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**170 High Street, Deritend,
Birmingham: An Archaeological
Desk-Based Assessment
2002**

by
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Summary

A desk-based assessment was carried out in September 2002 by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit in advance of the proposed re-development of 170 High Street, Deritend in Birmingham City Centre by Andrews Construction. The proposed development site covers the majority of the northern part of the street block defined by High Street Deritend, the River Rea, Bradford Street, Birchall Street and Stone Yard (NGR SP 0780/8629). The proposed development site probably contains below-ground remains of former channels of the River Rea, evidence for the deliberate culverting of the river in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and deposits relating to the eighteenth and nineteenth century industries in this area. It is thought that the proposed development site lies too far to the south of the original line of High Street, Deritend to contain substantial remains of any causeway which formerly carried the routeway over the River Rea.

1.0 Introduction

This report describes the results of a desk-based assessment carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) ahead of a planning application (Application No. C/02916/02/FUL) by Andrews Construction to re-develop 170 High Street, Deritend, Birmingham City Centre (Figure 1). The site is a former petrol station on the corner of High Street Deritend and Stone Yard (Figure 2). This assessment was required by Birmingham City Council's Planning Department because the area around the Digbeth/High Street Deritend routeway is known to have a high potential for buried archaeological remains dating from the medieval period onwards. The brief issued by Birmingham City Council (BCC 2002, see Appendix) envisages that this assessment will form the first stage of an archaeological response designed to mitigate the impact of the proposed development on any buried archaeological deposits contained within the proposed development site. This assessment follows a written scheme of investigation (BUFAU 2002) which has been approved by the council. The assessment has been conducted following guidelines contained in the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1999).

2.0 Location of the proposed development site and study area

The proposed development site lies in the southern part of Birmingham City Centre to the south of the A41 High Street Deritend route (Figures 1 and 2). The site lies to the east of the River Rea, immediately adjacent to Deritend Bridge, it is bounded by High Street Deritend to the north, Stone Yard on the east, retail premises and an alley to the south and former factory buildings on the west. The proposed development site covers the majority of the northern part of the street block formed by High Street Deritend, Stone Yard,

Birchall Street, Bradford Street and the present course of the River Rea (Figure 2). In order to set the proposed development site in its historical context the whole street block, not just the proposed development site, was assessed.

3.0 Geology and topography

Central Birmingham is situated on the north side of the Rea Valley on a narrow Keuper Sandstone ridge. The study area is in an area of relatively flat, low-lying land to the southeast of the city centre and lies at the base of the Rea Valley. The River Rea flows across a fault at the bottom of Digbeth, water draining from the sandstone accumulates and issues as springs in this area. The drift geology of the valley floor in this area consists of scattered patches of sand and gravel, which are overlain in places by deposits of alluvium that have built up around the Rea.

4.0 Objectives

The general objective of this assessment was to determine the likely survival and significance of archaeological remains within the proposed development site so the requirement for any further archaeological work in advance of construction can be determined. The particular aims of the assessment were:

- The likely survival of remains of industrial processes from the medieval period onwards.
- The likely survival of palaeoenvironmental deposits
- The likely survival of a possible causeway over the River Rea in this location
- The overall potential of the site to contribute to an understanding of the historic development of this part of Birmingham.

5.0 Method

A variety of sources were consulted. Historic and modern maps, trade directories, secondary sources and unpublished material were consulted. Material within the Local Studies and Archives departments of the Birmingham Reference Library (BRL) proved to yield the most relevant information on the study area. No geotechnical information was available. A walkover survey of the site and the study area was also carried out.

6.0 Present character (Figure 2)

The superstructure of the petrol station has been removed and the site is currently boarded-off with fencing and advertising hoardings (Plate 1). The surface of the site is comprised of a variety of materials, including block paving around the positions of the petrol pumps, concrete, and the tile floor of the former petrol station shop. Ground level within the proposed development site slopes upward slightly from the corner of High

Street and Stone Yard towards the southwest corner of the site (Plate 1). The development site is raised slightly above the level of the Stone Yard pavement, suggesting that the land within the site may have been raised artificially.

A complex of disused industrial buildings lies between the proposed development site and the River Rea. These buildings date to the early twentieth century and are of at least two types of construction. Some are metal framed with corrugated iron skins while others are brick-walled with corrugated-iron roofs (Plate 1).

Immediately to the south of the development site, by the sharp bend in Stone Yard, is a modern retail and warehouse building currently occupied by a nursery retailer - 'Just Kidding'. The building is steel framed with brick infill and corrugated steel panels, and the roof is also corrugated steel (Plate 2). The remainder of the buildings on Stone Yard are a mix of late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century industrial buildings, of mixed character, currently occupied by a number of businesses (Plate 2). The building on the corner plot of Stone Yard and Birchall Street is a two storeyed brick structure dating to the late nineteenth-century or very early-twentieth century (Plates 2 and 3). This appears to be a former office-block of a factory complex. There is a letter box, inscribed 'R. Jones and Company', on the Birchall Street frontage. Two large factory workshops front onto Birchall Street (Plate 3). These are of a unified construction, the northerly of the two also abutts the former office building (Plate 3). The southern workshop is in use as the premises of a garage and MOT centre.

The White Swan Public House is on the corner of Birchall Street and Bradford Street (Plates 3 and 4). The White Swan is a Grade II listed building dating to c.1900 (see section 8.1 below). Next to The White Swan on Bradford Street is a single-storeyed early twentieth century industrial brick building. The rest of Bradford Street within the study area up to the River Rea is occupied by large modern buildings. Most of this area is taken up by Bradford House, a now-vacant four-storeyed office building dating to the early 1960s (Plates 4 and 5). A large former factory/warehouse building lies between Bradford House and the River Rea (Plate 5). This is mainly constructed in brick with a steel framed roof of asbestos and glass. Its frontage to Bradford Street is double-gabled and has extremely large steel framed windows and is currently used by 'International Stock Ltd.' (Plate 5). The River Rea is not visible on this side of Bradford Street as it has been built over by factory and warehouse structures. The buildings to the rear of the Bradford Street frontage were not accessible at the time of the survey. Limited views from the street frontages suggest that this area is built over by late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century factory, warehouse and office buildings.

The River Rea runs through the study area in a wide brick-culvert, observed from the south side of Bradford Street and from the 'International Stock Ltd.' car park south of Deritend Bridge (Plate 6). The river runs at the base of the culvert, which is a straight-sided with a shallow, concave base. The base of the culvert is at least 1.9m below the modern street level at Bradford Street suggesting that the level of the ground immediately around the culverted river may have been raised to facilitate construction of buildings.

7.0 Archaeological and historical background

7.1 Previous archaeological work

Digbeth and Deritend are two former medieval suburbs of Birmingham. Prior to the 1990s very little archaeological work, often limited to salvage recording, had been carried out in these areas. Salvage recording carried out by Sherlock during road widening to convert Deritend High Street to a dual carriageway in 1953 identified a large amount of finds near the former site of the medieval St John's Chapel, on the corner of Chapel House Street (cited in Litherland 1995, 6). These included a polished stone axe of Early Neolithic to Early Bronze Age date, sandstone foundations presumed to be those of St. John's Chapel, medieval 'Deritend Ware' pottery and wasters from pottery manufacture dating to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The presence of wasters at this site suggested that 'Deritend Ware' pottery was produced nearby.

A number of archaeological investigations have been undertaken in Digbeth and Deritend since the mid-1990s. This is due largely to archaeological involvement in the numerous re-development and regeneration programmes and, also, to the realisation that despite intensive industrial development in these areas in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, archaeological remains of medieval and early post-medieval activity can survive. Work at the Old Crown in Deritend in 1994 again found medieval 'Deritend Ware' wasters. Other archaeological work has demonstrated a high incidence of medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains – frequently including waterlogged deposits– surviving as 'islands' between disturbance by nineteenth and twentieth century development. Excavations in Digbeth and Deritend have produced important evidence for medieval and post-medieval industrial activity, particularly leather tanning. Archaeological work immediately around the River Rea has shown that the level of this area was substantially raised – by two to three metres in places – in the later nineteenth century to counteract flooding and to enable building.

Most of the recent archaeological work conducted in Digbeth and Deritend has concentrated on the north side of the Digbeth/High Street, Deritend routeway. Consequently, relatively little is known of the south side of the street, in which the present study area lies.

7.2 Historical background

The study area adjoins the River Rea at the western edge of the medieval settlement of Deritend, which had effectively become a suburb of Birmingham by the later medieval period. Birmingham became an important centre and market in the medieval period as it lay at the focus of several local and cross-country routes. One of the main roads into Birmingham was the Digbeth/High Street, Deritend routeway, which was one of the only crossings of the marshy Rea Valley in the area and led on to the routes southeast to Coventry and Stratford. The study area lies on this routeway, immediately south of

Deritend Bridge, where the crossing of the Rea was made from at least the medieval period. Deritend probably developed due to the importance of this routeway. Deritend lies in the ancient parish of Aston and was a part of the manor of Bordesley, originally outside the manor of Birmingham. It has been argued that the coherent plan of Deritend, as seen on early eighteenth century maps, indicates that it may have originated as a deliberately planned market street in the earlier medieval period as an attempt to capture some of the trade passing to and from Birmingham (Baker in Litherland 1995, 8). Whatever the precise origins of Deritend it was a successful settlement and was acquired by the lords of Birmingham by the later thirteenth century. The inhabitants of Deritend were allowed to establish a chapel of ease to spare the long journey to their parish church at Aston in 1381. The inhabitants established the Guild of St. John to support the chapel, the guild was sufficiently wealthy to support two priests and a school.

In the mid-sixteenth century the antiquarian and traveller John Leland described Deritend High Street as a “pretty strete, in which dwelle smithes and cuttlers”. The timber framed Old Crown Inn, probably dating to the early sixteenth century, still stands on the north side of High Street, and another timber framed inn now in Cannon Hill Park, The Golden Lion, stood on the south side. Deritend remained a small settlement focused on the High Street and comprising houses with gardens, inns, commercial premises and small-scale industries, like those mentioned by Leland, until the end of the eighteenth century.

As Birmingham grew during the eighteenth century Deritend became subsumed within the town. The cutting of Bradford Street in the later eighteenth century led to infilling, mainly with housing and small-scale industrial buildings, of the land between it and High Street, Deritend by the end of the century. The increasing industrialisation of Birmingham from the late eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century turned Deritend into an essentially industrial suburb. There was increasingly dense industrial building in the backplots of Deritend in the early to mid-nineteenth century and the consolidation of smaller industrial holdings into large factories in the latter half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. Building in the areas immediately around the River Rea was facilitated in the 1850s by culverting the river and by the raising of surrounding areas using imported materials. The River Rea was straightened in the late eighteenth century. It continued to flow erratically in the early nineteenth century and was a flooding risk, it became increasingly polluted by industry and sewage, the old river channel was described as being a ‘sewage lake’ (Bunce 1878, 324). This led to the culverting works in the 1850s.

