

**41-42 Hall Street, Dudley, West
Midlands.**

**An Archaeological Desk-based
Assessment. 2005**

Project No. 1336
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41- 42 Hall Street, Dudley, West Midlands.

An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment. 2005

By Eleanor Ramsey

For further information please contact:
Birmingham Archaeology
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
Tel: 0121 414 5513
Fax: 0121 414 5516
E-Mail: bham-arch@bham.ac.uk
Web Address: <http://www.barch.bham.ac.uk>

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SUMMARY

An archaeological desk-based assessment of 41 - 42 Hall Street, Dudley (NGR SO 947901, SMR 4904) was carried out in advance of proposed development. The work was commissioned by Crystalight Ltd and was undertaken in August 2005. Available primary and secondary sources including historical maps and trade directories were consulted, as was the Sites and Monuments Record, the main source of archaeological information for the Borough. Dudley itself is of Anglo-Saxon origin, and Hall Street is likely to pre-date the planned medieval town. Cartographic evidence suggests that the field within which the site is situated pre-dates the medieval period, and the field boundaries and the possible burgage plot divisions within the field appear to have been respected up until modern times.

The post-medieval character of Hall Street, gained from the trade directories, was mainly defined by food retail, though a mixture of trades, industries and residential properties were listed. 41-42 Hall Street are locally listed buildings, with Victorian frontages and multi-phase construction behind, some of which is likely to date to the 18th century, if not earlier. Cartographic evidence suggests that until the 20th century, the rear of the 41 Hall Street property was open land, increasing the potential for the survival of below-ground archaeology. This potential is increased further since the floor levels of the building extensions at the rear of the properties are significantly higher than the surrounding ground level, suggesting minimal truncation by subsequent development. The site as a whole, therefore, has the potential to enhance our understanding of the origin and development of both the study area, and this area of Dudley as a whole.

**41-42 HALL STREET, DUDLEY, WEST MIDLANDS.
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT. 2005**

1 INTRODUCTION

In August 2005 Birmingham Archaeology carried out an archaeological desk-based assessment of 41 - 42 Hall Street, Dudley (hereafter referred to as the study area). The project was commissioned by Crystalight Ltd in advance of proposed development.

This report details the results of the assessment, which was prepared in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessment (IFA 1999). The assessment conformed to a Written Scheme of Investigation (Birmingham Archaeology 2005), in accordance with guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990).

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

Dudley is situated at a break in the north-south ridge of Central England. Hall Street is located to the southeast of the historic medieval core of Dudley (Fig. 1) and the site at 41-42 Hall Street is centred on NGR SO 947901 (Fig. 2). This is just to the north of the Dudley Southern Bypass some 500m to the east of Dudley town centre.

The town of Dudley lies directly on the 280 to 345 million year old Westphalian coal measures of the Carboniferous period. Outcrops of sandstone within the coal measures do occur at the southern edge of the town, though mostly in the surrounding fields (Boland *et al* 2004).

The present character of the site comprises buildings at the front, and demolished buildings and open ground at the rear. Demolished properties, 38 - 40 Hall Street (SMR 7930, Plate 1) are adjacent to the site.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principle aim of the project was to assess the potential for the survival and significance of any archaeology within the study area.

Site specific aims were to:

- To define the likely extent, survival and significance of archaeological remains, including historic buildings, in the area of proposed development.
- To determine the need for further archaeological assessment by field evaluation in advance of consideration of the development proposals.

- To determine the need for preservation of archaeological remains including historic buildings, and/or further archaeological work in advance of, or during development.
- To assess the impact of the development on the historic landscape.

This information will be used to inform a mitigation strategy for future archaeological work on the site (see Section 8 below).

4 METHODOLOGY

A search of all relevant and available published and non-published documentary sources, including historic maps, was carried out at Birmingham Central Library and the Library of the University of Birmingham. The Dudley Sites and Monuments Record, the main source of archaeological information for the Borough was also consulted. In addition, a walkover of the study area was undertaken in order to assess the topography and any above-ground archaeology, including the evidence of the standing buildings.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

5.1 Prehistoric

Up until recently there was little archaeological evidence to indicate prehistoric occupation within the area now encompassed by Dudley Town Centre, however, in 2003, during an archaeological watching brief (SMR 12097), one sherd of Bronze Age pottery was recovered at the southern extent of the Inhedge (Boland *et al*, 2004). In the 1980s, the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments put forward the idea that the morphology of Castle Hill was suggestive of a former Iron Age hill-fort although no artefacts dating to the Iron Age have yet been recovered to confirm this (*ibid.*). Also of note, the ridge, along which Hall Street is situated, no doubt provided an important route of prehistoric use (Collins, 1992, 9, Hemingway pers. comm.).

5.2 Anglo-Saxon

Although not reflected in the built form of the modern town there was certainly an Anglo-Saxon settlement at Dudley before the Norman conquest, since it was recorded in the Domesday Book in 1086 and it is indicated by the evidence of its place-name. The name 'Dudley' is thought to be derived from a personal name Dudda and the Old English term for a woodland estate leah; hence 'Dudda's Leah' (*ibid.*). Evidence for Anglo-Saxon occupation in Dudley is possibly suggested by the dedication of St. Edmund's Church, Edmund being a King of the East Angles, executed by Danes 870AD.

During the Castle Hill excavations in the 1980s, archaeological evidence of timber structures revealed that the site of Castle Hill may have been occupied and defended as

early as the 8th century. This conclusion was based also on the evidence of an Anglo-Saxon brooch and a radiocarbon date from a piece of charcoal (Boland *et al*, 2004).

5.3 Medieval

Also recorded in the Domesday Book in 1086, was the new Norman Castle which by now dominated the area from the hill top. At this time William Fitz Ansculf was the Baron of Dudley (*ibid.*).

The Domesday Book records a relatively small population including three tenant farmers, ten smallholders, a smith and two slaves. The inhabitants had ten ploughs which indicates that there was a substantial area of arable land although the vast majority of the land across the parish/estate was woodland.

