



THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF
WALSALL

Text by Nigel Baker
Illustrations by Mark Eveson
Walsall University Field Archaeology Unit

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Text by Nigel Baker
Illustrations by Mark Breedon
Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit

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INTRODUCTION

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The urban origins of Walsall are to be found in a tiny, planned, market settlement of c.1200, represented by the existing High Street. This small nucleus subsequently expanded with the addition of another planned street on the opposite side of the valley, and further development to the north-east and south-west. There is no unambiguous evidence for the pre-urban, pre-13th-century origins of Walsall, but any settlement is likely to have been in the area of the parish church.

Archaeological deposits in Walsall are, as a consequence of the small size of the medieval town and the intensity of post-medieval development, a scarce resource. However, some parts of the town may have a considerable archaeological potential, and three areas are identified as being of particular archaeological significance (see fig.16).

INTRODUCTION

This report is an evaluation of the archaeology of the historic town centre of Walsall. It was commissioned in October 1987 by the Department of Engineering and Town Planning of Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, and undertaken by staff of the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit, under the general supervision of the writer, between 1987 and December 1988.

The report has two closely related aims. It is, first and foremost, an assessment of archaeological potential: an attempt to quantify the survival of archaeological strata within the area of the old Borough. This would be an exercise of limited value without a statement of the outstanding research questions which the archaeological evidence is potentially capable of answering. The report also, therefore, discusses the disparate sources of physical evidence, for the origins and growth of the town up to c.1700. This cut-off date should not be taken to imply that physical evidence is irrelevant to the history of the 18th-, 19th-, and 20th-century town: merely that the physical evidence for this later

period survives far more completely, intact or recorded by maps, documents, and photographs, and is not threatened with destruction to the same extent as the few surviving areas of archaeological deposits containing evidence of activities taking place in the medieval and early post-medieval periods.

METHODOLOGY AND PRESENTATION

The core of the report is divided into three sections. The first sets the town in context, by looking at the rural surroundings and the history of settlement in the area, by summarising the documentary evidence for the development of the town itself, and by examining the shape and character of the natural site on which the town was to grow.

The second section explores the cartographic evidence for the changing shape of the town from the late 17th century onwards, and, by using the geographical techniques of town plan analysis, proposes a model for the physical development of the town up to c.1700, and poses a number of research questions arising from this.

The third section examines evidence from boreholes, observations, and a programme of trial excavations, to assess the extent of the survival of buried archaeological strata: the raw material required to test and refine the model of the town's development, and to answer the many outstanding research questions. In addition, three areas within the town, of particular archaeological interest, are briefly discussed.

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH.

In 1801, Stebbing Shaw wrote of Walsall: 'Being tinged with the smoke of a manufacturing vicinity, this town has been often looked upon with ignomy and contempt; but surely without just reason, if we may judge from its present improved appearance. And, though it has

INTRODUCTION

hitherto been very imperfectly described, and little noticed, it surely deserves to be better known...(1)'. Shaw himself gave Walsall only a brief treatment in his 'History and Antiquities of Staffordshire', concentrating on the manorial and ecclesiastical aspects of the town's history. It was not until 1887 and the publication of Frederic Willmore's 'A History of Walsall and its Neighbourhood' that the town received its first detailed and thorough history, making extensive use of national and borough archives for the middle ages and later. The book also made use of the physical evidence for the early town, with descriptions of areas, buildings, and finds, and the inclusion of John Snape's town plan of 1782 (2).

A further landmark was provided by the publication of E.J. Homeshaw's 'The Corporation of the Borough and Foreign of Walsall' in 1960, though this is generally concerned with the post-medieval political development of the town. The Victoria County History's section on Walsall, published in 1976, is the most authoritative and wide-ranging account now available, describing the physical growth of the town after the middle ages, together with its political, ecclesiastical, and economic history (3). More recently, Lewis and Woods have addressed many of the same themes as Willmore and the V.C.H., while giving the modern social history of the town more attention (4). The publications of the Walsall Local Studies Centre also represent a significant advance in the study of the town's history.

Willmore was the first writer to describe the physical layout of the historic town core and to tackle some of the problems of the topographical development of the early town, notably the location of the earliest settlement and the existence of early defences on Church Hill. The same issues were raised again in a paper published by Gould in 1982/3 (5). His views of the evolution of the town are radically different to those of the mainstream writers (Willmore, V.C.H., Lewis and Woods) and will be discussed further in Part Two of this report. For now it is sufficient to note that these contributions represent the sum

total of published topographical investigation in the town.

The early buildings of the town centre have received rather more attention, though little work was done before the great watershed of the 1930s when large areas of decayed and derelict housing stock were cleared. Theses by Slater and by Susan Claxton in 1972 (6,7) dealt with the old buildings of the town from both planning and historical perspectives. A paper on timber-framed buildings with decorated plaster panels in Walsall High Street was published in 1974/5 by Penn (8). There is probably a considerable potential in the systematic study of buildings, now demolished, recorded in photographs. This line of enquiry has not been followed in this report beyond a tentative study of aspects of the buildings on Lower Rushall Street (Part 3, section 2 iii).

The recovery of archaeological evidence by scientific excavation began in the town with the excavation of two sites in the early-mid 1970s, by Stuart and Susan Wrathmell. The first of these, excavated between 1972 and 1975, was the manorial moat site, to the west of the town centre, threatened by an extension to the Manor Hospital (9). Excavation showed that agricultural activity, represented by ridge-and-furrow ploughing, had come to an end on the site by the 13th century, when several timber buildings raised on stone sills were constructed. These were replaced by the late 14th century when their remains were buried beneath upcast from the construction of the moat, after which further buildings were constructed before the eventual abandonment of the site in the early 15th century. The second site, excavated by the Wrathmells in 1975, was an urban domestic tenement on the north-west side of Lower Rushall Street (10). Here, the excavators found evidence of limestone quarrying and domestic occupation in the medieval period, followed by the construction of a timber-framed building and a limestone-rubble-walled building in the early post-medieval period. These excavations, together with the removal of late debris under archaeological control from the crypt of St. Matthew's in 1980 (11), represent the only published archaeological fieldwork to have taken place in the town prior to the 1987-8 evaluation.

PART ONE : WALSALL IN CONTEXT

1.1 THE RURAL BACKGROUND (Fig. 1)

Walsall is situated on the northern edge of the West Midlands conurbation, about eight miles north-west of Birmingham, in the southern upland region of Staffordshire. Historically, Walsall has consisted of two parts: the Borough, given a separate legal identity in the early 13th century, and the Foreign, an extensive rural area coeval with the ancient parish. Until c.1300 much of the western and northern parts of the parish lay within the jurisdiction of the royal forest of Cannock.

The parish of Walsall covered an 'L' shaped area, about six miles by four miles, the long arm running north-south, with a smaller detached portion to the north-east (not shown on fig.1). The boundaries largely followed natural watercourses. The geology of this area is dominated by boulder clay, with patches of sand or sand and gravel underlying parts of the town itself and the area to the west (occupied by the manorial deer-park), and areas of alluvial deposits around the watercourses (fig.1; 12).

While accepting that the available evidence is very limited (a product perhaps of the extent of the 19th- and 20th-century built-up area, soils unresponsive to aerial photography, and limited archaeological activity), there is no evidence that the area occupied by Walsall parish was densely occupied before the medieval period. Few finds of prehistoric material have come from within the parish, and the nearest known focus of activity is the Barr Beacon area. There have been a few finds of Roman material, mostly single finds of coins from areas to the south and east of the town centre: a coin found close to the parish church, a coin of Agrippa from the Caldmore area, a coin of Commodus and an unidentified coin from the Chuckery. A probable Iron Age and Romano-British iron bloomery site has been identified in the Coal Pool area near Rushall (13). No known Roman

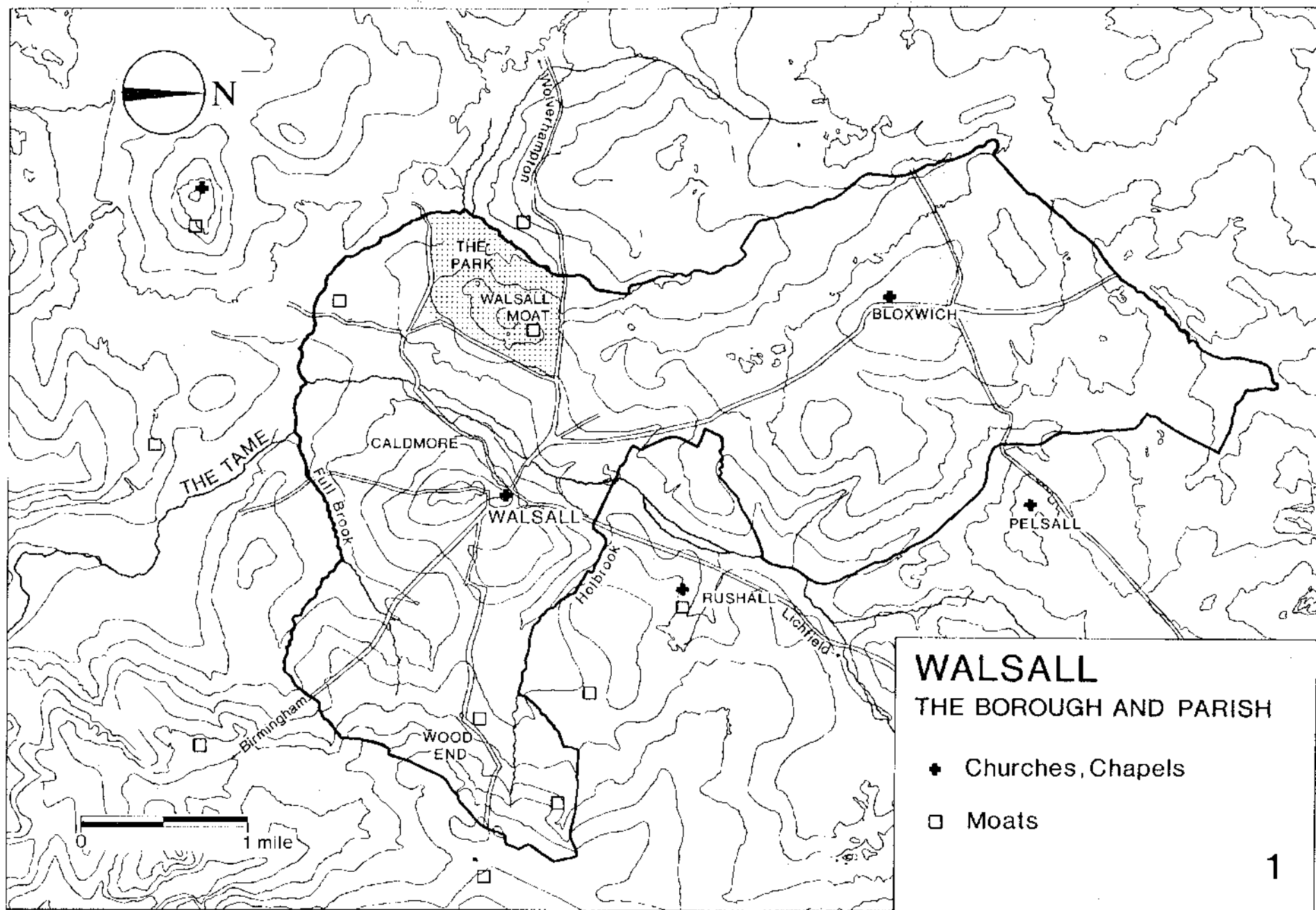
roads pass through the area, though a road known in the Anglo-Saxon period as 'alde strete' crosses the parish from south-west to north-east, through Bloxwich and Pelsall (fig.1), on its way between Lichfield and Wolverhampton (14).

The medieval town lay towards the southern end of the parish, occupying a site that straddled both sides of a shallow north-south stream valley (1.3, below). There were several subsidiary settlements within the parish. The largest of these was Bloxwich, an Anglo-Saxon place-name, recorded for the first time in Domesday Book as an area of woodland. Bloxwich and Great Bloxwich were recorded in 1300, and a chapel was built there in the early 15th century (15). Other, smaller, settlements are known by the early 14th century at Wood End and Caldmore (16).

The parish was rich in mineral resources. Coal deposits outcropped in the Coal Pool area, a mile north-west of the town at Reedswood, and immediately south-west of the town: coal was completely absent only from the south-east quarter of the parish. Ironstone was to be found between and below the coal seams. Limestone was available in outcrops or close to the surface along the eastern boundary of the parish and from Church Hill in the town centre, and from the area immediately to the north (Lower Rushall Street and the Arboretum) (17).

1.2 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: Evidence from Documents

Walsall may be identifiable with the place-name 'Walesho' recorded in a will of 1002-4 (18); the first certain record is in 1159, when Henry II granted the manor to Herbert le Rous (Ruffus), a



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WALSALL IN CONTEXT

royal official, in return for an annual fee farm of four pounds. The settlement is not recorded in Domesday Book, though there is later evidence for it having been a royal manor (19). Evidence for the developing physical and administrative structure of the settlement begins to emerge in the early 13th century. The parish church was recorded for the first time when it was granted by the Crown to the Bishop of Lichfield in 1200. In 1220, the Crown granted to William le Rous, lord of the manor, the right to hold a weekly market (on Mondays) and an annual fair (20). About fifteen years later, in the first borough charter, William granted wide-ranging exemptions from feudal customs to the burgesses who had almost certainly begun to occupy and develop the site. The burgesses paid an annual rent of 12d for their tenements (21).

The provisions of this first charter were extended by the joint lords of the now divided manor in 1309, in terms that make it clear that the new borough was, to some extent, self-governing, with its own bailiffs and a legal identity that was distinct from that of the manor (22). By 1377, there was an assembly (consilium), of twelve burgesses, with a mayor, constable, and bailiff. By c.1500, the size of this assembly had been increased to twenty five (23). There is no direct evidence for the site of these meetings in the earliest years of the town's life, though by 1426 the burgesses were meeting in the hall of the Guild of St. John, on the north side of the High Street, the site of the surviving 19th-century Guildhall. A market cross, at the top of the High Street, is known from 1386 (24).

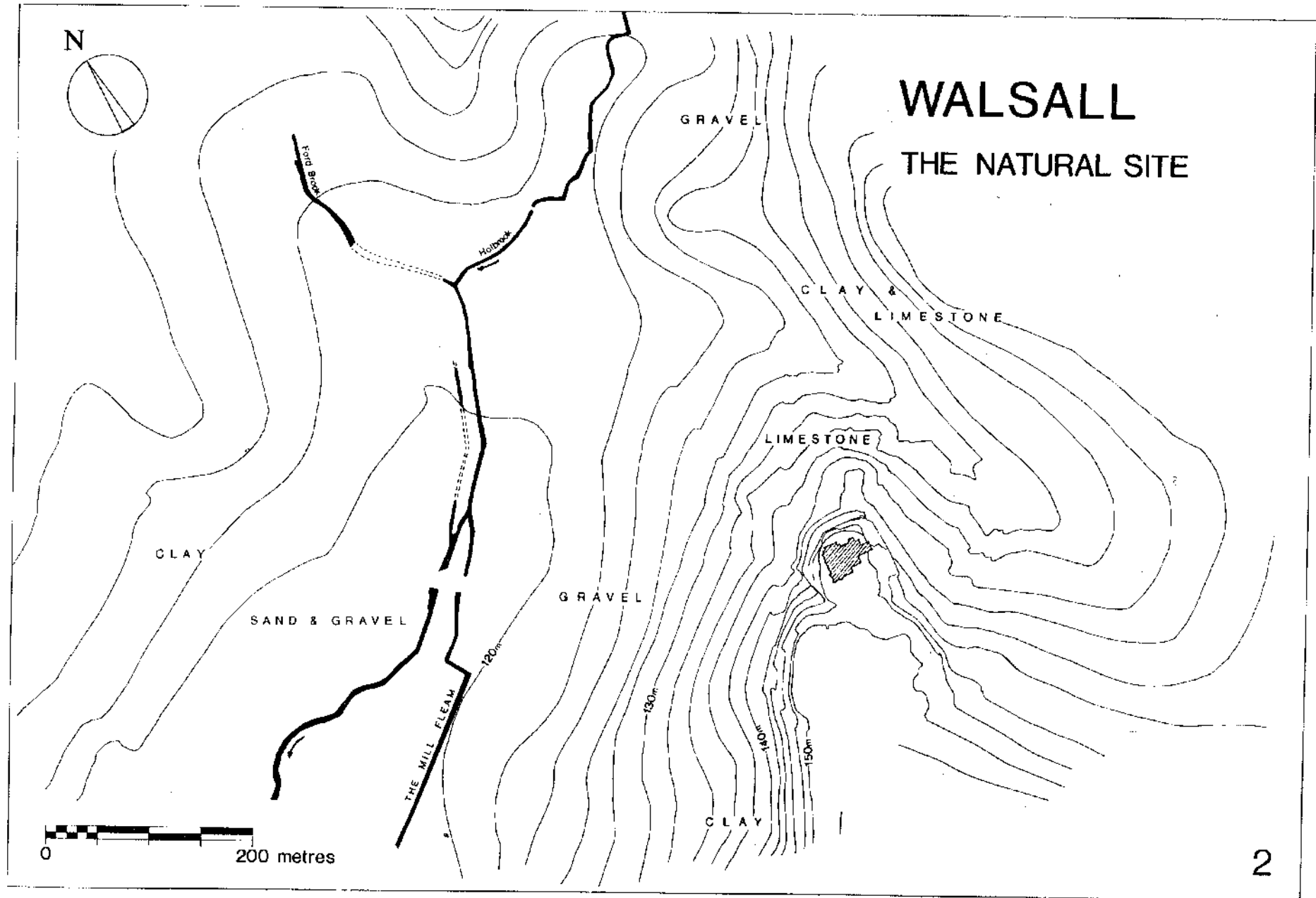
There is little evidence for the occupations followed by the burgesses as the town emerged from its rural background in the course of the 13th century, though later in the medieval period there are indications that the town was beginning to assume an industrial character. The mineral resources of the area were exploited from at least as early as the 14th century: the lords of the divided manor agreed in c.1300 to share the

profits from coal- and ironstone-mining. Extraction of iron from ironstone is recorded at Bloxwich at the same time, and there are various references after that date to the primary working of iron on rural production sites (25).

