

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit

Report No. 471

April 1997

**BLACK COUNTRY TRUNK SEWER  
PERRY BARR TO GRAVELLY LINK**

**An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment 1997**

by  
Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit

Report No. 471

April 1997

**BLACK COUNTRY TRUNK SEWER  
PERRY BARR TO GRAVELLY LINK**

**An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment 1997**

by  
Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit

*For further information please contact:*  
Simon Butaux, Iain Ferris or Peter Leach (Directors)  
Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit  
The University of Birmingham  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham B15 2TT  
Tel: 0121 414 5513  
Fax: 0121 414 5516  
E-Mail: [BUFAU@bham.ac.uk](mailto:BUFAU@bham.ac.uk)  
Web Address: <http://www.bham.ac.uk/BUFAU/>

# BLACK COUNTRY TRUNK SEWER PERRY BARR TO GRAVELLY LINK

## An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment 1997

### Contents

1.0:	SUMMARY
2.0:	INTRODUCTION
3.0:	SITE DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION
4.0:	AIMS
5.0:	METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES
6.0:	THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SETTING
7.0:	ASSESSMENT
8.0:	RECOMMENDATIONS
9.0:	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
10.0:	REFERENCES AND SOURCES

### Figures

Fig.1	Location of study area.
Fig.2	Botham's 1794 map of the Township of Handsworth.
Fig.3	Map of Birmingham and its Environs, 1857.
Fig.4	1st edition Ordnance Survey map, 1884.
Fig.5	Area of Perry Mill on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map, 1904.
Fig.6	Area of Holford Mill on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map, 1904.
Fig.7	Area of Perry Mill on the 3rd edition Ordnance Survey map, 1916.
Fig.8	Area of Perry Mill on the 4th edition Ordnance Survey map, 1938.

# **BLACK COUNTRY TRUNK SEWER PERRY BARR TO GRAVELLY LINK**

## **An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment 1997**

### **1.0 SUMMARY**

This report provides an archaeological desk-based assessment of the line of the proposed Black Country Trunk Sewer from Perry Barr to Gravelly Link. It was commissioned by Charles Haswell and Partners Ltd on behalf of Severn Trent Water Ltd. The sources consulted for this assessment included the Birmingham Sites and Monuments Record, published archaeological reports, and archive material, and secondary documentary and map sources held in the archives and local studies sections of Birmingham Central Library.

There are no known archaeological sites along the line of the eastern stretch of the proposed sewer. However, research indicates that the western stretch of the proposed sewer may cross the conjectured line of the Roman road known as Ryknild Street. Although, two mill sites, Perry Mill and Holford Mill, lie close to the line of the proposed sewer, only the site of the millpool of the latter is likely to be affected. The implications of the western stretch of the proposed sewer (subsequently referred to as the study area, Fig. 1) are considered and proposals for an archaeological watching brief are suggested.

### **2.0: INTRODUCTION**

This report provides an archaeological desk-based assessment of the proposed line of the Black Country Trunk Sewer from Perry Barr to Gravelly Link. Birmingham University Field Archaeological Unit (BUFAU) were commissioned to carry out this assessment by Charles Haswell and Partners Ltd, on behalf of Severn Trent Water Ltd. The desk-based assessment was conducted in accordance with the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Department of Environment 1991). The assessment was prepared in accordance with the 'Standard and Guidance for Desk-Based Assessments' (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994).

### **3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION**

The study area extends from Perry Hall playing fields eastwards to the River Tame and the M6 motorway (Fig. 1). The study area comprises the built up area of Perry Barr and the industrial zone of Witton, with recreational grounds in between.

### **4.0 AIMS**

The aims of this assessment were:

- (1) To assess the survival and significance of any archaeological remains along the line of the proposed sewer by means of a search of written records and plans, archaeological records and geotechnical records.

- (2) To propose further archaeological assessment, including, if appropriate, proposals for field evaluation to further determine the potential of the effect of the proposed sewer.
- (3) To propose a strategy to mitigate the impact of any development, if appropriate.

## **5.0: METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES**

The primary source of archaeological information for the study area is the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) for Birmingham, which contains an up-to-date record of all reported archaeological sites, and the recorded findspots of individual artefacts.

Several further sources of archaeological information have proved useful. Historical sources consisted of antiquarian and estate maps, and early editions of Ordnance Survey maps. The archive material consulted included conveyances and plans relating to the mills referred to in the text.

Archaeological reports of excavations provided useful information concerning the effect of recent development close to the proposed sewer. The presence of Romano-British industrial activity in the area has also been discovered by archaeological fieldwork at a kiln site to the south of the proposed sewer.

