

PRIORY CHURCH OF ST MARY AND ST MICHAEL, CARTMEL, CUMBRIA

Archaeological Assessment



Client: PCC Cartmel Priory

NGR: 337959 478815

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March 2023



The Site	
Site Name	Priory Church of St Mary and St Michael, Cartmel
County	Cumbria
NGR	337959 478815

Client	
Client Name	PCC Cartmel Priory

Planning	
Pre-planning?	Yes
Planning Application No.	-
Plans (e.g. conversion, extension, demolition)	New extension to church
Condition number	-
Local Planning Authority	South Lakeland District Council
Planning Archaeologist	Jeremy Parsons, Cumbria County Council

Archaeological work	
Desk-based assessment done as previous phase of work?	Yes, as part of statement of significance compiled by Marion Barter Associates
Area of assessment	North wall of nave

Archiving	
Relevant Record Office(s)/Archive Centre(s)	Barrow-in-Furness/Kendal
Relevant HER	Cumbria
Relevant Museum	Kendal Museum

Staffing	
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Date(s) site work carried out	26 th January 2023 and 2 nd March 2023

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Summary

As part of proposals for the construction of an extension to the north side of the nave of the Priory Church of St Mary and St Michael, Cartmel, Cumbria, Greenlane Archaeology was commissioned to carry out an archaeological assessment of the north wall of the nave. This was intended to establish the development of this part of the structure based on a more detailed examination of the surviving fabric, but also taking into account the available documentary evidence in order to determine its archaeological significance.

The origins of Christian worship in Cartmel are obscure, but there is evidence that a church existed before the establishment of the Priory, which was established in the late 12th century. The Priory Church remains the only substantial surviving element of this. The documentary history of the Priory in the medieval period is not detailed, although a postulated understanding of the development and arrangement of the site has been established through various pieces of evidence. Significantly it is thought that the cloister was moved from the south side of the church to the north in the 14th century. The church is the only part of the Priory that survived the Dissolution to the present day and there is considerable documentary evidence for renovation and alterations to it from the early 17th century onwards, with a particularly large programme of work in the late 19th century.

The assessment involved the production of detailed photorectified views of the internal and external elevations of the north wall, from which elevation drawings were produced. These revealed a number of construction phases, including evidence for early fabric, probably from the late 12th or early 13th century. There is evidence for an associated doorway, which was later blocked, perhaps in the 14th century when the cloister was moved. The wall was later raised in height and again modified with the insertion of the current window.

While generally devoid of architectural features of interest the wall still retains evidence for numerous phases of development and potentially some of the earliest surviving fabric in the Priory as a whole. It has, however, been subject to numerous modifications including modern cement pointing, which has hidden a lot of detail. It is recommended that any intrusive work to create a new doorway be subject to an archaeological watching brief so that any features of interest can be recorded and the structure better understood.

Acknowledgements

Greenlane Archaeology would like to thank the PCC of Cartmel Priory for commissioning the project and for their help on site, in particular David Hugget, and their agent Dominic Roberts at Francis Robert Architects for his assistance during the project. Thanks are also due to Adam Stanford at Aerial-Cam for producing the photorectified images.

1. Introduction

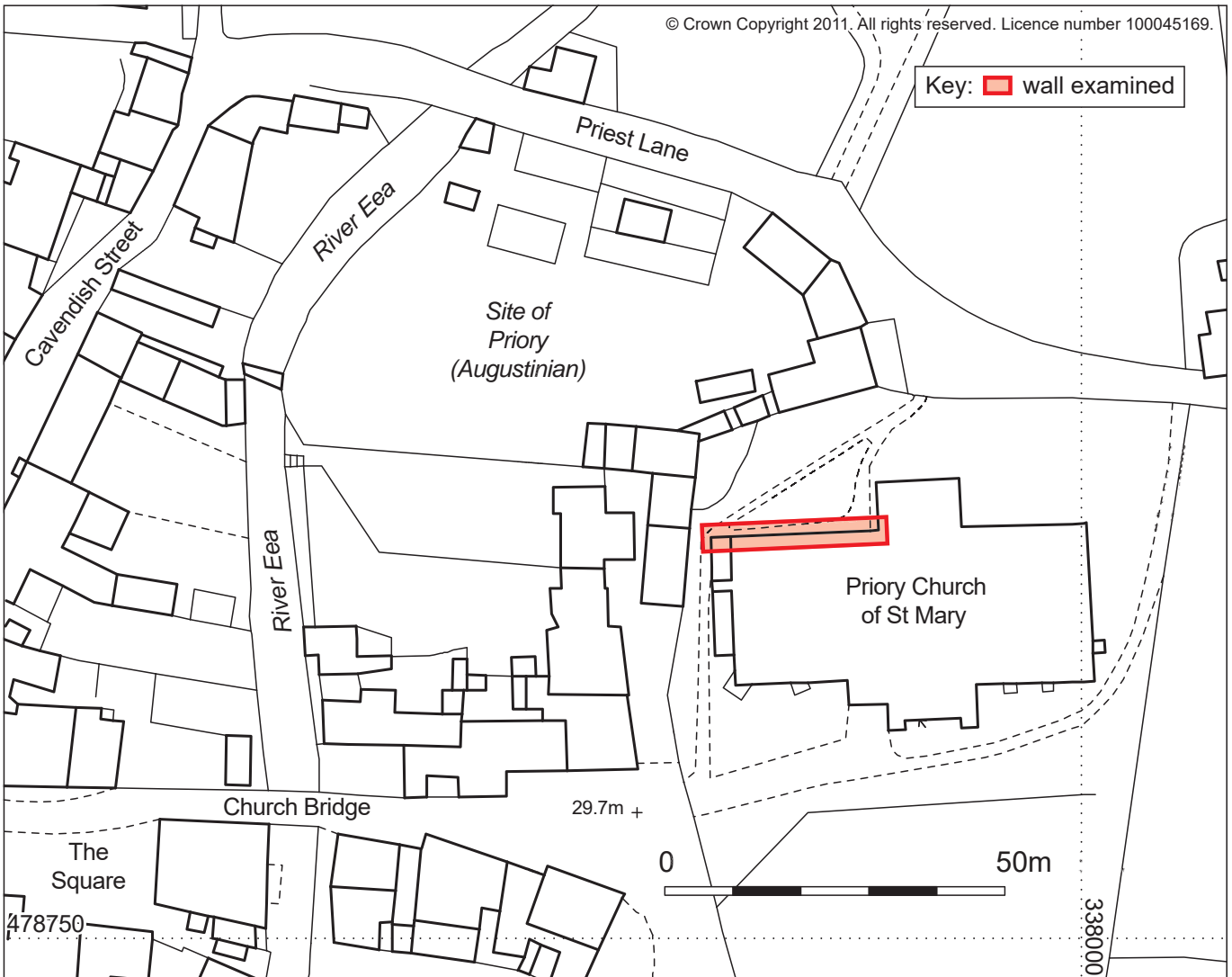
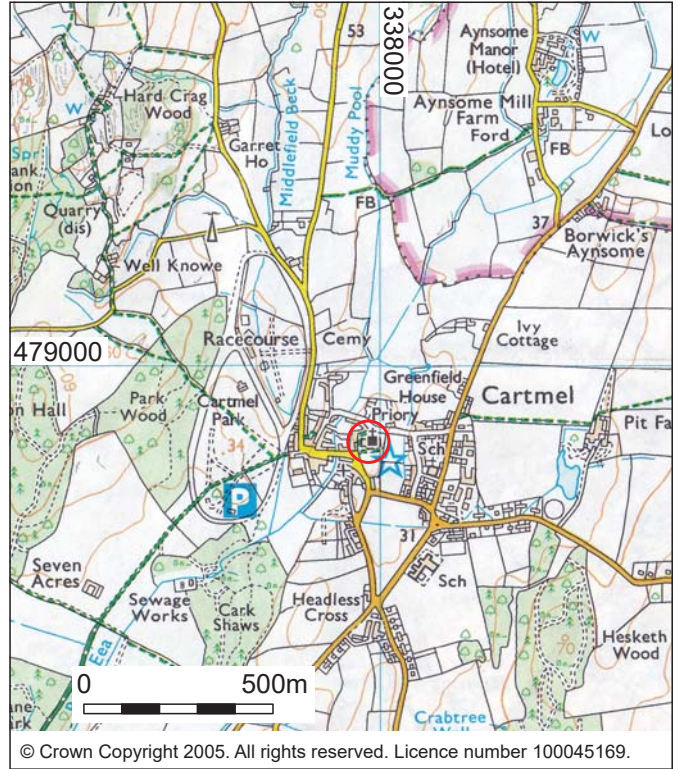
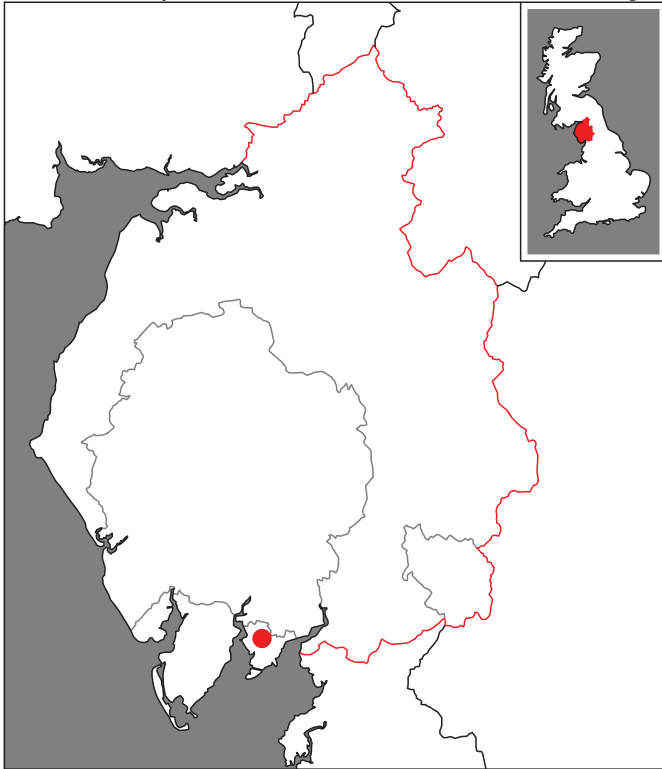
1.1 Circumstances of the Project

1.1.1 The circumstances of the project are set out in the tables on the inside cover of this report.

1.2 Location, Geology, and Topography

1.2.1 The site is located on the north-east side of Cartmel immediately to the north of the nave of the Priory Church, south of Priest Lane, at approximately 30m above sea level (Figure 1; Ordnance Survey 2011). The 'exceptional' and 'largely unspoilt' village of Cartmel, situated approximately 3.5km north-west of Grange-over-Sands to the south of the South Cumbria Low Fells on the northern side of Morecambe Bay (Countryside Commission 1998, 69; Ordnance Survey 2011), is now protected by Conservation Area status (Countryside Commission 1998, 73).