Within the Borough, there is extensive evidence for the production of metal goods, horse furniture in particular, from the later 14th century onwards. Robert Grubbere had a forge within the Borough in 1362-3; in 1377 two burgesses were admitted, one bearing the name of Sprior (spurrier), the other Brasier - possibly their occupations; lorimers are mentioned with great frequency after three were recorded in 1435. In the early 15th century (1404-5) smithies were recorded on Church Hill and Rushall Street. Pewterers are also known from the beginning of the 15th century. Leatherworking (in the form of tanning) was recorded for the first time in the 1440's (26). In 1540 Walsall was visited by Leland, who recorded the 'many smiths and bit makers in the town' (27).

Documentary evidence suggests a substantial growth in Walsall's population in the 17th century. Mollesley's Dole was a charity under the terms of which one penny was payable to each inhabitant of Walsall, and visitors, on Twelfth Night. In 1619 it was paid out to a total population of 2,861, of which 1,622 were in the borough. In 1661, the resident population stood at 4,213, of which 2,241 were in the borough. By 1700, the total of recipients stood at around 5,500 (28). The hearth tax of 1665-6 records 343 houses within the Borough: 'the most densely-packed population in the whole county (29)'.

During this period, Walsall's metal industries continued to expand. From the mid-16th century the Midlands were supplying manufactured goods to a national market. It was in the South Staffordshire coalfield that developments in the manufacturing industries were 'most rapid and most sophisticated' (30), and by the end of the 17th century, the subdivision and specialisation of manufacturing processes was highly



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WALSALL IN CONTEXT

developed. Scattered references show Midlands products being marketed as far afield as Yorkshire, East Anglia, Devon, Buckinghamshire, Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire, and Oxfordshire. Walsall pewter was sent to London, and to market towns in the region. William Nicholas of Walsall sold pewter in Northampton, Coventry, Banbury, Abingdon, Chipping Norton, Wallingford, and Hereford (31). The direction of the town's economic development over the next two centuries had clearly been determined.

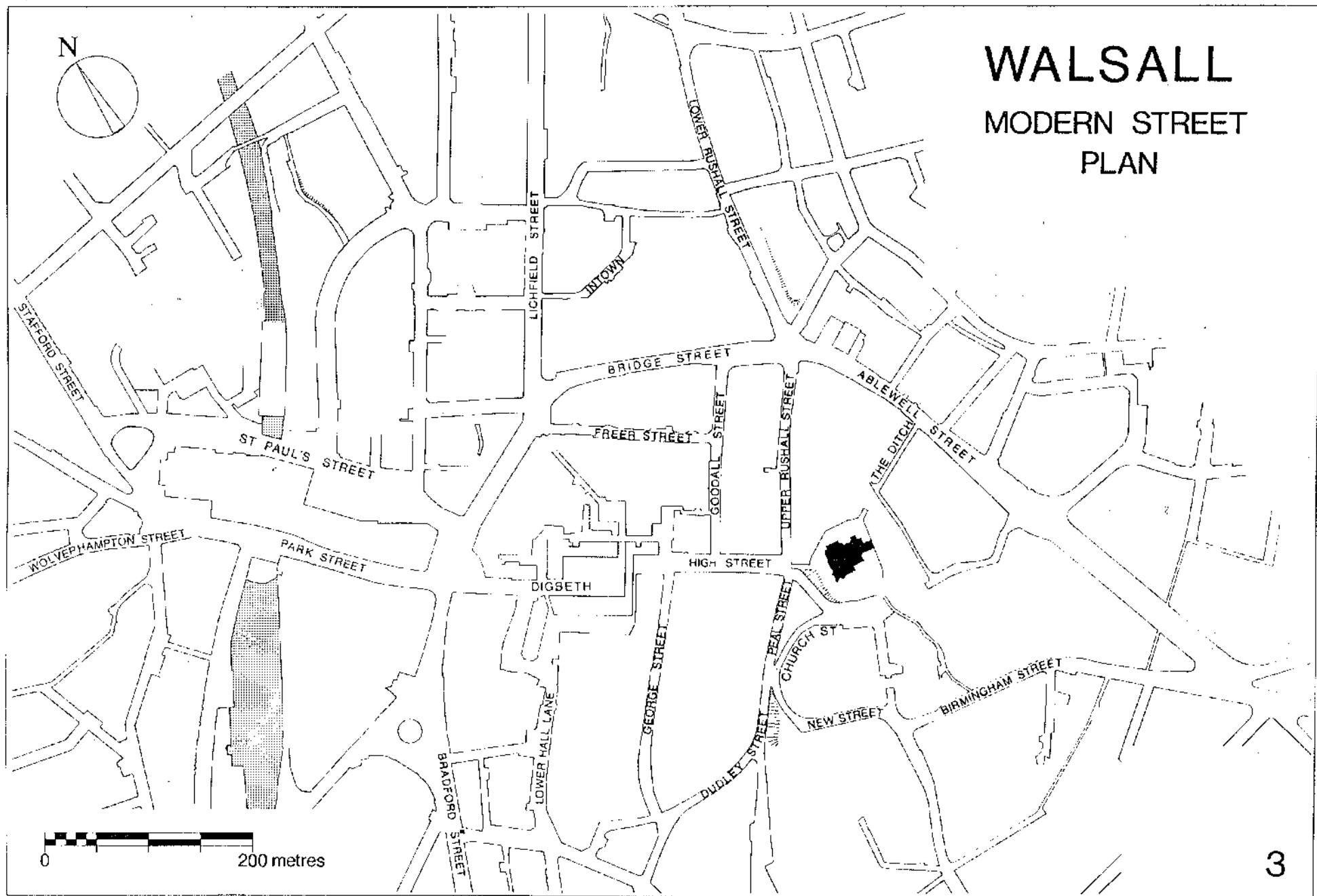
1.3 THE PHYSICAL BACKGROUND: The Site of the Town (Fig. 2)

The site of the historic core of Walsall lies in and around a shallow stream valley, running north-east to south-west, dominated by the limestone mass of Church Hill on the south-east side (see also figs. 1 and 14). Two small streams, the Ford Brook and the Holbrook unite just to the north of the town centre, to form the Walsall or Town Brook, flowing south-westwards for another mile and a half before joining the Tame. The southern slope of the valley is somewhat steeper than the northern, particularly below Church Hill, a north-facing promontory with the stream valley on one side, and a shallower defile (occupied by Ablewell Street) running northwards into the valley, on the other. The church itself stands on the tip of the promontory.

Excavations, observations, and boreholes show that the superficial geology in the area of the old town centre is fairly complex. The valley bottom around the watercourses contains waterlogged alluvial deposits. The lower slopes of each side of the valley (e.g. around the south end of Park Street, and Digbeth) consist of mixed sands and gravels. Further up the slope on the north side (the Town End area) these deposits give way to a clay subsoil. On the opposite side of the valley, Church Hill is an outcrop of Wenlock limestone lying, in

places, very close to the present ground surface. The solid limestone bedrock gives way to the north, in the Ablewell Street area, to a mixed subsoil of clay with weathered limestone fragments. To the south-west, the west flank of Church Hill in the Dudley Street area consists of a more homogeneous sticky clay (see Appendix 1).

These factors (relief, drainage, soil-type) had a considerable influence on the immediate location of the settlement. It will be argued later (3.1, below) that the choice of the promontory site for the church was significant, and that the basic core of the urban settlement founded below it was established along a pre-existing route crossing the stream valley in a north-west/south-east direction (the High Street-Park Street axis). It is likely that this route was determined by the stream-crossing, located at a point where one stream rather than two (with their alluvial deposits) had to be crossed, and where the alluvial zone was much more restricted in extent than it was further downstream where the valley floor is much broader. Beyond this, some points regarding the early road pattern on, and traffic through, the town site remain obscure. Lower Rushall Street and Ablewell Street represent a route between Lichfield and the Birmingham area, bypassing the core of the early town (see 2.2, below); traffic from the Wednesbury area would have joined this route via New Street and Birmingham Street across the top of Church Hill, (see fig. 3) but neither of these has the appearance of an early through-route.



WALSALL

MODERN STREET PLAN

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PART TWO: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN

2.1 THE POST-MEDIEVAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN PLAN.

A series of maps and some documentary evidence allow us to study the growth of the street system and the built-up area from the end of the 17th century to the present day; the modern street system is shown in fig.3.

The earliest known map of the town is a small manuscript map, dated 1679, drawn by Gregory King at a scale of 50 poles to the inch (32). There is clearly no attempt at accuracy in the modern sense and the street plan shown is wildly distorted, though recognisable. The plan shows the church, with the High Street and Park Street running west and north towards Town End, not named as such, where four routes converge. Ablewell Street and Rushall Street are shown converging to the north of the church. To the south, Peal Street and Church Street are shown as 'The hill', with Dudley Street and New Street, both labelled 'Hill top', running south-east and south-west from them. Lower Hall Lane is shown connecting Dudley Street with the High Street. Two lanes (The Ditch and Hill Street) cross Church Hill to the east of the church. A single track is shown crossing the stream to the north of the High Street/Park Street.

The extent of housing is shown by the conventional depiction of frontages. If this can be relied on (and other sources suggest that, broadly speaking, it can), the built-up area was restricted to three main areas: High Street and Park Street (inclusive of Digbeth which is not named separately), with scattered clusters of occupation around and beyond Town End to the north-west; Upper and Lower Rushall Street, and the northern section of Ablewell Street, to the north; and Peal Street, Church Street, and the north ends of Dudley Street and New Street, to the south. This pattern corresponds with what is known of the 17th-century population from the Mollesley's Dole returns. These

record a population of 516 along High Street, Park Street and Town End in 1619 (increased to 711 in 1661); of 580 in Rushall Street (increasing to 784); and a surprising density of 526 (increasing to 746) in the Church Hill/Peal Street area, a much smaller area (33). The eastern slope and the top of Church Hill are unoccupied and described as 'Church lands'. Lower Hall lane is also unoccupied. What the map leaves out is, of course, any idea of the density of building on occupied plots behind the frontages.

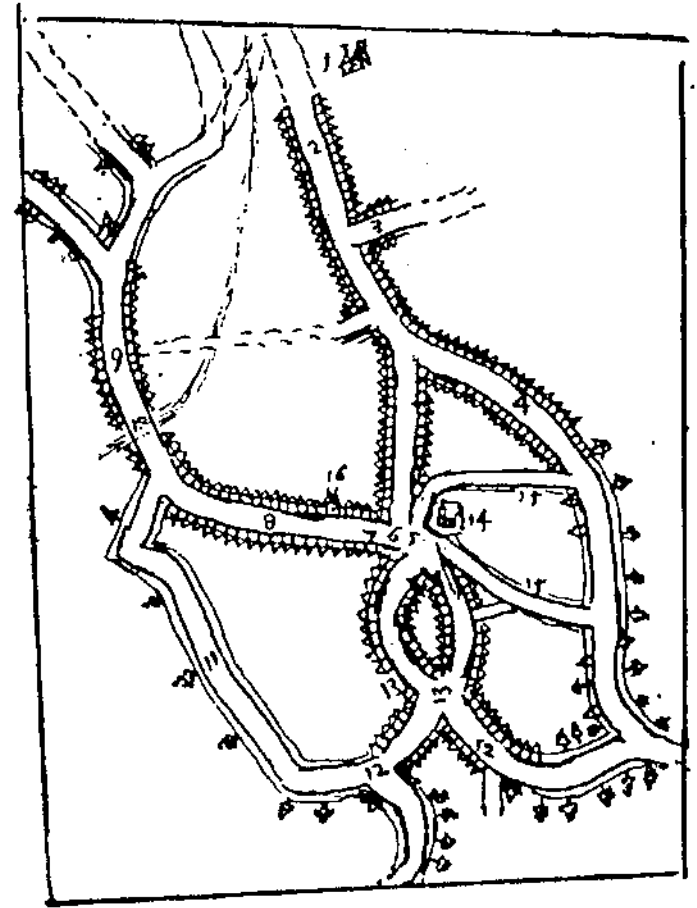
This picture of Walsall in the early post-medieval period is generally in agreement with the documentary evidence that indicates a medieval origin for most of the streets mapped in 1679. The High Street was recorded in the second borough charter of 1309 as 'alta via', with its market. Town End is probably the area described as the 'head of the town' in the same document; Ablewell Street occurs as 'Ablewellsych', and in its modern form for the first time in 1403. Rushall Street is first recorded in 1339; Peal Street appears as Hole End in 1380. Birmingham Street is not recorded until 1535, Digbeth in 1583 (34).

There is a gap of almost a century before the next surviving map of Walsall was drawn. This was a hand-drawn estate map, showing the properties of the Countess Dowager of Monrath, drawn at a scale of 4 chains to the inch in 1763 (35). Again, it is not an accurately surveyed plan, but for our purposes is useful in that it shows that there had been no additions to the street plan in the central part of the town since 1679.

By the time John Snape surveyed his plan of Walsall in 1782, two new streets had arrived (36). The first, Bridge Street, was built following an Act of Parliament in 1766. It connected the north end of Ablewell Street with The Bridge and Park Street, allowing Birmingham traffic to bypass the gradients and sharp corners of Upper Rushall Street and the High Street. The second new arrival in this period was George Street, laid out to the south of the High Street by 1770 (37).

Walsall ground plot, projected by 50 poles in an inch.

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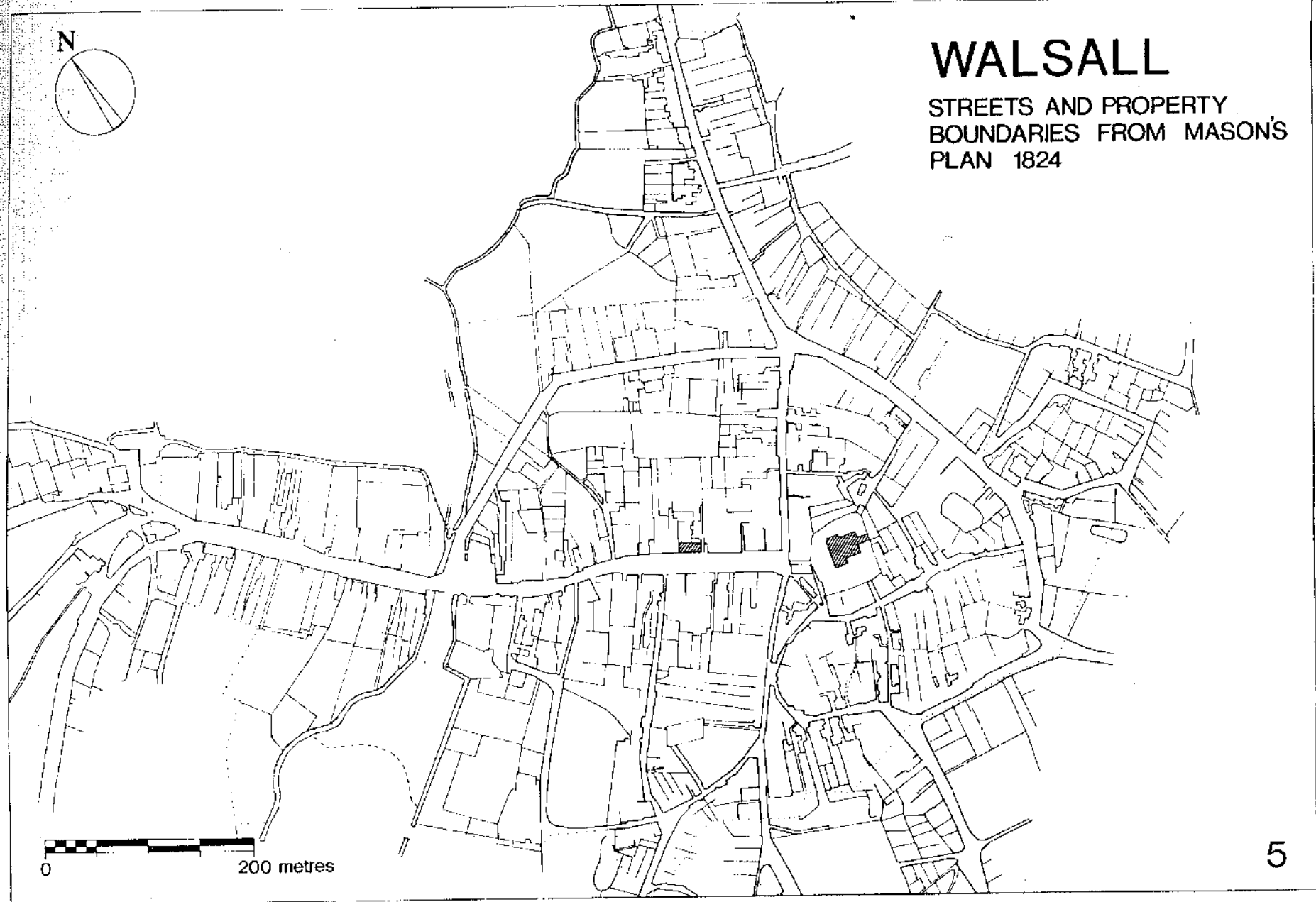


- 1 Ronalds hall
- 2 Ryphall street
- 3 Hayrif lane
- 4 Runbless street
- 5 market street
- 6 the cross or market house
- 7 the conduit
- 8 Big bath or high street
- 9 Park street
- 10 brook & bridge
- 11 Hall lane
- 12 Hill top
- 13 The hill
- 14 The Church
- 15, 15 Church lands
- 16 Town hall

WALSALL IN 1679

WALSALL

STREETS AND PROPERTY
BOUNDARIES FROM MASON'S
PLAN 1824



THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN

Thomas Mason's plan of 1824 (see fig.5; 38) shows no further additions to the landscape, though with increasingly dense settlement on the east side of Ablewell Street and to the south of Church Hill. Mason's plan is particularly significant in the level of detail that it contains. Snape's plan, although the first plan of Walsall to have been accurately surveyed, is a street plan, with shading to indicate built-up frontages. Mason's plan is generally very accurate (though it goes strangely wrong in Town End and the Lime Pit Bank area off Ablewell Street), and also shows block plans of buildings, on and behind the frontages, with a more-than-schematic attempt to show the property boundaries behind.

