

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
Project No. 801
June 2001

**Shannon's Mill, Walsall:
Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment**

by
Melissa Conway

with contributions by
Steve Litherland

For further information please contact:
Simon Buteux or Iain Ferris (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
Web Address: <http://www.bufau.bham.ac.uk>

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Shannon's Mill, Walsall: Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment

Summary

A desk-based assessment was carried out in June 2001 by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit in advance of a retail development by St. Modwen Developments Limited centred on Shannon's Mill in Walsall town centre (NGR SP 0135/9825). The development potentially affects a significant proportion of the urban core of medieval Walsall and presents a valuable opportunity to expand our knowledge of the town prior to the 19th century. This assessment forms the first stage of an archaeological response to the proposed development. The objectives of this report were twofold. Firstly, to assess the likelihood of the survival of medieval deposits and identify areas where further archaeological work is required before the development proceeds; and, secondly, to evaluate the importance of the buildings affected by the development and identify those which require further recording prior to development.

The overall development area was further sub-divided into three zones based upon established street blocks. Within these zones the area around Church Hill was identified as having good potential to answer many important questions concerning the early development of the town. In addition, the area defined by George Street, High Street and Lower Hall Lane was also identified as having potential to answer important questions concerning the medieval planning and layout of the historic town centre. In terms of the historic built environment there is an important collection of Grade II Listed Buildings clustered upon Lower Hall Lane. This group is further complemented by the locally listed Shannon's Mill and an ensemble of 19th-century properties fronting George Street. Finally, properties fronting Ablewell Street include the locally listed Borough Arms and comprise a group of mainly 19th-century commercial premises and associated outhouses and workshops to the rear that have a distinctive historic character.

Introduction

This report outlines the findings of an archaeological desk-based assessment of the area of a proposed retail development centred on Shannon's Mill in Walsall town centre; the work was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) in May 2001 (Fig. 1), with a commission by Duval Brownhill Partnership on behalf of St. Modwen Developments Limited. The archaeological assessment forms the first part of a staged archaeological response to the development and is a condition of the planning permission for the scheme. The proposed development area is hereafter referred to as the Study Area. The aim of the report is to provide a summary of known and potential archaeological information relating to the Study Area, in order to enable appropriate archaeological mitigation strategies to be devised. The assessment adheres to the guidelines set down in the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments* produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1999) and follows a brief prepared by Mike Shaw, the Black Country Archaeologist (Shaw 2001).

Location of Study Area (Fig. 2)

The Study Area covers a significant component of the historic core of Walsall town centre. The Study Area can be further sub-divided into three smaller zones based on established street blocks. The first zone lies to the north-east of St. Matthew's Church and is defined by The Ditch, Ablewell Street, Upper Rushall Street and the terrace wall to the north of the church. The second zone comprises the majority of the street block defined by Lower Hall Lane, Caldmore Road, Upper Hall Lane, George Street and Digbeth/High Street, and includes Shannon's Mill. The third zone lies between George Street and Dudley Street/Peal Street and is currently a car park for the Sainsbury's store situated on the High Street. The Study Area currently comprises a mix of open grassland areas, car parking areas and 19th-and 20th-century buildings of industrial, commercial and domestic character, including a group of Grade II Listed Buildings in Lower Hall Lane.

Objectives

The objectives of this assessment were to identify areas within the Study Area where archaeological deposits relating to the early history of Walsall could be expected to survive. This included the compilation of potential deposit maps and an assessment of the extent to which these deposits may have been damaged or destroyed by later building activity such as cellaring or terracing/levelling. Once the extent of archaeological survival was established, areas requiring further archaeological work were identified and a set of provisional recommendations proposed.

Method

A site inspection of the study area was carried out and documentary research on primary and secondary records and maps held by BUFAU, the Walsall Local Studies Centre and the University of Birmingham Library was undertaken. The Black Country Sites and Monuments Record was also consulted. All sources consulted are listed in reference section, below.

Geology and topography

Walsall town centre straddles the sides of a shallow stream valley which runs north-east to south-west. The south side of the valley is dominated by a large outcrop of limestone known as Church Hill. The Study Area lies on the north-east and west slopes of this hill (Fig. 3). The geology on which the town sits is highly varied, ranging from sands and gravels at the bottom of the valley (including Digbeth), clays and clay subsoils on the sides of Church Hill (including Dudley Street and Ablewell Street), to limestone bedrock on the summit of Church Hill (Baker 1989, 9).

Present character

A site visit was made to determine the nature of current land use within the Study Area and to identify any buildings and features of historical or archaeological interest. Special efforts were made to establish the presence or absence of cellaring in existing buildings in the area, so that their impact on possible below-ground archaeological deposits could be more accurately quantified. In most cases it was not possible to gain access to the buildings or areas situated behind the street frontages. Observations are, therefore, largely limited to what was visible from the street. For ease of discussion the Study Area has been split up into the three zones outlined above.

Zone I: St. Matthew's Church, The Ditch, Ablewell Street, Upper Rushall Street

The land between St. Matthew's Church, Upper Rushall Street, The Ditch (Plate 1), and the rear of the buildings along the Ablewell Street frontage, is currently a landscaped grassy area planted with trees and crossed by pathways. The land slopes down from the church to the rear of the Ablewell Street backplots. No buildings front onto this side of Upper Rushall Street. The only standing buildings in this zone are along the Ablewell Street frontage and its backplots. The buildings along the Ablewell Street frontage are all of the same broad type, being two or three storey brick commercial buildings with shops on the ground floor and domestic accommodation on the upper floors. All of these buildings are later 19th century or early 20th century in date, but are executed in a variety of styles. Interspersed with these buildings are two purpose-built public houses, both 20th century in date. The Borough Arms is locally listed (WMBC 2001a). The two pubs and the majority of the buildings on the Ablewell Street frontage have cellars. The backplots of these buildings are characterised by a jumble of out-buildings and workshops and brick boundary walls of varying dates. A modern office block with adjacent car parking areas stands at the Upper Rushall Street end of these backplots.

Zone II: Lower Hall Lane, Upper Hall Lane, George Street, Digbeth/High Street

Zone II is characterised by a concentration of building stock that retains an overwhelmingly 19th century character in terms of the variety of housing, factories and shops clustered within it, despite the negative impact of a number of more recent buildings (Plate 2). Most of the standing buildings along the frontage of Lower Hall Lane are early 19th century in date, cellared, and have been statutorily Grade II Listed. The lower end of George Street is dominated by the Shannon's Mill factory that is locally listed (WMBC 2001b). The remainder of the north-west side of the George Street frontage possesses a unified historic character that is reinforced by the street furniture. The historic building stock includes two rows of 19th-century shops, a late 19th-century office/workshop with good quality brick detailing, and a striking large late 19th-century public house on the corner with the High Street. Most of these buildings are cellared. A modern concrete and glass building, Millennium House, sits uneasily amongst this older building stock at the junction of Lower Hall Lane and Caldmore Road. The High Street and Digbeth frontage is occupied by the 'Old Square' shopping precinct. This, together with the adjacent services on Lower Hall Lane is a typical example of a mid-1960s planned shopping area based on concrete frames and piled foundations.

Zone III: George Street, Peal Street/Dudley Street

This zone lies immediately south-west of the large Sainsbury's supermarket in the High Street. The zone is entirely covered by the Sainsbury's car park, constructed with the adjacent supermarket in the mid-1980s. It would appear that extensive scouring away of ground occurred here to create the car park, and therefore archaeological survival can be expected to be minimal.