1.2.2 Cartmel lies on the junction of a complex series of solid geology comprising Bannisdale Slates of Silurian age and carboniferous limestone, covered by thick glacial debris, including deposits of cobbles, pebbles and sandy material (Moseley 1978, plate 1) and it is thought to have been substantially influenced by a post-glacial lake that filled much of the low-lying area in which the village now sits (Mitchell 1990). The local topography is typically that of improved undulating pasture set between areas of limestone, and more locally to Cartmel, slate outcrops.



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Figure 1: Site location

2. Methodology

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The archaeological assessment is intended to provide a suitable record of the affected area of the building, which, when taking the historical development of the building into consideration, allows an assessment of its significance to be made. This involved several different elements, all carried out according to the Standards and Guidance of the ClfA (ClfA 2020; 2020b; 2020c) as outlined below.

2.2 Desk-Based Assessment

2.2.1 Information compiled during a desk-based assessment carried out as part of an earlier heritage assessment for the whole Priory (Marion Barter Associates 2020) has been incorporated into this report where relevant. This examined a range of relevant sources.

- **Record Office/Archive Centre:** the majority of original and secondary sources relating to the site are deposited in the relevant Record Office(s) or Archive Centre(s), as specified in the cover sheet of this report. Of principal importance are early maps of the site. These were examined in order to establish the development of the site, date of any structures present within it, and details of land use, in order to set the site in its historical, archaeological, and regional context. In addition, any details of the site's owners and occupiers were acquired where available;
- **Online Resources:** where available, mapping such as Ordnance Survey maps and tithe maps were consulted online;
- **Greenlane Archaeology:** Greenlane Archaeology's office library includes maps, local histories, and unpublished primary and secondary sources. These were consulted where relevant, in order to provide information about the history and archaeology of the site and the general area.

2.3 Building Recording

2.3.1 The building recording was carried out to Historic England Level 3 type standards (Historic England 2016), which provides a relatively detailed record of the building. The recording comprised the following elements:

- **Written record:** descriptive records of all parts of the building were made using Greenlane Archaeology *pro forma* record sheets;
- **Photographs:** photographs in colour digital format (as both 12meg jpegs and RAW files) were taken of the main features of the building, its general surroundings, and any features of architectural or archaeological interest (see *Appendix 3*). A selection of the colour digital photographs is included in this report, and the remaining photographs are in the project archive. In addition, complete photographic coverage was also made in order to allow the production of photorectified images;
- **Drawings:** elevation drawings showing the various areas of architectural detail were produced by annotating plotted versions of the photorectified views at a scale of 1:100. These have been used to produce figures in the report.

2.4 Archive

2.4.1 The archive of the project will be deposited with the relevant Record Office or Archive Centre, as detailed on the cover sheet of this report, together with a copy of the report. The archive has been compiled according to the standards and guidelines of the ClfA guidelines (ClfA 2020c). In addition, details will be submitted to the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) scheme. This is an internet-based project intended to improve the flow of information between contractors, local authority heritage managers and the general public. A copy of the report will be provided to the client and a digital copy of the report will be provided for the relevant Historic Environment Record, as detailed on the cover sheet of this report.

3. Rapid Desk-Based Assessment

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The desk-based assessment is used to place the results of the assessment in their local historical and archaeological context. Information was largely extracted from that compiled as part of previous reports carried out by Greenlane Archaeology in Cartmel, in particular a historical background of the Priory Church recently produced for a Statement of Significance compiled by Marion Barter Associates (2020).

3.3 Site History

3.3.1 **Introduction:** since the assessment is specifically focussed on the Priory Church, only information relating to its history has been included.

3.3.2 **Early history:** the origins of a Christian community in Cartmel and the wider Cartmel Peninsula are obscure. What is undoubted is that there was a British population in Cartmel following the demise of the Roman Empire's control over the area, as they are referred to in a grant made by the Northumbrian King Ecgfrith to St Cuthbert of land in Cartmel. Historically, this was translated as having included the British population, i.e. that the natives were given as chattels (Crowe 1984, 63), but more recently this has been reinterpreted as referring to the grant having been made by Ecgfrith *and* the Britons that were in Cartmel, suggesting that there was a recognised native aristocracy in the area who were negotiating with the Northumbrians (Edmonds 2013, 20). Whether that means there was an existing British church estate within the block of land that was presented as part of this grant is difficult to say, however. No *eccles* place-names are recorded in the immediate vicinity of Cartmel itself which would potentially indicate the presence of a British church, or at least land held or controlled by them (Elsworth 2011), although there is an 'Eccleston Meadow' in Flookburgh, which might be significant in this regard (Stockdale 1872, 125). Nevertheless place-names indicating the presence of Britons are found in the region, such as Walton, which derives from an Anglo-Saxon word *wealas* applied to native Britons, possibly especially those that thought of themselves as Romans (Woolf 2010, 231-232).

3.3.3 Of potential interest in understanding the origins of the church in Cartmel, and therefore the subsequent development of the Priory, are other local place-names which indicate the presence of a church. Kirkhead, near Allithwaite, demonstrates that when Norse settlers arrived in the area in the 10th century there was a church already in existence or, more implausibly, that they constructed a church when they arrived. The names 'Kirkepol' and 'Kirk Heys' are also recorded nearby (Crowe 1984, 65), but there is no certainty that a church existed in the area around Kirkhead and, like *eccles* place-names, the element *kirk* could just refer to land controlled by a church. However, Stockdale records a *'tradition that there was a chapel near Kirkhead and Abbot Hall – some remains of which, even graves, it is said, existed in the last century'* (Stockdale 1872, 505). In addition, Crowe suggests that the place named as *Cherchebi* (meaning 'church village') in the Domesday survey corresponds with Cartmel, since it was known as 'Cartmel Churchtown' in later records (1984, 61); this correlation is by no means definite, however. Complicating the issue further is the story regarding the foundation of the actual Priory; according to a legend, first printed in 1821 (Atkins 1821), the monks came into Cartmel looking for a place for their new priory and found a suitable hill. Having marked out the site for building a voice spoke to them, saying *'Not there, but in a valley between two rivers, where the one runs north, and the other south'*. Unable to imagine such a place they began searching across the north of England, but finding nothing matching this description they returned to the original hill. In doing so they crossed a valley where they found a stream running north and another running south, as predicted, and between them they built their priory. They also built a chapel on the original hill dedicated to St Bernard, which retains this name as 'Mount Bernard' to this day. Regardless of the speculation about the possibility of early churches being on different sites, the fact that the 12th century priory church was used as a parish church actually makes it entirely plausible that the Priory was actually, quite deliberately, located on the site of an earlier church. This would be more in keeping with other sites, where continuous use of the same site was relatively common, although this is normally only comes to light through archaeological excavation.

A very useful recent and relatively local example of this is at St Michael's Church, Workington (Zant and Parsons 2019). Indeed, it is clear that a church did exist at Cartmel before the establishment of the Priory because there is a reference in 1135 to Willelmus, clerk of Cartmel, and in 1155 to Uccheman, parson of Cartmel (Stockdale 1872, 8-9). It is also interesting to note that a consideration of the geology of the site has concluded that the Priory is actually built on an island of glacial debris in a post-glacial lake (Mitchell 1990, 44 and figure 2 on page 48); this would have been an ideal location for an early medieval 'celtic' church/monastery, which were often erected in isolated spots such as islands or peninsulas (see Thomas 1971, 10-47). In the wider area local place names indicate a complex mixture of social and ethnic groups during this period, including native Britons, Angles and Vikings. The earliest forms of the place-name 'Cartmel', which are recorded from the 12th century, probably derive from the Old English "ceart" and "the Old Norse word "melr" (Crowe 1984, 61) and broadly mean "sand bank by rocky ground" (Dickinson 1991, 9) and may originally have applied to the Grange area (Dickinson 1980, 7).

3.3.4 Medieval Period (11th century AD – 16th century AD): by 1168 the parish of Cartmel was a royal estate and in 1186 it was granted to the Marshall family, the Earls of Pembroke, by Henry II (Crowe 1984, 65). The predominant relevant element of the historic landscape is, of course, Cartmel Priory and in particular the Priory Church, although much of the present village of Cartmel lies within the wider precinct of the Priory. The Priory of St Mary the Virgin in Cartmel was established in 1188 (or had been established by 1190 at least) by an order of Augustinian Canons through the patronage of William Marshall, later earl of Pembroke (Farrer and Brownbill 1914, 259; Dickinson 1945, 51). The mother priory was Bradenstoke in Wiltshire, which sent a group of canons to Cartmel, although from the start Cartmel was independent (Farrer and Brownbill 1914, Vol.2, 143). It is apparent that the new priory at least invoked the memory of an earlier church, dedicated to St Michael, as the parish church and its chapels were referred to in the original foundation; an altar to St Michael was reserved for the use of parishioners and this dedication continued until after the Dissolution (Farrer and Brownbill 1914, 259). The parishioners continued to make use of the church after the establishment of the Priory, with the Town Choir, on the south side of the chancel, reputed to have served them (Dickinson 1945, 64-65); however, the west part of the nave would have been a more traditional area in a priory church for the local community to use (as at Carlisle) and from the 1340s the south chapel was a chantry chapel. Important fabric from the primary phase of construction, which continued into the early 13th century (up until the death of William Marshall in 1219), remains, primarily in the chancel and the north and south transepts, Piper Choir and crossing. This fabric, with mainly pointed arches, is characteristic of the style now referred to as Early Gothic (this was a French architectural tradition, and the term Early English is now considered to be inaccurate). The fabric of the church shows that the primary phase of the sanctuary projected one bay east of the east ends of the north and south chapels, so that the sanctuary was lit by north and south lancet windows. The nave may not have been built by 1219, as the quality ashlar work stops just within the east end of the nave. The evidence for missing claustral buildings at the church are blocked doorways in both the north and south transepts (that led to upper floor rooms), a book recess on the west side of the south transept and corbels on the west face of the transepts that carried a cloister roof.

3.3.5 The architecture of the Priory Church continued to be changed and remodelled in at least two phases during the later medieval period, but the lack of documentary records for this period hampers an accurate interpretation; the physical fabric of the building and its archaeology is therefore an important source of evidence for this period. The architecture of the church expresses phases of major investment, where features are readily dateable. In the mid-14th century the chapel south of the chancel was rebuilt and enlarged (Dickinson 1945; Dickinson 1991, 42) to create the Harrington chantry (John Harrington died 1347), with new windows of flowing Decorated Gothic tracery. The elaborate tomb and its altar would have occupied a large part of the chapel. More substantial work to the church took place in the 15th century, meaning the building or rebuilding of the nave with arcades, clerestories and aisles. The chancel was refurbished with a vast new east window in c1420 and smaller Perpendicular Gothic windows were also installed in the transepts and Piper Choir, in place of the earlier lancet windows. The top stage of the tower and the choir clerestory is also of this period. The rebuilding of the nave with new south windows partly supports the theory that the priory underwent substantial reorganisation in the 14th century, when it is suggested that the cloister was moved from its original south location to the north.

