

# BOSTON TOWN HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT BASELINE STUDY

by

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with contributions by Joanna Hambly and Jenny Young



*A view of Boston from the top of Hussey Tower  
by Nathan Drake, 1751*



ENGLISH HERITAGE



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Patron: Baroness Willoughby de Eresby

Lincolnshire  
County Council

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Planning &  
Conservation

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Dear Sir or Madam:

**RE: Boston Town Historic Environment Baseline Study**

Please find enclosed a copy of the Boston Town Historic Environment Baseline Study. The study aims to raise awareness of the nature and value of Boston's archaeological and built heritage and its potential to contribute to a sustainable social and economic future of the town, for the benefit of all.

The study evolved through the Boston Town Masterplanning process and is a collaboration between English Heritage, the Heritage Trust for Lincolnshire and Boston Borough Council.

I hope you will find the enclosed interesting to read. In the meantime, if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Best wishes,

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Heritage Trust for Lincolnshire  
Enclosure (1)

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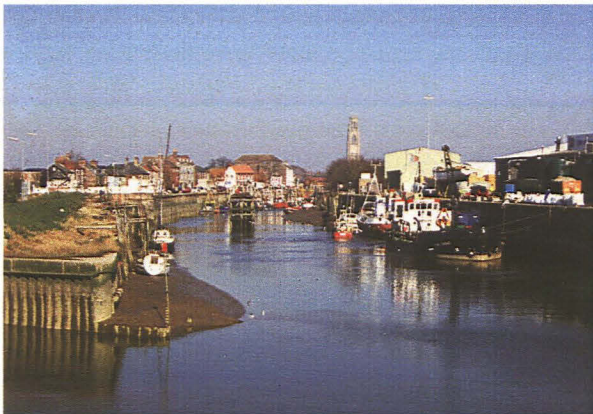
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## PURPOSE OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT BASELINE

The Boston Historic Environment Baseline Study aims to raise awareness of the nature and value of Boston's archaeological and built heritage and its potential to contribute to a sustainable social and economic future for the town, for the benefit of all.

The publication of local historic environment information is particularly timely in the light of ongoing major planning reform including the White Paper, Heritage Protection For the 21st Century (2007), which puts the historic environment at the heart of an effective planning system and maximises opportunities for local consultation and involvement.



*The Haven, Boston*

The Baseline Study is a rapid survey that assimilates and makes accessible all widely available current archaeological and documentary information about the historic development of the town. This will be a first step towards identifying where the gaps in our knowledge and understanding lie, and prioritising future management, research and action.

It is intended that the baseline will provide essential historic environment information for the following:

- Physical planning and land use strategies, policies and supplementary guidance.
- Education, culture and tourism strategies and policies.
- Community involvement in the identification and protection of locally important heritage assets.

## CURRENT POLICY FRAMEWORK

Archaeology is a material consideration in the planning process, and national Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, Planning and Archaeology introduced in 1990 (PPG16) provides guidance on how archaeology should be dealt with in the development process. PPG16 stresses the importance and finiteness of the archaeological resource. It sets out the preferred option for preservation *in situ* for nationally important archaeological remains, the importance of early consultation with the Historic Environment Record and Local Authorities and the necessity and benefits of evaluation as a tool to assess the potential impact of development.

National Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, Planning and the Historic Environment introduced in 1995, (PPG15) provides a full statement on government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas and other elements of the historic environment. PPG15 stresses the value and fragility of the historic environment and advocates appraisal, assessment and recording of buildings, features and areas as an important part of development proposals that affect any element of the historic environment.

The adopted Boston Borough Council Local Plan (1999) and the Boston Borough Interim Plan (2006) designates conservation areas and areas of archaeological sensitivity. The Plan contains policies that protect the archaeological and built heritage of the Borough throughout the development process.

## FUTURE CHALLENGES

### Planning Reform

A common theme of recent and forthcoming government planning policy concerns the creation of a sustainable and high quality built environment for the future and for the benefit of all, and greater involvement of local communities in shaping the future of their local environment. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) puts in place a new statutory framework to deliver a more flexible,

sustainable and community led local planning system. This will be achieved through the creation of Local Development Frameworks that address a broad range of issues affecting the nature of places, the way they function and the experience of their local communities. Area Action Plans may be prepared as part of the Local Development documentation. These will set out detailed spatial strategies for areas of change and conservation.

Baseline data about Boston's Historic Environment will provide essential information for Boston's Local Development Frameworks. The collation and dissemination of historic environment information through the Baseline Study will raise awareness and understanding of the nature and value of Boston's buried and built heritage both within the Local Authority and amongst local residents. Heritage can provide a focal point for engaging communities in decisions about preservation and development and will enable everyone to make better informed contributions and decisions for sensitive and sustainable development for the future.

Proposals set out in the recent Heritage Protection White Paper will have a significant impact on the management of statutorily designated heritage assets. More responsibility will be devolved to Local Planning Authorities and there will be greater opportunities for involvement by local communities to identify and protect local buildings and sites that matter to them.

### **Development pressure**

Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands sets a target of 60% of new development on previously developed or 'brownfield' sites. Taking into account the mainly rural context of Lincolnshire, the Lincolnshire Structure Plan (2006) sets a target of at least 35% of all new development to be on 'brownfield' sites within towns and larger villages. At the same time levels of new building in smaller settlements and in the countryside will be significantly reduced. This will particularly affect Boston as a sub regional centre in the County. So-called 'brownfield' sites often coincide with

areas of high archaeological potential and above ground historic value.

This challenge has already been faced recently with new developments in the extremely sensitive areas of South End, South Square and Pescod Square. This trend will continue and is likely to quickly gather momentum in the town. Clear and robust strategies and guidance are required to protect, manage and enhance the heritage assets of Boston whilst enabling new development to take place.



*Medieval stonework in Customs House Lane*

### **Culture, Education and Tourism**

Boston Borough Council and Lincolnshire County Council highlight the potential of Boston's historic environment to contribute to the key aims of quality of life and sustainable economic development. The Lincolnshire Structure Plan (2006) identifies heritage tourism as a significant potential development area in Boston.



*Hussey Tower, South End. A rare example of an early brick built medieval tower house*

The Borough Council also recognise the value of capitalising on the town's unique historic environment for tourism, culture and education. Widely available information and a good understanding of the nature of Boston's historic environment will form the essential foundation upon which to build these strategies.

## **WHY BOSTON'S HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT IS SPECIAL**

### **The medieval legacy**

From the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries Boston was one of the principal ports in medieval Britain, in one year handling more trade than the port of London. The buildings and infrastructure of the time reflect the commercial activities and the wealth in the town. High status private and public buildings such as merchants' houses, Guild Halls, monastic houses and the parish church of St. Botolph are clear symbols of the levels of confidence and investment in the prosperous town. Some of these buildings still survive in 21<sup>st</sup> century Boston, as does the medieval street pattern in much of the town centre. Commercial developments of warehousing, workshops, wharves, docks and boatyards would have been

crowded along the busy river frontage. The timber remains of many of these, as well as many other medieval remains, still lie preserved in the waterlogged silts and clays that underlie the town.



*Medieval shoes from excavations in the Market Place*

### **The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century legacy**

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the drainage of the fens to the north resulted in another period of prosperity for the port and a renewed investment in the buildings and infrastructure of the town. Many of Boston's finest and distinctive buildings date from this period. Fydell House and the warehousing in South Square, the Assembly Rooms and the Exchange Buildings in the Market Place, the Bank House and the 'Barracks' in High Street South are just a few examples of Boston's rich Georgian architectural inheritance. The spacious layout of the Market Place is also a result of 18<sup>th</sup> century remodelling in the town.



*Late 18th Century terrace, 124-136 High Street. Popularly known as 'the Barracks'*

### The special archaeological legacy

The location of Boston, on a low lying estuary in the fens, has meant that the water table has remained high and deposits below ground are waterlogged and anaerobic, that is, do not contain oxygen. In these conditions bacteria and chemical reactions responsible for decay and corrosion are inhibited resulting in the preservation of a wide range of buried artefacts, including usually fragile organic materials such as wood, leather, cloth and vegetation. These conditions are unusual in this country and only a small number of other towns and cities contain the extent of waterlogged deposits that are likely to exist in Boston.



*Archaeological excavation in Wormgate. Note preserved timbers within organic sediments in the centre of the photograph.*

As well as being remarkably well preserved, the archaeological deposits in Boston are in places unusually complete. This is due in part to the fact that in the modern era, Boston has escaped the type of wholesale post-war development that has re-modelled many historic towns.

The cumulative result of the above factors has left Boston with a buried and above ground historical legacy, the quality, extent and integrity of which are rare and, therefore, of regional and often national importance. The tangible elements of this legacy in Boston are a well-preserved and diverse medieval and post-medieval archaeological deposits below the ground, and a well preserved historic townscape and individual buildings.

Boston's historic environment is the product of a thousand years of what people have made and continue to make of their town. However, it is fragile and needs to be looked after. When it is gone, it is gone forever.



*127 High Street. A late medieval timber-framed building being demolished in 1977*



## THE ORGANISATION OF THE BASELINE INFORMATION

The first section of the Boston Historic Environment Baseline Study will present all widely available archaeological and documentary evidence concerning Boston's history as a series of maps, with brief supporting text, revealing the development of the town over the last one thousand years. Additional maps will show all known modern impacts to the buried archaeological and built heritage resource, all known archaeological interventions and all known current historic environment statutory designations.

The second section of the Study begins by considering the management of the archaeological resource in Boston. Based on the information presented in Part 1, areas of buried archaeological potential are presented as zones, each zone having a particular history, character and archaeological potential. Information concerning the character, assessment and opportunities relating to the built heritage is available in the draft Boston Conservation Area Appraisals (2005).

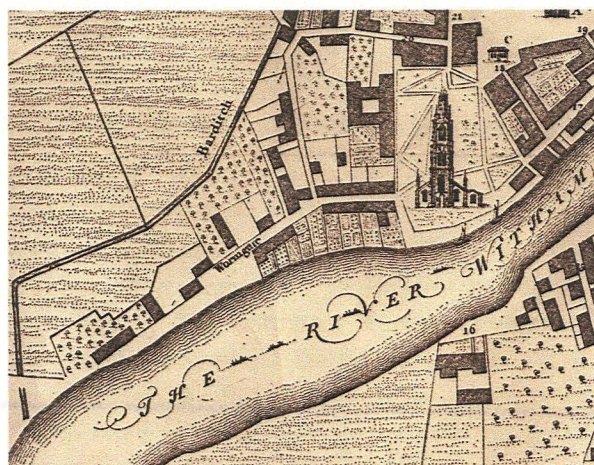
Finally, the Baseline study will highlight the key issues facing Boston's buried and built heritage and put forward a series of recommendations for the future management and enhancement of Boston's historic environment resource.

## PRINCIPAL SOURCES

The principal published sources used in this work are Pishey Thompson's *History of Boston*, William Wheeler's *The History of the Fens of South Lincolnshire* and Gillian Harden's *Medieval Boston and its Archaeological Implications*. The later maps are based on cartographic sources, which have been summarised in Frank Molyneux and Neil Wright's *An Atlas of Boston*, and the Ordnance Survey map series available from 1887.

The archaeological information has been collated largely from the wealth of 'grey literature' of archaeological reports generally produced from 1990 onwards after the introduction of PPG16 and consequent developer funded archaeological

interventions. Extensive use has been made of the archaeological and built heritage records held in the Historic Environment Record, maintained by Lincolnshire County Council, and the Boston parish files, maintained by the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire.



Wormgate in 1741. Extract from Hall's map of Boston

## BOSTON'S HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT BASELINE INFORMATION BOSTON BEFORE AD 1086

### *Topography and Geology*

Boston lies on a solid geology of soft Jurassic Ampthill Clays, scoured out during a succession of Ice Ages to form a basin that underlies much of the Lincolnshire Fens. The later glacial episodes partially filled this basin with till (boulder clay) and sands and gravels. This underlying glacial topography is not clearly understood, although glacial moraines, that form the ridge of higher ground extending through Stickney and Stickford, indicate an undulating base. Finally, marine alluvium has then further infilled the basin creating the generally level ground that now surrounds the town.

Much of Boston lies at 2m above Ordnance Datum, although higher ground is recorded adjacent to the Witham. This is due to natural levees following the river course and the gradual build up of deposits within the town during the medieval period.

### *Prehistoric Boston*

No prehistoric sites are known from the immediate vicinity of Boston, although a number of individual or isolated finds have been recorded. The paucity of sites does not represent a genuine absence but is caused by the masking of prehistoric ground levels by later marine alluvium.

