

DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT
OF
MOLINEUX HOTEL,
MOLINEUX STREET,
WOLVERHAMPTON,
WEST MIDLANDS

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Desk-based assessment of Molineux Hotel, Molineux Street, Wolverhampton, West Midlands

Tom Vaughan

Part 1 Project summary

A desk-based assessment was undertaken of Molineux Hotel, Molineux Street, Wolverhampton, West Midlands (NGR: SO 9126 9898). It was undertaken on behalf of Donald Insall Associates. They intend to demolish the existing North-West Range, construct a new west range (an Archival Storage building), and undertake landscaping works to create a new garden area around the existing and proposed building. The project aimed to determine if any significant archaeological site was present and if so to indicate what its location, date and nature were.

The aims of this assessment were to summarise the character and extent of any identified features of the historic environment, particularly the layout of the former grounds, indicate their significance and assess the impact of the proposed development.

The original building dates from *c* 1720, although this was rapidly enlarged in the mid 18th century, and formal ornamental gardens were laid out to the immediate north and east of the house, overlooking open parkland. Access was via Molineux Fold to the south, and yards with associated outbuildings and stables lay to the south-west. By the mid 19th century the formal gardens had been levelled to make way for open areas of grassed lawns and woodland. The house and grounds were converted into a hotel and public house, with public pleasure and sports grounds in the 1860s. Formal walks were reinstated, but had been superseded by an ice skating rink in the 1880s, and bowling greens *c* 1900. The football club took over much of the former grounds in 1889, building massive stands in the 1930s, which took in the northern two-thirds of the former gardens. The ring road further squeezed the property in 1969, cutting it off from the city centre to the south. Molineux Hotel finally closed to the public in 1979, after which time the building was boarded up and the remaining grounds tarmaced over for use as car parking.

The low retaining wall and associated steps to the north of the Garden Range represent the only visible surviving element of the gardens surrounding the house. They are however comparatively late and appear to date from the early/mid 20th century.

To the west, the groundworks associated with the development may reveal remains related to the foundations of the mid 18th century North-West Range, the late 19th century North Range (a fragmentary survival of the Billiard Hall?), associated surfaces, 19th century outbuildings and the 20th century garage along Molineux Alley. To the south there is the potential for exposure of features related to *Molineux Fold* yard and access with associated surfaces, walls, gateways and later 19th century outbuildings. Finally, to the east and north there potentially lie remains of the mid 18th and mid 19th century ornamental gardens, a later 19th century skating rink and turn of the 19th/20th century bowling greens.

It is unclear exactly what impact each successive phase of redevelopment and alteration has had on previous elements of the layout of the property. Clearly the impact of the development of the football ground to the north and the ring road to the south will have removed the greater part of any earlier deposits; however within the bounds of the present site, there does not appear to have been much alteration to the ground levels or topography generally, indicating that survival of archaeological deposits may be conjectured to be good.

Part 2 Detailed report

1. Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

A desk-based assessment was undertaken at Molineux Hotel, Molineux Street, Wolverhampton (NGR: SO 9126 9898). It was undertaken on behalf of Donald Insall Associates. They intend to demolish the existing North-West Range, construct a new west range (an Archival Storage building), and undertake landscaping works to create a new garden area around the existing and proposed building. This is considered by the Curator, Mike Shaw (Black Country Archaeologist, Wolverhampton City Council) to have the potential to affect a site of archaeological interest (BCSMR 483).

1.2 Project parameters

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological desk-based assessment* (IFA 1999), Planning Policy Guidance Notes 15 '*Planning and the Historic Environment*', and 16 '*Archaeology and Planning*' and relevant EIA guidance and Legislation.

The project also conforms to a brief prepared by the Curator (MHAB 2007) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (HEAS 2007).

1.3 Aims

The aims of the project were to summarise the character and extent of any identified features of the historic environment, indicate their significance, the impact of the proposed development and identify mitigation measures, where appropriate.

More specifically the following aims have been identified.

- To collect relevant information relating to the former layout of the gardens
- To inform the watching brief

2. Methods

2.1 Study area

The study area included the site (Fig 1), although features of the historic environment were considered within *c* 500m of the site, to encompass the settings of scheduled ancient monuments and Listed Buildings.

2.2 Documentary search

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Black Country Sites and Monuments Record (BCSMR), Wolverhampton Archives and Local Studies (WA). The event reference given by the BCSMR is EBL 811. The following sources are relevant to the study area.

Cartographic sources

(Where possible, all maps and plans have been reproduced at a common scale of 1:1,000)

-
- 1750/1, Isaac Taylor map, scale 1:2,376, WA: MAP/1 (**Fig 2**)
 - 1788, Godson map and schedule; scale 1:5,940?; WA DX-349 (**Fig 3**)
 - 1825/7, Map of the Town of Wolverhampton, Geoffrey Wallis, April 1827, scale c 1:7,425, WA: MAP/554a-b (**Plate 1**)
 - 1828, Map of the Town of Wolverhampton, HJA Bliss, scale 1:7,425, WA: MAP/555 (**Plate 2**)
 - 1841/2, Wolverhampton tithe map and apportionment, WA: DX-411, MAP/557 & MAP/115, SBL6298, scale 1:4,950 (**Fig 4**)
 - 1852, Health of Towns Map, Robert Syer Haggard, scale 1:2,640, WA: MAP/388 (**Fig 5**)
 - 1871, Steen and Blackett, scale 1:2,640, WA: MAP/123 (**Fig 6**)
 - 1871, Plan of the town and borough of Wolverhampton, Steen and Blackett, scale 1:528, WA: MAP/560 DX 673/34-5 SBL 6095 (**Plate 3**)
 - 1886, Ordnance Survey, scale 1:500, sheets LXII.6.20, 25 (**Fig 7**)
 - 1st edition Ordnance Survey, 1889, scale 25":1 mile, sheet LXII.6 (often misdated 1884) (**Fig 8**)
 - 1902, Ordnance Survey, scale 25":1 mile, sheet LXII.6 (often misdated 1904) (**Fig 9**)
 - 1919, Ordnance Survey, scale 25":1 mile, sheet LXII.6 (often misdated 1914) (**Fig 10**)
 - 1926, First floor plan of Molineux Hotel, scale unknown (Morriss 1999, 1) (**Fig 11**)
 - 1937, Ordnance Survey, scale 25":1 mile, sheet LXII.6 (**Fig 12**)
 - 1955/6, Ordnance Survey, scale 1:10,000 (**Fig 13**)
 - 1971/6, Ordnance Survey, scale 1:10,000 (**Fig 14**)
 - 2005, Ordnance Survey Superplan, scale 1:10,000 (**Fig 15**)

Site archives (from earlier excavations, evaluations, etc)

- Cherrington, R, 2006 *Former Molineux Hotel, Whitmore Hill, Wolverhampton: an archaeological watching brief during geo-technical works*, Benchmark Archaeology unpublished report dated September 2006
- Hewson, M, 2006 *Molineux Hotel, Wolverhampton: An archaeological watching brief, 2006*, Birmingham Archaeology, unpublished report, dated 10th May 2006, Project No. **1394**
- Morriss, R K, 1999 *The Molineux Hotel, Wolverhampton: An Archaeological and Architectural Analysis*, Mercian Heritage Series No. **85**, unpublished report, dated June 1999
- WCC, 2006a *The Molineux Hotel, Wolverhampton: Landscape Brief*, Regeneration and Environment Section, Wolverhampton City Council, unpublished report, dated April 2006

- WCC, 2006b *Molineux Hotel: Brief Desk Top Study*, Property Services, Wolverhampton City Council, unpublished report, dated 16th October 2006

The following sources have also been cited in this assessment.

- Butler's Journal c 1930 *Special Molineux Number*, Springfield Brewery magazine, November issue, WA: DX-808/5/9
- DoE, 1990 *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16)*, Department of the Environment
- DoE, 1995 *Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Archaeology and the historic Environment (PPG 15)*, Department of the Environment
- English Heritage Listed Buildings Online <http://bonline.english-heritage.org.uk/BuildingDetailsForm.aspx?id=378488&search=y>
- English Heritage, 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*, **EH 51125**
- IFA, 1999 *Standard and guidance for archaeological desk-based assessment*, Institute of Field Archaeologists
- HEAS, 2007 *Proposal for an archaeological desk-based assessment and watching brief at Molineux Hotel, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire*, Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 13th March 2007, **P3057**
- Mander, G P and Tildesley, N W (ed), 1960 *A History of Wolverhampton to the early nineteenth century*, Wolverhampton Council Borough Corporation
- Mason, F, 1979 *The Book of Wolverhampton – the story of an industrial town*, Barracuda Books, Buckingham, England
- Mills, M and Williams, T, 1996 *Images of England - Wolverhampton*, Tempus Publishing Ltd, Wolverhampton Borough Council
- Pevsner, N, 1975 *The Buildings of England - Wolverhampton*, Penguin Books
- Shaw, S, 1801 *History and Antiquities of Staffordshire*
- Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983 *Midland and Western England, sheet 3, scale 1:250,000 + Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales (A brief explanation of the constituent soil associations)*
- Upton, C, 1998 *A History of Wolverhampton*, Bookcraft Ltd
- WCC, 2005 *Restoring the Molineux Hotel*, Wolverhampton City Council, English Heritage, Advantage West Midlands, leaflet dated June 2005
- WCC, 2007 *Molineux Hotel, Wolverhampton: Brief for archaeological Work 2007*, Wolverhampton City Council, unpublished document dated 16th February 2007
- Wolverhampton Local History website <http://www.localhistory.scit.wlv.ac.uk/> (accessed 5th May 2007)

Aerial photos

- 2001, vertical, provided by Client
- 2004, vertical, provided by Client

2.3 **Other methods**

A site visit was undertaken on 17th April 2007.

Consultation has been undertaken with Mike Shaw to establish the key issues likely to be of importance in determining the planning application.

A detailed specification has been prepared by the Service (HEAS 2007).

2.4 **Results**

The results are mapped on Figures 2-14 and brief details of individual features of the historic environment are given in Appendix 1. Event records have been omitted where this would repeat information included in Section 3.3.2, and would not materially affect the assessment. BCSMR references have been used throughout this assessment.

2.5 **Impact assessment criteria**

The criteria cited in Table 1 have been used.

<p>Severe Adverse: Loss of integrity of nationally important archaeology/cultural heritage including Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Grade I/II* registered parks and gardens and registered battlefields. Demolition of a Grade I/II* Listed Building. Dramatic adverse change in the setting or visual amenity of the feature/site.</p>
<p>Major Adverse: Land take resulting in the degradation of a cultural heritage site of national importance and/or extensive change to the setting or visual amenity of such a site e.g. intrusion into the setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Loss of integrity of sites of archaeological interest of regional value, or Grade II registered parks and gardens, e.g. a dramatic change in the setting or visual amenity of a regionally important site such as a Conservation Area. Widespread adverse effects on the setting or structure of a Grade I/II* Listed Building. Demolition of a Grade II Listed Building.</p>
<p>Moderate Adverse: Land take resulting in the degradation of a cultural heritage site of regional importance and/or extensive change to the setting or visual amenity of such a site. Extensive change to the setting or structure of a Grade II Listed Building. Demolition of a locally listed or other historically important building. Encroachment upon a Conservation Area, historic parkland or other historic landscapes where the quality of the setting or its amenity would be noticeably impaired. Slight change to the setting or structure of a Grade I/II* listed building. Removal of a historically important hedgerow (after the Hedgerows Regulations).</p>
<p>Minor Adverse: Loss of integrity of an area where archaeological features/areas of local importance have been identified. Slight change to the setting or structure of a Grade II Listed Building. Limited encroachment upon a Conservation Area or historic parkland or other historic landscape where intrusive views are created or slight effects upon its integrity would result.</p>
<p>Not Significant: Landscape or ecological planting on an area where locally important archaeological features have been identified but impacts are thought to have no long term effect on the resource. Removal of common hedgerows and limited damage to important hedgerows where no replacement proposed.</p>
<p>Minor Beneficial: Perceptible improvement in the setting or structure of a Grade II listed building, Conservation Area or Grade II historic parkland. Improved management of locally/regionally important archaeological site.</p>

Moderate Beneficial: Perceptible improvement in the setting or structure of a Grade I/II* listed building, Conservation Area or Grade I/II* historic parkland. Improved management of nationally important archaeological site.

Table 1: Significance Criteria for Cultural Heritage Issues

2.6 The methods in retrospect

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the assessment have been achieved.

3. Archaeological and historical context

3.1 Topography

Molineux Hotel is located on the north-west side of central Wolverhampton, separated from the city centre by the inner ring road (NGR: SO 9126 9898). The site is accessible from the south via a pedestrian underpass from Wulfruna Street under the Ring Road. To the north-west, the site is accessible for vehicles via Whitmore Hill or through the car park off Molineux Street to the east (WCC 2006a, 8).

The site comprises a sub-rectangular area of approximately 45m by 60m (2,700m²), enclosed by temporary hoardings and bounded by tarmac car parking to the north and east, Ring Road St Peters to the south and Molineux Alley to the west. Buildings associated with the University of Wolverhampton lie to the east, commercial offices lie to the west. North of the car park is the Jack Harris stand, the south stand of Wolverhampton Wanderer's Molineux Park Football Ground.

The site contains the extant building, rough areas of demolition rubble and soil to the north, disused tarmac car parking to the east and south, and a tarmac driveway to the west. A derelict retaining wall runs around the north and east side of the building, comprised of brick with occasional sections of sandstone. A short set of steps pierces the wall to the north-east. There is an imperceptible slope over the site, from *c* 149m AOD at the south extent, to *c* 148m AOD by the retaining wall, beyond which the slope is more obvious (Plates 14-31).

3.2 Geology and soils

Wolverhampton falls within an unsurveyed urban area, however to the north-west the predominant soils belong to the Clifton Soil Association (711n) comprising slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged reddish fine and coarse loamy soils, and similar soils with slight seasonal waterlogging, some coarse loamy soils seasonally affected by groundwater over parent material of reddish till; with small scattered areas of the Salwick Soil Association (572m) comprising deep reddish fine loamy soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging, some deep well-drained coarse loamy soils, some fine loamy soils affected by groundwater, over parent material of reddish till and glaciofluvial drift; and along the watercourses the Wick 1 Soil Association (541r) comprising deep well drained coarse and sandy soils, locally over gravel, some similar soils affected by groundwater, slight risk of water erosion, over parent material of glaciofluvial or river terrace drift (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

Solid geology consists of undifferentiated strata of the Triassic Kidderminster Formation of the Sherwood Sandstone Group consisting of coarse brownish-red sandstones and conglomerates (Bunter Pebble Beds), with a fault to the south along the Ring Road. Boreholes drilled in vicinity of site in 1971 revealed sandstone with marl bands up to *c* 3.50m thick at depth greater than 12m (British Geological Survey 1981; WCC 2006, 1).

