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**HOUSEGATE/SHIPYARD ROAD,
SELBY,
NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**REPORT ON AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
DESK-TOP STUDY**



**2002 FIELD REPORT
NUMBER 37**

OUSEGATE/SHIPYARD ROAD,

SELBY

REPORT ON AN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-TOP STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study suggests that there may have been settlement at Selby from as early as the 2nd century AD. This is likely to have continued through the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian periods and there is no doubt that Selby has been of local and regional significance from the 11th century to modern times. In all periods prior to the modern period, river transport was very important and this clearly applied to Selby. The study area can be shown to have been active in river trade during the modern and post-medieval periods and probably during the medieval period as well. It is also possible that significant remains of earlier periods may lie within the study area although this cannot as yet be verified. Remains of wharves and other riverside structures are thus predicted and the evaluation of these by means of a programme of limited archaeological trenching is suggested

1. INTRODUCTION

In August 2002 an archaeological desk-top study was undertaken by York Archaeological Trust on land at the eastern end of Ousegate, Selby, North Yorkshire (NGR SE 6200 3219, Figure 1) on behalf of Barratt York. The study was undertaken to provide background information before a planning application was submitted to North Yorkshire County Council for the redevelopment of the site. The historical and archaeological significance of the study area was assessed using a variety of sources including cartographic evidence, the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) of the County of North Yorkshire, the National Monuments Record (NMR), Regional Archives and published archaeological and historical reports.

