

**Baysdale Abbey
Westerdale
North Yorkshire
SE 5485 8588
Archaeological Watching Brief
(NYM2006/0950/FL)**

Authorised by

Date:.....

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March 2009

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Baysdale Abbey, Westerdale

North Yorkshire

NZ 6213 0673

Archaeological Watching Brief

Non-technical Summary

An Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out at Baysdale Abbey, Westerdale, North Yorkshire, in October 2008 during the conversion of a barn and outbuildings into holiday accommodation. Archaeological deposits, including a stone wall were recorded in the area to the east of Baysdale Abbey farm house.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report concerns the results of an Archaeological Watching Brief carried out by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. during the conversion of a barn and outbuildings to holiday accommodation at Baysdale Abbey, Westerdale, North Yorkshire (NZ 6213 0673 : Figs. 1 and 2 – Planning Reference NYM 2006/0950/FL).
- 1.2 The development took place in the vicinity of the former Cistercian Priory of St, Mary, and accordingly, a Watching Brief level of observation and recording was set in place by the North York Moors National Park’s Senior Archaeological Officer, Graham Lee, to mitigate the impact of the development. The archaeological observation and recording was conducted in October 2008.
- 1.3 All works were funded by Burwarnton Estates Company Ltd.

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2. Topography and Geology

- 2.1 The Watching Brief was carried out in the area adjacent to the barn and outbuildings and also along the course of a new water that was installed in a narrow trench running from the barn, through the car-park, and then turning northwest into the pasture field lying north of the farmhouse. This location is on the southern side of the Black Beck, which flows north-eastwards through Baysdale. The elevation of the site is between approximately 205m and 208m AOD.
- 2.2 The soils are of the Dale Association, described as seasonably permeable and seasonably waterlogged clays and silts over a solid geology of Carboniferous and Jurassic clay and shale (Mackney *et al.* 1983).

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 Basedale forms part of the parish of Westerdale, neither settlement receiving a mention in the Domesday Survey. The earliest mention of Baysdale was as *Basdale* in a charter of c. 1200, the name meaning 'valley with a cow-shed' (Ekwall, 1935). The earliest recorded lords were the Balliols of Barnard Castle, who in the 12th century held the forest called first Westerdale, then Baysdale and finally Stokesley (Page ed. 1923).
- 3.2 Baysdale Abbey was the Cistercian Priory of St Mary, which moved to Baysdale c. 1189, having first occupied Hutton and subsequently Nunthorpe. At the time of the dissolution of the Priory in 1539, Elizabeth Raughton was Prioress, and there were ten other nuns in occupation (Page ed. 1974). In terms of the number of sisters, Baysdale Priory was joint third of the twelve Yorkshire houses of Cistercian nuns.

- 3.3 A detailed survey was made of Baysdale Priory at the time of the dissolution. The survey listed a church 65 ft. in length, probably with a crypt. The 50 ft. square cloisters lay on the church's southern side and had walkways 7 ft. wide. The dorter lay on the east side of the cloister with the frater and an apparent warming house on the southern side. The walls were of timber, roofed with slates and thatch; the dorter and church were probably stone-built. The prioress's chamber, hall and guest accommodation were on the west side of the cloister; this range appears to have had stone-built walls on the ground floor, with a timbered upper storey. The kitchen was at the southeast corner of the cloister. A separate court contained a 'garnar', storehouse, kiln-house, malting floor, bake-house, chamber over the entrance gate (with an adjacent water-mill) and a cow-house. There was also an ox-house in the outer yard, a hay-house, a house for turves (peat for fuel), and a barn.
- 3.4 The first Prioress at the Priory (Isabella) obtained the right for the nuns and sisters to be buried in a cemetery at Baysdale, but all the servants and men were to be buried at the parish church at Stokesley, where they also had to travel to receive other sacraments.
- 3.5 The only medieval structure known to survive at Baysdale is the bridge across the Black Beck (SM No. 34723). The present dwelling at Baysdale Abbey was built in 1822, although there are earlier date-stones above the entrance. The exact position of the church, the associated claustral buildings and domestic range is unknown, but a likely location is the level area to the southwest of the present dwelling, which contains many earthworks, and was referred to as Hall Flatt on the 1857 first edition Ordnance Survey map.
- 3.6 Sir Ralph Bulmer obtained Baysdale Abbey from the crown in 1544, Ralph dying in 1558 'seised of the monastery or manor'. In 1577 Robert Yoward of Baysdale held the majority of the manor, settling this on his son Ralph. Thomas Yoward

