NAA

ANALYTICAL EARTHWORK
SURVEY REPORT

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CONISBROUGH CASTLE,

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

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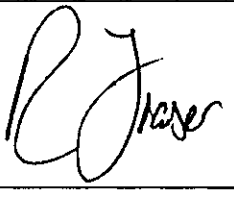
Approval	

CONISBROUGH CASTLE, SOUTH YORKSHIRE

ANALYTICAL EARTHWORK SURVEY REPORT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document presents the results of a programme of analytical earthwork survey, undertaken in order to produce an updated site plan and digital terrain model of the earthworks comprising part of the Scheduled Monument (No. 13245) of Conisbrough Castle, South Yorkshire, and the results of a geophysical survey of a tract of land to the west of the castle.

1.2 This document has been prepared by Northern Archaeological Associates Ltd (NAA) in accordance with *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (EH 2006) and in compliance with a Project Design (NAA 2009) prepared as part of the Initiation phase of the project (EH 2006, 24). The Project Design was submitted to, and agreed as a suitable scheme of works for the project at Review Point 2 with English Heritage (EH), in order to comply with MoRPHE guidance, which supersedes the earlier *Management of Archaeological Projects* document (EH 1991).

1.3 This document represents the End-of-Project report which will be submitted to English Heritage at Review Point 3 subsequent to the Execution stage of the project.

2.0 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The site is located to the south of the River Don and is centred on SK 5150 9890 at an elevation of approximately 60m AOD (Figure 1) The castle is situated at the north-eastern end of the town of Conisbrough and is located approximately 300m from the pre-Conquest church of St Peter, the position of which is considered to be indicative of the early medieval burh of Conisbrough.

2.2 The remains of the castle occupy a distinct knoll which is surrounded by a series of earthworks associated with its use, and a number of earthworks resulting from activity in other periods. The site is bounded to the south and east by Low Road, to the south-west by Castle Hill and Castle Avenue and to the north by Dale Road.

2.3 The bedrock geology of the Conisbrough area comprises the Upper Westphalian lithologies of the Carboniferous period (IGS 1979). The knoll on which the castle sits is part of a narrow band of Middle Coal Measures sandstone bounded to the east and west by deposits of Lower Magnesian Limestone (ARCUS & SYAS 1993). These bedrock deposits are largely overlain by boulder clay and morrainic drift with alluvium

being present in the valley of the River Don (IGS 1977). The soils of the Conisbrough area comprise the slowly permeable soils of the Bardsey association (Jarvis *et al* 1989).

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The principal aim of the archaeological works at Conisbrough Castle was to provide new and comprehensive survey data, both topographic and geophysical, from which to re-interpret the monument's setting thereby enhancing the existing corpus of knowledge regarding the evolution of the site through time. In particular the project sought to address the following issues:

- what earthwork evidence, if any, existed for the putative motte and bailey castle that is generally considered to have preceded the present stone castle?
- which aspects of the morphology of the knoll related specifically to the construction and development of the stone castle
- how much of the surviving earthworks were a result of the dumping of spoil arising from earlier archaeological interventions, especially those undertaken in the 1960s and 70s?
- how much of the surviving earthworks related to the post-medieval use of the site?
- how much of the surviving earthworks were the result of historic land slippage or subsidence?
- was there any surviving evidence for extramural settlement at the site, and if so, what was the likely condition of any such remains?
- was there any surviving evidence for the putative pre-Conquest burh at the site, and if so what was the nature and likely condition of any such remains?

3.2 A further issue, the potential for the existence of prehistoric or Roman period remains to be present at the site, was raised through documentary analysis during the course of desk-based studies undertaken in support of this report. The literary connections between Conisbrough and a certain post-Roman semi-historical figure are tenuous in the extreme, but the location is potentially suitable for a prehistoric or Roman defensive site.

3.3 In order to address these issues, and in order to comply with SHAPE Sub-Programme Number 11111.130 (EH 2008, 15), *Understanding Place:*

Analysis of specific historic assets and locales, NAA were commissioned by EH to undertake a programme of analytical survey of the castle earthworks and a programme of geophysical survey of land situated to the west of the extant remains.

3.4 The principal objectives of the archaeological works were:

- to undertake an analytical earthwork survey of approximately 4.65ha of the site to Level 3 standard defined in *Understanding the Archaeology of Landscapes: a guide to good recording practice* (EH 2007)

- to undertake a geophysical survey of approximately 0.85ha of the site to the west of the castle using both geomagnetic and electrical survey techniques to the standard specified in the Statement of Requirement for the project (EH 2008)

- to produce a digital terrain model of the same area from data derived from the above survey

- to prepare a descriptive analytical report integrating the results of the above surveys, and all accompanying desk-based studies required as part of the project, to English Heritage Level 3 (EH 2007).

4.0 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Conisbrough appears to have its origins in the pre-Conquest period, the place-name being recorded as *Cuningesburg* in the Domesday Book. The name itself seems to be a Scandinavian corruption of the Old English elements *cyning* and *burh* (Ekwall 1960, 120) which roughly translates as "the King's burh" (fortified settlement), though which king the burh belonged to remains obscure. Prior to the Norman Conquest, the Honour of Conisbrough was held by King Harold but was in the possession of William de Warenne, who was the son in law of King William I, at the time of the Domesday Survey.

4.2 In describing his travels in the Yorkshire area, and in particular the course of the River Don, William Camden wrote;

"Then (the river) *looketh it up to Connisborow or Conines-borrough, an ancient castle, in the British tonge Caer Conan, seated upon a rock, into which, what time as Aurelius Ambrosius* (sic, Ambrosius Aurelianus) *had so discomfited and scattered the English Saxons at Maisbelly that they tooke them to their heeles and fled every man the next way hee could finde, Hengest their Captaine retyred himselfe for, and a few daies after brought his men forth to battaile before the Campe against the Britans*

that pursewed him, where hee fought a bluddy field to him and his. For a great number of men were there cut in peeces, and the Britans, having intercepted him, chopt of his head, if we may beleeve the British History rather than the English-Saxon Chronicles, which report that he, being outworne with travell and labour, died in peace. But this Coningsborough in latter ages was the possession of the Earles of Warren." (Camden 1607).

4.3 The event that Camden was describing relates to the early post-Roman period in British history. Hengist was supposedly an Anglo-Saxon mercenary, who along with his brother Horsa and three keels of warriors, were invited into Britain by Vortigern, a post-Roman British leader, in order to counter the threat of barbarian incursions by the Picts and Scots (and probably Anglo-Saxons) into southern Britain. Whist this strategy worked initially, Hengist and Horsa eventually turned renegade and precipitated further Anglo-Saxon incursions into eastern Britain. This threat was in turn countered by the British, under the leadership of Ambrosius Aurelianus, which resulted in a number of battles between the two sides in the conflict.

4.4 The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle only makes mention of Hengist fighting battles against the British at *Aegelsthrep* (in which Horsa was killed), *Crecganford* and *Wippedesfleot* in AD 455, 456 and 465 respectively (Savage 1995, 19). No mention is made of *Maisbelly*, or indeed *Cuningesburh*, nor is the manner of Hengist's death recorded in either the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle or by Bede; Nennius simply records that he died and Gildas refused to name any of the early Anglo-Saxon leaders. However, in its entry for AD 473, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle does record a further battle against the Welsh at an unspecified site in which Hengist was again victorious (*ibid*).

4.5 Camden's reference to *Caer Conan* and *Maisbelly* appears to originate in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regnum Britanniae,* supposedly a translation of an earlier Welsh tradition attributed to a 7th century figure, Bishop Tysillo (or Tysilio), in which Ambrosius Aurelianus defeated Hengist at a place recorded as *Maesbeli.* However, according to Sebastian Evans, Geoffrey of Monmouth stated;

"And when he had thus spirited up all of them and put them in stomach to fight, he advanced towards Aurelius as far as a field that was called Maesbeli, through the which Aurelius would have to pass, for he was minded to make a sudden and stealthy onslaught and to fall upon the Britons unawares.....Then, when all the companies on both sides were drawn forth in battle-array, the foremost ranks engage, dealing blow upon blow and shedding no little blood. On the one side the Britons, on the other the Saxons, drop down to die of their wounds. Aurelius cheereth on his Christians, Hengist giveth the word unto his

Paynims; and as the conflict thus was raging, ever among did Eldol seek occasion to get at hand-grips with Hengist, but none such offered; for Hengist, when he saw his own men fall, and that the Britons by God's grace were gaining ground, straightway fled away and made for the Castle of Kaerconan, that is now called Knaresborough." (Evans 1904, 192).

The last line of the above text is usually stated as being; "*.....Kaerconan, which is now called Cunungeburg*" in later translations (eg Thorpe 1966, 191)

4.6 However, the source apparently used by Geoffrey, the Brut Tysillo (sometimes called Ystrya Brenhined y Brytanyeit), appears to have been translated from Welsh into Latin by Gwalter, the archdeacon of Rydychen (Oxford) whom Geoffrey met whilst he was a student at Oxford in the 12th century. The final line of the translation of the Brut Tysillo reads *" I, Gwalter, Archdeacon of Rydychen, turned this book from kymraec into lladin, and in my old age I have turned it the second time from lladin into kymraec".* This may imply that Gwalter was originally transcribing an oral tradition into Latin text and later in life committed the same tradition to text in Welsh, for this would have been a pointless task if the document had already existed in textual form in the latter language. Gwalter's original manuscripts do not survive, and the earliest version of the work appears to a copy originating in the 15th century (Jesus MS LXI). A recent translation of the part of this manuscript relating to the same events described by Geoffrey states;

"And then they went to a place called Maes Beli, thinking to make a sudden treacherous attack on Emrys and his army. But Emrys foresaw that, and marshalled his army, and intermixed his own men and those of Llydaw. And he posted the men of Dyfed on the high hills on their flank, and the men of Gwynedd in a wood nearby, so that they could receive the Ssaesson whichever way they came And on the other side, Hainssiestr (Hengist) *exhorted and instructed his men. When many on both sides had been killed, Hainssiestr and his army fled to a place called Kaer Kynan and Emrys and his army pursued and killed them, as has been told"* (http://www.maryjones.us/ctexts/tysillo.html).

4.7 Camden's association of Conisbrough and Hengest, derived as it was from a post-Conquest author's rendition of what in origin was essentially an oral tradition, must, therefore, be considered to be tenuous at best. It may even be possible that the name Conisbrough is of British derivation, the *Kaer Kynan* of Tysillo, (if the spelling was correctly transcribed c.700 years after the events the text is describing) rather than Anglo-Scandinavian. The location of Maes Beli is equally elusive and a number of later authors have suggested that given that the word *maes* simply means field, that Belgh (now Belph), near Worksop in Derbyshire, might

be regarded as the approximate location of Maes Beli (e.g. Haigh 1861) although this must also be considered to be equivocal.

4.8 If the link between Kaer Kynan, (or Kaerconan/Caer Conan) and Conisbrough could be convincingly made, the use of the word *caer* to describe the site is interesting and opens up the possibility of there once being a prehistoric or Roman period defensive site in the vicinity.

4.9 A charter of AD 664 records the granting of land at Conisbrough (and many other places) to St Peter's Minster at Medehamstede, by Wulfhere, King of Mercia (Sawyer 1968, 88). However, the gift of land does not necessarily demonstrate the presence of a settlement in the area at that time, and if Conisbrough is actually named as such in the charter (the manuscripts, of which there are two versions, both in Latin, were not examined as part of this study), the date of the document is earlier than the date of the burhs established by Alfred or the Danes in Danelaw. However, the manuscripts may well be late copies of the original charter, and the place-name changed to that prevalent at the time of transcription. Another alternative is that Conisbrough may have originated as a fort on a boundary along the line of the Dearne and middle Don valleys, (including places such as Sprotborough, Mexborough, Barnburgh, Worsborough Stainborough and Kexborough) fortified by the Danes in the late 9th or early 10th century (Parker, p35-36).

4.10 A settlement at Conisbrough did exist by AD 1002 when it was mentioned in the will of Wulfric Spotte (*ibid* 430), an Anglo-Saxon aristocrat who was a minister and advisor to Ethelraed Unraed. Wulfric bequeathed extensive lands at Conisbrough to his son (or brother) Elfhelm, which included Conisbrough itself and all of the lands comprising the fee described in the Domesday Book. Twenty-eight townships were dependent upon the honour, and these extended from Hatfield to the north-east, to Hoyland in the west and Whitwell to the south. The privileges of this will were later confirmed in a charter of AD 1004 by Ethelraed himself (*ibid* 276).

4.11 There is some physical evidence for pre-Conquest activity within the fabric of the church of St Peter at Conisbrough. Anglo-Saxon masonry survives in the north-west, and south-west angles of the nave of the church and there is a blocked window in the north wall of the nave which also appears to be of Anglo-Saxon craftsmanship (Pevsner 1967, 166). In addition, a fragment an Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Scandinavian cross shaft, decorated with interlace carving, survives within the church (*op. cit.* 167). The church was not examined or recorded by Taylor and Taylor, and there is little other evidence to support the former existence of a pre-Conquest burh.

4.12 Camden did not further expand upon the Earls of Warenne although it was they that were responsible for constructing the "ancient castle" he refers to. Prior to the Norman Conquest, the Honour of Conisbrough was held by King Harold but was in the possession of William de Warenne, who was the son-in-law of William the Conqueror, at the time of the Domesday Survey. William enjoyed a successful military career in both France and England, and upon the death of King William, he remained loyal to his son William Rufus, possibly as a result of him being awarded an earldom, later known as the Earldom of Surrey, at about this time. At the height of his power he held estates in 13 counties alongside his estates in Normandy which he began to acquire after distinguishing himself in Duke William's military campaign in Mortemer in 1054. William de Warenne, became the first Earl of Conisbrough, and although he held other estates in the north of England his principal holding appears to have been centred on Conisbrough. It is *assumed* that William would have built a castle, probably a motte and bailey, somewhere within the area and it is furthermore *assumed* that this would probably have been located on the site of the present castle. The other estates held by William included Acre Castle in Norfolk and lands in Lewes, Sussex, where he introduced the Cluniac Order into England by establishing the priory of St. Pancras, with the assistance of his wife Gundreda of St. Omer, Flanders (Le Patourel 1966 VI, 11).

4.13 The first Earl, killed in the Battle of Pevensey in 1089, was succeeded by his son, William de Placetis, who married Isabel de Vermandois, the former wife of Robert de Beaumont, the first Earl of Leicester. In 1101, William briefly supported Robert Curthose against Henry I, which resulted in him being banished from the kingdom and having his English estates confiscated by the king. Henry finally reinstated William after he lent him his support at the battle of Tenchebrai in 1106 (*op cit* 12). William was subsequently granted the manor of Shelf, north-east of Halifax and the Sandal estates in 1107, where he probably built the first Sandal Castle of timber. The second Earl gave further lands at Conisbrough, Harthill, Dinnington, Braithwell, Hatfield, Fishlake, Sandal and Armthorpe to the priory at Lewes established by his father.

4.14 William II de Warenne died in 1138 and was succeeded by his son who was also named William. William the third Earl is described by Henry of Huntingdon as being *".... a manifest adulterer and distinguished lecher, a faithful follower of Bacchus, though unacquainted with Mars, smelling of wine, unaccustomed of warfare...."* who supposedly stole the Count of Aumale's wife (Greenway 2002, 77). He married Adeliade Talvas of Sussex but when he met his death on crusade in Laodicia, Palestine, in 1148 he left no male heir. The only child of William III de Warenne and Adeliade was Isabel, who was given in marriage to William de Blois, the son of King Stephen, who became the fourth Earl of Conisbrough. Following the death of her husband in 1159, Isabel subsequently married

Hamelyn Plantagenet, who was the son of Geoffrey of Anjou and the half brother of Henry II. He became the fifth Earl, taking the arms of de Warenne on his marriage to Isabel in 1163. As a result of this union Conisbrough became a Royal Castle (Pevsner, 1967, 168). Hamelyn Plantagenet Warenne is credited with replacing the early wooden motte and bailey, supposedly constructed by the first Earl with the present stone fortification of Conisbrough Castle. The plan of the stone keep, which is circular, and ward enclosed by the curtain wall are said to be based on Mortemer castle in Normandy, which also belonged to the de Warenne family, although their principal seat was at Bellencombre (La Patourel 1966 VI, 9) However, a number of other castles with circular or near circular keeps also exist within Britain. These include the circular keeps at Pembroke, Dolbadarn, Caldicot and Skenfrith castles in Wales, Dundrum and Nenagh castles in Ireland and the castles at Longtown and Barnard Castle in England (Forde Johnston 1977, 96-7). Polygonal castles are rather less common, the example at Orford in Suffolk has around twenty sides, and as a consequence appears almost circular in plan (*op cit*, 94). The fashion for building circular or near circular keeps appears to have originated in the later decades of the 12th century, and their design may reflect eastern European and near eastern influences reaching Britain as a result of, amongst other things, the Crusades (*op. cit.* 91).

4.15 During his time as earl, Hamelyn supported Henry II and donated money towards the ransom to free his nephew King Richard I. In later life he was present at King John's coronation in 1199 and at the oath of allegiance made by the king of Scotland to John and England in 1200. He showed further support towards the king by playing host to him at Conisbrough. The fifth Earl died in 1202 and was succeeded by his son, William Plantagenet Warenne.

