

**Desk Top Evaluation and Walk over Survey at
Lake Road, Market Place Houghton Le Spring**

(NGR NZ 349 499)

1. Introduction

As a result of a request from HMH Architects, a desk top evaluation and walk over survey has been carried out on the former dairy site at the junction of Gravel Walks and Lake Road, Houghton Le Spring, Tyne & Wear. NGR NZ 349 499. (Fig.1 & 2)

This request was in response to a planning application to build a three storey building providing twelve apartments, a boundary wall and car parking facilities

The desk top evaluation was in order to determine from all available records, and a site visit, the likelihood if any of archaeological deposits surviving on the aforementioned site.

Information from the survey would be used to determine if any further archaeological investigations were to be carried out prior to taking the planning application forward.

The information provided below is based on available written records and maps in Houghton le Spring library, and the local records office in Sunderland City Library. In addition, the special collections in Blandford House, Newcastle upon Tyne, the special collections section of Durham University library as well as the British Library have been checked. At least two site visits have been carried out to determine the present nature of the site.

The initial results are described below followed by a discussion and recommendations for future work.

2. Geology and Topography

The site is situated at the foot of the Permian magnesian limestone escarpment at the junction with the carboniferous coal measure series. Specifically the site is situated on laminated clays overlying carboniferous coal measures.

Being at the foot of the escarpment, it is likely that there would be fresh water springs in the vicinity. This proved to be the case, as indicated on the earlier Ordnance Survey maps See attached map, the spring runs along the west side of the site, aligned in a NNE -

SSW direction where it links with another running where the present lake road is located. The springs are now covered over. By what methods the former springs are contained is unknown.

3. The archaeological desk top based assessment: definitions.

At all stages in this assessment the work was carried out according to the Institute of archaeologist's code of conduct.

The Institute of Field Archaeologists defines a desk based assessment as:

“a programme of assessment of the known or potential archaeological resource within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. It consists of a collation of existing written, graphic, photographic and electronic information in order to identify the likely character, extent, quality and worth of the known or potential archaeological resource in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate”

The purpose of a desk based assessment is to:

“gain information about the known or potential archaeological resource within a given area or site (including presence or absence, character and extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and relative quality of the potential archaeological resource), in order to make an assessment of its merit in context, leading to one or more of the following:

- ◆ The formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource.
- ◆ The formulation of a strategy for further investigation, whether or not intrusive, where the character and the value of the resource is not sufficiently as to permit a mitigation strategy or other response to be devised
- ◆ The formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research

4. Methodologies

The following methodologies were employed during this assessment;

1. At least two site visits, where the location was checked without entering the enclosed area. A series of digital photographs were taken on one occasion (Fig.3 & 4)
2. Consultation with a member of the local history society for anecdotal background information of the site
3. Checking the Historic Environment Record based at the West Chapel at Jesmond Old Cemetery.
4. Checking out and noting any relevant information at the following libraries; the British Library, Houghton-Le Spring, Sunderland local records, Blandford House in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. and the University of Durham special collections.

The following description and results are based on based on the above.

5. The Results

The HER record was checked out at West Chapel, for previous archaeological investigations in the area. An exploratory excavation at Kirkland, approximately 200m southeast of the present development site yielded inconclusive results (HER 268). This was at Grid reference NZ 3478 4987. See Fig. 5 [Pink area]. A combined geotechnical/archaeological investigation at Houghton Hall also yielded inconclusive results.

The general pattern of settlement in this area of Houghton le Spring, with settlement along each side of a wide green suggests a medieval if not Saxon origin.

The earliest documentary reference is 1112. It is known that at the time of the Boldon Book, Houghton- le- Spring was an important centre of the Bishops estate with 13 cotmen, 3 half cotmen, bailiff, smith, carpenter, pounder, with work services owed by other vills. The survey by Hatfield lists 4 free tenants, 23 tennants of demesne lands, extensive bond lands and exchequer lands, watermill, brew house, oven and forge.

