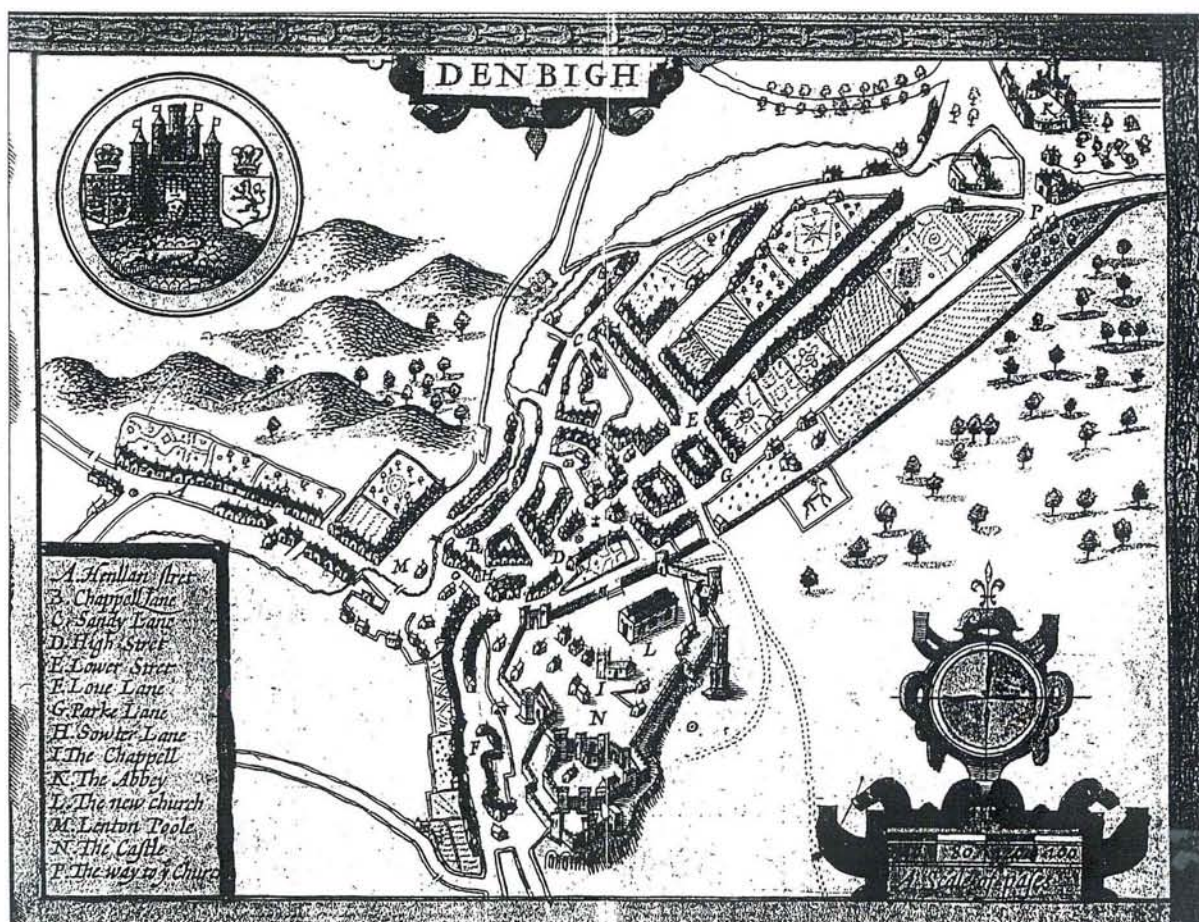


Wall at the Rear of Love Lane, Denbigh

AN ASSESSMENT



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January 2002

Report for Denbigh Townscape Heritage Initiative

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SUMMARY

An analysis of early maps of the town of Denbigh together with a field examination has found no evidence to indicate that a boundary shown on John Speed's map of the town in 1611 is the same as the wall that now acts as a rear boundary to properties in Love Lane. It is more likely, though unproven, that the wall dates to the early 19th century or a little before.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.2 It had been suggested that a wall (henceforward termed simply 'the wall') forming the rear boundary to properties in Love Lane, Denbigh was that depicted by John Speed on his early 17th-century map of the town. As part of the Townscape Heritage Initiative for Denbigh it was determined that an assessment of the wall should be prepared to inform future consideration of its significance and interest. To this end a brief, dated 24 October 2001, was prepared by the Denbighshire County Archaeologist on behalf of the Townscape Heritage Initiative, detailing the works required.
- 1.2 The Contracting Section of CPAT was invited to submit a tender for the assessment on 16 November 2001, and this was subsequently accepted on 11 December 2001. The assessment was commenced immediately because of restrictions on access to the Denbighshire Archives and was completed in January 2002.

