



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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THE PRESERVES, LOW ABBOTSIDE NORTH YORKSHIRE

on behalf of

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**THE PRESERVES, LOW ABBOTSIDE,
NORTH YORKSHIRE
PEAT RESTORATION AND GRIP BLOCKING WORKS
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Northern Archaeological Associates Ltd was commissioned by the Yorkshire Peat Partnership (YPP) to undertake a rapid archaeological survey and assessment in advance of peat restoration works on The Preserves, Low Abbotside, North Yorkshire (NGR SD 912 925). The project area comprised approximately 1.1km² of upland landscape (Fig. 1) – defined by Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) as requiring assessment.

The aims of the survey were to provide a pre-intervention record of any archaeological remains and historic features within these areas; to evaluate the significance of these heritage assets; assess any potential impact from the restoration works, and advise on a suitable strategy to mitigate against the occurrence of any such damage during the consolidation works.

In advance of the fieldwork, an HER audit was undertaken to inform the subsequent survey. This combined NMR and HER data, modern aerial photographic material and First, Second and Third Edition Ordnance Survey map data, with the aim of establishing the known archaeological resource; defining the extent of identified sites and plotting any potentially new monuments. This information was compiled into a GIS prior to survey commencing, and the database and plots were provided to the survey teams as baseline data, to be edited and updated in the field. All identified archaeological sites were visited during the survey and their vulnerability to potential damage during groundworks was assessed. Any previously unknown archaeological remains were also recorded and their vulnerability similarly evaluated.

A total of 10 heritage assets were surveyed, of which 6 were previously recorded in the HER. The remainder are newly discovered sites, expanding the existing knowledge and understanding of the archaeology of Low Abbotside. The overwhelming majority of the archaeology was post-medieval in date, and related to land enclosure (drystone walls and gates, earthen banks), and extraction (limestone quarrying). An undated earthwork, possibly a shieling and enclosure, was noted to the east of Area A, close to Sargill Beck, and an enclosure bank, potentially of medieval date and related to Sargill Park, lies within Area B.

During the survey, a number of issues and concerns came to light in terms of the reliability of the YDNPA HER data and the condition of the archaeological remains. Several shortfalls in the HER data were identified, many of which are endemic to the HER/SMR system and are shared across all counties and regions. Primarily, many assets lacked accurate or meaningful location information. This is a common HER problem which predominantly arises from the plotting of material from aerial photographs and other mapping. The only way to properly validate HER information is through combined field survey and HER audit. During the survey, accurate information regarding the location and extent of archaeological remains has been collated. It is hoped that this information will be useful in updating the HER.

In terms of monument condition, the majority of standing structures have been subject to gradual decline; predominately from weather erosion, vegetation encroachment and grazing animals. This included collapsing drystone boundary walls (which are now no longer maintained in favour of fencing); and earthen boundaries, which are being increasingly displaced by haggling peat and animal erosion.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Northern Archaeological Associates Ltd was commissioned by the Yorkshire Peat Partnership (YPP) to undertake a rapid archaeological survey and assessment in relation to peat restoration works on The Preserves, Low Abbotside, North Yorkshire (Fig. 1). The survey comprised an area of approximately 1.1km², defined by Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) as requiring assessment. Two distinct areas were surveyed either side of Sargill Beck: Area A, to the south-west of the beck and bounded on its north side by the beck itself; and Area B, to the north-east of the beck and on higher ground.
- 1.2 The aims of the survey were to provide a pre-intervention record of any archaeological remains and historic features within these areas; to evaluate the significance of these heritage assets; assess any potential impact of the restoration works, and advise on how such damage could be avoided.
- 1.3 This report presents the results for the survey including a table (Table 1) of all identified heritage assets; both known sites which already appear on the YDNPA Historic Environment Record (HER) and/or the National Monument Record (NMR). All sites identified during the survey were assigned a Unique Identification Number (UIN), and cross-referenced to existing recorded sites in both datasets where correlation existed. All sites are illustrated on Figure 2.
- 1.4 The significance of each asset has been assessed individually, and as part of a cluster - or group - of monuments within their landscape context. This information has been used to compile a plan of important archaeological sites and historic features using a simple 'traffic light' coding system. This is intended to facilitate the grip blocking and consolidation work and, where appropriate, identify proposed 'safe' access routes (Green Zones).
- 1.5 The surveys and all post-survey work was undertaken according to national guidelines (EH 2007, 2008; IFA 2009) and conformed to the agreed project designs and briefs (NAA 2014; YDNPA 2014).

