
**DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT OF THE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ON LAND
AT 29-31 THE STRAIT
LINCOLN
(LTS05)**

Work Undertaken For
Straight Developments Ltd

Report Compiled by
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National Grid Reference: SK 97635 71495

A.P.S. Report No: **68/05**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES**



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1. SUMMARY

Desk-based assessment was undertaken to determine the archaeological implications of redevelopment of land at 29-31 The Strait in Lincoln.

The site lies in the heart of the Roman and medieval lower city. Occupation on the site is to be expected from the Roman period onwards, if not earlier. Previous archaeological investigations in the vicinity have demonstrated the depth of significant archaeological deposits surviving in the area.

Archaeological excavation was undertaken within the southern boundary of the site at Grantham Place in 1981, and the car park immediately to the east was the site of large scale open-area excavation undertaken between 1972 and 1976. Here, Saxo-Norman and Roman deposits were encountered in excess of 3.5m below the surface and similar deposits should be expected to survive in the vicinity. The uncertain nature of past terracing of the hill slope means that significant deposits might nonetheless survive at shallower depths in some areas.

The frontage onto The Strait is shown as occupied by structures from the earliest cartographic sources. Continuous occupation from the medieval period is probable. The rear has been occupied by various outbuildings and workshops developed throughout the 19th century. Buildings at the eastern end of the site are terraced into the west-east slope and may have truncated earlier deposits here.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Definition of an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment is defined as ‘an 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’ (IFA 1999).

2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Jonathan Hendry Architects on behalf of Straight Developments Ltd to undertake a desk-based assessment of land at 29-31 The Strait, Lincoln. This was in order to determine the archaeological implications of potential future development.

2.3 Site Location

The site is located in the centre of Lincoln on the east side of The Strait on the hill slope of the lower city at National Grid Reference SK 97635 71495. It comprises numbers 29-31 on the frontage of The Strait, together with yards and outbuildings to the rear, extending some 75m east-west (Fig. 2) and covering an area of c. 1400m².

NB Throughout this report the ‘assessment area’ refers to a zone 50m around the ‘site’, the proposed redevelopment site itself.

2.4 Topography and Geology

The site lies on the lower slopes of the Jurassic escarpment, at about 20m O.D. above a solid geology of Lower Lias clays (BGS 1992; Jones *et al* 2003, 17-18). The ground slopes naturally from north to south and from west to east. However, this topography has been much altered by occupation of the site over centuries.

3. AIMS

The purpose of the desk-based assessment is to obtain information about the known and potential archaeological resource within the vicinity of the proposed development site. In addition to the above, statutory and advisory heritage constraints were identified.

4. METHODS

The research undertaken in the compilation of this archaeological desk-based assessment involved the examination of available primary and secondary sources relevant to Flaxengate and the immediate surrounding area.

These sources consisted of: primary records and published accounts of excavations on and in the vicinity of the site; Ordnance Survey maps and published copies of older maps and plans; secondary sources, in the form of periodical articles and books, held by the Lincolnshire Archives Office, Lincolnshire Library and Heritage Lincolnshire

This research was supplemented by a walkover survey of the land, undertaken to assess the current ground conditions, and to ascertain the presence of any

disturbances which might have affected surviving archaeological deposits, or constraints to further investigation. The results of the archival and field examinations were committed to scale plans of the area.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Historical Evidence

Up until the 11th century, the High Street (the Roman Ermine Street) probably remained the main route up the hill to the south gate of the upper city. The diversion of this route to follow The Strait and Steep Hill seems to have occurred in this period and the properties on the east side of the street were probably first laid out at that time (Jones *et al.* 2003, 204).

In the late medieval period The Strait was the site of the meat shambles, part of a series of markets apparently established at an early date on the fringes of the late Saxon settlement in the southeast corner of the lower city.

The area lay in the parish of St Martin and some of the properties which passed into the ownership of the Dean and Chapter of the cathedral can be traced to the 12th and 13th centuries through the documentary record. 29-31 The Strait largely coincides with a particularly well-documented property, originally running from the frontage on The Strait through to Flaxengate to the rear (Fig. 6).

In 1299 this was left by William of Thame, cordwainer, to John of Ancotts; in 1310 it was acquired by Ralf of Threckingham, servant of master William of Thornton, canon; and in 1311 it passed to William of Thornton himself, who granted it to the

Dean and Chapter. In later Dean and Chapter leases it is described as containing a hall, parlour, kitchen, brewhouse, buttery, five lodging chambers, one stable adjoining, with a hay loft over, and including a garden and orchard (RH Jones 1980, 52).

The City council hold records of late 19th and early 20th century redevelopment on the site, the most significant being the complete rebuilding of Nos 30 and 31 in 1905 by Thropp & Harding for the then owner J E Dickinson who also owned No. 29.

