



ECA Unit  
Stonebow Road  
Hereford  
Herefordshire  
(NGR SO 5150 4028)

*Archaeological watching brief.*



June 2006  
Hereford Archaeology Series 717  
SMR 43215

**This report is produced by**

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**Cover picture**      *Excavation underway on the site to the back of the Stonebow (ECA) Unit, work being done by Badham and Sons.*

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**Site Work**

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**Illustration**

D. Rouse S. Porter

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D. Rouse

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**1. Summary**

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*Herefordshire Primary Care Trust received planning permission to build an extension to the Stonebow (ECA) Unit on the site at Stonebow Road (Fig 1). This was subject to an archaeological condition and a watching brief was commissioned by Hurley and Davies Architects Ltd.*

*The main aim of the project was to enable archaeological features to be adequately recorded in the areas affected by the proposal. Groundworks were monitored and the findings recorded by an experienced archaeologist.*

*No archaeological features pre-dating the Post Medieval/modern period were present within the excavated areas of the site. Made ground containing medieval pottery and architectural moulded stone, post medieval and modern finds overlay a truncated medieval deposit containing medieval painted glass.*

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## **2. Introduction**

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Archaeological Investigations Ltd was commissioned by Herefordshire Primary Care Trust through their agents Hurley and Davies Architects Ltd to carry out archaeological monitoring and recording of groundworks. The scope of the work encompassed a watching brief during groundworks with the work taking place between the 20th April and 5<sup>th</sup> May 2006.

The project arose in response to a planning application (DCCE 2005/3185F) from Herefordshire Primary Care Trust submitted to Herefordshire County Council to build a single storey extension to the Unit on the site at Stonebow Road (Fig 2). Permission was granted subject to a number of conditions, one of which involved archaeology:

No development shall take place until the applicants or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This programme shall be in accordance with a brief prepared by the County Archaeology Service.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development.

Hurley and Davies commissioned Archaeological Investigations Ltd to do the work and their scheme of investigations was approved by Herefordshire Council (AIL 2006).

The site is centred at NGR SO 5150 4028 with an Ordnance height close to 52.50m O.D. The underlying geology consists of alluvium overlying fluvio-glacial gravel above Lower Old Red Sandstone bedrock.

Currently the site is garden to the south of the Stonebow Unit. The site has been artificially levelled and drained.

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## **3. Historical Background**

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### **Site History.**

The site is located close to but probably outside the boundaries of the burial ground of St Guthlac's Priory, which was re-founded in 1143 on the site currently occupied by Hereford County Hospital.

“The original site of the collegiate church of St Guthlac was within the area known as Castle Green. In the middle of the eleventh century a castle was built close to the monastery by Ralph, Earl of Hereford. At the start of the twelfth century the monastery was given to the abbey of St Peter in Gloucester and within a few years, following the siege of Hereford Castle during the wars of Steven and Matilda in 1140, the establishment was re-founded by Bishop Robert de Bethune in the Bye St suburbs.

St Guthlac's thrived on its new site (SMR 3498). It received several new endowments and in 1291 its income was £87 15s 10¼ d., more than that of Chepstow, Abergavenny and Monmouth. Thereafter there were no further large donations and the value of the property in 1535 was £169 19s 6½ d. after disbursements of alms etc. of £19 2s 7d.

After the dissolution in 1539 the site passed to John ap Rice [Price]. By 1645, during the Civil War, the priory buildings were ruinous. In 1675 the Price family sold the site and over the next 150 years there were several changes of ownership.

In 1797 a new county gaol, designed by John Nash (SMR 20124), was built on part of the site and in 1834 the Hereford Union Workhouse was built on part of the remainder (SMR 20127). It now forms part of the County Hospital. Most of the gaol was demolished in 1930, and the bus station and a cinema (SMR 20125) now occupy the old gaol site, whilst the hospital has expanded to cover almost all of the remaining grounds of the priory, including the area of the proposed works.

The precise location of the monastic church and precinct buildings has not, as yet, been established and little is known of the occupation of this particular part of the monastic precinct in the medieval period. Taylor's map of 1757 shows no buildings on the site (Fig 3).

The 1841 Tithe map (Fig 4) shows no buildings along the Commercial Road (formerly Bye St) frontage, and does not show Stonebow Road at all. The 1858 map (Fig 5) shows the County prison and a few buildings on the junction between Commercial Street and Stonebow Road, Stonebow Road appears as a narrow lane with just a few buildings dotted along it. The workhouse is also shown, and is near to a small building marked "priory".

By 1929 a large building occupied the corner plot on the city side of the junction (Fig 6), but by 1965 the site had been cleared and was used as a car park (Fig 7).

### **Previous archaeological investigations.**

Several archaeological excavations have been undertaken within the area of the former St Guthlac's. These are addressed in detail in an earlier report (HAS 242). Briefly, skeletons from the monastic cemetery have been recovered, but this was much further west than the present investigation. Closer to this area several walls were recorded which had been disturbed by a series of pits or ditches, though the date of the walls is unclear. To the north, a mill, associated with the priory, was investigated during the building of the Safeway store in 1988 (now Morrison's store). This revealed a major road of medieval or earlier date, possibly Roman (HAS 50). The projected alignment possibly runs towards the junction of Stonebow Road and Commercial Road. Other investigations showed a thick layer of modern disturbance, deepening towards Commercial Road, overlying the earlier levels. On one site, the Medical Records building (HAS 213), there were peaty deposits laid down by the meandering and water logging of the Eign Brook, whilst the former Hartford Motors site (HAS 217) showed signs of more intermittent flooding" (Stone 1995, HAS 248).

Further archaeological investigations were undertaken when the Stonebow Unit was extended in 1994 (HAS 230), "*the area was seen to have been extensively disturbed by the digging of a large number of linear pits, most dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, one pit produced only medieval material and two early walls were also exposed*" (Appleton-Fox 1994).

The Stonebow Unit entrance was extended in 1999 (HAS 405), but no evidence of previous occupation was encountered. There had been a large amount of recent ground disturbance that may explain the lack of evidence. Worked stone was recovered that may have come from the demolished priory buildings.

Worked stones, also likely to be associated with the priory buildings (HAS 441) were recovered during a watching brief carried out in 1999 on the junction of Stonbow Road and Commercial Road, no other evidence was present.

Excavations carried out at Hereford County Hospital between 1998 and 2003 (HAS 664) "*helped reveal the likely extent of the of the priory burial ground to the south-east and north-west and located substantial masonry thought to be the remains of the monastic church*" (Crookes 2005). Local Sites and Monuments Record information is included on figure 9.

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#### **4. Aims and Objectives**

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The project was considered likely to produce results that would be of local archaeological importance.

The main aim of the project was to enable archaeological features to be adequately recorded in the areas affected by the proposal.

The main objectives of the work were to:

- a. Identify the date and nature of features exposed by groundworks.
- b. Assess survival, quality, condition and relative significance of any archaeological features, deposits and structures within the study area.
- c. Produce a record of the features.
- d. Deposit an ordered archive in an appropriate depository.

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#### **5. Method**

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##### ***General archaeological method.***

All ground breaking activity carried out on the site was observed by an experienced archaeologist. The watching brief was in two phases. The first involved observation of the excavation of geo-investigative test pits on behalf of Terra Firma (Wales) Ltd and was undertaken by Benedikte Ward on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2006.

The second phase took place in April 2006 and was carried out by Dale Rouse. It covered excavation of 600mm wide foundation trenches averaging 2.10m deep around the building footprint which measured 10.7m long by 10.3m wide.

Part of a moulded architectural stone was recovered from the near to the tree (small find 2), the moulding was carved from oolitic limestone and appears to be a piece from a medieval monument, memorial, or tracery (Appendix 2). The moulding could be early English style or more likely, perpendicular. If the former it could date from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, if the latter it would date to somewhere in the later 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Due to the nature of this part of the excavation it was not possible to say for certain which layer the stone came from but it is most likely to have been from made ground 101 (see below).

Trenching commenced at the north-east corner of the proposed new building (Figs 10 and 11). A surface consisting of concrete brick sets was present along the edge of the dig line that was 0.10m deep. The brick sets were bedded on a layer of concrete, also about 0.10m deep. The concrete bedding overlay a hard packed deposit consisting of scalpins in a matrix of sandy clay, the deposit appeared to be a levelling layer for the concrete surface above. The depth of the levelling material was around 0.20m. The above modern layers were together assigned context 100.

