

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-  
BASED ASSESSMENT OF LAND  
NEXT TO ALL SAINTS WAY,  
WEST BROMWICH

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Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt and Tom Rogers

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Project 3171  
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# Contents

<b>Part 1 Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Part 2 Detailed report</b>	
1. <b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>2</b>
2. <b>Methodology</b> .....	<b>2</b>
3. <b>Potential impacts</b> .....	<b>2</b>
4. <b>Baseline conditions</b> .....	<b>2</b>
4.1 Natural deposits .....	2
4.2 Prehistoric and Roman remains .....	3
4.3 Post-Roman and Anglo-Saxon remains .....	3
4.4 Medieval remains .....	3
4.5 Post-medieval remains .....	3
4.5.1 Enclosure and buildings .....	3
4.5.2 Windmill .....	4
4.6 19 <sup>th</sup> century remains .....	4
4.6.1 Streets .....	4
4.6.2 Chapel .....	4
4.6.3 Burial ground .....	5
4.6.4 Other buildings and gardens .....	5
4.7 20 <sup>th</sup> century remains .....	6
5. <b>Predicted impacts</b> .....	<b>6</b>
5.1 Phase 1 .....	6
5.2 Phase 2 .....	6
6. <b>Mitigation</b> .....	<b>6</b>
7. <b>Residual impacts</b> .....	<b>7</b>
8. <b>Publication summary</b> .....	<b>8</b>
9. <b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>8</b>
10. <b>Personnel</b> .....	<b>8</b>
11. <b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>8</b>





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# Archaeological desk-based assessment of land near All Saints Way, West Bromwich

**Darren Miller**

## Part 1: Summary

This report addresses the archaeological implications of a proposed development next to All Saints Way, West Bromwich (NGR 400350 291770). It predicts the nature and significance of archaeological remains on the basis of historical and archaeological information. It also predicts the impact of the proposed development on these remains, and discusses the form and outcomes of mitigation measures.

In summary, there is ample evidence that the site contains significant archaeological remains. The most significant remains are probably the burials in an unmarked burial ground off Sandwell Road. The burial ground was used between c1810 and 1853, and was established next to a Baptist chapel. The next most significant remains are probably those of the chapel itself, which was the first Baptist chapel in West Bromwich. In addition, remains of 19<sup>th</sup> century houses and other buildings almost certainly survive along Sandwell Road, Bratt Street, and Hargate Lane. There is also evidence for 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings further along Sandwell Road, and it is possible that an 18<sup>th</sup> century windmill stood just inside the site, on land north of Mill Lane. Finally, by analogy with other parts of the West Midlands, there could be remains of prehistoric and/or Roman activity. There are unlikely to be remains of activity between the Roman period and the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as for most of this time, the site formed part of a heath that was used primarily as pasture.

Some remains will inevitably be removed or truncated by construction works. Some remains may also be affected by site clearance, remediation, drainage, landscaping, and cumulative changes to the environment of the substrate. However, most of these impacts can be addressed by various mitigation measures. Indeed, some measures will be necessary to comply with statute law, and with local government policies regarding archaeology and development. Specifically, the construction of Phase 1 Buildings 6 and 7 on the site of the burial ground, will require full compliance with the procedures set out in the Disused Burial Ground (Amendment) Act of 1981. Among other things, this will involve the removal and reburial of all human remains. It is also likely that Sandwell Borough Council will require the burials to be removed, analysed, and reported on as part of a wider programme of archaeological work. This programme will probably begin with a field evaluation, involving sample trenching in all areas of the site. Later stages outside the burial ground could involve limited excavation and/or salvage recording. In addition, the Council may require changes to the assessment scheme, or to construction methods, so that certain remains are preserved *in situ*. These measures will have beneficial effects, offsetting the inevitable loss of some archaeological remains. In particular, the results will be of lasting interest and value to planners, researchers and the general public.

## **Part 2: Detailed report**

### **1. Introduction**

This report addresses the archaeological implications of a proposed development next to All Saints Way, West Bromwich (NGR 400350 291770). It predicts the nature and significance of archaeological remains on the basis of historical and archaeological information. It also predicts the impact of the proposed development on these remains, and discusses the form and outcomes of mitigation measures.

The structure and content conform to a briefing note prepared by Lovejoy Birmingham (Lovejoy 2006), and to a specification prepared by the Service (HEAS 2005). The content also conforms to the Institute of Field Archaeologists' guidelines for archaeological desk-based assessments (IFA 2001).

### **2. Methodology**

The assessment is based on sources held by Sandwell Community History and Archives Service, and on maps and records supplied by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council. Other sources relating to the site are held in Birmingham City Library and Staffordshire Record Office, but the BCL was closed while the assessment was being prepared, and the sources held in the SRO were not considered to be essential. Other information came from sources held by the Service, and from various websites relating to local history and archaeology. Selected sources are referred to in the main text, and a full list is given in the bibliography. The site was also visited twice, once by the Project Manager, and once by the Project Leader, to ensure that the assessment was informed by first-hand observation. On both visits, digital photographs were taken for future reference, and to provide illustrations.

### **3. Potential impacts**

The assessment scheme could result in the removal or truncation of significant remains. This would represent an irretrievable loss of potentially useful and valuable information. In particular, major groundworks associated with construction and drainage could result in the complete removal of localised remains, and/or the severe truncation of more extensive remains. More limited groundworks associated with clearance, remediation, and landscaping could also result in truncation. Finally, the assessment scheme could affect remains indirectly by changing the environment of the substrate.

### **4. Baseline conditions**

#### **4.1 Natural deposits**

Most of the archaeological remains identified in this assessment will be associated with or derived from natural deposits. The condition of some remains will also reflect the nature of these deposits, and especially the properties of local soils. The soils of West Bromwich have not been surveyed, but geological maps show that the area is underlain by Pleistocene drift deposits (British Geological Survey 1962), and soils developed on these deposits nearby have been surveyed and mapped as seasonally waterlogged loams (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983). Soils of this type and remains derived from them can therefore be expected, although some truncation will have occurred as a result of modern development. It is also likely that organic remains will not be well preserved, due to repeated cycles of wetting and drying.

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## 4.2 Prehistoric and Roman remains

No evidence of prehistoric activity has been found within 500m of the site. There is also no evidence of Roman activity, with the exception of coins and pottery found c150m to the east of the site in 1986/7 (SMR 6353). However, this meagre record is likely to reflect a lack of fieldwork and prospection. Work undertaken in other parts of the West Midlands suggests that prehistoric and Roman remains are common, if not ubiquitous, reflecting extensive hunting and gathering in early prehistory, and extensive farming since the late Bronze Age. This is certainly suggested by the results of surveys in the Sandwell Park (Hewitt and Hodder 1988), and around Sutton Coldfield (Hodder 1992). Both surveys produced considerable quantities of prehistoric flints and Roman pottery, the former indicating hunting and gathering, the latter settlement or manuring with farmyard manure. It is also suggested by the increasing number of artefacts being found and reported by members of the public (details available from the Portable Antiquities Scheme website at [www.findsdatabase.org.uk](http://www.findsdatabase.org.uk)). In addition, prehistoric and Roman remains have often been found during fieldwork undertaken in advance of development (Hodder 2002a and 2002b). It is therefore likely that the West Bromwich area contains at least some evidence of prehistoric activity, and much more evidence of Roman activity than has yet been discovered. It is also possible that some evidence exists within the present site, if only in the form of scattered flints and pottery. Remains of this type could be regarded as significant, even if they were not associated with contemporary features.

## 4.3 Post-Roman and Anglo-Saxon remains

There is no evidence for activity or land-use between the Roman period and the Domesday survey of 1086. However, it is likely that the area formed part of the heath indicated by the place-name Bromwich ('the broom farm'), first documented in 1086 (Watts 2004, 92). It is also likely that the heath had formed centuries earlier, as a consequence of late- or post-Roman agrarian decline. The reversion of farmland to heath and woodland was certainly a feature of this period, as attested by evidence from Sutton Chase and elsewhere (Hodder 1992, 181). If this was the case, no evidence of post-Roman and Anglo-Saxon activity can be expected, as the heath would have been used primarily for grazing. Moreover, post-Roman and Anglo-Saxon remains are extremely rare throughout the West Midlands, and most finds have been made in different contexts.

## 4.4 Medieval remains

The heath described above was almost certainly the heath recorded in several medieval archives (Dilworth 1973, 18). The heath probably shrank in this period as parts of it were brought into more intensive management. Indeed, 19<sup>th</sup> century field patterns between Sandwell Road and Newtown Road seem to represent a series of direct enclosures (Hodder 1990, fig 1), and it may be that Lyndon, the main settlement of West Bromwich by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, developed as part of this process. This would be consistent with the evidence for older settlements and fields in the north of the parish (Hodder 1990). Whatever the case, it seems that the site, and the modern centre of West Bromwich was heathland throughout the medieval period. This being so, no evidence of medieval activity can be expected.

