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**Whitby Abbey  
North Yorkshire  
SE 9025 1114**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

<b>N.Y.C.C. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES</b>	
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**MAP  
March 2004**

**Whitby Abbey  
North Yorkshire  
SE 9025 1114**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

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**Whitby Abbey  
Whitby  
North Yorkshire  
SE 9025 1114**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Non Technical Summary**

*An Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out at Whitby Abbey, Whitby, North Yorkshire during the planting of a hedge in March 2004. No archaeological deposits/features were observed due to the minimal nature of the excavation works.*

**1. Introduction**

1.1 MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief at Whitby Abbey, Whitby, North Yorkshire (Fig. 1) during the excavation of a split trench for a new security hedge on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March 2004, close to the east side of the Banqueting House.

1.2 All work was funded by English Heritage and all maps within this report have been produced from The Ordnance Survey with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright. License No. AL 50453A.

**2. Historical and Archaeological Background**

2.1 The headland on which the Abbey stands was the site of a late Roman signal station.

2.2 Hilda established a religious community on the headland in 657. It was here that the Synod of Whitby was held in 664, establishing that the rule of the Roman Church of St. Augustine should hold sway in England over the Celtic tradition.

- 2.3 The community established by St. Hilda's flourished until the Danes invaded Northumbria in 867, resulting in the destruction of many churches and monasteries, Whitby included.
- 2.4 The destruction of the Anglo-Saxon monastery gave the Normans a blank canvas when it came to the rebuilding of the Abbey, which began under Reinfrid in the late 1070s. A Benedictine house was established using the cult of St. Hilda as a valuable cash earner. However, large building programmes in the 13<sup>th</sup> and early 14<sup>th</sup> centuries drove the Abbey into debt.
- 2.5 Whitby Abbey went into 'voluntary surrender' in December 1539, and the site was leased by Richard Cholmley in March 1540. Cholmley purchased the entire precinct outright in 1555. The Cholmley family built a mansion in the south-west of the precinct using materials from the Abbey buildings. The Cholmley's work included the classically-styled Banqueting House.

### **3. Methodology**

- 3.1 Instead of excavating an open trench the split trenching method was used, whereby the ground was split open and the new panting inserted into the ground. This method resulted in less ground disturbance.

### **4. Results**

- 4.1 The excavations were located to the west of the Banqueting House adjacent to a section of stone wall and ran from the raised access to the information centre, following the course of the wall as far as an existing hedge (Pls. 1-4). The new hedge was planted up to 1m from the edge of the wall and was designed to act as a barrier to the public.
- 4.2 No finds were recovered from any of the excavations due to the minimal disturbance of the topsoil deposits.

### **5. Conclusions**

No archaeological deposits were affected due to the method employed for the planting of the hedge.

6. **References**

Platt, C      1985   Whitby Abbey.

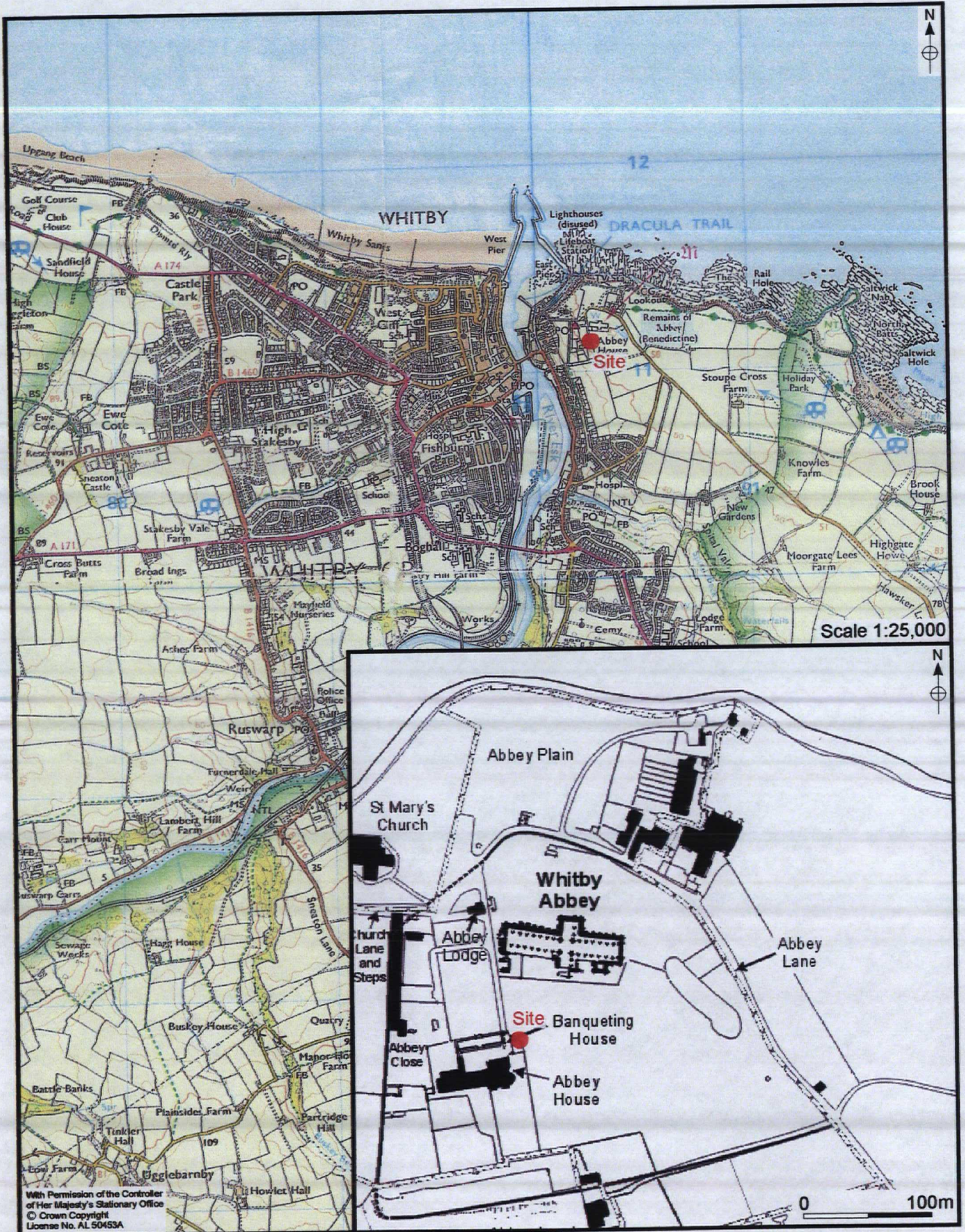


Figure 1. Site Location

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Plate 1. Start of Hedge Planting. Facing West



Plate 2. Start of Hedge Planting. Facing South East





Plate 3. Completed Hedge. Facing West



Plate 4. Completed Hedge. Facing West