The first half of the 19th century saw a series of dramatic changes to the landscape of the old town centre. The St. Paul's area, to the north of Park Street, was developed in the 1820s. In 1830 Lichfield Street was built, replacing Lower Rushall Street as the principal access to the town from the north. In 1831 Bradford Street was laid out to the south of The Bridge, and around the same time Goodall Street and Freer Street were built to the north of the High Street. The construction of the railway, and the opening of the station on Park Street in 1849, followed by the improvement of The Bridge in 1851, finally shifted the town's centre of gravity away from Church Hill and determined the pattern of development into the 1960s (39).

2.2 AN ANALYSIS OF THE EARLY TOWN PLAN

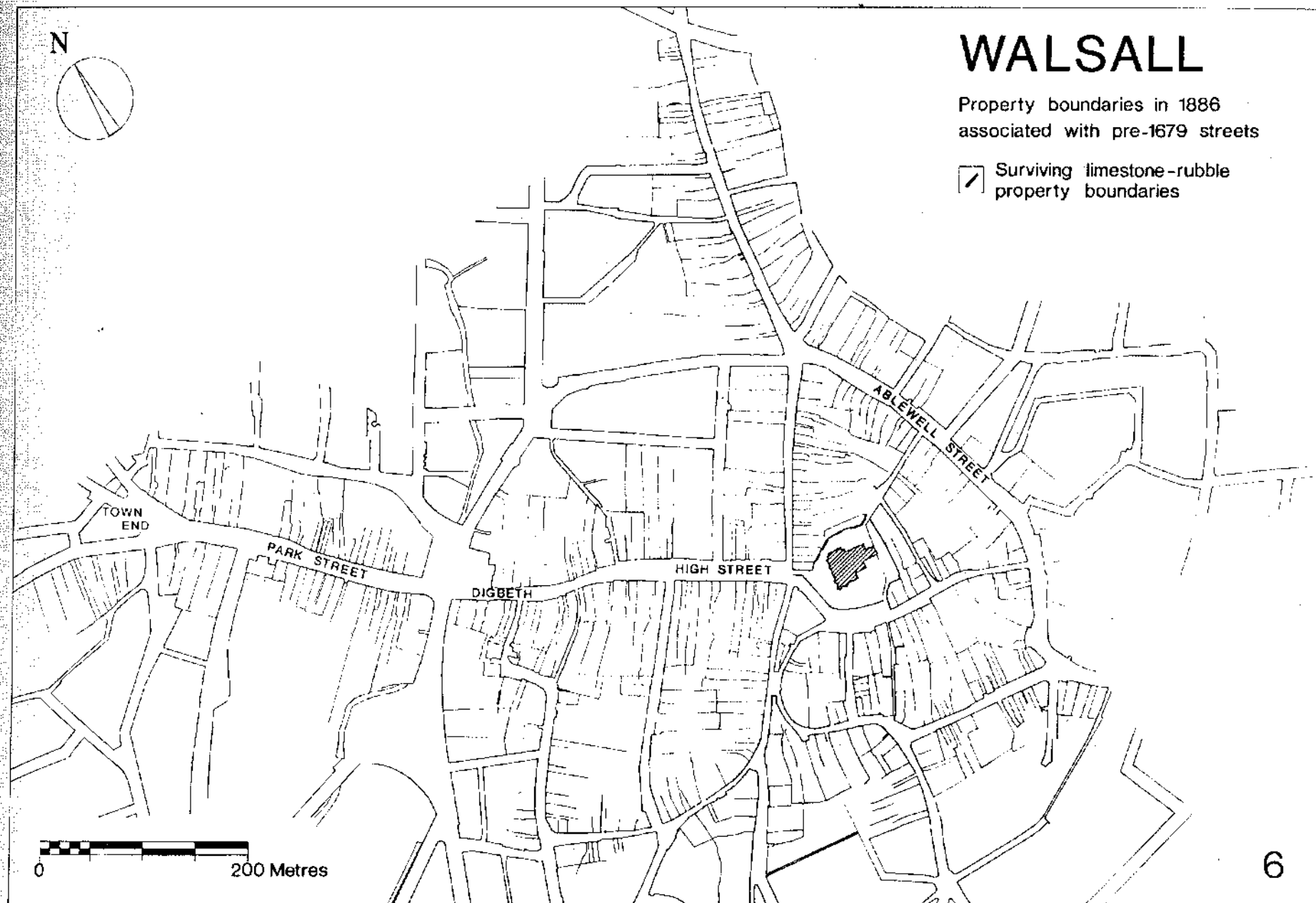
One of the most important events in the cartographic history of Walsall was the publication of the large-scale (1:500 and 1:2,500) town plan sheets by the Ordnance Survey in 1886. The 1:500 plans contain an enormous amount of detail: block plans of buildings,

outhouses, and minor structures; even street furniture (lamp-posts, pumps, doorsteps, etc.). The surveyors were working in the town at the phase in its development that would be characterised by historical geographers as the climax of the local burgage cycle: the subdivision of street-blocks into individual plots, and building coverage within the plots, had both reached a peak before the widespread slum clearance programmes in the first half of the 20th century followed local economic decline (40). What is particularly important for the early history of the town is that these large-scale Ordnance Survey sheets are the only surviving accurate and comprehensive record of the layout of ancient property boundaries.

Fig.6 shows the street pattern in the town centre as it was in 1886, together with major property boundaries, building lines, and terrace walls, associated with those streets that were in existence by 1679 (see above). It is possible to recognise broad internal divisions within the town plan where the characteristics of the plots or properties along certain streets, and the characteristics of the streets themselves, are distinct from those in adjoining areas. The clearest example of this phenomenon is the difference between the High Street and Digbeth: the High Street is a straight, wide street, lined either side by properties with straight boundaries; Digbeth, on the other hand, is a narrow serpentine street associated with curving property boundaries, at least on the south side where the pattern is better preserved. These are not arrangements that could have been imposed on a landscape that was already built up: they must represent features existing or laid out when those parts of the town were first developed. The areas within which these features are found to be uniform are what are referred to by historical geographers as 'plan units', a concept first developed by M.R.G. Conzen (41).

In Walsall, much of the evidence of this underlying structure disappeared with the slum clearance programmes. Even by 1886,

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN

features of the medieval landscape had been disrupted to a greater extent than is found in some medieval towns today. This disruption was mainly a consequence of the insertion of major new elements into the historic town centre, and the addition of elements to its immediate periphery. For example, the construction of the railway station and yards on the south side of Park Street in the 1840s obliterated a large area of the old plot pattern; similarly, the construction of Goodall Street and Freer Street obliterated parts of the plot pattern on the north side of the High Street. In addition to the insertion of these major townscape elements, the constant process of sub-dividing and re-amalgamating properties had, by the 1880s, heavily obscured the underlying medieval plot series making recognition of individual burgage-plots extremely difficult, even though some of the features and characteristics of the plot series are clear. Some of the problems can be overcome by turning to Mason's plan of 1824 (fig.5), to restore elements of the town plan destroyed by mid-Victorian streets and railways.

Proposed Plan-Units (Fig. 7)

- 1. The Churchyard.** An irregular enclosure occupying the tip of the Church Hill peninsula. The north and north-west sides overlook what is now a slope and was previously a series of terraces, below the curving churchyard wall. The east side is formed by a massive north-south terrace wall; the southern boundary is less clearly defined topographically, being at the same level as Church Street. This area will be discussed in greater detail in section 3.2.i, below.
- 2. The High Street.** A short (164m/540ft), wide (19m/c. 65ft) street, characteristic of a medieval planned market street, with rectilinear straight-sided properties either side. Mason's plan suggests straight back fence lines roughly parallel to the street, giving the plots a depth of c. 300ft. The original plot width is difficult to recover due to

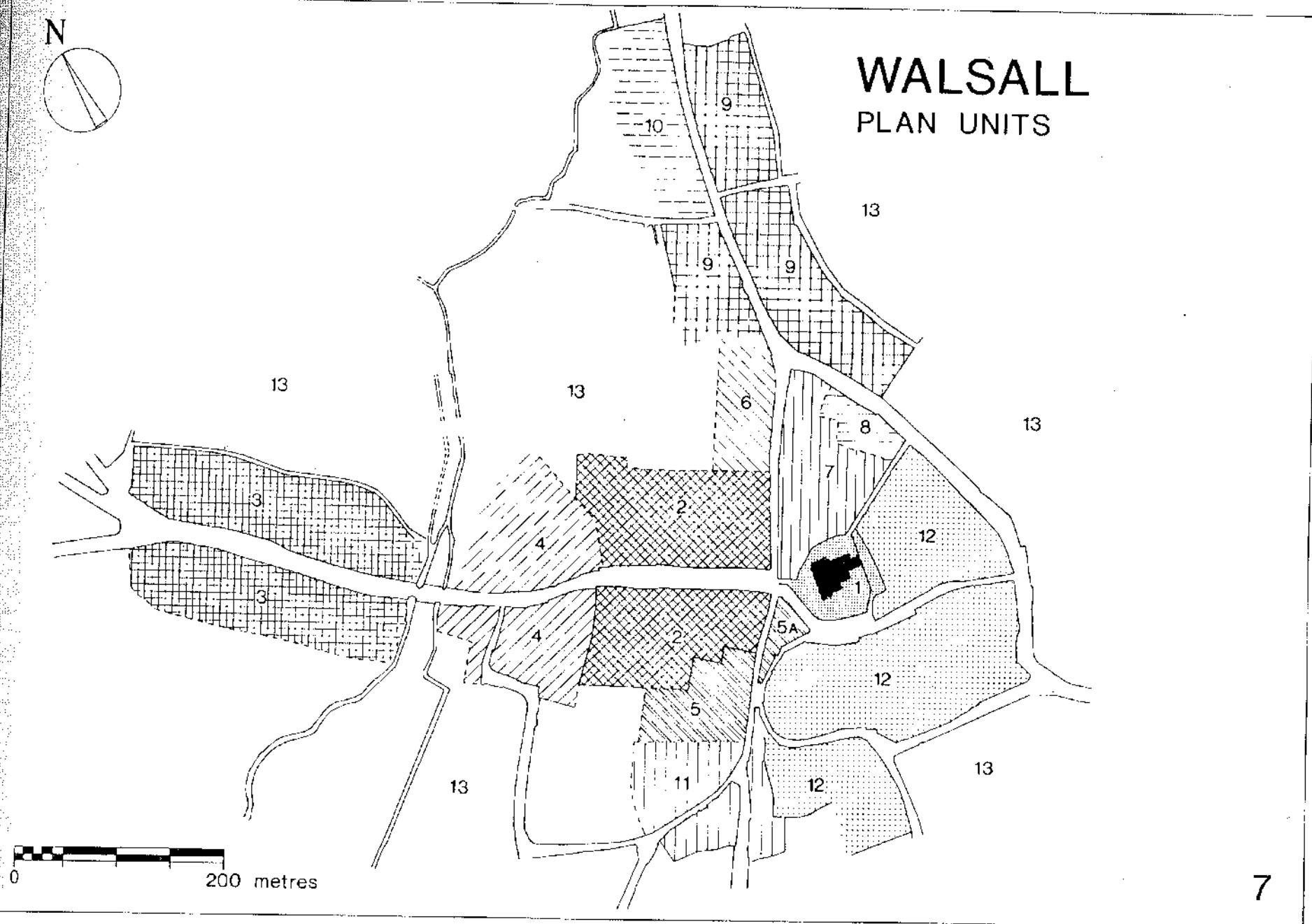
later sub-division and amalgamation. Although the Guildhall site is not recorded as such until the 15th century, its central location on the north side of the street may be significant. Fig.7 shows the plan unit to include part of the Upper Rushall Street frontage. This is based on the evidence of Mason's plan, which shows the back fence line for the properties on the north side of the High Street continuing through to Rushall Street, at which point the frontage is staggered slightly (fig.5). This suggests that High Street is the primary street. The relationship between the High Street properties and those on Peal Street is less clear. The junction between the properties on the north side of the High Street and those on Digbeth is also uncertain, as is the date of The Old Square, the alleyway dividing the two systems: it may be a purely post-medieval insertion (a short-cut to Bridge Street), it may reflect the trend of properties on the north side of Digbeth (see below). In summary, the High Street plan unit appears to represent a regularly planned market settlement, consisting of a market street with contemporary burgage properties; it is uncertain whether the Guildhall site was a primary feature of this layout.

- 3. Park Street.** Another wide (18-21m/c. 60-70ft) street, associated with plots with generally straight boundaries. The plot series on the north side of Park Street was bounded by a rear service lane, redeveloped in the 19th century as St. Paul's Street; the pattern on the south side was largely obliterated by the railway yards, but Mason's plan (fig.5) suggests that the plots terminated along a straight back fence line about 220ft from, and parallel to, the frontage. Mason's plan also shows a number of property boundaries at the south-east end continuing across the back fence line to the stream. One of these curves strongly westwards, but this anomaly may be the product of inaccurate surveying: the same boundary is identifiable from the Ordnance Survey, where it appears more regular; moreover, Mason's surveying at the north-west end of Park Street is demonstrably

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WALSALL PLAN UNITS



THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN

defective. Park Street seems likely to represent another major planned element in the town: a widened street with burgage properties either side subject to a degree of regular planning: provision of a rear service lane on one side, straight, parallel back fence line on the other.

In a recent paper, Gould suggested that the focus of a number of roads on Town End, rather than at the stream-crossing, suggests that this area was an early settlement nucleus, possibly of pre-Conquest origin (42). If, however, it is accepted that Park Street represents a major planned area, this would provide a likely if less exciting explanation for the road-pattern. The roads focus on/diverge from the end of a planned thoroughfare, perhaps having been re-routed from a junction nearer to the valley-bottom: the most likely site for this is about half-way down Park Street, where there is a noticeable kink in the northern frontage (represented by No.50 Park Street, now W.H.Smith's). Parallels for the divergence of routes at the ends of re-planned thoroughfares can be found at the end of Abbey Foregate in Shrewsbury, and Lowesmoor in Worcester. The roads diverging from Town End give access to the town from the Wolverhampton area, and the northern parts of the parish (the Bloxwich area).

4. Digbeth. Before re-planning in the 1960s, this was a winding street noticeably narrower than the adjoining High Street. To the south, the property boundaries, Lower Hall Lane, and the alley known as Adam's Row, were all S-shaped, and almost certainly reflected part of an aratral curve of medieval agricultural boundaries. This pattern continued on the other, south-west, side of Lower Hall Lane (see fig. 6), suggesting that this lane was a secondary development over a former open field. The pattern on the north side of the street is confused by the expansion of the buildings making up the George Hotel, and while properties in the centre of the north side appear to have had straight boundaries, those at the High Street end seem to have been curved. There is insufficient evidence to judge whether the characteristics of the

properties on each side of the street were sufficiently similar to justify the inclusion of both sides of the street within the same plan unit; the north side has, however, been tentatively included on the summary plan.

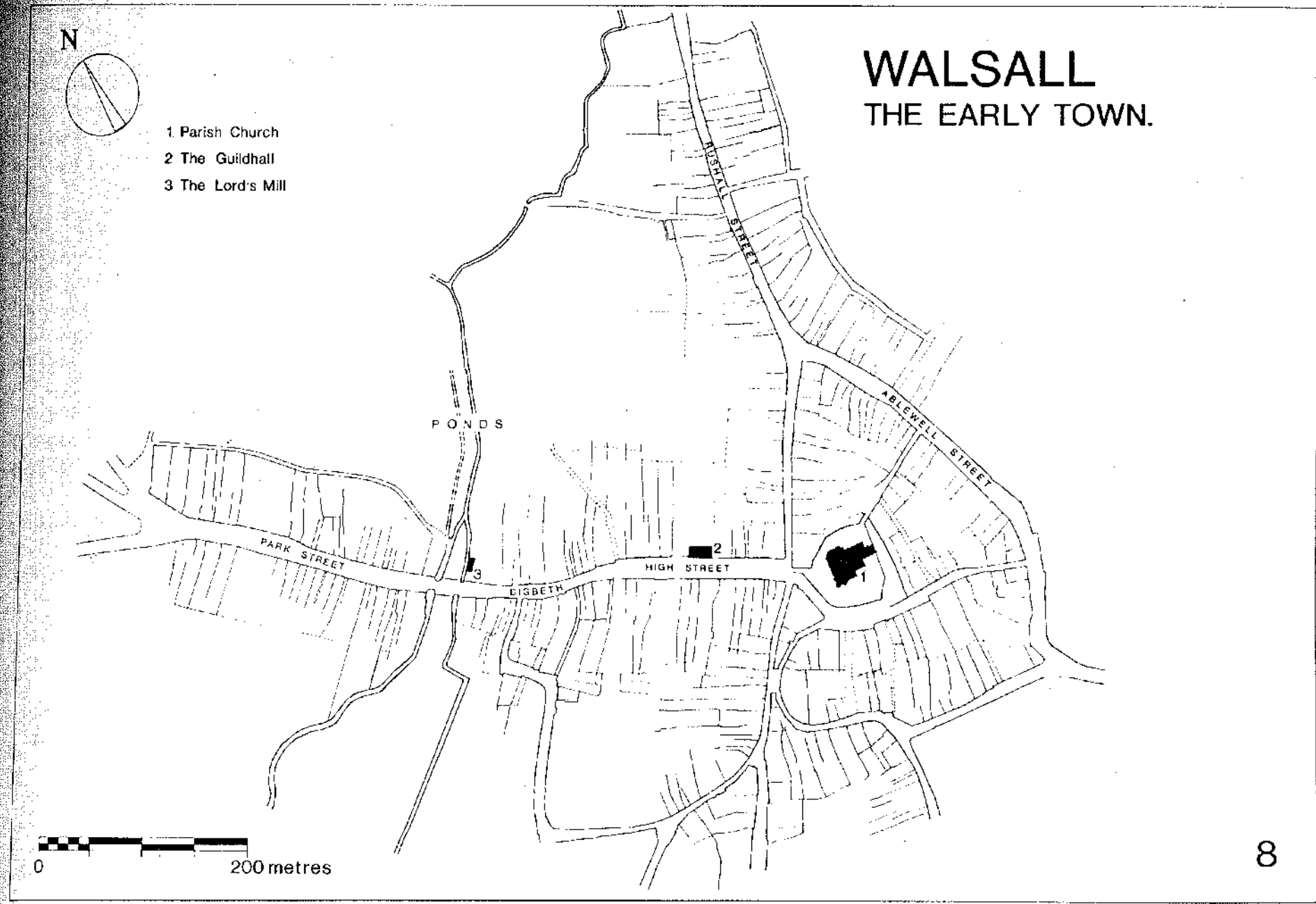
Digbeth appears to represent an 'unimproved' section of the cross-valley routeway that was widened and straightened to the south-east for the High Street, and on the opposite bank for Park Street. Construction of buildings on the south side appears to have fossilised a pre-existing pattern of agricultural boundaries.

