



## **Durford Abbey Farm, nr. Rogate, West Sussex**

Report on an Archaeological Evaluation  
& Mitigation Statement for Re-Development Works

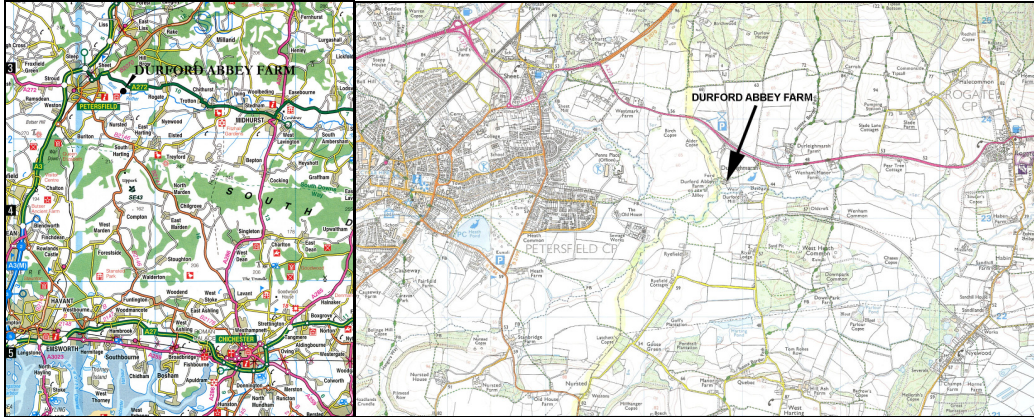
July 2013

## NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

*This document details the results from an archaeological evaluation carried out at Durford Abbey Farm, nr. Rogate, West Sussex in March 2013 and sets out the mitigation methods to be employed in a proposed re-development at that site. It accompanies applications for Scheduled Monument Consent, Planning Permission & Listed Building Consent.*

## BACKGROUND

### Topographical Background



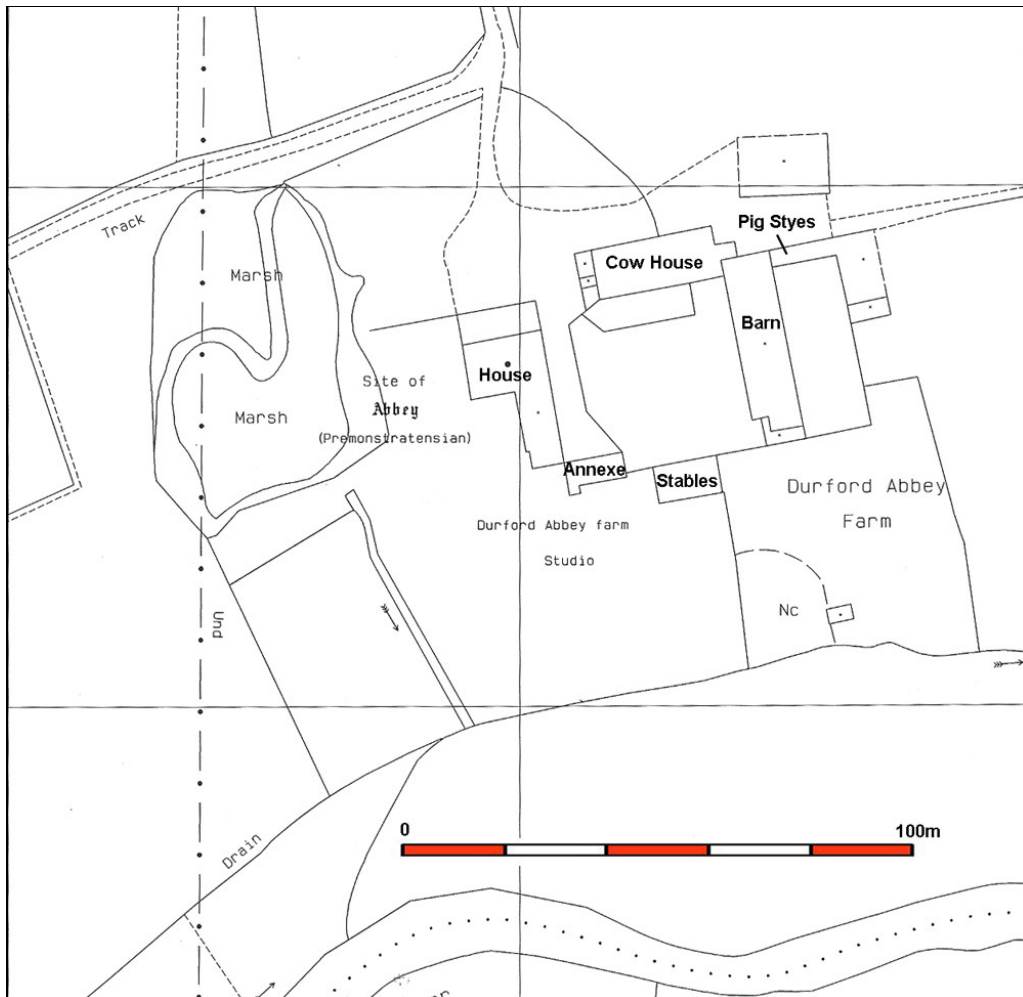
**Figure 1** Site location. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. License number: AL100036068

