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**Bentley Youth Centre, Bentley
Doncaster, South Yorkshire**

Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

March 2010

Report No. 2039

C L I E N T

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council

Bentley Youth Centre, Bentley Doncaster, South Yorkshire

Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

Summary

An archaeological desk-based assessment was undertaken on the proposed site of the Bentley Youth Centre, Doncaster. The site is currently occupied by the Children and Young Peoples Partnership Trust who operate from a two storey building with grass lawns to the front and a large enclosed yard space to the side and rear. This area of Bentley does not appear to have been much developed until the creation of the Miners Welfare Park on Askern Road. Given the lack of development in this area the potential for the preservation of features of archaeological interest may be high particularly when considered in relation to the wider context of Bentley and its historic and prehistoric heritage.



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Report Information

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Acknowledgements

Archaeological Services WYAS would like to thank the staff of Doncaster Archives, Doncaster Local Studies Library and South Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) for their assistance and advice.

1 Introduction

Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) were commissioned by Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment on the proposed site for the development of a youth centre on Askern Road, Bentley, near Doncaster. The assessment was undertaken in order to inform the proposed redevelopment of the site.

Site location and topography

The site covers a total of 0.2 hectares and includes a two storey building, presently occupied by the Children and Young Peoples Partnership Trust, with a grassed area to the front and an enclosed yard space to the left side and rear, on Askern Road, Bentley, Doncaster, South Yorkshire (NGR SE 5651 0626). Collectively this forms a rectangular parcel of land which is bordered to the south and west by aspects of the Miners Welfare landscaped park, to the immediate east by Mill Dike, which runs along the edge of Askern Road, and to the rear by access to Limbrick Court.

The site and surrounds of Bentley are located upon relatively flat and low lying ground which forms part of the river Don flood plain.

The study area comprised all the land within 1km of the boundary of the proposed development site, as agreed with Andrew Lines of the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (SYAS).

Geology and soils

The underlying solid geology in the study area consists of Bunter Sandstone (BGS 1992) with overlying drift geology of Keuper Marl.

2 Methodology and Sources

The following sources of information have been consulted in order to meet the requirements of the desk-based assessment and are in line with guidelines laid down by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008).

Archaeological archives and databases

Information on previous archaeological finds and investigations within the study area was obtained from the South Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record, Sheffield, and from the National Monuments Record via the Archaeology Data Service website and Images of England Website. The Doncaster Archives as well as Local Studies Library were also consulted for historic maps and plans, antiquarian histories and other relevant documentary sources.

Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments

Details of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments were obtained from the National Monuments Record.

Published and unpublished sources

A range of published and unpublished material has been researched and consulted. This includes academic articles together with general sources on the study area and its wider archaeological and historical background. These are listed in the bibliography.

Geological and soil surveys

Information on the underlying geology and soils within the study area was taken from data collected by the British Geological Survey (1992) and the Soil Survey of England and Wales (1980).

Site visit

A site inspection was undertaken on the March 4th 2010 (see Plate 1 and Plate 2).

3 The Study Area

Identified archaeological sites, buildings and features

A total of ten archaeological sites, features and historic buildings have been identified within the study area. These are discussed below and have been catalogued in Section 4.

Designated sites and areas

A total of six sites are recorded in relation to Listed Buildings (**A-F**), and a single site listed as a Scheduled Monument within the immediate study area, while none are featured as Registered Battlefields or Registered Parks and Gardens.

Previous archaeological investigations

A single phase of trial trenching was undertaken at Jossey Lane (SYAU 1992) but produced negative results (**1**). Similarly an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by ASWYAS (O'Neill 1998) on a site off Arksey Lane but despite being located in close proximity to the medieval scheduled monument of Moat Hills encountered no features of archaeological interest.

A number of small scale archaeological investigations have been carried out in and around the site of Moat Hills with variable results. A scheme of trial trenching undertaken by ARCUS on the site of Arksey Lane Daycare Centre (Davies 1996) established the presence of a ditched feature probably representing a component of the medieval moated site but also reported that much of this area had been truncated by modern activity (**9**). Further excavation

in the area exposed a robbed out section of stone wall but this was thought to be of post-medieval origin (Cumberpatch 1995).

