

**Old Hall Street,
Wolverhampton**

**An Archaeological Desk-Based
Assessment: Phase II**

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
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Old Hall Street, Wolverhampton
An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment: Phase II

by
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Old Hall Street, Wolverhampton

An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment: Phase II

1.0: Summary

This report describes the results of a desk-based assessment of a site at Old Hall Street in Wolverhampton, West Midlands (NGR SO391660/298410), ahead of proposed development. The work, involving the use of computerised mapping systems, enabled historic features and below-ground interventions to be overlain onto a modern Ordnance Survey base map, thereby providing an indication of areas of disturbance and areas of archaeological potential prior to a field evaluation being undertaken. The assessment identified areas of potential archaeological significance which may have remained unaffected by later development.

2.0: Introduction

This archaeological assessment has been prepared by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) on behalf of Wolverhampton Metropolitan Borough Council, ahead of proposed development by Heantun Housing Association on a site at Old Hall Street in Wolverhampton in the West Midlands. This programme of work was carried out in addition to a recent desk-based assessment (White 1996). It involved two main aspects: firstly, the plotting of historic features, including the former Old Hall and Moat, from the historic maps of Wolverhampton onto a modern Ordnance Survey base, and secondly, the gathering and plotting of cellarage and modern below-ground interventions (eg services and borehole data) onto the same Ordnance Survey base. These tasks were carried out with the use of computerised mapping and GIS software. The assessment was prepared in accordance with a Brief prepared by Mike Shaw, the Black Country Archaeologist, on behalf of Wolverhampton Metropolitan Borough Council (Appendix 1).

3.0: Site Location and Description

The site is centred on NGR SO 391660/298410 (Figure 1), within the southern part of Wolverhampton town centre, and comprises an area of about 6 hectares. It is bounded by Bilston Street in the north, Garrick Street in the west, and St. George's Parade in the south and east. Old Hall Street bisects the site from east to west. The site contains a number of buildings, including the College of Adult Education and the Central Library. Other areas of the site consist of car-parking areas and derelict ground (Figure 2).

4.0: Objectives

The objective of this assessment was to identify areas of archaeological potential and areas of possible disturbance within the site in order to enable the targeting of trial-trenches for the field evaluation stage of the work. The specific requirements for the

work, as defined in the Brief, involved the plotting of features shown on the historic maps onto a modern Ordnance Survey base, and the plotting of cellarge, services, and borehole data onto the same base.

5.0: Archaeological Background

The previous desk-based assessment, (White 1996), has described the historical and archaeological background of this area of Wolverhampton in detail, so only a brief summary is given here.

Wolverhampton has seen little previous archaeological work, and finds from the prehistoric and Roman periods are extremely limited. Medieval pottery was found during an excavation at St. Johns Street in 1983 (SMR 5391). Pottery of 12th-13th century date was also recovered from excavations across the "Ditch" (SMR 2575) by Malam in 1982. This ditch is shown on Taylor's 1755 map of Wolverhampton, running north of, and parallel to, Bilston Street. In 1989, further trenches were cut across the ditch by Lang, and revealed heavy truncation by 19th century cellarge. Various dates have been suggested for its provenance, including Saxon, medieval, and post-medieval, but investigation has so far proved inconclusive.

The Old Hall Street site lies within a Conservation Area and immediately south of Bilston Street, which is an ancient routeway. This area lay outside the probable location of the defensive earthworks of the main settlement of Wolverhampton, but due to its location at a meeting of important routes, it has been suggested that the area may have had significance prior to the building of the Old Hall (SMR 2557) on the site.

Taylor, on his 1751 map, depicts the Great Hall and its associated gardens surrounded by a substantial moat. White (1996) points to the fact that the buildings shown within the moat are not centrally positioned and that this could indicate that earlier buildings may have existed in this area. It is thought, from the study of illustrative and photographic material, that the Old Hall may have originated in the 16th century, but it and the substantial buildings, possibly barns, shown to the south-west of it, have not been securely dated. The house has also been known as Levesons and Turtons Hall. In 1575, it was owned by the Leveson family, who made their fortune in the wool trade.

By 1842, as depicted on the tithe map, the moat had been infilled and the Old Hall building had been substantially extended. Towards the end of the 19th century, it was largely used as a Japanning factory and for the production of tin goods. In 1883, it was demolished.

In 1982, a trench was excavated between Old Hall Street and Bilston Street by Malam and Thom (SMR 8631). No plan is available of the exact location of the trench, but it is known to have been cut adjacent to the site of the college. A 'peaty' deposit was identified at the bottom of the trench, about two metres below the surface. The upper fills produced post-medieval material.

6.0: Method

Significant features within the proposed development site, shown on the historic maps, were related to Ordnance Survey base maps by scanning and geo-rectifying the relevant sections of the historic maps against the Ordnance Survey Landline data, and then digitising polygons representing the features. Historic features digitised included the Moat, its associated buildings, and later additions. As there was no available data for cellarage within the proposed development site, the outlines of all buildings within the site from geo-rectified 19th-century maps were digitised, as a guide to where cellarage may be expected to occur. The maps used are listed in the Sources section of this report and reproduced in Appendix 2. Electricity, water and gas services were digitised from paper base maps provided by the utility companies, and similarly, the locations of boreholes were digitised from paper base maps provided from a report by SP Associates. Unfortunately, no information regarding the location of the previous trial trench on the site was available. Problems encountered during the process of geo-rectification are discussed later, in Section 7.1.

A range of different software was utilised during the project, including Idrisi GIS software, Cartalinx digital mapping software, and Arcview GIS software. The results of the assessment have been produced as hardcopy (Figs. 3-9) and digitally as individual Mapinfo tables.

7.0: Discussion of Results

7.1 Accuracy of Geo-rectification

During the course of the last century, Wolverhampton has undergone extensive changes in the area of the development site, in particular the road layout and buildings. This made it very difficult to find enough points of correlation between the modern Ordnance Survey plan and the historic maps in order to achieve the most accurate geo-rectification possible. Too few well-distributed points leads to distortion of the resulting rectified image. This problem was also compounded by the inherent inaccuracy of the historical maps themselves. In particular, the 1751 Taylor map does not represent a vertical view of the site, and the 1842 and 1852 maps proved very difficult to rectify, probably due to the inaccuracy of the original surveying.

Due to the problems outlined above, it was decided that the most accurate method possible was to rectify the 1889 Ordnance Survey map against the modern Ordnance Survey Landline data, as the 1889 map was the most accurately surveyed of all the historic maps, and contained the most corresponding points. The earlier historical maps were then rectified against the geo-rectified version of the 1889 map.

Inevitably, some distortion has occurred as a result of these problems, as is nearly always the case when dealing with historic mapping data, and particularly so in the case of this area of Wolverhampton, where such wholesale changes in the urban landscape have taken place over the course of the twentieth century. Some small manual corrections have been made to eradicate the most prominent distortions. However, providing that these inherent inaccuracies are taken into account when

utilising the digitised data, the assessment has provided an extremely useful picture of the development of the site over the last 250 years, highlighting areas of archaeological potential which are likely to have remained unaffected by later disturbance. This has enabled the formulation of a highly focused trial-trenching strategy.

7.2 Historical Features (Figures 3 and 4)

As shown on Figures 3 and 4, the moat and its associated buildings underwent a period of change between 1751 and 1842. The moat was infilled and the Old Hall buildings were substantially extended to the south and west. It is not possible to ascertain the exact amount of extension to the Hall buildings, as on Taylor's map they are highly stylised and drawn three-dimensionally. However, the possible farm buildings shown outside and to the south-west of the moat, are shown in plan and these appear to have remained substantially the same in regard to their ground-plan and position from 1751 to 1842. On the 1842 map, the Old Hall building is labelled Turton's Hall.

7.3 19th-Century Buildings and Cellarage (Figs 5-7)

The purpose of displaying the location of these buildings was to indicate areas where cellarage may potentially exist on the site, as the exact location of any cellarage remains is not known. Not all of these buildings are likely to have possessed cellars, so Figures 5, 6 and 7 simply provide a guide to areas which may have been subject to cellar disturbance.

The main Old Hall building appears to have undergone relatively little change between 1842 and 1852 (Figure 5), and is still labelled 'Old Hall,' although the label 'Tin Works' may also apply in part to the building. The associated buildings to the south-west have gone and been replaced by new buildings, and many other new buildings can be seen to have been erected on the site. Some of these, including the building later labelled as the Vicarage, have been built in the line of the former Moat. It is unlikely that foundations associated with these particular buildings will have destroyed archaeology associated with the Moat, as they are not likely to have been deep enough to have caused extensive disturbance.

By 1871 (Figure 6), the Old Hall is no longer labelled as such. Neither is it truly recognisable, as it appears to have been subdivided into many smaller units, presumably in use as industrial buildings. Many other buildings are in existence on the site, more of which are built over the line of the former Moat.

