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The Archaeology of the Monastic Order of the Gilbertines

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Abstract

The Order of St Gilbert of Sempringham was founded around 1130 and was notable both for its double houses, containing canons and nuns, and the claim of later historians that it was the only truly 'English Order'. Rose Graham and Brian Golding have studied the history of the Gilbertines, however the archaeology of the order has never been comprehensively researched. Of the original 27 monastic houses, 13 have been destroyed or have had their original monastic plans obscured by later buildings. For the remaining 14 houses, there is good archaeological evidence surviving. Using this data, and especially the elements that enable the spatial reconstruction of each site, this thesis focuses on establishing the layout of the monastic buildings and precincts. The thesis takes a holistic approach to the study of the subject utilising a range of sources including data from excavation, geophysical survey, topographic survey and aerial photography. The thesis recreates the layouts of double and single houses in order to understand the relationship between the men and women of the Gilbertine order. It also identifies and addresses the transition from the Gilbertine double house to the prevalence of the single house following the death of St Gilbert *c.* 1190 and the order's subsequent decline. The study argues that the Gilbertine order formulated a number of distinctly Gilbertine forms of monastic layout, usually related to their distinctive role of accommodating both men and women, which are mostly visible on the sites of double houses in the first instance. This distinctive style was continued to a less extent in the foundation of later single houses through the recurrent placement of cloisters to the north of the priory church.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

The subject of medieval monasticism has received much attention over the last century. In this time, books have been written concerning the history of monasticism in England, from the twelfth century until the Dissolution. Over the last 20 years there has been resurgence in the study of the history of monasticism, approaching the subject through the examination of the different orders. This has included the study of the larger orders, such as the Cistercians and Carthusians (Jamroziak 2013; Luxford 2008), as well as the smaller orders, such as the Premonstratensians and the Gilbertines (Gribbin 2001; Golding 1995). There has also been a trend towards approaching the archaeology of monasticism through the study of individual orders (see Coppack & Aston 2002; Coppack 2009). These studies have tended to focus on the larger monastic orders and have often been limited to a small number of houses of each order. Yet to date there has been no comprehensive archaeological study of any of the smaller orders within England.

The monastic order of the Gilbertines was founded in England around 1130. The order was remarkable for being the only monastic community to have been wholly founded within England, not having originated from continental Europe. Another notable characteristic was the presence of both nuns and canons within its 11 double monasteries (figure 1). These houses accommodated men and women in dual cloisters, each with their own place of worship. The nuns' church acted as the priory church and was split down the centre to provide a segregated space of worship for the two groups. In addition to the double houses, the order had 16 single houses, which contained only canons (figure 1). These houses were similar to those of other orders of canons, such as the Augustinians or Premonstratensians, present in England in the late-medieval

period. The pattern of foundation of Gilbertine houses changed greatly around 1190, following the death of the order's founder St Gilbert, with the focus shifting from the double to the single house, and from the nuns to the canons. The finances of the order declined in the following centuries up until the Dissolution. All of the Gilbertine priories survived the suppression of the lesser monasteries and were dissolved between 1538-9.

Aims

This thesis provides a study of the layout and landscape context of the Gilbertine monastery by examining all of the available archaeological data for each site. Previous archaeological studies of the order have been limited to site-specific investigations, rather than a more holistic analysis of the existing data for all 27 Gilbertine houses within England. This present study examines all the available archaeological dataset and, following on from the historical examination of the order by Golding (1995) and Stephenson (2011), interprets the material record within an established historical framework. The thesis has set out to answer seven principal, if sometimes inter-related, questions.

The 'Cult of St Gilbert' and the Pattern of Foundation

Gilbert was personally responsible for founding ten of the eleven double houses of the order, and following his death only one more double house, at Shouldham, was established. At this point, there was a marked shift away from the foundation of double houses towards the foundation of single houses, and a decline in the rate of foundation

