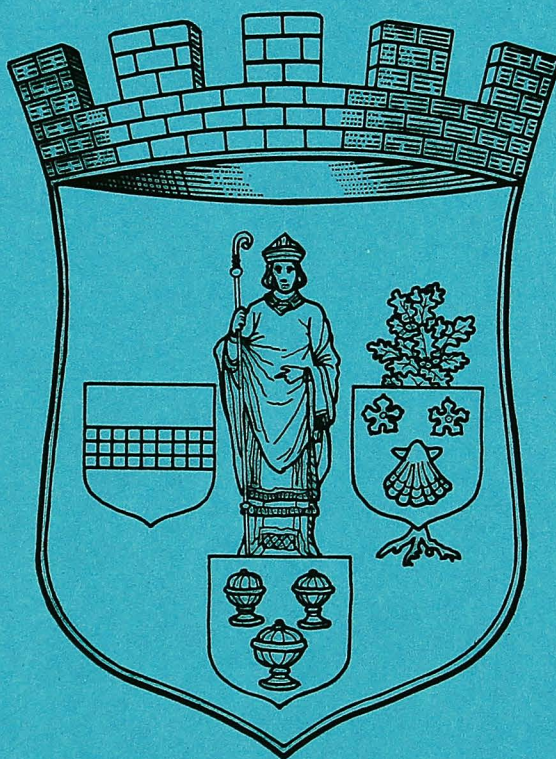


Historic

# PAISLEY

the archaeological implications  
of development



Anne Turner Simpson  
Sylvia Stevenson

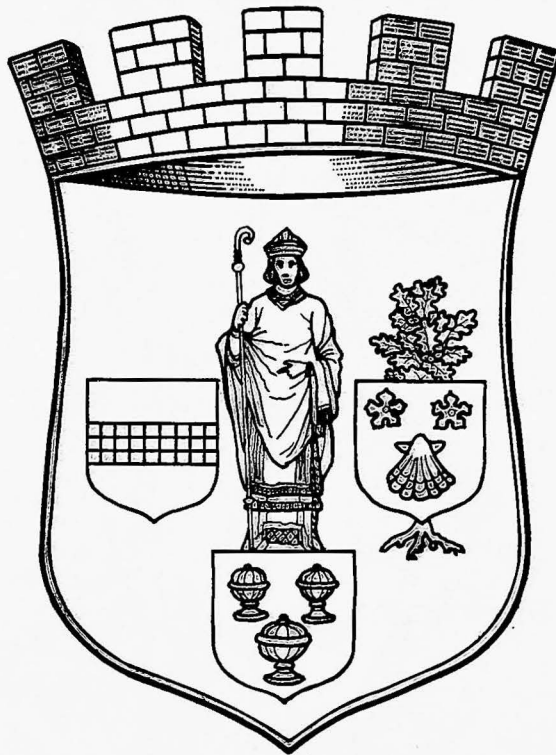
Scottish Burgh Survey  
1982



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of development



Anne Turner Simpson  
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Scottish Burgh Survey  
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Department of Archaeology, University of Glasgow

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## PREFACE

This report of the history and archaeology of the former burgh of Paisley is one of a series of such reports on the historic towns of Scotland. The reports have been commissioned by the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate of the Scottish Development Department with a view to providing the necessary background information upon which to base a policy for urban research in the future. They are also aimed at providing local authority planning departments with the historical and archaeological information necessary to enable them to assess the archaeological implications of any planning applications.

Each report contains an historical report compiled by Anne Turner Simpson with an archaeological report and a series of illustrative plans compiled and drawn by Sylvia Stevenson. The reports attempt to identify those areas within the burghs which were developed at various periods of their history up to approximately 1800, and to locate within those areas, sites which are of particular historical importance. Areas of 19th century growth and modern suburbs have not been examined.

The survey team would like to acknowledge the help and support of Mr. C.D. Begg, Director of Physical Planning, Renfrew District Council and members of his staff, specifically Mr. J.A. McInnes, Depute Director of Planning, and Mr. Boyd; the staff of the Archaeology Division of the Ordnance Survey, Edinburgh; and the Historic Buildings Branch of the Scottish Development Department; Dr. Geoffrey Stell, Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland; Mr. J.D. Hendry, Chief Librarian, Renfrew District Library Service, and Mr. K.W. Hinshalwood, Local History Librarian, Central Library, Paisley; Mr. D. Shearer, Chief Curator of Museums and Art Galleries, Renfrew District Council and members of his staff, especially Mr. R.J. Malden, Senior Depute Curator; also Mrs. V. Reilly, Keeper of Local History and Textiles. The survey team would also like to thank Professor Leslie Alcock and Mr. Eric Talbot who supervised the project at Glasgow University.

Note: The views expressed herein are those of the survey team, freely given, and do not necessarily represent official policy.

Cover: The Coat of Arms of the burgh of Paisley as depicted in Bute, MacPhail and Lonsdale, 1897, 306.



# History

'In general architectural appearance the town of Paisley presents few features calling for the particular attention of the tourist. Its streets are for the most part narrow and tortuous, while even its handsome edifices suffer in effect from the contiguity of less imposing structures' (Hugh MacDonald, 1856).

'The history of Paisley, may, properly speaking, be said to be the history of her trade' (John Parkhill, 1857).

## INTRODUCTION

Site: Paisley is located on a very important medieval route which followed the Lochwinnoch Gap into south-west Ayrshire. Initial settlement grew up at a fording point on the River White Cart seven miles (11km) west of Glasgow. The most important tributary of the White Cart is the Espedair Burn, while another was St. Mirin's Burn whose source was the Wellmeadow to the west of the medieval town. The Merksworth Burn, for a considerable distance, formed the northern boundary of the burgh and Lady Burn flowed into the Cart from the east.

Place Name: Paisley (in Gaelic Paislig) derives its name from the Latin basilica 'church' which in Middle Irish became Baslec (dative case) 'church, churchyard, cemetery'. The early spellings which end in 'th' (i.e., Pasletum) are probably due to a misreading of the 'c' and 't' (Nicolaisen, et al., 1970, 149).

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Burgh Status: Paisley was erected as a burgh of barony in favour of the Abbot of Paisley in August 1488 (Pryde, 1965, 52). After the Reformation, in 1587, the burgh was raised to the status of a burgh of regality in favour of its lay superior, Lord Claud Hamilton.

Medieval: St. Mirin, an Irish saint of the sixth century, is said to have founded a church at Paisley, and some antiquaries alleged that the holy man established a monastery as well, although there is little foundation for this assertion (Metcalfe, 1909, 2). His church presumably stood in Seedhill and down to 1560 it was used as the parish church for the surrounding community.

The next mention of Paisley does not occur until the mid-twelfth century, when Walter FitzAlan, son of the Steward of Scotland, founded a Cluniac Priory in the neighbourhood of Seedhill. As a burgh, Paisley owes its origins to the Abbey. Its first settlers would have

been those normally attracted by a monastic establishment: Millers, brewers, waulkers. Prior to 1490, Paisley had no municipal organisation. Residents could not hold fairs or markets and they were entirely subject in all matters of trade and commerce to Renfrew, whose officials levied tolls and customs up to the gates of the monastery. Until 1488, the villa of Paisley is scarcely referred to in the records and we must assume, therefore, that the pre-burghal settlement which thrived outside the abbey walls was a small one.

The charter of erection of 1488 gave the Abbot the right to set up a burgh which had the right to trade in wines, wax, linen and woollen cloth and to maintain a weekly market and two yearly fairs (Metcalfe, 1909, 99). This rival market angered the nearby royal burgh of Renfrew. In the late 1480s 'under silence of night' men of Renfrew came to the burgh and destroyed certain stones and hewn work which was ordained to the market cross of the said town of Paisley (Metcalfe, 1909, 108). Later, Renfrew men were accused of illegally trying to collect tolls in Paisley (Metcalfe, 1909, 109). In 1490, James IV sent a letter to the burgesses of Renfrew and 'diverse other persons' warning them not to interfere with the young baronial burgh and her trade (Metcalfe, 1902, 39).

Early Modern: By the middle of the sixteenth century Paisley had become the most populous town in Renfrewshire. The abbey gave it prestige and even after 1560, its progress was not halted. Although only a small portion of the abbey properties and finances were granted to the town for public purposes after the Reformation, Paisley's site grew in importance as Glasgow's world-wide trade expanded (McCarthy, 1969, 20).

The seventeenth century witnessed a strong momentum towards increasing industrial output. Medieval trades in the town had included stonemasons, slaters, joiners, smiths, shoemakers and weavers. By the late seventeenth century, trades in the town had become more specialised. In addition to merchants and shopkeepers, there were maltsters, litsters (dyers), glaziers, coopers and a wigmaker, glover, wright, flesher and an apothecary (Metcalfe, 1909, 458, 472, 465, 476, 485).

Eighteenth Century: Gliding into success on Glasgow's coat tails, Paisley enjoyed an almost meteoric rise in the eighteenth century. Unlike many contemporary Scottish towns, Paisley benefited greatly from the Union of 1707 and the increased contact with England and her

overseas colonies. Principal among her early eighteenth century manufacturers were linen and cotton. Manufacturing thread from linen yarn had been introduced into the town by 'female ingenuity' as early as 1722, and by 1744 there were ninety-three mills for twisting thread, a figure which had climbed to 137 by 1792 (MacKie, 1835, 125). Linen production was still a vital industry in 1760 (Kemp, 1887, 53), and in 1766, there were some 855 looms for its manufacture (Metcalf, 1909, 460).

As it had done for thread manufacture, linen both encouraged and fostered the growth of other industries. Silk weaving had started in Paisley before the American Revolution, but after 1783 when the fashion changed 'it began to get dull' (Parkhill, 1857, 33). Another trade which faltered due to the dictates of finicky fashion, was that of ribbon production. In 1766 there were 155 looms for making ribbon, but by 1835 only comparatively few (Metcalf, 1909, 460; MacKie, 1835, 125). Concurrent with silk manufacture was that of muslin which eventually superseded it (Parkhill, 1857, 33).

Along with the rise in manufacture, eighteenth-century Paisley was marked by a steady rise in population. At the time of Union it was estimated that there were no more than 3,000 residents in the town, a figure which climbed to 3879 in 1744. Within ten years that figure nearly doubled for in 1754, 6,000 people were living in Paisley. The number marched to 16,000 in 1781, 19,903 in 1791 and 24,324 in 1801, quadruple the figure in 1754 (Parkhill, 1857, 17).

#### BURGH MORPHOLOGY

Street Layout: It has been suggested that there was a pre-abbatial embryonic settlement on the right bank of the Cart near Seedhill. When a religious community was settled there c.1169, residents of the 'village' were pushed across the river and thus the medieval settlement grew up on the left bank of the White Cart.

It is likely that early Paisley residents were concentrated in very small burgages near the junction of Causeyside with St.Mirin's Wynd and High Street, which constituted the village of the time (McCarthy, 1969, 35). The limits of this early settlement did not extend further south than present-day Canal Street nor further than Causeyside (McCarthy, 1969, 38). By 1550 the town was dissected by two main routeways, High Street and Causeyside and a number of minor lanes. High Street was a focal arch of the burgh. It is the major east-west



street, following the lie of the land along a fifty foot (15m) ridge. The ridge is fairly straight and narrow, running as it does from the Cross to the junction with Oakshaw Street and the position of the road is confined to the ridge by purely physical features: the heights to the north and the slope to the south (McCarthy, 1969, 38). The Abbey Ford connected High Street with the public highway from Glasgow.

As late as the early eighteenth century the town was described as having only one principal street, High Street, about half-a-mile (0.8km) in length with several lanes belonging to it (Sinclair, 1793, vii, 62). One of the 'several lanes' was Moss Row, which received an early mention in 1489 and owes its name to the fact that it terminated at the burgh moss (Metcalf, 1909, 444). St.Mirin's Wynd ran in a south-easterly direction to near the mouth of St.Mirin's Burn. In 1877 the whole of the Wynd was swept away when St.Mirin's Street was opened, providing a more direct access to Causeyside Street from the Cross. Before the opening of St.Mirin Street, Water Brae provided an access to Causeyside.

Longait was an important thoroughfare which has since disappeared. Its route is not easy to determine, although it is alleged that it began at the foot of St.Mirin's Wynd and went along the shore of the White Cart to the Espedair Burn and crossing this stream proceeded to Blada Yard and then, bending west by an old orchard, to Gordon's Lane. After crossing Causeyside it appears that Longait followed the line of present-day Canal Street and terminated near the Laih Common (Brown, 1886, i, 153). A number of other minor thoroughfares including Dyer's Wynd, Burngate, Quarrel Hill and Wellmeadow help to complete the picture of the early town.

Causeyside was the second major thoroughfare of early Paisley. The route commenced at St.Mirin's Burn and terminated where one road branched to Lylis Land and another to Lochelboside. Formerly Causeyside was very steep. When it was widened in the nineteenth century the gradient of the street was levelled (Metcalf, 1909, 450).