The town of Dudley today, however, owes its origins to a conscious act of town planning undertaken by the 12th century Lord of Dudley Castle, Gervase Paganel. Dudley's medieval layout can still clearly be discerned in the street patterns and plot boundaries of the modern townscape. The sinuously curving boundaries and regular block patterns formed by the building plots of the new town clearly indicate that they respected the pattern of strips and furlongs in a pre-existing arable field system. It is highly likely these were the fields of the Anglo Saxon settlement recorded in Domesday (*ibid.*).

In confirming his endowments to Dudley Priory in the 1180s, Gervase Paganel granted the monks rights in relation to both St. Edmund's and St. Thomas's churches, clear evidence that both co-existed at that time. The new town was laid out between the two churches along a spine of higher ground from Castle Street through Market Place and along High Street. Narrow building plots ran back from the street frontages to 'back lanes' that serviced the rear of the plots represented by Tower Street, Birmingham Street and King Street. Wolverhampton Street and Hall Street also formed part of the town but probably pre-dated the new layout. There are few documents which relate to the 12th century town or that relate to its later medieval evolution. The gleanings of information in these respects is, therefore, likely to be heavily dependent upon the results of archaeological research (*ibid.*).

At the end of the 14th century the castle still dominated the whole town. By this period Fisher Street, Hall Street and Wolverhampton Street were almost certainly being developed as part of the seigniorial borough, the sites of the burgage houses being granted in return for a fixed annual rent to the lord of the borough (Roper, 1968, 11).

Extending on three or perhaps even four sides of the town were the great common fields of Dudley; Greystone field, Church field (in the vicinity of the study area), and Peacocks field (*ibid.*).

5.4 Post-medieval

“A good and handsome town” was the opinion of Sampson Erdeswick, Staffordshire’s first historian after his visit to Dudley at the end of the 16th century (Roper 1963, 9). In the first half of the century there were probably few changes in the occupations of the people with farming and nailmaking predominating, though with some lingering reminders of Dudley’s association with the English wool trade. The Lay Subsidy returns show a very slowly increasing wealth, with little emphasis on the ownership of land until quite late in Elizabeth I’s reign (*ibid.*).

From the 16th century onwards both the documentary and archaeological records paint a picture of rapidly increasing industrialisation in the immediate environs of the town centre core. There are clear hints that by the 16th century the whole area north of Tower Street across to Priory Street and between Stone Street and New Street was developing as a recognisably industrial ‘suburb’ of the town centre. Also, judging by the archaeological evidence, during the 17th century occupation increased and the industrial characteristics of the area were consolidated. Excavations have revealed a series of rectangular buildings of this date with foundations constructed from the local Dudley sandstone. All were associated with metalworking debris and even the bases for the floors were made up of dumps of iron slag (Boland *et al*, 2004). At this time nailmaking still remained an important constituent of Dudley’s economy.

Stone structures must have formed a very notable component in Dudley’s character before the 18th century, although from that time onwards the Town increasingly rapidly took on the brick built appearance that conveys today’s predominant character. The ready availability of limestone must have made its use as a building material a very cost effective option, particularly in the context of replacing the essentially everyday buildings that had been lost during the Civil War (Boland *et al* 2004). The Castle remained strong for much of the Civil War and it had few problems from surrounding Parliamentarians. In fact Parliamentarian positions in the locality were captured at one point. The only occasion in which the castle suffered badly was when it was besieged by Parliamentarian Forces in 1644 and 1646 (Hemingway, pers. comm.). The Royalists ultimately surrendered on 13th May 1646 and handed over control of the Castle, and a town which had clearly suffered major war damage was left to the task of reconstruction (Boland *et al*, 2004).

With a few notable exceptions, the 18th century was to prove a long, untroubled period in Dudley’s history as a town. So far as its industrial history is concerned, the changes came slowly, and for a long while the chief trends were towards intensification of the existing trades associated with coal and iron workings. By the time Pearson and Rollason’s Trade Directory appeared in 1781, Dudley had grown into an important commercial centre (Roper 1968, 5).

The dwelling houses of Dudley’s increasing number of industrial entrepreneurs were being built in brick at the very outset of the 18th century. However, space suitable for the building of what were essentially great mansion houses for “the new rich” was not at all

readily available within either the confines of the medieval town, its industrial suburb around Stone Street or even in the common fields. The latter were largely still in multiple ownership and although increasingly being enclosed were still being cultivated (Boland *et al*, 2004).

Court's Map of Dudley c.1785 (Fig. 3) clearly shows the open fields still creating a tight 'necklace' around the urban core. South of the town the individually owned strips and furlongs of 'Church Field' stand out quite clearly, although there has been some amalgamation into larger more rectangular land parcels (*ibid.*).

Also typical in the later 18th century and onwards was an exponential increase in the urban population which led to the cramming of housing firstly onto every feasible subdivision of town centre plots and later into speculative terraces on the town's periphery. This was directly linked to the final breakdown of the old medieval system of land tenure, through enclosure and the amalgamation of landholdings. When Pensnett Chase was enclosed in the late 18th century this opened the door to the wholesale exploitation of its vast mineral reserves, the old open field system around Dudley similarly became redundant and began to be colonised by industry and worker housing (*ibid.*).

Dudley Town's industrial past from the 18th century onward became dominated by seven main industries; limestone working, basalt quarrying, mining, iron production, nail making, anvil and vice manufacture, the production of fenders, fire-irons and bedsteads, and glassmaking (*ibid.*).

6 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY AREA

No previous archaeological work has been undertaken in the vicinity of the study area, though there are locally listed buildings, including 41 and 42 Hall Street. Building recording was also conducted during the demolition of 38 - 40 Hall Street in 1999 (SMR 7930, Hemingway, pers. comm., Plate 1). These were 19th century structures, which predated the buildings on either side.

It is possible that Hall Street lies on part of a prehistoric routeway, and the road itself is likely to pre-date the planned town. The name Hall Street probably derives from a local hall, the location of which is unknown, though one could speculate that it was near the church, and probably Anglo-Saxon in origin since the Normans occupied the castle (Hemingway, pers. comm.). Also, it is likely that by 1700 a building stood on the 41 - 42 Hall Street site (*ibid.*).

