



ADVANCING LINCOLNSHIRE'S PAST



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**EXCAVATION FOR THE INSTALLATION OF
INTERPRETIVE PANELS
AT
BARDNEY ABBEY
BARDNEY
LINCOLNSHIRE**

October 1993

Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire
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BDP 93

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Appendix 1

Department of National Heritage, Scheduled Monument Consent document HSD 9/ 2/ 2767

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Summary

Two small trenches were excavated at Bardney Abbey, Lincolnshire, in advance of the erection of interpretive panels. Although located in the cloister area and adjacent to the abbey guesthouse, the interventions were made into imported topsoil layers and did not disturb archaeological deposits associated with the use or dissolution of the abbey.

Introduction

On Wednesday, March 24th 1993, two trenches for the installation of display panels were excavated at Bardney Abbey, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). The site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, Lincolnshire County Monument Number 14. Scheduled Monument Consent for the excavations was granted by the Department of National Heritage on 22nd July 1992, and the terms and conditions specified in consent document HSD 9/ 2/ 2767 (Appendix 1).

The Benedictine Abbey of Bardney (NGR TF 113 705) lies on the east bank of the River Witham approximately 1km to the north of the village of Bardney, and 13km east of the city of Lincoln, in the district of West Lindsey, Lincolnshire (Fig. 2).

Of Anglo-Saxon derivation, the place-name means 'Bearda's island', the area having been a slight island in marshy ground alongside the Witham.

Endowed by King Ethelred of Mercia, the monastery at Bardney became an important place of pilgrimage and a prosperous religious centre following the enshrinement of the remains of St. Oswald, whose bones were brought to Bardney in 675 by Ethelred and his wife, Osthryd.

Viking raiders destroyed the Abbey in 870 and in 909 the bones of St. Oswald were removed to Gloucester.

A priory consecrated to Saints Peter, Paul and Oswald was founded in 1087 by Gilbert de Gant. Gilbert, the new Norman owner of Bardney and the surrounding lands, also endowed the house with land from his estates at Bardney, Southrey and elsewhere. In 1116, Gilbert's son, Walter, raised the status of Bardney to an abbey.

Previous excavations have established the traditional arrangement of Bardney Abbey, with the Abbey Church to the north and the chapter house, dorter, refectory and kitchens ranged around the cloister. West of the church lay the abbot's lodgings and gatehouse, and to the east was the infirmary. The parish church is thought to have stood alongside the monastery. This church fell into ruin in 1434 and, because the parishioners annoyed the monks by coming into the Abbey precinct, the Abbot agreed to build a new church, which is located in the present village centre.

In October 1536, the Lincolnshire Rising, a local rebellion against the impending dissolution of the monasteries, broke out. Six monks from Bardney were implicated in this rebellion and were hung, drawn and quartered at Lincoln in March 1537. Subsequently, the Abbey surrendered to the King and was dissolved in 1538.

Following the dissolution the land was acquired by Sir Robert Tyrwhitt, who demolished the church, using the stone to transform the other monastic buildings into a private residence. He occupied the abbot's lodging and converted the cloister into a walled garden, leaving the remainder of the abbey structures to fall into ruin. By 1718, when Browne Willis surveyed the site, all the buildings, including Tyrwhitt's house, had gone and only a fragment of

the gatehouse remained standing. The site had become pasture by 1753 when it was visited by William Stukeley, who also observed that the area of the Abbey buildings was being quarried for the stone.

Excavation of the site was commenced in 1909 by the local vicar, Reverend Charles Laing. This work continued for six years, uncovering the ruins of the main abbey buildings, before being terminated by the war and Laing's death. Several peripheral areas remain unexcavated. A report on the results of these investigations was published by Harold Brakspear in 1922. Left open to view, the stonework deteriorated due to exposure to the weather. In 1933, to protect them against further decay, the ruins were covered over such that the outlines of the buildings remained visible for the benefit of visitors.

Aims

The aims of the excavation were to record archaeologically two foundation trenches for the installation of display panels. Trench 1 was located in the cloister area and Trench 2 was situated by the abbey guesthouse (Fig. 3). Both trenches were 0.75m square and were opened, excavated and cleaned by hand to a depth of 0.35m. Recording of the contexts encountered was according to standard Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire practice. Photographs were taken of both trenches (Fig. 4). However, as no stratigraphy was revealed, neither section drawings nor plans were made.

