



ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
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WYAS

**Canklow Woods  
Rotherham  
South Yorkshire**

*Archaeological Watching Brief*

*Report No. 1460*

*November 2005*

CLIENT

Rotherham MBC

# Canklow Woods

*Rotherham*

*South Yorkshire*

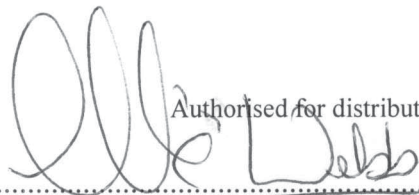
## *Archaeological Watching Brief*

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### *Summary*

*An archaeological watching brief in Canklow Wood, Rotherham monitored the excavation of thirteen hand-excavated holes for the installation of new woodland furniture the majority of which lay within the scheduled area (SAM SY382) containing a later prehistoric enclosure, bank and terrace complex. In all cases a thin layer of topsoil was observed to overlay natural sandstone deposits, and no archaeological features or finds were identified.*



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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) was commissioned by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the hand excavation of thirteen foundation holes for new woodland furniture (way marker posts and seating) in Canklow Woods (centred SK 431 905). The woods are located *c.*1.5 km south of Rotherham town centre (Fig. 1). The majority of excavations are within the bounds of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM SY382) situated on the eastern plateau of the woodland although two are located outside the scheduled area to the north (Fig. 2). The scheduled area comprises a complex of banked enclosures, banks and terraces as well as other features, and the archaeological watching brief was in response to the possible disturbance of potential buried remains during the works. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport had given permission for the work at agreed locations on condition of an archaeological watching brief. The work was carried out in accordance with a brief for archaeological monitoring provided by the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (SYAS, Appendix II).
- 1.2 Canklow woods comprises ancient woodland (i.e. continually wooded since 1600 AD), although it consists only of secondary mixed woodland (Rackham 1986), with more open areas of scrub and bracken. The underlying geology comprises red Coal Measures sandstone (British Geological Survey 1974).
- 1.3 The archaeological watching brief was carried out on the 31<sup>st</sup> October and 1<sup>st</sup> November 2005.

## **2. Historical Background**

- 2.1 A Domesday entry assigns seven acres of wood pasture to Rotherham (Jones 1993, 32), insufficient in area to account for the current extent of woodland at Canklow Woods, but an indication of the survival of some wooded areas in this region. Wood pasture describes an area exploited for its trees, but with the undergrowth used as pasture for cattle, sheep and pigs (Jones 1993, 32-33). 'Kankelawe' is first mentioned in 1202 in the Yorkshire Feet of Fines and is recorded as 'Cancklowe' in the 1608 Minister's Accounts (Smith 1961, 178). 'Canc' refers to a steep rounded hill.
- 2.2 Through the medieval and post-medieval periods wood pasture gave way to coppice management in an attempt to conserve wood supplies as the population grew. Boundaries within the woodland were common to control the movement of animals and compartmentalise the coppice regimes (Jones 1993). By the late 19th century coppicing was in decline as alternative fuel sources became increasingly available and most remaining woodland was converted into canopy woods. Despite these changes the area of the woodland has remained relatively unchanged to the present.

