

*BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY
FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT*

**An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment
and Walkover Survey
of New Meeting Street, Oldbury**

1998

B.U.F.A.U.



Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
Project No. 555
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**An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Walkover Survey
of New Meeting Street, Oldbury
1998**

by

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**An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Walkover Survey
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1.0 Summary

A desk-based assessment, commissioned by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, was carried out ahead of proposed development of land in the area of New Meeting Street, Oldbury. The assessment examined the available documentary, cartographic and photographic evidence which led to the identification of discrete zones of potential surviving archaeological remains. It is recommended that these zones should be assessed by the excavation of a series of trial trenches.

2.0 Introduction

The following report describes the results of the first stage of archaeological assessment of land at New Meeting Street, Oldbury, West Midlands (centred on NGR SO 9916 8977), hereafter the Study Area. The land has been targeted for enhancement by Sandwell MBC. Any proposed enhancement of the Study Area may result in the disturbance of buried archaeological remains. An assessment of the above and below-ground archaeology was therefore required by the Department of Planning and Architecture, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, to permit the formulation of appropriate mitigation strategies for the archaeological resource.

The assessment consisted of a search of documentary and cartographic sources, published and unpublished written records and a walkover survey of the Study Area. Sources of information are referenced in Appendix 1. The report was produced by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of the department of Planning and Development Services, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, following a brief prepared by Ruth Waller, Planning Archaeologist for Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (Waller 1998). The brief for this work is reproduced as Appendix 2. The guidelines set down in the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessments* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994) were also followed. A general introduction will first place the Study Area in context, followed by a consideration of the area's present character, incorporating the results of the walkover survey, a historical and archaeological profile of the area, a consideration of above and below-ground archaeological potential, an assessment of the archaeological resource, and recommendations for an archaeological response. Illustrative maps are included to depict aspects of the area's archaeological and historical character.

3.0 Location of Study Area (Figure 1)

The Study Area is located immediately to the north of Oldbury town centre (centred on NGR SO 9916 8977). It encompasses an area bounded by Bromford Road, New Meeting Street, Queen Street, the line of a former canal and by a school playing field. An outlying piece of land is located immediately to the east of the canal, adjacent to Poplar Road.

4.0 Geology and Topography

The majority of the Study Area is located on Carboniferous rocks, including purple and ochreous marls with green grits and conglomerates. It is within these rocks that coal seams are found. Due to faulting, older rocks such as Cambrian diorite and quartzite have been brought to the surface (British Geological Survey 1955). The Study Area is situated on higher ground which is bounded by the route of the former Birmingham Canal. It consists of grassed-over areas with trees and hedges around some of the boundaries. The Study Area comprises an open recreation ground and a tarmaced play area.

5.0 The Study Area in a Historical Context

As no archaeological investigation has been conducted within the Study Area this profile is based solely on a study of the available documentary, cartographic and photographic sources.

The name 'Oldbury' itself comes from -old -borough which is a Saxon word signifying an ancient place or town of account (Harris 1850). An ancient castle and causeway is reputed to have stood somewhere in the vicinity of Oldbury where ruins were apparently visible in the mid-18th century. In the mid-19th century there were no traces whatsoever (Harris 1850). One reference claims that the town of Oldbury was a Roman Camp or station, the reason being that a so-called branch of the Ikniel Way, the '*Portway*' passed near, if not through, Oldbury. However, Margary in his study, contains no reference to 'Portway' in Oldbury (Margary 1973).

At the time of the Domesday Survey, Oldbury was part of Halesowen Manor and was held by the Earl of Shrewsbury. The Manor was annexed to Shropshire and remained so until 1844, when it became part of Worcestershire. Before the rise of Birmingham, a number of important settlements lay round the fringes of the plateau on which Birmingham was situated. Oldbury was located near to a coalfield (Middle Coal Measures) and no doubt exploited this mineral resource. The medieval period saw a symbiotic lifestyle which involved land cultivation and metal-working, along side trades such as textiles and leather. Likely sources for iron would have been outcrops of ironstone in Dudley and Walsall (Birmingham 1950). The mechanisation of the fulling process in the 14th century saw the beginnings of an industrial revolution, when the number of mills rose and a complex network of roads came into being.

The dissolution of the monasteries in 1536 saw the break-up of ecclesiastical estates which came into the hands of laymen who were eager to exploit their newly-acquired resources. New technological processes were being introduced into the iron industry during the 16th

century which, along with other developments, resulted in a period of great economic activity throughout the West Midlands. This, in turn, would lead to changes in the cultural landscape. The ever-growing population of metalworkers and miners gave impetus to the development of new towns and villages.

It was the mineral resource and the location of James Brindley's Birmingham Canal (built around 1772) which led to Oldbury's industrial pre-eminence. The canal allowed both the assembly of the raw materials for the iron industry and the despatch of the finished metal. One reference states that in 1796 the vast majority of furnaces were situated near a canal basin (Birmingham 1950). From 1800 onwards the towns continued to grow. People were moving from the countryside into towns, due to the work associated with the coalfield, leading to an increase in the population, and in order to meet the demands of this growing population the old semi-rural villages began to expand.

As the West Midlands evolved into an industrial region, the semi-rural landscape decreased. Towns were spreading out along the main roads, pit heaps covered the fields, and a railway network emerged across the land. The number of furnaces and forges greatly increased in this period and a group of blacksmiths' forges named 'Brades Works' was established in Oldbury around 1860. The emergence of Brindley's network of canals meant that firms which had been primarily based in Birmingham now sought sites in areas such as Oldbury in order to build new factories and expand production. Oldbury is also known for its chemical industry, which dates to the early part of the 19th century, and the steel tube industry which had its beginnings at the start of this century. In 1966 Oldbury became part of the county Borough of Warley which in 1974 combined with West Bromwich to form Sandwell.

6.0 A Detailed Assessment of the New Meeting Street Study Area

The evidence will be discussed and evaluated under the following sub-headings: Present Character; Historical and Archaeological Profile; Standing Buildings; Below-Ground Information; Archaeological Potential; and Recommendations for an Archaeological Response.

Present Character incorporates the results of a walkover survey and includes a description of the modern environment. The **Historical and Archaeological Profile** outlines historical development and provides details of any previous archaeological work. **Below-Ground Information** covers information from a site inspection and anticipated ground disturbance. The section on **Archaeological Potential** summarises the potential of the Study Area for further archaeological field evaluation in the light of evidence gleaned by archaeological assessment to date, and is designed to give an indication of the potential importance of surviving archaeological deposits. This section should be read in conjunction with the following **Recommendations for an Archaeological Response** to potential development works.

6.1 Present Character (Figure 1)

The main Study Area is bounded by Bromford Road, New Meeting Street, Queen Street and the line of the Birmingham Canal. In addition to this, there is small piece of land located immediately to the east of the canal, adjacent to Poplar Road. The area is owned by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.

The recreation ground consists of a mainly grassy area with a tarmaced play area at the southern end. Three terraces are visible in the remaining area, running down to the limit of the old canal, possibly a result of levelling of buildings which formerly stood here. The canal itself has been filled in and grassed over, and the underside of the bridge which crosses the canal on Bromford Road has been bricked up. The line of the canal can be followed right across the Study Area. A maintained footpath can be seen running along this line and beyond the boundary of the area. It is likely that this was once the former towpath. The land to the southeast of the Slaughter House, and the area adjacent to Queen Street, consists of overgrown scrub. Old property boundaries have been respected and are defined by chicken-wire fencing, and the remains of structural debris are still visible. The land immediately to the north of the school playing field lies on a different slope. This is probably also the result of levelling after the demolition of buildings.

The area which contains a Non-Conformist burial ground and former chapel consists of a grassed area, bounded on the northeast by sections of hedge which would appear to follow the line of the old canal. Slight undulations in the ground level were visible in this area.

