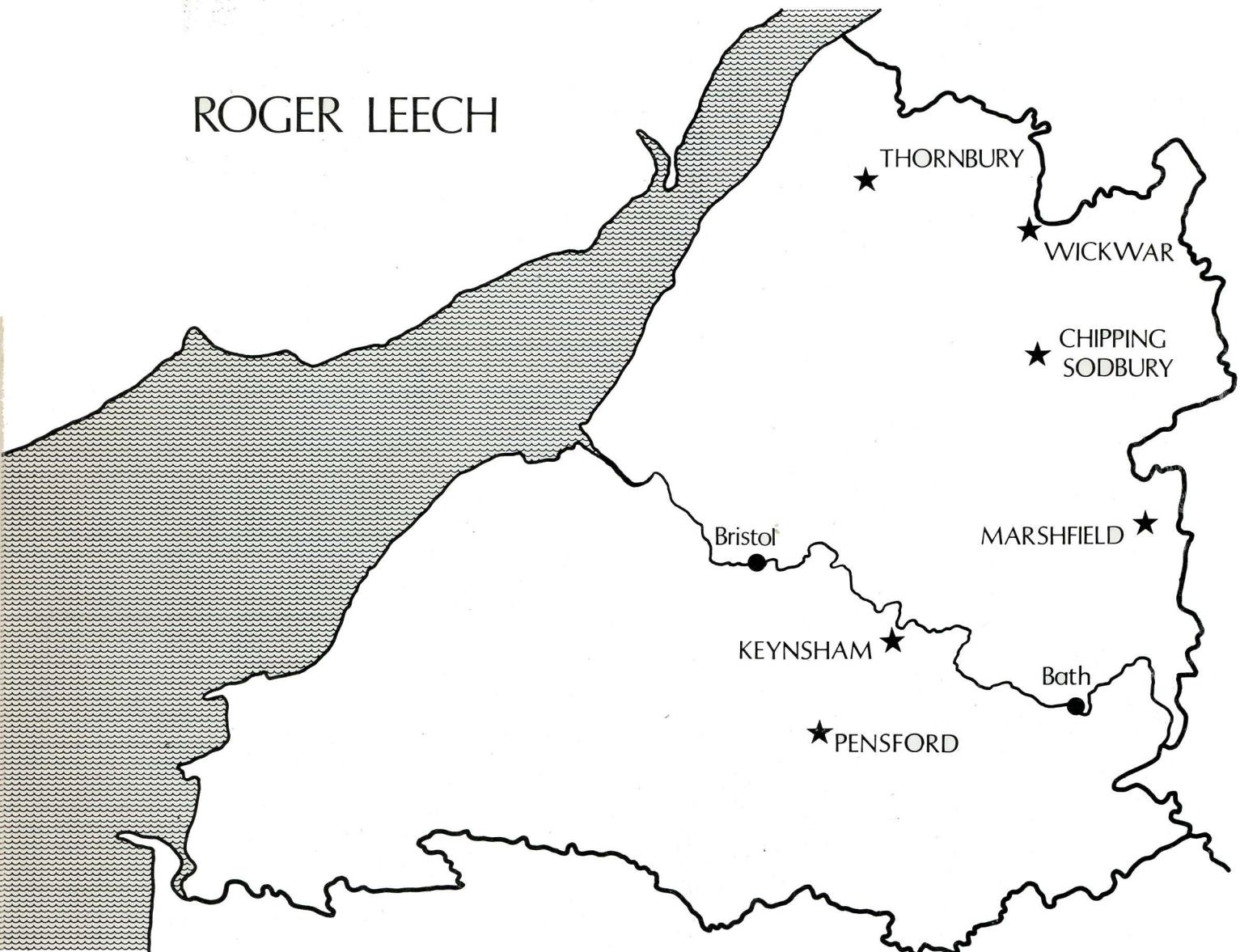


# SMALL MEDIEVAL TOWNS IN AVON

## ARCHAEOLOGY AND PLANNING

ROGER LEECH



Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset

The Committee for  
Rescue Archaeology



in Avon, Gloucestershire  
and Somerset

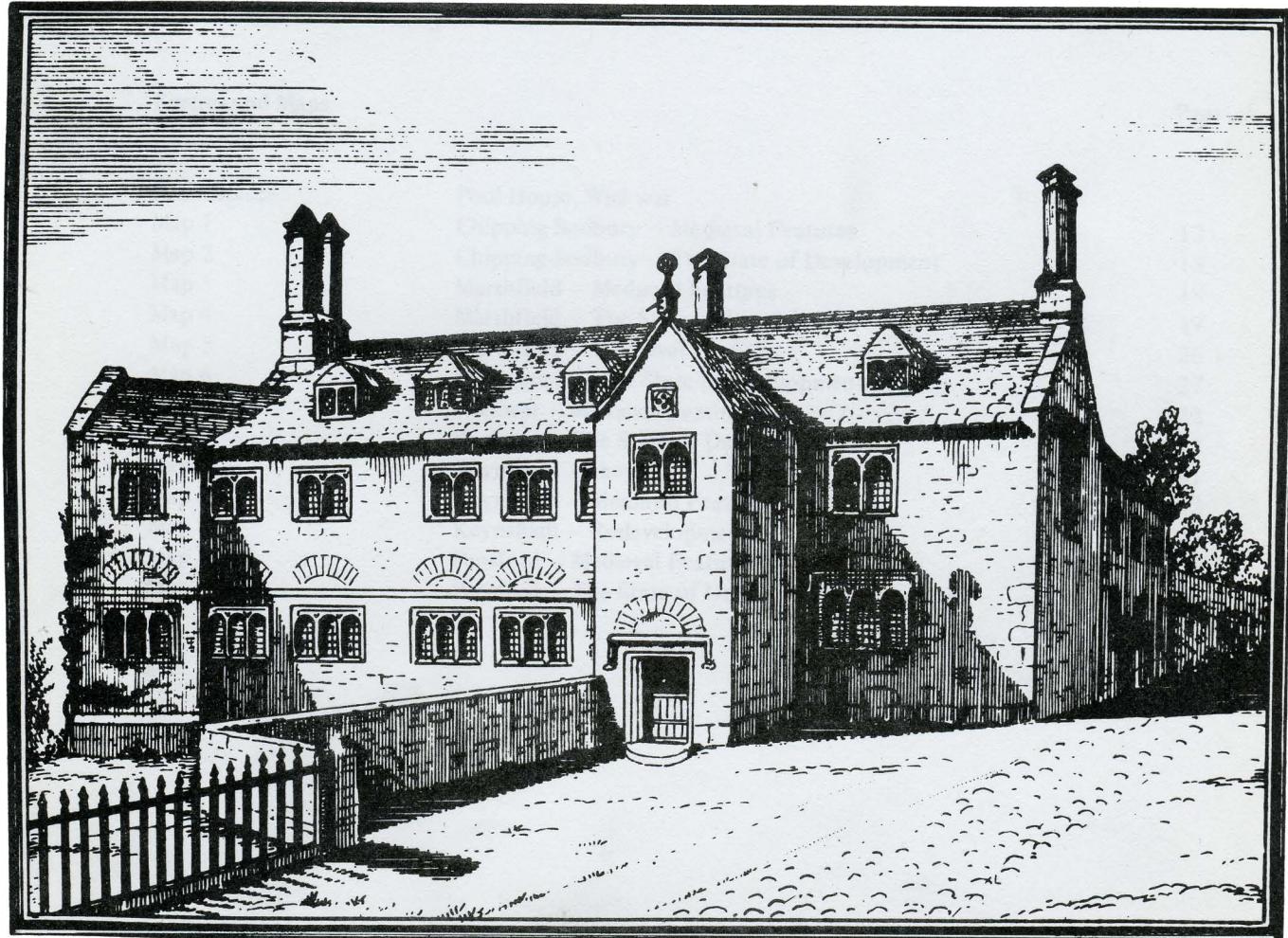
SURVEY No.1

# SMALL MEDIEVAL TOWNS IN AVON

## ARCHAEOLOGY AND PLANNING

Compiled and Illustrated  
by  
Roger Leech

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Richard M. Bryant



*The Pool House at Wickwar.*

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## PREFACE

The Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset came into being in late 1973, partly in response to archaeological changes taking place nationally, partly in response to the regional archaeological situation on the eve of Local Government re-organisation. The Committee itself, existing under the aegis of the South Western Regional Group of the Council for British Archaeology, consists of representatives from many of the archaeological organisations, voluntary and professional, in the three counties and, since mid-1975, happily includes representatives or observers from all three of the County Councils and those District Councils currently affording active support to field archaeology.

The Committee has rapidly become the biggest archaeological employer in the region; its activities, through its own staff and that of some of its constituent members, range from large-scale excavation through regional surveys to liaison with local societies, museums, Local Authorities and the Statutory bodies. It is financed largely by the Department of the Environment, for which it acts in many ways as regional agent in the field of rescue archaeology, but the significance of the Local Authorities' contributions in the region cannot be emphasised too much.

'Rescue archaeology' is a phrase requiring explanation. It meant, and for some still means, the rapid, often last-minute, salvaging of archaeological information immediately before or during land-disturbance by, for example, road-building, quarrying or town-centre redevelopment. Such situations are always going to occur, not least because the archaeological archive on and in England's landscape is ubiquitous. Many such situations in recent years have clearly arisen through lack of understanding and of communication between the archaeological interests and other land-users. If archaeology can produce information for the other land-users, and in particular the essential facts about where known archaeological sites are, many of the 'salvage situations' can be pre-empted, either by avoidance altogether or by the making of adequate arrangements to mitigate potential archaeological damage. The vital element is to build a sense of our heritage into the land-users' consciousness and, in particular, to establish the existence and status of the archaeological dimension in the Planning procedures. It is in that context that this, the first of the CRAAGS' Surveys, is published.

P. J. Fowler  
Chairman

June 1975

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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December 1974

## SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.1 The increased rate of redevelopment in Britain's historic towns has now prompted a number of reports on its archaeological implications. Reports on Gloucester and Tewkesbury have already appeared, and this study is one of a series of surveys of all the other historic towns in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset.

1.2 It has been prepared for the Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset (CRAAGS), which has been set up by the Council for British Archaeology to administer in conjunction with the Department of the Environment the funds for Rescue Archaeology in the three counties. The completed towns survey for Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset will enable CRAAGS to identify the priorities for rescue excavation in those historic towns most seriously threatened by redevelopment. It is also hoped that it will be used by the County and District Councils in considering the constraints imposed by the historic environment.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF A TOWN'S ARCHAEOLOGY

1.3 Most towns value their history, and express their belief in its importance by supporting museums and record offices from public funds. In this time of rapid development, they may designate Conservation Areas so that some sense of continuity is retained. Individual members of the public take a thoughtful interest in the past in greater numbers than ever before, and it is becoming generally recognised that no generation in any community has the right to deprive its successors of the sense of historical perspective in their everyday environment.

#### *Documented history*

1.4 As the documentary sources for the medieval history of the towns discussed in this report have not yet been studied, the historical accounts which follow are taken from various general works, referred to in the bibliography. The Victoria County Histories of Gloucestershire and Somerset will be including sections on all the towns in due course.

#### *Archaeology*

1.5 The surviving documents will probably tell us little of ordinary everyday life in the towns before the sixteenth century, and information about their origins, their houses and their streets will come from archaeological research: the recording of physical remains from the past, by fieldwork, excavation, and the survey of buildings. Of the towns discussed in this report only Keynsham and Thornbury have been the subject of archaeological research.

### THE SCOPE OF THIS STUDY

1.6 This survey of historic towns in Avon includes all places which were boroughs or had urban status in the medieval period, defined here as being between c. 450 and c. 1600. These were:

Chipping Sodbury	{	Northavon District
Marshfield		
Thornbury		
Wickwar		
Keynsham		
Pensford		Wansdyke

Studies of the archaeological implications of development in Bristol and Bath will appear in due course. The archaeological importance of the latter was discussed briefly in 'Bath: a Study in Conservation' (Buchanan and partners 1968, 5, 16-17).

1.7 This report considers the archaeological importance of each of these towns, together with any earlier settlements on the same sites. The ways in which the areas of special interest have been defined vary from one town to another, but in each case a consideration of the town's topography, including the street lines, breaks of slopes, water supplies and property boundaries, has been important. In all cases the earliest detailed maps of the towns, usually of the eighteenth or nineteenth century, have been studied. Some of the historical maps which accompany this text are direct copies of single early maps, others are conflations of several. Features obviously dating from the post-medieval period such as railways, workhouses and gasworks have been omitted. The title 'Medieval Features' given to the historical maps is necessarily vague, partly because so little documentary research has been undertaken in any of the towns; but it does allow a general identification of the parts of the town likely to have been churchyards, other religious precincts, market places, mills, houses and gardens in the medieval period, and it is within these areas in particular that the case for archaeological investigation will need to be considered when they are redeveloped. In several cases analogy with other towns, which have been studied in more detail, suggests that the street plan, many of the property boundaries and the position of streams are likely to be medieval in origin, and the debt to previous topographical studies is gratefully acknowledged (Some general notes on the archaeology and topography of medieval towns are given below, 1.8 - 1.17). It should be emphasised that areas outside the medieval parts of the towns, containing perhaps isolated medieval buildings, an eighteenth century terrace or a nineteenth century gasworks, may be equally worthy of record before and when destruction threatens.

## THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY OF MEDIEVAL TOWNS

### *Before the Norman Conquest*

1.8 Archaeological and documentary research have shown that in the Saxon period (c. 450–1066) a number of towns were either newly founded, like Hamwith (Southampton), Oxford and Bristol, or refounded on the sites of earlier Roman towns, like London, Winchester and Bath. Features, such as regular street patterns, and the orderly apportionment of space within the town area, show that many of those of Saxon origin were planned. The reasons for the foundation and development of some Saxon towns can be traced; Lyng, Somerset and Wareham, Dorset were designated 'burhs' (boroughs) by Alfred for the defence of Wessex. Others such as Bristol may have grown organically from an advantageous position or have been deliberately planted to encourage trade and create profits for their founders.

1.9 The only towns in Avon in the Saxon period were Bath and Bristol (see 1.6). Bristol especially was to dominate the region throughout the medieval period, and this fact is a partial explanation of the small number of medieval towns within the county of Avon. Historic Somerset north of the Mendips (i.e. present south Avon) with two medieval towns (Keynsham and Pensford) may be contrasted with a similar sized area of Somerset south of the Mendips (Mendip and Sedgemoor Districts) where there were ten medieval towns.

### *After the Norman Conquest*

1.10 Large numbers of towns were founded in the eleventh, and more particularly, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In most cases the foundation was by a lord who hoped to obtain a good income from the venture, and the siting of a new town was crucial to its success, prospective inhabitants being attracted not only by the freedoms offered, but by the profits likely to be made from trade. Sometimes a town was created on an entirely new site as at Newport, Isle of Wight or Hull. More often it was adjacent to an earlier small settlement, which by the twelfth century could probably be referred to as a 'village'. In Avon, Chipping Sodbury was an entirely new plantation whereas Keynsham, Marshfield, Thornbury and Wickwar were added to existing settlements. Chipping Sodbury, Keynsham and Marshfield were on main roads leading from Bristol, and their prosperity indicates that the sites were well chosen. Thornbury flourished as a local market centre, though Wickwar probably suffered from its proximity to the more prosperous towns of Wotton-under-Edge and Chipping Sodbury.