The earliest map consulted which depicts Hall Street and the study area is Henry Court's pre-enclosure map of c.1785 (Fig. 3). This shows Hall Street running down to various "Greens" (Dixon's Green, Watson's Green etc), which were early medieval features that by the post-medieval period had been enclosed (Hemingway, pers. comm.). This map depicts the fields north of Hall Street as smallish square or rectangular blocks, which would have been used as arable land, and larger, more irregular fields to the south as

pasture. This highlights the essentially agricultural nature of this area of Dudley at the time. Though no buildings are illustrated, it is likely that the arable fields were occupied, and the study area itself is located within a long, rectangular, furlong-shaped field along Hall Street. The Directory of Birmingham Etc 1770 lists seven people present at Hall Street, involved in a number of trades; William Evans (bag weaver), George Howkins (padlock maker), John Onions (mealman), Thomas Price (nail chapman), James Simpson (haberdasher), William Southall (nailor) and James Wright (ironmonger and vice maker). From the Birmingham Directory of 1780 there are still seven people present at Hall Street including John Onions (grocer) and the widow and son of James Wright (vice makers). Other inhabitants have changed, and by this time Joseph Johnson (butcher) and William Penn (glass maker) have taken over occupancy.

Thirty years later (from Holden's Triennial Directory 1809-11) there has been a wholesale change in tenancy along Hall Street. Of the eleven occupants listed, three are engaged in nail manufacturing, one of the staple industries of Dudley at this time. Other trades include an iron-master, a shoemaker, a builder, a worsted maker, a hat maker, a baker, a watch and clock-maker and a wine and brandy merchant. The Plan of the Mines of Lord Dudley (1812, Fig. 4) depicts buildings along either side of Hall Street, and though stylised, it is likely there were buildings within the study area by this time.

By 1818 (from the Commercial Directory for 1818-1820) there were 14 listed occupants along Hall Street, and a further seven taverns and public houses. Again, a range of trades were represented. John Rowton is listed present at the Phoenix Glasshouse, and there are three (different) nail manufacturers. The Worcestershire General and Commercial Directory of 1820 also lists nail manufacturers, the Phoenix Glass House (Messrs. Badgers) and several taverns and public houses. This directory also lists, in amongst the industrial trades represented, tailors, hairdressers, crockery dealers and shopkeepers, suggesting that the overall character of Hall Street at this time was quite mixed.

Treasure's Map of 1835 (Fig. 5) depicts the site within a terrace of housing along the northeast side of Hall Street, within the same furlong-shaped field boundary depicted on the c.1785 map. Immediately to the south and east are fields, again highlighting the surviving dominance of agriculture. Further along Hall Street is Waddam's Pool, though the pool itself is not illustrated, possibly because by this time it had been converted into a reservoir (Hemingway pers. comm.). The directory of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Wolverhampton and their immediate environs shows a marked increase in population, including that within Hall Street (Robson 1839). Within Hall Street, there is also a concentration of certain trades. Of the 25 listed butchers in Dudley at this time, nine are located at Hall Street, with two further pork butchers being present. Of the five fruiterers listed, three are present at Hall Street, and there are also several grocers and cheesemongers, a flour dealer, a confectioner and two bakers. It is not uncommon for trades and industries to congregate together, and the proximity to the nearby fields and water source at Waddam's Pool makes Hall Street ideal for agriculture/food retail. Many other trades are listed including a bookseller/stationer, a broker, a china warehouse, a clothier, a cooper, three hairdressers, a printers and a surgeon. There is a nail warehouse, a smith, an iron merchant and the Phoenix Glass Works, but by and large, the character of

Hall Street is not heavily industrial in nature. There are also several taverns and public houses, serving travellers and tradesmen entering Dudley along this route, though the number of these is in proportion to the large overall number in Dudley as a whole.

This picture is evident in the History, Gazetteer and Directory of Staffordshire 1851, and the Post Office Directory of Worcestershire 1864 also lists a diversity of trades. In amongst the butchers, bakers and grocers there are several cutlers, earthenware and china dealers, haberdashers and tailors/milliners. Also listed for Hall Street are two private residents, two surgeons, an accountant, a registry office for servants, an Alma and mourning coach proprietor, two chemists, a dentist, an academy, a ladies school, and a mining agent. There are also watch and clock makers, currier and leather sellers, boot and shoe makers, a carpenter, a plasterer, and a painter/glazier. In addition to these, William Woodall, malleable iron founder and wrought iron nail and chain manufacturer, iron, steel and oil merchant at Kate's Hill, had an office at Hall Street.

Kelly's Directory of Worcestershire 1878 is the first directory consulted which records property numbers. Matthew Septimus Allen, surgeon, is listed at 41 Hall Street, and James Whitwell, cabinet maker, is listed at 42 Hall Street. The Ordnance Survey Edition of 1882 (Fig. 6) depicts 41 Hall Street as the larger of the two buildings, probably formed from two older plots of land. The buildings illustrated are likely not to be the earliest buildings along Hall Street, though may incorporate earlier elements. The outline of the original field is still respected, and the property boundaries themselves are indicative of earlier burgage plots, with a path providing access at the back of the plots. At the rear of number 41, a path is illustrated indicating the land at the back of this property was open. At the rear of number 42, other buildings are shown. The Directory of 1878 lists a similar mix of trades, industries and residential properties, as previously.

Kelly's Directory of Worcestershire 1896 also lists James Whitwell as a cabinet maker at number 42 Hall Street, though there is no mention of number 41 either in the private residents list, or the commercial list. The Ordnance Survey Edition of 1903 (Fig. 7) shows little change to either property, with the rear of number 41 still open. Kelly's Directory of Worcestershire 1912 still lists James Whitwell as a cabinet maker at number 42, and again, does not mention number 41. Many other properties on Hall Street in the vicinity are listed as residential in this directory.

The Ordnance Survey Edition of 1916 (Fig. 8) depicts a building extension at the rear of number 41, and again no change at the rear of number 42. Kelly's Directory of Worcestershire 1924 lists Joseph Hobbs, fried fish dealer, at 41 Hall Street, and George Henry Hartland, painter, at 42 Hall Street. The Ordnance Survey Edition of 1937 (Fig. 9) illustrates no change at the rear of number 42, but shows that the buildings at the rear of number 41 are no longer standing. The most recent use for 41 Hall Street was a fish and chip shop, with a sign "Hobbs and Son".

