

Ellerton Priory Geophysical and Photographic Survey 2014



Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Archaeology Group

Report Edited by Stephen Eastmead

1 Background

Ellerton Priory (SE 0795 9739) was a small Cistercian Nunnery dedicated to Saint Mary, sited on the south bank of the River Swale in North Yorkshire (Image 1). It was probably founded around 1200. Historically it has often been incorrectly referred to as Ellerton Abbey, which name refers to either the civil parish or the eighteenth century house erected 160m to the south-west of the priory. The land coloured pink in Image 1 is the main subject of this report. In addition the wider water catchment area either side of Juniper Gill at the southern border of the map was subjected to a walk-over survey.

The area surrounding Ellerton Priory that has been scheduled by English Heritage under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 is shown in red on Image 2. Ellerton Priory was first scheduled in 1949 (Appendix 1).

This report divides the area surveyed into four parts. With reference to Images 1 and 2:

1. West Field — the large field (coloured pink in Image 1) to the west of Ellerton Priory stretching from the River Swale in the north to the modern road in the south is sometimes referred to as Ellerton village but here will be called the 'West Field'.

2. Mill Field — the large area of scheduled land (coloured red in Image 2) to the south of the West Field will be called the 'Mill Field'.

3. Unscheduled Field — the improved field to the east of Juniper Gill Plantation between areas 2 and 4 will be called the 'Unscheduled Field'.

4. Water-catchment Area — the third much smaller scheduled area (coloured red in Image 2) together with land in its immediate vicinity will be called the 'Water-Catchment Area'.

In addition **East Field** is used to denote the field where Ellerton Priory building is located.

In 2013/14 the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) was working with the land owner the Drax family, the tenant farmer Mr. Michael Barker and English Heritage to replace missing roadside parkland trees in the West Field (Image 5). The Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Archaeology Group (SWAAG) was asked by Mr Robert White, Senior Historic Environment Officer, YDNPA, to do a gradiometer survey of this area prior to the planting. The English Heritage license obtained by Robert White included the whole of the scheduled monument. Mr Barker kindly allowed SWAAG to survey the whole of the West Field together with the Mill and Unscheduled fields.

In October 1996 Ed Dennison Archaeological Services (EDAS) were commissioned by the YDNPA to undertake an archaeological survey of Ellerton Priory (Image 3). Their geophysical survey was restricted to the **East Field**. The West and Mill fields were not surveyed and the Unscheduled Field between the mill and its associated water-catchment area showed no obvious features. Their report is available at: <http://www.outofoblivion.org.uk/pdfs/reports/SYD13684-ellerton-priory.pdf>

Local information suggests that the only time these fields have been subjected to the modern plough was during World War II. As tractor engines then were relatively modest and ploughs much smaller, the fields probably have never been subjected to deep ploughing. Whilst most of these fields show obvious medieval earthworks, two areas, the northern section of the West Field and the Unscheduled Field, both appear to have been more thoroughly ploughed in the twentieth century.

2. Ellerton Priory Complex

The YDNPA provided LIDAR (**L**ight **D**etection **A**nd **R**anging) images of the area. Image 4 is a LIDAR image of the Ellerton Priory complex with the scheduled areas outlined. The land rises from 178m AOD (**A**bove **O**rdnance **D**atum) beside the River Swale to about 270m AOD at the

Ellerton Priory Geophysical Survey 2014. Fields Surveyed.

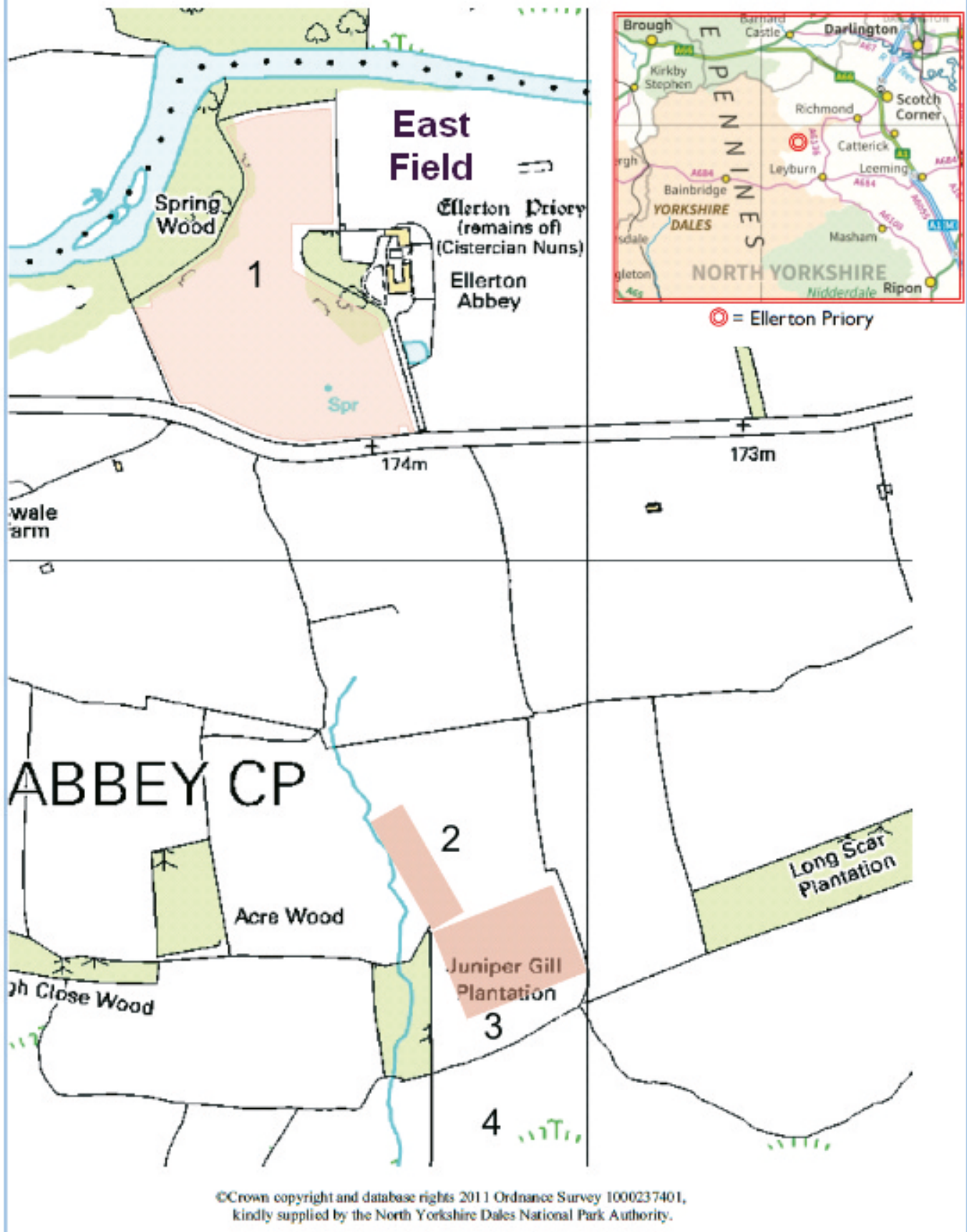


Image 1: Ellerton Priory location.

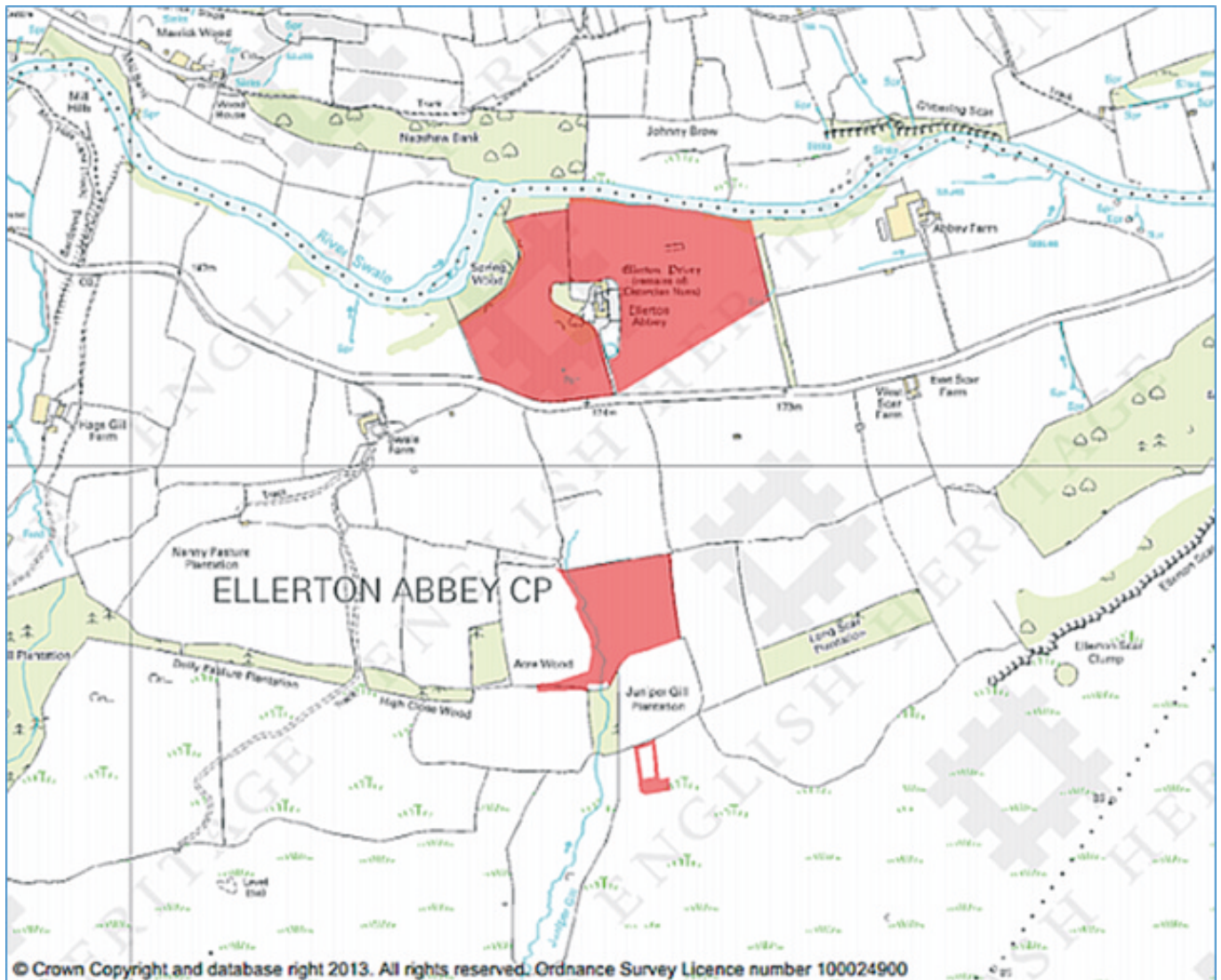


Image 2: Ellerton Priory — English Heritage scheduled areas.

main reservoir in the Water-catchment Area. It appears as a largely medieval landscape to the south of the River Swale up to the beginning of Ellerton Moor. At the northern end of the image is the priory / village complex. The loop of land in the centre is the land associated with Ellerton Abbey house built c.1830. A dry-stone wall extends from the northern end of Ellerton Abbey boundary loop to the river, which divides the priory complex into a West and an East Field.

Image 5 is a Google earth view of the same area as Image 4. The gaps in the roadside parkland trees can be seen. In the bottom centre of the image the watercourse Juniper Gill passes through Juniper Gill Plantation and then exits to run down the western edge of the Mill Field. As Juniper Gill enters the next field it peters out amongst heaps of hill wash that have been deposited when it has been in spate. Image 4 shows that historically hill wash also accumulated at the bottom of the Mill Field. In normal conditions Juniper Gill is largely dry below Juniper Plantation. The water appears to descend into a natural underground watercourse as there is no obvious man-made leat or culvert below platform P3 (SE 07830 96661). There is a field boundary immediately to the west of where the hill wash is gradually accumulating. Directly opposite where this field boundary meets the modern road there is a known culvert that still flows with water under the West Field. This is discussed on Page 32.

Image 4 shows that most of the medieval ploughing was orientated north-south although there are exceptions. In addition it appears that Juniper Gill once took a more north-easterly route from the south west corner of the Unscheduled Field across the adjacent field before turning north towards the River Swale just to the east of Ellerton Priory East Field.

3. Methodology

a) Instrumentation

- i) ProMark120 GPS using 1 minute Rinex OSNet correction.
- ii) Bartington 601-2 Gradiometer
- iii) GeoScan RM85 Resistivity Meter

b) Processing Software

- i) TerraSurveyor
- ii) GNSS Solutions

c) Surveys

- i) GPS Landscape surveys
- ii) GPS localised geophysical 30m x 30m grids
- iii) Gradiometer survey of West Field and selective areas of both the Mill and Unscheduled Fields.
- iv) Selective resistivity surveys on interesting areas. Unfortunately SWAAG was too busy with a Heritage Lottery funded project to do the resistivity surveys during the time of the English Heritage license.

d) Photography

Appendix 2 of this report also includes a selection of additional digital images.

e) Gradiometer data

Gradiometer data processing was kept to a minimum. The data was destriped and clipped to obtain a good greyscale image.



Image 3: East Field — Ellerton Priory with Ellerton Abbey House in the background.