1. Durford Abbey Farm lies in the parish of Rogate in West Sussex, approximately 1½ miles to the east of Petersfield, and c.300m south of the A272 (NGR SU 7779 2336). The Farm sits upon the sands of the Sandgate Beds, just to the north of the River Rother, at c. 50m OD.

### Project Background

1. Durford Abbey Farm lies upon the site of the medieval monastery of Durford, the remains of which are protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (National Monument No: 29280).
2. The owners of Durford Abbey Farm, Mr. & Mrs. S. Perry, wish to carry out works to three agricultural structures (a cow house, barn and pigsty) and an associated yard, including the removal of the stumps of two London Plane trees. A previous scheme to carry out works on the cow house and barn was granted Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) (HSD 9/2/10441), Listed Building Consent (LBC) (08/02626/LBC) and Planning Permission (PP) (08/02630/FUL) in 2008, but these permissions have now lapsed. As part of that previous scheme West Sussex Archaeology excavated a series of evaluation trenches in 2007 in those areas to be impacted by the development. The results from these were incorporated into a report that accompanied the applications which set out the impact of the proposed development upon the archaeological remains and proposed a programme of mitigation (WSA 2008). The resulting SMC and PP included conditions which followed the recommendations in that report.

3. The new scheme includes a number of variations to the first, including the removal of two London Plane tree stumps, and as a result four new evaluation trenches were excavated in order to inform the consequences of this removal and provide further data concerning the nature of the foundations of the extant buildings. The evaluation was carried out by George Anelay of West Sussex Archaeology Ltd from 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> March 2013. The methodology for this evaluation was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation drawn up by West Sussex Archaeology Ltd (WSA 2013).
4. This document sets out the impact of the new scheme upon the scheduled monument and proposes an associated programme of mitigation. In order to achieve this it will include a report on the four evaluation trenches excavated in 2013.