4.16 In 1204 King John lost his campaign in France, as a result of which all the English nobles, including William, who had supported him had, their lands in France confiscated by Philip II. William remained loyal to King John for some time and is documented in the Magna Carta as such, but by the summer of 1216 he had changed his allegiance and supported a planned invasion of England by the Dauphin, Louis of France. After the death of his first wife, Maude, daughter of the Earl of Arundel, William married Maude, the daughter of William Marshall of Pembroke. When the 6th Earl died in 1240, Maude held his estate until their son John, the seventh Earl de Warenne, came of age. In 1247 John married Alice de Lusignan, who was Henry III's sister. He was appointed warden for Scotland and was awarded the title of the Earl of Strathearn by Edward I in 1296. Three years later he led the charge with Edward at the battle of Falkirk. John died in 1304 and was succeeded by his grandson who was also called John.

4.17 At the age of 19, the eighth Earl married Joan, daughter of Henry Count de Bar, who was only ten years old. In 1317, Thomas Plantagenet, Earl of Lancaster, attacked Conisbrough castle with a large force of men as a result of John de Warenne absconding with Thomas's wife with the intention of both divorcing their respective spouses and marrying one another. Thomas encountered only six men inside the castle as John had already taken Lancaster's wife to Reigate castle. He captured the men and seized de Warenne's castles at both Conisbrough and Sandal. In 1322 the earl of Lancaster was captured at the battle of Boroughbridge and brought to trial at Pontefract Castle where the judges, one of whom was John de Warenne, found him guilty and ordered that he be beheaded. In the same year King Edward II spent a few days at Conisbrough castle and ordered that forty marks be spent on repairs to the walls and tower (The Manor of Conisbrough, Conisbrough Court Rolls) which would indicate that they were in a poor state of repair at this time. In 1326 Conisbrough castle and its lands, which had been seized by the earl of Lancaster, were returned to the de Warenne family by the king.

4.18 In 1347 the 8th and last Earl died without leaving a legitimate heir. His two illegitimate sons by Maud de Nereford, now Countess de Warenne, became Knights Hospitallers in the Holy Land and the earldom lapsed. The Lordship of Conisbrough passed to Edward III, who subsequently passed it to his fifth son Edmund de Langley, Earl of Cambridge, later to become the first Duke of York.

4.19 In 1415 Richard of Conisbrough, the Earl of Cambridge, was executed along with Lord Scrope of Masham, for conspiracy against Henry V. Richard's elder brother, Edward, Duke of York, was killed at Agincourt and his nephew, Richard Earl of Cambridge, succeeded to the dukedom. He fell at the battle of Wakefield with his elder son and so his younger son, Edward, inherited the title and the Conisbrough estates. Edward subsequently acceded to the throne in 1461 as Edward IV and in 1495 the grant of the Conisbrough estates to the Crown was confirmed in perpetuity. In 1526, the manor of the priory of Lewes at Conisbrough, including lands at Braithwell, Dinnington, Harthill and Sandal passed to John Waterhouse and his son Robert for £150 5s 10d per annum. Conisbrough castle was allowed to fall into a state of disrepair and by 1538 the gates, drawbridge, a lengthy section of curtain wall and one of the floors inside the keep had collapsed (Hull, 2005) and the castle was abandoned.

4.20 In 1561 Conisbrough castle and the lordship were granted by Elizabeth I by patent to her first cousin Henry Carey, first Lord Hunsdon, who held them until his death in 1596. From this time it passed in succession through the Carey family until the castle and manor of Conisbrough were sold to Thomas Osborne the fourth Duke of Leeds for £22,500 in 1737.

He was succeeded at Conisbrough by two further Dukes of Leeds, Francis and George Osborne, and Conisbrough Castle passed to the Sackville family upon the death of the sixth Duke in 1838. Conisbrough Castle was never attacked during the Civil War as it was already relatively derelict by this time and this is why the keep in particular survives in a good state of repair.

4.21 In 1840 a brickyard was opened in the castle grounds and remained open until 1856. The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1854 (Figure 2), and the tithe map of 1858 (Figure 6) maps for the Conisbrough area all show the location of the brickyard immediately to the north of the castle with three associated buildings being depicted on the northern limits of the plot. The brickyard was owned by Elizabeth Smith, named on the enclosure map for Conisbrough (Figure 8), who, prior to abandoning the site, planted the trees that are still evident on the land adjacent to the castle (The Manor of Conisbrough, Conisbrough Court Rolls).

4.22 The tithe map and award of 1858 reveals that the area to the immediate east of the brickyard was divided into three fields, which were all registered as being under crop and for which rent was paid to the vicar. The only field-name which is legible on the tithe award is that of Sysgreen Croft, which is the northernmost field and also appears on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1854. By the time of the tithe award, the brick field had passed out of use and was recorded as being two fields, one of which was described as a garden, there being no register of a rent being paid for the second. The Castle Yard, the area immediately surrounding the castle, is also recorded as being under crop in this period, the rent again being paid to the vicar.

4.23 A later change which occurred within the garth of the castle was the demolition of the moot hall in 1871 which led to the courts baron and leet of the manor being held in various public houses (The Manor of Conisbrough, Conisbrough Court Rolls).

4.24 The second and third edition Ordnance Survey maps (Figures 3 and 4) show that the three fields which had been under crop had become two fields and by the time of the fourth edition map in 1938 (Figure 5) the field boundaries had disappeared altogether, although they are evident to the present day, being delineated by a few remaining trees. The fourth edition map also showed that the field to the south of the castle had been turned into a memorial garden by this time.

4.25 The castle was eventually acquired by Conisbrough Council in the 1940s, placed under Guardianship in 1949, and subsequently subjected to a number of programmes of repair, consolidation, restoration and

other archaeological works associated with the presentation of the monument.

Previous archaeological works

4.26 Although it seems certain that the castle and its earthworks were subjected to some interference prior to the 20th century, the extents of such works is unrecorded. The National Monuments Record hold a number of photographs of the castle originating in the 1950s some of which clearly depict clearance and consolidation works being undertaken at the site (for example NMR GP/53/19/6 and GP/53/19/7, dating to c. 1953) although no documentary records of these works appear to have survived. The Ministry of Public Building and Works began a recorded programme of restoration work at Conisbrough Castle in 1967. The interior of the castle ward was further cleared in order to investigate the visible and covered building remains in this area. The work revealed that a long building had stood in the north-west corner of the bailey of which the northern and western sides were formed by the curtain wall which curved round through 90 degrees (Thompson 1968, 153). As a result of this, the western end of the structure tapered and was much narrower than the eastern end. The substantial size of the building, which measured 77 by 33 ft, and the presence of a large central hearth, measuring 11 by 7 ft, suggested that it was a great hall. An arcade was found to divide the building into a south aisle, which measured approximately 12 ft in width, and a main nave which was composed of four bays and measured 19 ft at the eastern end and only 16ft at its western terminal with the curtain wall. A series of service buildings was discovered extending eastwards from the hall along the inner face of the north curtain wall, the last of which was a kitchen adjacent to the keep. A further range, which ran south along the inner face of the western curtain wall, was two-storied and the presence of a fine fireplace in the curtain-wall indicated that the upper storey comprised a chamber. Thompson concluded that the hall was well built and broadly contemporary with the keep, dating it to around 1200.

4.27 The Ministry of Public Buildings and Works carried out a further phase of excavation in 1969, (Thompson 1969) which revealed that there had been at least one major alteration to the single-aisled hall indicated by the presence of two kinds of stone bases on the ground floor. The excavation also indicated that there had been a marked change in the ground level of the bailey. Outside the western curtain wall Thompson discovered a bank, comprising clay and stones to a maximum height of 6ft, which was held in position by a retaining wall. The bank material yielded pottery sherds dating to around 1200. This bank was truncated by the foundation cut for the curtain wall and a sherd of pottery pre-dating 1100 was encountered on the original ground surface beneath the bank.

4.28 The discovery of a latrine chute cut down to the natural bedrock in the bailey revealed the nature of the subsoil of the hill on which the castle stands. Huge fissures were evident in the walls of the chute where layers of clay had dissolved from the natural bedrock making the ground very unstable. Thompson surmised that it was this instability that had caused a substantial stretch of the south curtain-wall to collapse (Thompson, 1969, 215). Excavation revealed that although this subsidence had affected part of the barbican, the eastern turret of the gatehouse and the next tower eastwards, the gatehouse turret with the springing of its gate arch and part of the barbican wall lay approximately 15ft below its original position in a relatively intact state. Surviving wall remains also indicated that there had been a building adjacent to the gatehouse against the interior of the south curtain wall. The footings revealed that it extended 20ft into the castle ward and measured 40ft in length and the earlier discovery, by miners, of an altar slab near the gatehouse suggest that it may have been a chapel.

4.29 An exploratory sondage was also excavated against the exterior of the keep between the two southern buttresses. This revealed that the cylinder of the keep had a steep batter at its base terminating in a fine plinth course, which Thompson supposed was the intended ground level. Below this plinth was an offset course of approximately 8in. and then the face dropped vertically to the original ground surface 6ft. 10in. below. Thompson observed that the artificial mound cast up against the masonry consisted of hard beaten clay with horizons of soil and that other than sherds of 14th century pottery recovered from its upper part, the make-up of the mound was devoid of finds.

4.30 A further sondage behind the collapsed south curtain wall revealed a bed of clay measuring 4ft. in depth beneath the floor level of the later buildings. Pottery sherds recovered from this deposit were dated to the late 13th century, which demonstrated that it post-dated the curtain wall and Thompson considered that this material may acted as a levelling layer between the bank at the western end of the bailey and a motte.

4.31 Four phases of excavation took place at Conisbrough castle between 1973 and 1977 (Johnson 1980) prior to the construction of a new and permanent ticket office. The areas of the castle which were examined included the basements of the ranges of buildings built against the inner face of the south-western curtain wall, the barbican passage and the fallen towers of the main gate. These works confirmed that substantial deposits of made ground were present within the castle ward as two sondages were cut into the clay layers through which the foundation trenches of the ranges in the ward were cut. This revealed mixed clay to a depth of 0.8m beneath which there was a dark grey sandy soil with charcoal inclusions, probably a decayed topsoil layer, overlying a solid, homogenous red clay. It was also confirmed that the curtain wall was

preceded by an earthen bank which may have encircled the whole of the promontory. A sondage was cut through the foundation of the north-eastern section of the curtain wall, which revealed a bank of dumped material surviving at a maximum height of 2.3m where the pitched footings of the curtain wall were set into it. It was also suggested that this earthen bank may have been associated with an earlier motte which had been completely eradicated during the construction of the stone keep (*ibid* 77).

4.32 In 1990 a topographic survey of the castle and its immediate environs was undertaken on behalf of English Heritage. The resulting product of the survey was a plan of the site, with interpolated contours superimposed on the plan base. This plan exists in AutoCAD format but, as there is no embedded height data, the resulting drawing is two-dimensional and provides little potential for further analysis.

4.33 In 1991 the South Yorkshire Archaeology Unit undertook a watching brief during groundworks associated with the provision of an electricity cable at the castle. The area involved appeared to be composed of a sequence of dumped spoil deposits resulting from the earlier excavation works. The South Yorkshire Archaeology Unit also undertook a programme of geophysical survey and trial trenching within the castle car park in 1993 though no significant archaeological features were encountered during these works. A geophysical survey of part of the site was undertaken by ARCUS in 1994, the results of which have not been examined as part of this project. The West Yorkshire Archaeology Service excavated a single trial trench in the gardens of the castle tearooms in 1997 but the only archaeological features were of Victorian date.

5.0 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Analytical Earthwork Survey (Figures 8 and 9)

5.1 The Analytical Earthwork Survey was undertaken by NAA at various times between 27th January and 25th February 2009.

5.2 The survey was undertaken in accordance with the procedures set out in *Understanding the Archaeology of Landscapes; A guide to good recording practice* (EH 2007). A staged approach to the survey was undertaken and this commenced with a site reconnaissance survey and assessment of the significance of the earthworks at the site. Part of the site control framework established during the earlier survey (EH 1990) of the site was relocated, checked and combined with a new temporary control framework established using a real-time GPS system operating within the Ordnance Survey National Grid.

5.3 Topographic survey data was predominantly acquired using a Leica RX 1250 real-time GPS system equipped with on-board data capture software. This was supplemented by data acquired with a Leica TCR 705 Total Station Theodolite utilising on-board data capture software. In both cases, survey data was exported as .dxf files for subsequent use in AutoCAD.

5.4 All survey data was processed in AutoCAD 2004, the results being plotted as a 1:1,000 hachured plan with a digital copy being presented as an AutoCAD .dwg file.

5.5 In addition, as part of the earthwork analysis, a hand annotated hachured sketch plan, based upon the 1990 English Heritage survey plan, was created in order to facilitate the descriptive recording and interpretation of the site.

Geophysical Survey (Figures 10 and 11)

5.6 The geophysical surveys were undertaken by GSB Prospection Ltd (GSB) between the 19th and 22nd January 2009. The survey methodology was designed to comply with guidelines outlined by English Heritage (2008c) and by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (Gaffney, Gater and Ovenden 2002)

5.7 The geophysical survey areas, comprising a series of 20m by 20m grids were established using tapes and a total station theodolite; and semi-permanent marker pegs were left on site, and located by NAA as part of the Analytical Earthwork Survey. The full geophysical survey report is presented as Appendix A.

5.8 The geophysical surveys were undertaken with the following instruments.

Technique	Traverse Separation	Reading Interval	Instrument
Magnetometer – Detailed	1.0m	0.25m	Bartington Grad 601-2
Resistance – Twin Probe	1.0m	1.0m	Geoscan RM15

5.9 The readings were stored in the memory of the instrument and were subsequently downloaded to computer for processing and interpretation. Geoplot 3 (Geoscan Research) and in-house GSB software were used to process and present the data.The raw data .cmp files were reprocessed by NAA using Geoplot 3 for quality control purposes, however, the results and interpretations presented here are those produced by GSB.

5.10 The data was interpreted and presented on Ordnance Survey base maps supplied by English Heritage. Large scale (typically 1:500) XY trace and greyscale plots are also be presented on CD for archiving purposes.

5.11 A project archive will be prepared in accordance with good practice guidelines and submitted to the client in acceptable formats at the Project Closure stage.

Digital Terrain Model (Figures 12 to 18)

5.12 The Digital Terrain model of the site was derived from the survey data acquired during the Analytical Earthwork Survey. It was produced using Landserf v2.2 and presented as a rendered surface plan and as a .tif image with the 3D data used in its creation being supplied in AutoCAD format.

6.0 RESULTS

6.1 The surviving earthworks at Conisbrough Castle are not the result of a single phase of activity but rather the product of alteration and modification from the post-Conquest to the modern periods.

6.2 Conisbrough Castle lies at the north-eastern end of the promontory upon which the historic core, focussed around the church, of Conisbrough was built. As such, the site of the castle would not have been unsuitable for some form of prehistoric fortification, such as a promontory fort. For similar reasons the knoll may have been suitable for some form of Roman military site. It is situated adjacent to the Templebrough to Castleford Roman Road, and lies close to the confluence of the Kearsley Brook and the River Don. Similarly the site may have once contained earthworks relating to a pre-Conquest burgh for which there is place-name evidence. In all cases, such earthworks could have been reworked or remodelled and incorporated into the present arrangement or else destroyed during the construction of the later stone castle. Additionally, there is considerable evidence for the reworking of the earthwork remains in the post-medieval period in order to further romanticise the ruins for amenity purposes.

6.3 The following description of the surviving earthworks is based upon their morphology, and this is followed by an attempt to place the earthworks within their chronological and cultural frameworks. The features discussed below are identified on Figure 9.

Morphology

6.4 The monument at Conisbrough Castle is focussed upon a natural knoll (1) upon which the castle was built (Plate 1). The knoll has been significantly remodelled to produce a steep scarp surrounded by a series of ditches (2, 7, 8, 9 and 10), which may or may not be contemporary, and most of which have been altered through time.

6.5 What may be the earliest surviving ditch, ditch 2, (Plate 2) is approximately 235m long and extends from the causeway of the present access road into the castle (feature 11), and encloses the western, northern and part of the eastern sides of the castle knoll before petering out adjacent to the terminals of ditches 7 and 8 in the east. Ditch 2 generally has a flat bottom and is bounded on its outside by a relatively low bank with a short counterscarp on its inner face (feature 3). The exception to this is seen on the westernmost section of the ditch, where it appears to be much deeper than elsewhere. Here there is no evidence for a bank beyond the ditch cut but the counterscarp on the western side of the ditch has been remodelled at a later date to create a terrace (feature 5) projecting outwards from mid-slope (Plate 3). A stone revetment at the base of the terrace is visible at its southern end (Plate 4). The southern terminal of ditch 2 in this area is almost certainly false, resulting from the creation of the causeway over the ditch which now carries the access road.

6.6 Ditch 10 is almost certainly a continuation of ditch 2 to the south of the access road. Ditch 10 survives for approximately 28m and peters out at its south-eastern end but if projected around the knoll, would intersect the remains of ditch 2 adjacent to ditch terminals 7 and 8. It is possible that the intervening section of ditch has been filled with rubble from the collapsed curtain wall, the remains of which are directly above this projected section of ditch. Feature 12 may represent evidence for part of the counterscarp of an original element of ditch 2/10 (Plate 5) but is perhaps more likely to result from the slumping of the present make-up of the knoll. However it is equally possible that ditches 10 and 2 never formed a complete circuit of the knoll requiring a further length of ditch to be cut to the south and east of the knoll (see below) in order to achieve this. The base of ditch 10 is uneven and appears to have been the site of at least some spoil tipping during the excavations undertaken at the castle in the 1970s (Plate 6).