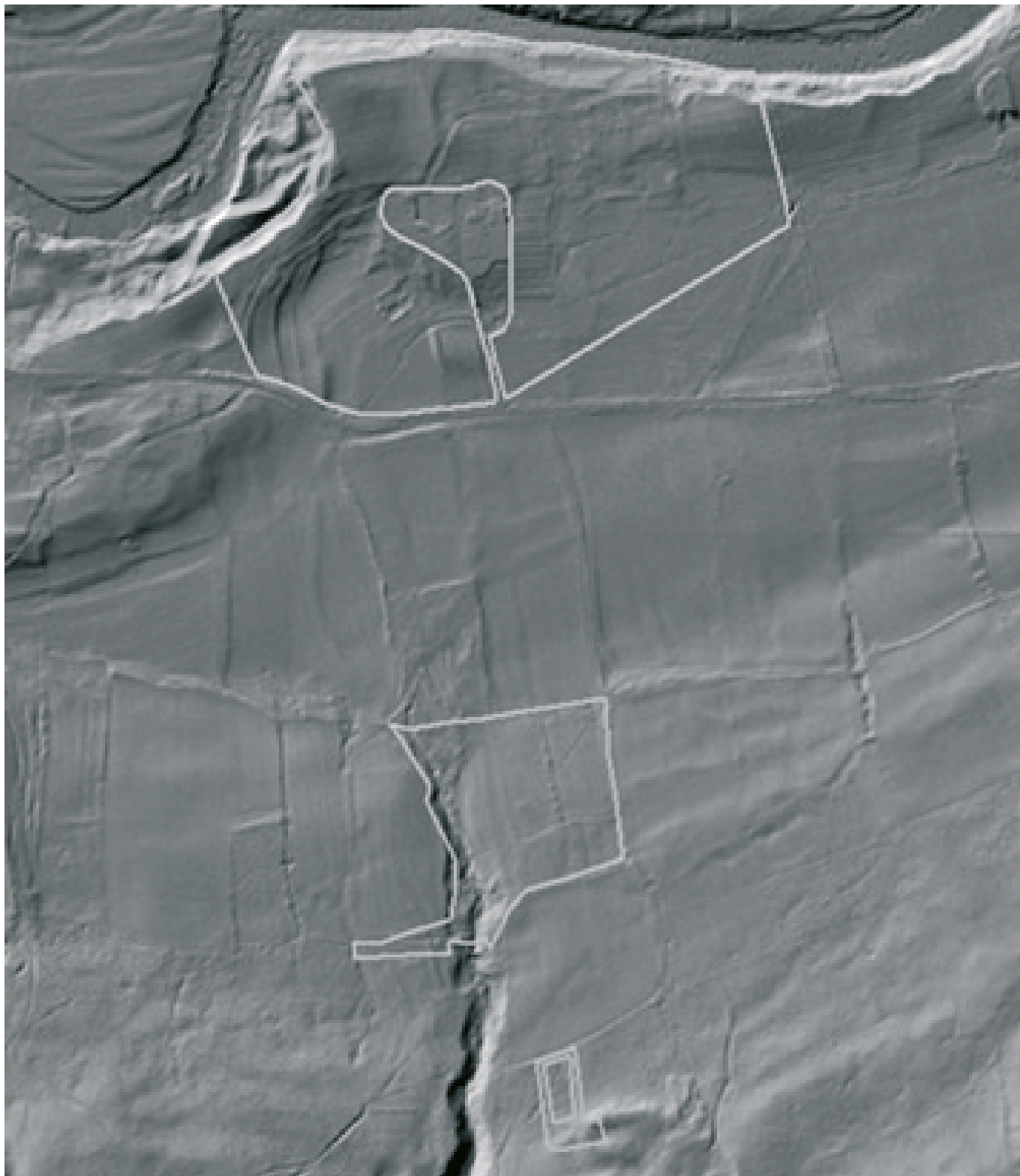


Image 4: LIDAR image of the Ellerton Priory English Heritage scheduled areas.



Image 5: Google earth view of the Ellerton Priory complex.

4. West Field

A GPS landscape survey was made of the major features in the West Field (Image 6). The field was then surveyed using the Bartington 601-2 gradiometer by dividing the area up into 30m by 30m grids. The West Field had a number of areas which precluded a magnetic survey near them. They were:

- a. Iron fencing surrounding Ellerton Abbey house
- b. Iron field gates
- c. Scrap iron within the field
- d. Pig netting around some trees.
- e. Water troughs and surrounding thick mud.
- f. Fallen mature trees

The majority of these instances were around the periphery of the field and the resultant areas of interference have been masked off.

Image 7 is a LIDAR image of the main Ellerton Priory and village complex, whereas Image 8 is a LIDAR image of the West Field overlaid with the major landscape features from the GPS survey. Images 9 and 10 are a greyscale image of the gradiometer data with Image 10 also showing the major landscape features.

Images 11 and 12 show the distribution of the positive and bi-polar magnetic anomalies, with Image 12 also showing the landscape features.

Looking at Image 9 in detail:

- The north and north-west survey grids terminate at an escarpment which varies between 5m–17m above the River Swale.
- Around the periphery of the northern section of the West Field are four strong bi-polar areas, three of which are in a line with the dry-stone wall forming the north-east boundary. The most southerly one is due to the iron field gate, but there are no obvious causes for the other two. The most interesting one is beside the western escarpment as it is located adjacent to the foundations of a rectangular building (Image 13). It is also close to the only track down the escarpment to the riverside (Image 14).
- The LIDAR image shows that the northern section of the field had been improved. The magnetic data appears to show a fairly central rectangular structure together with nearby linear features and small clusters of bi-polar responses. This could be an extension to the farm building structures described in the EDAS report for the north-west section of the East Field.
- The south west side of the West Field is dominated by the medieval road which forms a gentle curve from the western field boundary north-eastwards to the northern section of the iron railings that curve around Ellerton Abbey house.
- Just to the south of the medieval road up the West Field are three shallow lynchets generally following the gentle curve of the road. In-between the lynchets the LIDAR indicates a small area of north-south medieval ridge and furrow ploughing.
- Above the lynchets, where the West Field is most uneven are three curving banks (Image 6) around relative flat platforms. These earthworks are similar to other scooped settlement sites found along the River Swale. There is magnetic activity in and around these earthworks.

- To the south-east of the 'scooped platforms' are the Ellerton Priory fish ponds in the form of two small and two larger depressions. The northerly of the two small 'ponds' contains modern field clearance stones and presumably some ferrous material that is producing a bi-polar peak.
- Most strikingly a diagonal black and white bi-polar stripe extends from the iron roadside field gate directly towards Ellerton Abbey house. It is consistent with it being a cast iron water supply pipe taking spring water to the house.
- To the north of the cast iron water pipe is a curving field boundary in the form of a ditch. The medieval ploughing to the south of the ditch respects the boundary ditch, whereas the cast iron pipe together with the sandstone slated culvert just to its south do not. This is likely to be the original water-course to the fish ponds.
- The culvert mentioned above (Images 6–10) curves around a large linear stone clearance bank. The water passing down this culvert now finds its way eastwards under the drive to Ellerton Abbey house via a flat arched bridge to the lower part of the East Field. The geophysics data suggests that the stone clearance bank once extended further south than it does currently.
- The centre of the southern section of the West Field does not show any features.

Apart from the stone foundations beside the escarpment and a small rectangular feature in the northern section of the West Field there is no evidence of Ellerton village being located within this field. The Ed Dennison Report (1996) identifies possible rectangular buildings consistent with it being a farmhouse in the north-west of the East Field. The features found in the northern section of the West Field may be an extension, however this area and the central section of the East Field marked A and B on Image 15 do not have any LIDAR-visible earthworks to substantiate this.

With regard to the medieval road to Ellerton Priory, LIDAR Image 15 shows the road leaving the priory towards the west before gently turning towards the northern edge of Ellerton House before taking the path across the West Field as shown in the gradiometer data. The LIDAR shows the road continuing to the south and west towards Swale Farm. The earthworks shown on the LIDAR image suggests that medieval Ellerton village was largely clustered around Swale Farm, which would also be nearer to most of the cultivated land, the mill and their water supply.

Image 13 is a photograph of the foundation stones around a rectangular platform close to the western escarpment in the West Field, with Ellerton Priory in the background.

Image 14: Location beside the escarpment looking south. The hollow-way on the right is the track down to the River Swale. The circular area beside it is the large magnetic anomaly that is close to the rectangular building foundations.

Ellerton Priory Gradiometer Survey West Field Landscape GPS survey

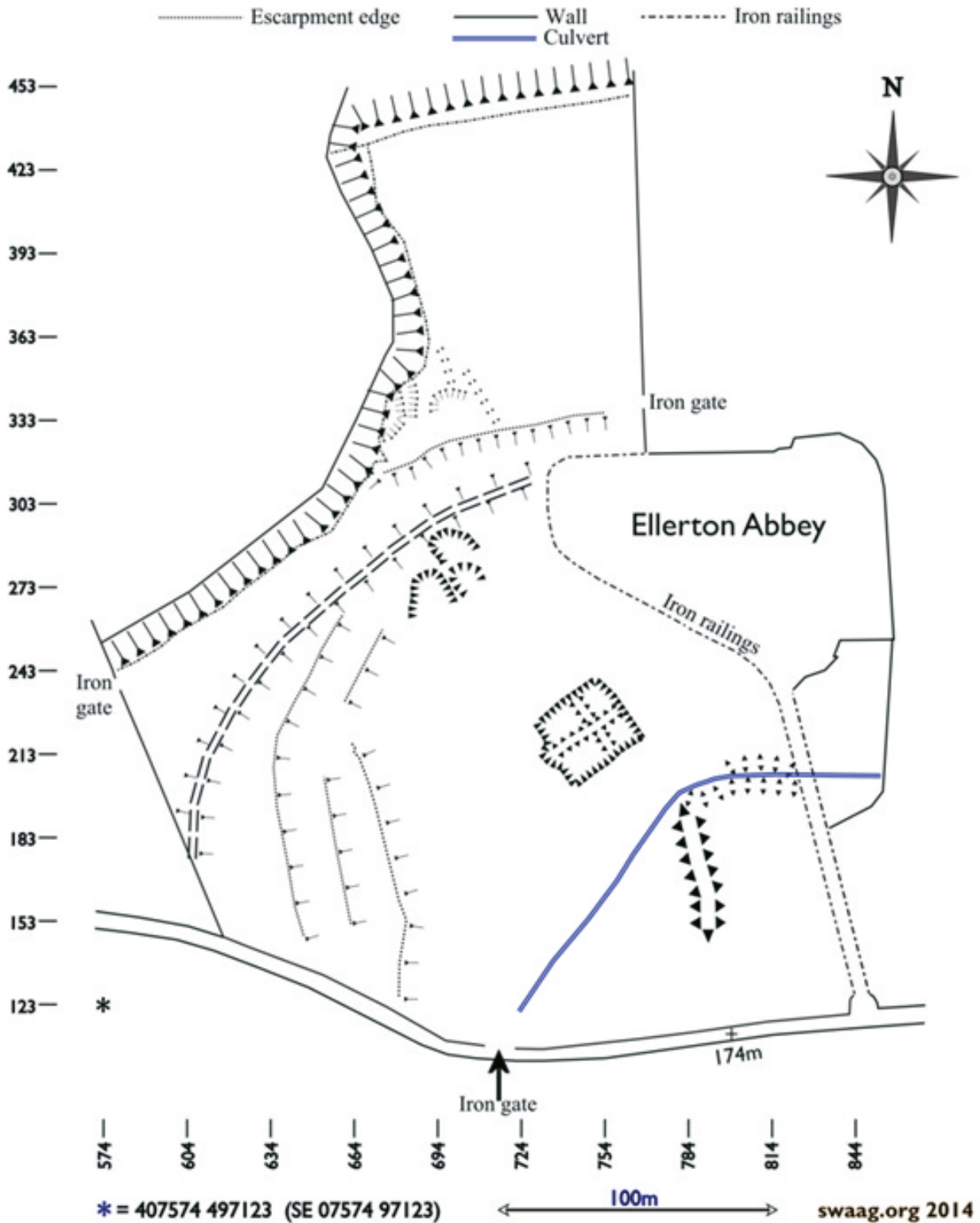


Image 6: Ellerton Priory: West Field GPS survey of the major landscape features.

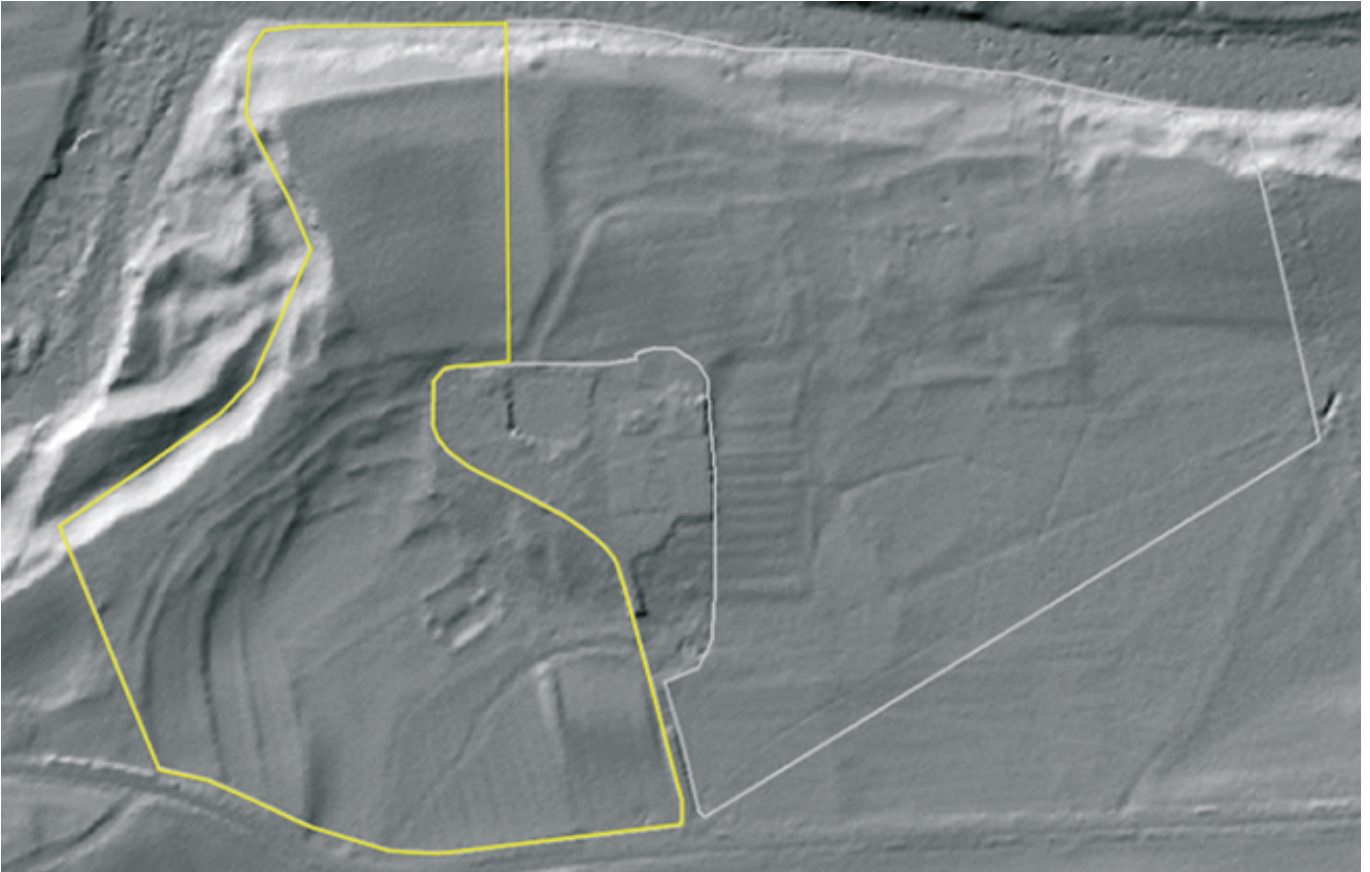


Image 7: Ellerton Priory LIDAR: West Field outlined in yellow, with the East Field outlined in white.



