



North Hertfordshire District Council



**An Archaeological Desktop Assessment
of a site in the town centre,
Hitchin, Hertfordshire**

cover illustration:

A Roman alabaster sculpture recovered from the site of the new Corn Exchange in 1853.

Object drawn at scale 1:3

**Land to the rear of
Paynes Park, Market Place and High Street,
Hitchin, Hertfordshire
An Archaeological Desktop Assessment**

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Commissioned by Lovell Developments Limited

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North Hertfordshire District Council
Department of Engineering and Leisure Services
Museums Field Archaeology Section
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Payne's Park/Market Place, Hitchin:	Desktop
NHDC Site Code:	Hit-PP'94
National Grid Reference:	TL18302910

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Conventions

AA	Archaeological Area
Acc	Accession
AS	Area of Archaeological Significance
bc	radiocarbon date
BC	calendar date: tree-ring counting for dating (dendrochronology) or recalibration of radiocarbon dates
BM	British Museum
CBA	Council for British Archaeology
DoE	Department of the Environment
EHAS	East Hertfordshire Archaeological Society
HCC	Hertfordshire County Council
NGR	National Grid Reference
NHDC	North Hertfordshire District Council
PH	Public House
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record

Glossary

Ancient Monument

Nationally important archaeological sites designated under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 by the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Apotheosis

The exaltation of a person to the rank of a god.

burgage plot

A term applied to a tenure whereby burgesses or townsmen held their lands or tenements of the king or other lord, usually for a fixed money rent: abolished in 1922.

burh

A fortified settlement

Circulars

The legislation of Town and Country Planning is supplemented by Central Government advice on a wide range of issues which are addressed in circulars (see also Planning Policy Guidance).

Conservation Area

Area of special architectural or historic interest which has been determined by the Local Planning Authority as one where the character or appearance is worthy of preservation or enhancement.

cremation

The burning of a human corpse.

Danelaw

The body of laws in force in that part of England which the Danes occupied in the ninth century AD, also known as Danelagh.

earthworks

The excavation and embanking of earth as part of a constructional process.

Etruscans

A people who lived in area today known as Tuscany during the first millennium BC.

fell-mongeries

Establishments where dealers in skins or hides of animals, especially sheepskins operated.

geophysics

The physics of the earth whereby unseen features are investigated by a range of scientific devices such as proton-magnetometer, resistivity meters and radar.

horizon

A spread of material representing a common period which separates earlier deposits from any subsequent material. Also applied to abstract concepts.

iconography

The making of an image representing some sacred personage.

inhumation

The deposition of a human corpse.

Iron Age

Principally the period is from c.600 BC to 200 AD but historically in Britain it is normally taken to conclude with the advent of Roman rule in A.D. 43. The period refers to a European identity that emerged with the accessibility of iron for use in tools and weapon manufacture.

La Tène

The name of a type-site in Switzerland has been given to the second period of the European Iron Age over much of the continent and lasted from the mid 5th century BC till the advent of Roman occupation.

layer

A spread of material.

Listed Building

A building which has been identified by the Secretary of State for the Environment as being of special architectural or historic interest and is entered on the list of such buildings.

Neolithic

A term devised in 1865 by Lord Avebury to describe the period of human prehistory when people produced their own food by cultivation and domesticated animals but still used flint and other stone as the material for tools and weapons. The word means

'New Stone Age'. The period spanned from c.3,500 to 1,700 bc.

Planning Policy Guidance - PPG

The Government prepares a number of Notes about key issues for which it wishes to set down comprehensive guidance. In doing so, it clarifies advice already given in circulars.

post-holes

The hole that is created into which a post can be inserted.

Proserpine

The Roman counterpart to the Greek goddess Persephone the daughter of Zeus and Demeter who was kidnapped by Pluto, or Hades, to be his wife and queen of the lower world, but allowed to return once a year and is associated with Spring.

Romano-British

The period in British history when the country was the subject of Roman rule. Traditionally the period is 43 to 410 AD.

Romano-Celtic

The term is applied to native influences that were adapted to take into account Roman attributes.

samian

Samian or Terra Sigillata is a distinctive pottery ware that was produced mainly in south and central Gaul (approx. France) and the Moselle valley in the first three centuries AD. It is a red ware with a bright glossy surface, plain or elaborately decorated by means of moulds. The second name is derived from the stamp with which the potter frequently added his name to the vessel.

scraper

An artifact of chipped stone or flint, with a convex or concave working edge. Most scrapers were probably used in the working of wood and in cleaning hides and defleshing carcasses.

serf

A person in a condition of servitude, required to render services to his lord, and commonly attached to the lord's land and transferred with it from one owner to another.

sigillata

see samian

stratigraphy

One of the major tools of archaeological interpretation. The law of superposition states that, where one deposit overlies another, the upper must have accumulated later in time than the lower, which could not have been inserted beneath a layer already there. The principle was adopted from geology. In archaeology a number of provisos must be added, notably that there must have been no subsequent disturbance (slipping of deposits, burrowing by animals, etc.). The law, too, gives only the order of deposition of layers; some of their contents may be of much earlier date, and accidentally incorporated from another deposit, but they cannot be later.

Structure Plan

A statement of the County Council's general proposals for the development of land in the County which, when approved by the Secretary of State, forms part of the Development Plan.

tithe map

A map that was produced so as to define the land ownership in order to assess the tax required to be levied, representing the tenth part of agricultural produce in kind or actually paid, for the support of the priesthood or religious organisation.

tun

A Saxon word meaning a small settlement.

wasters

Often applied to deformed pottery vessels, having been miss-fired during manufacture.

Acknowledgements

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SUMMARY

S.1 Hitchin is an historic Medieval market town with Saxon origins. In addition, there is evidence for earlier Roman and Prehistoric settlements within the Medieval town area. The town centre, including the proposed Paynes Park redevelopment site, lies within an outstanding Conservation Area and an Archaeological Area, as defined by the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 (July 1993). Hitchin has been recognised by the Council for British Archaeology as of national archaeological and historical importance. English Heritage also recognises the importance of Hitchin, and has recently set out criteria for the preservation and recording of the archaeology of such historic small towns.

S.2 A study of the detailed town maps for Hitchin, from the modern back to the earliest which dates from the mid-seventeenth century, a century earlier than previously supposed, shows the proposed Paynes Park redevelopment site to be in an area at the rear of Medieval and later burgage plots. This area would have housed ancillary buildings, trades and other activities to the street frontage properties. These may or did include one or more of the following: stables, stores, breweries, maltings, potteries, tileries, tanneries, fell-mongeries, domestic quarters, gardens, allotments, paddocks, yards, alleys, boundaries, drains, pits, wells, etc. Archaeological evidence of some of these activities and/or others may be expected from the area if it is properly investigated.

S.3 It is known that Hitchin began as a Saxon settlement and Saxon finds have been recovered from the town centre. The study of maps has presented an interesting possibility that the redevelopment area may fall within the Saxon settlement area, and that in the Late Saxon period the settlement may have been re-planned on a new layout, but still including the site. The town plan was certainly re-designed in the twelfth century when Hitchin became a borough.

S.4 Formal archaeological investigations in Hitchin have been rare and small-scale so far, despite the known potential from historical records, topography and casual finds, due to a lack of appropriate opportunity. However, such excavations and observations as there have been in the town centre have clearly demonstrated the archaeological potential in terms of the surviving stratified archaeological deposits, up to 2 metres

deep in places, and the range of periods represented. Besides the expected Medieval and Post-Medieval remains of the historic market town, there is evidence from a number of points in the town centre for earlier Saxon, Roman, pre-Roman Iron Age, and other Prehistoric settlements and occupation. However, to date we know hardly anything about the nature or extent of the pre-Medieval settlements, or indeed much about the development of the Medieval town itself.

S.5 From the proposed redevelopment area there are existing records to show that Prehistoric and Romano-British finds have been made in the vicinity. The find of a rare piece of sculpture recovered last century on the Corn Exchange site has been reinterpreted in this report as dating to the Romano-British period; this is of major importance and may have significant implications for contemporary occupation in the area. As well as evidence for these earlier periods, there is considerable potential for the recovery of archaeological evidence for the Medieval and Post-Medieval town.

S.6 The topography of the application site, combined with recent observations of deep archaeological stratigraphy in Market Place, suggests that, at least in places, significant archaeological deposits may survive there. An archaeological field evaluation is recommended as the next step in the investigation of the site.

1 Introduction

1.1 Hitchin is considered to be one of the five most important and historic town centre Conservation Areas in the county. As well as being within an outstanding Conservation Area and Archaeological Area (NHDC District Local Plan No. 2 1993), its historical and archaeological significance is high-lighted by both the Council for British Archaeology and English Heritage.

The Application

1.2 It is set within this context that Lovell Developments Ltd. has submitted an application to North Hertfordshire District Council for outline planning permission for land between Market Place, High Street and Paynes Park, Hitchin. The application site falls within both the Conservation Area and the Archaeological Area.

1.3 The initial details of the application read as follows:-

N.H.D.C. reference 93/1150/1

Lyons+Sleeman+Hoare reference 93/51/RM/dp (agent for Lovell Developments Ltd.)

An area defined for redevelopment as:

'Land between Paynes Park and Market Place (including former Jacksons Yard and Brookers Yard), to provide A1 retail (4416sq.m.), A2 financial and professional services (465sq.m.), and A3 food and drink (372sq.m.), floorspace. Six residential flats with parking. Public conveniences. Vehicular access via Paynes Park. 217 open parking spaces. Servicing and ancillary facilities, (Outline - design, external appearance and landscaping details reserved).'

1.4 The document dated 11th October 1993 submitted by the developer's agent contains a section relating to the archaeological potential of the proposed site.

Page 5; section 6:

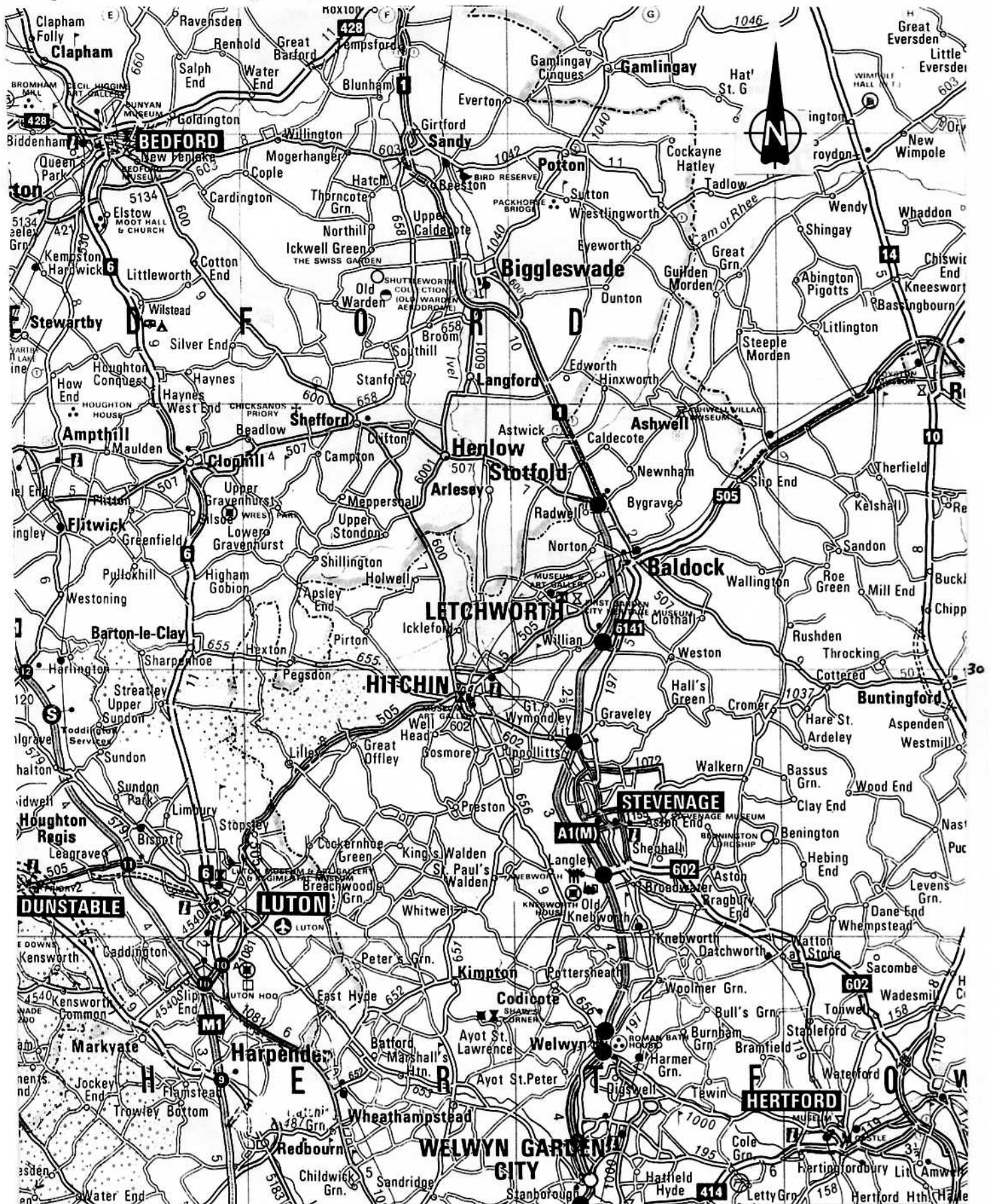
Archaeological considerations

Lovell Developments Ltd will commission the implementation of an 'Archaeological Desktop Assessment' of the site subject to the Planning Application, shortly after the submission of the Application. Fee proposals from the consultants have been obtained and they have indicated that the report can be completed within a period of four weeks from instructions being given to proceed.

1.5 The scale and location of the proposed development indicate the quantity of archaeological information that is potentially available for such a Medieval town centre site.

1.6 The present Desktop Assessment Report, which has been commissioned by Lovell as part of the planning application, develops from a background discussion of the town to detailing the evidence pertaining to the deve-

Regional Setting



Scale 1:200,000

page 2 20

Figure 1

opment area. Provided with an accrued information base, a discussion then assimilates the data into an interpretive format before recommendations consider the implication of the proposed construction programme upon the potential archaeological evidence, with an

evaluation of such a potential. The section is concluded by defining those methods of investigation that it would be profitable to conduct, having become evident during the limited research for this particular assessment.

English Heritage Criteria

1.7 Why are historic towns important archaeologically? English Heritage recognises that historic towns represent one of the three main ways in which archaeological deposits are known to exist in this country, and are an archaeological expression of particular kinds of social, economic, political, cultural, and symbolic action.

1.8 In environmental terms, urban areas are resources that have been created or brought about through the activities of human communities. In many cases, as with Hitchin, their development has taken place over a very long period of time. Their creation is unique in the sense that the particular events, processes and conditions which provide the context of their emergence will never be repeated. As such, urban areas are a finite and non-renewable resource.

1.9 English Heritage is currently in the early stages of applying the strategy of its Monuments Protection Programme, already being successfully applied in the countryside, to an initial sample of urban areas. At the moment this does not include Hitchin, but it is worth setting out the objectives of managing the urban archaeological resource, as it is relevant to all historic towns with surviving archaeological remains.

1.10 The main general objectives of archaeological resource management relating to urban areas can be summarized as follows (Darvill 1987 25):

- a to retain the rich diversity of archaeological remains that is known to exist in*

urban areas.