The Old Hall buildings were demolished in 1883. The 1889 Ordnance Survey map shows the area formerly occupied by them as an empty space. There are substantially fewer buildings on the site by this time. Figure 7 shows that there are few areas remaining which have not seen any disturbance at all, although it must be borne in mind that not all these buildings would have possessed cellars.

7.4 Borehole Data (Figure 8)

Four boreholes were sunk in the southeast corner of the site on a tarmac car-park, the locations of which can be seen on Figure 8. Borehole 2 found Made Ground, consisting of brick, coal fragments and plant remains at a depth of 0.70 - 2.30m. Plant remains were also found to a depth of 1.65m in Borehole 3. Borehole 4 contained Made Ground to a depth of 3.60m. None of the boreholes appear to lie within the line of the moat as rectified onto the Ordnance Survey base, although Borehole 4 is within 10m of the south-east corner of it. The made ground recorded in Borehole 4 may represent moat-related deposits; if this is the case, the potential for recovery of palaeoenvironmental remains is likely to be high.

7.5 Services Information (Figure 8)

Figure 8 shows the positions of the underground electricity, gas and water services, as supplied by the individual utility companies (sewerage is not included). Most of the services lie around the periphery of the site and along the line of Old Hall Street, although there is a possibility that there exist other minor or unmapped services elsewhere on the site.

8.0 Trial Trench Locations

Figure 9 shows the position of the services and boreholes in relation to the historic features and 19th-century buildings, enabling areas of potential significance to be correlated with areas of least disturbance. The results suggest that the areas of the site most likely to yield information about the moat are the northern central area (although part of this area is affected by a major gas main) and the northeast corner, where the moat returned to the south. Information on the associated buildings is most likely to be obtained from central and southwestern areas of the site, as this is where buildings are marked on the 1751 map, and there is no specific knowledge of cellaring in this area. At present, however, only the northern and eastern areas of the site are available for trial trenching, and following a site visit and consultation with the archaeological advisor to the planning authority, Mike Shaw, trench locations have been agreed upon. The trench locations are designed to try and locate the moat itself, and any associated buildings to the southeast of the moat. The agreed trench locations are shown on Figure 9.

9.0 Acknowledgements

This report was written by Sarah Watt, who carried out all the geo-rectification and digitising of the map features. It was edited by Lucie Dingwall, who also managed the project. Thanks are due to Mike Shaw of Wolverhampton MBC for commissioning the study. The assistance of Glynn Barrett is also gratefully acknowledged.

10.0 Sources

White, H. 1996 *The Old Hall Site, Wolverhampton: A desk based assessment*
West Midlands Joint Data Team

Shaw, M. 2000 *Old Hall Street Development Area, Wolverhampton: Brief for
Archaeological Evaluation*

