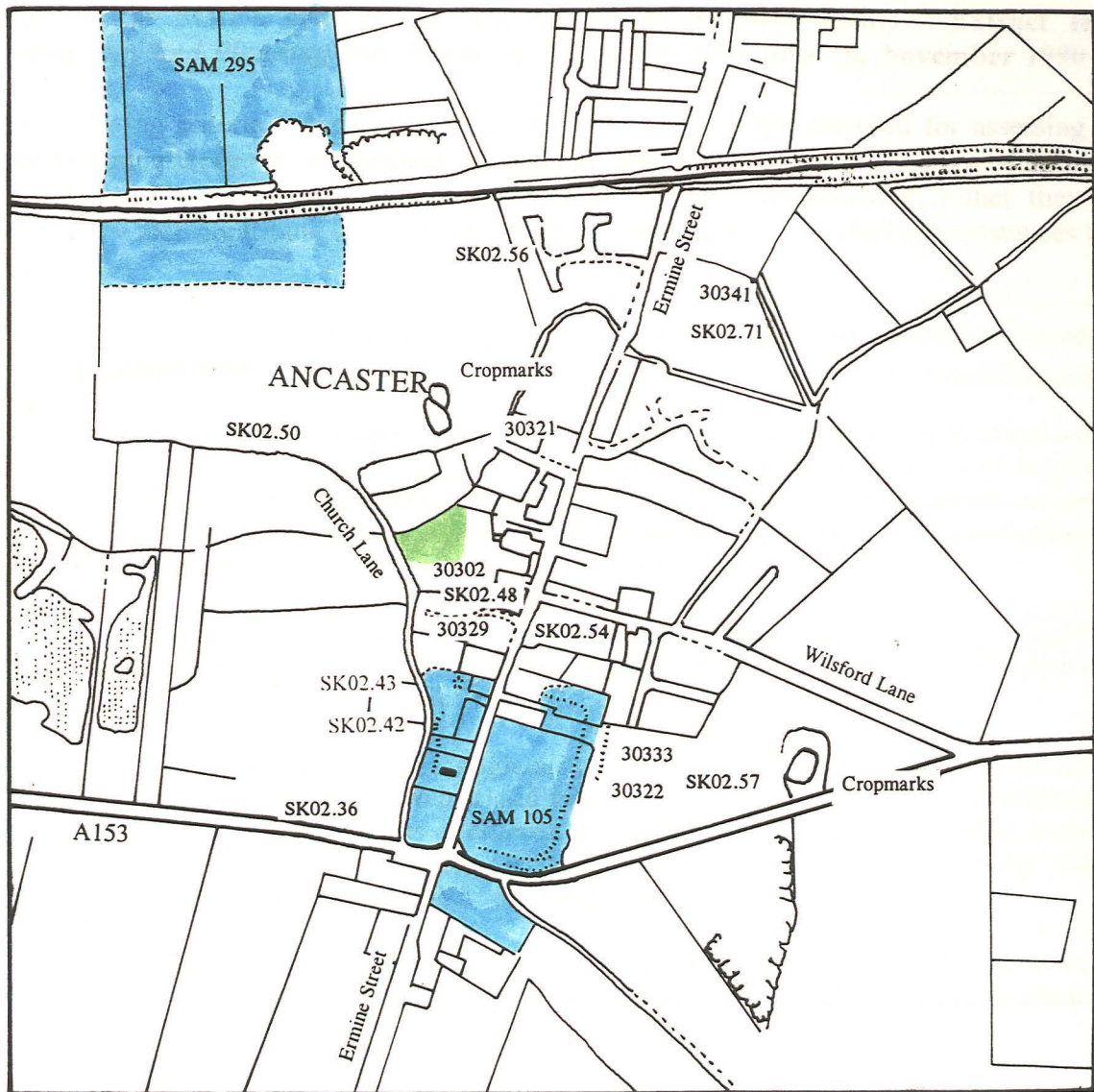
Fig. 7 Extract from 1905 Ordnance Survey Map



Scale enlarged



Fig. 8 Plan of known Archaeological sites in the vicinity



Scheduled Ancient Monument

## Appendix 1

### Secretary of State's criteria for scheduling Ancient Monuments - Extract from *Archaeology and Planning* DoE Planning Policy Guidance note 16, November 1990

The following criteria (which are not in any order of ranking), are used for assessing the national importance of an ancient monument and considering whether scheduling is appropriate. The criteria should not however be regarded as definitive; rather they are indicators which contribute to a wider judgement based on the individual circumstances of a case.

i *Period*: all types of monuments that characterise a category or period should be considered for preservation.

ii *Rarity*: there are some monument categories which in certain periods are so scarce that all surviving examples which retain some archaeological potential should be preserved. In general, however, a selection must be made which portrays the typical and commonplace as well as the rare. This process should take account of all aspects of the distribution of a particular class of monument, both in a national and regional context.

iii *Documentation*: the significance of a monument may be enhanced by the existence of records of previous investigation or, in the case of more recent monuments, by the supporting evidence of contemporary written records.

iv *Group value*: the value of a single monument (such as a field system) may be greatly enhanced by its association with related contemporary monuments (such as a settlement or cemetery) or with monuments of different periods. In some cases, it is preferable to protect the complete group of monuments, including associated and adjacent land, rather than to protect isolated monuments within the group.

v *Survival/Condition*: the survival of a monument's archaeological potential both above and below ground is a particularly important consideration and should be assessed in relation to its present condition and surviving features.

vi *Fragility/Vulnerability*: highly important archaeological evidence from some field monuments can be destroyed by a single ploughing or unsympathetic treatment; vulnerable monuments of this nature would particularly benefit from the statutory protection that scheduling confers. There are also existing standing structures of particular form or complexity whose value can again be severely reduced by neglect or careless treatment and which are similarly well suited by scheduled monument protection, even if these structures are already listed buildings.

vii *Diversity*: some monuments may be selected for scheduling because they possess a combination of high quality features, others because of a single important attribute.

viii *Potential*: on occasion, the nature of the evidence cannot be specified precisely but it may still be possible to document reasons anticipating its existence and importance and so to demonstrate the justification for scheduling. This is usually confined to sites rather than upstanding monuments.