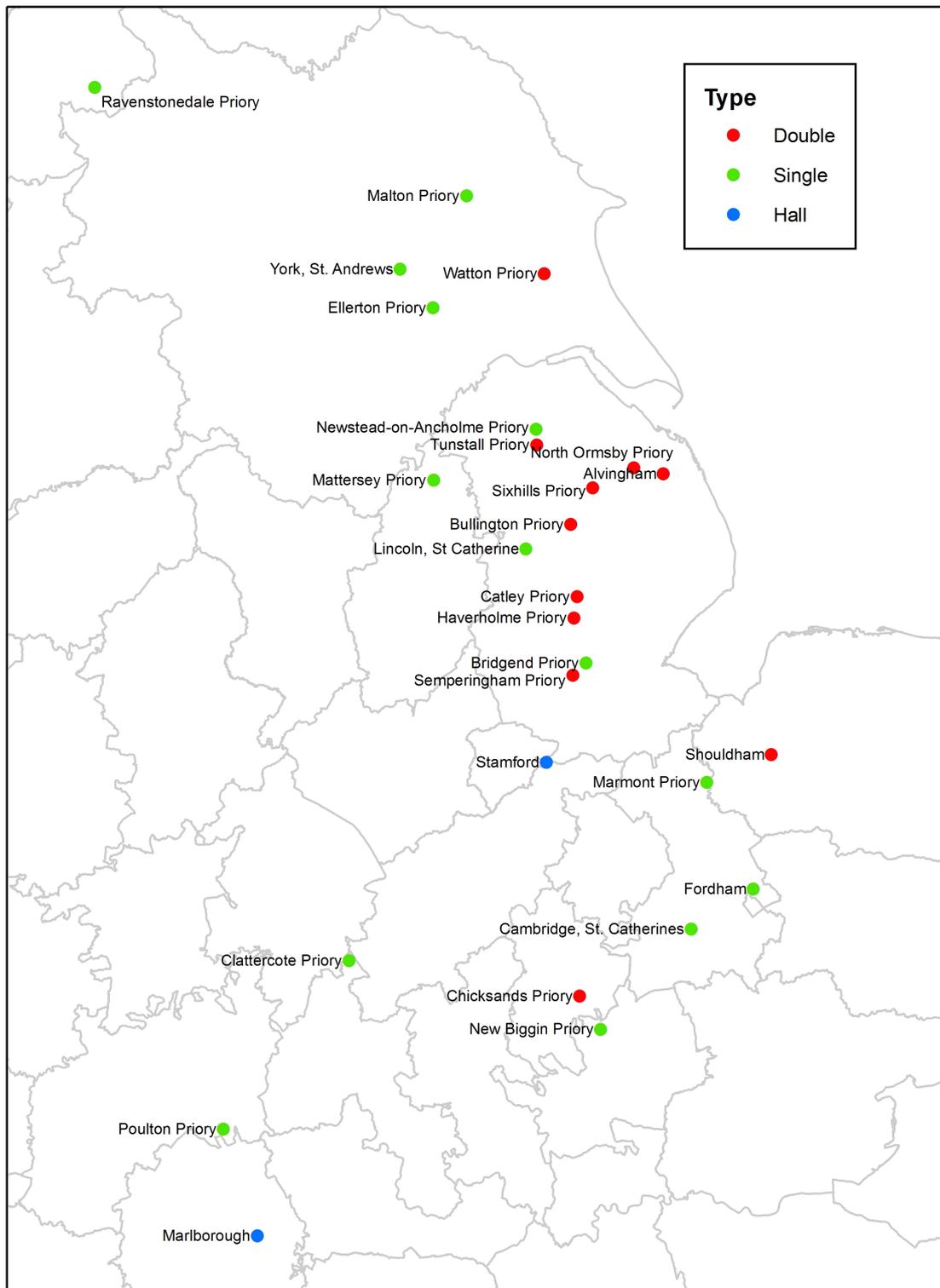


Figure 1 – Location of single and double Gilbertine houses and educational halls within England (produced by the author)

overall. Nonetheless, the double foundations of the Gilbertines survived much longer than those of other orders such as the Premonstratensians or Bridgittines.

A principal aim of the thesis is to evaluate the role of the head of the order. This includes the extent to which Gilbert and his successors (particularly Roger of Malton) had a hand in modelling the arrangement of the Gilbertine houses, and to explain the change in the pattern of foundation of the order. It is hypothesized that the failure of Gilbert's successors to continue to found double houses was a result of both the collapse of the cult of personality following his death, and a marked decline in the popularity of the mixing of the sexes in monastic environments.

How 'English' was the Order?

Rose Graham titled her 1903 work *St Gilbert of Sempringham and the Gilbertines: A History of the Only English Order*, and the further aim of the thesis is to evaluate to what extent the Gilbertines deserve this accolade, and how distinctive the Gilbertine order actually was. It is unquestionable that the order was the only one to be founded within England by an English Saint, however their history is heavily linked to the other continental orders, especially with that of the Cistercians. This thesis focuses on the arrangement of the Gilbertine houses, their patterns of foundation and decline, and compares these to the sparse data available for other contemporary mixed orders active within England in an attempt to establish how different the order was from those from mainland Europe.

Segregation within the Double House

It has been suggested by Roberta Gilchrist (1995: 110) that ‘the concept of enclosure was integral to the concept of female monastic identity’. This thesis aims to determine to what extent this was true of the Gilbertine Order, and how this segregation was established. Comparing the similarities and differences between single and double houses, will allow a comparison of the spaces shared by both sexes, with those occupied solely by men. Differences in the layout between the two will be ascertained, and the reasons behind these variations considered. One key aspect of recognising these variations is the identification of gendered spaces and the way in which these spaces were divided to ensure the segregation of their occupants.

The Decline of the Gilbertines

By the end of the fourteenth century, monasticism in England had undergone a decline and contraction, and its effect on the Gilbertine order has been well documented by Brian Golding (1995), and is evident in the valuations of the Gilbertine houses in 1291 and 1535 (Knowles & Hadcock 1971). The thesis seeks to outline the archaeological data available for Gilbertine houses during this later period, first, to establish whether any decline is visible within the archaeological record, and second, to identify how this deterioration in fortunes may have affected the monastic houses and their occupants.

The Arrangement of the Gilbertine Precinct

The thesis also aims to establish the arrangement of the Gilbertine precinct. To date, little research has been undertaken into the layout of the precinct of the order, the only exception being the inclusion of Watton within Aston's *Monasteries in the Landscape* (2000). As with the cloistral buildings, the thesis aims to identify gendered areas and divisions, and to establish the extent to which occupants were segregated by sex. There has also been the opportunity to place the monasteries within a wider secular context, by examining them within their wider landscape setting. This will be done by identifying, where possible, those buildings within the precinct related to secular activities, as well as considering the house's positions relative to local population centres.

The 'Lost' Gilbertine Houses

The locations of eight of the 27 Gilbertine houses are currently unknown; this thesis aims to identify the location of the possible double house at Tunstall, the single houses at Bridge End, Marmont, Fordham, Poulton and Marlborough, and the Educational Halls at Stamford and Cambridge. This will be made possible through the use of historic mapping, aerial photograph and modern satellite mapping, combined with study of the historical record.

The Gilbertine ‘Type-Site’

A final key aim of the thesis is to attempt to establish a ‘type-site’ for both the single and double houses of the order, that is, a site that best exemplifies the arrangement of the others of like form. Of the double houses, Watton, as the most well recorded site, is often suggested as the type-site from which all other Gilbertine double houses are to be compared. However, recent surveys at Sempringham and other houses has provided new evidence suggesting that the arrangement of Watton is not representative of the majority of other Gilbertine double houses, and an alternative is presented within Chapter 2 of this thesis. Similarly, Mattersey, the most complete instance of a single house, is often used as an example of a typical Gilbertine single monastery. Yet, this thesis hypothesizes that due to the pattern of foundation, during and following Gilbert’s death, it is impossible for one house to be representative of all Gilbertine single houses. This attempt to produce a typical characterisation also extends to the Gilbertine precinct, with an attempt to create a ‘standard’ Gilbertine double precinct arrangement, with a focus on gender segregation.

