

Land adjacent to 55 Northgate, Canterbury, Kent

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment Report

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SUMMARY

This report presents a provisional desk-based assessment constituting rapid archaeological appraisal of land at 55 Northgate, Canterbury, Kent (centred on NGR 615176 158276; Fig 1). The report was commissioned by Caroline Gingell of NFA Architects Ltd, on behalf of Mr John Rodgers of Torran Construction Ltd, in June 2016 in view of proposed development of the site.

On the basis of previous work within the proposed development area and nearby, buried archaeological remains of regional significance may be preserved within the proposed development area.

A programme of archaeological and field evaluation of the area prior to development is recommended, including a watching brief in consideration of the potential for geoarchaeological evidence. Following assessment of the results, further archaeological and/or geoarchaeological excavation may be required to mitigate the impact of development.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents a provisional desk-based assessment constituting rapid archaeological appraisal of land at 55 Northgate, Canterbury, Kent (centred on NGR 615176 158276; Fig 1). The report was commissioned Caroline Gingell of NFA architects Ltd, on behalf of Mr John Rodgers of Torran Construction Ltd, in June 2016 in view of proposed development of the site.
- 1.2 This assessment is a consultation document prepared for the client which may be submitted as part of a planning proposal (supplementing a heritage statement for example). It constitutes a pilot study assessing the potential for further research, either desk-based or in the field. Additional desk-based research and/or fieldwork may be requested by planning authorities or specified as conditions on any planning consent, although any request for further desk-based work should clearly demonstrate the benefits of such an approach as opposed to field evaluation, for example.
- 1.3 The objective of the current research, verbally agreed with the client and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), has been to view readily available existing evidence in order to assess the extent and nature of any heritage assets with archaeological interest within the Proposed Development Area (PDA), and thereby gauge the likelihood of heritage assets of archaeological interest being affected by development within the PDA. Research has been undertaken to an appropriate level of detail in response to funding limitations which affect the affordable scope and provisional nature of the study, as well as the particular circumstances of the proposed development.

2. POLICY AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORKS

- 2.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with national and local policy regarding heritage assets and with reference to research frameworks.

National policy

- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG March 2012) sets out a series of core planning principles designed to underpin plan-making and decision-taking within the planning system. In terms of development proposals affecting known heritage assets, the following principle states that planning should:

Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

- 2.3 By definition the historic environment includes all surviving physical remains of past human activity. Heritage assets include extant structures and features, sites, places and landscapes. The European Landscape Convention definition of a historic landscape describes: ‘an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors’ (Council of Europe 2000: which came into force in the UK in March 2007; see research frameworks, below). Furthermore the historic landscape encompasses visible, buried or submerged remains, which includes the buried archaeological resource.

2.4 Policy 126 states that:

Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- *The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
- *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and*
- *Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of the place.*

2.5 When determining planning applications, the following policies are especially pertinent:

128. Local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

129. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of the heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

132. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a Grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments,

protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

139. Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

- 2.6 The existence of the latter within a proposed development area can be partially investigated and to an extent predicted via desk-based assessment, but field evaluation and/or archaeological monitoring of groundworks are likely to be a planning requirement and should be expected.

Local policy

- 2.7 Applying the same general principles on a local scale, the relevant Canterbury District Local Plan (Publication Draft 2014) policies are HE1 (includes Scheduled Ancient Monuments and buildings of local architectural or historic interest), HE2 (World Heritage Sites), HE4–5 (Listed Buildings), HE5–6 (Conservation Areas), HE12 (Historic Landscapes), and HE10 and HE11 (Archaeology). Policy HE 11 is particularly relevant:

‘The archaeological and historic integrity of designated heritage assets such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other important archaeological sites, together with their settings, will be protected and, where possible, enhanced. Development which would adversely affect them will not be permitted.

Planning applications, on sites where there is or is the potential for an archaeological heritage asset, must include an appropriate desk based assessment of the asset

In addition where important or potentially significant archaeological heritage assets may exist, developers will be required to arrange for field evaluations to be carried out in advance of the determination of planning applications. The evaluation should define:

The character, importance and condition of any archaeological deposits or structures within the application site;

The likely impact of the proposed development on these features (including the limits to the depth to which groundworks can go on the site); and

The means of mitigating the effect of the proposed development including: a statement setting out the impact of the development.

Where the case for development affecting a heritage asset of archaeological interest is accepted, the archaeological remains should be preserved in situ.

Where preservation in situ is not possible or justified, appropriate provision for preservation by record may be an acceptable alternative. In such cases archaeological recording works must be undertaken in accordance with a specification prepared by the Council’s Archaeological Officer or a competent archaeological organisation that has been agreed by the Council in advance.’

Research frameworks

- 2.8 The national and local policy outlined above should be considered in light of the non-statutory heritage frameworks that inform them. While the regional South East Research Framework for the historic environment (SERF)¹ is still in preparation, initial outputs are available on-line and have been considered in preparing this report, in order to take current research agendas into account.

3. LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 3.1 The PDA is located within the suburban area of Northgate (Fig 1). The area lies at approximately 8.2m AOD,² the ground rising from 7.9mAOD to 8.9mAOD between the Northgate and the Tortel roundabout. Situated on the margins of the valley floor of the Stour the ground west of the PDA slopes away gradually to the river.
- 3.2 British Geological Survey mapping shows only Pleistocene quaternary drift deposits of head brickearth across the PDA with recent alluvium on the west across the floodplain of the river Stour.³ Bedrock and drift geological deposits not exposed at the surface are probably Palaeocene Thanet Beds overlain by second terrace river gravels. A fragment of a Lower Palaeolithic handaxe (Kent HER Record TR15NE1132; Roe 1968, 142) from the Northgate allotments north-west of the PDA may be derived from these river terrace gravels.
- 3.3 The development and early topography of the valley floor between the two branches of the river Stour has been investigated through a series of geoarchaeological boreholes across the former Kingsmead Stadium site to the north of the PDA. The work, undertaken in 2007, identified four stages of the evolution of the Stour floodplain, with late Pleistocene sands and gravels dated between 26000-13000BP, later gravels interbedded with fine grained silts and sands and a final meandering channel with some lateral migration associated with deposition of peats dated to the early Mesolithic, 9400-7300BC. The final deposits of sediments probably commenced during the Neolithic/Bronze Age periods and continued into the medieval period (Halsey 2010). The present course of the Stour is largely the result of canalization and straightening from the early twentieth century.⁴

4. DESIGNATIONS

- 4.1 The PDA does not affect or impact on any World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Battlefields, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings or Registered Parks and Gardens. A significant number of listed buildings, however, are located in close proximity to the PDA. Two listed heritage assets are however located in close proximity to the PDA, on the opposite south side of St John's Place, at 58 Northgate/11 St John's Place and The Haven, both early nineteenth brick built houses (National Heritage List Numbers 1241062 and 1260240). Nos 76-91, refronted timber framed buildings of eighteenth century date, on the opposite east side of Northgate are also listed (National Heritage List Numbers 124114 and 124115). The remains of the Hospital of St John The Baptist, founded by Archbishop Lanfranc in 1085 for the poor and infirm are located just

¹ http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/heritage/south_east_research_framework.aspx

² Above the Ordnance Datum

³ <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

⁴ The sequence of deposits and evolution of the river and floodplain is considered in more detail in Pratt 2015.

to the north of the PDA and are designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (National Heritage List Number 1995122). Policy 129 of the National Policy Planning Framework applies to the setting of these designated heritage assets.

- 4.2 The PDA lies within the Canterbury Conservation Area (as defined in the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990) and the Canterbury Area of Archaeological Importance, as designated by the Secretary of State on 30 March 1984 pursuant to the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Statutory Instruments 1285 and 1286 dated 17 August and 30 September 1984 detail the procedures that should be followed to comply with the Act to ensure that the potential archaeological resource is protected and preserved. The Director of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT) is the designated investigating authority within the Canterbury Area of Archaeological Importance.

5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

- 5.1 This study is based on archaeological records included within the Kent Historic Environment Record, including the Canterbury Urban Archaeological Database, as well as other unpublished grey literature, and readily available primary and secondary historical sources. A list of sources consulted is given. The UAD search covers a radius of 75m around the PDA (centred on NGR 615176 158276). These records have been assessed in terms of their particular relevance to the PDA and only significant evidence is cited in this report. Numbers in parenthesis refer to the UAD or Kent HER databases.
- 5.2 It has been considered beyond the means of this project to pursue detailed questions requiring an in-depth study of primary documentary and cartographic sources. General historical context for archaeological findings is provided where applicable/significant in terms of results, and a survey of published and unpublished maps (including geology and contour survey) has been undertaken. A full list of maps consulted is provided at the end of the report. Only maps showing significant topographical developments are reproduced here.
- 5.3 All results of analyses are presented below in synthesis and in order of chronology.

Romano-British (c AD 43 – 450)

- 5.4 A major Roman road leading out of the north gate of the walled Roman town followed an alignment now represented by Northgate and thence along the Sturry Road, connecting Canterbury to Reculver and Richborough. Earlier excavations for the laying of sewers in 1868 recorded an early Roman cremation burial just south-west of St John's Place (MKE 4772; Pilbrow 1871, 61) which may indicate the southernmost extent of burial along the Roman road. Other Roman period remains have been recorded in proximity to this road, principally during modern archaeological excavations. Investigations in January 1986 along the south side of St John's Place recorded a soil horizon containing considerable quantities of Roman pottery and building materials, as well as two shallow rubbish pits and a gully or ditch. Although no structural remains were discovered, the finds were considered to indicate that the area lay on the fringe of a Roman cemetery or perhaps near to a Roman building (ECA 8177; Anderson 1987). To the south of the PDA investigations in 1973 at 68 Northgate recorded soil horizons dated to the late first century AD overlain by a drain and layers of gravels which were probably part of the roadbed of the main Roman road and which were in turn sealed by a layer of brown