## *The Street Plan*

1.11 Following the decision to found a town came the necessary formalities such as the granting of a charter (a legal document listing the rights and obligations of the townspeople), and the laying out of streets and property plots. Most entirely new towns were planned either on a grid or on a single street pattern and often, as at Salisbury or Chipping Sodbury, this can still be traced. The towns added to existing settlements are often equally distinctive. The plan is most commonly a single street some distance from the church and manor house of the earlier settlement. This pattern can be observed in a great number of towns including Marshfield, Thornbury and Wickwar.

## *Burgages*

1.12 Within towns of this period many features can now be recognised as typical. The plan of most allowed each house a narrow plot of land, usually about one third of an acre, with frontage onto the street. This extended from the front to a back lane at the rear of the property. The plot itself is often referred to as a burgage plot, though this term should properly only be used for plots in towns which were boroughs. In Avon, Chipping Sodbury, Keynsham, Marshfield and Wickwar have this typical street pattern, but there are many comparisons elsewhere.

## *Streets and Markets*

1.13 Individual streets are often of particular interest. The widest street, often cigar-shaped in plan as at Chipping Sodbury and Wickwar, was usually the market place, although sometimes another part of the town may have been set aside for this purpose. Street names often indicate the crafts formerly practised in the town. In most English medieval towns the street pattern and street names predate the buildings left standing today which are usually of the fifteenth century or later.

## *The limits of the Town*

1.14 The limits of the town in the medieval period can often be detected by the presence of buildings that were originally on the outskirts of a town where land was cheaper. In the larger towns such as Bristol and Bath friaries, hospitals and priories were built just outside the limits of the town. After the Reformation Almshouses were frequently built on the edges of towns as at Marshfield.

## *Water Supply*

1.15 A town's water supply usually came from wells and rain water butts. Nearby streams were used for the supply of power to mills and to feed watercress beds and fishponds. Chipping Sodbury, Keynsham, Thornbury and Wickwar were all sited close to, though considerably above the level of, adjacent streams. In the first two towns there was sufficient power to drive mills. At Chipping Sodbury, Thornbury and Wickwar streams appear to have been straightened where they ran past the backs of burgage plots.

## *Fields*

1.16 While a few larger towns may have had mainly non-agricultural communities, in the smaller ones many of the inhabitants still farmed the surrounding land. Keynsham, Marshfield, Thornbury and Wickwar are examples of the latter. All except Marshfield appear to have had areas of small enclosed fields, probably pasture, situated between the burgage plots and the open fields beyond.

## *The later Medieval Period*

1.17 After the thirteenth century no new towns were founded in the manner described above. New urban settlements of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries tended to show organic growth, and were frequently centred on river valleys remote from existing towns. Here cloth workers could establish mills and at the same time escape the restrictions of town guilds. Examples of this type of development can be seen in the Stroud Valley, Gloucestershire; and at Pensford, the latter situated on the edges of two already existing parishes.

## FUTURE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

1.18 The ways in which archaeological research can contribute to our understanding of the six small medieval towns in Avon are discussed in Section Nine following the detailed accounts of the separate towns.

1.19 The Recommendations and Conclusions that result from this study have been summarised in Sections Eight to Ten following the individual town reports. Although they have implications extending beyond the towns which are the immediate subject of this Report to the County of Avon as a whole, the Committee thinks it is appropriate to present them in this, the first such study to be written under its auspices.

## Mills

2.8 The Ordnance Survey plan of 1882 shows three mills. One is now demolished and not at present built over. The other two are of the seventeenth century, but are probably on the sites of earlier mills.

## Standing Buildings

2.9 The town has many late medieval stone and half-timbered buildings. The Department of the Environment's Lists of Buildings of Special Historic or Architectural Interest include 49 buildings of the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, and five buildings of the fifteenth century. The quick survey undertaken for this report revealed over 100 buildings dating from before c. 1840 and not listed (see Map 2). Of these more than 15 were of the seventeenth century or earlier. Only two Listed Buildings in Chipping Sodbury have been demolished since the Statutory and Provisional Lists were first compiled in 1952, but neither is noted in the National Monuments Record.

## Industrial Archaeology

2.10 The town's industrial archaeology has not been studied. The only site referred to in 'The Industrial Archaeology of the Bristol Region' (Buchanan and Cossons 1969) is an eighteenth century toll house outside the town. Buildings of the eighteenth century or earlier which were clearly for industrial use survive in the Brook Street area and at various points behind the street frontages of Broad Street and High Street.

## AREA OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

2.11 The area of archaeological potential is shown on maps 1 & 2. The limits of the medieval town as laid out by c. 1179 are exceptionally clear, and were not exceeded until the present century.

2.12 Within them the area of archaeological potential may be divided into:—

- (i) The probably area of medieval occupation (shown stippled);
- (ii) An area possibly of medieval occupation but more likely to have formed the open spaces behind the burgage plots (shown white). This corresponds closely to the parish boundary in 1882 (Map 1).

## AREAS TO BE DEVELOPED

2.13 Map 2 shows an assessment of future development in Chipping Sodbury. The areas zoned for industrial, business or shopping use are those designated as such in the Yate and Chipping Sodbury Town Map (Gloucestershire County Council 1970). Not only does the area of potential industrial use include two of the three medieval mill sites (2.8), but two areas in the centre of the medieval town are included within possible shopping precincts. Major redevelopment is however unlikely. Gloucestershire County Council stated in 1966 that it did not intend to destroy the unique character of the town, and for this reason a new shopping area was created at Yate. From time to time however individual house sites within the town may be redeveloped.

2.14 At present two sites of archaeological interest are threatened, both being the sites of demolished houses on main street frontages in the centre of the town. They are:

- (i) 23, 25 High Street;
- (ii) 6, 8 Horse Street.

## AREAS AND SITES TO BE PRESERVED

### *Conservation Area*

2.15 It is envisaged that the historic part of Chipping Sodbury will become a Conservation Area in the near future (Gloucestershire County Council 1970).

### *Listed Buildings*

2.16 Map 2 shows all Listed Buildings within the town, but does not distinguish between the 37 buildings on the Statutory List (Grades I & II) and the 60 Grade III buildings. At present the latter have little real protection, although when the Lists are revised many will probably be reclassified as Grade II (8.7). In addition over 100 buildings constructed before 1840 are not Listed at all.

## CONCLUSIONS

### *The Planned Medieval Town*

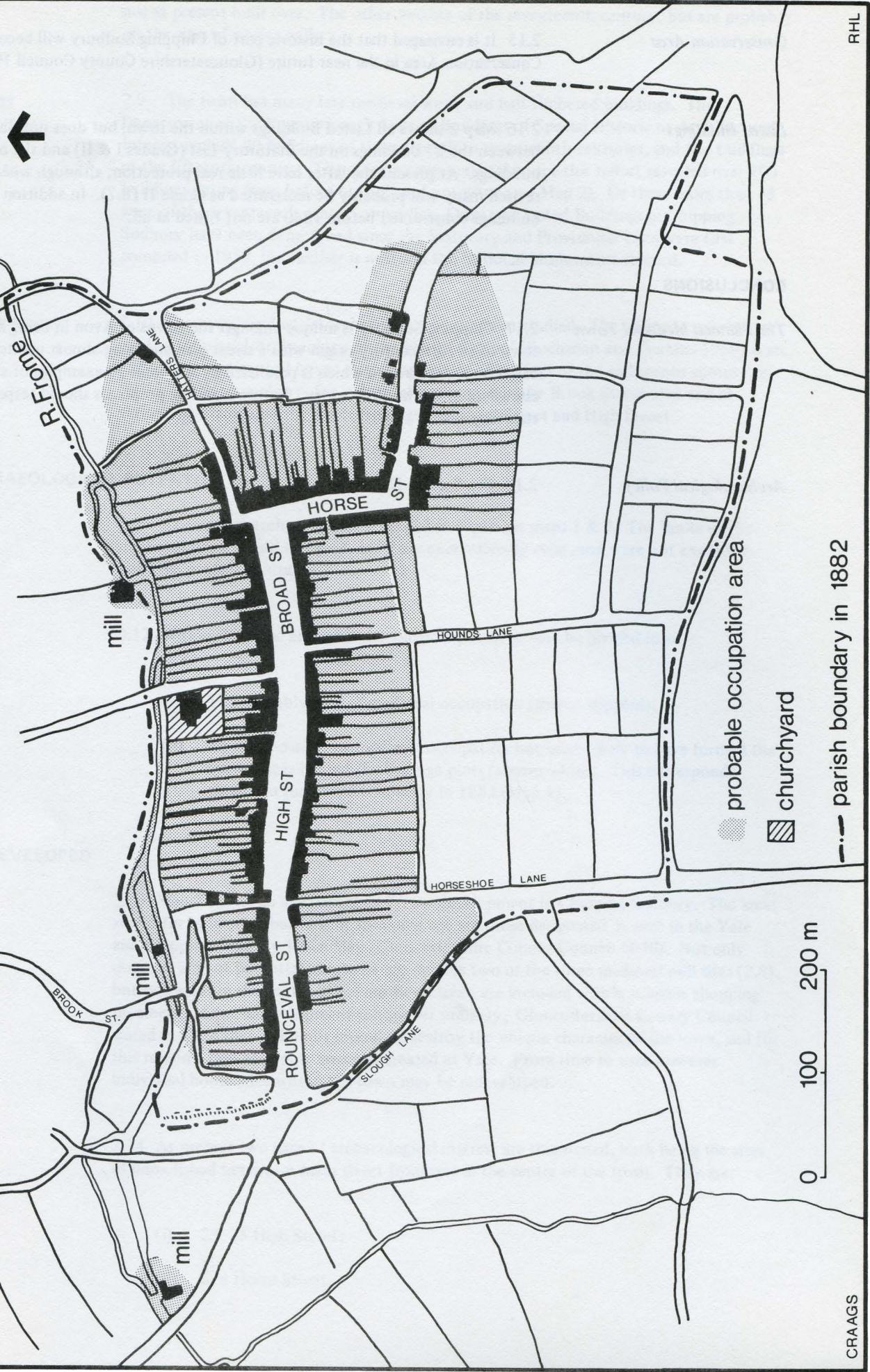
2.17 Chipping Sodbury is unique amongst the towns of Avon in being a new planted town of twelfth century origin with a street plan surviving almost unaltered. It is based on a grid pattern which is paralleled by less than 30 examples of similar date elsewhere in the whole country. Future planning proposals should respect this unusual street layout.

### *Archaeological Policy*

2.18 See Section Nine.

MAP 1

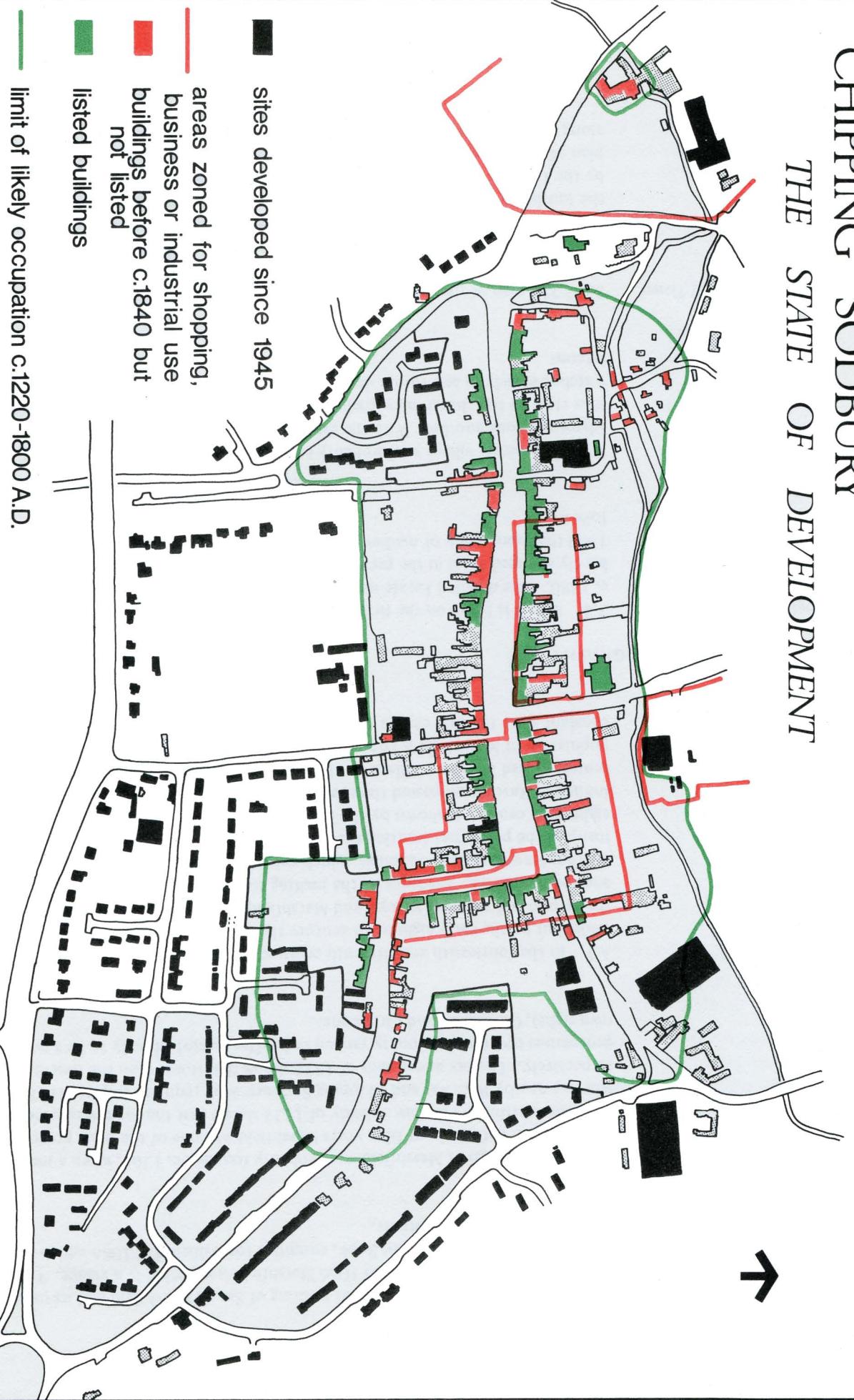
CHIPPING SODBURY  
MEDIEVAL FEATURES



# CHIPPING SODBURY

## THE STATE OF DEVELOPMENT

MAP 2



## SECTION THREE – MARSHFIELD

### HISTORY

3.1 Documentary evidence tells us nothing of Saxon Marshfield and its origins. At the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066 Marshfield was probably a village. The earliest reference to it is in Domesday Book, compiled for William I c. 1086 which records details of 67 of the inhabitants.

3.2 The borough of Marshfield was probably founded c. 1265, when a market charter was granted. Within about fifty years Marshfield was one of the most prosperous towns in Gloucestershire. The Lay Subsidy of 1327 shows that the town was rated at 70s. 7d., whereas nearby Wickwar and Chipping Sodbury were required to pay 41s. 7d. and 50s. 2d. respectively. The tax assessment of 1334 shows that it was then the fourth most prosperous town in the County ranked only after Bristol (shortly to be a county in its own right), Gloucester and Cirencester.