6.7 A narrow, shallow ditch, ditch 7 of which only the partial remains of one terminal survives, was cut a few metres to the east of the eastern end of ditch 2. This was subsequently re-cut by a slightly wider ditch, ditch 8, which was cut slightly closer to the base of the knoll, leaving a narrow spur of ground between it and the remains of ditch 2 (Plates 7 and 8). Neither ditch survives for more than 13.5m.

6.8 A much broader and deeper ditch was subsequently cut around the south-eastern sector of the knoll (ditch 9) which truncated ditch 8 (Plates 9 and 10). The ditch is flat-bottomed and curves towards, but does not connect with, ditch 10. It is plausible that ditches 7, 8 and 9 represent three episodes of what was essentially the same event, the cutting of a single ditch, by three gangs of workmen following each other around the base of the knoll. If this were the case, the work seems to have been

curtailed prematurely and perhaps the project was abandoned for some reason. If ditches 2, 10, 7, 8 and 9 are contemporary, the resulting ditch circuit around the knoll is not truly uninterrupted and was only achieved untidily. The ditch (9) is bounded on the south side by a very substantial bank (13), probably created from the soil resulting from the excavation the ditch. A flight of stone steps (14) are situated in the northern terminal of the ditch (Plate 11), which also contains piles of loose rubble at various intervals along its course. Feature 15, represents a denuded sub-rectangular platform seemingly cut into the scarp of the knoll which overlies the cut of ditch 9 (Plate 12). This feature, which lies immediately adjacent to the course of a former footpath, clearly post-dates the ditch and is likely to represent a slump in the make-up of the slope of the knoll in this area.

6.9 Two small stone-built features were noted within the scarp of the knoll. Feature 16 comprises a set of 3 earth-fast stones (Plate 13) situated to the north-east of same footpath adjacent to feature 15. The function of this feature is obscure, but it may represent the former position of a bench or other garden-type feature. Feature 17 is a similarly obscure length of stonework (Plate 14) which may represent a short length of revetment, or else be tumbled masonry from the curtain wall.

6.10 Other features noted within the body of the knoll include feature 18, a former footpath (Plate 15), a quarry pit and associated dump of spoil (feature 19) and an area containing several lobes of historic soil-slippage and tree-boles (features 20) the knoll once being more densely wooded than it is now (for example Plate 16).

6.11 Feature 21 is a substantial mound lying on the scarp of the knoll at its north-western limits. This has variously been interpreted as debris resulting from the archaeological works undertaken in the 1960s and -70s or a fallen tower (Thompson 1980, 328). The feature is not really apparent on aerial photographs taken prior to the 1960s clearance works undertaken in the inner ward (Plate 16) largely as a result of tree cover but appears on a later photograph (Plate 17) taken after the 1967 excavations as a grassed mound. However one photograph (NMR GP/53/19/7) of this area taken in 1953 clearly depicts a large heap of rubble in this area surmounted by a framework of scaffolding and planks that appears to be a temporary barrow-ramp. It would appear that the mound visible today is largely the result of the clearance of rubble from the interior of the castle undertaken prior to the 1960s excavations though it is conceivable that this also encapsulates the remains of a fallen tower which is no longer visible.

6.12 The only other features identified on the scarp of the knoll all relate to the routes of former informal pathways for which there is plentiful photographic evidence (Plates 16 and 18).

6.13 The land to the west and south-west of the knoll broadly comprises a series of 4 terraces (Plate 19, A to D). The southern edge of the most northerly of these (A) is delimited by the denuded remains of a earthen bank (feature 22) which runs from the edge of ditch 10 at a point south of the barbican of the castle, along the lip of the terrace towards Castle Hill (Plate 20 and 21). The bank then turns northwards following the line of Castle Hill to the west of The Lodge where it has been incorporated into a garden feature. The point at which the bank turns northwards lies directly opposite a lane situated below the gardens belonging to The Priory located to the west of Castle Hill. The bank seems to terminate at a point to the south of the present site gateway. The bank reappears north of the gateway, but appears much broader and higher than elsewhere (feature 23). This is probably not the result of differential survival but is more likely to result from the dumping of spoil during the construction of the present entranceway, which was built several metres to the north of the terminal of the bank noted above. As the bailey bank (22) continues northwards it becomes progressively more obscure until the remains of the bailey are simply reflected by a break of slope defining the northern limits of the terrace. The break of slope turns eastwards towards ditch 2 near the northern limits of the site. The projected point of intersection of the two features is masked by a series of mounds (24) some of which contain traces of rubble (Plate 22 and 23). The mounds are fairly amorphous finger mounds and probably just represent dumps of rubble or similar material which have accumulated during past clearance or building works. An Ordnance Survey Antiquity Model map of 1960 records the features as being the result of "modern mutilation".

6.14 There are few features within the area of the bailey that could possibly relate to the positions of former buildings. The remains of two footpaths (features 25 and 26) cut the bailey bank on its south-eastern side, and the modern access road to the castle is partially embanked on its south western-side. There are also some low earthworks (feature 27) resulting from the construction of the modern visitor centre.

6.15 The results of the geophysical survey of this terrace are not particularly informative, especially the gradiometer survey which was largely compromised by the presence of the visitor centre and various collections of subsurface ferrous litter over much of the area though one linear feature of uncertain origin, aligned roughly parallel with the foregate causeway of the castle. The resistivity survey did detect a curving high resistance anomaly to the north-west of the visitor centre roughly in the area where the bailey bank should be. Although the bank is not visible as an earthwork in this area, the high resistance feature may represent the subsurface remains of the feature. A series of insubstantial linear features, three of which appear to exhibit right-angled corners, were detected, these also appearing to have some alignment similarities with the foregate causeway.

6.16 Terrace B is situated below and to the south-east of terrace A. Most of the earthwork features here appear to relate to the routes of former pathways or erosion (feature 28) for which there is historic photographic evidence (Plates 24 and 25). The bank associated with ditch 9 terminates on the north-eastern side of the terrace in an exaggerated mound (29) once colloquially known as Hengist's Grave (VCH 1912, 29). There are no earthworks suggestive of former building platforms present on this terrace but both forms of geophysical survey detected features interpreted as being archaeological in origin. The gradiometer survey identified a single three-sided feature in the centre of the terrace, the resistivity survey identifying two three-sided features, and several features of uncertain origin.

6.17 Terrace C is situated below and to the south-east of terrace B (Plate 26). There are a limited number of earthworks present on this terrace, the most obvious being a distinct notch cut into the outer face of the bank 13, and a lobe of earth, probably spoil arising from the excavation of the notch, immediately to its east (features 46). The purpose of this feature is unclear and the Ordnance Survey Antiquity Model map notes the feature as "modern mutilation". Feature 30 is a broad, shallow, subrectangular hollow containing a low mound (feature 31). These features do not appear to be of any great antiquity and are perhaps best interpreted as some form of garden or parkland features. There is a slight ridge (32) to the south-east of these latter features upon which are the slight remains of what appear to be furrows. There are slight earthwork features to the south-west of feature 30 (feature 33) and these seems to be the result of the partial back-filling of the hollow for unknown purposes. The gradiometer survey of terrace C identified a feature interpreted as an area of potential burning in the southernmost corner of the area. The resistivity survey identified a feature of archaeological potential in the same area and an area of low resistance in a position equivalent to that of earthwork feature 30, which is suggestive of slightly damper ground in that area, possibly a former pond.

6.18 Terrace D is separated from terrace C by a modern road. It is located to the south-east and below terrace C and is now an area of amenity containing pathways and a war memorial. The remainder of the terrace comprises lawns and the whole area has been landscaped. There are no surviving earthwork features on terrace D and the area was not subjected to geophysical survey.

6.19 An area of open grassland (34) situated to the north-east of the castle knoll contains the relict remains of ridge and furrow cultivation (Plate 27). This area is depicted as comprising three fields on historic mapping and although the field boundaries have been removed, their former lines can still be detected.

6.20 To the west of the grassland is a substantial quarry (35). This is recorded as a brick-field in historic mapping and is now heavily wooded and used for public amenity (Plate 28). The former quarrying works have exacerbated the slope and dimensions at the outer face of the bank (36) associated with ditch 2 and its original dimensions are now impossible to discern. The degree of remodelling of the bank is also difficult to assess but at least some of the feature is composed of brick wasters, dumped during the lifetime of the brick-field, these being evident in the root bole of a fallen tree (Plates 29 and 30). The bricks bore part of their manufacturers mark, this being "...ITH" (presumably part of the name "Smith" after the former owner of the brick-field, Mrs Elizabeth Smith. Plate 31). There are a series of low lobes and mounds (37) situated near the south-eastern limits of the quarry, these probably representing quarry debris or further dumps of wasters.

6.21 Access to the former quarry from the castle area is by two flights of steps (38 and 39) at either end of the quarry. These clearly post-date the closure of the quarry in 1848 (Plates 32 and 33) and show traces of relatively recent maintenance. However, the remains of an earlier footpath (47) leading through woodland from the footpath on top of bank 13 survives as a shallow hollow-way (Plate 34). This presently terminates in a precipitous drop into the quarry but it is possible that an earlier flight of steps once existed in this area which were replaced by the more gently rising eastern steps (38) and the footpath rerouted along the top of the south-eastern lip of the quarry (40). A small mound (41) to the south of the footpath on top of bank 13 is likely to have resulted from the rerouting of the footpath.

6.22 Two low lobular earthworks, located within the part of the quarry (42 and 43) almost certainly relate to post-quarry landscaping works.

6.23 There are a series of denuded earthwork features located to the north-west of the castle knoll. A small mound (44) is situated immediately to the west of steps 39. It is located in a position that should equate with the outer face (36) of the bank associated with ditch 2. The most likely interpretation of this feature is that it relates to either the quarry or the construction of the steps.

6.24 Feature 45 is the hollowed remains of a footpath leading to a blocked entrance in the perimeter wall of the site and appears to be of relatively recent origin.

Phasing and chronology

Prehistoric and Roman

6.25 The siting of castles within earlier enclosures is not an uncommon phenomenon, especially where those enclosures occupy strategically important positions. The most obvious examples are those where castles were built within Roman forts, utilising the rampart of the fort as a bailey or ward. Examples of these include Bowes, Brough and Brougham Castles which were built in the strategically important line of Roman forts across the Stainmore Pass (Margary No. 82), and those located on the southern shores of Britain such as Burgh Castle and Portchester Castle. However, the Iron Age hillfort at Old Sarum had a substantial motte inserted into its interior in the post-Conquest period, and the hillfort at Dinas Bran in Wales was also chosen as the site for a castle (Forde-Johnston 1977, 23-32).

6.26 Topographically, the site would have provided a suitable location for the construction of a promontory fort, or similar, attributable to the prehistoric period. There is some scant historical evidence to suggest that a "Kaer" was present at Conisbrough in the early post-Roman period, although the nature of this evidence is such that it should be treated with extreme caution. If there was a structure of this nature present at Conisbrough Castle, it could have been a prehistoric fortification such as a promontory fort, or a small Roman period structure such as a fortlet, similar in size to that at Chew Green in Northumberland. The site at Conisbrough is situated in a classic location for a fortlet; overlooking the confluence of two water courses (M Bishop, *pers comm*), and alongside the line of the Templebrough to Doncaster Roman Road (Margary 710c). However there are no earthworks present at the site which would appear to support the former existence of a structure originating in either the prehistoric or Roman periods although such remains may exist buried below the ground surfaces of the castle ward. A number of trial trenches were excavated during the 1970s archaeological campaigns, with the explicit intention of proving natural deposits. The archive for this work survives at Doncaster Museum and the site diary contains descriptions of the deposits encountered during trial trenching (although there is no location plan for the trenches). The chronologically latest deposit encountered comprised pink clay on which or through which all other archaeological features lay or were cut. Below this lay a deposit of clean, hard, red clay "0 - 10m" (sic, but must be a transcription error for 1.0m) thick. This in turn sealed a layer of clay and limestone rubble and the excavator considered that this "needs further investigation" (the writer clearly not believing that this latter deposit was natural shattered rock-head). The "further investigation" did not appear to have been undertaken for there is no further mention of such an activity in the site diary. However, on the basis of this information, there is some potential for

earlier remains, potentially of prehistoric or Roman date, to be preserved beneath up to 2m of stratigraphy in the inner ward. Despite this, a cursory inspection of the artefactual archive obtained from the site, principally the pottery, during the course of this study, did not identify any ceramic material of a date earlier than the 11th century (P. Robinson, *pers comm*).

Early medieval

6.27 Pre-Conquest activity within the Conisbrough area is attested both historically and architecturally. If Geoffrey of Monmouth's references to the activities of Hengist are ignored, place-name evidence suggests that the site may have been a burh, though when it became considered as such is not clear. A charter of AD 664 records the granting of land at Conisbrough by Wulfhere, King of Mercia though it is unclear from the translation of this document whether the place-name is in its original form or a later translation of the original (Sawyer 1968, 88). The place-name incorporates Anglian and Scandinavian name elements and it is possible that Conisbrough may have lain on a boundary fortified by the Danes in the late 9th or early 10th century along the line of the Dearne and middle Don valleys (Parker 1987, 35-36). In this context, it is of interest that St Peter's church contains Anglo-Saxon masonry which Ryder has suggested may have formed part of a nave with a porticus to north and south in the 8th century (Ryder 1982, 45-52), while the cross fragment lying in the south aisle is Anglo-Scandinavian and of late 10th century (ibid, 59).

6.28 If Conisbrough was a fortified site, any defences could plausibly have incorporated or exploited earlier structures such as was the case at the Iron Age sites at Old Sarum and Cadbury Castle, both of which were refortified in this period. Although there are no strikingly obvious earthworks present at the site that might readily equate with the defences of a burh, a long low ridge (32) survives on one of the terraces (C) located to the south-west of the castle. Whilst this has the outward appearance of a natural topographic feature, the results of the electrical resistivity survey indicate an abrupt increase in earth resistance along the north-western edge of this feature (Figure 11). Such a response may be the result of the feature being lined with masonry along this edge, or may equally be the result of more natural phenomena, such as a ridge of near-surface bedrock. However, the response is not replicated on the south-eastern slope of the feature. The ridge does not appear to continue to the south-west of Castle Hill and has been either buried under or destroyed by the large bank (13) situated to the south and east of the castle.

6.29 Aside from the above feature, there are no other earthworks present at the site that can be readily attributed to the pre-Conquest period although the potential for some features to exist to survive as buried

remains cannot be entirely discounted. However, some of the 11th century pottery noted in the excavation archive in Doncaster Museum could conceivably be of late Anglo-Saxon date.

Medieval

6.30 Subsequent to the Norman Conquest, the Honour of Conisbrough was awarded to William de Warenne, though some authorities consider that this was an acquisition made after he had amassed estates in Sussex and Norfolk (Le Patourel 1966 VI 11). William de Warren was a pivotal figure in the Norman invasion of Britain in 1066, and was awarded territory in Lewes in Sussex as a result. Although William's principal seat was probably centred on Lewes, the Conisbrough holdings would have required some kind of focal point for its effective administration. It has hitherto been assumed that William would have probably built a motte and bailey castle within the area in order to fulfil this requirement, and that this would have been sited on the knoll occupied by the present castle. Both assumptions appear to have little factual foundation and there is little, if anything, preserved within the surviving earthworks that would support the hypothesis that a motte once occupied the site of the present keep. An earthen bank below the curtain wall, which was first proven by excavation in the 1960s (see above), has been used in an attempt to support the argument for the presence of a former bailey on the knoll (Thompson 1969, 216 and Johnson 1980, 77). Once this argument is accepted, it follows that the former presence of a motte is plausible, this being reinforced by comparison to other de Warenne castles, such as Sandal and Mortemer. The lack of upstanding evidence for a motte is considered by Johnson to be the result of its complete eradication during the construction of the present keep, an event accompanied by a general raising and levelling of the ground levels within the 'bailey' (ibid). However, it is equally plausible that the earthen bank is the remains of another form of structure, such as a ringwork, and that a motte never existed.

6.31 On architectural grounds the surviving castle keep was built between 1180 and 1190 at the behest of, and contemporary with, Hamelyn Plantagenet, the fifth earl and the first two historical references to the castle originate at in this period (Thomson 1971, 2). The curtain walls are considered to be a slightly later addition, constructed either by Hamelyn, or his son, William, who succeeded him in 1201. The buildings in the inner ward of the castle were added in the 13th century (Johnson 1985, 1), and the many of the surviving earthworks present at the site would appear to relate to this phase of activity.

6.32 The castle appears to occupy a natural knoll which has been enhanced in such a way as to increase the severity of its slope and provide a relatively level ground surface for the area enclosed by the curtain wall.

The keep occupies the easternmost section of the knoll with the curtain wall enclosing the remaining area of its summit. There is archaeological evidence to suggest that the wall was built upon a pre-existing bank, which itself post-dated *c.* AD 1100, based upon the fact that pottery considered to be earlier than this date was recovered from the original ground surface below the bank. Although there is little in the way of visible earthwork remains (parts of it are just visible on the Digital Terrain Model, figures 12 to 18), this bank represents the earliest known earthwork on the site. As a result of there being no excavated evidence for a motte, and that Johnson opined that the bank seems to have completely encircled the top of the knoll, the most plausible interpretation for the bank is that it represents the remains of a former ringwork. Whether the knoll was modified in this or a later period is not clear, but it is possible that ditches 2/10 and 7/8/9 and the bailey 22 could be contemporary.