obtained land and an interest in the water-mill in 1578 from one of the heiresses of Sir Ralph Bulmer. However, Ralph, Lord Eure died in possession of the site in 1617. Thereafter, Baysdale Abbey was owned by the Fotherleys of Castleton, the Peirson family (1709-1808), the Russell family and subsequently through inheritance, the Hamilton family, who were Viscounts of Boyne.

4. Methods

- 4.1 The Archaeological Mitigation Strategy provided by Graham Lee clearly stated that a continuous presence watching brief should be carried out on all groundworks at the site. All groundworks at the site were carried out by either a JCB excavator or a 360° mini-digger using a narrow toothless bucket.

- 4.2 A section was drawn at a scale of 1:10, and plans of deposits at 1:20 scale. A photographic record was taken in monochrome and colour print in 35mm format, and a number of digital images were also taken using a six million pixel camera set on high resolution. A written record was compiled under the continuous context recording system on MAP's *pro forma* context sheets. Finds were collected by context, and processed to MAP2 standards.

5. Results

- 5.1 The groundworks associated with the development involved the excavation of a series of narrow trenches to accommodate new drains and services.

- 5.2 Natural deposits consisted of dense, highly plastic brownish yellow clay. A 0.10m thick deposit of greyish brown clay (context 1005) directly overlay the natural and presumably the former land surface.

- 5.3 A stone wall was identified during the cutting of the water supply trench north of the farm house. Wall 1004 was recorded for a length of 2.5m in the northern face of the trench, which corresponded almost exactly to the wall's alignment. The structure represented by the wall lay largely outside and to the north of the trench,

but the eastern corner was identified, with the wall continuing obliquely out of the trench to the west. Wall 1004 consisted of a lower course of fairly regular, squared, un-bonded sandstone blocks, with traces of a narrower single course above. Three narrower courses survived at the wall's eastern corner. There were no traces of a foundation trench, the wall apparently resting on the old land surface.

- 5.4 A deposit of sandstone rubble in a grey clay silt matrix (context 1006) lay up against the western side of Wall 1004, and is interpreted as demolition/clearance material. Rubble deposit 1006 contained pieces of post-medieval roof-tile. A deposit of smaller rubble (context 1003) that occupied a hollow in the top of the wall is interpreted as further evidence of demolition/clearance activity.
- 5.5 Rubble deposit 1006 continued into OS Parcel 0062 to the southwest, where it was recorded separately as Context 1007. This rubble contained sherds ranging in date from the 13/14th century to the 16/17th century.
- 5.5 A dark grey silt subsoil deposit (context 1002) was identified along the entire course of the trench, and contained sherds with a date range from the 13th to the late 18th/early 19th centuries. The subsoil was overlain by a modern turf-line (context 1001).

6. Discussion and Conclusions

- 6.1 The watching brief identified structural remains in the area north of the present farm-house. The excavation of the water supply trench through the field to the west revealed rubble deposits but no structures. No archaeological deposits of any kind were present in the area of the barn and outbuildings.
- 6.2 Only the foundation course of the wall was present, consisting of regular sandstone masonry; although there was with no bonding, this might be expected for a foundation. The nature of the wall is consistent with it being the dwarf-wall

foundation of a timber-framed structure. As the Survey made of the Priory at the time of the Dissolution showed, some of the buildings in the claustral range appear to have been timber-framed, and no doubt the many of the buildings in the ancillary court were constructed in like fashion.

