

**An Archaeological Watching Brief  
On Land at The Workshop, Pipe Passage, Lewes, East  
Sussex,**

**(NGR 541279 1100026)**



**By**

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**With a contribution by Elke Raemen**

**Project No. 3039**

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*Abstract*

*An archaeological watching brief was maintained during groundwork for an extension to the property on land at The Workshop, Pipe Passage, Lewes, East Sussex. A substantial deposit of imported garden soil was found across the site, indicating that the ground level had been built up, probably at the time a mid 19<sup>th</sup> century row of cottages were constructed to the north. Below this a 19<sup>th</sup> century brick wall foundation and an 18<sup>th</sup> century buried soil deposit were identified. To the north of the site two late 19<sup>th</sup> century to modern wall footings were revealed, most probably relating to the use of the site for allotment gardens and greenhouses.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology, was commissioned by Russell Harvey to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundwork for the construction of a single storey extension on land at The Workshop, Pipe Passage, Lewes, East Sussex (NGR 541279 110026) (Fig. 1).
- 1.2** Planning permission has been granted on appeal by Lewes District Council for the erection of a single storey side extension at the site (Planning Ref: LW/04/2118; Appeal Ref: APP/P1425/A/05/1175373).
- 1.3** The site is located within the historic core of Lewes, and is positioned close to the location of the western medieval town wall. Due to the archaeological potential of the site, the County Archaeologist of East Sussex County Council advised Lewes District Council that a condition should be attached to the planning consent requiring a programme of archaeological work. The stipulated programme was in the form of a watching brief.
- 1.4** A Written Scheme of Investigation outlining the requirements was prepared by Neil Griffin of Archaeology South East (Griffin 2007).
- 1.5** The development area is situated within the garden of The Workshop, and the proposed groundwork included the hand excavation of footing trenches to a depth of 600mm. Existing drains were to be rerouted to avoid the location of the new extension.
- 1.6** The British Geological Survey map Sheet 313 (Area: Lewes) Solid and Drift Edition (1:50,000 scale) indicates that the site lies on Upper and Middle Chalk
- 1.7** The fieldwork was undertaken by Alice Thorne during September 2007. The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Project Manager) and Louise Rayner (Post-excavation Manager).

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The site lies within the historic core of the medieval and post-medieval town of Lewes and is situated immediately to the west of the Scheduled remains of Lewes Castle (ES HER Monument Number 12872). Lewes Castle comprises a motte and bailey and as such may be considered to form just one example of a type of monument that is well documented nationally. It is, however, considered practically unique in possessing two mottes (Lincoln Castle being the only other example) and this peculiarity serves to underline the significance of

this particular monument. The route of Pipe Passage closely follows the former course of the western medieval town wall on its eastern (innermost) side. It is possible that this route fossilises the course of the former wall walk and that structural remains associated with the former fortification extend into the development site.

- 2.3** Archaeological observations in the vicinity of the castle and subject site have produced evidence for extensive medieval and post-medieval activity. This largely comprises domestic activity in the form of rubbish pits, cess pits and wells, although some evidence of post-medieval brick manufacture was also forthcoming (e.g. Griffin 2005a; Riccoboni 2004; James in prep.). In addition, work to the rear of School Hill House revealed the presence of a number of features of possible Iron Age and Roman date (Griffin 2005b). Recent investigations by ASE at the former Baxters printwork site have also found conclusive evidence of late Saxon Activity.
- 2.4** A watching brief maintained to the rear of 161 High Street to the east of The Workshop recorded one possible pit as well as the remains of three walls, which are thought to be medieval in origin. The watching brief also recorded medieval occupation layers and post medieval made ground deposits (Riccoboni 2007).
- 2.5** An evaluation (Thorne 2006) and subsequent watching brief (Barber 2007) on a development on New Road to the north of the site investigated a steeply sloped bank and underlying deposits which suggested that a large steep-sided cut had been made into the underlying chalk at this point. Although apparently orientated north-east to south-west too little was exposed to be certain of the cut's full extent and morphology. The initial date of this cut is also not certain as the lowest infills were not reached. Though it may well represent an early post-medieval chalk pit it cannot be ruled out as forming part of the medieval town's defences. Whatever the origin of the feature, the exposed deposits suggested it to have been infilled between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Subsequently these fills had had a terrace driven into them to accommodate a small brick/flint building of probable early/mid 19<sup>th</sup>- century date which had been demolished prior to the evaluation.
- 2.6** A pipe kiln was excavated in 1958 further south of the development site on the opposite side of Pipe Passage, (Norris 1970). Marked pipes from within the various fills of the ash and stoking pits have been attributed to five makers working between 1832 and 1878 (*ibid*). The kiln appeared to have been truncated during its working life by filling in the lower levels and reducing the height of the ware chamber. In its original form it was a muffle design and was probably built in the early 1830s (Peacy 1996).
- 2.7** The existing building within the development site was constructed as

a silversmith's workshop in the early 1990s and prior to this the land was occupied by allotments with attendant greenhouses. Ground levels within the development site are noticeably higher than those of the adjacent churchyard and this is possibly because of importing soil and manure to the site over a prolonged period when the land was allotments, and prior to this presumably formed the gardens of properties fronting the High Street.

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1** The general aim of the archaeological work was to monitor any intrusive ground work in order to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest exposed and affected by the excavations are recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards and a report of the findings produced. Particular attention was made to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.
- 3.2** The groundwork comprised the excavation of footing trenches. Following the identification of a defunct soakaway during groundwork, the further excavation of a new soakaway pit and adjoining drainage trench became necessary. All excavation was undertaken by hand.
- 3.3** All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded according to accepted professional standards in accordance with the Specification using standard Archaeology South-East context record sheets. Deposit colours were verified by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.4** The spoil from the excavations was inspected to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest.
- 3.5** All remains were levelled with respect to the nearest Ordnance Survey benchmark, located on the southeast corner of St Michael's Church, High Street (value = 31.90mAOD). Level values are shown on the section drawings, Fig. 3.
- 3.6** A full photographic record of the work was kept (black and white prints, colour slides and digital images) and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held at the Archaeology South-East offices at Portslade and will be offered to the Lewes Barbican Museum in due course.
- 3.7** After monitoring excavation of the footing trenches and soak away pit it became apparent that a further phase of ground reduction (to a maximum depth of 200mm) within the imprint of the new build would not impact below the upper portion of the garden soil, and would therefore not be of a sufficient depth to expose any archaeological

deposits or features. Likewise the section of trench leading past the trenches to the location of the soak away would similarly cut through the deposit of imported garden soil. Following discussion with the county archaeologist it was therefore agreed that the watching brief could be curtailed at this point (See Fig. 2 for locations of all groundwork).

