

PART 2: Walls 9 - 19 and endrefs

Wall 9 (Fig 53: repairs and works mainly during January and February 2022)



Fig 53: Wall at the southern side of the cloister, probably coeval with wall 6

Wall 9, often said to be the south wall of the cloister, cannot be so. It probably derives from a building first recorded on the Kewstoke Tithe Map of 1840, and in its current form, cuts the former spiral stair at the southern end of wall 10.



Fig 54: Wall 9 from south, 2020

Before repairs in 2022, wall 9 was lacking any major defects, but required repointing to replace lost surface mortar.

The wall is strengthened by the backing of an earth bank, obviously post-Dissolution, but featuring in OS plans as early as 1885 (Fig 55 below). The origin of this bank is obscure: various stones set into the bank appear to be garden features of late post-medieval date, with the whole being apparently a pseudo-haha, allowing uninterrupted views to the countryside beyond from the garden.

It clearly cannot have been present when the cloister was in use before the 16th century: various buildings have come and gone along this line, including a long building recorded on the Kewstoke Tithe Map (1840) (Fig 56 below). It is even possible that the construction of this building was the occasion of the construction of wall 9 (?and wall 6), which for reasons discussed elsewhere, cannot possibly be on the line of the original south cloister wall.

The bank clearly could not have functioned as a garden feature while this structure was in place, and so probably dates to the late 19th century (between 1840 and 1885).

