

NOTES

Newark Priory, Ripley, Surrey

An evaluation exercise on the scheduled area of Newark Priory was undertaken by the Central Excavations Unit in December 1988. This was in response to a request from Ancient Monuments Division, English Heritage, for information to assist in determining a Scheduled Monument Consent application to plough the field concerned.

The priory precinct sits on a small raised area in the valley floor of the river Wey. The northern edge of the precinct is delimited by the Abbey stream and the southern edge by the main river channel (beyond the limits of the plan, fig 1). The western boundary (also off the plan) is a water supply channel that apparently underwent modification during the life of the priory. The entrance to the precinct was by a bridge over the water supply channel to a gatehouse, remains of which are visible today. Parts of the eastern end of the church remain standing, the south transept wall to the height of the eaves.

A fairly comprehensive outline plan was produced of the main buildings of the priory as a result of excavations south and east of the priory church in the late 1920s by Captain C M H Pearce (Pearce 1932). The cloisters lay to the south of the nave with ranges of buildings on the three remaining sides, the separate infirmary buildings lying to the south-east of the buildings, surrounding the cloisters. The simple gatehouse at the western extremity of the precinct and a separate building, interpreted as a bell tower or steeple, were the only other structures excavated within the precinct.

Three trenches were excavated by hand, two on the site of known previously-excavated structures, the third west of the church approximately midway between the gatehouse and the church, close to the highest point within the precinct. The trenches on the site of the priory buildings showed that little or no change had been caused by cultivation in the 60 years since the earlier excavations. No evidence of structural remains was found in the third trench. It did however reveal evidence of two phases of cultivation, the current regime to a depth approximately half the total depth of ploughsoil (0.45m). The earlier episode of cultivation has left plough furrows cut into the surface of the natural sand. None of the archaeological deposits associated with the priory was excavated, and there were no finds.

REFERENCE

Pearce, C M H, 1932 An account of the buildings of Newark Priory, with a note on its founder's family, *SyAC*, 40, 1-39

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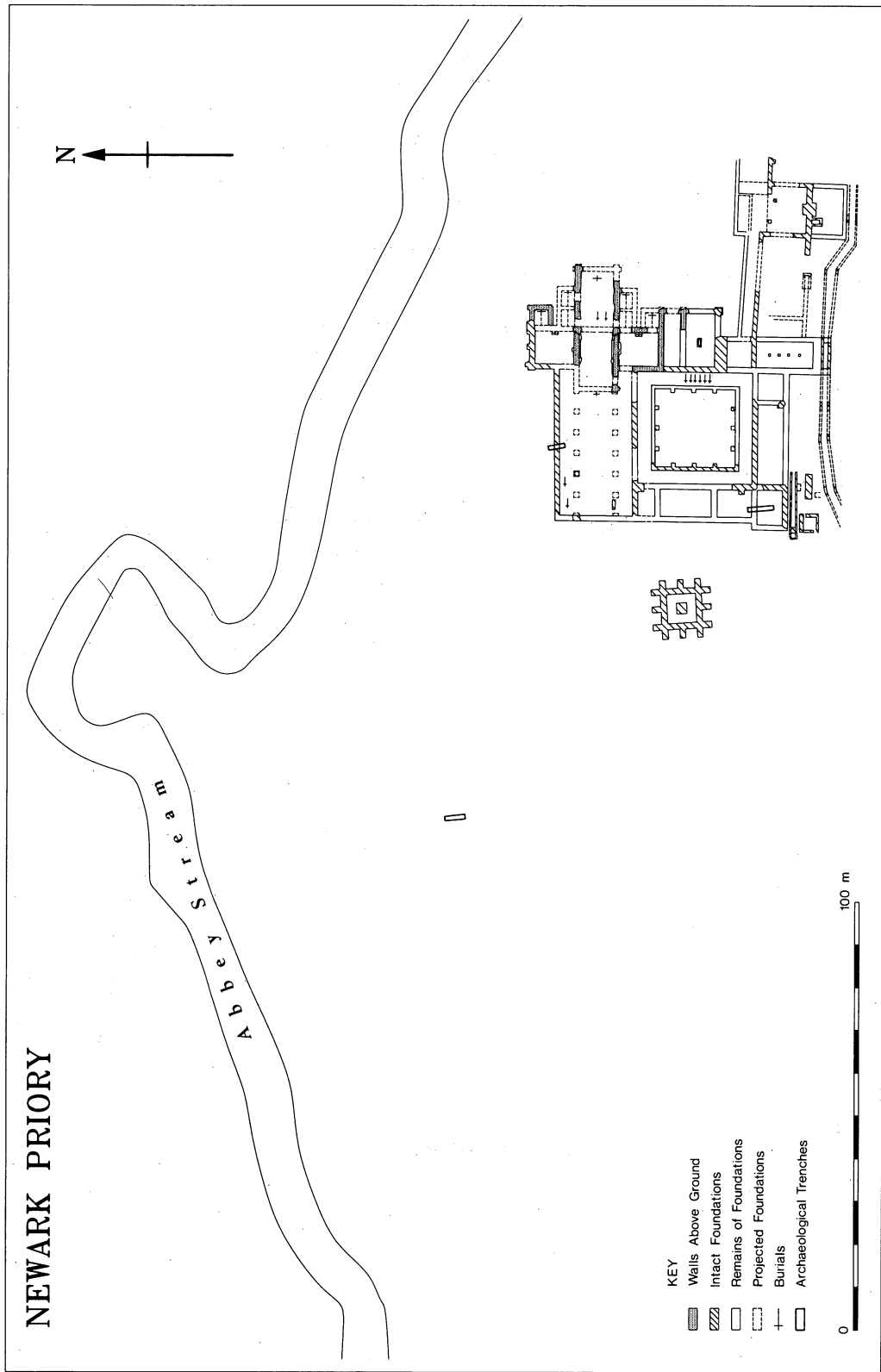


Fig 1. Newark Priory, plan showing remains excavated in 1929 and trenches dug by English Heritage