2.0 ASSESSMENT

- 2.1 All of the known archaeological sites recorded in the YDNPA HER and the NMR were visited during the survey, and their potential vulnerability to damage during the groundworks was assessed. The area was also surveyed for previously unknown archaeological remains; the vulnerability of these was also assessed.
- 2.2 A number of datasets were assessed prior to the survey commencing, and the results compiled into a GIS. Aerial photographs were used to complement the data gathered on the ground and to accurately define the full extent of the archaeology present. First, Second and Third Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) maps were also used to inform the field survey.

- 2.3 A total of 10 heritage assets were recorded within the survey area. Of these, 6 were sites recorded in the HER and/or the NMR; 2 were sites identified from the desk-based annotation of the available datasets, and 2 were 'new' sites identified during the field survey. Based on significance, these were divided into three categories: Red Zones; Amber Zones; and Green Zones as defined below.

Red Zones: Absolute constraint areas

- 2.4 Red Zones include scheduled sites and other remains which are potentially of national significance. These areas must be avoided during the groundworks. No vehicles or plant must track through, work within, or be stored in these zones. Scheduled monument sites are protected by law under the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979. It is a criminal offence to undertake work of any kind in these areas without prior written consent from the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sports.
- 2.5 As no scheduled or equally important sites exist within the survey boundary, no Red Zones have been defined within the surveyed areas.

Amber Zones: No access areas

- 2.6 Amber Zones include significant remains that appear on the YDNPA HER or have been identified as part of the rapid archaeological survey (Fig. 2). These areas should be avoided during the peat restoration and grip blocking works.
- 2.7 If, due to the practicalities of the restoration works, access through an Amber Zone is required then this should only be undertaken after consultation with the YDNPA Countryside Archaeological Adviser. Such access has the potential to cause damage to significant archaeological remains and, therefore, should be kept to a minimum.

Green Zones: Potential access areas

- 2.8 Green Zones are areas within the Amber Zones which have been identified as potential access routes. There is still known archaeology in these areas but this has been assessed as of lesser significance than elsewhere, usually due to preservation or prevalence. Vehicles can be tracked across these routes in order to reach those areas of grip blocking cut off from other access. However, given the dispersed nature of archaeology at The Preserves, and the absence of any large contiguous areas like mining complexes, it has not proved necessary to define green routes across most of the survey area. A crossing point has been established across linear boundary **10004**.

Other areas and remains

- 2.9 The remainder of the surveyed areas are free from significant visible archaeological remains, although sub-surface material might still be identified during the course of the restoration works. It is advised, however, that all care should be undertaken during the groundworks to avoid damage to any obvious

upstanding remains not covered by the scope of the archaeological survey and assessment. Such remains may include gateways, boundary stones, drystone walls, sheepfolds, grouse butts and cairns (constructed piles of stones).

3.0 RESULTS AND SIGNIFICANCE

- 3.1 The results of the survey, and assessment of the survey area, are summarised within Table 1 which includes an outline assessment of significance. The overwhelming majority of the heritage assets within the survey area relate to extraction (including limestone quarries and related tracks and fords), pasture (drystone walls, gates, and just outside the area, barns and shelters). Other assets identified and assessed comprise a possible medieval boundary and shieling.