Image 8: Ellerton Priory LIDAR: West Field with landscape features superimposed.

Ellerton Priory Gradiometer Survey West Field

Data destriped and clipped $\pm 7nT$

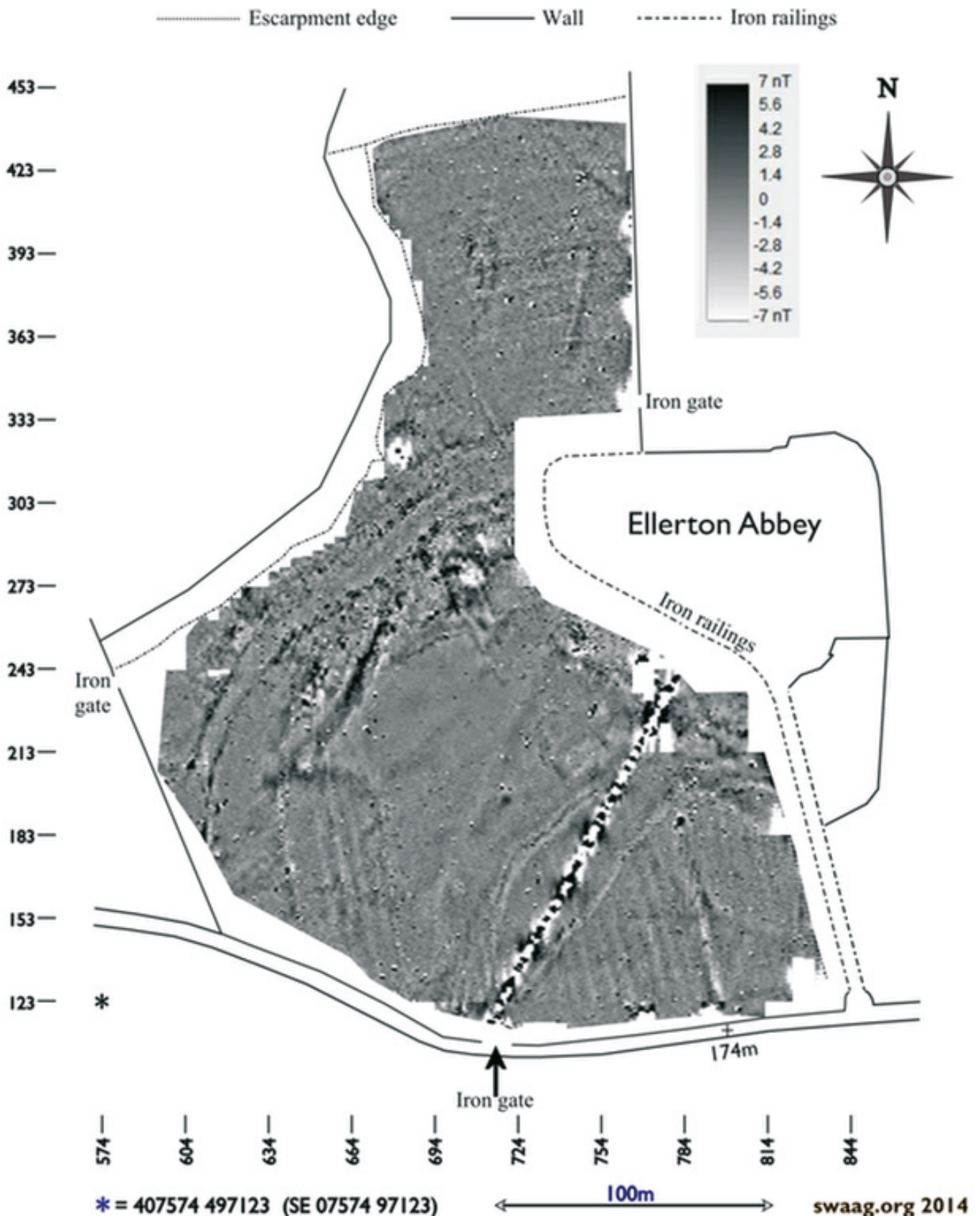


Image 9: Ellerton Priory: West Field gradiometer data.
Greyscale image of the gradiometer data.

Ellerton Priory Gradiometer Survey West Field

Data desriped and clipped $\pm 7\text{nT}$

Plan of landscape features over the gradiometer data.

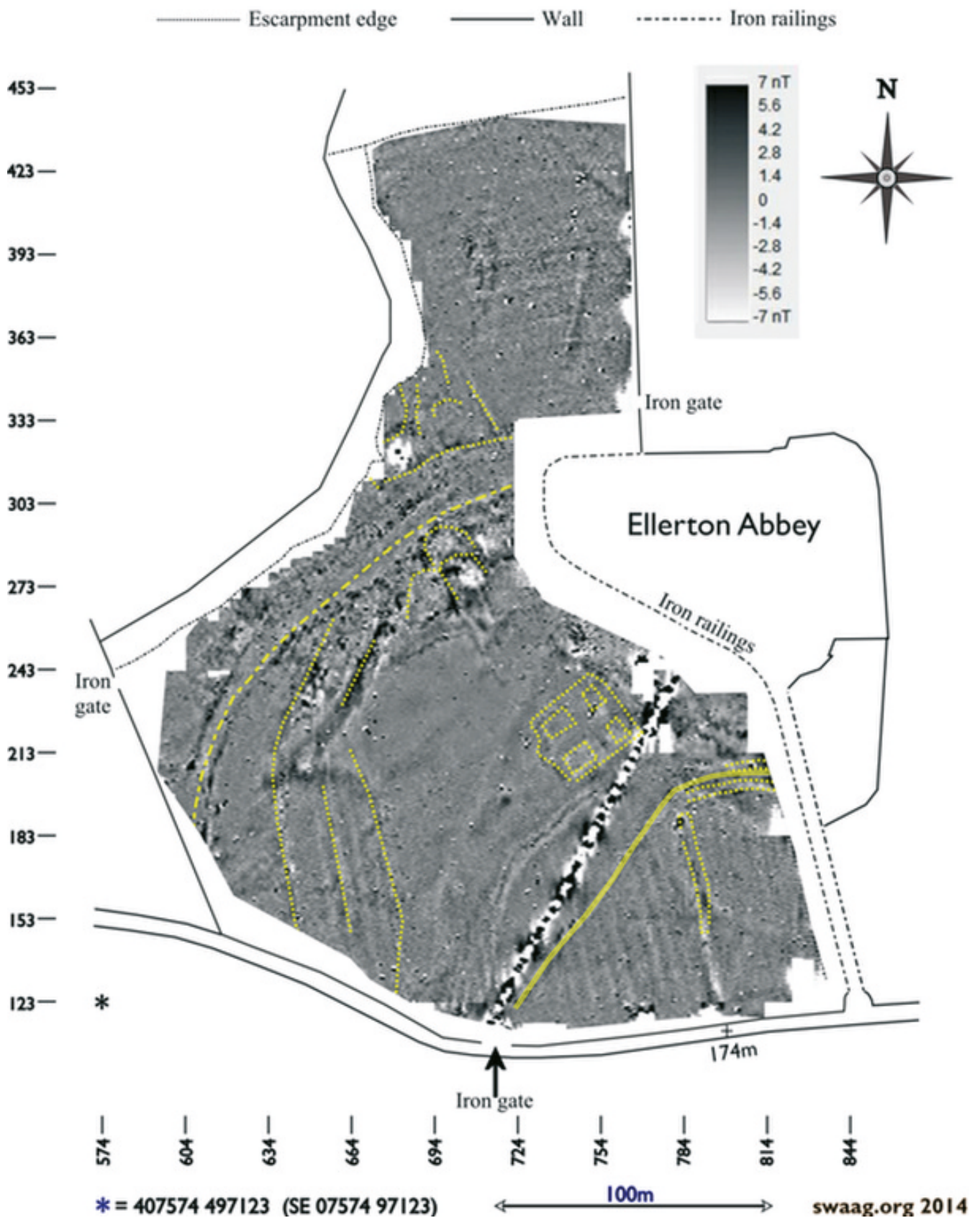


Image 10: Ellerton Priory: West Field gradiometer data.

Greyscale image of the gradiometer data with major landscape features overlay.

Ellerton Priory Gradiometer Survey West Field

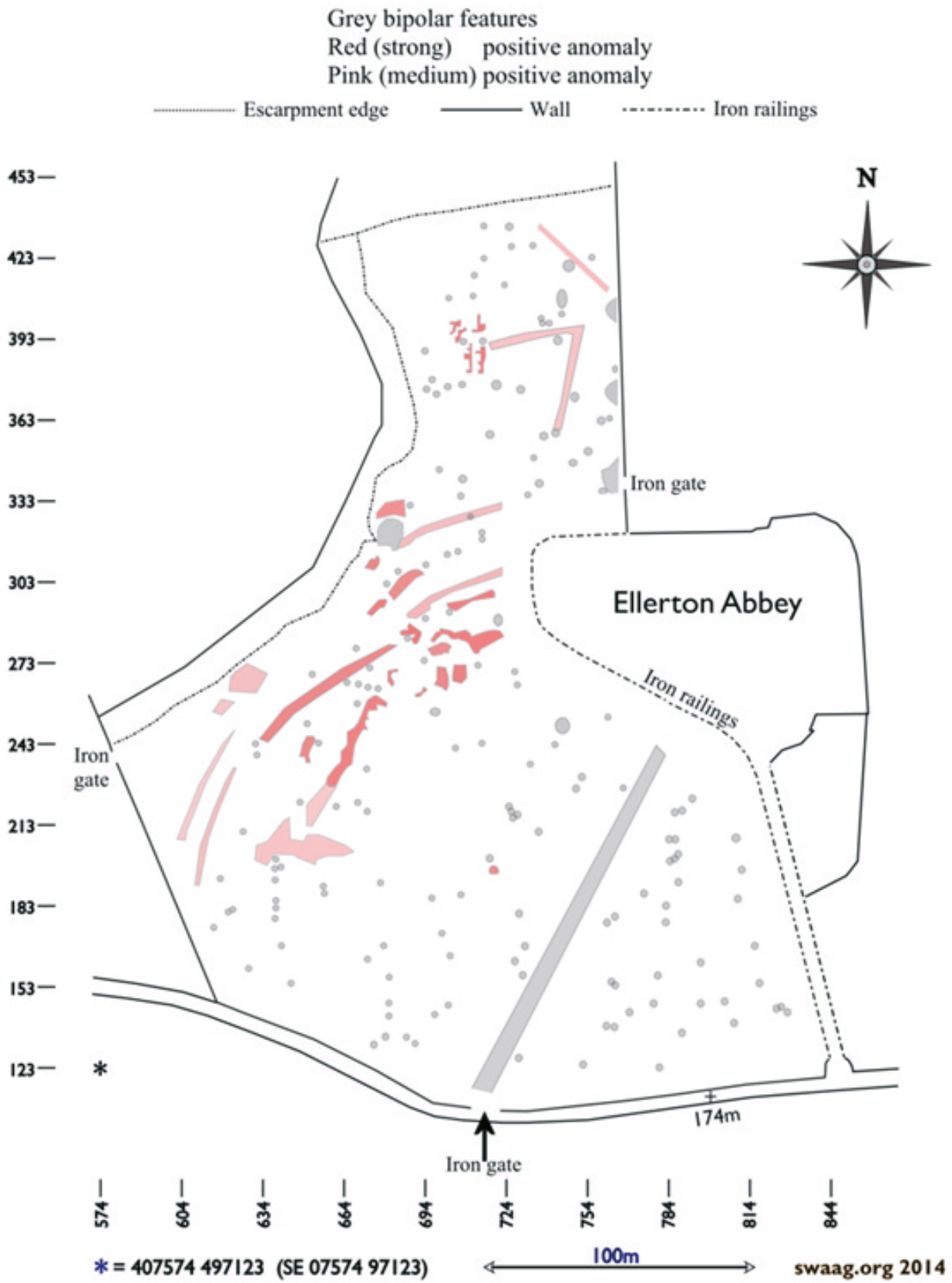


Image 11: Ellerton Priory West Field gradiometer data. Positive and bi-polar magnetic anomalies.

Ellerton Priory Gradiometer Survey West Field Landscape GPS survey

Grey bipolar features
 Red (strong) positive anomaly
 Pink (medium) positive anomaly

----- Escarpment edge ——— Wall - - - - - Iron railings
 ——— Culvert

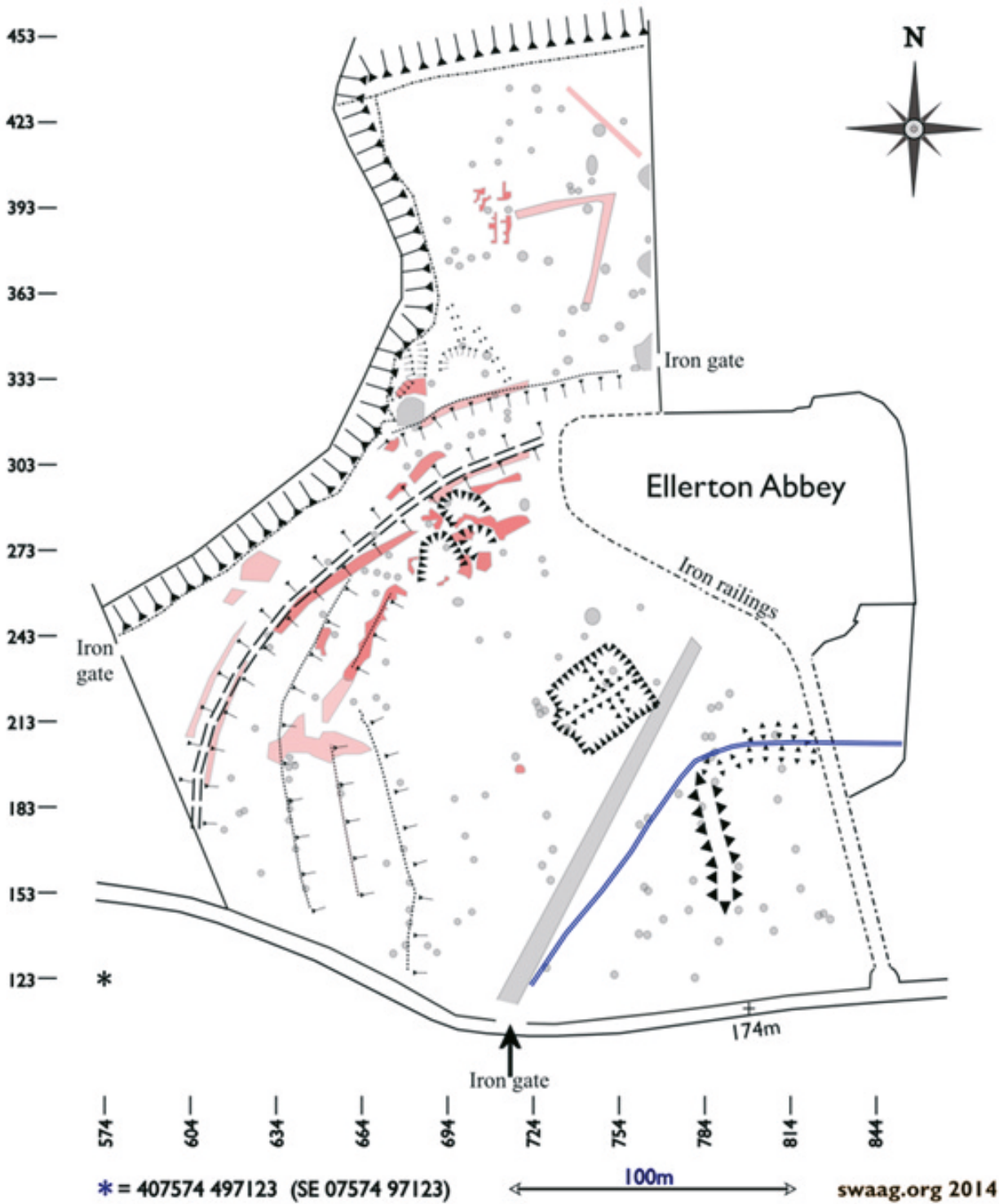


Image 12: Ellerton Priory: West Field gradiometer data.
Positive and bi-polar magnetic anomalies.