3.3 Historic environment

3.3.1 The house and grounds

Pevsner summarised the building as follows:

‘...the Molineux Hotel. The façade to the Ring Road is of *c* 1740-50. Five bays, three storeys, characteristic ensemble. Shortly after, a new front was made at the back and an extension built to the north. This has two Venetian windows and they are sumptuously appointed, belonging to a room with a Rococo plaster ceiling and also plaster wall panels. The staircase belongs to the earlier date. It has three thin twisted balusters to the tread. A Georgian south wing and a Victorian turret complete the loose composition.’ (Pevsner 1975, 319).

He regarded the building as one of the two most important houses in Wolverhampton; the other being Giffard House, also listed Grade II* (LB #378504). This latter was built in 1727-8; and located close by, to the south on the opposite side of Wadhams Hill, off North Street (*ibid*). This house contained fine panelling and a central staircase with fluted balusters, which were very similar to those in Molineux Hotel and are conjectured to be the work of the same craftsman (Mander 1960, 133).

Pevsner’s dating of the building is not entirely accurate. The earliest portion of the building is thought to date from *c* 1720, comprising the five-bay, three-storey South Range (Fig 11: **A**). It is considered to have been built on previously undeveloped fields, north-west of the then urban extent of Wolverhampton (WCC 2007, 1). The West Range (Fig 10: **C**) was added, possibly in stages, in the 1750s but has subsequently been altered, losing most of its historic features along with the original second storey. The Garden Range (Fig 10: **B**), around the north and east sides of the South Range, is considered to have been constructed in the 1760s. This range became the focal point of the building. Finally the North-West Range (Fig 10: **D**) was added sometime in the mid 18th century, although it was substantially altered in 1926 (Morriss 1999, 1; Cherrington 2006, 3). The property included magnificent gardens, which swept down the hill to what is now Waterloo Road, to the north-west (Mander 1960, 133) with ‘... fine views of what was then considered to be some of the best and most picturesque countryside in England.’ (<http://www.localhistory.scit.wlv.ac.uk/listed/molineuxhotel.htm>).

The earliest extant documents relating to the property date to the early 1740’s, when it was a private residence owned by John Rotten, a local businessman who was in a partnership with Richard Wilkes. On his death in 1743 the property was valued at £700. The business had debts with Benjamin Molineux, so in September 1744 Rotten’s widow, Jane, sold him the property in part payment. The house then remained in the family’s hands for the next one hundred years and is named after them (Morriss 1999, 2; WCC 2006a, 4; WCC 2006b, 1).

The Molineux family were *nouveau riche* (new-money), having made their money in the iron industry. John Molineux (d. 1754), described as an iron master, was the first of the family to own the house. He is recorded as also owning properties and workshops at Horseley Fields on the south-east side of the town. The house descended to his son, Benjamin Molineux, also an iron master. Later in the 18th century, their descendent George Molineux became High Sheriff of Staffordshire and was referred to as ‘father of the town’ in 1820, which gives some indication of the social status and influence, which the family enjoyed at this time (Shaw 1801, 162; Mander 1960, 133; Upton 1998, 56-7; Morriss 1999, 4; WCC 2006b, 1).

The earliest cartographic source at a suitable scale to depict the house and grounds in any detail is the 1750/1 map by Isaac Taylor (Fig 2). This includes a long narrow wing extending off to the south-west of the present building (a South-West Range), which does not appear on any subsequent plans, such as the 1828 Bliss map (Plate 2) or the 1841/2 tithe map (Fig 4). Taylor depicts formal gardens with geometric ornamental flowerbeds on the north and east sides of the house, contained within a hedge. These are bounded by another enclosed garden, which appears to have been a kitchen garden put to small-scale cultivation, bounded by a

fence or railings. A yard extends around the south and west sides of the property, which is accessed via an alley fronted by other properties off to *Goat or Tup Street* (later renamed as North Street). To the north is a large sub-rectangular area of grassed parkland denoted as '*Mr Molineux's Close*'. This is bounded by trees, *Dunster Lane* (later Dunstall Lane; the present Molineux Street) to the east and an unnamed, apparently gated, lane to the west with two small buildings on the east frontage (the present Molineux Alley), and to the north a further, unnamed, lane. Within the park a tree lined ride extends from the north-east corner of the outer enclosed garden, over to *Dunster Lane* to the east (Fig 2).

The house was radically altered and extended by Benjamin Molineux between 1744 and his death in 1772 (as described above: Fig 10, **B-D**; WCC 2006a, 4). Unfortunately there are no available detailed plans or other cartographic sources from this immediate period to shed further light on this redevelopment; nor is it clear exactly what alterations were undertaken of the surrounding grounds.

The 1788 map by Godson is at too small a scale to provide much detail (Fig 3). The plot, no. 927, is annotated with *John Molineux Esq.* The house is shown as a rectangle with a large protruding central bay off the South Range. This is not shown on any other plans and may simply be a mis-location of the south-west range depicted on Taylor's map (Fig 2). The access off Tup/North Street to the south is lined with buildings as noted previously. The east frontage of Molineux Alley is further built up. Regarding alterations within the surrounding park, a single large rectangular structure lies within the park to the north-east of the house, adjacent to a wall located along the route of the ride depicted on Taylor's map (Fig 2). Along the north boundary of the park a lake is depicted indicating that substantial landscaping had been undertaken.

The Wallis map of 1825/7 (Plate 1) does not show any detail of the outline of the house beyond a simple rectangle, nor the layout of the grounds; the word '*Gardens*' simply denotes their existence to the rear of property, which is identified as '*Molineux Court*'. The map appears to show a terrace of buildings to the south-east of the house, which would accord with Taylor, although conversely no other buildings are recorded on the corner of Wadham's Hill and North Street. In contrast the Bliss map of 1828 (Plate 2) shows the house pictographically, as one long, two-storey range, a steep pitched roof with a central turret, a straight drive leading off North Street to the south-east; surrounded by a line of trees, without buildings on the corner of *Waddams Hill* and North Street. Bliss also denotes the house as '*Molineux Court*'.

The 1841/2 tithe map (Fig 4) records full details of the footprint of the building, the layout of the grounds and surroundings. By this time the building had been altered and extended to attain its present footprint, as detailed above. The park to the north is shown in detail and includes a linear lake along the north boundary, first shown on the 1788 map, defined woodland borders, and two paddocks, while the ride had been delineated with a fence, leading to an irregular building off *Dunstall Lane*. This latter now has buildings along the frontage, as does the southern end of the still unnamed Molineux Alley, which is no longer gated. The enclosed garden to the north of the house is now devoid of its former formal features or the kitchen garden, which would accord with changes in the garden styles over the period. In fact the kitchen garden had been moved to the north side of the park, which now contains a number of small buildings. The yard to the south of the house is sub-divided but otherwise empty. A path is shown leading off to the north of the yard, behind the buildings off Molineux Alley. Lastly the access off *North Street* is lined with buildings as noted previously by Taylor, although no detail is shown behind the street frontage.

The accompanying apportionment lists the details of the property as follows:

<i>Landowner</i>	<i>Occupiers</i>	<i>No. on plan</i>	<i>Name and description of Lands and Premises</i>	<i>State of cultivation</i>	<i>Quantities a. r. p.</i>
Molineux, George (Executors of)	John Edmondson Molineux	233	Garden and Pond	Garden	0 3 39
ditto	ditto	234	Paddocks	Pasture	1 2 26
ditto	ditto	235	House, Offices and Gardens	Garden	1 1 19
ditto	ditto	236	Kitchen Garden	Garden	0 1 27½

The Health of Towns map by Haggard of 1852 (Fig 5) appears to show the layout of the grounds much as ten years earlier, although no trees are noted, and two curvilinear paths branch off to north-east and west from the Garden Range and within the kitchen garden to the north. Concerning the building itself, noted as *Molineux Hall*, it has three small extensions: two off the West Range to north and south, and one off the south elevation of the Garden Range. It is unclear what these are, but they may be conjectured to be porches or conservatories. Within the park, more buildings are recorded along the east end of the former ride or drive. Off North Street the terraced houses and courts to their rear are also depicted for the first time.

The last Molineux to occupy the house, Charles, did so only briefly before moving to Kilsall, Shropshire, in 1856. A sale of fixtures and fittings was undertaken in August of that year, when the inventory included Stables, a Coach House, Laundry, Yard and a Warehouse, along with brewing vats and a malt crusher, indicating that one outhouse had been in use as a brewhouse. The house appears to have remained empty for a few years after his departure, although the gardens were maintained and indeed used for summer fêtes, traditional games and displays (Morriss 1999, 6).

In April 1859 the property was advertised for sale in the *Wolverhampton Chronicle* as ‘... a handsome and spacious Mansion [which] ... contains several large and elegant reception rooms and excellent bed rooms and every requisite for a large family’ (Morriss 1999, 7). The ground covered a total of 8 acres (3.24 hectares), including a coach house, stables, greenhouse and a conservatory. The property was finally bought in 1860 by Oliver Edward McGregor, a local tobacconist, with whom it remained until 1887. By the early 1870's he had invested approximately £7,000 (*over £440,000 today*), converting it into a hotel and public house, with the gardens as public pleasure and sports grounds ‘... to afford innocent, healthful and exhilarating exercise for all, and is determined to have the management so that all classes may thoroughly enjoy themselves’ (Morriss 1999, 7; Plate 5; WCC 2006a, 5; WCC 2006b, 1). The illustration by John Fullwood (Plate 4) is undated, although appears to show the building as a private property, which would place it before 1860.

Steen and Blackett produced two maps at differing scales in 1871 (Plate 3 and Fig 6), the more detailed of which (Plate 3) includes full details of the building's outline and the layout of the property. The aforementioned extensions north and south of the West Range are revealed to be flights of steps; that on the south side of the Garden Range is a solid building. A further flight of steps lies on the north side of the Garden Range and in the corner of the West and North-West Ranges. The west corner of the North-West Range appears to have been altered with lean-to outbuildings. The yard to the south is largely vacant, although walls and a gateway with associated paths are recorded. The access off to the north-west is the same, although Molineux Alley is here noted as *Molineux Walk*. To the north of the Garden Range an oval path (enclosing a smaller circular path to the south), occupy the area of the formal enclosed garden and south paddock. The building to the north-east first depicted in 1852 is revealed as a *Conservatory*. Further north, steps down to a series of paths around and across the park, around the lake at the north extent of the property and to an entrance off Waterloo Road at the north-west corner. A terrace of four houses lies along the north-east frontage of the access from North Street, with occasional outbuildings within their yards, and

terraced courts to the rear. Steen and Blackett's larger scale map (Fig 6) does not show the detail of the paths across the park.

The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886 (Fig 7) indicates the oval area to the north of the house to be occupied by a *Skating Rink*, with a new building (fully the size of the house itself and described as a *Billiard Hall* in 1956) to the west, alongside Molineux Alley on the site of a smaller range of outhouses, separated from the house by a covered area. The conservatory first noted in 1852 to the north-east of the skating rink is identified as glass roofed. The house itself is now known as *Molineux Hotel*. A small extension has been added to the north side of the North-West Range, along with another on the south-east corner of the Garden Range to infill the vacant space between the house and the terraces off the access road now noted as *Molineux Fold*. The yard off this access has also acquired a small building, adjacent to the South Range. The *Courts* off North Street, to the south and east of the house are individually numbered. A quarry is located to the north-west of the house, with an access track on the alignment of a former walk, parallel and leading to Molineux Alley to the north-west. The *Molineux Grounds* parkland has been extended radically to the north; the lake has been removed, and a large oval sports pitch and racetrack laid out, with attendant *Grand Stand* to the west. This racetrack was used for both local and international cycle races and was advertised in 1887 as '... the finest cycle track in England' (Morris 1999, 7). The sports pitch was used for cricket and football.

The illustrative poster commissioned by McGregor to promote the Pleasure Grounds (Plate 5) appears to contain elements of both the 1871 and 1886 plans: a skating rink is depicted, although it only occupies the eastern half of the area denoted on the 1st edition OS; the western half contains the circular paths and flowerbed, next to the large new building alongside Molineux Alley. Similarly the oval racing track is shown (replete with cyclists on Penny-farthings), although with a bridge over the lake, which occupies half of the 1886 sports pitch and continues to the west of the picture. The northern half of the sports pitch contains three circular flowerbeds. The area east of the house is occupied by grass interspersed with a line of trees.

A photograph taken during the Exhibition of Staffordshire Arts and Industry in 1869, looking south toward the house (Plate 6) shows the area of the smaller ice rink to be occupied by the temporary exhibition building in a large Crystal Palace-style glasshouse with tiered roof. Unfortunately this obscures much of the area immediately around the house itself, although white-painted iron railings define the border of the house and the wider pleasure grounds to the north. The paths around the pleasure grounds are delineated by fine iron fences; the intervening areas are grassed, with occasional small trees and various circular flowerbeds, the larger containing internal pathways.

A pre-1886 photograph of the grounds looking south over the lake (Plate 7) confirms the general layout depicted on the publicity poster, although the areas between the paths appear to comprise simply grass with occasional small trees. It is unfortunately not close enough to provide information on the area surrounding the house itself.

In 1884 McGregor sold the property to Edwin Steer, who rapidly sold it to J E Gittoes. It was then sold at auction in 1887 Joseph Devey for only £5,850, when it was described as including an 'Assembly Room or indoor skating rink' with an 'American Bowling Saloon' below. In May 1889 Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club acquired the lease of the northern half of the pleasure grounds from the then owners Northampton Brewery, for £50 per annum. By 1901 it was in the hands of W Butler & Co, a local Wolverhampton Brewery.

The 1902 OS map (Fig 9) depicts the *Football Ground* as part of the larger *Molineux Grounds*, within the oval cycle track, with covered *Stands* to the north and west. Otherwise the pleasure grounds to the south appear to have been cleared of the previous flowerbeds and paths; the only extant features are the bank and steps leading down from the former skating rink site (Plate 7); while the quarry to the south-west has been built on. There are a number of

changes around the house itself, notably the apparent removal of all but one of the sets of steps, leaving only that set on the north side of the Garden Range; the removal of all but one of the small ancillary buildings, the construction of two walls and a small outbuilding off the boundary with the Courts to the south-east, the removal of all features within the yard off Molineux Fold, which has been extended to open onto Wadham's Hill, and the construction of a wall running from there up to the south corner of the North-West Range. It is reported that three bowling greens lay within the grounds, two north of the house, and one to the south, although their exact location is not noted on the OS map (Morris 1999, 7-10).

Only a small number of alterations were undertaken by 1919 (Fig 10). These included the demolition of Court No. 1 and adjacent buildings south of the house, to create an open area, bisected by a path directly off the corner of Wadham's Hill and North Street; removal of the steps and consolidation of the bank along with probable levelling of the area of the former skating rink, which necessitated the extension of the flight of steps north of the Garden Range; and further a field, the construction of a large grandstand north of the *Football Ground*.

