

ST. HELIERTRAFFIC PLAN REPORT

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It is ten years since the Island Transportation Study resulted in the publication of a report proposing plans for the provision of a road system and parking facilities for St. Helier which would accommodate the increase of traffic attracted to the town by the mid 1980's, based on a population of 80,000 resident persons. That report resulted in the first ever in-committee debate in the States and it was followed by the appointment of an independent working party to consider vehicle restraint.

Published in October 1976, the report of the working party on vehicle restraint proposed measures under seven main headings, namely:-

- A. Restraint of ownership of Jersey registered vehicles by permit;
- B. Restraint proposals which would affect vehicles not of Jersey registration, persons who are non-resident, hire cars, coaches and ferries;
- C. Restraint proposals which were financial;
- D. Vehicle testing road worthiness;
- E. Restraint proposals relating to traffic and parking in St. Helier;
- F. Encouragement of the use of public transport;
- G. Restraint over travel to and from schools.

Following consideration of the working party's report, the Defence Committee presented its own report on restraint to the States and the Public Works Committee presented a report on highway improvements, traffic management measures and the provision of two further multi-storey car parks at the Gas Works site and Patriotic Street. Both reports were debated by the States on 10th May 1978, the States adopting in entirety the proposition of the Public Works Committee, as well as adopting a proposition of the Defence Committee which:-

- (1) Charged the Harbours and Airport Committee to seek agreement with the shipping companies who import non-'J' registered cars, either by RO/RO or by LO/LO (Lift On/Lift Off) operations, that there would be generally no increase in this traffic over and above that scheduled for 1978, and to report to the States thereon;
- (2) Confirmed the opinion of the Defence Committee that restriction on ownership of residents' vehicles was not desirable at the present time;

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(3) Charged the Defence Committee to prepare draft legislation with a view to:

- (a) Enabling conditions to be attached to hire car operators' licences with regard to the number of cars and the garaging thereof, also the recovery of fines; and
- (b) Requiring that the transfer of registration of a vehicle to Jersey registration from that of another country shall not be permitted unless that vehicle has satisfactorily undergone a road-worthiness test carried out in Jersey.

(4) Recommended the relevant Committees to consider:

NO - (a) Instituting an annual mechanical test for all vehicles over five years old;

*YES: BIG CARS
KE MORE ROOM +
WASTE ENERGY.
ENCOURAGE SMALL
CARS BY TAX
INCENTIVE.* (b) Restraint by artificial pricing on the purchase and/or registration of private cars according to size and/or the cost of petrol;

(c) The imposition of restrictions on the operation of commercial vehicles;

(d) The practicability of methods of reducing traffic congestion caused by school and commuter journeys;

(e) The need for additional off-street parking to provide facilities for:

1. commuters - on the periphery of the town;
2. shoppers within the town areas; and
3. visiting commercial vehicles in the vicinity of the harbour;

(f) Improvements to the existing public transport service;

(g) Extending the licensing of Coach Operators to cover all operations in addition to the existing control on numbers and garaging;

(h) The licensing of local commercial vehicle operators with the ability to impose conditions with regard to numbers, size, road-worthiness, parking, garaging and operation thereof.

It is worth emphasising that the States rejected what might be termed the more severe restraint proposals, which included such measures as restraint on the ownership of vehicles and severe restriction of parking for commuter traffic to only one multi-storey car park, namely Pier Road.

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In 1979 the traffic working party was reconstituted under the chairmanship of the President of the Public Works Committee, and it was decided that further investigation was required into the potential for traffic restraint. The working party set its terms of reference to gather information and formulate a policy in respect of traffic restraint on the use of vehicles rather than any restraint on ownership, and in March 1981 the Department of Public Building and Works published a document entitled "Traffic in Jersey - The Options for Restraint". This report has been circulated to all States' Members and widely amongst all parties having an interest in traffic in Jersey. The traffic working party and the Public Works Committee have received observations on the report and taken note of these in their deliberations.

All the forecasts over the past decade have indicated that the major problems in Jersey lie within the town of St. Helier. Forecasts of traffic growth are being realised and there can be little doubt that if the population of the Island reaches 80,000 and the Island enjoys future economic prosperity, then traffic congestion in St. Helier can become an acute problem. Whilst a major road building programme matched to meet traffic demands of the future may be unacceptable, equally will be many restraint proposals as contained in the Traffic Restraint Working Party Report of 1976. Indeed the States have expressed their views on those restraint proposals as already indicated in this report. However, it is clear that a 'do nothing' policy which must result in the road system becoming increasingly saturated as traffic levels rise would not be a prudent course to follow. Relying on the population to resolve the problem of severe traffic congestion in an individual manner will prove costly indeed for the business and commercial life of St. Helier. A balanced traffic policy is therefore essential, which should be pursued over the course of the next five years.

In this report the Committee proposes certain traffic restraint and management measures that it considers practical to implement, which together with some road improvement will help to contain the congestion problems the Island faces in the coming years. The Committee also identifies more penal restraint measures which may in the long term become necessary.

APPROACH TO TRAFFIC IN THE 1980's

GENERAL

It has to be recognised that where traffic is in danger of stifling a community, preventative measures will be required. The Committee is determined that the movement of people and goods must be protected and that growth in these areas must be accommodated by carefully considering the balance between:-

- (a) The need to protect the environment and character of St. Helier;

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- (b) The continued economic prosperity of St. Helier;
- (c) Individual freedom in the choice of making journeys;
- (d) The practicability of any restraint controls.

The Committee is satisfied that restraint controls on traffic will not be totally fair and equitable for all sections of the community and that severe restraint measures can only therefore be considered acceptable if combined with more traditional policies that will together maintain the satisfactory movement of people and goods. These other measures refer to road improvement and traffic management, which should be implemented until there is an unacceptable problem of environmental damage threatened. In this way the individual freedom to choose the mode of travel for making journeys will be maintained to the maximum possible extent.

The Committee has re-looked at all the measures previously considered relating to restraint, together with all the proposals contained in the 'Options for Restraint' document. Clearly not all are complementary and therefore a choice has to be made to present a package of ideas for dealing with the potential growth of traffic over the next decade, by which time the projected 80,000 resident population may well be reached.