2 LOCATION

- 2.1 Love Lane lies immediately to the west of the castle and defended medieval town of Denbigh which occupy the higher ground at the southern-west end of the modern settlement (Soulsby 1983, 121). The lane follows a straight course, south to north, at a lower level than the town defences and then curves to continue, as High Gate, entering the market area of the medieval town, now High Street.
- 2.2 There is a suggestion that Love Lane formed one of the main thoroughfares of what Leland in the earlier part of the 16th century classed as the 'new town' to distinguish it from the old town within the medieval walls (Owen 1979, 73). Certainly it appears as early as 1440 when there is a reference to a burghage in the suburbs of Denbigh in 'le Love Lane' (Owen 1981, 78), and at a later date the Love Lane Ward was one of four in the town, again signaling its importance (Owen 1979, 74). Most of the houses on Love Lane are of no great age but at the northern end of the lane at its junction with Swine Street, no.2 retains its timber-framing from around 1500 (Welsh Office 1981, 23).
- 2.3 The wall as defined in the brief runs from SJ 0500 6573 at its southern end where it is 50m west of Love Lane to SJ 0496 6586 at its northern end where it is 75m beyond the lane. It appears to form the rear property boundary of nos 54 to 88 Love Lane and to be in the region of 136m long, adopting a tangential course to Love Lane as it runs northwards until it meets Meadow Lane which it bounds for approximately 50m.

3 MAP REGRESSION

- 3.1 Map regression analysis is a technique developed by historical geographers in the 1970s to identify the earliest landscape features recorded on maps, by stripping away successive layers of more recent information that have accumulated and been depicted on more modern cartography. Strictly speaking this attempt to equate the wall shown on modern maps with that drawn by Speed cannot be classed as map regression analysis but more an attempt to identify a specific feature through time.
- 3.2 There is one other caveat that must be mentioned at this stage. In general terms from the later 17th century onwards most maps, whether printed or in manuscript form, are what can be termed plan maps and depict boundaries only as continuous lines. On such maps there is usually no possibility of differentiating between walls, fences, hedges and the like. Therefore, for the nature of the boundary, there are limitations to what can be inferred.
- 3.3 Modern large-scale Ordnance Survey maps of Denbigh depict the wall at the rear of the Love Lane properties as a single continuous line, with long narrow garden plots on its east side, except to the north to the rear of nos 54-70 Love Lane where the plots are shorter and there are two much broader plots. On the west is a field and a small triangle of ground formed by the convergence of the wall and Meadow Lane (fig 1).
- 3.4 The 1st edition of the large-scale (25" to the mile or 1:2500) Ordnance Survey plan of Denbigh accurately displays the Love Lane area as it was in 1875 (fig 2). There are of course more recent editions of the Ordnance Survey map, dating to 1898 and 1910, but these intermediate maps are unlikely to provide any relevant information than cannot be gleaned from elsewhere. This later 19th-century map demonstrates that the wall, or at least the line of it, was in existence at the time that the ground was surveyed. But perhaps more significant is the detail of the immediate environment of the wall. Meadow Lane in 1875 was no more than a footpath from Lôn-Llewelyn towards Bridge Street, running across a field later to be divided into two parts by the creation of Meadow Lane. The plots now containing nos 74-88 Love Lane had not yet been developed and the area was open ground, presumably a field. Further north, behind nos 54-70 Love Lane, the ground appears to have been broken up by scarps and rock faces, hinting that the ground was rough and perhaps no more than rough grazing.
- 3.5 The map accompanying the Tithe Survey of 1840 (fig 3) is at a slightly smaller scale (1:3168) than its Ordnance Survey successors and as a result of its function – as a plan to assist in the calculation of tithe payments on land – elements of the townscape irrelevant to that calculation, such as houses, are omitted. Notwithstanding this selectivity, the field patterns and perhaps to a lesser degree the garden plots appear to have been mapped accurately. The course of the wall is shown as is the footpath preceding Meadow Lane.
- 3.6 Much the same picture comes from what is assumed to be a slightly earlier map (*Denbighshire Record Office DD/PH/234*). A manuscript estate map by T. Jones, but lacking its associated schedule, it is attributed by the archivist to the early 19th century on the grounds of style, and is certainly a more accurate depiction than the Tithe map (fig 4). It shows only the fields to the west of the wall, together with the footpath, and is important, primarily, for enabling the boundary to be pushed back to the beginning of the 19th century. A second map illustrating the 'Liberty and Borough of Denbigh', compiled about 1809 (*Denbighshire Record Office BD/A/308*), and engraved for publication five years later (*Denbighshire Record Office BD/A/310*), though showing Love Lane, is at too small a scale and lacks the overall detail of the environs of the town to make it of any interest in this study.

