



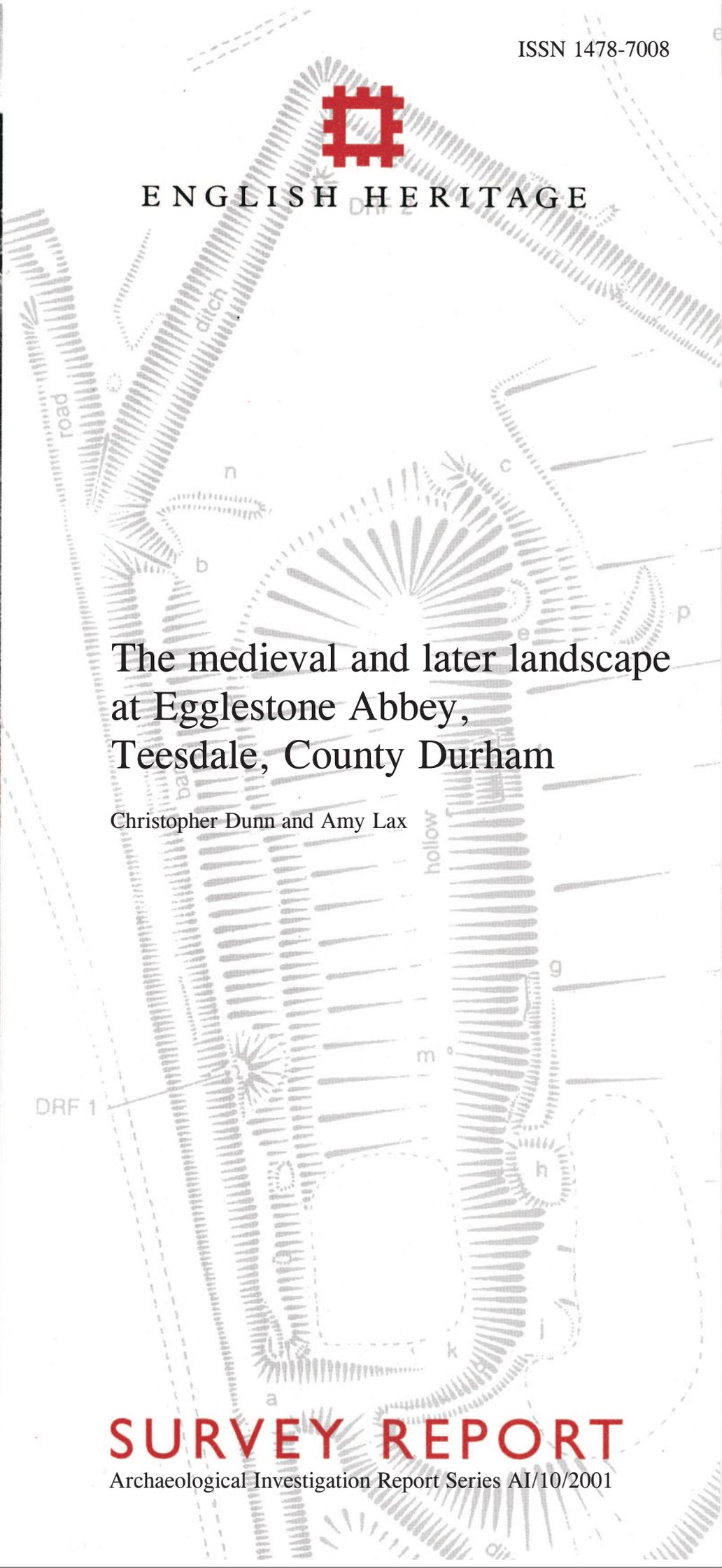
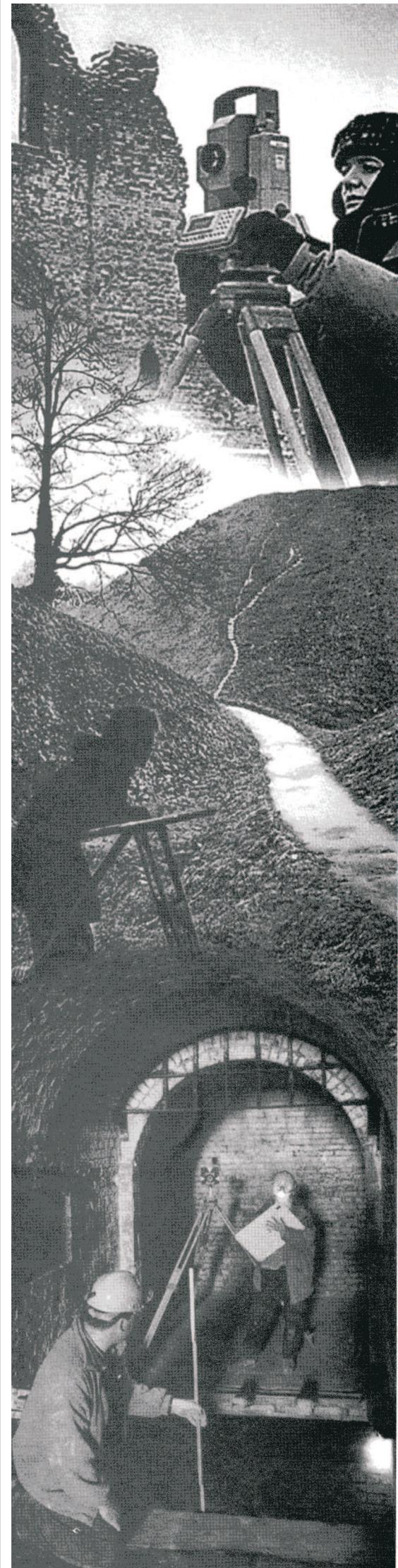
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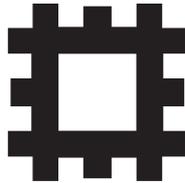
The medieval and later landscape  
at Egglestone Abbey,  
Teesdale, County Durham

Christopher Dunn and Amy Lax

**SURVEY REPORT**

Archaeological Investigation Report Series AI/10/2001





**THE MEDIEVAL AND LATER LANDSCAPE  
AT EGGLESTONE ABBEY,  
TEESDALE, COUNTY DURHAM**

**Archaeological Investigation Report Series AI/10/2001**

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*Frontispiece. General view of Egglestone Abbey and the post-Dissolution house from the north-east (photographed by Christopher Dunn).*

## CONTENTS

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List of illustrations	iii
1.Introduction and background to the survey	1
2.Topography, geology and land use	3
3.History	5
4.Previous research	6
5.Description and interpretation of the earthworks and buildings	8
6.Discussion	27
7.Methodology	32
8.Acknowledgements	33
9.Bibliography	34
Appendix 1: NMR numbers linked to the site	35

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

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<i>Frontispiece. General view of Egglestone Abbey and the post-Dissolution house from the north-east.</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Figure 1. Location of Egglestone Abbey (based on OS 1:50000 mapping).</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Figure 2. Aerial view of Egglestone Abbey (NMR Air Photos Library: Number NMR 17524/03, 08-Jan-2001).</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Figure 3. English Heritage earthwork plan of Egglestone Abbey and environs at 1:2500 scale (plan of gatehouse from Turnbull and Walsh (2000, Fig 1) with field boundaries, buildings etc. based on the OS 1:2500 mapping).</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Figure 4. English Heritage earthwork plan of Egglestone Abbey and environs at 1:2500 scale showing the main areas of earthworks and buildings discussed in the report (plan of gatehouse from Turnbull and Walsh (2000, Fig 1) with field boundaries, buildings etc. based on the OS 1: 2500 mapping).</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Figure 5. Annotated 1:1000 scale window showing the earthworks in the field immediately south of the abbey ruins and farm road.</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Figure 6. The abbey church and southern end of the post-Dissolution house viewed from the enclosures to the south.</i>	
<i>Figure 7. The small circular mound viewed from near the abbey ruins to the north-west.</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Figure 8. The bridge crossing the stream south of the farmstead.</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Figure 9. Annotated 1:1000 scale window showing the principal area of earthworks in the field situated west and north-west of Holly Lane Plantation.</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Figure 10. The eastern watercourse looking west.</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Figure 11. Possible locations for the precinct boundary to the west, south and east of the abbey (plan of gatehouse from Turnbull and Walsh (2000, Fig 1) with field boundaries, buildings etc. based on the OS 1:2500 mapping).</i>	<i>29</i>

## 1. Introduction and background to the survey

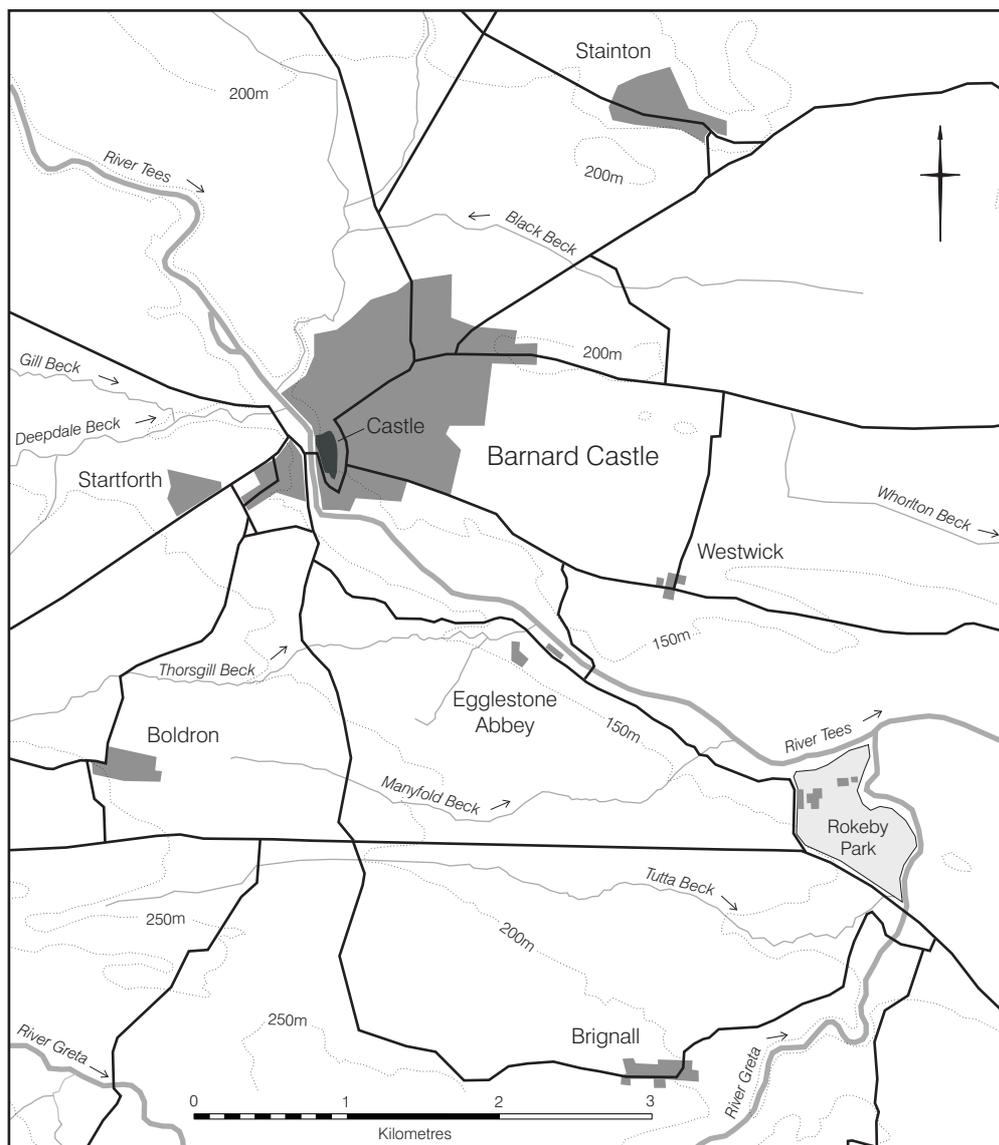


Figure 1.  
Location of  
Egglestone Abbey  
(based on OS  
1:50000 mapping).