The traffic problems of St. Helier fall into two distinct types and largely affect different areas of the town. The first type relates to the morning and evening peak hour travel by the resident population, being journeys to and from work and school. Here the severest problems relate to the congestion on radial routes leading to the town and in particular the Ring Road* circulating the periphery of the main town area. The second results from the excess of traffic in the central area of town throughout the business day, which presently occurs intermittently between about 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. As traffic levels in the town increase, both the Ring Road and the central area will be subjected to the severest traffic congestion. The two problems, however, can be considered separately and for the purpose of this report are dealt with in this manner.

PEAK HOUR TRAVEL

The Ring Road is vital for the traffic movement to and from the town area. With traffic volumes still rising, it is important to improve the carrying capacity of the Ring Road to whatever degree can be attained. In particular the capacity of junctions situated around the Ring Road which accommodate the interchange of traffic need to be improved wherever possible, because it is at these locations that initial congestion is formed.

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Footnote

*The Ring Road is normally considered as being Rouge Bouillon on the west and north of town and roads linking to the Esplanade, St. Saviour's Road and roads linking to La Route du Fort, and La Route du Fort/Tunnel/Esplanade.

NOTHING IN THIS REPORT TO DISCOURAGE USE OF PRIVATE CAR & TO ENCOURAGE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT MODS.

The Ring Road is subjected to severe pressures during the morning and evening peak traffic periods. The Committee believes that the Ring Road traffic must be controlled more effectively and proposes peak hour clearways preventing vehicles from stopping at the busiest times of the day. In addition it also proposes to restrict right turn movements off the Ring Road, a movement which is often the cause of delay to traffic. The junctions under consideration for this type of restriction include Great Union Road, La Pouquelaye, Robin Hood, Stopford Road, Wellington Road and Belmont Road.

To improve the capacity of a road system, including its intersections, does not in all cases require road surgery. A good example where the Ring Road's capacity was substantially increased is the area where St. Saviour's Hill joins the Ring Road. The simple introduction of a gyratory road system substantially increased the road capacity of this area and eliminated traffic congestion problems previously experienced.

The Committee believes that this type of solution can be applied to other parts of the Ring Road. This was demonstrated by an experimental scheme involving West Park Avenue and Parade Road, which reduced traffic congestion but was not maintained as a permanent scheme for environmental reasons. However, the principle of a gyratory road scheme is recommended as the best means to improve access between the Ring Road and the east/west traffic route of Victoria Avenue /Esplanade. The scheme the Committee proposes involves St. Aubin's Road, Cheapside, Parade and Gloucester Street, all of which are main roads and which should, therefore, avoid the environmental problems associated with the earlier experimental scheme. The Committee's proposals for this area are illustrated in diagram 1.

Located at the north-west of the Ring Road is the intersection with Queen's Road, one of the main arteries to St. Helier from the north of the Island. This junction is close to the emergency service stations and congestion presently occurs on the Ring Road due to the inability of this junction to handle peak traffic flows. The Committee has considered widening Rouge Bouillon to provide an additional traffic lane in the north bound direction of the Ring Road. Such a proposal would increase the capacity of the junction by approximately 20% but requires the removal of trees bordering Gloucester Terrace.

There is no doubt that a roundabout or gyratory scheme is to be preferred at this location. A previous Public Works Committee proposed a gyratory road scheme and this was supported by the Ambulance Station Working Party in its report. However, the Committee does not accept that a school can be located inside a major gyratory scheme. The Committee had hoped that the Brighton Road School would not be re-developed as a primary school and would have preferred the original Education Committee proposal to develop a new school on the Balmain site. The Committee has modified its view in the light of a primary school remaining in the Brighton Road buildings and now puts forward a roundabout junction for consideration by the States. The proposal illustrated in diagram 2 requires the purchase of some property (also recommended in the Ambulance Working Party report) and modification to the primary school's playground area.

The Ring Road junction of Rouge Bouillon and Midvale Road has sufficient capacity for future requirements, but this will not be the case with the junction on the north of the Ring Road at the Robin Hood. A number of alternative plans for improving the junction have been considered and the Committee proposes the improvement detailed on diagram 3.

In the north-east the Committee is satisfied that the circulatory roads which link St. Saviour's Hill with the Ring Road can accommodate the present and future traffic loads.

On the eastern side of the Ring Road the junction with Wellington Road, whilst satisfactory for much of the day, is significantly overloaded at school times. The Committee's plans for reducing school traffic (considered later in this report) will, if effective, reduce some of the problems at this junction. However, the Committee believes that road improvement is necessary and after considering a number of possible options, proposes an improvement as illustrated in diagram 4. The Committee also recognises that a peak hour ban on the right turn off the Ring Road into Wellington Road may also be necessary.

The States have already approved an improvement line for Clarence Road and Pleasant Street. When this widening is completed, the Committee proposes to introduce a road management scheme as illustrated in diagram 5. As with the rest of the Ring Road, the proposals for a peak hour clearway would apply in this area and the peak hour restriction on right turns may be extended to the junction with Belmont Road.

In the south-eastern area of St. Helier it may be necessary, in the longer term, to increase the capacity of the junction at Georgetown. In the immediate future, the Committee plans to improve the visibility for traffic leaving Don Road and entering La Route du Fort at this junction.

The full potential of the Tunnel beneath Fort Regent is presently not derived in the west bound direction, due to substantial volumes of non-stopping traffic selecting instead to travel through the town centre. This is clearly undesirable and the Committee intends to pursue the improvement of Green Street, which has the States' approval, and to then introduce a traffic management scheme as illustrated in diagram 6. The result will be a reduction of traffic in the central area of St. Helier and a more efficient use of the Tunnel route in the west bound direction.

