

**Whitby Abbey Lodge,  
Whitby, North Yorkshire**

**archaeological monitoring**

*on behalf of*  
**English Heritage**

**Report 1854**

March 2008

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# **Whitby Abbey Lodge, Whitby, North Yorkshire**

## **archaeological monitoring**

### ***Report 1854***

March 2008

*Archaeological Services Durham University*

on behalf of

***English Heritage***

*37 Tanner Row, York, YO1 6WP*

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## **Contents**

1. Summary . . . . .	1
2. Project background . . . . .	2
3. Landuse, topography and geology . . . . .	2
4. Historical and archaeological background . . . . .	3
5. The monitoring programme . . . . .	3
6. Results . . . . .	4
Appendix 1: Context data . . . . .	5
Appendix 2: Stratigraphic matrices . . . . .	6
Appendix 3: Project specification . . . . .	7

## **1. Summary**

### ***The project***

- 1.1 This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring conducted during the excavation of test pits within Whitby Abbey Lodge.
- 1.2 The works were commissioned by English Heritage, who provided a specification. Archaeological Services conducted the works in accordance with this specification.

### ***Results***

- 1.3 A stone wall was identified in pits 2 and 3, the alignment of which is consistent with the present boundary wall for the courtyard in front of Abbey House, which extends west from the lodge. It is probable that the upper part of the wall was removed to accommodate the lodge when it was built in 1866. The wall was reached 0.55-0.65m below the present internal floor level of the lodge. A flagged floor, probably the original floor surface, was reached at a depth of 0.15m. The bottom of the foundations of the external wall of the lodge were located approximately 0.8m below the internal floor level.
- 1.4 No further features, deposits or finds of archaeological significance were identified. Undisturbed natural glacial subsoil was not reached in any of the pits.

## **2. Project background**

### ***Location (Figures 1 and 2)***

- 2.1 The site is located at Abbey Lodge, Whitby, North Yorkshire (NGR NZ 9024 1125). The site is approximately 50 metres square in size. The lodge is located in the northeast corner of the Abbey House grounds, immediately west of Whitby Abbey.

### ***Development***

- 2.2 The present lodge is to be refurbished and modified. The modifications will involve the lowering of the present floor level.

### ***Objective***

- 2.3 The objective of the monitoring programme was to provide supervision of the removal of modern overburden to identify, sample, record and interpret all archaeological features and deposits exposed under the floor of the lodge.

### ***Methods statement***

- 2.4 The works have been undertaken in accordance with a specification (Appendix 3) provided by English Heritage.

### ***Dates***

- 2.5 Fieldwork was undertaken on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2008. This report was prepared between 17<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

### ***Personnel***

- 2.6 Fieldwork was conducted by Matt Claydon. This report was prepared by Matt Claydon, with illustrations by Janine Wilson. The Project Manager was Daniel Still.

### ***Site Code/OASIS***

- 2.7 The site code is **WAL08**, for **Whitby Abbey Lodge 2008**. The archive is currently held by Archaeological Services and will be transferred to English Heritage in due course. Archaeological Services is registered with the **Online Access** to the **Index** of archaeological investigationS project (OASIS). The OASIS ID number for this project is **archaeol3-39788**.

## **3. Landuse, topography and geology**

- 3.1 At the time of the monitoring the proposed development area comprised the ground floor of Abbey Lodge. The present floor lies approximately 0.5m above the external ground surface at c.50m AOD.
- 3.2 The underlying geology comprises alternate layers of sandstone and Carboniferous shale. This is overlain with glacial deposits consisting mainly of boulder clay.