Image 13: Ellerton Priory West Field.
Foundation stones around rectangular platform with Ellerton Priory in the background.



Image 14: Ellerton Priory West Field beside the western escarpment looking south.
The hollow-way on the right is the track down to the River Swale. The circular area beside it is the large magnetic anomaly that is close to the rectangular building foundations.

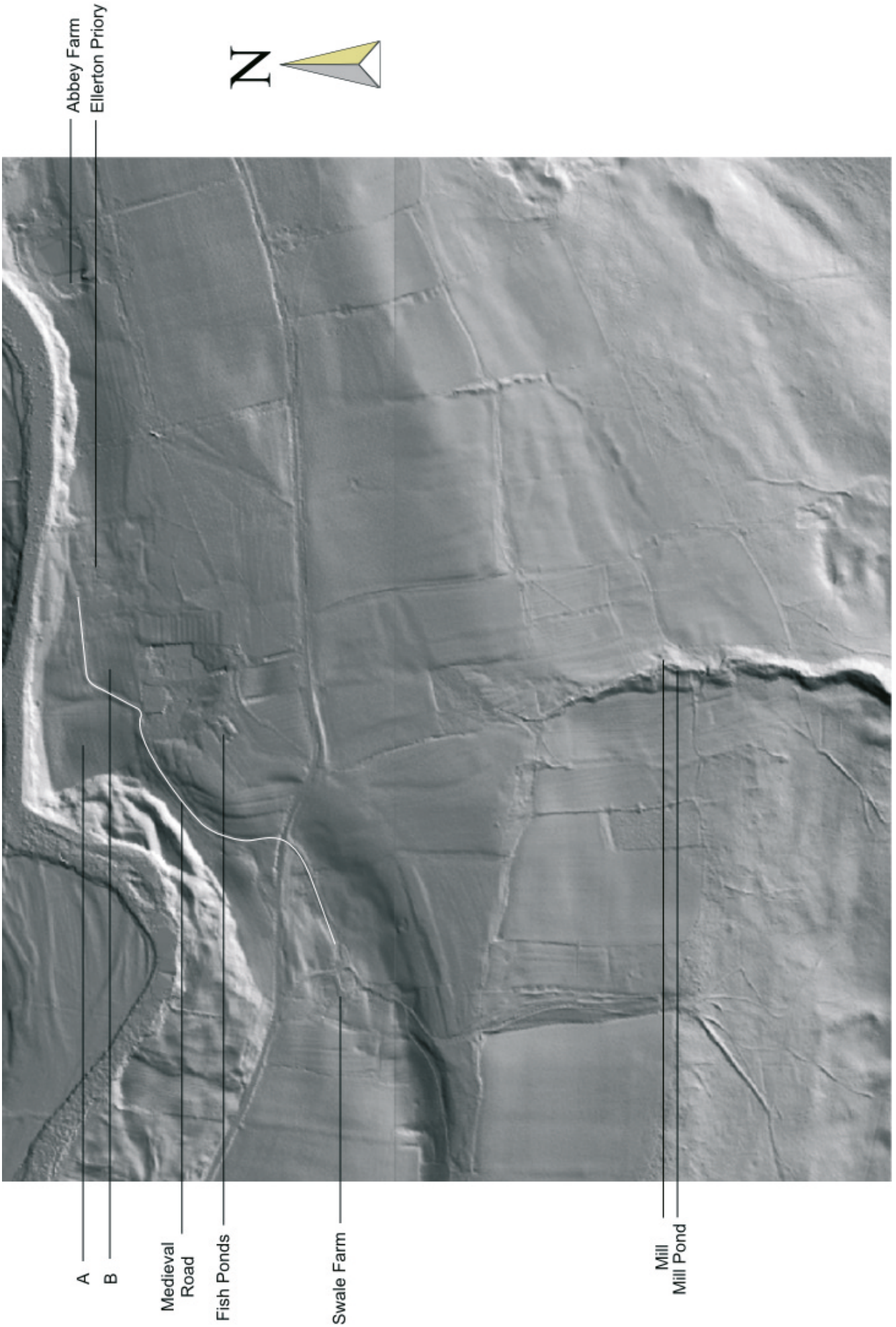


Image 15: Ellerton Priory Village Complex — LIDAR.

5. Mill Field

The earliest watermills date to the Romano-British period (English Heritage Introductions to Heritage Assets: Mills). All known mills from this period used vertical waterwheels, however later in the Anglo-Saxon period the majority used horizontal or Norsk waterwheels, but by the 13thC they had disappeared apart from in the Shetlands.

It is likely that the medieval village of Ellerton had a watermill before the priory was founded, and had undergone this transition in waterwheel technology at some point (Images 16 & 17).



Image 16: English Heritage Introductions to Heritage Assets: Mills.
Horizontal mill reconstruction based on a post-medieval example from Lewis, Hebrides.

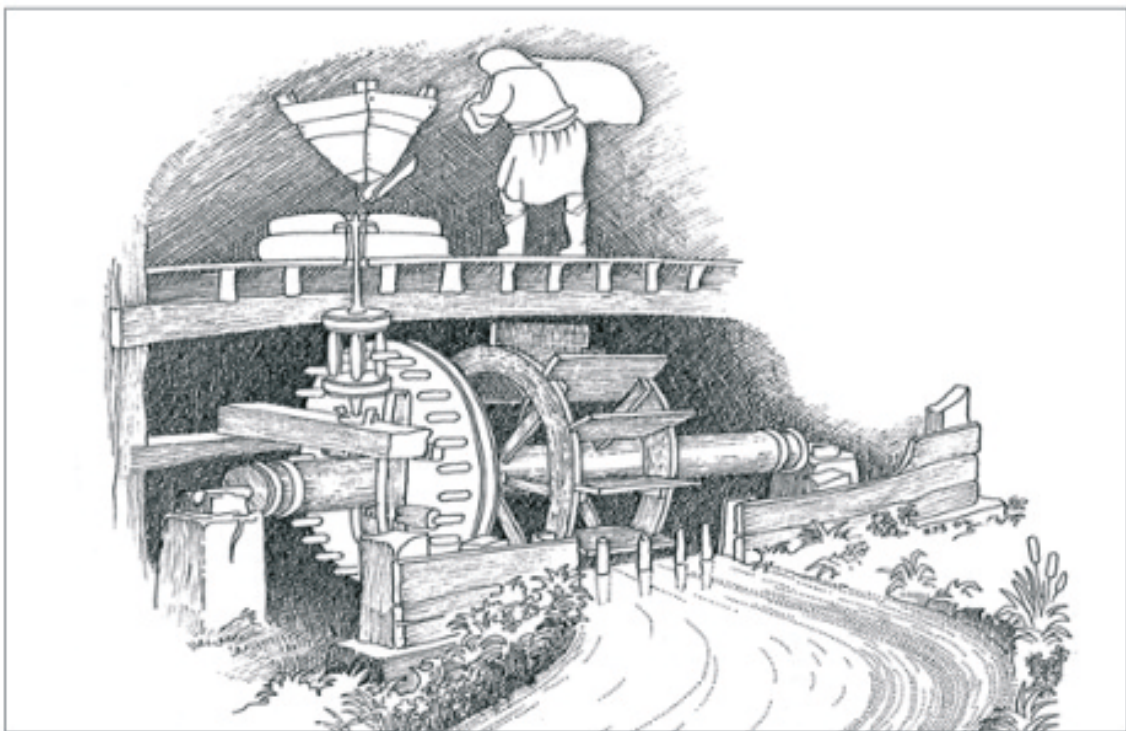


Image 17: English Heritage Introductions to Heritage Assets: Mills.
Fullerton Romano-British mill, reconstruction by Bob Spain.

This was a simple form of undershot vertical wheeled mill where the water ran under the waterwheel.

Image 23 shows the Mill Field to the east of Juniper Gill with four earthwork platforms P1 – P4 identified. The English Heritage Ancient Monuments Listing states: “*One building, identified as a mill is located about 150m north of the plantation*”. The landscape survey identifies this as platform P1 (Image 18). This is a small platform with a well-defined gill-side right-angle perimeter.



**Image 18: Mill Field platform P1 viewed looking north-west.
This platform is approximately 150m north of Juniper Gill Plantation.**

However this platform together with the larger P2 platform nearby stands a significant distance above and beside the Juniper Gill with no obvious mill race or by-pass channel. There are no visible stone earthworks or worked stone nearby.

As it lies approximately 15m in altitude below the dam with no signs of a managed water supply other than the Juniper Gill, a survey of Juniper Gill bed was made along the length of Mill Field. Looking at the situation it seemed more obvious to site the mill close to the dam. The first place worked stone was identified was near the sharp bend opposite platform P3 and up to where the dam appeared to have been located a few metres further south.

Image 19 is of the likely Ellerton Mill site platform P3. The dam site is by a small tree a few metres to the left of this image.

Image 20 is of the dam site and pond. The dam crosses the gill approximately where the small tree is located. The circular depression in the surrounding bank appears to have been the pond. The western leat entered this area near to the shadow below the two cows.

Image 21 shows an example of a large worked stone that is broken in half. The other half is embedded in the bank. This area contains many large dressed stones that are consistent with them once being part of the dam/mill structure.

Image 22: shows Juniper Gill Plantation Bridge where Juniper Gill exits the woodland.



Image 19: Mill Field. Mill site platform P3.



Image 20: Mill Field: Mill Dam. Foreground is platform P4. The dam appears to have been located near to the tree in the centre. The mill pond probably extended into the circular area just beyond. The mill site P3 is located just to the right of this image.



Image 21: Mill Field. Worked stone below the dam. The other half is also present.



**Image 22: Mill Field. Above the dam and mill pond.
Juniper Gill exits Juniper Gill Plantation under this bridge.**

Ellerton Priory Mill Field and Water Catchment

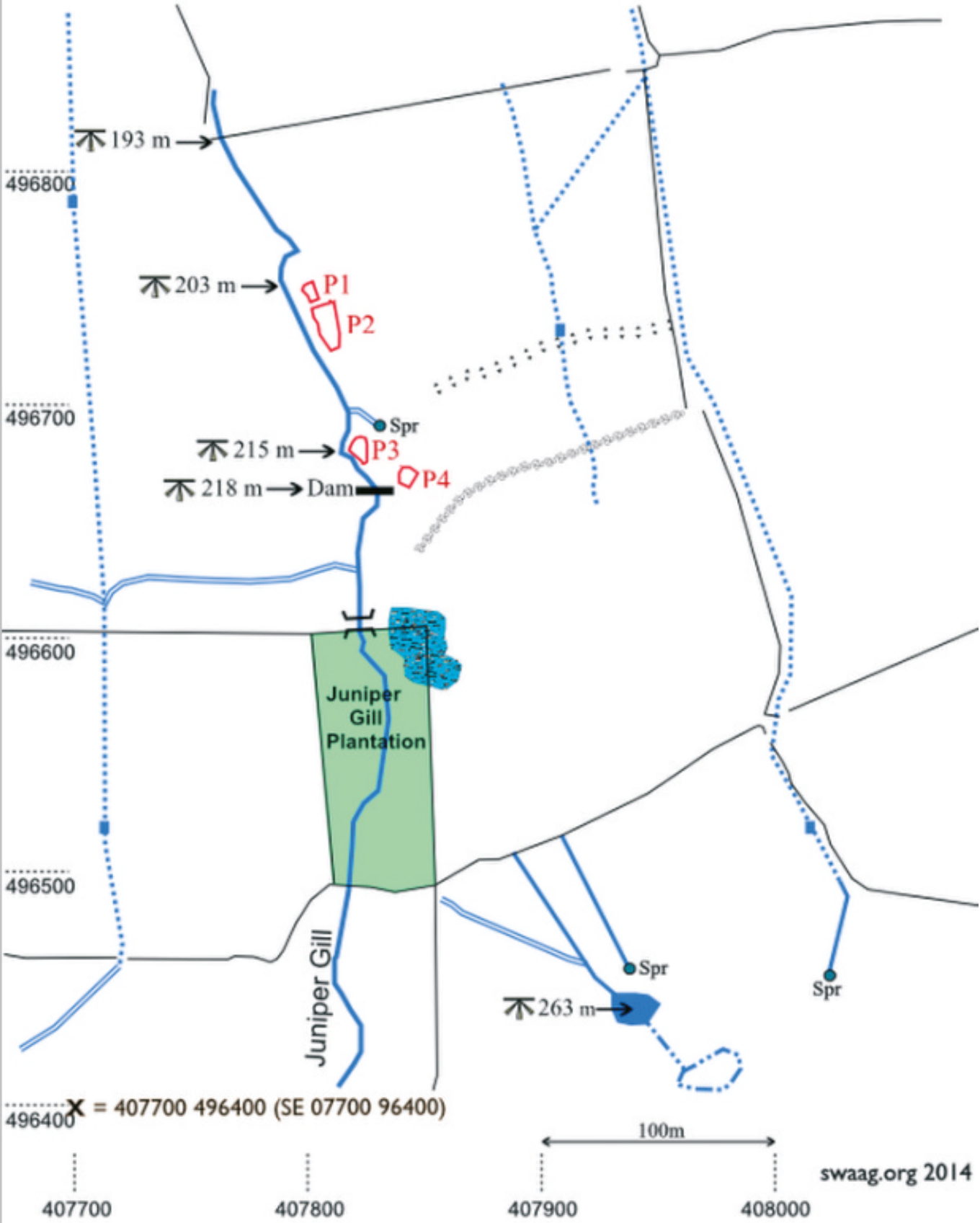


Image 23: Ellerton Priory Mill Field and Water-catchment Area.