- b to make the archaeological heritage satisfy the demands made upon it by society as a whole.*
- c to reconcile conflict and competition for the use of land within urban areas that contains archaeological deposits.*

1.11 Translated into specific objectives the following intentions may be defined:

- a preserving archaeological deposits in situ wherever possible.*
- b recording in advance of their destruction any archaeological deposits that cannot be preserved.*
- c identifying and resolving conflicts of interest at an early stage.*
- d recognizing and communicating the importance and nature of the archaeological resource to a wide general public.*
- e carrying out programmes of archaeological research to enhance understanding of the resource (Darvill and English Heritage 1992 1 43-4).*

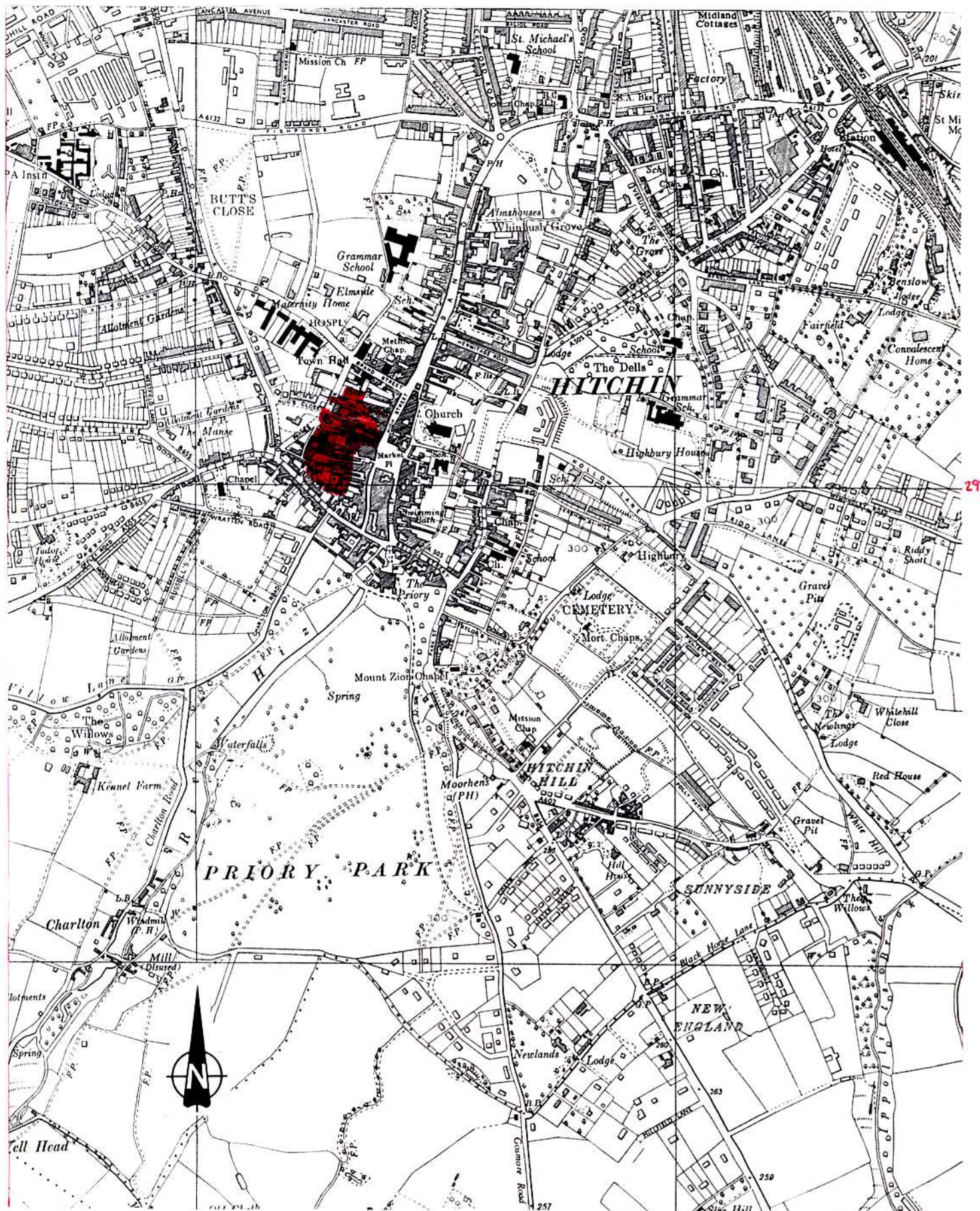
1.12 English Heritage defines Hitchin as one of five medium-sized Medieval market towns in Hertfordshire. A medium-sized market town is an urban area which provided a market and service centre for surrounding communities, related in some way to the exchange and redistribution of commodities. Medium-sized market towns have been described as ‘‘local market centres which differed from villages in having...a substantial proportion of trades and craftsmen whose services would be drawn on

by the villages of the surrounding area "
(Hinton 1983 77-8).

1.13 For the Monument Protection Programme, English Heritage has devised a simple scoring system which gives priority to the presence of certain key classes of monument. A medium-sized market town has a fairly wide range of monument classes and would typically accumulate a score of between 40 and 80 points on the basis of these classes. Hitchin scores 100 points using the English Heritage system because it had a market, borough status, 2-3 churches, 2 Friaries and 2 gilds (Darvill and English Heritage 1992 1 35).

1.14 With the above ideas in mind, we may now proceed to the main parts of this Report.

Development Setting within Hitchin



Scale 1:10,560

page 5

Figure 2

2 Methodology

The Summary Project Design

2.1 The basis for structuring the Desktop Assessment Report is derived from the summary Project Design furnished by the NHDC Keeper of Field Archaeology to MDS who prepared the initial main draft report, work upon which commenced 04.01.94.

1 Research

1.1 Survey published and archive sources of historic cartographical, archaeological, geological, and topographical data relevant to the development area. Sources consulted will include:

- a Hertfordshire Sites and Monuments Record.
- b North Hertfordshire Museums Sites and Monuments Record.
- c Geological maps.
- d Ordnance Survey maps of the site and its environs.
- e Tithe Apportionment and parish maps (where available).
- f Estate and enclosure maps of the area (where available)
- g Historical documents held in local museums, libraries or other archives, e.g. the County Record Office (where directly relevant).
- h Appropriate archaeological and historical journals and books.
- i Unpublished research reports and archives, especially those held by North Hertfordshire Museums, concerning relevant archaeological investigations.

Where nearby excavations have addressed similar archaeological problems, the results will be assessed, with a view to identifying areas where further work is particularly required.

- j Aerial photographs.
 - k All available borehole and trial pit data from the site and its immediate surroundings.
 - l Any further geophysical and/or geo-technical data available.
 - m The site itself by means of one or more site visits.
- 1.2 Collate the information gained into a workable database, cross-referenced to the original sources.

2 Plot - OD levels where available:

- 2.1 Areas of potential archaeological significance within the development site. Areas of greater or lesser priority should be defined where possible.
- 2.2 Areas where levels of archaeological interest are liable to have been destroyed by past and present buildings and features, e.g. cellars.
- 2.3 The scale and nature of the redevelopment proposals in relation to 2.1 and 2.2 above (in particular illustrating areas where no disturbance is proposed).
- 2.4 Other relevant constraints on the site, including conservation area, listed buildings, archaeological area, etc.

3 Report

- 3.1 Summarise and incorporate the above information into a report, detailing the main findings with appropriate illustrations.
- 3.2 Provide a comprehensive list of sources consulted, giving full bibliographic details. Where sources referred to in 1.1 above have not been consulted the reasons for this will be explained.
- 3.3 The Report will comprise an introduction, background, methodology, sources consulted, discussion and recommendations.

The Desktop Assessment

The research

2.2 The first stage of the research was to address the material housed by the North Hertfordshire Museum Service in the form of maps, plans, record cards, books as well as other information resulting from associated archaeological and historical fieldwork.

2.3 It was evident from the outset that only the basic detail could be assimilated due to the telescoped timetable permitted for the execution of the report. It was therefore necessary to maximise the information readily available both at The Museum Resource Centre, Bury-mead Road, Hitchin, and at Hitchin Museum, Paynes Park. The primary additional sources consulted were the Hertfordshire County Record Office and the Hertfordshire County Sites and Monuments Record.

The report

2.4 The second stage was the preparation of the report with the assimilated information for the area of the development being presented in historical period order, having considered the archaeological importance of the area in its juxtaposition to the rest of the historic town.

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

Historical

3.1 Historical Hitchin is situated within the District of North Hertfordshire, 3 miles west of Letchworth, 4 miles northwest of Stevenage, 8 miles east of Luton and 16 miles from Bedford to the north (Figure 1). The town lies on the line of the Chilterns that become the East Anglian Heights further east. Created during the Ice Age is the gap in the line of the ridge that is referred to as the Hitchin Gap, through which flows the river Hiz, and in which Hitchin is located.

3.2 The proposed development area is situated on the west of the main historic core of the town in a space defined by Payne's Park and Market Place/High Street. Being so sited it is likely to reveal archaeological remains pertaining to the Medieval and earlier history of Hitchin (Figure 2).

3.3 There has been much attention paid by local historians to the possible derivation of the name of the town, foremost of whom was Reginald Hine (Hine 1929 2 350). For the purpose of this report it is sufficient to observe that in the Domesday Book, prepared under the instruction of William the Conqueror during the latter years of the eleventh century, the town is referred to as *Hiz* (Morris 1976 132c), with the name becoming *Hichene* or *Heicchen* by 1147 (Gover *et al.* 1938 8).

3.4 In the eighth century Hitchin was part of the Mercian kingdom, and later was for a time within the area of the Danelaw, even though the evidence from the district is slight (Friel

1982 8). Later the town was possessed by King Edward the Confessor who bequeathed it to Harold, who then fell at the Battle of Hastings. As a consequence it became the property of William the Conqueror. Subsequent kings held the town as a royal manor through to Charles I when the area was passed to William Wilshere and his descendants (Anon 1880 201).

3.5 The high profile for the town is confirmed by its Medieval status as a Borough, and it was considered to be the second largest town in the county during the early Middle Ages. The borough status was possibly not conferred until the twelfth century when the Baliols were lords, which is also the period from which much of the visible architecture of the present church dates (VCH 3 6). The church, incidentally, incorporates possible Roman tile within the fabric of the tower, suggesting perhaps that the ruins of a Roman building existed nearby in the twelfth century. The town however did not incorporate all the elements one may consider as integral to confirm the standing of the town as a borough: no town defences or castle were ever constructed and the town did not have a mint. Ashwell also in the district of North Hertfordshire was another early borough and it too lacked these particular elements. However, as with many other recorded Medieval towns, Hitchin's status as a borough must have derived mainly from its market charter, local trades and industry, and the prosperity of its burgesses.

Archaeological

3.6 The early evidence of occupation in the area is represented by the recovery of a number of stone tools from the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age periods of prehistory, with as yet very little material from the pre-Roman Iron Age. However, a site archaeologically excavated in 1980 in Portmill Lane did reveal slight structural evidence from the latter period. The Roman period is represented by the recovery of pottery, coins and other finds, including the disturbance of a number of possible burials, e.g. at The Biggin, to suggest that a scatter of small farmsteads along the riverside may have been the pattern.

3.7 Around Hitchin itself a number of Saxon coins, brooches and other metalwork have been found, along with several probable Saxon burials, to provide some of the only archaeological clues to the Saxon settlement that existed before the early Medieval town emerged to provide the basic street layout that can be seen today. The immediate vicinity of Hitchin is one of the few areas of North Hertfordshire to produce many early Saxon finds, including brooches from Charlton village, coins and brooches from Oughton Head, coins from Ickleford, and burials from St. Ippollitts. Together these finds suggest that a number of smaller settlements and farms developed, perhaps from the sixth century A.D. onwards, around early Hitchin.

3.8 The town developed through the Medieval period mainly on the strength of its wool and cereal production, as did many towns in the region. In the sixteenth century it was recorded that *'in the towne is made great store of Malt'* (Norden 1903 19). Norden was actually writing in the latter part of the sixteenth century while his work was republished at the beginning of this century by the East Hertfordshire Archaeological Society. Norden was also able to report that Hitchin had a famous corn market since the thirteenth century, with which the Portmill

was connected. In later centuries tanning was a significant industry, for example the Russells site in Bancroft, with its related activity, fell-mongering, for example in Portmill Lane. Malting and brewing continued to be of great importance right through to the twentieth century.

3.9 Post-medieval market activity in addition has included potatoes, peppermint and lavender (VCH 1912 3 3). Another historian noted that there were some 35 acres devoted to the growing of lavender and that *'when the plant is in flower, afford an odour as delightful as can well be imagined'* (Anon 1880 202). The lavender crop was then distilled by one of two firms, Messrs. Perks and Llewelyn and Messrs. W. Ransom and Son.

3.10 Archaeological excavations in Portmill Lane and by The Biggin have produced evidence of Romano-British occupation, and observations have produced a scatter of Roman material from around the town, including half a quern (hand-mill) stone from the Bancroft (NHDC 402), a scatter of pottery from St. Andrews Hill, a military helmet in Colchester museum that may have come from somewhere in Hitchin, as well as a quantity of coins recovered all round the area. A Roman settlement in the form of farmsteads, as suggested above, would appear to be also supported by the recovery of a Romano-British cemetery from a site on the western outskirts of Hitchin at Foxholes (NHDC 408-10 and 417); although no occupation site has been located there yet the presence of the cemetery indicates that a settlement must be close by.

3.11 Equally, the so far very limited archaeological work around Hitchin has not identified the exact location or extent of the Saxon settlement of *'Hicca''Hicche''Hiz'*. Individual objects have been recovered from the area of the town: from a gravel pit a sixth century hanging bowl with decorated enamelled es-

