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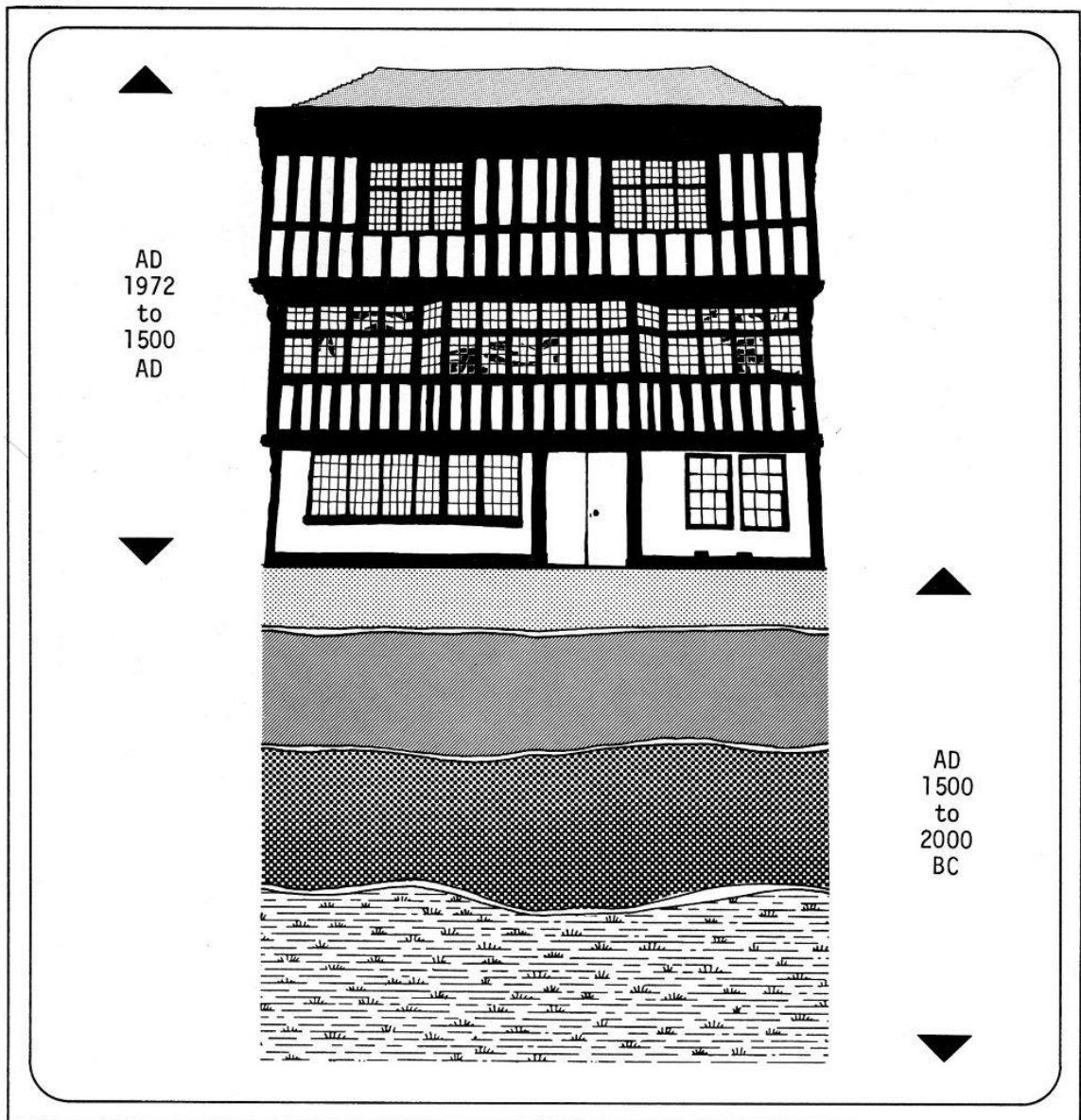
Tewkesbury

The Archaeological Implications of Development

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Summary

Tewkesbury is a small historic town in the middle of major redevelopment. Although in many ways typical of such towns in the 1970s, it possesses a fine Abbey Church and a truly remarkable heritage of half-timbered buildings. Destruction of this heritage on some scale has already occurred during redevelopment, and more is inevitable. Furthermore, virtually nothing has been done so far about the archaeological destruction that redevelopment has entailed, and major opportunities for placing the town's history on a realistic and expanded basis have been missed. The Report surveys the situation from the archaeological point of view, assesses the problems and potential of the Borough in archaeo-historical terms, and makes recommendations for improving the position in the light of proposed development over the next decade.

1 PREFACE

In a sense this survey arises directly from a genuine conflict which came to a head in 1971, 500 years after, and during the celebration of, an earlier Battle of Tewkesbury. In essence the main misunderstanding was between present citizens sincerely commemorating one of the few occasions when their small provincial town has impinged on national history and others, all too easily dismissed as pettifogging preservationists or interfering outsiders, who were equally sincerely concerned not so much in the town's past but with the future of that past, not least in its national context. The juxtaposition of successful communal Festival effort with major destruction of original, irreplaceable material of the real history of the community provided a fitting starting point for what we see as the much more serious Battle of Tewkesbury, 1971-2000 AD. It says much for all the interests at loggerheads six months ago that they, in some cases represented by the individuals with whom the popular press then made a Roman holiday, now constitute the Tewkesbury Archaeological and Architectural Committee whose first act was to commission this survey on 19th January 1972.

Despite the destruction of important parts of Tewkesbury's heritage, despite the lost opportunities over the last decade, our survey shows that, given the will, Tewkesbury can still recover its history, already to be seen as much longer than has been appreciated. We know too, and can but hope that others will be persuaded, that that history is of more than local interest, even though the initiative for its examination must originate locally. The Borough has a priceless asset, not just culturally but in hard touristic cash values, in its architecture; its less tangible assets - its street plan, its buried history, indeed the very idiosyncrasies which make it Tewkesbury-different-from - any-other-town, are equally significant, historically of course for understanding the development of this particular urban community, but environmentally too in providing a satisfying physical and psychological framework for the future community and its visitors.

SECTION 1 Background

1.1 Geology (fig 1)

The Borough overlies Keuper Marl, White Lias, Lower Lias and Gravels. Information about the last, so important in predicting likely settlement areas, is limited and no detailed maps exist. Even the one-inch geology map has not previously been published. It is unfortunately inaccurate and, for our purposes, misleading e.g. the Oldbury area, shown as White Lias, in fact contains substantial gravel deposits. We reproduce it, nevertheless, as the best available source.

1.2 Topography (fig 2)

Tewkesbury in north Gloucestershire is situated on navigable waters a little to the east of the confluence of the Rivers Avon and Severn, The Carrant Brook and River Swilgate flow north and south of the town respectively. This position at a crossing point of the Avon, and to a lesser extent of the Swilgate, is an important factor in the town's development.

The town itself lies above the 25ft contour; its northern end, the Oldbury area, is largely defined by the 50ft contour. Most of the surrounding area is liable to flood, at times making Tewkesbury virtually an island. In 1678 flood water came up as high as the gutter of the Bull Ring in Church Street, and until the building of the Mythe Causeway the town was periodically cut off.

1.3 Communications (fig 4)

Tewkesbury's position on a navigable waterway and at a bridging point of the Avon is the principal factor in its growth. It is astride an old land route from the South West to the North, possibly pre-dating the Roman road from Gloucester to Droitwich and Wroxeter which passes through the urban centre

1.4 The Urban Centre

The present built-up area has, in the past, been limited by severe flooding, especially along the Swilgate, combined with man-made factors, namely the Abbey precinct and the lands of Tewkesbury Manor on the south. Hence, development in the medieval town was northwards, along High Street and, to a lesser extent, eastwards along Barton Street- To say this, however, is to beg the question of the original nucleus. The present street pattern, based on Church Street, High Street and Barton Street, existed in its entirety almost certainly by the 14th century at latest and is of such a form as to suggest an earlier element of urban planning (fig 3). Thereafter, town growth was achieved by increased building density within the restricted area rather than by ribbon or suburban extensions, though both have now occurred this century. In the report 'Historic Towns', published in 1965 by the Council for British Archaeology, Tewkesbury is one of the 51 towns "so splendid and precious that their future should be a national concern".

1.5 The Borough Status

Tewkesbury is now a Borough of 2770 acres with a population of c9000. The product of a penny rate is £2917 (1971). It will lose its Borough status in the 1973-4 local government re-organisation but its future position in the new arrangements is not yet clear.

SECTION 2 Conventional History.

2.1 The Place-Name

The name Tewkesbury is interpreted as meaning 'Teodec's fortified place'. Unfortunately, the town's traditional and earliest personality, Theoc the hermit, is probably no more than the figment of a medieval monk's imagination,

2.2 Late-Saxon/Norman

In the late-Saxon period, Tewkesbury was part of the estate of the thegn Brictric but nothing is known of the nature of the settlement then. At the Conquest the area may have been laid waste, for its value fell from £100 pa to £12 pa and had not recovered 20 years later. The estate passed to Maud, wife of William I, who established a market. Thirteen burgesses are recorded,

2.3 12th Century

Tewkesbury was part of the honour of Gloucester and in 1140 became involved in the Earl's squabbles with Waleron of Worcester, the latter burnt down Gloucester's Tewkesbury house and possibly part of the town with it. The site of this arson may be in the western angle of Chance and Barton Streets, Thereafter Gloucester may have moved to Holme Castle, so-called by Leland but probably no more than a substantial house. Of much greater significance was the foundation of the Benedictine Abbey in 1121, an event crucial to the development and character of the town,

2.4 13th/14th Centuries

The Royal Court's presence is attested on at least three occasions, the first in 1204 when King John spent Christmas at Holme Castle. There is no reason to think other than that the town flourished,

2.5 15th/16th Centuries

1471 saw the battle which is Tewkesbury's most-publicised event although one of little real historical significance to the town itself. Of rather more concern to the contemporary burgesses was the trade down the Severn in corn from the town's hinterland, and in local manufactures such as woollen cloth. The local prosperity is still reflected in the 100+ Listed, half-timbered buildings, probably dating to the 16th century and earlier. This prosperity was further stimulated by the dismemberment of the two large estates, the Earl of Gloucester's and the Abbey's. The monastic buildings were also demolished. In 1698 Tewkesbury was granted a royal charter of incorporation,

2.6 17th/18th Centuries

Although supporting Parliament in the Civil War, the town actually changed hands four times between February and April 1643. The defences are said to have been slighted twice. Alarums and excursions apart, these centuries saw the decline of the woollen cloth industry and the growth of the hosiery cottage industry, giving the town its narrow alleyways, close-packed cottages and infamous lack of sanitation. These conditions were, however, symptomatic of the town's prosperity, otherwise witnessed by a large number of contrasting but contemporary handsome town-houses. Some sixty 17th century houses, mostly half-timbered, and about two hundred 18th century buildings, or earlier buildings with extensive 18th century additions and renovations, survive,

2.7 19th/20th Centuries

With malting, metal-working and leather-working supplementing the hosiery industry, prosperity continued into the 19th century. The previously boggy roads, for example, were repaved, and Mythe Bridge was constructed in the 1820s; the Swan and the Hop Pole, Tewkesbury's posting houses, were handling 30 coaches a day. But the main railway by-passed the town, which declined fairly rapidly as coach and river transport became archaic. Long since deprived of its ecclesiastic importance and no longer a nodal point in the transport/communications network, Tewkesbury's third *raison d'être*, its market, also reduced to local rather than sub-regional significance, was insufficient to promote the urban growth which characterised the later 19th century elsewhere. As a result, however, the town escaped the worst excesses of the Industrial Revolution. There was virtually no new building between 1850-1930 in the urban nucleus; hence its remarkable heritage of earlier architecture. This, and other aspects of town life, increasingly suffered as motor traffic choked the A38 along Church and High Streets, but the town has now been by-passed again, much to its relief, this time by the M5 Motorway. It is, however, seeking to re-assert its marketing capability, partly through supermarkets, partly in the contemporary guise of a tourist attraction, not least by drawing traffic off the motorway to which it is connected by a short and direct link. Hence the major redevelopment of the urban centre, unprecedented since late medieval times, and of the surrounding amenities; and hence the need for this survey.