brickearth, probably from collapsed timber framed building (UAD ECA 8786; Harrington and Philp 1974). Further evidence for the Roman road has been recorded to the north of the PDA. Observations during excavations within Northgate Street adjacent to St John's Hospital in 1999 recorded a sequence of successive cobbled and gravel surfaces, the lowest in association with a gravel filled hollow which probably represents the metallings and side ditch to the Roman road (ECA8165; Pratt 1999). To the north, excavations in 1993 in Northgate car park recorded a substantial recut ditch, interpreted as the side drainage ditch to the Roman road, the fill containing pottery of second to third century date (at TR 1531958389) (ECA812; Herdman 1996). Something of the pattern of Roman land use and management adjacent to the Roman road has been recorded during archaeological investigations. To the south-west of the PDA, on the east side of Duck lane, excavations in 1994, recorded a group of pits of second century AD date, as well metallings, perhaps yard surfaces, gullies and a ditch (TR15NE372 and 1548; Ward and Bennett 1995). Closer to the river Stour, investigations in January 1996 recorded a series of Roman ditches aligned parallel to the river, interpreted as a flood barrier, channelling water away to the north-west. The lower fills, containing third century pottery, were overlain by alluvial deposits, cut though by a further ditch, the fill containing pottery of fourth century date and subsequently overlain again by alluvial deposits (ECA8129; Hicks 1997, 12-13). On the east side of Northgate, Roman period refuse and quarry pits and a boundary ditch mainly dated to the second and third century AD, were also recorded during excavations in 1989-90 on the site of the later Priory of St Gregory (Hicks and Hicks 2001, 381).

Early to Later Medieval (c 700 – 1540)

5.5 Little is known of the area in the immediate vicinity of the PDA during the early medieval period. Excavations in 1989-90 on the site of the later Priory of St Gregory recorded domestic rubbish pits, timber-lined wells, gullies and more significantly ditches interpreted as property boundaries, all dated before 1050AD, indication that a process of ribbon development was occurring along one of the main routes out of the city (Hicks and Hicks 2001, 381). Between the late seventh and ninth centuries a wic or trading settlement serving as a port to Canterbury probably existed at Fordwich (Tatton-Brown 1987, 29) a charter of 761 granting remission of tolls on ships (Sawyer 1968, 78-79 charter 29). Both the Roman road and the river provided a means of direct access between the wic and Canterbury, emphasising the importance of these routes of communication. Close to the North Gate the finding in 1907 of a late tenth to mid eleventh century Viking penannular brooch (MKE4508) is a reminder of the sacking of Canterbury by Danes in 1011-12. In the late eleventh century a large tract of land forming part of the archiepiscopal estates and extending between the Northgate and Barton on the south side of the river Stour, was granted to Christ Church Priory. Domesday Book lists the area as one sulung in *Nordevde* (Northgate), with seven villagers and 26 smallholders having two ploughs as tenants of the manor, 24 acres of meadow and also eight mills. The demesne of the land was rated at one and a half ploughs situated northeast of the later Priory of St Gregory where a new home farm or grange was established, becoming known in the twelfth century as the Manor of Colton, the place name being recorded in 1210-12 as Bertone, referring to the barley farm/enclosure (Wallenberg 1931, 174). Part of the land belonging to this manor remained vacant and was used for the foundation in 1084/85 of a church with a community of priests and clerks, and also the Hospital of St John by Archbishop Lanfranc. In 1133 the clergy were replaced by Augustinian canons and the institution refounded as the Priory of St Gregory. Christ Church property rentals of 1166

show that between the northern city walls and the manor of Colton/Barton there was a considerable suburb, comprising dwellings (*mansura*) in Northgate Street, Broad Street and the area around Drutintune or Old Ruttington Lane (Urry 1967, 25-27) (Figs 2-4). Houses within defined property holdings likely developed along both sides of Northgate Street from the late Saxon period through to the thirteenth century. Archaeological investigations in Northgate car park in 1993 recorded some of the buildings fronting onto the north side of Northgate Street, timber built with stone footings, set within narrow property plots, dating from the thirteenth century and occupied until the late fourteenth/early fifteenth century when they were demolished (ECA8120; Herdman 1996). Other buildings first erected in the thirteenth century have also been recorded on the east side of Duck Lane during excavations in 1994 (TR15NE1684; Ward and Bennett 1995).

Post-medieval (c 1500 – 1900)

5.6 The layout of the medieval suburban property ownership and in many cases the buildings themselves survived into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A plan of 1640 shows the range of buildings in elevation along the north side of Northgate Street (Fig 5) including the area occupied by the PDA. Mid to late eighteenth century plans of 1752 and 1768 (Figs 6-7) show the buildings along the street frontages in block plan. As late as 1822 (Fig 8) the north side of the Northgate Street frontage is incomplete with much of the ground to the rear of the properties west towards the river Stour in use as gardens or orchards. The frontage was finally completed by 1825 (Fig 9). By 1843 (Fig 10) St John's Lane has been laid out with the first buildings erected along the north side, including development of the PDA, with developments also being undertaken to the west of Duck Lane and to the rear of St Radegunds. The first edition Ordnance Survey plan of 1872 (Fig 11) shows the late Victorian development of the area in detail, with terrace housing along the north side of St John's Place and the erection of the British School and the Methodist Chapel at the west end. Most of these buildings remain standing with the exception of that which formerly occupied the PDA. This building was converted for use as a fortified house (TR15NE825) as part of the defensive scheme for fortress Canterbury during the early years of the second world war. Northgate Street witnessed extensive damage due both to aerial bombardment during 1942 and subsequent site clearances by the Ministry of Works during and in the years following the end of the war.

6. INTERIM IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 Investigations to the west along the south side of St John's Place in January 1986 identified the top of head brickearth deposits at a depth of 1.8m below the present ground surface. At this location the investigations also recorded that the uppermost 1.1m of soils consisted of layers of loam dumped in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries and interpreted as material to raise the ground level well above the water table or resulting from considerable building activity (ECA 8177; Anderson 1987). At Duck Lane car park to the south-west, investigations in 1994, also recorded the top of brickearth deposits at a depth of 1.8m, although there the foundations of buildings first erected in the thirteenth century were recorded at a considerably shallower depth (TR15NE1684; Ward and Bennett 1995). Little information is available for the street frontage along the north side of Northgate Street, but on the east side in the area of the former Priory of St Gregory excavations in 1989-90 recorded a considerable depth of soil overlying the foundations of the mid twelfth century priory.