The Excavations

Revealed at the base of trench 1, in the cloister area, was a layer of brown sandy loam with moderate to frequent fragments of limestone (13). As the excavation ceased when the surface of this deposit

was encountered, no details of the nature, depth or date of this material was recovered. However, no comparable layer was exposed in trench 2, by the Abbey guesthouse.

Overlying this stony deposit in trench 1 was a layer of brown sandy loam (12) with occasional, mixed inclusions. These comprised small pieces of limestone, fragments of bone, pottery, one small sliver of painted glass and moderate plant roots. The pottery recovered from the deposit included sherds of both medieval and post-medieval date.

In trench 2, a layer of grey-brown sandy loam (22) was examined. This was similar in consistency to the loam layer encountered in trench 1 (12), but notably more root-invaded, darker in colour and containing fewer inclusions. These inclusions consisted of occasional pieces of limestone rubble and rare bone fragments. No pottery or other artefacts were recovered from this layer.

Turf layers (11 and 21 respectively) sealed the loam deposits of both trenches 1 and 2 and provided the present ground surface.

Discussion

As only the surface of the stony loam layer (13) revealed in trench was examined, the deposit cannot be adequately interpreted. However, in consideration of the nature of the overlying deposit (12), it is possible that the stony material constitutes the surface of previous excavations made in the first quarter of the present century. If this is the correct assessment, then it is probable that beneath the interface there lies intact archaeological deposits associated with the use and dissolution of the Abbey.

The loam deposits (12, 21) encountered in both trenches were similar in consistency, though distinct in the nature of their inclusions. Post-medieval pottery included in one of the layers (12) indicates a post-monastic date for its deposition. Together, the deposits are considered to represent deliberate soil dumping. This act is probably identifiable with that documented in 1933, when the Abbey ruins were covered over to protect them against weather erosion. Variety in the inclusions between the two deposits suggests the possibility that the soil for this purpose was acquired from old excavation spoil heaps lying adjacent, and that this material had derived from the same basic area where it was subsequently redeposited.

Conclusions

The interventions for the emplacement of the interpretive panels were made into fine brown soils that were notably root-invaded, but otherwise of even consistency. These are considered to represent dumped soils of recent date, probably those placed there in 1933 to prevent deterioration of the ruins due to exposure to the weather. Consequently, although the two trenches were located in areas that were potentially archaeologically sensitive, no deposits associated with the use or dissolution of the abbey were compromised.