*Plate 1: enclosure bank **10004**, facing east.*

Medieval Enclosure

- 3.2 The survey area lies within Abbotside Common, which forms part of the early medieval manor of Aysgarth. By the 19th century, the survey area is identified as 'Sargill Parks' on the First Edition Ordnance Survey mapping (1856), and the name 'park' could indicate its origin as an 11th century hunting chase. Hunting was a favourite pastime of the Norman lords, and large areas of the upper Dales are described in medieval documents as *forest* or *free chase*, meaning a large tract of land set aside for the hunting of deer and wild boar, rather than strictly a densely wooded area (White 1997, 55).

- 3.3 In the later medieval period the area came under the control of Jervaulx Abbey, who established vaccaries (medieval farms specialising in cattle) on the common. The survey area may also have been an example of vaccary, where boundaries were built to enclose land that had been claimed out of the Forest hunting land, which was probably a mix of open grazing, scrub and woodlands, in order to provide farm land. Certainly by the early post-medieval period it was probably functioning as a single, large, stinted pasture, i.e. part of the system of communal grazing controlled by manorial courts whereby animals grazing common land were 'stinted' or controlled to ensure the system was not abused by individuals grazing more than their fair share (White 1997, 72). The system, which survives in some areas to this day, is likely to date back to at least the medieval period.
- 3.4 A possible medieval boundary, **10004**, was identified in Area B, connecting two existing sections of drystone wall. This is clearly visible from aerial photographs and has been previously transcribed. The survey identified the earthwork as a continuous sinuous bank, c.2m wide and approximately 0.5m in height, clearly predating the drystone walling. There was no evidence for stone within the bank. The bank, which may have been topped by a hedge, may also originally have had parallel ditches. The shape and curve of the bank suggests that this is the northern edge of an enclosure, which could extend between Mill Gill, north-west of Askrigg, and the end of Shutt Lane, north-east of Sedbusk, with Sargill Beck cutting diagonally across its centre. The enclosure warrants further detailed examination.



*Plate 2: shieling **10008** (foreground) with bank extending to second pole*

- 3.5 A possible medieval or post-medieval shieling **10008** was identified, immediately west of the boundary west of Park Hall, and overlooking a sheltered flattish area on the south side of Sargill Beck. The shieling comprises a small circular turf and stone structure, with 1m wide walls, and had a diameter of c.3-4m. On the north side appears to be an opening, and the south

side is abutted by an L-shaped enclosure, running south for c.5m before turning c2m east, where it is truncated by grip. Shielings served as temporary, summer, accommodation for people involved in transhumance (the removal of cattle from permanent dwellings to exploit areas of summer pasture some distance away from the main settlement). These are commonly located adjacent to watercourses which served as routes into the uplands or along those boundaries of the territory allotted for grazing (English Heritage 2011, 3).



*Plate 3: blocked field gate **10007**, with track extending away to north*

Post-Medieval Enclosure and Extraction

- 3.6 Abbotside was divided in 1723 by the Wortley family, creating the townships of High and Low Abbotside. In 1797, the manor passed to James Archibald Stuart Wordey Mackenzie who was created Baron Wharnccliffe in 1826. The manor included the Sargill Mine, the level for which lies 750m north-west of Area A, which was almost certainly driven in the early 19th century. Sargill Smelt Mill, 350m to the north-west, was built around 1848. The mill appears to have closed with the demise of the Sargill Mines Co. around the mid 1860's, and is now designated as a Scheduled Monument (Gill 1992, 113). There is no evidence of lead-mining within the survey areas.
- 3.7 Enclosure of the commons appears to have commenced in earnest from 1835 (North Yorkshire County Records Office NRRD GM 11 and 12). It is probable that most of the drystone walled enclosure dates to this period, though the walling has clearly been rebuilt over the centuries. A blocked gate was

identified during the walkover within the northern edge of Area A (**10007**), identified during walkover. now incorporating a step-over stile (two large flat flags set in the wall). The blocking wall was constructed of rough random coursed stone using tumble from the wall itself. The drystone wall was well built, with large quoins at the entrance. Within Area B, other boundaries are indicated on the 1895 Ordnance Survey mapping (**10005**, **10006**), but these are now no longer visible. A number of rotten fence-posts were seen in the area of these boundaries, suggesting they may have been fences rather than drystone walls. Small steadings are evident, lying just beyond the survey areas at Park Hall and Cogill Closes, accessed by fords across the adjacent streams (**10009**, and **10010** respectively). By the later 19th century, an economic depression caused by cheaper imports began to hit pastoral farming, which caused it to contract from the uplands. With the contraction came diminishment in the number of holdings, from two or three to one, as landlords demolished old farms and consolidated them into larger and more profitable farms. These steadings probably fell out of use in this period.