7 PRESENT SITE CONDITIONS

At present, the buildings at the front of 41 and 42 Hall Street are essentially intact, though they are in a dilapidated state (Plate 2). The frontages are Victorian, with number 41 possibly being earlier than number 42, though they are tacked on to the framework of earlier buildings rather than complete new builds (Litherland, pers. comm.) The passage between the two buildings (Plate 3) shows evidence of a blocked door and window, suggesting that access to the number 42 property through this passage had at one time been possible. The build of the passage walls contains 18th century bricks (Hemingway pers. comm.). The wooden gate to the passage is set into stone blocks (Plate 4), and both the front and the back of the building appear to be re-faced in later brick (Plate 5). The floor of the passage itself is cobbled (Plate 6).

Both properties possess cellars, though access was limited due to Health and Safety considerations, and both properties display much evidence of multi-phase alteration (Plate 7), especially in the roof areas.

The lower courses of the boundary wall at the rear of number 42 are constructed from 18th century bricks, with the upper courses being of later construction (Plate 8, Hemingway pers. comm.).

The buildings at the rear of both properties are no longer standing, but the floor levels of these buildings are substantially higher than the overall ground level (Plate 9), which has significant implications for the survival of below-ground archaeological deposits.

8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Hall Street has a long history of occupation and activity, possibly pre-dating the planned medieval town, and as such the importance of any surviving below-ground archaeological deposits in the area should not be underestimated. The ancient field boundary within which the site is situated is indicative of an Anglo-Saxon field system, being less regular in shape than the medieval fields to the north and west. Cartographic evidence suggests that these field boundaries, and also the medieval burgage plot boundaries which divided the field, were respected in the vicinity of the study area up until modern times. The use of number 41 as a residential property comprising two older plots of land, further increases the chance that archaeological deposits relating to the medieval or earlier periods may survive within the site boundaries. The raised floor levels of the later extensions and outbuildings at the rear of the properties also demonstrate this potential.

Archaeological deposits associated with the development of the site may also be present at the rear of the study area. These would provide valuable information concerning specific activity on the site during the early post-medieval period. As no other below-ground archaeological work has been carried out in the area, obtaining general information concerning the date, nature and level of survival of archaeological deposits is not only important in respect to the site, but also for a wider area.

The properties themselves are locally listed buildings, and both display Victorian frontages with earlier multi-phase alterations within the build. 18th century bricks are evident as original construction in the property boundary to 42 Hall Street, as are re-used bricks in the construction of both buildings. It is possible that earlier elements survive within the cellars of both properties, and also within the roof structure. It is not uncommon to find fragments of earlier buildings incorporated into the fabric of buildings throughout Dudley.

It is therefore recommended that further archaeological work is conducted on this site, including building recording and field evaluation. The final decision of course, rests with the Borough Archaeologist for Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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10 SOURCES