The village is later described by Surtees as one of the great copyhold manors of the See of Durham, as well as the centre for an extensive parish. Originally, a substantial village, still showing its 17th - 18th century prosperity, on an E-W axis. (See Fig. 5, the 1855 OS map, 25” to one mile [area marked in blue])

At the west end is the rectory, separated from the church by the main road from Durham, then the church the church on the north side of Church Street. In the centre was Quality Hill, now known as Nesham Place with Houghton Hall on its SW corner and its east end, Market Place. Notice the change of place names from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map [1855] to the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map [1897], Figs. 5 & 6.

In 1483 Bishop Dudley granted leave to the rector “to enclose and fortify and embattle a tower” (subsequently removed in the 18th century. In 1574 the Kepier Grammar school was founded and built and in 1668, the Davenport and Lilburne almshouses were constructed. By 1794, Houghton-le-Spring township had a population of 996 persons in 225 families. Further expansion led to a weekly market by 1825; around the same time there were 21 inns and public houses, 2 beer shops and a large brewery on the Durham road. By 1891 the population had risen to 37,921- no doubted accounted for by coal mining and its affiliated and dependant industries.

With reference to the former dairy site, the site was a dairy – known as Houghton Dairies until 10-12 years ago, owned by Trevor Greenshield. Prior to its use as dairy it was a farm – the original farmhouse being demolished many years previous. The buildings appear on all the Ordnance Survey maps.

The earliest date for this farm cannot be ascertained but it may extend back into the 17th century.

The only map known that predates the Ordnance Survey maps, is the 1827 tithe map of the area which depicts buildings where the dairy was located. The map which is too fragile to copy is currently located in the special collections of the University of Durham Library located on Palace Green, Durham City.

The list of owners/tenants of the land in the vicinity of the former dairy listed an important fact – a plot of land listed as 198 is known as BANKS. I take this to indicate possible earthworks- possibly associated with the medieval village? The area known as BANKS is located immediately southwest of the present development site.

6. Discussion and Recommendations

The area proposed for development appears to be located in the Northeast corner of what appears to be the medieval settlement of Houghton-le-Spring. It owes its location due to the springs in the vicinity.

Former earthworks in the area – now gone indicate the site lies within the settlement area. The spring nearby, now covered over would suggest an appropriate area for residential development. The former farm (later used as a dairy) may have medieval origins – the earthworks and watercourses indicate a possibility.

There has been no previous investigation in the vicinity of this site, although no recording had been carried on buildings prior to demolition, enough fragments remain to warrant a record being made prior to site development.

The original date of the farm is not known or whether it had medieval origins. I would therefore recommend in this instance, prior to development, an archaeological evaluation be carried out.

This evaluation would seek to find evidence of presence or absence of archaeological deposits. If any are present, it would be necessary to establish a date as well as the nature of these deposits. The evaluation would help to determine strategies for the further management of the archaeological deposits – if any are present.

With this in mind, I would recommend, three evaluation trenches be excavated within or close by the footprints of the proposed structures (Fig.8). Trench 1 (2m x 10m), Trench 2 (2m x 15m) and Trench 3 (2m x 5m). See Fig.7.

These trenches would be initially excavated by plant under archaeological supervision and finished by hand. A documentary record to be undertaken even the results prove negative.

In addition to these trenches, if the fragments of the former dairy/farm buildings are to be demolished I would recommend a photographic/drawn survey to be made prior to demolition.

Ian J Stewart (Dr) Geoarchaeologist



Contract No. 11006

Note: a copy of this report has been sent to the Tyne & Wear County Archaeological Officer. A further copy has been retained by Ian Farmer Associates, who subscribe to OASIS – a computerised on line documentary resource available to archaeologists where a summary of this report will appear.

