

***Alison Clarke M. A.***  
***Archaeological Consultant***

18 Ash Grove, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL6 1RQ  
Tel : 01609 776501/0860 506062 Fax: 01609 779968

NYCC HER	
SNY	12032
ENY	4228
CNY	
Parish	2152
Rec'd	

**REAR OF 70 - 78 THE GREEN,**

**THIRSK**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**FOR**

**HAMBLETON DISTRICT COUNCIL/BROADACRES HOUSING  
ASSOCIATION**

**ALISON CLARKE**

**FEBRUARY 1997**

PARISH 2152  
EM 4228  
SNY 12032

## EVALUATION REPORT ON TODDS YARD, THE GREEN, THIRSK

### INTRODUCTION

The site of Todds Yard, rear of 70 - 79 The Green, Thirsk, (N.G.R. SE431822) is the subject of a planning application by Hambleton District Council and Broadacres Housing Association to build housing. Because of the potential for buried archaeological remains on the site, an archaeological evaluation was required prior to determination of the planning application. This evaluation was carried out in the week commencing 27 January 1997.

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND AND CARTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

Thirsk is an historic market town with a complex history that is only partly understood. Recent archaeological work has confirmed the presence of pre-Conquest occupation in the area of the castle, but the origins of the St James Green area are still unclear. The area is known locally as 'Old Thirsk', and was described in 1398 as Old Market, but its relationship to 'New Thirsk' (the present market area) is unknown. The plots bounding the Green have the appearance of burgage plots, albeit rather short and without the characteristic curve.

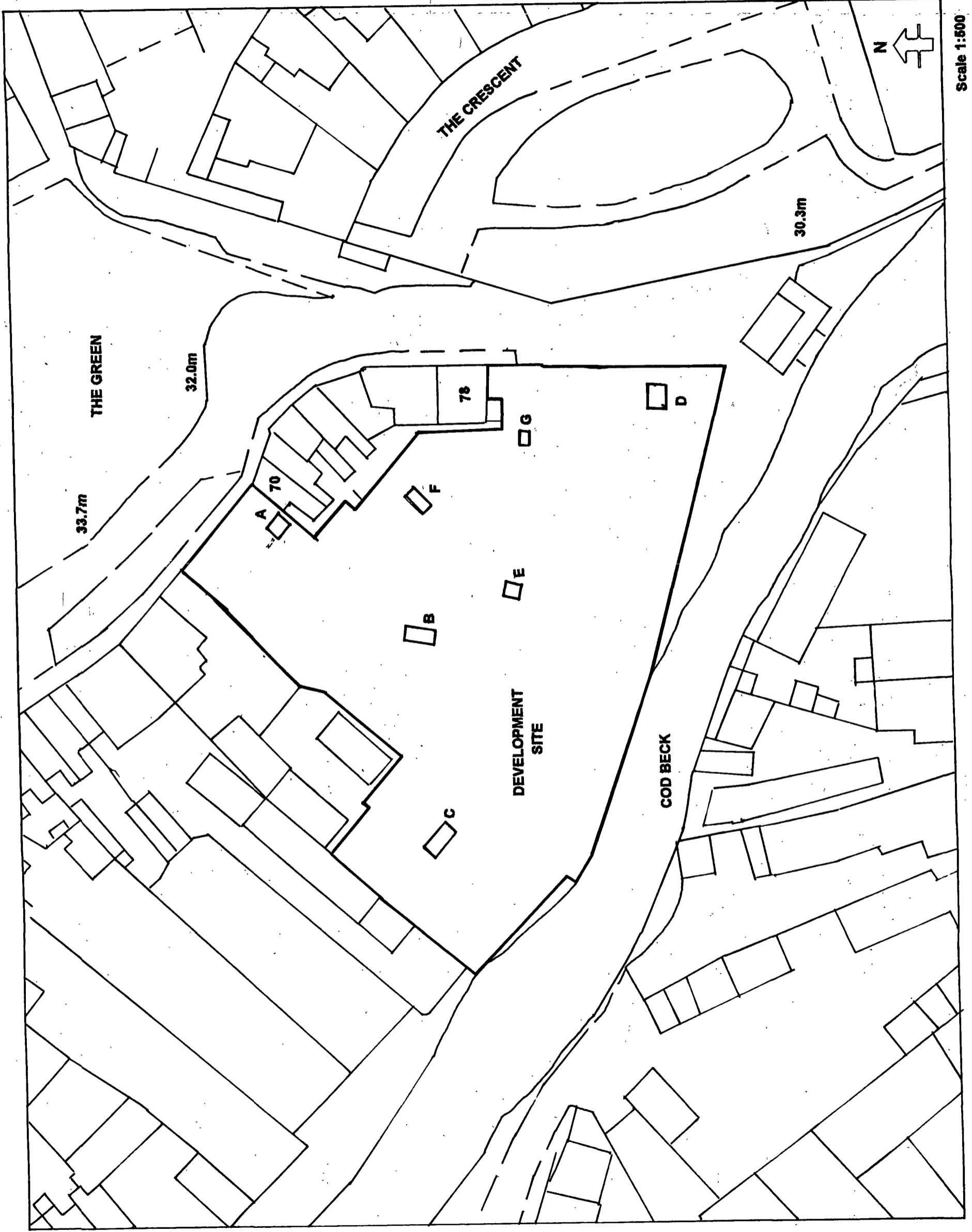
The site itself is at the extreme eastern end of The Green, and is bounded by Cod Beck to the south. The earliest available map of the area, produced in 1796, shows a wider Cod Beck, with an empty plot covering the majority of the site (Plan 4). A small separate plot containing a building occupies the north-western corner fronting onto The Green, and the portion of the site which extends westwards appears to be part of a separate plot which runs all the way from The Green to Cod Beck. This contains no buildings in the area of the site. The 1843 tithe map (Plan 5) shows a similar situation, except that the small plot fronting onto the Green has become part of the plot to the west. The plot number given to the main part of site has no record in the tithe apportionment, which is unusual and may indicate that the land had no known owner.

