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**A Rapid Assessment of the Archaeological  
Landscape surrounding Howgrave Hall and  
Banqueting House, Sutton Howgrave, North  
Yorkshire**



*View of the Banqueting House at Howgrave Hall from the south*

**Abby Hunt**

**Archaeological Survey & Investigation Internal Report**

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## 1. Introduction

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In October 2005, English Heritage's Ancient Monuments Inspector for North Yorkshire (Keith Emerick) approached the Archaeological Survey & Investigation (AS&I) team for advice on the archaeological landscape setting of the Banqueting House at Howgrave Hall, North Yorkshire. Howgrave Hall is currently a working farm which also runs a caravan site on land to the south-west of the Banqueting House. An application for the renovation and refurbishment of the Banqueting House (a Grade II Listed Building - UID 332662, recorded as 'Howgrave Old Hall') and an extension to the caravan site has recently been lodged. Advice on the archaeological landscape has been sought in order to inform future site presentation and to suggest possible further work to enhance the understanding of the monument.

Howgrave Hall is located at the north-west end of the small village of Sutton Howgrave, approximately 8km north of Ripon, at NGR SE 3138 7912 (Figure 1). Briefly, the site consists of a walled enclosure to the south-west of the Banqueting House, the north-western part of which is currently used as the caravan site. The earthworks in this area are believed to relate to a formal garden associated with the Banqueting House. To the south of this is a larger pasture field containing a number of further earthworks, which are in a relatively good state of preservation. These are believed to represent the remains of a medieval village, associated with one of the two manors which existed here in the Middle Ages. The course of the modern parish boundaries is such that the farmhouse and Banqueting Hall lie within the parish of Howgrave, whilst the earthwork remains are in Sutton with Howgrave parish. For the purposes of this report, the earthwork remains, Howgrave Hall and the Banqueting House will be referred to as Howgrave village (which no longer exists), while the present village will be referred to as Sutton Howgrave.

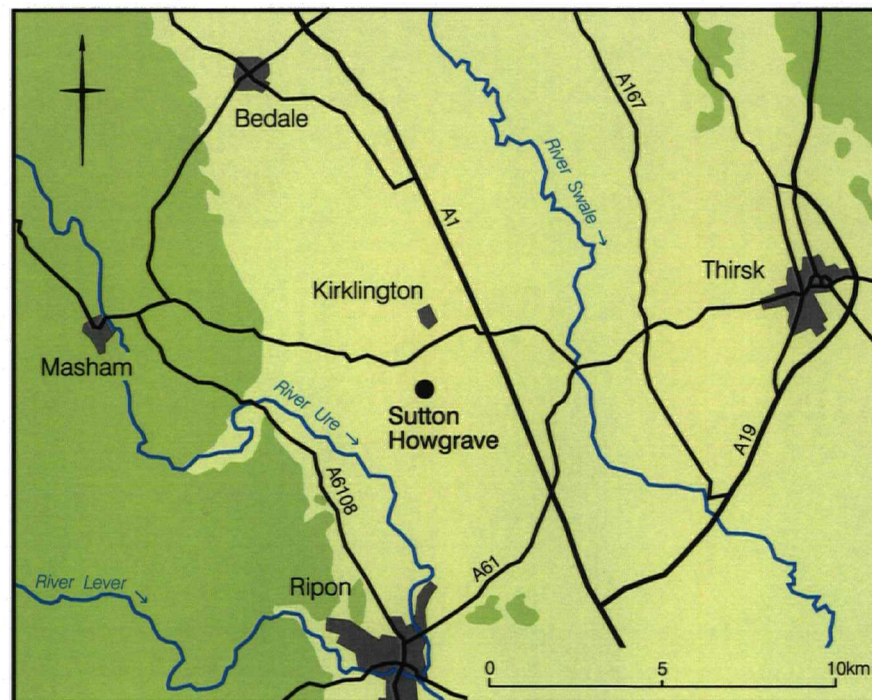


Figure 1  
Location map

The wall, incorporating a pair of gate piers, to the west of Howgrave Hall and the Banqueting House are Listed (Grade II - UID 332650; Figure 2). The earthworks in the fields to the south-west and south of the farm complex form a Scheduled Monument (UID 53665; NMR no. SE 37 NW 12).