The area located on the opposite side of the canal is surrounded by residential housing. The edges are defined by a rough fence and trees. The structure within this particular area is still standing but in a derelict condition, and access was not possible due to thick undergrowth and modern rubbish tipping. Where New Meeting Street actually runs into the Study Area it has become covered in undergrowth. Some of the guttering and parts of the tarmac surface are still visible today.

The majority of the Study Area is used for public recreation. Although the grass and paths are well maintained there is a large amount of tipping across the area.

6.2 Historical and Archaeological Profile

6.2.1 Previously-recorded sites

There are no listed sites within the Study Area on the SMR, but entries relating to other parts of Oldbury give an indication of the history and archaeology.

A flint scraper was found in Oldbury (SMR 2802) and though its exact provenance is unknown it is thought to be Neolithic or Bronze Age. A possible Iron Age Hillfort (SMR 4020) may also have been located in Oldbury. Numerous sources make reference to the word 'castle', including the Oldbury and Langley Tithe Award, 1845 and the Halesowen Court Rolls in 1306. As yet there is no physical evidence to confirm this.

Entries relating to the Medieval period are more numerous. Archaeological excavations have taken place in the town centre (Barnsby 1967, Hodder 1992) and in Church Street (Hodder 1987; SMR 1732). In 1967 Medieval pottery was recovered and in 1987 a series of pits was revealed which contained late-Medieval or early-Post-Medieval pottery. These rubbish pits imply that there would have been dwellings of some description along the frontage of Church Street (SMR 6205). A Chapel dedicated to St. Nicholas (SMR 2828) was built in Oldbury in 1529. This was demolished in 1840 and was replaced by Christ Church. The Oldbury and Langley Tithe Map and award describe there being a moat at Blakeley Grange (SMR 2815), and this is thought to date to the Medieval Period. Ogilby's Map dating to 1675 (not illustrated) marks the site of Blakeley Mill (SMR 6354). The Mill was first mentioned in 1302 but there are no surviving traces today. As mentioned above, there are no sites within the Study Area itself, but this may be because no comprehensive survey has been carried out here. All of the entries listed above fall within a kilometre square around the Study Area and they show that there was activity in Oldbury dating to the Medieval Period and possible contemporary or earlier activity within the Study Area should not be ruled out.

Entries post-dating the Medieval Period are more numerous and will be discussed more fully below. Most of the entries relate to buildings dated to the 19th century and include the TSB Bank (SMR 1446), The Junction Public House (SMR 1448), Christ Church (SMR 1450), and a Methodist Church (SMR 1456). The Wesley Chapel in Church Street dates from 1853 (Maddison 1991). The Big House (SMR 1424; Plate 2) is located on Church Street and is thought to be the oldest standing building in Oldbury. It dates to the early-18th century and the cellars have revealed foundations of an earlier structure.

6.2.2 Map evidence

1577 (Map 1)

Saxton's Map Of Staffordshire, dated 1577 (Map 1), shows Oldbury as having a Chapel; 'Oldbury chap'. The caption is accompanied by a pictorial representation of an ecclesiastical building. A 1682 map produced by Joseph Browne (Map 2) is similarly annotated. Although these maps do not provide us with detailed information, they do show that there was a settlement in existence.

1775 (Map 3)

On Yates' map of 1775 (Map 3) one can see a pattern of development associated with Oldbury. The church or chapel is still depicted and the roadways are marked. The structures which have been annotated tend to be focused on either side of the road in a ribbon-style development pattern

1845

A tithe map dated to 1845 (not illustrated) confirms that the Study Area contained a '*Wesleyan Chapel and burying ground*'. The remainder of the area comprises houses, allotments and gardens. The property boundaries are consistent with those evident today

1857 (Map 4)

A map produced in 1857 by Charles Henry Blood (Map 4) shows more detail than those mentioned above. It depicts roads and waterways with their corresponding names, railways,

and field and property boundaries. An idea of the industrial activity in the area can be obtained by simply looking at the text on the map. These include a number of collieries, a glassworks and an iron foundry. Although the Study Area can be located upon this map by using New Meeting Street and the Birmingham Canal, the finer detail is not clear. The only discernible features are a number of structures fronting both New Meeting Street and Bromford Road.

1889 (Map 5)

The Ordnance Survey First Edition map dated 1889 (Map 5) has no annotated text within the Study Area but there are a number of visible structures. Fronting Church Street at the southern end there is a terrace of buildings. Their position on the main street may indicate that they were houses and, or shops. Adjacent to this block of buildings is a defined strip of open land. Further back from the Church Street frontage there are a number of buildings, at least two of which have property boundaries defining areas of open space. The location of the Birmingham canal directly to the northeast of these buildings suggests they may have been canal-related. To the east of this concentration of buildings there is a relatively open area which has a boundary, running approximately north-south, dividing it in half. The western half contains two buildings, one situated near the canal and the other fronting what is now New Meeting Street. The latter of the two has a smaller subsidiary building attached to it. The eastern half is roughly triangular in shape and contains a single building, which the tithe map evidence suggests was a chapel. The area of land between the canal and what is now known as Queen Street is occupied by two blocks of buildings marked as 'Steam Saw Mills'. The final piece of land within the Study Area is located on the opposite side of the canal adjacent to Poplar Road. The map shows two buildings, Broadwell Villa in the north and Broadwell Cottage to the south. The names on the map may be an indication of their importance within this area, possibly as the homes of local important people, such as landowners or millowners.

1919 (Map 6)

The 1919 edition of the Ordnance Survey map (Map 6) demonstrates both change and continuity in the basic groundplans of the buildings. Those buildings which face directly onto Church Street and those located behind appear to be in the main unchanged, but although the groundplans have not changed, the function of the buildings may have. The piece of land which previously contained only two buildings is, by 1919, completely built up. The building which was nearest to the canal appears to have been demolished and replaced by a much larger structure looking directly onto the canal. It is uncertain whether the building facing New Meeting Street was demolished, or incorporated into the new building phase. It is possible that the new structures may have been associated with war-time industry. The location of the Oldbury Railway Carriage and Wagon Works to the east of the canal may reflect a general boom in industry. The building in the triangular area of ground, is labelled as a disused mortuary chapel and burial ground. The area relating to the steam saw mills remains largely unchanged, and the area to the north of the canal has a number of additional buildings. It is unclear as to whether or not the villa and the cottage still remain at this time.

1938 (Map 7)

The 1938 edition of the Ordnance Survey map (Map 7) shows further changes to the Study Area. The buildings fronting Church Street have been demolished and the area has been

designated as a recreation ground. The structures to the east are still standing, apart from one strip of land which would appear to be completely open. The burial ground is still annotated on the map but the chapel no longer appears.

1956 (Map 8)

An Ordnance Survey Map produced in 1956 (Map 8) sees the recreation ground remaining unchanged except for the planting of some trees. Adjacent to this recreation ground on the eastern side, a block of buildings has been annotated as a slaughter house. The groundplans of the buildings remain unchanged from 1889. Buildings along the street frontages have been allocated numbers, allowing a greater understanding of the property boundaries. To the rear of these is the ruin of a chimney. The large structure fronting the canal to the west of the burial ground functions as a warehouse at this time. The area of saw mills has been developed in to a large engineering works. The area to the north of the canal has remained relatively unchanged since 1919. Although there have been a number of changes to the Study Area throughout time, a number of things have remained relatively constant. The layout of the roads has not been infringed upon and old boundary lines which divide the Study Area have been respected. The canal remains on the same course from 1775 onwards. Post-1938, it has been labelled 'old line'.

6.2.3 Below-Ground Information

No specific geotechnical information is available for the Study Area and no previous archaeological work has been carried out. A combination of site inspection, and examination of historical information and photographic records, can provide an indication of below-ground conditions.

6.2.4 Standing Structures

There are two standing structures within the Study Area. They comprise a bricked-up bridge crossing the canal on Church Street and a derelict building (Fig.1), which was probably related to an industrial area by the canal.

