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**Tom Hill Youth Centre, Denaby Main  
Doncaster, South Yorkshire**

*Archaeological Desk-based Assessment*

*March 2010*

*Report No. 2040*

C L I E N T

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council

# **Tom Hill Youth Centre, Denaby Main, Doncaster, South Yorkshire**

## **Archaeological Desk-based Assessment**

### *Summary*

*An archaeological desk-based assessment was undertaken on the proposed site for the redevelopment of the Tom Hill Youth Centre, Denaby Main, Doncaster. The site is currently occupied by the Tom Hill Youth Centre and associated parking and ball court facilities fronting onto Wadworth Street. Wadworth Street and the area of Denaby Main located to the south, west and east of the site does not appear on Ordnance Survey maps until 1930 and represents a late extension to the village which was itself only established in 1867 subsequent to the foundation of Denaby Main Colliery.*



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### Report Information

Client: Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council  
Address: Council House, College Road, Doncaster, DN1 1BR  
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County: South Yorkshire  
Grid Reference: SE 5015 9943  
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Site Code: DYC10  
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Project Management: Mitchell Pollington BA MA  
Report: Adam Tinsley BA BA MA  
Illustrations: Ian Atkins  
Photography: Adam Tinsley  
Research: Adam Tinsley

Produced by: Archaeological Services WYAS, PO Box 30,  
Nepshaw Lane South, Morley, Leeds LS27 0UG  
Telephone: 0113 383 7500  
Email: admin@aswyas.com

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### **Acknowledgements**

Archaeological Services WYAS would like to thank the staff of Doncaster Archives and of South Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record Office 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 of the redevelopment of the current Tom Hill Youth Centre, Wadworth Street, Denaby Main, 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 0.3 hectares and is occupied by the Tom Hill Youth Centre and associated tarmaced parking area and ball court. It comprises a rectangular parcel of land extending roughly north-east to south-west along a section of Wadworth Street, Denaby Main, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, (NGR SE 5015 9943; Figs 1 and 2) to the west of St Albans Roman Catholic (RC) Church. The site is bounded to the north by Wadworth Street and to the east by a lane separating it from the church. To the south and rear of the site is a football pitch, while to the west the site borders a single residential property. A tree line extends along the northern front of the site on Wadworth Street.

Denaby Main is located on the northern slope of North Cliffe Hill which runs gently down towards the river Don. It is located between the townships of Conisbrough, to the immediate east, and Mexborough, across the river Don towards the north-west.

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

### **Geology and soils**

The underlying solid geology in the study area consists of Carboniferous Upper Coal Measures (BGS 1992) belonging to the Barnsley Bed. The overlying soils are un-surveyed by the Soil Survey of England and Wales (1980) and listed as mainly urban and industrial contexts.

## **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 (SMR), Sheffield, and from the National Monuments Record via the Archaeology Data Service website and Images of

England Website. The Doncaster Archives and Local Studies Library was 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 4th of March 2010 (Plate 1 and Plate 2).

## **3 The Study Area**

### **Identified archaeological sites, buildings and features**

A total of nine 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**

Three Listed Buildings (A-C) have been identified within the study area. No designated Scheduled Monuments, Registered Battlefields or Registered Parks and Gardens are situated within the study area.

### **Previous archaeological investigations**

Several phases of archaeological mitigation were undertaken at the former site of the Denaby Main Pottery including an evaluation undertaken by ASWYAS (Cudlip and O'Neill 2000) and subsequent excavation of the site by the former Manchester University Archaeological Unit (Gregory 2004). No other archaeological works have been undertaken within the confines of the study area.

## 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). Within the study area limited Mesolithic activity is attested by the recovery of isolated flint objects and scatters. A single microlith was recovered to the south-east of the site on the boundary of the township of Conisbrough (9) while a flint scatter of unknown quantity but including various tool types such as blades, scrapers, burins and leaf shaped arrow heads were recovered to the north-east of the site, just over the river Don (6). Contrary to the SMR record at least part of this assemblage may be Neolithic in origin (see catalogue entry).