The street name has been interpreted as a derivation of 'dyke-path' (43), which is appropriate to its valley-bottom location, a situation identical to Digbeth in Birmingham.

5 and 5A. Peal Street, Church Street, and Dudley Street (north).

The north-west side of Peal Street was characterised by exceptionally long, thin properties (up to 8:1) stretching down the slope as far as the post-medieval George Street. Some were laterally divided mid-way between the two streets. This plan unit dovetails into the High Street plan unit to the north-east: the rear of several of the Peal Street plots appear to have been laid out at the expense of the rear parts of some of the High Street plots. There is no clear chronological relationship here between the two plan units, although the High Street was clearly the primary street in the commercial sense. They may have been contemporary. On the opposite side of Peal Street stands the small triangular block of land bounded by Peal and Church Streets, and Church Hill, occupying a steep north-facing slope. This small piece of ground was characterised by tiny, heavily-terraced properties. Settlement here probably represents the infilling of a small piece of open ground, on a very steep gradient, within the triangular road junction. To the north-east it was separated from the churchyard by Church Hill, a thoroughfare that was encroached on and almost blocked in 1824 (fig. 5), but open in 1886 (fig. 6). The 1679 plan gives the impression that it was an open thoroughfare at the

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WALSALL

THE EARLY TOWN.

- 1 Parish Church
- 2 The Guildhall
- 3 The Lord's Mill

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN

date (fig. 4). Before the 19th century, Peal Street and Dudley Street gave access to the Dudley area, Wednesbury, and West Bromwich.

6. Upper Rushall Street (north-west side). The construction of Bridge Street in the 18th century, and Goodall Street in the early 19th, make any assessment of the likely characteristics of the early plot pattern in this area difficult. Mason's plan (fig.5) suggests that the southern half of this side of the street was occupied, initially, by the last plot on the north side of the High Street (see plan unit 2, above). To the north, the same plan shows a group of probably five properties, straight sided, at right-angles to the street, terminating against a common back fence line about 55m from, and parallel to, the frontage (the line later taken by Goodall Street), suggesting settlement secondary in date to the High Street, subject to a degree of regularity in planning. The straightness of the street, and its layout at right-angles to the High Street could be indicators that, as a road, it was laid out at the same time as the High Street, even though, as suggested above, settlement on it seems to have been secondary.

7. Upper Rushall Street (south-east side). This area was characterised by heavy terracing on the north-facing slope of Church Hill, and by a series of properties with irregular, contour-influenced boundaries. Upper Rushall Street and Lower Rushall Street represent the pre-19th-century access to the north and to Lichfield.

8. Ablewell Street (south-west side). An area consisting of two groups of curved plots, now occupying a series of terraces cut into the eastern slope of Church Hill. It is possible to speculate that these properties were laid out at a later date than those on the east side of Upper Rushall Street (plan unit 7, above): the curved shape of these plots probably results from a need to provide boundaries perpendicular to the street, close to the frontage (to accommodate buildings more easily), while further back from the frontage, the boundaries take their alignment

from the back-fences, parallel to Upper Rushall Street, of pre-existing properties. Of all the plan units in the historic centre of Walsall, the plot pattern of this one is the best preserved, having been subjected neither to clearance nor amalgamation and redevelopment. Recent non-archaeological trial excavation revealed a section of limestone-rubble wall in the back fence line (see section 3.2.iii, below).

9. Ablewell Street (north) and Lower Rushall Street. In the 1880s, when the Ordnance Survey sheets were published, this area had escaped the intensive subdivision of plots that had affected the more central parts of the town; as a consequence, the general features of the plot pattern in this area are clear. The pattern survived on the east side of Lower Rushall Street until the slum clearances of the 1930s; the pattern on the west side has been subject to a slower process of erosion, though some ancient boundaries still survive to the south of Intown Row. Most of Lower Rushall Street was characterised by a distinctive herringbone-pattern of plots at an angle to the street frontage. It could be argued that this was a result of the fossilisation of agricultural boundaries. However, it is perhaps more likely that this configuration arose from the laying out of plots with their side boundaries parallel to those already established on the west side of Upper Rushall Street (plan unit 6) and those on the east side of Ablewell Street; as the side boundaries of the new plots neared the street they were given an angle, to bring them perpendicular to the frontage, to facilitate the construction of buildings with a not-too-irregular plan.

On the east side of the street, the plots appear to have been laid out within two parcels of land, (separated by Holtshill Lane, about half-way along Lower Rushall Street), with access-lanes at the rear (partly encroached-on by some of the plots: see fig. 6). Although the plot-pattern here has now virtually disappeared, the lanes survive as Dog Kennel Lane, Balls Hill and Balls Street. On the west side of Lower Rushall Street, the configuration of the rear of the plots was obscured

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN

19th century apart from a short length of back fence-line common to several plots to the south of Intown Row, but there is no sign of an access. The provision of a rear service lane for the plots on the east side of the street, and not those on the west, may reflect functional considerations, a point that will be returned to in the discussion section below. The homogeneity of the plot-pattern and the provision of service lanes suggest that this area represents a major northward extension of the medieval town subject to a degree of regular planning (see also 3.2.iii).

10. Lower Rushall Street (north-west). By 1886, this area was a mixture of housing and medium-scale industrial premises (tanning, saddlery and a foundry), and presented an incoherent plot-pattern (fig. 6). In 1824, housing and tanneries occupied a series of sub-divisions of large parcels of land stretching from the frontage westwards to the Holbrook (fig. 5). This pattern is not inherently datable, but presents no medieval characteristics. It may have been a post-medieval imposition over a former part of the medieval layout described above (plan unit 9).

11. Dudley Street (south). This area was characterised by generally short, irregular properties accommodating the curve of the road on the north side, and the road-fork on the south side, and may reflect piecemeal development southwards from Peal Street.

12. Church Hill, New Street, Birmingham Street. This area covers almost the whole of Church Hill to the east and south of the parish church, including several streets and a variety of gradients. By the 1880s, occupation in this area was relatively dense, mostly at the domestic level with housing in courts and yards behind the frontages. There was some larger-scale industrial activity, mainly on the west side of Ablewell Street, of which the largest was the Alpha Tube Works, opposite the east end of the church, occupying the site of a former limestone quarry. Underlying the occupation recorded by the

Ordnance Survey, the general trend of the plot-pattern is clear: very large properties, rectilinear or irregular in outline, depending on the local topography. For example, the ground between Hill Street (running east-west, immediately south of the church) and Birmingham Street was divided into a number of large parcels with boundaries generally running from one street to the other, squarish in shape at the Peal Street end, narrow and rectilinear in the middle, and irregularly divided to give large corner plots at the Ablewell Street end. The pattern on the south and west sides of New Street was different, with slightly curved, contour-influenced boundaries, the westernmost boundary being a substantial terrace. Alone amongst the streets in this area, Birmingham Street is straight for all of its length, hinting, perhaps, at a planned origin. However, these areas are, with the exception of the west end of New Street, shown as unoccupied on the 1679 map (fig.4), where they are described as 'Church Lands'. There is nothing from the plan evidence alone to distinguish those areas that were occupied by 1679 from those that were still vacant, with the possible exception of the south side of New Street, referred to above. It may be, therefore, that the underlying plot pattern is one that pre-dates the expansion of housing into this area: it may reflect a series of closes or small fields subject to the gradual expansion of the built-up area in the early post-medieval period. John Snape's map shows all frontages north of Birmingham Street fully built up by 1782.

13. 18th-century and later developments. The surrounding areas, composed of a large number of plan units added to the town after c.1700, lie beyond the scope of this report; the sequence of development around the early town core has been described above (Part 2, section 1).

The extent and layout of the medieval and early modern town, comprising plan units 1-13, is shown, with later elements removed, in fig. 8.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN

2.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EARLY TOWN.

The earliest urban element visible in the town plan is almost certainly the High Street, a methodically-planned market settlement, laid out below the church on the line of a pre-existing road across the valley, probably by William le Rous, the lord of the manor. This settlement probably dates to c.1200-1220, around the time of the market grant to William (1220), somewhat earlier than the first borough charter, probably of the 1230s, granting exemptions to burgesses who seem already to have been established on the site. Expansion thereafter proceeded north-westwards, with the laying-out of the Park Street area, southwards along Peal Street and Dudley Street, and north-eastwards into Upper Rushall Street and Ablewell Street, and Lower Rushall Street.

The processes by which this growth took place seem to have been varied. The concept of 'planned' townscape elements on the one hand, and 'unplanned' on the other, is not adequate to describe the variations in the layout of the plan units seen in Walsall. The extremes are there, in High Street and Digbeth (though even the features of Digbeth must be the expression of formal decisions in an owned landscape). Between these two, it can be argued, lie a number of degrees of 'planning': from the probable re-routing and widening of Park Street, provided with a service lane on one side; the provision of a rear service lane to new properties on the apparently unimproved Lower Rushall Street; to the rectilinearity of the properties on the north-west side of Upper Rushall Street. Two major elements are missing in our evidence for the degree of 'planning' in the early growth of Walsall. First, the evidence of metrology: the identification of the original units of measurement used by the medieval surveyors laying out new properties. The application of metrology to plan analysis, to help distinguish phases

in urban growth, is highly developed (44), but in this case the essential raw materials are missing, as measurements taken from even the 1:500 town plans are not sufficiently accurate, and the boundaries themselves are, generally, no longer extant. Secondly, the 'plan units' are, of course, not just convenient analytical concepts, they are real, large-scale features of the landscape, and imply a level of investment in it. One element of this investment is the need for and cost of preparation of an area for settlement (the groundworks), not only through re-planning, widening, or creating roads, but through processes like terracing on gradients and reclamation of low-lying ground. These processes are recoverable, and dateable, with archaeological techniques, though the application of these in Walsall to-date has been very limited (but see section 3.2.iii).

The chronology of the early growth of the town is very uncertain. Plan analysis is able to suggest a relative chronology for the plan units in the northern part of the town, with settlement on Upper Rushall Street following the laying-out of the High Street, and followed by settlement on the south side of Ablewell Street; these, in turn, followed by settlement on Lower Rushall Street. The relationships between the elements in the southern part of the town are less certain. There are also some similarities between Park Street and Lower Rushall Street that could be used to argue that these areas were both 'planned', laid out for urban settlement, at a similar period, though the same evidence could also be used to support an argument around similar provisions for differential land-use: both streets had tenements on the up-slope side bounded to the rear by a service lane. The tenements on the other side of each street ended at a back fence-line, though there may have been some provision for access to the watercourses that lay beyond.

While it may be possible to establish a relative chronology of settlement for some areas, the establishment of a fixed chronology — the actual date at which these later elements were established — is

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN

more difficult. On general historical grounds, it could be argued that the creation of major planned elements would have been unlikely, within the medieval period, after the economic and demographic problems of the mid-14th century; if this were the case, then the pattern of boundaries and the extent of settlement implied by fig.8, was a product of little more than a century of urban growth. This is, however, far from certain, and it could equally be argued that major elements in the town plan could be the product of later medieval urban growth associated with early industrialisation. More data is required. The published documentary evidence is not much help, and though further research might locate medieval deeds or other documents that would provide evidence for the character of areas in the town in the later middle ages, evidence for the establishment of individual streets or of housing on them, is unlikely to be forthcoming. Towards the end of the period with which this report is concerned, a manorial survey of 1576 records 48 burgage tenements in High Street and Park Street (Digbeth is not mentioned: there is no evidence to decide whether this is because it was unoccupied, or because it was not distinguished from the adjoining streets), 54 in Rushall Street (Upper and Lower not distinguished) and 35 in Hole End (the Peal Street/Dudley Street area) (45).

The problem of early land-use is equally intractable. It is clear that, by the 15th century, the metal trades were firmly established (see Part 1 section 2, above), but their location, and the distribution of other activities, is not clear — at least not from the published sources. Homeshaw, for the end of the period, saw the metal trades as concentrated in Rushall Street, Hole End, and the Church Hill area, with the High Street mainly reserved for 'drapers, mercers, grocers, butchers, lawyers, and innkeepers' (46). Whether this pattern was established in the earliest years of the town's growth is not known.

Finally, one comes to the problem of the pre-urban origins of Walsall. With the exception of Gould, all writers on Walsall have regarded the

parish church, on its hilltop site, as the most likely focus of early settlement. Although the church itself is not recorded until 1200, and no surviving elements of its fabric are earlier than the 13th century, the siting of the church suggests that its origins may be considerably more ancient, and its original dedication to All Saints is not incompatible with this. The hill-top site invites comparison with Wednesbury and Wolverhampton (47). The former is a potentially early church sited within a suspected Iron Age hillfort, the latter is a known early minster, of 10th-century or even earlier origin (48). The church at Wolverhampton bears a particularly close topographical resemblance to Walsall: it is sited on the tip of a north-facing promontory. It is likely that the Wolverhampton site was defended, either by a complex earthwork enclosure around the hill-top, as one writer has argued (49), or by a simpler ditch (and presumably bank) dug across the narrowest point of the neck of the peninsula to the south of the church (50). A ditch in this position has now been located by excavation (51).

Most writers have followed Willmore's suggestion that Church Hill in Walsall is likely to have been defended, was possibly the site of an Iron Age hillfort, and that the street name 'The Ditch' is a reflection of this. There is, unfortunately, no topographical or archaeological evidence with which to confirm or refute this argument. Elements in the large-scale town plans that might appear to suggest defensive features (on Church Hill and in other areas) can all be more easily explained as the products of more mundane activities, particularly terracing. Further, three trial-trenches on the north-eastern slopes of Church Hill, although in some respects inconclusive, failed to reveal any evidence of defensive features, despite being located at potentially significant points (on breaks-in-slope, major terrace-lines, a major property boundary; see section 3.1 and Appendix 1, sites 12, 13, and 14). However, the contour map (fig.2) reveals two indentations in the contours either side of the peninsula to the south of the church:

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN

immediately to the south, the line of Church Hill and Hill Street, and c.100 metres further south, the line of New Street and Birmingham Street. Either of these points could simply be the result of a 'hollow-way' effect of roads carving defiles into the slope; either of these points could be the location for a defensive line cutting off the peninsula, paralleling the situation at Wolverhampton. Lastly, the moated manorial site excavated in the 1970s outside the town to the west was a new creation of the 13th century (52). There is likely to have been a manorial hall somewhere in the area before this date, and in the absence of any other evidence, the most frequently-paralleled location would be in the vicinity of the church. It must be emphasised that this is mere speculation, and that the pre-urban origins of Walsall are as obscure now as they were to Frederic Willmore, and will remain so until further archaeological evidence is forthcoming.

To conclude, from the analysis of evidence contained largely in a series of historic maps, a model has been proposed for the urban origins of the town and for its subsequent growth. The question now arises, are the archaeological resources available, not only to test and refine this model, but to throw light on the chronology of urban growth, the processes by which it took place, and the activities that it actually represented?

PART THREE: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

3.1 THE TOWN AS AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE.

The prediction of the occurrence or absence of archaeological deposits (stratified deposits of soil and debris containing building remains and objects in a relatively undisturbed state) in towns can never be a precise science, given the possibility that ground conditions may be subject to intense local variability. Nevertheless, it is possible to arrive at a generalised picture of a town, or of an area within it, given three principal types of information. These are: first, actual observations of the depth and character of the man-made deposits ('made-ground') below the present surface; secondly, knowledge of the morphological characteristics of the natural site, which will determine some of the processes affecting the made-ground deposited on it (accumulation, erosion, waterlogging) (see section 1.3 above); thirdly, the characteristics of the built environment later than the period considered to be of interest, to assess the damage that this has caused, through terracing, cellaring, and foundations, to the earlier deposits, where they have formed.