The Esplanade, presently and in the future, will accommodate the highest volumes of traffic of any road in the Island. The configuration of roads in the Weighbridge area is equally the major road intersection in St. Helier. Plans for this area have been considered over a number of years and there is considerable conflict between a variety of interests, all competing for space and land between the harbours and the north side of the Esplanade. Land reclamation west of the Albert Quay, together with redevelopment of the Island Site, will create an opportunity to satisfy many of the competing demands for space. It is apparent that the various Committees with an interest in this area recognise the opportunity that will present itself in the coming years to make substantial improvements and road planning holds the key to the redevelopment of this area. Illustrated in diagram 7 is the outline layout that the Committee has presented to the Island Development Committee, which is responsible for the overall planning of the area.

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The proposals outlined for the Ring Road will, of course, provide benefit not only for peak hour traffic but also throughout the remainder of the day, so that as traffic levels rise and the central area comes under even greater pressure, some journeys can be attracted away from the town centre to the Ring Road.

CENTRAL BUSINESS AREA

Over the past ten years it has proved necessary to progressively restrict non-essential traffic from the centre of St. Helier. Pedestrian precincts in the town centre have improved the environment for pedestrians and also reduced the attraction to the area of through journeys and, as a result, the impact of congestion has been reduced. Survey work carried out in the summer of 1979, reported in detail in the 'Options for Restraint Report', clearly identified that if the central area of St. Helier is to survive as a successful trading area further measures will be necessary to prevent traffic strangling the area.

The threat of a traffic stranglehold on the central area occurs between about 10.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. The Committee proposes that the solution is to cordon off the central area during this time period and designate those categories of vehicles which may be permitted to enter the area.

Diagram 8 illustrates the proposed cordoned area and the access points which would need to be controlled. The advantage of the scheme is its flexibility, in that restrictions can be progressively applied so that as traffic levels rise over the coming years the central business area will be maintained to a level that will ensure that business can continue to thrive. Experience in operating such a cordon scheme will also be of considerable benefit and, therefore, there will be advantage to be gained by first introducing the scheme in a modest form. The concept of a cordon around the central business area of St. Helier holds the key to keeping the business life of the town healthy.

Some changes to the traffic flow pattern of the town centre are proposed. In addition some road improvements already programmed become even more essential if a cordon scheme is to be successful. The completion of Dumaresq Street widening, held in abeyance for some years, and the widening of Little Green Street are vital, as these roads will take traffic which presently passes through the proposed cordon area. The Committee also intends to pursue improvements involving Devonshire Place, Cannon Street and Lempriere Street, roads which form an important traffic route for vehicles which do have reason for entering the central part of St. Helier from the west of the Island.

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More effective control of road space in the central area of town is required to allow for the essential servicing of business premises. It is therefore the intention to introduce an unloading licence scheme in order to properly manage the unloading facilities provided on roads within the proposed cordon area. The Committee proposes to provide additional facilities for the unloading of vehicles and also to meet the requirements of the disabled by providing sufficient on-street parking spaces in the central area. This will mean the loss of general on-street parking, but on-street parking within the cordoned area needs to be strictly limited to prevent congestion presently resulting from 'hunting' for a parking space.

PROVISION FOR PARKING IN ST. HELIER

The Committee is convinced, and it believes the States support its view, that the provision of adequate parking facilities for St. Helier is a vital consideration. The proper control of parking facilities can substantially influence the level of traffic on the road network. The early deliberations suggested that a traffic restraint policy can be applied through the restriction of parking space. The Committee, however, believes that its policy, designed to maintain the volume of traffic at less than saturation level, is dependent on the provision of adequate parking facilities. Indeed the Committee's restraint measures detailed later rely partially on the concept of levelling out over a greater time span peak traffic movement, and as such are dependent on parking space being available.

Parking policy is now fairly well established. The Committee has approval to construct a new multi-storey car park in Patriotic Street and it is planned to have this in commission during 1984. The Committee also has the approval in principle from the States for the development of a multi-storey car park on the Gas Works site. These two facilities will provide approaching 1,400 additional parking spaces in the town area. Further plans involve the extension of Green Street multi-storey car park and the possible development of some parking facilities on the proposed land reclamation site west of the Albert Pier.

The Committee has also developed its policy in relation to the administration of car parks in St. Helier, the purpose of which has been to derive the means to share space between long term commuter parking and the short term requirement at the various public car parks. As a result the peak loading of traffic on to the road network can be distributed to advantage around differing areas of St. Helier.

When the additional off-street parking provision envisaged by the Committee is developed, some on-street parking facilities should be withdrawn to enable road space vacated to be taken over by circulating traffic. This is particularly important in the central area of St. Helier, i.e. the proposed cordoned zone. Ultimately it may become necessary to withdraw altogether the provision of the relatively small volume of on-street parking presently available in this area.

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RESTRAINT POLICIES

To supplement all the proposals outlined earlier in this report the Committee has considered the restraint proposals that were discussed in the States in May 1978, and the proposals contained in the 'Options for Restraint Report'.

The Committee is convinced that efforts to restrain the level of peak hour traffic should be tried. It also accepts that controls may need to become more stringent as the number of vehicles in the Island increases in future years. The Committee believes that the restraint options open to the population which has already attained a very high level of car ownership are limited, but is satisfied that the measures it proposes in its present plans will be compatible with the type of controls that might, in the long-term become necessary.

In its deliberations, the Committee has rejected certain restraint measures because it cannot support them on principle, whilst others have been rejected because they are not compatible with the particular plans the Committee is proposing.

Holiday Traffic

The Committee does not support at the present time, limiting the number of visitor cars brought to the Island because it is convinced that there would be a detrimental effect on one of the major industries. If restraint on holiday traffic ever has to be singled out for attention, then the Committee is convinced that such restraint should be dealt with locally on a time and movement basis. For the same reasons the Committee could not support any limit on the number of hire cars which presently service the tourism industry.

Financial restraints

Clearly, it would be possible to reduce the level of traffic on the Island's roads through financial restraints. The States have it within their control to impose levels of taxation on either vehicle purchase or on the fuel which is used, to effectively reduce the numbers of vehicles on the road network. The Committee has rejected this concept because it is fundamentally the wrong approach, in that it would not be a restraint equally felt by all sections of the community. In addition, the Committee can only support restraint on roads that are congested to saturation levels and at such times when the congestion prevails.