The earlier prehistoric land surface is in places sealed by as much as 11 metres of freshwater and marine alluvial deposits. Peats deposited within these alluvial layers generally date to the Iron Age (700BC – AD43), suggesting that a rapid accumulation occurred during this period (Waller, 1994).

It is likely that the outfall of the River Witham was still in the vicinity of the town and not, as has been suggested (Harden 1978), further east near Wainfleet. At this time, the river would have been a braided channel, meandering through a very wide floodplain.

Isolated prehistoric finds have been recorded in Boston. Where found adjacent to deep drainage ditches, they may have been brought to the

modern surface from deeply buried prehistoric deposits. It is also possible that the finds were brought to the town as objects of interest during later periods.

Southwest of Boston, immediately outside the study area, Late Iron Age pottery has been found during fieldwalking. The site also produced Romano-British pottery so it may represent a native tradition surviving in the fens after AD 50.

### THE MAPS

#### MAP 1: AD 43 - 1086

##### *Romano-British (AD 43-410)*

Widespread Romano-British occupation of the fenland has been recognised, particularly on the western fen-edge and northeast of Boston during recent intensive archaeological survey (Lane 1992). Unfortunately, this survey did not extend into the immediate environs of Boston and the true density of settlement and occupation is unknown. Again, as with prehistoric sites, many of these sites may remain buried beneath post-Roman flood deposits.

However, sites have been found within the study area and concentrations of individual finds suggest the probability of more. Excavation undertaken at the Grammar School revealed Romano-British deposits. This coupled with finds of coins and pottery in the vicinity of Hussey Tower, indicate the probability of settlement in this locality. A second concentration lies in Skirbeck where ditches and pottery have been recorded.

The nature of settlement during this period is unlikely ever to be fully understood and comparisons with known fenland sites must be drawn. Romano-British occupation in the fens often centred on village-like settlements with an economic basis focused on animal rearing and salt-making. According to current evidence, the area round South End and Skirbeck have the most potential to contain Roman remains at relatively shallow depths below the present ground surface.

##### *Saxon: AD 410-1066*

Early in this period, the fens of Lincolnshire appear to have suffered from extensive flooding depositing marine silts over much of the fen basin.

Subsequently, the fen and marsh environments surrounding the town become much more defined than in preceding periods.

Although there is no archaeological evidence for Early Saxon (410 – 650) occupation in the Boston area, it is likely that settlement would have developed on river levees. Other townships in the region developed on the siltlands, the higher areas of land between salt marsh and freshwater fen.

Mid Saxon (650 – 850) settlement has been recorded in Skirbeck, where ditches and sunken-floored buildings have been identified (Palmer-Brown 1996, 10). These date to the 8<sup>th</sup> century and may represent one of many dispersed settlements in the vicinity. Work by the Fenland Survey suggests that consolidation of these settlements to form nucleated villages perhaps occurred during the late 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries (Hayes 1988, 325). The place-name Skirbeck, for example, suggests a Danish origin, thus dating the naming of the settlement to the 9<sup>th</sup> century, possibly indicating it had attained a reasonable size and permanency by then.

Pottery of Late Saxon date (850-1066) has been recorded within the study area at the Axe and Cleaver on West Street. The nucleation of settlements to form Boston and Skirbeck probably took place close to their relevant churches, likely to have been on the sites of St Nicholas and St. Botolph, and this is where archaeological potential for this period is highest.

The Domesday account of 1086 gives the briefest of glimpses into Late Saxon Boston (Foster & Longley 1976). Skirbeck prior to 1066 was held by Ælfgar, earl of East Anglia until 1062 followed by Ralf the Staller, a Breton living in Norwich who was appointed to the earldom by William the Conqueror (Hart 1992, 183). Skirbeck was part of an extensive estate centred on Drayton, near Swineshead.

The part of Boston on the west bank was probably carved out of the territories of Wyberton (Roffe 2000). Adestan and a number of other individuals (perhaps tenants), who held estates that were centred on Tattershall, previously held this village.

A later Saxon presence is hinted at by coins found in Boston. These include a coin of Athelwulf (AD 839-858) and one of Cnut (1016-1035).

Although the status of Boston is unknown at this time, finds of continental Saxon pottery in Lincoln indicates that the Witham was a significant route of trade. In the subsequent period, the presence of a major international fair at Boston, along with its rights (Sawyer 1998, 198), suggest that Boston was already developing into an important market centre.

## MEDIEVAL BOSTON

### MAP 2: AD 1086 - 1545

This map depicts the land surrounding Boston town from 1086 – 1545. One map is sufficient as little recorded change occurred outside of the town during this period.

West of Boston lay Haute Hundre (Eight Hundred Acre) Fen, which was not successfully drained for agriculture until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1241, the sheriff of Lincoln was required to divide this fen between the various townships and by the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century it was under cultivation, pasture or meadow, although by the 14<sup>th</sup> century had reverted back to fen (Hallam 1965, 69). Fens were present north of the town, although how close they came to the town is not known. South and east of Boston lay the open fields of Wyberton and Fishtoft.

The Witham is shown in its more meandering course, before its canalisation in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The course has been reconstructed from maps and parish boundaries that fossilised its route up to the end of the nineteenth century. South of the town the river is much wider and lies between the protective medieval sea banks that are still evident.

Other watercourses are shown. For example, the course of the 'Scire Beck' is well documented through history, although elements of its route are now lost. Until the unification of Skirbeck with Boston in 1885, the route also marked the parish boundary, even though the Maud Foster Drain

had effectively destroyed traces of the former stream.

Draining the fens to the southwest of the town was the canalised stream known as the Old Hammond Beck, first mentioned in the 1315 when it was referred to as *Hamundebek* and *Hamondbek* (Cameron 1998, 58). There is circumstantial evidence that places it earlier than 1240 (Hallam 1965, 53) although a Roman origin, as suggested by Wheeler (1896, App. 1, 19), is unlikely.

Skirbeck provides a medieval centre first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086. The Domesday account indicates the presence of two churches with two priests and two fisheries (Foster and Longley 1976). One church became the focal centre of Boston and the second was St. Nicholas' church.

The present St. Nicholas' church was built during the 13<sup>th</sup> century, replacing the earlier building mentioned in Domesday. Skirbeck is something of an enigma in as much as there is little to demonstrate a medieval origin for the area apart from the church. Medieval pottery has been found under the floor of the church (Healey, *pers. comm.*). Little archaeological intervention has occurred in the vicinity of the church where such settlement should be expected.

Long Causeway and Hilldyke Causeway represent routes in and out of Boston north of the town. These two connected Boston with the villages of Sibsey, Stickney and Stickford and the villages located on the southern edge of the Wolds. There is some evidence for enclosing of the fens adjacent to these causeways and areas are likely to have been dry enough to provide for the foundation of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem north of the town in c. 1200.

The foundation of this hospital included land at Hilldyke, 2.5km north of Boston, which is described as meadow and plough land adjacent to Hilldyke Causeway (Hallam 1965, 148), suggesting that fen reclamation was under way here by the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Similar roads would have connected the town to Wyberton and villages to the south and possibly west to Swineshead. However, documentary evidence is lacking for these routes.

The countryside around Boston during the medieval period would have been characterised by extensive pasture, meadow and managed fen as well as the open fields where a variety of crops were cultivated in strips. Far from being a hindrance, the fens north and west of the town were important economic resources, not only for wildfowl, reeds, peat etc., but also as summer grazing, particularly for sheep. Sheep may be the principal reason for the possible establishment of a grange by Stixwould Priory adjacent to the Hammond Beck (Hallam 1965, 51). No physical trace of this survives but if a grange did exist here, it would have been at the heart of an organised agricultural enterprise.

### MAP 3: BOSTON TOWN: AD 1086-1250

Archaeological evidence for this period in Boston is very sparse; so much of our knowledge about the early medieval town relies on historical documentation. The town is first referred to in 1089 when Count Alan of Brittany granted a church to St. Mary's Abbey, York; perhaps one of the two mentioned in the Domesday Survey. In 1130, the name Boston was first mentioned when it was referred to as '*Botulvestan*' (Dover 1972, 1). York was acquiring supposed earlier monastic sites and Boston was one of the reputed (and unlikely) sites of St. Botolph's house of Icanho. Hence the name '*Botulfstone*' or '*Botulvestan*' (Coppack *pers. comm.*).

The town appears to have taken land from Skirbeck as well as Wyberton parishes, the two areas separated by the Witham. The larger part of the town lay on the east bank within the Richmond Fee, taken from the lands of Count Alan. The west bank comprised a further two fees, the Creoun fee, derived from Guy de Craon's holding, centred on the bridge and the Tattershall fee, located along the southern part of the modern High Street and representing Eudo son of Spirewic's holding (Roffe 2000).

Unlike many other towns in Lincolnshire, Boston appears never to have been a seignorial residence, the focus of Count Alan's estate being at Drayton. It is then likely that the town grew up around an exchange or market centre, perhaps in a similar way to King's Lynn (for the origins of Lynn see Owen 1980).

The Richmond Fee, centred on the Market Place, was (and still is) the social and economic centre of the town and home to two markets and fairs held in Boston. The market is first referenced between 1125 and 1135 when confirmation was given to the monks of St. Mary's Abbey to trade on all their land in Boston, including their cemetery (that is of their cell, not necessarily the parish church) (Dover 1972, 21). A fair, known as the Holland Fair, was also established in the Creoun Fee, perhaps an extension to the Boston Fairs (Owen 1984, 43).

The sinuous shape of Boston and its medieval development is intimately reflected in its position along the river. The initial street layout is likely to have followed the banks of the Witham with subsequent streets developing east and west from this plan (Butler 1975, 46). In form it reflects Boston's rival port of King's Lynn, although there the morphology of the town changed through later planned grid development.

The early street pattern can only be recognised through contemporary documentation which overall is generally poor for Boston. However, certain roads are known about. Leading north from the church is Wormgate, a probable corruption of *Wyrma* or *Widma* both early forms for the Witham, which led to *de pol* (meaning deep pool), visible on the map just downstream of the current location of the grand sluice. Major religious institutions such as Fountains Abbey, St. Mary's Abbey, York and Crowland established houses along this important route to the north as well as smaller houses such as Malton Priory (also in Yorkshire) and Haverholme Priory and Spalding. Fountains Abbey had a house on the south corner of Fountain Lane and Emery Lane, next to the house of Thornholme, and a woolhouse in Lincoln Lane (Coppack *pers. comm.*). The importance of the wool trade has been fully recounted elsewhere (e.g. Carus-

Wilson 1963). It is without doubt the key factor in Boston's commercial success throughout the earlier part of the town's industry and the motivation behind investment in the town by the major institutions of the time, i.e. the monasteries.

The pattern of streets around the Market Place is poorly understood, although a road leading north to Long Causeway would have existed, eventually to become Strait Bargate

At some point it was thought necessary to construct the Barditch around the eastern side of the town. Without understanding the original purpose of this ditch it is impossible to assess the effect it had on the town. It has been proposed that the Barditch was a defensive feature, perhaps with an internal wall, that never developed further (Barley 1975, 60). For the Barditch to be an effective defence, the western side of the Witham should also be similarly protected. However, there is only one reference to walls, dating to 1356, which is somewhat inconclusive (Dover 1972, 13). Although the Barditch was revetted in stone in some places and the available evidence suggests it was in use as a sewer, Roffe (2000) saw its function as a means to mark the boundary between the new town and the territory of Skirbeck.

Within this period, Boston would have seen rapid growth in size, which was centred on its port. It was astute of Alan de Creoun to construct a bridge and sluice in the town in 1142, which would have impeded through traffic to Lincoln, thus establishing Boston's subsequent status as Lincoln's *entrepot*.

One enigma in Boston is the status of St. John's Church to the south of the town. There is some confusion as to whether it was part of the hospital of St. John, but later documentation suggests it was a separate foundation, despite the area subsequently being called *Hospital Ende*. In a will of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it is described as a chapel and separate from a hospital (Foster 1941, 180). Leland, writing in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, claims '*The chif parroche church was at S. Johns, where yet is a church to the toune. S. Botolph's was but a chapel to it*' (Toulmin-Smith *nd*, 33). However, Leland's observations do not accord with the dedication of

St. Botolph's, which is likely to be older than St. John's (Coppack *pers. comm.*).

#### MAP 4: BOSTON TOWN: AD 1250-1400

The general layout of the town continues to develop in this period and as the town grew, smaller lanes led off principal streets to the rear of the street frontages. It is in this period, that more archaeological evidence is available to supplement historical sources.