Fig. 1 & 2 Site Location Plans

Fig. 3 & 4 Photographic views of site

Fig.5 OS 25" map of area (1st Ed. 1855)

Fig.6 OS 25" map of area (2nd Ed. 1897)

Fig.7 Location plan of proposed trenches (Scale 1:500)

Fig.8 Feasibility plan for supported housing (Scale1:500)



**IAN FARMER
ASSOCIATES**

Geotechnical & Environmental Specialists

Lake Road, Houghton le Spring

Contract No. 11006

Site Location Plans

REPRODUCED FROM ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE
CONTROLLER OF HER MAJESTY'S STATIONARY OFFICE

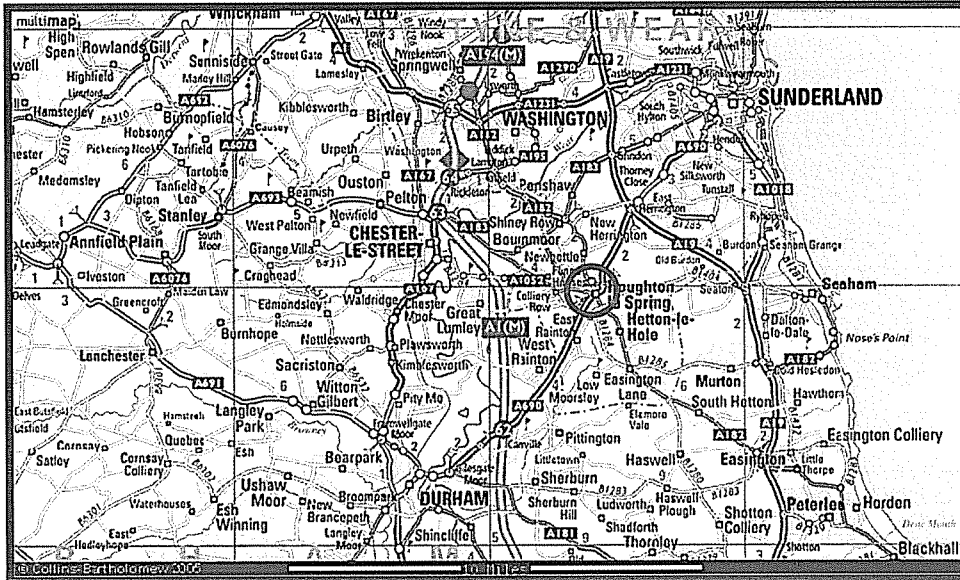


Fig.1 Location of Houghton le Spring (NZ34NW)

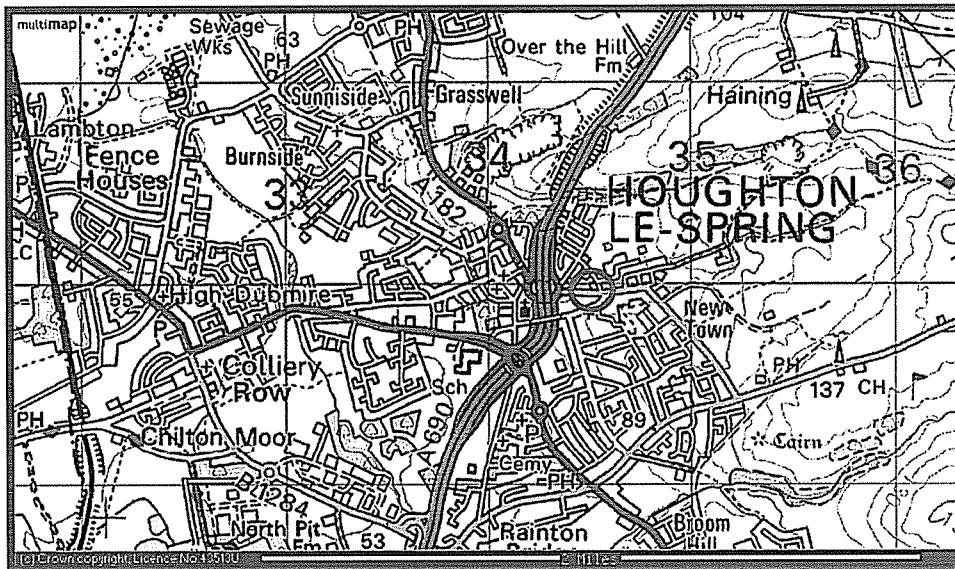


Fig. 2 Location of Lake Road site, Houghton le Spring NGR (NZ 345 499)