SECTION 3 Statutory Protection (figs 3,5)

3.1

Between 1947, when historic buildings began to be listed under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act of that year, and 1971, when the revision of Tewkesbury's List of Historic Buildings was carried out, some 45 statutorily protected buildings were demolished in the town. Other buildings, unlisted but of undoubted value historically and architecturally, were also destroyed.

3.2

The designation of Conservation Areas was instituted by the Civic Amenities Act 1967 in an attempt to conserve the character of areas rather than the structure of individual buildings. Tewkesbury's Conservation Area, approved in 1970, contains the area of Church Street, Barton Street as far as Chance Street, Oldbury Road and High Street as far as King John's Bridge, and the Severn Ham. This area contains the whole of the medieval urban town as far as we know, though it certainly excludes some, perhaps much, of the Roman settlement (fig 5),

3.3

The Town and Country Planning Act 1968 further rationalised the machinery of Building Preservation Orders by requiring Listed Building Consent from the Minister before a listed building can be altered or demolished. The concept of 'Group Value' was again enhanced by the provision for the listing of a group of buildings which individually may be of limited merit but together represent a visual or other asset to an urban area. In 1969, consent was given nationally to the demolition of 266 listed buildings as against the previous national average of c 400 pa. Thirty-three of these buildings were in Gloucestershire with, not for the first time, the third highest county total in England after London and Yorkshire,

3.4

Tewkesbury contains the extraordinarily high number of some 350 listed structures. Seven are Grade 1, thirty-four Grade II*, and the majority of the remainder are Grade II, A smaller number are included for Group Value.

3.5

Outside the Town centre but within the Borough, Margaret's Camp, Holme Castle, and King John's Bridge are Scheduled under the Ancient Monuments Acts 1913-53 (fig 5). It is fair to say, however, that even when the Field Monuments Bill at present before Parliament becomes law, scheduled monuments will still be afforded considerably less protection than listed historic buildings, that the Schedule of Ancient Monuments is by no means comprehensive or archaeologically representative, and that the Acts contain no machinery for coping with the complexities of urban archaeology. It is, for example, difficult to see how statutory protection, even if it were desired, could be given to the Oldbury area in Tewkesbury (7.3),

SECTION 4 Archaeological Provision

4.1

Like most small towns, however important historically, Tewkesbury has been archaeologically neglected. This, however, is a national problem with which archaeologists and historians themselves have only recently been coming to grips, encouraged by State aid and, in some places, by the co-operation of enlightened local authorities and developers. The previous lack of awareness on all sides is indicated by the fact that this document is only the fourth such to be prepared and published for any of the thousands of towns and urban areas in the country.

4.2

In Tewkesbury a museum was founded in 1963 in a fine house in Barton Street, but its functions are very much limited by the lack of any full-time staff. In effect it is only a static show-piece, however desirable the preservation of the building containing it may be. It contains relatively little of the evidence on which following paragraphs are based. No conservation facilities exist and the library is meagre. Its records are defective though its displays are improving. Nevertheless, it exists, and the fact that the Town Clerk is the Honorary Curator indicates the continuing interest of the Corporation which was instrumental in its establishment. Further reorganisation is in hand, in cooperation with the Area Museum Council. Its status as a Charitable Trust, with its own Trustees and a Management Committee including Borough Councillors, has already proved useful in the new circumstances (4.5).

4,3

There is no town archaeological society or group at the moment, a Tewkesbury Archaeological Group, formed in 1971, disbanded later the same year but not before helping to create the all-important precedent of direct financial subvention from the Corporation to the archaeology of the town.

4.4

In 1971 the Corporation made a grant, subject to certain conditions, of £150 towards the expenses of the Tewkesbury Archaeological Group. This grant was itself encouraged by a grant of £100 from Rescue, the new Trust for British Archaeology. Neither grant was spent during 1971 and both are renewable at the start of the next financial year, 1972-3,

4.5

These amounts form the immediate assets of the Tewkesbury Archaeological and Architectural Committee, a joint representative body, independent but for financial purposes under the wing of the Museum Trustees. This Committee came into being by agreement through the good offices of the Mayor in late 1971 and held its first meeting in January 1972. On it are representatives of the Corporation, the Museum Committee, the Civic Society, Rescue, and the Council for British Archaeology. Representatives of the last two bodies are also members of the staffs of the Extra-Mural Departments of the Universities of Birmingham and Bristol respectively. The Committee has power to co-opt. It is serviced by the Corporation through the Town Clerk, and while it has authority to act on its own initiative one of its main functions is envisaged as an advisory one in relation to the Corporation,

4.6

The new Committee begins its work in a changed local situation but some other outside factors are relevant. The Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, the traditional county body now approaching its centenary, has members in the area and has its own resources, not least for publication. It has already acted over particular applications for listed building consents in Tewkesbury. In regional terms, the borough comes within the area of Group XIII of the Council for British Archaeology and of the extra-mural area of Bristol University. Over recent years, numerous archaeology and local history courses have been conducted in Tewkesbury by that University's Dept of Extra-Mural Studies. The proposed national increase in financial provision for rescue excavation in 1972-3 from the Department of the Environment is important, and contact with DOE's Directorate of Ancient Monuments is already established. Major DOE grants can be looked for if local initiative and support is evidenced. Various resources applicable to the archaeology and history of Tewkesbury are not therefore confined to the town itself.

4,7

Relevant bodies within the borough include the Civic Society which has been concerned with buildings and development plans; the Abbey Lawn Trust, which has renovated a row of buildings in Church Street; and of course, the ecclesiastical interest, for Tewkesbury is rightly proud of the way in which it has looked after its magnificent Abbey Church

SECTION 5 The Archaeological Dimension

5.1

About the beginning of the fifteenth century, Tewkesbury is supposed to have made considerable progress in population and importance, but the records of those times afford us little information respecting the conditions of the people, in places of this description, either as to their numbers, the state of their trade, or their advancement in civilization. Even in 1830, Tewkesbury's historian, James Bennett, was not unaware of the limitations of his sources for the town's history. The historical records, though of paramount importance, contain substantial gaps and are often vague; as a result we are extremely ignorant about many aspects of Tewkesbury's history, Bennett had no means of appreciating the way in which the defective documentary record can be enhanced by archaeological study, not least through systematic controlled excavation. The fact is, however, that the standing half-timbered buildings in the town are but the tip of the historical iceberg: below lies the material of several thousand years of occupation, the key to a more complete understanding not just of the fabric of the town but also precisely of those elements in the life of its communities about which documents are lacking or silent.

5.2

Tewkesbury has long been thought of as an historic town, but it has not been appreciated as an ancient settlement like, for example, Gloucester and Cirencester. Antiquaries were attracted to such well-known Roman towns, but the lack of an obvious, named counterpart at Tewkesbury resulted in the neglect of its archaeological possibilities.

5.3

Geographically Tewkesbury comes within the Midlands and, locally, is part of the Gloucestershire Clay Lowlands. Both of these regions have been, until recently, chronically under-explored archaeologically because they were assumed to be fairly barren and densely wooded, Archaeological thinking about them has, however, been galvanised in the last few years by two projects in particular: the Avon Valley and the M5 Motorway Research Committees. Both have revealed a previously unexpected density of settlement and extent of land-use in pre-medieval times, the one primarily by air photography, the other by ground observation. For the first time, we can now begin to appreciate the settlement context of which Tewkesbury forms a part, the evidence coming from clay lands as well as river gravels, notably at Tredington and along the Carrant (fig 4),

5.4

More generally, the lead of the Council for British Archaeology in the development of urban archaeology during the 1960s, and particular well-publicised events like 'the rape of Worcester' on the one hand and the realistic response to development opportunities and inevitable destruction in Winchester and Oxford, have focussed rather more than just academic attention on the exciting possibilities, social as well as scholarly, of the archaeological dimension in the history of British towns. Within the increasing popular awareness of the importance of environment and conservation, archaeological considerations are gradually coming to be accepted as a factor in planning urban development: going fast are the days when developer or local authority could with impunity destroy part of a communal heritage without question. More positively, a fast-growing number of both developers and local authorities, of which Tewkesbury is now one, accept their responsibility in this matter and seek to discharge it through consultation and/or financial provision,

5.5

All these factors have helped to arouse informed interest in the potential of Tewkesbury with a history below as well as above ground. We would be less than fair, however, if we did not gladly acknowledge that such factors would count for little had it not been for the dedicated and enthusiastic work in Tewkesbury over recent years of Mrs E M Linnell. Her voluntary and almost single-handed efforts have opened up a new dimension in the town's history and gives us a glimpse, albeit fleeting, of some 4000 years' activity on the same site. Although obviously restricted in quantity and quality, her observations and collecting from demolition and development sites in the town, often in face of considerable difficulties, now form the basis for the present assessment and for any future work. It is further to her credit that she has freely put all her information and material at our disposal for the purposes of this survey: without that enlightened co-operation, Section 6 would not only have been that much more difficult to compile and much less comprehensive but would also have lacked the essential ingredients which enable us to write of the 'archaeological dimension' in the town's history.

SECTION 6 The Archaeology of Tewkesbury (fig 5)

6.1

We must emphasize that there has been no organised systematic excavation at all in the urban area and that Tewkesbury has little tradition of consistent archaeological observation. The following notes are but fragments of information, irregularly and unevenly recorded and here brought together for the first time. While the evidence has all the limitations inherent in its nature, in sum it suggests that a considerable amplification of the history of settlement at Tewkesbury is necessary,

6.2 19th Century Observations

1828 Many Roman coins were found in the neighbourhood of the Abbey Church (Bennett)

1830 Roman coins were frequently dug up in the Oldbury area (Bennett)

1840 A well was found at the Gas Works in Oldbury. It was 12ft deep, lined with Lias, and contained the skull of a bear, a horse, two oxen, two dogs and a human; at the bottom were at least 'a dozen urns of a fine red clay', probably with cremations. Nearby were 6 or 7 human skeletons, variously oriented, and a masonry structure 8ft long, 2ft wide and 16 inches deep. The bottom was a flat stone with strong traces of burning on the side walls (Bennett).

1865 Romano-British and Lake Village pottery found in the riverside at Severn Ham (Symonds).

1883 British and Roman pottery (including a large jar) and, as far as I remember, a few Roman coins; several flints too (Symonds).