The site is situated in an area of sandy till soil between the Rivers Ure and Swale. There are pockets of Lacustrine deposits in the vicinity of Sutton Howgrave, but these do not encroach upon the area of the landscape under consideration here.

A rapid walk-over assessment of the site was carried out by Abby Hunt of the AS&I team on 25 October 2005. Readily available historic maps were also consulted as further sources of evidence for change in the landscape. The current report is intended to bring together the results of the assessment and to provide recommendations to aid further understanding of the site.



*Figure 2  
The wall and gate  
piers to the north-west  
of the Banqueting  
House*



## 2. Background History

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Both Howgrave and Sutton Howgrave are mentioned in the Domesday Survey as belonging to Count Alan, Earl of Richmond; the latter was held by Flotmann prior to the Norman Conquest. At the time of the Domesday Survey Sutton Howgrave consisted of 9 villagers with 4 ploughs and the manor was 5 furlongs long by 4 furlongs wide (Faull and Stinson 1986, 312d). The first reference to Howgrave as a manor is in the sixteenth century, at which point it was held by the Wandesfords of Kirklington and remained in their hands until the mid-nineteenth century (Page (ed) 1914, 375). However, by 1640, it is recorded that there was no inhabitant in the township (Beresford 1954, 300). The Banqueting House has been dated to c1660-70 (Pevsner 1966, 361), thus placing it after the desertion of the village in the chronology of the site. An estate map probably dating to 1760 (Figure 4) purports to be a plan of the estate of Philip Bendlowes Esq, although at this date the documentary sources suggest that the manor and its lands were still under the ownership of the Wandesford family. Howgrave Hall Farm was purchased by a Sir William Nussey at the start of the twentieth century, having previously been owned by a Mr Other (Page (ed) 1914, 375).

The manor of Sutton Howgrave was owned by the Duke of Bridgewater in 1760, but by the time it had been acquired by Mrs John George Oddy, from Norfolk, in the early twentieth century, it had no manorial rights attached (Page (ed) 1914, 374)



*Figure 3  
Top: The Banqueting  
House from the south.  
These two elevations  
would have been the  
'show' faces of the  
building.*

*Bottom: The  
Banqueting House  
from the west. The  
exterior staircase  
giving access to the  
upper storey can be  
seen to the left.*



### 3. Map Evidence

A number of readily available maps of Sutton Howgrave, including plans from 1760 and 1811, tithe maps from the 1830s and various Ordnance Survey (OS) map editions, were consulted as part of this assessment.

#### The 1760s Estate Map

A nineteenth-century copy of a plan of the estate of Philip Bendlowes at Sutton-cum-Howgrave originally dating to 1760 is held in the North Yorkshire County Record Office (NYCRO) (Ref: ZM1 132 MIC 1497/164-166; Figure 4). The plan shows that the walled enclosure containing the Banqueting House was, at this date, divided by a boundary on a north-east to south-west alignment. However, the long, narrow strip of land at the north-western of edge of this enclosure was apparently not in existence in 1760.

This plan also shows that the land occupied by the former village site was still subject to division at this point, with three unequal plots depicted, two of which have structures at their north-western ends. There is also a broad open area between these enclosures and the wall defining the walled enclosure and the extent of Howgrave Hall, labelled 'Howgrave'. This open area is accessed by a 'routeway from the west/north-west (labelled 'Public Bridle Route') and by another routeway from the north-east. The fact that this is a broad open area with access from both ends, adjacent to a row of plots, strongly suggests that it was originally a green associated with the former village. Although the plan does not extend far enough south to cover the whole of the area now occupied by Sutton Howgrave, it does show another open area here, this one labelled 'Sutton', in roughly the same location as the present village green. The existence of these two village greens concurs with the evidence



Figure 4  
Extract from the 1760  
plan of the estate of  
Philip Bendlowes at  
Sutton cum Howgrave.  
Reproduced by  
permission of  
North Yorkshire  
County Record Office.



from the Domesday Survey that there were in fact two manors here. To the south-east of the plots (tofts) of Howgrave village, the plan shows a routeway, which is identifiable as the hollow way observed on the ground to the south of the large, rectilinear block of earthworks (Figure 6 - C).

