

CASTLEFIELDS REGENERATION SCHEME

Halton, Cheshire



Archaeological Assessment



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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	4
1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
1.1 Circumstances of Project.....	5
2. METHODOLOGY.....	6
2.1 Project Design	6
2.2 Desk-Based Survey	6
2.3 Field Walkover Survey	6
2.4 Gazetteer of Sites	7
2.5 Archive.....	7
3. BACKGROUND	8
3.1 Location and Geology	8
3.2 Historical Background	8
4: ASSESSMENT RESULTS.....	12
4.1 Documentary Sources	12
4.2 Cartographic Sources and Map Regression	14
4.3 Cheshire Sites and Monument Record (CSMR)	17
4.4 Aerial Photographs.....	18
4.5 Field Walkover Results	19
5: DISCUSSION	21
5.1 Archaeological Resource.....	21
5.2 Archaeological Potential	22
6. BIBLIOGRAPHY	24
6.1 Primary Sources	24
6.2 Secondary Sources	25
APPENDIX 1.....	27
Project Brief	
APPENDIX 2.....	28
Project design	
APPENDIX 3.....	35
Gazetteer of Sites	
ILLUSTRATIONS	46
Figure 1 Location Map	

- Figure 2 1757 Estate map of Norton Manor, belonging to the Brooke Family
(Eyes 1757)
- Figure 3 1770 Ink and watercolour drawing of Norton Manor
- Figure 4 OS first edition map (1873-77), showing the extent of the Norton Park in
1873, with areas of surviving parkland in 1910-12 (from OS 2nd edition
map) overlain
- Figure 5 Castlefields: Site Map
- Figure 6 Defined areas of fieldwalking

PLATES.....47

- Plate 1 1974 Aerial photograph of Norton Priory and area of fish pond
- Plate 2 The Bridgewater Canal and Environs, looking west
- Plate 3 Castlefields Recreational Centre and Environs, looking north-east
- Plate 4 Large Pond Adjacent to the Bridgewater Canal, looking north-west
- Plate 5 Area of Land Immediately West of Norton Priory, looking south

SUMMARY

A desktop assessment was undertaken in July 2002 of the proposed development site of Castlefields Regeneration Scheme, at Halton in Cheshire (centred at SJ 545 829, Fig 1) by Oxford Archaeology North, on behalf of The Environment Partnership.

The assessment comprised a desk-based survey of available documentary and cartographic sources, together with a field identification survey; it has highlighted the archaeological resource within and around the study area at Castlefields, east of Norton Priory. Few Prehistoric or Roman sites were detected, none within the study area, but this does not rule out the existence of sub-surface remains, particularly in the light of recent excavations. In general, the identified archaeological material is of local importance, comprising typical examples of medieval through to post-medieval agricultural, parkland and industrial features. The most important site recorded is the potentially medieval mill pond to the immediate west of Norton Priory, which existed until the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries.

The study area extends over both secular (Halton Castle) and religious (Norton Priory) lands during the medieval period and the interaction between the two is not yet fully understood, since few monastic documents survive. The archaeological remains relating to eighteenth and nineteenth century transport development, notably the Bridgewater Canal, are of some significance.

The study examined recent land-use of the area and established that it has been subject to extensive landscaping resultant from the expansion of parkland in the eighteenth / nineteenth centuries, but the main impact on the landscape occurred in the late 1960s when the New Town of Runcorn was established. This involved the excavation of a large pond / lake associated with the formation of a Town Park. The land was then extensively landscaped with the loss of the former agricultural land and associated field boundaries.

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The desk-based study, field walkover and report were undertaken by Vix Hughes and the drawings were by Emma Carter. The report was edited by Jamie Quartermaine and Rachel Newman and the overall project management was by Jamie Quartermaine.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was invited by The Environment Partnership to submit a project design for an archaeological assessment of the Castlefields Regeneration Scheme, Halton, Cheshire (centred at SJ 545 829; Fig 1). The archaeological work is in accordance with a brief prepared by Mark Leah, of Cheshire County Council, Environmental Planning Department (*Appendix 1*). The study was required to assess the archaeological and historical importance of the proposed regeneration scheme area, which lies immediately adjacent to the west of Norton Priory.
- 1.1.2 OA North undertook the archaeological assessment in July 2002, examining the 1.25sqkm proposed development area which lies immediately to the south of the A558 and east of the A533. The desk-based study examined the overall study area but information on the historical background was gleaned from a wider, more regional context. The study utilised information contained in the Cheshire Sites and Monuments Record (CSMR) and also examined published and unpublished records held by the Cheshire County Record Office in Chester (CRO) and at Norton Priory Museum. The desk-based study was followed by a rapid walkover survey; this examined only the eastern and northern part of the study area (0.56sqkm in extent), the rest having been subject to recent development.
- 1.1.3 This report details the results of the work and outlines a statement of the archaeological potential of the development site and its impact on the identified archaeological resource.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

- 2.1.1 A project design (*Appendix 2*) was submitted by OA North to The Environment Partnership for an archaeological assessment of the proposed Castlefields Regeneration Scheme. The project design provided for a desk-based study and a walkover survey, in accordance with a project brief (*Appendix 1*) written by Mark Leah, of Cheshire County Council, Environmental Planning Department. The project design was adhered to in full and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 DESK-BASED SURVEY

- 2.2.1 **Cheshire Sites and Monuments Record (CSMR):** existing archaeological information was obtained from the CSMR for all sites within the proposed development area. Sites of all periods and types were noted but currently CSMR policy does not include the logging of industrial features.
- 2.2.2 **Cheshire Record Office (Chester) (CRO):** manuscript and printed maps, directories and selected other documents, as well as published sources, were studied in the CRO. Most sources were primary and provided information concerning landuse and ownership, population, and the general local history of the study area.
- 2.2.3 **Norton Priory Museum:** primary sources of information, relevant to the manor and activities of Norton Priory, are held at Norton Priory Museum, with some copies at the CRO. The copies at the CRO were examined and pertinent information was also available from secondary, published sources, making a visit to Norton Priory unnecessary at this stage.
- 2.2.4 **Aerial Photographs:** vertical black and white and colour photographs were available at the CSMR, covering a period from the 1970s onwards, and gave good coverage of the area in question. They were studied using a x8 enlarging lens and comparisons were made to the CSMR entries and notes taken during the field identification survey. In addition, colour slide aerial views of several other features within the study area were examined. The information on aerial photographs contained in the National Monuments Record was not available within the timescale of the project.
- 2.2.5 **World Wide Web:** some information about the development area, particularly concerning the industrial archaeology and the proposed redevelopment aims for the area, was gleaned from a scan of this source.

2.3 FIELD WALKOVER SURVEY

- 2.3.1 The area for fieldwalking examined only the terrain that has not been developed, which was 0.56sqkm in extent; the survey was divided into five discrete areas (Fig 6) for the purposes of reporting. The land was walked systematically, with the aim of identifying previously unknown archaeological sites and finds.

- 2.3.2 The work was carried out on 9th-10th July 2002. The area was freely accessible to the public with complete rights of way along footpaths and the canal towpath. Much of the area was in use for recreational purposes and was under short grass with landscaped stands of trees. The ground was walked in transects not more than 20m wide, notes were made, and photographs taken (colour and black and white).

2.4 GAZETTEER OF SITES

- 2.4.1 All of the information concerning archaeological sites within the assessed area has been collated into a gazetteer (*Appendix 3*), which provides details of their location, period, and character. Locations are given as eight-figure National Grid References where possible, and the position of each site is indicated on Figure 5.

2.5 ARCHIVE

- 2.5.1 A full archive has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (1991). The archive will be deposited in the CRO with an additional copy of the report being lodged with the CSMR and a summary sent to the National Monuments Record (NMR).

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

- 3.1.1 **Site Topography:** the assessment area consists of 1.25sqkm of land in the township of Castlefields, in the district of Halton, North Cheshire. The study area is bordered by the A558 to the north and the A533 to the west, with the Bridgewater Canal passing through the northern part of the area and Norton Priory lying immediately adjacent to the north-east. The study area is situated along the southern side of lower reaches of the river Mersey ; it is on land slightly higher than the flood plain to the north, and the land gently rises, from approximately 20m OD in the northern part, towards a low hill in the area of Pickerings Rough, at approximately 50m OD, in the southern part of the area.
- 3.1.2 **Geology:** the study area lies on a band of Keuper Sandstone with Upper Mottled Sandstone to the north and Waterstones to the south (IGS 1971). The drift geology is largely a product of fluvial activity along the Mersey and further inland are boulder clays, which were deposited during the various glacial episodes (Countryside Commission 1998; Higham 1993; Hebblethwaite 1987).
- 3.1.3 **Soils:** the overlying soils are mostly of the Bridgnorth and Clifton Associations, with the Bridgnorth soils being typical brown sands (usually wind blown) and the Clifton soils being typical stagnogleys (Lawes Agricultural Trust 1983). The brown sands are suitable for arable and pasture, being of Grade 2 landuse, whereas the stagnogleys are Grade 3 and most suited for grassland. The western part of the study area is under urban development and has not been subject to soil surveys.

3.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.2.1 **Prehistoric:** there is clear evidence of man's activity in Cheshire from the Palaeolithic to the Neolithic period but nothing is known of near to the study area (Higham 1993); this may be due to the lack of fieldwork in this part of the county, the ephemeral nature of the cultures in this region, or the changes in coastline and river courses, and their relation to settlements and activity. From the north side of the Mersey at Ditton Brook (SJ 475 851 – 475 854), three excavated sites produced scatters of worked flints and waste flakes, which indicate the presence of Mesolithic people in the area, as do excavations further to the west at Greasby (Cowell 1992). There is some suggestion from the assemblages and the range of tools produced that the remains may represent several visits to the area, which was probably open land, adjacent to both the river and deciduous forest further inland (Cowell 2000a).
- 3.2.2 The Bronze Age has also provided no definite evidence in the study area, although further away to the south-east there are burial mounds recorded (Higham 1993) and a Middle Bronze Age axe was found while the Manchester Ship Canal was under construction in 1892 (*ibid*).
- 3.2.3 In the Iron Age the area was part of the land occupied by the Cornovii tribe, and although boundaries between tribes are speculative, the Mersey appears to have served as the boundary between the Cornovii and the Brigantes to the north

- (Cunliffe 1991, 188). A site on the northern side of the Mersey at Brook House (SJ 473 850), excavated in 1993, uncovered the remains of two Iron Age concentric enclosures marked by ditches and banks (Cowell 2000b); it was not clear whether these two enclosures were contemporary or whether the outer may have been later. Within the inner enclosure was a circular building with a causeway leading across the enclosure to the building's entrance; other associated features included several pits, a four-posted structure, and a hollow containing metalworking residues. There appeared to have been a period of abandonment, which has speculatively been linked to the arrival of the Roman military in the region, before the site was re-occupied in the second century AD. The finds reflect the aceramic nature of Iron Age settlements in the North, with only a few sherds of Cheshire Very Coarse Pottery (VCP) present, suggesting trade relations with the salt producing areas of the north Midlands, rather than indigenous pottery production. The overall interpretation of the site is that of high status, probably utilising the pastoral nature of the area (Cowell 2000b, 66).
- 3.2.4 **Roman:** there is considerable evidence for Roman activity around the Mersey in this area, although no sites or finds of the period were identified within the study area. At 10km to the north-east lies the large Roman industrial site of Wilderspool (Shotter 1997, 82; Hinchcliffe and Williams 1992). In addition, 20km to the south-west is Chester, a legionary fortress established sometime in the AD 70s (Salway 1981, 139). The route between the two places has not been established with certainty but it is suggested that it passed along the south of the Mersey (Shotter 1997, 35). The site of a Roman camp is marked on modern Ordnance Survey maps, on the basis of fieldwork carried out in the 1930s (Newstead and Droop 1934), although subsequent work in the 1960s suggested that this was probably a Roman agricultural site (Section 5.2.3) (Brown *et al* 1975).
- 3.2.5 **Medieval:** Domesday Book compiled in (1086) gives some general indications of the landscape of the area during the late Saxon period (Higham 1993, 202; Morgan 1978) and there is some suggestion of a large estate to which the names Norton, Aston, Sutton and Weston may relate, being the furthest cardinal points of the estate (Higham 1993, 155; Greene 1989, 29). The name Halton was possibly introduced when the Barony of Halton was given by Roger Lacy to his brother Richard. 'Halton' and variations of it do appear in Domesday Book, the name probably means '*farm at a heathery place*' (Dodgson 1970, 153-154), and will have applied to Halton, the capital manor of Runcorn Parish in the hundred of Tunendune (Higham 1993, 155).
- 3.2.6 **Norton Priory:** a priory was established in 1115, by William fitzNigel, as an Augustinian house in Runcorn, but in 1134 it was relocated, by a distance of 4km, to Norton. In 1391 Norton Priory was raised to abbey status, a rare occurrence, which reflected its wealth and position in the area at this time. As part of the general dissolution of the monasteries, the priory was suppressed in 1536 under the aegis of Sir Piers Dutton and all its lands and holdings were examined. Unusually, it was then not immediately sold, either in part or whole, but in 1545 the manor was bought by Sir Richard Brooke of Leighton, for £1,512 1s 9d (Greene 1989, 31). Interestingly, the later Enclosure documents show a descendant Sir Richard Brooke (baronet) owning land in the study area approximately 300 years later, and continued to occupy Norton Priory until the 1920's; it was demolished in 1928

(LUAU 2000). Indeed the Brookes owned the land until it was given to the Norton Priory Museum Trust.