6.3 20th Century Observations (figs 4,5,6,7)

General: miscellaneous finds, mainly of Roman material, found from time to time, collated as far as possible by Mrs Linnell and shown on fig 5. Roman pottery in particular has been noted over much of the urban area and specifically from Smith's Lane to the south end of Church Street.

Particular: (the following observations all relate to the 1960s; the site numbers relate to figs 6 and 7)

1 **Oldbury Road/High Street site:** a number of half-timbered cottages and alley-ways were destroyed without proper record when the area was cleared. It then lay open for a number of years, during which Mrs Linnell carried out small-scale excavation. During development Neolithic pottery was recovered and the existence of buildings was recorded along about 100ft in the forecourt of the former Sabrina cinema. The number, plans, date and relationships of these buildings was not obtained; nor was any useful information about medieval structures along the 350ft High Street frontage. Of practical value, however, was the observation of the gravel subsoil and of the fact that medieval and Roman levels occurred within 4½ft of the present street level. We cannot forebear to comment that the failure by all parties except Mrs Linnell to do anything about this site, the largest area of medieval and ancient settlement ever available for investigation in the town and obviously (now) fundamental to the basic questions of Tewkesbury's origins and development, is unforgivable and irretrievable.

2 **11-115 High Street:** the building of the new Post Office in 1969 was on a site already cleared of earlier buildings by the construction of a Co-Operative Store, but no observation of an archaeologically important site stretching the whole way from its High Street frontage back to Oldbury Road was maintained. As a result, nothing is known.

3 **27,28,29 High Street:** a site extending from a High Street frontage to the Back of Avon produced some unstratified Roman pottery but it was not examined at all during development. Its timber-framed buildings with Georgian brick facades were completely gutted and rebuilt for Lipton's Supermarket.

4 **Riverside Walk along the Mill Avon and Back of Avon:** no archaeological work was carried out during construction of the Walk which is along the area adjoining the waterfront and therefore a potential source of information about Tewkesbury's port and the dating of the Mill Avon,

5 **Fire Station, Oldbury Road:** no important buildings were demolished but the absence of any observation means that we have no information - and negative evidence would have been significant here - from a site within 100 yards of the Cross, the centre of the medieval town.

6 **102,103,104 Church Street:** no information was recorded from this site which fronts on to the Cross in an area known to have been densely built up in medieval times, though the existence of cellars probably would have reduced its potential for early evidence. The standing timber-framed buildings behind 18th/19th century brick and stucco facades were demolished and rebuilt as one unit for the new Co-op

7 **25-28 Barton Street,** no information exists from the site of the new Police Station, fortunately set back from the general line of the medieval street frontage

8 **Gander Lane:** the erection of a new row of bungalows involved the demolition without record of twelve timber-framed pre-1652 cottages and possibly Tudor stables; nor was the site examined archaeologically, another lost opportunity since the Lane is first recorded in 1540 and it is important for the study of the street pattern to know whether it existed earlier on the opposite, south-west, side of the Lane, the construction of a car park within the original Abbey precinct involved the destruction of the superstructure of a length of the precinct wall, probably the only original such structure to have survived the restorations of T Collins in the 19th century. While the foundations presumably remain below ground, the opportunity to date the boundary and examine its doubtless variable structure and position was not taken. The bridge over the Swilgate was also widened in spite of objections by the Civic Society.

9 **St Mary's Lane:** probably in existence since the 11th century, the Lane has produced no information through lack of observation despite the construction of a car park and the considerable thinning out of its properties since 1945.

10 **34-48 and 50-51 Church Street:** this terrace, Tewkesbury's finest example of planned domestic medieval building, has recently been conscientiously renovated at a cost of £80,000, a scheme which attracted praise and reward as an example of enlightened conservation. No provision was, however, made for the under-ground history which of necessity had to be disturbed in the reconstruction, and Mrs Linnell's small scale excavation was limited to a narrow discontinuous section from street frontage to Abbey precinct wall in nos 45 and 47, Coins of 1797 dated the brickwork of the front extensions, but no medieval floors were found and had presumably been removed in the 18th century, Beneath the floors of that date, however, early medieval walls were glimpsed and a length of ditch was traced and sectioned. It contained a 13th century pitcher handle and a sherd of 2nd century samian ware, Small quantities of 11th century and later sherds, mostly from cooking pots paralleled at Worcester, were also found. It must be stressed that this inadequate and tantalising investigation is the only instance from the whole of the town of anything like a medieval stratigraphical sequence having been recorded.

11 **The area between Oldbury Road and Chance Street and south of Station Street** has recently been almost completely redeveloped, principally for the town's new swimming pool. The buildings demolished were of little interest in the conventional sense since the area was one of 'small open fields' as late as 1811, Most of the site covered gravel deposits. Although no systematic watch of the redevelopment was kept, considerable quantities of Roman pottery were picked up and Roman coins were found near Holy Trinity church Other finds were a stone implement possibly Mesolithic, and a human skull found with the pottery. This last may, however, represent a victim of the Oldbury Plague House, which stood hereabouts, rather than a Roman burial.

12 **Twixtbears:** though superficially of little archaeological potential, this previously largely unoccupied site was not watched during recent residential development.

13 **Holme Hill:** the discovery of a Roman cemetery in 1967 during the construction of playing fields led to the only official excavation in the borough so far. Directed by E Greenfield for the then Ministry of Public Building and Works, the excavation examined seven burials, three in stone coffins aligned east/west. No report has been published¹ and the coffins were apparently left in situ, A Roman iron spearhead in Cheltenham Museum is recorded from Holme Hill².

14 **Howells Road:** a car park was constructed between this road and the Swilgate but the site has been liable to extensive flooding and its archaeological potential is low. Again, however, we are guessing.

Miscellaneous sites not numbered on figs 6 and 7:

146 High Street: Roman pottery was picked up on the site after the demolition of an unrecorded Georgian-fronted timber-framed building

1-2 High Street: Roman pottery was noted in an Electricity Board trench in front of these buildings.

112 High Street: no records were made of these Grade III structures demolished as unsafe; behind their Georgian facades were unsuspected timber-framed buildings.

¹ A brief report has been published in the Victoria County History of Gloucestershire, Volume VIII 1968. The coffins were removed and placed outside the nearby cemetery chapel.

² This is actually an arrow head.

Similar descriptions apply elsewhere in the town e.g. 139 High Street and 71,72,73 Barton Street, Grade II timber-framed houses with Georgian facades, demolished in spite of objections by the Civic Society.

Tewkesbury Park: Roman coins, pottery and building material have been found but the precise site of the implied structures is unknown:

The Roman road from Gloucester to Droitwich, which passes through Tewkesbury on an unknown line, was sectioned on Shuthonger Common in 1960- No report has been published³.

SECTION 7 Archaeological Assessment (figs 4,5,6,7)

7.1

We have now set out the facts of Tewkesbury*s archaeology: their meagreness quantitatively and qualitatively is only too apparent. Drawing them together and viewing them against current archaeological thought, we can now postulate the outlines of a story greater in breadth and depth, and perhaps interest, than that given in Section 2,

7.2 Prehistoric (figs 4,5)

The recognition of a greater extent of river gravel in the Borough than previously appreciated automatically increases the likelihood of early settlement. Palaeolithic material is, however, so far lacking, though it can be expected, The area would also have been attractive, as far as we can envisage, to Mesolithic hunters and fishers c5000 BC, and the first hint of their activity may possibly be to hand from Oldbury, The 1971 discovery of Middle/Late Neolithic pottery of c2500 BC, also on Oldbury, coupled with the realisation that at least some of the air photographic sites in the Avon valley are also Neolithic, begins to fill in the settlement background, and indeed the overall incidence of 3rd millennium land-use, which alone can put the well-known Cotswold long barrows into some sort of realistic context. The Tewkesbury material may indeed be as much a chance loss as it was a chance find; but it appeared to be stratified and we must allow the possibility of contemporary settlement, perhaps insular, perhaps lacustrine, and with that the possibility of organic preservation in the prevailing damp conditions The situation - a low gravel knoll in a valley bottom - may not accord with traditional views of Neolithic farmers, but there is in fact plenty of evidence elsewhere to encourage the idea of 3rd millennium BC activity represented under Tewkesbury. Indeed, thinking of the stone-axe trade with its material coming into Wessex and the South West from the Marches, North Wales and northern England, does not the position of Tewkesbury demand it? We are still, however, far from Tewkesbury's urban origins. The scattered evidence from air photograph and stray find of human activity in the 2nd and 1st millennia BC relates to the surrounding area rather than the borough. The five nearby hill-forts probably indicate the existence of farming settlements along the valleys and it may be that the alleged Iron Age pottery from the Ham represents one such. Occupation of the gravel 'island' in the last centuries BC is then not only inherently conceivable but is possibly already evidenced, even though we know nothing of its nature,

³ A report by Mrs Sanders and Dr Webster was published in the Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society. Volume 37. P. 41

7.3 Roman (figs 4,5)

Though almost exactly the same is true of the Roman settlement, the fact of its existence cannot now be questioned. This must rank as the major result of the work in the last decade of Mrs Linnell and the Gloucester Archaeological Research Group. The establishment of a Roman settlement is a good illustration of the importance of observing and recording at every opportunity whatever evidence is available, even if it is negative and however unarchaeological the circumstances. Tewkesbury now demonstrates how the assemblage of fragments of evidence, however insignificant in themselves, can eventually build up into a pattern of greater import than any single find would suggest. It shows too why archaeology is concerned not with collecting for its own sake but for such interpretations as the evidence will allow.

Though the indications are that activity or occupation during the Roman period was widespread and long-lived over much of the area subsequently covered by the medieval town, the settlement nucleus seems fairly clearly to have been Oldbury, a place-name which now takes on an added significance (7,4). Stone-based buildings, a cemetery, a corn-drying oven (Bennett's 'masonry structure', 6-2), many coins and much pottery have all been attested in this area over the last century; so too has the extraordinary-sounding 'well' with its skulls and inurned cremations. We would guess that this was in fact a later 1st century/early 2nd century AD 'ritual shaft' of a type now fairly familiar in Romano-British and earlier archaeology. A shaft with almost identical contents has been recorded at Biddenham.

Since water-cults were an important element in Celtic religion, we would speculate that the proximity of the Oldbury shaft to the junction of the Rivers Avon and Severn is no coincidence. Certainly it implies some form of cult centre which, even if we are correct in our dating, may well have had much earlier origins. Its existence also implies that, whatever the nature of the occupation at Oldbury, it was not just a 'native farm'. The extensive area from which Roman material has been noted implies likewise; and the Holme Hill cemetery and Tewkesbury Park evidence could well be pointers to an 'extra-mural' pattern familiar around major Roman settlements, especially towns. The Roman road is important too, since it linked two of the major military establishments. It is difficult to believe in any case that there was nothing with it at the Avon crossing. The crossing may have been north of Stanchard Pit though the site of King John's Bridge cannot be discounted. The road's route immediately south of the town is uncertain too, though the tongue of marl represented by the 50ft contour, thrusting directly towards Oldbury, can now be seen as a likely line (fig 2). The possibility of Tewkesbury as a Roman port must also be considered, though there is no certain direct evidence; but then there has been no investigation in the relevant area. To write of 'Roman Tewkesbury' of course begs the question: are the town's urban origins to be sought in the first four centuries AD rather than in late-Saxon or Norman times? The evidence is as yet completely insufficient to answer but at least the question can now be conceived. If Arcadian coins can be believed, the Roman settlement continued at least into the 5th century; if the Ravenna Cosmography can be believed, somewhere between Gloucester and Droitwich is the as yet unidentified place called 'Argistillum'.

