



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BIRMINGHAM

**Chessvale Bowling Club,
East Street, Chesham,
Buckinghamshire**

**An Archaeological Desk Based
Assessment**

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit



Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
Project No. 987
October 2002

Chessvale Bowling Club, East Street, Chesham, Buckinghamshire
An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment

by
Suzy Blake

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>

Chessvale Bowling Club, East Street, Chesham, Buckinghamshire
An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment

Contents

Summary	1
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Location of Study Area	1
3.0 Objectives	1
4.0 Method	1
5.0 Geology and Topography	2
6.0 Site Inspection	2
7.0 Cartographic Sources	2
8.0 Archaeological and Historical Background	
8.1 Previous Archaeological Work	3
8.2 Sites Recorded on SMR	4
8.3 Historical Profile of the Study Area	6
9.0 Conclusions and Provisional Recommendations	7
10.0 Acknowledgements	8
11.0 References	9
12.0 Cartographic Sources	10

List of Figures

Figure 1	General Location Map
Figure 2	Map of Chesham showing site location and SMR sites
Figure 3	Extent of development area
Figure 4	Map of the County of Buckinghamshire 1825
Figure 5	Map of the main street of Chesham 1843
Figure 6	Diocesan Tithe Map 1843
Figure 7	Enlargement of town plan from Diocesan Tithe Map 1843
Figure 8	1 st Edition Ordnance Survey 1883 6"
Figure 9	2 nd Edition Ordnance Survey 1898 25 "
Figure 10	Ordnance Survey 1923 Revision with 1938 additions 6"

List of Plates

Plate 1	Looking south east – showing bowling green and steep bank to the rear of site
Plate 2	Looking east – Showing difference in height between level of bowling green and East Street
Plate 3	Looking south – showing access to the rear of the site
Plate 4	Looking east – showing access to the front of the site

Summary

An archaeological desk-based assessment was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) in October 2002 on the site of Chessvale Bowling Club, East Street, Chesham (centred on NGR 496035, 201582). The assessment was undertaken ahead of a proposed residential development of the site. All available documentary and cartographic evidence was examined and a site visit was incorporated into the assessment in order to identify features, or potential features, of archaeological or historical interest. The assessment revealed that the development sites lies within an area of historical and archaeological interest with significant potential for the survival of buried archaeological deposits. These deposits may relate to Mesolithic, Neolithic, Roman, medieval and post-medieval settlement and activity in Chesham, and could survive relatively undisturbed due to lack of development.

1.0 Introduction

This archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) on behalf of Hightown Praetorian Housing Association ahead of the proposed residential development of the site of Chessvale Bowling Club, East Street, Chesham, (NGR 496035, 201582). The location of the site is shown in Figures 1 to 3. As the site is considered likely to contain archaeological remains which may be affected by the proposed development, an assessment of the archaeological implications are required in advance of the consideration of the proposals. This is in accordance with government advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: *Archaeology and Planning*. The desk based assessment forms the first stage of an assessment of the impact of the proposed development. The aim of the report is to provide a summary of the known and potential archaeological information on the study area based upon existing data, to enable appropriate mitigation strategies to be devised as required in the Brief for the work prepared by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service. The assessment adheres to the guidelines set out in the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1999).

2.0 Location of the Study Area

The development site is located to the east of Chesham High Street, between East Street and the railway line and comprises of Chessvale Bowling Club and adjacent areas (centred on NGR 496035, 201582) (Figure 3). Almost the entire site lies about 1.50m higher than the level of East Street, with the eastern boundary of the site being even higher (Plates 1 and 2).

3.0 Objectives

The objectives of this archaeological desk-based assessment are to determine the likely survival and significance of archaeological and palaeoenvironmental remains within and around the proposed development site in its local, regional, or national context as appropriate. The assessment also examined the need for any further archaeological work in advance of the proposed development, and to identify potential requirements for any *in-situ* preservation of archaeological remains, or for their recording, in advance of or during the development.

4.0 Method

Research into primary and secondary documentary sources and historic maps held at the University of Birmingham Library, Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service Sites and Monuments Record and Buckinghamshire Records and Local Studies Service was undertaken. All sources consulted are listed in sections 11.0 and 12.0 below.

5.0 Geology and Topography

The site is situated towards the bottom of the slopes of the eastern side of the Chess river valley and lies on the Middle Chalk Layer, which extends down the side of the valley, turning to valley gravel and alluvium at the bottom. The western side of the site has been raised recently in order to level the ground for the construction of a bowling green.

6.0 Site Inspection

The site fronts onto the eastern side of East Street and is enclosed by a 2m high boundary wall of brick construction; a low wooden fence tops this wall (Plate 1). The public access to the site is by means of a gateway off East Street near to the southern end of the wall. The Bowling Green is reached up concrete steps from this access (Plate 4). The green is surrounded by a concrete path measuring 1.40m in width, which appeared to lie at the same level as the top of the brick wall enclosing the site to the front. To the north of green two small buildings were observed, one of brick construction and one of wooden construction. These were located just within a further brick constructed boundary wall. Similarly a brick wall belonging to the adjacent property bound the northern side of the site. To the rear (east) of the green a steep bank slopes up to a hedge. At the northern end of the bank were a series of buildings, the largest of which had brick foundations, the rest being constructed of corrugated iron panels. This building was 'terraced out' of the slope with steps leading to further, wooden constructed buildings at the top. The most southerly of these buildings was situated partially behind the hedge at the top of the bank, just in front of the rear boundary to the site. The rear (eastern) boundary was a wall constructed of a mixture of both brick and flint and was partially demolished to a height of approximately 0.9m. The demolition rubble from the wall was scattered across the area between the boundary and the hedge. To the rear of the wall was a footpath directly adjacent to Chesham station. The footpath was approximately 2.70m wide but was lined with lamp posts and telegraph poles reducing the access width to 2.20m in places (Plate 3). Buildings to the north and south were on an upward incline, this suggests that there is a high proportion of made ground at the western side of the site and a probable lesser proportion to the east. The bowling green was slightly overgrown and did not appear to be in current use.

7.0 Cartographic Sources

An extensive range of historical maps was examined in order to identify the changing morphology of the study area with regard to the street layout and the properties and other features contained within it.

A map of the County of Buckinghamshire dated 1825 (Figure 4) (Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, 2000 p.29) shows the layout of the main streets of the town has not altered. No streets are shown in the area of where East Street now exists, nor are any buildings shown. It should be noted however that this is a large-scale map of the whole county and therefore does not have a significant amount of detail. A map, showing the main street of Chesham dated 1843 (Figure 5), names some of the public houses that existed at the time. Although the layout of the main street appears to be the same as the earlier maps, it does not show the development area. It therefore offers little information as to land use.

The 1843 Diocesan Tithe Map (Figure 6) includes the area to the east of High Street and shows the site to have no buildings or other features. The enlarged map of the town centre (Figure 7), featured on the tithe map, shows the area to the east of High Street in more detail. This indicates that the site lies within garden plots to the rear of the buildings fronting on to High Street. No path or track, which may have pre-dated East Street, is recorded.

By the time the 6 inch scale 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map (Figure 8) was published in 1883 there is the beginnings of the expansion of Chesham northwards from the central market area. It is also clear that by this time little development had taken place to the east of High Street. East Street had still not been constructed. By the time of the 25-inch 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1898 (Figure 9) a significant addition to the Ordnance Survey maps is notable, with the construction of the railway directly to the east of the development plot. Also evident on this map is further expansion to the north of the town centre. The 1923 Revision of 6 inch Ordnance Survey, which includes 1938 additions (Figure 10) still shows the site of the bowling club to be undeveloped, with no sign of a precursor to East Street evident.

8.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

8.1 Previous Archaeological Work (Figure 2)

An archaeological excavation undertaken at Stratford's Yard in Chesham (SMR no. 1875) during 1969 revealed a late Mesolithic working floor and also yielded some Neolithic material along with pottery and animal bone about 1m below the present ground level. The animal bone gave a radiocarbon date of the fourth millennium BC (Stainton, 1989 p.49). In 1982 further archaeological excavation was carried out when the site was to be developed, revealing further deposits relating to the Mesolithic and Neolithic occupation of this site.

Another excavation was undertaken at East Street (SMR no. 5682) by Buckinghamshire County Museum from April to June 1989 ahead of a proposed development on the site. The excavation revealed archaeological deposits sealed beneath 0.50m of modern overburden, and surviving, relatively undisturbed, to a depth of c.0.30m across the site (Collard, 1990 p.18). A large quantity of artefactual flint debris, burnt flint and animal bone was recovered from a dark soil layer, with typical Mesolithic microlithic pieces amongst the flint. Also recovered from this layer were sherds of Neolithic/Bronze Age pottery. This evidence suggests that the dark soil layer, which yielded these finds, was of a Neolithic or Bronze Age date (Collard, 1990 p.18). The presence of a significant amount of Mesolithic flint material from the same layer could, however, be explained by the continuing use of the site from the Mesolithic through the Bronze Age.