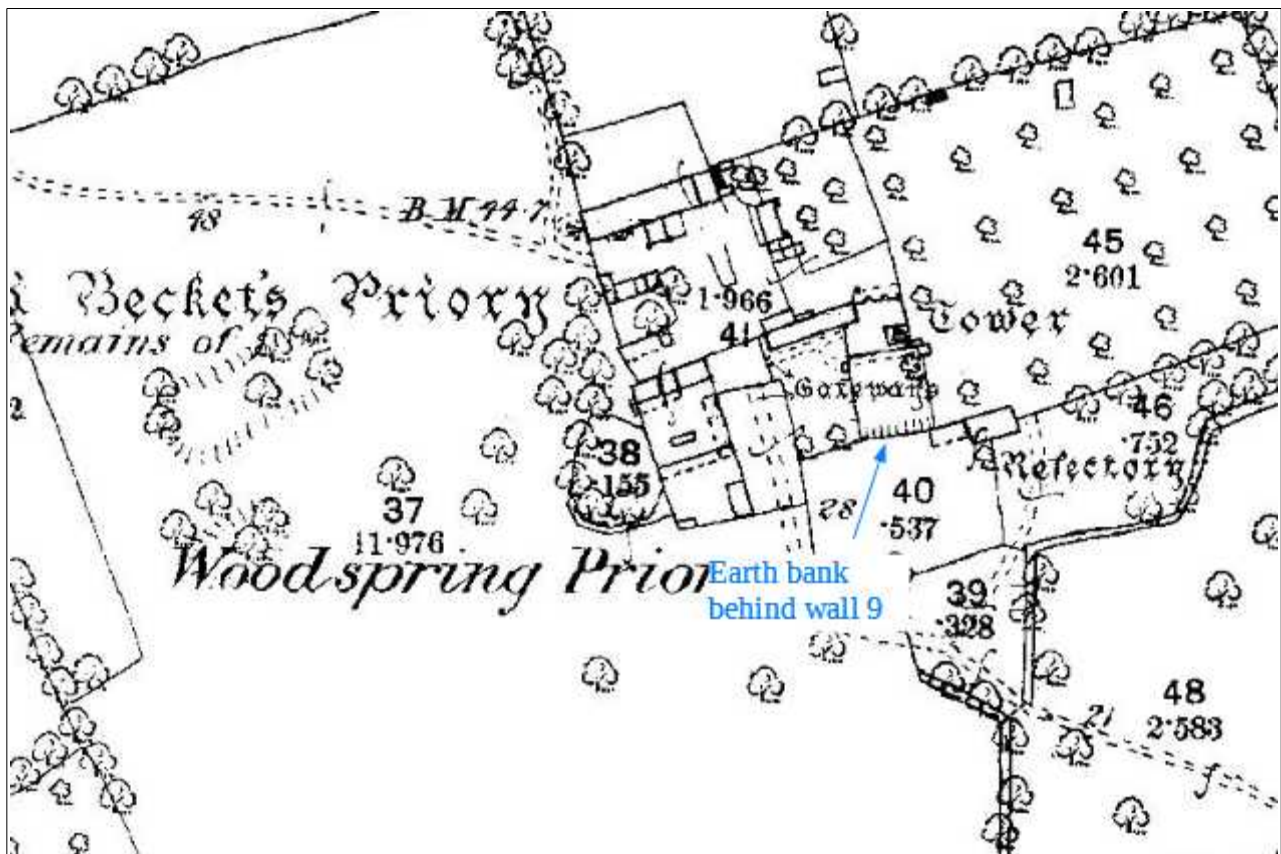


Fig 55: Earth bank behind wall 9, OS plan c1885

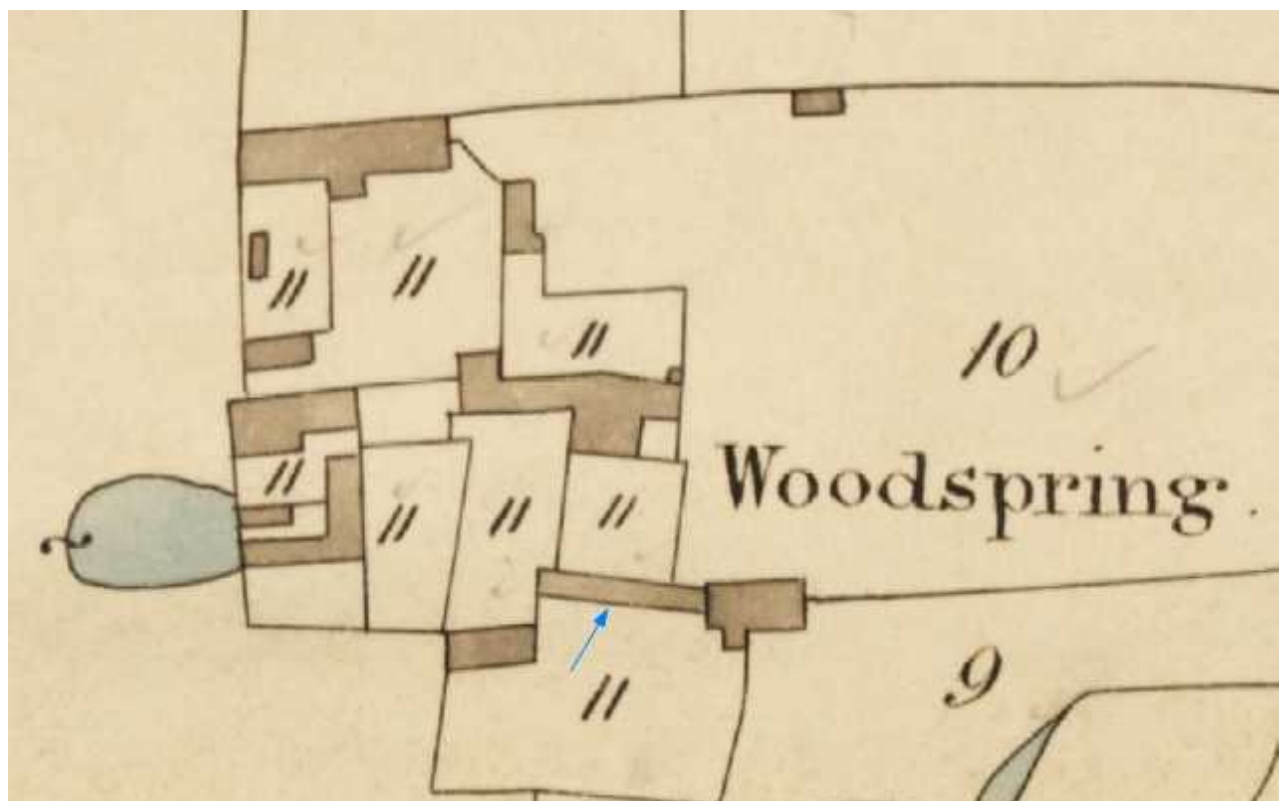


Fig 56: Structure first recorded in 1840 (Kewstoke Tithe Map)

The long building depicted on the 1840 Tithe Map had itself disappeared by 1885 (Fig 55 above), where a broken-fronted building, almost certainly a pigsty, was constructed against wall 6, and was still visible in the early 20th century (Fig 57 below). It acquired a concreted floor in the mid 20th century, still visible in air photos of 1949 (see wall 19 below), and the remnants of sockets for structural timbers of which were visible until 2022 repairs (Fig 38 above).



Fig 57: Wall 9 and agricultural buildings attached to wall 6 (nd, but c1930) (post card courtesy of David Long, Clevedon)

Unlike the situation in c1914, when the field was used by pigs (YCCART 2021b), the state of the grass, and the fence against wall 9 show this field was now used by cattle (or more likely, horses).

Repointing (Fig 58 below) was interrupted by frosts in February 2022, but successfully protected and is now sound.

The projecting stone in Fig 58 is likely a domestic insertion, to simplify movement between the garden (cloister) area and the paddock to its south, and of no great age.

Wall 9 raises again the point that easy assumptions about the origin and age of structures within even such a well-known Scheduled area as Woodspring Priory need to be tested: discovered later (or earlier!) origins in no way lessen the importance of these structures, but increase our understanding of the development and use of the sites, both within the range of dates for which the site was Scheduled, and outside of it.

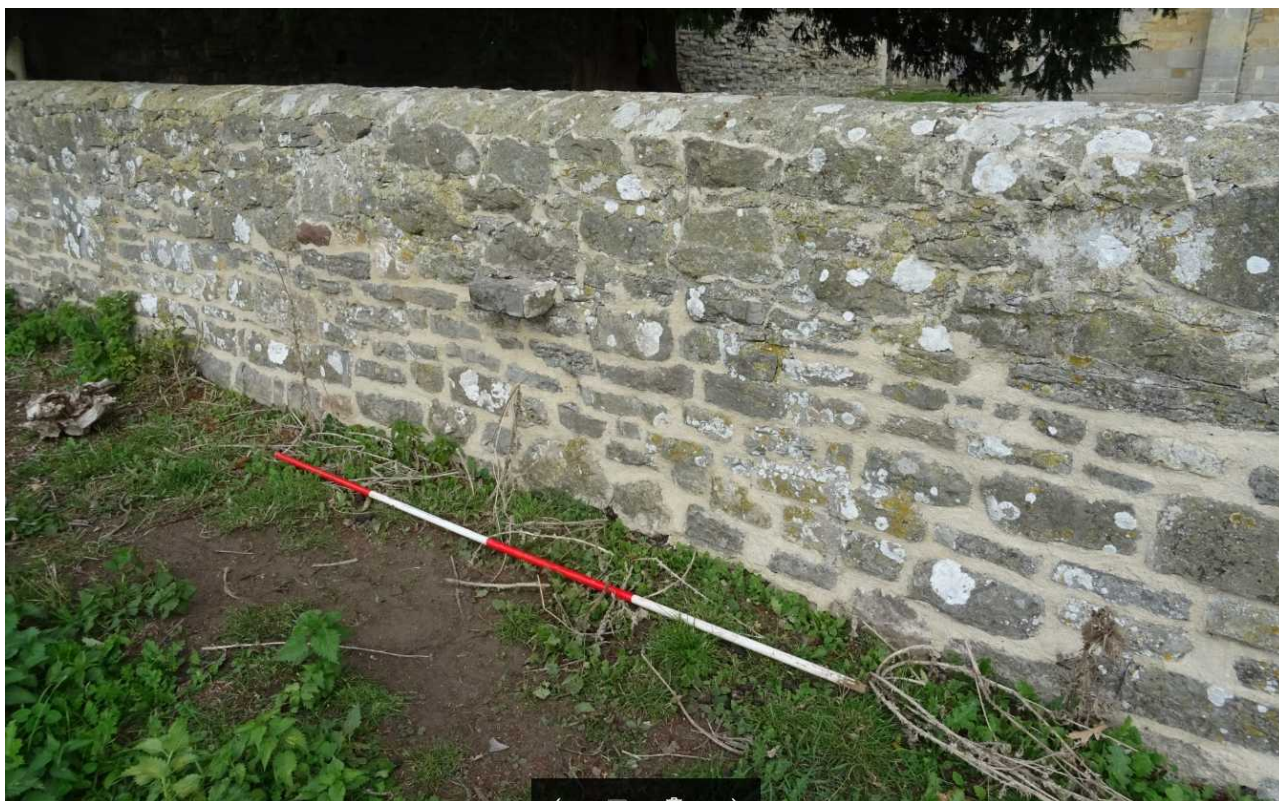


Fig 58: Wall 9 after repointing in 2022

Wall 10: (Fig 59: Repairs during winter and spring 2022)