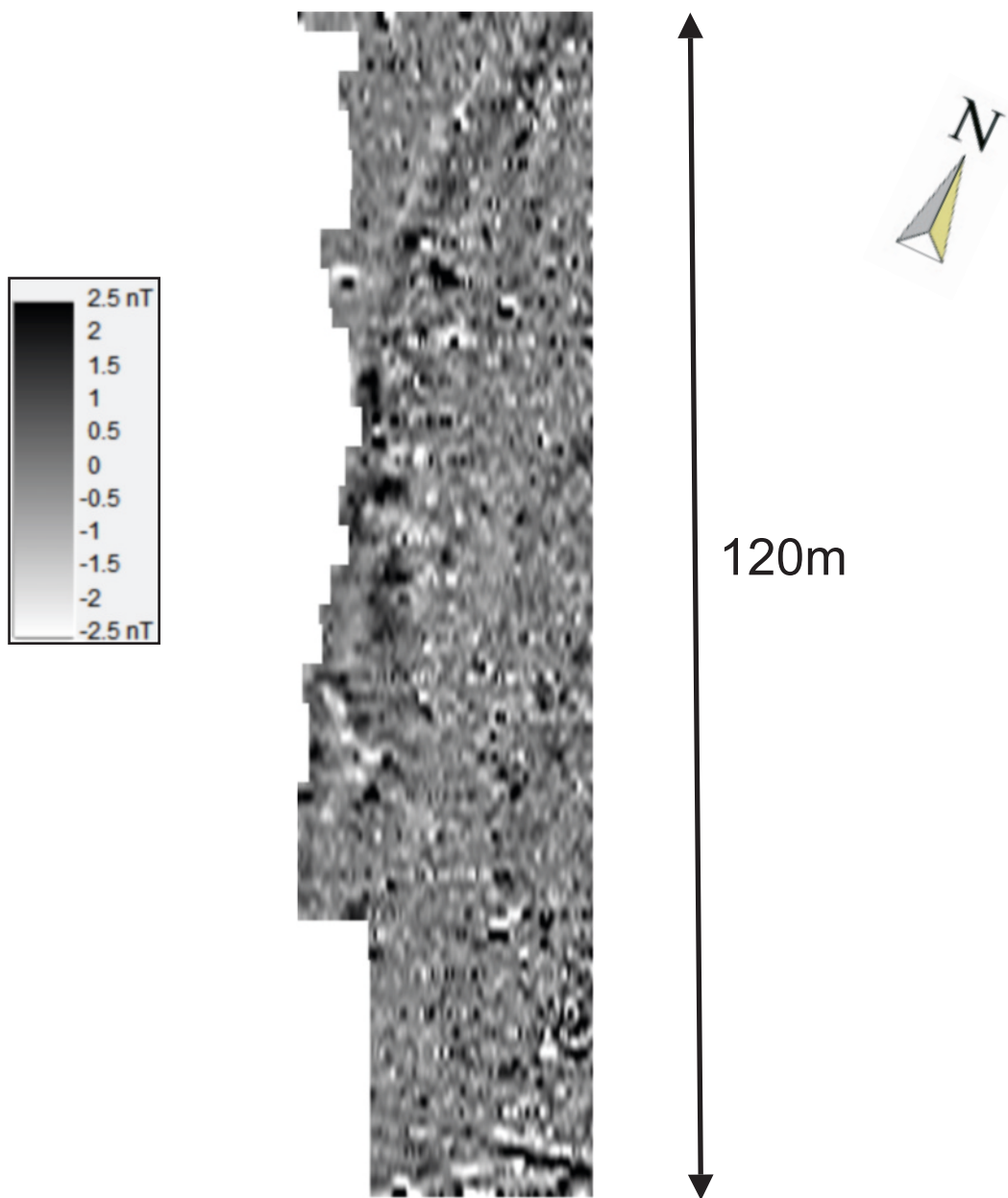
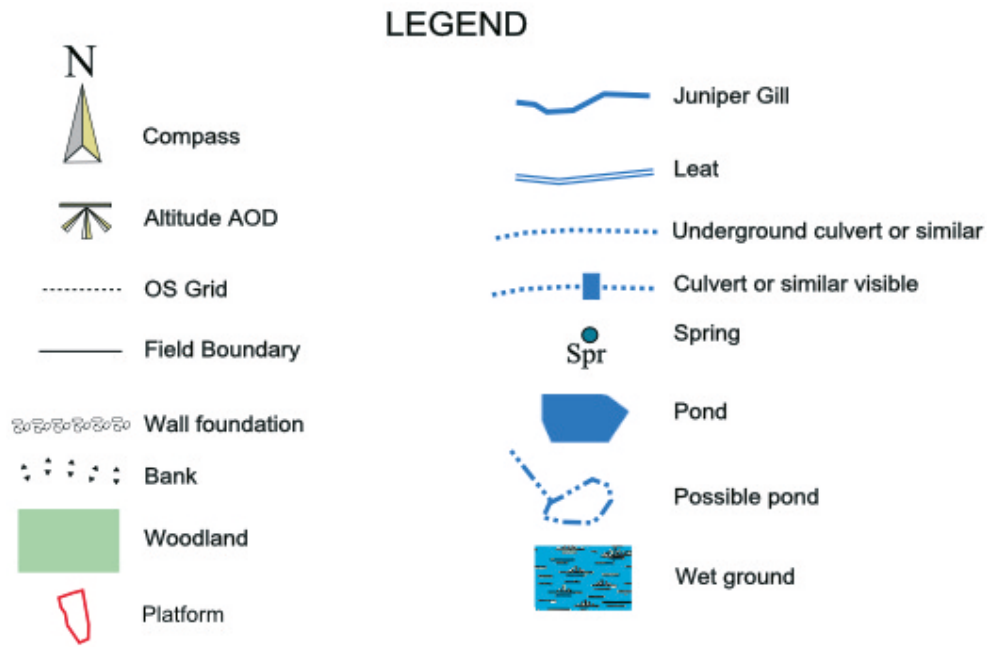


Image 24: Mill Field Gradiometer Data

The geophysical survey of Mill Field (Image 24) covered as much of platforms: P1, P2 and P4 as possible. P3 unfortunately was too small (Images 19 & 26). Nothing was revealed on the platforms. There may be an ancient Juniper Gill channel curving to the north passing along the eastern edge of P2 (Image 26). On the central western side of the survey area some high magnetic readings may infer the use of fire in some process (Images 26 & 27).

Image 25 is the Mill Field LIDAR image with the survey area outlined. This does not add any further information about the survey area. It does clearly show some ridge and furrow ploughing, and two old field boundaries running east–west, with the northerly one being medieval in date. From the southerly of these boundaries a spring line can be traced north-wards down the field. Where it crosses the medieval boundary it breaks the surface as a wet area of ground with a few stones lying about. There is no obvious evidence of it being culverted. The LIDAR also shows a post medieval–modern division or diversion of this spring line to the north-east, where it appears to join a spring-line that runs north from the field boundary towards the lower part of the East Field managed water system. Where the original spring-line meets the northern boundary of Mill Field there is no trace of it in the next field below.

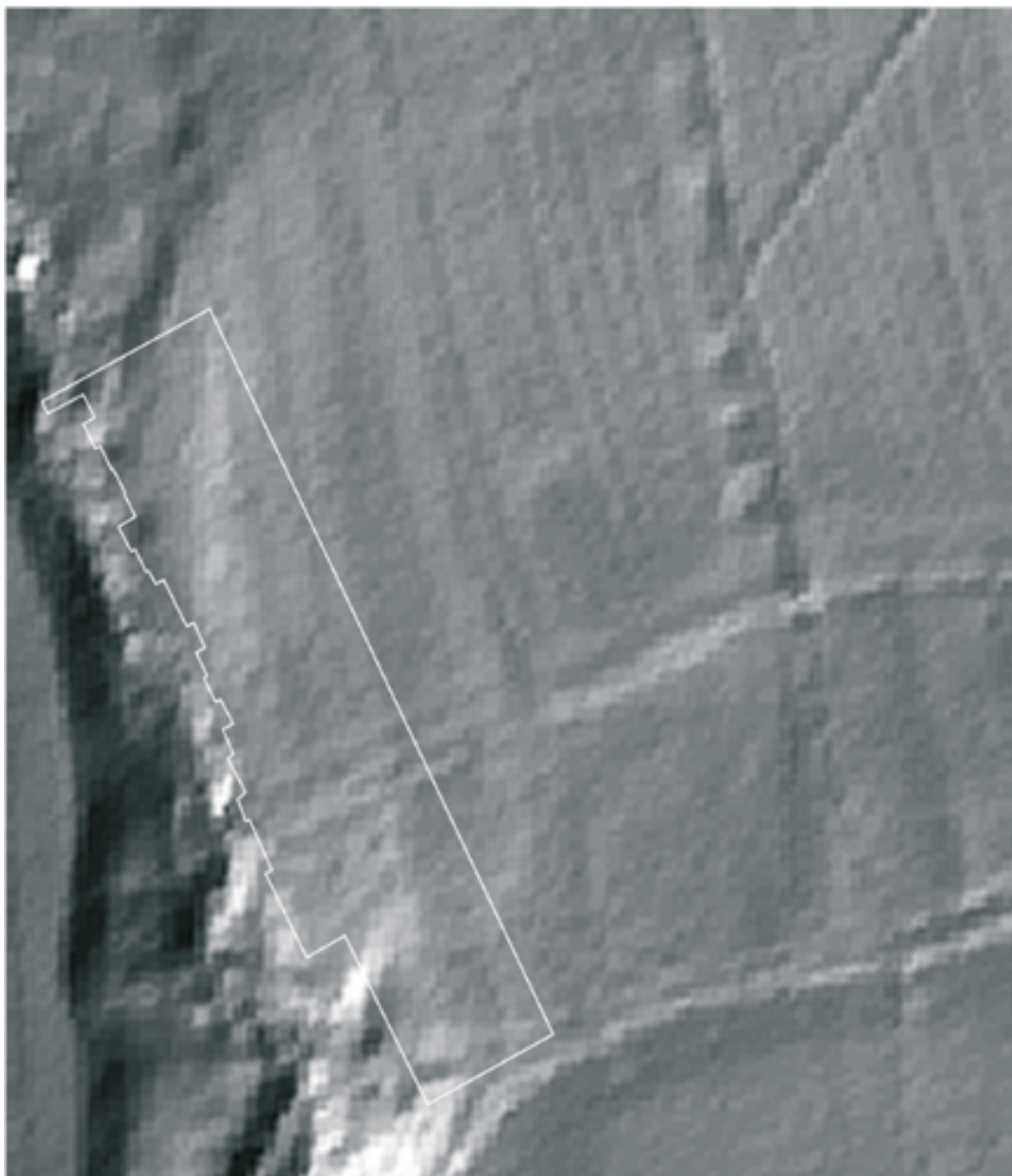


Image 25: Ellerton Priory Mill Field LIDAR Image with Gradiometer Data Location.

Ellerton Priory Mill Field

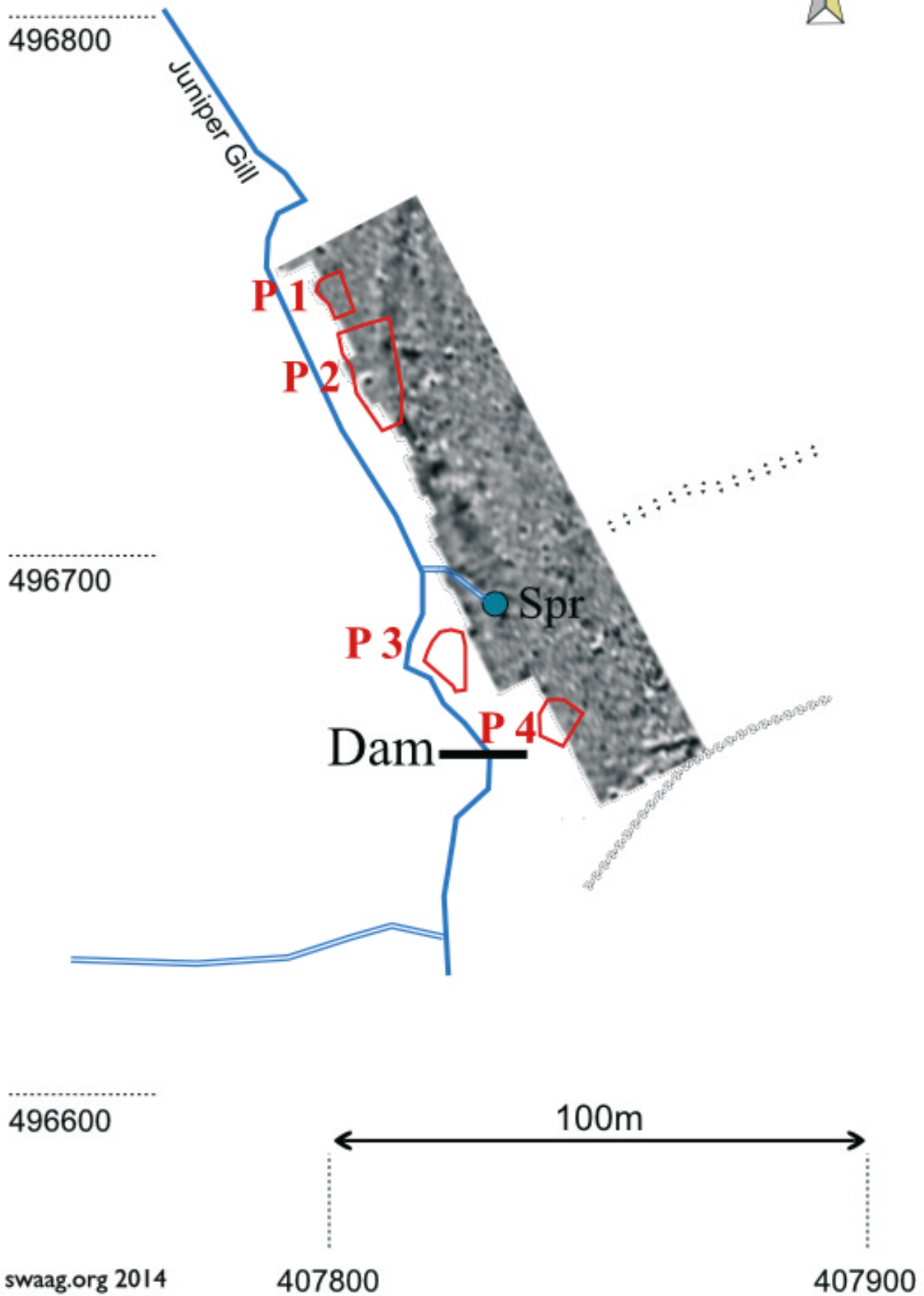


Image 26: Ellerton Priory Mill Field Gradiometer Data.