To keep pace with the rapid industrial growth and expanding population in the eighteenth century a large number of new streets were laid out in the town. The appropriately named New Street, was laid out in 1724 between High Street and Causeyside. Orchard Street came later in 1746 and its original width of eighteen-and-a-half feet (5.5m) was found to be 'sufficient' (Metcalf, 1909, 350). Both Canal Street and Wellmeadow,

along with Gordon's Lane, were improved in the second half of the century. Prussia Street dates from 1757.

Across the river in the neighbourhood of the Abbey there was a considerable amount of New Town development. The establishment of the Abbey in the mid-twelfth century, had, of course, truncated any large-scale urban development on the right bank of the Cart, although by late sixteenth century it is said that both Fisher Row and Abbey Close were in existence (Metcalf, 1909, 354). They formed the nucleus of the eighteenth-century New Town. In 1750, Lord Dundonald began to feu out lots of land, and by 1760 the abbey walls were knocked down. A few years later the ancient garden of the monastery was laid out on a regular plan for feuing eighty-three houses (Metcalf, 1909, 365). These new streets were named from various branches of the weaving trade: Gauze Street, Thread Street, Lawn Street, Incle Street and Silk Street.

A number of suburbs also spread out during this century as well. New Smithhills, described by Crawford and Semple as a suburb, was under way by 1778 (1782, 107). Walneuk and a suburban community at Seedhill appear to have been in existence by mid-century as does Maxwellton (MacDonald, 1856, 219; Crawford and Semple, 1782, 108). Hartson and Millarston were both founded in 1750, while Cowieston grew up by 1770 and New Carriagehill by 1776 (Crawford, 1782, 108). By 1782 a suburb at Old Sneddon boasted eleven houses, twenty-three families and thirty-two looms (Crawford, 1782, 108).

Market Area: Paisley town records mention markets for fish, butter, fowls, flesh, cheese, salt, wool, cloth, shoes, 'kye' and horses (Metcalf, 1909, 334). A meal market was established in 1635 in the High Street after having been removed from the Cross. The flesh market also stood in the Cross until the mid-seventeenth century, when a new meat market was built 'where the lister tree stands' (Metcalf, 1909, 335). Both a tron and market cross stood at the cross.

Defences: Paisley did not maintain a formal system of defence. In time of war, residents were simply required to 'braid' their yardheids with thorns (Metcalf, 1909, 158). The community did, however, boast a number of ports. St. Mirin's Port (or South Burn Port) was taken down at the time when New Street was laid out in 1733 and its stones were sold at a public auction for eight pounds (Metcalf, 1909, 350). The Bridge or East Port was removed in December 1763 and dismissed as

useless, 'obstructing the view betwixt the town and the Smithhills' (Metcalfe, 1909, 350). In the School Wynd at the head of Stoney Brae was the Barn Yard Port, while another gateway stood in Moss Raw. The West Port survived until the nineteenth century. It was removed when the present Orr Square was built in 1807.

Harbour: Harbour facilities in pre-1800 Paisley were not extensive. Vessels of forty tons burden could call at the quay a little below Sneddon at spring tides (Crawfurd, 1782, 92).

Bridge: A bridge at Paisley was apparently in existence in the late fifteenth century (Brown, 1795, 338). It was apparently ruinous a century later for James VI gave the burgesses power to levy a toll to be used towards bridge repair (Brown, 1886, i, 176). In 1702, the eastern arch of the structure fell in, but the town council was too poor to mend it. Traffic in the meanwhile was conducted by the fords at Sauchel or Sneddon until the bridge was rebuilt in 1711. In the eighteenth century two other bridges were erected spanning the White Cart. The St. James Bridge in 1760 was placed at the Sneddon Ford, while another, the Abbey Bridge, was erected at the Sauchel Ford in 1763 and stones from the Abbey were apparently used in its construction (Brown, 1795, 338; Ramsay, 1839, 18).

### BUILDINGS

Abbey: The Abbey gave Paisley its corporate existence. The ecclesiastical institution was founded c.1169 by Walter, son of Alan, Steward of Scotland, an Anglo-Norman, who had accompanied David I from Shropshire, and received lands from him in Paisley, Pollok, Renfrew, Cathcart and Eaglesham (MacGibbon and Ross, 1897, iii, 7; Metcalfe, 1909, 4). The Cluniac Priory, which was the daughter house of Wenlock in Shropshire, was to supercede the sixth-century church of St. Mirin.

St. Mirin, however, was one of four saints to whom the priory was dedicated, along with the Blessed Virgin, St. James the Greater and St. Milburga, patron of the monks of Wenlock (Howell, 1929, 8). The priory received abbatial status in 1245 during the incumbency of Abbot William (1225-1248), who also thoroughly consolidated the establishment (MacGibbon, 1897, iii, 8). It was one of Scotland's wealthiest abbeys, having been granted many lands, and in the fifteenth century, in the great age of lay piety, several chantry altars were established and sumptuously endowed. It was also in the fifteenth century that Paisley's founder, Abbot George Shaw, added greatly to the existing church fabric.



Before the Reformation, the Abbey consisted of the church, the cloister and conventual buildings. The church comprised a long aisleless choir, a nave with aisles, a north transept, a south transept, with St.Mirin's Chapel attached to the south of it, and a tower and spire over the crossing (MacGibbon, 1896, iii, 10).

By the mid-eighteenth century, the choir and transepts along with several parts of the Abbey were in ruins. These ruins contained excellent building stone, a fact which did not escape the notice of the 'reckless' young Earl of Dundonald who quarried this stone, undoubtedly to aid his building schemes in the New Town (Parkhill, 1857, 29).

When this quarry was exhausted, the nobleman proceeded to take down a good portion of the ruins which were still standing, but the heritors stopped him from removing the ashlar stone above the arch of the main window of the north transept, which is one of the finest of any abbey in Scotland (Parkhill, 1857, 29). A bullet at the 1758 siege of Louisburg ended Dundonald's vandalism. By 1788 however, the church was in a bad state of repair, and although there were moves to have the abbey completely taken down, large-scale restoration work was attempted instead (Lees, 1878, 338). The roofs of the nave and aisles were renewed, the side aisles were renovated, galleries and seatings improved and boardings which obscured the clerestory windows were taken down and replaced by stone (Howell, 1929, 43).

The Abbey church from the time of the Reformation until the eighteenth century had served as sole parish church for Paisley residents. In 1733, the town council entered into an agreement with the Earl of Dundonald as patron of the parish for the erection of new churches in the town. Consequently, the Old Low Church was built in 1738, the High Church followed in 1756 and the Middle Church in 1781. In 1781, the town of Paisley was formally divided into three parishes (Metcalf, 1909, 383).

Chapels: In addition to the great abbey church, Paisley had a number of chapels within its neighbourhood. In the area of Wellmeadow Street stood a chapel dedicated to St.Rollock. The chapel was ordered to be taken down in 1612 by the town council who wanted its stones, timber, slates and other materials for use in erecting a new hospital (Ramsay, 1839, 17). Another chapel within the town stood on the south side of School Wynd and was dedicated to St.Nicholas. A chapel dedicated to St. Convall stood within the village of Fereneze in the parish of

Paisley and another 'suburban' chapel was located at Blackhall (Metcalfe, 1909, 156).

Hospital: The first hospital of which there is any record in Paisley was founded in 1618 with the town council as patrons. It was erected at the east corner of the present Orr Square and was designed for six poor old men who were too feeble to work (Metcalfe, 1909, 173). The structure had two storeys and was dominated by a steeple. In 1723 the hospital was in a ruinous condition and a new one was built on the same site with the addition of a public hall. This hospital was removed in 1808 when the present Orr Square was laid out.

Tolbooth: The first tolbooth in Paisley was erected shortly after the foundation of the burgh in 1488. It was of two storeys and was located at the southwest corner of Moss Street. Subsequently, a clock and bell were added to it. The structure was apparently ruinous by 1610 when the town council sold six feus of land in order to raise capital to help pay for a new tolbooth. The 1610 structure was in turn removed in 1757 when a third municipal building was erected, housing not only council offices, but also quarters for the sheriff court and town clerk's office. This tolbooth was taken down in 1821.

School: A charter of James VI granted to the burgh of Paisley all the altarages, of chapels, lands and manses formerly belonging to the abbey for erecting and maintaining a grammar school (Metcalfe, 1902, 58). The school itself was not built until 1586, ten years after the charter. This early institution was located on the south side of School Wynd and was replaced by a new erection in 1753 (Metcalfe, 1909, 388).

Houses: In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, few houses in Paisley were built of polished ashlar stone. The greatest part of the houses were built of rough stone faced with wood, thatched with straw, although some were tiled (Metcalfe, 1902, ciii). The earliest reference to a slated tenement occurs in the seventeenth century (Metcalfe, 1902, 135), although many houses, including a number of St. Mirin's Wynd, were thatched as late as the middle of the nineteenth century (Metcalfe, 1909, 349). The town council, however, in 1733 took action against houses of low-grade material. 'Considering the streets of this burgh are very straight and narrow in many places which cannot easily be made wider and broader', began the statute which decreed the number of thatched houses and timber fronts, 'no person build houses fronting

to the street in time coming...but shall be built of stone walls back and fore'. The stone-built houses were to be covered with slate, tile or lead, and similarly any 'ruinous' house was to be repaired in a like manner (Metcalf, 1909, 349).

Mills: A mill, which stood on the right bank of the Cart, was granted to the Priory by the son of Walter the Steward, along with ground around it to build a miller's house (Metcalf, 1902, xxvi). During its history, the Abbey controlled a number of mills. A waulk mill and a corn mill were located on the Espedair Burn, while the monks maintained a second waulk mill near Seedhill (Brown, 1886, i, 135; Metcalf, 1909, 458). Moreover, near the Sauchel Ford was a mill used for grinding bark for the tanning industry (Crawford, 1782, 99).



# Archaeology

## SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The streets of medieval Paisley are fossilized in the present town plan. With the exception of the Place of Paisley at the Abbey (NS 4854 6391), there are now no structures pre-dating the seventeenth century. The majority of the medieval buildings were removed in the eighteenth or nineteenth century as a result of extensive property re-development and street improvement schemes. It was during these two centuries that the town expanded outwith its medieval limits, the erstwhile Abbey gardens were feued at Sneddon from 1749. East of the Abbey, after 1768, the Marquis of Abercorn laid out and feued the new town, comprising Silk Street, Lawn Street, and Gauze Street etc. In addition to this outward expansion, the burgh burgages were increasingly developed, though largely within their ancient boundaries. During the last twenty years, the townscape has again undergone considerable change (see map 2). Road improvements in Canal Street, Gordon Street, Bridge Street and Cotton Street, have diverted traffic away from the town centre. Thread Street and Abbey Street have now disappeared in an extensive re-development of regional and local government offices on the site of the Abbey gardens. To the north of Gauze Street, the River White Cart was bridged and a new shopping Mall built in the 1960s. Various infill developments have been carried out in Moss Street and Gilmour Street (NS 483 640), and more spectacularly on the High Street at NS 482 639 and NS 483 639. On the extreme West of High Street, the Technical College has implemented extensive re-development, breaking through pre-existing frontages, for purposes of access, on Storie Street, George Street and Lady Lane. The southern boundary of the early burgh has been extensively re-developed between George Street and Canal Street. These developments represent recent major improvements to the townscape, although, regrettably, they also represent opportunities now lost to identify sites of archaeological interest

For the future, redevelopment has been proposed on School Wynd (NS 481 640) and between 23 and 25, High Street, including an extensive backland area with access onto New Street. An office development is also proposed for the area between 33 and 55, High Street. An extensive area adjacent to Storie Street may also be the subject of intensive redevelopment by the Technical College (see map 2). The property between Smithhills Street and Lawn Street may also be redeveloped in the future. These sites are of varying degrees of importance and are discussed below (see page 13).

There are, at present, no archaeological studies on which to assess the depth and degree of survival of archaeological deposits in the historic centre. Without this information, it is difficult to assess the value of these sites in advance. It is important, therefore, because of this lack of knowledge, that steps are taken prior to redevelopment to assess the potential of each site.

#### Future Investigation

The policies outlined below are not listed in order of importance but are intended to provide guide lines for future research as opportunities arise through renovation and redevelopment (see page 20 ff for full discussion).

1. To attempt, through a combination of documentary research and excavation, to determine the date and nature of earliest settlement at Seedhill, and the site of the present town respectively. To provide evidence for the social and economic development of the post-twelfth century community on the west bank of the River Cart.
2. To provide evidence for the site and chronology of the town ports, through the observation of archaeological levels in the presumed positions occupied by them, in combination with the study of the surviving documentary evidence.
3. To confirm by a combination of archaeological and documentary research, the development of the street plan of Paisley, and to identify any variation in street alignment and width.
4. To establish the physical nature and plan of the town buildings prior to the eighteenth century. To determine the nature of construction, materials used, the relationship of town buildings to each other and the street frontage, and the commercial and industrial usage of the associated burghs.
5. To clarify the exact position, plan and chronology of buildings associated with the Abbey complex.
6. To trace the site of the Chapel of St. Nicholas and establish a chronology for its foundation and development.
7. To establish the site of the chapel and associated graveyard of St. Roque.
8. To carry out documentary research into the possibility or otherwise of the existence of two independent chapels of Our Lady in the burgh, and an early chapel of St. Mirin.