## **6.0: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SETTING**

There has been limited previous archaeological work within the immediate vicinity of the proposed sewer. Archaeological excavations approximately 0.5km to the south of the study area (Hughes, 1959), on the southern side of Wellington Road, revealed a spread of kiln debris and a considerable quantity of Romano-British pottery dating from the late 1st - late 2nd century AD, including wasters. However, no archaeological features were found, and the focus for this important industrial activity was not located. Archaeological test-pitting (Ferris, 1993) immediately to the north of the 1959 excavation, showed that extensive 19th and 20th century ground disturbance, including cellaring, had truncated any earlier remains. The inspection of ground beam trenches (Jones, 1993), during construction groundworks for student residences immediately to the north of Wellhead Lane, failed to identify the Roman road Ryknild Street, the route of which may have crossed the development zone (Mould, 1993). This suggested that the road had either been destroyed by development, or that it did not cross the development zone (Jones, 1993).

In addition to these archaeological investigations are a number of sites recorded on the Birmingham SMR which are either crossed by, or in close proximity to, the line of the proposed sewer.

### **Perry Mill (SMR 03208) and Old Mill Race (SMR 20414)**

Perry Mill was situated to the south of Old Perry Hall, on the eastern bank of the River Tame. It was fed from the Tame by the 'Old Mill Race' (SMR 20414). It is recorded in the Birmingham SMR as the manorial mill of Perry, and a mill in Perry is referred to in Domesday. The mill is depicted on an estate plan dating from 1720 (not illustrated), and it is also shown on Botham's map of Perry Barr of 1794 (not illustrated). A building in the same location (to the southwest of Home Farm) is marked on the first edition OS map of 1884 (Fig. 4). According to the SMR the mill was demolished in 1890. However, this building continues to appear on subsequent OS editions dating to 1904 (Fig. 5), 1916 (Fig. 7) and 1938 (Fig. 8). The buildings of the former Home Farm appear to have been converted into kennels adjacent to Perry Barr

Stadium (Figs. 1 and 8). It seems probable that these buildings were only demolished following the recent re-development of the stadium area. The map of 1938 also shows that the course of the River Tame has been adjusted and that the Old Mill Race has been infilled and built over.

#### **Holford Mill (SMR 03209)**

According to the SMR Holford Mill was a blade grinding mill until 1855 when it was converted for gun barrel boring. It was then acquired by the National Arms and Ammunition Co. at some time before 1875. The mill, and its associated pond, which lay immediately to the north, are depicted on Botham's map of 1794 (Fig. 2). They were fed by a mill race diverted from the River Tame. The later mill complex is clearly indicated on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1904 (Fig. 6). The SMR states that the remains of the mill lay within the later ICI industrial complex, and that parts of the buildings were still being used as an office and store in 1956. This is also supported by recent research (George Demidowicz pers. comm.).

#### **Roman road Ryknild Street**

It seems probable that the proposed sewer crosses the former line of the Ryknild Street Roman road. An early map of 1857 entitled 'Map of Birmingham and its Environs' (Fig. 3) depicts the road terminating just to the north of the River Tame to the northwest of Holford Mill. A possible continuation of the road may be inferred from Botham's 1794 map (Fig. 2) where a field boundary runs south from the River Tame, skirts the eastern side of Holford's Farm, and extends a short distance to the south of Aston Lane (Peter Leather pers. comm.). Another possible route which is suggested by Botham's map might be further to the west down Wellhead Lane and continuing southwards along a former road (Peter Leather pers. comm.). This road is preserved as a field boundary on later maps, for example the 1884 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 4).

#### **The Wellhead Brewery (SMR 20415)**

The Wellhead Brewery was situated immediately to the north of Wellhead Lane (Ordnance Survey maps 1904 and 1916, Figs. 5 and 7). It subsequently became the site of a metal works (Ordnance Survey map of 1938, Fig. 8).

### **7.0: ASSESSMENT**

*Perry Mill* - The route of the proposed sewer clearly lies well to the north of the former site of Perry Mill. This area has been substantially redeveloped on at least two occasions during the course of this century. Both redevelopments have included the realignment of the River Tame. It seems highly unlikely that any surviving features associated with the former mill would be affected by the proposed sewer.

*Holford Mill* - The proposed sewer lies to the north of the site of the former buildings at Holford Mill. However, the location of the former mill pond and associated features would be affected. From the map evidence it would appear that this site has not been as heavily developed as the surrounding area, suggesting that archaeological features could have survived. There is also the possibility that the silting of the mill pool may have sealed earlier archaeological deposits.

*Ryknild Street* - It seems likely that the proposed sewer crosses the course of the Roman road Ryknild Street. Two hypothesised routes for the road have been suggested above. The proposed sewer crosses the westernmost of these routes, just to the north of

Wellhead Lane. However, an archaeological watching brief immediately to the north of this point (Jones, 1993) failed to identify the road and revealed a considerable degree of relatively recent below ground disturbance. The alternative hypothesis given above is that Ryknild Street may have followed a course further to the east. This area has remained relatively undeveloped and evidence for the road may have survived beneath what are now playing fields.

*Wellhead Brewery* - It does not seem likely that the proposed sewer will affect the site of the former Wellhead Brewery which lies to the north.

## **8.0: RECOMMENDATIONS**

A watching brief is recommended where the proposed sewer would cross the site of the former pond associated with Holford Mill. It is also recommended that a watching brief be carried out where the proposed sewer crosses the playing fields to the east of Wellhead Lane, to attempt to locate the course of Ryknild Street, and also to identify any possible associated archaeological remains. It may be necessary to include a contingency for salvage recording should significant archaeological remains be encountered during the watching brief.