The course of the 'Public Bridle Route' to the north-west of Howgrave Hall and the associated field boundaries shown on the 1760 plan create an anomalous curvilinear pattern in the landscape, which is distinctive from the other more regular field boundaries in this area. It may be that the bridleway was an established feature of some antiquity, in regular use at the time when the land was enclosed. The fields would thus have respected its course. Alternatively, the curvilinear boundary may perhaps have been a park boundary, creating an open landscape visible from the banqueting house, but requiring general traffic to and from the village to be diverted around the outside of it, hence the development of the bridleway. This curving field boundary no longer survives as an extant feature in the landscape, but has been fossilised as part of the course of the parish boundary of Howgrave CP.

It is interesting to note that there is apparently no road immediately to the north-east of the former village tofts shown on this plan, indicating that the present road, which is now the main routeway through the village, was in fact a post-1760 insertion.

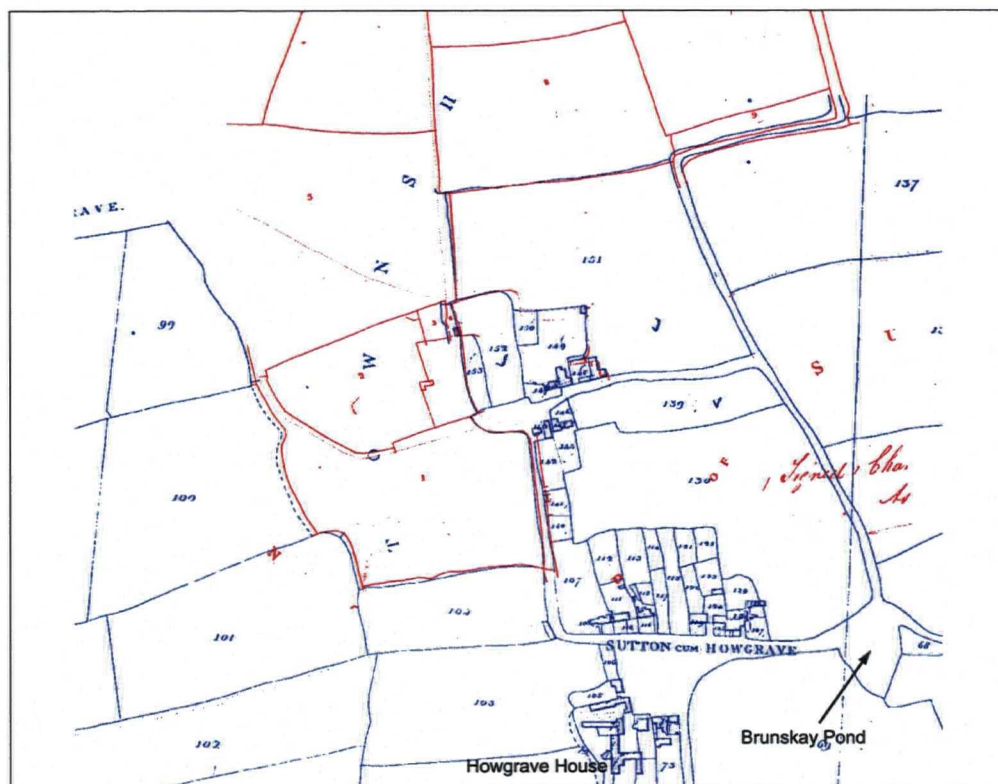
#### **The 1811 Plan**

There is a plan of 'Howgrave Field Names' in the NYCRO (Ref: ZMI 129 MIC 1497/163) which is believed to date to 1811. It shows Howgrave Hall Farm and the field to the south-east. The farm buildings and Banqueting House are all shown on this plan as is the walled enclosure, which is depicted with a small rectilinear enclosure in its southern corner. South-east of the farm, there is a broad strip of ground labelled 'Howgrave', as shown on the 1760 map. To the south-east of this, where the village earthworks now survive, a complex of buildings is depicted, with associated enclosures; this is broadly similar to the 1760 depiction, with the exception of the arrangement of the structures. A routeway is shown to the north-east of this field, which was not on the 1760s map, suggesting that it was created between 1760 and 1810.