Archaeological background, sites and features

Prehistoric periods (c. 10,000 – AD 43)

The earliest human activity within northern Britain probably followed the retreat of the ice sheets around 10,000 BC, as small nomadic groups gradually moved north with the improving climate. Evidence for human activity in the Palaeolithic period is sparse in South Yorkshire and no evidence for Palaeolithic activity has been identified in the vicinity of the study area.

The post-glacial landscape largely comprised treeless tundra, but by the early Mesolithic period, about 7600 BC, this gave way to woodland as the climate improved. Such environmental change increased the potential for human activity as the spread of woodland led to the expansion in animal and plant resources. The nomadic nature of the Mesolithic groups meant that they left few remains and archaeological evidence for this period is largely limited to finds of flint implements (Manby 2003). No activity relating to the Mesolithic period is represented within the study area.

The Neolithic and early Bronze Age periods are traditionally seen as marking the introduction of farming, as nomadic hunter-gatherer subsistence gave way to agriculture and the domestication of animals. The population probably remained semi-nomadic during much of the Neolithic and sites of this period are typically represented by scatters of flints, pottery and burnt stone (Manby *et al.* 2003) often associated with single or multiple pit deposits. The period may also be broadly characterised by the introduction of large ceremonial and funerary monuments (Manby *et al.* 2003). The Bronze Age by comparison witnesses an intensification of agricultural practices with increasing clearance of woodland and the establishment of rudimentary field systems as well as the emergence of small nucleated settlement with evidence for more identifiable domestic structures. Neolithic activity in the area is represented by a single find spot relating to the recovery of a polished flint axe towards the south-west of the site (Magilton 1977, 13) (8).

Iron Age and Roman period

The typical settlement pattern in Yorkshire by the Iron Age was of rural farmsteads surrounded by field systems and enclosures, linked together by trackways (Haselgrove 1999). Such field systems are extensively documented across much of South Yorkshire (Riley 1980) and are well represented within the immediate environs of the study area (Roberts *et al.* 2007).

By the later Iron Age period, the study area is thought to have fallen within the territory controlled by the Brigantes, who were initially allied to the Romans under their Queen Cartimandua. In AD 69, a dispute between Cartimandua and her former consort Venutius

provided the pretext for Roman invasion which began soon after and was consolidated by AD 72 with the creation of a number of linked forts throughout the area (Ottaway 2003). One such fort was founded at Danum (modern day Doncaster), which formed a central hub for activity being situated at the crossroads of several major road networks, including the Great Northern Road as it became known (Margery 1973), as well as being located at the highest point of the river Don that was navigable by boat.

A relatively extensive zone of probable Romano-British field systems and enclosures have been documented to the north-west of the site (Roberts *et al* 2007) which partially extends into the northern periphery of the study area (3). Several crop marks are also noted as potentially Romano-British to the west of the site (*ibid*) but share a similar alignment to field systems associated with medieval or post-medieval ridge and furrow and may consequently be much later than anticipated (see catalogue entry). To the south-west of the site, and partially built over by modern housing, a double-ditched rectangular enclosure with a possible central hut structure has also been recorded (4). Immediately next to this feature a sub-circular enclosure with similar internal structures has also been documented and may also be of Romano-British date although an earlier prehistoric origin is possible. A dense concentration of crop marks recorded to the south-east of the site near Bentley Mill Farm may also be of this period. Three spot finds relating to the recovery of isolated Roman coins have been recorded, one located along Askern Road (6) and two from separate sites towards the south-west around Scawthorpe (2 and 5).

Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods (AD 410 to c. 1500)

While place names in the general area, such as Conisbrough and Mexborough, probably have a Saxon origin there is little archaeological evidence for settlement in South Yorkshire during the post-Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods. It is known, however, that after the withdrawal of the Romans much of West and South Yorkshire came under the domain of the Saxon kingdom of Elmet, which was itself absorbed into the larger Northumbrian kingdom sometime in the early 7th century (Loveluck 2003). While much of northern and central England subsequently fell under the Danelaw established following conquests by the Viking 'great army' in the latter half of the 9th century AD (Hall 2003) the resurgent kingdom of Wessex was able to bring the area back under Saxon control and it remained so until the Norman invasion of 1066 AD. However, no features of Saxon or Viking origin are known from the study area.