- 3.7 Unfortunately, no known maps of the town of Denbigh in the 18th century, let alone for most of the 17th century, have come down to us. What few later 18th-century maps there are deal with the small holdings of estates in the town, the nearest to Love Lane being for the Lenten Pool area in 1776 (*National Library of Wales/Dept of Maps/Plas Heaton Deposit Vol 1*). None is relevant to this enquiry. Thus there is a gap of nearly 200 years in the historic cartography for the town of Denbigh.
- 3.8 John Speed's plan of Denbigh was published in 1611 to accompany his map of the county of Denbighshire in the *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain*. Each county in his *Theatre* was so treated. The plan of the town itself (fig 5) must have been drawn between 1596-1610, and is likely to have been an original survey by Speed: unlike some of the English towns for which he was able to utilise existing plans by other surveyors or cartographers, Speed seems to have no earlier Welsh settlement plans to draw on and he was thus forced to compile his own (Skelton 1970, 32)
- 3.9 Important here is an appreciation of how Speed worked. It has been argued that his method was to compile a sketch plan from an elevated point opposite the town, and detail of streets and the like was added subsequently by pacing. Precision as such was not a primary concern, and detailed examination of another of his town plans – New Radnor – indicates quite clearly that this was true to shape but not to scale (Silvester 1994, 18; see also Bangor by Longley 1995, 55). Using this as a guide we can assume that some of the detail shown on Speed's Denbigh is depicted realistically, but any hope of achieving metrical accuracy would be unreasonable. And it must be stressed that no detailed analysis of Speed's Denbigh has been attempted in the past as far as can be ascertained.
- 3.10 The town plans that Speed produced have been termed 'perspective maps' (Smith 1991, 163). They differ from later maps in presenting buildings, hills and trees in three dimensions. Inevitably, they are thus not directly comparable with their successors.
- 3.11 Speed (fig 6) depicts Love Lane in the foreground of his drawing, together with houses on both its frontages and the tenement plots behind those on the west side of the road brought together in groups. The castle and Lôn-Llewelyn also appear in the foreground. The width of the individual thoroughfares is without doubt exaggerated, yet minor details such as the sudden changes to the lengths of the tenement plots behind Love Lane attest a degree of precision which is meaningful in the context of elucidating the plan development of the town.
- 3.12 Speed shows a continuous line of houses lying almost to the southern end of Love Lane, where it is joined by Lôn-Llewelyn, certainly more extensive than the pattern in 1875; some of these houses are face on to Love Lane but a few are end on, another point of detail which can be taken as an indicator of accuracy. The plots at the rear of these buildings are of three or perhaps four different lengths, but significantly they are shown as running broadly parallel to Love Lane. At the southern end the block of land between Love Lane and Lôn-Llewelyn is shown as tenement plots, divided longitudinally into two to reflect the presence of two lost houses or cottages on Lôn-Llewelyn (somewhere near the commencement of the footpath that is now Meadow Lane). It is conceivable that this longitudinal division might be taken for the wall that is the subject of this assessment, except that its location is wrong for it is too far to the south. Assuming that Speed's illustration of the tenement plots at the rear of Love Lane is reasonably close, it appears that they are mirrored on the large-scale 1875 map, not by the continuous boundary that incorporates and extends the wall, but probably by the more back boundaries to the individual tenements that appear intermittently rather closer to Love Lane.

4 FIELD RECORD

4.1 *General*

- 4.1.1 The boundary wall, defining the rear of properties in Love Lane, Denbigh, was examined and photographed in early January 2002. Three distinct sections of walling are recognisable.
- 4.1.2 The southern element of the wall, forming the boundary at the rear of Nos 74 to 88 Love Lane (pls 1-6), runs roughly south-east to north-west along steeply-sloping ground which falls from 115m OD at the south-east (SJ 0500 6573) to c.104m OD at the north-west (SJ 0497 6580). There is a similar fall in height from the frontages in Love Lane, to the west and north-west. West of the wall a roughly triangular-shaped field is bounded by modern property walls on the south-east and a footpath on the west.
- 4.1.3 From the northern end of this first section, a second stretch of wall continues to the north-west (pl 7), for the most part forming the boundary between an ancient quarry on the east, and on the west a parking area for visitors to the allotment gardens (SJ 0497 6580 to SJ 0496 6583). At its northern end this length of wall coincides with the southern end of Meadow Lane.
- 4.1.4 The third and northernmost length of wall (pl 8), aligned north to south, defines the boundary between the rear of Nos 54 and 56 Love Lane and the southern end of Meadow Lane (SJ 0496 6583 to SJ 0496 6586). It is constructed on ground sloping gently to the north. To its east, and predating it, is a quarry. Originally this boundary wall continued further northwards, but has been demolished to allow for the construction of a shooting range.

4.2 *Description*

- 4.2.1 The southernmost length of wall, of some 69.5m, forms the boundary at the rear of Nos 74 to 88 Love Lane. It was constructed as a free-standing vertical wall using quarried limestone and whitish-grey gritty mortar. Edge-set coping stones were castellated.
- 4.2.2 On its west face the height of the surviving lengths of this wall above present ground surface vary from 1.2m to 1.9m at the wall-end. It is 0.5-0.6m wide. Stones used in the construction are generally no more than 0.4m long and 0.3m thick. The stone has weathered to a light grey and has coatings of whitish-grey lichen. For the most part the mortar has weathered out of the upper courses, but has survived at lower levels.
- 4.2.3 The current condition of the wall reflects different ownerships. Fuller descriptions are provided in a text lodged in the site archive.
- 4.2.4 The central section of wall at the rear of Nos 58-72 Love Lane is some 38m long and bounds the site of a quarry to the east. It was constructed in a similar fashion to the southern section of wall, previously described. It was, however, secondary to it, the visible mortar showing that it abutted the existing wall-end of the southern section.
- 4.2.5 At its southern end, a 2.9m-length of original wall survives to a height of 1.8m. The width of the wall is 0.5-0.6m. To the north, a 2.5m length of dry stone walling indicates a recent repair. That section of the wall adjacent to the allotment parking area is obscured by ivy for about half its length, but a 6m length of wall at the south looks to be a rebuild, to a maximum height of 1.4m. Light grey mortar is visible in places but the stone does not show the same signs of weathering as the original wall and lichen has not accumulated. To the

north, the original wall survives to a height of 1.4m, although there are some signs of damage caused by tree growth on the east side of the wall. Coping stones are visible in places beneath the ivy.