Underlying the levelling material were the partial remains of an earlier concrete surface that was also about 0.10m thick (104). The concrete directly overlay a substantial deposit of mixed, made ground (101) averaging between 0.70m and 1.10m deep. The deposit consisted of mixed clay, sand, fine gravel, cobbles and charcoal waste. Finds from the deposit were of a mixed date range and included 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century and later pottery, clay pipe, oyster shell, part of a glass bulls eye, fragments of animal and human bone, building materials including brick, floor tile and slate. Two modern ducts and two large copper service pipes cut the top of the made ground.

Cutting the made ground 1.60m south of the outer wall of the existing building was a robbed out wall trench (Fig 11). The cut of the robbed out wall was observed in the eastern foundation trench for the new building. The robbed wall trench was aligned east-west and was roughly parallel with the south external wall of the Stonebow Unit. The cut (106) measured 0.70m wide x 0.80m deep. The fill (107) consisted of mortar and small pieces of stone that were quite densely compacted, there were no large pieces of stone visible in the fill. The robbed wall trench showed in both sections of the east trench but was not visible in the sections of the west trench, presumably it returned somewhere between the two sides of the new building. A modern ceramic drain overlay the fill of the robbed trench (105).

The made ground overlay a truncated layer (102) of dark greenish-brown silty-clay averaging around 0.40m deep with inclusions of fine gravel, grit and small stones. The layer survived best near to the south wall of the Stonebow unit building (Figs 10 and 11), petering out farther away from the building.

In several places the top of the deposit undulated where it appeared to have been dug out before the made ground was brought in, probably as levelling material for the site.

Finds from layer 102 included seven pieces of medieval window glass, including at least one painted piece with surviving red paint decoration (small find 1, Fig 12, Appendix 4). Fish and animal bones were also present in the deposit. No other finds were present in the excavated areas.



The areas of ground disturbance were tied into features shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 mapping. A temporary site bench mark was not used in this case.

A system of context records was kept and numbered independently. Recording was in accordance with Archaeological Investigations Ltd's site manual. Registers were kept for context records, photographs and drawings on site.

General biological samples were not taken as no archaeological features were present within the areas excavated.

Painted medieval window glass, architectural moulded stone and pottery were recovered during the excavation from a stratified deposit.

The finds were retained for general dating and the painted glass recorded and conserved.

During the excavation generally and after cleaning the trench sections, photographs were taken using colour and black and white 35mm film.

Site notes and sketches were made in a site notebook.

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## **6. Results**

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The first stage of archaeological work was a watching brief, carried out on two geo-investigative test pits dug ahead of the development to assess the ground stability (Fig 2). The test pits were dug using a mini digger with a 0.60m wide bucket under archaeological supervision.

Test pit 1 was located slightly to the west of the proposed building area and dug to a depth of 1.90m. The top 1.40m consisted of mixed red-brown silty-sand and clay made ground with inclusions of stone and gravel, building rubble and pottery. The made ground overlay a further 0.50m of red sand, sub angular stone and rounded cobbles. No finds of archaeological significance were present in test pit 1.

Test pit 2 was located to the south of the proposed building area and dug to 1.70m deep. Made ground (as described above) was present to a depth of 1.60m where the same red sandy/stoney deposit was encountered. No finds of archaeological importance were present in test pit 2.

The second stage of work was to monitor and record the excavation of foundation trenches and service runs relating to the proposed development. The site area had been partially cleared prior to the commencement of excavation of foundations, formerly the site area had been garden attached to the back of the Stonebow Unit.

A large tree had been cut down and the base and roots had to be dug out as it was very close to the line of the trench on the west side of the proposed building (Fig 2). Modern ceramic drain pipes aligned north-south were exposed during the digging out of the tree, and a mixed selection of pottery, brick, bone and tile were recovered from the dig, the pottery finds ranged from the 13<sup>th</sup> century to post medieval and modern.

Underlying the dark clayish layer was a deposit of very fine gritty gravel, occasional patches of blue-grey clay were seen overlying the gravel (103). No finds were present in the blue clay or the gravel which were natural deposits.

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## **7. Discussion**

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The most recent archaeological feature encountered on the site was the robbed wall trench 106, the wall footing probably related to buildings shown on the 1858 map (see Fig 5).

The made ground 101 contained mixed finds from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards. It seems likely that at least some of the material in the made ground is likely to have come from the truncated layer below. A few pieces of disarticulated human bone that were found in this deposit are most likely to have been disturbed and removed from the cemetery of Saint Guthlac's Priory, the boundary wall to the cemetery is thought to be close by to the south-east of the present works.

The truncated brownish-green clay layer 102 appears to be what remains of a medieval soil horizon. All the datable finds recovered from the layer were medieval and probably relate to the activity at the Priory of St Guthlac.

The window glass and architectural stone moulding are likely to have derived from buildings at St Guthlac's Priory, possibly the church. The pieces of window glass are the first pieces to be found from or near the Priory site and will be conserved in the hope that future works may produce a larger corpus of glass for detailed study.

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## **8. Conclusions**

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In conclusion the main aims of the project were to enable archaeological features to be adequately recorded in the areas affected by the proposal.

The features that were present on the site were identified and dated where possible, the features encountered were assessed and a record of them was produced.

The methods used for the site were the standard current techniques used and were appropriate in this case.

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## Appendix 1. Site Archive. (Accession No HFD MG 2006-1)

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The site archive will be held by Hereford City Museum.

- 1 Scale plan of the trenches at 1:50
- 2 Scale section drawings at 1:20
- 7 Pages of site note book notes and drawings
- 1 Copy of this report
- 2 Photographic registers
- 1 Set of colour prints from 35mm, 36 exp film
- 1 Set of black and white prints from 35mm, 36 exp film
- 1 Copy of the project design

### **The finds**

#### Pottery

(A full and detailed pottery and ceramic report is included as appendix 3)

#### Bone/shell

Context 101, bone, small undiagnosed assemblage (13 pieces)

Context 101, shell, upper oyster shell (1 piece)

Context 102, bone (rib), salmon vertebrae (2 pieces)

Unstratified, bone, boar/pig tusk, horse tooth, sheep/pig tooth (7 pieces)

Unstratified, shell, oyster shells (2 pieces)

#### Building materials

(Architectural moulded stone report in Appendix 2, Painted glass report in Appendix 4)

Context 102, Medieval-painted window glass (cross hatch decoration) (small find 1, 1 piece)

Unstratified, Medieval- plain green window glass (1 piece)

Unstratified, Medieval- plain window glass (4 pieces)

Context 101/102, limestone (Oolite), Architectural moulded stone (small find 2, 2 pieces)

#### Miscellaneous

Context 101, clay pipe, stems- thick/thin early types (3 pieces)

Context 101, glass, window glass-bullseye (1 piece)

Unstratified, clay pipe, 2 thick stems, 1 thin (3 pieces)

Unstratified, glass, thick-vessel glass (1 piece)

*Description of a moulded stone (small find 2), Context 101/102?*

During the course of the excavation to the back of the Stonebow Unit, a piece of moulded stone was recovered from a deposit probably related to the demolition of St Guthlacs Priory. The stone was carved from oolitic limestone from the Cotswolds.

In "Hereford City Excavations, Volume 4", (p139) Richard Stone says in reference to masonry from the Franciscan Friary or Greyfriars "*The oolitic limestone from the Cotswolds was used only for internal detail and was probably exclusively sepulchral*"

The stone looks like a mullion (no glazing slots or holes), a shaft (possibly from a sepulchral monument) or part of a tracery window, the front face has a keel moulding that curves forwards, and there is a double chamfer on the back face. The "top" is broken (one small matching fragment was also found that fits the top), and the bottom although worn retains its original face. The stone has some damage on the front, back and side faces and traces of plaster are present on the front and rear faces.

The height of the stone is nearly 12.5cm, in section it measures 7.5cm x 5.5cm at the top. Due to the forward facing curve, the bottom face measures 7cm x 5.5cm.