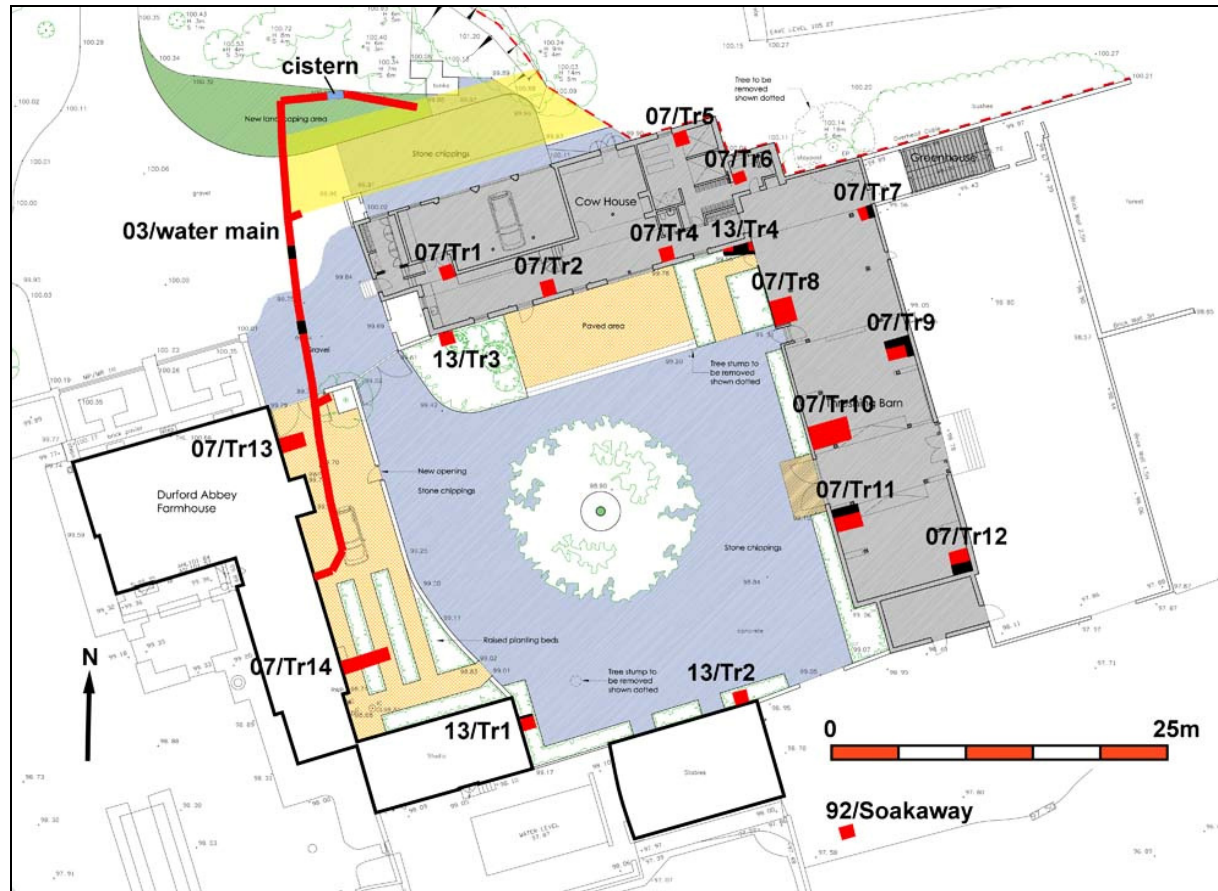


**Figure 2 . Site Plan.** © Crown copyright. All rights reserved.  
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## Historical Background

1. The medieval Premonstratensian monastery at Durford was founded by Henry Hussey, Lord of the Manor of Harting, some time before AD 1161. The abbey was one of the smaller monasteries, probably with about ten canons attached to it. From the 14<sup>th</sup> century the abbey fell into decline, with significant damage to its buildings left un-repaired. In AD 1536 it was suppressed as part of the Dissolution. It then passed into private ownership, in which it has remained up to the present day.
2. Four previous archaeological investigations have taken place at Durford Abbey Farm: around the stables, including an associated soakaway (Wessex Archaeology 1992); for a new water main (WSA 2003); on the dam of the fishponds (WSA 2004); and as part of previous investigations associated with the re-development of the farm (WSA 2008). These investigations have indicated that buried remains associated with the medieval monastery, including wall foundations, do survive below the current farm. In addition to these archaeological investigations, various fragments of medieval masonry are to be seen in a number of walls around the property, but it is thought probable that nothing survives of the Abbey buildings themselves, excepting buried remains.

## RESULTS

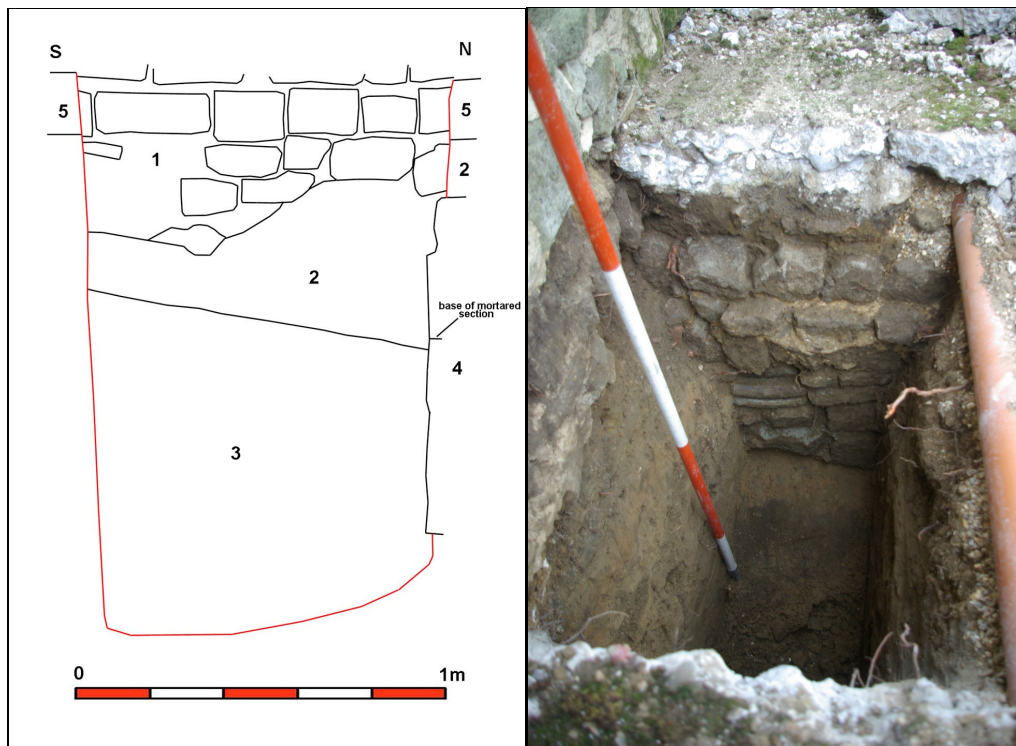


**Figure 3** Plan of the 2013 evaluation trenches (13/Tr1-4) alongside those of 2007 (07/Tr1-14), the water main trench of 2003 and the soakaway trench of 1992.



