

96/2



LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

FRANCIS HOUSE SILVER BIRCH PARK GREAT NORTHERN TERRACE LINCOLN LN5 8LG

**Compak Systems Site, Trinity Street
Gainsborough**

Archaeological Desk Top Study

NGR: SK8178 8965

Site Code: GBW 96

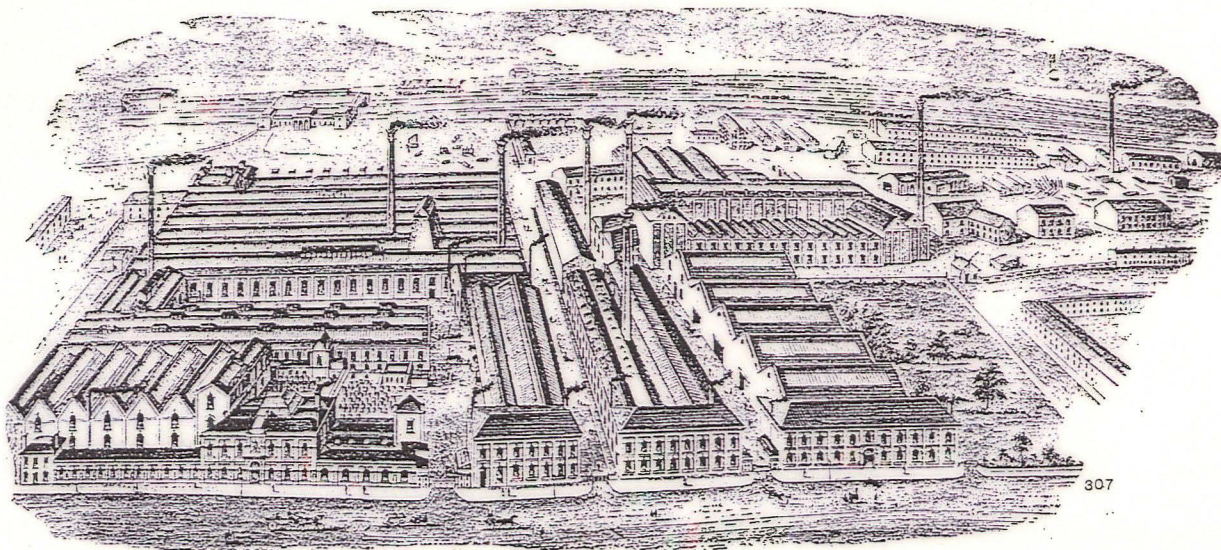
LCNCC No. : 15.96

for

Littman & Robeson

Chartered Town Planners

(on behalf of Carter Commercial Developments Ltd)



Artist's impression of the Britannia Iron Works at the time of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers' visit, 1885.

January 1996

Negative DBA (no event, source or mon)

Contents

List of Figures

Summary	1
Site Location	1
Planning Background	1
Previous Archaeological Work	2
Archaeological Background	2
Prehistory	
Roman	
Saxon and Danish Periods	
The Medieval and Modern Town	3
The Britannia Works	4
Discussion	5
Conclusion	5
References	5
Figures	

Figures

Fig. 1 Site location and extent of proposed development. Plan reduced from 1: 1250 survey kindly supplied by Littman & Robeson.

Fig. 2 a) Reproduction of 1748 survey of Gainsborough (LAO, Bacon Plans no. 39)

b) Transcription of the 1748 map showing the position of the proposed development as field enclosures (reproduced from Beckwith 1968)

Fig. 3 Part of the 1851 Map of the Town and Port of Gainsborough by D. J. H. Ibbetson showing the proposed development on the east side of Beaumont Street as open ground The site of the proposed filling station lies on the south side of Torr Street, built after 1748.

Fig. 4 Part of the 1887 O. S. 1:2500 map showing the engineering works over part of the site with the Vicarage at the south end.

Fig. 5 Part of the 1977 O. S. 1:1250 map (reduced size) the engineering works and the canteen. Reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO, © Crown copyright. LAS Licence no. AL50424A.

Fig. 6 Plan of the Britannia Iron Works, no date but after 1885. Buildings on site of proposed development include show rooms (18, 19, 20).

Compak Systems Site, Trinity Street Gainsborough Archaeological Desk Top Study

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Summary

An archaeological desk top study has shown that the extent of the medieval town lay north and west of the proposed development site. The below ground archaeological impact is therefore considered to be minimal. The building complex on the site was once part of the Britannia Iron Works site belonging to Marshall and Sons Ltd, the main employer in the town between 1875 and 1975. Given its importance to the history of the town and its position in relation to the Listed Buildings to the north a comprehensive survey of the building, prior to demolition is recommended.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services was Commissioned by Littman & Robeson Chartered Town Planners, on behalf of Carter Commercial Developments Ltd to undertake an archaeological desk top study in accordance with the requirements of West Lindsey District Council. These are outlined in the letter of November 10th 1995 from the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council (archaeological advisers to WLDC). There was no Brief set for the work.