The 1856 OS 6" map (Plan 6) shows no change, but by 1912, the OS 25" map (Plan 7) shows buildings all the way round the northern and eastern extremes of the site, separated from the central portion by a boundary. The building at the north-western corner seems to have disappeared however, although there is still a boundary in the same position. This may be in the position of the surviving piece of wall within the site noted near to Trench A. The distribution and location of buildings around the site seems to have remained largely unchanged since the beginning of the century, apart from the structures associated with the depot which occupied the site until recently.

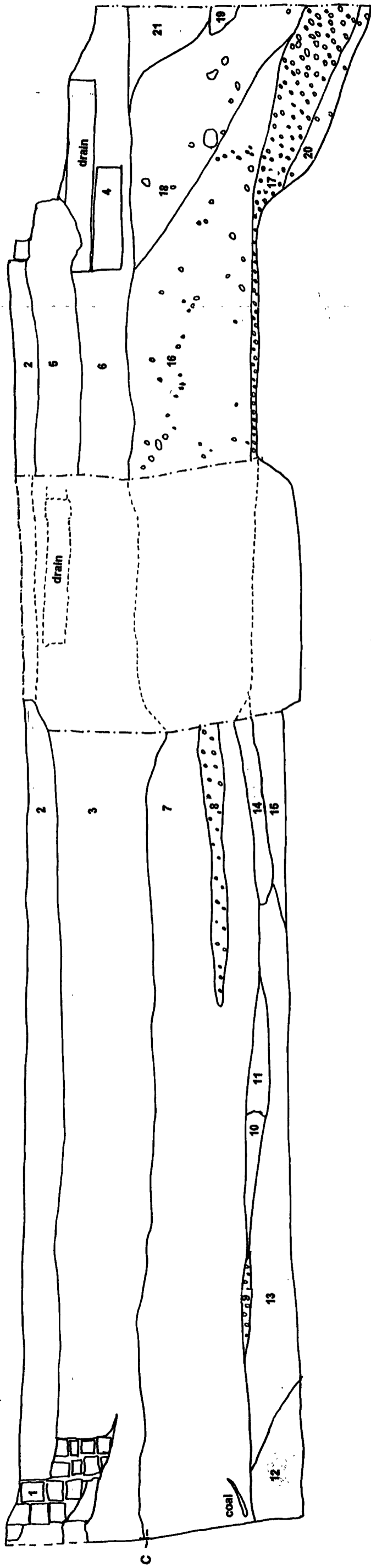
### TRENCH LOCATION AND METHODOLOGY

A total of seven trenches were machine excavated within the site (Plan 1). The precise location of these was in part determined by availability, as much of the site was covered in thick concrete, but as far as possible they were positioned to produce a snapshot of all areas of the site and to maximise the possibilities of revealing any archaeological levels which might be present.