### 13/Tr1

1. Trench 1 was located against the east wall of the existing annexe in order to examine the nature of both the ground conditions and the foundations. The trench was 1.5m deep, 1m north-south, and 0.75m east-west, shortened by the necessity of avoiding a foul sewer running parallel to the annexe at this point.
2. The foundations of the annexe (1 in Fig.4) proved to be uneven and shallow, at their deepest only 0.45m below the level of the existing courtyard surface. They were composed of Lower Greensand blocks set in a pale yellow mortar and had been dug into a layer of yellow/brown sandy soil (2 in Fig.4) containing medieval/post-medieval roof tile and mortar. This layer sloped from south to north, from 0.65m – 0.75m below the courtyard surface. Below this were the undisturbed sands of the Sandgate Beds (3 in Fig.4), here of a yellow/brown colour.



**Figure 4** Trench 1, to the left is the west face, to the right the north face. The scale is 2m.

3. In the northern face of the trench, the south elevation of an east-west running wall (4 in Fig.4) was exposed, composed of roughly dressed Lower and Upper Greensand blocks, the upper 0.4m of which was bonded in a yellow mortar, while the lower part was unmortared. One block of sculpted stone was set within the lower part, seemingly originally designed for an arch. The top of the remains of this wall lay 0.32m below the current concrete courtyard surface (5 in Fig.4), with the annexe foundations, where they crossed its line, resting upon it.

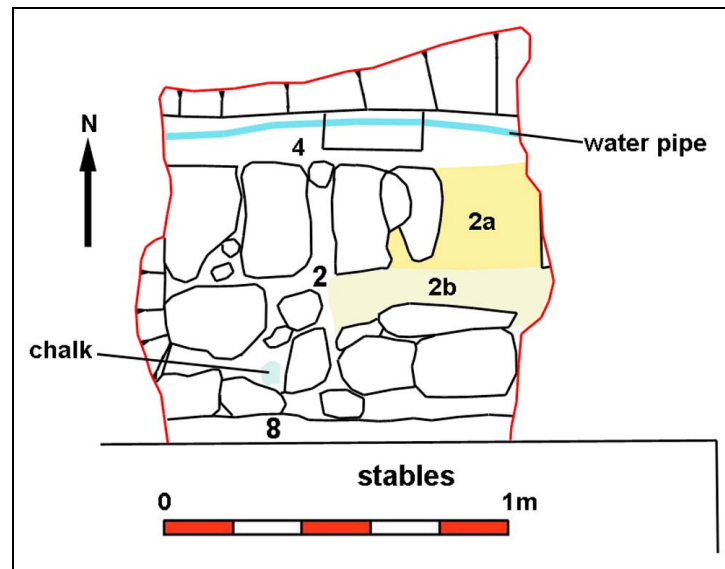
This wall is likely to be part of the remains of the medieval monastery. The presence of the fragment of sculpted stone might suggest that this wall dates to a later phase of the monasteries development.