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ASSOCIATES**

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Lake Road
Houghton le Spring
Contract No. 11006
Photographic Record



Fig.3 View of Lake Road site looking North

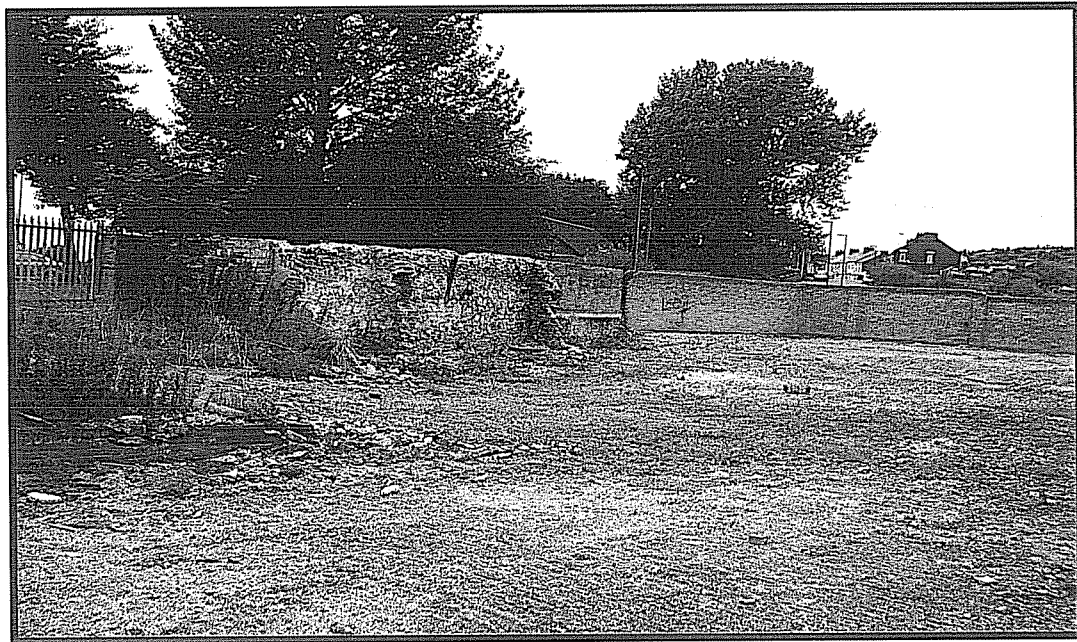
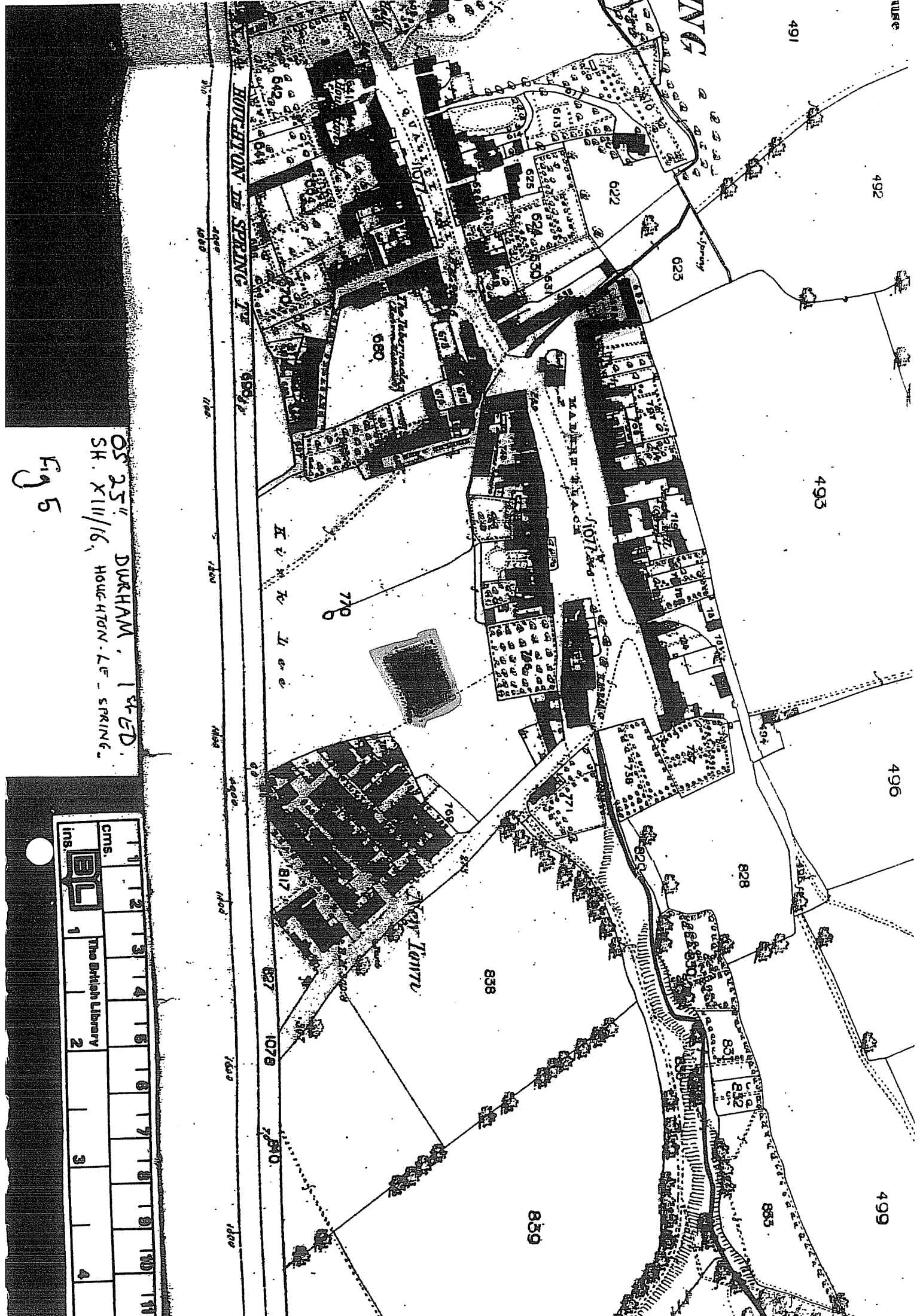