## **9.0: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This assessment was commissioned by Charles Haswell and Partners Ltd on behalf of Severn Trent Water Ltd. The report was researched and compiled by Derek Moscrop. The editing was carried out by Catharine Mould and Gwilym Hughes. The illustrations were prepared by Nigel Dodds. The assistance of the staff of the Birmingham SMR and the local studies and archives sections at Birmingham Central Library is gratefully acknowledged. Special thanks to Peter Leather and Barbara Osbourne (Birmingham Roman Roads Project) for advice on Ryknild Street and to George Demidowicz for his guidance concerning Perry Mill and Holford Mill.

## **10.0: REFERENCES AND SOURCES**

Ferris, I. 1993. *An Archaeological Evaluation at Wellington Road, Perry Barr, Birmingham*. BUFAU Report No.276.

Hughes, H.V. 1959. 'A Romano-British Kiln Site at Perry Barr, Birmingham'. *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society*. 77, 33-39.

Jones, A.E. 1993. *University of Central England, Perry Barr, Birmingham. An Archaeological Watching Brief 1993*. BUFAU Report No.270.

Mould, C. 1993. *Site of Proposed Student Residences, University of Central England Perry Barr, Birmingham. An Archaeological Desk-Top Study*. BUFAU Report No.252.

## **MAP AND PRIMARY SOURCES**

1794. A Plan of Estate in the Township of Perry Barr. Drawn up by Samuel Botham.

1794. Plan of the Township of Handsworth in the County of Stafford. Drawn up by Samuel Botham.

1840. Tithe Map for Perry Barr Township in the Parish of Handsworth.

1842. Tithe Map for Handsworth Township in the Parish of Handsworth.

1857. Map of Birmingham and its Environs.

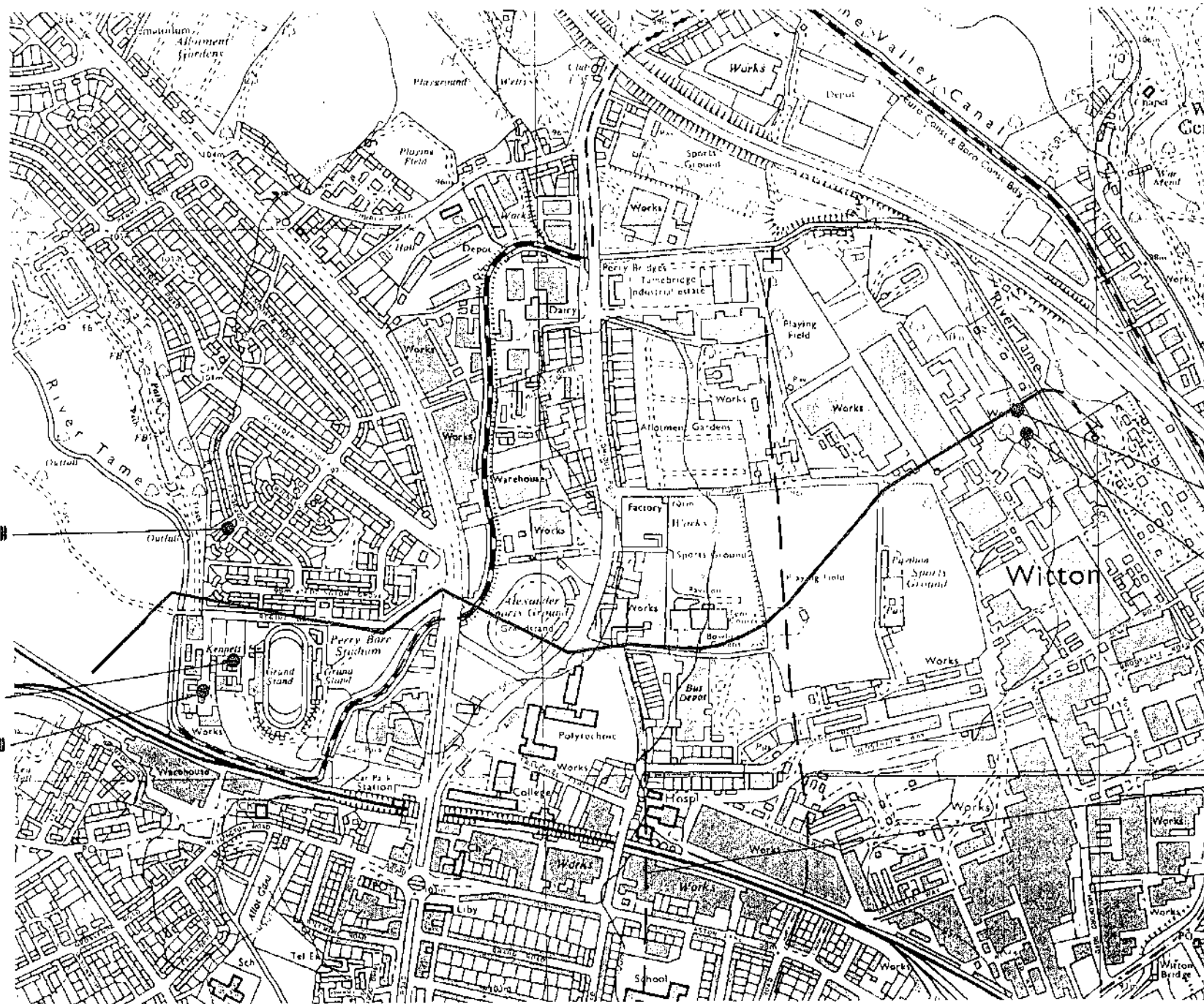
1872. Plan of the Parish of Handsworth.