## 13/Tr2



**Figure 5** Trench 2, looking south-west. The scale is in 0.5m bands.

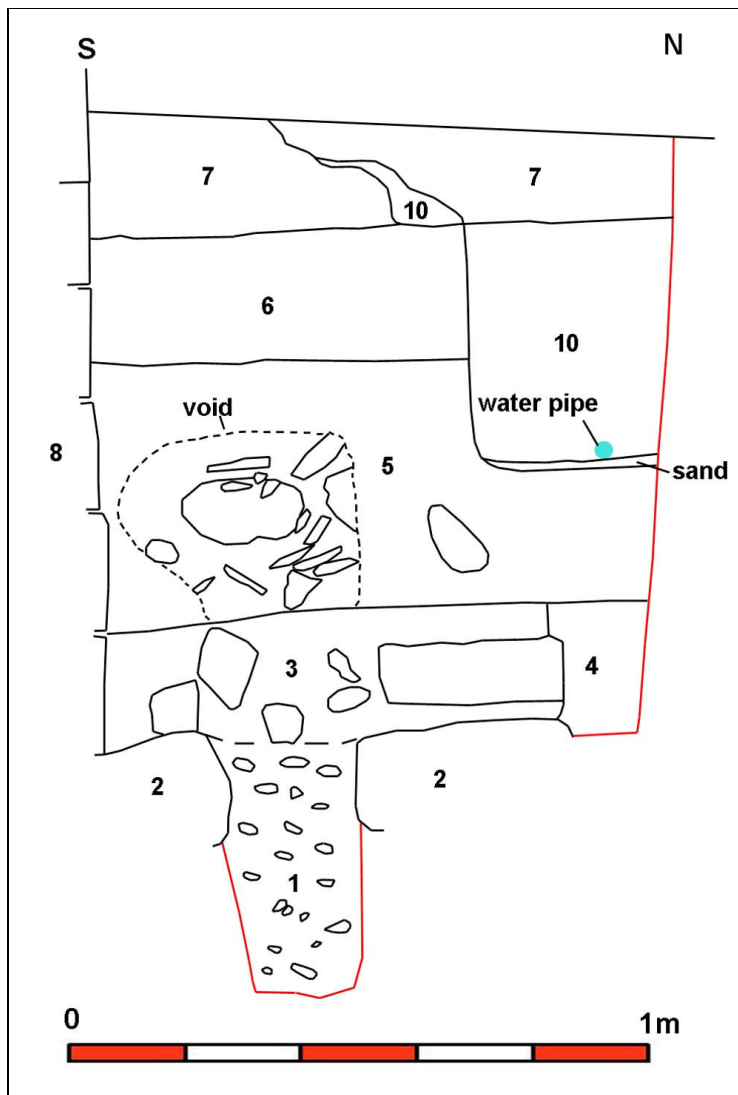
1. Trench 2 was positioned against the eastern end of the north wall of the stables in order to examine the nature of both the ground conditions and the foundations. The trench was approximately one metre square and 1.1m deep, with a small slot against the west face dug down to 1.5m deep.



**Figure 6** Plan of layer 2 at the base of Trench 2.



2. The foundations of the stables (8 in Figs. 6 & 7) were composed of roughly dressed Lower Greensand blocks set in a pale yellow mortar and extended to 1.1m deep below the level of the current yard surface. They rested upon a layer of large Upper and Lower Greensand blocks (2 in Figs. 6 & 7) which extended across the base of the trench, ending in an east-west running line, 0.8m to the north of the stables. To the north of this line there was a band of dark brown sand (4 in Figs. 6 & 7). Traces of both yellow (2a in Fig.6) and white mortar (2b in Fig.6) were visible on the surface of this stone layer. The small slot dug against the west face of the trench revealed that below the stone layer, at least in this location, was a layer of gravel and chalk (1 in Fig.7), with occasional medieval/post-medieval roof tile. Over the stone layer was a 0.2m thick compact layer of yellow/brown sandy soil and stone rubble (3 in Fig 7).



**Figure 7** The west face of Trench 2.

3. Above layer 3, and extending throughout the trench, was a 0.45m thick layer of loose brown soil (5 in Fig.7) containing frequent post-medieval roof tile, stone, mortar and brick fragments. This layer was below the current concrete yard surface (7 in Fig.7), which sat upon a layer of orange sand (6 in Fig.7). Against the northern baulk of the trench a modern water pipe had been inserted into a trench (10 in Fig.7) which had been dug down to a depth of 0.6m.
4. It is likely that the stone layer at the base of this trench is part of the remains of the medieval monastery, although in such a small excavation it is hard to determine the exact nature of what was exposed. The band of dark brown sand to the north may be the undisturbed natural sands, in which case the layers to the south may be filling or retaining a terrace cut into the slope as it runs south to the river. The fact that the foundations to the stables sit upon this layer suggests that here at least they are not re-using a medieval precursor. It has been suggested, however, that the western wall of the stables incorporates two *in situ* medieval door arches. If this were found to be the case, then the stables are only in part re-using medieval masonry. The similarity in construction of the stables and the annexe foundations might indicate that both these buildings date to approximately the same phase of development of the site.

