

# *Marches Archaeology*

## **Land between Old Town and Long Street Wotton-Under-Edge Gloucestershire**

**A report on an  
archaeological desk based assessment**

May 2005

*Marches Archaeology Series 382*

*Archaeological Consultants and Contractors*

**This report is produced by**

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**Land between  
Old Town and Long Street  
Wotton-Under-Edge  
Gloucestershire**

**A report on an  
archaeological desk based assessment**

**NGR: ST 757 933**

**Report by  
Jo Wainwright**

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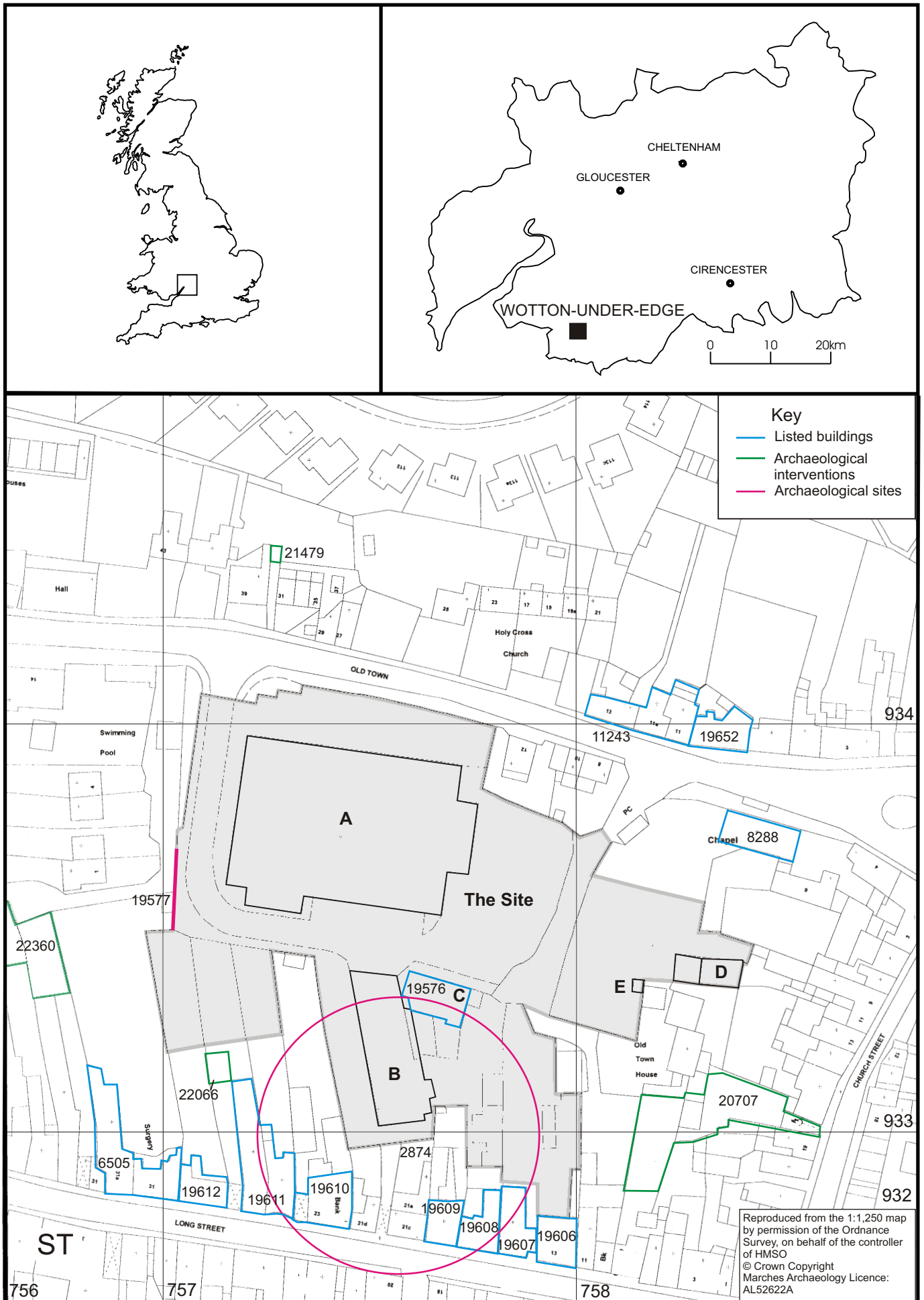


Fig. 1: Location of the site showing SMR sites in the vicinity

**Land between  
Old Town and Long Street  
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**NGR: ST 757 933**

**A report on an  
archaeological desk based assessment**

*Summary*

*A desk based assessment was carried out on land between Old Town and Long Street, Wotton-Under-Edge, Gloucestershire. The site lies within an area that has been utilised for purposes other than agricultural from the medieval period onwards. Long Street was in existence by the thirteenth century and although Old Town was not mentioned until 1575 it is likely to have earlier origins, perhaps as a routeway between the open field system.*

*The southern part of the study area is within the backlands of buildings fronting onto Long Street and it cannot be discounted that remains of the Friary of the Crutched Friars exist in this area (SMR 2874). The northern part of the site was probably only utilised for agricultural purposes but buildings fronting onto Old Town and their backlands may have existed here.*

*The eastern part of the study area could have been within plots fronting onto Church Street or Long Street. The development of the town is less certain here but Church Street must have been in existence by the latter part of the medieval period. Therefore medieval features associated with backlands could be encountered here.*

*A building within the study area is listed as being of a nineteenth century date (SMR 19576). However, it is probable that this building was constructed in the eighteenth century. A medieval doorway inserted into a later wall forms part of the western boundary of the site (SMR 19577).*

*It is possible that some truncation of the site has taken place during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries especially on the Old Town frontage.*

## **1 Introduction**

Hunter Page Planning Ltd (HPP) on behalf of Renishaw PLC (the client) commissioned Marches Archaeology to provide a desk based assessment on land between Old Town and Long Street, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire. The site is situated at approximately NGR: ST 757 933 (Fig. 1). No Brief for the work was issued by Gloucestershire County Council.