Methodology

Due to a lack of previous research on the archaeology of the Gilbertines, no full or even partial bibliography containing source material exists. From the historical research available, as discussed below, this thesis has identified a number of questions that could be answered using archaeological data, particularly regarding the arrangement of the houses and their precincts. However, without a comprehensive list of sources, it was impossible to know which of these questions could be answered. This led to the creation of a Gilbertine archaeology source list, using a variety of different

sources and data types. These datasets were then combined to produce reconstructions of the layouts of Gilbertine monastic houses and precincts. These models have then been analysed, compared and interpreted to answer the questions laid out in the aims section. Where excavation records exist, these have been combined with the survey data, either to test the veracity of the plans, or to supplement the available data.

Data Collection

Data for all Gilbertine houses was requested from Heritage Environment Records (HERs) and Sites and Monuments Records (SMRs) in Cambridgeshire, Central Bedfordshire, Cumbria, Gloucestershire, Hertfordshire, East Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, North Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, York, and Wiltshire. The searches were carried out on a site-by-site basis as well as a search of the parish in which each site was located. These archives were then all visited and copies made of any information relevant to the Gilbertine order. The HERs and SMRs yielded articles, desk-based assessments, geophysical surveys, excavation reports (both research led and commercial) and geophysical surveys for the areas of and those surrounding the monastic sites.

A similar search was also carried out at the Historic England Archive (formally the National Monuments Record), which included a number of aerial photographs of Gilbertine sites. The oblique photographs were originals or reproductions of those already found in the regional HERs and SMRs, and were not retained by the author. However, the Historic England Archive also holds a number of Royal Air Force and Ordnance Survey vertical aerial photographs. These were studied but, due to their low resolution when compared to the oblique photographs available, were not retained. The archive also held aerial photographs transcriptions, undertaken as part of the National

Mapping Programme (NMP). The only Gilbertine site for which transcriptions were available was Newstead priory (included in Chapter 4). The thesis relies heavily on the use of aerial photography to present layout of priory buildings and precincts. For all sites where aerial photography showing archaeological features exists, these photographs have been included within the thesis. In the case of more than one photograph showing the same features on one site, the photograph that best shows these features is presented.

The Historic England Archive also held limited excavation archives for Watton and Bullington; the archive from Bullington consisted of a single Ordnance Survey sheet with brief annotations, whilst that for Watton contained photographs of Hope's 1890s excavations (reproduced in Chapter 2). A number of further excavation archives were recovered from The Collection, Lincoln City Museum store. Here excavation archives were present from Haverholme and North Ormsby, and associated artefacts from surface collection at Bullington, Sempringham and Watton. The artefacts within the collection have been briefly catalogued (see the Future Work section of Chapter 6), but due to their specialist nature are otherwise not included within this thesis. The archive for Haverholme priory contained a number of 1:100 scale trench plans, dated to the 1960s, with no supporting documentation or annotations. Due to the lack of a site diary or report for the Bullington excavation, it was impossible to fully reconstruct the findings of the excavation using the plans alone (discussed in Chapter 2).

Due to the relatively low number of total records, it was possible to take copies of all relevant reports and articles. However, copies of all aerial photographs were not obtained, in part due to copyright restriction and cost consideration, and partly due to some photographs showing identical data. In cases where multiple photographs were available for one site, all examples were studied and copies only taken of those that

contained relevant archaeological information (a discussion of the use of aerial photographs within this thesis is continued below). The archive for North Ormsby included original plans from Dornier's 1966 excavation on the nuns' and canons' cloisters, including a ten-page report of the excavations (discussed in Chapter 2).

LiDAR data for all sites for which it was available was requested and collected from the Environment Agency. The resolution of the data available ranged from 2 metres to 0.25 metres. All LiDAR plots were analysed for earthworks using a GIS package to produce hillshade and differential lighting effects. LiDAR data has been used to illustrate a small number of sites within the thesis, and often, the LiDAR data was inferior to that observed and transcribed from aerial photographs. This was often due to the poor resolution of the LiDAR data (often 2 metres), which although useful for landscape modelling, was not of high enough quality to identify small and medium sized earthworks. The availability of LiDAR data due to unsurveyed areas was also a problem, as due to the location of priories near major watercourses, Environment Agency surveys often finished just outside of the area of the monastic precinct. The use of LiDAR within those areas that have been subject to the expansion of towns or cities subsequent to the medieval period was also problematic. Data for the priories at York, Marlborough, Lincoln, Stamford, Hitchin and Cambridge, which could have previously provided useful information regarding layout of priories and precincts are now unusable due to later development and urban expansion.

Geophysical Survey

Collection of plans and surveys from the sources listed above provided evidence for the arrangement of a number of double and single Gilbertine houses. To 'ground-truth' these plans, and answer specific questions regarding layout, a number of sites

were chosen to undergo geophysical survey to supplement the existing record. Surveys at Watton, Mattersey, Shouldham and Clattercote employed resistivity survey to test for the presence of buried remains. Resistivity was chosen as it gives the best results when prospecting for stone walls usually found at priory sites. Resistivity surveys were carried out using either a RM15 or RM85 Resistivity Meter, with a 0.5 metre sample interval along 1 metre transects. All surveys were undertaken in either summer or winter, at times when rainfall would not be expected to vary greatly between phases of resistivity survey. It was possible in all cases to carry out the resistivity on consecutive days, decreasing the risk of drift within the surveys. Despite not all the geophysical surveys undertaken by the author yielding positive results, the plots have been presented and discussed within the thesis, often providing negative evidence pointing to another location of a building or buildings.

Watton is the best-known example of a Gilbertine double house, and the one on which much previous research has been based. It also provided high potential, based on the excavation recorded by Hope (1901), for the presence of substantial remains to exist beneath the current ground surface. The priory was the wealthiest of the Gilbertine houses at the Dissolution, and given the scale of other houses, Sempringham and Chicksands, it is probable that Watton's monastic complex and precinct covered a large area surrounding the central cloistral ranges. Geophysical survey was carried out to investigate the presence of extant sub-surface remains at Watton Priory, and this survey was designed to test the veracity of Hope's 1901 excavation plan and clarifying the position and layout of specific areas of the priory. Hope did not fully excavate the north-west corner of the nuns' cloister, the southern transept of the nuns' church, or the northern extent of both nuns' and canon's cloisters, but made conclusions based on

evidence from other monastic sites. Detailed survey within this area has helped to evaluate Hope's claims and reinterpret them.