Borehole data taken from report by S.P. Associates

Water service data provided by Severn Trent Water

Gas service data provided by Transco

Electricity service data provided by GPU Power Distribution

Maps

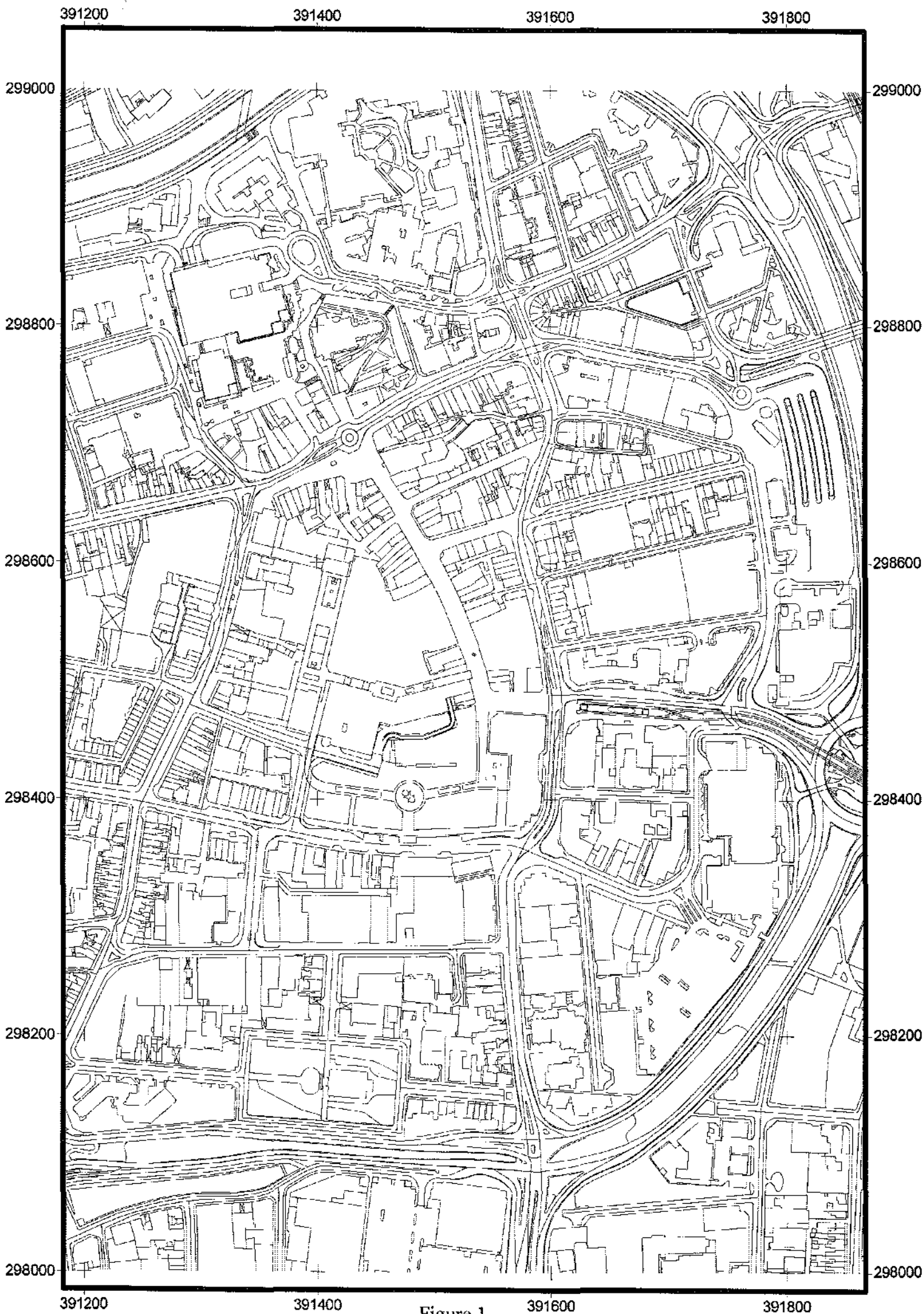
1751 Isaac Taylor, Map of Wolverhampton

1842 Wolverhampton Tithe Map

1852 Health of Towns Act Map