7.4 Early Medieval (fig 6)

In the light of the postulated Roman nucleus at Oldbury, that place-name too poses questions. High Street was known as Oldbury Street in 1257: which 'old fort'¹ was being referred to? - a hypothetical Saxo-Norman 'burgh' around the Abbey to the south (2,1, 2.2) or that existing in fact or folk memory at Oldbury to the north? And when was the name given to the Oldbury area? - if during the early or mid-Saxon period, the former hypothesis is ruled out, and we wonder whether earthworks, possibly even ruins, at Oldbury were not still visible or at least remembered as a new settlement towards the lower southern edge of the 'island' came into being around the road junction subsequently marked by the Cross. The fact is, of course, that we know nothing about

Tewkesbury, except by such speculation, between c400 and 1000 AD, It is only a guess that a settlement existed at all, and its context in terms of Saxon settlement of the area, of British survival, and of the little known Hwicce to whose territory it is central, is quite unknown. Even the origins of Christianity in the town are uncertain,

7.5 Medieval and Modern

Nothing useful can be added archaeologically to the summary 2,3-2.7.

SECTION 8 Archaeological Problems and Potential (figs 3,5,6)

8.1

Because ignorance about the long and complex history of human settlement in and around Tewkesbury is so great, the potential for gains in knowledge is enormous. Even our outline is by no means firm, and virtually everything is still to be learnt within it. Nor does the required information relate mainly to detail: what has still to be answered are the major historical questions (8,2),, Nor is it any answer to point to the documentary evidence as providing the answers from medieval times onwards- While such evidence is essential, precisely because it is selective, irregular and literate it seldom tells us much about material culture, the ordinary, the life of the silent majority^ Archaeology, far from being the hunt for treasure and the dead assigned to it in popular myth, studies precisely these things.

8.2

Below is a short list of some of the major problems in Tewkesbury's history which can only or best be tackled by archaeological methods:

1. The nature, extent and dates of the various prehistoric uses of the area, and the geology to which they relate;
2. The origins and nature of settlement in the Roman period with particular reference to land and river communications;
3. Tewkesbury 400-1000 AD;
4. The origins and development of the medieval town with particular reference to its street pattern, its buildings, its market, and its relationships to the Abbey, to Oldbury, to the port, and to the immediately surrounding sites;
5. The Civil War defences;
6. The infilling, rebuilding and growth of the post-medieval town, particularly its houses and industrial structures;
7. The establishment of dated type series of pottery and standing buildings to provide the base-lines for further study.

8.3

The location of the potential archaeology and geology of Tewkesbury can be defined to a certain extent, both generally and in particular, In general, it will be found by the observation and recording not just of finds but of layers and structures in all holes and trenches dug almost anywhere in the town As we hope we have made clear (7,2), this is not an esoteric and time-wasting job but an essential and effective instrument of research- It costs money to dig holes: why not get the most out of them?

8.4

In general, too examination of all street frontages before and during redevelopment is essential. It is only in this way that the structure and significance of standing buildings can be recorded, that their predecessors can be found and examined, and that the development of the street plan can gradually be pieced together. Investigation of earlier, pre-medieval, levels is of course desirable too but that can also be carried out elsewhere (8 10). The point we wish to emphasise here is that it is only on the street frontages that the development of the medieval town can be studied. The hint of early urban planning contained in the street pattern needs to be tested. What is the significance of Maud's market (2.2)? The development of High Street is particularly important: it seems to have been built up for the whole of its length by the late 14th century but was it complete any earlier, was its growth regular, did it spread from south to north or vice versa? Was St Mary's Lane an original part of the street plan? What is the date of Oldbury Road parallel to High, formerly Oldbury, Street, what was the density of buildings between the two, and what purpose did Oldbury Road serve lying between those buildings and apparently open fields to its east as late as 1811?

8.5

The value of recording sections across roads must also be stressed. These can not only provide structural and dating evidence of successive road surfaces but can also enable the ebb and flow of street frontages on either side to be studied.

8.6

The river frontages present a tremendous archaeological potential for the study of one of Tewkesbury's main functions - as a port - and for the preservation of both utilised and natural organic material. It may well be, for example, that timber wharves are preserved behind the existing waterfronts, as at Kings Lynn and Bergen, or major structures like the Saxon mill found at Tamworth in 1971. The environmental evidence must also be considerable- We draw attention in particular to a length of massive red sandstone walling with three bonded buttresses on Red Lane- This is medieval at latest and its function is unknown; it fronts an accumulation of probably stratified deposits. The interest of the waterside is increased if complicated by the Abbey Mill and its associated structures, as yet uninvestigated but probably 12th century. Much could also be learnt from study, as opportunity offers, of the bridging areas.

8.7

Although the Abbey has played a vital part in the town's history and is well-documented, we are still ignorant of the most basic facts e.g. the plan before Dissolution, the whereabouts of related and documented buildings such as earlier mills, a furnace house and a tan house due for demolition in 1542, and the history of the precinct and its boundary- A hint that the boundary may be more complex than so far imagined, yet may exist in a stratified archaeological context, was given by the Church Street excavation (6.3(10)),

8.8

The puzzling group of extra-mural medieval sites (fig 5) presents an archaeological untapped source of information, Holme Castle, the Earl's Barton, (the location of both is uncertain), Margaret's Camp, Gupshill Manor, Mitton Manor and King John's Castle are archaeologically unknown for date, character, function and relationship, and their documentation is sketchy.

8.9

Nothing is known of the Civil War defences yet documents twice refer to their slighting (1643, 1646), What were they? Where are they?

Back in the town, in physical and technical terms much has still to be learnt about the various industries documented from medieval times to the present e.g. 1257 Walker's (i.e. Fuller's) Lane, 1540 Braison's (i.e. brass-worker's) Lane, and weaving, knitting, malting and, possibly, clay-pipe manufacture, The coaching 'industry' has its archaeology too e.g. the stables in Tolsey Lane In this context, the importance of the areas behind the existing street frontages must be emphasised, particularly as they tend to contain what can too easily be regarded as the less significant i.e. less aesthetically pleasing, buildings Industrial growth in Tewkesbury, however, tended to develop at right angles to the main streets down the lengths of the elongated urban tenements, thus creating the narrow, overhung alleyways of the 17th and 18th centuries in particular It is in these areas too that, when demolition is necessary, area excavation primarily to explore pre-medieval levels unrelated to the known street pattern, could take place without damage or hindrance to the existing street front structures. And finally, the answer to another of the puzzling oddities of Tewkesbury's archaeology - the complete absence so far of any medieval pits - might lie in these tenements too No pits in reality would make it extremely difficult to obtain those large stratified and associated pottery groups so important as the hardware of urban archaeology. One would also have to ask where did all the rubbish go - into the rivers? The relatively shallow depth of build-up in the town - compare the 4 ½ft at Oldbury with the 15ft plus in many medieval towns - alone requires some such explanation.

SECTION 9 The Future (figs 6,7)

9,1 Development Areas Available for Investigation, February 1972

(The site numbers relate to fig 6 in the town centre and to fig 7 in the rest of the Borough)

15. **Oldbury Road to High Street**, north of the new Sun Street: the area is adjacent to Site 1 (63), is still undeveloped and is likely to remain so for some time. The Sabrina Cinema which occupied the central portion of the area had a large basement but the west and east end of the site should be investigated,

16. **30-38 High Street**, an empty lot north of Smith's Lane: actually being cleared by machinery for immediate development during our fieldwork- Previously a brewery had been demolished and its large cellars had probably destroyed much of the archaeological value of the site especially on the High Street frontage- Some Roman pottery was found at the Back of Avon, or western, end of the site-

17. **Wenlock Road**: at the time of our survey, the foundations for 97 dwellings were being excavated without archaeological observation close to Perry Hill Gardens where Roman material, notably a 'badge of Germanicus, was found in 1916.

18. **Mitton Manor**: at the time of this survey, the foundations for dwellings were being excavated immediately adjacent to the Manor. A chapel and cemetery have been recorded here though the exact site is uncertain, A road-widening scheme in 1959 is said to have gone through part of the chapel and the cemetery was certainly encountered.

19. **17-20 Barton Street**: a vacant lot with a Barton Street frontage:

A number of individual lots are empty but are too small to number on fig 6: between Compton's Alley and Hughes Alley on the south side of Barton Street; the west side of the St Mary's Road and

St Mary's Lane junction; south east of Tolsey Hall fronting on to Tolsey Lane, formerly Guest Lane and Salters Lane and known to have existed in early medieval times

9.2 Developments with Planning Approval

20. **Lilley's Alley, the Swilgate end.** Small 18th century brick cottages will be demolished in 1972 for residential development Excavation could result in crucial information about the evolution of one of the finest examples of Tewkesbury's characteristic alleyways.

21. **High School.** in the western angle of Church Street and Gander Lane. Later in 1972 the school is to be converted into a magistrate's court and a small area may be available for examination This site, like Lilley's Alley, could give information about the depth and concentration of urban development at right angles to the main streets of the medieval town.

22. **Congregational Church,** south side of Barton Street: it is planned to demolish the Church and its hall, replacing them with a new church and constructing a road connecting Barton Street and Orchard Court This site would be the first substantial one to become available on the south side of this Street within the medieval town and investigation could be extremely valuable. Date of work unspecified,

23. **Tewkesbury Park:** a golf course and park area are planned for an unspecified date and the opportunity could be taken to investigate the known Roman settlement. Construction of the golf course and any landscaping involved will almost certainly be archaeologically damaging

23a As we were finishing the text, a new plan for a sewer pipe from the Swilgate near the Gander Lane bridge to the Sewage works north of Tewkesbury Park was brought to our notice The work will probably take place in the summer 1972 and will involve digging a pipe-trench c2 ½ft wide. It will cut through the Holme Hill Romano-British cemetery (site 13) and Bloody Meadow, the traditional site of the massacre of fleeing Lancastrians during the Battle of Tewkesbury, It could therefore provide a useful section through a potentially informative area south of the town (fig 7).

9.3 Development Areas

24. **Post Office Lane** is the centre of the most extensive area of proposed development in the urban centre, A residential use is envisaged for what is at present a rather decrepit industrial zone. The fact that it is adjacent to the Mill Avon makes it of crucial importance, not least because of the possibility of a build-up of waterlogged and stratified deposits behind the wall of the Mill Avon. Any extension to the Riverside Walk (site 4) is important for the same reason.

25. **Back of Avon to the rear of the Town Hall:** the potential of this site should by now be obvious.

26. **Ring Road:**(i) the first stage between King John's Bridge and the railway embankment in Cotswold Road may be as far as 5-10 years ahead but, if it is built, it will directly affect the Oldbury Gasworks area (7-3); (11) the second stage is intended to complete the half-ring by extending southwards past the eastern side of the urban centre Nothing of obvious archaeological significance on the proposed route is known at the moment though it would be surprising if nothing was there

27. **Eagle's Alley, Oldbury Road,** immediately adjacent to the south side of Site 1 (fig-6): as we were finishing this report, a new and unexpected proposal for a major redevelopment over 0.6 acre behind the High Street frontages became a likelihood, with clearance of the site envisaged for late 1972- The recording of the standing structures and the advance excavation of as much as possible

of this critical area, right beside the Roman buildings seen in 1971, and with a long frontage on Oldbury Road, immediately become priorities requiring large-scale effort in 1972-3.