Following the Norman Conquest Bentley does feature in the Domesday book as being held by a Saxon nobleman named Osulf who reportedly had two carucates and two bovates of land for geld (Pidcock-Burns 1996). After this point the area came under the Norman lordship of Roger de Busli although little is subsequently known of the detailed development of the area. The village of Bentley may have its origins in this period as suggested by a number of street names, with a core centred in the area of Cooke Street (Magilton 1977), however, it may have formed a somewhat dispersed and minor settlement and certainly no

church was established until late in the 19th century, at which point the area came under the parish of Arksey. With this said the site of Moat Hills is located within the study area (**Scheduled Monument 1**). This site comprises a double ditched enclosure with apparent traces of structural remains across the main island and probably relates to a manorial residence established, according to comparative evidence, sometime during or after the 12th century AD (Le Patourel 1973). A further moated site (SMR 00393/01 SM number 13215) is located to the north- west of the site, just beyond the radius of the study area, in close proximity to the motte and bailey castle at Castle Hills (SMR No 00392/01 SM Number 13211). Due north of Moat Hills a series of crop marks are also documented around Bridge and Stockbridge Farms (Roberts et al 2007) (**10**) and, while the site was not listed in the Domesday book and again possesses no church, may represent the remains of a deserted medieval hamlet. The site at Stockbridge is one of four such sites within the Arksey area the others being Shaffholme, Almholme and Tilts. Traces of further crop marks, potentially of medieval origin, were also noted immediately to the west of Moat Hills and extending south in association with traces of ridge and furrow (ibid). Of more immediate relevance, a similar and quite extensive system of crop marks, together with evidence for ridge and furrow, were also recorded to the immediate west of the current site extending both west and north from this point.

Several other sites within the study area may also be of medieval origin although in each case the sites would appear to be of 17th century date and therefore the very end of the period. The internal timber framework of a barn on Church Street would appear to be 17th century in character (**7**) and the listed building of Bentley Mill is also believed to be of the same period although it may well occupy the site of a much earlier structure (**B**). Stockbridge Farmhouse and its associated outbuildings also appear to have been built during the 17th century (**E** and **D** respectively).

Post-medieval and modern period (c. 1500 to present)

The landscape of South Yorkshire underwent considerable change, including the immediate environs of Bentley, during the post-medieval period as the more accessible shallow coal deposits, mainly located towards the west of the county, were developed. Growing demand and new mining technologies and infrastructures were developed which facilitated the exploitation of deeper sections of the South Yorkshire Coalfields further to the east (Hill 2001). This rapid expansion of the coalfields mainly occurred during the 19th and into the early 20th century and was accompanied by the growth of established urban areas or in some cases the foundation of entirely new purpose built villages to accommodate the growing workforce and their families.

Indeed cartographic evidence indicates that much of the area extending north from Bentley along Askern Road remained undeveloped until the early 20th century and comprised mainly of enclosed agricultural field systems until this point (see Figs 3 and 4). At what point this area was enclosed remains uncertain as enclosure maps for the area provided insufficient

information. By contrast Figure 5 demonstrates that by 1931 the immediate environs of the site had undergone a significant transformation with residential premises established on the opposite side of Askern Road, along the newly founded Shakespeare Street and Tennyson Road, and at the same time a landscaped park was created for the welfare of the miners on and to the immediate west of the development site. This phase of development probably occurred sometime around 1908 and directly relates to the founding of the Bentley Colliery located to the north of the site along Askern Road (Hill 2001). While the present character of the site can largely be attributed to such developments only a small number of sites of any archaeological interest may be identified within the study area relating to this period. These include several listed structures, most notably the Church of St Peters built in 1891 and located on High Street (F) as well as a pinfold enclosure on Finkle Street (A) and a milestone located on Askern Road (C).

4 Catalogue of Archaeological Sites and Buildings

Archaeological features

Catalogue entries have been ordered geographically from west to east, and given a numerical identifier, with their locations shown on Figure 2. The catalogue entry includes a National Grid Reference (NGR) number. Where an archaeological feature has an associated ‘SMR’ number the information has been obtained from the South Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record Office in Sheffield. All further information is referenced in the bibliography.

1. Trial trenching by SYAU SMR 0045 05/01

Trial trenching undertaken by the former South Yorkshire Archaeology Unit on property off Jossey Lane (SYAU 1992) which encountered no features of archaeological interest.

2. Roman coin SMR 01072/01 SE 556 063

An AE Antoninianus of Carausius from the garden of 86 Danesway, Scawthorpe.