#### **The Nineteenth-Century Tithe Maps**

As mentioned above, Howgrave originated as two separate manors, a division which has been reflected in later parish divisions. The tithe maps for the village, dating to the 1830s, are thus similarly split, with the area of the present village of Sutton Howgrave shown on the tithe map of Sutton cum Howgrave (NYCRO Ref: Tithe Map MIC1801/196), and the Banqueting House and the field of earthworks on the tithe map for Holme cum Howgrave (NYCRO Ref: Tithe Map MIC1794/313) (Figure 5). The layout of Sutton cum Howgrave on the first of these maps is close to the present village plan, although the rectilinear village green north of Howgrave House appears to have been much larger in the nineteenth century than it is today. The houses on the north-western side of the village green are also depicted on the tithe map with their associated plots of land and although some plots have been subdivided, their elongated, rectilinear plan is clear, indicating a medieval origin. This is also

Figure 5  
 Extract from the tithe maps for Holme cum Howgrave (shown in red) and Sutton cum Howgrave (shown in blue). Reproduced by permission of North Yorkshire County Record Office.



the form that the plots of the former Howgrave village, now reduced to earthworks, would originally have taken. The distinctive road pattern, that of the road enclosing a large part of Sutton cum Howgrave village, is shown on the tithe map, confirming that the road between the existing village from the former village of Howgrave had been inserted by this date. Just beyond Sutton cum Howgrave village, the road leading eastward from the north-east end of the village green broadens out. This broadening corresponds with the location of Brunskay Pond on modern maps. The position of the pond suggests that in the nineteenth century it was a common resource for the villagers, most probably originating in the medieval period. It seems that this layout was mirrored to the south-west, with the former village of Howgrave also having an associated pond at the end of a village green (see Section 4 below) - further evidence of the existence of two adjacent, and yet distinct, medieval settlements.

The tithe map for Holme cum Howgrave is somewhat less detailed than the Sutton map. The field divisions are depicted, but there is little detail beyond that. There is no depiction of any features within the field containing the village earthworks. There is also only one building shown in the area of Howgrave Hall; an L-shaped structure, which does not immediately correspond with any of the buildings known to have stood here from earlier cartographic evidence. The walled enclosure is no longer divided by a boundary, but the curving field boundary to north-west of Howgrave and its associated bridleway is still depicted on this map.

### The Ordnance Survey Maps

The various editions of the Ordnance Survey (OS) maps do not add a great deal of information to that already gleaned from earlier maps and plans. Some of the early twentieth-century editions show that there has been tree planting in the walled enclosure and in the narrow



strip of land within it. The maps also show the earthwork remains forming the two compartments adjacent to the Banqueting House (discussed further in Section 4). There also appears to have been a pond in the walled enclosure, a short distance to the north-west of the Banqueting House.

The modern OS map demonstrates that the parish boundary of Howgrave CP fossilises the curvilinear field boundary shown to the north-west of Howgrave Hall on earlier maps and plans.

## 4. The Earthwork Remains

The earthwork remains around Howgrave Hall and Banqueting House fall into two distinct groups, those in the walled enclosure and those in the field to the south of the farm. To avoid confusion, the features will be described according to these two groupings.

The features observed at the time of this site visit are shown as Figure 6, in schematic form superimposed on an aerial photograph of the site.

The Banqueting House has already been subject to detailed analysis, the results of which can be found elsewhere (see Ryder 2000).