## **4.0 RESULTS**

### **4.1 Footing trenches (Fig. 2 and 3, Plate 2)**

The footing trenches measured 25m in length. They had a width of 500mm and a depth of 600mm. They demonstrated that a thick deposit of garden soil was present across the site [1]. This comprised a friable dark brownish grey clay silt, which contained occasional shell (oyster, mussel and limpets) and frequent fragments of tile, chalk, and rough, cortex covered flint nodules. Occasional bone (some showing butchery marks), fragments of slate, china, window glass, clay pipe, and plant pot were also present.

The surface of [1] contained frequent areas of modern intrusion [7], with patches of disturbance containing cement bags, brick, iron and plastic. In one area of the garden a modern glass bottle dump was encountered (containing modern Gordon's gin bottles and Schweppes bottles) (See Fig 2). These areas of modern disturbance of the garden soil are likely to derive from modern use of the site as allotment gardens and from recent construction activity at the site, in particular the period of construction of The Workshop itself.

At the westernmost extent of the footing trenches, closest to the course of Pipe Passage a creamy, greyish white deposit of weathered chalk was encountered at the very base of the trench [6].

Two wall footings were encountered during excavation of the footing trenches (see Plates 2 and 3). [3] comprised a footing structure constructed of an eastern side of modern brick laid in five regular stretcher courses upon a minimum 20 cm deep cement and brick rubble foundation (Fig. 3 Section 2). The bricks each measured 22cm x 10 cm x 6 cm and were bonded with a cement mortar. The core of the wall was backfilled with a modern silty clay and rubble deposit. The western side of the footing was constructed of a minimum of two courses of bricks laid face- on, with the frog visible. An iron girder was located across the top of the wall. The bricks had the same dimensions and bonding material as the eastern face of the wall.

A second wall structure was noted running parallel to [3]. Structure [5] had a maximum width of 20cm, and a maximum depth of 14cm, and comprised two length of modern brick, laid in two stretcher courses,

bonded with a cement mortar (Fig. 3, Section 2). The structure was slight and shallow, and was located below the level of modern surface disturbance [7], but was sitting above the deposit of garden soil [1], again suggesting a modern feature – probably a remnant of a garden wall.

#### **4.2 Soak away pit (Plate 1)**

The soak away pit measured 1m<sup>2</sup> and was hand excavated to a depth of 1.36m. It was found to contain a 1m thick layer of garden soil [1]. Below this a section of wall was partially revealed towards the base of the pit extending from the south facing section [2] (Fig. 3, Section 1).

Wall [2] was constructed of two courses of rough weathered red brick. The upper course laid headers on, and the lower with headers laid vertically. They were bonded with a sandy yellow mortar. The bricks measured 65 mm high, 221 mm long and 100 mm wide

Below [2] a friable dark brownish grey silty clay was located for an additional 16cm extending to the base of the pit [4]. This contained frequent chalk fragments, flint nodules and occasional fragments of brick, tile, glass and oyster shell. At the very base of the pit a trace of weathered chalk was partially visible, suggesting that at this depth the excavation was approaching the surface of the underlying geology or town bank [6].

### **5.0 FINDS** by Elke Raemen

#### **5.1 Pottery**

A small assemblage of pottery was recovered, ranging in date from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. The oldest piece was recovered from [4] and consists of the base fragment of a London stoneware tankard dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. All other pottery was recovered from [1], the oldest sherds of which are three white salt-glazed pieces of stoneware with scratch blue decoration, dating to the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. Other pieces are of 19<sup>th</sup> century date and include a blue transfer printed pearlware plate fragment with willow pattern, a piece of blue transfer printed china, a fragment of a white porcelain toy saucer and an unglazed red earthenware flowerpot fragment. Two pieces of 19<sup>th</sup> century refined buff earthenware were also recovered, one of which has “G. H. Richards. London, S. E.” in a garter stamped under the base.

#### **5.2 Ceramic Building Material**

A small assemblage of Ceramic Building Material (CBM) was recovered. Context [2] contained two complete frogged bricks,



adhering to each other with a dull yellow mortar. The bricks are high fired and sparse fine sand-tempered with a moderate tempering of slag to 12 mm. Both pieces measure 65 mm high, 221 mm long and 100 mm wide and are of mid to later 19<sup>th</sup> century date.

Two roof tile fragments were recovered from [4], both of mid 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century date. The pieces are high fired with sparse fine sand-tempering. One of them also has rare chalk inclusions to 2 mm and occasional clay pellets to 3 mm.

### **5.3 Clay Tobacco Pipes**

A relatively large assemblage of Clay Tobacco Pipe (CTP) fragments was recovered from the site. This includes a few early residual pieces. Two plain stem fragments of mid 17<sup>th</sup> century date were recovered from [4]. Context [1] contained another mid 17<sup>th</sup> century piece consisting of a plain bowl fragment with spur and milling under the lip.

Two plain stem fragments and a bowl fragment, all from [1], date to the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The bowl has a round heel with the makers mark "IH" which probably refers to either John Holcom I (†1688) or John Holcom II (†1699), both based in Lewes. Another plain bowl fragment dating to the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was recovered from [4]. A slightly later bowl fragment from [1] is of later 17<sup>th</sup> to early 18<sup>th</sup> century date and is plain apart from milling under the lip.

The later material includes six plain stem fragments from [1] and three pieces, including a mouthpiece, from [4], all dating to the mid 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. A plain bowl fragment from this period from [1] contains the makers mark "TH" on the spur, which probably refers to Thomas Harman (II), who was based in Lewes between 1768 and 1774. Pieces of later 19<sup>th</sup> century date, all from [1], include two decorated bowl fragments, one of which is a Burnes Cutty pipe. Of particular interest is a stem fragment with "G. Corner Lewes" in an oval stamped on the stem. G. Corner is recorded as working at the Pipe passage kiln between 1866 and 1874 (Norris 1970, 168-170).

### **5.4 Glass**

A green wine bottle fragment was recovered from [1] and dates to the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Another wine bottle fragment from [4] is of later 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. One pale blue and three transparent window glass fragments, all dating to the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century, were recovered from [4].

### **5.5 Other Finds**

A general purpose nail was recovered from [4]. Context [1] contained the head of a bone tooth brush with staining from the copper alloy wire used to fix the tufts into the brush. The holes for the tufts are pierced through and on the back there are grooves for the wire. The piece is of later 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century date.

## **5.6 Animal Bone**

Seven fragments of animal bone were recovered from two contexts within this site. Context [1] produced a complete, left rabbit femur. Context [4] produced a fragmented adult sheep mandible and a cattle sized long bone fragment. The long bone fragment has been sawn off at one end and displays knife marks along the shaft.

## **6.0 CARTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE**

**6.1** The earliest map consulted, a plan of the Borough of Lewes dated to 1799 by the cartographer William Figg, indicates that the development site (located to the rear of Freemasons hall and St Michael's church and to the east of the town wall) is undeveloped at this time. A faint indication of land division may suggest the development site lay within the back gardens of Freemasons Hall at this time (Fig. 4).