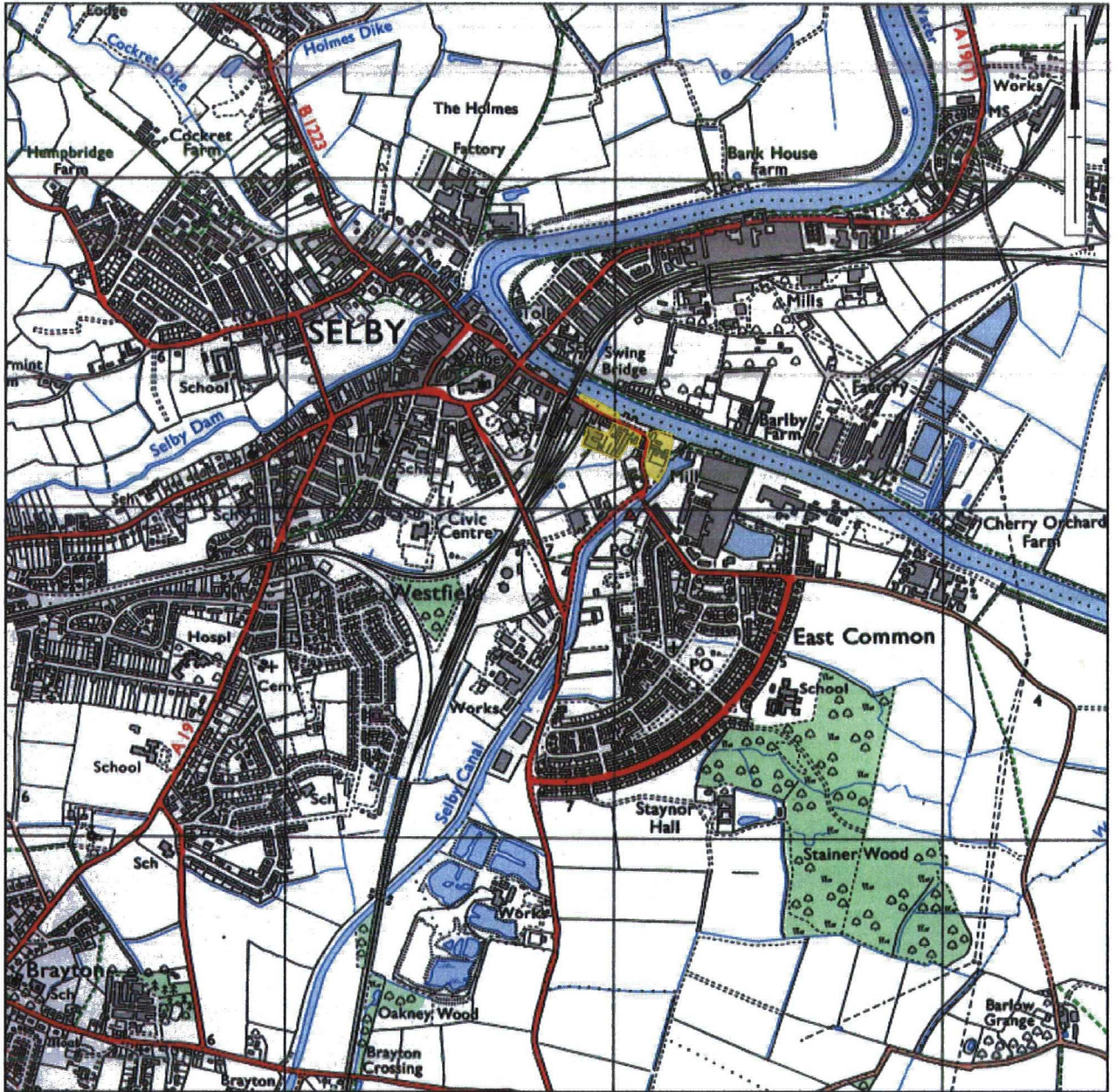
2. METHODOLOGY

Initially the NMR was the subject of a search for any sites of historic or archaeological importance in the general vicinity of the site and the information gathered was assessed. The archive of information held at the SMR of the County of North Yorkshire was searched and its contents were also assessed. The SMR record cards for the study area were checked for any references to the land in question, and for sites in the vicinity. Historical and archaeological publications held by the SMR and York Archaeological Trust were also examined for additional information as was the archive of the YAT (YAT 1997). Selby Library was visited to check local sources for any information. Readily accessible cartographic sources were also examined.

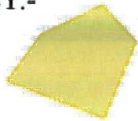
Site research notes are currently stored with the York Archaeological Trust under the York Archaeological Trust accession code YORAT:2002.8

3. TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The site lies adjacent to the eastern end of Ousegate and the northern end of Shipyard Road, south of the River Ouse and south-east of Selby town centre. The proposed development consists of several separate, but nearly contiguous areas, measuring c.250m east to west and c.140m north to south. The ground is fairly level in this area of Selby and lies at c.5.5m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).



KEY:-



Extent of development site

BASED UPON ORDNANCE SURVEY 1:25000 MAP DATA WITH PERMISSION OF THE CONTROLLER OF HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE, CROWN COPYRIGHT, YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST CROMWELL HOUSE, 13 OGLEFORTH, YORK. YO17FG. LICENCE NUMBER AL 10001343

0 1000 metres

Figure 1 Site location

The drift geology is generally of silts and clay and Kelfield Marl with alluvium close to watercourses. This overlies solid geology of Bunter Sandstone, Permian Marls, Magnesian Limestone, and coal.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 The Prehistoric period (to the 1st century AD)

Evidence for the prehistoric period is not prolific in the Selby area but polished stone axes of the Neolithic period have been found at Barmby Moor, Camblesforth Common, Church Fenton, Skipwith and Wheldrake. Bronze-age palstaves (axes) have come from Howden, and a gold ring of similar date was found at Cawood. An Iron-age log boat has been found at Hasholme (Scott 1986).

4.2 The Roman Period (1st to the 5th centuries AD)

Evidence for this period is not currently extensive but the main Roman road from Doncaster to York passes close by and is still visible as a prominent ridge near Monk Fryston. Roman kilns have been discovered at Throlam Farm, Holme on Spalding Moor, and pottery of this period has also come from Hemingborough. A Roman stone quern was discovered at Hirst Courtney and a Romano-British settlement is known at Drax. Large quantities of pottery from East Haddlesley may indicate the site of another settlement or possibly a villa. (Scott 1986). A borehole evaluation in 1992, on land to the north of Gowthorpe and south of Selby Dam, suggested that waterlogged occupation deposits of Roman date lay in this area in the centre of Selby (NYM 10424). In 1998 a watching brief on the foundations for a new block of flats at the junction of Ousegate and New Street (NY 267) recorded ditches and possibly levelling deposits of the Roman period quite close to the proposed development site.

4.3 The Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian periods (5th to 11th centuries AD)

There is slight but potentially significant evidence for the Anglo-Saxon period in the area. An 8th century spearhead was found at Ferrybridge Power Station, and a very rare Carolingian winged spearhead, known to be used for hunting, came from the River Ouse at Kelfield. Nearer to the study area, in the 19th century skeletons in hollowed out tree-trunk coffins were found around Church Hill (NYM 10426) and although they are difficult to date they should belong to either the Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Scandinavian periods. Skeletons found at Riccall Landing at various points during the 19th and 20th centuries are normally ascribed to the Anglo-Scandinavian period and may be victims of the battles between the English and Norwegian armies in 1066 (Scott 1986). Other evidence, in the form of place names, is reviewed below.