Early/Middle Saxon Hitchin

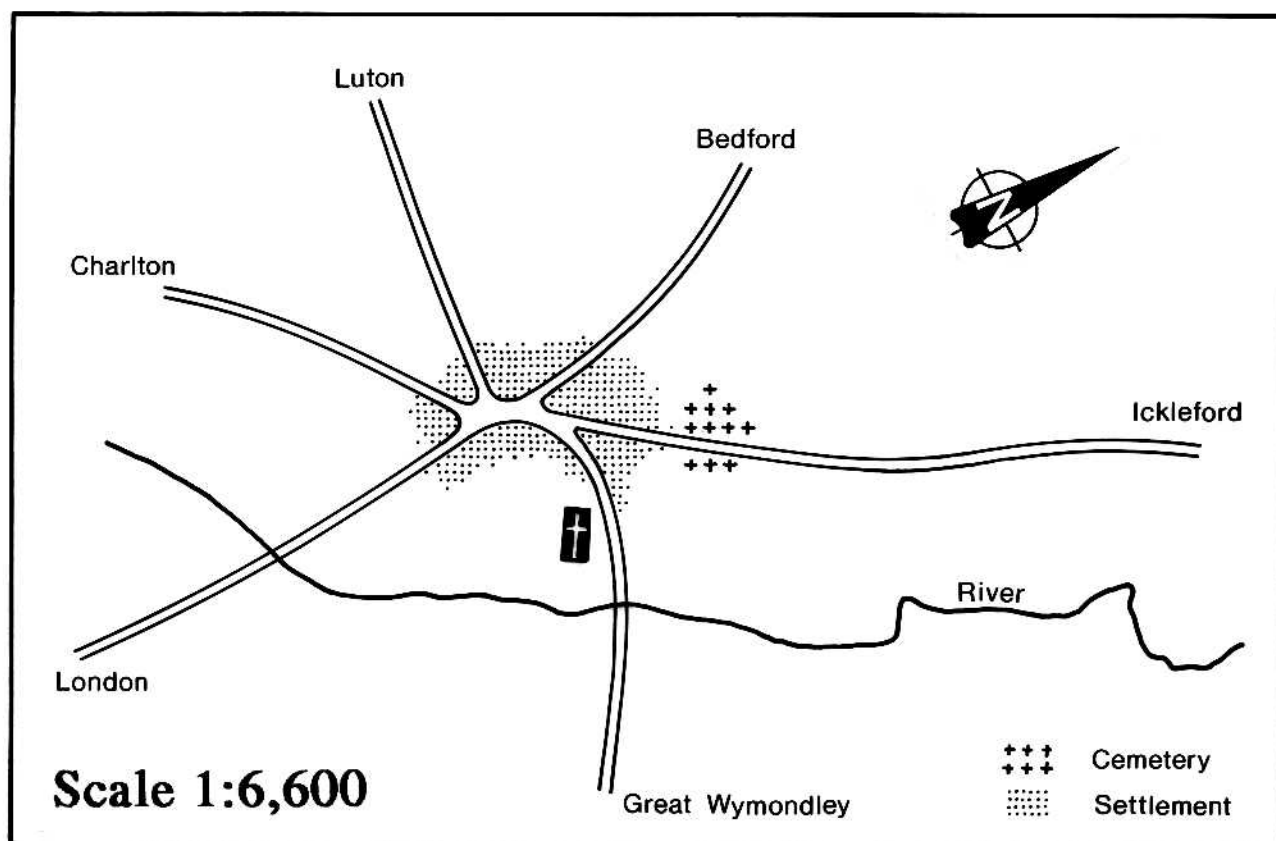


Figure 3

Late Saxon Hitchin

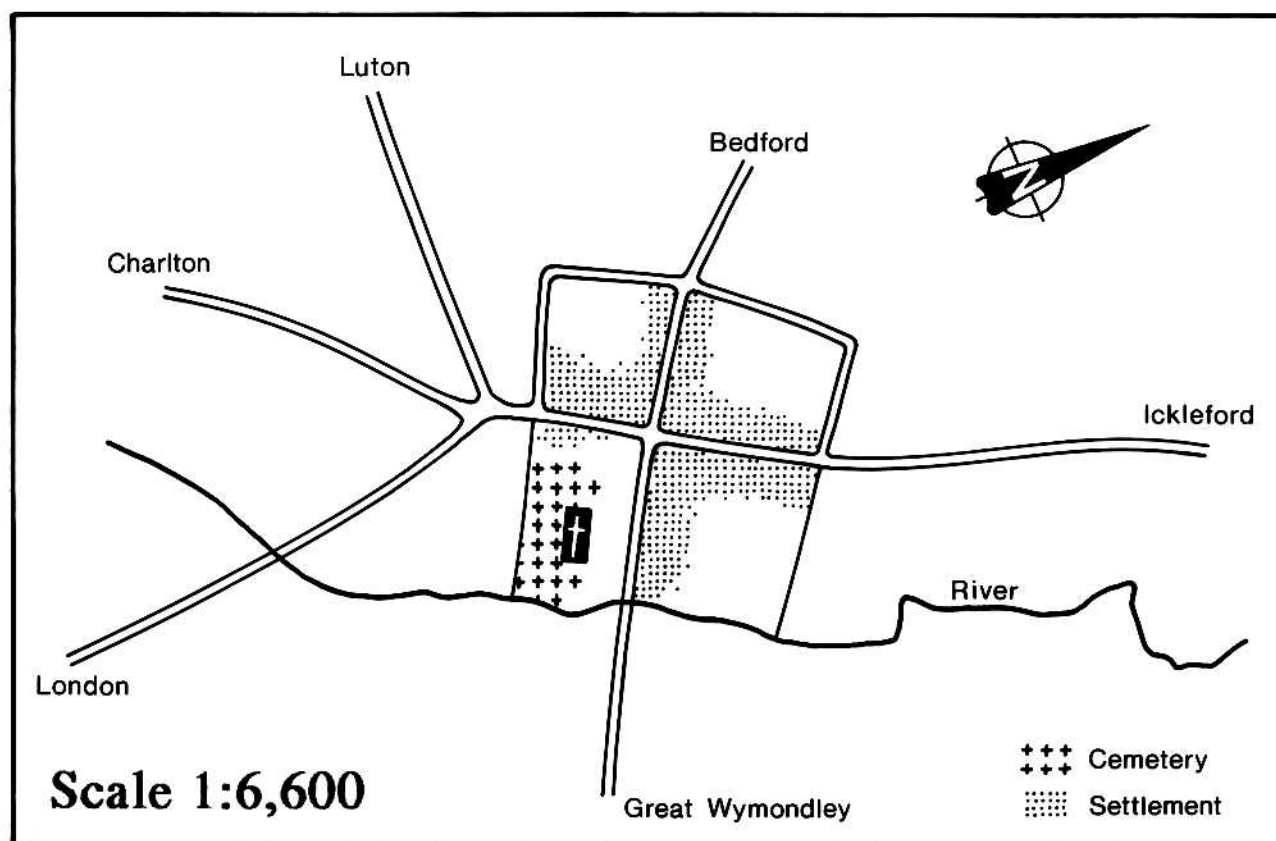


Figure 4

cutcheons (NHDC 436); from the former site of St. Andrews School, now the market, a decorated gilt silver pin of the ninth century (NHDC 437); a pottery vessel from a garden in Gaping Lane (NHDC 438); seven ninth century pennies (NHDC 441); a spear-head from another gravel pit (NHDC 442); a Winchester-type horse-shoe (NHDC 443); and from a garden on the south-western outskirts of the town, a late Saxon gold finger-ring inset with a

Roman intaglio (NHDC 1021). The northern limit of an early to mid-Saxon settlement may be indicated by the position of an inhumation cemetery which is known from chance finds over the past one hundred years to lie buried under the junction of Brand Street, High Street and Bancroft. It is however possible that this cemetery may instead date from the Late Roman period.

Topographical

3.12 The topography of the town has never before been evaluated to assist the understanding of Saxon Hitchin, or even of the Medieval town. Masked by the Medieval town plan it would appear that there is in fact some evidence to suggest that it may be possible to attempt to define the later Saxon town. Indeed, before the preparation of this report the possibility of a planned Late Saxon town of Hitchin had not been considered.

3.13 Many towns in late Saxon England were planned, especially those under direct royal control, but mostly with security being the prime motivating factor, and trade being an important second. Towns such as Wareham in Dorset and Wallingford in Oxfordshire are examples where a town plan was set out on one side of a river at its crossing point and in the form of a square, but unlike these examples, Late Saxon Hitchin did not have a mint. Figure 3 is a hypothetical projection of a possible lay-out of earlier Saxon Hitchin, with a settlement centred about the junction of several regional and local roads on the west side of the river Hiz.

3.14 The hypothetically possible Late Saxon 'new' town, it is suggested, was located partly to the north of the pre-existing settlement (Figure 4), including an area where the possibly early Saxon inhumation burials have been disturbed during modern construction; a date suggested by the fact that later burials

would have been associated with the church and not some distance from it. The two lengths of road, Payne's Park and Grammar School Walk, that extend for c.130m south and north respectively from the west end of Brand Street, appear right through to the earliest maps of Hitchin in the seventeenth century. They appear to lead nowhere except for linking with certain alleys that connect the above roads with the main north-south market streets of the Medieval town plan: West Alley to the south and the northern alley which was in line with the later Hermitage Road to its east, this alley having been lost since the Middle Ages.

3.15 The two short road lengths mentioned above, it is suggested, may indicate the western side, with the western half of the northern and southern limit represented by the two alleyways to define the possible square town plan. The hypothesis suggests that the Bedford Road was re-routed to pass through the new lay-out. The western half of the road length being later called Pound Lane, now Brand Street, while the eastern side would have continued the line to cross the river and join with the Great Wymondley/Stevenage road to the east. The square of the new town would have also been crossed by the north-south road from Charlton to Ickleford, on the line of the later Bancroft and High Street, with the latter bordering the southeastern quadrant containing the Minster church erected by King Offa in the late eighth

century.

3.16 The final northeastern quadrant is not so easily definable with the area being affected by the later importance of a crossing on the line of Portmill Lane. The river crossing for the possible Late Saxon Hitchin, it is proposed, might have been slightly to the south of Portmill Lane, in direct line with Brand Street. The subsequent re-location to the north, along Portmill Lane, probably occurred when the early Medieval town was set out, and possibly as part of a requirement on behalf of the church for more space for its graveyard.

3.17 It is possible that the market activity for the late Saxon town continued in the same area as the older settlement, at the junction of roads on the southern side of the 'new' town area. However, once the minster church was in operation, from the ninth century onwards, control of the market may have been dominated by the church authorities. There remains a possibility that Offa's church was not the first ecclesiastical foundation in Hitchin. This is stated only because the end of the eighth century seems a rather late date for the construction of the first Christian place of worship in a settlement like Hitchin, which may have existed since the late sixth or early seventh century.

3.18 Hitchin was not a military centre either in the Saxon period or later with a castle. Nevertheless, it was an important regional centre under direct royal control. The village of Charlton was possibly established to provide the town with serfs. The name means 'tun' or farm of the free peasants, and such names of villages are often found in close proximity to an ancient royal estate which is the suggestion for Hitchin (Friel 1982 14).

3.19 To the north of Hitchin is Bedford, with a Medieval castle, and to the south, Hertford, also with a castle. Both towns were established in the Saxon period as defended 'burhs' with military roles, and with supporting territory being later defined to support each of these centres. Bedfordshire was probably established

in the early 10th century with Hertfordshire slightly earlier (Friel 1982 8). Hitchin, being on the boundary of the two counties, it clearly played an important role, but not a military one. It may therefore prove to be that the proposed Late Saxon planned town also dates from this period. It is perhaps of interest that even in the mid-twelfth century Anarchy period, motte and bailey castles were erected at Pirton and Great Wymondley, but not at Hitchin itself.

3.20 The hypothesis of a Late Saxon planned town has yet to be tested archaeologically, but most such settlements incorporated an outer limit of bank and ditch inside of which were perimeter roads for access. This possibility might help to indicate where such buried earthworks may be found today.

3.21 The street plan indicates that the historic core of Hitchin as seen today is in essence that of an early Medieval planned town. Following the Norman Conquest there developed the desire to re-order many of the major settlements. Some were led by the construction of military sites and/or by the redevelopment of church buildings. However, the majority of English towns, and some large villages, e.g. Pirton, were re-arranged around the importance of the market place (Platt 1979 33), although at Pirton the castle was a major factor too. In Hitchin it is probable that a combination of royal authority and church interest was the main persuader to expand the market place and re-plan the town layout for the benefit of the burgesses.

3.22 The plans employed for setting down the early Medieval market towns were devised according to local conditions and therefore varied in form. Some new towns set out wide double markets or very long, wide market streets, such as at Baldock and Royston, both planted towns of the mid-twelfth century. Other older centres such as Old Sarum recreated themselves on new sites, in this case becoming Salisbury in the early thirteenth century; and in the process created an open

square within a grid of streets. Hitchin consisted of a single market area created by the setting out of a wide street parallel to the river with the parish church situated between the two. It is virtually certain that the church is on the same site as its Saxon predecessor but the earliest settlement need not have been as close to the river.

3.23 The basic form of the Medieval town is a 'T' plan with the market area forming the stem (Figure 5). The road from London that crossed the river before extending away towards Luton, formed the head of the 'T'. It may therefore possibly be that the early Saxon settlement was in the area of the 'Y' junction of the roads which was not reflected in the resultant Medieval layout. Quite often the courses of roads were diverted to force traffic through the market areas. At Hitchin it is possible that the road from London approached on a much straighter line than today, crossed the river to pass through the settlement to meet with the road from Bedford and the road from Charlton some 130m north-east of the Medieval junction. If the postulated layout is pursued, then the old Bedford road may have passed through the area of the proposed re-development.

3.24 The date of the setting out of the Medieval town is not recorded, and no excavation to date has elucidated this aspect of Hitchin's history. However, a date around 1100 is a strong possibility. As elsewhere, building encroachment within the open space of the wide market street, with temporary stalls gradually becoming permanent buildings, probably began as early as the fourteenth century, despite what the Victoria County History may state, even though the earliest surviving documented record of continuous tenure is not until 1470 (VCH 3 3).

3.25 Baldock was a new foundation in the middle of the same century and so Hitchin, being an earlier but re-modelled town, probably of the post-Conquest period, was at a more 'developed' stage. As stated above, it is probable that part of the early Medieval

planning of the town included the moving of the river crossing north thereby destroying the lay-out symmetry of the Saxon town. Often in the layout of the town quadrants, there were sub-divisions with the opportunity for the 'back' plots to be developed at a later date. The location of Port Mill Lane may therefore be simply the Medieval upgrading of a pre-existing alley through one such back plot division. The actual position of the north-south through road was consumed by the creation of the wide classic 'cigar' shaped market street, as was the form deployed at Royston. Until that time the market was possibly held on the edge of town to the south, maybe on the site of the possible Early Saxon town market (as stated above).

3.26 The widening of the north-south road for the enclosed market was probably in an eastern direction, indicated by the detail of the property line along the western side of the market area, and would have destroyed the earlier southern entrance to the town. An entrance that would have seen the coming together of the London, Charlton and Luton roads, and which also in the early Saxon period may have included the Bedford road before it was diverted to run through the new Saxon site via Brand Street. Old Park Road is probably a Medieval invention as a consequence of the growing significance of Tilehouse Street.

3.27 The foundation of the Carmelite Priory in 1317 (VCH 1912 3 12), beyond the southern end of the market (Figure 6), was a new dimension for the town coming some two hundred years after the probable date of Hitchin becoming a borough. Even though its date indicates that it did not influence the layout of the town, it is clear that the town plan influenced the siting of the Priory, and maybe that of the mill to its west which may have been founded or rebuilt at about the same time.

3.28 Founded by John Blomvill, Adam Rouse and John Cobham the Priory foundation lasted only some two hundred years until the reign of