## 4.5 Post-medieval remains

### 4.5.1 Enclosure and buildings

There is documentary evidence for further encroachments on the heath in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (Dilworth 1973, 33), and it seems that most of the site was enclosed in this period. The evidence comes in the form of William Yates's map of Staffordshire, published in 1775. Like most county maps of the period, Yates's map is highly selective and schematic. It cannot therefore be interpreted in detail, or enlarged for comparison with modern maps. However, Yates's cartography is clear enough to show that, by 1775, the area between Bratt Street,

Sandwell Road, and New Street had been enclosed. An extract from Yates's map is reproduced as Figure 2, and the boundaries of the heath before and after this enclosure are superimposed on Figure 3. Yates's map also shows five buildings within the enclosure, two on along Sandwell Road, in the area shown on Figure 10, and the other three outside the site to the south. Given the limitations of the map, the actual number of buildings and their precise location must remain uncertain. It is also uncertain whether the buildings represent settlement or some other activity. However, it is clear that buildings existed on the site by 1775, and it is likely that some remains of them survive. If so, they might be seen as moderately significant, especially in an area that has little archaeological evidence for the period before the Industrial Revolution.

#### 4.5.2 **Windmill**

In addition to the features recorded on Yates's map, a windmill north of Mill Street, shown by lettering on Wood's map of 1837, may also date to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This suggestion is not disproved by the absence of a windmill on Yates's map, and it is consistent with its absence from maps and documents after 1842 (SMR 5734). With regard to the location of the windmill, it may have stood just outside or just inside the present car park off Mill Street (Fig 10). If it stood outside, in the Expressway, it is likely that all remains of it have been removed. If it stood inside, however, distinctive remains of brick or stone foundations should be present, and would probably be regarded as significant (SMBC 2008, Policy C9).

#### 4.6 **19<sup>th</sup> century remains**

There is ample evidence for 19<sup>th</sup> century development and associated remains. In 1804, the remainder of the heath was enclosed by Act of Parliament, and the newly-enclosed land soon became the nucleus of the modern town of West Bromwich (VCH). The best sources for the purpose of this assessment are Wood's map of 1847 (Fig 3), and the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1890 (Fig 4). It should be noted, however, that two maps of the area in 1857 could not be located at Sandwell Library.

##### 4.6.1 **Streets**

Wood's map shows that the main streets of the modern town centre had already been laid out, and that development had taken place along the north side of the High Street, and along New Street, Lyng Lane and Moor Street. However, there were still vacant plots along all of these streets, and it seems that some streets were entirely undeveloped. Wood also shows a number of streets that do not appear on later maps, including Farmer Street, which extended from New Street to the Junction of Sandwell Road and Hargate Lane, and three streets connecting Farmer Street with Bratt Street (Fig 3). With regard to the assessment site, Wood's map shows that this contained the west half of Farmer Street, and the north end of Roberts Street, one of the three streets referred to above. Remains of these streets should therefore be present, but they are unlikely to be regarded as particularly significant.

##### 4.6.2 **Chapel**

Wood's map also shows that a chapel stood on the south side of Sandwell Road, opposite the entrance to Mill Lane (Fig 3). It was almost certainly the last building on the south side of Sandwell Road, as shown on the first edition map of 1890, and on later maps up to 1960 (Figs 4-8). If this was the case, it stood on the right hand side of the goods entrance to Sandwell Homes, in an area now partly occupied by a small electricity sub-station (Figs 10 and 11). From the account of non-Conformist communities in the *Victoria County History of Staffordshire*, the chapel can be identified as a Baptist foundation, built in 1810 and called the Providence Chapel. The account states that the chapel was used by a Baptist community until 1853, and then by a group adhering to the Methodist Reform Union for a decade or so after 1892. No information is given on the building itself, although the account is based on several local histories that may contain some information (Honeybund 1906; Richards nd; Langley

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1905, and Stokes 1855). Unfortunately, the potential value of these sources was realised too late for them to be consulted, but at all events, the Ordnance Survey maps show that the chapel was a large building, measuring some 17m by 10m, and that the main entrance was flanked by buttresses (Fig 4). Judging by surviving Baptist chapels of the same period in Staffordshire and Shropshire, it probably had rendered brick walls, a pitched tile roof, and windows with rounded or lancet arches (RCHME 1986). Given the scale of the chapel, and the fact that only part of its footprint has been disturbed, substantial remains are likely to survive. If so, these would almost certainly be regarded as significant (SMBC 2008, Policy C12).

#### 4.6.3 **Burial ground**

The VCH account also states that the chapel had a burial ground attached to it, and gives the names of those who contributed the land. As with the chapel, no more information is given, and no more has been found, but the burial ground was clearly the plot on the north side of the chapel shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1890, and on later editions up to 1960 (Figs 4-8). At present, the area is now open ground in front of the petrol station in Sandwell Homes (Figs 10 and 11). This area must therefore be regarded as particularly significant and sensitive. Although no records of burials exist, the size of the burial ground, and the figures for the congregation given in the VCH account, suggest that it might contain more than a hundred burials. This may be an over-estimate, as some members may have been buried elsewhere, but whatever the case, multiple burials will certainly be present, and this issue will need to be addressed in both its archaeological and legal aspects. On the legal side, it appears that the area conforms to the definition of a disused burial ground according to the Burial Grounds (Amendment) Act of 1981, and that it can be developed, provided that the procedures set out in the act are followed. Among other things, the procedures require the removal and reburial of all human remains (English Heritage 2005, 17-22). If an archaeological contractor is appointed, the remains will need to be excavated, studied, and reported on to professional standards (English Heritage 2005, 40-44).

#### 4.6.4 **Other buildings and gardens**

The first edition Ordnance Survey map shows the results of intensive development since 1847 (Fig 4). Most of the fabric of the modern town was in place, and the southern half of the site was already fully developed, in the sense that it retained the same form for the next 70 or 80 years.

Two rows of houses and a corn mill had been built along the south side of Sandwell Road. More terraced houses had been built behind the chapel, along the south side of the burial ground, and along both sides of Bratt Street. Behind all these buildings were gardens and outbuildings (presumably sheds, coal-houses, and toilets). The only undeveloped areas in the southern half of the site were the gardens belonging to the four houses known collectively as Highfields (SMR 577), a plot to the north, and two plots to the east of the burial ground. By contrast, most of the northern half of the site was open ground, presumably grassland or scrub. The only developed areas were in the far west, where a row of houses had been built along Hargate Lane, and in the far east, where half-a-dozen stables had been built by the local authority. There is no evidence on the first edition map for the streets shown on Wood's map of 1847, although the line of Wood's Farmer Street is shown as an unmarked track.

Substantial remains of all these buildings are likely to exist, unless modern truncation has been particularly severe (Figs 10, 12, and 13). There will also be reworked garden soils including large quantities of 19<sup>th</sup> century artefacts. Depending upon their state of preservation, such remains might be considered to be as significant as those of earlier periods. Particular importance might be attached to remains of the cornmill, as an industrial monument (SMBC 2008, Policy C9).

#### 4.7 **20<sup>th</sup> century remains**

Later editions of large-scale Ordnance Survey maps show few changes within the boundaries of the site between 1890 and 1960 (Figs 4-8). The main changes took place in the northern half of the site. By 1938, the Corporation stables had become a larger yard, and a weighbridge, presumably related to the yard, had been built near the junction of Sandwell Road and Hargate Lane (Fig 7). The land to the north of the yard had also been enclosed, and perhaps landscaped, as a playing field. By 1960, the yard had been extended further to the west, and provided with new garages and parking bays (Fig 8). The playing field had also been appropriated by the school that was built to the east of the site in 1925. By contrast, the southern part of the site remained virtually unchanged. The only new buildings were a detached house on Sandwell Road, built between 1890 and 1904, and a clinic to the north of Highfields, built between 1938 and 1960. However, the corn mill had almost certainly been converted or rebuilt by 1919, and the gardens of Highfields and the plot behind the burial ground had both been made into tennis courts by 1938. Substantial remains of these buildings and features are likely to exist, but not likely to be seen as significant. The extent of development after 1960 is uncertain, due to a lack of local knowledge and later Ordnance Survey maps. So too are the stages of demolition and redevelopment that have given the site its present appearance. However, this information can probably be supplied by Sandwell Borough Council, or by local residents.

#### 5. **Predicted impacts**

The main impacts of the assessment scheme can be predicted by comparing a plan of documented remains with a draft outline plan (Figs 9 and 10). Without mitigation, the construction of the buildings would have direct, irreversible, and permanent effects as summarised above. At present, it is not known what methods of construction are envisaged, or whether any of the buildings will be cellared. However, as most remains are likely to be shallow, they will probably be affected in any case. The following paragraphs identify specific impacts relating to buildings of Phases 1 and 2. At present, it is not known what methods of construction are envisaged, or whether any of the buildings will be cellared. However, as most remains are likely to be shallow, they will probably be affected in any case. The following paragraphs identify specific impacts relating to buildings of Phases 1 and 2.

##### 5.1 **Phase 1**

Building 6 and 7 will affect remains of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century chapel and burial ground. The same buildings will also affect remains of late 19<sup>th</sup> century houses to the west and south. Buildings 14 will affect remains of late 19<sup>th</sup> century houses along the north side of Hargate Lane. Finally, Building 2 may affect remains of two or more 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings.

