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BILSTON HIGH SCHOOL

PROSSER STREET
BILSTON
WEST MIDLANDS

Historic Building
Assessment

and

Archaeological
Desk-Based
Assessment

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Bilston High School, Prosser Street, Bilston, West Midlands

**HISTORIC BUILDING ASSESSMENT
and
ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT**

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for

Wolverhampton City Council

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Bilston High School, Prosser Street, Bilston, West Midlands

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Historic Buildings Assessment

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Bilston High School, Prosser Street, Bilston, West Midlands

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Historic Buildings Assessment

SUMMARY

Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned in March 2009 by Wolverhampton City Council, to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment and historic building assessment at Bilston High School, Prosser Street, Bilston, West Midlands (NGR SO 94629 96038). The school and its associated lands are to be brought forward under the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme as a possible site to accommodate one of Wolverhampton's two new Academies. The current desk-based assessment and building assessment have been required by Wolverhampton City Council in advance of decisions for any related development of the site.

The primary phase of the High School dates to 1905/6 when it was built as Stonefield Schools (Girls, Boys and Infants departments), the boys and girls departments surviving fairly complete within the standing complex and representing an interesting example of Edwardian school buildings, built shortly after the Education Act of 1902. In the early years of the 20th century, Staffordshire LEA was at the forefront of a move away from the traditional 'central hall' school towards a more open 'pavilion' type of plan which became widely adopted by the time of the First World War. The Stonefield school represents something of a 'hybrid', incorporating a number of new ideas regarding health and ventilation in school buildings current at the time, while harking back in the use of elements such as the modified 'central hall' plan. The school was extended by the addition of a further range to the north of the old school with return wings effectively creating a courtyard plan. Later developments at the school include a series of unsympathetic, utilitarian buildings including a tall infill block occupying the centre of the former courtyard formed by the 1938 range. Despite having been removed from their historical context to a significant degree by recent infrastructure developments, the school buildings remains a 'visible landmark and an important feature of Bilston town centre' and represent a well regarded community asset. As such, their retention within any proposed redevelopment of the school site can be seen to be desirable and in line with Wolverhampton City Councils stated conservation aims. The case for retention applies principally, though not exclusively, to the early 20th-century ranges. The 1938 extension, though obscuring certain elements of the primary phase buildings, can be seen to form an integral part of the development of the school building over time, reflecting changing attitudes towards institutional educational architecture on both a local and national level.

The study area, comprising the wider school grounds, is situated between the main focus of the historic town to the north and Brindley's BCN canal of 1768 to the south. The area would have experienced industrial and residential expansion and development during the later 18th and 19th centuries. A review of historic mapping has established that the central and southern areas of the site formerly experienced fairly extensive coal mining activity and, latterly, included an Iron Works and associated house. The grounds have, however, undergone phases of significant earth movement in the past, the principal school buildings being constructed upon a pronounced bank to the north-west corner of the site. Reference to historic mapping reveals that much of this landscaping is of some antiquity and a walkover survey of the study area has revealed no obvious upstanding features of archaeological significance or interest. However, documentary and cartographic sources have identified a number of areas of archaeological potential that may require further investigation as redevelopment at the site progresses. Decisions regarding the necessity for, and the nature and extent of any further

programme of archaeological work lie with the Planning Archaeologist of Wolverhampton City Council.

Bilston High School, Prosser Street, Bilston, West Midlands

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Historic Buildings Assessment

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Project

1.1.1 Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned in March 2009 by Wolverhampton City Council (WCC) to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment and Historic Buildings Assessment at the site of Bilston High School, Prosser Street, Bilston, West Midlands (NGR: SO 94629 96038; see Figure 1).

1.1.2 The school and its associated lands are to be brought forward under the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme as a possible site to accommodate one of Wolverhampton's two new Academies. The current desk-based assessment and building assessment have been required by Wolverhampton City Council in advance of decisions for any related development of the site.

1.2 Reasons for Work

1.2.1 The buildings of Bilston High School, which date in part to the early years of the 20th century, are recognised as being of local historical significance and, as such, are included on the both Wolverhampton City Council's non-statutory local list of buildings of special or architectural interest and the Black Country Historic Environment Record (BCHER, ref. 5328).

1.3 Scope of Report

1.3.1 The project was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Birmingham Archaeology (2009) and approved by the conservation officer of WCC in response to a brief issued by WCC in December 2008. A copy of the WSI is included below as **Appendix A**.

1.3.2 This report outlines the results of the assessment, which has been prepared in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* (IfA, 2008a) and *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (IfA, 2008b).

1.3.3 This report has been prepared based upon information current and available as of April 2009. Details of archaeological terms used in this report are given in the glossary appended as **Appendix B**.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Desk-Based Assessment

2.1.1 The general aim of the archaeological desk-based assessment, as defined by the WSI, was to collate existing archaeological and historic information relating to site and its immediate environs, to enable informed decisions to be made regarding any further archaeological input which may be required by means of mitigation as the proposed

development at the site proceeds. Given that the current development site lies within the area of the 'Bilston Urban Village' as assessed archaeologically in a number of previous reports (White 1998; Ramsey 2003; revised 2007), the current project has focussed upon the development site itself and the school buildings in particular.¹ The site as defined in section §.4, and as shown in Figure 2, will thus be referred to throughout the following report as 'the study area'.

2.2 Historic Building Assessment

2.2.1 With regard to the standing buildings within the study area, the assessment aimed to provide a detailed analysis, development and assessment of the importance of the school buildings with a view to informing future decisions regarding proposals for alterations and potential selective demolitions. Further, the assessment sought to provide an interpretative assessment of the significance of the buildings to the historic environment in national, regional and local terms and to consider the school buildings in their wider townscape context.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Desk-Based Assessment

3.1.1 A search was made of all relevant and readily available published and unpublished documentary source material, including historic maps, early photographs and drawings written descriptions, and primary and secondary sources related to the study area held by the Wolverhampton City Council Archives and Local Studies Service, Molineux House, the local history section of Bilston Public Library and by the libraries of the University of Birmingham. The Black Country Sites and Monuments Record (BCSMR), the principal source of archaeological data for the area, and standard on-line resources such as A2A, NMR and the Staffordshire County Council's 'Gateway to the Past' were also consulted.

3.2 Walkover Survey

3.2.1 Subsequent to the completion of initial documentary research as outlined above, a walkover survey of the study area was undertaken in order to assess the topography and any above-ground archaeology, including standing buildings.

3.3 Historic Building Assessment

3.3.1 The building assessment comprised an examination of the entire building stock within the study area. Each building was briefly described, photographed and its position mapped and assessed. The photographic record comprised high resolution digital photography using a Nikon D50 single lens reflex camera and was commensurate with a 'Level 2' record as defined by English Heritage (2006, 14), extending to include both general and detail shots, contextual views and accessible exterior elevations, visible structural and decorative details (interior and exterior), and general interior views of principal rooms and circulation areas. Where possible, photographs included graded photographic scales.

3.3.2 Written notes were compiled on *pro forma* record sheets as a basis for compiling the written description. Existing survey drawings of the buildings (supplied by WCC) were annotated with significant archaeological detail.

¹ Established in consultation with Ms S Whitehouse, WCC.

4 SITE LOCATION AND DESIGNATIONS

4.1 Site Location

4.1.1 The study area is located at Prosser Street, Bilston West Midlands, 4 km south-east of Wolverhampton City Centre; it covers a total area of c.5.6 hectares and is centred on NGR SO 94629 96038. It is bounded to the north by Prosser Street and the rear of a number of residential properties fronting onto Linton Croft, to the east by an area of waste ground and partly by the surviving southern section of Dudley Street, and to the south and west by paths and tracks which define the boundaries of the school playing fields. To the south, the study area is currently occupied by the school playing fields and to the east against Dudley Street by a series of tennis courts. The standing buildings of Bilston High School are located to the north-west corner of the study area with associated playgrounds to the south-east.

4.2 Designations

4.2.1 As noted above, the school buildings are recognised as being of local historical significance and are included on the WCC's non-statutory local list of buildings of special or architectural interest and on the Black Country Historic Environment Record (BCHER, ref. 5328). The WCC local list describes the school as follows:

'Primary School built in 1906. Built around a central hall, highly ornate with large imposing windows. Many original features, including turrets, tall iron railings and terracotta details. The associated building is inter-war date. The complex is a high visible landmark and an important feature of Bilston town centre. Locally Listed, approved November 2001'.

5 GENERAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT²

The study area falls within the area of the 'Bilston Urban Village' project which has been the subject of a number of previous archaeological desk-based assessments (White 1998; Ramsey 2003; revised 2007). The following section summarises the results of those assessments, readers are directed to the original reports for a more in depth discussion of the wider context of the current site. The detailed development of study area itself will be addressed in Section 6 below.

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 The historic core of Bilston is a designated Conservation Area and a recognised Area of Archaeological Importance. As with all urban areas, the land surrounding the historic core would have provided vital agricultural and industrial resources, and, although the occupation and activity in these areas would perhaps not be quite as intense as within the core of the town itself, the importance of understanding these resources from a historic and archaeological viewpoint should not be underestimated. The coal, iron and sand resources that typify the area surrounding Bilston, as indeed the Black Country as a whole, not only shaped the history and development of Bilston from the medieval period onwards, they provided the resources that fuelled the industrial revolution that shaped the history and development of the whole of Britain.

² Based in part upon Ramsey, 2003.

5.2 The Prehistoric and Roman Periods

- 5.2.1 No sites dating to the prehistoric or Roman periods are recorded Black Country Sites and Monuments Record for the area. A nineteenth century account (Lawley, 1893) records the discovery of a hoard of Roman Coins from the reigns of Commodus and Antonius, described as having been found in a beautiful state of preservation in Bilston, though the authenticity of this find cannot be verified.

5.3 The Anglo-Saxon Period

- 5.3.1 Little is known of the Saxon period in Bilston although the place name is first recorded in 985AD in a grant of land by Aethelred to Lady Wulfruna, where the boundaries are described as '*Bilsatene gemæro*' (Horovitz 2005, 121). A second charter of 996 records lands granted by Wulfruna to the church at Wolverhampton describes the boundaries of Bilston ('*Bilsetnatun*') in more detail. Antiquarian reference to a Saxon temple at Bilston (Lawley, 1893), believed to be founded by Oswy, King of Mercia, to celebrate his victory over Penda of Northumberland, has not been corroborated by material evidence, either documentary or archaeological.

- 5.3.2 Domesday Book records Bilston as being in the ownership of the King (*Terra Regis*) and describes the village as follows:

'In Bilston (Billestvne) two hides. Land for four ploughs. Eight villagers and three smallholders with three ploughs. Meadow, one acre; woodland ½ league long and ½ wide. The value was 20s; now 30s.' (Morris 1976; 1,4).

- 5.3.3 Historically, the name occurs as *Billistan/Billeston* (C12th), *Belsten/Bilestun/Billestun* (C13th), *Billesdone/Bylston* (C14th) and *Bylleston* (C15th; Horovitz 2005, 121). Etymologically, the name possibly derives from a local landmark, OE '*bile*' (bill or beak) being used topographically for a promontory or pointed hill, in combination with OE *sæte* meaning 'settlers' (*ibid.*). An alternative derivation is from a combination of Saxon elements '*Bael*' (fire) and '*Tun*' (town), a possible early reference to the predominance of coal deposits in the area (Collins 1991, 8).

5.4 The Medieval Period

- 5.4.1 In the medieval period Bilston was part of the ecclesiastical parish of Wolverhampton and lay within the royal manor of Stowheath, which comprised most of the east side of Wolverhampton. A deed of 1378 gives land for the support of a priest of Bilston, suggesting there was a chapel here by that date (Cope, 1976). A chapel, dedicated to St Leonard, was certainly in existence by 1458 when a chantry was founded there by Sir Thomas de Erdington (Brereton, 1996).
- 5.4.2 There is some cartographic evidence to indicate that the medieval settlement of Bilston (BCSMR 5810) may have been planned around the High Street/Church Street axis. The medieval settlement presumably lay around the chapel, principally along Church Street and, to its west, High Street; both streets display evidence of characteristic burgage-plot property layouts. It is as yet unclear, however, when the settlement was established and how it developed over time.
- 5.4.3 Agriculture doubtlessly played an important role in the economy of the area from an early date, coal and iron were probably mined, at least on a small scale, from at least the 13th century. Lawley (1893) recounts Rev Richard Ames, curate of Bilston in the

17th century, describing how 'coal hath been got in Bilston as far back as 1380'. Further, in a deed of 24th May 1401, mention is made of 'two cole pitts...called 'ye holloways' and 'ye Delves' situate near 'Windmille Field in Bilston'. Flax was being grown, dressed and spun by hand for the manufacture of rope, used in the local pits (Collins 1991, 8).

- 5.4.4 Ironworking in the vicinity of Bilston is also attested to in the medieval period (VCH 1967, 108) and, although the specific locations of these industries are not known, the industrial potential of the study area is without doubt, and is attested to by the rapid expansion of coal and ironworking industries in the post-medieval period. In the period before the construction of the canal, the Bilston Brook provided a suitable source of water for such industries.

5.5 The Post Medieval Period

- 5.5.1 By the Tudor period, Bilston had evolved to become a pleasant village with a number of good houses of timber, plaster and thatch. The populace were involved predominantly in agricultural and related trades, as they would be up until the later years of the 18th century (Collins 1991, 9). Local deposits of coal and iron were, however, increasingly exploited and used for the manufacture of small items to meet local needs, thus developing the skills of working and fashioning metals for which Bilston would subsequently become famous.

- 5.5.2 Thus, by the early 17th century, a picture emerges of a well-established iron industry. The availability of cheap coal and iron, with additional good quality sand and limestone contributed greatly to the industrial development of Bilston, and the region in general. Early industries were localised and organised as domestic industries leading to local specialisms, such as lockmaking (Wolverhampton and Willenhall) and nailmaking (Dudley and Sedgley). Bilston specialised in the production of buckles and chapes, though at the height of the industrial revolution during the early 19th century, this staple industry was nearly extinct (Whites Directory 1834). From the records of the Rev. Richard Ames, it is known that there were about 100 bucklemakers active in the period 1716-1730, with over fifty chapemakers in addition to toymakers, boxmakers, hingemakers, tinder-box makers, locksmiths, enamel workers and japanners (Cope, 1976). These craftsmen would have worked from their own homes or small backyard workshops, or from small premises sufficiently established to take apprentices. Often, ironworking would be undertaken in combination with other commercial interests including land and livestock, agriculture, coal and mineral mining and the felling of timber (*ibid.*) The small number of freeholders who voted at the general election of 1747 suggests that Bilston was, at that time, still strongly tied to the manor. Much of the development at this time took place parallel to the main east-west axis of Church Street/High Street and the main north-south road of Oxford Street/Lichfield Street. Otherwise the town remained a relatively rural settlement laid along these roads.

5.6 The Industrial Revolution

- 5.6.1 As elsewhere in the country, the Industrial Revolution had a massive effect on the development and growth of the industry and town of Bilston. The natural resources of the Black Country were exploited to the full, and mines, furnaces and workshops dominated the area; mining began in earnest in Bilston at the end of the 18th century, with many of the local landowners sinking mines in their estates to exploit both coal and ironstone measures to feed the burgeoning iron trade (see Figure 5). John 'iron-mad' Wilkinson moved his works from Willey in Shropshire to Bradley in the 1760s,

bringing with him the revolutionary processes developed by Darby at Coalbrookdale, and so started a period of unprecedented growth. Between 1695 and 1771, the population rose from 1002 to 3875; the first national census of 1801 recorded 6914 inhabitants, while ten years later, this number had risen to 9646 and by 1821 the population was over 12,000 (Collins 1991). The population doubled again before stabilizing at c.24,000 around the middle of the 1860s.

- 5.6.2 White's 'History, Gazetteer and Directory of Staffordshire' of 1834 (p.220-21) describes a 'populous market town celebrated for its extensive coal and iron works' with 'inexhaustable mines ... giving employment to an immense number of workmen and furnishing materials for the numerous smelting furnaces, foundries, forges and slitting mills which are carried on to a vast extent'.
- 5.6.3 As the need for communication and movement increased, so the transport infrastructure in and around the town improved. From the early 18th century onwards a number of improvements were made to the local road network and new roads were built, though the Bilston network was not fully 'turnpiked' until 1766. The canal to the south of Bilston, a part of the future BCN linking the centre of Birmingham with the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal, then under construction, was authorised by an Act on 24 February 1768 and engineered by James Brindley. (Collins 1991, 12).
- 5.6.4 As a result of its location in relation to Wolverhampton, Bilston was well served by the railway network with six stations in and around the town (Bilston Central, Bilston West, Bradley and Moxley, Daisy Bank and Bradley, Priestfield, and Ettingshall Road and Bilston; Collins 1991, 14). The first line serving the town was the Birmingham Wolverhampton and Stour Valley Railway, opening in 1852 with a station at 'Ettingshall Road and Bilston' in Rough Hills. Two years later, the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton (OWW) line opened with stations at Daisy Bank, Bilston and Priestfield while the Birmingham Wolverhampton and Dudley Railway (BWD) of the same year served stations at Bilston (central) and Bradley and Moxley.
- 5.6.5 The current study area, being located between the main focus of the town and Brindley's canal would certainly have experienced redevelopment and an increase in activity due to its proximity to the new transport systems.

6 THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY AREA

This section of the assessment describes the known archaeological and historical development of the study area. It is based upon information current and available as of April 2009. Other areas of archaeological or historical importance, not presently recorded, may be identified during subsequent phases of field investigation.