5.2 Cartographic Evidence

The Strait lies in the heart of the lower city and the frontage is depicted as entirely built up from the earliest surviving maps of the town, dating back to John Speed's map of 1610.

William Marrat's plan of 1817 and James Padley's of 1819 both show buildings largely confined to the Strait frontage reflecting the contraction of commerce to the central thoroughfares in this period (Fig. 4). However, one or two isolated structures are shown to the rear, and Marrat does indicate three long plots stretching from The Strait to Flaxengate. These would seem to reflect the medieval layout as suggested in the documentary record with most of the western side of Flaxengate belonging to properties fronting onto the Strait. The Grantham Street frontage was unoccupied.

This situation persisted until the mid 19th century, Padley's later larger-scale mapping (1842-1868) showing gradual infilling and expansion and providing detail of buildings to the rear of the frontage for the first time (Fig. 5). Later

19th-century maps show continuing piecemeal development to the rear. By the time of the 1888 1:500 Ordnance Survey plan (Fig. 3) the site had reached its fully developed form and a row of three terraces stood on the Grantham Street frontage at the south of the site. Subsequent development saw one major change with the complete reconstruction of Nos 30 and 31 in 1905 but has otherwise involved piecemeal clearance in the south of the site with the gradual removal of outbuildings and the demolition of the row of terraces on Grantham Street during the 20th century. The only recent additions have been breeze-block sheds.

5.3 Archaeological Data

Records of archaeological sites and finds are held by the Lincoln City Council Archaeology Section. Sites and finds identified through excavations undertaken over the second half of the last century have been the subject of a recent synthesis from which the general discussion is drawn (Jones *et al.* 2003). Significant excavations in the vicinity of the proposed development area are tabulated below and located on Figure 2. The results of excavations undertaken on the site of the new City & County museum in 2003 (Malone in prep.) have also been taken into consideration.

UAD code	Site
flax 69	Flaxengate 1969
f72	Flaxengate 1972-6
dt74i	Danes Terrace 1974
dt74ii	Danes Terrace 1974
sh74	Steep Hill 1974
dt78	Danes Terrace 1978
gp81	Grantham Place 1981
sw82	Swan Street 1982

Prehistoric Archaeology

The Witham gap has been a focus for human activity from the Neolithic (and perhaps Mesolithic) period onwards. Much of this activity, in the Bronze Age at least, seems to have been focused further to the east within the river valley. From within the area of the city itself prehistoric finds are limited to a sparse scatter of material of widely varying dates generally recovered from secondary contexts. Prehistoric features, if present, would be sealed beneath several metres of later stratigraphy.

Roman Archaeology

Although there are indications of an earlier presence further to the south, it is the establishment of the Roman legionary fortress sometime in the 60s AD that had the largest impact within the current city centre. The fortress itself occupied the level ground of the plateau. Extra-mural activity extended down the hillside to the waterfront and river crossing, for the most part probably close to the line of Ermine Street, more or less the current High Street. After the removal of the legionary garrison, Lincoln was refounded as a veteran colony and development on the hillside began to increase. By the mid second century there is evidence for formal planning and occupation over an extensive area with larger public and commercial buildings close to Ermine Street and private housing further away to the west and east. Where the full sequence has been examined development from early timber buildings to increasingly large stone-built structures has been identified.

Ermine Street north from the south gate of the Lower City was lined with temples, baths and at least one fountain. Whether such public buildings continued onto the steeper part of the slope is unclear, but there has been less modern excavation

here. The western end of a substantial late Roman basilican building was revealed during excavations on the north side of Grantham Street just to the southeast but excavations immediately to the west in 1981 (gp81) and to the south of Grantham Street 1982/3 (sw82) failed to find any further evidence for the layout of this building.

Although the precise layout of the Roman town here is unknown, its influence can still be seen in the way the later property boundaries run largely perpendicular to the line of Ermine Street, rather than to The Strait itself. Excavation at the junction of The Strait and Danes Terrace just to the north showed how the medieval structures had reused upstanding Roman masonry as a foundation, thus perpetuating these much earlier alignments.

Anglo-Scandinavian Archaeology

Tenth-century settlement in the Lower City was based in the central southern quarter of the town around Silver Street, Hungate, Flaxengate, and the High Street as far north as St Martin's church. Thirteen phases of timber building between the late ninth and late 12th centuries were identified during the excavations at Flaxengate (f72) with a range of domestic and industrial uses including glass and copper-alloy working. The development site lies near the northern limit of the known settlement in this period which appears to have favoured the lower slopes of the hill. However, the earlier structures fronting Flaxengate identified during excavation clearly continued at least some way to the north and deposits of similar date were also identified further up the hill slope during excavations at the Museum site.