##### 5.2 **Phase 2**

Building 9 will affect remains of the 19<sup>th</sup> century corn mill and houses to the north, while Building 10 will affect remains of 19<sup>th</sup> century houses along the north side of Bratt Street. Buildings 11 and 12 will affect remains of late 19<sup>th</sup> century houses along Sandwell Road, and the south side of Bratt Street. According to the outline plan, Buildings 11 and 13 will also require the demolition of the two surviving late 19<sup>th</sup> century houses.

#### 6. **Mitigation**

Some remains will inevitably be removed or truncated by construction works. Some remains may also be affected by clearance, remediation, drainage, landscaping, and cumulative changes to the environment of the substrate. However, most of these impacts can be ameliorated by various forms of mitigation. Indeed, some measures will be necessary to comply with statute law, and with local government policies regarding archaeology and

development. Specifically, the construction of Phase 1 Buildings 6 and 7 on the site of the burial ground would require full compliance with the procedures set out in the Disused Burial Ground (Amendment) Act of 1981 (Ministry of Justice 2008; English Heritage 2005). This would involve the removal and reburial of all human remains, following public advertisement and notification of the Baptist Union Corporation (Baptist Union Corporation 2006). It is also likely that Sandwell Borough Council will require the burials to be excavated, analysed, and reported on as part of a staged programme of archaeological work. This programme will probably begin with a field evaluation, involving sample trenching in all areas of the site. This will establish the number and depth of burials in the burial ground, the significance of other documented remains, and the presence and significance of inferred and/or unexpected remains. Apart from the removal of human remains, later stages could involve limited excavation and/or salvage recording. In addition, the Council may require changes to the assessment scheme, or to construction methods, so that certain remains are preserved *in situ*. These measures would have beneficial effects, offsetting the inevitable loss of some archaeological remains. In particular, the results would be of lasting interest and value to planners, researchers and the general public. Finally, the Council may require the two surviving late 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings to be recorded before demolition.

## 7. Residual impacts

The following summary assumes that the assessment scheme will follow the outline plan, and that mitigation will proceed along the lines described above.

Key issues	Mitigation methods	Residual impact
Disturbance of early 19 <sup>th</sup> century burials	Re-location of Phase 1 Buildings 6 and 7 or removal and reburial of all human remains, probably as part of an archaeological programme of work and after a field evaluation to determine the number and depth of burials	Minor beneficial: human remains would be left <i>in situ</i> or removed and reburied probably after analysis and reporting.
Removal/truncation of remains of early 19 <sup>th</sup> century chapel and other buildings	Field evaluation followed by limited excavation or salvage recording	Minor beneficial or negligible/none, depending on the significance of the remains, as established by the field evaluation.
Removal/truncation of remains of late 19 <sup>th</sup> century commill and houses	Field evaluation followed by limited excavation or salvage recording	Minor beneficial or negligible/none, depending on the significance of the remains, as established by the field evaluation.
Removal/truncation of documented 18 <sup>th</sup> century remains	Field evaluation followed by limited excavation or salvage recording	Minor beneficial or negligible/none, depending on the significance of the remains, as established by the field evaluation.
Removal/truncation of inferred prehistoric and/or Roman remains	Field evaluation followed by limited excavation or salvage recording	Minor beneficial or negligible/none, depending on the significance of the remains, as established by the field evaluation.
Removal/truncation of undocumented and /or unexpected pre-modern remains	Field evaluation followed by limited excavation or salvage recording	Minor beneficial or negligible/none, depending on the significance of the remains, as established by the field evaluation.
Demolition of surviving late 19 <sup>th</sup> century houses	Building recording	Minor beneficial: the loss of the buildings would be offset by a permanent record of their character and history

Key issues	Mitigation methods	Residual impact
Decay or deformation of surviving remains as a result of development	Field evaluation followed by limited excavation or salvage recording	Negligible/none or minor adverse: the effects of the assessment scheme on the environment of the substrate are uncertain at present, and it may not be possible to mitigate adverse effects on archaeological remains.

8. **Publication summary**

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, and unless directed otherwise, the Service intends to publish the following summary in the most appropriate local or regional journal.

*The Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service was commissioned by EC Harris to address the archaeological implications of a propose development next to All Saints Way, West Bromwich (NGR 400350 291770). The assessment addressed the nature and significance of archaeological remains on the site, the impact of the proposed development on these remains, and the form and outcomes of mitigation measures.*

*The assessment identified and located significant remains of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century date, including remains of the first Baptist chapel in West Bromwich, built in 1810, and multiple burials in an adjacent plot. The assessment also identified the approximate location of two or more 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings and an 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century windmill. In addition, the assessment identified some potential for prehistoric and/or Roman remains. With regard to impacts and mitigation, it was concluded that most of these remains would be affected by the proposed development, and that the proper response would a programme of archaeological work including the removal and analysis of all human remains.*

9. **Acknowledgements**

This assessment has been prepared with the help of Fay de Souza (Sandwell Borough Council), David Mobberley (Lovejoy Birmingham), and Simon Wills (Glen Howells Architects).

10. **Personnel**

The assessment was undertaken by Darren Miller. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers. The illustrations were drawn by Carolyn Hunt and Tom Rogers.

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## Figures

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## 12. Archaeology and cultural heritage

### 12.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the archaeological implications of the assessment scheme. It predicts the nature and significance of archaeological remains within the assessment site on the basis of historical and archaeological information. It also predicts the potential impact of the assessment scheme on these remains, and discusses the form and outcomes of mitigation measures. The structure and content conform to a briefing note prepared by Lovejoy Birmingham (Lovejoy 2006), and to a specification prepared by the Service (HEAS 2005). The content also conforms to the Institute of Field Archaeologists' guidelines for archaeological desk-based assessments (IFA 2001).

### 12.2 Methodology

The assessment is based on sources held by Sandwell Community History and Archives Service, and on maps and records supplied by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council. Other sources relating to the site are held in Birmingham City Library and Staffordshire Record Office, but the BCL was closed while the assessment was being prepared, and the sources held in the SRO were not considered to be essential. Other information came from sources held by the Service, and from various websites relating to local history and archaeology. Selected sources are referred to below, and a full list is given in the ES appendix. The site was also visited twice, once by the Project Manager, and once by the Project Leader, to ensure that the assessment was informed by first-hand observation. On both visits, digital photographs were taken for future reference, and to provide illustrations.

### 12.3 Potential impacts

The assessment scheme could result in the removal or truncation of significant remains. This would represent a loss of potentially useful and valuable information. In particular, groundworks associated with construction and drainage could result in the complete removal of localised remains, and/or the severe truncation of more extensive remains. Other groundworks associated with clearance, remediation, and landscaping could also result in truncation. Finally, the assessment scheme could affect remains indirectly by changing the environment of the substrate.

### 12.4 Baseline conditions

The baseline conditions are the remains indicated by historical evidence, and by the results of fieldwork in other parts of the West Midlands.

#### Natural deposits

Most of the archaeological remains identified in this assessment will be associated with or derived from natural deposits. The condition of some remains will also reflect the nature of these deposits, and especially the properties of local soils. The soils of West Bromwich have not been surveyed, but geological maps show that the area is underlain by Pleistocene drift deposits (British Geological Survey 1962), and soils developed on these deposits nearby have been surveyed and mapped as seasonally waterlogged loams (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983). Soils of this type and remains derived from them can therefore be expected, although some truncation will have occurred as a result

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of modern development. It is also likely that organic remains will not be well preserved, due to repeated cycles of wetting and drying.

## **Prehistoric and Roman remains**

No evidence of prehistoric activity has been found within 500m of the site. There is also no evidence of Roman activity, with the exception of coins and pottery found c150m to the east of the site in 1986/7 (SMR 6353). However, this meagre record is likely to reflect a lack of fieldwork and prospection. Work undertaken in other parts of the West Midlands suggests that prehistoric and Roman remains are common, if not ubiquitous, reflecting extensive hunting and gathering in early prehistory, and extensive farming since the late Bronze Age. This is certainly suggested by the results of surveys in Sandwell Park (Hewitt and Hodder 1988), and around Sutton Coldfield (Hodder 1992). Both surveys produced considerable quantities of prehistoric flints and Roman pottery, the former indicating hunting and gathering, the latter settlement or manuring with farmyard manure. It is also suggested by the increasing number of artefacts being found and reported by members of the public (details available from the Portable Antiquities Scheme website at [www.findsdatabase.org.uk](http://www.findsdatabase.org.uk)). In addition, prehistoric and Roman remains have been found during fieldwork undertaken in advance of development (Hodder 2002a and 2002b). It is therefore likely that the West Bromwich area contains at least some evidence of prehistoric activity, and much more evidence of Roman activity than has yet been discovered. It is also possible that some evidence exists within the present site, if only in the form of scattered flints and pottery. Remains of this type could be regarded as significant, even if they were not associated with contemporary features.