During the excavations conducted at the County Hospital between 1998 and 2003, three fragments of moulded oolitic limestone were found. One of the pieces was part of an elaborate (though quite small) cornice and the others were part of an ashlar block and a small unidentifiable squared block with smoothed faces and one sawn face (measured 5cm x 3.5cm x 3cm).

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Stone, R., 2002 "The Masonry" in A. Thomas and A. Boucher (eds) Hereford City Excavations Volume 4, Further Sites & Evolving Interpretations. *Logaston Press, 139-142.*

## 1. Summary of the pottery recovered from the site at the Stonebow Unit

Cont	Fabric	Wt g	Date	Form	Decoration/Comment
us	STSL	14	17/18	plate	Brown and white trailed slip
us	A7B	43	13/15	jug	Rod handle. Patchy green speckled glaze
us	STSL	13	17/18	Plate/dish?	Dark brown black int. gl. Decorated edge
us	STSL	7	17/18	?	Red int. and ext. slip no glaze
us	A3	8	13	Jug?	Ext mottled green glaze. Poss. turned groove
us	modern	17	20	Mixing bowl	Internal and external glaze
us	Stone ware	6	19+	?	Industrially produced
us	modern	15	19+	bowl	Industrially produced, yellowish fabric and a clear internal and external glaze
101	A5	6	113/15	C/pot?	Internal green speckled glaze
101	modern	3	19+	?	Clear glaze. Industrially produced white-ware

## 2. Summary of the ceramic building material from the site

us	Drain pipe	21	mod	drainpipe	Modern salt glazed drainpipe
us	A7B	12	13/15	Roof tile	Mottled tan and green glaze
us	B4	46	14/16	Roof tile	No surface treatment
us	A10	24	16/18	Roof tile	No surface treatment
us	A7B	68	13/15	Roof tile	Knife cut crest. Olive/green speckled glaze. Highly fired
us	A7B	28	13/15	Roof tile	Olive/green speckled glaze. Highly fired
us	A7B	3	13/15	Roof tile	Lower surface broken away
101	A7B	33	13/15	Roof tile	Olive green glaze. Highly fired
101	B4	10	14/16	Roof tile	Speckles clear glaze

us - unstratified

A total of 10 sherds of pottery were recovered from the site at Stonebow -total weight 132g (Table 1) together with 9 fragments -245g weight (Table 2) of ceramic building material. The pottery was examined macroscopically and under a hand lens (x10) and classified according to Vince's type series (Vince 1985, 2002).

Although modern material was present a quantity of medieval pottery and roof tile was also recovered. The majority of this material was probably residual in post-medieval and later

deposits (D Rouse pers. comm.) but was considered worthy of study as it can be dated to the monastic or immediately post-dissolution period. The remaining material dates to the 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century or later.

All of the medieval pottery from the site was sourced in Herefordshire, and the tile in Herefordshire or the immediately surrounding area. Of the three sherds of pottery dating from the monastic period, two were slightly abraded. These included a sherd of a cooking pot in fabric A5 with an internal green speckled glaze, the handle of a small jug in fabric A7B and a body sherd from a jug in fabric A3. Fabric A7B is now known to have been produced in or just outside Hereford, though kiln wasters have also been found at Weobley. It dates to the mid to late 13<sup>th</sup> century to the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

The material included medieval roof tile, presumably from monastic buildings in the area. Similar material was found in trench 24 during excavations undertaken on the County Hospital site in 2000. The majority of tile would probably have been removed from the site for reuse in the city after the dissolution, and only small amounts of broken material would remain.

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## **Bibliography**

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Vince, A, 1985, The Pottery, in Shoesmith, R, *Hereford City Excavations, Vol. 3: The finds*, 35-65

Vince, A, 2002, The Pottery, in Boucher, A & Thomas, A, *Hereford City Excavations, Vol. 4: Further Sites and Evolving Interpretations*, 65-92

**Glass from Stonebow/ECA Unit, Hereford**

**Context 102 Small find 1**

Medieval window glass

- 1 fragment of decorated window glass with painted design of fine cross hatching within tram line borders. Potash glass, brittle. 1 piece chipped off (Fig 12).
  
- 2 plain greenish window sherds with some grozed edges. Potash glass, brittle, brown/black weathered surfaces.
  
- 4 fragments (2 small) of window glass, possibly painted. Several grozed edges. Potash glass, brittle, brown/black weathered surfaces.

**Conclusions**

The window glass is not easily datable, but the style of the cross hatching may be comparable to, amongst others, 13<sup>th</sup> century examples from the Reredorter at Battle Abbey (Kerr, 1985, 133-135). However this type of background infill is used throughout the medieval period.

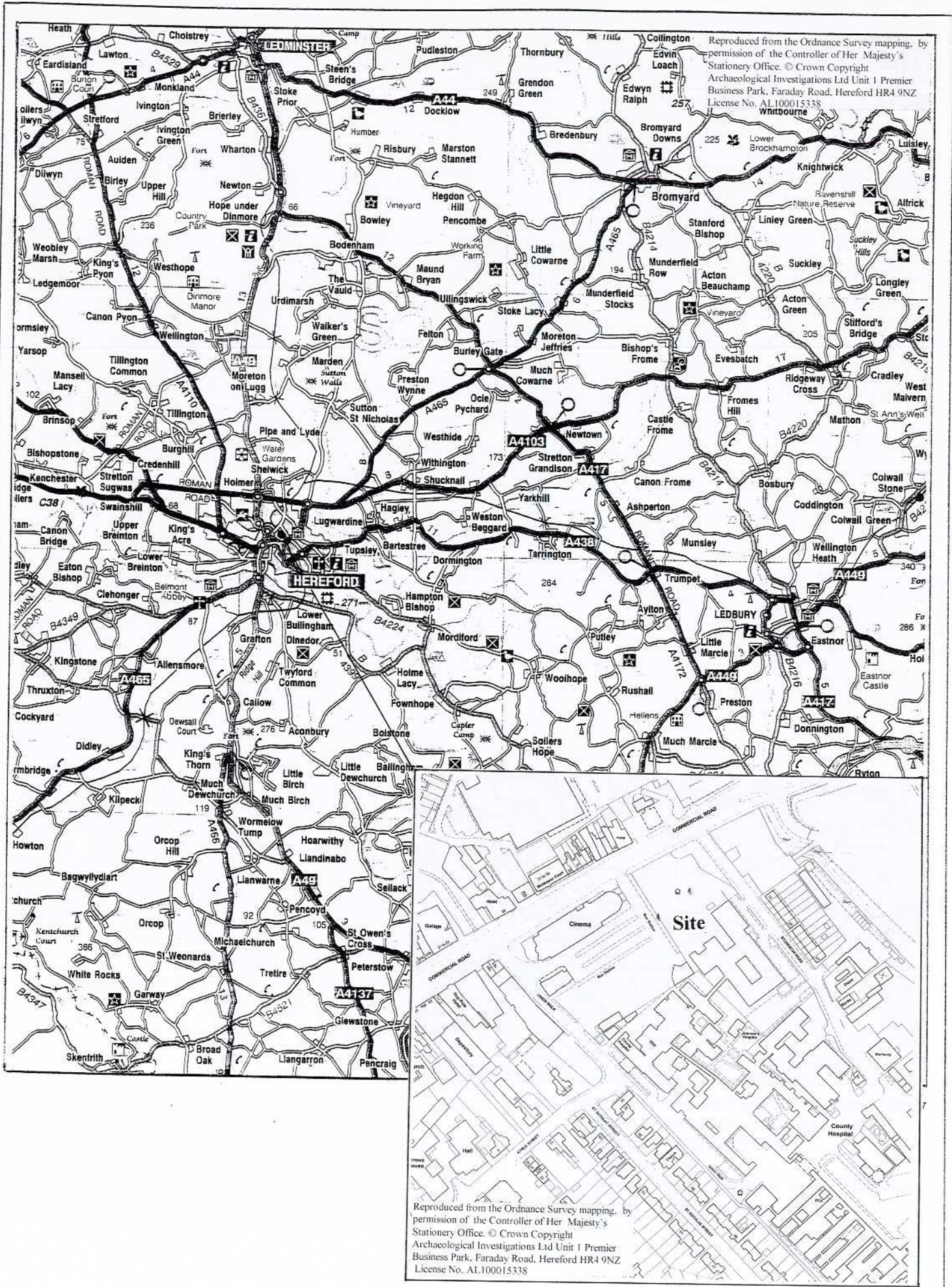
**Recomendations**

The decorated piece should be illustrated and individually packaged in a rigid container. The other pieces should be kept individually wrapped in acid free tissue and retained in the rigid box.

