

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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BEESTON'S BUS DEPOT,  
LONG BESSELS, HADLEIGH

HAD 071

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION, 2004

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Field Team

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

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**Beeston's Bus Depot, Long Bessels,  
Hadleigh  
(HAD 071)  
Planning Application no. B01/00228/OUT  
Report no. 2004/103**

## **Summary**

*Hadleigh*, Beeston's Bus Depot, Long Bessels (TM/030428; HAD 071) An archaeological evaluation was carried out within a proposed development area on the former Beeston's bus depot, Hadleigh, in order to sample and record any surviving archaeological deposits. Trenching revealed made up ground over the majority of the site, to a depth of over two metres in places and suggestive of the presence of large, backfilled pits. Documentary evidence points towards gravel quarrying on the site and finds recovered during the evaluation indicate that backfilling took place after the late 15<sup>th</sup> century.

(Linzi Everett for S.C.C.A.S. and Landlink Plc.; report no. 2004/103)

## **1. Introduction**

Planning permission for housing development on the former Beeston's bus depot, Long Bessels, Hadleigh, requires a programme of archaeological works as a condition of the consent. The site lies at TM 0302 4280 (Fig. 1), within the area of archaeological importance defined for Hadleigh medieval town and close to known archaeological findspots. Long Bessels runs north east to south west between two medieval streets, George Street and Angel Street, which together with Long Bessels itself are shown on Hodkinson's map of 1783. The site has high potential for deposits associated with medieval and later occupation. A desk-based assessment of the site was carried out by independent historical researcher, Anthony Breen, using the readily available cartographic and documentary sources. His report is attached in full as Appendix II.

A Brief and Specification for the archaeological work (Appendix III) was produced by Keith Wade of the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team. Evaluation of the site was carried out by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Field Team 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> July 2004 and was funded by Landlink Plc.

## **2. Methodology**

The development area comprises c.3,500 square metres and is largely surfaced with asphalt. Five trial-trenches, measuring a total of 85m, were opened in locations agreed by the Conservation Team at Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (Fig. 2). This was carried out by a mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.5 metre wide ditching bucket, under the supervision of an archaeologist. Overburden was removed from the trenches to the depth of the naturally occurring subsoil, where possible, but over the majority of the site, natural was not reached within a safe working depth. Where it was reached, the natural subsoil comprised a pale orange sandy flint gravel. Both the excavated soil and the exposed surfaces of trenches were examined visually for artefactual evidence.

Where features were revealed, they were cleaned manually for definition and each allocated 'observed phenomena' numbers within a unique continuous numbering system under the SMR code HAD 071 (Appendix I). Features were then partially excavated in order to recover dating evidence as well as to observe their form and possibly determine any function. Trenches were planned and features digitally photographed on site to form a part of the site archive. The evaluation archive will be deposited in the County SMR at Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds.

All finds were washed and marked before being quantified, identified and dated by the finds management staff of the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service.

### 3. Results

The results from each trench are summarised below. A plan of trench 1 and sections of pits 0003 and 0005 are included as Figure 3.

| Trench | Description  | Cut               | Fill                              |
|--------|--|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1      | 28m SE - NW. 320mm asphalt/hardcore; 220mm dark brown silty sandy clay. 550mm deep at SE end onto brown/orange gravelly sand, believed to be natural. Beyond this, the entire trench appears to comprise various layers of backfilled material within a pit or series of pits over 1.8m deep in places. These layers were quite sterile apart from occasional brick fragments. | 0003; 0005; 0008; | 0002; 0004; 0006; 0007; 0009-0016 |
| 2      | 12m NE-SW. 160mm asphalt/hardcore sealing a mid to dark brown silty sand, with occasional red brick/tile fragments. Excavated to a depth of 2m but natural not reached.  |                   |                                   |
| 3      | 15m NE - SW. 160mm asphalt/hardcore sealing a mid to dark brown silty sand, with occasional red brick/tile fragments. Excavated to a depth of 2m but natural was not reached.  |                   |                                   |
| 4      | 15m NE - SW. 180mm asphalt/hardcore sealing a mid to dark brown silty sand, with occasional red brick/tile fragments. Excavated to a depth of 1.6m where pale yellow brown gravelly sand natural present.  |                   |                                   |
| 5      | 7m N - S, turning SSW - NNE for a further 8m. 300mm asphalt/hardcore sealing a mid brown silty sand 500mm thick. 2.5m from the southern end was a large, square pit filled by dark brown silty sand and rich in early 20 <sup>th</sup> century bottles, ceramics and metal containers.   | 0017              | 0018                              |