## **2 Aims and objectives**

The purpose of Desk-based Assessment is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as “to gain information about the known or potential archaeological resource within a given area or site (including presence or absence, character and extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and relative quality of the potential archaeological resource), in order to make an assessment of its merit in the context, leading to one or more of the following: the formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource; the formation of a strategy for further investigation, whether or not intrusive, where the character and value of the resource is not sufficiently defined to permit a mitigation strategy or other response to be devised; the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research”.

## **3 Methodology**

Initially a site visit was made and the Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record was consulted. A visit was made to the Wotton Heritage Centre and the Gloucestershire Record Office. The following sources were considered:

Ordnance Survey maps; Tithe maps and other historical maps; Previous published and unpublished archaeological reports and archive work; Written non-archaeological sources; Air photographs and geological maps.

## **4 Site description**

The site lies in the centre of Wotton-Under-Edge within a parcel of land that is bounded on the south by Long Street, on the west by Bear Street, on the north by Old Town and by Church Street in the east (Fig. 1). The site is just over a hectare in size. The land slopes gently down from the west to the south-west and north-east. The underlying geology is of Marlstone Rock of the Middle Lias series and shallow trenches excavated within the town have revealed brown rubble limestone (Cave, R, 1977).

The study area can be divided into three separate areas. The first consists of the premises of Renishaw PLC which includes three buildings (Area 1, A-C). This area is situated in the northern, central and southern parts of the site. The second area, situated in the south-west of the site, consists of parts of rear gardens of houses fronting onto Long Street (Area 2). The third area consists of rough grassland and two buildings and is situated in the far east of the site (Area 3, D and E).

Area 1 has three buildings situated within it and the rest of the area is used for car parking. The ground surface is mainly tarmac but in the south there are several concreted areas with the foundations of demolished buildings visible (Plate 3). A lawned area can be seen in the east of the area adjacent to Building B (Plate 4). The northern part of Area 1 fronts onto Old Town and consists of a raised bank with a wall (Plate 1). Building A was built in the later part of the twentieth century and it is probable that the frontage and the area surrounding building A was landscaped at this time (Plate 2). Building B was constructed in the early part

of the twentieth century (Plate 4) and Building C at an earlier date (Plate 7). The boundaries of the area are mainly formed by stone or brick but in places there are wooden fences (Plate 6).

Area 2 consists of the rear parts of gardens of houses fronting onto Long Street (25-29). Access to these gardens was not available at the time of the study. The individual gardens are separated by walls. There appears to be a slight terrace down but no wall between the parts of the gardens in the study area and the parts outside of the area.

Area 3 consists of two buildings. Building D has a date of 1898 set into the stonework and Building E is a dilapidated corrugated iron shed. The area to the west of the buildings is mainly scrubland with some tarmac surfaces.

## **5 Archaeological and historical background**

*Wotton-Under-Edge* by Nick Tavener

The town is situated on a east facing slope, above a stream leading into the Little Avon and is surrounded by hills on almost all sides.

Recorded prehistoric activity within the area largely comprises undated earthworks situated at some distance from the study area (and largely to the north of the town - see Appendix 1), although a prehistoric axe (SMR 16929) was found in Tabernacle Road. Likewise, the sparse finds or evidence for Roman activity are also at some distance from the study area with the exception of a Roman votive tablet (SMR 2860) apparently found on the south side of Long Street.

Leech (1981) stated that the first documentary reference to Wotton occurs in the Domesday Book of c. 1086, when it was called *Vutune* and was one of the three hundreds of Berkeley. Lindley (1968) has advanced arguments that it was mentioned in a charter of A.D. 940 when Edmund King of Wessex leased four hides of land in *Wudentun* to the thegn Edric.

What is more certain is that the present centre was founded as a planned town on sloping ground to the south-west of the church around 1252 when Joan, Lady Berkeley obtained a grant of a weekly market and fair, and then issued a charter. This confirmed that individual burgage plots would be one third of an acre each 'according to the uses of Tetbury', that rents were to be one shilling a year and that each burgess was to have free pasture for a horse and cow in the three fields of the manor. The mention of the three fields suggests an already existing open field system which in itself would indicate an existing settlement. The specific exclusion in the charter of the parish church, manor and nearby cottages from the borough bounds also indicates that there was already a settlement in existence before this formal foundation of a town. Local legend has it that the earlier town was burnt to the ground in the reign of King John and this, in conjunction with the clues provided by the charter, has been taken to mean that there was an earlier township based around the parish church, although this has yet to be proved. The present church was consecrated in 1283.

The basis of the economy of the town in the medieval period is uncertain (Leech, 1981). The wool trade was probably important, but by the sixteenth century it had been supplanted by the cloth industry. Leland described the town (around 1540) as 'a pretty little market town, well



occupied with clothiers, having one fair long street and well builded in it'. The reference to a single (main) street is interesting. It seems that the thirteenth century town comprised of Long Street and High Street (Leech, 1981). Haw Street and Bradley Street (both to the west) are first mentioned in 1440. 'Old Town', though not mentioned until 1575, is a deep hollow way and probably an ancient route. The town grew in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries because of the prosperity brought by the cloth industry. Smith (1608) lists several shoe makers and a tanner in addition to the many cloth trade workers.

### *The site*

There have been no archaeological interventions within the study area. However, there are three sites listed on the SMR. The listing for SMR 2874 is of the site of medieval Crutched Friars (Fig. 1). A licence for the foundation of a house of Crutched Friars in Wotton-Under-Edge was granted by Edward III in 1349 and a part of the house was still standing in the later part of the nineteenth century (SMR 2874). Perkins described the house as being two doors down from his residence in Berkeley House, which would place it at 27 Long Street (Lindley, 1962). However, the centre of the site shown on the SMR is further west in the garden of 21 Long Street. It is not known at present what the extents of the friary were. It could have just consisted of one building or many buildings and it may have had a precinct enclosing a larger area. Therefore in the medieval period part of the study area could have been within the precinct of the friary.

The second SMR entry is for a wall and doorway which forms part of the western boundary of the site ( SMR 19577, Fig. 1, Plate 8). The stone doorway is listed as being of a fifteenth century date incorporated into a later wall with the opening infilled at a later date. The doorway is reputed to have derived from Kingswood Abbey but there is no evidence to support this (SMR 19577). An inspection of the visual remains of the wall revealed that it continues northwards behind the modern wall for approximately a further 20 metres.