Medieval Archaeology

From the mid-late 11th century the layout of the Lower City underwent significant changes, expanding northwards onto the steeper hill slope and eventually filling most of the walled area. Timber building gave way to stone, the Jew's House at the base of Steep Hill being a notable survival of this Norman stone architecture. Further evidence of early stone buildings was recovered during excavations at Grantham Place (gp81), at the junction of The Strait and Danes Terrace (dt74i), and to the south and east on Flaxengate and Grantham Street (f72).

Post-medieval Archaeology

The 13th century marks the high point of the medieval city. By the mid 14th century a decline in prosperity is evident due to the collapse of the cloth industry, the impact of the Black Death and the rise of the port towns of Boston and Hull. Commercial activity contracted to the vicinity of the High Street and elsewhere the grand stone-built structures of the earlier period were abandoned and eventually replaced by less substantial timber-framed structures.

The 19th century layout of the proposed development site is shown in Figure 3. Terracing of this period is likely to have affected the later medieval deposits as has been evident on other sites in the vicinity

6. CONSTRAINTS

6.1 Heritage Constraints

No 29 The Strait is Listed Grade II (1941-1/9/381). The description makes only passing mention of the 18th and 19th century rear range, but these are included within the curtilage outlined on the accompanying map. The site lies within

the Steep Hill Conservation Area. Archaeological remains within the site are not protected by any statutory heritage constraints and are therefore protected only through the implementation of PPG16 (DoE 1990). However, the excavation area on Grantham Street (gp81) is noted as an area for which the City Council would seek consultation with English Heritage over redevelopment.

6.2 Other Constraints

The site was visited on 15th April 2005 to assess the potential of the site to contain archaeological features and to note any constraints to further work.

The site is entirely built up on its frontage with The Strait and along its northern boundary. Open areas within the south of the site are down to hard surfaces – concrete and tarmac. Drainage and sewer connections are evident to the rear, but their lines have not been traced.

7. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria used to assess the significance of the remains present within the assessment area were adopted from the *Secretary of State's criteria for scheduling ancient monuments* (Department of the Environment 1990, Annex 4; see Appendix 1).

Period

Remains dateable from the prehistoric Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods have been recognised within the assessment area.

Rarity

Buildings within the Roman *colonia* have

rarely been extensively investigated. The early medieval remains are a rare insight into the re-establishment of town life from the 9th century. General occupation remains of the medieval and post-medieval periods are not scarce but may have rare or unusual aspects.

Documentation

Records of archaeological sites and finds made in Lincoln are kept by the Lincoln City Council Archaeology Section and the Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record.

This report provides the first site-specific consideration of the archaeological and historical aspects of the proposed development area.

There is likely to be some historical documentation regarding the site which has not been examined.

Group Value

Roman, medieval and later remains recorded within the assessment area include evidence for domestic occupation, industry and craft. These have moderately high group value as part of the fabric of the city in these periods. Post-medieval brick, stone and timber framed buildings, identified as below-ground archaeological remains, also have a moderate group value.

Survival/Condition

Archaeological interventions within the vicinity have demonstrated that deeply stratified archaeological remains often survive in good condition (see Assessment of Impact below).

The freely draining soils generally preclude the survival of ancient organic remains except through charring, although the lower levels of the Flaxengate (f72)

site were waterlogged at the time of investigation.

Fragility/Vulnerability

All archaeological deposits present on the site would potentially be vulnerable to disturbance from proposed development of the site, but most are to be found at considerable depth and in practice the degree of disturbance would be limited unless major changes to ground levels were proposed.

Diversity

Moderate period diversity is represented by archaeological remains of medieval and post-medieval date occurring in close proximity to the proposed development area.

Moderate functional diversity is provided by sites and remains relating to settlement and industry in the vicinity.

Potential

Deeply stratified Roman, Medieval and later remains have been identified on sites investigated in the vicinity. It is highly likely that similar deposits will occur at the site.

8. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

Previous use of the site is likely to have had a varied impact on buried archaeological remains. The eastern end of the site has been terraced into the natural slope. This may have damaged the upper layers of archaeological deposits, but significant remains of earlier periods are likely to survive beneath.

Trial pits in the car park immediately to the east identified at least 1.5m of post-medieval overburden and ground

reductions in the order of 2m might be possible without significant impact. However, the varied nature of past terracing of the site means that archaeological deposits might survive at shallower depth in some areas and this would need to be tested through intrusive investigation.

The southern extremity of the site has been subject to detailed archaeological excavation in the past and would not require any further assessment. Development here would potentially be under less constraint.

9. OVERVIEW

The site lies within the core of the Roman and medieval lower town. Deeply stratified archaeological deposits have been identified on numerous sites in the vicinity and are to be expected across the site. Some impact by 19th century terracing is evident but archaeological deposits of medieval and earlier date will in all probability be present to some depth.