Early Medieval Hitchin

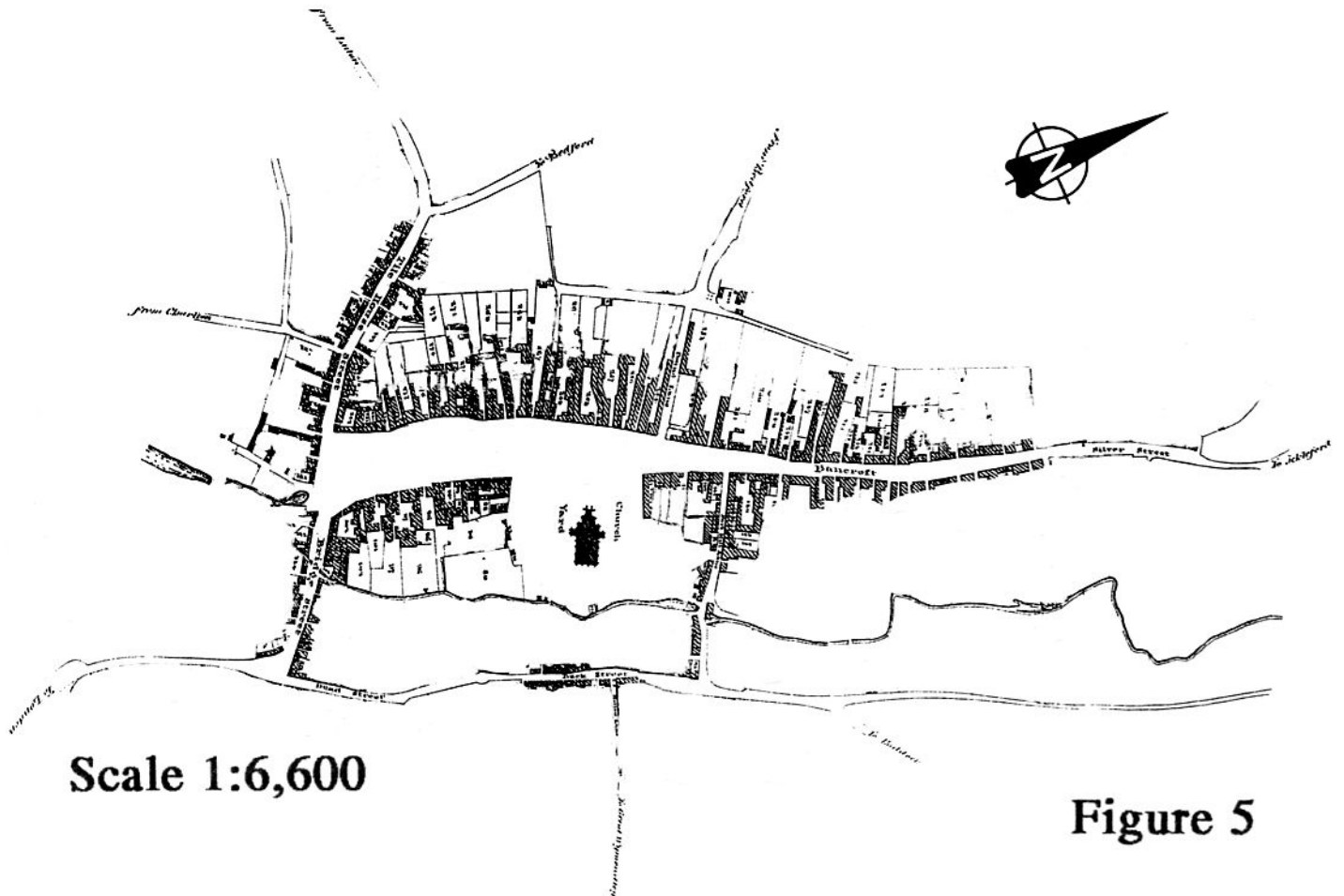


Figure 5

Early 19th century Hitchin

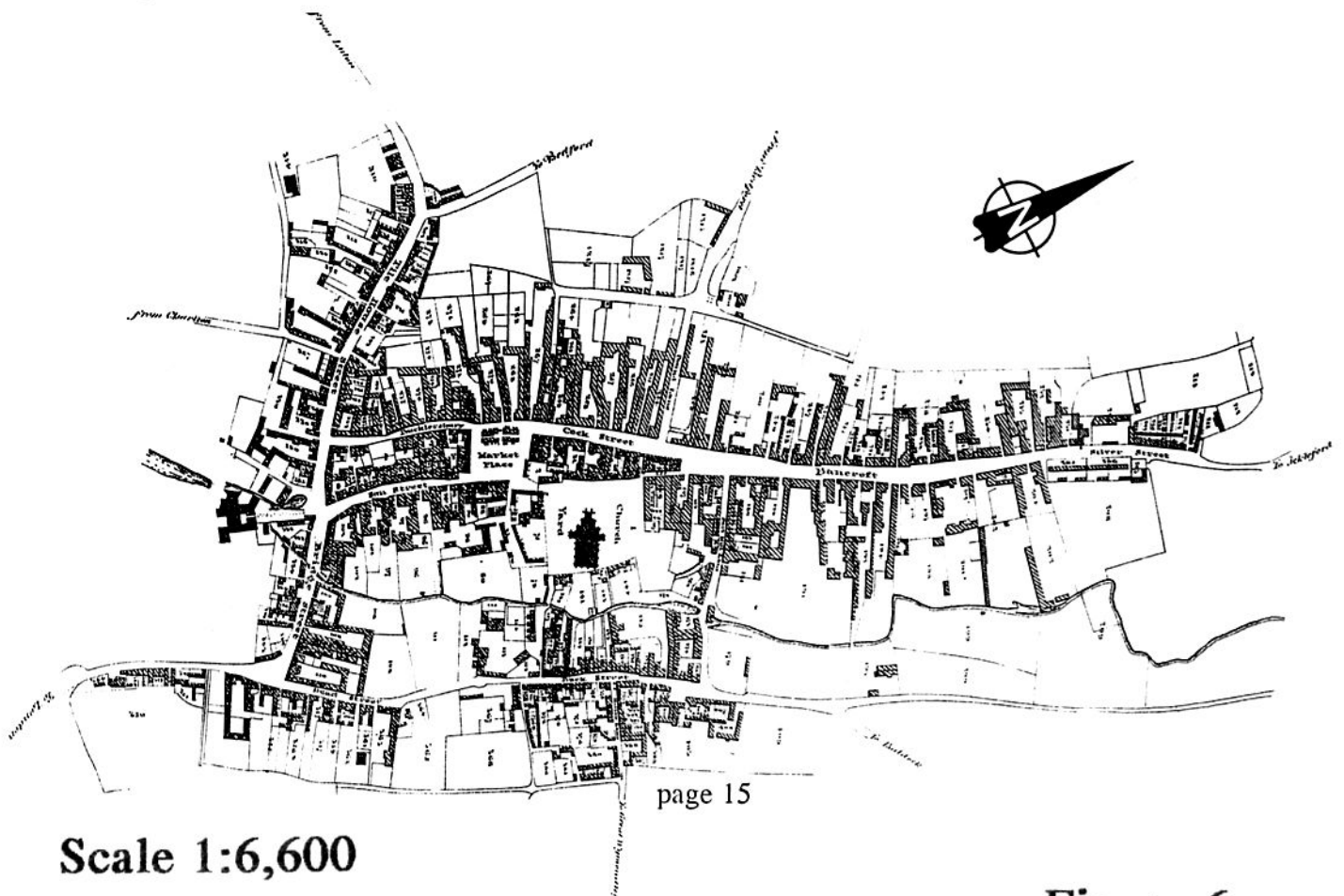


Figure 6

Henry VIII; at the dissolution of the monasteries in 1538 the site passed to the Radcliffe family (Chauncy 1826 166). The creation of the Priory came too late to affect the street lay-out of the town which was soon seeing the market area infilled with permanent shops and other buildings, so creating 'islands' in the centre of the widest part of the market street. By the seventeenth century even the surviving square Market Place was becoming filled with buildings on its west side. These were demolished in the nineteenth century (Figure 6). The moving of the Corn Market to the new Corn Exchange in 1853 was part of a town plan to clear the surviving square of buildings, so that by 1857 the task was complete.

3.29 Thus, it may be seen that over the centuries Hitchin's development is a dynamic one, with Saxon, Medieval, and post-Medieval inhabitants stamping their identity upon the town that we can see and enjoy today.

4 The Development Area

4.1 The area of the proposed development covers an approximate 19,500sq metres (1.29 hectares), occupying a large portion of the town centre site to the immediate west of Bucklersbury, Market Place and High Street. Only the Arcade area brings the development into direct contact with the shopping street frontage. The development area also includes a portion of Payne's Park road to the north, but does not extend as far as Brand Street to the north and Tilehouse Street to the south.

4.2 The solid geology consists of Lower Chalk with a deep drift covering of Fluvio-Glacial deposits, i.e. sand, clayey silt and gravel of the Anglian phase of the Quaternary period. Along the southern side of Brand Street and parallel to the road is an underground water channel within a deposit of clay, sand and gravel, that

may have been open during the Palaeolithic period (James *pers. comm.*). This may possibly explain the occurrence of the flint tools from the vicinity. The surface of the land slopes gently down from west to east while rising extremely slightly from south to north.

4.3 The area includes many extant structures of which Listed Buildings 98 and 245 are within the area of proposed development, along with the rear of number 56 High Street, Listing 99 (Figure 17). Listing a building imposes a range of planning constraints not afforded to other structures. The boundary of the Hitchin Town Centre passes through the site parallel to and mid way between Bucklersbury/High Street and Payne's Park. The defined boundary of the Archaeological Area 142 runs along the line of Payne's Park (NHDC Local Plan 2).

Topographical Study

The seventeenth century

4.4 The earliest map of Hitchin that has come to light is held at Hitchin Museum (Figure 7). The cartographer is unknown as is the true date. The staff at the museum suggest 1750 while the Hertfordshire County Record Office indicate an early eighteenth century date. It is the authors' belief that such a date is probably wide of the truth. Apart from the style, the map shows areas of open land where Drapentier's map of c.1690 published in Chauncy's County History in 1826, shows additional building as well as industrial structures. The historical survey of the county by Chauncy was not published for a century and a quarter after its completion, with it being suggested traditionally that the date of the accompanying map is 1700, the same as the originally printed manuscript (Hine 1 16). Even though the

completion of Chauncy's work was that date, the map is likely to have been drawn before the turn of the century, i.e. 1680-99, and we are therefore suggesting a date circa 1690 (Figure 9).

4.5 If the possible date is accepted, then the first map may be about fifty years earlier, and therefore dating to about 1630-40. Stylistically the map is similar to many early-mid seventeenth century maps, for example, the Lannock Manor estate plan that covers the parish of Weston in Hertfordshire. This dates to 1633 which possibly supports our dating of the earliest known map of Hitchin.

4.6 Further examination of this map since the above was written has revealed the depiction on it of the Free School which was erected in

1641 (VCH 3, 5), but the absence of the first Baptist Chapel in Tilehouse Street which was erected in 1692 (Urwick 1884, 646), proves that the map must be seventeenth century, and must date to between c.1642 and 1692. For the reasons discussed above a date c.1650 would seem probable. Unfortunately, Drapentier's map for Chauncy's book does not cover the area of the Baptist Chapel so there is no help in that respect to refine its date.

4.7 The possibly c.1650 map is orientated with north to the top and to a scale of about seven chains to the inch or 11.5 inches to the mile. As was the common practice for the period, the buildings are depicted in two and three dimensions with an attempt to squeeze the structures into the required length of road. As a consequence of such an approach, the accuracy can not be considered in the same terms as that applied to an Ordnance Survey plan. However, the sequence would be reasonably accurate with much detail that is invaluable to the topographer. The relevant portion of the map has been enlarged to double the scale to show the structures within the area of concern (Figure 8). No street names are annotated on the map although it is self evident as to their identity.

4.8 Starting with Brand Street, there is no development along its northern side except for the western end where the Town Hall now stands, while at the corner with Bancroft there are some trees and a fence line. The latter would have been sited over part of the cemetery which is possibly related to the early Saxon settlement. The southern side of the road consists of a small building at the western end on the corner of what is now Payne's Park. From the building the frontage is represented by a wall before the occurrence of further buildings. A row of street fronting buildings is shown, with at the western end, a building that projects back into the land strip at the rear to meet with another row of buildings set parallel to the first that are also connected at the eastern end by the buildings fronting the High Street of today.

4.9 Comparing the same area with that depicted on Drapentier's map from the latter part of the same century (Figure 10), the northern side of Brand Street, then called Pound Lane, can be seen to have been totally in-filled except for the very western limit, with the corner with Bancroft seeing also much back development. On the south side, the previous stretch represented by a wall gave way to new building to complete the frontage along most of the length of Pound Lane except for again the western limit.

4.10 The c.1650 map illustrates that the length of the High Street, the west side of the market square and Bucklersbury consisted of continuous building with, every so often, a projection run west at right angles to the frontage to indicate secondary building by this date. Of course one would expect, although maybe less densely, such back-yard ancillary buildings for crafts and stables, etc., from the Medieval period as well. Also Tilehouse Street had by this date been totally in filled along the length of the frontages, with larger properties that had undeveloped land plots to the rear. The western end of the street was marked by the setting for the Free School building and its grounds, constructed in 1641 (VCH 3 5). Towards the end of the seventeenth century the whole back-land of the corner in the angle between Bucklersbury and Tilehouse Street had been totally infilled, not just with houses and probably workshops, but also industrial buildings as depicted by two tall chimneys on Drapentier's map.

4.11 Tilehouse Street is so named because of the tile and pottery kilns in the area, to which the two structures depicted may be related. We certainly know that there were pottery kilns in the vicinity by the fourteenth century since pits filled with 'wasters' have been found at the junction of Tilehouse Street with Payne's Park (North Herts. Museum Records and Turner-Rugg, forthcoming). '*Tylehousestret*' is recorded from at least the fifteenth century (Gover et al.,9). '*John le Tilere*' is recorded in the 1323 Lay Subsidy Roll, and '*Philip Potter*'

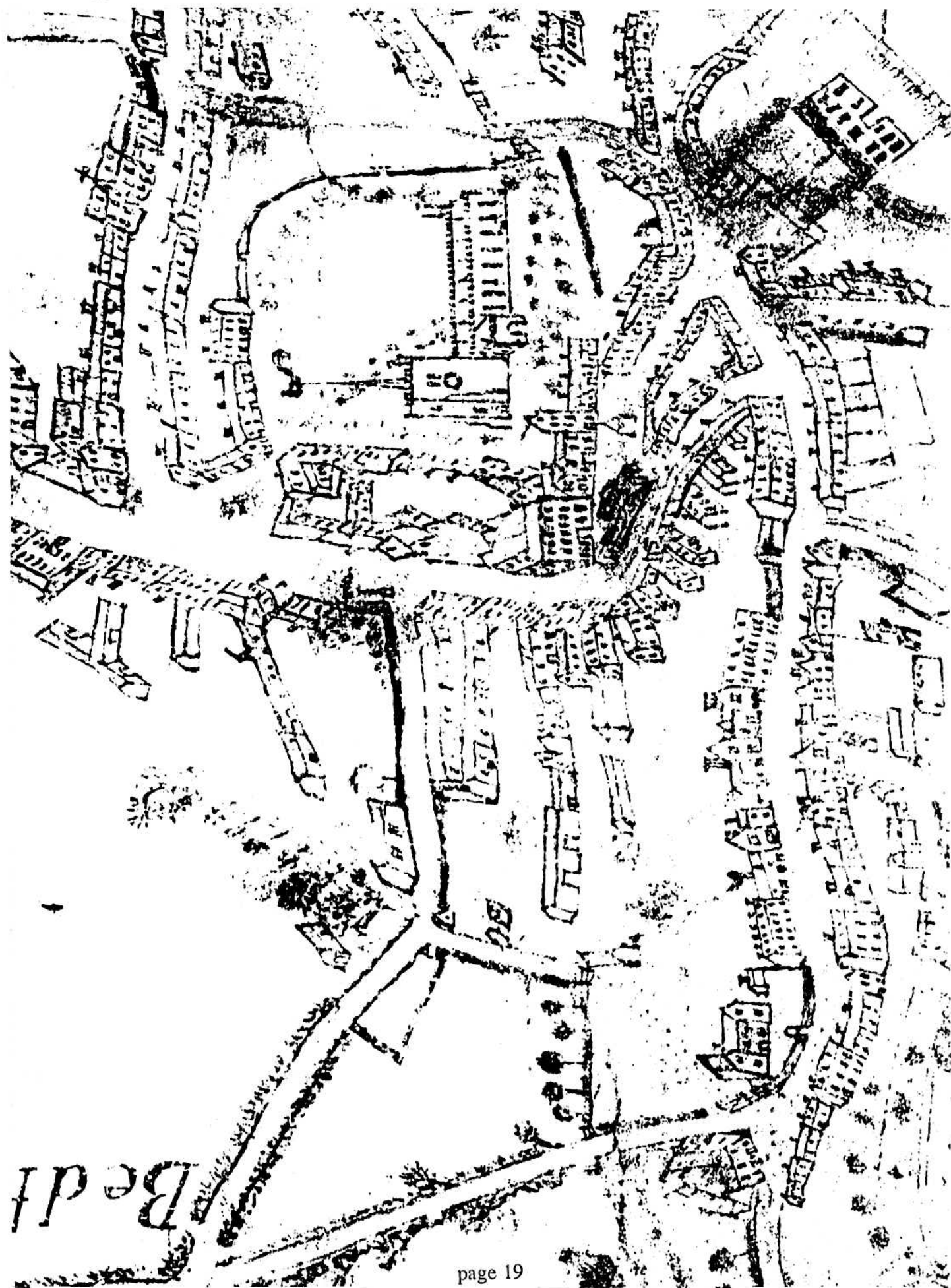
Segment of c.1650 map of Hitchin



Scale 1:5,544

Figure 7

Enlargement of Development Area from c. 1650 map



in the 1492/3 Feet of Fines. The Victoria County History records the fact that Brickearth is found at Hitchin, and that there were probably tileworks here in Medieval times. There were certainly brickworks in the 19th century and probably long before (VCH 3 5).