- 6.2 Although the precise alignment of the Roman road is not known, observations at two locations along the north side of Northgate Street, in Northgate car park, and at 68 Northgate, indicate that the alignment is offset to the west from the medieval and modern street. Some evidence for this may therefore survive within the PDA. It is evident from the cartographic evidence that buildings occupied the street frontage along the north side of Northgate Street in the seventeenth century. Some of these structures may have been medieval in date, and others of medieval date survive along Northgate Street. The latest building on the site of the PDA appears to have been erected in the early nineteenth century, similar to the red brick house surviving on the opposite side of the street. It has not been established whether the building had cellars. If so this would have impacted to a considerable extent on buried remains of earlier structures.
- 6.3 In the first instance, a programme of archaeological evaluation of the proposed development area by the excavation of trial trenches is recommended, undertaken to determine the presence or absence of buried archaeological remains, and assess their date, significance and state of preservation. There should also be consideration as to the potential for geoarchaeological evidence within the PDA, with any possible superficial deposits of interest being reported immediately.
- 6.4 Should archaeological or geoarchaeological remains be found a further programme of archaeological assessment and/or excavation to ensure either preservation in situ or preservation by record may be required prior to and during the development of the site. If required by a condition attached to a planning consent, the works should be undertaken in consultation with Canterbury City Council as Local Planning Authority.

Maps and Plans Consulted

Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales) Canterbury Sheet 289 1:50000 Series Southampton, Ordnance Survey for Institute of Geological Sciences, National Environment Council, 1982

Canterbury Cathedral Archives C.A.L.C. Map 123 Canterbury circa 1640

W. and H. Doidge *A Plan of the Antient City of Canterbury* 1752

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Ordnance Survey Plan Kent Canterbury Sheet XLVI.3.9. Scale 1 to 500. Surveyed 1872, published 1874

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Fig 1 : Land adjacent to 55 Northgate, Canterbury : The Proposed Development Area