In 1926 the house underwent substantial alterations, under the supervision of W A Hutchings, including most notably the removal of the top storey of the West Wing (Morris 1999, 10). It has been proposed that the North Range was built during these alterations (WCC 2006a, 12). However the cartographic sources would appear to refute this; rather that it comprised part of the building (described as a Billiard Hall in 1956), which was built between 1871 and 1886.

By 1937 (Fig 12) the football club had constructed massive stands around the football pitch, taking in the entire area of the former parkland and encroaching slightly on the aforementioned bank. The level area has been subdivided and is now denoted as a *Bowling Green*. Molineux Fold has been opened up entirely and is devoid of all features; while North Street has been widened which involved demolition of the terraces on the frontage along with one of the pubs and a number of the Courts. A photograph of c 1930 (Plate 9) shows the south elevation of the house, along with Molineux Fold as an open car park, bounded by waist-high white bollards along the Wadham's Hill frontage and containing a large ornate sign atop a substantial squared post.

By the 1950s the house was no longer in use as a hotel, although it remained open as a public house (Morris 1999, 10). The *Billiard Hall* is first described as such in 1956, along with a *Garage*, which appears to occupy (the site of) the range of buildings first recorded in 1841-2 to the south, alongside Molineux Alley (Fig 12). This latter building appears as an entirely separate property, and is divided off from *Molineux Fold* by a wall from the south corner of the North-West Range down to Wadham's Hill. The *Bowling Green* is depicted to the north-east of the house, as a sub-oval area surrounded by a path, with a small rectangular *Pavilion* to the north-east, and to the south-west a further open area (presumably another green?) bounded by a pathway which is surrounded by trees on two sides. This latter is accessed via a set of steps out from the Garden Range. Steps are also noted on the north side of the house, on the Garden Range and West Range (the former are confusingly not shown on the 1937 OS map (Fig 12), but are shown on the 1919 edition (Fig 10). A small rectangular structure of unknown function, is also noted to the north of the steps, north of the West Range.

In 1969 the St Peter's section of the Ring Road was constructed across Molineux Fold immediately to the south of the house. This involved the demolition of all of the terraced properties along North Street, the entire removal of North Street and Wadham's Hill. The 1971 OS map (Fig 14) reveals the isolated position of the house, with the Fox Inn to the north-east, both cut off from the city centre to the south. The only extant building on the south-east side of the house is the small rectangular structure to the east of the Garden Range, which first appeared on the map of 1937 (Fig 12) to the rear of the former Courts, along with a further small structure on its south corner, first noted in 1956 (Fig 13). The Billiard Hall and Garage have been demolished and that area alongside Molineux Alley walled off from the house. The garden area between the house and the football club remains, although

somewhat reduced in size, and is now apparently an entirely open space devoid of all features.

The public house continued in business, finally closing in 1979 when the lease expired. Meanwhile, the football club, having bought it in 1976, applied unsuccessfully to have the building demolished that same year and again in 1982, on the grounds that it was neglected and decaying (Morriss 1999, 14; WCC 2006b, 1).

In the late 1980s the former gardens around the disused building were turned over to tarmaced car parking for the football club; while larger football stands were erected in the 1990s, which now dominate the view to the north (WCC 2006, 7).

By 1999 the building had been stripped of the more valuable fixtures and fittings; including the main staircase, the 18th century wainscot of two rooms and many period chimneypieces. Most of the panelling of the Oak and Smoke rooms and parts of other stairs were removed for safe storage. The building was by then considered to be ruinous and in danger of collapse (Morriss 1999, 14). This was compounded in June 2003, when a fire destroyed much of the roof and the remaining interior. Wolverhampton City Council then rapidly acquired the building and have been carrying out extensive stabilisation and restoration works after the last few years, including the reinstatement of some fixtures and fittings (WCC 2006a, 3).

The OS Superplan of 2005 (Fig 15) confusingly indicates a structure off the north side of the North-West Range, where nothing was noted in 1971. Photographs reveal it to be of some age and not a new construction (Plates 24-28). A retaining wall exists to the north of West Range and steps are still denoted north of the Garden and West Ranges (Plate 30), along with the wall butting the east elevation of the Garden Range, aligned north-east to south-west.

3.3.2 Site investigations

Molineux Hotel has been the subject of a number of archaeological investigations in recent years, notably architectural analysis (Morriss 1999), desktop study (WCC 2006a and 2006b), and monitoring of groundworks (Cherrington 2006; Hewson 2006).

Morriss has undertaken a project of building recording of the house, which includes a full description of the house and discussion of the Molineux family in the context of the history of the town (1999).

In early 2006 a watching brief was undertaken of service trenching, across the car park adjacent to and to the south-east of, the South Range. This revealed a dense layer of brick building rubble, directly overlying the natural matrix of soft red sand, along with the infilled remains of brick cellars. The natural sand lay at a depth of 0.35-1.05m below the existing ground surface. The cellars appear to form part of the terrace indicated on the 1841/2 tithe map (Fig 3), which lay along the north-east frontage of a street noted as Molineux Fold on the 1st edition OS map (Fig 6). Interestingly, in the cellar of 8, Molineux Fold, a cast iron cauldron was found, still *in situ* atop its brick base. The buildings were demolished in the 1960s during construction of the St Peters section of Wolverhampton Ring Road. The brick rubble observed throughout the trench was considered to relate to this phase of demolition (Hewson 2006, 4, Plate 4).

In September 2006 observation of geotechnical test pits and boreholes around the outside of the extant North-West Range identified the natural matrix to comprise largely sand, with sandy clay to the north-east, at a depth of 0.30-0.8m below the modern ground surface. A shallow, possible garden soil, with post-medieval building debris, was observed to the north-east of the building (TP2); a brick layer for a yard or floor surface lay to the south-west (TP 5a); and 18th-19th century demolition rubble was identified to the north and south (TPs 1, 3 and 4; Cherrington 2006, 4-9).

In addition to these, a borehole was drilled in 1971, approximately 20m to the south of the house. This did not reveal any made ground, although it was not apparently archaeologically monitored (WCC 2006b, 1).

3.3.3 **The present development site**

The only visible surviving structural elements of the former gardens within the site are the semi-ruinous brick and stone retaining walls with associated flight of steps to the north and east of the Garden Range (Plates 14, 16 and 30). These first appear on the cartographic source of 1956, and possibly 1937 (Figs 12 and 13; Section 3.3.1 above). Otherwise the area to the south of the house is roughly level, while the ground to the north slopes down to the north-west, to terraced car parking within the football club grounds. This appears to reflect the former topography, as identified from cartographic and photographic sources described above (*ibid*).

3.4 **Statutory and other designations**

The Molineux Hotel is a Grade II* Listed Building, # 378488, designated in July 1949 as Grade II and upgraded in 1979.

The listing description is as follows:

'House, hotel from 1860s, derelict at time of resurvey (1990). c 1720 with mid C18 additions and C19 addition; in course of restoration, 1990. For Benjamin Molineux, ironmaster. Brick with ashlar dressings; tile roof, mostly removed, with brick stacks. 3 storeys; 5-window range; 2-window range to right; 2-storey 3-window range to left. Central range has platt bands over ground and 1st floors; top cornice, most removed; quoins. Windows have rusticated wedge lintels with keystones; most windows boarded, some remaining 12-pane sashes. Central entrance has plain surround and scrolled brackets to missing hood. Roof has end stacks and early c1875 clock turret. Range to right has similar windows to 1st and 2nd floors; inserted entrance. Range to left has quoins and cornice; similar windows. C19 two-storey 3-window range to left return has similar details; brick cornice and coped gable. 4-window range to right return has right half breaking forward; platt band over ground floor and top modillioned cornice with stone-coped parapet; windows have rubbed brick flat arches with keystones; Venetian window to ground floor. Details of right return continued to 6-window rear range; recessed entrance bay; Venetian window to ground floor to left of round-headed entrance with keystone, panelled pilasters, frieze and consoled pediment; 3-bay range projects to right; rubbed brick flat arches to windows, one to ground floor round-headed.

Interior has good contemporary open-string stair with 3 thin twisted balusters to each tread, most missing; ground-floor room to right has Rococo style plaster wall panelling and ceiling, Adam-style fireplace; Oak Room has fine contemporary wooden panelling with Corinthian pilasters; another room has wooden panelling. The grounds were opened to the public in 1860, and was Wolverhampton's first public park.'

<http://lbonline.english-heritage.org.uk/BuildingDetailsForm.aspx?id=378488&search=y>

The grounds associated with the house are not scheduled or covered by any other statutory designation. In their present state, the grounds are of low archaeological significance.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Summary

The original building, comprising the South Range, dates from *c* 1720. Following his purchase of the house in 1744, Benjamin Molineux, demolished a South-West Range and built the extant West, Garden and North-West Ranges respectively, prior to his death in 1772. Formal ornamental gardens and kitchen gardens lay on the north and east sides of the house, overlooking a long open park. To the south of the house lay the Molineux Fold access, off Tup Street (later North Street) with yards, stables and outbuildings. From the mid 18th century terraced dwellings lined Molineux Fold and North Street.

By the mid 19th century the formal gardens had been levelled to make way for open areas of grassed lawns and woodland. The house and grounds were converted into a licensed hotel with public pleasure and sports grounds in the 1860s, which played host to the Exhibition of Staffordshire Arts and Industry in 1869. Formal walks were reinstated, but had been superseded by an ice skating rink in the 1880s, and bowling greens *c* 1900. The football club took over much of the former grounds in 1889, building massive stands in the 1930s, which took in the northern two-thirds of the former gardens. The ring road further squeezed the property in 1969, entirely altering its setting and cutting it off from the city centre to the south. Molineux Hotel finally closed to the public in 1979, after which time the building was boarded up and the remaining grounds tarmaced over for use as car parking.

4.2 Potential impacts

The low retaining wall of brick and sandstone with associated steps to the north of the Garden Range represent the only visible surviving element of the gardens surrounding the house. They have previously been recommended for retention within the future layout (WCC 2006a, 9), although are comparatively late features and appear to date from the early/mid 20th century.

The groundworks associated with the construction of the New Archive Extension building on the west side of the site have the potential to disturb archaeological remains related to the foundations of the mid 18th century North-West Range, the late 19th century North Range (a fragmentary survival of the Billiard Hall?), with associated yard surfaces, 19th century outbuildings and stables and the 20th century garage along Molineux Alley.

Elsewhere the groundworks associated with the landscaping of the site generally have the potential to disturb remains of former features surrounding the house. To the south these comprised *Molineux Fold* yard and access with associated yard surfaces, walls, gateways and later 19th century outbuildings. To the east and north lay mid 18th and mid 19th century ornamental gardens, a later 19th century skating rink and turn of the 19th/20th century bowling greens.

It is unclear exactly what impact each successive phase of redevelopment and alteration has had on previous elements of the layout of the property. Clearly the impact of the development of the football ground to the north and the ring road to the south will have removed the greater part of any earlier deposits; however within the bounds of the present site, there does not appear to have been much alteration to the ground levels or topography generally, indicating that survival of archaeological deposits is conjectured to be good.

Although the proposed landscaping and garden layout do not reflect the earlier gardens, which lay almost exclusively to the north of the house, the proposed development is considered to have a **Moderate Beneficial** impact on the setting of the extant Georgian building.

5. **Publication summary**

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

A desk-based assessment was undertaken on behalf of Donald Insall Associates client of Molineux Hotel, Molineux Street, Wolverhampton (NGR SO 9126 9898; BCSMR EBL 811).

The original building dates from c 1720, although this was rapidly enlarged in the mid 18th century, and formal ornamental gardens laid out to the immediate north and east of the house, overlooking open parkland. Access was via Molineux Fold to the south, and yards with associated outbuildings and stables lay to the south-west. By the mid 19th century the formal gardens had been levelled to make way for open areas of grassed lawns and woodland. The house and grounds were converted into a licensed hotel with public pleasure and sports grounds in the 1860s. Formal walks were reinstated, but had been superseded by an ice skating rink in the 1880s, and bowling greens c 1900. The football club took over much of the former grounds in 1889, building massive stands in the 1930s, which took in the northern two-thirds of the former gardens. The ring road further squeezed the property in 1969, cutting it off from the city centre to the south. Molineux Hotel finally closed to the public in 1979, after which time the building was boarded up and the remaining grounds tarmaced over for use as car parking.

The low retaining wall and associated steps to the north of the Garden Range represent the only visible surviving element of the gardens surrounding the house. They are however comparatively late and appear to date from the early/mid 20th century.

To the west, the groundworks associated with the development may reveal remains related to the foundations of the mid 18th century North-West Range, the late 19th century North Range (a fragmentary survival of the Billiard Hall?), associated surfaces, 19th century outbuildings and the 20th century garage along Molineux Alley. To the south there is the potential for exposure of features related to Molineux Fold yard and access with associated surfaces, walls, gateways and later 19th century outbuildings. Finally, to the east and north there potentially lie remains of the mid 18th and mid 19th century ornamental gardens, a later 19th century skating rink and turn of the 19th/20th century bowling greens.

It is unclear exactly what impact each successive phase of redevelopment and alteration has had on previous elements of the layout of the property. Clearly the impact of the development of the football ground to the north and the ring road to the south will have removed the greater part of any earlier deposits; however within the bounds of the present site, there does not appear to have been much alteration to the ground levels or topography generally, indicating that survival of archaeological deposits may be conjectured to be good.