## **Post-Roman and Anglo-Saxon remains**

There is no evidence for activity or land-use between the Roman period and the Domesday survey of 1086. However, it is likely that the area formed part of the heath indicated by the place-name Bromwich ("the broom farm"), first documented in 1086 (Watts 2004, 92). It is also likely that the heath had formed centuries earlier, as a consequence of late or post-Roman agrarian decline. The reversion of farmland to heath and woodland was certainly a feature of this period, as attested by evidence from Sutton Chase and elsewhere (Hodder 1992, 181). If this was the case, no evidence of post-Roman and Anglo-Saxon activity can be expected, as the heath would have been used primarily for grazing. Moreover, post-Roman and Anglo-Saxon remains are extremely rare throughout the West Midlands, and most finds have been made in different contexts.

## **Medieval remains**

The heath described above was almost certainly the heath recorded in several medieval archives (Dilworth 1973, 18). The heath probably shrank in this period as parts of it were brought into more intensive management. Indeed, 19<sup>th</sup> century field patterns between Sandwell Road and Newtown Road seem to represent a series of direct enclosures (Hodder 1990, fig 1), and it may be that Lyndon, the main settlement of West Bromwich by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, developed as part of this process. This would be consistent with the evidence for older settlements and fields in the north of the parish (Hodder 1990). Whatever the case, it seems that the site, and the modern centre of West Bromwich was heathland throughout the medieval period. This being so, no significant evidence of medieval activity can be expected.

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## Post-medieval remains

There is documentary evidence for further encroachments on the heath in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (Dilworth 1973, 33), and it seems that most of the site was enclosed in this period. The evidence comes in the form of William Yates's map of Staffordshire, published in 1775. Like most county maps of the period, Yates's map is highly selective and schematic. It cannot therefore be interpreted in detail, or enlarged for comparison with modern maps. However, Yates's cartography is clear enough to show that, by 1775, the area between Bratt Street, Sandwell Road, and New Street had been enclosed. An extract from Yates's map is reproduced as Figure 12.2, and the boundaries of the heath before and after this enclosure are superimposed on Figure 12.3. Yates's map also shows five buildings within the enclosure, two in the area shown on Figure 12.10, and the other three outside the site to the south. Given the limitations of the map, the actual number of buildings and their precise location must remain uncertain. It is also uncertain whether the buildings represent settlement or some other activity. However, it is clear that buildings existed on the site by 1775, and it is likely that remains of them survive. If so, they could be regarded as significant, especially in an area that has little archaeological evidence for the period before the Industrial Revolution.

In addition to the features recorded on Yates's map, a windmill north of Mill Street, shown by lettering on Wood's map of 1837, may also date to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This suggestion is not disproved by the absence of a windmill on Yates's map, and it is consistent with its absence from maps and documents after 1842 (SMR 5734). With regard to the location of the windmill, it may have stood just outside or just inside the present car park off Mill Street (Fig 12.10). If it stood outside, in the Expressway, it is likely that all remains of it have been removed. If it stood inside, however, distinctive remains of brick or stone foundations should be present, and would probably be regarded as significant (SMBX 2008, Policy C9).

## 19<sup>th</sup> century remains

There is ample evidence for 19<sup>th</sup> century development and associated remains. In 1804, the remainder of the heath was enclosed by Act of Parliament, and the newly-enclosed land soon became the nucleus of the modern town of West Bromwich (VCH). The best sources for the purpose of this assessment are Wood's map of 1837 (Fig 12.3), and the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1890 (Fig 12.4). It should be noted, however, that two maps of the area in 1857 could not be located at Sandwell Library.

Wood's map shows that the main streets of the modern town centre had already been laid out, and that development had taken place along the north side of the High Street, and along New Street, Lyng Lane and Moor Street. However, there were still vacant plots along all of these streets, and it seems that some streets were entirely undeveloped. Wood also shows a number of streets that do not appear on later maps, including Farmer Street, which extended from New Street to the Junction of Sandwell Road and Hargate Lane, and three streets connecting Farmer Street with Bratt Street (Fig 12.3). With regard to the assessment site, Wood's map shows that this contained the west half of Farmer Street, and the north end of Roberts Street, one of the three streets referred to above. Remains of these streets should therefore be present, but they are unlikely to be regarded as significant.

Wood's map also shows that a chapel stood on Sandwell Road, opposite the entrance to Mill Lane (Fig 12.3). It was almost certainly the last building on Sandwell Road, as shown on the first edition map of 1890, and on later maps up to 1960 (Figs 12.4-12.8). If this was the case, it stood on the right hand side of the goods entrance to Sandwell Homes, in an area now partly occupied by an electricity sub-station (Figs 12.10 and

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12.11). From the account of non-Conformist communities in the *Victoria County History of Staffordshire*, the chapel can be identified as a Baptist foundation, built in 1810 and called the Providence Chapel. The account states that the chapel was used by a Baptist community until 1853, and then by a group adhering to the Methodist Reform Union for a decade or so after 1892. No information is given on the building itself, although the account is based on several local histories that may contain some information (Honeybund 1906; Richards nd; Langley 1905, and Stokes 1855). Unfortunately, the potential value of these sources was realised too late for them to be consulted, but at all events, the Ordnance Survey maps show that the chapel was a large building, measuring some 17m by 10m, and that the main entrance was flanked by buttresses (Fig 12.4). Judging by surviving Baptist chapels of the same period in Staffordshire and Shropshire, it probably had rendered brick walls, a pitched tile roof, and windows with rounded or lancet arches (RCHME 1986). Given the scale of the chapel, and the fact that only part of its footprint has been disturbed, substantial remains are likely to survive. If so, these would almost certainly be regarded as significant.

The VCH account also states that the chapel had a burial ground attached to it, and gives the names of those who contributed the land. As with the chapel, no more information is given, and no more has been found, but the burial ground was clearly the plot on the north side of the chapel shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1890, and on later editions up to 1960 (Figs 12.4-12.8). At present, the area is now open ground in front of the petrol station in Sandwell Homes (Figs 12.10 and 12.11). This area must therefore be regarded as particularly significant and sensitive. Although no records of burials exist, the size of the burial ground, and the figures for the congregation given in the VCH account, suggest that it might contain more than a hundred burials. This may be an over-estimate, as some members may have been buried elsewhere, but whatever the case, multiple burials will certainly be present, and this issue will need to be addressed in both its archaeological and legal aspects. The legal aspects will need to be addressed by specialists, but it appears that the area conforms to the definition of a disused burial ground according to the Burial Grounds (Amendment) Act of 1981, and that it can be developed, provided that the procedures set out in the act are followed. Among other things, the procedures require the removal and reburial of all human remains (English Heritage 2005, 17-22). If an archaeological contractor is appointed, the remains will need to be excavated, studied, and reported on to professional standards (English Heritage 2005, 40-44).

The first edition Ordnance Survey map shows the results of intensive development since 1837 (Fig 12.4). Most of the fabric of the modern town was in place, and the southern half of the site was already fully developed, in the sense that it retained the same form for the next 70 or 80 years.

Two rows of houses and a corn mill had been built along Sandwell Road. More terraced houses had been built behind the chapel, and on both sides of Bratt Street. Behind all these buildings were gardens and outbuildings (presumably sheds, coal-houses, and toilets). The only undeveloped areas in the southern half of the site were the gardens belonging to the four houses known collectively as Highfields (SMR 577), a plot to the north, and two plots to the east of the burial ground. By contrast, most of the northern half of the site was open ground, presumably grassland or scrub. The only developed areas were in the far west, where a row of houses had been built along Hargate Lane, and in the far east, where half-a-dozen stables had been built by the local authority. There is no evidence on the first edition map for the streets shown on Wood's map of 1837, although the line of Wood's Farmer Street is shown as an unmarked track.

Substantial remains of all these buildings are likely to exist, unless modern truncation has been particularly severe (Figs 12.10, 12.12 and 12.13). There will also be reworked

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garden soils including large quantities of 19<sup>th</sup> century artefacts. Depending upon their state of preservation, such remains might be considered to be as significant as those of earlier periods (SMBA 2008, policy C12). Particular importance might be attached to remains of the corn mill, as an industrial monument (SMBC 2008, policy C9).

## **20<sup>th</sup> century remains**

Later Ordnance Survey maps show few changes within the boundaries of the site between 1890 and 1960 (Figs 12.4-12.8). The main changes took place in the northern half of the site. By 1938, the Corporation stables had become a larger yard, and a weighbridge, presumably related to the yard, had been built near the junction of Sandwell Road and Hargate Lane (Fig 12.7). The land to the north of the yard had also been enclosed, and perhaps landscaped, as a playing field. By 1960, the yard had been extended further to the west, and provided with new garages and parking bays (Fig 12.8). The playing field had also been appropriated by the school that was built to the east of the site in 1925. By contrast, the southern part of the site remained virtually unchanged. The only new buildings were a detached house on Sandwell Road, built between 1890 and 1904, and a clinic to the north of Highfields, built between 1938 and 1960. However, the corn mill had almost certainly been converted or rebuilt by 1919, and the gardens of Highfields and the plot behind the burial ground had both been made into tennis courts by 1938. Substantial remains of these buildings and features are likely to exist, but not likely to be regarded as significant. The extent of development after 1960 is uncertain, due to a lack of local knowledge and later Ordnance Survey maps. So too are the stages of demolition and redevelopment that have given the site its present appearance. However, this information can probably be supplied by Sandwell Borough Council, or by local residents.