The first printed version of this interpretation, identified for this study, is in an article published in *The Builder* in 1899 (Anon 1899; see CAC(B) BDX/828/1/3/88 1899); this was later repeated by Farrer and Brownbill (1914, 259) and then by Curwen (1920, 111), but the most extensive discussion was by Dickinson (1945, 57-66). The evidence for this theory is a combination of the known disruption in the wider region during this period caused by the Scottish raids, with corresponding documentary evidence suggesting that by 1391 the church was in a state of decay and architectural evidence from within the building. The latter include 12th century features on the south transept that express former claustral buildings here, the presence of the 15th century south aisle windows which are not compatible with a cloister here at that date, the doorway cut into the north transept north wall and a row of rough corbels on the blind north side of the nave which is thought to have supported the roof of a later north cloister (Dickinson 1945). It has also been suggested that the ground on which the original south cloister was built might have been subject to subsidence, which required the cloister to be moved (op cit, 63). This has been investigated more recently with Mitchell suggesting that the Priory is located on an island of 'sandy glacial debris which is known to be more than 8 feet deep in places' within a post-glacial lake (1990, 45), but this does not prove that the south cloister had to be taken down. Notwithstanding these arguments supporting this theory, the evidence for it is not robust and has not been tested by any detailed, modern examination of the fabric, nor any archaeological evaluation of below-ground material. Indeed, earlier accounts of the church's history observed the same evidence within the building but concluded that the features on the south side of the church related to a chapter house or dormitory 'that was intended to be continued southward, but was never erected' (Paley 1872, 5) while on the north side of the nave the 'projecting through-stones indicate that a wooden pent-house... extended from some buildings lying westward, to the north doorway' (op cit, 5-6).

3.3.6 Unfortunately, it is not possible to get a detailed view of the possessions acquired by the Priory due to the loss of its archives, although it evidently received a number of further grants in the 13th and 14th century and eventually acquired a number of comparatively large farms (Dickinson 1991, 14-19). Its ecclesiastical wealth was valued at £46. 13s. 4d. in 1291 in the *Taxation of Pope Nicholas* (Dickinson 1980, 15). However, like much of the north of England, it was subject to raids by the Scots throughout the 14th century (Dickinson 1991, 29-30); with the raids of 1316 and 1322 having 'wrought immense damage in the area' and on the latter occasion the *Lanercost Chronicle* records that the Scottish raiders "*burnt the lands around the priory... and took away cattle and booty*" (Dickinson 1980, 13). The Priory was also affected by the Black Death, which may explain why, probably like many English monasteries, it is recorded as having fewer brethren than normal in 1381 (Dickinson 1980, 16). The defensive potential of the Priory should not be overlooked (Hyde and Pevsner 2010, 268). The main Priory gatehouse leading into the precinct was built between 1330 and 1340 and the land surrounding the Priory was also enclosed by a precinct wall during the 14th century (Curwen 1920, 111). The gatehouse is the only remaining building associated with Cartmel Priory, although vestiges of other buildings are incorporated in later structures. Elements of the precinct wall evidently survived in reasonable condition into the early 19th century and are depicted in Ffolliott's plan of 1854. Baines describes it as running west from the gatehouse, before running north past Fairfield where '*about one hundred yards of the wall exist of rough ragcoble [sic] stone*' before it turned east then south-east (Baines 1836, 725). The likely earliest plan delineating the presumed and known elements of the Priory and its precinct wall, produced by Ffolliott in 1854, is of interest as it seems to have been used as the basis for determining the position of these features in subsequent accounts (e.g. Dickinson 1981, 83), although the manner in which these structures were positively identified is uncertain.

3.3.7 In 1390 a papal mandate to the archbishop of York ordered an investigation of the prior of Cartmel, William, accused of simony in admitting canons to profession and of 'too frequent visits to taverns', to the extent that the monastery was falling into disrepair (Dickinson 1980, 13). This may have been the catalyst for a period of reputedly much needed reconstruction and restoration of the Priory, possibly begun in the final years of the 14th century (*ibid.*, 19). Hyde and Pevsner state, somewhat enigmatically, that '*something drastic [emphasis added] made it necessary for the canons to rebuild their monastic precinct on the [north] side*' in approximately the mid-15th century (Hyde and Pevsner 2010, 267). Furthermore, the surrounding lofty precinct wall was said to have been largely rebuilt and partly re-sited in the 15th century, too (Dickinson 1980, 18). It has elsewhere been suggested that rebuilding was

needed as a result of the devastation wrought by the Scottish raids, which perhaps burnt the Priory buildings to the ground (Curwen 1920, 111-112), or else the relocation of the cloistral buildings became necessary out of consideration for the underlying geological properties of the respective sides of the church (Mitchell 1990, 45-46).

3.3.8 The small field to the north side of Priest Lane (immediately to the north of the Priory Church) is called "Farmery" field, which Dickinson interprets as a reference to the old word for infirmary, which in this case would have provided treatment for the sick and infirm brethren (Dickinson 1980, 21; 1991, 109). Subsequent archaeological work here has demonstrated the presence of burials and a range of structures, which would support this view (Wilson and Clare 1990; Abacus Archaeology 2012). In either case, its layout can apparently be determined from aerial photographs, which show that its main structure, most likely a large hall, with twin aisles and an open area at one end, ran north/south and it had a subsidiary block on its eastern side (Dickinson 1991, 109). The walling of the monastic precinct continues to the east and the area to the north, towards the beck, is low-lying and prone to flooding (Dickinson 1991, 109-110). The land between Farmery field and the beck to the west may have been gardens and orchards with fields to the north (Dickinson 1980, 21). The field immediately to the south-east of Fairfield Lodge formed part of the Priory's outer court, which would have housed the agricultural and industrial buildings essential to the Priory's economy, which potentially included barns, granaries, brew house, bake house, guesthouse, wool house, swine house, stables, mills, dovecots, tannery, and blacksmiths etcetera, and nowadays forms part of the Scheduled Monument area associated with the Priory (Scheduled Monument Number: 34796).

3.3.9 During the Dissolution the value of all monastic houses was assessed and visitations took place, on the order of Henry VIII. In 1535 Cartmel was found to have a value of £91 6s 3d (Dickinson 1991, 33-34). Since it was initially the smallest houses that were most threatened by closure under the First Act of Suppression, Cartmel protested and a more detailed survey was carried out in 1536, revaluing it at £212 12s 10½d (op cit, 34). Despite this, the closure of the Priory went ahead in 1537, although for a short time the canons at Cartmel were reinstated following the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536-1537, the Northern revolt against the Crown's decision (Farrer and Brownbill Vol.2, 143-148). In 1540, the site of the Priory was granted to Thomas Holcroft (op cit). At Cartmel, the parishioners purchased the whole church (Dickinson 1991, 33-23), a pattern that also occurred at some other town centre priories such as Malvern. This likely reduced the damage caused, for example by the complete removal of lead from the roof (op cit, 36-37). However, various accounts suggest that it was partially unroofed and allowed to fall into disrepair for perhaps as long as 83 years (eg Cooper 1899, 223); no specific evidence is given for this apart from an account in 1873, which states that the effect of being unroofed 'are still visible in the decayed state of certain portions of the wood-work in the Choir from exposure to the weather' (CAC(K) WPR/89/4/2/12 1873-1957). The very weathered condition of the choir stalls' timber may support this. Fortunately for Cartmel a large part of the Priory's estates was acquired by the Preston family of Furness, whose descendants, the Cavendish family, still own Holker. George Preston paid for repairs to the roof of the Priory Church between 1615 and 1617, but not a large enough sum to suggest that there was extensive damage to remedy (Dickinson 1991, 37-40). The rest of the Priory buildings were almost entirely demolished; the main exception being the gatehouse, to the west of the church, and parts of the precinct wall to the north, although more substantial elements of the latter were clearly still standing into the mid-19th century (Ffoliot 1854). In addition, more recent investigations have revealed that substantial amounts of medieval fabric survive in other buildings around the village (Greenlane Archaeology 2013a; 2013b) and, as Stockdale said of the Priory, it is likely that '*Half the Town of Cartmel has been built out of stones taken from these ruins*' (CAC(B) DDHJ/4/2/1/6 1860s-1870s). Some account of repairs to the church at the end of the 16th century and into the 17th century survives in the Church Book, which was saved by James Stockdale and partially transcribed by him. These show a fairly continual process of repairs, particularly to the roofs, with a more substantial programme of re-roofing carried out by the Preston family in about 1618 (Dickinson suggests it was between 1617-1622; 1991, 37. Rigge argues that it was 1618-1623, and notes that the new roof was at a lower pitch '*as the weather-mouldings on the outside walls show*' (1879, 5)).

3.3.10 **Post-medieval Period (16th century AD – present):** not long after the repairs carried out by the Preston family were completed Cromwellian soldiers stayed in the village on 1st October 1643, stabling

their horses in the church after a minor battle in Furness and doing some damage to the building (Dickinson 1985, 115). In 1660 came the re-establishment of Anglicanism and the church bells were re-cast in 1661 (Dickinson 1980, 25). There is otherwise relatively little record of alterations for over 200 years after the improvements made by the Preston family. In 1677 the current vestry was constructed (Taylor 1959), in place of the old sacristy, following a bequest by William Robinson of Newby Bridge of £40. This comprised a two-storey extension matching the height of the Town Choir to the south, which reinstated symmetry to the east end of the church (Dickinson 1991, 88). It also reused some earlier material including a window with its earlier stained glass, and later held a collection of early books given to the church by Thomas Preston in his will (he died in 1697). Remarkably, there is seemingly no record of any work carried out at the church in the 18th century, although it is perhaps noteworthy that in 1852 the archive relating to Cartmel was described as having been 'rudely and cruelly dealt with; fire & the sword have at various times done much mischief among them & few of great antiquity or value have been preserved' (CAC(K) WPR/89/1/7/5 1845-1852) and it is likely that a gallery was added during this period.