9. To assess the survival of archaeological levels on the site of the early seventeenth-century hospital. Of additional interest here is the possibility of recovering architectural detail which would provide evidence for the date of St. Roque's chapel.

#### Areas of Archaeological Priority

It is proposed here to outline areas which on present evidence should be given consideration in the event of future redevelopment. It should be stressed, however, that it is not possible on the basis of the present limited archaeological evidence to make value judgements of one site or area in relation to another. The divisions marked on map 2, and discussed below, are dictated solely by the current documentary and structural evidence qualified by imminent redevelopment or other disturbance in the postulated area of potential archaeological interest.

1. Area one encompasses the estimated extent of the built-up area of the burgh as it existed in the fifteenth century, and may be defined today by Oakshaw Street, Storie Street, Gordon Street, the White Cart Water and Gilmour Street. An in depth study of the original documentary material would produce a much clearer image of this part of the present townscape than it is possible to contemplate within the terms of the present project. Nineteenth-century redevelopment has transformed this part of the burgh, and no town buildings pre-dating the eighteenth century now survive. More recently, building replacement on the High Street frontages near the Cross, has reduced future opportunities to examine the underlying levels of this, the oldest part of the town, for archaeological remains. The north to south ground slope, steep in places, has led to many buildings on both sides of the High Street, being cut into the ground surface either at the side, front or rear, and there are signs of extensive basement and cellarage. The substantial nature of the Victorian building foundations on the High Street may mean, therefore, extensive destruction of the archaeological deposits. However, the widening of the High Street in the nineteenth century, may mean that early frontages survive beneath the present pavements. This supposition must, however, be qualified by two factors, firstly, the High Street, particularly at NS 483 640, has been levelled in the course of nineteenth century attempts to lessen the gradient, and secondly, the laying of services to modern properties will undoubtedly have disturbed underlying deposits.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the infill of the erstwhile backland properties, and any attempts to identify early industrial usage of these areas and identify them with the early frontage sites are now



complicated, both by the disturbance and by the later sub-division of the original fifteenth-century feus. Future opportunities to examine this area will be limited. Frontage sites may be available for investigation at 23 and 25 High Street (NS 4824 6399) and this proposed commercial development will extend through the backland onto the New Street frontage (see map 2) which would potentially provide an important opportunity to achieve a continuous investigation of both frontage and associated backland in this early part of the town. Property between 49 and 55 High Street (NS 480 639) may also provide an opportunity to examine frontage deposits prior to redevelopment.

Extensive redevelopment of High Street backland property is proposed by the Paisley College of Technology on the east side of Storie Street. This area has undergone at least two phases of redevelopment since the laying out of Storie Street in the eighteenth century, and has been successively a Ropery (O.S. 1859, 25" XII, 2) and a cattle market. Redevelopment may provide an opportunity to establish the degree of survival and depth of archaeological deposits, to identify the demarcation lines between the High Street burgages, and to establish any early industrial usage.

Possible demolition of a group of eighteenth and nineteenth century houses at the junction of Causeyside Street and New Street (NS 483 637) in the course of road improvements may provide opportunities to examine the early frontage of Causeyside Street, assess the survival of deposits here, and the date of expansion southwards of the town.

To the north of the High Street, proposed housing redevelopment on the site of Oakshaw School (NS 481 640) would allow the investigation of early land use of this site on the fringes of the medieval burgh.

2. Area two may be defined by Cotton Street, Gauze Street, Smithhills Street, and the White Cart Water. It includes the Abbey and the site of its associated walled precinct. The town was apparently restricted to the west bank of the river, and the development north of the Abbey dates originally from the eighteenth century feuing (see page 5 ). Much redevelopment has taken place during the last twenty years in this area. For the future, a new commercial development has been tentatively proposed for the extensive site between Lawn and Smithhills Streets which may provide an opportunity to establish pre-eighteenth-century land use of the area. Perhaps more importantly, the area west of the Abbey, down to the river, although much disturbed by building and burial since the Reformation, may still provide evidence of the monastic development

which reputedly extended down to the waterside (see page 36 ). It is probably not now possible to trace the course of the Abbey wall, although the foundations of the associated gatehouse were re-discovered during street building operations in 1874 (see page 37 ). The Abbey has been extensively renovated over the last 100 years and the churchyard levelled. There is no current threat to the site.

3. Area three is defined by Oakshaw Street, Wellmeadow Street, High Street and Orr Street. The antiquity of this area post-dates the development of the High Street east of Orr Square, and interest here lies chiefly in assessing the chronology of urban development westwards, the layout of the feus here, and the relationship of early buildings with each other, and with the street. The nineteenth century frontages have been largely removed, and the backland properties have not undergone the intensive repletion of those on the east High Street, probably due to the relatively steep slope between Oakshaw Street and High Street . It is uncertain whether early frontages will be tracable here as the road appears to have been terraced into the slope, particularly at the Thomas Coats Church (NS 487 639). A better understanding of this area can only be achieved by exploratory excavation and the study of surviving documentary sources. The Oakshaw Street frontage was developed largely in the nineteenth century, and is unlikely to provide any relevant information.
4. Seedhills is the reputed site of pre-twelfth-century Paisley, it is now extensively rebuilt, although with the present rundown of the Anchor Mills complex it is possible that some opportunities may present themselves for future investigation of the area, to establish corroborative evidence. The site of the monastic mill (NS 4868 6367) may be available for examination.
5. The grounds of the John Neilson Institute are presently to be landscaped by the Public Services Agency. This eminence is, by tradition, the site of a Roman fort, but more probably of Iron Age origin. It was extensively re-shaped in the eighteenth century during the construction of a bowling green, and the site was again disturbed in the nineteenth century during the building of the Institute. On this latter occasion, however, the work was scrutinised by a local historian who identified no surviving structural or artifactual material. The site has, therefore, in all probability been destroyed, though it may be worthwhile employing a watching brief during landscaping.

### Recommendations

The historic centre of Paisley has undergone extensive property clearance and redevelopment in the recent past. No published archaeological excavation has been carried out in the area occupied by the medieval burgh and most of the information relative to this area has hitherto been obtained from the surviving documentary sources. Future planning proposals will affect High Street frontages and backlands which have remained undisturbed since the nineteenth century, and it is therefore, a matter of some urgency that advantage is taken of opportunities to examine sites in the historic core prior to redevelopment. The following recommendations are therefore made in the hope of utilizing future opportunities to assess the survival of archaeological deposits in the area of archaeological interest, and direct future archaeological investigation to those areas of greatest potential.

- (a) Any proposed road improvements, repairs to, or extension of existing services such as gas, electricity or water to frontage and backland properties which involve trenching, could profitably be monitored in the hope of establishing the degree of disturbance and probable depth of archaeological deposits within the area of archaeological interest outlined on Map.2.
- (b) A policy of selective trial trenching on proposed development sites in the archaeologically sensitive areas outlined on page 12ff, would, in conjunction with (a) above, provide a useful indicator to future priority areas.
- (c) Although there are now few buildings pre-dating the eighteenth century in the burgh, a watching brief on future renovation and/or demolition projects may lead to the identification of early structural remains behind a later facade, or re-used early foundations beneath eighteenth or nineteenth-century buildings.
- (d) Closer scrutiny of the surviving documentary sources than has been possible in this limited survey, would in conjunction with (a) - (c) above contribute considerably to knowledge of the development of the early townscape.

### PREVIOUS WORK

There has been no recorded archaeological excavation in the historic core of Paisley. Some exploratory work has, however, been carried out on two earthworks on the periphery of the town, the results of which are described briefly below.

The construction of a new road to the west of an earthwork at Dyke Bar Hill (NS 4974 6234) necessitated some site grading. From the disturbed soil produced as a result of this operation, some artifactual material was recovered. A corroded coin of indeterminate currency, and a corroded copper brooch with 'paired lenticular perforations' were found exterior to a supposed entrance to the earthwork, in what was presumably rampart spread some 28' (8.5m) wide. A sherd of light green glazed pottery was recovered from further down the slope. No further details (Lonie and Newall, 1968, 36).

An exploratory excavation was carried out in 1973 upon what the excavator postulates on the basis of its similarity to other earthworks of early medieval date, to be a Norman ringwork of earth and timber, in the grounds of 12, High Road, Paisley (NS 4751 6333). In the nineteenth century, this site was alleged to be a Roman camp, it apparently consisted of a circular rampart, and in 1857, was certainly more substantial in its remains than today (O.N.B. 1857, 20, 85). Trenching revealed a minimal 8" (0.2m) of humus overlying natural boulder clay, and no structural evidence was found. The excavator considers the lack of stratigraphy to be due to landscaping of the area in the later nineteenth century. Two sherds of pottery were recovered, but only one of these could be dated to the late medieval period (Talbot, 1973, 45; Talbot, 1973, 3-4; Talbot, 1974, 49).

A number of artifactual finds have been made in the burgh and its immediate environs, and while these are frequently not from a secure stratigraphical context, the locality can in most cases be identified, and they serve to illustrate both the wide chronological range of material found in the burgh, and its long history of human settlement.

1. A Red Deer Antler was recovered from the site of a new gas tank in Paisley, some 14 - 15' (4.2m - 4.5m) below the ground surface in the late nineteenth century. A paper in the Transactions of the Geological Society of Glasgow (1879, vol.VI) describes the horizon as a post tertiary fossiliferous bed containing an abundance of 'Ostracoda and Foramenifera'. The antler measured 3' (0.9m) long, and had seven tines. It was presented to the Paisley Museum (Robertson, 1879, vol. VI, p.53-7; Smith, 1880-81, vol. XV, 59).
2. Two fragments of a sculptured cross were found about 1838 in a well at Newton Woods (circa NS 452 625). The carving exhibited a certain similarity to that on a probable shrine cover at Inchinnan, which is tentatively dated to the tenth century. The Elderslie Cross, as it is known, is now in the Paisley Museum, (Anderson 1888-9, XXIII, 349-51).



3. A Cross shaft, 3' 10" (1.1m) long by 2'8" (0.8m) wide and 9" (0.2m) thick, previously stood by the farm steading at Stanlie Green (NS 4615, 6170) and was subsequently moved to NS 4630, 6159). The front face bore traces of a four card plait, a horseman and two beasts. The reverse carried the tracable remains of two beasts and the sides two bands twisted together (Allen, 1903, 461; Stuart, 1856, I, pl. 117; MacGibbon and Ross, 1889, vol. III, 281).
4. Two sepulchral slabs were recovered during restoration work at the Abbey in 1900 (NS 485 639). The stones were discovered during the insertion of new foundations beneath the four piers of the crossing, and they formed, on discovery, the lowest course of masonry of the old south-west pier at a depth of 12'6" (3.8m) below the floor of the nave, face down on a bed of sand. Both stones were broken during recovery. Both were decorated with incised crosses, and probably dated from the thirteenth or fourteenth century. The author considered that the stones were placed face down on the sand shortly after manufacture, as the carving was 'crisp' (Ross, 1900-01, 64-66).
5. A fragment of an altar Retable from Paisley Abbey, of sandstone, measuring 11' (0.28m) in height by 10" (0.25m) in width, and decorated in relief with scenes of the crucifixion and the entombment of Christ. The panels are divided by a shaft below the base of which are carved the arms of Abböt George Shaw (1472-1498). The remains of a two line inscription in Gothic Ribbon letters below the crucifixion, and a single line below the entombment probably describe the subject of the scene above. The retable probably dates from the late fifteenth century (Richardson, 1927-28, vol. LX II, 208-209).
6. Howell (1935-36, vol. XI, 155) recorded a re-used Pictish symbol stone in the floor of the choir, tentatively dating it to the tenth century. There is, however, no corroborative evidence of the existence of this stone.
7. A small pierced stone inscribed with a cross and found at Paisley Abbey (NS 486 639) is in the possession of the finder, N. Cunningham (Cunningham, 1977, 44).
8. A number of inscribed stones have been recovered during building work in the town, and are now in the collection of Paisley Museum.
  - (a) A stone representing the full face of a human head was discovered during building operations in Smithshills Street, Paisley (NS, 4852, 6407). It was probably originally incorporated in the wall surrounding the Abbey grounds which was demolished in the late

- eighteenth century (O.S. Record Card NS 46 SE (M)).
- (b). A door lintel with roll moulding and inscribed with the date 1666 and the initials (I.C.A.P.I) before the date, was discovered in 1902 during the excavation of foundations for a new property immediately to the west of Maxwellton Street on the south side of George Street (NS 4729 6365). It is in the collection of Paisley Museum, (O.S. Record Card NS 46 SE (M)).
- (c) A stone inscribed with the first verse of the seventh psalm, the name of John Aitken (of Balgreen?) and the date 1591 was removed during structural alteration to the rear of 40-42, High Street (NS 4808, 6401) (O.S. Record Card, NS 46 SE (M)). It is now in the Paisley Museum.
- (d) An inscribed stone bearing the inscription [ANNO 1490 HELD OF THE LORD ABBOT OXSCHAWSYDE FREE BURGAGE TERRITORY NUMBERS 59-93, HIGH STREET]. Evidently a boundary stone defining burghal land in Oakshaws side, approximately from the Cross to Townhead centred NS 481, 640. In the Paisley Museum collection. The inscription possibly nineteenth-century in date (ex. inf. J. Malden). (O.S. Record Card, NS 46 SE 19).