**6.2** A second map published in 1799 by J Edwards, and a revised edition of this map dating to 1817 appear to contradict Figg's Map. These two Maps appear to indicate that Freemasons Hall may have extended over the development area at this time. However, the cartographic conventions used in the drawing may simply represent property boundaries, rather than actual structures, and perhaps represent an example of the problems inherent in the use of cartographic sources for detailed historical reconstruction of land use (Fig. 5).

**6.3** A later map of Lewes by William Figg dated to 1824 shows the site in more detail, and confirms the undeveloped nature of the land at this period. The location of The Workshop occupies an area of garden to the rear of Freemasons hall, and may straddle a property boundary, or form of land division to the north (Fig. 6).

**6.4** The Ordnance Survey 25 inch First edition of 1873 shows the site in much more detail. It shows that Prospect Cottages have been built in the intervening 49 years, and shows the site of the Workshop to have been occupied by two greenhouses – and several other small garden structures at this time. The northernmost greenhouse is located within the current footprint of The Workshop (and a scar is still visible on the east facing garden wall showing the base of the structure at this time to be lower than the present ground level) and a second structure

occupies a central position within the garden (Fig. 7).

- 6.5** The Ordnance Survey map of 1910 shows the northernmost greenhouse in the same position. The central greenhouse has been enlarged during the intervening 37 years and now abuts the western garden wall. The Ordnance Survey map of 1949 shows no change in the area of the assessment site during the intervening period, suggesting that the area was used for allotment gardens and greenhouses for most of its late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century history (Fig. 8).

## **7.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1** The cartographic evidence suggests that the development site was situated in undeveloped land or garden, to the rear of Freemasons' hall until sometime in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Around this time Prospect Cottages were built, and the area of The Workshop became allotment gardens, occupied by two substantial greenhouse structures and several other small garden features, including a cistern. This form of land use continued throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Due to restrictions on the use of maps in copyright it has not been possible to confirm the late 20<sup>th</sup> century use of the area, but it seems probable that the site continued in use as allotment gardens right up until the construction of The Workshop in the 1990's.
- 7.2** The topography of the site suggests that the site of The Workshop has been built up to create a level garden surface. The west of the site borders Pipe Passage, which follows the course of the medieval town wall. To the east of the site there is a sharp drop to the level of St Michael's churchyard.
- 7.3** The results of the watching brief support this initial assessment. A thick layer of garden soil was present across the site, which upon current evidence appears to have a maximum thickness of 0.60m to the west of the garden, dropping to 1.36 m to the east, confirming that the site is located upon a drop in the underlying geology, or perhaps more likely the medieval town bank.
- 7.4** [1] comprised a 19<sup>th</sup> century deposit of garden soil, incorporating residual pieces of earlier pottery. The thickness of the deposit suggests imported soil, which may possibly have derived from ground preparation prior to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century construction of Prospect Cottages to the north.
- 7.5** Below this, a 19<sup>th</sup> century wall was identified [2], partly exposed in the soakaway pit at a depth of 1m (36.38mOD). This feature is likely to represent a late garden feature or property boundary relating to the gardens at the rear of Freemasons' Hall. Below wall [2] a buried soil

containing some 18<sup>th</sup> century material was encountered [4]. This deposit is likely to derive from the period when the area was undeveloped and used as gardens, and incorporates residual material and domestic refuse, presumably from the use of Freemasons' Hall. It was later sealed by [1] during landscaping of the allotment plot.

- 7.6** Wall footings [3] and [5], (at 37.31m and 37.20mOD respectively) are both late 19<sup>th</sup> century or modern structures. The irregular construction technique of Wall [3] suggests a substantial, but rather makeshift / semi permanent structure – possibly the footing for a large greenhouse. The insubstantial nature of wall [5] suggests that it may constitute a remnant of a garden wall.
- 7.7** A potential problem results from a scar on an east facing garden wall, indicating that the northern greenhouse was situated at a lower level than the current ground level. If, as the pottery evidence suggests, the majority of the site had been built up to close to its current level during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century prior to the construction of the southern greenhouse, this would leave a split level across the site. However, the 1873 map (Fig. 7) does records a flight of steps to the north west of the property, which may explain this discrepancy.

**Cartographic Sources Consulted:**

A plan of the Borough of Lewes, 1799, by William Figg,  
Map of Lewes, 1799 by J Edwards,  
Map of Lewes, 1817 (revised edition of 1799) by J Edwards,  
Map of Lewes, 1824, by William Figg  
The Ordnance Survey 25 inch First edition of 1873  
The Ordnance Survey 1: 2, 500 edition of 1910 (ESRO 54/14)  
The Ordnance Survey 1: 2, 500 revision of 1949 (ESRO 54/14)

**References:**

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**SMR Summary Form**

Site Code	PPL07					
Identification Name and Address	The Workshop, Pipe Passage, Lewes,					
County, District &/or Borough	East Sussex, Lewes District					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR 541279 1100026					
Geology	Upper and Middle Chalk					
Arch. South-East Project Number	3039					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban ✓	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 17- 19/09/07	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Russell Harvey					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin					
Project Supervisor	Alice Thorne					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM ✓	Other Modern		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was maintained during groundwork for an extension to the property on land at The Workshop, Pipe Passage, Lewes, East Sussex. A substantial deposit of imported garden soil was found across the site, indicating that the ground level had been built up, probably at the time a mid 19<sup>th</sup> century row of cottages were constructed to the north. Below this a 19<sup>th</sup> century brick wall foundation and an 18<sup>th</sup> century buried soil deposit were identified. To the north of the site two late 19<sup>th</sup> century to modern wall footings were revealed, most probably relating to the use of the site for allotment gardens and greenhouses.</i></p>						

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-31988**

**Project details**

Project name            The Workshop, Pipe Passage

Short description of the project    An archaeological watching brief was maintained during groundwork for an extension to the property on land at The Workshop, Pipe Passage, Lewes, East Sussex. A substantial deposit of imported garden soil was found across the site, indicating that the ground level had been built up, probably at the time a mid nineteenth century row of cottages were constructed to the north. Below this a nineteenth brick wall foundation and an 18th century buried soil deposit were identified. To the north of the site two late nineteenth century -modern wall footings were revealed, most probably relating to the use of the site for allotment gardens and greenhouses.

Project dates            Start: 17-09-2007 End: 19-09-2007

Previous/future work        No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes    3039 - Contracting Unit No.