6.1 Overview

- 6.1.1 The study area is situated between the main focus of the historic town along Church Street/High Street to the north and Brindley's BCN canal of 1768 to the south. The area would have experienced industrial and residential expansion and development during the later 18th and 19th centuries. This increase in industrial activity would have been enhanced by the proximity of the new transport links of the BCN and the OWW railway; Bilston (West) railway station, opened in 1854, was formerly located nearby on Coseley Street to the west of the study area. The southern boundary of the study area is approximately coincident with the line of the former Bilston Brook, a focus for the early industrial development of the town. The course of the brook, plotted on early maps, has been gradually lost over time.

6.2 Known Archaeological Sites

6.2.1 A total of 12 sites are recorded on the Black Country HER within or directly bordering the study area; the sites are summarised in tabulated form below and locations are illustrated in Figure 2.

| HER Ref. No. | Type* | Site name/description | NGR | Period/Date |
|--------------|-------|-------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| 5328 | LLB | Bilston High School | SO 94629 96038 | 1906 |
| 5624 | PAW | Watching Brief at 32-4, Dudley St. | SO 94800 96150 | |
| 8733 | AS | Possible site of watermill | SO 94700 95800 | Med/P-Med |
| 10642 | AS | Woolley Factory (site of ironworks) | SO 94686 95777 | P-Med |
| 10907 | AS | Site of Stonefield Quarry | SO 94661 95968 | P-Med |
| 10912 | AS | Site of Stonefield Ironworks | SO 94661 95821 | P-Med |
| 10915 | AS | Site of Barborsfield Quarry | SO 94843 95760 | P-Med |
| 10918 | AS | Site of Stonefields Furnaces | SO 94615 95836 | P-Med |
| 10920 | AS | Dudley Street, Bilston | SO 94830 96030 | P-Med |
| 10954 | HB | Slag Wall, Dudley Street | SO 94869 95970 | P-Med |
| 10959 | AS | Site of Woolley's House | SO 94736 95912 | P-Med |
| 13789 | AS | Course of Bilston Brook | SO 94753 95772 | -- |

*** Site Classification:**

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| SAM: Scheduled Ancient Monument | PAW: Previous Archaeological Work |
| HPG: Historic Park or Garden | LB: Listed Building |
| AS: Archaeological Site | LLB: Locally Listed Building |
| FS: Archaeological Findspot | HB: Historic Building (unlisted) |

TABLE 1: Sites registered with the Black Country HER within/adjoining the Study Area (see **Figure 2**).

6.2.2 Known archaeological activity within and around the study area can be seen to be related predominantly to the post-medieval industrial exploitation, specifically coal mining activity and ironworks.

6.2.3 A watermill on the Bilston Brook (**BCSMR 8733**) is recorded as far back as the 14th century, though its exact location has not been established. Yates' map of 1775 (Figure 3) indicates a schematic waterwheel on the brook to the south-west of the town centre, though interpretation of the map is not straightforward and inconsistencies negate its use as a reliable source for locating the mill (see below).

6.3 Map Regression

Early Maps

6.3.1 Early county maps (Saxton, 1557; Speed, 1610; Blaeu, 1648; Stent, 1665; and Morden, 1695)³ are of too large a scale to be of any use in tracing the detailed development of Bilston as a settlement.

6.3.2 Yates's map of Staffordshire of 1775 (Figure 3), a further large scale county map, is of interest in that it clearly shows a mill (shown as a schematic waterwheel) on the Bilston Brook to the south-west of the town. The mill is shown at the end of a track, the location of which (to the south of High Street immediately west of the junction with Wolverhampton Street) would, on first inspection, appear to correspond to Coseley Street. The line of Coseley Street is, however, clearly shown further to the west which would place the track to the east and the location of the mill would thus

³ WALSH MAP/469; MAP/471d; MAP/473a; MAP/474 and MAP/478b respectively.

correspond approximately to the site of the later Woolley Factory (Figure 6). The map indicates a number of coal pits to the south of Bilston Brook and to the west of Coseley Road.

- 6.3.3 Sherriff's 'Map of Bilstone Liberty' 1779 (Figure 4)⁴ illustrates the still essentially pre-industrialised nature of the study area at the end of the 18th century. Of the land parcels included within the study area to the east of Coseley Road, only three are listed in the accompanying schedule with none agricultural or residential use, namely parcels 303, 305 and 306 which are all described as comprising 'Colliery Ground'.
- 6.3.4 A map of the mines of Lord Dudley, prepared in 1812 (Figure 5)⁵ clearly illustrates the burgeoning industrial exploitation of the lands around Bilston in the early years of the 19th century, illustrating a number of collieries, furnaces and iron works in the vicinity of the town. The map does not depict the current study area in any detail.
- 6.3.5 The 'Cholera map' of 1832 by R Timmis (Figure 6)⁶ is the first cartographic source to show the current study area in any degree of detail. The 'Woolley Factory' is clearly marked (and annotated) towards the southern boundary, occupying a site on the north bank of the Bilston Brook. The factory was split over two sites, located to either side of a north-south aligned road, with a large pond immediately north of the eastern site. The access road, which ran approximately parallel to the Coseley Street to the west, crossed the Bilston Brook to the south and, to the north, veered eastwards onto an open, triangular area laid out to the south of High Street.⁷
- 6.3.6 Timmis's map of 1839 (Figure 7) and accompanying schedule⁸ provide valuable information regarding ownership and use of the study area in the mid 19th century. A review of the schedule reveals that much of the land was in the ownership of Mr Edward Woolley (see Table 2, below), while the map clearly shows Woolley's Factory (No. 385/6) to the south, adjacent to the Bilston Brook; the large pond visible on the earlier map is not shown. Interestingly, land parcel No. 388 is recorded as '*the paddock to his house*' implying that the adjacent buildings, being located to the north of the factory complex, represented Woolley's residence. This may correspond to the 'Stonefield House' where Woolley is recorded in Melville's Directory of 1851 (p.120). The map appears to show that the house was approached directly from the north via a drive leading from the Old Quarry Hole (No. 375), itself located off the south side of the High Street. Just beyond the study area to the north, land parcel 371a, 'at the back of the High Street', is recorded as being occupied by one James Hawley, listed in Slater's Directory of 1850 (Staffs p.10) as a 'rope and twinemaker'; the business and premises subsequently being taken over by Thomas Hawley, possibly his son and likewise a rope and, latterly, a tentmaker.

| No. | Occupier | Proprietor | Area (A.R.P) | Description |
|------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| 371 | Thom. Banks | Thom. Banks | 28.2.3 | Between Market Place and the Brook |
| 371a | James Hawley | Thom. Banks | 1.0.30 | At the back of High Street |
| 375 | Edw. Woolley | Edw. Woolley | 1.0.14 | The Old Quarry Hole |
| 376 | Edw. Woolley | Edw. Woolley | 0.3.33 | Adjoining ditto |
| 383 | Edw. Woolley | Edw. Woolley | 6.1.4 | The road running to E Woolley's |
| 385 | Edw. Woolley | Edw. Woolley | 0.2.36 | Adjoining E Woolley's Road |
| 386 | Edw. Woolley | Edw. Woolley | 0.3.27 | Ditto and E Woolley's Factory |
| 387 | Edw. Woolley | Edw. Woolley | 0.3.4 | Next adjoining from the road |

⁴ WALS MAP/BIL/102a (1842 copy by Timmis and Blood) with accompanying schedule.

⁵ WALS MAP/500.

⁶ WALS D-NAJ/E/4/2.

⁷ The schedule accompanying Timmis's later map of 1939 identifies this area as 'The Old Quarry Hole'.

⁸ WALS MAP/BIL/102a, with accompanying schedule DX-181/1.

| | | | | |
|-----|--------------|--------------|--------|---|
| 388 | Edw. Woolley | Edw. Woolley | 0.3.22 | The paddock to his house |
| 389 | Edw. Woolley | Edw. Woolley | 3.2.22 | The piece in which is the road to ditto |

TABLE 2: Extract from schedule accompanying Timmis' map of 1839 (Figure 7).

Colliery Plans

- 6.3.7 A series of later 19th-century plans held at the Wolverhampton City Archives and relating to the Stonefield and Barbor's Field collieries are of particular relevance to the study area (Figures 8-12).⁹ The maps were prepared to illustrate the location of pit shafts along the extent of subterranean mining activity at the level of various beds (New Mine, Fire Coal and Heathen Coal workings), though a degree of surface detail was included. The first of the plans date to 1868 (Figures 8/9) and indicate that both Market Street and Dudley Street had been laid out since Timmis's map of 1839; Dudley Street marks the eastern side of the current study area and can be seen to have been occupied by a number of residential blocks facing onto Dudley Street itself and a series of four small side streets off the western side of the road (identified on later OS maps as, from north to south, St Luke's Place, Sankey Street, York Street and Raglan Street). At the south-west corner of the site, Woolley's Iron Works continues to be clearly indicated and annotated adjacent to the Bilston Brook, while the possible buildings of Stonefield House to the north, first indicated on Timmis's map, are shown in more detail. The works opposite Woolley's Works on the western side of the access road appear by this date to have been in the ownership of the Bilston Iron Company. The premises of Thomas Hawsey Esq., ropemaker, are clearly labelled on the map of 1875 (Figure 10), while the map of 1888 (Figure 11) for the first time labels the 'ropewalk' occupying a narrow strip adjacent to Woolley's land; the field to the east is annotated as 'Lintons Piece', the derivation for the later Linton Croft.
- 6.3.8 It is apparent from a comparison of the later colliery plans (the latest dating to 1896, Figure 12) with the early first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886-7 (Figure 13), that the later colliery plans were based for the most part upon the earlier maps with surface detail (for example the extent of Stonefield House) being simply copied over in subsequent versions. Their usefulness as precisely dated historic documents is thus somewhat reduced.

Ordnance Survey Maps

- 6.3.9 The 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886-7 (Figure 13) illustrates a state of development not much altered from that depicted in the colliery plans. The former 'Woolley's Works' are again shown adjacent to the former Bilston Brook, the course of which was becoming less well defined by this date. The works are here labelled the 'Factory Iron Works' and the name would again appear to relate to the factory buildings on both sides of the north-south aligned access road. The majority of the central study area appears to constitute open land and the extensive use of stippling and hachures indicates the disturbed nature of the ground, the result of widespread mining activity; a total of four former shafts are indicated within the boundary of the development site.¹⁰ In the centre of the study area, a small building is indicated set within a wooded enclosure. This would appear to be a remnant of the former series of buildings which together possibly represented Stonefield House; it is unclear when the other elements of the former house complex were demolished as, as stated above, the

⁹ WALS MAP/BIL/16, 18, 19 and 20.

¹⁰ The original specification for the school (see §.8.2.2) refers to the requirement for capping of pit shafts on the site prior to the erection of the school buildings.

series of colliery plans appear to simply repeat surface detail in subsequent versions. The ropewalk, indicated on a previous colliery plan (see §.6.3.7, Figure 11) is again clearly shown, aligned approximately north-south at the foot of the pronounced bank which formed the eastern boundary of the later school playground and which survives today; such a ropewalk need only have comprised an ephemeral structure essentially to provide a long covered area for the production process (Sanctuary, 1988). To the eastern side of the study area, the extent of residential development along Dudley Street and associated side roads remains essentially as shown in the earlier colliery plans.

- 6.3.10 The major development illustrated by the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 first revision map of 1903 (Figure 14), was the removal of the former Factory Iron Works to either side of the north-south aligned access road and its associated structures. The course of the Bilston Brook had also become lost as the stream had been successively culverted and covered over (Ramsey 2007). Hawsey's ropewalk had also been removed by this date, its alignment being reflected by the pronounced bank. What would appear to be a tramway or small rail line is marked running from the beyond the centre of the southern site boundary to a sidings at the north-west corner of the study area and from here connecting to a further line which joins the mainline railway south of Bilston Station. The surviving remnant of Stonefield House and the layout of the residential area to the east along Dudley Street remained essentially unaltered. Beyond the study area a substantial iron works established by George Sankey, owner of the Stonefield site, was developing at Albert Street to the east.
- 6.3.11 The Ordnance Survey 1:2500 2nd Revision map of 1919 (Figure 15) is the first to indicate the buildings of Stonefield Schools as constructed in 1905/6 on land sold to the Bilston Urban District Council by Sankey and Sons for the sum of £1,250.¹¹ The main school building comprised two ranges aligned at right angles to one another, labelled simply as 'School',¹² the northern range fronting onto an extension of Market Street beyond Dudley Street and the western range fronting onto the north-south aligned road/track formerly serving the Factory Iron Works. The principal ranges enclosed a school yard to the south-east, divided by an angled wall and including a further substantial building aligned parallel to the western range. To the south of principal school ranges was a further rectangular block, with a small central projection to the west, labelled 'Infant School'.¹³ The eastern boundary of the school site was delineated by a pronounced north-south aligned bank. The rail/tram lines indicated on the earlier edition had been removed though their former course remained traceable as earthworks, otherwise remainder of the study area stayed essentially unchanged.
- 6.3.12 The Ordnance Survey 1:2500 3rd Revision map of 1938 (Figure 16) illustrates the northern extension of the school buildings apparently during construction, the western return range falling short of the 1905 north range.¹⁴ The new range fronts Prosser Street which had been newly formed, linking Market Street and Coseley Street to the west. To the east of the school buildings, and beyond the northern boundary of the study area, a series of residential houses had been constructed at Linton Croft. The central part of the study area remained relatively unchanged, the course of the former

¹¹ WAL5 DB-25/7/3/10.

¹² The principal ranges of the school building survive relatively intact and are described in greater detail in section §.8 below.

¹³ The infants school was demolished following a fire in 1996; 'Ex-school wrecked in arson attack'; Express and Star, 2/9/1996.

¹⁴ The Girls School Log Book of 2.9.1938 records that the 'New building is unfinished but we are able to use part of it'. Original copy retained at school premises.

tram/train lines (see §.6.3.10) having become established as a footpath with a further path allowing access to the side streets off Dudley Street to the east.

- 6.3.13 The Ordnance Survey 1:2500 National Grid Series edition of 1965 (Figure 17) shows only limited changes within the study area, which would appear to have undergone soft landscaping in line with its use as a school playing fields; the former uneven surface had been levelled and the banks to the borders regularised. A fairly large building comprising three parallel east-west aligned ranges had been erected to the south of the Primary School at the bottom of the earth bank, where footings still survive (Plate 63). Historic photographs¹⁵ indicate that this building comprised single-storey, 'pre-fab' type structures.

7 PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK

7.1 Assessment

- 7.2 The development site falls within the area of the 'Bilston Urban Village' project which has been the subject of a number of desk-based studies (White 1998; Ramsey 2003; revised 2007). Ramsey (2003, 11; fig.16; 2007, 14; fig. 13) identifies the current study area as an 'Area of Archaeological Interest' (No.3), highlighting the possible survival of remains related to pre-canal and post-canal industrial development in general, and to Woolley's Factory and House in particular.

7.2 Fieldwork

- 7.2.1 As part of ongoing works associated with the ongoing 'Bilston Urban Village' scheme, an archaeological watching brief was maintained by Marches Archaeology (Appleton-Fox, 2004) on the excavation of 24 trial pits within the area project, of which seven lay within the playing field of Bilston High School and thus within the current study area. Test pits revealed generally deep levels of overburden, up to 2-3m thick, with little of archaeological significance exposed, though TP 139, located within the area of the former Woolley Factory (Appleton-Fox, 2004, fig.2) exposed a brick floor, and associated brick footings at a depth of c.2.5m.

8 STONEFIELD SCHOOL: BUILDING DESCRIPTION

8.1 General Arrangements

8.2 Primary Building, 1906

- 8.2.1 The Stonefield Schools were constructed on the direction of the Bilston Urban District Council between 1905 and 1906, the first admissions to the completed school being made on 3rd September 1906.¹⁶ The site for the buildings was sold to the Council by George Sankey for the sum of £1,250, having been judged the best of three possible sites for the construction of a new school.¹⁷
- 8.2.2 A detailed '*Specification of the various artificers works to be done... in the erection of New Schools at Stonefield Bilston*', dated February 1905, survives at the

¹⁵ 'When road comes school must go', Express and Star, 24/5/1968.

¹⁶ Boys Admissions Register, 1st September 1906 - 21st January 1918; original copy retained at school premises.

¹⁷ WAL5 DB-25/7/3/10, the other sites were located at Regent Street and Wolverhampton Street.

Wolverhampton Archives.¹⁸ The specification refers to the construction of 'boys and girls and infants departments, for 400 children each, cookery centre, manual training centre with out-offices, playsheds and boundary walling', all to be built to the plans of the Bailey and McConnel, architects, of Bridge Street, Walsall. The specification extends to 37 pages of hand written text and comprises detailed instructions regarding works to be undertaken and materials to be used by bricklayers, tilers, carpenters and joiners, plasterers, ironfounders, plumbers, glaziers and painters. It was approved by the Board of Education on 20th March 1905; no accompanying drawings have been traced.