Only one known intact building firmly dateable to this period survives within the town, St. Botolph's church which was begun in 1309 (Spurrell 1971, 1) although it would have taken over a hundred years before it was finally completed. However, recent dendrochronological dating of timbers at the Guildhall suggests the present Guildhall building was constructed in 1390 (Clarke *et al.* 2003, 42). Significant elements of the Dominican friary also survive incorporated into later buildings along South Street and Spain Lane.

Of great importance to the development of the town is the arrival of the friars who established their first friaries on the eastern bank of the river, within the Barditch. The only visible surviving elements of these friaries is stonework in existing buildings along South Street and the refectory of the Dominican friary, now the Blackfriars Arts Centre. Opinion has it that the houses of mendicant orders were built on the periphery of towns in vacant areas. This does not seem to have been the case in Boston (as in Lincoln, Coppack *pers. comm.*), where recent archaeological excavation in South Square, between the Dominican and Franciscan friaries, shows this area was occupied and developed since the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The Carmelite and Austin friaries, located to the west and south of the town, may have developed in vacant areas of land, which had been donated.

The location of the Dominican friary is known and elements of the Franciscan friary have come to light during archaeological work at the Grammar School and along John Adams Way, at the former Haven Cinema site. The later Carmelite friary is known to lie west of the High Street and re-used masonry from Paddock Grove may signify its

position. The location of the Austin friary is still uncertain. The Ordnance Survey places it on the south side of Skirbeck Road in an area lying east of St. John's church and Harden (1978, 25) placed it within the Barditch, south of the Franciscan friary. William Stukeley placed it in the vicinity of South Terrace (Garner 1972, 25), where it is shown on Map 4.

A further development of paramount importance to the town was the arrival of Hanseatic merchants from the Baltic soon after 1259 (Thompson 1853, 366). They established a steel-yard (customs house) towards the south of the town, possibly in the region of the Grammar School, adjacent to the Mart Yard, the place where stalls were set up at the fairs and markets. However, post-medieval references suggest that the steel-yard may have been located in the vicinity of South Terrace, an area later called *Steelyard Green* (Thompson 1856, 247). Excavations at the former General Hospital site did find evidence for high status buildings, although the ground plan retrieved was insufficient to identify the presence of a steelyard or the Austin friary.



*The Seal of the Staple, 14th century. Used to stamp all goods weighed at the Steel-yard.*

Although the Barditch enclosed a relatively small area of the town, archaeological evidence suggests that expansion outside this area was limited in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Archaeological investigations along Wide Bargate have revealed sequences of dumped layers, perhaps an attempt to raise the ground surface before settlement was

established, particularly on the southern side where structural remains have been identified. The beginning of this occupation outside the Barditch suggests that space was at a premium within the town, undoubtedly not helped by the establishment of the friaries.

Along High Street, archaeological investigations have also revealed suburban areas south of the town. High Street is first referred to in 1276 when land was granted to Spalding Priory (Owen 1984, 45). Further south, a cluster of archaeological features at the point where the Hammond Beck flows into the Witham may represent small scale wharfage, as the Hammond Beck was used to transport produce from the fen into the town.

Industrial remains are also being recognised in this period. To the east of the town, within the town fields, was a tile kiln and there is evidence for a pottery kiln within the confines of the Barditch. However, to date the only evidence that industrial activities were located within specific zones of the town is the presence of woolhouses owned by monastic houses along Wormgate and in the Lincoln Lane area on the west side of the Witham.

The number of monastic holdings in this part of the town appears to increase, although this may just reflect a lack of documentation from the earlier period. The documentation is often quite detailed and in the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century Bridlington Priory's house is described as containing a hall, two chambers, two upper rooms, a kitchen and a stable (Lancaster 1912, 360). Furthermore, the subsequent tenants of the house can be traced into the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

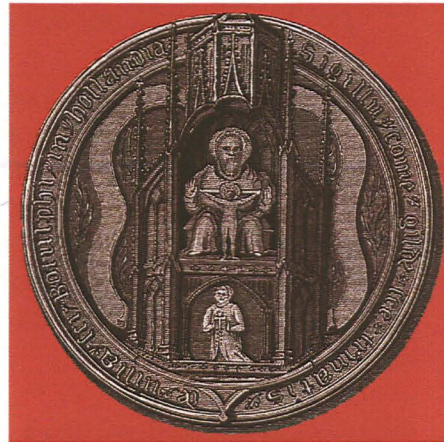
The Lincoln Lane area, west of the river, saw some of the first stone secular structures in the town as Lincoln merchants occupying this area were sent squared stones from the King's quarries at Lincoln in 1267-73 (Dover 1972, 10).

#### MAP 5: BOSTON TOWN: AD 1400-1545

From about 1400, trade in and out of Boston began its sharp decline. This decline had started earlier, perhaps as early as c. 1300, but had been fairly slow. In 1430 it slumped further. Wool was

the most affected, although wine and cloth also suffered (Wright 1986, 38). Trade was further affected when the Hanseatic League was dismissed from the town in 1470. They did return for a short period but never with the same numbers or the volume of trade (Haward 1935, 175).

Although in decline, trade was controlled by the Guild of the Blessed Mary (Thompson 1856, 369). Several other guilds, some with guildhalls, were established in Boston about this time and may have overseen a particular function in the administration of the town. Although the guilds survived the Dissolution, they were eventually closed in 1547.



*Seal of the Guildhall of the Holy Trinity*

Piecemeal reclamation of fen and marsh can be seen to continue into this period, particularly along the northern side of Wide Bargate where there is evidence for structures in this period.

The friaries were surrendered in February 1539 to the Bishop of Dover. York Abbey's cell was suppressed in 1540. The lands passed to Cromwell, who became the Earl of Essex and to Charles Brandon the Duke of Suffolk. The Greyfriars (Franciscans) were reserved for the King. Although the land eventually passed to the Corporation in 1545, some was leased out at an earlier date often with obligations regarding the maintenance of sea walls and quays (Page 1906, 214).

Nine secular buildings around the town survive from this period comprising mainly houses but

also including larger halls (Hussey Tower, Pescod Hall and Shodfriars). Many of these buildings are constructed from brick with timber frames, although a full survey of the structures is needed to elucidate their ground plans. Bricks were introduced into Boston during the 14<sup>th</sup> century and a brick built tile kiln of this date is also known. Although there are no surviving buildings of this earlier period in Lincolnshire apart from the gatehouse of Thornton Abbey (Robinson 1999, 13), there is some evidence that the Guildhall in Boston may date to 1390 (Clark *et al.* 2003, 42). Numerous documentary sources indicate that bricks were manufactured in Boston during the 15<sup>th</sup> century to supply the construction of Tattershall Castle (Simpson 1960). Hussey Tower, formerly Benyngton Tower, along with Rochford Tower in Skirbeck, represent rare survivals of tower houses.

Religious houses still held property along Wormgate, although references are not as common as they had been previously. Bridlington Priory's house was being rented out from as early as 1343 with tenancies lasting between 30 and 80 years (Lancaster 1912, 361). Whether this was a response to the declining wool trade through Boston is unknown.

The end of this period, 1545, has been chosen as it reflects the date of Boston achieving borough status marked by the end of the Honour of Richmond with the demise of Henry, Duke of Richmond. By this time, the friaries had been dissolved and the guilds would be dissolved within two years.

## POST-MEDIEVAL BOSTON

### MAP 6: POST-MEDIEVAL BOSTON AD 1545 - 1845

The post-medieval period brought a number of landscape changes to the area surrounding the town. Principal among these changes were attempts to drain the northern fenlands which started with the cutting of the Maud Foster Drain, referred to as a 'new cut' in 1568 from Cow Brygge to Boston Haven, the southern part of which canalised the Scire-Beck (Wheeler 1896, 202). Other drainage works include the New Hammond Beck, also known as Redstone Gowt

or Adventurer's Drain, in 1601. Within the next forty years, the South Forty Foot drain had been cut principally to drain the fens northwards of Bourne.

Holland Fen was eventually enclosed in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century and the land apportioned between the various villages that once used to intercommon there. The enclosing of Holland Fen was not without difficulty and riots occurred, as people feared the loss of fenland resources (wildfowl, thatch etc).

Towards the end of this period the Witham had been straightened up to and through the town. The Grand Sluice was constructed in 1766 and despite some early problems was instrumental in Boston regaining its status as a port.

To the north of the town, towards the east and west fen around Stickney, the last expanse of fen was finally enclosed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Boston Corporation contributed money to the scheme, funding the re-cutting of the Maud Foster Drain in exchange for detached portions of land in the newly reclaimed fen.

### MAP 7: BOSTON TOWN: AD 1545-1700

In this period documentary references to street names are more common and the pattern of the town, still broadly based on the medieval layout, becomes clearer.

Street names are also an indicator of the sorts of activities undertaken in parts of the town and zones of activity and industry are recognisable in this period. This is especially clear in the vicinity of the Market Place where *Flesheware Row*, *Butcher's Row* and *Fysshe Row* occur as street names.

The Borough of Boston was created in 1545 following the end of the Richmond Honour. Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, suggested to leading Boston inhabitants that they could, through the sale of guild properties, fund a charter allowing for the creation of the Borough of Boston. Initially, Boston paid £1,646 for the properties of the various religious holdings and



for the lands of Lord Hussey who had been beheaded in 1537 for failing to suppress the Lincolnshire Rising.

The minutes of the newly formed corporation indicate that problems revolved around the incessant need for flushing the Barditch, for repairs to bridges and the administration of property around the town. Although a full study was outside the scope of this report, many topographic elements illustrating the development of the town survive in these minutes. These range from records of areas of pasture around the town to the purchase of further properties, including the manor of Rossehalle from the Duke of Rutland in 1557.

Broad Marsh, Broad Field, and Holms Pasture, later called Docks Pasture, indicate the proximity of farming to the town. Holms Pasture lay south of the town and was bordered to the north by Steelyards Green that was described as four acres of 'hempland' (Thompson 1856, 247). Hemp is was grown for production of rope.

This period was one of further decay for Boston's trade. Wool remained the chief export in the latter half of the sixteenth century but only 203 sacks are recorded as being exported in 1558/9. Tax paid on exports in the same year was £611, although tax had fallen to £111 by the end of the century (Lewis 1973, 5). Coastal trade did continue into the next century but served a much reduced hinterland and comprised coal and salt from Newcastle, and smaller household items from London. Exports from the town included wool (153 sacks) as well as local produce (*ibid.* 8) such as hides, lead, wheat, ale, peas etc. (Harden 1978, 12).

The former custom house, located in the Mart Yard was moved to Packhorse (or Packhouse) Quay between 1640 and 1662 as this part of the town gradually became deserted. The Mart Yard was taken over by the Grammar School (founded in 1567) with the shops demolished soon after, although the fate of Hall-Garth Manor is unknown. The Hanseatic warehouse and other buildings, including St. John's church were also demolished. Many of the friaries suffered a

similar fate, although elements of the Dominican Friary (Blackfriars) survived which were probably used as warehousing given the proximity of Packhorse Quay

Now that the Mart Yard was closed or disused, trade was principally undertaken in the Market Place. Documentary evidence suggests that this was divided into areas where particular goods were sold. A cross, such as the Corn Cross and the Butter Cross indicated some of them, with butchers and fishmongers installed within permanent shops west of the Market Place.

The English Civil War left little impact on the town, despite being garrisoned by Parliamentarians throughout much of the duration. Contemporary accounts indicate that Boston was provided with defences, although no traces of these survive. Stukeley, the 18<sup>th</sup> century antiquarian, comments that '*Boston was fortified in the time of the civil wars; remains of it between the Friery behind the workhouse and Skirbeck drain*' (Garner 1972, 25), although all trace had disappeared by the time of a 1741 map of the town. Other works, including a battery to guard the Haven, are also referred to and await discovery.

#### MAP 8: BOSTON TOWN: AD 1700-1850

The period map is largely drawn from two sources, Robert Hall's *Plan of Boston* of 1741 and John Wood's *Map of Boston* dating to 1829, both reproduced in *An Atlas of Boston* (Molyneux and Wright 1974) and indicating the beginning and end of the period in question. As such, the relative expansion of the town can clearly be demonstrated.

Hall's map illustrates the town soon after the beginning of this period. Initially, the town looks as if it has not changed since the medieval period. The street pattern is no different to the surmised medieval pattern and is still largely confined within the Barditch (although this has been culverted in several places). The town centre, from Strait Bargate to South End comprises long blocks of buildings fronting the

Market Place with narrow lanes giving access to the rear of the properties.

The density of buildings during the 18<sup>th</sup> century within Boston still reflects the medieval core of the town. The densest area lies within the Barditch on the eastern bank and along High Street and north of West Street. By the end of this period, development had spread south from Wide Bargate, north from Wormgate with further streets appearing northwest of the town and west of High Street.