Site Location

Gainsborough lies on the east bank of the River Trent 25 miles south of its confluence with the Humber. The proposed development covers the southern half of the former Britannia Works and is bounded by Station Hill to the north, Colville Terrace to the south and Trinity Street to the west. The proposed development will consist of a supermarket and associated parking. A smaller area on the west side of Trinity Street, on the site of the former canteen for the Britannia Works is included in the application for a petrol station.

Planning Background

The sites lie within the area designated a secondary shopping zone in the *West Lindsey Local Plan 1993-2001*. Deposit Draft (March 1994). Policies which apply to this zone are E7 (change of use), S2 (class of retail development), TR9 and TR10 (parking).

Outline application was made in 1992 (W33/497/92) 'to demolish existing buildings on the site and to erect a food and non-food retail development and associated parking and services'. This covered the main site on the east side of Beaumont Street and permission was granted on July 19th 1995 subject to 13 conditions, none of which is archaeological.

A further outline application (W33/674/95) has been made covering both sites, for permission to 'erect a retail store, petrol filling station, car park and vehicular access'. This is currently being considered subject to the usual consultations, including a desk top study to consider the archaeological implications of development.

The Britannia Works buildings to the north of Station Hill are Listed Grade II.

Previous Archaeological Work

Archaeological investigation in Gainsborough has mainly been confined to the area around the Old Hall where excavation and recording of the building has been undertaken since 1982. There have also been watching briefs along water mains and gas pipe installations in that part of the town, and along Bridge Street, which have produced little archaeological information. An evaluation in the cellars of the Baltic Mill showed that the warehouse had been built over former river silts suggesting that the warehouses along the rivers edge are built on reclaimed land.

Archaeological Background

Prehistory

Chance finds have shown that prehistoric settlements underlie many medieval towns. (Lincoln, Horncastle and Caistor have produced such material). However, these sites form part of a pre-urban landscape, unrelated to the towns which subsequently developed there. One or two worked flints were found during the excavations at Gainsborough Old Hall but nothing else is known from the town.

Roman

Recent fieldwork and aerial photography in North Lincolnshire has revealed extensive settlement in the Roman period. There was a thriving pottery industry in the Trent valley, the nearest known kiln sites being at Lea, 3km south of Gainsborough (Garmonsway 1972, 143). The Trent was an important trade route and there was a ferry crossing at the end of Tillbridge Lane between Littleborough and Marton. Gainsborough would have been an ideal location for a port in the Roman period but apart from a few sherds of pottery which were recovered during excavations at the Old Hall nothing is known about any Roman settlement.

Saxon and Danish Periods

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that in 1013 King Swein came with a fleet from Denmark along the Trent until he came to Gainsborough. The Danes briefly took control of the kingdom of Lindsey but after the death of Swein in 1014 Lindsey was soon reconquered by the King of Mercia. This is the first surviving documentary reference to Gainsborough and it implies that Gainsborough must have been of considerable strategic importance by the early 11th century. There is no evidence (documentary or archaeological) to indicate where the core of the Anglo-Saxon settlement lay. Adam Stark, Gainsborough's first historian, claimed that the Danes fortified Gainsborough in 1013 and that these defensive works survived as a sewer until the 19th

century (Stark 1843). Whilst there is little doubt that an area of the town was defined by a medieval town ditch there is no physical evidence that the Danes constructed any defences. It can only be suggested that the early settlement must have been at the core of the medieval settlement and that there was probably a waterfront/quay dating from the Saxon period.

The Medieval and Modern Town

Gainsborough is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as an unexceptional entry. There are no indications that it was anything more than a large settlement (Foster and Longley 1924, 191). The manorial property is assumed to have been on the same site as the Old Hall (built after 1460) which lies NW of the Market Place and close to the parish church.

There are very few buildings in the town, with the notable exception of the Old Hall, which are known to be earlier than 18th century in date. Post-war development in Gainsborough has obliterated so much of its medieval layout and medieval timber buildings were being demolished as recently as the 1960s. Early maps of the town can, however, help to identify the core of the settlement. The earliest of these maps is thought to date from about 1690 and is held at the Lincolnshire Archives Office (LAO, Brace 17/3). It shows that the built up area of the town was triangular in shape centred around the church and the market place with buildings stretching along the River Trent as far as the site of the later bridge (constructed in 1790), which was probably a ferry crossing point. The extent of the medieval town is assumed to have been similar or possibly smaller. A map of 1748 (LAO, Bacon Plans no. 39), prepared for the Sir Neville Hickman (Lord of the Manor) is representational but the distinctive oval shape of Northolme is clear with Trinity Street (then known as Back Street) running south. A few houses are shown at the north end but the proposed development site is clear of any buildings (marked * on Fig. 2). The land was still part of the old enclosures at the time of Enclosure in 1795 (Beckwith 1972, 25-28).