1879. Map of the District of the Handsworth Local Board.  
1884. Ordnance Survey, First Edition.  
1904. Ordnance Survey, Second Edition.  
1916. Ordnance Survey, Third Edition.  
1938. Ordnance Survey, Fourth Edition.

MS 1246/1. Plan of the River Tame in Perry Barr (1720).  
MS 1246/3. Map of the estate of Perry Barr of John Gough (1776).  
MS 1004/2. Conveyance of blade or boring mill called Holford Mill (1847).  
Jewel Bailee Papers - No.33. Plan of the Estate of John Gough (c.1820).

Copies of the above maps are held in the Local Studies section at Birmingham Central Library. The sources appended with specific reference codes are held in the Birmingham Central Library archives.





Site of Old Perry Hall

Site of Home Farm

Site of Perry Mill

Site of Mill Pond

Site of Holford Mill

Suggested Course of  
Ryknild Street

Fig 1

PLAN  
of the  
TOWNSHIP of HANDSWORTH  
in the  
COUNTY of STAFFORD

Drawn in the Year 1794  
By John Belknap

B A R R E

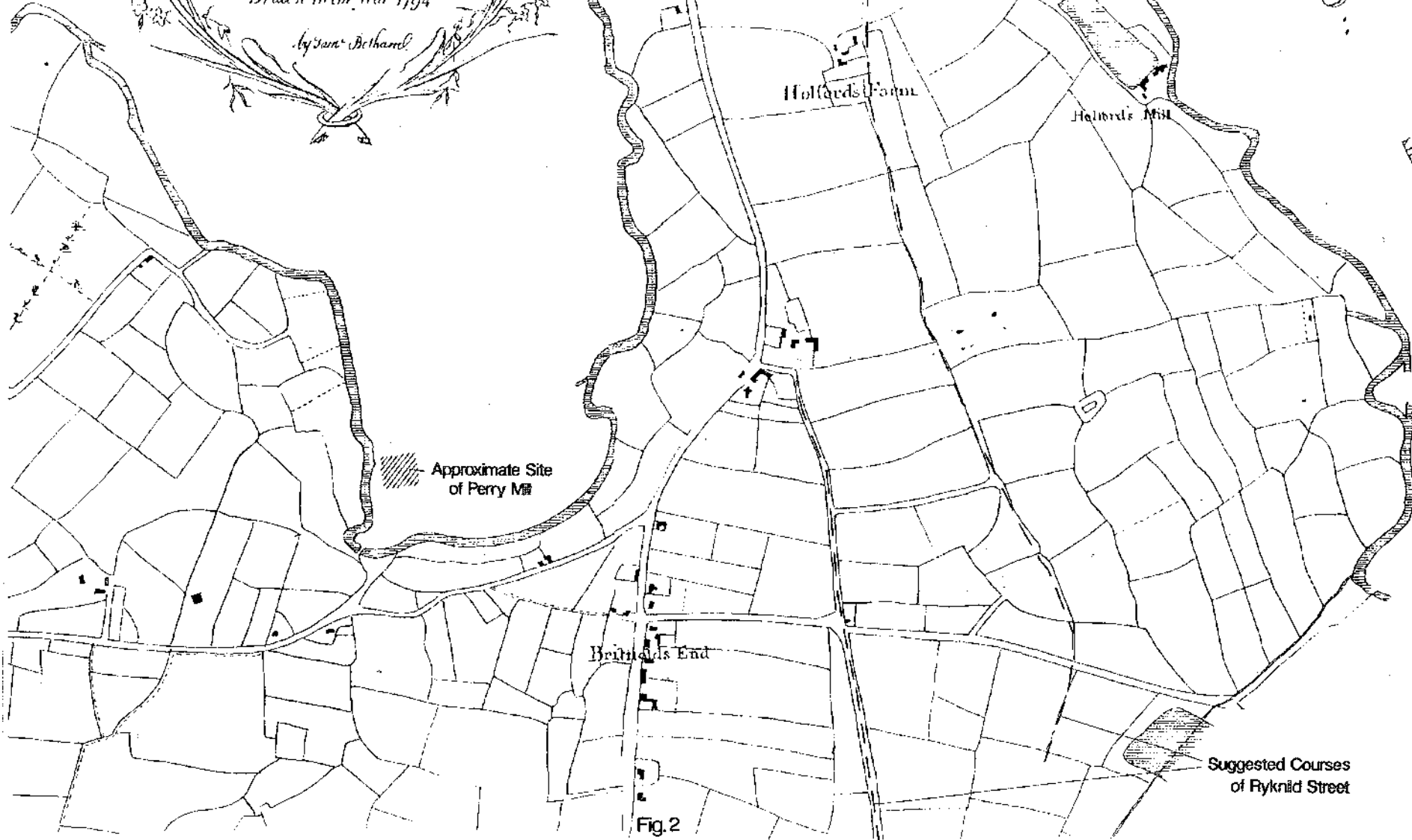
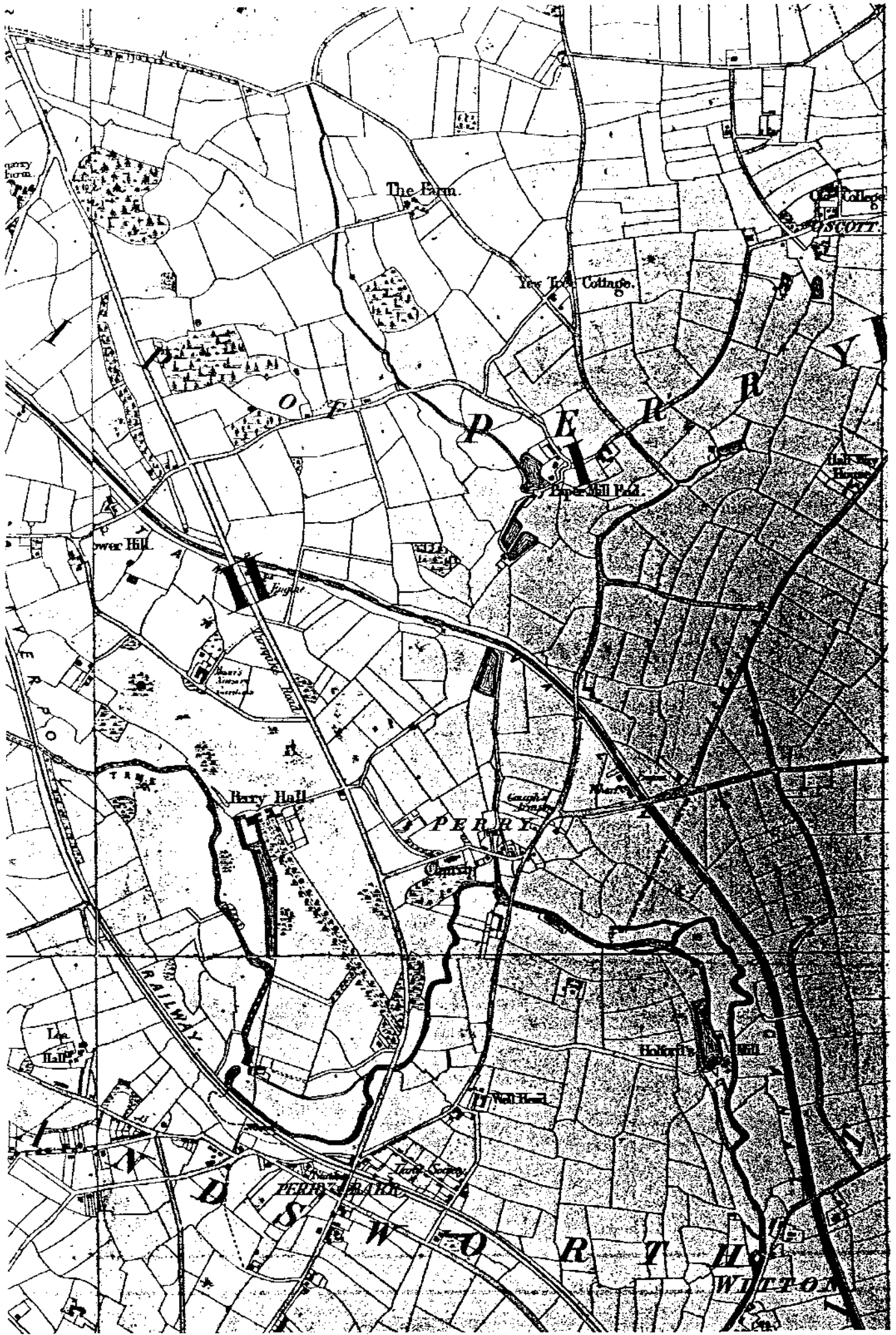