SECTION 10 Recommendations

10.1

Policy: that the Tewkesbury Archaeological and Architectural Committee, in the very closest co-operation with national and local government and other relevant parties, should initiate a programme of recording and investigating to the fullest possible extent the evidence, above and below ground, of the existing Borough's history, giving priority to those sites affected by current and impending development and accepting from the start that such a programme can only be carried out by a combination of professional assistance, volunteer effort and public participation

10.2 Aims:

That the Committee should make provision for the following:

1. The advance recording of all standing buildings threatened by alteration or demolition, whether or not they are Listed, and the additional recording as resources allow of all other buildings in the town with a view, as a long-term objective, to the compilation as a complete an archive as possible
2. The implementation of an advance 'archaeological search' on every site affected by development, bearing In mind that such a 'search' could range from the briefest of checks with known information through small-scale trial excavation to major excavation but need not hold up development work If properly arranged In consultation with the Planning Authority, the developer and the contractor.
3. The observation and recording of all other ground disturbances in the Borough.
4. The collation of the documentary evidence Into a Topographical Index of the Borough.
5. The conservation, storage and display of the material resulting from its work,
6. A continuing public relations/information/educational programme about its work starting with the proper promotion of this Report-
7. The publication in permanent form of the results of its work for academic purposes, of an Annual Report, and of such other matter as is necessary to achieve its aims,
8. Volunteer and public participation in its work,
9. Adequate finance to achieve its aims,

10.3 Immediate Action:

1. To make arrangements for the observation and recording as soon as possible of sites 16, 17, 18 and 23a, and the excavation of such other sites as are now available (91), including site 15 if time and resources allow before the major undertaking (late 1972 or early 1973) represented by sites 20 and 27, the full investigation of which must be regarded as essential
2. Appoint a Borough Archaeologist on a short-term contract (6-9 months) to direct and execute the work necessary to cope with the immediate needs, the person appointed to be directly responsible to the Committee.
3. Raise the finance, if necessary by a loan, to make the above work possible,
4. Make arrangements, however temporary, for a 'base' from which the work can proceed, and for storage and for conservation facilities.
5. Expand the Committee to include representatives from DOE, Gloucestershire CC, Society of Antiquaries (Lond), W Midlands Archaeological Research Committee, Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, formal representation from Bristol and Birmingham Universities, Gloucestershire College of Art and Design, North Gloucestershire Archaeological

Research Group, and Tewkesbury educational, religious and business interests; and to set up working groups from the Committee, with other co-options, to act on delegated matters such as the month to month archaeological work, finance, and fund-raising, publicity, documentary and buildings survey etc

6. Acquire influential patronage,

10.4 Medium-term Action: the options:

The recommendations in the preceding paragraph are made simply because we are writing in the middle of a critical situation and it is imperative that steps be taken to cope in 1972; 10-3 does not propose, however, what in our view is an adequate blueprint for dealing with the Tewkesbury situation over the next 5 years, though it is certainly based on one of the options open to the Committee i.e. the situation could be dealt with, unsatisfactorily in our view, on a year to year basis with a (different?) excavation director imported for a specific site each time. Amongst other deficiencies, such a scheme would not provide for one of the basic requirements of the situation - le continuous surveillance,

The ideal arrangement would be to set up during 1972 an Archaeological Unit on the Winchester model. This would not only revolutionise knowledge of Tewkesbury but would do so in the most efficient way possible. The initial capital and running costs - minimum of £10,000pa - would seem to rule this out at Tewkesbury except in the unlikely events of a munificent gift or loan or commercial sponsorship (is the last so impossible?).

Another alternative would be to appoint a Town Archaeologist to a full-time post for, say, 3 years in the first instance, following the example at Gloucester where the post is funded jointly by the City Council and DOE. A salary in the range £1500-2000 would be required, related to local government or university scales, though again we would suggest any such appointment should be directly responsible to the Committee unless the local authorities themselves create and fund the post.

Of these three alternatives, this last seems the most feasible in the Tewkesbury situation and would-be archaeologically acceptable without further elaboration, even though one person alone is not going to be able to do everything and several practical difficulties can easily be envisaged. Furthermore, it seems to us that archaeological provision in itself is not enough and must be associated with fund-raising and information programmes.,

10.5 A Five-Year Programme 1972-76:

In making this, our main recommendation and of course a compromise, we have tried to balance what is archaeologically desirable and what is financially feasible. Once the principles of an active rescue programme and a town archaeologist are accepted, endless permutations are of course possible, and the following is certainly not inflexible. Rather it is one scheme which we think is a practical solution; it is intended also to give an idea of the order of effort required.

It is based on four elements: archaeological provision, related to the Town Archaeologist idea and to the proposed development, designed to meet the requirements of excavation before and continuous surveillance during that redevelopment; a Fund-Raising Appeal; volunteer and public participation, based in part on a new Tewkesbury Archaeological Society (or Supporters' Association); and a conscious public relations exercise, not least to extract the maximum educational value from the programme. Fundamental to our proposal is that by the end of the 5 years the town museum will be a viable unit, capable of acting to meet further needs i.e. we have deliberately opted for the museum as the desired long-term organisation to meet Tewkesbury's needs rather than a new Archaeological Unit. Our calculations could of course easily be upset and there seems no point in looking beyond 1976 except in this one basic respect. Even so, we have had to make certain assumptions, not least that DOE grants can be obtained and increased, that

the County Council will increasingly become involved financially after 1973-4. This is in fact one of the main imponderables because even if, as it should, the County Council finally accepts a major responsibility in the archaeological field, there is no way of knowing at the moment how it will develop e.g. the appointment of a County Archaeologist need not necessarily help the Tewkesbury situation at all whereas the growth of a County Archaeological Unit or a County Museum Service could make all the difference. In the circumstances, we have assumed that the initiative and the main responsibility will lie in Tewkesbury for the time being even when it ceases to be a Borough, Our recommendation can best be set out in columns on a full page (page 16).

10.6

It would be very easy, in conclusion, to recommend that Tewkesbury and those concerned with both its history and the wider interest of that history should never again be so thoughtless with their heritage. Such a recommendation is in fact unnecessary because if this Report is not acted on there never will be another chance. We hope that we are at least able to make the choice a conscious one, Tewkesbury in 1981 will have the history it deserves.

YEAR	ARCHAEOLOGY	INCOME	FUND-RAISING, PR etc
1972	Formation of T Archaeol and Arch Comm Publication of T Rpt Appt of Excav Director Excav of sites 27 & 20 with site display, free leaflets etc 1st excav interim Rpt	4000	Public reaction, media coverage Exhib of T's archaeology Public lecture, start of schools involvement,, Formation of T Archaeol Soc (£1 sub. half to TAAC); first 100 members
1973	Appt of Town Archaeologist (3/4yr contract) Appt of Archaeol Asst with some responsibility in Mus esp re conservation (1yr contract) Major excav continues Emergence of local volunteer help	Part funded by local authority?	Press conf: launch of Syr Public Appeal to raise £10,000 Regular press releases TAS regular newsletters, membership 250, takes over much of local fund-raising per coffee-mornings sales, fayres etc Excav guided tours, slides and postcards for sale
	2nd excav interim Rpt	6000	Publication of popular Guide to Archaeol of T Exhibit in Museum VIP occasion Public lecture on '73 results
1974	Appt of full-time, permanent Museum Curator Appt of Excav Asst (2yr contract extendable to 3yrs) Excav of sites 24 or 25 3rd excav interim Rpt First Full Report (⁶ 72 work)	Part funded by local authority? 7000	
1975	Excav Asst becomes Excav Director while first Town Archaeologist prepares '73-4 work for publication and is involved in Anniversary Appt of new Excav Asst (1yr contract) Excav of sites 24 or 25		Major exhib etc as part of 400th anniversary of Borough Charter with big PR exercise and fund-raising climax
1976	Appt of Town Archaeologist as second permanent Mus post. Henceforth mus handles excav First non-emergency excav? Merger of Mus Comm and TAAC? 5th excav interim Rpt. Second Full Rpt (73-4 work) Popular 'new history of Tewkesbury;	Local authority funds 2 Mus posts? DOE grants for any further rescue excav	Perm exhib of T's history and archaeol

SECTION 11 Acknowledgments and Sources

11.1

This survey has only been possible through the co-operation of numerous individuals and organisations. We would like to thank in particular the Town Clerk and his staff, especially those in the Surveyors Dept; the Civic Society; the County Planning Dept; the Archaeology Division of the Ordnance Survey, J Rhodes of Gloucester City Museum; Mrs E M Linnell of Mitton, Tewkesbury; and Mrs E Raggett. The support of Rescue, the Trust for British Archaeology, and in particular of its Hon Secretary, P A Barker has been vital,

11.2

We acknowledge a general debt to, and inspiration from, the several Council for British Archaeology publications of recent years on towns and their archaeology. In particular we have had the benefit in draft of its major publication 'The Erosion of History: Archaeology and Planning in Towns', ed C Heighway (May 1972). We have also learnt much from the three existing archaeological implication studies of Oxford (1967, 2nd ed), York (1971), and Tamworth (1971),

11.3

We have used the following published local sources for detailed information, and would record our debt in particular to Bennet and VCH VIII

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Gloucestershire County Planning Office, Architectural Survey of Tewkesbury

SECTION 12 Postscript TAAC August 1972 - January 1973

12.1

The appointment of a Director of Excavations in late July 1972 began the implementation of the programme suggested earlier in this report (10.2). Meetings were held to discuss what major site might be excavated; the Sabrina Cinema was chosen and work began in early August (Site 15). Observation, salvage and trial operations began elsewhere in the Borough. This was made possible by a generous grant from the Department of the Environment.

12.2

As predicted, the sewer pipe trench encircling the southern and eastern outskirts of the town (Site 23a) was started in July and its progress from Gander Lane to Lower Lode was observed. The cutting through Holm Hill (Site 13) produced Romano-British pottery and building material in disturbed ground. A series of multiple burials in graves dug deep into the clay were cut by the trench in the southern area of Holm Hospital grounds. They were obviously recent and were probably inhumations of epidemic victims of the 1840's noted in the Tewkesbury Workhouse Register. From the A.38 south of Tewkesbury, across "Bloody Meadow" towards Lower Lode, the trench served mainly to confirm what was already known of the geology of the area.

12.3

In the late summer of 1972 buildings at Lilley's Alley (Site 20) were awaiting demolition before redevelopment on the site. The cottages and factory are, however, still intact at the time of writing. In August 1972 a trial trench was dug to provide a guide to the controlled use of machinery during full investigation. It was shown that the ground surface south-east of Church Street was the result of large-scale terracing in post-medieval times to provide a level at which building could take place above the flood level of the Swilgate. The natural marl was reached in the trench at a depth of 3.5 metres below the present level of Lilley's Alley. It, therefore, appeared that the risk of flooding for Tewkesbury in the medieval period was higher than in recent times. The fill used to raise levels along the back of the Swilgate contained post-medieval material to a depth of 2 metres with only a small number of late medieval sherds below this. This terracing must have been part of the process of urban expansion away from the main thoroughfares, since it was noted in the buildings survey that houses along Lilley's Alley furthest from Church Street tended to be the latest in date, a conclusion with important implications for full archaeological enquiry. Large-scale excavation to former ground levels will be prohibitive, physically and financially.