12.5

## **Predicted impacts**

The main impacts of the assessment scheme can be predicted by comparing a plan of documented remains with the current Masterplan (Figs 12.9 and 12.10). Without mitigation, the construction of the buildings would have direct, irreversible, and permanent effects as summarised above. At present, it is not known what methods of construction are envisaged, or whether any of the buildings will be cellared. However, as most remains are likely to be shallow, they will probably be affected in any case. The following paragraphs identify specific impacts relating to buildings of Phases 1 and 2.

### **Phase 1**

Most of the Phase 1 buildings would have some impact on documented remains.

Building 7 would affect remains of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century chapel and burial ground. It would also affect a row of 19<sup>th</sup> century houses. The burial ground and another row of 19<sup>th</sup> century houses could also be affected by construction and landscaping to the east of Building 7.

Building 4, 8, 9, and 13 would also affect remains of 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings. Finally, Buildings 1 and 2 would probably affect one or other of the mapped 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings.

### **Phase 2**

Two of the Phase 2 buildings would have archaeological implications. Buildings 10 and 11 would affect remains of late 19<sup>th</sup> century houses. Building 11 would also involve the

demolition of a surviving house. In addition, landscaping behind Building 10 would involve the demolition of the other surviving house.

## 12.6 Mitigation

Some remains will inevitably be removed or truncated by construction works. Some remains may also be affected by clearance, remediation, drainage, landscaping, and cumulative changes to the environment of the substrate. However, most of these impacts can be ameliorated by various forms of mitigation. Indeed, some measures will be necessary to comply with statute law, and with local government policies regarding archaeology and development. Specifically, the construction of Phase 1 Building 7 on the site of the burial ground would require full compliance with the procedures set out in the Disused Burial Ground (Amendment) Act of 1981 (Ministry of Justice 2008; English Heritage 2005). This would involve the removal and reburial of all human remains, following public advertisement and notification of the Baptist Union Corporation (Baptist Union Corporation 2006). It is also likely that Sandwell Borough Council will require the burials to be excavated, analysed, and reported on as part of a staged programme of archaeological work (SMBC 2008, Policies C9 and C11). This programme will probably begin with a field evaluation, involving sample trenching in all areas of the site. This will establish the number and depth of burials in the burial ground, the significance of other documented remains, and the presence and significance of inferred and/or unexpected remains. Apart from the removal of human remains, later stages could involve limited excavation and/or salvage recording. In addition, the Council may require changes to the assessment scheme, or to construction methods, so that certain remains are preserved *in situ*. These measures would have beneficial effects, offsetting the inevitable loss of some archaeological remains. In particular, the results would be of lasting interest and value to planners, researchers and the general public. Finally, the Council may require the two surviving late 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings to be recorded before demolition.

## 12.7 Residual impacts

The following summary assumes that the assessment scheme will follow the Masterplan, and that mitigation will proceed along the lines described above.

Key issues	Mitigation methods	Residual impact
Disturbance of early 19 <sup>th</sup> century burials	Re-location of Phase 1 Building 7 or removal and reburial of all human remains, probably as part of an archaeological programme of work and after a field evaluation to determine the number and depth of burials	Minor beneficial: human remains would be left <i>in situ</i> or removed and reburied probably after analysis and reporting.
Removal/truncation of remains of early 19 <sup>th</sup> century chapel and other buildings	Field evaluation followed by limited excavation and/or salvage recording.	Minor beneficial or negligible/none, depending on the significance of the remains, as established by the field evaluation.
Removal/truncation of	Field evaluation followed	Minor beneficial or



<b>Key issues</b>	<b>Mitigation methods</b>	<b>Residual impact</b>
remains of late 19 <sup>th</sup> century corn mill and houses	by limited excavation and/or salvage recording	negligible/none, depending on the significance of the remains, as established by the field evaluation.
Removal/truncation of remains of 18 <sup>th</sup> century buildings	Field evaluation followed by limited excavation and/or salvage recording	Minor beneficial or negligible/none, depending on the significance of the remains, as established by the field evaluation.
Removal/truncation of inferred prehistoric and/or Roman remains	Field evaluation followed by limited excavation and/or salvage recording	Minor beneficial or negligible/none, depending on the significance of the remains, as established by the field evaluation.
Removal/truncation of undocumented and /or unexpected pre-modern remains	Field evaluation followed by limited excavation and/or salvage recording	Minor beneficial or negligible/none, depending on the significance of the remains, as established by the field evaluation.
Demolition of surviving late 19 <sup>th</sup> century houses	Building recording	Minor beneficial: the loss of the buildings would be offset by a permanent record of their character and history
Decay or deformation of surviving remains as a result of changes to the environment of the substrate	Field evaluation followed by limited excavation and/or salvage recording	Negligible/none or minor adverse: the effects of the assessment scheme on the environment of the substrate are uncertain at present, and it may not be possible to mitigate the effect on archaeological remains.

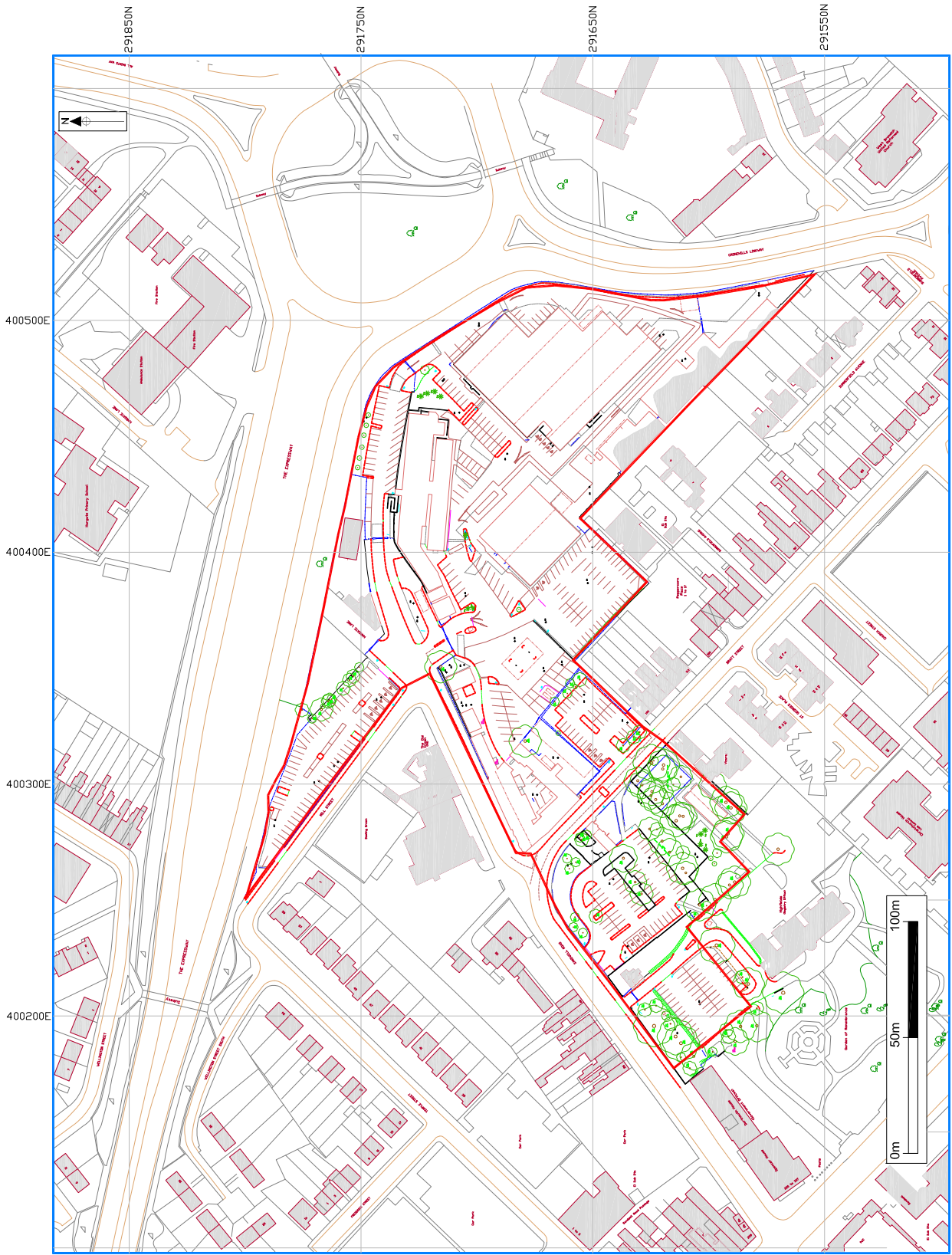
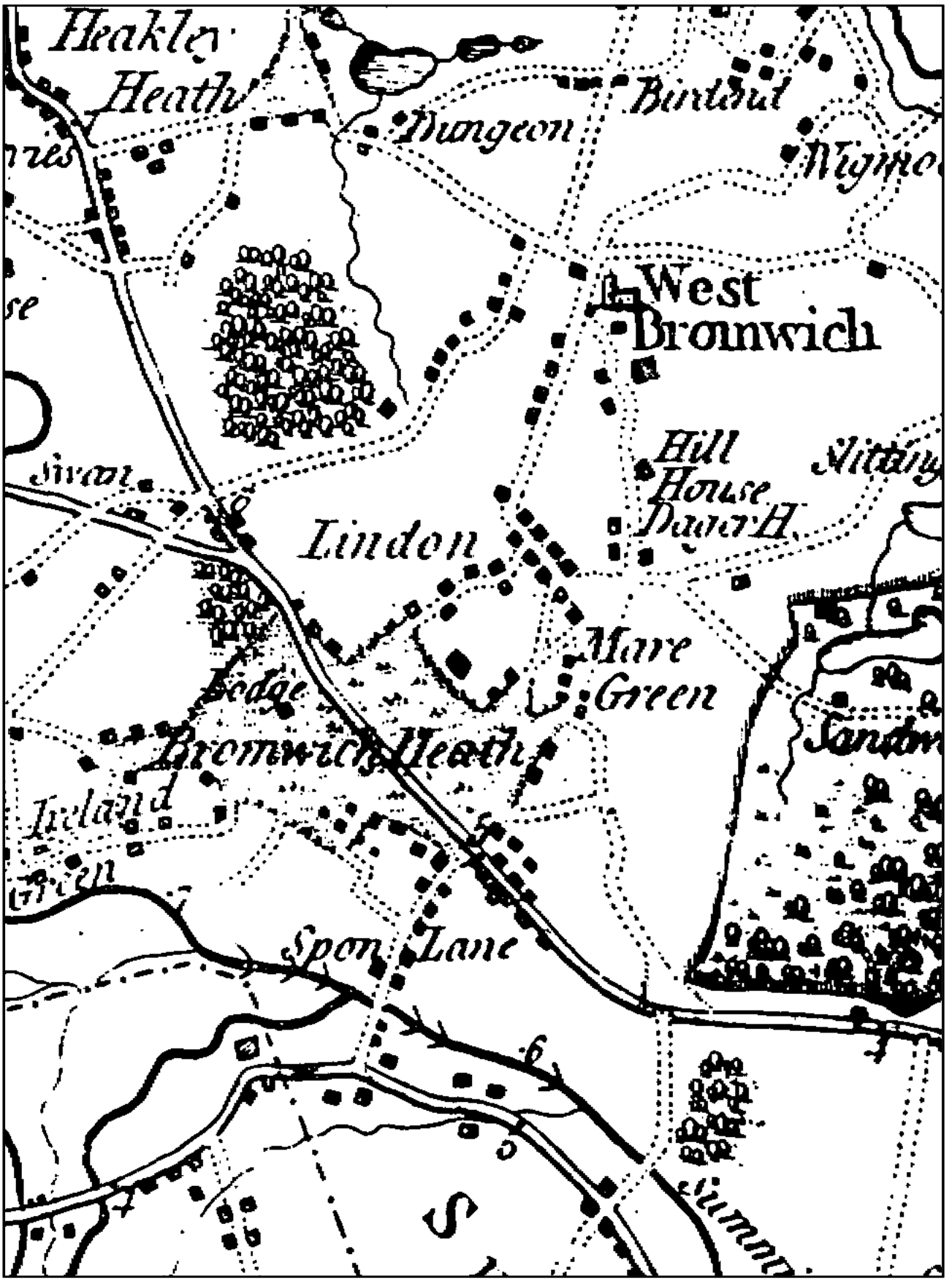