Fig. 2



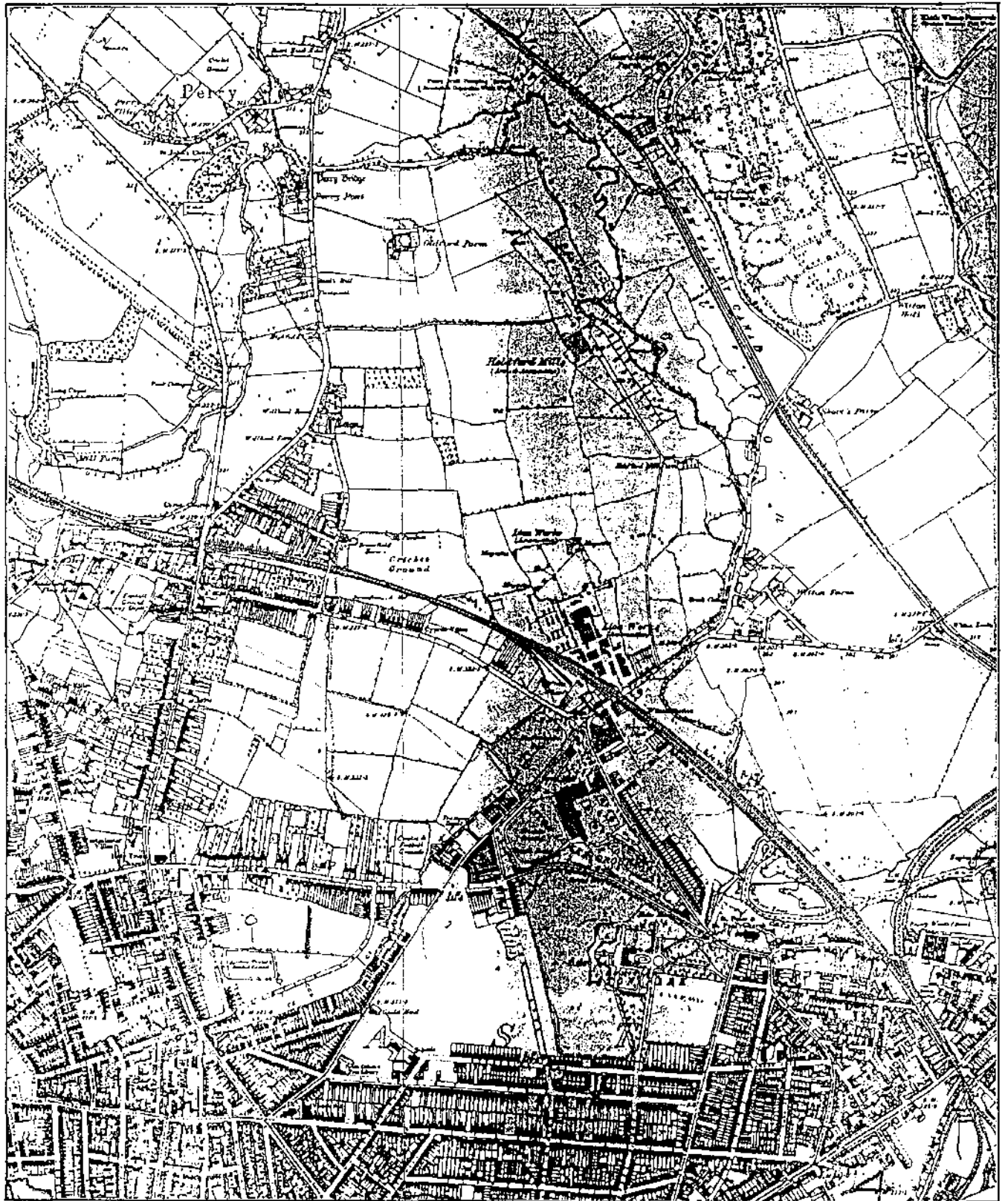


Fig.4