### 4. The Finds

#### Beeston's Bus Depot, Long Bessels, Hadleigh (HAD 071)

Sue Anderson, September 2004

#### Introduction

Finds were collected from five contexts, as shown in Table 1.

| OP    | Pottery |      | CBM |      | Clay pipe |      | Iron |      | Miscellaneous | Spotdate    |
|-------|---------|------|-----|------|-----------|------|------|------|---------------|-------------|
|       | No.     | Wt/g | No. | Wt/g | No.       | Wt/g | No.  | Wt/g |               |             |
| 0002  | 2       | 8    | 1   | 1    |           |      |      |      |               | 19/20th c.  |
| 0004  |         |      | 4   | 73   |           |      |      |      | 1 Ae pin      | PMed        |
| 0006  | 1       | 11   | 1   | 15   |           |      |      |      | 1 Ae pin      | 15/16th c.. |
| 0013  |         |      |     |      | 1         | 6    |      |      |               | PMed        |
| 0015  | 3       | 25   | 2   | 51   | 1         | 2    | 2    | 15   |               | PMed        |
| Total | 6       | 44   | 8   | 140  | 2         | 8    | 2    | 15   |               |             |

Table 1. Finds quantities.

#### Pottery

Six sherds of pottery were recovered from a layer and two pit fills. Layer 0002 produced a sherd of Suffolk/Essex redware with white slip line decoration (13th-15th c.) and a sherd of transfer printed earthenware (19th/20th c.). A pedestal base from a late medieval mug was found in pit fill 0006. A small sherd of Colchester-type redware (13th-14th c.) with white slip decoration was found in fill 0015, along with two sherds of glazed red earthenware (16th-18th c.).

### **Ceramic building material (CBM)**

Eight fragments of CBM consisted of a tiny fragment of plain roof tile from layer 0002; a fragment of grog-tempered floor tile, a piece of late brick and two fragments of medium sandy plain roof tile from pit fill 0004; a fragment of medium sandy ferrous tempered plain roof tile from pit fill 0006; and two fine/medium sandy plain roof tile fragments from fill 0015. Most were probably post-medieval.

### **Metalwork**

Two iron nails were recovered from fill 0015. Small wire dress pins of probable late medieval or early post-medieval date were found in pit fills 0004 and 0006.

### **Miscellaneous**

Clay pipe stems were found in fills 0013 and 0015, the former showing signs of burning.

### **Discussion**

Two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered, but both were residual in later contexts. The majority of finds from this site probably belong to the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## **5. Discussion**

Despite the high potential for evidence to survive on this largely undeveloped site, the density of archaeological deposits was low. Much of the site comprised large, deep, pits which, taking into account the sandy, gravelly nature of the natural subsoil, appear to be backfilled quarry pits. Such an interpretation is supported by the fact that the 1839 tithe apportionment records that the development area was named *Gravel Pit Meadow* at the time. Finds from features 0003 and 0005, which lie at the very base of the quarry pit fill, suggest backfilling occurred around or after the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. Where these quarry pits are present, any earlier archaeology which may have existed would have certainly been destroyed.



### Beeston's Coach Depot, Long Bessels, Hadleigh

#### Introduction

This report has been commissioned to “examine all the readily available cartographic sources (e.g. those available in the County Record Office). Record any evidence for archaeological sites (e.g. buildings, settlements, field names) and history of previous land uses. Where possible, photocopies or tracings should be included in the report”.