Deritend remained largely industrial into the late twentieth century and was home to some very large firms, such as Birds Custard. The area suffered in the Second World War and some bomb damaged buildings were never re-built. The recession of the 1970s and early 1980s led to the disuse and dereliction of many industrial properties in Deritend. Some industry continues in Deritend but the majority of the former industrial properties have been demolished with new service sector or retail properties constructed on their sites. Many former industrial buildings have also been converted to new uses such as offices, retail premises, service depots and, increasingly, residential accommodation.

8.0 The study area

8.1 Archaeology (Figure 2)

Twenty records exist in a 250m radius of the proposed development site on the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) for Birmingham. A selective list of these records is included below; records of recent standing buildings outside the study area, including structures relating to the Bird's Custard factory, have been omitted (Figure 2).

SMR No. 01251

Old Crown Public House

NGR SP 0800/8632

A Grade II* listed building and the oldest surviving secular building in Birmingham city centre. This has been identified with the 'mansion house of timber' noted by Leland in 1538. It was originally thought to date from 1368 but seems to have been rebuilt in the early sixteenth century and restored in 1862. The building is timber framed with plaster infill and a tile roof.

An evaluation in the yard found wasters of thirteenth or fourteenth century pottery, including "Deritend Ware" indicating pottery production on or near the site. A watching brief on trenches dug during renovations identified 'islands' of archaeological deposits between later disturbance. Several possibly medieval features were located, including a ditch running parallel to Heath Mill Lane and two sandstone foundation blocks in the old Stable Block. Medieval pottery wasters were found but no kiln structures were observed. Post-medieval features recorded included brick- built features, cobble and paviour surfaces, levelling deposits and structural debris.

SMR No. 02110

19th Century Building, Digbeth

NGR SP 0779/8638

Grade II building of circa 1860; constructed of polychromatic brick with stone dressings; with slate roof. The building occupies the corner plot of Digbeth and Milk Street and is five storeyed; seven bays on Digbeth plus the corner and another seven bays on the left-hand frontage in Milk Street. Ground floor has apparently original shop fronts.

SMR No. 02993

Chapel of St. John the Baptist

NGR SP 078/862

The chapel of St John the Baptist was founded in the later fourteenth century and stood at the corner of Chapel House St and High St, Deritend. In the sixteenth century two priests are noted; one was a schoolmaster. The fourteenth century building was replaced in 1735. The site was sold in 1939 and the chapel was demolished in 1947. Salvage Excavation before redevelopment by BUFAU and BMAG took place in 1983.

SMR No. 02996

Deritend Polished Stone Axe

NGR SP 078/863

Found in 1953 during road widening 0.6m below ground level on the site of St John's Chapel, Deritend. Petrological report identified the axe as belonging to Langdale Group VI.

SMR No. 03302

Syres House

NGR SP 080/863

Known from documentary evidence to exist next door to Old Crown. Family lived here from 1450 for about 100 years. Records of family at Aston Church.

SMR No. 20096

Town Mill

NGR SP 076/863

Medieval and post-medieval mill situated on Mill Lane.

SMR No. 20234

The White Swan Public House

NGR SP 078/862

Grade II Listed Building. Public House of 1899-1900 by James and Listed Lea for Angels Brewery. Situated on corner of Bradford Street and Birchall Street. Red brick and Terracotta; slate roof with coped gables, terracotta dentilled eaves and pierced ridge tiles.

SMR No. 20427

Hartwell Smithfield Garage, East

NGR SP076/684

Evaluation demonstrated the survival of "islands" of archaeological deposits between areas of later disturbance. Layers dated from c. 1500 to c. 1800 and included waterlogged deposits containing leather and wood. There were also the remains of late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century brick buildings. A watching brief was carried out during the subsequent development. This identified building remains and deposits of late post-medieval date and undated midden deposits, a surface, a garden soil and a rubbish pit. No deposits of medieval or early post medieval date were identified, possibly due to the depth of the groundworks and/or the earlier topography. Earlier deposits may survive below the level reached in the watching brief.

SMR No. 20431

Custard Court

NGR SP 080/863

The site lies in the medieval suburb of Deritend and may originally have been laid out as a market area. The site may not have been developed in the medieval period as it was prone to flooding from the nearby River Rea; the site is an open space on eighteenth century maps. An evaluation (one 16m by 2m trench) found no medieval or early post medieval activity. The trench located eighteenth century pottery, a nineteenth century brick floor and a large pit/ditch (a possible eighteenth century boundary/drain running down Heath Mill Lane) and twentieth century buildings. The nineteenth century buildings are probably those shown on the 1889 Ordnance Survey map (a lockworks, monumental works and a dwelling), these were built between 1838 and 1848 and replaced after 1905 by terraces of small houses. Excavation in 2000 found four phases of activity: Phase 1, thirteenth to fourteenth century (occupation layers, postholes and a gully); Phase 2, late seventeenth to mid eighteenth century (6 pits, probably clay pits for brickmaking); Phase 3, eighteenth century (5 tanning pits, 3 wells and 2 small pits of a documented tannery and bark mill); Phase 4 (nineteenth century artisan housing).

SMR No. 20433

Oxford Street Gasholders

NGR SP 076/865

Two gasholders shown on Pigott Smith map c. 1850. Site now occupied by tarmac forecourt, gasholders

may partially-survive under tarmac.

SMR No. 20614

Green Street, Deritend

NGR SP 20614

Seventeenth and eighteenth century pottery found during salvage excavation in November 1983. The remains of nineteenth century factories were partly identified. The site was waterlogged and a 6m length was selected for detailed investigation, which was cleaned, drawn, and recorded. Finds from cleaning the section included glass, clay pipe and pottery. Types of pottery found were; midland purple, cistercian ware, white stoneware and other stoneware. Subsequent excavation of two areas revealed a considerable amount of post-medieval disturbance, the two possibly medieval features – a post-hole and a slot – did not contain finds. A few medieval sherds came from a buried topsoil layer directly above natural. The rest of the ceramic assemblage was post-medieval. Brick-built features were found in one area, these were part of a nineteenth century button-maker's workshop.

SMR No. 20615

High Street, Deritend

NGR SP 0789/8630

Large amounts of medieval pottery was found in High Street Deritend near Chapel House Street road widening in 1953. This included a hard unglazed gritty ware, some grey with red fractures and core, most sherds were of undecorated cooking pots. One sherd had a gutter-like spout similar to fourteenth century pottery found at Ashton (near Chester). Some sherds were black with a mainly purple core, these were badly cracked and distorted and were identified as wasters. The wasters suggests that kilns producing this pottery are situated nearby. Similar pottery was found in hearths dating to AD 1276-80 at Weoley Castle.

SMR No. 20637

Digbeth and Deritend Medieval and Post-medieval Settlement

NGR SP 077/862 (centred)

Extent of Digbeth/Deritend medieval and post-medieval settlement

SMR No. 20642

Hartwell Smithfield Garage, West

NGR SP 076/864

An evaluation and watching brief were carried out in advance of redevelopment. Trenching showed survival of medieval pits on the eastern side of the development area. The remainder of the recorded deposits and features consisted of nineteenth century cellars and services and their associated trenches. The pits contained thirteenth and fourteenth century pottery and environmental material, including coal, charred seeds, and fibres which may be a by-product of textile manufacture.

SMR No. 20664

Floodgate Street Tanning Site

NGR SP 078/863

An assessment showed the site of an eighteenth century and earlier leather tanning in this area and suggested survival of "islands" of archaeological deposits, including the potential for waterlogging and remains of a causeway over the River Rea. An evaluation (three trenches) showed heavy disturbance by cellaring but also demonstrated the survival of earlier deposits. A seventeenth century waterlogged deposit was found at a depth of 1.6m below the present surface in Trench 1b, near the Floodgate Street/Digbeth corner, a similar deposit was revealed at a depth of 1.8m in Trench 3, in the centre of the site. Sandstone blocks, reused in foundations, were found in Trench 2, on the Milk Street side of the site, and were contemporary with a nineteenth century deposit. The other deposits and features encountered were of nineteenth century cellars (backfilled in the twentieth century) and services. Subsequent excavation has

provided evidence for medieval boundary ditches, palaeochannels and waterlogged deposits and seventeenth century tanning processes.

SMR No. 20684

Custard Factory/210 High Street, Deritend

NGR SP 078/863

Desk-based assessment in 2002 indicated likely good survival of below-ground archaeological deposits. These may include remains of post-medieval industry such as leather-tanning, medieval occupation and a potential causeway across the River Rea – waterlogged deposits are likely. The site contains nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings related to the Custard Factory.

8.2 Development of the study area

It is known that the Digbeth/High Street, Deritend routeway, as one of the only crossings over the marshy Rea valley for miles, was important as a means of long and short distance trade and contact throughout the medieval period. It is likely that this routeway, and its river crossing at Deritend Bridge, was an important route for several centuries. The find of a polished stone axe by the side of High Street, Deritend (SMR No. 02996) near to Deritend Bridge shows that this area saw prehistoric activity, this may be related to the river crossing. The routeway was probably established at the very earliest by the Anglo-Saxon period. The routeway runs from Birmingham to other known centres of Anglo-Saxon settlement – Coventry and Stratford – and it is likely that the routeway crossed the River Rea at the same point in this period. The name of Digbeth also originated in the Anglo-Saxon period, early spellings of Digbeth show that the name was probably derived from a term for ‘dyke path’. This also suggests that the routeway may have been raised on a dyke at this date.

Deritend Bridge is the only feature within the study area which is well documented before the mid-nineteenth century. The bridge was the subject of a protracted court case between the justices of the borough of Birmingham and the inhabitants of the county of Warwickshire over bridge repairs between 1625 and 1642 (referred to in Gill 1952, 51). The bridge had fallen into such a state of disrepair by the mid-sixteenth century that visitors to the town thought that it had been sabotaged in the Civil War (Gill 1952, 51). The repairs were finally carried out in 1652 (Gill 1952, 51) but the form of the bridge at this date is unclear. William Hutton, in his *History of Birmingham*, refers to the erection of a new stone bridge in 1750 and states that earlier bridges were mainly of timber (1783, 220). Westley’s prospect of the town – drawn up in 1731 – shows a wide stone bridge carried over the river on three piers (Figure 3). This shows that the river was spanned by a stone bridge from at least the earlier eighteenth century.

The earliest map of the study area dates to 1732 and was also drawn by Westley (Figure 4). Westley’s map and prospect show most of the study area lay within a riverside meadow. At this time the River Rea made an abrupt double bend before running under Deritend Bridge, the remainder of the study area lay over this bend at this date. The proposed development site lay partially in the meadow and partially over the river channel in 1732. A street called Brickhill Road ran along the eastern edge of the study area in 1732, this later became Birchall Street and Stone Yard. The name of this street

may show that brick-making had been carried out in this area or, alternatively that the street leads to a brick-pit.