- 6.3 However, such dating evidence as there is for the recorded structure is reliant on the finds recovered from the demolition layers associated with it. The latest finds are of late 18th / early 19th century date, which may be explained by either post-medieval re-use of a medieval structure, or conversely by the structure being constructed in the post-medieval period.
- 6.4 The rubble present within the field to the west of the farm-house could relate to the demolition of structures in the immediate vicinity, or perhaps the creation of a landscape associated with the construction the farm-house itself, and which included the excavation of a ha-ha. Post-medieval material was again present in the rubble at this location.
- 6.5 Although the watching brief did not conclusively identify the location of medieval structures relating to Baysdale Priory, it has provided useful pointers for where they might be found by any future research.

7. Bibliography

- Ekwall, E 1935 *The Concise Dictionary of English Place-Names.*
- Mackney D *et al.* 1983 *Soil Survey of England and Wales, Sheet 1: Northern England.*
- Page, W (ed.) 1969 *A History of the County of York North Riding. Volume 2. Victoria County History.*
- Page, W (ed.) 1974 *A History of the County of York. Volume 3.*

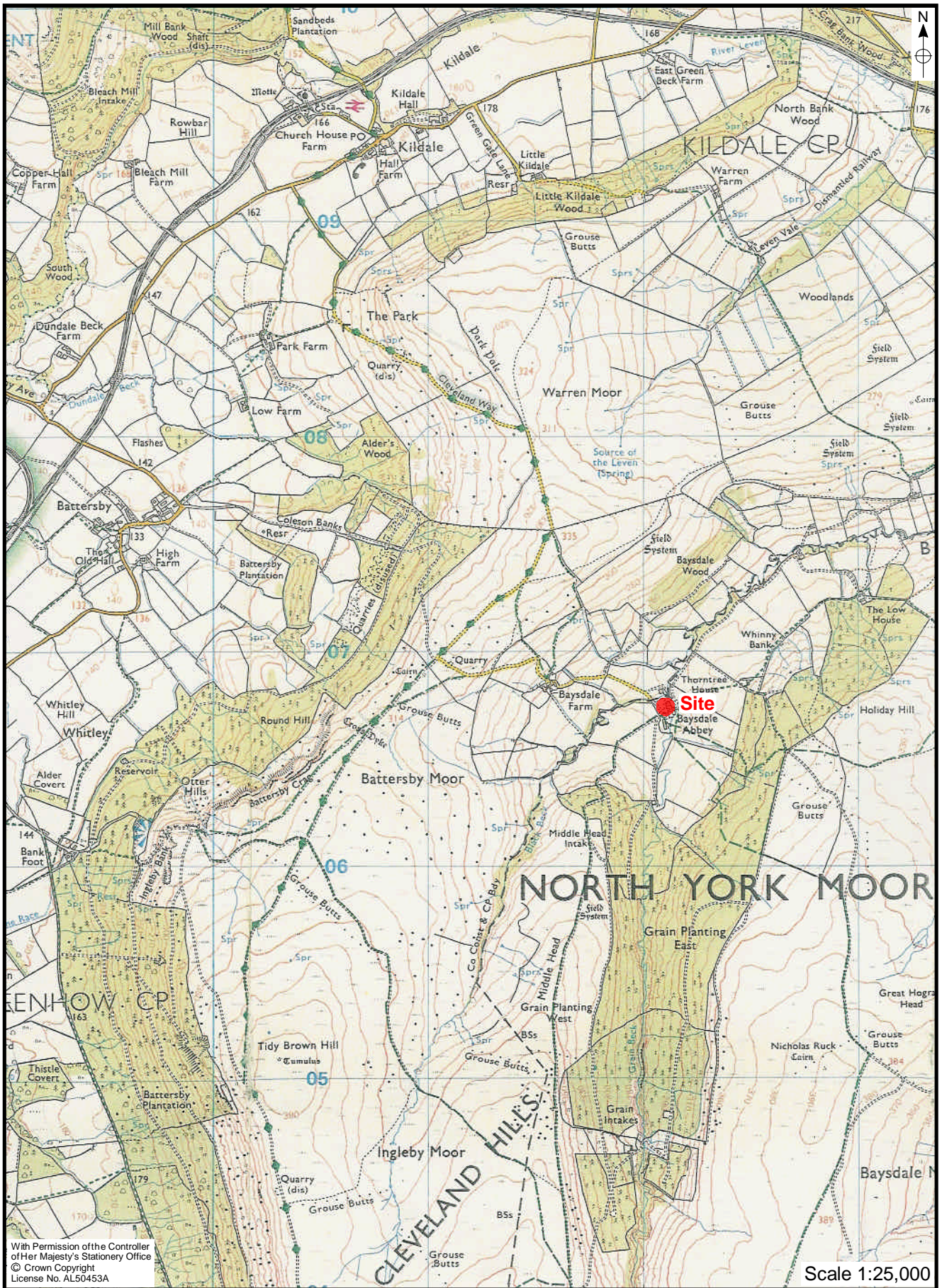


Figure 1. Site Location.