Within the medieval street pattern, however, a period of renewed prosperity in Boston brought about by drainage and the construction of the Grand Sluice in 1766, led to an extensive remodelling and building programme, which changed the face of the historic town.



*Georgian door. Wormgate*

Many of these 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century town buildings survive today and are indicated on the period map. The information is drawn from the Listed Building register, other published references and a rapid survey of the town. It is unlikely to represent the full range of buildings belonging to these periods in the town. It is known that some medieval buildings survive

within or behind 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century facades, but the true extent awaits discovery. The 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century streetscape within the town centre is largely intact and forms a major and important element of the historic built environment. Some 19<sup>th</sup> century warehousing from this period also survives, although much has been destroyed.

Non-Conformist religion also had an effect on the built fabric of Boston during this period as Methodists, Baptists and Quakers are recorded as having their own places of worship scattered around the town. Some of these buildings are still standing and in use for their original purpose (see Leary 1972).

Also evident in increasing numbers are public buildings comprising schools, workhouses, gasworks and jails. Few if any of these buildings survive, although the sites of most are generally known. The provision of leisure facilities for the inhabitants of Boston also became an important feature of the town environment during this period. A bowling green is shown on the 1741 map and within a few years Skirbeck was a centre for early bathing hotels, centred on two buildings, Pudding-pie House and the Neptune Inn, which were gradually overshadowed by similar facilities at Frieston Shore. In the nineteenth century, areas for swimming and walking were created along the bank of the Witham south of the town known as Bath Gardens and Vauxhall Gardens. Permanent theatres were built in the town from 1777 and a library was also established.

There are fewer properties depicted along Wormgate, indicating that the former medieval houses belonging to the priories and abbeys have probably been cleared.

Wide Bargate is still an important open space and development is apparent on both sides and continues up to the Maud Foster Drain. Animal pens are shown within Wide Bargate indicating that the fair and markets were still important to the town. To the south of Wide Bargate, planned grid-like development has occurred leading off Pen Street.

Early nineteenth century urban development is also apparent along the Maud Foster Drain with a range of both industrial buildings, including the windmill of 1819, and terraced housing represented.

Development began along the Spilsby Road from about 1810 onwards. This development represented a higher status growth in the town and is typified by Victorian villas, larger towards the northeast of the road, although on the south eastern side of the road development is later in date.

North of the town a small suburb grew up alongside the Grand Sluice. Known as Witham Town, the houses were built by industrialists and merchants to provide accommodation for workers on the river port at the sluice.

On the west side of the river, development also reflects the medieval pattern. The highest density of buildings occurs opposite the church in the Lincoln Lane and Stanbow areas. Directly opposite the church lies Irby Hall, one of few high status buildings in the town. Continuous development is apparent along High Street (also referred to as Goat Street) as far south as where the Hammond Beck enters the Haven.

The beginning of this period still sees Boston's port at a low ebb, despite Daniel Defoe commenting in 1724 on the town being "a large, populous and well built town, full of good merchants, and has a good share of foreign trade, as well as Lynn" (quoted by Lewis 1973, 9). By 1751, the Haven is recorded as being silted up and large ships were unable to reach the town (*ibid.*).

With drainage of the fens and the construction of the Grand Sluice a resurgence in the port became viable and during the Napoleonic wars it reached a position as the 24<sup>th</sup> most important port in the country. However, this was short-lived and until the construction of the dock in 1884 trade remained relatively low and coastal in nature.

#### **MAPS 9 AND 10: BOSTON 1845 TO 1945**

Many major changes occurred in the town during this last period assessment. However, the overall size of the town changed little.

Two factors changed the face of Boston during this period. The first was the arrival of the railways in 1848 followed by the construction of the dock in 1884 with its associated works.

The railway through Boston was quite extensive with lines connecting the town to Lincoln, alongside the Witham, to Louth, Peterborough and Sleaford. It has been said that the arrival of the railways in Boston ended the town's Georgian prosperity as agricultural produce was shipped by rail rather than sea (Wright 1994, pl 144). Visible reminders of the railway include the station and the bridge over the Witham near the Grand Sluice. South of Sleaford Road was the Great Northern Railways locomotive department that was located in Boston until 1953 when it moved to Doncaster and was replaced by goods stations. Further lines and the swing bridge were opened to connect the dock with the main railway network in 1893. Housing was provided for the railway workers in two areas, Trinity Street and Locomotive Street and warehouses were built adjacent to the railway lines.

Though it never came to fruition, a tramway was also proposed in 1878 that connected Boston to a proposed pier on Frieston Shore (Wright 1982, 249) with a branch to join the railway near its crossing over the Maud Foster Drain.

The construction of the dock in 1884 developed a large area of former agricultural land at the south end of the town. Following construction of the dock a number of single-storey sheds were built for storage followed by two granaries before 1891 (Lewis and Wright 1973, 48). Other features were installed at the dock including a fish market, icehouses and workshops owned by firms such as the Boston Deep Sea Fishing and Ice Company Ltd and the Steam Trawling Company of Boston Ltd (*ibid.*). Few of these buildings survive.

The area northwest of Wide Bargate was developed at the beginning of the twentieth century from a former deer park, the focal point of which is now Central Park. Various streets were laid out at this time, primarily Thorold Street and Tawney Street with Norfolk Street also included at a later date.

There are few reminders of Boston's involvement during the wars. Pillboxes survive around the dock area and were placed for its protection during WWII (Osborne 1997, 30). St. John's Workhouse was briefly taken over by the Royal Navy, renamed HMS Arbella, and was in overall charge of the defence of the Wash. Additionally, the Secret Army set up underground operational bases adjacent to the Borough offices on West Street on a bomb site and in the vicinity of the docks.

The final period of development is reconstructed from the 1946 Ordnance Survey plan. New areas of development include the area between the town and the Maud Foster Drain, which is indicated by the street pattern, although few new buildings were constructed. Similar arrangements or developments under way are evident along Sleaford Road, northwest of the town and to the north of Spilsby Road. South End is dominated by wood yards, created to store this import from Scandinavia. There is still evidence of Boston's port status with a rope walk alongside Hospital Lane and near Marsh Lane.

By the end of this period, the pattern of streets is not dissimilar to the map of 1845, which in fact can be traced back to the medieval period. This is of course before John Adams Way was constructed and changed the face of the eastern side of the town. The dock and railway had affected the western and southern sides of the town, but to the east the suburbs south of Main Ridge and around Skirbeck were open areas with only a hint of the development that was about to occur.

### MAP 11: POST 1945 DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS TO BOSTON'S HISTORIC TOWN

Map 11 highlights areas of post-1945 development that are likely to have had the most impact on the buried and built heritage of Boston. Fortunately, Boston has not suffered the 1960s remodelling of the town centre as many other towns in the country did. This alone raises the potential for survival of well preserved archaeological remains below and above ground. Much modern development, however, has taken place in Boston, as depicted on the map.

The full extent of the damage to below ground deposits caused by modern development is difficult to assess without information about the foundation design for each building. The nature of construction techniques and the scale of groundworks associated with post war development, however, often has a devastating impact on buried archaeological deposits. This is generally not the case with very recent development (post 2000) in known archaeologically sensitive areas where the Borough Council has implemented a policy of preservation *in situ*, such as Pescod Square and South End.

The principal areas where there is likely to have been significant impact into archaeological deposits are:

- North and south of Strait Bargate and Wide Bargate, between the Market Place and the Maud Foster Drain
- Between Lincoln Lane and West Street
- Large areas between the High Street and the railway line on the west side of the town.

Some development, and most since 1990, will have taken steps to mitigate the impact of new construction by recording and latterly, preservation *in situ* of archaeological remains. The biological and chemical impacts of development include changes to groundwater levels and geochemistry such as pH changes and redox. This is an important factor in Boston as a significant proportion of the buried archaeological deposits are waterlogged and anaerobic, with corresponding excellent preservation of organic material where aerobic bacteria are inactive. Groundworks which cause the drying out, the

reintroduction of oxygen and changes to the geochemistry of these environments all contribute to the re-activation of bacterial activity which will cause organic materials to decay. The biological and chemical impact of modern development is difficult to characterise, however for very recent development (post 2000) developers have taken steps to reduce the risk of such damage to fragile archaeological remains.

Regarding Boston's historic built environment, there are a number of areas of the town where recent development has diverged from or disrupted the historic form of the town. These are:

- Haven Bridge Road/John Adam's Way, which cuts southwest, northeast across the town. This major road has disrupted the historic form of the town that has developed following the course of the River Witham, and acts as physical barrier between the south of the town and the centre. As a result, the built fabric in the southern and eastern parts of Boston has suffered decline and decay. This is particularly evident in the southern half of the High Street and in South End.
- Out of town style commercial development with extensive car parks to the north and south of Sleaford Road as it enters the town centre around the railway line.
- The mixed 1970s development between Lincoln Lane and West Street.

#### **MAP 12: ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS AND NON-DEVELOPMENT RELATED PAST IMPACTS**

Archaeological interventions and past physical impacts in Boston, not including modern development, are depicted on Map 12. The vast majority of archaeological interventions have taken place since 1990 following the introduction of PPG16, which requires that developers consider and mitigate the impact of development to archaeological remains. Most archaeological interventions are small scale and many do not reach natural deposits. The information from them is available from the Lincolnshire County Council

Historic Environment Record and from the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire.

Other physical impacts include: cellaring, clay extraction for bricks, construction of the docks and bomb strikes. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century photographs of Boston show many ponds and small extraction pits. These have not been mapped. It is important to note that although a building may contain cellars, it is possible that buried remains are intact beneath their floors and those shown on the map are unlikely to represent the full extent of cellars in the town.

Also shown are reclaimed areas from former river courses and marsh where archaeological remains are likely to be very different in character or non-existent.

Services such as water, gas, electricity etc. are also not shown on the map. These service trenches are likely to have had an impact into below ground deposits in some parts of Boston.

#### **MAP 13: STATUTORY CONSTRAINTS**

There are three Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the Baseline Study area:

- SM 33137 – a rectangular earthwork, Wyberton West Road
- SM 49 – Hussey Tower, South End
- SM 250 – Hospital Bridge Lane footbridge, across the Maud Foster drain.

These are protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Any works affecting a scheduled monument or its setting must have Scheduled Monument Consent obtained from the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport.

Listed buildings are shown on Map 13. These are protected through the Planning Act (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) 1990. Any works affecting a listed building or its setting must have Listed Building Consent obtained from the local planning authority. The register of listed buildings in Boston is available from Boston Borough Council.

The Conservation Area in Boston is outlined on Map 13. Eleven specific character areas within the zone have been identified and described by Boston Borough Council (Draft Boston Conservation Area Appraisal 2005). Any works that affect a conservation area must have Conservation Area Consent obtained from the local planning authority.

Recent recommendations set out in the Heritage Protection White Paper (2007) are likely to result in a single system of national designation, the streamlining of of the heritage consent regime, and the devolution of responsibilities for heritage consent to Local Authorities.

## MANAGEMENT OF THE RESOURCE

### *The archaeological heritage*

#### MAP 14: ZONES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

The archaeology of Boston has been broadly ascribed to four zones, based on the extent of the existing, often limited, knowledge presented in Part 1. Each zone has a different character based on the historical development of the town and presents different threats and opportunities.

Period	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
AD 1086-1250	✓			
AD 1250-1400	✓	✓		
AD 1400-1545	✓	✓	✓	
AD 1545-1700	✓	✓	✓	✓
AD 1700-1845	✓	✓	✓	✓
Archaeo environmental potential	✓	✓	✓	?

*Archaeological and palaeo-environmental potential by designated zone. A tick signifies that archaeological remains from the corresponding period listed in the left hand column has been recorded within a zone*

#### Zone 1

##### **Character**

Central Boston: Early medieval urban core with subsequent post-medieval development retaining a largely medieval street pattern. The river Witham flows through the medieval core of the town. On the eastern side of the Witham are St. Botolph's church and the market place, which would have been the ecclesiastical and commercial heart of medieval Boston. Secular structures from the medieval and later periods survive, although facades are often altered. There is also the potential for Roman remains to be encountered on higher ground such as river levées, for example, similar to those found at the Grammar School.

It is possible that the area to the west of the Witham, developed subsequently to the area enclosed by the Barditch to the east. The medieval street pattern is retained in places on the western riverbank, but has been destroyed in the Lincoln Lane area. There are some surviving medieval buildings, with more examples of post-medieval date. South of Haven Bridge Road/John Adams Way, on either side of

the High Street, early post-medieval (16<sup>th</sup> century) deposits have been widely recorded. North of Haven Bridge Road/John Adam's Way there is the greatest potential for medieval and post-medieval deposits, although the modern impact is greater in much of this area.

