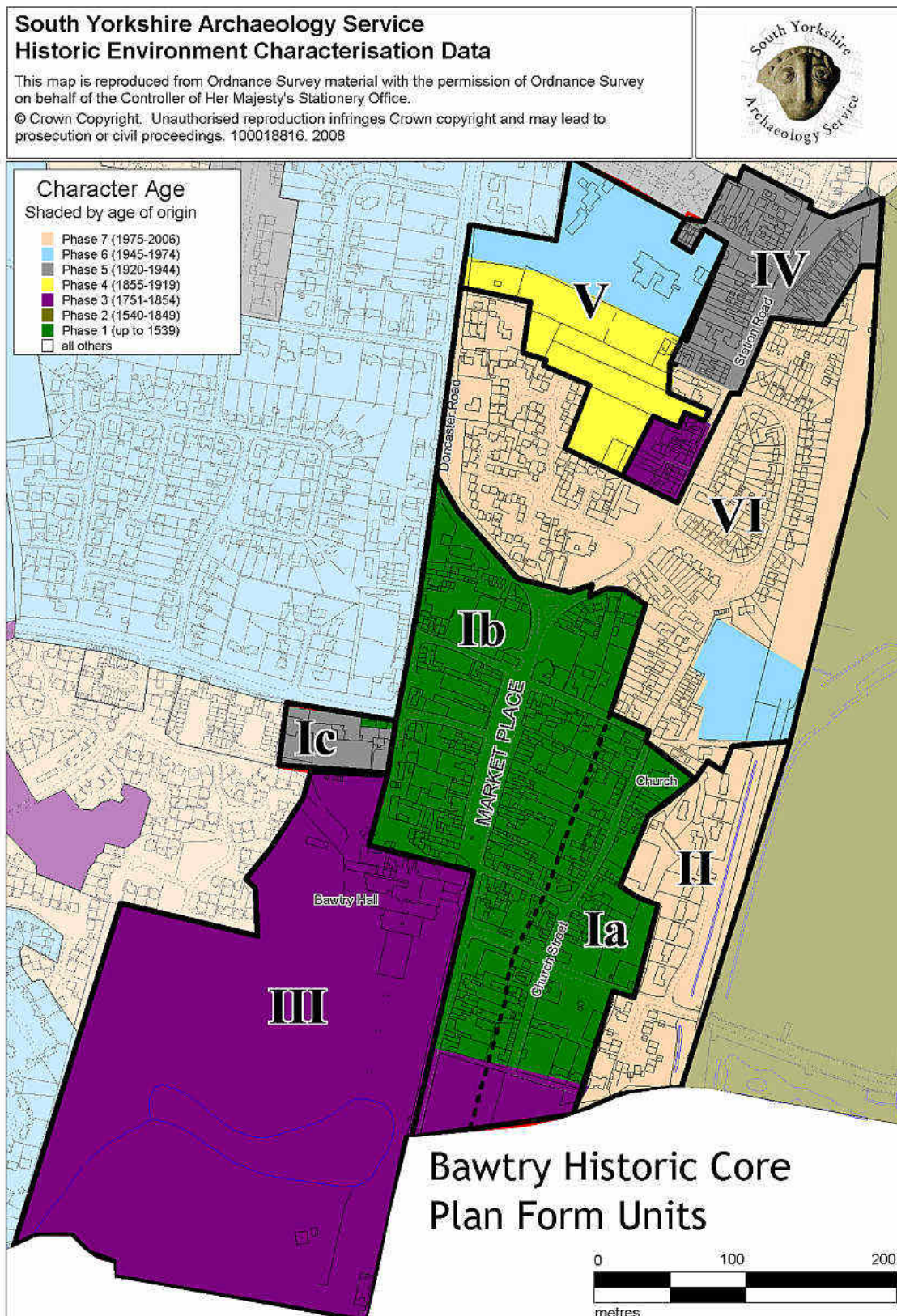


Complex Historic Town Cores - Plan Form Analysis

Bawtry Complex Historic Town Core



Units I a, b and c - The medieval settlement area

The dominant plan-form within this area of Bawtry consists of classic narrow 'burgage' plots laid out perpendicular to three linear streets - Top Street, High Street (with its rectangular market place), and Church Street. These streets run roughly north to south through the town and are linked to one another with a regular grid formed by interconnecting streets.

The oldest element of this plan is almost certain to be Top Street, which fossilises part of the course of a Roman road between Doncaster and Lincoln (Collis 1996, 184; Buckland 1986, 32). Church Street, however, probably formed the main street of the earliest surviving settlement area (unit 1a) that is thought to have been a riverside settlement focussed on the medieval chapel of St Nicholas (patron saint of seafarers) (Hey 1980, 105; Magilton 1977, 13). This church incorporates architectural elements dating to c.1200 (Pevsner 1969, 98). The river Idle, which lies just to the east of the town, remained navigable up until the 19th century and Bawtry's prosperity as a market centre appears to have been linked largely to its location as a convenient point of transhipment from the river to the Great North Road. High Street is generally accepted to have been laid out to divert traffic from this route through the market place of the later planned town.