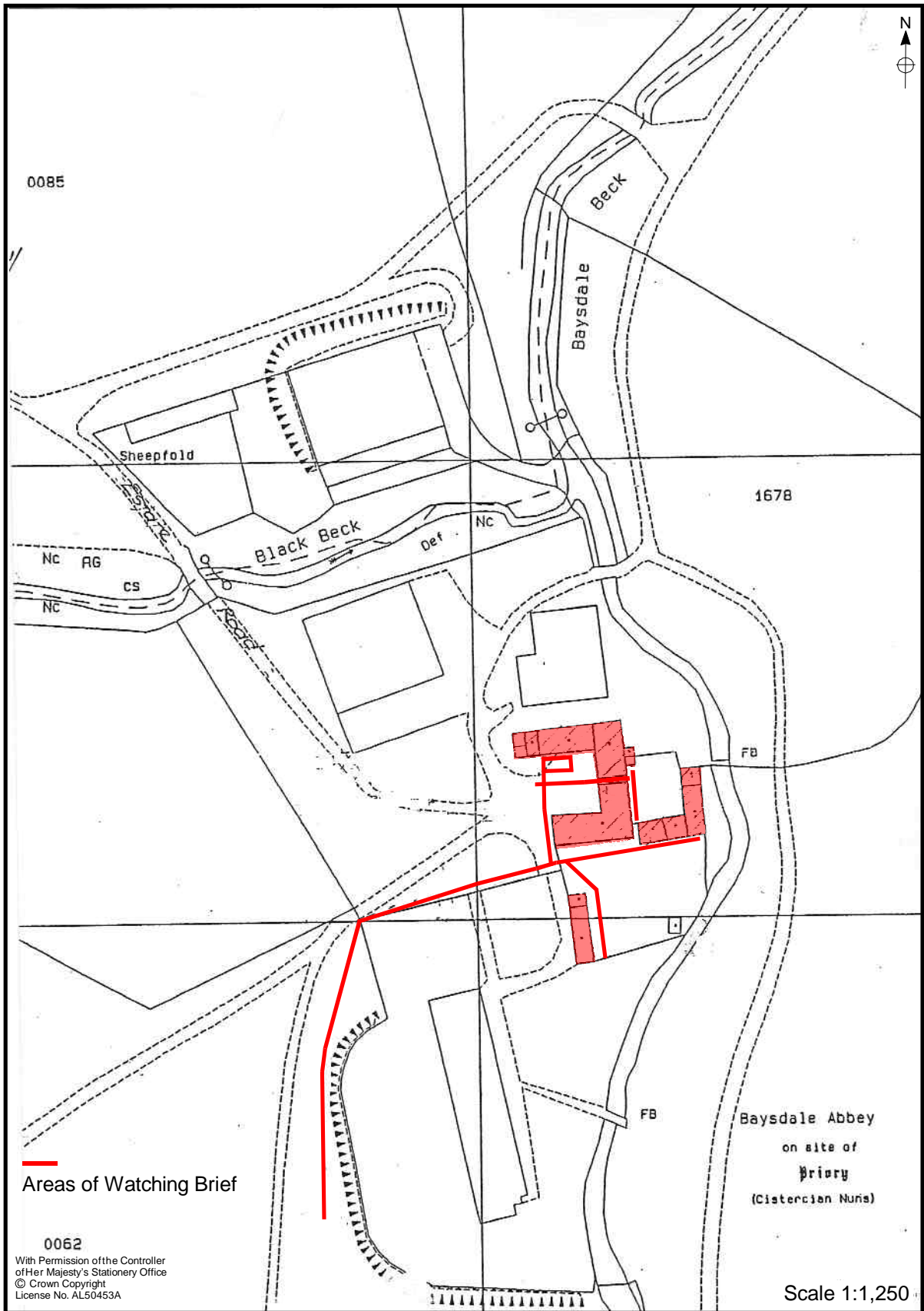


Figure 2. Location of Watching Brief.