Skirbeck Quarter: the medieval core of Skirbeck with limited post-medieval development represents the quarter. Very little archaeological work has been carried out in this zone and, therefore, the understanding of the resource is poor. There is potential for important Anglo-Saxon and early medieval deposits to survive in places. Deposits are likely to be waterlogged because of the close proximity to the Haven.

Archaeological deposits in Zone 1 are up to 3 metres thick and are generally waterlogged from 1 metre below present ground level. The archaeological record in this zone represents in many places an unbroken sequence from the earliest medieval occupation of the town through to the post-medieval settlement. Where preservation is good, archaeological deposits in Zone 1 are likely to be of national importance.

##### **Threats**

Unsympathetic and high impact modern development including roads, car parks and buildings, since 1945 and prior to the implementation of PPG16, has been damaging to the above and below ground historic environment resource. Much of this development has had little or no associated archaeological investigation or recording. This has occurred particularly in the Lincoln Lane area. Post-medieval buildings are less likely to have had an adverse affect on below ground archaeology than modern structures.

The construction of Haven Bridge Road/John Adam's Way has cut off the southern part of Zone 1 from the rest of the historic High Street and town centre. This has resulted in the deterioration and decay of the built environment south of the Haven Bridge. All development within this zone is likely to impact on important archaeological deposits and steps should be taken to assess and mitigate against this.

**Opportunities**

Deposits in Zone 1 are critical to the understanding of the nature of development of the town. There are opportunities to examine religious structures and Boston's role in national and international trade. There is the potential to further understand the nature of the port from early to modern times with the identification of wharves and docks along the Witham and the types of trade going in and out of the port. Archaeological investigation would help to discover why Skirbeck initially developed as the more important centre and elucidate the reasons for the subsequent decline of the settlement in favour of Boston.

**Zone 2****Character**

Archaeological deposits in Zone 2 represent evidence for medieval expansion of the town beyond the Barditch between 1250 and 1400. This reflects a thriving economy within the town and relates to the importance of the port at this time.

Later medieval suburban expansion is recorded to the south of the town and east and northeast of the Barditch. Occupation deposits, including buildings, have been recorded with concentrations on both sides of Wide Bargate, and religious sites including two cemeteries associated with friaries, as well as the site of the early medieval St. John's church. The only surviving and standing buildings of the late medieval period within Zone 2, are Hussey Tower and Pescod Hall. To the south of this zone, deposits and structures have been recorded and may relate to activity associated with the Hammond Beck, as it flows into the Witham.

In places, archaeological deposits are up to 3 metres thick (e.g. west of Hussey Tower) and are generally waterlogged from 1 metre below the present ground level. In places, archaeological deposits are of national importance, e.g. within the former timber yard at South End and at Pescod Square.

**Threats**

Much of this Zone has been re-developed, generally unsympathetically and prior to the implementation of PPG16. This has resulted in only minimal archaeological work being undertaken.

John Adam's Way has cut off the southeast sector of this zone from the historic town centre, resulting in deterioration and decay of the built fabric.

All future development is likely to impact important archaeological deposits and steps to assess and mitigate against this should be taken. Some of the very recent development has been designed to have minimal impact on archaeological deposits.

**Opportunities**

Zone 2 is important for understanding the reasons for and nature of later medieval expansion outside of the Barditch. There are opportunities for examining a friary as well as the cemeteries of two others, St. John's church, and high status medieval and post-medieval secular buildings. There is also the opportunity to investigate the importance of the port and its trade during the medieval and post-medieval periods, especially the role of the Hammond Beck and Boston's hinterland.

**Zone 3****Character**

Zone 3 is represented by late medieval and post-medieval suburban expansion south of Wide Bargate. There is a moderate potential for earlier remains which increases towards Zone 2. Examples of medieval remains include a tile kiln to the far east of this zone, and burials recorded in Rowley Road and at Boston Football Ground.

**Threats**

This Zone is bisected by John Adam's Way, which cuts off the eastern half from the historic town centre. Further development in this zone, particularly towards Zone 2, may impact archaeological deposits and steps should be taken to assess and mitigate against this.

**Opportunities**

Archaeological investigation would help to understand the medieval and post-medieval development of the town.

**Zone 4****Character**

Zone 4 is typified by post-medieval suburb development along West Street, Sleaford Road and the Witham. Some industrial development has



occurred. There is a limited potential for earlier remains.

### **Threats**

Unsympathetic out of town style shopping development exists in the west and southwest parts of this Zone. Further development in this Zone may impact archaeological deposits and steps should be taken to assess and mitigate against this.

### **Opportunities**

Archaeological investigation would help further our understanding the post-medieval development of the town.

Development outside of these zones is still subject to PPG 16 assessment and Boston Borough Council considers each site on an individual basis. A Saxon settlement has been found outside the zones summarised above. This is a reminder that unexpected important archaeological remains are always a possibility.

### **Zone of high palaeo-environmental potential**

Depicted on Map 14, is a zone of high palaeo-environmental potential (shown in green). This zone cuts across the described archaeological zones and is not period exclusive. The extent of the area is based on information from sediments recorded in archeological interventions.

Because of the town's location at the Witham estuary, the waterlogged nature of the soil enhances the preservation of waterlogged organic archaeological and environmental material, such as wood, leather, insects and vegetation. The palaeo-environmental potential is perhaps better in Boston than that for York and London and comparable to King's Lynn. Waterlogged deposits survive at varying depths below the present ground surface and the likelihood of good preservation increases with greater depth. Although less than twenty archaeological interventions have had accompanying detailed environmental archaeological analysis, thus making the overall assessment of this resource difficult, some have produced exceptional results.

The river itself holds a potential for buried boats and ships, river frontage structures and structures buried in the riverbed. There is also the potential for rubbish from all periods to be incorporated within the river mud. A further understanding of these issues is important for river management.

### **The Built Heritage**

A map depicting important built heritage character zones and assessments has not been included in this document as this is addressed in Conservation Area Appraisals carried out by Boston Borough Council. These are currently being revised (draft Boston Town Conservation Area Appraisal 2004). Large sections of the built heritage of the town are not in conservation areas, however, and this study brings with it the opportunity to reassess the extent of designations in the town, and provides a baseline for a more detailed characterisation of the town as a whole.

Map 11 highlights the main modern impacts to the historic fabric of the town. Some of these developments are sympathetic to, and enhance, their surroundings. Much development and demolition, however, has resulted in intrusion and loss to the historic streetscape.

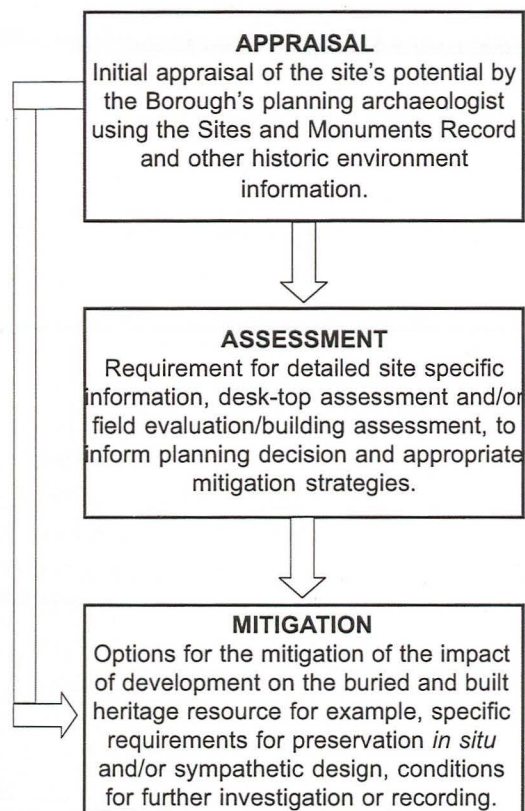
Many historic buildings survive in Boston, some of the best examples of which are listed. However, since 1989 several listed buildings have been demolished or de-listed. Even more historic buildings have been lost that were not protected by listing, through development or disuse. This latter group of buildings, which include a number of industrial developments such as warehouses, railway infrastructure *etc.*, are just as important in understanding the development of Boston throughout history as those that do have statutory protection.

Nicholas Pevsner (1989) called for a Royal Commission Survey of the architecture of Boston but this is yet to happen. A full survey of the built heritage within Boston's historic core, although a major undertaking, would enable the true extent and significance of the historic built fabric to be recognised and be an invaluable tool for all those concerned with the management of Boston's Historic Environment.

## BEST PRACTISE PROCEDURES FOR DEVELOPMENT IN HISTORIC BOSTON

### Archaeology

As a rule, any significant development, anywhere, should consider impact to the historic environment as a material consideration from a very early stage (PPG16). According to best practice, the three basic stages of Appraisal, Assessment and Mitigation should be followed.



In Boston, any proposed development in Zones 1 and 2 should start with an appraisal, ideally well before a planning application is submitted, by consulting the Boston Planning Archaeologist or the Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Record. Any large-scale development proposals in Zones 3, 4 and surrounding areas should also be appraised for potential archaeological implications at an early stage.

### Mitigation

Because of the special preservation conditions in much of Boston and the importance and fragility of much of the waterlogged archaeological and palaeo-environmental resource, mitigation

strategies for proposed development are very likely to comprise a requirement for engineering a foundation design that will minimise harm to the underlying archaeological deposits where they are identified.

In Zones 1 and 2, where assessment and evaluation have identified archaeological deposits of national importance, the preservation of these deposits *in situ* will be the preferred option wherever possible. In order to achieve this, the impact of development must be kept to an absolute minimum. This will necessitate appropriate and, in many cases, innovative foundation design.

### The Historic Built Environment

The effect of new development on the familiar local scene, be it on listed buildings and their settings, the character and appearance of conservation areas, landscape character or undesignated areas of townscape, should be taken into account from the earliest stages of the design process.

This can be done using a similar methodology to that used in archaeology, beginning with assessment of the quality of a site and its environs, followed by a design appraisal and justification. Characterisation provides the understanding that informs the assessment stage and this process works most effectively and efficiently if it is implemented at all levels of the planning process, from the broad brush, Borough wide strategy level down to the development of small plots.

This method can be used to inform the master planning of areas and the publication of site specific design briefs, giving confidence to the market and at the same time fostering a sense of place.

### KEY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF BOSTON'S HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RESOURCE

This section of the baseline study puts forward an interpretation of the key issues for the management and enhancement of Boston's below ground and built heritage, based on the information presented in Part 1. A series of recommendations to start addressing these key issues are then suggested.

Three main strategic areas have been identified:

1. the management and enhancement of the historic environment resource in physical land use planning.
2. the management and enhancement of the historic environment resource for wider public enjoyment, including education, recreation and tourism.
3. the management and enhancement of the historic environment resource in archaeological and historical research.

#### Key Issue 1

*There is a lack of information and understanding concerning many aspects of Boston's archaeological heritage. Without this understanding it is difficult to manage effectively, the impact of development on the buried historic resource.*

- Reliable information about the nature and extent of below ground archaeological deposits is patchy and completely lacking in some areas.
- The geochemical and biological impact of new foundations on fragile organic rich buried archaeology is poorly understood.

#### Recommendations

A detailed characterisation of the archaeological resource in Boston would address this key issue.

This work should focus on:

- Developing a deposit model for Boston. This should draw together all available information on current micro-topography within the town, the levels below the ground at which archaeological deposits are encountered, the depth of archaeological deposits and the level at which natural deposits are encountered. Much of this information will be available

from existing records from the British Geological Survey; archaeological interventions; geotechnical investigations; the Environment Agency, etc. Where adequate records do not exist, a programme of borehole survey and targeted test pitting could supplement existing information.

- Developing guidelines on suitable construction methods and foundation design for those areas in Boston with high potential for fragile, waterlogged archaeological deposits. This should be developed in conjunction with engineers and be based on a geotechnical study of the impacts of foundations and construction activity on the type of buried archaeological deposits that exist in Boston.
- Assessing the potential of re-using former foundations, with a requirement that new foundation plans and details be archived for use in the future.

#### Key Issue 2

*There is a lack of information and understanding concerning the character, value and vulnerability of the historic built environment. Without this, it is difficult to manage effectively the impact of development on Boston's built heritage*

- The current stock of standing buildings is poorly understood and many could contain older, for example medieval, elements within their structures.
- The character and appearance of large areas of Boston remains un-appraised, making it difficult to take these factors into account when making management decisions affecting them.
- Modern development has been in some cases not sensitive in scale and character to the surrounding townscape.
- The built environment is marred by historic buildings in a poor state of repair, and by open and derelict sites where buildings have been demolished. These are threats to the historic environment and economic prosperity of Boston, but are also regeneration opportunities.