Ellerton Priory Mill Field



Grey bipolar features
Red (strong) positive anomaly
Pink (medium) positive anomaly

496800

Juniper Gill

P 1

P 2

Spr

P 3

P 4

Dam

496700

496600

100m

swaag.org 2014

407800

407900

Image 27: Ellerton Priory Mill Field Gradiometer Data — Positive and Bi-polar magnetic anomalies.

Ellerton Priory Gradiometer Survey Unscheduled Field

Google Earth image showing areas surveyed

Data destriped and clipped $\pm 2.5nT$



swaag.org 2014

Image 28: Google earth view of the Mill Field and the Unscheduled Field with gradiometer data overlay.

Ellerton Priory Gradiometer Survey Unscheduled Field

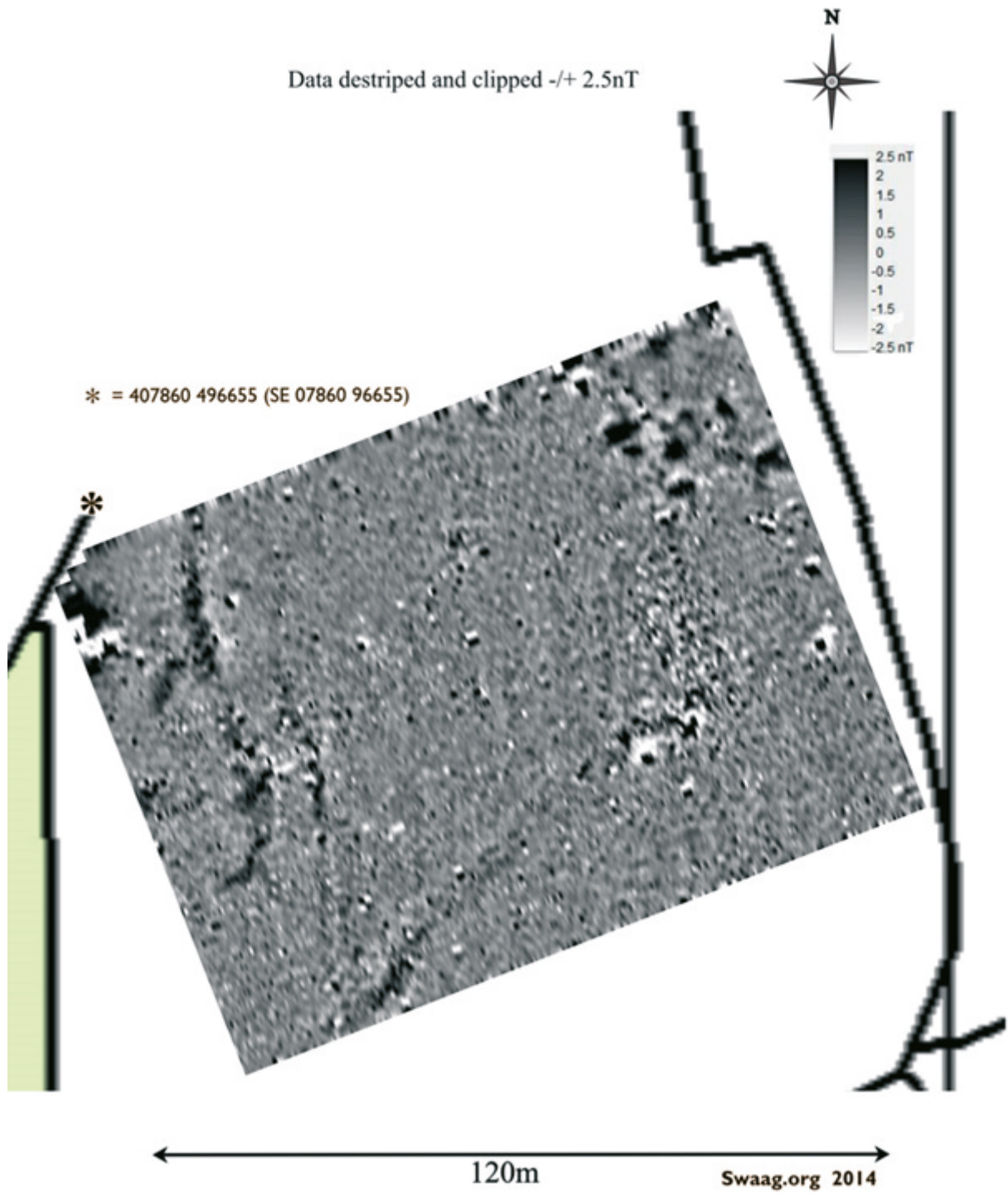


Image 29: Unscheduled Field gradiometer data on 1 in 10,000 Ordnance Survey map, ©Crown copyright and database rights 2011 Ordnance Survey 1000237401, kindly supplied by the North Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.

6 Unscheduled Field.

Image 28 shows the Google earth image of the Unscheduled Field south of the Mill Field and east of Juniper Gill Plantation. This image has both the Mill and Unscheduled Field's gradiometer data superimposed, and Image 29 shows the magnetic data on the Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map. Image 31 shows this field devoid of any visible earthworks.

The magnetic data (Image 29 & 31) does show four strong bipolar ferrous anomalies. The strong one at the north-west corner is a stone gatepost with iron hinge brackets lying in the grass. The others are all sub-surface.

There are some areas of strong positive responses. The most interesting being in the north-east corner of the survey which may indicate some human activity.

The broad response running north-east from the southern edge appears to be confirmed by the LIDAR (Image 4) as an ancient route of Juniper Gill down from the moorland, crossing two fields before turning north and entering the River Swale at the eastern boundary of Ellerton Priory's East Field. Just to the north of this feature on the western side of the survey area are two shallow 'S' shaped features that appear to be of geological origin which may have been water channels too.

Image 32 is a Google earth view of the mill's water-catchment system with the five main water sources identified (W1–W5). It was thought that the Unscheduled Field could have had culverts carrying the spring water that originates from the moorland area to the south, however compared with the culvert found in the West Field (Image 9) none were detected.



Image 30: Unscheduled Field viewed from Juniper Gill Plantation. Abbey farm in the centre and Ellerton priory in the valley just to the right of the foreground tree.

Ellerton Priory Gradiometer Survey Unscheduled Field

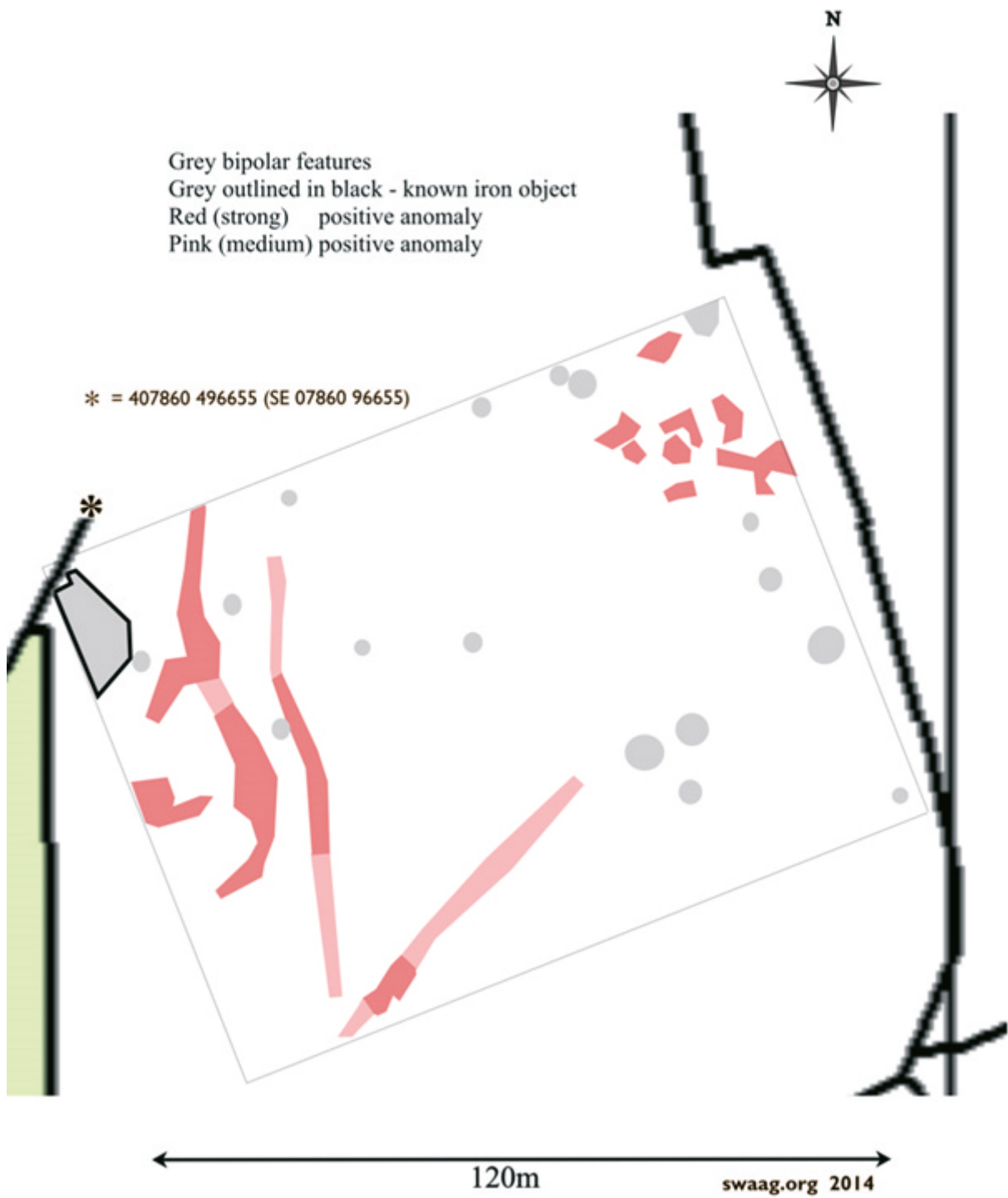


Image 31: Ellerton Priory Unscheduled Field Gradiometer Data. Positive and Bi-polar magnetic anomalies.

7 Water-catchment Area

Google earth Image 32 and Image 33 show the essential components from the GPS survey, whilst the photograph Image 34 shows the moorland section with the various components identified. There appear to be five main sources of water that relate to Ellerton Priory and village.



Image 32: Google earth image of Ellerton Mill's water-catchment area.

Ellerton Farm, Ellerton Abbey and Swale Farm still receive their cold water from some of these sources.

Apart from Juniper Gill itself, the watercourses down from the moorland and its associated springs would have been via managed leats or sandstone culverts, although in some cases natural underground watercourses may have been utilized. Modern materials and practices have since been used to pipe the water down from the moorland apparently largely following the same routes.

The the five sources (W1–W5) from west to east on Ellerton Moor (Image 33), W1 is a leat/spring system that leads to a gate in the southern boundary of the field to the west of Juniper Gill Plantation where a spring line flows northwards. Part-way down the field it breaks surface where it is fenced off from farm animals. It continues underground until it enters the next field below where the Mill Field scheduling extends to cover a leat system. It once was channelled into these two surviving leats where water could be directed eastwards into the mill pond or westwards towards Swale Farm the site of medieval Ellerton Village. Modern pipes currently take the water northwards bypassing the leats towards the modern road. It surfaces twice more, once as shown by the blue rectangle on Image 33, and secondly near a roadside double field gate, where it could be the feed to the culvert identified in the West Field (as mentioned on page 4).

Sources 2–4 are also shown in Image 34.

The second source (W2) is from the high moorland down Juniper Gill. Above Juniper Gill Plantation the gill is of significant depth (Image 35). Juniper Gill and its tributaries extend for more than 1 km in a southerly direction and drain many hectares of moorland.

From the south-east corner of Juniper Gill Plantation on the open moorland a prominent leat cuts upwards across the hillside towards what was once a small hill-side dam (W3) . This third source was the main managed water reservoir located 45m in altitude above the mill pond. There is a second shallow but larger depression above this reservoir that may also have been used to store water. The leat peters out as it approaches the plantation. It would appear that water was left to make its own way down the steep slope into Juniper Gill. Now that the dam has gone and the reservoir is dry, spring water rises from just below the dam, but instead of running down the leat it trickles directly to the dry-stone wall that forms the boundary between the moorland and the Unscheduled Field. A second spring a few metres to the east does the same. These springs may be feeding water to the marshy area (Image 33) around the north-east corner of Juniper Gill Plantation.

The fourth source (W4) largely appears to originate at the southern border of the Mill Field with the Unscheduled Field although there are some slight vegetative suggestions that it may extend slightly further south.

The fifth source (W5) was another spring that originates further around the hillside towards the east. It initially runs directly towards a drystone wall to the north-east, before turning to run along this boundary northwards towards Ellerton Priory East Field water system by running just the other side of the Unscheduled Field's eastern boundary wall.

There is no visible spring water crossing the Unscheduled Field towards either the spring-line crossing the Mill Field or the marshy area. It is likely that the water follows natural subterranean courses.