*Plate 4: quarry **10001**, facing north-west*

- 3.8 The geology of the area comprises bedrock of the Alston Formation, alternating bands of carboniferous limestone, sandstones, siltstone and mudstones (BGS Geology of Britain Viewer). Lines of shake holes are particularly visible within Area A. Two limestone quarries were identified within the southern end of Area A (**10001** and **10002**), exploiting these deposits. The quarries relate to the enclosure activity and agricultural improvement in the 19th century. The widespread application of lime, generated through the burning of limestone in

limekilns, was implemented to improve acidic soils as well as for the production of lime mortar and white-wash. The quarry sites within the survey area have exploited outcrops of limestone, creating a vertical quarry face projecting above the surrounding ground level. **10001** comprises a face approximately 3m in height and 45m in length, with heaps of broken stone and chippings lying as turfed-over heaps to south. A sunken rectangular area to the west may be a hut or shelter. **10002** mostly lay to the south of the survey area, and as such was not examined in detail, though it appeared to be of similar dimensions to **10001**. The quarries are depicted on early editions of the Ordnance Survey mapping, and are marked as disused by the early 20th century. A possible limekiln is recorded at Park Hall, which is probably where the quarried limestone was burnt. A trackway **10003** may have connected the quarries and Park Hall with the main road between Sedbusk and Askrigg; this has been incorrectly identified as a leat, but is clearly visible on aerial photographs as a straight linear feature running north-north-east from the road. The trackway, and indeed the quarries, may predate the enclosure walls, but this would need further investigation.



Plate 5: section of exposed peat at SD 90550 91641, facing north

Palaeoenvironmental assessment – Lynne F. Gardner

- 3.9 All the peat deposits were summarily assessed according to the sampling regime specified in the brief. Areas of exposed peat and the sides of drainage

channels and grips were surveyed during the fieldwork and any sections of exposed peat were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential.



Plate 6: haggged peat along edge of Sargill Beck, at SD 90295 92255, facing south

- 3.10 The two survey areas were systematically examined for areas of exposed peat. The western survey area was crossed by a number of grips and gully channels, particularly on the raised ground above Sargill Beck, but few exposed peat sections were seen. Where peat was identified, it was mostly quite thin, less than 0.5m in most cases (see Plate 5). Various hagsgs were encountered during the walk-over survey but a rapid study of these indicated that the depth of peat was not likely to be significant, thus unsuitable for in-depth sampling. Areas of haggged peat were visible along the edge of Sargill Beck, where the peat deposits are washing into the beck, but these areas were mostly quite thin and badly damaged. Most of the eastern survey area is quite well-vegetated with narrow gullies and grips, again with little peat exposure evident. Both areas contain some wide natural hollows where peat has clearly accumulated to some depth, but without a programme of peat coring this would be hard to demonstrate. No sites of significant palaeoenvironmental potential were identified and no artefacts or ecofacts were identified during the walkover.
- 3.11 A hagg within the south-western section of the western study area was chosen for closer examination after it was established that there was a paucity of suitable peat hagsgs along Sargill Beck's banks.

- 3.12 The section of the selected hagg was cleaned *circa* 0.3m back from the extant edge and excavated perpendicular to the base with a spade and a trowel. The visible peat layer was a uniform 0.36m deep throughout the 1.5m section and this overlaid a pale grey matrix of silty-clay. No archaeology was encountered. There were no defining diplotelmic layers which suggested, considering the slope, that the only layer visible was the catotelmic layer. The acrotelmic (upper) layer is normally 0-0.5m in depth and was most likely to have been lost through erosion as the section was on a slope. The visibility of grenz or tephra layers is usually limited to palynological study as they are only visible macroscopically (Allaby 1998). The peat depths are relatively shallow throughout the moor and are unlikely to be suitable for large-scale palaeoenvironmental reconstruction.
- 3.13 The rapid onset of the inclement weather prohibited a section drawing being undertaken. Based on these findings a programme of further investigation and/or sampling was not warranted.