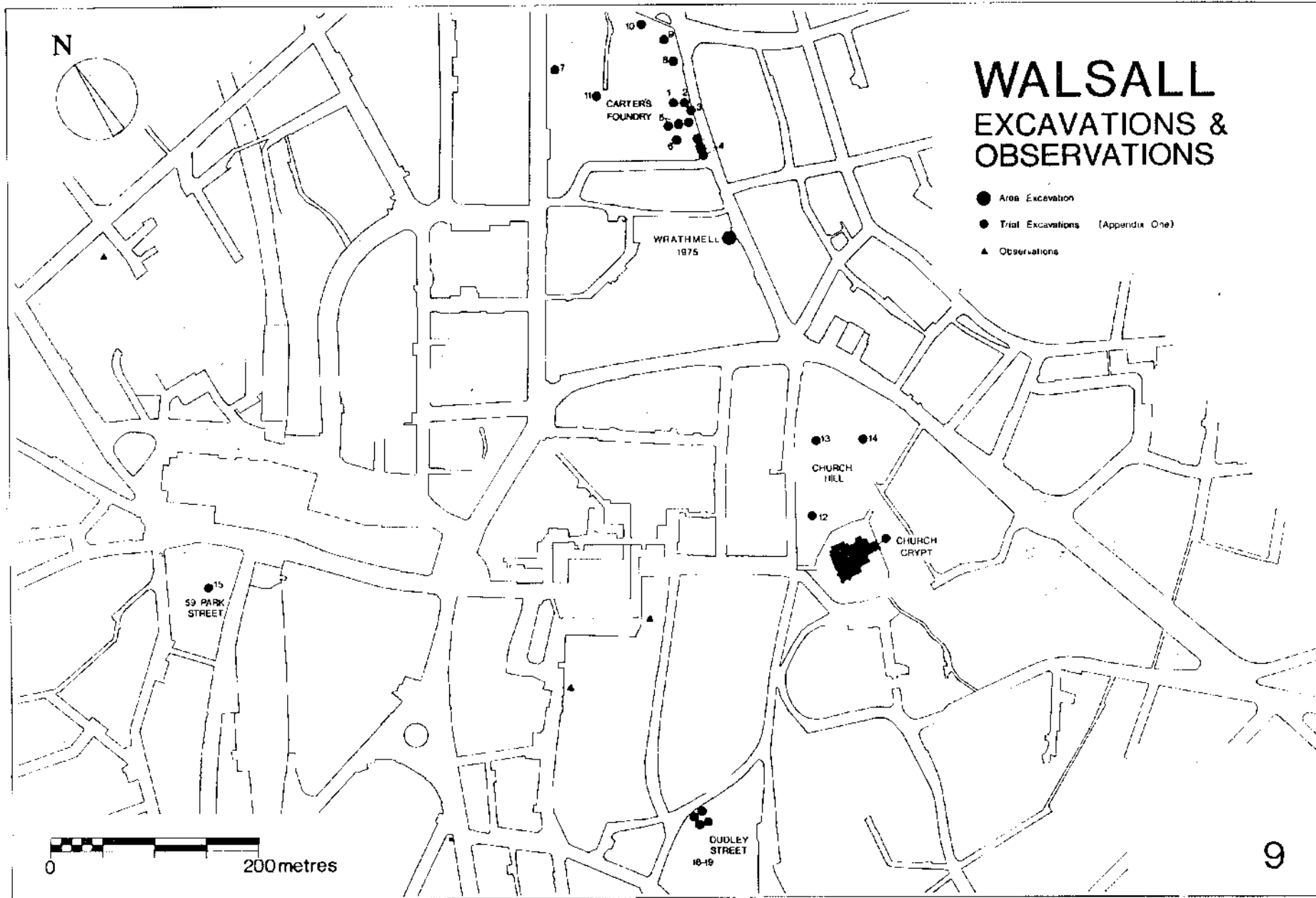
i. Deposits (Figs. 9 and 10).

A programme of trial excavations was conducted, as part of this report, on sites in Dudley Street, Park Street, and on Church Hill, between Upper Rushall Street and Ablewell Street. In addition, further trial excavations were conducted under a separate contract on Lower Rushall Street (for the location of sites, see fig.9; for trench-by-trench results, see Appendix 1). Four trenches at 63-7 Dudley Street (sites 16-19) contacted the natural clay subsoil buried only c. 0.5m below the cleared ground surface by a mixed topsoil-like deposit containing 19th-century material. Further north-east along the same side of the valley, two of the Church Hill trenches (sites 12 and 13) found

an essentially similar picture. At site 12, the natural limestone bedrock lay within c.0.3m of the present surface, sealed by 19th-century material, except where it had been cut by a very large negative feature, possibly a quarry pit (see fig.17, Appendix 1). At site 13 the natural subsoil (clay) was sealed by less than one metre of 19th-century deposits. Site 14, at the rear of properties on Ablewell Street, produced a more complex result. Natural clay was contacted at a depth of 1.7m, sealed by 'fairly sterile stoney layers' of uncertain origin; further north, the natural was sealed by a great depth of material representing the filling-in and moving-outwards of a terrace.

On the opposite side of the valley, to the rear of No.59 Park Street (site 15), a homogeneous deposit of dark soil 1.3m deep was encountered, overlying natural clay. The top of this deposit contained 19th-century material, but at the base a number of sherds of medieval pottery were recovered. The investigation of the Carter's Foundry (previously the Britannia Foundry) site on the west side of Lower Rushall Street showed a variety of ground conditions (sites 1-11). Excavation at the north end of the site away from the frontage found a build-up of garden soils towards the stream at the base of the slope (site 10), but no pre-19th-century material. The Lower Rushall Street frontage area was found to have been subjected to severe 19th-century and later disturbance along the length of the site. The excavations were able to identify one area with a high archaeological potential, where the slope towards the stream had been buried and probably protected from disturbance under a large 19th-century terrace whose revetment walls contained section of a limestone-rubble building (site 1) and property boundary. As this area has subsequently been destroyed, this observation is only of use as a pointer to likely conditions elsewhere on the street and in other parts of the town.

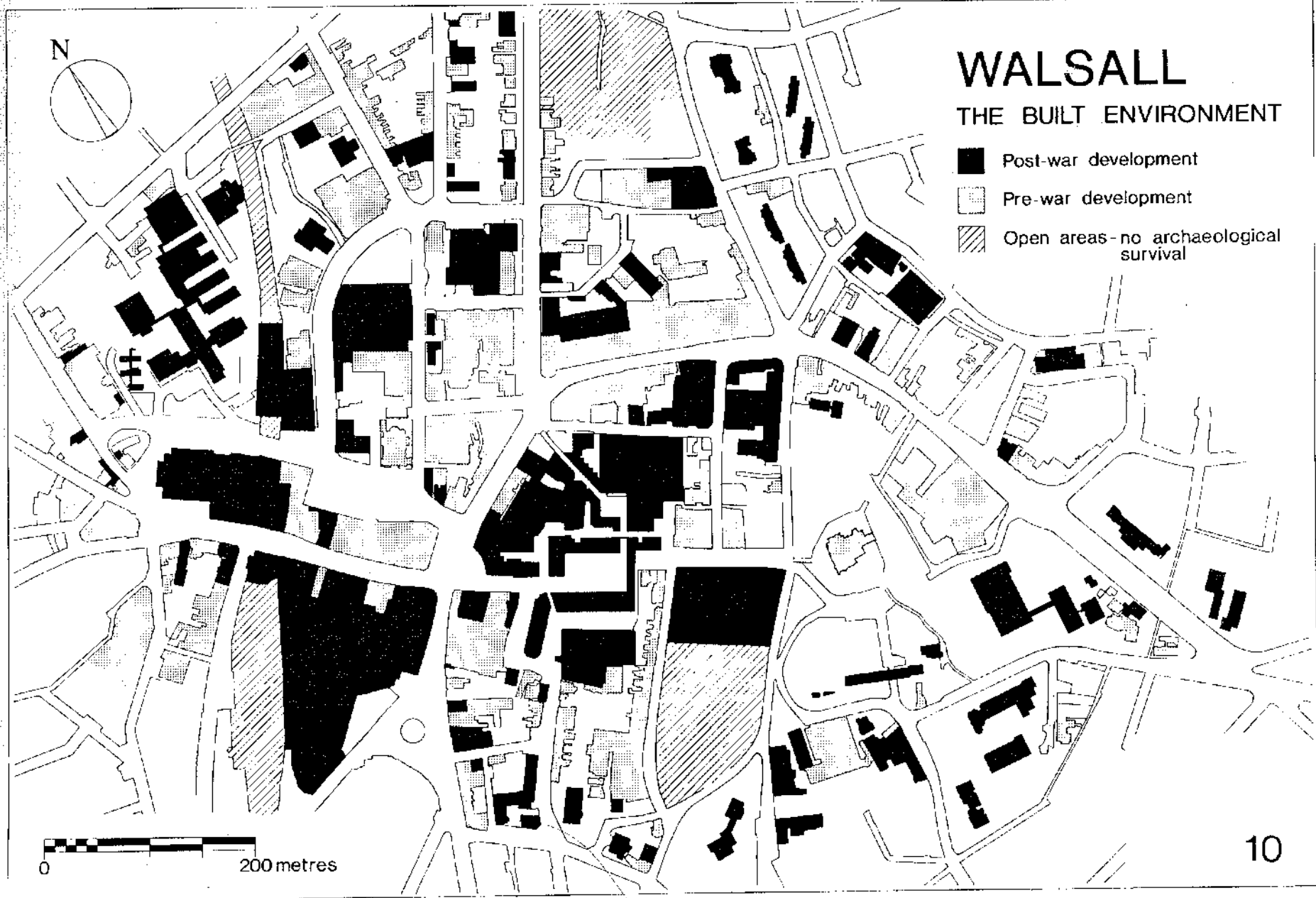
The records of over one hundred boreholes, held by the Department of Engineering and Town Planning, were examined. The great majority



WALSALL

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Post-war development
- Pre-war development
- ▨ Open areas-no archaeological survival



THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

of these, of course, give an account of ground conditions that no longer apply to their particular site, the development for which they were commissioned having since taken place. They do, however, provide a general guide to the formation of deposits across the town as a whole.

Figure 10 summarises the information from the boreholes and the trial excavations. To take the north-west side of the valley first, borehole data is available for two areas: the Hatherton Road/Darwell Street area, outside the medieval town; and the south side of Park Street, just within the medieval town. Boreholes from the former are only of interest in that they recorded dark and 'organic' deposits around the Ford Brook, pointing to the likelihood of similar deposits around watercourses within the medieval occupied area — deposits where there would be a possibility of the preservation of ancient organic material through waterlogging — and deep stratification. The boreholes from the latter group, part of the preparatory work for the Saddlers' Centre, show a more mixed picture. There was some evidence of organic deposits around the brook, and areas of deep deposits of recent origin, suggesting landfill. Further north, on the gradient, the depth of made-ground was generally less, though with some evidence of black silty and topsoil-like deposits (similar to that excavated at 59 Park Street, site 15) which may have represented typical 'back-yard' deposits, consisting of cultivation soils with evidence of rubbish-disposal and other activities. The majority of the boreholes across the site recorded 19th- and 20th-century deposits, generally ash, brick, and gravel, overlying the natural subsoil.

There is some further evidence for alluvial deposits with waterlogging in the valley bottom, from two boreholes up-stream from the medieval occupied area, one recording 2.2m of deposit including black silt, the other (from the south-west end of Bridge Street), dark grey-green clayey silt. A single borehole in Digbeth, c.25m south-east of the Mill Fleam (see section 3.2.ii,below), recorded a remarkable

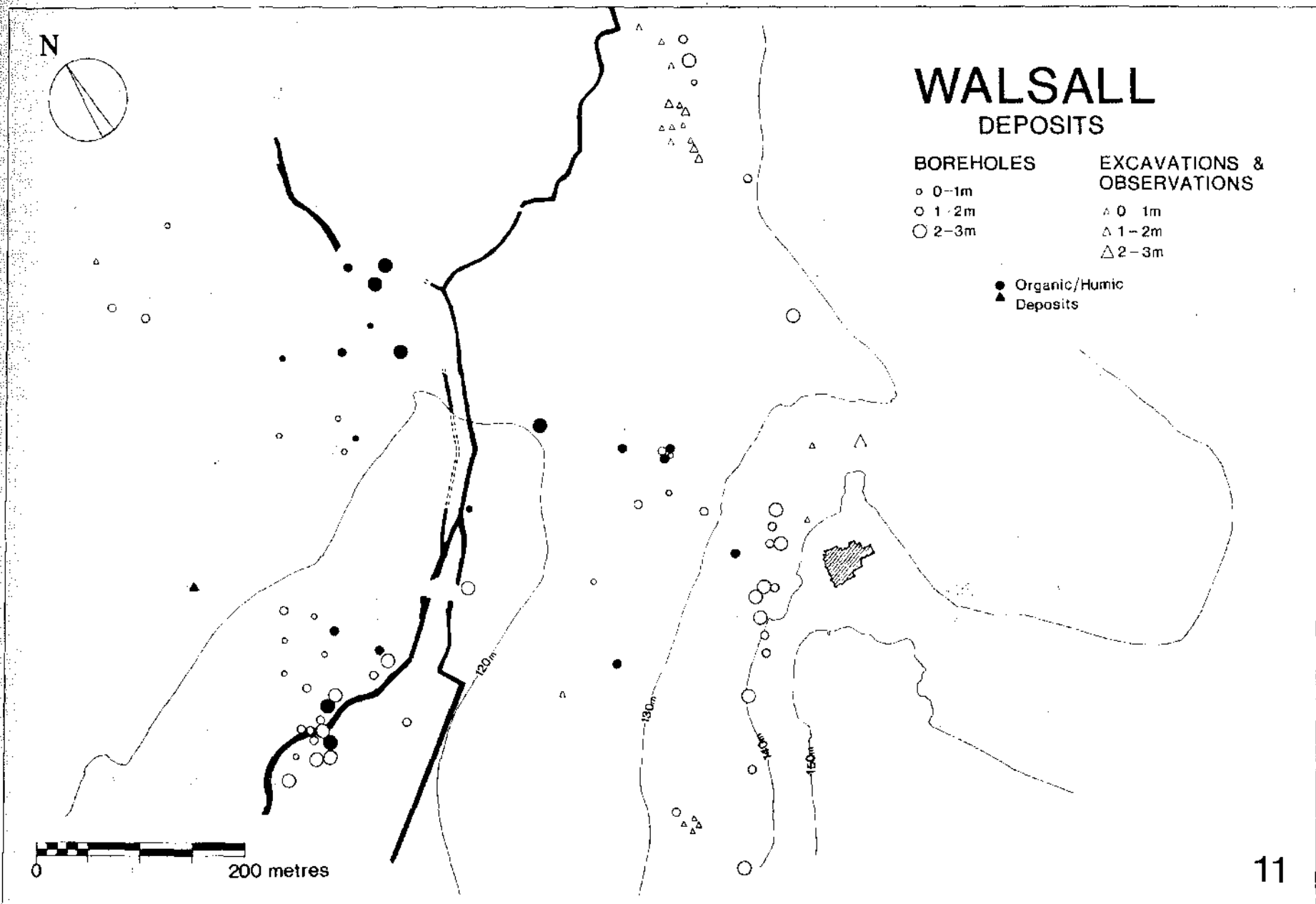
depth of 3.1m of mixed deposit overlying natural sand. To the south-east, further up the slope, an observation of exposed ground, and a borehole, both in the Lower Hall Lane area, recorded natural gravel immediately underlying superficial 19th-century deposits, and 1.2m of 'topsoil and gravel'. To the north of the High Street, most boreholes encountered between one and two metres of made-ground, of a variety of compositions: ash and rubble; brown sandy soil; and in two adjacent boreholes, sandy-silty material with black organic matter.

Boreholes in the Dudley Street area showed made-ground of 19th- and 20th-century character. Soil descriptions are not recorded for most of the boreholes in the Peal Street area, though one found brownish clayey-silt with organic material at a considerable depth below ground-level. In the angle of the High Street and Upper Rushall Street, one borehole recorded just over one metre of brown soil; others encountered a cellar, recent deposits, and soil descriptions of others were not recorded.

ii. The Modern Built Environment (Fig. 11)

The general pattern of building in the town centre clearly reflects the changes which took place in the mid-19th century, when the construction of the railway station in Park Street triggered a rise in property values in that part of the town, at the expense of the eastern end of the town, Church Hill in particular. The rise of Park Street as a new commercial centre was followed by the improvement of the valley bottom, the Bridge, which became a miniature central business district, dominated by banking. The first major post-war redevelopment took place in the Digbeth area in 1966-9 with the construction of the shopping precinct; Townend Square, on the north side of Park Street, followed in 1971 (53). The last decade has seen the construction of Sainsbury's, occupying a terrace cut into the slope on the south side of

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THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES.

the High Street, and the Saddlers Centre, on the south side of Park Street.

It is not always possible to make a direct equation between the date of a building, not always even its size, and its destructive impact upon the underlying archaeological deposits. However, most of the post-war developments shown in fig. 11 are very substantial buildings, and between deep foundations, basement levels and extensive terracing, archaeological deposits are unlikely to have survived, with the possible exception of the potentially deep deposits in the Digbeth area and the valley bottom. Many 19th-century buildings are likely to have had a similarly destructive impact, particularly those with extensive basements or a generally monumental character requiring deep foundations. A traditional building-type (the two- or three-storey brick building, with a shop over a cellar on the ground floor frontage, and residential accommodation above) survives in several areas of the old town: the east end/north side and west end/south side of Park Street; the north side of the High Street to the east of Goodall Street; the east side of Upper Rushall Street; the west side of the south end of Lower Rushall Street; Ablewell Street. The possibility of the survival of archaeological deposits in areas covered by these buildings is difficult to assess: it is likely that deep deposits would survive in areas not actually cellared (a combination that probably only applies to the east end of Park Street), but the survival of shallow deposits is more uncertain.

iii. Cellarage

A cellar-survey was undertaken in 1988 by Jon Cane, covering Park Street, Digbeth, Lower Hall Lane, High Street, New Street, Birmingham Street, Ablewell Street and Upper and Lower Rushall Street, aimed at establishing the existence of cellarage rather than its

actual type. The detailed results of the survey are contained in Appendix 1 B, below. In summary, although the information is incomplete, the majority of the older buildings inspected were found to be cellared, and one suspects that many older buildings which now have no cellars, actually possess cellars that have been filled-in in recent years, or that have been disused and their access sealed beneath modern shop fittings: this was the picture that emerged from a recent intensive cellar-survey carried out in Shrewsbury. Similarly, although retail units of modern shopping centres and precincts are not now provided with cellars, it is not unlikely that their 18th- and 19th-century predecessors on the frontages were. There may have been exceptional areas. It might be supposed, for instance, that buildings in the valley bottom would not be cellared, because of the likelihood of flooding, though the survey located cellarage under the buildings at the Digbeth - Bradford Street corner, and reports of the recent redevelopment of the corner of Bradford Street and Park Street speak of brick-built vaulted cellarage on the site. Unconfirmed reports suggest that the old buildings of the High Street (now demolished) were uncellared, due to the proximity of hard limestone bedrock to the surface, though the results of the survey on the surviving traditional buildings in the area tend to contradict this.