Any associated project reference codes    PPL07 - Sitecode

Type of project            Recording project

Site status                Conservation Area

Current Land use        Residential 1 - General Residential

Monument type          WALL FOOTING Post Medieval

Significant Finds        POTTERY Post Medieval

Investigation type      'Watching Brief'

Prompt                    Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

**Project location**

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX LEWES LEWES The Workshop, Pipe Passage, Lewes
Postcode	BN7 1 YG
Study area	20.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 412 100 50.8716559877 0.00701333536063 50 52 17 N 000 00 25 E Point
Height OD	Min: 44.00m Max: 46.00m

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**Project creators**

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Neil Griffin
Project supervisor	Alice Thorne
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Russell Harvey

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**Project archives**

Physical Archive recipient	Local Museum
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Physical Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics'
Digital Archive recipient	Local Museum
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Drawing','Map','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section'

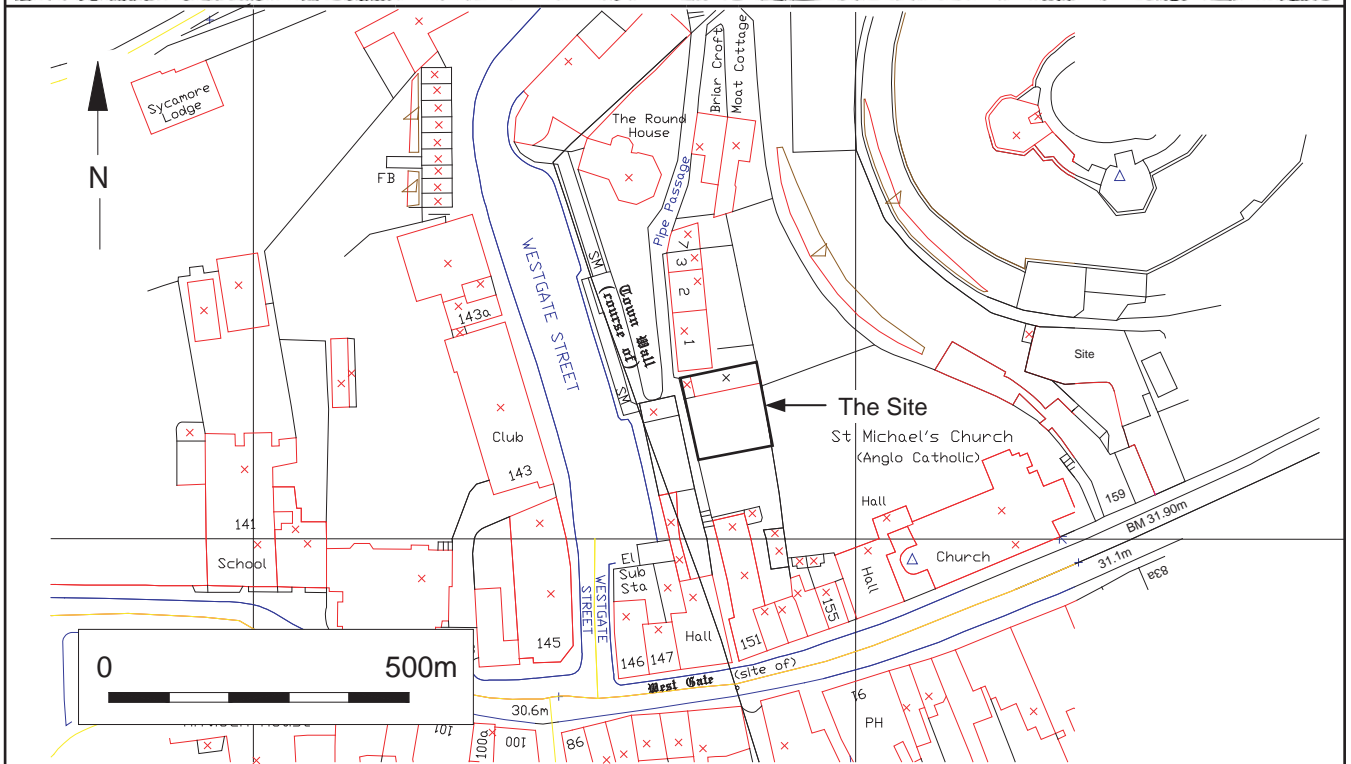
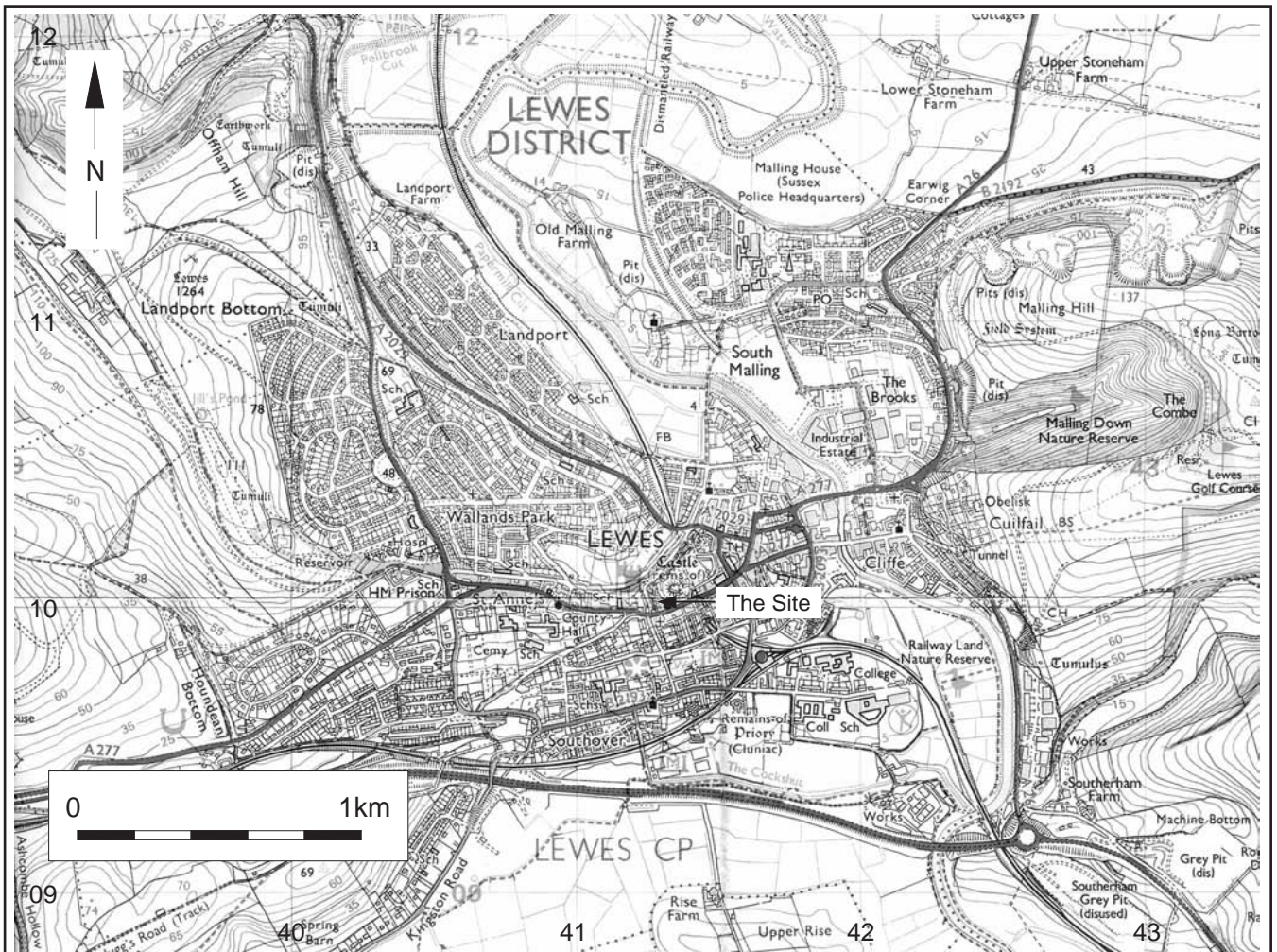
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**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Thorne,A
Other bibliographic details	3039
Date	2007
Issuer or publisher	Archaeology South - East
Place of issue or publication	Archaeology South- East
Description	Grey Literature Report