1871 Steen & Blacket: Plan of the Town and Borough of Wolverhampton

1889 First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey



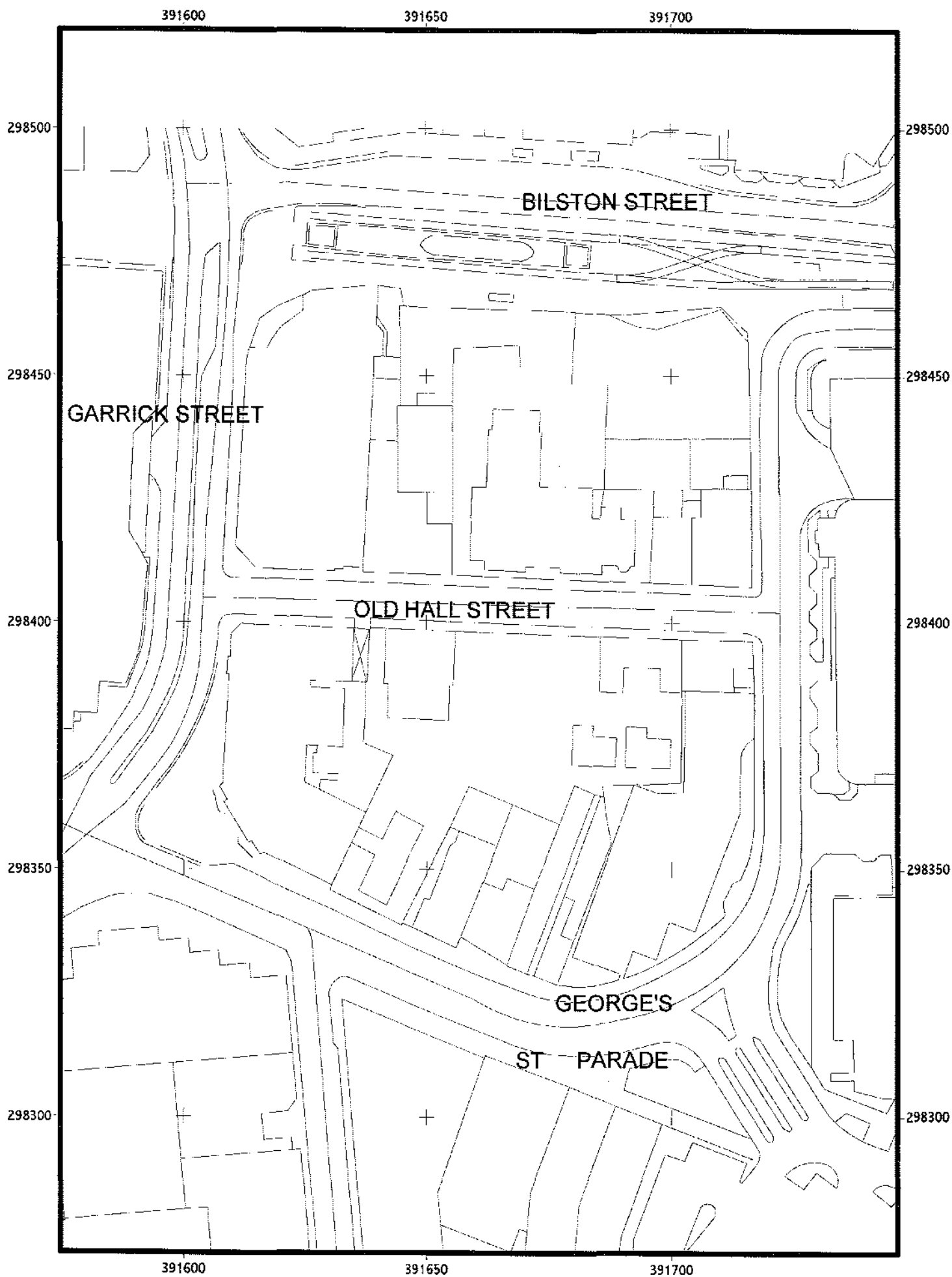
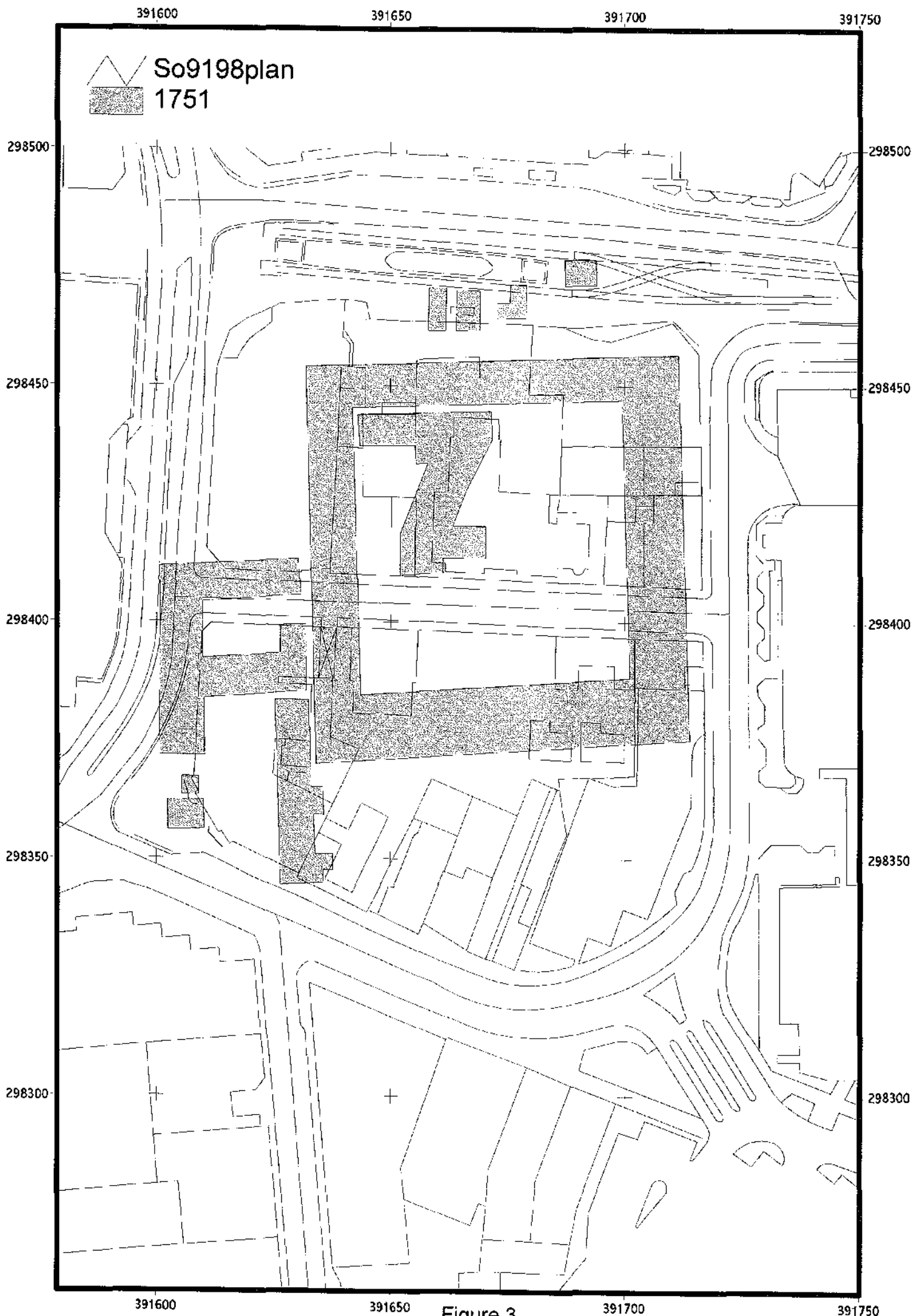
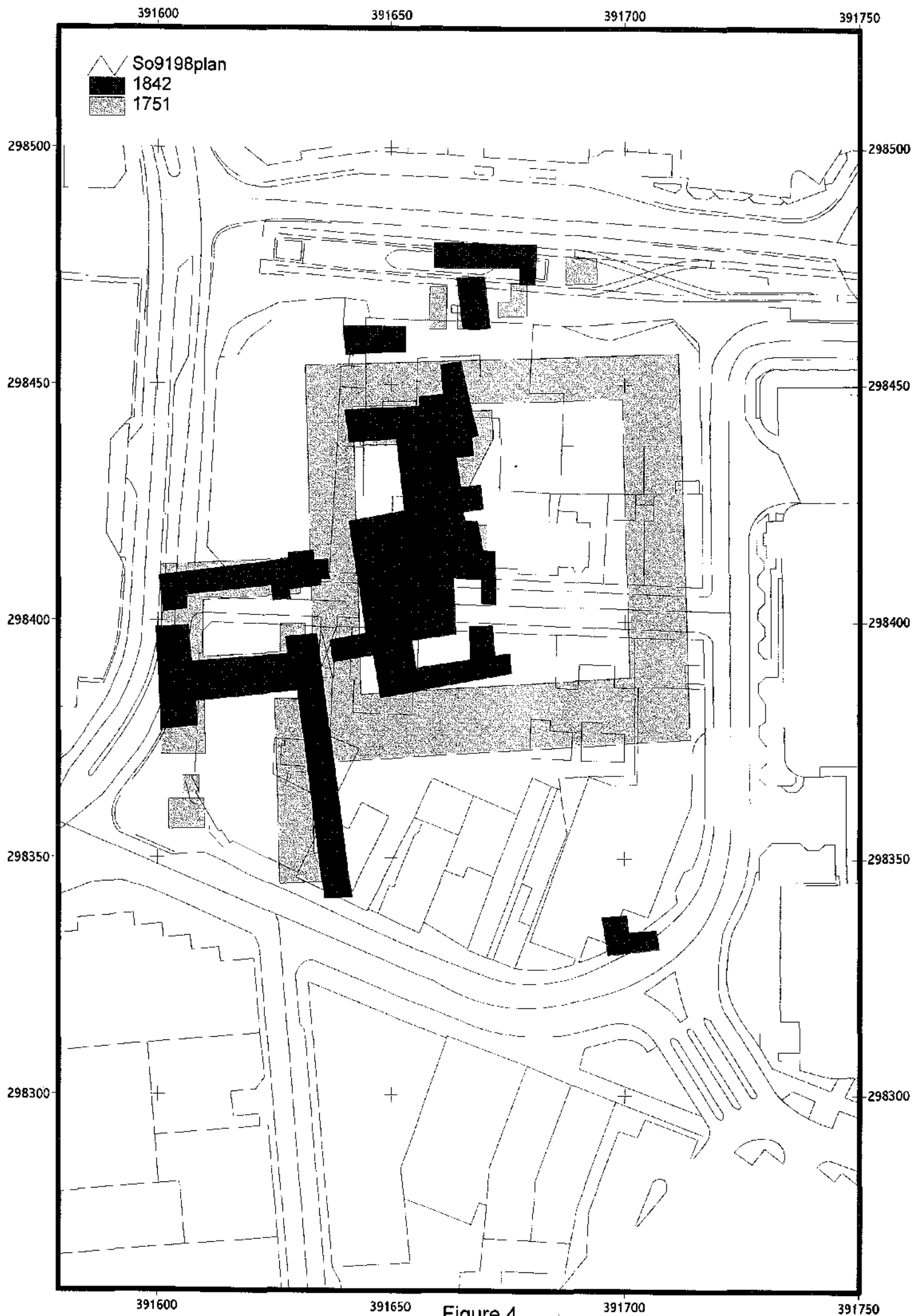
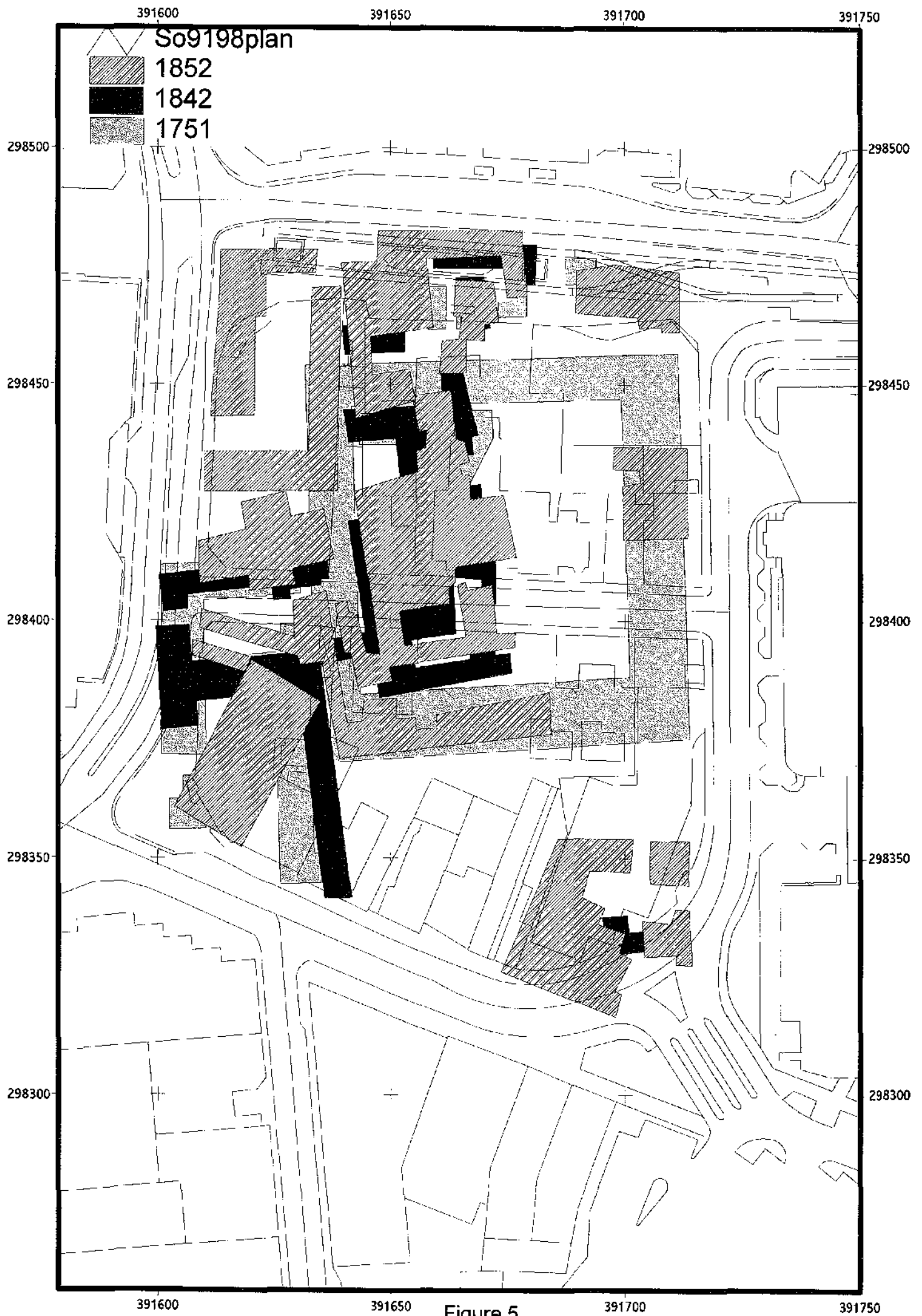
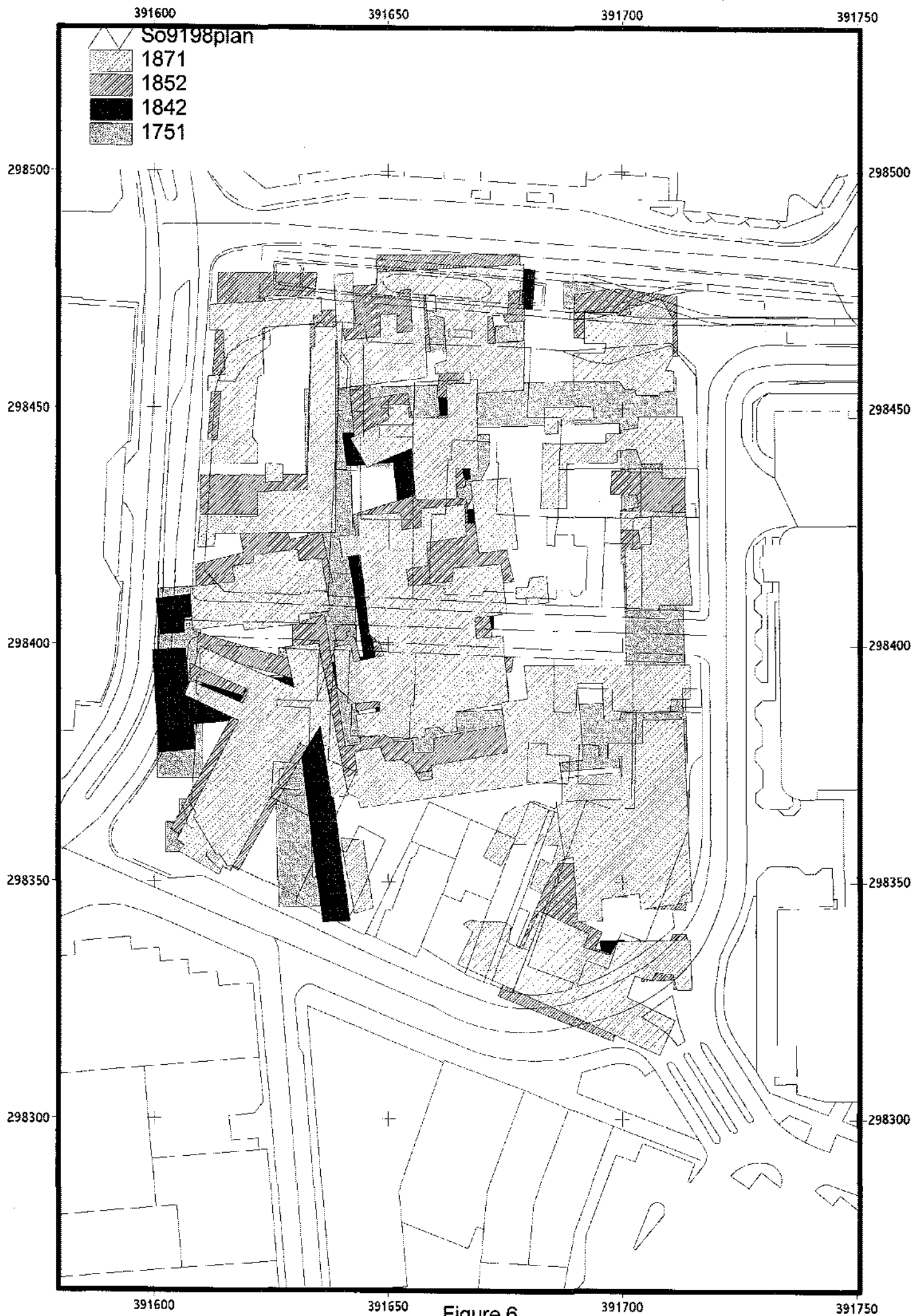