6.33 By definition ringworks are roughly circular areas of ground enclosed by an earthwork comprising a bank and external ditch which may not completely enclose the site especially on promontories or similar sites. The bank may have been equipped with stone revetments, and timber palisades towers, and a gatehouse. The ground level within the ringwork may be raised above that outside, which would explain the made ground within the enclosed ward at Conisbrough, and in some cases a bailey is attached to the to the exterior of the ringwork such as at Alberbury in Shropshire and Cefn Bryntalch in Powys (Highham and Barker 1992, 207-9). It is generally accepted that ringworks are contemporary with motte and bailey castles and most, if not all, were built after the Conquest. There is some evidence to suggest that a few late Anglo-Saxon sites were equipped with defences, for example Goltho, from the 9th century onwards (Beresford 1987 29-84), and Sulgrave in the mid 11th century, where both had been provided with earth ramparts. Goltho was subsequently converted into a motte and bailey castle, and Sulgrave into a ringwork (King and Alcock 1969, 102-121 and Brown 1976, 49) in the post-Conquest period.

6.34 The construction of the keep represents the second identifiable phase of activity on the site, this occurring in the late 12th century. The curtain wall followed shortly afterwards. It is extremely likely than the knoll had been re-profiled before or during this phase of activity.

6.35 Other surviving earthwork features attributable to the medieval period comprise the truncated remains of broad ridge and furrow cultivation (34).

Late medieval/post-medieval

6.36 The later medieval and post-medieval history of the castle is obscure. However, the curtain wall appears to have been unstable from a relatively early date. In 1322 King Edward II spent a few days at Conisbrough Castle and ordered 40 marks to be spent on repairs to the walls and the tower, this suggesting that the castle was already beginning to deteriorate by this time.

6.37 The de Warennes continued to hold Conisbrough until the 8th earl, John, died in 1347, when the manor reverted to the Crown. It was eventually granted to Edmund Langley, fifth son of Edward III, who later was created Earl of Cambridge and, in 1386, Duke of York. His eldest son Edward, Duke of York, inherited the manor in 1402 and held it until his death at Agincourt in 1415. The manor was then held by the widow of Edward's brother, Matilda, Countess of Cambridge, until her death in 1446. The next grantee was Matilda's stepson Richard, Duke of York, who was killed at the battle of Wakefield in 1460 during the Wars of the Roses. His son Edward, Earl of March, succeeded him in the lordship and, in 1461, was acclaimed king and took the throne as Edward IV after victory over the Lancastrian forces in the same wars. As a result, Conisbrough passed to the Crown once more.

6.38 Subsequent to the death of Richard III, the last monarch of the House of York, at Bosworth Field in 1485, the Crown passed to the House of Tudor. The Tudors rarely visited the North of England, and Conisbrough Castle fell out of use. Royal estates frequently suffered from neglect and the House of Tudor appears to have been the ultimate absentee landlord. As a result the castle fell into disrepair and part of its curtain wall had collapsed by 1538.

6.39 As a result of its lack of military value, it appears to have escaped further injury during the Civil War. Pictorial evidence in the form of a number of etchings of limited reliability, suggests that the inner ward of the castle had stood derelict for a considerable period of time, and was partially covered with trees by 1800. Part of the site was under cultivation in 1858 and is recorded as being such in the tithe award of that date. There is no surviving earthwork evidence for this activity although it may have resulted in some level of attrition to earlier earthworks such as the bailey. Another part of the site was quarried in the 19th century, the brick-field resulting from this activity being identified on both the tithe map and 1st edition Ordnance Survey map and the quarry survives as a series of earthwork features to the north of the castle. The owner of the brick-field at this time, Elizabeth Smith, is named on the enclosure map of 1857. The development of the park appears to have taken place in the late 19th century (Clark & Toop, 2009, 16). Photographic evidence, probably attributable to the late Victorian period, suggests that the site was also a

visitor attraction at this time and certain amenity features had been added to the site in order to enhance the level of its appeal

6.40 The collapse of the curtain wall (which occurred prior to 1538) may have resulted in the partial filling of ditch 2/10 on the south and south-eastern side of the knoll which may in turn have precipitated the excavation of ditch 7/8/9 (if not contemporary) in an attempt to partially refortify the site. It has been argued that a tower on the north-western corner of the castle also appears to have fallen, resulting in earthwork feature 21, although there is photographic evidence that the feature is at least in part composed of dumped rubble deposited in the 1950s. The width and depth of ditch 2 in this area are less than to the south (Plate 35) possibly the result of an attempt to partially clear the rubble and restore the profile of the ditch. Features 24 located on the other side of the ditch are probably the result of other clearance or construction works.

6.41 Ditches 7/8/9 were cut in a sequence though may be part of a single event. As a results of this, ditch 7, is only visible as a short length of shallow ditch and its terminal. Ditch 7 was subsequently largely cut away by a second ditch, 8, situated slightly further to the west. This re-cut survives as only a short length of ditch as it in turn has been truncated by a further ditch cut, ditch 9. Ditch 9 comprises a substantial feature, both in terms of both its depth and width, located predominantly on the south side of the castle, and its construction would have involved the creation of large quantities of spoil, probably up-cast as bank 13. The period in which these ditches were cut is not entirely certain and the earliest available mapping only suggests that the work had been completed by the mid-19th century. If not contemporary with ditches 2/10 the cutting of these new ditches may have been part of an abandoned attempt to refortify the castle, though no effort to connect the new ditch(es) to the surviving elements of ditch 2/10 appears to have been made. Additionally there is no surviving evidence to suggest that the curtain wall had been repaired at this time although this could have been effected in timber. The cutting of this ditch could have been undertaken at any time in the medieval or post-medieval periods, however the castle was not attacked during the English Civil War of the mid 17th century, suggesting that at least by this date the site was indefensible.

6.42 The majority of the remaining earthwork features would appear to have their origins as landscape or garden features originating in the Georgian and/or Victorian periods. An undated engraving (Plate 36), illustrates the leisure value of the castle ruins in what appears to be the late Georgian period. An engraving first published in the Gentleman's Magazine, dated to 1801, depicts a similar scene (Plate 37). This was the period of the Gothic Revival in architecture when a large number of buildings, in particular country houses, were built in this style, often incorporating

ruins within their parks or gardens. This architectural tradition was associated with Romanticism, a complex artistic, literary and intellectual movement with its origins in the second half of the 18th century. The movement embodied a strong sense of aesthetics, and in particular, for the picturesque. The ruins of Conisbrough Castle would have easily have satisfied the criteria for the picturesque, and Gothic, especially if the ruins had been tidied up a little and rendered accessible. It had the added benefit of being associated with Walter Scott's novel Ivanhoe, written in 1819, which was in part inspired by the ruins. However, the castle at Conisbrough is not directly associated with a country house, and its amenity value appears to have been, at least in part, public rather than the exclusive reserve of the wealthy or important. However, the castle was in the ownership of by the Dukes of Leeds in this period, who had their principal seat at Keeton Hall, near Worksop, up until 1811 when they moved to Hornby Castle, near Bedale. Keeton Hall was designed in the Palladian architectural tradition by William Talman in 1698 and this style of architecture would have become unfashionable by the late 1700s. It is possible that the Dukes of Leeds made Consibrough Castle the destination of excursions, another concept with its origins in Romanticism, in order to compensate for the lack of anything of a Gothic nature at their home. When George Osborne, the sixth Duke of Leeds, moved his seat to Hornby Castle, a flamboyant house designed in the then fashionable Picturesque Gothic tradition by John Carr in about 1760, the need for excursions would have been negated, and indeed the distances between the two sites would have been to great for them to be a feasible activity anyway. If this were the case Conisbrough Castle would no longer have been needed by subsequent holders of the Dukedom, and it was disposed of in 1838 upon the death the sixth Duke.

6.43 As noted above, the site is traversed by a network of footpaths which may have their origin in this period. Features such as the stone steps (14) in the terminal of ditch 9 are likely to have been constructed to facilitate movement around the site. The terrace (5), perhaps a viewing platform, cut into the counterscarp of ditch 2 was revetted with masonry to ensure its stability. There were more garden features once present at the site than survive today. Plate 38 depicts part of the castle at its most picturesque, with a decorative pond placed where the visitor centre is now situated, and what appears to be a bench or a table in the background. The visible remains of further garden features may be represented of the low earthworks on terrace C, in particular features 30 and 31 which may be another pond. Feature 46 may have been cut into bank 13 in order to insert a flight of steps to facilitate access to the top of the bank from terrace C, and Hengist's Grave, feature 29, may also be a deliberate addition to the bank. Feature 16 may also represent an undated recreation structure situated by the side of a former footpath that once crossed ditch 9.

6.44 In 1840 a brickyard (35) was opened in the area situated to the north-east of the castle. This involved considerable ground reduction works resulting in the sharp scarp (36) into the quarry. These groundworks affected the outer face of bank 3 to a degree where it is now not possible to discern its original profile although the uppermost edges of the bank survive in two areas. The various earthwork features now situated within the floor of the quarry, (features 37, 42 and 43) almost certainly relate either to the use of the quarry, or result from land reclamation works undertaken subsequent to the quarry's closure in 1856. The steps, 38 and 39, must post-date 1856 and the present footpath towards the quarry seems to have replaced a former pathway 40. Mound 44 probably resulted from either the construction of steps 39and does not appear to be part of the original bank (3) of ditch 2. The level of ground reduction occasioned by the creation of the brickyard was clearly substantial, and this has eradicated all evidence for previous land use within this area.

Modern

6.45 There a number of earthworks on the northern side of the knoll some of which relate to natural phenomena. The remains of a former quarry, and its attendant spoil heap (19) are situated towards the top of the scarp of the knoll, just to the north of the curtain wall. An area of soil slippage and tree-boles (20) exists just to the west of the quarry feature, the slippage itself may or may not have been precipitated by falling trees. Although the knoll is still wooded in parts, there is photographic evidence to suggest that the woodland was denser in the past. Some of the earthworks within the eastern end of ditch 10 may be the result of the dumping of spoil generated by excavation works undertaken in the 1970s, a spoil tip being visible in Plate 6. Also visible in the same photograph is what appears to be a fairly recent dump of material in the western terminal of ditch 9, which may have originated in the 1960s excavations. In addition, there are a number of dumps of stone in the bottom of ditch at various points along its course.

7.0 DISCUSSION

7.1 The surviving earthworks at Conisbrough Castle are the product of alteration and modification from the post-Conquest to the modern periods. The evolution of the earthworks is not straightforward to disentangle as a result of the post-medieval use of the site, where it appears to have been used for amenity purposes, quarrying and agriculture. Latterly the site has been subjected to a series of archaeological interventions, and some of the surviving earthworks may be a result of spoil tipping in the 1960s and 70s.

Earthwork evidence for the putative motte and bailey castle

7.2 There is little in the way of surviving earthworks that would support the existence of a motte and bailey castle predating the present stone castle. There is a bank beneath the curtain wall of the castle, this being proven by excavation, and this has been interpreted as being a bailey earthwork in the past. So far no archaeological evidence for a motte has been revealed by excavation. The bank was built after *c.*1100 based on pottery evidence (although Thompson misleadingly used the term "pottery earlier than AD 1100" in his report (Thompson 1969, 215)), and William de Warenne, the 1st Earl of Conisbrough is recorded as being in possession of the Honour of Conisbrough in the Domesday Survey of 1086. It is not unreasonable to suggest that William would have created some sort of focal-point from which to administer his lands in the Manor of Conisbrough, but this need not have been on the site of the present castle. The nearest known motte and bailey site to Conisbrough is located at Mexbrough, some 3km to the north-west, but this seems to have been dependent upon the castle at Tickhill, located more than 9km to the south-east of Conisbrough. The critical question must be, how much earlier than AD 1100 is the pottery used to date the bank? If the bank at Conisbrough is later than 1086, then the present site is perhaps unlikely to have been built by the First Earl, who was killed at Pevensey in AD 1089. Given the lack of any excavated evidence for a motte, it is perhaps more plausible that the bank represents the remains of an earlier structure, perhaps a ringwork, that once encircled the crest of the knoll.

Aspects of the morphology of the knoll relating specifically to the construction and development of the stone castle

7.3 The knoll upon which the castle sits is a natural outcrop of Coal Measures sandstone surrounded by deposits of magnesian limestone. At present, the crest of the knoll is relatively level, but from excavated evidence there appears to be substantial quantities of made ground present at the site, although this is not obvious from the topography alone. The scarp of the knoll appears to have been accentuated, and apart from the area of the collapsed curtain wall, seems to exhibit a relative uniform slope all around the circumference of the castle. Ditch 2/10 and outer bank 3 would seem to be contemporary with the reshaping of the knoll but whether this was related to the construction of the stone castle, or an earlier fortification, cannot be stated with absolute certainty.

Earthworks resulting from the dumping of spoil arising from earlier archaeological interventions

7.4 There is surprisingly little evidence for earthworks resulting from the dumping of spoil generated by earlier archaeological interventions. The feature (21) located on the scarp of the knoll in the north-western corner of the castle was used as a dump for rubble during some clearance works undertaken in the 1950s but may also encapsulate masonry from a fallen

tower. A series of small earthworks beyond the ditch (features 24), may reflect dumps of cleared from other parts of the castle complex. There is photographic evidence to suggest that some of the earthworks in the vicinity of ditch 10 and the western end of ditch 9 may contain spoil arising from archaeological works undertaken in the 1960s and 70s. There is no evidence for spoil heaps arising from the South Yorkshire Archaeology Unit's work in 1991, or the West Yorkshire Archaeology Service's work in 1997. There are also a number of dumps of rubble within the base of ditch 9, and although these look like relatively recent dumps (they have not grassed over), their origins are unclear.

Surviving earthworks relating to the post-medieval use of the site

7.5 Several features apparently relating to the recreational use of the site were created, Seem to have been created in the post-medieval period. The most obvious of these being the creation of a terrace (5) on the counterscarp bank of ditch 2 (from which there is a good view of the keep through the broken section of the curtain wall) and what appears to be a series of garden features 30 and 31, with 33 representing the partial backfilling of the complex, on Terrace C. A series of steps (14) had been inserted into the easternmost terminal of ditch 9 facilitating access to an arrangement of large rocks, seemingly deliberately placed in and around the terminals of ditches 7 and 8 to form a garden feature. Many of the lengths of walling noted at various locations around the site are likely to belong to this period. There is also photographic evidence for the former existence of other garden features, and a network of footpaths that sprang up over the majority of the site. It is tempting to associate these additions and alterations to the increasing popularity of Romanticism in the late Georgian period, and a perceived need to enhance the castle's sense of place for aesthetic reasons in order to fulfil the impression of the picturesque beloved of the Romanticists. Conisbrough became associated with the novel Ivanhoe, which was written in 1819, but the site had prior semi-historical connections which would have appealed to the Romanticists, those relating to Hengist and the post-Roman period in Britain; to them, the Arthurian period, as related by Geoffrey of Monmouth. However, final formalisation of the castle grounds did not occur until the late 19th century, when the custodian's lodge was added (D. Went pers. comm.).

7.6 In 1840, a large portion of the site was quarried for clay for brickmaking. The brickfield (35) was situated to the north-east of the castle, and quarrying works damaged the outer face of bank 3, associated with ditch 2. The resulting effect is a steep and dramatic drop from the top of bank 3 to the ground surface to the north-east. This is entirely the result of quarrying, the post-Conquest ground levels now being difficult to determine, although they must have been similar to that seen to the east of the quarry in an area of preserved ridge and furrow (34). The brickfield has eradicated all evidence of any earlier activity which may have

occurred in this area. A small quarry (19) was also excavated on the northern face of the knoll. Although this is not a particularly datable feature, it seems likely that it is of post-medieval date.

Earthworks resulting from historic land slippage or subsidence

7.7 The most obvious alteration to the site arising from subsidence is the re-profiling of the southern flank of the knoll, resulting from the collapse of the curtain wall in this area. This appears to have occurred prior to 1538, and the curtain wall appears to have been unstable from shortly after it was built, probably because it was built on a pre-existing earthen bank. There are a few features on the northern section of the scarp of the knoll with evidence for historic soil movement. In at least one case this was the product of a tree falling, the resulting bole being situated close to the top of the scarp. Other features resulting from soil slippage (20) survive in the general vicinity of the tree bole some of which may have resulted from tree root disturbance.

7.8 Although not the result of land slippage or subsidence, several areas have been subjected to attrition resulting in distinct earthwork features. The majority of these comprise the lines of former footpaths, these being especially distinct on bailey bank 22 (footpaths 25 and 26 having worn substantial grooves in this earthwork). Footpath 45 is also distinct, as are several of the former footpaths around the scarp of the knoll, though many are gradually recovering.

Evidence for extramural settlement

7.9 There is no convincing earthwork evidence for extra-mural structures present at the site. The area enclosed by the bailey on terrace A is relatively flat and no structural evidence was encountered during archaeological works undertaken in advance of the construction of the visitor centre by the South Yorkshire Archaeology Unit in 1991. The earthworks present on terrace B result from the courses of former footpaths, and an erosion hollow (28) for which there is photographic evidence. Aside from a broad ridge running the entire length of terrace C, the remaining earthworks appear to be more akin garden or landscaping features, and may be of post-medieval date. Terrace D in now occupied by a memorial garden and landscaping has removed any former earthwork features. The quarry to the north-east of the castle has removed all surface features which may have once related to extramural settlement in this area and there are no obvious settlement-related earthworks in the field to the east of the quarry.