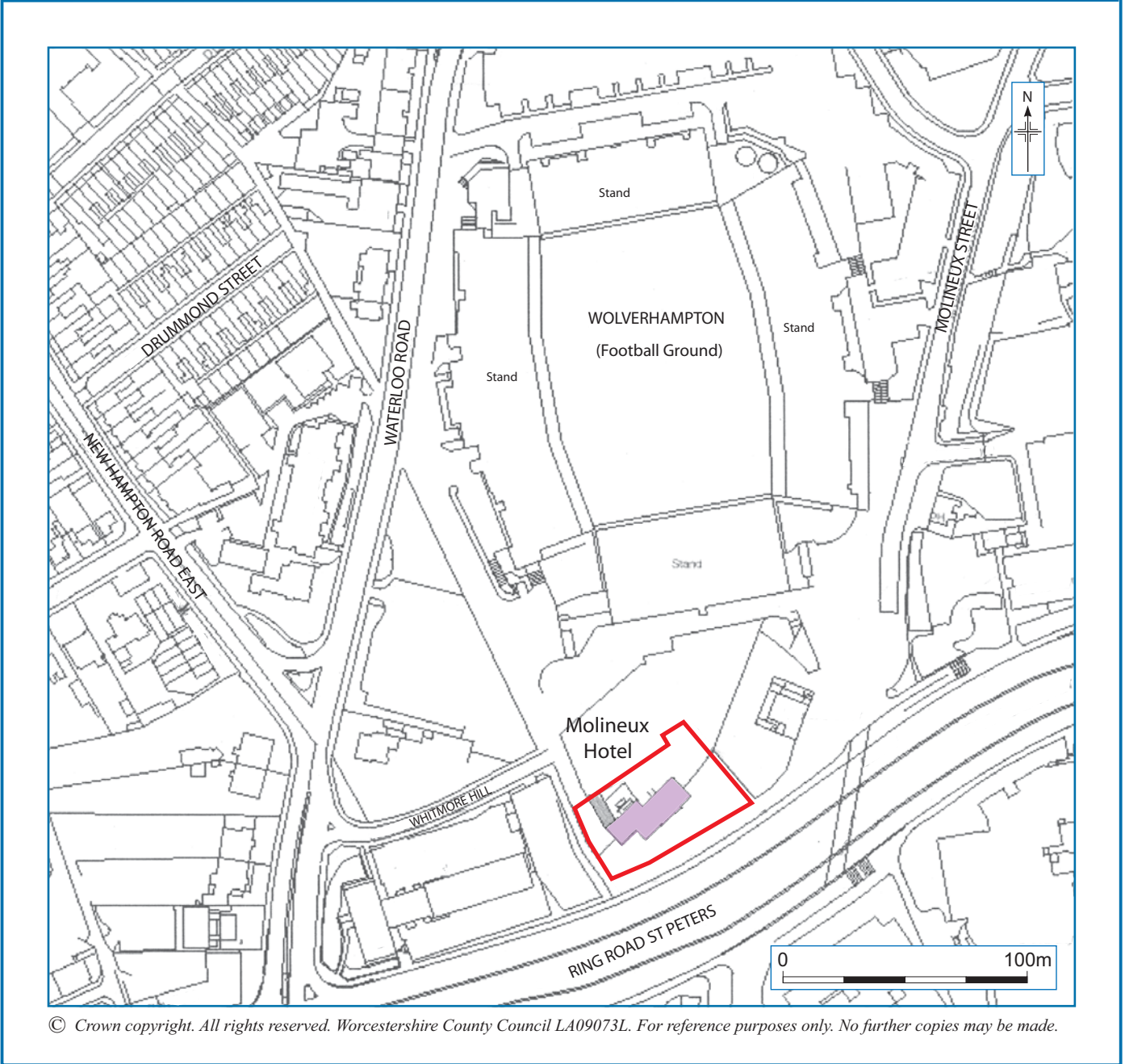
6. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Sarah Butler (Donald Insall Associates), Mike Shaw (Black Country Archaeologist, Wolverhampton City Council), Nikki Hills (Senior Landscape Architect, Wolverhampton City Council), Adrian Boyle and Tony Saunders (Wolverhampton City Council), Nick Barker and Des Kelly (DSM Ltd).

7. **Personnel**

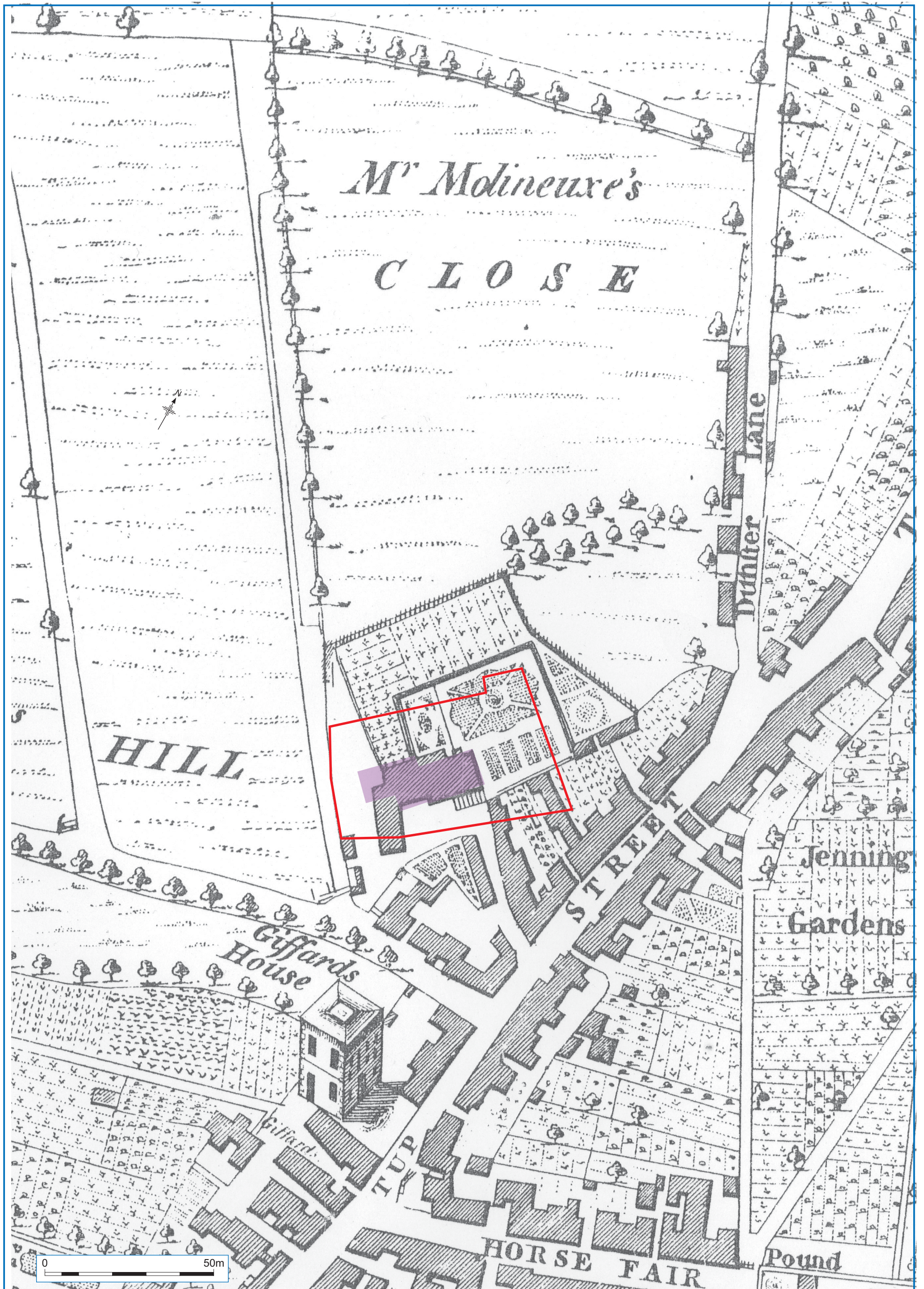
The assessment was undertaken by Tom Vaughan. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan. Data collection and the site visit were undertaken by Sarah Phear. Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt.

8. **Figures**



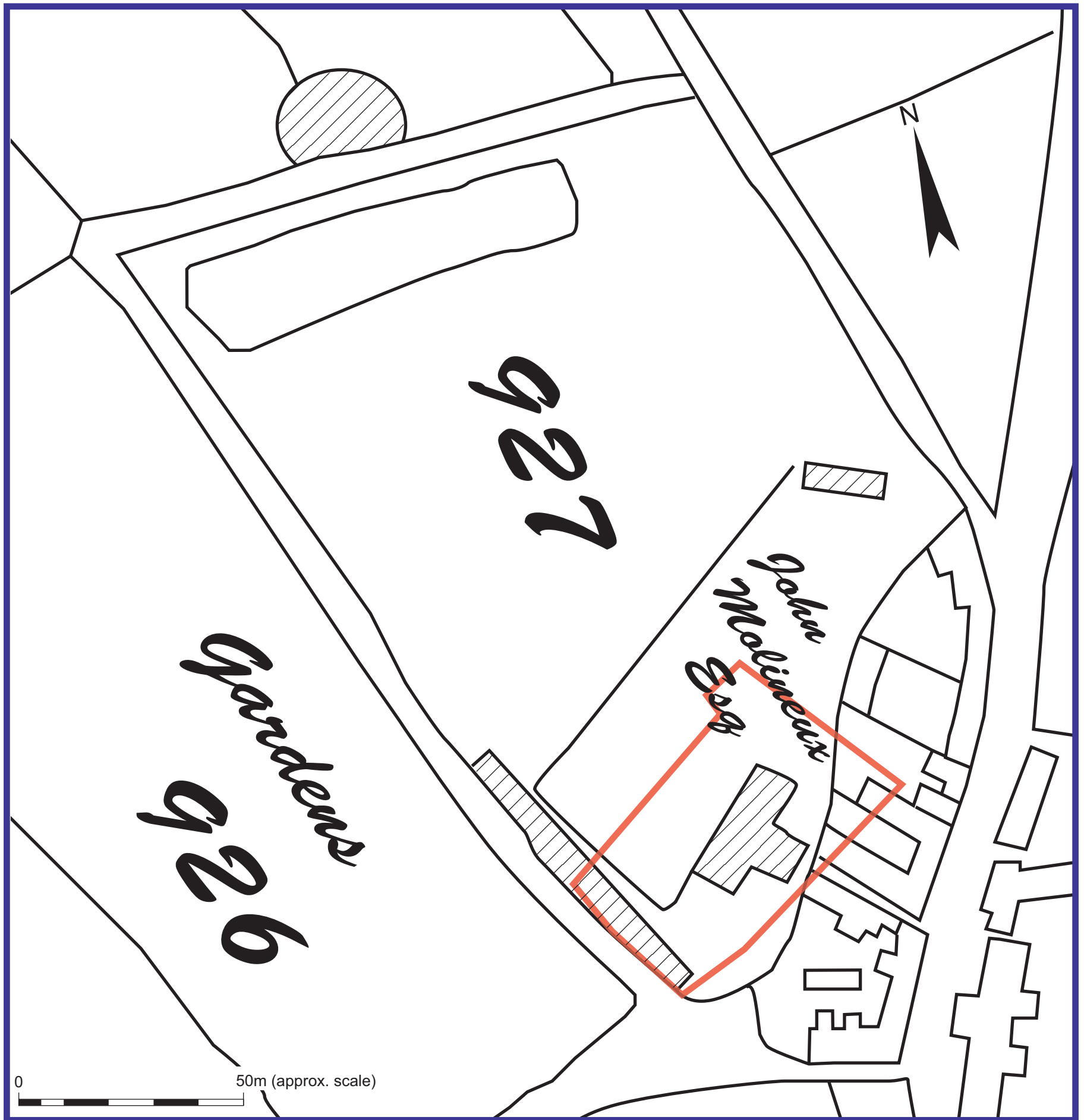
Location of the site.