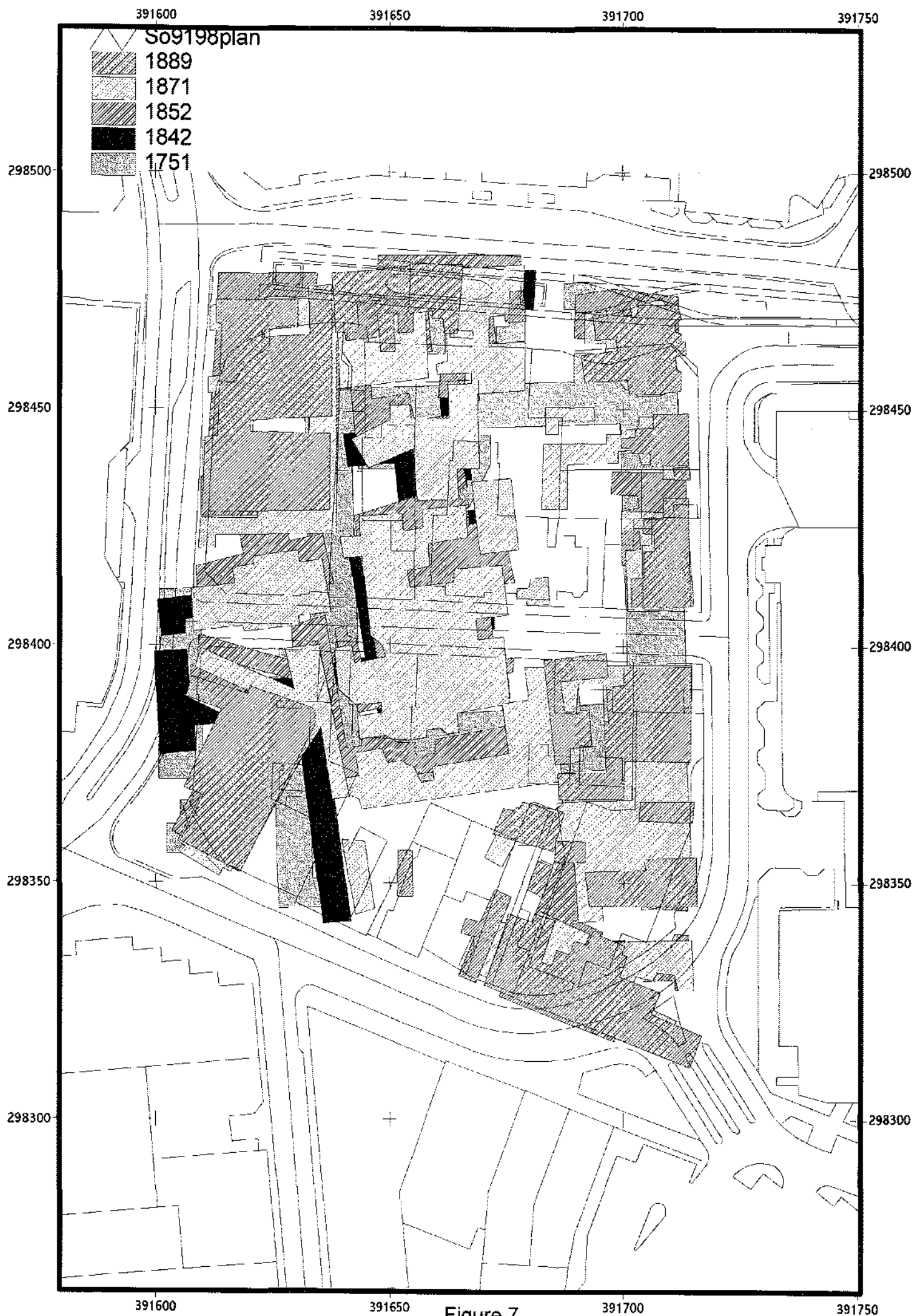
Figure 2
















391600

391650

391700

391750

-  Boreholes
-  Electricity services
-  Water services
-  Gas services
-  So9198 plan

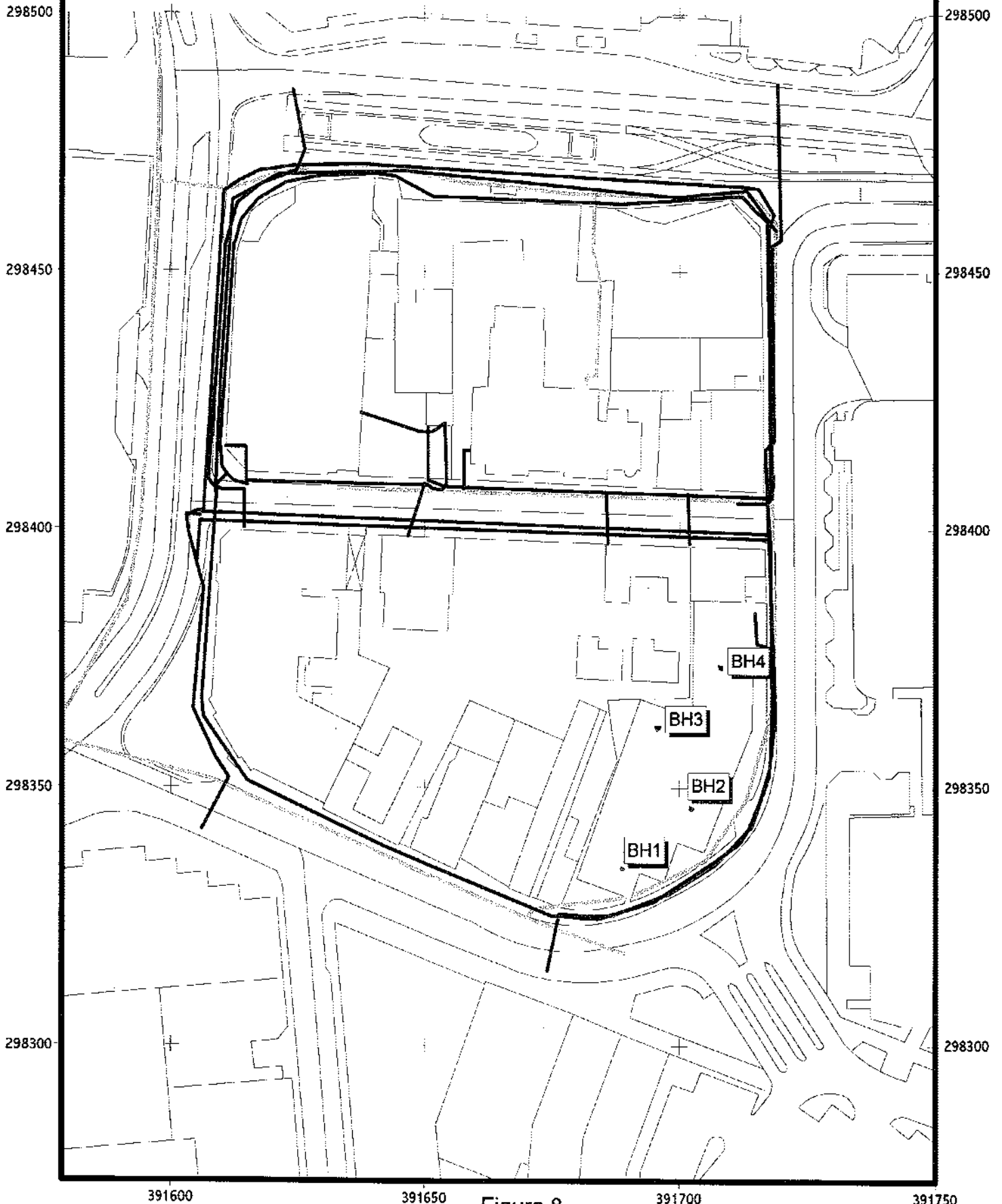
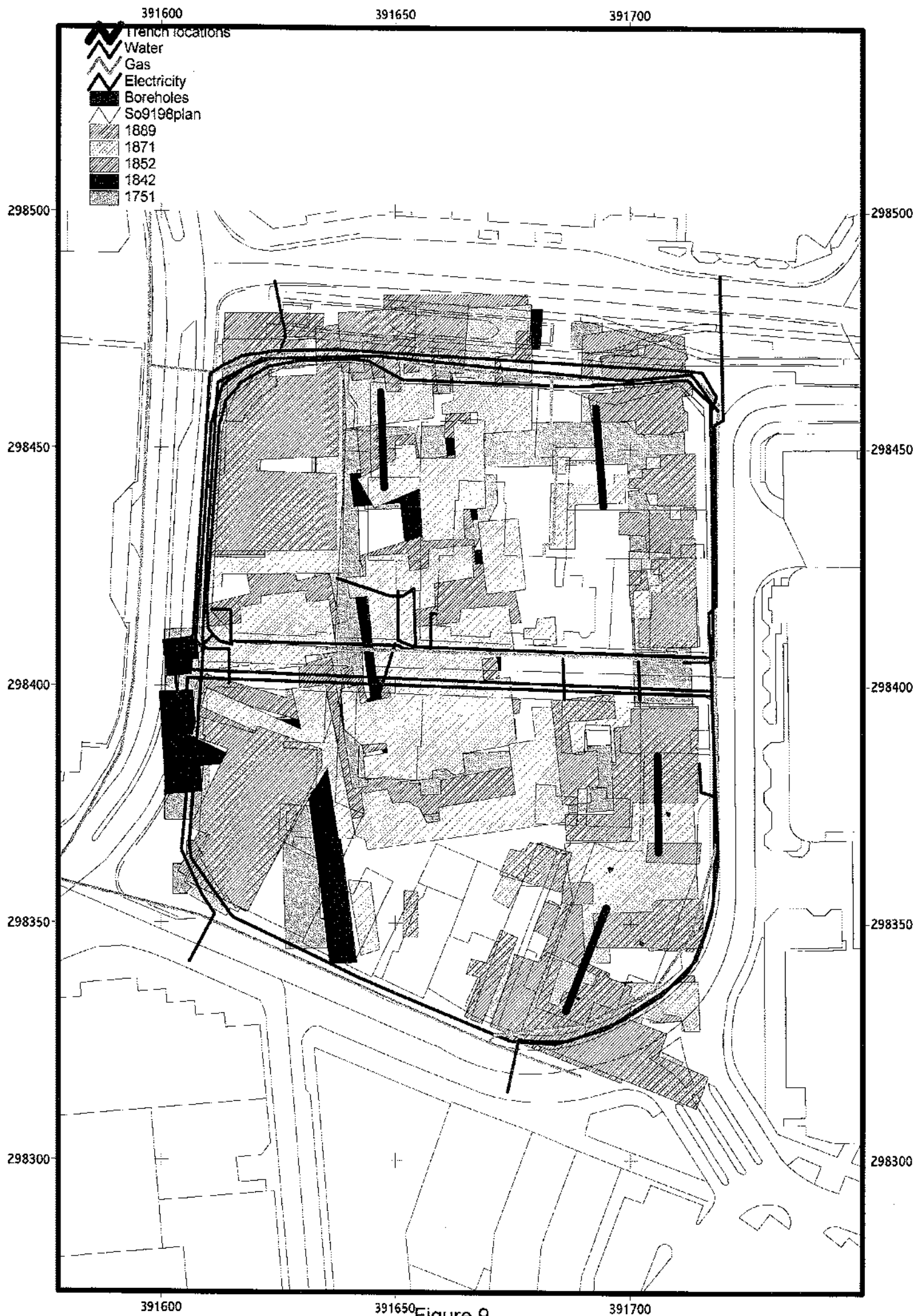