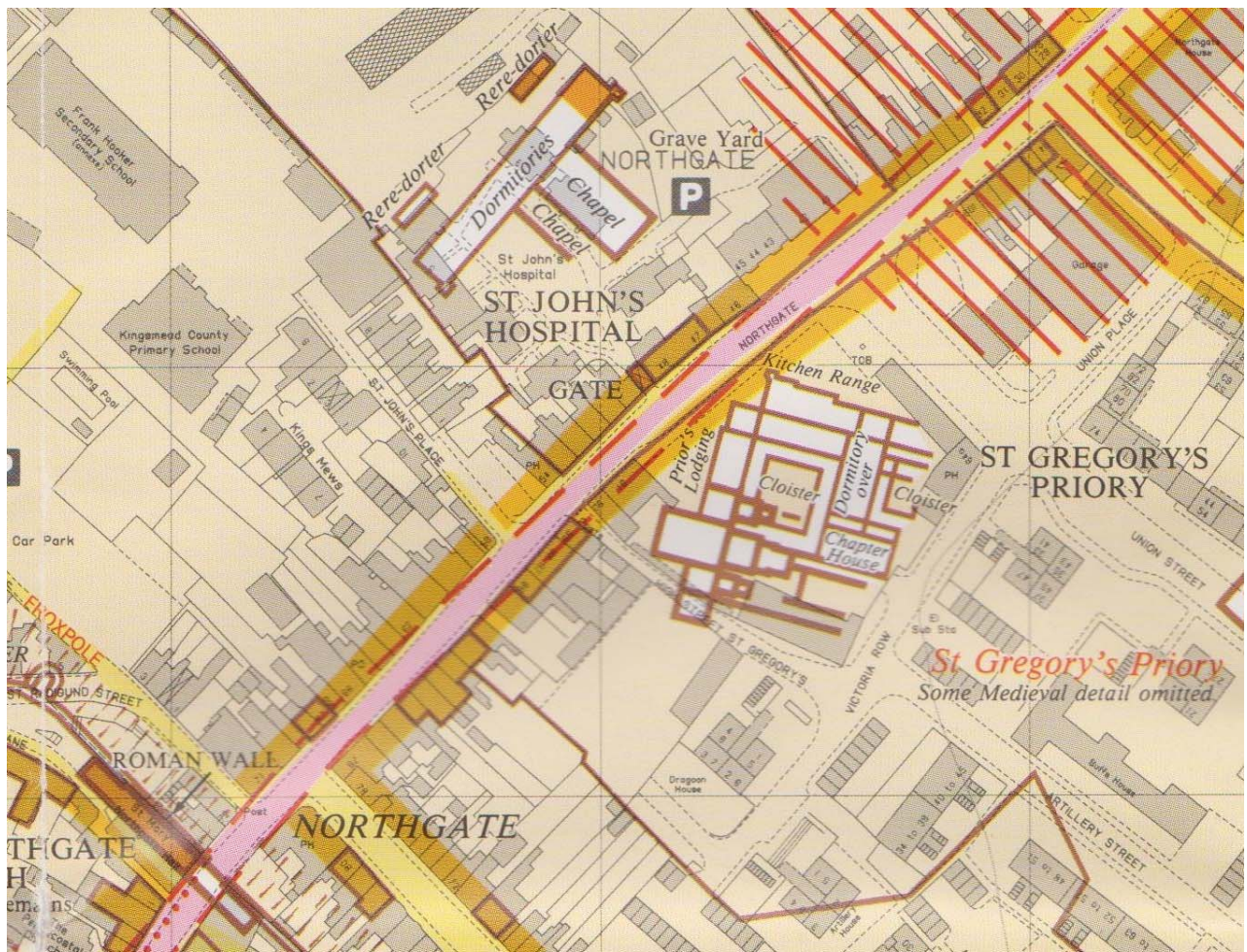


Fig 2 : Layout of Medieval Suburb of *Nordevde* showing alignment of Roman and medieval street, known medieval buildings along Northgate Street and the position of the Priory of St Gregory and the Hospital of St John the Baptist (source: Ordnance Survey Roman and medieval Canterbury historical map and guide Southampton, 1990)

Fig 3 : Plan of medieval suburb of Northgate Street 1166 (source: Urry 1967, map 1 (a) sheet 1)

[illegible]

Fig 4 : Plan of medieval suburb of Northgate Street 1200 (source: Urry 1967, map 2 (b) sheet 13)

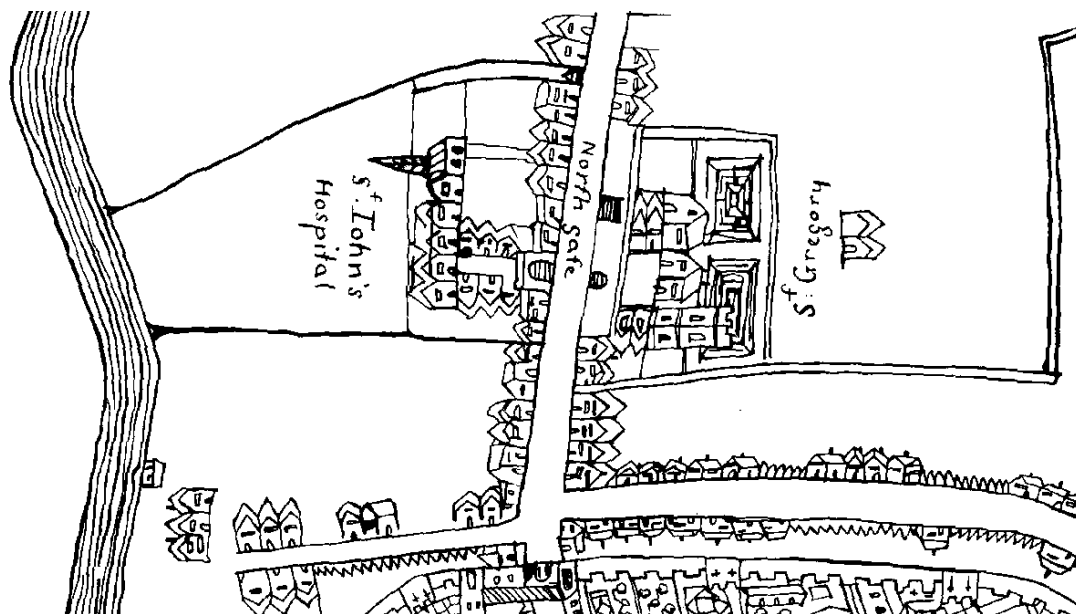


Fig 5 : Canterbury circa 1640 (source: drawing of Canterbury Cathedral Archives C.A.L.C. Map 123)