The Trent was one of the busiest rivers in England and Gainsborough flourished as goods were transferred between sea-going and river vessels. There are references to the Lord's Staith [quay] and the Chapel Staith throughout the medieval period. It has been estimated that in 1750 only six Lincolnshire towns would have had a population of more than 2500 inhabitants. Gainsborough was third in size after Lincoln and Boston. Boston at this time was in decline as a port and Gainsborough was the largest port in the county. (This was to change in the 19th century with the emergence of Grimsby.) It was the 19th century which saw a doubling in population, from 4506 in 1801 to 8293 in 1851, which is reflected in expansion of the town beyond its medieval limits (Beckwith 1968, 10). It is recorded in the Topographical Dictionary of England, published in 1831, that a new street called Spring Gardens had recently been built and a considerable number of buildings had been raised on the south side of the town (Beckwith 1968, 22). (Spring Gardens forms the northern limit of the Britannia Works site.)

The first properly surveyed large-scale plan of the town was made in 1851 by Denzil John Holt Ibbetson, a railway engineer who came to Gainsborough to supervise the construction of the Great Northern Railway (Fig. 3). The street pattern is often one of the oldest surviving elements in a town and may antedate by many centuries the oldest of the standing buildings which survive within it. It clearly shows narrow burgage plots, characteristic of medieval urban property boundaries in the areas around the Market Place and between Church Street and North Street, confirming in detail the general size and extent of the town shown on the maps of 1690, 1748 and 1794.

The 1748 survey shows the Britannia Works site as an area of old enclosures which lay west of the open fields. Extensive areas of Gainsborough were privately enclosed probably in the 16th century (Beckwith 1972, 32). The same field boundaries are present on the map after enclosure in 1804 and indicates that there were no buildings in this part of the town. Ibbetson's map also shows that the site of the Britannia Works was open ground but the proposed site for the petrol station contains housing. The shape of the property boundaries suggests that this is not medieval development and its absence on the 1748 map, although not totally reliable suggests that the houses were later than this date.

The Britannia Works

William Marshall founded his company in 1848 and by 1855 was able to purchase new premises on the site of the present Britannia Iron Works located on the east side of Beaumont Street/ Trinity Street. During the next 45 years the land occupied by the company grew from 1.5 acres to over 29 acres.

Marshall's originally made threshing machines, portable engines, boilers, steam rollers, traction engines, bed engines and tea machinery. During the First World War the Britannia Works made naval guns, lumber carriages and shells. (Aircraft were manufactured at the Lea Road site in the town). In the Second World War they made gun mountings, ammunition hoists, rocket launcher platforms and much ammunition. Marshall's were an internationally renowned engineering firm with offices world-wide, including Germany, Russia, India, Pakistan, Australia and New Zealand. It was the main employer in the town until after the Second World War. The firm was taken over in 1975 and has changed hands several times since.

The works were divided into two parts known as the north and south sides and were connected by a tunnel under the roadway leading to the Manchester Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway station, later to become part of the Great Central Railway, on the east side of the site.

The north side comprised offices, completed in 1873, the engineering department, iron foundry and boiler shop. The buildings on the south side are slightly later in date and included the machine shop, erecting shop, paint shop, smithy, woodworking departments and those departments concerned with the finishing of threshing machines, straw elevators, tea machinery,

grinding mills and other special products. Fig. 6 shows that the proposed development covers the former smithy (demolished and currently carparking) and the engine show rooms (nos. 18, 19, 20).

The curving building range along the street frontage is not shown on the O.S maps of 1887 (surveyed 1885) when the southern part of the site is shown as the vicarage, belonging to Holy Trinity. This parish was created in the 1840s, in response to the increasing population. It is recorded that the church sold all its land over the years up to 1893 to allow for housing and other development in the parish.

In 1984 refurbishment of the southern works buildings (those proposed for demolition) as workshops was commended in the annual award scheme *Conserving the Industrial Heritage* sponsored jointly by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and The Times Newspaper (Cox 1985, 190).

Discussion

The proposed development lies outside the medieval core of the town as defined by 18th and 19th century cartographic evidence. It is bounded on its west side by Beaumont and Trinity Street, formerly known as Back Street, or Backside street, which marked the limit of housing until the 19th century. The Britannia Works were built on land which had not previously been developed.

Conclusion

The impact of development on below-ground archaeological remains is considered to be low, the main feature of importance on the site being the standing building which, if it cannot be retained as part of the development, should be fully recorded prior to demolition. This would normally comprise a full photographic survey of external and internal elevations together with ground plans and elevation drawings.