#### **4. Historical and archaeological background**

- 4.1 Whitby Abbey is situated in a prominent position on East Cliff, above the fishing port of Whitby. The monument is a multi-period site comprising a single constraint area containing a number of features. These include the buried remains of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century monastery of Streonaeshalh and the 11<sup>th</sup>-century abbey church, the ruins of the later church and associated features of the post-Conquest Benedictine monastery, the ruins of a 17<sup>th</sup>-century manor house of the Cholmley family and a 14<sup>th</sup>-century cross, situated on Abbey Plain.
- 4.2 Abbey Lodge was built by Charles Strickland in 1866 as a new entrance to the outer courtyard of Abbey House, the original central gateway being closed. The lodge itself has no designation; however, the ground beneath the structure is scheduled.

#### **5. The monitoring programme**

- 5.1 Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during the excavation of three test pits within Abbey Lodge. The pits were excavated to assess the underlying ground make-up, and evaluate the archaeological potential of deposits encountered (Figures 3-6). A mechanical breaker was used to remove the concrete floor, and the pits were then excavated by hand.

##### ***Test Pit 1 (Figures 3 and 4)***

- 5.2 This pit was located in the northwest corner of the lodge. It measured 0.6m by 0.4m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m. The lowest deposit encountered comprised mixed crushed stone, rubble, mortar and dark soil [8]. This was overlain by a 0.08m-thick layer of very compact black asphalt-like material [7]. Over this was 0.15m of crushed stone, rubble and mortar mixed with sand and silt [6], into which stone flags were set forming an earlier floor surface [5]. This had been covered by a thin membrane [4] over which a concrete floor had been set [3]. This was overlain by a thin layer of polystyrene [2] onto which the present wooden floor had been laid [1].

##### ***Test Pit 2 (Figures 3 and 5)***

- 5.3 This pit was located in the east part of the lodge. It measured 0.7m by 0.45m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.88m. A stone wall [F10] was encountered across the south part of the pit at a depth of 0.55m. The full extent of the wall could not be ascertained due to the size of the pit. The wall comprised faced sandstone blocks bonded with mortar. Two courses were identified; the lower course was stepped out, presumably forming the foundation course, although the base of the wall was not reached. The pit was stepped back eastwards under the stone flag surface to inspect the east wall [F9] of the lodge. The foot of wall [F9] was reached at a depth of 0.85m below the present floor level. Five courses of this wall, comprising roughly-faced sandstone blocks, bonded with mortar, were identified below floor level. It was built directly over the earlier wall [F10], traversing it at 90 degrees. The foundations for the lodge wall were in-filled with stone rubble [12], which overlaid the early wall [F10] to a depth of 0.3m below the floor level. This

was overlain by 0.1m of dark silt [11] into which stone flags from the floor identified in pit 1 were set [5]. This was again covered by a thin membrane, [4], a concrete floor [3], a thin layer of polystyrene [2] and the present wooden floor [1].

***Test Pit 3 (Figures 3 and 6)***

- 5.4 This pit was located in the west part of the lodge. It measured 0.7m by 0.43m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.8m. The earlier wall identified in pit 2 as [F10] continued through to this pit. The alignment of this wall [F16] maintains the course of the outer garden wall of Abbey House, which extends west from the lodge. In this pit only one course of the wall [F16] was reached, standing to a height of 0.2m below the present floor level. This pit was also stepped back northwards under the stone flag surface to inspect the external wall [F17] of the lodge. Three courses of mortar-bonded faced sandstone were identified; the base of the wall was reached at a depth of 0.80m below the present floor level. The foundations of the lodge wall [F17] were in-filled by, and the early wall [F16] was overlain by, deposits similar to those identified in pit 1; loose stone and rubble mixed with mortar and brown silt [15], a 0.05m-thick layer of compact black asphalt-like material [14], and further rubble and silt [13]. These were overlain by the stone flag floor [5], membrane [4], concrete floor [3], polystyrene [2] and floorboards [1].