- The full space and use potential of some historic town centre buildings is not realised.

### **Recommendations**

A detailed characterisation of the historic built environment resource would address part of this key issue. This should focus on:

- Encouraging an external and internal survey of buildings within the historic core of the town and a suitable programme of dendrochronological dating of potential medieval and early post-medieval buildings, possibly by establishing a partnership with an academic institution.
- Developing more detailed characterisation for different character areas in Boston to feed into planning policy and regeneration strategies to foster high quality development and sustainable economic growth in an holistic management approach.
- Auditing the amount of unused space in historic buildings, e.g. upper floors, cellars, outbuildings.
- Gathering information about any significant original purpose, or former use of a building that could inform future development proposals.

The management of development in the historic town should generate confidence in a shared vision for the future of Boston that will foster investment. Key aims of this approach will be to:

- Encourage the re-use of historic buildings. This is particularly pertinent to former industrial buildings and warehousing.
- Encourage the use of the whole of an historic building, for example upper floor accommodation in the town centre.
- Encourage the sympathetic redevelopment of brown field sites.
- Encourage designs that accommodate and respect the history of a building and/or the surrounding character of the area.

### **Key Issue 3**

*The economic, educational and recreational potential of the historic environment is not fully realised in Boston.*

- There are enormous opportunities for improving awareness of the historical importance of Boston.
- The totemic quality of The Stump is unquestionably a huge asset to Boston, but this has led in the past to too much of a single emphasis for visitors to the town. Significant opportunities exist for a fuller, more varied visitor experience that would maximise inward investment and increase appreciation of the town as a whole.
- It is difficult to access and appreciate parts of Boston because of traffic and major roads.

### **Recommendations**

A coherent heritage strategy based on consultation and inclusiveness would address this key issue. The strategy should focus on:

- Increasing access to historic environment information
- Producing high quality, widely available and varied media, popular publications for residents, visitors and education groups
- Developing signed trails in the town that encourage residents, visitors and education groups to explore historic Boston.
- Creating a safer and higher quality environment in the key historic areas of South Square and the Market Place by traffic management measures and public realm improvements.
- Encouraging access to South End and south High Street by increasing the permeability of John Adam's Way to pedestrians.
- Supporting and encouraging local heritage organisations such as Boston Preservation Trust and Boston and District Archaeological Society to raise awareness of Boston's archaeological and built heritage, for example a regular one day conference with published proceedings to disseminate new

archaeological information, historical and conservation work.

#### **Key Issue 4**

*There is no research agenda for Boston's archaeological or built heritage and a corresponding lack of interpretation and synthesis of archaeological and historical investigations.*

#### **Recommendation**

To develop a research framework, based on a detailed characterisation of the historic environment resource. The research framework should be implemented in all PPG16 archaeological interventions, research investigations and any community/public investigations.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The Boston Historic Environment baseline Study has set out to describe the unique evolution of the physical town of Boston according to what is known about its past history in order that the tangible remains of this history are better understood and appreciated. At the heart of this exercise is the presumption that the historic environment belongs to and is valued by everyone, and that the balancing of change, with the conservation of this finite and irreplaceable asset is a common goal.

Archaeologically and historically, Boston is an important resource with enormous potential for research, educational and tourism purposes. Boston is internationally important for its *in-situ* well preserved organic deposits, as well as its past economic and social history. The survey has highlighted that a detailed characterisation of the archaeological resource and the built environment along with a coherent heritage and research strategy would be of great benefit to the effective management of the town's historic environment.

The best strategies rely on the best intelligence and this study is the first step towards gathering the information that is needed and looking to the way forward.

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

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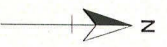
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Map 1  
Boston  
Roman and Saxon  
(AD 43-1086)

-  Study area
-  Roman site
-  Roman findspot
-  Saxon site
-  Saxon findspot












# Map 2

## Medieval

### Boston

AD 1086-1545

-  Study area
-  Known site
-  Fen
-  Medieval seabank
-  Principal thoroughfares







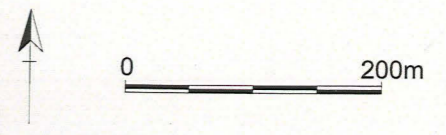
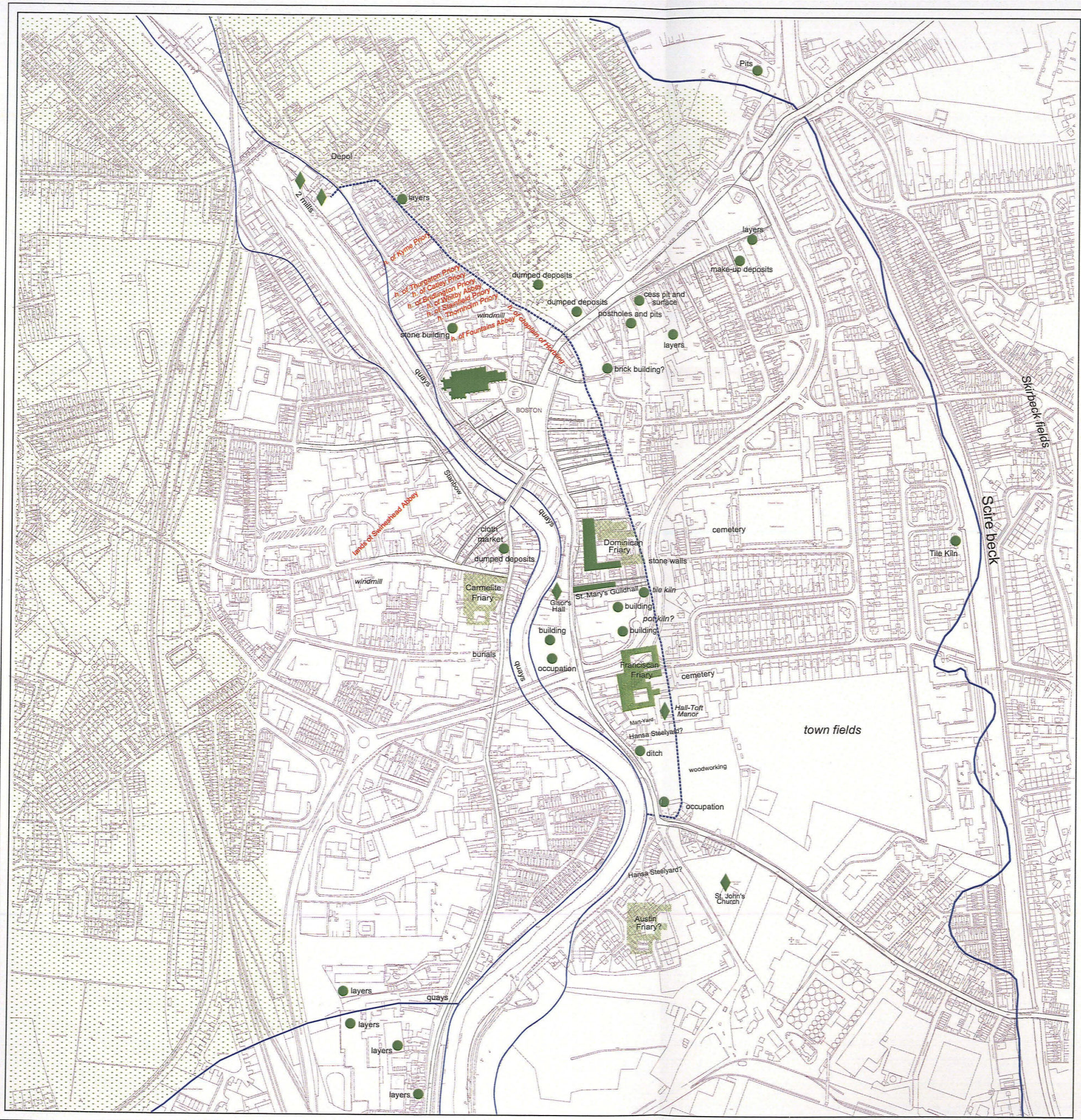


# Map 4

## Boston town inset

### AD 1250-1400

-  Documented building/site
-  Evidence from excavation
-  Extant building
-  Fen/marshy ground








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# Map 5

## Boston town inset

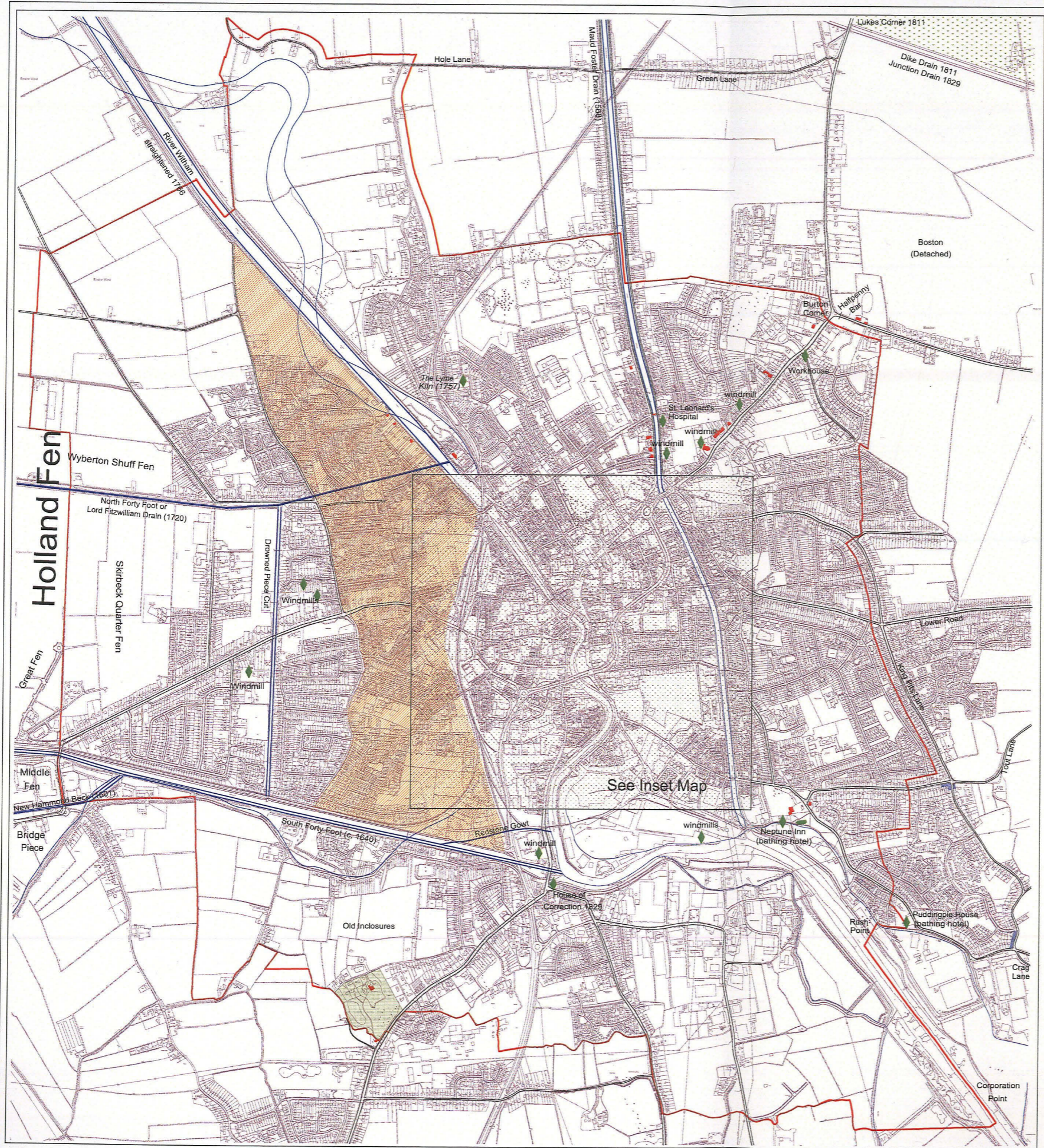
### AD 1400-1545

-  Documented building/site
-  Extant building: 1400-1545
-  Extant building from previous period
-  Evidence from excavation
-  Fen/marshy ground



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




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# Map 6

## Post-medieval Boston

### AD 1545-1845






-  Study area
-  Known site
-  Fen
-  Extent of Boston Inclosures prior to 1783
-  Extant roads by 1839
-  Drainage works
-  Skirbeck built up areas 1833
-  Parkland
-  Extant listed post-medieval structures