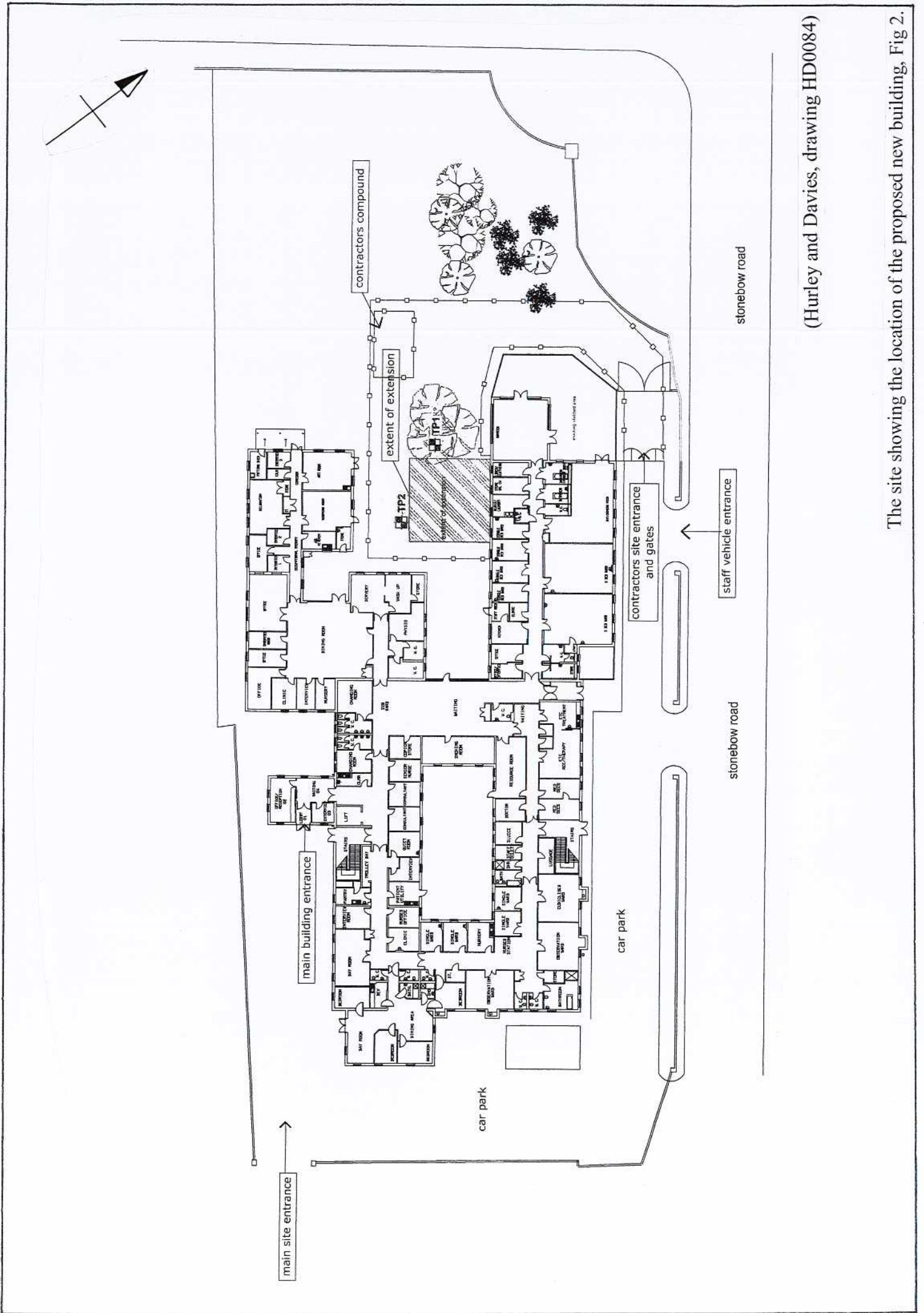
**References**

Kerr, J., 1985 "The window glass" in J N Hare, *Battle Abbey, the Eastern range and the excavations of 1978-80*, 127-138. **HBMC Arch Report No2.**



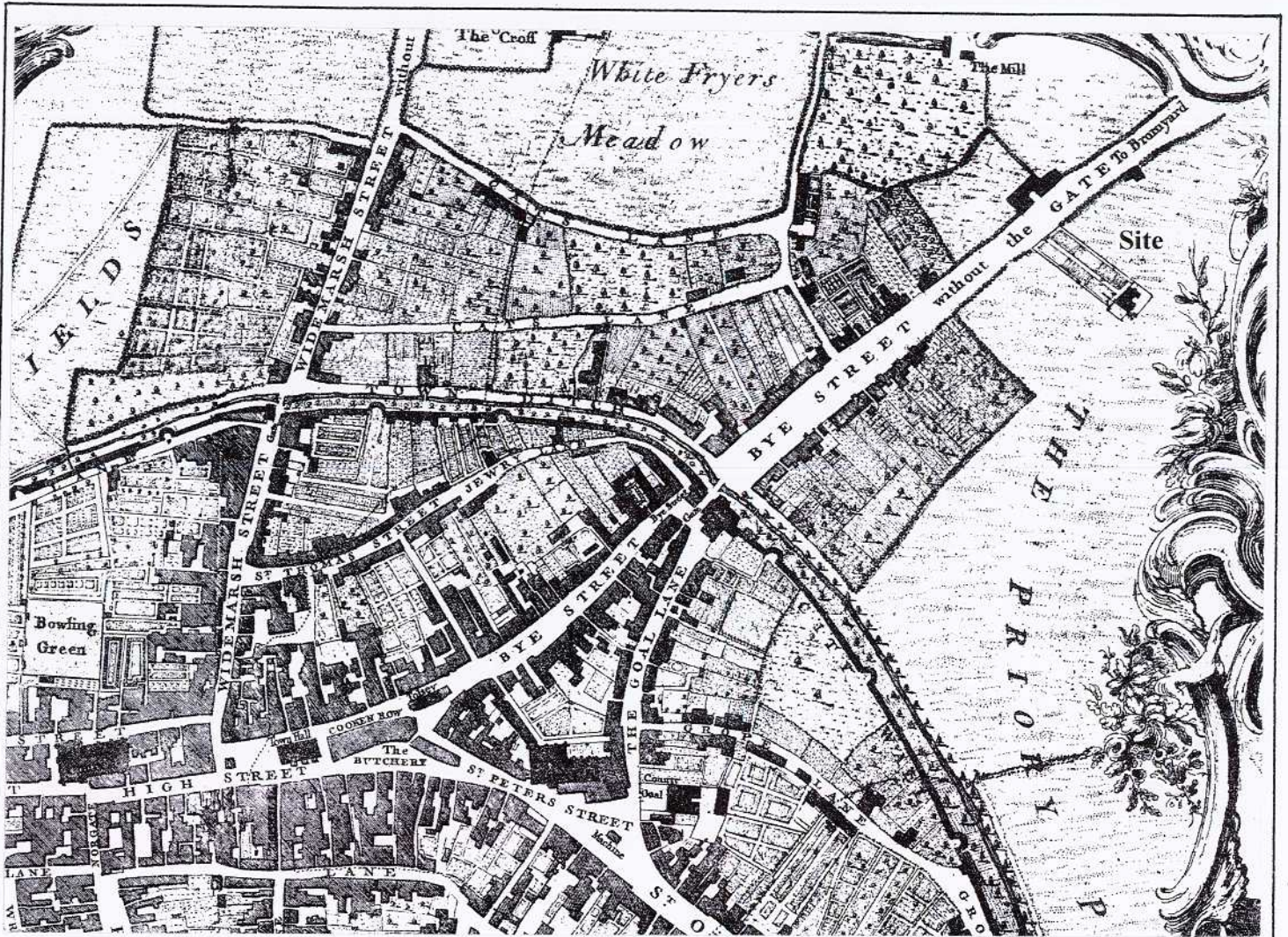


Location map with site inset, Fig 1.