Numbers 2 and 3 The Cottages, The Close is the third entry on the SMR sited within the study area (SMR 19576, Fig. 1, Plate 7). The building is Grade II listed and is recorded as nineteenth century three storey houses (SMR 19576). The ground floor extension to the rear of the building is a later addition. From a visual inspection of the exterior and parts of the interior of the building it is not impossible to suggest a mid-late eighteenth century date for construction.

There are several buildings fronting onto Long Street which are on the SMR as Grade II listed buildings. All are of a fairly early post-medieval date (SMR 19606-19612 and 6505, Fig. 1). The remains of a medieval basement have also been uncovered at Berkeley House (SMR 6505, Fig. 1). Although none of these buildings are within the study area the backlands of the plots are. It seems likely that Long Street was in existence by the thirteenth century and the burgage plots were perhaps carved out of part of the open field system. Although Old Town was not mentioned until 1575 it is possible that this was a hollow way and was an earlier routeway between the open fields. It is possible that the burgage plots on the north side of Long Street ran roughly back to meet plots running southwards from Old Town. The pattern of plot boundaries is noticeably less symmetric at the east end of Long Street and there is perhaps much less certainty about the date of original development of Church Street. Therefore it is likely that before Long Street was in existence the area of the site was under cultivation. When the burgage plots were laid out in the medieval period

buildings must have existed on the Long Street frontage. Activity to the rear of the plots may have been of a domestic, industrial or of an agricultural nature. If this is the case there may be archaeological remains surviving in the areas of the back plots behind Long Street.

An evaluation at 17-19 Church Street and 9b Long Street revealed medieval soil horizons and a drainage gully which probably represents activity associated with agricultural or gardening (SMR 20707, Tavener, 2000, Fig. 1)). However, an evaluation at 27 Long Street revealed a post-medieval cistern or soakaway. No medieval features or deposits were excavated ( SMR 22066, Fig. 1). Further to the west at 35a Long Street a medieval cultivation soil and post-medieval garden features were uncovered (SMR 22360, Fig. 1).

The earliest map evidence for the town is provided by an estate map dating to 1763, superimposed on this map is the approximate area of the site (Fig. 2). It clearly shows Long Street (High Street) and Old Town. Plots running back from Long Street are shown as are some plots that run back from Old Town. If you take into account the probable inaccuracies of this early plan and the superimposed approximated area of the site it is clear that the boundaries of the study area follow ones that were in existence by 1763. Internal divisions within the study area are also still apparent and to a certain degree seem to be consistent with plot boundaries shown on the 1763 Plan.

The western boundary of the site (between 159 and 158 marked on the plan) must be along the wall which is listed on the SMR as 19577. From the site visit it is possible to suggest that this wall actually continues northwards to approximately the north-east corner of Parcel 159.

The northern boundary of Area 1 seems to follow the line of Old Town until Parcel 28 is reached. Here it follows existing boundaries and the entranceway to, presumably, The Close. Continuing eastwards the site boundary still follows boundaries on the 1763 plan and a building is shown in roughly the same position as Building D. However, this cannot be the same building that exists today if the date stone of 1898 on Building D is correct.

The southern boundaries of the site appear to correspond with plots running back from Long Street. The site boundary seems to end where the garden areas of the backlands begin. In the south-west the boundaries stop north of buildings shown as 19, 20 and 21.

The building marked 48 on the 1763 plan is probably Building C, Numbers 2 and 3, The Cottages (SMR 19576). The building shown on the plan appears to be larger than the building is today and a roof line scar on the eastern end of Building C could indicate where another building was joined to Building C. Indeed this could have been where Number 1, The Cottages was located.

The 1847 Tithe map of the Parish of Wotton-Under-Edge shows few internal property divisions within the study area indicating that most of the area was not titheable (Fig. 3). What is shown is the open area (1240) which corresponds to 28 (2), 157 and 158 on the 1763 plan. The apportionment lists this area as Rack Close which was occupied by the Reverend Benjamin Robert Perkins. The area was under pasture and was not titheable. Parcel 1243 was owned by The Reverend Perkins but occupied by George Hobbs Minett and is listed as a kitchen garden. The Reverend Perkins was vicar of Wotton for over 50 years and an influential character in the town (Wright, 1872). Building C is clearly visible on the Tithe map as is a building where Building D is situated.

The 1881 First Edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch plan shows many of the plot boundaries unchanged from the 1763 plan (Fig. 4). In the south-east of the study area the backs of some of the plots have been amalgamated and several new buildings are present. Building C is shown but, as on the earlier plans, it appears to be larger than it is today. A well directly to the north of the building is also shown.

The 1901 Second Edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch plan shows little change from the First Edition though Building D, if the date stone is correct, is shown as a Sunday School (Fig. 5).

The 1921 Ordnance Survey 25 inch plan is similar to the 1901 plan though by this time Building B has been built (Fig. 6). Another building directly to the south of Building B is also shown. It is possible that there has been another southern extension added to Building C but the map evidence is not clear and it could be that there were two small enclosed spaces to the south of Building C and not an extension at all. It is probable that Building B was erected when H. H. Lewton established his cycle and motor works on the site (Perry, 1986). In 1943 the Ministry of Supply took over Lewton's Garage and brought in Lister's to undertake Government work (*op cit*). Lister's continued to occupy the site after the war and about 100 people worked here.

The 1951 revision of the 1921 Ordnance Survey plan shows three or perhaps four new buildings within the central part of the study area (Fig. 7). Presumably these were workshops built by Lister's. The eastern part of Building C, if this existed, must have been demolished after 1951. The buildings shown within the back plots of the houses fronting onto Long Street must have been demolished after 1951 also. Some of the foundations of these buildings were visible at the time of the site visit.

During the latter part of the twentieth century the building fronting onto Old Town was built by Lister's but this closed down in 1983 when the firm controlling Lister's decided to concentrate production elsewhere (*ibid*). In 1984 Renishaw PLC bought the Lister's site and adapted the factory for it's own needs.

## **6 Discussion**

It seems likely that during the early medieval period the study area was utilised for agricultural purposes. Archaeological interventions outside of the study area have identified medieval cultivation soils between Old Town and Long Street. However, by the thirteenth century Long street was in existence and it is likely that burgage plots were laid out which ran back from the Long Street frontage. It is possible that Old Town was originally a routeway between the open field system and predates Long Street. Burgage plots would probably have run back from the Old Town frontage to meet the plots fronting onto Long Street. There must have been buildings on the Long Street frontage in the medieval period and behind these buildings activity must have of been taking place. This activity could have been of a domestic, industrial or agricultural nature. It is possible that buildings existed in these backlands and therefore within the study area.