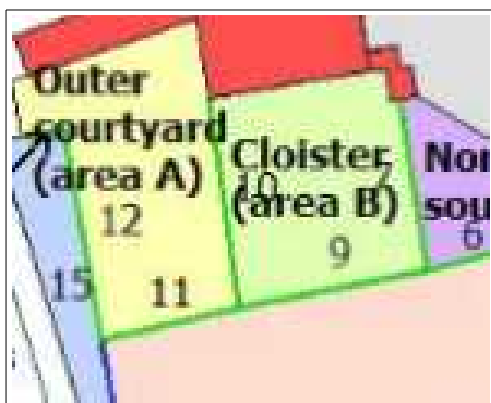


Fig 59: West cloister wall 10 (centre), specifically Listed in its own right and largely medieval in origin

Wall 10 (uniformly c4.0m high) is clearly the medieval surviving structure of the external west wall of the cloister, possibly dating (see below) to the later 15th/16th century stage of development at the Priory. Unlike any walls so far described (with the exception of parts of wall 7) this medieval origin is demonstrable.

This is also the first structure so far described that has clear evidence of a first floor structure (above the west cloister walk), although wall 7 may have done so, but evidence there is lacking.



Fig 60: Northern (external) view of wall 10, after repairs, 2022 - note buttresses, gargoyles and basal string course

This wall is entirely composed of coursed rubble, mostly of local Blue Lias, with freestone features, such as the stair door and buttresses, and the gargoyles on the exterior wall.



Fig 61: By contrast, southern (external) view of wall 10 before clearance and repair, 2022

The difference between these two views shows the necessity for the works of 2022.

One potentially limiting factor in the works was the presence of roosting bats in the top of wall 10 during winter 2021-22. These introduce a necessity to obtain a licence and procedures for 'demolition, construction and maintenance' of buildings where such bats are shown to be in residence (on-site notice). While this may cause problems with timing and scheduling of repairs, such issues can usually be (and were here) solved with goodwill. The fact that bats were able to roost in the structure of the wall is another indication of how necessary the 2022 repairs had become.

Wall 10 is the remaining 2-storey west wall of the west cloister walk, the floor of which was clearly identified during YCCCART geophysical survey in 2021-22 (YCCCART, forthcoming).

The upper gable of the buildings was preserved when the church was rebuilt in the late 15th/early 16th century, and can be seen today (Fig 66 below).

Below this gable, at the northern end of wall 10, a later, post-medieval entrance has been punched through the wall, and a freestone 'porch' constructed on its western side. This is visible today as a rather clumsily built freestone arch facing the 'garden' (see

below).

Apart from the existing putlog holes (cleaned and repaired during the works), and the projecting corbel stones for the first floor roof, the interior of the wall is largely featureless until it reaches the southern end of the wall, where the doorway into, and the internal curve of, a stair to the first floor survive (Fig 67 below).

The mass of this interior cloister wall would presumably have been plastered over as an internal wall during use, but 500 years of weather have apparently completely removed any traces of such.



Fig 62: Eastern (interior) view of wall 10, looking south-west, after repairs, 2022

Apart from the 'porch' at its northern end, the external wall has more complex structure than the internal, presumably as it was a visible feature.

The wall has a string course along the base of most of its length, bridged by (but apparently respected by) a series of three buttresses in various states of repair, some incorporating earlier carved freestone work, potentially implying their later date than the wall (although see below).

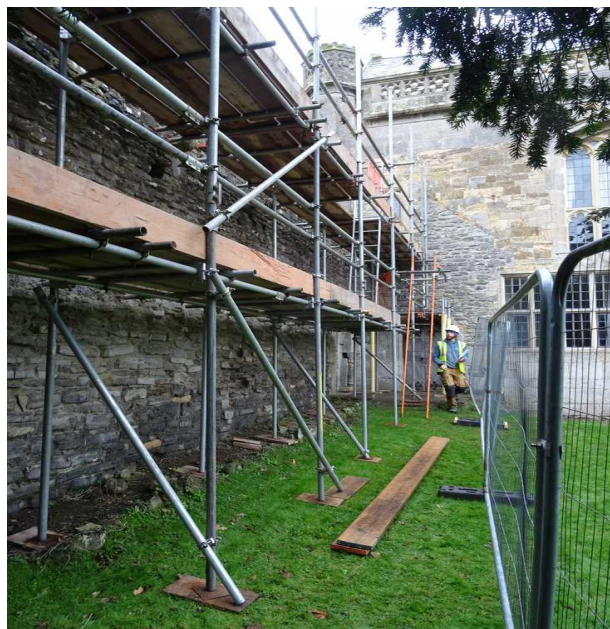
Along and just below the top of the wall, a series of freestone grotesque gargoyles survive (also in various states of disrepair) (see below). These were presumably for the dispersal

of rainwater from the first floor roof into the open ground outside.

Most of the works to this wall consisted of the stabilisation of the top of the wall (where the bats were) and the repointing of the rest of the faces. This was accomplished from scaffolding during March and April 2022.



Fig 63: External and internal scaffolding, wall 10, March - April 2022



At the northern end of wall 10, the doorway and porch constructed in the wall were in reasonable condition, and needed little repair.

The porch structure is post-1829 in construction (Buckler's drawing of 1829 shows a conventional, possibly late medieval doorway - Fig 64 below - at the site). While the 1840 Kewstoke Tithe map shows nothing at the site, this is a small scale map, and the earliest reliable mapping is the OS Epoch 1 map of c1885 (Fig 55 above), which shows the structure in place.

The porch simply encompasses earlier features, so (for example), the southern turret of the western front of the nave survives to ground level inside it: on the garden (eastern) side, the structure is a rather clumsily built freestone arched doorway, with surviving contemporary mortar (pale grey with coal inclusions) between its structure and the medieval wall 10.

Part of this doorway, with its ragged surrounding patched gap in the medieval stonework, can be seen in Fig 66 below.

The gable end of the cloister buildings survives in the south wall of the rebuilt nave (the former of coursed Lias rubble, the latter of ashlar, mixed up to the string course level with the shoulders of the windows, but largely of 'new' Doultong/Dundry stone above). Detailed recording of this structure of the nave and the types of stone used / reused might well clarify details of its construction history that are currently obscure.