At Mattersey there was potential, based on excavation plans and aerial photography transcription, for exterior and interior walls to exist under the current ground surface. Survey was carried out to provide answers to a number of questions relating to the internal divisions of the priory. In particular this focused on the relationship between the structure forming the north transept and the church which was unclear, as the former appears to post-date the life span of the latter. Furthermore, survey had the potential to reveal interior divisions that explain this relationship and can be used to place the two in the same phase. The eastern limit of the priory church was also unknown prior to the survey, and finally survey was expected to provide information regarding the water management on the site. There was no evidence of a large drain providing the priory with water and the base of the reredorter is much higher than the nearby stream.

At Shouldham priory aerial photography had established the position of the priory church and the northern cloister, however the position of the nuns' cloister had not been identified. Furthermore, following study of the plans of Sempringham and Watton priories, it became obvious that two distinct arrangements were evident in the ground plan of the Gilbertine double house. The first, aligned north to south, as at Sempringham, and the second, east to west, as that of Watton. Geophysical survey at Haverholme and Shouldham was implemented to establish their alignment. Although the survey was unsuccessful in identifying the alignment at Haverholme, the resistivity plot did provide negative evidence for the location of the priory to the north of the survey area. At Shouldham an east to west alignment was established due to the survey (see Chapter 2).

Finally, resistivity survey was employed at Clattercote to identify the arrangement of the priory church and cloister. Clattercote was one of the priories founded during the mastership of Gilbert, others of which seem to conform to a traditional monastic layout (with the cloister to the south of the priory church). Survey was carried out to confirm that Clattercote conformed to this pattern. As the position of an east-west range was known, it was possible to survey to the north and south of this building to locate the relative position of the priory church.

At Haverholme magnetometry was used to survey the site of the priory as the field within the survey area had recently been ploughed, and therefore resistivity or other methods would not have provided good results. This technique also had the advantage of being able to cover a large survey area in a relatively short time, just two days in the case of Haverholme. Magnetometry survey was undertaken using a Bartington Grad-601 Gradiometer, set at a 0.25 metre sample interval on 1 metre wide traverses. Haverholme priory was chosen for geophysical survey to try and provide a context for the excavation plans within The Collection, Lincoln and to confirm the position of the priory cloisters. Although the survey failed to identify the position of the priory, it is possible using this negative data to hypothesize an alternative location.

Further surveys had originally been planned at Catley, Ellerton and North Ormsby, however these were not viable due to access within the required timeframe for the surveys to take place.

Previous Research and Primary Sources

Little survives in the way of primary sources for the history of the Gilbertine order. The most important of the surviving documents relating to the order is *The Book of St Gilbert*, which was translated and published in 1987 by Raymonde Foreville and

Gillian Keir. The text survives in two forms within the British Library, the first being Cotton Cleopatra B. i dating to the early-thirteenth century and the second, Harleian 468, dating to the mid- or late-thirteenth century. The translation by Foreville and Kier primarily relies on the early-thirteenth century document as its source, with the later edition only used to add additions not found in the earlier document. The book includes the *Vita*, a collection of letters concerning the revolt of the lay brothers, documents relating to the canonization of Gilbert, and a list of the miracles attributed to him.

The *Vita* is a hagiographic account of the life of Gilbert, written by an unnamed canon of Sempringham in the early-thirteenth century, following the death of the founder. The motivation behind the text was to ensure the canonization of Gilbert, which was fulfilled in 1202 by the order of Innocent III (Foreville & Keir 1985: lxii-lxiii). The letters from the period of the lay brother' revolt, a crisis in the history of the order discussed in Chapter 6, were probably included within the dossier as proof that the outcome of the event had been in favour of Gilbert and against those who questioned his piety. Due to the hagiographic nature of the document, the later section is given over to an appendix of the letters relating to canonization and proofs of Gilbert's miracles, including the curing of blindness, deafness and leprosy (Foreville & Keir 1985: ciii). The *Vita* is useful in contextualizing the archaeological record as it outlines a number of rules by which the nuns and canons were to live their lives. This included rules providing for the enclosure of men and women, which have been used to inform interpretation of the layout of the church and cloisters, and the inner courts of the monasteries.

Rose Graham's *St Gilbert of Sempringham* (1901) provides the first modern history of the order. Graham begins by recounting the story of the life of St Gilbert, based mainly on the account related within Dugdale's *Monasticon* (1846: 980).

Dugdale in turn took his accounts from documents now lost that apparently related to the rule of the Gilbertines and the *Vita*. While outlining the Gilbertine rule, Graham (1901: 55-6) goes to great lengths to emphasise the role of the turning window, the aperture through which the canons would pass the chalice for communion. This was probably due to the recent excavations at Watton priory by William St John Hope that took place at the end of the nineteenth century, for which Graham reproduced the ground plan (Hope 1901). Hope had discovered the site of the turning window in the church, the function of which had been suggested to him by Graham.

The two chapters that follow are short treatises on the relationship of the order with the Crown and with the Papacy and its bishops, all of which she classes as supportive of the Gilbertines; the Crown supporting the order due to its English pedigree, and the Pope supporting the enclosure of women in religious orders. The final chapter of the book is given over to a description of the physical remains of the priories, which Graham (1903: 219) describes as ‘very few’. These descriptions are limited to those sites that displayed standing masonry around 1900, and are therefore small in number.

Although *St Gilbert of Sempringham* is a relatively simplistic historical account of the order, characteristic of its time and relying heavily on the sections of the rule and foundation documents provided by Dugdale, it is important in understanding subsequent approaches to the order. As the first book to focus on the history of the order, it has provided source material for every subsequent publication on the subject. The synthesis of sections of the rule and the historical and archaeological data available at the time provided a good basis for further work. This thesis has reevaluated the findings of Graham and Hope that relate to the church and the interaction between men and women at Watton priory.