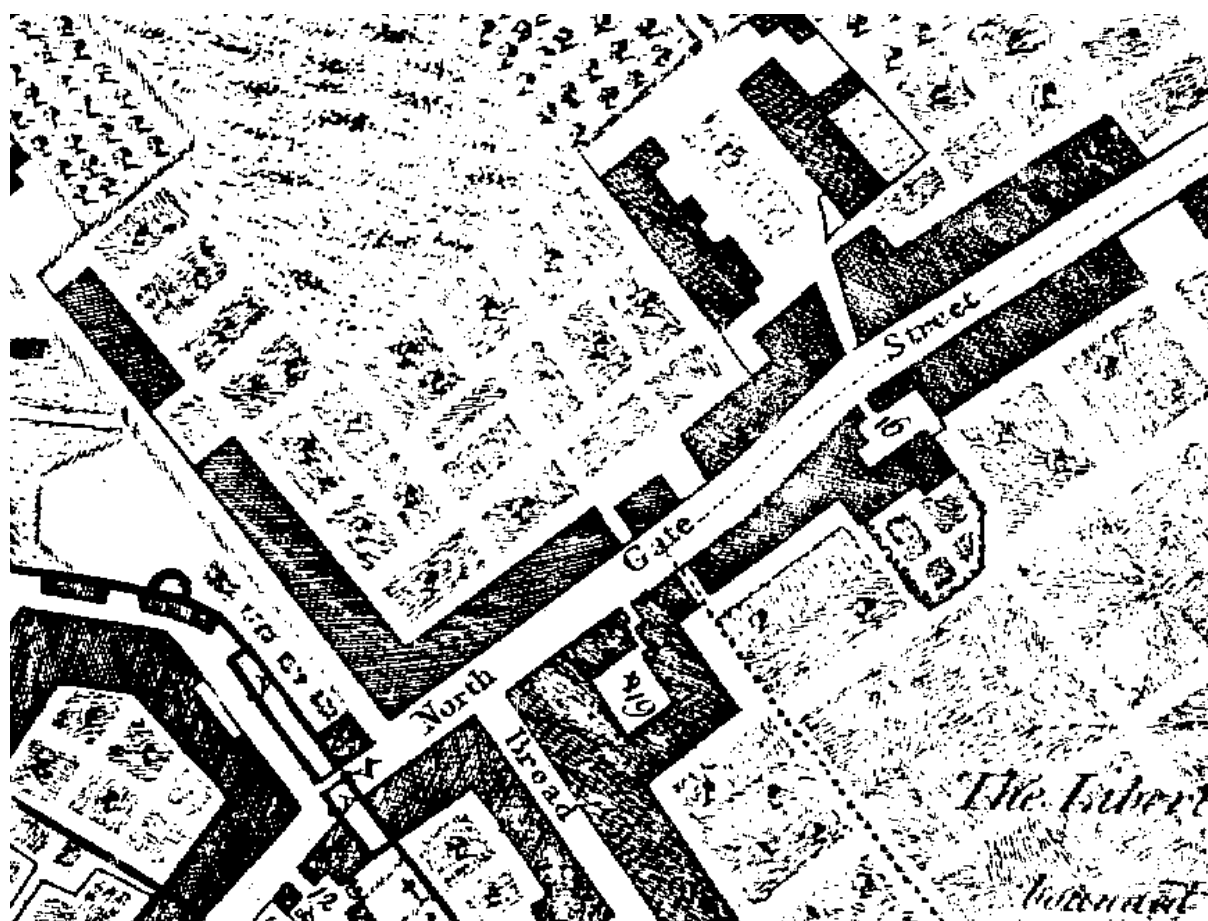


Fig 6 : Extract from: W. and H. Doidge *A Plan of the Antient City of Canterbury* 1752

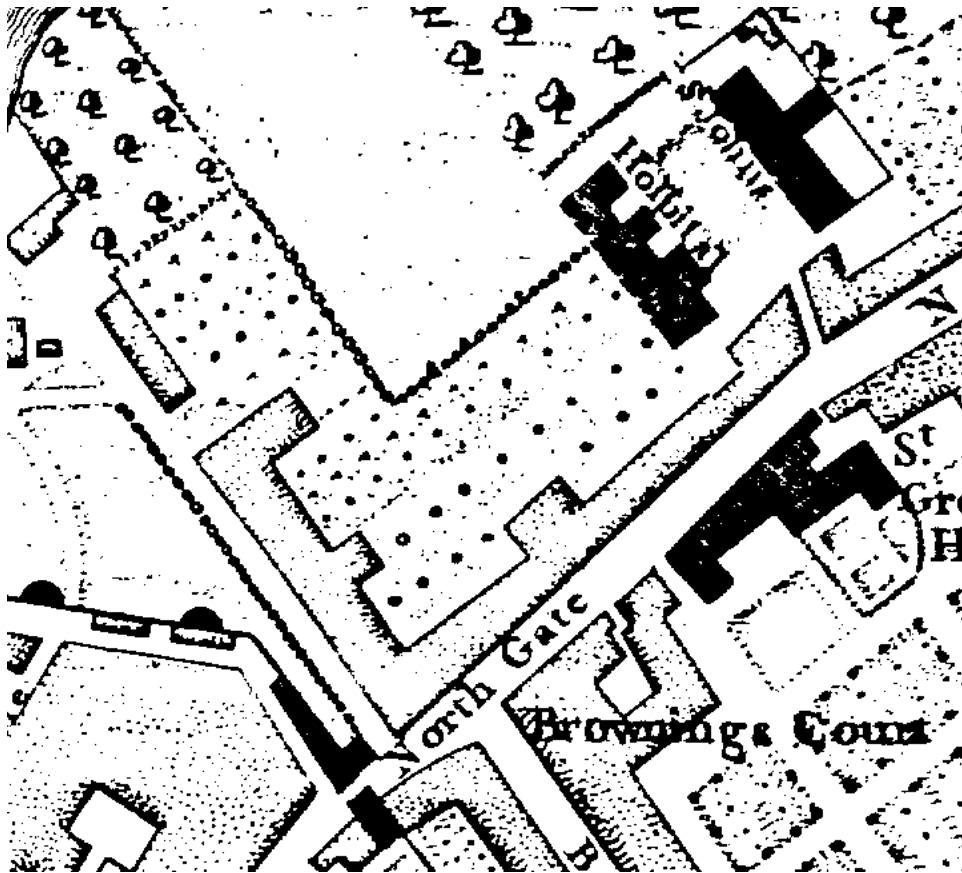


Fig 7 : Extract from: J. Andrews and M. Wren *A Plan of the City of Canterbury* 1768