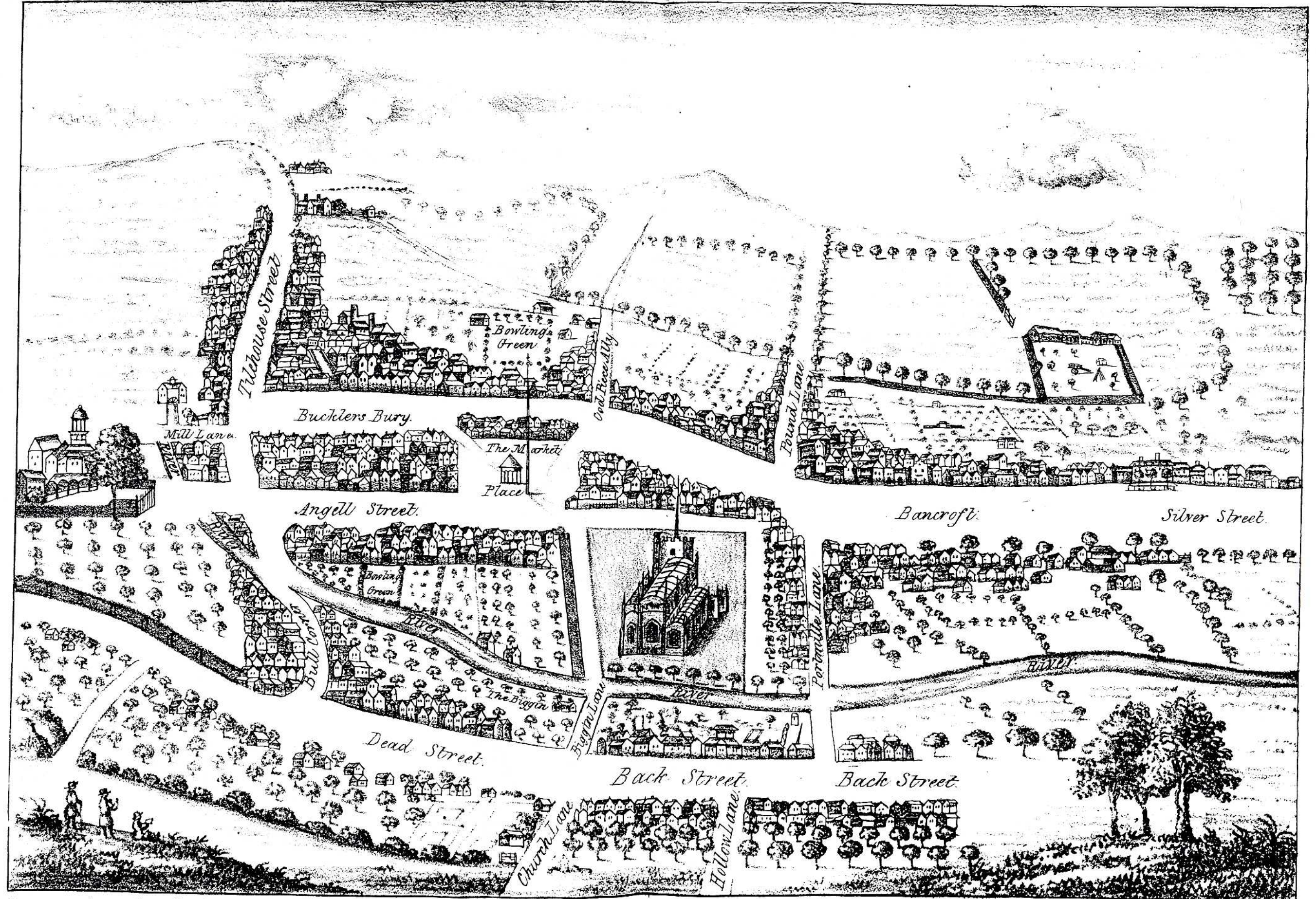
4.12 On the c.1650 map, the line of Payne's Park coming off Bedford Road only existed originally as far as West Alley, formerly known as Cod Piece Ally. At that point the track terminated at a field gate, beyond which was a single building that may also be the building depicted in the same position on Drapentier's map to the immediate west of the bowling green. There is no historical evidence to suggest that this road ran through to Tilehouse Street before the end of the seventeenth century. The bowling green mentioned appears only on the Drapentier map in an area that on the earlier plan was represented by a long single shed or stable on open land at the rear of a property block fronting the market street.

4.13 No alley is shown on the earlier map but

there is a substantial range of out-buildings, including possible stabling sheds, on the line that may correlate with Cod Piece Ally, now West Alley. Clearly the alley was a major access route from a very early date as demonstrated by its exaggerated width on the Drapentier map.

4.14 One other building appears to have been lost between the dates of the two maps in the area of interest. On the eastern side, mid-way along the line of the old Payne's Park road, between Cod Piece Ally and Pound Lane, was a single building set at right angles to the road without any indication of out-buildings. The area on Drapentier's map is represented by open land with field property plots behind the buildings to a line of trees that marked the position of the old road not named on Drapentier's map. Clearly, for whatever reason, the area saw both development and clearance to demonstrate that towns are constantly evolving entities that are always responding to changing needs.

Perspective map of Hitchin, c.1690 THE TOWN OF HITCHIN.



Drawn on Stone from his Original Engravings by C. L. Pyle.

Figure 9

Enlargement of Development Area from c. 1690 map

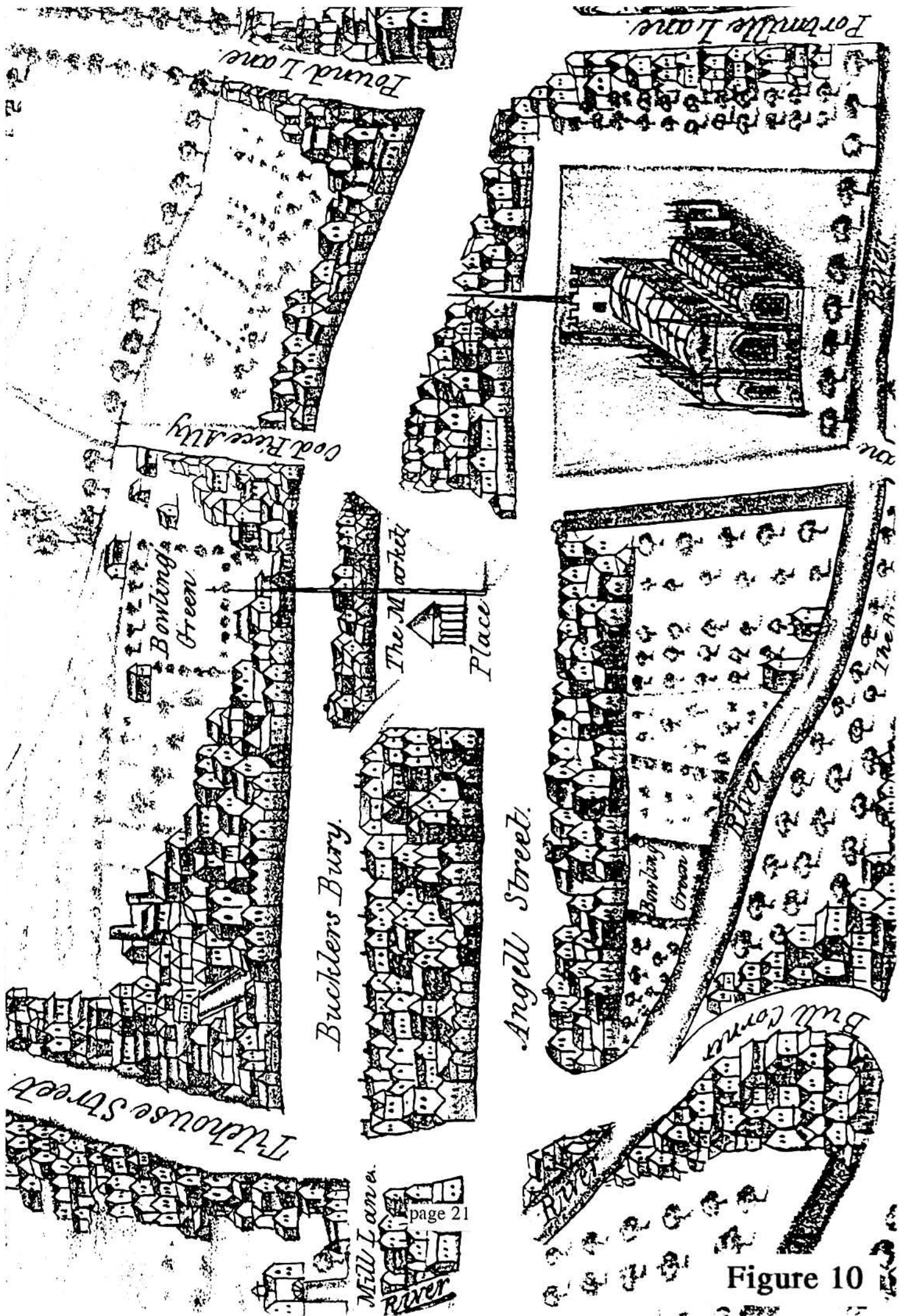


Figure 10

1818

4.15 Unfortunately the whole of the eighteenth century is silent in respect of detailed maps of Hitchin, other than the over-simplified plans that appear on the small-scale county maps of the period. It is not until the early years of the nineteenth century that cartographic information enables a continuation of the study of the town's development to be made (Figure 11).

4.16 It can be seen at a glance that much has occurred over the previous century with much back-development, probably along earlier property boundaries (Figures 11 and 12). The angle between Bucklersbury and Tile House Street is as congested with buildings as it had been towards the end of the seventeenth century. However the two buildings with industrial chimneys apparently have gone by this date, having possibly been in the area of land plot 274.

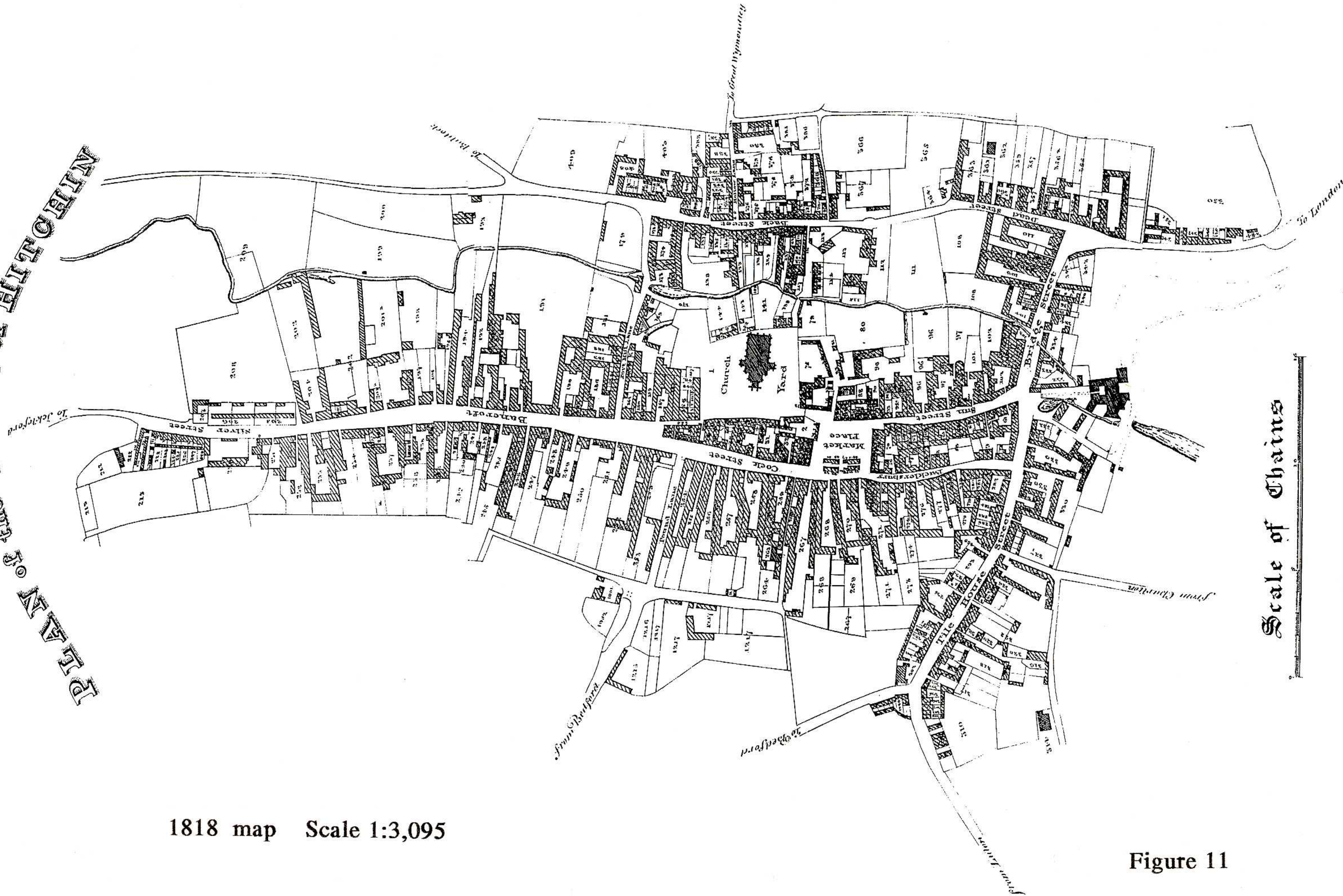
4.17 The greatest change occurred further north with development extending westward from the market frontage represented by Bucklersbury, the Market Place and Cock Street, now the High Street. The bowling green has disappeared under the development of yards and ancillary buildings, many of which were probably related to the numerous inns that fronted the market. The former position of the bowling green was probably represented by the land to the south of footpath and plot number 268, the parcel of land to its south, plot number 269, and the next plot to the south again. The map clearly demonstrates that property boundaries were being greatly extended westward during the eighteenth century as demand for land increased.

4.18 The building at the southern end of the original limit of the old Payne's Park road

would appear to have existed still in 1818, then at the western end of a courtyard for The Swan inn, which was sited facing the junction of the Market Place with Cock Street. Its measured proportions and its true position being planned, indicates that both the earlier maps were accurate in that regard. The site of the building approximately mid-way along the east side of the old Payne's Park road between Cod Piece Ally and Pound Lane that appeared to have gone by the time of Drapentier's map, in 1818 is being occupied by another, unless the Drapentier map had simply omitted the detail at that point. Pound Lane at the western end was still showing as open ground, but now with buildings on the west side of the Payne's Park road close to the junction of Pound Lane and the Bedford road. At the junction of the roads was located the Pound represented on the 1818 map by four dots, probably posts, from which the name of the road to the east was named. Many towns and villages had pounds of one form or another into which stray animals and occasionally people were placed, particularly over night before a decision was taken to resolve the problem come the morning.

4.19 Cod Piece Ally at this time is now almost totally developed along both sides of the path from which additional back plots could be accessed to stimulate further building particularly to the north. Indeed much of the open back land between Cod Piece Ally and Pound Lane was by this date developed. Not surprisingly, with the exception of a few buildings discussed above, the development was biased towards the eastern side of the site and the market area.

TOWN of HITCHIN



1818 map Scale 1:3,095

Figure 11

1851

4.20 The next plan in the sequence was produced by the Ordnance Survey and for the first time truly accurate plan details can be relied upon, with detail extending to the layout of the gardens that adorned the remaining open back plots at this time (Figure 13). Although the accuracy of measurement of the 1818 map is itself extremely good compared with the seventeenth century maps.

4.21 By comparing the 1851 map with that for 1818, it can be seen that some of the gardens have been generated at the expense of some of the smaller plots. Many of the gardens are accompanied by small buildings, probably garden sheds of some description. Many names are now given to the various yards that by this date have become enclosed by back development. The yard for The Cock now occupied the whole length of the land plot, as did that for The Swan. The latter yard ran right to the house, now called Alfred Cottages, that has been identified on the previous maps at the southern end of the old Payne's Park road; which was by 1851 called West Street.

4.22 Between 1818 and 1851 a house to the north of the cottages was built with a small enclosed garden to the rear. This structure is now Payne's Park House, Listed Building 276, which has been circumvented by the proposed development. West Lane, now Payne's Park, can be seen projecting southwest to the junction of the Luton and Bedford roads, across the land to the rear of the Free School, creating two areas. The eastern was divided into small gardens, while the western provided land onto which a large single house was built that was later to become the home of Hitchin Museum.