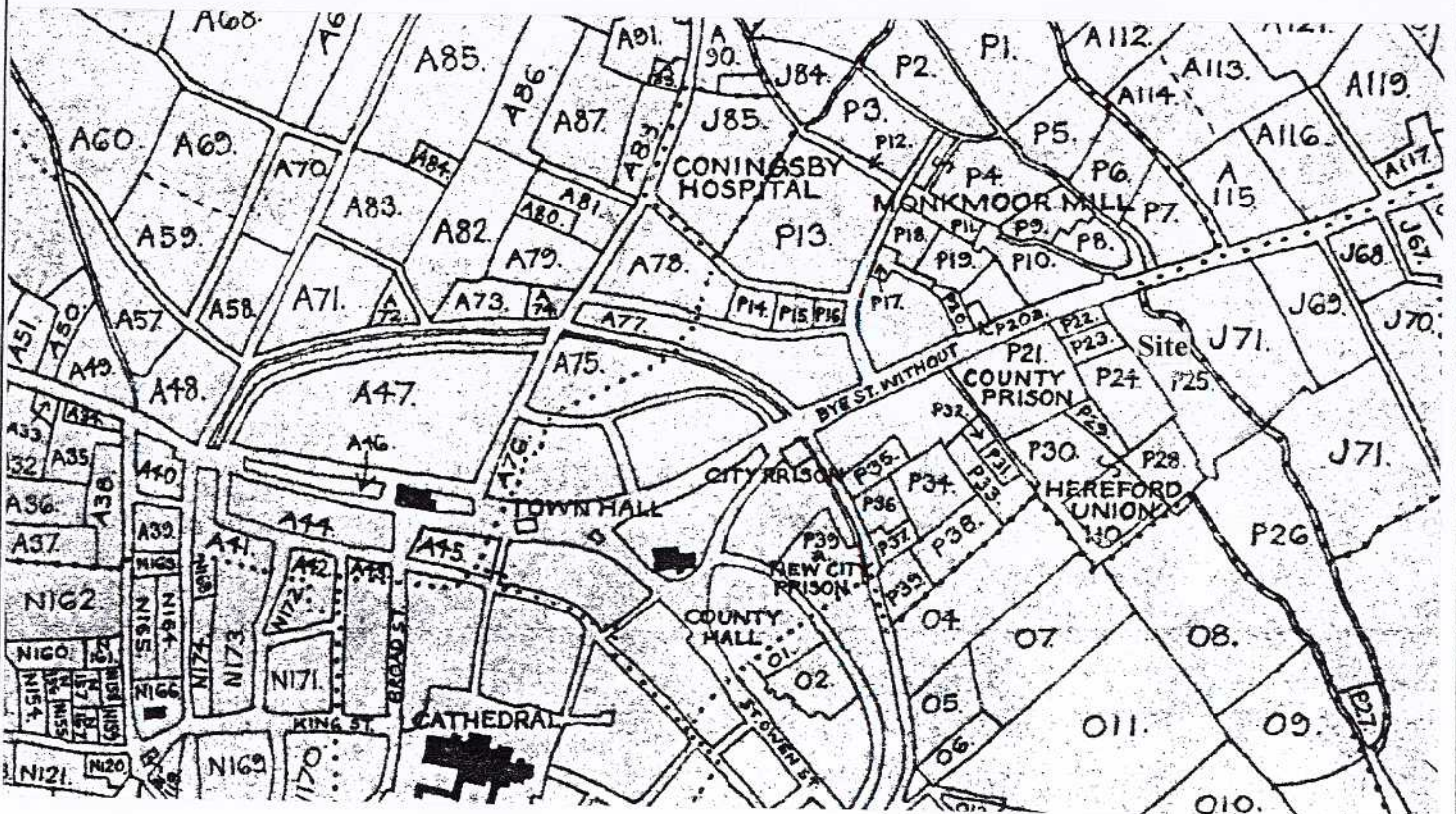


(Hurley and Davies, drawing HD0084)

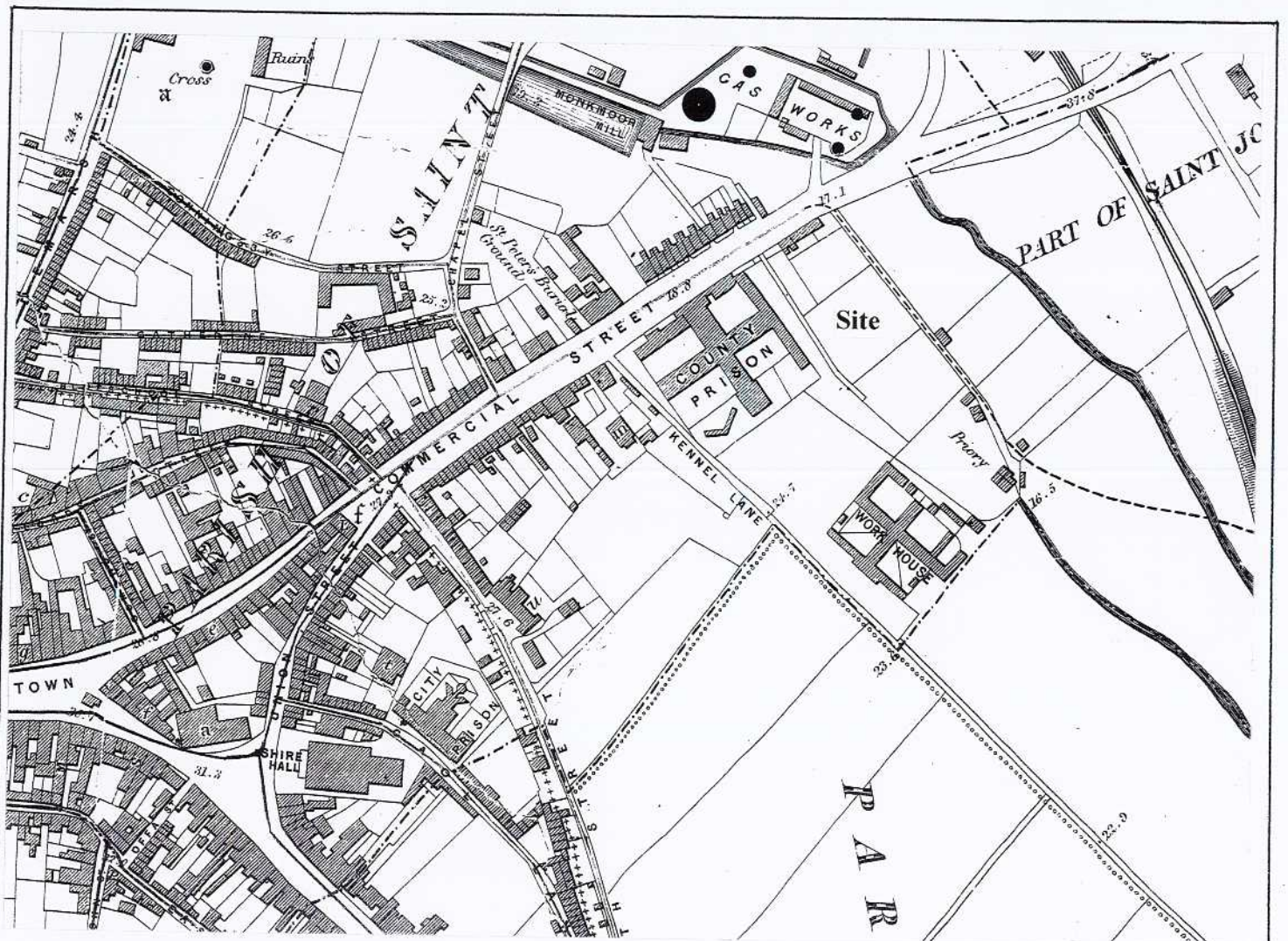
The site showing the location of the proposed new building, Fig 2.