Fig 64: J C Buckler's drawing of 1829 shows the cloister wall before construction of the 'porch', and the then current (largely intact) status of the external buttresses



Fig 65: Porch (1989) and opposing doorway (2022) set into wall 10



Fig 66: 'Ghost' of upper storey gable of west cloister in south wall of church nave, 2012

At the southern end of wall 10, the entrance to a spiral stair to the first floor survives, with a couple

of stone treads. Wall 10 meets with wall 9 (above) and 11 (below) at this point, and it is very clear that the junction leaves no room for the full circular structure of the stairwell (Fig 69 below).

Fig 67: External wall of stairway and entry door at south end of wall 10, 1992



The north part of the interior of the stairway survives, and was comprehensively repointed, with the rest of wall 10 in March and April 2022.



Fig 68: Interior of staircase and junction of walls 9, 10 and 11 before works (2012)

The mismatch of the three walls can be clearly seen in Fig 68 (above) and Fig 69 (below).



Fig 69: Junction of walls 9, 10 and 11 after repointing works, 2022

It is clear from these photographs that walls 9 and 11 have encroached on the area

formerly occupied by the stair turret in wall 10, implying it was probably already in more or less its current state by the time of their 19th century construction, despite Paul's (Paul 1885) attempting to depict the whole staircase on his plan of the priory.

On the exterior of the west cloister wall, there was little damage requiring rebuilding (except at the very top): the buttresses (Figs 60 and 61 above) are in various states of decrepitude, and were repointed as is.

There is good reason to suppose the buttresses are contemporary with the wall: they share a(n applied) stringcourse with the wall (as does the chapter house wall in wall 7), at least some appear to be set into the wall, and despite some re-used worked stone in some (see Fig 70 below). This re-used stone, incidentally, appears to be set with the same mortar as used in the construction of walls 1-4, meaning this is potentially a post-medieval repair, and not original.

In addition, they share a spatial relationship with the freestone gargoyles in the wall (which no-one has challenged as medieval), since each gargoyle is set exactly half-way between the buttresses.

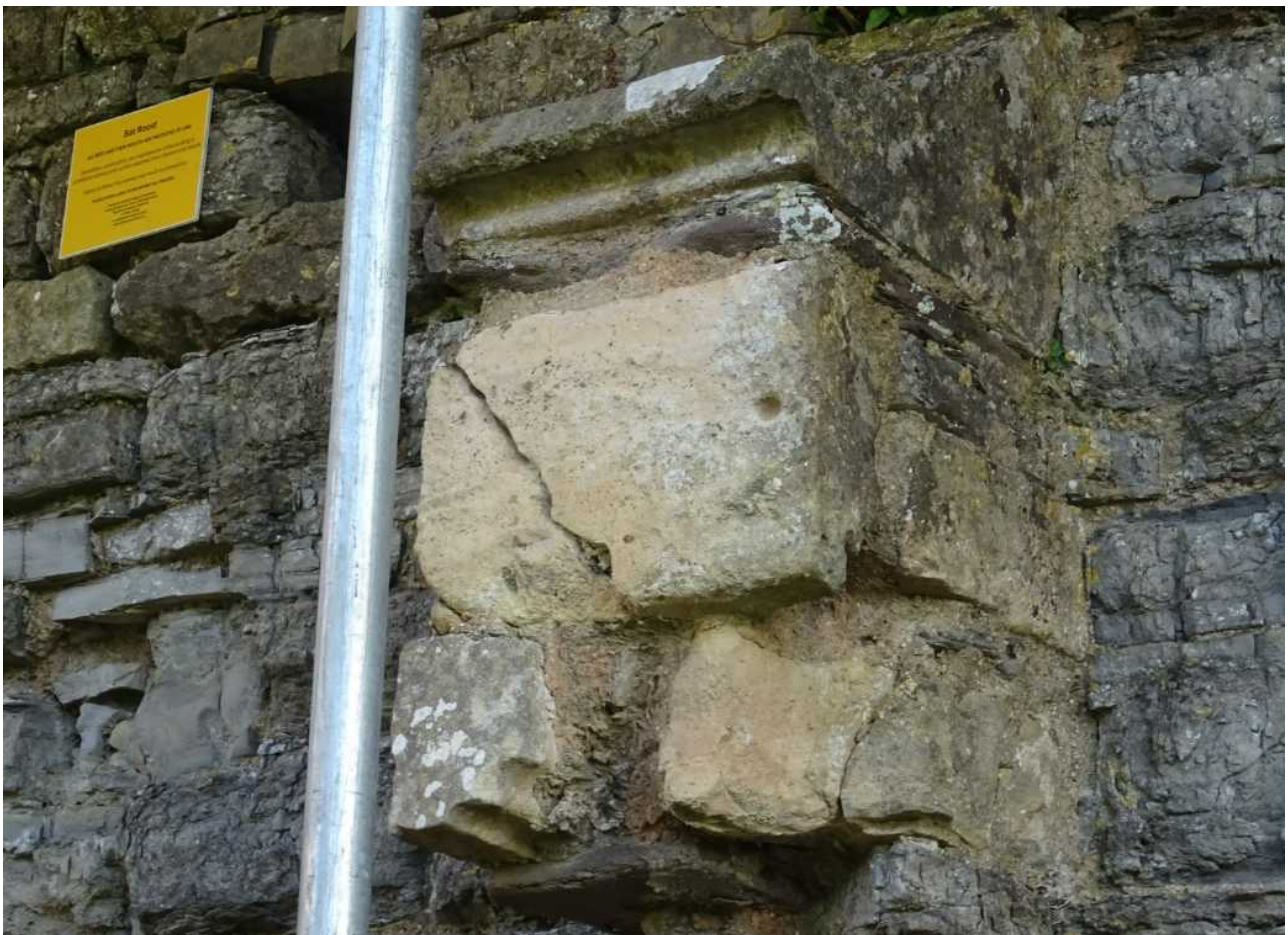


Fig 70: Re-used carved freestone in northern buttress, wall 10 (2022)

Unlike the coursed Lias stone of the mass of the wall, which was presumably rendered during the medieval period), the buttresses (and the gargoyles) are of freestone. The buttresses also have decorative elements (such as the shoulders) and were presumably

left visible, a type of presentation which is again fashionable today.