Fig.4 View of Lake road site looking West



OS 25" DURHAM, 1st ED.
 SH. XIII/16, HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING.

Fig 5

ins.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
cms.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
The British Library												
ins.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

HUGHTON LE SPRING

Houghton Le Springs
Wagon Workhouse
85
2-850

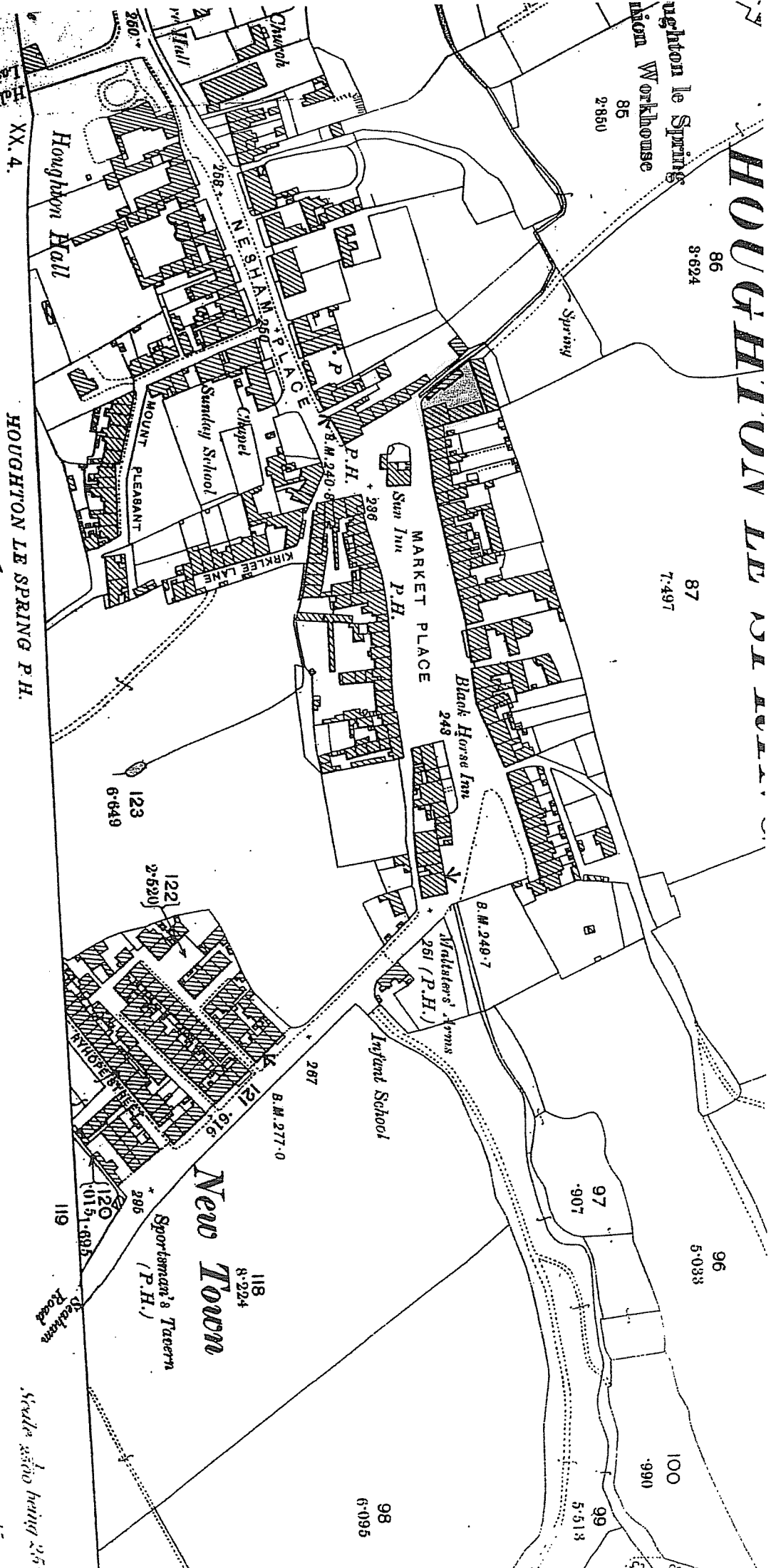
86
8-624

87
7-497

96
5-033

100
-990

98
6-095



Houghton Hall
XX. 4.

HUGHTON LE SPRING P.H.

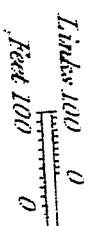
Ordnance Survey Office, Southampton, 1897

The spot which is 0-650 of a foot below the general Mean Level of the Sea

Buildings Walls, etc. have marked thus (* 52) to surface levels.