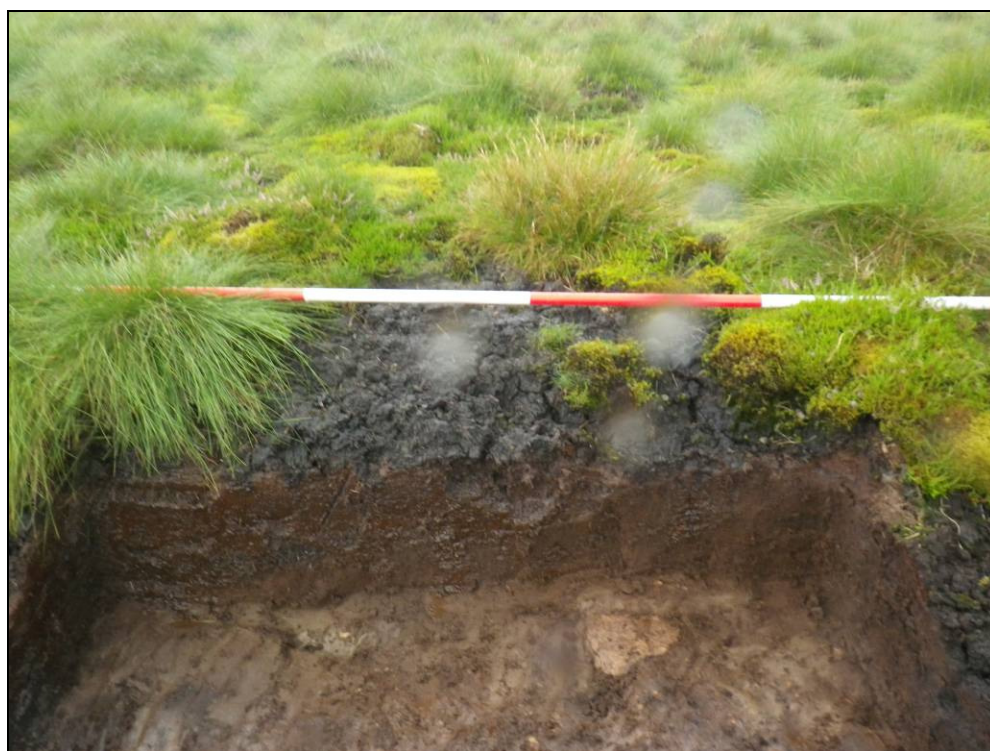


Plate 7: section through peat hagg, facing west

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Due to the lack of scheduled or nationally significant archaeological remains, no Red Zones were defined within the survey area.
- 4.2 The Amber Zones around discrete archaeological remains should be avoided. Green Zones, which represent areas where access routes are required across Amber Zones, are mostly not needed as all the Amber Zones should be easily avoidable by the contractors; a crossing point for **10004** has been provided. However, if restoration works are required in these areas, or if contractors need to track vehicles across an Amber Zone, then contact should be made with the Countryside Archaeological Adviser at YDNPA, as even tracking a vehicle through these Zones could potentially damage archaeological remains.