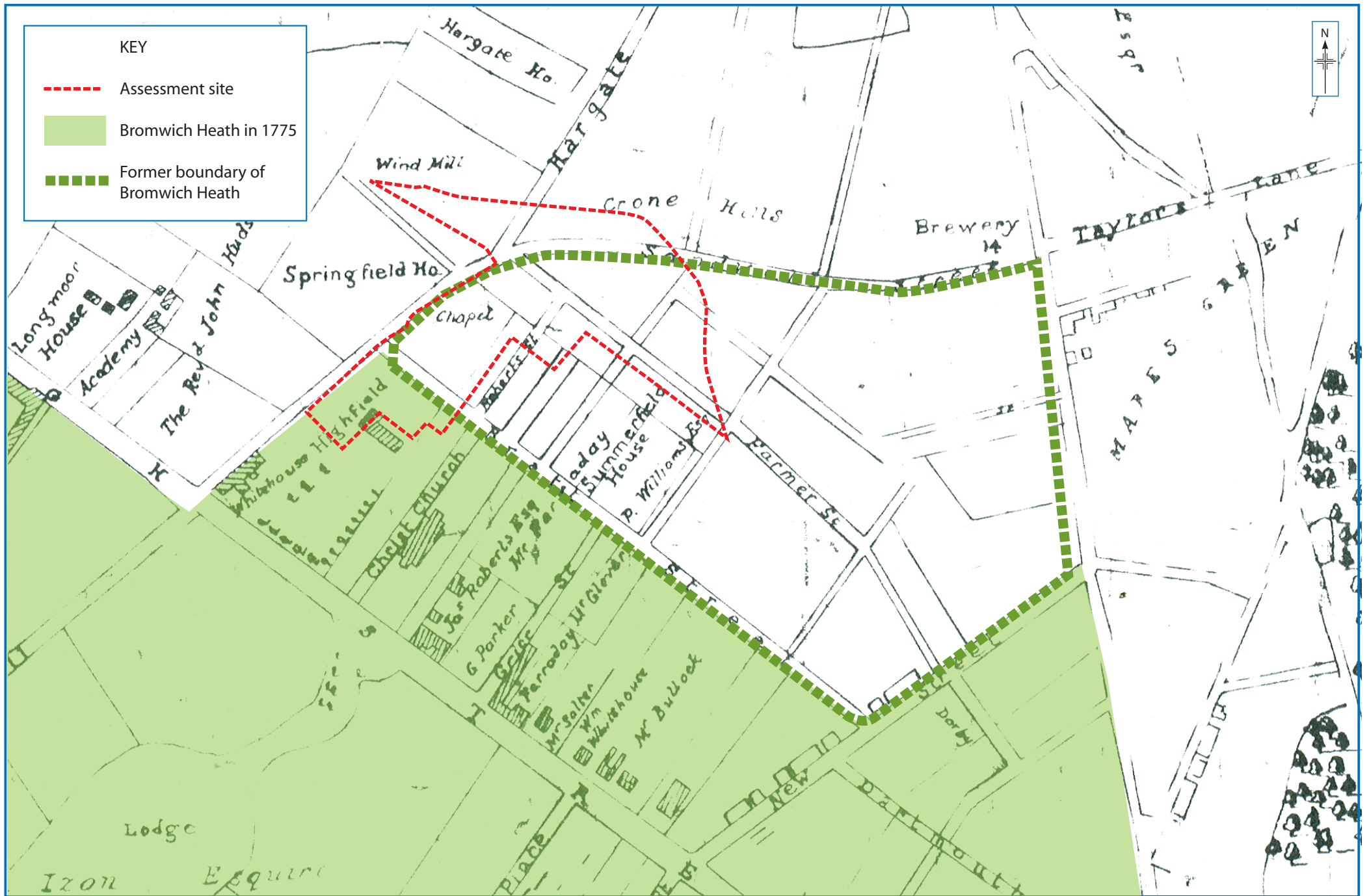
Figure 1.

Location and boundaries of assessment site



Extract from Yate's Map of Staffordshire (1775)