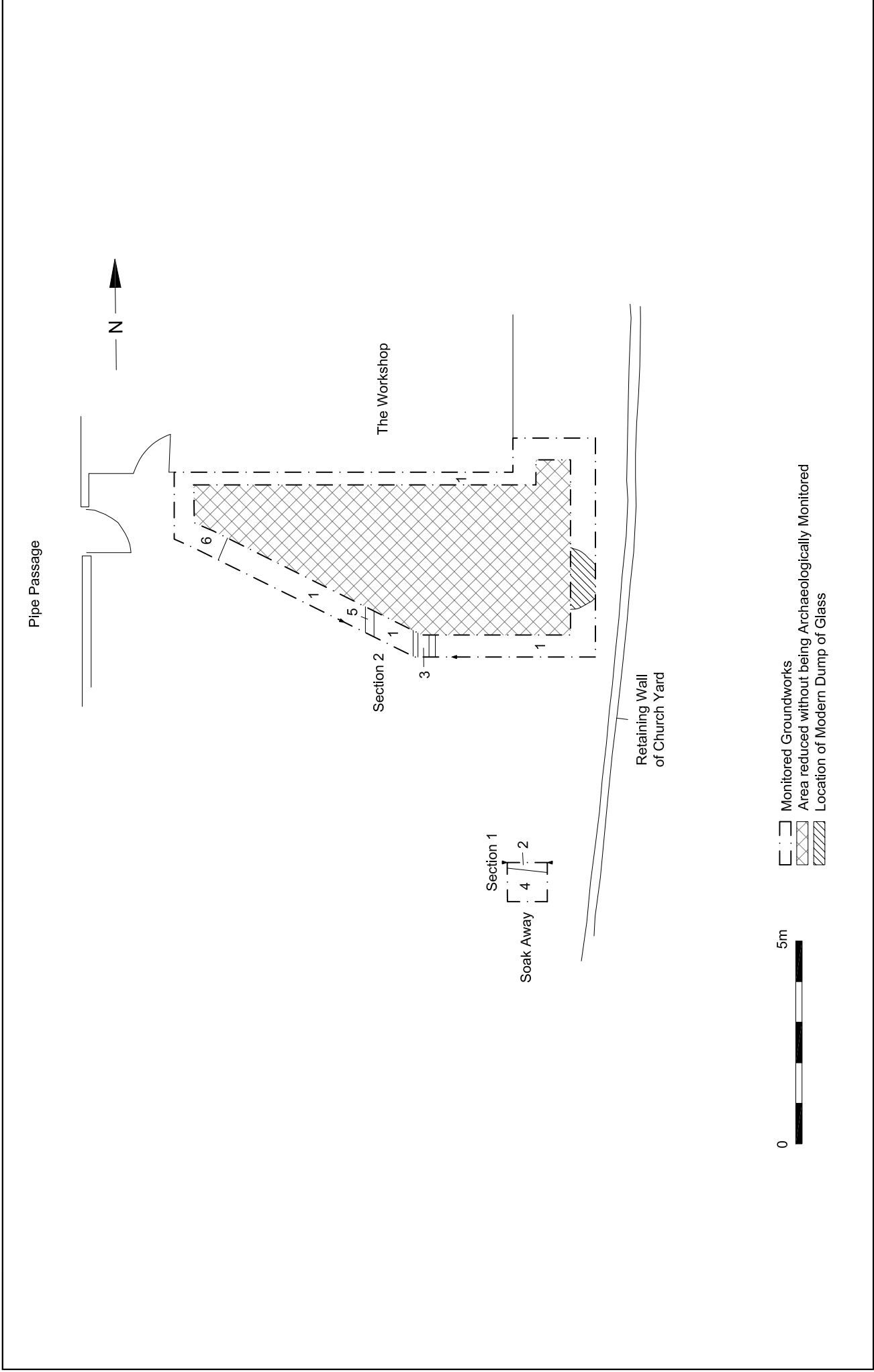
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Entered by	Alice Thorne (tcornath@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	27 September 2007



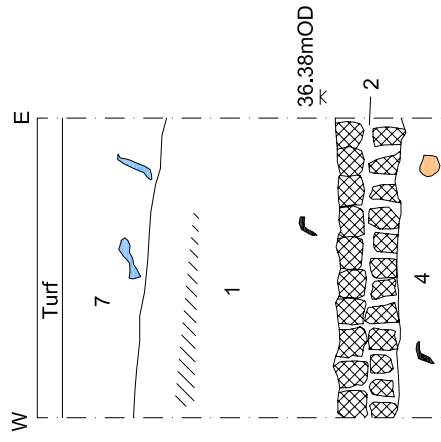
© Archaeology South-East			The Workshop, Pipe Passage, Lewes		Fig. 1
Ref: 3039	Oct 2007	Drawn by: JLR	Site Location Plan		

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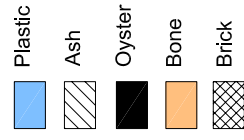
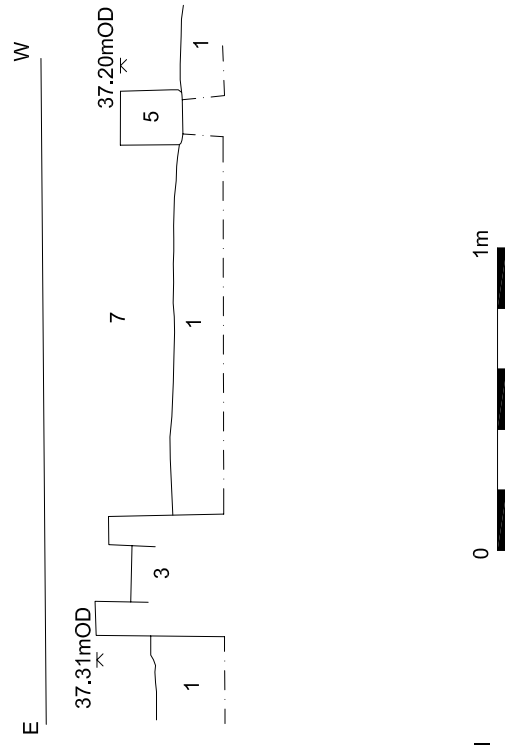