3.3.11 It is not until the 19th century that extant records become more detailed, in part because of the extensive repairs and restoration carried out in the second half of the century (see Section 2.1.9 below); a summary of repairs, with a detailed account of expenditure from 1864, was published in 1873 by Rev Hubbersty CAC(K) WPR/89/4/2/12 1873-1957). The need for work to the building by the early 19th century was clearly urgent, given the description by Dr Whitaker in 1818: '*In this fine Church, after the lapse of nearly two centuries, another Preston begins to be wanted... there is an appearance of something between a Cathedral and a ruin. Damp floors, green walls, and rotting beams, shelter just sufficient for owls and bats, and light augmented by broken panes, are connecting links between the high and finished repair of the one, and the total abandonment of the other*' (Whitaker 1818, 5). A number of minor repairs were evidently carried out in the 1820s, with a Robert Webster (part of the architect family of Kendal; see Martin 2004) paid for '*freestone repairs to the west window*' in 1820, and for unspecified work in 1823 (Tyson 1993, 11). A much longer list of required repairs, made by the Bishop of Chester, was also produced in 1821, with relevant items including:

'The lead of the tower to be repaired, & the inside to be rough cast.

The covering of ye Roof & Aisles to be examined & thoroughly repaired where wanting.

The Area of ye church to be made level, & the whole re-flagged, where ye flags are broken, or bad.

The wooden frame for ye clock to be removed out of ye church.

The church yard wall to be examined, & repaired where necessary.

The organ to be removed to ye west end & it is strongly recommended, tho' not ordered by the Bishop, that when ye flagging is taken up, the pulpit & reading desk be brot [sic] near the communion rails & the Pews be carried down either near the font, or along each transept.' (CAC(K) WPR/89/4/3/3 1821-1822).

Other interesting comments include preventing cattle from grazing in the churchyard, and that '*at a vestry meeting it be consider'd whether all the paths, except one, might not be stopped up, as ye church yard is render'd very disgraceful by people loitering about & playing in it & doing mischief to W window &c'* (ibid). A separate note of the same date also adds:

'The Glass in ye windows of ye church, in many of them, wants repairing.

The top of ye Tower in ye church, not to be whitewashed.

The Earth to be removed from ye outside walls of ye church, & a Drain of open slate or stone made adjoining to them, as far as is practicable, so as to carry off all drippings of water into ye common Drain.

No Burials to be made without or within ye church except at ye distance of a yard from ye walls or pillars' (ibid).

3.3.12 It is clear that not all of the Bishop's requested repairs were carried out, at least not immediately, as a follow up letter enquired what had been done a year later (ibid). This was met with a statement from the church that confirmed that most of the roofing had been done and the drain dug along the outside of

the south wall but elsewhere this was waiting upon plans to reseal the interior, as was the reflagging (*ibid*). Indeed, it was not until 1830 that records show the work started on the proposed reflagging of the floor, although the first relevant record is an estimate made by Roger Elleray and John Newby in 1828, which states that the west nave, north and south transepts, Town Choir, Piper Choir, including recesses in both, were to be included (CAC(K) WPR/89/4/3/5 1828-1832). The architect for this work is not known although Rigge incorrectly writes that E.G. Paley was responsible (born in 1823, he was clearly too young) (Tarney, 1897, 174). A specification for the work from 1830 gives remarkable detail, stating that the flags are to be less than two inches thick and to be sourced from Hutton Roof and Banks Bottom ‘& true and self faced... well squared in the edge & laid solid on sand and jointed in regular courses with Putty & Paste in every joint and all the joints dressed off even after laid’ (CAC(K) WPR/89/4/3/5 1828-1832). The old flags were to be checked and reused where suitable, gravestones were to be re-laid, and the ground was to be levelled, evidently with imported soil where necessary (a quantity of 685 carts of soil was given in the earlier estimate; *ibid*). The resulting work by Michael Richardson and George Riley cost over £150 but also included repairs to at least one of the pillars (*ibid*). A subsequent receipt from 1831 from David Bayliss was also received for work in the ‘lumber room’, to the pillars, in the porch, and for flags for the pulpit (*ibid*). Shortly afterwards other repairs were carried out to the Harrington Monument, with John Newby and David Bailey paid for cleaning and repairs and for stone, while John Newby was also paid for cleaning arches in the church, and money was spent on the organ gallery stairs (CAC(K) WPR/89/4/6/1 1835-1969). Not everyone was happy with these renovations – James Stockdale, writing to *The Times* some 35 years later, condemned the work done in the 1830s to the Harrington Monument and the original font, which was ‘*subjected anew to the mason’s chisel, and fashioned into its present shape, and (oh, the Vandalism!) a modern date – 1833 – cut in large letters upon it*’ (CAC(B) DDHJ/4/2/1/6 1860s – 1870s).

3.3.13 The programme of improvements continued between 1837 and 1841, initially with repairs to the guttering on the east side of the south transept, then the ‘*two roofs on the south side of the Nave or West End*’, with all of the work carried out by Roger Elleray (CAC(K) WPR/89/4/3/8 1837-1844). The receipts give a very detailed list of the materials used including items such as ‘*oak planks for the gable ends*’ and ‘*Laths of Red deal*’, while a payment for ‘*1 Day at Coniston choosing out*’ indicates the source of the slate while it is also clear that this work extended to include the porch and ‘*A New Oak Gate for the Main Entrance*’ and ‘*Gate repairing at the East Entrance*’ (*ibid*). The expense of such repairs was clearly an issue, however, and the Rev Thomas Remington stated in 1841 that ‘*as complaints have been made at the expense of keeping the church in repair, I have for your satisfaction, drawn out a statement of the ordinary expenses, which you will oblige me by showing to any one who may be inclined to think we are not saving as we ought to be*’ (CAC(K) WPR/89/4/3/8 1837-1844). Nevertheless, important repairs to the roof were continued under the supervision of Rev Remington through the ‘*principle of strict economy in the management of the Church Rates*’ so that between 1845 to 1865 the roofs of the north aisle of the nave, the eastern half over the south transept, the Piper Choir and Vestry, the north transept, the south aisle of the chancel (the Town Choir) and the nave were (in that order) all ‘*re-slatted in a most substantial and durable manner*’ (CAC(K) WPR/89/4/2/12 1873-1957). During this period, in 1850, the old plaster was also removed, the walls having been coated ‘*with an extraordinary thickness of whitewash from top to bottom and from end to end*’ and the, now decaying, plaster ceiling was also removed from the crossing and ‘*the present one of Timber was put up from a design gratuitously furnished by the late George Webster, Esquire of Eller How, architect*’ (*ibid*). In places, beneath the old plaster, the walls were found to be of rubble construction and so new plaster was added to conceal this, it being noted by one contemporary that ‘*in some parts of the walls the squared stones were found to have been removed, and replaced with rubble-work... this was especially the case in the south transept, where there had been ancient alterations and buildings, traces of which are visible outside the walls. The nave and its aisles were found to be of such rough rubble workmanship as not to admit of being pointed or the surface dressed internally, they were therefore plastered in a manner as little incongruous as possible with the better built parts of the interior*’ (Rigge 1879, 7).

3.3.14 The death of the Rev Remington in 1854 led to a pause in renovation, which was renewed in 1857-8 when the Chancel was re-roofed and ‘*the interior plaster ceiling, which had become dangerously decayed, was taken down, and the timber Roof thoroughly repaired; the walls, pillars, and arches were cleaned from whitewash; and a very striking feature of the Church which had been blocked up and*

almost obliterated, namely the Triforium, was opened and completely restored (CAC(B) WPR/89/4/2/12 1873-1957). Also, in the late 1850s, the 17th century plaster ceiling in the Town Choir was evidently in poor condition; so it was removed and replaced with a timber ceiling, designed by E.G. Paley, re-roofed and the walls were stripped of whitewash (*ibid*). By 1863 a considerable donation of money and further fund-raising led to a new round of restoration also designed by E.G. Paley, recorded in detail in the Hubbersty publication of 1873, with significant elements including the restoration of the walls and roofs of the nave and side aisles, the removal of the '*cumbrous galleries*' and new seating, the restoration of the south porch including the addition of new oak doors and glazing the west window, and the erection of a new pulpit, reading desk and font, the latter '*having been rendered necessary by the unfortunate circumstance that the ancient Font of the Church had been so altered and spoiled many years ago, by some unskilled hand, as totally to have lost its original form*' (CAC(B) WPR/89/4/2/12 1873-1957). In addition, the paving in the centre of the church and south transept was re-laid with concrete used under some of the seating and new flooring laid in the sanctuary with encaustic tiles and limestone. Repairs were made to several windows, a new organ and clock was installed in the Town Choir (organ built by Jardine), and new heating stoves: '*providing for the warming of the Church by means of two of the largest sized Gurney stoves... in conjunction with the hot-water apparatus put up by Mr Remington in 1853*' (*ibid*). All of these alterations cost over £3,500.

3.3.15 Numerous original documents relating to the Paley restoration exist, including a plan for reseating the church (CAC(K) WPR/89/4/310 1863), which shows a '*large gile stove*' on the north and south side of the nave, predating those mentioned in 1892, (see below), the faculty to take down the galleries (CAC(K) WPR/89/4/2/3 1864) and an associated plan (CAC(K) WPR/89/4/6/2 1864) and a general plan of the church showing the position of the grave slabs (CAC(K) WPR/89/4/6/3 1867). Much of this work was almost undone when a fire broke out in the nave in early January 1892, as described in a newspaper article at the time: '*The west end of the church is warmed by two large Gurney's stoves, one located on the northern side, the beautiful memorial to Lord Frederick Cavendish being to the rear; the other on the southern side with the font between. It was from the latter the fire arose. The stove pipe enters the wall and traverses a considerable distance through it in a pretty well upright direction, when it comes under the wall plate and lead, the smoke passing through a small chimney immediately behind the battlements. The passage under the leads is of a dead level, and it was here the fire broke out, catching the spars of pitchpine which overhang the wall plate*' (Newspaper cutting in Vestry Archive 17th January 1892). Fortunately, the fire was noticed quickly, the alarm raised and it was put out with minimal damage sustained. At an unknown date before 1889, the lean-to addition was built between the west buttresses; this is shown on the OS map surveyed in 1889 and on several late 19th century views. This may have been designed by Paley but the faculty for it has not been identified in the records. The west doorway into this area was uncovered during the 1850s restoration phase (Hubbersty, 1873, 8).