Information on the depths at which archaeological deposits were encountered is available for excavated sites to the north and southeast. However, the extensive, but variable, terracing of the hill slope from the Roman period onwards identified on other sites in the vicinity means that precision is not possible without intrusive investigation. Some indication of the types of deposits potentially surviving can be given, however.

Prehistoric remains are sparse, where they have been identified, and would probably only be encountered at depths in excess of 4-5m below the current ground level.

Timber structures of the **early Roman** period may extend over some of this area, but would probably be at a similar depth.

From the **2nd-4th century** the area would have been fully developed as part of the Roman town with a succession of buildings, perhaps including public buildings or grand and lavishly appointed town-houses as identified in excavations to the south and east. Such deposits might be found at 3-4m below the surface and be 1-2m in depth.

Anglo-Scandinavian occupation in the 9th-11th centuries was found to be extensive in excavations to the southeast. However, the development site largely lay to the rear of postulated street frontages in that period and may not have been intensively occupied.

Laying out of The Strait from the 11th or 12th century onwards resulted in a concentration of **Medieval** occupation on that frontage. Ancillary buildings, stables, outhouses etc. are recorded to the rear in documentary sources. The Grantham Street frontage was also occupied by stone buildings from the mid-12th to mid-13th century onwards.

Post-medieval redevelopment in the form of workshops to the rear of the frontage, and terraced housing on Grantham Street, took place from the latter half of the 19th century. Buildings on Grantham Street were demolished in the 1960s and this area has since been used for car parking.

10. CONCLUSIONS

An archaeological desk-based assessment of land at Flaxengate and Grantham Street, Lincolns was undertaken in order to

determine the archaeological implications of the proposed development of the site.

The assessment has identified evidence of deeply stratified archaeological deposits dating from the Roman period onwards occurring within the assessment area. It is very likely that such deposits also occur within the site, although these may be at such a depth as to remain undisturbed by current redevelopment proposals. Further intrusive investigation would be required in order to confirm the likelihood of such deposits being encountered.

11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services would like to thank Mr Chris Darcel of Jonathan Hendry Architects who commissioned this report on behalf of Straight Developments Ltd and arranged site access. This work was coordinated by Steve Malone. The report was edited by Tom Lane. Access to records kept by the Lincoln City Council Archaeology Section, including the Urban Archaeological Database, was kindly provided by Mick Jones and John Herridge. Dave Start permitted examination of the parish files and library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire. The walk-over survey was undertaken by Steve Malone.

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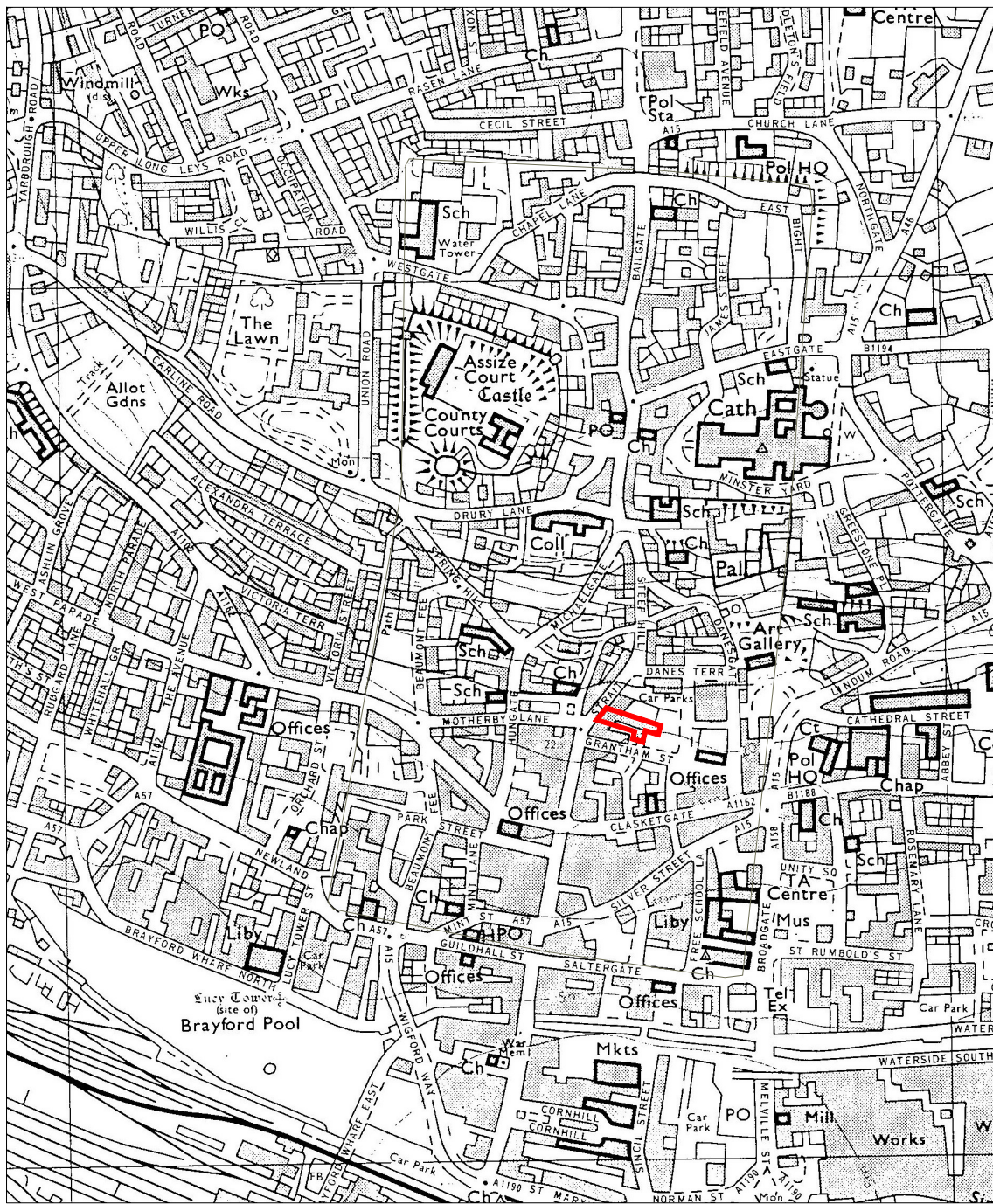
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Sources Not Consulted