General Arrangements

- 8.2.3 The school building as built occupied an L-shaped plan comprising two ranges arranged at right angles and joined at the north-west corner of the site, enclosing a playground area to the south-east. The northern range, aligned approximately east-west along a western extension of Market Street housed the girls department while the boys department was housed within the western range, aligned approximately north-south. The principal elevations were oriented to the north and west, though the northern elevation has subsequently been broken up by a series of later additions (see below). Historic plans indicate a contemporary infants school (destroyed by fire in 1996)¹⁹ to the south of the surviving west range, together with a substantial structure in the centre of the playground area, which was divided by a diagonal wall. The playground structure also subdivided, the northern part apparently being open to both sides with a solid dividing wall down the centre, while the southern section possibly originally housed the manual training centre described in the specification; photographs dating to the 1930s show the interior of a room, furnished with woodwork benches, of generally similar appearance to the main halls of the primary ranges, though including a fireplace in one of the long, side walls. The former location of this block is evidenced by an area of patching in the tarmac of the playground surface (Plate 56). Extending eastwards from the southern end of this block was a narrow east-west aligned range of buildings, the easternmost section of which survives to the present day at the head of the bank that defines the boundary of the school yard area (Plates 58/9).
- 8.2.4 The buildings are of a single storey throughout, constructed of well fired orange-red brick laid to English bond, with decorative window and string detailing in a somewhat harder, darker red brick (Plates 20 and 25/6). Terra cotta detailing is employed in decorative panels set into the gables of the ranges (Plate 21) while the entrance doorways are also embellished with scrolls and inscriptions 'Girls' and 'Boys' (Plates 16, 18/9). The two ranges are characteristically similar, though slight variations in both plan and detailing mean that they do not constitute exact copies of one another. They will be described in turn.

The North Range

- 8.2.5 The north range is aligned east-west and, when built, fronted onto a westwards extension of Market Street; the front elevation is now broken up by a series of later additions (1930s/?1980s) though most of the original fabric survives intact. In plan, the range essentially comprises a longitudinally aligned hall occupying a central position with a series of classrooms opening off one lateral side and the two short ends. Subsidiary accommodation to the eastern and western ends of the hall would

¹⁸ WALS CMB-BIL/11/2/1.

¹⁹ 'Ex-school wrecked in arson attack'; Express and Star, 2/9/1996.

have originally housed teachers rooms, cloakrooms, and toilet facilities. A further, high classroom block was located to the far east end of the range.

- 8.2.6 The principal elevation of the range faced to the north. The central section of the elevation comprised the exterior aspect of the central hall, of four, gabled full-bays with two, terminal half-bays, separated by low buttresses (Plate 3). Directly above the buttresses, semi-circular headed openings serve to allow rainwater run-off from the hall roof, feeding into sections of longitudinal eaves gutter and downpipes. The full bays each house tall, segmental headed window openings with iron, multi-pane windows set within three-light, timber transom and mullion frames. Windows have bottom hinged hopper lights to the base, fixed lights to the centre and centrally hinged panels to the head. The window openings are set vertically between upper and lower projecting brick strings (Plates 25/6). Each gable is enhanced by an inset terra-cotta panel (Plate 2) while a timber clock turret rises above the centre of the roof ridge (Plate 1). Flanking the hall to east and west are matching gabled classroom blocks, wider than the hall bays and projecting forward of the northern hall wall line (Plates 1 and 4) with classically inspired detailing of applied pedimented pilasters, all in brick. These gables house tri-partite windows with flat heads of gauged brick, the wider central window being slightly recessed from the wall face with an exaggerated 'key-stone' and being housed within a wide semi-circular arch of moulded brick embellished with a single terra-cotta panel. The westernmost gable includes a foundation stone dated 1905/6 beneath the level of the lower string (Plate 5). The transverse roofs of the gabled projections are furnished with low timber louvres (Plate 1).
- 8.2.7 To the eastern end of the elevation, two segmental headed window bays separate the main block from the principal entrance door to the girls department. This doorway was originally flanked by two, three-light canted bays topped by standard gables behind perforated parapets (Plate 1/2). The western bay has subsequently been removed during extensions to the school (see Figure 22), though the gable survives, while the western example survives intact. Fenestration is of 6/6 horned sashes. The central entrance door has deeply splayed jambs and low segmental head, here incorporated into later work, and is surmounted by a terra-cotta panel with the inscription 'GIRLS' below a dentilated, gently curved head.
- 8.2.8 A further classroom (004) is located at the far east end of the range, beyond the opposed entrance doors, cloakrooms and toilet facilities. It is rectangular in plan, aligned east-west with a pitched roof and ridge stack at the western end gable (Plate 14). The eastern gable reflects the projecting classroom gables of the north elevation, previously described, though it includes only two segmental headed windows (Plate 15).
- 8.2.9 At the western end of the range, the arrangement is broadly similar to that described above, though the details of the doorway are simpler, with no flanking canted bays (Plate 4). The doorway has again been incorporated into later work and obscured to some extent; the inscription above the door has been lost and it is unclear as to whether it originally served the girls or boys department (see §.8.2.19 below).
- 8.2.10 The playground elevation comprises four symmetrical gables (Plate 11) with tri-partite fenestration, the central windows being both wider and taller than the flanking windows (Plate 20). Fenestration is of iron, multi-pane windows set within timber transom and mullion frames; windows again have bottom hinged hopper lights to the base, fixed lights to the centre and centrally hinged panels to the head. The hall roof with central bell tower rises above the central two gables. Horizontal articulation is

provided by a single string at low level, there being no upper string above the windows. To the east is a further, narrower two-window gable, slightly recessed from the main front (Plate 13); the transverse pitched roofs of all gabled blocks are furnished with timber ridge louvres. To the east again is located the first of two playground doors serving the north range; it is of standard design with deeply splayed brick reveals, almost flat segmental-head of gauged brick and incorporating a terra-cotta plaque inscribed 'GIRLS' below a small gable with decorative terra-cotta panel. The door is flanked to east and west by short two-window bays. At the far east end, classroom 004 (previously described) forms a distinct block with high fenestration of multi-panel windows breaking through the eaves line forming semi-'dormers' to either side of a central, projecting window bay (Plate 14).

- 8.2.11 At the western end of the range is a further primary doorway of standard design but with terra-cotta scrolls flanking a gable-less plaque inscribed 'GIRLS' (Plate 19).
- 8.2.12 Practical considerations are represented by iron grilles (Plate 25) regularly spaced along the length of the elevation, supplying fresh air to the interior classroom spaces via interior ventilation boxes. Rainwater drainage follows the model of the north front with semi-circular headed openings between gables. To the east, a single contemporary iron rainwater hopper of Art Nouveau inspired design survives (Plate 23); replaced elsewhere by unsympathetic plastic heads, their former existence is evidenced by 'shadows' on the brickwork (Plate 24).
- 8.2.13 Internally, the central section of the range comprises a total of six classrooms arranged around a central hall (Room 026; Plate 27), the 'marching hall' referred to in the original specification. Four of the classrooms (011/018/022/029) are enclosed with substantial brick walls, while two rooms, opening off the south side of the hall were originally partitioned by a series of hinged, half-glazed screens; these screens have been removed to create a single open space (Plate 28) though the original arrangement is evidenced by wall scars while the screens themselves survive *in-situ* within the west range (Plates 33/4). The enclosed classrooms are accessed via single segmental-headed doorways housing heavy panelled, half-glazed doors with brass fittings (Plate 29), and are all furnished with 'observation windows' with chamfered jambs to allow the interior to be seen from the central corridor (Plate 32). The northern two classrooms (022 and 029) are furnished with further paired, double-doors opening onto the body of the hall.
- 8.2.14 The roofs of the hall (four full bays and two half bays) and of the southern two classrooms (three full bays) are formed of arch-braced timber trusses with iron tie-rods and are ceiled just above collar level. Elsewhere, the introduction of suspended ceilings has been widespread (eg. Plate 35), though it would appear that all classrooms were originally similarly open to collar level (Plate 36).
- 8.2.15 To the east and west of the hall and classrooms, the range is divided to form a series of smaller spaces. Modern refurbishment has obscured original arrangements to a large extent, though by implication they can be said to have housed entries, cloakrooms, toilets and circulation spaces, the latter lit by skylights (Plate 32). Certain rooms can be identified by reference to the original specification, for example room 031 which can be recognised as a teachers' room/office and adjacent store (030) by its unusual use of sash windows, as specified in the document.

The West Range

- 8.2.16 The west range is aligned north-south and, when built, fronted onto a north-south aligned track/road formerly serving the Factory Iron Works. The range closely reflects the north range in plan, elevation and detailed arrangements though it does not represent an exact copy. It is focussed around a longitudinally aligned hall of identical dimensions, occupying a central position with a series of six classrooms opening off one lateral side and the two short ends. Subsidiary accommodation to the northern and southern ends of the hall would have originally housed teachers' rooms, cloakrooms, and toilet facilities. The range adjoins the north range at its north-west corner. The west range retains a length of original boundary wall and iron railing (Plate 7/9), the latter by Johnson Bros of Walsall (Plate 10) and including unusual, integral cast-iron wall coping sections.
- 8.2.17 The principal elevation faced to the west (Plates 6/7); the arrangements and treatment of the hall and associated classroom blocks reflects exactly those of the north range, and will not be described in detail. Similarly, the northern doorway to the range (Plate 8), flanked by paired segmental headed windows, matches in all respects the westernmost of the north range doorways (Plate 4) save for the fact that it has been blocked to form a window, and retains its terra cotta legend 'BOYS' and an original lamp fitting. The major differences of layout occur at the north and south ends of the range. To the north is located a tall rectangular classroom block (076) aligned east-west, with a pitched roof and three tall, north-facing windows which cut through the eaves level (Plate 6) in a manner similar to those recorded in the eastern block of the north range; the details of the western gable also match the eastern gable of the latter block. The southern end of the range, beyond the hall and principal classrooms, is formed of two parallel blocks aligned north-south to either side of a lateral corridor with a doorway to the exterior at the far south end (Plate 31). The eastern room (095), with open pitched roof and observation window (blocked) from the adjacent corridor presumably represents a further original classroom; that to the east, with observation window onto classroom 086, a probable teachers' room (087) and closet (087a).
- 8.2.18 The playground elevation again presents an almost identical picture to the northern range (compare Plates 11 and 12, 13 and 17, 18 and 19) and will thus not be described in detail. The junction of the two ranges at the north-west corner of the site results in the close juxtaposition of girls and boys entrances (Plate 16); these were originally divided by a boundary wall (see Figure 15).
- 8.2.19 Internally, details are much as recorded within the north range with a wide range of surviving primary details and finishes. The hinged screens of the hall survive here *in-situ* (Plates 33/4), though the hall itself has been subdivided and suspended ceilings introduced. Wood-block flooring survives extensively, while the southern entrance doorway (Plate 31) opens onto a lobby floored in granolithic cement, again a primary feature referred to in the original specification. Of particular interest is the junction of corridor 077 and 032 at the north-west corner of the building; the discontinuity of dado and skirting details here, together with the trace of wall scars, suggests a former partition wall separating the girls and boys departments at this point. Thus the western door of the north elevation (which lacks its name plate) would originally have served the boys department.

8.3 Extension, 1937-8

- 8.3.1 Preliminary plans for the upgrading of the Stonefield Schools were submitted in November 1935²⁰ and estimates submitted for tender in July 1936.²¹ Building works would appear to be slow however and the buildings were still incomplete by August of 1938 (see fn.14, p.10 above).
- 8.3.2 The extension of the school premises comprised the introduction of a further east-west aligned range to the north of the old girls department, fronting onto the newly formed Prosser Street (Plates 37/8), with single storey return wings to east and west connecting back to the earlier building and creating an enclosed courtyard to the south (Plates 45/6). The building is in brick throughout, laid to Flemish bond with, in the principal elevations, extensive use made of vitrified headers. Dressings, strings and decorative detailing around principal windows (Plates 41/2) are in a buff limestone. The principal elevation faces to the north; the main block comprises symmetrically opposed two-storey classroom blocks (Plate 38) with hipped roofs to either side of a tall, single-storey hall (Plate 40), slightly lower than the two-storey block, again with hipped roof surmounted by a bell turret (Plate 40) reflecting those of the earlier halls. Fenestration is of regularly spaced iron-frame casements at each level, somewhat taller within the hall block where they are separated by projecting pilasters supporting a stylised entablature of brick and stone construction. At the eastern end of the range is a single storey entrance/office annexe (Plate 39).
- 8.3.3 The rear elevations of the main block are simpler, in a paler more regular orange brick, laid again to Flemish bond (Plates 43/4) with flush concrete window lintels. The eastern classroom block includes a central, flat roofed, projecting stairwell ((Plate 43). The return wings are rectangular in plan with hipped roofs and are flanked by (formerly) half-open verandas to the courtyard elevations (039/075; Plates 45/6) which continue onto the southern elevation of the main block (048/9, 059); the upper sections of the verandas have subsequently been infilled with UPVC glazing. Fenestration of the return wings extends above the level of the shallow mono-pitch veranda roofs (Plates 45/6). The western return wing contains a further classroom (069) stores and closets while the eastern wing contains a dining hall and kitchen (034-7). The verandas abut the north elevation of the primary girls range to the south, resulting in the loss and/or obscuration of some primary fabric.
- 8.3.4 Internally, the main block comprises two four-classroom blocks (two per storey) to either side of a tall single-storey hall (055; Plate 48). The upper storeys of the classroom blocks are accessed via independent staircases (051, east [Plate 52]; 063, west) with no communication at first floor level. Classroom arrangements (Plate 47) and internal finishes are utilitarian throughout, surviving primary details include straight angled skirting fillets (Plate 50), a mix of solid and half-glazed panelled doors with brass fittings (double, Plate 49; single, Plate 50) and recessed convex dado mouldings (Plate 51). Iron railings to the upper stair wells, including interlocking semi-circular panels add an element of interest (Plates 53/4). Original flooring materials again include herring-bone wood block with quarry tiles to circulation spaces.

²⁰ Bilston and Willenhall Times, Nov.30th 1935.

²¹ Bilston and Willenhall Times, July 25th 1936.

8.4 Later Developments

- 8.4.1 Later developments at the school include a series of late 20th-century, utilitarian buildings, none of which are of any architectural merit or historical interest. Buildings include a southern extension of the western range (Plate 12) and a tall, single-storey infill block occupying the centre of the former courtyard between the north range of the original school and the 1937/8 range (Plate 55). Further afield are located a single-storey, brick-built science block (Plate 60) and, at the north-east corner of the study area, a tall sports hall structure (Plate 61).

8.5 Discussion

- 8.5.1 The primary structures of Stonefield Schools represent an interesting example of Edwardian school buildings, built shortly after the Education Act of 1902. This Act swept away the foregoing system of School Boards, replacing them with Local Education Authorities (LEAs) responsible for the provision of state elementary and secondary education, and for the establishment and maintenance of their own schools, under which the Bilston UDC operated. Under George Reid (Medical Officer) and John Hutchings (Architect), Staffordshire LEA was at the forefront of a move away from the more traditional 'central hall' plan, much espoused by Felix Clay, the national Chief Architectural Advisor to the LEAs, towards a more open 'pavilion' type of plan. At first encountering opposition, the ideas of Reid and Hutchings eventually prevailed and by the time of the First World War, the pavilion plan had become widely adopted (Kelleher 2007, 12).
- 8.5.2 The Stonefield represents something of a 'hybrid', incorporating a number of new ideas regarding health and ventilation in school buildings current at the time, while harking back in the use of elements such as the modified 'central hall' plan.
- 8.5.3 The extent of survival of original details and finishes within the school is surprising; few primary windows or doorways have been significantly altered and few secondary openings created. Most of the classrooms and circulation spaces are furnished with the glazed brick dado, moulded rail and quarter-round fillet skirting required in the original specification, even though some have been covered over. Original flooring of herring-bone pattern wood block survives to much of the hall, classroom and corridor areas and while in a number of areas floors are covered by carpet, it is probable that original flooring survives beneath.
- 8.5.4 The 1937/8 additions can be seen to arise from a significantly different theoretical basis. The use of well-lit and well-aired classrooms served by extensive fenestration to both the exterior and to flanking open verandas around an enclosed courtyard encapsulated the revised approach to school design current in the years before the Second World War.
- 8.5.5 Later 20th-century additions to the school, marked in red on Figure 22, are of limited historical interest and no inherent architectural merit. The infill range between the 1938 block and the north range of the primary school in particular can be seen to be wholly unsympathetic and to have a negative impact upon the overall appearance of the building complex.
- 8.5.6 Despite having been removed from its historical context to a great degree by recent infrastructure developments such as the creation of the Black Country Way dual carriageway and the removal/rerouting of the northern part of Dudley Street, the

school building remains a 'visible landmark and an important feature of Bilston town centre' (local list description) and represents a well regarded community asset.

9 SITE ASSESSMENT

9.1 Walkover Survey

9.1.1 The study area covers a total area of c.5.6 hectares. It is bounded to the north by Prosser Street and the rear of a number of residential properties fronting onto Linton Croft, to the east by an area of waste ground and partly by the surviving southern section of Dudley Street, and to the south and west by paths and tracks which define the boundaries of the school playing fields. The school buildings themselves occupy an elevated site compared to the remainder of the study area, with pronounced banks to the eastern and southern side of the tarmaced playground area (Plate 57).

9.1.2 With the exception of the standing school buildings described in section §.8 above, the greater part of the study area is laid to grass and it is immediately apparent that a significant amount of soft landscaping has been undertaken in the recent past to form school sports fields, tennis courts and recreation areas (Plates 64-66) with attendant regrading of earth banks. As a result of this landscaping, no features of obvious archaeological significance or interest were noted during the walkover survey, in particular no upstanding earthwork remains related to the site of Edward Woolley's Factory or former house were observed. An area of hard-standing and brick footings located at the base of the bank to the south of the extant school buildings (Plate 63) relate to a series of single-storey 'pre-fab' huts dating most probably to the 1950s or early 1960s.

9.1.3 An exposed section to the north of the school sports hall (Plate 62), though falling outside the current development area, clearly illustrates the potential for structural remains related to the 19th-century domestic development of Dudley Street along the eastern boundary of the study area, though again the extent of previous earthmoving and landscaping on the site may well have had a negative impact upon any related archaeological deposits.