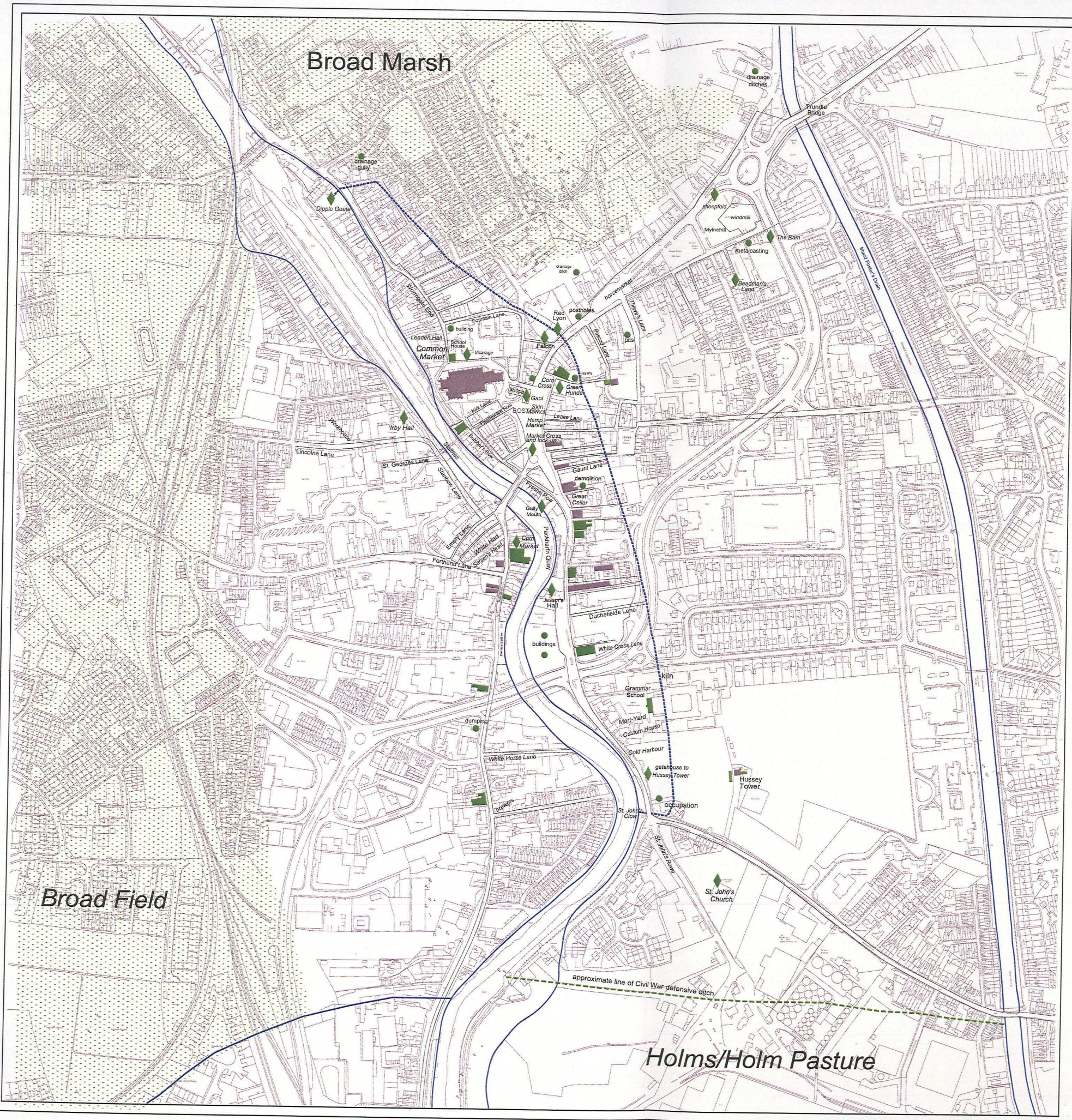


# Map 7

## Boston town inset

### AD 1545-1700

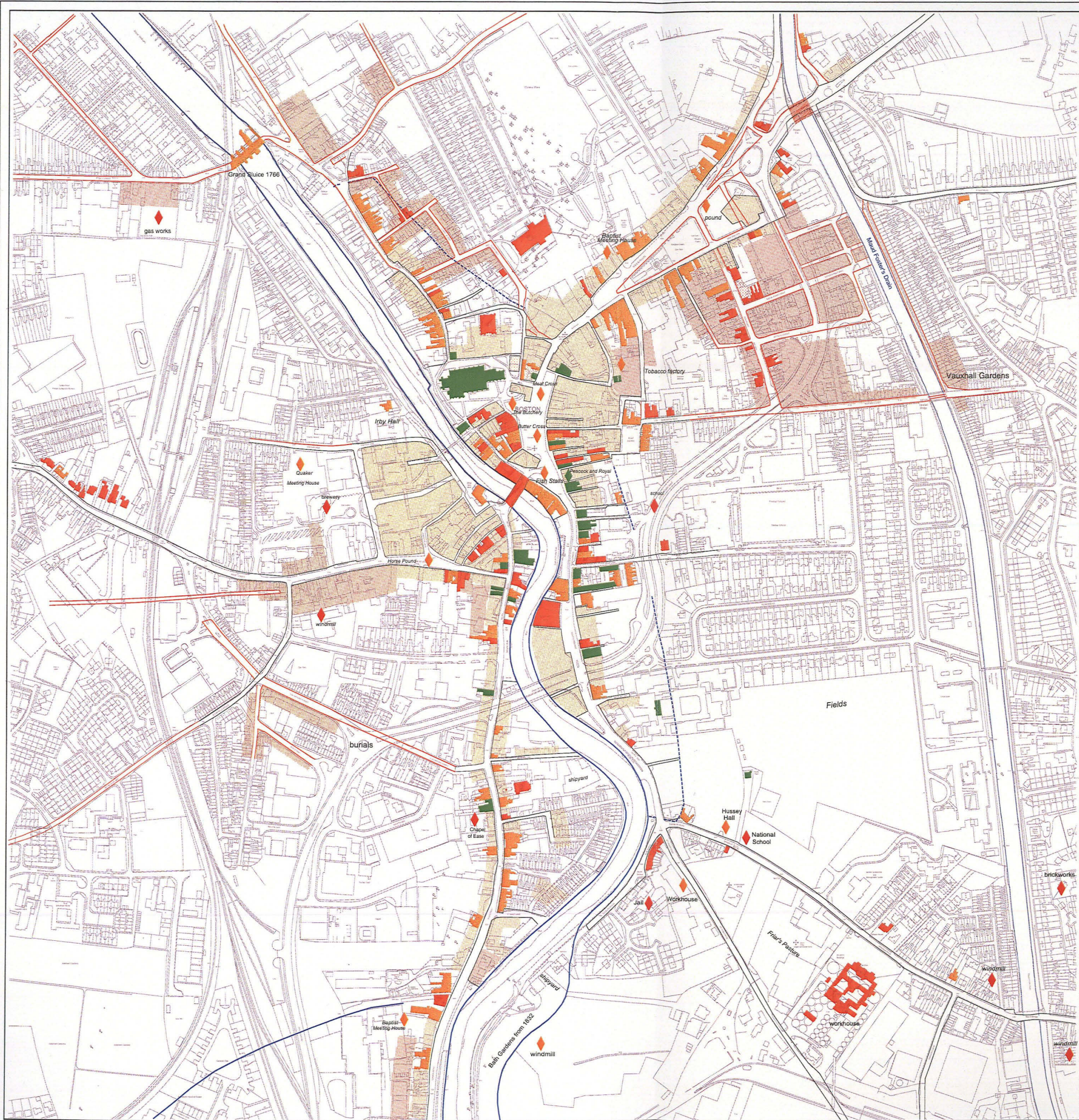
-  Documented building/site
-  Extant building 1545-1700
-  Extant building from previous period
-  Evidence from excavation
-  Fen/marshy ground



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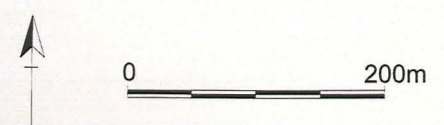


# Map 8 Boston town inset AD 1700-1845



- Documented building/site: 18th century
- Extant 18th century building
- Extent of built up area 1741
- Documented building/site: early 19th century
- Extant early 19th century building
- Extent of built up area 1829
- Extant medieval/early post-medieval building

Roads highlighted in black appear on Robert Hall's Plan of Boston dating to 1741. The roads highlighted in red are those that can be traced on John Wood's 1829 map of Boston.










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# Map 9

## Boston

### AD 1845-1945

-  Study area
-  Known site
-  Extent of Boston suburban expansion 1945
-  Railway and associated features
-  Dock and associated features
-  New churches
-  Extant listed medieval and post-medieval buildings



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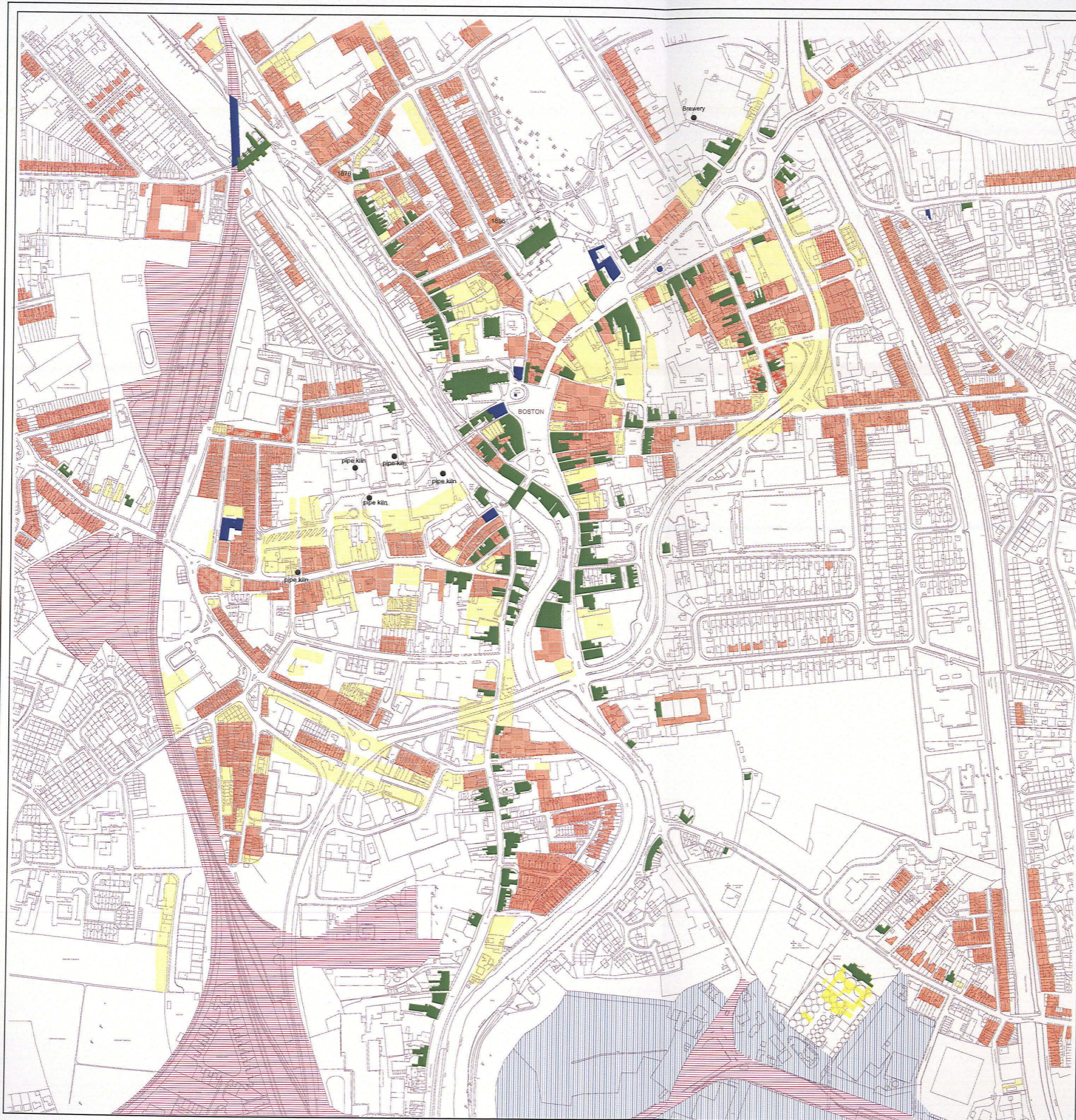