Figure 178: High Street on the east side of Market Place (unit 1b), Bawtry. The streetscape is marked by a variety of buildings dating to different periods and including some former coaching inns

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Most writers regard the area shows as plan unit Ib as the main area of replanning of Bawtry, probably by Robert de Vipont lord of the manor in the late 12th to early 13th century (Collis 1996, 184; Magilton 1977, 13). Indications of the growing urban status of the settlement include the confirmation of tofts to free burgesses of the town by Vipont's widow in 1292 (Hunter 1829, 70) and a market charter dated 1293 (Collis 1996, 184). The plot series' associated with the market place are more regular and longer on historic maps than the plots fronting to Church Street, and the grid pattern formed by the subsidiary streets set at right angles to High Street is typical of town plantations made during this period (Hey 1980, 105; Butler 1976, 32-48).

Plan form unit Ic represents the site of the medieval chapel of St Mary Magdalene, sited alongside the former Roman road. This foundation is likely to have served as both a hospital (in the medieval sense of providing hospitality to travellers or pilgrims) and a chantry chapel for the saying of prayers in perpetuity for the soul of its founder and their family. In 1300 and 1316 this chapel is referred to as both "by" and "without" Bawtry (Collis 1996, 184) indicating its marginal position in relation to the town. A Masonic lodge, believed to incorporate parts of the medieval building, now occupies the site. Medieval burials were retrieved from land to this buildings immediate east in 2007 (O'Neill and Jackson 2007)

Most current buildings in these plan units are of post-medieval date but a number have possible 17th century or earlier elements including some with known timber framing (Magilton 1977, 11). Holland (1999, 169-174) ascribes many of the present buildings in this area, especially along High Street, as dating to the period 1770 to 1850 during which the town's economic prosperity shifted from river borne trade to its position on the coaching route of the Great North Road.

Unit II - Port Area

The dominant plan form of this area is of cul-de-sac roads featuring large detached and semi detached properties. These developments date to the late 20th century.

This area roughly corresponds to the area of the wharfs and associated features of the historic port area of Bawtry (SMR 3502) centred on a now silted and overbuilt meander of the River Idle. Bawtry's existence as a port is first recorded in 1276 with medieval records indicating the export of Derbyshire lead and Nottinghamshire wool (Hey 1980, 108). It is known there were 'staithes' (landing platforms), controlled independently by the town burgesses and the lord of the manor, the former "butted upon the churchyard wall" (ibid, 109). By the time of Daniel Defoe's visit to the town in the 1720s, Bawtry was exporting heavy goods from South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire such as lead, wrought iron, edge tools and grindstones; and importing timber, hemp, flax, iron ore, copper and tin (Holland 1980, 21-22). The water borne trade along the Idle began to break down with the

improvement of transport along the River Don Navigation and Chesterfield Canal in the later 18th century. This took the navigable waterways directly to the industrial centres of South Yorkshire and north Derbyshire, removing the need for costly road transport (Holland 1999, 171).

Little remains in the current townscape of this unit's earlier history.

Unit III - Bawtry Hall and Park

This plan unit shows the surviving area of Bawtry Hall Park (in the 19th century the park extended further to the west and north west but this area has now been developed for mid - late 20th century housing). Pemberton Milnes built the present Bawtry Hall in 1779 (Hunter 1829, 72), although both Hunter and local antiquarian William Peck believed the hall to be built on the site of the manor house of the traditional lords of the manor of Bawtry (Doncaster MBC undated). The hall is sited directly on the probable course of the Roman road diverted through the town centre by the medieval replanning of the town (Collis 1996, 184; Buckland 1986, 32). This alignment is depicted by Peck's plan of 1813 (reproduced in Jefferson 2002, Ill. 4), suggesting it was still apparent as a pathway at this time.

Bawtry Hall was acquired by the Government prior to 1939 and became a major headquarters of RAF Bomber Command during World War II. This use continued until the late 20th century.

The parkland within this unit is of complex form, the lake and Woodlands at the south are depicted on 1851 OS whilst the more regular woodlands and avenue to the west are 20th century in origin probably dating to the RAF's occupation of the site from 1941 until 1986.

This plan unit appears to truncate the south western corner of the planned medieval settlement: it is possible that the former road running through the park may have bounded the settlement until the enlargement of Bawtry Hall Park in the 18th century.

Unit IV - Station Road

Limited ribbon development of terraced properties along Station Road is first apparent on the mid 19th century OS plans, although the majority of this area post dates the establishment of the towns railway station in the later 19th century.

Unit V - Relict strip pattern between Doncaster Road and Station Road

This area retains strip enclosure boundaries into which later land uses (including a cemetery, nursery plots and a school) have been fitted with minimal damage to the older plan form. Before the construction of the late

20th century housing that is characteristic of unit VI, this pattern continued to the south right up to Doncaster and Station Roads. The pattern of these enclosures is typical of former open fields enclosed by the piecemeal removal of blocks of strips as communal cultivation practices went out of use (nationally from the late medieval period onwards). A hint of the gentle elongated 'reverse-s' shape that is so common in this enclosure type is still apparent in the boundaries that run through the cemetery.

Unit VI - Late 20th century infill

The majority of this housing dates to the mid - late 20th century. West of Station Road its pattern is mostly of detached housing built on cul-de-sac patterns across a continuation of the strip patterns preserved in unit V. East of Station Road, housing is generally semi detached and laid out in a more geometric pattern typical of the mid 20th century across former wash lands of the river Idle. None of the development of this area has fossilised earlier land division patterns.