6.3 Archaeological Potential

As stated above, without specific below-ground information from archaeological evaluation trenches and geotechnical investigation, definition of areas of archaeological survival may best be characterised in terms of zones of potential survival (Zones 1-6, Figure 2).

References indicate the medieval settlement (SMR 6205) was centred south of the Study Area, close to the present position of Christ Church. The Study Area is within the area of the putative medieval settlement, and possibly also the Iron Age and Saxon settlement areas. Property divisions within the Study Area seem to have remained relatively consistent over time, which suggests that at least the topography of the medieval settlement has been preserved. Deposits revealed in the excavations at Church Street (SMR 1732) were well-preserved but shallow, and it is likely that archaeological remains in the Study Area will have

been affected to some degree by subsequent development, particularly along the street frontages. Any surviving archaeology is likely to consist of features relating to backplots, such as rubbish pits, field and property boundaries. There is also a possibility that remains relating to the pre-medieval settlement may survive in those areas which have remained free of structures over time.

Zone 1 comprises the Birmingham Canal which runs along the northern edge of the main site and to the south of Zone 6. The canal itself is approximately 15m wide. Its depth is unknown as it has been backfilled and grassed over. The below-ground deposits are likely to have been extensively truncated in this zone. A bridge crossing the canal is still in use today but its underside has been bricked up.

Zone 2 comprises an area measuring approximately 60m x 20m. From 1938 up to the present day this zone has been designated as recreation ground and there are no surviving structures. Maps dating back to 1857 demonstrate that there were structures situated on the street frontage and immediately adjacent to the canal until at least 1919. It is likely that any below-ground deposits in these areas will have been truncated. However, evidence from the various maps shows that some of the structures had open spaces or backplots associated with them, and it may be possible that below-ground deposits in these areas may survive.

Zone 3 comprises an area measuring approximately 50m x 30m. It is bounded on the south by New Meeting Street and by the Birmingham Canal to the north. From the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1889 up until the 1956 edition it is evident that this zone has had a continuous period of domestic and, or industrial structures. Pockets of archaeology may survive in the backplots of the buildings fronting New Meeting Street and the area to the southwest of the warehouse. The below-ground deposits in the remainder of Zone 3 are likely to have been truncated by buildings.

Zone 4 comprises an area roughly triangular in shape, measuring approximately 1200 square metres. From 1857 this zone was marked as a burial ground and appears to be largely unaffected by later buildings. This zone is also noted as being a burial ground. There is considerable potential in this area for the survival of human remains. Any earlier deposits are likely to have been heavily disturbed by burial activity.

Zone 5 comprises an area approximately 30m x 70m and is bounded by Queen Street and New Meeting Street and cuts across the northern end of Albert Street. As with Zone 3 this area has been continuously built on since 1889 (Maps 5-8). The below-ground deposits within this zone are likely to have been heavily truncated by industrial buildings. The only likely survival of archaeological deposits in this zone is in the backplots of the buildings fronting the former Albert Street and Queen Street, but these areas have been considerably disturbed by services.

Zone 6 covers the area situated on the opposite side of the canal, bounded by the Birmingham Canal and adjacent to Poplar Road. The zone is approximately 1900 square metres. This area has been less heavily built on than the other zones, with more ground having been left open. Boundaries from former strip fields may exist in this area. A single derelict building remains in this area. It was probably associated with an industrial area by the canal.

7.0 Recommendations for an Archaeological Response

The recommendations below provide an outline for the level of archaeological mitigation within the Study Area. However, the precise nature of such mitigation would be dependent upon any additional information provided by geotechnical and other below-ground works, and would need to be approved by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council. It is hoped to place the maximum of trial trenches within the area. These trenches are to be 20m x 1.5m. Ideally, all of these trial trenches will be excavated to a length of 20m, but, in practice, they may be shorter due to problems with space, and in order to avoid services.

Zone 1

It is recommended that no trenches be placed within Zone 1 because the canal will have destroyed all remnants of archaeological deposits. However, it may be appropriate for a RCHME Level 1 photographic survey of the bridge on Church Street to be carried out.

Zone 2

Ideally, this zone should be evaluated by the excavation of one trial trench. However, the current use of this zone as a children's play area, and the consequent Health and Safety implications, precludes any below-ground assessment.

Zone 3

This zone has two potential areas which may contain surviving archaeological deposits. It is recommended that one trench be located across the backplots fronting New Meeting Street, and another within the small area behind the site of the warehouse and New Meeting Street property boundaries.

Zone 4

It is recommended that two trial trenches be located in this area to test for the extent of the burial ground and the potential for survival of human remains.

Zone 5

There is potential for survival of archaeological deposits in the backplots of the buildings fronting Queen Street and the former Albert Street, but the area is criss-crossed by services. It is recommended that a trial trench be located in this area, if it is practical to do so. The eastern part of Zone 5 has little archaeological potential. The engineering works will have been very destructive to below-ground deposits and the risk of contamination makes it an undesirable area to locate a trial trench.

Zone 6

There is a comparatively large amount of land in this zone which has never been developed. It is recommended that two trial trenches be excavated, one on an east-west orientation and one on a north-south orientation, in order to try and locate possible strip field boundaries. It may also be appropriate for a RCHME Level 1 photographic survey to be carried out.

8.0 References

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9.0 Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1

Appendix 1: Catalogue of Cartographic, Documentary and Photographic Sources Consulted

Saxton's Map of Staffordshire. 1577.

Joseph Browne's Map, 1682.

Yate's Map 1775

Tithe map and award of the Townships of Oldbury and Langley in the Parish of Halesowen, 1845

Charles Henry Blood's Map, 1857.

Ordnance Survey, 1889.

Ordnance Survey, 1919.

Ordnance Survey, 1938.

Ordnance Survey, 1956.

Maddison, John. 1991 Oldbury and Rowley Regis in old photographs.

Appendix 2

BRIEF FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT NEW MEETING STREET, OLDBURY

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This document is the brief for the two stage programme for an archaeological evaluation to be carried out on an area of land at New Meeting Street, Oldbury, Sandwell in advance of development. It sets out the requirements for a detailed desk top assessment and field evaluation of the area.

1.2 This brief should be used by archaeological contractors as the basis for the preparation of a detailed archaeological project specification. In response to this brief contractors will be expected to provide details of the proposed scheme of work, to include the anticipated working methods, timescales and staffing levels.

1.3 The detailed specifications will be submitted for approval to the Borough Archaeologist of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council. The client will be free to choose between those specifications which are considered to adequately satisfy this brief.

2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

2.1. The area to be investigated is situated approximately 0.5 miles to the north of the town centre of Oldbury, in the Borough of Sandwell, West Midlands. The site of the proposed development lies to the north and east of New Meeting Street and Queen Street. The centre of the development site is at national grid reference SO9916 8977 and is shown as Figure 1 overleaf.

3. PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 The development proposed is currently for an indicative scheme comprising 12 large family houses surrounding an area of green space.

Broadsell
Industrial
Park

Owner of Slaughter House to be contacted so that future intentions can be identified.