A number of other carved stones have been recovered from the burgh mainly dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth century. For reasons of time and space, it is not possible to list all these here, but they can be seen in Paisley Museum (ex. inf. J. Malden).

9. An oak panel with the monogram [M.A.E.K.] from the house of the minister of Paisley 1585-1606, Master Andrew and Elizabeth Knox, at 25, High Street (site now 39, High Street). The panel is in the collection of Paisley Museum (ex. inf. J. Malden).
10. A finger ring of silver, originally gilt, and formed with two hands joined with a heart and rose between, is said to have been found in the vicinity of Paisley. It is inscribed [IESUS] and is in the collection of the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh (Simpson, 1857-60, vol.III, 483).
11. A small 'earthenware' jug was found at a depth of 1' (0.31m) on the drying green at the rear of 64, Broomlands Street, (NS 4704, 6373). Earlier ground levelling may have removed up to 2' (0.6m) of surface deposit so that the original depth of deposition was probably 3' (0.9m). The vessel possibly dates from the fourteenth or fifteenth century. It is in the Paisley Museum (Mayes, 1945-47, vol.LXXX, 140; Mayes, 1941, vol.X, 77-8; Laing, L.L. & Talbot, E.J. 1974, vol.III, 44).

12. A jug of red clay with a ribbed body described as 'medieval' was dug up in a garden at Castlehead (NS 4755 6335) in 1879. The vessel is now in the Paisley Museum (O.S. Record Card, NS 46 SE 5).
13. Three vessels were found about 1827 in the course of digging in a field, now part of Ferguslie Park, some 500 yards (457.2m) from the castle of Ferguslie. The find was made at a depth of 3'- 4' (0.9m- 9.2m) and there were no associations. Two of the vessels are described as 'crucible-like', with vertical sides, flat bottoms and a 'dark vitreous glaze'. The upper parts pinched to a triangular mouth - one with a well-defined spout. To the exterior of one, a third vessel has apparently been inverted over it and is cemented to the complete vessel by some vitreous material. There was no suggestion of metallic dross adherent to the interior of either vessel. The third vessel is a small finger moulded conical beaker of reddish fabric with a greenish-brown glaze and slightly everted lip.. The present whereabouts of these finds is unknown, although they were exhibited to the society of antiquaries early this century (Christison, 1906-07, p.419).
14. A Gold coin, described by Semple as a 'Lion', of James I or II, was discovered during the digging of house foundations on a steading at the north-east corner of New Street and Shuttle Street (NS 4827 6382). The obverse inscription read [ IACOBVS, DEI. GRACIA. REX,SC] and the reverse [SALVVM.FAC.POPVLVM.TVVM.A]. The coin weighed 50 grains. In 1872, it was in the possession of Archibald Gardner esq., of Nethercommon, 'writer' in Paisley, but its present whereabouts is not known (Semple, 1872, 170-71).
15. A hoard of 515 silver pennies of Edwards, I, II and III, 5 pennies of Alexander III and 3 of John Balliol, were discovered 'near Paisley', on April 5th 1791. There is no specific findspot, the deposit is dated between 1292 and 1360, and Metcalf favours a date well into the fourteenth century on the basis of the low proportion of Alexandrian coins. The hoard was dispersed and sold after recovery (Lindsay, 1845, 263; Metcalf, 1977, 38).
16. A hoard of Anglo-Saxon Stycas named Edilof, Edilvegh, Edilred, Edilred Rex, and others were discovered at Paisley in October 1782. Unfortunately, the exact find spot is not specified, and the present whereabouts of these coins is not known. (Lindsay, 1845, 262).
17. A small brass medal of Roman date commemorating Titus' capture of Jerusalem was discovered at Stanely Castle (NS 463 616) in 1829. Its present whereabouts is not known (Black, 1953, 3-4)
18. Three slightly worn Antoniniani of Tetricus I, reputedly found on land adjacent to 59 Bathgo Avenue Paisley where built some

- dump'. Robertson considers that these were probably not lost locally in ancient times (Robertson, 1970-71, vol. CIII, p.127).
19. A well worn Denarius of Antoninus Pius found circa 1800 in the vicinity of Paisley Reservoir (NS 464 619). In 1950, this was in the possession of Mr. I. MacDonald, 16, Arlington Street, Glasgow (Robertson, 1949-50, vol. LXXXIV, 147).
  20. A worn as of Domitian, a worn bronze coin of Galeria Valeria and an as of Galerius minted at Antioch, were found with a Paisley Communion token dated 1809 during the demolition of a bridge at Stoddarts carpet factory Paisley in 1950. These coins were in the possession of Mr. P. McDermid, 187, Greenend Avenue, Johnstone in 1950 (Robertson, 1949-50, vol. LXXXIV, 148).
  21. A worn and corroded bronze coin of Constantius II was found 1' (0.31m) down in a garden at 69, Blackstoun Oval, Paisley (NS 4689, 6406), a new housing scheme, previously parkland associated with Ferguslie House. Present whereabouts uncertain, (Robertson, 1960-61, vol. XCIV, 148).
  22. A worn bronze coin of Constantius I was discovered during digging operations on open ground north of Ingle Street (NS 487 642). The site had undergone past disturbance as a Catholic Chapel stood here in the nineteenth century. The present whereabouts of this coin is uncertain. (Robertson, 1960-61, vol. XCIV, p.148).

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

### Early Settlement

The chronological diversity of artifacts recovered from the burgh and its immediate environs exemplifies the favourability of the site of the town for human activity over the centuries (see page 15 ff). Some of the earliest writers ascribed Roman settlement to the site. Principal Dunlop of Glasgow University wrote in the mid-seventeenth century 'at Paisley there is a large Roman camp to be seen', and went on to describe extensive fortifications in the vicinity of Oakshawhead, which were largely destroyed in the eighteenth century by the construction of a bowling green (NS 4770 6402). Sibbald's description of the site in 1707, and Crawford's in 1710 both follow that of Dunlop, but although there are isolated finds of Roman coins in the town (see page 19 ff) there is no evidence to suppose, as early writers claimed, that Paisley was the Roman Vanuara of Ptolemy (Brown, 1886, Vol.I, 18) and morphologically,



the camp at Oakshaw seems more likely to have been Iron Age in date than Roman. Metcalfe affiliates Oakshawhead with 'outposts on Castlehead (NS 6751 6333 ) and Woodside' (NS 4679 6390). In the former case, Castlehead is most probably again on the basis of morphology (see page 16 ) a Norman ringwork, and in the latter case, although now destroyed by the cemetery at Woodside, the earthworks were probably Iron Age in date.

The original early medieval settlement at Paisley before the founding of the priory in 1163, was at Seedhills on the east bank of the White Cart Water (area NS 486 636). St. Mirin reputedly founded a church at this fording point of the river in the sixth century, around which grew up the settlement pre-dating the abbey foundation. Whether or not the Saint was responsible for the erection of a church here, the existence of the settlement at Seedhills is attested by the founding charter of the Abbey. Walter Fitz Alan endowed his priory with 'the church of Passelet, with all its possessions and two carucates of land, measured and perambulated about the river Kart...'. In the same charter, he gives the monks and Prior '...four shillings from the mill at Passelet for the church...and besides this, a full tenth of that mill of Passelet' (Brown, 1886, Vol.I, 138). Some confusion might arise regarding the holdings of the chaplain of the altar of St. Mirin in the fifteenth century Abbey, (the priory became an abbey in the early thirteenth century, see page 6 ) and those of the presumed early church at Seedhill. In the Post Reformation period, the town council minutes for January 31st 1618, refer to a building in Seedhill 'which pertained of old to the chaplain's of Saints Mirin and Columba' - most probably a reference to altars in the Abbey church, and on April 21st 1620, the minutes allude to 'the laich house in the Seedhill with an auld graveyard attached thereto which was sett for a year to John Greenlees...', Brown (1886, Vol.I, 139) considers that this 'laich house' formed a part of the early church of Paisley mentioned in the foundation charter of the Abbey. Certainly, the graveyard is most probably that used by the monks and community of Pre-Reformation Paisley. Howell (1929, 31) comments that the present churchyard to the north of the Abbey church is Post-Reformation, and Brown (1886, Vol.I, 139) would seem to confirm this hypothesis by stating that all traces of the burial ground at Seedhill mentioned in the minutes of 1620, had disappeared by the late eighteenth century. The charter of one James Crawford in the seventeenth century records that on the lands of Seedhill 'there were buildings, gardens and orchards which had been anciently inhabited by the chaplains of the altars of St. Mirin'.

Seedhill survived as an independent community until the late nineteenth century by which time the expansion and development of the textile mills here had largely obliterated all traces of pre-existing settlement (Metcalf, 1909, 447). Future work in this area should be directed towards determination of the date and nature of the earliest settlement at Seedhill.

The founding of the Priory brought about in the late twelfth century a shift in the focus of secular settlement to the west bank of the White Cart Water. McCarthy (1969, 29) claims that this re-orientation was a deliberate attempt by the new religious community to isolate its position, and consolidate its possessions on the east bank of the river. Brown (1886, Vol. I, 141) also suggests that this shift in site was largely due to the desire of the monastic community to absorb Seedhill for its own use. The new settlement west of the White Cart was sited favourably for development. The river provided transport through the then wooded country to the north and east and provided an ample food source. Charter evidence suggests that the White Cart was rich in salmon and trout. Being at the lowest fording point of the river on the main route which is now into Ayrshire from Glasgow, Paisley was also advantageously situated. The falls in the river below Seedhill, producing water power, the fertile agricultural soil, ample local fuel, both timber and coal (deposits of which were subject to exploitation at an early date in the medieval period), and sufficient flat land to favour urban expansion, would seem to have provided incentives for rapid early development. However, after the foundation of the Abbey, little is heard of the growth of the site west of the River Cart until Paisley became a burgh of barony by a charter of King James IV in 1488 (Black, 1952, 64). Although therefore, Paisley undoubtedly has its origins in the foundation of the Priory, some writers have claimed (McCarthy, 1969, 27) that the benevolent paternalism practiced by the Benedictines fostered village rather than urban growth, and that Paisley did not develop into a town until the dissolution of the Abbey at the Reformation. The purpose of the Benedictine order, as defined by St. Benedict, was to educate the young, and to develop land attached to the Abbey. The foundation in the pursuance of these goals undoubtedly attracted craftsmen and artisans who created the basis of future industrial achievement of Paisley. However, until the creation of the burgh in 1488, and the feuing of monastic lands by Abbot George Shaw in 1490, the village of Paisley appears not to have extended beyond a few hundred yards west and south of the bank of the River White Cart adjacent to the Abbey. The feuing of land undoubtedly

attracted new settlers, and the town in the late fifteenth century, achieved a size and prosperity unrivalled until the eighteenth century. Evidence of this prosperity is clearly seen in the rent roll begun by Abbot Crichton (Metcalfe, 1909, 94).

Future work on the post-twelfth century community on the west bank of the River Cart should be directed towards providing evidence of the growth, and social and economic development of the settlement up to the achievement of burgh status in the fifteenth century.

### The Town Defences

Paisley was never a walled town in the defensive sense. As in many other Scottish medieval towns, the trading privileges, health and safety of the inhabitants and the definition of the town limits, were ensured and indicated by strong walls or 'heid roemes' at the foot of the town burgages. Access from the backland property to the town thoroughfares was controlled by strong gates at the closes channelling all persons desirous of entering the town through the ports. A proportion of the town revenue was obtained from a levy on goods entering the town, a duty which it was more convenient to collect at the ports which made evasion more difficult. Controlled access of vagrants and other persons likely to be a burden or a trouble to the town could also be effected more easily where admission was at set points. This aspect was of particular importance, as is seen from the town records, in times of epidemic disease.

In the seventeenth century, numerous references to the town walls and ports occur in the town minutes in (sometimes) vain attempts to exclude epidemics. In 1602, an outbreak of plague in Scotland initiated elaborate precautions to protect the inhabitants of Paisley. Persons with land bordering the burgh boundary and ports were ordered to put their dykes in repair, and 'braid the samin with thornis, that nane clyme ovir' (Metcalfe, 1909, 216). At the same time, the inhabitants were ordered to prevent illegal entry to the burgh through their back yards.