The street block which forms the study area was fully established by the later eighteenth century and is first shown on Hanson's plan of Birmingham (1778). By this date Bradford Street had been cut through and the lines of Birchall Street (Birch Hole Street) and Stone Yard had assumed their present course (Figure 5). The name Birch Hole Street, if it is not a corruption of the street's earlier name Brickhill Road, may also be an indicator of the nature of industry carried out in this area. Pits filled with bark were used in leather tanning, a well documented industry in Digbeth and Deritend in the medieval and early post-medieval period, and the name of this street may refer to such features.

A plan of Birmingham, published in 1795, shows that the course of the River Rea had been altered to the line of its modern course (not illustrated). The original works to alter the course of the Rea were carried out between 1778 and 1795; it has not been possible to locate any documents which relate to this process so its unclear what the works entailed.

The next detailed map of the study area is the Pigott-Smith plan of 1828 (Figure 6). This plan shows the new course of the River Rea and illustrates that, by 1828, The study area was built-up with a mixture of housing and industrial buildings. The plan shows that a new street frontage, to the south of High Street by Deritend Bridge, had developed in the centre of the proposed development site. This is called Bridge Row on later maps and trade directories. The frontage of these properties lined-up with the south bank of the old river channel. Between Bridge Row and the High Street was an open area, this area corresponds to position of the former river channel so by this date the river channel had been in-filled. This may mean that these properties were built prior to the straightening of the river or, alternatively, that the ground between them and the High Street was not stable to build on, lying over a recently abandoned river channel. It is unclear precisely when the development of the area began, but it was probably between 1790 and the 1820s.

The first detailed view of the individual buildings in the study area is the plan of the town drawn up by Pigott-Smith, the borough surveyor, at a scale of 1:528 between 1851 and 1860 (Figure 7). The plan shows a mixture of residential and industrial development in the study area. The plan shows the frontage of Bridge Row was occupied by housing with the backplots occupied by industrial shoppings and back-to-back housing. It is unlikely that the buildings on Bridge Row were cellared as they lay right next to the former river channel and very close to the river's course at that date. The northern half of the Stone Yard frontage was occupied by housing. The buildings in the area defined by the southern part of Stone Yard, Birchall Street and part of Bradford Street form a distinct block. This block was occupied by housing on the frontages of Birchall Street and Bradford Street and by shoppings and some back-to-backs in the backplots. The rest of Bradford Street was occupied by larger factory buildings and shoppings, these include a distinctive-looking circular structure which may be a bottle kiln or glass cone.

From the 1850s the trade directories for Birmingham began to list trades by street not just by surname or trade as had been the case prior to this date, which makes it possible to identify the individuals occupying many of the plots within the study area. The *Post Office Directory of Birmingham* for 1854 shows the study area at roughly the same time as the Pigott-Smith plan was drawn up. Bridge Row was occupied by, a tinplate workers and japanners, a stampers and piercers, an estate agent and a saddlers, ironmongers and whipmakers. It is likely, however, that these firms, with the exclusion of the estate agent, operated out of the linear industrial buildings depicted in the backplots of Bridge Row. The other properties on Bridge Row were probably occupied by private residents. The occupants of Stone Yard included two pump makers, a pawnbroker, a lock maker, a coal dealer, a glazier, a smith, a wheel-wright and a clothier. Birchall Street was occupied by two fender and fire-iron makers, a shopkeeper, a whip maker and a beer retailer. An inn, the Britannia, is listed at No. 4 Birchall Street, near the junction with Stone Yard. Bradford Street contained some more respectable trades including, a ladies school, two hairdressers, a milliner and dressmaker, a boot and shoe maker and a shopkeeper. Manufacturing trades are also well represented on Bradford Street including, a glass enammellers, a manufacturer of dog chains, horse collars and locks and handcuffs, and a brass wire drawers and rolling mills. The circular industrial building shown the rear of Bradford Street on the map may have been a glass-making structure, perhaps a cone, relating to the production of glass enamel at No. 291 Bradford Street.

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map (1889), shows that considerable change had occurred in the study area (Figure 8). Housing still existed on parts of the Bridge Row and Stone Yard frontages at this date. The backplots of Bridge Row, including the area of the proposed development site, had become heavily built over with industrial buildings. The factories on Bridge Row, moving from the River Rea toward Stone Yard, are labelled as the Deritend Bridge Works, a Button Works and a Stampers and Piercing Works. A large part of the Stamping and Piercing Works lay within the proposed development site. The majority of the southern half of the study area had become built over by the buildings of two large factories, a rolling mills and the Patent Enamel Works by 1889. The Patent Glass Enamel Works contains a distinctive circular industrial feature, also present on the Pigott-Smith map, in its centre. Two smaller factories lay between these large factories, a glass works and a fire-iron works. Some housing and the Britannia Tavern was still located on the Birchall Street frontage, near its junction with Stone Yard.

Kelly's Directory of Birmingham for 1888 lists the Deritend Bridge Works was operated by Charles Smith & Sons Ltd, the trade of this firm was 'medieval metalworkers' – reflecting the popularity of 'Gothic' styles in the late Victorian era. Jennens and Co., a military ornaments manufacturer, operated The Button Works. The Stamping and Piercing Works was operated by John Tomlinson. These three firms were listed at these addresses in trade directories from the late 1860s. Two further occupants were listed on Bridge Row, a private resident and a midwife. Birchall Street has few entries in 1888, reflecting the fact that much of its frontage has been swallowed-up by the Patent Glass Enamel Works. Birchall Street also contained a beer retailer, a shopkeeper and a hardware dealer. The rolling mills on Bradford Street were operated by William Cooper.

The Patent Glass Enamel Works was run by the Patent Glass Enamel Co. The fire-iron works, between the rolling mills and the Patent Glass Enamel Works, was operated by William Turner. No tenant is listed for the glass works on Bradford Street, this may have been operated by the Patent Glass Enamel Co. Ltd as it was a related process. Only two smaller concerns, a shopkeeper and a beer retailer, survive on Bradford Street at this date.

Slight change in the study area is visible by 1905 when the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of this area was published (Figure 9). To the rear of Bridge Row the area, partially within the proposed development site, previously occupied by the Stamping and Piercing Works, shoppings and back-to-back housing had been cleared of buildings and a large yard and new industrial building had been built. Further change had occurred on Birchall Street, the site of the Britannia Tavern was no longer marked as a public house and a new public house, the White Swan, had been constructed on the corner of Birchall Street and Bradford Street. The factory buildings on Bradford Street had also changed by 1905. The sites occupied by the glass works and the fire-iron works in 1889 had been cleared by 1905 and were empty of buildings at this date. The factory buildings on either side of this space, formerly a rolling mill and the Patent Enamel Works, had been combined into one large wire and rolling mills by 1905. The distinctive circular industrial building, at the heart of the Patent Enamel Works in 1888, had disappeared by this date. A part of the former Patent Enamel Works, between Stone Yard and Birchall Street, had been hived off as a separate factory by 1905.

Kelly's Directory for Birmingham for 1905 lists the Deritend Bridge Works as occupied by the same firm that had occupied it since the late 1860s, Charles Smith and Sons. The trade of this firm had changed by this date, from medieval metal workers in 1888, to makers of locks, etc. Jennens & Co. was still operating from the Button Works on Bridge Row, as it had since the late 1860s. No tenant is listed for the new industrial structure, partially within the proposed development site, on Bridge Row. Two entries exist for Stone Yard in 1905, Enoch Rollason, engineer, and R. Jones & Co., solder manufacturers. R. Jones & Co. may have operated out of the Stone Yard side of the factory, created from part of the former Patent Enamel Works buildings, between Stone Yard and Birchall Street. There are only three entries for Birchall Street, a shopkeeper, Lilley & Sons (Stampers and Piercers) and The White Swan public house. Lilley & Sons may have operated on the Birchall Street side of the factory building between Stone Yard and Birchall Street.

The Third Edition of the Ordnance Survey map of this area (1918) shows that the study area had developed an entirely industrial character by this date (Figure 10). The only non-industrial building which remains is the White Swan public house on the corner of Birchall Street and Bradford Street. In 1918 the ground-plan of the factories on Bridge Row had not changed from that seen in 1905. The Birchall Street frontage, with the exception of the White Swan, and all of the south frontage of Stone Yard was built over by this date by one large factory. The only change in the large wire and rolling mills on Bradford Street was the infilling of the gap in the middle of the Bradford Street frontage with another industrial building.

There is no listing for Bridge Row in *Kelly's Directory for Birmingham* for 1918 by this date these properties were classed as being on High Street, Deritend. The Deritend Bridge Works were still operated by Charles Smith & Sons & Co. Ltd. The adjacent factory had become known as the Deritend Button Works by this date and was still operated by Jennens & Co. Ltd. The large factory building occupying the corner of Stone Yard and Birchall Street is listed in the 1918 directory as operated by R. Jones & Co. This firm is listed on Stone Yard in the 1905 directory and had expanded to occupy most of this area by 1918. The early twentieth century buildings currently standing on the corner of Birchall Street and Stone Yard (See section 6.0) probably date to this phase of the of the firm's expansion. The wire and rolling mills on Bradford Street were operated by William Cooper and Goode in 1918, this is probably a growth of the same firm, William Cooper, listed as operating these mills since 1888.

The next available map of the study area is the Ordnance Survey coverage for this area in 1951 (Figure 11). Much change has occurred since 1918, the majority of the study area has been built over with a single large factory, the Phosphor Bronze Works. This factory seems to be constructed over the southern fringe of the formerly open ground between the former Bridge Row and the original line of High Street, Deritend. High Street, Deritend had been converted into a dual carriageway by this date. The White Swan public house and the metal works of R. Jones & Co. Ltd. remain in their previous locations.

No firms are listed on High Street, Deritend, between the River Rea and Stone Yard, from the 1930s until the establishment of the Phosphor Bronze Co. in this area in the later 1940s. This suggests that the Deritend Bridge Works and the Deritend Button Works became disused after 1918. Early twentieth century industrial buildings still exist in the area formerly occupied by the Deritend Bridge Works suggesting that some of its buildings were incorporated into the Phosphor Bronze Works. The rolling mills on Bradford Street seem to have become disused in the 1920s or early 1930s and part of their former site became occupied by the Phosphor Bronze Works. The Phosphor Bronze Works seems to have moved away from this section of the Bradford Street frontage by the 1960s, by which date Bradford House had been constructed. The Phosphor Bronze Co. is listed in trade directories at High Street, Deritend into the late 1970s, the firm had also expanded to Birchall Street by the early 1970s. R. Jones & Co. Ltd was based on its Stone Yard and Birchall Street premises up to the 1960s. By the 1970s part of the former R. Jones premises seem to have been taken over by the Phosphor Bronze Co. and another part of the premises was occupied by the Anti-Attrition Metal Co. Ltd.