Although the Old Town frontage is less well documented it is possible that buildings existed on the frontage and activity was taking place behind these buildings during the medieval period. However, the map evidence shows this area used for purely agricultural purposes in the post-medieval period so it is likely that this was the case during the medieval period.

The eastern part of the study area (Area 3) could have been within plots fronting onto Church Street or Long Street. The development of the town is less certain here but Church Street must have been in existence by the latter part of the medieval period.

The SMR shows the site of the friary of the Crutched Friars (SMR 2874, Fig. 1)) as being slightly to the south of the study area. It is not known at present what the extents of the friary were. It could have just consisted of one building or many buildings and it may have had a precinct enclosing a larger area. However, no archaeological evidence for a friary has been uncovered but it cannot be discounted that part of the study area could have been within the precinct of the medieval friary.

The doorway within a wall forming part of the western boundary of the site is listed as being a medieval doorway inserted into a later wall (SMR 19577, Fig. 1). This boundary is shown on the 1763 plan of Wotton and it is more than likely to be the wall that exists today. Indeed an inspection of the visual remains of the wall revealed that it continues northwards behind the modern wall for approximately a further 20 metres. The 1763 plan shows a return of this wall westward to enclose Parcel 159. From the site visit it is possible to suggest that this wall actually continues northwards to about where this return was located. Therefore it is likely that this doorway was used either as an entrance to Parcel 158 or Parcel 159. Parcel 159 appears on the 1763 Plan as probably a walled garden associated with building 18 on the Long Street frontage (Berkeley House, SMR 6505). Medieval remains of a basement have been uncovered at Berkeley House so it is possible that this doorway is *in situ* and is not a later insertion.

Although Numbers 2 and 3, The Close is listed on the SMR as a nineteenth century structure it is likely to have been built earlier (SMR 19576). It is more than likely to be the building shown on the 1763 plan of Wotton. Although this building is shown on the maps larger than it is today it is possible that a portion of the building at the eastern end was demolished sometime after 1951.

Building D has a date stone of 1898 but the map evidence show an earlier building on this site. Buildings A and B were both constructed in the twentieth century and buildings shown on the 1881 Ordnance Survey Plan in the south-eastern part of the study area were demolished sometime after 1951.

## **7 Conclusions**

The study area lies within an area that has been utilised for purposes other than agricultural from the medieval period onwards.

The southern part of Area 1 is within the backlands of buildings fronting onto Long Street (Nos 13-21). It is likely that medieval remains associated with back plot activity exist in this area. It also cannot be discounted that the remains of the Friary of the Crutched Friars exist in this area (SMR 2874). However, in places it is probable that any archaeological remains have been truncated by standing or now demolished buildings. The northern part of Area 1 was probably only utilised for agricultural purposes but buildings fronting onto Old Town and their backlands may have existed here. The construction of Building A may have removed any archaeological features if they existed here.

Numbers 2 and 3 The Cottages form a single listed building (SMR 19576) and further research is required to accurately date this building. It is also unclear whether the medieval doorway (SMR 19577) is *in situ* or the reason why it was sited here.

Area 2 consists of the rear parts of gardens of houses fronting onto Long Street (25-29). Although only post-medieval features were excavated during a watching brief at 27 Long Street (SMR 22066) it cannot be discounted that medieval features or deposits associated with backland activity exist in this area.

Area 3 is situated at the eastern end of the site. This part of the site could have been within plots fronting onto Church Street or Long Street. The development of the town is less certain here but Church Street must have been in existence by the latter part of the medieval period. Therefore medieval features associated with backlands could be encountered here.

## **8 Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank the staff at the Wotton Heritage Centre and the Gloucestershire Record Office for their assistance.

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### *Maps*

1763, *A plan of the borough of Wottonunderedge (sic) and its environs being part of the Manor of Wotton Foreign.*

1847, Tithe Plan and apportionment of the Parish of Wotton-Under-Edge, GRO D439/5/6/7

1881, First Edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch Plan, Gloucestershire Sheet 56.15

1901, Second Edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch Plan, Gloucestershire Sheet 56.15

1921, Ordnance Survey 25 inch Plan, Gloucestershire Sheet 56.15

1921, Ordnance Survey 25 inch Plan, Gloucestershire Sheet 56.15

### **10 Archive**

The site code is OTW05A. The archive consists of:

1 set of digital photos from the site visit

## Appendix I: SMR Listings

The following list has been filtered from a requested search of a 1km radius of Wotton, with a detailed search of Wotton urban area.

### *i) prehistoric or possible prehistoric sites*

SMR		N.G.R. (ST)
2851	doubtful round barrow?	c. 744 944
2852	doubtful barrow (date unknown)	760 940
2853	doubtful barrow (date unknown)	7601 9390
2854	doubtful barrow (date unknown)	7602 9397
4031	penanular enclosure (date unknown)	7452 9405
4032	circular enclosure (date unknown)	7498 9411
4077	earthwork (date unknown)	7608 9383
2855	spear and arrow - findspot Bronze Age	755 942
11009	finds from pipeline prehistoric	760 941
15684	Battle Axe findspot Bronze Age	7636 9320
16929	Axe findspot (at Tabernacle Road)	755 936

### *ii) Roman*

2860	Roman votive tablet (south side of Long Street)	7567 9328
11010	Roman potsherd	752 965
11011	medieval potsherd (?Roman)	7520 9650
11060	Roman altar	768 939

### *iii) Medieval*

2874	Site of medieval Friary of Crutched Friars	7570 9330
2800	Lady Berkeley School (medieval site)	7600 9300
6505	No. 31 Long Street (Berkeley House), medieval remains	7579 9330
8287	medieval Church (Old Town)	7602 9342
16892	site of medieval manor house	7607 9345 (??)
19577	wall with medieval doorway	75702 93361
20707	evaluation, land to the rear of 17-19 Church Street and 9b Long Street	75821 93304
22360	evaluation at 35a Long Street	75669 93343