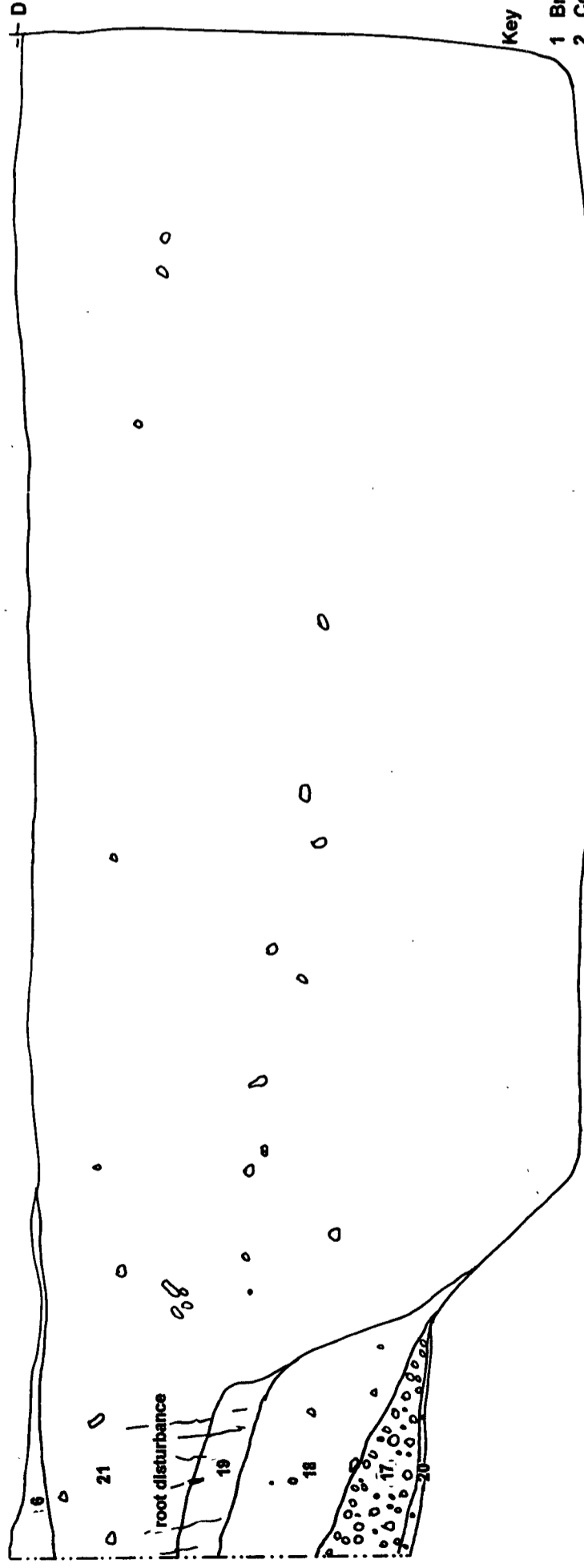
TODDS YARD, THE GREEN, THIRSK  
PLAN 1:  
SITE LOCATION AND TRENCH POSITIONS



Scale 1:500



W



Key

- 1 Bricks
- 2 Concrete pad
- 3 Brick rubble in black gravelly clay
- 4 Breeze block
- 5 White and brown mortary rubble with brick
- 6 Dark brown disturbed loamy sand with stones and charcoal flecks
- 7 Fine yellow-brown disturbed sand with clay nodules and charcoal patches
- 8 Brown sandy clay with small stones
- 9 Brown gravel
- 10 Reddish orange sand
- 11 Reddish brown sandy clay
- 12 Fine yellow sand
- 13 Fine brown sand
- 14 Fine yellow sand with black patches
- 15 Fine hard pale orange sand
- 16 Gravelly brown sand with reddish tinges
- 17 Hard brown gravel with small stones
- 18 Brown disturbed sand with some stones
- 19 Yellowish brown sandy clay
- 20 Hard orange stony sand
- 21 Dark brown muddy soft silt, structureless with occasional stones and charcoal flecks

Scale 1:20

CASTLEGATE PLAN 9 NORTH FACING SECTION C - D, FOUNDATION TRENCH

LINE

to the original sketch

... and other things ... Bell ...  
... and ... ..  
... ..



CASTLEGATE PLAN 10 1792 MAP EXTRACT

The trenches (A to G) varied in size from 4 by 2 metres to under 2 metres square. The size was again restricted in places by the presence of thick concrete. Two trenches originally envisaged near to Cod Beck were not attempted, but an additional trench (F) was located near to the rear of houses fronting the Green.

The machine removed material in level spits down to significant archaeology or to natural, whichever was the higher. Archaeological levels (present only in Trench C) were then tested by hand excavation in order to establish their significance.

#### **TRENCH A**

This trench, 2.7 metres by 2 metres, was located 4.7 metres from the boundary in the northern corner of the site. Recent gravel infill was removed to reveal a stepped concrete pad, 80 cm below the surface on the north side and 110 cm on the south side. This was bounded at the northern edge of the trench by a breeze block wall which reached to within 50 cm of the surface. The trench was abandoned at this depth. A remnant cobble and brick wall to the west of the trench had its footings at roughly the existing surface level, and it is likely that the modern concrete construction had destroyed any archaeological levels which there might have been at this point of the site. The stretch of wall is in the correct position to be part of a boundary on the site which dates back to at least the late eighteenth century (see Cartographic evidence and Plan 4).

#### **TRENCH B**

This trench was located in the north-western quadrant of the site and measured 3.8 metres by 2 metres. A surface skim of concrete covered black silty sand with occasional brick fragments and stones which merged at around 75 cm below the surface with a dark brown loamy silty sand with occasional charcoal flecks, brick fragments and small stones. By 135 cm below the surface this in turn merged with a mid brown, stoneless, soft silty clay which continued to the base of the trench at 170 cm. No archaeological features were present, and a land drain crossed the south-east corner of the trench at a depth of 135 to 150 cm.