# Map 10

## Boston town inset

### AD 1845-1945

- Documented building/site
- Listed 1845-1945 building
- Extent of built up area 1946
- Extant medieval/post-medieval building
- Railway and associated features
- Dock and associated features
- Extent of demolition of 19th century buildings



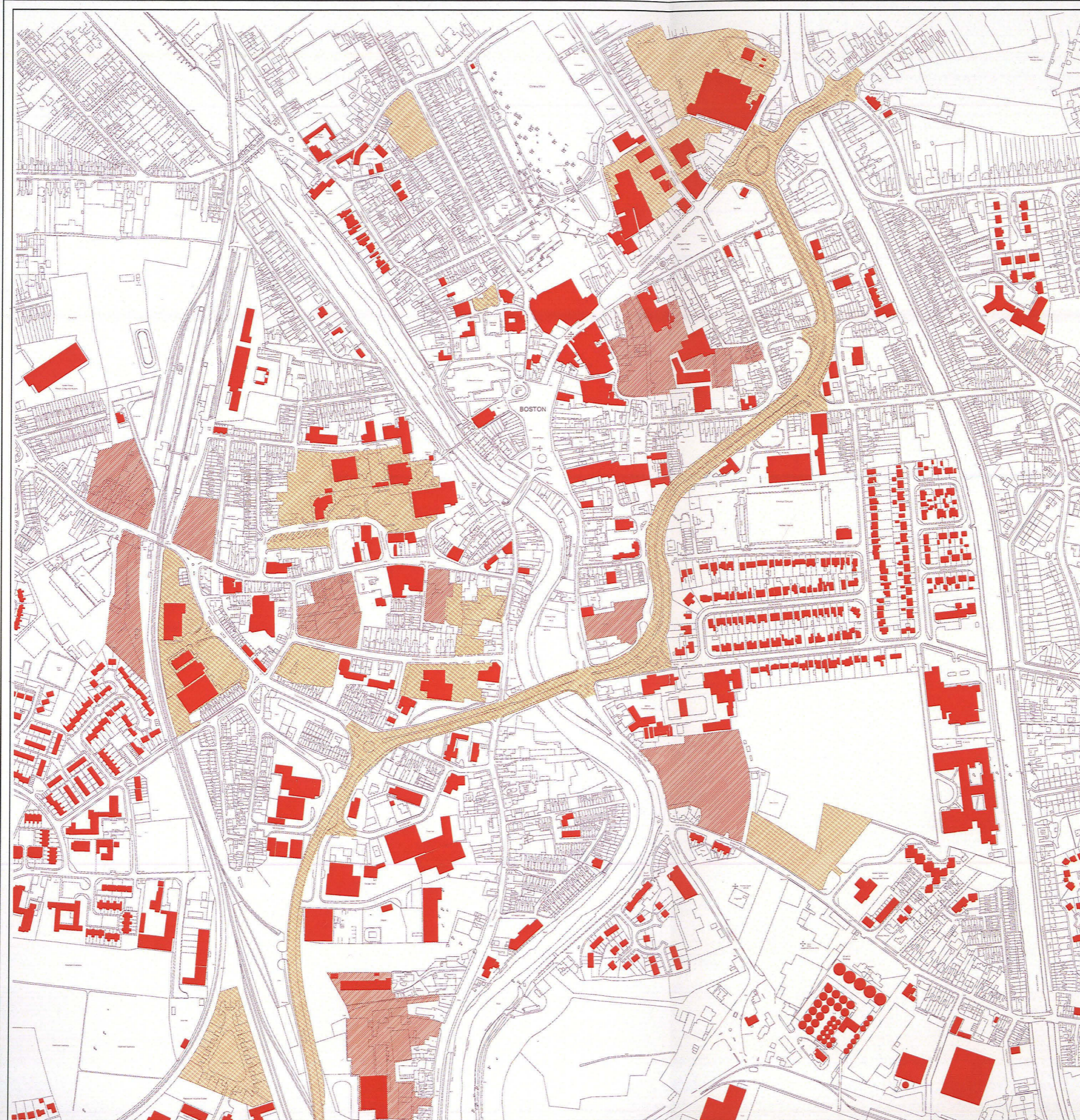
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# Map 11

## Post 1945

### Development

-  Post 1945 building
-  Major post 1945 development
-  Major post 1945 road scheme/car park



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# Map 12

## Archaeological Interventions and Non-Development Impacts







- Study area
- Archaeological Intervention
- Reclaimed Land
- Areas of Clay extraction/docks etc
- Identified or suggested presence of cellars
- ★ Bomb strikes

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Tudor Cottage, Tattershall Road, Watching Brief 1997 | 34. South Square, Evaluation, 2000                   |
| 2. Robin Hood's Walk, Watching Brief, 1998              | Watching Brief, 2002                                 |
| 3. Asda, Evaluation, 1994                               | Excavation, 2003                                     |
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| 4. 4-8 Union Place, Evaluation, 1991                    | Excavation, 1997                                     |
| 5. 11-11a Union Street, Watching Brief, 1995            | 36. 95 Liquorpond Street, Watching Brief, 1995       |
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| 7. Red Lion Street, Evaluation, 1998                    | 38. Rowley Road, Evaluation, 1972                    |
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| Excavation, 2002  | Watching Brief, 2003                                 |
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| 17. Trinity Street, Watching Brief, 1997                | 46. Skirbeck Road, Evaluation, 1989                  |
| 18. Lincoln Lane, Watching Brief, 1999                  | 47. London Road, Evaluation, 2000                    |
| 19. Hillards, Watching Brief, 1981                      | 48. London Road, Evaluation, 2002                    |
| 20. Market Place, Watching Brief,                       | 49. 138-142 High Street, Evaluation, 2003            |
| 21. Market Place, Watching Brief,                       | 50. General Hospital, Evaluation, 1994               |
| 22. Craythorne Lane, Watching Brief, 1994               | Excavation, 1995                                     |
| 23. Pump Square, Evaluation, 1992                       | Watching Brief, 1995                                 |
| 24. West Street, Evaluation, 2002                       | 51. 56 Skirbeck Road, Evaluation 1998                |
| Watching Brief, 2003                                    | Watching Brief, 2000                                 |
| 25. Cinema, West Street, Watching Brief, 2002           | 52. St. John's Workhouse, Watching Brief, 2001       |
| 26. 35 Paddock Grove, Watching Brief, 1994              | 53. St. Nicholas Close, Watching Brief, 1994         |
| 27. 2-4 High Street, Watching Brief, 1998               | 54. Church Road, Skirbeck, Excavation, 1995          |
| 28. 17-19 High Street, Watching Brief, 1996             | Evaluation, 1996                                     |
| Evaluation, 1996  | Evaluation, 1997                                     |
| 29. Axe and Cleaver, West Street, Excavation, 1961      | Watching Brief, 1997                                 |
| 30. 32 High Street, Watching Brief, 1994                | Watching Brief, 1998                                 |
| 31. 36 and 38 High Street, Watching Brief, 2000         | 55. Mill Road, Watching Brief, 1994                  |
| 32. 42-44 High Street, Watching Brief, 2000             | 56. Wyberton West Road, Watching Brief, 2002         |
| 33. Blackfriars, Excavation, 1963                       | 57. Wyberton West Road, Watching Brief, 2000         |
| Evaluation 1991   | Evaluation, 1997                                     |
| Excavation 1992   | Watching Brief, 1998                                 |
| Watching Brief, 1994                                    | 58. Wyberton West Road, Evaluation, 1997             |



# Map 13

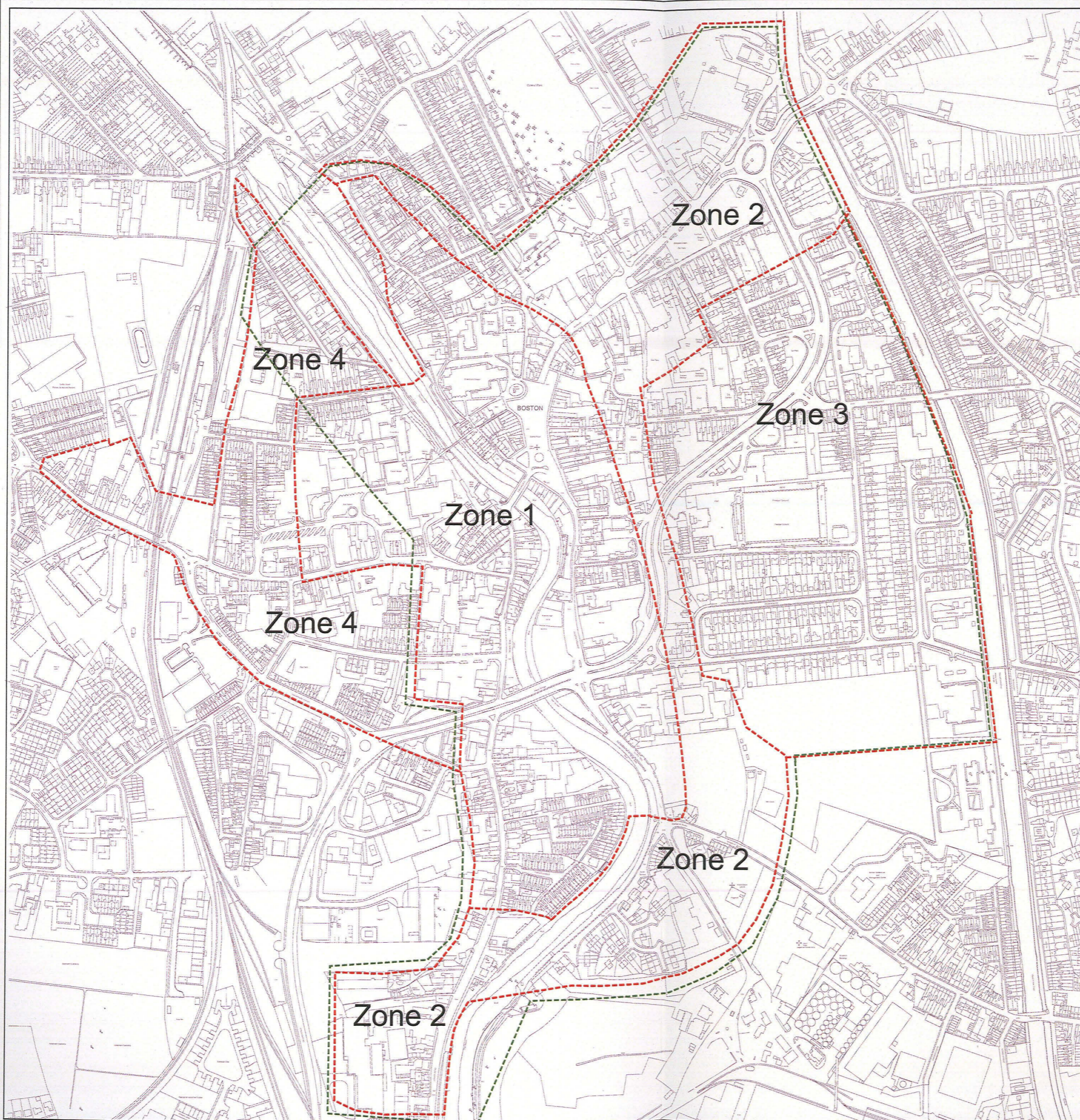
## Statutory Constraints



-  Study area
-  Scheduled Ancient Monument
-  Listed Building
-  Conservation Area
-  Burial Ground
-  Registered Park and Garden & Burial Ground

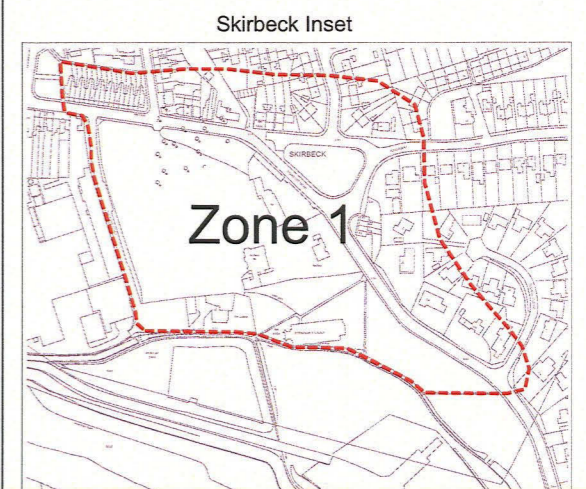


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# Map 14 Archaeological Zones



-  Zone of archaeological potential
-  Area of archaeoenvironmental potential



0 200m