The site of the town ports of which there appear to have been five at Paisley, and where it is possible to identify their original positions, provide an excellent definition of the extent of the built-up area in medieval times. Although the burgh lands were extensive, the burgh itself did not exceed the limits indicated below until the expansion which accompanied industrial prosperity in the eighteenth century.

The 'Brig Port' stood at the west end of the old bridge over the River

Cart (NS 484 640). According to Brown (1886, Vol.I, 151), the port stood on the bridge itself, which under certain circumstances would provide a 'terminus ante quem' for its construction. Unfortunately however, the construction date of the old bridge is not known. It is certain that for centuries, the river was crossed only by fords, one near the Abbey, and one at Sneddon (Black, 1952, 173). But the erection of the bridge near the cross, on which stood the port, was attributed to several abbots before Abbot George Shaw, in a charter of whom one of the first documentary references to the structure is made on 2nd June 1490. In the original charter of erection, the burgh is said to begin at the end of the bridge of Paisley, upon the Cart...' (Brown, 1886, Vol. I, 175). Semple (1872, 46) claims that the bridge was constructed before the erection of the town into a burgh in 1488. This early bridge is said to have been rebuilt at the end of the sixteenth century (Metcalf, 1909, 347), and stood until its partial collapse and repair in 1702/03 (Black, 1952, 173). It may be suggested, therefore, that the port was erected at some time in the fifteenth century, perhaps simultaneously with the building of the bridge on which it reputedly stood. It remained until 1763 when a minute of the council for December 8th of that year details it as 'useless', and 'obstructing the view betwixt the town and Smith-hills' and on these grounds to be removed (Brown, 1886, Vol.II, 61). The port must have survived the partial collapse of the bridge in the early eighteenth century, as no mention is made of it at that time. This port was probably of stone but there is now no likelihood of other details of its construction coming to light as the old bridge was demolished and rebuilt in 1782 (Semple, 1872, 46).

The St.Mirin Port formed the main entrance to the town from the south. Causeyside was in the medieval times a separate village, this is indicated in several burgh charters of the period (McCarthy, 1969, 39) and as such, was not contained by the burgh ports. The St.Mirin Port (Burn or South port as it is variously described) stood at the extreme south-end of St.Mirin's Wynd, area NS 484 639). The date at which this port was erected is not certain, but it was probably contemporary with the feuing which followed the erection of the burgh. It survived into the eighteenth century, though had probably been obsolete for some years. John Renfrew, a Smith, and John Stewart, a master at the grammar school, had acquired two tenements adjoining the port, and petitioned the town council for its removal as the ruinous state in which it existed was an obstacle to the proposed improvement of their property. The council minutes for 5th December 1733 record that authority was given for the demolition of the



port, and on December 11th, the stones were sold by public roup (Brown, 1886, Vol.I, 153). It had been rendered obsolete in any case by the construction of New Street in 1728 which opened up the southern part of the town. In the eighteenth century, St. Mirin's Burn was flagged over, and the roadway raised as part of a general improvement scheme. Later redevelopment in the late nineteenth century, drastically altered this part of the town, and McCarthy (1969, 39) claims that the original wynd lies 14' (4.2m) below the level of the present street. If this is indeed the case, it seems very probable that early structural traces still survive here (see page 29 ), though whether the foundations of the stone port will still exist is questionable.

The Moss Row Port stood, as the name suggests, in Moss Row. Brown (1886, Vol.I,153) claims that it stood adjacent to 14, Moss Street. Paisley however, underwent renumbering of the houses of the town centre early this century, and this reference does not coincide with the present 14, Moss Street, which stands at NS 4830 6409, but with the present 21, Moss Street. Little more is known of this port. In 1605, the plague was rife in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Rutherglen and the council in an attempt to forestall the infection in Paisley ordered 'that not onlie all the ports of this burgh be weill keipit and that thair be yets(gates) hung upon the Mosraw and Barne Yaird (School Wynd) ports...' (Metcalf, 1909, 219-20). This decree suggests that both the 'Moss Raw' and 'Barne Yaird' ports had been allowed to lapse during the latter part of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, but, although deficient of gates, the structure from which to hang them survived. There is no indication when the Moss Row port was cleared, it most probably disappeared in the late eighteenth century expansion. With the development of Sneddon, the town expanded beyond its medieval limits, and the domestic, political and economic situation would by this time have made its use obsolete. The street improvements of 1873 led to the widening and straightening of Moss Street (McCarthy, 1969, 190) and may have obliterated all trace of the port. The port on School Wynd was also known as the Barn Yard Port and stood at the west end of School Wynd (approximately NS 481 640). The exact site is not precisely determinate, and neither is the date of its erection. It is mentioned in 1602 among stringent regulations enforced by the town council to prevent persons from entering the town due to an epidemic of the plague. At this time it was instructed that the Barn Yard Port should be built up to prevent access (Craig, 1881, 24). By 1605, however, it had been re-opened, as another threat of infection, inducing the council

to order the hanging of gates in the 'Barne Yaird' (see above ). The expansion of the town in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries must have rendered this gate too, an obsolete inconvenience and it must have been removed at that time.

The West Port stood across the High Street and in the medieval period indicated the western limit of the burgh. Brown (1886, Vol.I, 151) claims that it stood between 34, High Street (south side) and 83 High Street (North side). His description does not correspond to the present system of enumeration. 34 High Street is now 51, High Street and 83 High Street is now 42. However, Brown (1886, Vol.I, 249)

also records that in 1613 the Bailies and council agreed to erect at the West Port in the High Street 'a hospital or almshouse' which would place this structure at approximately NS 480 639. The port apparently survived the building of this first hospital. It was a substantial structure, the burgh master of works in a council minute of 12th April 1611, is given authority to commandeer the services of 'all persons and inhabitants of the burgh...he requiring them to help lift timber or stones when necessity shall require for reparation of the tolbooth and west Port ...' (Brown, 1875, 40). In 1644 the West Port is mentioned as the point of confrontation between the bailies and government troops (Black, 1952, 113). At what date the West Port was removed is not certain, though Metcalfe (1909, 350) claimed that it was probably taken down in 1807, if not before, when the second hospital was removed, and the present Orr Square formed.

### The Town Plan

Until the erection of the village of Paisley into a burgh in 1488, the settlement appears to have been limited to the area immediately adjacent to the west bank of the River Cart. The physical advantages of the site have been discussed on page 22 , but full advantage was not taken of these until feuing began under the conditions of the charter issued by Abbot George Shaw in 1490. There is little information available to give an impression of the town before this time. However, the abbey Rental Roll begun by Abbot Crichton together with the chartulary, suggests that by the mid-fifteenth century, the town had expanded from Seedhill and over the River Cart. It seems that there was a settlement immediately south-west of the Abbey, before the granting of the burgh charter. The first feu of the fifteenth century on the west side of the Cart was apparently taken by a Dr. Gilchrist (Leech) in 1404. This property, on which he

seems to have had a house, ran from the Espedair Burn north to the early Abbey orchard, and from the junction of the present Gordon Street and Causeyside Street to the confluence of the Espedair with the Cart (Metcalf, 1909, 444). Further, a charter granted to John de Schelis in August 1432 in which Gilchrist obtained a piece of land belonging to the chaplain of the altar of our Lady on St. Mirin's Burn, implies that Thomas Redhead, Andrew Smith and John Cook were already established there. The widow of Gilchrist appears in the charter evidence as possessing a house 'next to Causeyside'. It can be established therefore, that this area was occupied and Causeyside Street existed some time before the erection of the burgh. Similarly, there is charter evidence to prove the existence of Nether Crossflat (or 'Corsflate') as early as 1460, and between the granting of the burgh charter of James IV in 1488, and the charter of Abbot Shaw which implemented the feuing in 1490, other streets are mentioned. A charter dated November 1489 indicates the existence of 'Mossgait' (Moss Street) and roughly contemporary with this mention, one Alan Sutherland is recorded as possessing a tenement in School Wynd. Stoney Brae, St. Mirin's Wynd, the High Street, Wellmeadow, Longait (Canal Street) and Dyers Wynd, were all well established by 1490, and Wattirside, Broomlands and the 'vennel opposite Wellmeadow' also achieve mention before this date (Metcalf, 1909, 96). It has been established therefore, that the main thoroughfares of the town pre-date the foundation of the burgh. In 1490, the charter of Abbot George Shaw functioned mainly to define the bounds of the burgh, and to implement further feuing. Black (1952, 65) quite rightly points out that the boundary of the burgh lands as described in the original document is now difficult to trace, as the great majority of ditches, hedges and houses used as reference points have since disappeared. However, Black (op.cit). speculates on the most probable course, starting at the confluence of the Espedair Burn and the River White Cart, following the Burn to the foot of South Campbell Street and turning north through Castlehead to Wellmeadow. From Wellmeadow, the boundary appears to have followed the line of Well Street and Underwood Road to the foot of Stoney Brae turning north and east here to enclose Sneddon, and then south along the Cart to the Espedair Burn. The whole of the burgh therefore, with the exception of Seedhill, lay on the west bank of the River Cart. The burgh records, extant from 1594 (Mackie, 1835, 133) confirm that in medieval times, the town ports (see page 23) defined the extent of the built-up area, and the position of the five ports of Paisley so far as they can be determined, suggest that although the burgh lands were extensive, the

built-up area was not. The western limit of the town for example, was at the present Orr Square (NS 480 639), and Causeyside was at that time a separate village outwith the town ports. This position was reversed only with the eighteenth century industrial expansion of Paisley, and an improvement in socio-political conditions which made the ports obsolete.

In 1490, Abbot Shaw let 56 feus on the west side of the River Cart, and before 1520, approximately 62 more followed (Metcalf, 1909, 444). In the Poll Tax Roll of 1695, the town is recorded as having only four hundred and sixty houses. Between 1488 and 1560, the population of the burgh had risen by at least 200 (McCarthy, 1969, 41). The burgages at this period varied in size with smaller acreages concentrated around the market cross, St. Mirin's Wynd and Causeyside, in the areas of pre-burgh settlement. But the property divisions established between Oakshaws and the High Street, which had enclosed substantial areas at the first feuing, diminished in size subsequently as the demand for houses, shops and property within the ports grew, and the original burgages were sub-divided to meet this need. The size and shape of these sub-divided burgages depend largely on the ground plan of the first house constructed on the street frontage, a wide frontage, for example, would leave only a narrow strip for disposal later. In the eighteenth century, the town saw considerable expansion outwith the medieval limits, this expansion is outlined briefly on page 4 ff. The medieval streets remain fossilised within the present plan, although in the nineteenth century, almost without exception they were widened and improved.

According to one George Robertson, Paisley in the early eighteenth century contained 'little territory beyond the extent of its own streets perhaps not more than a square mile in all, including the ground on which it stands' (McCarthy, 1969, 50). Shortly after this, the town expanded in all directions, beginning with the laying out of New Street in 1734. 'Aiket's yard' to the west of the High Street was purchased by the Town Council for this purpose, and New Street was laid out between High Street and Causeyside over St. Mirin's Burn (Kelso, 1922, 2). Aiket's yard was apparently not built on at this date, as the council records report a number of fruit trees, and ash and plane trees sold at auction preparatory to road building. New Street was extended in 1743, to form Orchard Street on the site of the Abbey orchard on land feued out by James Fulton (Semple, 1872, 92). In both cases, land was divided up and laid off for building almost immediately after the construction of the street, and this infilling of previously unbuilt burgh lands became a commonplace throughout



the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As well as expanding into the erstwhile backlands, the High Street frontages were advancing westwards outwith the old west port, and between 1760 and 1790, Castle Street, Storie Street, and Oakshaw had been laid out and feued, and several houses occupied the steadings (McCarthy, 1969, 54).

Gilmour Street was laid out from the new County Buildings to Dyer's Wynd in 1816, and was extended to the Cross, through the passage known as the 'Hole in the Wa', or 'Lillies Wynd' in 1845. This improvement necessitated the removal of some buildings (Craig, 1881, 101).

An extensive programme of street widening and improvement was carried out in the late nineteenth century. In 1864, the Town Council began to buy up old properties in St. Mirin's Wynd and Causeyside, and between 1871 and 1873, both areas were cleared of buildings and a new and spacious street opened up - St. Mirins Street. The level of the old St. Mirin's Wynd had been raised in the early eighteenth century, and considerable rebuilding had taken place here subsequent to the disastrous fire in 1733. Previously, (together with the High Street end of Causeyside Street), having a very steep gradient, the new street was re-orientated on the Cross, and levelled up. McCarthy claims that the old wynd lies some 14' (4.2m) below the level of the present street (McCarthy, 1969, 39). St. Mirin's Wynd now lies below the gardens of Dunn Square.