An archaeological desktop study was undertaken during 1997. This was carried out ahead of the proposed construction of a new Town Hall, theatre, supermarket and associated parking on the area of land between High Street and St Mary's Way, Chesham. The desktop assessment revealed a high potential for archaeological remains of pre-historic, Roman, medieval and post-medieval date and the possibility of considerable impact upon the archaeological resource (Field, 1997).

Following the desktop assessment three archaeological evaluations and an archaeological excavation were undertaken. The first, in April 1998, consisted of the excavation of three trial trenches, on the site of the former Catling's Garage located to the west of High Street and east of St Mary's Way. This evaluation produced little archaeological information. Two flint flakes were recovered from the alluvium, however these were not associated with any archaeological features and were un-dateable (Armour-Chelu 1998a p.5). It was therefore concluded that these were residual finds. A single ditch represented the only feature earlier than the post-medieval period, and was possibly associated with a sherd of Roman pottery (Armour-Chelu 1998a p.5-6). Also revealed were peaty deposits representing buried garden soils, probably of an early post-medieval date. The site had suffered a considerable amount of disturbance. Fuel tanks once in place to the north west of the site had caused a significant amount of disturbance and due to seepage the ground had to be decontaminated leaving this area of the site archaeologically sterile (Armour-Chelu 1998a p.6).

The second archaeological evaluation, also undertaken in April 1998, was in advance of the development of an existing car park in Albany Place, to the north of St Mary's Way and the west of High Street. The excavation of five trial trenches revealed that this area had been subject to disturbance from service trenches and during the construction of the car park. There was little surviving archaeological evidence apart from localised survival of buried peaty soils and alluvial deposits (Armour-Chelu 1998b p.5).

From May to July 1998 the third evaluation was undertaken on the site occupied by the existing Sainsbury's supermarket, the Elgiva Theatre, The Malt House and Chesham Town Hall. Nine evaluation trenches were excavated over an area of 15000m². These evaluation trenches revealed a successive build up of 19th and 20th century deposits. Elements of a tanning pit complex consisting of at least two clay lined pits were revealed, although these had been backfilled with relatively modern material (Armour-Chelu 1998c p.12). A single, securely dated medieval domestic rubbish pit was recorded, with the fill dating from the 13th to 15th centuries (Armour-Chelu 1998c p.13). These evaluations revealed that the focus of significant archaeological remains lie to the east of the course of the river Chess and near to High Street, and that the area to the west of the river appear to have been subjected to continuing disturbance since the 19th century.

Following these evaluations an excavation on the site of 128 High Street was undertaken during the summer of 1998. The excavation revealed little archaeological evidence for prehistoric occupation or activity on the site and although several flints were recovered they were not associated with any archaeological features. A small number of Romano-British and late Saxon pottery sherds were recovered during the excavation, however these came from later contexts and may not be indicative of the occupation of this site during the Romano-British or later periods (Armour-Chelu 2001 p.18). The excavation did however reveal a significant amount of archaeology relating to the medieval occupation of the site. The earliest deposit from this period was a buried soil layer containing mainly 13th and 14th century pottery, and earlier residual material. Also revealed were the remains of two phases of domestic buildings or dwellings, the earlier phase dating from the 14th century with second phase of 15th century date surviving at a depth of 1m below the modern ground surface (Armour-Chelu 2001 p.1). Unfortunately the excavation yielded little information relating to diet and economy at the time. The late medieval to post medieval period saw a change in the use of the site from domestic habitation to the industrial usage. By the 16th century the land formed part of a tanning works complex, 14 of which were identified and excavated during the course of the excavation, with the use of these pits continuing into the 18th or 19th century (Armour-Chelu 2001 p.21).

8.2 Sites recorded on the SMR

SMR No.	Site Name	Brief Description	Grid Ref.	Distance From Study Area
1241	St Mary's Church	Medieval church, parts of which date from the C12th/13th. Modified during the C15th	SP95660152	350m
1833	(Finds spot)	An Iron Age gold coin inscribed 'ANDO' although exact location unknown	SP96000200	Unknown
1835	(Finds spot)	A Roman (Greek?) coin, found in Chesham although exact location unknown	SP96000200	Unknown
1836	1, The Broadway	A Roman coin, Maximianus (Egyptian) c.305AD found in the vicinity of 1, The Broadway, Chesham	SP95970174	180m
1837	The Balks	Well constructed cultivation terraces, mainly used for allotments. Very well preserved (up to 10m high)	SP96240129	300m
1838	Chesham Pillory/Pound	Location of the post-medieval pillory/pound in the Broadway area of Chesham	SP95970174	190m
1839	54&56 Church St.	Medieval house, now forming two tenements built in the C14th, restored and enlarged in the C17th	SP95750147	290m
1843	The Star Inn	The Star Inn on Blucher Street, post-medieval house built in the C17th, enlarged in C19th	SP95911760	200m
1846	Rectorial Manor House	Site of the rectorial manor house. House probably erected c1500 and was taken down in the C19th	SP95660161	360m
1848	Chesham Market Town Hall	Site of the town hall and market place on High Street. Market held there since the grant of 1257	SP95911480	140m

1851	1 High Street	Sherds of Romano-British Pottery found at 1 High Street	SP95940151	130m
1852	Blucher Street	A dozen sherds of Romano-British type pottery recovered during excavation of a hole to extract a petrol tank	SP95800180	300m
1853	1 Blucher Street	A Roman Coin of unknown date found at the rear of 1, Blucher Street	SP95930178	240m
1875	Stratford's Yard	A C16th brick and timber built house. Also site of excavation of Mesolithic/Neolithic occupation site excavated in 1969 & 1982.	SP95980145	160m
1905	Duck Alley	A sherd of Roman Pottery was found at Duck Alley, Chesham	SP95890135	290m
1914	The Bury	Medieval/Post-medieval manor and watermill located to s.w. of the church. Possible cemetery also located on this site	SP95621480	400m
2144	(Finds spot)	Palaeolithic handaxe recovered from the spoil during the excavation of foundations of the s.e. corner of the new library	SP95890179	300m
2930	(Finds spot)	Faintly decorated Bronze palstave, possibly originating from Chesham	SP96000200	Unknown
4203	'Near White Hill School'	In 1532 Thomas Harding was condemned as a relapsed heretic and was burnt at the stake – the site of execution being near White Hill School	SP96200180	280m
4433	Lacey Green Mill	Octagonal mill with brick basement & timber body last used for milling in 1914. Originally at Chesham the mill was moved to Lacey Green in 1821	SP96000200	Unknown
4657	1 Blucher Street	Building of timber framed construction dated from C16 th concealed behind a Victorian and later facade	SP95920177	270m
5157	Paynes Mill	A medieval fulling mill which was leased to Missenden Abbey for 15s c. C12 th /13 th	SP62000200	Unknown
5568	Friends Meeting House	Friends Meeting House (1800) and associated burial ground (1796) on Bellingdon Road.	SP95910194	390m
5569	Particular Baptist Chapel	Particular Baptist Chapel and burial ground on Red Lion Street c.1897	SP96040137	190m
5570	Baptist Chapel (General)	Burial ground and Baptist Chapel (general)	SP96040138	210m
5682	East Street	Mesolithic/Neolithic/Bronze Age settlement site. Finds include Mesolithic microlithic stone tools, burnt flint, pottery & animal bone. Excavated 1989.	SP95980146	130m
5909	(Finds spot)	A Palaeolithic handaxe recovered from the general area of Chesham. Kept in Luton Museum.	SP96000200	Unknown

6515	Great Germaines	19 th century formal gardens and parkland shown on 6 th 1 st Edition OS Map with unclear boundaries.	SP95700116	370m
6516	Lowndes Park	C18 th & C19 th gardens and park, now a municipal park, Formerly known as The Bury (1712)	SP95590152	500m

Table 1. A brief summary of all sites recorded on the SMR that fall within a 500m radius of the study area. The locations of these sites are shown in Figure 2.