Ellerton Priory Mill Field and Water Catchment

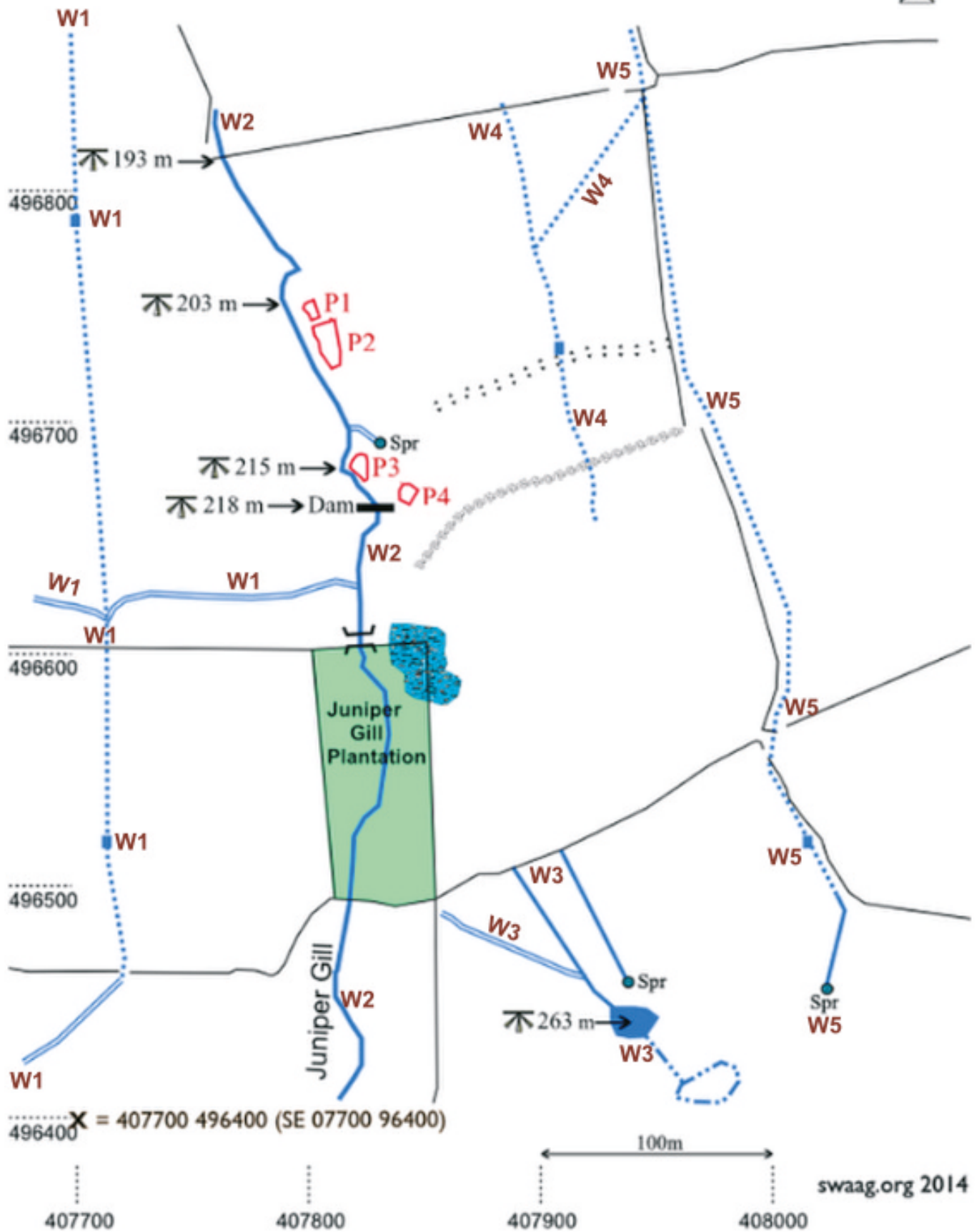


Image 33: Ellerton Priory water-catchment system, with gradiometer data overlay and water-courses W1–W4 identified.

Ellerton Priory Water-catchment Area

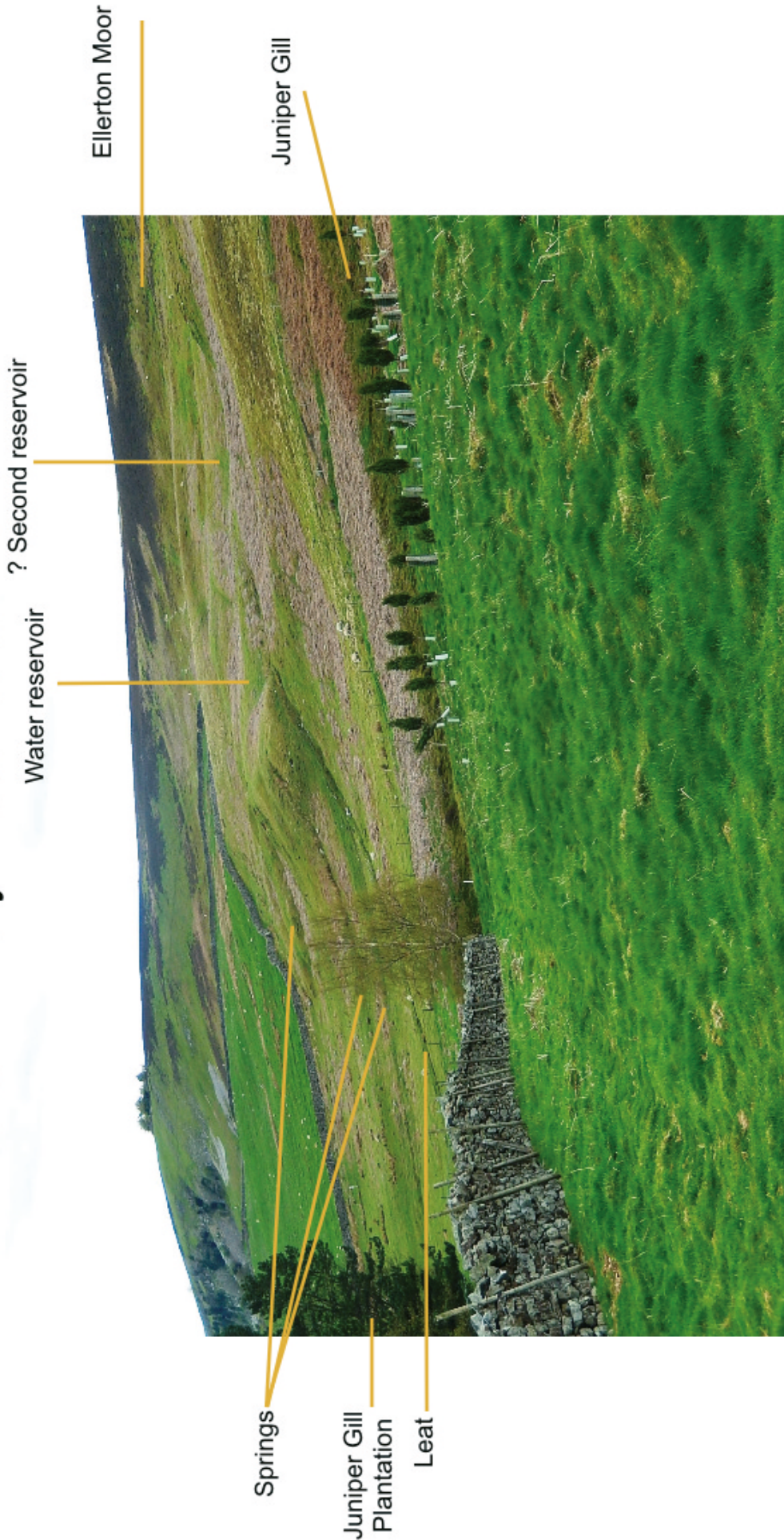


Image 34: Photograph of Ellerton Moor and the Water-catchment Area.



Image 35: Juniper Gill above Juniper Gill Plantation — looking south.

8 References

Ellerton priory, Swaledale, North Yorkshire, Archaeology Survey, Ed Dennison Archaeological Services, (1996).

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Swaledale, Valley of the Wild River. Andrew Fleming (2010).

9 Personnel who contributed to the survey

SWAAG

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Shirley Gale

Stephen Eastmead

YDNPA

Robert White, Senior Historic Environment Officer.

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Hannah Brown

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11 Appendix 1 English Heritage Ancient Monuments Listing

List entry Summary

This monument is scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as amended as it appears to the Secretary of State to be of national importance. This entry is a copy, the original is held by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Name: Ellerton Priory: a Cistercian nunnery including fishponds, water management system, mill, field systems and Ellerton medieval settlement

List entry Number: 1019154

Location:

The monument may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County	North Yorkshire
District	Richmondshire
District Type	District Authority
Parish	Ellerton Abbey

National Park: YORKSHIRE DALES

Grade: Not applicable to this List entry.

Date first scheduled: 27-Apr-1949

Date of most recent amendment: 09-Nov-2000

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: RSM

UID: 31353

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Monument

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

A nunnery was a settlement built to sustain a community of religious women. Its main buildings were constructed to provide facilities for worship, accommodation and subsistence. The main elements are the church and domestic buildings arranged around a cloister. This central enclosure may be accompanied by an outer court and gatehouse, the whole bounded by a precinct wall, earthworks or moat. Outside the enclosure, fishponds, mills, field systems, stock enclosures and barns may occur. The earliest English nunneries were founded in the seventh century AD but most of these had fallen out of use by the ninth century. A small number of these were later refounded. The tenth century witnessed the foundation of some new houses but the majority of medieval nunneries were established from the late 11th century onwards. Nunneries were established by most of the major religious orders of the time, including the Benedictines, Cistercians, Augustinians, Franciscans and Dominicans. It is known from documentary sources

that at least 153 nunneries existed in England, of which the precise locations of only around 100 sites are known. Few sites have been examined in detail and as a rare and poorly understood medieval monument type all examples exhibiting survival of archaeological remains are worthy of protection.

Medieval villages in England were marked by a great regional diversity in form, size and type, and the protection of their archaeological remains needs to take these differences into account. To do this, England has been divided into three broad provinces on the basis of each area's distinctive mixture of nucleated and dispersed settlements. These can be further divided into sub-Provinces and local regions, possessing characteristics which have evolved gradually during the past 1500 years or more. The Craven Block local region, including the Askrigg Block, encompasses the high moorlands south of Stainmore. Away from the 'specialist nucleations' of post-medieval date (the clusters of houses associated with mining and the railways), dispersed settlement includes both seasonal and permanent farmsteads, as well as specialist sheep and cattle ranches. The latter were normally outlying dependencies of larger settlements or estate centres located in adjacent regions. In these upland environments, dating settlements can be difficult. Medieval villages were organised agricultural communities, sited at the centre of a parish or township that shared resources such as arable land, meadow and woodland. Village plans varied enormously, but when they survive as earthworks their most distinguishing features include roads and minor tracks, platforms on which stood houses and other buildings such as barns, enclosed crofts and small enclosed paddocks. They frequently included the parish church within their boundaries. In the northern province of England, villages were the most distinctive aspect of rural life, and their archaeological remains are one of the most important sources of understanding about rural life in the five or more centuries following the Norman Conquest. Medieval villages were supported by a mixed system of agriculture based on both arable and pasture. Arable cultivation usually took place in strips of land, which were divided up amongst individual villagers. The cultivation of these strips led to long, wide ridges, and the resultant 'ridge and furrow' where it survives is the most obvious physical indication of medieval field systems. The strips were laid out in groups known as furlongs defined by terminal headlands at the plough turning-points and lateral grass balks. Furlongs were in turn grouped into large open fields. Well preserved ridge and furrow, especially in its original context adjacent to village earthworks, is both an important source of information about medieval agrarian life and a distinctive contribution to the character of the historic landscape. It is usually now covered by the hedges or walls of subsequent field enclosure. In addition to field systems, other medieval agricultural activities were practised such as fish farming in special fishponds. These were artificial pools of slow moving water in which fish were bred and stored in order to provide a constant supply of fresh fish for consumption and trade. Fishponds were maintained by a water management system to regulate water flow. In addition to the ponds there would be buildings for use by fishermen for storing equipment or fish curing. The tradition of constructing and using fishponds in England began during the medieval period and peaked in the 12th century. Large and complex systems were often associated with the wealthy sectors of society such as monastic institutions and the aristocracy. Small and simple examples are commonly found at villages throughout England. As part of the economic functions of the community most villages contained one or more watermills. A watermill uses the gravitational force of water to turn a paddled wheel which enabled the operation of varying kinds of machinery. The wheel could be set directly into a river or stream or more commonly powered by water fed through artificial channels. Early medieval mills could have horizontal or vertical wheels and the former had disappeared from England by the 12th century. The earliest mill identified thus far dates to the late 7th century AD and by the time of the Domesday Book an estimated 6,000 were in existence. During the medieval period mills were usually used for grinding corn but with technological improvements their use spread to further agricultural and industrial purposes such as tilt hammers and bellows and textile processing. The remains at Ellerton preserve a wide range of features associated with the medieval period. Important remains of both the nunnery and the village and their associated social, agricultural and economic activities survive. The monument offers important scope

for understanding the relationship between the religious and the secular communities and the consequent impact on the wider dales landscape.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

The monument includes remains of Ellerton Priory and the adjacent early medieval village, including fishponds and field systems located on the south bank of the River Swale 10km west of Richmond. Also included are earthwork remains of a mill and the water management system, located on the hillside 700m to the south, which provided the water supply to the priory and its associated industrial activities. The monument comprises three separate areas of protection. The first area contains the priory and the adjacent village remains, and occupies the whole of the field west of Ellerton Abbey house and most of the field to the east as far south as the water course extending east to west. The second area contains the water management system, associated structures and areas of medieval agriculture, and occupies the field north-east of Juniper Gill Plantation and part of the field to the north-west. The third area contains a reservoir and associated water channels and is located on the moor edge to the south. The monument is also known as Ellerton Abbey although this is not the correct name. The medieval village of Ellerton was one of the settlements located in Lower Swaledale mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086. The settlement then comprised land two leagues long and one league wide which could be worked by two plough teams. The manor was held by Gamall and the whole was valued at 13 shillings. It is thought to have been established as early as 800-900 as an outlying township of a wider pre-Norman territorial unit based upon Downholme 4km to the east. The irregular plan of the village is typical of pre-Conquest settlements in the region. By the 14th century, in common with other villages in the area it suffered a decline in fortune due to bad harvests, disease and raids by the Scots and was eventually abandoned. Ellerton Priory was a small Cistercian nunnery dedicated to Saint Mary. Relatively little is known of the history of the priory but the Eaglescliffe family, who may have been lords of Ellerton, have been suggested as founders in around 1200. As with many Yorkshire nunneries, Ellerton was small and at its height probably only housed thirteen nuns, and as few as five are recorded in 1381. The priory was poor but it is known that it held land in Ellerton manor and two properties in Walburn 6km to the west. At the Dissolution income from rents and farms in Richmond and neighbouring villages including Bellerby and Constable Burton was recorded. In the early 14th century the priory suffered at the hands of Scottish raiders, specifically in November 1347 when it was utterly despoiled. The priory was surrendered to the crown on 18th August 1536 and formally dissolved the following year. After the Dissolution the site of the priory was bought on a 21 year lease by Ralph Closeby, a member of the royal household. In 1568 the site was sold to Percival Bowes and John Moysier when it became part of the manor of Ellerton under the lordship of Richard Brackenbury whose family had been former tenants of the priory. In the early 17th century the manor passed to the Drax family. The remains of Ellerton Priory are dominated by the church, parts of which survive as upstanding ruins, and are Listed Grade II. Recent earthwork and geophysical surveys of the priory show that it demonstrates the usual layout of a monastic house, with a church, orientated east to west, forming the north range of a four-sided complex known as the cloister. The typical arrangement of a cloister included accommodation located on the east side with direct access to the church, the south side housed the kitchens and refectory, and the west side stores, cellars and sometimes a guest house. The cloister lay at the centre of an enclosure known as the inner court which contained a range of further buildings essential for the economic and social functions of the priory which could include an infirmary, and lodging for the prioress or secular guests. Beyond the inner court was the precinct which housed outbuildings and structures necessary for the economic functions of the priory such as gardens, a bakehouse, workshops, stables and stores, as well as some agricultural land. The precinct was normally defined by a wall or fence. Remains of such features survive as low earthworks or are known from survey to survive below ground. Nunneries in contrast to male monastic houses tended to be poorer and this is reflected in their size and use of lesser building materials such as timber or cob, with the ex-