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 and sites of this period are typically represented by scatters of flints, pottery and burnt stone (Manby *et al.* 2003) usually, although not always, 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 sometimes rudimentary field systems as well as the emergence of small nucleated settlement including evidence for more identifiable domestic structures. No evidence for such activity occurs within the immediate study area.

### *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) although do not impact upon the immediate environment of the current site.

By the later Iron Age 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 in about A.D. 71 and cemented by the creation of a number of linked forts throughout the area (Ottaway 2003). One such fort was established to control fording points across the river Don at the site of 'Danum' or Doncaster, to the east of Denaby, and was potentially linked to an earlier site established at Templeborough, further to the south-west, via a road (Margery 1973) which probably passed relatively near to the site.

While no evidence of Iron Age activity can be identified within the study area a Roman presence is attested by several find spots. These include a single sestertius from the reign of Domitian due west of the site at a property off Bolton Street (3), a single coin dated to AD 308 (5) and a hoard of 29 coins dated to the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD (7) both located due north of the site on the opposite bank of the river Don. An unknown quantity of Romano-British greyware pottery was also recovered from a ploughed field, in the same area as the flint scatter mentioned above (6).

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

There is little archaeological evidence for settlement in South Yorkshire during the post-Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods. After the withdrawal of the Romans much of West and South Yorkshire is known to have come 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 place names such as Conisbrough and Mexborough indicate the presence of a Saxon defended site or 'burgh' in the wider area no evidence relating to this period exists within the study area.

Anglo-Saxon northern England fell under the 'Danelaw' which was established following the conquests made by the Viking 'great army' in the later half of the 9th century AD (Hall 2003). No archaeological finds of this period derive from the study area, however, the place name of Denaby is believed to derive from the Old English of 'Denegebi' or 'Degenebi' meaning village of the Danes (Smith 1961). While this undoubtedly relates more to the village of Old Denaby located to the west, rather than Denaby Main itself, it does attest to the presence of occupation during this period. Control of northern England was later regained by the resurgent Saxon kingdom of Wessex until the subsequent conquests by William the Duke of Normandy in 1066 AD.

Following the Norman Conquest Denaby is mentioned in the Domesday book (Hunter 1974) with the area coming under the lordship of William, the first Earl De Warren (Magilton 1977). The continued strategic significance of the ford across the river Don ensured continued occupation of the area and indeed the establishment of the first Norman fortifications at Consibrough around 1070 AD. This probably originally consisted of a wooden motte and bailey on the site of the current castle which was later developed into its present form of a stone keep and curtain wall by Hamelin Plantagenet, 5th Earl De Warren and illegitimate half-brother to Henry II, sometime between 1165 and 1202 AD. Further evidence for medieval occupation in the area can be found in the presence of another motte and bailey site north of Denaby on the opposite bank of the river at Castle Hill, Mexborough (SK 485

999). Denaby again features in the Poll Tax returns of 1379 AD and was recorded as consisting of up to 26 households. However, while there is good evidence for the occupation of the general area during the medieval period no archaeological features or spot finds have been recorded within the study area. A single stone-lined culvert was reportedly uncovered during building work at a power station which may relate to the medieval period but could as easily be post-medieval in origin (4).