### *iv) Post-medieval*

19606	No.13 Long Street, seventeenth century house with nineteenth century shopfront
19607	No. 15 Long Street, seventeenth century house with nineteenth century shopfront
19608	No. 17 Long Street, eighteenth century house with modern shopfront
19609	No. 19 Long Street, seventeenth and eighteenth century structure, part of which may date from the sixteenth century
19610	No. 23 Long Street, early nineteenth century building
19611	No. 25 Long Street, seventeenth century house with nineteenth century shopfront
19612	No. 29 Long Street, eighteenth century house and shop
8288	Congregational Chapel, early eighteenth century with drastic remodeling in the late nineteenth century
19576	Nos 2 and 3 The Cottages, The Close, nineteenth century three storeyed houses
11243	Old Town Mill, nineteenth century
19652	No. 9 Old Town, seventeenth century house

21479 watching brief at 39 The Old  
22066 watching brief at 27 Long Street

75727 93442  
75712 93316



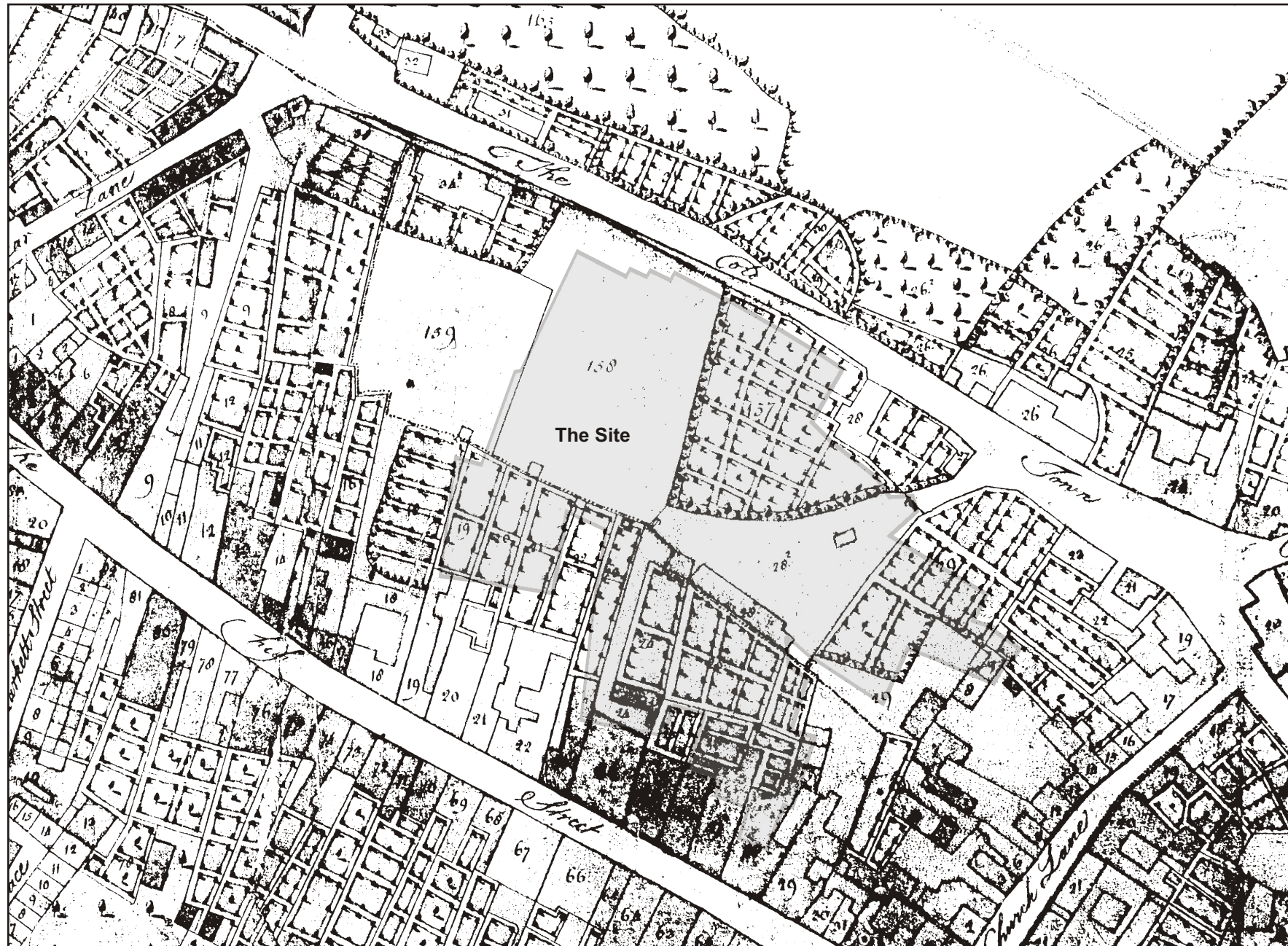


Fig. 2 Detail from a plan of the borough of Wottonunderedge and its environs being part of the manor of Wotton foreign 1763. With location of the site superimposed