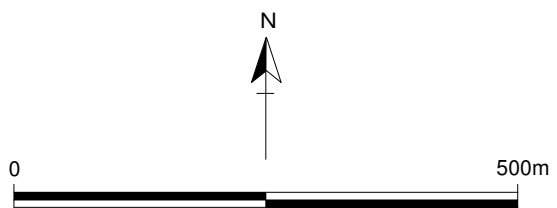
Examination was not made of primary historical documentation held at Lincolnshire Archives – experience has shown that the consultation of primary historical documents is extremely time-consuming, and only fortuitously affords information relevant to archaeological inquiries.

13. ABBREVIATIONS

APS	Archaeological Project Services
BGS	British Geological Survey
D&C MSS	Manuscripts of the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral of Lincoln
DoE	Department of the Environment
HMSO	Her Majesties' Stationery Office
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists
LAO	Lincolnshire Archives Office
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record
UAD	Urban Archaeological Database



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Figure 1 Site location

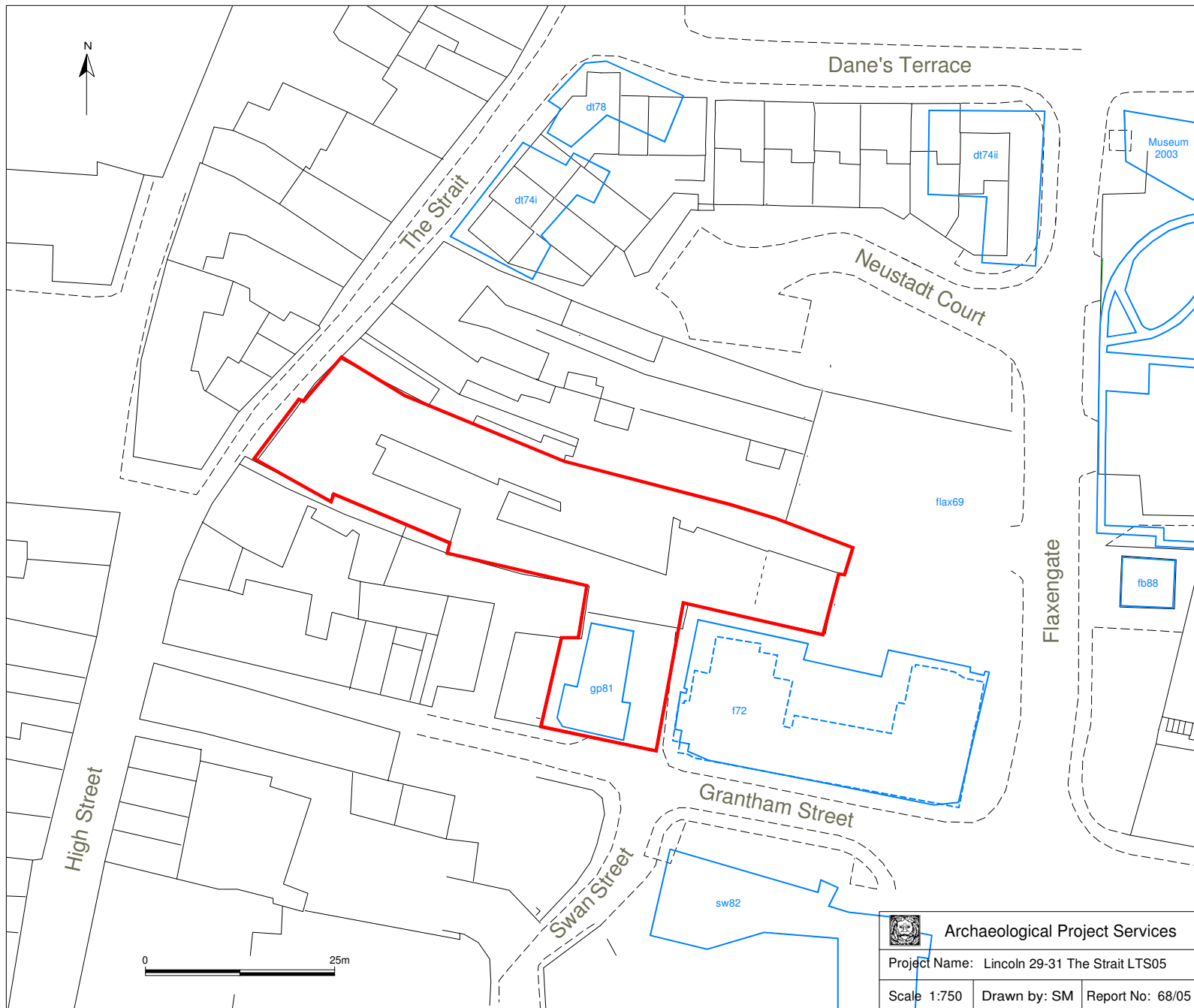


Figure 2 Site location showing previous archaeological investigations in the vicinity




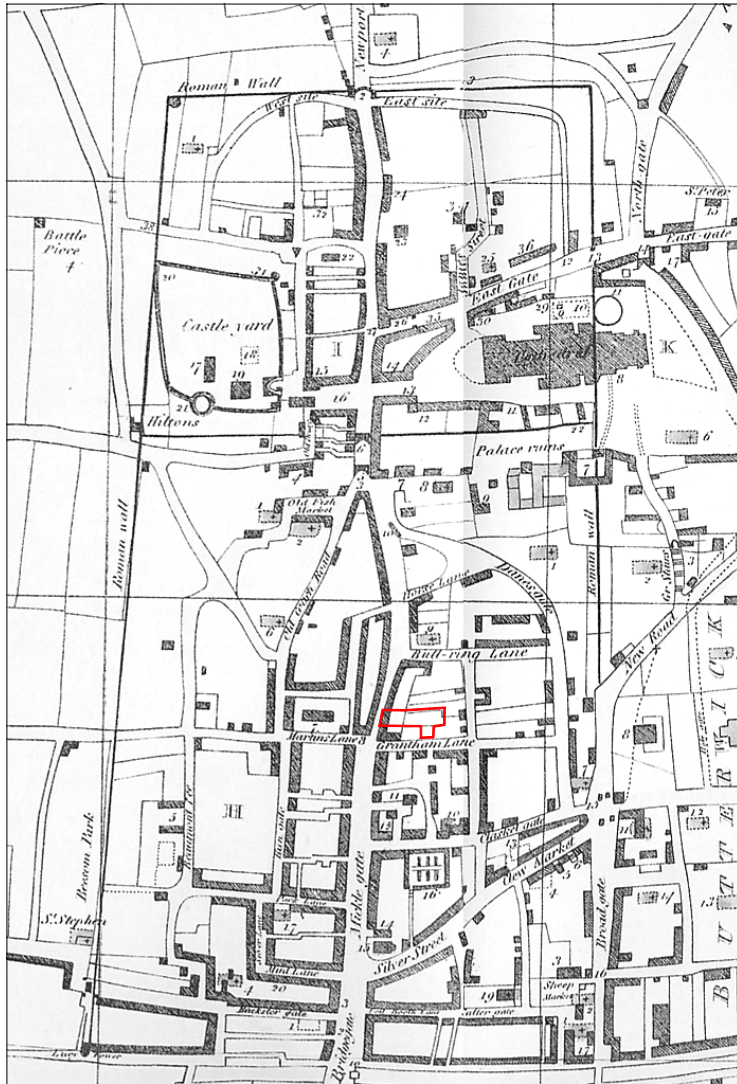
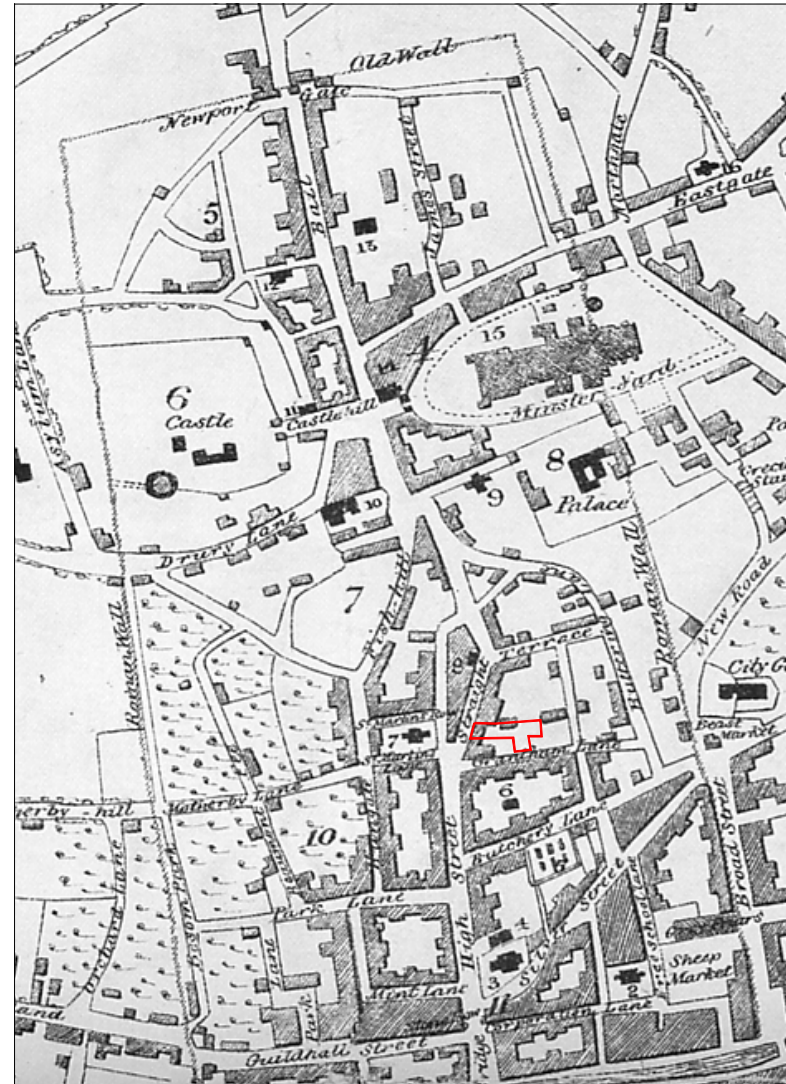
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Figure 3 Ordnance Survey 1888