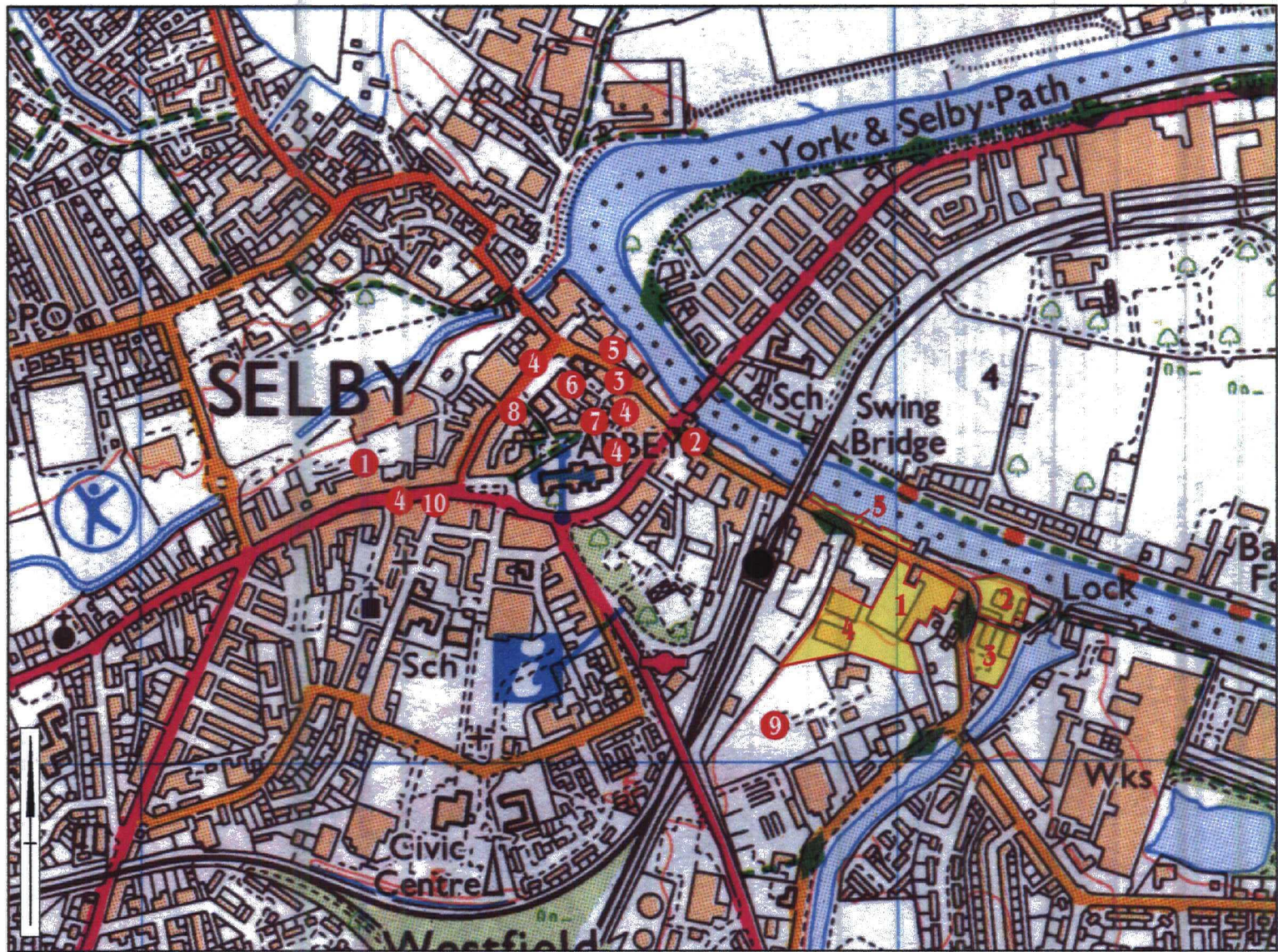


Figure 2 Archaeological sites in the study area

0 400 metres

BASED UPON ORDNANCE SURVEY 1:25000 MAP DATA WITH PERMISSION OF THE CONTROLLER OF HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE, CROWN COPYRIGHT, YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST CROMWELL HOUSE, 13 OGLEFORTH YORK. YO17FG. LICENCE NUMBER AL 10001343

- KEY:-
- 1 NYM 10424
 - 2 NY 267
 - 3 NYM 10426
 - 4 NYM 10430
 - 5 NYM 10450
 - 6 NY 557
 - 7 NYM 10433
 - 8 NY 471
 - 9 NYM 10446
 - 10 NY 546

 Development areas

4.4 The Medieval Period (11th to the mid 16th centuries AD)

Evidence for this period is plentiful in the general area and includes possible medieval occupation deposits and organic dumps found at 20 Church Hill in 1973 (NYM 10430). A watching brief in 1996 on Yorkshire Water trenches in Ousegate, Water Lane and other streets close to the abbey located burials, deposits and finds of the period (NYM 10450) while a watching brief at The Masonic Hall, Church Hill (NY 557) also recorded deposits of this date and possible pits. Foundations of stone and accompanying burials from Church Hill (NYM 10433) are believed to belong to the Chapel of St. Germanus which was recorded in the 13th century but fell into decay by the 17th century. A 1997 watching brief in Micklegate/Finkle Street recorded occupation deposits and timbers of medieval date and walls (NY 471). Probable occupation deposits were noted from a site in Church Hill, west of the Three Swans public house in 1996 (NYM 10430) and stratified deposits, features and structures of the 11th century and later were encountered during an evaluation at Irwin's Yard, Micklegate in 1996 (NYM 10430). Some of the deposits were waterlogged. In the area known as The Vivars, some 250m to the south-west of the study area a 1994 watching brief recovered medieval pottery including at least one waster and an evaluation in this area in 1995 located probable medieval deposits and a possible medieval fish pond (NYM 10446). An earthwork survey of the area demonstrated the survival of ridge and furrow of the period. Investigations at 16 Gowthorpe in 1997 (NYM 10430) located boundary ditches and a late medieval structure. Waterlogged occupation deposits of the medieval period were encountered in the borehole evaluation north of Gowthorpe and south of Selby Dam. A watching brief on trenches dug between Scott Road and Selby Abbey in 1998 recorded medieval structures, surfaces and deposits, some of them organic (NY 546). Observations in the 19th century in Finkle Street of solid masonry walls were thought to be traces of a Norman castle and a cobbled pavement and steps, seen 3.5 feet down, in the Gowthorpe, Market Place, and Finkle Street areas, also seen in the 19th century may be parts of medieval streets and a structure. Medieval features, deposits and structures were located and recorded during the watching brief at the junction of Ousegate and New Street.