Restraint through parking policy

The Committee accepts that in some areas, and in particular large cities, restraint on traffic has successfully been achieved through

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restricting parking facilities, but as stated earlier in this report limiting the space available for parking will not be the solution in Jersey. It is not compatible with the Committee's plan which is to accept that the population should have the freedom to use private transport to the maximum possible extent. Only then should any necessary control be applied to maintain peak movements of traffic below saturation level.

restraint
by cost of
Parking
related to
number of
journeys to
shop - elimin-
ate non-essenti-
als trips to town.

Controlling peak hour traffic levels

To supplement the proposals assisting peak hour traffic movement, the Committee recommends an improved bus service for school children attending the main town schools. A survey of school journeys has indicated that there is potential to attract school trips away from the private car. It will, however, only be achieved if passenger transport takes the form of direct journeys to school from the outlying parish districts. It is also suggested that the starting time at schools in the town area be separated by a minimum of 30 minutes. Schools should be grouped so that Victoria College and Jersey College for Girls open together, with Hautlieu, De La Salle and Beaulieu starting at a time difference of 30 minutes.

A car sharing scheme was launched in the summer of 1979. The scheme was not successful, partly because time matching of similar journeys proved extremely difficult. However, the Committee believes that car sharing should continue to be encouraged, especially in regard to commuter trips because 60% of the Island's working population is located within the Ring Road, whilst a quarter is in the very central part of St. Helier.

The Committee is also of the opinion that peak traffic flows can be spread over a significantly longer time span, if a substantial proportion of business situated in St. Helier adopts flexible working hours for their employees.

The benefits to be derived from the above proposals include:-

- (a) A reduction in the number of school children travelling by car;
- (b) A split in time by 30 minutes of the remaining school children travelling by car;
- (c) The opportunity for increased car sharing by commuters working in St. Helier;
- (d) The opportunity for commuters to avoid school travel time.

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CONCLUSIONS

The Committee hopes that by improving the Ring Road in the limited fashion described in this report, together with the management proposals and the restraint measures outlined, traffic can continue to flow without intolerable congestion. If the worst fears of the traffic planners come to fruition, further, more stringent, restraint measures would appear unavoidable. Inevitably the peak hour traffic flows will be affected and the Committee has had to recognise that it may be faced at some future date with the need to present a proposition to the States to restrict at the peak travel times the number of vehicles which can be permitted into St. Helier. This is a step the Committee will be reluctant to take, even though the concept is not unique, in that a restriction on the freedom of movement of private cars already applies in some areas of the world.

In addition to the proposals contained in this report, the Committee intends to study the benefits that modern technology can provide for traffic control in a town such as St. Helier. The Committee has been advised by its Engineers that computer control of traffic may now offer benefits which can justify the investment. Technology in this area has substantially advanced in recent years, considerably reducing the capital investment required. The Committee hopes to reach a conclusion on this matter during the next year, when it will present a report to the States on the prospect for computer control of traffic for St. Helier. The Committee is satisfied that the introduction of computer control to assist traffic movement will be complementary to the proposals contained in this present report.