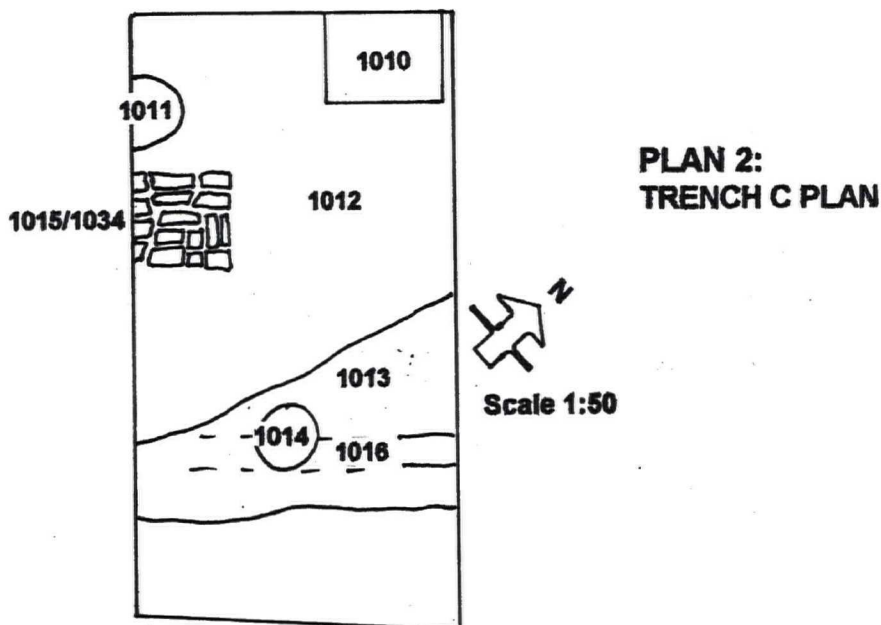
#### **TRENCH C (Plan 2)**

This trench was located near the western end of the site and was 2.1 metres by 4 metres. A mixed brown sandy loam with brick, mortar and modern debris covered a mid brown sandy loamy clay containing brick, stones, occasional animal bone and modern pottery, which reached to the base of the trench at 105 cm. This was cut by several features.

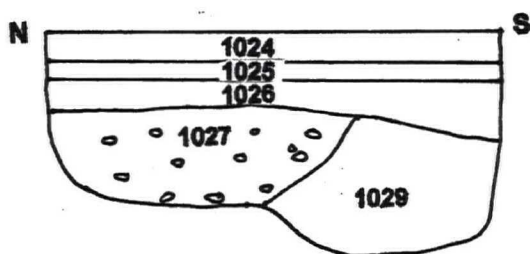
A linear feature containing black sandy loam, cinders and clinker crossed the trench at a depth of 50 to 80 cm. This feature contained a concentration of small animal and fish bones 40 cm in diameter, 15 to 20 cm deep. Another pit at the western end of the trench, at a depth of 53 to 65 cm below the surface, contained a number of partly articulated sheep bones, including a skull, in a dark brown clayey loam. A third pit, immediately to the east of the second and at a similar depth, contained a selection of animal bones in a dark brown clayey loam. This pit, which had almost vertical sides and was 20 cm deep was directly above a small area, 66 cm by 55 cm, of brick paving which continued under the north-facing section. The bricks were modern 3" (7.5 cm), and were laid directly onto mid brown sandy loamy clay.

Beneath the central linear feature at a depth of 105 cm below the surface was a large glazed earthenware drain which crossed the trench

# TODDS YARD, THE GREEN, THIRSK



- KEY**
- 1010 lime mortar
  - 1011 pit of dark brown clayey loam containing articulated animal bones
  - 1012 layer of mid-brown sandy clayey loam containing stones, brick frags., occasional bone, modern pottery
  - 1013 black sandy loam with cinders, clinker, bricks and stones
  - 1014 concentration of small animal bones within 1013
  - 1015 straight sided pit of dark brown clayey loam containing animal bones, overlying 1034
  - 1016 glazed pottery drain running beneath 1013
  - 1034 brick floor beneath 1015



**PLAN 3:**  
TRENCH F WEST FACING SECTION (sketch)

Scale 1:50

- KEY**
- 1024 modern gravel
  - 1025 coarse concrete
  - 1026 black clayey sand with stones, brick, bone, modern glass
  - 1027 hard brown clay with stones and some charcoal flecks
  - 1029 soft grey-brown silty clay

from north to south and was observed to have an outfall in Cod Beck. The trench was not continued beneath this level in order not to damage the drain.

#### **TRENCH D**

This trench was located 2.45 metres from the eastern edge of the site and measured 3 metres by 2.60 metres. The main fill was recent gravel infill. containing breeze blocks, concrete, bricks, cables, wood and other modern debris. This lay above a concrete pad at a depth of 80 cm which abutted a brick wall on the southern edge of the trench. The trench was abandoned at this depth.