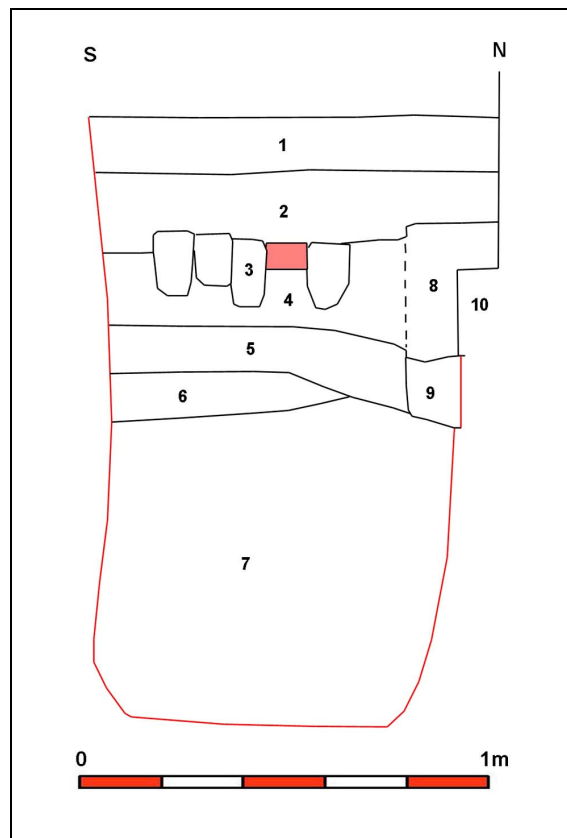
### 13/Tr3

1. Trench 3 was located against the south wall of the cow house, at its western end, in order to examine the nature of both the ground conditions and the foundations. The trench was 1.45m deep and approximately one metre square.

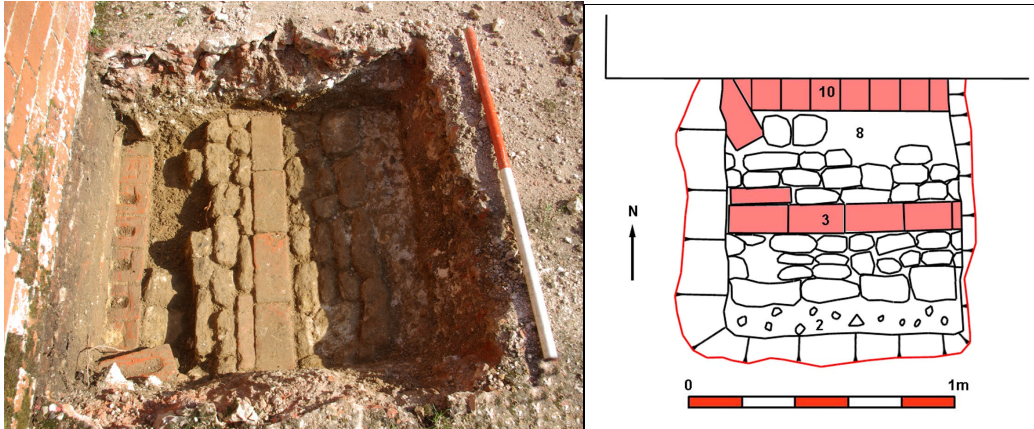


**Figure 8** Trench 3 looking north-west. The scale is in 0.5m bands.

2. The foundations of the cow house (10 in Figs.9 & 10) were of brick set upon a crushed chalk base (9 in Fig.9). At a depth of 0.36m below the current concrete yard surface the brick foundation widened by 0.1m to its full depth of 0.58m below ground level. The underlying crushed chalk extended to a depth of 0.75m below ground level and sat upon the surface of the undisturbed sands of the Sandgate Beds (7 in Fig.9), here of a predominantly yellow colour.
3. The cow house foundations had been dug through four earlier layers, the lowest of which was a dark brown soil (6 in Fig.9), 0.1m thick, containing frequent charcoal and medieval/post-medieval roof tile; above this was a lighter brown, more sandy, soil (5 in Fig.9), 0.1m thick, again with roof tile; above this was a similar soil layer (4 in Fig.9), 0.2m thick, but with more frequent tile and stone rubble. This last layer formed the base for a surface (3 in Figs. 9 & 10) composed of cobbles and brick, lying at a depth of 0.3m below the existing concrete surface, and extending across the trench to within 0.1m of its southern edge. This surface predates the current cow house, the foundations of which have been dug through it. Above the cobbles, and seemingly contemporary with the cow house, was a 0.2m thick layer of crushed chalk (2 in Figs.9 & 10), probably forming the exterior yard surface before the existing concrete (1 in Fig.9) was laid above.