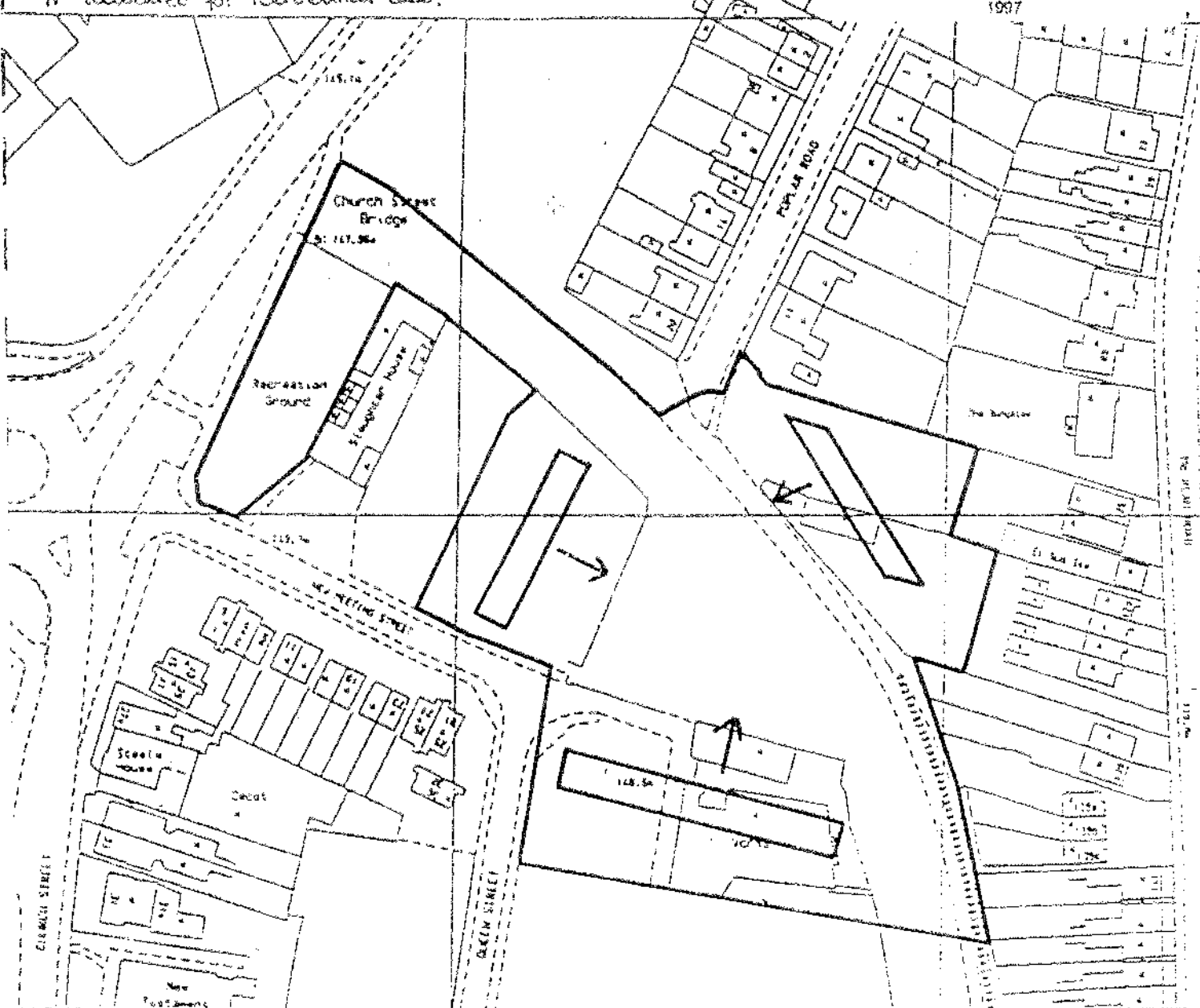
This site and land to the west allocated for commercial use in the UDP, remainder is allocated for residential use.

Based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

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1997



Indicative layout shows residential development surrounding a central green area of open space.

IBURY

FIGURE 1

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 The entire proposed site of development lies within an Area of Potential Archaeological Importance as designated in Sandwell M.B.C.'s Unitary Development Plan. The area may contain the buried remains of the medieval village which have been shown by recent excavations in other parts of Oldbury to be well preserved and to be shallow deposits. The area also contains visible historic landscape features including property boundaries which follow the lines of strip divisions of Oldbury's medieval open fields.

4.2 Excavations at Church Street, approximately 300 metres to the south west of this site, in 1967 and 1987 revealed pits of 15th or 16th century date, cultivated soils and property boundaries (SMR 1732). Further excavations in 1988 at Birmingham Street/Church Street revealed 17th century deposits (SMR4019).

4.3 Historic maps also show an area designated as "Burial ground" to lie within the proposed area of development on this site. The 1904 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map shows a non conformist burial chapel on the site with the designation "burial ground". The extent of this burial ground must be defined as part of the archaeological evaluation.

5. REQUIREMENT FOR WORK

5.1 Prior to this scheme of development being undertaken a detailed desk top assessment and a field evaluation must be carried out. The desk top assessment phase must be completed prior to the field evaluation.

5.2 Any adjustments to the brief for the evaluation should only be made after discussion with the Borough Archaeologist of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council. If any major archaeological discovery is made it is hoped that this be accommodated within the scheme and preservation in situ of the remains be given due consideration.

5.3 The purpose of the archaeological evaluation should be to gather sufficient information to establish the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits. This information can then be used to make an informed planning decision.

5.4 The investigation should be carried out by a recognised archaeological body in accordance with the code of conduct of The Institute of Field Archaeologists.

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METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF SANDWELL

LAND FOR HOUSING

NEW MEETING STREET

OLD BURY

25 DWELLINGS

DEREK RAMSON: B.Sc. (Tech) C. Eng

DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES.

scale 1:1250	tracing no
date JULY 1971	drawing no 16/04/134

DTS.118

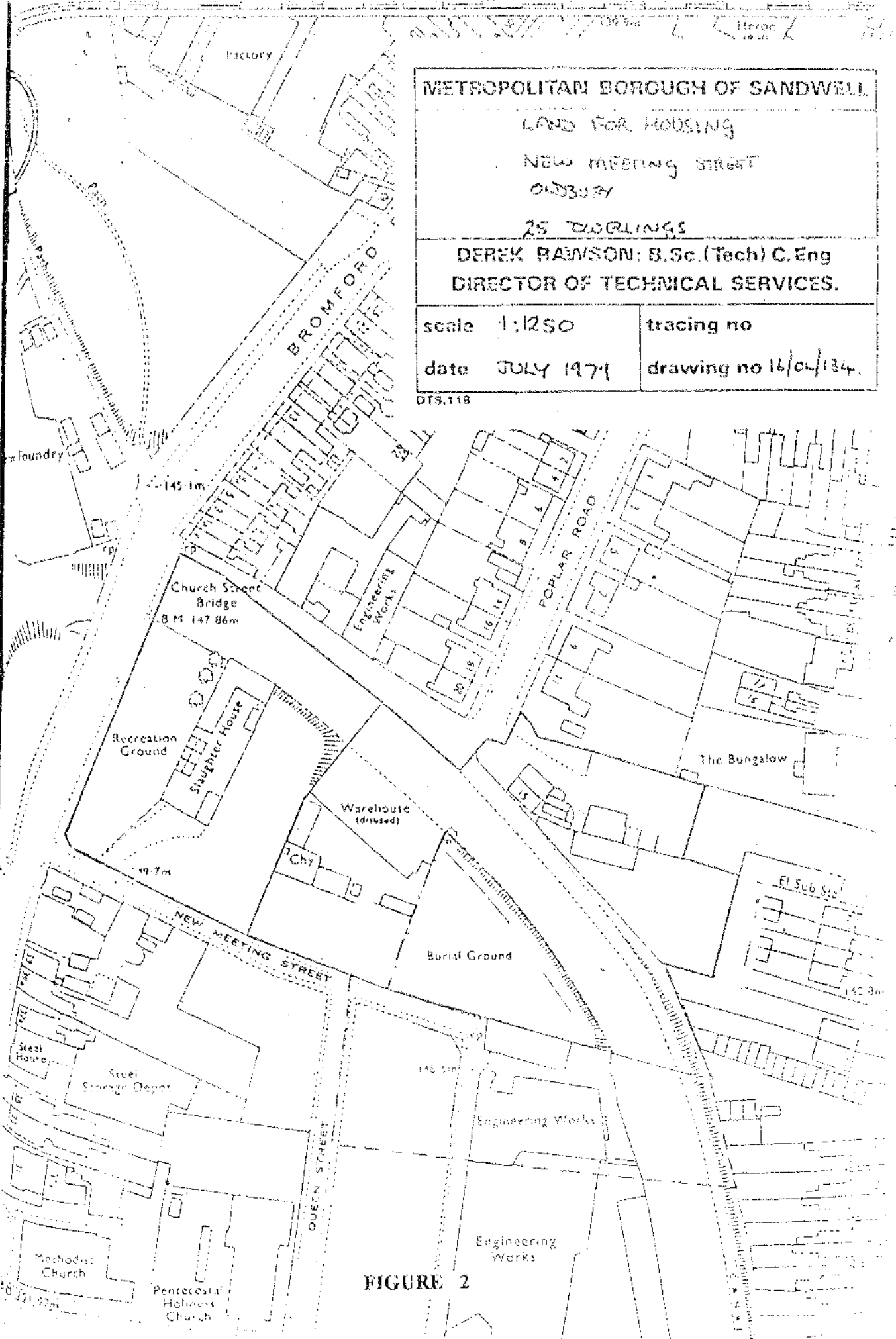


FIGURE 2

6. STAGES OF WORKS AND TECHNIQUES

6.1 The archaeological evaluation must be preceded by a fully detailed desk top assessment. This will indicate the presence of any archaeological constraint hitherto unidentified. As this detailed desk top assessment will be followed by a field investigation of the remains identified and an evaluation of the threat to their survival in situ, the project specification must be sufficiently flexible.