4.5 The Post-Medieval Period (mid 16th to 19th centuries)

There is a good deal of archaeological evidence for this period from the area. Post-medieval build-up deposits and demolition deposits were recorded at 20 Church Hill together with pottery up to the 17th century in date. Pottery, other finds, and deposits of the period also came from Yorkshire Water trenches in Ousegate/Water Lane. The watching brief at Micklegate/Finkle Street in 1997 found quantities of metal working slag and a well possible of this period. Deposits from this period were also noted from the boreholes north of Gowthorpe and demolition deposits, and dumps or levelling deposits were recorded from the Scott Road to Selby Abbey works. Structures, deposits and features of this period were encountered during the watching brief at the junction of Ousegate and New Street.

4.6 The Modern Period (19th and 20th centuries)

There is much evidence for this period in the immediate and surrounding area. Modern demolition deposits were noted from 20, Church Hill and modern disturbed ground from the Ousegate/Water Lane trenches. The 1995 evaluation at The Vivars encountered modern build-deposits and dumps while a watching brief at Gant Walk, to the rear of Church Lane, in 1998 recorded modern dumps and 19th century build-ups (NYM 10430). A watching brief at 25 Finkle Street in 1997 noted a modern structure and dumps and a watching brief at the junction of Ousegate and New Street in 1998 encountered modern structures and deposits.

4.7 The Historical Background

The origins of Selby are, as with many smaller towns, obscure but the place name may give some indication. A number of different explanations of the name Selby have been put forward including "Abode of the Seal" perhaps a reference to seals frequenting the area. Another meaning that has been offered is "fortunate town". A modern translation of the name gives "settlement in a willow copse". The "by" suggests occupation in the Anglo-Scandinavian era but the "sel" portion of the name is believed to be Saxon and it therefore suggested that Selby was a well established settlement by the 9th century AD. The number of streets in Selby containing the suffix gate, for example Ousegate, Bondgate and Micklegate, from the Old Norse "gata" = street, also strongly suggests a pre-conquest origin for Selby. Speed, in his "History of England", 1631, states that the youngest son of William 1, the future Henry 1, was born at Selby which may imply a place of some importance at that time. After the Norman Conquest much of the land was shared out amongst the supporters and followers of William 1. The Domesday Book mentions Selby briefly and an Abbot of Selby. It is uncertain if there was any pre-conquest monastic establishment at Selby and the present Selby Abbey originated in 1069 when a wooden chapel was erected. By c.1100 the Abbey Church and associated buildings were under construction in stone. Apart from the Abbey Church virtually nothing now remains of the monastery. It is known that the Abbey possessed a staithe in Ousegate, probably close to the out fall of the present canal. A medieval millpond lay close to the Ouse and at some time a new water course was built which for part of its course ran along the back of Ousegate to enter the river close to the Abbey staithe. During the medieval period the Abbot of Selby was the local Lord of the Manor. All the finer buildings in Selby during this period were built of stone, and also many of the smaller cottages, due to readily available stone from nearby Monk Fryston. Throughout the period Selby was dominated by the Abbey and in 1397 it had an abbot, prior, and 25 monks. By c.1416 there was an abbot, 35 monks, 10 corroderies and other guests, and 65 servants. Apart from rents much of the abbey's income came from grain, animals and wool although timber from local sources was also important and was stored at the staithe at Ousegate. Selby had a market each week and annual fairs of two days duration on the Feast of St Peter and the Feast of St Michael. Medieval trades attested included a cobbler, a tanner, a baker and a butcher. Other occupations attested during the 14th century are carpenters, weavers, dyers, tailors, blacksmiths, a draper, a grocer, mason, slater, and a plasterer. Towards the end of the 14th century, in 1379, it is recorded that there were 198 families living in Selby amounting to c.1100 persons, making it a sizeable town despite great reductions in numbers due to plague from 1348 onwards. The abbey was eventually dissolved in 1539 after peacefully surrendering to the crown and in return the abbot was granted a pension of one hundred pounds. By this time the area of Selby was apparently still well

wooded, perhaps a reflection of the relative abundance of good quality stone for construction. (Scott 1986).