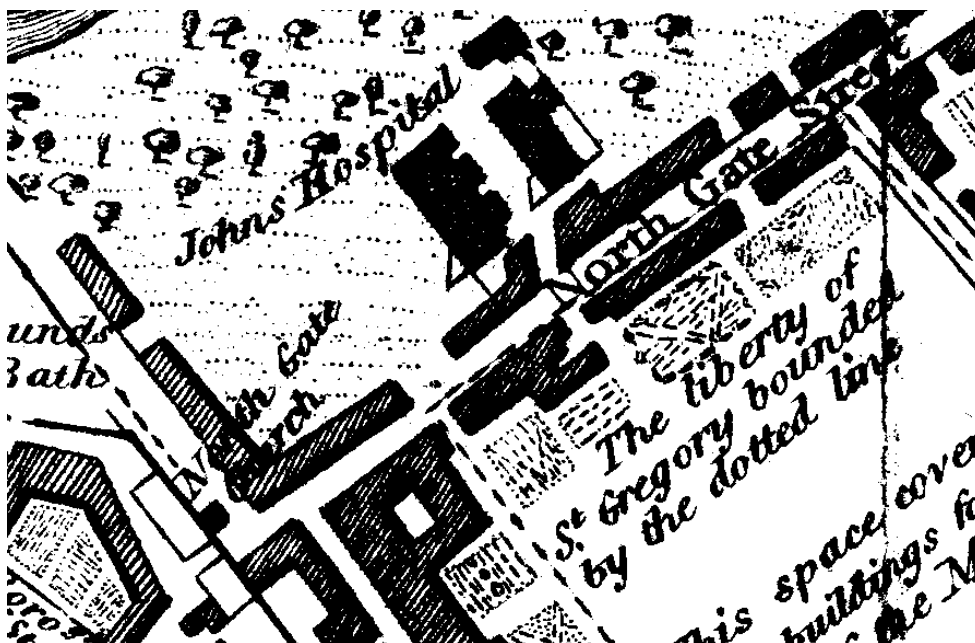


Fig 8 : Extract from: J. Bingley *Canterbury* published in: *The Kentish Tourist, or, Excursions in the County of Kent* London, 1822

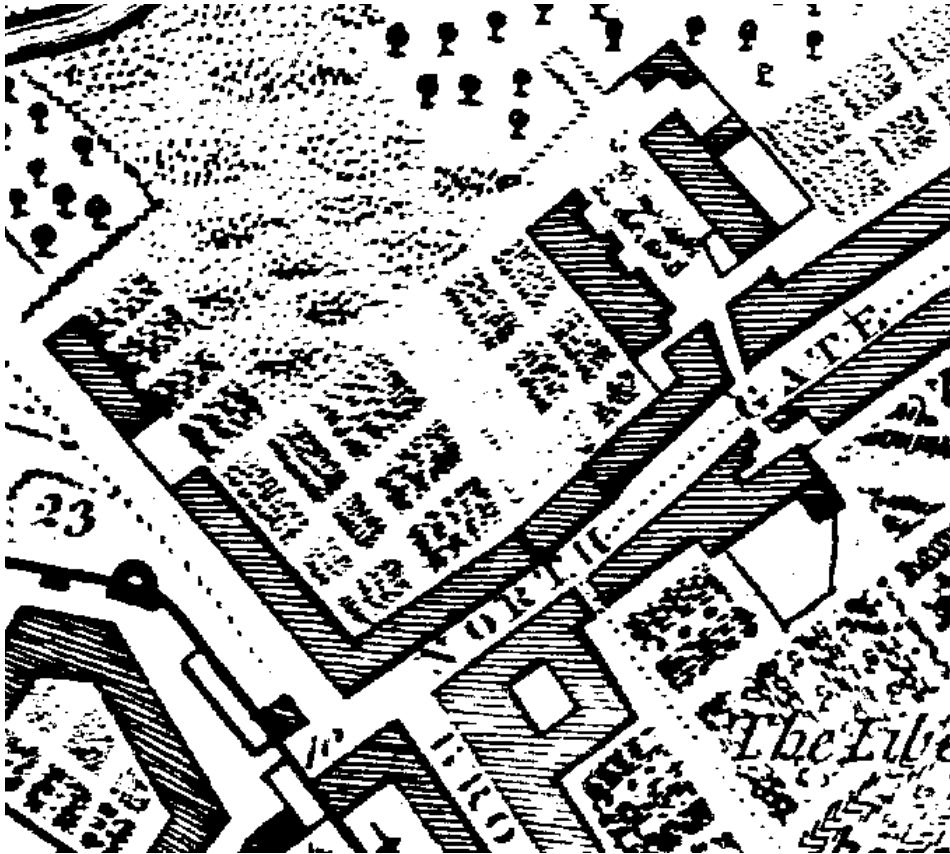


Fig 9 : Extract from: Fenner *A Plan of the City of Canterbury, and the adjoining suburbs* 1825