Unlike all the other the historic boroughs of Suffolk, that of Hadleigh have retained a large number of original documents. These are held at Hadleigh Guildhall Archives, Hadleigh Town Council, Market Place, Hadleigh, Ipswich, IP7 5DN. The collection includes the manuscript collections of Borough Records from 1619 onwards and the records of the Hadleigh Market Feoffment from 1438 onwards. The non-manuscript collections include a “large collection of photographs”. The office is open 9.30-12.30 by appointment and enquires should be addressed to the town clerk (see Foster and Sheppard).

Cartographic, published and archive sources are available at the Suffolk Record Office in Bury St Edmunds, though there are further limitations on the use of this material.

#### Maps

The Suffolk Archaeological Unit has supplied copies of the Ordnance Survey maps. The site to the east of Long Bessels, a diagonal road way that runs from Angel Street into Threadneedle Street that joins George Street to the south. A measurement of 1.490 acres is given to the field on the larger scale maps. Before 1926 the site was free of buildings.

Amongst the Hadleigh Urban District Council collection held at Bury, there are plans “5 pairs of houses” built for B Beeston dated October 1938 (ref. EF 504/6/103) and “A garage Long Bessels for B Beeston” dated April 1945 (ref. EF 504/6/144). Architectural plans remain in Copyright until 100 years after the death of the originator and these records have not been examined.

The Hadleigh Tithe map is difficult to use. The original allocation of tithe apportionment numbers to plots within the town area is not in consecutive numeral sequence. As many of these plots are extremely small, the copy of the map and photocopies thereof are difficult to read. The original map was requested and plots identified as far as was possible with the use of a magnifying glass. The original map is damaged and has been remounted. It is now in a melinex cover that reflects light, unfortunately this prevents useful digital photography.

The 1839 tithe map of Hadleigh (Figure i; ref. T127A/2) is unusual in many respects. The map and apportionment allocate a single number to over 118 acres of “land not subject to rent charge, road, rivers etc”. Although many parts of the 118 acres were covered with buildings these are not shown on the tithe map. Examples can be easily identified such as the site of the then late medieval almshouses along George Street and other buildings in the High Street. The declaration at the beginning of the apportionment does not explain why these areas were not subject to a rent charge as there is no mention of a modus for any part of the parish.



This site was then in the field marked 1389a on the map. The owner was Rev William Powell and it was in the occupation of Elizabeth Joslin. It is described as “Gravel Pit Meadow” and was measured at 1 acre 2 roods and 1 perch. Adjoining the roadway at the southwest corner of the site, Rev Powell owned small house numbered 364 then in the occupation of John Brooks. Elizabeth Joslin occupied a house to the south of the site numbered 375 and the large field to the east numbered 1388. The Hadleigh Grand Feoffment owned both of these properties. The field was measured as 4 acres 1 rood and 32 perches and is simply described as a close.

The field on the opposite of the road numbered 231 was in the ownership and occupation of John Gullen and measured at 3 roods and 29 perches. All the other plots in the surrounding area were small houses and gardens the largest 365 another close, listed under John Smith Robinson but in the occupation of Levi Pettit, was measured as 2 roods and 7 perches.

There is a photographic copy of an 1830 map of Hadleigh (Figure ii; ref. Acc 2116). Hadleigh Urban District Council were the owners of the original map. It is not listed in the council’s collection. Long Bessel is named as “Vessels” and no buildings are shown along the street line other than those shown on the Tithe map.

There are no earlier maps of this area at Bury. At the record office in Ipswich, there are early 19<sup>th</sup> century draft maps of various farms in Hadleigh in the Isaac Johnson Collection (ref. HD11:475). None show the area of the town. Other maps listed in the map catalogue show farmlands that straddle the boundaries of this parish and the neighbouring parishes of Layham, Roydon and Holton.

## Owners

It was not the purpose to the Tithe Commission to examine terms of tenure and occasionally the tithe apportionments name incumbents of parishes without qualifying whether or not the land is held as Glebe. The Rev William Powell is listed in White’s Directory of 1844 as the “incumbent of Shelley”. The records of this parish including the surviving Glebe Terriers are held at the Suffolk Record Office in Ipswich (ref. FF 569/S44a). Originally there were no glebe lands connected with the curacy of this parish. Gifts of Queen Anne’s Bounty allowed the parish to acquire land in parish of Dedham, Essex and Stoke and Nayland in Suffolk. The terriers do not contain any reference to lands in Hadleigh. This suggests that Rev Powell owned the land at Long Bessel in his own right.