5.0 REFERENCES

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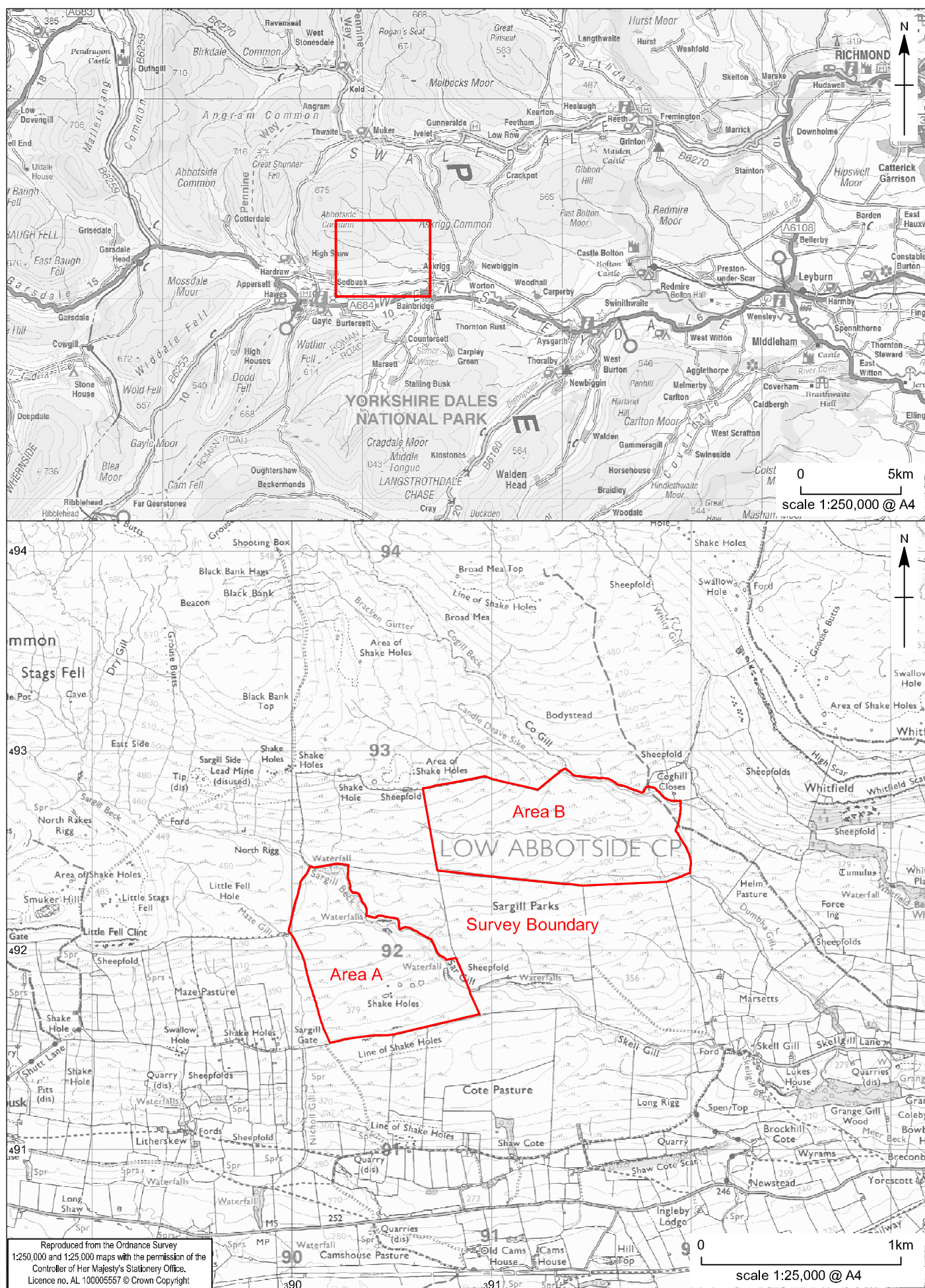
Table 1: Assessment of archaeological sites