8.3 Historical Profile of the Study Area

Prehistoric

The excavation of two sites, one at Stratford's Yard, the other on East Street, revealed evidence of prehistoric occupation dating from the Mesolithic through to the Neolithic period. Other evidence to suggest such an early date for settlement and activity in Chesham include a number of finds such as two Palaeolithic handaxes (SMR no.'s 5909 & 2144), a faintly decorated Bronze palstave (SMR no. 2930) and an inscribed Iron Age coin (SMR no. 1833) (Page, 1905 p191). There are also several finds from Chesham suggesting Roman activity within the town, including Romano-British pottery (SMR no's 1851 & 1852) and three Roman gold coins (SMR no's 1853, 1835, & 1836) recovered from the area of High Street and Blucher Street and The Broadway. The coin recovered from The Broadway (SMR no. 1836) was dated to c.305AD.

Medieval

The earliest documentary reference to Chesham comes from the compilation of the Domesday Book in 1086, where the village of *Cestreham* was named as one of the estates of the Bishop of Bayeaux (Sheahan, 1971 p.838) and was assessed at 'eight and a half hides' (Page, 1925 p.206). Chesham formed part of the lands of the 'barony of Bolbec' which was held of the king in chief by Hugh de Bolbec until some time after 1452 (Page, 1925 p.206). The castle of Bolbec in Whitchurch formed the head of the barony of Bolbec, which included ten Knights' fees in 1166 (Page, 1925 p.443). It later passed to the Earls of Oxford through marriage and was held by the family until c.1581 (Page, 1925 p.206), and a market has been held in the town since the grant to the Earl of Oxford in 1257 (Pevsner & Williamson, 1994 p.236). The town's medieval prosperity was based around its mills; four are recorded along the River Chess at the time of Domesday (Pevsner & Williamson, 1994 p.236).

The church of St Mary's (SMR no. 1241) is situated just to the west of what is now the town centre. The church dates originally from the 12th century, with the registers for the church beginning in 1538 (Page, 1925 p.215). However, little of the original church still survives, the only features being part of the window in the north transept and a few detached stones, although its likely that more of it survives in the walling of the central tower and transepts. The church was adapted and enlarged during the 13th and 15th centuries but by the beginning of the 18th century the church was beginning to fall into a poor condition (HMSO, 1912 p.92-94). The whole fabric of the church was restored by G.G. Scott between 1868 and 1869 (Page, 1925 p.214). Situated to the south of the church were the remains of 'The Bury', a medieval/post medieval manor house (SMR no. 1914), there are also records of a possible cemetery being located on or near this site.

Two adjacent houses located on Church Street (SMR no.1839), once a single domestic dwelling, date from the 14th century. A lot of the original characteristics of this building are still visible, although it was added to in the 17th century and more recently. Within the area around Church Street, Germaines Street, High Street, Blucher Street and The Broadway there several more houses dating from the 16th and 17th centuries, suggesting this area formed the nucleus of the medieval and early post medieval settlement.

A series of evaluations and an excavation on the area of land between the High Street and St Mary's Way revealed archaeological evidence for the medieval and later settlement in Chesham. Despite a significant amount of disturbance due to post-medieval and modern activity, buried soils dating to the

13th and 14th century along with the remains of two phases of buildings, the earlier phase dating from the 14th century and the second phase dating from the 15th century have survived below the modern ground surface.

Other evidence for early settlement and activity in Chesham is recorded in The Victoria History of the Counties of England (Buckinghamshire). They refer to a 'regular five sided island entirely surrounded by a moat' at Little Pendor Farm (Page, 1908 p.29). To the north east of Chesham a roughly square entrenchment called Grove Bank was also recorded and it is suggested that this may have been intended for a castle as traces of walling were once exposed (Page, 1908 p.29). These features could be of medieval, or possibly earlier date.

Post medieval

The post medieval town of Chesham had several thriving industries which, along with the introduction of the railway line at the end of the 19th century led to the expansion of the town northwards into the 'Newtown' area. The beechwoods of the Chiltern districts have led to the manufacture of wooden ware in the area since at least the 13th century (Page, 1908 p109) which continued and developed into the post-medieval period. The centre of trade was based in Chesham and became of considerable importance. Chesham became noted for its turnery ware during the early 19th century, although by 1862 its wooden ware and turnery trade was declining (Page 1908, p110). The trade did continue, with a number of manufacturers continuing into the twentieth century, producing products such as dairy utensils and brushes. Chair making was a later development than the wooden ware industry, although soon overtook it, and became of great importance during the 19th century (Page 1908, p110). The boot and shoe-making industry was also of great importance in Chesham and in the early 1900's it was recorded that there had been such an industry in the town for many generations (Page 1908, p112). This was probably due to the existence of several tan-yards in the town, evidence for which was found during the evaluation and excavation in the area between High Street and St Mary's Way. The tanneries in the town had died out by the 1900's though, due to the larger scale production of leather being undertaken in London by this time. During the early 19th century a great many hands were employed in Chesham in the shoe-making trade, although despite this shoemaking does not appear in the census for the manufacturers of the county, taken in 1831 (Page 1908, p11). By 1862 the trade had flourished and the manufactured shoes were being sent to London and exported abroad (Page 1908, p112). Other industries based at Chesham included iron and brass foundries (Page 1908, p126). The Metropolitan Line station opened in 1889 (Pevsner & Williamson, 1994 p.237) and the line itself is first shown on the 2nd Edition 25" Ordnance Survey map of the same year. The railway line is situated directly to the east of the proposed development area although it does not appear that the site has been significantly disturbed during work for the construction of the railway.

By the beginning of the 20th century the Parish of Chesham covered an area of 1386 acres, made up of 736 acres of arable land, 621 acres of permanent grass, and 16 of woods and plantations (Page, 1925 p.203) and was a thriving town. This was owed mainly to the boot and shoe trade, with the two main factories being those of Messrs. Reynolds and Mr. John Heyes (Page, 1925 p.302). Other industry in the town at this time included brewing, two brush factories and with the beech woods covering the surrounding hills providing timber for the saw mills there was a large trade in wooden ware chairs (Page 1925, p203). The once important straw-plait trade was however almost extinct (Page 1925, p203). Such industry and large factories caused the town to spread northwards.

Several of the streets seen in the modern layout of the town are relatively new additions. This includes East Street, which was not constructed until 1966. No buildings are marked on any of the historic maps within the area of the development until the construction of the bowling green and its related buildings. This suggests that the area of development may not have been significantly disturbed, as it has not been subjected to continuous re-development.

9.0 Conclusions

This desk based assessment has revealed that the site of the proposed residential development at Chessvale Bowling Club lies within an area of archaeological interest, with potential for deposits dating from the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods through Roman and medieval activity to the late post

medieval period. The location of the site is within 160m of two other Mesolithic/Neolithic occupation sites, one at Stratford's Yard and another located just to the south on East Street. The topography of these two sites is very similar to that of the development area, situated on the lower slopes of the river valley, above the level of the river itself. It would therefore be reasonable to assume that this site would also have been a suitable location for occupation during the Mesolithic and Neolithic times.

The site is also located within the main area of the medieval settlement. Although there are no available sources showing any buildings dating from this period on the development area, it does lie just to the east of High Street where significant archaeological remains relating to medieval settlement in Chesham were recovered during excavation. Although there may not be evidence for buildings in this area there may be archaeological remains relating to the burgage plots to the rear of buildings on High Street or evidence for the use of the land for grazing or cultivation. Evidence for both these forms of land use within this area are present in the archaeological record. Just to the south east of the site are 'the Balks' (SMR no. 1837), a series of cultivation terraces measuring up to 10m high and possibly dating from the medieval period, while during the excavations between High Street and St. Mary's Way evidence for buried soil, primarily used grazing and rich in 12th and 13th century pottery, was revealed.

The historic maps show that there has not been any substantial development on the site or near the site of the bowling club until the construction of the railway at the end of the 19th century (although this does not appear to have affected the site). No other development was undertaken until the construction of East Street in 1966 and the addition of the bowling green following this. Even with the construction of the green and its associated development the land appears to have been built up to level the ground, and the buildings are not of substantial construction (two of them being sheds). The most substantial threat to the buried archaeology would have been the construction of East Street during the 1960's, although this does not appear to have had a major impact on the site. It is therefore unlikely that there has been any significant disturbance of land encompassed in the development area, indeed the modern build up of the plot to level the ground may have assisted in protecting any archaeology which may survive below ground. It is also likely that archaeological deposits will exist at a shallower level towards the eastern side of the site as the ground has been built up more to the western side of the site.

This assessment has revealed that there is a high potential for the survival of buried archaeological deposits within the proposed development area. Any development on this site has the potential to disturb or destroy important archaeological remains, which may relate to activity and settlement in Chesham from the prehistoric period through to post-medieval times.

