

CHESHIRE HISTORIC TOWNS SURVEY

Northwich

Archaeological Strategies



2003

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Northwich: Area of Archaeological Potential

1. Introduction

- 1.1 An Area of Archaeological Potential (AAP) has been identified at Northwich, comprising four Archaeological Character Zones (ACZs). Each Zone is identified by its defining archaeological or historical characteristics, or *Primary Characteristics*. For example, in the Roman Activity Zone (Archaeological Character Zone 1), the defining characteristics include the site of a Roman fort and civilian settlement (*vicus*).
- 1.2 Each Archaeological Character Zone may also include sites and features which are not defining characteristics but are nonetheless of archaeological and historical importance, and these are identified as *Secondary Characteristics*. For example, Archaeological Character Zone 1 contains post medieval industrial development and this has therefore been identified as a Secondary Characteristic.
- 1.3 The list of characteristics is not exhaustive, and it is possible that other types of important archaeological remains and features exist within each Archaeological Character Zone. The boundaries of the AAPs and the Archaeological Character Zones, and the list of Primary and Secondary Characteristics are intended as a guide for planners and developers. They are based on current knowledge, and are therefore subject to change as new information is revealed.

2. Existing Designations (Figure 1)

Scheduled Ancient Monuments	None
Listed Buildings	Grade I – Two Winnington Hall, St Helen's Church, Witton Grade II – Thirty-two
Conservation Areas	One – Northwich
Registered Parks and Gardens	None

3. The Archaeological Character Zones (Figure 2)

Zone 1: Roman Activity

Primary Characteristics	
Roman Fort	An auxiliary fort was located on the west bank of the River Weaver in an area now known as Castle. Two periods of activity have been identified, the first began c AD 70, the second finished c AD 140.
Roman Settlement	Evidence has been recovered which suggests the presence of civilian settlement (<i>vicus</i>) outside the fort.
Cemetery	The discovery of cinerary urns in the vicinity of Winnington Lane suggests an extra-mural cemetery lay in this area.
Roman Saltworking	A number of lead salt pans have been discovered at Northwich, along with a brine kiln dating to the 1st century AD.
Roman Roads	Watling Street, the road that connected Chester with York, ran through Northwich.

Secondary Characteristics	
Post Medieval Industry	During the post medieval period a number of industries developed along the banks of the River Weaver, including docks and ship building yards.
Post Medieval Settlement	During the post medieval period this Zone underwent domestic expansion.

Zone 2: Medieval Core

Primary Characteristics	
Medieval Salt Works	Salt working dominated the town's economy. It was carried out on the banks of the River Dane and c 1600 it was recorded that there was a single brine pit with stairs down into it.
Medieval Settlement	Northwich was described as a Borough from the 13th century onwards, although no charter survives.
Town Bridge	The Weaver Bridge is first mentioned in 1351, however a crossing is likely to have been located in this area since the Roman period.

Secondary Characteristics	
Early Medieval Salt Working	The early medieval township of Northwich probably originated as an industrial enclave dedicated to the production of salt. At the time of the Conquest (1066) it was valued at £8, which indicates that it was an important salt producing centre.
Early Medieval Settlement	Salt workers appear to have lived immediately east of the industrial enclave in Witton-cum-Twambrook.
Post Medieval Industry	During the post medieval period a number of industries developed in this area.
Post Medieval Settlement	This area continued to be settled during the post medieval period.

Zone 3: Witton Chapel

Primary Characteristic	
Witton Chapel	Northwich was served by St Helen's Chapel at Witton, which lay in an isolated position to the east of the town. It was a parochial chapel of Great Budworth and contains work dating back to the 14th century.

Zone 4: Post Medieval Industry

Primary Characteristics	
Post Medieval Industry	Works located within this Zone include salt works, timber yards, a shipyard, dockyard, sawmill, foundry, tannery and fustian works.