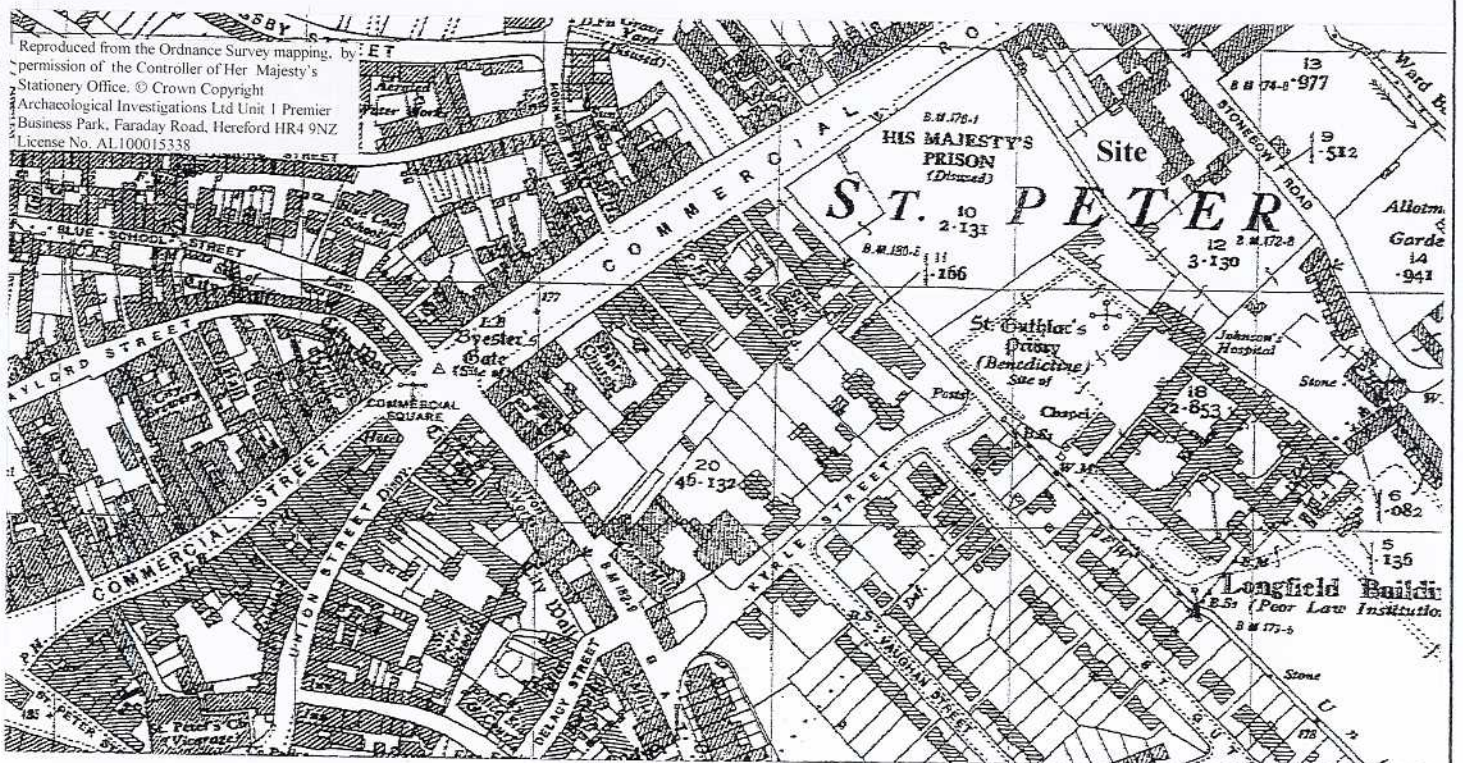
Taylor's map of 1757, Fig 3.



Tithe map of 1841, Fig 4.

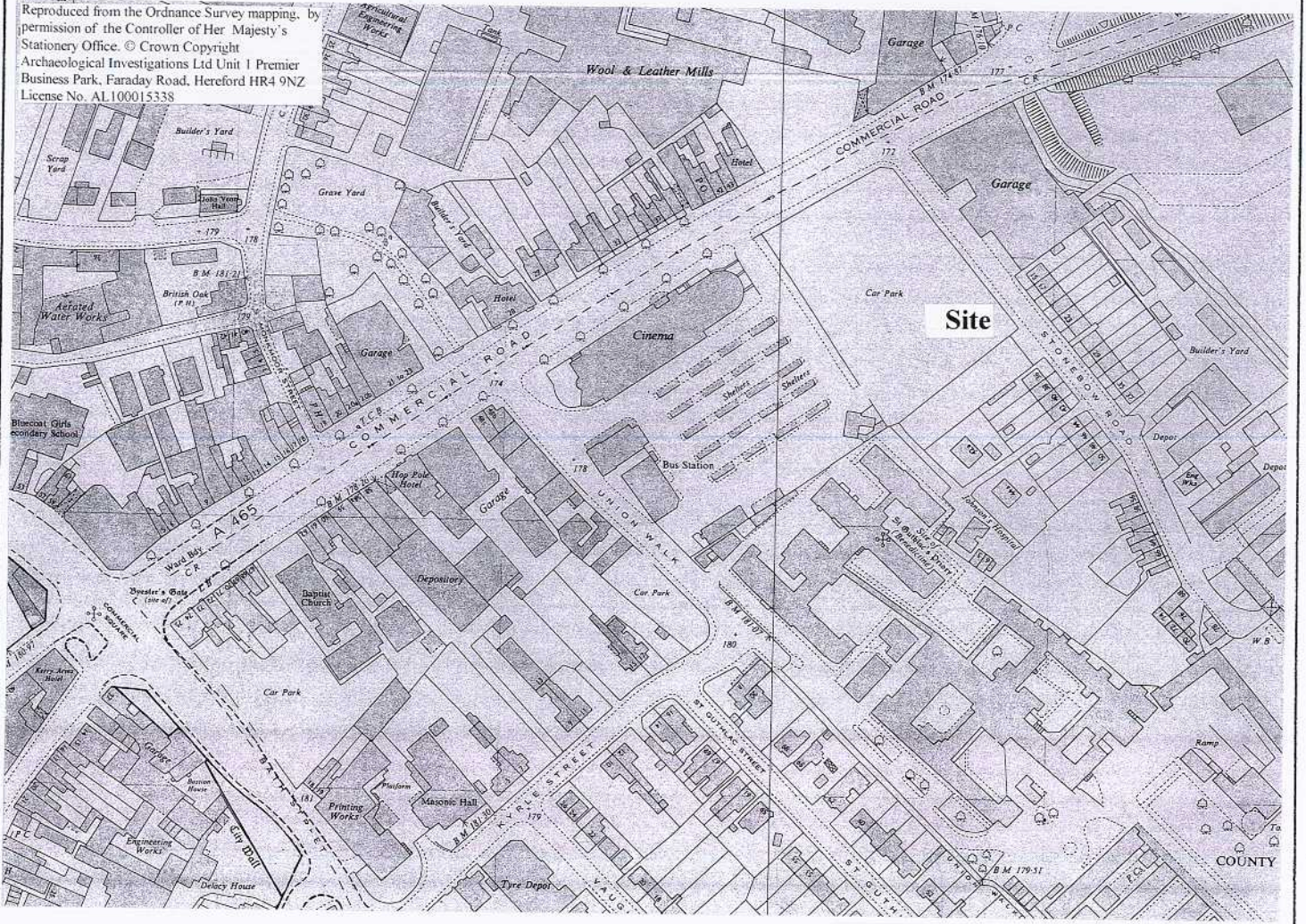


Geological map of 1858, Fig 5.