Figure 1



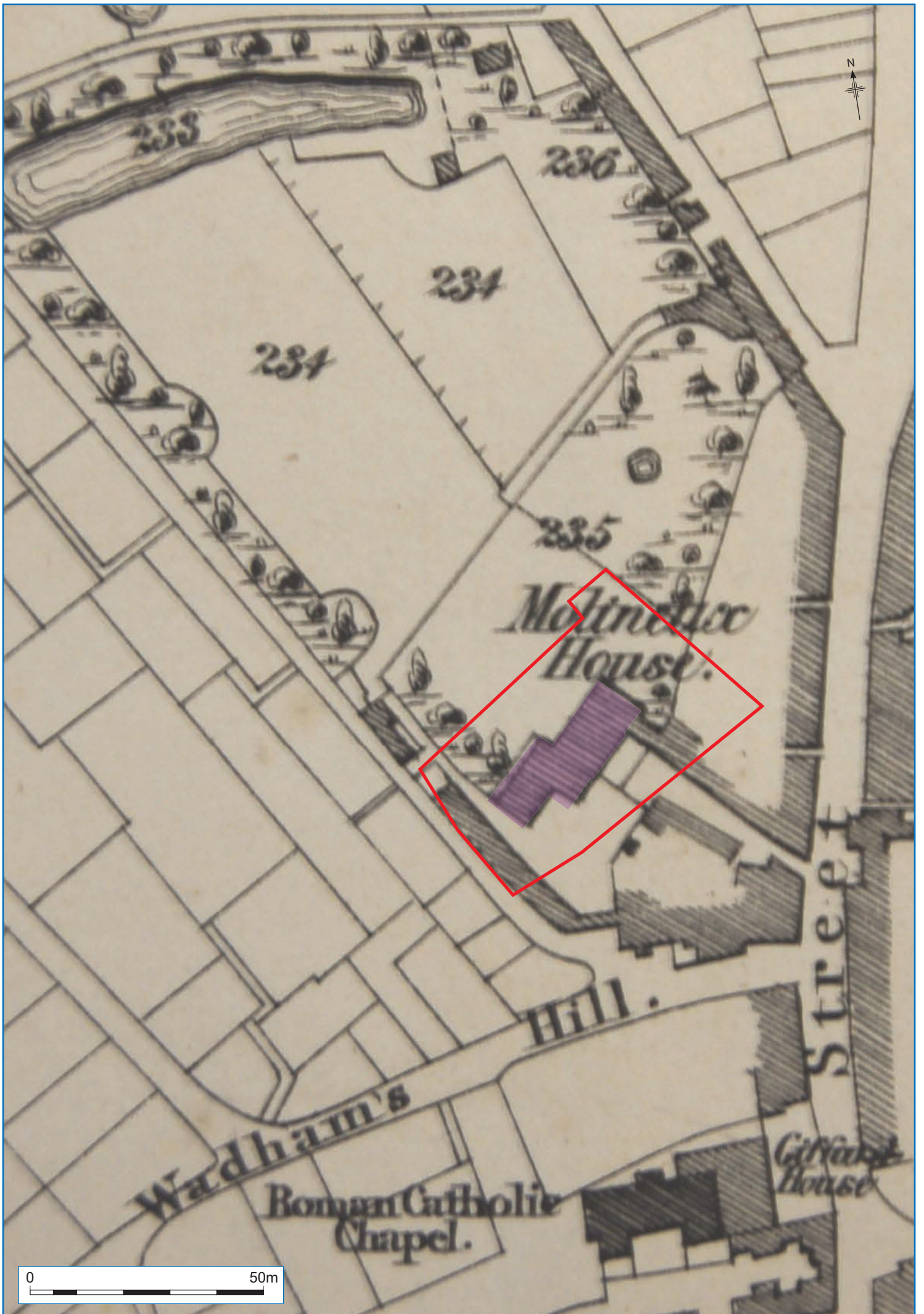
1750-1, Isaac Taylor map

Figure 2



1788 Godson Map

Figure 3



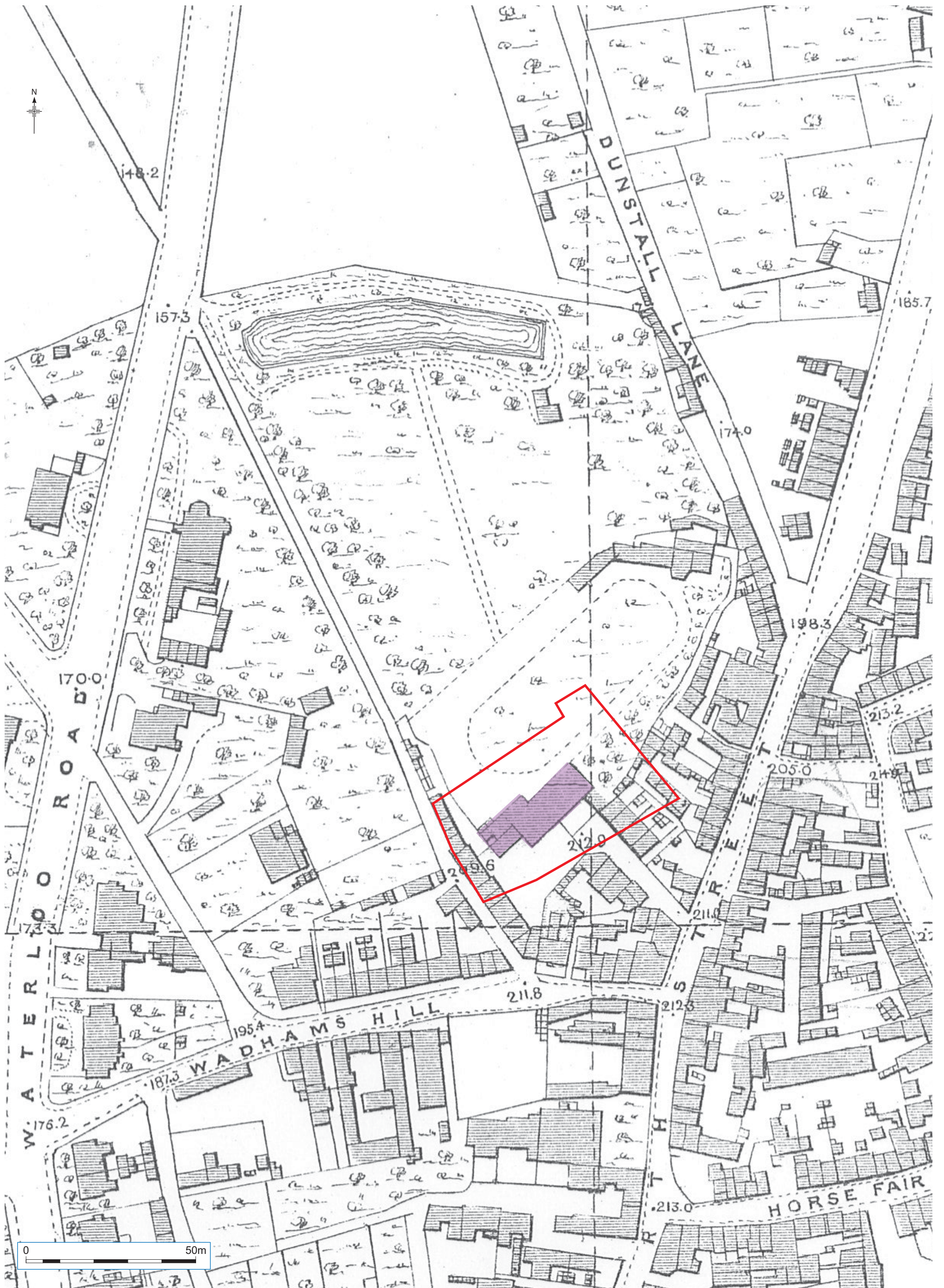
1841-2 Wolverhampton tithe map

Figure 4



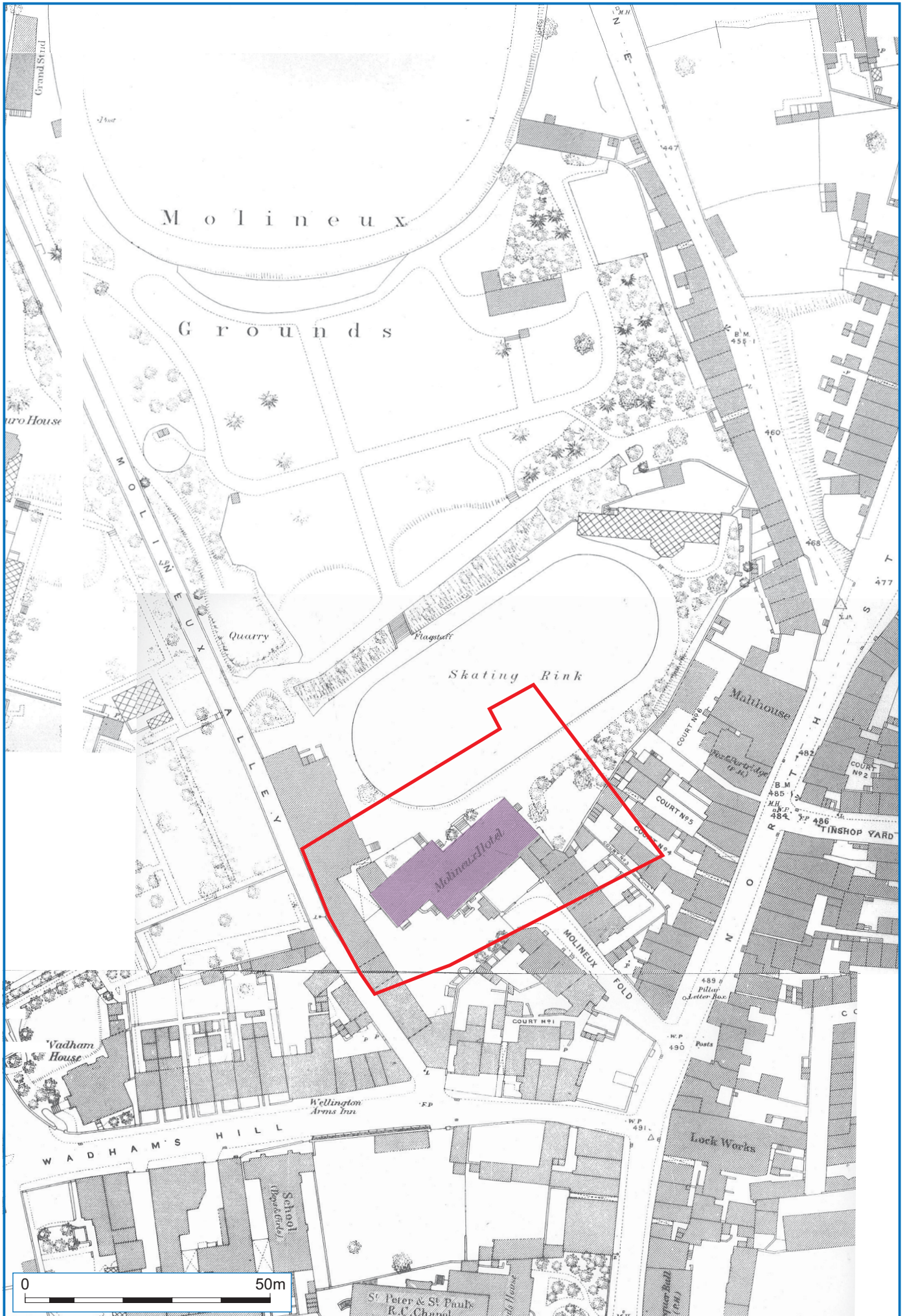
1852, Health of Towns map

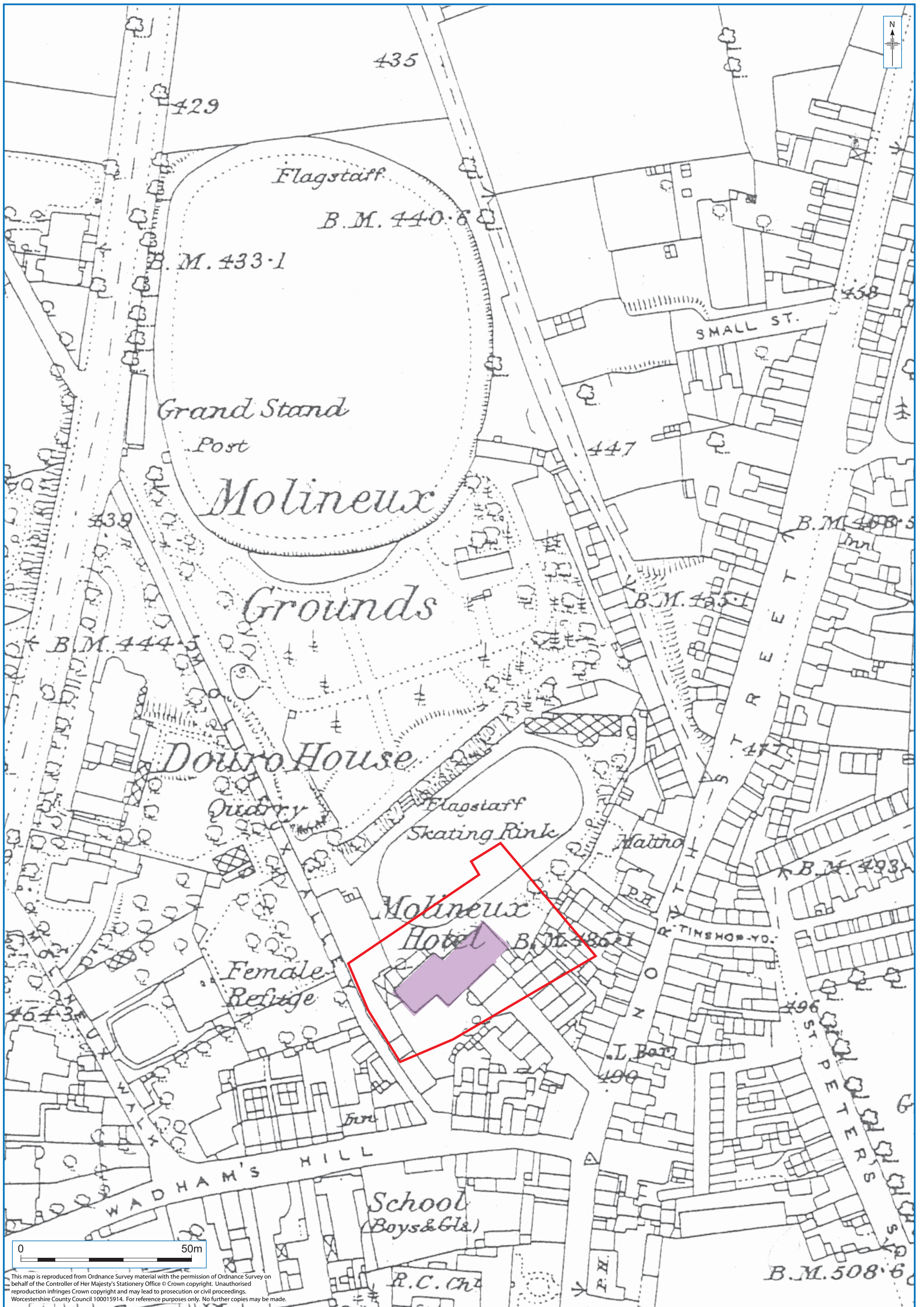
Figure 5



1871, Steen and Blakett map

Figure 6

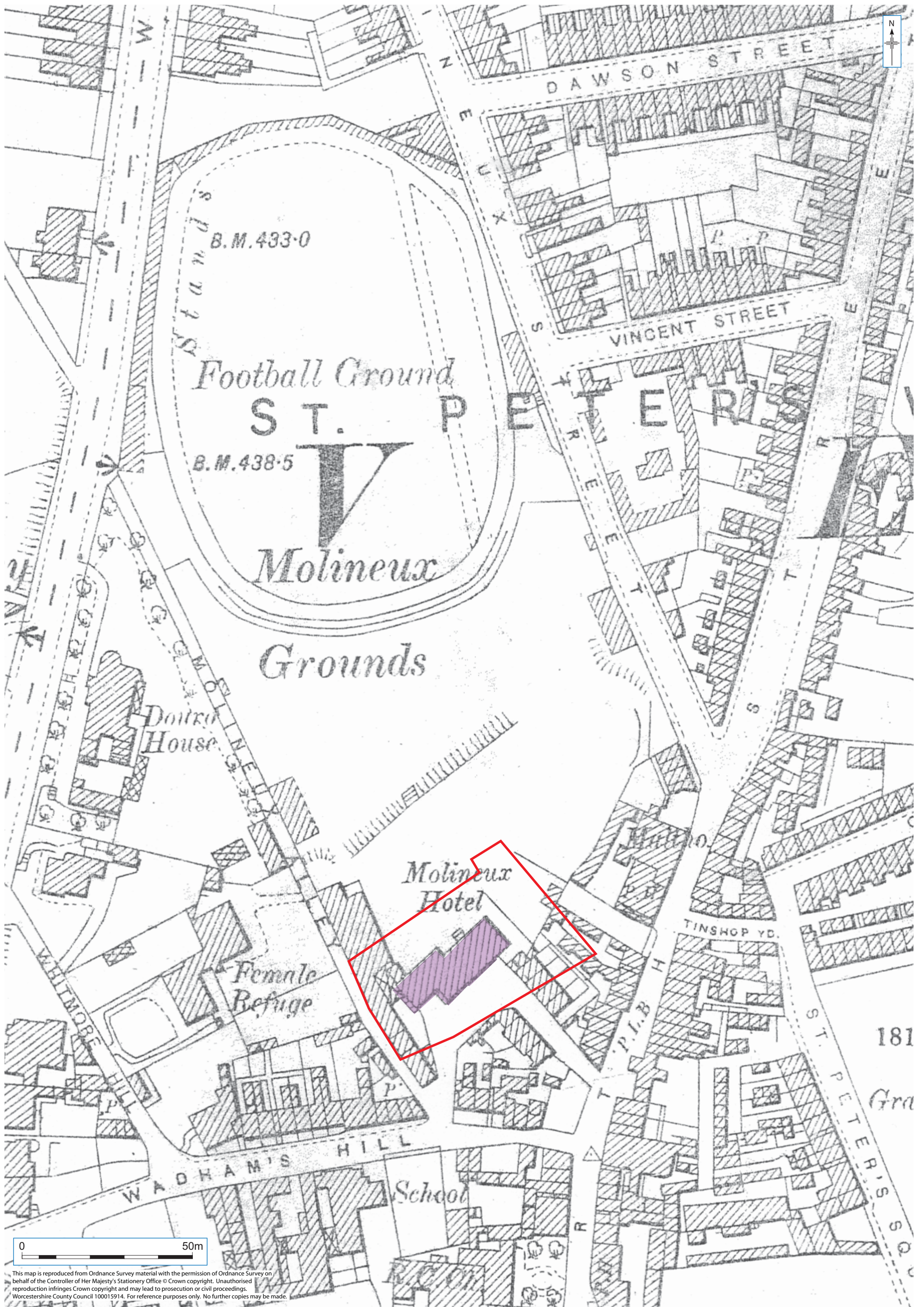




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1889 1st edition Ordnance Survey