### **3. Archaeological Background**

- 3.1 The site of Canklow Woods was first evaluated in the 1940s by Harold Copley who carried out an extensive survey of the sandstone ridge and undertook limited excavations (Copley 1950a, 1950b). He identified and mapped earthworks, field systems, lynchets and stone mounds. A concentration of features to the northern limits of the ridge were interpreted as a small Iron Age fort, while activity to the south was seen to constitute an 'Iron Age homesteading' (Copley 1950b, 190). The retrieval of prehistoric flint tools and early Roman pottery provided some dating evidence.
- 3.2 John Tyson continued Copley's research into the earthworks of Canklow Woods by excavating a trench across the northern rampart of the 'Iron Age fort'. He believed he had confirmed the presence of a small fort with the identification of earth and stone built ramparts retained by stone revetment (Tyson 1950), but a poor record of the stratigraphy makes these interpretations inconclusive. As a result of the investigations by Copley and Tyson, however, the area of proposed settlement activity was granted Scheduled Ancient Monument status in 1952 (SAM SY382).
- 3.3 A review of the surviving earthworks along the ridge was made by Dolby in 1981. He recognised the shortcomings of the 1940's and 1950s investigations, but perhaps more importantly realised that erosion, largely due to pedestrian traffic, was obliterating these little understood features (Dolby 1981).
- 3.4 Further archaeological survey by South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (SYAS) in 1988 was in response to an application for the construction of a dry ski slope and hotel on the western slope of Canklow Woods (Sydes 1989). This re-evaluated the scheduled area and recognised the existence of further archaeological remains (field boundaries, cultivation terraces and a possible settlement area) beyond the protected area. Inaccuracies and inconsistencies with Copley's survey were also demonstrated.
- 3.5 A more recent archaeological survey by SYAS was commissioned by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council in 1992 and involved the re-survey of the ridge area as well as the slopes and the flatter land to the west (Latham 1992). This revealed that archaeological features were indeed concentrated on the flat summit of the hill (the scheduled area), although many previously unrecorded features were identified, mainly low linear banks that were fragmentary and difficult to follow. This survey also assessed the damage to the known archaeological remains due to pedestrian and motorcycle activity.
- 3.6 Canklow Woods was included in a desk-based assessment of various woodlands of South Yorkshire (Cumberpatch 2001). This study assessed the previous archaeological surveys and excavations, included data on flint tools, metal objects and pottery found in the area and assessed documentary evidence pertaining to the ownership and management of the woodland since the 17th century. Importantly this assessment recognised that further survey would undoubtedly reveal more features, but that only excavation would clarify issues of function and date.
- 3.7 Finally, Level II surveys were recently completed with the use of a GPS receiver for each woodland by Archaeological Services WYAS (Richardson

2002). Numerous features including banks, enclosures, bell pits, quarries, ditches and banks were identified dating from the Iron Age/Roman to the post-medieval periods. Certain monuments were highlighted for more detailed Level III survey including the banked enclosures, banks and terraces of the scheduled area, which were also surveyed by Archaeological Services WYAS (Lee 2005). This survey produced accurate hachured plans of the features and assessed their current condition, concluding that erosion continued to be a problem.

#### **4. Method**

- 4.1 The excavations for the woodland furniture foundations were carried out by a ground-working contractor using hand tools and the process was observed by ASWYAS archaeologists. The topsoil was removed and the boundary to the natural examined and the resulting spoil and sections were examined for features and finds. A written record comprising a trench record sheet, relevant sketch drawings (when no archaeology was located), and a photographic record were taken. The location of each excavation was predetermined by Rotherham MBC and marked on the ground and grid references were given to ASWYAS to locate them in plan.

#### **5. Results**

- 5.1 The results from the archaeological monitoring are summarised below. The topsoil encountered across the site was consistently dark 'blackish' brown sandy clay containing moderate small to medium fragments of sandstone. The topsoil overlay a layer of weathered natural sandstone comprising compacted frequent sandstone fragments weathered from the bedrock by erosion. The underlying natural geology was solid sandstone.
- 5.2 **Trench 1.** Trench 1 was 0.5m long by 0.45m and 0.6m deep revealing a layer of made ground 0.2m deep above a layer of buried topsoil 0.1m deep, which overlay weathered sandstone natural. The made ground was a compacted layer of hardcore from the modern footpath. No archaeological finds or features were observed.
- 5.3 **Trench 2.** Trench 2 was 0.35m square and 0.65m deep revealing a layer of topsoil 0.15m deep, which overlay weathered sandstone natural. The ground cover was grass. No archaeological finds or features were observed.
- 5.4 **Trench 3.** Trench 3 was 0.40m long by 0.35m wide and 0.65m deep revealing a layer of topsoil 0.2m deep, which overlay weathered sandstone natural. No archaeological finds or features were observed.
- 5.5 **Trench 4.** Trench 4 was 0.46m long by 0.45m wide and 0.63m deep revealing a layer of topsoil 0.23m deep, which overlay weathered sandstone natural. The ground cover was grass. No archaeological finds or features were observed.
- 5.6 **Trench 5.** Trench 5 was 0.40m long by 0.36m wide and 0.8m deep revealing a layer of topsoil 0.2m deep, which overlay weathered sandstone natural. The ground cover was grass. No archaeological finds or features were observed.