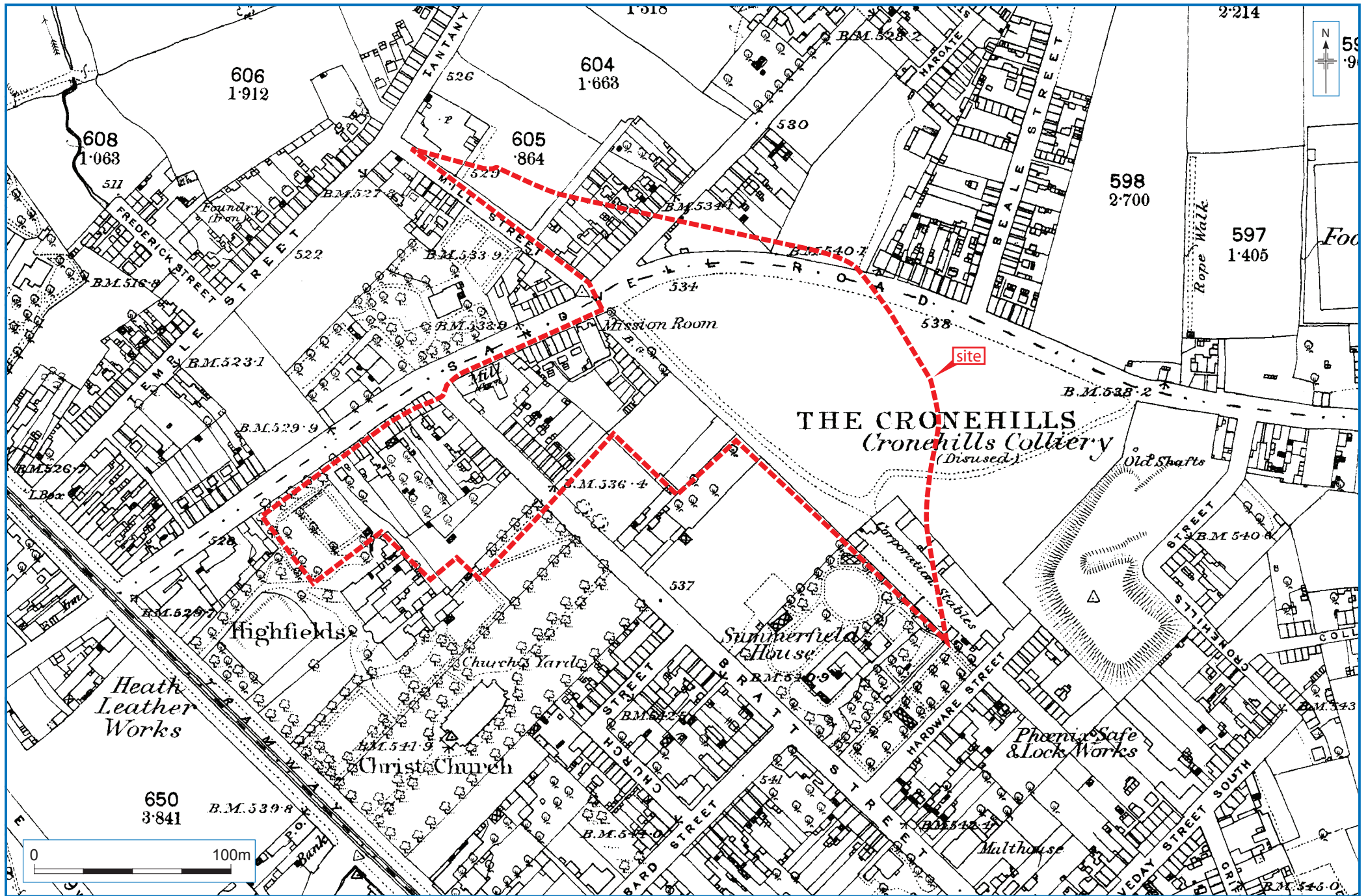
Figure 2



Extract from Wood's Plan of West Bromwich (1837) overlain with boundaries of Bromwich Heath based on Yates's Map of Staffordshire (1775)

Figure 3

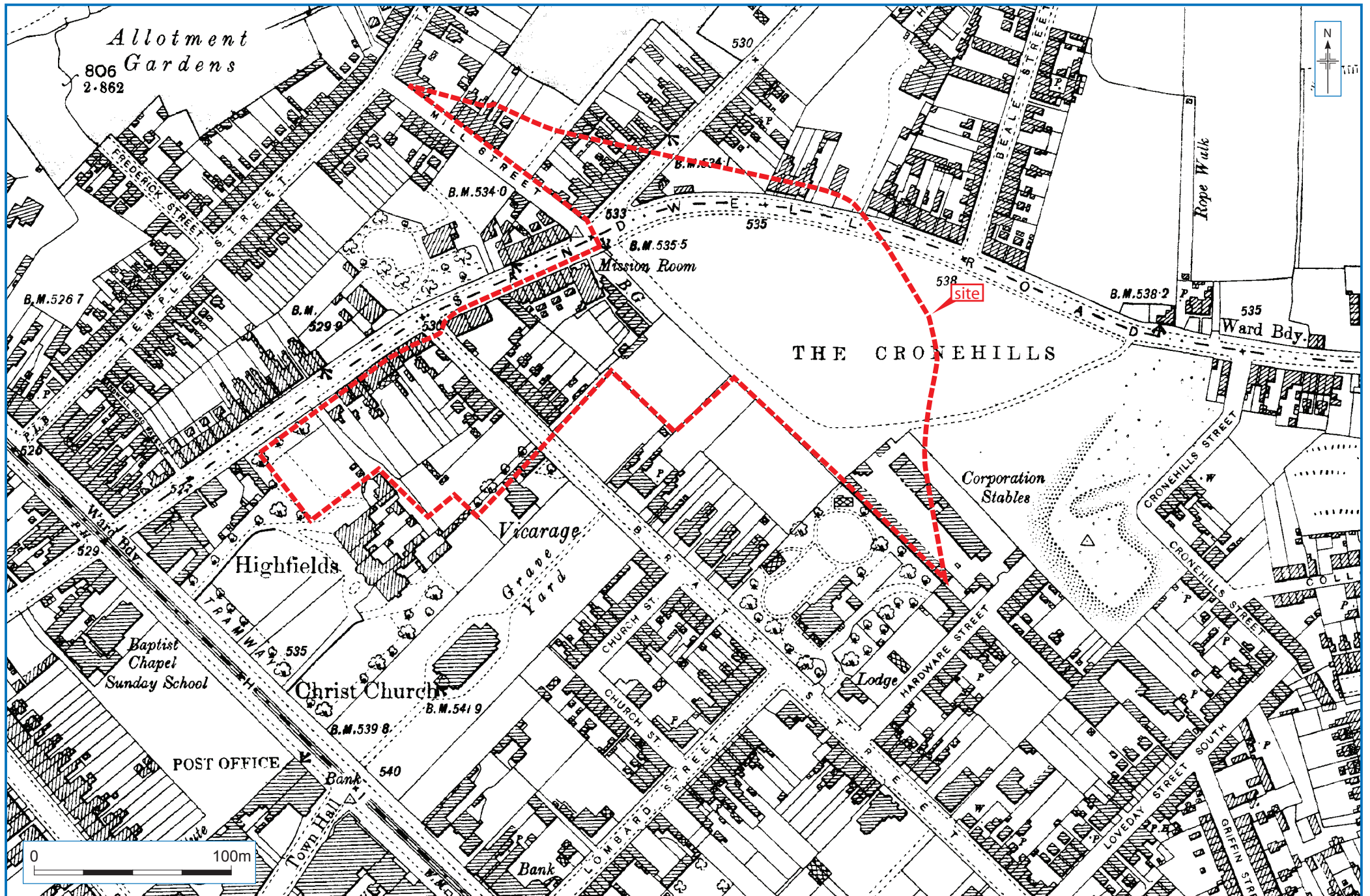




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Extract from first edition Ordnance Survey map (1890)