9.0 Conclusions and provisional recommendations

This assessment has shown that the Study Area has been subject to a complex sequence of mainly industrial development from the close of the eighteenth century onwards. It is likely, however, that the study area, lying next to an important river crossing, may have been the focus of activity from the Anglo-Saxon period onwards at least, the area may even have seen prehistoric activity. It is not clear whether the area was settled or utilised in the medieval period. The earliest documentary and cartographic evidence, from the

earlier eighteenth century, shows the proposed development site as partially lying in a riverside meadow with the remainder lying over the course of the River Rea. A town's meadows and river were an important economic resource. Riverside areas were frequently used from the medieval period onwards for tanning, as a source of clay for pottery and brick manufacture, as drying yards and for osier beds. The proposed development site lies between two medieval settlements, Deritend and Digbeth, both of which were home to small industries including smithing, pottery manufacture and leather tanning. It is probable that the riverside part of the proposed development site would have been exploited in the medieval period and deposits relating to this use may survive within the proposed development site.

The northern part of the proposed development site lies over the course of the main channel of the River Rea up to the end of the eighteenth century. The River Rea was straightened to approximately its modern course in the 1790s, from this date the river ceased to flow through the proposed development site. The old course of the river, within the development site, was in-filled between the 1790s and 1828, when it is shown on maps as an open space between the line of High Street, Deritend and the buildings on Bridge Row. The likelihood of deposits relating to the straightening of the river, and the infilling of the old channel surviving within the proposed development site is high, it is also probable that any such deposits will be waterlogged and contain preserved organic and palaeoenvironmental remains. Deposits contained in the old river channel may help to identify whether the eighteenth channel was natural or man-made. The development site also has the potential to contain evidence for earlier channels of the River Rea. Palaeoenvironmental evidence which may exist in the old river channel will be important as it will enable reconstruction of past environmental conditions and the identification of industrial development in this part of Birmingham.

The southern half of the development site lies on the former south bank of the River Rea and has been subject to multiple phases of mainly industrial, development since the end of the eighteenth century up to the middle of the twentieth century. This area was mainly occupied by housing and small-scale industry up to the later nineteenth century. It is unlikely that any of this development was cellared due to the risk of flooding from the adjacent River Rea. From the late nineteenth century and throughout the majority of the twentieth century, the study area and the southern half of the development site was occupied by large-scale industry. The industries represented in this area over this period were mainly relating to metal working and finishing. It is likely that the remains of these factories will be encountered in the proposed development site.

This assessment has also demonstrated that the ground around the River Rea and its former channels may have been raised, using imported materials, in the early nineteenth century to facilitate development. Observation of the banks of the River Rea within the study area suggests that this may amount to an increase in level of around two metres next to the river itself. The depth of levelling material probably decreases as the distance from the River Rea increases. The former channel of the River Rea, within the proposed development site, will probably also be filled with a similar depth of material. There are

no standing buildings on the proposed development site relating to any of the prior phases of occupation.

It was thought that the proposed development site could contain archaeological remains of a causeway which is thought to have carried High Street, Deritend and Digbeth over the River Rea during the medieval and earlier post-medieval periods. This assessment has shown that the proposed development site probably lies much further south than the original line of the High Street, Deritend/Digbeth routeway. This means that it is unlikely, but not impossible, that any remains of this causeway will be found within the development site.

It is also possible that the proposed development site may contain further evidence of the Deritend Ware pottery industry of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It is known that the kilns that produced this pottery were in Deritend, the precise location is unknown, and could, therefore be in the proposed development site.

Any buried archaeological deposits encountered are likely to be buried deeply by nineteenth century levelling activities; archaeological horizons were found 2.5 – 3m below modern ground surface during recent work at Floodgate Street (J. Williams, *pers comm*). Any buried archaeological remains which are present in the development site are also likely to be waterlogged and include preserved organic material due to their depth of burial and the proximity to the modern and former river channels of the Rea. Some truncation of archaeological deposits may have occurred due to the insertion of petrol tanks on the eastern side of the development site during the construction of the petrol station on the site in the 1980s, given the depth of made- ground in this area this disturbance may be minimal. There is also the possibility of ground contamination by these petrol tanks and by the former bronze works on the site.

It can be seen from the foregoing discussion that the potential of the development site to contain buried remains of multiple periods and of different kinds of archaeological evidence is very high. It is not possible at this date to be more specific about the kind of archaeology that may be contained within the site, the extent of its preservation or the depth at which it is buried. The brief issued for this desk-based assessment envisaged this work as a first stage of assessing the archaeological resource of the development site (BCC 2002). The brief envisages a second stage of assessment, by trial-trenching, to be carried out prior to the granting of planning permission for the development.

It is recommended that trial-trenching, using four trenches 2-4m wide, be undertaken. Two 10m long trenches (Trenches A and B) should be dug as to the street frontage to test the archaeological potential of the former river channel. These trenches should pay particular attention to sampling waterlogged deposits for plant remains, pollen and insect remains. Two 5m long trenches (Trenches C and D) should be dug to the rear of the street frontage to test the below-ground survival of deposits and features, particularly those related to industrial buildings known to have existed in this area. The trenches should be located to avoid any disturbance caused by the below-ground petrol tanks, due to these

tanks health and safety precautions need to be rigorous and advice from the West Midlands Fire Service will be sought prior to the commencement of works.

10.0 Acknowledgements

This report was written by Melissa Conway and the illustrations were prepared by Nigel Dodds. The report was edited by Steve Litherland and Alex Jones, who also managed the project. The walkover survey of the site was carried out by Melissa Conway and Andy Walsh. Thanks are due to Andrews Construction for commissioning this project and to David Andrews of Andrews Construction for his co-operation during the project. The aid of Dr. Mike Hodder, Toni Demidowicz, the staff of Archives and Local Studies sections of Birmingham Reference Library and to Jamie Peart of the University of Birmingham Map Library is also gratefully acknowledged.

11.0 References

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BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Application number C/02916/02/FUL

170 High Street Deritend(SP 0780 8629)

Brief for *Archaeological Desk-based Assessment* and *Archaeological Field Evaluation* in advance of determination of application

1.Summary

*Proposed development at 170 High Street Deritend is likely to affect below-ground archaeological remains of medieval and post-medieval date, including remains of industries and deposits likely to provide information on past environmental conditions. This brief is for assessment of the impact of the proposed development on archaeological remains, consisting of an **archaeological desk-based assessment followed by an archaeological field evaluation consisting of excavated trenches**. This will determine the need for preservation of archaeological remains in-situ and/or for further archaeological excavation in advance of commencement of development.*

2.Site location and description

The site is bounded by High Street Deritend to the north, Stone Yard to the east and existing buildings to the west and south. It was formerly occupied by a petrol station, the superstructure of which has been demolished. The site has various surfaces and is approximately level. The ground rises up both sides of the valley of the River Rea to the north-west and south-east.

3.Planning background

Application number is for new building on the whole site. Because the site is likely to include archaeological remains which would be affected by the proposed redevelopment, an assessment of its archaeological implications is required **before the application can be determined**. This is in accordance with Policy 8.36 of the City Council's Unitary Development Plan and government advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, "Archaeology and Planning". The archaeological assessment will enable appropriate archaeological mitigation strategies to be devised. The mitigation strategies may involve modification of site layout or foundation design to ensure in situ preservation of archaeological remains, or, if this is not feasible, full recording of archaeological remains by archaeological excavation in advance of development, followed by analysis and publication of the results.

4.Existing archaeological information

The site was included in an archaeological desk-based assessment of the whole of the Digbeth/High Street Deritend/High Street Bordesley frontage in 1995. Historic maps show that by 1731 and up to the early 19th century the north part of the site was covered by a large pool where the River Rea made an abrupt turn before passing under Deritend Bridge. This formed the southern side of Deritend island to the north of the main road. The desk-based assessment suggested that

the turn in the river may be a natural feature, but may equally be man-made and associated with exploitation of the Rea to feed water mills and water-using industries such as leather tanning. The desk-based assessment suggested that, while the petrol tanks in the former petrol station forecourt will have caused some disturbance, archaeological deposits are likely to survive around them, particularly given the need to extensively raise the ground level in this area in the past because of problems of flooding. The desk-based assessment stated that the site had high potential for the survival of archaeological remains from the medieval period onwards, together with evidence for the past environment. Preservation is likely to be good because of the likely raising of the ground level and likely waterlogging.

Archaeological information from nearby site gives an indication of the likely archaeological remains on this site. To the north, excavations on the west of Floodgate Street in 2002 revealed extensive remains of leather tanning in the 17th century and 13th or 14th century ditched property boundaries. There were organic remains including timbers probably belonging to sluices, bark used in the tanning process and animal hair which was a residue from the process. To the east of the site, further remains of leather tanning were found in excavations in Gibb Street/Heath Mill, and debris from pottery manufacture in the 13th century was found at the Old Crown and on the south side of High Street Deritend.

5.Requirements for work

The archaeological desk-based assessment and field evaluation are required to define the likely extent, survival and significance of archaeological remains in the area of the proposed development, so that appropriate mitigation strategies can be devised. The mitigation strategies may involve modification of site layout or foundation design to ensure in situ preservation of archaeological remains, or, if this is not feasible, full recording of archaeological remains in advance of development, followed by analysis and publication of the results.

In particular, the archaeological desk-based assessment and field evaluation must address the following:

- (i)The likely survival of remains of industrial processes from the medieval period onwards;
- (ii)The likely survival of remains of past environmental conditions;
- (iii)The likely survival of a possible artificial causeway carrying Digbeth and High Street Deritend;
- (iv)The potential of the site to contribute to an understanding of the historic development of this part of Birmingham.

6.Stages of work

The extent, survival and significance of archaeological remains on the application site, as described in part 5 above, are to be assessed by site inspection and a search of published and unpublished written records,

illustrations and maps, and archaeological and geotechnic records, and a comparison with and a comparison with archaeological evidence from other sites in the Digbeth, Deritend and Bull Ring areas. The attached guidance note provides information on sources.

The archaeological field evaluation is to consist of excavated trenches located so as to sample each part of the proposed development site and to examine particular features of the site suggested by the desk-based assessment, including the effect of terracing. The exact location and size of each trench is to be agreed on site with the Planning Archaeologist prior to commencement. Surface deposits in each trench are to be mechanically removed, under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation is to be entirely manual. Excavation in each trench is to be sufficient to define record and sample all archaeological features encountered. The potential of deposits for environmental analysis must be assessed. Finds are to be cleaned, marked and bagged and any remedial conservation work undertaken.

7.Staffing

The archaeological desk-based assessment and archaeological field evaluation are to be carried out in accordance with the Code of Conduct, Standards, Guidelines and practices of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and all staff are to be suitably qualified and experienced for their roles in the project. It is recommended that the project be under the direct supervision of a Member or Associate Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

8.Written Scheme of Investigation

Potential contractors should present a Written Scheme of Investigation that which details methods and staffing. It is recommended that the Written Scheme of Investigation be submitted to the City Council's Planning Archaeologist before a contractor is commissioned, to ensure that it meets the requirements of the brief.