12.4

Archaeological investigation in Tewkesbury coincided with the closing stages of the construction of the Lex Supermarket precinct (Site 1). In a small, undisturbed area a trench 4 metres by 2 metres was cut down through a metre of black silt to reveal a group of Romano-British containers, undisturbed and embedded upright in the buried sandy soil. This discovery demonstrated the shallowness of Roman levels and confirmed the presence of large areas of featureless black silt which accumulated in medieval times. It also showed how much had been lost in earlier construction as predicted in 1971 (6.3).

12.5

The major archaeological work has been at the site of the Sabrina Cinema in Oldbury Road (Site 15, figs. 6 and 8) and was made possible by a grant from the Department of the Environment. One trench was cut near the High Street frontage for information about medieval frontages. Another

trench established a sequence of activity on the Tewkesbury gravel, extending back at least 4000 years, from Late Neolithic to modern times, with intensive settlement in the Romano British period. Eight major periods were represented:

1 Late Neolithic.

The fill of a large pit, diameter 3 metres and depth 40cms and cut well into the gravel, contained sherds with finger-tip and cord impressions and of clear Neolithic affinities.

2 Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age.

Cut into this pit was a grave 1.3 metres long and occupied by a tightly flexed burial. Grave goods were not associated but some of the Neolithic pottery had become incorporated in the grave fill.

3 Early Iron Age.

Layers irregular in outline comprising stained sand and pebble contained sherds of Early Iron Age pottery and worked flints.

4 Early Iron Age/Romano-British.

Part of a ditch system was exposed with a larger ditch 1.50 metres wide, accompanied by a smaller ditch 30-50 cms wide. Primary silting contained fragments of Early Iron Age pottery but the main body of the fill of the ditch contained Romano-British pottery.

5 Romano-British.

Ditching continued on the site. The upcast raised the level by 10-20 cms over the surrounding area. Red clay provided floor surfaces in and around dwellings. In late c1, a thick and extensive pebble layer was laid over much of the site. Activity continued in c2 marked by the discarding of pottery, building material, slag, millstones. A furnace became a sump or cess pit. Another pebble layer was then to blanket part of the site. This later pebble platform had large quantities of lias stone embedded in it, supporting a stone structure of lias, oolite and red sandstone. In late c2 - early c3 the collapse of this stone structure was accompanied by fire and wear.

6 Post Roman/Saxon.

A large ditch had been dug across the area, cutting through Romano-British levels. This ditch cut deep into the gravel and some sherds of middle Saxon character were found in the primary silting.

7 Medieval.

Six pits were cut into underlying layers and two had penetrated the gravel to the marl beneath. These contained a small quantity of medieval pottery. The absence of clearly discernible medieval stratification at Cinema 2 meant that it was impossible to tell at what level the pits had been dug.

8 Post Medieval/Modern.

In the late c15, alleys accompanied by brick cottages extended over this area of Tewkesbury. Suburban development was attended by the construction of wells, cellars, the laying of sewer pipes, all of which had failed to inflict excessive mutilation to the deposits in Cinema 2.

At Cinema 4 there was a striking density of pits with very few structures. Romano-British pottery was again present in quantity, including an intact black burnished jar. As with Cinema 2 there was a remarkable quantity of building material, including a fragment of painted plaster, in the fill of some pits. The excavation of the remaining undisturbed area of Site 15 is now a priority and continues as weather and the availability of machinery permit.

12.6

Plans for the construction of a detached dwelling in the rear garden of Tudor House Hotel provided the opportunity for a trial trench against the red sandstone wall which borders Red Lane, the

significance of which has already been commented upon (8.6). A large revetment of stone and brick which appeared to have preceded the raising of the level of the garden was associated with c18 pottery. The earth beneath this revetment, although disturbed, contained mainly late medieval sherds. The base of the wall rested on the red marl, which was reached 4 metres below the level of the garden and which characterizes the natural to the west of High Street. The working of the red sandstone blocks has since been shown to be Norman but the wall to which the stone belongs in Red Lane is a construction of the Late Medieval/Tudor period, perhaps contemporary with the initial phase of Tudor House. The existence of the wall at an earlier date would argue for the enclosure of a medieval stone building, which exists neither in surviving stone footings, nor in topographical/place-name features.

12.7

Tewkesbury Borough Council has contributed generously towards archaeology in the Borough, particularly in the provision of a large building in Mill Street as an Archaeological Centre. This has facilitated the housing of archaeological activity under one roof, with requirements such as storage, finds processing, conservation, workshop, reception and lecturing being met in the various parts of the building. A small conservation laboratory has been particularly successful and a wide range of materials now receive essential first aid treatment within hours of leaving the site. Form and fabric series have been produced for Tewkesbury pottery and are being tested against collections elsewhere in the Severn Valley area. Students from Cheltenham College receive tuition and excavate as a supervised group, while a small number of volunteers are available from the local area. The study of standing buildings has been instigated with sites where demolition is imminent, e.g. Lilley's Alley (Site 20) and Nelson Inn (with Site 19). A course "History in a Town: Tewkesbury", organised by the Department of Extra-Mural Studies, University of Bristol, was held in October 1972 and was very well attended.

12.8

In the next few months there will be a display based on Cinema site material at the Tewkesbury Arts Centre, and the publication of an Interim Report, to be made available for sale and distribution during the summer of 1973. Major excavations will be conducted in 1973 at sites where demolition and/or development takes place. These could include Eagle's Alley (Site 27), Nelson Inn and adjacent area (Site 19), Lilley's Alley (Site 20) and Tewkesbury Park (Site 23). A watching brief is now being extended outside the Borough in anticipation of local government reorganisation, and it is hoped that an excavation may be carried out in the Autumn of 1973 at Aston on Carrant, in conjunction with gravel extraction.

A Hannan for TAAC

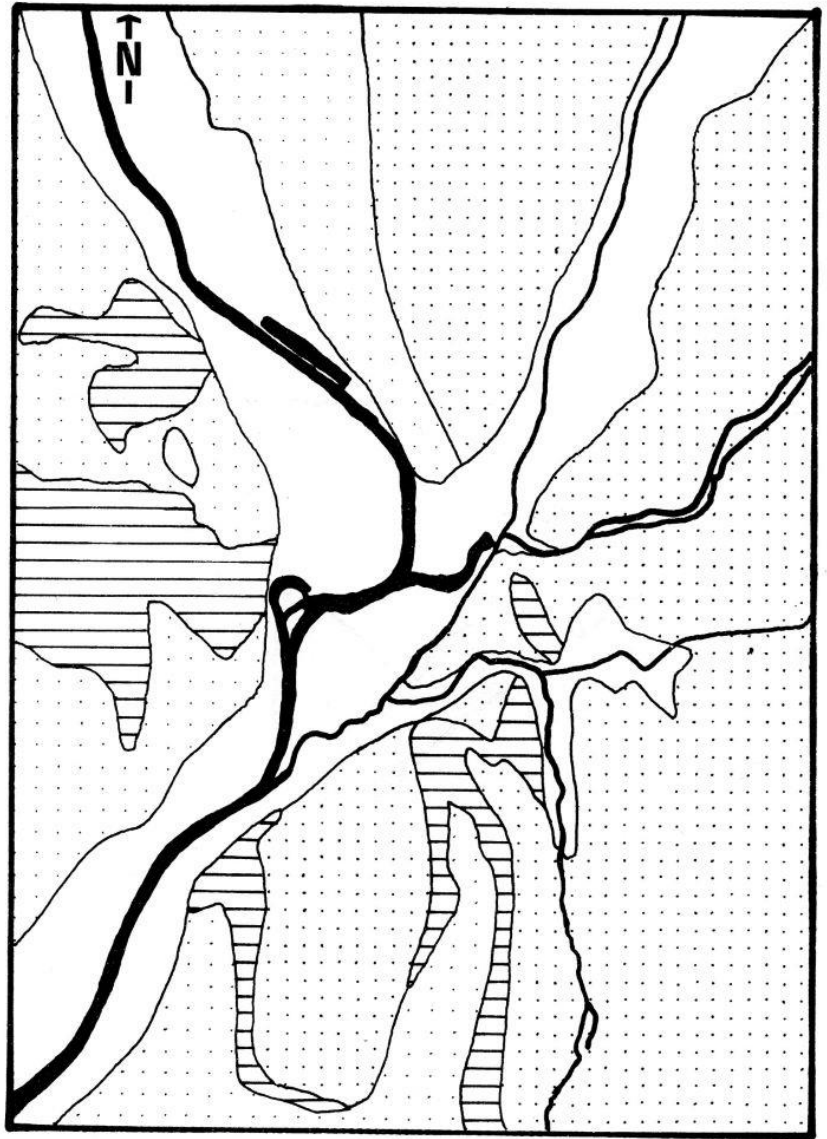
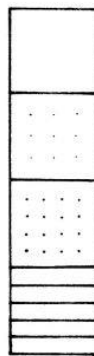