7.10 Despite the lack of earthwork evidence, the geophysical survey undertaken to the west of the castle appears to have detected a number of anomalies considered to be of archaeological origin (Figures 10 and 11, and Appendix A). The geomagnetic survey of terrace A was largely compromised by the proximity of the visitor centre but did detect an area

of increased magnetic response at the northern end of the terrace for which there was no corresponding resistivity anomaly. There is also a geomagnetic anomaly of uncertain origin located towards the southern end of the terrace, which is broadly aligned with a number of resistance anomalies in the same area. The resistivity survey detected a curving band of high resistance to the west and north of the visitor centre. This was interpreted as being of modern origin, but the line of the feature approximates that of the course of the bailey bank, and it is, therefore, possible that it represents an archaeological feature. There are a number of resistance anomalies situated towards the southern limits of terrace A which have been interpreted as being of archaeological origin. These comprise a group of four high and one low resistance features which may be the remains of former structures. Four of these five anomalies are aligned with each other, and the foregate causeway, but their alignment with respect to the bailey bank is a little curious. If these anomalies are real archaeological features, and only excavation would elucidate this matter, the conflict in alignment may suggest that the surviving bailey bank is a later feature.

7.11 The geophysical survey of terrace B also detected features of potential archaeological origin. The geomagnetic survey identified a single three sided structure located roughly in the same position, but on a slightly different alignment, to a similar resistance anomaly. There is an area of increased magnetic response on the western edge of the terrace. There is a further resistivity anomaly of archaeological potential towards the northern end of the terrace and a further four anomalies of uncertain origin at various locations on the terrace.

7.12 The results of the geophysical survey of terrace C are better correlated with the extant earthwork features. The geomagnetic survey detected two bands of increased magnetic response which correlate with the edges of the ridge running across the terrace and a strong response located at the southern limits interpreted as an area of burning. Although there is no corresponding earthwork feature in this area, the anomaly corresponds to a resistivity anomaly in roughly the same area. The resistivity survey detected a single high resistance band on the north-western edge of the ridge interpreted as being a result of topographic conditions but which may also be the result of subsurface features. There is a band of low resistance present to the north-west of this, reinforcing the interpretation of the earthwork feature in this area as a former pond.

Evidence for a putative pre-Conquest burh

7.13 The evidence for the former existence of a pre-Conquest burh at Conisbrough seems to be restricted to that provided by its place-name. Many authorities consider that if present, the burh was most likely to be centred on the area of the church, to the west of the castle, which has demonstrably pre-Conquest origins. Topographically, the church and the

castle are separated by a slight saddle, but otherwise both are located on the same ridge of high ground. The only earthwork present on the castle site which might be interpreted as being part of the defences of a former burh are the remains of a low bank or ridge located on the southern limits of terrace C. The north-western lip of the ridge produced a linear high resistance anomaly, interpreted as reflecting the topography of the terrace at that point, but the geophysics report comments that these topographic conditions are probably of anthropogenic origin. While it is possible that the high resistance band represents the remains of masonry, or a revetment, it may equally be the result of near-surface bedrock. The ridge runs into bank 13 and does not reappear anywhere else on the site, nor does it exist in ground to the west beyond Castle Hill. Although there is a slight possibility that the ridge could have formed part of a burh's defences, it would perhaps seem more likely that it represents a landscaping feature.

7.14 It is possible that the bank upon which the curtain wall of the castle is built could also represent the defences of a burh that did not enclose the area around the church. The dating evidence for the bank is limited to pottery attributable to a period "earlier than AD 1100" which was obtained from the old ground surface below the bank during excavation works undertaken in the 1960s. If the pottery has a broad date range, the earthen bank on top of the castle knoll could conceivably be of late 9th or early 10th century date rather than being a post-Conquest feature.

7.15 It has furthermore been suggested that the line of the pre-Conquest burh remains fossilised in the street patterns around the church, and adjacent to the castle, which may represent the former circuit of the burh's defences. Two schemes are possible, and both commence at a point on Castle Avenue close to where the bailey bank of the castle turns north-westwards along Castle Hill. The larger of the two schemes would see the defence-line of the former burh running south along Castle Avenue, west along March Street, north and north-east along Elm Green Lane and south-east along what is now Station Road. The alternative scheme, which would have enclosed a substantially smaller area would commence at the same starting point on Castle Avenue, to turn westwards along West Street, north and north-eastwards along Church Street and south-eastwards along Castle Street to intersect Castle Hill at a point close to the present visitor centre. In both cases, the area in which the castle and its earthworks are situated would have been excluded from the scheme. Perhaps the smaller of the two schemes would have been the most effective in terms of manning the defences, the larger scheme would have required significantly more warriors to adequately man the perimeter. If the castle knoll was not the focus of the pre-Conquest settlement, to include it within the defences of the burgh would have exacerbated this problem.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The analytical earthwork survey undertaken at Conisbrough Castle identified a total of 47 earthwork features, or groups of features, dating from the post-Conquest period onwards. There were no earthworks that could be attributed to the prehistoric or Roman periods, but the location of the site would not have been unsuitable for defensive structures such as a prehistoric promontory fort or a Roman fortlet. If they existed, their earthworks could have been destroyed by or incorporated into the earthworks of the later stone castle. The earthwork evidence for a possible pre-Conquest burh is rather limited, and somewhat equivocal, and is restricted to an earthen bank located below the curtain wall of the castle, and a low ridge of ground situated on a terrace to the west of the castle.

8.2 Evidence for the post-Conquest period is represented by the reshaped castle knoll, and its encircling ditch system, and an earthen bailey situated to the west of the castle. At least one of the ditches on the south side of the castle was probably created subsequent to the collapse of a section of the curtain wall of the castle. No evidence for a motte was identified, and the earthen bank below the curtain wall, formerly interpreted as a bailey may alternatively be interpreted as forming part of a ringwork. The ridge and furrow cultivation remains identified to the east of the castle knoll probably have their origins in the medieval period. Some of the geophysical survey features situated on the terraces to the west of the castle could also potentially relate to extramural medieval settlement or activity.

8.3 The majority of the remaining earthwork features have their origins in the post-Medieval period and relate to industry and amenity.

8.4 In order to investigate and clarify the suggested phasing and chronology of the site proposed in Section 6 above, a limited programme of intrusive archaeological intervention would be required. This could include the excavation of a trench on the southern side of the castle knoll in order to confirm whether ditch 2/10 did once encircle the knoll and has been filled with rubble resulting from the collapse of the curtain wall in this area. A further trench across ditch 9 and bank 13 would help refine the date of construction of this complex and clarify its interpretation.

8.5 A series of trial trenches excavated on the southern part of terrace A, the central part of terrace B and over the area of burning identified in terrace C would further investigate geophysical anomalies identified in these areas to determine whether they relate to settlement or other later activity. Similarly a trench excavated across the ridge on the latter terrace would clarify its character and if built, the date of its construction.

8.6 No further intrusive intervention within the castle itself is considered necessary, so the potential for the existence of prehistoric and/or Roman remains at the site would remain hypothetical. However the archive resulting from the 1970s excavations could be usefully re-examined and the pottery reassessed in the attempt to refine its dating. If possible the archive resulting from the 1960s excavations should be located and subjected to a similar level of scrutiny. This may confirm the dating of the bank upon which the curtain wall was built and ultimately this would assist in the interpretation of the chronology of the monument.

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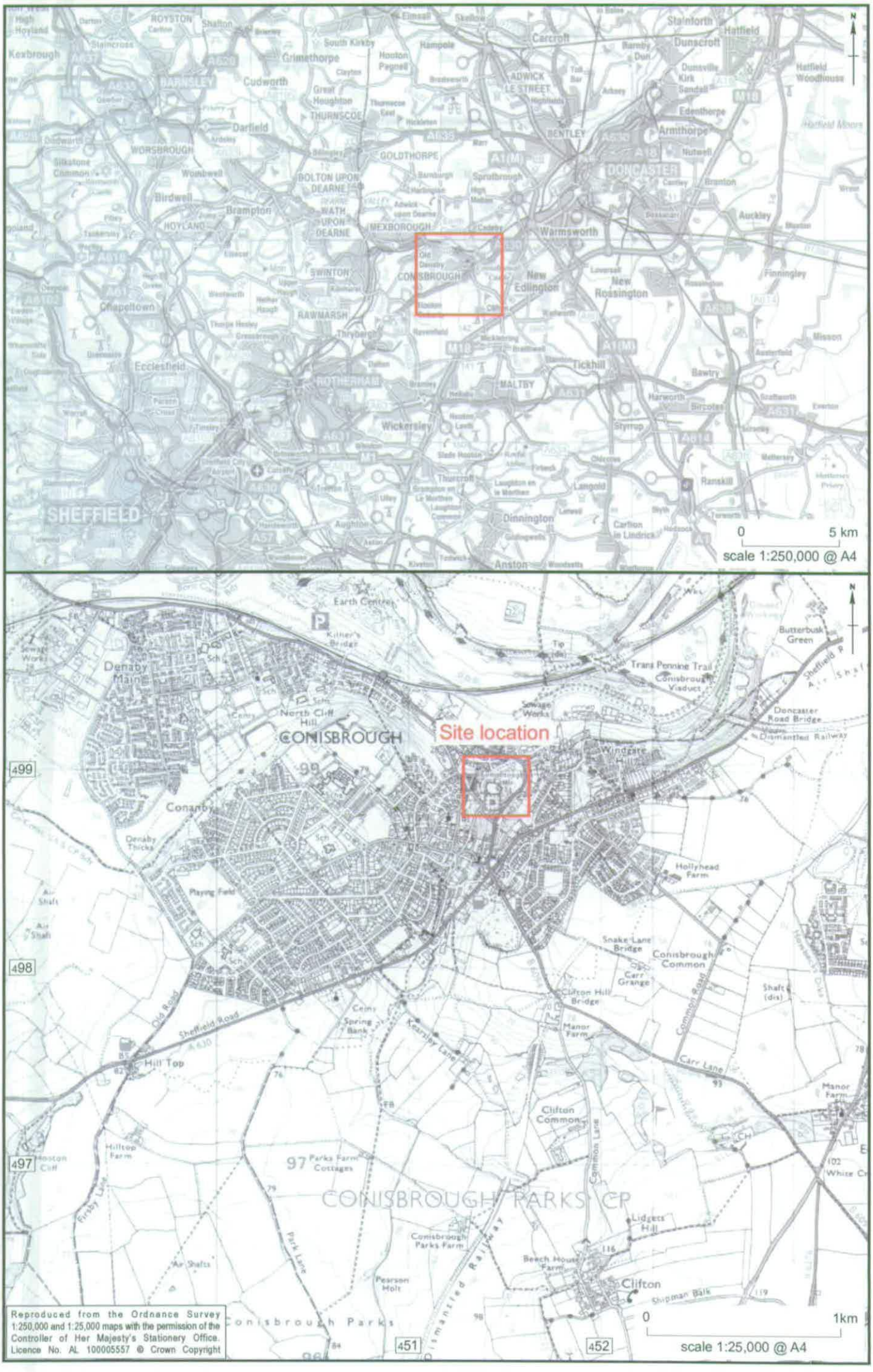

Figure 1 Conisbrough Castle: site location

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Figure 2 Conisbrough Castle: Ordnance Survey 1:10560 map of 1854

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Figure 3 Conisbrough Castle: Ordnance Survey 1:10560 map of 1888-93

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Figure 4 Conisbrough Castle: Ordnance Survey 1:10560 map of 1903-04

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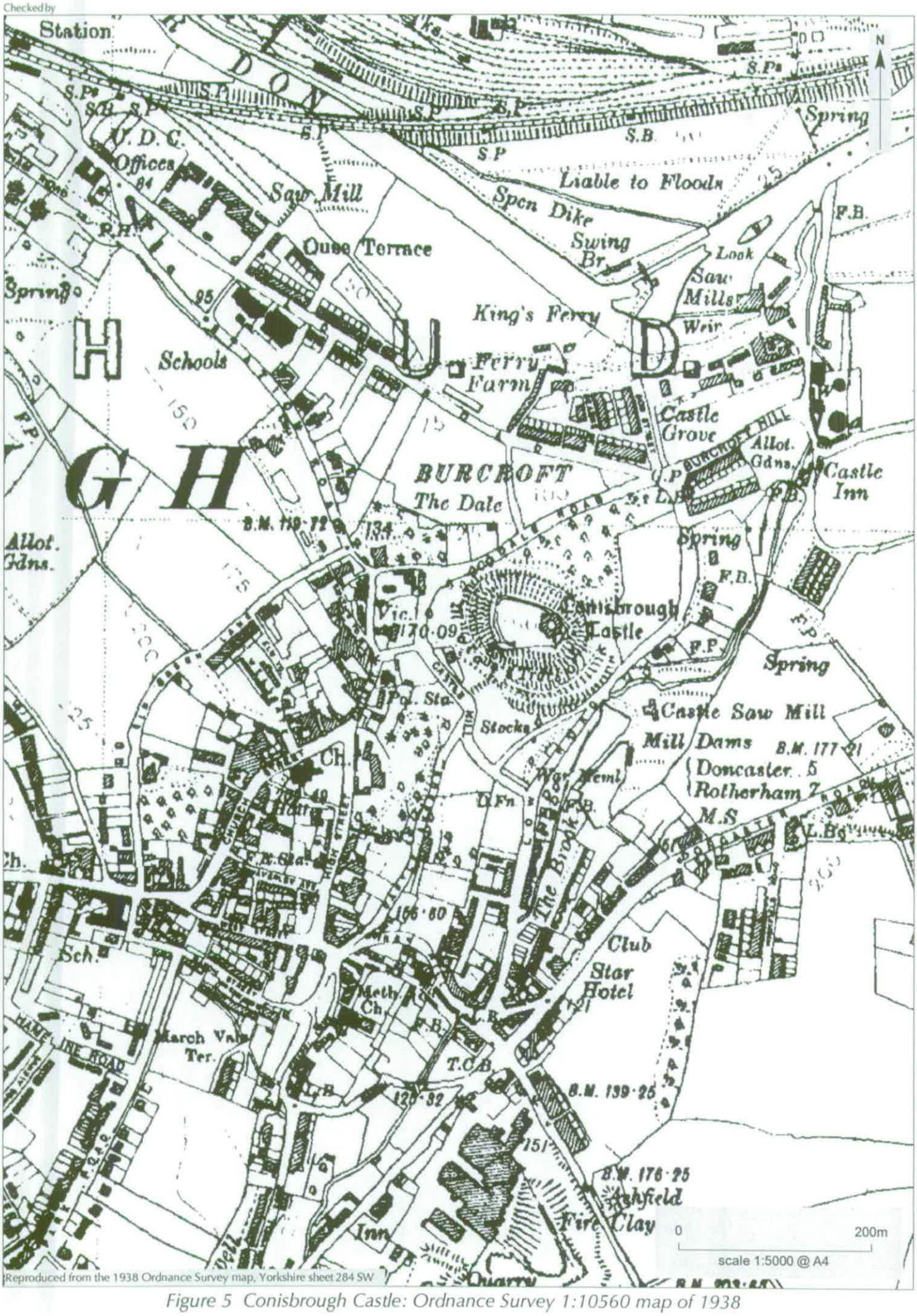