10 CONCLUSIONS

10.1 The School Buildings

10.1.1 As stated above, despite having been removed from their historical context to a great degree by recent infrastructure developments, the school buildings remains a 'visible landmark and an important feature of Bilston town centre' (local list description) and represent a well regarded community asset. As such, their retention within any proposed redevelopment of the school site can be seen to be desirable and in line with Wolverhampton City Councils stated conservation aims.

10.1.2 The case for retention applies principally, though not exclusively, to the early 20th-century ranges. The 1938 extension, though obscuring certain elements of the primary phase buildings, can be seen to form an integral part of the development of the school building over time, reflecting changing attitudes towards institutional educational architecture on both a local and national level.

10.1.3 Should limited demolitions and/or alterations be required as part of any proposed redevelopment scheme, a further stage of more detailed historic building recording

may be required in advance of/during work. Decisions regarding the necessity for, and the nature and extent of any further programme of work lies with the Planning Archaeologist / Conservation Officer of Wolverhampton City Council.

10.2 Areas of Archaeological Potential

10.2.1 It is readily apparent that the study area has undergone phases of significant earth movement in the past, the principal school buildings being constructed upon a pronounced bank to the north-west corner of the site, and reference to historic mapping reveals that much of this landscaping is of some antiquity. The walkover survey of the study area has revealed no obvious upstanding features of archaeological significance or interest, while previous monitoring of test pits within the area has been disappointing from an archaeological perspective. However, the survival of remains related to Woolley's Iron Works to the south of the study area has been suggested by previous excavations and the possibility of remains related to the associated house within the central area of the playing field cannot be discounted. Further, remains related to 19th century domestic activity off Dudley Street is attested by visible remains, exposed to the north of the sports hall building. Areas of specific archaeological potential are illustrated in Figure 23.

10.3 Archaeological Mitigation

10.3.1 Any further programme of archaeological mitigation will need to be designed as detailed development proposals for the site become available. All decisions regarding the necessity for, and the nature and extent of any further programme of work lies with the Planning Archaeologist of Wolverhampton City Council.

11 SOURCES

(a) Cartographic Sources (in chronological order)

- 1775 Yates's map of Staffordshire, 1775.
- 1799 Map of Bilstone Liberty, James Sherriff, copy by Timmis and Blood, 1842 (WALS MAP/BIL/102a).
- 1812 Map of the mines of Lord Dudley (WALS MAP/500).
- 1832 Map of the Town of Bilston (Cholera map) by R. Timmis (WALS D-NAJ/E/4/2).
- 1839 Map of Township of Bilston by R. Timmis. (WALS MAP/BIL/102a)
- 1868 Barbor's Field Colliery; New Mine and Fire Coal Clay workings (WALS MAP/BIL/18).
- 1868 Barbor's Field Colliery; Heathen Coal workings (WALS MAP/BIL/19).
- 1875 Draft Plan of Stonefied Colliery (WALS DX-264/25).
- 1886-7 Ordnance Survey County Series 1:2500 map, 1st Edition.
- 1888 Barbor's Field Colliery; New Mine and Fire Clay Coal (WALS DX-2674/30).
- 1896 Barbour's Field Colliery, 1896 (WALS MAP/BIL/16).
- 1903 Ordnance Survey County Series 1:2500 map, 1st Revision.
- 1919 Ordnance Survey County Series 1:2500 map, 2nd Revision.
- 1938 Ordnance Survey County Series 1:2500 map, 3rd Revision.
- 1965 Ordnance Survey National Grid Series 1:2500 map, Edition.

(b) Other Graphic Sources

- C20th Photograph of Council Schools, Stonefield, Bilston (WALS P/6319).
- 1935 Plan of Stonefield Schools, dated September 1935 (WALS CMB-BIL/11/2/2).
- 1948 Block Plan of School Buildings dated 25th May 1948 (WALS CMB-BIL/11/2/3).
- 1968 Photograph of school buildings from Express and Star (24/5/1968).
- 1996 Photograph of Infant School following fire from Express and Star (2/9/1996).

(c) Primary Sources

- 1905 Draft Specification for erection of Stonefield Schools (WALS CMB-BIL/11/2/1).
- 1906-18 Boys Administration Register 1st Sept. 1906 – 1st April 1918. Original copy held at school.
- 1906-65 Stonefield Council School, Girls Department Log Book 1906-1965. Original copy held at school.

(d) Secondary Sources

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IfA 2008b *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures*

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Kelleher S, 2007. 'Staffordshire Historic School Building Study: Phase 1'. Unpublished Birmingham Archaeology Client Report No. **1566**.

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Morris J, (ed.) 1976. *Domesday Book: Vol. 24; Staffordshire*. Phillimore, Chichester.

Ramsey E, 2003. 'Bilston Urban Village; Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment Supplement'. Unpublished Birmingham Archaeology Client Report No. **1122**.

Ramsey E, 2007. 'Bilston Urban Village; Archaeological Assessment Supplement'. Unpublished Birmingham Archaeology Client Report No. **1602**.

Sanctuary A, 1988. *Rope, Twine and Net Making*. Shire Publications, Aylesbury.

VCH (1967). *Victoria History of the County of Staffordshire*. Vol. **2**.

WCC 2008. 'Brief for Buildings and Archaeological Assessment: Bilston High School, Prosser Street, Bilston.'

White H, 1998. 'Bilston Urban Village: Archaeological Assessment'. Unpublished Client Report New Series No. **19**.

(e) *Trade Directories* (in chronological order)

- 1818 Commercial Directory.
- 1834 White's History, Gazetteer and Directory of Staffordshire.
- 1850 Slater's Directory of Staffordshire.
- 1851 Melville and Company's Directory of Wolverhampton and Neighbourhood.
- 1861 Harrison and Hawood's Directory and Gazetteer of Staffordshire.
- 1865 Jones's Directory of the Iron District.
- 1879 Hulley's Directory.
- 1892 Kelly's Directory of Staffordshire.

(f) *On-line Resources*

www.blackcountryhistory.org.uk

APPENDIX B: Glossary of Terms

Archaeological Periods and Date Ranges

| Period | Date Range |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Prehistoric | |
| Paleolithic | 500,000 BC – 10,000 BC |
| Mesolithic | 10,000 BC – 4,000 BC |
| Neolithic | 4,000 BC – 2,400 BC |
| Bronze Age | 2,400 BC – 700 BC |
| Iron Age | 700 BC – AD 43 |
| Historic | |
| Roman | AD 43 – AD410 |
| Anglo-Saxon/Early Medieval | AD410 – AD 1066 |
| Medieval | AD 1066 – AD1539 |
| Post Medieval | AD 1540 – AD 1900 |
| Modern | AD 1901 - present |

Statutory Designations

Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)

'Scheduling' is the process through which nationally important sites and monuments are given legal protection. A schedule has been kept since 1882 of monuments whose preservation is given priority over other land uses. The current legislation, the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, supports a formal system of [Scheduled Monument Consent](#) (SMC, see below) for any work to a designated monument.

Conservation Area (CA)

Conservation Areas are any areas of '*special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*' and are designated by Local Authorities. There are now more than 8,000 conservation areas in England. Designation introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest.

Listed Building (LB)

A 'Listed Building' is a structure that has been placed on the statutory lists of buildings of '*special architectural or historic interest*' compiled by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on advice from English Heritage. When a building is listed, it is listed in its entirety, which means that both the exterior and the interior are protected. In addition, any object or structure fixed to the building, and any object or structure within the curtilage of the building, which although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1 July 1948, are treated as part of the listed building.

Locally Listed Building (LLB)

A Locally Listed Building is a building, structure or feature which, whilst not Statutorily listed by the Secretary of State, a local authority feels makes a significant contribution to the local environment and an important part of an area's heritage due to its architectural, archaeological significance or historical associations. The maintenance of a Local List is addressed by Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 Planning and the Historic Environment, para. 6.16; inclusion on a Local List does not give a building any statutory protection.

Registered Parks and Gardens (RPG)

The *Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England*, compiled and maintained by English Heritage, currently includes nearly 1450 sites, divided into three grade bands. The majority of the sites identified through the *Register* as being of a sufficiently high level of interest to merit a national designation, are designated Grade II. Around 30% of the 1450 are considered to be of exceptional historic interest and are awarded a star giving them Grade II* status while a further 10% are of international importance, and are classified as Grade I.

Archaeological Priority Area (APA)

An Archaeological Priority Area is an area specified by Local Planning Authorities to help protect archaeological remains that might be affected by development. This means that a site in such an area should be assessed for their archaeological potential when application is made for their redevelopment.

The Planning Process

Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC)

The Secretary of State must be informed about any work which might affect a monument above or below ground, and English Heritage gives advice to the Government on each application. In assessing each application the Secretary of State will try to ensure that damage done to protected sites is kept to a minimum. **Written consent must always be obtained before any work can begin.** Some development may also need planning permission.

Listed Building Consent (LBC)

Listed Building Consent (LBC) is required in order to carry out any works to a Listed Building which will affect its special value for listing purposes. This will almost certainly be necessary for any major works, but may also be necessary for minor alterations and possibly even repairs and maintenance. LBC may also be necessary for a change of use of the property. **It is a criminal offence to carry out work which needs listed building consent without obtaining it beforehand.**

The Archaeological Process

The Principle Stages for handling archaeology within the planning process, in line with the Government's Planning Policy Guidance notes PPG 15 and PPG16 are:

- **Pre-determination:** desk-based assessment, archaeological evaluation
- **Post-determination:** preservation *in situ*, preservation by record (excavation)

Stages of Archaeological Work

Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)

Any programme of archaeological work will normally be undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), clearly stating the scope and extent of work, the aims and objectives, and the methodology to be employed during the course of work. The WSI will be prepared by the contracted archaeological organisation and approved in advance of work by the archaeological officer of the relevant LPA.

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (DBA)

An archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) constitutes a first stage, non-invasive assessment of the archaeological potential of a site, undertaken in advance of any development. Research will normally comprise a search of all readily available documentary and archival sources pertaining to a site combined with an on-site 'walkover' survey to assess surviving archaeological remains / built heritage of the area.

Archaeological Evaluation

An archaeological evaluation is a limited programme of intrusive or non-intrusive fieldwork undertaken to establish the extent of survival of archaeological deposits within a site and to determine the character, date, state of preservation and potential significance of any buried remains. An evaluation is often required prior to the determination of a planning application for development and will normally be undertaken subsequent to a desk-based assessment. A variety of techniques may be employed including geophysical survey, fieldwalking, trial trenching and test pitting. The results of evaluation will be used to establish the necessity for and determine the requirements of any further stage of archaeological work.

Archaeological Excavation

An archaeological excavation is a programme of controlled, intrusive fieldwork, normally undertaken by means of open area excavation, with the purpose of examining and recording archaeological deposits, features and structures identified by documentary research and/or archaeological evaluation. Archaeological excavation will normally lead on to a programme of post-excavation analysis and publication.

Archaeological Watching Brief

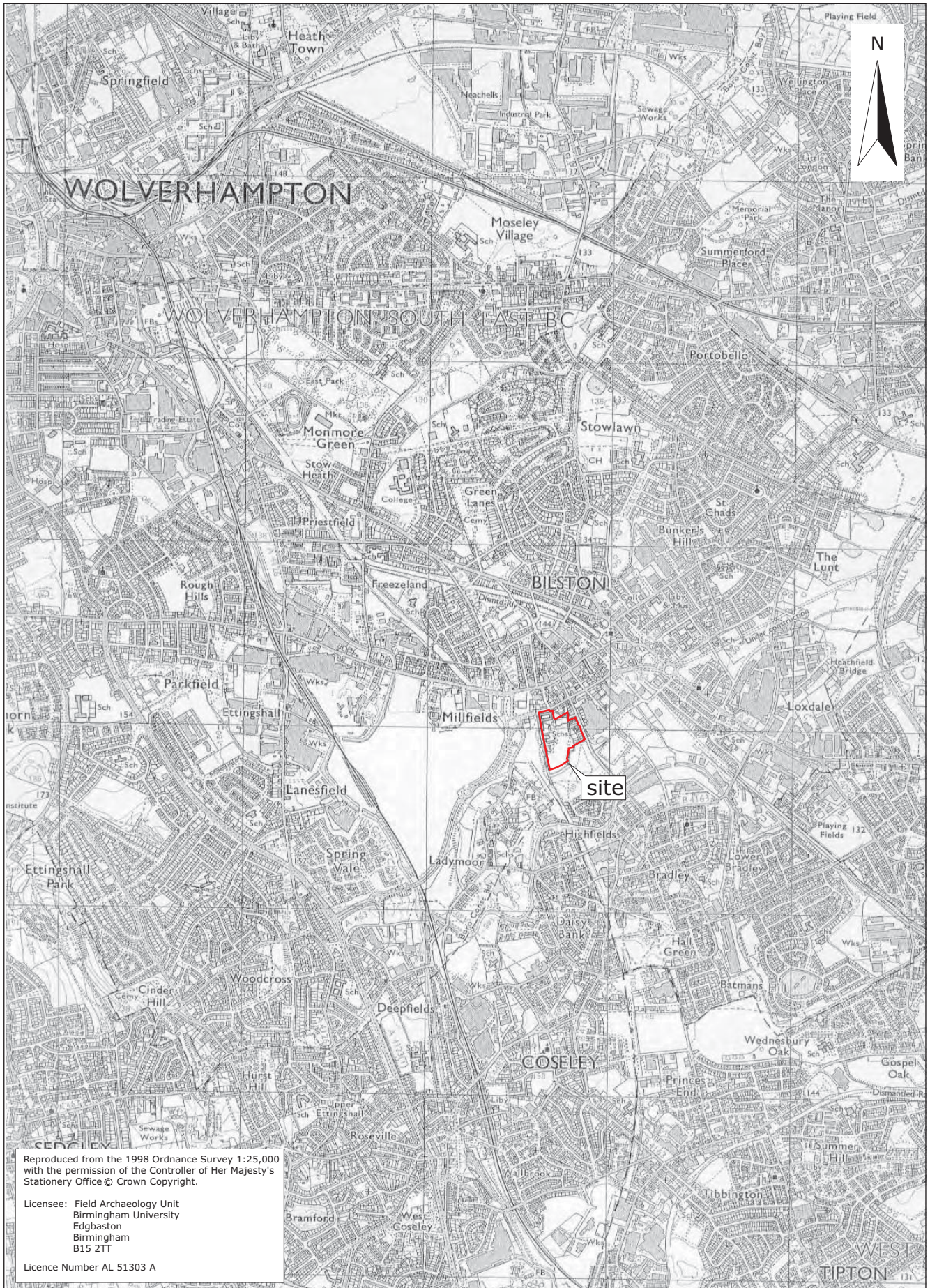
An archaeological watching brief is a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons within an area or site where there is a possibility of archaeological deposits being disturbed or destroyed. Groundworks will normally be undertaken by a principal contractor under the supervision of an attending archaeologist.

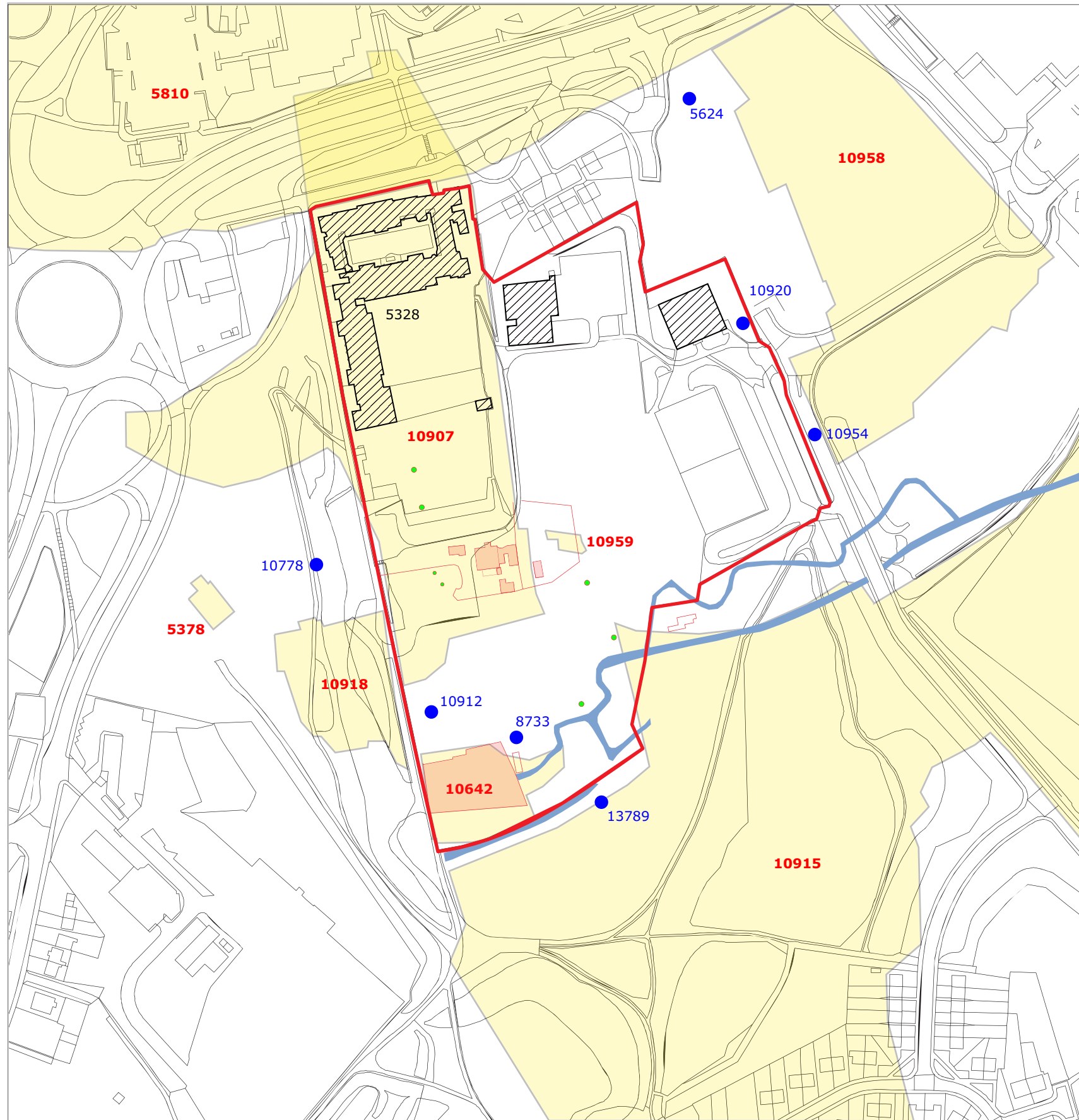
Preservation *in-situ*

Foundation design to avoid or minimise impact on archaeology may be sought. This might include locating buildings to avoid archaeology; display of remains; sympathetic location of piled foundations and piling techniques; raising floor or ground beam levels; the routing of services; management of ground water. Landscaping and planting may also be constrained. Monitoring over a number of years after completion may be needed to assess if the preservation techniques have been successful.