Marrat 1817



Padley 1819


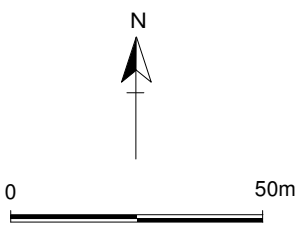
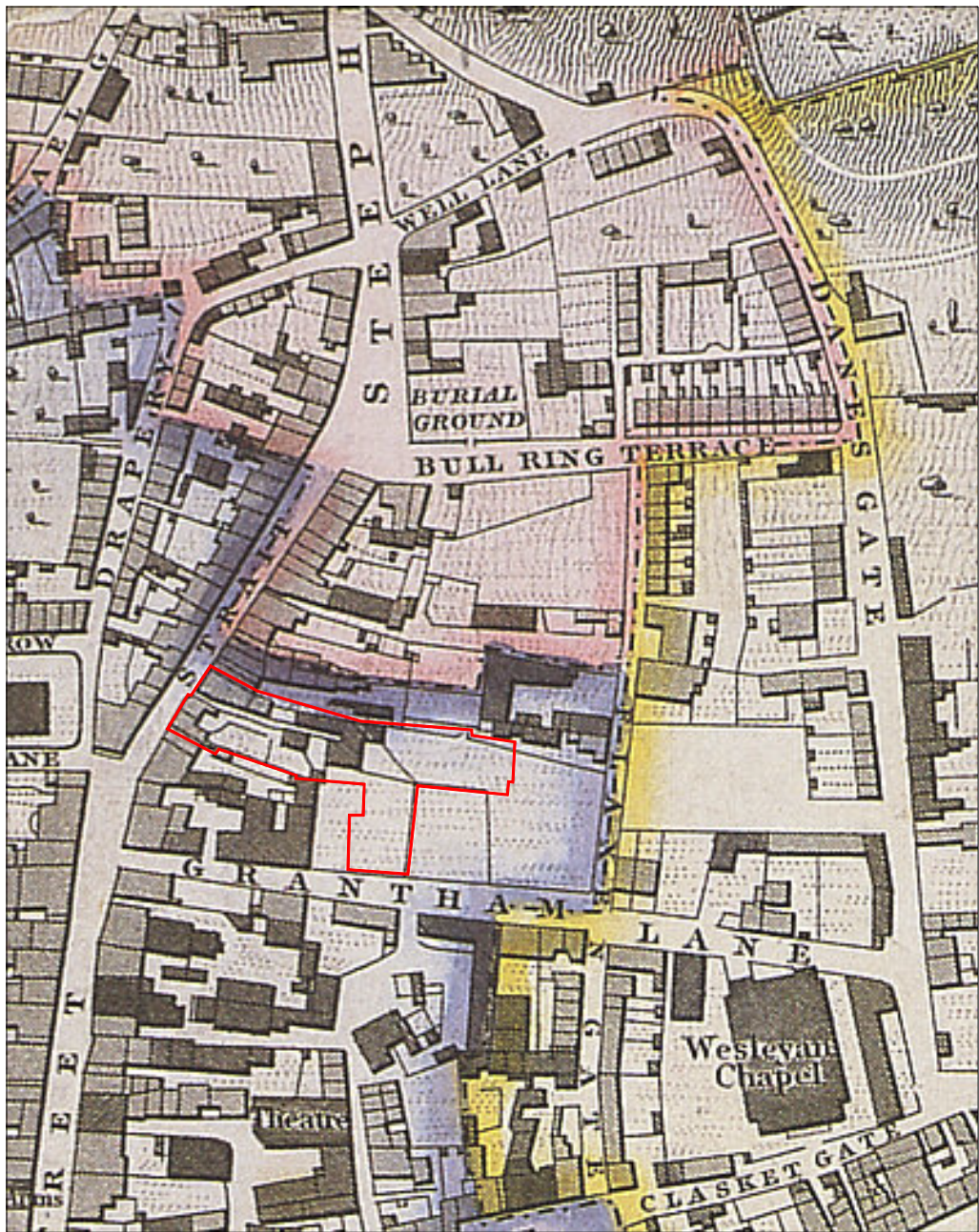
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Figure 4 Early 19th century mapping