- 4.2.6 The northernmost section of wall bounding Meadow Lane is some 26m long. It survives to a height of 1.7m at its southern end and 2.1m at the north. The wall is some 0.5-0.6m wide and there is a drop of 1m to vegetation on its east (Love Lane) side. The top of the wall is mostly obscured by ivy, but edge-set coping stones are visible. The use of light grey mortar is apparent over most of the wall, but there are indications of recent repointing along some upper sections of the wall.
- 4.2.7 At the north a stub of wall 1.5m long and 1.5m high indicates that this boundary continued northwards.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Analysis of John Speed's plan of Denbigh, together with later large-scale maps of the town, fails to confirm that the present stone wall was in place at the beginning of the 17th century. Instead, a rather more rectangular pattern of tenement plots associated with a larger number of houses existed on Love Lane, and although this cannot be proved from the extant maps, there is more than a suggestion that these are the residue of medieval burgage plots set out at right angles to the lane. The purpose of the footpath (later Meadow Lane) is curious, but might be explained if it had once been a back-lane access to these burgage plots, surviving into later centuries in attenuated form.
- 5.2 The boundary wall of limestone rubble appears to fall into three sections, with the central section being later (though how much later is unknown) than that to the south. There is no intrinsic dating evidence for the wall, but as a boundary line it was here at the time of the Tithe survey in 1840, and it is possible that the wall might be attributed to the early 19th century, or perhaps even a little earlier. Repairs and rebuilds are likely to be mostly mid to late 20th century, some being quite recent. A well-built section of wall and doorway at the rear of Nos 74-76 could be earlier 20th century or late 19th century, while the northernmost section, though also possibly early 19th century, has been better maintained than adjoining sections.
- 5.3 The stone wall is best explained as a boundary, defining the curtilage of a dwelling or group of dwellings, separating them from the fields or meadows to the west.
- 5.4 We can conclude that there is no evidence to indicate that the present wall at the rear of the Love Lane properties is that depicted by Speed.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the following for their assistance and co-operation: Nathan Blanchard of the Denbigh Townscape Heritage Initiative; Kevin Matthias and his staff at the Denbighshire Record Office; and the staff at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. Thanks are due to the Denbighshire Record Office for their permission to reproduce fig 4 in this report, and to Denbighshire County Council for permission to include fig 1 under their Crown copyright licence.

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1611 Speed, J *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain*

Early 19th century. Map of Denbigh town and Bryn Caredig. Surveyed by T Jones. Estate map (*Denbighshire Record Office DD/PH/234*).

1809 Exact map of the Liberty and Borough of Denbigh by John Roberts of Ruthin
Manuscript map. (*Denbighshire Record Office: BD/A/308*)

1813 Exact map of the Liberty and Borough of Denbigh by Mr Roberts of Ruthin
(*Denbighshire Record Office BD/A/310*)

1840 Tithe survey of Denbigh (original in National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth)

1875 Ordnance Survey 25" 1st edition, Denbighshire 13.4

Aerial photographic sources

Oblique aerial photographs held by CPAT
87-MB-856

Vertical aerial photographs held by RCAHMW
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106G/UK/1468/4029-4031, 1946
106G/UK/1450/4045-6, 1946
58/2122/404-5, 1957
58/5607/164, 1963

APPENDIX 1

WALL AT REAR OF LOVE LANE, DENBIGH SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT BY THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

1 Introduction

- 4.2 It has been suggested that a wall forming a property boundary behind Love Lane in Denbigh may be that depicted on John Speed's map of the town which was published in c.1611. If this is the case it clearly has some historic significance, and as part of the Denbigh Townscape Heritage Initiative it has been decided that an archaeological desk-top assessment should be undertaken to establish its history and development. To this end the Denbighshire County Archaeologist has prepared a brief for the assessment (dated October 2001), outlining the aims and objectives of the exercise.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the assessment are:
- 4.2.6 to determine, in as far as this is possible, whether the wall at the rear of Love Lane is that depicted by Speed
- 4.2.7 to complete a map regression analysis of the specified area
- 4.2.8 to produce a thorough photographic survey of the wall, recording all significant features
- 2.1.4 to prepare a report outlining the results of the assessment, incorporating sufficient information on the archaeological resource for a reasonable decision to be taken regarding its future management.

3 Methods

- 3.1 Stage 1 of the assessment will involve the examination of all the relevant and readily available primary and secondary documentary, cartographic, pictorial, photographic and oral sources. Repositories consulted will include the following: the Denbighshire Sites and Monuments Record; the National Monuments Record held by RCAHMW, Aberystwyth; the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth; the Denbighshire County Archives, Ruthin and the Flintshire County Archives at Hawarden.
- 3.2 Stage 2 will consist of a thorough photographic survey of the wall, assuming that access to all sections of it can be arranged.
- 3.3 Following the completion of these two stages an illustrated and bound report will be prepared according to the principles laid out in the Curatorial Brief. This will be in A4 format and contain conventional sections on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Historic Background; Evaluation; Conclusions and Recommendations and References, together with appropriate illustrations and appendices. These results will be prepared to an adequate publication standard.
- 3.4 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991).