Fig 71: Gargoyles (clockwise from north to south) in wall 10 exterior (2022)

Wall 11: (Fig 72) (works mainly repointing in January and February 2022)

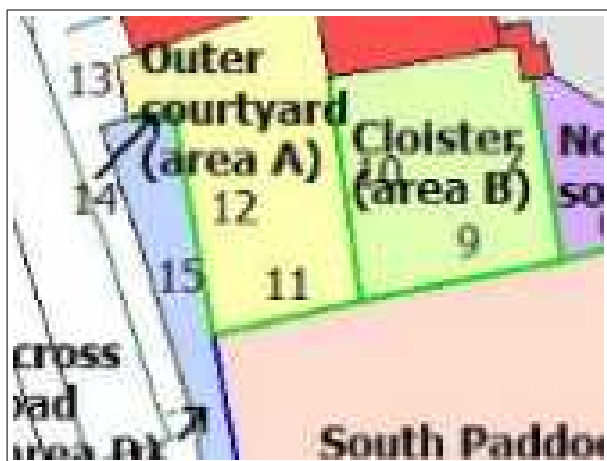


Fig 72: Wall 11 at the southern end of the old farmhouse garden ('Outer Courtyard'), and post-Dissolution in origin.

Wall 11, along with walls 6 and 9, clearly post-dates the priory: it includes some re-used freestone within its structure, as well as the gate leading from the garden out into the southern paddock.

This wall butts up against, and thus post-dates, wall 12/15 against the lane.



Fig 73: Wall 11 before repairs (tapes laid out for geophysical survey 2020)

Most of the necessary works to wall 11 were repointing: presumably its proximity to the farmhouse and its garden meant that the wall was usually well-maintained.

The wall contains several fragments of re-used freestone (Fig 75 below), presumably due to its easy availability at the time of construction.

The gate between the garden and the southern paddock seems to have once been wider (Fig 74), perhaps marking a change between farmyard and domestic garden. Like several of the walls, it does not appear on the 1768 map of Woodspring (Fig 40 above), or even the Tithe Map of 1840 (Fig 41), but there are no obvious traces of a predecessor between the two plots.



Fig 74: Current gate in wall 11, with clear evidence of filling in of a former wider gateway to its east



Fig 75: Re-used freestone (probably a column section) in wall 11 (from north 2022)(scale square 2cm)

Although repointed during frosty weather (on one occasion, the south face of the wall (in the sun) at 7° C was workable, while the north, at 2° C, was not), the repointing has taken and has not been subject to frost damage.



Fig 76: Wall 11 successfully repointed, 2022

Wall 12/15: (Fig 77) (mainly repointed, February to March 2022)

*For practical reasons, the two sides of this wall were recorded separately, hence 12 applies to the east side of the wall, and 15 to the west. This record also includes wall 14, which is abutted by the structures of wall 13.

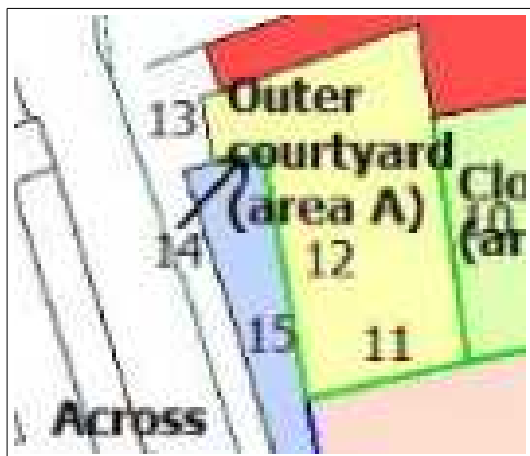


Fig 77: Wall 12/15, on the west side of the farmhouse garden, against the overgrown verge of the lane, from the junction with wall 11 to that of wall 14.

At the extreme northern end of this wall, the corner shared with wall 14 was reconstructed in 2020, when re-used carved freestones, including half of a well-worn 'Tudor' fireplace, were revealed (YCCCART 2020a).

Before restoration works, this wall was heavily overgrown (Fig 78 below).



Fig 78: Wall 12/15 in 2012 (during resistivity survey), showing heavy growth (especially of ivy) on the wall

This undergrowth had rooted into the top of the wall, reducing the mortar there to little more than dark brown dust, from which the stones could be lifted by hand. Apart from this necessary 'gardening', the wall was in reasonably good shape, having clearly been repointed more recently than some other walls in the complex, and repairs in 2022 were

largely limited to major repointing.

When uncovered, this also turns out to be a wall approximately 4m high, although this may be the result of 19th century heightening of the wall (YCCCART 2018). The wall is also of more mixed geological origin than some of its neighbours, with admixture of Pennant Sandstone and squared freestone blocks, in addition to the usual liassic and carboniferous limestone rubbles.

The height of the wall may be a reflection of its role as a boundary wall of the monastic complex or the farmhouse against the lane: other boundary walls are much further from the core of the site, and thus presumably such height was not felt to be necessary.

On the eastern (12) side of this wall, the only anomaly is the thickening of the wall north of its junction with wall 11 (also noted by Paul - Fig 3 above).



Fig 79: Thickening of wall 12/15 on its eastern side (after repairs, 2022)

While this appears as if it might be the butt end of a pre-existing structure incorporated into the wall, there is no evidence on the west side of the wall, or in geophysical surveys of the plot, that such a structure existed, and there is no explanation for this anomaly. Wall 12/15 shares the tendency of some of the structures to have more carefully squared and coursed stone at the base of the wall, with upper structure more irregularly shaped and coursed: this may reflect older structures surviving near the base of the walls. Only

detailed photogrammetric recording or laser scanning could solve this issue.



Fig 80: Wall 12/15 junction with wall 11, indicating more regular basal courses and potentially less regular courses above (the same can be seen on the cover illustration)

Less recording was carried out (or necessary) on the overgrown western side 15 of the wall, which was subject to the same intense and extensive repointing as side 12.



Fig 81: Repointing at southern end of wall 15 (2022)

At its northern end, the wall turns west, through the corner rebuilt in 2020 (YCCCART 2020a), and encompasses wall 14, which terminates at a butt joint, where wall 13 stands (see below).