© Archaeology South-East		The Workshop, Pipe Passage, Lewes		Fig. 2
Ref: 3039	Oct 2007	Drawn by:	Site Plan	
			JNC	

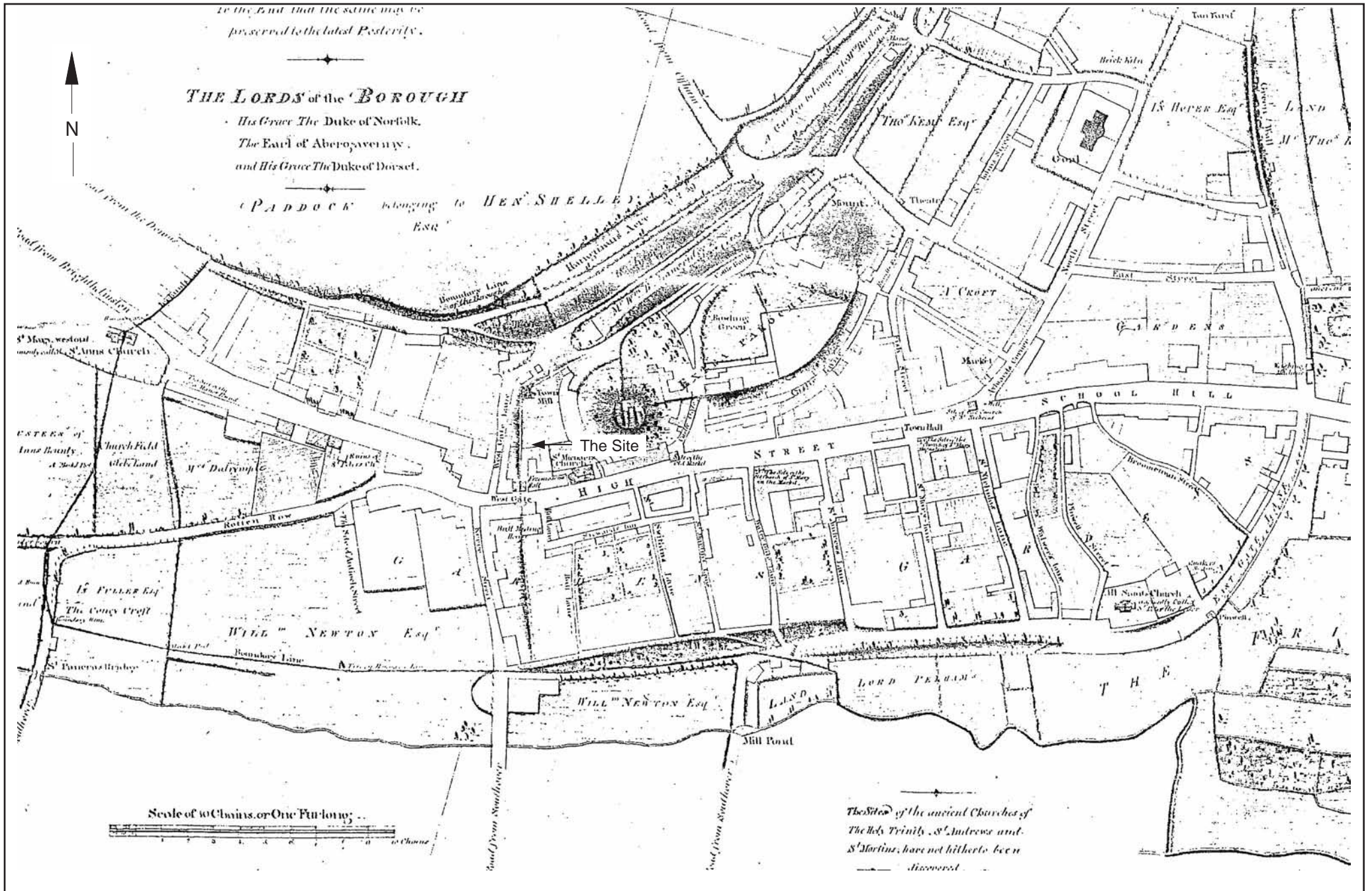
Section 1



Section 2