## **6. Results**

- 6.1 A stone wall was identified in pits 2 and 3, the alignment of which is consistent with the present boundary wall for the courtyard in front of Abbey House, which extends west from the lodge. It is probable that the upper part of the wall was removed to accommodate the lodge when it was built in 1866. The wall was reached 0.55-0.65m below the present internal floor level of the lodge. A flagged floor, probably the original floor surface, was reached at a depth of 0.15m. The bottom of the foundations of the external wall of the lodge were located approximately 0.8m below the internal floor level.
- 6.2 No further features, deposits or finds of archaeological significance were identified. Undisturbed natural glacial subsoil was not reached in any of the pits.

## **Appendix 1: Context data**

<b>No</b>	<b>Trench</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	All	Wooden floor
2	All	Polystyrene insulation
3	All	Concrete floor
4	All	Membrane
5	All	Stone flag floor
6	Tr1	Rubble and soil deposit
7	Tr1	Asphalt layer
8	Tr1	Rubble and soil deposit
F9	Tr2	Lodge wall
F10	Tr2	Wall
11	Tr2	Dark silt deposit
12	Tr2	Rubble and soil deposit
13	Tr3	Rubble and soil deposit
14	Tr3	Asphalt layer
15	Tr3	Rubble and soil deposit
F16	Tr3	Wall
F17	Tr3	Lodge wall

## Appendix 2: Stratigraphic matrices

### Test pit 1

1	Wooden floor
2	Polystyrene
3	Concrete floor
4	Membrane
5	Stone flag floor
6	Rubble and soil
7	Asphalt layer
8	Rubble and soil

### Test pit 2

1	Wooden floor
2	Polystyrene
3	Concrete floor
4	Membrane
5	Stone flag floor
11	Silt deposit
12	Rubble and soil
F9	Lodge wall
F10	Wall

### Test pit 3

1	Wooden floor
2	Polystyrene
3	Concrete floor
4	Membrane
5	Stone flag floor
13	Rubble and soil
14	Asphalt layer
15	Rubble and soil
F17	Lodge wall
F16	Wall



## Appendix 3: Project specification

### BRIEF FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING WORK WATCHING BRIEF

#### 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 An application for *scheduled monument consent* will be submitted in order to carry out a programme of conversion work on *Whitby Abbey Lodge*. The site falls under the *scheduled area covered by Whitby Abbey (monument number 13284) East Cliff Whitby, North Yorkshire (NGR NZ9024 1125)*
- 1.2 This document provides a brief for an archaeological watching brief associated with some initial investigations into the nature of the ground floor construction of the Lodge. It is essential that a watching brief be maintained during the proposed development work. This is a condition of *scheduled monument consent*, which has been granted for the investigation works. The aim is to examine, record and recover archaeological deposits affected by the works, and provide further information about the deposits encountered. Where deposits are established as significant, further archaeological investigations may be necessary.
- 1.3 The existing internal ground floor is of solid construction which is built up well above the adjacent external ground level. It is anticipated that a maximum of 6 holes would be formed to a depth that would extend to the natural formation - i.e. that which was in existence before the Lodge building was constructed. These investigation holes will be formed close to the external walls - against the inner face - as the nature and size of the wall foundations and the existence of any DPC need to be understood. The holes are to be formed by hand using hammer and chisel and small power hammer drills and will be as small as is practically possible given the unknown nature of the construction and the need to visually inspect the construction.
- 1.4 The tenderer is to provide a costed project design in line with the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) 2006 and IFA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs.
- 1.5 It is essential that all archaeological fieldwork, investigations and study of the historic environment are carried out in a secure research context. The Yorkshire Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment (2006) sets out the key research priorities for the region. All studies and investigations must demonstrate their relevance in relation to both national and regional priorities for archaeology and the historic environment.

#### 2.0 Site Description

- 2.1 The area effected by this work is scheduled and in the guardianship of English Heritage. The investigation works have class 6 consent under the Ancient Monuments (Class Consent) Order 1994. A copy of the consent can be supplied by Tim Baldock, Project Manager, English Heritage.
- 2.2 Access to the site is via Abbey lane leading from the A171 trunk Whitby, North Yorkshire. A number of facilities are available on site. Use of these should be agreed with Tim Baldock, and the site Visitor Operations Team.