- 3.2.7 Records from the priory and other sources show that the Mersey was prone to flooding and that embankment work was carried out to prevent this. In some places, where not obliterated by the Ship Canal, earthworks relating to this activity exist, but these are not within the area (*ibid*). The purpose of preventing flooding and the corresponding drainage of the manor's marshlands was to increase the land available for agriculture and other activities. Nearby Oxmoor, to the south-west, is mentioned in the 1536 *Augmentation Office Commissioners' Accounts* (PRO SC6/HenryVIII/410 26259) and its name suggests that the area may have been used for grazing in the medieval period (Dodgson 1970, 32). These accounts give a glimpse of the economy and landscape of the area at the very end of the medieval period, suggesting that there was pasture land / meadows nearer the Mersey, with arable use further inland, together with a variety of relatively small-scale industrial activity from mills, fisheries and woodland.
- 3.2.8 **Halton Castle:** if Norton Priory represents the religious element of the medieval landscape and economy then Halton Castle reflects the secular element. The first Baron of Halton was probably Nigel, in about 1071, who held the land under Hugh I of Avranches, acting as the Earl of Chester for William the Conqueror (Beaumont 1873). It was during Nigel's time that the castle was begun and the structure laid out, although no motte and bailey fortification has been confirmed on site during recent excavations (McNeil and Jamieson 1987). Nigel's son William fitzNigel held Halton until his death in 1133 (Ormerod 1882), and the Domesday Book records that it was one of the 30 manors that he held in 1086 (Morgan 1978). The stone built castle at Halton probably dates from the later part of the twelfth century, during the rule of Henry II (McNeil and Jamieson 1987). After 1194 the family name became de Lacy through marriage and the House of Lancaster became Lords in 1310. With the changes in ownership and the accumulation of properties by the families over time, the importance of Halton as the manorial seat declined, as the focus shifted elsewhere, particularly once it became part of the great Lancastrian lordship, which was amalgamated with the Crown in 1499 (*ibid*). Eventually most of the land became the property of the Brooke family, who also held Norton.
- 3.2.9 **Post-medieval:** the proposed development site lies partially within the boundary of the manor of Norton Priory and Norton Township and partially within the township of Halton. Following the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the site of the abbey became a hall, in which elements such as the west range of the cloister and the undercroft were retained. This Tudor hall was besieged by Royalists in 1643, but survived until some time between 1727 (Buck Print) and 1757 (John Eyes 1757 Estate map of Norton Priory) when it was demolished and a new Georgian mansion was constructed. Evidence from the 1757 estate map shows that there seemed to be a broad continuation of the later medieval landuse and economy, although the estate books themselves are lost. By the creation of the Tithe Maps (CRO EDT 307/1 and EDT 182/1 (1844/5)), 87 years later, Norton, as well as the Halton area, was still owned by the Brooke Family and occupied by various tenants. The fields were used for either arable or a mixture of meadow and pasture, with pastoral land use being the greater, and oats being the predominant crop, with barley, wheat and potatoes taking up the rest.

- 3.2.10 **Industrial Activity:** the general study area includes sites of significant importance in the industrial development of Britain. Industries such as quarrying on varying scales, mineral extraction, shipbuilding, soap and chemicals, and tanning were prevalent in the area. Tanning is evident within the study area at Astmore, on the north side of the Bridgewater Canal (*Section 4.3.8 below*), where a tannery is shown on the 1845 tithe map (CRO EDT 182/1 and 2). This tannery, and any surviving remains, would now lie beneath the A558 or the slim strip of embankment between the canal and the road. The site was attractive to the tanning industry as much of the surrounding land was in use for pasture, and so provided an abundant source of cattle hides, and also the proximity of the canal provided transport for raw materials in and the finished goods out. Runcorn was in fact one of the primary, post-medieval leather production centres in the country (Starkey 1990, 153-4).
- 3.2.11 **Communications:** the development of the local industries was closely linked with corresponding development of the transport network. In the mid eighteenth century, Francis, the third Duke of Bridgewater, began implementing a plan for a waterway to the south-east of the study area. This, the Bridgewater Canal, was the first canal in Britain and was partly open by 1761, by 1767 it was open as far down as Runcorn and was fully open by 1772; it was used to carry coal, cotton, maize and other agricultural products up until 1975 (Hadfield 1984). Neither the estate map of 1757 (Eyes 1757), nor the drawing of the area, dating to 1770 (Norton 1770), show the Bridgewater canal.
- 3.2.12 To the north of the study area is the Manchester Ship Canal. Although it was not opened in this form until 1894, there has been a man-made waterway along this stretch since 1740, called the Mersey and Irwell Navigation. The River Mersey meanders to the north of the study area, making the transport of raw materials difficult, and there was thus a great impetus to create a controllable and navigable route. The Mersey and Irwell Navigation was open to water traffic by 1740 (Hadfield 1984).
- 3.2.13 The area also saw the development of the railway system in the nineteenth century, with several lines running into the Runcorn peninsula where there was a major transport exchange between canals, roads, railways and shipping. This has continued to be a major form of transport for heavy goods but the recent twentieth century has seen a boom in road transport and associated with this and the growth of the chemical industry, there has been a rapid expansion of urban areas to accommodate an increasing population, following the establishment of the Runcorn New Town in 1964.

4: ASSESSMENT RESULTS

4.1 DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

- 4.1.1 **Introduction:** by searching and examining original and transcriptions of documents and cartographic material it was possible to build up a picture of the history, cultural heritage and archaeological potential specific to the confines of the study area, in addition to the broader information contained in the Background to this report (Section 3.2). Numerous significant documents were found relating to the study area, which were available both as primary documents and as transcripts. The majority of the documents dated from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries and covered a variety of subjects, including genealogy, land ownership, wills, accounts, correspondence, plans, surveys, and other assorted topics. The documents are contained in multiple bundles within two collections, which are dependent on the family they came into the possession of and the property they relate to.
- 4.1.2 The majority of the documents are hand written and legible, while the earlier documents were typically less legible and were written in Latin; however, several of these had both transcripts and translations available. Nearly all the documents related to various aspects of land ownership but, although the changing land holdings could be traced, few could be attributed to specific plots of land, or gave information about the ground conditions, or indicated the presence of archaeology.
- 4.1.3 **Halton and Norton Townships:** the study area lies partly within the townships of Halton and Norton which were in the ancient parish of Runcorn, in the hundred of Bucklow and the deanery of Frodsham. The name Halton derives from *Heletune* or any of the later variations such as *Haulton* meaning 'farm at a heathery place', (Dodgson 1970, 167).
- 4.1.4 The earliest document which contains clear references to the study area is the Domesday Book from 1086 (Morgan 1978). It describes the manors of *Heletune* (Halton) and *Nortune* (Norton), both of which were owned by William the Conqueror but the subject lords were different, Orme holding Halton and Ansfred holding Norton. Domesday Book describes the size of the manors: Halton was the larger with 20 carucates, while Norton only had six. Halton, also, had more woodland, more fishermen, and several prominent landholders were mentioned, but interestingly the area of meadow was smaller than in the manor of Norton. What both the entries indicate is that there may recently have been some depreciation in land values or disturbances in the working of the manors, as they are described as having become 'waste' since the rule of Edward the Confessor, possibly when the Normans were attempting to establish their authority in the North West.
- 4.1.5 There are numerous later documents and these essentially cover land and properties related to either the manor of Halton, and the main residence at Halton Castle or the manor of Norton and Norton Priory. The boundary between the Norton Manor estate, which was for the most part a survival of the priory curtilage, and the Halton Manor estate apparently corresponded to the Bannerstitch stream, between Norton and Halton, which is referred to as a boundary in a Dutton Charter of 1199-1203 (Barraclough 1957).

- 4.1.6 Ormerod's (1882) review of the history of Cheshire includes valuable information, obtained from primary documents, concerning these manors. He includes transcripts of the Augmentations Office Commissioner's accounts (PRO SC6/HenryVIII/410 26259), taken for the Abbey of Norton in the twenty-eighth year of Henry VIII's reign (1536/7), mentioning lands held in Halton, Norton and nearby Astmorefield. Another account for the Abbey mentions not only the 72 acres lying about the Abbey, but also six acres in the Cryme and the Water Mill (Ormerod 1882, 687). The Cryme is referred to later, in 1545, as the Mayden's Crime or Great Crime and could relate to the earlier 1353 reference to *Chanoncrymbe* (canon's land). The reference to a water mill is of great interest because, although it does not give a location for it, this may relate to the water mill and mill pond, to the west of the priory, known from eighteenth century sources (Section 4.2.3).
- 4.1.7 There are two main collections of papers which contain documents for Halton and Norton. The first is the Brooke of Norton collection (DBN) and the second is the Cholmondeley of Cholmondeley collection (DCH).
- 4.1.8 **Brooke of Norton (DBN):** this collection, of hundreds of individual documents, includes deeds, family papers, conveyances, household accounts, receipts, surrenders, sales and so on for properties owned by the Brooke Family of Norton, which includes estates in Norton and Halton. The sheer number of documents precluded any detailed study and was beyond the remit of this current project, but the potential for identifying individual tenants and information relating to plots of land within the study area remains. A brief scan of the documents revealed there to be useful information contained within them, although this was not always appropriate. For example there is a nineteenth century survey and valuation of the estates belonging to Sir Richard Brooke, covering the townships of Shordley, Hope, Kinnerton and others, but this did not include Halton and Norton (DBN/3/C/9A/11), whereas a bundle of deeds of the eighteenth century did relate to the family estates in Norton, Stockham, Ashton Granges, Runcorn, Halton and others, but they were relatively limited since there were only brief descriptions of the properties and in many cases the properties were not identifiable (DBN/3/Bundle 3). In illustration of this, two seventeenth century documents concern two closes or parcels of land called the Assmore Heyes, and Morely Crofts (DBN/C/1/4 and 5); land in Astmore partially lies within the study area, principally along the north side of the Bridgewater canal, but the Tithe map of the area (CRO EDT 307/1 and 2) does not refer to any land as 'Astmore Heyes' or 'Morely Crofts' and it is not possible to suggest where these lands may have been situated, or if they were within the study area.
- 4.1.9 Several documents were encountered which chronicled the dispute between the Duke of Bridgewater and Sir Richard Brooke over the construction of the Bridgewater Canal through Sir Richard's lands in Halton and Norton. A good example of this is the nineteenth century *'plan of the proposed canal from Hempstones on the River Mersey, north of Halton, to a point on the Mersey, south of Warrington, passing through lands belonging to Sir Richard Brooke'* (DBN/C/1/14). Since the issue went as far as discussion at the Palace of Westminster, some papers will be held at a national level (the House of Parliament or the Public Record Office) rather than in local repositories.

- 4.1.9 ***Cholmondeley of Cholmondeley (DCH)***: this collection includes a large number of medieval deeds and papers as well as later documents. The majority relate to properties well outside the study area but there is a selection connected to Halton, Runcorn and Clifton, including plans, surveys and rentals from a period between c1185 and 1895.

4.2 CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES AND MAP REGRESSION

- 4.2.1 Maps, as originals or copies, were consulted from a variety of locations, including the CRO, the CSMR, Warrington and Runcorn Local Studies Libraries, and Norton Priory. The search included both manuscript and printed maps at smaller scales for the county and at larger scales specifically relating to the study area.
- 4.2.2 There are numerous maps of the county of Cheshire, the earliest reliable one being Saxton's map dating to 1577 (CRO PM12/10) which was used as a base map by subsequent cartographers such as Smith in 1598 (CRO PM1/16). The next map which was in common use and copied for some time was Speed's map of 1610/11 (CRO PM14/7). On all of these early maps Halton is portrayed, although in no detail, simply being shown as a dot or symbol indicating a building which to some degree illustrates the relative importance of each place through its presence or absence; however, Norton Priory is not shown. By the time of Jansson's map of 1636 (CRO PM1/1), Norton Priory is shown as a building with a wooded area to the south and west of it, indicating not that the building was established in the interval between the maps, but that the map makers were altering their ideas of what should be shown. Later maps such as Ogilby's map of 1675 exhibit further detail; this, for instance, highlighted the roads and routes in use (CRO PM10/3). Maps of the eighteenth century, including Morden's of 1701 (CRO PM2/2), Hutchinson's of 1740 (CRO PM9/13) and Kitchen's of 1750 (CRO PM2/12), showed little advancement in technique or survey quality on Saxton's map. Such advancements came late in the eighteenth century, from 1759 onwards, as a result of the Society of Arts offering prizes for new and accurate maps to be completed using triangulation as a survey method. A successful result can be seen in Burdett's 1777 county map (CRO PM12/16), which diagrammatically demonstrates the continuing perception that Halton Castle is more prominent than Norton Priory / Hall.
- 4.2.3 There is an estate plan of 1757 (Eyes 1757; Fig 2) which is a '*map of the manor and lordship of Norton in the parish of Runcorn, together with a plan of Norton Hall, the seat of Sir Richard Brooke, baronet*'. The original is held at Warrington Library but excellent copies are held at Norton Priory and it was published in Greene (1989, 26). The estate map is topographically accurate, drawn to scale, and includes a great level of detail. It only covers the north-eastern part of the study area, however, and although each field is given an alphanumeric code, the accompanying estate book documenting the code has been lost. Drawn prior to the insertion of the Bridgewater Canal it provides a useful examination of the land before this major episode of landscaping. The most interesting aspect of the map is the large, regular shape of the mill pond (Site 31) (shown as A24) to the immediate west of the priory site, made by damming the Bannerstitch Brook which flows to the west of the priory, from the south, northwards to the Mersey. When compared to aerial photographs of

the area (Section 4.4.2) it is apparent that the feature is accurate and may still exist in an infilled state. The roads shown on this map no longer exist as such, although some later trackways do approximately coincide with the roads. In particular, the road leading to the west, which is sharply angled, was severely disrupted when the canal was inserted. In addition, the few buildings shown on this stretch may have been relocated; they are in the approximate position of Halton Gate Farm (as shown on the Ordnance Survey (OS) first edition map (1873-77) but, since the buildings should span both sides of the canal, it would appear that either the ones further east were abandoned or removed by the canal or they were relocated to the south side of the canal slightly further to the west.

- 4.2.4 A watercolour and ink drawing (Fig 3) drafted as part of Sir Richard Brooke's evidence against the construction of the Bridgewater Canal, and therefore dating to c1770. It is apparently held in the Mellon Collection (RIBA library) but is adequately published in Greene (1989, 37). It again shows the mill pond (Site 31), with boats on it showing recreational use, the narrow northern outlet of the pond, passing by the water mill, and the surrounding area, the buildings and woodland. The area seems to have been subject to water management from the medieval period since there were moats around the priory and large drains at that time, known through excavation and from several documents (*ibid*). The Brooke Family clearly maintained the moat system and it is possible that the mill pond could also date back to the medieval period. The area immediately around the hall was shown as parked, although the land to the west of the mill pond was shown as agricultural fields.
- 4.2.5 **Tithe Maps:** the 1770 watercolour and the 1757 estate map show a small area around Norton as being possible parkland but by the time of the tithe map (CRO EDT 307/1 and 2 (1844)) there would appear to have been a considerable expansion of parkland and with it the implied loss of farming land and the removal of boundaries within the park. The fields to the west of the mill pond (Site 31) as shown on the 1770 watercolour are extensive open land on the tithe (1844). A further park is known to have been part of the de Lacy's land at Halton in the medieval period but this was a 500 acre deer park to the south and west of Halton Castle (Starkey 1990, 20), which does not correspond to the park shown on the mid-nineteenth century tithe maps (CRO EDT 307/1 and 2 (1844); CRO EDT 182/1 and 2 (1845)). This Norton Park in the early to mid nineteenth century, extended partly within both the Norton and Halton townships, extending beyond these administrative boundaries and being determined by a single ownership.
- 4.2.6 Beyond the park the fields are medium sized, and very regular, probably as a result of organised land divisions either before or after the construction of the canal; smaller fields more typical of medieval land holdings can be seen outside the study area around Halton Castle and the village of Norton. By the time these maps were drawn up the Bridgewater Canal had been constructed and the contrast in the landscape, with that depicted on the 1757 estate map, is quite clear. There are fewer roads and more significantly there is no indication of the mill pond (Site 31); the small open water bodies which are shown in various fields are consistent with marl pits, where clays were extracted for agricultural land enrichers (Starkey 1990, 21). The field names accompanying the tithe were relatively ordinary and reflect the agricultural use of the land, with examples such as Big Meadow and Shepherd's

Field. However, others reflect local resources, such as Brick Kiln Field, Tannery, and several demonstrate the previous use or ownership of the land. These are notably the fields to the west of Halton Castle, which bear names such as Old Castle, including part of Crown Lands, Kings Field, and Nine Butts with Old Castle, butt being the place where townsfolk would practice archery as a community from the medieval period onwards, prior to the existence of a standing army.