Naomi Field
January 29th 1996

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Maps

(LAO= Lincolnshire Archives Office)

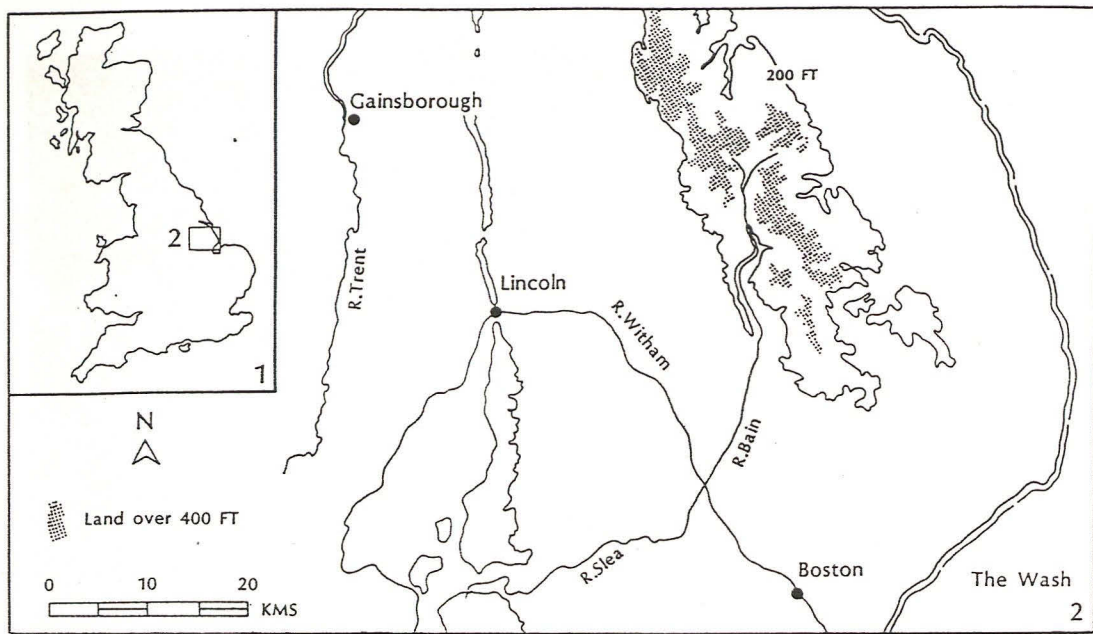
LAO, Brace 17/3 Survey of Gainsborough, undated but c.1690

LAO, Bacon Plans no. 39. *Lands, Leyes, Meadows and Pasture in the Precincts of Gainsborough belonging to Sir Neville Hickman*

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O.S. 1:500 survey of 1886. Sheets nos. VII.12.4 and XLII.12.4