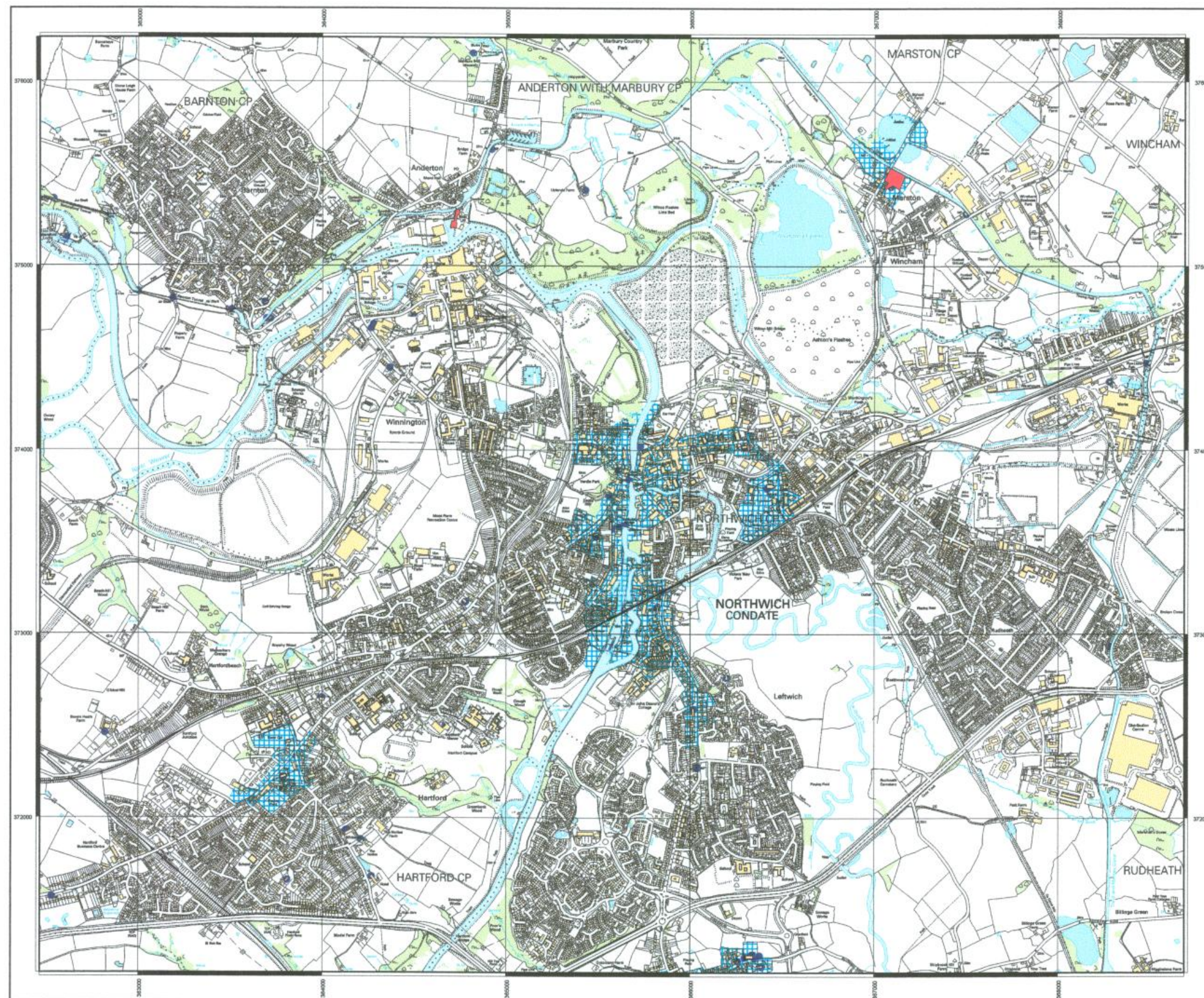


Figure 1: Northwich Existing Designations

- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Listed Building
- ▨ Conservation Area