The ruins of the Premonstratensian abbey of Egglestone are situated at NZ 0625 1510, some 2km south-south-east of Barnard Castle (Fig 1). They comprise the abbey church with the cloister on the north and not to the south as was more usual. Little survives of the claustral buildings as standing structures apart from the east range, while the location of some buildings, such as the infirmary, is not known. Abbey Mill is situated on the western bank of the River Tees below and to the east of the abbey; it now shows little evidence of its monastic origin. Near the abbey on the south-west is Abbey Farm where the remains of a substantial medieval gatehouse were found in 1999, and subsequently excavated, during an archaeological watching brief of ground works associated with the erection of a new farm building. The presence of the gatehouse was completely unsuspected and its discovery led to a brief assessment of the wider landscape setting of the abbey. This resulted in the recognition of a number of largely unrecorded earthworks, especially in the area beyond the farmstead on the south-west, which were thought to be probably medieval in origin and to relate to the abbey. The latter is a Scheduled Ancient Monument; however, these earthworks, the farm buildings and the land surrounding it are not

protected. In order to understand more about the context of the abbey - in terms of its wider surroundings - and to inform any future management proposals, the Archaeological Investigation Section of English Heritage were requested by David Sherlock (inspector of ancient monuments, North East Region) to produce an analytical survey of the earthworks that survive in the vicinity of the abbey; the request specifically excluded a new plan and consideration of the abbey ruins. An initial field reconnaissance visit with the inspector and county archaeologist indicated that the surviving earthworks were neither particularly extensive nor complex and that the most cost-effective way of recording them was, therefore, by means of a Level 2 survey (Dunn 2000; RCHME 1999, 3-4). The survey was undertaken during the latter half of November 2000 at an overall scale of 1:2500 but with two windows at larger scale (1:1000) where warranted by the amount of detail present, some of which could not be shown at the smaller scale.

## 2. Topography, geology and land use

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Egglestone Abbey is located at about 140m AOD near the confluence of the Thorsgill Beck with the River Tees; the former flanks the site on the north and the latter is to the east. The abbey is situated on a terrace, immediately above the floodplain, in the angle between the two rivers (Fig 2). Steep slopes, especially on the north, fall away from the edge of the terrace down onto the floodplain. The terrace has a north-west to south-east orientation and begins to become a distinctive feature in the landscape some 300m west of the abbey. It broadens out to a maximum width of 200m beside the abbey but then starts to narrow again and gradually becomes indistinguishable from the slope that forms the southern side of the Tees valley. The south of the terrace is marked by a prominent and steep, north-facing scarp. The position of the abbey church and cloister towards the northern edge of the site suggests that the precinct, especially to the south, was largely coterminous with the terrace. It also helped to give the abbey (and post-Dissolution house) an impressive appearance and location, especially when viewed from the north and east. The terrace is well down the valley side making it a sheltered site for the abbey and one with some degree of seclusion.



*Figure 2.  
Aerial view of  
Egglestone Abbey.*

The geology of this part of County Durham consists of rocks belonging to the Millstone Grit Series and Carboniferous Limestone Series. East of the abbey, on the banks of the Tees, crinoidal limestone - often referred to as Egglestone Marble - was quarried during the medieval period. The nearest of these quarries, Abbey Quarry (NMR Number: NZ 01 NE 52), lies a short distance south-east of Abbey Mill House just beyond the limits of the survey in area NZ 0642 1507. It belonged to the abbot of Egglestone Abbey until the Dissolution and some of the stone from here was used in Durham Cathedral (Blacker and Mitchell 1999, 119-120). This is probably also the quarry referred to by Cox (1720-31, 602) indicating that stone was still being extracted during the early eighteenth century.

Boulder Clay overlies much of the area and the abbey itself is built on Fluvio-glacial Terrace and Older River Gravel Terrace. Alluvium is present on the floodplain

(Geological Survey of Great Britain 1969). The streams that descend the valley sides have cut deep, narrow channels through the soft Boulder Clay and are a very characteristic landform of the locality; within the survey area some are like miniature gorges.

The area occupied by the abbey church and cloister has been fenced off and the space within is regularly mown; rougher grassland lies beyond the fence to the west and on the valley floor. The fields on the south side are under pasture. Above the farmstead to the south-west there is a narrow strip of woodland called Holly Lane Plantation.

### 3. History

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The abbey, dedicated to St Mary and John the Baptist, was founded some time between 1168 and 1198, probably by Ralph de Multon although no foundation charter has been found (Knowles and Hadcock 1971, 188). It was established as a daughter house of the abbey of St Agatha situated at Easby near Richmond. The history of Egglestone Abbey has already been described in some detail by Graham and Baillie Reynolds (1958), Hodgson (1904), Kenyon (1999) and also in Page (1914). The brief summary that follows is largely based on these works and is included in order to provide an overall context and background for the archaeological remains. Egglestone was formerly in the North Riding of Yorkshire until the local government reorganisation of 1974.

Poverty emerges as one of the principal features of the abbey's existence. The abbey was always poorly endowed and some of its possessions were burdened with such heavy obligations that any profits must have been minimal. In the early thirteenth century it even came close to losing its abbatial status when an enquiry was held to determine whether it should be reduced to that of a priory. At times it was relieved of paying taxes and during the reign of Edward I the canons refused to pay dues demanded by the mother house in France; this brought some relief because it avoided Egglestone being taxed as an 'alien priory' during the Hundred Years War. It suffered particularly heavy losses when the Scots invaded Yorkshire in 1315 and again in 1346 when the English army stayed at Egglestone on its way to Neville's Cross to fight the Scots. The Archbishops of York tried to alleviate the poverty of the canons by giving them permission to appropriate certain churches; this brought them the churches at nearby Rokeby and Startforth. In 1348 Sir Thomas Rokeby gave them the advowson of the church at Great Ouseburn (near Boroughbridge), which they had a licence to appropriate, as compensation for the damages caused by the army in 1346; unfortunately the value of the great tithes were by now much reduced. In 1398 Pope Boniface VIII offered an indulgence to anyone visiting Egglestone on a major feast day in the hope of encouraging visits to the abbey. It is believed that the canons generally numbered about fifteen although some of them would have been serving churches and chapels outside; in 1491 eight of the fifteen canons were employed in such duties. In 1535, on the eve of the Dissolution, the King's commissioners valued the monastery at only £36 7s 2d which meant that it was the poorest of the Premonstratensian houses in England. However Henry VIII spared Egglestone during the first round of suppressions in the following year when many houses with an annual value of less than £200 were done away with. It was re-founded in 1537 but three years later the abbot and convent finally surrendered it to the King's commissioners.

Initially the site was farmed to Alan Kynge of London but in 1548 it was granted to Robert Strelly and Frediswinda his wife. It is generally assumed that Strelly was responsible for converting the domestic buildings on the northern side of the church into a mansion. After his death the property passed to his nephews and stayed in the family until the seventeenth century. It then passed through many hands but in 1770 was sold to John Morritt of Rokeby. At about this time Egglestone was visited by John Byng, the traveller and diarist, who noted that the ruins were neglected and choked with weeds and nettles. After the house ceased to function as a mansion, it was tenanted by labourers and according to Hodgson (1904, 156) there were four separate families living in different parts of the house at the same time in the 1840s. Hodgson (1904, 157) also lamented the destruction - a few years prior to his writing - of portions of the cloister arcade, the north transept and adjacent buildings which were pulled down to provide stone for the stable yard at Rokeby. In 1925, Major Henry Edward Morritt placed the ruins of the abbey in the guardianship of the state; the site is now in the care of English Heritage. Scheduling took place in 1993.

## 4. Previous research

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Most previous research has concentrated on the standing fabric of the abbey and there has been relatively little attention given to the archaeology of the area surrounding the ruins. No earthworks, apart from the front scarp of a mound of upcast associated with a pond, were shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale map surveyed in 1892 and published the following year (OS 1893). The pond is situated on the hillside south of Abbey Farm and was labelled *Old Reservoir* on the map; the outline of the pond continues to be shown on the OS 1:2500 scale mapping but the scarp has now been omitted (OS 1976). In 1980 a small mound, situated a short distance from the abbey on the north-east and on the southern side of the road leading to the Abbey Farm, was investigated by the Archaeology Division of the OS; it was considered to be merely part of the natural slope with a hollow, probably caused by quarrying (NMR Number: NZ 01 NE 27). In August 1992, the former Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England visited the abbey during fieldwork aimed at providing plans of the Scheduled Ancient Monuments in County Durham (RCHME Durham SAMs Project). The results of this fieldwork at Egglestone are summarised under the NMR record for the abbey ruins (NMR Number: NZ 01 NE 11). To the west, between the abbey and Abbey Farm, slight scarps were surveyed; of these two were interpreted as the probable remnants of a building abutting the cloister. It was also suggested that a linear hollow was once a trackway skirting the north-west corner of the abbey. The remains of a field system, thought to be of medieval origin and comprising ridge-and-furrow cultivation were noted in the fields lying to the south of the abbey. In the field immediately adjacent to the abbey on the south, a small circular earthwork was recorded near the eastern boundary of the field and interpreted as a possible stack stand. Beyond it on the west and occupying the northern part of the same field, scarps and a bank were surveyed. It was thought that they might have separated two former pasture fields from the ridge and furrow visible to the south and east. An oval depression was recorded in the westernmost of these postulated fields together with an angular trench-like feature within the eastern field; it was suggested that this feature might have been a robber trench exploiting the foundations of an early building.

The late 1990s saw the publication of research, based on documentary and geological evidence, into the location of medieval quarries near the abbey (Blacker and Mitchell 1999). The brief assessment of the landscape surrounding the abbey that followed on from the discovery of the gatehouse in 1999, drew attention to the broad farm track that leads in the general direction of the abbey (and former gatehouse) from the south-west. It was suggested that this may have been the original formal approach to the abbey while a complex of earthworks further west were identified as the likely remains of the abbey's demesne farm. It was also thought possible that some of the existing field walls might incorporate remnants of the former precinct wall, especially west of the gatehouse. Attention too was focussed on the pond situated on the hillside above Abbey Farm (see previous paragraph); it was suggested this might have been a settling and filtration tank for the monastic water supply. Features in the side of the valley behind Abbey Cottages were thought to be possibly from quarrying and perhaps an indication of the source of the stone used in the construction of the abbey (Turnbull and Walsh 2000).