3.3.16 There is much less recorded information for the 20th century. In 1925 and 1930 Austin and Paley were commissioned to carry out repairs and pointing of internal walls and other minor work, apparently in connection with work being carried out by the stained-glass manufacturers Shrigley and Hunt, who were also based in Lancaster (Brandwood 2012, 250 and 252). A new reredos, high altar and other sanctuary fittings were installed in 1933, the gifts and names of donors recorded on a panel on the rear of the reredos. In 1934, a faculty was granted for electric lighting (the church had been lit by oil lamps). In the late 1950s further repairs were made to the roof of the chancel (CAC(K) WPR/89/4/3/12 1873-1957). This was in part funded by the Holker Estate as a result of lands conveyed to them in 1796, which carried with them '*the responsibility of the repair of the chancel*'. This charge was evidently compounded in 1956 after considerable discussion of the amount that was due, at which time it was noted that '*This liability for chancel repair is not an unusual one. Hundreds were compounded when an Act extinguished the tithe in 1936; and relatively few remain. The unusual thing in the case of Cartmel is that the liability had for so long been forgotten on both sides*' (*ibid*). In 1964 the stonework and lead in the east window were repaired by glazier Dennis King and mason John Rawson, with architect Alan Reed (recorded in a painted panel on the window). Details of subsequent faculties (held in the vestry archive) record works carried out to the fabric between 1971 and 2017; one of the most substantial and more recent changes, completed in 2018, was the removal of fixed seating within the nave, along with the timber platforms. As part of the same re-ordering (by Dominic Roberts of Francis Roberts Architects), the Paley font was

relocated from the west end of the nave to the south aisle and the earlier font was reinstated in the centre of the nave. This opened up a large nave space, much as it was prior to the late 19th century, as depicted in early images of the interior.

3.4 Illustrative Sources

3.4.1 While there are numerous early views and illustrations, and later photographs, of the Priory Church at Cartmel, these are typically taken from the south side and so none are known that show the north side of the nave in any detail. The only useful illustrations are a small number of plans and some elevations that show the historic internal arrangement of the building, which are included below.

3.4.2 **Ffoliott, 1854:** this is the earliest plan to show the interior of the church and although it is uncertain how accurate it is it seems to show the interior arrangement of the building in a way that compares well with later plans and was produced before the substantial alterations of the late 19th century were carried out (Plate 1). While limited in detail this is of interest in terms of the north side of the nave as it appears to show a short section of wall running from the north wall and joining one of the arcade columns to the south. A door on the east side of the north wall of the nave is also shown as being in existence at this time.

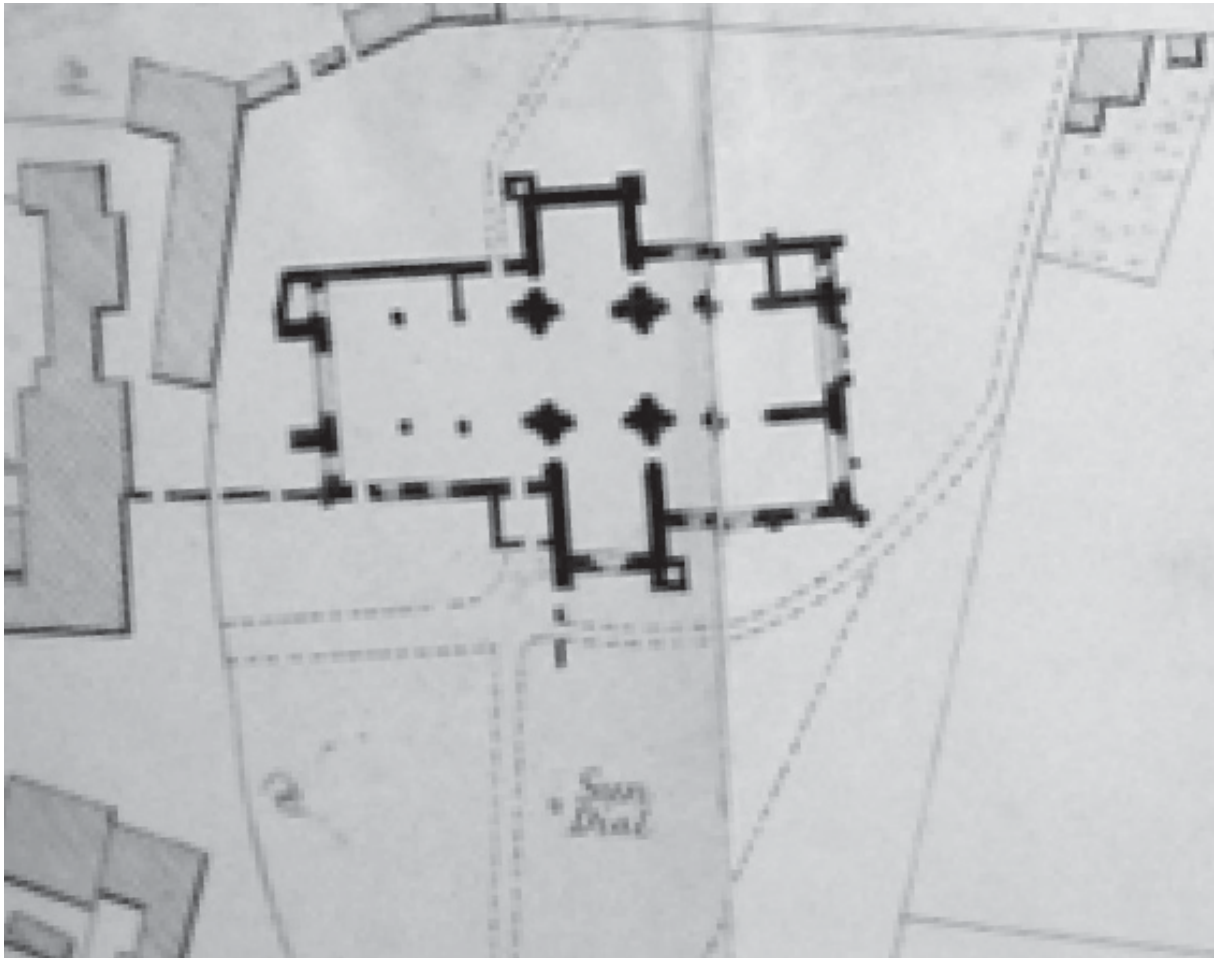


Plate 1: Extract from Ffoliott's plan of 1854

3.4.3 **Plan, 1863:** a plan was also produced for the restoration of the church carried out in 1863 (CAC(K) WPR/89/4/3/10 1863). This too shows an existing doorway on the east side of the north wall of the nave, but to the west of it there is an obvious flue built into the wall thickness and a dashed line connecting it to a circular structure labelled 'Large gile stove' (Plate 2).

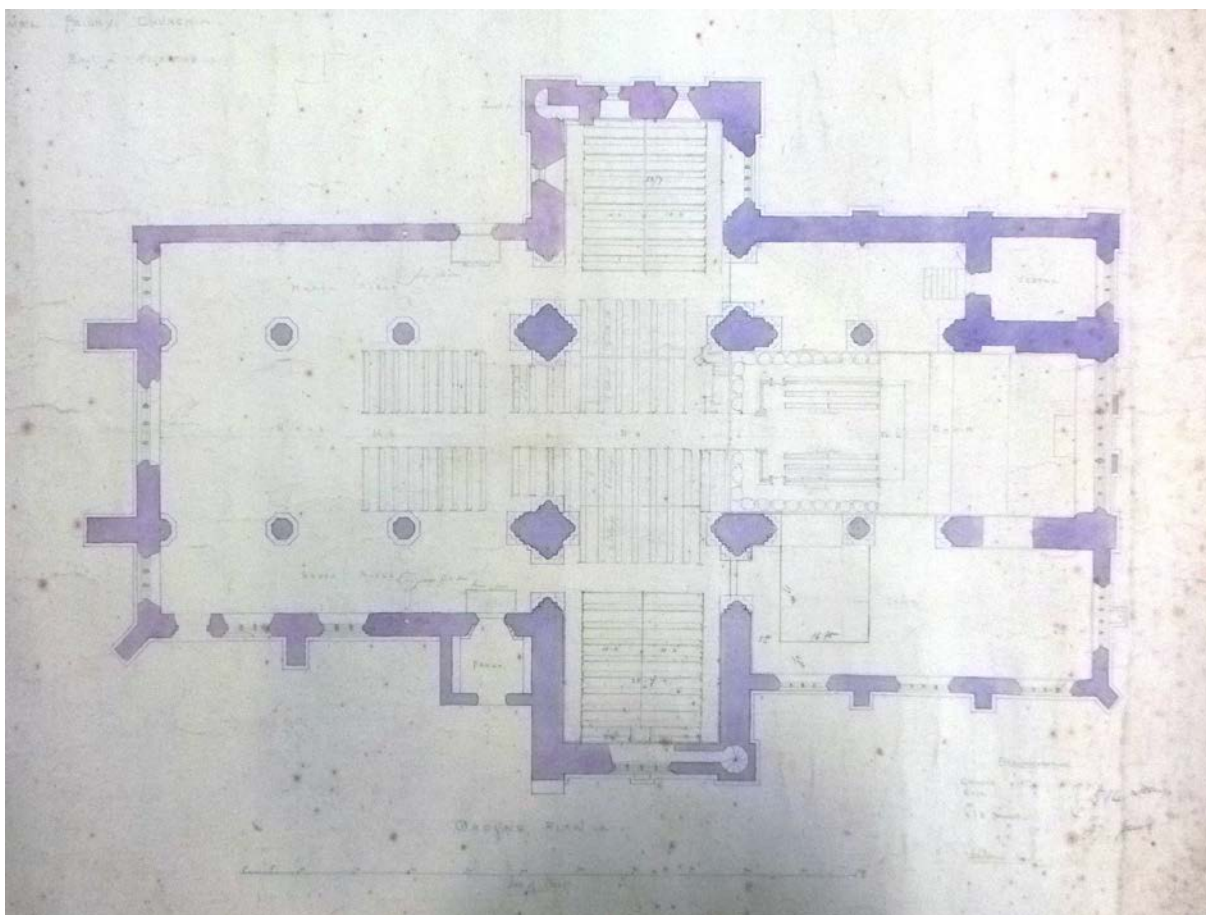


Plate 2: The plan of 1863

3.4.4 **Plan and elevation, 1876-1879:** a series of architectural drawings were produced in the late 1870s (CAC(K) WPR/89/4/6/5 1876-1879). The plan is apparently the first one to show the suggested phasing of the building, with the north wall of the nave suggested as belonging to the '*Original Transitional Building*' phase (Plate 3). It is also apparently the first plan to show the step on the internal face of the wall. Unusually, there is also an associated view of the north exterior elevation, which shows details such as the doorway on the east side, the string course and the row of projecting corbels, which proves they were present at that time (Plate 4).