fig.1. **1" : 1 mile.**
Geology of the Tewkesbury area



alluvium
red marl
lower lias
white lias

Fig. 2 TEWKESBURY: Area liable to flooding

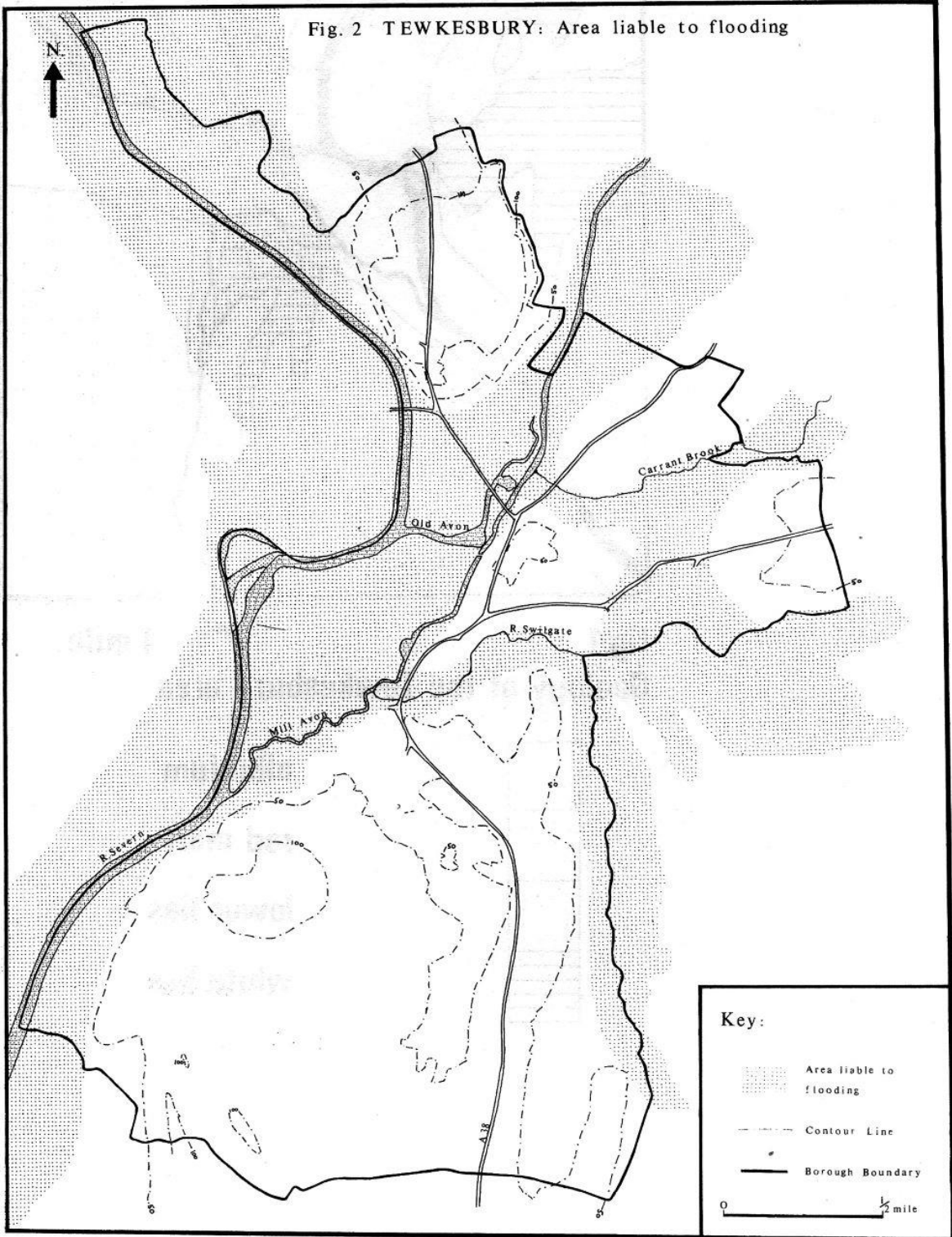
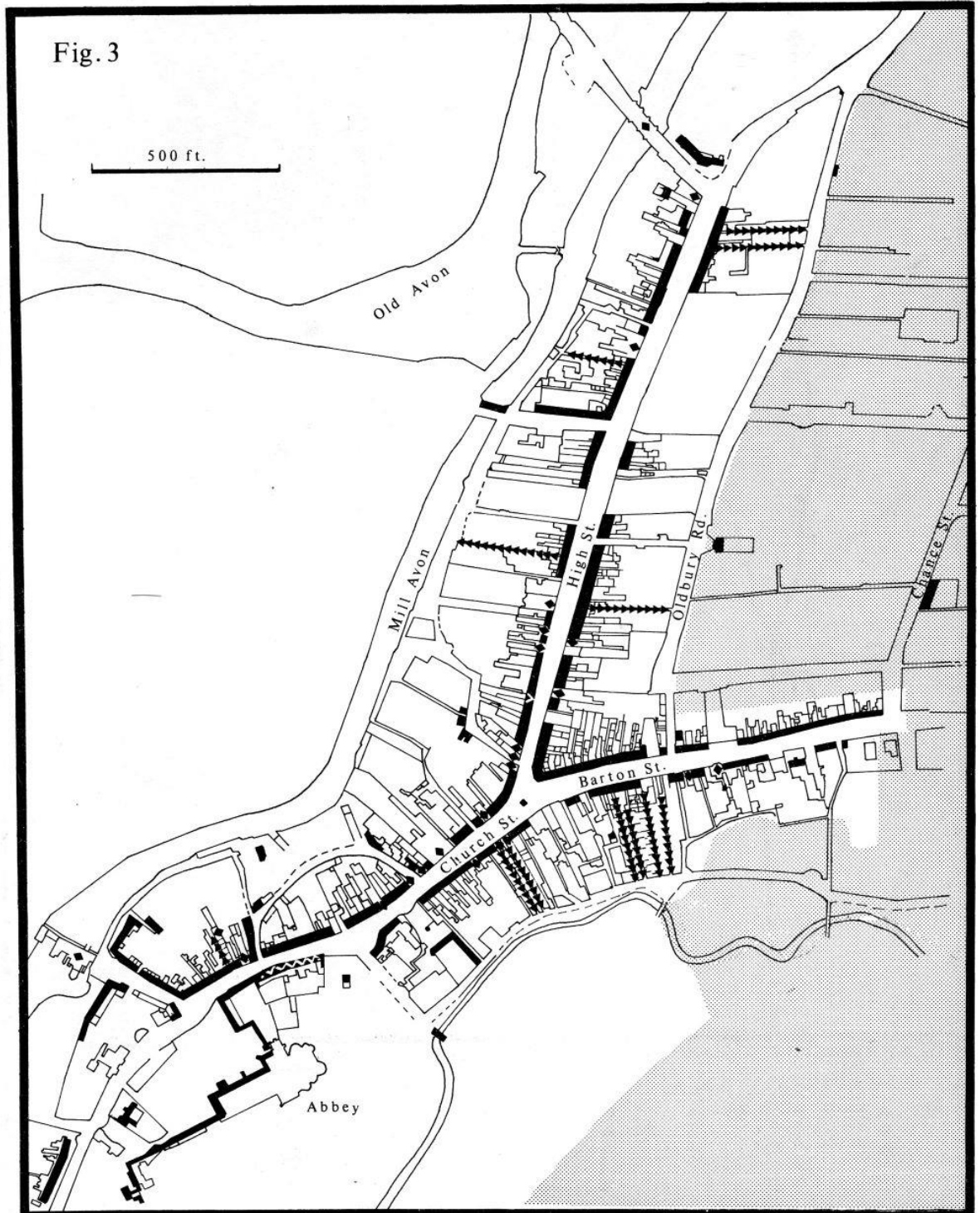
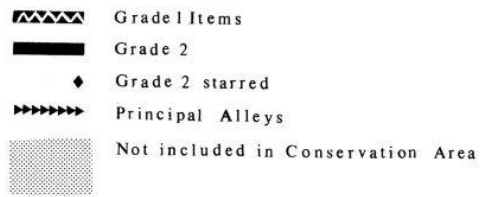


Fig.3 Listed Buildings in Tewkesbury Town Centre



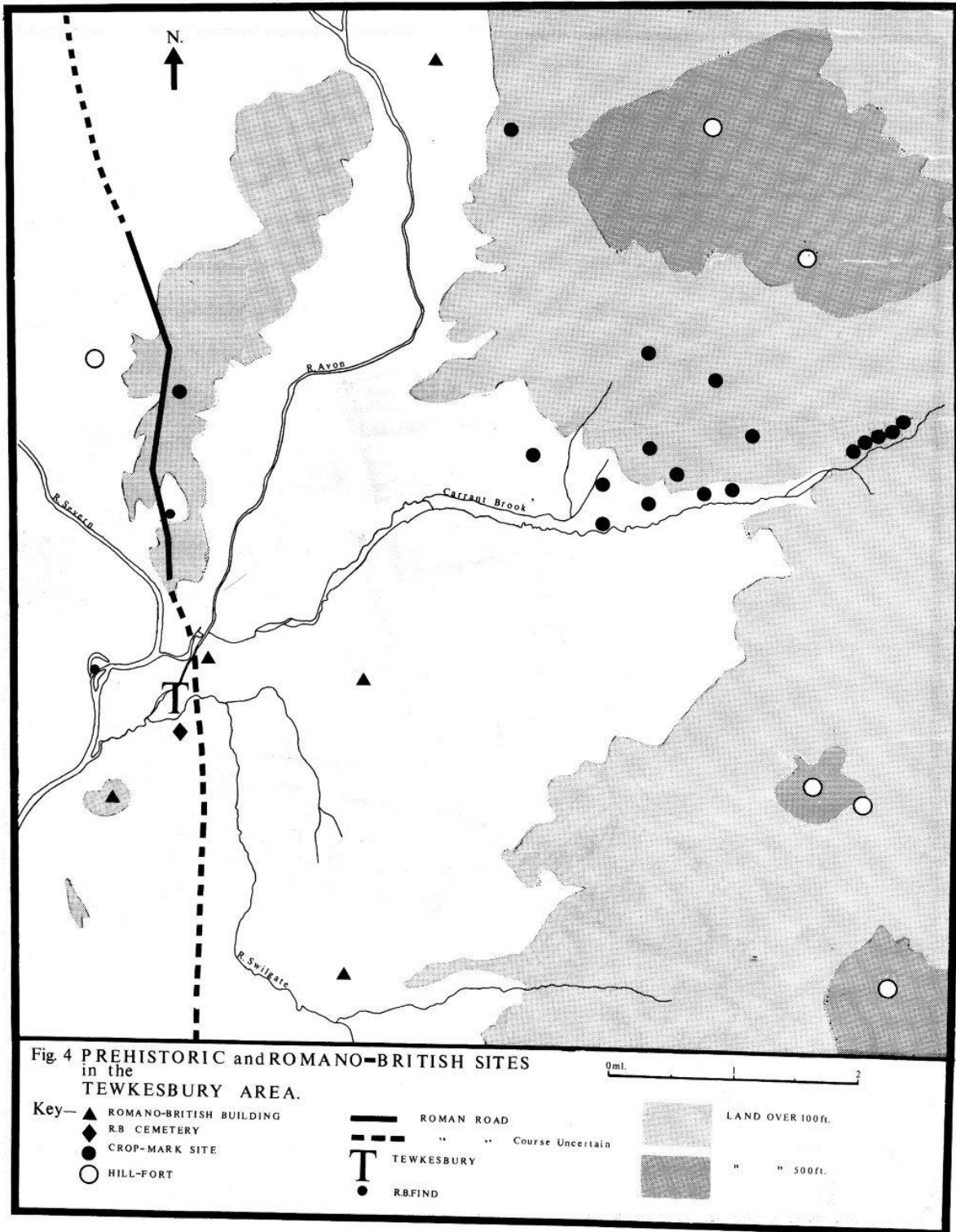


Fig. 4 PREHISTORIC and ROMANO-BRITISH SITES in the TEWKESBURY AREA.

Key—
 ▲ ROMANO-BRITISH BUILDING
 ◆ RB CEMETERY
 ● CROP-MARK SITE
 ○ HILL-FORT

— ROMAN ROAD
 - - - " " Course Uncertain
 T TEWKESBURY
 ● R.B.FIND

0mi. 1 2

LAND OVER 100ft.
 " " 500ft.

