

ELLERTON PRIORY, SWALEDALE,
NORTH YORKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 1996 Ed Dennison Archaeological Services (EDAS) were commissioned by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) to undertake an archaeological survey of the remains of Ellerton Priory, located c.10km west of Richmond, in Swaledale (NGR SE 079 974 centred). The project comprised topographic earthwork and geophysical surveys, a detailed architectural survey of the ruined church, and a written description and report.

Ellerton Priory, founded in c.1200 possibly by the Eaglescliffe family, was one of the poorest and smallest of all the Yorkshire nunneries. As a result, the priory is unlikely to have contained the full range of structures and features seen at other larger sites. Nevertheless, the earthwork survey was able to suggest that the precinct, containing both inner and outer courts, measured c.120m-130m east-west by c.150m north-south. The ruined church stands in the approximate centre of this precinct, and the geophysical survey clearly established that its cloisters lay to the south - the data revealed internal sub-divisions in the west range while other anomalies at the south end of the east range suggest a refectory, kitchen or dorter. Within the rest of the inner court a variety of structures and features were identified by the earthwork survey, including a possible reredorter, an isolated building which might be a small infirmary or the prioress/guest house, and a possible garden space and fishponds. Within the outer court, which would have been accessible to the secular population, are a number of presumably agricultural barns and structures, some associated with small yards or enclosures, as well as two potential gatehouses. A holloway approaches the precinct from the west, and there is another isolated farmstead or large house on the west side of the precinct.

The now ruined church has a total length of 34.5m and a maximum width of 8.1m, and the west tower stands 14.7m high above ground level. The north-east corner of the chancel wall stands to 5.9m high, while the north wall of the nave is only 1.5m high and the south wall is ruined and visible only in plan. The earliest ?13th century church appears to have had a very simple plan, with an undivided and aisleless nave, a square-ended chancel and, unusually, a western tower.

The tower is architecturally complex. Initially constructed in the ?13th century, it was remodelled in the 15th century when new windows were added along with the angled buttresses and stair tower - this rebuilding may have been a delayed reaction to the destruction caused by the Scottish raids in the mid 14th century. A second phase of alteration then took place in the 19th century, when it was raised by up to 1.5m in height and embattled; a comparison of sketches suggest that this work was done between 1843 and 1911. Other associated works at this time appear to have included the reconstruction of the tower roof, the replacement of dressings in the tower buttresses, the re-erection of the central part of the nave's north wall, and alterations to the string course in the east wall of the nave. These alterations were probably carried out by the Erle-Drax family, who also built the adjacent Ellerton Abbey (house) in c.1830, to turn the ruined medieval church into a romantic Gothic ruin.

The survival of the priory remains is significant because the site has not been altered, improved or subsequently developed, in contrast to many other Yorkshire monastic sites. This is in part due to the fact that the site has remained in a single ownership and tenancy. Although the church ruins were altered to create a Gothic ruin in the 19th century, there appears to have been little disturbance to the surrounding earthworks. However, while many of the earthworks can be interpreted, no evidence for a burial ground has been found (assuming one was present), and the extensive water supply system located around Juniper Gill on the hills to the south needs examination. In addition, little detail is known about the history and development of the priory, where and how extensive its landholdings were, and what was its relationship with the adjacent (now deserted) village of Ellerton.

1 INTRODUCTION

Background to the Project

- 1.1 In October 1996 Ed Dennison Archaeological Services (EDAS) were commissioned by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) to undertake an archaeological survey of the remains of Ellerton Priory, located c.10km west of Richmond, in Swaledale.
- 1.2 The project, which was defined by a brief prepared by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and a subsequent EDAS project design (see Appendices 1 and 2), was to include a general topographic survey of all features considered to be of archaeological, architectural and historic interest, a detailed architectural survey of the ruined church, and a written description and report. Some limited documentary research, using readily-available published sources, was also carried out. A geophysical survey of the area immediately surrounding the ruined church was also undertaken as a later addition to the project.

The Survey Area

- 1.3 The remains of Ellerton Priory are located at NGR SE 079 974, on the south bank of the River Swale and north of the B6270 Downholme to Reeth road, some 10km to the west of Richmond and c.3km east of Grinton (see figure 1). The site lies within the Yorkshire Dales National Park and it is scheduled as an Ancient Monument under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (Monument Number 31353); the area of the scheduled monument was increased significantly in November 2000 to include the remains of a deserted village to the west of Ellerton Abbey (house) and water management features to the south of the B6270 road (DCMS 2000). The church ruins are also listed as being of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, Grade II. The site is recorded on the National Archaeological Record (site SE09NE1) and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Historic Environment Record (site MYD 34854).
- 1.4 The survey area originally measured c.250m by 200m, and took in most of the northern half of a large pasture field (OS field number 0029); the area was subsequently extended to the west to include earthworks immediately to the north of Ellerton Abbey (house) (see figure 2). The north side of the survey area is bounded by the River Swale and the east and west sides marked by drystone walls; there is also a coniferous shelter belt along the east side.
- 1.5 The area stands above the River Swale at c.170m AOD and the pasture field was grazed by sheep at the time of the survey (see plate 1). The underlying geology is fluvio-glacial gravel over Carboniferous Limestone (IGS 1979), and the soils are typical brown earths of the East Keswick association (Soil Survey 1983).

Aims of the Survey

- 1.6 In accordance with the brief provided by the YDNPA (Appendix 1), the aims of the survey were to:
 - gather sufficient information to establish the extent, nature, character, condition, quality and date of the surviving archaeological and historical features within the survey area;

- identify any archaeological and historical features, and assess their interpretation potential;
- establish the functional relationships between the archaeological and historical features; and
- provide a detailed record of the complex.

Survey Methodology

- 1.7 The methodology employed by the survey was in accordance with the brief prepared by the YDNPA and a subsequent project design submitted by EDAS in June 1996 (see Appendices 1 and 2). It was subsequently decided that it was not necessary to complete the gazetteer of sites.

Documentary research

- 1.8 A basic documentary and historical survey for the site was undertaken. This included an examination of any readily available cartographic sources and any other appropriate published or unpublished literature, but did not encompass any research with original documents. Information held by the YDNPA Historic Environment Record was also consulted. In the event, relatively little information was forthcoming.
- 1.9 The North Yorkshire County Records Office (NYCRO) in Northallerton hold copies of the Ordnance Survey 1st (1857) edition 6" map (sheet 53). The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority provided a copy of the Ordnance Survey 1929 3rd edition 25" map (sheet 53/5) and the current (1982) 1:10,000 map (sheet SE09NE). Despite consultation at other record offices such as the Borthwick Institute in York, only a few other maps were found, but they were generally of little use. Other relevant information was collected from published sources such as Power (1922), Burton (1979), and Knowles and Hadcock (1971). Several aerial photographs of the site and records of previous repair, including photographs, were provided by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.
- 1.10 Details of all the sources consulted as part of the project are included in the bibliography (Chapter 7) below.

General site survey

- 1.11 The general topographic survey was achieved using Nikon Total Station equipment (DTM5) with data logged into a DR2 data logger. A total of four temporary survey stations were established over the survey area. The survey was integrated into the Ordnance Survey national grid by re-section to points of known co-ordinates. The levels of all appropriate structures and earthworks were recorded as levels AOD, calculated from a bench mark located on the south-east corner of the ruined church tower (171.27m AOD at E407936.5/N497377.5). Sufficient information was also gathered to allow the survey area to be readily located through the use of surviving walls, wall junctions, and other topographical features.
- 1.12 The survey recorded the ground level position of all upstanding buildings and other structures, wall remnants, earthworks, leats, paths, stone and rubble scatters, stonework, and any other features considered to be of archaeological or historic

interest. The footprint of the ruined church was also recorded to aid the detailed building recording (see below). The main phase of the EDM survey was undertaken in February 1997 in dry and clear weather conditions.

- 1.13 The survey data were processed using Civilcad (Version 4.4) software. The building footprints were plotted at 1:100 scale while the general site survey was plotted at 1:500 scale. The survey data was then re-checked in the field as a separate operation and amendments made as necessary; this field checking was undertaken in February and October 1997 to take advantage of varying ground conditions. Field notes were also made to expand the drawn record. The subsequent plans are presented as interpretative hachure drawings using conventions analogous to those used by the RCHME (now English Heritage) (RCHME 1999); figure 6 is a reduced version of the earthwork plan.

Geophysical survey

- 1.14 The geophysical survey was undertaken in July 1997, after a Section 42 Licence under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) had been obtained from English Heritage (licence dated 13th May 1997, ref: AA/1131/13). Some 2.2ha were surveyed, corresponding to the majority of the topographic survey area. Full details of the geophysical survey are contained in the resulting stand-alone report (GeoQuest Associates 1997); the information and interpretation in Chapter 3 below has been extracted and enhanced from this report.
- 1.15 The geophysical survey was carried out using a Geoscan FM36 fluxgate gradiometer with ST1 sample trigger. A zig-zag traverse scheme was employed and data were logged in grid units of 20m by 20m at 0.5m by 0.5m intervals, thus providing 1600 measurements per grid. Each grid was fixed in relation to a baseline whose position relative to the topographic survey stations was found using a Sokkia Set 5A total station. The coordinates of the grids were then registered with a CAD file of the detailed topographic survey. Data were downloaded on-site into a Toshiba Satellite 110CT laptop computer for processing and storage. These data were subsequently transferred to a laboratory computer for further processing, interpretation and archiving.
- 1.16 The GeoQuest InSite® Windows software was used to process the geophysical data and produce a continuous tone grey-scale image of the raw data at a scale of 1:500 which was superimposed on the topographic survey data. The following basic processing steps were applied to the data:
- the removal of random 'spikes' present in the geomagnetic data due to small ferrous objects on or near the surface; this process replaces spikes with the mean of near-neighbours;
 - the removal of striping artefacts in the images caused by alternating changes in level between zig-zag traverses during a geomagnetic survey;
 - the correcting for apparent shear in strong geomagnetic anomalies surveyed by zig-zag traversing;
 - the correction for drift in magnetometer calibration with time;

- the adjustment of grid mean values to achieve an optimum match along the lines of contact between data grids; and
- the interpolation of the data, using a bilinear function, to generate a regular mesh of values at 0.25m by 0.25m intervals.

Architectural survey

- 1.17 A ground plan of the ruined church was produced at 1:50 scale by enhancing the EDM-generated footprint survey. In addition, 1:50 scale plans of each of the three stages of the church tower were produced through hand measurement.
- 1.18 Elevation drawings of the ruined church and the tower were produced at a scale of 1:50 using a combination of rectified photographs and hand measurement. Both internal and external elevations were produced for the church walls but only the external elevations for the tower. It had also been decided that individual faces of the angled buttresses would not be drawn, apart from where they appeared in the main elevations. The rectified photographs were taken in September 1996, and the production of the associated plans and elevations was completed in December 1996 and January 1997.
- 1.19 In accordance with the project brief, the resulting elevation drawings show all significant archaeological and architectural features such as construction detail, and modifications and differences in fabric, but do not record the wall faces stone by stone. The elevation drawings are also marked with a common datum reduced to levels AOD, and are presented using conventions analogous to those used by the RCHME (RCHME 1996). Figures 9 to 11 are reduced versions of the completed elevation drawings and plans.
- 1.20 In addition to the rectified photography, a number of medium format black and white prints were also taken of the church and its surroundings, on 27th February 1999.

Report

- 1.21 A draft survey report was produced in August 1998, although it was not completed until 2011. In order to maintain the timescale of the original survey work, no new information has been added to this report, for example, a more up-to-date description and assessment of the ruined church, or more recent publications relating to nunneries.

2 SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND INTERVENTION

Documentary Background

- 2.1 Unfortunately, there is a general paucity of documentary evidence for medieval nunneries as a whole (Thompson 1984) and this lack of information is reflected in the Yorkshire examples (Burton 1979). Of the 25 Yorkshire nunneries in existence at the start of the 14th century, only Esholt has printed accounts and, apart from a recently discovered 15th century account roll for Marrick (Tillotson 1989), there appear to be no other significant records for any other houses. Buildings at some of the Yorkshire nunneries are described at the time of the Reformation (Brown 1886) but Ellerton is unfortunately not included. The lack of records for Ellerton is traditionally blamed on the Scottish incursions in the early 14th century (Speight 1897, 219; Russell 1914, 228), specifically in November 1347 when the priory was totally despoiled (Fieldhouse & Jennings 1978, 57), but some documents may still be in private hands; Dugdale notes that in 1722 the foundation charter was held by the landowner, Henry Drax Esquire (Dugdale 1846, 745).
- 2.2 Ellerton priory was a small Cistercian nunnery dedicated to St Mary, Leland describing it as “a priori of white clotid nunnes, standing in a valle ... a mile beneath marik prory” (Solloway 1913, 160; Chandler 1993, 566). Even the name of the founder and the date of foundation are open to question; Warner, chief steward to the Earl of Richmond, or his son Wymar, have been suggested as the founder (Solloway 1913, 160), although the Eaglescliffe family (also called ‘de Barden’, referring to a place adjoining Ellerton), who may have been early lords of Ellerton, are more likely (Russell 1914, 229). Burton suggests that the founder is unidentified, but that a date of before 1200 is probable (Burton 1979, 43).
- 2.3 As with many Yorkshire nunneries, Ellerton priory was very small and probably housed 13 nuns, although only five are recorded in 1381 and in 1537 (Knowles & Hadcock 1971, 272-273). The first recorded prioress was Alice, noted as being head of the priory in 1227 during a dispute with the Prior of Kirkham over the church of Whixley. Subsequent prioresses were Petronilla (recorded in 1251), Ellen (1268), Sibil (1299), Margaret (1347), Mary Gray (date uncertain), Alice Sherwood (1429) and Joan Harkey (1535) (Solloway 1913, 160).
- 2.4 The priory was surrendered on 18th August 1536 by Joan Harkey, and it was subsequently dissolved in 1537. Joan was granted a small pension of £3 but she died in poverty in Richmond (Cross & Vickers 1995, 560). Although many of the small post-conquest priories were poor, Ellerton was one of the poorest and least well endowed, valued at only £2 13s 4d in 1291 and £15 14s 8d in 1535; this compares with its nearest neighbour of Marrick which was valued at £66 12s and £64 18s respectively (Burton 1979, 45).
- 2.5 At present, little is known of the priory’s possessions or endowments. Breithiva, daughter of Norman de Ellerton, and Adam her nephew granted the priory all their land in Ellerton “beyond Whitbec to the east and beyond Ruedic to the west” (Russell 1914, 229). Two bovates of land in the manor of Ellerton belonged to it in 1287 and in 1316 the prioress was part-owner of the manor of Ellerton-cum-Stainton. The priory also held land in Walburn amounting to two tofts and three bovates (Fieldhouse & Jennings 1978, 40). At the dissolution the revenues of the house were derived from rents and farms in Barforth, Barton, Bellerby, Carlton, Constable Burton, Hornby, Melsonby and Richmond, amongst others; the value of

the priory site with gardens, mills, meadows, and glebe was only £1 (Solloway 1913, 160).

- 2.6 At the dissolution, Ralph Closeby, a member of the royal household, obtained a 21 year lease on the site of the priory for £12 10s 8d. The site was then sold to Percival Bowes and John Moysier in 1568, when it became part of the manor of Ellerton under the lordship of Richard Brackenbury whose family had formerly been tenants of the priory (Fieldhouse & Jennings 1978, 111 & 113). In the early 17th century, the manor passed to the Drax family, who are recorded as being the owners in 1897 (Speight 1897, 219). At the time of the survey project, the site was owned by the Trustees of Admiral Drax's Daughters' Houses Trust and was farmed by Mr M Baker of Abbey Farm.

Previous Archaeological Research into the Priory Complex

- 2.7 There has been little previous archaeological research into the priory complex at Ellerton. As noted above, the available documentary evidence is sparse and the site has often been confused with Ellerton on Spalding Moor (East Yorkshire), where there was a Gilbertine priory, and Ellerton on Swale near Catterick (Solloway 1913, 160). The site is however generally called Ellerton on Swale (Burton 1979).
- 2.8 All that now survives above the ground at Ellerton is the ruined church, consisting of a rectangular aisleless nave and chancel, and a three stage buttressed tower. The tower survives largely intact to a maximum height of 14.7m above ground level, but the north wall of the nave and chancel, which is c.1.5m high, appears to be a modern rebuilding, while the south wall is largely collapsed or has been demolished. The only other significant wall surviving is the north-east corner which has an external buttress and rises to 5.9m high. At the base of the tower and in the nave there are a number of broken or damaged fragments of decorated grave slabs, but elsewhere the interior of the nave is partially covered with rubble and some vegetation. Low and in some cases rather denuded earthworks surround the church, and several low rectangular platforms and banks can be discerned.
- 2.9 The priory complex has not been the subject of any previous archaeological investigation; indeed, medieval priories and nunneries as a whole have received relatively little attention (Gilchrist 1989). However, some of the decorated grave slabs have been recorded or examined by various authors including for example Speight (1897, 219-220) and Ryder (1986); Ryder's sketches are important because he recorded some slabs which have since been removed. It is also recorded that several grave slabs were uncovered when rubbish was being cleared from the interior of the nave by workmen in 1827 and they disturbed the burials beneath (Urban 1827). The same workmen also apparently demolished some parts of the church, notably the north and south walls, dug up the foundations of the cloisters, and used the stone to build an additional room at the adjoining farmhouse, although it is not clear whether this is the present Abbey Farm to the east or Ellerton Abbey (house) to the west.
- 2.10 At a more general level, there are a number of published or readily available accounts relating to other nunnery sites, both locally at Marrick (S T 1838; Tillotson 1989; Tweddle undated), regionally (e.g. Brown (1886) and Burton (1979)) and nationally (e.g. Nichols (1978), Power (1922) and Thompson (1984)). Some nunnery sites have also been excavated or surveyed, such as those at

Higham in Kent (Tester 1967) and Littlemore (Pantin 1970), and those in north-west Lincolnshire (Everson, Taylor & Dunn 1991); the available evidence has been summarised by Gilchrist (1988a & 1989). Gilchrist (1988b) has also considered the spatial arrangement of nunnery layouts while others have examined the estates and economics of rural nunneries (Graves 1984). In general, there is a growing interest in all aspects of the archaeology of rural monasteries (Gilchrist & Mytum 1989), and the role women played in religious life (Nicols & Shanks 1984).

Maps and Plans of the Priory Complex

- 2.11 Very little cartographic material has been found for the priory site, and most of the Ellerton maps and plans held by the North Yorkshire County Record Office (NYCRO) do not cover the specific ruins. For example, 1807 and 1828 plans of the Drax family estate do not show the priory (NYCRO ZQH 6/51 & ZQX 5/33).
- 2.12 Jefferys' map of 1771 does not name the site, but does depict a small rectangle representing Ellerton Abbey (house) and a tower-like structure presumably representing the church tower (see figure 3). A further 1835 map of the proposed Richmond to Reeth turnpike road names "Ellerton Abbey", but only depicts a small square presumably representing the church tower (NYCRO QDP(M) 25/1). The Ellerton 1852 tithe map is held as part of the West Yorkshire Archive Service in Sheepscar (Leeds) (WYAS RD/RT/77), and this shows that priory site lies in a field called 'Abbey Field', which was under pasture and was owned by J L Drax and occupied by Matthew Horsley; the "Ruins of Ellerby Abbey" are depicted as a rectangular structure, adjacent to the "Mansion" of Ellerton Abbey (house) (see figure 3).
- 2.13 The Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1857 6" map (sheet 53) depicts a similar open rectangular structure, named as "Chapel" and "Site of Ellerton Priory" (see figure 4). There also appears to be a short section of wall extending east from the north-east corner of the chancel. No other earthworks are shown, although there is a "Spring" just to the south of the church. The 1929 Ordnance Survey 25" map (sheet 53/5) is similar, although the west tower is shown as roofed, and there is a rectangular roofed structure measuring 18m by 8m attached to the east end of the chancel (see figure 4). This arrangement is also depicted on the more recent 1975 Ordnance Survey 25" map, although the attached structure is now unroofed (see figure 2).

Previous Depictions and Descriptions of the Church

- 2.14 The great landscape painter J M W Turner (1775-1851) produced several pencil sketches showing views looking down Swaledale towards Ellerton Priory in 1816, but unfortunately the depictions of the church are too distant to show any detail (www.yorkshire.com/turner/trails/downholme). The one which shows the closest view of the church depicts the tower with an upper floor window and perhaps a wall running down to the steep sided river valley; the caption describes the view as from the west but it must be from the east, as the tower is on the wrong side of the river (Tate Gallery D11237) (see figure 3).
- 2.15 Both Whitaker and Dugdale note that the 'shell of the church is entire' (Whitaker 1823, 316; Dugdale 1846, 745) but an 1843 depiction shows only the tower to be substantially intact (Richardson 1843, 85). This view is from the north-west, on the north bank of the river, and there are a number of differences between this

depiction and the building's present form, which may be attributable to real changes since then, although some could result from artistic licence or poor observation.

- 2.16 The 1843 depiction (figure 5) shows an apparent buttress at the tower's north-east corner rising to the full height of the tower, and a two-light mullioned, pointed headed window at the top of the tower's north elevation. Only one single light window is shown in the west elevation, possibly at a slightly lower height than the existing opening. There is also a large crack at the top of this elevation and although unclear, the north wall of the nave appears to have collapsed. There is also some standing masonry depicted at the east end of the church, apparently a large buttress and low walls, with roofed buildings behind. The latter are presumably Abbey Farm but it is not clear whether the buttress and other walls are part of the church; they may be the result of artistic licence.
- 2.17 A sketch from a similar view point and a description is provided in the Victoria County History, the drawing dated to 1911 (Russell 1914, 226). This shows that an extra embattled stage with a string course and a window in the west elevation has been added to the tower (see figure 5); these works are likely to be associated with the creation of a 19th century romantic Gothic ruin, to view from the adjacent Ellerton Abbey (house) (see below and plate 2). The 1911 sketch also gives some indications of a ruined wall at the east end of the church, possibly representing the south-east corner of the chancel, and the north wall of the nave also appears to have been rebuilt to a height of c.1.5m.
- 2.18 In 1966 the church was described as "a W tower with a round arch to the nave and Perp, transomed bell-openings and something of the walls of the aisleless nave, which may be older" (Pevsner 1966, 159). The church ruins are also listed as being of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, Grade 2 (DOE 1986, 8). The listed building description reads:

"Priory church. C15 and perhaps earlier. Rubble with quoins. Narrow, aisle-less nave and choir, with west tower. North and east walls of nave and choir partially standing, to a height of approximately 1 metre on north, rising to 3 metres at east end. South wall missing except for west jamb of south door. West tower arch of 3 storeys, with stepped diagonal buttresses, stair turret on south side, plain tower arch to east. West side has 2-light window under hood-mould to first storey; mullioned and transomed window with C19 traceried head to third storey. Interior: on ground on north side of nave to east of centre next to wall 2 pieces of an elaborate grave slab, tapering in plan, probably of 1250-1300. It has, in relief, cross with interlaced diamond head and trefoil terminals, flanking leaf scrolls and marginal chamfer with running leaf band. To south, another tapering medieval grave stone, base broken off, has cross with diamond head with fleur-de-lys terminals. A small house of Cistercian nuns, founded in the reign of Henry II by Warner, steward of the Earls of Richmond. Scheduled as an Ancient Monument".

Previous Repairs and Consolidation

- 2.19 In February 1980 English Heritage's Field Monument Warden noted that the condition of the ruins were starting to cause concern, and the YDNPA requested a meeting with English Heritage to discuss repairs. A site inspection was made by English Heritage in November 1983 and an outline of programme of consolidation and repair was proposed, although it was noted that some repairs had been

undertaken 'in the not too distant past'; these included the replacement of the tracery in the upper window on the west side of the tower and the roofing of the tower with lead.