#### **TRENCH E**

This trench was located centrally within the site and measured 2.1 metres by 1.85 metres. Recent gravel fill overlaid a grey to black stony silty sand with concrete lumps and other modern debris. This layer showed evidence of dumping and was clearly modern landfill. It reached to a depth of between 150 cm and 185 cm, below which was a grey-brown smooth clay which reached to the base of the trench at 195 cm.

#### **TRENCH F (Plan 3)**

This trench was located in the north-eastern quadrant of the site, 4 metres from the backs of houses fronting onto the Green, and measured 1.75 metres by 3 metres. Modern gravel infill and coarse concrete covered a layer of black clayey sand with brick, stones, modern glass and some bone which reached to a depth of 50 cm below the surface. Below it was a layer, 65 cm thick, of hard brown clay with stones and some charcoal flecks over the north-eastern half of the trench. In the southern half of the trench a soft grey-brown silty clay underlay the black sand and this dipped to underlie the hard brown clay also. The south-western corner of the trench contained a grey-brown soft silty clay containing concrete, tarmac and other modern debris which reached to the base of the trench at 140 cm. This had a strong smell of petrol and was in the area of a former petrol pump.

#### **TRENCH G**

This trench was located on the eastern edge of the site, immediately south of No 70 The Green. It measured 1.6 metres by 1.4 metres. Underlying a concrete skim was dark grey mixed silty sand with stones, brick, concrete etc. to a depth of 40 cm, which had an indeterminate interface with a grey-brown soft silty clay with some stones. This reached to a depth of 140 cm below the surface where a layer of black stony sand with coal and cinders was encountered at the base of the trench. The southern half of the trench was not excavated below 40 cm to avoid further damage to a live water service.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

The trial trenches revealed no evidence of medieval occupation on the site. Much of the area has been subject to landfill, and the conclusions of the borehole findings were confirmed, suggesting that the southern half of the site consists of recent landfill to depths up to 1.8 metres. This landfill would seem to be as deep near to the centre of the site (Trench E) as it is nearer to Cod Beck (Boreholes 2 and 3).

The western portion of the site (Trench C) has not been raised in the same way, and this area contained the only archaeological levels encountered. However, the material encountered related to comparatively modern usage, probably associated with a former butcher's back yard.



Disturbance from the drainage pipe lay beneath the animal bone pits, and extended to at least 1.2 metres below the ground surface.

In the northern area of the site modern disturbance was widespread to depths of at least .9 metres, and only Trench B contained relatively undisturbed soils. Here there were no archaeological features and the soils indicated alluvial deposition. Trench F also showed evidence of alluvial build up, and the hard brown clay in the northern part of the trench may indicate a former river bank. It is possible that the Cod Beck, which from the cartographic evidence formerly had a less constricted course, earlier took a northward loop through the area of the site which gradually moved southwards to its current course.

It is clear from the cartographic evidence that the majority of the site was not built upon until recent times, probably because the ground sloped down fairly swiftly to the Beck and was subject to flooding until it was built up to its present levels.

#### **IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT**

The proposed development does not seem likely to disturb any archaeological levels. Much of the ground is composed of recent landfill to depths of over 1.3 metres, and modern disturbance in the most of the remainder also reaches to levels below those likely to be reached by the development. The remaining undisturbed areas did not contain any archaeological features of significance, and it seems likely that the site was not in use in the medieval period.

No further work on the archaeology of the site should be necessary.