Cartographic and documentary information

Walsall is well covered by historic maps, the earliest available map of the town dating from 1679 and the period between this date and the issue of the first edition Ordnance Survey coverage for the area in 1886 is reasonably evenly covered by maps and town plans. The available historic maps and plans have been summarised and interpreted by Baker (1989), and are therefore not reproduced here. Baker has proposed a convincing developmental sequence for the town, isolating areas of earlier medieval development from those of the later medieval and post-medieval periods, these plan units having been used as a framework for this assessment and for the discussion of the results below.

Within the context of this desk-top assessment of a large Study Area it has not been feasible to carry out in-depth documentary research for the whole area. Therefore, the availability and quality of documentary evidence relevant to the Study Area has simply been assessed at this stage. An examination of the collections of the Walsall Local Studies Centre has shown that a wealth of documentary evidence – rate books, trade directories, old photographs, building plans, etc. – exists for the Study Area. Further historical research is, therefore, recommended for future stages of archaeological research.

Archaeological and historical background

Previous archaeological work

Recent years have seen a significant increase in the amount of archaeological work being carried out in Walsall town centre. However, most of this work has taken place outside the Study Area. One piece of archaeological work was carried out by BUFAU within the Study Area in 1988, and is summarised in *The Archaeology of Walsall* (Baker 1989). Three trenches were dug on Church Hill, in what is now the grassy expanse between Upper Rushall Street and Ablewell Street, to test the survival, depth and nature of buried deposits in this area. Two of the trenches (Sites 13 and 14) yielded unfavourable results. Deposits were shallow and exclusively of later post-medieval date. Site 12, however, gave slightly better results, with deep deposits and a limestone terrace wall encountered, both of which were post-medieval in date.

Other known archaeological information on the broader Church Hill area, derived from the Black Country Sites and Monuments Record (BCSMR), is also relevant to assessing the archaeological potential of Zone I of the Study Area. A Roman coin was found near St. Matthew's Church in 1949, but there is, however, no other definitive archaeological evidence of pre-medieval activity in this area. An evaluation carried out in 2000 on land

behind the west frontage of Ablewell Street, just outside Zone I, revealed islands of undisturbed deposits between 18th and 19th century cellaring. A stone-built well, of possible medieval date, was located in one of the trenches (BCSMR 13055). Substantial lime-mortared stone walling, interpreted as part of the town defences, was discovered at Bullocks Row in 1998, but this structure could equally be the remains of a terrace wall (BCSMR 11041). The information from other parts of Church Hill suggests that substantial early deposits could survive as islands between later building development in Zone I. BUFAU also carried out a watching brief in 1995 on service trenches at The Bridge, adjacent to the western side of Zone 2. This work failed to reach any medieval deposits, with trenches up to 1m in depth, which may indicate that archaeologically significant deposits in this part of Walsall are probably buried at some depth.

Historic profile of the Study Area

Early history

The earliest known reference to Walsall is from 1159 when Henry II granted the manor of Walsall to Herbert Le Rous. It has been frequently argued, however, that the origins of Walsall lie before the Norman Conquest. A 'Walesho' is named in a will of c.1002, and may be identifiable with the town, but Walsall is not recorded in the Domesday Book. It has also been argued that the earliest settlement in the Walsall area is considerably earlier in date. A possible explanation for the curious street name The Ditch, on Church Hill, is that the hill is the site of an Iron Age hillfort. However, no archaeological evidence has yet been found to support this theory. Two main theories exist on the earliest development of the town. Gould argued that the focus of several historic routes at Town End singles this area out as the earliest focus of the town. Most other writers, however, have taken a different view, arguing that the parish church and Church Hill are the most likely focus of early settlement.

Medieval development

More definite documentary evidence for the physical and administrative development of Walsall exists from the earlier 13th century onwards, in the form of parish church records and market and borough charters. The High Street, aligned on the church, was certainly the focus of the town by at least the 14th century, with the market cross and meeting place of the town's Guild both situated here. It can also be demonstrated that most of the basic street plan within the Study Area was in existence by the 16th century, only George Street being a later addition.

Analysis of historic maps allowed Baker (1989) to suggest the extent of the core of medieval Walsall (Fig. 4). Baker suggests that the High Street, with its regularly laid out burgage plots represents a planned market street, probably dating to around the same time as the town's first market charter in 1220 (Baker, 1989, 22). Less regular, but probably contemporary, is the settlement along the eastside of Upper Rushall Street. Walsall appears to have been successful as a market town and expanded within the medieval period. Settlement probably expanded along both Digbeth street frontages, and also along the street frontage on the west side of Ablewell Street near its junction with Upper Rushall Street. Both of these later areas consist of less regular burgage plots. The majority of the land within the area described by Lower and Upper Hall Lanes and Dudley Street/Peal Street was probably not built up in the medieval period (Fig. 4; Areas 5, 11 and 13). Baker argues that this area was probably an open field during this period.

The Study Area, therefore, straddles the urban core of medieval Walsall and its immediate periphery.

It has been possible to identify two terraces in Zones IIa and IIb from the Ordnance Survey (OS) 1st edition map, surveyed in 1886, and from evidence of 19th-century photographs. The probable positions of these terraces are depicted on Fig. 5. It is likely that terraces were constructed all around Church Hill in the medieval period to make the steep slope of the hill more habitable. Terraces are common features of medieval towns situated on hills and are a generally early aspect of the plot development in towns. The putative terraces run perpendicular to the High Street and are regularly spaced at 10 metre intervals. This roughly equates to 2 perches, a measurement that terraces in Shrewsbury were also constructed in (Baker *et al.*; 1993). Terracing may also have been carried out in Zones I and III. However, later disturbance and landscaping makes it hard to establish the extent of such activity at present.

In the later medieval period Walsall began to develop a more industrial character. Coal and ironstone mining was being carried out within the parish by at least the beginning of the 14th century. The production of metal goods (especially horse furniture) and leatherworking were also established by the later 14th and later 15th centuries respectively. These industries that were to become the basis of Walsall's economy and prosperity in the post-medieval period, were, therefore, already well established in the town by the close of the medieval period.

Post-medieval development

The population of Walsall had grown considerably by the close of the 17th century. Records of the recipients of Mollesley's Dole, a charity which paid out a penny to every inhabitant of Walsall once a year, illustrate this growth well. The population was recorded as 2,861 in 1619 and had risen to around 5,500 by 1700 (Baker, 1989, 7). The records of Mollesley's Dole also show that occupation was densest in the Church Hill and Peal Street areas (Baker 1989, 11). A map of 1679 shows that settlement in the earlier post-medieval period remained focused on the areas of existing medieval settlement, and this pattern persisted until later in the 18th century.

Snape's map (1782) shows the creation of new streets, including George Street within the Study Area, marking the first major additions to Walsall's medieval street pattern. The cutting through of George Street, completed by 1770, destroyed aspects of the medieval plot patterns along the south-west frontage of High Street and Digbeth. George Street itself became a major street within the town centre, and new properties, mainly commercial, were laid out on the previously undeveloped land along the majority of both its frontages soon after the creation of the street. The west side of the lower end of George Street seems to be the only part of the street where the frontage does not seem to have been developed immediately. The OS 1st edition map (Fig. 6) shows that the plots here were much larger than elsewhere on the street, which reinforces the idea that this area was developed slightly later than the other parts of the street.