O.S. 1:2500 survey of 1885, published 1887. Sheets nos. XLII.8 and XLII.12



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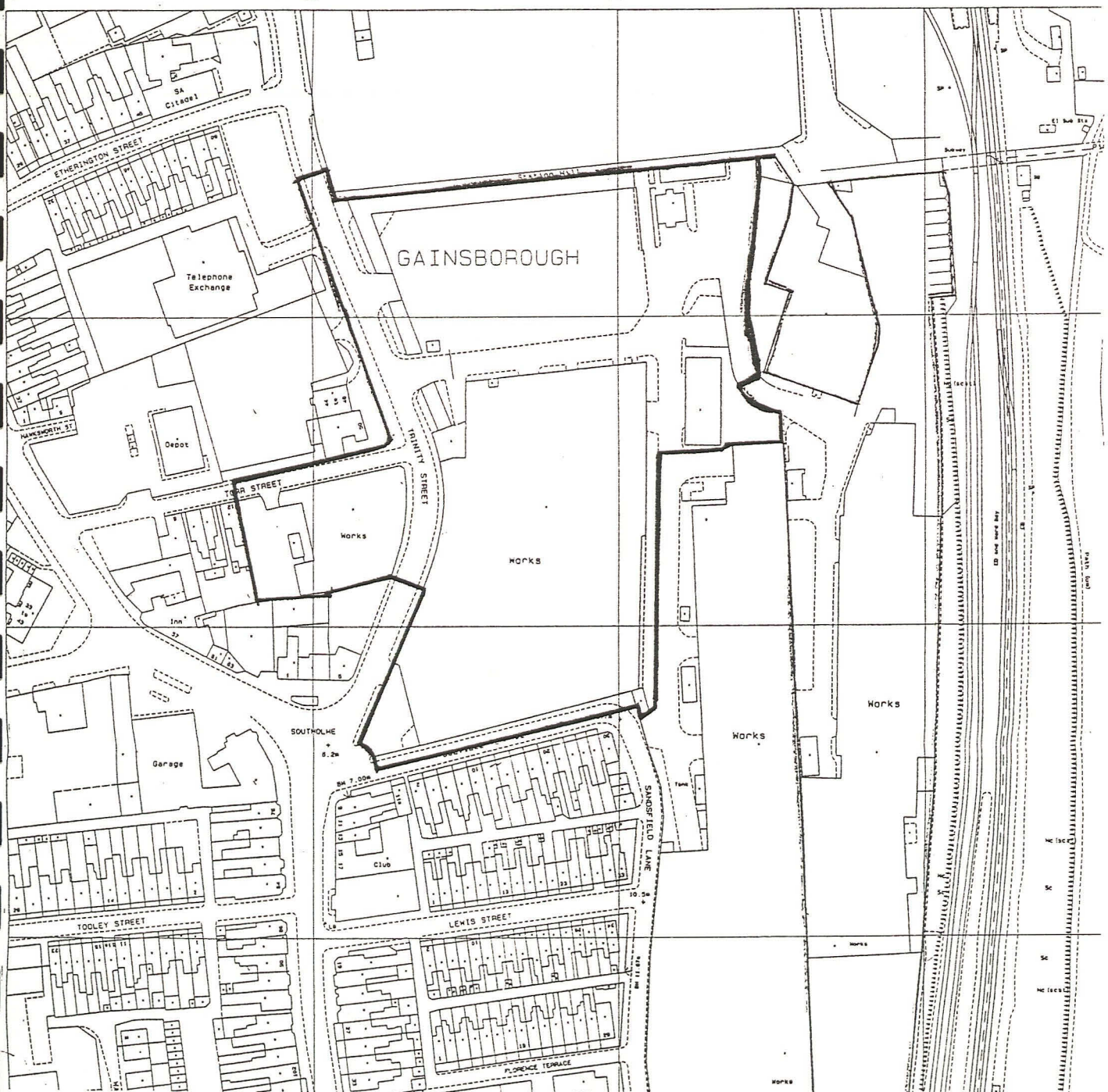
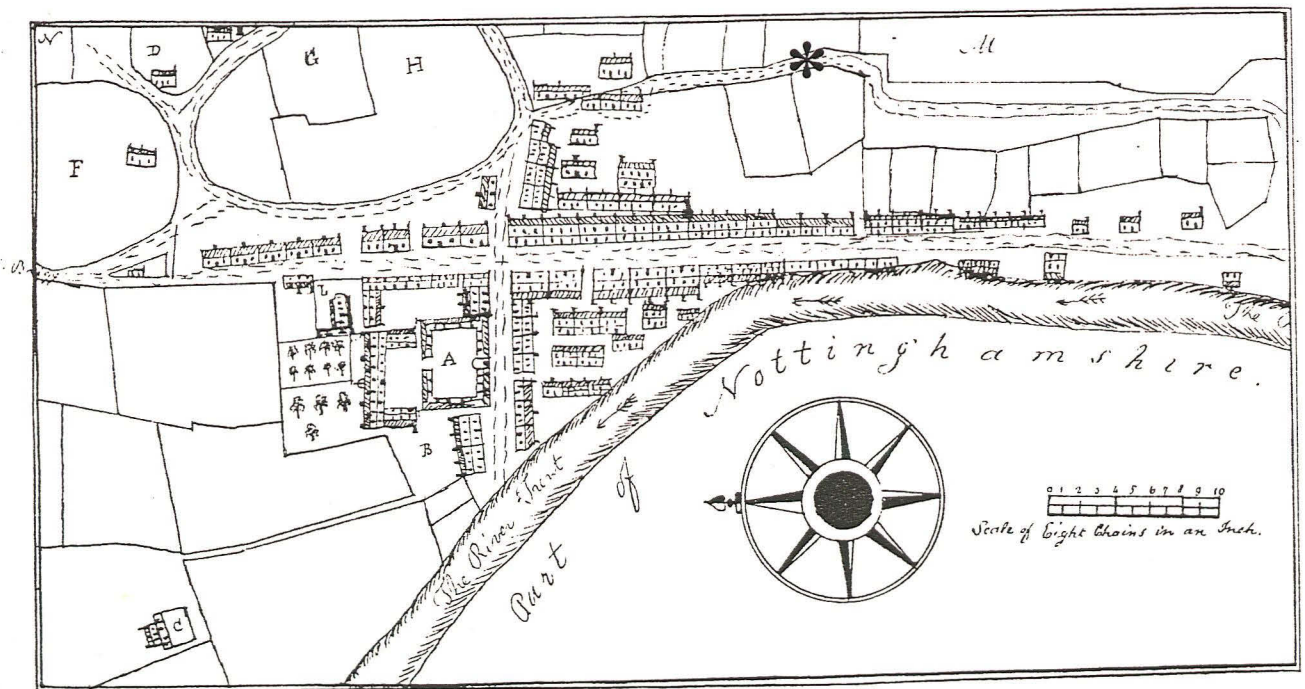


Fig. 1 Site location and extent of proposed development. Plan reduced from 1: 1250 survey kindly supplied by Littman & Robeson.



Gainsborough in 1748

Fig. 2 a) Reproduction of 1748 survey of Gainsborough (LAO, Bacon Plans no. 39)

b) Transcription of the 1748 map showing the position of the proposed development as field enclosures (reproduced from Beckwith 1968).