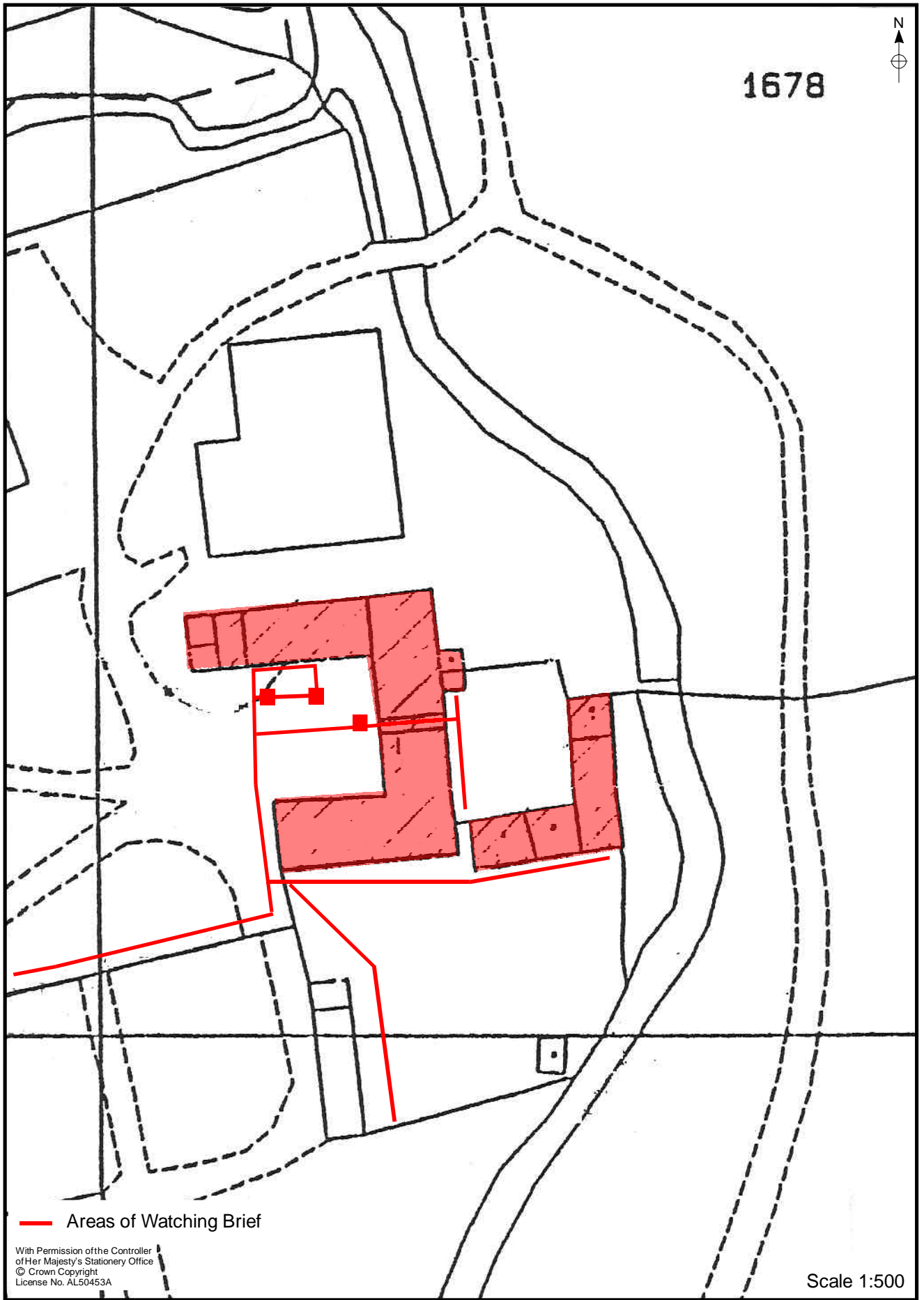


Figure 2. Location of Watching Brief.