In summary, cellarage is to be expected on all frontages, with the consequent localised destruction of archaeological deposits, with the possible exception of the Digbeth/valley bottom area where there is some possibility of a build-up deep enough to have survived, at least in part.

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3.2 AREA STUDIES

From the information on ground conditions across the town centre, and from the historical and topographical studies, it is possible to define three general areas of particular archaeological significance, defined both by the potential survival of archaeological deposits, and the potential contribution that these areas could make to the early history of the town in general and, specifically, to some of the research problems posed in Part Two of this report.

i. The Parish Church and its Environs. (Fig.12)

The church, its churchyard, and its potentially early origins were discussed briefly in Part Two, above. Although the present church contains no visible elements earlier than its 13th-century vaulted crypt, the hill-top site suggests the possibility of an origin substantially before 1200, when it was first recorded. To its site can be added its original dedication to All Saints, possibly but not necessarily early, and the large size of its parish, outlying portion included. While the evidence now available could not sustain a claim that St. Matthew's/All Saint's was, in origin, a pre-Conquest minster church, it has to be admitted that the vaulted passageway, taking the churchyard perimeter path under the chancel and giving access to the crypts at the same level, is an unusual feature with strongly processional overtones. It could be argued that this hints at a monastic connection, though perhaps this is as likely to have been a result of the church's appropriation by Halesowen Abbey in 1248 (54), as a relic of a much earlier arrangement.

The below-ground archaeology of the church and churchyard have never been explored, so it is impossible to quantify the archaeological potential of this area in terms of known depths of deposit. The churchyard walls are a mixture of limestone-rubble and more recent brickwork. Limestone rubble walling is not by itself closely dateable

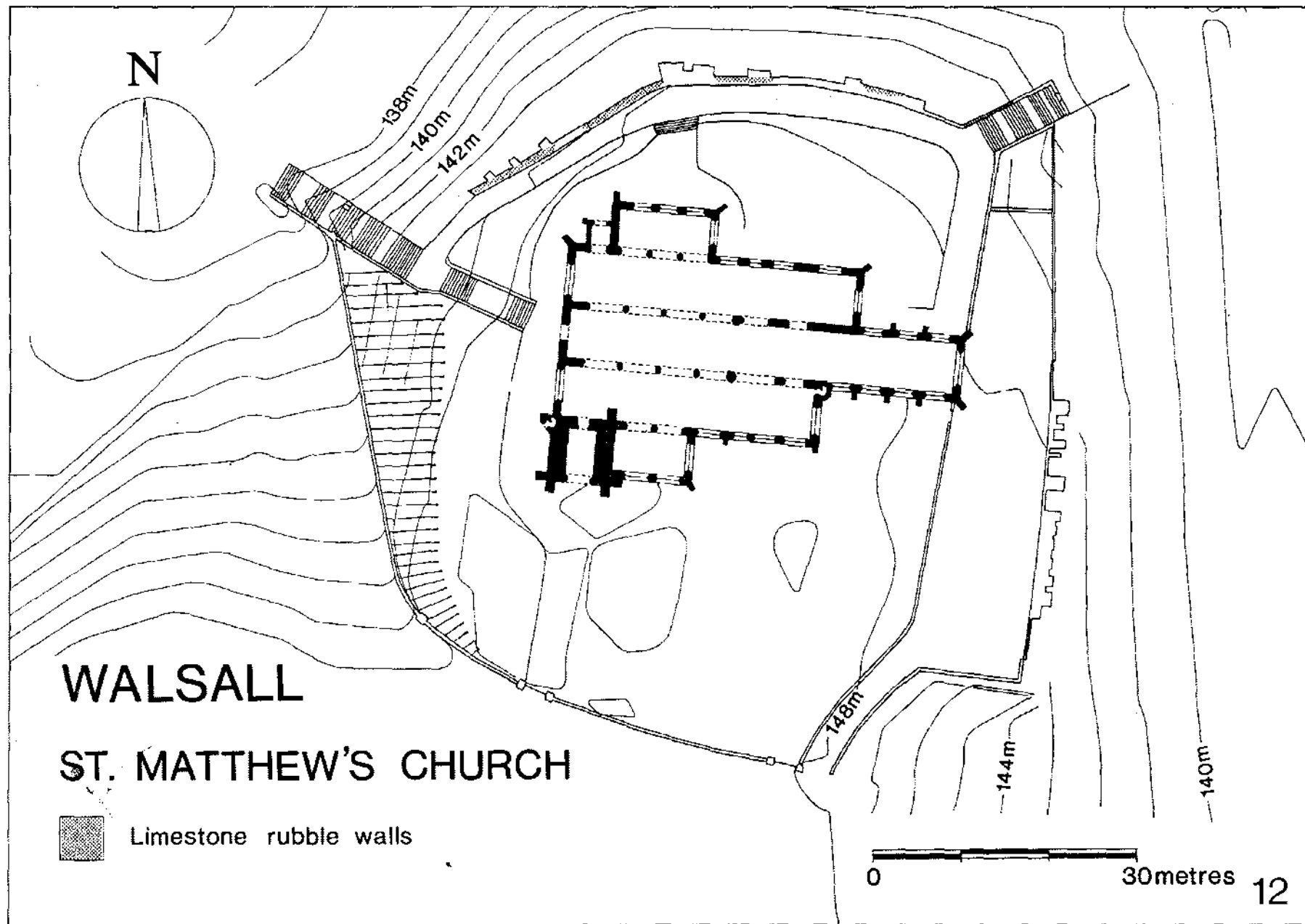
(see section iii, below), but there is a strong possibility that the revetment walls around the churchyard are, in parts, of a considerable age. In this case, the churchyard walls may have acted like a 'cake-tin' (55), allowing deposits within to accumulate to a considerable depth over a long period of time. The possibility that the area (St Matthew's Close and the Memorial Gardens) to the south of the churchyard represents the most likely site for pre-urban defences and an early manorial complex was discussed earlier (section 2.3, above). There has been no archaeological exploration of this area, and the general character of the deposits here is unknown.

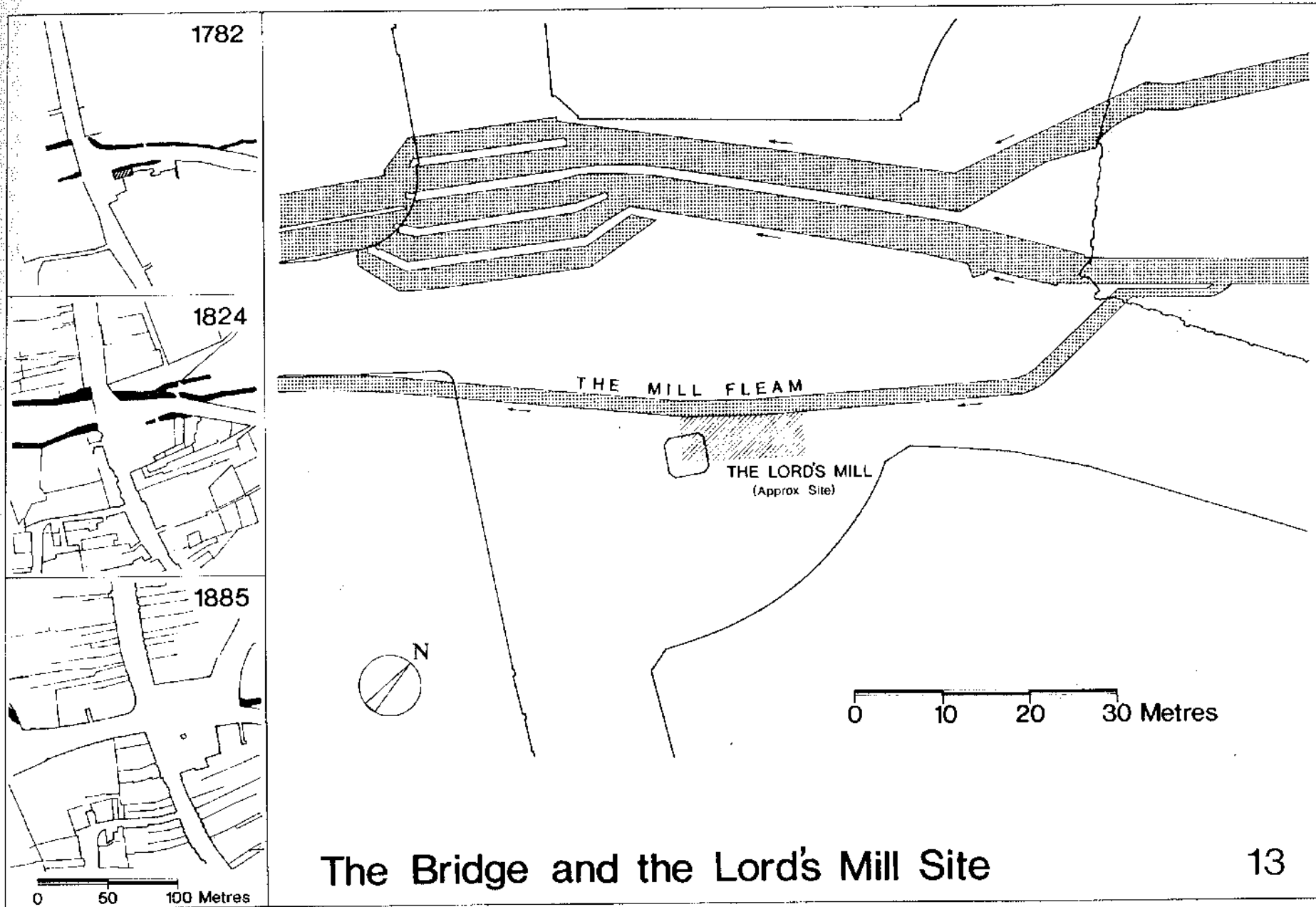
ii. The Bridge, and the Lord's Mill Site.

(Figs. 13 and 14)

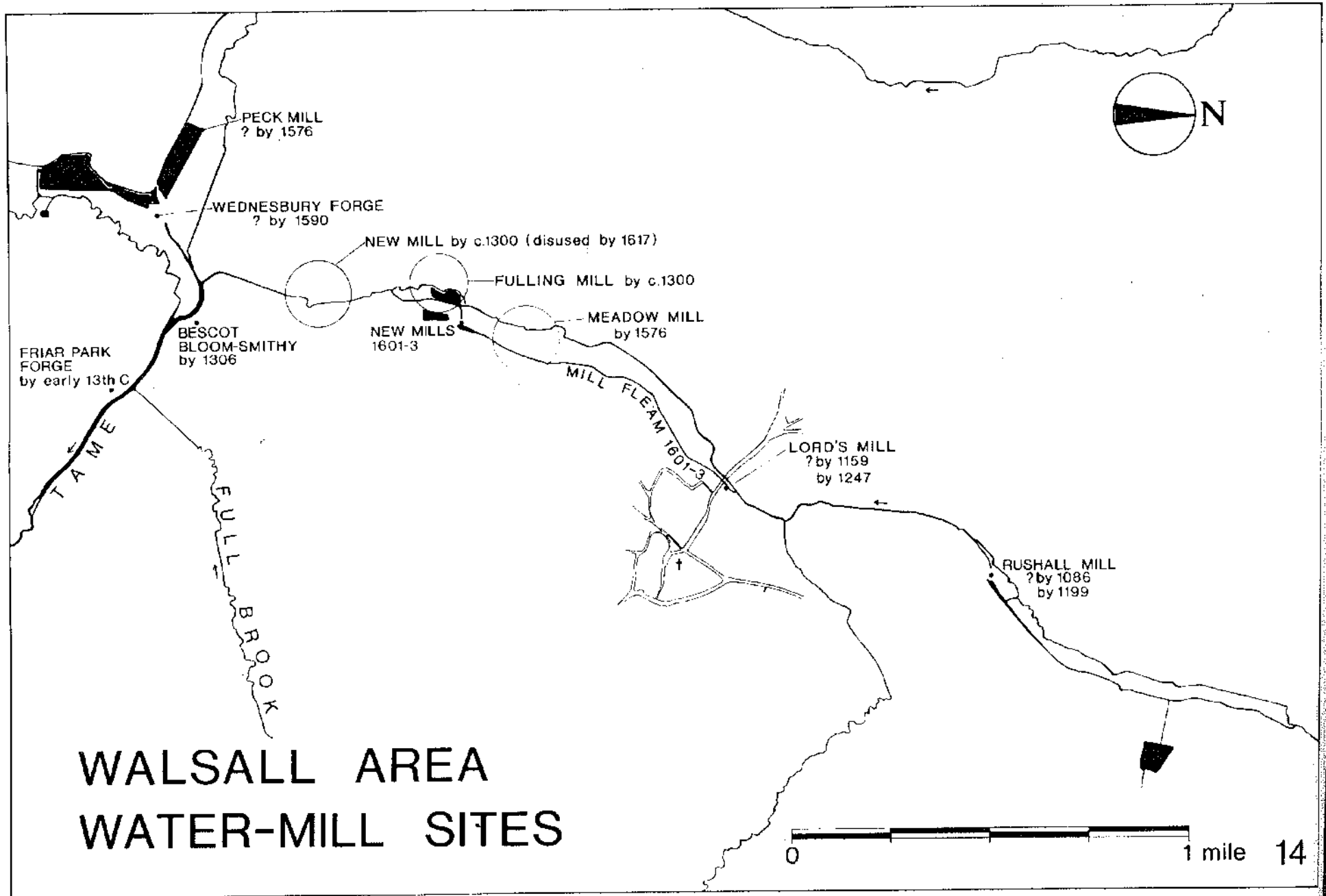
On simple mechanical grounds the valley bottom is likely to be the area where deposits will have accumulated to the greatest depth, through erosion off the slopes, and through deliberate dumping for reclamation purposes. The available, though admittedly limited, evidence for the ground conditions in this area lends support to this view. There is also a strong possibility of waterlogging with the consequent long-term survival of organic materials. In these circumstances, the valley bottom is of major archaeological significance to the town as a possible reservoir of evidence reflecting changes in the historic environment (through the study of preserved pollen, seeds, and other plant and insect material); and also because of the possible occurrence of ancient landfill containing stratified collections of artefacts that could well reflect activities taking place elsewhere in the early town, in addition to providing a chronology for the reclamation itself.

The valley bottom also contains the site of the medieval manorial mill, known as the Town Mill or the Lord's Mill, first recorded in the mid-13th century (56), though probably of earlier origin. A watermill





The Bridge and the Lord's Mill Site



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was recorded by Domesday Book at Rushall, probably on or near the Butts Foundry site on the Ford Brook about three-quarters of a mile upstream. The Walsall mill was able to make use of the additional water provided by the Holbrook, joining the Ford Brook a short distance to the north. It is also likely that the medieval milling arrangements at Walsall included one or more ponds, in the area now occupied by the south end of Lichfield Street, first recorded in 1247-8, and known as the 'great fishery or pool of Walsall' or the 'great fish stew' (57). The pond was presumably retained by an artificial dam across the valley floor, though no evidence of this is known.

By c.1300 there were further mills a short distance downstream: the New Mill, which was disused by 1617, and a fulling mill. The precise sites of these are not known, neither is that of Meadow Mill, recorded in 1576, and thought to have been in the same general area (58; see fig.14). Documentary evidence records the building in 1601-3 of New Mills (rebuilt in 1788-9 and demolished in the 1920s) driven by an artificial leat taken off the Town Brook in the area of the Lord's Mill. This simple picture probably conceals a rather more complex reality: it is clear from Snape's plan of 1782 that the Lord's Mill was powered by the supposedly 17th-century fleam (fig.13), suggesting either the partial re-use of medieval channels in the 17th century, or some other post-medieval reorganisation.

Nothing whatever is known of the actual structure of the Walsall mill, save that it was demolished in c.1813 having been in use for some time as a blacksmith's shop (59). A short distance away was the bridge itself, first recorded in c.1300 and described as a stone bridge in 1618; repairs in brick seem to have been carried out in 1724 (60). The Monrath map of 1763 shows it with eight arches, though in a rather sketchy fashion. With the improvements of 1851-2, when the ground level in the area was substantially raised, the watercourses in the Bridge area were culverted, and the bridge itself was buried (61). It is possible that the medieval structure, with repairs and additions, still

survives (see Appendix 2: fig.13).