Figure 8



Appendix 1 - Design Brief

Old Hall Street Development Area, Wolverhampton

Brief for Archaeological Evaluation

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Old Hall Street development area lies on the site of one of Wolverhampton's major monuments, the Old Hall, a moated site that dates back to at least the 16th century. The hall was demolished towards the end of the 19th century but there is a strong possibility of survival of foundations and of the infilled moat below the present ground surface. In addition earlier remains may survive both within and outside the moated area. The brief sets out work necessary to ensure that provisions are made for preservation of the archaeological deposits in any future development of the area.

2. Site location and description

- 2.1 The Old Hall Street development area lies within the southern part of Wolverhampton town centre at SO916984. The site is a rectangular area of around 6ha delineated by Bilston Street on the north, Garrick Street on the west and St George's Parade on the south and east. Old Hall Street bisects it. The area includes a number of major buildings such as the College of Adult Education and the Central Library but there are also a number of open spaces, which are at present either derelict ground or surface car parking.

3. Planning background

- 3.1 The area is a Conservation Area and Wolverhampton MBC is actively promoting the regeneration of this area as part of the St John's Urban Village. Draft proposals were drawn up and sent out for public consultation at the end of 1999. They are defined in the accompanying leaflet (Wolverhampton Council, *Draft Planning Guidelines for Old Hall Street Area, Wolverhampton Town Centre*).

4. Archaeological Background

- 4.1 Settlement in Wolverhampton dates back to at least the Saxon period when an ecclesiastical (church) and probably royal centre appears to have been founded around the site of the present St Peter's church. Slater has pointed out a roughly oval area centred on the church, which may have demarcated this original settlement (Hooke and Slater 1986). He suggests that the area may have originated as an Iron Age hill fort although there are as yet no finds of this date from the town.

- 4.2 Old Hall Street lies outside and immediately south of this area, separated from it by the line of a large ditch, shown on the earliest map of Wolverhampton, Taylor's map of 1750. The site does, however, lie beside an early routeway out of the town, now marked by the line of Bilston Street, and is likely to have come into occupation as the settlement expanded in the medieval period. Certainly by the 16th century it was the site of a major building, the *Old Hall*, also known as *Leveson's*, *Turton's* or the *Great Hall*.
- 4.3 The hall was surrounded by a large, square moat with a causeway entrance on the west side. The building itself appears to have been a three-storey brick structure, dated on stylistic grounds to c 1575. There may, however, have been an earlier hall on the site for there are early 16th century references to the Levesons holding a large house and grounds in the town. The moat was infilled by 1842 and the hall itself was demolished in 1883. There were in addition ancillary buildings outside the moated area to the west, described as barns for receiving sheep and storing bales of wool (Jones 1900). The Leveson family is known to have had business interests in wool.
- 4.4 The excavation of a trench for the construction of a boundary wall at the north end of the Old Hall area in 1982 revealed over 1m of late post-medieval build up. Below this 'peaty' material was recovered at the bottom of the trench at a depth of around 2m. This may have been fill from the moat of the Old Hall.

5. Requirements for work

- 5.1 There has been little previous archaeological work in Wolverhampton and the location and survival of archaeological deposits is largely unknown. Hence any archaeological deposits which do survive will be of great importance in starting to understand the early history of the town
- 5.2 The general requirements for the work will be to establish presence or absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the whole of the area potentially affected by development.
- 5.3 Using this information an appropriate mitigation strategy should be devised to ensure the preservation of archaeological deposits within the development area, or failing this preservation by record (ie an archaeological excavation) may be required.
- 5.4 Specific requirements would be:
- Establish date of the moated site

- Establish width and depth of moat
- Establish date of hall and associated buildings within moat
- Establish whether there are earlier buildings within moated area
- Establish the date of ancillary buildings to the west of the moated area
- Establish whether there is earlier occupation outside the moated area
- Establish whether there is a potential for the recovery of environmental information, particularly from the moat deposits

6. Stages of work

6.1 Desk-based assessment

The area has already been the subject of a recent desk-based assessment (White 1996) which examines the archaeological, historical and topographical evidence for the area.

Further requirements are:

- To plot features shown on the historic maps onto a modern Ordnance Survey base, preferably using a computerised mapping (GIS) system
- To gather and plot details of cellarage onto a modern Ordnance Survey base, preferably using a computerised mapping (GIS) system
- To gather and plot details of services onto a modern Ordnance Survey base, preferably using a computerised mapping (GIS) system
- To plot any borehole data onto a modern Ordnance Survey base, preferably using a computerised mapping (GIS) system
- To gather information about the previous trial trench on the site, particularly its exact location, the nature and depth of deposits and the types of finds recovered.

6.2 Trial trenching

On completion of the desk-based assessment the Contractor should agree locations for the excavation of trial trenches with the Black Country Archaeologist taking into account the need to provide sufficient information to compile a mitigation strategy and taking into account the data gathered in the desk-based assessment. A particular requirement would be to assess the potential of the site for recovery of palaeoenvironmental information.

6.3 Reporting and mitigation strategy

Reports should be produced on completion of the desk-based assessment and on completion of the trial trenching. The desk-based assessment should include a list of sources consulted. The reports should include an

assessment of the impact of development and be used to devise and agree an appropriate mitigation strategy (see 5.3 above).

Reports should contain:

- A written summary of the findings together with appropriate illustrations, which should be related to the national grid.
- A copy of this brief

Excavation reports should contain:

- An analytical summary of features and deposits
- A summary of any artefactual material uncovered

7. General conditions

7.1 Suitably qualified and experienced archaeological staff should undertake all work.

7.2 An appropriate recording strategy should be used and the method and justification for this stated in the report.

7.3 The code of conduct, standards and guidance of the Institute of Field Archaeologists should be adhered to.

7.4 A specification for the work required should be prepared by the archaeological contractor and agreed with the sponsor and the local planning authority before the work commences. It is advisable to submit a draft of the specification to the Black Country Archaeologist before the submission of a tender in order to ensure that the work proposed meets the requirement of the archaeological evaluation brief.

7.5 Archive deposition

On completion of the work the site archive should be deposited with an appropriate museum/public archive. The site owner should be encouraged to deposit any finds with the archive.

7.6 Publication and dissemination

On completion of the work a summary report should be produced for publication in an appropriate local or national archaeological journal

Two copies of all reports should be submitted to the Black Country Sites and Monuments Record and two copies to the local planning authority. Unless there is a specific request for confidentiality, the reports will be made publicly available six months after their publication and a copy will be deposited with the borough archives service.

7.7 Health and Safety

It is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that all work is carried out in accordance with relevant Health and Safety regulations.

Site procedures should be in accordance with the guidance set out in the Health and Safety Manual of the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers

Where necessary, responsibility for the reinstatement of land after excavation should be agreed with the developer and landowner.

7.8 Monitoring

The work will be monitored by the Black Country Archaeologist on behalf of the Planning Authority and provisions for monitoring should be agreed with him. At least five working days notice of commencement of any fieldwork should be given to the Black Country Archaeologist.