4.23 Apart from West Lane appearing there are two other changes of name: Pound Lane has become Brand Street and Cod Piece Alley is referred to as Post Office Alley. The 1851 map also for the first time shows the position of two other but unnamed alley ways. The first alley is mid-way between the yard of The Cock and Brand Street between two strips of extensive back development, no doubt aided by the presence of the alley to afford access. The other alley ran between the two properties, The Swan and Whittings Yard before cutting across a garden to reach a gate set into the back wall. The rear boundary is in itself a prominent feature being common to the properties extending south from Whittings Yard to Parcell's Yard. By comparing the position of the wall with that indicated on the 1818 map, it can be seen that the earlier map was slightly, inaccurate having distorted the line of the boundary, which had the effect of foreshortening the length of the land plots to its east.

4.24 The other main details to be observed between the 1851 and 1818 maps is the disappearance of two sets of buildings within the remaining space of the market square, and the construction of the Town Hall towards the western end of the south side of Brand Street.

4.25 The overall impression gained from a study of the map is the indication of how much space was still open with many of the gardens no doubt growing lavender bushes with their attendant perfume to fill the air. The distillers Messrs. Perks and Llewelyn operated from the buildings around the yard to the immediate north of The Cock, where Woolworths is now.

1881

4.26 The second edition of the Ordnance Survey amended the earlier map and also added the occasional useful indication of the use to which buildings were being put (Figure 14).

4.27 The main change between this map and its previous, was the rapid infilling that must have occurred in the space of thirty years, with many of the gardens disappearing under new development. The biggest single change was the demolition of The Red Lion and the construction of the Corn Exchange, with a large iron foundry to its west. To the north of the ironworks, the gardens gave way to additional buildings and yards; probably part of the industrial complex that was reached by an access road from West Lane laid over part of the yard of The Swan to the immediate south of the Alfred Cottages. The creation of the access road also resulted in the construction of a new building, mid-way along yard of The Swan, which totally cut off the front half of the yard from the rest of the traditional land plot. That now became a yard area for the

Alfred Cottages and the buildings along the southern side of the Post Office Alley at its western end, with access gained from between the two sets of buildings from West Lane.

4.28 As per the earlier map, the only malting buildings indicated flanked Whiting's Yard despite the fact that there must have been many more such buildings within the area. In the same way, the only granary identified is along the southern side of the yard that lies immediately north of The Cock yard. The building also appears on the 1818 map having probably been constructed during the late eighteenth century, between which runs the unnamed alley discussed above.

4.29 The other main changes within the area is the building on the corner of Brand Street and West Lane to the immediate west of the Town Hall to complete the street frontage along the southern side of Brand Street, and the removal of the remaining two blocks of buildings within the remaining open area of the Market Place.



1881 Area of Development

Scale 1:1,250

Figure 14

1981

4.30 The final map to be used for this Desktop Assessment is the current Ordnance Survey map which by coincidence was revised exactly one hundred years after the second edition was produced (Figure 15).

4.31 The open aspect to the rear of the market street frontage properties which appeared in a diminishing form from map to map through time has by 1981 all but disappeared. The gardens that had survived in 1881 have been, if not built over, at least covered in a layer of concrete and Tarmac. With many of the properties becoming offices and shops, car parking became a priority, although the late Victorian cattle market in the town operated into the 1960s.

4.32 Apart from minor additional buildings, the main changes have occurred in the central area of the proposed development. Across the central area from West Lane, now called

Payne's Park, to Cock Street, now High Street, the entire block was demolished. Alfred Cottages gave way to the widening of the Payne's Park road, while the buildings that flanked the northern side of its yard area were removed along with the entire suite of buildings that formed The Swan Inn. In its place was designed and constructed an arcade with the yard area behind now used as a public car park. The range of buildings including the granary north of The Cock have given way to a retail store with roof car parking, while the gardens to the south of the ironworks along with part of the industrial area is now part of a builders yard, stores and shops.

4.33 Apart from West Lane now being Payne's Park, Post Office Alley has changed its name for a second time to West Alley, possibly occurring at a time when Payne's Park was still called West Lane.

Archaeological Study

4.34 The proposed area of development is divided approximately into two equal parts on a north-south orientation by the western limit of the Local Authority's town centre area. The boundary that defines the Archaeological Area No. 142 lies further to the west and thus includes the whole development area (as stated above). The appropriate attendant Local Plan Policies are defined in Appendix 1 within this report (Figure 16).

Palaeolithic

4.35 In the area to the rear of the properties on the south side of Brand Street have been found a number of flint tools dating to the Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age) period, c.10,000 to 5,000 bc. It is therefore possible that further individual items possibly relating to a flint working area may occur within the area of proposed development. The location appears

on the Sites and Monuments record from Hertfordshire County Council as no. 282. The additional reference number on Hertfordshire County Council's map, 1214, is a miss plot and not relevant for the area under discussion.

Roman

4.36 From an area just within the northern limit of the proposed development area is the site for the recovery of Roman pottery, SMR number 1419. The record for the material is brief, stating only that '*pottery and other evidence of occupation*' was found.

4.37 When The Red Lion Inn was demolished in 1853 to make way for the Corn Exchange, on one part of the site which is not located precisely, but which would place it on the eastern edge of the proposed development area, two fragments of sculpted alabaster were recovered incorporated within the foundations

of the old inn. The two halves fit together to present part of a classical mythological frieze (see cover illustration).

4.38 The central element of the scene is of a horse and chariot facing right. The sculpture is clear enough for detail of the wheel and the structure of the chariot frame to be studied. The horse has a decorated harness and a plaited mane. Five figures are represented. The right hand figure stands behind the horse but is looking left to the main figure in the chariot. The figure's right arm is flexed with the hand possibly holding a torch or the arm of another person who has all but been broken away, but who would have stood behind the horse's head, which is also missing. The figure is wearing a cloak over an arm length shirt, and also has a large wing protruding from the right shoulder blade with traces of another wing behind the left shoulder, suggesting that it is almost certainly a winged Victory. The middle figure in the group may be either in the chariot or directly behind. He too is looking left to the rear, but this character, who could be an emperor, is wearing a cloth cap as well as a cloak fastened centrally over the chest with a circular brooch. The next character is to his right and again stands either in the chariot or behind. The person, who is certainly female, is looking forward in the direction of the previous two characters, and is dressed in a flowing toga, partly covered by a cloak that is looped over both arms and over her head, which has an elaborate hair-style. Her right foot is also visible, stood upon the rear floor of the chariot. The fifth and final figure in the group is possibly a Roman soldier in uniform. He is apparently wearing a thonged leather jerkin with short sleeves over a long shirt; over all was a full flowing cloak fastened at the nape of the neck by two disc brooches linked by a double chain.

4.39 The scene is bordered by a decorative frame top and bottom together representing a building with the group moving through on a road surface. The upper border contains stylistic patterning to represent the roof with tiles,

the masonry wall of the building may be seen behind the figures, with the base depicting the cobbled road surface. The lower border has alternately a single flower head and a human face, each separated by classical column.

4.40 Hitchin not having a museum in 1853, the object remained in private hands until 1939 when A. M. Lucas, of a well-known local family who were long associated with Hitchin, donated it to the new museum. We now know, as a result of the present study, that this archaeological object is actually one of the most important items to have been recovered from the North Hertfordshire District. It appears to have escaped the attention it deserves before because it has previously been incorrectly identified; it thus escaped detailed examination and listing on Hertfordshire's SMR. The stone is 390mm long, 310mm high and a maximum of 55mm thick, with the division between the two halves running from top right to just above bottom left. The frieze has two natural edges; the top and the left sides. It is not clear if the stone is from a sarcophagus, a funerary casket, or from a building, but the former is most likely. The style of the sculpture has in the past been interpreted as Etruscan, and thus it was assumed to be a relatively modern collector's loss, but as a result of our study we now know that this is wrong.

4.41 We have drawn the sculpture and sent a copy of the drawing for identification to the Museum of Classical Archaeology in the University of Cambridge. Dr. Henry Hurst, the curator and a leading classical archaeologist, has kindly re-interpreted the object for us, with the help of the assistant curator, John Donaldson. They have identified the iconography as either a Victory scene or an Apotheosis; Dr. Hurst favours the latter. They have dated the style to the Imperial Roman period, probably early to mid third century A.D. Dr. Hurst also says the style is that of the Eastern Empire, possibly from Asia Minor, the province of Phrygia in modern Turkey (Hurst and Donaldson, *pers. comm.*).

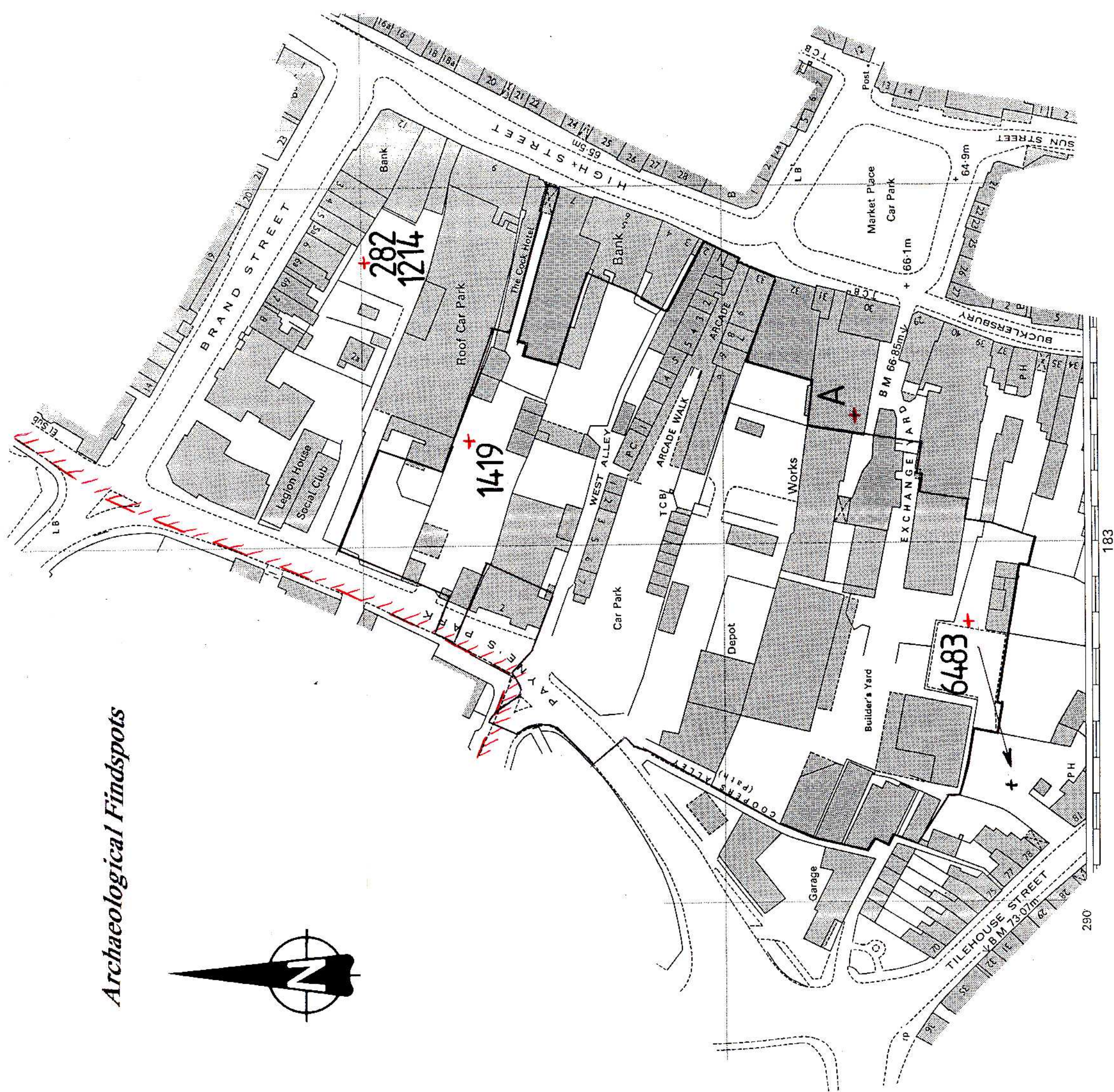
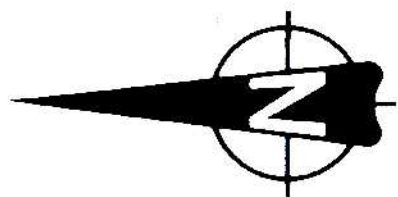


1981 Area of Development

Scale 1:1,250

Figure 15

Archaeological Findspots



Boundary for
'Archaeological Area'

Scale 1:1,250

Figure 16

4.42 In view of the circumstances of discovery, in the foundations of a pre-seventeenth century building, the stone is much more likely to have arrived in Britain during the Roman period than to be a post-Medieval collector's loss. Collectors of classical antiquities from Mediterranean countries were not really active before the eighteenth century, and in Turkey it would be unusual even in the nineteenth century. Difficulties of access and the Muslim regime would have made it almost impossible at an earlier date. Besides, even if the object was a collector's piece, why did it get used as building material soon after it was collected with such difficulty? The conclusion must almost certainly be that the sculpture dates from the Roman occupation of Britain, was found somewhere in the local vicinity, and was reused as building material during the construction of the Red Lion Inn.

4.43 Both the use of marble for the stone and the iconography make this find an extremely rare discovery for Britain. Our research so far has revealed no other example in Britain, although marble sarcophagi are not so unusual from Roman Gaul (France), and are more common in Italy itself of course. An Apotheosis scene was sometimes sculpted on a Roman sarcophagus, but only for the very wealthy and important. The scene depicts, in the case of an emperor his deification; however, in other cases the symbolism was a glorification of the deceased - an elaborate final farewell.

4.44 The fact that the style is Eastern, one of the figures wears a Phrygian cap, only adds to the rarity of the object. The source of the marble is yet to be established, but it may have been imported to Britain as raw material. On the other hand, it may have been imported as a finished item or, if not, the sculptor may have come from the Eastern Empire; itinerant craftsmen are not unknown at the time, after all, communications were very good for the period. This object clearly requires further

research.

4.45 The implication for the proposed development is that there may be an important Roman site in the vicinity; even without the sculpture, there is other evidence of Romano-British occupation within the development area. Also, while the Market Place was being re-furnished in 1993, there were local rumours of Roman coins being found by nocturnal treasure hunters using metal detectors. This evidence must be investigated prior to the development proceeding.

Saxon

4.46 As stated above, on the north-east corner of Brand Street, and under the junction with Bancroft, there is conclusive evidence of an old burial ground; possibly early Saxon or late Roman in date. However, no burials or other Saxon remains have to date been recorded any closer to the proposed development area. Nevertheless, the location of the development area makes it probable that evidence of the Saxon settlement of Hitchin will be discovered during an appropriate archaeological investigation.

Medieval

4.47 No Medieval archaeological material has to date been recovered from the area of the proposed development, reflecting the past lack of investigational activity within the area and Hitchin at large. However, in view of the position of the site, where we know there were Medieval outbuildings for a number of purposes, yards, storage and refuse areas, it is a virtual certainty that, if archaeological deposits survive, evidence of buildings, activities, boundaries, etc. of the period will be found. In addition, there is a possibility of finding remains, such as kilns, relating to the Medieval pottery and tile-making industry which we know was operating in the area.

Post-Medieval

4.48 In 1983 a watching brief was exercised on an area just beyond the southern limit of the proposed development that has been duly recorded on the County's SMR as number 6483; but mis-plotted on their record map, and corrected on ours (Figure 17). The entry for the detail is as follows:

'Observations carried out during machine stripping of the site of a proposed car park to the rear of the Coopers Arms public house revealed a substantial amount of 19th and 20th century building debris, remains of a paved and cobbled surface, a building/demolition horizon probably earlier than the 18th century and a mortar bonded garden/boundary wall. No artefactual material was recovered anywhere off the site that was earlier than the 18th century'.