Brian Golding addressed the history of the order in his 1995 book, *Gilbert of Sempringham and the Gilbertine Order*. The focus of the work is on the relationship between the priories and their founders and benefactors, providing a comprehensive study of the finances of priories in their earlier phases. Given the relative wealth of the order at its foundation, the subsequent decline is significant. The layout of many of the religious houses of the order were established in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and due to their poverty, unlike the houses of richer orders, were not greatly modified or expanded in the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. The book provides a context for the shifting focus of 'pious giving', away from the monasteries towards more 'individual' expressions in the late-thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Golding 1995: 4). This change in emphasis is important in understanding the later archaeology of Gilbertine priories, particularly the shrinking of the single houses. Golding's work concentrates on the early history of the Gilbertines up until the beginning of the fourteenth century, as Golding cites this date as the point at which the order had reached its maximum extent (ibid.). Due to the lack of benefactions following 1300, the approach taken by Golding would be difficult to sustain. The relationships between the benefactors and the priories were less pronounced, following a new focus on private worship.

Recent study by Stephenson, has concentrated on the later history of the Gilbertines. This work, submitted as a doctoral thesis in 2011, focuses on the order in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, through the study of documents relating to the Dissolution of the monasteries. Just as Golding's work supplies a detailed record for the first two centuries of the order, Stephenson provides an account the later history of the order. This has been of particular value in contextualizing the archaeological evidence relating to the decline of the order following the thirteenth century. Research

into the number of nuns and canons present within the Gilbertine houses also provides evidence for the differing emphasis placed on single and double houses by the order.

In addition to these larger works, the study of the Gilbertines has attracted the attention of those interested in the role of women in medieval society, particularly within the monastic tradition. The inclusion of women within monastic history and archaeology has often been neglected, and recent work by a number of scholars has sought to redress this imbalance. The Gilbertines has been included within a wider focus on the history of medieval nunneries carried out by Burton (1979), Elkins (1988) and Thompson (1991). Roberta Gilchrist (1990; 1994) has continued this concentration on monastic women and translated it to the study of archaeology. Gilchrist's work has centered on the female experience in the medieval religious context and the use of gendered space within monastic houses. This has proved particularly important in the study of the Gilbertine double house and the use of layout in the church, cloister and precinct to divide the sexes and the different groups within the monastery.

The Early Life of St Gilbert

Some context must be given for the life of St Gilbert and his position in Lincolnshire's ecclesiastical community. The following section aims to outline the salient points of the saint's life, but is in no way an exhaustive biography. A comprehensive life history, considering the effect of the saint's upbringing on his later work can be found in Graham (1901: 1-29) and Golding (1995: 7-16).

Gilbert was born in the parish of Sempringham in southern Lincolnshire, in or shortly before 1089. He was a product of the newly established Post-Conquest England, with his father being a minor member of the French nobility and his mother hailing from 'lower rank' English stock (Graham 1901: 2-3). The only information relating to

Gilbert's parentage and early life comes exclusively from the *Vita* and must be viewed with a degree of caution, given the hagiographical nature of the text. This is best seen in the story given in the *Vita* of the vision experienced by Gilbert's mother, which is described as the moon descending into her womb to symbolize the light that her progeny would bring to the world (Foreville & Kier 1987: 11). Golding (1995: 10) has recognized this as a common trope, present in the hagiographies of Bernard of Clairvaux and Stephen of Obazine, used to prophesy and highlight the piety of the individual in question.

Despite these problems with the *Vita* as a historical text, it is possible to provide a portrait for Gilbert's parents. Rather than the wealthy man outlined in the *Vita* (Golding 1995: 11-13) it is probable that Gilbert's father, Jocelin, was a Norman minor noble of local status (Golding 1995: 11). The name of Gilbert's mother is not given and the only description of her is of an English woman of lower rank than her husband (Foreville & Kier 1987: 11). The very fact that different nationalities of Gilbert's parents are mentioned in the *Vita* may be significant; as a public figure focused on the acquisition of land and wealth for his monasteries, Gilbert's position as both Norman and English would have placed him in the best position to approach landholding parties within both groups.

Some physical deformity precluded Gilbert from following his knightly father in the martial arts. It also, according to the *Vita*, made him despised by his family, who went as far as to make him eat with the servants (Foreville & Kier 1987: 13). This deformity and the reaction of Gilbert's family may not have been as extreme as the *Vita* suggests. It certainly provided a situation for Gilbert to overcome, as with the pre-natal prophecy, it was not uncommon for hagiographies to place their subjects in difficult positions from which they could rise, with the help of God. Gilbert's disability is the

reason given for him being sent to school to train as a clerk, and Golding (1995: 11-12) has suggested that he probably attended an education at either the school in Lincoln or Crowland, the monastic institution nearest to Sempringham. Gilbert's initial education was not a success, with reference to his laziness made in the *Vita* and he was eventually enrolled in a school in France.

There is no indication from the account given within the *Vita* as to which school Gilbert attended, if indeed he remained in a single locality. Golding and Graham favour Paris or Normandy, as the possible locations for Gilbert's education, but it could also have been any number of the cathedral schools throughout the country. Gilbert was to return from France with the title of *Magister* and formed a school to educate children of both sexes at Sempringham. This was an unusual choice for the scholar to make, given his position as *Magister* he could have been expected to take a position within a cathedral school, either at Lincoln or another urban centre. This early choice to focus on both boys and girls within local community would foreshadow the establishment of the first Gilbertine monastery in the early-1130s. At this time Gilbert was not a priest, despite this his father gifted him the churches of Sempringham and West Torrington. Golding (1995: 13) has highlighted the impropriety of Gilbert's acceptance of these churches and the obvious embarrassment of the author of the *Vita*.

Before 1123 Gilbert left Sempringham to enter the house of Robert Bloet, Bishop of Lincoln. He continued in the household after Robert's death and the ascension of his successor Alexander (Graham 1901: 5-9). The *Vita* emphasizes Gilbert's piety in carrying out his role as chaplain in the Bishop's house (Foreville & Kier 1987: 21-3). Gilbert found favour with Bishop Alexander who intended to make him penitentiary for the Diocese of Lincoln. Gilbert's refusal of the position may have caused a tension between himself and the bishop, as shortly after turning down the post

he returned to Sempringham to continue his work in the community (Golding 1995: 16). It was this return to Sempringham that would perpetuate Gilbert's foundation of the first Gilbertine monastic institution. In the following years Gilbert would struggle to form a rule for the order that could satisfy the needs of men and women. The eventual outcome would be Gilbert's position as master of the one of the largest orders within the North of England. His upbringing in Lincolnshire and education in mainland Europe would greatly influence his choice of rule and the arrangement of the Gilbertine priories. Although a small number of foundations would be made outside of the Bishopric of Lincoln, these would form the minority of Gilbertine houses. The links made with the Bishops of Lincoln in Gilbert's early years would do much to aid his foundation of an English monastic order.