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

The 1854 first edition Ordnance Survey map of the area records the location of the village of Denaby Main as consisting of enclosed pasture land (Fig. 3). Indeed it is not until the opening of the colliery at Denaby Main in 1868 (Hill 2001) that the village was established to house the new mining community, marking a shift in focus away from the village of Old Denaby as it became known. The site of the colliery is listed within the study area to the north-west of the site (2). The location of the present site and indeed Wadworth Street and sections south and west of this point were not developed until some time in the late 19th century or early 20th century as demonstrated by the Ordnance Survey map of 1890 which depicts the area as enclosed fields bounding the periphery of the newly developed village (Fig. 4). The site first appears on the Ordnance Survey map of 1930 (Fig. 5) which indicates the establishment of Wadworth Street in association with a general expansion of the village in a south-easterly and westerly direction, including the provision of welfare facilities for the colliery workers in the form of the Church of St Albans and of All Saints, the Miners Welfare Institute, a school, football pitch, bowling green and cricket field as well as further housing. The site of St Albans is now designated as a Grade II listed building (C). This general expansion of the village was probably associated with the continued success of Denaby Main colliery but also the establishment of a second mine by the same company within 1km at Cadeby. The development of the site and immediate area may therefore primarily be associated with the post medieval expansion of coal mining activities in the area during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Further activity associated with this period can be noted with reference to two other sites located within the study area. North Cliffe Quarry, located due south of the site, was developed during the later half of the 19th century and includes a double trackway linking the quarry to off-site lime kilns (8). Towards the north-west of the site several phases of archaeological investigation (Cudlip and O'Neill 2000; Gregory 2004) examined the structural remains of the former Denaby Main pottery, located within a disused quarry just off Doncaster Road (1). The pottery was established on the site of a former brick works in 1864 by Charles W. Wilkinson and John Wardle trading under the name of Wilkinson and Wardle until 1866 when John Blyth succeeded Wilkinson. The pottery continued in operation for a relatively short period and closed in 1868 due to financial reasons. The premises were then converted to a bone works, known locally as the Mexborough Bone Mill, and continued in operation until sometime in the early 20th century. The short period of operation meant that

pottery produced at Denaby Main is relatively rare and that little was actually known about the site until excavations by the University of Manchester (Gregory 2004).

A series of 20th century features were also recorded across the study area during survey work undertaken for the assessment project 'The Cropmark Landscapes of the Magnesian Limestone of South and West Yorkshire' undertaken by ASWYAS (Roberts *et al* 2007) and, while no specific information is available, apparently relate to the creation of several bomb shelters associated with the establishment of a munitions works in the area (Louisa Mathews pers. Com.). Several of these features were recorded in close proximity to the proposed development site.

Much of Denaby Main relating to this period has since been demolished and redeveloped during the second half of the 20th century to make way for the current residential properties.

## 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 SMR. All further information is referenced in the bibliography.

#### **1. Denaby Main Pottery** **SMR 03621/01** **SK 4934 9971**

A pottery located within a disused quarry immediately south of Doncaster Road, south of Greys Bridge and the level crossing of the main railway line, on the very western limit of the study area. It was established on the site of a former brick works in 1864 and traded until 1868 when the firm reportedly went bankrupt. It consisted of several kilns and ancillary buildings the remains of which were excavated and recorded during trial trenching by ASWYAS (Cudlip and O'Neill 2000) and subsequently by the former Manchester University Archaeology Unit (Gregory 2004).

#### **2. Denaby Main Colliery** **SMR 04408/01** **SK 494 997**

The site of the former Denaby Main Colliery established in 1868 which continued to trade until closure in 1968. The establishment of the colliery led to the creation of Denaby Main village as the company provided housing and other facilities for its workers.

#### **3. Roman coin** **SMR 01822/01** **SK 497 995**

A single sestertius relating to the reign of Domitian (AD 81-96) recovered from Allotment Gardens off Bolton Street (Magilton 1977, 30). Held at Doncaster Museum.

**4. Stone lined culvert****SMR 01017/01**

A stone lined culvert reportedly uncovered during building work associated with the construction of a power station on the Mexborough to Conisborough road although the spot location does not have a NGR reference. The feature is of an unknown date and may be medieval or post-medieval.

**5. Roman coin****SMR 03308/01****SE 50**

A single Roman coin reportedly dated to AD 308. Exact find spot unknown.

**6. Flint scatter****SMR 02425/01****SE 503 001**

A scatter of Mesolithic flint artefacts of unspecified quantity but including microliths, blades, scrapers, burins and several leaf shaped arrow heads, recovered from the plough soil together with an amount of Romano-British grey ware sherds. Held by private collector Mr M. Brown, 52 Victoria Road, Balby, Doncaster. While the assemblage has been classified as Mesolithic, apparently due to the abundance of microliths in the assemblage, the listing of leaf shaped arrow heads would also seem to indicate a Neolithic component (Waddington 2004).