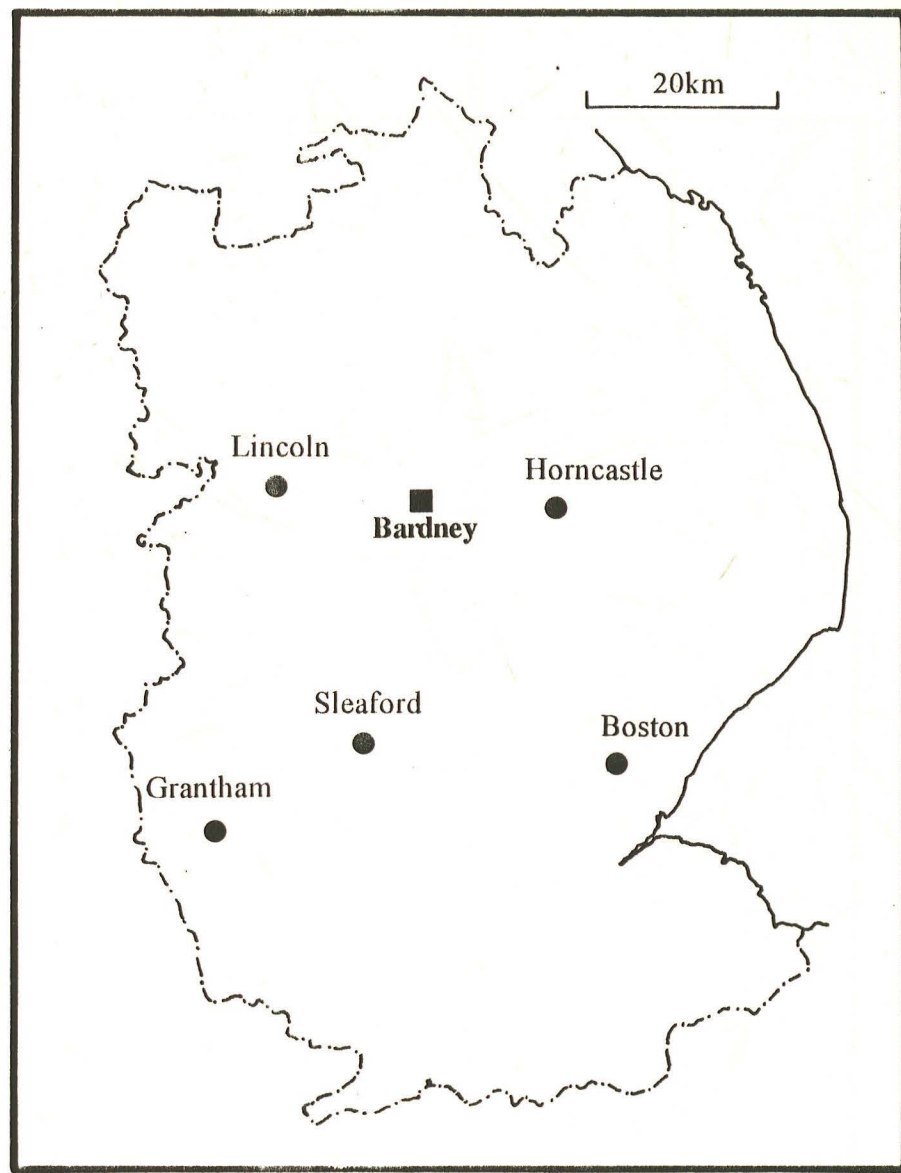
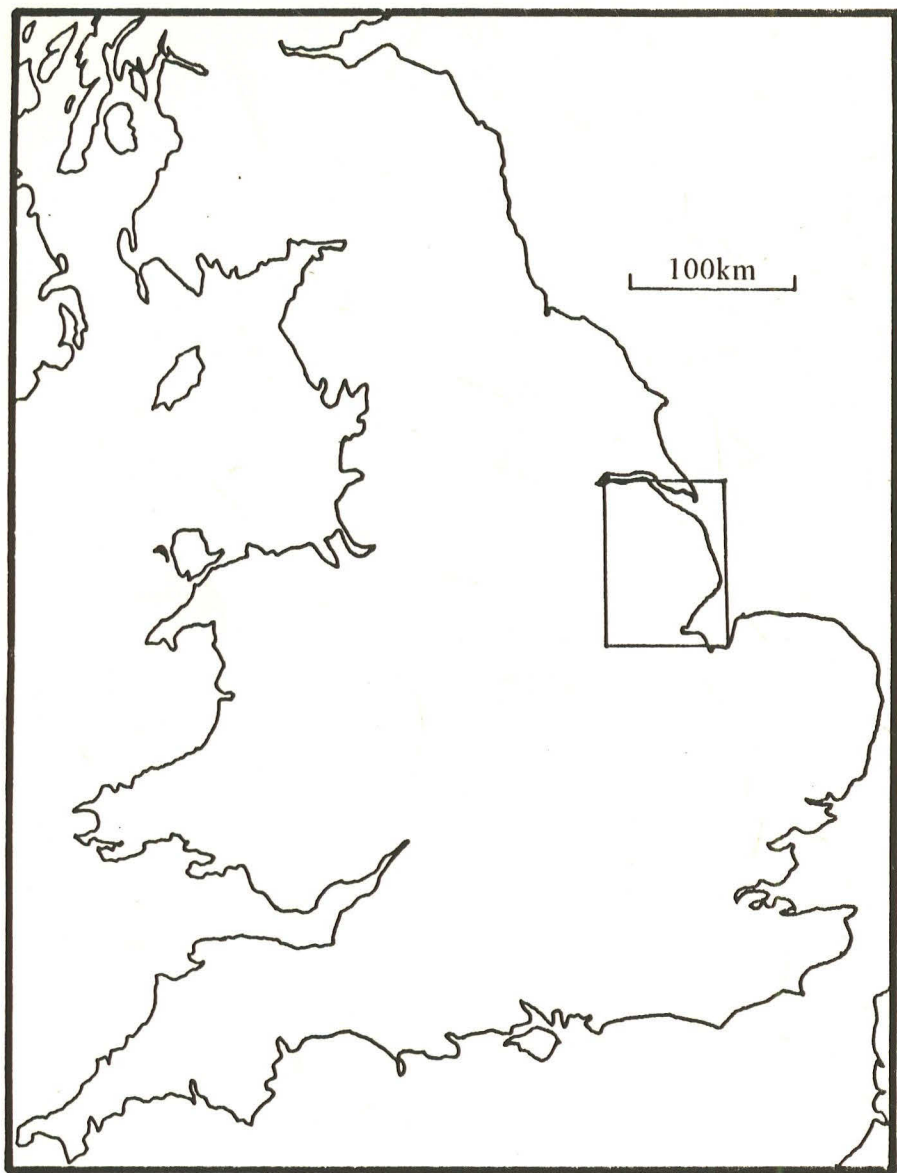