Fig. 5 TEWKESBURY: Archaeological Sites and Conservation Area

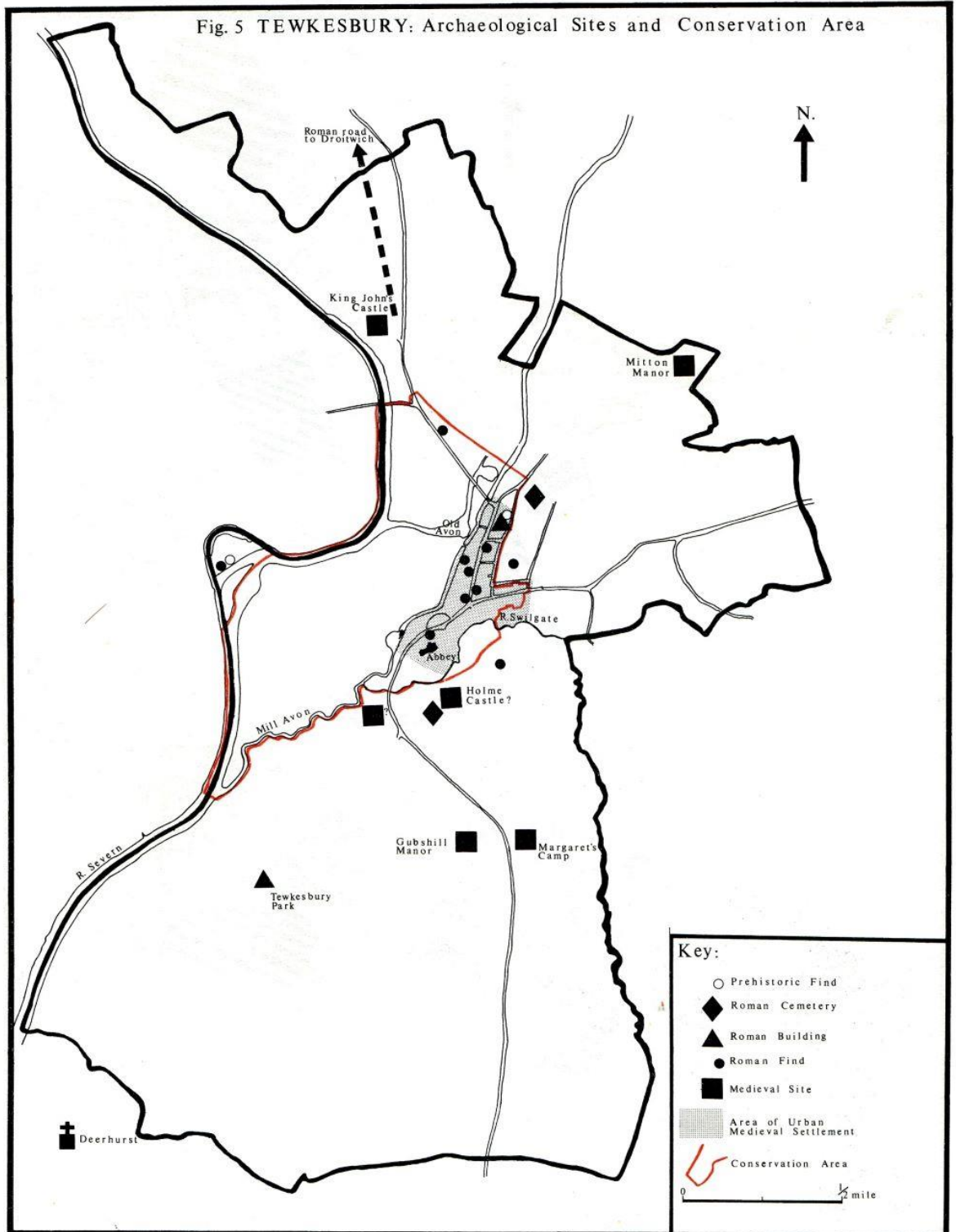


Fig.6 Development Areas in Tewkesbury Town Centre

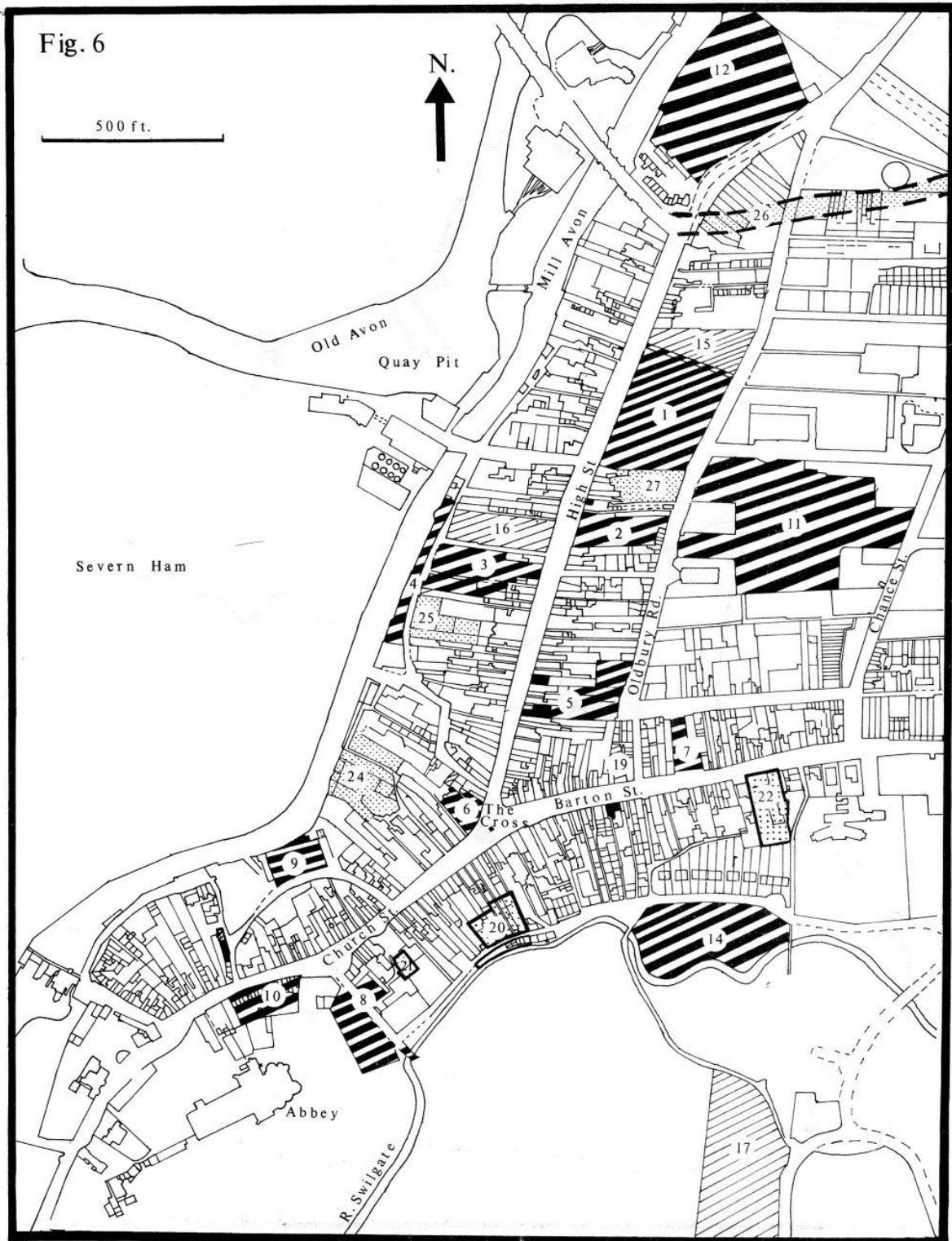
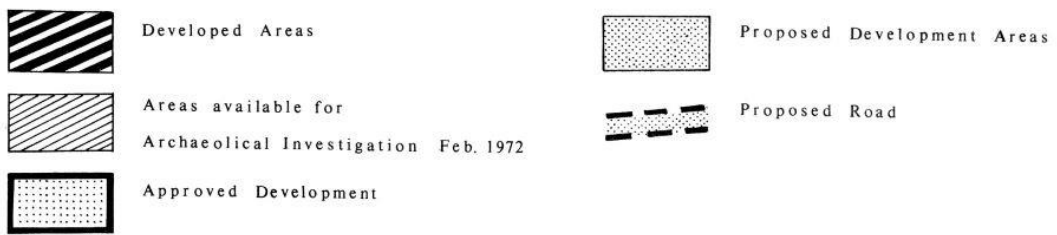


Fig.7 Development Areas in the Suburbs of Tewkesbury.

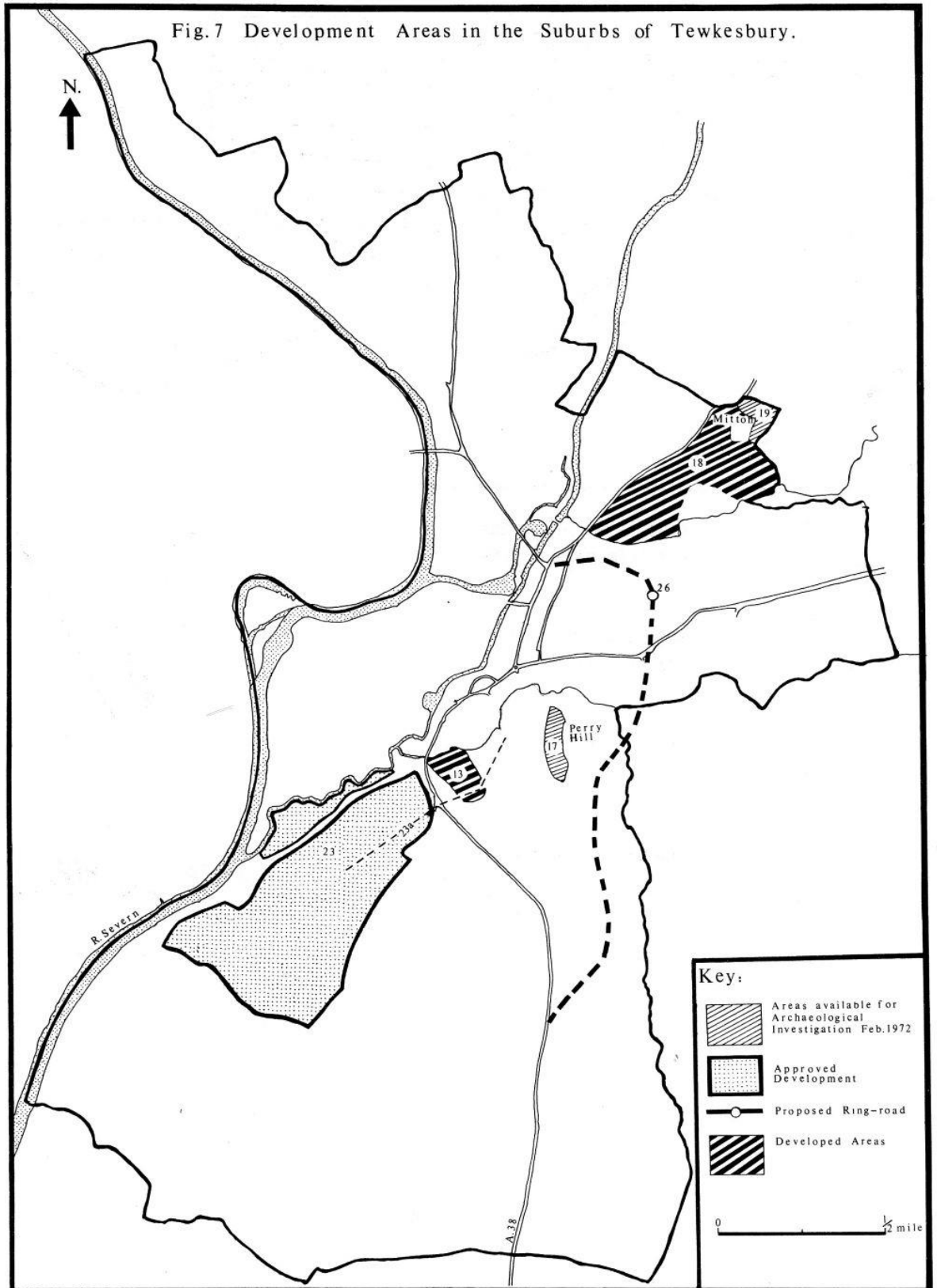


fig. 8

SITE 15