#### 3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 Whitby Abbey is situated in a prominent position on East Cliff, above the fishing port of Whitby and overlooking the North Sea. The monument is a multi-period site comprising a single constraint area containing a number of features. These include the buried remains of the seventh century monastery of Streonaeshalh and the eleventh century abbey church, the ruins of the later church and associated features of the post-Conquest Benedictine monastery, the ruins of a seventeenth century manor house of the Cholmley family and a fourteenth century cross, situated on Abbey Plain. Streonaeshalh was the first monastic foundation on the site and, typically of the early Anglo-Saxon period, was a double house of both men and women presided over by an abbess. In 1924-25, partial excavation of the site carried out by Sir Charles Peers uncovered a small area of the Saxon monastery on the west and north sides of the medieval church which, from the material recovered, has been interpreted as part of the women's quarters. At least two phases of development were represented, the earliest comprising timber buildings. Elaborate ranges were served by a network of drains and were split into groups by paths. Four individual cells were identified, each having a living area with an open hearth and a bedroom with a latrine. Another building was either a guesthouse or a store and was partially rebuilt when a new series of rooms was added to its east side. A group

of buildings to the west were found to overlie earlier burials and have been dated to the early ninth century. Finds were of a domestic sort and included quern stones, loomweights, needles, pins and writing implements. No clearly communal chapterhouse, refectory or dormitory was found and the relative scarcity of Saxon material suggests that the larger part of the Saxon foundation lies below and to the south of the church, beneath the cloister of the post-Conquest abbey. Similarly, there is no evidence as yet of the pre-Conquest abbey church. It is believed that this will be found beneath the naves of the fourteenth and eleventh century churches. Peers' excavation also revealed the foundations of the east end and transepts of the eleventh century church built soon after the foundation of the Benedictine monastery. He did not excavate the nave but the position of the mid-twelfth century parlour, which would have marked the junction of the north and west cloister ranges, suggests it was as long as the fourteenth century nave which overlies it. The later medieval church, whose ruins are all that is left standing of the post-Conquest abbey, was begun in c.1220 with the rebuilding of the east end, followed, over the next few decades, by the reconstruction of the transepts. The first three bays of the nave were also rebuilt at this time, along with the central tower. The rest of the nave was not rebuilt until the fourteenth century, with a clerestory - a row of windows set above the main storey to let in light - being added in the fifteenth. The west end is also fifteenth century. The church would have formed the north range of a four-sided cloister, with the east, south and west ranges lying to the south. An engraving by Samuel Buck (1711) shows the late twelfth century chapterhouse occupying its traditional position in the east range, below the south transept. There are no visible remains of these ranges but the buried foundations survive undisturbed and preserve the layout of the post-Conquest monastery. By analogy with other abbeys, it is believed that the east range would also have included the dormer (dormitory), the south range the kitchen and frater (refectory) and the west range rooms for storage and cellage. Other rooms and buildings would have included an infirmary, warming-house, guesthouse and day-rooms whilst, outside the cloister, within the wider precinct, would have lain a variety of ancillary buildings such as a brew house, bake house and gatehouse. Earthworks to the north of the church, on Abbey Plain, may represent some of these and other earthworks have been located to the west, in the field known as Almshouse Close. Additional features include cemeteries and a fishpond, the latter lying to the east of the church. Excavations at the Saxon monasteries of Jarrow and Monkwearmouth indicate that the cemetery of the double house lies to the south of the church, beneath the medieval cloister. The later monastic cemetery, according to tradition, will lie east or south of the east cloister range. A medieval lay cemetery was discovered north of the church during Peers' excavations. To the south-west of the church lay the abbot's lodging which, after the Dissolution, became part of Abbey House, the residence of the Cholmley family. The Saxon double-house was founded in 657 by King Oswy of Northumbria. Its first and most illustrious abbess was St. Hild who presided there till her death in 680 when the abbacy passed to Oswy's daughter Aelfled. Not only was the abbey a royal burial place, many distinguished Saxon churchmen and women were educated there, including Caedmon, the most celebrated vernacular poet of Northumbria. The monastery's greatest claim to fame, however, and an indication of its reputation at the time, was that it was the setting for the Synod of Whitby of 664, one of the most important events in the history of Christianity in England at which it was decided that the English Church would follow the Roman rite rather than the insular 'Celtic' tradition. Our main written sources for the Saxon monastery are the histories of the Venerable Bede. Consequently, little is known about the abbey in the years following his death except that it was destroyed in 867 by the Viking army led by the sons of Ragnar Lothbrok. An interval of more than two centuries followed until, in 1078, William de Percy granted the abbey site to Reinfrid, an unlettered monk who had come with two companions on a pilgrimage to visit the holy places of the north. The initial foundation, however, was beset by trouble, not only from sea-raids but also from arguments with the founder and internal strife which resulted in a group of monks under one of their number, Stephen, retiring to Lastingham and, ultimately, St. Mary's in York. The abbey began to flourish when Serlo de Percy, William's brother, became prior and when William's son became abbot. Despite occasional raids, the last occurring in c.1153 under Eystein Haroldsson, King of Norway, the Benedictine abbey quickly became the third in value after St. Mary's in York and St. German's in Selby, and it was not until the fourteenth century that it began to decline. By then it was heavily in debt and, by the time of its suppression in 1539, it was a poor house by Benedictine standards though still rich by those of other Orders. Following the Dissolution, the lease of the abbey and precinct was given to Richard Cholmley who subsequently bought the freehold in