- 2.20 The English Heritage November 1983 inspection report noted that there were no major structural problems in the tower, although trees and other vegetation was starting to gain a hold on some of the elevations (see plate 3). The major recommendations were that all vegetation should be removed, that the tower roof be replaced and covered with aluminium to reduce the risk of theft, that two pine logs that served no tying function should be taken down from the interior of the tower, that the top courses of the north nave wall should be secured, that the arch over the south door should be strengthened with the insertion of a concrete lintel, and that some of the trees in the interior of the nave should be cut down.
- 2.21 None of this work was actually carried out, but in January 1987 a more sympathetic schedule of work was proposed by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA 1987), based on English Heritage's earlier recommendations. This included the removal and treating of vegetation adhering to the masonry, the felling of two large sycamore trees inside the nave, the general repointing of recessed mortar, the rebedding of the top three courses of the north wall of the nave as a drystone construction, the drilling and cramping of the voussoirs over the south door, the overhauling of the lead roof and gutters in the tower, the replacement of the newel post in the tower stair, and several other minor works. Most of this work was carried out in March-April 1987 by G E Brown and Son of Low Row, Richmond. No detailed archaeological records were made of this work, although there are photographs showing some parts of the ruins before the work was carried out, dating to March 1983 (YDNP 643/12-21) and 28th November 1986 (YDNP 1396/1-19); the latter were presumably taken to assist in the drawing up of the 1987 specification. Additional work to remove the derelict timber and corrugated iron hen house at the east end of the church was undertaken by British Trust for Conservation volunteers under YDNPA supervision in July 1988 - as part of this work, the rubble in the base of the tower was stacked against the north wall and two carved grave slabs were repositioned in the base of the tower, leaving two others in the nave (notes supplied by YDNPA).
- 2.22 Further conservation work was carried out in the first half of 1990 by P and S Coverdale of Boldron, Barnard Castle. This included the consolidation of the north wall of the nave and some minor works to the interior of the tower. It was also suggested in December 1990 that public access might be a possibility, comprising a new stile and a permissive path from the B6270 road (notes supplied by YDNPA). A further set of photographs taken on 28th March 1991 (YDNP 49/0-16) show what work had been completed, such as the removal of trees growing out of the east internal elevation of the chancel and the west and north sides of the tower, the cutting down of some trees and the clearance of vegetation from the interior of the nave, and the repointing of the east side of the tower and the external east face of the chancel.
- 2.23 A comparison between the 1991 photographs and the survey data produced as part of the EDAS survey (September 1996) imply that a further phase of consolidation was undertaken after 1991. This involved the partial repointing of the east chancel wall, and the consolidation of the north wall of the nave; some of this work has resulted in a slight loss of detail (see architectural description below).

3 EARTHWORK AND GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS

Introduction

- 3.1 As noted in Chapter 1 above, the main phase of the earthwork survey was carried out in February 1997, although some minor amendments were made at intervals after that; the area of survey is depicted on figure 2. After this was complete, it was decided that a geophysical survey should be undertaken, which would help in both the interpretation of the earthworks and the identification of any buried structures and deposits. The geophysical survey was therefore carried out in July 1997, after a Section 42 Licence had been obtained from English Heritage under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979).

Description of the Earthworks

- 3.2 With the exception of some of the larger banks representing major boundaries and holloways, the majority of the earthworks in the survey area are low and to some extent smoothed, and less than 0.5m high (see plate 9). No earthworks are depicted on any of the historic maps consulted as part of the project.
- 3.3 Within the survey area, two main areas of earthworks can be identified, those located around the ruined church and those sited further to the west. In the following description, reference should be made to figure 6.

Earthworks around the church

- 3.4 Immediately to the south of the church is a level and slightly raised area ('a' on figure 6) measuring 20m north-south by 27m east-west and defined by slight breaks of slope. The west side is aligned with the church tower but the east side is more angled and runs towards the south-east corner of the nave. The south side is marked by a faint bank, and there is a short section of a second parallel bank 9m to the south. Two sub-rectangular low mounds on the north and south sides of an otherwise flatter area lie at the west end of these parallel banks; the north side of the north mound is slightly disturbed. It is possible that area 'a' represents the site of the priory cloisters, that the two slight banks on the south side represent the width of the south cloistral range (i.e. 9m), and that the earthworks in the south-west corner might represent buildings at the south end of the west range. It should also be noted that there is also a similarly-sized flat and level area to the east of 'a', which is devoid of any obvious earthworks.
- 3.5 Earthworks of a probable building and associated yard or enclosure ('b') lie just beyond the south-east corner of the presumed cloister garth. The building lies on the north side of the enclosure, on a prominent east-west platform measuring 14m by 6m and formed by 0.4m high banks. Slight internal divisions might suggest that the structure is divided into three unequal-sized cells. The yard lies to the south, defined by a low, broad, flat-topped bank to the east, a slight bank to the west which extends from the south side of the platform, and a broad 5m wide and 0.7m high bank ('c') to the south. Although disturbed by a drain, the west end of the bank appears to continue further to the west before petering out, but the east end seems to terminate, possibly forming one side of an entrance 4.5m wide.
- 3.6 Beyond this presumed entrance, another prominent bank continues the general alignment of 'c'. The west end curves around to the south and then east, and there

is a small bank running between the two. A further bank 12m to the east might suggest that there is a north-south aligned structure ('d') at the west end of an otherwise level and defined enclosure.

- 3.7 A further yard or enclosure ('e') with associated buildings lies just to the north of structure 'd'. The enclosure is almost 25m square and is defined by a slight terrace to the north and a prominent bank to the south and east; the bank on the west side separates it from the adjacent enclosure 'b', and there is a slight depression running from what might be an entrance in the south-west corner. The main entrance however is 9m wide in the north-east corner. A narrow 4m wide terrace on the north side of the enclosure might contain two structures aligned east-west and measuring 7m and 12m long, although it is equally possible that it is a three cell building measuring 25m long. There is a wider flatter platform at the east end of the terrace, perhaps forming another structure, with a more definite platform 10m by 6m just behind (north) and at a slightly higher level.
- 3.8 Immediately beyond the east end of the church, a number of small post holes can be seen ('f'). These represent the site of a recent agricultural structure which is shown on the OS 1929 25" map (sheet 53/5) as a rectangular roofed building 18m long by 8m wide attached to the east end of the ruined church (see figure 4). Photographs examined as part of the architectural survey show that it was of a timber and corrugated iron construction; it had collapsed by November 1983 (YDNP 643/17) and was removed in July 1988; the site had been cleared by March 1991 (YDNP 49/1). It is likely, although not certain, that two adjacent sub-rectangular enclosures are associated with this former structure.
- 3.9 To the north of the post holes are two further depressions ('g'), located just behind (south) a large east-west and slightly curving bank. The eastern depression is sub-rectangular in plan and measures 7m by 9.5m (maximum) and is 0.5m deep. The depression to the west is more semi-circular and its north side is less well defined, being located at the base of the adjacent boundary bank. Both features look like ponds, although there are no obvious signs of any leats or channels to convey water in or out.
- 3.10 A flat almost square area ('h') measuring 28m east-west by 22m north-south lies against the north side of the church. Apart from a shallow section of a right-angled bank, the area is devoid of earthworks. The north side of the space is defined by the large slightly curving boundary bank mentioned above, which is 3m wide and 0.6m high at this point, while the east side is marked by a low spread bank which runs from the north-east corner of the chancel. The defined flat area is very similar to that seen on the south side of the church and, given that one third of all nunneries have north cloisters (Gilchrist 1989, 253), the interpretation of this area as a cloister range cannot be discounted.
- 3.11 A number of structures appear to have been built against the north side of the major boundary bank, on a shelf of level ground which widens to the west and which lies immediately above the steep scarp which falls to the river. At the east end a building ('i') measuring 15m long and only 4m wide seems to be associated with two parallel banks which run down the steep slope to the north. Two more constricted areas of level ground to the east and further to the west might suggest the position of other buildings. Further to the west again, where the terrace starts to widen out, short protruding banks define two bays 5m and 15m long by 3.5m wide. These may represent one large two-celled structure ('j') but if so it is the only

building platform within the complex which is skewed from the general east-west or north-south orientation. A slightly sunken triangular area in front (north) of this structure is defined by a right-angled bank.

- 3.12 Finally, another building and associated paddock or enclosure can be identified to the south of 'j', adjacent to the north-west corner of the west tower of the church. The enclosure ('k') measures 16m by 7m (maximum), and there is a prominent well preserved platform 0.5m high on the north side. Traces of a rectangular building measuring 15m by 4.5m can be seen on the platform.

Earthworks to the west of the church

- 3.13 The major feature to the west of the church is a linear north-south alignment of large stones and disturbed ground, which appears to represent the course of a former drain (see plate 1). This disturbed area is a maximum of 4.5m wide, and its north end runs into the break of slope which forms the steep scarp down towards the river. Water can then be seen emerging a short way down the slope, forming a wet marshy area. A number of field drains runs into the south end of the disturbed drain, and an adjacent area of disturbance contains two partially buried 3" thick slabs which might represent part of a culvert.
- 3.14 A set of earthworks ('l') can be identified to the west of the drain. Unlike all the probable structures noted above, these earthworks are aligned north-south and they appear to represent a range of buildings. The earthworks are low and in many cases only a very slight bank can be seen. The main feature of the range is a row of four apparently equally sized cells, which probably represent one building c.25m long by 5m wide, but it is also possible that there are two separate but co-joined building, that to the north measuring 12m by 4m. There is a 3m wide shelf in front (east) of the range defined on its east side by a slight scarp.
- 3.15 At the north end of this range, a rectangular depression measuring 9m by 4.5m represents another structure, apparently slightly offset from the main alignment. There is also another 14m by 3m building at the south end of the long range; the west side has been dug out of the natural slope which rises to the west, and there appears to be a 1.5m wide entrance in the south-east corner. A much larger, slightly sunken area measuring 22m by 7m lies on the west side of the range. The central part of this area has been slightly eroded by farm traffic, but it appears that there was an access to it around the south end of the main range.
- 3.16 One other building and enclosure ('m') lies beyond the north end of the range 'l', to the north of a bank which defines the south side of a holloway (see below). The enclosure measures 14m by 9m and its west and north sides are defined by a low spread bank, with a probable 4m wide entrance in the south-west corner. Immediately to the north are a series of wall lines defining a rectangular area of 15m by 6m which might represent a building.
- 3.17 A further set of earthworks ('n') can be identified in a more remote location towards the north-west corner of the survey area. Once again, these all define a series of rectangular terraces or depressions which have a general east-west alignment. On the south side two separate co-joined rectangular buildings can be seen, each measuring 15m east-west by 5m north-south. The slight fall in the natural ground level means that the west building is slightly higher than that to the east. The west building may have a small extension on the west end, and the east building

appears to have an entrance in the centre of the north side. A further similarly-sized building lies immediately to the north, but set slightly further west; the earthworks here suggest that there are three cells with an entrance in the centre of the north side. A mis-aligned rectangular depression, open to the east, lies to the east, and there are several other wall lines running off at right angles in the general area. Although described here as separate structures, the juxtaposition of the rectangular earthworks could also imply that they represent rooms within one large and substantial building.

Other earthworks

- 3.18 In addition to these two main areas of earthworks described above, a number of outlying features were identified by the survey. The most prominent of these is a holloway ('o') which enters the survey area from the south-west corner. The point of entry has now been blocked by the substantial stone wall which surrounds Ellerton Abbey (house), and there are the remains of a sheepfold in the angle of this and the adjacent field wall. The 5m square sheepfold has now largely collapsed but rubble stone walls 0.5m high can be seen, with two upright gateposts on the east side with iron pintels for a gate in one.
- 3.19 After entering the survey area, the holloway runs in a north-east direction before rising up a natural slope and then curving around to the east. In its initial stages, it is between 4.0m and 4.5m wide and up to 1m deep but it becomes more constricted as it turns; the west side is more pronounced and there are traces of a wall in the bank. A small sub-rectangular depression on the south side of the holloway at the point at which it turns, might represent a small structure measuring 5m by 2m. To the east, the course of the holloway is less well defined, although the south side is marked by a stepped bank which probably represents a former field boundary. The projected course of the road would take it past the complex of earthworks at 'n', and it appears to run into the enclosure or paddock 'm' noted above.
- 3.20 A prominent natural scarp lies in the north-west part of the survey area. The partially exposed foundations of a wall 1.5m thick can be seen running away from the top of the crest in an approximate northerly direction; it is probable that this, together with the traces of walling seen in the west side of the holloway ('o'), represents an earlier alignment of the existing stone wall boundary to the west. Within the angle of the scarp, two slight banks run down the slope, and a slight sub-rectangular terrace ('p') might represent the location of a small structure.
- 3.21 A number of other minor earthworks can be seen within the scarp slope which falls down to the river Swale. There is an apparent level shelf or terrace ('q') measuring 12m wide (north-south), just above the river and below building and enclosure 'm'. The west side appears to be marked by two flat-topped projections towards which a wall line runs down the steep slope from the south; the northern of these two projections is only 2.5m wide and 3m long but it contains a central square depression and so is presumably some form of structure. Just to the north of these features is a prominent re-alignment of the river bank, caused by what looks like natural boulders. The shelf of level ground ('q') appears to continue further to the east, although it is crossed and disturbed by an area of marshy ground. In addition, there is a small circular earthwork 5m in diameter further to the west, which looks exactly like a small exploratory mine shaft and there is a certain

amount of stone rubble in the sides of the mound; it might be a very small circular building or even a tree hole.

- 3.22 Further to the east, beyond the two parallel banks which run down the scarp from building 'i' (see above), is another area of disturbed earthworks ('r'). A drain exits from the upper parts of the natural slope and, although dry at the time of the survey, water erosion has created a 0.7m deep rubble-filled gully. Two possible platforms can be identified either side of this channel, that to the east being sub-rectangular 8m by 7m and more convincing as a building platform terraced into the side of the scarp. Further to the south, on the level ground above the scarp, a faint north-south aligned flat-bottomed shallow ditch ('s') between 5m and 7m wide with a former field boundary on the east side, may well represent the course of the drain.
- 3.23 Within the rest of the survey area, the ground is generally devoid of earthworks although some ridge and furrow can be seen in the area immediately to the east of Ellerton Abbey (house). The ridges, which are 0.3m high and 7m apart, have an east-west orientation and it is noticeable that their east ends terminate in a slight headland which is aligned with the back (west) of the north-south range of buildings ('l') seen to the north. The ridge and furrow can clearly be seen running under the house enclosure wall and fence, and there is a small area of disturbance caused by a modern septic tank.
- 3.24 There are two other large open areas with the survey area, to the west of the north-south range of buildings ('l') and to the east of the shallow flat-bottomed ditch ('s'). The former has a gradual, natural slope from west to east and it is possible that it contains some very slight and unsurveyable east-west aligned ridge and furrow; a spread bank separates this area from the range of buildings to the east. The second area in the east of the site has a gradual slope from north to south, and former field boundaries can be seen defining the south and west sides. Once again, it is possible that there is some slight north-south ridge and furrow in this area but none could be positively identified, despite several inspections at different times of the year and in different lighting conditions.

The Geophysical Survey

- 3.25 Using the methodology described in Chapter 1 above, a geophysical survey was undertaken over most of the area covered by the earthwork survey. The following text is extracted from, and builds on, the information contained in the stand-alone survey report (GeoQuest Associates 1997) which was required to be produced as a condition of the Section 42 licence.
- 3.26 The first stage in the interpretation of the geophysical survey results is to extract significant anomalies and present them on a geophysical interpretation plan; three classes of anomalies have been distinguished and are depicted on figure 7 as follows:
- Green: significant regions of anomalously high magnetic field gradient which might be associated with high susceptibility soil-filled structures such as pits or ditches;
 - Blue: areas of anomalously low magnetic field gradient, corresponding to material with low magnetic susceptibility, such as stone foundations, trackways or rock rubble;

- Red: strong dipolar anomalies (paired positive-negative) which mostly reflect ferrous litter such as horse-shoes and chain links or fired materials such as clay brick/tile.

From this, an archaeological interpretation plan can be produced (see figure 8).

- 3.27 The survey area is characterised by a high concentration of small dipolar magnetic anomalies which almost certainly reflect the presence of ferrous litter in the soil. Four other large, intense anomalies have been detected which correspond to the footings for a telegraph pole ('f10' on figure 8), a rubble-filled hollow associated with a probable spring and drain ('f11'), an area of modern dumping and ground disturbance ('f12'), and a reinforced concrete slab associated with a septic tank ('f13'). A high concentration of dipolar magnetic anomalies ('f9') was also detected immediately to the east of the church, reflecting the presence of ferrous and/or fired materials such as metalwork, bricks and tiles in the ground; this corresponds to an area of disturbed ground containing debris from the previous removed timber and corrugated iron hen house (see above).
- 3.28 However, several diffuse negative anomalies were detected to the south of the ruined church. These reflect areas of low magnetic field gradient, and almost certainly represent the remains of stone foundations. One group of anomalies immediately to the south of the church form a rectangle measuring c.20m by 25m ('f1') with an apparent absence of features in the centre; this is characteristic of a monastic cloister. Further geomagnetic evidence for wall foundations was detected to the west of the cloisters ('f2'), and on the south and south-west sides ('f3').
- 3.29 Several positive magnetic anomalies ('f4') were detected in the south-east corner of the survey area. These parallel lineations, which are aligned approximately east-west, are fairly regularly spaced at between 8m and 10m intervals and are typical signatures for ridge and furrow; the relative increase of high susceptibility soil in the furrows compared with the paucity of such soil over the adjacent ridges gives rise to the anomalies. The east end of the ridge and furrow is marked by a north-south stoney headland, represented by an intense negative magnetic lineation on the greyscale image.
- 3.30 Another curvilinear north-south negative magnetic lineation ('f5'), with an adjacent positive magnetic lineation, was detected to the west of the church, and this corresponds to the low, disturbed, stony bank with the remains of a shallow ditch on its western side identified by the earthwork survey.
- 3.31 Numerous other curvilinear positive magnetic anomalies were detected across the whole of the survey area, and these generally correspond to low banks identified by the earthwork survey. Some of these anomalies almost certainly form enclosures while others may even represent building remains, such as 'f6' in the north-west corner of the survey. The broad east-west lineations ('f7' and 'f8') detected near the northern survey limit correspond to existing scarps, or terrace-like breaks of slope, as the land drops down to the river Swale.

Discussion and Interpretation

- 3.32 The earthwork and geophysical surveys have combined to produce a detailed layout of the priory complex and, in the absence of specific documentary references, it is possible to interpret some of the remains by reference to analyses

of other nunnery sites throughout the country (Gilchrist 1988a & 1989); this is explored in more detail in Chapter 5 below.

- 3.33 The ruined church appears to stand in the centre of an almost square enclosure, measuring c.120m-130m east-west and c.150m north-south, which probably represents the priory precinct; it is noticeable that the ruined church stands almost precisely in the centre of this area. The precinct appears to be defined on the west side by a range of north-south aligned structures ('l') and, if the boundary extended north as far as the river, the two flat-topped projections on the west side of the terrace 'q' might represent its alignment. The east side of the precinct might be formed by a slight bank and flat-bottomed ditch ('s'), possibly containing a drain. However, the alignments of the north and south sides are open to question. The south side may well correspond with the large interrupted east-west bank ('c') visible towards the south end of the survey area, with the gap adjacent to possible building 'd' representing the entrance. The north side might be formed by the prominent east-west slightly curving bank and ditch which is set back from the break of slope above the river but, as there are probable buildings ('i' and 'r') to the north of this, it seems likely that the north side of the precinct lies further towards the river, and is perhaps marked by the river bank itself - it is also possible that there was not a formal boundary on the side.
- 3.34 The earthwork survey was not able to positively establish whether the cloisters were attached to the north or south side of the church, but the geophysical survey was able to confirm a southern location. Indeed, the geophysical data is remarkably clear, and several short stub walls suggestive of internal divisions are evident in the west range which appears to be some 5m wide (see figure 8). A double parallel alignment of foundations in the south range may represent part of the internal covered walk which traditionally surrounded the cloister garth. The east range is not so obvious, but it is likely to be represented by a short section of buried wall running at a slight angle towards the south-east corner of the chancel. Overall, the cloisters measure c.25m east-west by 20m north-south, and the internal area contains relatively few features; the cloister garth was traditionally kept clear of buildings, and may have been used as a garden or a place of burial. No obvious features were seen in the geophysical data, although the 15m long north-south anomaly might represent a drain or path within the cloister garth.
- 3.35 Another set of foundations is represented by the geophysical anomalies at the south end of the east range ('f3'). The features as depicted suggest a structure measuring 10m by 7.5m with a number of internal sub-divisions; the interpretation of this feature, which was not specifically identified by the earthwork survey, is difficult, but it probably represents the junction of the south and east ranges, and it may be the site of a refectory, its associated storage areas, a kitchen, or even a reredorter (latrine); a further anomaly running to the east might represent the line of an underground culvert, taking water or waste to the drain which appears to run along the east side of the precinct. Further anomalies to the west of the west range ('f2') might be additional structures or be lines of underground drains or culverts, perhaps linking into the main north-south disturbed drain which lies to the west of the church.
- 3.36 The earthwork survey identified several potential building platforms just beyond the south-east corner of the cloister garth, including a possible range of structures on a narrow terrace on the north side of enclosure 'e'. The geophysical survey suggests that either the back (north) wall of these structures was of stone, or that

the anomaly represents an underground culvert (see above). More detached earthwork platforms lie nearby. All these buildings lie within the projected precinct enclosure, and they presumably represent outbuildings, although that on the south side ('d') adjacent to an apparent entrance, might be a gatehouse.

- 3.37 To the north of the church, a number of buildings ('j' and 'i') appear to lie on the outer edge of a substantial bank which the geophysical survey suggests has a ditch on its south side. Two other adjacent depressions ('g') might represent ponds, located to the west of a north-south drain, and geophysical data implies a ditch running into the more prominent feature.
- 3.38 The range of structures ('l') to the west of the church might represent a detached guest range (see below), although the earthworks might suggest agricultural buildings with a yard to the rear. To the north, a further building and yard ('m'), or possibly two buildings, lies at the termination of a holloway ('o') which enters the site from the south-west corner of the survey area and which passes in front (south) of another set of earthworks ('n') which might be two adjacent buildings although the geophysical data suggests is a single structure ('f6'). The function of this small complex is unclear, but it might be a detached farmstead (either monastic or lay) or ancillary priory buildings located just outside the precinct, or even be the remains of a later house (see Chapter 5 below). The earthworks at 'm', on the west side of the precinct boundary and at the end of holloway, might be another gatehouse.

4 ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY

Introduction

- 4.1 The standing remains of the church at Ellerton Priory comprise the western tower, and an aisleless, undivided, nave and chancel or presbytery (see plate 2). The earliest elements of these standing remains have been dated on stylistic grounds to the 13th century, but the majority of them, including the present tower, appear to result from a major building phase in the 15th century. Subsequent phases of intervention can be ascribed to the 19th century, and to the late 20th century (1987 and 1990), when the building was consolidated by the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The ground floor of the church was open to livestock at the time of the survey, and two mature Cedar trees are growing within the nave. The tower is roofed however, and its interior is largely weatherproof.
- 4.2 The building has a total length of 34.5m and a maximum width of 8.1m, and the tower stands to a maximum height of 14.7m above ground level. At the north-east corner, the surviving chancel wall stands to 5.9m. The north wall of the nave has an average height of 1.5m, while the south side is ruined and visible only in plan.
- 4.3 The tower is built on broad, rough footings visible in a few places where the ground surface appears to have eroded. Otherwise, the church is constructed of mortared sandstone and gritstone rubble, with cut sandstone and gritstone dressings, including edge-laid quoins. Much of the mortar is of a hard, gritty nature, with many large and mixed inclusions, which appears to be original to the building, although there is also much mortar which is evidently recent and probably dates to the 1987 and subsequent consolidations; this is more grey in appearance and has a finer matrix, with some brush marks visible. The tower is roofed with lead over softwood timbers. Other timber survives in the tower staircase, where the central vertical rail is of round section softwood; there are also two wooden doors, at the top and bottom of the stairs.