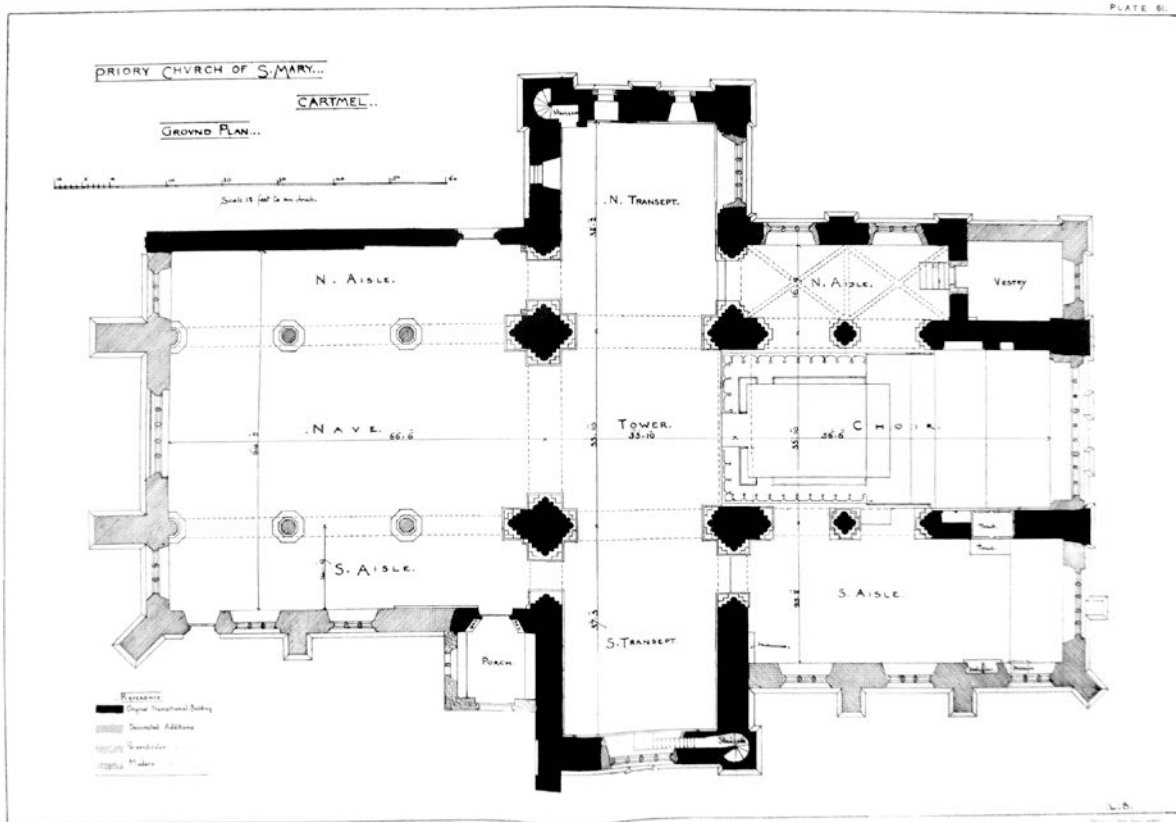


Plate 3: The plan of 1876-1879

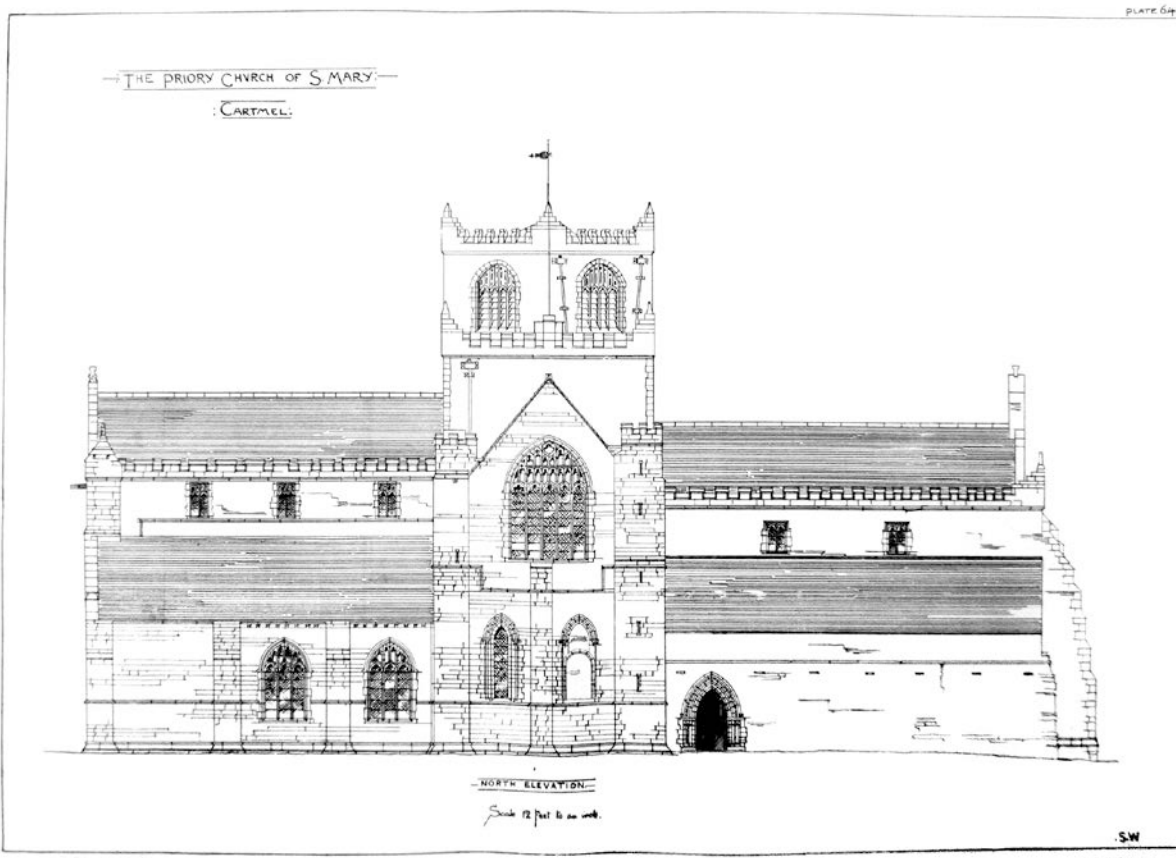


Plate 4: The north elevation of 1876-1879

3.4.5 **Plan and elevation, early 20th century:** this is a set of undated but probably early 20th century drawings, probably based on the preceding ones, but also including a cross-section that shows the south face of the north wall of the nave (CAC(B) BDX/828/1/3/80 20th century). However, neither shows any additional information of note (Plate 5 and Plate 6).

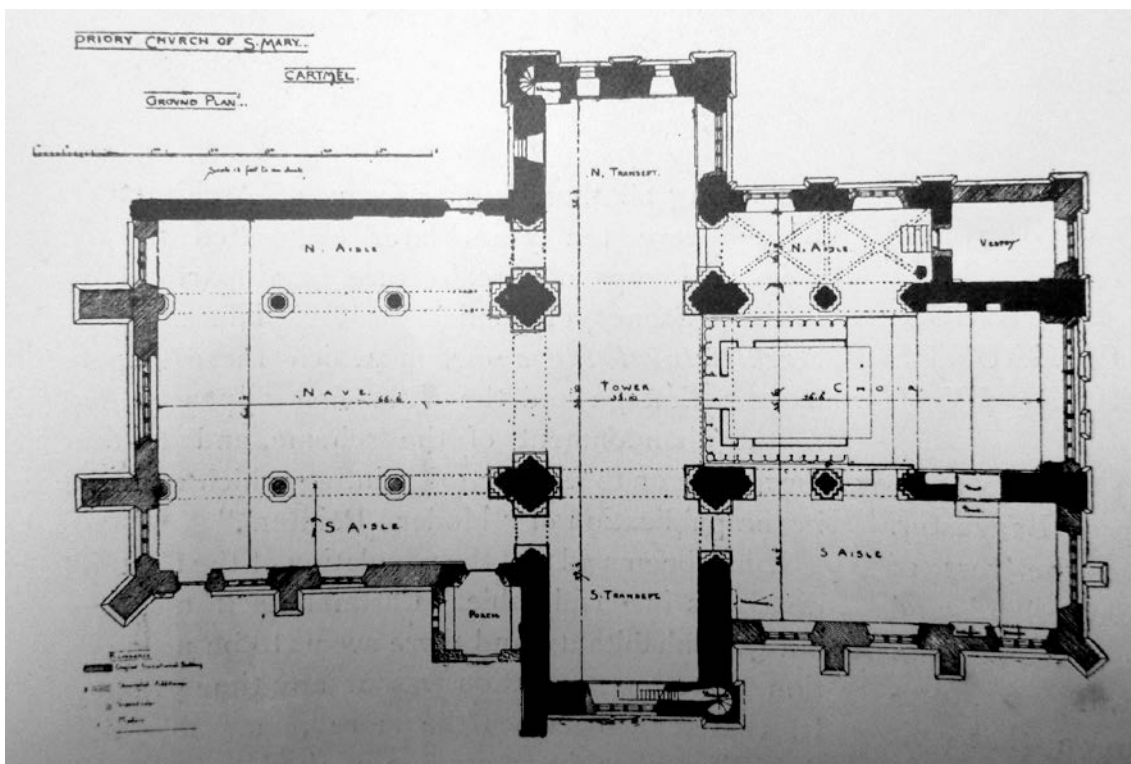


Plate 5: Early 20th century plan

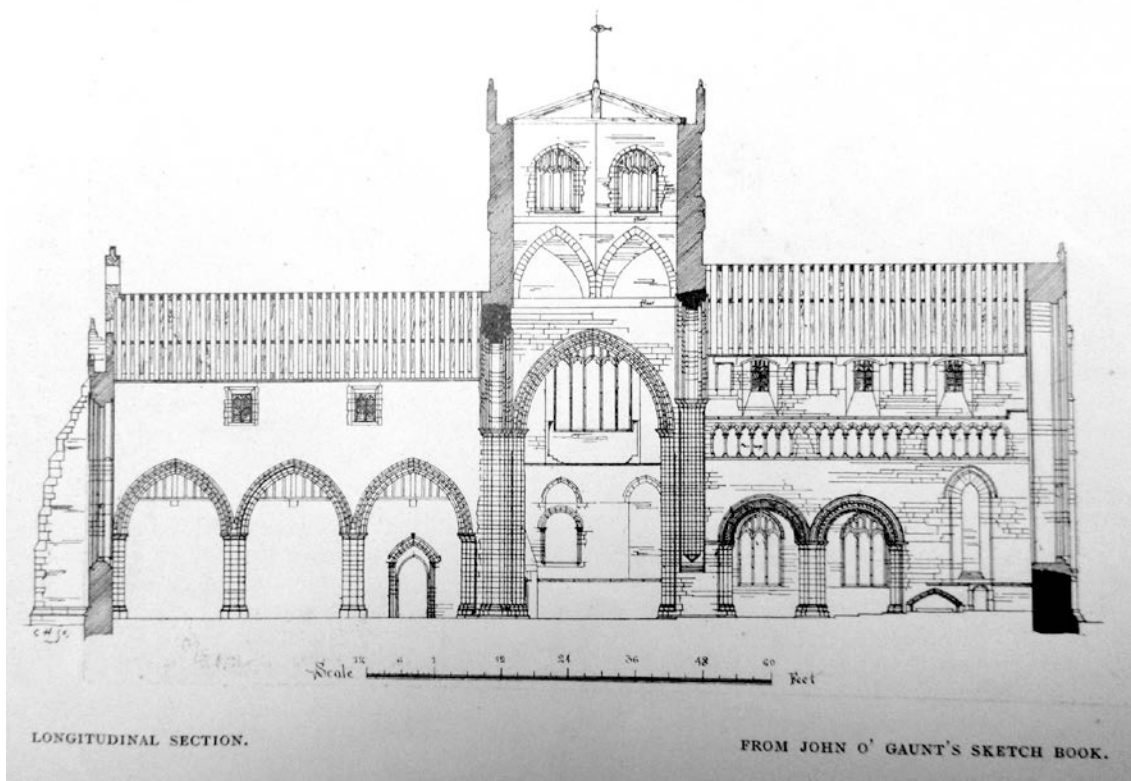


Plate 6: Early 20th century cross-section showing the south face of the north wall of the nave

3.4.6 **Plan, 1998:** a more recent plan of the church was produced by Salter (1998, 36) and included proposed phasing. This suggests that the area to the east of the step in the north wall of the nave is a later phase than the west end, 15th century rather than c1190-1200 (Plate 7). However, the reasoning behind this is not clear.