- 5.7 **Trench 6.** Trench 6 was 0.3m square and 0.56m deep revealing a thin layer of topsoil 0.06m deep, which overlay weathered sandstone natural. The ground cover was grass. No archaeological finds or features were observed.
- 5.8 **Trench 7.** Trench 7 was 0.3m square and 0.64m deep revealing a thin layer of topsoil 0.08m deep, which overlay weathered sandstone natural. The ground cover was leaf litter. No archaeological finds or features were observed.
- 5.9 **Trench 8.** Trench 8 was 0.36m long by 0.32m wide and 0.75m deep revealing a layer of topsoil 0.12m deep, which overlay weathered sandstone natural. The ground cover was leaf litter. No archaeological finds or features were observed.
- 5.10 **Trench 9.** Trench 9 was rectangular in plan at 1.05m long by 0.35m wide and 0.8m deep revealing a layer of topsoil 0.2m deep, which overlay weathered sandstone natural. The ground cover was leaf litter. No archaeological finds or features were observed. The hole was excavated to support a frame for a decorative monolith.
- 5.11 **Trench 10.** Trench 10 was 0.48m long by 0.34m wide and 0.7m deep revealing a layer of topsoil 0.22m deep, which overlay weathered sandstone natural. The ground cover was leaf litter. No archaeological finds or features were observed.
- 5.12 **Trench 11.** Trench 11 was 0.42m long by 0.33m wide and 0.6m deep revealing a layer of topsoil 0.12m deep, which overlay weathered sandstone natural. The ground cover was leaf litter. No archaeological finds or features were observed.
- 5.13 **Trench 12.** Trench 12 was 0.4m long by 0.3m wide and 0.6m deep revealing a layer of topsoil 0.12m deep, which overlay weathered sandstone natural. The ground cover was leaf litter. No archaeological finds or features were observed.
- 5.14 **Trench 13.** Trench 13 was 0.35m square and 0.65m deep revealing a layer of topsoil 0.09m deep, which overlay weathered sandstone natural. The ground cover was leaf litter. No archaeological finds or features were observed.

## **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1 No archaeological features or finds were located during the hand excavation of thirteen foundation holes for new woodland furniture within the scheduled area of Canklow Wood.
- 6.2 Given the limited nature of the investigation and the small sample of the area few interpretative inferences can be drawn. Suffice to say, the lack of finds from the earlier excavation by Tyson (1950) was noted, even when investigating the monuments themselves, and the foundation holes monitored here also point to a lack of artefactual material in the area. The small sample area observed within this watching brief, however, cannot be taken as archaeologically representative of this part of the woodland. The results do provide useful data for the depths of topsoil and nature of the geology for the scheduled area, and highlight the shallow nature of the topsoil in places.