**7. Roman coin hoard****SMR 0066/01****SE 503 002**

A hoard of approximately 29 coins dated to the reign of Trajan and subsequent Emperors during the 2nd to 3rd century A.D. recovered from a railway cutting north of the river Don (Magilton 1977).

**8. North Cliff Quarry and trackway****SMR 04584/01****SK 5070 9930**

A limestone quarry in use between 1850 and 1901 with evidence of a trackway for the transportation of goods to an off site lime kiln.

**9. Microlith****SMR 01987/01****SK 51 99**

A single microlith recovered from the plough soil near Cadeby Cliff.

**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. Milepost****LB No 334 800****SE 4933 9983**

A milepost approximately 70m west of the junction with Denaby Lane, Doncaster Road (north side). Grade II.

**B. Milepost****LB No 334 799****SE 5087 9944**

A milepost set in the pavement outside number 10 Doncaster Road (south side) Grade II.

**C. Church of St Albans****LB No 334, 806****SE 5021 9945**

A Grade II Listed Building constructed towards the end of the 19th century as part of the provision for mine workers welfare by the owners of Denaby Main and Cadeby Collieries with later amendments in the early 20th century. Also created at this time were a series of recreation grounds, including a football pitch, cricket field and bowling green as well as the premises of the Miners Welfare Institute.

## 5. Conclusions

The general area of Denaby Main has been a focus for activity since the first colonisation of the land during the Mesolithic period although this occupation does not appear to have been very focused within the immediate study area until the establishment of the village itself with the founding of the colliery in the later half of the 19th century. A Roman presence was firmly established in the area with the creation of forts at several fording points along the river Don, most immediately at Doncaster and Templeborough. These two sites were reportedly linked by a road which may have passed near the site of Denaby Main and there is some evidence of Roman occupation in the immediate study area through several find spots registered with the SMR. Continued occupation through the immediate post-Roman and early medieval period is suggested by the evidence of place-names although no material evidence for such has been recovered from within the study area. The strategic importance of the fording points across the river Don in this area would probably have secured at least a cursory presence and certainly resulted in a focus of activity following the Norman Conquest which witnessed the establishment of several defensive sites including Conisbrough Castle located just over 1km to the south east of the study site. The principle focus for occupation would however have been both around Conisbrough itself and at the site of Old Denaby further to the west. Certainly, barring the circumspet evidence of a culvert of unknown date, the exact location of which is also uncertain, no archaeological remains relating to the medieval period have been recovered from within the study area.

Denaby Main was established at the commencement of works at the colliery in 1868 and prior to this the site location, and indeed that of the entire village, was given over to agricultural practices. Moreover while the village of Denaby Main was first established at this point, Wadworth Street and areas south, west and east of this point were not constructed until a second phase of expansion during the early 20th century. This phase of development witnessed the provision of numerous welfare facilities for employees at the mine including the listed building of the Church of St Albans, the premises of the Miners Welfare Institute, and a number of recreational grounds. During this second phase of development it would

appear that the site itself may have been occupied by a grass lawn, or other open area, although a section along the southern edge was taken up by a building associated with the football pitch further to the south, possibly changing and shower rooms, or a pavilion of some sort. The current facilities appear to have been added in the later half of the 20th century and occupy a central section of the site along its frontage onto Wadworth Street. The immediate environs of this building would also appear to have been lightly landscaped at this time with the creation of the current parking area and ball court.

While the site has therefore seen several phases of development which may have reduced the potential for archaeological preservation, at least within the confines of present structural foundation deposits, the minimal development of the area, which has largely been given over to open ground of one form or another, may still retain the potential to produce archaeological deposits. Given the agricultural nature of previous land use such features would probably relate to agricultural land divisions and associated practices relating to the post-medieval or medieval periods. The potential for features relating to earlier archaeological periods also remains although given the relatively low density of find sites within the study area, this may be minimal. Any further archaeological works should be agreed in advance with the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service.