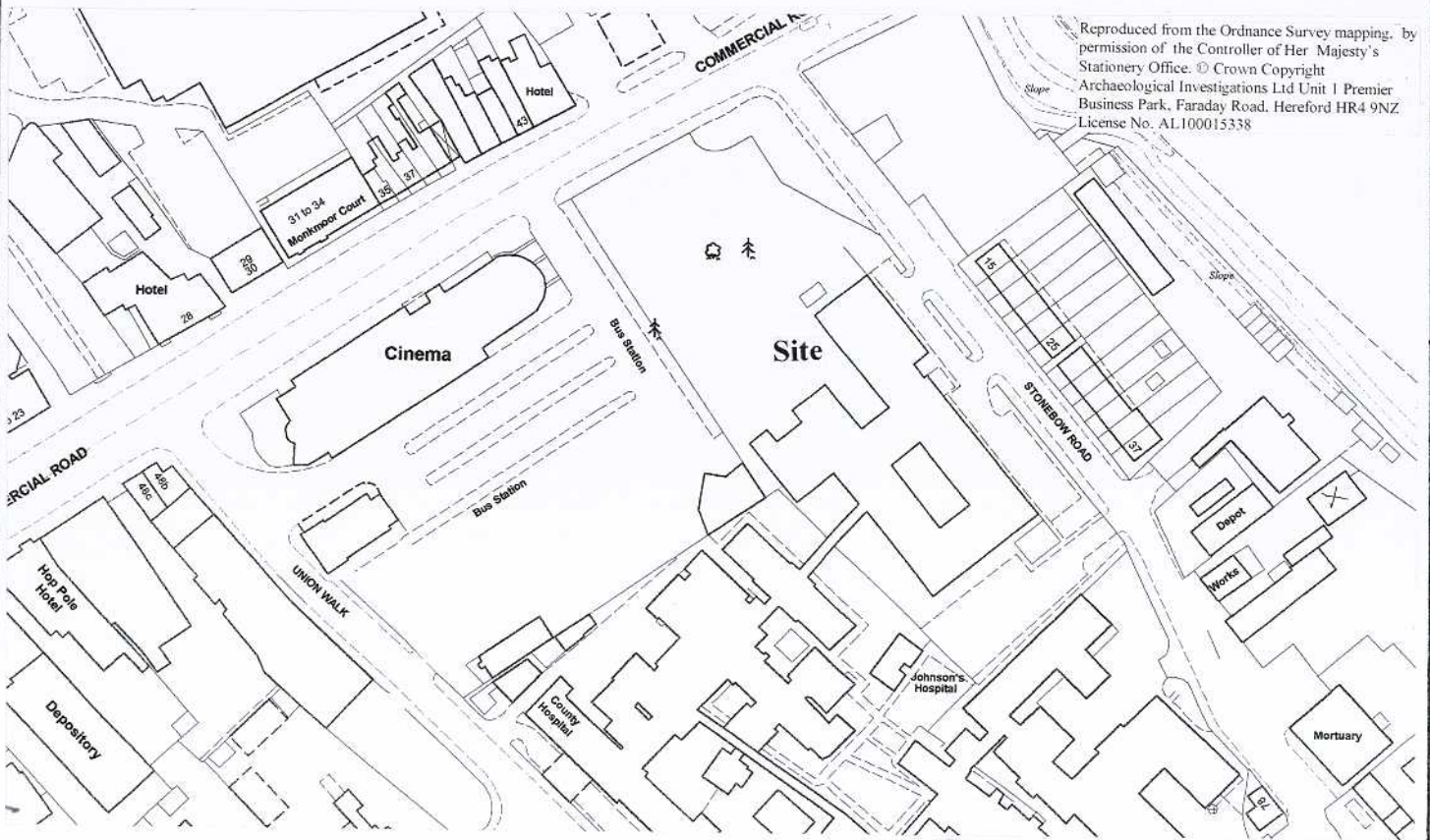


Ordnance Survey map of 1929, Fig 6.

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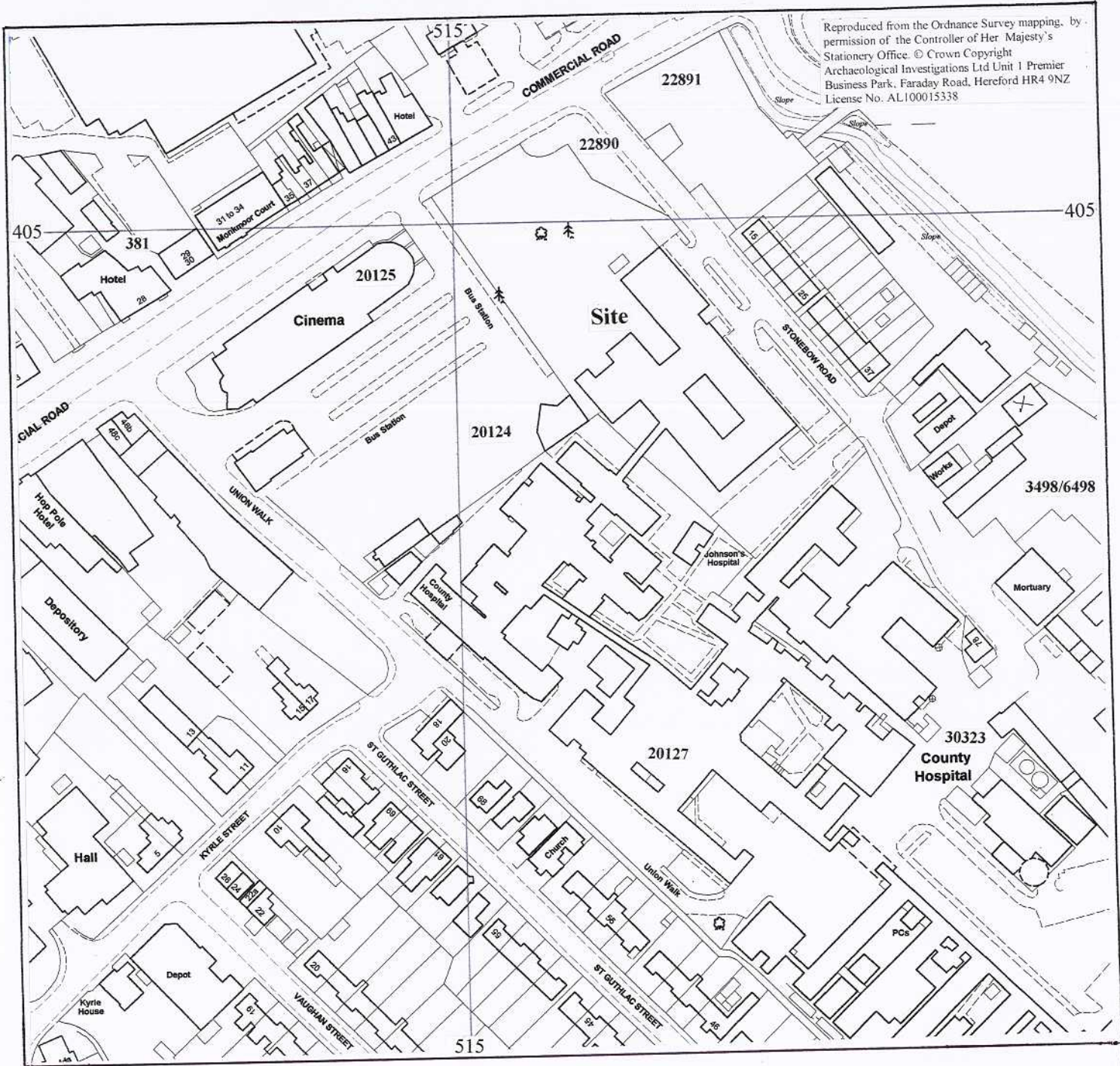


Ordnance Survey map of 1967, Fig 7.