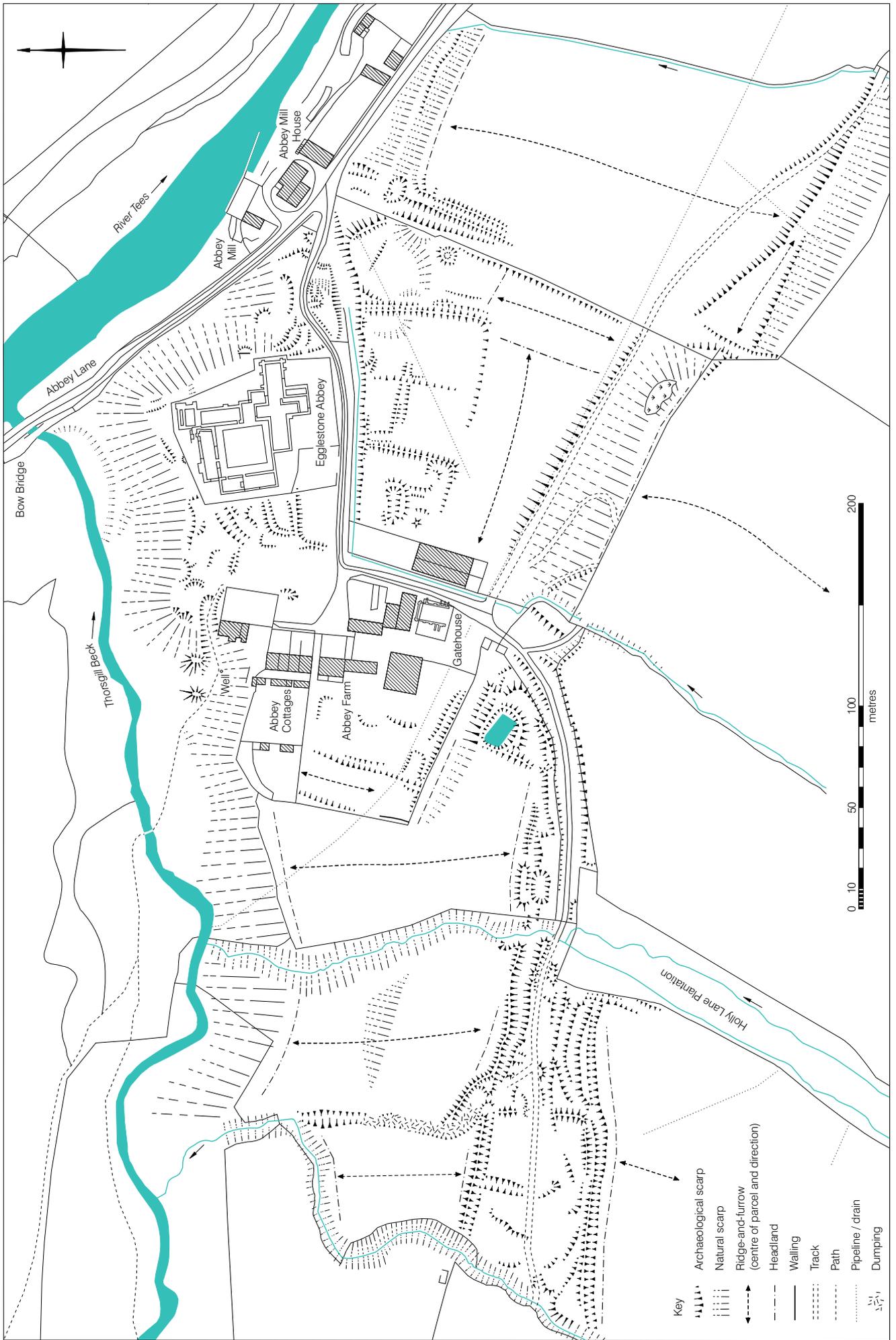


Figure 3. English Heritage earthwork plan of Egglestone Abbey and environs at 1:2500 scale (plan of gatehouse from Turnbull and Walsh (2000, Fig 1) with field boundaries, buildings etc. based on the OS 1:2500 mapping).

## **5. Description and interpretation of the earthworks and buildings (Fig 3)**

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Earthworks occur in eight main areas that largely fall within existing fields and these divisions provide a convenient structure for the following account; these areas have been referenced 5.1 to 5.8. A final section (5.9) has also been added which contains a brief account of the domestic and farm buildings (Fig 4).

### **5.1 The earthworks surrounding the abbey church and cloister**

This section describes the earthworks immediately beyond the perimeter fence that encloses the abbey ruins. The approximate outer limits are: north and north-west, Thorsgill Beck; west, Abbey Farm and cottages; south, the farm road skirting the ruins; east, Abbey Lane.

#### **5.1.1 North**

Slight scarps on the narrow strip of land between the perimeter fence and the edge of the terrace on the north, may be largely the result of dumping and relatively late disturbance; they are up to 0.6m high. Black earth, a jumble of loose stones and pieces of broken china are visible in active erosion scars on the steep face of the terrace below, indicating that a lot of rubbish has been thrown over the edge in the past. A long scarp, up to 1.3m high, on the floodplain has a curved course and relates to a former line of the southern bank of Thorsgill Beck. This may mean that the beck has been straightened in this area and, near the northern end of the scarp, a packhorse bridge called Bow Bridge, probably of 17th or 18th century date (NMR Number: NZ 01 NE 12), crosses the beck. A medieval origin has, however, also been claimed for this bridge (Graham and Baillie Reynolds 1958, 24).

#### **5.1.2 West**

The most significant earthworks surrounding the abbey are probably the low banks and scarps, up to 0.5m high, which survive on the west between the perimeter fence and the farmstead; they are bounded on the north by the edge of the terrace. The surface of much of this area is slightly uneven suggesting that there are buried features. The banks visible just beyond the fence define at least one, and possibly as many as three small enclosures. A linear hollow is also present, and a hollow-way descends the face of the terrace behind Abbey Cottages.

##### **5.1.2.1 The small enclosures**

The middle enclosure, at NZ 0620 1510, is the most complete and may, as suggested by the RCHME in 1992, be the remains of a former building abutting the cloister; it measures about 12m across by at least 20m. Its principal axis, like that of the probable enclosure joining it on the south, seems to mirror the main orientation of the abbey. The space between the middle enclosure and a linear hollow to the north contains a couple of fragmentary scarps and could just be the site of a third enclosure. Another possibility is that some of these elements are the remnants of garden compartments belonging to the sixteenth century mansion. In this respect it is possible that the incomplete probable enclosure to the south could once have formed the north-west corner of the western enclosure, situated in the field immediately south of the abbey ruins (section 5.2.1 below). The construction of the farm road, possibly

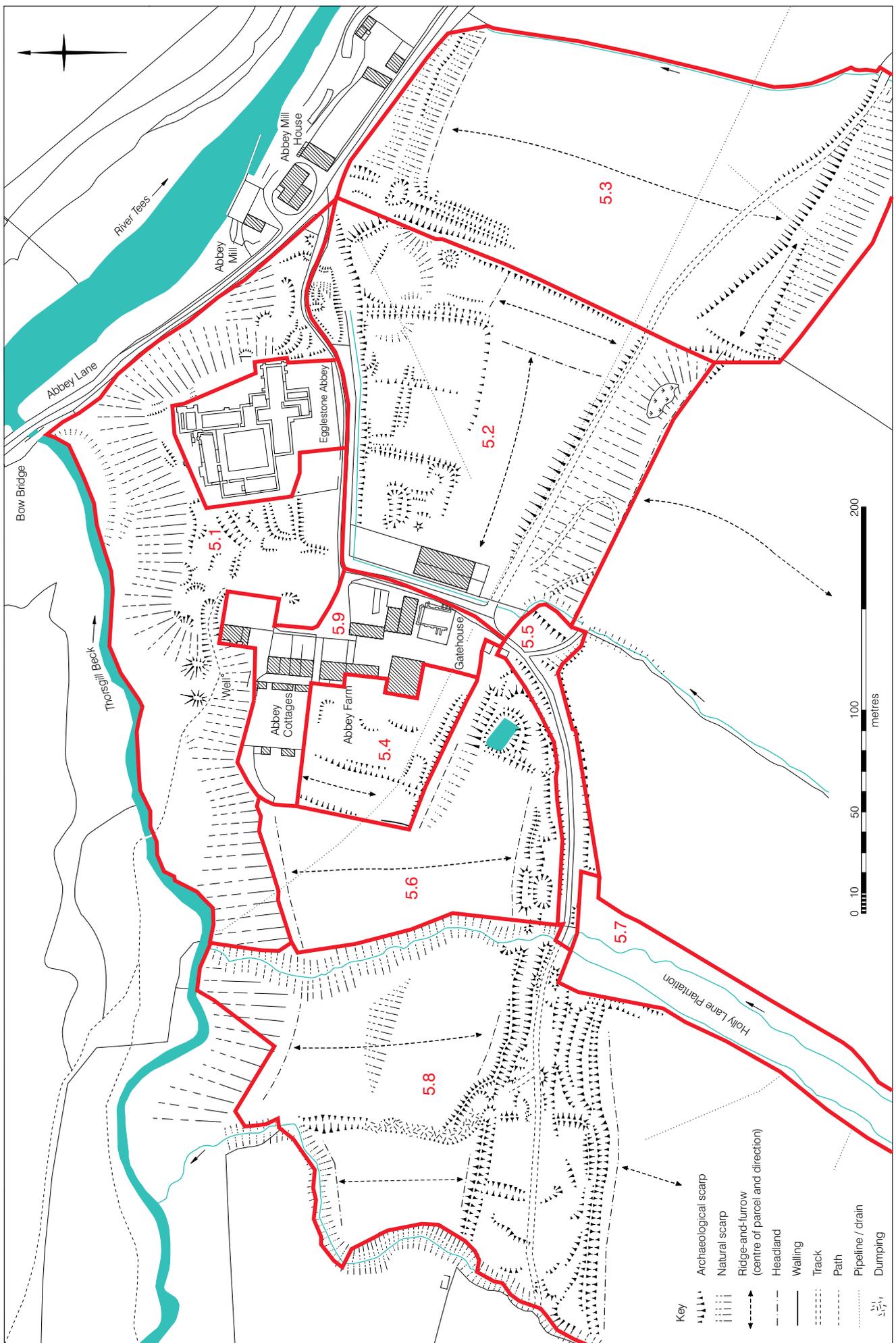


Figure 4. English Heritage earthwork plan of Egglestone Abbey and environs at 1:2500 scale showing the main areas of earthworks and buildings discussed in the report (plan of gatehouse from Tunbull and Walsh (2000, Fig 1) with field boundaries, buildings etc. based on the OS 1:2500 mapping).

during the nineteenth century, is likely to have eradicated any physical link between these enclosure earthworks.

#### 5.1.2.2 The linear hollow

This earthwork lies immediately north of the enclosures and is approximately 7m wide and about 0.5m deep. It is now only 22m long but once may have continued south-south-west along the western edge of the enclosures and may be the reason for their slightly curved ends. This feature was interpreted as a trackway by the RCHME in 1992; however, its north-east end is heading towards the northern part of the cloister which suggests that it is more likely to be the remnants of the watercourse which once supplied the rere-dorter drain that survives at the northern end of the eastern claustral range.