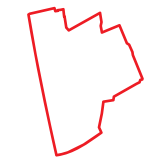






Historic Building Recording (HBR)

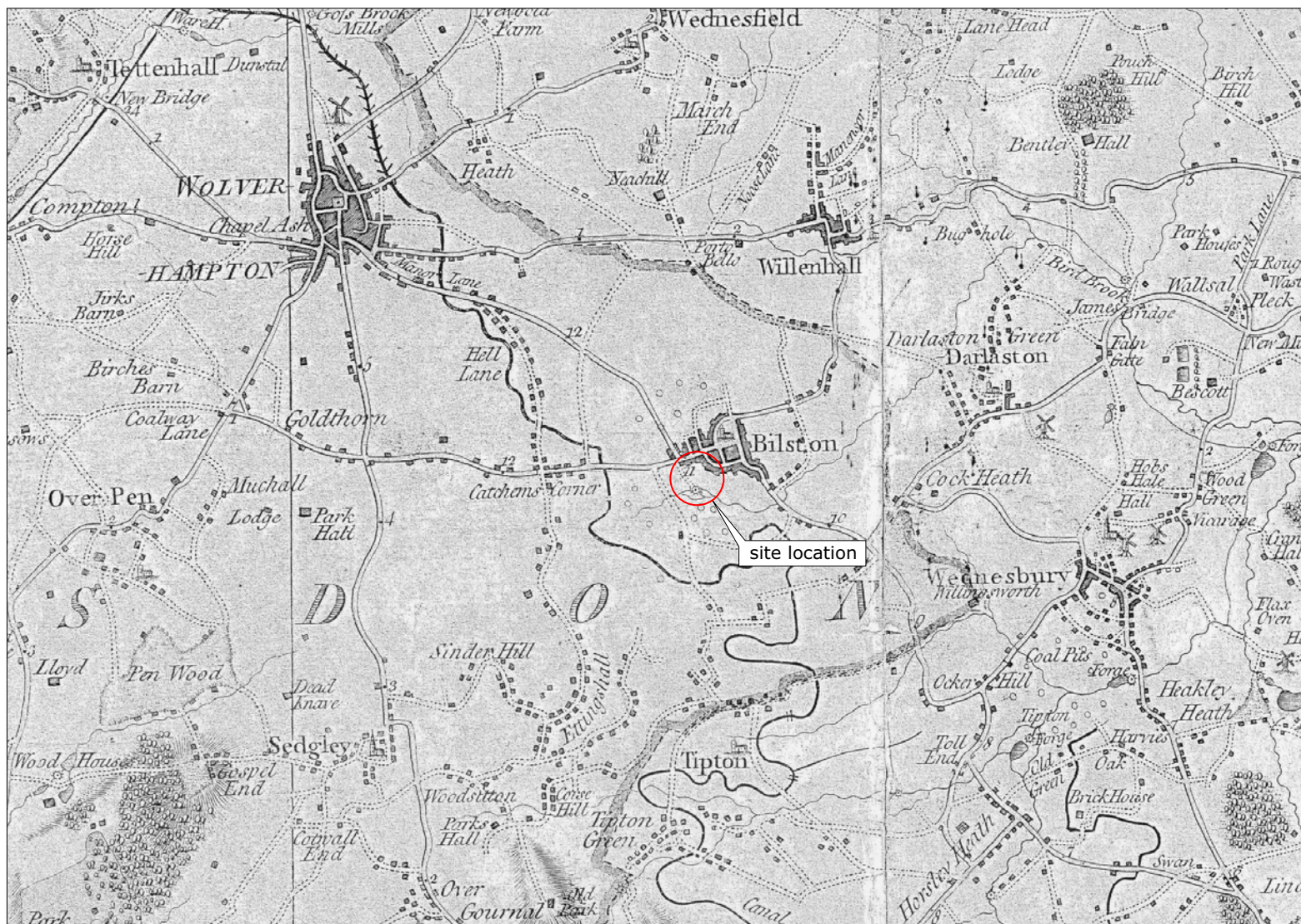
A Historic Building Record (HBR) is a programme of work intended to establish the character, history, dating, form and archaeological development of a specified building, structure or complex and its setting. A programme of historic building recording will often be required as a condition of planning consent / listed building consent, to be taken in advance of (pre-determination) and/or during building refurbishment / alterations / demolitions (post determination). HBR can be undertaken to a range of different levels (Levels 1 – 4 as defined by English Heritage) dependent upon the significance of the building under consideration and the extent of the proposed works.





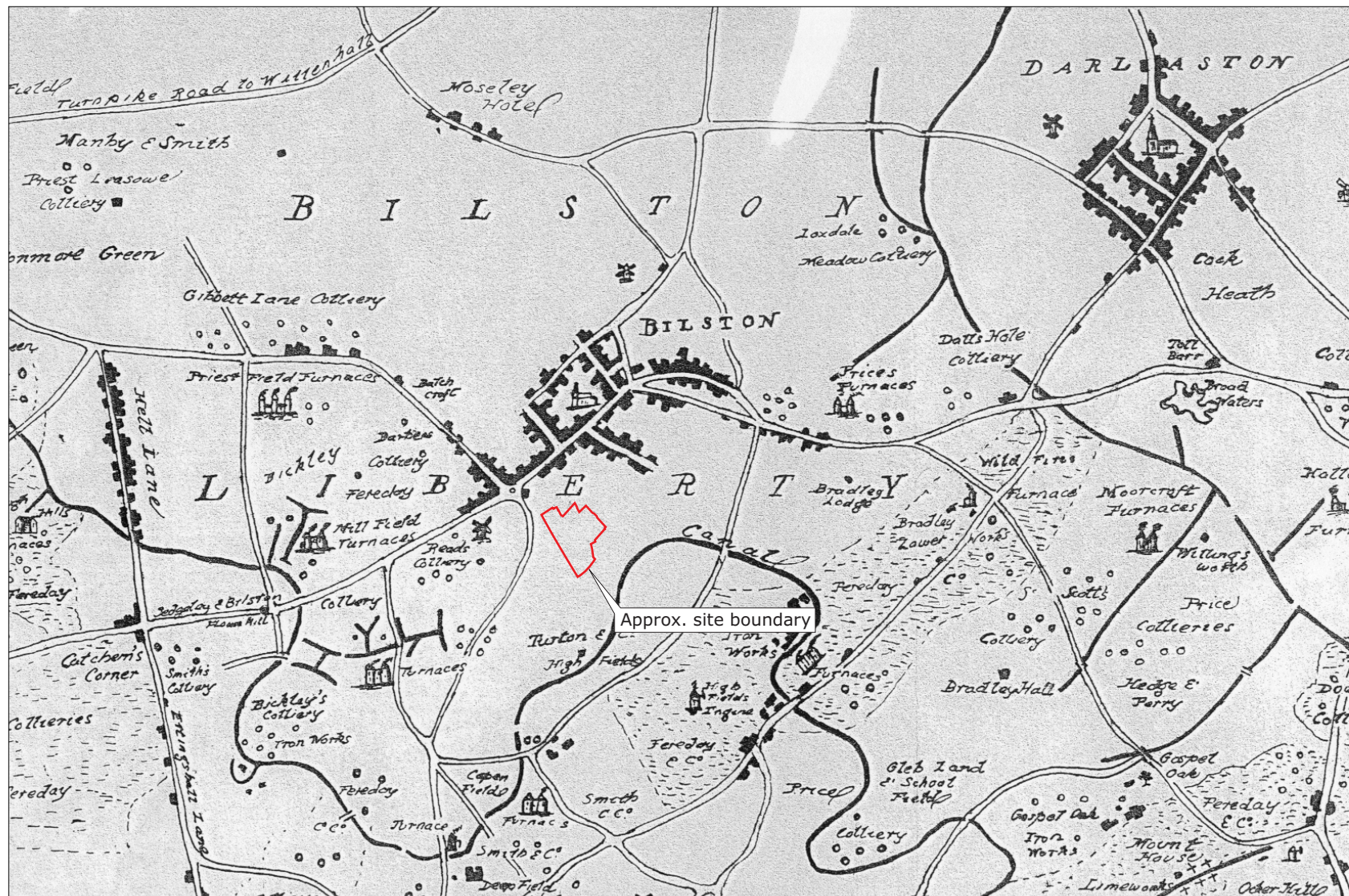
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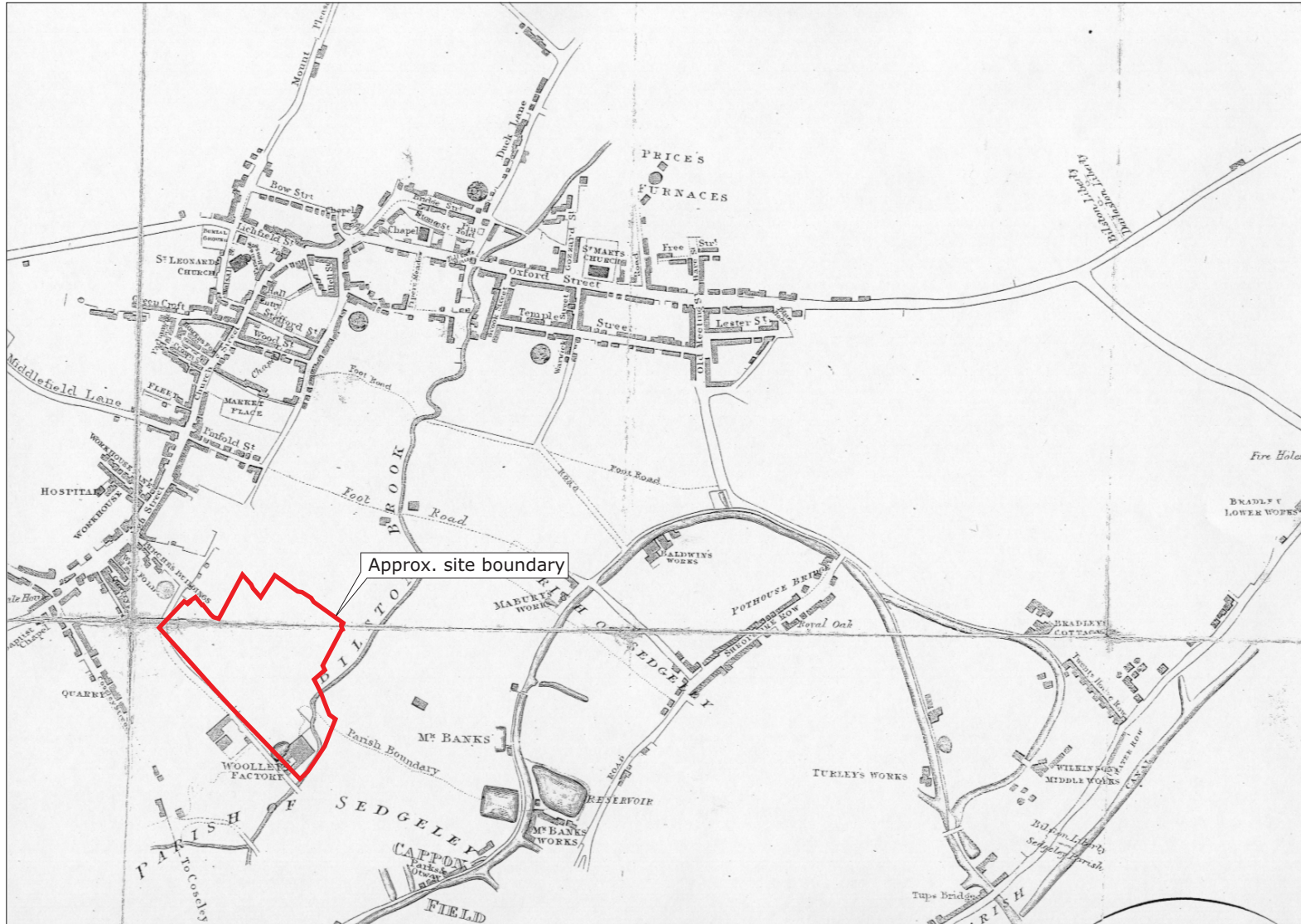
-  study area
-  standing buildings within study area (including former Stonefield Schools)
-  footprint of buildings plotted from historic mapping incl. colliery plans
-  former course of Bilston Brook, plotted from historic colliery plans
-  former coal shafts, plotted from historic colliery plans / OS mapping
- BCHER data**
-  123 archaeological site
-  123 archaeological area