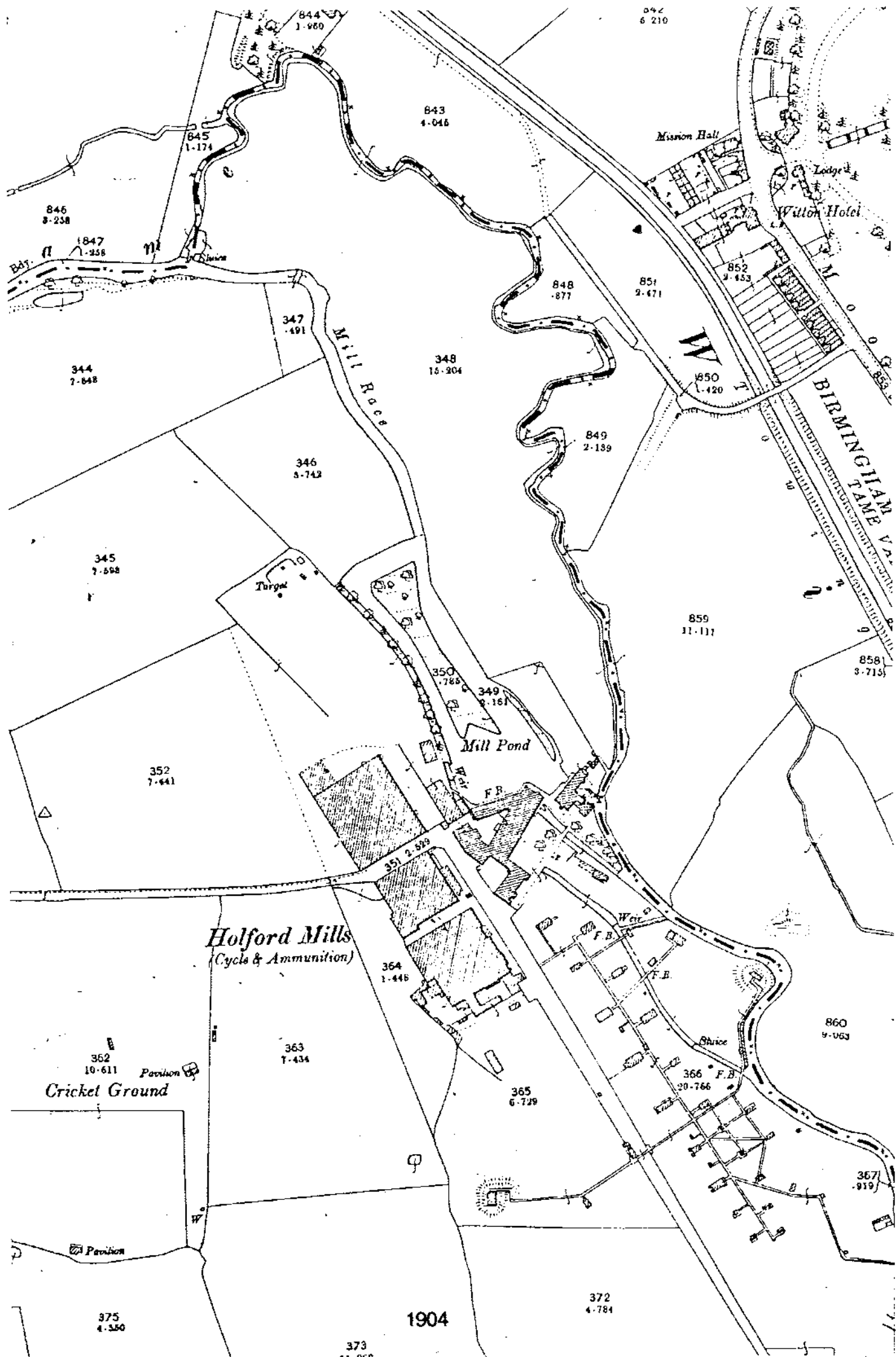
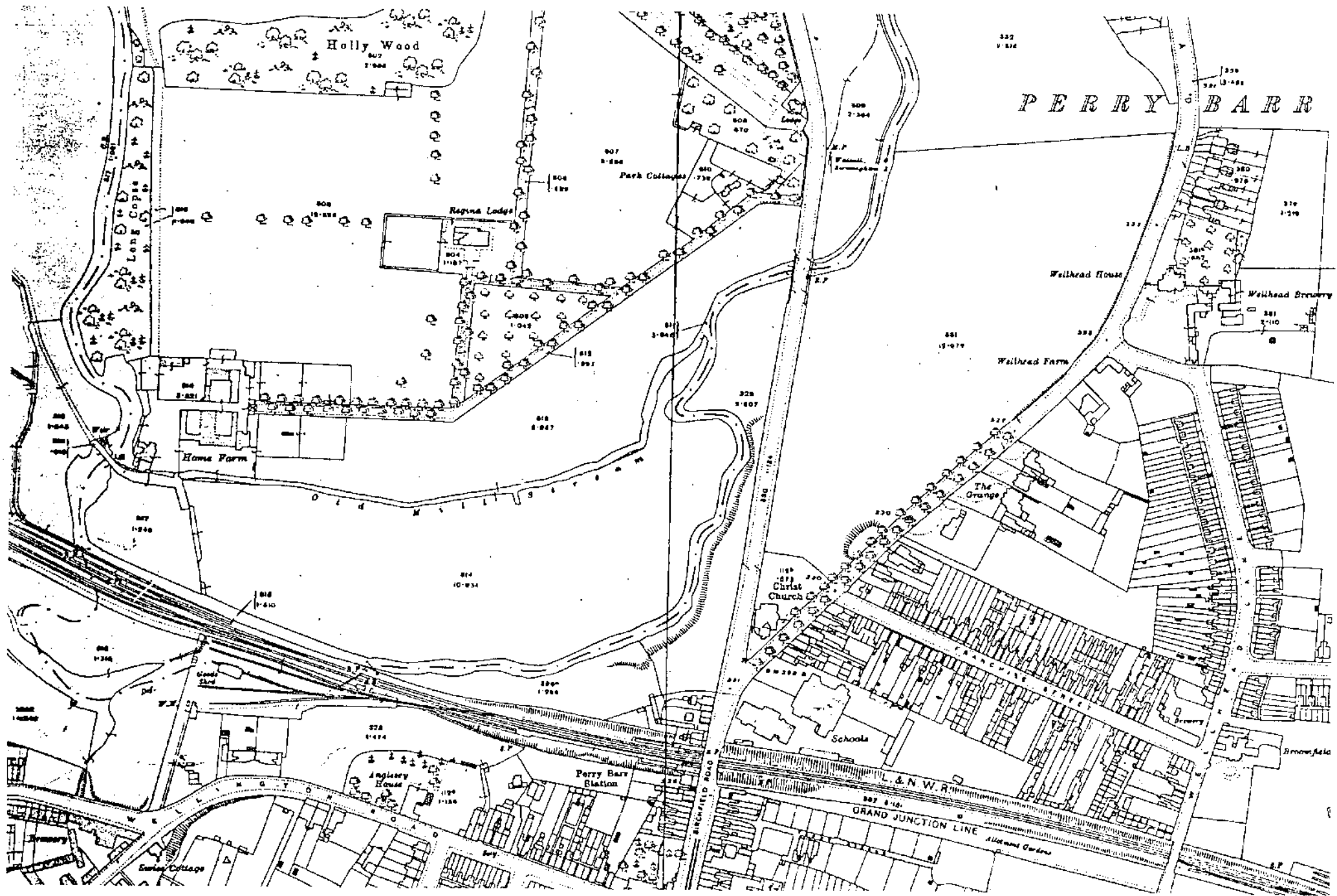