10.0 Acknowledgements

This report was written by Suzy Blake, with contributions from Kate Bain and was edited by Richard Cuttler, who also managed the project. The site visit was made by Kate Bain and Nigel Dodds prepared the figures. Thanks to Mark Hanson who commissioned the report on behalf of Hightown Praetorian Housing Association. Thanks are also due to Julia Wise of Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service and to Buckinghamshire Records and Local Studies Service.

11.0 References

- Armour-Chelu, Robert 1998a '*New Town Hall and Associated Parking, Chesham, Buckinghamshire. Trial Trenches, Catling's Garage*' Lindsey Archaeological Services, Lincoln
- Armour-Chelu, Robert 1998b '*New Theatre and Associated Parking, Chesham, Buckinghamshire. Archaeological Evaluation (Trial Trenches, Albany Place)*' Lindsey Archaeological Services, Lincoln
- Armour-Chelu, Robert 1998c '*Supermarket Development, Chesham, Buckinghamshire. Trial Trenches, Supermarket Site, Elgiva Lane*' Lindsey Archaeological Services, Lincoln
- Armour-Chelu, Robert 2001 '*Supermarket Development and Associated Parking, Chesham, Buckinghamshire. Archaeological Excavations on the Site of 128 High Street*' Lindsey Archaeological Services, Lincoln
- Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society 2000 'Buckinghamshire in the 1760's and 1820's. The County Maps of Jefferys and Bryant' p.29 Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, Aylesbury
- Collard, Mark 1990 '*East Street, Chesham: Interim Report*' in South Midlands Archaeology No.20, 1990, p.18 CBA Group 9
- Field, Naomi 1997 '*Land to the West of High Street, Chesham, Buckinghamshire. Archaeological Desk Top Study*' Lindsey Archaeological Services, Lincoln
- HMSO, 1912 '*Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England). Buckinghamshire Volume 1 (South)*' HMSO, London
- Page, William (Editor) 1905 '*The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Buckingham Volume 1*' Archibald and Company Limited, London
- Page, William (Editor) 1908 '*The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Buckingham Volume 2*' Archibald and Company Limited, London
- Page, William (Editor) 1925 '*The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Buckingham Volume 3*' The St. Catherine Press, London
- Pevsner, Nikolaus & Williamson, Elizabeth 1994 '*The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire*' 2nd Edition, Penguin Books, London
- Sheahan, J.J. 1971 '*History and Topography of Buckinghamshire*' Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, London
- Stainton, Bambi 1989 '*Excavation of and Early Prehistoric Site at Stratford's Yard, Chesham*' in Records of Buckinghamshire Vol. 31, 1989, p.49-74 Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, Aylesbury

12.0 Cartographic Sources

Map of the County of Buckinghamshire 1825 from 'Buckinghamshire in the 1760's and 1820's The County Maps of Jefferys and Bryant' (see above)

Map of the main street of Chesham from a 'Volume of plans of the Late James Field Esq.' 1843

Diocesan Tithe Map 1843 (including enlargement of town centre)

1st Edition Ordnance Survey 1883 6"

2nd Edition Ordnance Survey 1898 25"

Ordnance Survey 1923 Revision with 1988 additions 6"