- 4.2.7 There are no Enclosure maps for the study area, as very little of Cheshire was subject to enclosure acts, when common land was subdivided between interested parties. This was because much of the area was already enclosed by the eighteenth century.
- 4.2.8 **Ordnance Survey Maps:** the area is again covered by two maps of the larger scale first editions 6" to 1 mile (1873-77) and by three of the first edition 1:2500 maps. The first edition shows the same level of detail as the tithe maps, in terms of the landscape, but with one notable difference. A large proportion of the study area is shaded as grey, which typically indicates parkland, and confirms the impression gained from the tithe maps that the park has expanded considerably since the 1770 watercolour (Norton 1770). Between the tithe map and the OS first edition map (1873-7) there is apparently very little change in the layout of the park. Areas of woodland are clear and were evidently landscaped components of the park. There is a noticeable decrease in the number of marl pits within the fields, which were presumably gradually infilling over time. The smaller scale 1:2500 sheets, covering the period 1872 to 1910, show there to be some changes in the landscape, the most notable being a significant reduction of the area of parkland, which is still centred on Norton Priory (Fig 4), and the former parkland is shown as having returned to agricultural use.
- 4.2.9 The majority of changes took place following the post Second World War, when residential areas start to encroach in a gradual fashion. This was followed by the formation of Runcorn New Town in 1964 and the start of a period of wholesale construction, including major arterial roads, such as the A558, and in 1969-72 the building of Castlefields Housing Estate and other elements, such as the busway and the school and recreational centre within an area defined as the 'Town Park'. This appears to have included the excavation of a large area for a huge pond (Site 34) adjacent to the south side of the canal, used for fishing, as part of the landscaping of the area. At the time of this work, very little archaeological work was carried out, excavations taking place to the west in 1967 (Section 4.3.3) being apparently the only work in connection with the development. This means that where areas of great disturbance have occurred, no information on what was there before was collected, nor were the extents of such disturbances properly mapped.

4.3 CHESHIRE SITES AND MONUMENT RECORD (CSMR)

- 4.3.1 The CSMR contained 30 records of sites within a 1km radius of the defined study area. None of these sites lay within the limits of the assessment but, considering their immediate proximity to the study area and their archaeological potential, they warrant discussion.

- 4.3.2 There are no prehistoric sites or findspots recorded within the study area, and in a 1km radius of the study area there is only one recorded prehistoric site, which borders on the south-western part of the study area (Site 01). This is a findspot of a Late Iron Age gold stater, found at Halton Castle. Slightly more remote from the study area, a Neolithic stone axe (Site 35) was found in a pond in 1986 in the Town Park in Brookvale.
- 4.3.3 The CSMR includes one recorded Roman site excavated at Halton Brow (Site 02). First examined in 1936 and subject to further exploration in 1967. The earlier work concluded that the site was a third to fourth century AD temporary military camp, whereas the later work suggested a second to third century AD agricultural site (Brown *et al* 1975). An antiquarian account records a 40 acre earthwork (Site 03), shaped as a parallelogram, with Halton Castle in one corner (Watkin 1886); however, the account is somewhat ambiguous as it may refer to the Roman site referred to above (Site 02) or the later, post-medieval, Halton Deer Park (Beaumont 1873).
- 4.3.4 Twenty sites from the medieval period lie within the immediate 1km radius of the study area. Of these three relate to Halton Castle (Sites 07-09), 14 relate to Norton Priory (Sites 10-23), one is a quarry site which went out of use in the late fifteenth-early sixteenth century (Site 04), one is the site of St Mary's parish church, which pre-existed the current building (Site 05), and the last is a possible windmill mentioned in documentary references of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Site 06).
- 4.3.5 The remaining seven sites are post-medieval in date and include a seventeenth century almshouse (Site 24), a pair of early seventeenth century cottages (Site 25), a sixteenth century residence for the steward of Halton Castle (Site 26), a seventeenth century hall (Site 27), two seventeenth century farmhouses (Sites 28 and 29) and the Tudor building of a manorial hall at Norton by Sir Richard Brooke (Site 30).
- 4.3.6 The pond in which the Neolithic axe was found (Site 35) in the Town Park in Brookvale (see above *Section 4.3.2*) could be one of three possibilities: firstly a modern man-made pond; secondly, a water-filled marl pit for clay extraction, or thirdly, the remains of a medieval millpond. If it were the latter it could suggest a series of mills and ponds along the brook running approximately north/south to the west of Norton Priory and thus it may relate to the mill pond (Site 31).
- 4.3.7 **Listed Buildings:** of the 30 CSMR sites, seven are Listed Buildings (Sites 05, 07, 08, 09, 10, 14, and 25) but there are a further 13 records of Listed Buildings not recorded in the CSMR. The buildings are of varying grades, with Grade I being the highest and most architecturally important, Grade II*, of regional importance and Grade II of local importance. Out of the 20 records, some of which comprise several buildings, two are Grade I, four are Grade II* and the rest 14 are Grade II. The Grade I buildings are the Halton Castle group (Sites 07 - 09) and the Norton Priory group (Sites 10 and 14). The Grade II* group is composed of Halton Parish Library (Site 37), the Castle Hotel (Site 39), the Old Hall (Site 27), and the steward's house (Site 26), known as the Seneschal's House. All bar one of the Listed Buildings are within the settlement core around Halton Castle, and range in date from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. Although most are residential in

function, several are farmhouses, and there are also religious buildings, an inn, gate piers and a library, as well as Halton Castle itself.

- 4.3.8 ***Scheduled Ancient Monuments:*** there are two scheduled monuments: Halton Castle (Sites 07 - 09; SM 27611) and Norton Priory (Sites 11 - 23; SM 27608). Both are immediately adjacent to the study area and have statutory protection.

4.4 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

- 4.4.1 It was hoped that photographs covering the area would be available for a period prior to the construction of the Castlefields housing estate, between 1969 and 1972, and therefore provide an insight into the landuse at the stage. However the earliest aerial photographs dated from 1973, by which time much of the area was already under the residential conurbation. The photographs were all Vertical Air Photographs and varied in what they showed, but were all at a similar scale allowing for easy comparisons. The 1973 run (Hunting Survey) was in black and white, while the runs from 1983 (Airviews Survey) and 1993 (Geonex Survey) were in colour. The large open areas to the north and east of the study area were the main focus of examination but study was also made of the open areas within the residential zones. There are earlier photographs from 1947 and 1965 held by the National Monuments Record (NMR) but these were unavailable within the time frame of the project.
- 4.4.2 ***Hunting Survey 1973:*** a single photograph covered the entire study area and showed all the major features, such as the roads, canals / water bodies, field boundaries and buildings, clearly. There are four features of note; the first is the open body of water (Site 34) adjacent to the Bridgewater Canal (Site 31) and the scale of the photograph shows how extensive it is. The second is the scarce amount of tree coverage at this period, which is concentrated around the southern slip road of the A558. Thirdly, there is an area of what appear to be natural drainage channels to the south of the Castlefields Recreation Centre, and finally there is a very regular square-shaped mark in the field to the west of Norton Priory (Site 38).
- 4.4.3 ***Airviews Survey 1983:*** two colour photographs cover the study area and these enhance some of the aspects within the area. It is notable that the tree coverage has increased in the ten years since the earlier photograph, extending along the strip on either side of the Bridgewater Canal. The area around the large water body by the canal shows up as an extensive area of bare ground with minimal vegetation coverage. The same square feature (Site 38) seen in the 1973 photograph appears in these and, as a slightly larger area is covered, an additional two, almost identical squares can be seen to the north; their function remains unclear. In the photographs is a further large soil mark, again in the field to the west of Norton Priory. It shows up as a regular, straight-sided oblong shape with rounded ends, similar to that of a racing track. The feature is quite extensive and is aligned north/south and within it is located the regular square shape noted in the earlier photograph. It has been possible to compare this oblong feature with various sources and it corresponds to the size, shape and position of the mill pond (Site 31) shown in the 1757 estate map (Section 4.2.3).

- 4.4.4 **Geonex Survey 1993:** two colour photographs cover the study area, taken ten years after the previous ones. The water body next to the Bridgewater Canal appears to be somewhat smaller, possibly indicating that there has been some infilling, and vegetation has been allowed to encroach along the periphery. In general, there is a greater extent of tree coverage, showing continued spread along the canal, but in addition the land to the south-west of the Castlefields Recreation Centre has quite extensive tree coverage both in a concentrated area and also in smaller stands. This would appear to reflect the landscape management of the area and the encouragement of greenery to enliven the social environment.

4.5 FIELD WALKOVER RESULTS

- 4.5.1 The study area is mostly occupied by residential land use and the remaining open areas lie along the north and east edges, which were subject to a field walkover. The entire area is open to public access, with numerous footpaths and no fenced off areas, therefore the entire area could be satisfactorily examined. There were no identifiable fields within this area so the walkover was separated into manageable areas, Areas 1 – 5 (Fig 6). All the areas are subject to land management, which essentially involves grass cutting over the entire area, and to a certain extent allows for any features to be clearly visible. No finds were recovered from any of the areas.
- 4.5.2 **Area 1:** this area occupied the land between the Bridgewater Canal to the south and the A558 to the north. It was a ridge of land which sloped down towards the canal on one side and towards the road on the other. The land appears to have been manufactured into an embankment, which may have occurred in part during the construction of the canal in the eighteenth century but was probably further, and more extensively, reshaped during the construction of the A558. The area of land is currently under moderately dense woodland with some degree of understorey vegetation. No potential archaeological features were identified in this area.
- 4.5.3 **Area 2:** this area lay along the south side of the Bridgewater Canal (Site 47) and was bordered to the south by the residential access road. It also encompassed the area between the north/south aligned residential access road and the busway to the east. The area mostly comprised gently undulating short grass, with small stands of trees through which tarmac paths wind. At the western end the ground is embanked next to the canal and then slopes steeply down towards the housing estate, with a depression in the area between. The land is more densely wooded than Area 1, but the depression was covered with long rough grass, around which the grass has been mown to allow for pedestrians. There are several buildings adjacent to the canal, which are brick-built and of post-medieval date; this contrasts with the concrete-built mass housing on the opposite side of the road. The buildings are all in good repair and in use for a variety of functions, including business premises and residential accommodation. Along the length of the canal is a towpath which in some places is no more than a muddy track but in other locations appears to be a well-defined structure with stone edging, although very overgrown. At the eastern end of this area the land is more open, particularly around the Barge Public House. The building has been heavily modified and it is not evident to what extent any earlier fabric survives; a date stone shows that the extension was constructed in

1989, suggesting that the ground in the immediate vicinity has been disturbed. The land to the north of the canal, at this point, is only a thin strip between the roads, which have been cut into the surrounding landscape, and the remaining parts are wooded. No potential archaeological features were identified in this area.

- 4.5.4 **Area 3:** this area was defined by the busway to the west, the boundary with Norton Priory to the east, the A558 to the north and by the Bridgewater canal to the south. The area was mostly open, short, managed grassland, with trees around the edges; there were gentle slopes down towards a flatter area, again around the edges. Around the periphery were tarmac paths for cyclists and pedestrians and these had lamp posts providing electrical street lighting, which implies that some disturbances will have occurred in these locations. There was no evidence, from either vegetational change or soil marks at ground level, of the site of the mill pond (Site 31) shown on the 1757 estate map (Eyes 1757) and the aerial photographs (Section 4.4).
- 4.5.5 **Area 4:** this area lay to the south of Area 3, south of the Bridgewater Canal (Site 47) and extended to the access path leading to the Castlefields Recreation Centre. The area was a similar mix of open, short, managed grassland, with small to medium-sized stands of trees, in deliberately laid areas. The ground sloped gently up towards the recreational centre buildings which occupied a substantial area, implying that the ground will have been disturbed when this was built, unless there is survival under carpark or sports field areas. The main feature observed in this area was the large water body adjacent to the canal (Site 34) and any archaeological sites within its extent will have been lost in the course of its excavation. No potential archaeological features were identified in this area.
- 4.5.6 **Area 5:** this last area was located south of the access road to the recreational centre and bordered by the busway to the south. The southern part of the area is quite extensively wooded with a dense understorey, which made examination difficult in this section. The northern part was more open with similar ground cover to that described in the other areas, comprising open grassland with stands of trees. The busway has been cut into the surrounding landscape and so the adjacent area may have been subject to embankment using the spoil from the busway construction. No potential archaeological features were identified in this area.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

- 5.1.1 *'Archaeology is the study of human societies through their physical remains – both above and below ground'* (English Heritage 2002). Other definitions have a slightly different emphasis but all have the same basic idea of studying the past through material remains (Rathje and Schiffer 1982; Butlin 1993). Archaeology seeks to understand man's past through the evidence left by his activities, including occupation sites, structures, artefacts and palaeoenvironmental evidence; analysis of the data allows ideas to be formulated concerning the date, type, origin, cultural identity, economic practices, and various other aspects of man's past.
- 5.1.2 The objectives of the project were to:
- research and collate as much available archaeological information on the defined study area as the timescope of the project allowed;
 - determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature and survival of the archaeological resource within the study area;
 - assess the archaeological potential of the proposed development area.
- 5.1.3 **Prehistory:** the potential for prehistoric sites to exist in the study area is difficult to determine, nearby evidence of the gold coin from Halton Castle (Site 01) and the find of a Neolithic axe (Site 35) at Town Park suggests that casual finds may have survived and may continue to be found, and demonstrates prehistoric activity within the general area. On a larger scale, settlement sites have recently been uncovered on the northern side of the Mersey at Brook House (*Section 3.2.1*), indicating that the region was populated and that quite extensive remains do survive.
- 5.1.4 **Roman:** excavations have demonstrated the close proximity and survival of a Roman agricultural landscape at Halton Brow, up until the most recent urban expansions of the 1960s (Brown *et al* 1975). This suggests that there is potential for further remains in areas which have been left undisturbed.
- 5.1.5 **Medieval:** in the medieval period the study area was within an area of considerable importance, being within the land holdings of Halton Castle and Norton Priory, an area of possible secular and religious interaction. An area which may still have extant buried remains of medieval date is that immediately to the west of Norton Priory, where aerial photographs (1983) indicate an outline which corresponds to the size and shape of the mill pond identified on the 1757 estate map. This strongly indicates that there may be surviving remains in this area, not only of the mill pond but of any other features or ancillary buildings which may have existed. If documentary sources mentioning ponds or pools refer to this same mill pond then it could potentially date to the monastic period of Norton Priory. The wealth of evidence from the Norton Priory excavations (Greene 1989) demonstrates that the quality of the archaeology is excellent, since waterlogged organic remains were retrieved from the moats surrounding the priory and hall, which were still in existence in the eighteenth century (Eyes 1757).