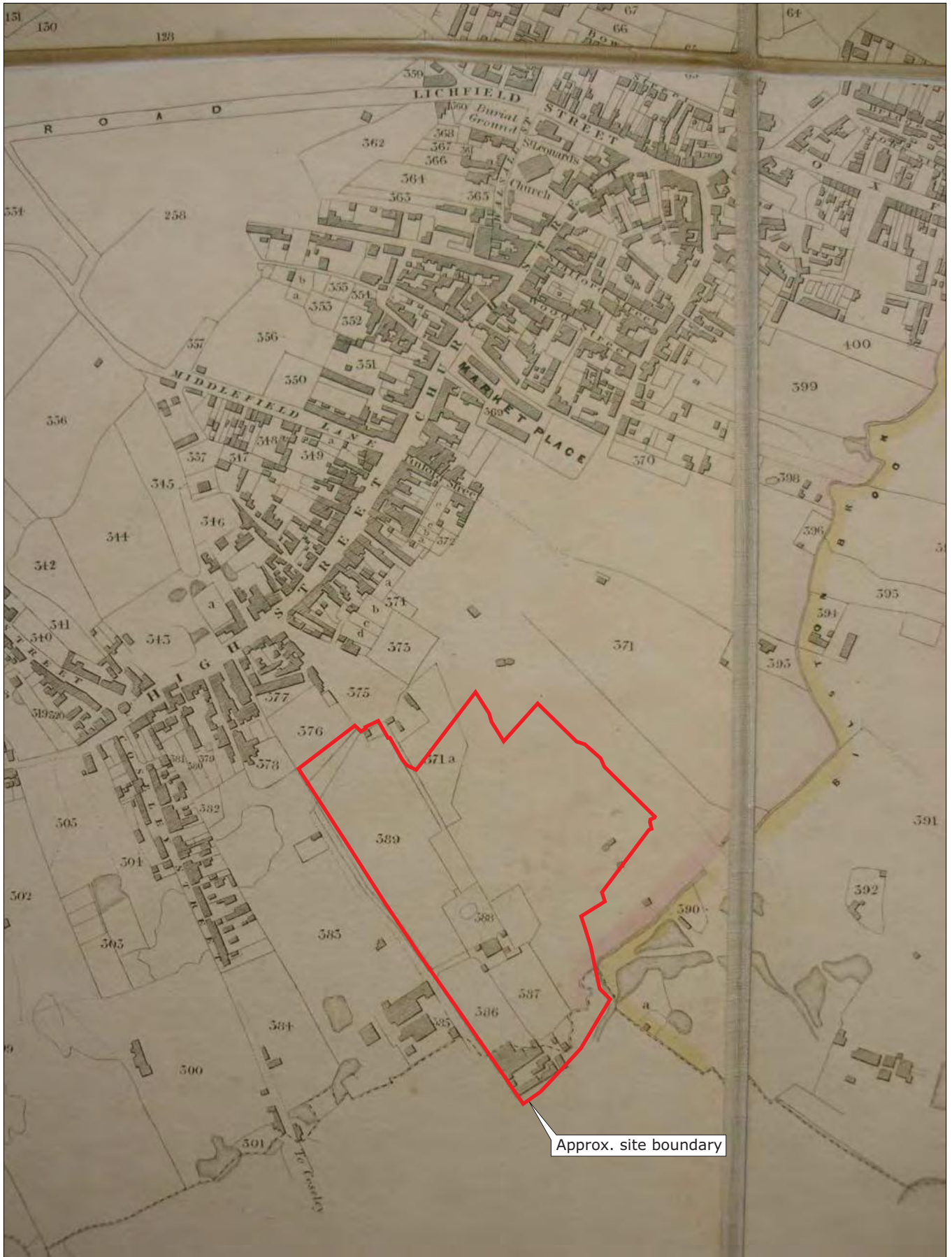


Approx. site boundary

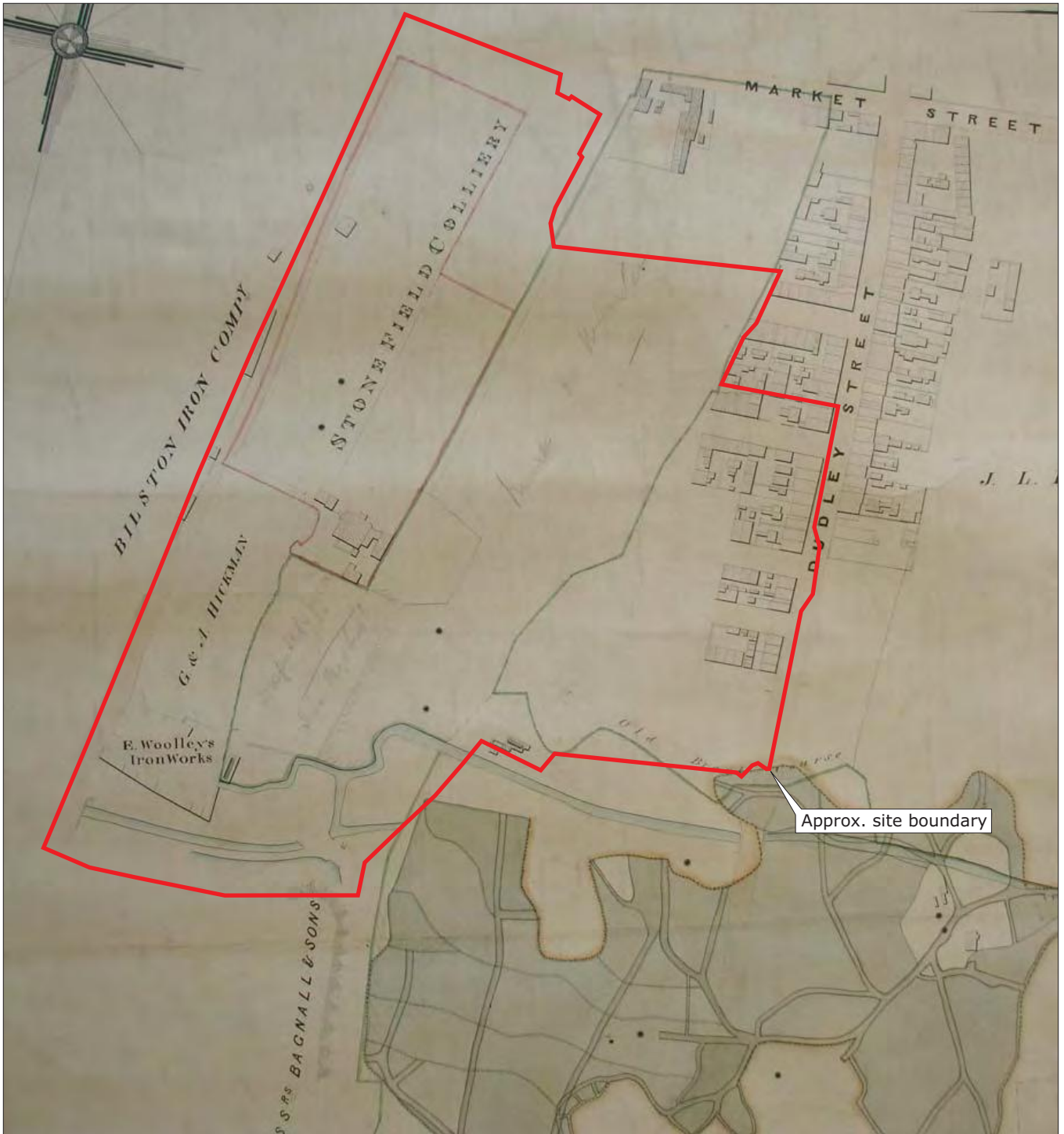




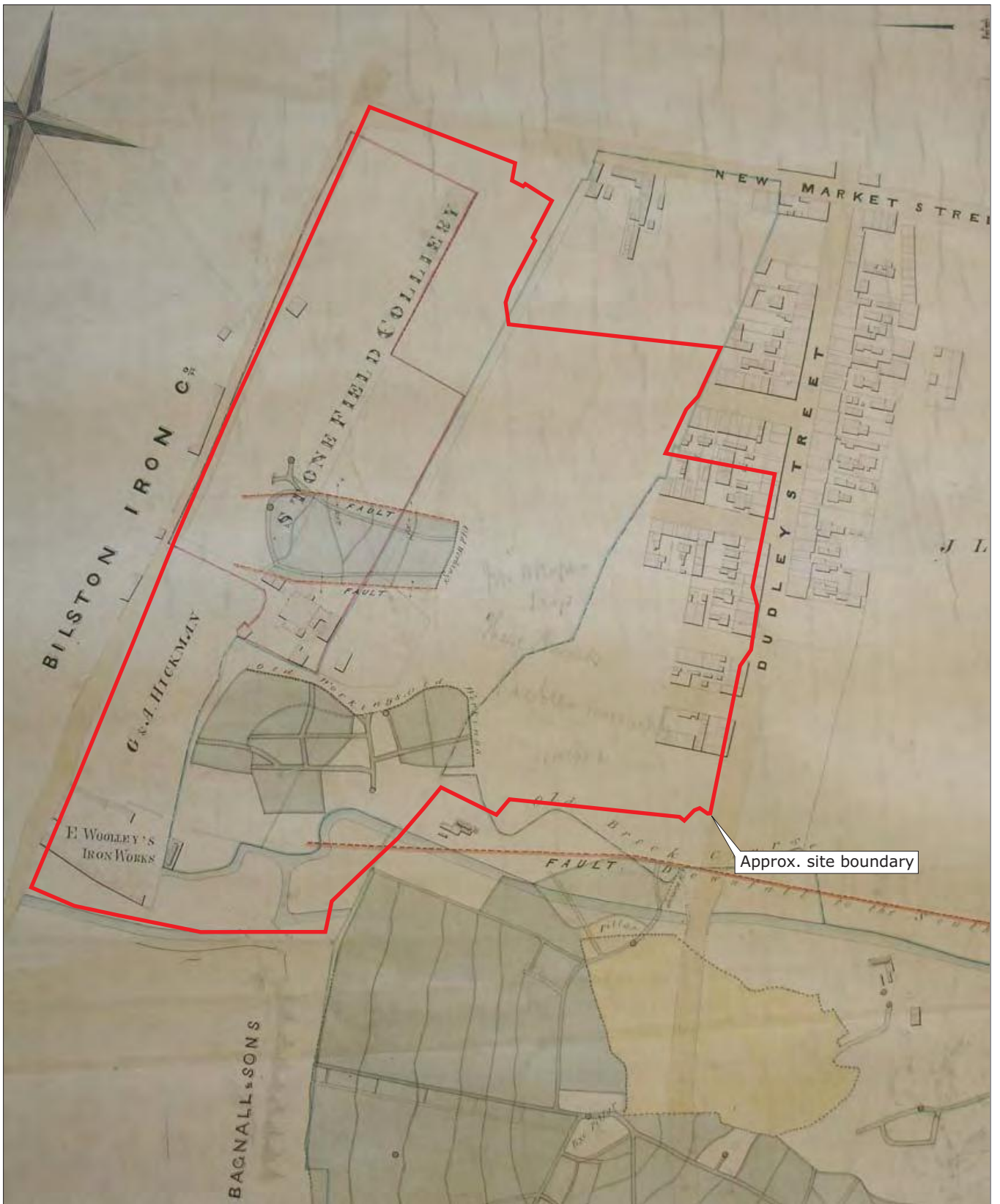
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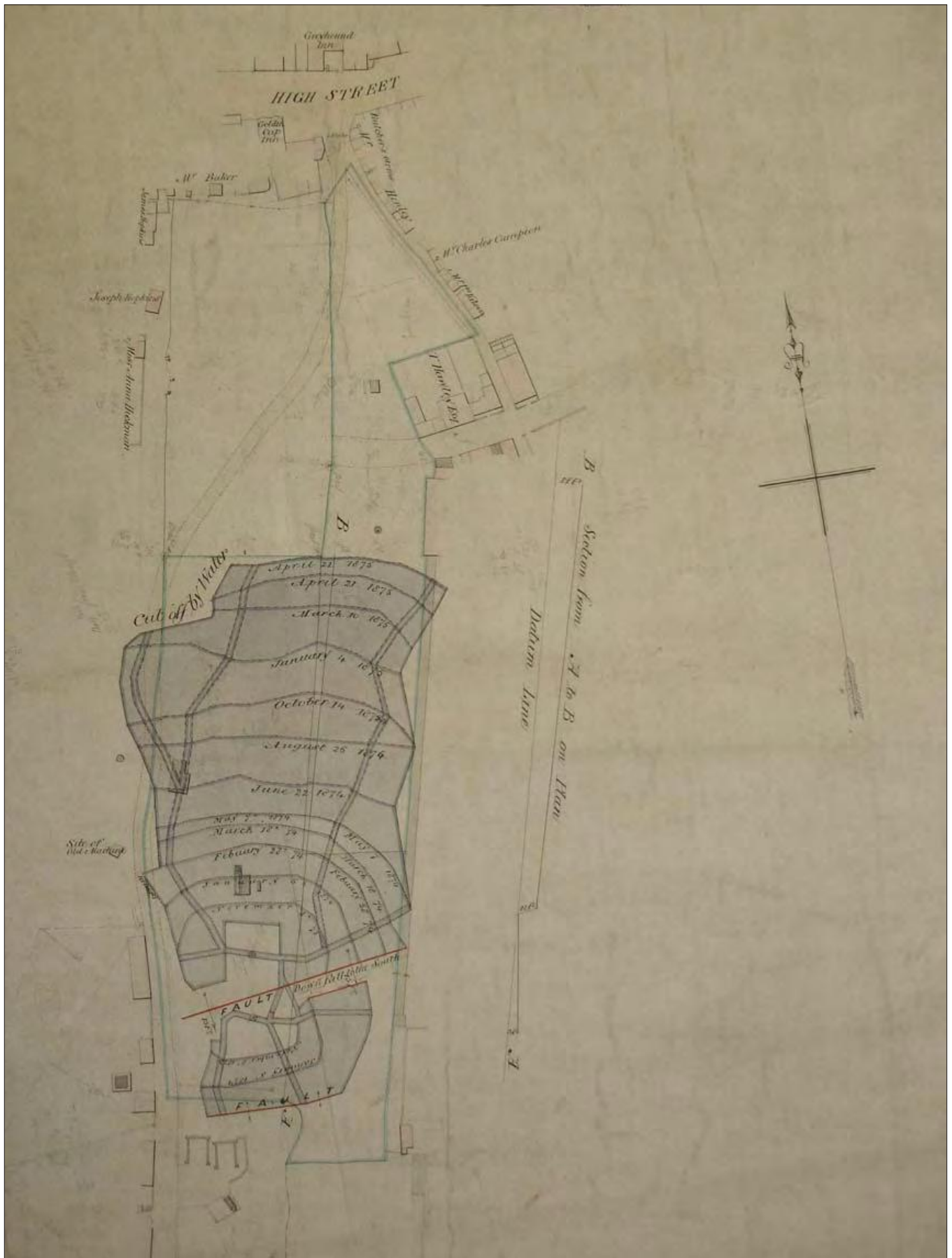
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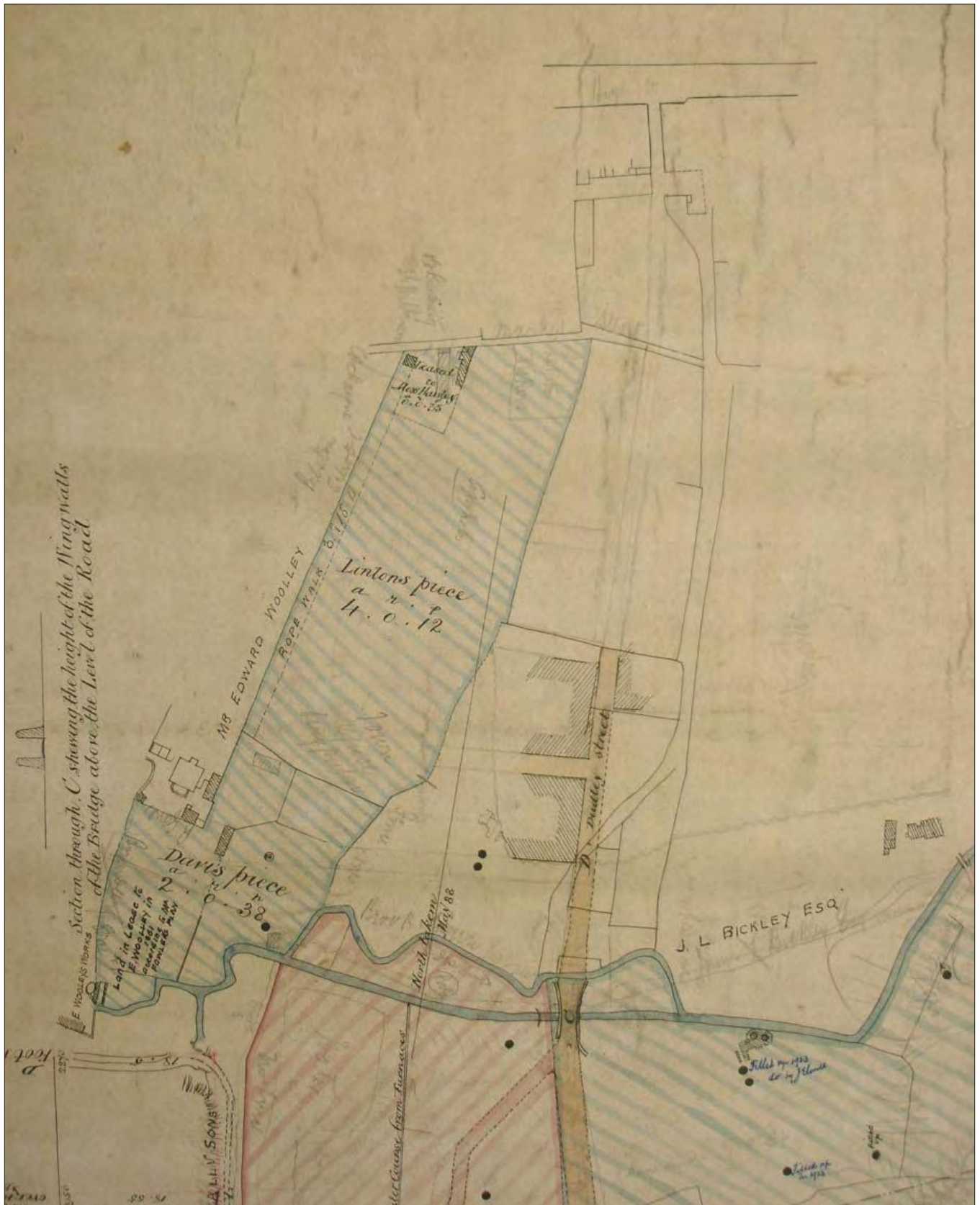
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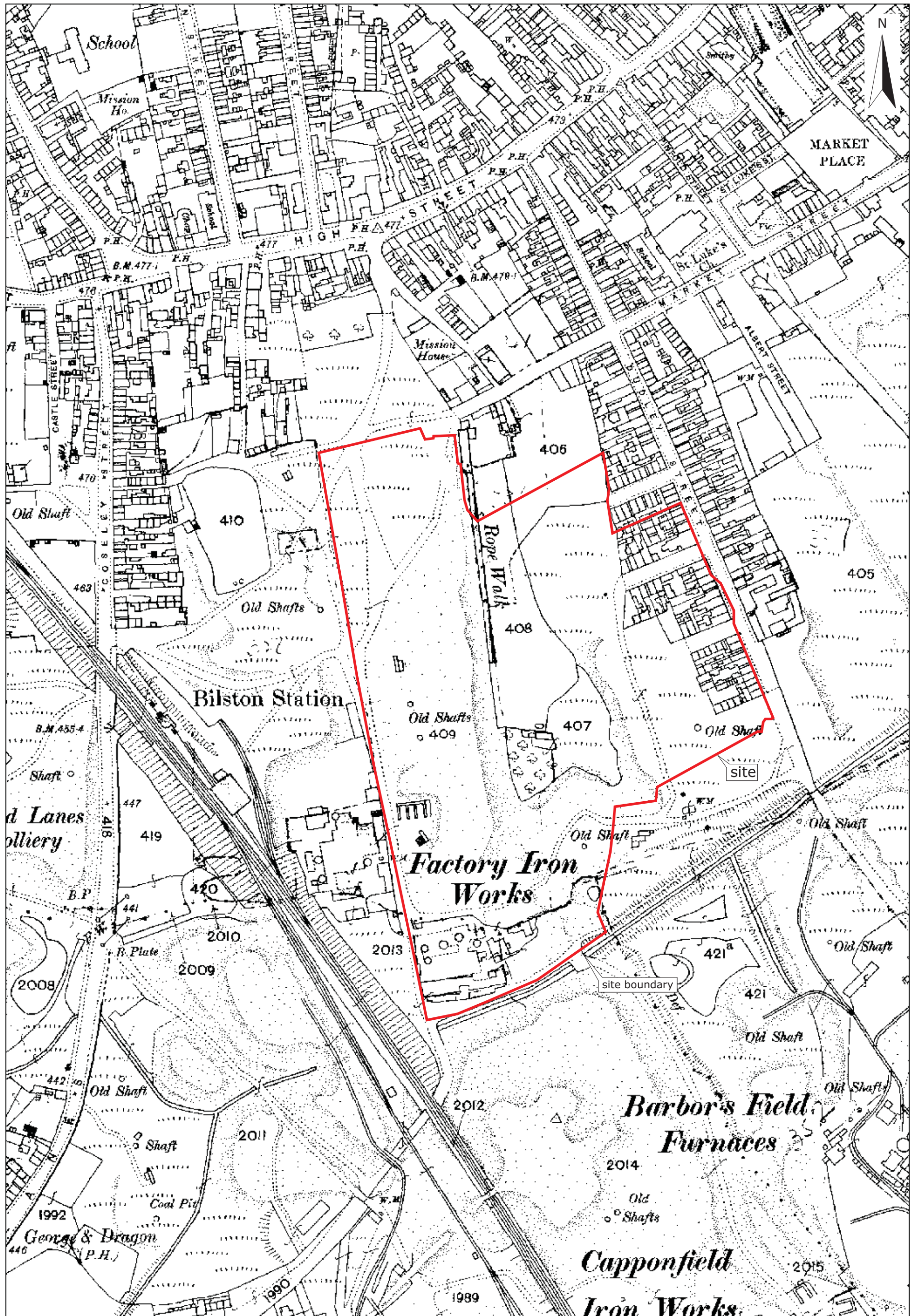
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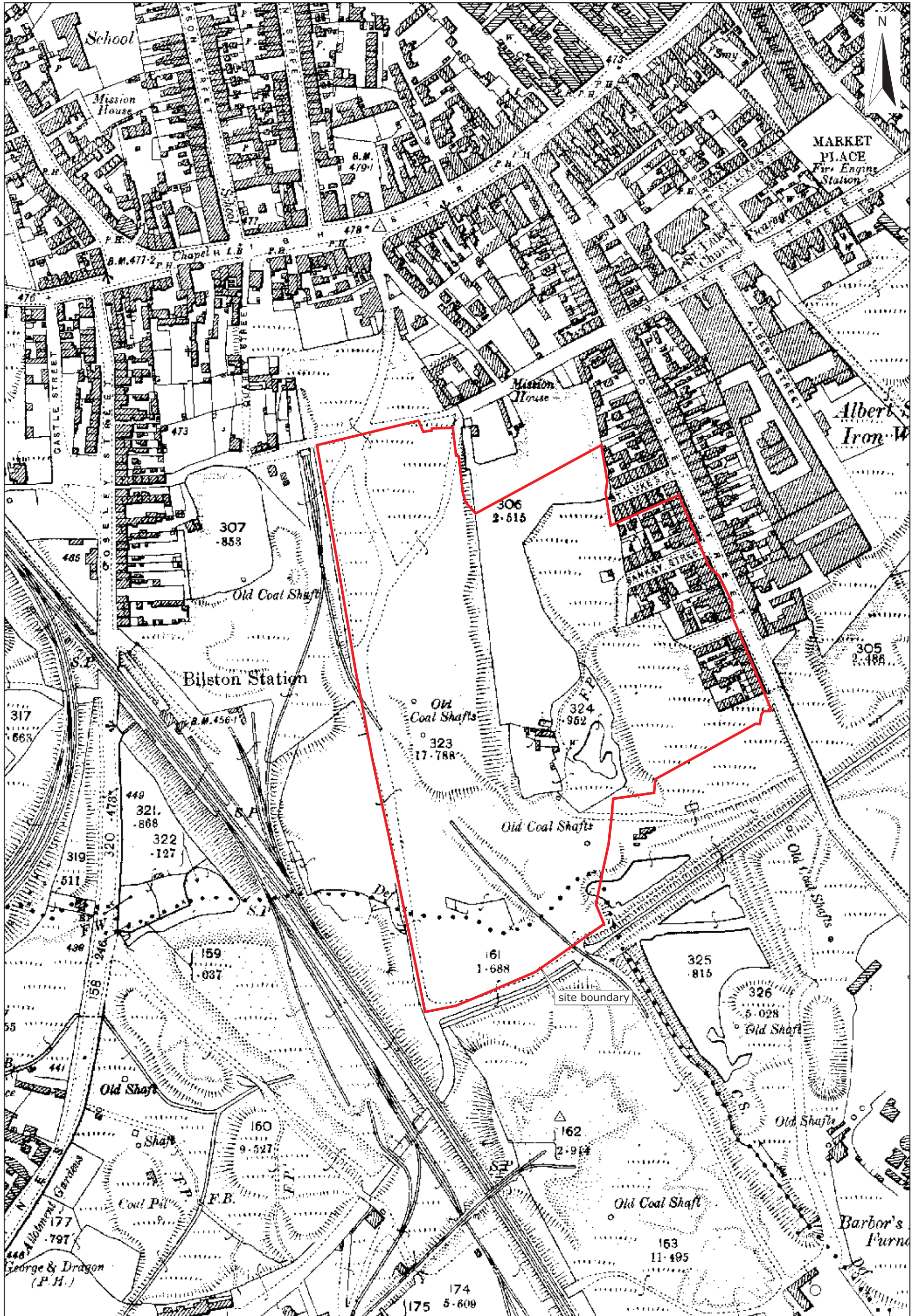