Ordnance Survey 1902 Geological Survey of England and Wales: Aylesbury 1:50 000

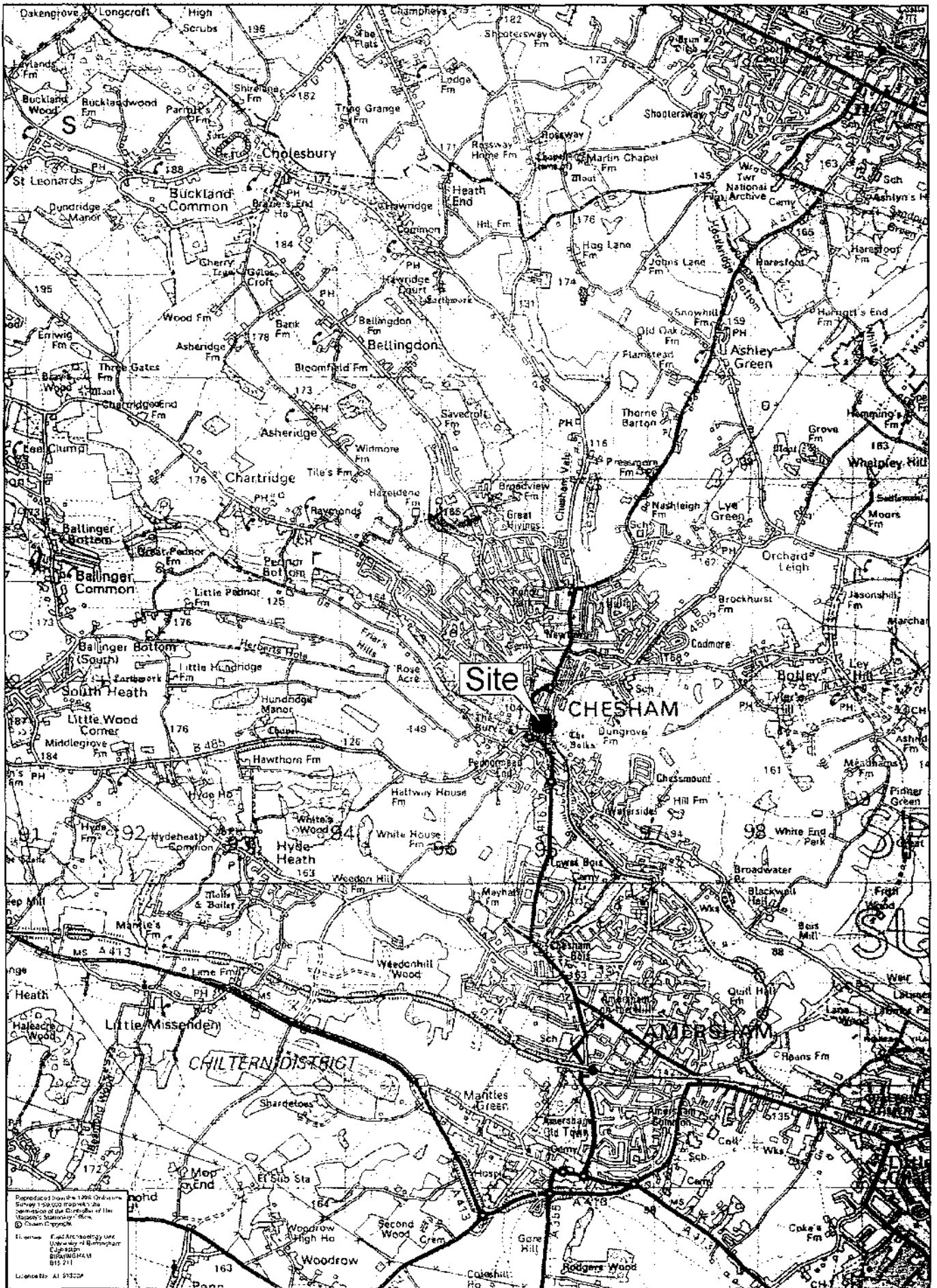


Fig.1

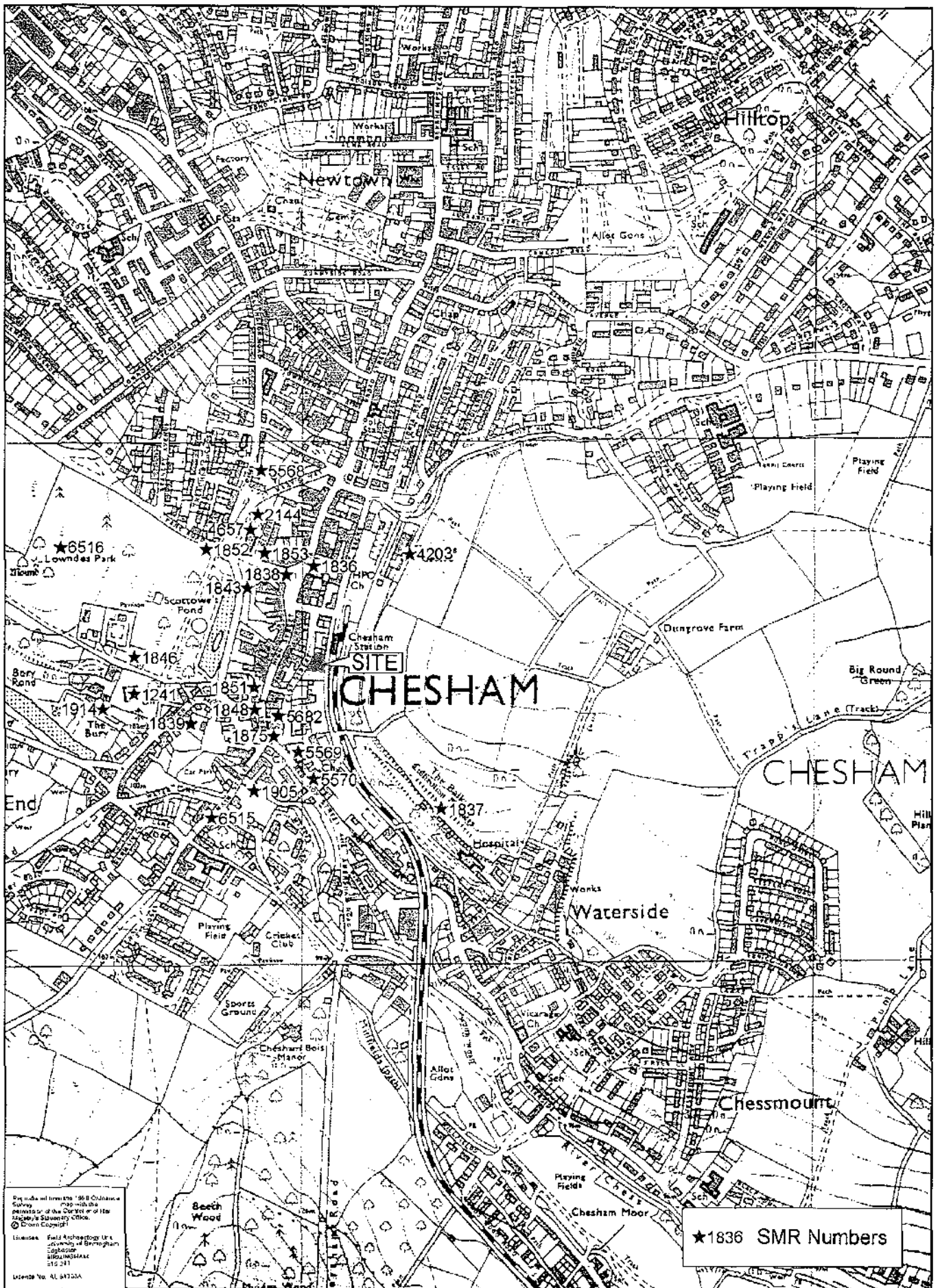


Fig.2

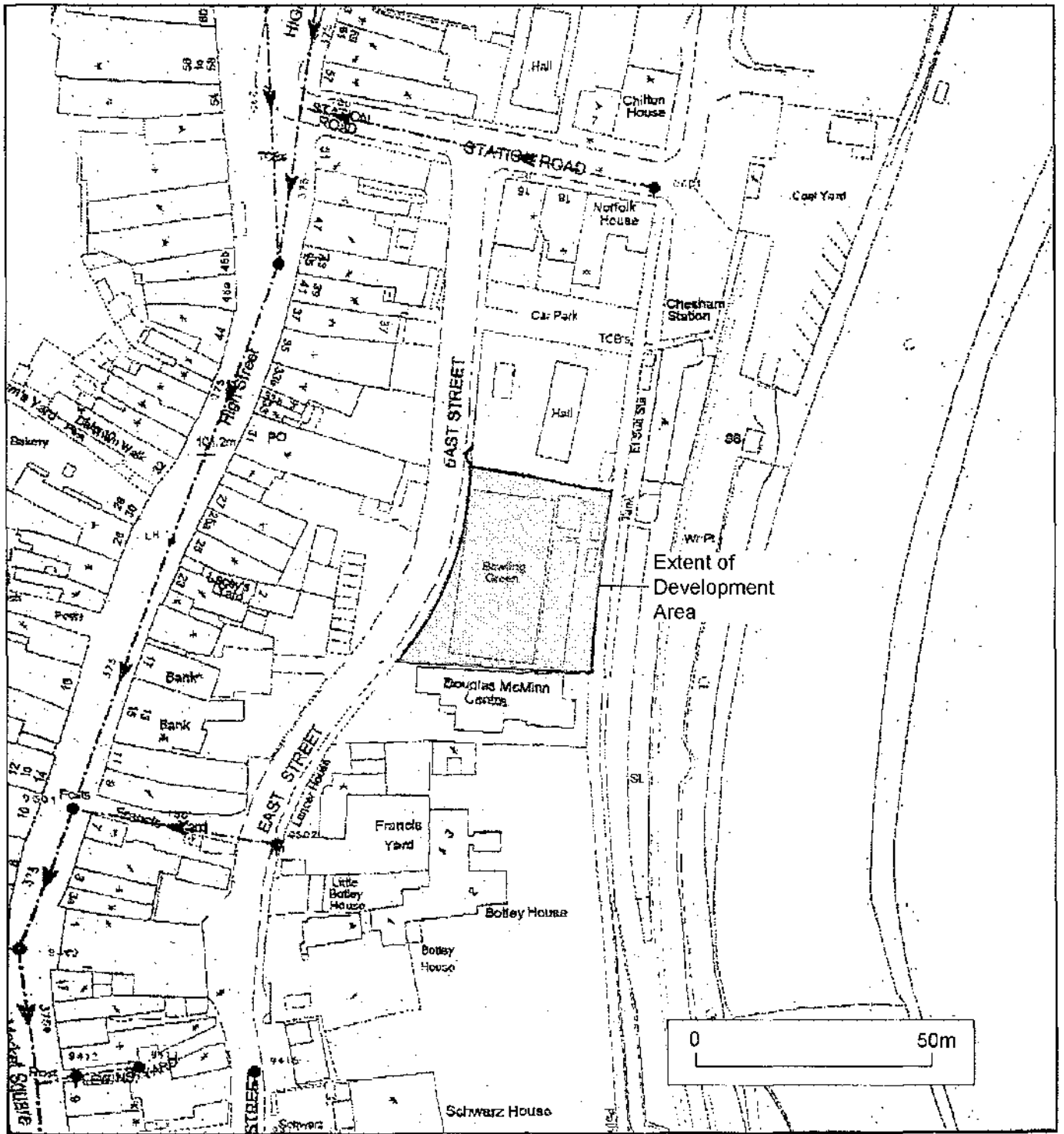