4.49 However it must be remembered that the laying of a car park would not have involved an excavation of any depth to possibly disturb earlier material. In fact it is probable that the excavation fortunately only reached the uppermost archaeological levels, and that considerably more deposits survive below. It is likely that the Cooper's Arms Inn was originally the Tylers' guildhall. It dates from the fifteenth century and may have been of courtyard plan (RCHM 1910 121). If so, archaeological evidence of this may lie buried beneath the car park.

4.50 In the early 1960s when Woolworths was being built, a pit containing a group of mid-eighteenth century domestic rubbish was recorded. The artefacts comprised pottery and china, glass bottles and wine glasses, and clay tobacco pipes, amongst other material. The material presumably came from one of the

properties on the High Street frontage, and indicates a certain affluence. At about the same time, another rubbish pit was found during some building works at the back of Brookers premises. This material, which comprised similar types of artefacts, may be dated to the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

4.51 The above discoveries clearly show that post-Medieval archaeological remains will survive on parts of the site. They are of interest, even though they are of relatively recent date, since the surviving maps and documentary evidence leave many gaps in our understanding and knowledge of Hitchin's history which archaeology can help to expand.

Buildings

4.52 Standing structures have not been investigated as part of this Desktop Assessment, report other than detailing Listed Buildings that are recorded for the area (Figure 17), as well as the buildings depicted on the various maps. This is because of the basic need to collate readily available material rather than conducting documentary research in addition to an on site survey, an aspect recognised by its absence from the *Project Design* for this Desktop report.

4.53 Apart from the portion of the rear of property number 56, High Street, Listing 99, there are two Grade II properties, numbers 1 and 2 High Street, Listings 98 and 245, within the proposed development area that are Listed. Listed building 98 is 16th or early 17th century which has been refaced in the late 18th or early 19th century; while Listing 245 was built in the 19th century. Four buildings in the area of Arcade Walk were until the mid 1980's Listed as Grade III, Listings 262-5. With the demise of the Grade III category, the local Listings have been dropped (Appendices 1 and 3).



Figure 17

5 Discussion

5.1 As mentioned in the previous section, the known archaeology from the site of the proposed development is fairly minimal. However, the fact that the site is in the historic centre of Hitchin, and the topographical study, coupled with the little that is known from the archaeological information so far recorded, indicate the considerable potential for the site.

Prehistoric Periods

5.2 The recovery of Palaeolithic flints from the south side of Brand Street, the evidence of pre-Roman Iron Age occupation in Portmill Lane, and Romano-British occupation at several points around the town centre, together with the fact that the site is in a geographically desirable location for ancient settlement, all combine to raise the possibility of archaeological evidence for prehistoric occupation surviving within the development area.

Historical Periods

5.3 The occurrence of Roman pottery and other occupational material from the site itself, if put with the singular discovery of the third century A.D. Roman marble frieze, may indicate that further occupational material of the Romano-British period from the area could be expected. Discoveries of that period would probably have little or no bearing upon the later Medieval burgrave plots as they have been portrayed through the various early maps that cover the area of the development proposal.

5.4 The possibility of evidence for the Early Saxon settlement of Hitchin appearing within the site is a distinct one. The possibility of a Late Saxon planned town is a new theory that has yet to be tested. The area of the develop-

ment will afford such an opportunity. If the northern half of Payne's Park along with West Alley indicate the possible inner limit of the boundary defining the south-west corner of the edge of the supposed planned town, then the possible bank and ditch would lie just beyond. If a boundary existed then it would cut across the centre of the site from west to east in the vicinity of Arcade Walk or to its immediate south. In addition to the possible planned town limits, the early history of some of the major land divisions may still survive as buried archaeological deposits, as may Saxon structures.

5.5 The advent of the re-planned town in the early Middle Ages would be the next main

horizon of detail that could be recognised archaeologically within the area. The earliest map available dates to a period some 500 years or more after such a major change. Therefore there is much that can be gained from archaeology to indicate as to how, having been reorganised, the town plan developed into the form that was then recorded in the seventeenth century. Archaeological information may also be available to indicate the uses to which the various buildings and burgage plots were put, to illuminate part of the character, enterprise and economy of the town for the various periods of its history.

Archaeological Potential

5.6 At the time of preparing this report, no test pits have been cut or boreholes sunk, to provide possible data to indicate the potential depth to the archaeological deposits that will occur to some extent across the whole site. Nor has there been a survey to locate any cellars of existing or former buildings within the proposed area. Such a survey would indicate possible areas that may have destroyed the earlier material, as well as possibly providing a glimpse of the likely surviving adjacent archaeology.

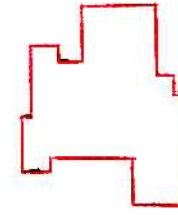
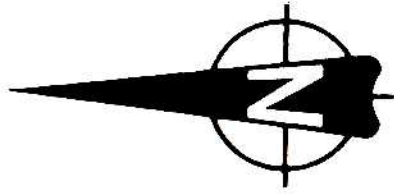
5.7 Historic urban sites have demonstrated time and again that rather than clear away an accumulation of material, any new development was often built on top of old foundations, so that archaeological deposits can be well in excess of a metre in depth. It was the practice in the Saxon and Medieval periods to dump both domestic and industrial rubbish in pits within the respective back plots of building land. This means that the archaeologically excavated material can easily be related to specific activities occurring within a given building or group of buildings. The more the material accumulates, the better protected from future disturbance are the earlier occupation levels.

5.8 Roads are also subject to a similar process with new surfaces being laid one on top of the other. Work in November and December 1993 within the area of the adjacent Market Place, by members of the Field Archaeology Section of North Hertfordshire District Council, hand excavated a few archaeologically controlled square holes in advance of tree planting. These revealed a minimum of eight surfaces to a depth of over a metre, representing road and market surfaces from the Late Medieval and Post-Medieval periods. In Oxford, for example, sections across roads have been cut and observed archaeologically, and also shown that layers of road surfaces can represent over a metre of deposits (Platt 1979 60). The same processes, or similar, can operate on building plots and their associated yards, providing a considerable depth of archaeological stratigraphy.

5.9 Combining the available details from the series of maps included with this report, a composite plan can be produced to indicate those areas within the development that are not likely to have seen standing structures during the past 300 years (Figure 18). The resultant plan indicates that in total there is a sizable area that has not been developed in recent centuries. This does not preclude the possibi-



*Areas within Development
without known structures*



Open areas during past 300 years =

Scale 1:1,250

Figure 18

lity of earlier Medieval structures, or Saxon, Romano-British, or Prehistoric occupation on those areas. Within these areas disturbance of earlier archaeological deposits should be minimal; with the areas where there have been structures causing variable interference, but mostly of archaeological interest anyway. However, as stated above, the frequency and location of possible cellars within the area has yet to be determined, although it is considered that such occurrences will prove minimal. The majority of cellars will be along the Market Place frontage, and in any event, ancient cellars will be of archaeological interest.

Diagrammatic section of positive terracing

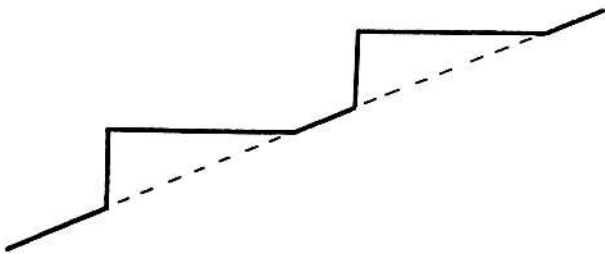


Figure 19

Diagrammatic section of negative terracing

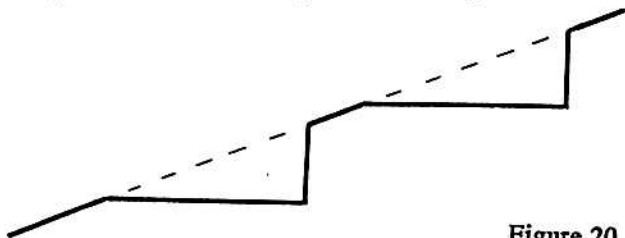


Figure 20

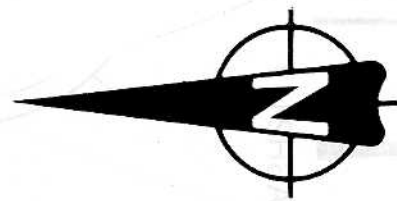
5.10 Several visits have been made to the site during which the ground level has been observed to slope from a high level at Payne's Park road on the west side of the development down a gradual slope to the east, where it meets Market Place and High Street. It would appear that where buildings have been constructed on the slope of the back plots, many of the foundations were built out from the slope rather than terraced into the western

higher ground, positive terracing (Figure 19). The conclusion from this observation is that less archaeological disturbance would have occurred than if the foundations had been terraced into the slope, i.e. negative terracing, as demonstrated in Figure 20.

5.11 The 1851 map included, amongst other detail, a range of spot heights across the area of the development to enable a comparison to be made with spot heights taken in 1991 by Lovell Developments Ltd (Figure 21). The combination of the two sets of heights indicate that over most of the area there has been no appreciable change to the ground level. The biggest difference would appear to occur mid-way along West Alley where spot height 20 indicates the ground level has been reduced by about 30cm. Even such a difference is minor when compared to the likely depth of archaeological stratigraphy that probably exists within the area.

5.12 The inescapable conclusion is that the area represented has very significant archaeological potential, with the possibility of it providing for the first time considerable information regarding the foundation of the early Medieval market town and its later development, as well as information about the preceding Saxon Hitchin. There is in addition the possibility of clarifying the nature of the Romano-British and Prehistoric settlements along this part of the valley of the Hiz. This opportunity should not be missed.

*SpotHeights within Development Area:
1851 and 1991*



Scale 1:1,250

Blue number = 1851

Red number = 1991

Figure 21

6 Recommendations

Survey

1 Documentary

No written documents were consulted other than secondary sources for the compilation of this report. It is therefore an unknown quantity as to the extent of available primary material that is likely to be relevant for the area to provide an historical structure in support of any potential archaeological information. However, it is known that Hitchin Museum houses a collection of historical manuscripts mainly relating to the post-Medieval town, some of which may be relevant to the present development site. In addition, the County Record Office may contain useful documents, as may the Public Record Office and British Library. Another potentially useful source of Medieval and later documents is the private collection held by Messrs. Hawkins, Russell and Jones, a local firm of solicitors who can trace their history back to the sixteenth century. Some of their manuscript material is in the County Record Office.

Recommended:

An historical researcher be empowered to assess the relevant source material before being commissioned to undertake a study which will also include an interpretation in terms of the development area, its buildings, both former and present, property areas and their associated uses and boundaries. Such a study should be undertaken at the earliest opportunity. If there is to be an archaeological field evaluation, or larger scale excavations, then the period of time when the associated reports are in preparation would be the appropriate time for such a study.

2 Standing Structures

Many earlier buildings in the area of the affected back plots of the proposed development have been demolished already, with others in a semi-derelict state. Some presently standing buildings will be removed for the purposes of the redevelopment programme.

It is also noted that due to the time-scale for the desktop assessment, no historic photographs have been included. However, Hitchin Museum has an extensive collection of historic photographs, some of which may be relevant to buildings on this site.

Recommend:

- A Before any alterations are made to any buildings or walls or other above ground structures, a full photographic survey should be undertaken, both externally and to include an internal assessment for possible details that would be worthy of recording. The survey may also require measured drawings to be produced to aid the interpretation of the history of individual structures.*
- B An historic photographic survey be undertaken to add the time dimension to the proposed photographic survey of the area as it currently exists. Such a survey should compliment the documentary research and therefore may best be conducted by the historian.*

- C *Any Listed buildings that are to be included within the final agreed development boundary, will require detailed agreement concerning their future with the appropriate Local and National agencies that would thereby be involved.*

3 Archaeology

Apart from the sparse records of quite varied archaeological material from within or close to the proposed development area, as yet there has been no field test of the real archaeological potential.

Recommend:

- A *Geophysical survey may be employed to assist in the identification of certain areas where there is at present open ground, although it is considered that such a contribution will be limited. However, ground probing radar may be best used to identify possible former cellars that are currently within open areas so that the distribution of any archaeological test trenches can be maximised. Ground radar was successfully utilised to locate in-filled and abandoned cellars in Market Place in 1993.*
- B *In order to evaluate the unknown but potential archaeology of the site, it is recommended that a series of test trenches are dug archaeologically to elucidate the true potential. This must be done to a Brief to be prepared by the NHDC planning advisory archaeologist. The archaeological organisation which does the field evaluation will produce an evaluation report afterwards which the Council's archaeologist will use to assess whether further archaeological work will be required and of what nature. If any areas are identified that may require more extensive excavation, the NHDC archaeologist will prepare another Brief for the work. All proposed archaeological works will be the subject of negotiation between the developers and the NHDC.*

Summary

6.1 It is also recommended that the documentary and photographic surveys are conducted and reports presented to coincide with that derived from the archaeological test trenches. The best circumstance would be for the historical photographic and documentary research to be undertaken by the same person. The geophysical survey, if commissioned, would need to be undertaken and results available before any test trenches could be considered.

6.2 Hitchin, being an historic town, might be expected to contain a wealth of archaeological and historical information. During the period of this short study, it has been rapidly concluded that the scale and location of the proposed development involves an area that, if investigated, would most likely generate a considerable amount of archaeological and historical information.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Reference Documentation

General Legislative and Advisory documentation

Association of County Archaeological Officers, 1993

Model Briefs and Specifications for Archaeological Assessments and Field Evaluations

DoE, 1985

A Guide to the Legislation on the Listing of Historic Buildings in England

DoE, 1990

Planning Policy Guidance No. 16: Archaeology and Planning

English Heritage, 1990

Developing Frameworks: Policies for our Archaeological Past, 1979-1999

English Heritage, 1991

Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition

English Heritage, 1992

London Region Archaeological Guidance Paper No. 1: Model Brief for an Archaeological Assessment

IFA, 1986

Institute of Field Archaeologists: *Code of Conduct*

IFA, 1993

Institute of Field Archaeologists: *Environmental Assessment and Archaeology*, Occasional Paper, 5

North Hertfordshire District Council,

North Hertfordshire District Local Plan, No.2, July 1993

Local Government Policy - NHDC

Policy 8

Development in Towns. Within the towns of Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth, and Royston, and at North East Stevenage (Policy 4), the Council will meet the majority of the development needs within the District and will normally permit development proposals if the aims of other relevant policies are met.

(HCC Structure Plan Policies 48 and 49)

2.19 As part of the Council's aim to maintain the present pattern of towns and villages in North Hertfordshire, most of the new development up until 1996 will take place in the towns of Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth and Royston and at North East Stevenage. This will protect the rural character of the larger part of North Hertfordshire and will encourage the re-use of urban land to avoid neglect and dereliction. New development and investment are important ways of recycling urban land, and assisting urban regeneration and renewal. This accords with Structure Plan Policy 48 which also refers to the need for schemes to have regard to adjacent land uses and improving efficiency in the use of land rather than to perpetuating the existing or previous use.

Policy 16

Areas of Archaeological Significance and other Archaeological Areas. For Archaeological Areas, the Council may require a preliminary evaluation of any potential archaeological remains before deciding to permit or to refuse development proposals. For Areas of Archaeological Significance, a preliminary evaluation will be required as part of the application for development proposals which could disturb any possible archaeological remains. To assess the archaeological value of specific sites, the Council will seek expert advice. If the site is judged to be nationally important, and the remains should be left undisturbed, the Council

will normally refuse development proposals which adversely affect the site or its setting.

On other sites, the Council may permit development proposals with conditions and/or a formal or informal agreement, depending on the archaeological value, to provide:

- 1 an excavation before development; and/or
- 2 facilities and an agreed period of time for access to the site for an investigation and/or for 'observation' of the groundworks as development progresses by someone appointed by the Council; and/or
- 3 other measures as necessary; and/or
- 4 a contribution from the developer towards the funding of any relevant investigation.