**Figure 9** West face of Trench 3.

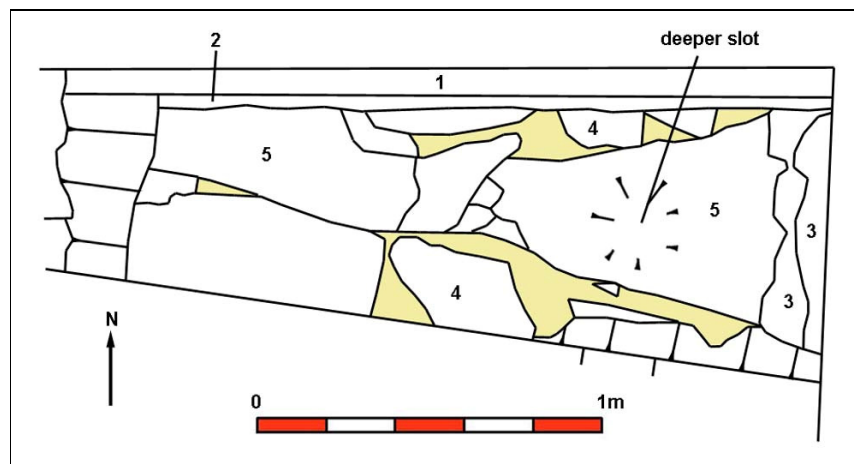


**Figure 10** Trench 3, to the left is the cobble surface (3) looking east, the scale is 1m.

4. No trace of any of the remains of the medieval monastery was found within this trench, although some of the soil layers are probably linked to its demolition. The cobble surface, which caps these rubble layers, is likely to date to the period after all the alterations of the 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and is possibly associated with an earlier building shown on the site of the cow house on the 1843 Tithe map and, in an altered form, on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1873. The current cow house was constructed between the date of this map and the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of 1898.

#### 13/Tr4

1. Trench 4 was located in the angle formed by the walls of the cow house and barn in the north-east corner of the existing courtyard, in order to examine the nature of both the ground conditions and the foundations of both buildings. The trench was 1.05m deep, with a small slot dug down to 1.4m. It was 2.2m north-south and tapered from 0.95m at its east end to 0.6m at its west. This unorthodox shape was dictated by that of the slab of concrete that overlay the trench.



**Figure 11** Plan of Trench 4.



2. The trench was found to contain three sets of foundations. Along its north face were those belonging to the cow house (1 in Fig.11), again composed of brick, with the same wider brick base as found in Trench 3. Here, however, they sat not upon a layer of crushed chalk, but instead upon a mortared base of chalk and brick fragments (2 in Fig.11), the bottom of which was 0.46m below the existing yard surface.
3. Along the trenches eastern face were the foundations of the barn (3 in Fig.11). These were composed of unmortared Lower Greensand rubble splaying out to 0.2m wider than the wall above and reaching a depth of 0.72m below the existing yard surface. Where they met the cow house they had clearly been altered, presumably when the latter was built, so that it is the barn's foundations which butt against those of the cow house.
4. Both these sets of foundation overlay an earlier one composed of Upper Greensand blocks set in a yellow mortar (4 in Fig.11). Although these had been damaged it was evident that they form a junction at this point, with one arm running east-west and the other north-south. It was not possible to determine in such a limited trench whether this represents the corner of a building or the meeting of several walls. The base of these foundations was set within the undisturbed geology (5 in Fig.11), here of yellow/brown sand and gravel, at a depth of 1.05m below the yard surface. These foundations are likely to be associated with the remains of the medieval monastery, possibly forming part of the Abbey church, which is believed to lie in approximately this location alongside the graveyard to the north (WSA 2003).



**Figure 12** Trench 4 looking east. The scale is 2m.



## Conclusion

1. In addition to Trenches 13/Tr1, 13/Tr2 & 13/Tr4 from this excavation, Trenches 03/water main, 07/Tr7, 07/Tr9, 07/Tr11 and 07/Tr12 were all found to contain identifiably medieval structural remains. However the overall layout of the Abbey is still not clear, although the view that the present Farm courtyard reflects the position of the original monastic cloister has been again undermined by the latest series of evaluation trenches. It now seems likely that medieval walls will be found under at least the eastern and southern parts of the courtyard, with the monastic cloister possibly lying in its north-western part.

## MITIGATION METHODOLOGY

### The Cow House

1. Trenches 07/Tr1, 07/Tr2, 07/Tr4 & 07/Tr5 found no identifiable medieval remains in the Cow House, and any archaeological deposits that do exist lay at a depth of 0.6m or more below the existing floor in 07/Tr2, 07/Tr4 & 07/Tr5 and at 0.35m 07/Tr1, where there was evidence of much modern disturbance. In accordance with these results the architect for the proposed development, Wray-McCann Architect Ltd, proposes that the foundation and slab plan to raise the level of any ground disturbance to above a depth of 0.6m below the current floor level. The depth of archaeological deposits in relation to the proposed new floor levels and their make-up layers, are shown on the architect's plans which accompany the applications.
2. It is of course possible that identifiably medieval remains may exist below the current floor of the cow house, despite the absence of such remains within the trenches excavated. It is therefore proposed that, in addition to the mitigation methods already undertaken by setting the maximum depth of disturbance to above 0.6m, provision is also made to locally adjust the floor depths in order to span over and thereby preserve *in situ* any archaeological remains revealed that are considered to be of sufficient significance to prevent their removal. In order to ensure that this is carried out an archaeological watching brief on the reduction of the ground associated with the works in the Cow House will be undertaken, thus enabling either preservation *in situ* or preservation by record. Decisions regarding which form of preservation is most appropriate to specific archaeological remains revealed will be agreed with English Heritage and the Local Planning Authority.