#### **SUMMARY**

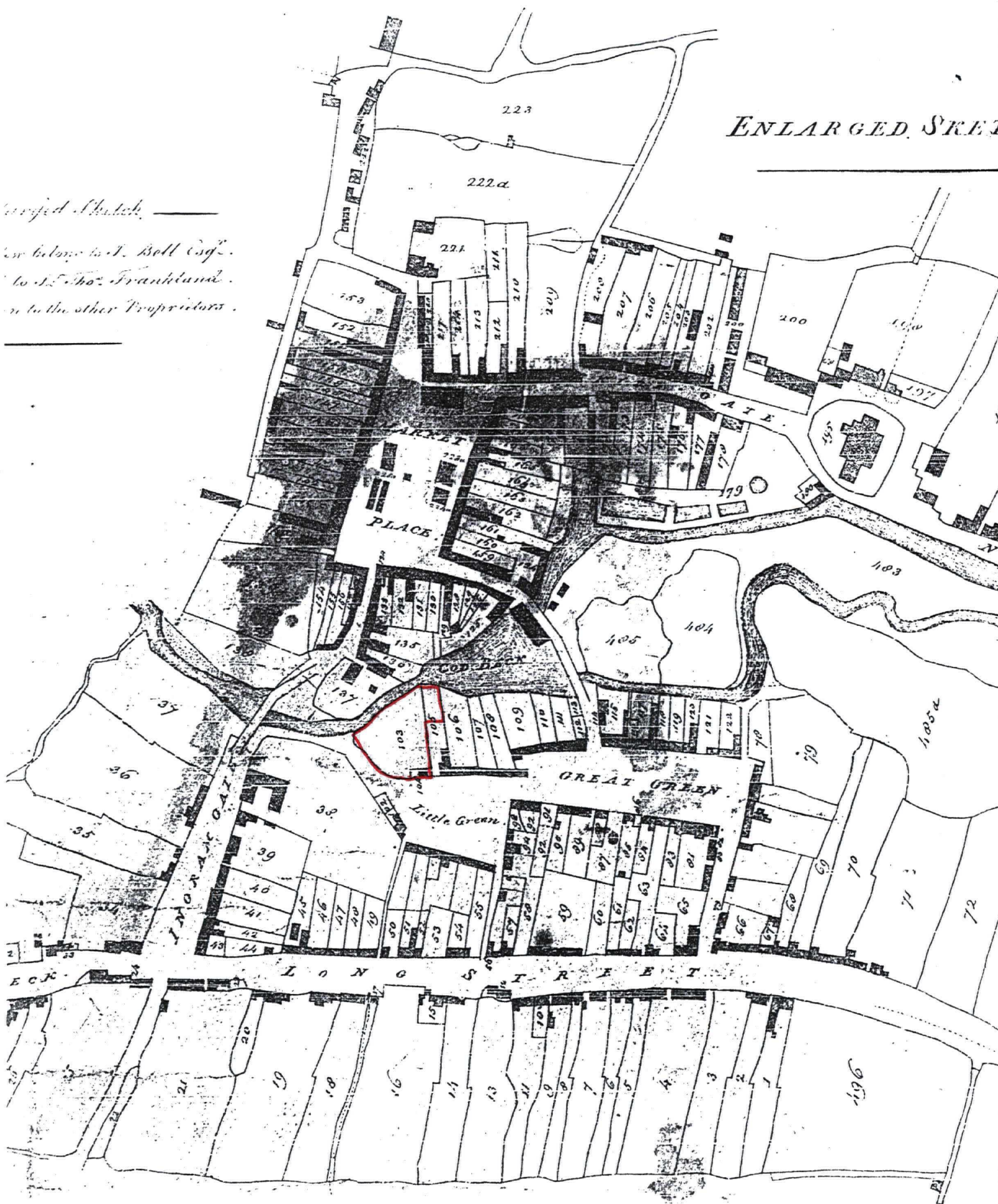
*Seven trial trenches located across the proposed development site failed to identify any significant archaeology. It would seem from examination of the cartographic history of the site that it had not been used to any significant extent before its use as a depot in the twentieth century.*