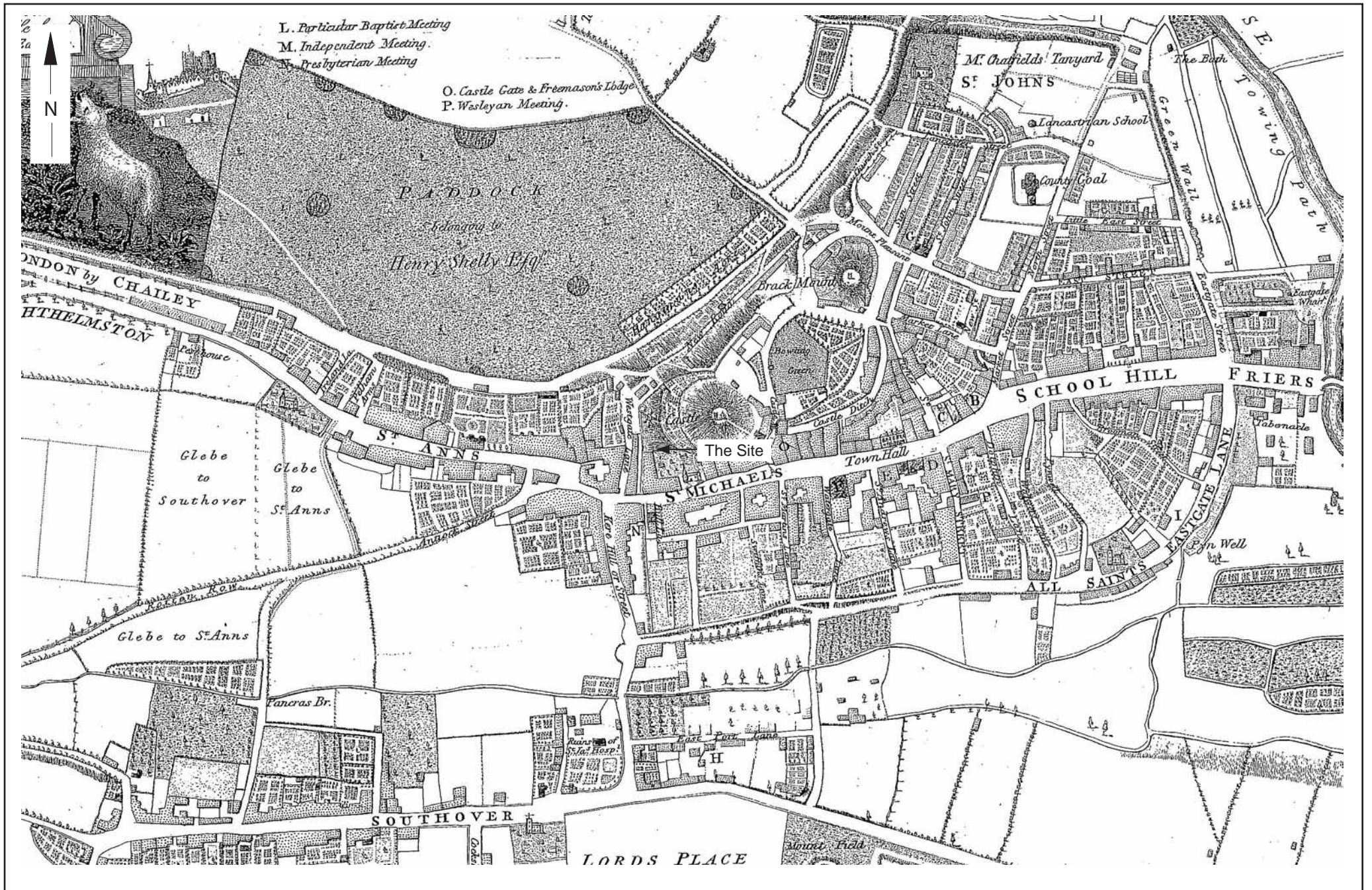




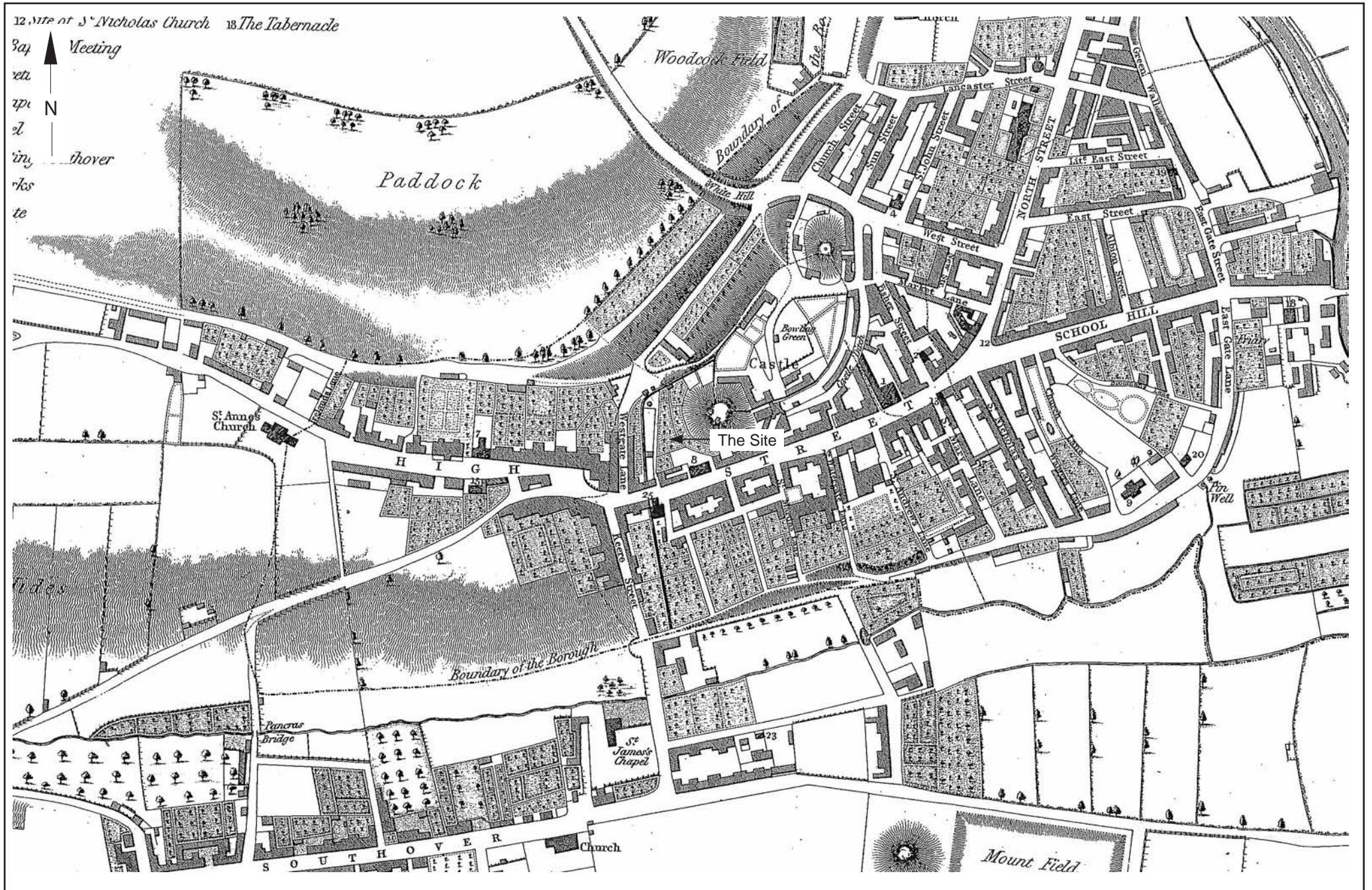
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Ref: 3039	Oct 2007	Drawn by: SM	Plan of the Borough of Lewes 1799, by William Figg