6.2 The desk top assessment should include an assessment of the site both within the local and regional context. It should highlight any particularly relevant research priorities which may be addressed by this project.

6.3 In order to ensure that all possible archaeological constraints are evaluated all secondary sources must be consulted as part of the desk top assessment. Sources to consult should include:

- 6.3.1 West Midlands County Sites and Monument Record;
- 6.3.2 All Ordnance Survey maps;
- 6.3.3 Tithe, Enclosure Award and Parish maps (where appropriate);
- 6.3.4 Historical documents, particularly those held in the Staffordshire Archives Office;
- 6.3.5 Archaeological books and journals;
- 6.3.6 Unpublished reports and archives (where appropriate), particularly those of the Sandwell Borough Archaeologist;
- 6.3.7 Aerial photographs;
- 6.3.8 Any other sources deemed appropriate;
- 6.3.9 A visit to verify the site conditions.

6.4 The specification will be expected to contain a reasoned discussion of field evaluation techniques selected for the evaluation phase. The rejection of a particular technique must be explained. Consideration should be given to field walking, site survey, geophysical survey and the observation of geotechnical pits (if appropriate) as well as the undertaking of archaeological test-pits as possible field evaluation techniques. When preparing the specification, account must be taken of the local geology, topography and land use as it affects the feasibility of the various techniques.

6.5 The evaluation should also take into account environmental evidence and provide an assessment of the viability of such information should further archaeological work be carried out.

7. METHODS

7.1 In consideration of methodology the following details should be given in the contractor's specifications:

- 7.1.1 A projected timetable must be agreed for the various stages of work;
- 7.1.2 The staff structure and numbers must be detailed. This should include lists of specialists and their roles in the project;
- 7.1.3 It is expected that all on-site work will be carried out in a way that complies with the relevant Health and Safety Legislation and that due consideration will be given to site security;
- 7.1.4 The techniques applied in field survey, if undertaken, must be described in full. These should include the conventions applied in earthwork survey presentation, the spacing of transects and the presentation of statistical data from field walking and the plotting of aerial photographs.

7.2 Excavation is a potentially destructive technique and the specification should include a detailed reasoning behind the application of this technique. The following factors should be borne in mind:

- 7.2.1 the use of an appropriate machine with a wide toothless ditching bucket;
- 7.2.2 the supervision of all machine work by an archaeologist;
- 7.2.3 the machine should be used to remove topsoil down to the first archaeological horizon;
- 7.2.4 the most recent archaeological deposits are not necessarily the least important and this should be considered when determining the level to which the machining will be carried out;
- 7.2.5 when archaeological features are revealed by machine these will be cleaned by hand;
- 7.2.6 a representative sample of every archaeological feature must be excavated by hand (although the depth of surviving deposits must be determined, it is not expected that every trench will be excavated to natural);
- 7.2.7 any human remains encountered must be left in situ and only be removed if absolutely necessary. The contractor must comply with all statutory consents and licences under the Disused Burial Grounds (Amendment) Act 1981 or other Burial Acts regarding the exhumation and interment of human remains. It will also be necessary to comply with all reasonable requests of interested parties as to the method of removal, reinterment or disposal of the remains or associated items. Attempts must be made at all times not to cause offence to any interested parties.
- 7.2.8 it is expected that an approved recording system will be used for all on-site and post field-work procedures.

8. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

8.1 The Borough Archaeologist of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council will provide a monitoring programme to ensure that fieldwork meets the specification. To facilitate this she will require at least seven days notice prior to the commencement of the work.

9. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

9.1 The final report must be produced in two stages. There must be a preliminary report of the desk top assessment. This report must:

- 9.1.1 summarise all available information;
- 9.1.2 provide a comprehensive list of all sources consulted along with an explanation if sources detailed in section 6.2 are not consulted;
- 9.1.3 outline all possible options for further work, including recommendations for alterations to the original evaluation specification;

9.2 The second stage shall be an evaluation report which should be a straight-forward account of the fieldwork carried out and should be produced within two months of the completion of the fieldwork phase. If this is not possible then the Sandwell Borough Archaeologist must be consulted at the earliest possible opportunity. The report should include:

- 9.2.1 plans of the trench layout and features therein;
- 9.2.2 tables summarising features and artefacts together with a full description and brief interpretation;
- 9.2.3 plans of actual and potential deposits;
- 9.2.4 a consideration of the importance of the findings on a local, regional and national basis;
- 9.2.5 a consideration of the evidence within the wider landscape setting;
- 9.2.6 a critical review of the effectiveness of the methodology;
- 9.2.7 recommendations for further work or aspects to be considered as part of the archaeological strategy to mitigate the impact of the development to be adopted by the developer.

9.3 A copy of the desk top assessment and evaluation reports must be deposited with the Sandwell Borough Archaeologist, the developer and with the West Midlands County Sites and Monuments Record.

10. ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

10.1 Arrangements must be made with the land-owner(s) and/or developers for the deposition of the object and paper archive. Preliminary discussion must take place prior to fieldwork commencing and the receiving museum must be named at the tender stage.

10.2 The archive should be produced in the form set out in that museum's conditions of acceptance of archaeological archives. The local museum should be contacted at the earliest possible opportunity so that the full cost implications of the archive deposition can be taken into account.

11. PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION

11.1 The deposition of a copy of the report with the West Midlands County Sites and Monuments Record and the Sandwell Borough Archaeologist will be deemed to put all the information held into the public domain, unless a special request is made for confidentiality. If material is held in confidence a timescale must be agreed with the Sandwell Borough Archaeologist, but it is expected that this shall not exceed six months.

11.2 A short note should be presented to the editor of West Midlands Archaeology and consideration be given to a full account being published in due course.

13. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

13.1 This document attempts to define the best practice expected of an archaeological evaluation but cannot fully anticipate the conditions that will be encountered as work progresses. However, changes to the approved programme of evaluation work are only to be made with the prior approval of the Sandwell Borough Archaeologist.