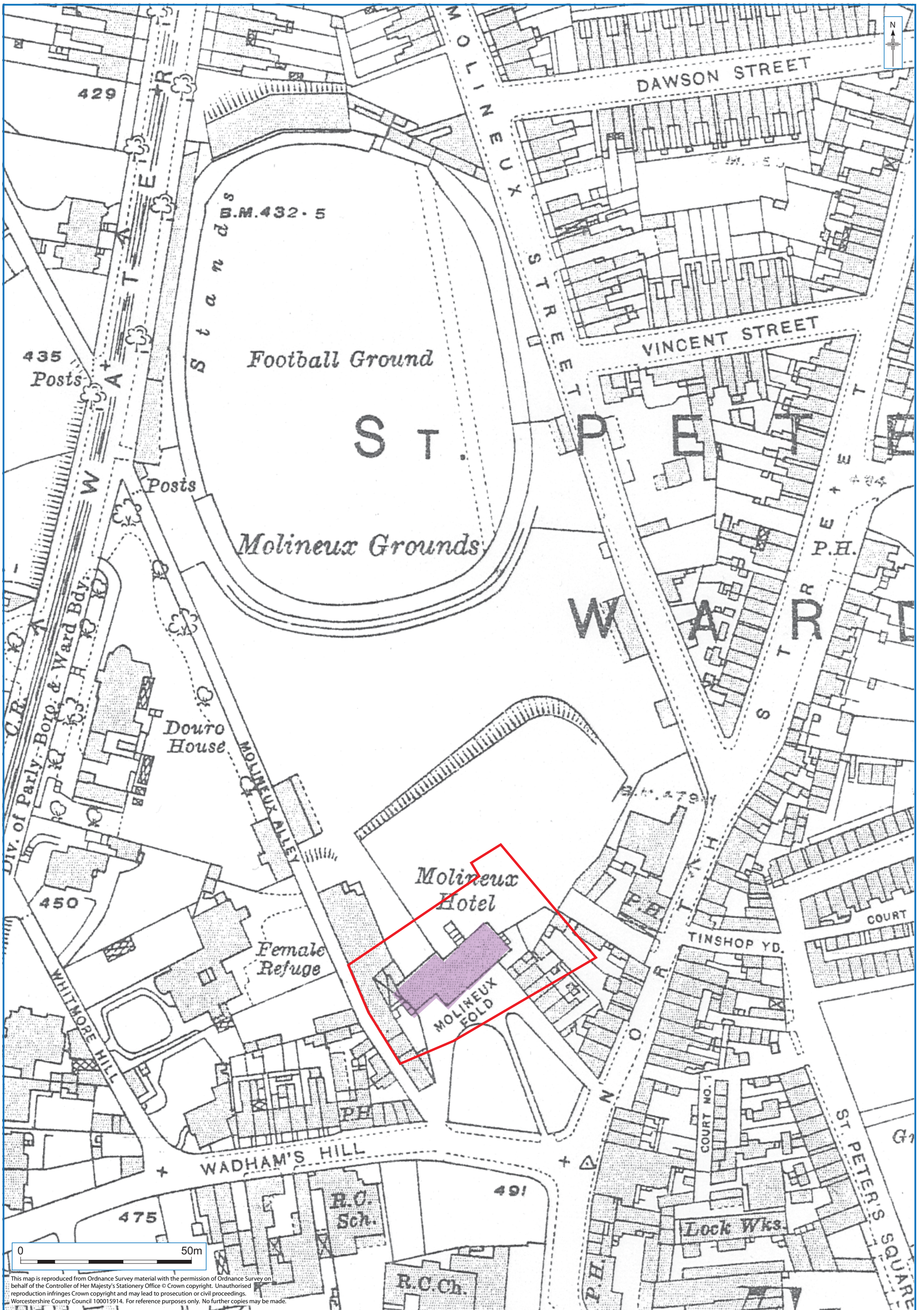
Figure 8



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1902 Ordnance Survey

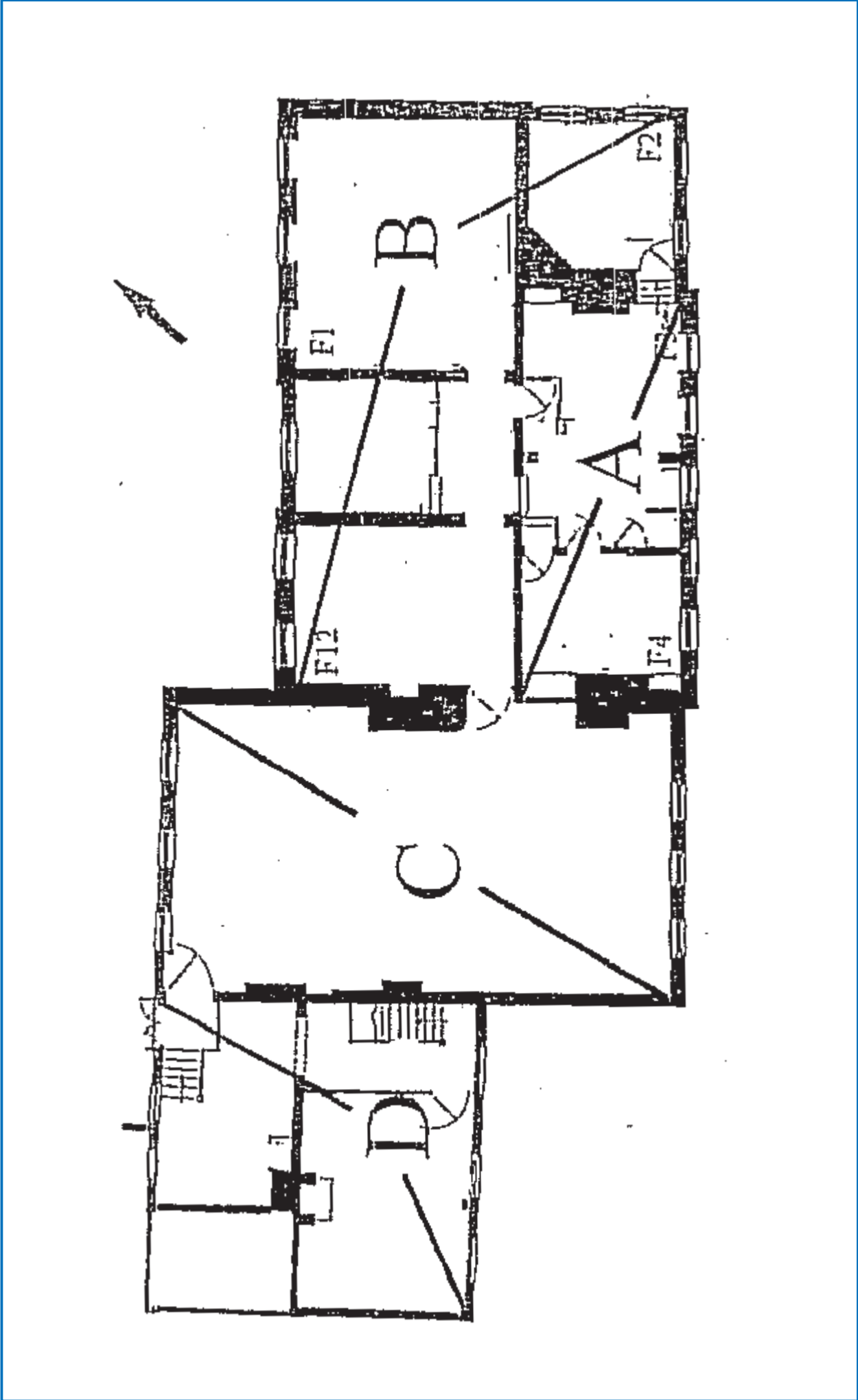
Figure 9



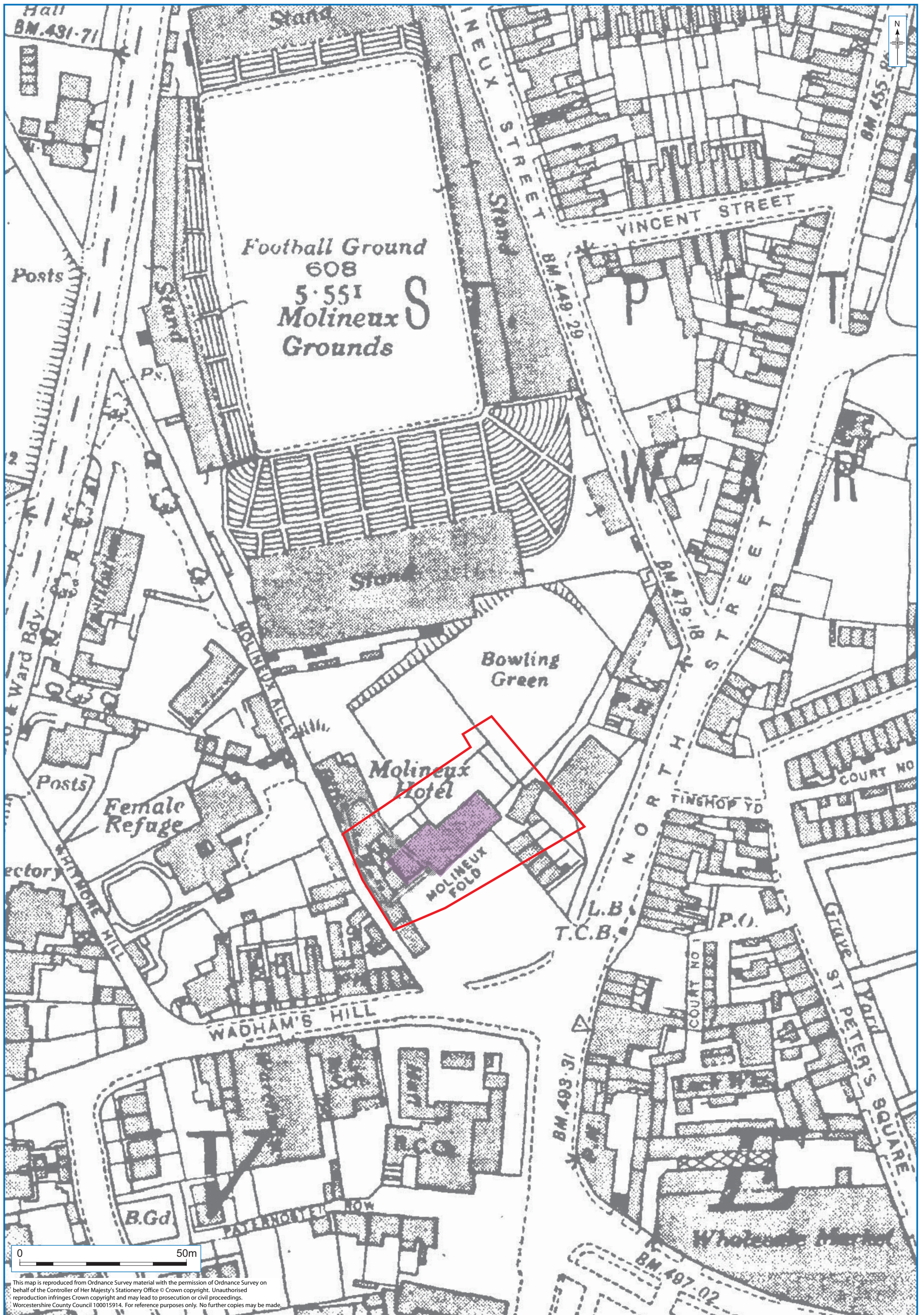
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1919 Ordnance Survey

Figure 10



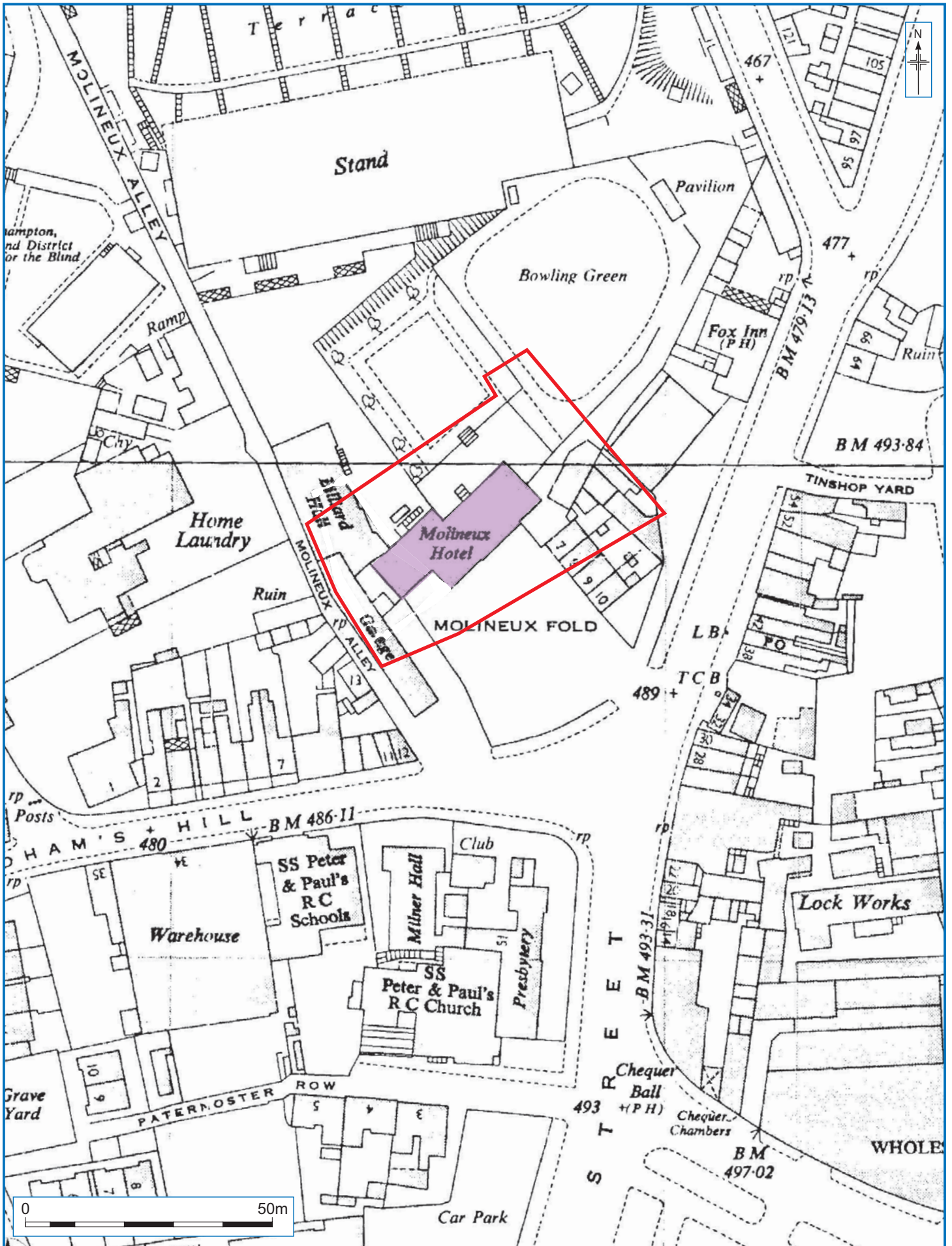
The main components of Molineux House, based on a 1926 first-floor plan (from Morriss 1999)