The widening of the Abbey Close, and the removal of the derelict property there began in 1861, but was not completely effected until 1928. Nine other streets in the town centre were widened in the course of the 1873-77 urban renewal programme, and by 1909, the High Street had been widened, Dunn Square and Johnston Street formed and Causeyside Street and Orchard Street widened and rebuilt. From the archaeological viewpoint, the street widening programme was valuable in that the building facades which fronted the narrow streets of the eighteenth century and earlier town, may have survived the nineteenth century building, and still lie below the present street. Encroachment upon the public thoroughfare was commonplace in the medieval and post-medieval period. In 1649, for example, feuars were still allowed to encroach upon the street upon payment of a yearly sum. On 29th February, 1649, John Love was permitted to build 'ane hanging foir stair with pallars under it upon the gavell (gable) of the tenement that was Th<sup>s</sup> Mylnes foirgainst the showe mercat at the cross...' (Brown, 1886, Vol. I, 240). The deposition of rubbish in the burgh streets was a serious problem until the early nineteenth century. Repeated legislation against

this proved ineffective, and the problem had reached such a level before the Reformation, that the Archbishop of St. Andrews was able to address a small crowd from the elevation provided by one of those 'foulzie' heaps, instead of erecting a platform (Kelso, 1922, 3). It is possible that this refuse, in spite of being periodically cleared by order of the council, succeeded in raising the level of the streets, particularly in the densely populated core of the old burgh, before the thoroughfares were surfaced. Paving was not begun in the burgh until 1603, in which year, cobble stones were laid around the market cross, followed by the surfacing of the High Street to Wellmeadow in 1606 and St. Mirin's Wynd, School Wynd and Moss Row by 1619 (Black, 1952, 103). Although some depth of midden material and frontages may survive in some parts of the town, in other parts, such as between the Cross and the bridge, the gradient of the street had been reduced by paring away the crown of the road, here to such an extent, that the foundations of the tolbooth built in 1757 were only 1'6" (0.46m) below the then ground surface (Craig, 1881, 138). In the mid-nineteenth century, drains were regularly laid through the burgh at some depth. About 1868, for example, a drain some 7' (2.1m) deep was excavated in the High Street. These early disturbances have been added to by the laying of services during this century to modern premises and any surviving deposits must be fragmentary. However, the observation of roadworks and repairs to services would be valuable in initially establishing the degree of survival of archaeological deposits beneath the present streets, and to confirm variations in alignment and width.

### Early Buildings and Materials

Few buildings of the medieval period, with the exception of fragments of the much restored Abbey, survive in Paisley. Although the Abbey chartulary was entered until 1548, and records many property transactions, there are, however, few entries relevant to the structural components and plan of the early town buildings. The Town Council minutes were, with few exceptions, entered from 1594, and probably though now lost, existed from 1507 (Mackie, 1835, 133; Metcalfe, 1909, 177). These Town Minutes are rather more forthcoming regarding the structural elements of late sixteenth-century buildings. Many were of wood, with some of the more wealthy buildings in stone- (either hewn or unhewn) and clay. Practically all were roofed with straw or heather, the ridges secured with earth turves (rigging turves). These turves, for repairing old houses and for new constructions, were at a premium, and the council

repeatedly passed legislation relating to the cutting of them on the town lands (Brown, 1886, Vol.I, 170). Slates were at this time scarce, and restricted largely for the use of the wealthier inhabitants and public buildings. The kind of building does not appear to have altered substantially between the late sixteenth and the early eighteenth century. In 1733, the Council Minutes record legislation passed to avert the future possibility of fire as disastrous as that which had destroyed St. Mirin's Wynd on 2nd June 1733. The Minutes describe many of the burgh houses as thatched with straw or heather, and some built with timber fronts. The Council ordered that from that time forward 'no person build houses fronting to the street in time coming,...but such as shall be built of stone walls both back and, fore, covered on the roof with slate, tile, lead or stone...' (Metcalfe, 1909, 349). These regulations were not, however, rigorously enforced, and down to the mid-nineteenth century, some of the houses in St.Mirin's Wynd were straw thatched. Serious fires in the burgh bring other features of construction to notice. After a disaster in 1729, when one hundred and thirty families in Causey-side were made homeless, legislation was passed to compel all house owners 'whose lum (chimney) heads are equal with the rigging, to raise them two feet' (Black, 1952, 141).

Details understandably survive of the better built houses in the burgh. The chaplains and officials of the Abbey had dwellings in the town. The Abbey Chartulary contains a manuscript charter of John Stewart dated January 26, 1505, which states that the Abbey Chamberlain, Sir John Mouss, possessed a house at the north-east corner of St. Mirin's Wynd (Metcalfe, 1909, 156) (NS 4836 6400 ). Semple (1872, 49) claims that this building was built by the Chamberlain in 1471. On the west side of Saint Mirin's Wynd stood the Lady House (NS 483 639). In 1432, this building was granted by charter to John de Schelis by Abbot John Lithgow. At that time, the chaplain of the Lady Altar was Sir John Wann, who subsequently transferred this chaplainry to a site in High Street (Brown, 1886, Vol.I, 151). Brown claims that this new site corresponded to numbers 14, 15 and 16 High Street (now 17,19 and 21 High Street) His identification may be partially based on the presence of an indistinct sculptured figure on the back wall of 14, High Street in the late nineteenth century. This house was erected in 1745, but as Semple (1872, 43) speculates, the stone was probably incorporated in the later fabric from an earlier building on the site. The numbering of High Street has changed since the late nineteenth century, and the site is not now immediately identifiable. This later tenement of the Lady Altar is

recorded as lying on the south side of the High Street, 'Hes of propertie lyand thereto ane tenement of land lyand on the south side of the hie street that anis was heritabillie umqll Sir Robert Wanis he beand Lady Priest foundit it and doted it to our Lady Altar for evir, as ane instrument in Mr. Walter Steuards prothogall buik beeris dated 8 August 1511 dow devydit into three tenements...' (Brown, 1886, Vol.I, 151). The date of the transfer of the Lady House is not certain, but it probably took place about 1490, as the tenement on the east side of the house was feued in June 1490, and is described as bounded by the tenement formerly of Sir John Wann on the west. Further feuing in 1511 of this adjacent tenement confirms the earlier association with Sir John Wann.

Another early tenement of which it is tentatively possible to identify the site and function, is that known as the 'unhouss', which was feued by Abbot George Shaw to Andrew Payntor, a Paisley burgess, in 1490. In the description of the property in this feu charter, it is stated that the tenement was formerly the 'Unhouss'. Semple (1872, 106) claims that on the name evidence the building was formerly the bakehouse of the Abbey or the village, which was superseded on the erection of the Abbey Refectory by Abbot Shaw in 1484. The site of this building is placed at NS 4835 6398 and it was most probably destroyed in the fire of 1733.

The building known as the 'Paisley Tak' (NS 4834 6400), stood at the corner of High Street and St.Mirin's Wynd, and was feued by Abbot Shaw on the 21st April 1500 to what appears to be another lay servant of the Abbey, Richard Brighton, referred to as 'our beloved buckler' (Brown, 1886, vol.I, 149). Brown (op.cit), suggests that the property acquired its name through some connection with the collection of the burgh customs and taxes.

Slightly more information is available regarding public buildings in Paisley. By the end of the seventeenth century, there were at least two permanent markets. Until 1635, the meal market was held at the Cross, but in that year owing to 'the throng and straitness' of the street' it was removed to the High Street close to the present junction with New Street (NS 4813 6397) on the east side of the old west port. A mural tablet from the front of the building said to be dated [1665] was removed at the time of demolition and donated to the Museum. The Flesh market originally consisted of Fleshers stalls at the Cross. In May 1655, these were ordered to be removed, and a shed to be built for the accommodation of the fleshers 'where the Lister tree stands'. By October, 1670, the

Town Council Minutes show that the flesh market had been established 'at the north end of the Meeting House'. In the eighteenth century (Brown,, 1886, Vol.II, 61), the council purchased a steading in Moss Row an adjoining tenement there, and a steading in Dyer's Wynd, and in 1764, produced a plan for a new flesh market and shambles fronting Moss Street. According to Semple (1872, 151) the market occupied the site of 5, Moss Street. He goes on to say, that the 72' (21.9m) stone frontage stood opposite the nineteenth century exchange buildings, to which site the flesh market was moved in 1767.

In 1491, Abbot Shaw presented to the new burgh of barony, 'our house commonly called the Heyt House, with, vaults, booths and other pertinents as well under as above, to be henceforth in all time coming a common tolbooth' (Metcalf, 1909, 315). This early tolbooth was two storeys in height and stood at the south-west corner of Moss Street (NS 4829 6402. Additions of a common hall and steeple were made at an unknown date, the steeple first appearing in the records in 1603. This building stood until 1609, when it was declared ruinous, and the scale of six roods of town land provided the resources for reconstruction. There is little information relating to this structure, though John Slezer's Illustration (Slezer, 1693) of Paisley in the late seventeenth century details an impressive tower and spire, and in 1756, rebuilding was again necessary. This mid-eighteenth century building underwent various stages of re-modelling over the next century, but in 1821, the tolbooth was demolished, and in 1870, the steeple was removed having become unsafe, the foundations undermined by the excavation of a sewer in the adjacent High Street, and the repeated lowering of the ground surface of this street in order to reduce the gradient. The site was rebuilt in the nineteenth century, and there is now no trace of the erstwhile tolbooth.

All the buildings discussed above have now been destroyed and no trace survives above ground level. They represent only a small percentage of the early burgh buildings. Later development has almost undoubtedly led to serious disturbance of any surviving subterranean structural remains. The burgh lies on a south facing slope, and the majority of the present buildings are extensively terraced into this slope, many also have extensive cellars and basements. The street widening programme of the late nineteenth century, may mean that pre-nineteenth century frontages survive beneath the present road surface in many cases, but, such an assumption must be qualified by the fact that the High Street particularly was repeatedly lowered at NS 483 640 to make the gradient more acceptable



to traffic, and considerable deposits may have been lost here. Conversely, in the case of St. Mirin Street, the remains of early buildings may survive but beneath a considerable depth of overburden.

The building of the Priory and the continual improvement of the later Abbey meant that Paisley was a centre for craftsmen from an early date. Stonemasons were certainly a feature of the townscape in the fifteenth century, the Lord Chamberlains' accounts for 1490 record 'srink silver donated to the masons'. Further, a note in the Abbey Rent Roll refers to a lease granted at Crossflat to Thomas Hector, stonemason, in return for services, and indeed, in the nineteenth century, a total of fifty two mason's marks were recorded on the Abbey structure. Doubtless the crafts of wood and metalworking were also associated with the early burgh, primarily for the service of the Abbey. The dissolution of the Abbey in the sixteenth century, led to an expansion of town industry as markets were sought further afield. The plentiful water supply encouraged the development of the textile industry and its ancillary trades, and in the Poll Tax Roll for Renfrewshire in 1695, the weavers of Paisley outnumbered all other tradesmen. By this date, however, shoemaking was also a dominant industry, and old St. Mirin's Wynd was the location of many of the practioners of this art. The Pittance rental for example, records two houses in St. Mirin's Wynd acquired by William Greenlees, 'cordoner' in the late seventeenth century. At a later date, (1770), William Campbell, shoemaker, acquired property adjacent to that of Greenlees. Semple (1872, 49) claims that those leather workers carried out their own tanning, though it is known that a tannery existed at Seedhills from the seventeenth century. Few of the industries mentioned in the Poll Tax Roll are likely to survive in the archaeological record. Physical traces are most likely from the leather working industry, with tanning pits cut into the then ground surface. Weaving may leave limited traces, 'treddle holes' excavated by weavers in the vicinity of Castle Street led to the discovery of a number of human bones probably related to St. Roque's graveyard (see page 39 ) (Howell, 1929, 31), but unless exceptionally wet soil conditions prevail, it is unlikely that any products with an organic base will survive in the archaeological record, and interpretation of pre-eighteenth century industry in Paisley must be based on documentary research and any surviving structural remains of the manufacturing process.

Future work must therefore be directed towards determining the plan, nature of construction materials and relationships of town buildings to

both each other and the early street frontages. Investigation of the associated burgages, though the archaeological deposits must now be considerably disturbed by eighteenth and nineteenth century infill development, may provide information regarding early industry in the burgh.

### The Abbey

The history of the Priory, and after 1245, the Abbey of Paisley, has been outlined on page 6 , above. The Abbey was founded approximately in 1163, and the future occupants appear to have inhabited the church of Saints Mary and James on the King's Inch at Renfrew from about 1169 until such time as the new Priory buildings were sufficiently habitable for their reception. A charter executed not later than 1172, and granted by the founder of the Priory, Walter FitzAlan, refers to the church of Saints James Mirin and Milburga of Paisley, of the monks serving God there, of their dormitory, and of the land on which they formerly dwelt at Renfrew. The charter infers that at the time the charter was executed, the monks had already taken possession of Paisley Priory. There is no evidence as to the nature of the church and dormitory or the state of completion when the house was entered by the monks. Metcalfe (1909, 11) comments that the fact that the dormitory was apparently in existence in 1172, implies that some of the day rooms and offices were completed, and possibly, part of the church for worship. Charter evidence also suggests that the chapter house was in use by 1177, when Margaret, daughter of Walter FitzAlan, was buried there.