Map evidence from the 19th century demonstrates that settlement and occupation became increasingly dense in all zones of the Study Area as the century wore on. The zenith of this trend is visible on the OS 1st edition map of 1886. All zones of the Study Area, apart from Zone IIc, were characterised by dense occupation along frontages, with a very high density of buildings, frequently arranged in courts, crammed into the back plots. Most of

the buildings along the frontages were commercial shops with upstairs accommodation. The buildings in the backplots had a variety of functions, including housing, workshops or stores.

The mid-19th century also saw the beginning of decline in this area of Walsall town centre. The opening of the railway on Park Street (1849) and the improvement and monumentalising of The Bridge (1851) shifted the civic and commercial focus of the town away from the traditional focus on the Digbeth – High Street – Church Hill axis. This set in train a long-term decline in the fortunes of this part of the town that, for some streets, lasted until the mid-1980s. Upper Rushall Street, Peal Street and Dudley Street (within Zones I and III) in the Study Area had become regarded as slums by the 1870s and large swathes of buildings were demolished in these areas in the early 1930s as part of a slum clearance policy adopted by Walsall Council in 1930. Subsequent editions of the Ordnance Survey maps show a gradual decline in the density of buildings throughout the other parts of the Study Area from the start of the 20th century onwards.

The 1960s saw major redevelopment along Digbeth and the western end of the High Street, with the construction of the Old Square shopping precinct and market area. This development involved the clearance of all of Zone IIa and most of Zone Iib, and the construction of large service buildings, loading bays and car parks over much of the area behind the frontage. Further change was made to the, by-then very run-down, eastern end of the High Street in the mid-1980s. This work involved the clearance and levelling of the area described by High Street – Peal Street/Dudley Street – George Street and the construction of a large Sainsbury's store and adjacent car park (Zone III) in the levelled area.

Geotechnical information

No boreholes have been sunk within the Study Area. Those that have been sunk in adjacent areas have produced varied results, with some contacting the underlying natural geology very close to the modern ground surface, whilst others have encountered deep, but undated, humic/organic deposits (summarised in Baker, 1989, 28 & Figure 11). This mixture of results partially reflects the manner in which this area of Walsall has been settled, the differing depths illustrating the manner in which terracing of land can lead either to the accumulation and burial of deep deposits or to the removal of deposits. The existing borehole records also show that deeper and more organic deposits are commoner in boreholes nearer the valley bottom. These deposits have accumulated through simple processes of soil mechanics and land drainage, and archaeological potential may be considered to be high for such deposits nearer to the base of the valley within Zone II.

Building appraisal

An appraisal of the standing buildings potentially affected by the development was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the brief prepared by Mike Shaw (Shaw 2001). The appraisal consisted of a rapid external inspection of the buildings, their listing descriptions (if any), and relevant data held by the Black Country Sites and Monuments Record and the Local History Centre, Walsall. The purpose of the appraisal was to establish the nature, date and significance of the standing buildings potentially

affected by the development and to outline any need for further recording that may be required ahead of, or during development in order to mitigate the impact of this scheme.

For clarity, the building appraisal follows the subdivision of the overall Study Area into zones. The description of the present character of each zone provided a general characterisation of the streetscapes within the Study Area (above). What follows is a basic assessment of each structure or collection of structures. Reference should be made to figure 7 for the Black Country Sites and Monuments references, which are prefaced BCSMR. There are three sets of Grade II Listed Buildings in Lower Hall Lane. In addition, the Shannon's Mill factory is locally listed as is the 'Borough Arms' on the corner of Ablewell and Upper Rushall Streets. The ensemble of buildings fronting Ablewell Street has also been included in this survey, together with the rest of the buildings on the north-west side of George Street. Both sets of buildings are demonstrably of historic interest, and make a significant contribution to the character of their respective streetscapes. All buildings of potential historic interest were photographed. Where these have not been illustrated in the report, the photograph is contained in the project archive, which is presently held at BUFAU.

Zone 1, Ablewell Street

80, 81 (Plate 3)

Much altered, ?speculative block of three one-bay-wide commercial properties. Three stories high, squat windows and parapet to upper storey. Central first-floor window probably original, with simple stone hood with twelve-light balanced sash pointing to mid-19th century date. Fourth bay, nearest The Ditch, probably a remnant of a cart-entrance depicted on OS 1st edition (Fig. 6). Rear wing may be built of clamped brick.

82, 83 (not illustrated)

Post-1886 three storey commercial premises of three bays with central cart entrance. Called Thomas' Mews. Slightly projecting decorated brick gables to either side and moulded first floor frieze along frontage.

84-87 (not illustrated)

Five-bay long, three storey block of commercial premises, including terracotta detailing, probably early 20th century in date. Narrow central bay probably once a cart entrance. A number of small workshops and outhouses to the rear of this and adjacent properties may pre-date this structure.

89 (not illustrated)

Three storied larger commercial premises of two bays. Later 19th century in date. Windows replaced apart from larger first-floor double sash. Decorated eaves and engineering brick courses.

90 (not illustrated)

Highgate Public House, mock-Tudor three-storey structure, incorporating timber-framing effect on second storey.

91-93 (not illustrated)

Tall, three storey row of three, much altered, commercial premises. All window later, decorated second storey frieze may be original, late-19th century date, probably post-1886.

95 and 96 (BCSMR 8978; Plate 4)

Two-and-a-half storied commercial premises of two bays. Much altered, both gable and projecting first floor bay windows appear inter-war in date. Nevertheless, may incorporate earlier work behind. Black Country SMR reference 8978 does not appear to relate to this building, but may refer to one behind the frontage. Adjacent 96 Ablewell Street, stylistically similar, but smaller. There is another concentration of small workshops and outhouses behind these and adjacent buildings.

98, 99 (Plate 4)

Two-storey pair of commercial premises incorporating mock-timber-framed gables. Post-1886, partially built on site of Old Nag's Head Public House.

Former Borough Arms', corner of Ablewell and Upper Rushall Street (BCSMR 6660; not illustrated)

The building is a purpose-built public house of three stories with elaborate tiling and terracotta moulding on both fronts. Built in 1903-6 in a typically eclectic 'Edwardian manner'. Locally listed as being of historic interest.

step above street, with simpler columns and cornice over, similar style of window heads to some ground floor windows, but several later shop-fronts inserted. Ground floor window of

second bay is wider, with a twenty-light sash window.

Conclusions

Below-ground archaeology

The Study Area encompasses an important proportion of the medieval core of Walsall. Although a convincing model for the physical development of medieval and early post-medieval Walsall exists, as yet very little corroborative archaeological evidence for this model has been found. Therefore, the current development represents a valuable opportunity to test this model and increase our knowledge of this important period. In common with most urban archaeological sites it may be anticipated that preserved archaeological deposits within the development area will be localised, surviving as 'islands' between areas of later disturbance from cellars and foundations. These deposits are most likely to survive in areas previously occupied by the backplots of the medieval tenements. Previous excavations of such backplots have usually produced evidence for pitting and rubbish disposal associated with the occupation of the adjacent houses, and frequently produced evidence for small-scale industrial activity. It is also possible that remains of a buried medieval agricultural soil may exist in Zone II. It is therefore important to locate the most likely area of survival. This would be the primary aim of the subsequent evaluation stages of archaeological research. Therefore, there follows a general overview of the potential for archaeological preservation within the three areas affected by the development, before a provisional set of recommendations for further archaeological work is set out below.