3.3 In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries its prosperity was founded upon the wool trade, but by the early eighteenth century the woollen industry had become centred upon the Stroud and adjacent valleys, and Marshfield's chief industries were changed to malting and candle making. Evidence of the malting trade is still to be seen in the former malthouses and storage buildings, which survive as unusually long outhouses at the rear of many of the properties fronting the High Street. The town's continuing prosperity in the eighteenth century is shown by the large number of fine houses of that period. The Industrial Revolution passed the town by, and in relation to the importance of other centres, it had become a village by the twentieth century. The estimated present population of Marshfield is approximately 1,000, a figure which has remained fairly constant since the first census in 1801.

### ARCHAEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

#### *The Street Plan*

3.4 Map 3 is based on the first Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan of the town, surveyed c. 1880. Less detailed Estate maps of 1744 and 1768 suggest that the town map had hardly changed at all in the previous one hundred and thirty-five years. On the map of 1880 the topography of medieval Marshfield is strikingly clear, and may be interpreted as follows.

#### *Saxon Origins*

3.5 The earlier village was probably centred around the church and manor which are adjacent to one another. With the establishment of a town c. 1265, a number of house sites close to the church may gradually have been abandoned. This area should be watched closely in any future development for it could be of considerable archaeological interest.

#### *The Medieval Planned Town*

3.6 The plan of the medieval borough as laid out (1.11) c. 1265 is very clear. Burgage plots were laid out on both sides of the High Street for a distance of 360 metres. The western end of the original town is shown on Map 3. Behind the burgage plots ran back lanes which still survive in parts. Later development has obscured the original plan of the south-eastern end of the planned town, but it may be that the space now occupied by the Lord Nelson Inn and adjacent buildings was originally an open market place. The plan of the original borough is very similar to that of nearby Wickwar: both were laid out along either side of a main road leading away from the earlier village nucleus.

## *The later Medieval Town*

3.7 Around the borough were the open fields of the earlier village. These, so characteristic of the medieval landscape, would have been divided into long narrow strips, some of the divisions between which have survived as field boundaries to the present day (Map 3), and have even influenced the course of the Marshfield bypass.

3.8 Map 3 shows that the medieval borough could not be contained within its original limits. As the town expanded westwards along the road to Bristol, new burgage plots conformed to the existing pattern of strip fields, and were of much greater depth than the original plots which had been confined by the two back lanes. The latter did not continue behind the new plots.

3.9 The date of this later westward expansion is uncertain. It could have been within a decade or so of the town's foundation, for the documentary sources show that Marshfield quickly became very prosperous (3.2). Archaeological research could elucidate this problem. Specifically, the limits of the town in the early seventeenth century are indicated by the almshouses built c. 1619 (1.14).

## *The Church of St. Mary*

3.10 The present church dates mainly from the late fifteenth century. It incorporates earlier Norman work and is probably Saxon in origin.

## *Standing Buildings*

3.11 The town has numerous buildings dating from the seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries. 107 of these are included in the Department of the Environment's Lists of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, but many more may be of historical interest (8.7).

## *Recording the Buildings*

3.12 No thorough photographic or drawn record of the town's buildings exists. The National Monuments Record includes only photographs covering the more important buildings, notably the Church, the Old Malthouse and Catherine Wheel Inn. The problems of recording buildings are discussed in Section Nine (9.11-12).

## *Industrial Archaeology*

3.13 The town's Industrial Archaeology has not been studied. Many former industrial buildings are now outhouses and there is a trend for these to be converted to dwellings. It is essential that all such conversions be preceded by an expert examination of the building, and desirable that a proper study be made of the Industrial Archaeology of the town.

## **AREA OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL**

3.14 The area of archaeological potential is shown on maps 3 & 4. In the case of Marshfield this approximates to the area of probably Saxon, Medieval and later medieval occupation. These limits were not exceeded until the present century.

## **AREA TO BE DEVELOPED**

3.15 Map 4 shows an assessment of future development in Marshfield. This is taken largely from the *Marshfield Adopted Village Plan* (Gloucestershire County Council 1973 a). On the northern and southern sides of the town, development will in general be confined to the back parts of the medieval burgage plots. On the southern side of the town, development seems likely at the point where the early medieval town terminated on its western side. Archaeological investigation should take place when this development occurs (see 3.9).

## AREAS AND SITES TO BE PRESERVED

### *Conservation Area*

3.16 Map 4 shows the Marshfield Conservation Area. The area of archaeological interest falls almost entirely within it.

### *Listed Buildings*

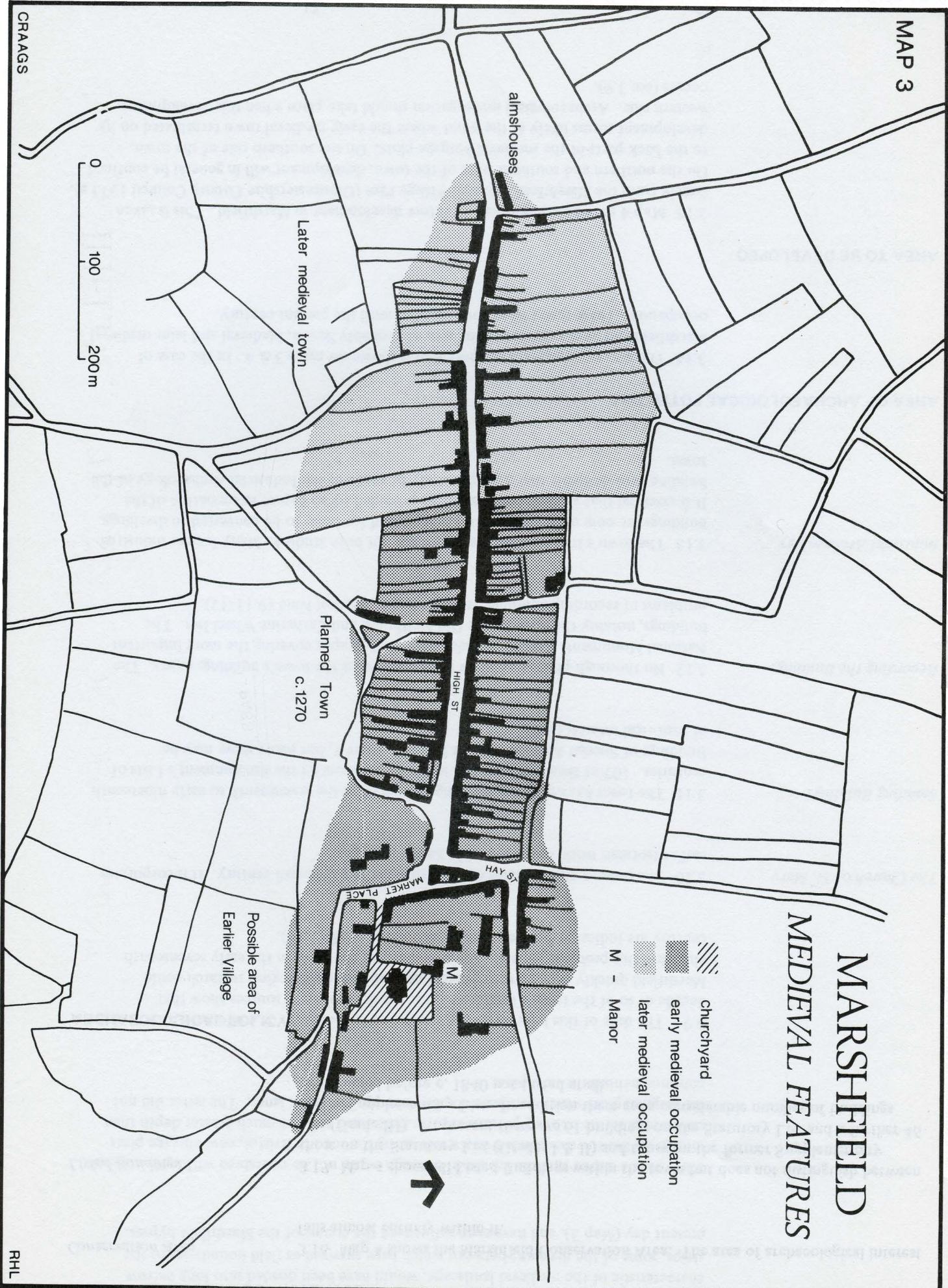
3.17 Map 4 shows all Listed Buildings within the town but does not distinguish between those on the Statutory List (Grades I & II) and those on the former Supplementary List (Grade III). At present there are 61 buildings on the Statutory List and a further 46 on the Supplementary List. In addition there are a considerable number of buildings constructed before c. 1840 not Listed at all.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL POLICY

3.18 See Section Nine.

MAP 3

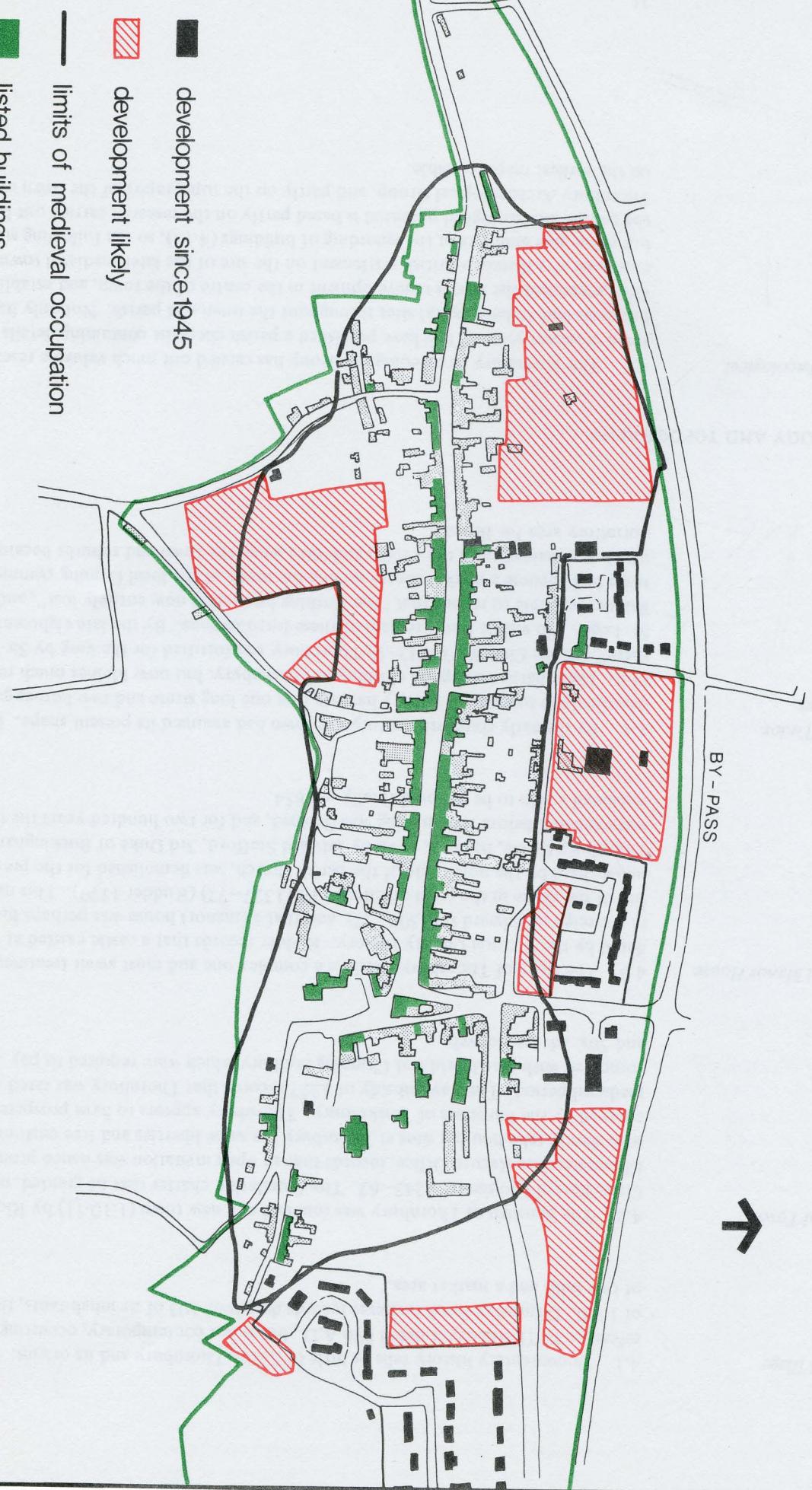
## MARSHFIELD MEDIEVAL FEATURES



# MARSHFIELD

## THE STATE OF DEVELOPMENT

MAP 4



## SECTION FOUR – THORNBURY

### HISTORY

#### *The Saxon Village*

4.1 Documentary history tells us little of Saxon Thornbury and its origins. The earliest reference to Thornbury is dated 896 A.D., but is not contemporary, occurring in a charter of 1560. Domesday Book however records details of 103 of its inhabitants, the existence of two mills and a market area.

#### *The Medieval Town*

4.2 The borough of Thornbury was founded as a new town (1.10-11) by Richard de Clare, Earl of Gloucester 1243–62. The foundation charter that he granted, now in the Gloucestershire Record Office, records that an open invitation was issued promising to all who should take housing sites at Thornbury the same liberties and free customs as those enjoyed by the burgesses of Tewkesbury. Thornbury appears to have prospered in the medieval period. The Lay Subsidy of 1327 records that Thornbury was rated at 70s. 7d., compared with Marshfield and Chipping Sodbury which were required to pay 76s. 10d. and 56s. 2d. respectively.

#### *The Medieval Manor House and Castle*

4.3 The story of Thornbury Castle is a complex one and must await treatment in detail by the Victoria County History. Rudder records that a castle existed at Thornbury in the reign of Edward II (1307–27), and that a (manor) house was perhaps built on the site of the castle in the reign of Edward III (1327–77) (Rudder 1779). This manor house, hard by the north side of the parish church, was demolished for the present Thornbury Castle, begun c. 1511 by Edward Stafford, 3rd Duke of Buckingham. Stafford was executed before the building was finished, and for two hundred years the Castle remained a ruin to be restored finally in 1854.

#### *The town in Tudor and later times*

4.4 By the early sixteenth century the town had assumed its present shape. Leland described the town as “a letter y havinge first one long strete and two hornes goyne out of it. There hathe bene good clothing in Thornebyry, but now Idelnes much reynithe there”. In the Civil War (1642–9) Thornbury was fortified for the king by Sir William St. Leger. No visible traces remain of these fortifications. By the late eighteenth century Rudder was able to record that “the clothing business is now entirely lost”, and the town had become a market centre serving the needs of the local farming community, which it remained until the 1950’s and ’60’s when the town and suburbs became a dormitory area for Bristol.

### ARCHAEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

#### *Previous Archaeological Research*

4.5 The Thornbury Archaeological Group has carried out much valuable research in the town in recent years. They have published a parish checklist containing details of buildings and archaeological sites throughout the town and parish. Not only has the Group watched the recent redevelopment in the centre of the town, and established the existence of a Romano-British settlement on the site of the later medieval town (4.6), but it has also undertaken the recording of buildings (4.13), so the following summary of the town’s archaeological potential is based partly on the research carried out by the Thornbury Archaeological Group, and partly on the topography of the town as seen on the earliest maps available.

## *Romano-British Settlement*

4.6 Romano-British pottery has been found at a number of places centred around Rock Street and Castle Street (Map 5), confirming the existence of a settlement of Roman date underlying the later medieval town. Only careful archaeological investigation will reveal the full extent and nature of this settlement. Nothing is known of this part of the town before the thirteenth century. There may have been continuity of occupation from Roman times, but only a detailed excavation programme could confirm or refute it.