1555. It remained with the Cholmley family until 1791 when it passed by marriage to the Fanes. The medieval church suffered gradual decline, and was damaged by a direct hit from a German cruiser in 1914. The abbey has been in State care since 1920
- 3.2 Abbey Lodge was built by Charles Strickland in 1866 a new entrance to the outer courtyard of Chomley House; the original central gateway being closed. The building is of one and a half storeys with slate roof with dormers and gable extending over an arched gateway into the courtyard area. The lodge itself has no designation; however, the ground beneath the structure is scheduled.
- 3.3 The abbey site has been the subject of intensive archaeological investigation over a number of years. A full list of published material can be supplied if necessary.

#### **4.0 Archaeological Watching Brief**

- 4.1 A full archaeological watching brief must be carried out during the excavations undertaken in the interior of the Lodge building.

The objectives of this watching brief are as follows:

- to provide supervision of the removal of modern overburden;
- to identify, sample, record and interpret all archaeological features and deposits exposed. Once archaeological deposits have been reached excavation will be halted and the archaeological contractor will clean and make an assessment of the potential of the features and deposits exposed, and sample an appropriate number of features and deposits exposed. *The complete excavation of all features is not necessary particularly where features continue into sections or go below the maximum depth of excavation. Complex archaeological features and deposits will be fully excavated and recorded; less complex should be sufficiently sampled in order to understand their nature, stratigraphic complexity and date;*

#### **5.0 Method**

- 5.1 The contractor must demonstrate that all staff, including subcontractors, are suitably qualified and experienced and understand the work required of them.
- 5.2 A record of all features excavated will be produced using appropriate archaeological context recording. All features will require a full written, drawn and photographic record.
- 5.3 All measurements will be expressed in metres. Plans and sections will be produced at appropriate scales. Trenches will be located using reliable and repeatable measurements.
- 5.4 All photographic recording of features should use the most appropriate method to fulfil the objectives of the project (35mm colour slide, black and white print, Digital photograph) and agreed in advance of the fieldwork.
- 5.5 An appropriate artefact collection and discard policy should be defined and agreed in advance of any fieldwork.
- 5.6 All drawings to be provided as ink on film or where facilities are available as digital drawings in a .dwg or .dxf format.
- 5.7 *If appropriate a sampling strategy must be prepared in consultation with the English Heritage Regional Archaeological Science Advisor. The archaeological contractor will ensure that all conservation specialists and consultants are identified as part of the contractor's team from the outset. The archaeological contractor will ensure that a sum for any sampling and assessment work is identified in the tender return.*
- 5.8 On completion of the fieldwork all samples will be processed and artefacts cleaned, conserved, identified, labelled and packaged in accordance with the requirements of the appropriate repository guidelines and standards.