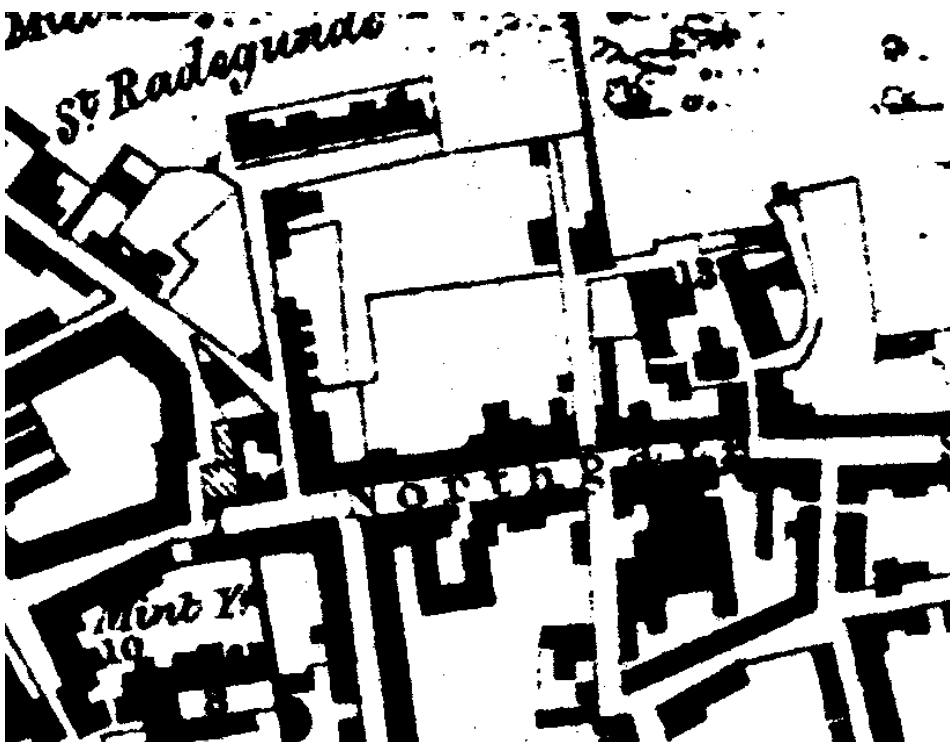


Fig 10 : Extract from: T. W. Collard *Plan of the City of Canterbury and its vicinity* 1843

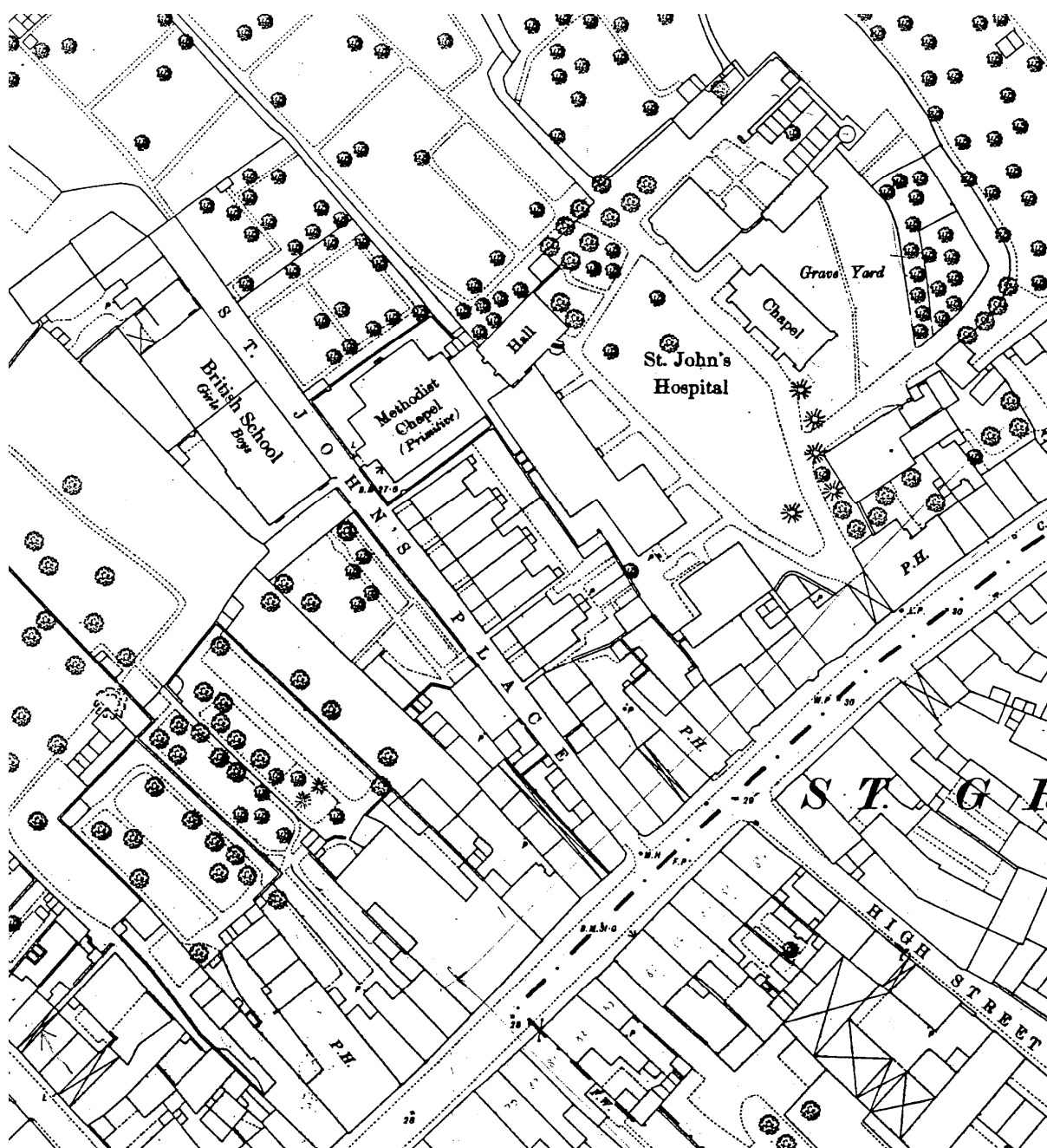


Fig 11 : Extract from: Ordnance Survey Plan Kent Canterbury Sheet XLVI.3.9. Scale 1 to 500. Surveyed 1872, published 1874