Zone I

It is likely that the earliest settlement in Walsall was on Church Hill. Any archaeological deposits that survive in this area could, therefore, be invaluable to the understanding of the early development of Walsall. Here, the area around The Ditch, a street argued to derive from possible Iron Age defences, is particularly important. Zone I was intensively occupied throughout the post-medieval period, the dense building pattern only being cleared in the 1930s. This pattern was probably shaped by a series of terraces cut into the hillside that may have had their origins in the medieval period.

The dense post-medieval occupation in this area will have had a prejudicial effect on the survival of earlier archaeological deposits. It is probable that most of the buildings along the Upper Rushall Street frontage were cellared. However, survival is likely to be greater in the backplots behind. Therefore, the survival of archaeological deposits is hard to quantify at this stage.

Zone II

Zone II straddles an area with a varied historic development. Therefore, it has been necessary to further subdivide this zone for the purposes of analysis of its archaeological potential. Zone IIb represents part of a morphologically distinct episode of medieval planning along the High Street. It may also be argued upon morphological grounds that Zone IIa represents a later phase of development into the lower lying land along Digbeth.

2. Targeted small-scale evaluation trenching, or test-pitting within buildings, in order to determine survival of archaeological deposits in specific areas.
3. Larger-scale excavation of specific areas of potential archaeological interest.
4. Further documentary research to complement the above.

In Zone I it is hard to quantify the extent of archaeological survival on present evidence. However, the value of these deposits can be demonstrated to be potentially very high in terms of the understanding of the early development of Walsall. The impact of the proposed road scheme here is likely to be very high. Therefore, it is proposed that the whole of the affected area be stripped under archaeological direction. This would enable surviving areas of archaeological deposits to be identified and excavated. This method is recommended because more limited evaluation trenching in this area, like those dug by BUFAU in 1988, is likely to prove inconclusive. Further detailed historic and cartographic research may also facilitate the identification of previous terrace locations and therefore facilitate better targeting of excavations.

In Zones IIa and IIb there is also high potential for the survival of significant medieval deposits, particularly due to terracing. In this area a programme of archaeological trial trenching and test-pitting may be most appropriate. This would be targeted towards identifying the terraces and other areas where archaeological deposits have survived, such as towards the rear of the burgage plots fronting High Street. This archaeological work should follow, and be informed by, any geotechnical operations, and, depending on the result, may lead to further, more extensive excavation in advance of development. The response to development in Zone IIc should be informed by the results of any geotechnical test-pitting. Dependant upon these results, further limited trial-trenching may be considered appropriate.

In Zone III there is little chance of the survival of deposits for any period. Monitoring of any geotechnical test-pitting may be an appropriate response in this area.

Standing buildings

It is recommended that every effort be made to retain as many of the standing buildings of historic interest as is feasible within the overall development area. The survival of historic buildings within Walsall town centre is not very high, and those that have been retained and refurbished contribute a great deal towards the overall quality of the town. The Grade II Listed Buildings on Lower Hall Lane have some measure of statutory protection, while the locally listed buildings clearly contribute to the overall sense of place. However, it has also been demonstrated that the ensemble of historic buildings within Zone II represents an important visual and cultural amenity, due to extraordinary survival of this group. However, if any historic buildings are affected by the proposed redevelopment it is recommended that a programme of recording should be implemented, in order to ensure their preservation by record. The level of record is clearly dependant upon the scale of works proposed, but would range from limited recording of any area affected by refurbishment to full-scale recording in advance of demolition. The level of record recommended in advance of demolition would be to that of Level 3 of the Royal Commission guidelines (RCHME 1996). This would include full photographic coverage,

supplemented by detailed written notes on the development of the building, and the compilation of floor plans and cross-sections as appropriate. This approach has previously been adopted in Walsall town centre, in advance of the redevelopment of the Town Wharf area. It should also be remembered that the backplot buildings are of equal historic importance to those at the head of each plot and that the same level of recording would be appropriate to these structures.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the staff of the Walsall Local Studies Centre, Dan Roberts of Walsall M.B.C. Planning Dept., and Mike Shaw, the Black Country Archaeologist, for their help in the compilation of this report. Thanks are also due to Charles Brown of Duval Brownhill and St. Modwen Developments Limited for commissioning this report. The text was produced by Melissa Conway and Steve Litherland, the figures produced by Mark Bredon, and the photographs by Edward Newton. The report was edited by Iain Ferris of BUFAU, and the project was managed by Steve Litherland.

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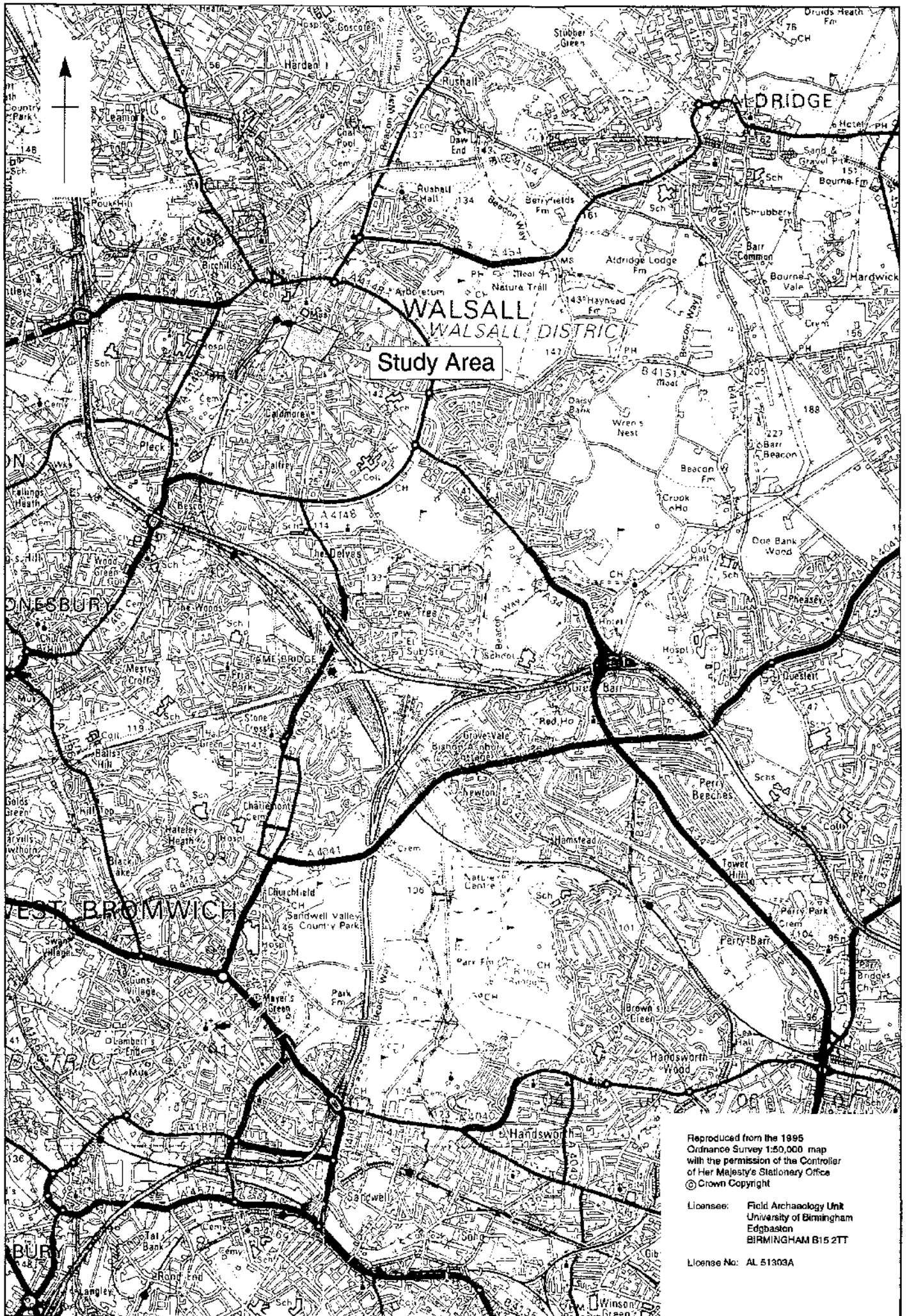
The Walsall Red Book 1930