- 5.1.6 **Post-Medieval:** prior to the impact of modern motor vehicles, and the road system accompanying them, the area had been subject to significant levels of improvement during the post-medieval period. The Bridgewater Canal (Site 47) and the various rail routes have all left their mark on the landscape but have not been subject to research and recording. Despite the number of documentary and cartographic sources, there are only limited surface remains of the industrial period landscape surviving, although there are potentially significant sub-surface remains, which may increase the understanding of the canal development, particularly in terms of social aspects and working practices. The construction of the canal involved large numbers of labourers who worked in gangs and often had work camps along the route; although no such settlements are known in the study area, the potential for finds is moderate.
- 5.1.7 The existence of an extensive landscaped parkland in the nineteenth century is well documented, but in terms of archaeological potential it is unlikely that much remains. This is primarily because many of the activities associated with this would be reasonably ephemeral, such as deliberate tree plantation or the landscaping of woodlands to improve vistas, including the relocation of fences. There is no evidence for the construction of follies or ornamental ponds, although in the eighteenth century the mill pond was being used as a boating lake, but at this date the parkland area was not as extensive as in the subsequent century. The parkland was gradually returned to open land and agricultural use in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries before eventually being recreated as modern parkland.
- 5.1.8 The parkland is located in the eastern part of the study area and its longevity could have allowed the preservation of archaeological remains from earlier periods, although the present day park has been landscaped and developed, including the installation of street lighting and possible soil movement for general landscaping. Areas have been identified where embankment has taken place and although these are small their construction could have resulted in the preservation of material beneath the past ground surface. Other areas where clear disturbance has taken place have also been highlighted and in these the likelihood of surviving remains of any period is remote.

5.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

- 5.2.1 The results of the assessment have shown that there is potential for the survival of archaeological remains within the study area, in particular, evidence of large-scale water management dating to at least the eighteenth century if not earlier, as well as the use of the area for recreational purposes, including organised parkland landscapes. There are also elements of a relict industrial landscape relating to the early industrial transport network in the region; there is also considerable corroboratory documentary evidence for settlement and activity in the area. The area was particularly important during the medieval period, the study area being the interface between the Halton and Norton manors. The eastern part of the area became part of the Norton Manor estate, which was a survival of the priory estate; the western extent of the priory curtilage apparently corresponded to the Bannerstitch stream, between Norton and Halton, which is referred to as a boundary in the Dutton Charter of 1199-1203 (Barraclough 1957). The potential survival of

the mill pond (Site 31), and any ancillary structures, highlights the fact that the area was actively exploited as part of the priory estate, although no surface remains survive.

- 5.2.2 The key aspect in terms of the archaeological resource within the study area is the extent to which the area has been landscaped during the last two hundred years, which may have resulted in the loss or covering of archaeological sites. The earliest major landscaping was for the construction of the Bridgewater Canal (Site 47). This involved the digging of the canal trench, and the corresponding construction of side embankments, together with the altering of the drainage pattern by means of culverts beneath the canal (Greene 1989). This landscaping would have been localised within the narrow corridor of the canal, but these changes heralded a period of rapid change to the agricultural landscape with the pattern of small fields in scattered tenancies being replaced with large, straight-sided fields held in tenurial blocks (*op cit*, 23). During the nineteenth century the land was further landscaped to accommodate the expansion of the park, and then more landscaping was involved in the reversion to agriculture. However, the greatest impact was within the latter part of the twentieth century, associated with the establishment of the Runcorn New Town in 1964. This involved the construction of extensive areas of housing, together with the construction of expressway and busway routes. The eastern expansion of the housing was limited by the establishment of the Town Park, occupying the eastern part of the study area. This was heavily landscaped to allow for its recreational use. A large pond / lake (Site 34) was established to the west of the Recreational Centre, and up against the Bridgewater Canal, and it is possible that some of the resultant spoil was deposited over the surrounding parkland. However, no surviving records of this landscaping have come to light in the course of the present study and discussions with Mr Baxter of Halton Borough Council's Environmental Department, who took up post in 1974, indicate that any landscaping that took place in the Town Park area occurred prior to this date. What is evident, however, is that extensive landscaping has been undertaken in the Town Park area in the 1960s or 1970s. Roads and tracks have been established through the area, and none of the field boundaries shown on the second edition OS maps (1910-12) survive. The ground exhibits a gentle undulating surface and there are no scars from the removal of boundaries either on the ground or on the aerial photographs, suggesting that either the ground has been built up or the surface has been removed. The survival of the mill pond (Site 31) as a crop mark suggests that any soil removal was not sufficient to have affected this feature. Given that considerable amounts of spoil were produced to create the pond (Site 34), it is more probable that the ground has been built up. This could potentially be tested by archaeological investigation, but little archaeological field investigation has been undertaken in the area, which severely limits confident assertions of the extent or condition of any remains.
- 5.2.3 In terms of the earlier periods, the lack of definitive evidence for extant archaeological remains within the study area means that estimating its presence and potential is difficult. A potential for archaeological sites exists on the basis of extrapolation from known sites in the region, but it is unclear whether recent landscaping and residential expansion have adversely impacted on such sites.

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APPENDIX 1

PROJECT BRIEF

CONFIDENTIAL

BRIEF FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

CASTLEFIELDS REGENERATION SCHEME, HALTON

SJ 545 829 (centred)

Prepared for Halton Borough Council

by



All enquiries regarding this brief should be addressed to:

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August 2001

CASTLEFIELDS REGENERATION SCHEME, HALTON
(c. SJ 545 829, centred)

Brief for an archaeological desk-based assessment

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1. Summary

- 1.1 Draft proposals are currently being formulated by Halton Borough Council for the regeneration of the Castlefields area of Halton Borough, a development of post-war housing lying to the north of Halton Castle. One of the possible proposals involves the demolition of some of the housing and the creation of areas of open space. In order to compensate for the consequent loss of land for housing, some land in the vicinity of Norton Priory Museum, which is currently open space, may be developed for housing and other uses. The nature and survival of archaeological deposits in these areas has not been established but the proximity to the priory site suggests an area of some archaeological potential.
- 1.2 Project Designs and tenders are invited from suitably-qualified archaeological organisations to carry out an archaeological desk-based assessment, in order to collate the currently available archaeological information from those areas of potential development around Norton Priory Museum, in order to establish their archaeological potential. This will assist in the formulation of any further mitigation measures that may be necessary. This brief has been prepared accordingly.

2. Background

- 2.1 Draft proposals are currently being formulated by Halton Borough Council for the regeneration of Castlefields, an area of post-war housing to the north of Halton Castle. The proposals involve the demolition of some housing and the creation of open space. This aspect of the project does not appear to have archaeological implications. In order to compensate for the loss of housing land, however, the possibility of building on land to the west of Norton Priory Museum is being explored. This land is currently open space and is included within the Town Park. A further area to the east of the museum is included as a possible site for an area of sports fields (a use it previously enjoyed), although it should be noted that this is within the scheduled area of Norton Priory and such a use may turn out to be inappropriate. These general locations are numbered on Figure 1 of this brief, along with the limits of the study area, and are shown in more detail on the accompanying briefing document prepared by Halton Borough Council.
- 2.2 The site of Norton Priory is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 27608) and was an Augustinian foundation, established in 1134 after the transfer of the site from Runcorn. The site remained significant throughout the medieval period but was not of sufficient stature to escape closure in 1536, during the first round of suppressions at the Dissolution of the monasteries. The site and its estate passed into secular hands and a Tudor mansion and 18th-century house were built on the site in turn.

2.3 During the first part of the 20th century the house became ruinous and overgrown, until excavations began during the 1970s, under the auspices of the Runcorn Development Corporation. The excavations were published in 1989 and the site of the priory church and claustral buildings are now displayed to the public within Norton Priory Museum. The priory grounds, however, would have extended beyond the present limits of the museum and contained the mill, water management features, land boundaries, and possible cemetery areas. Several of these features appear on post-medieval plans and illustrations of the site (Greene 1989, Figs 13, 21, and 24) and are located in areas that coincide with the potential development areas. The landscape around the priory has changed profoundly in the last 30 years but it is quite possible the below-ground evidence associated with these features still survives.

2.4 Following discussions with Halton Borough Council, the planning archaeologist has advised that the project should be the subject of an archaeological desk-based assessment, in order to collate the existing archaeological information from the potential development areas and their immediate environs. The resulting report will inform the formulation of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may prove necessary in the event of development of some or all of the potential development areas.

3. Brief

3.1 The brief is to collate available archaeological information, to determine as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature of the archaeological resource and its likely survival within the study area, and to prepare a report assessing the archaeological potential, if any, of the various potential development areas.

3.2 For the purposes of the assessment, the core study areas are defined as the areas numbered 1-5 on the accompanying plan, together with their immediate surroundings as marked in red on the plan (see Figure 1). This is in order to give consideration not only to the core areas, but also to the surrounding landscape, in order to place the sites in their archaeological/historical context. In this context, it will be necessary to summarise the history of both Norton Priory but detailed information on the site's development should only be included where relevant to the present study.

3.3 An archaeological assessment is not intended to reduce the requirement for further investigation or preservation of known or presumed archaeological deposits. It may be seen as a guide to any requirement for further archaeological work, if any, or preservation of significant deposits.

4. Project Design

4.1 Project design should detail the following:

- .1 the names of the project director, supervisors, specialists and any sub-contractors to be employed on the project (including details of qualifications & experience of the key project personnel).
- .2 the extent of the proposed works as precisely as is reasonably possible.
- .3 the proposed timetable.
- .4 a *separate* itemised estimate of costs (core/project staff, specialist fees, travel/subsistence, site works, equipment/materials, archive preparation and copying, report preparation, finds storage fees, overheads, contingency, specified other costs).

- 4.2 Contractors, sub-contractors and specialists are expected to conform to the requirements set out in Cheshire County Council's *General Conditions for Selected Archaeological Contractors and Consultants*.
- 4.3 It is the contractor's responsibility to ensure that all third party costs, such as specialist, SMR, archive and storage fees, are included in the tender.
- 4.4 Contractors may wish to discuss their draft project design with the Planning Archaeologist before formal submission.

5. Specification

- 5.1 A desk-based assessment must be made of all known and available sources of information relating to the study area, including (where appropriate):
- .1 data in the Sites & Monuments Record.
 - .2 printed and manuscript maps.
 - .3 place and field-name evidence.
 - .4 aerial photographs in both local and national collections.
 - .5 other photographic/illustrative evidence.
 - .6 published and unpublished documentary sources.
 - .7 local museum catalogues and artefactual evidence.
 - .8 oral evidence.
 - .9 engineering/borehole data, particularly that relevant to changes in the landscape during the laying out of the New Town.
 - .10 geological/soil surveys.
- 5.2 Organisations/institutions to be consulted should include Cheshire County Council's Sites and Monuments Record, Cheshire Record Office, Norton Priory Museum, Halton Borough Council and (if appropriate) the National Monuments Record.
- 5.3 A comprehensive site inspection, in order to examine the current land use and topography. Access to the study area should be arranged through Halton Borough Council.
- 5.4 Completion and deposition of the project archive.

6. Report

- 6.1 Copies of the report (number to be established) must be submitted to Halton Borough Council by the date specified in the covering letter. Two further copies must be lodged with the Cheshire SMR.
- 6.2 The report should include:
- .1 a concise, non-technical summary of the project results.
 - .2 a summary of methodology.
 - .3 a copy of the brief and of the agreed project design.
 - .4 an indication of any departure from the agreed project design.
 - .5 a summary of past and present land-use (particularly important in order to establish the likely degree of damage to archaeological deposits).
 - .6 a summary of the historical background.

- .7 a plan and gazetteer of areas or sites of known or potential archaeological significance within the study area.
- .8 an assessment of the likely archaeological implications of any future development.
- .9 a full bibliography of sources consulted, and a list of any further sources identified but not consulted.
- .10 an index to the project archive.

6.3 The report should be confined to a factual account of the archaeological information. It should not contain any recommendations for mitigating measures. These may, however, be presented in the form of a separate addendum to the main report.

7. Project Monitoring

7.1 The project will be monitored by the Planning Archaeologist, to whom not less than seven days' written notice must be given of the commencement of work.

8. Access and Safety

8.1 Access to the site should be arranged through Halton Borough Council. Contractors shall comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and related legislation. Site procedures shall be in accordance with the guidance set out in the latest edition of the Health and Safety Manual of the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers.

9. Further Information

9.1 Further information or clarification of any aspects of this brief may be obtained from:

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APPENDIX 2 PROJECT DESIGN

June 2002

**Oxford
Archaeology
North**

CASTLEFIELDS REGENERATION SCHEME HALTON CHESHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Proposals

The following project design is offered in response to a request from The Environment Partnership for an archaeological assessment at Castlefields, Halton, Cheshire.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology North has been invited by The Environment Partnership to submit a project design and costs for an archaeological assessment of the Castlefields Regeneration Scheme, Halton, Cheshire. The archaeological work is in accordance with a brief by Mark Leah, of the Cheshire County Council, Environmental Planning Department. The study is required to assess the archaeological and historical importance of the proposed regeneration scheme area, which is immediately adjacent to the west of includes Norton Priory.

1.2 BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1 The study area is adjacent to the historically important Norton Priory, includes part of its precinct, and much of the study area fell within its cartilage. Norton Priory was established in 1134, after the site of priory moved from nearby Runcorn, only 19 years after the establishment of the Runcorn Priory. The site developed both in influence and in scale through the medieval period, particularly the thirteenth century, with the expansion of the church and the adjoining buildings. Following the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536, the building passed into secular hands, and the west range and outer court buildings were adapted into a Tudor mansion. A large eighteenth century house was constructed on the site, but by the early twentieth century the house became ruinous.
- 1.2.2 Beyond the immediate precinct of the priory were ancillary, and associated remains such as the mill, water management features and potentially cemetery areas, which may be impacted by the present proposals. There is consequentially a need to assess the existence or potential for archaeological remains within the development area, some of which may have a direct or in direct link with the Priory.

1.2 OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY NORTH

- 1.2.1 Oxford Archaeology North (OAN) (formerly Lancaster University Archaeological Unit) has considerable experience of the evaluation and assessment of sites of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large scale projects during the past 20 years. Evaluations and assessments have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables. OAN has undertaken numerous archaeological assessments and studies within Cheshire and is currently undertaking a major programme of post-excavation on the excavations undertaken at Norton Priory in the 1970's by Patrick Green. OAN has considerable familiarity with the archaeology of the site and the region. OAN has undertaken numerous desk-based studies in the region for The Environment Partnership.
- 1.2.2 OAN has the professional expertise and resource to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. OAN and all its members of staff operate subject to the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Code of Conduct, and OAN is a registered organisation with the IFA (No 17).