Fig.3

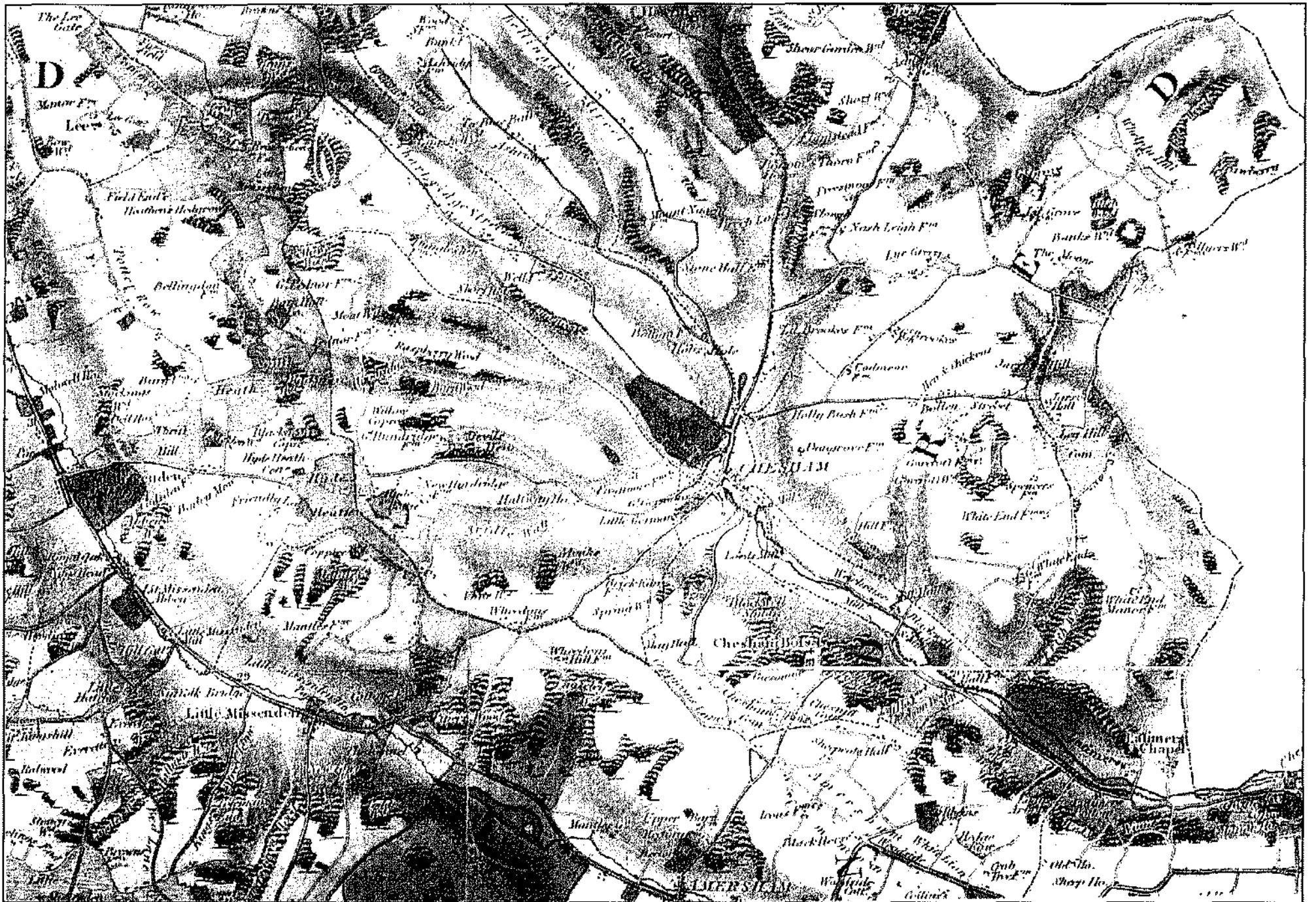


Fig.4 (1825)

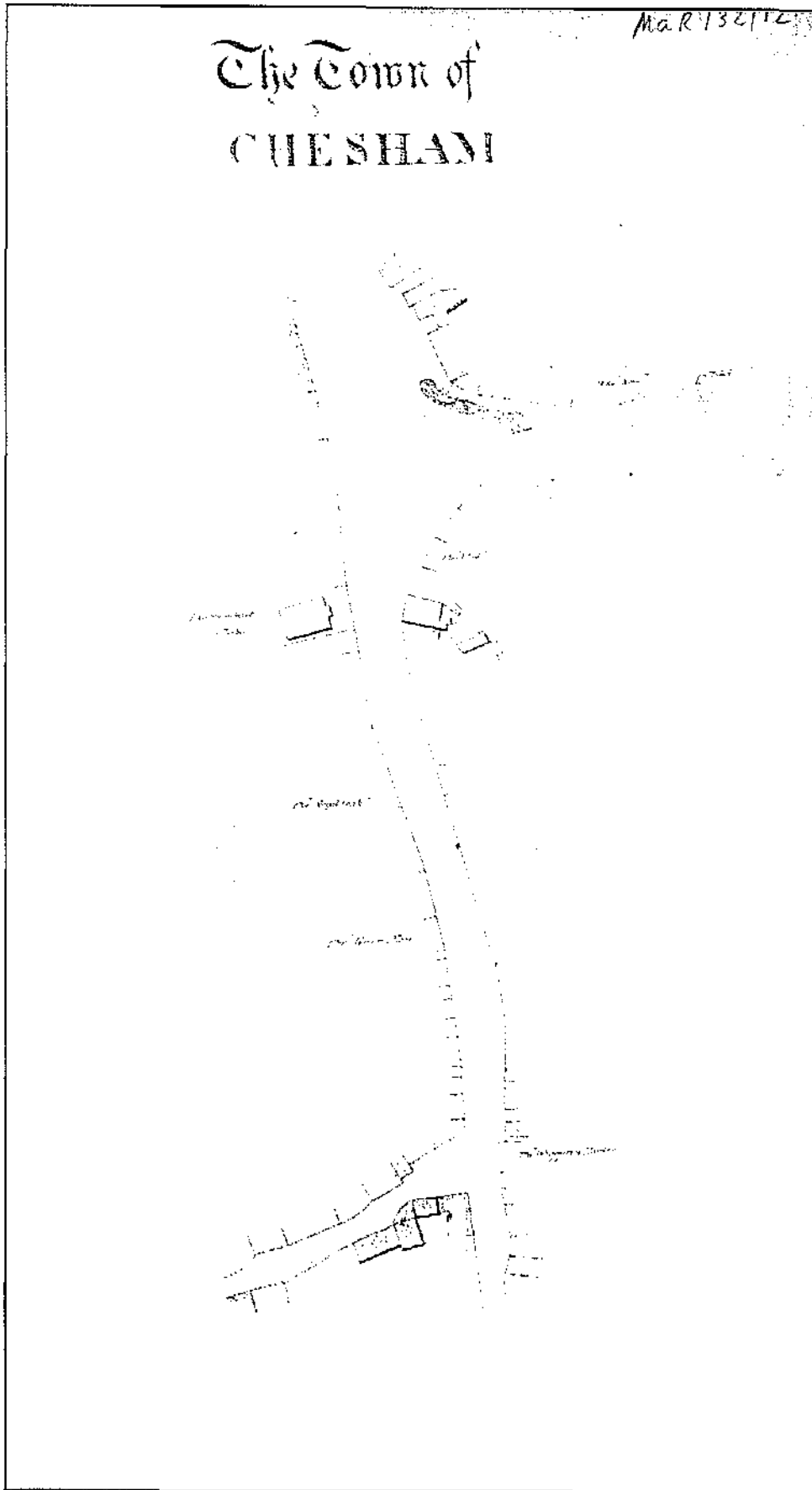


Fig.5 (Main Street 1843)

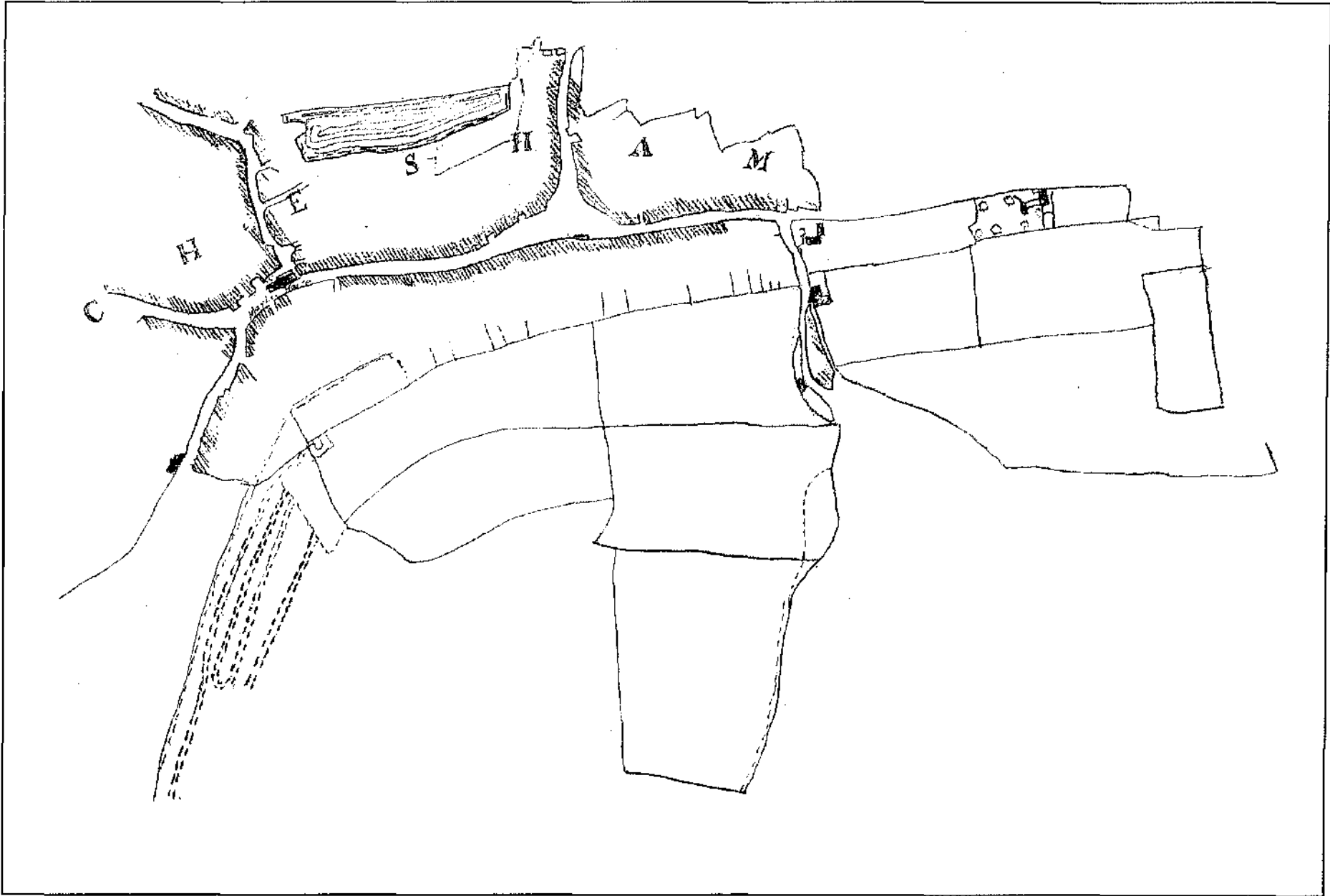


Fig.6 (Diocesan Tithe Map 1843)