13.2 Further contact addresses:

Ms Debbie Richards,
Collections Manager
Wednesbury Museum,
Holyhead Road,
Wednesbury, Sandwell
West Midlands, WS10 7DF
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Fax: 0121 505 1625

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Sandwell Borough Archaeologist,
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council,
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Tel: 0121 569 4025
Fax: 0121 569 4072

Ms Hilary White,
Sites and Monuments Record Officer,
West Midlands County Sites and Monuments Record,
Joint Data Team, Clarendon House,
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West Midlands, B91 3RZ.
Tel: 0121 704 6930
Fax: 0121 704 6554

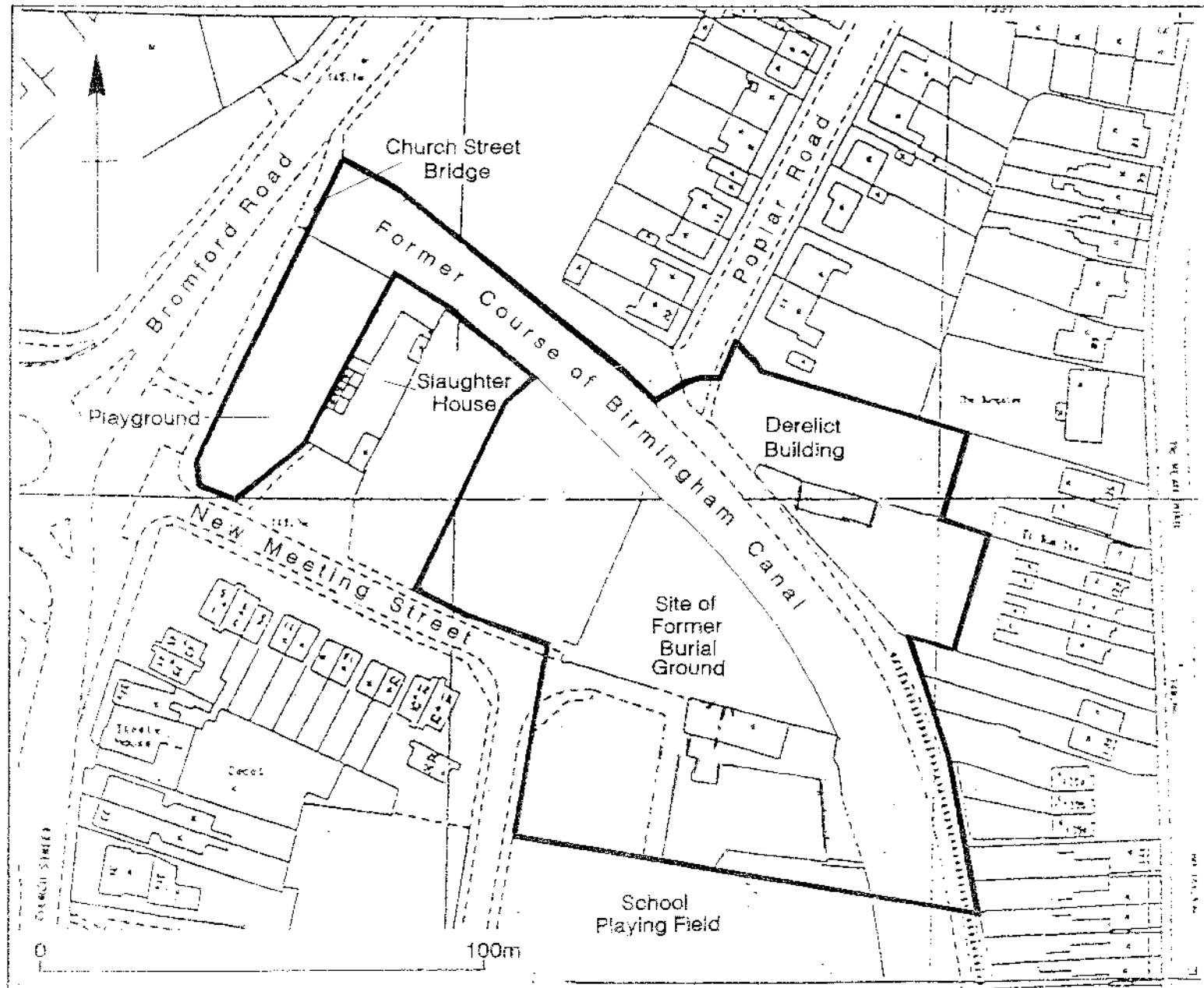