Wall 13: (Fig 82) (Repointing and works during late spring and summer 2022)

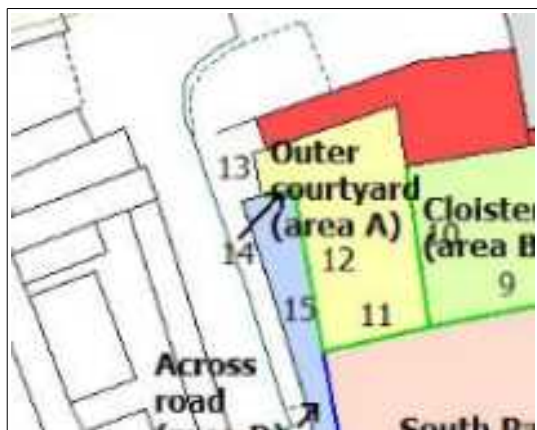


Fig 82: Wall/structure 13, current entrance gate to the farmhouse complex.

There has been some doubt as to whether the structures in wall 13 can be medieval, or even if they are re-used from the 'missing' building once in the paddock south of the complex: this was demonstrated to be false in YCCART 2021b, where the co-existence of the entrance gates and the 'missing' building between 1829 and 1840 at least, shows this cannot be true.



Fig 83: Wall/structure 13 before repairs (2018)

It is immediately obvious that the wall and the entrances are fairly crudely constructed, compared to the rest of the core of the site: the round-headed vehicular access arch to the south in particular is anomalous, the round arch apparently not fitting with the largely Perpendicular nature of the rest of the site, although similar can be seen elsewhere (e.g Maxstoke in Warwickshire). In addition, it is also clear that the south pillar of this opening is now nearly 10 degrees out of vertical: this may be due to initial sloppy building, but cracks in the adjacent wall (see below) imply this is at least partly due to settlement, and some drastic moves are described to prevent further movement.



Fig 84: Wall/structure 13 in 1829 (by J C Buckler)

Both the Buckler drawing (which incidentally, also shows a lower wall 12/15 and wall 14), and the copy of a painting from 1902 (Fig 85 - Knight 1902) are taken from angles which almost hide the south side of the arch, implying strongly by this omission, that the jamb was probably already out of the vertical 200 years ago - this can just be seen in the 1902 illustration.

Wall/structure 13 appears to possibly be later than the monastic elements of the site, but to establish this requires further work: in particular, the use of two mismatched stone sections to form the '4-centred' arch of the pedestrian gate, and their unconformable seating on the 'jambs' of the door imply this (or possibly, clumsy later repair of an existing gate).

Historic England, however, seem happy enough to date the structure as 'C14/C15' (List UID 1129767), and in the absence of any new evidence, this is where the matter stands.

The 1768 Woodspring plan shows a structure standing precisely on the line of 13 (Fig 40 Part 1), but such small-scale plans are not always particularly strong evidence in such matters.



Fig 85: Painting of wall/structure 13 used as frontispiece of Knight's 'Seaboard of Mendip' (1902)

Repairs to this structure were largely limited to clearance of vegetation and repointing: its position in the complex probably implies that it has been maintained reasonably well.

The Listing of the entrance structure includes the adjacent mounting block and carving.

The Listing does not seem to mention the extensive cobbled surface lying between the gateway and the track, which appears coeval.

The mounting block included in the Listing is not evident in the 1829 drawing (Fig 84 above), but it is evident in 1902: the sculptured stone with the 'Five wounds' carving is clearly present in 1902, but not in 1829.

The mounting block was in fairly poor condition, and required repointing during the repairs.

The potential settlement of the gateway to its south was remediated during the works in 2022. The obvious movement of the whole of structure 13 (Fig 86 below) was righted by the construction of a new buttress (after a small trial excavation to make sure this did not interfere with any buried archaeology, which revealed nothing untoward).



Fig 86: Butt joint of walls 13 and 14 (Feb 2022), showing failure and movement of the south part of 13.



Fig 87: New buttress (2022) and repointed south side of wall/structure 13



Fig 88: East (inside) of wall 13 after repointing, 2022 (note the absence of freestone jambs to either opening)

Wall 16: (Fig 89) (repointing largely in spring 2022)

Wall 16 is a small stub wall attached to wall 17, and forming one side of a gateway on the lane.



Fig 89: Wall 16 before repairs (2020)

This small wall, largely of coursed carboniferous limestone, butts against wall 17, and is thus probably comparatively late in construction. It is just possible that it is the wall depicted alongside a gate entering the complex on the 1768 map (Fig 40 above), but this seems unlikely given its clear relationship with wall 17.



Fig 90: Wall 16 under repair, 2022

Repair here was limited to clearance of vegetation and repointing.

The wall now functions as the south wall of the bin and recycling store for the farmhouse, and is accompanied by a modern cattle grid.

Wall 17: (Fig 91) (repairs largely during December 2021 to March 2022)

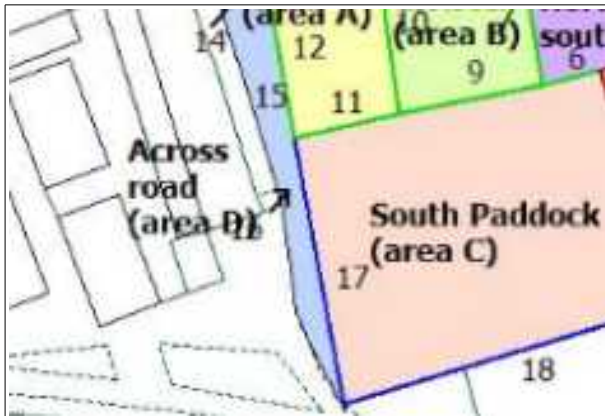


Fig 91: Wall 17, running between wall 11 to the north and wall 18 to the south, and including the gate into the south paddock

Walls 17, 18 and 19 form the boundaries of a paddock to the south of the core buildings of the priory.

They have been subject to multiple repairs and repointings.



Fig 92: Wall 17 north of field gate (and wall 16) (2020)



Fig 93: Wall 17 under repair and frost protection (2022)

Wall 17, joins seamlessly to wall 12/15, but immediately loses height south of the junction with wall 11 (and the farmhouse garden) to about 1.8m. It is clearly a mortared field wall of roughly coursed squared Lias and Carboniferous limestone, although worked freestone blocks are incorporated into its structure. Paul's 'small window', which should be in the northern half of wall 17 above the gate, is no longer evident.

The primary damage to wall 17 was a collapse immediately north of the field gate (Fig 94 below), which collapse had happened since YCCCART carried out geophysical survey in the plot in 2012. This collapse again illustrates the futility of poured concrete capping of field walls, beneath which the wall content collapses leaving the concrete bridging a gap.