8. Bibliography

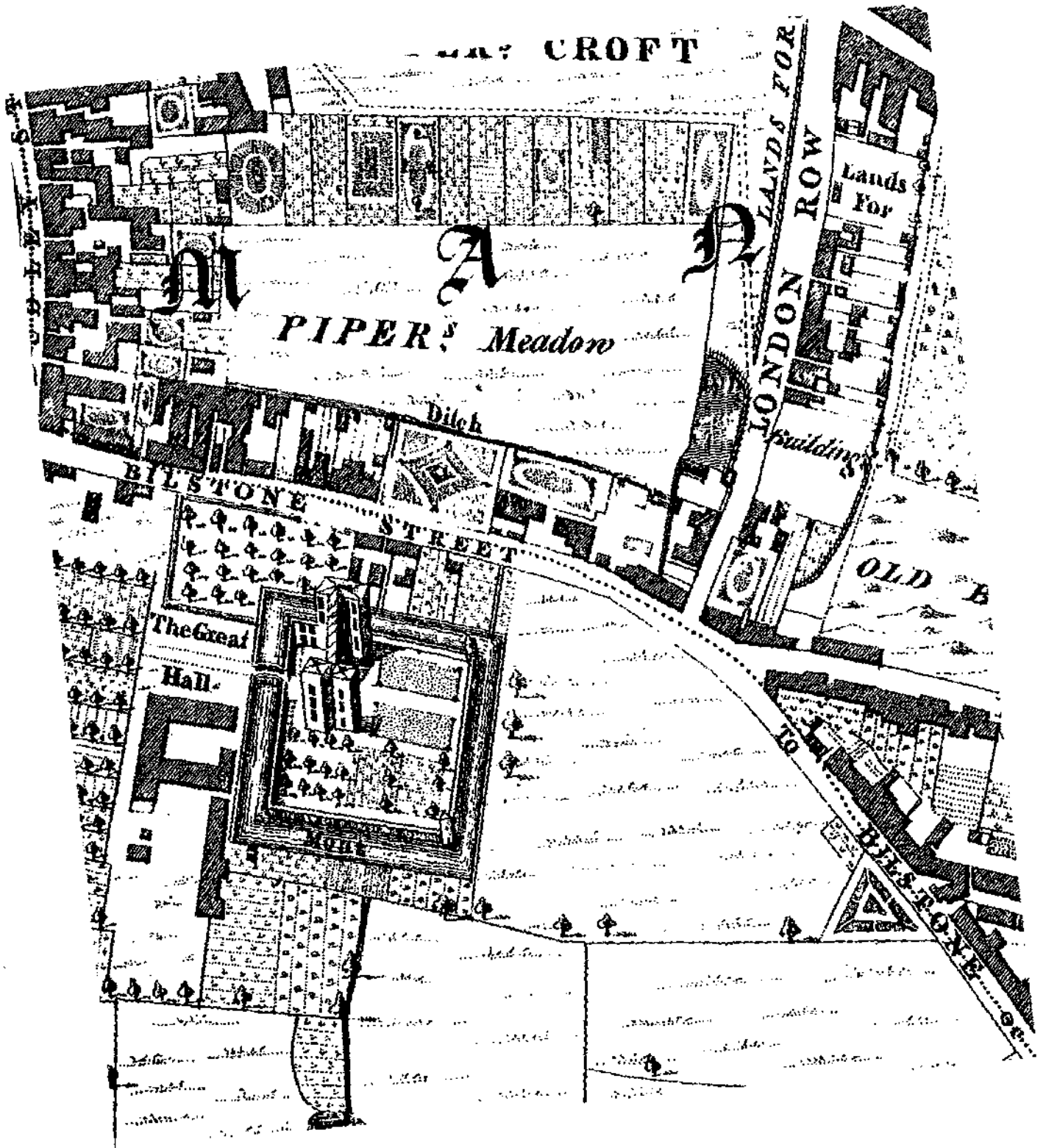
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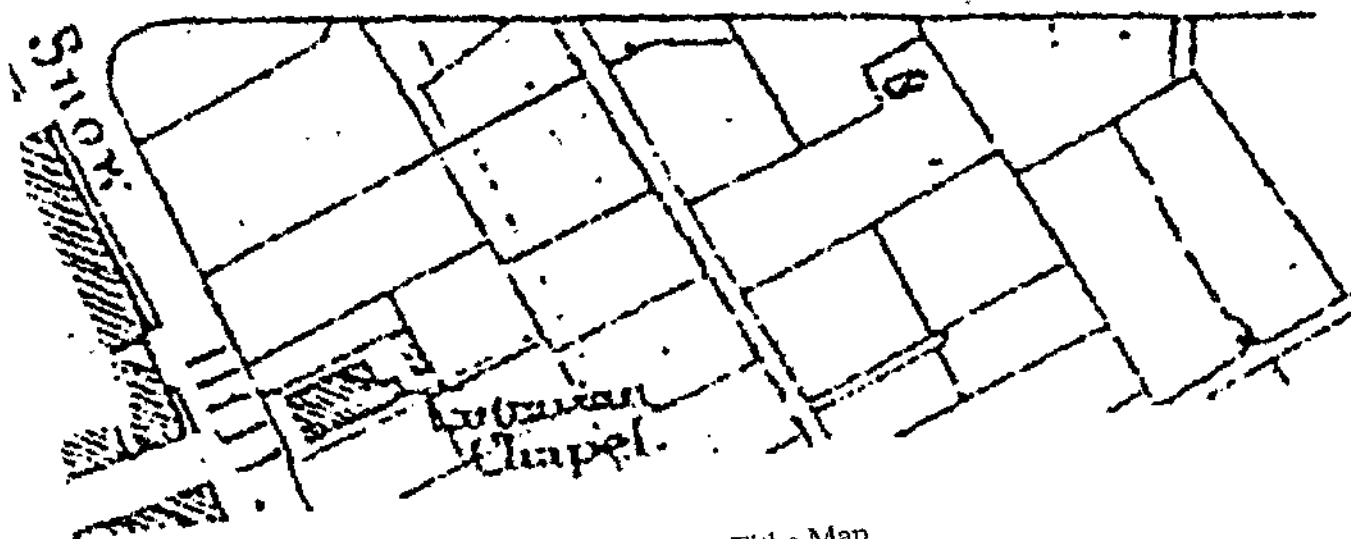
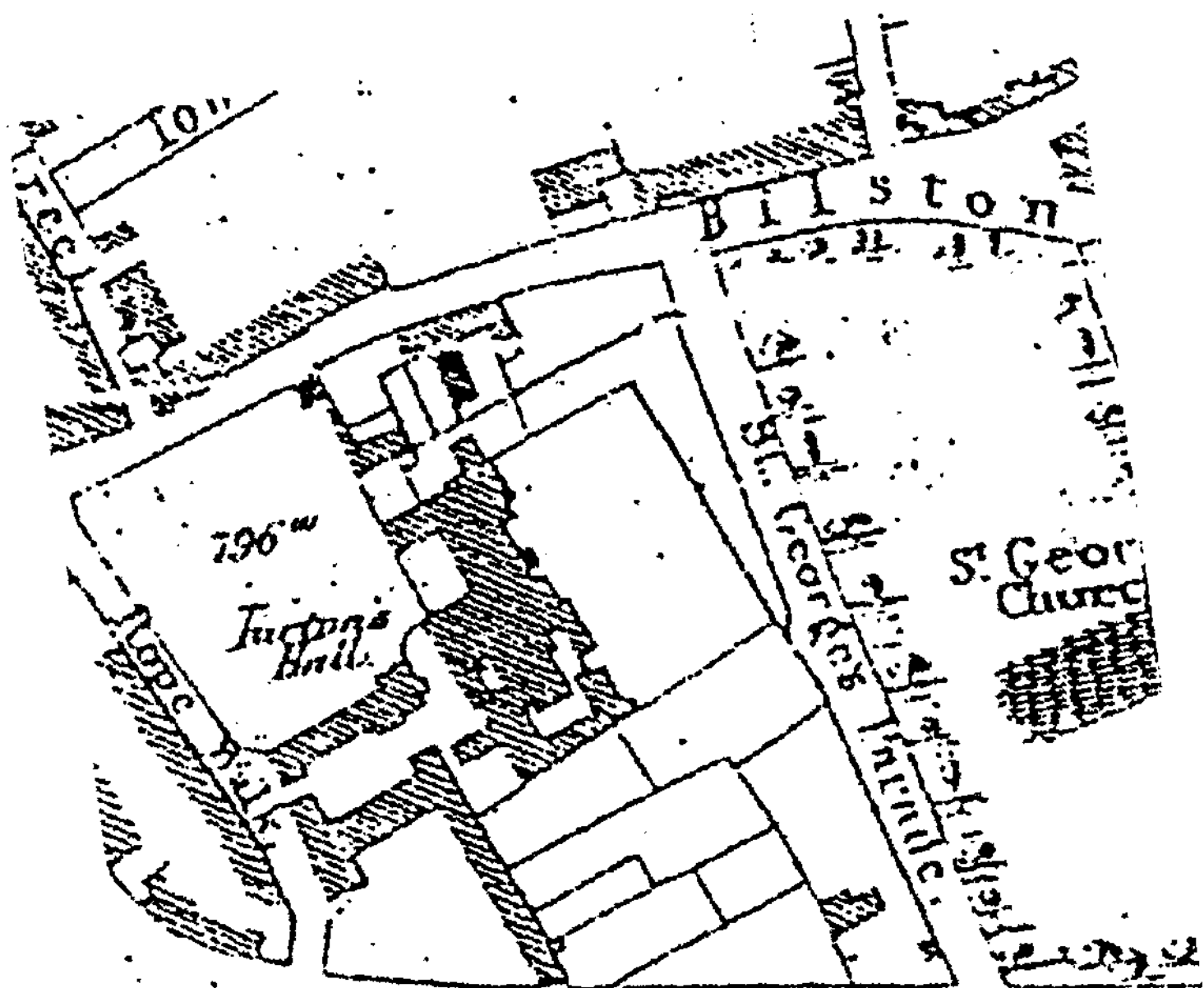
Jones, W H, 1900 *Story of the Japan tin plate working and iron braziers trade etc in Wolverhampton and District*