#### **6.0 Archive and Report**

- 6.1 The site archive will be prepared to the standards specified in the Management of Archaeological project, English Heritage, 1991, Appendix 3. Archive preparation and deposition should be undertaken with reference to the appropriate repository guidelines and standards. The contractor must demonstrate that arrangements have been with an appropriate organisation for the deposition of the project archive in advance of any work on site.
- 6.2 The contractor will provide a written report within 3 months (or shorter period by mutual agreement) on completion of the fieldwork. A copy of the report should be sent to the *project manager, local authority archaeologist/conservation officer*, and to the English Heritage, regional *Inspector of Ancient Monuments/Historic Buildings Inspector* and the County HER. The report should contain as a minimum:

- Non-technical summary
  - Introductory statement
  - Aims and objectives
  - Methodology
  - Results
  - Conclusion
  - Index and location of archive
  - References and bibliography
  - Copy of project design
- 6.3 Where appropriate arrangements should be made to publish the results of the investigations through a local or national journal.
- 6.4 English Heritage supports the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. The overall aim of the OASIS project is to provide an online index to the mass of archaeological grey literature that has been produced as a result of the advent of large-scale developer funded fieldwork. The archaeological contractor must therefore complete the online OASIS form at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/>. Contractors are advised to contact the North Yorkshire HER prior to completing the form.
- 7.0 Timetable and Monitoring**
- 7.1 Fieldwork should start on .....Jan / Feb 2008 (Precise date to be advised).....  
to ensure completion by.....with in a working week.....
- 7.2 The project will be monitored by the *English Heritage, Inspector of Ancient Monuments/ Historic Buildings Inspector/ Local Authority - County Archaeologist/Conservation Officer* who will be given at least two weeks notice by the principle contractor, (or shorter period by mutual agreement) in writing of the commencement and timetable of the work.
- 7.3 The archaeological contractor will ensure that additional arrangements are made for monitoring visits if necessary during or after the fieldwork is complete. The archaeological contractor will report any unexpected discoveries immediately to the project monitor/s.
- 8.0 Health and Safety**
- 8.1 The contractor should comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act and subsequent additions and amendments. All fieldwork must be carried out under an agreed Health and Safety Policy. A risk assessment should be carried out prior to the commencement of work and the project should have a nominated Safety Officer.
- 8.2 If the Provisions of Construction, Design and Management (CDM) Regulations 1994 are appropriate the employer will appoint a Planning Supervisor who will prepare a Health and Safety Plan which will be made available to the archaeological contractor prior to the commencement of work.
- 8.3 On arrival on site, the archaeological contractor will report to the principle contractor and confirm all working arrangements. The archaeological contractor will have the power to suspend works when necessary, but they must ensure that this does not unreasonably disrupt the work schedules of other contractors.

Dr Mark Douglas.  
Properties Curator  
English Heritage.  
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Archaeological Services  
University of Durham