## *Saxon and Medieval*

4.7 Map 5 is based on the Tithe Apportionment Map of 1840, which is the earliest map to show the plan of the town in detail. From it the topography of medieval Thornbury, as confirmed by Leland (4.4), may be interpreted as follows.

## *The Earlier Village*

4.8 An earlier village, close to the church and Thornbury Castle, was probably gradually abandoned after the foundation of a borough to the south (4.9). The site of the village manor house was possibly later occupied by the first Thornbury Castle built by c. 1307–27 (see 4.4), in turn replaced by another manor house c. 1327–77, which was demolished for the present castle begun c. 1511. Any development in the vicinity of the castle and St. Mary's Church should be preceded by archaeological investigation.

## *The Medieval Town*

4.9 The plan of the medieval borough as laid out by Richard Earl of Gloucester between 1243 and 1262 is also a case for conjecture. Other medieval towns in the area, like Chipping Sodbury, Marshfield and Wickwar, were planned towns, and the same is almost certainly true of Thornbury; although there are no clearly defined back lanes, the central part of the town – the area facing on to and enclosed by The Plain, St. Mary Street, Rotten Row (now Chapel Street) and High Street – appears to have been planned. If that was so, Castle Street will represent a slightly later infilling between the originally separated medieval planned town and the earlier village. The earliest buildings in Castle Street are of the fifteenth century.

4.10 The most striking feature of this medieval street pattern – the island site enclosed by Soaper's Lane and Silver Street, possibly a former market area, – has been blocked off. The designation of Thornbury as a Conservation Area (4.18, 8.16) should be preceded by the restoration of the Rights of Way along these ancient streets.

## *St. Mary's Church*

4.11 The present church dates mainly from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, though re-used stonework indicates an earlier Norman church which in turn probably replaced a Saxon church.

## *Standing Buildings*

4.12 The town has many buildings of the fifteenth to early nineteenth centuries, 68 of which are included in the Department of the Environment's Lists of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The quick survey undertaken for this report revealed over 70 buildings dating from before c. 1840 and not Listed (Map 6).

4.13 A number of buildings of historic interest have been demolished since the Lists were first compiled in 1947. The following table of a few selected demolished buildings, all on the map of 1840, shows what records have been made.

Buildings	Listed or not	Photograph	Measured drawing
Thornbury House	grade II	none	none
23, 25 High Street	—	yes NMR	none
27, 29 High Street	grade II	yes NMR	none
13 St. Mary Street	—	none	none
4, 6 St. Mary Street	—	none	none
4, 6, 8 St. John Street	—	none	none
1–11 Gloucester Road	—	none	none
2, 4 Horseshoe Lane	—	none	none
5 Silver Street	—	yes NMR	none
School House	—	yes TAG	

N.M.R. – National Monuments Record

T.A.G. – Thornbury Archaeological Group

No thorough photographic or drawn record of the town's buildings exists. The National Monuments Record includes photographs (in addition to those listed above) of the Church, the Congregational Chapel, the Friends Meeting House, the Methodist Chapel, general views of Castle Street and High Street, views of Nos. 8 and 24 High Street, the old Register Office, the Hatch and the Church Institute.

#### Industrial Archaeology

4.14 No research into the Industrial Archaeology of the town has been carried out. Buildings, not for domestic use, survive on the north side of Horseshoe Lane in Hawkins' Yard (4.17 (4)), behind Nos. 4–6 Crispin Lane, and at No. 6 Gloucester Road.

#### AREA OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

4.15 The area of archaeological potential is shown on Maps 5 & 6. This approximates to the area of probable Saxon and later medieval occupation, including the area of likely Romano-British settlement, limits not exceeded until the present century.

#### AREA TO BE DEVELOPED

4.16 Map 6 shows an assessment of future development in Thornbury, taken largely from the *Town Map Amendment* (Gloucestershire County Council 1969 a), and the *Designation Map – Designation Areas Nos. 5 & 6* (Gloucestershire County Council 1969 b).

## AREAS AND SITES TO BE PRESERVED

### *Conservation Area*

4.18 Although Thornbury has been included in the *Provisional List of Potential Conservation Areas* (Gloucestershire County Council 1970), there are no signs that it will be so designated in the near future. The area to be considered was "High Street, Castle Street and Park Road to and including the Church and Castle".

### *Listed Buildings*

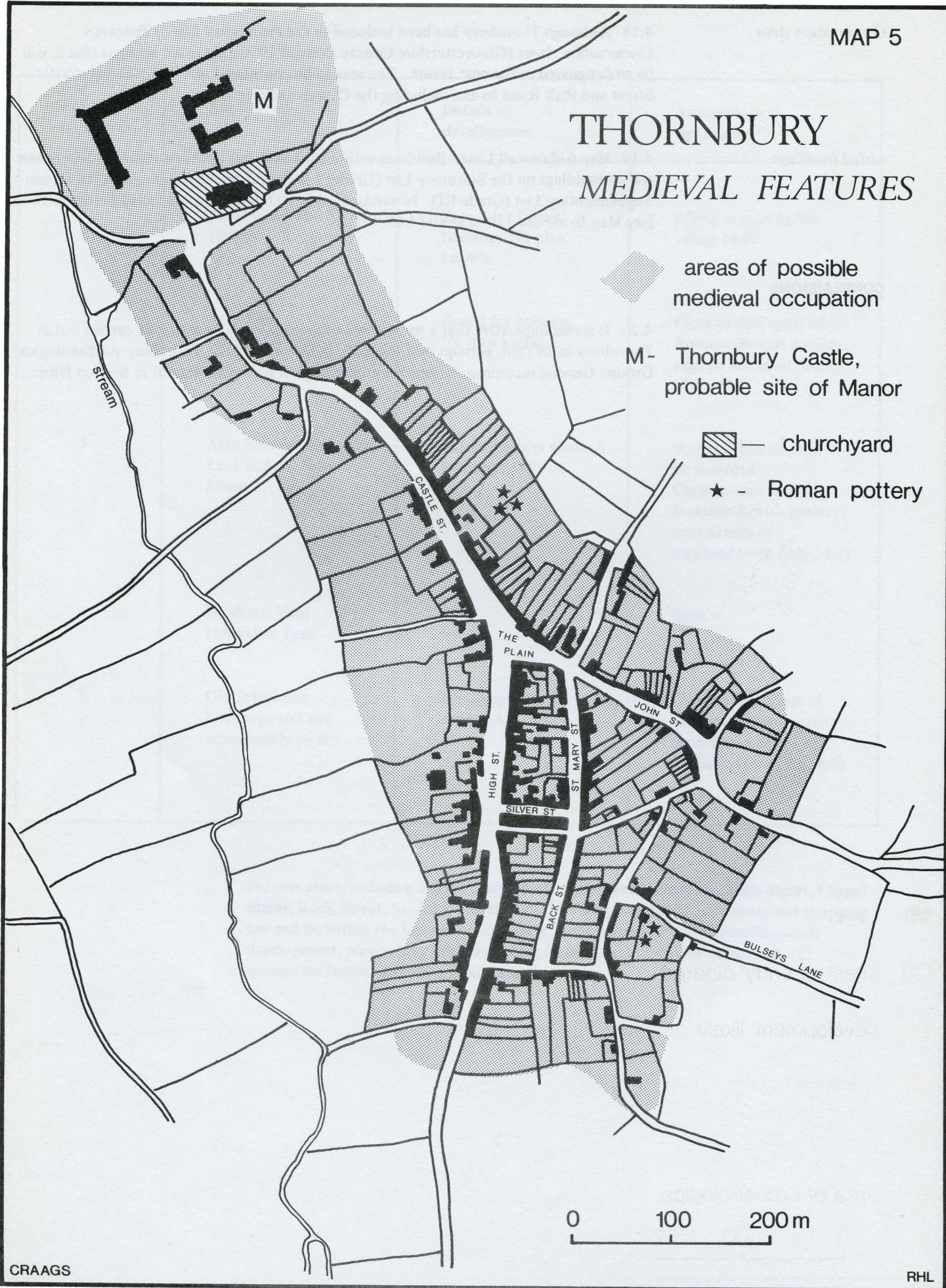
4.19 Map 6 shows all Listed Buildings within the town, but does not distinguish between the 48 buildings on the Statutory List (Grades I & II) and the 20 buildings on the former Supplementary List (Grade III). In addition, over 70 buildings constructed before c. 1840 (see Map 6) are not Listed at all (4.12, 8.7).

## CONCLUSIONS

4.20 It seems imperative that a programme of archaeological research be carried out in Thornbury in 1975/6, perhaps by CRAAGS, in liaison with the Thornbury Archaeological Group. General recommendations for archaeological policy are set out in Section Nine.

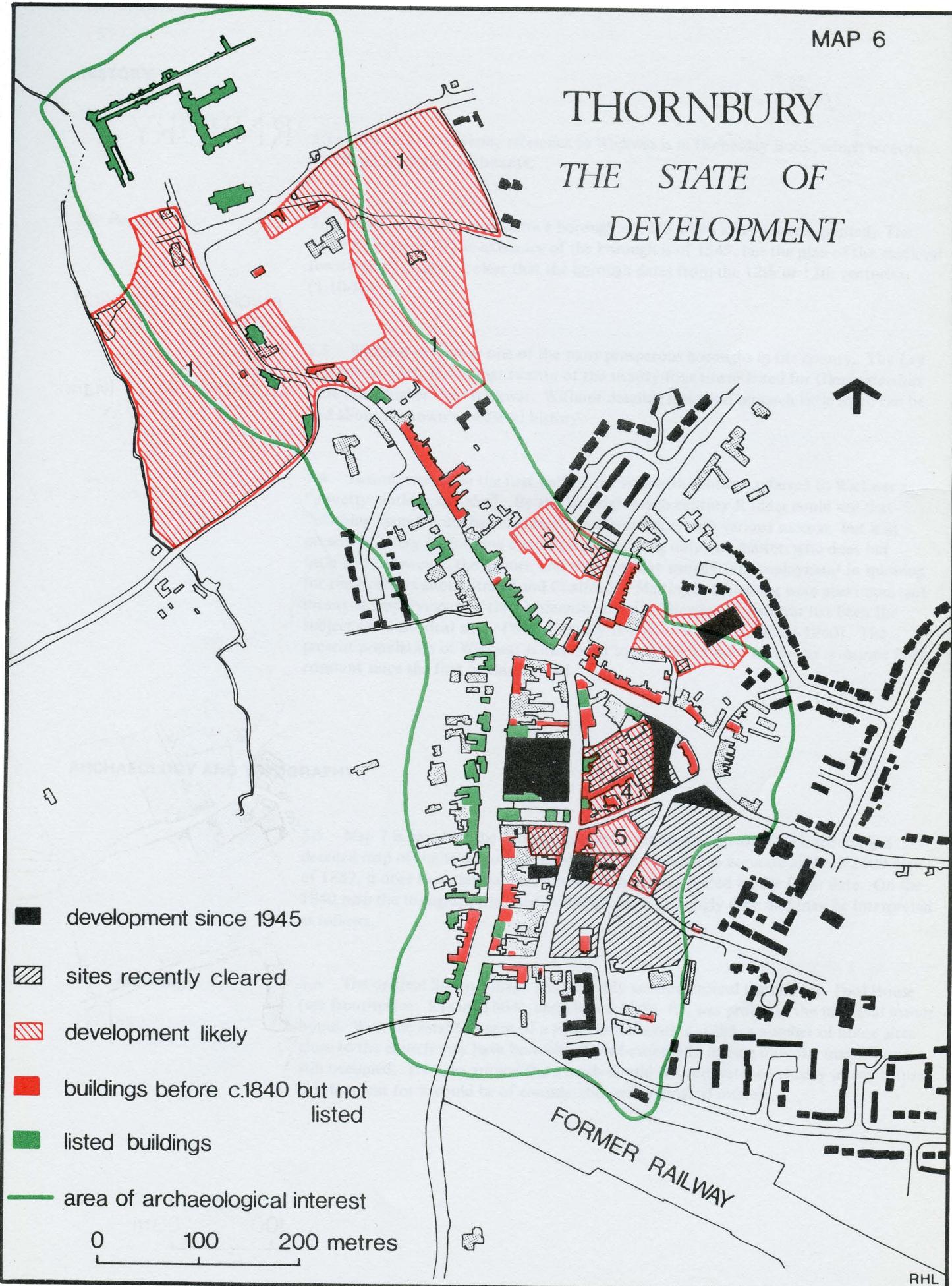
# THORNBURY

## MEDIEVAL FEATURES



# THORNBURY

## THE STATE OF DEVELOPMENT



## SECTION FIVE – WICKWAR

### HISTORY

#### *The Borough*

5.1 The earliest surviving reference to Wickwar is in Domesday Book, which records details of 28 of the inhabitants.

5.2 Wickwar probably became a borough c. 1285 when a market was granted. The earliest reference to the existence of the borough is of 1545, but the plan of the medieval town (Map 7) makes it clear that the borough dates from the 12th or 13th centuries (1.10-11).

5.3 Wickwar was never one of the most prosperous boroughs in the county. The Lay Subsidy of 1327 shows that twenty of the twenty-four towns listed for Gloucestershire were rated higher than Wickwar. Without detailed historical research little more can be said about the town's medieval history.

5.4 Leland, writing in the first half of the sixteenth century, referred to Wickwar as "a pretty clothing townlet". By the late eighteenth century Rudder could say that "clothing manufacture has continued here ever since, with various success; but is at present in a very languishing condition, there being only one master, who does but little in it. However, the women and children have usually full employment in spinning for the clothiers about Stroud and Chalford". Malting and brewing were also important means of employment by the eighteenth century. Brewing in Wickwar has been the subject of a historical study (West Country Brewery Holdings Limited 1960). The present population of Wickwar is estimated to be 680, a figure which has remained fairly constant since the first census in 1801.

### ARCHAEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

#### *The Saxon Village*

5.5 Map 7 is based on the Tithe Apportionment Map of 1840. This is the earliest detailed map of the town to have survived; although not as accurate as the 1:2500 plan of 1882, it does show several features which had disappeared by the latter date. On the 1840 map the topography of medieval Wickwar is strikingly clear and may be interpreted as follows.

5.6 The original Saxon Village was probably centred around the church. Pool House (see frontispiece; Lysons 1804), demolished 1840–88, was probably the medieval manor house. With the establishment of a town to the south c. 1285, a number of house sites close to the church may have been abandoned eventually leaving only the manor house still occupied. The area around the church should thus be watched closely in any future development for it could be of considerable archaeological interest.

### *The Medieval Planned Town*

5.7 The plan of the medieval borough as laid out c. 1285 (1.10-11) consisted of burgage plots on both sides of the High Street for a distance of at least 320 metres. The area north of North Street may or may not have been part of the original planned town. If not, then originally the medieval borough was physically separate from the earlier village. The back lanes behind the burgage plots survive in part on the west side (The Buthay), and almost in entirety on the east side (Back Lane). On the 1840 map the latter ran to the east, and then to the south of Southend House. The position of the Market Place is uncertain, but is most likely to have been the wider part of the High Street. The plan of the original borough shows affinities with that of Marshfield (3.6).

### *The Church of Holy Trinity*

5.8 The present church was almost completely rebuilt in 1881. The earliest features incorporated in this rebuilding are of the fifteenth century, nothing being known of earlier churches on the site.