Architectural Description

- 4.4 In the following description, reference should be made to figure 9 which depicts the ground plan of the church and the three stages of the tower, the third stage representing the roof level. Figures 10 and 9 present the reduced elevation drawings.

The nave and chancel

- 4.5 The nave and chancel are undivided and form a continuous rectangular space with an internal area of 28.8m long by 5.5m wide. The most significant remains are found at the east and west ends, but most of the north wall, which has an average height of 1.5m, appears to be a modern rebuilding. The south wall is collapsed or has been demolished, and is visible in plan for approximately half its presumed length, with rubble spreads obscuring the eastern half to a large extent. At ground level all the walls are within 0.1m of an average thickness of 1.0m.
- 4.6 The south-west corner of the nave is formed of dressed sandstone quoins. On the west return of these quoins is a possible former string course, 3.0m above ground level, its south end running only to within 0.4m of the quoins, while its north end runs under the later south wall of the stairs.

- 4.7 Some 2.5m to the east of the south-west corner is the west jamb of a doorway in the south wall, formed by an arch whose width is 1.2m and present maximum height is 3.2m (elevation 6); extrapolation of the curve suggests the centre of the doorway was originally some 3.4m high. Two iron hinges remain in the west jamb of the doorway, while the wall to the right (east) is ruined and now stands to only some 0.2m height.
- 4.8 The remains of the south wall continue intermittently to the east, where the east wall of the chancel remains standing to a height of 2.6m. The exterior face of this east wall rises to c.6.0m in height, 1.5m from the north end of the wall, before terminating in an angle buttress at the north-east corner (elevation 1) (see plate 5). Insufficient fabric remains to indicate whether there was a matching buttress at the south-east corner.
- 4.9 Within the remains of this east wall, a number of external features are visible. At c.1.5m above ground level, an off-set runs across the whole of the elevation and continues across the north-east buttress. This is plain chamfered and heavily weathered at either end of the wall, but the central 3.1m section is composed of four stones with a hollow chamfer to both top and bottom faces, i.e. they have a symmetrical section; their form and relatively unweathered nature suggests that they are of a secondary date. The single surviving course of masonry above these stones, which is not properly mortared, also lends weight to this argument. Photographs of July 1983 (YDNP 643/17) and November 1986 (YDNP 1396/13) show a second course above these, which has evidently since fallen or been removed, possibly when the elevation was repointed after 1986, probably in 1987. Also evident on this elevation is a chamfered string course c.3.9m above ground level, running for only 1.1m; it does not run as far as the present south end of the wall at this height. This suggests that the present profile of this wall may be a result of rebuilding to some degree. Above this string course, a similarly chamfered stone can be seen set at right angles to the wall face, within the thickness of the wall; this may merely be a rejected dressing used as facework. There is a small void, c.0.1m by 0.5m, at the same level as this stone, which is probably the result of a fallen facing stone.
- 4.10 The present outline of the east wall indicates that there may have been a large window in this elevation, as might be expected for a church, but nothing of this survives. It is possible that the removal of the window dressings was accompanied by the replacement of some of the off-set dressings, and possibly by the rebuilding of part of the north end of this wall. Some alterations to this wall may also have been made when the adjoining post-built agricultural structure was constructed, as shown on the OS 1975 1:2500 map (see figure 2).
- 4.11 The north-east angle buttress adjacent to this elevation runs to a height of 5.0m above ground level, but it may have continued further upwards, as its top is presently corework (see plate 6). There are three chamfered off-sets on the buttress, and a chamfered plinth. The buttress is clearly contemporary with the adjoining east and north walls of the chancel as a number of the stones are continuous between them. The dressings of the buttress are of sandstone and some display rather rough punch dressing, and are heavily weathered.
- 4.12 The east end of the north chancel wall is of a similar height to the adjoining east wall, some 5.6m maximum (elevation 2) (see plate 6). However, only a length of some 0.6m of the wall is believed to be original, with the remainder being secondary. The form of the wall is unusual, being interrupted by two string courses, at heights of 2.0m and 3.5m above ground level, and these do not

correspond to the off-set or string courses seen on the east wall. Each string course is formed from a single stone, c.0.1m thick and between 0.5m and 0.6m long. At the top of the wall, there is what may be a third string course, which has been altered during the construction of the adjoining secondary fabric; this feature consists of two courses of roughly dressed stones 1.5m long and 0.3m high. An interesting stone has been incorporated in the original fabric 1.1m above ground level; this is semi-circular in shape, with a hole cut in the centre of the straight side, such as would be found in a door stoop.

- 4.13 There is a vertical line of three voids associated with the remains of the string courses, 0.6m from the east end of the wall. One is positioned at ground level while the others are at 1.7m and 3.3m above ground level; they are all c.0.15m square and c.0.2m deep. As they coincide with the ragged joint between original and secondary fabric, it is believed that they were intended to hold timbers either used during the construction of the secondary wall or of a now demolished adjoining structure, perhaps an ephemeral agricultural shelter.
- 4.14 The adjoining secondary fabric is detectable by a slight change in the alignment of the wall, and by a change in the type of masonry to smaller stones, especially rounded cobbles, accompanied by a smaller proportion of squared stones. The wall top is rough in profile, and heavily mortared, and appears to have been intended to be weatherproof from the outset, rather than being exposed corework. The secondary fabric is shown as being largely of drystone construction in March 1991 (YDNP 49/1-2) and it has since been repointed; this pointing is closer to the wall surface and there is a distinct absence of the gritty, white mortar apparent elsewhere on the church. This apparent area of infill continues for 27.3m, as a low wall c.1.6m in height, where a ragged joint is evident, 1.4m from a buttress at the north-west corner of the nave (elevation 3). The different characteristics of the two fabric types are clearly evident here, with the chunky, squared stones of the original wall contrasting with the later cobble-rich infill.
- 4.15 Internally, the east wall of the chancel contains a single void, 1.3m above ground level, 0.2m wide and 0.1m high (elevation 10); its function unknown. There are no other distinct features in this face, but the general form of its profile near its north end does hint at a former window opening of some size here, although there are no dressings to firmly indicate one. There are also two areas of limewash adhering to this wall face which have been retained despite the post 1991 repointing of this face. At the base of this wall is a massive sandstone slab which is probably a former altar; it is described with the other fragments below.
- 4.16 The internal face of the east end of the north wall is also unremarkable, but it does contain two voids or sockets, 1.6m and 3.1m above ground level (elevation 9); their function is not known. The ragged joint between the original fabric and the later infill to the west is not clear due to the post-1991 repointing, but it is apparent on a photograph of March 1991 (YDNP 49/11). There are no other features in the north wall until the west end, where a joint is visible at the point where the infill fabric gives way to the original; this joint has however been made less visible by the recent pointing, as comparison of its present form with that on photographs of November 1986 (YDNP 1396/5) and March 1991 (YDNP 49/6) show. This joint corresponds closely with that on the outer face of the wall. A socket 0.2m from the west end of this wall, c.2m above ground level, remains unblocked.
- 4.17 Adjacent to this, the west wall of the nave contains the doorway into the tower (elevation 8). This arch measures 2.2m wide and 4.1m high and has a plain round head, formed from rubble voussoirs with an ashlar keystone. There is a

suggestion that there has been some alteration to the form of this doorway, as the stonework of the south jamb has different characteristics from the north jamb; the former is of sixteen smallish blocks with some packing around, while the north jamb has ten more substantial blocks. Although this difference may result from deliberate alterations to the form of the arch, it is equally possible that it results from repairs to the south jamb.

- 4.18 There is a former void in the west wall, 1.3m above ground level and some 1.3m to the south of the doorway, which has been blocked with a loose stone; its function is not known. There are two further former voids to the north of the doorway, but these have been infilled with mortared stones, and are not now readily identifiable. All these voids are shown as being open on photographs taken in November 1986 (YDNP 1396/3-4).
- 4.19 There is a narrow window opening aligned slightly to the south of the centre over the arch, its base 5.6m above ground level. It measures 0.4m high and 0.1m wide and lights the former first floor within the tower; it appears to be original to the surrounding fabric, which implies the presence of an earlier tower, contemporary with the present nave (see below). Above this narrow opening, the former roof line of the nave can be seen as a line of lead flashing accompanied by a gradual set back in the face of the wall (see plate 10). The roof line has a shallow pitch of less than 10 degrees. Above this line, the wall fabric continues upwards, and is of similar form; it is described as the east wall of the tower below.

The tower

- 4.20 The tower is of an irregular plan form, and at ground level measures 5.4m east-west and 6.2m north-south, including its two western angle buttresses (see plates 3 and 4). It consists of a central core approximately square in plan, with stairs housed in an 'annex' to the south; its east wall is formed at lower levels by the west wall of the nave. It appears to have contained three floors at one time, although nothing of these survives; access is also possible onto the top of the present roof.
- 4.21 The sandstone rubble from which the tower is constructed is similar in appearance to that used for the earliest parts of the nave, being variable in size and laid to approximate courses in places (see plate 7). There are cut sandstone quoins of varying sizes at the corners, and a chamfered plinth at ground level and two chamfered string courses. The lower of these string courses is at 1.5m above ground level and is heavily weathered. Both the plinth and the lower string course run continuously around the north, west and south walls of the tower (although part of the former is hidden in places), and the two western buttresses. Both butt up to the west wall of the nave however, on both north and south sides of the tower, indicating that the present tower was added to an earlier church, or that a substantial remodelling of an earlier tower took place. The upper string course, positioned just below the parapet and some 13.3m above ground level, is of more recent appearance and may date wholly to the 19th century phase. This string course is continuous around all four walls of the tower.
- 4.22 There are a number of openings in the tower, the largest of which is the round-headed doorway in the east wall (elevation 8), which gives access into the tower (see plate 10); the tower is lit at ground floor level by a west window, and at higher levels by additional windows.
- 4.23 The south wall of the tower contains three external faces (elevation 6), as it is stepped in plan to accommodate the stairs, which are housed in a projection,

beginning 0.4m to the north of the south-west corner of the nave. The 'annex' housing the stairs in turn projects 1.15m from the main south wall of the tower, and its corner is defined by dressed sandstone quoins; the south-east corner of the tower above the level of the nave is also of dressed quoins. On one of the former quoins, approximately 1.0m above ground level are two adjacent Ordnance Survey benchmarks, one cut into the stone and one a brass screw set in a lead plug. Some of the quoins above the lower string course are damaged with corners knocked off; this damage has been evident for some time, being visible in photographs of July 1983 (YDNP 643/13).

- 4.24 There is a single narrow opening in the south wall of the stairs, and central to the projecting wall face, 9.5m above ground level. This opening is formed from four dressings with a hollow chamfer, and measures 0.25m wide and 0.5m high. In the adjacent west face of the stairs annex (elevation 7) is a line of three similar slits, the lowest slightly narrower (c.0.15m wide), at 2.0m, 6.0m and 12.2m above ground level. Apart from a now blocked void in the south wall of the stairs, open in July 1983 and November 1986 (YDNP 643/13 & 1396/19), there are no other features in these three wall faces.
- 4.25 Above the upper string course on the south elevation, the wall continues for a maximum of 1.4m, with this maximum height of 14.7m above ground level being found at the tower's south-east corner (elevation 6). There are the remains of three merlons (upstanding parts of battlements) visible in the wall face of the stairs annex, and a fourth merlon at the north-west corner of the tower proper. The dressed quoins continue up to the top of the walls, except for a cap stone at the south-east corner.
- 4.26 The south-west angle buttress adjoins the west end of the tower's south wall. It has the same profile as the north-east buttress, having five chamfered off-sets, the topmost one being 9.8m above ground level, above which the sandstone quoins of the tower continue. Many of the dressings of the buttress have clearly been replaced: their smooth, unweathered and milled toolings contrast with the upper dressings which are rougher and bear more lichen.
- 4.27 The west wall of the tower, flanked to each side by angle buttresses, contains three window openings (elevation 5) (see plate 7). At ground floor level is a central former two-light window, with two cinquefoil heads with sunken spandrels, and stepped sill and splayed interior; there are four horizontal bar holes in each jamb. The mullion has gone, and is shown as missing in the 1911 sketch (Russell 1914, 226) (see figure 5). A hood mould survives over this window, and the degree of weathering suggests that the dressings have not been replaced. The form of this window suggests a 15th century date. There is a rubble relieving arch over the window, c.1.0m above its lintel; this relieving arch appears to be carried through the wall thickness, as it is visible on the inside face of this wall.
- 4.28 On either side of this window, at c.2.0m above ground level, is a square void, each between 0.1m and 0.15m square and containing a loose stone. These voids appear open on photographs of November 1983 (YDNP 643/14) and were infilled during the 1987 consolidation. Their function is not known but they are likely to have been putlog holes. Four further voids of similar size are evident at the approximate level of the relieving arch across the elevation on the 1983 photograph, but these have been infilled with mortared stone and are no longer obvious.

- 4.29 The first floor square-headed window in the west wall is also central, but is narrower than that on the ground floor level, measuring 0.5m wide and 1.3m high. It too has a hood mould. The window is a single light, and is rectangular, with hollow chamfered sides. The lintel bears three dog-teeth, which the VCH description notes were originally three square-shaped flowers (Russell 1914, 226), and both the lintel and the sill have two holes which would have held vertical bars.
- 4.30 The second floor window, which was formerly of four lights, is aligned slightly to the south of the centre of the wall face, which suggests that this opening was an insertion, a theory supported by the fact it is not shown in the 1843 illustration (Richardson 1843, 85). Many of the window's dressings are cleanly cut and little weathered, indicating that they are recent or have been replaced; correspondence from English Heritage suggests that this was done before 1984 and it is shown in the 1911 sketch, with the description noting that it is a bad modern copy of that seen in the north elevation (Russell 1914, 226). The window has a transom and the lower part of a central mullion, a situation which is depicted in the 1911 sketch; the upper two lights have trefoil heads and sunken spandrels, but they are cut with straight lines and are very hard in appearance. The opening thus formed measures 1.1m wide by c.1.5m high. The upper string course runs across the wall face 1.5m above this window, and the battlements can be seen above this, with the remains of three merlons apparent. A sycamore tree growing from below the upper window in July 1983 (YDNP 643/14) has since been removed.
- 4.31 The north-west angled buttress, which is of essentially the same form as that at the south-west corner, does not appear to have had any stone renewed, and in fact the lowest string course is badly weathered. There is an iron pintle inserted c.1.0m above ground level.
- 4.32 The north face of the tower (elevation 3) is stepped back from the north wall of the nave by 1.0m (see plates 3 and 4). It contains no openings at ground floor level but two rows of two voids, 2.0m and 3.6m above ground level can be seen; they had been infilled with loose stones by November 1986 (YDNP 1396/17-18). These holes pass through the wall thickness and so presumably held substantial timbers, possibly for an adjacent structure, or were perhaps used for putlogs.
- 4.33 The only opening in the tower's north wall is at second floor level and is of a similar form to that at the same level in the west wall but is central to the elevation. The lintel, similarly to the west window, is of newly cut appearance, but more of the remaining dressings appear weathered and may therefore be of older date; the VCH suggests that it is original (Russell 1914, 226). The transom survives, but not the mullion.
- 4.34 There are two spout openings visible just below the top string course in the north wall, each set 0.5m in from the corners of the wall; these drain the roof, and some lead sheeting has been used to form each spout. The only remnants of the battlements on this elevation is a single merlon at the north-west corner of the tower. A photograph of this wall face of November 1983 (YDNP 643/16) shows two voids close to the western gutter opening, which have since been infilled with mortared stone; these appear to have been the locations of fallen face stones. Another change evident since 1983 is the absence of a small but established sycamore tree at the east side of this elevation, close to the top.
- 4.35 The east wall of the tower, above the roof line of the nave (elevation 8), also contains a window at second floor level, of the same form as the other second floor windows. The extensive vegetation that obscured it at the time of the survey

means that its precise details are not visible, but earlier photographs (YDNP 643/16; July 1983) show a standard arrangement of quoins. However, it is clear that, like the window in the north wall, it retains its transom but not its mullions, and some of the dressings have evidently been replaced; the VCH states that the head is modern, as well as the south jamb and transom (Russell 1914, 226). The top of this elevation is also irregular, but contains only one merlon, at the south-east corner.

- 4.36 The interior of the tower is now open to the roof, but there is good evidence for the locations of former floors, and further evidence for what may have been intermediate staging, possibly dating from the construction phase. However, it is also possible that some of this evidence relates to an earlier phase of the tower. It appears that the east wall of the tower (i.e. the west wall of the nave) is keyed into the masonry of the adjoining north and south walls of the tower, thus implying either that the west face of this wall was rebuilt to some extent when the tower was constructed, or more probably that the tower is contemporary with the nave, but that its outer walls only were remodelled, thus leading to the butting up of the tower fabric on the outside.
- 4.37 At ground floor level a plain chamfered doorway in the south wall, 1.8m high and 0.7m wide, leads to the stairs; there is a modern board door *in situ* (see plate 11). A newel stair, ascending in an anti-clockwise direction, gives access to the upper parts of the tower. The steps are of stone, with the lowest three being of single cut blocks, the step integral with the central column of the newel. Above these, the steps are mostly made of a number of sandstone blocks, with a central softwood post, which was replaced in 1984. It is possible that this difference in the steps results from a rebuilding of the earliest stairs. The stairs are lit by the four slits described above, each of which is splayed on the interior. Doorways of a similar form give access to the former floor levels; the bases of these doorways have been blocked with upright stone slate slabs. The stairs emerge via a fourth doorway with wooden door onto the roof (see plate 8).
- 4.38 There are a number of sockets within the tower. Two are found in the south wall, 2.3m above ground level; they are irregular in form, but measure between 0.2m and 0.4m in width and height, and are c.0.5m deep. These are matched by a second pair in the north wall; these however formerly passed through the wall thickness, and are visible on the outer face, where they have been blocked with loose stone. A fifth socket at the same level, in the south end of the west wall, and likewise passing through the wall thickness, completes this group. The functions of this group of sockets is not clear. They are unlikely to have held floor beams, as they are set at a level well below the top of the doorway into the tower from the nave, and lie just above the sill level of the west window. Instead, it appears more likely that they served as putlog holes during construction.
- 4.39 There is a second pair of sockets in the north wall, of the same form as below, and running through the thickness of the wall to the outer face, where they are blocked with loose stones. These are set 3.6m above ground floor level.
- 4.40 The true level of the removed first floor within the present tower, 5.4m above ground level, is indicated by the doorway into the tower from the stairs. This doorway is also in the south wall of the tower, and has a similar form to that seen on the ground floor, although it is slightly lower, at 1.6m high. The lowest part is blocked with an upright stone slate, to prevent falls into the tower. The threshold of this doorway is some 0.7m higher than a group of four former corbels and associated sockets. The two corbels in the east wall remain largely intact, and are

roughly shaped, but the pair in the west wall have been knocked flush. There are shallow sockets adjacent, in the north and south walls (c.0.1m deep). The first floor therefore appears to have been based on a pair of beams aligned north-south, at the east and west ends of the tower, and joists were presumably laid across these; steps would have been necessary to enter the floor from the stairs. The floor would have been lit by the windows in the east and west walls. It was noted in the 1987 specification for repairs that two pine logs were to be removed from the interior of the tower, and they may have come from here.

- 4.41 There is some evidence for another, intermediate floor, between the first and second floor levels, 8.2m above ground level. In the centre of both the north and south walls is a probable former corbel, now flush, with a slight void above. Additionally, there are three probable voids over the first floor window in the west wall, c.0.1m square. It is not clear whether these are matched in the east wall, as it is not possible to inspect this wall safely from the second floor doorway. However, it seems as though there was provision for a floor or staging at this height, possibly for the construction phase.
- 4.42 Above these features, 10.0m above ground floor level, is a very uneven set-back around the internal faces of all four walls, of 0.15m average width. The set-back is some 0.2m lower on the south wall than on the other three. Associated with this set-back is a group of four beam sockets, two in each of the west and east walls, the tops of which are level with the step. Below three of the beam sockets are large stones within the facework, which may again have been corbels, although it is possible that they were always flush with the wall face, and were intended only to provide a firm base to the socket. Below the south-west socket is a small patch of recent pointing which may indicate the infilling of a large stone like the others. These sockets presumably held timbers supporting the second floor; this floor would have been lit by the three windows of similar form in the west, north and east walls.
- 4.43 The second floor would have been entered by a third doorway from the spiral stair, 10.5m above ground floor level. The height difference between the sill of this doorway and the set-back (0.5m), may indicate that there was a step down into the floor, or that the threshold of the doorway has been raised, although there is no obvious evidence for the latter. The doorway is of the same form as the lower two, but a number of the dressings display milled tooling indicative of a probable 19th century date. The doorway is 1.7m high, and like that below is partly blocked with an upright stone slate.
- 4.44 The stairs continue upwards and lead to a fourth doorway giving access onto the roof, c.13.0m above ground level. This doorway has a hollow chamfer on the outer face, and tooling to its dressings indicate a 19th century or later date. Two steps outside the door lead up to the roof, which is constructed of seven narrow, shaped joists, their ends set into the wall fabric. These are overlain by broad boards, and these in turn are covered in lead sheeting (see plate 8). Gullies at east and west sides drain water to the spouts in the north wall.
- 4.45 The roof is enclosed within a low parapet, between 0.5m and 1.6m high, which is shown as being battlemented by 1911 (Russell 1914, 226). Now only a few of the merlons survive (as noted above) and coping remains in only one or two places. The battlements appear to have continued around the perimeter of the tower, including the stairs projection on the south side. At the south-west corner of this projection, the wall has been capped with part of a window head, which is badly weathered, but appears to be cinquefoil headed, with sunken spandrels, closely

resembling the ground floor window in the west wall, and also one of the fragments seen in the base of the tower (stone no. 3; see below). The leadwork of the roof was not recorded, although it contains much graffiti, including 'S DENT 1889', 'A H 1827' (presumably one of the workmen clearing the interior of the nave at this date), 'G D K' with 'J P', 'H STOKES 1962', '6th AUG 1963' and 'J M and GM 1975'.