9.Monitoring

The archaeological desk-based assessment and archaeological field evaluation must be carried out to the satisfaction of the Chief Planning Officer, Birmingham City Council, and will be monitored on his behalf by the Planning Archaeologist. At least five working days notice of commencement of the assessment and evaluation must be given to the Planning Archaeologist, so that monitoring meetings can be arranged.

The monitoring will include a review meeting on completion of the research for the archaeological desk-based assessment to determine requirements for the field evaluation.

10.Reporting

The results of the archaeological desk-based assessment and archaeological field evaluation are to be presented as a written report, containing the following:

- (i) Copies of historic maps and other appropriate illustrations
- (ii) An analytical summary of features and deposits found in the evaluation;
- (iii) Appropriate plans and sections;
- (iv) A summary of finds;
- (v) An assessment of the site's significance in terms of national, regional and local importance. The non-statutory criteria for scheduling should be employed;
- (vi) A copy of this brief.

A copy of the report must be sent to the Planning Archaeologist.

11. Archive deposition

The written, drawn and photographic records of the archaeological desk-based assessment and archaeological field evaluation, together with any finds, must be deposited with an appropriate repository within a reasonable time of completion, following consultation with the Planning Archaeologist.

12. Publication

The written report will become publicly accessible, as part of the Birmingham Sites and Monuments Record, within six months of completion. The contractor must submit a short summary report for inclusion in *West Midlands Archaeology* and summary reports to appropriate national period journals.

CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER
BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

Date prepared: 28 June 2002

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170HighStreetDeritendeval.doc