10.1 Primary Sources

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10.3 Cartographic Sources

c.1785 Harry Court's Plan of Dudley

1812 Plan of the mines of Lord Dudley

1835 J. Treasure's Plan of Dudley

1882 Ordnance Survey Edition 6" Series

1903 Ordnance Survey Edition 6" Series

1916-1924 Ordnance Survey Edition 6" Series

1937-1948 Ordnance Survey Edition 6" Series



Fig.1

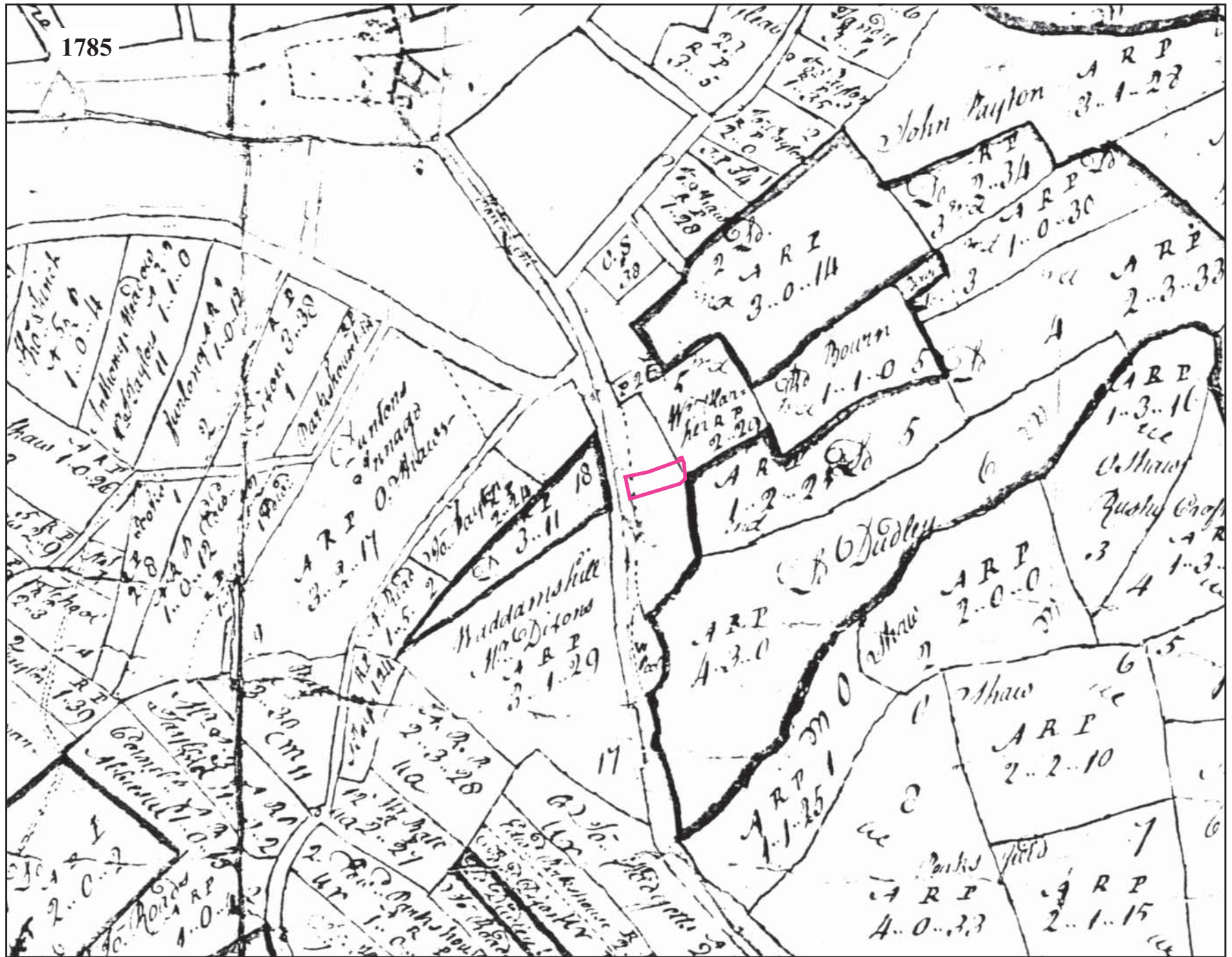


Fig.3

1812



Fig.4

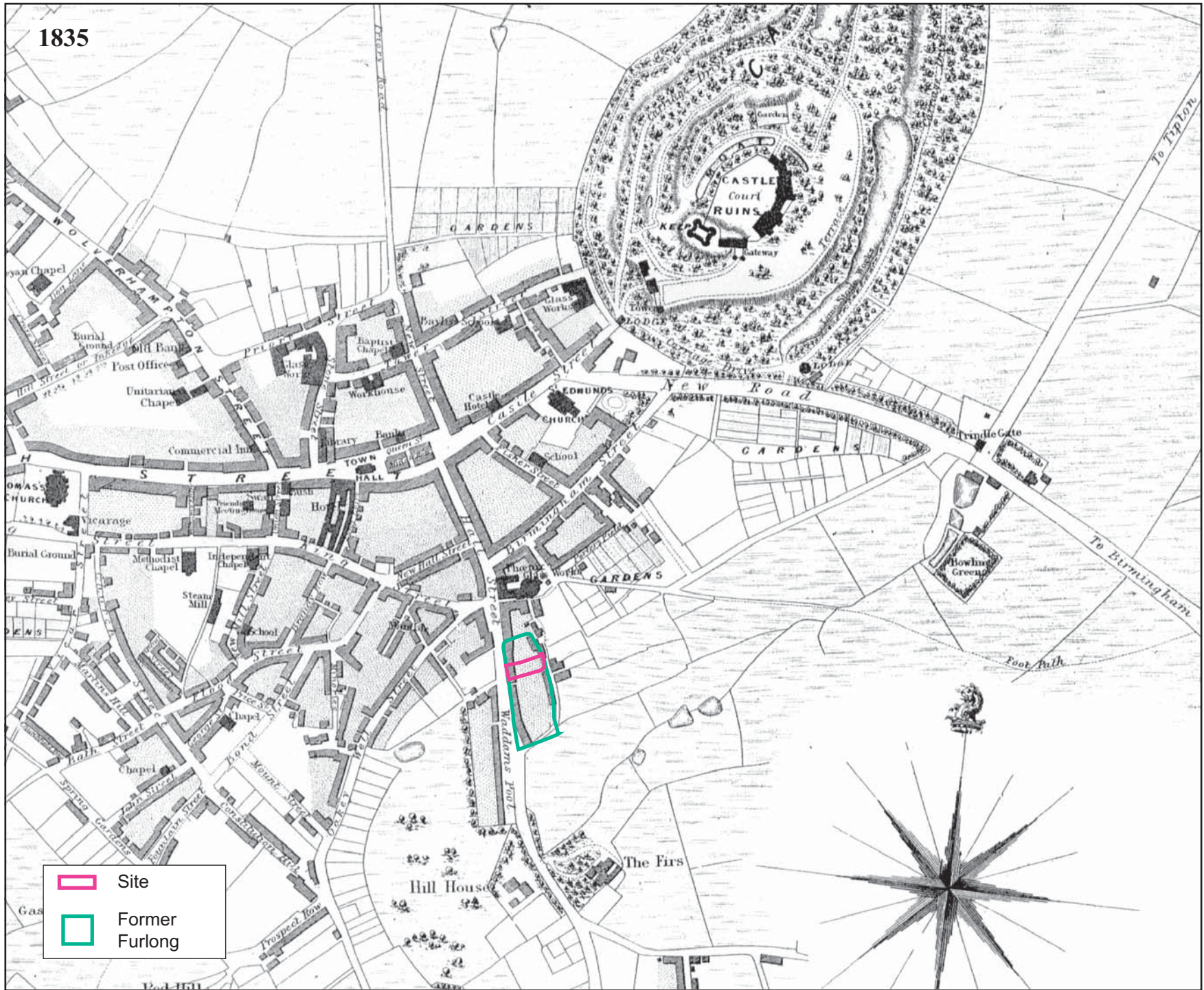
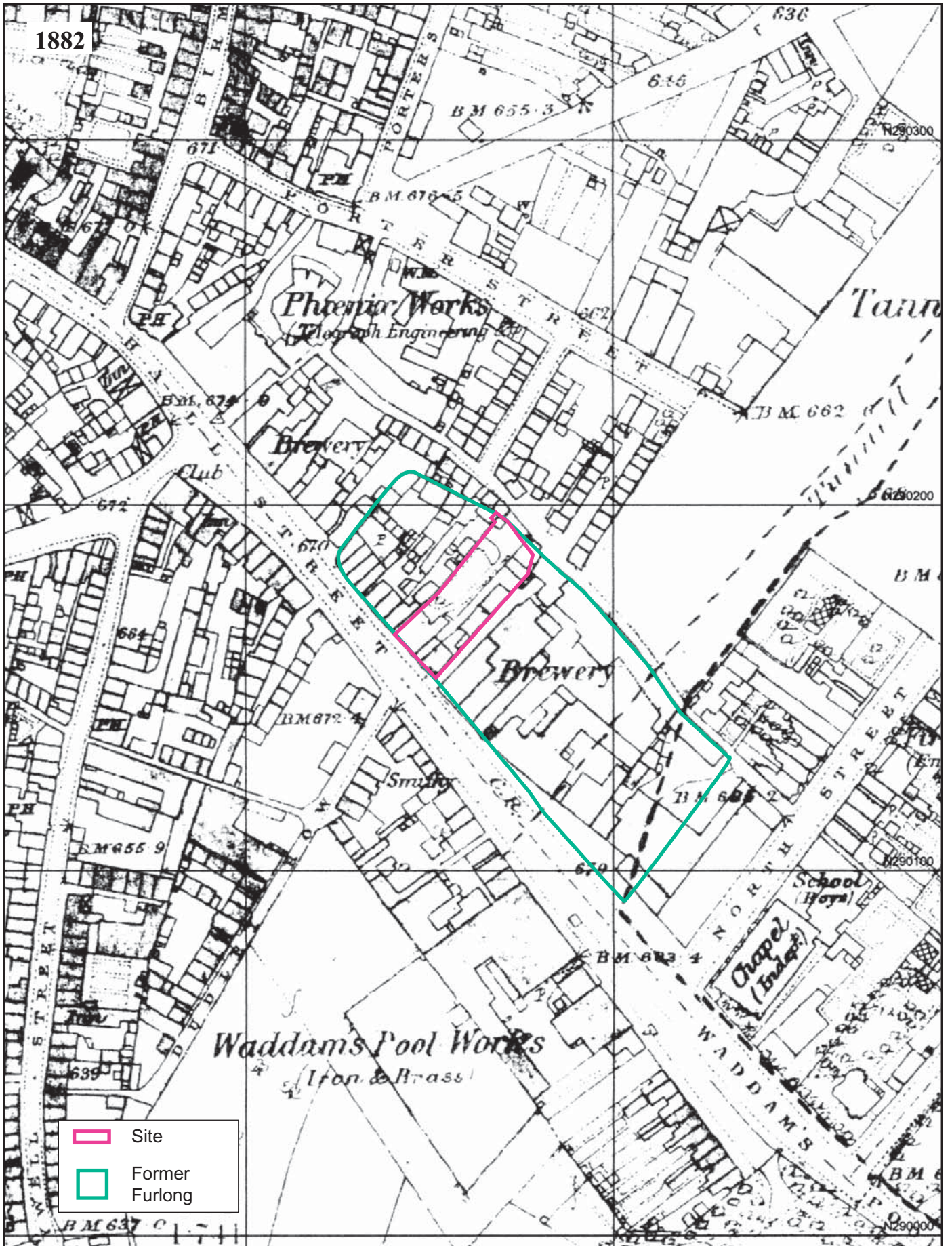