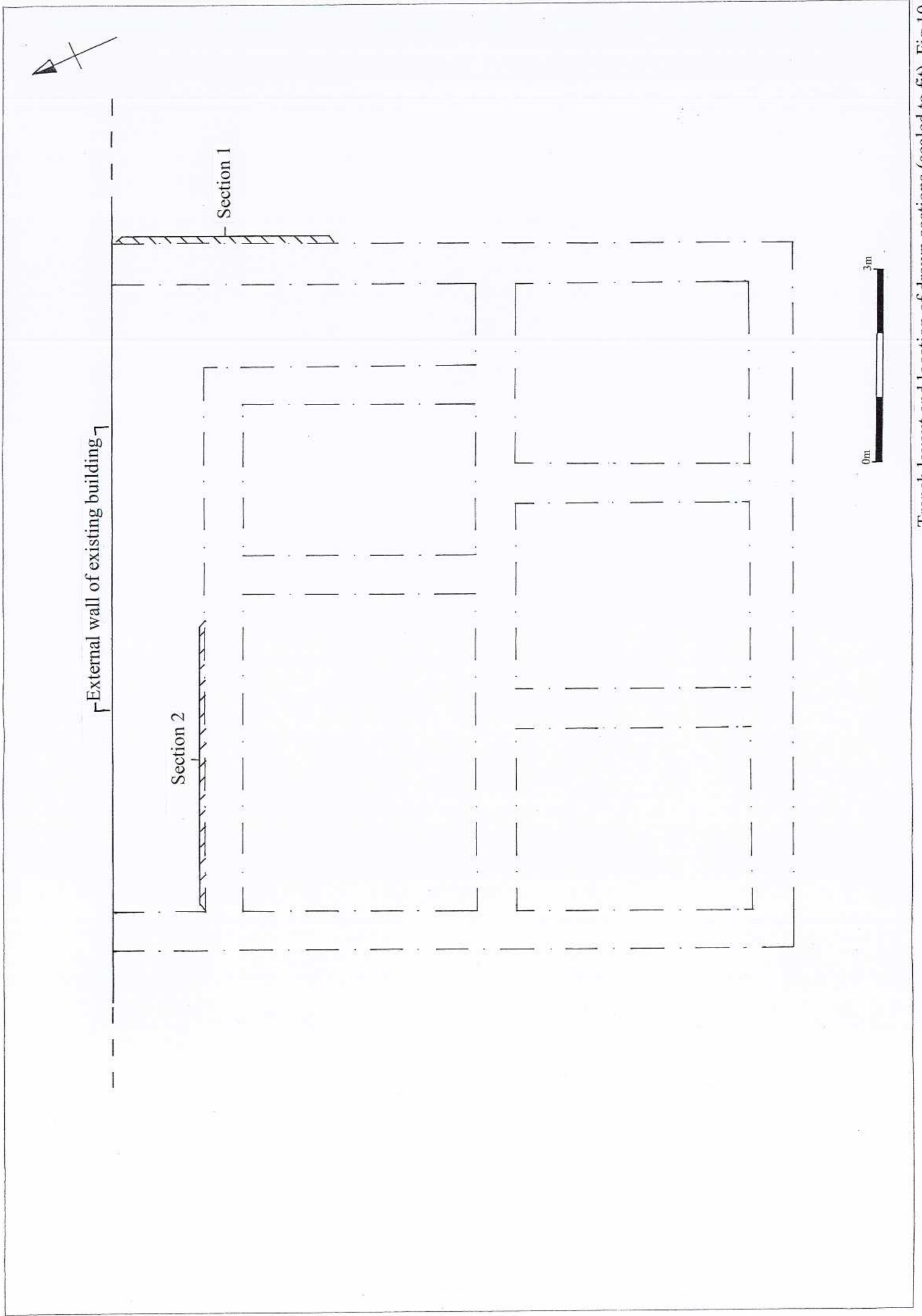


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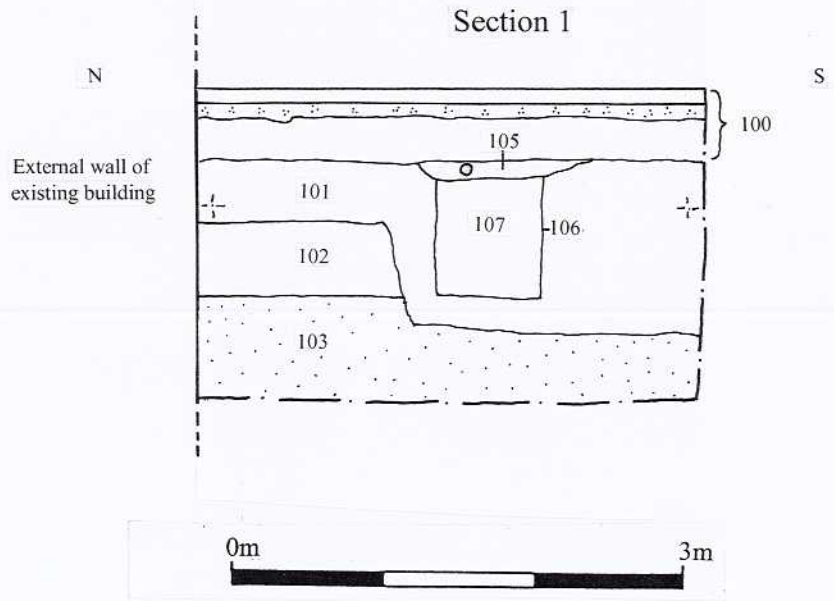
Ordnance Survey map of 1999, Fig 8.



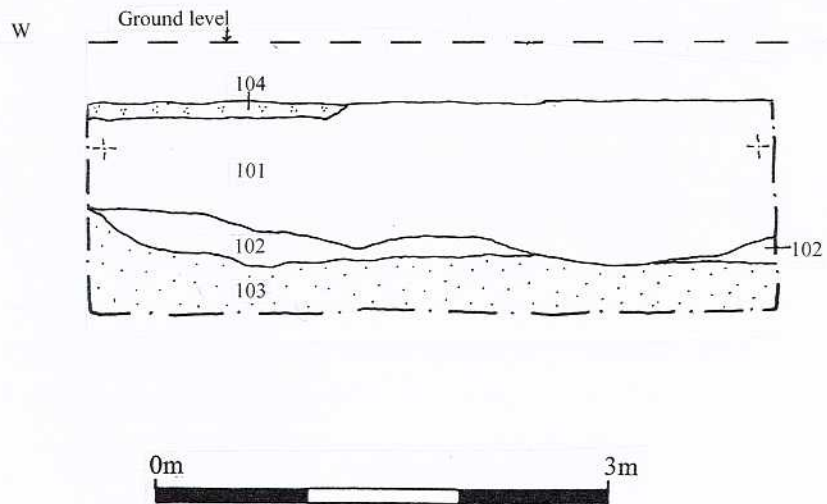
3498/6498	Excavations, St Guthlacs Priory, Medieval Priory, buried remains
20124	County Gaol site, Designed by John Nash
20127	Union Workhouse, Designed by Plowman
30323	Excavation, County Hospital site, Medieval buried remains
20125	Excavation, Classic Cinema site, Post med-buried remains
22890	Excavation, junction of Stonebow/Commercial Rd, Medieval buried remains
22891	Excavation, Hartford Motors site, Medieval buried remains
381	Excavation, rear of 28-29 Commercial St



Trench layout and location of drawn sections (scaled to fit), Fig 10.

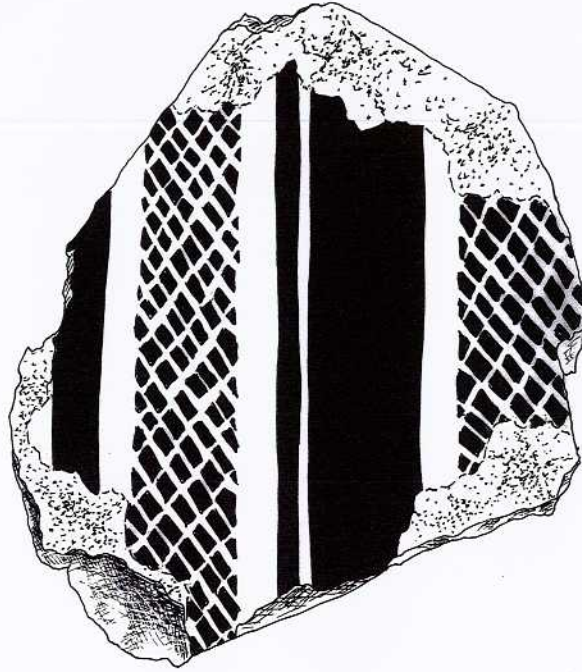


Section 2

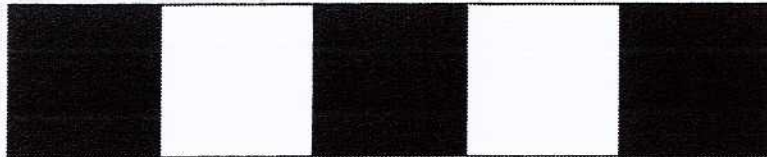


Section drawings at 1:50 scale, Fig 11.





0



5cm