### The Walled Enclosure (Figure 6 - A)

The north-western edge of the walled enclosure is defined by a long stretch of brick wall, which incorporates a pair of gate piers close to its north-eastern end. This is a listed structure and is believed to date to c1700 (Listed Building UID 332650), making it broadly contemporary with the Banqueting Hall. Approximately 9m to the south-east of this wall, following a parallel course within the enclosure, is a hedgerow which defines a narrow strip of land. This hedgerow does not appear on the historic maps up to the 1830s but is shown on the Ordnance Survey First Edition map of the area (c1850).

The north-western part of the walled enclosure is fairly level, with no particular features of note. However, the south-eastern part contains better defined earthwork remains. Parallel with the south-western end of the Banqueting House is a strong scarp, lying at right angles to the south-eastern enclosure wall. This defines a rectilinear area abutting the structure, probably a garden compartment, set at a lower level than the surrounding area. To the south-west of this is another rectilinear area, defined by a very low earthwork bank to the

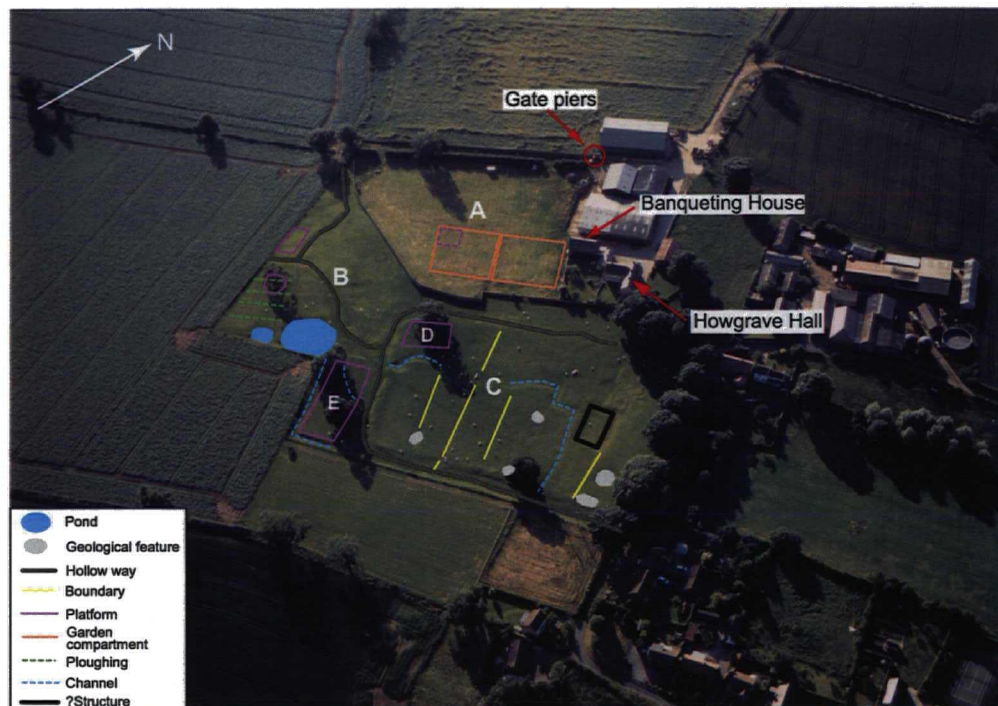


Figure 6  
Annotated aerial  
photograph of  
Howgrave Hall  
showing a schematic  
depiction of the  
principal features  
observed during the  
walk-over survey.  
Photograph: ©English  
Heritage. NMR 17288/  
17 SE 3179/5 08-Jul-  
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south-west, also at right angles to the enclosure wall. This second compartment is on a higher level than the first and has faint traces of a rectilinear depression in its western corner, possibly the site of a building. A previous suggested interpretation of this upper compartment is that it was the site of an earlier manor house. However, it is possible that it was a second garden compartment associated with the Banqueting House, perhaps containing a garden structure, such as a summer-house. A brief inspection of the Banqueting House itself strongly suggests that the south-east and south-west facades were the 'show' aspects of the building, supporting the theory that the juxtaposition of the Banqueting House and gardens would have created a formal landscape setting.