A careful search was made of the card indexes held at Bury to identify property records for other owners, none were found. There are two deeds (HA 518/1/37 & 38) listed for Long Bessels.

The deeds relate to copyhold land described as a “*piece of land formerly a Tainter Yard containing two acres formerly in the occupation of John Dunningham, then John Gulling and late of Joseph Webb Makin*”. The land was sold under the terms of the will of Henry Branch, basket maker dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1853. The land was held of the manor of Hadleigh Hall and sold to Henry Durrant in 1867.

Transfers of copyhold land were recorded in the manorial court books until copyhold tenure was abolished in 1922. The contemporary court book that covers the period of the tithe map and the years 1831 – 1844 is damaged and unfit for production. Various rentals for this manor covering the years 1749 – 1844 are also damaged and unfit for production. In the court records for 1853, there is an entry for land owned by Joseph Dunningham that was transferred to a Mr J. C.



Archer. The description does mention a "*customary tenement in George Street*" but the rest of the description does not match the details of this site.

The court book are indexed by copyholder and a careful search was made of the volume covering the years before 1831 and after 1844 in an effort to match the names of copyholders with those given in the tithe apportionment without any success.

## **Published Works**

In the book "Hadleigh in Old Pictures", there are two views of the Almshouses in George Street. Both show the buildings before they were rebuilt in 1887. A chapel connected with the almshouses was retained though the original boundary wall has been demolished. The row of single storey buildings became almshouses in 1497 though the buildings may have been earlier. These have not been photocopied as the publishers has stated in the front piece that none of the work can be "reproduced in any form by print, photoprint, microfilm, or any other means without written permission". The book also has a photograph of "houses at the corner of Long Bessels and Angel Street", these 19<sup>th</sup> century brick built structures are now the site of Hadleigh Food Stores.

A view of "a medieval type cottage, No 2 Long Bessels" is given in the book "Hadleigh through the Ages". The author W.A.B. Jones was the former archivist of the Hadleigh Archives. In his opening chapter he mentions that the Bessells are mentioned for the first time in 1603, though he does not give the sources of this information. On a sketch map of the town, he shows the position of the pest houses at the The Green to the east of this site.

## **Conclusion**

This report is very incomplete and it is highly likely that additional records relevant to this report are held at Hadleigh. It is possible to suggest a brief site history based on the information already gathered. The street pattern suggests an element of town planning with Angel Street and George Street set at a right angle to the High Street. From the published pictures of the almshouses and No. 2, Long Bessels amongst other early photographs of housing, it would appear to be the case that this was an area occupied by small labourers cottages. There appears to have been a large number of these built along these streets and the area relatively free of the dwellings of the more important inhabitants. The late date for the street name suggests it may have been a by way or alley way or convenient short cut for the residents to pass between Angel and George Street.

The area to the east in the ownship of the Feoffment and the site of the almshouses suggests a communal use reserved for those on the fringes of polite society. The site of the pest houses at The Green adds to this suggestion. The field name from the tithe map "Gravel Pit Meadow" may suggest a field used for the extract of gravel for road repair, again a communal use. The references to tainter yards off George Street is an area of open space used for the stretching of woven dyed cloth or cloth that had come from a fulling mill, not an area of domestic dwellings.

**Anthony M Breen June 2004**

## **References**

### **Suffolk Record Office**

#### **Bury St Edmunds**

T127A/1 Tithe Apportionment 1839

T127A/2 Tithe Map 1839

Acc 2116 Photograph of Map of Hadleigh 1830

HA 518/1/8 Court Book Manor of Hadleigh Hall

HA 518/1/10 Court Book Manor of Hadleigh Hall

HA 518/1/37 & 38 Deeds re property in Long Bessels 1853 – 1867

#### **Ipswich**

HD11:475 Isaac Johnson Map Collection

FF 569/S44a Glebe Terriers Parish of Shelley

### **Published Works**

Colin Bull “Hadleigh in Old Picture Postcards”, Zaltbommel, Netherlands

Janet Foster and Julia Sheppard “British Archives: A Guide to archive resources in the United Kingdom”  
4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Palgrave Publishers, 2002