### *Standing Buildings*

5.9 Many buildings of the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries remain, 70 of which are included in the Department of the Environment's Lists of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.

### *Recording the Buildings*

5.10 There is no thorough photographic or drawn record of the town's buildings. The National Monuments Record contains only three general views of the main street and photographs of the exteriors of the Congregational Chapel, Frith Farm, the Grammar School, the Rectory and Southend Cottage. No exterior photograph of the church is included, although there is a photograph of an eighteenth century candelabra inside the church.

### *Industrial Archaeology*

5.11 Although a documentary study of the West Country Brewery exists, no thorough survey of the town's industrial archaeology has been undertaken. There is a trend for former outhouses and industrial buildings to be converted to dwellings.

## **AREA OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL**

5.12 The area of archaeological potential is shown on Maps 7 & 8. This approximates to the area of the probable earlier village and planned medieval town. The town did not spread outside this area until the present century.

## **AREAS TO BE DEVELOPED**

5.13 Map 8 shows an assessment of future development in Wickwar, taken largely from the published *Wickwar Adopted Village Plan* (Gloucestershire County Council 1973 b). New development will only be allowed outside the Conservation Area.

## AREAS AND SITES TO BE PRESERVED

### *Conservation Area*

5.14 Map 8 shows the Wickwar Conservation Area. The limits of medieval occupation fall within the designated area, except for a section to the east of the church.

### *Listed Buildings*

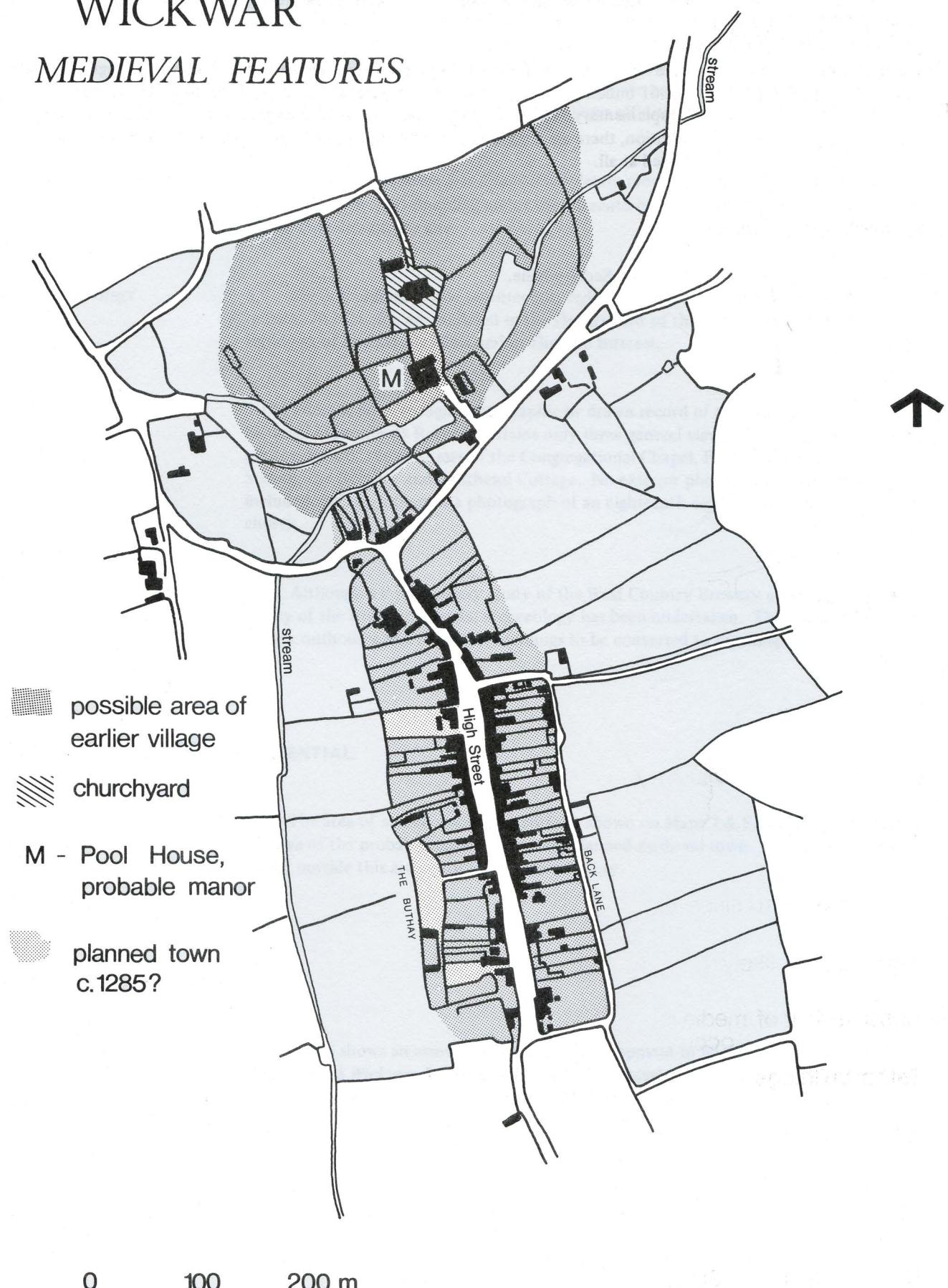
5.15 Map 8 shows all Listed Buildings within the town, but does not distinguish between the 61 buildings on the Statutory List (Grades I & II), and the 46 on the former Supplementary List (Grade III). The latter have little real protection (see 8.20). In addition, there are a considerable number of buildings constructed before 1840 not Listed at all.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL POLICY

5.16 See Section Nine.

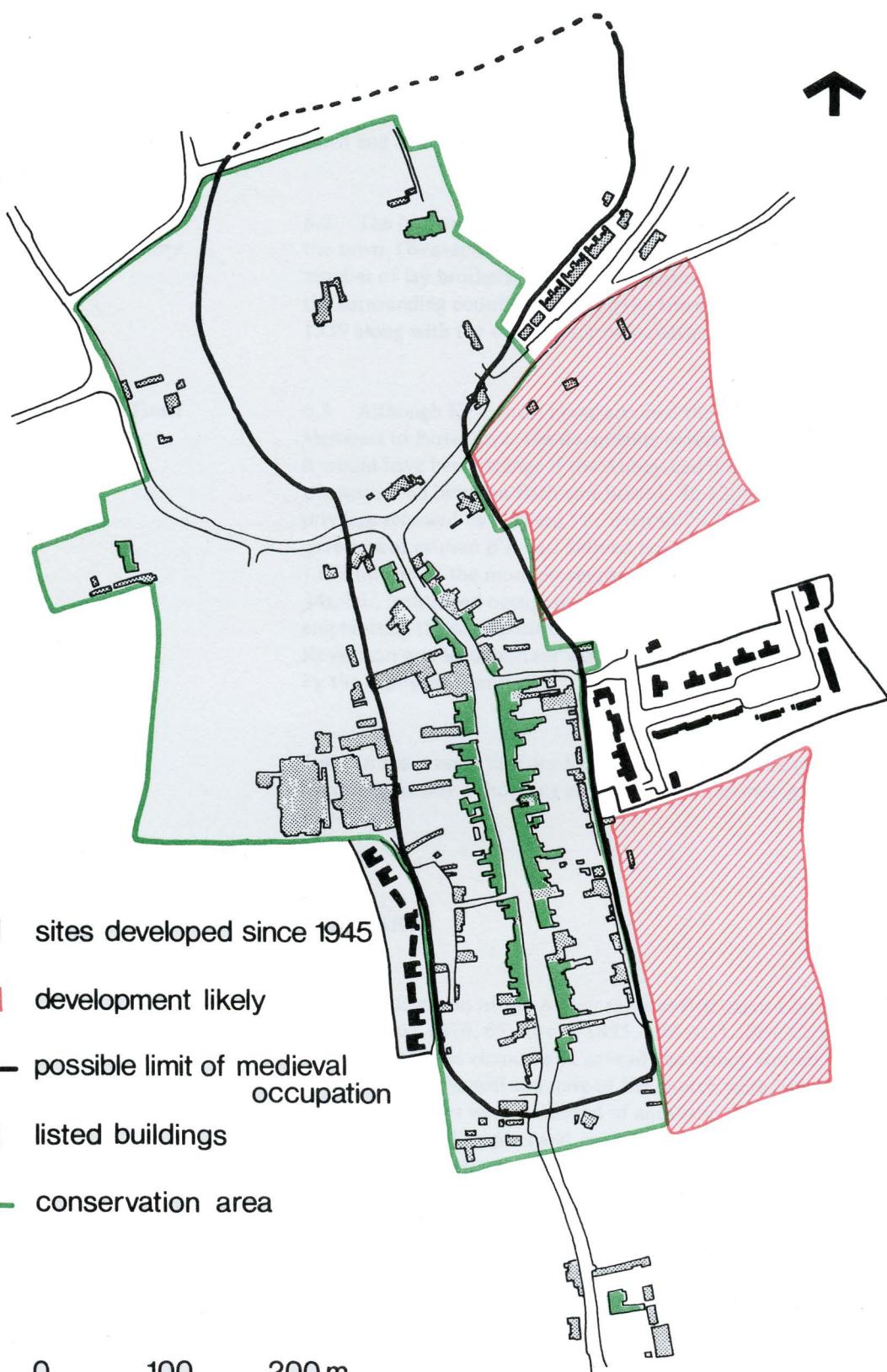
# WICKWAR

## MEDIEVAL FEATURES



## WICKWAR

## THE STATE OF DEVELOPMENT



## SECTION SIX – KEYNSHAM

### HISTORY

#### *The Abbey of the Blessed Mary*

6.1 Documentary evidence tells us little of Saxon Keynsham and its origins. In 871 it was reputedly the burial place of Healmund, Bishop of Sherborne. The Saxon church was a minster with responsibilities over a wide area, Keynsham was included in Domesday Book, and until 1166 the manor belonged to the Earls of Gloucester, when it was included in the endowments given to the newly founded Augustinian Abbey of Keynsham. From 1166 until the Dissolution of the Monasteries the fortunes of the town and abbey were inextricably mixed.

#### *The Medieval Town*

6.2 The history of the Abbey has been treated in considerably more detail than that of the town, (Weaver 1907, Holmes 1911). It was founded in 1166 for 26 canons and a number of lay brothers, and quickly became prosperous owning much land throughout the surrounding counties including the town of Marshfield (3.1-18). It was dissolved in 1539 along with the other larger monasteries.

6.3 Although Keynsham never attained the status of 'borough' and did not send Members to Parliament, the documents nevertheless indicate that a town developed, and it would have been strange if the Abbey had not taken advantage of such a good site on the main road between Bath and Bristol. In 1303 Edward I granted a market and fair, a privilege renewed by Edward IV; even so "it is very doubtful if the town had any self-government or even if it had defined boundaries" (Savage 1954). The Lay Subsidy of 1327 lists 33 of the more prosperous inhabitants who were collectively assessed at 44s. 8d., mentioned occupations such as "Clerk", "Shepherde" and "Taillour", thus emphasising the juxtaposition of monastic, rural and town life. By the sixteenth century Keynsham was an important wool town, though this industry had virtually disappeared by the eighteenth century.

6.4 In the present century Keynsham has expanded rapidly, the medieval town becoming mainly a shopping area, and the surrounding parts a dormitory suburb for Bristol.

### PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

#### *The Abbey*

6.5 Investigation of the Abbey site was first carried out in c. 1875 by Irvine and Brock (Anon 1876, 65; Brock 1875, 198-205). Brock's account was based on excavations in the chancel and nave of the Abbey and on documentary and topographical evidence. The chancel and nave of the church were recognised and partly planned. Detailed drawings were published of encaustic tiles and of Norman to Perpendicular stonework including piers and capitals. Various sepulchral slabs were described. Burials, probably the cemetery, were recorded when the railway cutting was made c. 1835. The conventional buildings had been to the south of the church. To the southeast was a fishpond, and between the Abbey and parish church was an arched vault over a spring. After the Dissolution Chandos House was built on the site of the Abbey and was itself demolished in 1776. Irvine's plans and notes relating to the Bath district, including those on Keynsham Abbey, were given to Bath Reference Library in 1947 (Taylor 1972).

6.6 In the twentieth century several excavations have taken place. In 1956, while new tennis courts were being laid out to the south of the Parish Church, wall footings and evidence for a cemetery were observed (Grinsell 1956, Greenfield 1960).

6.7 The A4 bypass, constructed between 1964 and 1966, cut through the central part of Keynsham Abbey; passing first through a building to the west of the nave, it then cut a 45 metre wide strip through the western half of the Nave, the West Cloister Walk, the Cloister, the Dormitory, part of the Chapter House, the Refectory and a number of associated buildings to the southeast. Before the bypass work had started, the Folk House Archaeological Club had begun excavations on the line of the road, and during its construction many archaeological features were identified and recorded. A plan of this work was produced in 1967, but has not yet been published. Interim accounts of the work have appeared in the FHAC Newsletter at regular intervals since 1962. Although in the circumstances the above work was most commendable, a properly financed excavation by the Department of the Environment, carried out in advance of the road construction, would have produced an immeasurably greater amount of information, including a much more detailed plan of the Abbey's development. It must be concluded that an excellent opportunity to excavate fully part of an important Augustinian Abbey was missed.

6.8 Concurrent with and after the rescue work outlined above, research excavation by the F.H.A.C. has continued on the site of the Abbey church and adjacent buildings immediately to the east of the A4 bypass. At present work is proceeding on the clearance of the South Transept and Chapter House. The excavations have been described briefly in the interim reports referred to above. In 1968 it was stated by Mr. E.J. Mason of the F.H.A.C. that a full report on the A4 bypass excavation could not be issued until a number of questions had been answered by further research, and that another three years' work would be necessary before a full definitive report could appear. No plans of the excavations or drawings of the finds have yet been published, and although a report is in preparation, the excavations continue into their fourteenth year, the present aim being to examine all available parts of the site down to the bedrock.

#### *The Town*

6.9 The medieval core of Keynsham has been redeveloped to a greater extent than any of the other towns in this report. Over 42% of the frontages of High Street/Temple Street have been redeveloped since 1945, mainly in the last five years (see Map 11), in an area likely to have been the original centre of the medieval town, without any excavation taking place. Some medieval pottery has been salvaged from builders' trenches and deposited in Bristol City Museum.

#### *The two Roman Villas*

6.10 Outside the limits of the medieval town two important Roman villas have been excavated and partly destroyed. Though for reasons stated in the Introduction (1.6) they are outside the scope of this report, it is relevant to remark that the foundations of one were relaid just inside the gates of Fry's Factory as a gesture to their importance. These remains now have little resemblance to their former appearance 'in situ', though perhaps they serve to illustrate the futility of moving ancient monuments.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL (see Map 10)

6.11 The following summary of the town's archaeological potential is based on the documentary records; on the research carried out by the Folk House Archaeological Club; and on the topography of the town as seen on the earliest maps available.

### *Saxon Keynsham*

6.12 The earlier village was probably centred around a church, which would have been on the site of either the later abbey or the present parish church. Saxon stonework, probably from the site of the abbey, built into the gateway to Abbotsford in Station Road, suggests the earlier presence of a Saxon church, perhaps of considerable importance (6.1). If by the late Saxon period a Manor House existed close to the church it would probably have been incorporated into the Abbey precinct after 1166.