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1937 Ordnance Survey

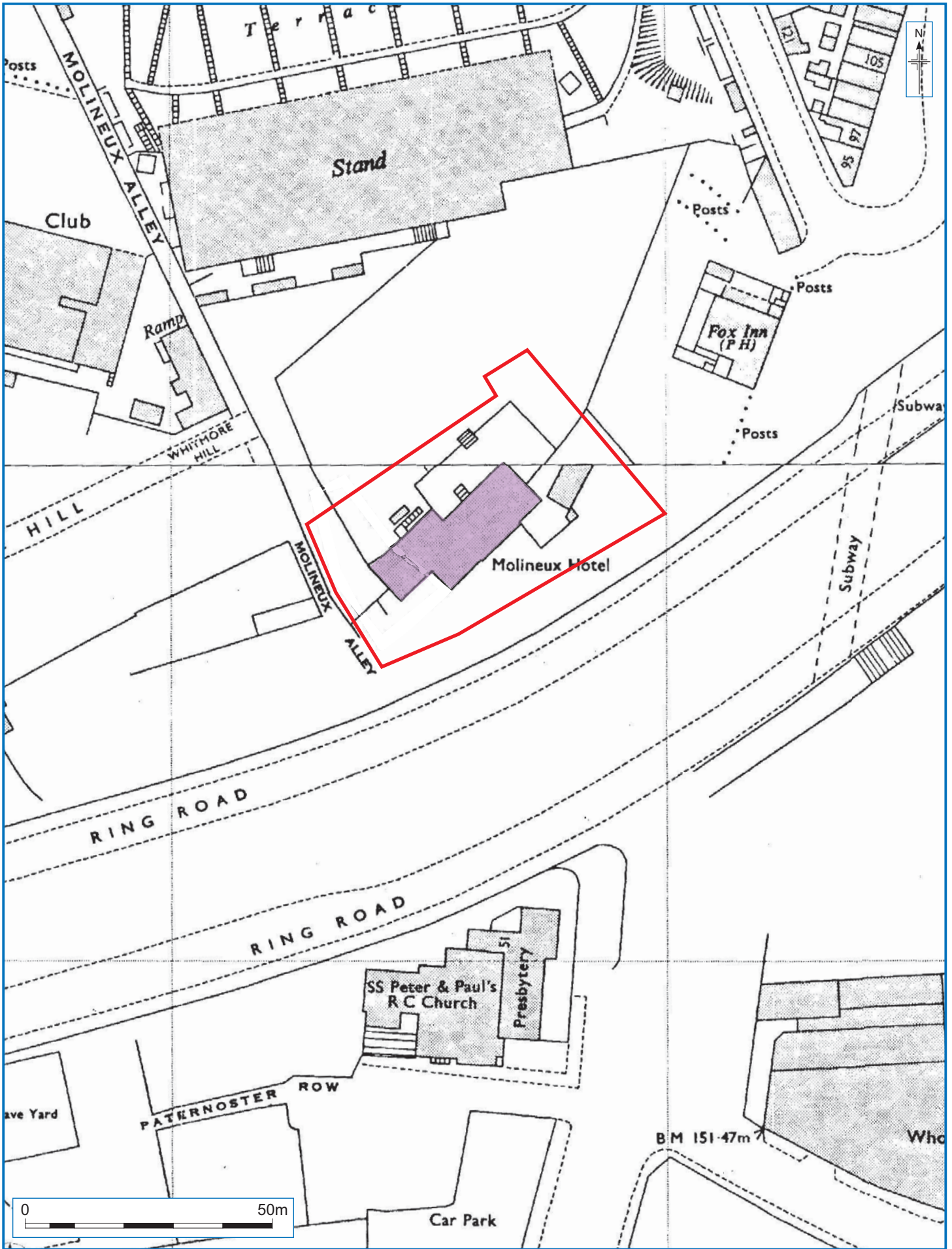
Figure 12



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1956 Ordnance Survey

Figure 13



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1971 Ordnance Survey

Figure 14



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2005 Ordnance Survey Superplan

Figure 15

9. **Plates**

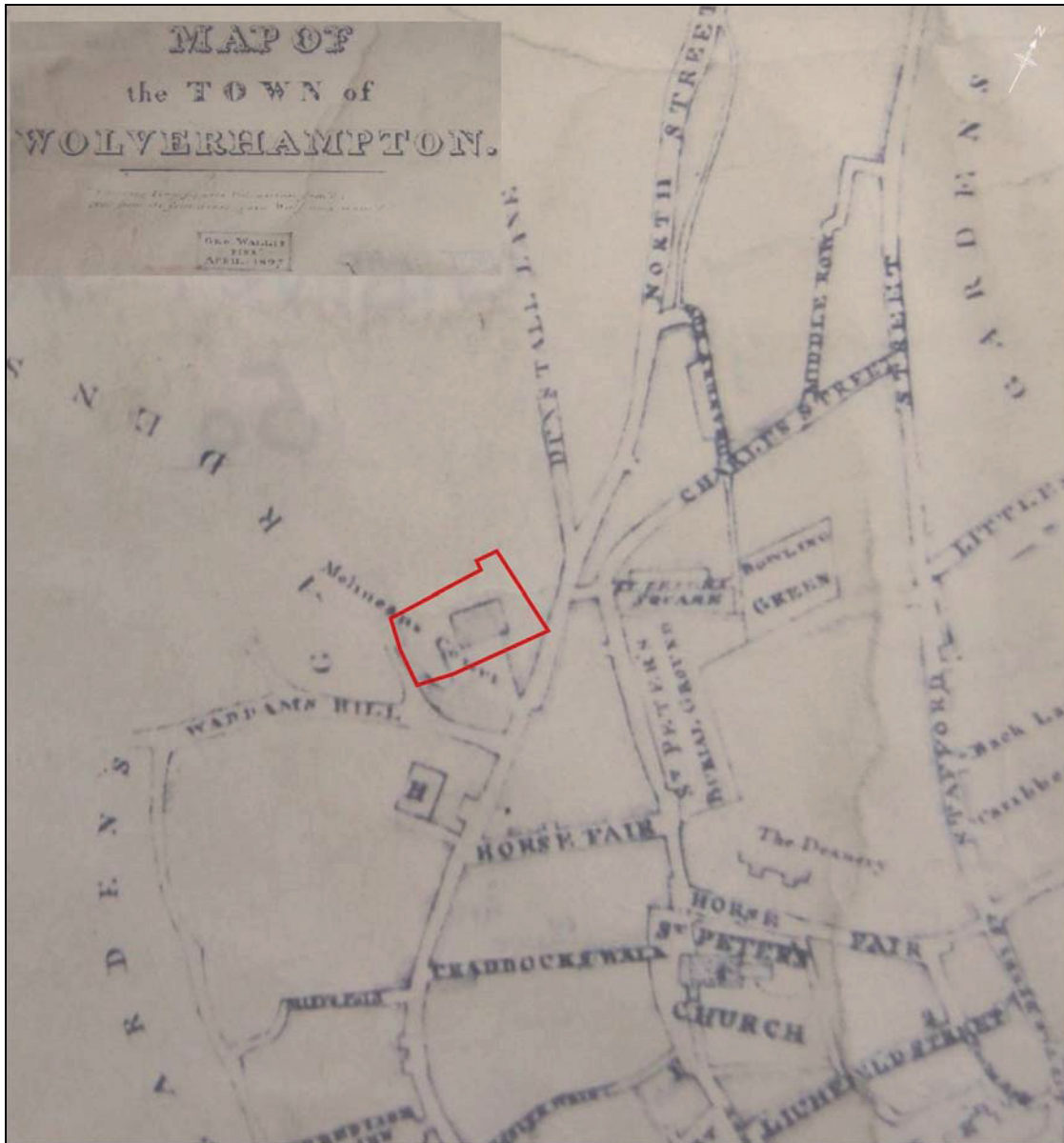


Plate 1: 1825/7, Map of the Town of Wolverhampton, Geoffrey Wallis (WA: MAP/554a-b)

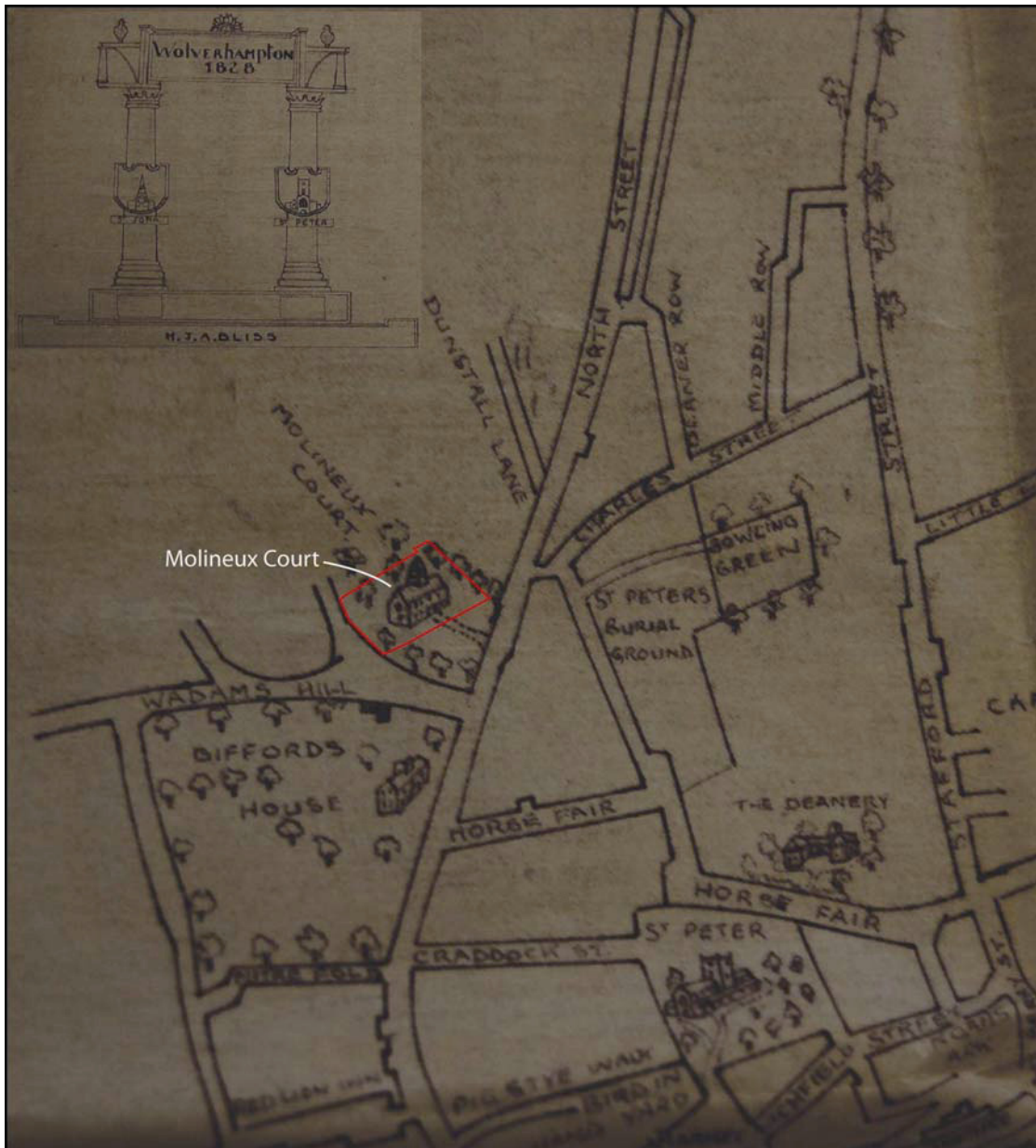


Plate 2: 1828, Map of the Town of Wolverhampton, HJA Bliss (WA: MAP/555)



Plate 3: 1871, Plan of the town and borough of Wolverhampton, Steen and Blackett (WA: MAP/560 DX 673/34-5 SBL 6095)

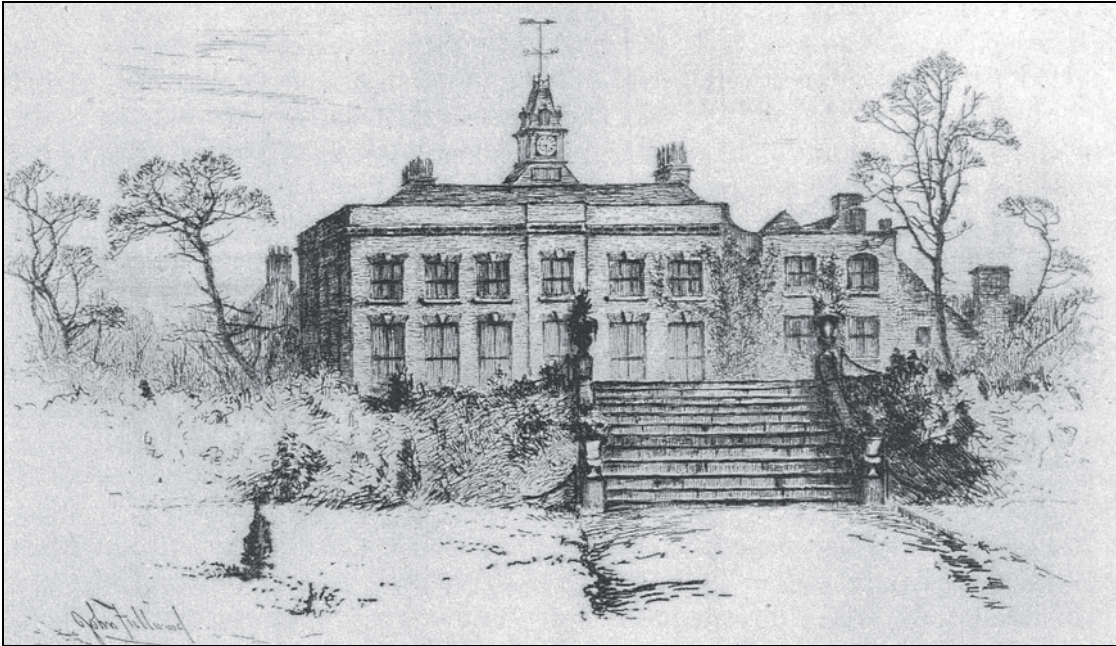


Plate 4: View south, illustration by John Fullwood, mid 19th century? (Mason 1979, 122)