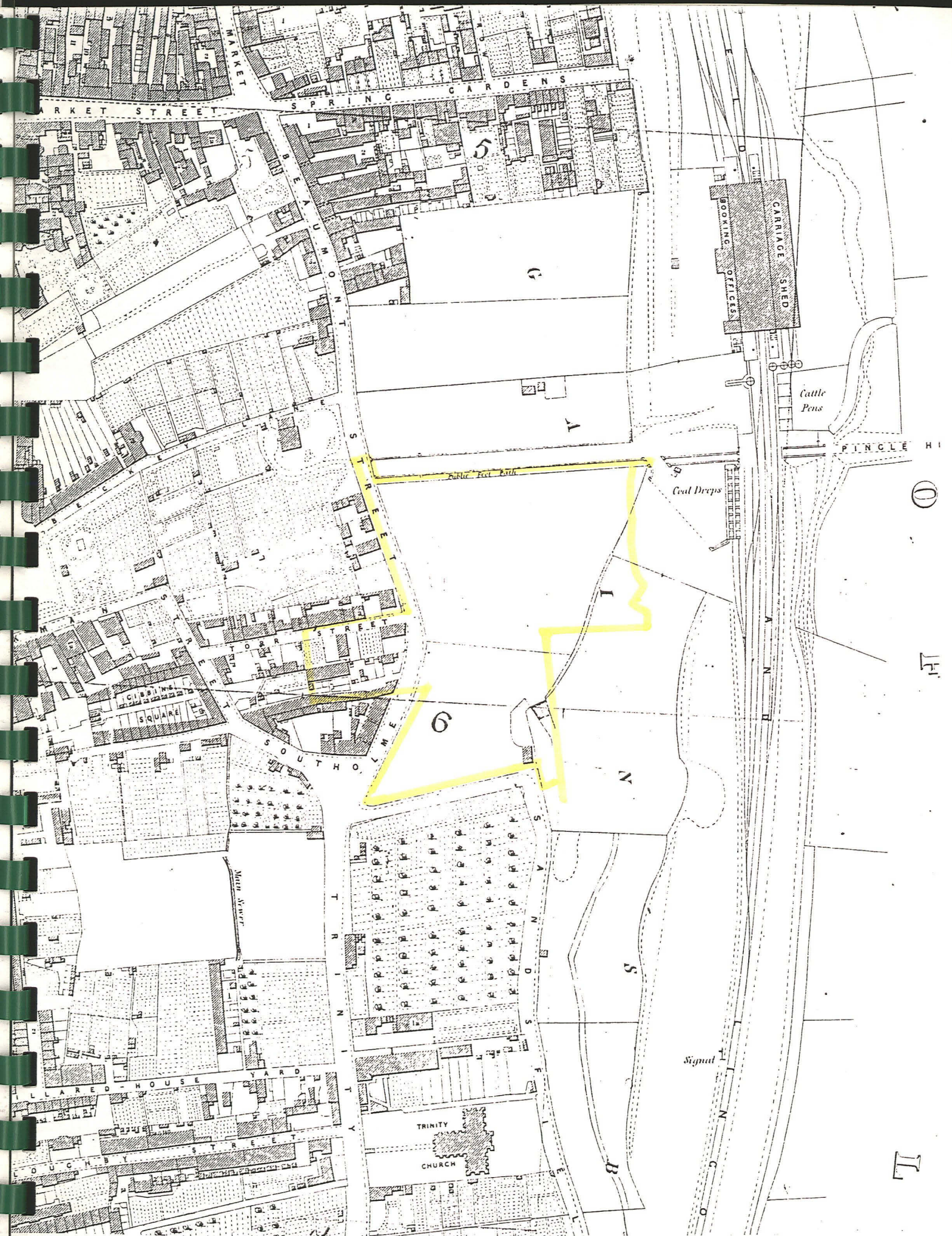


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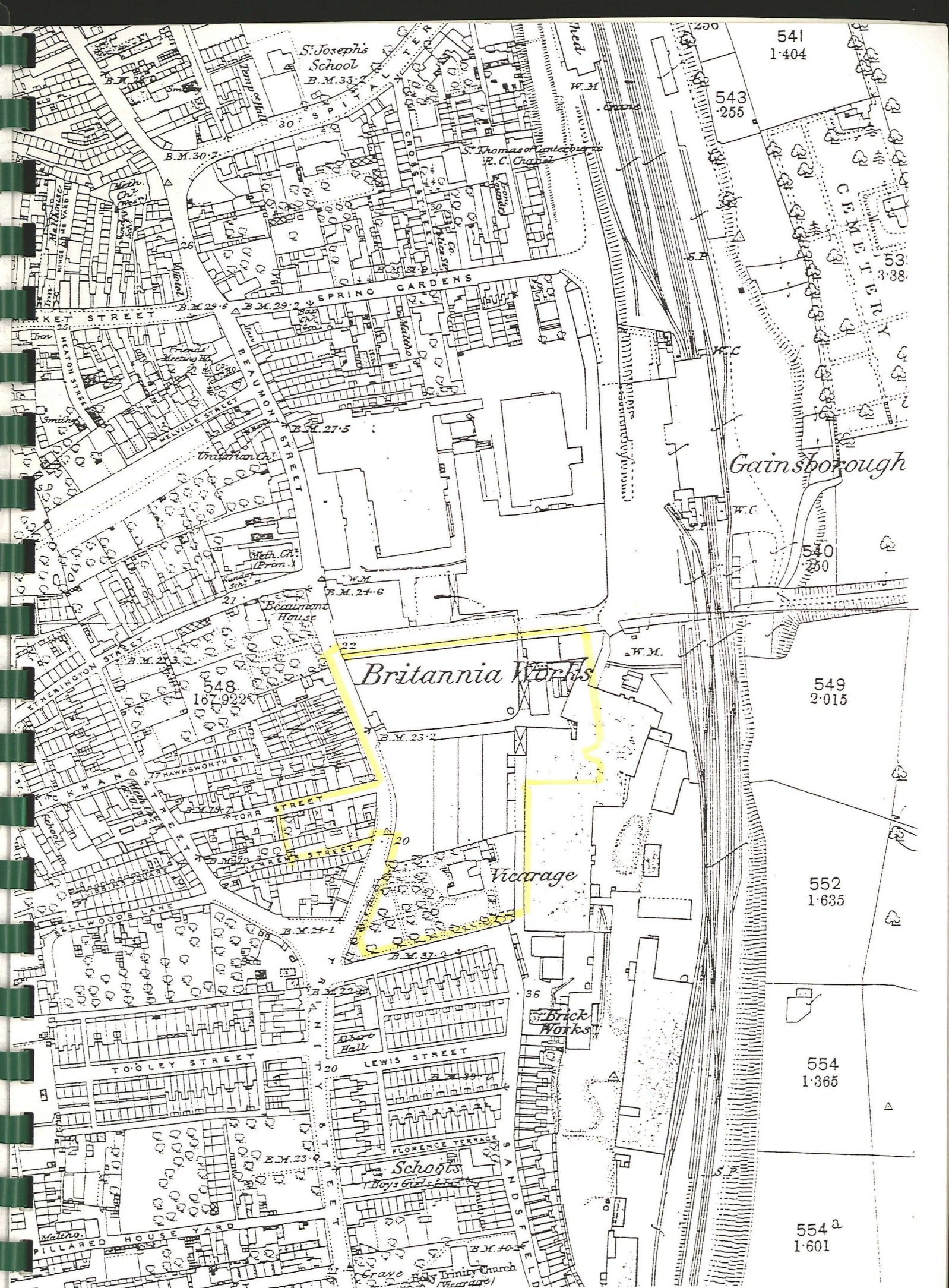