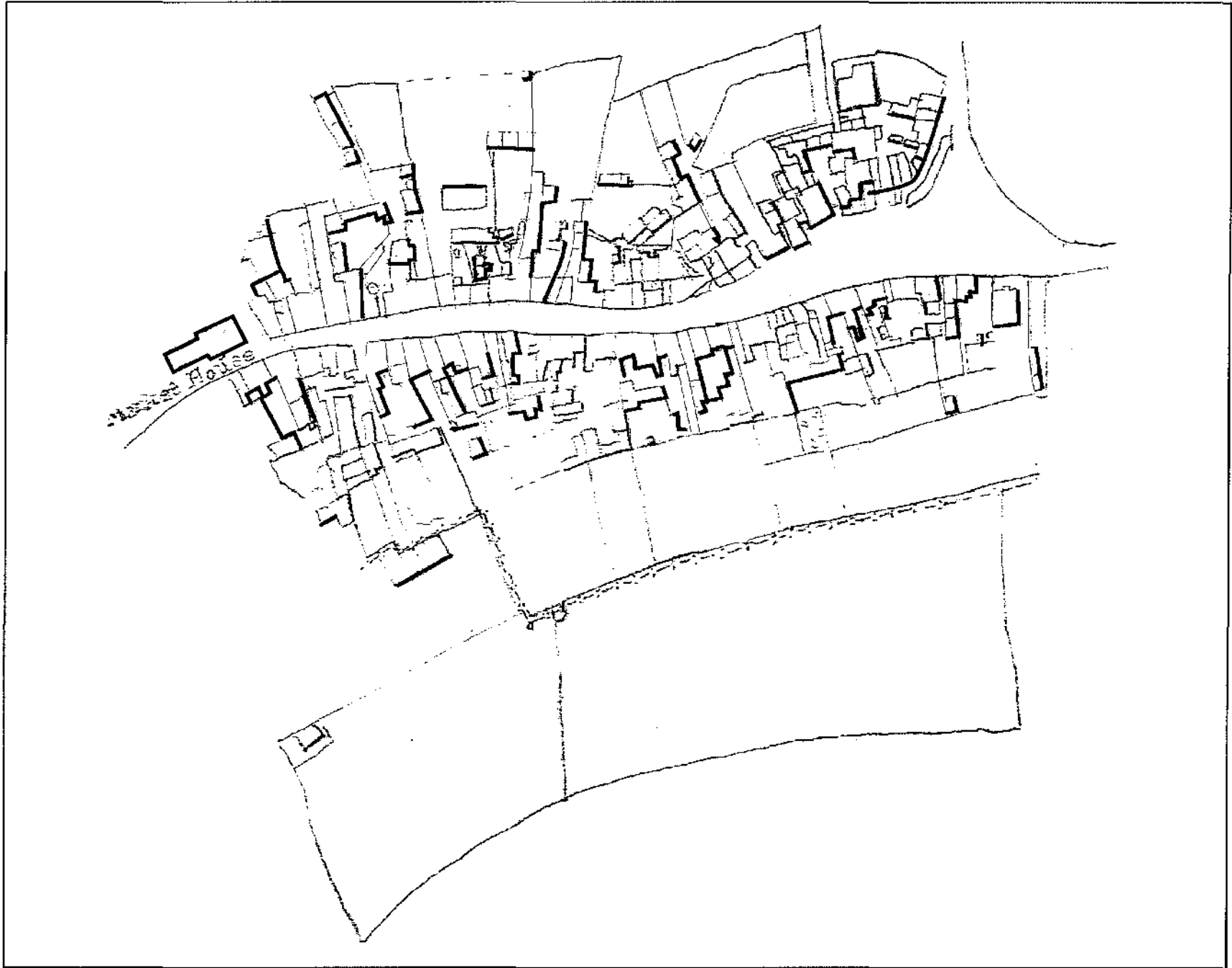


Fig.7 (Diocesan Tithe map 1843)

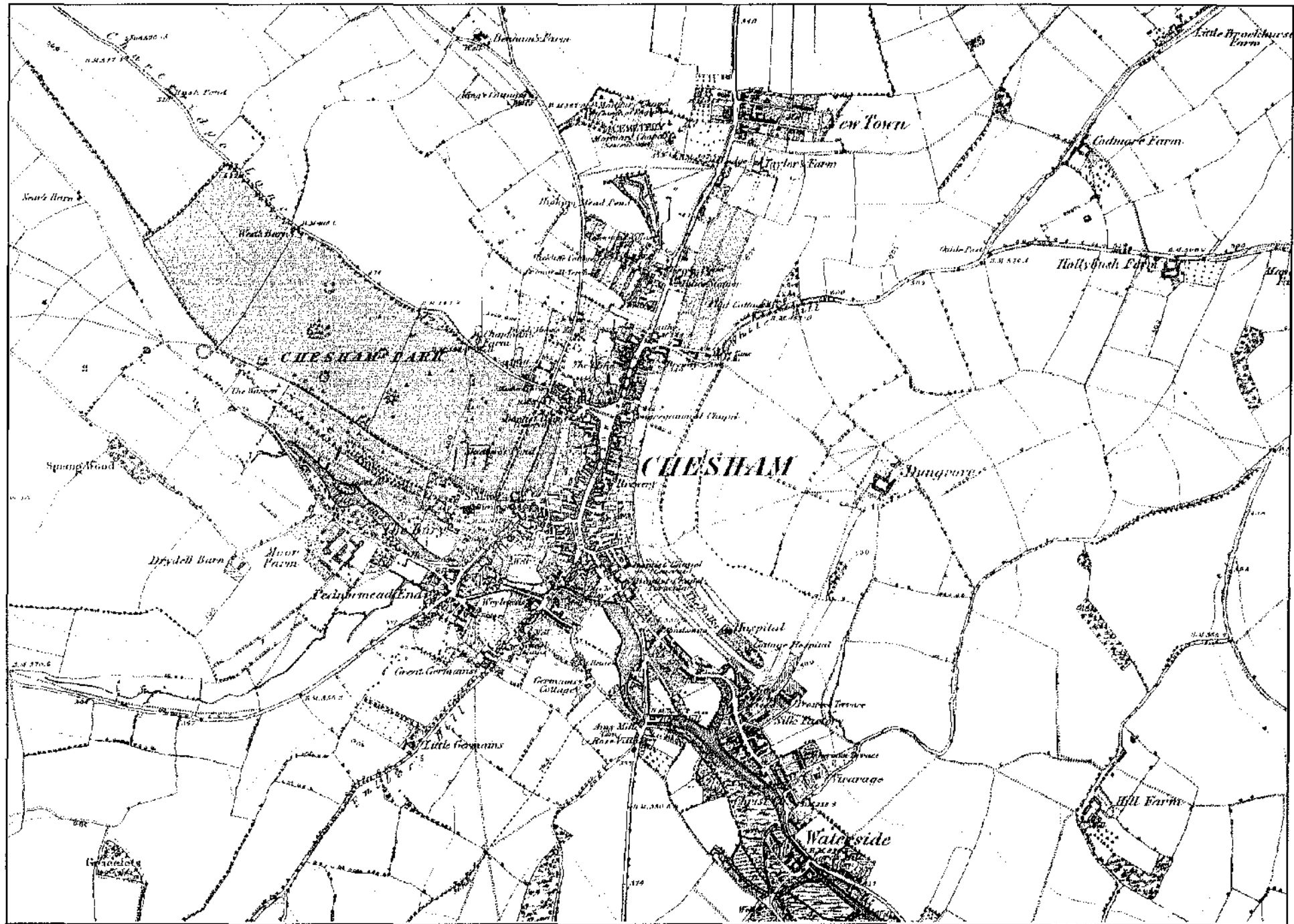


Fig.8 (1883)



Fig.9 (1898)