3. Romano-British field system SMR 04076/01 SE 558 069

An extensive crop mark system indicated to be probably Romano-British in origin although overlain by further medieval to post medieval field systems (Roberts et al 2007). A southern extension of these crop marks has also been identified as Romano-British but shares a similar alignment to further crop marks which encroach upon the development site and are identified as medieval or post medieval due to the presence of ridge and furrow. It is suggested that both sections should perhaps be classified as one and assigned a provisional date accordingly.

4. Romano-British enclosure SMR 00064/01 SE 5580 0565

A rectangular double ditched enclosure with a central circular hut structure believed to be of Romano-British origin, now partially covered by residential buildings. A second sub-circular enclosure again associated with possible hut structures, is located to the immediate south of

this features and may also be of Romano-British date although an earlier prehistoric origin may also be possible.

5. Roman coin **SMR 01073/01** **SE 559 060**

An AR denarius of Caravalla AD 199-200 from the garden of 33 Clevedon Crescent, Scawthorpe.

6. Roman coin **SMR 01035/01** **SE 5645 0673**

An Antonius of Quintillus found on waste ground in 1966.

7. Timber framed barn **SMR 01521/01** **SE 5649 0562**

A barn containing structural timber elements characteristic of the 17th century, on Church Street, Bentley.

8. Neolithic axe **SMR 01272/01** **SE 5680 0590**

A Neolithic polished flint axe.

9. Archaeological evaluation **SMR 04545/01** **SE 571 061**

Archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on the site of Arksey Lane Daycare Centre by ARCUS (Davies 1996). Excavations revealed that much of the area had been truncated by modern activity but encountered a ditch section possibly associated with the moated manorial enclosure of Moat Hills.

10 Deserted medieval hamlet **SMR 02908/01** **SE 5740 0660**

A dense series of crop mark features possibly indicative of a deserted medieval hamlet although no church can be identified in the vicinity and no entry is present in the Domesday book.

Listed Buildings

The Listed Building catalogue entries have been ordered geographically from west to east and given an alphabetical identifier with their location shown on Figure 2. The catalogue entry includes a National Grid Reference (NGR) and a Listed Building reference number.

A. Pinfold enclosure **LB No 334, 800** **SE 5680 0592**

A Grade II stone built pinfold enclosure located on Finkle Street. Such enclosures were used to hold stray stock and the owner charged a fee for their release. This example is believed to derive from the early 19th century.

B. Bentley Mill **LB No 334,923** **SE 5702 0574**

A Grade II 17th century water mill with 19th and 20th century amendments, possibly occupies the location of a much earlier structure (Magilton 1977).

C. Milepost **LB No 334, 907** **SE 5645 0690**

Installed at the junction of Askern Road and Rosedale Road, probably after 1832 when the status was changed to a turnpike. Grade II.

D. Farm Building Range **LB No 334, 927** **SE 5742 0661**

A Grade II range of farm buildings located 15m north of Stockbridge Farmhouse on Stockbridge Lane probably with a 17th century origin.

E. Stockbridge Farmhouse **LB No 334, 926** **SE 5743 0658**

A Grade II 17th century farmhouse located on Stockbridge Lane associated with the before mentioned range of outbuildings.

F. Church of St Peters **LB No 334, 920** **SE 5661 0559**

A Grade II listed building located on High Street and constructed in 1891 by Charles Edward Stephen Cooke with later additions during the 20th century.

Scheduled Monuments

The catalogue of scheduled monument entries has been ordered geographically from west to east and given a numerical identifier with their location shown on Figure 2. The catalogue entry includes a National Grid Reference (NGR).

1. Moat Hills manorial enclosure **SE 5723 0606**

An enclosure with a double moat and traces of structural remains within the largest island space, of uncertain date but probably constructed from the 12th century AD onwards.

5. Conclusions

The immediate environs of the site along Askern Road do not appear to have been much developed until the establishment of the colliery at Bentley in 1908. This was accompanied by the rapid growth of the village in this area, including the establishment of a landscaped park for the welfare of the mine workers, a feature that has been retained more or less in its original form to the present day. While structural remains relating to any buildings of interest do not appear to directly impact upon the site, Bentley is located within a landscape rich in crop mark evidence for field systems and enclosures deriving from the post-medieval or medieval through to the Romano-British period and, in certain instances, possible prehistoric phases of occupation. One such section of crop marks has been identified during mapping of

aerial photographs immediately to the west of the site. It is likely that while continued use of the area as agricultural land up until its development at the start of the 20th century may have denuded any archaeological remains due to plough action, the landscaping of the site may have reached only a minimal depth and therefore features of archaeological interest may be relatively well preserved. Given the density of archaeological features within the study area, with traces immediately bordering the site itself, it is therefore suggested that groundwork, outside of the foundation deposits for the current building occupying the site, have a moderate chance of encountering archaeology. Any further additional archaeological works would need to be agreed in advance with the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service.