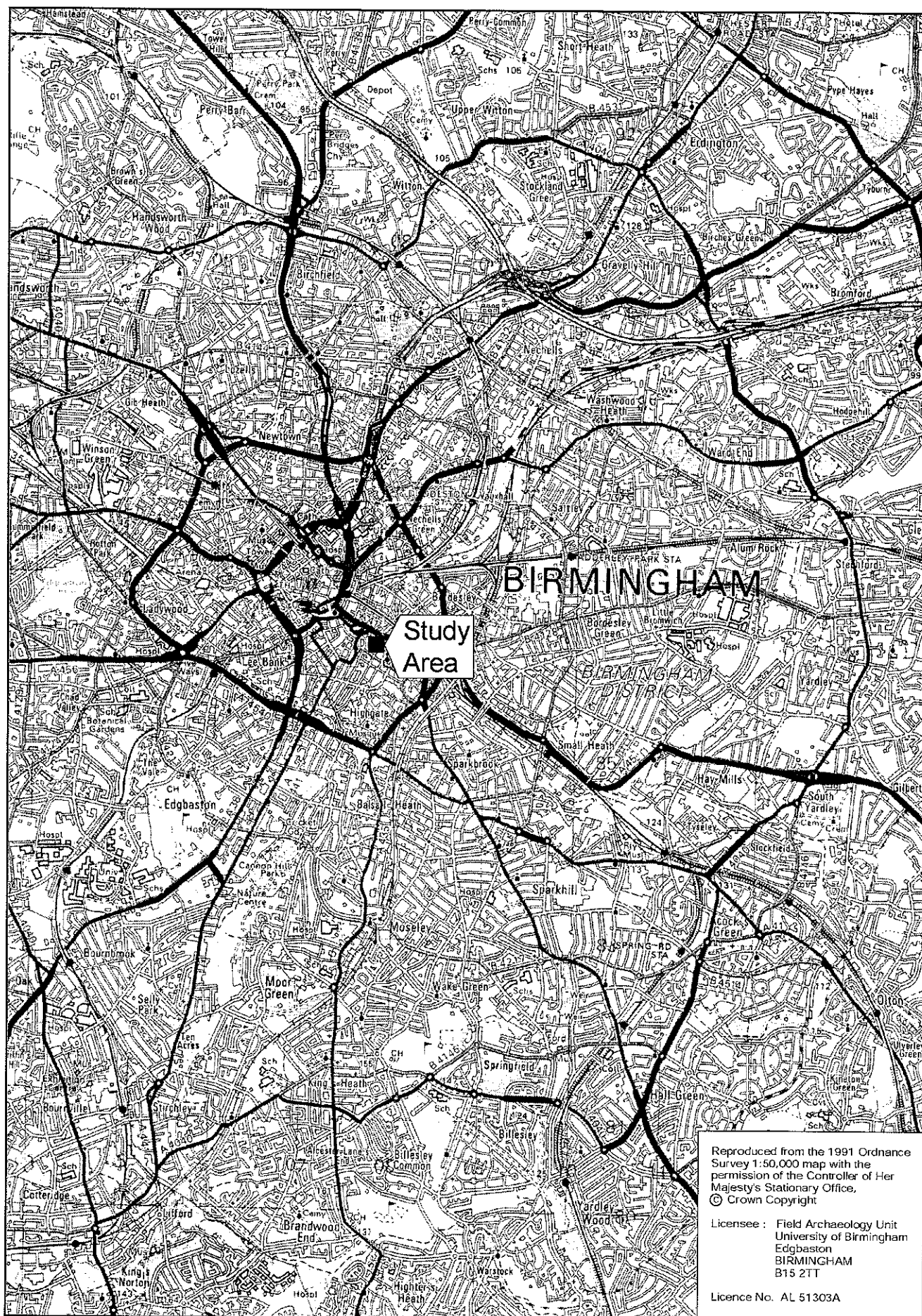


Figure 1

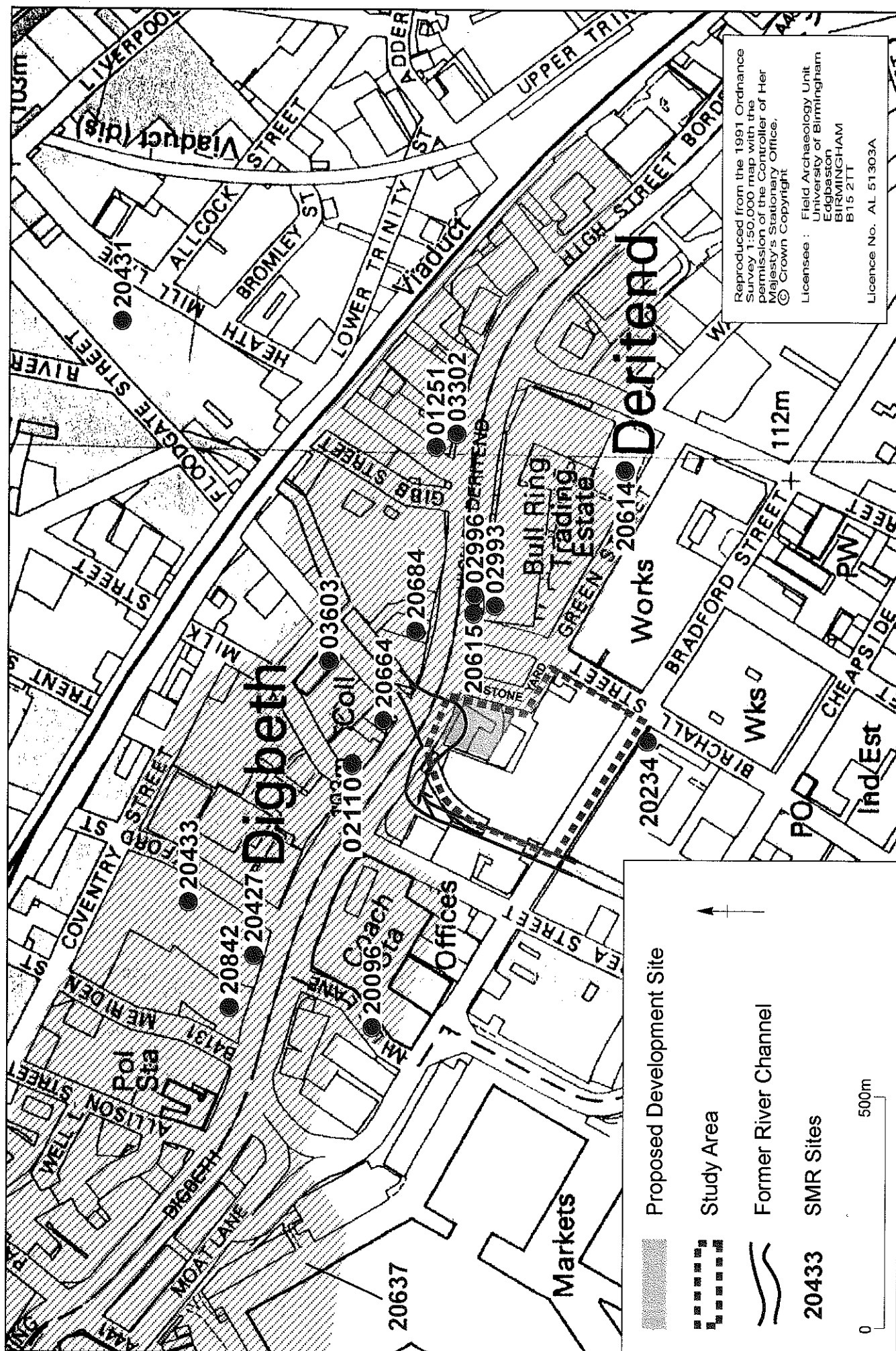


Figure 2

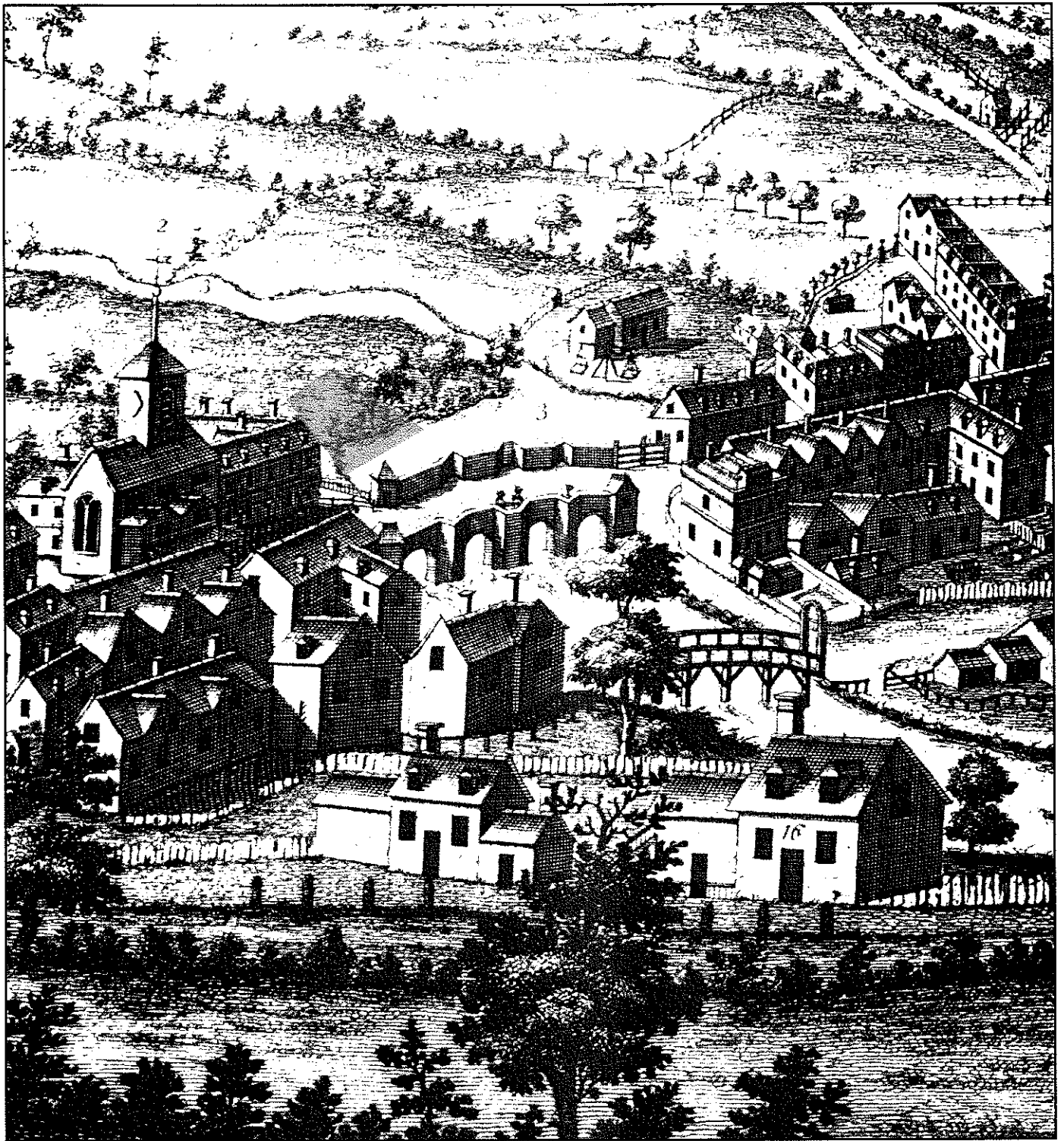


Figure 3



Figure 4