Worked Stones within the Church

- 4.46 A number of stones within the interior of the church and tower are of interest; they are numbered 1 to 7 on figure 9. These stones include four fragments within the tower (nos 1-4), a pair of slabs close to the tree towards the east end of the nave (nos 5-6), and a massive slab adjacent to the east wall (no. 7). Some of these stones were described or illustrated by Speight (1897, 219-220), Pontefract and Hartley (1934, 166-167), Edleston (1943, plates IV & VII), and more recently by Ryder (1986).
- 4.47 Two stone coffin lids were found in 1827 during clearance and dismantling works in the nave (Urban 1827; Pontefract & Hartley 1934, 166-167). One was supposed to be that belonging to the founder of the priory, being engraved with a cross with the inscription "HIC IACET WIMERVVS P'SONA". The second was also inscribed "PETRONILE PRIORISE", Petronilla being a prioress in the mid 13th century. Urban notes that the lids, which were found near the south wall, were in very good condition, but that the workmen who uncovered them split the former and scattered the underlying skeletons. Hartley and Pontefract record that these stones were replaced within the nave, and in 1963 Ryder produced a sketch of the Petronilla slab (see figure 13) and noted that it has since been removed from the site.
- 4.48 The four surviving fragments in the tower appear to be from a variety of sources. Nos 1 and 2 represent the remaining two parts of a decorated slab which had been broken into three pieces by 1963 with the lower portion having been lost by 1979 (Ryder 1986, 35). The two remaining pieces were photographed *in situ* next to the north wall of the nave, adjacent to piece no. 5, in July 1983 (YDNP 643/19) and November 1986 (YDNP 1396/9). They appear to have been subsequently moved into the tower, probably during the consolidation works in 1987; the YDNP specification notes that 'gravestones to be removed by owner's agents prior to works starting' (YDNP 1987). These two fragments were recorded by Ryder in August 1979, and added to the lower fragment which was sketched in 1963 but which had subsequently been removed from the site (Ryder 1986, 35 & figure 2b; see figure 12). The elaborate slab has an interlaced diamond cross head without a central rosette or overlying ring, having terminals of trefoil rather than a fleur-de-lys type; this indicates a date of c.1250-1300. The flanking leaf scrolls are more open and the marginal chamfer bears a running band of trefoil leaves, alternately facing in and out from the slab. The broad cross shaft rises from a three step Calvary base of unusual form. The whole design is carved in bold relief on a grey fine-grained sandstone, and has been a piece of high quality work.
- 4.49 Stone no. 3 is part of a window head, being the central element of a two light cinquefoil window, similar or identical to the ground floor window in the tower's west wall, and to that used as a wall capping at the south-west corner of the stair tower. A photograph from 1986 (YDNP 1396/6) shows this close to the east doorway of the tower, and it would appear that this piece was placed in its present position as part of the 1987 consolidation works.

- 4.50 Stone no. 4 is another decorated stone, possibly a fragment of grave slab. It is likely that this piece was also placed in its present place during the 1987 consolidation works.
- 4.51 Stone no. 5 is another grave slab, which has remained *in situ* adjacent to the tree (see plates 12 and 13). It measures 1.3m by 0.5m, and is approximately aligned with the church, although this may not be significant. It too has a cross inscribed on the east end of its upper surface, with a shaft running to the west end of the stone. This and the adjacent piece no. 6 appear to have been raised by the root action of the large cedar tree which is growing between them. It was in its present position when photographed in September 1982 (YDNP 71/20) and in November 1986 (YDNP 1396/9), and it was sketched by Ryder in 1979 (see figure 12).
- 4.52 Stone no. 6 is also probably a grave slab, but is plainer in form, with the upper side of the stone chamfered along its long sides (see plate 12). It measures 1.7m long by 0.4m wide, and is on a similar alignment to the body of the church. This stone is not visible on a photograph of November 1986 (YDNP 1396/9), thus illustrating the action of tree roots and/or livestock erosion within the nave.
- 4.53 Stone no. 7 is situated against the east wall of the church, and may be a former altar or a re-sited grave slab. It measures 2.1m by 0.9m and is c.0.3m thick. It now rests on sandstone blocks placed under each end, and is therefore raised slightly above the existing ground surface. There is no decoration apparent on the upper surface, but it is very flat and smooth, and is clearly of some significance, although its original function and location are unknown.
- 4.54 Russell notes that there were three other gravestones in the nave, with foliated heads and of 14th century date, together with a less ornate example which is 13th century and an 14th century example with a foliated cross on calvary steps, as well as a double base to two small shafts in the tower (Russell 1914, 226). In 1963 Ryder also produced sketches of two further cross slabs which have since been removed from the site (see figure 13).

Discussion

- 4.55 The remains of the church at Ellerton priory are relatively complex, although only a small proportion survives. The earliest fabric appears to be confined to the east and west ends of the nave, and probably the interior of the tower; the north and south walls are recorded as having been demolished in 1827 (Urban 1827). There is no evidence for the date of the earliest fabric, as there are no diagnostic architectural details due to the plain character of the walls and lack of decoration, although the presence of mid 13th century coffin lids within the building supports the idea that the church was already present by this date. The earliest church therefore appears to have been of very simple plan, with an undivided nave and chancel, and a western tower (see figure 15).
- 4.56 The tower is however a more complex element. It is clear from the exterior that the outer faces are later than the nave, but the internal faces may well be contemporary, suggesting that it was remodelled. A date can be ascribed to this remodelling by the form of the window openings, of which the lower ones are Perpendicular in style, and characteristic of the 15th century and, although some of their dressings have been replaced, it would appear that the newer stonework was in some respects faithful to the original. There is further support for the idea that the tower was remodelled from an existing structure in the form and locations of the other window openings, the gradual step-back in the tower's east wall above

the roof line of the nave, and in the complex arrangements for floors within the tower. These latter may be partially explained by the possibility that the original floor levels did not correspond with the later stages, and that some form of internal stairs were used, rather than the separate stone stairs found at present.

- 4.57 The present height of the tower appears to be due to a relatively late intervention, probably of the 19th century. There is no obvious fabric break indicating the height of the 15th century tower, but a depiction of the tower in 1843 (Richardson 1843, 85) (see figure 5) shows the top apparently rising to a height below its present uppermost off-set. A sketch dated to 1911 then shows the heightened and embattled tower (Russell 1914, 226) (see figure 5). It is therefore likely that this remodelling took place in the late 19th century to convert the ruined medieval church into a romantic Gothic ruin, designed in part to be viewed from Ellerton Abbey (house) (see plate 2). This house was constructed in the 1830s for the hereditary landowners, the Erle-Drax family (DOE1986, 8). It is a substantial villa built in rough sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings, and the associated landscape includes a Victorian garden to the west and a small lake to the south which is crossed by a straight carriage drive, the junction with the B6270 being marked by rusticated gate piers and cast-iron gates (Hatcher 1990, 86). The house achieved some notoriety as being the residence of the wealthy dog-loving Mrs Pumphrey (played by Margaretta Scott) in the 1978-1990 TV series, *All Creatures Great and Small*.
- 4.58 The work carried out to achieve this remodelling appears to have included the replacement of a number of second floor window dressings and possibly the insertion of a west window, and the heightening of the tower by up to 1.5m, with a string course and battlemented profile; that these operations were contemporary is suggested by the former window dressing incorporated in the coping in the south wall of the tower. Other works probably carried out at or around this time include the reconstruction of the tower roof, the replacement of dressings in the tower buttresses, the re-erection of the central part of the nave's north wall, and the alterations to the string course in the east wall of the nave.
- 4.59 An ephemeral agricultural lean-to appears to have been constructed against the east wall of the nave, probably in the early 20th century, which is shown on the OS 25" map of 1929. It is not known to what extent this resulted in alterations to the church's east wall.
- 4.60 Further, more recent, phases of intervention can be identified in the fabric and are attributed to various consolidation works carried out by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority in 1987, 1990 and after 1991. These included patch pointing to many of the external and internal faces, the felling of mature sycamore trees from the interior of the nave and the removal of several saplings from the tower and east wall, the inadvertent blocking of some voids, and more extensive repairs to insecure masonry. Some *ex situ* fragments, including coffin slabs, were also moved into the tower from the nave for protection.

5 INTERPRETATIVE DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

General Comments

- 5.1 While there appear to be few specific accounts or documents for Ellerton priory itself, it is possible to use the limited information obtained from other nunneries, such as the Yorkshire building descriptions (Brown 1886) and the 15th century account roll for Marrick (Tillotson 1989), as well as those more general works which deal with the layout and functions of nunneries (e.g. Gilchrist 1988a & 1989), to help interpret and understand some of the recorded remains at Ellerton.

Liturgical considerations

- 5.2 It is important to appreciate the various special requirements and liturgical practises that nuns had, and which were reflected in the architecture and spatial arrangement of priories, as compared to the more traditionally studied male monasteries. In particular, the degree of enclosure experienced by medieval nuns and monks should be compared (Gilchrist 1988b).
- 5.3 An acknowledgement of the relatively constricted role of the female monastic is fundamental to the understanding of nunnery architecture. Nuns were prohibited from saying mass, touching the chalice and cloth, burning incense, and approaching the altar during mass. Prioresses were prohibited from preaching in public, receiving vows, hearing confession and giving blessings. These liturgical restrictions are reflected mainly in the form of nuns' churches, which tended to be narrow aisleless parallelograms, since there was never any need for additional altars in side chapels; sometimes parish and nunnery churches were placed side by side, as parallel aisles, with the nuns' church on the cloister side. In the nuns' church, there was often no structural division between the nave, choir and presbytery, and upper level galleries were sometimes provided for secular guests (Gilchrist 1988a, 3; Gilchrist 1989, 252-253).

Benefactors and economy

- 5.4 Certain features typical to nunneries can be identified, perhaps indicating that their benefactors commissioned according to a gender specific rather than an order specific design. The founders of nunneries generally came from a lower social standing than those who founded monasteries (Burton 1979, 24), and their motives reflected their local importance and family interest. As a result, most donors came from the immediate neighbourhood; the 1415-16 record shows that Marrick drew the majority of its rents from numerous scattered parcels of land within 20 miles of the house, rather than any large single or widely flung estates (Tillotson 1989, 9; Burton 1979, 12).
- 5.5 The more marginal nature of nunnery sites in comparison to male monasteries could reflect the lower status of nuns in the eyes of their benefactors. It is also possible that the restricted nature of many of the sites is an expression of the economically passive female role prescribed by the church; in the same way that it was inappropriate for female mendicants to beg, perhaps female contemplatives were never expected to achieve an economic self-sufficiency (Gilchrist 1989, 257).
- 5.6 The endowments of many northern nunneries were biased towards sheep and cattle farming, and mills were an important source of revenue, but many of the nunneries had to rely on grants, dowries or entry fees to supplement or sustain their incomes (Burton 1979, 13, 15 & 21); 83% of the income at Marrick priory was

from its agricultural land and other property by way of rents and sale of produce such as animals (e.g. cattle), grain and wool (Tillotson 1989, 9). It is unlikely that nunneries were allowed to participate in trade or industry, occupations considered inappropriate for all English women, and most nunnery estates were managed by hired secular bailiffs. It may be necessary to assume that the nuns were never active outside the cloister - tasks undertaken in the outbuildings and granges were done by secular servants although the nuns may have done some tasks traditionally associated with women such as weaving and brewing. In 1415-16 Marrick Priory had over 18 servants (Tillotson 1989, 13-14).

Layout and construction

- 5.7 Nunneries normally adopted a modified Benedictine cloister plan, and the tendency for regional types (see below) suggests a lack of central planning. The most distinctive feature of the nunnery plan was the cloister, the square around which the church and three ranges were built. Most nunnery cloisters ranged between 14m and 18m square, reflecting the limited resources available and the restricted nature of the sites chosen; one third of nunneries had their cloister located to the north of the church (Gilchrist 1988a, 3; Gilchrist 1989, 253).
- 5.8 While the church would have been of stone construction, the cloister ranges could have been of stone and/or timber, and be of one and/or two storeys. The east range often contained the chapter house, usually confined within the width of the range, and/or other components such as a parlour or warming house. The upper floor contained the dormitory (dorter) and an external stair would have led to a latrine (reredorter), the precise location of which was subject to the available water supply and drainage. The south range housed the refectory (frater) which was accessed directly from the cloister garth, and there would have been an adjacent kitchen. This would have been sited off the main cloister where fresh water was available and incoming supplies of food could be received. The west range often served as a guest house for visiting seculars and/or the offices of the nunnery officials, and the upper floor sometimes provided lodgings for the prioress; occasionally, separate guest ranges were built.
- 5.9 An outer court was often located to the west of the church, through which seculars could gain access into the nave. This court housed the outbuildings associated with the self-sufficiency of the nunnery; cattle sheds, granaries, stables, dovecotes, barns, fuel stores, bakehouses etc would be expected. At some sites, detached buildings were constructed for secular lodgers and guests, and these were often adapted to become, for example, a bread house, brewery and dairy. At Wilberfoss Priory near York all the outbuildings were built of “goode substancialle tymer walles, seyld and plasterid abouue” with roofs covered with slates or thatch, while at Esholt, a Cistercian priory of a similar annual monetary value to Ellerton (Burton 1979, 45), some buildings were all of stone, or all of wood, or had a stone foundation with timber above, with slate or thatched roofs (Brown 1886, 204-205 & 321).
- 5.10 The whole nunnery complex, its cloister and outbuildings was contained within a precinct which was frequently surrounded by a moat, bank or more commonly a wall, often enclosing an area of c.300m by 200m. A gatehouse was occasionally positioned in a western break in the precinct wall (Gilchrist 1988a, 5). Some precincts did not have a physical boundary for the precinct, for example at Higham in Kent (Tester 1967, 154), but this is generally unusual.

- 5.11 Some regional variations in the general layout of nunneries can be identified. Yorkshire nunneries never had sacristies incorporated into their plans (Brown 1886, 201). This may either reflect the fact that they were built in the 12th century before sacristies became common, or more likely it was due to the slightly different role undertaken by the priests and chaplains. Many Yorkshire nunneries provided chambers for the priest within the precinct or outer court and, because of their permanent presence, no other male liturgical space was required in the claustral complex. Another characteristic peculiar to Yorkshire priories is the reversal of nave and choir seating arrangements where nunnery churches were shared with parochial congregations; nuns often claimed the east portion of the church although this was not always the case, as at for example Marrick (Gilchrist 1989, 254-255).
- 5.12 As the nuns could not say mass, nunneries were seldom commissioned to perform the increasingly popular chantry masses that sustained the incomes of other monastic houses in the later medieval period. This lack of investment is often expressed in the slow or piecemeal development of plans, and the permanent presence of wooden structures with thatched roofs within the precinct; even the richer nunneries reveal an absence of building work carried out after the initial foundation.
- 5.13 This lack of endowments would inevitably lead to general disrepair and the disintegration of the claustral plan. At Yedingham Priory, for example, several buildings were described as being decayed or ruined at the Reformation (Brown 1886, 207), disused refectories (fraters) at Handale and Thicket priories were used to store grain, and Baysdale and Wilberfoss priories had dairies next to the chapter house (Gilyard-Beer 1958, 47). A common response was the growth of individual cells within the claustral ranges, for example at Littlemore where the dorter was divided into two rows of chambers each measuring c.2.5m by 3m (Pantin 1970). At Wilberfoss Priory near York, the adoption of individual cells and 'familiae' (private messes for eating) was accompanied by the encroachment of breadhouses, breweries and dairies into the cloisters (Gilyard-Beer 1958, 47).

The Ellerton Priory Complex

- 5.14 Although some of the general points above can be applied to the Ellerton complex, any direct comparison can only be implied and intrusive investigation would be required to confirm or refute the following suggestions and interpretations. It should also be noted that Ellerton Priory was one of the poorest, and by inference one of the smallest, of all the Yorkshire nunneries; it was valued at only £2 13s in 1291 and £15 14s in 1535 (Burton 1979, 45), and it only contained five nuns in 1381 and 1537 (Knowles & Hadcock 1971, 272-273). As a result, Ellerton is unlikely to have contained the full range of structures and features noted above; if it did, it is likely that buildings performed dual functions or were contained within larger complexes rather than being individually constructed structures.
- 5.15 In the following interpretation and discussion, it has been assumed that, with one possible exception, all the earthworks within the study area are associated with the monastic complex, although they may of course not be all of the same phase. This assumption is based on the plan form and morphology of the earthworks, and the fact that they are almost all oriented east-west or north-south. It should also be noted that, although the survey area comprised the core of the priory site, additional earthworks forming fishponds and a wider water management system lie to the west of Ellerton Abbey (house) and the B6270 road.

- 5.16 The earthwork survey was able to suggest that the priory precinct probably measured c.120m-130m east-west, with the northern boundary possibly extending as far as the river bank to give a north-south dimension of c.150m (see figure 14). Examples of other Yorkshire nunneries suggest the precinct enclosed an area of some 300m by 200m (Gilchrist 1988a, 5) and so the Ellerton example would appear to be rather smaller than normal, a fact perhaps consistent with the size and importance of the complex.
- 5.17 A variety of structures and features can be identified within the precinct enclosure (see figure 14). It is noticeable that the ruined church stands in the approximate centre, and the geophysical survey clearly established that the cloisters lay to the south. The west and south claustral ranges were well represented in the geophysical data as buried stone foundations, with the west range in particular containing a number of internal sub-divisions. The west claustral range traditionally fulfilled a variety of functions and often served as a guest house and/or as offices, and it was often the most impressive and usually built of stone. The internal sub-divisions might represent smaller rooms on the ground floor of two storey structures, or might perhaps reflect the presence of small rooms or individual cells as sometimes seen at other nunneries; their presentation in the geophysical data is very similar to the two rows of sleeping chambers (each measuring c.2.5m by 3m) seen in the dormer at Littlemore (Pantin 1970) for example. Other anomalies at the south end of the east range suggest an offset structure, again with internal sub-divisions, possibly representing the refectory, kitchen or dormer. Only the outline of the east claustral range was identified by the geophysical survey, although a slight earthwork platform was evident; the lack of definite anomalies in this area might suggest that it was this area that was dug up by workmen in 1827 (Urban 1827), although one might expect some disturbance to show up in the survey data. No structural evidence for a chapter house or other internal sub-divisions was immediately obvious, and it might be that part of the range was built of wood (as it was at Wilberfoss, including the chapter house) which may not have left much of a magnetic signature.
- 5.18 The geophysical survey did not record many stone foundations or features beyond the claustral ranges, suggesting that the majority of the other outbuildings or structures were of timber; this would be entirely in keeping with a small rural priory (see above) and some of the geophysical anomalies may represent soil-filled trenches for wooden tie beams. Interestingly, the survey did not identify any stoney structures associated with the precinct wall although some soil-filled ditches were seen.
- 5.19 The earthwork survey identified several other possible building platforms within the precinct which are likely to represent outbuildings or other monastic structures (see figure 14). Those earthworks on a narrow terrace on the north side of enclosure 'e' might be outbuildings, with a back (north) wall of stone, but given their proximity to the cloisters, it seems more likely that they are a reredorter with an underground culvert identified by the geophysical survey running into the drain on the east side of the precinct; not all priories had this flushing system, for example the reredorter at Higham was served only by a garderobe pit and drain (Tester 1967, 148-149). It is possible that the more prominent and isolated earthwork on the north side of enclosure 'b' is the site of a small infirmary or a detached dwelling for either the prioress or the priest; at Baysdale the priests' chamber was "in length xvij foote and xij foote brode with a little side chambre in th' end of the same, and a chymney of tymer, and tymer walles coueryd wth thak" (Brown 1886, 328). In addition, if the substantial bank 'c' does represent the line of the precinct wall, the earthwork 'd' at the west end of a larger enclosure might be the site of a gatehouse.

- 5.20 The range of structures ('l') to the west of the church might represent a detached guest range, but given the size and prosperity of the priory, this seems unlikely. The earthworks have the appearance of three large agricultural buildings or barns with perhaps a yard to the rear (west), and they lie on the western edge of the precinct. It would be expected that the buildings lay within the outer court, and so they may have been built into the precinct wall or formed part of it. Another building and yard ('m'), or possibly two buildings, lie to the north of range 'l' and at the end of a holloway ('o') which approaches the site from the west. Given the presence of this holloway, and its position on the presumed precinct wall, it is possible that these earthworks ('m') represent another gatehouse, located in the traditional position on the west side of an outer court; the yard may have been a collecting or gathering area in front of the gate.
- 5.21 Other earthworks to the north of the church surround a relatively flat area ('h'). This area may be a yard, with the buildings around it, for example 'k', 'i' and 'j', being additional barns or agricultural buildings. But as these would have been used by seculars, they would have been confined to the outer court, and so the slightly curved substantial ditched bank running east-west to the north of the church might, in part, be a physical barrier between the secular and religious areas. If this is the case, the flat area ('h') may have been a garden, and further to the east, within the monastic enclave, are two adjacent depressions ('g') which might represent fishponds; the geophysical data implies a ditch running into the more prominent feature. Many of the priory descriptions also note the presence of gardens, vegetable plots and orchards, sometimes enclosed with walls (Brown 1886); Marrick Priory had a cole or cabbage garden (*Kalgarth*) for example (Tillotson 1989, 16). Perhaps the area to the east of the church, in the level platform to the east of the cloister, contained such features.
- 5.22 The holloway ('o') which approaches the priory complex runs from the deserted medieval village of Ellerton, located in the field to the west of Ellerton Abbey (house). Within the survey area, the holloway runs up a slight rise to then turn east at a point where the width of the road becomes much more constricted. There would have been an impressive view of the monastic complex from this point and some of the adjacent earthworks (e.g. 'p') might represent one of two small buildings. The holloway also passes in front (south) of a range of structures ('n') which were interpreted by the earthwork and geophysical survey as being one or more adjacent buildings.
- 5.23 It is difficult to ascribe a function for these earthworks ('n'). The fact that they lie outside but adjacent to the presumed precinct boundary might suggest that they are associated with male-orientated activity which would have been excluded from the outer court. They might, for example, represent a small farmstead or be the house of a bailiff or granger who was hired by the priory to run their estates, or even be a priest's house although it seems too large for this. The presence of a wall line running to the proposed gatehouse ('m') to the east might suggest that the earthworks are associated with the monastic complex, but this need not necessarily be true. The earthworks could represent an entirely separate manorial complex such as a farmstead or be a precursor to the 19th century Ellerton Abbey (house), built after the Dissolution. However, the presence of soil-filled ditches rather than stone foundations in the geophysical data might imply an early date, possibly contemporary with the priory.

The Priory Church

- 5.24 The church has a total length of 34.5m and a maximum width of 8.1m, measurements which lie within the average dimensions for nunnery churches as a whole (Gilchrist 1988a, 4). The west tower stands to a maximum height of 14.7m above ground level, and the surviving chancel wall stands to 5.9m at the north-east corner. The north wall of the nave has an average height of 1.5m, while the south side is ruined and visible only in plan.
- 5.25 The earliest church appears to have been of very simple plan, with an undivided and aisleless nave, a square-ended chancel, and a western tower (see figure 15). The former two are common to priories and are in keeping with early Cistercian ideals, which held that the church should be as plain and humble a building as possible (Gilyard-Beer 1958, 15), and the various liturgical practises mentioned above. The presence of a west tower however is unusual.
- 5.26 The tower is more complex, and the various window openings suggest that it was remodelled in the 15th century. A second phase of alteration took place in the late 19th century, when the tower was raised by up to 1.5m in height and embattled, probably to turn the ruined church into a romantic Gothic ruin. Other associated works appear to have included the reconstruction of the tower roof, the replacement of dressings in the tower buttresses, the re-erection of the central part of the nave's north wall, and the alterations to the string course in the east wall of the nave. This work was presumably carried out by the Erle-Drax family, who also built the adjacent Ellerton Abbey (house) in c.1830 (Hatcher 1990, 86).
- 5.27 The identification of the cloisters on the south side of the church means that the existing door in the south wall provided a means of access from either the west range or the north-west corner of the cloister garth. It was common for seculars to enter the priory church from the west, through the outer court and avoiding the claustral range, but the presence of a 15th century window suggests that there was no access through the tower, although one could have been possible in the original 13th century structure. It is therefore likely that access for seculars into the church was through a door in the north wall, which was demolished in 1827 and for which no evidence remains.
- 5.28 The fact that the earliest fabric in the church appears to date from the 13th century implies that the complex was established towards the end of the period of priory foundation in Yorkshire (Burton 1979, 9). The rebuilding of the tower in the 15th century may have been a delayed reaction to the destruction caused by the Scottish raids in the mid 14th century, specifically in November 1347 when the priory was totally despoiled (Fieldhouse & Jennings 1978, 57).