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Plate 1. The Tom Hill Youth Centre viewed facing south-east from Wadworth Street



Plate 2. The Tom Hill Youth Centre viewed facing west from the south-eastern corner of the ball court

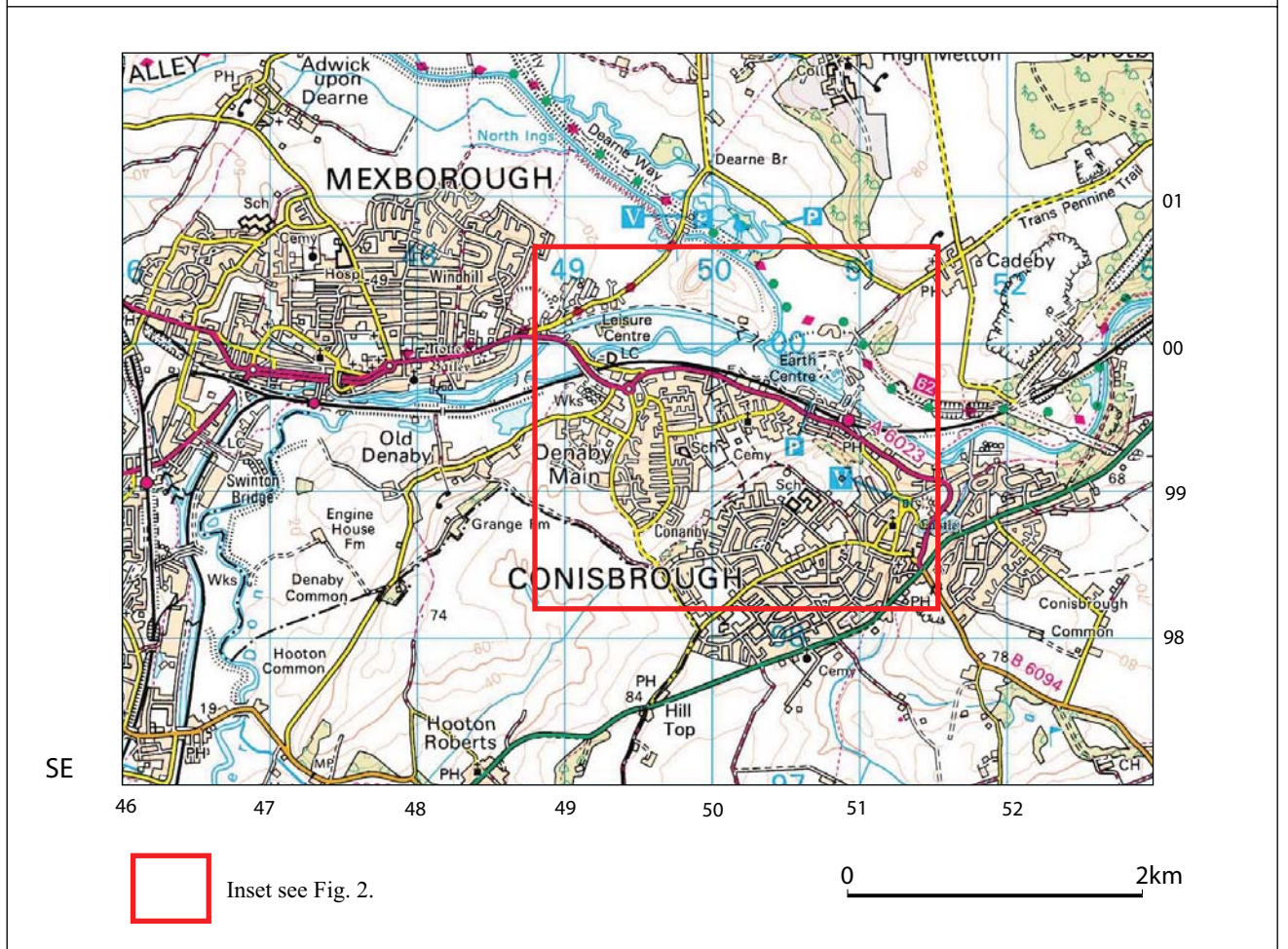
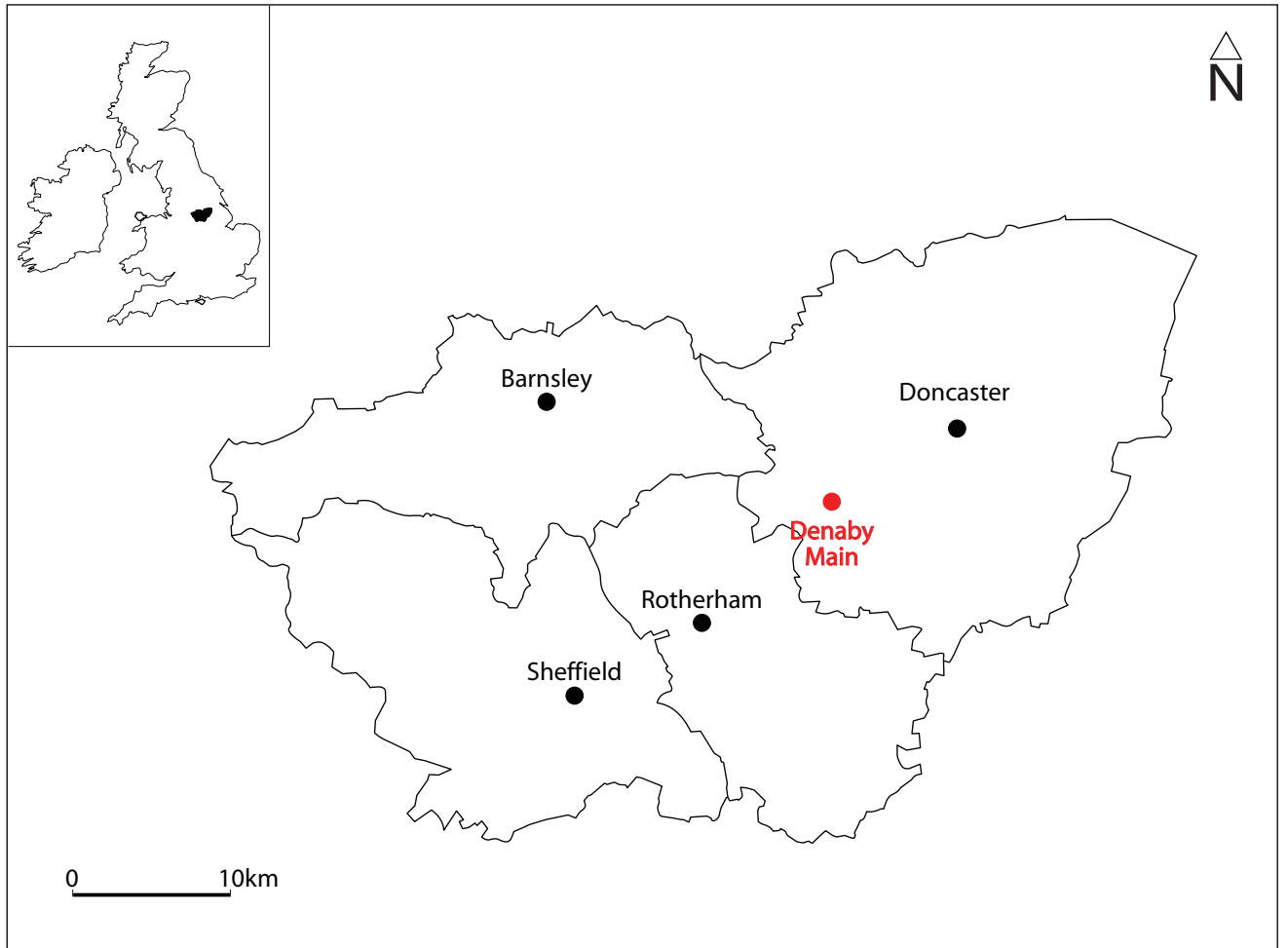