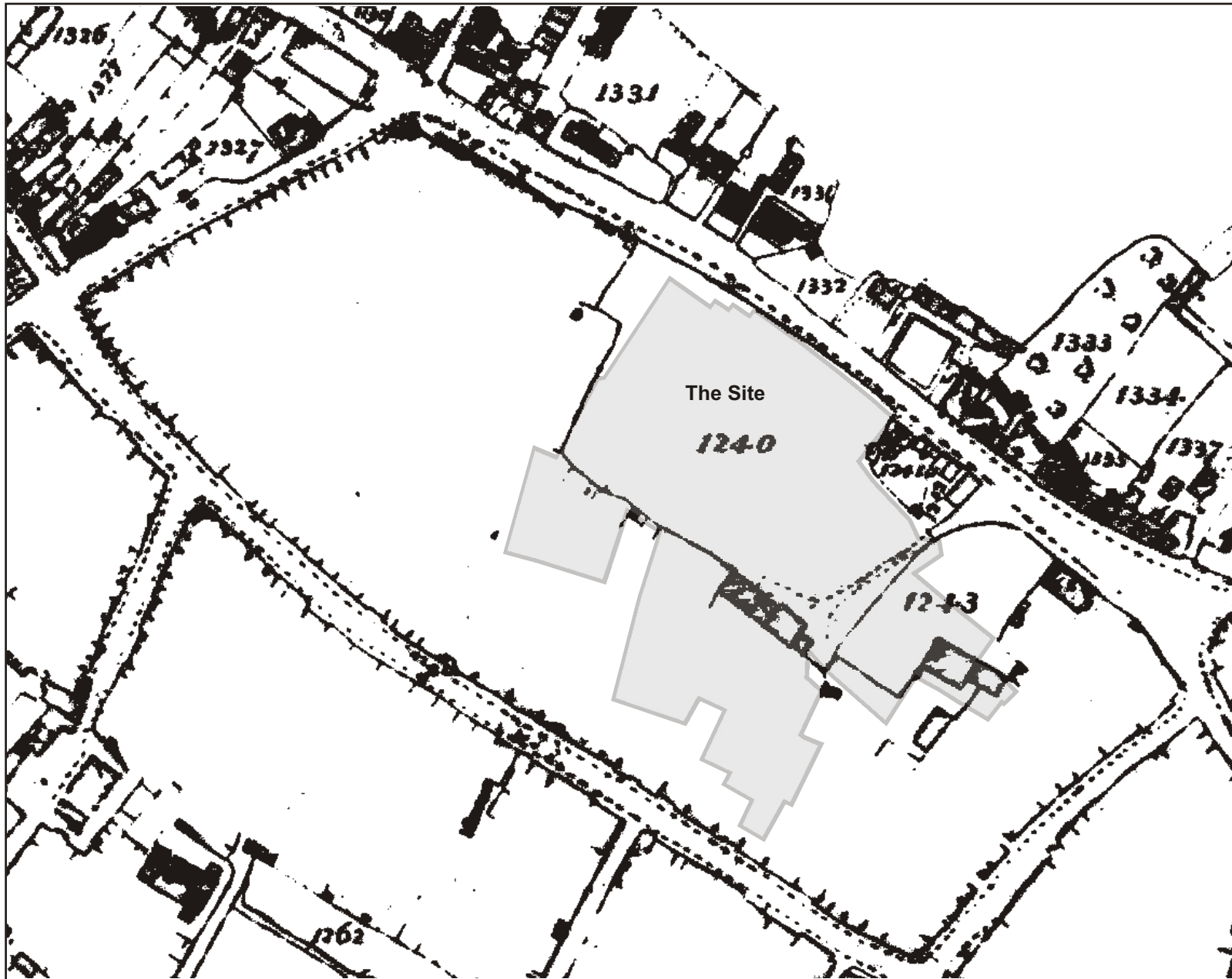


Fig. 3 Detail from the 1847 Tithe Plan of the Parish of Wotton-Under-Edge

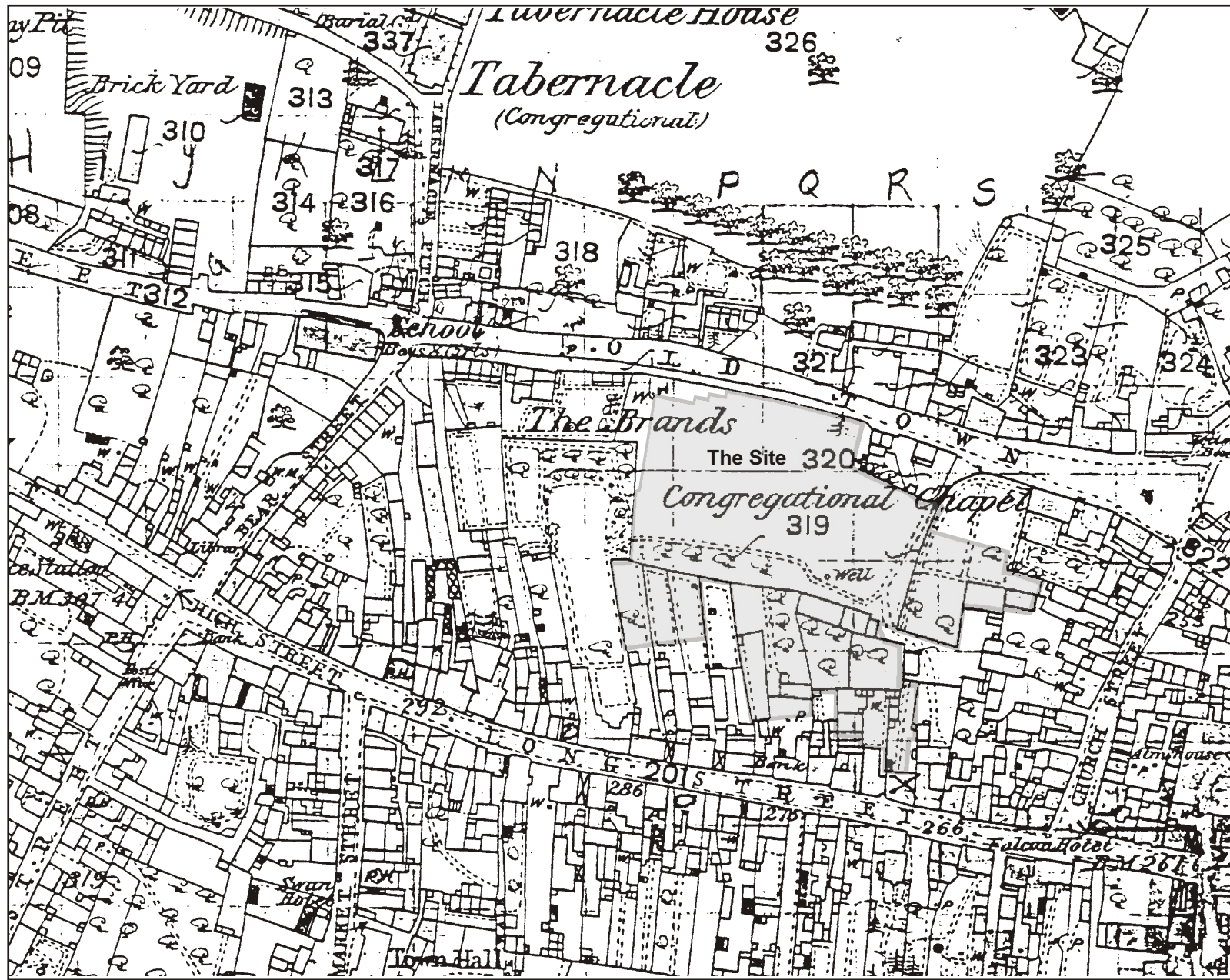


Fig. 4 Detail from the 1881 First Edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch Plan (not to scale)