Cartographic sources

1679 Gregory King's Plan of Walsall (50 poles to an inch)

1886 Ordnance Survey 1st Edition (1:500)

1903 Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition (1:2500),
and subsequent editions of 1916, 1930 and 1963.



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Fig.1

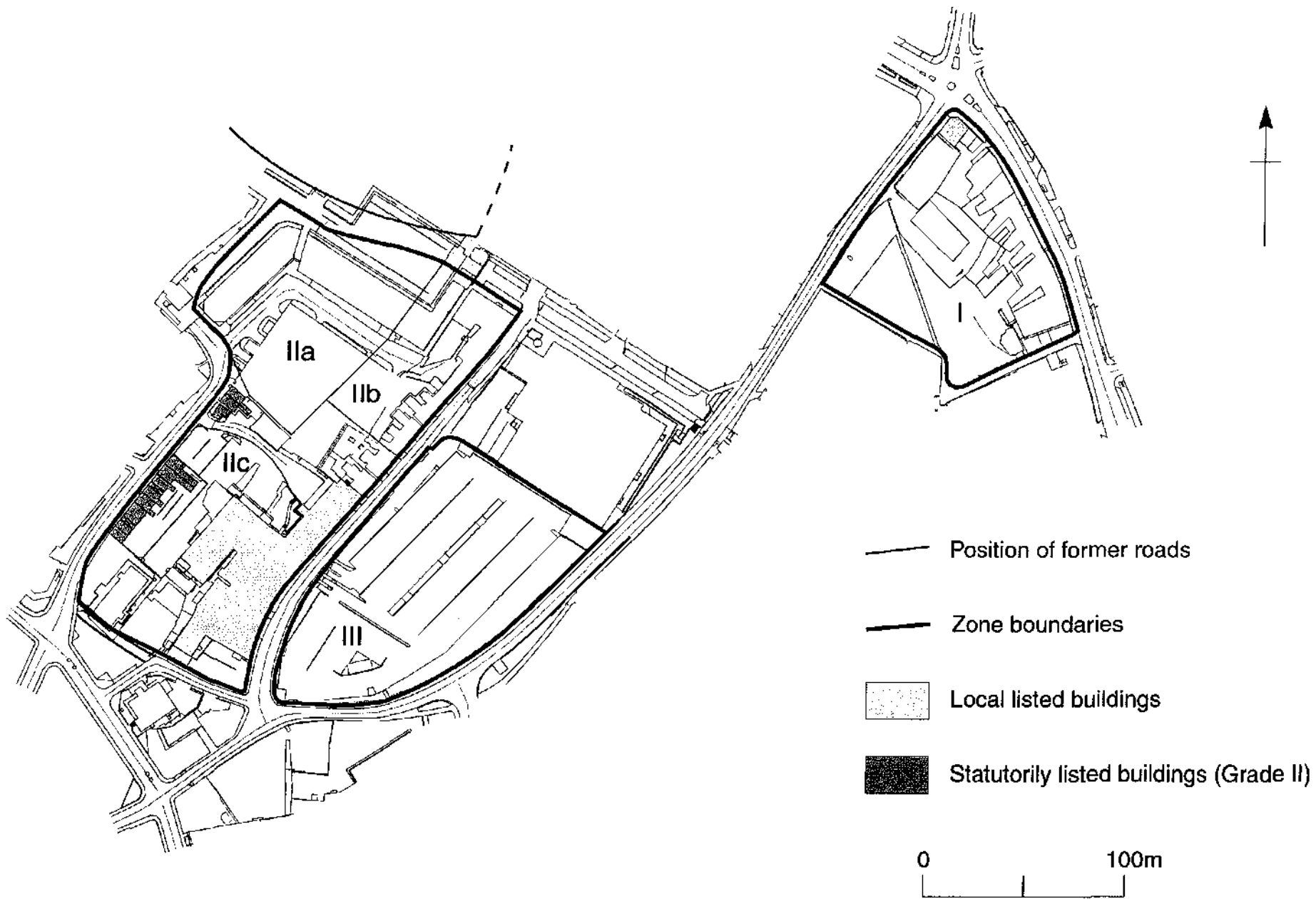


Fig.2

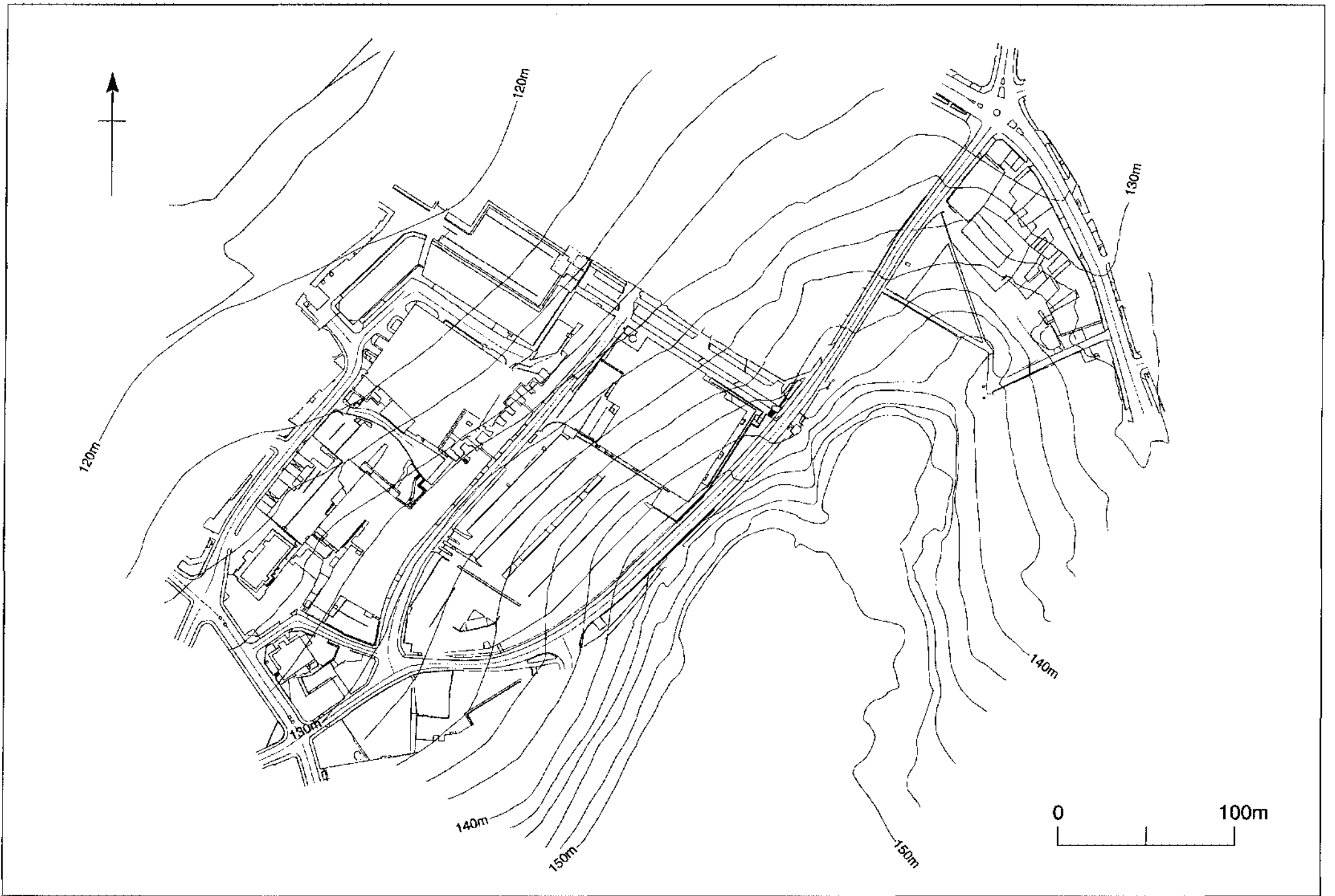