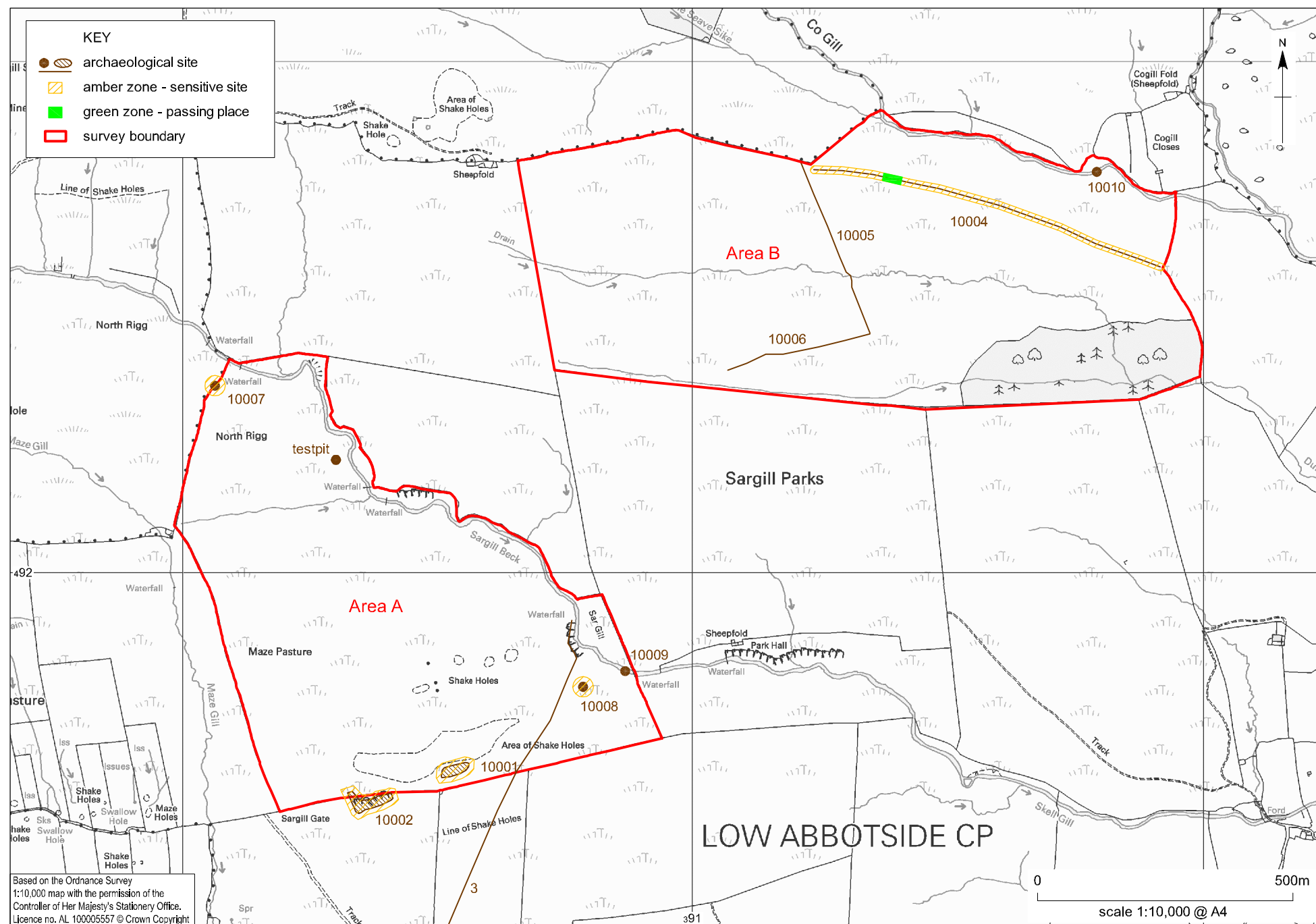
Key: Red = within Red Zone; Amber = within Amber Zone; White =No archaeological risk