Fig 94: Wall gate and collapse in wall 17 (2021)



Fig 95: Wall collapse under repair, late 2021

Apart from this collapse, and a few areas missing large amounts of surface mortar, repair was largely limited to heavy repointing of both sides of the wall, and foundation levels were not reached in repairs.

Wall 17 terminates at its southern end with a rounded corner leading into wall 18.



Fig 96: South end corner of wall 17, with break between 17 and wall 18 (2012)

A second, much less clear break in wall 18 exists some 4m east of this: the area in between may have been a field entrance at one point: the infill is much less regular than the walls 17 and 18 on either side.



Fig 97: Repaired wall collapse and repointing, wall 17 north of field gate, 2022



Fig 98: Wall 17 south of gate repointed 2022

The interior of both walls 17 and 18 was almost entirely mortar-free, in effect held up by gravity only (see wall 18 below). Early photographs show that overgrown and slightly neglected is a common historical state of these walls (Fig 99 below).



Fig 99: Wall 17 (including white gate) in 1934 (Fraser 1934)

Wall 18: (Fig 100) (Rebuilding and repairs in 2020-2022)

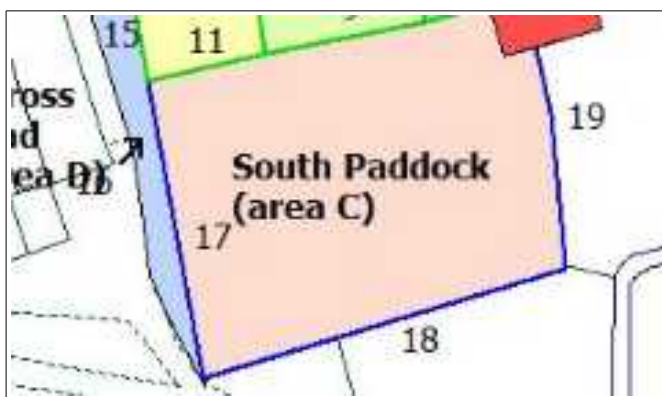


Fig 100: Wall 18 forms the southern edge of the south paddock, joining wall 17 at its west end and 19 at its east.

Collapses in this wall were the earliest repairs carried out in this set of works, many before the main campaign in late 2021-2022. There were at one point some very surprising results (Fig 115).



Fig 101: Wall 18 (2020) showing patched nature of wall and major collapse

Wall 18 is largely of coursed and mortared carboniferous limestone, with very occasional lias and freestone additions.

The wall seems to be double-skinned with a (now) hollow core, presumably once filled with mass rubble and mortar, but now weathered out (Fig 102 below).



Fig 102: 'Double-skinned' structure of wall 18, seen in collapse at its eastern end, 2020



Fig 103: Blocked gateway between the paddock and land to the south, in wall 18, 2020

Before the collapses, a few structures were visible in the wall. Mentioned above is the

probable blocked gateway at the very western end of wall 18 against wall 17.

These 'tapered' gateways, wider at the top than the bottom are very unusual in northern Somerset: there is another in the field to the south of the paddock.



Fig 104: Gateways at Woodspring Priory in watercolour (c1820) in SANHS collections, Taunton

These are not a modern phenomenon: two similar are seen in a c1820 watercolour in Taunton (Fig 104 above).

Presumably, the gateways can function as they are designed to take fairly narrow wheel-based farm vehicles which could be piled with hay (loose before mid-20th century baling began) or sheaves of corn, which could then over-ride the side of the vehicle, and still manage the gate.

Wall 18 seems to have been particularly prone to collapses (possibly due to its structure), and most of the repair works in 2020-22 were rebuilds of such. This was followed by large-scale repointing of most of the north face of wall 18, and much of the south face.

From west to east, the collapses and necessary repairs were:



Fig 105: Small collapse towards the western end of wall 18, opposite the Turkey Oak outside (2020)



Fig 106: Larger collapse (ii) under concrete wall topping, towards the centre of the wall (2020)

Both of these collapses grew after the recording above in 2020, that in the centre of the wall (ii) eventually falling away almost to ground level.

All of the collapses were barely visible (or even begun) in 2012, when the first geophysical survey of the field was carried out, but they grew speedily, and especially during the very rainy weather of 2020.

The exposed rubble of the wall centre revealed a pale brown gritty fairly lime-rich mortar, unlike that in walls 1-5, and probably later in date. Surfaces had been patched with everything from coal-flecked grey industrial mortar to concrete.



Fig 107: Large collapse (iii) close to junction of wall 18 with wall 19 (2020)

While the first collapse (Fig 105 above) required little more than patching, the two larger required demolition to foundation level and reconstruction. Various carved freestone elements were found incorporated in the walls during these works.



Fig 108: Collapse ii, cleared for rebuilding (2020) other area of major repair alongside to left)



Fig 109: Collapse ii under repair (late 2020)



Fig 110: Freestone blocks from collapse ii (2020)

The cuboid block above is probably a building block: the wedge-shaped item (c80cm long) is probably too thin to be a vouissoir, and is perhaps a (tiny) stair tread or similar.

Once all three collapses had been repaired, the repointing of both sides occurred during the winter and spring of 2022.



Fig 111: Collapse iii cleared for rebuilding, late 2020



Fig 112: Part of freestone tracery from collapse iii (from the moss growth, parts of this have been exposed at the surface for some time) (c50cm high)





Fig 113: Wall 18, south side, completely repaired and repointed (2022)



Fig 114: Wall 18, north side, east end, completely repaired and repointed

One slightly unexpected find from wall 18 is below.



Fig 115: A somewhat unexpected find from wall 18 in 2018

A visit to check on potential crop marks in the hot summer of 2018 revealed 12 tiny coffins, containing fabric and clay doll 'bodies', buried in the fabric of wall 18 where it had collapsed.

These were, on routine inspection, of modern construction, the coffins of painted plastic insulating board, and the fabric and 'bodies' also modern. This odd find had clearly been inserted into the wall *after* the collapse. Their construction must have been time-consuming, and their origin remains mysterious, although they may have been a conscious imitation of Edinburgh's famous miniature coffins (see Fortean Times). They were kept on the site, as they clearly reflect some modern attitudes to Scheduled Monuments, but sadly, have since disappeared.