#### 5.1.2.3 The hollow-way and associated features

Near the north-west corner of the area, a hollow-way, up to 1.5m deep, cuts through the edge of the terrace and descends to the floodplain. It is still followed by a track, marked on the various editions of the OS 1:2500 scale mapping, that leads to a footbridge across the beck. A small, flat rectilinear area with a short arc of low bank defining its eastern margin is visible in the corner of the terrace immediately north of the start of the hollow-way at NZ 0615 1514; perhaps it is the site of a former building. The hollow-way is bordered by a pair of elongated mounds where it descends the steep face of the terrace behind Abbey Cottages. The mounds are about 1m high with jumbled blocks of stone visible in the larger one situated on the east. This mound is possibly the result of slumping of part of the face of the terrace. It may also be that at least one of the mounds was augmented with material dug out when the well to their south was created. The latter was shown on OS mapping from the late nineteenth century (OS 1893) and survives as a small ruined structure of coursed rubble near the southern edge of the track, which follows the bottom of the hollow-way. The face of the terrace has a massive indentation in this area which has helped to provide a route for the hollow-way. This landform may have been created by former springs eroding the face of the terrace. The occurrence of the well, together with the covers of two inspection hatches - possibly connected with water facilities - visible close-by, suggests that this might once have been a wet area. Perhaps the indentation and mounds are some of the features behind Abbey Cottages, which were recently thought to be from medieval quarrying (Turnbull and Walsh 2000). Between the foot of the indent and the beck, further scarps are visible which seem to relate largely to former river meanders; they were not surveyed.

#### 5.1.3 South

The area immediately south of the cloister and north of the road to the farm has been levelled to make the visitor's car park for the abbey. The earthworks surviving in the field on the other side of the road are described below in section 5.2.

#### 5.1.4 East

East of the abbey church the natural slope becomes less steep. This probably accounts for the presence of former tracks, represented by low scarps up to 0.6m high, which ascend the face of the terrace immediately north of the road to the farm. Two slight platforms are also present - one is at the foot of the natural slope and the other just

below its top at approximately NZ 0628 1512. A wall face, visible as two courses of dressed stone, protrudes through the turf at the rear of the latter - the face is at least 2.2m long and 0.7m high. Low mounds and a scarp are present in the extreme eastern corner of the field near Abbey Mill House; they seem to continue in a northerly direction the course of a bank visible in the north-east corner of the field immediately south of the abbey ruins (section 5.2.1 below).

## **5.2 The earthworks in the field immediately south of the abbey ruins and the farm road (Fig 5)**

This field contains the remains of three rectilinear enclosures, a ha-ha, a small circular mound, a small rectilinear depression, evidence of ridge-and-furrow cultivation and three tracks.

### **5.2.1 The three rectilinear enclosures**

These form a linked row across much of the northern part of the field. They measure on average about 55m in length and 35m across, and their boundaries consist of either low banks or scarps, at best about 0.4m to 0.6m high. The latter, like the interiors, have a smoothed appearance suggesting that they may have been reduced by later ploughing with only the more resilient features left upstanding. The long sides are slightly curved, perhaps indicating that the enclosures were laid out on top of former ridge-and-furrow cultivation whose orientation might have influenced the course of the boundaries. On the north the enclosures terminate against a ha-ha which is probably much later in date and appears to have truncated them. It is quite possible that their original northern limits were once much closer to the abbey ruins. On the south the limits of the enclosures are most indistinct due to the presence of ridge-and-furrow cultivation orientated almost west-north-west to east-south-east; the latter may even have partly destroyed the boundaries here and encroached upon the interiors. This might mean that the scarps surveyed here relate to the limit of ploughing rather than to the original ends of the enclosures. The boundary between the central enclosure and eastern enclosure was not recognised by the RCHME in 1992 with the result that the remains were thought to represent just two 'fields'; the survey was undertaken in summer when slight features would have been obscured by long grass.

The western enclosure contains the most detail. A linear depression near its centre is 19m long by a maximum of 8m wide. It narrows from east to west and is up to 0.7m deep; outward facing scarps beyond it on the south-east and north-west probably represent spread upcast or demolition material. The depression may, as suggested by the RCHME in 1992, be the site of a former building or, alternatively, a largely filled in pond - perhaps it was a monastic fishpond. Its orientation is not quite the same as that of the enclosures, if anything it is nearer to that of the abbey church. A possible explanation is that the depression and enclosures belong to different phases of activity on the site. A small, approximately circular mound, situated south of the western end of the depression, could be from later dumping - at least one stone protrudes through its surface. A fairly flat 'L'-shaped area edged by low scarps may represent the site of a former building in the south-east corner of the enclosure. There is even a suggestion on the ground that the creation of this feature led to part of the rear of the enclosure's eastern boundary bank being cut away. Low scarps extend back from near the western end of this possible building site towards the depression.



The northern part of the central enclosure is crossed transversely by low scarps, which in one place form a slight bank. On the west they terminate at the southern end of a broad, linear hollow, 11m long, which lies in front of the boundary bank which separates this enclosure from the one to the west. Some of these elements were recorded by the RCHME in 1992 and thought to be the remains of a robber trench (section 4 above). At first sight they appear to mark a sub-division within the enclosure, however, two short scarps adjacent to them in the eastern enclosure seem to be the continuation of the same feature. If this is correct, the feature is likely to be earlier than the enclosures because the long boundary scarp that separates the central enclosure from its eastern neighbour cuts through it. Immediately south of these earthworks the enclosure boundary is fronted on the east by a short length of shallow ditch. From here southwards the interior stands slightly above that of the eastern enclosure.

The eastern enclosure is largely devoid of internal features apart from the two scarps discussed in the previous paragraph and three short scarps near the ha-ha. The north-eastern part is lower than the rest of the interior due to the natural slope of the ground. The eastern boundary consists of a reasonably well-defined bank with a second bank parallel to it and just beyond it on the north-east. This fragmentary bank extends southwards for 29m and then ends near the start of a linear hollow whose plan is rectangular and measures 28m by 6m overall. Its long axis is again parallel with the eastern boundary and it fades out near the end of the enclosure. It is reminiscent of a short hollow-way but has a level bottom.

It is possible that there may have been a fourth enclosure in the north-east corner of the field, which also abutted the eastern enclosure. The line of the southern side of the ha-ha continues as a single broad scarp, about 1.5m high, beyond the eastern enclosure and starts to descend the face of the terrace; the latter is less steep here than elsewhere. Near its foot the scarp splits into two arms, with one arm continuing the line of the single scarp and the other turning through ninety degrees to head south-east back onto the terrace. This arm soon becomes a bank with a low back scarp; the front scarp is about 1.5m high. It disappears under the boundary of the field when it reaches the top of the terrace. However, it may have changed direction at this point and be represented in the next field by a stony scarp, up to 2m high, which forms one side of a hollow-way (section 5.3.1 below). This scarp is situated close to the field boundary but as it heads south its course diverges slightly from that of the latter; it fades out at a point which is opposite the southern limits of the three enclosures. Internal features include a small mound (see below, section 5.2.3) and a narrow scarp that crosses obliquely the north-east corner of the possible enclosure. The scarp is the remains of a former field boundary which was still extant at the end of the nineteenth century (OS 1893).

The enclosures are probably later in date than the abbey. Their orientation is not the same as the latter and they also appear to contain or overlies earlier features. One possibility is that they represent a series of garden compartments belonging to the post-Dissolution house. The good views of the surviving end gable of the house obtained from the northern parts of the central and eastern enclosures may not be fortuitous. It has been suggested that much of the central part of the abbey church - tower and crossing - was deliberately demolished soon after the Dissolution because it restricted the amount of light reaching the new mansion (Graham and Baillie Reynolds 1958, 13; Hodgson 1904, 155). It is also possible that the demolition took place to try and give some view of the house, and perhaps a romantic framing for it, from the gardens (Fig 6). Against this is the fact that the view may still have been



*Figure 6.  
The abbey church and  
inner (south) face of the  
north end of the east  
range viewed from the  
enclosures to the south.*

largely obscured until portions of the cloister arcade and north transept were removed a few years before Hodgson wrote his paper. The rectangular hollow situated immediately outside the eastern enclosure could also have been a garden feature. A second possibility is that the enclosures have an agricultural origin, perhaps they were paddocks and allotments for the labourers who were living in the house after it had ceased to function as a mansion. This might make them of relatively late date and could account for their orientation being different to that of the abbey. A twentieth century pipe trench crosses the enclosures almost diagonally and is visible as a very slight linear feature with a straight course; it misses the western enclosure.

### 5.2.2 The ha-ha

This feature is about 5m wide and is situated against the northern boundary of the field. Stones protrude in places through the southern side of the ha-ha, especially where the enclosure boundaries are exposed in section, and a stream flows along its bottom; the water disappears underground into a culvert near the north-eastern end of the enclosures. It is possible that water was once taken across this part of the site to Abbey Mill. The northern side of the ha-ha consists of a vertical revetment, 1.3m high, of coursed, dressed stone.

### 5.2.3 The small circular mound

It is located at approximately NZ 0632 1502 and has been terraced into the upper part of a natural slope (Fig 7). The mound is 5m in diameter with a fairly flat top that measures 3.7m across; it stands 0.3m high above the ditch, which surrounds it. The outer side of the ditch is 0.6m high on the east where the natural slope has been cut. On the north-west the ditch becomes a ledge with a marked front scarp where material has been pushed out. The overall width of the monument is 10m.

*Figure 7.  
The small circular  
mound viewed from the  
abbey ruins to the  
north-west.*



The RCHME identified this earthwork in 1992 as a possible stack stand. It could, however, possibly be the remnants of a demolished dovecote (of unknown date) whose foundations have been robbed. Dovecotes were not uncommon in Teesdale and extant examples include the dovecote north of St. Lawrence's chapel, Barforth Hall, Barforth and also the one south of Gainford Hall, Gainford (English Heritage 1999, 11). There was also once a dovecote (NMR Number: SE 18 NW 330) above the ruined Premonstratensian abbey at Coverham, North Yorkshire. Alternatively it could be a garden feature such as the site of a gazebo. A scarp, whose route is parallel to the wall that forms the east boundary of the field, fades out close to this earthwork on the south. It is probably unrelated and is either an earlier course of the wall or a later plough scarp.

#### 5.2.4 The small rectilinear depression

This is the feature at NZ 0630 1508 that was considered to be a natural slope, with a probable quarry hollow, by the OS in 1980 (NMR Number: NZ 01 NE 27). It consists of a rectilinear hollow, 6.8m by 3.5m and 0.8m deep, cut into rising ground. Its long sides are flanked by up-cast while its narrow eastern end has not been closed with a scarp and is thus open. Scarps immediately above it and partly forming its western end define a short bank, 0.5m high, which seems to be roughly on line with one of the banks which bound the east side of the near-by eastern enclosure. It is just possible that the hollow, especially given its position in relation to the topography, could be the remains of a corn-drying kiln of unknown date or even the remnants of a former building.

#### 5.2.5 The ridge and furrow cultivation

Two parcels of ridge-and-furrow cultivation are situated between the enclosures and a track at the rear of the terrace to the south. On average individual ridges are 4m wide and survive to a maximum height of 0.4m. The eastern parcel seems to be the

earliest and the ridges are orientated north-north-east to south-south-west, with the ends of some apparently truncated by - and therefore earlier than - the eastern enclosure. In addition, the westernmost surviving ridge appears to have formed the headland for the second parcel indicating that the latter is also of later date. The ridges of this western parcel have a west-north-west to east-south-east orientation and are parallel to the southern limits of the three enclosures; perhaps these two classes of monuments are contemporary with one another. However, some of the ploughing may impinge on the enclosures suggesting either a later date for the ridges or that they remained in use after the enclosures ceased to have a function.