5th July 1982

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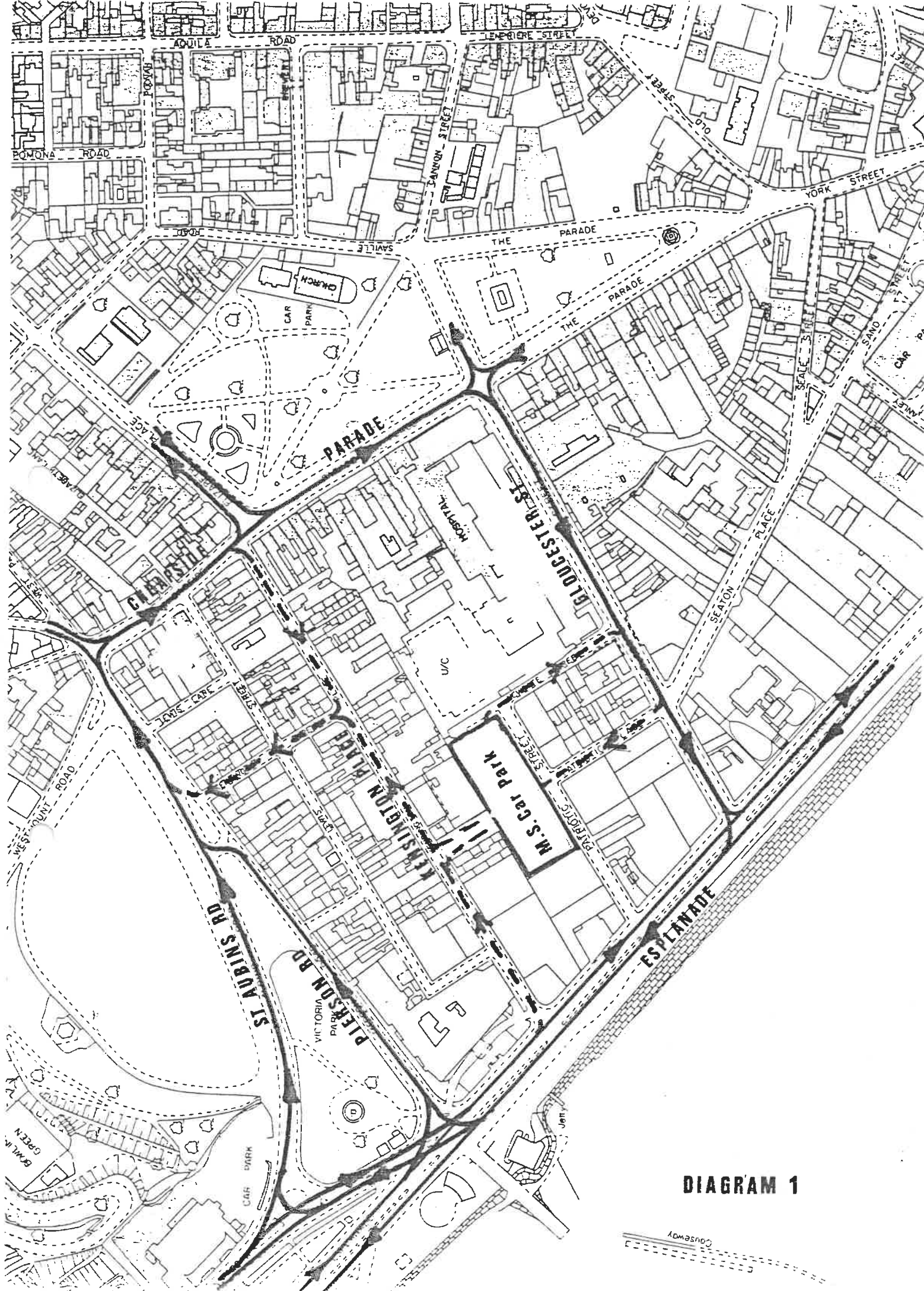
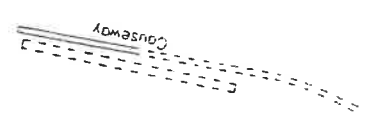
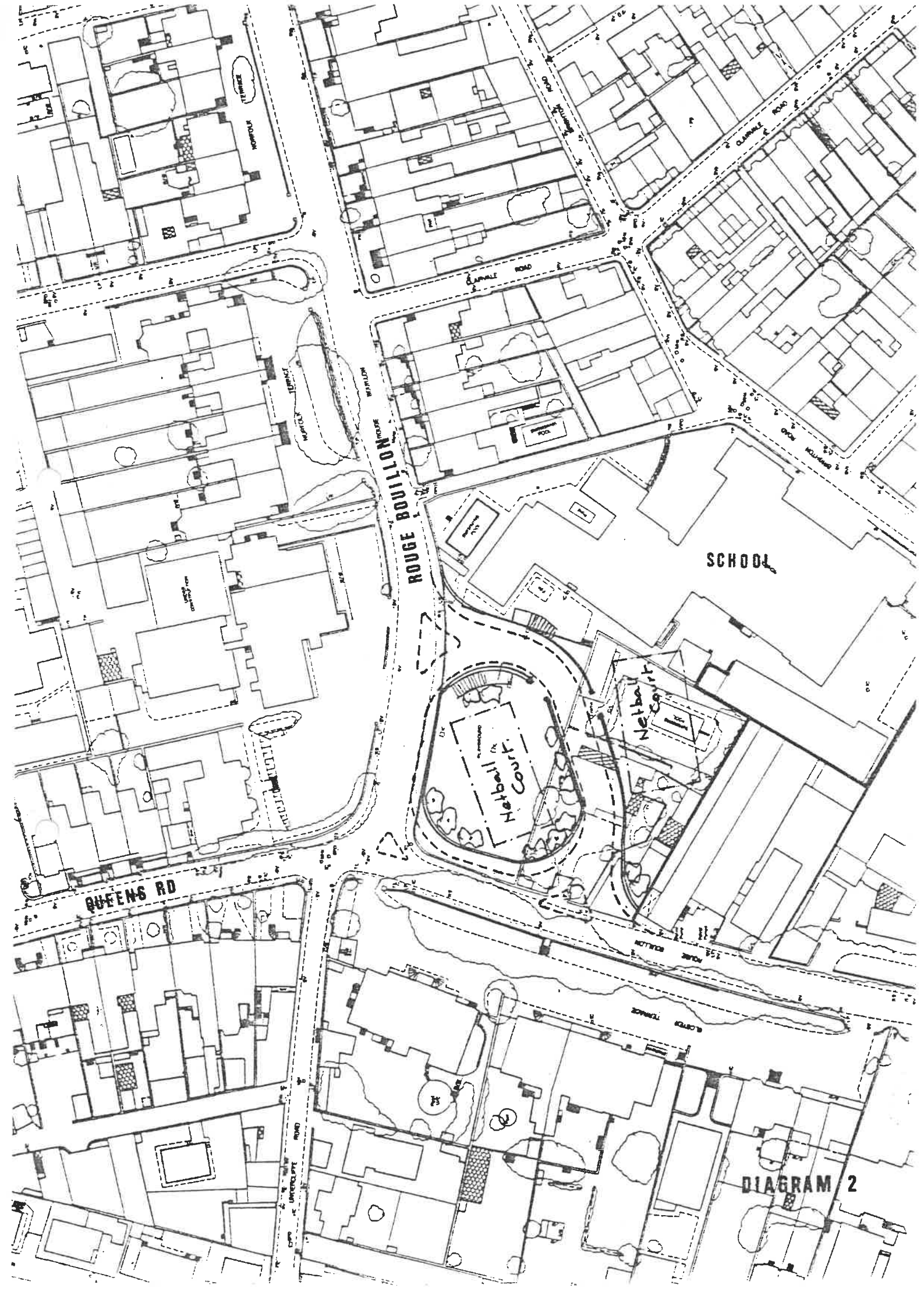