The original fabric of the Priory remains only in some fragments of twelfth-century masonry detectable in the present structure. The Abbey was subjected to repeated improvement and rebuilding programmes, initially caused, according to the Scotichronicon, by the destruction in 1307 by the English, but before this date, documentary records suggest that building was on-going. In 1250, Dovenald de Gilchrist, Lord of Tarbert gave the brothers full liberty to cut timber in any of his forests for the building or repair of their house. Similarly, in 1294, James, the fifth Steward, confirmed to the brothers by charter, the gifts of his ancestors, and gave to them the right to quarry stones for building and limestone for burning at Blackhall and elsewhere throughout the barony of Renfrew (Metcalfe, 1909, 34 and 40). This reference provides some clue as to the source of building materials. Building work appears to have resumed in the fourteenth century, following the disaster of 1307, and it has been suggested (Metcalfe, 1909, 48) that the damage must have

been extensive, as the bulk of the surviving masonry pre-dating the Reformation is of fourteenth century and fifteenth century date. Metcalfe (1909, 74) suggests that the restoration of the Abbey commenced after the treaty of Northampton in 1328, was suspended during the second war of Independence, and was not seriously undertaken until after the accession of the Stuarts. Abbots Thomas Tervas and Crichton were responsible for much of the fifteenth century work. Tervas not only rebuilt the triforium and clerestory, but also roofed the church 'theekit' with slates, and 'riggit' it with stones. Tervas was also responsible for building a 'staitlie yet houss' to control access to the Abbey (Metcalfe, 1909, 84).

In the late fifteenth century, Abbot George Shaw made further additions to the Abbey buildings. The Lord Treasurer's accounts in 1491 make references to ongoing building operations, and Abbot Shaw appears to have been responsible for reconstructing a refectory amongst other conventual buildings, erecting a tower over the gateway erected by Abbot Tervas, and enclosing the abbey together with its gardens and deer park, with an impressive wall (O.S.A. 1792, vol.VII, 79).

The Abbey was suppressed in 1559, and in the following year, according to Knox who provides the only surviving written evidence, was sacked by the Earl of Glencairn. The degree of damage suffered by the building is not clear, but it fell into decay, the process of neglect only being arrested in 1788 by the first of a number of restorations.

The church, as the largest component of the Abbey complex, survived the depredations of the succeeding centuries rather more successfully than the other conventual buildings. The 'Place of Paisley' (NS 4854 6391) was built in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century by Claud Hamilton on the site of the Abbey Chapter House, refectory and cloister. The 'Place' was further added to the south in 1675 and the structure may incorporate some of the monastic walls. The cloister colonade was partially restored in the nineteenth century. Lees (1878, 215) claims that the Abbot's house probably stood at the south end of Cotton Street, and that other buildings associated with the Abbey lay between the Abbey church and the White Cart water. This claim is supported by the reputed discovery of foundations in this general area which are attributed, though not proven, of monastic origin.

In 1485, Abbot George Shaw laid off a new garden round the Abbey, and enclosed it with an ashlar wall. Allan Stewart, a town bailie had obtained a charter on 16th May 1490, from Abbot Shaw, giving him rights

to 'the orchard or great garden' previously appended to the Abbey and which lay in the vicinity of Causeyside and Gordon's Lane (Semple 1872, 73). The new wall was approximately a mile in circumference, and is thought to have run from the north transept of the Abbey along Lawn Street east along Incle Street and then south to Seedhill and the river, and west along the river to a point approximately 100' (30.4m) west of the Abbey Bridge (see map 3). The wall was lavishly ornamented with statuary and heraldic plaques, and excited comment from historians and topographers until its destruction in the eighteenth century. Crawford writing in 1710 (Crawford and Semple, 1782, 61) refers to it as 'one of the most magnificent walls in Britain, all built with square stone upon both sides...'. In 1757, four acres of the Abbey gardens were offered for feu, and by 1760, parts of the Abbey wall had been demolished and sold as building material for the new town. In 1759, an entry in the burgh minutes refers to the statues from the wall sold to one John Robertson, who purchased 'old statues twenty-eight stone at 1s10d, per stone' (Metcalf, 1909, 366). The advertisement of feuing issued in 1757 offered 'excellent materials for building will be supplied from the houses and garden walls of Paisley, where there is a vast quantity of hewn stone...' (Craig, 1881, 67). The Abbey itself, was also quarried for building stone at this time, and in 1763, the main Abbey gateway built by Abbot Tervas was demolished. By 1781, the wall had been largely removed, although in 1909, Metcalfe claimed that a few fragments survived on the north and south sides of the east end of Abbey Bridge (NS 485 638) (Metcalf, 1909, 90).

The site of the Abbey has therefore been much disturbed in the centuries since the Reformation. The position of some of the monastic buildings is uncertain in relation to the Abbey church. In the nineteenth century, domestic building had encroached almost to the door of the Abbey, and disturbance of the sub-soil must have been considerable. Recent environmental improvement of the area, the improvement of Cotton Street and in the nineteenth century, the restoration of the Abbey with the accompanying disturbance of sub-floor levels must have further complicated the surviving stratigraphy. Any future proposed development on the east bank of the White Cart adjacent to the Abbey, could, however, be usefully preceded by exploratory excavation, initially to assess the depth of surviving archaeological deposits and also to locate surviving foundations of the monastic offices.

### The Chapel of St. Nicholas

The Chapel of St. Nicholas stood on the south side of School Wynd (NS 482 640) known in the sixteenth century as the 'Barnyard'. The date at which this chapel was endowed and constructed is not certain. In 1448, the charter of King James IV erecting Paisley into a burgh incorporates a list of feuars in which is mentioned property on the south side of the passage to Oxshaw leading from the Moss Row, described as 'St. Nicholas Chapel' (Brown, 1875, 36). This reference suggests that the chapel was well established by the late fifteenth century. There is, however, no available information as to the plan of the building, its association with a graveyard, or the street frontage. The chapel survived until between 1577, when a grammar school was founded by Royal Charter, and 1586, when the new grammar school building was opened on the site of the chapel. The structure of the chapel must have been removed in the intervening years. The endowments to the grammar school conferred by the charter of James VI in 1577 included the alterages of the Saints Mirin, Columba, Ninian and Nicholas amongst others. The alterage of St. Nicholas may have been associated with the chapel, though the majority of the others referred to were property revenues supporting altar chaplains in the abbey church. Brown (1875, 37) claimed in the late nineteenth century, that the chapel and later grammar school stood on the site of 4, School Wynd. Today, this number applies to a building on the north side of the Wynd (NS 4826 6408), and it seems likely that renumbering has taken place on this street since the late nineteenth century. In spite of the redevelopment of the site in 1586, and again in 1753, with an enlarged school building, no mention has been made in the available records of any traces of either the chapel or remains which might be expected to be associated with a churchyard. The junction of Moss Street and School Wynd as far west as St. John's Church has been widened and straightened since 1859 (O.S. 1859, 25", XII, 2), and it is possible that traces of the chapel frontage and the succeeding two grammar schools survive beneath the present roadway. The gradient of School Wynd rises sharply to the west, however, and nineteenth century illustrations of the second grammar school on the site suggest that its western extremity cut into this slope which may have been detrimental to earlier deposits.



### St. Roque's Chapel and Burial Ground

The chapel of St. Roque (St. Rock or St. Rollock as it is variously called in the Abbey Chartulary and Town Records) formed a part of the possessions of Paisley Abbey until the Reformation. The date of the erection and endowment of the chapel is uncertain, and it comes into historical prominence only at the dissolution of the mother house, when its revenues are given over to the support firstly, of the first Paisley Grammar School in 1576, and subsequently to endow the building of a hospital in the burgh in 1612.

The chapel, the associated graveyard and seven roods of land stood close to the junction of Wellmeadow Street and Castle Street (NS 4746 6389). The building stood until 1612 by which time it was ruinous, but the construction materials were sufficiently well preserved at that date to be given for the building of a hospital in the High Street. A Minute in the town records for 30th April 1612, records that 'It is appointed and ordained that St. Rollock's (sic. St. Roque) Kirk shall be taken down and the stones, timber and slates thereof employed and bestowed in the building of an hospital...' a further entry dated December 18th of the same year concerns payment to Patrick Semple and John Stobo... 'slaters for taking down of St. Rollock's Kirk, for preservation of timber, and slates thereof which were altogether ruinous and likely to fall down...' (Brown, 1875, 289). This entry provides some insight into the substantial structural nature of the building if not the plan, and the implied structural decay suggests that it had ceased to function as a religious house for some considerable time before 1612.

The associated graveyard and seven roods of land had been let for some time before the building was demolished. The Council Minutes show that on the 8th May 1595, Adam Lochhead and John Stewart paid duty on the lands of St. Roque's Chapel. From this time onwards, the Kirk and Kirk-yard lands were let every year by public roup (Brown, 1875, 29). The records of this letting process provide some information regarding the relationship between the chapel and its associated graveyard. The proceedings of the public roup for 13th April 1605, for example, indicate that the burial ground lay to the east of the Kirk. This would mean that the graveyard was situated to the west of the head of Castle Street based on the fact that it was in exactly this position in 1828 that workmen excavating a trench for the purpose of laying a water pipe from the canal to the distillery in Well Street, discovered a large number of human bones (Brown, 1875, 28).

After the clearance of the chapel in 1612, the grass of the graveyard was regularly sett, and it is possible that some building took place in the vicinity as early as 1646, when the then tenant complained to the council that the grass was 'injured' by reason of the visitation and bigging of buildings thereupon!. This building cannot have been very extensive as in the following year, the council advertised the chapel property and seven roods of arable land for sale by public roup. This sale was cancelled and the land was subsequently let for 'alternate pasture and tillage' until January 1653 when it was, as far as can be seen from the council records, roused and sett for the last time to a William Paterson, cordiner, for three years. After this date there is no mention of further letting, however, the ground appears to have been used as a market between 1658 and 1661 (Brown, 1875, 31).

Whether the site of the chapel and kirkyard ever came under the plough is not certain. The fact that the tenant of 1646 complained about the state of his grass suggests not, and the arable use may have been restricted to the seven roods of attached land. However, whether or not the chapel foundations, if indeed, any survived the demolition of 1612, were disturbed by the plough, later building work may have effectively destroyed any surviving traces. It may still be possible however, to trace the limits of the graveyard.

#### Dubious Chapel Foundations

There are at least two chapels which are mentioned by various authorities but which probably have no basis in fact. The supposed documentary or place name evidence for them has possibly been misinterpreted, as there is no structural or artifactual evidence to re-inforce the written tradition. The supposed chapels are assessed briefly below.

(a) Metcalfe (1909, 157) claims that a chapel of 'our Lady' gave its name to the Lady Burn flowing into the River Cart from the east (NS 486 637). The same authority speculates on the existence of another chapel of 'our Lady' which may have given its name to the district of Lady Lane (NS 477 638). The place name and other references could refer not to an independent chapel, but to lands, the revenue of which was used to support chaplains of chapels in the abbey. Indeed, the house of the priest serving an altar of 'Our Lady' in the Abbey, is known to have stood on the west side of St. Mirin's Wynd and subsequently on the High Street a charter dated 1432 between John de Schelis and Gilchrist makes reference to a piece of land belonging to the chaplain of the altar of Our Lady on St. Mirin's Burn.

(b) Similar confusion may have occurred regarding the supposed chapel of St. Mirin at Seedhill (see page 21 ). The chaplain of the altar of St. Mirin in the Abbey is said by some authorities to have possessed a house at Seedhill, indeed, the town council minutes for January 24, 1622, record an order by the bailies and council to 'roupit and sett' the 'chappellainers' house' here (Metcalf, 1909, 156). The present churchyard at the Abbey is said by several authors to date from the post-Reformation period. The monastic churchyard is said to have been situated at Seedhill and to have survived for some time after the Reformation. A reference of 1620, for example, mentions 'the laich house in the Seedhill with an auld graveyard attached thereto...' (Lees, 1878, 215). The founding charter of the Priory in the twelfth century provides indisputable evidence for a church at Seedhill. A clear distinction must be drawn however, between this now vanished building and the seventeenth-century references to structures which were most probably affiliated with the fifteenth-century chapel of St. Mirin in the Abbey. The churchyard referred to in the reference of 1620, could however, represent continued monastic use of early consecrated ground.

Ancient Seedhill now lies beneath an extensive nineteenth-century and later mill complex, and there is no prospect of examining the site.