A headland is visible on top of the steep, natural scarp that rises above the terrace at the southern end of the field. It is set slightly back from the edge of the slope and is now separated from its attendant ridge-and-furrow by the wall which forms the southern boundary of the field; the wall is therefore of a much later date than this ploughing. The ridges are remarkably well preserved on the valley side in the adjoining field to the south. Their courses exhibit a pronounced reverse 'S' plan with individual ridges measuring about 4m to 5m across. The field wall incorporates a lot of re-used masonry from the abbey and was built, therefore, after the Dissolution and at a time when the abbey (and presumably its attendant structures) was being robbed for stone. A waterlogged platform interrupts the face of the natural scarp to the east near the visible end of the headland. It is unlikely to be an archaeological feature and has probably developed around a spring.

#### 5.2.6 The three tracks

These are located at the southern end of the field. Two ascend at an angle the steep, natural slope near the farmstead and clearly developed as access was required between the farm and its fields on the valley side. The third track consists of a broad terrace, up to 1.8m high, and lies at the foot of the steep scarp. Its outer face is crossed by a water main that was installed, possibly in the 1960s; the course of the trench is still visible in a number of places as a shallow linear feature. The track now provides access to fields further east but it is such a prominent earthwork that it may once have been more than just a farm track.

### 5.3 The earthworks in the field south-east of Abbey Mill House

This field lies on the southern side of Abbey Lane and on the west abuts the field situated immediately south of the Abbey ruins (section 5.2 above). The earthworks comprise tracks, the site of a possible former building and ridge-and-furrow cultivation.

#### 5.3.1 The tracks

The face of the terrace at the northern end of the field is interrupted by a terraced track some 3m wide; its back scarp, where the natural slope on the south has been cut into, is 1m high. On the west it fades out before reaching the remains of a possible building. The latter seems to just impinge on the projected course of the track westwards, suggesting that the possible building is the later feature. The track may be an earlier route of Abbey Lane because, just outside the survey area on the east, the latter now changes direction slightly and its course follows the bottom of the northern face of the terrace, however, the line of the lane approaching this bend from the east is continued to the west by the track.

Near the site of the possible building the track may once have turned into the hollow-way that forms a prominent earthwork near the western boundary of the field. The scarp that forms the western side of this earthwork has already been described (section 5.2.1 above - the possible fourth enclosure). The hollow-way measures 8.4m across (maximum) and 2m deep; its flat bottom is 2.7m wide. Many stones are visible in its sides, especially where disturbed by cattle poaching. Its eastern lip is followed by a bank, which stands 0.4m above the bottom of a ditch that fronts it on the east. The bank is probably a former field boundary which, judging from the amount of stone visible, was likely to have been a wall. The ditch is 2.8m across and may have been a drain following the probable wall. A second bank, 0.3m high, follows the eastern lip of the ditch and could be upcast from periodic refurbishment of the latter. All these earthworks extend south-south-west for about 60m and then fade. Beyond this point later ploughing has levelled them. A linear depression with slightly splayed ends, about 40m long and 7m wide on average, descends the steep natural slope at the southern end of the field close to the south-western corner. It is heading in the direction of the end of the hollow-way described above but, in its present form, it looks more like a former streambed. It has been partially filled in with dumped material and fades out at the foot of the slope due to plough damage. If the streams on the side of the valley opposite the abbey were once evenly spaced, a former stream at this location would make sense. It is possible that the hollow-way has utilised part of the lower course of the stream after it had become redundant.

The southern part of the field, near the foot of the steep natural slope, is crossed by a track, which enters from the field abutting to the west, where it is on a marked terrace (section 5.2.6 above). Near the eastern boundary, it starts to ascend the natural slope and crosses a stream (which has cut a deep bed for itself) via a small, stone bridge, and leads into an adjoining field. The bridge, probably of nineteenth-century origin, is about 2m high and has rather fine block-like coping stones that are in a ruinous condition. The stream follows the field boundary northwards and on reaching the terrace is carried forward on top of a low embankment.

### 5.3.2 The site of a possible building

The earthwork of this possible structure is situated near the north-western corner of the field at NZ 0635 1504. It has been terraced into the face of the natural slope below the edge of the terrace, and consists of a shallow oblong depression of slightly 'L'-shaped plan; maximum dimensions are 12m (east to west) by 7.5m and 0.4m deep. A short, linear depression below it on the north is up to 0.4m deep and may be the remains of a track, which served it and gave access from the valley floor. The relationship of the possible building to an adjacent track and hollow-way (section 5.3.1 above), that appear to be overlain or blocked by it, suggests that they are earlier features. Perhaps it was the site of an outbuilding belonging to the settlement on the opposite side of Abbey Lane.

### 5.3.3 The ridge-and-furrow cultivation

A plough headland follows the edge of the terrace in the northern part of the field and is one end of a parcel of ridge-and-furrow that extends south to the foot of the steep natural scarp. In some parts of the field much later ploughing has destroyed the evidence for this cultivation but where they are still relatively well-preserved, the ridges are about 0.5m high and a maximum of 5m wide. The route of the water main (see section 5.2.6 above) across the southern end of the parcel is marked by a narrow bank-like feature of back-fill. Land for ploughing was clearly at a premium in this

area because even parts of the natural scarp at the southern end of the field have been ploughed where the terrain is less steep. This has produced at least one good strip lynchet near the south-west corner of the field; its tread is about 4.7m wide and the riser, 1.2m high. A drain-like feature crosses the natural slope east of this former cultivation.

## **5.4 The earthworks in the paddock immediately west of Abbey Farm**

These comprise principally a long scarp, a probable pond, ridge-and-furrow, and scarps and wall footings near the western and southern boundaries of the paddock. The southern end of the paddock is crossed by a modern water main.

### **5.4.1 The long scarp**

A long, east-facing scarp with a north-north-east to south-south-west orientation divides the paddock into two unequal parts. It has a maximum height of 0.6m and may be following the side of an earlier plough ridge. A low bank represents its southern end and a shallow ditch survives in its central section; the overall width here is about 4.5m. Its course diverges slightly from that of the near-by field wall to the west and it is probably earlier in date than the latter. It may have been a former boundary with the ditch helping to drain the waterlogged area at the foot of the natural slope to the south. The space between the scarp and the farm buildings contains a few slight scarps. Of these, the one to the north appears to relate to an outbuilding marked by the OS at NZ 0610 1508 (OS 1974) but since demolished.

### **5.4.2 The probable pond**

This is situated at about NZ 0607 1503 in a naturally waterlogged area near the southern wall of the field, immediately east of the long scarp. It consists of a rectangular platform with a slightly hollowed interior cut into the foot of the natural slope that rises above it to the south. The scarp, which forms the rear of the platform, is 0.6m high and the one at the front is 0.4m high. The long scarp may have formed its western side - if this is correct then this feature could have measured about 12.5m by 7m. Its form is reminiscent of that of a small farm pond that has not been maintained and has almost completely filled up with silt.

### **5.4.3 The ridge-and-furrow cultivation**

A pair of furrows, about 0.2m deep with a flattened ridge between them, shows that the land, which now constitutes the western part of the paddock, was once ploughed. Ridge-and-furrow is also visible in the adjoining field on the west, however, its orientation is slightly different indicating that at least two phases of ridge-and-furrow cultivation are present. A likely scenario is that the original western boundary of the paddock (section 5.4.4 below) was established, in part at least, on land that had formerly been cultivated. Subsequent ploughing of the hillside beyond took account of these revised arrangements, hence the difference in orientation.

### **5.4.4 The scarps and footings near the boundary walls of the paddock**

It has been suggested that elements of the precinct wall may survive in some of the existing field walls, especially west of the abbey gatehouse (section 4 above). The

present survey indicates that this is unlikely for those bounding the paddock; they seem now to be largely the result of later rebuilding or major refurbishment.

The southern wall is about 1.2m wide and is situated near the foot of the steep natural slope. The latter partly accounts for the marked scarp down from the base of the wall on its northern side. The present wall may have been substantially refurbished or rebuilt because traces of wall footings (too small to record at 1:2500 scale) are visible, at irregular intervals, in front of it on the north. The footings of the existing wall consist of erratic boulders that look like the products of agricultural field clearance. The coursed rubble above them contains little evidence of medieval masonry having been re-used.

The wall on the west is just over 1m wide at its southern end but narrows to 0.7m at the north. It also appears to have been rebuilt because - near its southern end - a line of small boulders just protrude through the turf about 1.3m in front of its eastern face. They are probably the remnants of an earlier course of the wall whose route further north is almost certainly continued by a scarp, 0.4m high, which diverges slightly from the present wall and seems to be following the orientation of the ridge-and-furrow to the east.

## 5.5 The track leading south-west from Abbey Farm

It has been suggested that the broad farm track, which now provides access between the farm and its fields on the south-west, may originally have been the formal approach to the abbey from Boldron with a fork, just south of the gatehouse, providing a route to Rokeby. The track now passes through the farmyard on the eastern side of the site of the abbey gatehouse but may once have led directly to it (Turnbull and Walsh 2000). For the sake of clarity the track and associated features will be described under two sections - the area outside the farmyard gate, and the main part of the track as far as the north-east corner of Holly Lane Plantation.

### 5.5.1 The area outside the farmyard gate



*Figure 8.  
The bridge crossing  
the stream south  
of the farmstead.*

Immediately outside the gate the present track passes along the western side of an almost square enclosed area or thoroughfare with slopes descending into it on the east and south. A minor track serves a field at the southernmost corner of this area. Just inside the field, at NZ 0614 1495, a stone bridge (NMR Number: NZ 01 NE 49), possibly of nineteenth century date, carries the track over a stream which flows down the valley side south-west to north-east (Fig 8). Below the bridge and north of the area under discussion, the course of the stream follows the eastern side of the farmyard - where clearly it has been canalised - beyond which it turns through ninety degrees to flow along the bottom of the ha-ha south of the abbey ruins (section 5.2.2 above).

### 5.5.2 The main part of the track

On leaving the thoroughfare the course of the track swings to the west, passes the northern end of Holly Lane Plantation, and leads into a field (section 5.8 below). A well-defined scarp, up to 2.6m high, edges much of its southern side. The scarp probably owes some of its height to the build up of plough soil in the lower end of the adjoining field. Stone walling is visible in its face in at least one place towards its eastern end; drains flank both sides of the track in this area. The scarp on the northern side of the track is less distinct; at best it is 1.5m high towards the farm and about 0.6m high or less elsewhere. Where it is present it combines with the southern scarp to produce a feature which is reminiscent of a hollow-way, 16m wide. Some stone, possibly remnants of walling, is present in the face of the northern scarp near its eastern end.

## 5.6 The earthworks in the field south-west of Abbey Farm

This field lies between the paddock immediately west of Abbey Farm (section 5.4 above) and the track leading south-west from the farmyard (section 5.5 above). The northern boundary follows the edge of the terrace and the western boundary is on the east lip of a gorge-like little stream valley. The north-east part of the field is crossed by a watermain. Earthworks present include two ponds, scarps near the field's southern boundary and evidence of ridge-and-furrow cultivation.