### **The Field**

The irregularly shaped field to the south of the Hall and Banqueting House contains numerous earthworks, many of which survive in relatively good condition. In the western part of the field, which is roughly triangular in shape, the main earthworks are the remains of a meandering hollow way, between 0.5m and 1m deep in places (Figure 6 - B). It follows a course from the western corner of the field, roughly parallel to the field boundary, before turning to continue on an east-west alignment. The hollow way then splits as it reaches the central part of the field, with two arms, one skirting the northern perimeter of the principal rectangular block of surviving earthworks and the other forming the southern edge of the block (Figure 6 - C). The southerly arm of the hollow way also continues up to the south-eastern corner of the modern field. This part of the hollow way corresponds to the route of the present parish boundary. It is also marked on the 1760s estate map as a 'Public Bridle Road' and can be traced continuing away to the north-west. It seems likely that the two arms of the hollow way have their origin as the main street (north) and the back lane (south) of the medieval village.

At least two platforms were also observed in the western part of the field. One of these is rectilinear in form, defined by the hollow way on two sides, but cut through by the modern field boundary. A further platform, curvilinear in form, is visible a little further to the south. These may possibly have been building platforms, representing an extension of the medieval village further to the west. However, the more southerly of these, a rounded feature overlies an area of ridge and furrow ploughing, identifiable from aerial photographs. Any further surface remains beyond the field boundary have been obliterated by more recent ploughing in the adjacent field.

A pair of rounded depressions were observed adjacent to, and cut through by, the south-eastern boundary of this part of the field. At the time of the site assessment, the larger of the two features was holding a small amount of water, giving a strong indication that it was formerly a pond. The smaller depression may also have been a pond. On the 1760 plan of the village, the curved boundary between fields 10 and 24 suggests that it is following the edge of an existing feature, probably the larger pond (see Figure 4).

The earthworks in the east of the field represent the site of the medieval village of Howgrave. As mentioned previously, there is a large rectilinear area defined on three sides by the arms of the principal hollow way (Figure 6 - C). Within this rectilinear area are at least four parallel boundary features, indicating that the area was divided up into rectangular plots, on a north-

*Figure 7  
Rectilinear  
depression close to  
the north-east of the  
medieval village  
earthworks*



west to south-east alignment. These correspond with the boundaries shown on the 1760 plan of the village (Figure 4), which, in turn, most likely respect and fossilise boundaries which originally formed part of the medieval village here. On a similar alignment is a deep rectangular hollow at the north-eastern end of the block of earthworks; this is approximately 1m deep in places (Figure 7). A slight bank within the hollow defines a shallow ditch around the interior of the feature. This may represent the location of a large building, perhaps an early incarnation of the manor house. The survival of the ditch would suggest that the building had subsequently been robbed out, with a trench dug to remove foundation stone. However, the ditch may be a little too regular and 'neat' to fully support this theory. Alternatively the feature may be later than the village remains, although their shared alignment suggests a degree of contemporaneity. A more detailed examination of this feature may bring a clearer idea of its original function.

In the western corner of the block defined by the hollow ways a rectilinear platform was also observed (Figure 6 - D). It is well-defined on three sides, but its south-eastern edge has been cut into by a channel (see below). There is presently a tree growing on this platform which is surrounded by stone fragments and a dense area of nettle growth, suggesting that it may be the remains of a former structure.

Cutting across the previously described village earthworks is a sinuous channel on a north-east to south-west alignment, which takes on a more regular appearance at its north-eastern end. The channel then apparently turns to the south-east and continues in this direction, following a boundary of one of the village tofts, until it meets the south-eastern arm of the principal hollow way. The sinuous part of the channel cuts through the rectilinear boundary features described above, indicating that it post-dates these features, while at its north-eastern end it appears to be following the outline of other, more regular features. One possibility is that this feature was a channel leading water from the ponds at the south-western edge of the field in order to create a stretch of water across the site of the former village, which would have made an attractive feature visible from the upper storey of the Banqueting House. Alternatively it may simply have been draining the site, carrying overflow water from the ponds at the south of the site.