DIAGRAM 1





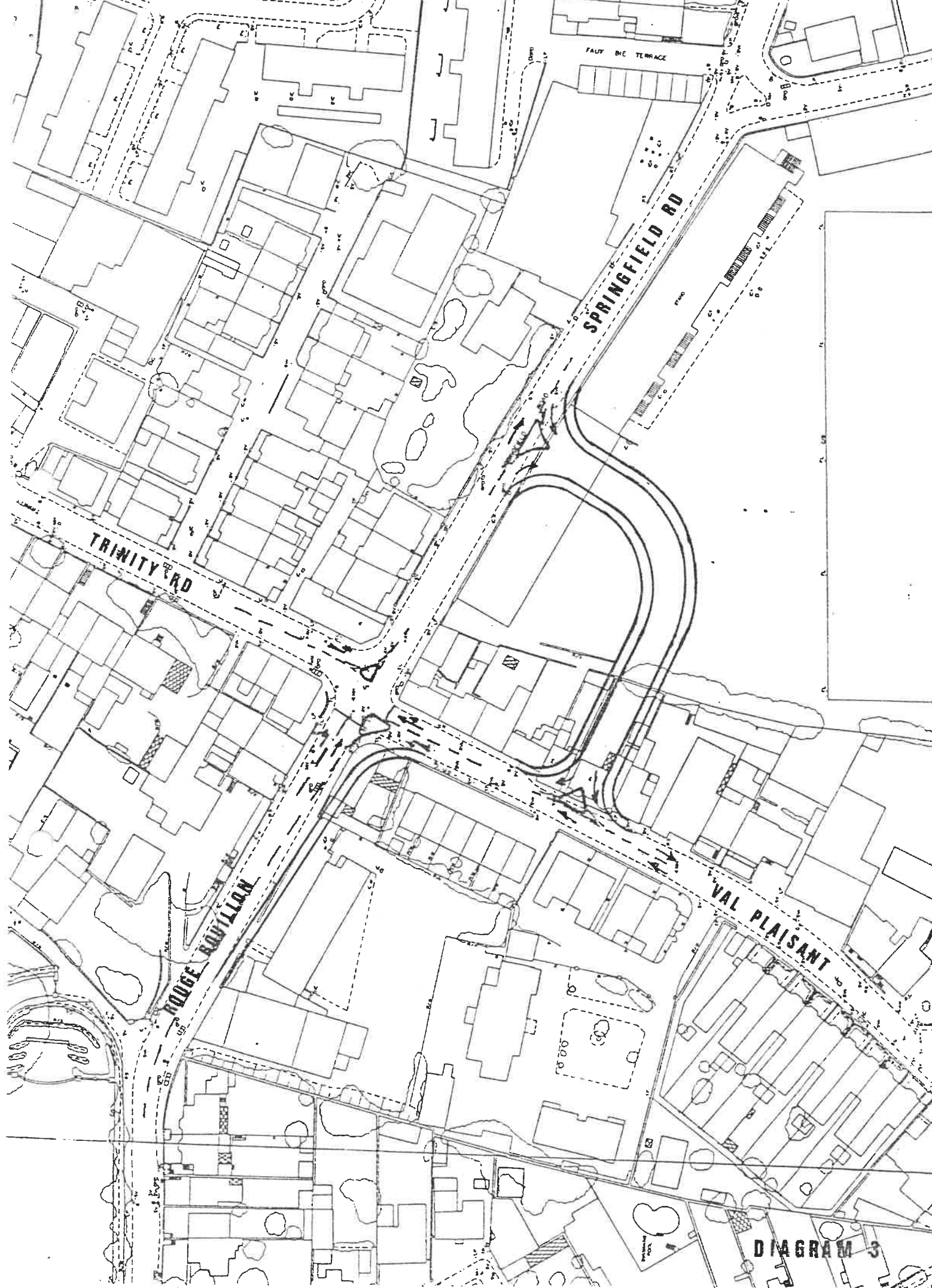


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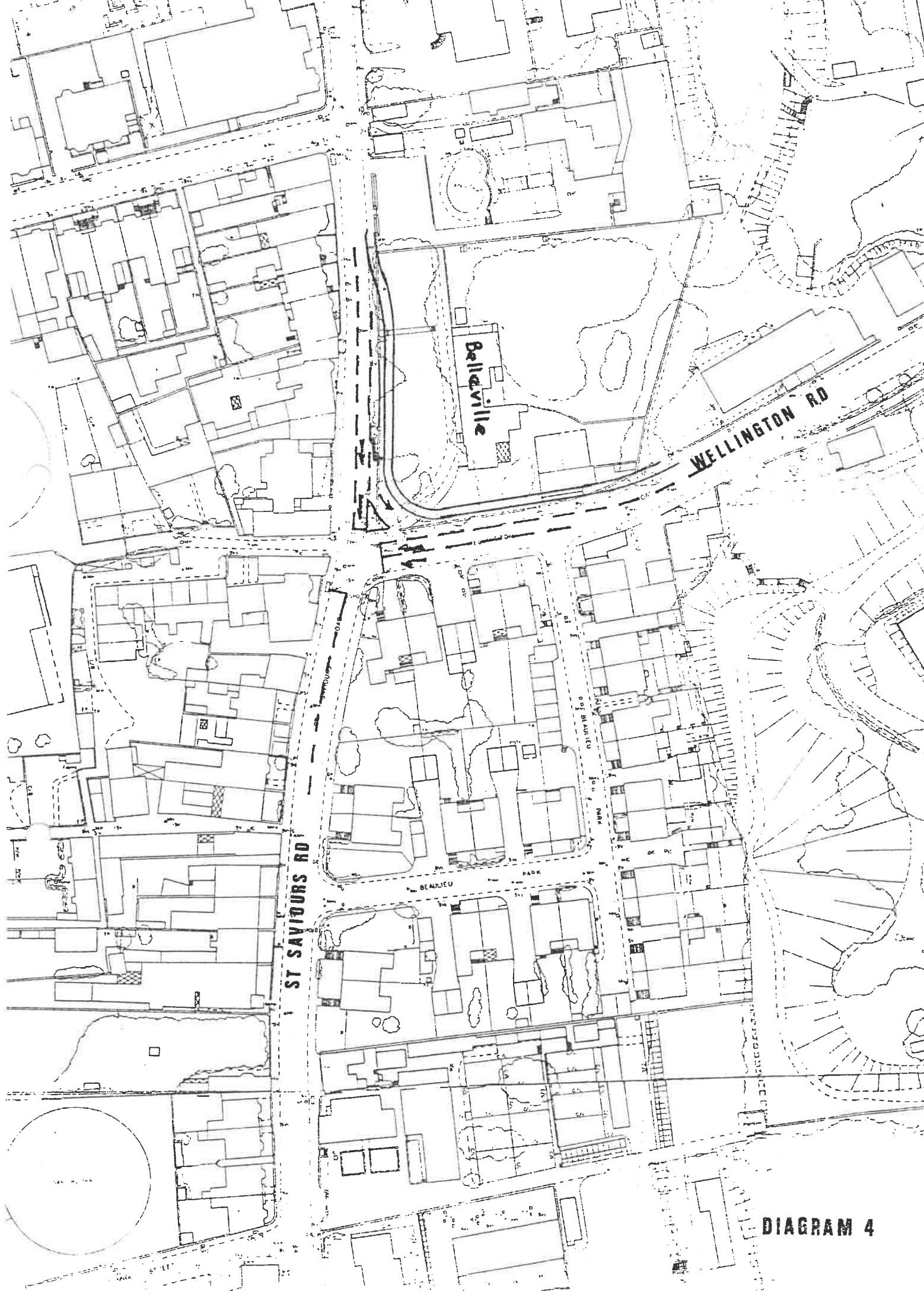