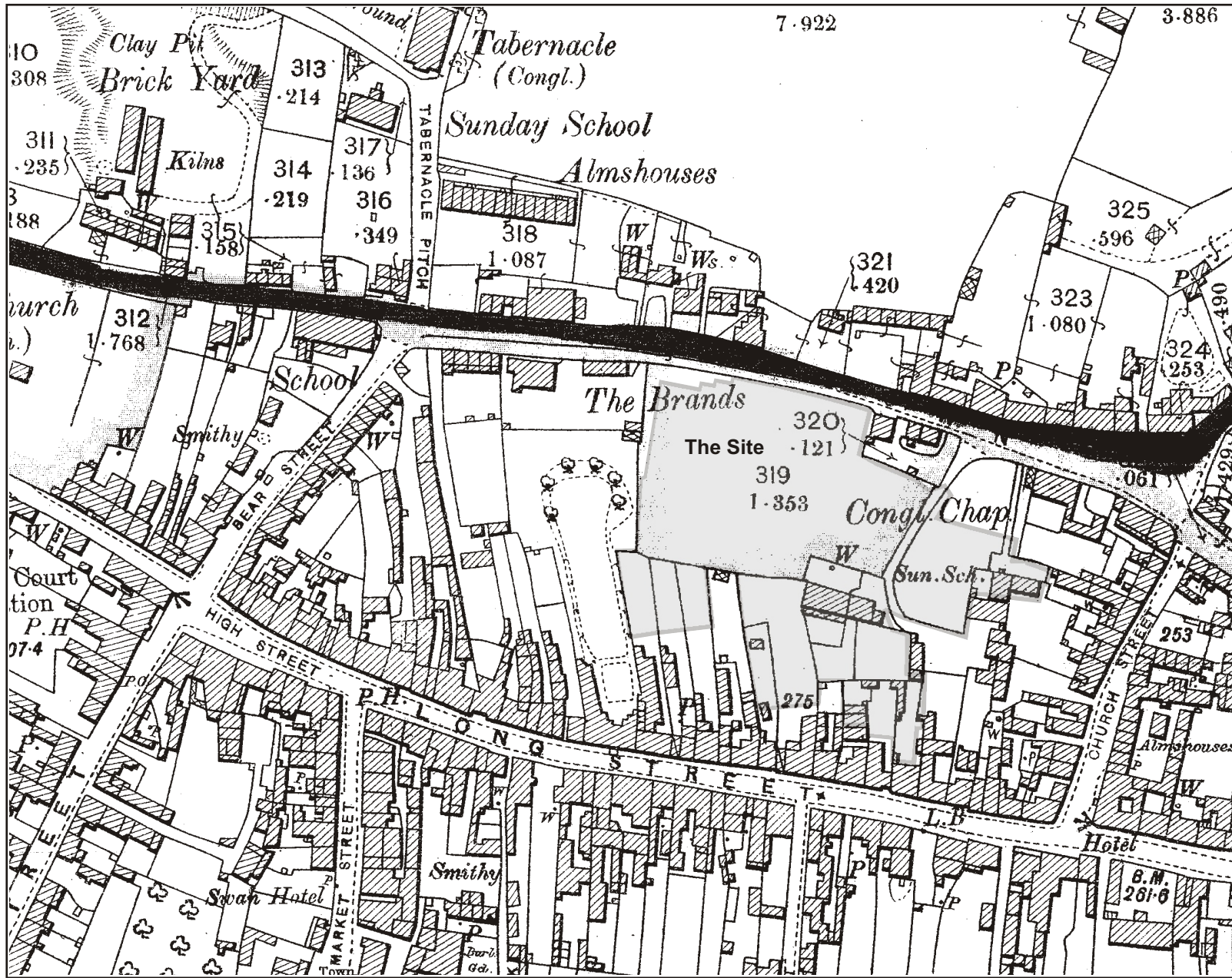


Fig. 5 Detail from the 1901 Second Edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch Plan (not to scale)