Situated in the corner of the modern field beyond the south-western edge of the large rectangular block of earthworks is a further rectilinear platform, close to the larger of the two ponds (Figure 6 - E). The platform is defined by the principal hollow way on two sides and by another linear hollow to the south-east and south-west. The latter is somewhat different in



form to the principal hollow way and has the appearance of a water-cut channel. Cutting across the northern corner of the platform is a shallow channel, possibly leading from one of the ponds. There are no obvious structural remains on the platform, but one possibility is that this may have been the site of a mill connected with the village. However, this platform is shown as a paddock on the 1760 plan of the site. In order to prove or disprove the suggestion of the mill location, a better understanding of the water management in this area is needed.

At least five circular hollows were observed at the time of the site visit, mainly concentrated in the eastern corner of the field. These are patches of subsidence related to the underlying gypsum; this is a commonplace phenomenon in the area around Ripon (discussed in an article at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/roses/studysites.html>).

There are other surviving earthworks on the site, but they are less prominent than those identified above and are beyond the scope of the present assessment. These features would need to be recorded and interpreted as part of a more detailed survey.

The field adjoining the south-eastern boundary of the field containing the village earthworks is also included as part of the scheduled monument. A brief inspection of the field was made at the time of the site visit, but no features of immediate interest were observed. Closer inspection on the ground or geophysical survey may shed further light on any extant above- or below-ground remains in this area.

## 5. Summary & Recommendations

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The scope of this site assessment has only allowed a summary investigation of the remaining earthworks associated with Howgrave Hall Farm, the Banqueting House and the former village of Howgrave. However, it is clear that there are substantial above-ground remains which reflect the development of the landscape since the medieval period.

The present assessment has indicated that Howgrave Hall, the Banqueting House and the walled enclosure occupied an area of land on the north side of a green which separated them from the village of Howgrave to the south. The remains of the village, consisting of a hollow way skirting a block containing a number of rectilinear tofts, can be seen in the field to the south-east of the walled enclosure.. Other building platforms and features likely to be contemporary with the medieval village are also visible in this area.

The walled enclosure adjacent to the Banqueting House was likely to have contained at least one formal garden compartment, probably dating to the seventeenth century. This would have been viewed from the upper storey at the south-western end of the Banqueting House. There appears to have been a second garden compartment adjacent to the first, which may have contained a structure. If this was the case, then the likelihood is that it was a garden-related structure, rather than something more substantial. The village remains may also have been altered, possibly with a watercourse inserted, in order to create a more pleasant vista from the upper storey windows on the south-east side of the Banqueting Hall.

Following this 'ornamental' phase, the area of the former village was re-used, as demonstrated by the depictions on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century maps of the area. It seems likely that there was at least one farmstead, or cottages, built at the north-eastern edge of the medieval village and that associated enclosures probably re-used some of the former toft boundaries. The cartographic evidence and the present topology of the village have also demonstrated that there is much more still to be learnt about the development of the settlement of Sutton Howgrave. It certainly appears that a substantial part of the two medieval manors known to have existed here have been fossilised within the modern landscape. There are also anomalies in the layout of the roads and field boundaries in and around the village which need further study in order to understand the full story of the landscape.

From this brief assessment of the field remains, it seems clear that the site would benefit from further in-depth investigation. A survey of the surviving earthworks at 1:1000 scale would allow a more detailed analysis of the layout of the former village and an understanding of the chronology of the earthwork remains. This survey work would be most appropriately undertaken in tandem with further study of the plan of the present village. It is possible that the application of geophysical survey could further enhance any detailed work on the site. In particular, the rectangular depression and other possible building locations could benefit from this kind of survey to get a better indication of the nature of any sub-surface remains.



## **6. Acknowledgements**

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English Heritage gratefully acknowledges the North Yorkshire County Record Office for allowing permission to reproduce the 1760 plan and 1830s tithe maps in this report.

Thanks also go to Mr Robinson for allowing access to the site and for sharing his knowledge of the site.

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