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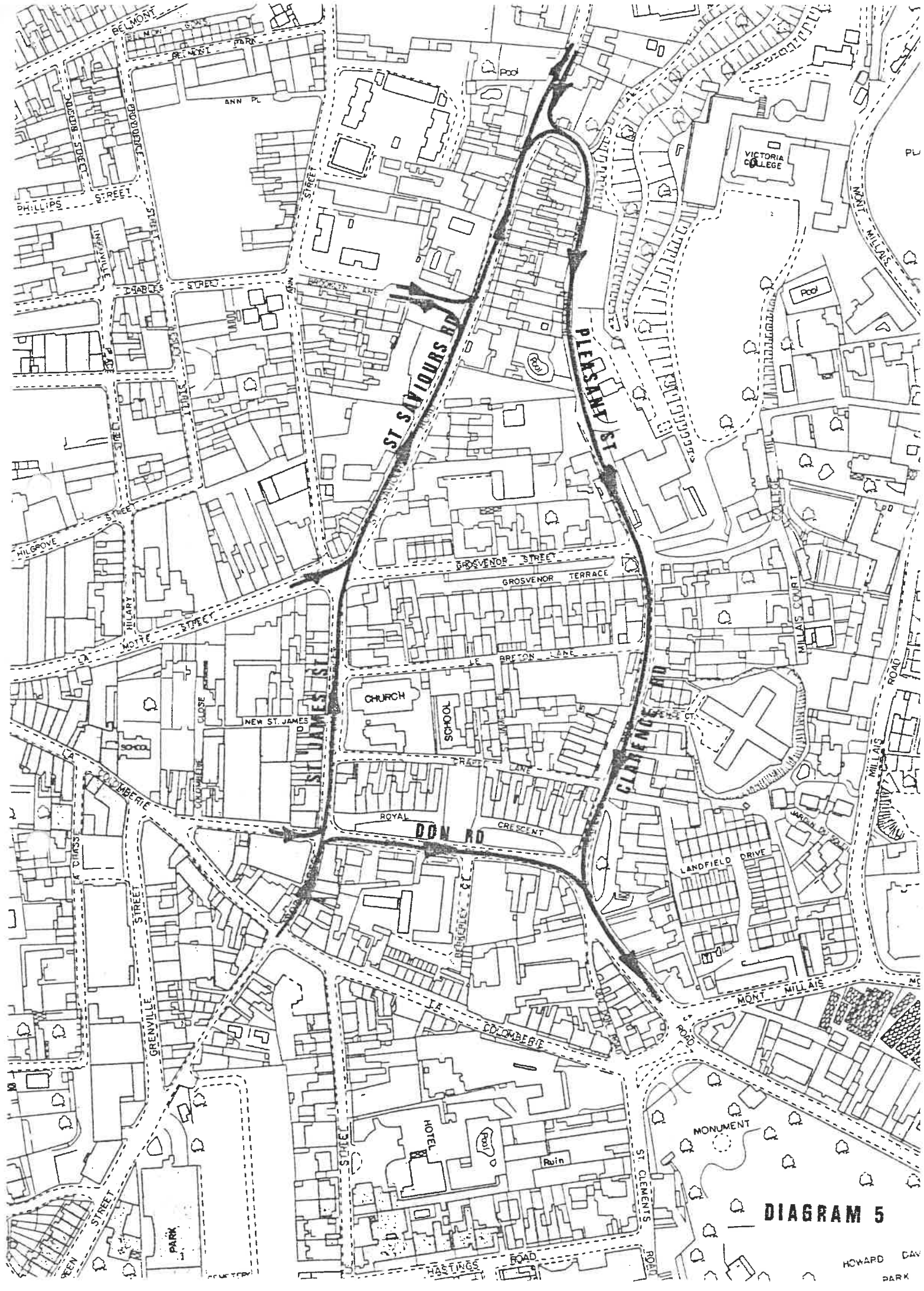