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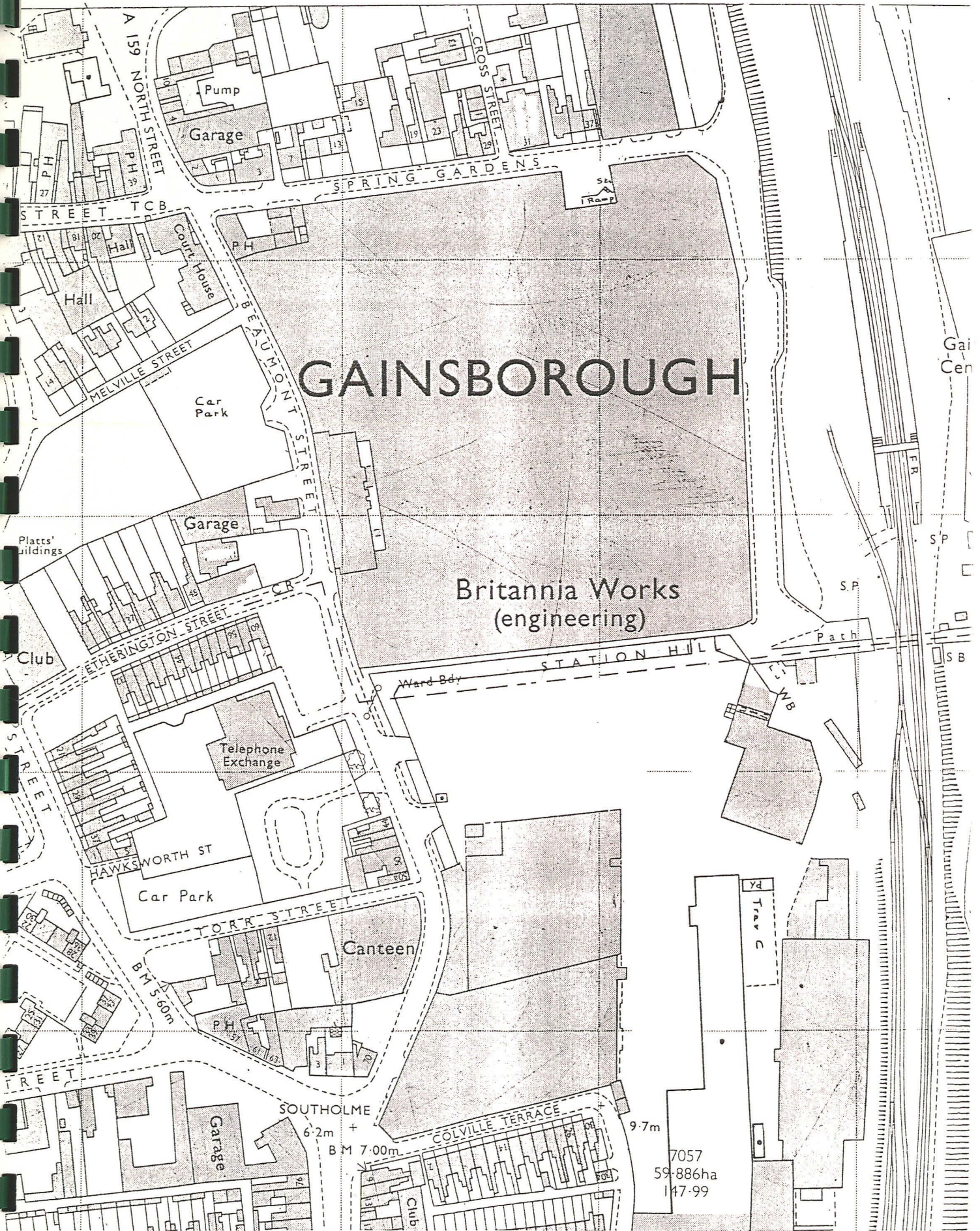