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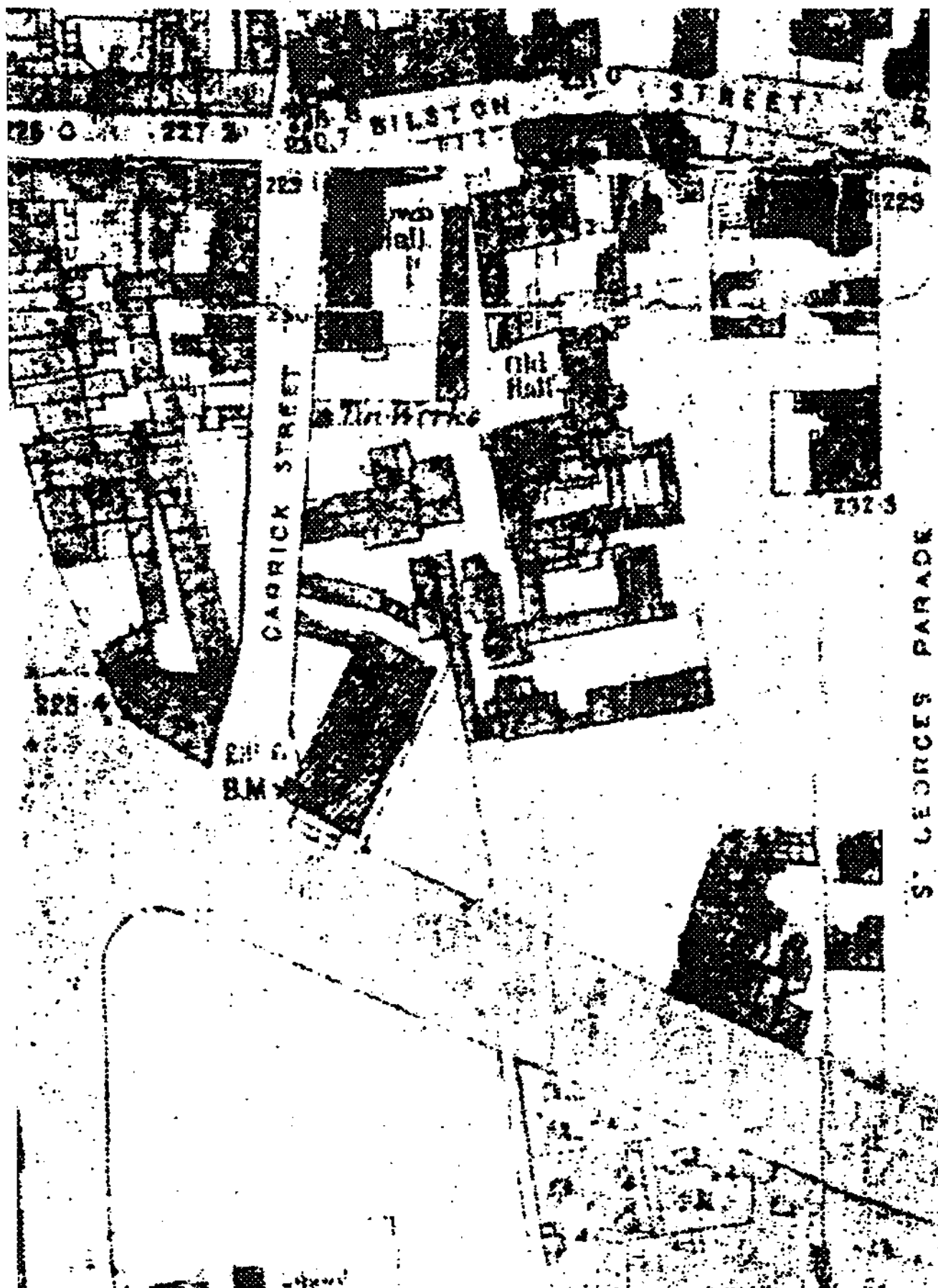
Prepared on 13 February 2000 by Mike Shaw, Black Country Archaeologist, on behalf of Wolverhampton MBC

Appendix 2 - Historic Maps

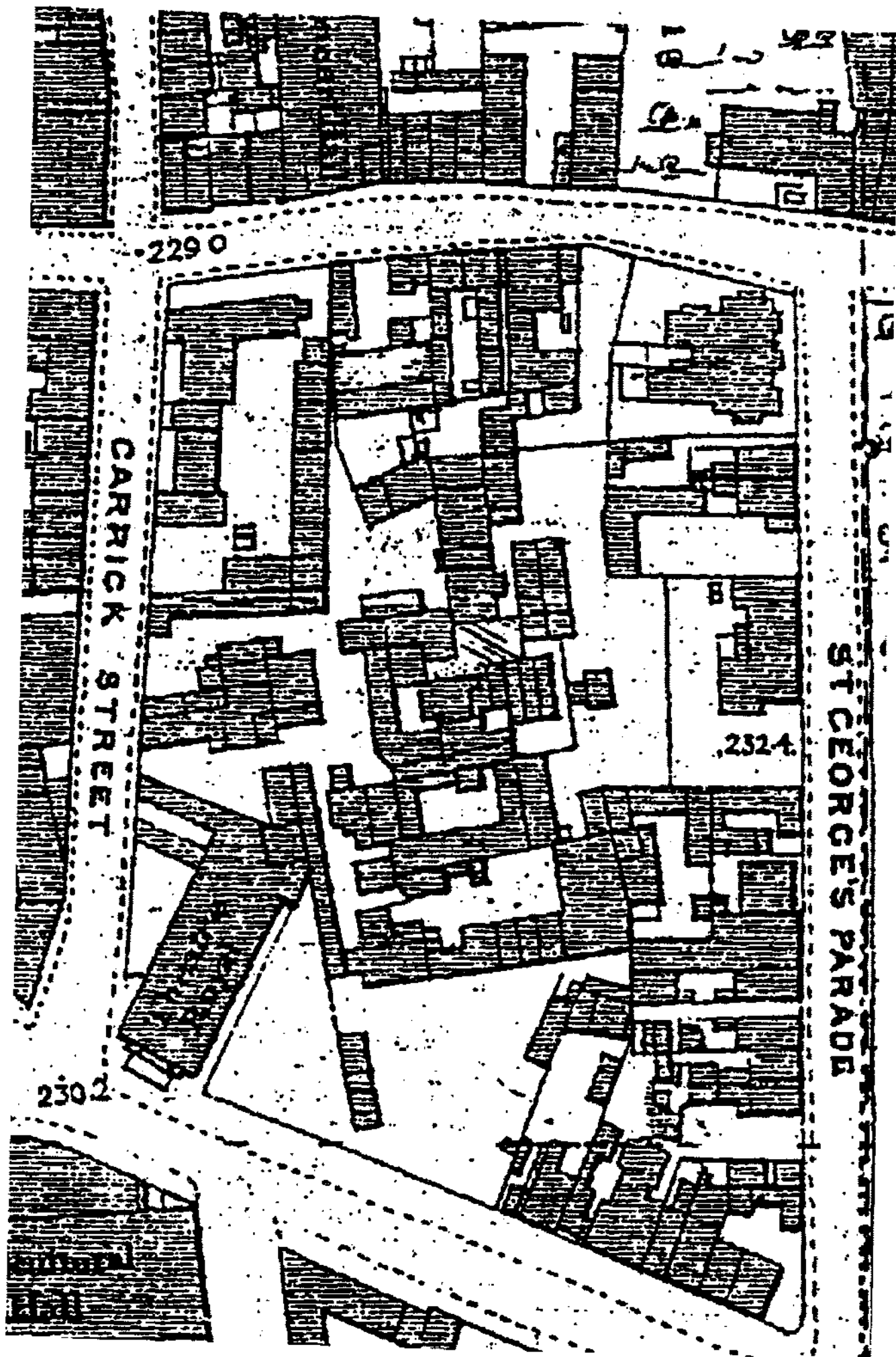




1842 Tithe Map



1852 Health of Towns Act Map



1871 Steen & Blacket Map