DIAGRAM 5

HOWARD GARDEN PARK

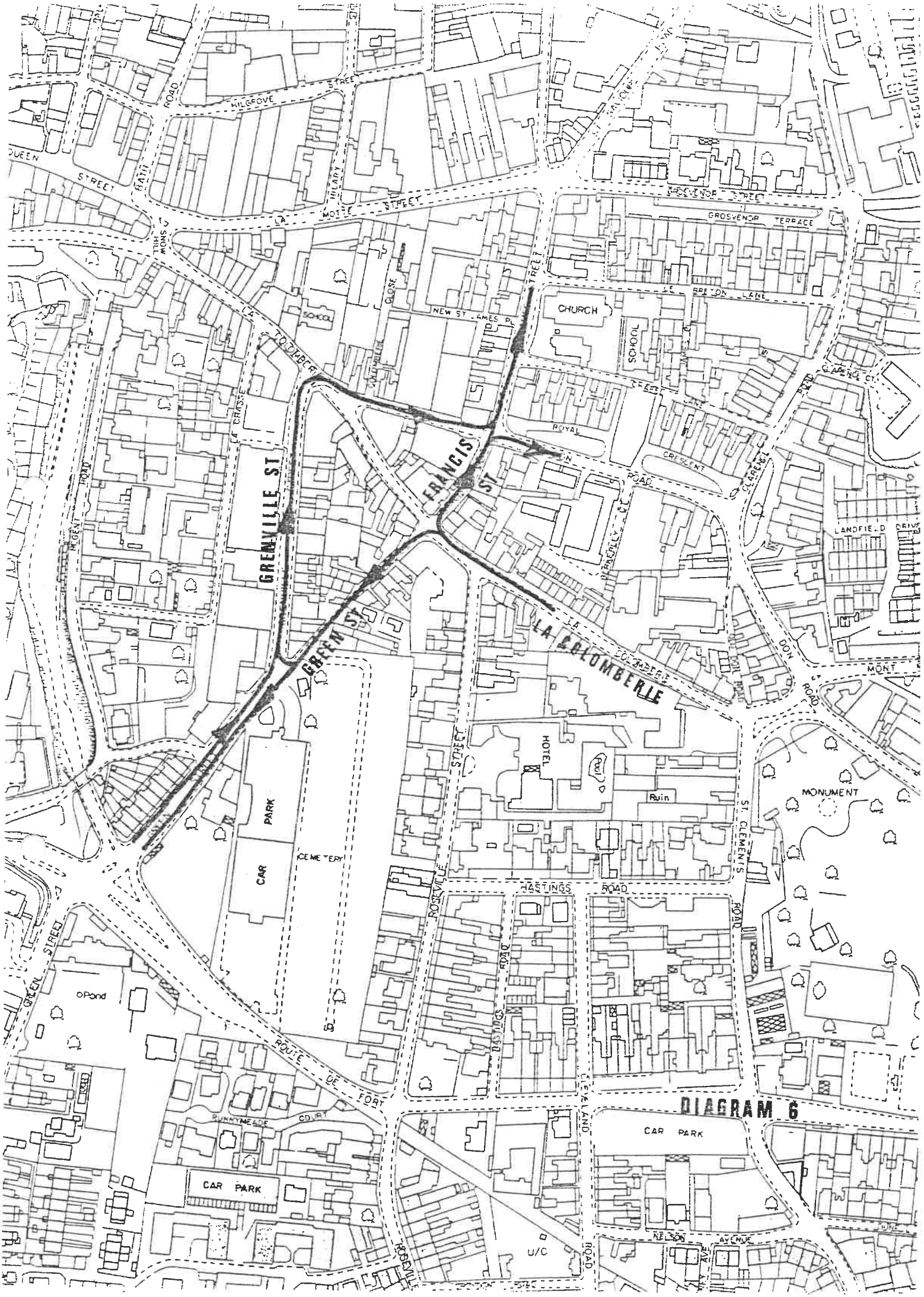


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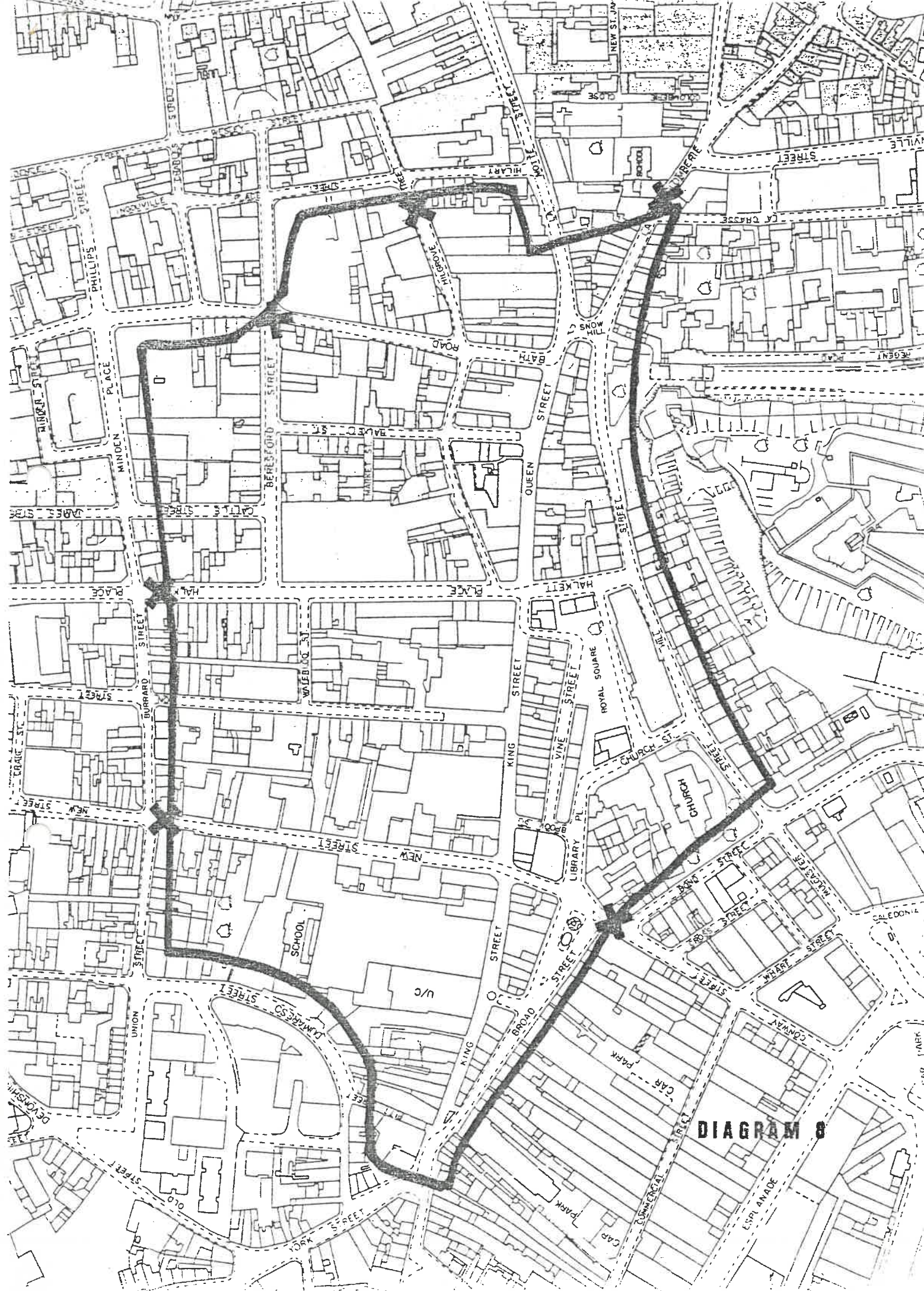


DIAGRAM 8