W.A.B Jones “Hadleigh Through the Ages” East Anglian Magazine Publishing Ltd 1977, revised 1989

William White “White’s 1844 Suffolk”, David & Charles Reprints, 1970



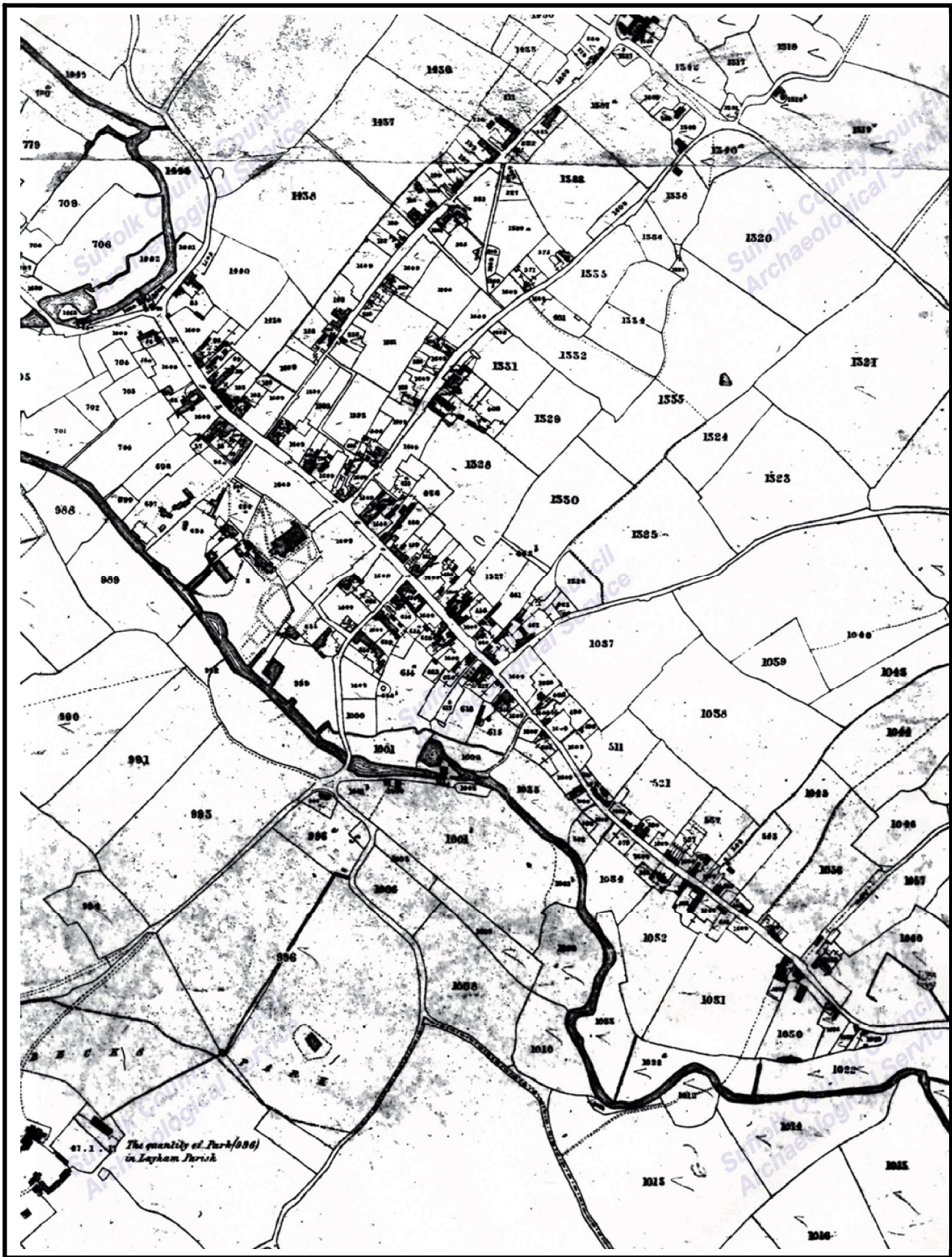


Figure i: Hadleigh tithe map, 1839





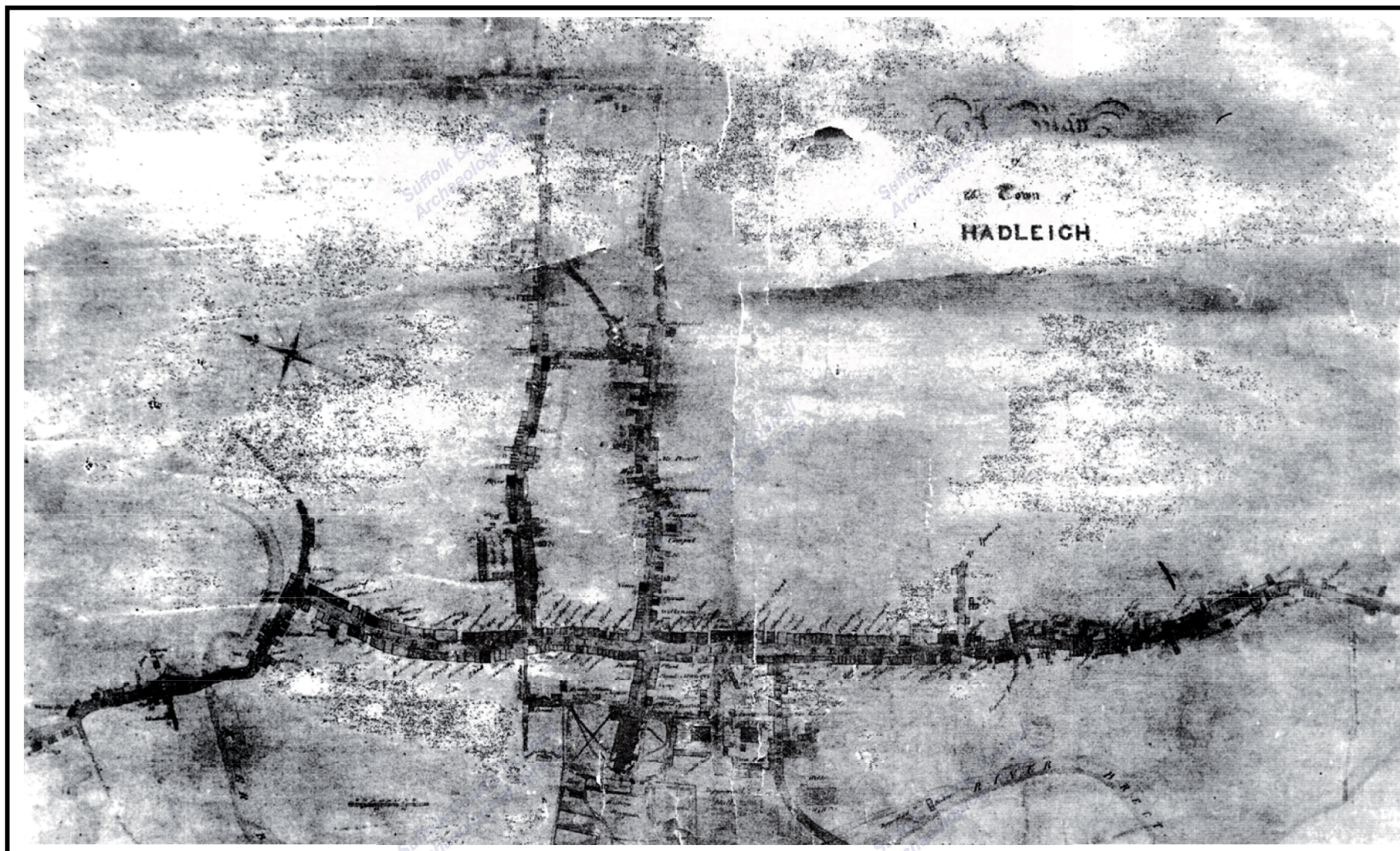


Figure ii: map of Hadleigh, 1830