Scale reduced

Fig 6



N.B. The representation on this map

Scale also being 2 1/2"

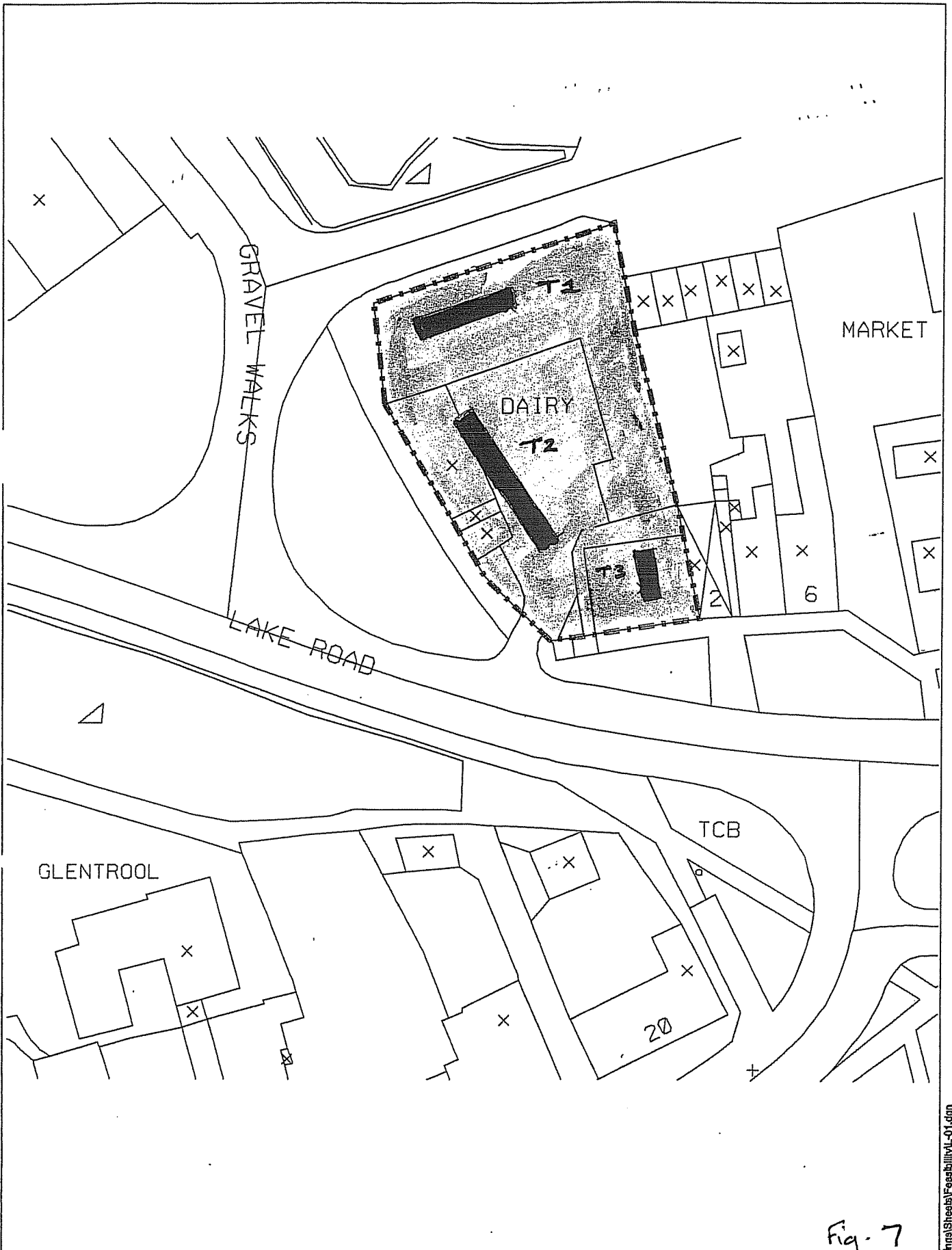


Fig-7

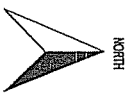
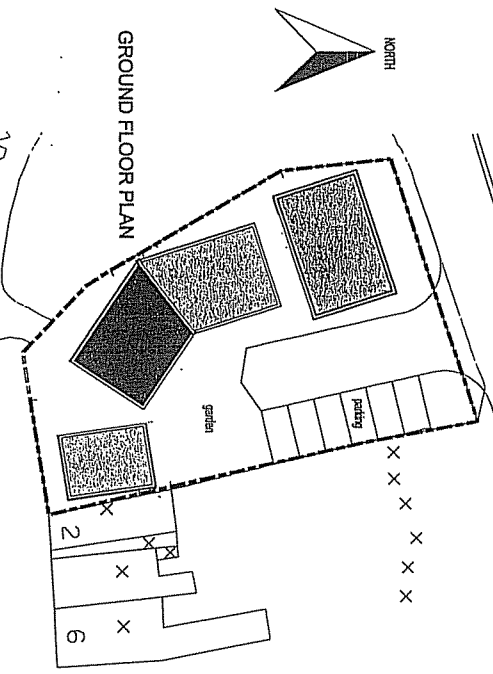
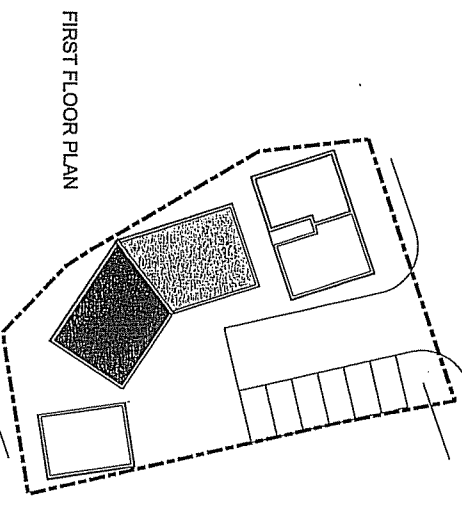
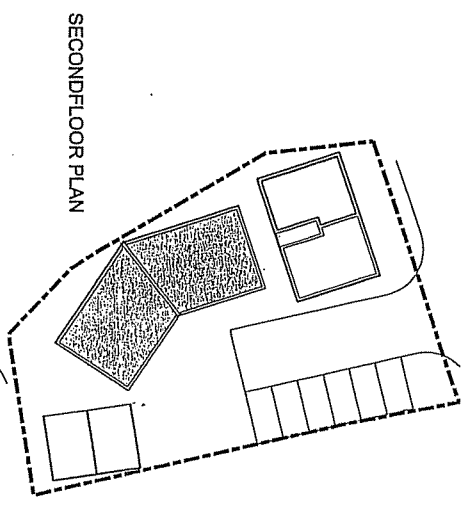


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Project
**ENDEAVOUR HOUSING ASSOCIATION
 SUPPORTED HOUSING
 LAKE ROAD, HOUGHTON LE SPRING**

Drawing Sheet			
LOCATION PLAN			
By VM	Check JK	Scale 1:500	Date MAY 2006
Project Number 3798	Drawing Sheet Number L-01	Rev/Lon	

filename: F:\3798\Drawings\Sheets\Feastibility_L-01.dgn
 time plotted: 09:28:03
 Date plotted: 12/05/2006



ENDEAVOUR HOUSING ASSOCIATION

SUPPORTED HOUSING

HOUGHTON LE SPRING

FEASIBILITY LAYOUT

CIRCULATION:

SHARED FACILITIES:
 Entrance hall,
 Interview, Parent's lounge,
 Smoker's room,
 People First facility, wc,
 Toddler's room,
 Teenager's homework room,
 Kitchen, Laundry

STAFF FACILITIES:
 Office, wc, locker room,
 staff sleepover & en-suite
 40.5sqm

RESIDENTS' ACCOMMODATION:

1no. 3B5P flat @ 85.5sqm

3no. 2B4P flats @ 61.1sqm
 1no. 2B4P wheelchair flat
 @ 66.0sqm

3no. 1B2P flats @ 40.5sqm
 2no. 1B1P bedsits @ 38.5sqm

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fig 8

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