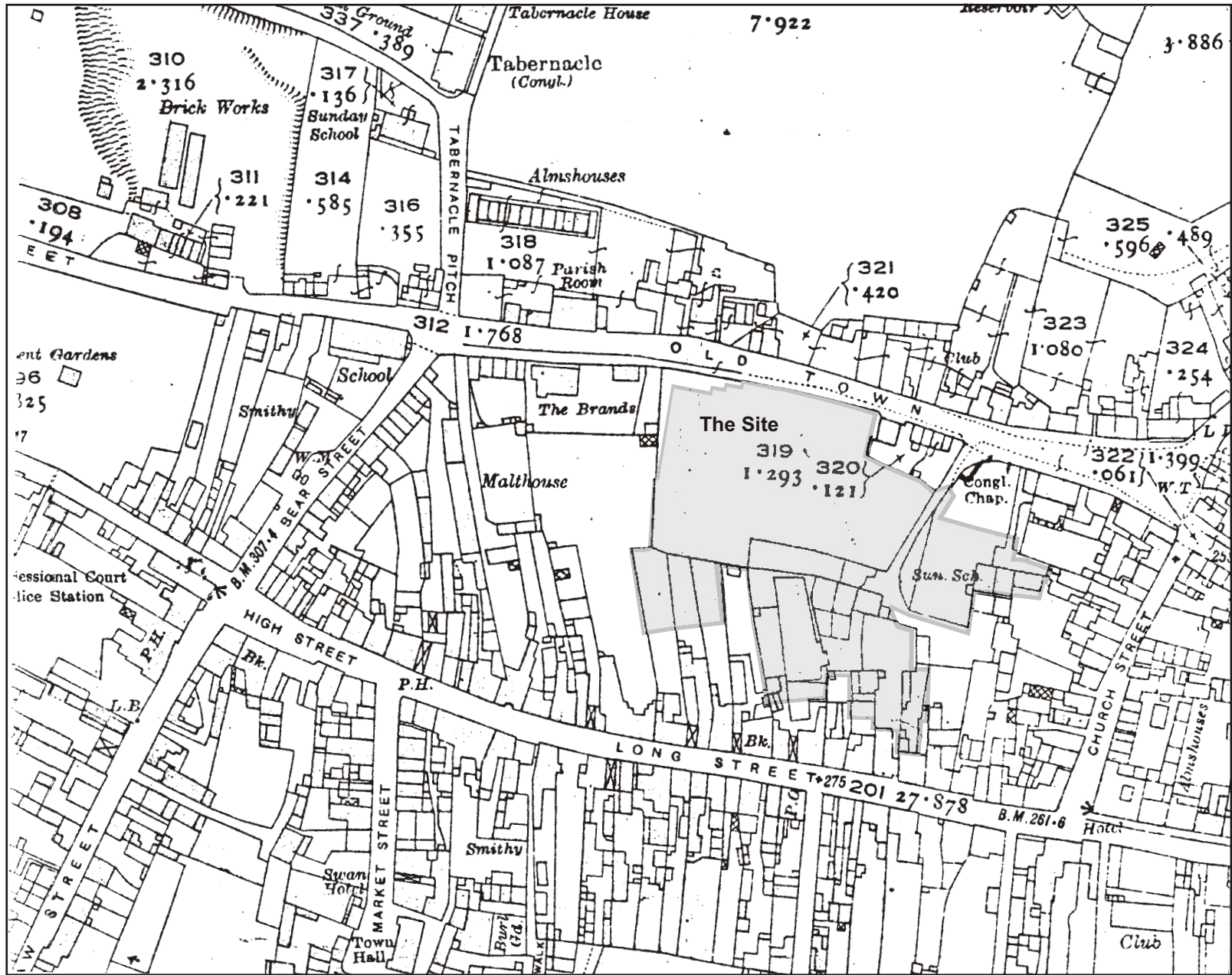


Fig. 6 Detail from the 1921 Ordnance Survey 25 inch Plan (not to scale)

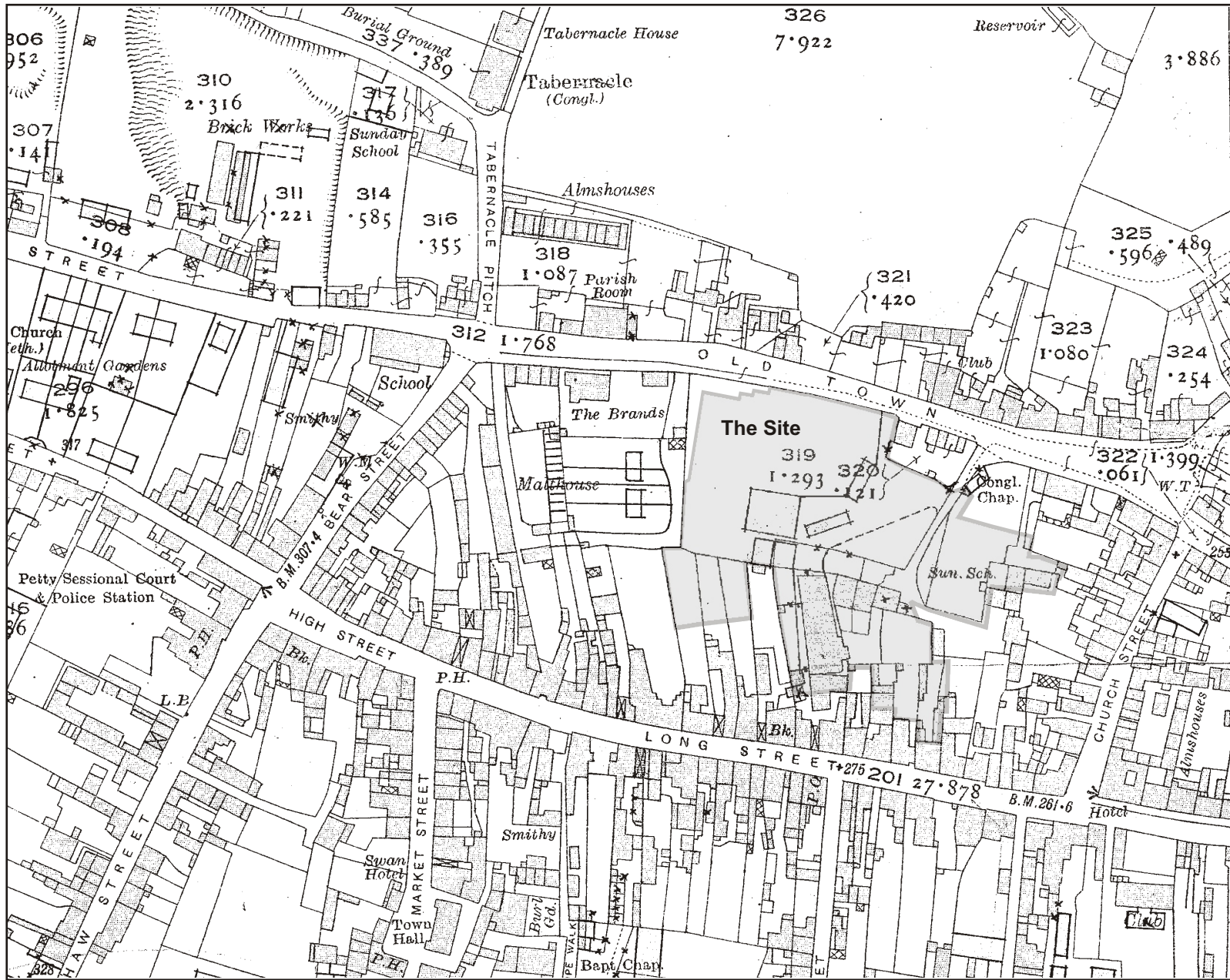


Fig. 7 Detail from the 1921 Ordnance Survey 25 inch Plan with 1951 revisions (not to scale)



**Plate 1: View of main factory building fronting on to Old Town looking south-west**



**Plate 2: View showing reduction of ground surface of main factory building looking south**



**Plate 3: View of car park to east of main factory building looking north-east**



**Plate 4: View of factory building looking south towards Long Street**





**Plate 5: View of building in the far east of site looking west**



**Plate 6: Looking south towards Long Street showing Listed Building 19606**



**Plate 7: Listed building 19576 looking south**



**Plate 8: SMR 19577 medieval doorway and wall looking west**