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1 The assessment will be undertaken by a small team of skilled archaeologists under the overall supervision of Mr R J Silvester, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist who conducted the evaluation.
- 4.2 It is anticipated that Stage 1 may take up to 3 days, stage 2 in 1 day and the preparation and dissemination of the report 3 days. A copy of the report will be deposited with the Denbighshire Sites and Monuments Record.
- 4.3 CPAT will not be in a position to complete the assessment until January 2002. However as we are informed that the Denbighshire Record Office in Ruthin is likely to be completely closed for long-term refurbishment from the 9 December, this will necessitate an early commencement of some aspects of the work. The curator and client will be informed of the timetable once this has been finalised.
- 4.4 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.5 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance.

R J Silvester
28 November 2001

APPENDIX 2

Site Archive

1 x Set of black and white prints (CPAT film no 1129) + catalogue

1 x Set of colour slides (CPAT film no CS02/03) + catalogue

1 x detailed report on physical characteristics of wall

1 x Set of copies of relevant historic maps + accompanying note

Fig 1 Modern map of the Love Lane area showing the rear boundary wall

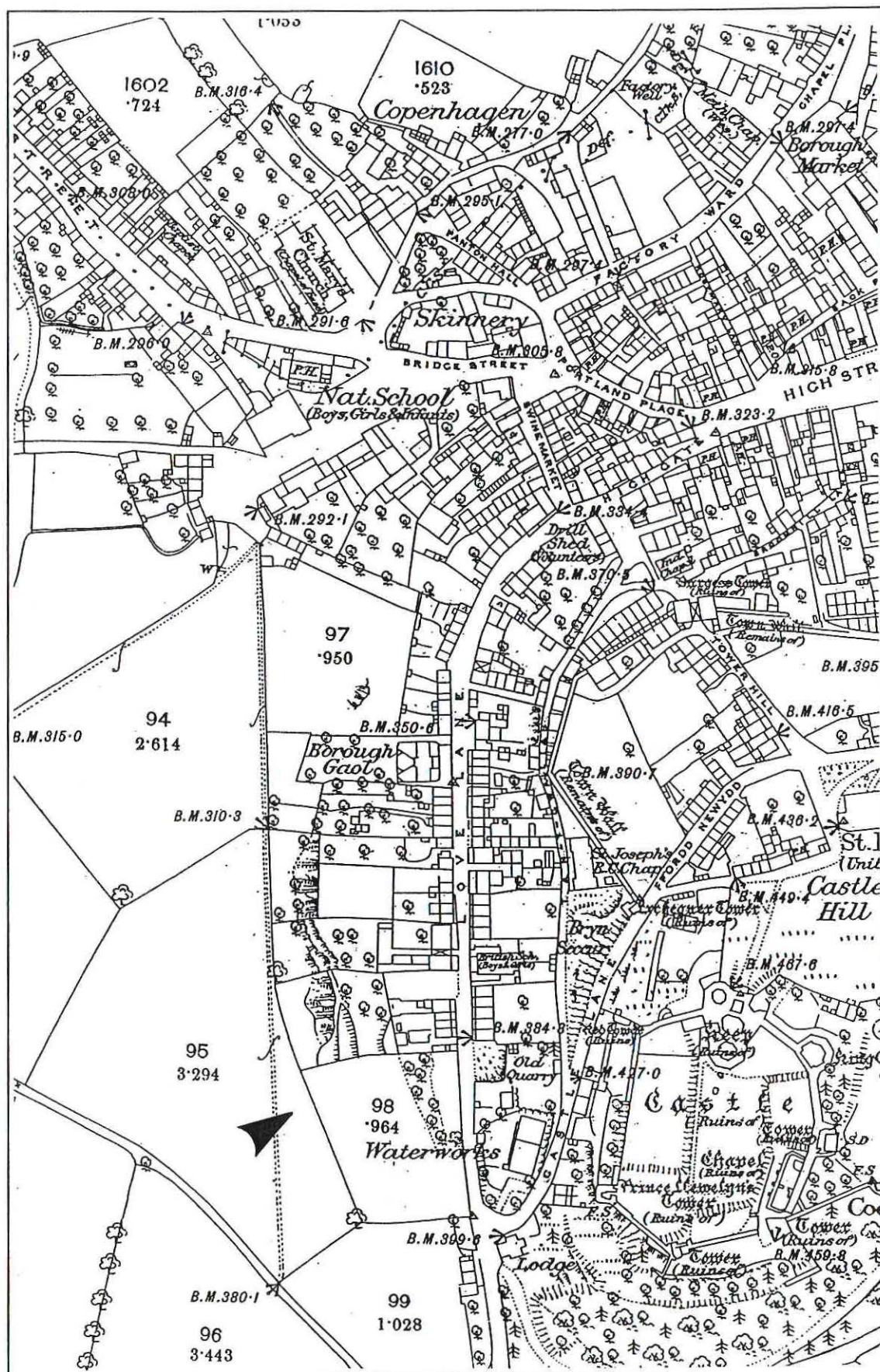


Fig 2 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of 1875

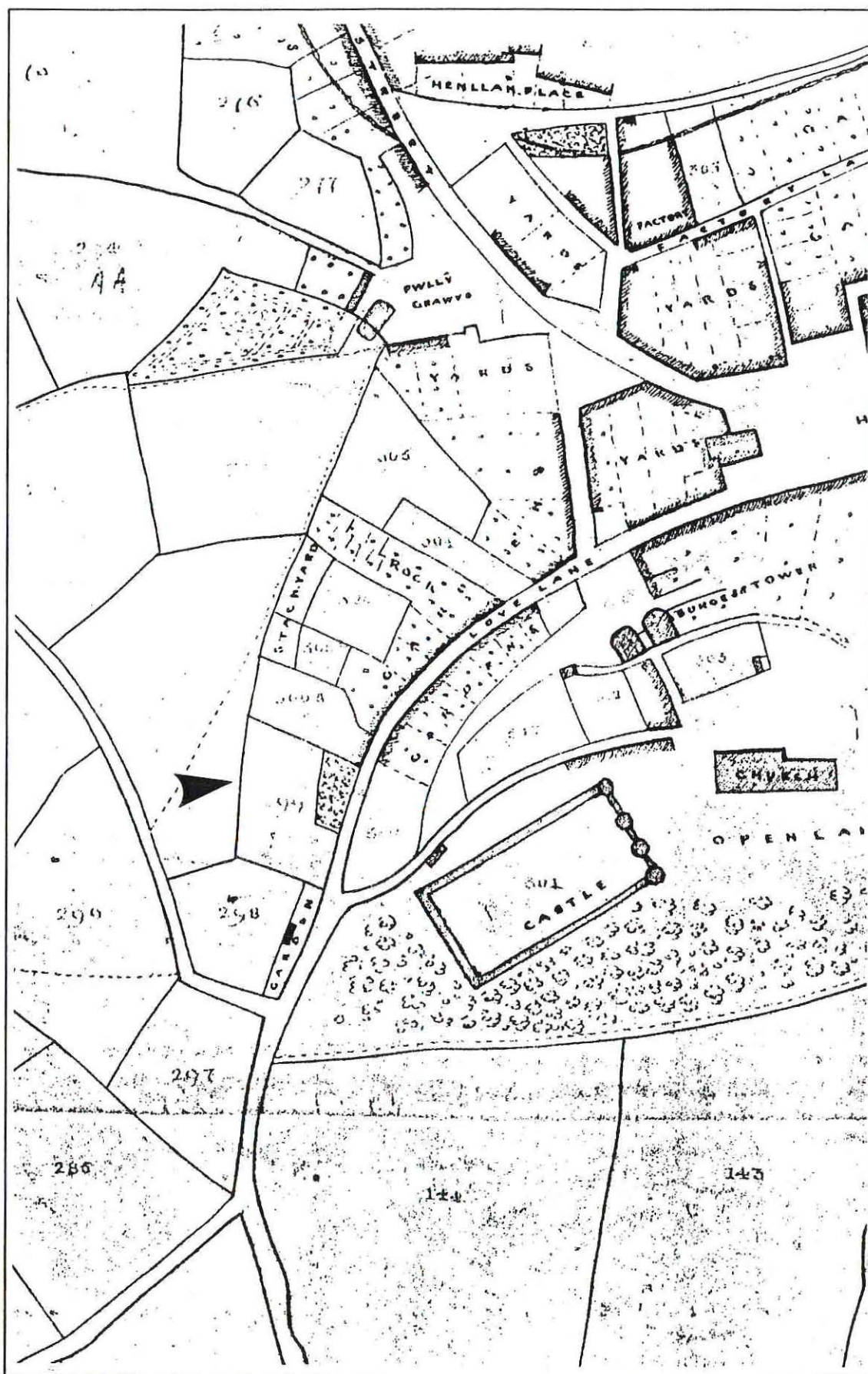


Fig 3 Tithe survey of Denbigh, 1840

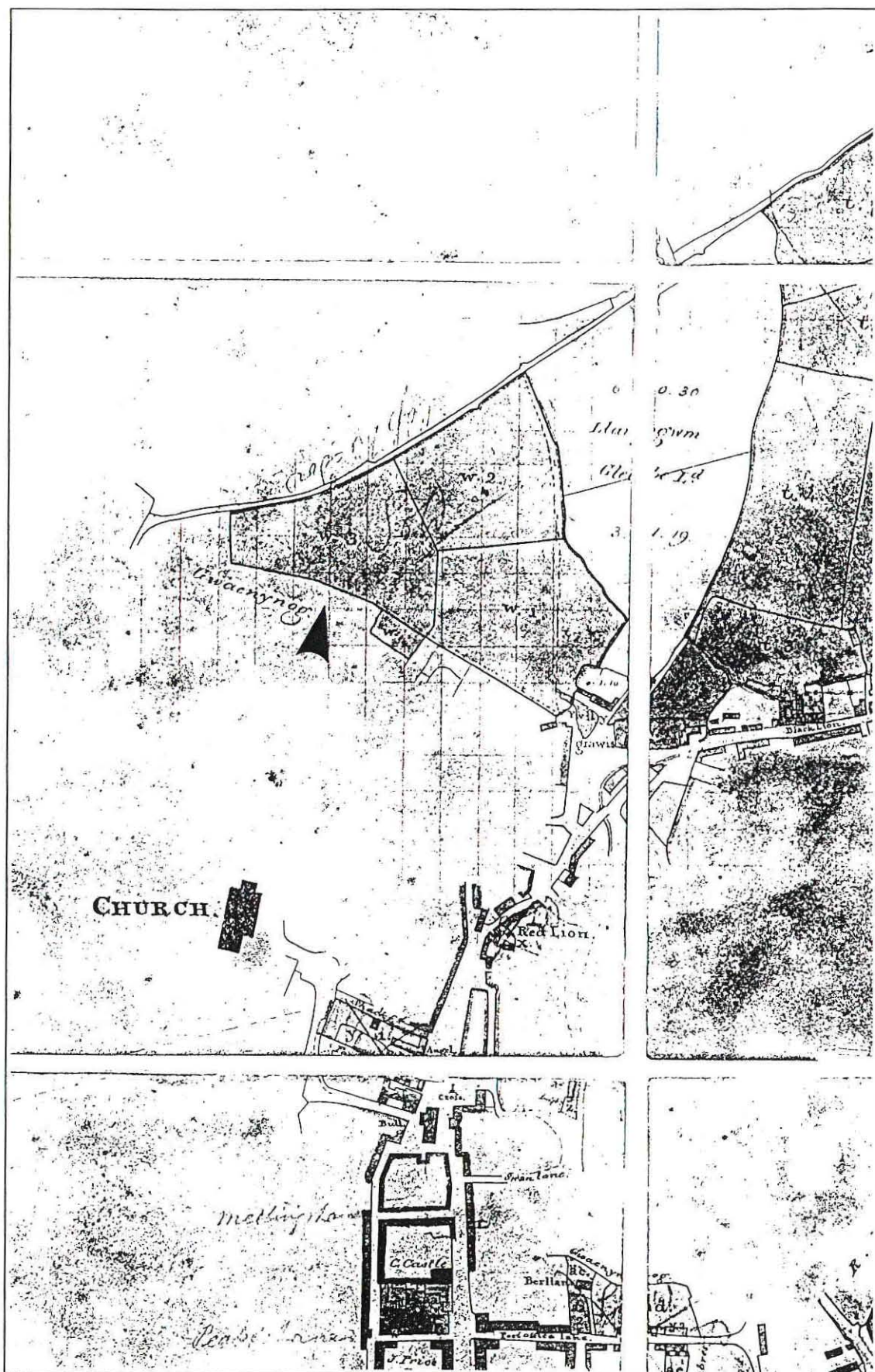


Fig 4 Estate map of Denbigh by T Jones, early 19th century

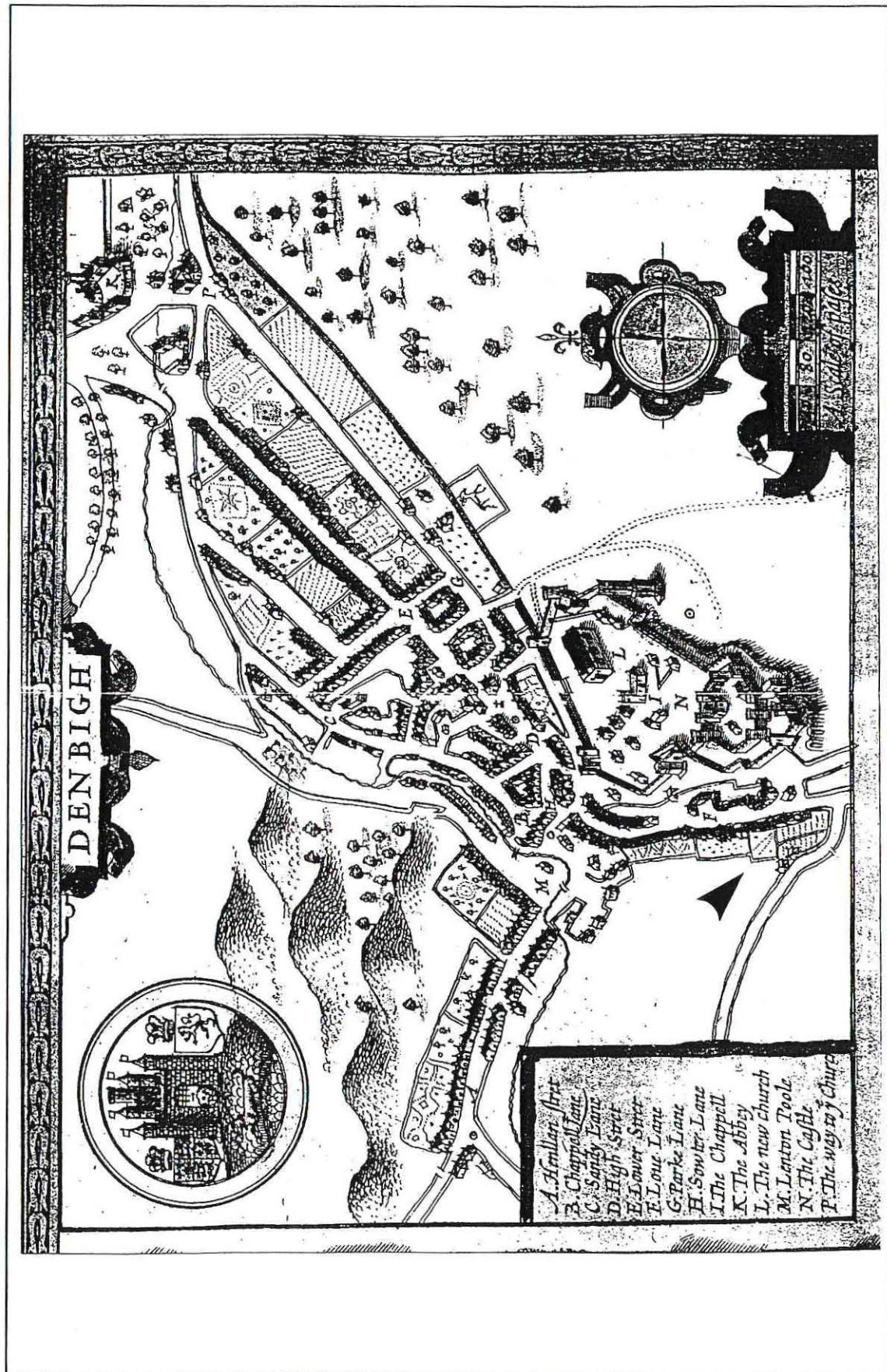