Fig. 1 GENERAL LOCATION PLAN

Fig. 2 SITE LOCATION PLAN

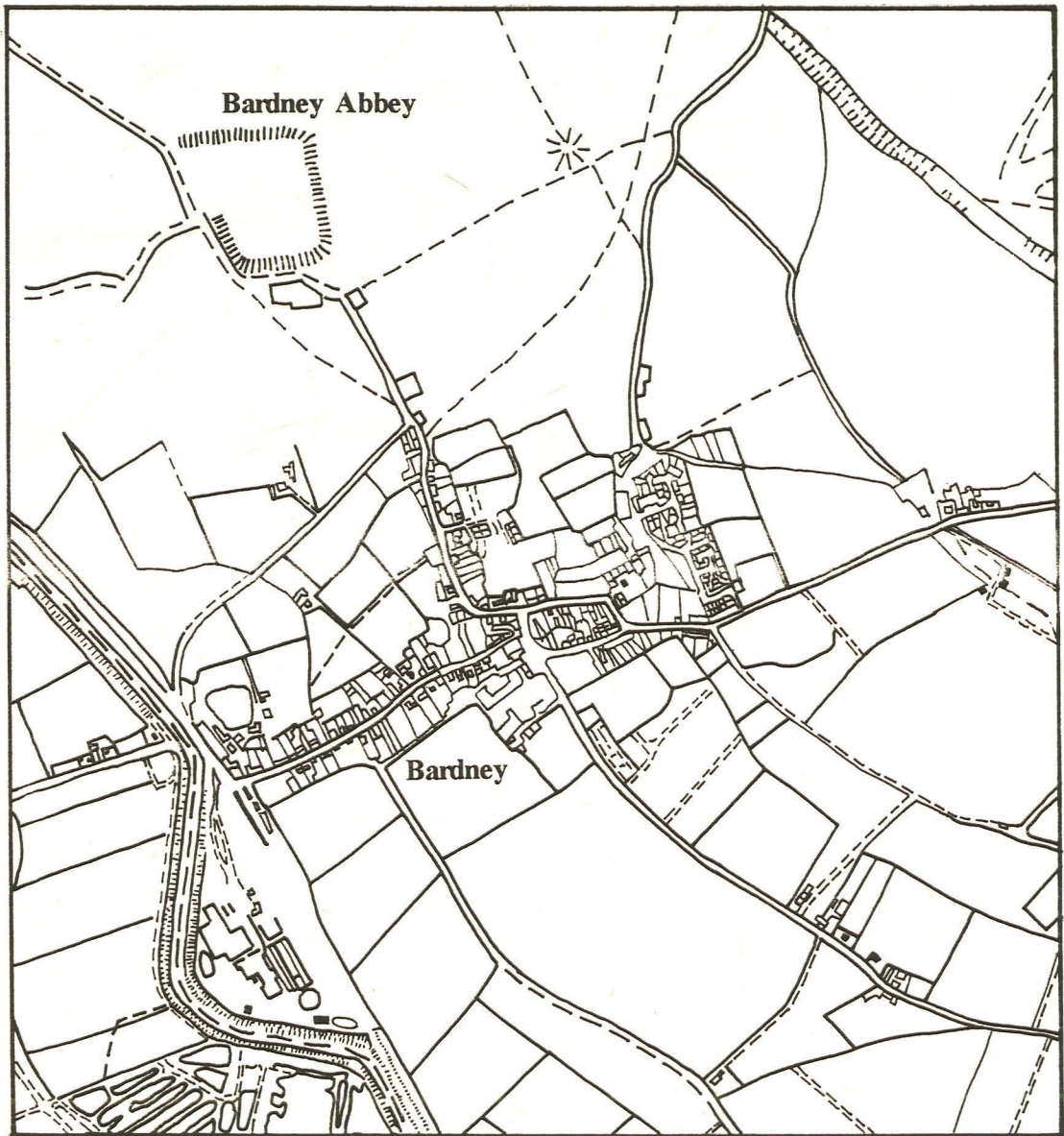


Fig. 3 BARDNEY ABBEY TRENCH LOCATION PLAN

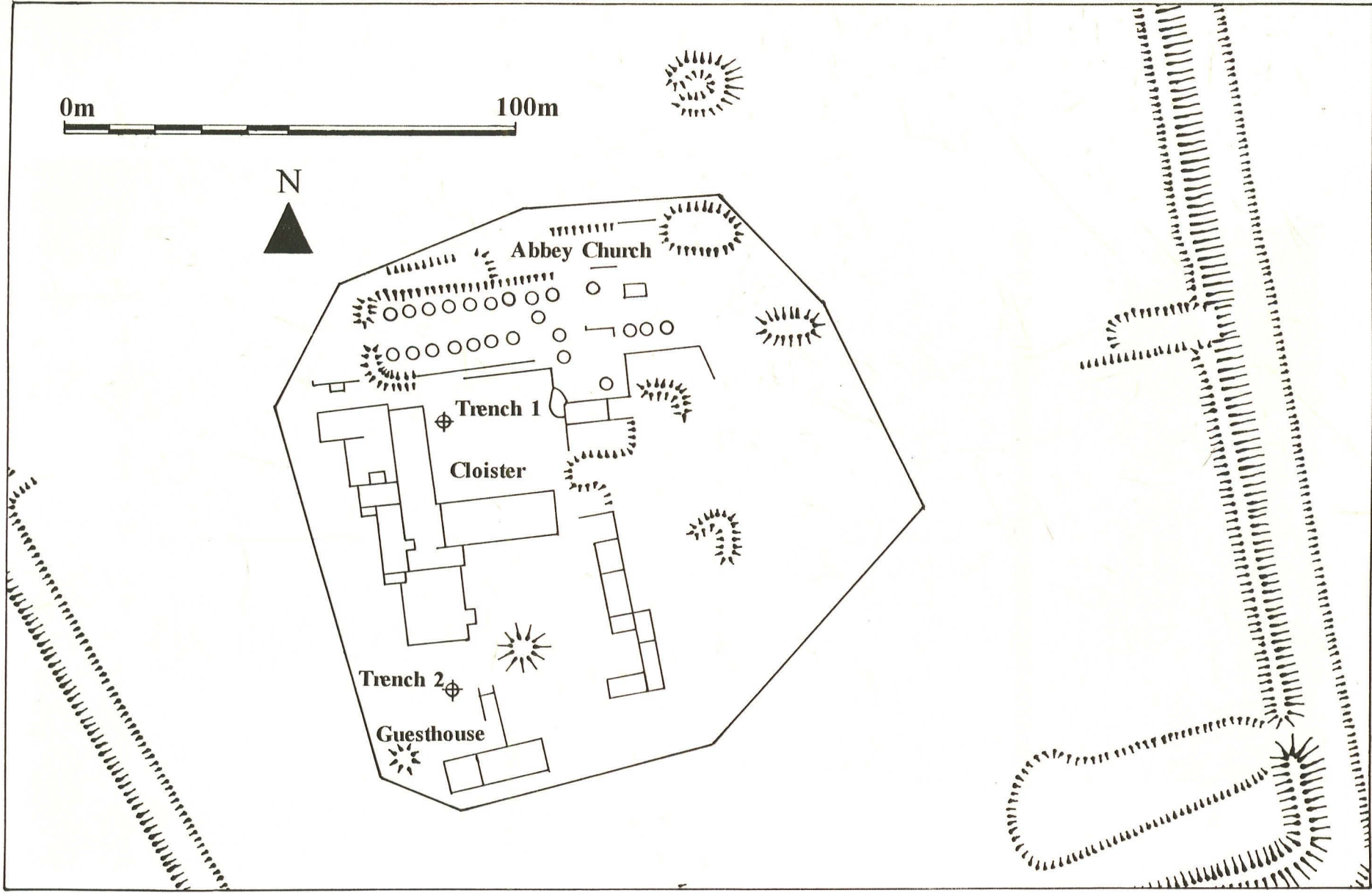


Fig. 4 TRENCH PHOTOGRAPHS



Trench 1 Cloister Area



Trench 2 Abbey Guesthouse Area



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HSD 9/2/2767

22 July 1992

Sir

ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREAS ACT 1979 (AS AMENDED) -
SECTION 2

PROPOSED WORKS AT: BARDNEY ABBEY, WEST LINDSEY, LINCOLNSHIRE
COUNTY MONUMENT NO: 14
APPLICATION BY: HERITAGE TRUST OF LINCOLNSHIRE LTD

1. I am directed by the Secretary of State for National Heritage to refer to your Trust's application for scheduled monument consent dated 2 June 1992 and to the site plan and drawing submitted therewith in respect of proposed works at the above-named scheduled ancient monument concerned with the erection of two interpretative panels.