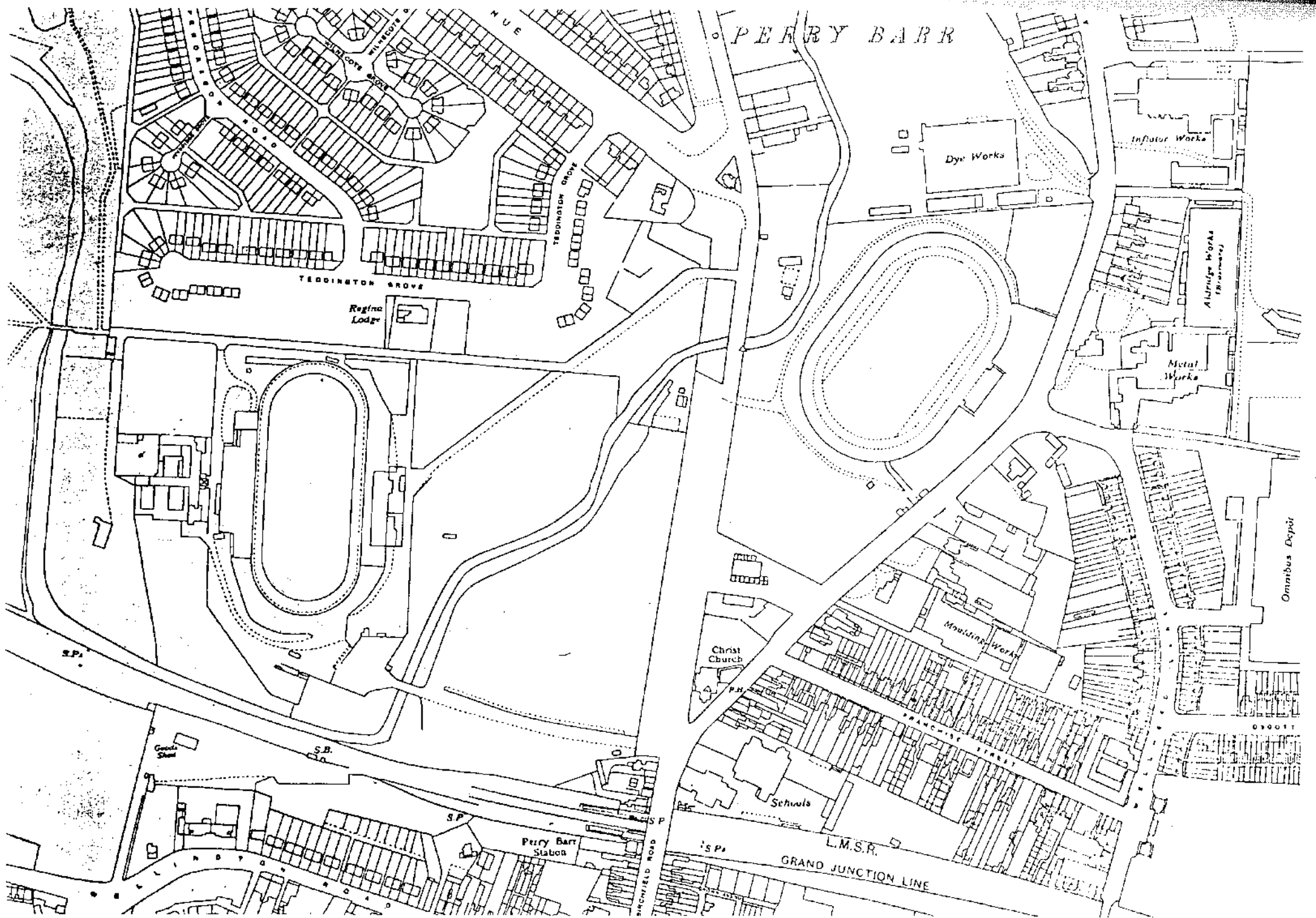


Fig.6



1916 Fig 7



1938 Fig 8