Conclusions

- 5.29 The survival of the church at Ellerton is all the more significant because the original founding ideals of the Cistercian movement have not been obscured by later additions and rebuilds, as is commonly the case at other Cistercian houses, and especially the larger establishments, such as Fountains and Jervaulx. The preservation of the earthworks within and outside the monastic precinct is also noteworthy, as the site has not been improved, developed or otherwise significantly disturbed. This is in part due to the fact that the site lies within a rural agricultural and largely protected landscape, but also because the site has remained in a single ownership and tenancy. More particularly, the complex as a whole is generally undisturbed from post-dissolution development; many monastic ruins

were turned into large houses and the surrounding areas converted into gardens, leading to a multi-period, multi-functional and often confusing landscape (e.g. Stainfield in Lincolnshire; Everson, Taylor & Dunn 1991, 175-177). Although the church ruins were altered to create a romantic ruin in the 19th century, there was little disturbance to the surrounding earthworks.

- 5.30 While many of the earthworks within the precinct can possibly be interpreted, some features characteristic of monastic sites have not been identified. Perhaps the most important of these is the location of a burial ground. Although some burials were found within the nave of the church, as might be expected with the prioress and other important personages, the possibility of there being a small burial ground within some part of the precinct should be considered. Examples from other priory sites suggests that burials were placed in or around the cloister garth, but none were immediately obvious from the geophysical survey data.
- 5.31 Another question deals with the problem of water supply. The priory site is raised well above the level of the river Swale and, although the river is likely to have been utilised for fishing, perhaps transport and other activities, there are no apparent means by which water could be channelled from the river into, through, and out of the complex. It appears that there were two main drains which ran north-south through the precinct, but the water was brought from some distance to the south. Recent investigations have identified a complex water management system on the side of the hill near Juniper Gill Plantation to the south of the B6270; a complex of leats, reservoirs and stone-lined conduits have been noted on Juniper Gill, together with a possible mill site and other related, possibly industrial, structures (DCMS 2000). This implies a well engineered water supply system, not unexpected in monastic complexes (Bond 1989). However, it should also be remembered that Ellerton was a small and relatively poor priory, and so is unlikely to have had a particularly sophisticated system.
- 5.32 Further afield, the role and functioning of the priory estate at Ellerton has not been considered, and the absence of information on the extent, location and type of monastic landholdings which might have a bearing on the types of buildings in the priory complex is frustrating. In addition, an examination of the relationship between Ellerton (Cistercian) and Marrick (Benedictine) priories would be of benefit, using the existing information contained in Tillotson (1989) and Tweddle (undated).
- 5.33 Finally, the juxtaposition of the deserted village and the priory is something to note, particularly as a holloway links the two. Of all corporate monastic institutions, nunneries, and particularly the relatively poorly endowed, locally patronised and post-Conquest foundations, are thought of as being completely removed from contact with and impact on the contemporary secular world. However, recent studies in north Lincolnshire and elsewhere have shown that, for example at Stainfield (Benedictine) and Orford (Premonstratensian), the priories created planned villages alongside the monastic precincts and reorganised the local system of landscape management (Everson 1989).

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

- 6.1 The recommendations resulting from the completion of the survey can be considered under three headings, the future management of the historic landscape elements, the interpretation of the historic landscape to a wider audience, and the requirement for further work.

Management Recommendations

- 6.2 It is clear that majority of the survey area is currently under a good management regime, with sheep grazing the grassland. There does not appear to be any significant erosion taking place, and there is no evidence for overstocking. The majority of the identified archaeological features are in a state of equilibrium and do not appear to be under threat or to have particular management issues.
- 6.3 However, there are several localised areas of disturbed ground, most specifically to the west of the church, where stones and bare soil mark the alignment of a north-south drain through the priory precinct. This feature should be repaired and restored to grassland, after an appropriate level of archaeological recording.
- 6.4 The ruins of the church, although consolidated in 1987 and 1990, are again suffering from some deterioration. All the exposed stonework should be inspected and assessed, and further consolidation work carried as appropriate; this should include the removal of any vegetation on the ruins. For example, the loose stones at the base of the former window in the east elevation, although probably a later addition, should be mortared in. The condition of the roof over the tower should be checked, as it is important that rain is prevented from entering the inside of the tower. As part of any new work, it would be appropriate to unblock some of the putlog holes etc that were inadvertently blocked during the previous phases of repair.
- 6.5 The interior of church is suffering damage and erosion due to stock entering the building. There is also nothing to prevent them entering the base of the tower. It would be appropriate to erect a stock-proof fence along the south wall of the church, although care would be needed to ensure that any damage to the underlying stonework was kept to a minimum. It is not recommended that a fence be erected beyond the limits of the south wall, as this may cause damage to the underlying archaeological deposits associated with, for example, the cloisters.
- 6.6 Once stock have been removed from the interior of the church, it would be appropriate to manage the two large mature Cedar trees growing here. They are now part of the cultural significance of the site, and relate to its 19th century 'gothicisation', and so should be retained. Although some tree root damage has occurred in the past, it is unlikely that any additional significant damage will take place. However, there should be some pruning to the branches of the trees, especially where they are, or have the potential to, hitting the church tower etc. It would also be appropriate to undertake a tree survey, to assess their health and estimated growth, so that any future potential problems can be addressed. In addition, it would be appropriate to remove any new sycamore saplings and nettle growth from the nave, and establish a grass sward to protect both underlying archaeological deposits and the remaining grave slabs.

- 6.7 Finally, it is clear that some of the gravestones previously seen on site have been removed by persons unknown. It would therefore be useful to consider marking the stones in some way, perhaps with a microchip, so that any future thefts can be traced.

Interpretation Recommendations

- 6.8 The priory complex clearly has a story to tell, from the medieval period, to the 15th century improvements, to the late 19th century gothic ruin. At present, it is difficult to appreciate and get close to the monument, although it is obviously a popular view point as it is mentioned in numerous guidebooks and walks leaflets. It also has a brief mention on the YDNPA's web site www.outofoblivion.org.uk.
- 6.9 The site is not located on a public footpath or Access Land, and the only viewpoint is on the B6270 Downholme to Reeth road. There is nowhere to stop on this road, and the provision of any interpretative material on the roadside would have significant Health and Safety implications. The possibility of allowing public access to the site should be discussed with the landowners, for example via a permissive footpath. If this was possible, an interpretative information board could be erected within or adjacent to the ruined church, or digital forms of interpretation could be provided.

Recommendations for Further Work

- 6.10 The recommendations for further work would aid the interpretation, understanding and management of the features which have already been recorded by the survey, and would help to place this survey into a wider landscape context.
- 6.11 Although the majority of the priory complex has been subject to an earthwork and geophysical survey, there are significant other earthworks to the west of Ellerton Abbey (house). Most of these are associated with the deserted medieval village of Ellerton, although it is possible that some monastic features, such as ponds, might also survive here. A detailed earthwork survey of this area would help in the understanding of the deserted village, and also what its relationship with the priory was.
- 6.12 Similarly, it would be advantageous to undertake some earthwork survey of the priory's water supply system, to the south of the site around Juniper Gill. Although these earthworks have been protected as a Scheduled Monument, they are not fully understood and appreciated - they may, for example, represent additional monastic elements such as areas of industrial working and/or a mill.
- 6.13 Finally, it would be appropriate to undertake more detailed documentary research into the complex as a whole. At present, there are few specific references to the site, its organisation and landholdings. Such documentary work would help in the understanding and appreciation of the priory, as has been the case at nearby Marrick priory, for example.

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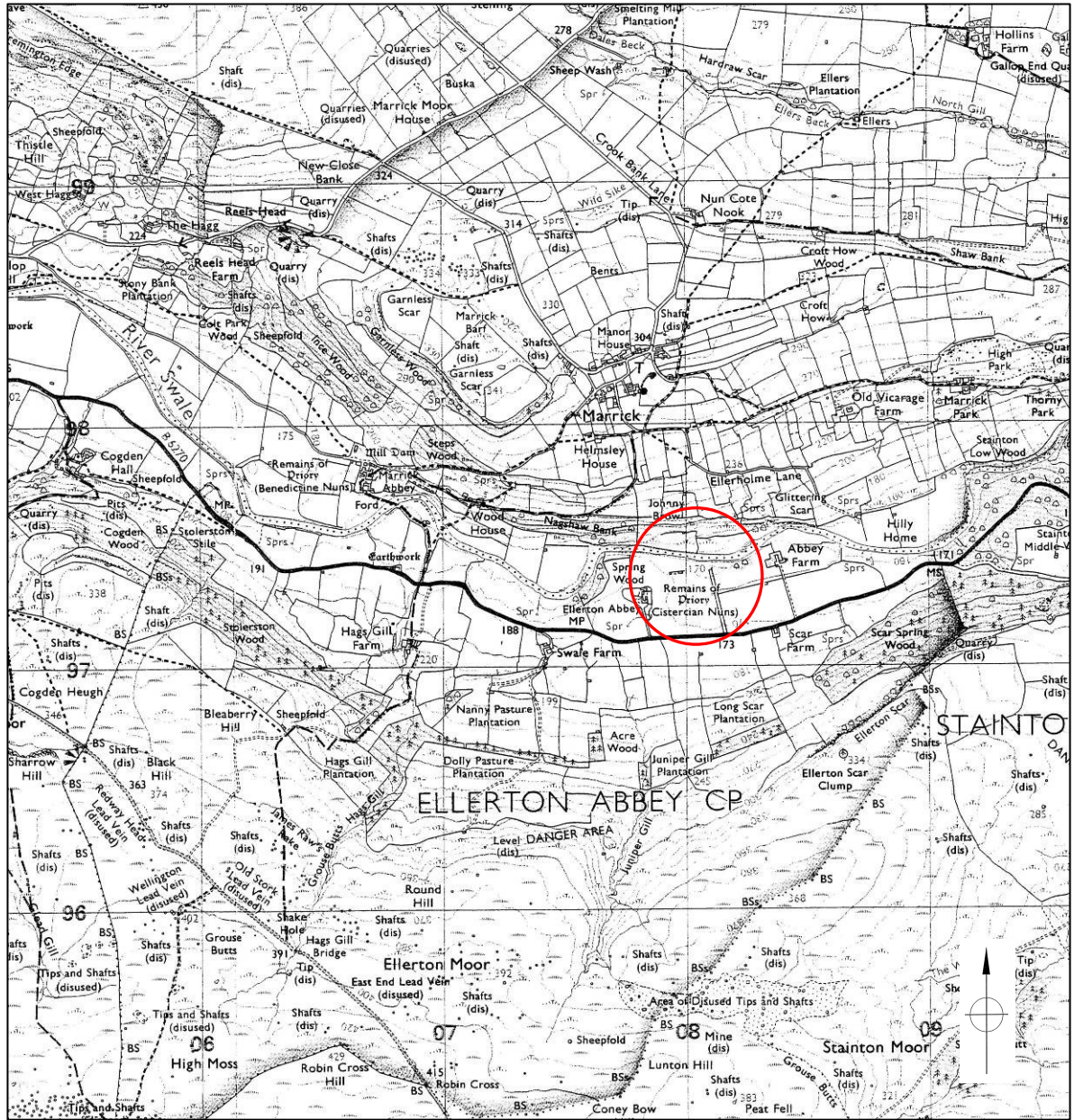
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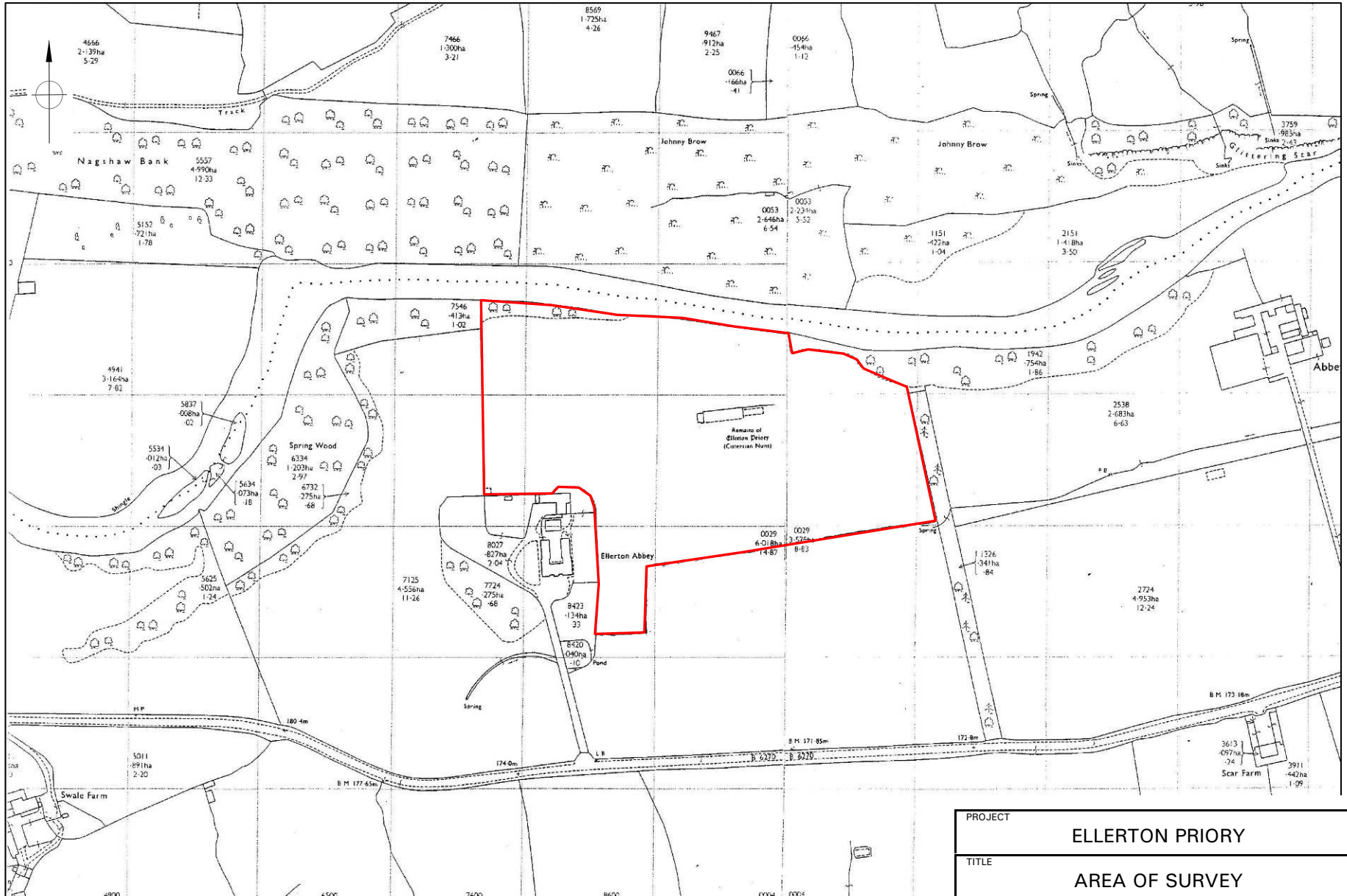
8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 EDAS wish to thank the landowners, the Trustees of the Admiral Drax's Daughters' Houses Trust, the tenant, Mr M Baker of Abbey Farm, and the Archaeological Conservation Officer of the YDNPA, Mr R White, for their co-operation in carrying out this survey. The latter is especially thanked for his patience in awaiting the final report.
- 8.2 EDAS gratefully acknowledge the provision of detailed information which has played a significant contribution to the report, specifically the aerial photographs, ground photographs and other data from the North Yorkshire SMR and the Yorkshire Dales National Park HER.
- 8.3 The earthwork survey and description was carried out by Ed Dennison, in conjunction with Land Surveys of Leeds. The architectural survey and assessment was undertaken by Stephen Haigh with the rectified photographic survey being done by Denis Thompson of Bedale. The geophysical survey was undertaken by GeoQuest Associates. All the above were subcontracted to EDAS. The majority of the project was funded by the YDNPA, although EDAS also funded some of the geophysical survey.
- 8.4 The final report, illustrations and archive were produced by Ed Dennison. Mr R White kindly provided comments on the draft report. Despite this, any errors or inconsistencies remain the responsibility of Ed Dennison. The project archive has been lodged with the YDNPA, and copyright of the report has been transferred to them although Ed Dennison retains the right to be accredited as author.



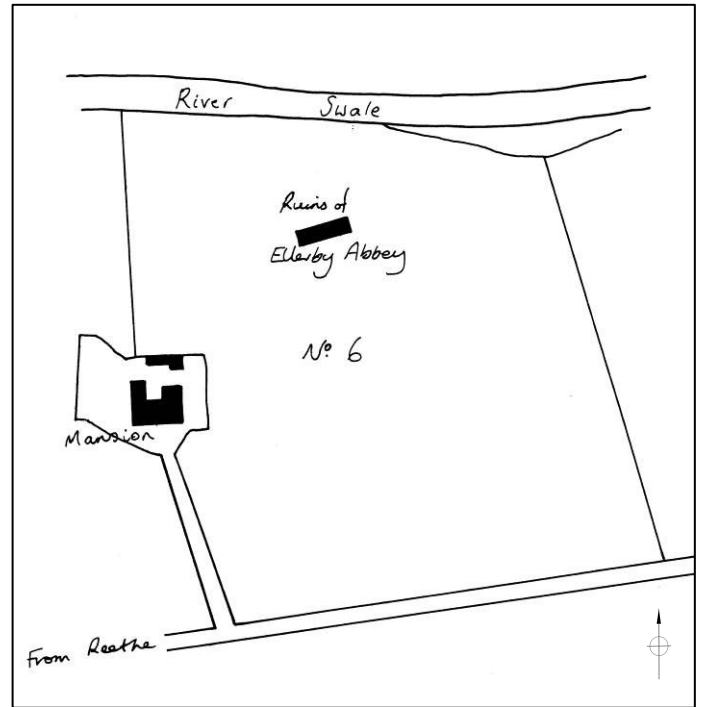
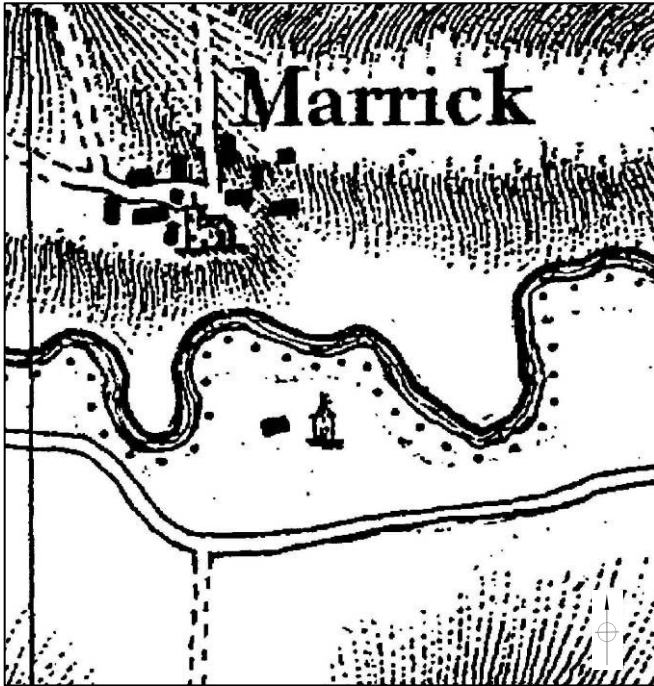
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PROJECT	ELLERTON ABBEY		
TITLE	GENERAL LOCATION		
SCALE	NTS	DATE	SEPT 2011
	EDAS	FIGURE	1



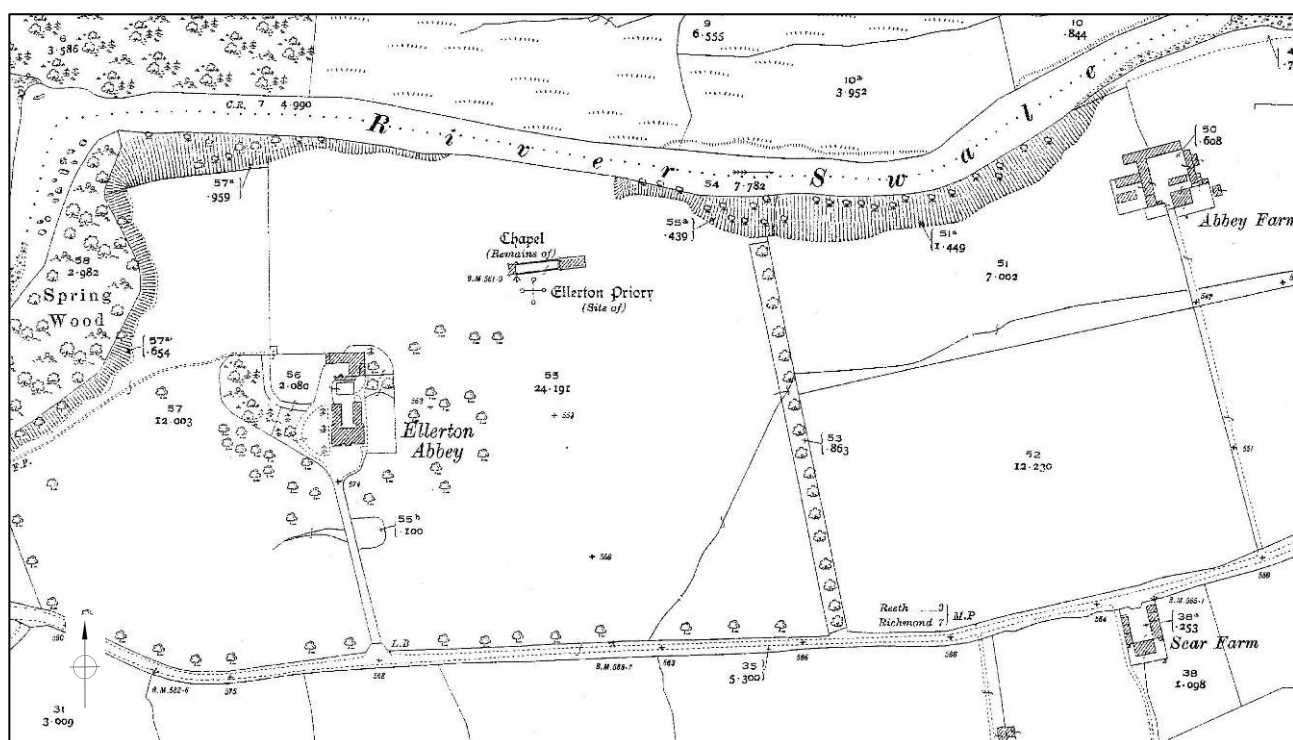
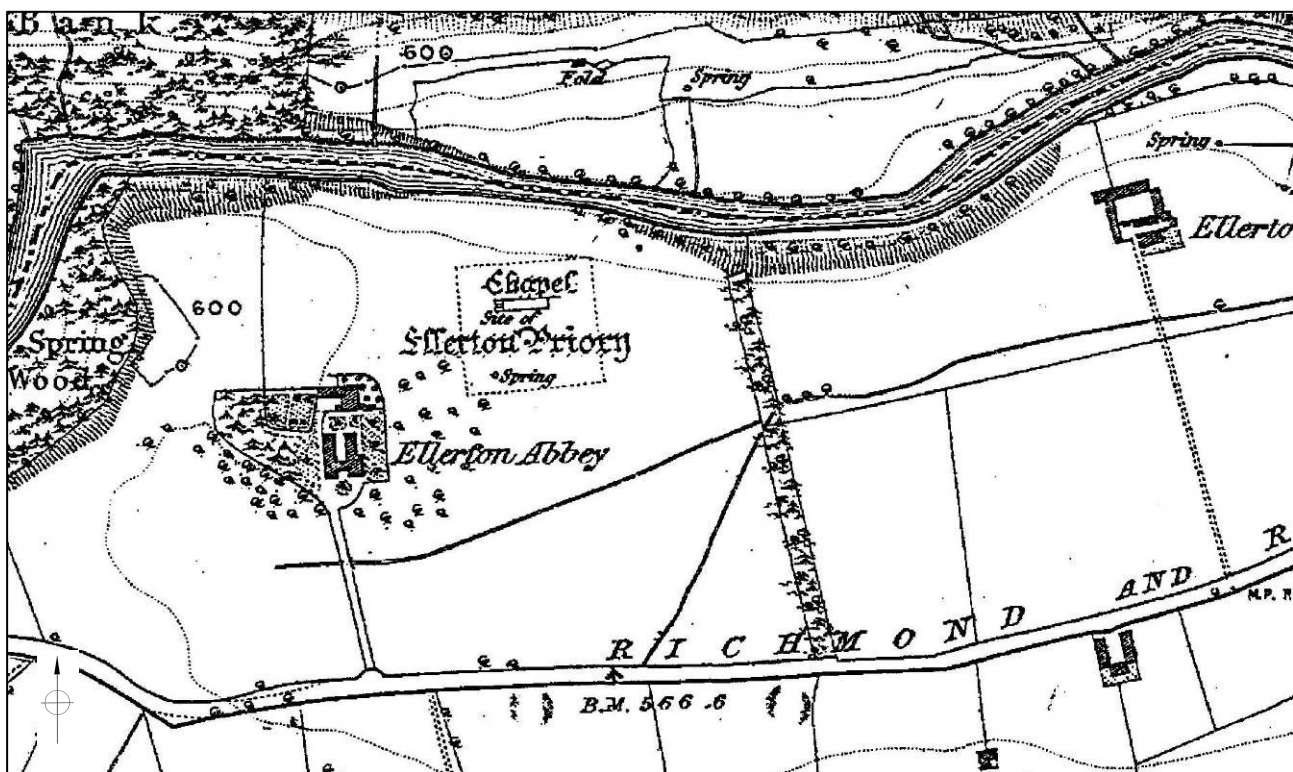
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PROJECT		ELLERTON PRIORY	
TITLE		AREA OF SURVEY	
SCALE	NTS	DATE	JULY 2011
EDAS		FIGURE	2



Top left: Section of Jefferys' 1771 plan.
 Top right: Section of 1852 tithe map (WYAS Leeds RD/RT77).
 Bottom: Ellerton Priory from the West by J M W Turner (Yorkshire 2 sketchbook, Tate Gallery D11235, Finberg number CXLV).