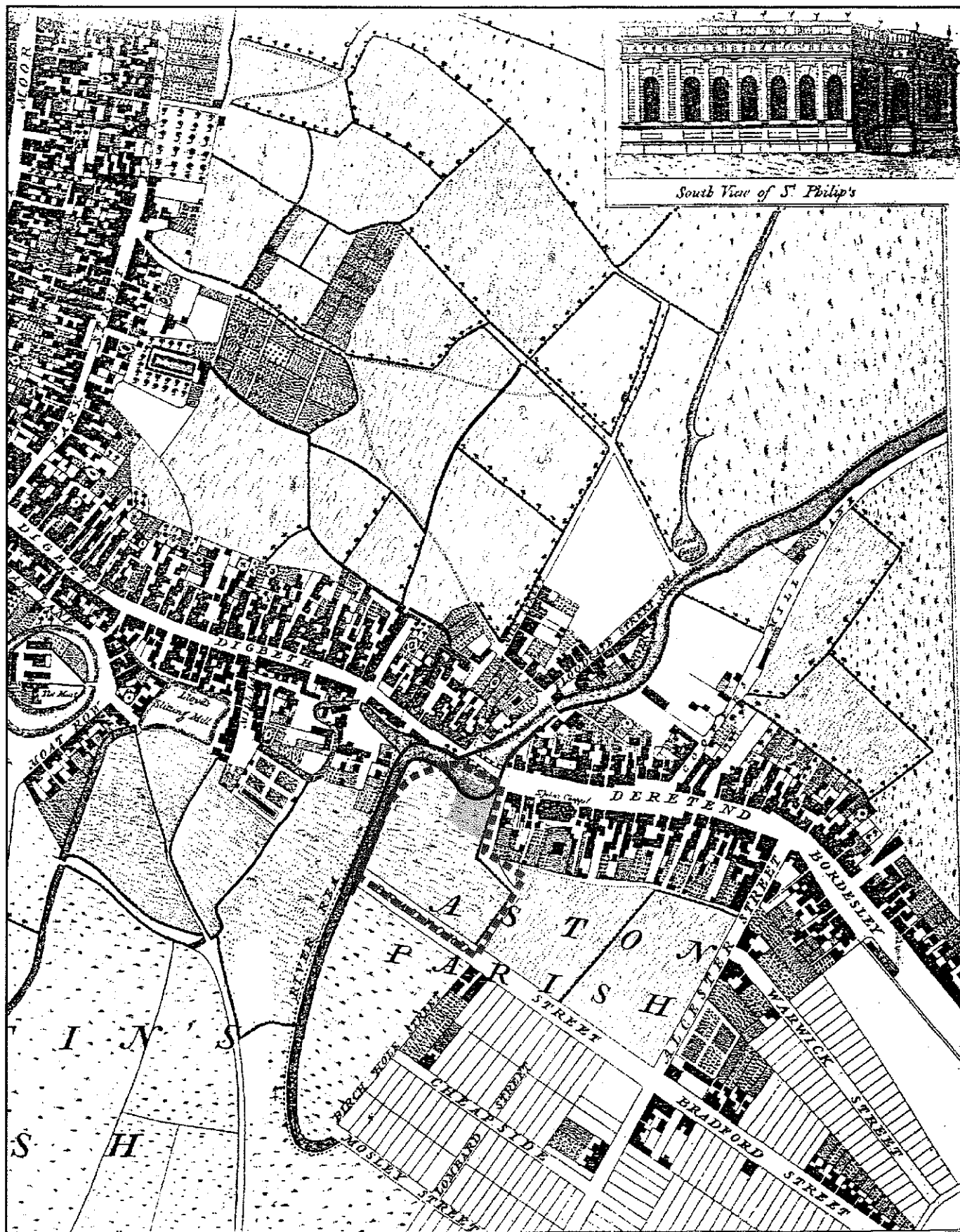


Figure 5



Figure 6

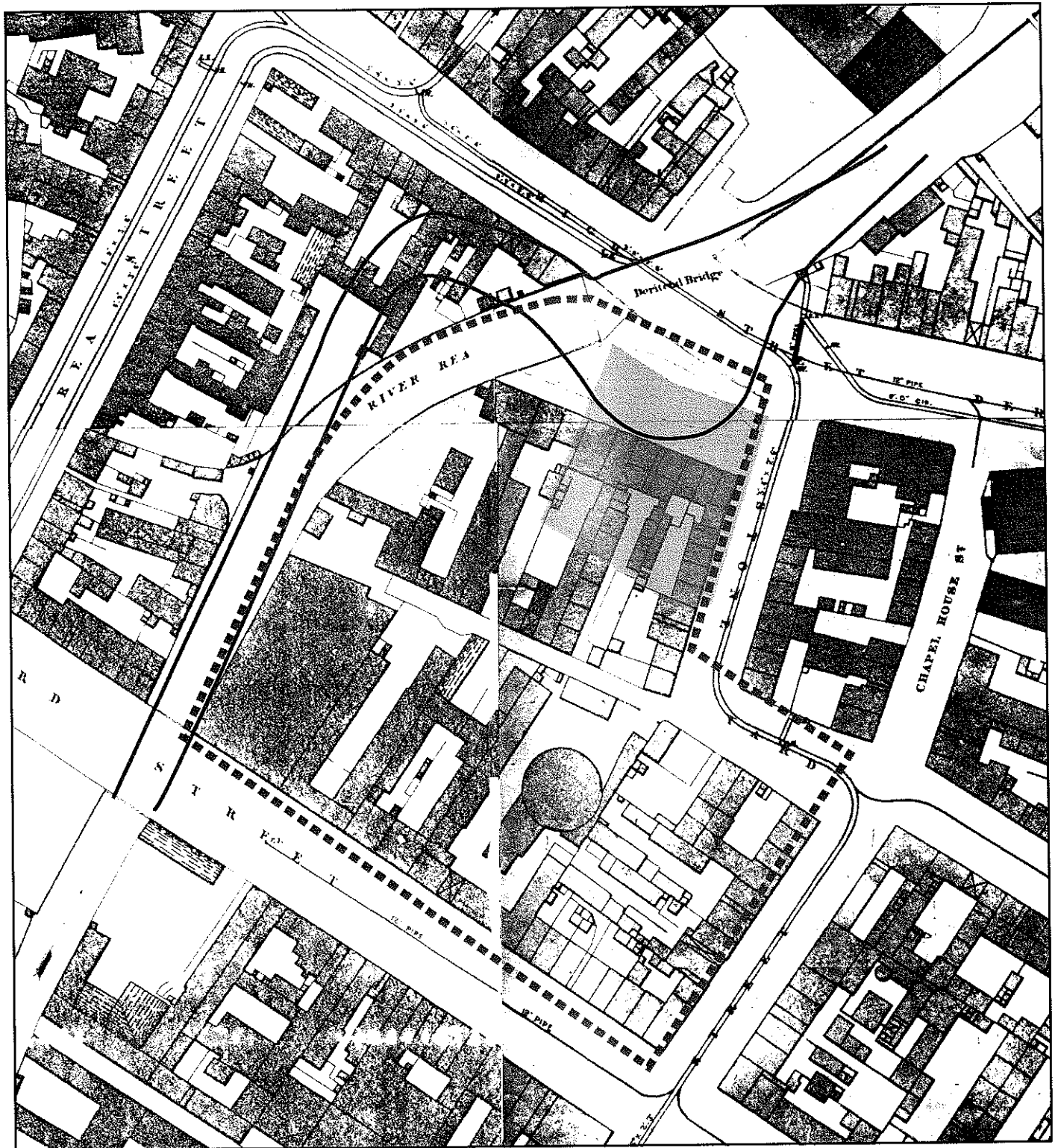


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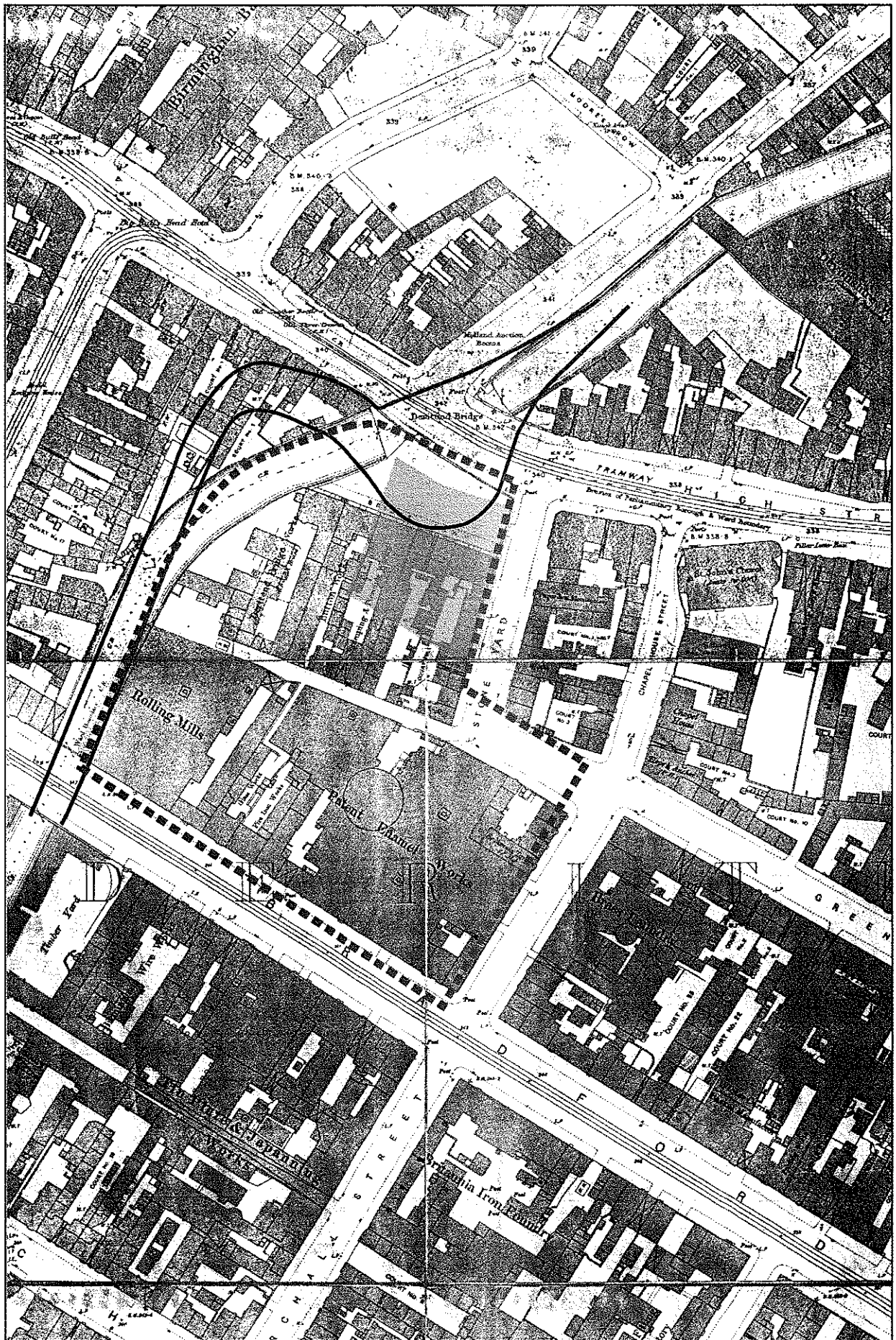