Types of Gilbertine House

The priories of the Gilbertine order can be broadly categorized into two types: single and double houses. The differences between the single and double houses are discussed at length in the second and third chapters of the thesis. In the double house, the presence of nuns and canons living in close proximity to one another greatly affected the layout of the monastery. A second difference was the scale of the priory, it might be expected that the double house would be considerably larger than the single monastery. However, the evidence outlined in Chapter 2 suggests that the double house was more than twice the size of its single counterpart. Within these two classes of double and single houses, further distinctions can be made between urban and rural houses, educational halls, and houses that incorporated hospitals. These distinctions have been made in the relevant chapters, and Chapter 5 draws the distinction between the location and arrangement of the rural house compared to those examples from urban

contexts. The major difference between urban and rural houses was one of scale; the rural house, certainly the double rural house, was often much larger than those found in close proximity to towns or cities. This is unsurprising given the restrictions of space that resulted from the monastery's urban context. The dichotomy of rural and double houses has been addressed by a number of authors in Gilchrist and Mytum's 1993 publication *Advances in Monastic Archaeology*.

The foundation of hospitals and their association with monastic sites was a tradition that was established in England in the Saxon period (Godfrey 1955: 16-17). The presence of Gilbertine hospitals was limited to the single houses and a number of sites were founded with the express purpose of managing pre-existing hospitals, including the large foundations at Lincoln and Malton. Other single houses were responsible for founding hospitals; for example, at Clattercote the foundation of a leper hospital was written into the foundation grant. Due to the focus of early archaeologists on the church and cloister, little attention has been paid to the other buildings within the monastic precinct. Consequently, limited archaeological evidence is available for the arrangement of the monastic hospital known to have been present at Gilbertine sites. Although this thesis considers the existence of hospitals at a number of sites regarding the layout of the monastic precinct in relation to their position within the outer court, the lack of existing evidence has limited this discussion.

The final class of house was that of educational hall. The traditional pattern for the further education of canons outside of the monastic setting was for them to attend private halls or colleges (Golding 1995: 174). The Gilbertines sought to establish their own institutions of learning and maintained two of these houses at Cambridge and Stamford. These houses provided training for the canons, although Golding (1995: 174-5) suggests that both were relatively ineffective, probably enrolling only a small

number of the order. Despite the importance of these two sites in understanding the order in the context of the education of the canons, little evidence of layout or arrangement of the buildings remains.

The archaeological remains of Gilbertine establishments are at best fragmentary and for some sites non-existent. This thesis aims to bring together the available evidence for each type of site and for the first time to compare the differences in layout. This has provided a better understanding of the experience of the monastic inhabitants and the factors that effected the arrangement of the monasteries.

Chapter 2 - The Gilbertine Double House

This chapter uses the archaeological record to characterise the Gilbertine double, or mixed houses, where both canons and nuns lived together, and as a distinct entity from the traditional nunnery that also contained male occupants such as lay brothers and a priest. This will be done by identifying original and unique architectural traditions, which included the bias towards the location of the cloister to the north of the church, a church that allowed men and women to worship together, and various shared and segregated spaces within the monastery. These traditions make the Gilbertine establishments containing both men and women more than just ‘mixed communities’, but along with a small number of European orders in twelfth-century England, one of a series of essentially double monasteries.

Were Gilbertine Monasteries ‘Double Houses’?

A number of historians have argued that the Gilbertine double houses were predominantly nunneries with a small number of canons attached, rather than a place for men and women to worship on equal terms (e.g. Elkins 1988; Burton 2001), a position summarized by Janet Sorrentino (2002). Sorrentino argues that the term ‘double monasteries’ is problematic due to all female religious houses requiring the presence of men to a greater or lesser extent. At the very least, the women of even the smallest and least accessible nunneries required a canon or priest to hear their confession and to lead the mass. The lack of a standardized monastic rule peculiar to women within the twelfth century, meant that many nunneries adopted traditionally male monastic ways of life, often copied wholesale from their male counterparts

(Golding 1995: 72-3). The usual decision amongst women in monastic orders, including Premonstratensian and Bridgettine nuns, was to follow the rule of St Benedict. Although this rule urged purity of the soul through manual labour, the vast majority of nunneries also had a contingent of lay brothers to attend to the monastic land holdings. In the case of an incumbent priest or lay brothers, the male members of the community had the primary role of serving the nuns.

The nuns of the Gilbertine order in part followed this tradition, and also adopted the rule of St Benedict, whilst by way of contrast the Gilbertine canons followed the rule of St Augustine. The Benedictine rule was considered ‘monastic’, with a focus on contemplation and private worship, whilst the Augustine rule was more ‘secular’, having its roots in the European secular colleges. Each of these rules held a separate schedule, or *cursus*, that set the time and nature of the inmates’ daily prayer and outlined the liturgy for saints’ days and festivals. A marked difference between each *cursus* was the number of readings at *matins*, the monastic *cursus* (the nuns) having 12 and the secular *cursus* (canons) having nine (Sorrentino 2002: 363). Sorrentino presents evidence from surviving historic Gilbertine manuscripts that both the nuns and the canons only held nine readings at matins, suggesting that all the inmates followed the wider secular *cursus* of the canons. She asserts that the use of the secular *cursus* of the canons overtook that of the nuns rather than the emergence of a hybrid of both the monastic and secular rules.