Wall 19: (Fig 116) (works of repair and repointing largely in late 2021 and early 2022)

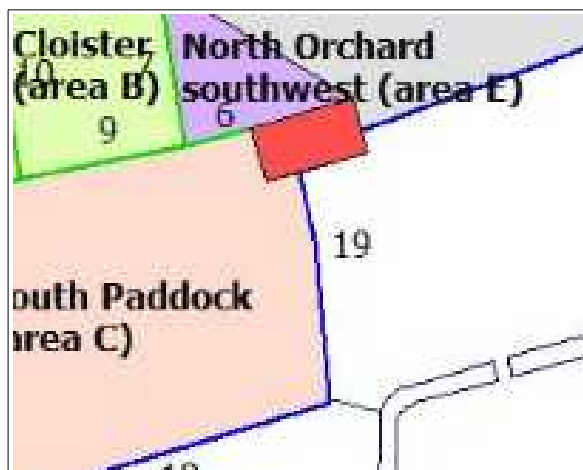


Fig 116: Wall 19 forms the eastern side of the south paddock, from its junction with wall 18 in the south, to where it butts against the infirmary.

Wall 19 now runs straight (with only a small kink in its line) but until 1807-1840, the wall turned through two right angles to meet the infirmary at its eastern end (Figs 118 and 121). This may be a reflection of the former existence of an infirmary chapel to the SE of the building.



Fig 117: Wall 19 from SW before works (except one repointing episode in centre) (2020)

There is no obvious trace today of the point where the wall formerly turned to the east (although logic would locate it at the kink in the plan of the wall).

The wall change occurred after 1807, when George Bennett, a local antiquary from Banwell, published a description of some of the buildings at Woodspring (including the infirmary) in the *Gentlemen's Magazine* (Bennett 1807) (Fig 118 below).

Bennett's record of the infirmary, incidentally, also shows large changes in the structure of the building have happened since, but this will be considered elsewhere.



Fig 118: Bennett's 1807 drawing of the infirmary, showing proto-wall 19 still terminating at the eastern end of the building.

The wall today awkwardly butts against the infirmary below the window in the south facade (see below).

It is constructed largely of roughly coursed carboniferous limestone, with the occasional fragment of freestone.



Fig 119: Small fragment (c30cm long) of worked freestone in top of wall 19

The wall has also been altered since its re-routing: an opening close to the infirmary was carefully constructed with large quoinstones, giving access between the paddock and the field to its east (Fig 120).

The date of this opening in the wall is not clear: none of the maps (1840 or 1885) show a gap at this site: it is, however, clearly visible on air photographs of 1949, and may perhaps be another war time alteration from WW2.



Fig 120: Former opening in wall 19, close to the infirmary

Wall 19 was, on the whole, in good condition, with the exception of a partial collapse in its centre, and the rather parlous condition of the last 3m against the infirmary.



Fig 121: Section of wall 19 against infirmary (2021)



Fig 122: Worked freestone recovered from wall 19 repairs by infirmary (scale 2cm squares)

This section of wall was taken down to the first sound area, largely level with the adjacent wall, and rebuilt.

A number of fragments of carved freestone (largely Dundry stone) were uncovered from the works (Fig 122 above), including some carved, but highly weathered sections.



Fig 123: Works underway to rebuild part of wall 19 against the infirmary (late 2021)

The question of why carved and worked freestone was available to be used as rubble in wall construction, possibly centuries after the demolitions following the Dissolution, is an intriguing one.

Clearly, in this case, such stones were available for use in the first half of the 19th century when the wall line was altered (although they may, of course, have been found in demolishing the earlier line of wall 19).

Like many such sites, even today there are heaps of reusable masonry lying around at Woodspring (there is one such on the north-west side of the orchard, though it is usually overgrown). At least one decorative stone from an internal chimney piece found its way to a rockery in Winscombe (Tomalin and Crook 2007), so at least some fragments were curated and not used as rubble.



Fig 124: Central portion of wall 19 (from east): this was unstable, and had to be rebuilt



Fig 125: Rebuilt and repointed north end of wall 19



Fig 126: Exterior (east) of wall 19 after rebuild and repointing (2022)



Fig 127: Interior (west) of wall 19 after rebuild and repointing (2022)

Some conclusions re dating of walls

Most of the walls subject of this study seem to be post-Dissolution. Given the history of the C16/17 Great House at the site, and the subsequent farm, this should not be surprising. Some attempts at closer dating are made in the table below.

Wall number	Description	Date	Origin	Note
1	Field wall north of orchard	Post-Dissolution	Potentially the boundary of a new Tudor garden, possibly associated with the known post-medieval hospital at the site.	Hospital referred to in Knight 1902
2	Field wall north of orchard	Post-Dissolution		
3	Field wall north of orchard	Post-Dissolution		
4	Field wall east of orchard	Post-Dissolution		
5	Field wall south of orchard	Post-Dissolution		
6	Wall between infirmary and cloister	1768-1840	?Rear wall of new building on 1840 Tithe Map	Maps
7	East wall of cloister block	Mixed: Medieval Post-Dissolution Post wall 6	Medieval and later structures: work needed to untangle this	
8	Allotted but not used			
9	South wall of cloister block	1768-1840	?Rear wall of new building on 1840 Tithe Map	Maps
10	West cloister wall	Medieval	Medieval with 19th century 'porch' addition	Buckler illustration (re porch)
11	South wall of farmhouse garden	Post-Dissolution	1840-1885	Maps
12/14/15	West wall of farmhouse garden	Post-Dissolution, but poss medieval components	Majority probably post-1768	Maps
16	Stub wall against lane	Late post-medieval	<i>Possibly</i> pre-1768	Map
17	West wall of	Post-Dissolution	Paddock created	Crop mark and

	paddock		after Dissolution:	geophysical evidence
18	South wall of paddock	Post-Dissolution	overlies probable medieval structures and	
19	East wall of paddock	Post-Dissolution	incorporate carved freestone	

Recommendations for further work

As always with such a complex historical site, recommendations for further work could be almost endless.

The field walls (as detailed in this report) are relatively straightforward to date and characterise: problems arise when looking at walls that are within the core area of the priory.

Wall 7 (for example - see above) is clearly of multiple dates, with an undeniable medieval core, but additions of post-medieval (and some, late post-medieval) origin.

In fact, the history of the whole priory would be very well served by prioritising complete record, such as photogrammetric, laser-scanning or even stone-by-stone drawing, to elucidate the structures originating in, or altered in, each epoch (Domesday manor, priory, great house and hospital, farmstead, golf course, public venue and farmstead). This, of course, is realistically recognised as a counsel of perfection.

Before any further excavation is planned, the work of Paul (1885), Hill (1920s) and Tomalin and Crook (1970s) should first be published as far as possible, in some academically acceptable form.

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