2. In accordance with paragraph 3(2) of Schedule 1 to the 1979 Act, the Secretary of State is obliged to afford to the applicant, and to any other person to whom it appears to the Secretary of State expedient to afford it, an opportunity of appearing before and being heard by a person appointed for that purpose. This opportunity has been declined in your telephone conversation with Miss Hime of the Department on 21 July 1992.

3. The Secretary of State is required also by the Act to consult with the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England before determining whether or not to grant scheduled monument consent. The Commission have advised him that the proposed works will be beneficial for the presentation and public enjoyment of the monument. They say that the necessary arrangements for archaeological recording are included within the application and they recommend that scheduled monument consent be granted, subject to the following conditions:

i. the works to which this consent relates shall be carried out to the satisfaction of the Secretary of State, who will be advised by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission. At least 2 weeks notice in writing of the commencement of work shall be given to Mr A J Fleming of the Commission at Room 329, Fortress House, 23 Savile Row, London W1X 1AB in order that a Commission representative can inspect and advise;

ii. any ground disturbance works to which this consent relates shall be carried out under the archaeological supervision of Mr D Start or his nominated representative of the Heritage Trust for Lincolnshire;

iii. an interim excavation report shall be sent to the County Sites and Monuments Record and to the Commission (address as in condition i) within 6 months of completion of the excavation and if merited a final report of the excavation shall be prepared and made available within 5 years of completion of the excavation.

4. Having considered the advice of the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission, the Secretary of State is satisfied that the proposed works will benefit the presentation and public enjoyment of the site and is further satisfied that the appropriate archaeological recording arrangements are included within the application. Accordingly, the Secretary of State hereby grants scheduled monument consent under section 2 of the 1979 Act for the proposed works described at paragraphs 4 and 6 of the application dated 2 June 1992 and shown on the site plan and drawing submitted therewith, subject to the following conditions:

i. the works to which this consent relates shall be carried out to the satisfaction of the Secretary of State, who will be advised by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission. At least 2 weeks notice in writing of the commencement of work shall be given to Mr A J Fleming of the Commission at Room 329, Fortress House, 23 Savile Row, London W1X 1AB in order that a Commission representative can inspect and advise;

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iii. an interim excavation report shall be sent to the County Sites and Monuments Record and to the Commission (address as in condition i) within 6 months of completion of the excavation and if merited a final report of the excavation shall be prepared and made available within 5 years of completion of the excavation.

5. By virtue of section 4 of the 1979 Act, if no works to which this consent relates are executed or started within five years from the date of this letter, the consent shall cease to have effect at the end of that period (unless it is revoked in the meantime).

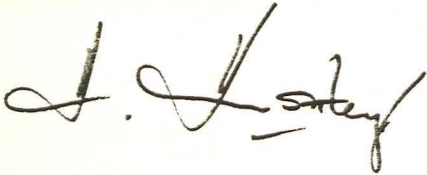
6. This letter does not convey any approval or consent required under any enactment, bye-law, order or regulation other than section 2 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

7. Attention is drawn to the provisions of section 55 of the 1979 Act under which any person (hereinafter referred to as the 'applicant') who is aggrieved by the decision given in this letter may challenge its validity by an application made to the High Court within six weeks from the date when the decision is given. The grounds upon which an application may be made to the Court are (1) that the decision is not

within the powers of the Act (that is, the Secretary of State has exceeded his powers) or (2) that any of the relevant requirements have not been complied with and the applicant's interests have been substantially prejudiced by the failure to comply. The "relevant requirements" are defined in section 55 of the 1979 Act: they are the requirements of that Act and the Tribunals and Inquiries Act 1971 and the requirements of any regulations or rules made under those Acts.

8. A copy of this letter is being sent to the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission.

I am Sir
Your obedient Servant

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'H. F. F. Knottley', written in dark ink.

H F F KNOTTLEY
Authorised by the Secretary of State
to sign in that behalf