2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The following programme has been designed in accordance with a brief by Mark Leah of Cheshire County Council Environmental Planning to provide an accurate archaeological assessment of the designated area, within its broader context. The principal purpose of the assessment is to collate information about the archaeology of the site and its environs. This will enable an assessment of the significance of the identified archaeological resource. The required stages to achieve these ends are as follows:

2.2 Desk Top Survey

To accrue an organised body of data to establish the impact of the proposed regeneration scheme. It requires an assessment of the archaeological and landscape resource, including an appraisal of

the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), documentary records, both secondary and primary.

2.3 **Identification Survey**

An identification survey to record the character of any extant earthworks within the study area and provide an assessment of the archaeological significance of the earthwork remains.

2.4 **Assessment Report**

A written assessment report will assess the significance of the data generated by this programme within a local and regional context in order to inform the planning brief for the RIS. It will advise on the impact on the resource of the anticipated development within the site, and will identify both opportunities and constraints for/of the sites development.

3. **METHODS STATEMENT**

3.1 The following work programme is submitted in line with the stages and objectives of the archaeological work summarised above. The defined programme provides for both a documentary study and a field identification survey of the study area. The documentary study will examine the wider area of the regeneration scheme. The fieldwalking will exclude the built up areas and will concentrate on the areas on the open eastern part of part of the development area.

3.2 **DESK-BASED STUDY**

3.2.1 Norton Priory has been the subject of extensive documentary research by Patrick Greene (Greene 1989) and the present study is not intended to repeat this work. The aim of the study will be to examine pertinent historic cartographic sources, which may provide details of the location of monuments within the overall study area, but not to undertake a detailed history of Norton Priory. However, the work of Patrick Greene will be used to provide an historical background to the site. In addition the study will attempt to establish the recent history of the study area, from records held by Halton Borough Council, and to establish if sites have been buried or destroyed as a result of recent developments and landscaping.

3.2.2 The following will be undertaken as appropriate, depending on the availability of source material. The level of such work will be dictated by the timescale of the project.

3.2.3 **Documentary and cartographic material:** the proposed documentary study will be informed by the work of Patrick Greene (1989). The study will be specifically targeted on mainly cartographic sources, which have been identified and referenced by Greene, and his study will be considered a starting point for elucidating the history of the site. The study will include an appraisal of the Cheshire Sites and Monuments Record, as well as appropriate sections of County histories, early maps, and such primary documentation (tithe and estate plans etc.) as may be reasonably available. Particular emphasis will be upon the early cartographic evidence which has the potential to inform the post-medieval occupation and land-use of the area. Any photographic material lodged in the County Sites and Monuments Record or County record Office will also be studied. Published documentary sources will also be examined and assessed. The study will examine place and field name evidence for the site and its environs. This work will involve visits and or correspondence searches of the following repositories: Cheshire Sites and Monuments Record, Cheshire County Record Office, Chester, Lancaster University Library, Halton Borough Council, the OAN library and the Norton Priory archive presently held by OAN.

3.2.4 **Aerial Photography:** a brief survey of the extant air photographic cover will be undertaken. Cheshire Sites and Monuments Record will be consulted for aerial photography and the study will entail liaison with the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments (England) (NMR), although, within the timescale available, it is unlikely that prints will be forthcoming from this body for inclusion in this report.

3.2.5 **Physical Environment:** a rapid desk-based compilation of geological (both solid and drift), pedological, topographical and palaeoenvironmental information will be undertaken. It will be based on published geological mapping and any local geological surveys in the possession of the

county council or the client. This will not only set the archaeological features in context but also serves to provide predictive data, that will increase the efficiency of the field inspection.

3.3 IDENTIFICATION SURVEY

3.3.1 **Access:** liaison for basic site access will be undertaken through The Environment Partnership.

3.3.2 It is proposed to undertake an OAN 'level 1' survey (OAN 2002) of the study area. This is a rapid survey undertaken alongside a desk based study as part of a site assessment. It is an initial site inspection intended to identify the extant archaeological resource. It represents the minimum standard of record and is appropriate to exploratory survey aimed at the discovery of previously unrecorded sites. Its aim is to record the existence, location and extent of any such site. The emphasis for the recording is on the written description which will record type and period and would not normally exceed c50 words. The extent of a site is defined for sites or features greater than 50m in size and smaller sites are shown with a cross. The reconnaissance will be undertaken in a systematic fashion, walking on approximately 30m wide transects, within the extent of the defined study area.

3.3.3 It is proposed to use Global Positioning System (GPS) techniques to locate and record the features and artefact sites. GPS instrumentation uses electronic distance measurement along radio frequencies to satellites to enable a positional fix in latitude and longitude which can be converted mathematically to Ordnance Survey National Grid. The use of GPS techniques has proved to be an essential and extremely cost effective means of locating monuments, and can achieve accuracies of better than +/- 1m.

3.3.4 A photographic record will be undertaken simultaneously. An early surface inspection such as this is highly recommended, as such work can frequently double the amount of archaeological information for an area. This fieldwork will result in the production of plans at a scale of 1: 2500 or any other appropriate scale required, recording the location of each of the sites listed in the gazetteer. All archaeological information collected in the course of field inspection will be recorded in standardised form, and will include accurate national grid references. This will form the basis of a gazetteer, to be submitted as part of the report.

3.3.5 OAN provides a Health and Safety Statement for all projects and maintains a Unit Safety policy. All site procedures are in accordance with the guidance set out in the Health and Safety Manual compiled by the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (1997) and risk assessments are implemented for all projects.

3.4 ASSESSMENT REPORT

3.4.1 **Archive:** the results of Stage 3.2 and 3.3 will form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition, 1991*). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. It will include summary processing and analysis of any features and finds recovered during fieldwork. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IFA in that organisation's code of conduct.

3.4.2 This archive can be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format, both as a printed document and on computer disks as ASCII files (as appropriate), and a synthesis (in the form of the index to the archive and the report) will be deposited with the National Monuments Record (RCHM(E)), as appropriate. OAN practice is to deposit the original record archive of projects (paper, magnetic, and plastic media) with the Cheshire Record Office.

3.4.3 **Collation of data:** the data generated by 3.2 (above) will be collated and analysed in order to provide an assessment of the nature and significance of the known surface and subsurface remains within the designated area. It will also serve as a guide to the archaeological potential of the area to be investigated, and the basis for the formulation of any detailed field programme and associated sampling strategy, should these be required in the future.

- 3.4.4 **Assessment Report:** one bound and one unbound copy of the report will be submitted to the Client, and a further copy submitted to the Cheshire Sites and Monuments Record. The final report, following completion of the identification survey, will include a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above and will include a full index of archaeological features identified in the course of the project, together with appropriate illustrations, including maps and gazetteers of known or suspected sites identified within or immediately adjacent to the study area. It will also include a complete bibliography of sources from which the data has been derived, and a list of further sources identified during the programme of work, but not examined in detail. It will include a copy of the project design. It will provide an assessment of past and present land use.
- 3.4.5 The report will identify areas of defined archaeology, an assessment and statement of the actual and potential archaeological significance of any features within the broader context of regional and national archaeological priorities will be made. Illustrative material will include a location map for the identified resource.
- 3.4.6 **Proposals:** the report will make a clear statement of the impact of the proposals upon the identified archaeological resource, and will identify both the opportunities and the constraints for the development.
- 3.4.7 **Confidentiality:** the assessment report is designed as a document for the specific use of the client, for the particular purpose as defined in the project brief and this project design, and should be treated as such; they are not suitable for publication as an academic report, or otherwise, without amendment or revision. Any requirement to revise or reorder the material for submission or presentation to third parties beyond the project brief and project design, or for any other explicit purpose, can be fulfilled, but will require separate discussion and funding.

4. WORK TIMETABLE

- 4.1 It is envisaged that the various stages of the project outlined above would follow on consecutively, where appropriate. The phases of work would comprise:
- | | | |
|------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>i</i> | Desk-Based Assessment | 5 days (on site) |
| <i>ii</i> | Identification Survey | 1 day (on site) |
| <i>iii</i> | Assessment Report | 6 days (desk-based). |
- 4.2 OAN can execute projects at very short notice once an agreement has been signed with the client. The desk-based study is scheduled for completion within three weeks from the completion of the field work.
- 4.3 The project will be under the project management of **Jamie Quartermaine, BA Surv Dip MIFA** (OAN Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed. All Unit staff are experienced, qualified archaeologists, each with several years professional expertise.

APPENDIX 3

GAZETTEER OF SITES

Site number	01
Site name	Halton
NGR	SJ 55378 8204
Site type	Findspot
Period	Prehistoric/Romano-British
SMR No	117
Source	SMR
Description	A gold coin / stater, apparently found in 1795.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary.

Site number	02
Site name	Halton Brow
NGR	SJ 5342 8250
Site type	Ditches
Period	Roman
SMR No	110
Source	Brown <i>et al</i> 1975
Description	The Roman site of Halton Brow has been excavated twice, once in the 1930s when the site was interpreted as a temporary Roman military camp, and then again in the 1960s when more extensive work showed the site to be more consistent with a single ditched enclosure of irregular pentagonal shape, and part of an agricultural system. The finds suggested occupation from the second to fourth centuries AD.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary.

Site number	03
Site name	Halton Park
NGR	SJ 5378 8197
Site type	Enclosure
Period	Roman to Post-Medieval
SMR No	120/1
Source	Watkin 1886
Description	Antiquarian Foote-Gower described an earthwork, consisting of a ditch and rampart enclosing 40 acres with Halton Castle in one corner. If true then this implies the possible medieval reuse of an earlier fortification. This could tenuously relate to either the 'roman camp' at Halton Brow (Site 02) or the medieval deer park attached to Halton (outside the study area).
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary.

Site number	04
Site name	Rock Farm
NGR	SJ 5380 8170
Site type	Quarry
Period	Medieval onwards
SMR No	104/0/3
Source	Greene 1989
Description	Excavations by Patrick Greene in 1973 revealed a long rectangular quarry pit (13m x 2m x 1.1m). There was evidence of channels being cut in order to use wedges and so split the rock along bedding planes. Pottery recovered from the base of the pit indicate that it went out of use in the late fifteenth to early sixteenth centuries.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary.

Site number	05
Site name	Church of St Mary
NGR	SJ 5374 8192
Site type	Church dedicated to St Mary
Period	Medieval
SMR No	104/7
Source	English Heritage 1996
Description	This is the parish church of Runcorn, and an earlier phase of this probably dates to the medieval period and would have served the inhabitants of Halton and its castle. The present red sandstone church dates to 1851 and was by Sir G G Scott. The building has a lofty four bay nave with side aisle and chancel roof at lower level. It has a bell-turret on the east gable. The building consists of squared snecked rubble walls with angle buttresses to the chancel and corner buttresses to the nave. The main Gothic entrance is located in the south aisle. The windows are curvilinear in the chancel and nave, and have drip moulds with stops carved as faces. All windows have stained glass. The octagonal bell-turret has trefoil openings surmounted by gablets and there are octagonal gablet kneelers to the gables.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary but is a Listed Building, Grade II.

Site number	06
Site name	Mill Hill
NGR	SJ 5380 8190
Site type	Site
Period	Medieval
SMR No	105
Source	Ormerod 1882
Description	Documentary references dating to 1386 and 1443 mention Le Mulnehall, indicating that there may have been a windmill at this location.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary.

Site number	07
Site name	Halton Castle
NGR	SJ 5377 8250
Site type	Ruined Castle
Period	Medieval
SMR No	104/1
Source	Ormerod 1882; Beamont 1873; McNeil and Jamieson 1987
Description	Located on a natural promontory the castle was originally built in about 1070/1 by Nigel who was the first baron of Halton. Building works are indicated in several documents from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and the gatehouse to the castle is known to have been built between 1450 and 1457. By the sixteenth century the castle was in use as a prison and during the Civil Wars of the seventeenth century the premises were besieged, captured and partially dismantled by the Roundheads. The castle is shown as a ruin in the Buck brothers' drawing of 1727, and remains so today. Excavations on the site have revealed a wealth of archaeological remains directly related to the occupation of the castle through its various periods.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is of national importance, being a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Site number	08
Site name	Halton Castle
NGR	SJ 5377 8250
Site type	Lower Bailey Wall