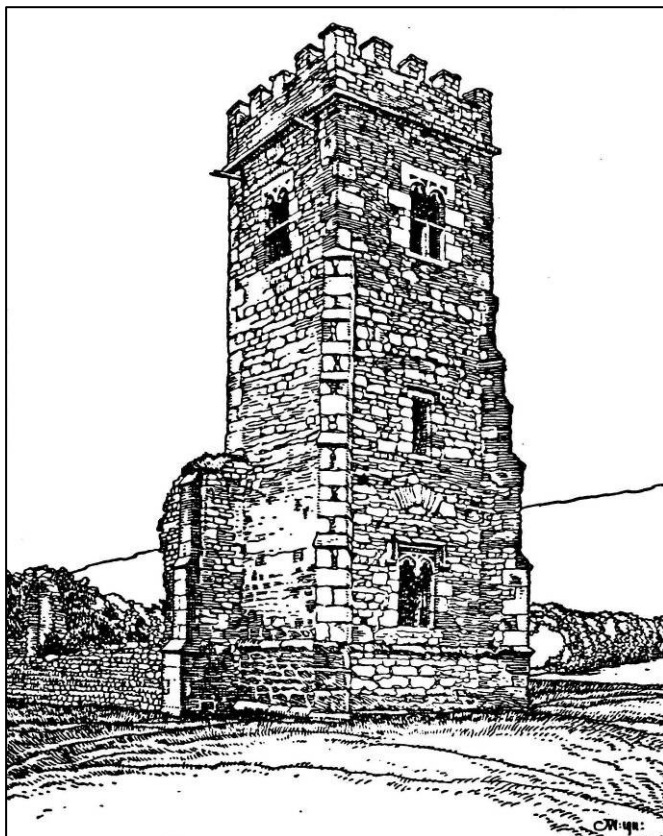
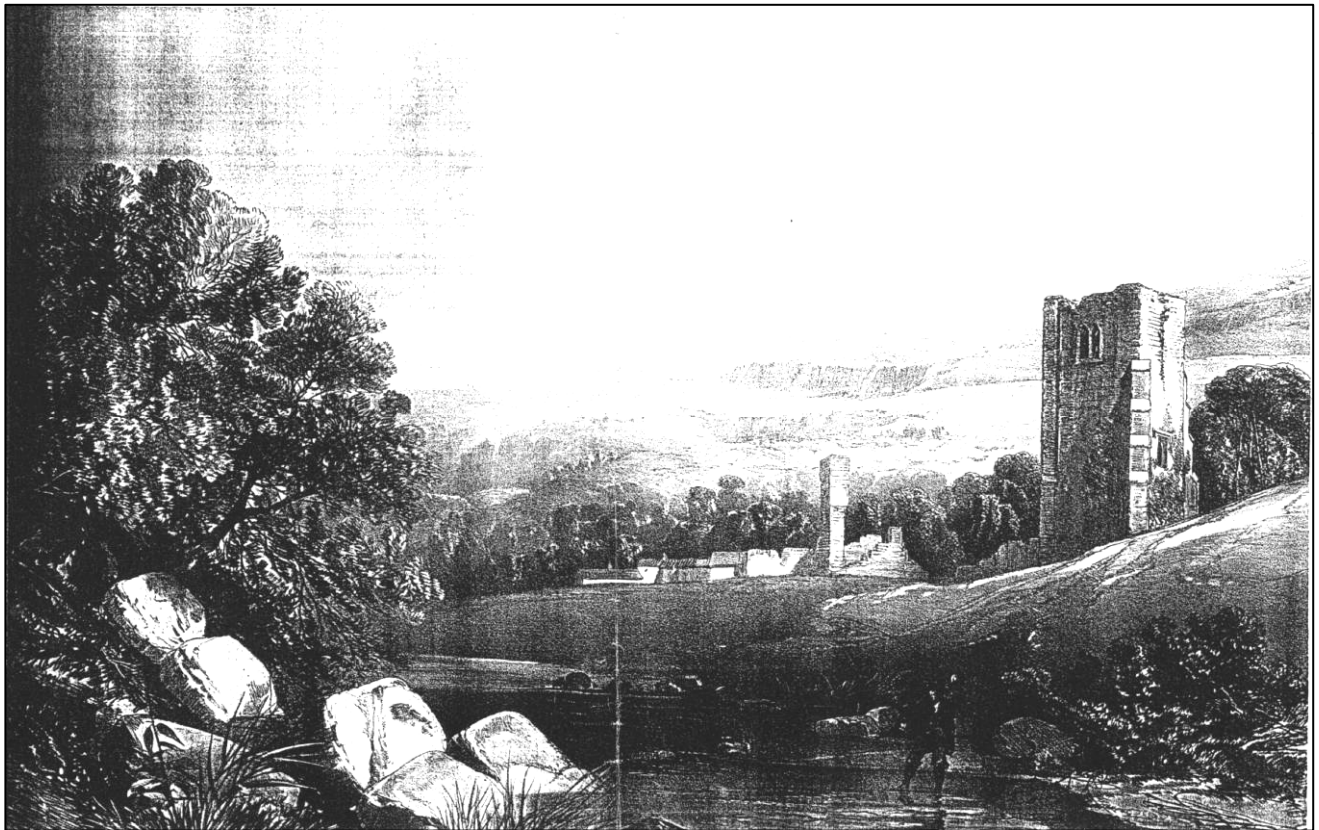
PROJECT		ELLERTON PRIORY	
TITLE		HISTORIC DEPICTIONS	
SCALE	NTS	DATE	SEPT 2011
EDAS		FIGURE	3



Top: Ordnance Survey 1857 6" map sheet 53.

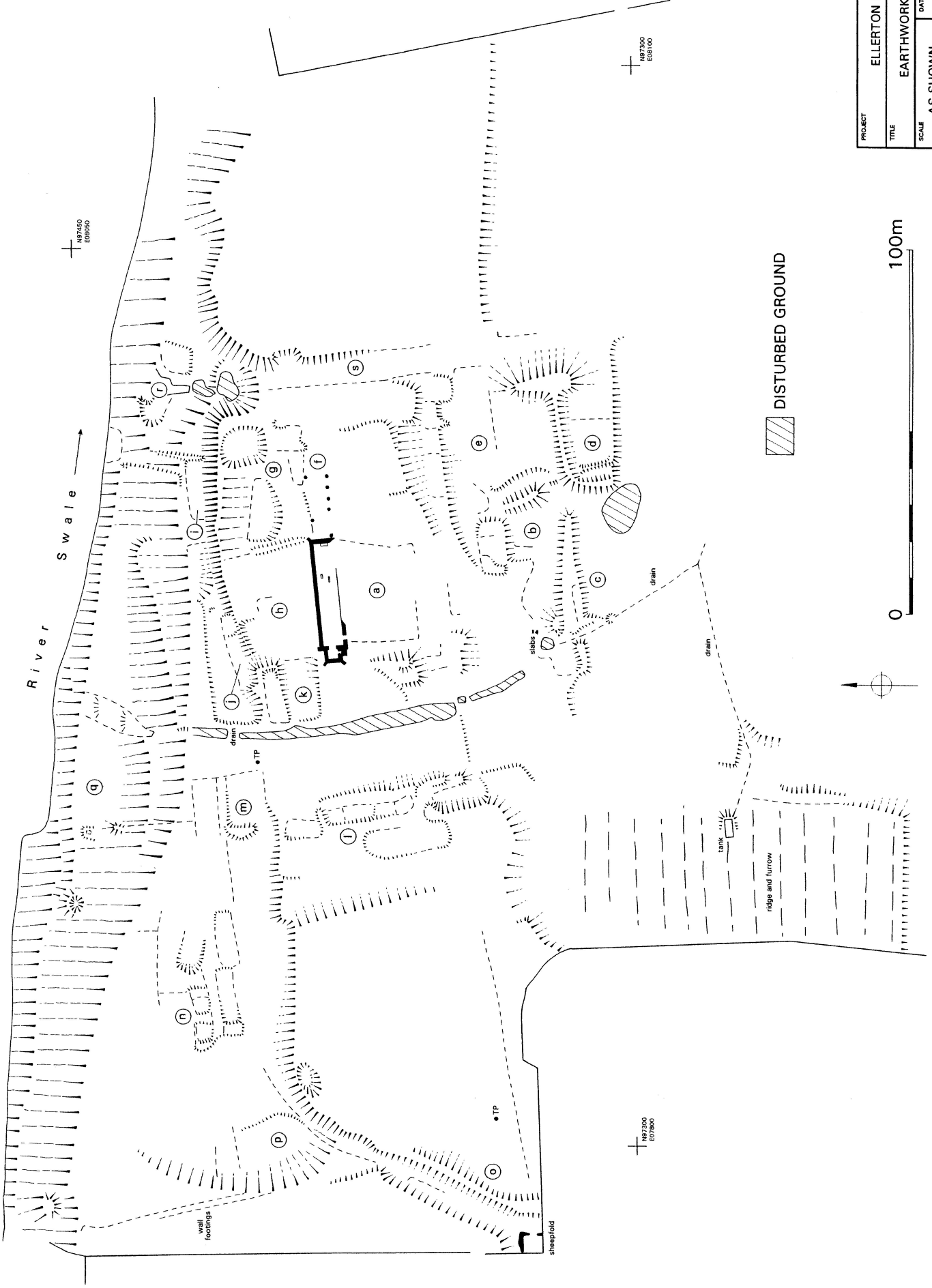
Bottom: Ordnance Survey 1929 25" map sheet 53/5.

PROJECT		ELLERTON PRIORY	
TITLE		HISTORIC MAPS	
SCALE	NTS	DATE	SEPT 2011
EDAS		FIGURE	4



Top: Sketch of Ellerton Priory by William Richardson 1843.
 Left: "Remains of Ellerton Priory Church" 1911 (Russell 1914, 226).

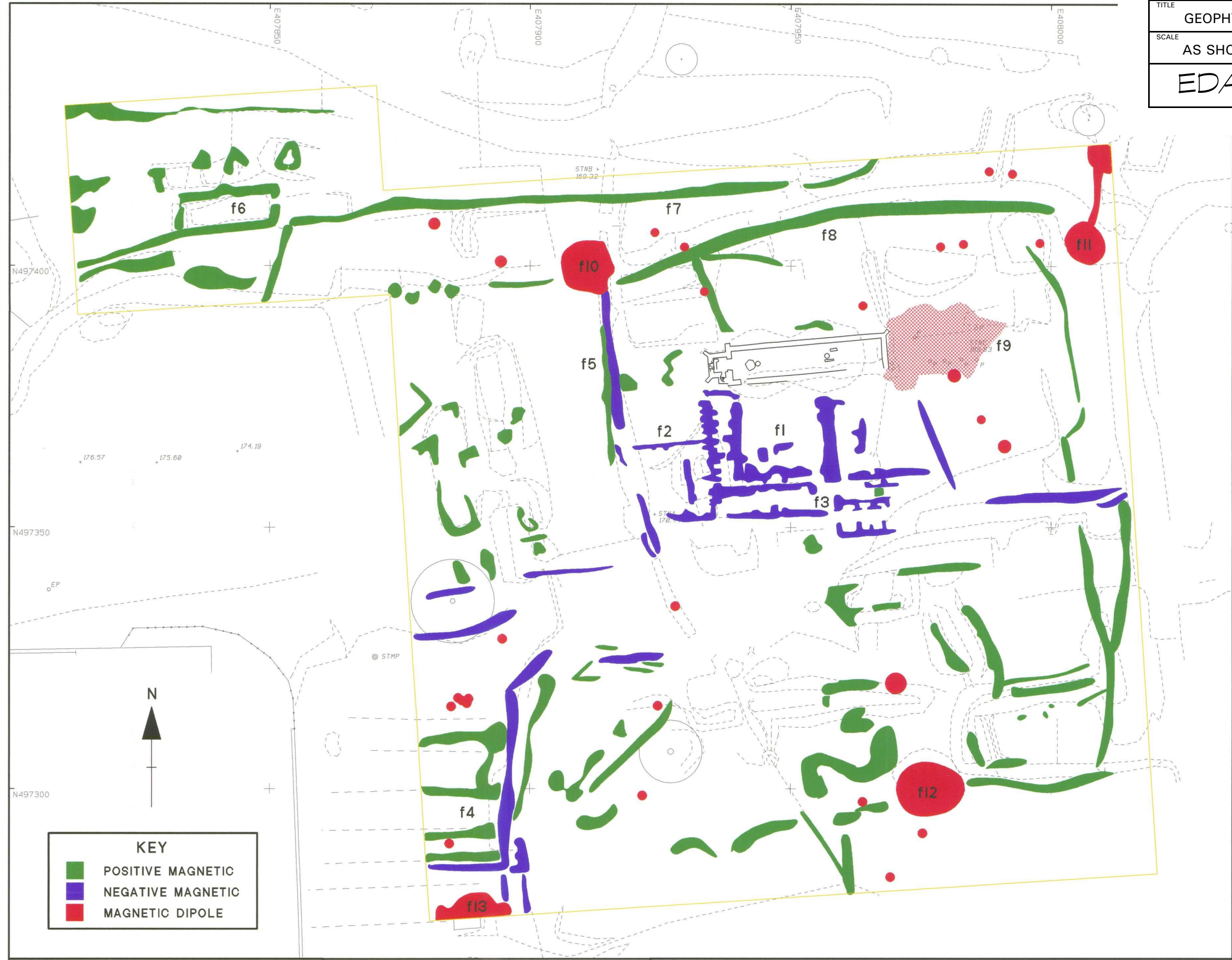
PROJECT		ELLERTON PRIORY	
TITLE		HISTORIC DEPICTIONS	
SCALE	NTS	DATE	SEPT 2011
EDAS		FIGURE	5



 DISTURBED GROUND

PROJECT	ELLERTON PRIORY		
TITLE	EARTHWORK SURVEY		
SCALE	AS SHOWN	DATE	SEPT 2011
	EDAS	FIGURE	6

PROJECT		ELLERTON PRIORY	
TITLE			
GEOPHYSICAL INTERPRETATION			
SCALE	AS SHOWN	DATE	SEPT 2011
EDAS		FIGURE	7



<p>ELLERTON PRIORY GEOPHYSICAL INTERPRETATION</p>	<p>1:500</p> <p>0 50m</p>	<p>SURVEY BY: GeoQuest ASSOCIATES</p> <p>FOR: ED DENNISON ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES</p>
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PROJECT		ELLERTON PRIORY	
TITLE			
		GEOPHYSICAL INTERPRETATION	
SCALE	AS SHOWN	DATE	SEPT 2011
EDAS		FIGURE	8

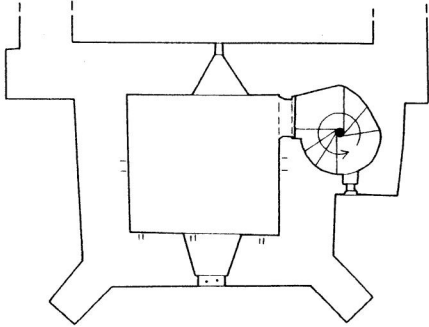


ELLERTON PRIORY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

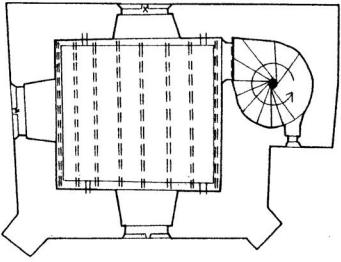


SURVEY BY: **GeoQuest** ASSOCIATES
FOR: ED DENNISON ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

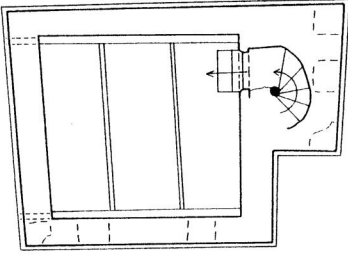
PROJECT	ELLERTON PRIORY		
TITLE	PLAN OF CHURCH		
SCALE	AS SHOWN	DATE	SEPT 2011
	EDAS	FIGURE	9



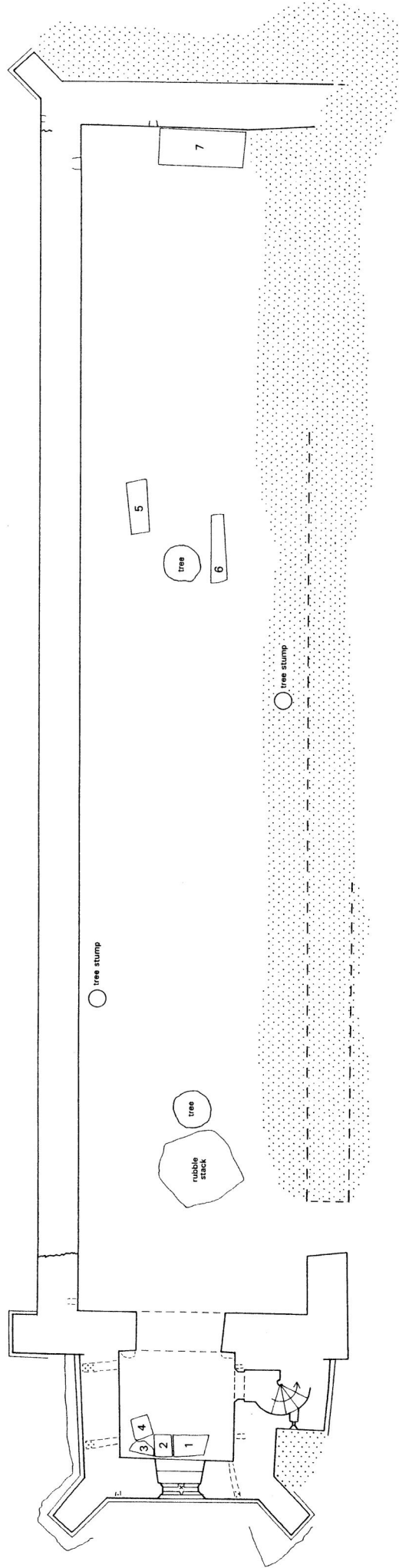
West tower First floor





West tower Second floor

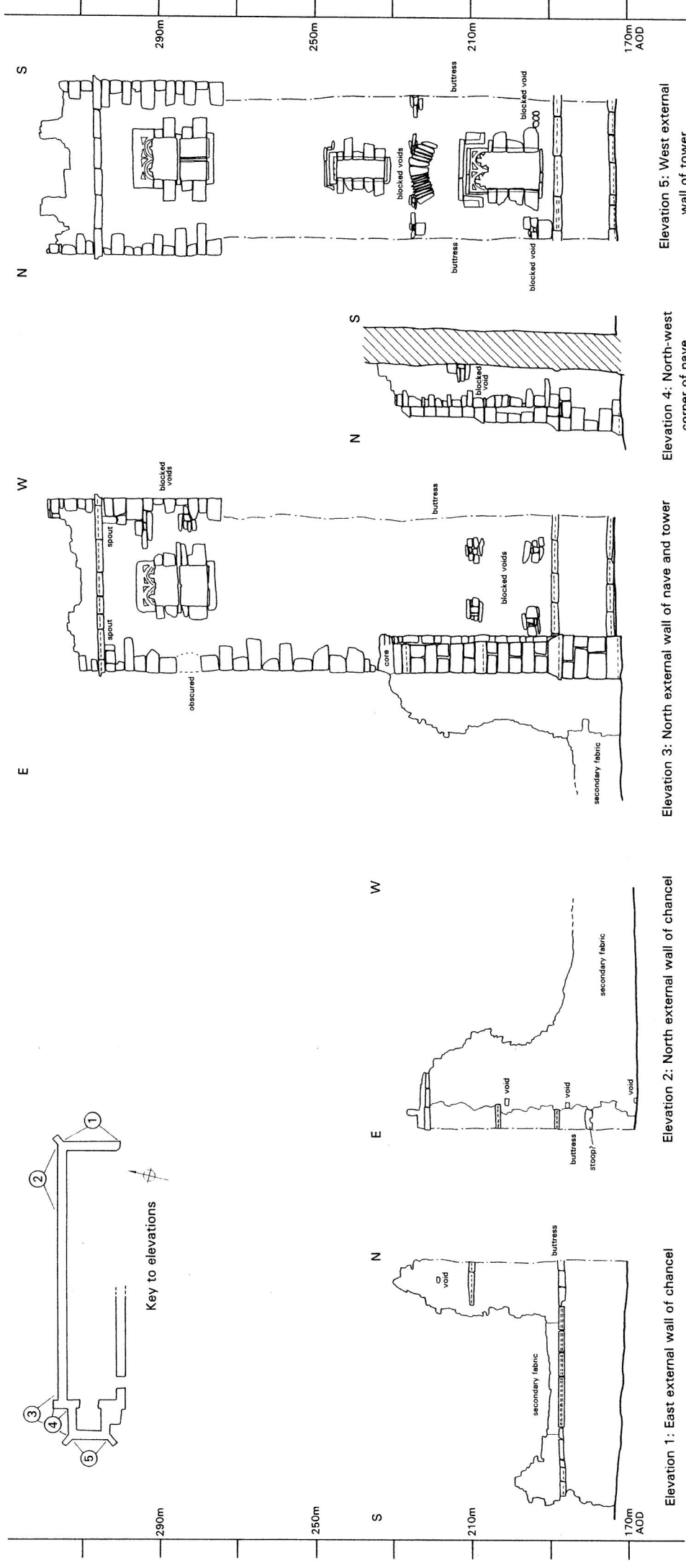


West tower Third floor (roof)