Whitby Abbey Lodge, Whitby, North Yorkshire

archaeological monitoring

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Figure 1

Location of site

on behalf of  
**English Heritage**

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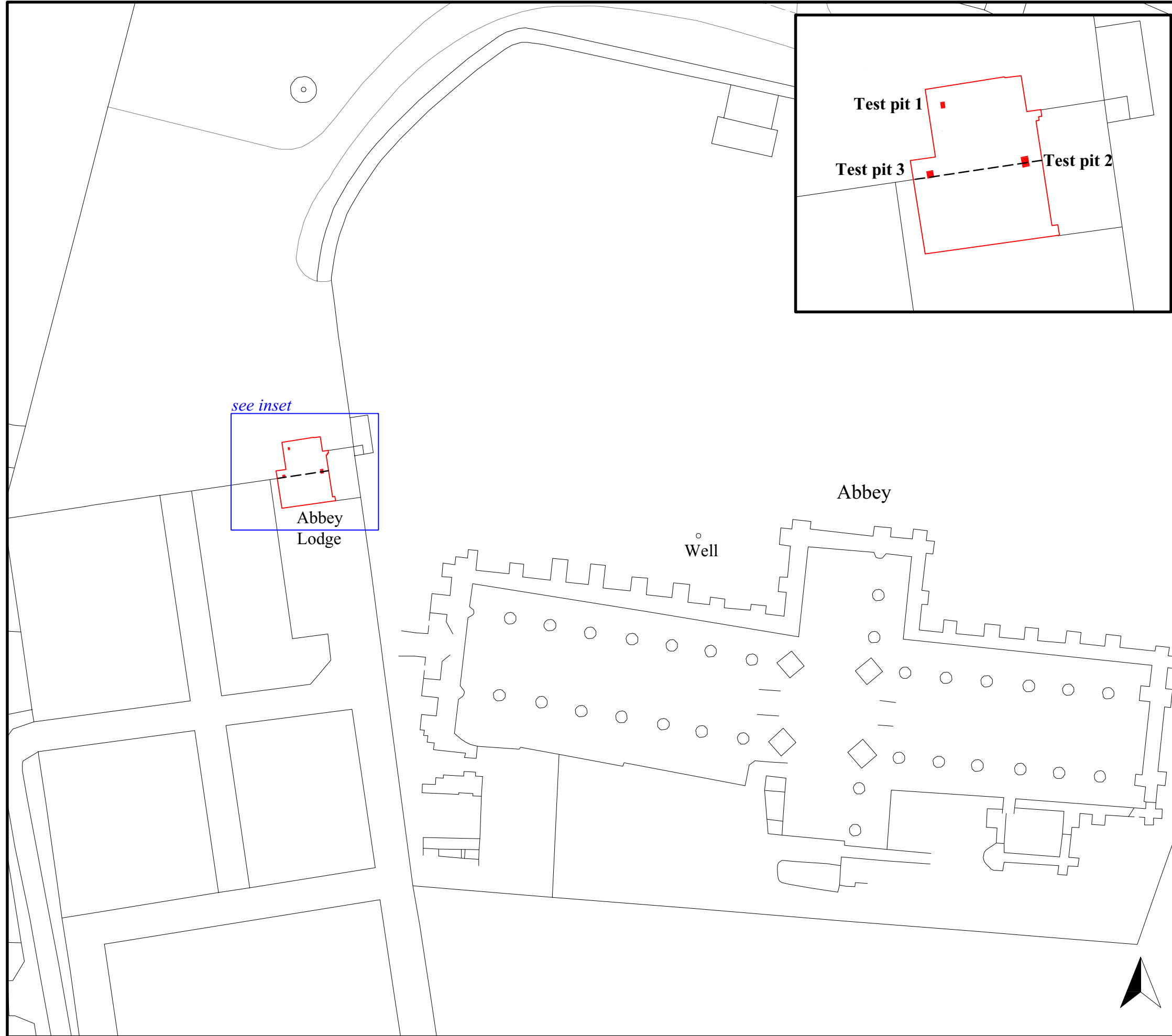


location of site

0 1km

scale 1:25 000 - for A4 plot





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Figure 2

*Location of monitored trenches*

*on behalf of*  
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0 25m  
scale for plan 1:500 - for A3 plot