The dissolution of Selby Abbey seems to have little effect on Selby generally and the town continued to prosper. By the 17th century this prosperity was attracting the wealthy upper classes to the town although it also attracted the poor, some dwellings housed four or five families. By 1618 the Abbey church became the official parish church for Selby thus ensuring its survival to the present day. In 1643, during the English Civil War, Selby was attacked by the Parliamentarians and many of the Royalists were forced to retreat to York, an action which culminated in the Siege of York in 1644. During this period Selby Abbey had been used for stables and suffered accordingly although Selby in general seems to have not been seriously damaged. The later 17th century saw the growth of non-conformist churches and eventually Quakers, Methodists and Presbyterians were all active in the area. Markets and fairs still flourished and the river trade was still important. The great increase in river trade during the 18th century prompted the construction of the Selby Canal from Huddlesley on the River Aire to Selby (NMR Unique Identifier 1340668). This canal, still in existence, lies immediately to the east of the study area. One effect of the construction of the canal was a desire to improve communications generally and it is during this period that the idea of a bridge across the Ouse appears to have been first vigorously promoted, the town at this time still relying on a ferry to cross the river. During the 18th century Selby's population had increased to c.3000 inhabitants and it was a busy and prosperous town. The great increase in river traffic during the 18th century led to the establishment of one of Selby's earliest known shipyards in the 1750's in Ousegate and shipbuilding became a tradition that survived until nearly the end of the 20th century with much of the shipbuilding taking place in and around the current study area. By the early 19th century the population had grown to c.4100 with some 1300 of this relying directly or indirectly on river trade for their livelihood. A new canal connecting Knottingley to Goole, and avoiding Selby, led to a downturn in river trade in the second quarter of the 19th century although it is believed that this was partly or mostly compensated for by the expansion of shipbuilding in the town. The town also received a boost in 1834 when the railway, later to become the Leeds to Hull line, first arrived in Selby. Certainly Selby was not in any serious decline since, as with many other mid 19th century towns, increasing industrialisation coupled with poor sanitary and water provision, saw a marked increase in the level of disease. Cholera killed 55 persons in Selby in 1831-2 and in 1847 many succumbed to "Irish Fever". In 1848-9 cholera returned killing 108 in Selby with one of the worst affected areas being Ousegate, perhaps reflecting the combination of industry and poor water supply and drainage in the area. By 1859 the lessons had been learnt and the Local Health Board were vigorously enforcing the provision of suitable water, drains, and street cleaning. By the end of the 19th century Selby was a cleaner place and still quite affluent, shipbuilding being a major employer in the area and regular markets and fairs were still being held (Scott 1987). During the early to mid 20th century river traffic continued with an emphasis on agricultural products. During World War 2 Selby's shipbuilding capacity was eagerly and thoroughly exploited and one shipyard alone, Cochrane's, employed 500 people and built at least 107 vessels, many of them tugs. During the war the staithes and quays along Ousegate were used to unload ammunition, the area being some way from the core of the town and thus safer. In the post-war period shipbuilding and trade in agricultural products continued as before although affected for a while in 1947 due to serious flooding in which some 1400 homes were affected. One of the worst hit areas of Selby was Shipyard Road running through the

study area. With reduced demand and fierce competition in the shipbuilding industry the yards declined and by the 1990's had vanished.

5. CARTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

An early map of Selby, dated 1790 (Selby Lib)(Figure 3), shows Ousegate quite well built up and although it does not identify all the structures, the eastern part of the study area is clearly marked "Mr Sheppards Ship Yard". This map also shows the proposed site of the road bridge, built shortly after the map was drawn, across the Ouse. Another early map of Selby is the 1808 Enclosure Award Map (Figure 4). Although due to the scale there is not an abundance of detail there are apparently at least three structures marked to the east of Shipyard Road. These may be shipyard buildings and their depiction on this map may suggest that they are of some substance and importance. On the west side of Shipyard Road, and lining Ousegate, is a nearly continuous row of structures on long narrow plots. These could be structures, such as warehouses, associated with the river trade and it is interesting to note the prominence given to them on this map. The next map of the area, a manorial map of 1818, is also at a rather small scale but appears to show the same structures as the 1808 map. The 1851 6 inch to the mile Ordnance Survey map (Figure 5) shows that buildings in the area have spread back from the street fronts and are now encroaching on what were formerly backyards and possibly gardens. Although this map is difficult to interpret it appears that the northern end of Shipyard Road may have been blocked off and was now occupied by buildings. These buildings may, however, have spanned the road rather than blocking it and, if so, hint at the relative lack of space due to the increased river trade activity known to have occurred in the early 19th century. This map also shows the Leeds to Hull railway line with at least two sidings serving buildings towards the centre of Ousegate. Comparison with the maps of 1808 and 1818 may indicate considerable expansion of Selby, particularly to the south-west of the historic core. The 1908 O.S. map (Figure 6), at 25 inches to the mile, shows considerable detail including staithe and warehouses and other buildings in the area together unidentified structures and a disused ship building yard within the study area. Other structures along the east side of Shipyard Road are very probably domestic dwellings. There are now many more railway sidings to the west of the study area serving two malthouses and a goods shed and this may indicate the continued importance of the area for river trade and traffic. The 1938 O.S. 6 inches to the mile map (Figure 7) shows mainly subtle changes to the area and confirms that the vicinity was well built up at this point in time, mainly apparently, with commercial structures and it is possible that some or all of the domestic dwelling noted on the 1908 map. Since the 1938 map there have only been minor changes to the area. The 1995 O.S. map shows the current standing buildings.