Fig.5



1882

- Site
- Former Furlong

Fig.6

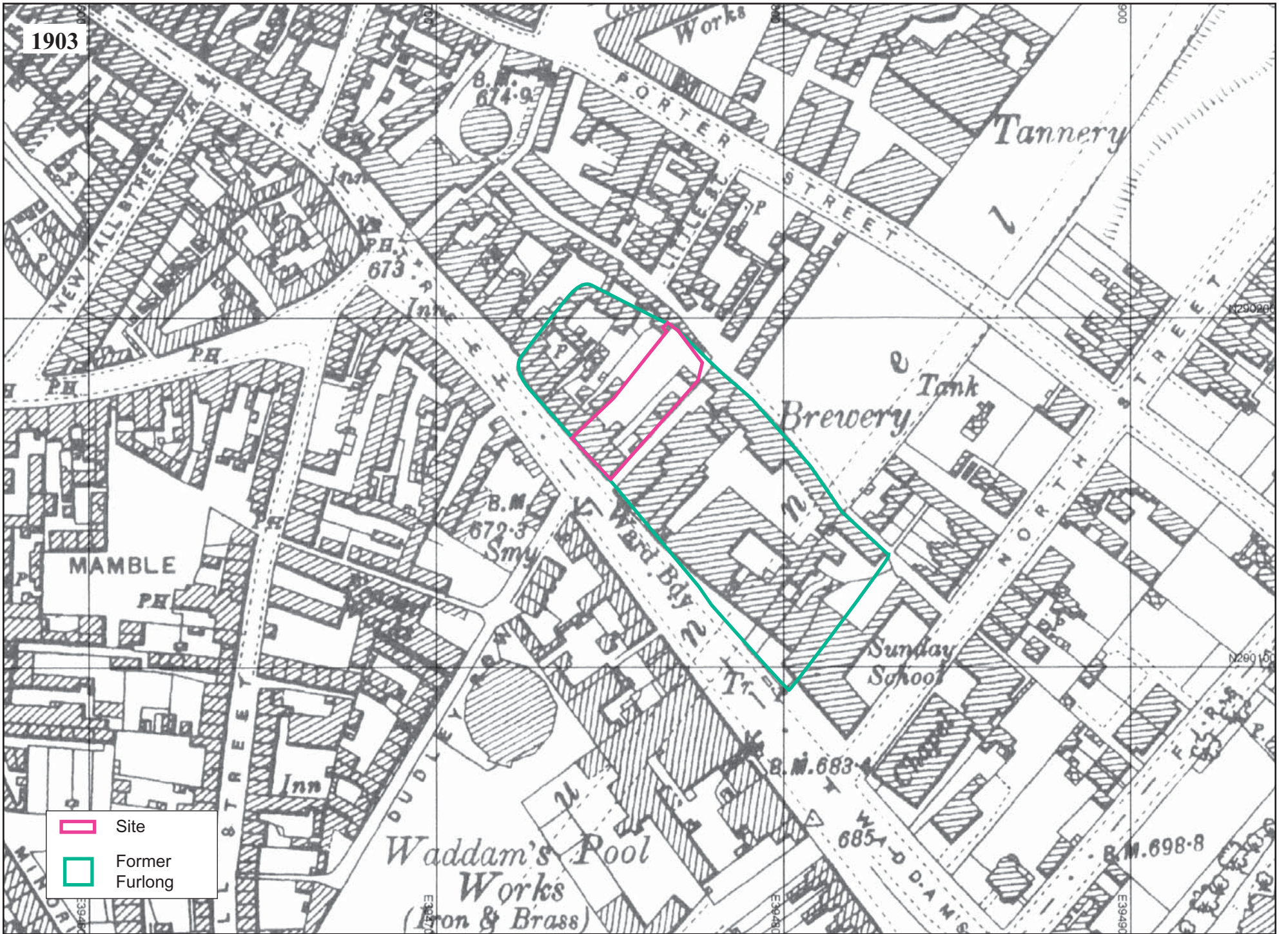


Fig.7

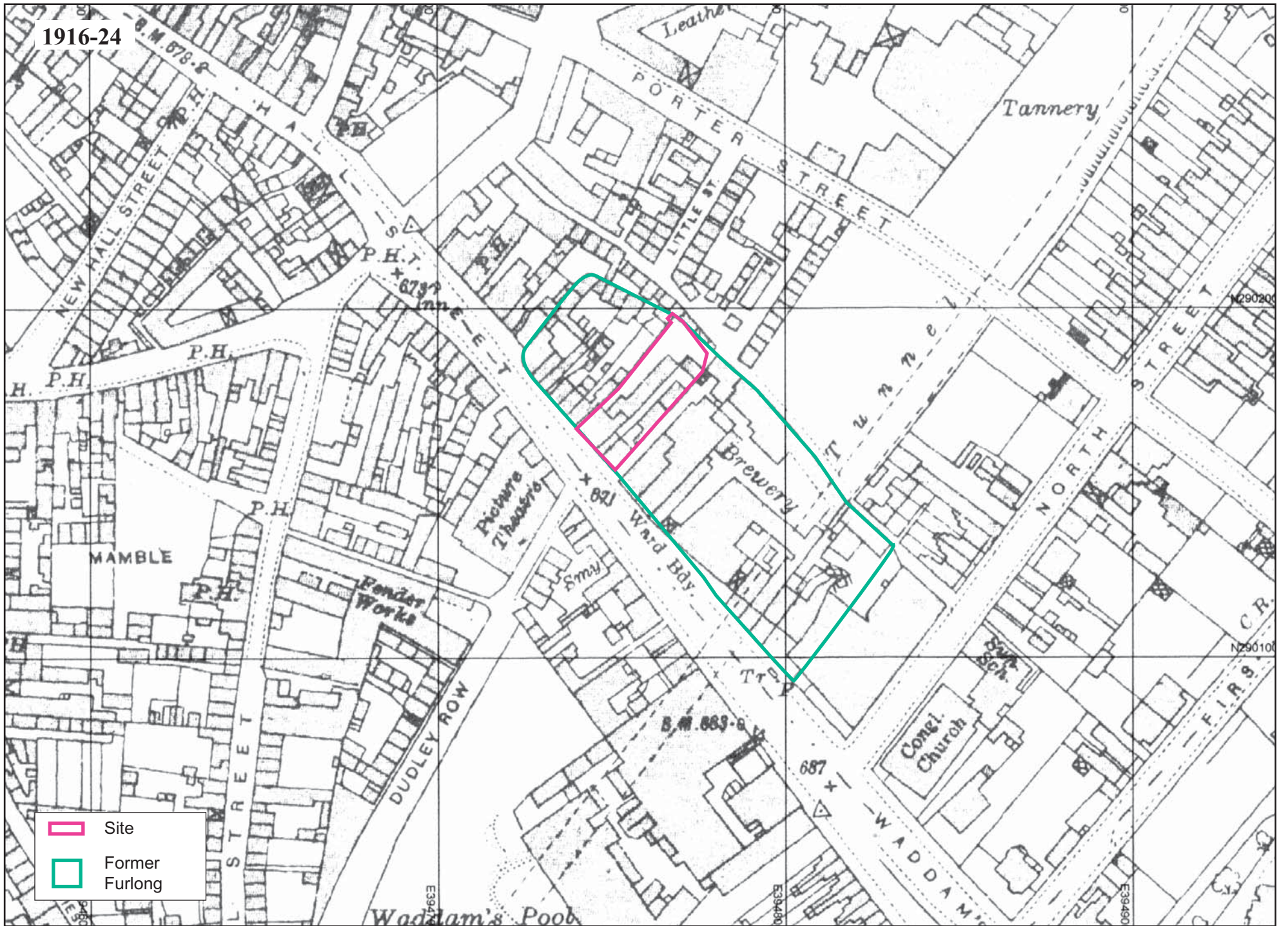
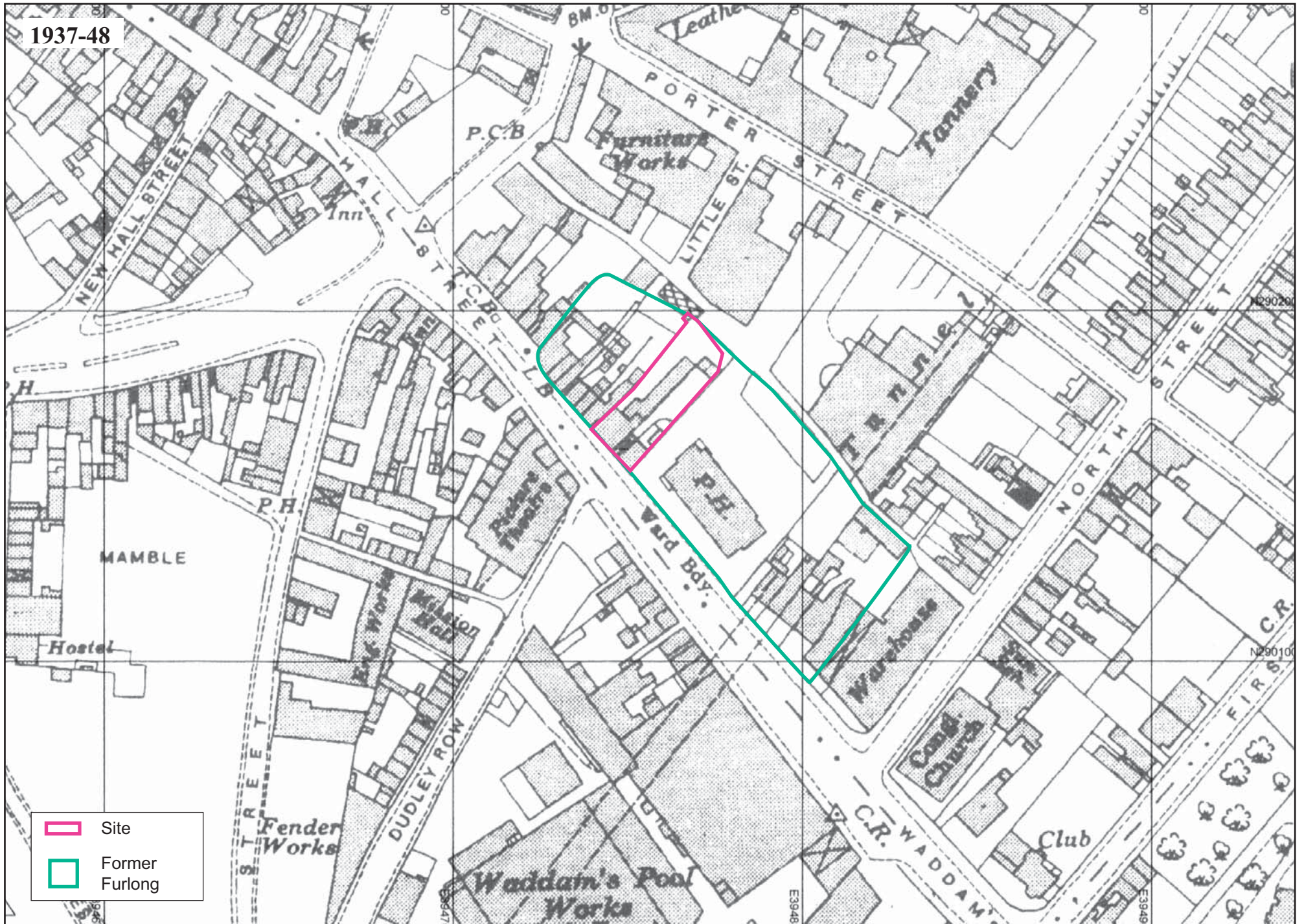