(HCC: Structure Plan Policy 14)

2.33 Historic remains, early settlements and a pattern of ancient routes and Roman roads give the District a particularly rich heritage of known and suspected archaeological areas. Some of the most important sites are scheduled as Ancient Monuments by the Secretary of State for the Environment. These are defined as of National Importance and require his consent for works under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

2.34 Development proposals are potential threats to all early remains. Therefore, the need is to preserve the most important sites and to make as accurate and comprehensive a record as possible of other areas before the remains are destroyed. In this way, the most significant are kept for the benefit of present and future generations while the records of the other areas help build an understanding of the past.

2.35 Recent efforts have brought together developer and archaeological interests, and a

Code of Practice (revised 1988) has been published. A further initiative, in common with many other parts of the county, has been a welcome increase in archaeological investigations in the County. The Council commends these initiatives but wishes to clearly indicate its level of concern about specific areas in North Hertfordshire.

Policy 17

Removal of Permitted Development Rights for Archaeological and Wildlife Sites. In an identified wildlife or archaeological site (Policies 14, 15, and 16), the Council may, in exceptional circumstances, permit development but may control subsequent permitted development which could harm its value.

2.36 If the Council intends to grant planning permission on land which has some archaeological or wildlife interest, future occupiers may exercise their rights of permitted development which does not need planning permission. If the Council considers changes under those rights could destroy or devalue the interest, then this will need protecting by the removal of those rights by a condition on the original planning permission.

Policy 20

Conservation Areas. In Conservation Areas, the Council will only permit proposals which positively preserve and enhance their character and will refuse:

- 1 the demolition of buildings, walls and structures which are important to the visual quality and historic integrity of the Conservation Area, the loss of which would adversely affect its character;
- 2 any development proposal which does not respect and reflect the visual quality of the area because of its design, materials, colour, form, and scale;
- 3 the felling or removal of, or unsympathetic work on, trees which contribute to the visual quality of the area;

- 4 the display of advertisements which are unsympathetic and would not meet the aims of Policy 46; and
- 5 the erection of overhead lines where they would be obtrusive.

2.39 To preserve the character of whole areas of towns and villages rather than individual buildings, the District Council has the duty to define Conservation Areas. New development is not necessarily unacceptable but the Council will apply a 'conservation' approach so that development is in sympathy with the character of the area and positively enhances the environment.

2.40 Conservation Areas have "special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". (s.69, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). They may be centred on listed buildings, pleasant groups of other buildings, open spaces, trees, an historic street pattern, a village green or features of historic or archaeological interest. As a result, within Conservation Areas, there are tighter controls over permitted development rights, advertisements, demolition of unlisted buildings, and work to or felling of trees.

2.41 To properly consider proposals for new buildings in a Conservation Area, the Council will often ask for details to be submitted. These would normally include plans and elevations, together with those of adjacent buildings at the same scale, and samples of materials for proposed buildings. If significant changes to a building are proposed, the drawings should show it as existing and as proposed. The Council will advertise in the local press any proposal which it considers will affect the character of the Conservation Area. Thus, public views will be considered before a decision on the application is made.

Other:

Hitchin is specifically covered within the North Hertfordshire Local District Plan document by section 5.3, pages 53-66.

Appendix 2: Archaeological material - Sites and Monuments Record

0282

Palaeolithic flint implements

Brand Street, Hitchin

NGR: TL 184292

Palaeolithic flint implements, Letchworth Museum; Acc 1495, 1525, 7171, 8050b, 8640, 8642

1214

Well

Churchyard, Hitchin

NGR: TL 184292

During building operations workmen found a well about 25 feet deep at the back of Wendy's Hat Shop in the churchyard, Hitchin. Lined with soft, chalky stone, the well was filled with about 15 feet of water. The curator of Hitchin Museum, G Evans, believes from looking at the photograph that it is an Early Medieval well.

1419

Pottery and other evidence of occupation

Hitchin

NGR: TL 18332917

Pottery and other evidence of occupation. No further information available.

5483

Medieval occupation material

Coopers Arms PH, Hitchin

NGR: TL 18292902

Observations carried out by Mr MJ Daniells (Hertfordshire County Archaeologist), and Mr GR Burleigh (Keeper of Field Archaeology, NHDC), during machine stripping of the site of a proposed car park to the rear of Coopers Arms public house revealed a substantial amount of 19th and 20th century building debris, remains of a paved and cobbled surface, a building/demolition horizon probably earlier than the 18th century and a mortar bonded garden/boundary wall. No material was recovered anywhere off the site that was earlier than the 18th century.

Appendix 3: Standing Structures

A Former Listed Buildings within proposed development area

Five buildings were Listed as Grade III: A non-statutory and now obsolete grade. Grade III buildings were those which, whilst not qualifying for the statutory list, were considered nevertheless to be of some importance. Many of these buildings are now considered to be of special interest by current standards - particularly where they possess "group value" - and are being added to the statutory lists as these are revised (DoE, Listings Branch).

no./grade description

261 III

Circa.1860. Stone and stucco front with parapet. Two storeys. Ground floor has wide entrance and tall shop window with glazed bars. Three Doric Pilasters, wide central one framing doorway with keystone. Frieze and ovolo cornice, end caucuses. First floor Venetian window has pilasters with palm leaf capitals. Rusticated angle piers. Wooden octagonal arcaded lantern with leaf cupola, tall finial and weathervane. Group value.

262 III

Mid 19th century refronting of earlier building in yellow brick with parapet. Two storey, corbelled brick cornice. Modern shop windows to ground and first floors. Second floor has three triple arched sash windows. Tall pilasters with foliated capitals to lower storeys. Group value.

263 III

No description available.

264 III

18th century, altered. Chequered red and grey brick, old tiled roofs with corbelled cornices. Two storeys, wooden shop windows. 15 first floor flush casement windows with glazing bars to east block, ten to west. Group value.

265 III

Part of the same building as No. 33 Market Place. 18th century or earlier. Colour washed brick with some timber framework. Group value.

B Listed Buildings bordering proposed development area

no./grade description

54 II

Monumental rectangular building of stone in the Italian style, erected in mid 19th century by Bellamy. Light rustication; bands at first floor level, two storeys. Massive cornice, developed with simple modillions. Hipped slate roof. Five windows x three windows all in projecting architraves, those on the piano nobile being much taller and embellished with hoods raised by a blank panel above their heads. Massive central entrance porch.

- 58 II
16th century inn of two storeys, considerably altered and almost completely modernised. Narrow facade to street shows a broad carriage-way beside a cross-gable with carved bargeboards jutting out from a steep tiled roof. Tudor label over one of two restored windows. Three storey building in Tudor style has been added on the north in modern times.
- 64 II
15th or 16th century, altered. Two storeys, overhanging upper storey, cross-gable over tall central carriageway, in which the timber construction shows clearly, steep roofs now slated. Ground floor windows all restored; upper floor, 4 windows of modern construction but possibly reproducing original two mullions and transome. The yard behind has half-timbered ranges of buildings with the upper storey overhanging on beam-ends; one section shows a formerly open gallery overhanging on the support of wooden columns. The roofs in the yard are still tiled.
- 82 II
No. 81, which may originally have been the Tylers' Guildhall, now the Cooper's Arms, retains much work of the 15th century: No. 82 appears to be of the 17th century, though it may have been joined to No. 81 at an earlier date. No. 81, which was considerably altered in the 19th century, is of two storeys beneath a hipped tile roof. The ground floor had three three-light mullioned windows beneath four-centred arches, each light headed with cinque-foil stonework. The northern window is now blind, with plaster infilling: the centre window now has sashed casements superimposed between the stone mullions; a door has been cut into the lower half of the southern window. Upper floor plastered, with two 18th century sashed windows. The combined facade of Nos. 81 and 82 is cross-gabled at west and east, with a gabled dormer and pargetted. Two storeys with upper floor oversailing. Two casement windows. Carriageway on right shows the timber construction.
- 84 II
Late Medieval building now two cottages. Timber frame, steeply pitched tiled roof with rebuilt chimney stack. Plaster faced brickwork to front except for upper floor of No.77, which has exposed vertical timbers, plaster infilling.
- 86 II
Mid 18th century range of small two storey houses in chequered red and blue grey bricks. Steeply pitched tiled roof with light moulded wooden eaves. Five sash windows in flush frames. Simple doors, mostly inserted later.
- 94 II
Early 19th century. Two storeys, red brick, flat-pitched square slate roof. Three sash windows. Central doorcase with simple flat Doric pilasters, entablature and cornice enclosing panelled door and fanlight. Boarded eaves. Glazing bars. Modern shops.
- 98 II
16th or early 17th century, refaced late 18th or early 19th century. Timber frame covered by plaster, Welsh slated roof. Three storeys, upper floors each oversailing, 2nd floor brackets. Modern shop fronts, two flush sash windows with glazing bars in moulded frames.

- 99 II
Mid 19th century in Italianate style. Impressive stucco building with careful details. Modillion cornice to hipped Welsh slated roof. Three storeys, quoins, vermiculated ground floor. Three storeys, 2nd floor architrave surrounds, first floor eared architrave surrounds, pediments. Slightly recessed wings. One window on left, two storeys on right.
- 210 II
1860, formerly Library. Stucco, Neoclassical temple form. Pedimented Welsh slated roof. One storey, two Doric pilasters, two tall sash windows. Closed central porch with Doric pilasters. Massive cast iron spearhead railings on right.
- 232 II
16th or 17th century, altered 19th century. Timber frame exposed to first floor with colour washed rough plaster infilling. Steeply pitched Welsh slated roof behind parapet. Two storeys. first floor oversailing. Two canted bay shop windows under frieze and cornice. Gabled back elevation.
- 233 II
Early to mid 19th century. Channelled stucco, Welsh slated roof with eaves cornice. 3 storeys, 4 sash windows with glazing bars in reveals. Modern shop fronts. Included for group value.
- 245 II
19th century stucco front. Three storeys, modillion cornice, plain parapet. Three light sash windows to 2nd floor, 1st floor canted bay with arched sashes. Altered 19th century shop windows. Included for group value.
- 246 II
17th or 18 century, altered. Pargetted front, old tiled roof with modillion cornice. Three storeys. Modern shop fronts. Three windows, first floor lattice casements, second floor sashes with glazing bars.
- 260 II
19th century. Whitewashed brick, hipped Welsh slated roof. Three storeys, 2nd floor band, cornice, quoins. Shop windows, upper floors five sash windows, first floor segmental heads. Included for group value.
- 276 II
Early to mid 19th century. Red brick, hipped Welsh slated roof with wide eaves cornice. Two storeys, projections to front on left and to right of centre, 1:2:1:1 sash windows in reveals under flat arches. Arched panels to ground floor left central and right central windows. Six flush panel door, rectangular fanlight with ornamental glazing bars; fielded panelled reveal, surround of Doric half columns under entablature. Modern estate agents' window inserted.
- 318 II
18th century house. Painted brick, tiled gambrel roof with box dormer and corbelled cornice. Two storeys and attics, 19th century sash window. Door in architrave surround under cut bracketed hood.

Corn Exchange, 1853. Red brick with stucco facade; Welsh slate roofs. Corn Exchange hall built to rear of offices to front. Two-storey facade in Mannerist Classical style. Two large ground-floor windows with glazing bars, are flanked by Tuscan half-columns; central door architrave, with chamfered jambs and projecting keyblock, is set in wide Tuscan pilaster; Tuscan end pilasters to carved brackets flanking plain frieze with egg-and-dart cornice. Rusticated quoin strips to moulded parapet shaped over central Venetian window with margin-light sashes; fielded infill panels. Facade crowned by elaborate timber bell copula. Hall to rear has panelled door with decorative fanlight, and plate glass to glazed clerestorey and lantern. Interior: stick-baluster staircase to front. Vestibule to left of hall lit by glazed dome. Hall has cast-iron columns to lattice girders and springing for wrought-iron roof of c.1895: sickle-girder trusses with semi-circular arched ribs set within upper tier of trusses to lantern. Clock to rear presented in 1853 by farmers attending market.

Appendix 4: Comparative Spot Heights: 1851 and 1991

1851 Spot Heights

	imperial	metric
1	223.1 feet	68.00 metres
2	221.1	67.39
3	227.1	69.22
4	220.3	67.147
5	228.4	69.616
6	224.4	68.397
7	220.2	67.117
8	228.8	69.738
9	224.9	68.549
10	223.3	68.062
11	225.3	68.67
12	221.7	67.57
13	218.1	66.477
14	218.1	66.477

1991 Spot Heights

	metric				
1	65.7 metres	13	67.556	25	67.835
2	66.016	14	68.285	26	68.169
3	66.275	15	69.15	27	68.633
4	65.86	16	69.7	28	69.307
5	66.54	17	66.07	29	69.867
6	66.93	18	66.436	30	70.3
7	67.42	19	67.266	31	66.413
8	68.243	20	67.75	32	67.529
9	69.392	21	68.152	33	67.157
10	70.13	22	69.255	34	69.29
11	70.52	23	69.735	35	67.557
12	66.683	24	70.02	36	68.16

Appendix 5: Hitchin Museum Local Reference Bibliography

- Anon, 1970 *A Brief History of Hitchin Priory*, HCC
- Dargert, L, 1993 *A Walk Around Hitchin*
- Field, R, 1991 *Hitchin: A Pictorial History*
- Fleck, A, 1986 *Hitchin in Camera*
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- _____, 1988 *A Hitchin Century in Camera*
- Poole, H, and Fleck, A, 1976 *Old Hitchin: Potrait of an English Market Town*
- Foster, A M, 1981 *The Book of Hitchin*
- _____, 1987 *Market Town*
- Gadd, P, 1980 *Fifty Years of Change in Hitchin, 1930-1980*
- Gadd, P, and Pigram, R, 1979 *Hitchin Inns and Incidents*
- Hine, R L, 1918 *Hitchin Priory 1317 - 1539*

The above reference list is not comprehensive but is provided as a reflection of the range of published material available.

Appendix 6: Documents consulted but not used

Record Office, Hertford

64353 1741

Hitchin

Copy of survey of Hitchin, ledger only.

A copy of a survey of Hitchin in the County of Hertford made by John Davis.

D/EWs P14 mid 18th century

A survey of Burford Field Season in the Parish of Hitchin. No surveyor.

Unspecified acreage northwest of Hitchin, bounded by Dunstable Road, Bedford Road, and Oughton River.

60988 circa. 1770

Hitchin

A plan of the lower Shot in Park Piece to Sew the New Baulk between Henry Carter Esq. and Mr R. Tristram. Surveyor unknown.

D/EHa P1 1771

Hitchin, Holwell, Ickleford, Pirton, Shillington.

A plan of the Manor and Parish of Ickleford and the lands in the adjoining Parishes of Hitchin and Pirton belonging to Rev'd Thomas Whitehurst. Surveyed by T. Bateman

D/ER P11 1777

Hitchin

No title, surveyor or date.

Acreage unstated in southwest of Hitchin being fields beside Windmill Lane. Names of landowners. Postmill drawn in perspective view.

58868 5th June 1782

Hitchin

No title. Surveyed by W. Clark

Northwest of Hitchin showing landowners, footpaths, Gaping Hill, Free school land and Pound west end of Brand Street (street not shown).

D/ER P1 1798

Hitchin - Preston Hamlet

Map showing Mr John Browns land in Hillgrove field. Surveyed by Thomas Times. Land belonging to Radcliffe and Mr John Brown.

ACC 2070 late 18th century

Hitchin

Untitled plan, probably a traced copy only. No surveyor. South and east of Hitchin bounded on three sides by Back Street, Stevenage Road and Ippollitts Brook and extending in east to Purwell Mill.

58869 circa.1800

Hitchin

Plan of Estate in Parish of Hitchin belonging to William Wilshere. Surveyor unknown.

D/EWs P15 1806

Hitchin

Several fields in Parish of Hitchin occupied by William Wilshere. No surveyor. Unspecified acreage in north-east of Hitchin, lying east of Verulam and Highbury Road

Hitchin Museum

Parish map of Hitchin with the hamlets of Preston, Langley and Walsworth, Hertfordshire. Surveyed 1844 by J. Bailey for Anthoney Jackson, Apportioners.