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Figure 5 Padley 1868



Figure 6 Medieval property boundaries (after RH Jones 1980 Fig.42)



Plate 1: 29-31 The Strait, looking south towards the top of High Street



Plate 2: Rear yard of 29-31 The Strait



Plate 3: Yards to rear of 29-31 The Strait, looking west



Plate 4: Yards to rear of 29-31 The Strait, looking east

Appendix 1

SECRETARY OF STATE'S CRITERIA FOR SCHEDULING ANCIENT MONUMENTS - extract from *archaeology and planning* DoE planning policy guidance note 16, November 1990

The following criteria (which are not in any order of ranking), are used for assessing the national importance of an ancient monument and considering whether scheduling is appropriate. The criteria should not however be regarded as definitive; rather they are indicators which contribute to a wider judgement based on the individual circumstances of a case.

- i *Period:* all types of monuments that characterise a category or period should be considered for preservation.
- ii *Rarity:* there are some monument categories which in certain periods are so scarce that all surviving examples which retain some archaeological potential should be preserved. In general, however, a selection must be made which portrays the typical and commonplace as well as the rare. This process should take account of all aspects of the distribution of a particular class of monument, both in a national and regional context.
- iii *Documentation:* the significance of a monument may be enhanced by the existence of records of previous investigation or, in the case of more recent monuments, by the supporting evidence of contemporary written records.
- iv *Group value:* the value of a single monument (such as a field system) may be greatly enhanced by its association with related contemporary monuments (such as a settlement or cemetery) or with monuments of different periods. In some cases, it is preferable to protect the complete group of monuments, including associated and adjacent land, rather than to protect isolated monuments within the group.
- v *Survival/Condition:* the survival of a monument's archaeological potential both above and below ground is a particularly important consideration and should be assessed in relation to its present condition and surviving features.
- vi *Fragility/Vulnerability:* highly important archaeological evidence from some field monuments can be destroyed by a single ploughing or unsympathetic treatment; vulnerable monuments of this nature would particularly benefit from the statutory protection that scheduling confers. There are also existing standing structures of particular form or complexity whose value can again be severely reduced by neglect or careless treatment and which are similarly well suited by scheduled monument protection, even if these structures are already listed buildings.
- vii *Diversity:* some monuments may be selected for scheduling because they possess a combination of high quality features, others because of a single important attribute.
- viii *Potential:* on occasion, the nature of the evidence cannot be specified precisely but it may still be possible to document reasons anticipating its existence and importance and so to demonstrate the justification for scheduling. This is usually confined to sites rather than upstanding monuments.

Appendix 2

GLOSSARY

Geophysical Survey	Essentially non-invasive methods of examining below the ground surface by measuring deviations in the physical properties and characteristics of the earth. Techniques include magnetometry and resistivity survey.
Layer	A layer is a term to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
Medieval	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
Natural	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.
Post-medieval	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
Prehistoric	The period of human history prior to the introduction of writing. In Britain the prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 500,000 BC, until the Roman invasion in the middle of the 1 st century AD.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.
Saxon	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 410-1066 when England was largely settled by tribes from northern Germany.