Figure 5 Conisbrough Castle: Ordnance Survey 1:10560 map of 1938

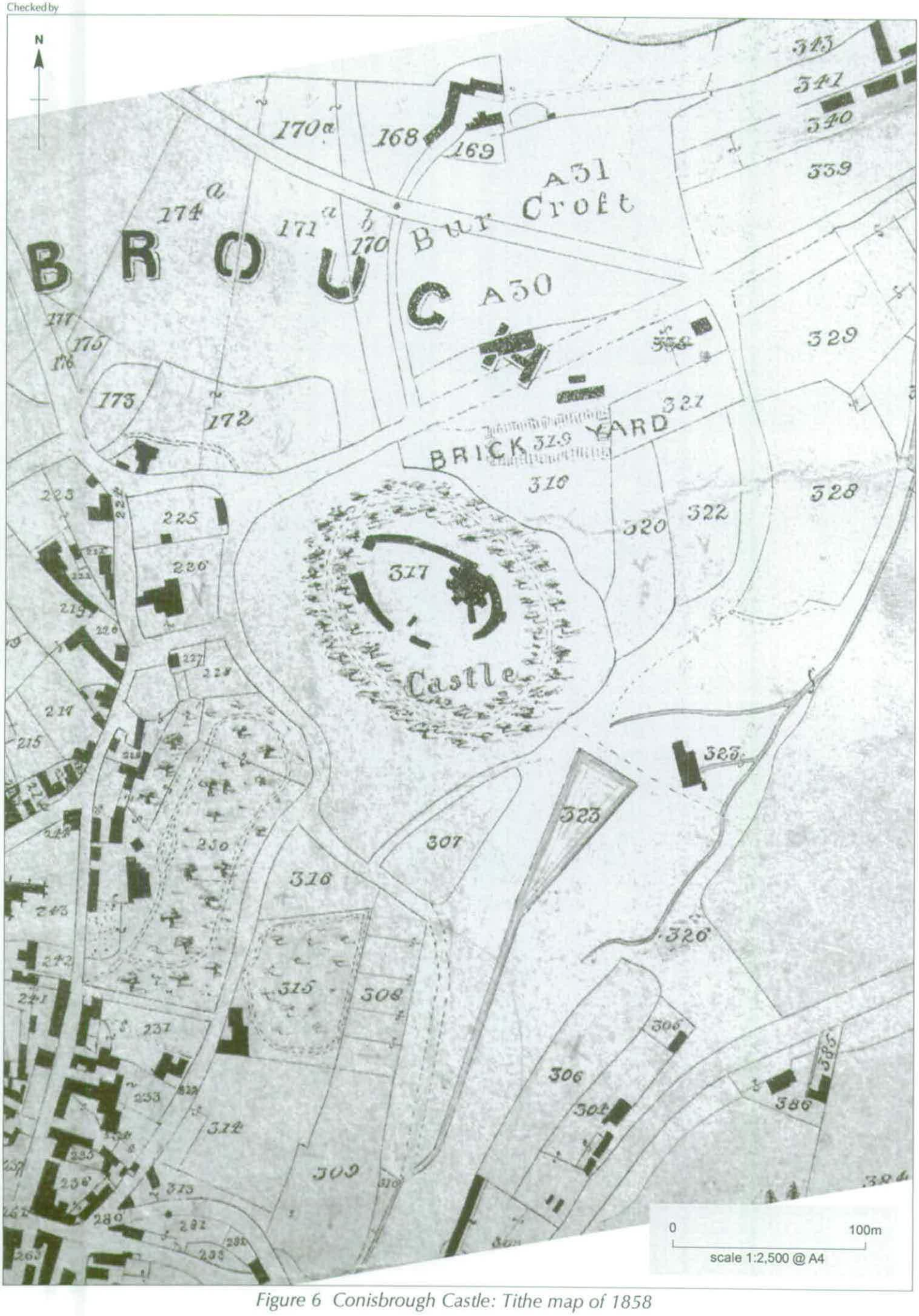

Figure 6 Conisbrough Castle: Tithe map of 1858

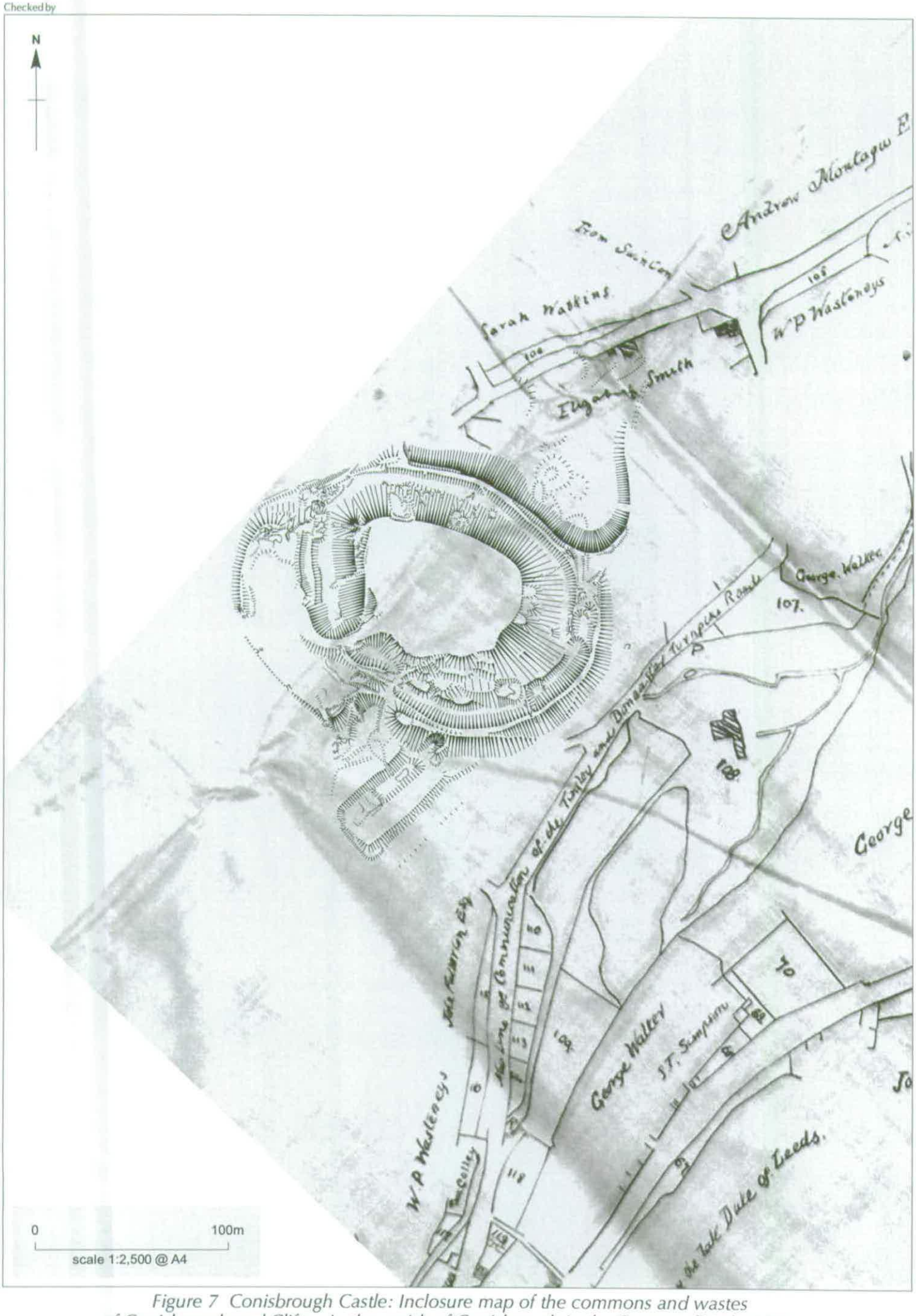

Figure 7 Conisbrough Castle: Inclosure map of the commons and wastes of Conisbrough and Clifton in the parish of Conisbrough in the County of York (1857)

Figure 8 Conisbrough Castle: hachure plan

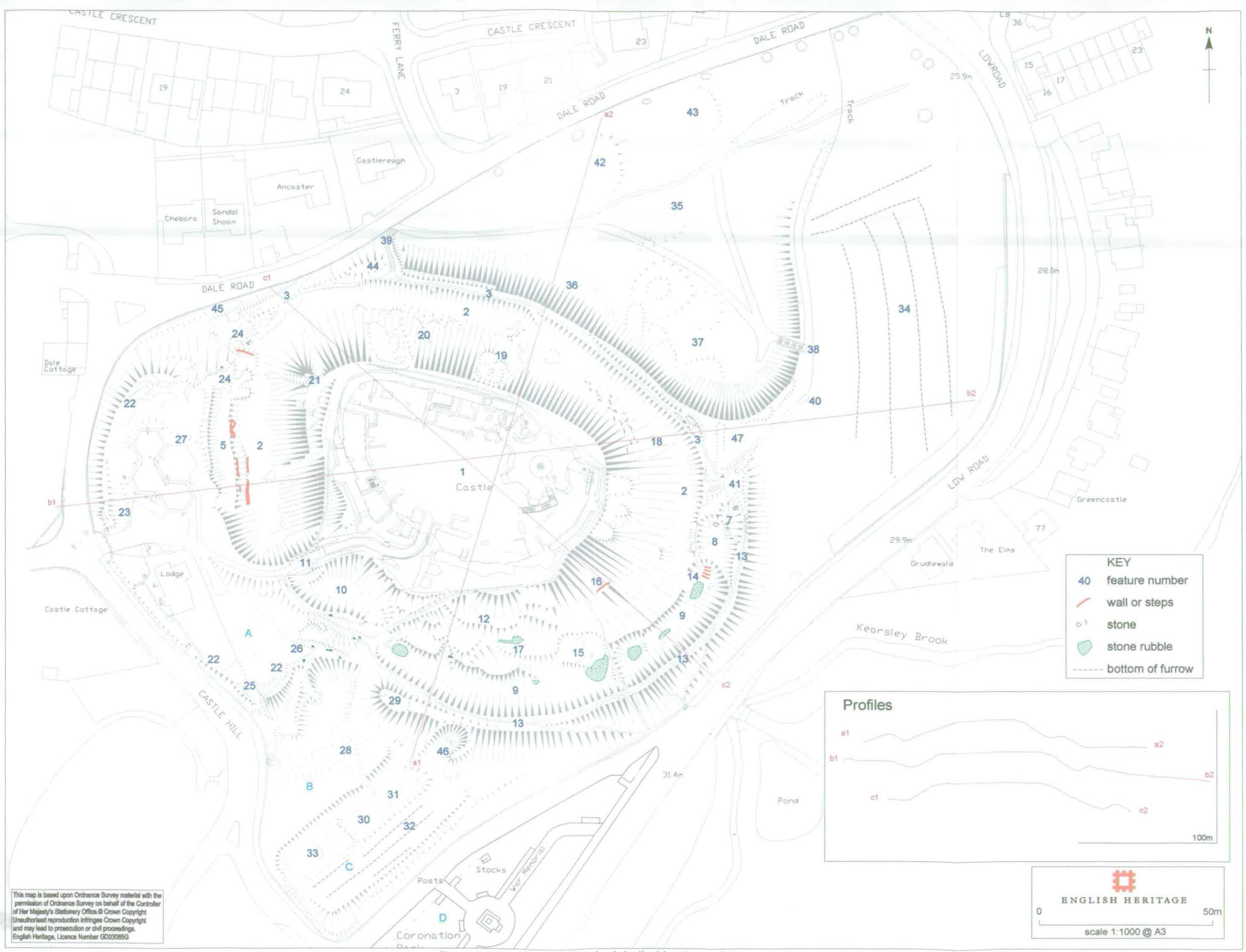

Figure 9 Conisbrough Castle: labelled hachure plan

?Burnt / Fired

?Archaeology

Increased Magnetic Response

Trend

Uncertain Origin

Ferrous / Magnetic Disturbance

N

Castlereagh

Ancaster

Chebara

Sandal Shoan

DALE ROAD

Castle

Area 2

Lodge

e Cottage

CASTLE HILL

Area 1

Posts

Stocks

Coronation Park

Pos

32.3m

D

B

C

C

A

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ENGLISH HERITAGE

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Figure 10 Conisbrough Castle: magnetic survey results, greyscale, interpretation and hachure overlay

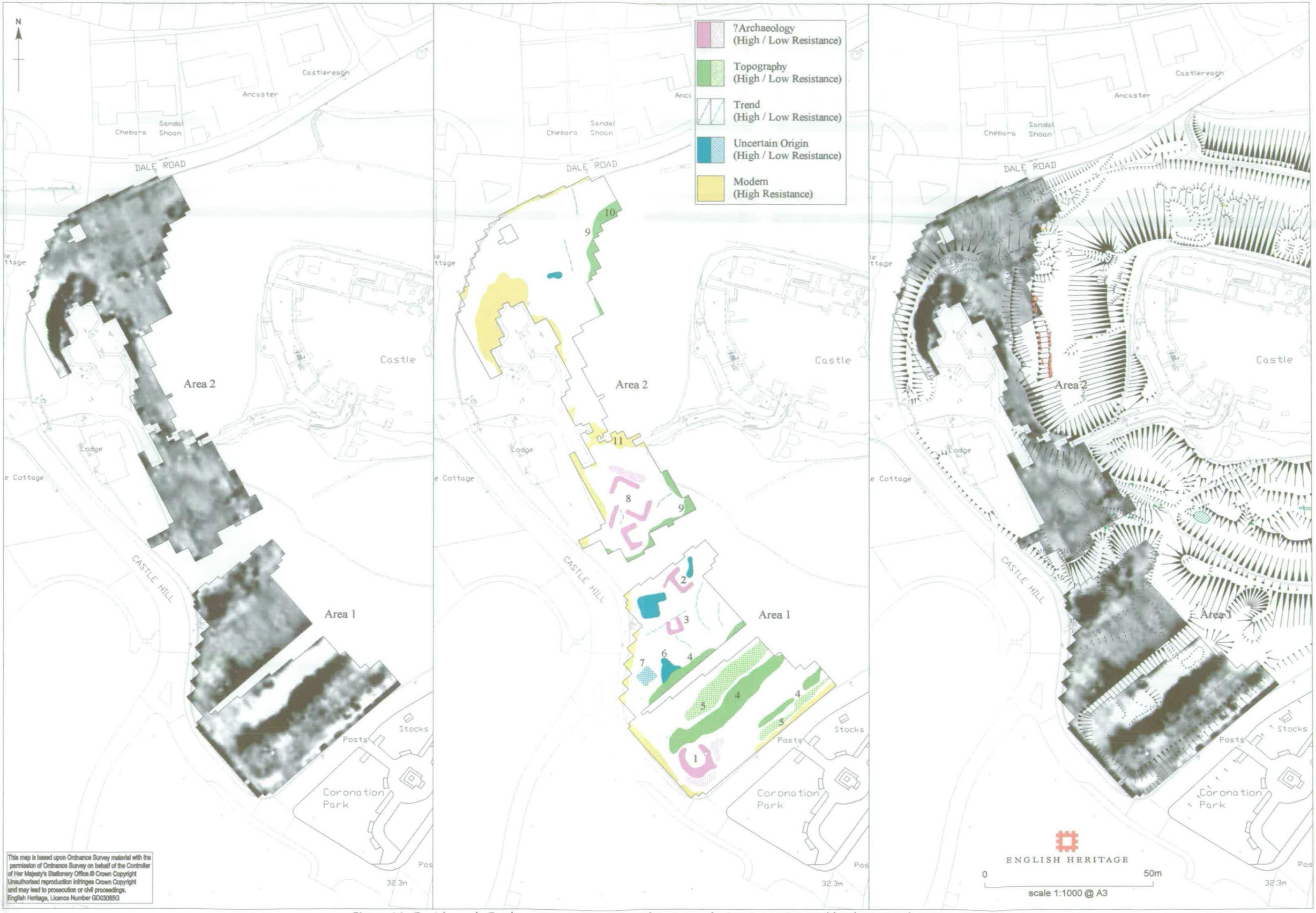

Figure 11 Conisbrough Castle: resistance survey results, greyscale, interpretation and hachure overlay