Fig.3

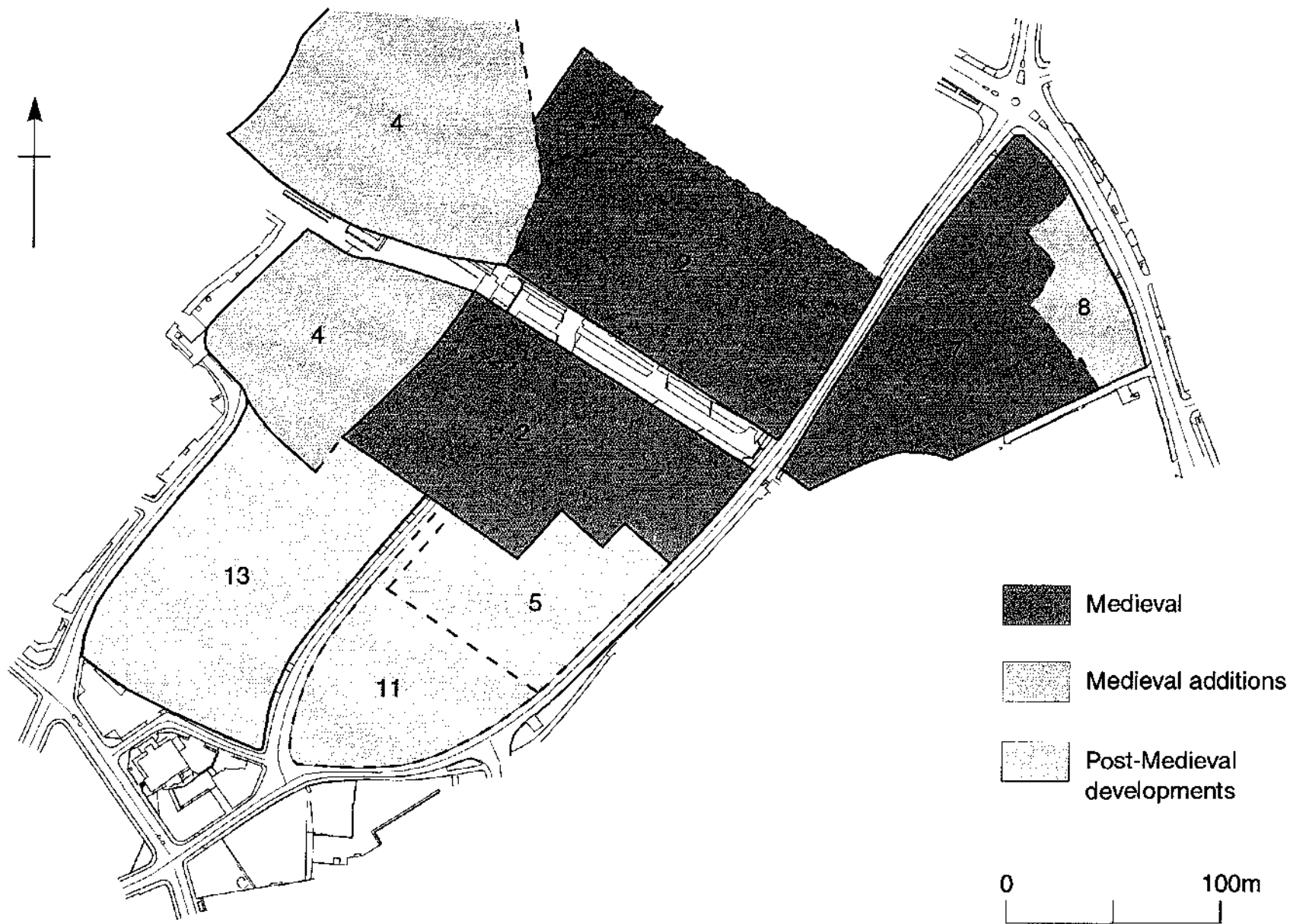


Fig.4

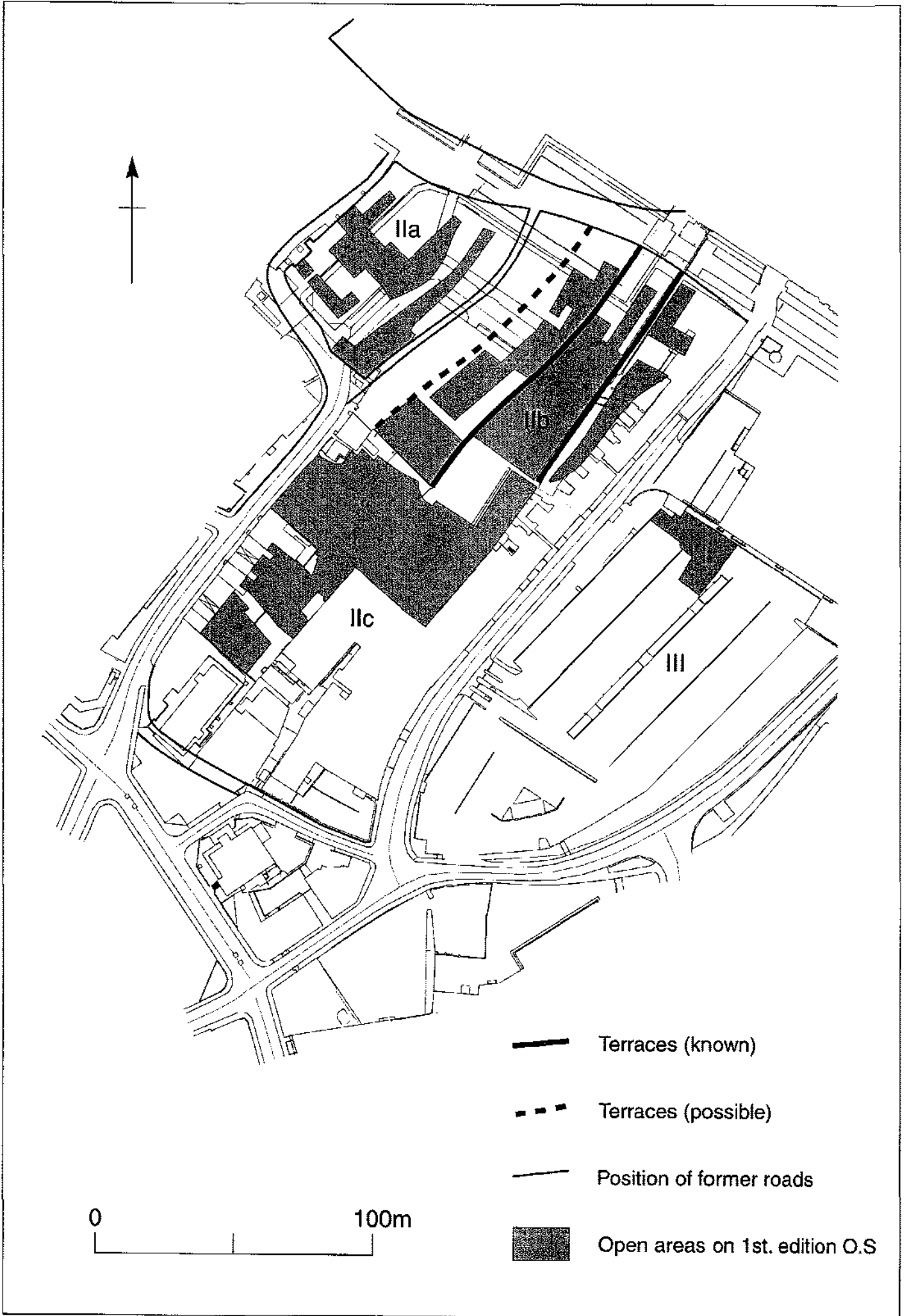


Fig.5



Fig.6

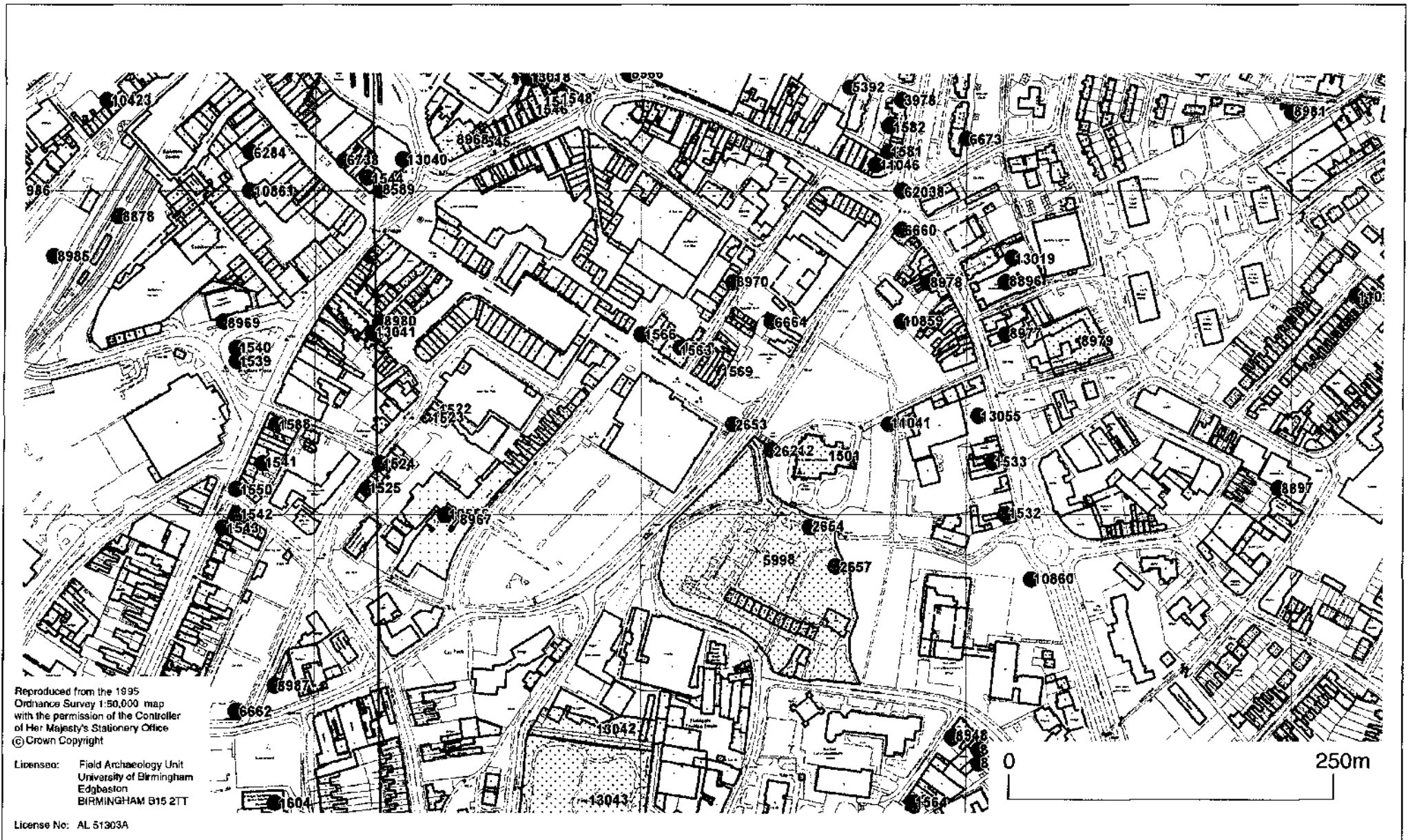


Fig.7 (Shaw 2001)