Fig. 1. Site location



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



Fig. 3. Extract from the Ordnance Survey 6 inch 1st edition series map of 1854 (sheet 284)

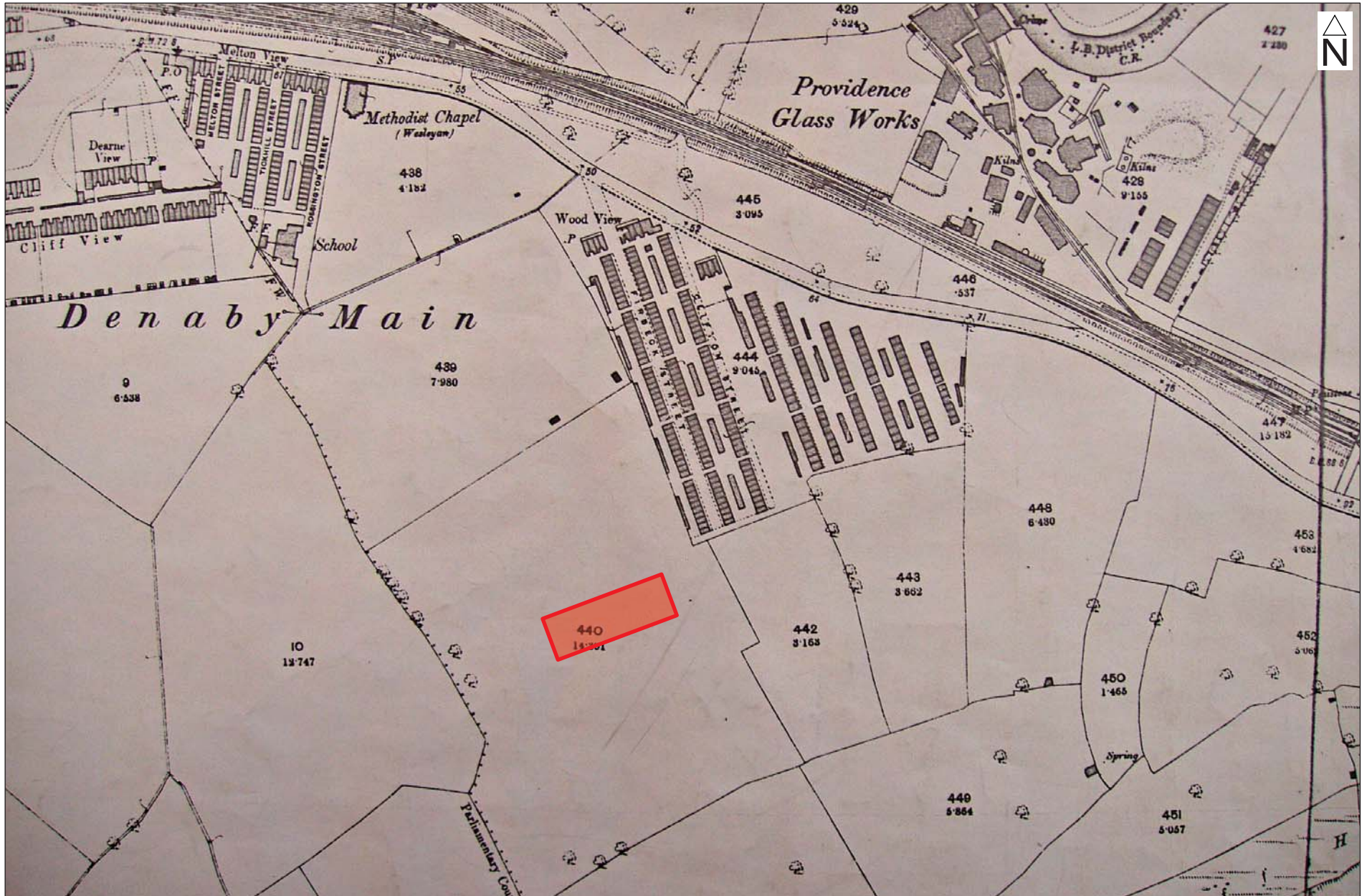


Fig. 4. Extract from the Ordnance Survey 25 inch series map of 1890 (sheet 284:10)