### The Hospital

The hospital or almshouse of Paisley was a post-medieval foundation. In 1612, the Town Council decided upon the foundation. The Council Minutes for 30th April of that year ordered the demolition of the chapel of St. Roque to provide the necessary building materials for the project (see page 39 ) and also describes the proposed site'... in Thomas Ingle's yard head at the west end of the house inhabited by John Barbour...' This site has been identified at the north-east corner of what is now Orr Square (NS 4804 6400). The hospital was complete by 1618, and the foundation charter, dated September of that year, states that it was to be lived in by six poor old men of the burgh (Metcalf, 1909, 173).

In 1612, the Council had entered into an agreement for the demolition of the chapel of St. Roque (see page 39 ) and the transport of the materials to Thomas Yard Head, and in preparation for the building, 'lime be brought and brought home for the building thereof' (Brown, 1875, 289). There is no mention at this date of any supplementary materials being purchased, and it must be supposed that the fabric of the chapel was sufficient to construct a building able to accommodate the six gentlemen specified in the charter of 1618. The new hospital was said to be two storeys in

height, and possessed a small steeple. The land granted for the foundation also allowed an attached garden for flowers and herbs (Brown, 1886, Vol.I, 250).

This building stood until 1723, when the town council determined to demolish the hospital due to its ruinous condition, and build 'a more commodious structure on the site' (Metcalf, 1909, 175). In 1724, the hospital was demolished and a new almshouse constructed on the same site including a public hall and a steeple with a stair on the east side to give access to the hall on the first floor (Craig, 1881, 27). This building stood on the site until 1808 when it was demolished and the site redeveloped. A modern building now occupies the north-east corner of Orr Square.

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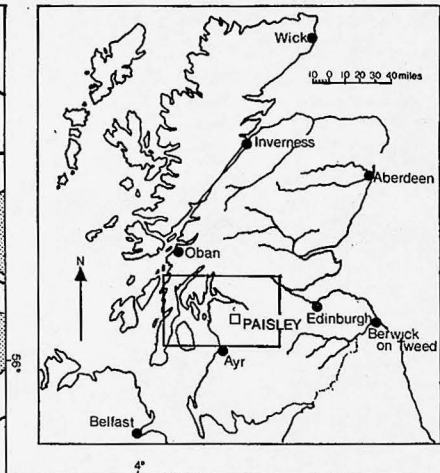
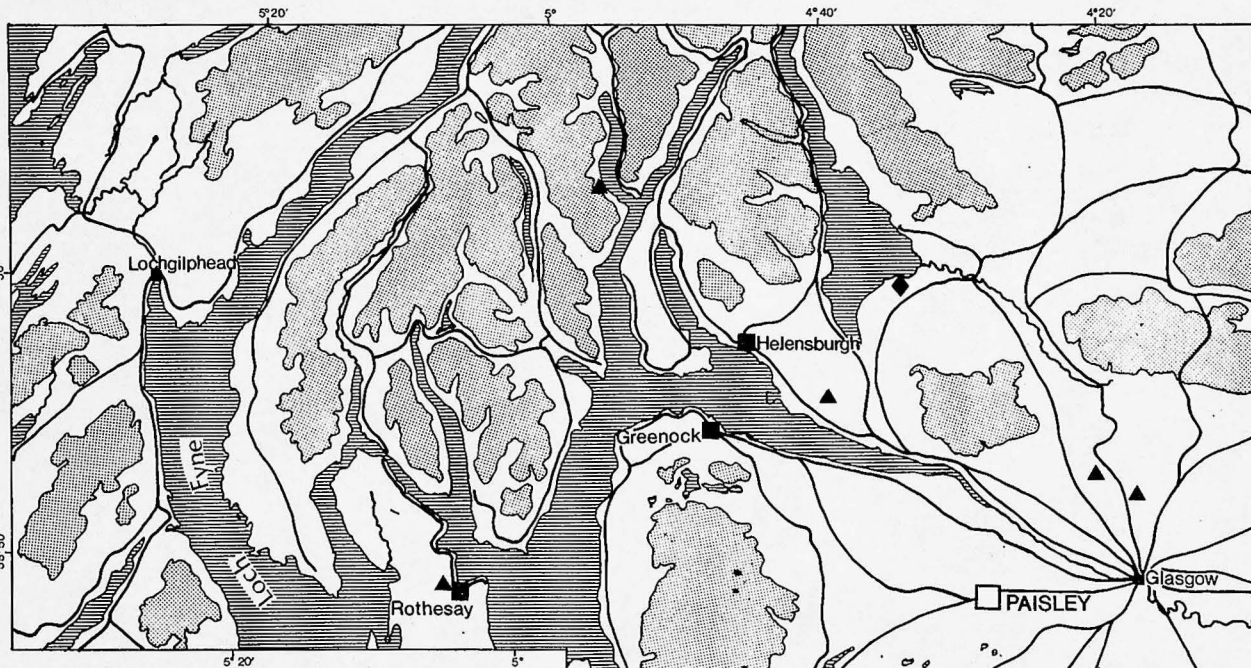


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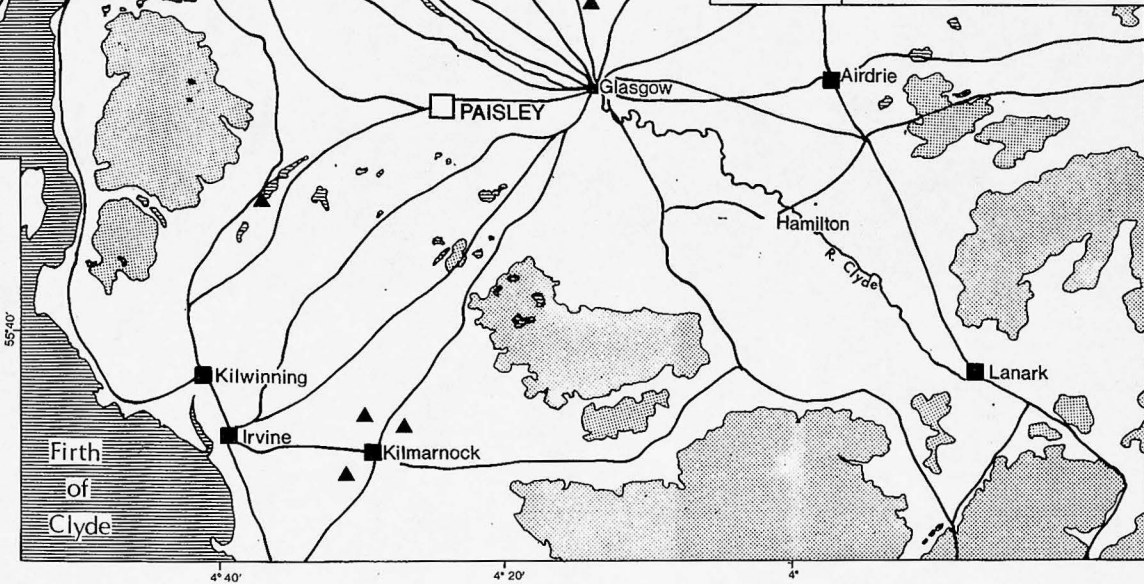
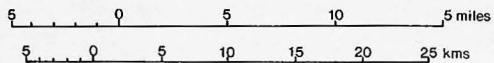
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### PAISLEY-REGIONAL SETTING

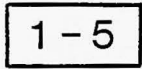
-  Primary routes
-  Land over 800 ft (244m)
-  Burghs
-  Ecclesiastical sites
-  Castles



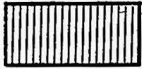
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# PAISLEY

# Map 2



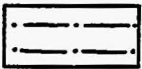
Areas of archaeological priority



Sites effectively re-developed



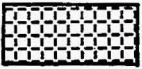
Sites proposed for re-development



New road



Demolished property



Car park



Property cut into sloping ground



Visible cellars and basements



Renovated property

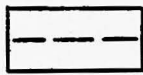


Derelict property

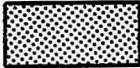


# PAISLEY

# Map 3



Boundary of Conservation Area



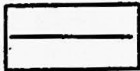
Listed buildings, all categories



19<sup>th</sup> century frontage line



Possible site of port



Possible line of Abbey wall



Paisley Abbey



Area of pre-16<sup>th</sup> century Abbey garden



Site of monastic mill



The 'place' of Paisley



Site of tolbooth



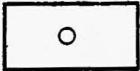
Well, 19<sup>th</sup> century or earlier



Site of 17<sup>th</sup> century hospital



Site of 17<sup>th</sup> century meal market



'Paisley Tak' (site of)



The 'Unhouss' (site of)

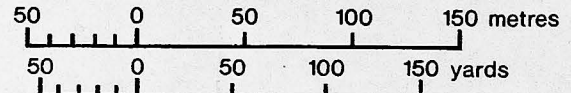


The 'Chamberlain's Houss' (site of)

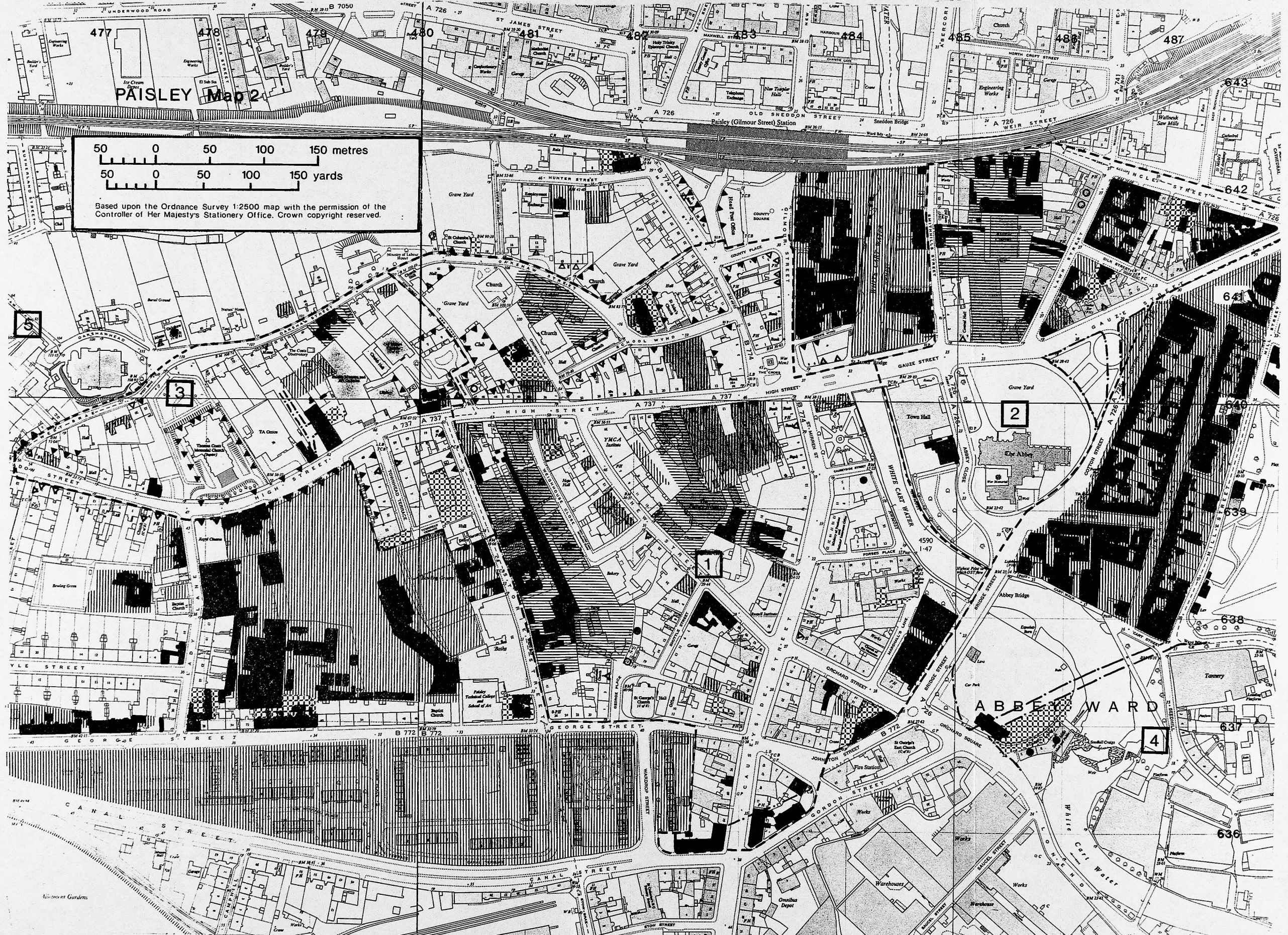


Archaeological find spot

# PAISLEY Map 2

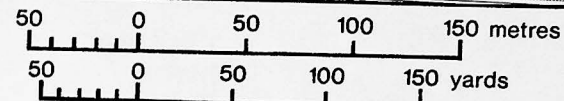


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# PAISLEY Map 3



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