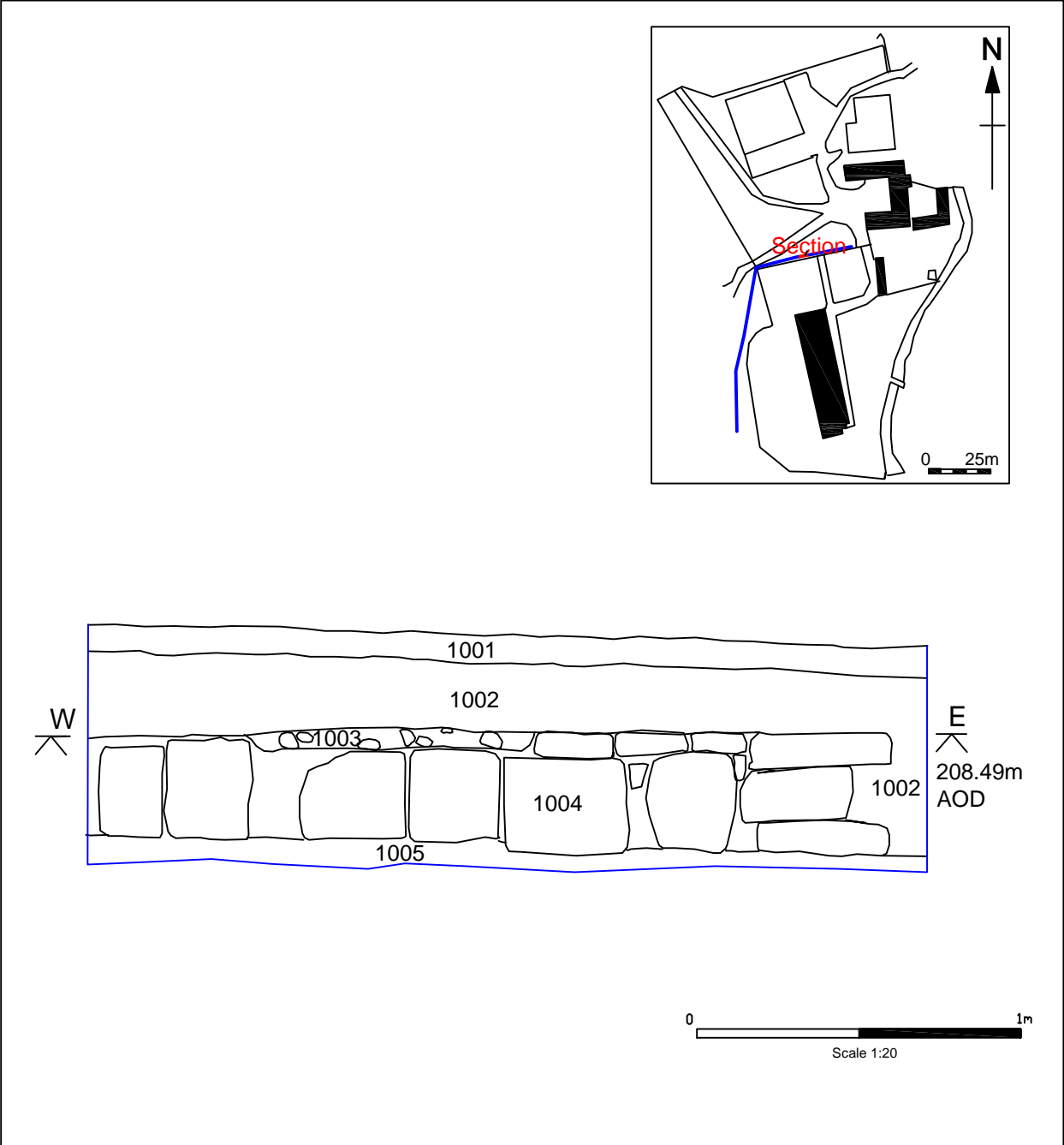


Figure 4. Section of Feature 1004.



Plate 1. View of Baysdale Abbey. Facing South.



Plate 2. View of Courtyard and Barns. Facing East.



Plate 3. View of Barn. Facing North-east.



Plate 4. View of water pipe trench. Facing South.



Plate 5. Trench for water pipe. Facing West.



Plate 6. Trench for water pipe. facing North.



Plate 7. Trench through Field 0062. Facing South-west.



Plate 8. Wall 1004. Facing West.

APPENDIX 1

Baysdale Abbey, Westerdale

Context Listing

Context	Description
1001	Deposit 10YR 3/2, clay loam; topsoil
1002	Deposit 10YR 4/1, clay silt; subsoil
1003	Deposit 10YR 4/1, sandy silt + rubble; demolition/clearance
1004	Structure Wall composed of sandstone blocks
1005	Deposit 10YR 5/1, silty clay; former land surface?
1006	Deposit 10YR 4/2, clay silt + rubble; demolition/clearance
1007	Deposit 10YR 4/2, clay silt + rubble; demolition/clearance

APPENDIX 2

Finds Catalogue

Context	Amount	Description	Wt. (g)	Spot date
1001	5 sherds	Tees Valley, Red, Black and Pearl wares	90	L.18 / e.19th