-  RUBBLE
-  BLOCKING





Elevation 5: West external wall of tower

Elevation 4: North-west corner of nave, external west wall

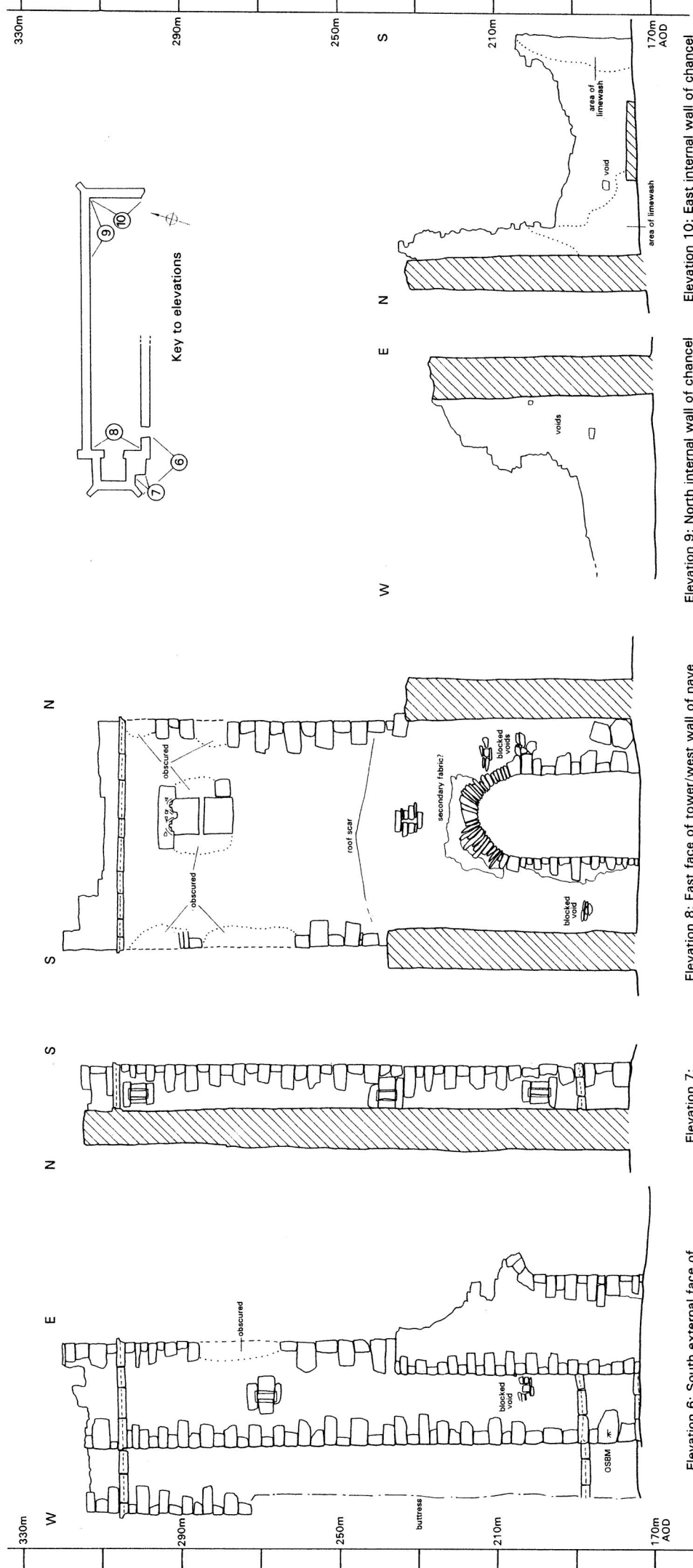
Elevation 3: North external wall of nave and tower

Elevation 2: North external wall of chancel

Elevation 1: East external wall of chancel



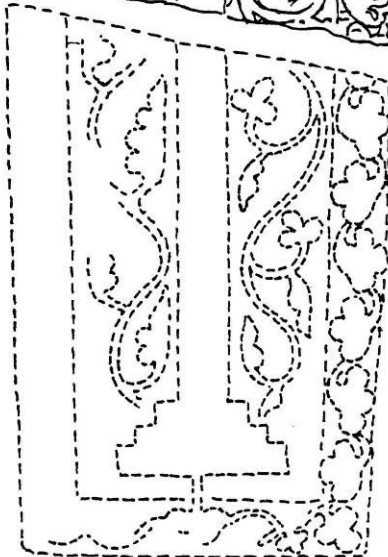
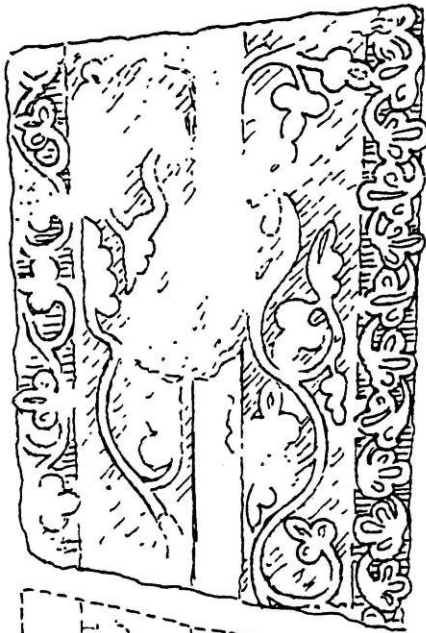
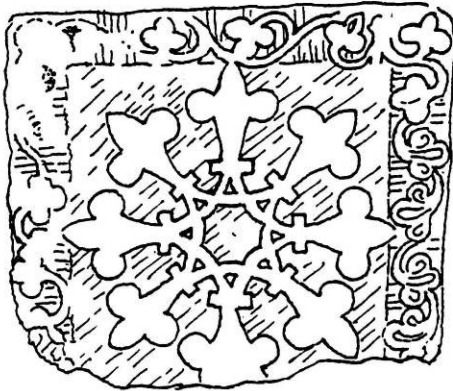
PROJECT		ELLERTON PRIORY	
TITLE		CHURCH - ELEVATIONS 1 TO 5	
SCALE	AS SHOWN	DATE	SEPT 2011
	EDAS	FIGURE	10



Elevation 6: South external face of tower and nave
 Elevation 7: West external face of stairs
 Elevation 8: East face of tower/west wall of nave
 Elevation 9: North internal wall of chancel
 Elevation 10: East internal wall of chancel

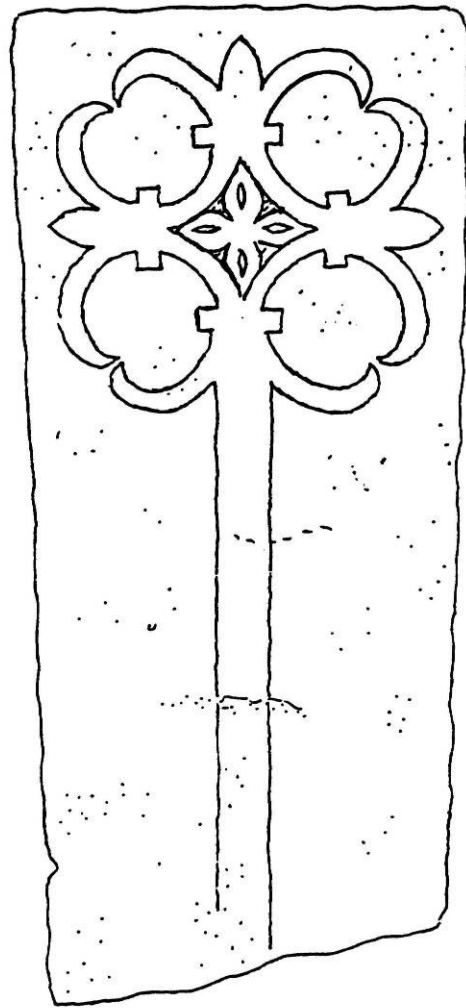


PROJECT	ELLERTON PRIORY		
TITLE	CHURCH - ELEVATIONS 6 TO 10		
SCALE	AS SHOWN	DATE	SEPT 2011
	EDAS	FIGURE	11



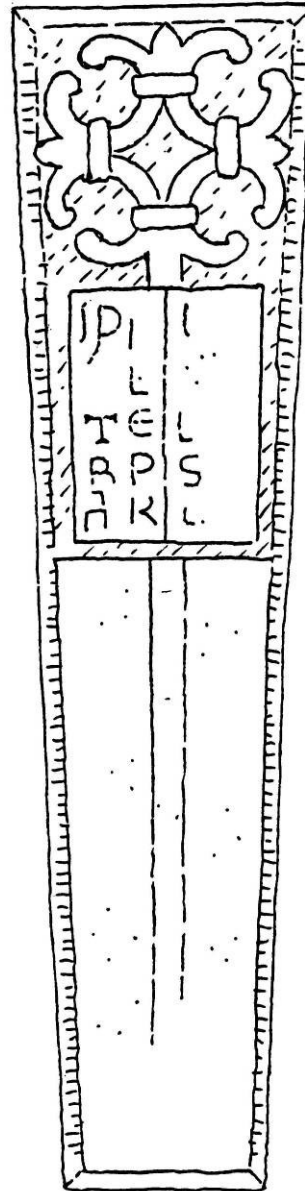
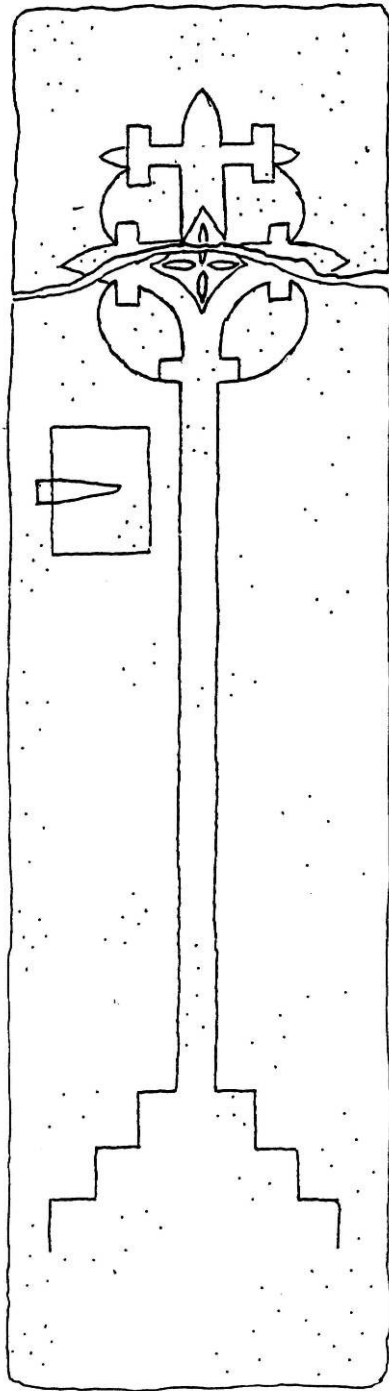
Stones 1 and 2.
Bottom piece now missing.

Reproduced from Peter Ryder's drawings (YDNPA HER).



Stone 5

PROJECT		ELLERTON ABBEY	
TITLE		REMAINING GRAVE SLABS	
SCALE	NTS	DATE	SEPT 2011
EDAS		FIGURE	12



Both stones recorded by
Ryder in 1963, now removed
from site.

Reproduced from Peter Ryder's
drawings (YDNPA HER).

PROJECT		ELLERTON ABBEY	
TITLE		REMOVED GRAVE SLABS	
SCALE	NTS	DATE	SEPT 2011
EDAS		FIGURE	13

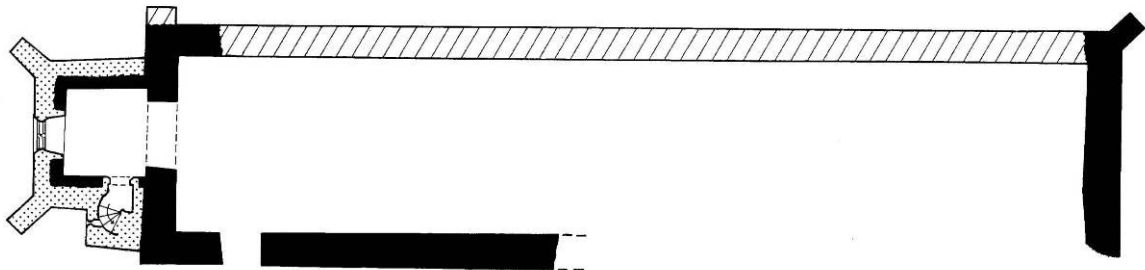
PROJECT		ELLERTON PRIORY	
TITLE		SUGGESTED INTERPRETATION	
SCALE	AS SHOWN	DATE	SEPT 2011
EDAS		FIGURE	14



- STONE BUILDINGS
- TIMBER BUILDINGS
- PRECINCT BOUNDARY

DISTURBED GROUND





- PHASE 1 13th CENTURY?
- PHASE 2 15th CENTURY?
- PHASE 3 19th CENTURY?



PROJECT		ELLERTON ABBEY	
TITLE			
SUGGESTED PHASING OF CHURCH			
SCALE	AS SHOWN	DATE	SEPT 2011
	EDAS	FIGURE	15



Plate 1: Ellerton Priory church, looking NE (February 1999).



Plate 2: Ellerton Priory church, looking SW towards Ellerton Abbey (house) (February 1999).



Plate 3: Church tower, looking SE (YDNP 643/15
March 1983).



Plate 4: Church tower, looking SE (February 1999).



Plate 5: East external elevation of chancel, looking W
(photo 2/7 September 1996).



Plate 6: East end of north external wall of chancel, looking S
(photo 3/2 September 1996).

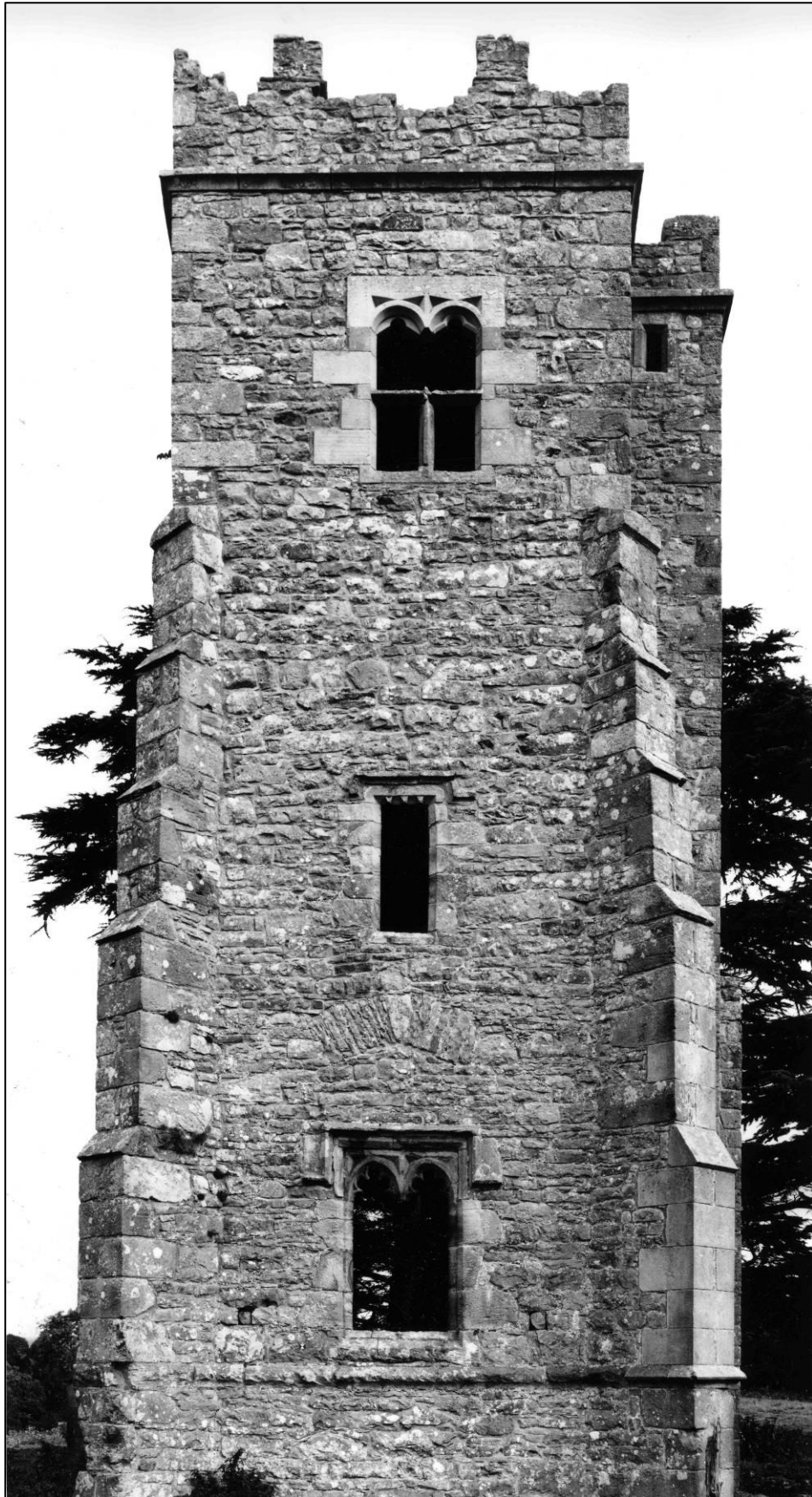


Plate 7: West elevation of tower (photo 1/3 September 1996).



Plate 8: Ellerton Priory church roof, looking SE (February 1999).



Plate 9: General view of priory precinct, looking E (February 1999).



Plate 10: West external elevation of tower, looking W
(photo 1/7 September 1996).

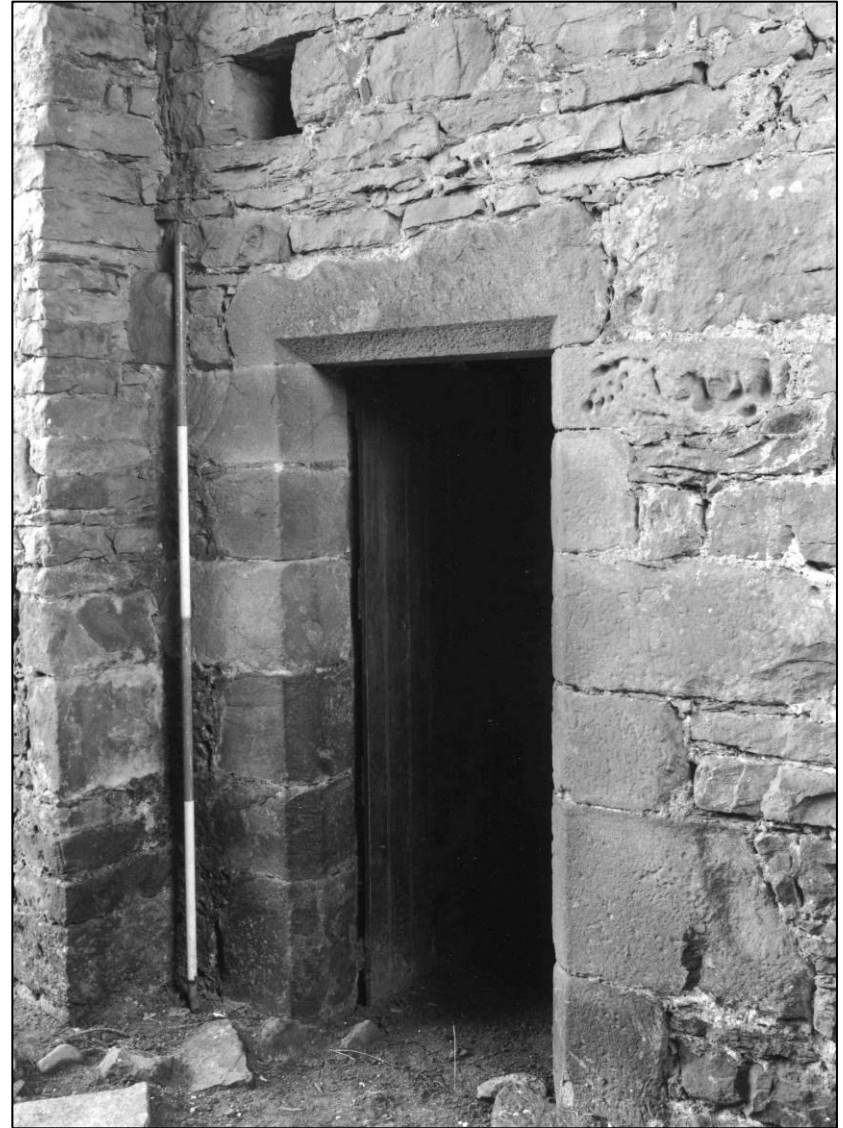


Plate 11: Door to stair annex, south internal wall of tower,
looking SE (February 1999).



Plate 12: View of grave slabs in nave, looking E (February 1999).



Plate 13: Detail of stone no. 5 in nave (February 1999).

APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX 1: YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK SURVEY BRIEF

1 SUMMARY

A non-destructive archaeological survey of Ellerton Priory, North Yorkshire, is required by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority as part of its archaeological conservation programme. The survey is intended to provide information for the management and interpretation of the complex. For budgetary reasons the work may have to be split into phases: an earthwork survey and a survey of the upstanding fabric. Separate and aggregate costings are required. A new measured and levelled survey, tied into the OS grid, of the archaeological and historical features is required, together with a detailed description, photographic record and report.

2 INTRODUCTION

Ellerton Priory was a small Cistercian nunnery, founded in the twelfth century and dissolved in 1537. It was then one of the poorest religious houses in the country. All that now survives above ground is the church which now consists of an aisleless nave and chancel and a three stage tower. The tower appears to have been partly rebuilt, possibly in the nineteenth century as a Gothic ruin for the nearby Ellerton Abbey House. At the base of the tower and in the nave are a number of fragments of decorative grave slabs which have been examined by Peter Ryder. There are traces of earthworks surrounding the church. Ellerton Abbey is a listed building and scheduled ancient monument although there is some uncertainty about the precise boundaries of the scheduled area. Consolidation work on the remains of the church was carried out for the Yorkshire Dales National Park in 1987. The National Park Authority (YDNPA) intends to commission the proposed survey as part of its archaeological conservation programme.

3 LOCATION

Ellerton Priory is located some 10km west of Richmond at SE 079974 on the south bank of the River Swale and approximately 100m north of the B6270 Swaledale road from which it is clearly visible. The Survey Area is approximately 260m by 180m as shown on the attached 1:2500 scale Ordnance Survey map extract.

4 OWNERSHIP

The area is owned by the trustees of Admiral Drax's Daughters' Houses Trust and farmed by Mr M Barker of Abbey Farm, Ellerton Abbey, Richmond, North Yorkshire, (01748 884258). The National Park Authority is discussing a management agreement with these parties and has their agreement for this survey. Contractors will be required to agree timetabling of the work with Mr Barker in order to minimise any inconvenience and disturbance to his farming activities.

The prospective contractors are required to indemnify both parties against any loss, damage or claims which may be made as a result of their entering the complex for survey purposes and accept liability for any personal injury, loss or damage sustained due to the state of the complex whether occasioned by negligence or otherwise.