### 5.6.1 The two ponds

These are some 70m apart and are located at the southern end of the field. The eastern pond at NZ 0609 1499 has been dug into the natural slope above the farmstead and still holds water. It is rectangular in plan, measures 19m by a maximum of 14m, and is fringed by prominent banks of upcast on the north, east and south. The one to the north may originally have helped to impound the water and stands about 1.3m above the current water level; its northern face is 2m high. A large ash tree of some antiquity grows on the southern bank. The area occupied by the pond seems to be largely enclosed by scarps which at the west define a bank at least 0.7m high. The bank is breached at its south-west end, possibly due to later damage. The pond was probably dug when the farmstead was created in order to supply the latter with water. The OS were, therefore, correct in labelling it *Old Reservoir* (OS 1893); it is now a beast pond. The bank on the west indicates that the pond was originally 'fenced off' from the rest of the field, perhaps to prevent farm animals fouling the water; the OS showed a field boundary at this location on the County Series map which was revised in 1912 (OS 1914).

The western pond at NZ 0601 1497 has fallen out of use and is largely silted up although water still gathers in its bottom during prolonged wet weather. It is roughly rectangular in plan, measures 15m by 9m and about 0.9m deep, and is probably a former beast pond. A bank of upcast, whose north face is approximately 0.6m high, survives on the northern side of the pond; there is also some upcast on the south along the field boundary. The bank, like a number of other features in this part of the field, has a smoothed appearance suggesting that later ploughing has spread it.

### 5.6.2 The scarps near the southern boundary of the field

A small number of intermittent linear scarps have a sinuous east to west route across the southern end of the field close to the boundary; the latter is not parallel to them. For the most part they consist of narrow, north-facing scarps which at best are 0.4m to 0.9m high; in a couple of places low, south-facing scarps also occur in front of them producing short and very shallow linear depressions. These earthworks appear to be relatively early features; the western pond cuts them and the bank (former field boundary) that enclosed the eastern pond on the west - despite being breached where they meet - seems to just impinge on their course. They may be remnants of an old plough headland or be a much earlier (and possibly medieval) version of the existing track to the south (section 5.5 above). However, it might also be of significance that they seem to continue the line eastwards of a massive, former watercourse which is present in the adjoining field to the west (section 5.8.3 below). It is just possible that the feature which they represent was once part of this channel and that it carried water destined for the abbey. But, if this is correct, it is surprising that what must originally have been a very substantial and deep construction is now so poorly represented on the ground.

### 5.6.3 The ridge-and-furrow cultivation

Remnants of ridge-and-furrow are visible in the rest of the field north of the linear scarps. The course of southern headland is just discernible in front of these scarps and the northern headland also survives at the other end of the field. The ridges have been largely levelled by much later ploughing and where they survive the furrows are generally no more than 0.3m deep and are spaced about 4.2m to 6.3m apart.

## 5.7 Holly Lane Plantation

This long, narrow belt of trees is situated on the southern side of the track that approaches the farm and abbey from the south-west (section 5.5 above); it comprises a mixture of deciduous and evergreen (holly and yew) trees with areas of scrub. The plantation was still quite overgrown and leafy at the time of the survey as a result of the very mild and wet autumn. In addition, the survey coincided with several pheasant shoots which were focused on the wood. It was thus not a practical or safe proposition to investigate and record this area - the following paragraph is based on rapid visual reconnaissance of the northern end of the plantation.

The principal earthworks appear to be linear banks and at least one ditch, probably a former water channel. They seem to be related to the two streams, that are shown on OS maps and which follow the principal axis of the wood (OS, 1893; 1975). The streams now merge just beyond the northern boundary of the plantation to form a single watercourse, which flows into Thorsgill Beck about 175m further north.

## 5.8 The earthworks in the field situated west and north-west of Holly Lane Plantation (Fig 9)

Streams bound this field along the whole of its western side and on the east, north of the plantation. Their courses become deep and gorge-like as they proceed in a northerly direction down the valley side towards Thorsgill Beck. Most of the earthworks, with the exception of some of the ridge-and-furrow, lie in a broad east to west band just north of the central part of the field. It has been suggested that they are the remains of the Abbey's demesne farm (Turnbull and Walsh 2000); the present survey has not substantiated this possibility. The earthworks comprise a number of tracks at the east and a small field to the west. On the north the most substantial of two former watercourses borders the area occupied by the tracks and a possible pond is also present. Remains of ridge-and-furrow cultivation survive beyond these earthworks in the northern and southern parts of the field.

### 5.8.1 The tracks

The remnants of at least four tracks cross the field in an east to west direction. The latest is the present tractor track (Track 4), which continues the course westwards of the farm track described above in Section 5.5.2. It enters the field on the east - just beyond the northern end of Holly Lane Plantation - and crosses on a causeway the stream that flows northwards from the plantation. The north side of the causeway is revetted to a height of 0.65m with boulders and crudely coursed rubble. The stones do not resemble, certainly in the muddy conditions that pertained at the time of the survey, the voussoirs of a small bridge as was suggested by Turnbull and Walsh (2000). The track crosses the remnants of the small field (section 5.8.2 below) whose site had clearly long since ceased to have any significance.

The other three tracks are situated on the southern side of the present track and are represented by a combination of terracing and hollow-ways; they are generally about 3m to 5m in width with hollowed sections measuring 0.4m to 0.6m deep. The earliest track (Track 1) is probably the middle one which now commences near the boundary of the plantation at approximately NZ 0596 1496, extends west for 30m and then changes direction to head south-south-west. This route takes it towards and around the south-east corner of the small field; the track therefore appears to respect the latter.

Returning to the eastern end of these earthworks, the earliest track appears to have been succeeded by the southernmost member of this group (Track 2) that lies on the northern side of a plough headland. The space separating it from the earliest track is crossed by a prominent north-facing east to west scarp, 0.7m high, which could be a limit of earlier ploughing, perhaps contemporary with the earliest track. The second phase track also seems to respect the small field. It leads towards the latter's south-east corner, where it appears to overlie the earliest track at about NZ 0590 1495. From the field corner it continues for 100m in a westerly direction to NZ 0579 1495 along and immediately in front of the bank which forms the southern boundary of this field. Here it is ditch-like measuring 3m wide and up to 0.5m deep. A substantial plough headland, 5.5m across and about 0.5m high, follows the southern lip of this feature.

The third track (Track 3) lies between the earliest track and the present track. It is now in a very fragmentary condition. In one place this is because it is surmounted by a cattle feeding trough and the land around it has become a churned up quagmire. Its

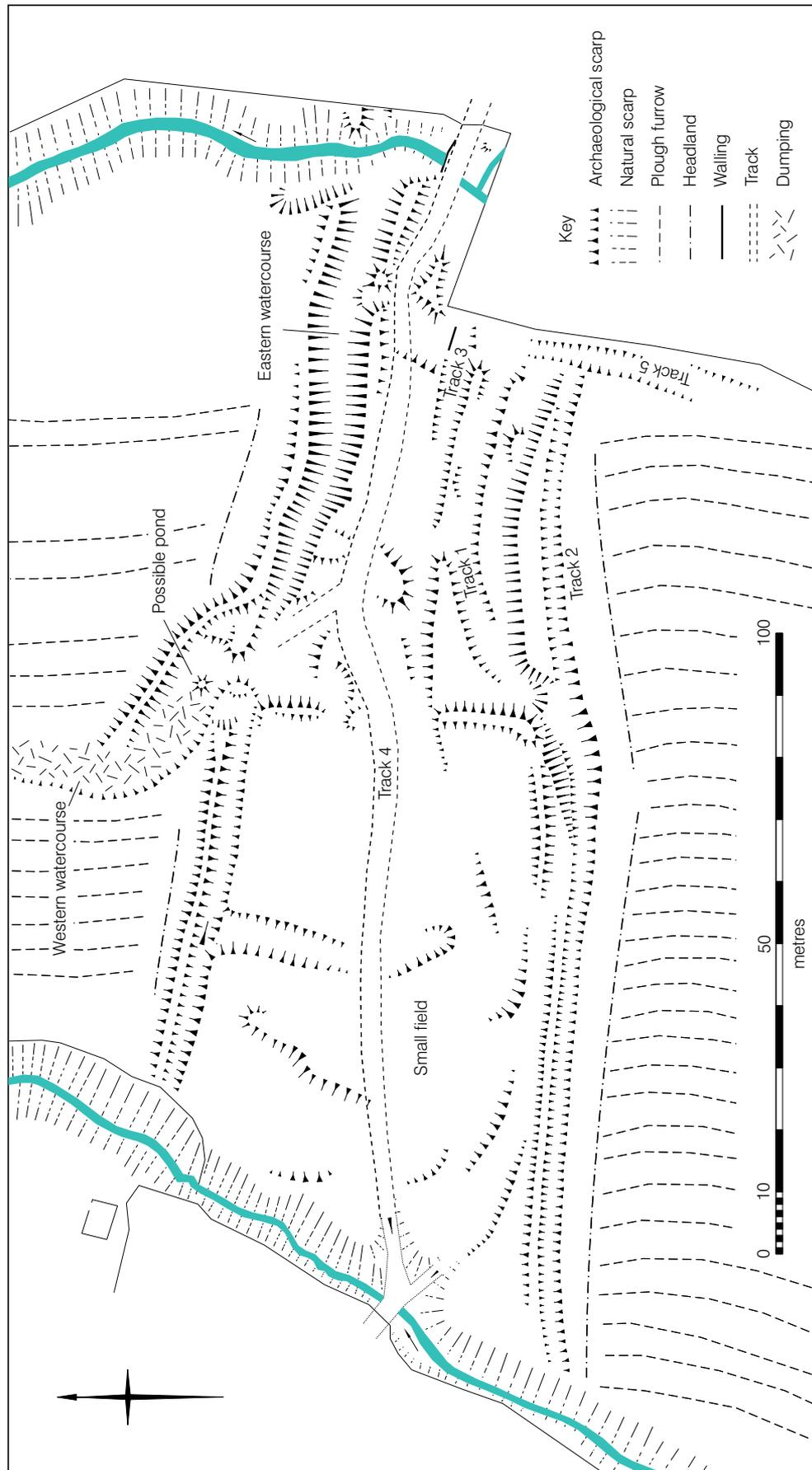


Figure 9. Annotated 1:1000 scale window showing the principle areas of earthworks in the field situated west and south-west of Holly Lane Plantation.

course shows no respect for the small field and slight scarps indicate its route across the south-eastern interior of the latter.

The above look very much like a succession of tracks where as one became redundant, due perhaps to becoming too muddy and rutted or to changes in local field and cultivation patterns, it was replaced by a new track on a slightly different route. They are perhaps not what one would expect the remains of a formal way leading to an abbey gatehouse to look like and are more reminiscent of agricultural tracks. It also seems unlikely that a major way would have had to negotiate and take account of the small field as is demonstrated by the courses of the two earlier tracks. Although these earthworks may be on the site of the former road to the abbey gatehouse, their present form and arrangement suggests a post-Dissolution date.