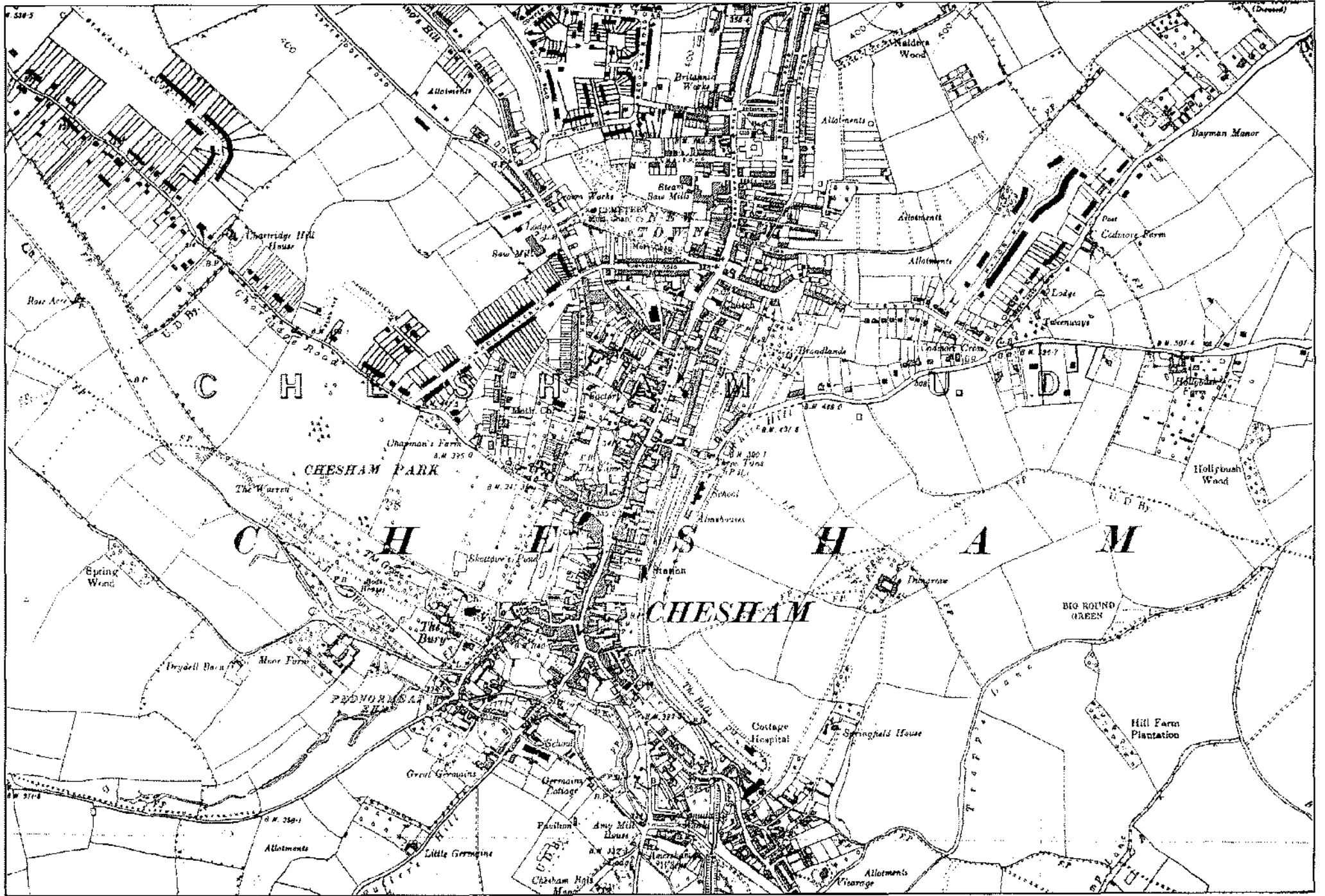


Fig.10 (1938)

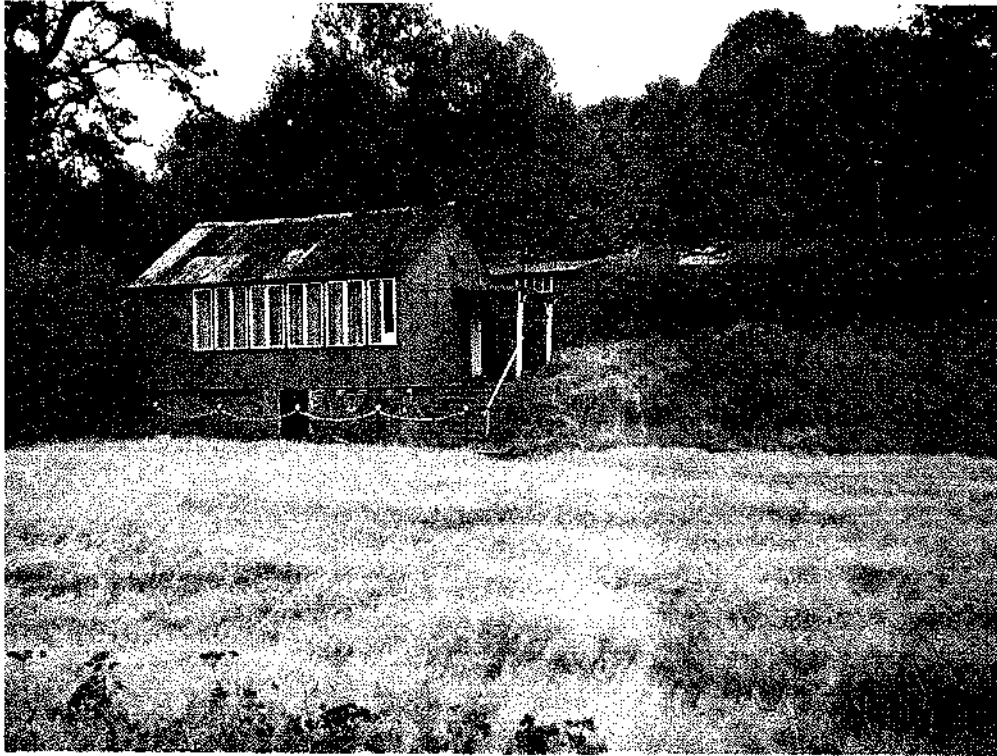


Plate 1

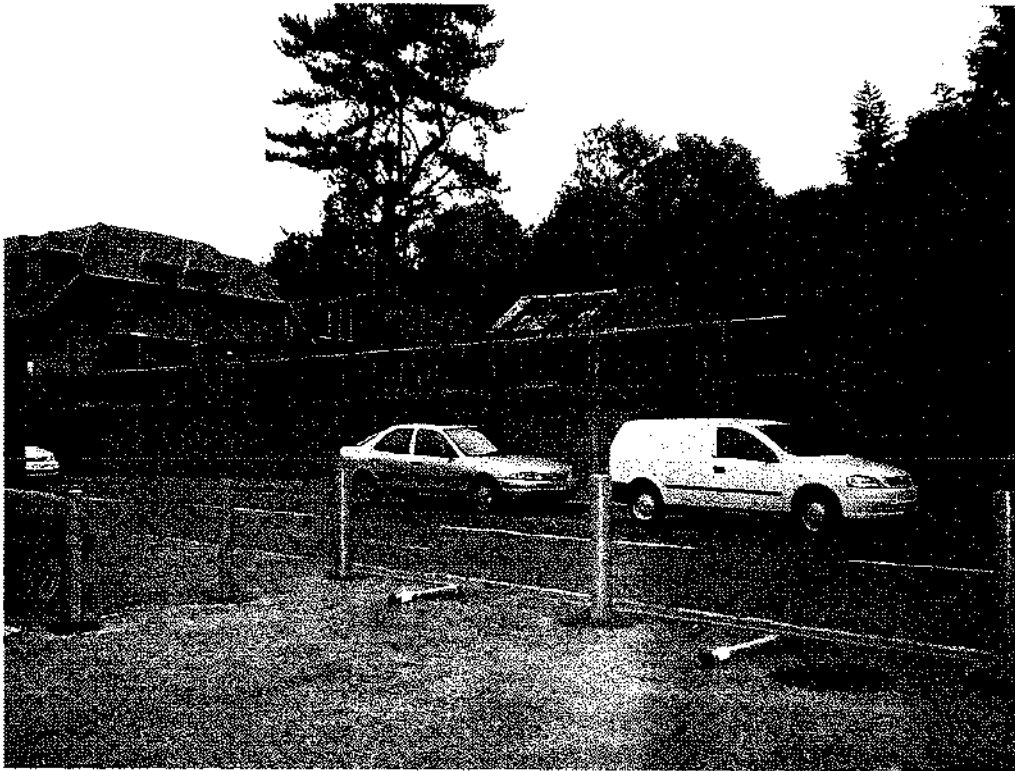


Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4