Period	Medieval
SMR No	104/1/1
Source	English Heritage 1996; GAT 1997
Description	Consolidation works and small-scale excavations revealed several stretches of the curtain wall surrounding the castle. The mason's marks indicated a clear medieval date for these stretches of well-built foundations, with sandstone ashlar block walls on top. There was also a section which appeared to correspond to the round tower shown in a plan of 1645. The wall revealed suggests that the outer bailey had a series of structures of different dates arranged within the curtain wall and that these may have been incorporated into the present nineteenth century walls.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary but is of national importance, being a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Site number	09
Site name	Halton Castle
NGR	SJ 5377 8250
Site type	Upper Bailey Curtain Wall
Period	Medieval
SMR No	104/1/2
Source	GAT 1997; English Heritage 1996
Description	To the south-west of the tower, on the northern side of the upper bailey curtain wall, a small area of wall was recorded. It included evidence of a blocked, pointed arched doorway and sill.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary but is of national importance, being a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Site number	10
Site name	Norton Priory
NGR	SJ 5484 8304
Site type	Abbey Remains
Period	Medieval
SMR No	66/1/0
Source	Greene 1989
Description	Norton Priory was established here in 1133/34 by William fitzNigel, the Baron of Halton. The abbey was an Augustinian house from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries and the earliest structures, identified through excavation, were two timber aisled halls. Later rebuilding was completed in stone and consisted of a full suite of buildings associated with a priory site. The abbey was partially demolished as a result of the Dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary but is of national importance, being a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Site number	11
Site name	Norton Priory
NGR	SJ 5485 8307
Site type	Church dedicated to St Mary
Period	Medieval
SMR No	66/1/1
Source	Greene 1989
Description	The priory church was originally built in the twelfth century, and was subject to six phases of construction, including repairs due to a fire in the thirteenth century. There is also evidence of fourteenth century flooring <i>in situ</i> under a fifteenth century floor. Large numbers of burials are connected with the church and its grounds.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary but is of national importance, being a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Site number	12
Site name	Norton Priory
NGR	SJ 5483 8302
Site type	Aisled Halls
Period	Medieval
SMR No	66/1/10
Source	Greene 1989
Description	A complex of medieval timber buildings was found during the excavations predating the stone structures. Two phases were evident and the structures have been interpreted as accommodation for the canons prior to the completion of the dormer. The later hall was destroyed by fire in the thirteenth century and the site was then occupied by the priory kitchen.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary but is of national importance, being a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Site number	13
Site name	Norton Priory
NGR	SJ 5487 8310
Site type	Bell Casting Pit
Period	Medieval
SMR No	66/1/11
Source	Greene 1989
Description	A large pit contained the remains of a sandstone and clay furnace and fragments of the mould for a bell, which appears to be for a bell cast in the thirteenth century. This bell pit was located north of the presbytery but another is known which was consistent with the twelfth century bell.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary but is of national importance, being a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Site number	14
Site name	Norton Priory
NGR	SJ 5483 8305
Site type	Undercroft
Period	Medieval
SMR No	66/1/12
Source	Greene 1989
Description	The remaining standing structure of the abbey contains a late twelfth century doorway, with a nineteenth century copy. This part of the abbey was used by the prior and latterly the abbot, and was incorporated into the Tudor and then Georgian houses which stood on the site.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is of national importance, being a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Site number	15
Site name	Norton Priory
NGR	SJ 5477 8306
Site type	Findspot
Period	Medieval
SMR No	66/1/13
Source	Taylor 1989
Description	Five fragments of human remains were found in 1989 within the priory site.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is of national importance, being a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Site number	16
Site name	Norton Priory
NGR	SJ 5482 8301
Site type	Guest Quarters
Period	Medieval
SMR No	66/1/2
Source	Greene 1989
Description	The remains of a hall with masonry footings post date an area of the site occupied by a quarry pit, ditches and early drains. The associated finds of window glass and roofing material suggest a high status building consistent with the guest quarters at the abbey. The building survived into the sixteenth century before being deliberately dismantled.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is of national importance, being a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Site number	17
Site name	Norton Priory
NGR	SJ 5485 8306
Site type	Cloister
Period	Medieval
SMR No	66/1/3
Source	Greene 1989
Description	The cloister appears to have been originally constructed in the twelfth century and then had a further three periods of rebuilding reflecting the increasing wealth of the abbey. In the post-dissolution period the cloister was demolished and the site used as a rubble dump.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is of national importance, being a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Site number	18
Site name	Norton Priory
NGR	SJ 5479 8304
Site type	Moat System
Period	Medieval
SMR No	66/1/4
Source	Greene 1989
Description	A complex moated system surrounded the priory precinct which was connected with, and contemporary to, the priory's main drain, dating to the thirteenth century. The moats survived into the eighteenth century when they are shown on the 1757 estate map. Excavations revealed the moat to be 10m wide and 2m deep and that the drain flow was controlled by a wooden sluice in a masonry frame.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is of national importance, being a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Site number	19
Site name	Norton Priory
NGR	SJ 5488 8301
Site type	Reredorter
Period	Medieval
SMR No	66/1/5
Source	Greene 1989
Description	At the east end of the range, a 'T'-shaped reredorter was found to straddle the drain which post-dated the main drain of the abbey.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is of national importance, being a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Site number	20
Site name	Norton Priory
NGR	SJ 5488 8310
Site type	Tile Kiln
Period	Medieval
SMR No	66/1/6
Source	Greene and Johnson 1978
Description	At a distance of 50m north of the priory church, a tile kiln and its associated clay extraction pits were found. The kiln was set in a rectangular trench and was a two tunnel vault form. The kiln wall was made of wasters and small clay blocks, the wasters being similar to the church floor tiles.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is of national importance, being a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Site number	21
Site name	Norton Priory
NGR	SJ 5484 8302
Site type	Monastic Kitchen
Period	Medieval
SMR No	66/1/7
Source	Greene 1989
Description	The priory kitchen was situated at the south-west corner of the refectory range and was built in two phases during the monastic occupation of the site. The kitchen was closely associated with the drainage system on the site. The use of the kitchens continued into the sixteenth century and a new drain was built at this time, but the structure was demolished in the eighteenth century to allow for the development of the garden.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is of national importance, being a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Site number	22
Site name	Norton Priory
NGR	SJ 5487 8305
Site type	East Cloister Range
Period	Medieval
SMR No	66/1/8
Source	Greene 1989
Description	Extending south of the transept, the east cloister range consisted of a passage, chapter house, warming room, and undercroft, below the canons dormitory and the reredorter at the end. The originally square twelfth century chapter house was rebuilt as a more elaborate building in the fourteenth century. The warming room contained a large fire place and the undercroft was later narrowed and divided to allow for a laundry.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is of national importance, being a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Site number	23
Site name	Norton Priory
NGR	SJ 5485 8303
Site type	South Cloister Range
Period	Medieval
SMR No	66/1/9
Source	Greene 1989
Description	This structure is represented by the foundations of a much remodelled building and formed the undercroft below the refectory running parallel to the cloister and dating to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Assessment The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is of national importance, being a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Site number 24
Site name Halton Almshouses
NGR SJ 5370 8190
Site type Almshouses
Period Medieval onwards
SMR No 104/0/1
Source Greene 1974
Description During a minor excavation on the site of the former almshouses no significant evidence of structures earlier than the eighteenth century almshouses was retrieved. The finds recovered included pottery from the fourteenth century but also of all periods up to the twentieth century. The site lies under the present village hall.
Assessment The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary.

Site number 25
Site name Main Street – Nos 125 and 127
NGR SJ 5395 8173
Site type Cottages
Period Post-Medieval
SMR No 104/0/2
Source English Heritage 1996
Description A pair of early seventeenth century cottages have a sandstone ground storey and brick nogged timber framing.
Assessment The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is a Listed Building, Grade II.

Site number 26
Site name Main Street – Seneschal's House
NGR SJ 5376 8225
Site type House
Period Post-Medieval
SMR No 104/3
Source English Heritage 1996
Description A house dated to 1598 was built to accommodate the steward of Halton Castle. It has an E-plan, and is symmetrical, built in sandstone with a stone/slate roof. It has two storeys plus attic, with five bays including three gabled projections.
Assessment The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is a Listed Building, Grade II*.

Site number 27
Site name Halton Common – The Old Hall
NGR SJ 5393 8193
Site type House
Period Post-Medieval
SMR No 104/4
Source English Heritage 1996
Description A house, built in 1693 with later alterations, consists of two storeys of sandstone, plus attic, with a stone/slate roof, mullioned windows, and a studded entrance door. The interior includes a Jacobean-style staircase, ovolo moulded beams and seventeenth century panelled doors.
Assessment The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is a Listed Building, Grade II*.

Site number	28
Site name	Main Street – No 78 Rock Farm House
NGR	SJ 5385 8178
Site type	House
Period	Post-Medieval
SMR No	104/5
Source	English Heritage 1996
Description	A late seventeenth century building with later alterations has two storeys of sandstone, six bays including two gabled projections, and a red brick-built section to the east. The original section has mullioned windows. The interior has bevelled beams. It was previously a residential farmhouse, but is now a social club office.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is a Listed Building, Grade II.

Site number	29
Site name	Main Street – No 45 Village Farm House
NGR	SJ 5368 8202
Site type	House
Period	Post-Medieval
SMR No	104/6
Source	English Heritage 1996
Description	An early seventeenth century building with later alterations was previously a farmhouse but is now a cottage.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is a Listed Building, Grade II.

Site number	30
Site name	Norton Priory
NGR	SJ 5481 8303
Site type	House
Period	Post-Medieval
SMR No	67/1/1
Source	Greene 1989
Description	Much of the abbey complex was demolished after its Dissolution and the land and estate was bought by Sir Richard Brooke in 1545. Parts were subsequently converted to form a Tudor house and buildings were constructed utilising some of the remaining abbey buildings. The Tudor house and landscape was demolished when the Brooke family decided to build a Georgian mansion on the site. This also incorporated the west range of the cloister, and was occupied by the Brooke family until the 1920s and was demolished in 1928.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary.

Site number	31
Site name	Norton Priory
NGR	SJ 54670 83020
Site type	Mill Pond / Ornamental Lake
Period	Post-Medieval
SMR No	-
Source	Eyes 1757; Greene 1989
Description	A pond is referred to in several early documents but the location is never exact enough to tie it in to the later cartographic sources of the 1757 estate map and 1770 ink drawing of Norton Manor (Greene 1989). The site shows up clearly on the 1983 aerial photograph of the area around Norton Priory, although there also appears to be a regular squared shape within the bounds of the pond; similar squares are seen to the

north. The CSMR records (66/1/4) that the now infilled ornamental lake west of the priory produced a large structural timber during drainage works in 1986 – this was from an oral communication and not a printed source.

Assessment The site lies within the delimited study area boundary.

Site number 32
Site name Norton Priory
NGR SJ 54660 83170
Site type Water Mill
Period Post-Medieval
SMR No -
Source 1770 Watercolour of Norton Hall; Greene 1989
Description Associated with the mill pond are representations of a building to the north, which appears to be a water mill driven by the stored energy of the pond.
Assessment The site lies within the delimited study area boundary.

Site number 33
Site name Astmore
NGR SJ 53730 82900
Site type Tannery
Period Post-Medieval
SMR No -
Source CRO EDT 307/1 and 2
Description Tanning is evident within the study area at Astmore, on the north side of the Bridgewater Canal, where a tannery is shown on the 1845 tithe map. This tannery and any surviving remains would now lie beneath the A558 or the slim strip of embankment between the canal and the road.
Assessment The site lies within the delimited study area boundary.

Site number 34
Site name Castlefields
NGR SJ 54570 82690
Site type Pond
Period Post-Medieval
SMR No -
Source OS 1:10,000 1975
Description Lying within the grounds of the Recreational Centre and near the Bridgewater Canal is a large pond. It would appear that this is of very recent date as it is not shown on early OS maps and does not relate to the canal. Instead it is a feature created in modern times as part of the landscaped parkland around the recreational centre. It was constructed in the period 1966-1972. Its presence indicates that in this area any below ground remains will have been removed.
Assessment The site lies within the delimited study area boundary.

Site number 35
Site name Town Park
NGR SJ 5491 8140
Site type Pond
Period Neolithic
SMR No 2325
Source SMR
Description A Neolithic polished axe was found in July 1986 in a pond in the Town park, in Brookvale.
Assessment The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary.

Site number	36
Site name	Castle Road
NGR	SJ 53820 81860
Site type	Cottages
Period	Post-Medieval
SMR No	-
Source	English Heritage 1996
Description	A row of three early eighteenth century cottages with later alterations are two storied, each with one bay, built in squared coursed sandstone with dressed heads, sills and broad surrounds to the doors. The windows consist of three-light horizontal sliding sashes with glazing bars. There is an old slate roof with diminished courses and one chimney stack of stone. It has been listed for group value.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is a Listed Building, Grade II.

Site number	37
Site name	Parish Library (formerly listed as the Cheshire Library)
NGR	SJ 58780 81890
Site type	Library
Period	Post-Medieval
SMR No	-
Source	English Heritage 1996
Description	A former library now serves as the Committee Room for the new linked Church Hall. It was built in 1730 for Sir John Cheshire, in stone with a slate roof. The building consists of one storey with two bays. It has an entrance door with four fielded panels in a stone doorcase, with Ionic columns, and triangular pediments, each with a raised segmental apex. The windows are arched with glazing bars. The roof has a cornice and a solid parapet, stone gables, and a chimney. The interior is of no interest following alterations and repairs in 1975. The building has contemporary gate piers in the wall fronting the entrance, consisting of squared red sandstone blocks on a projecting moulded plinth, with moulded cap and ball finials on a truncated cone support.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is a Listed Building, Grade II*.

Site number	38
Site name	Norton Priory
NGR	SJ 5468 8304
Site type	Crop Mark
Period	Post-Medieval / Modern
SMR No	-
Source	Greene 1989, 28; Hunting Survey UK (73 60), run 22/1607
Description	A very regular square-shaped crop mark was identified in the area to the west of Norton Priory. It is within the area of the former mill pond (Site 31), which was backfilled between the production of the watercolour drawing (1770) and the tithe map (1844). Clearly this feature post-dates the backfill of the pond.
Assessment	The site lies within the delimited study area.

Site number	39
Site name	Castle Hotel Public House (formerly Castle Inn)
NGR	SJ 53750 82020
Site type	Courthouse
Period	Post-Medieval

SMR No	-
Source	English Heritage 1996
Description	The former Duchy of Lancaster Court House is now a public house. It was built in 1737, with later alterations by Henry Sephton, Undertaker, in red sandstone with a slate roof. It consists of two storeys, and seven bays, with two bay projections on each side. The first floor entrance to the Court Room is approached up a stone staircase, and consists of a double door with six raised panels in a stone doorcase surmounted by the Royal Arms. The outer bays have a projecting weathered plinth midway up the ground floor windows. The upper windows have moulded stone bracketed sills, architraves, and heads marked with triple keystones. The roof has a moulded eaves cornice and is hipped with sandstone hip and ridge tiles. In the interior the courtroom has now been adapted for catering purposes but still contains a tablet with inscription and date.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is a Listed Building, Grade II*.

Site number	40
Site name	Norton Arms Public House
NGR	SJ 53770 82190
Site type	Public House
Period	Post-Medieval
SMR No	-
Source	English Heritage 1996
Description	A public house built in 1758 has rough cast brickwork with a slate roof. It consists of two storeys, plus attic, three bays, with a two-bay two-storey wing with a basement to the north.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is a Listed Building, Grade II.

Site number	41
Site name	Main Street – Nos 88,90,92 and 94
NGR	SJ 53930 81760
Site type	Cottages
Period	Post-Medieval
SMR No	-
Source	English Heritage 1996
Description	A row of four cottages built in 1827 constructed in red brick with a slate roof; it has two storeys, and four bays with gable projections at both ends.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is a Listed Building, Grade II.

Site number	42
Site name	Main Street – The Lodge
NGR	SJ 54120 81730
Site type	Lodge
Period	Medieval
SMR No	-
Source	English Heritage 1996
Description	The former lodge to Norton Priory is now a private dwelling, with later alterations and additions. A single storey, two bay, building, it is built in red sandstone with slate roof, with two-light mullioned windows, which flank the door opening. It is now built up with a pulvinated stone architrave. The building has cast iron lattice casements, stone bracketed eaves cornice, a hipped roof of large slates with lead rolls, and a stone chimney stack.
Assessment	The site lies within the delimited study area boundary and is a Listed Building, Grade II.

Site number	43
Site name	Main Street – Nos 31 (Halton House Stables) and 33 (Halton House)
NGR	SJ 53720 82140
Site type	House and stables
Period	Post-Medieval
SMR No	-
Source	English Heritage 1996
Description	A brown brick house, with sandstone slate roof, was built in 1779. It consists of two storeys and three bays. It was formerly stables, but now has been converted into a dwelling. It is built in red sandstone with a slate roof.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is a Listed Building, Grade II.

Site number	44
Site name	Main Street – Village Farm House
NGR	SJ 53650 82000
Site type	Cottage
Period	Post-Medieval
SMR No	-
Source	English Heritage 1996
Description	An early seventeenth century farmhouse, now converted into a cottage, consists of two storeys, one bay, built in coursed rubble sandstone walls with a slate roof.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is a Listed Building, Grade II.