Fig. 5 Part of the 1977 O. S. 1:1250 map (reduced size) the engineering works and the canteen. Reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO, © Crown copyright. LAS Licence no. AL50424A.

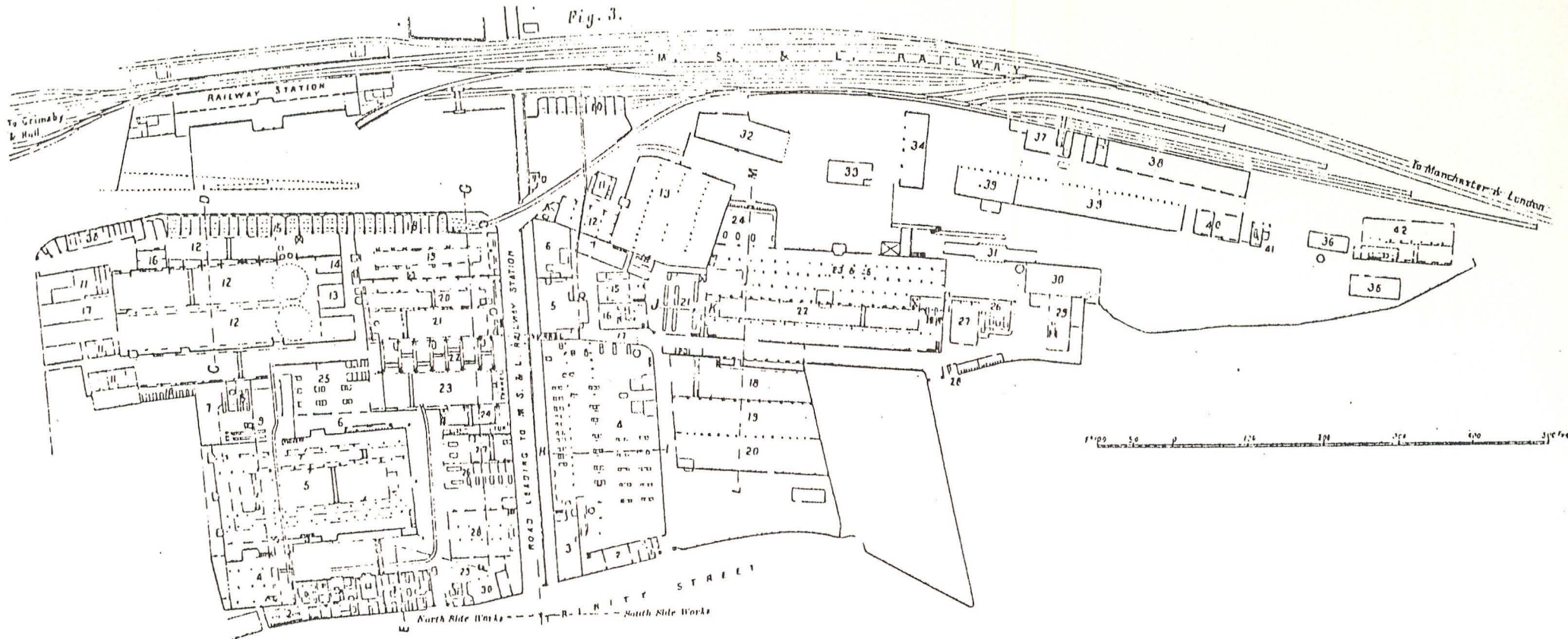


Fig. 1. Section at E. F. G.



Fig. 2. Section at L. M.



THE BRITANNIA IRON WORKS; MESSRS. MARSHALL, SONS, AND CO., LIMITED, GAINSBOROUGH.

Fig. 6 Plan of the Britannia Iron Works, no date but after 1885. Buildings on site of proposed development include show rooms (18, 19, 20).