Figure 12 Conisbrough Castle: digital terrain model, plan view

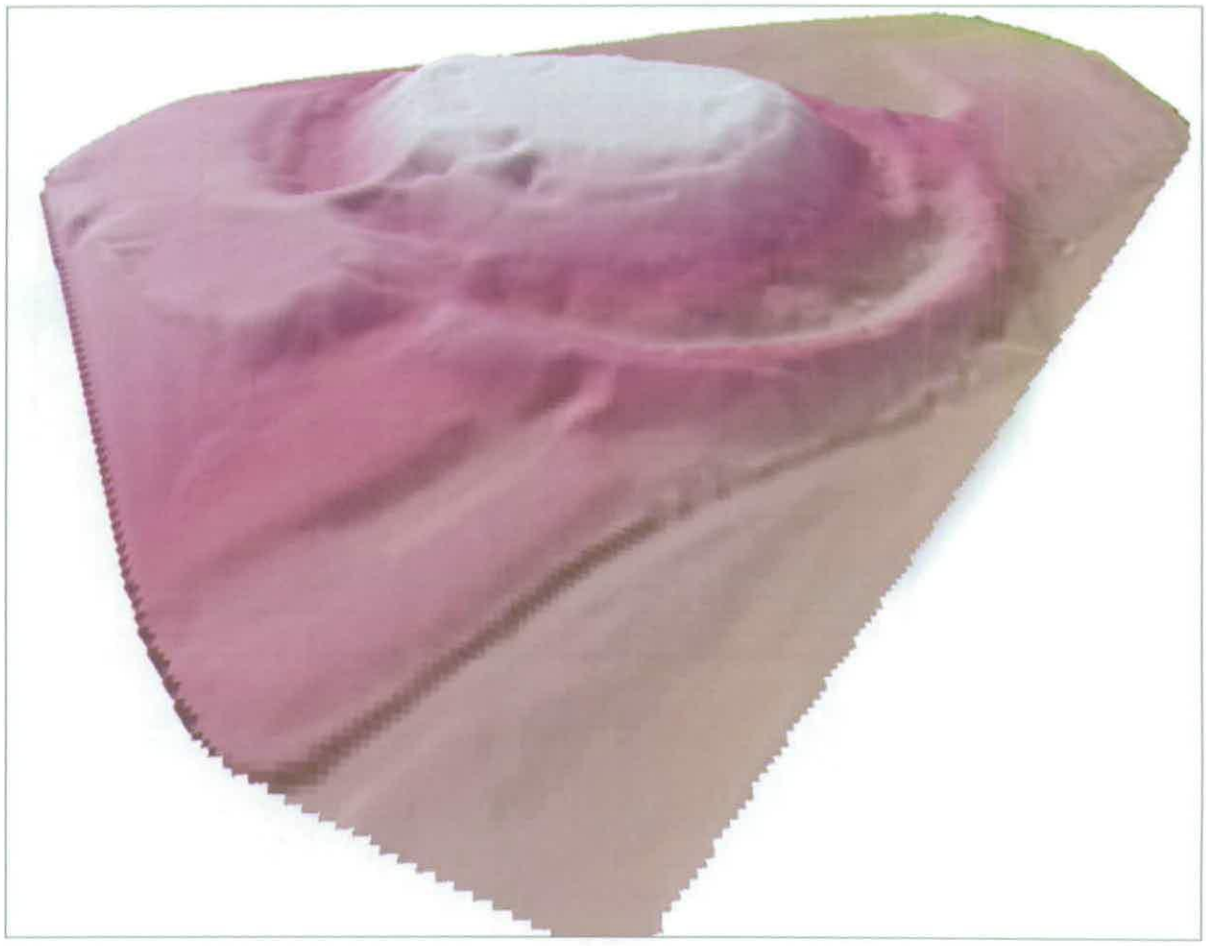

Figure 13 Conisbrough Castle: view of castle dtm from south

Figure 14 Conisbrough Castle: view of castle dtm from southeast

Figure 15 Conisbrough Castle: view of castle dtm from east

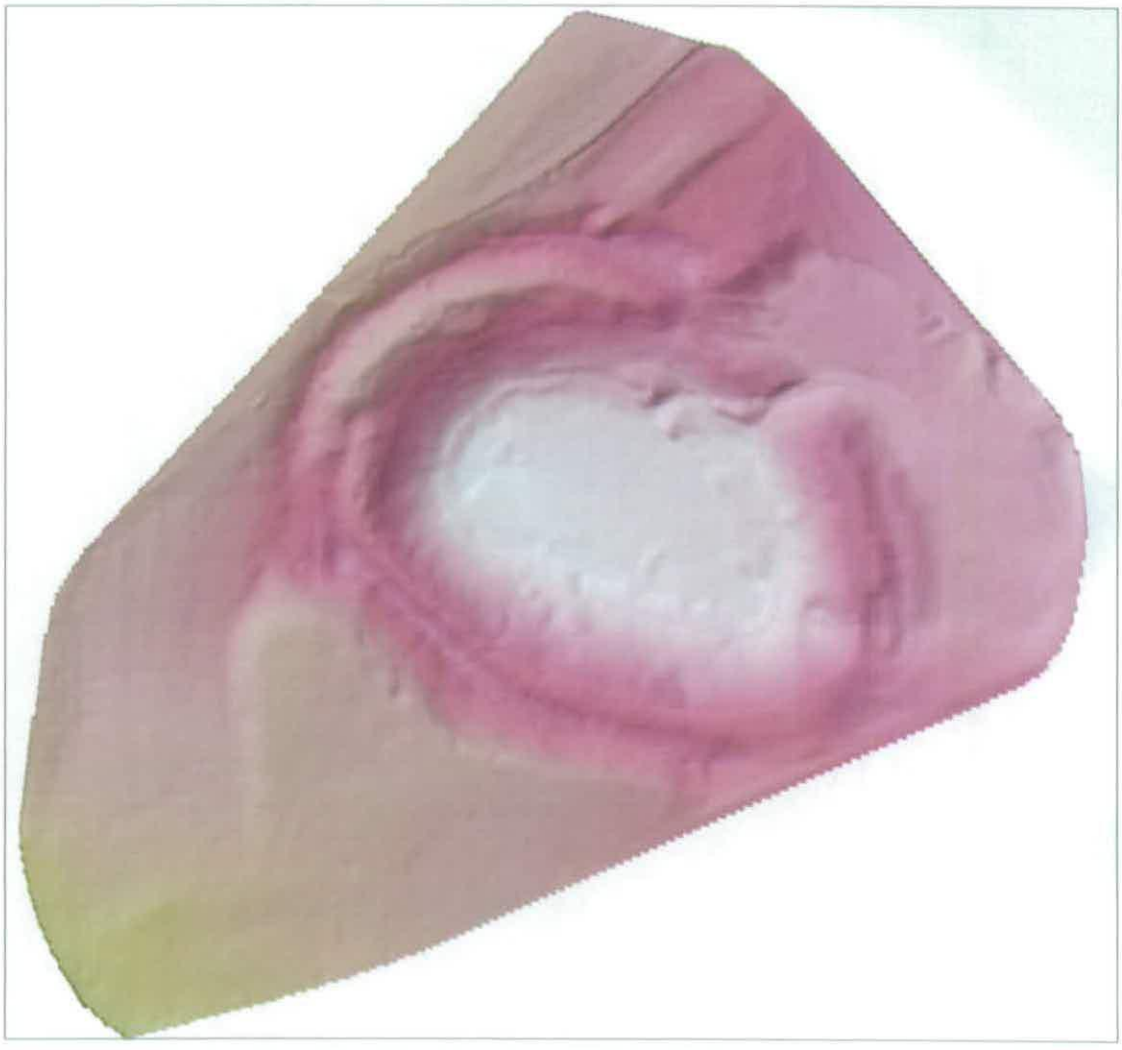

Figure 16 Conisbrough Castle: view of castle dtm from northeast

Figure 17 Conisbrough Castle: view of castle dtm from northwest

Figure 18 Conisbrough Castle: view of castle dtm from west

Plate 1 Conisbrough Castle: Conisbrough Castle facing north-east

Plate 2 Conisbrough Castle: ditch 2, western section facing south

Plate 3 Conisbrough Castle: terrace in section ditch 2 facing south

Plate 4 Conisbrough Castle: revetment wall at base of terrace facing west

Plate 5 Conisbrough Castle: possible remains of original counter-scarp or bank of ditch 2/10 facing west

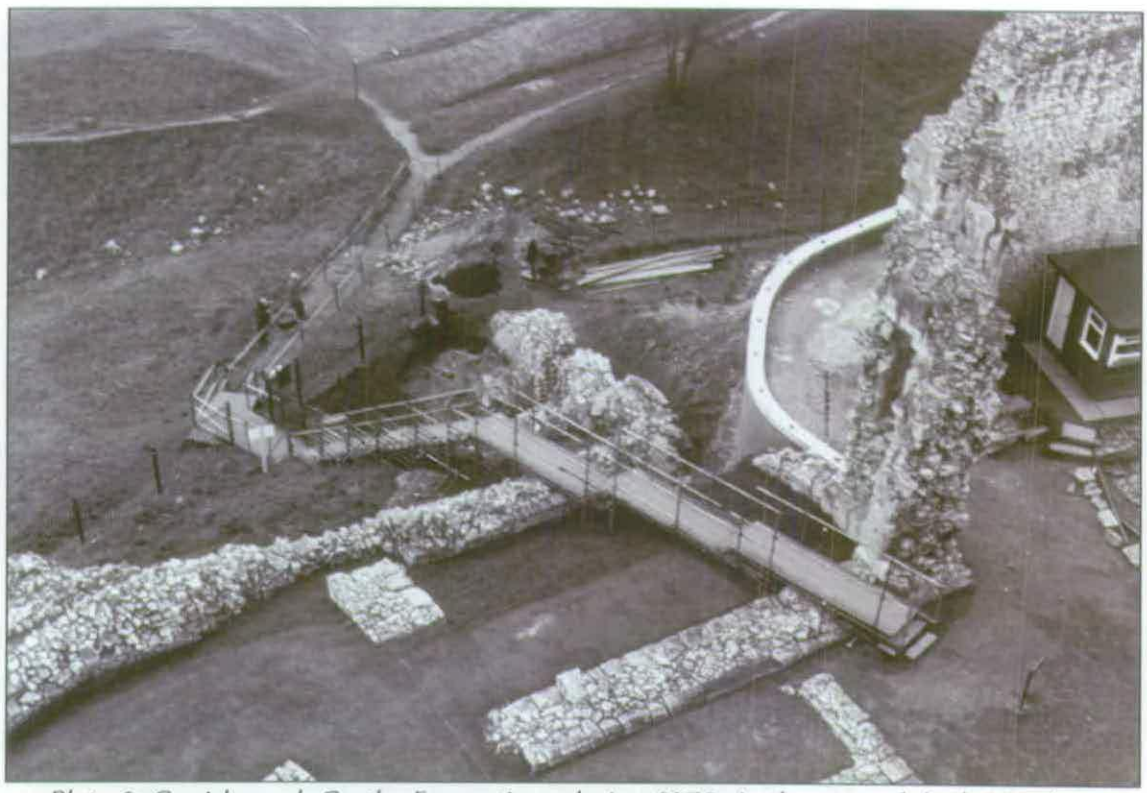

Plate 6 Conisbrough Castle: Excavations during 1970s in the area of ditch 2 and 10

Plate 7 Conisbrough Castle: general view of ditch 2 (left) and ditch terminals 7, 8 and 9 facing north-east

Plate 8 Conisbrough Castle: ditch terminals 7 (right) and 8 (left) facing north

Plate 9 Conisbrough Castle: general view of ditch 9 facing west

Plate 10 Conisbrough Castle: general view of ditch 9 facing north-east

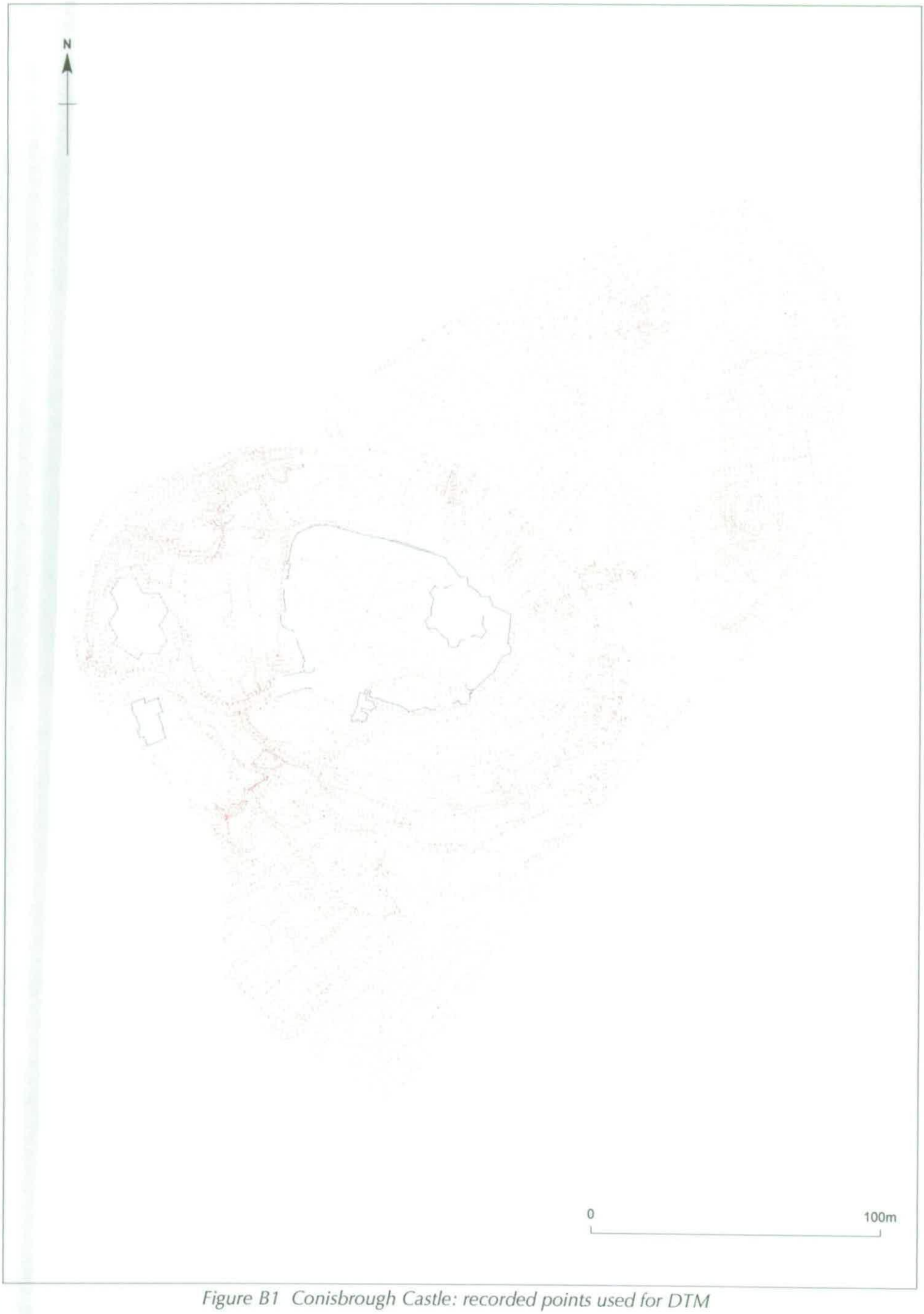

Figure B1 Conisbrough Castle: recorded points used for DTM

Figure B2 Conisbrough Castle: effective ground coverage for DTM at 3m spacing

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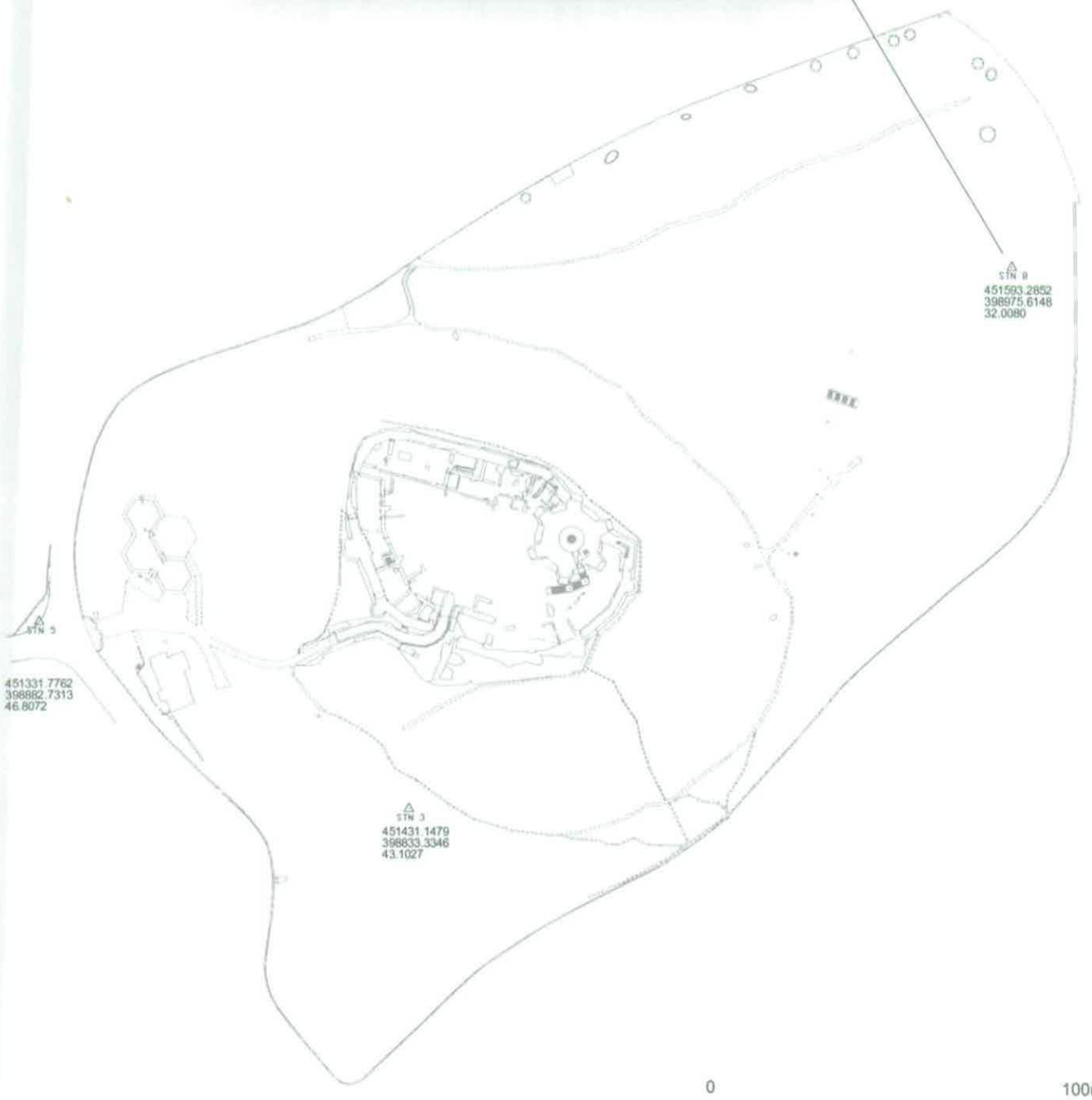

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Figure B3 Conisbrough Castle: locations of existing permanent stations

Plate 25 Conisbrough Castle: undated (pre 1967) view of castle earthwork from terrace B facing north-east showing erosion hollows and footpaths (© English Heritage)

Plate 26 Conisbrough Castle: terraces B and C

Plate 27 Conisbrough Castle: remains of ridge and furrow cultivation to north-east of castle, facing east

Plate 28 Conisbrough Castle: former brickfield to north of castle, facing north-west

Plate 29 Conisbrough Castle: root bole of fallen tree in former brickfield

Plate 30 Conisbrough Castle: root bole of fallen tree in former brickfield (detail)

Plate 31 Conisbrough Castle: detail of bricks

Plate 32 Conisbrough Castle: view of eastern steps into former quarry, facing east

Plate 33 Conisbrough Castle: view of western steps into former quarry, facing south west

Plate 34 Conisbrough Castle: former footpath to the south of the quarry

Plate 35 Conisbrough Castle: profile of ditch 2 adjacent to features 21 and 24, facing north

Plate 36 Conisbrough Castle: undated engraving (© English Heritage)