ception of the church which was invariably of stone construction. This use of lesser constructional techniques is evident by the slight nature of the earthworks. The church lies in the centre of the inner court and measures 34.5m long by 8m wide. It includes a rectangular aisleless, undivided nave, the chancel and the western tower. The tower stands to a height of 14.7m and the interior is open to the roof. The roof was replaced in the 1980s as part of a programme of repair. The east end of the church survives to a height of 5.5m. The earliest elements of the church date to the 13th century but the greater part belongs to the 15th century. The church was partly remodelled in the 19th century to turn it into a romantic Gothic ruin to be viewed from the nearby Ellerton Abbey house, which was built c.1830. This work included the rebuilding of the north wall of the nave, the insertion of a window into the west wall of the tower, and raising the roof by adding battlements. There are pieces of at least three elaborate stone coffin lids which may be dated to the late 13th century in the church. The cloister, lying to the south of the church, measures about 25m east to west by 20m north to south. The inner court, surrounding the cloister, measures about 120m east to west by 150m north to south. It is defined on the west side by earthwork remains of buildings orientated north to south, on the east and north sides by a slight bank and on the south side by a prominent bank. At the north-west corner of the inner court there are the remains of a gatehouse. From here a well preserved trackway extends west, through the adjacent village remains, and originally continued west as one of the main routes up into Swaledale. The south side of the inner court has a further entrance way allowing access to the precinct to the south. There are earthwork and buried remains of further buildings within the precinct. To the west of the gatehouse there are the remains of a small complex of structures which have been identified as a small farmstead within the precinct. There are also remains of agricultural features within the precinct including a block of ridge and furrow to the south west and a wide terrace to the east. In the field to the west of the priory, to the south of the village and adjacent to the modern road, there are the remains of a complex of fishponds. These include a rectangular tank 1.5m deep and measuring 10m by 20m. At the east end there is a smaller shallower tank about 8m square and a second smaller tank to the north. There are footings for a small building, possibly a fish curing house, on the north side of the large tank. The whole complex is surrounded by a low earthwork bank. The ponds were fed by water from the water management system to the south. The remains of Ellerton village are located in the field west of the priory. The north side of the field inclines upwards sharply and then rises gently to a cliff overlooking the river Swale. On the top of this slope there are the remains of the village street extending from the west and continuing east to the priory. Clustered around the street is an irregular arrangement of rectangular platforms upon which buildings stood. Some of these are cut into the south-facing slope. The building platforms measure up to 6m by 3m and stand 1.5m in height. Some of the building remains on the top of the slope lie within small rectangular enclosures. In addition to the building platforms on the slope there are also terraces, up to 7m wide which extend from the lower part of the field up to the top of the slope. These terraces contained tracks or were used for horticulture. On the east side of the lower part of the field there are two large rectangular earthwork enclosures which are partly cut into the rising ground to the east. The remainder of the lower part of the field west of the fishponds contains linear, parallel earthworks known as ridge and furrow which form part of the medieval field system. There is also a further block of ridge and furrow in the north-east of the field. On the hillside to the south there are also blocks of ridge and furrow surviving as faint earthworks extending down the slope in the field (in the second area of protection) to the east of Juniper Gill. There is a clear terrace 4m wide which crosses the field from east to west about 40m north of the ruined field wall which marks the south edge of the field. It is not currently clear whether all or part of the horticultural terraces, enclosures and ridge and furrow were associated with the village or the priory. On the hillside to the south are the remains of the water management system. This system provided water to a variety of industrial and economic functions located on the hillside. The system also provided water for the fishponds and to the priory for uses including the kitchens and latrines. The creation of this system included the modification of existing natural watercourses and the construction of conduits and water channels known as leats. The main stream in the area, Juniper Gill, was dammed just below Juniper Gill Plantation to create a reservoir to control water flow. A leat extended across the hillside for 80m to the west to a further natural water course

from which additional water was fed into the reservoir. A second reservoir was constructed out of a natural hollow further up the hillside south-east of Juniper Gill Plantation. This fed two stone lined conduits which ran north and downslope. Remains of the reservoir on Juniper Gill survive as prominent mounds on each side of the gill 20m below the plantation. The leat to the west survives as a prominent earth and stone bank 2m wide on the north, downslope side, with the channel to the south being 1.5m wide. The second reservoir (in the third area of protection) measures 30m east to west by 17m north to south. It is formed from a natural hollow which was originally dammed at the west end, and remains of the earthworks supporting the sluice system still survive. At the west end a leat 0.5m wide survives as a shallow trench extending north as far as the field wall where it turns and extends east for 40m then joins a further overflow leat leading north from the reservoir. The water course then continues north below ground through the next field. The exact position of the leat in this field or whether it survives is yet to be confirmed and hence this section is not included in the scheduling. After 150m a single leat emerges as an earthwork just beyond the ruined wall line where it is identifiable as a shallow depression up to 0.5m wide extending north down the slope. The leat continues north for a further 40m and then is breached just beyond a wide terrace crossing the field. Here it can be seen that the leat is composed of a stone built conduit. Further north the leat is preserved as clear, embanked, trenches up to 1.2m wide. Along the east side of Juniper Gill, north of the dam, are the earthworks of a series of rectangular buildings. These are the remains of buildings which required a regulated water flow such as mills, smithies and textile processing. One building, identified as a mill is located about 150m north of the plantation, and measures 6m by 3m. There are also traces of the course of water chutes, known as launders, feeding the building. In addition to the industrial buildings there are also remains of ancillary buildings such as stores and workshops. Remains of at least four of these structures survive as low earthworks up to 6m by 10m. Further structures requiring a water supply were located on the west side of the leat lying to the east. These are preserved as a series of four platforms cut into the slope adjacent to the conduit; they measure up to 6m wide and 4m deep. It is thought that the exploitation of water power at Juniper Gill pre-dates the priory and was associated with the village. The mill building has been identified as having a horizontal water wheel, a form of technology which had disappeared from England by the 12th century. Both Juniper Gill and the other water channels disappear underground to the north as they run beneath improved fields and their exact course is unclear. However water from these sources emerges in the south west of the field lying west of Ellerton Abbey house and flows east through conduits which may be medieval in origin. These water courses are still in use to provide drainage and water for stock and are not included in the scheduling. A number of features are excluded from the monument. These include all farm walls, fences, gates, tree guards, stock feeding and watering facilities and modern water conduits. However, the ground beneath these features is included. The area enclosed by the leats and reservoir in the third area of protection is totally excluded from the scheduling.

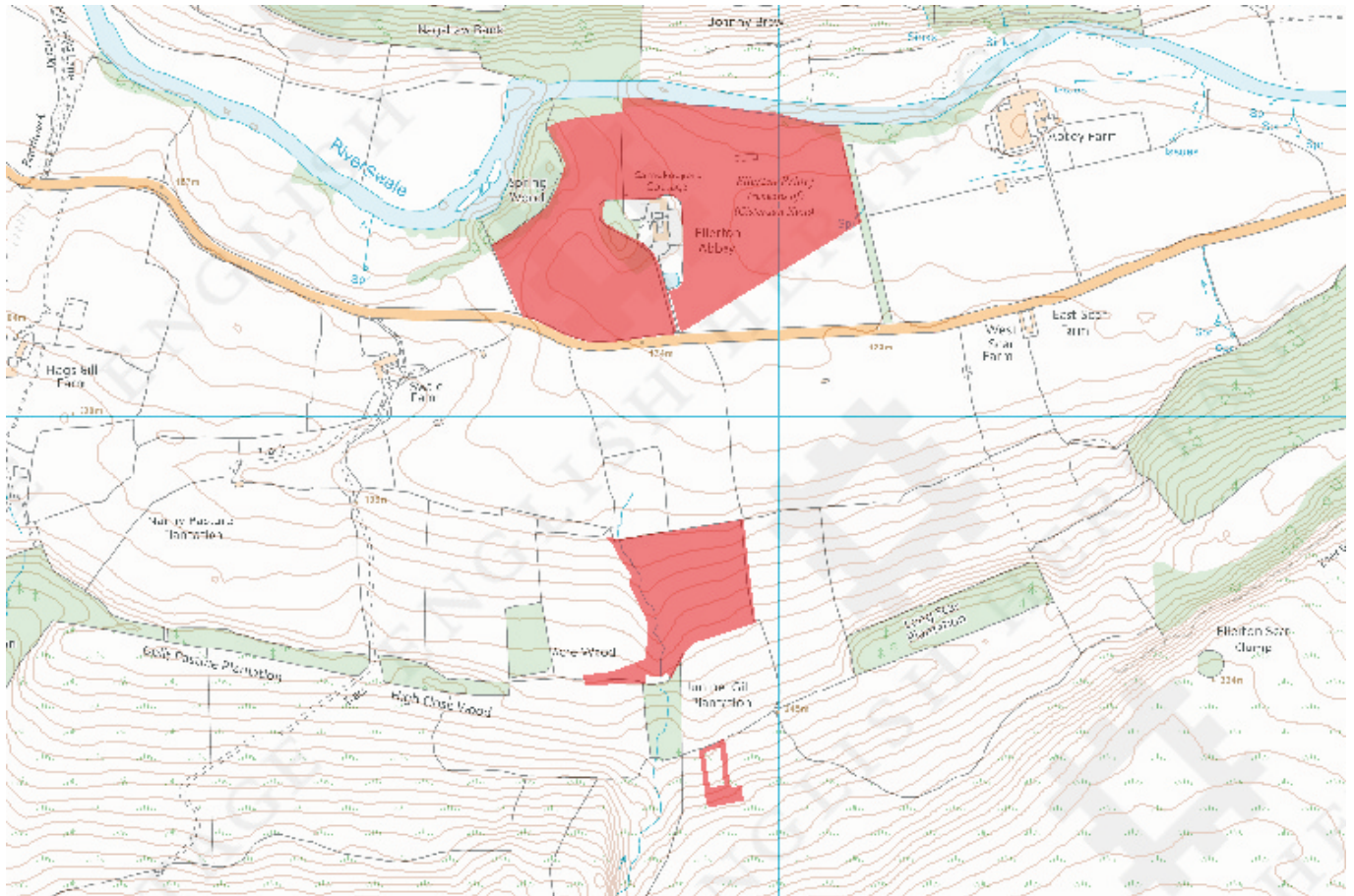
MAP EXTRACT The site of the monument is shown on the attached map extract. It includes a 2 metre boundary around the archaeological features, considered to be essential for the monument's support and preservation.

Selected Sources

1. **Book Reference** - *Author:* Fleming, A - *Title:* Swaledale: Valley of the Wild River - *Date:* 1998 - *Page References:* PP21,38 - *Type:* DESC TEXT
2. **Other Reference** - *Author:* Moorhouse, S - *Date:* 1998 - *Type:* PERS COMM
3. **Article Reference** - *Author:* Burton, J E - *Title:* The Yorkshire Nunneries of the 12th and 13th Centuries - *Date:* 1979 - *Journal Title:* Botherwick Papers - *Volume:* No. 56

National Grid Reference: SE 07835 96723, SE 07846 97169, SE 07911 96473

Map



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12 Appendix 2 Additional Photographs



Ellerton Priory with Ellerton Moor in the background.



Ellerton Priory looking north towards the River Swale valley.



Ellerton Priory.



Ellerton Priory West Field: fish ponds overgrown with thistles.



Ellerton Priory West Field: looking north at a major lynchet.



Ellerton Priory West Field viewed from Ellerton Abbey House with Juniper Gill, Juniper Gill Plantation and Ellerton Moor beyond.



Juniper Gill platform P3 Mill site with dam and mill pond beyond.



Ellerton Priory Mill and Dam Site: Worked stone.



Ellerton Priory Mill and Dam Site: Worked stone.



Ellerton Priory Mill and Dam Site: Worked stone.



Ellerton Priory Mill and Dam Site: Worked stone.



Ellerton Priory Mill Pond area looking southwards to where Juniper Gill is bridged below the plantation.



Juniper Gill Plantation Bridge.



Ellerton Priory Mill Pond: Top centre below the conifers the leat can be seen running towards the Mill Pond



The leat in the image above meets the fence line here. The spring-line runs from the small iron fence in the field just to the right of the gate opening in the dry-stone wall.



Looking from the south-east corner of Juniper Gill Plantation at the leat that connects the moorland reservoir with Juniper Gill.



Looking from the moorland reservoir at Juniper Gill Plantation. The leat and the two spring-lines are shown. The leat-like feature crossing the mid section of the leat is an old tractor track.

Appendix 3

English Heritage Geophysical Survey Database Questionnaire

Survey Details

Name of Site: ELLERTON PRIORY: A CISTERCIAN NUNNERY

County: NORTH YORKSHIRE

NGR Grid Reference SE 076 973

Start Date: 07/02/2014 End Date: 07/10/2014

Geology at site: The River Swale catchment is underlain by a series of Carboniferous, Permian and Triassic rocks resting on Lower Palaeozoic basement beds. The basement rocks are succeeded by a massive limestone formation known as the Great Scar Limestone. The Dinantian limestones, shales and sandstones, formerly known as the Yoredale Series, that overlay this formation outcrop in the valleys of the upper Swale and its tributaries (Dunham and Wilson, 1985).

Known archaeological Sites/Monuments covered by the survey

Monument no:1019154

Archaeological Sites/Monument types detected by survey as described in the schedule.

Surveyor: Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Archaeology Group.

Name of Client, if any: Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Purpose of Survey: Survey prior to parkland tree replanting

Location of:

a) Primary archive, i.e. raw data, electronic archive etc: Swaledale Museum Reeth

b) Full Report: Swaledale Museum Reeth

Technical Details

Type of Survey: Magnetometer

Area Surveyed, if applicable (In hectares to one decimal place): approx 5.7ha

Traverse Separation, 1m zig-zag with 4 readings / metre along each traverse

Type, Make and model of Instrumentation: Bartington 601-2

Land use at the time of the survey (Use term/terms from the attached list or specify other):

Grassland - pasture.

List of terms for Survey Type

Magnetometer (includes gradiometer)

Resistivity

Resistivity Profile

Magnetic Susceptibility

Electro-Magnetic Survey

Ground Penetrating Radar

Other (please specify)

List of terms for Land Use:

Arable

Grassland - Pasture

Grassland - Undifferentiated

Heathland

Moorland

Coastland - Inter-Tidal

Coastland - Above High Water

Allotment

Archaeological Excavation

Garden
Lawn
Orchard
Park
Playing Field
Built-Over
Churchyard
Waste Ground
Woodland
Other (please specify)



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