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## ***Acknowledgements***

### **Project management**

Daniel Lee BSc

### **Report and Graphics**

Daniel Lee

### **Fieldwork**

Vicky Brown BA

Paul Major MA



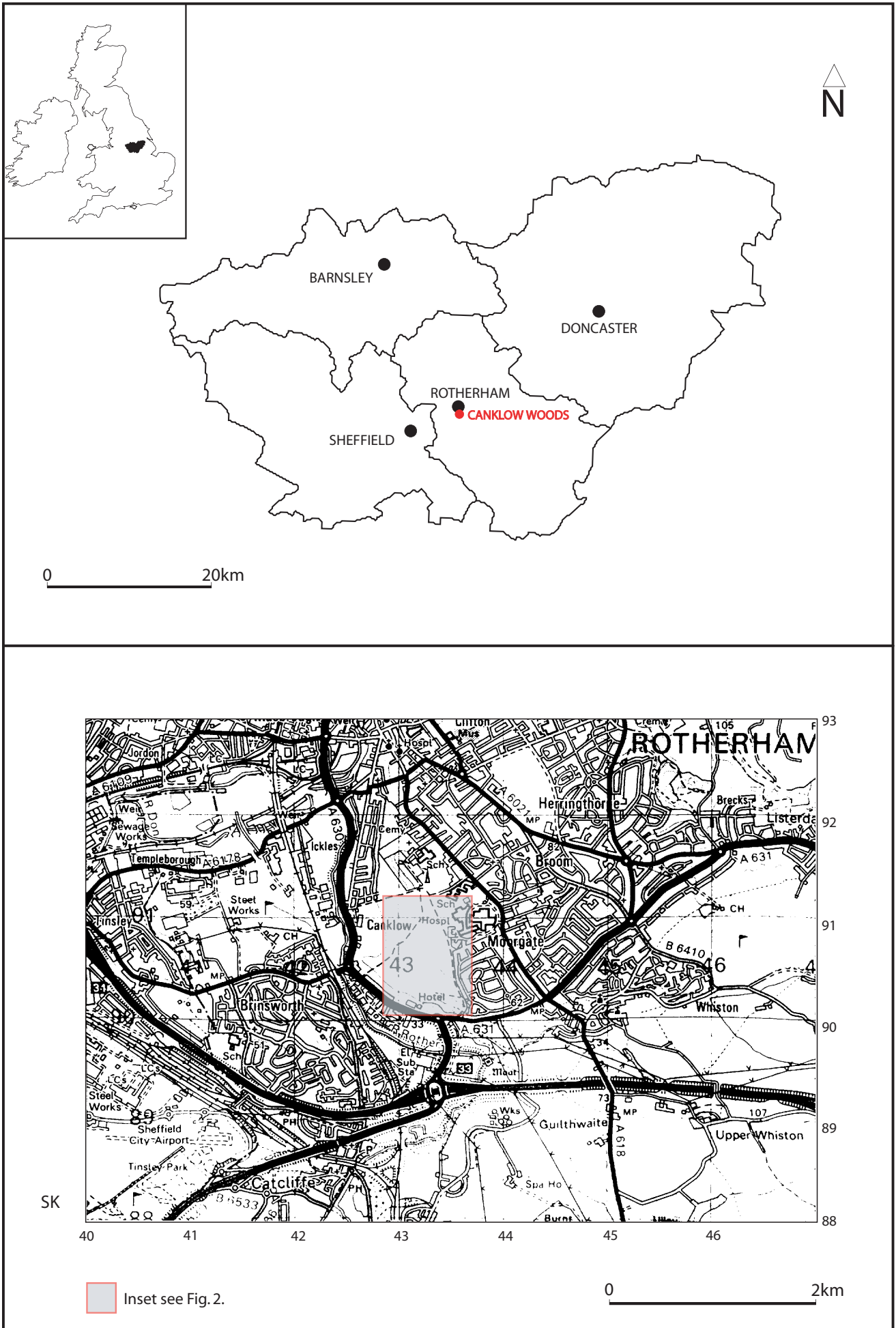
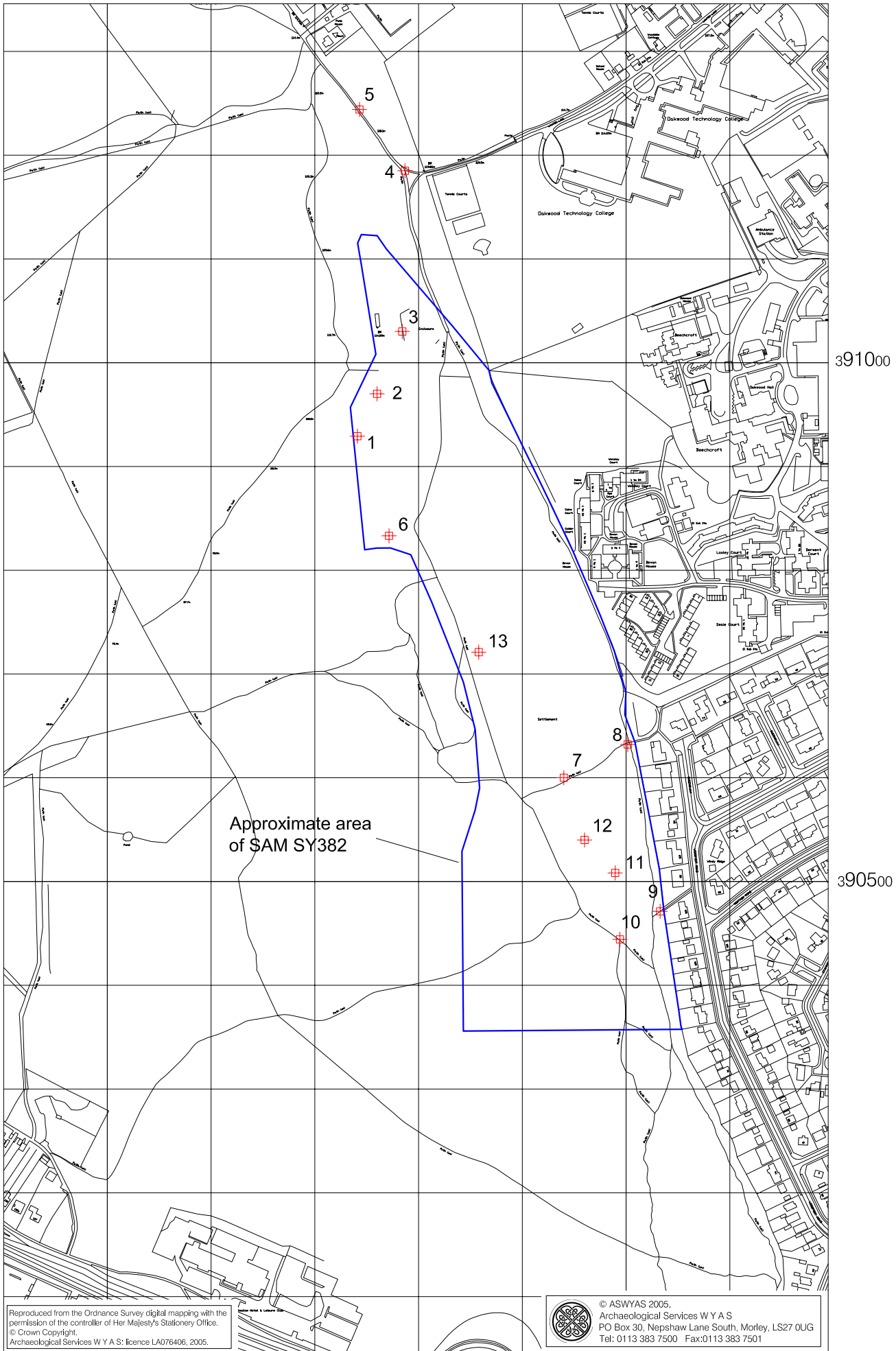