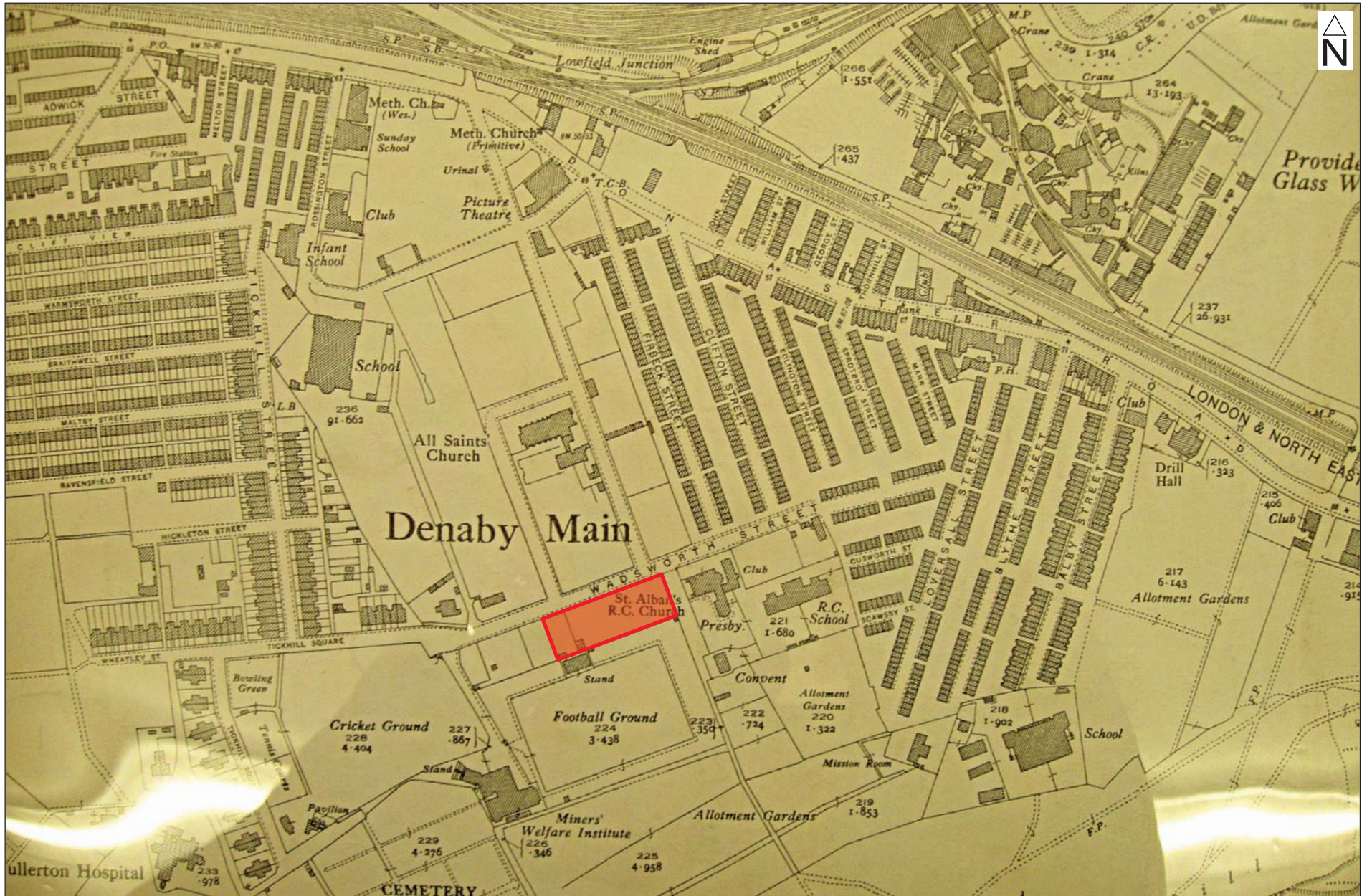


Fig. 5. Extract from the Ordnance Survey 25 inch series map of 1930 (sheet 284:10)