A short, north to south hollow-way (Track 5), about 4m wide and up to 0.7m deep, is centred at NZ 0595 1493 near the boundary with Holly Lane Plantation. It is almost certainly a relatively late farm track providing access between the present farm track and the southern part of the field. Other features in this area include an irregular mound - probably consisting of dumped material - situated immediately beyond the north-west corner of the plantation, and a 4m length of boulder walling, 0.5m wide, about 5m west of the corner.

### 5.8.2 The small field

This is centred west of the tracks at NZ 0585 1497. It is rectilinear in plan although its northern side is shorter than its southern one; maximum dimensions are 100m by 60m. The southern boundary consists of a rather battered, low bank fronted by the ditch-like feature that appears to be the continuation westwards of at least one of the tracks described above in section 5.8.1. A stream bounds it on the west whereas a ditch with an external field bank defines its northern perimeter. The ditch is clearly a former water channel and is about 4.7m across and 0.7m deep (south side); the ditch becomes deeper east of the point where it is joined at ninety degrees by a broad hollow that crosses the northern part of the interior of the small field. The bank rises 1m above the ditch on the north and stone protrudes in places through its northern face. The maximum overall width of the ditch and bank is 7m. The eastern boundary consists of a bank whose course is now intermittent as a result of having been crossed and destroyed in places by the later tracks. At best it is about 5m wide and 1m high.

The interior may have been ploughed judging by its smoothed appearance. Slight scarps crossing its south-western corner have been created by later access to the present stream crossing. The broad hollow referred to in the previous paragraph is up to 6m wide and 0.4m deep. It may be the remnants of a sub-division or, more likely, drained a former waterlogged area.

### 5.8.3 The two watercourses

The eastern watercourse is of massive proportions and lies north of the present tractor track (Fig 10). It commences on the west bank of the stream, which follows the eastern boundary of the field, and extends along a slightly sinuous course for some 80m into the field in a westerly direction. The principal component is a ditch, about 10m wide at its eastern end but narrowing to 5m at the west and up to 1.9m deep, which is embanked on both sides. At its eastern end water seeps out of its base into the stream, suggesting that there may be the pipe of a later land drain buried in its bottom. The south face of the southern bank is 0.9m high; the bank does not extend



*Figure 10.  
The eastern  
watercourse  
looking west.*

for the full length of the ditch. The northern bank, which appears to be a former field boundary, is much lower with its north face only 0.3m high. Three old holly bushes - possibly the remnants of a hedge - are growing on it. To the west, the bank diverges from the ditch to partially enclose the possible pond. In this area it is about 0.5m high and may have been enhanced with spoil from the construction or subsequent cleaning out of the possible pond. The maximum width of the ditch and its attendant banks is 16m.

The ditch continues in an easterly direction the course of the water channel, which lies along the northern edge of the small field described in section 5.8.2 above. The possible pond is located on the north side of the gap that now separates them. The evidence from aerial photographs indicates that these two features were once linked and formed a single watercourse (NMR Air Photos Library: Numbers RXB 3403/18A and 21A, 29-Dec-1985). It may have helped drain the hillside or even carried water between the western and eastern streams. The line of the eastern watercourse is continued even further east by the slight scarps at the southern end of the adjoining field. These are described above in section 5.6.2 where the possibility was put forward that they might represent the continuation of a channel, which once brought water to the abbey.

The western watercourse starts at the north-west end of the possible pond at NZ 0589 1501 and quickly adopts a northerly course down the hillside to join the stream, which follows the western boundary of the field, at NZ 0590 1509. Much of this feature has recently been filled in with earth and stone rubble - probably from the site of the medieval gatehouse during the construction of a new farm building (section 1 above) - although its northern end is still well preserved. Here it is between 6m and 10m in width. This feature is reminiscent of the deep beds that the streams in this area have cut out for themselves in the boulder clay. Perhaps some of the water, which has helped to shape this feature, came from former springs on the hillside, which have since been controlled by land drains. Water may also have drained into it from the channel at the edge of the small field after it and the western watercourse had ceased to function as a single entity.

#### 5.8.4 The possible pond

A former beast pond may be represented by a rectangular depression at NZ 0590 1501 whose western end has recently been filled in with earth and stone rubble. Originally it may have measured about 21m by 9m. It could, however, be simply the remnants of the former east end of the western channel (section 5.8.3 above) with the present pond-like appearance being the result of partial infilling.

#### 5.8.5 The ridge-and-furrow cultivation

Ridge-and-furrow, arranged in two parcels, is present in the northern part of the existing field beyond the earthworks of the eastern watercourse, the possible pond and the northern boundary of the small field. The parcels are separated by the western watercourse, their headlands respect the earthworks to the south while the northern headland of the western parcel takes account of the massive bend in the stream in this area. This suggests that features such as the watercourses were already well-established in the landscape when the ploughing took place. Indeed they could be seen to be defining and draining small, irregular former plots that are a characteristic feature of the land allotment west of the abbey on the lower slopes of the valley. The ridges of the eastern parcel have been almost flattened by later ploughing and are now only about 0.3m high with furrows spaced 4m to 6m apart. The ridges in the western parcel are some 0.4m high and about 4.4m across.

In comparison the ridge and furrow, which occupies the southern part of the field beyond the tracks, is well preserved. The ridges are about 0.5m high and the furrows are spaced 3.7m to 8m apart; their courses are like a reversed 'S'. Later drains cross the central and eastern parts of this former cultivation.

### 5.9 The domestic and farm buildings

The buildings were not recorded as part of this survey. However, it has been suggested that the farmhouse may incorporate *in situ* monastic masonry (Graham and Baillie Reynolds 1958, 24) and with this in mind it was considered that the inclusion of a basic assessment of the domestic and farm buildings might be helpful. Working photographs of their exteriors were taken, together with views of the interiors of the two principal stone farm buildings in order to show roof construction details. Dr P S Barnwell (English Heritage, Architectural Investigation) has examined these images and the following paragraph contains his observations.

The farm is probably a planned farmstead of c.1820-1840 with a few later additions; it is just possible that the row of stone cottages at NZ 0612 1509 are slightly later in date than the stone farmhouse at NZ 0612 1507. The northernmost cottage (NZ 0614 1512) is detached but also appears to have its origins in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Of the two principal stone farm buildings, the southern one at NZ 0615 1504 possibly began as a single story cattle shelter which was heightened in c. 1840-1860 to become a cattle shelter with a granary above. The western building, NZ 0614 1506, appears to be a barn with slit vents, with a probable stable at its north end and hayloft above. Blocked doorways indicate that the building has been altered, perhaps the hayloft replaced an earlier granary. The low building at NZ 0613 1506, south east of the farmhouse, is a possible byre and nag stable. There is no evidence for the re-use of monastic structures. The site of the former gatehouse, at about NZ 0614 1503, lies under a new building erected for cattle.

## 6. Discussion

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A major consideration to emerge from the survey is that the terrace and the land above it have been heavily ploughed, probably from the medieval period until relatively recent times. Apart from the area occupied by the abbey ruins, almost the whole of the locality contains evidence of ridge-and-furrow cultivation but in many fields much later ploughing has largely levelled even this. The result of this long and sustained phase of arable is that the non-cultivation earthworks that survive are, on occasions, incomplete and tend to form isolated groups with any linking remains having been destroyed. Although the elements which constitute these groups are still of interest in their own right, it makes it difficult to establish relationships and to obtain an overall picture of what the area surrounding the abbey was like and how it functioned, especially during the medieval and early post-medieval period. Bearing these limitations in mind, an attempt will now be made to explore what appear to be the three principal phases of activity on the site and to try to relate some of the features to them.

### 6.1 The monastic landscape

#### 6.1.1 Buildings

The survey has demonstrated that the abbey church and claustral range are so close to the edge of the terrace and steep drop down to the floodplain, that there may have been insufficient space on the north and east for some of the missing buildings such as the infirmary. A number of the features visible on the west, immediately beyond the perimeter fence, which encloses the abbey ruins, may indicate their site (section 5.1.2 above). It is also possible that there were structures on the southern side of the abbey church extending into the area now occupied by the northern part of the field to the south. At Easby Abbey, Richmond, North Yorkshire buildings were present on both sides of the abbey church; the infirmary to the north and the claustral range on the south (Hamilton Thompson 1936, plan). It might be, however, that due to continual poverty (section 3 above) the canons could not afford the normal complement of buildings.

#### 6.1.2 The water supply for the abbey

It is generally assumed that water was brought to the drain of the rere-dorter from Thorsgill Beck to the west (Graham and Baillie Reynolds 1958, 16). No evidence for a water channel approaching the abbey ruins from this direction has been found within the survey area. In view of the substantial difference in height between the terrace and the floodplain, the beck would need to have been tapped a considerable distance up its valley necessitating a very long channel to convey the water to the abbey. It is much more likely that the water came from a much closer and more accessible source. The probable candidate is the stream which approaches the abbey ruins from the south-west, passes between the present farm buildings on their eastern side and is now diverted into the ha-ha in front of the abbey (section 5.5.1 above). During the monastic phase the stream may have been led around the north-west corner of the cloister and into the drain. It has been suggested above (section 5.1.2.2) that the linear hollow near the corner of the cloister is the remains of this watercourse. According to some of the local inhabitants the stream never dries up and emanates from a particularly strong spring some 2 miles away. At Jervaulx Abbey, North Yorkshire the water was similarly supplied not from the principal river

near the abbey but in this instance from springs at the end of a small valley above the abbey which was dammed to create a reservoir (Jecock 1999, 19). It is just possible that the supply to Egglestone was also augmented with water brought to the site from the west-south-west. Two fields on the valley side near Holly Lane Plantation contain earthworks that might once have been linked to form a long water channel (sections 5.6.2 and 5.8.3 above).

### 6.1.3 The monastic fishponds

Prior to the survey nothing was known about the possible location of the abbey's fishponds. Definite and probable ponds have now been recorded south-west and west of Abbey Farm; however, these appear to be beast ponds and a reservoir of post-medieval origin (sections 5.4.2, 5.6.1 and 5.8.4 above). The possibility has been raised above (section 5.2.1 - the western enclosure) that a linear depression in the field immediately south of the abbey ruins might be the remnants of a former fishpond. This earthwork is near the western boundary of the field and the stream that, in addition to supplying the abbey, could also have served this feature.

### 6.1.4 The precinct boundary (Fig 11)

This has proved to be a most elusive feature to try and locate but the examination of the topographical setting of the abbey has suggested that the precinct was largely coterminous with the terrace (section 2 above). On the latter there are a number of possible locations for it.

During the initial reconnaissance visit to the site it appeared that the most likely course for the precinct boundary on the east was along or just outside the eastern boundary of the field that is immediately south of the abbey (possible course 1). On reaching the foot of the steep, natural slope it seemed logical for the precinct boundary to have changed direction and to have followed the base of the slope along a westerly course, an area now occupied by a track on a marked terrace (section 5.2.6 above). Its course appeared to be continued around the abbey by the southern and western boundaries of the paddock west of Abbey Farm. This now seems an unlikely location because the gatehouse is set well back from the postulated southern boundary of the precinct while the existing walls of the paddock appear to be largely the result of later rebuilding or refurbishment. Indeed the probable remains of the paddock's original western boundary, represented by a boulder line and scarp, seems to have been built on top of earlier ridge-and-furrow (sections 5.4.3 and 5.4.4 above). It is more likely that the boundary is a relatively late feature rather than the ridge-and-furrow having a pre-monastic origin.