### *The Abbey*

6.13 The Tithe Apportionment Map of 1840 (Map 10) shows the likely area of the Abbey Precinct. Within this area building would only have been impossible on the steep western slope down to the River Chew.

6.14 It is likely that the original precinct as laid out c. 1166 extended as far as the northern end of High Street, and then ran south along the line of the narrow back lane which still runs behind the southern end of High Street (see Maps 9 & 10). The town may well have been laid out (1.10-11) at a slightly later date, and part of the precinct possibly including monastic buildings along the north eastern side of High Street would then have been given over to tenement plots (6.18). It is not certain whether the parish church would already have been in existence at the date of the Abbey's foundation (6.12). It should be noted that the Abbey church was constructed in line with the parish church (Map 9); a succession of churches in line was a feature of several important early medieval monastic sites. The remaining area between the two churches at Keynsham should be regarded as being of great archaeological interest. The Abbey cemetery was either south of the Parish Church, burials being recorded there in 1956, or east of the Abbey, where burials were noted c. 1835 (6.5) and have also been recorded by the Folk House Archaeological Club.

6.15 Documents relating to the Abbey, including leases and visitations, show that within the precinct were a tannery, smithy, home farm, almonry and vineyard, in addition to the buildings that would be found in any Augustinian abbey. The Abbey owned Avonmyll and Southmyll, both used as fulling mills by 1536. A post-war bandstand is sited on the latter. A reference of 1526 indicates the presence of an adjoining 'mansion'.

6.16 There is much still to be learnt about the history and plan of Keynsham Abbey, and substantial areas with archaeological potential remain on both sides of the A4 bypass. The excavation of monastic sites is now seen to be a complex task, and it is anticipated that further archaeological research in this area should take place only in advance of destruction. In the event of future development within the area of the Abbey precinct, proper archaeological research will be an absolute necessity.

## *The Medieval Town*

6.17 The map of 1840 is at present the best guide to the topography of the medieval town. The precinct would appear to predate the laying out of High Street/Temple Street which was the main street of the medieval town. Probably the back lane east of the High Street represents not only the original line of the road between Bath and Bristol but also the western boundary of the Abbey precinct. The position of the High Street was determined by taking a line from the north west corner of the precinct and running south along the ridge overlooking the west bank of the River Chew. The setting out of a town would have necessitated immediate alterations to the shape of the Abbey precinct (6.14).

6.18 Distinct groups of tenement plots (see Map 10) on the west side of High Street/Temple Street and the east side of Temple Street suggest that the town was laid out in several stages. The earliest elements could be on the west side of High Street/Temple Street between Charlton Road and Carpenters' Lane. Except for an area in the centre (6.21), this part of the town consists of regularly laid out tenement plots with pasture (1.16) immediately behind them. Behind the pasture were the great open fields divided into narrow strips. The east side of the same street would be more or less contemporary. The very straightness of High Street/Temple Street indicates its planned origin (1.10-11), but the section south of Carpenters' Lane, which is on a slightly different alignment, could be a later medieval addition. If an earlier village was centred around the Church, then it is likely that many of the tenement plots were formerly strips in the open fields.

## *The Church of St. John Baptist*

6.19 The earliest part of the present church is the thirteenth century chancel, nothing being known of earlier churches on the site.

## *Hospital of St. John Baptist*

6.20 A religious hospital is recorded as having been founded in the fifteenth century; its location is not known, though its dedication suggests a possible link with the parish church. Detailed investigation of the town's buildings could reveal its whereabouts, if it is not amongst the 42% of buildings recently demolished in High Street/Temple Street.

## *Market Place*

6.21 A market place may have existed either east or west of the point marked 'M' on Map 10, the most obvious site being to the west, where the regular line of tenement plots is broken, possibly by later infilling.

## *Mills*

6.22 Two medieval mill sites have been referred to already (6.15). That within the Abbey precinct (Southmyll) is now the site of a post-war bandstand, although the mill-wheel has been preserved. A third probable medieval mill lay upstream on the site of the Albert Mill, which has recently been recorded in great detail by the Bristol Industrial Archaeological Society.

## *Standing Buildings*

6.23 Twenty years ago Keynsham had many buildings of the eighteenth century or earlier, only a proportion of which were included in the Department of the Environment's Lists of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. Of those included 81 have been demolished since the Lists were prepared. The Lists have recently been revised, and new additions are expected to augment the remaining buildings on the original schedule.

## Recording the Buildings

6.24 In addition to the 81 Listed Buildings referred to above, at least another 50 buildings of probably historic interest have been demolished since 1945. This number included houses in Prospect Place, Bath Hill, Bristol Road and the High Street. Photographs of practically all these buildings have been collected by the Keynsham and Saltford Local History Society in conjunction with the Keynsham Civic Society. These photographs indicate that many of the buildings demolished, for instance on Bath Hill or in Temple Street, were probably of late medieval origin.

## AREA OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

6.25 The area of archaeological potential is shown on Map 11. It approximates to the area of probably Saxon and later medieval occupation (Map 10). Only in the mid-nineteenth century did the town expand beyond these limits.

6.26 Map 9 shows the Abbey precinct in detail. The purpose of this plan is to emphasise the great potential of the remaining parts of this important Augustinian Abbey. It is based partly on Brock's account; partly on the records made while the A4 bypass was being constructed; partly on the information outlined above (6.5-8, 6.13-16); and partly on the plan of Walsingham Priory, an Augustinian house of comparable importance founded three years after Keynsham. The approximate positions of church, cloister and refectory are fairly certain.

## AREA TO BE DEVELOPED

6.27 Map 11 shows an assessment partly based on the *South East Environs of Bristol Map* (Somerset County Council 1972) of past and future development in Keynsham. As can be seen redevelopment has proceeded rapidly since 1945, most of it having taken place in the last ten years, and it can be anticipated that the older buildings in the town centre will continue to be replaced. No detailed formal planning proposals for Keynsham have been issued, although informal documents draw attention to future traffic problems in High Street. These may be alleviated by developing the Back Lane area as a through road, which would necessitate archaeological excavation within the Abbey Precinct (6.14, Map 9). No schedule of archaeological sites to be developed is included here, because any site within the town, not recently redeveloped, should be regarded as a potential area for future rescue excavation.

## AREAS AND SITES TO BE PRESERVED

### Conservation Area

6.28 No Conservation Area has been proposed.

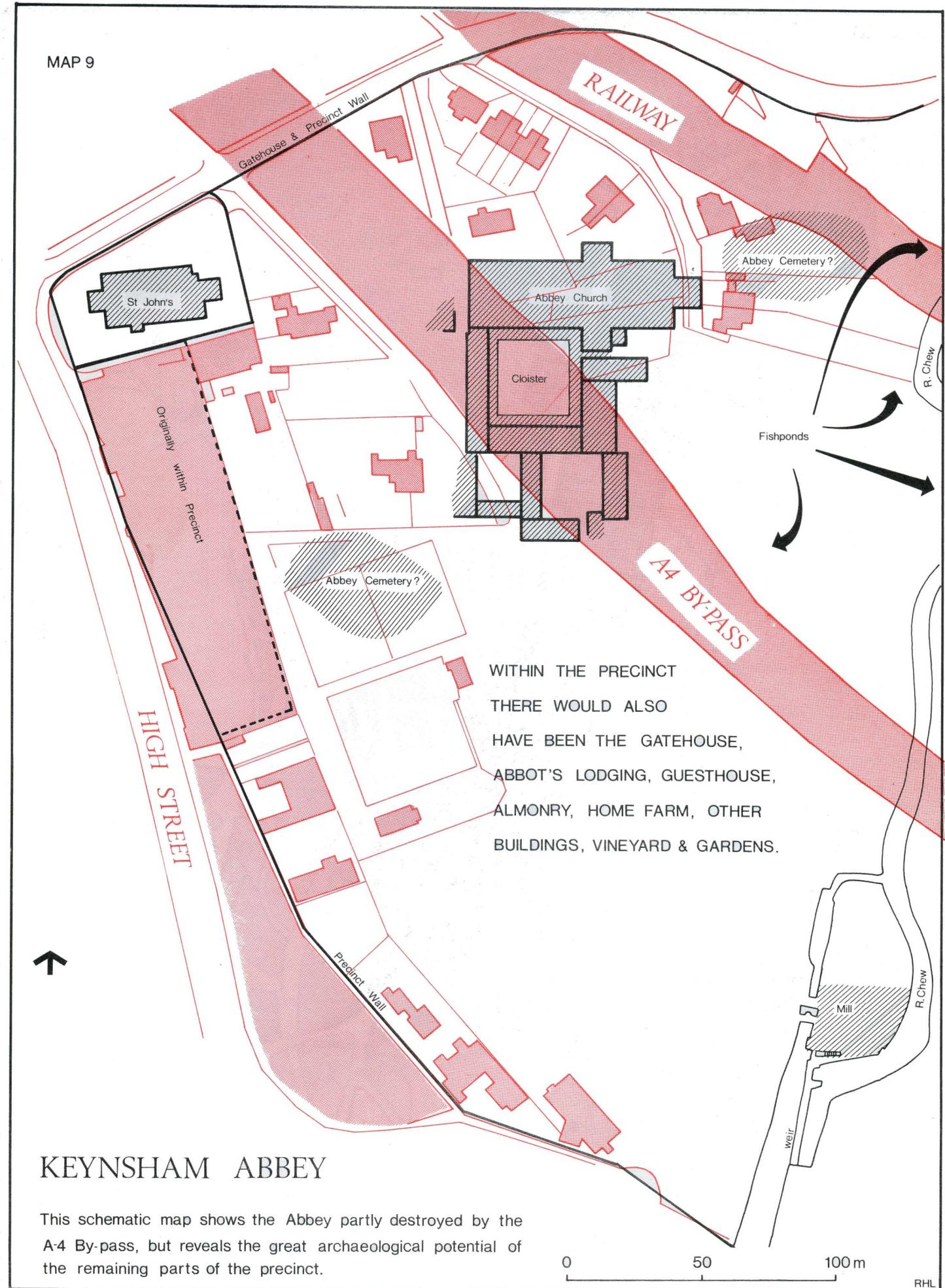
### Listed Buildings

6.29 Map 11 shows all Listed Buildings within the town, though the List is due to be revised (6.23). It should be noted that former Grade III buildings have received little protection, and that even Grade II buildings have frequently been demolished. 81 Listed Buildings were demolished between 1949 and 1974 (6.23).

## CONCLUSIONS

6.30 Keynsham, with its great Augustinian Abbey, was perhaps the most important of the smaller medieval towns covered in this report. Although 50% of the visual evidence for its medieval past has probably already been destroyed, it is hoped that the parts of the Abbey precinct containing areas of archaeological interest will remain intact for future generations to investigate, should the need arise. The present series of excavations 1962–75 should be completed as soon as possible, and a full report published (6.8, 6.16, 9.9). Several areas within the medieval town are likely to be redeveloped at some future date, but the need for archaeological investigation will depend very much on the extent and location of particular sites (9.1-9).