The view advanced by Elkin and Sorrentino of the double monastery, revises previous theories suggested by predominately Anglo-Saxon historians such as Mary Bateson (1899) and A. H. Thompson (1919). These historians, writing around the turn of the last century, argued that a community of men and women who shared a church, neighbouring accommodation and a common rule, were occupying a double house

(Bateson 1899: 138). Elkins (1988) has argued that this definition is too vague and Sorrentino (2002) makes the connection between the liturgical domination by the canons and the order not forming a unified space for both men and women to worship equally.

This debate has been addressed by both Brian Golding (1995) and more recently by Katherine Sykes (2009). Sykes contends that the term 'Double House' is still applicable within the correct context. Asserting that it is relevant for a number of communities including the Gilbertines, Fontevrists and Bridgettines, in contrast to the term 'mixed communities' referring to nunneries with a contingent of lay brothers and a priest or priests. Sykes (2009: 242-3) relates that during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the defining characteristic of the double monastery was the leadership of a master or prior from within the order that occupied the monastery.

Golding asserts that the Gilbertines occupied a space between the two extremes of sexual power, exemplified on one side by the all-powerful Abbess of Fontevrault, and on the other by the subservient women of the houses of Obazine and Prémontré (Golding 1995: 75). The Gilbertines appear to have established a balance between men and women within the monastery. Golding maintains that the very fact that there was no comprehensive rule for nuns allowed Gilbert to make a 'free translation' of the Benedictine rule that suited the needs of his order (Golding 2008: 662). This appears to have been achieved by limiting the power of the individual prior and prioress within their own particular monasteries, and leaving the significant decisions to be made by the master of the order at Sempringham. The role of men and women also gives the impression of having been similarly weighted in matters of discipline. Visitations by the central chapter to double houses were carried out by two canons and a lay brother, accompanied by an equal number of nuns and lay sisters (Golding 1995: 104). In

addition, the order's general confessor, the only member of the order besides the master to be licensed to take the nuns' confession, was required to be accompanied by two nuns to observe his work to ensure discipline (Golding 1995: 105).

At first glance, the evidence for an integrated group of men and women seems sparse. At its inception, the Gilbertine order was primarily focused on the role of women within the religious community, due to Gilbert's initial establishment of a *de facto* nunnery at Sempringham. This relationship is somewhat obscured within the architectural record due to the bias towards the relative size of male and female buildings within the monastic precinct. This is particularly conspicuous within the size of the cloisters compared to the relative numbers of each sex; the average number of canons for a Gilbertine double monastery was 12 with an average ratio of 1:4 canons to lay brothers. In contrast, the average number of the nuns limited to entering the monastery was around 100 with the same number of lay sisters (Hadcock & Knowles 1971: 195). If these numbers were accurate, they would have resulted in almost four times as many women in a double foundation as men. Despite this, the size of the cloisters for both sexes were often very similar, if slightly larger for the nuns, with a typical example being Watton priory where the nuns' cloister is 34.5 metres wide while the canons' cloister measures 31 metres. The two cloisters provided defined spaces for each group and it could be argued that both cloisters acted like independent monasteries.

Two main signifiers are used to identify which of the two cloisters the nuns occupied and which were occupied by the canons within the double house. In the double house the church was divided in two along its east-west axis and the larger partition devoted to the nuns, due to their greater number. This was how previous research identified the occupants at the sites of Watton (Hope 1901) and Sempringham (Coppack

2008). There were assigned a maximum of 12 canons in each of the monastic houses. The limitation on the number of nuns that could be housed at Bullington was set at 100 (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 194). This number is by no means the largest limitation, with the smallest being set at 60, at Catley and the largest 140, at Watton. Given this discrepancy between the numbers of nuns compared to canons it is highly likely that the nuns occupied the larger portion of the church. The second signifier of the nuns' cloister was the presence of a kitchen. The rule of St Gilbert required that the nuns provide food for the canons, the presence of a kitchen is therefore indicative of the presence of the nuns.

Northern and Southern Cloisters

Although much of the upstanding architectural material relating to the Gilbertine order no longer exists, many of the archaeological details can be reconstructed through excavation or survey. This data will be used to identify unique architectural aspects of the Gilbertine double house. First, the overall layout of the monastery can be established, with the positioning of the cloister to the north or south of the church, or both in the case of one or even possibly two sites. Second, individual buildings that provided shared or segregated spaces for men and women within the monastery will also be explored. Such mixed-gender spaces with Gilbertine double houses appear to have been the segregated church, passageway, window-house, and the possible double refectory. The passageway and window-house was the route by which the nuns' and canons' cloisters were connected. Along this route the nuns provided the canons' food and the prior and prioress could communicate. The window-house was a turnstile structure by which food or objects could be passed between the two groups without either seeing one another.

One of the most significant differences between the ‘standard’ monastic arrangement (Coppack 1990: 65-6) and that of the Gilbertine double house is the positioning of the cloister. The traditional arrangement found at an overwhelming number of non-Gilbertine monastic sites is for the cloister to be located to the south of the church. Being the most important structure, the church would have been the first building to be constructed on the site and unlike many of the other buildings can be said to have had a single overarching purpose from the moment of its construction (Little 1979: 23). The position of the cloister and the various ancillary buildings within the monastic precinct was always, if not variable, then at least open to some adaptation. The church as the primary building formed the heart of the monastery. It has been argued that the position and style of these buildings were significant to their designers and that, ‘the religious implications of building were upmost in the minds of its contemporaries’ (Krautheimer 1942: 1). If this is the case, then the relative position of the cloistral range to the church must be seen as important when viewed in the context of religiously significant iconography and an established tradition of monastic layout.

The later medieval cloistral arrangement evolved from the earlier Anglo-Saxon monastic tradition, where historically a number of monastic houses are known to have contained both men and women (Sykes 2009: 239-40). A description by Bede of the mixed Anglo-Saxon house at Barking bears a marked resemblance to the Gilbertine double house (Jane 1910: 154). Bede describes Barking as having a strict division between the men and women, the same arrangement appears to have been followed after death, with the monks being buried to the north of the church and the nuns within the nave (Cramp 1976: 206). An archaeological overview of the Anglo-Saxon monastery has been provided by Cramp (1976), who notes that the Anglo-Saxon cloistral complexes at Tintagel and Whitby appear to have grown up around the church,

grouping into ranges. As the layout of the monastery expanded, the cloistral arrangement developed, consisting of a series of ranges surrounding a central court. Between the ranges and the court was an enclosed arcade forming the cloistral walk. Over time the primary function of each building became fixed according to its location.