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Plate 1. The proposed site of Bentley Youth Centre viewed facing north-east showing the current building with grass area to the front and enclosed yard space to the side



Plate 2. The enclosed yard area to the rear and western side of the site viewed facing south-east

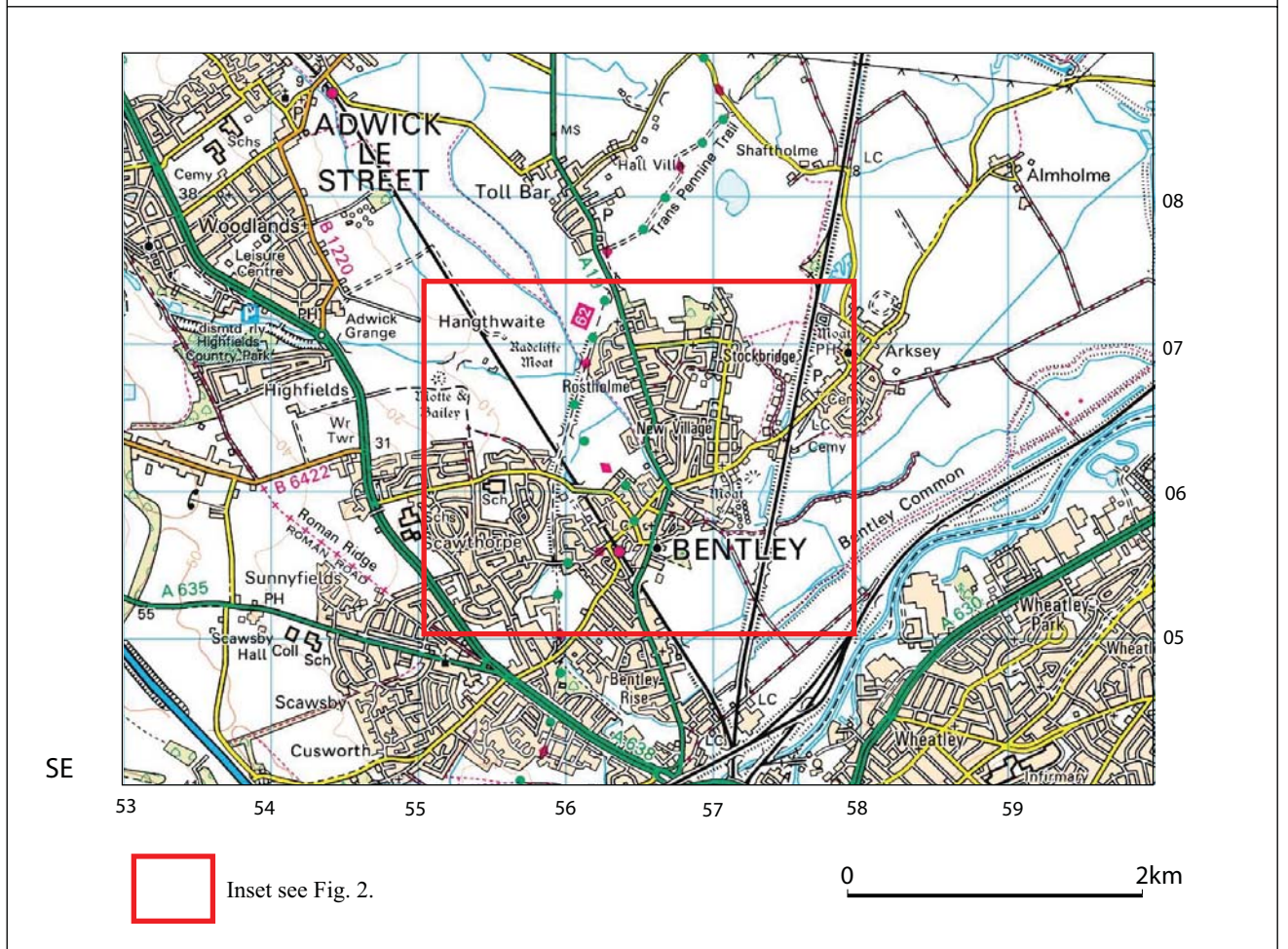
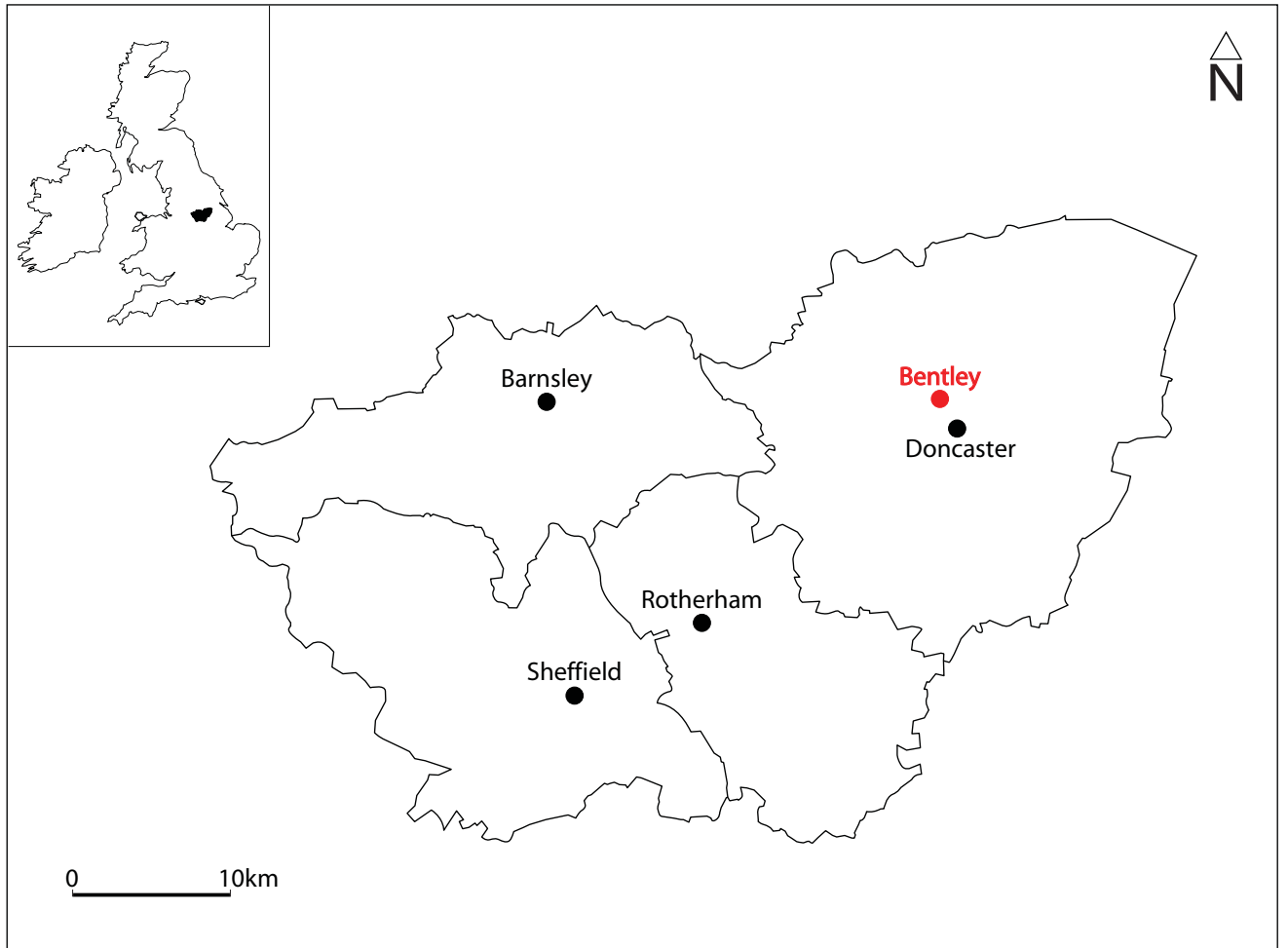