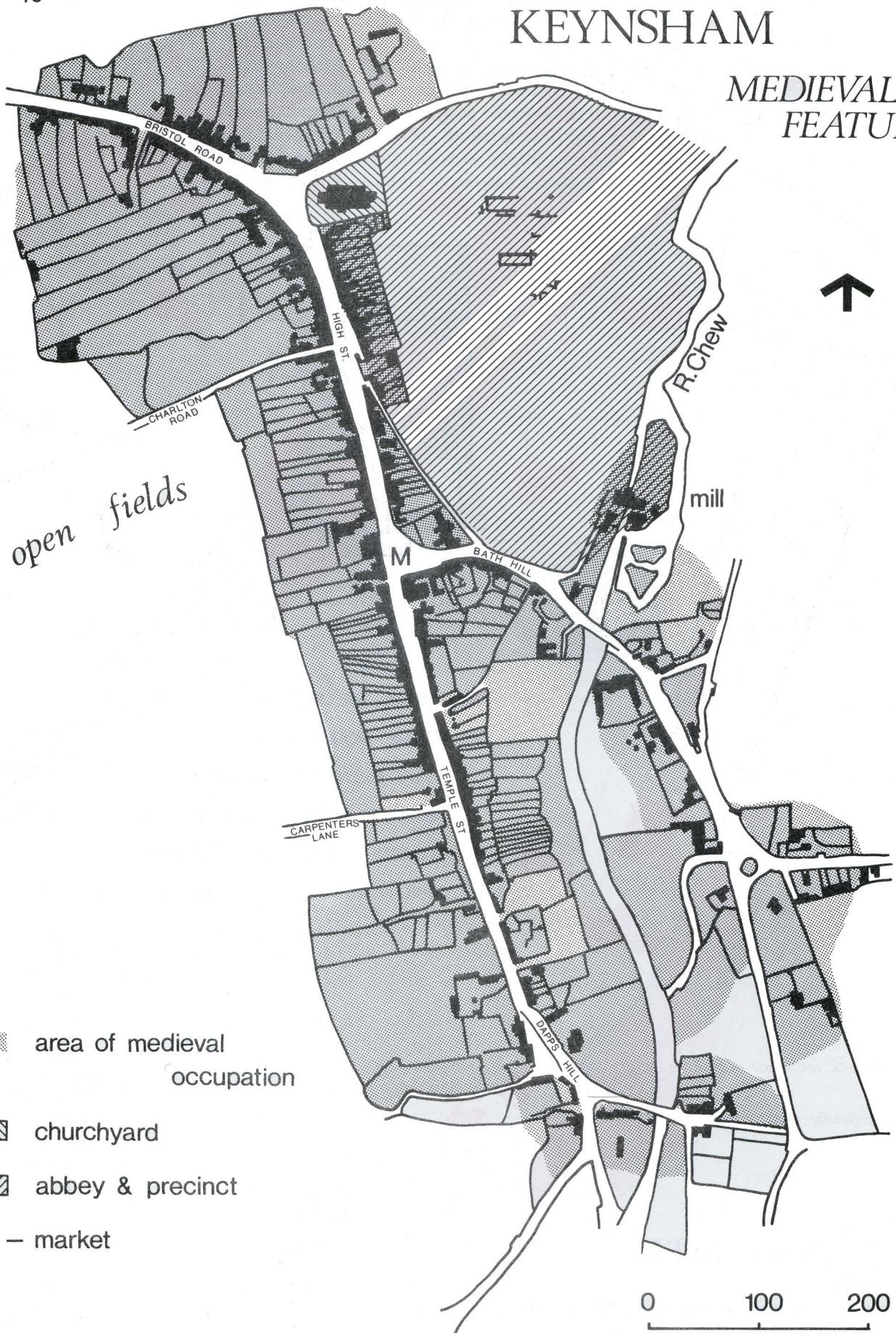
MAP 9



MAP 10

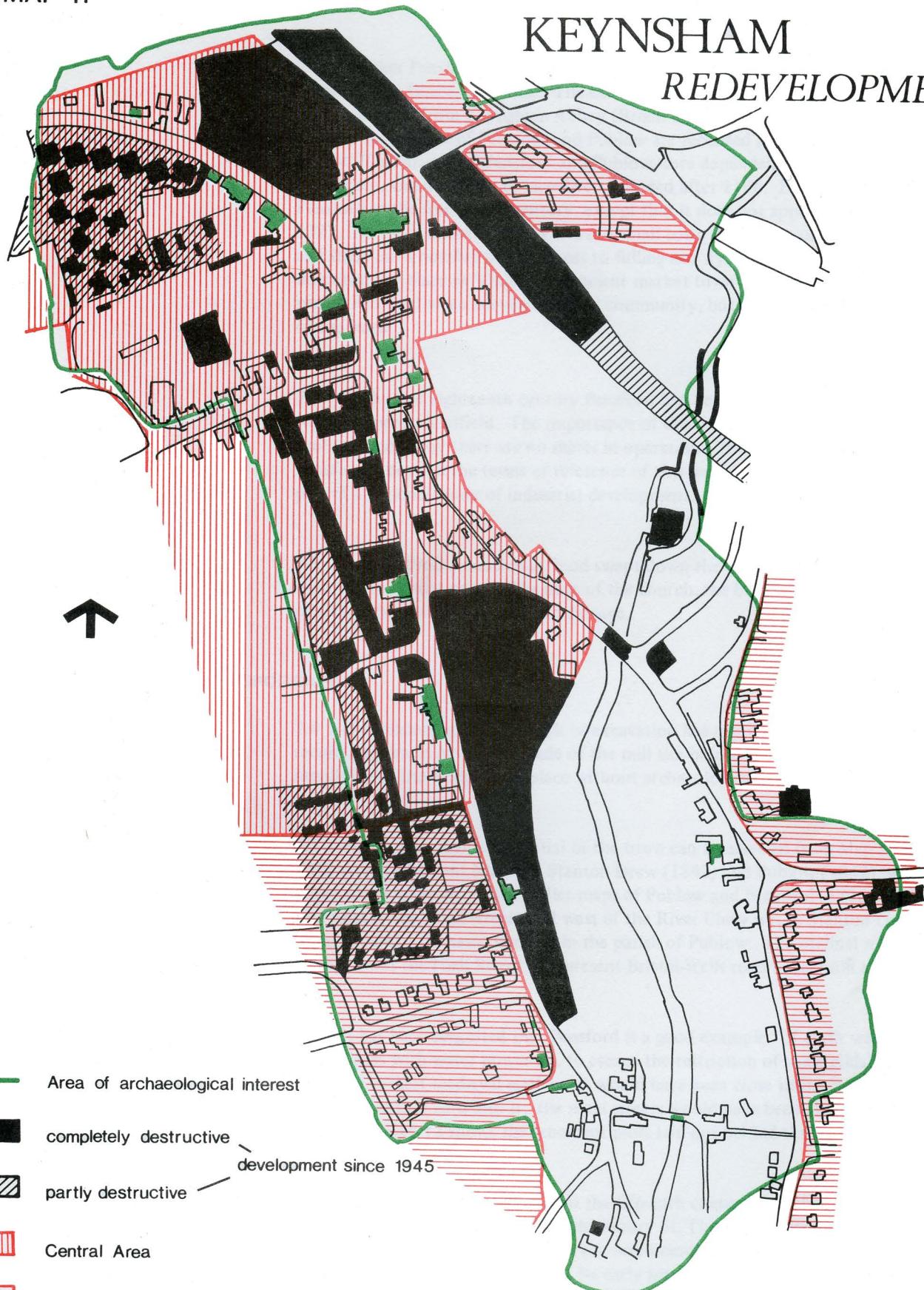
# KEYNSHAM

## MEDIEVAL FEATURES



MAP 11

# KEYNSHAM REDEVELOPMENT



0 100 200 m

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## SECTION SEVEN – PENSFORD

### HISTORY

7.1 Neither Pensford nor the parish of Publow, within which it partly lies, are mentioned in Domesday Book. The earliest reference to Pensford is on a twelfth century inscribed stone from Keynsham Abbey (Brock 1875, 204). In the early thirteenth century the manors of Pensford and Publow are recorded as belonging to the St. Loes family. The chapels of Pensford and Publow were dependent upon the Abbey of Keynsham, and are likely to have been founded after 1166. Little can be said about Pensford in the fourteenth century, except that it does not appear in the Lay Subsidy of 1327. By the sixteenth century it was a small town dependent on the cloth industry, and there are a number of references to fulling and dyeing; Leland writing c. 1546 described the place as 'a small but ancient market town'. By the end of the medieval period Pensford was a non-agricultural community, but not a 'town' in the strictest sense of the word.

7.2 In the late eighteenth century Pensford had become one of the main centres of the North Somerset coalfield. The importance of this coalfield declined in the nineteenth century, and today there are no mines in operation. The industrial archaeology of Pensford is beyond the terms of reference of this report, and needs to be examined as part of a regional study of industrial development.

7.3 In July 1968 a disastrous flood swept down the Chew Valley, and parts of Pensford were 12 feet under water. The nave of the church, the bridge, the mill and a number of other buildings all suffered severe damage.

### ARCHAEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

7.4 No archaeological fieldwork or excavation has taken place within the town. No record appears to have been made of the mill site before clearance commenced, and the rebuilding of the bridge took place without archaeological investigation.

7.5 The archaeological potential of the town can be assessed from Map 12 based on the Tithe Apportionment Maps for Stanton Drew (1842) and Publow (1842), with additional information taken from two earlier maps of Publow and Pensford (1776, 1810). The area west of the small stream and west of the River Chew was in Stanton Drew parish; the area east of the same line was in the parish of Publow. The original main road through Pensford was the High Street, the present Bristol-Wells road being built after c. 1810.

#### *The Medieval Settlement*

7.6 It has been suggested that Pensford is a good example "of cloth workers migrating into villages with water power . . . to escape the restriction of town gilds", (Savage 1954, 71). The earliest medieval settlement would have been close to the River Chew and the small stream that runs into it; the main streets would have been High Street and Church Street, and Map 12 shows the tenement plots laid out behind them.

#### *The Church of St. Thomas à Becket*

7.7 The tower may be earlier than the fifteenth century, but the rest of the church was rebuilt in 1869. Until the nineteenth century St. Thomas-in-Pensford was a chapelry dependent on Stanton Drew. From the seventeenth century it was certainly the church serving the whole settlement (7.8). Its early history is uncertain, and of great interest since it would cast light on the settlement's origins. Its nave is likely to be demolished, giving a valuable opportunity for archaeological investigation to establish the church's early history.

#### *Chapel Barton*

7.8 Collinson records that a chapel, which formerly stood at “Borough Bank”, was demolished in the mid-seventeenth century (Collinson 1791 429). A field called ‘Chapel Barton’ (see Map 12) indicates its approximate position and shows that it stood in Publow parish. This may have been the chapel dependent upon Keynsham Abbey (7.1). Any future infilling at this point should be preceded by archaeological investigation, which could determine whether or not medieval Pensford was served by two separate chapels – one dependent on Stanton Drew, the other dependent on Keynsham.

#### *Chantry Chapel*

7.9 Collinson refers to a Chantry chapel founded by the St. Loes family. Its position is not known.

#### *Mills*

7.10 The only obvious mill site is beside St. Thomas’s Church, though other mills may have existed alongside the smaller stream that joins the River Chew beside the bridge. Any redevelopment of the site (the buildings were demolished after the 1968 flood) should be preceded by archaeological investigation. Detailed fieldwork should be carried out to establish the existence of any further mill sites.

#### *Industrial and Domestic Life*

7.11 Unlike the other medieval towns in this report, Pensford does not have a well defined medieval street pattern with long tenements and back lanes. The properties on the east side of High Street and immediately north of Chew Bridge show the most obvious medieval features. There are no topographical clues to indicate whether the earliest settlement was on the Publow or Stanton Drew sides of the River Chew. Excavation of possible medieval tenements in the centre of the town could be extremely rewarding in that it would cast much light on this problem, in addition to providing evidence of social and economic life in the medieval settlement.

#### *Standing Buildings*

7.12 Pensford has a considerable number of buildings of the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, only six of which are mentioned in the Department of the Environment’s Lists of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. These include the railway viaduct, the Lock-up and Chew Bridge. The quick survey undertaken for this report revealed over 80 buildings dating from before 1840 and not Listed.

#### *Recording the Buildings*

7.13 No thorough photographic or drawn record of the buildings exists. The National Monuments Record includes photographs of the church exterior and interior, medieval cross fragments in the wall of two cottages (7.15 (c)), the bridge after the 1968 flood, the George and Dragon and the Lock-up.

### **AREA OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL**

7.14 The area of archaeological potential is shown on Map 13, and corresponds to the probable area of medieval occupation as shown on Map 12.

## AREAS TO BE DEVELOPED

7.15 Map 13 shows an assessment of future development in Pensford. No detailed planning documents have included Pensford in their brief, and this assessment is based first on a site survey to identify areas of possible future infilling and second on an examination of planning permissions either pending or applied for. Six of these likely developments call for particular mention:

- (a) A sewage works, with pumping station and pipelines, marked (1) on Map 13. The pipeline trench could provide a continuous section of much of medieval Pensford.
- (b) The nave of the church is likely to be demolished (7.7).
- (c) The two cottages adjoining the Institute are likely to be demolished. Two fragments of a medieval cross in the walls should go to Bristol City Museum.
- (d) The area around the field called 'Chapel Barton' could be developed in the future.
- (e) The mill site could be redeveloped.

## AREAS AND SITES TO BE PRESERVED

### *Conservation Area*

7.16 No Conservation Area has been proposed for Pensford (see 8.16).

### *Listed Buildings*

7.17 Map 13 shows all six of the Listed Buildings in Pensford, including the railway viaduct and medieval bridge.

### *Ancient Monuments*

7.18 The railway viaduct and Lock-up or round house are also Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL POLICY

7.19 Future archaeological research in Pensford should be related to the above factors (7.14-18), and to the more general recommendations in Section Nine.

## PENSFORD

## MEDIEVAL FEATURES



■ area of medieval occupation

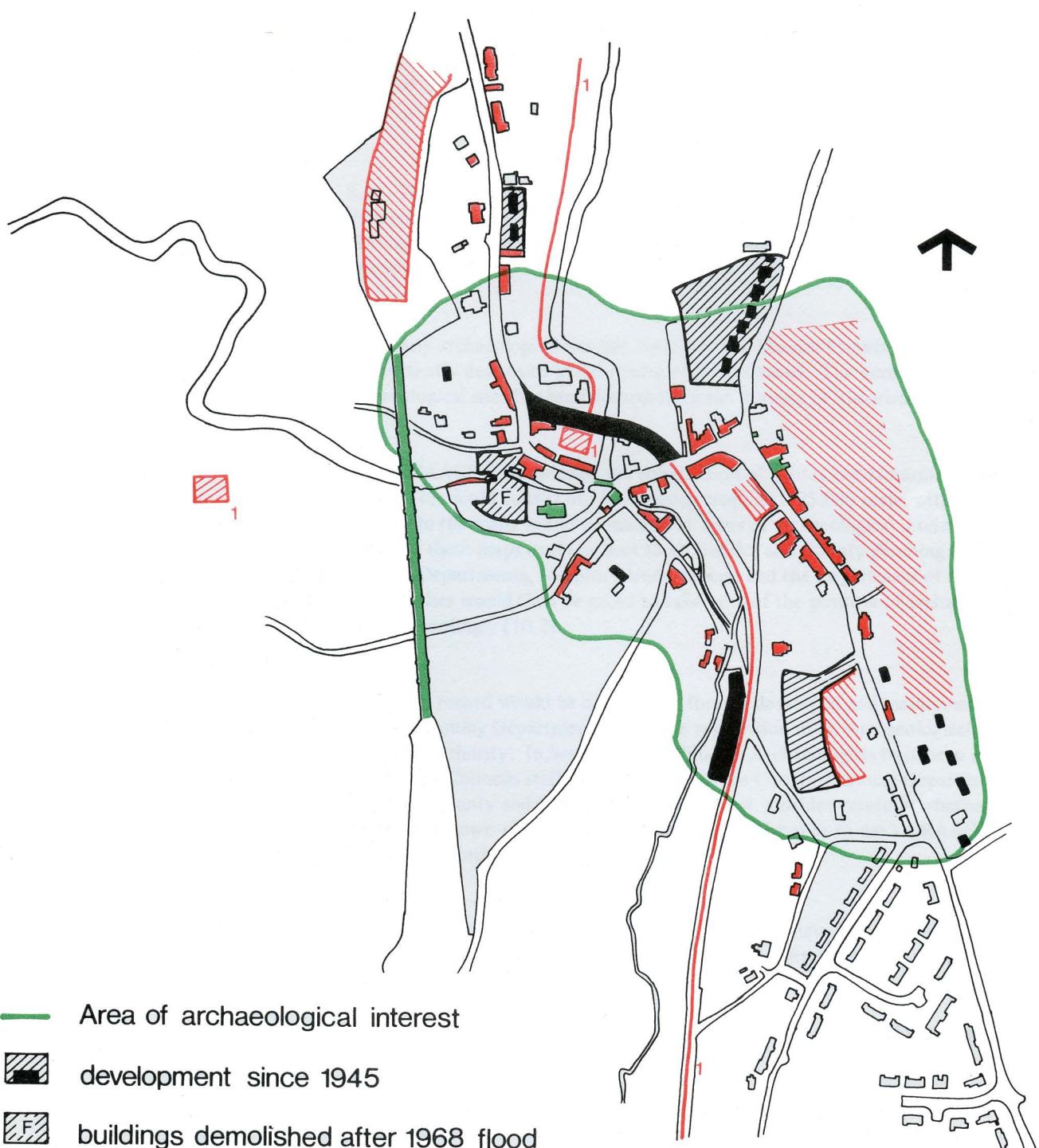
■ churchyard

M — mill

C — Chapel Barton

0 100 200 m

## PENSFORD THE STATE OF DEVELOPMENT



0 100 200 m

## SECTION EIGHT – ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PLANNING DEPARTMENTS

### THE NEED FOR A SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

8.1 The six medieval towns dealt with in this survey are among many sites and areas of archaeological interest unrecognised by District (and County) Planning Offices, which are at present only officially aware of archaeological sites if they are:

- (1) Scheduled Ancient Monuments;
- or (2) Listed Buildings;
- or (3) Marked on an available Ordnance Survey map.

8.2 The Archaeology Division of the Ordnance Survey maintains a large, but now less than comprehensive, record of archaeological sites in the country. Only a small selection of those in the record are marked on the published maps, and those not marked are unknown to the Planning Offices.

8.3 Any archaeological site not known to the District Planning Office may be inadvertently destroyed in the course of development. The unrecorded destruction of archaeological sites has been compared to the burning of historical manuscripts unread.

8.4 CRAAGS is considering the compilation of a Sites and Monuments Record for Avon. This could consist of transparency maps at 1:25,000 scale, with a related card index. On the maps would be marked all areas of archaeological interest. Dyeline copies of these maps could be sent to all District and County Planning Offices, Technical Services Departments, Statutory Undertakings and the Department of the Environment. These bodies would then be asked to take note of the position of archaeological sites and to act accordingly (10.2).

8.5 This record would be a substitute for one developed and maintained in a County or District Planning Department, under the supervision of an Archaeological Officer to the Planning Authority. In Somerset and Wiltshire Archaeologists have been appointed to the County Councils staff; in the former in the County Planning Department. In the long-term County and District Authorities must consider carefully whether they wish to prepare their own plans (as in Somerset and Wiltshire) or to use a CRAAGS Sites and Monuments Record on an agency basis.

8.6 Twenty-two County Councils in England now have archaeologists on their staff, following the recommendations of the Walsh Committee, summarised in Circular 11/72, parts of which are quoted.