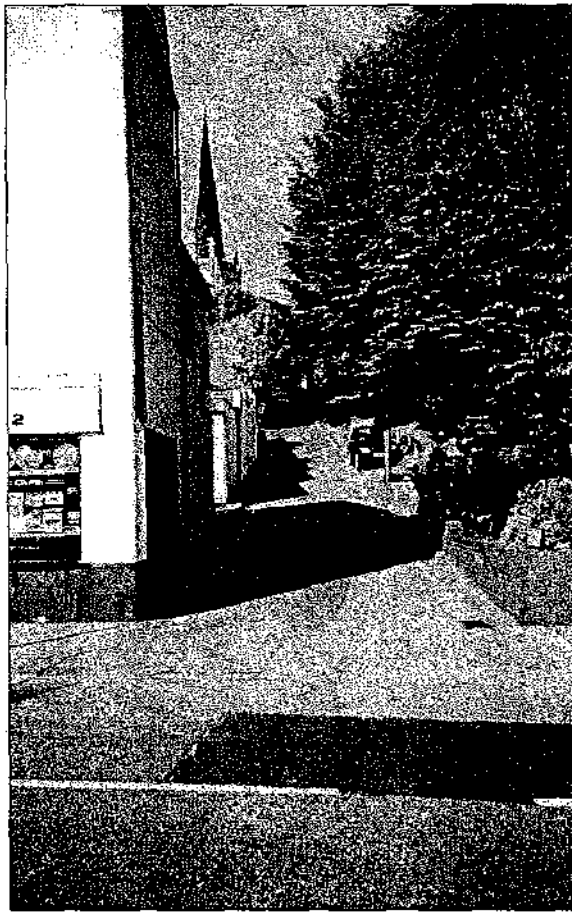


Plate 1

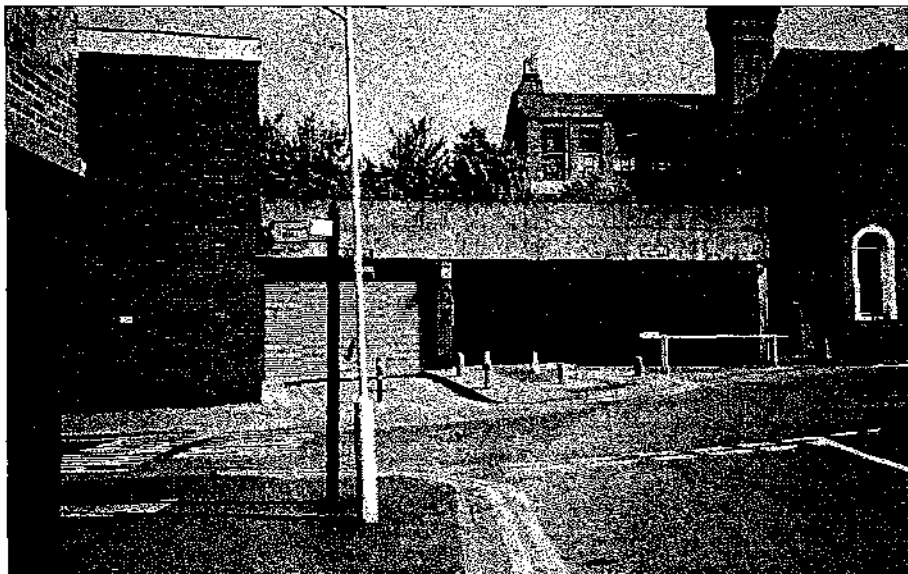


Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4

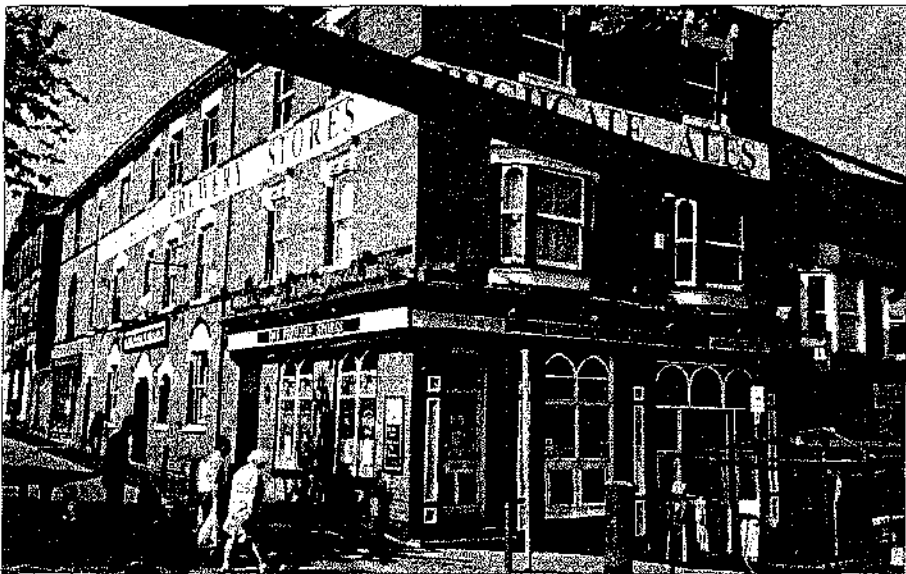


Plate 5



Plate 6

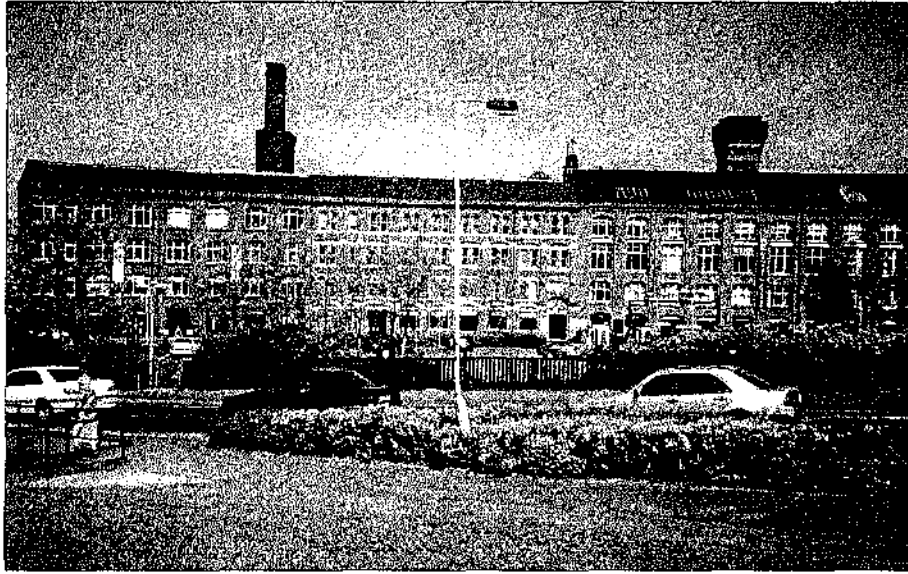


Plate 7

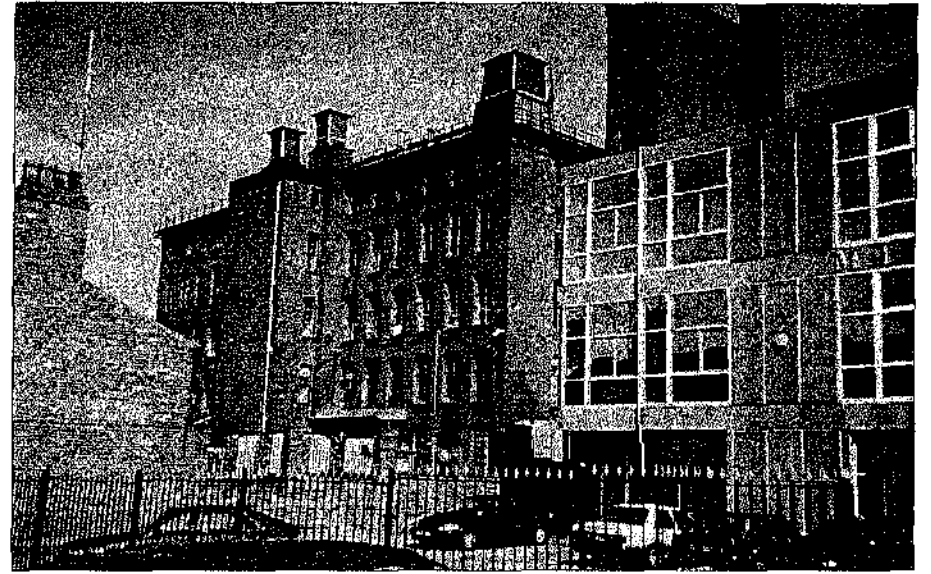


Plate 8



Plate 9



Plate 10