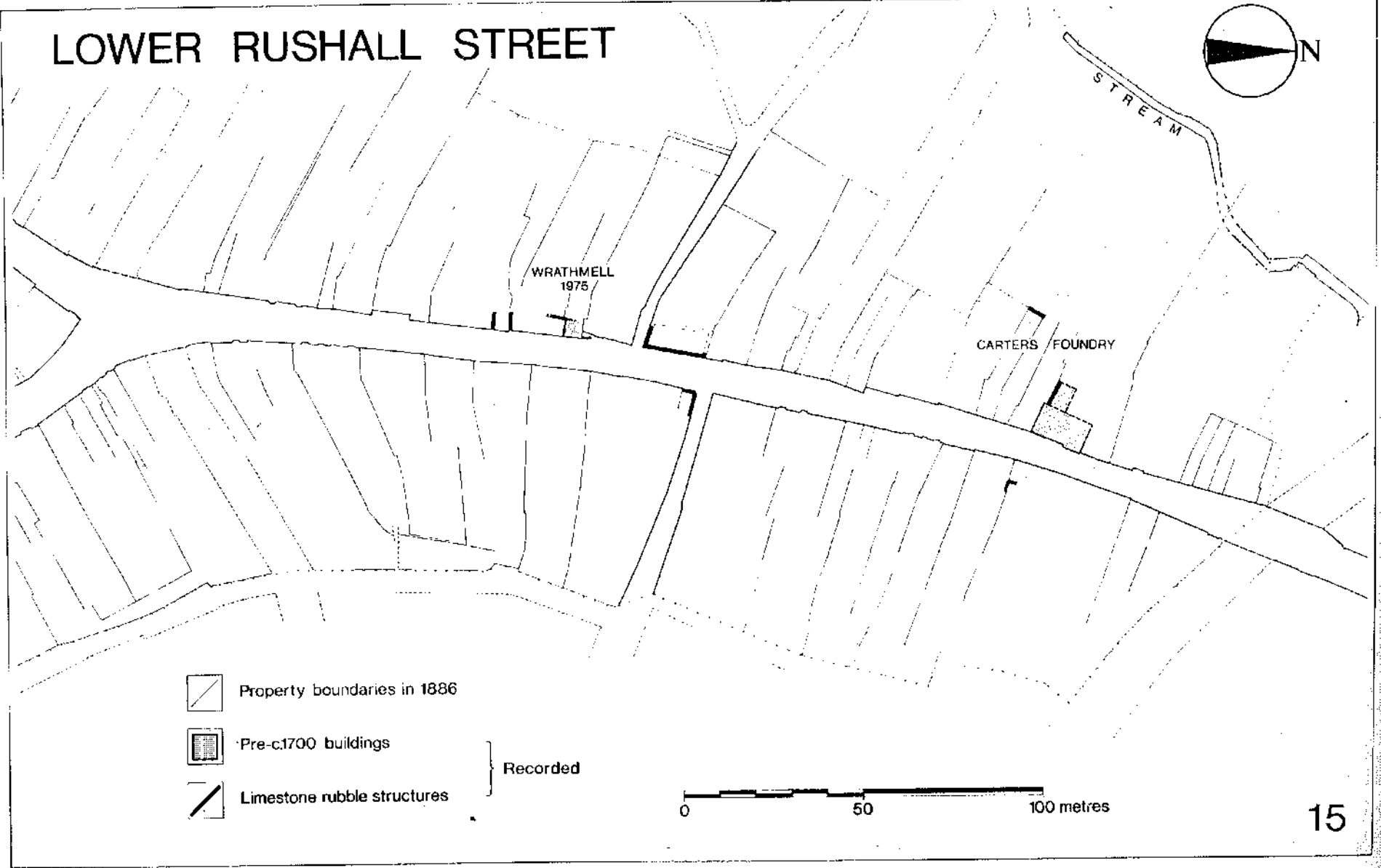
It is not possible to locate the mill with absolute precision, but as far as can be judged from re-scaling Snape's plan, it probably lies directly under the statue of Sister Dora in Bridge Square. In this location it may have been disturbed by the construction of a former underground public lavatory but, apart from this and damage by services, the site, and the adjacent bridge, should have escaped destruction by later buildings. The possibility of waterlogging in the area, discussed earlier, suggests that timber from the mill itself or from associated structures may survive, with the consequent possibilities of dendrochronological dating should any be recovered by excavation or in the course of the monitoring of commercial or service excavations.




iii. Lower Rushall Street. (Fig. 15)

In 1975 a small area excavation took place on the west side of Lower Rushall Street, a short distance to the south of the junction with Intown Row (figs. 9 and 15). The site investigation began with the recording of the surviving gable wall, lying at right-angles to the frontage, of a former timber-framed building, and the remains of a limestone-rubble walled building adjoining this to the south. The foundations, floor, and open hearth of the timber-framed building (of 16th-century date) were excavated. The interior of the adjoining limestone rubble building (also of 16th-century date) had been cellared, but under it was found a large medieval quarry pit. A later quarry pit was also found outside to the rear (62).

The site, which covered only a small area, had been partly cellared, partly rebuilt in the 18th century, and subjected to quarrying. It produced few artefacts and no medieval structural remains and, taken by itself, it could be argued that it makes only the smallest contribution to our understanding of the development of the town. However, this site, and sites like it, can be of the greatest importance as part of a

LOWER RUSHALL STREET



-  Property boundaries in 1886
 -  Pre-c.1700 buildings
 -  Limestone rubble structures
- } Recorded

0 50 100 metres

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

cumulative process of information-gathering, taking place within an explicit research framework.

For example, in the discussion of the significance of the plan units visible in the historic town plan (section 2.3) it was argued that it was difficult to assess the level of investment implied by each plan unit as a new addition to the townscape, without data on the 'groundworks' associated with each. The Wrathmells' excavation provides an example of just this type of information. The earliest feature on the site was a large pit, close to the street frontage, interpreted as a quarry pit. The pit had been backfilled and the ground levelled-up for domestic occupation, 'probably in the 13th or early 14th century'. The excavators noted that 'The amount of filling required to create a level frontage must have been considerable, and points to a concerted effort of expansion, rather than the piecemeal extension of housing (63)'. One suspects that the 'concerted effort of expansion' was the creation of plan unit 9, by an as yet unknown agency. This equation is, however, speculative, the process may have applied to this property only, but further excavation in the area could easily determine the extent to which similar activities were taking place elsewhere at the same time.

The excavation also demonstrates some of the possibilities of looking at the relationship between excavated structural sequences and mapped plot systems to arrive at a greater understanding of the development of a street. The gable wall of the timber-framed building survived because it was a party wall — a property boundary — separating the northern half of the site frontage (with its timber-framed building replaced by a brick building) from the southern half (with its limestone-walled building). The party wall-line lies on a short property boundary, perpendicular to the frontage, identifiable on the 1:500 town plan (fig.15). This property boundary does not, on the map, reach back to the back fence-line but stops short, looking like a longitudinal sub-division within a larger, earlier property. This is

confirmed by the excavation results. The levelling-up deposit, full of limestone chippings, that sealed the medieval quarry-pit, was found under both of the 16th-century structures, suggesting that both halves of the site had formerly been under single ownership (64). A later, post-medieval quarry in the yard area to the rear respected the line of the inserted boundary.

Having established the character of the plot system on the street we have, from a single excavated site, the suggestion that this plot system may have been a creation of the 13th or early 14th century following the reclamation of former quarries, and that the plot system was (at least in one place) subject to a process of sub-division in the 16th century. The Wrathmells' excavation also tells us, of course, about the redevelopment process associated with this sub-division: the construction of housing in two different materials, and in two different structural traditions, within a short space of time. The timber-framed building represents an enormously interesting type of structure: a single-storey, single-cell building (assuming it ended at the next property boundary to the north), an essentially medieval type, representing the lowest level of housing to be survivable into the 20th century (65). The extent of housing of this type along the street would be a valuable indicator of its social and possibly occupational character at this period. The construction of a limestone-walled building, this time of two storeys, next-door within a short space of time is similarly informative. Eye-witness accounts, photographs, and drawings of the street before the wholesale demolition of properties in the 1930s (66) show a great mixture of building-types and materials, brick predominating, but with a number of timber-framed and some limestone-walled structures which, on the excavated evidence, may have been built within the same period. These have not been studied in detail but where they can be located from the illustrative sources they have been plotted against the background of the property boundaries from the Ordnance Survey first edition (fig.15).

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Two structures are worth further attention here. The first is a limestone-walled building a few yards to the north of the 1975 excavation, on the corner of Intown Row. Visible in a series of photographs, this seems to have originally been of two storeys, with a third added later in brick. It was a long building (c. 18m/59ft) and probably occupied the whole frontage of one of the original herringbone-type plots. The length, and the number of blocked openings visible in the front wall, suggest that this was an early terrace or row-building, representing perhaps a similar sub-division of an early plot to that on the excavated site, though here, by speculative development on a property maintained in single ownership.

The second building worth noting is the largely timber-framed building on the Carter's Foundry site. This was the Three Tuns Inn, demolished in 1910, which photographs show to have been of 16th-century character. The length of limestone-rubble wall encountered in the trial excavations (site 1; see Appendix 1) on the site can be identified as the side-wall of a rear range to this building.

Consideration of limestone-rubble structures requires, at this point, comment on their occurrence in other parts of the town. Limestone-rubble walling, is now visible in the town centre in only one building outside Lower Rushall Street: No.44 New Street. It does occur in several property boundaries: on the east side of Lower Hall Lane, (the wall at the rear of 57 Lower Hall Lane seems to comprise re-used stonework and should not be included in this category), around the churchyard, in the back fence-line of properties on the south-west side of Ablewell Street, for property boundaries and minor back-yard structures on site 12 on Upper Rushall Street, and outside the area of the medieval town at Lord's Drive and next to the Leather Centre, and on Lichfield Street, opposite the Arboretum. There is no doubt that limestone rubble, even if it had ceased to be used for domestic buildings by or in the 18th century, was used for garden walls/property boundaries and minor ancillary buildings into the late 19th century. Its occurrence in association with

19th-century gardens well outside the area of the early town suggests this to be the case, and the trial excavation at site 12 was able to demonstrate this archaeologically.

In conclusion, the 1975 excavation was the first pointer towards the archaeological potential of Lower Rushall Street, locating deposits of medieval and post-medieval date between areas of later disturbance. In 1988, trial excavations on the Carter's Foundry site showed that, in certain circumstances (protection under the hard-core of a 19th-century terrace) deposits could survive even industrial redevelopment. It has also been argued that even a small-scale excavation on this street can yield significant results when seen in a wider context, results that would be immeasurably enhanced by the investigation of further sites in the area, on the same side of the street (particularly the back-yard areas of the adjacent properties, and the frontage between Intown Row and Whittimere Street), but also on the east side of the street — archaeologically unexplored, but free of major post-medieval redevelopment and at the bottom of the slope — where conditions for the preservation of archaeological sequences may be even better, and where more diverse evidence of economic activities could be recovered from back-yard pitting.

Finally, the case of Lower Rushall Street may be applicable to other towns in the region where a small medieval core has been swamped by post-medieval growth. Here we have a marginal street which has avoided the heaviest 19th- and 20th-century redevelopment with the consequent survival of earlier archaeological deposits. The same marginal situation gives the street a particular value: as a barometer of urban growth, particularly from the medieval into the early post-medieval period, a period to which too little attention has been paid, even though the roots of the region's industrial revolution are to be found in it.

CONCLUSIONS

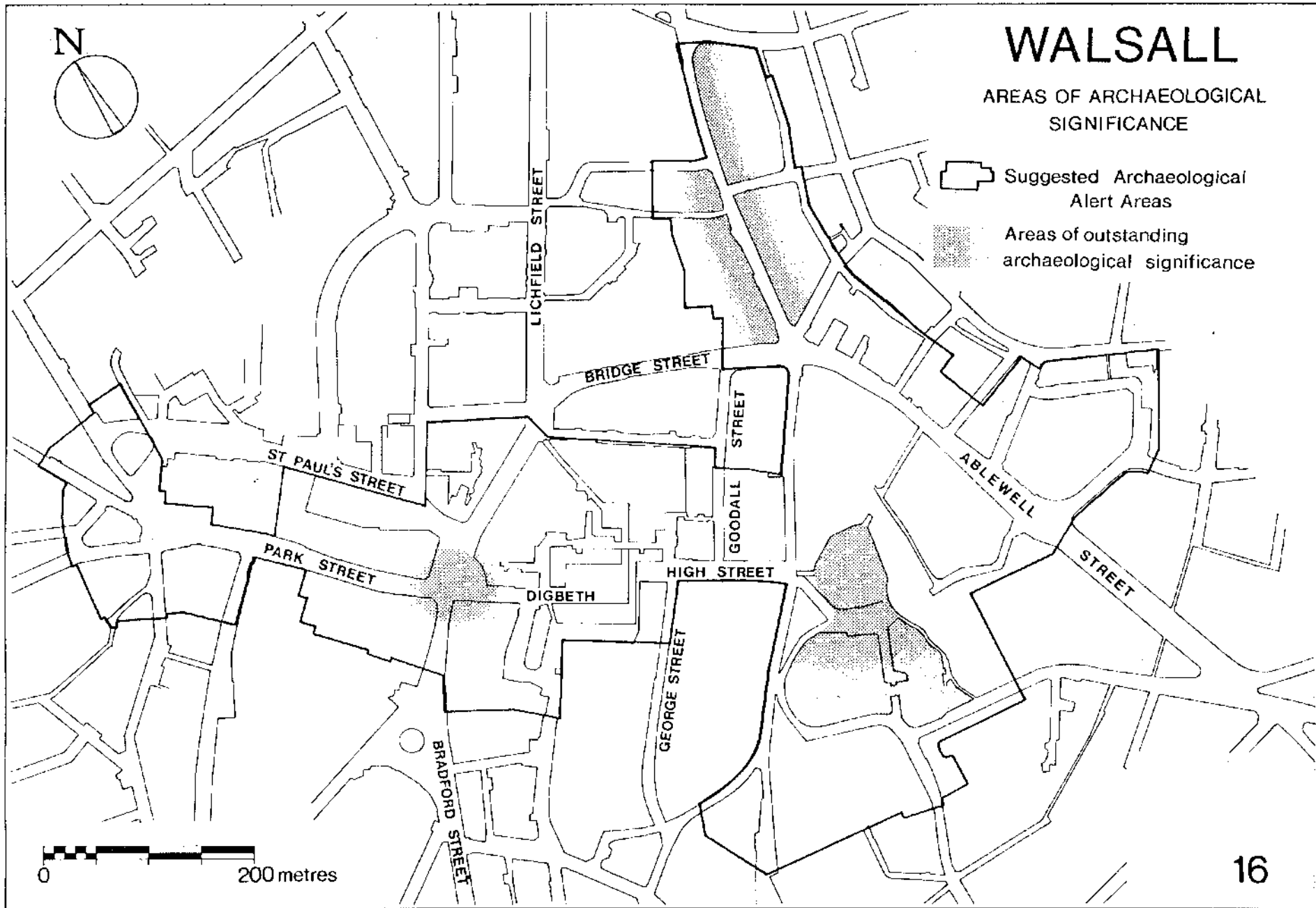
CONCLUSIONS

1. Evidence for the form of the ancient urban landscape preserved in a series of historic maps suggests that the town of Walsall started life as a small planned market settlement in the early 13th century, with subsequent growth in a number of directions. Much is still unknown: what were the town's pre-urban origins, what trades were practiced in the town's earliest years, how fast did the town grow in the medieval period, when, where, and how were the metal trades first established and how was production organised? All these questions are capable of being answered by archaeological evidence.
2. Largely because of the small size of the medieval town, and the intensity of subsequent development, intact archaeological deposits containing evidence of activity earlier than c.1700 are a scarce resource in Walsall, particularly where large modern developments are found on gradients.
3. Three areas are identified as having particular archaeological value, on the grounds of the likelihood of the survival of archaeological strata, and on account of the potential of these areas for testing the model of the town's early growth, and for the solution of the archaeological and historical questions posed above. These areas are: the parish church, its churchyard, and the adjacent area to the south; the Bridge and the valley bottom; and Lower Rushall Street (see fig. 16).
4. In addition to these areas of outstanding archaeological significance, some parts of the site of the medieval town which are now, or were formerly, covered by 18th-19th-century buildings may have a considerable archaeological potential which is impossible to predict without further individual on-site evaluations: the corner of the High

Street and Upper Rushall Street falls within this category.



Topographically, it is a key area, at the heart of the early town, but its actual potential cannot be known in the absence of on-site archaeological trial excavations. Large areas of the early town remain completely unknown archaeologically. For example, ground conditions on the west side of Ablewell Street are difficult to predict: the valley-bottom situation may have promoted the accumulation of deposits, but heavy development and terracing-into the slope may equally have destroyed them. The Hill Street area, now under grass, may contain valuable evidence for the post-medieval expansion of the town, but it too is archaeologically unexplored.

To take account of these areas, fig.16 indicates a proposed 'Archaeological Alert Area', a zone incorporating the occupied area of the early town, with important peripheral areas, including part of the valley bottom, and the Lime Pit Bank area off Ablewell Street, a possible metalworking area within the period under study. Where major recent developments are known to have sterilised areas on the periphery of the early town, these have been excluded. It must be emphasised that very few areas of the ancient borough can be discounted as having no likely archaeological value, and that vigilance is required throughout the area studied by this report in order to protect or to recover the diminishing and fragile archaeological resources.