Figure 4

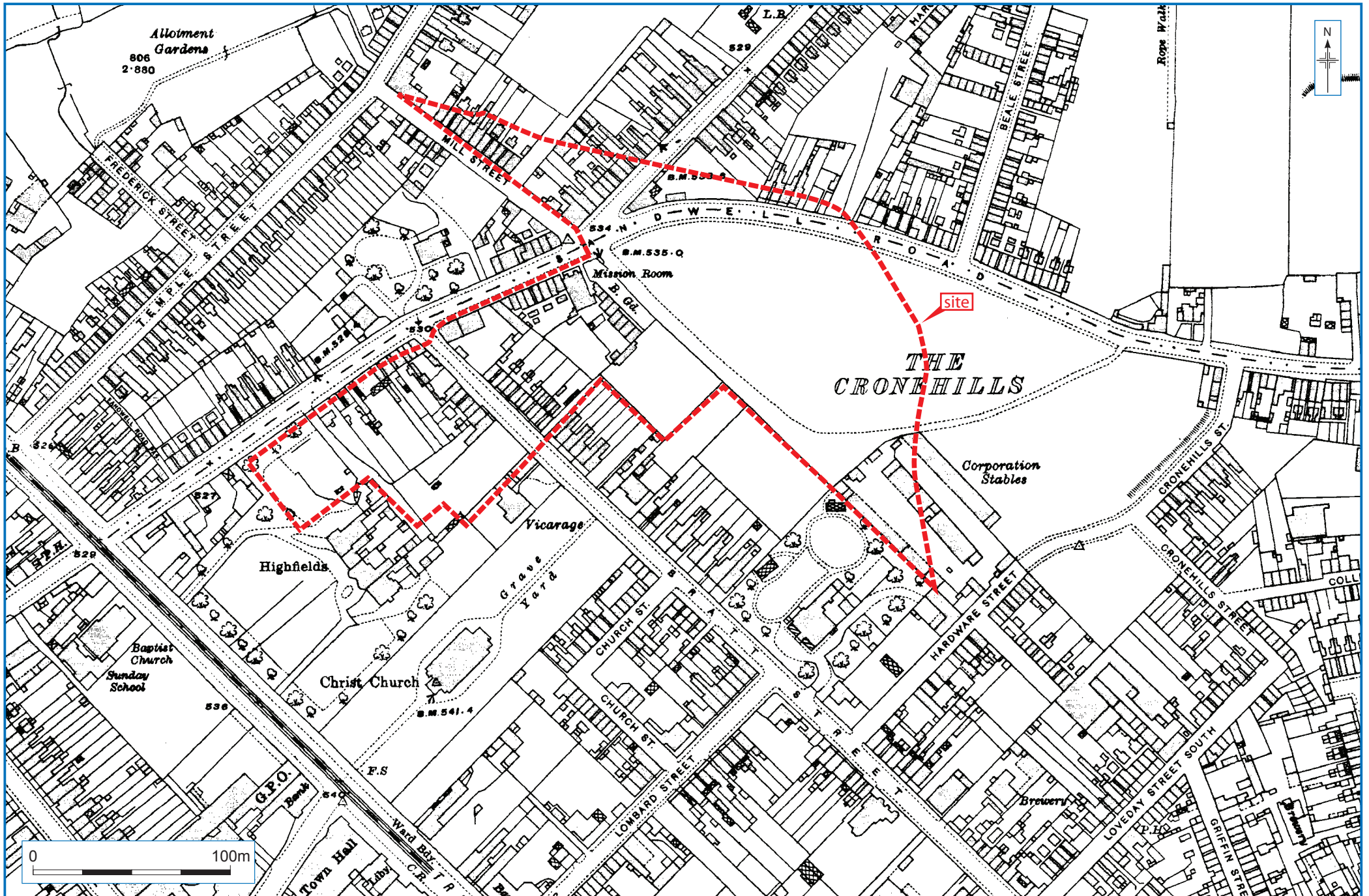


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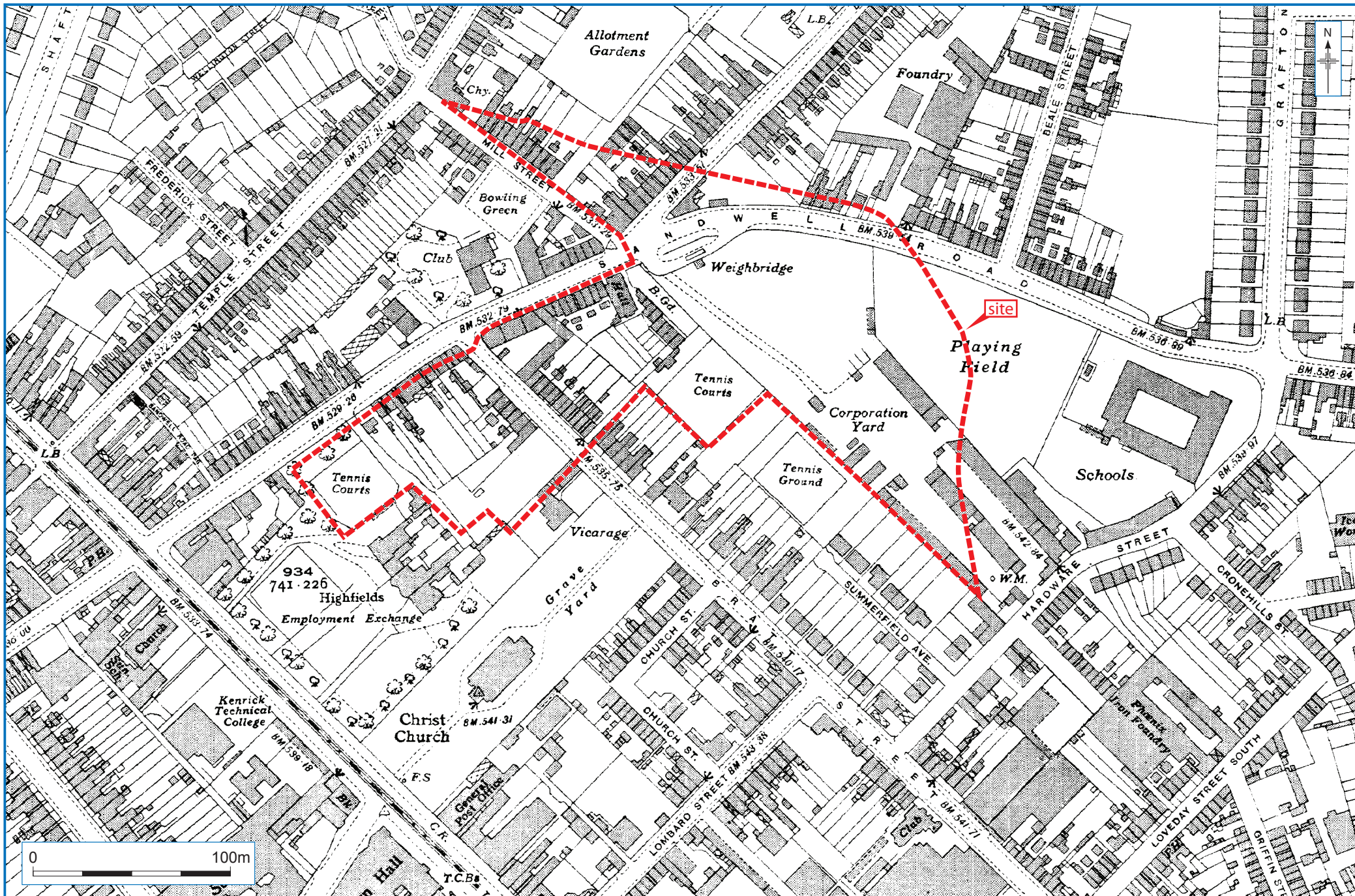
Extract from second edition Ordnance Survey map (1904)

Figure 5

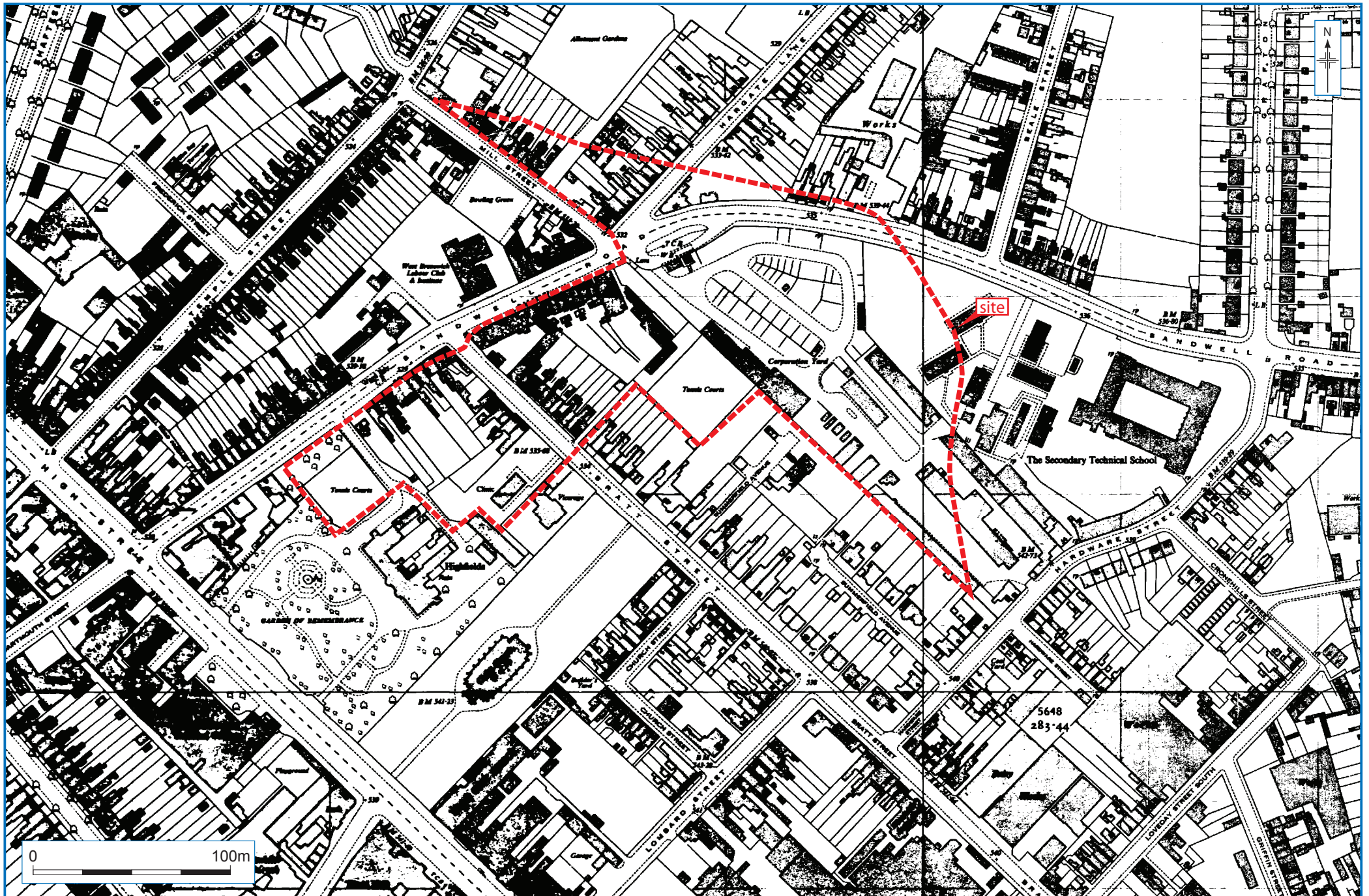












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Extract from fifth edition Ordnance Survey map (1960)

Figure 8