Fig 5 John Speed's map of Denbigh town, 1611

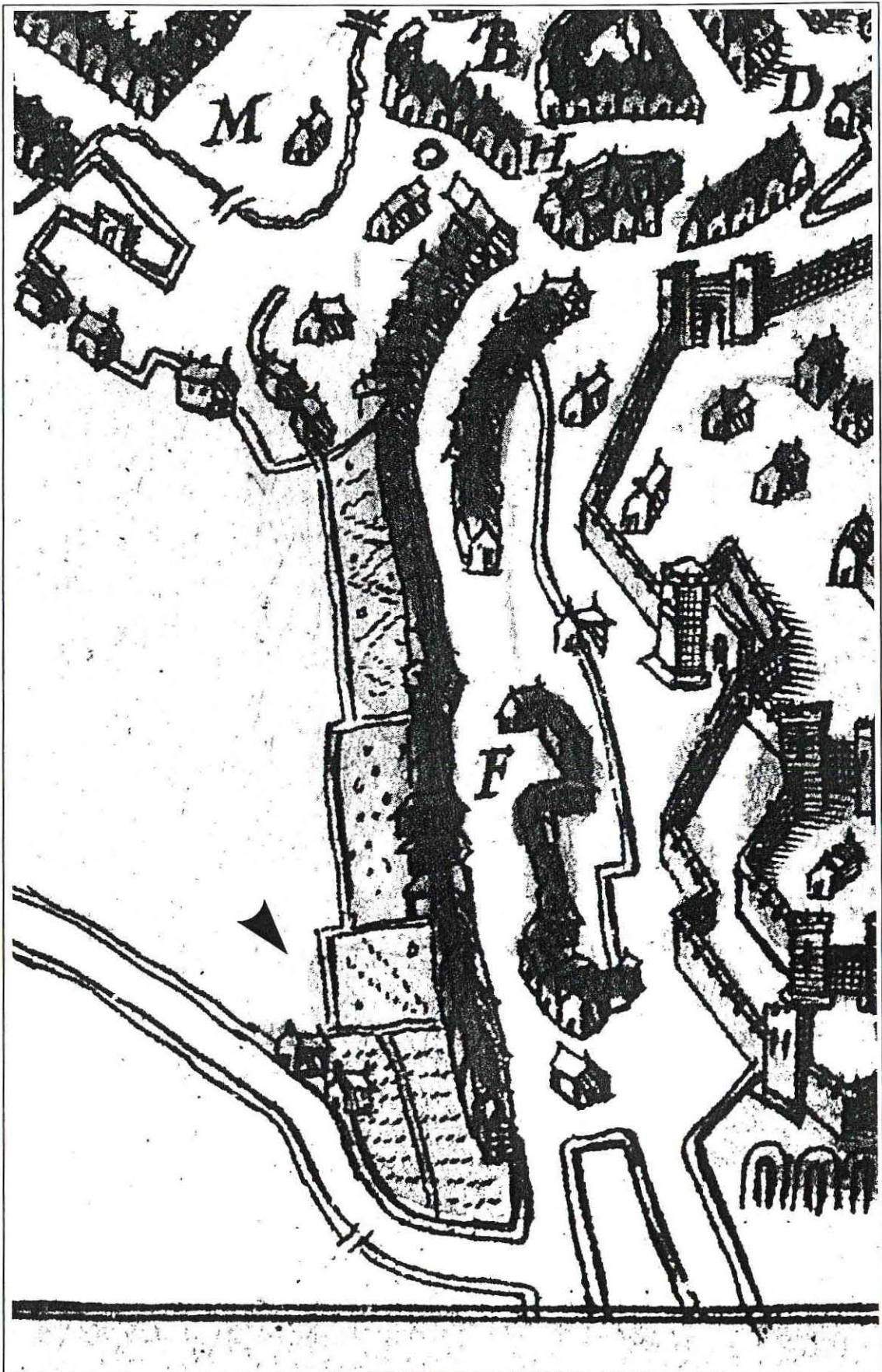


Fig 6 John Speed's map, detail



Plate 1 Wall at the rear of nos.86/88 Love Lane, Denbigh



Plate 2 Wall at the rear of no.84 Love Lane, Denbigh



Plate 3 Wall at the rear of no.78 Love Lane, Denbigh



Plate 4 Wall at the rear of nos.74/76 Love Lane, Denbigh



Plate 5 Wall at the rear of no.74 Love Lane, Denbigh



Plate 6 General view of the wall behind nos.74-80 Love Lane, Denbigh



Plate 7 Wall behind the quarry at the rear of 58-72 Love Lane, Denbigh



Plate 8 Wall beside Meadow Lane, Denbigh