1006	6 fragments	Roof tile: hip, flat and pantile	538	18th century+
1007	4 sherds	Tees Valley, Humber and Red wares	150	16/17th

APPENDIX 3

Photographic Archive Listing

Digital Camera

Frame	Description	Scale	Facing
1	OS Field 0062; pipe trench	N/A	North
2	OS Field 0062; pipe trench	1m	West
3	OS Field 0062; pipe trench	N/A	Southwest
4	OS Field 0062; pipe trench	1m	West
5	Rubble 1006	1m	South
6	Wall 1004	1, 0.5m	Northeast
7	Wall 1004	1, 0.5m	West
8	Wall 1004	1.0.5m	West

Colour Transparency - Film 1082

Frame	Description	Scale	Facing
25	Rubble 1006	1m	South
26	Ditto		
27	Wall 1004	1m +	Northeast
28	Ditto	0.5m	
29	Wall 1004	1m +	West

30	Ditto	0.5m	
31	Wall 1004	1m +	West
32	Ditto	0.5m	

Monochrome - Film 1083

Frame	Description		
17	Rubble 1006	1m	South
18	Ditto		
19	Wall 1004	1m +	Northeast
20	Ditto	0.5m	
21	Wall 1004	1m +	West
22	Ditto	0.5m	
23	Wall 1004	1m +	West
24	Ditto	0.5m	

APPENDIX 4

Project Team Details

Fieldwork

Kelly Hunter, Mark Stephens, Paula Ware

Post-excavation

Mark Stephens *report*

Paula Ware *editorial*

Kelly Hunter *illustrations*