Fig 1

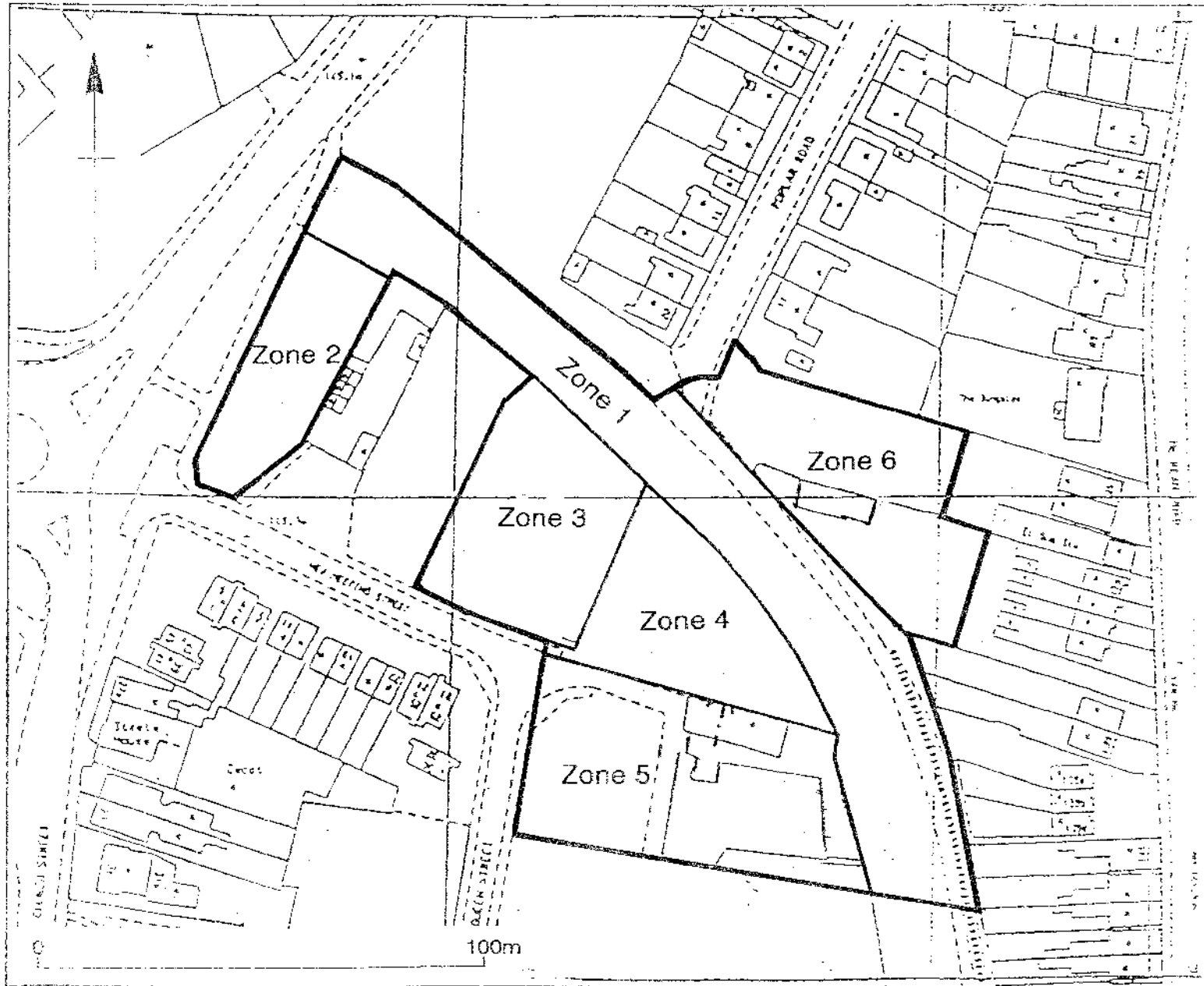


Fig.2

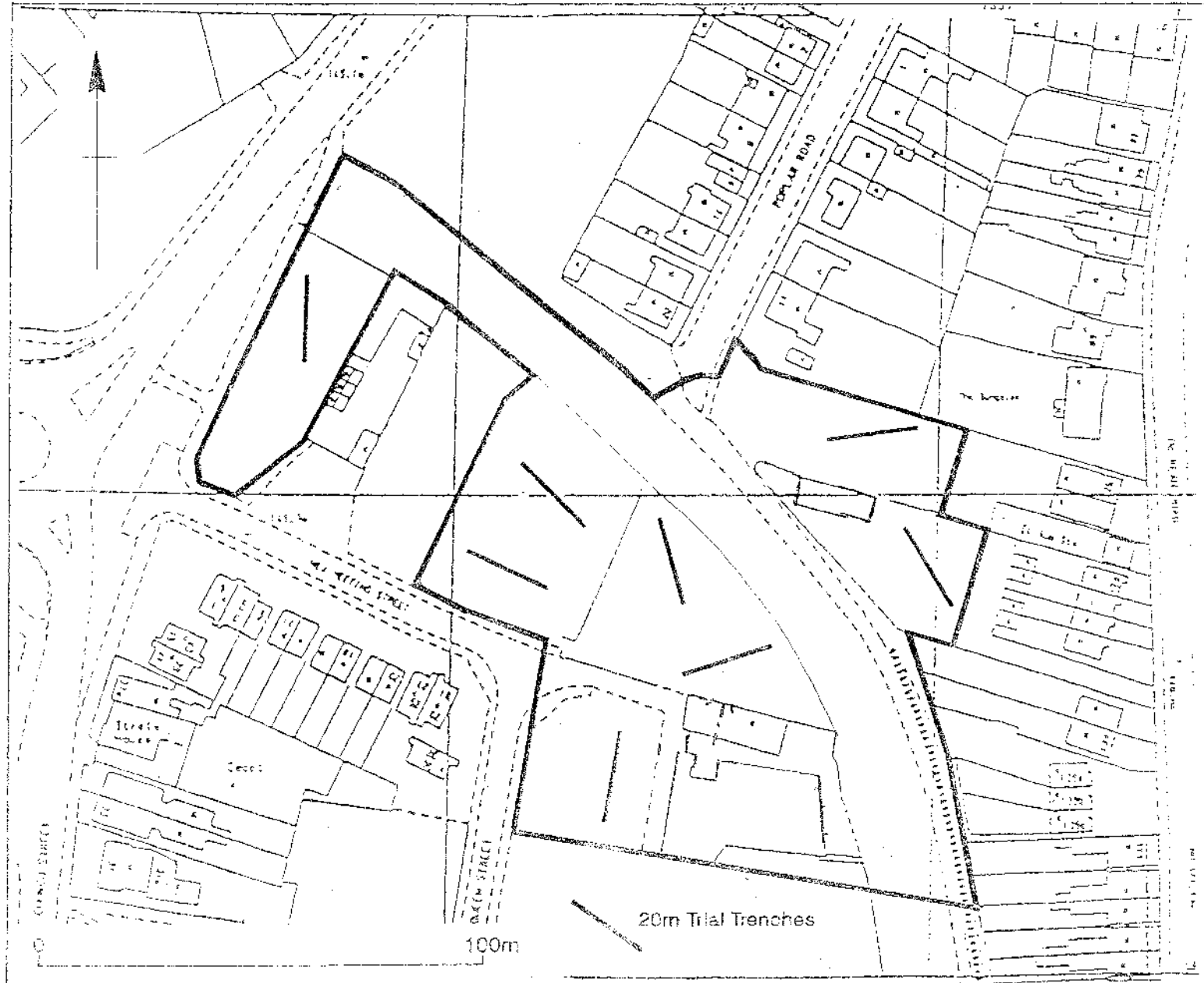


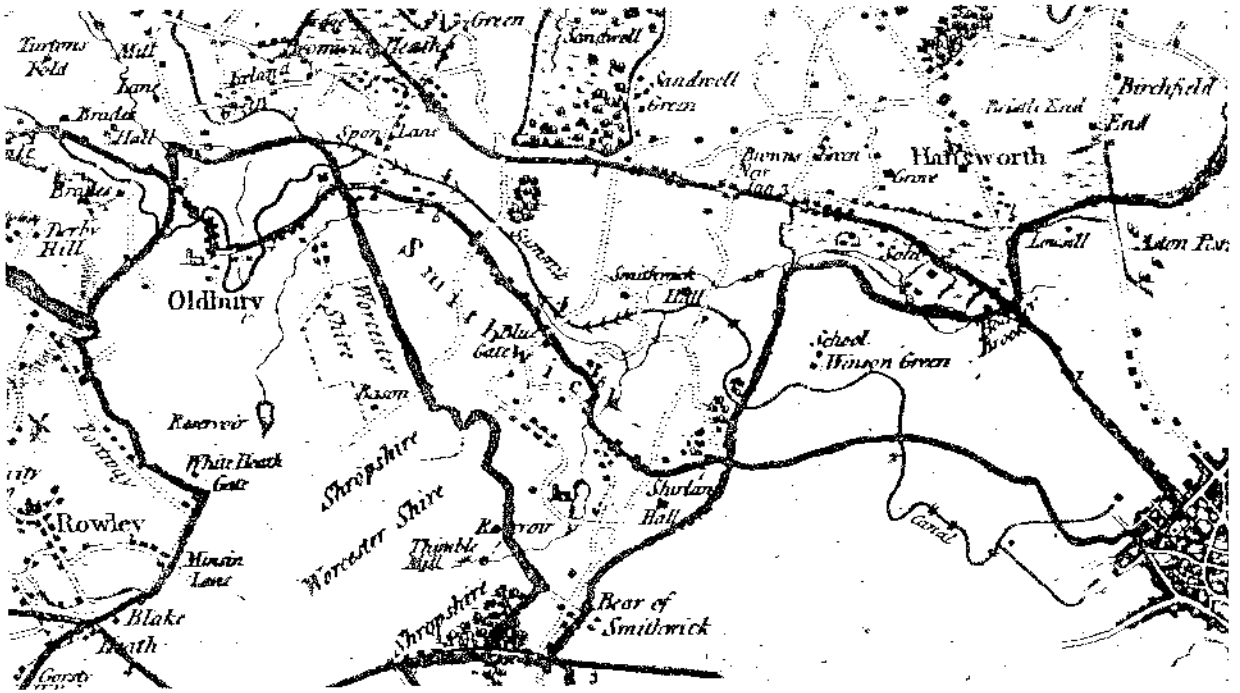
Fig.3



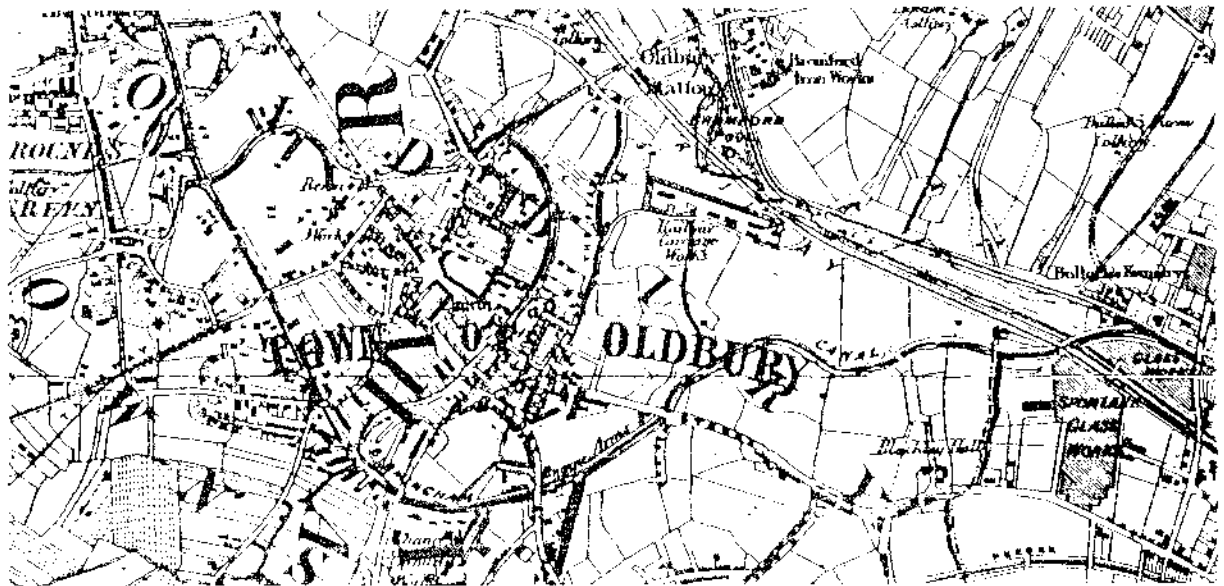
Map 1



Map 2



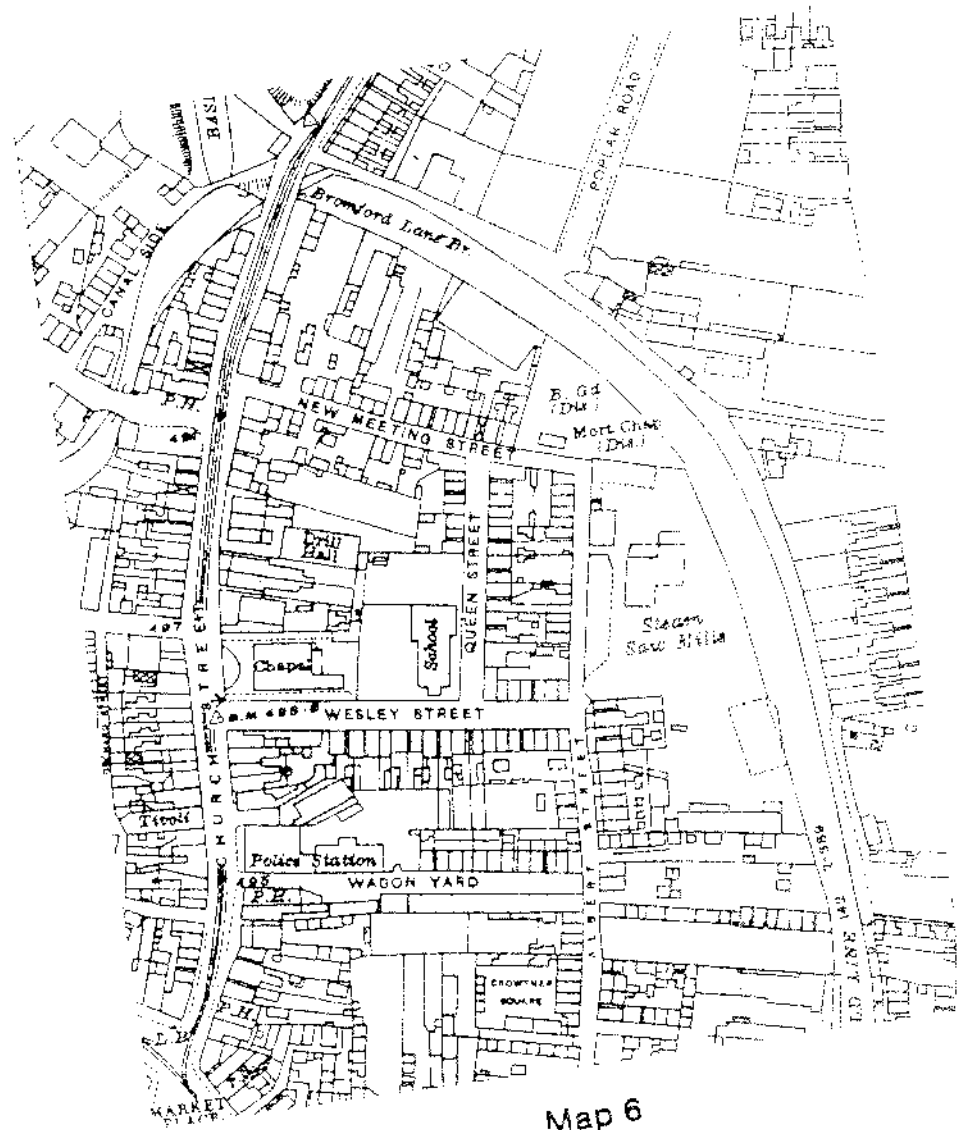
Map 3



Map 4



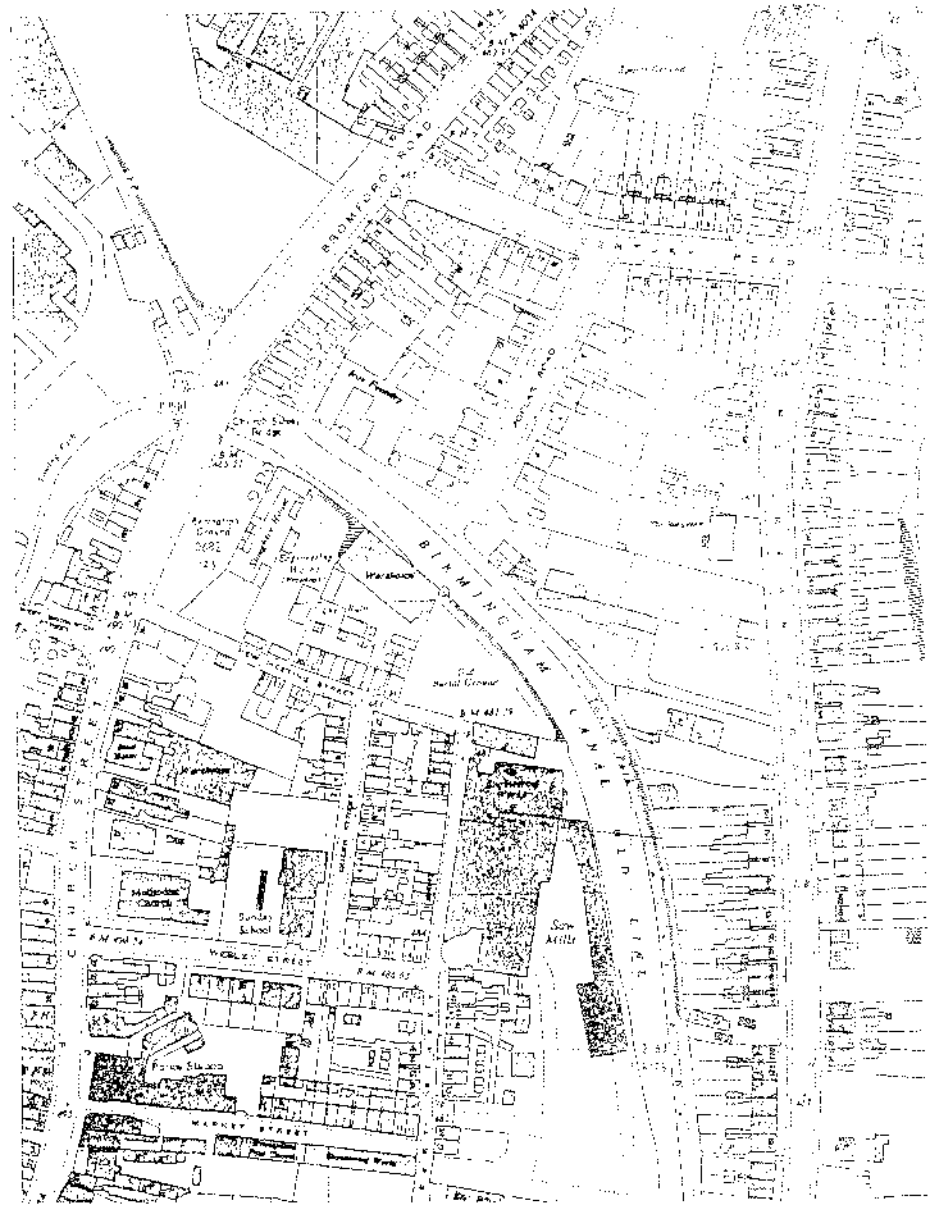
Map 5



Map 6



Map 7



Map 8



Plate 1



Plate 2