Fig.8

1937-48





-  Site
-  Former Furlong

Fig.9

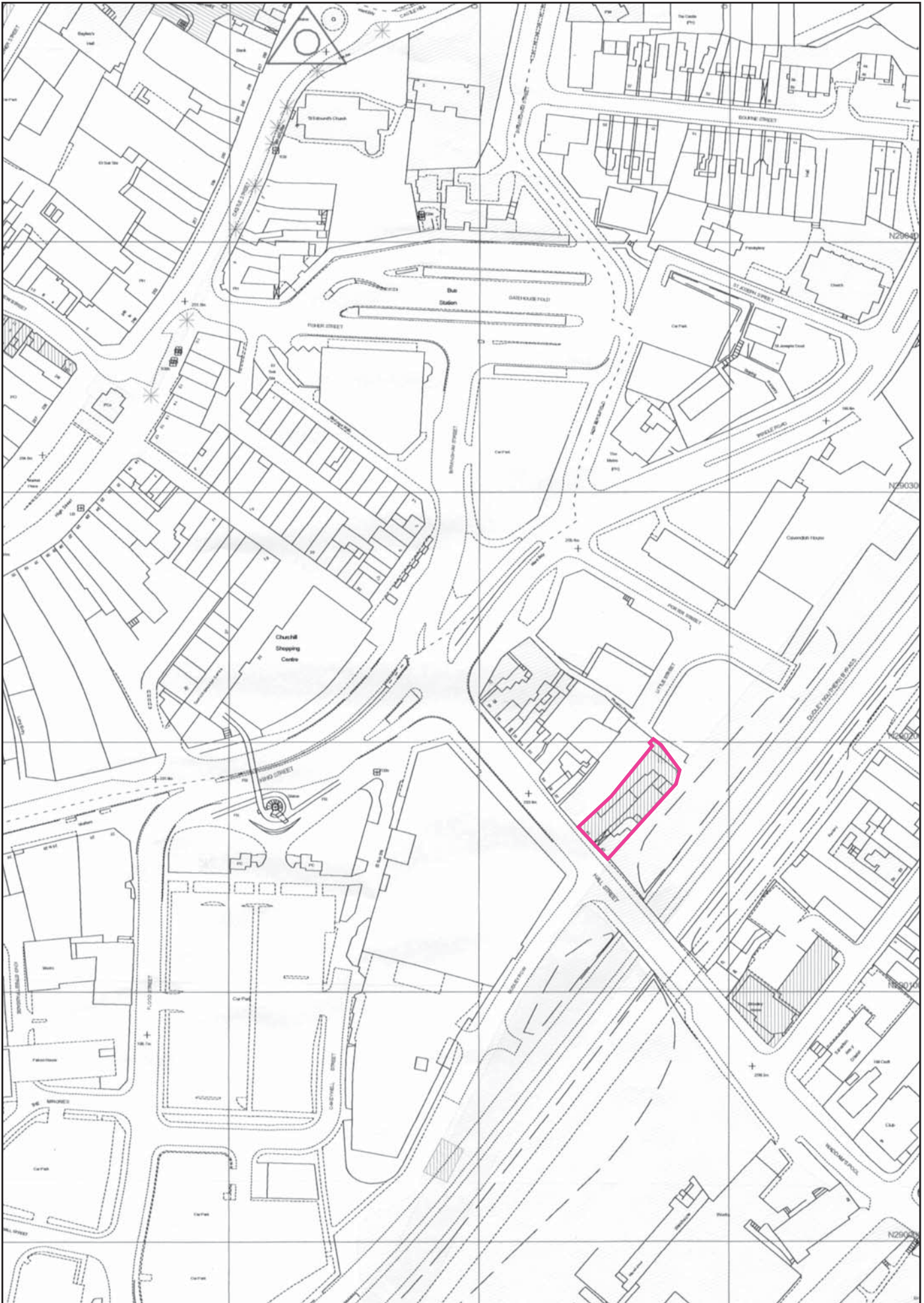


Fig.2



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4



Plate 5



Plate 6



Plate 7



Plate 8



plate 9