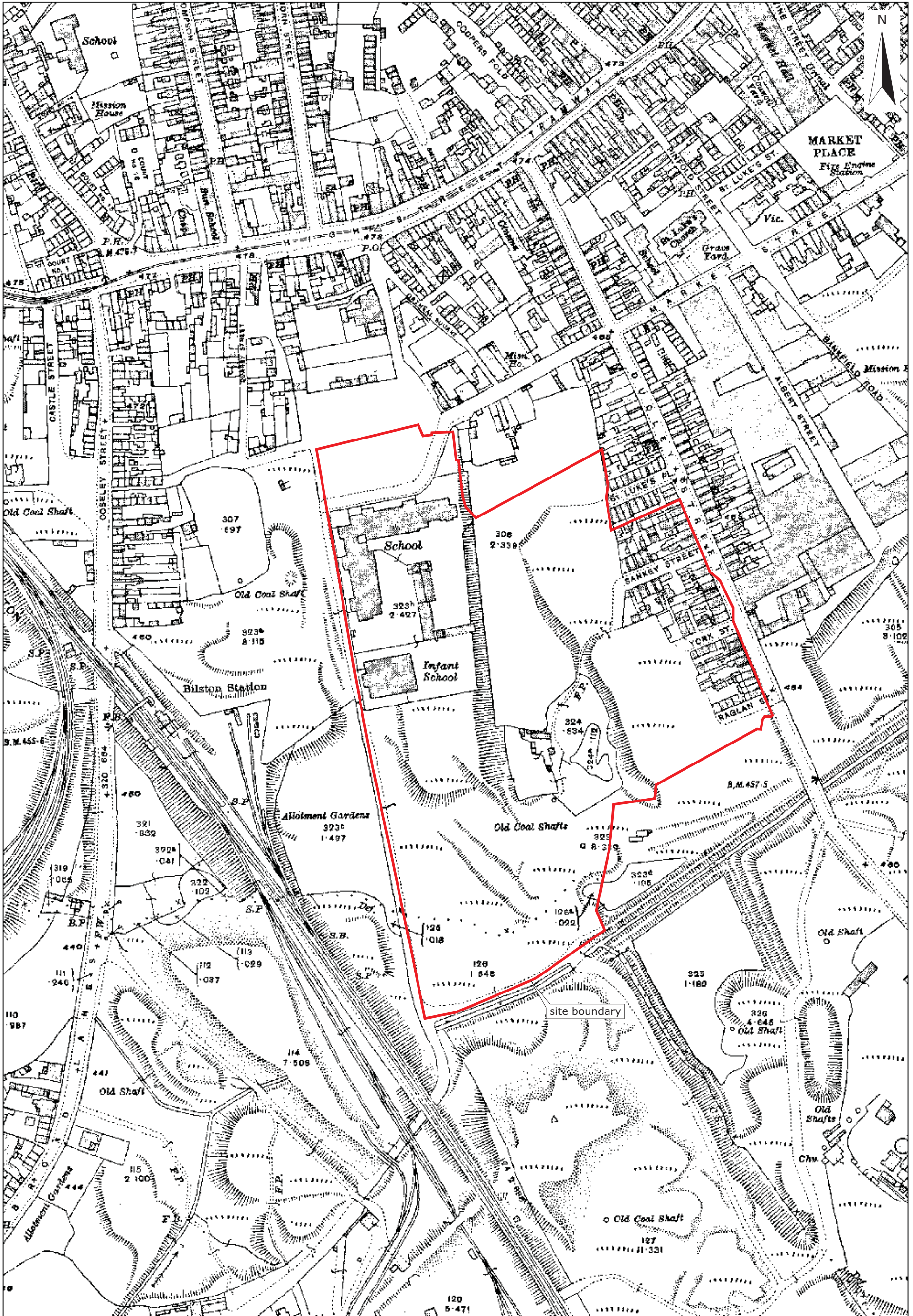
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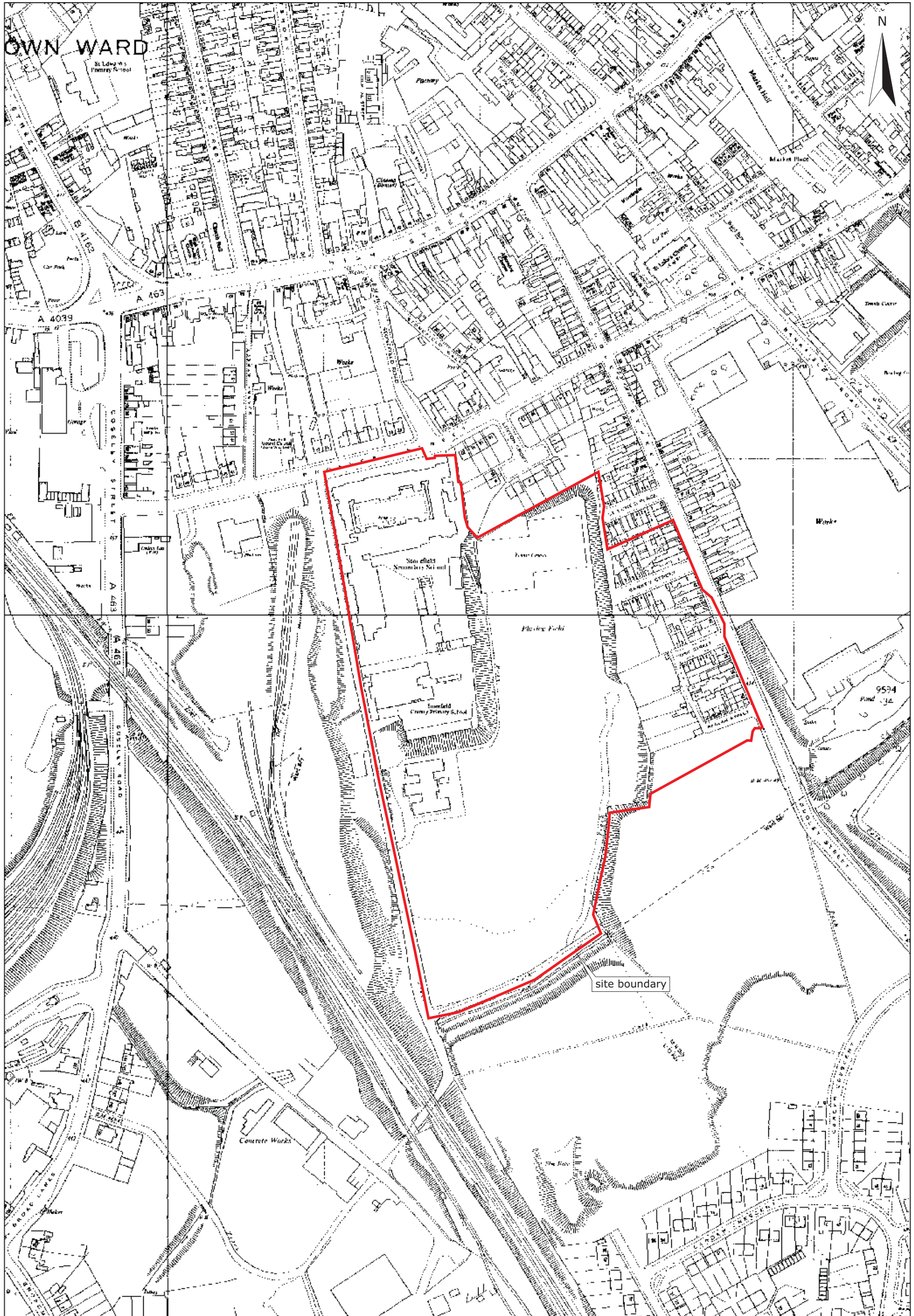
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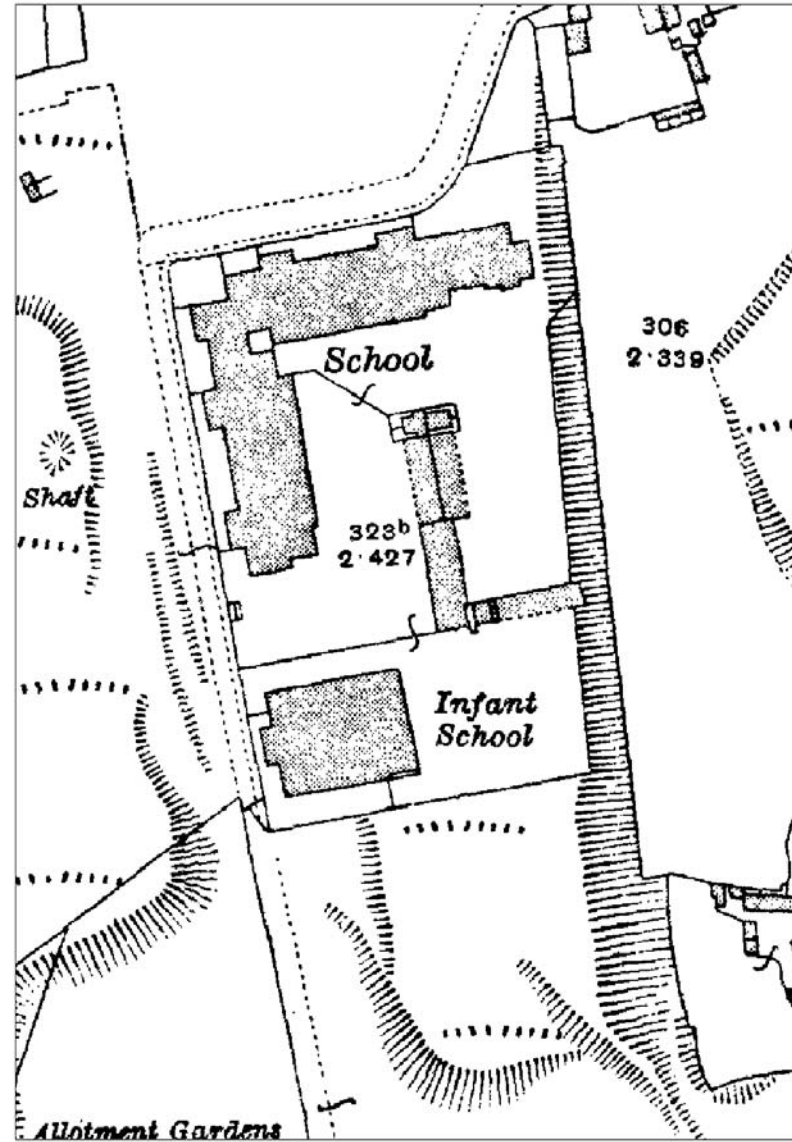


(a) Stonefield School as built, early 20th-century view (WALS P/6319).

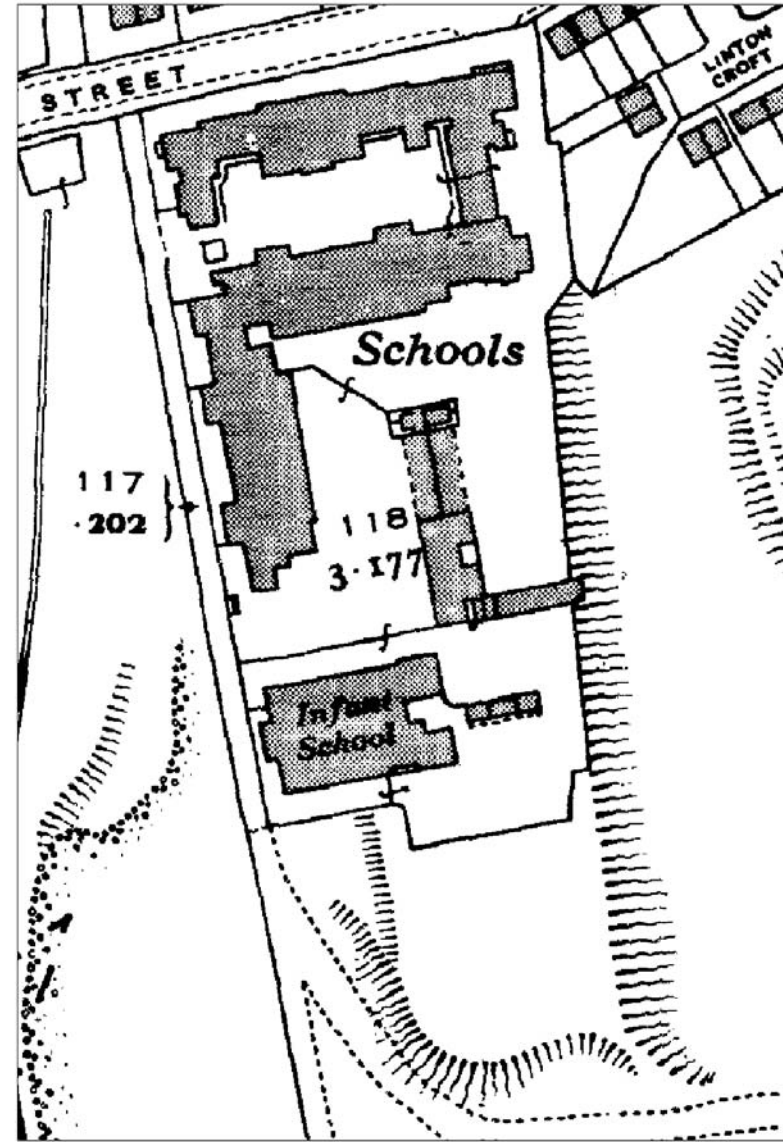


(b) Interior view of one of classrooms opening off girls hall. Note original glazed brick dado and half glazed hinged partitions (WALS P/6001).