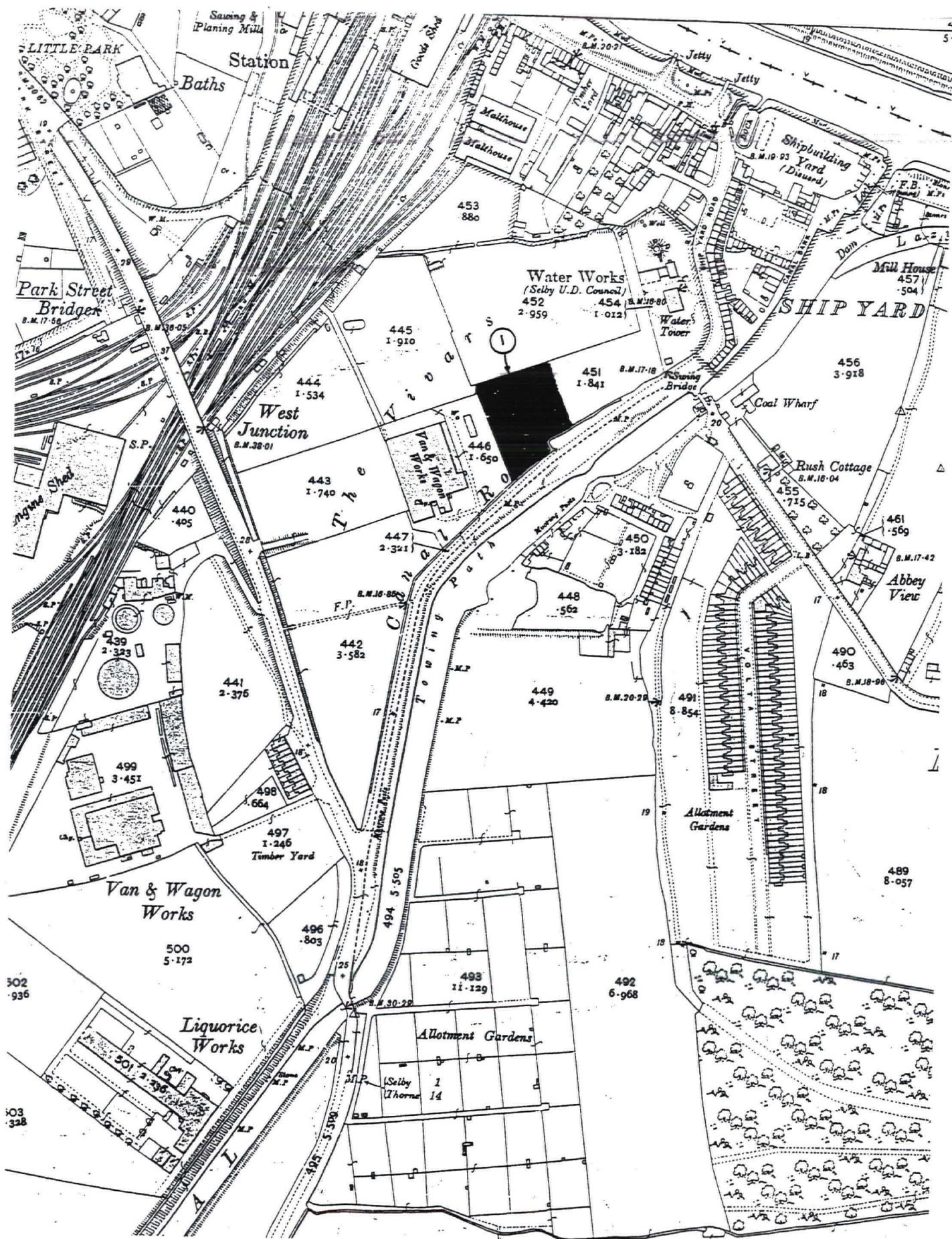


Figure 6 Ordnance Survey Map 1908

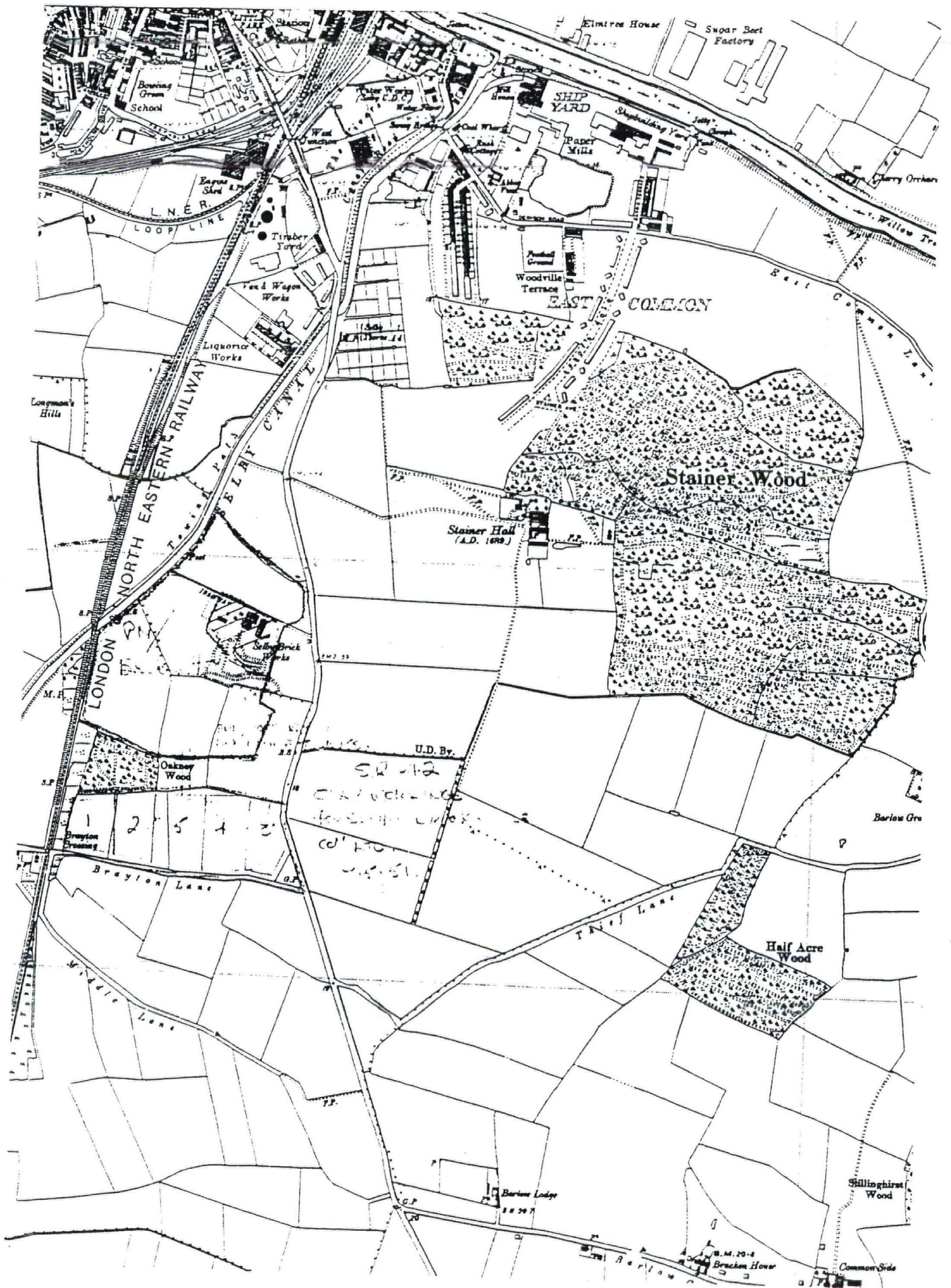


Figure 7 Ordnance Survey Map 1938

6. WALK-OVER SURVEY

The site was visited on August 27th 2002 when the existing structures within the study area were briefly examined. Although it was not possible to examine the buildings in any great detail it was clear that most, if not all of them, were relatively modern, with a number being obviously built or rebuilt during the 20th century. Although parts of the site were somewhat overgrown other parts were apparently still occupied and these parts were fairly clear and tidy. A good deal of the site consists of open ground which has a cinder/loose rubble surface but sections immediately either side of Ousegate have solid concrete surfaces. Most of the standing buildings appeared to be warehouses although one block on the Ousegate street frontage clearly included office accommodation.

7. LISTED BUILDINGS

None of the present structures on the site appear to be listed as of architectural or historic interest. In the general area, although no buildings in Shipyard Road are listed, there are a number of buildings of architectural interest. The Nelson public house, on the corner of Ousegate and Shipyard Road and immediately adjacent to the study area, is listed Grade II and 120 and 122 Ousegate, dating to the late 18th or early 19th century are also Grade II. There are many other listed buildings further from the development site along Ousegate and these are for the most part 19th century and Grade II.



Plate 1 Areas 1 & 4 looking south west



Plate 2 Wharf 2 (Area 5) looking east



Plate 3 Area 2 looking north east



Plate 4 Area 3 looking north east

8. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The archaeological evidence, from the National and local Sites and Monuments Records and from recent investigations shows clearly that central Selby is rich in archaeological stratigraphy which in many places is waterlogged adding to its importance and potential. Although the present site lies in an area which is some distance from the historic core the discovery of Roman features and deposits may indicate an as yet undiscovered settlement of the Roman period in Selby. River communication and transport was very important at that time and it possible that staithe, warehouses and other riverside features may lie in the area. Documentary evidence makes it clear that the south bank of the River Ouse was lined with staithe, storehouses, and other riverside structures throughout the medieval period and it has been suggested that some of these facilities do lie within the study area. Given the evidence that even relatively humble cottages were being built of stone at this time it is virtually certain that the staithe and storehouses connected with the river trade would be of stone. It is therefore quite possible that substantial well built medieval stone structures lie within the study area. The cartographic evidence also make it clear that buried remains of the post-medieval period may be intact within the study area and although it is likely that some of these remains have been damaged by later activity some may survive, particularly in the open areas where disturbance is likely to have been at a minimum.

9. ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

There have been no archaeological investigations in the immediate area of the proposed development site but an analysis of the available evidence strongly suggests that buried remains of the medieval to modern periods and possibly earlier may survive. It would therefore be prudent to instigate a preliminary scheme of archaeological evaluation in order to assess the nature, date, and condition of any archaeological remains which may survive within this site.

10. LIST OF SOURCES

Geological Survey 1973	Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales) Solid and Drift, Sheet 71.
NMR	National Monuments Record.
NYSMR	North Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record.
Selby Lib	Selby Library, Local Studies Reference Section.
Scott.P, 1986	The History of Selby and District, Part One.
Scott. P, 1987.	The History of Selby and District, Part Two.
Scott. P, 1989	Fifty Years of Selby, Part Two
YAT 1997	York Archaeological Trust Archive Gazetteer

11. LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Research and Report	David Evans
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Editor	David Brinklow
Photography	David Evans

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MAP SELBY ENGL
AWARD 1808



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*The Map or Plan to
which my Award refers
Signed Clerk*

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Explanation

*The Old Inclosures not Coloured are
the property of the Lord of the Manor;
the Freehold and Copyhold Old
Inclosures are Coloured Red
The Allotments are Coloured Green.*

A Scale of Eight Chains in One Inch.



Figure 4 Enclosure Award Map 1808

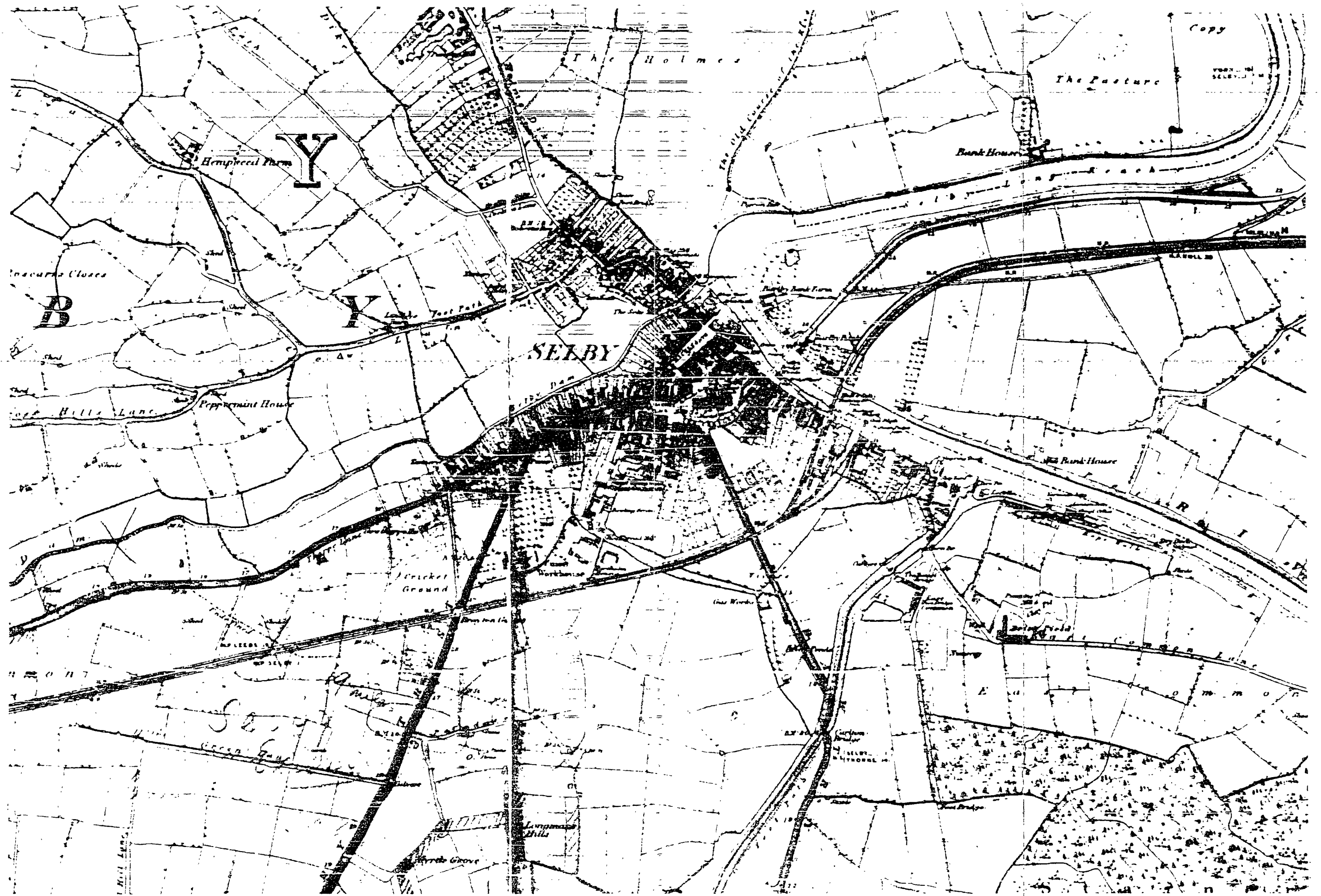


Figure 5 Ordnance Survey Map 1851