5 ACCESS

The area has no vehicular access but is approached across a pasture field from the B6270. Contractors should contact Mr Barker by phone or by calling at the farm to the east before visiting the site.

6 AIM OF WORK

The aims of the project are to:

- i) gather sufficient information to establish the extent, nature, character, condition, quality and date of the surviving archaeological and historic features within the survey area;

- ii) identify archaeological and historical features and assess their interpretation potential;
- iii) establish the functional relationships between archaeological and historical features;
- iv) provide a detailed record of the complex;

A costed proposal and method statement is required for:

- 1) a new survey of the archaeological and historical earthworks together with a detailed description and photographic record and report.
- 2) ground plan and elevations of the church building and floor plans where appropriate of the tower together with a detailed description and photographic record and report.

Items 1 and 2 should be costed separately as budgetary constraints may mean that the building recording is excluded in this phase. An aggregate price should also be submitted. It is recommended that contractors make a preliminary visual inspection of the area to familiarise themselves with the extent of the archaeological remains and the scope of the work.

7 SCOPE OF WORK

7.1 Topographic Survey

A new, detailed survey, accurate at 1:500 scale, is required to enable production of a hachured earthwork plan at 1:500 scale showing the archaeological remains. The core of the survey area is shown on the attached map extract. This is believed to contain the principal earthworks but is not based on an initial survey and thus archaeological features may extend for a short distance outside this area. Significant archaeological features related to the nunnery outside the area should be included in the survey

7.2 Building Survey

Ground level and floor plans of the church at 1:100 scale. Elevation drawings are required at 1:50 scale. These can be based on rectified photographs where appropriate. Drawings should show all significant architectural and structural features but stone by stone drawings are not required.

Drawn records should be presented as wet ink plots on standard 'A' size matt surface stable polyester film sheets (minimum thickness 75 microns) with appropriate grid marks, height values, compass points and information panel incorporating title, drawing number, keys, credits, date etc. Line thicknesses and point sizes should be chosen to allow for ease of duplication and reduction. Where appropriate drawing conventions should follow the general guidelines given in Recording Historic Buildings: A Descriptive Specification (RCHME 1991 or later editions) or be analogous to those used by the RCHME.

No use should be made of CAD methods for the generation of repetitive architectural features or detail.

7.3 Photographic records

A photographic survey of the complex is not required although it is anticipated that scaled photography will be used for the church. All photographic film should be exposed and processed to ensure high quality definition. Processing must be to archival standards in accordance with manufacturer's specifications. All photographs should be clearly numbered and labelled with the subject, orientation, date taken, photographer's name and cross referenced where applicable to film and negative numbers. All photographic material should be suitably stored to archival standards.

7.4 Written Accounts

A structured gazetteer of numbered site components should be made to include a summary description and preliminary interpretation of extant remains (eg location, dimensions, plan, form, function, date, sequence of development), mention of relevant documentary evidence and assessment of current condition and threats. Proforma record formats should be used: examples of the proposed format should be submitted with the project design.

7.5 Samples and Loose Finds

No sampling work is intended as part of this project. Loose finds should be reported to the Archaeological Conservation Officer of the Yorkshire Dales National Park at the earliest opportunity.

7.6 Documentary Research

A basic documentary survey, incorporating reference to published works should be undertaken. Original archive research on medieval documents is not included as part of this brief.

7.7 Aerial photographs

No new aerial photography is proposed as part of this project. The National Park Authority has 1:10,000 scale stereoscopic vertical photography of the area and limited oblique aerial photographic cover which will be made available.

8 PRODUCT

The Contractor shall be expected to properly order and index the full archive record (paper, magnetic and plastic media) for the project in line with the standards set by the National Archaeological Record and to deposit the archive with the National Park Authority. The archive should consist of the following:

Copies of relevant documentary material arranged to date sequence:

- Bibliographic sources
- Cartographic sources
- Pictorial sources

Survey control information:

- Diagram showing traverses and control network
- List of coordinates of control points and traverse stations
- Digital survey data

Set of Field and Final Ink Drawings.

Photographs:

- Negatives
- Bromide contact prints
- Scaled rectified bromide prints
- Selected bromide prints
- Colour transparencies

Written accounts/pro formae gazetteers:

- Site components
- Individual contexts

Structured catalogues and indices:

- Documentary material
- Field and final ink drawings
- Photographs

Project Management Records.

As well as written records, data should also be formatted for use in a computerised database system, supplied formatted for use as ASCII files, on 3.5" disks for use in an IBM-PC compatible microcomputer.

9 REPORT

4 copies (3 bound, 1 unbound) of an illustrated and typed report should be provided. A copy of the report should also be supplied, formatted as an ASCII file, on 3.5" disks for use in an IBM-PC compatible microcomputer.

The report should assemble and summarize the available evidence for the monument in an ordered form, synthesise the data, and comment on the quality and reliability of the evidence and how it might need to be supplemented by further work. It should include a contents list, acknowledgments, executive summary, background to the site, survey methodology and procedures, an account of the overall form and development of the sites and of the evidence supporting interpretation (including any specialist contributions), preliminary conclusions, a summary gazetteer of sites and site components incorporating a description, interpretation, form, condition, measurements and illustrative material as appropriate, a list of the archive contents and bibliography. It should also contain a copy of the brief and the approved project design as well as an indication of any departure from the project design. Copies of appropriate archive drawings and photographs should be incorporated.

A summary of the results should be prepared for publication in CBA Forum or other appropriate journal or monograph as agreed with the Archaeological Conservation Officer. A presentation at a day school on archaeology in the Yorkshire Dales or the CBA Yorkshire symposium may be required.

Copyright of all survey material will pass to the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It is envisaged that information and plans resulting from the project may be used in any interpretative material.

10 METHODOLOGY

It is the responsibility of the Contractor to select the most appropriate survey methodology and equipment to provide the required product.

A costed proposal and method statement is required of the Contractor to be accepted in writing before work commences. This should be based upon the format suggested in English Heritage's The Management of Archaeological projects (1991) and should indicate the proposed methodologies to be adopted; the relevant experience of the organisation, key personnel and any sub-contractors; details of manpower resources to be applied to the survey; a breakdown of costs; the proposed timetable for completion of fieldwork and submission of report and archive; and evidence of compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Particular attention should be paid to ensure that the aims and objectives of the project are directly informed by the methodologies employed and that the project team displays the appropriate levels of expertise to carry out the work. The Contractor, his staff and any sub-contractors will be expected to comply with relevant Codes of Practice of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

Contractors should note that the North Yorkshire County Council Standard Conditions of Contract apply.

11 MONITORING

Monitoring of the fieldwork will be carried out by the archaeological staff of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The Contractor is to arrange a preliminary meeting with the Archaeological Conservation Officer at the commencement of the contract and fortnightly on-site progress meetings, or as otherwise agreed, during the fieldwork stage, and at least one meeting to discuss a draft report before final submission.

Robert White
Archaeological Conservation Officer
Yorkshire Dales National Park
Bainbridge, Leyburn
North Yorkshire, DL8 3BP
01969 650456

1.8.96

APPENDIX 2

APPENDIX 2: EDAS PROJECT DESIGN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY, ELLERTON PRIORY, NORTH YORKSHIRE

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This project design specification sets out the work that Ed Dennison Archaeological Services (EDAS) consider is required to carry out a programme of archaeological recording at Ellerton Priory, in Swaledale, North Yorkshire. In essence, this work involves an archaeological survey of the earthworks surrounding the ruined church and a detailed survey of the upstanding fabric, augmented by a detailed descriptive record and report. The resulting report would provide sufficient accurate information to assist with the management and interpretation of the complex.
- 1.2 This project design has been prepared by EDAS using information contained in a project brief prepared by the Archaeological Conservation Officer of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNP 1996) and observations made during a site visit on 8 August 1996. The design and format of this project design follow the specific advice given by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority in their project brief and that published by English Heritage (English Heritage 1991).

2 BACKGROUND

Site Location, Land Use and Ownership

- 2.1 The Ellerton Priory complex is located some 10km to the west of Richmond, on the south bank of the River Swale at NGR SE079974. It lies at 170m AOD, between a large house called Ellerton Abbey House and Abbey Farm, and approximately 100m north of the B6270 Swaledale road. The site lies within the Yorkshire Dales National Park and is a scheduled ancient monument and a listed building of special architectural and historic interest.
- 2.2 The survey area measures approximately 260m by 180m, comprising most of the northern half of a large pasture field (OS field number 0029). The upstanding remains of the church lie towards the northern centre of the survey area surrounded by earthworks which, in some places, extend slightly beyond the survey area. At the time of the site visit, the field was grazed by sheep.
- 2.3 The site is privately owned and EDAS would indemnify the landowners in respect of their legal liability for physical injury to persons or damage to property arising on site in connection with the survey, to the extent of EDAS's Public Liability Insurance Cover.

Site Access

- 2.4 The site lies adjacent to the B6270 road and can be accessed through a field gate. EDAS would leave vehicles by the public road and walk into the site, although if vehicular access was required, EDAS would make appropriate arrangements with the tenant Mr M Barker of Abbey Farm. EDAS would also make contact Mr Barker before starting work on the site.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC INTEREST

- 3.1 Ellerton priory was a small Cistercian nunnery dedicated to St Mary. The early history of the priory is obscure, due to the fact that it's charters were stolen by the Scots in 1347 (Russell 1914, 228). Even the name of the founder and the date of foundation are open to question; Warner, chief steward to the Earl of Richmond, or his son Wymar have been suggested (Solloway 1913, 160), as well as the Eaglescliffe family (also called "de

Barden", a place adjoining Ellerton), who may have been early lords of Ellerton (Russell 1914, 229). Burton suggests that the founder is unidentified, but that a date of before 1200 is probable (Burton 1979, 43). The first recorded prioress was Alice, noted as being head of the priory in 1227 during a dispute with the Prior of Kirkham over the church of Whitley. Leland described the priory as "a priori of white clotid nunnes, standing in a valle ... a mile beneath marik prory" (Leland volume 5, 113).

- 3.2 The priory was subsequently dissolved in 1537. Although many of the small post-conquest priories were poor, Ellerton was one of the poorest, valued at only £2 13s 4d in 1291 and £15 14s 8d in 1535 (Burton 1979, 45). Only five nuns are recorded in 1381 and in 1537 (Knowles & Hadcock 1971, 272-273). Little is known of its possessions. Two bovates of land in Ellerton belonged to it in 1287 and the prioress was part-owner of the manor of Ellerton-cum-Stainton. At the dissolution the revenues of the house were derived from rents and farms in Barforth, Barton, Bellerby, Carlton, Constable Burton, Hornby, Melsonby and Richmond, amongst others; the value of the priory site with gardens, mills, meadows, and glebe was £1 (Solloway 1913, 160).
- 3.3 All that now survives above the ground is the ruined church which consists of a rectangular aisleless nave and chancel, and a three stage buttressed tower; trees and areas of rubble now occupy the interior. The only other significant wall surviving is the north-east corner which has an external buttress and the possible scar of a wall running to the north. Sufficient of the walls remain to suggest a 13th century date, while the tower dates from the 15th century and appears to have partly rebuilt as a Gothic ruin for the nearby Ellerton Abbey House (Russell 1914, 226). Some consolidation of the structure was carried out in 1987 by the Yorkshire Dales National Park (YDNP 1986). At the base of the tower and in the nave are a number of fragments of decorated grave slabs, which have been examined by Mr Peter Ryder. Low and in some cases rather denuded earthworks surround the church, primarily on the north, south and west sides; several low rectangular buildings and platforms can be discerned.

4 PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

- 4.1 There has been little previous archaeological research into the complex at Ellerton. As noted above, the available documentary evidence is sparse and the site has often been confused with Ellerton on Spalding Moor (East Yorkshire), where there was a Gilbertine priory, and Ellerton on Swale, to the south-east of Richmond (Solloway 1913, 160).
- 4.2 The priory complex has not been the subject of any previous archaeological investigation; indeed, medieval priories and nunneries as a monument class have received relatively little attention (Gilchrist 1989). However, some of the decorated grave slabs have been examined by Mr Peter Ryder for the Yorkshire Dales National Park (YDNP 1986).
- 4.3 At a more general level, there are a number of published or readily available accounts relating to other nunnery sites in the country, both regionally (eg. Brown (1886), Burton (1979) and S T (1838)) and nationally (eg. Nichols (1978), Power (1922) and Thompson (1984)). Some nunnery sites have also been excavated or surveyed, such as those at Higham and Malling in Kent (Tester 1967) and those in north-west Lincolnshire (Everson, Taylor & Dunn 1991); the available evidence has been summarised by Gilchrist (1988 & 1989). The examination of these works would help to understand and interpret the complex at Ellerton. For example, there are certain characteristics relating to the ground plans of female monastic houses and it is clear that most small poor Cistercian nunneries evolved only slowly; many had wooden buildings with thatched roofs, the churches were generally narrow and aisleless with no structural division between the nave, choir and presbytery, and most had cloisters ranging between 14 and 18 square metres (Gilchrist 1989, 252-254). The Yorkshire nunneries never had sacristies incorporated into their plans (Brown 1886, 201). The precinct was frequently surrounded by a moat, bank or

more commonly a wall, often enclosing an area of approximately 300m by 200m (Gilchrist 1988, 5).

5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

5.1 The aims of the project are to provide a detailed survey of the complex, and to inform the design and implementation of any further management and/or interpretation proposals.

5.2 Specifically, the project would:

- gather sufficient information to establish the extent, nature, character, condition, quality and date of the surviving archaeological and historical features within the survey area;
- identify archaeological and historical features and assess their interpretation potential;
- establish the functional relationships between archaeological and historical features;
- provide a detailed record of the complex.

6 SCOPE OF WORK

6.1 In order to maximise information retrieval, and because of the nature of the archaeological remains, the survey would be carried out at a variety of levels.

Detailed Topographic Survey

6.2 A detailed earthwork and topographic survey of the site would be carried out to record the position of all archaeological and historic features.

Detailed Building Survey

6.3 A detailed building survey of the remains of the church, utilising both rectified photography and hand measurement, would be carried out to show the main features of the building and the main interventions to their fabrics. Two options are presented for the elevation drawings, depending on the amount of detail required.

Documentary survey

6.4 Published and readily available aerial photographic, cartographic and documentary sources would be examined to provide a history for the site. Original archive research would not be carried out.

Written Account

6.5 A detailed written description of the site and its components would be produced.

7 METHODOLOGY

Detailed Topographic Survey

7.1 A topographic survey of the whole of the survey area would be carried out to record the position and form of all features considered to be of archaeological and/or historic interest. The extent of the survey area would be that defined on the map accompanying the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority project brief (YDNP 1996), although

earthworks beyond the defined area which are believed to form part of the priory complex and integral to the understanding of the site would also be surveyed.

- 7.2 The survey would be carried out using EDM total station equipment. Sufficient information would be gathered to allow the survey area to be readily located through the use of surviving walls, wall junctions, and other topographical features.
- 7.3 The site survey would be produced at a scale of 1:500 and presented as an interpretative hachure plan using conventions analogous to those used by the RCHME, giving details of surfaces and differences in coarse vegetation where appropriate. A footprint of the church and other individual structures on the site would be surveyed at a scale of 1:100 to aid the detailed building recording (see below).
- 7.4 Although not specifically required by the brief, the site survey would be integrated into the Ordnance Survey national grid and heights would be reduced to levels AOD. Control points would be observed through trigonometric intersection from survey stations on a traverse around and through the site. The maximum error in the closure of the traverse would be less than +/- 25mm. The locations, descriptions and values of the Bench Marks would be started in the final survey data.

Building Survey

- 7.5 Detailed recording of the ruined church, including the tower and any associated wall fragments, would be carried out. Plans and elevations would be produced using a combination of detailed instrument, rectified photographs and hand survey techniques.
- 7.6 A ground level plan of the church would be produced to a scale of 1:100, based on the footprint achieved by the topographic survey; if the topographic survey does not take place, the ground floor plan would be produced by traditional hand survey techniques. In addition, 1:100 scale floor plans of the tower at each of the three stages would be produced. The upper floor plan would be recorded at roof level while the first and second floor levels would be recorded using a ladder. All plans would show all significant details such as the positions of blocked or unblocked openings, inserted doorways, fittings, joist sockets and other items considered to be important.
- 7.7 Elevation drawings of the church and tower would also be produced at a scale of 1:50, using conventions and guidelines produced by the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England (RCHME 1991). For the tower, only the external elevations would be produced, but to their full height. However, both internal and external full height elevations would be produced of the north-east corner of the church.
- 7.8 All elevation drawings would be based on black and white rectified photographs, and would show all significant archaeological features such as construction detail, modifications and differences in fabric, but would not record the wall faces stone by stone. Although not required by the survey brief, the elevation drawings would be marked with a common datum reduced to levels AOD. Some detail on the elevations is presently obscured by vegetation, such as the upper levels of the east face of the tower or the lower parts of the east end; this detail would be added using a combination of hand measurement and interpolation.
- 7.9 All photographs would be clearly numbered and labelled with the subject, orientation, date taken and photographer's name, and would be cross referenced to film and negative numbers. All photographic film would be exposed and processed to ensure high quality definition, and processing would be archival standards in accordance with manufacturer's specifications.

- 7.10 Given the complexity of the church tower, two options for the external elevation drawings can be proposed.

Option 1

- 7.11 This option would involve the production of rectified photographs and elevation drawings of the major elevations, namely the west, north and east elevations, and the stepped south elevation of the tower, and the internal and external north-east corner of the church. This equates to a total of 12 photographs and elevation drawings.

Option 2

- 7.11 This option would involve the production of rectified photographs and elevation drawings of all external elevations as above, but with the addition of the four buttresses (three on the tower and one on the north-east corner of the church) and the interior returns of the church. Given the extent to which the buttresses are stepped, photographs would have to be taken of each setback on the outward projecting elevation. This option produces a total of 27 photographs and elevation drawings.
- 7.12 Given the aims and objectives of the project, it is recommended that option 1 is chosen, but the fee proposal accompanying this project design costs both options so that appropriate decisions can be made.

Documentary Research

- 7.13 A basic and limited documentary survey for the site would be undertaken. This would primarily cover the readily available cartographic and documentary sources held by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, the County Records Office in Northallerton, and information held by local libraries and the Yorkshire Archaeological Society in Leeds. Oblique and vertical aerial photographs held by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority would also be consulted. No original archive research on medieval documents would be undertaken.
- 7.14 Published or readily available sources relating to other local and national surveyed or excavated nunnery sites would also be examined, to gain an understanding of the results of the Ellerton survey work, for example, the recorded earthwork plan, and to aid the provision of interpretation and/or management recommendations. These sources would include accounts such as Brown (1886), Burton (1979), Nichols (1978), Power (1922) and Thompson (1984), amongst others.

Written Account

- 7.15 A written account of the complex, based on a structured gazetteer of numbered components using pro forma record sheets, would be made. This pro forma would include a summary description and preliminary interpretation of extant remains (eg. location, dimensions, plan, form, function, date, sequence of development), mention of relevant documentary evidence, and an assessment of current condition and threats. An example of the pro forma to be used is given as Appendix 1.

Samples and Loose Finds

- 7.16 No sampling work would be carried out as part of the survey. Loose finds would be reported to the Archaeological Conservation Officer of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority at the earliest opportunity.

Modifications

- 7.17 The programme of recording work may be modified in accordance with the professional judgement of the staff undertaking the work, insofar as the overall provisions and objectives of this project design would not be changed. Any variations in the project would be discussed and agreed in advance with the Archaeological Conservation Officer for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.

8 THE ARCHIVE

- 8.1 The full archive relating to the project, comprising paper, magnetic and plastic media, would be ordered and indexed according to the standards set by the National Archaeological Record.
- 8.2 The archive would consist of the following:
- Copies of relevant documentary material arranged in date sequence, namely bibliographic sources, cartographic sources, and pictorial sources.
 - Appropriate survey control information including digital survey data.
 - Field and ink drawings. The detailed survey ink drawings would be produced at scale as wet ink plots on standard "A" size matt surface stable polyester film sheets (minimum thickness 75 microns) with appropriate grid marks, height values, compass points and information panel incorporating title, drawing number, keys, credits, dates etc. Line thicknesses and point sizes would be chosen to allow for ease of duplication and reduction.
 - Photographic records, namely negatives, rectified bromide prints, and selected bromide prints.
 - Written accounts and pro forma gazetteers. The gazetteer and other data would be provided as both a paper copy and in magnetic form, formatted for use in a computerised database system and would be supplied formatted for use as ASCII files, on 3.5" disks for use in an IBM-PC compatible microcomputer.
 - Structured catalogues and indices of all documentary material, photographs and field and ink drawings.
 - Project management records, including a copy of the brief and approved project design and details of any departures from that design.
- 8.3 The full archive would be deposited with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority on completion of the project.

9 THE REPORT

- 9.1 The final report would take the form of an illustrated and typed standard A4 document which would assemble and summarise the available evidence for the historical and archaeological features of the site in an ordered form, based on a gazetteer of numbered site components.
- 9.2 Specifically, the report would include:
- A contents list.
 - Any acknowledgements.

- An executive summary.
 - A brief account of the project plan, research objectives, survey methodology, procedures and equipment used.
 - A summary of any previous works on site.
 - A summary of the historical and archaeological background to the site.
 - An account of the form and development of the site, including the evidence supporting any interpretation and preliminary conclusions, an assessment of the importance of the findings in relation to the other remains on the site and in the region, and how further work might enhance the conclusions.
 - A gazetteer containing detailed written descriptions of the buildings and other features of the site, including an assessment of current condition and threats.
 - A bibliography.
 - A copy of the brief and approved project design, together with the details of any departures from that design.
 - An appendix listing sources consulted.
 - An appendix containing a list of the archive contents.
- 9.3 Appropriate drawn records of the buildings and the complex as a whole would be produced as reduced A4 or A3 size paper copies within the body of the report; full scale drawings would be included within the site archive.
- 9.4 One draft copy of the report would be made available for discussion with the Archaeological Conservation Officer for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.
- 9.5 Upon approval, four copies (3 bound, 1 unbound) of the final report would be produced. Further copies would be produced at cost, subject to the approval of the parties involved.
- 9.6 Copyright of all survey and other material gathered as part of this project would pass to the National Park Authority on payment of final invoices.
- 9.7 Provision would also be made for the preparation of appropriate synopses for the North Yorkshire SMR and the NMR, or for publication in CBA Forum or other appropriate journal or monograph as agreed with the Archaeological Conservation Officer for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.

10 RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING

Staffing and Equipment

- 10.1 The project would be undertaken by EDAS, who are on North Yorkshire County Council's standing list of approved archaeological contractors. All the archaeological staff with EDAS are members of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and have considerable experience of non-destructive archaeological survey. Curricula vitae are available on request.
- 10.2 The project director for this work would be Mr E Dennison of EDAS. Mr Dennison would have overall supervision and responsibility for the project. The assistant staff would be

Mr S Haigh who would undertake the building recording. The detailed topographic survey would be undertaken by Land Surveys, acting as sub-contractors to EDAS, under the direction of Mr E Dennison. The rectified photography would be undertaken by Mr D Thompson; Mr Thompson has a proven track record in this type of work and has worked with EDAS on other similar projects.

Health and Safety

- 10.3 EDAS would comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974 while undertaking the project. A full copy of their Health and Safety Policy is available on request.

Project Timetable

- 10.3 The project would be able to be undertaken within two weeks of commission. A project timetable would be drawn up and agreed with the National Park Authority before survey work commences.
- 10.4 EDAS would also liaise with the tenant, Mr M Barker of Abbey Farm, over access to the site and would agree the project timetable with him so as to minimise any inconvenience and disturbance to his farming activities.

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