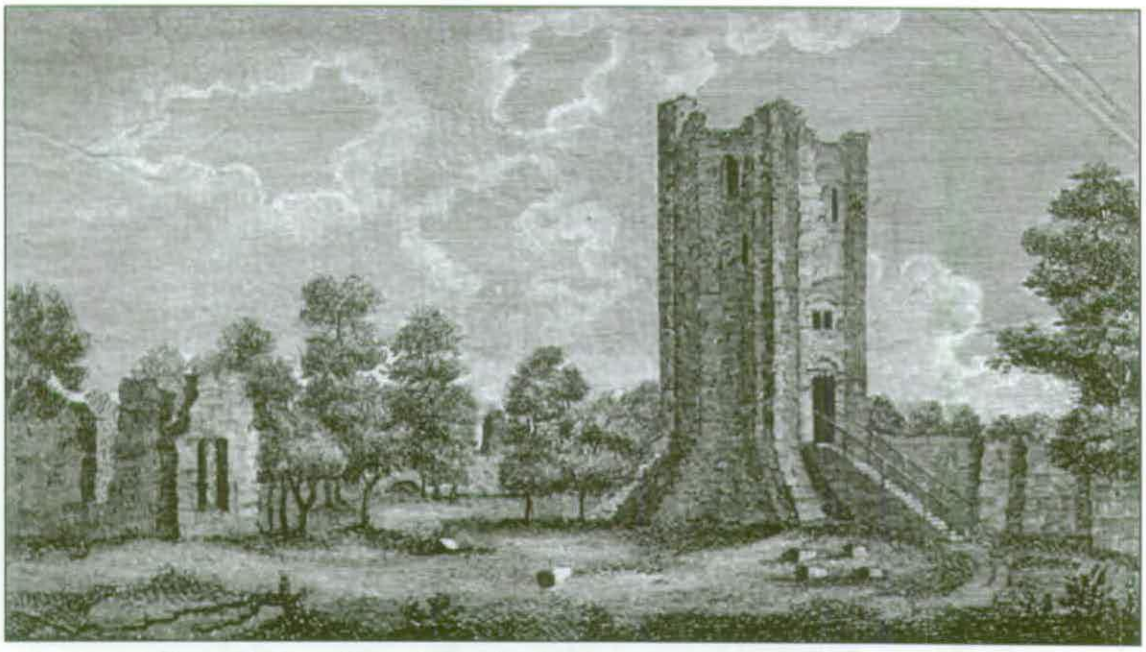

Plate 37 Conisbrough Castle: 1801 engraving (© English Heritage)

Plate 38 Conisbrough Castle: castle pond (© English Heritage)

Plate 11 Conisbrough Castle: flight of steps at northern terminal of ditch 9

Plate 12 Conisbrough Castle: possible building platform (15) in base of ditch 9 facing south-east

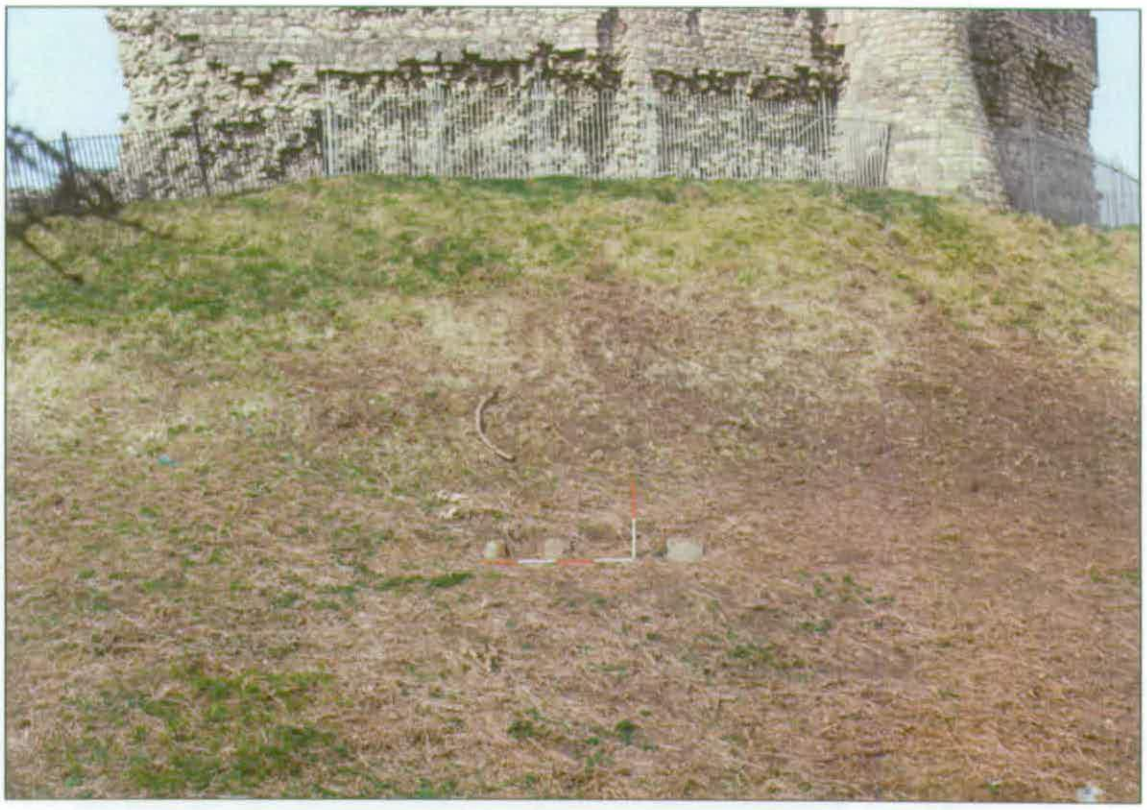

Plate 13 Conisbrough Castle: stone setting 16 facing north-west

Plate 14 Conisbrough Castle: possible stone revetment 17 facing north

Plate 15 Conisbrough Castle: line of former footpath on the castle knoll

Plate 16 Conisbrough Castle: aerial view of Conisbrough Castle pre 1967 (© English Heritage)

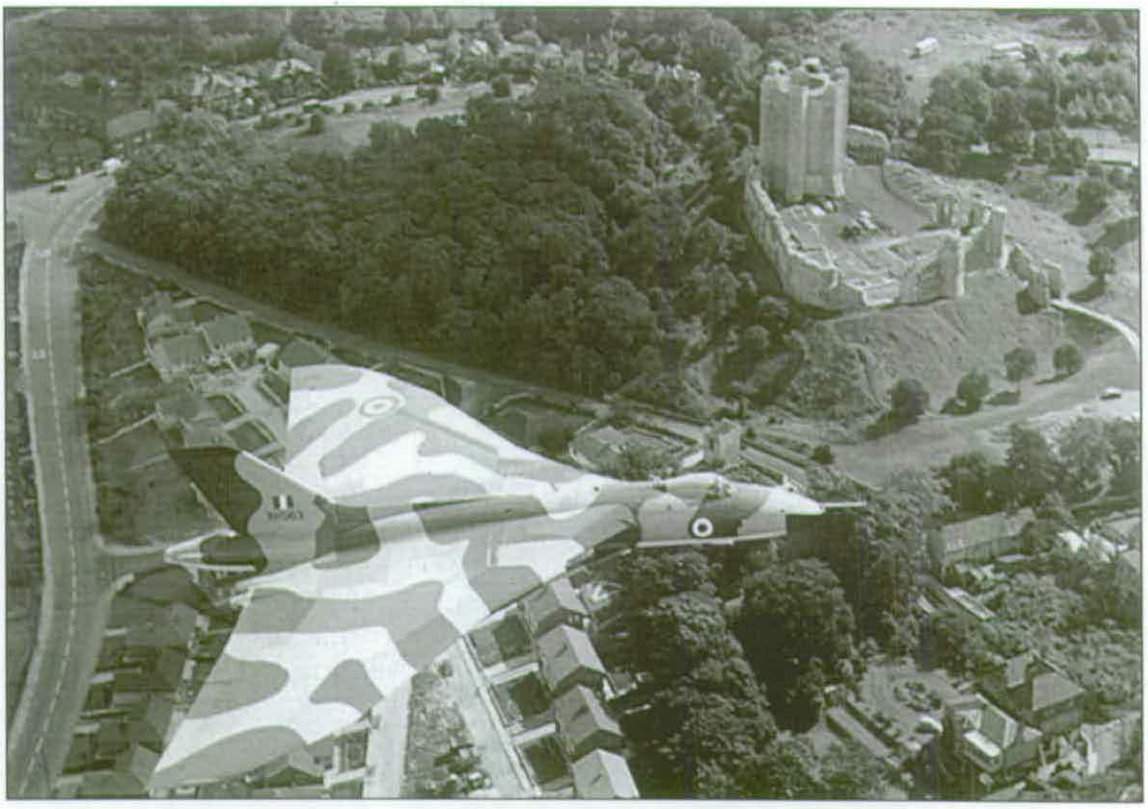

Plate 17 Conisbrough Castle: aerial view of Conisbrough Castle post 1967 (© English Heritage)

Plate 18 Conisbrough Castle: aerial view of Conisbrough Castle pre 1967 (© English Heritage)

Plate 19 Conisbrough Castle: terraces A, B, C and D from castle keep

Plate 20 Conisbrough Castle: terrace A, general view of earthen bank at southern limits of bailey facing south-east

Plate 21 Conisbrough Castle: general view of earthen bank at southern limits of bailey showing footpaths 25 and 26, facing south-east

Plate 22 Conisbrough Castle: feature 24, facing south-west

Plate 23 Conisbrough Castle: rubble feature 21 (foreground) and feature 24, facing west

Plate 24 Conisbrough Castle: undated (pre 1967) view of castle earthwork from terrace B, facing north-east (© English Heritage)

Appendix A

Geophysical Survey Report

by

GSB Prospection Ltd

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GSB Survey No. 2009/05

Conisbrough Castle, Conisbrough, South Yorkshire

NGR	SK 514 989
Location	Approximately 8km southeast of Doncaster, 0.5km to the north of the A630.
County	South Yorkshire.
District	Doncaster District.
Topography	Steeply undulating due to man-made ditches and banks, level in some areas.
Current land-use	Public open space.
Soils	Unclassified soils (*Soils of England and Wales. Sheet 1, Northern England.* Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).
Geology	Lower Magnesian Limestone covered by a shallow mantle of limestone-derived soils (EH 2008).
Archaeology	SAM (13245) Conisbrough Castle includes a 28m high keep, bailey walls and associated earthworks. The castle is attributed to Hamelin Plantagenet during the period 1163-1201.
Study Area	0.87ha
Survey Methods	Fluxgate Gradiometer and Resistance

Aims

To locate and characterise any anomalies of possible archaeological interest within the study area. The work forms part of a wider archaeological assessment being carried out by **Northern Archaeological Associates Ltd. (NAA)** on behalf of **English Heritage**.

Summary of Results*

Generally high levels of magnetic noise and resistance variation have complicated interpretation across the site, as has magnetic disturbance from the Visitor Centre. However, a number of anomalies of possible archaeological interest were detected, most of which were in the lowermost, southern part of the survey area away from the modern buildings. Several possible previous structures, one circular, were identified, as were more uncertain anomalies of potential archaeological interest. Artificial elements of topography were detected in the survey, together with a number of trends of uncertain significance.

Project Information

Project Co-ordinator: C Stephens BA MA and J Tanner BSc MSc PIfA
Project Assistants: E Collier and G Taylor
Date of Fieldwork: 19th – 21st January 2009
Date of Report: 30th January 2009

***It is essential that this summary is read in conjunction with the detailed results of the survey.**

Survey Specifications

Method

The survey grid was set out using tapes by **GSB** and tied in to the Ordnance Survey (OS) grid using a differential GPS system by **NAA** (see Figure T1 on the Archive CD).

Technique	Traverse Separation	Reading Interval	Instrument	Survey Size
Magnetometer - Scanning (Appendix 1)	-	-	-	-
Magnetometer – Detailed (Appendix 1)	1m	0.25	Bartington Grad 601-2	0.45ha
Resistance – Twin Probe (Appendix 1)	1m	1m	Geoscan RM15 and Multiplexer	0.52ha
Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) – 250MHz (Appendix 1)	-	-	-	-

Data Processing

	Magnetic	Resistance	GPR
Tilt Correct	Y	N	-
De-stagger	Y	N	-
Interpolate	Y	Y	-
Filter	N	Y	-

Presentation of Results

Report Figures (Printed & Archive CD):	Location, data plots and interpretation diagram on base map (Figures 1 - 5).
Reference Figures (Archive CD):	Data plots at 1:500 for reference and analysis. (See List of Figures). Tie-in information (Figure T1).
Plot Formats:	See Appendix 1: Technical Information, at end of report.

General Considerations

Conditions for survey were far from ideal. Due to heavy rain, low-lying ground was waterlogged and extremely slippery underfoot. The steep slopes were unsafe to survey and account for gaps in the data. It was also not possible to survey an area of dense scrub, and the study area was further reduced by the presence of the Visitor Centre, tea rooms and garden, car park and paved areas.

Smaller scale ferrous anomalies ("iron spikes") are present in both the magnetic datasets, their form best illustrated in the XY trace plots. These responses are characteristic of small pieces of ferrous debris in the topsoil and are commonly assigned a modern origin. While the most prominent of these are highlighted on the interpretation diagram, they are not discussed in the text below unless considered relevant.

Results of Survey

1. Magnetic Survey

1.1 Due to the high level of magnetic disturbance caused by modern buildings and the disturbed ground, greyscale plots at considerably greater ranges (-10 to +10nT) than would normally be presented have been included in order to differentiate anomalies of interest from the background "noise". These are shown alongside plots at a more conventional –2 to +2nT range (Figure 2). For the same reason, and for clarity, reference plots of X-Y traces are included at 15 nT/cm, 50 nT/cm and 75nT/cm on the Archive CD.

Area 1

1.2 The *c.*15m diameter annular form (with a projection to the side) of a strong positive anomaly at (A), albeit truncated by the wall and sunken road to the west, suggests an anthropogenic origin, and whilst the magnitude of the responses might indicate a ferrous cause, the response shape is more characteristic of fired material. The anomaly may therefore represent the remains of a structure, although this interpretation must be treated with caution. The positive response within anomaly (A) may be associated, due to its proximity, but is slightly eccentric and has therefore been categorized as *Uncertain*.

1.3 Anomaly (B) is sub- rectilinear, which together with the broad shape of the responses suggests that this anomaly may be of archaeological interest.

1.4 Two east–west bands of increased magnetic response at (C) coincide with ridges, which are probably the result of past terrain modelling for defensive purposes. Conversely the negative trend parallel to anomalies (C) coincides with a depression at the base of a slope. The area of increased magnetic response to the west of the dataset is more difficult to interpret, and may either result from past human activity or from natural effects.

1.5 Ferrous responses along the limit of the survey area are due to a metal fence and gate.

Area 2

1. 6 This area is dominated by magnetic disturbance and responses from modern structures and hard landscape features. The area of *Ferrous* response is clearly due to the proximity of the Visitor Centre and its external steel structure: the adjacent areas of magnetic disturbance and increased response represent the magnetic "halo", and perhaps also breaks in slope to the east.

1. 7 A short linear positive response (D) may be of natural or topographical origin but could equally represent past human activity. A parallel trend might support this interpretation, but as the anomaly is indistinct and poorly defined, confidence is low and the anomaly is allocated to the *Uncertain* category.

1. 8 Ferrous responses at the extreme northeast of Area 2 are adjacent to the boundary and probably modern in origin.

2. Resistance Survey

2.1 Two greyscale plots of the resistance data are included, to show both high pass filtered and unfiltered data (Figure 4).

Area 1

2.2 An annular high resistance anomaly (1), with adjacent areas of low resistance, partially overlaps magnetic anomaly (A), and may represent the remains of foundations. However, anomalies (1) and (A) are not in precise alignment, are not concentric and resistance anomaly (1) is smaller.

2.3 Although indistinct, high resistance anomalies (2) and (3) are both broadly rectilinear in form, and given the setting may be the remains of past structures.

2.4 Bands of high resistance responses at (4) are better defined in the filtered data and correspond both to ridges and breaks of slope and with magnetic anomalies (C). They can therefore be attributed to the same topographical, and probably ultimately anthropogenic, origin. Low resistance readings were obtained at (5) and again these correspond to the base of the slopes where waterlogged slump material can be expected.

2.5 Two areas of high resistance in Area 1 are adjacent to anomalies (2) and (3) and may therefore be of archaeological interest, but have been categorized as *Uncertain* due to their indistinct form. The third *Uncertain* anomaly (6) may be part of the topographic anomaly (4).

2.6 An area of low resistance at (7) may be natural, but is slightly rectangular and thus could be of archaeological interest. This is highly tentative and therefore the anomaly is categorized as *Uncertain*.

2.7 Trends of both high and low resistance could be of natural origin, but their proximity to anomalies (2) and (3) suggest that they may be of archaeological interest.

2.8 High resistance responses at the limits of the survey area are due to compacted ground adjacent to the boundary walls.

Area 2

2.9 A group of high resistance anomalies at (8) are rectilinear in form, and all but one are aligned with each other; this suggests evidence of past structures. The responses are in the same general position as magnetic anomalies (D) but are not strong or precisely aligned, and this interpretation is therefore tentative. The adjacent area of low resistance may share the same origin as (8), but due to the disturbed nature of the ground in this area and the indistinct form, this anomaly must remain *Uncertain*.

2.10 High resistance trends were detected, possibly of an archaeological nature, particularly that adjacent to anomaly (8), but natural origins are equally likely.

2.11 High resistance responses at (9) were obtained at the limits of the survey area, at the lip of the castle moat. These anomalies can therefore be attributed to reduced topsoil depth at the break in slope, similar to responses (4) (2.3 above). At (10), stone debris breaking the surface was visible, and this explains the high resistance readings.

2.12 Subsoil structure associated with the Visitor Centre, adjacent paving, the northern boundary wall and, at (11), the path to the Castle have caused high resistance readings allocated to the category *Modern*.

3. Conclusions

3.1 Although interpretations are difficult due to the disturbed nature of the ground and modern structures and landscaping, both techniques identified several anomalies of possible archaeological interest. Remains of possible former structures were detected, one in Area 1 possibly being circular. Other anomalies detected by either or both methods are of uncertain origin but may be of archaeological interest. The topography, probably a result of past military earthworks, was detected by both survey methods.

List of Figures

Report Figures

Reference Figures on CD

Appendix B

DTM Survey Points and Permanent Stations