Fig. 1. Site location

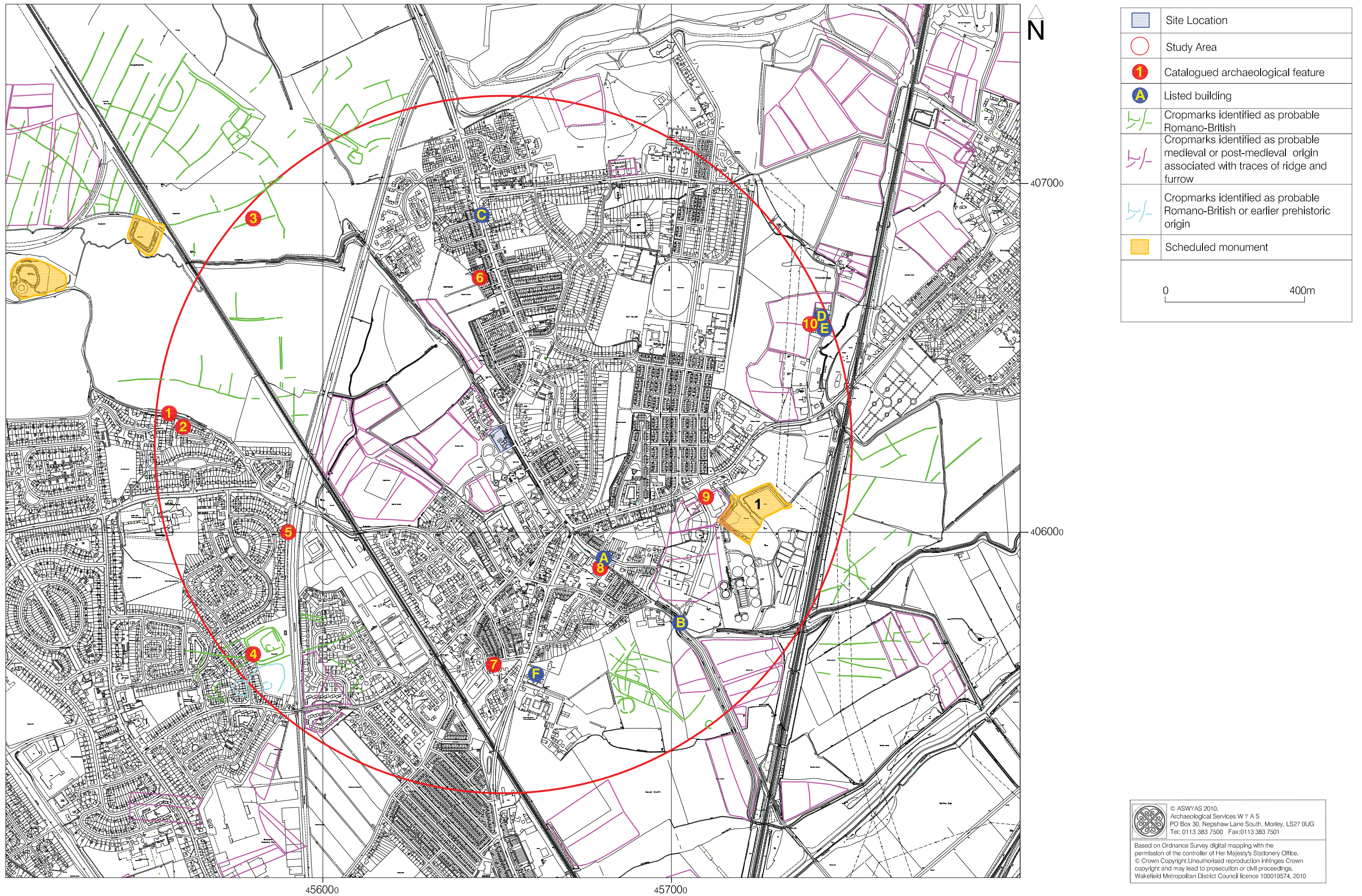


Fig. 2. The study area, proposed youth centre development and catalogued archaeological features (1:10 000 scale)



Fig. 3. Combined extracts from Ordnance Survey 6 inch maps of 1854 (sheet 276 & 277)



Fig. 4. Combined extracts from the Ordnance Survey 6 inch maps of 1907 (sheet 276 SE & 277 SW)



Fig. 5. Combined extracts from the Ordnance Survey 6 inch maps of 1931 (sheet 276 SE & 277 SW)