“Recommendations of the Field Monuments Committee directed at Local Authorities”

Paragraph 50. ‘The safeguarding of unscheduled field monuments is a matter for local authorities to consider through the use of their planning powers and otherwise . . .’

Paragraphs 77-78. ‘County planning authorities should maintain a consolidated record of known field monuments . . .’

Paragraphs 158-167. ‘County Councils should consider appointing archaeological officers either individually or in appropriate cases, on a shared or part-time basis. These officers should maintain close relations with the planning department and keep in close touch with the Department’s Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments.’”

Other recommendations in Circular 11/72 are also of importance to Local Authorities.

## PROBLEMS OF RECORDING SITES AND MONUMENTS ABOUT TO BE DESTROYED

### *Standing Buildings*

8.7 The Department of the Environment's Lists of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest are based mainly on an external examination of the buildings. The Lists of the six towns in this report were first compiled in the late 1940's and except in the case of Keynsham have not been revised since. Reassessment of the other Lists would probably result in substantial additions (see 2.9, 4.12, 7.12). It must be particularly emphasised that detailed architectural surveys approaching the standards exemplified in the work of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments have not been carried out in any of the six towns.

8.8 When approval has been given to demolish a Listed Building, the owner is obliged by law to notify the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments; he is liable to a fine of up to £250 if he does not comply. In practice the Commission's load of work is such that generally no more than a photographic record can be made, which then forms part of the National Monuments Record at the Department of the Environment, Fortress House, 23 Savile Row, London W1X 1AB. In the case of buildings formerly Listed Grade III and/or now on the Local List no recording procedure whatever is legally enforceable.

8.9 If the building to be demolished is not Listed, there is no statutory provision at all for recording it. Some unlisted buildings are in fact either historically or otherwise valuable, though they may have been so altered that their real character is not apparent. It is desirable that ALL buildings to be demolished, whether Listed or not, should be examined by an expert, and a photographic and/or drawn record made where necessary. Any demolition of a building within a Conservation Area now requires Planning Permission (Town and Country Amenities Act 1974, 277A).

### *Excavation*

8.10 In certain instances it will be necessary for archaeological excavation to take place before development. It is essential that the archaeologist be given sufficient time and the necessary access for this. If the developer is the Local Authority both should be forthcoming, though with a private developer difficulties may arise, and on occasion permission to excavate may be refused. With sites of major importance, the Planning Authority should insist that provision for archaeological recording be a recommendation in the Planning Consent, as is now the case, for example, in Bristol.

8.11 There will be instances where a site within an area of archaeological interest is not examined in detail until the contractor begins his work. It is essential that, wherever possible, the contractor allows the archaeologist access to the site to make rapid records of strata and other information including any chance finds in position. The latter problem is partly solved by the contractor working under RIBA clause 34 (Joint Contracts Tribunal 1971), which stipulates that antiquities should be left in place and that the responsibility for dealing with them rests with the Architect/Supervising Officer.

8.12 In Keynsham and Thornbury in particular, much development has taken place without adequate archaeological research and as a result the origin and development of these towns remain guesswork. The state of affairs which allowed Keynsham Abbey to be bisected by a dual carriageway, without even a major excavation in advance, must never be allowed to repeat itself.

8.13 Preservation should play an important part in the formulation of archaeological and planning policies in these six towns. "In conditions of rapid destruction of archaeological landscapes, preservation must have a part in any overall policy. Some areas must be left for future research by archaeologists equipped with a far greater range of skills and techniques than are available at the present time" (Benson & Miles 1974). There are at least 67 small medieval towns in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset, and it is unlikely that present archaeological resources could cope with significant developments in more than five of these in any one year. In the formulating of planning strategy, the very fact that there are only six small medieval towns within Avon should be sufficient justification for a policy of preservation in the new county.

8.14 In these six towns preservation can best be achieved by the designation of Conservation Areas, such as have already been declared in Marshfield and Wickwar. The procedure for the designation of such Areas is set out in the *Town and Country Amenities Act 1974*, amplified by *Circular 147/74*: "The Secretaries of State appreciate that some authorities still have staffing difficulties following local government re-organisation and must limit expenditure . . . . However, they believe that some authorities could have proceeded with designation more quickly and widely."

8.15 The criteria for possible Conservation Areas are set out in *Circular 53/67*: "They may be large or small, from whole town centres to squares, terraces and smaller groups of buildings. They will often be centred on listed buildings, but not always; pleasant groups of other buildings, open spaces, trees, a *historic street pattern*, a village green, or *features of archaeological interest*, may also contribute to the special character of an area" (my italics).

8.16 The conclusion must be drawn that substantial parts of Chipping Sodbury, Keynsham, Pensford and Thornbury should be so designated. These are:

**Chipping Sodbury (Map 1)**

- (a) entire area of medieval town;
- (b) seventeenth century suburb around Brook Street (included in area of archaeological interest, Map 2).

There are 97 Listed buildings and at least 100 constructed before c. 1840 which are not Listed.

**Keynsham (Map 9)**

- (a) both sides of High Street;
- (b) area between Dapps Hill and Gooseberry Hill.

Both are within the area of medieval occupation. The number of Listed Buildings is likely to be greatly increased when the revised Lists are published.

**Pensford (Map 13)**

The whole area is of archaeological interest. As well as six Listed Buildings, there are at least 80 buildings built before c. 1840 which are not Listed. The historic area is now bisected by the A37, and it might be preferable to consider two separate Conservation Areas on either side of the road.

**Thornbury (Map 6)**

With the exception of the area south of St. John's Street and east of the new road north of Horseshoe Lane and continuing southwards along Rock Street, the whole area is archaeologically important. It is essential that the 'historic street pattern' (4.10, 8.15) be taken into account. There are 68 Listed Buildings and at least 80 buildings built before c. 1840 which are not Listed.

## *Ancient Monuments*

8.17 For nearly a century it has been recognised that the Nation's most important archaeological remains should be Scheduled as Ancient Monuments. Within the six towns in this report there are three Ancient Monuments:

Keynsham	Chewton Keynsham packhorse bridge
Pensford (Publow)	Railway Viaduct
Pensford (Publow)	Round House (Lock-up)

8.18 It is recommended that the following be considered for Scheduling an Ancient Monuments:

- (1) *Chipping Sodbury* Medieval Bridge at Brook Street
- (2) *Keynsham* Areas of Abbey Precinct (as originally laid out – see Map 11) except where cut by A4 bypass and railway.

8.19 Parts of the walls of Keynsham Abbey are visible within the Folk House Archaeological Club's excavations and in the side of the cutting made by the A4 bypass. These should be taken into Guardianship by Wansdyke District Council or Avon County Council under the provisions of the Ancient Monuments Acts.

## *Listed Buildings*

8.20 The principles of selection for Listing Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest were revised in 1970 (Circular 102/74), when it was decided to abolish the III grading and to up-grade to the Statutory List certain categories of buildings that had previously been or would have been, graded III. The results of the quick surveys undertaken for this report (8.7) have been forwarded to the Department of the Environment (Historic Buildings Section), and it is recommended that the Lists for Chipping Sodbury, Thornbury and Pensford be revised as soon as possible. The Lists for Marshfield and Wickwar should also be revised, although the need is less urgent.

## **THE ORGANISATION OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN AVON**

### *C.R.A.A.G.S.*

8.21 All Department of the Environment grants for rescue archaeology projects in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset are now being made through the *Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset* (see 1.2) to ensure that decisions on the expenditure of DoE grants are reached within a justifiable and publicly understood framework of archaeological research, and so that the needs of rescue archaeology can be organised where these are not served by existing bodies.

8.22 Within Avon the only existing organisation carrying out a continuing programme of rescue archaeology with DoE grants through CRAAGS is Bristol City Museum. Bristol University and Bath Excavations Committee have carried out 'ad hoc' projects in the past. Elsewhere in Avon, in the Districts of Kingswood, Northavon, Wansdyke and Woodspring, the needs of rescue archaeology are partly met by the two Archaeological Field Officers employed by CRAAGS. The compilation of this report and the preparation of a Sites and Monuments Record (8.1-5) are only small parts of the necessary work.

8.23 Much archaeological research in Avon is carried out by local Archaeological Societies, Museums and Universities, and in recent years many have co-operated in the rescue archaeology projects necessitated by the construction of the M5 motorway. Local Societies have been active in watching construction works like the Keynsham bypass and those carried out in Thornbury. All these societies are members of the Avon Archaeological Council, whose object is 'to promote in conjunction with its constituent bodies and for the public benefit the study of archaeology in the County of Avon'.

8.24 The extent to which local archaeological societies are involved in rescue archaeology projects will depend on their particular interests, but CRAAGS is seeking and will welcome their help in all branches of its work.

8.25 Any archaeological organisation may apply to CRAAGS for DoE grants for rescue archaeology projects, including fieldwork, and publication.

## SECTION NINE – A POLICY FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

9.1 It has already been said that decisions to adopt particular rescue archaeological projects must be reached within 'a justifiable and publicly understood framework of archaeological research' (8.21). One of the purposes of this report has been to ascertain the archaeological potential of the six towns. This can now be summarised, and the possibilities of future research in them outlined.

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL

#### *Origins*

9.2 With the exception of Chipping Sodbury, little is known about the origins of the six towns, though in the cases of Keynsham, Marshfield, Thornbury and Wickwar, an identifiable medieval town appears to have supplanted a settlement of Saxon or earlier origin. It is very important to identify these earlier settlements. Pensford is probably later in origin, but its early history is as interesting and can only be unravelled by archaeological research.

#### *The topography of the town*

9.3 In each town the earliest maps available have been an essential clue to the archaeological potential; at the same time they have posed many new questions, such as the origin of the street plan, the location of the market place and the sequence of urban growth. These and many other topographical questions must be considered in future research projects.

#### *Population*

9.4 Particularly in the cases of Keynsham and Marshfield, the extent of late medieval development is uncertain. If documentary research cannot define it archaeological excavation must.

#### *House types*

9.5 At present not one single house plan of fourteenth century date or earlier can be offered for any of the six towns. These can be found only in the course of detailed excavation, or occasionally by the examination of buildings apparently of later date. Research must also be directed towards standing buildings of the fifteenth century and later. Only when house plans are available will it be possible to discuss local types and problems of social differentiation within these towns.

#### *Churches*

9.6 Recently the potential and future problems of church archaeology have begun to be defined (Jesson 1973), concern and opportunity arising mainly from redundant churches. In the six towns of Avon one such case is Pensford church, the detailed examination of which could be of great interest.

#### *Medieval religious houses*

9.7 The most important of these is Keynsham Abbey, discussed in detail above (6.5-16). Documentary research may cast further light on the location of St. John's Hospital, Keynsham, and on the location of various medieval chantries.

*Excavation*

9.8 Future archaeological policy in the six smaller medieval towns of Avon needs to be weighed against the research problems and potential of similar towns in Gloucestershire and Somerset. Within Avon, rescue archaeology projects must be directed towards the problems outlined above. The ways in which this may be achieved should be carefully considered. Archaeology is frequently thought to be synonymous with excavation, but this is by no means so. Archaeological field survey may sometimes yield as much or more information than excavation; it is certainly much cheaper. In these six towns major rescue excavations should be of complete groups of tenements or at the very least of complete individual tenement plots. Opportunities for major excavations are likely to occur in Keynsham, Pensford and Thornbury, and possibly in Chipping Sodbury. Smaller excavations will be necessary from time to time, but these will take place only with specific questions in mind. All sites within areas of archaeological interest will need to be watched (often by local groups) in the course of the contractors' works.

9.9 Excavation of unthreatened sites should take place only where there is a sound academic reason behind the project plus the competence and financial backing to carry the work through to eventual publication. Over thirty excavations carried out in Avon between 1925 and 1965 have still not been published in any adequate form.

*Survey*

9.10 This report should have demonstrated that urban excavation without a survey of the existing evidence cannot be justified. Within the towns examined, detailed parish surveys have been completed at Thornbury, and are in progress at Marshfield. Further research into property boundary lines in all these towns could reveal much about the towns' development, and along with other documentary research could pose new questions for archaeology to answer as well as expanding knowledge of a town's history in its own right.

*Recording Buildings*

9.11 Department of the Environment grants are available for rescue archaeology projects involving survey and excavation but not for the recording of buildings. This can lead to the strange situation in which large sums of money can be spent on excavating the foundations of fifteenth century buildings, while most buildings of similar date still standing, but about to be demolished, would qualify, if Listed, only for the statutory recording by the Royal Commission outlined above (8.8).

9.12 At present there is no co-ordination to the recording of buildings in Avon. Existing collections of photographs and drawings include: National Monuments Record; Bath Reference Library; Bristol City Library; Bristol City Museum; Bristol Buildings Record, Depart of Architecture, University of Bath; various departments in all the District Councils; Local History Library, Taunton; various private collections; Frith Collection; Keynsham and Saltford Local History Society. A card index to all existing records would prevent duplication of effort. It would also be of use to the considerable number of persons interested in historic buildings, and would permit an overall assessment of the need to record particular types.

9.13 A policy for the study of buildings in Avon is necessary to consider further the problems of recording (8.7-9), the shortage of funds (9.11), the lack of co-ordination between existing collections of photographs and drawings (9.12), and academic priorities.

## SECTION TEN – SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PLANNING DEPARTMENTS

10.1 District and County Authorities must be fully informed of the whereabouts of all archaeological sites and monuments and all 'archaeologically sensitive' areas. This is best achieved through a Sites and Monuments Record (8.1-6).

10.1 To ensure that areas, sites and buildings of archaeological and historic interest are not destroyed without a proper record being made, it is essential that there be full co-operation between the County and District Planning Departments and the Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset, the independent regional executive acting as an agency for the Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings, Department of the Environment (8.7-12).

10.3 Preservation must play a greater part in local and government policy (8.13): Conservation Areas should be declared where appropriate (8.14-16), and Listing and Scheduling be expanded where necessary (8.18, 8.20). Certain sites of importance could be taken into Guardianship by the District or County (8.19).

10.4 The recommendations of the Field Monuments Committee (DoE Circular 11/72) should be carefully considered, and acted upon where possible (8.6).

### A POLICY FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

10.5 Archaeological survey and excavation in Avon's towns must follow carefully considered policies (9.1-13), which must be examined in the light of regional and national needs (9.8).

### CONCLUSION

10.6 With the formation of the Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset (8.21), the framework now exists for a regionally based archaeological policy, towards which this survey of the six smaller medieval towns of Avon is a first step.

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## THE COMMITTEE FOR RESCUE ARCHAEOLOGY IN AVON, GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND SOMERSET

### **PUBLICATIONS : Surveys**

1. SMALL MEDIEVAL TOWNS IN AVON - ARCHAEOLOGY AND PLANNING (1975)  
Roger Leech (Urban Field Archaeologist with C.R.A.A.G.S.)
2. MEDIEVAL TOWNS IN SOMERSET (1975 forthcoming, in conjunction with the  
Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society)
3. MEDIEVAL TOWNS IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE (1975 forthcoming)
4. THE UPPER THAMES VALLEY IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND WILTSHIRE (forthcoming)
5. TAUNTON AND DISTRICT: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATION OF DEVELOPMENT  
(1975 forthcoming, in conjunction with Taunton Research and Excavation Committee)

### **Excavation Reports**

1. ILCHESTER 1974 (forthcoming)
2. TAUNTON : EXCAVATIONS UP TO AND INCLUDING 1974 (forthcoming)

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