Fig. 4



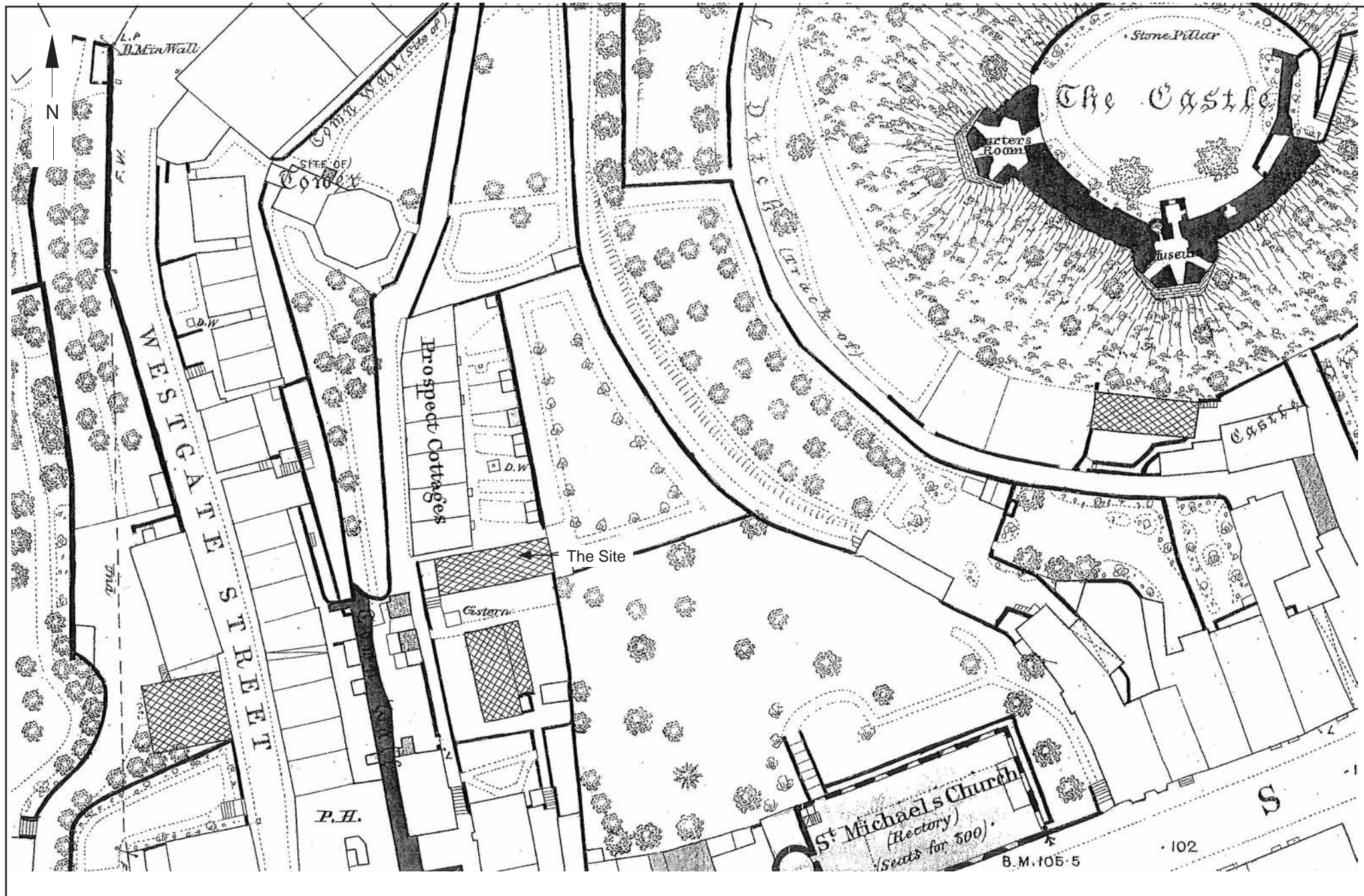






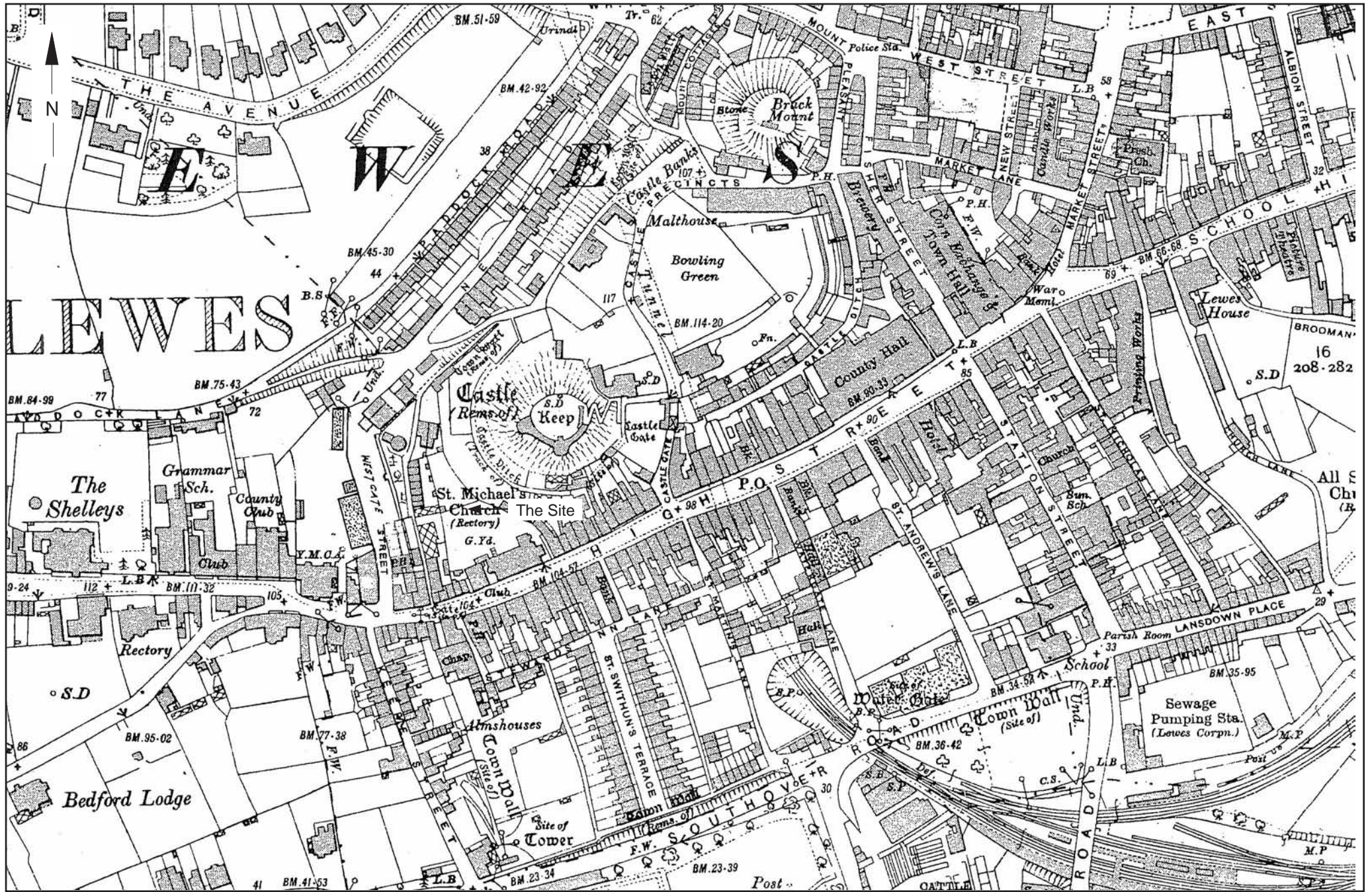
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			Fig. 8