WALSALL

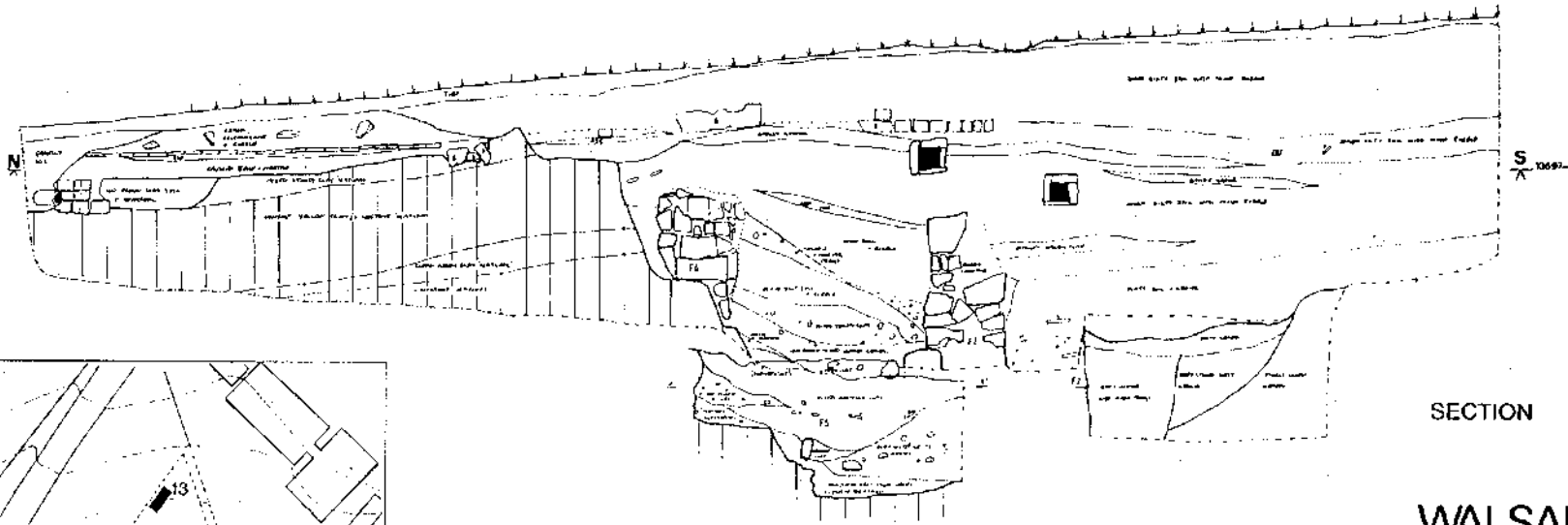
AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

-  Suggested Archaeological Alert Areas
-  Areas of outstanding archaeological significance



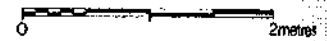
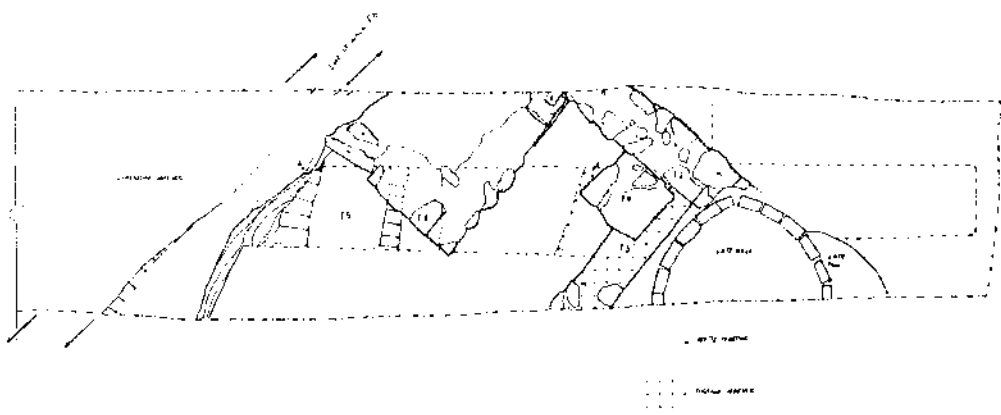
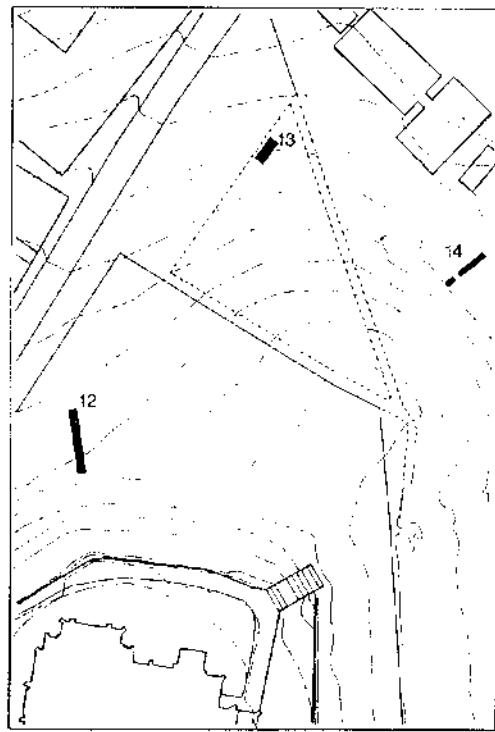
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APPENDICES



SECTION

WALSALL SITE 12



PLAN

APPENDIX ONE: THE 1988 FIELD EVALUATION

by Jon Cane

A. EXCAVATIONS.

Method.

All the excavations listed here were carried out within the framework of the evaluation described above. All but one were at least initiated with a mechanical excavator. In some cases (e.g. sites 01 and 12), time and safety factors allowed further excavation by hand. In the main, however, work was limited to the graphic and photographic recording of cleaned sections. All sites were investigated by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit's Roving Team: Jon Sterenberg (Supervisor), Lawrence Jones, Steve Litherland, and Iain McCraith.

Gazetteer. (For location of sites, see fig.9)

01. Carter's Foundry, Lower Rushall Street.

A machine-dug trench against the northern boundary wall of the foundry works. This wall partly comprised a length of limestone-rubble containing a partly-exposed window opening. Late deposits lying against the wall to the south were excavated, producing sherds of late-19th-century pottery. These layers, mainly rubble, overlay a fragmentary brick floor which abutted the limestone walling. This formed the floor of a passage or alley, defined by the limestone wall and a parallel brick wall 2m to the south. The floor sealed various features including a pipe trench. Dirty gravel was contacted at the lowest point, similar to the material which overlay the natural in trenches 04 and 08 to the south and east. No early deposits or finds were recovered. The limestone walling was fully recorded. The limestone wall has been identified as part of a rear range to the Three Tuns Inn, a probable 16th-

century, largely timber-framed, building, the rest of which was demolished in 1910 (see section 3.2. iii).

02. Carter's Foundry, Lower Rushall Street.

A narrow trench, in the north-east corner of the foundry. The top of the natural was contacted at a depth of c.1m but had been heavily truncated by later brick features, including a cellar in the extreme north-east corner and rubble-filled features to the south-west. At the south-western end the natural sand began to fall away to the north-west. This area had been levelled-up with dirty gravel similar to that encountered in the bottom of site 01, and this may represent a large-scale levelling-up operation over the whole area.

03. Carter's Foundry, Lower Rushall Street.

The entry to the foundry complex provided another opportunity to excavate close to the street frontage. Risk of substantial later disturbance was also thought to be less. In fact, the natural subsoil had been lowered by more than 1m and sealed by dark soil containing modern material, including fragments of slag and steel.

04. Carter's Foundry, Lower Rushall Street.

A series of four trenches were dug by machine at right-angles to the Lower Rushall Street frontage. All revealed substantial disturbance in the form of earlier cellars or other large post-medieval features. At the southern end the foundry floor was more than 1m below street level, suggesting the probable truncation of the natural in this area.

05. Carter's Foundry, Lower Rushall Street.

The courtyard of the foundry complex was tested by a series of three trenches running from the rear of the frontage buildings, westwards to the edge of the foundry. All revealed considerable later disturbance, including an intact vaulted brick culvert, but also a distinct fall in the level of the natural subsoil westwards, towards the Holbrook.

Much of the made-ground revealed by these trenches was composed of brick rubble and soil, but the initial levelling consisted of the same dirty gravel encountered in the adjacent sites. The site furthest from Lower Rushall Street, against the back wall of the western range of buildings, did not contact the natural subsoil but revealed truncated brick structures sealed by (and therefore earlier than) the same dirty gravel.

06. Carter's Foundry, Lower Rushall Street.

An area covered by the more recent buildings of the complex was investigated with a small machine-dug trench, primarily to test reports of large numbers of bones found during works in the area. The natural gravel was contacted at a depth of c.1.5m, but extensive brick features were revealed. No bones were recovered.

07. Lichfield Street.

A metre-wide machine-dug trench was excavated at right-angles to the Lichfield Street frontage. This area was mainly covered in brick demolition rubble, but circular brick features associated with the former tannery which occupied the site were still clearly visible. The trench was positioned to avoid these and to test the possible survival of early deposits. Natural gravel was contacted at a depth of c.0.3m at the western end of the trench, but fell away steadily to a depth of 1.4m at the eastern end. No features were identified either in the sections or in the exposed natural gravels and sands, and no early deposits were contacted.

08. Lower Rushall Street.

This machine-dug trench on the Lower Rushall Street frontage revealed extensive deep 19th-century cellarage, covering the area between the frontage and a terrace-cut to the rear associated with the 20th-century tannery buildings. The cellars were cut into the natural

sand subsoil.

09. Lower Rushall Street.

The trench revealed limited survival of 19th-century yard and garden deposits behind cellars on the street frontage.

10. Lower Rushall Street.

A machine-dug trench, revealing 1.9m of garden soils and rubble overlying natural clay.

11. Lower Rushall Street.

A machine-dug trench encountered a series of recent brick-built tanning-pits immediately below the modern surface. These were too substantial for the machine to penetrate, and the excavation was discontinued

12. St. Matthew's Church. (fig. 17)

A 2m wide trench was machine-dug on the sloping ground to the north-west of St. Matthew's Church. The area is now covered by grass but until earlier this century was occupied by dense housing (see section 2.1, above). Removal of the turf revealed a layer of dark rubble-filled soil which overlay a complex of brick features, including walls and drains, belonging to the Victorian housing in the area. The orientation of these features was compatible with that of the properties formerly fronting Upper Rushall Street (see section 2.2, above). At the northern end of the trench these features directly overlay natural clay and limestone, but overlay a thick layer of dark soil at the other. This layer sealed the remains of a series of substantial limestone-built walls. One of these (F6) was built into a steep scarp cut in the natural limestone, falling away to the south-east. Another, equally substantial, wall ran at right-angles south-eastwards (F2). The junction of these walls lay outside the excavated area, and the southern end of F2 had been destroyed by a later brick-built well. A later buttress (F4) had been added

to the south side of this wall, implying that this was the down-slope side of a possible terrace. Another wall running parallel to F6, some 3m to the south-east, abutted F2. In the area bounded by these walls another 'L' shaped structure (F1) had been built. The masonry used was considerably less substantial, and it may have been the base of a flight of steps giving access to the top of the terrace wall. Limited excavation of the layers through which the larger wall had probably been cut revealed that the main terrace wall (F6) had been built on the edge of a very large earlier feature, possibly a quarry (F5). This was bottomed to the west of F3 but nowhere else. It was filled with mixed gravel and gravelly clay, containing fragments of post-medieval tile. No early deposits were contacted. It seems likely that the sequence represents post-medieval limestone quarrying around the church (see sections 1.2 and 1.3, above), which may then have been partly reused within a property running back from the street, the edges having been revetted with walling. The area thus used may have been reduced by the construction of wall F2 before the whole area was backfilled and levelled.

13. St. Matthew's Church.

A 2m-wide machine trench was dug parallel to Upper Rushall Street, positioned to contact a major terrace wall, shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey plan running perpendicular to the street and breaking the slope down from St. Matthew's church. The top of this wall was contacted less than 1m below the surface, sealed by a layer of dark soil, and was found to be brick built. To the south of the wall a fragmentary tile floor was located at a depth of c.1.6m, sealed by a thick layer of rubble which lay against the wall. This floor may have been the floor of a building constructed against the terrace wall. The wall was built up against the yellow natural clay, the top of which was heavily disturbed, to the north of the wall, by shallow, ash-filled

features. No early deposits or finds were recovered.

14. St. Matthew's Church.

A 1m-wide machine trench was dug to the rear of properties on the south side of Ablewell Street in order to contact the terrace wall seen in site 13 (above). Natural clay was found at a depth of 1.7m, sealed by fairly sterile stony layers. The southern part of the trench posed serious problems due to the steep slope and the instability of the strata. However, it was possible to ascertain that the top of the natural clay did not reflect the present slope but was, in fact, fairly horizontal. The fragmentary remains of a possible brick terrace wall were seen at the extreme southern end, but the instability of the deposits behind it prevented confirmation of this. It seems likely that the topography of the natural at this point is the result of terracing back into the hillside.

15. 59 Park Street.

A small hand-dug trench in the back garden of this property, on the south side of Park Street, revealed natural clay at a depth of 1.3m sealed by a thick layer of garden soil. The top of the natural was disturbed and mixed and contained a small number of medieval pottery sherds, and a few pieces of iron slag. No early features were contacted.

16-19. 63-7 Dudley Street.

Four small trenches were hand-dug on the recently-cleared site on the south side of Dudley Street. Sticky natural clay was encountered under c. 0.5m of mixed dark soil containing 19th-century material. The top of the natural was cut by a number of shallow unidentifiable features containing post-medieval material.

B. THE CELLAR SURVEY RESULTS.

Unlisted properties: no information available.

Park Street

Cellared: 12, 14, 19, 29, 35-39, 41, 57, 65, 67, 73, 75

Uncellared: 8, 10, 25, 27, 34-36, 38, 40, 50 (Railway tunnel under 49-53 and 56)

Digbeth/The Bridge

Cellared: 40, and 7, 9, and 12 The Bridge

All units of 1960s developments uncellared

Lower Hall Lane

Cellared: 67-68

High Street

Cellared: 11, 13, 14, 40, 41

Uncellared: 38,39

Upper Rushall Street

Cellared: 35

Lower Rushall Street

Cellared: 11-17

Ablewell Street

Cellared: 2, 12, 13, 81, 82, 91, 92, 93, 95, 98, 99

Uncellared: 1,9,11,84

Birmingham Street

Cellared: 46

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APPENDIX 2: CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Fig.1:

Borough and Parish. Modern 1:25000 base (including contours) and R.K. Dawson's Map of the Borough of Walsall showing proposed boundaries (1832; 2 inches to the mile) (Walsall Local Studies Centre M253). Park boundaries from V.C.H. Staffs., 17, 184; Willmore, 1887, 89. Moated sites distribution from West Midlands S.M.R. Published scale: 1:50,000.

Fig.2:

The Natural Site. Modern base. Contours taken from Walsall Borough Council survey of Church Hill, with additional spot-height information from the O.S. 1:1250 and locally corrected from the O.S. 1st Edition 1:500. Watercourses from Mason's plan of 1824, and O.S. Published scale: 1:5000.

Fig.3:

Modern Street Plan. Modern base. Published scale: 1:5000.

Fig.4:

Walsall in 1679. Gregory King's ms. plan at 50 poles to the inch. Copy in W.L.S.C. Published in Lewis and Woods 1987.

Fig.5:

Thomas Mason's Plan of Walsall, 1824. Street pattern and property boundaries taken from original (WLSC 143/25) and rescaled to 1:1250. Note major distortions in the Town End area, and Lime Pit Bank (to the east of Ablewell Street). The dotted line represents the early 19th-century borough boundary. Published scale: 1:5000.

Fig.6:

Property boundaries in 1886. From 1st edition O.S. 1:500, photographically reduced and corrected to modern 1:1250 base. Street pattern in central area, with property boundaries added for those streets shown as part of the built-up area on the 1679 map. Surviving

limestone walls plotted from field survey in 1988. Published scale: 1:5000.

Fig.7:

Plan Units. Interpretative plan based on figs. 5 and 6. For methodology, see section 2.2. Published scale: 1:5000.

Fig.8:

The Early Town. Interpretative plan based on fig. 6, with additional information on property boundaries taken from fig. 5. Watercourses taken from Mason's 1824 plan of Walsall (W.L.S.C.143/21). Published scale: 1:5000.

Fig.9:

Excavations and Observations. Modern 1:1250 base, with site locations from Wrathmell 1975 and BUFAU 1988 Walsall evaluation archive. Published scale: 1:5000.

Fig.10:

Deposits. Modern 1:1250 base; contours taken from fig. 2, watercourses from first and modern O.S. maps, with additional information from Snape's map. Borehole logs plotted are from records held in the Dept. of Engineering & Town Planning (Structures), Walsall Borough Council. Published scale: 1:5000.

Fig.11:

The Built Environment. Modern base map, with information from field visit late in 1988. Assessment of date of development based on exterior survey only. Published scale: 1:5000.

Fig.12:

St. Matthew's Church. Based on first edition O.S. 1:500 (enlarged), with contours taken from Walsall Borough Council survey of Church Hill, and plan of church from a plan of 1819 in V.C.H. Staffs., 17, 231. Published scale: 1:600.

Fig.13:

The Bridge and the Lord's Mill Site. Based on 'A Survey of the Bridge showing position of the river culvert (Mill Fleam) and arches' (WLSC M203). A plan at 16 feet to the inch of likely 1960s date, by the County Borough of Walsall, probably based on an original of 1921-33. Toned areas represent watercourses. The map title implies that the subdivision of the brook into five channels represents the arches of the (medieval?) bridge. Mill building added from Snape's map of 1782. Published scale 1:600. Insets: from Snape (1782), Mason (1824), and O.S. First Edition 1:500 (1886).

Fig.14:

Water-mill sites. Based on Ordnance Survey first edition 6-inch sheets, with additional information from Dilworth 1976 and V.C.H. Staffs., 17, (1976), 185-6.

Fig.15:

Lower Rushall Street. Based on O.S. First Edition 1:500, with additional information from Wrathmell (1976), field survey in 1988 (Carter's Foundry evaluation, and survey of limestone walls), Mason's plan of 1824 (the stream and the borough boundary) and photographs in the collection of Walsall Local Studies Centre. Published scale: 1:1500.

Fig.16:

Areas of Archaeological Significance. Modern base map, incorporating information from all sections of this report.

Fig.17:

Site 12, section and plan. From BUFAU 1988 evaluation.

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