Figure 8

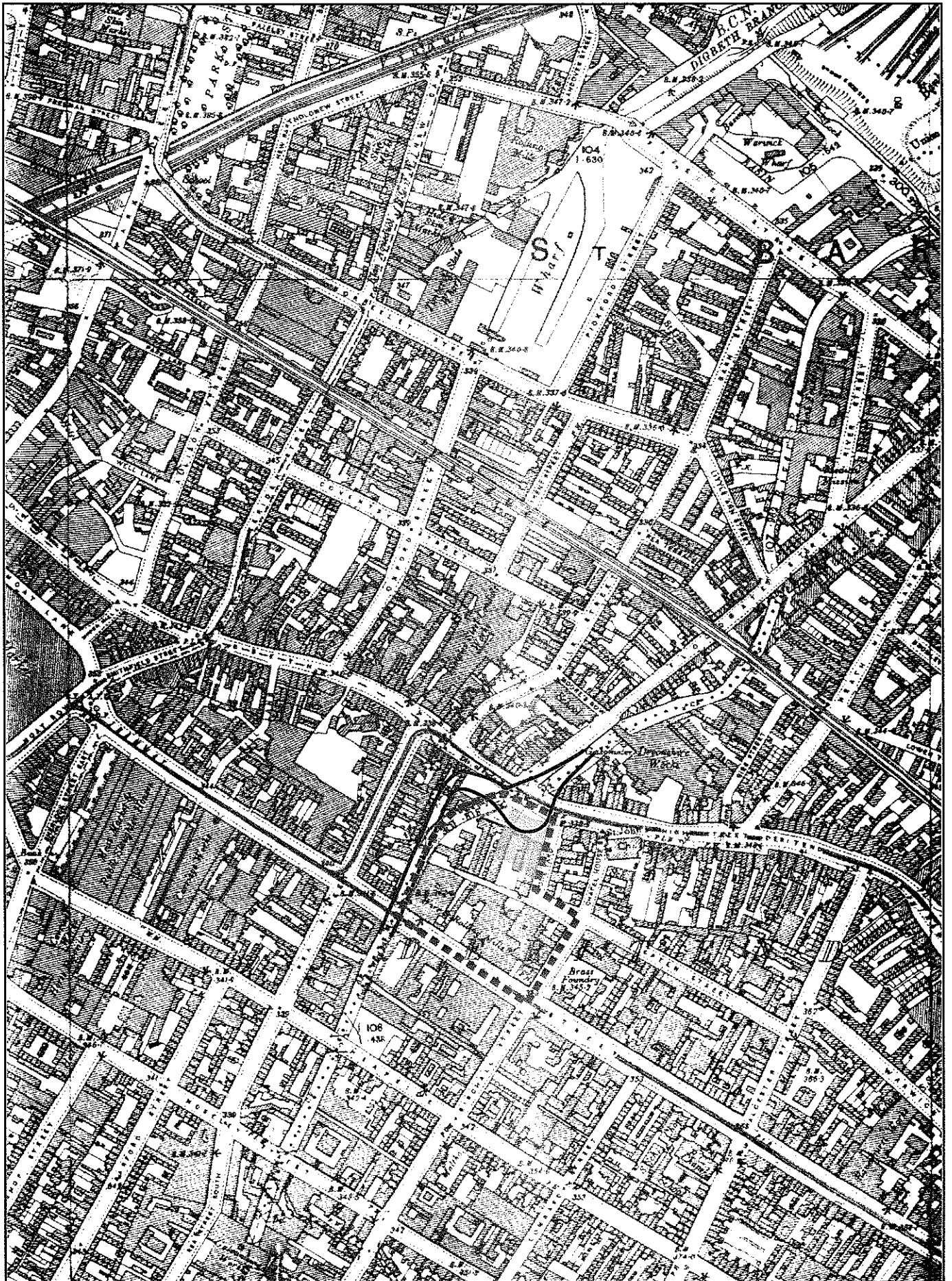


Figure 9

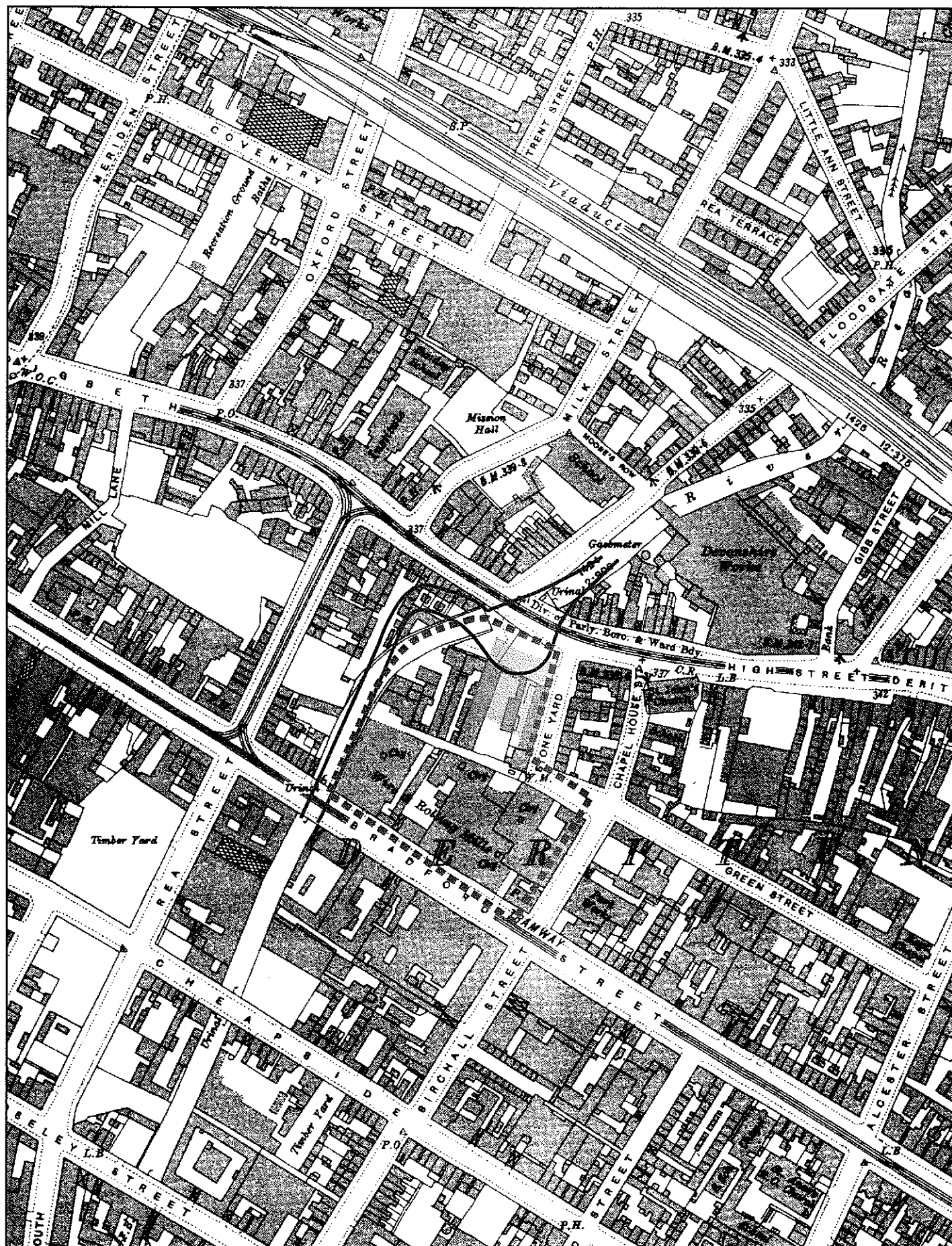


Figure 10

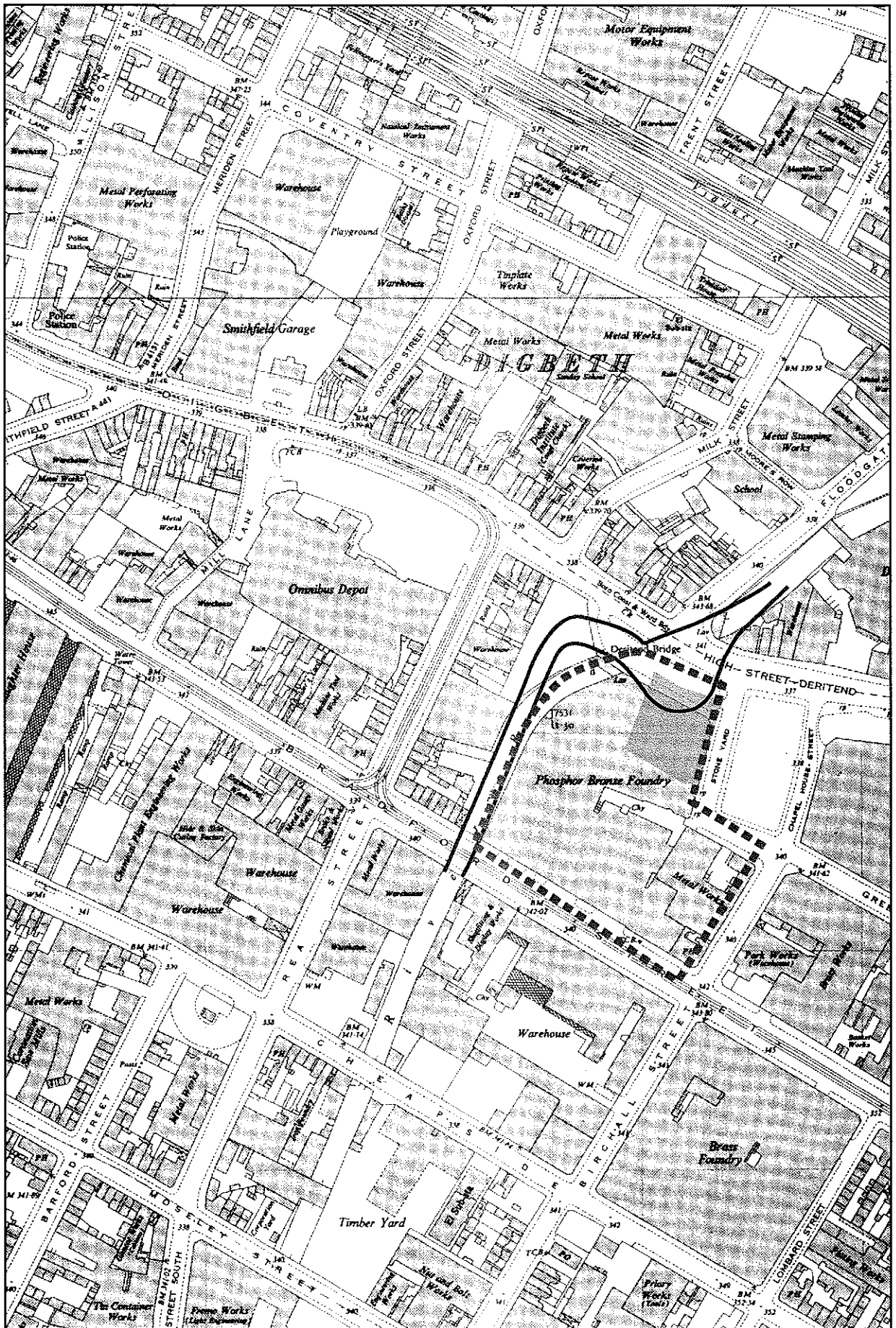


Figure 11

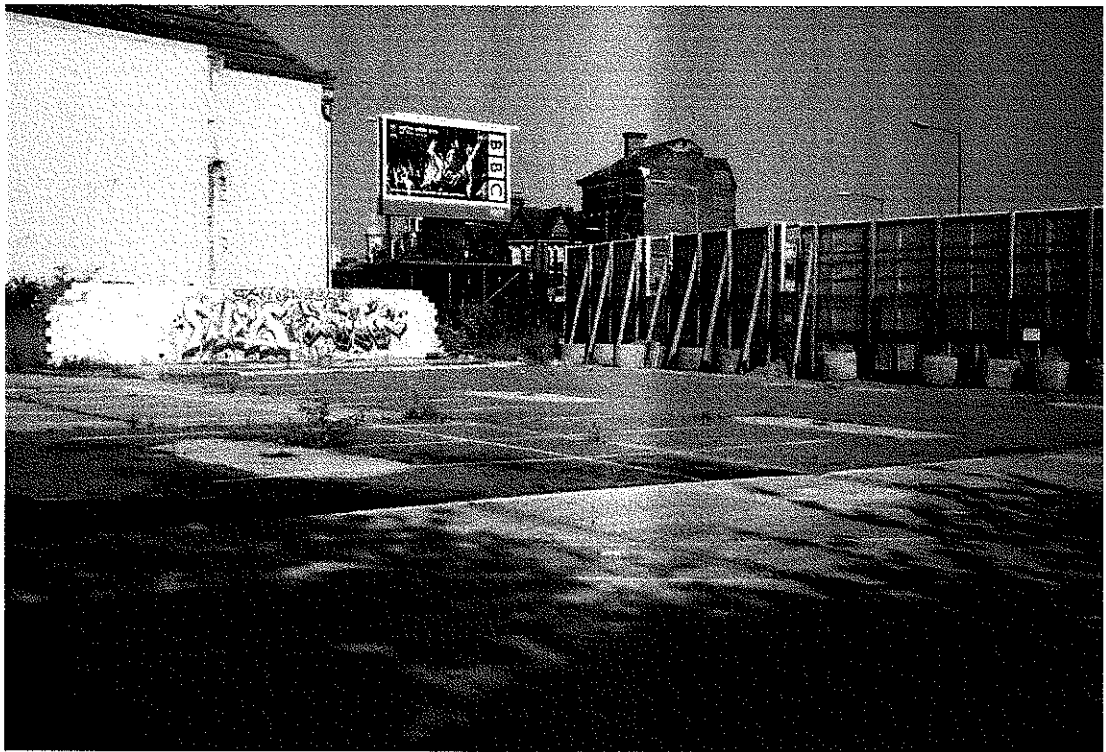


Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3

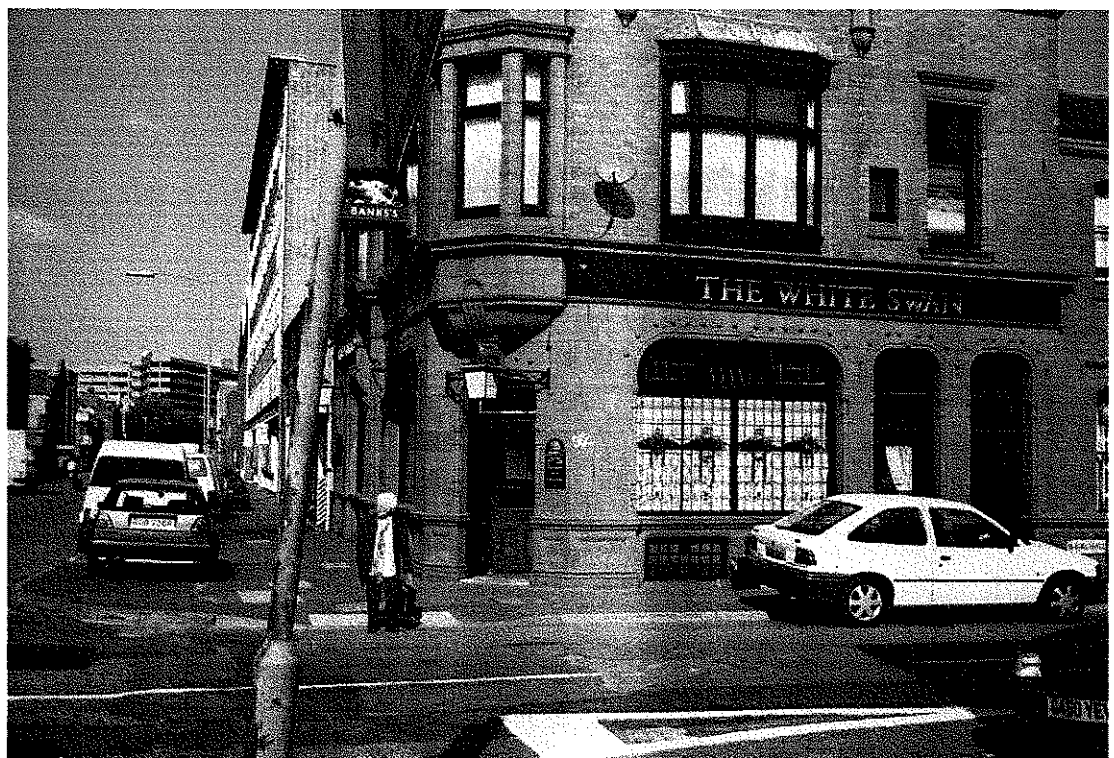


Plate 4



Plate 5

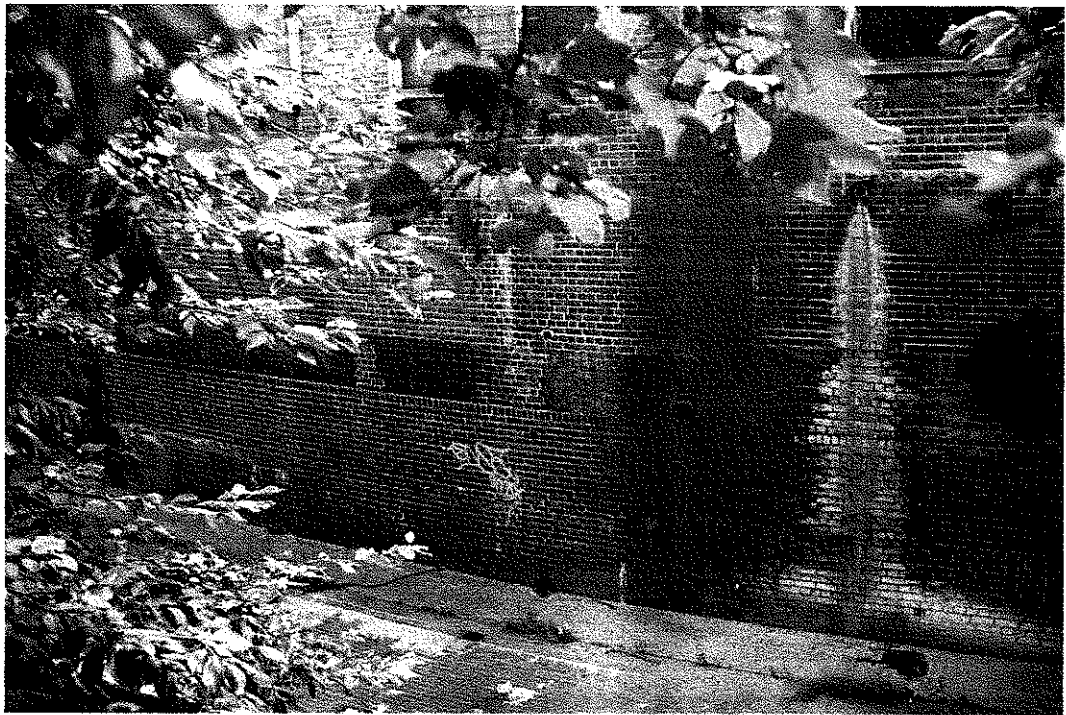


Plate 6