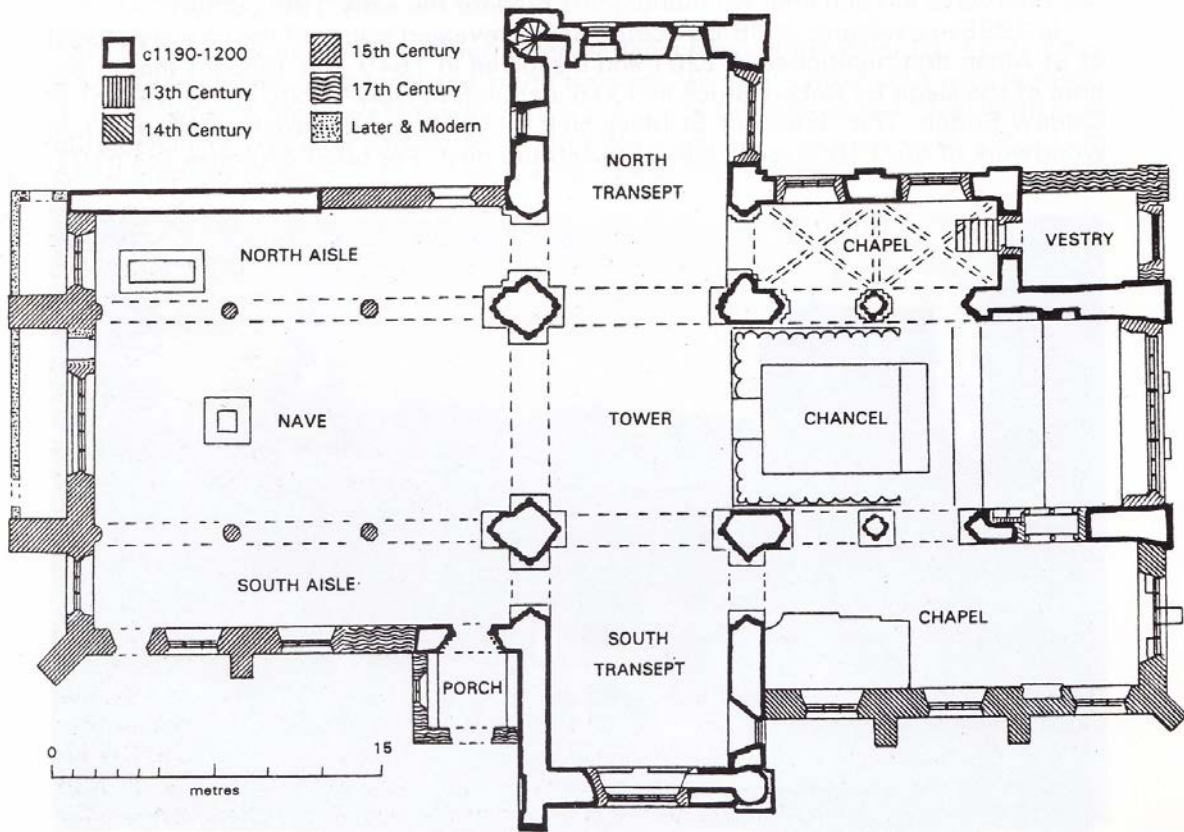


Plate 7: Salter's plan of 1998

3.5 Conclusion

3.5.1 While there is evidence for a church at Cartmel before the Priory, the site is primarily of importance because of the establishment of the Priory at the end of the 12th century. The documentary sources about its development are limited but it is thought to have had a major reorganisation in the 14th century, at which point the cloister was moved from the south side of the nave to the north. After the Dissolution its retention as a parish church meant that it underwent further changes, including a significant reordering in the late 19th century, which means that most of the available cartographic and visual sources are after that time.

4. Building Recording

4.1 External

4.1.1 The wall is largely constructed from random courses of rounded and angular stone of various types, for example local slates, volcanics and some limestone with thick cement pointing. There is a doorway on the east side with an ornate pointed arch with engaged columns and other decorative details. Above the level of this door is a row of seven projecting rough corbels, while the west end of the wall at this height the wall is stepped and finished with rough quoins. The lower level has some possible lines of joins and a possible blocked arched opening to the west of the extant doorway, within which are at least two pieces of dressed sandstone, presumably reused. The west end at the base has been extended by a single-storey addition, constructed from ashlar dressed blocks of pale yellow sandstone with triangular stone coping and incorporating a doorway. This has quoined jambs and chamfered top plus a chamfered plinth at the base. Above the row of corbels is an evident area of a different build about 0.5m tall, where the wall has presumably been raised, in very random courses. Above this is a projecting string course; at its east end the first three parts of this are well dressed slabs with a chamfered face, but the rest are very rough slabs. Above this is a fairly uniform area of more consistent limestone blocks, extending to the roof. Within this section, on the east side, is an obvious aperture, blocked with stone.



Plate 8: General view of the external elevation, from the north



Plate 9 (left): Extant doorway on the east side of the external elevation, viewed from the north



Plate 10 (right): Possible blocked doorway in the centre of the external elevation, viewed from the north



Plate 11 (left): The west end of the external elevation, viewed from the north

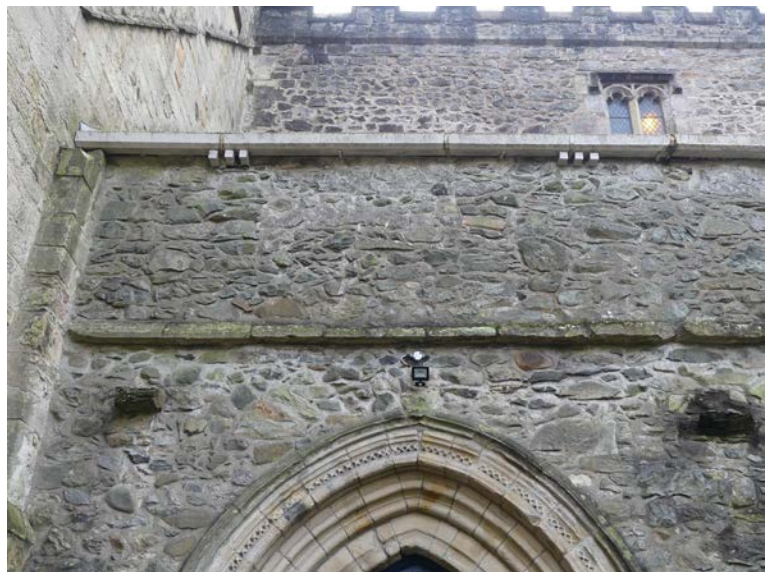


Plate 12 (right): Dressed string course and upper-level blocked aperture on the east side of the external elevation, viewed from the north

4.2 Internal

4.2.1 This also has a random course, with a combination of angular and rounded stones, a mix of volcanic and possibly limestone (although the pale colour could be due to staining by plaster or lime wash) with thick concrete pointing. The lower part, about 2.5m tall, of the west side steps out and is a

more random build extending for 10.25m from the west end where it comes to a straight quoined end. This is possibly a blocked doorway as there is a partial line of the corresponding jamb 1.1m to the east. To the east is the extant doorway with a pointed arch and moulded surrounds and carved decorative details, with a later timber porch added over. There are three projecting stones in the north-west corner and three projecting semi-circular stone corbels supporting the roof trusses. At the east end, above the top of the doorway, is a projecting step about 4.5m from the ground.



Plate 13: General view of the interior elevation, from the south-east

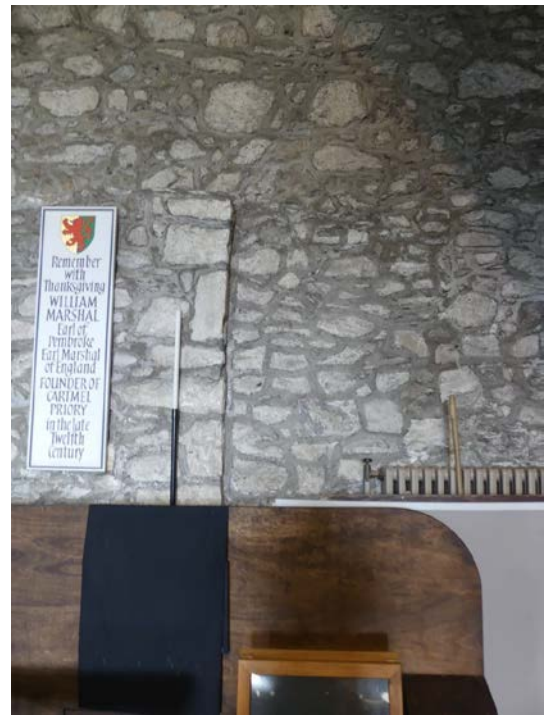


Plate 14 (left): The stepped section on the west side of the internal elevation, viewed from the south-east

Plate 15 (right): The quoined end to the stepped section of the internal elevation, viewed from the south



Plate 16 (left): Extant doorway on the east side of internal elevation, viewed from the south

Plate 17 (right): Stepped section high on the east side of the internal elevation, viewed from the south-west