Survey UID	MONUID	Easting	Northing	Mon. Type	Period	Description	Digital photo	Vulnerability	Significance
10001	MYD29139	390534	491613	Limestone quarry	Post Medieval	(GIS) quarry depicted as 'limestone quarry' on OS 1856, not depicted on OS 1895, marked as 'old' by 1914. Visible on APs and NMP programme transcribed this (HER) PM limestone quarry (Survey) this quarry is extant and comprises a south-facing vertical limestone working face approx 3m in height and 45m long, with heaps of broken stone and chippings lying as turfed over heaps to south. Sunken rectangular area to west may be hut.	26-31	Low	Moderate – evidence of extractive industry but fairly common across the moors.
10002	MYD45193	390374	491548	Limestone quarry	Post Medieval	(GIS) post-medieval limestone quarry, probably contemporary with 10001 but not shown until 1914 OS when marked as 'old'. Visible on APs and NMP transcribed this. (HER) same, wrong position. (Survey) this limestone quarry looked to be to the south of the field boundary and as such outside area, but appears to curve w and n into area as a low worked outcrops, no obvious spoil. C 5x5m, c 0.5m face. Main quarry looks large but not examined.	20-25	Low	Moderate – evidence of extractive industry but fairly common across the moors.
10003	MYD45194	390738	491751	Trackway	Post Medieval	(GIS) NMP transcription shows this as a leat, and it does cut directly across existing c19 field boundaries so may be early and taking water from Sargill beck but not sure what it would be supplying? (HER) same info (Survey) this was partly on the line of a modern grip and the topography does not seem favourable for a leat, as rises and falls. The NMP could be picking up the line of a track, possibly related to the quarrying activity immediately	39-42	Low	Low/moderate – important in development of the landscape, but not seen.

Survey UID	MONUID	Easting	Northing	Mon. Type	Period	Description	Digital photo	Vulnerability	Significance
						west, & ford.			
10004	MYD45083	391542	492736	Boundary bank	Medieval	<p>(GIS) NMP transcribed this and is clearly visible on APs as a boundary bank, linking two existing field walls. Possibly early enclosure, line reused for later (c19) boundary walls? Could be related to park?</p> <p>(HER) former boundary, unknown med date.</p> <p>(Survey) the bank clearly visible in survey as c2m wide bank, approximately 0.5m in height, extending between two extant field walls, but clearly earlier. Other field walls in area do not have similar bank in construction. No evident stones in bank.</p>	48-50	Medium	Medium/high – evidence of early boundary, important for understanding of development of area.
10005		391301	492589	Field boundary	Post Medieval	<p>(GIS) this is alignment of c19 drystone wall shown on 2nd edn 1895 mapping but not earlier. Relates to 10006 enclosures.</p> <p>(Survey) not seen during survey. There are modern collapsed fence posts adjacent, perhaps a later replacement? No evidence of any field wall survives, and no earthworks.</p>		Low	N/a as no longer exists
10006		391177	492428	Field boundary	Post Medieval	<p>(GIS) field boundary remnant visible on APs, formed north side of a small enclosure linked to drystone walls. Section of this enclosure only visible now, no longer extant.</p> <p>(Survey) not seen</p>		Low	N/a as no longer exists
10007		390064	492366	Gate	Post Medieval	<p>(Survey) blocked field gate within drystone wall, identified during walkover. Now incorporates a step-over stile. Blocking wall is rough random coursed stone using tumble. Stile is 2 large flat flags. Drystone wall well built, large quoins at entrance.</p>	15-17	Low	Moderate – evidence of agricultural management but fairly common across the moors.

Survey UID	MONUID	Easting	Northing	Mon. Type	Period	Description	Digital photo	Vulnerability	Significance
10008		390785	491776	Earthwork	Unknown	(Survey) small circular turf and stone structure, 1m wide walls, c 3-4m diameter, opening on n side? South side abutted by l-shaped enclosure c5m s turning c2m east, truncated by grip. Shielling?	43-44	Medium	Moderate – evidence of agricultural management but fairly common across the moors.
10009	MYD29140	390868	491807	Ford	Post Medieval	(HER) ford, depicted on the 1st edition 6" OS map. (Survey) no physical evidence may relate to crossing point for track 10003 and leading to park hall and lime kiln.		N/a	N/a as no longer exists
10010	MYD29301	391,792	492,785	Ford	Post Medieval	(HER) ford, depicted on the 1st edition 6" OS map. (Survey) no physical evidence may relate to crossing point for Cogill close		Low	N/a as no longer exists





The Preserves: heritage assets in the survey area

Figure 2