0 10m  
scale for inset 1:200 - for A3 plot

 projected line of wall

 monitored test pit

**Whitby Abbey Lodge, Whitby,  
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**archaeological monitoring**

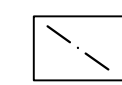


**Report 1854**

Figure 3

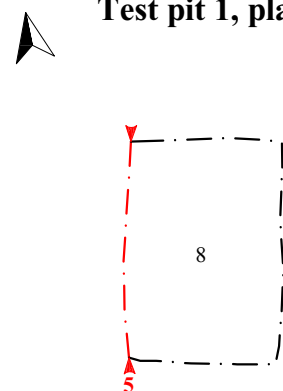
*Test pits 1, 2 and 3 plans and sections*

*on behalf of*  
**English Heritage**

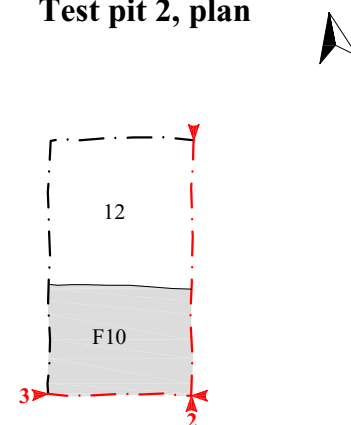
0 1m  
*scale 1:20 - for A3 plot*

 limit of excavation  
 section  
 wall

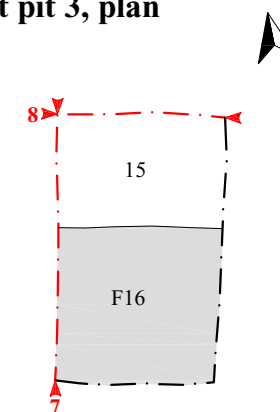
**Test pit 1, plan**



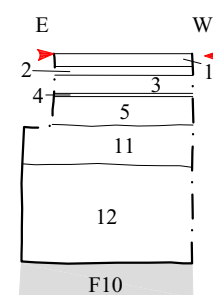
**Test pit 2, plan**



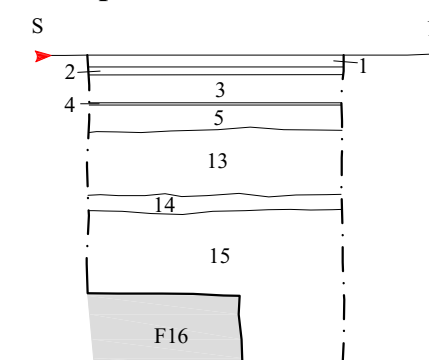
**Test pit 3, plan**



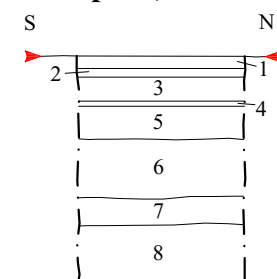
**Test pit 2, Section 3**



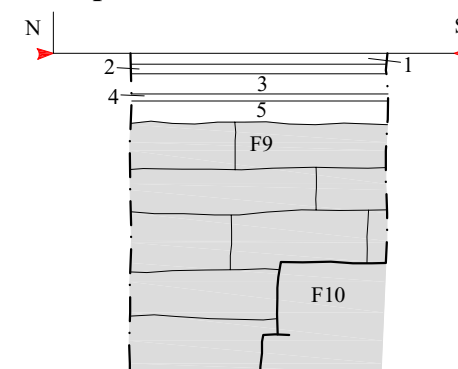
**Test pit 3, Section 7**



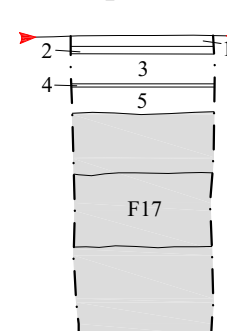
**Test pit 1, Section 5**



**Test pit 2, Section 2**



**Test pit 3, Section 8**







**Figure 4:** Test pit 1, looking north



**Figure 5:** Test pit 2 showing wall F10 on the right, looking east





**Figure 6:** Test pit 3 showing wall F16 at the near end, looking north