Alison Clarke

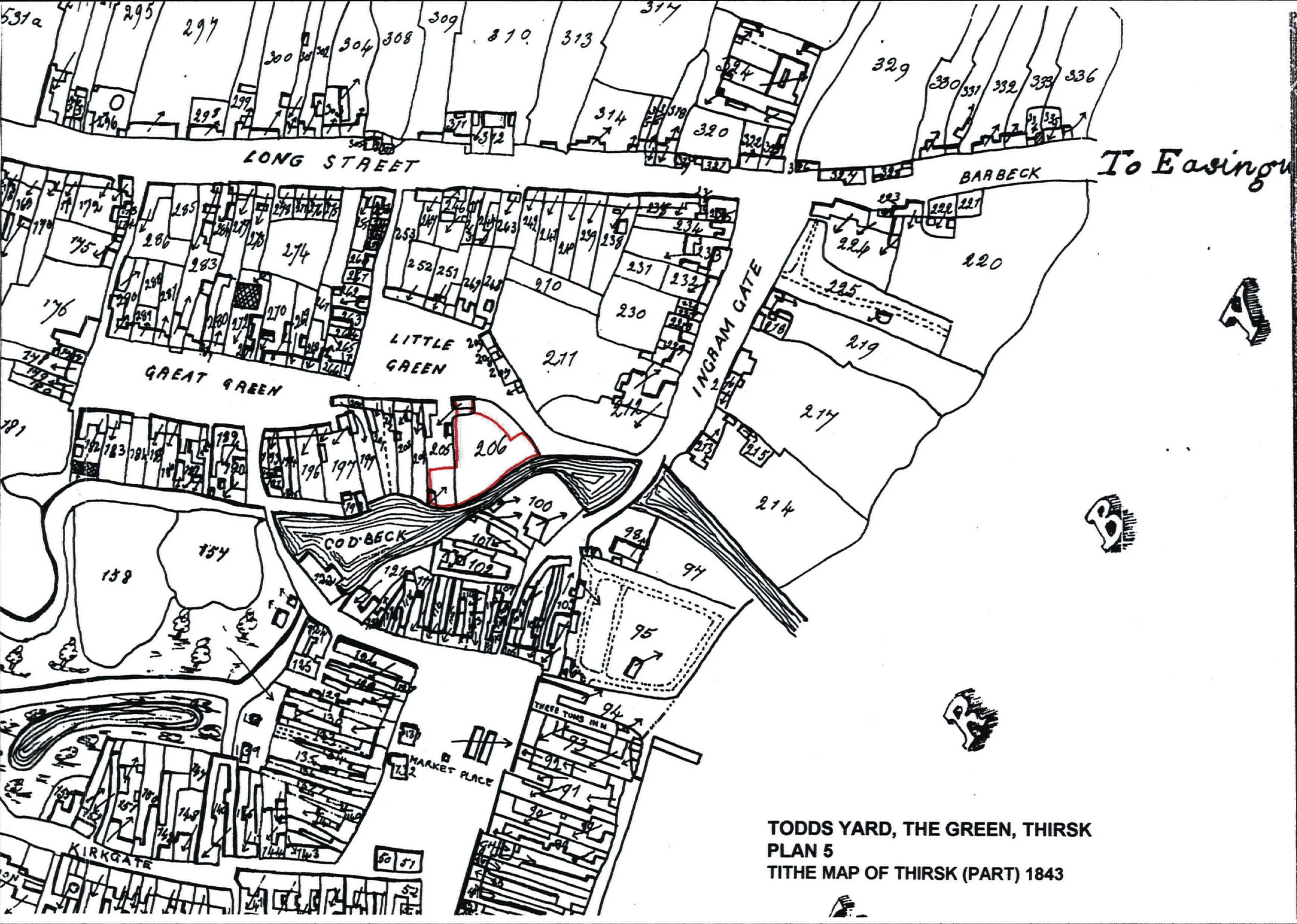
February 1997

ENLARGED STREET

Enlarged Sketch  
now belong to J. Bell Esq.  
to J. Tho. Frankland  
and to the other Proprietors.



TODDS YARD, THE GREEN, THIRSK  
PLAN 4  
PLAN OF THIRSK (PART) 1796



TODDS YARD, THE GREEN, THIRSK  
 PLAN 5  
 TITHE MAP OF THIRSK (PART) 1843



**TODDS YARD, THE GREEN, THIRSK  
PLAN 6  
OS 6" MAP OF THIRSK 1856**



**TODDS YARD, THE GREEN, THIRSK  
 PLAN 07  
 OS 25" MAP OF THIRSK 1912**