0 5m
Approximate scale

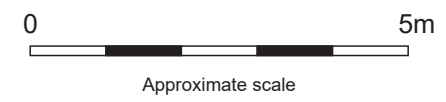


Figure 3: Photorectified image of the internal elevation

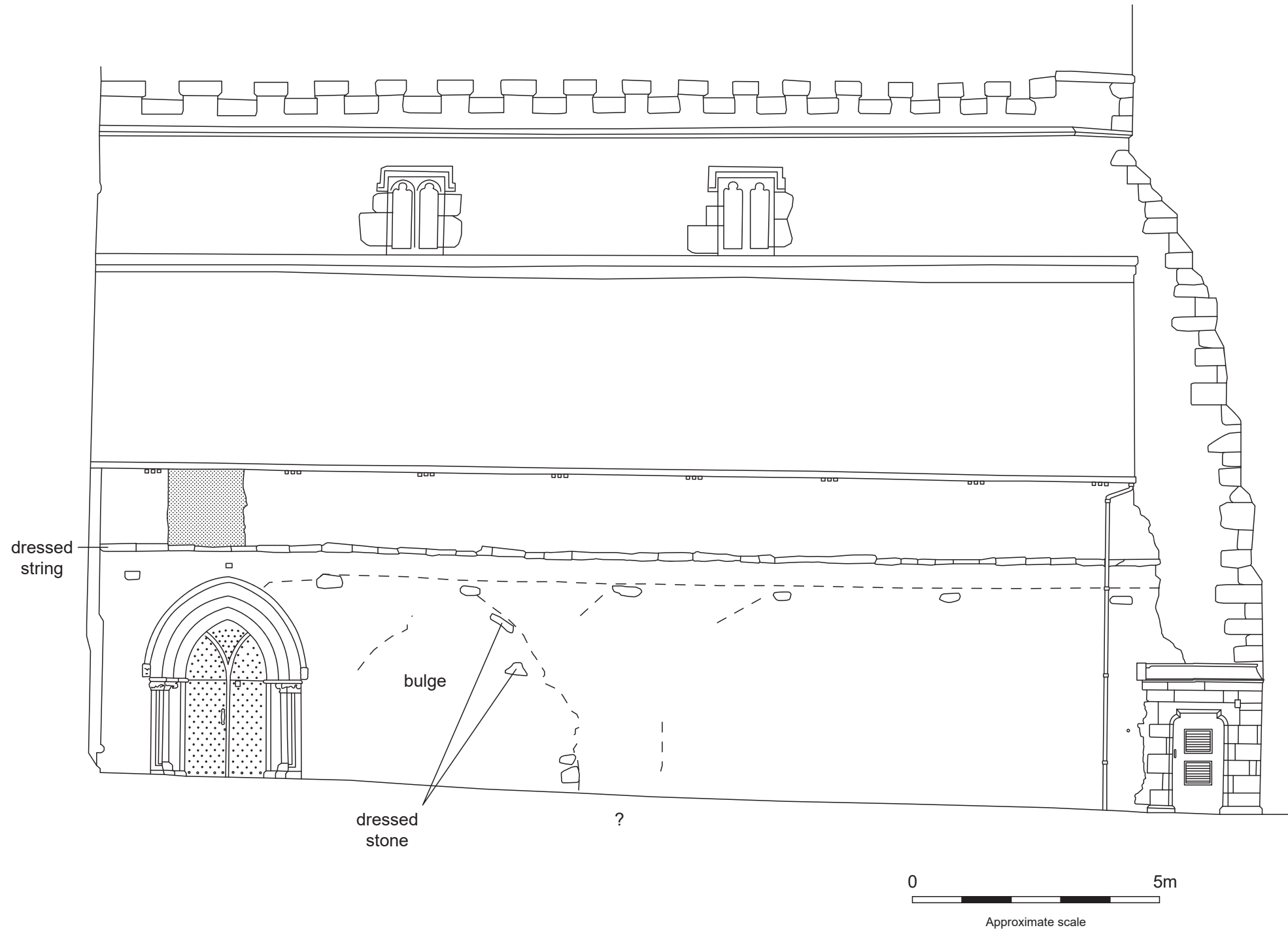


Figure 4: External elevation

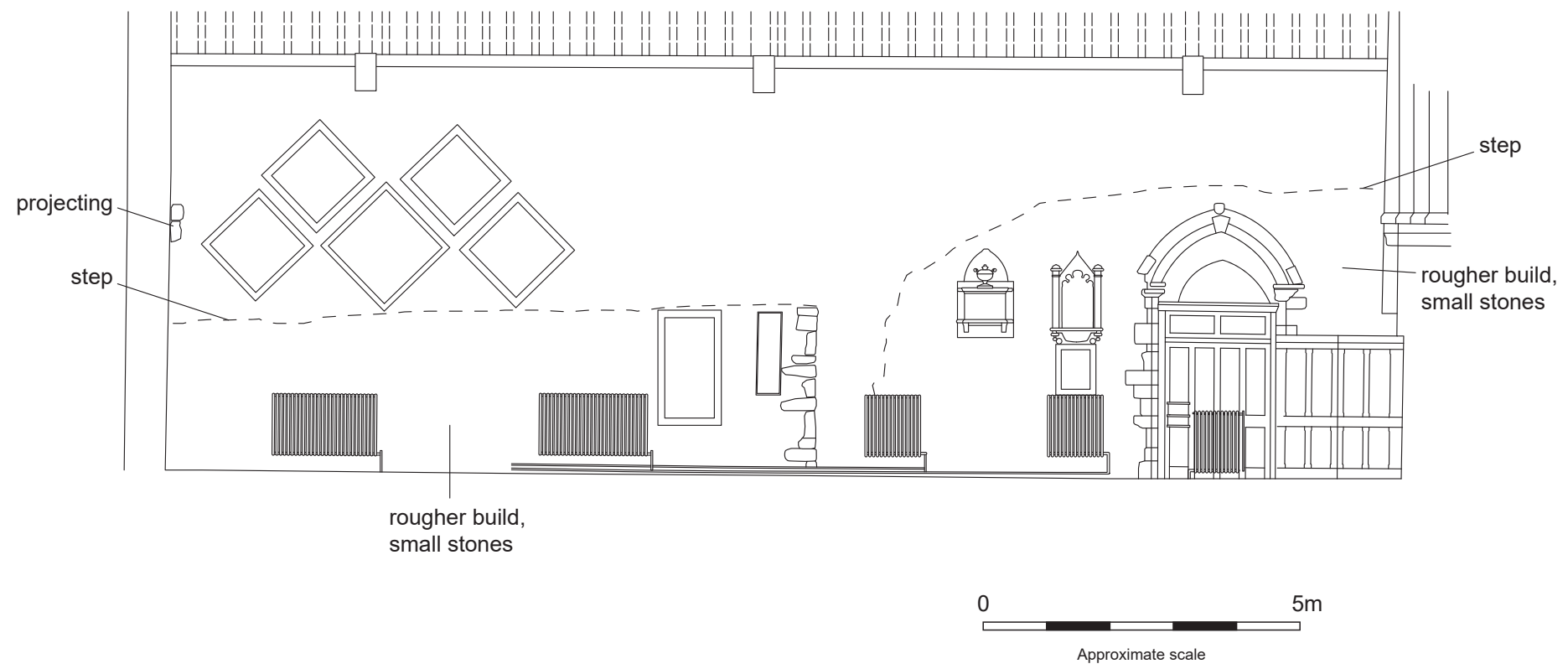


Figure 3: Internal elevation

5. Discussion

5.1 Results

5.1.1 While there is a general consensus in previous research into the Priory Church that the north wall of the nave contains some of the earliest surviving fabric in the building (perhaps even from its initial establishment in the late 12th century), the lack of any architectural detail has generally led to it being more neglected than other areas. In addition, Salter's view that the east end, beyond the step in the wall, is later, does not seem to be supported by any evidence within the fabric itself. Nevertheless, there are various features of interest within the wall, and these can be broken down into the following phases.

5.1.2 **Phase 1 (late 12th – early 13th century):** elements of the wall are almost certainly part of the original phase of construction of the priory, allowing for the possibility that it could relate to an earlier structure on the site. This seems to have been a very rough and fairly random build corresponding with the lower section of wall visible on the west side internally and ending with what appears to be a quoined jamb. This presumably represented a former doorway in the north wall, a not uncommon feature of the nave. Evidence for a corresponding blocked doorway in the external elevation is not as clear but there are hints in essentially the correct position. What is of note is the short section of wall shown on Ffoliott's plan of 1854 running from approximately the location of the quoined end to one of the arcade columns, although the purpose of this is not known.

5.1.3 **Phase 2 (14th century):** the apparent repositioning of the cloister, from the south side of the nave to the north, is supported by various pieces of evidence, including the row of corbels along the north side. Robbed foundation trenches discovered in the earlier archaeological evaluation were also interpreted as having been for the cloister walls (Greenlane Archaeology 2021). The positioning of the cloister in this location presumably put the former doorway out of use and so it was blocked; some evidence for this was identified in the external elevation, with pieces of reused dressed masonry among the blocking. The upper part of the wall was presumably also rebuilt or raised perhaps to provide the necessary height for the cloister roof and accommodate the corbels that supported it, but was slightly narrower than the Phase 1 wall.

5.1.4 **Phase 3 (15th-16th century):** the wall line was evidently raised again, as shown by an obvious change of build in the external elevation, which included the creation of a drip course of stone flags. This also included a small window on the east side. This change was presumably in order to accommodate the current roof.

5.1.5 **Phase 4 (late 19th century):** while there was evidently already a doorway on the east side of the wall its date is not known since it was replaced by the current one. It is possible one was created after the blocking of the earlier one to the west, that allowed access into the cloister at a more convenient point or bypassed it; Salter suggests that this section is 15th century (1998, 36). This was presumably added as part of the alterations carried out in the late 19th century by Paley, although no specific details are given. A flue for a stove had also evidently been inserted into the north wall some time prior to 1863, but presumably in the 19th century. Some rebuilding may have been associated with the insertion of this new door, as evidenced by the step and change in build on the east side, but this could also have related to an earlier door inserted this location. In addition, the single-storey extension at the west end was also added at this date.

5.1.6 **Phase 5 (20th century):** most recently the wall has been heavily pointed, internally and externally, with concrete. This has unfortunately hidden much of the detail from earlier phases that might have otherwise allowed a more detailed understanding. Internally, central heating in the form of radiators and attached piping has been added, as well as other fixtures, although some of these are earlier.

5.2 Significance and Conclusion

5.2.1 Although evidently containing some very early fabric, the north wall of the nave of Cartmel Priory has been substantially modified over the last 800 years. There is some evidence that a door existed in the centre of the wall from an early date, although it is not conclusive, especially not externally, but the

wall is otherwise devoid of architectural details that would better understand its development. The presence of the projecting corbels and other evidence does suggest that the cloister was moved to this location, but further investigation of the physical fabric of the wall would be required in order to establish how accurate the proposed phasing of its development is. The wall, nevertheless, represents an interesting part of the site as a whole and has the potential to contribute to the wider understanding of how the Priory developed. It is recommended that any intrusive work associated with the insertion of a new door be subject to an archaeological watching brief in order to identify and record any fabric of historical interest and to better understand the development of this part of the Priory Church.

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