Site number	45
Site name	Main Street – Holly Bank House
NGR	SJ 53650 81950
Site type	House
Period	Post-Medieval
SMR No	-
Source	English Heritage 1996
Description	An early eighteenth century house consists of two storeys, plus attic, and five bays including a blank bay over the entrance.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is a Listed Building, Grade II.

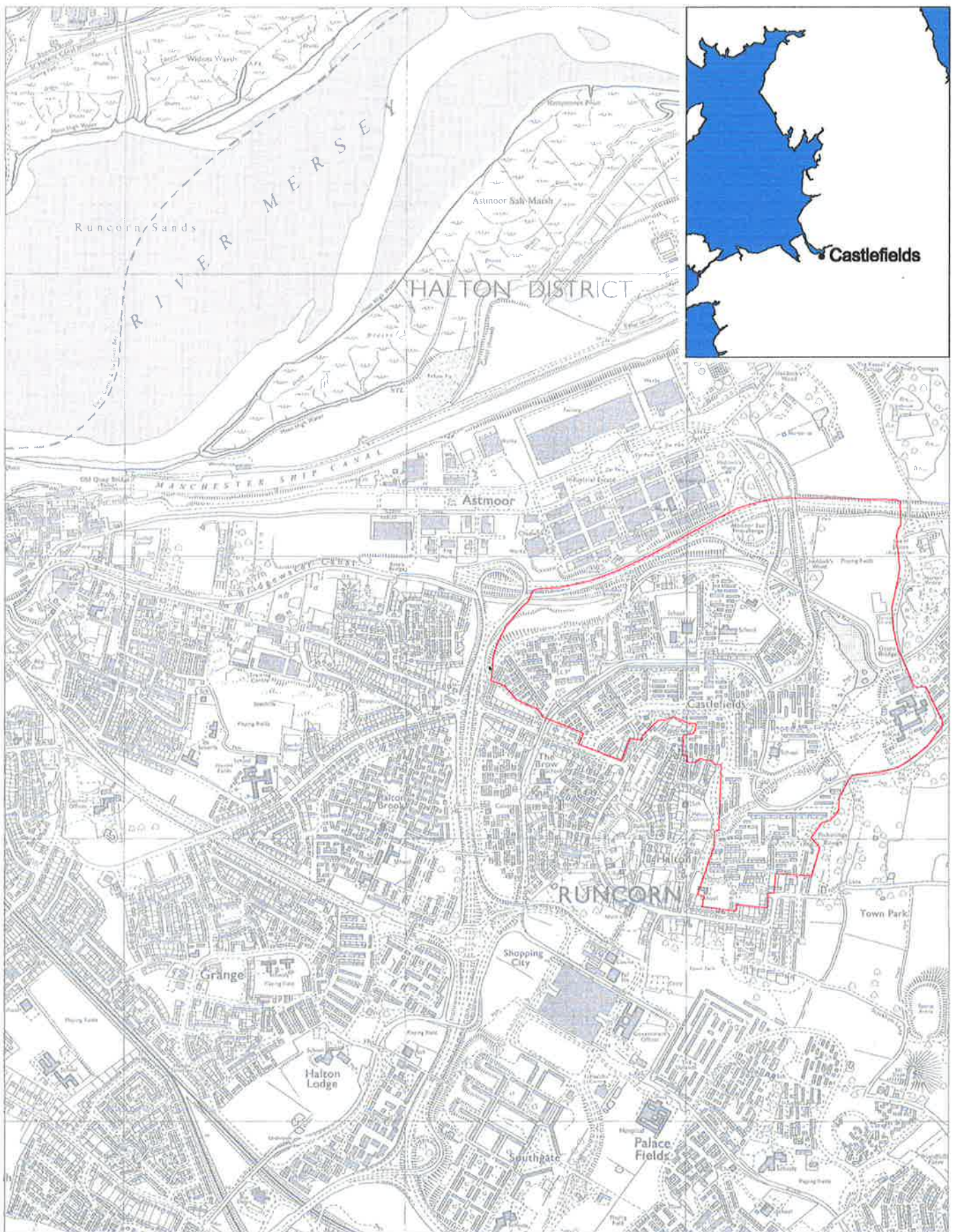
Site number	46
Site name	Main Street – Nos 59,61 and 63
NGR	SJ 53680 81850
Site type	Houses
Period	Post-Medieval
SMR No	-
Source	English Heritage 1996
Description	A row of early nineteenth century houses consists of two storeys, plus attics, and seven bays, built in red brick with slate roofs.
Assessment	The site lies outside the delimited study area boundary, but is a Listed Building, Grade II.

Site number	47
Site name	Bridgewater Canal
NGR	SJ 54203 82976

Site type	Canal
Period	Post-Medieval
SMR No	-
Source	Hadfield 1984
Description	A waterway was constructed in 1759-61 by James Brindley (1716-72) from Worsley to Manchester (later extended to Liverpool) for transporting coal. It is a gravity-flow canal constructed on an aqueduct across the Irwell Valley and is a masterpiece of eighteenth century engineering. It was the first British canal.
Assessment	The site lies within the delimited study area boundary.

ILLUSTRATIONS

- Figure 1 Location Map
- Figure 2 1757 Estate map of Norton Manor, belonging to the Brooke Family
(Eyes 1757)
- Figure 3 1770 Ink and watercolour drawing of Norton Manor
- Figure 4 OS first edition map (1873-77), showing the extent of the Norton Park in
1873, with areas of surviving parkland in 1910-12 (from OS 2nd edition
map) overlain
- Figure 5 Castlefields: Site Map
- Figure 6 Defined areas of fieldwalking

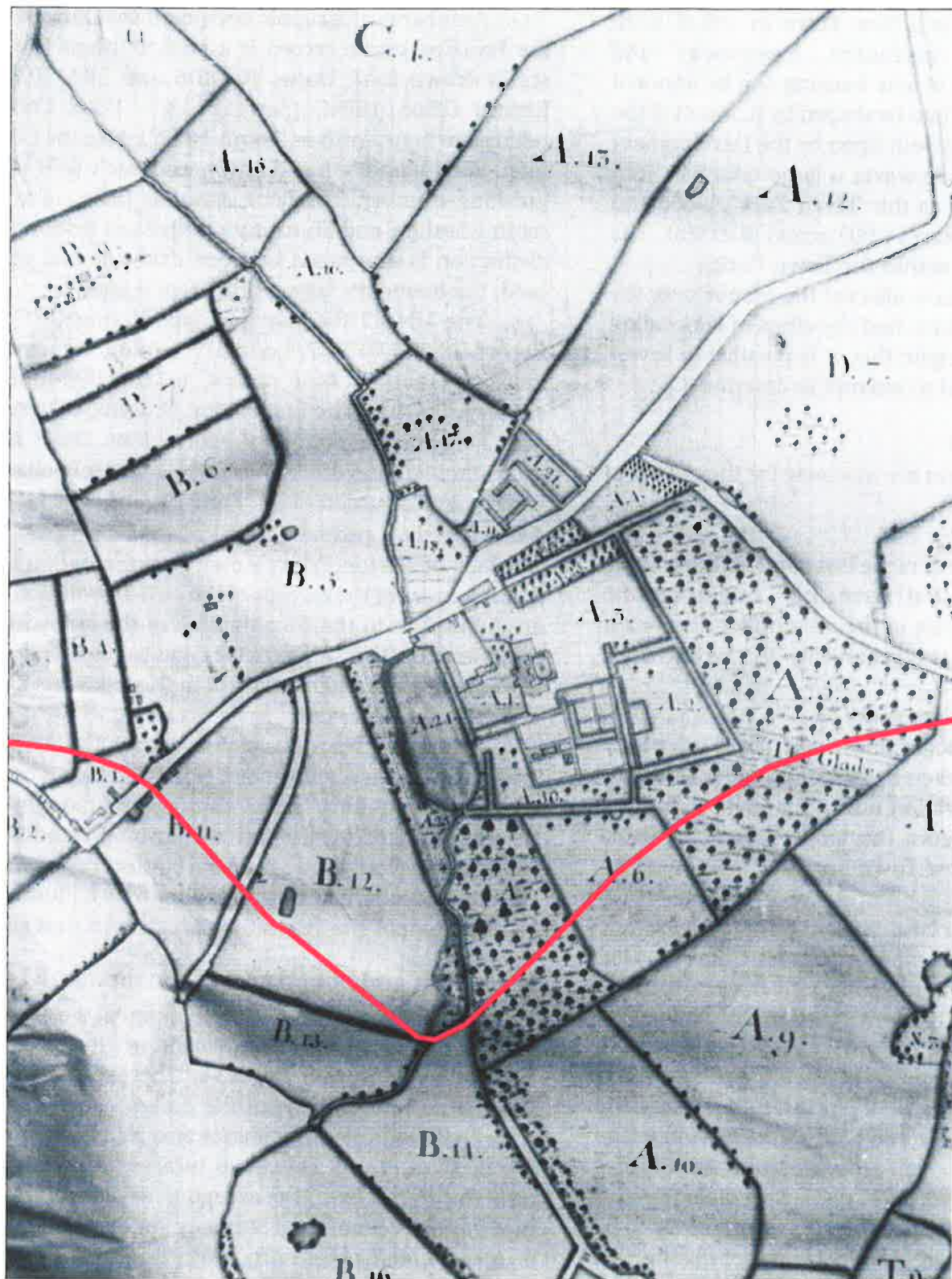


based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:10000
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0 500
metres

Figure 1: Location Map



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PROJECT: Castlefields
 DRAWING No: 02
 SCALE: 1:8000
 TITLE: 1757 Estate Map
 CLIENT: The Environment Partnership
 DRAWN BY: ELC
 DATE: July 2002

LOCATION:



KEY

— Canal

Figure 2: 1757 Estate Map of Norton Manor, Belonging to the Brooke Family (Eyes 1757)