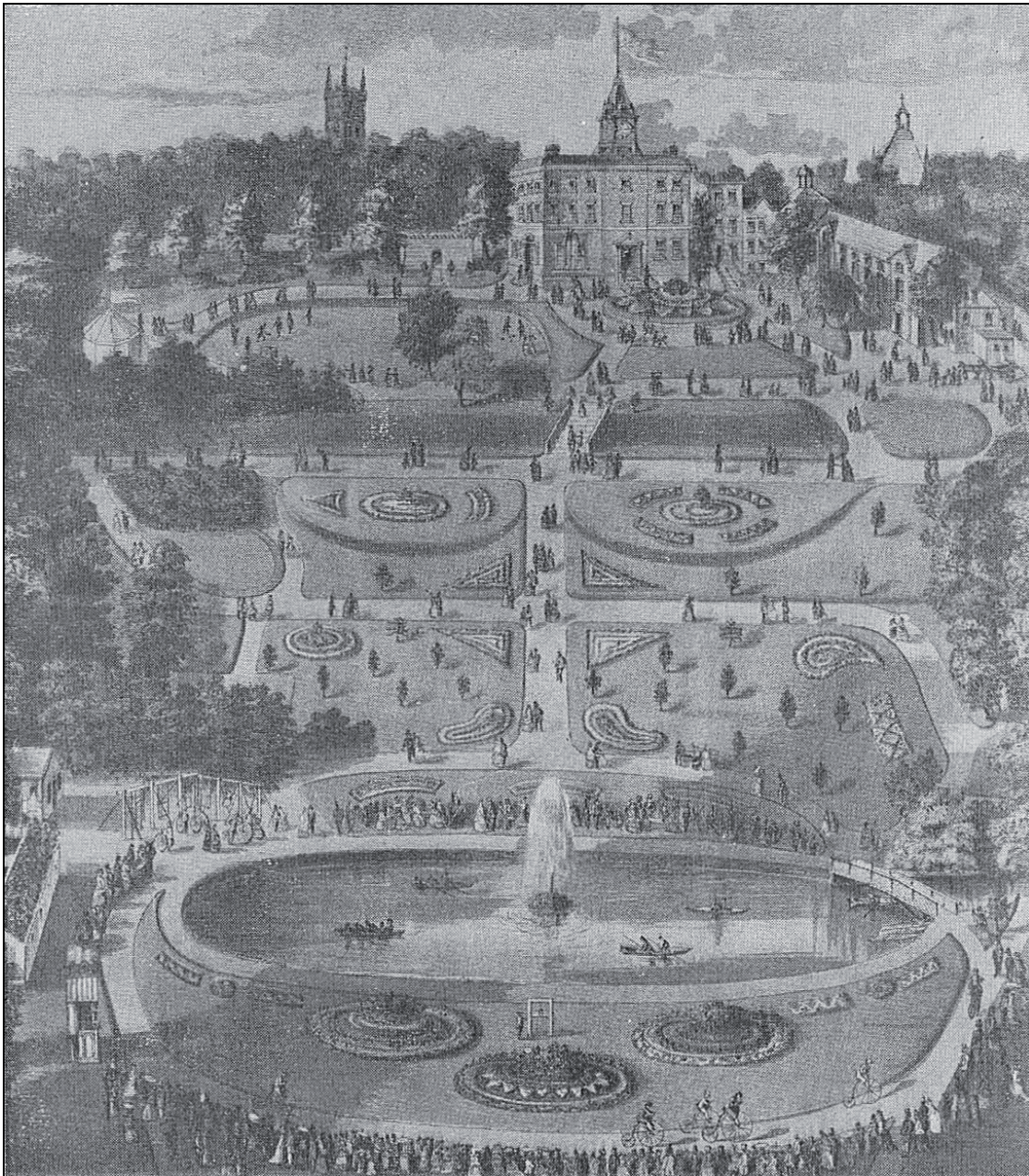


Plate 5: Reproduced from a poster promoting the Pleasure Grounds during the ownership of Oliver Edward McGregor, 1860-1887, view south (WCC 2006a, 6)



Plate 6: View south of The Exhibition, 1869 (Mason 1979, 115)

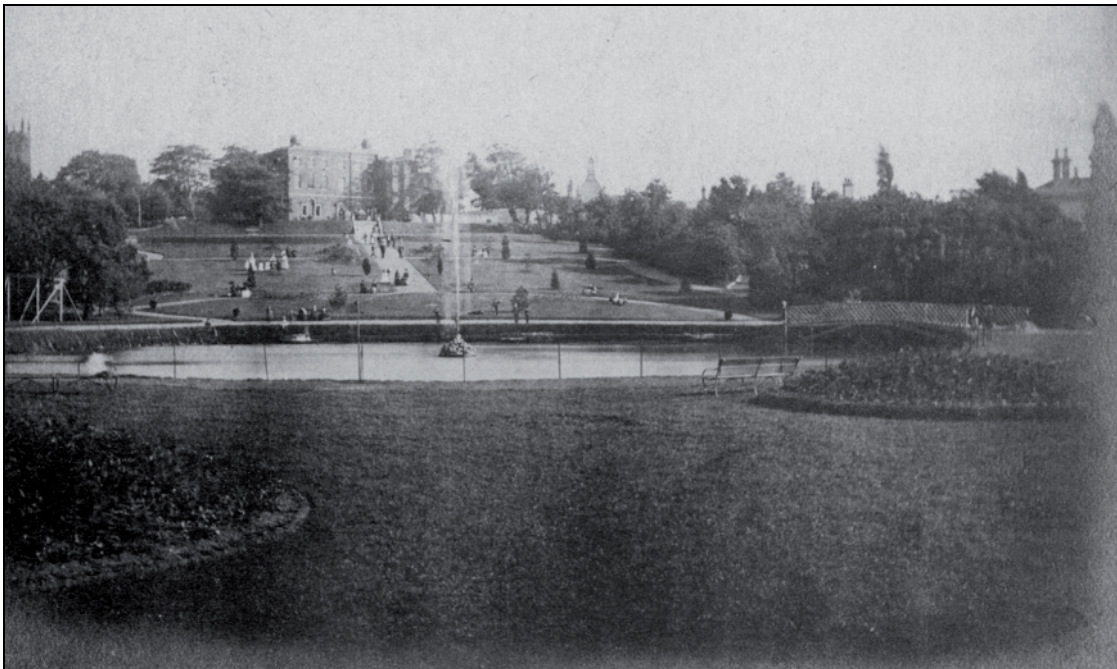


Plate 7: View south, over the lake to the hotel, pre-1886 (WCC 2006a, 5)

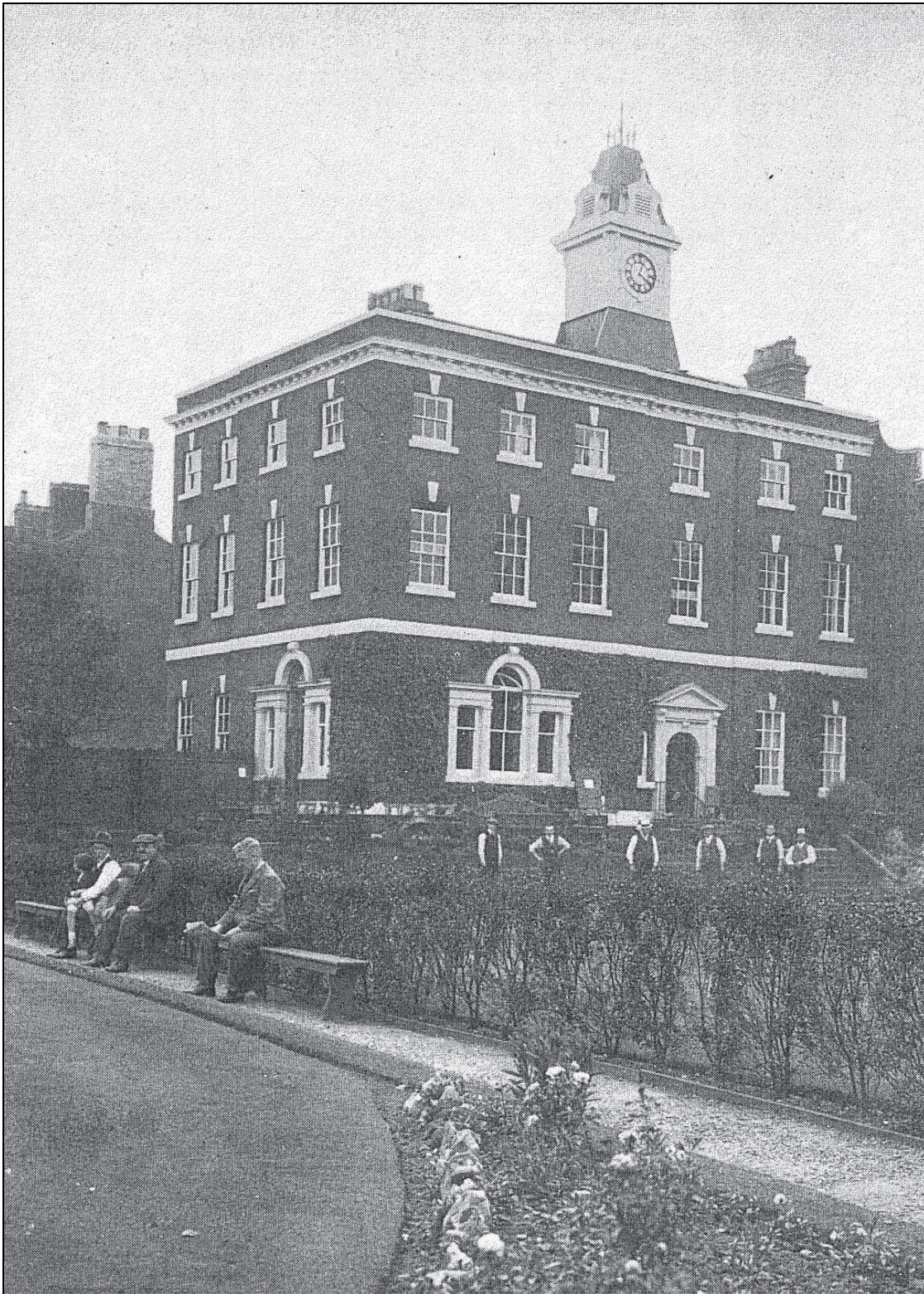


Plate 8: View south of the Bowling Green and Hotel c 1930 (Butlers Journal c 1930, 85)

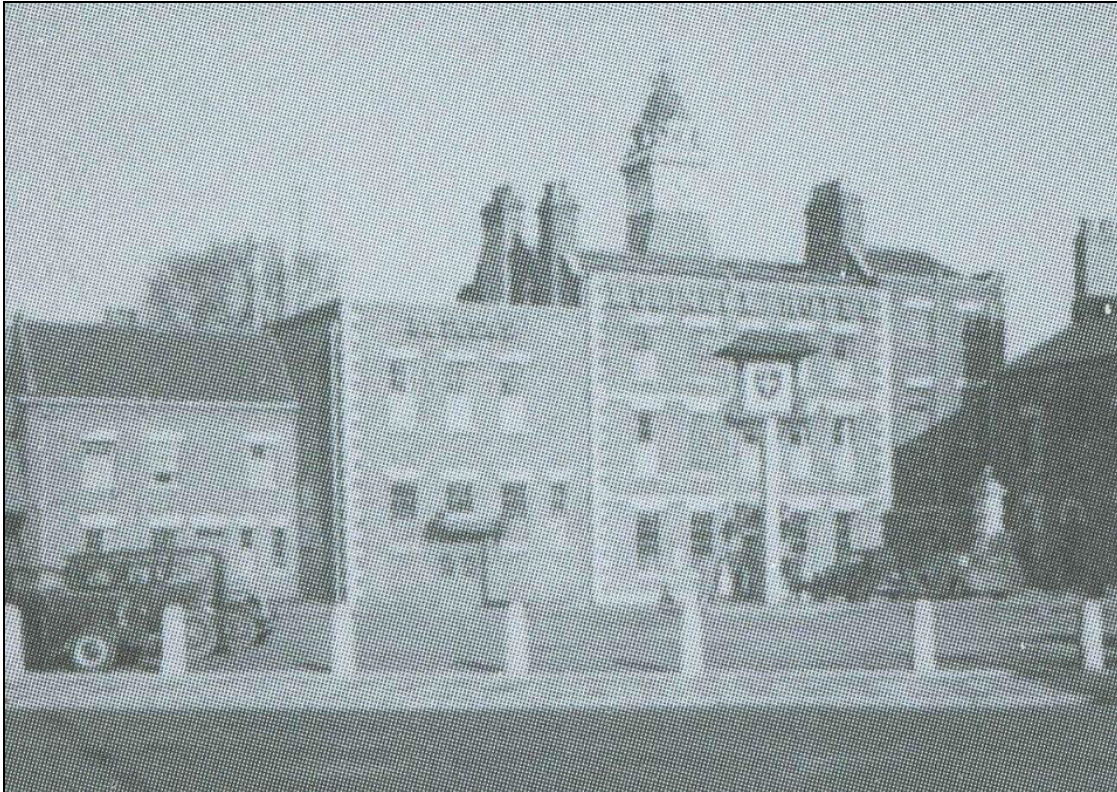


Plate 9: View north of the front façade, c 1930 (WCC 2005)



Plate 10: View north of the front façade, 1950 (Images Of England: Wolverhampton 1996, 93)



Plate 11: View north of the front façade, c 1960 (WCC 2005)



Plate 12: View west of the front façade and Garden Range, 1970s (Wolverhampton Local History website; photo by David Clare)



Plate 13: View south of the Garden and West Ranges, 1970s (Wolverhampton Local History website; photo by David Clare)



Plate 14: Garden Range east elevation and retaining wall, view south



Plate 15: Garden Range, blocked doorway and steps in east elevation, view south



Plate 16: Stone retaining wall to east of Garden Range, view south-west



Plate 17: East of house, view south-east



Plate 18: East of house, view south-east



Plate 19: East of house, view north-west



Plate 20: Garden, South and West Ranges, south and east elevations, view west



Plate 21: South of house, view south-west



Plate 22: South elevation of North-West range, view north-west



Plate 23: West Range, south elevation, view north



Plate 24: West of North-West Range, view north



Plate 25: North and Garden Ranges, view south-east



Plate 26: North of house, area of former bowling green and skating rink, view north-east



Plate 27: North of house, view south-south-west



Plate 28: North Range and brick retaining walls, north of house, view south-west



Plate 29: north of house, view south-west



Plate 30: Flanking walls for steps through retaining wall to north of Garden Range, view north



Plate 31: Garden Range north entrance and steps, view south-east

Appendix 1 Features of the historic environment registered with the Black Country Sites and Monuments Record (those within the site are indicated in bold)

Reference number and status	Site name	National Grid ref.	Record type	Date
BCSMR 483 Listed Grade II* (No. 378488)	Molineux Hotel, Molineux Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1SB	SO 9126 9899	Garden Mansion house Public house	<i>c 1720</i> <i>c 1720</i> <i>c 1860</i>
Listed Grade II* (No. 378504)	Giffard House, North Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1RA	SO 9127 9890	Presbytery and chapel	<i>c 1727-9</i>