Fig. 1. Site location



*Fig. 2. Site location showing the position of woodland furniture foundation pits*

***Appendix I***  
***Inventory of primary archive***

<b>File no.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
1	Trench Record Sheets	13
1	Location plan	1
1	Photo Record Sheet	1
1	Black & White photographic negatives	1
1	Black & White photographic contact sheet	1

***Appendix II***  
***Brief for archaeological monitoring (SYAS)***



## **BRIEF FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING (Watching Brief)**

### **1 BACKGROUND**

1.1 Canklow Wood is ancient semi natural woodland close to the centre of Rotherham. As part of access and interpretation improvements at the site an interpretative trail and woodland furniture is to be installed. The interpretative trail passes over Canklow Earthworks (scheduled monument SY382). The installation of waymarker posts and seating involves the excavation of holes on the scheduled part of the monument. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport have granted permission for this work to take place at agreed locations on condition that a watching is undertaken.

1.2 There is reason to believe that archaeological remains may be disturbed in the course of the proposed development, though little is known of their nature or state of preservation.

1.3 Archaeological monitoring (often referred to as a 'Watching Brief') is required to ensure that remains that are affected can be recorded and/or retrieved.

1.4 All archaeological work will be monitored by the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (SYAS).

### **2 FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY**

2.1 The work shall be carried out by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. Details of staff numbers, their relative experience and their responsibilities in carrying out the work should be submitted to SYAS in advance of work starting. Staff c.v.'s should be included, unless already supplied to SYAS in previous project specifications.

2.2 Reasonable prior notice (at least 14 days) of the commencement of the development is to be given to the archaeological contractor. A minimum of one week's notice of the commencement of fieldwork must be given by the archaeological contractor to SYAS, to arrange monitoring visits.

2.3 Access to the site must be afforded to the Rotherham MBC's nominated archaeological contractor at all reasonable times.

2.4 All groundworks associated with the construction of foundations, service trenches, etc., must be undertaken under archaeological supervision, to allow for the identification and recording of any archaeological material that might be uncovered.

2.5 Where structures, features or finds of archaeological interest are exposed or disturbed by construction works, the archaeological contractor must be given the opportunity to observe, clean, assess and, where appropriate, hand excavate, sample and record these features and finds.

2.6 Where archaeological remains are observed by contractors or plant operators, they must immediately notify the archaeological contractor.

2.7 If it becomes clear during the monitoring that little of archaeological interest is likely to survive on the site, the contractor should discuss their work with the monitor. A joint decision will be made on reducing the work to an intermittent watching brief or ceasing observation of groundworks.

### **3 ARCHIVE**

3.1 Upon completion of fieldwork, any samples taken will be processed and all finds will be cleaned, identified, assessed, spot-dated and properly stored.

3.2 A field archive will be compiled, comprising all primary written documents, plans, sections and photographs.

3.3 The field archive should be deposited with the appropriate museum or other archive (specified in the accompanying planning report). The archaeological contractor must contact the archive at the beginning of the project to arrange this and then to discuss conservation issues identified during the project.

### **4 REPORT & PUBLICITY**

4.1 A report will be produced to include the following:

- background information
- a summary of the works carried out
- a description and interpretation the findings
- an assessment of the importance of the archaeology found

4.2 All excavated areas must be accurately mapped with respect to nearby fixed structures and roads, and all archaeological features should be illustrated with appropriately scaled plans and sections. The report should be appropriately illustrated, including all of the following (unless agreed otherwise):

- a detailed location map
- a site plan showing all identified features of archaeological interest
- if possible, phase plans should be produced
- detailed plans and sections of features

- a selection of scanned photographs of work in progress
- select artefact illustrations

4.3 A printed and bound copy of the report must be supplied to SYAS for incorporation into the South Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record. A digital copy of the report must also be supplied.

4.4 Acceptable digital formats are:

- text (Word and ASCII);
- images (.JPG at no less than 300 dpi. resolution).

4.5 The siting of furniture has been carefully selected to minimise the likelihood of disruption to archaeological sites. Therefore it is anticipated that the report described in 4.3 above will be brief, in which case a summary report will not be necessary. However, if the main report becomes detailed due to the discovery of archaeological remains a summary report of an appropriate length, accompanied by illustrations, must be prepared and submitted in digital format, for publication in the appropriate volume of *Archaeology in South Yorkshire*.

4.6 The archaeological contractor must complete the online OASIS form at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/>.