1:20000

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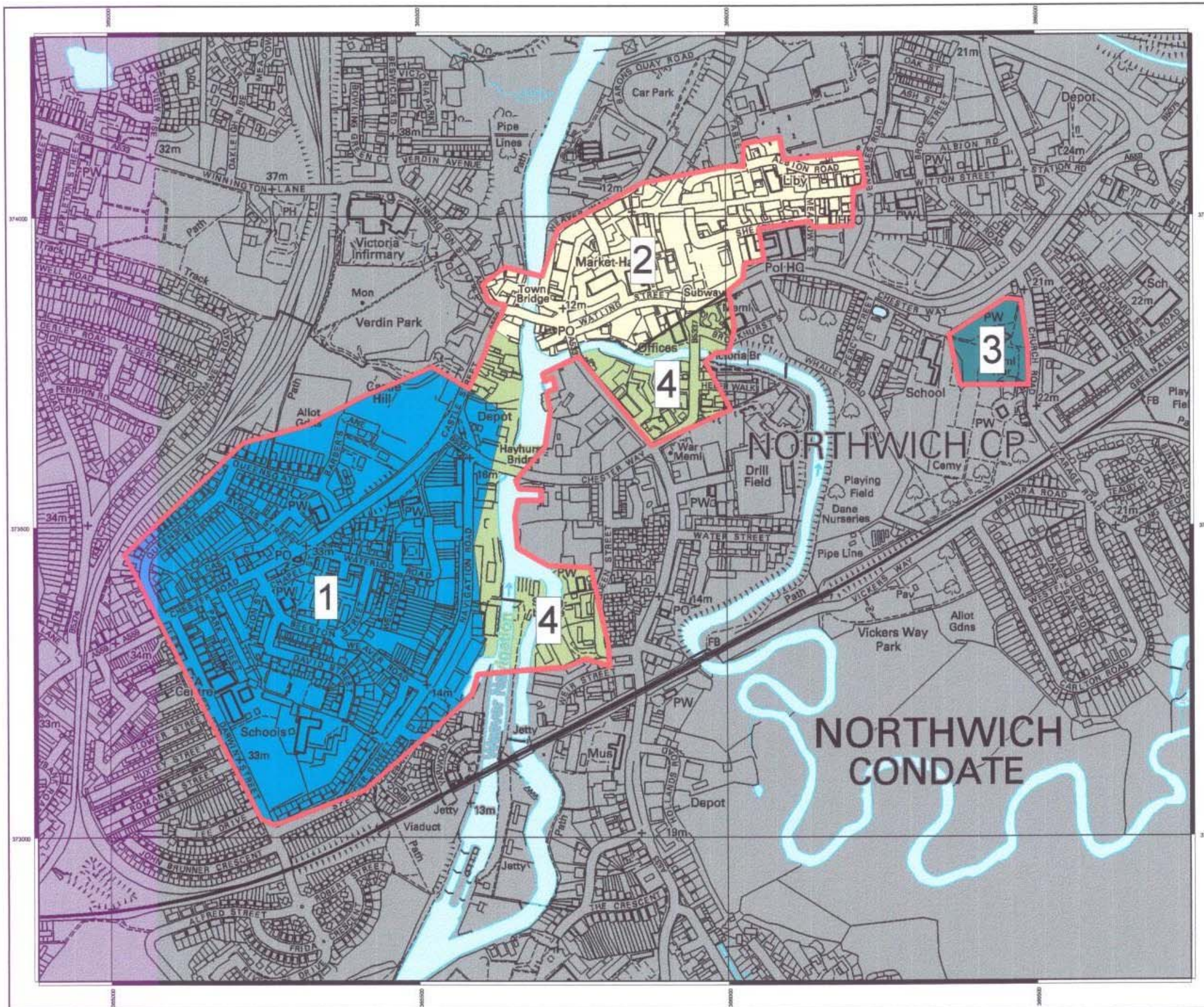


Figure 2: Northwich Area of Archaeological Potential and Archaeological Character Zones

- Area of Archaeological Potential
- ACZ 1: Roman Activity
- ACZ 2: Medieval Core
- ACZ 3: Witton Chapel
- ACZ 4: Post Medieval Industry
- Area Outside the Historic Core

1:6000

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