### The Barn

1. Trenches 07/Tr7, 07/Tr9, 07/Tr10, 07/Tr11 & 07/Tr12 located in the Barn have shown that archaeological remains, in this case the surviving parts of demolished medieval walls and a re-located sarcophagus, survive at a comparatively shallow level. In the light of

this the architect has set the proposed height of the new floor of the barn so that in no place will it, or its make-up layers, have an impact upon any archaeological deposits predicted on the basis of the excavated trenches. The depth of archaeological deposits in relation to the proposed new floor levels and their make-up layers, are shown on the architect's plans which accompany the applications.

3. It is of course possible that medieval remains may exist below the current floor of the Barn in locations not predicted by the excavated trenches. It is therefore proposed that, in addition to the mitigation methods already undertaken by setting the maximum depth of disturbance to lie above any identified archaeological remains, provision is also made to locally adjust the floor depths in order to span over and thereby preserve *in situ* any archaeological remains revealed that are considered to be of sufficient significance to prevent their removal. In order to ensure that this is carried out, and to further record those remains already known or assumed, an archaeological watching brief on the reduction of the ground associated with the works in the Barn will be undertaken, thus enabling either preservation *in situ* or preservation by record. Decisions regarding which form of preservation is most appropriate to specific archaeological remains revealed will be agreed with English Heritage and the Local Planning Authority.
4. In addition to the laying of a new floor within the barn, repair work to its superstructure will also be undertaken. Where this will involve the removal of elements of the historic fabric due to their unsound condition a photographic record will be made of them in position before any alterations are made.

### **New Greenhouse to East of Barn**

1. The proposed greenhouse will be sited within the roofless shell of a disused pig sty to the north-east of the Barn. Trench 07/Tr7, which was situated c.4m to the west of the greenhouse's location, indicates that surviving medieval wall foundations, if present in this location, survive at a depth of c.0.4m below the existing ground surface. The depth of the footings for the new greenhouse has been set above this depth in order to avoid any such remains.
2. It is of course possible that medieval remains may exist at a higher level than 0.4m within the pig sty, it is therefore proposed that, in addition to the mitigation methods already undertaken by setting the maximum depth of disturbance to above this level, provision is also made to locally adjust the locations of the footings in order to avoid and thereby preserve *in situ* any archaeological remains revealed that are considered to be of sufficient significance to prevent their removal. In order to ensure that this is carried out an archaeological watching brief on the reduction of the ground associated with the construction of the green house will be undertaken, thus enabling either preservation *in*

*situ* or preservation by record. Decisions regarding which form of preservation is most appropriate to specific archaeological remains revealed will be agreed with English Heritage and the Local Planning Authority.

## Landscaping

1. The works as proposed involve the laying of new surface treatments within the courtyard and to the north and west of the cow house. These works will involve the removal of existing surfaces and limited reduction and levelling of the underlying deposits. Within the courtyard surviving medieval deposits have been recorded as shallow as 0.3m below the current concrete surface and to the north and west of the cow house at only 0.25m below the existing surface. In the light of this all new surface treatments, and their underlying make-up layers, will not extend in depth below these levels.
2. It is of course possible that medieval remains may exist at a higher level than those previously recorded in the areas to be affected by the new surface treatments, it is therefore proposed that, in addition to the mitigation methods already undertaken by setting the maximum depth of disturbance to above these levels, provision is also made to locally adjust their depth in order to avoid and thereby preserve *in situ* any archaeological remains revealed that are considered to be of sufficient significance to prevent their removal. In order to ensure that this is carried out an archaeological watching brief on the reduction of the ground associated with the creation of the new surfaces will be undertaken, thus enabling either preservation *in situ* or preservation by record. Decisions regarding which form of preservation is most appropriate to specific archaeological remains revealed will be agreed with English Heritage and the Local Planning Authority.
3. It is possible that the removal of the two tree stumps lying within the courtyard will cause damage to underlying or adjacent medieval remains. In order to prevent this occurring their removal will be undertaken under archaeological supervision, with both the stumps and their roots being removed in a manner ensuring that no such damage is inflicted.

## Installation of new Services

1. The above works will require the instillation of new service runs. The plans drawn up by the architect which accompany these applications indicate the location of these services. Wherever possible these have been positioned within existing trenches to minimise their impact upon any buried archaeological remains.
2. It is proposed that an archaeological watching brief on the cutting of any new service trenches and on the re-opening of any of the existing

ones would be the most appropriate response. In addition a level of flexibility will have to be maintained in the positioning of any new trenches while it is being carried out, in order to avoid damaging the remains of any surviving structures or features associated with the medieval Abbey. Wherever possible trenches will be re-located in order to achieve this, but if this proves impractical then agreement will be reached with English Heritage over alternative solutions.

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