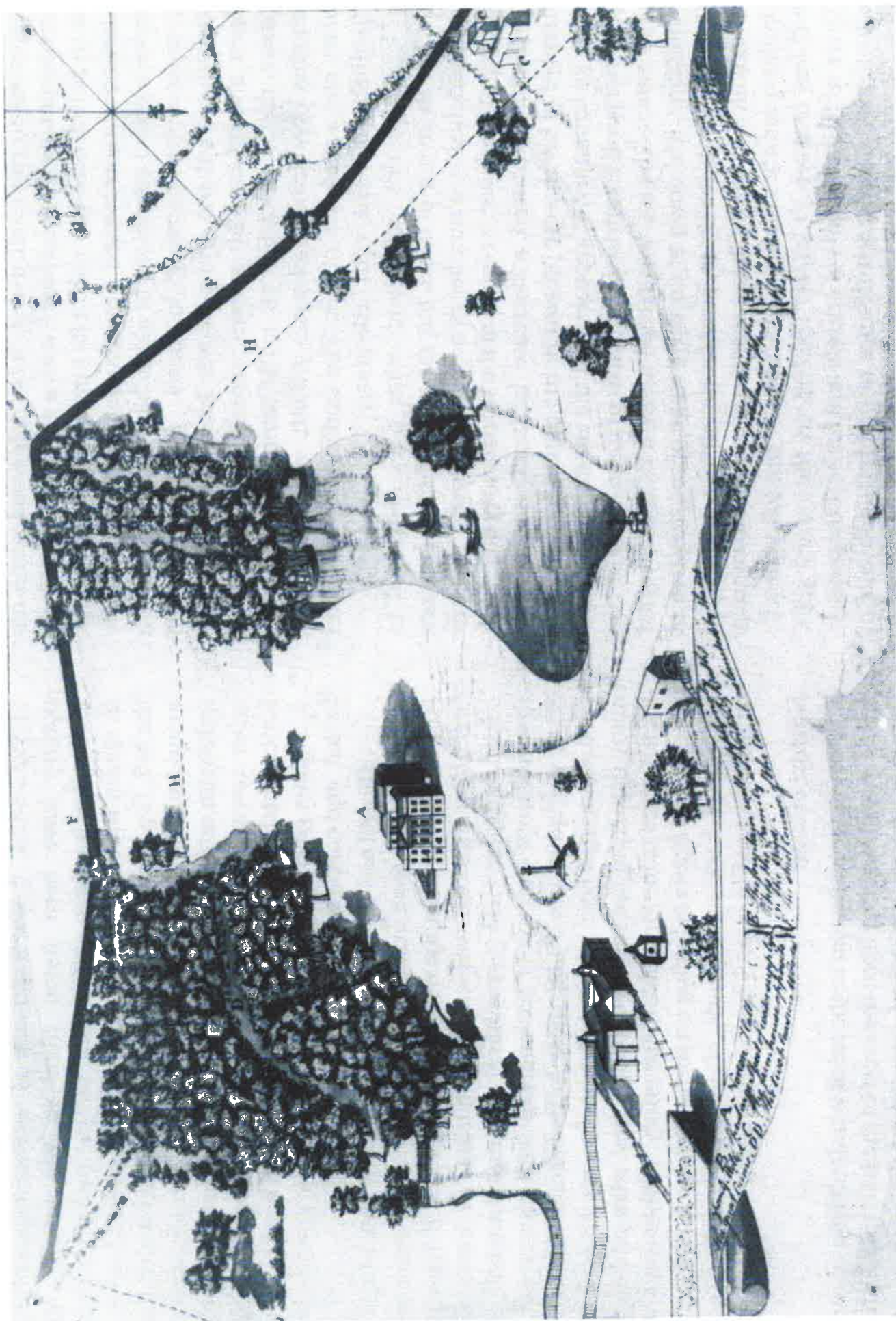


Figure 3: 1770 Ink and Watercolour Drawing of Norton Manor

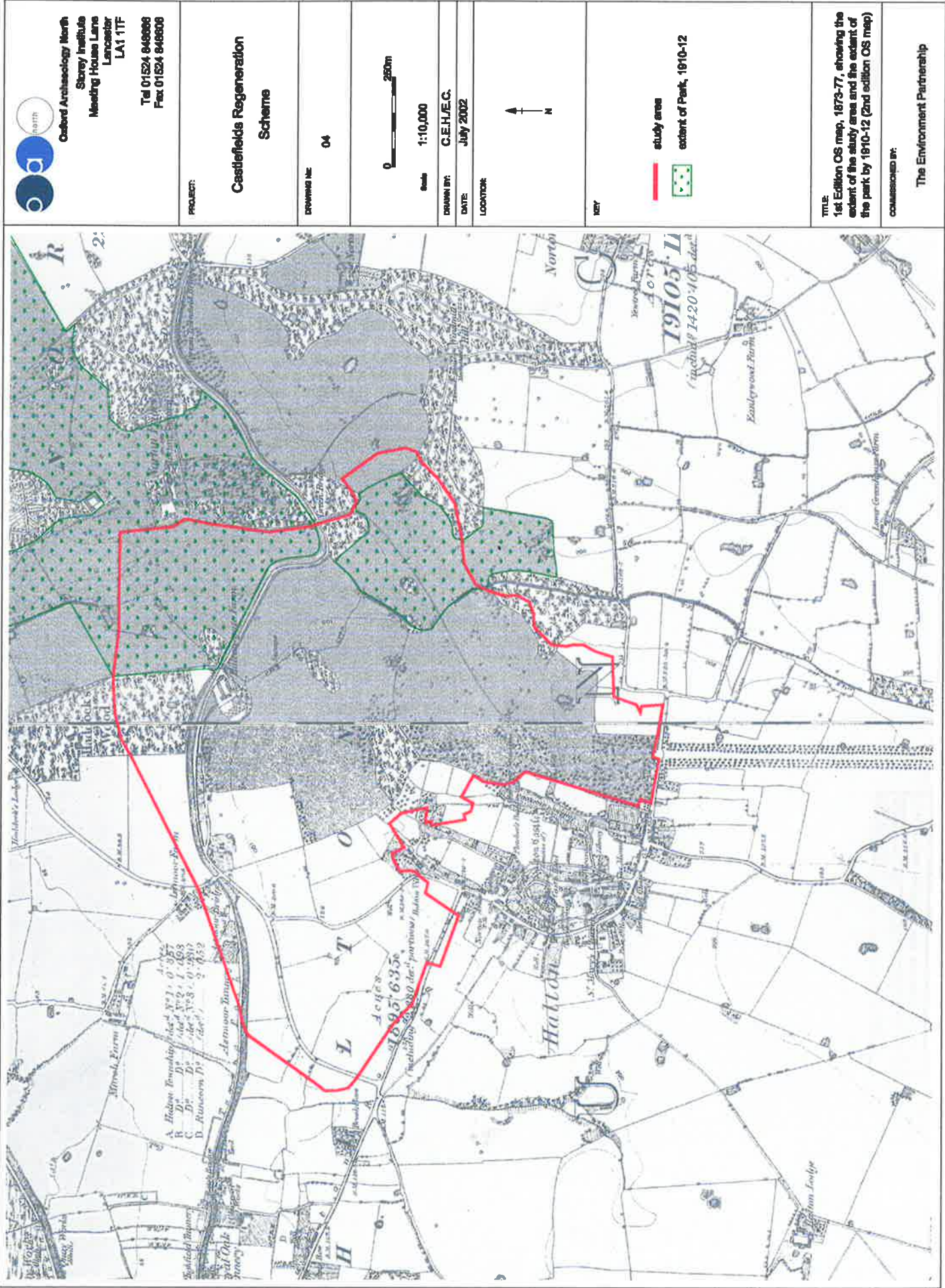


Figure 4 : OS First Edition map (1873-77) Showing the extent of Norton parkland in 1873, with areas of surviving parkland in 1910-12 (from OS 2nd edition map) overlain

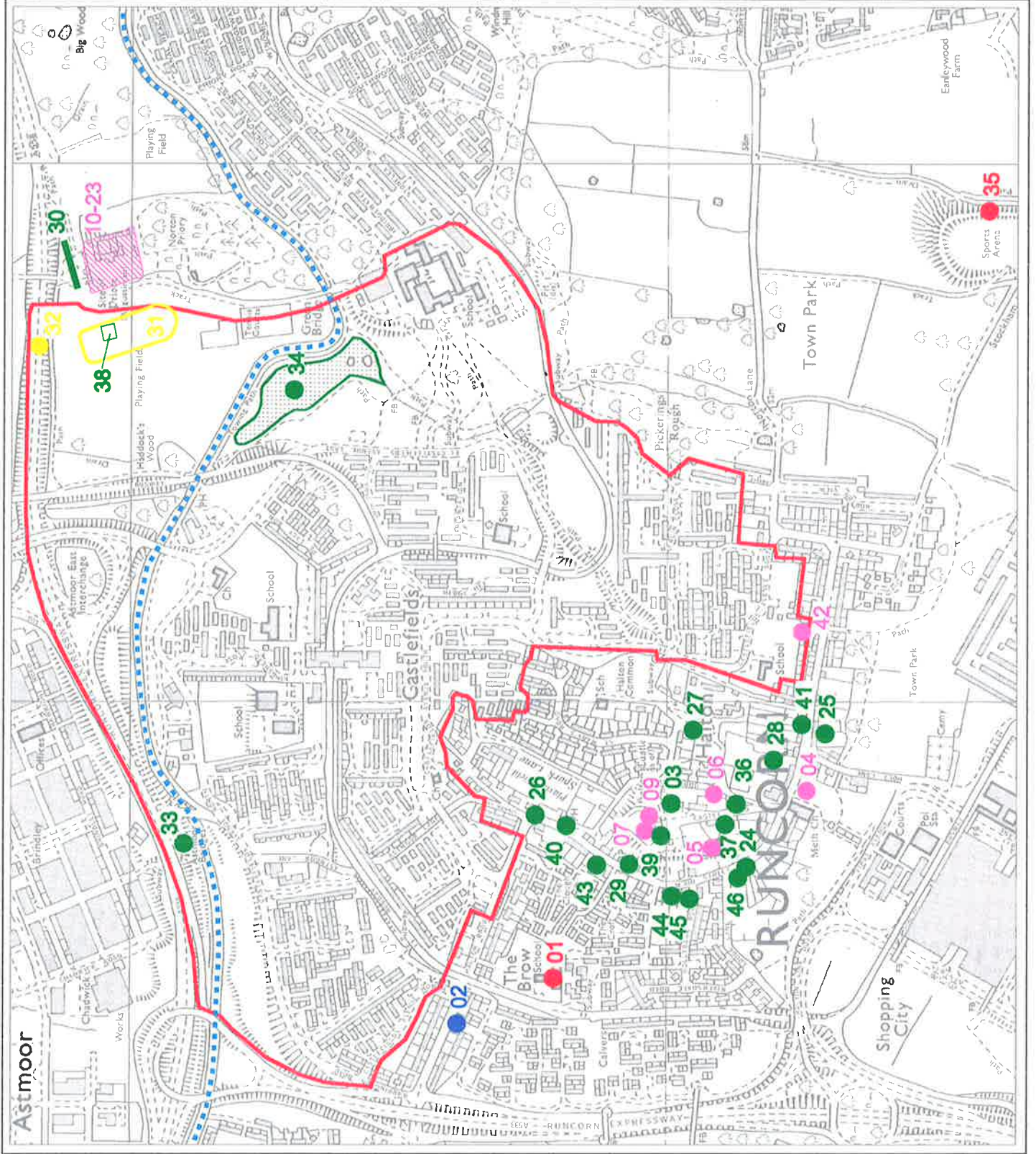
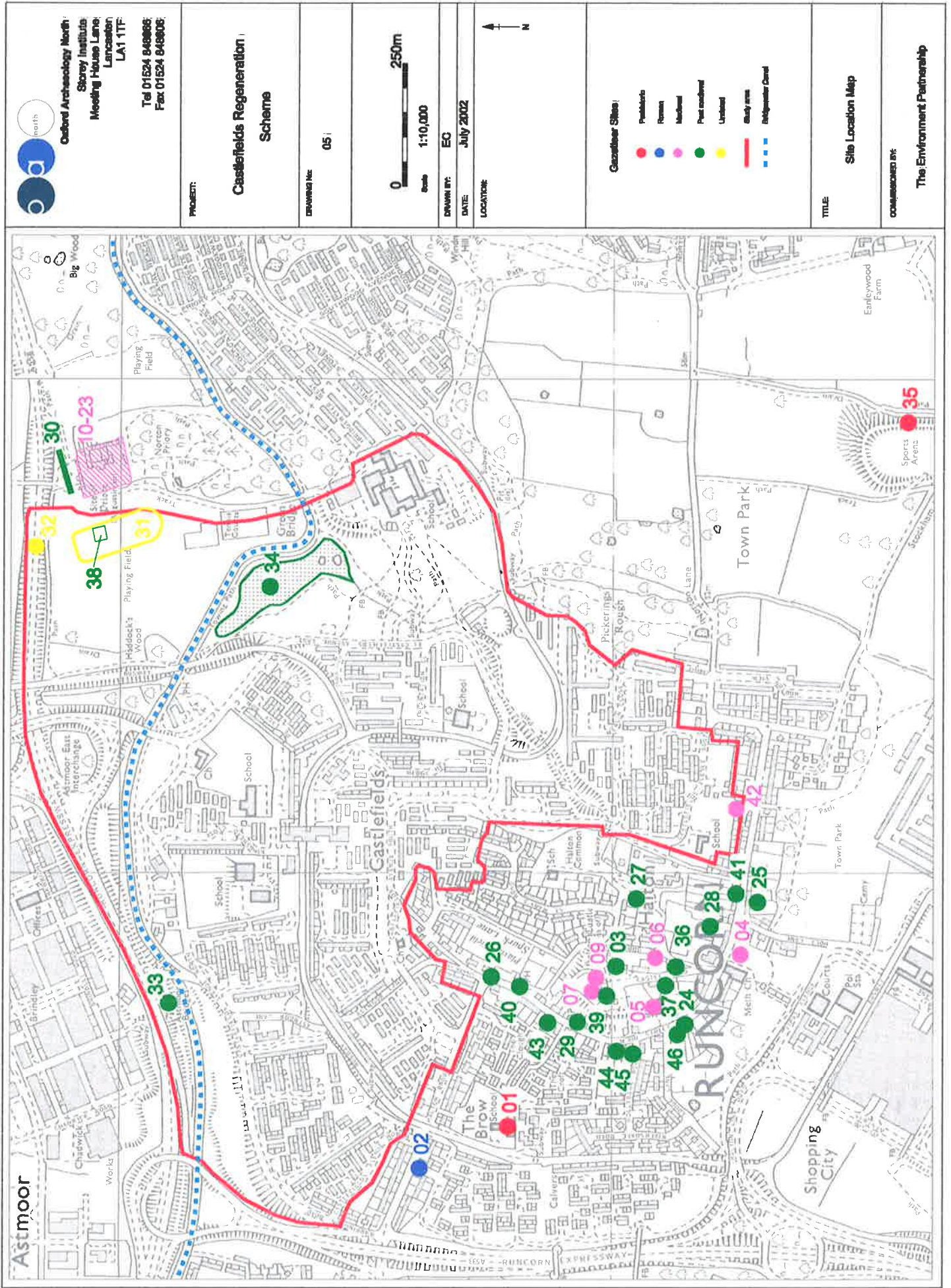


Figure 5: Castlefields: Site Map

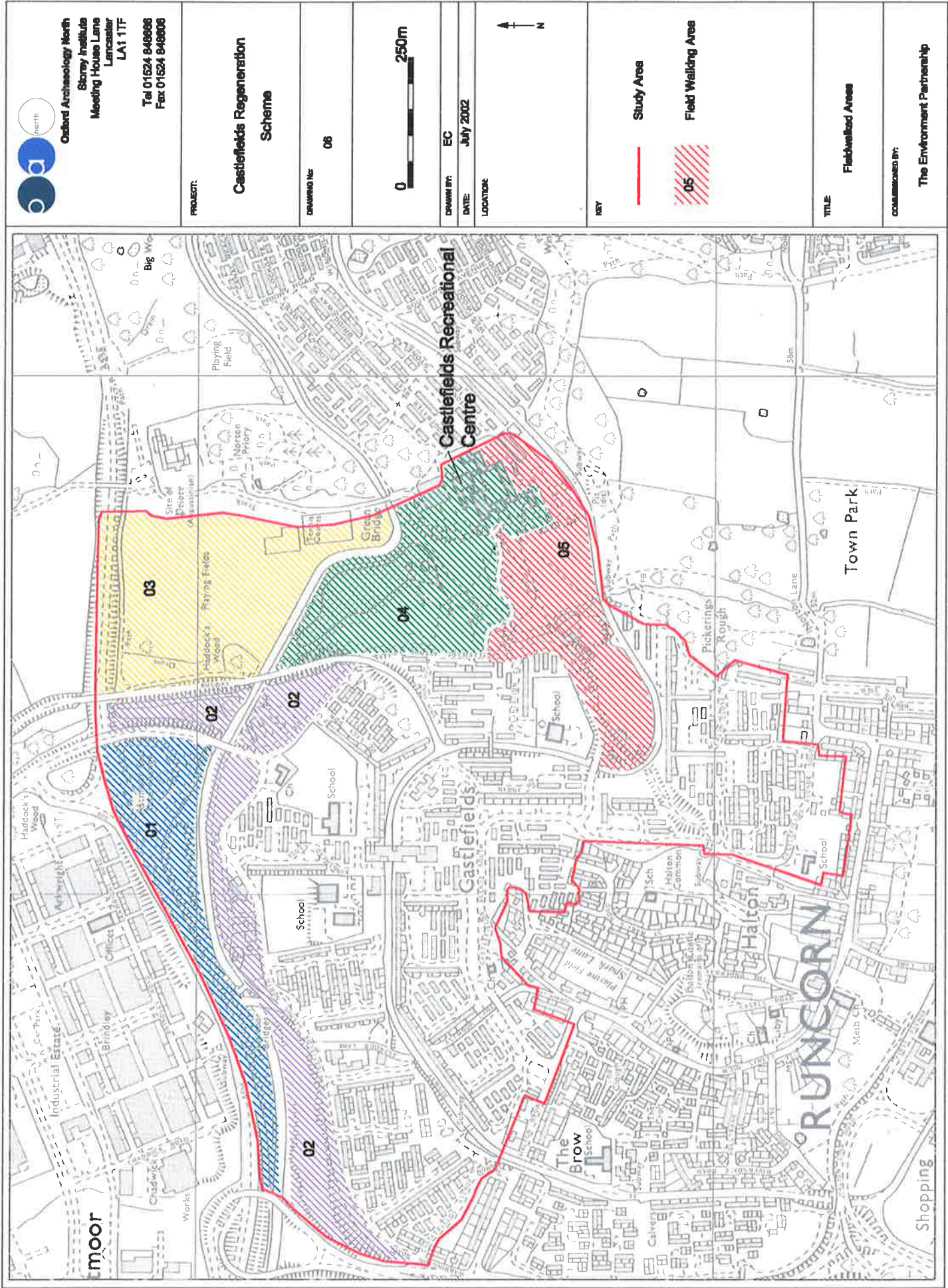


Figure 6: Defined Areas of Fieldwalking

PLATES

- Plate 1 1974 Aerial photograph of Norton Priory and area of fish pond
- Plate 2 The Bridgewater Canal and Environs, looking west
- Plate 3 Castlefields Recreational Centre and Environs, looking north-east
- Plate 4 Large Pond Adjacent to the Bridgewater Canal, looking north-west
- Plate 5 Area of Land Immediately West of Norton Priory, looking south



Plate 1: 1974 Aerial Photograph of Norton Priory and area of Fish Pond



Plate 2 The Bridgewater Canal and Environs, looking west



Plate 3 Castlefields Recreational Centre and Environs, looking north-east



Plate 4 Large Pond Feature Adjacent to the Bridgewater Canal, looking north- west



Plate 5 Area of Land Immediately West of Norton Priory, looking south



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