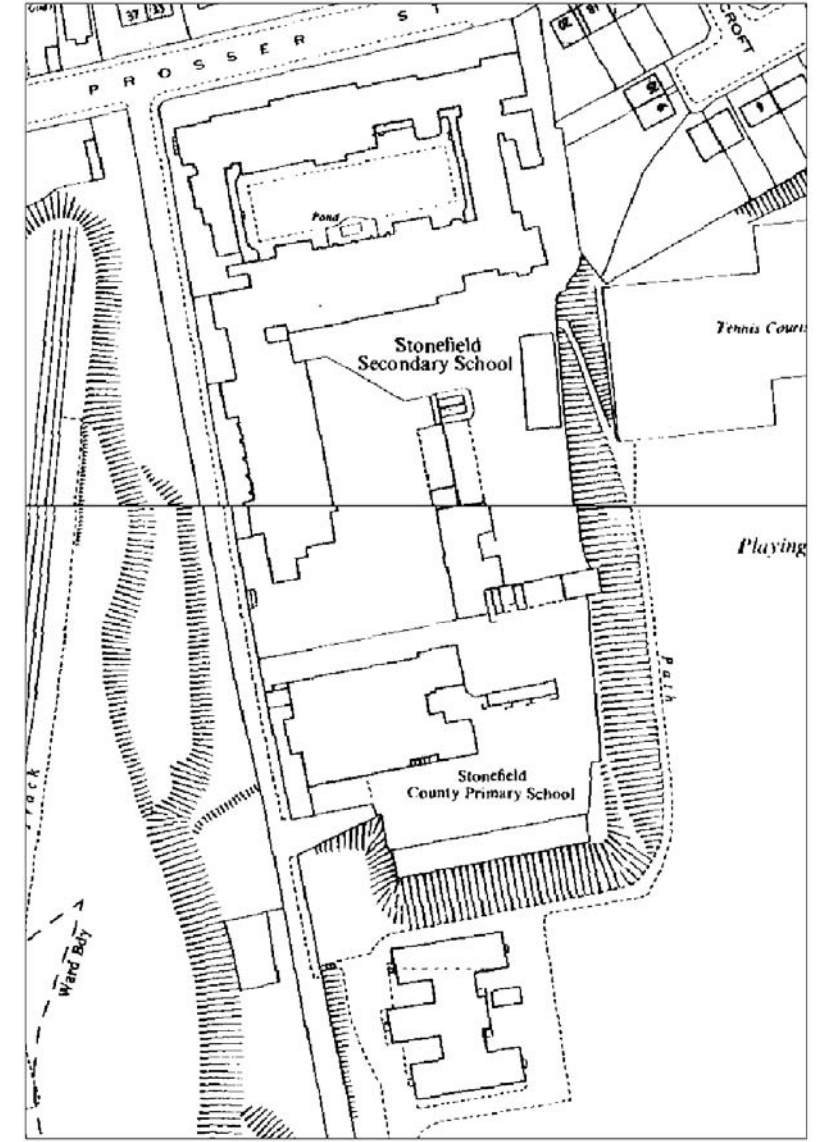




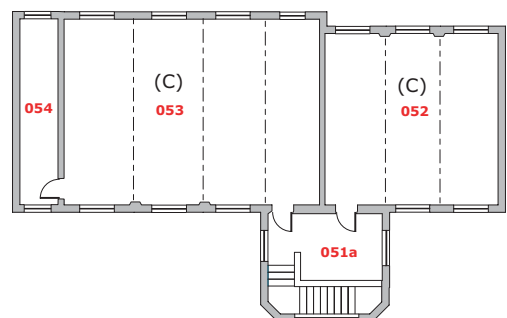
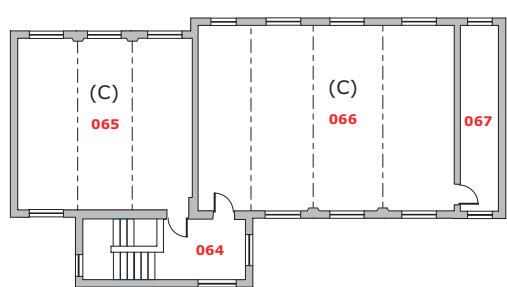
(a) Ordnance Survey edition of 1919



(b) Ordnance Survey edition of 1938

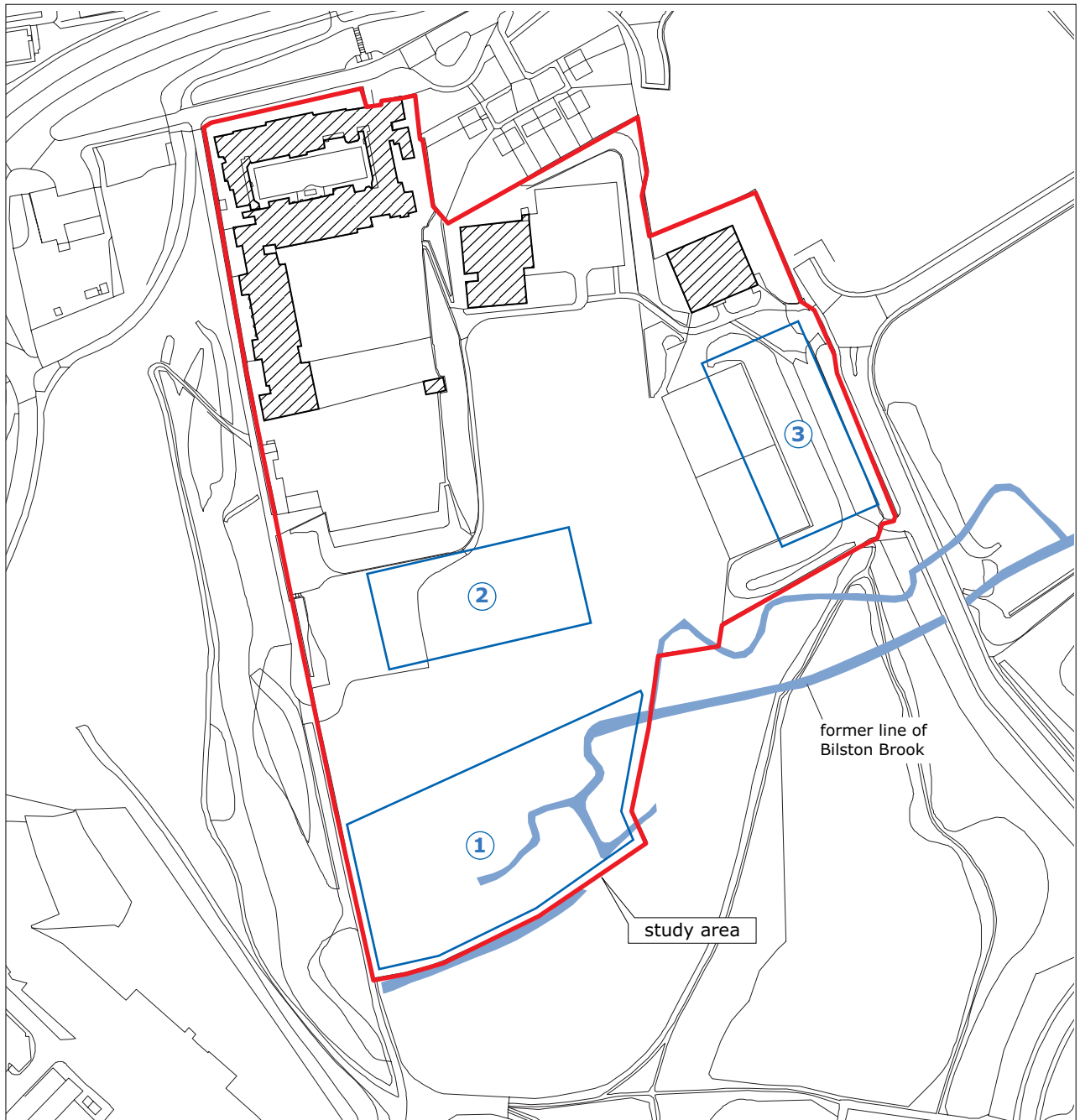


(c) Ordnance Survey edition of 1965



KEY

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| ■ primary phase 1905/06 | ▨ blocking | 123 room reference |
| ■ secondary phase 1937/8 | bw blocked window | (C) classroom |
| ▭ later additions | bd blocked door | (H) hall |
| | tr truss over | (O) office |
| | E(G) primary entrance (girls) | |
| | E(B) primary entrance (boys) | |



Areas of archaeological potential

- ① Woolley's Iron Works / Bilston Brook / Bilston Mill
- ② Woolley's House / Stonefield House
- ③ 19th-century development of Dudley Street


 standing building



Plate 1: North range (Girls department); north elevation, east end.



Plate 2: Perforated parapet.



Plate 3: North range, centre (Hall).



Plate 4: North range (Girls department); north elevation, east end.



Plate 5: Dated foundation stone; north range, north elevation.



Plate 6: West elevation (L:1937-8/R:1905/6), oblique view looking south-west.



Plate 7: West elevation (1905/6), oblique view looking north-west.



Plate 8: West range, entrance doorway.



Plate 9: West range boundary railings.



Plate 10: Boundary railings, manufacturers stamp; Johnson Bros. of Walsall.



Plate 11: North range, playground elevation.



Plate 12: West range, playground elevation



Plate 13: Northern range; playground elevation, oblique view looking north-west.



Plate 14: North range, eastern block.



Plate 15: Eastern block, east elevation.



Plate 16: Junction of north (Girls) and west (Boys) ranges.



Plate 17: Western range; playground elevation, oblique view looking south-west.



Plate 18: Playground entrance (Boys).

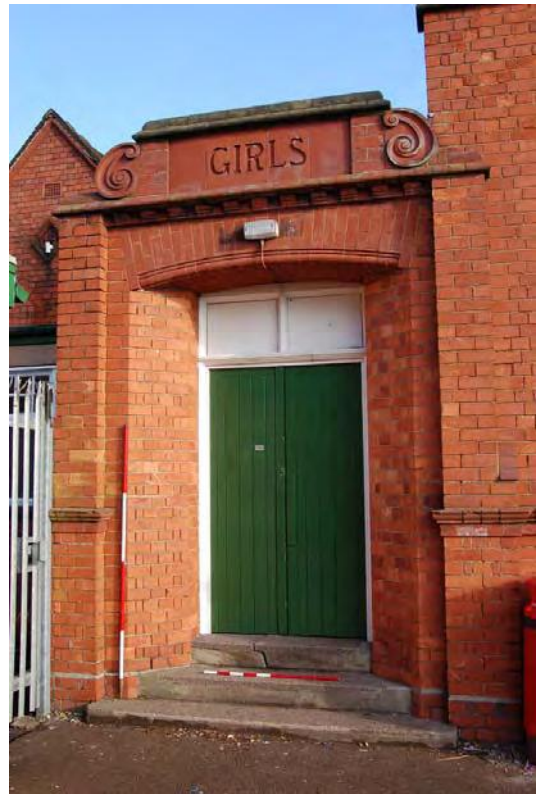


Plate 19: Playground entrance (Girls).



Plate 20: Western range (Boys); playground elevation, window detail.



Plate 21: Terra-cotta panel in gable.



Plate 22: Bell turret over Boys hall.



Plate 23: Primary rainwater hopper.



Plate 24: Unsympathetic replacement,
NB: note shadow of original hopper.



Plate 25: Decorative string and vent/grill.



Plate 26: String / window detail.



Plate 27: North range marching hall (026).



Plate 28: Classrooms off marching hall (NB: former folding partitions removed).



Plate 29: Primary segmental doorway.



Plate 30: Primary double doorway.



Plate 31: West range; former exterior door.



Plate 32: Primary corridor, note skylight and observation windows to classrooms.



Plate 33: West range; sub-divided hall.



Plate 34: Hinged classroom partitions.



Plate 35: Suspended ceiling cuts across windows within primary classroom.



Plate 36: Primary roof structure above suspended ceiling.



Plate 37: Prosser Street elevation (1937/8), oblique view looking south-east.



Plate 38: Prosser Street elevation (1937/8), oblique view looking south-west.



Plate 39: Prosser Street elevation (1937/8), east end.



Plate 40: Prosser Street elevation (1937-8), central section (hall).



Plate 41: Prosser St. elevation, detail (1).



Plate 42: Prosser St. elevation, detail (2).



Plate 43: 1937/8 range, east block; rear elevation including stair.



Plate 44: 1937/8 range, west block (left) and central hall (right); rear elevation.



Plate 45: 1937/8 east return range; west elevation onto yard.



Plate 46: 1937/8 west return range abutting 1905/6 north range.



Plate 47: 1937/8 range; classroom (046) interior.



Plate 48: 1937/8 range; hall (055) interior looking west.



Plate 49: 1937/8, double door detail.

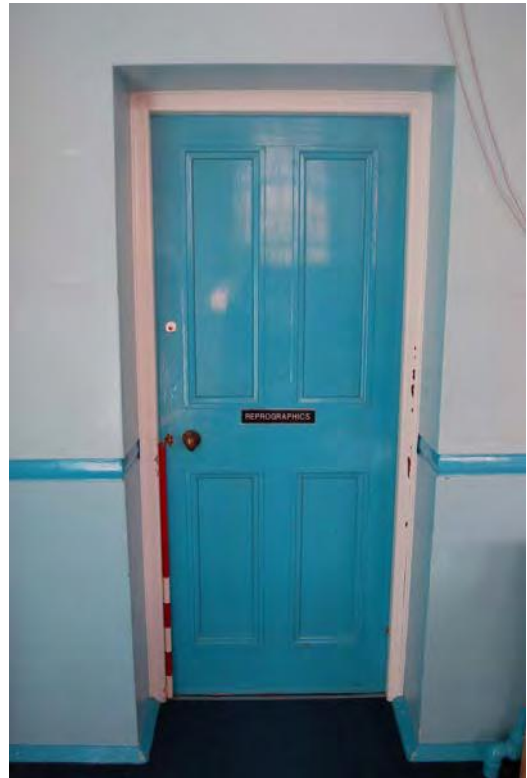


Plate 50: 1937/8, single door detail.



Plate 51: 1937/8, recessed dado detail.

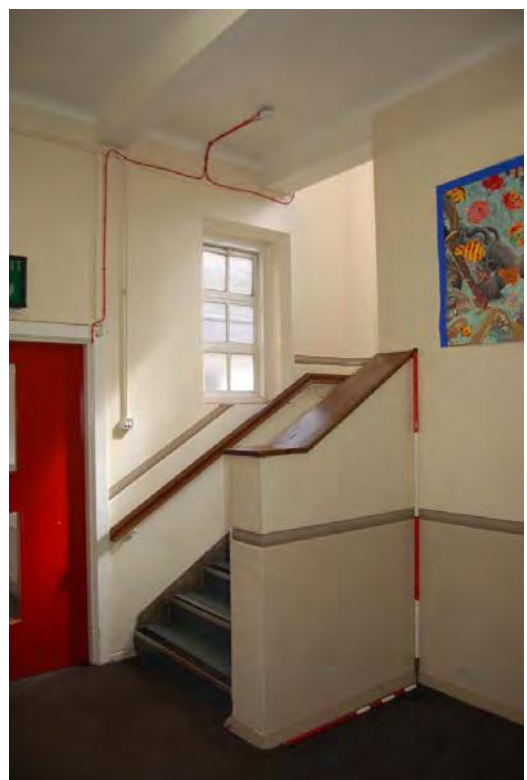


Plate 52: 1937/8; principal stair (051).



Plate 53: 1937/8 range; principal stair at 1F level (051a).



Plate 54: 1937/8 range; secondary stair at 1F level (064).



Plate 55: Unsympathetic infill block between 1938 range and northern 1905/6 range.



Plate 56: Tarmac patching on playground; probable footprint of former 'manual training centre'.



Plate 57: Pronounced bank to south and east of school complex, looking north-west.



Plate 58: Primary 'playshed' building within playground from the south-west.



Plate 59: Primary 'playshed' building atop eastern section of bank.



Plate 60: Modern science block, primary school buildings beyond, atop bank.



Plate 61: Modern sports block looking north.



Plate 62: Exposed section to north of sports block indicating survival of C19th structural remains.



Plate 63: Footprint of former 'pre-fab' classrooms on playing field.



Plate 64: Sports field looking south-west.



Plate 65: Tennis courts / sports field looking north-west, NB: School buildings in distance.



Plate 66: Location of Woolley's Factory at south-west corner of site, looking south-west.