As a result of the survey two other possible locations have appeared, each apparently possessing equal validity and supporting Coppack's assertion that the precinct was small (Coppack 1990, 148). The first option (possible course 2) is for a very small precinct situated entirely on the terrace with the abbey church and claustral range occupying its north-east quadrant. Its boundaries on the south-east and south may have determined the limits in this area of the three enclosures in the field immediately south of the abbey (section 5.2.1 above). If this is correct it might account for at least one of the two banks that survive along part of the east side of the eastern enclosure; the exact course of the southern boundary may have been encroached upon by ridge-and-furrow. On the west the linear arrangement and alignment of the farmhouse and cottages may be a reflection of its former course in this area. The edge of the terrace could have been followed on the north and north-east.

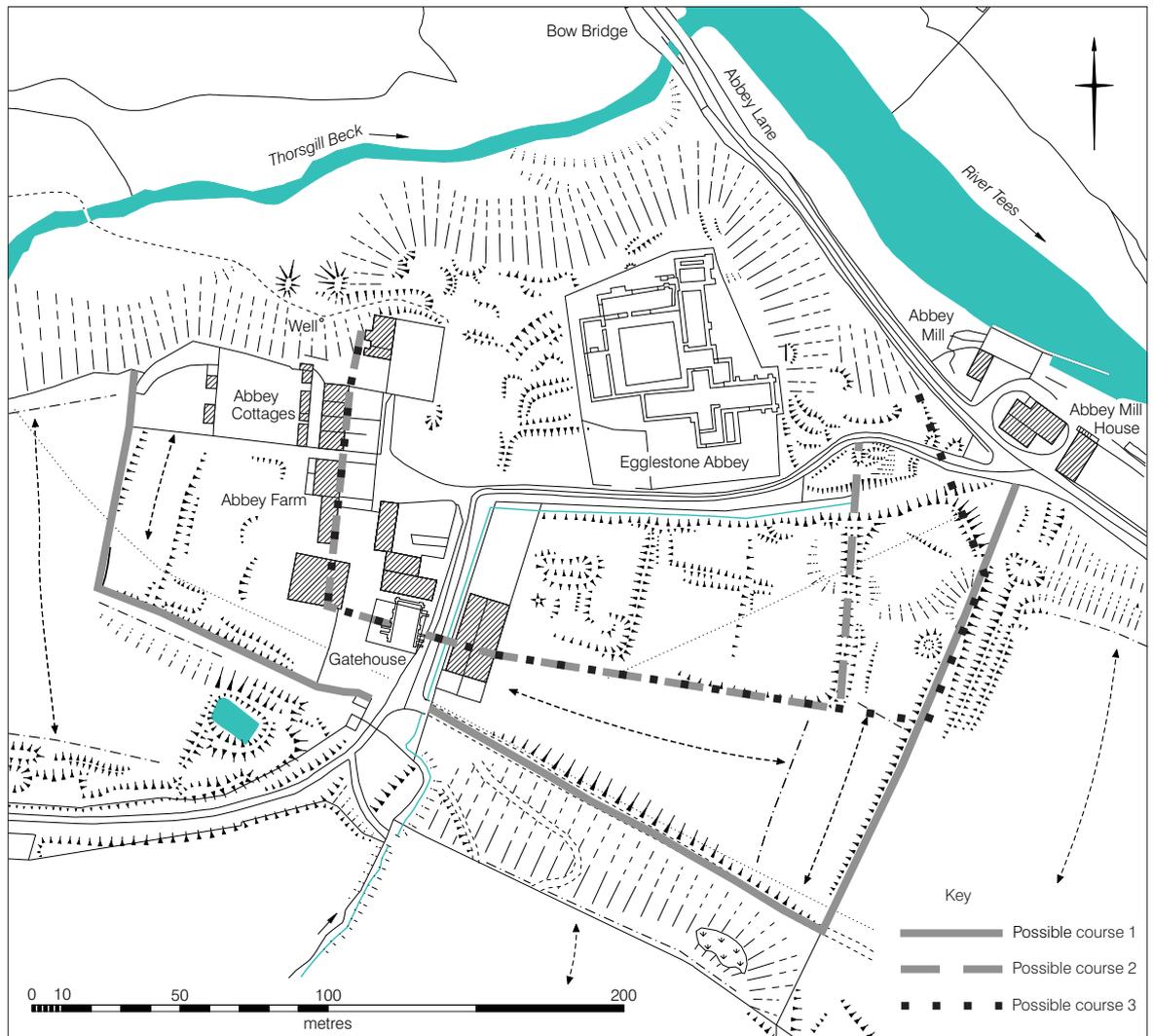


Figure 11. Possible locations for the precinct boundary to the west, south and east of the abbey (plan of gatehouse from Turnbull and Walsh (2000, Fig 1) with field boundaries, buildings etc. based on the OS 1:2500 mapping).

In the second option (possible course 3) the western and much of the southern boundary is the same as in the first option except that this last boundary may have continued eastwards beyond the eastern enclosure. It could have changed direction to head north-north-east just inside the field south-east of Abbey Mill House. In this field it may survive as the stony scarp that defines the western side of a hollow-way near the western field boundary (section 5.3.1). Beyond the end of the hollow-way its former course towards the floodplain and the River Tees may be represented by the bank with the steep front scarp that crosses the north-east corner of the field lying immediately south of the abbey ruins (section 5.2.1 - the possible fourth enclosure). It is unclear if the northern boundary followed the edge of the terrace or the Thorsgill Beck. This slightly larger precinct would have provided the abbey with a more central position within the precinct and, on the east, would have skirted the industrial elements - Abbey Mill and Abbey Quarry (sections 1 and 2 above), which would have lain just outside it.

### 6.1.5 The roads serving the abbey

The existing farm track leading south-west from Abbey Farm (section 5.5) may indeed be on or close to an original formal approach to the abbey gatehouse from the west. The broad funnel-like space, bordered by ridge-and-furrow, in the field beyond Holly Lane Plantation could also be part of this formal approach; the former tracks and small field which occupy it could be related to post-Dissolution agriculture rather than to the monastic landscape (section 5.8.1 above). Unlike Jervaulx Abbey, where the positions of at least three gatehouses have been inferred (Jecock 1999, 39), there is no obvious field evidence for more than one gatehouse at Egglestone. If this is a genuine reflection of the original arrangements here, then access routes from the north (Barnard Castle) and east must have been brought around the outside of the precinct to the gatehouse recently discovered. In this respect it is possible that the terraced track and hollow-way in the northern part of the field, south-east of Abbey Mill House (section 5.3.1 above) are of relevance.

## 6.2 The early post-Dissolution landscape

Around the middle of the sixteenth century the buildings on the northern side of the abbey church were converted into a substantial mansion (section 3 above). The quality of the surviving architectural components indicates that this must have been an imposing and impressive building. On the north and north-east its position above the steep face of the terrace would have provided it with a dramatic and commanding location. One would also expect a house of this magnitude to have been set within formal gardens which could be the explanation for the rectilinear enclosures situated in the field immediately south of the abbey church (section 5.2.1 above). These may be former garden compartments; it is possible that the westernmost element originally extended into the area on the western side of the abbey ruins, beyond the present farm road (section 5.1.2.1 above). They appear to have been subject to later cultivation that may be the reason for the relative dearth of internal features. The ruins of the abbey church could also have formed a romantic eye-catching element within this ornamental setting for the mansion. It is possible that the road pattern established for the monastery also served the house. However, it may be significant that the present farm track that crosses the southern end of the field south-east of Abbey Mill House and ascends the natural slope (section 5.3.1 above) provides an approach from the east, which now affords good views of the ruins. One wonders, therefore, if the house was also once approached from this direction.

An alternative view for the origin of the enclosures south of the abbey church has also been put forward above (section 5.2.1), where it was suggested that they might have an agricultural function dating perhaps to the time when the mansion had been converted into dwellings for labourers. This may also be the context for the hollow-way that descends the face of the terrace behind Abbey Cottages (section 5.1.2.3); it is so close to the abbey and later mansion that it is difficult to envisage it having early origins. It is possible that some of the ploughing which is visible close to the abbey and later house also belongs to this time.

## 6.3 The later landscape

Another major phase of activity on the site probably dates to after 1770 when the Morritt family purchased Egglestone (section 3 above). A major focus for this phase seems to have been the first part of the nineteenth century when the farmstead was

created (section 5.9 above). This must have represented a considerable investment in the estate and is probably part of a general re-ordering and tidying up of the landscape, which has emerged from the analysis of the archaeology. Field boundaries also appear to have been built or at least refurbished during this phase and a reservoir dug to supply the new farmstead with water. Access to the fields also seems to have been improved with the provision of bridges across the streams. There may also have been less dependence in some areas on arable with beast ponds being dug in newly created pasture fields to provide drinking water for farm animals. The present road to the farm may also have been made at this time together with the ha-ha built along the northern boundary of the field immediately south of the abbey. A ha-ha belonging to the nineteenth century similarly bounds Jervaulx Abbey, North Yorkshire; this one was created in 1809 to prevent visitors removing medieval floor tiles (Jecock 1999, 30). Sometime during or after the 1840s the post-Dissolution house was completely abandoned for habitation - perhaps this function was transferred to the new cottages north of the farmhouse.

## **7. Methodology**

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The OS 1:2500 scale mapping formed the base plan for this survey with the simpler earthworks being surveyed onto this base using tape and offsets. More detailed and extensive areas were recorded using an electronic theodolite with integral electromagnetic distance measurement. The digital information captured was plotted out at a scale a scale of 1:1000 to produce plans which were then taken out and enhanced in the field using traditional graphical methods. These final plans - which have been reproduced in Figs 5 and 9 - were then reduced to 1:2500 scale and the information added to the OS map base in order to produce the overall site plan.

## **8. Acknowledgements**

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Appendix 1: NMR numbers linked to the site

<b>Description</b>	<b>Nat. Grid Ref.</b>	<b>NMR number</b>	<b>Unique identifier</b>
The abbey ruins and earthworks nearby.	NZ 0625 1510	NZ 01 NE 11	19827
Packhorse bridge.	NZ 0623 1521	NZ 01 NE 12	19828
Abbey Mill.	NZ 0636 1509	NZ 01 NE 13	19831
Rectilinear hollow.	NZ 0630 1508	NZ 01 NE 27	19855
Small circular earthwork.	NZ 0632 1502	NZ 01 NE 45	1340525
Tracks, site of a possible building, ridge-and-furrow, and a small bridge.	NZ 0636 1492	NZ 01 NE 46	1340540
A probable pond, a long scarp and ridge-and-furrow.	NZ 0608 1505	NZ 01 NE 47	1340550
Site of medieval gatehouse and the track approaching from south-west.	NZ 0614 1503	NZ 01 NE 48	1340560
Small stone bridge.	NZ 0614 1495	NZ 01 NE 49	1340588
Two ponds, slight linear scarps and ridge-and-furrow.	NZ 0602 1502	NZ 01 NE 50	1340648
Tracks, remnants of a small field, water channels, a possible pond and ridge-and-furrow.	NZ 0585 1490	NZ 01 NE 51	1340717
Abbey Quarry.	NZ 0642 1507	NZ 01 NE 52	1340730
Banks and a ditch in Holly Lane Plantation.	NZ 0598 1493	NZ 01 NE 53	1340796