By the post-conquest period, in both England and mainland Europe, these buildings generally could have been identified by their position within the cloister (figure 2). The ground floor of the east range contained the chapter house to the north and the warming house with a storage area usually located to the south. Above, the majority of the east range usually formed the dormitory of the religious inmates with a reredorter projecting southward. The southern range formed the inmate's refectory over a storage room; the western end of this range often contained, or bordered, the kitchens (Platt 1995: 47-9).

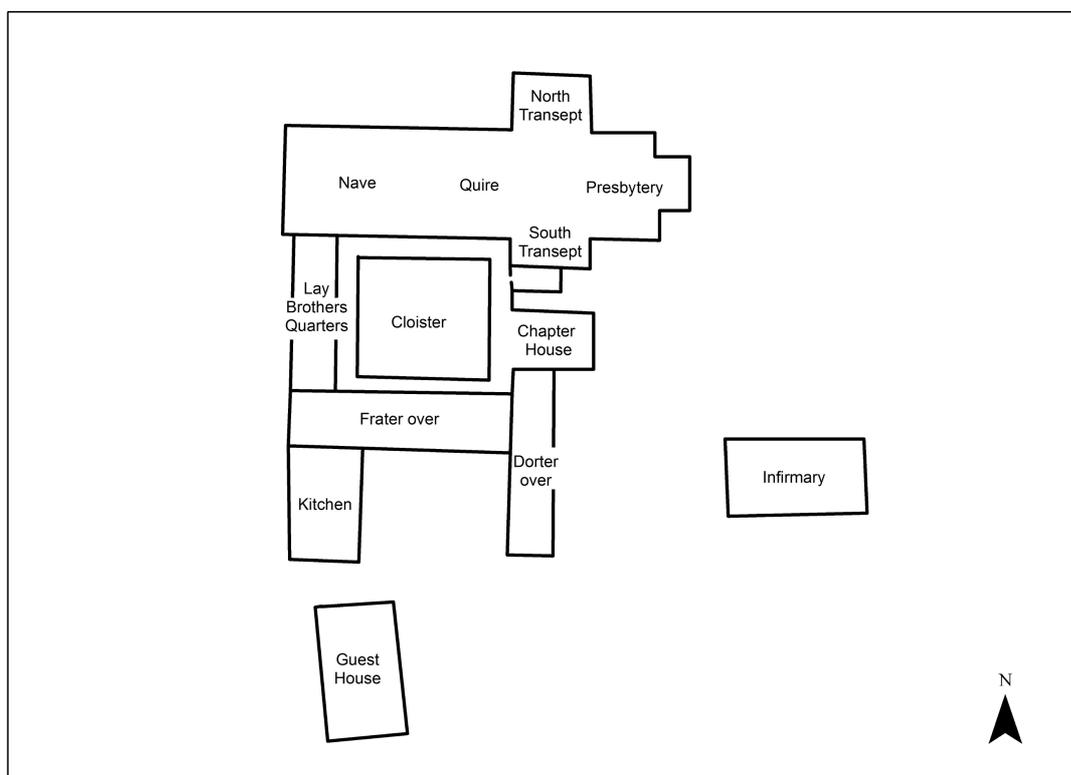


Figure 2 – Idealised plan of a post-conquest monastic church and the cloistral range (produced by the author)

It is likely that the ground floor of the western range was, as with the majority of the eastern and southern ranges, a storage area. However, the function of the upper levels of the range remains unclear. At Cistercian houses the western range has traditionally been assigned as the dormitory of the lay brothers in abbeys and lay sisters in nunneries. This is the case at the Cistercian site of Fountains abbey where the range consists of an undercroft with a dormitory above (Coppack 1990). However, at other sites such as the Benedictine abbey at Bardney the western range appears in lieu of the Abbot's Lodge and contained a private chapel, gallery and the Abbot's hall and great chamber (figure 3) (Brakspear 1922: 50). The purpose of the western range remains unclear at the majority of Gilbertine sites. Following excavation at Watton in 1900, the western range of the nuns' cloister is thought to have housed the lay sisters (figure 4) (Hope 1901: 17), whilst within the canons' cloister the purpose of the range is debatable. Hope (1901, 26-7) believed that it formed a hall and kitchens, presumably to house and feed the lay brothers. However, given the arrangement shown by Hope it appears to be a possible precursor to the fifteenth-century prior's lodge. This arrangement represents the standard established layout for a monastic establishment against which that of the Gilbertine house can be compared.

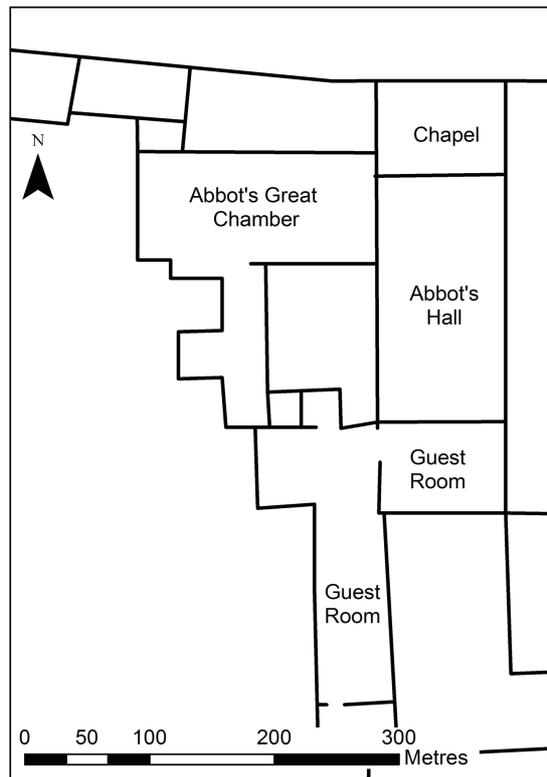


Figure 3 – The western range of Bardney abbey (after Brakspear 1922)

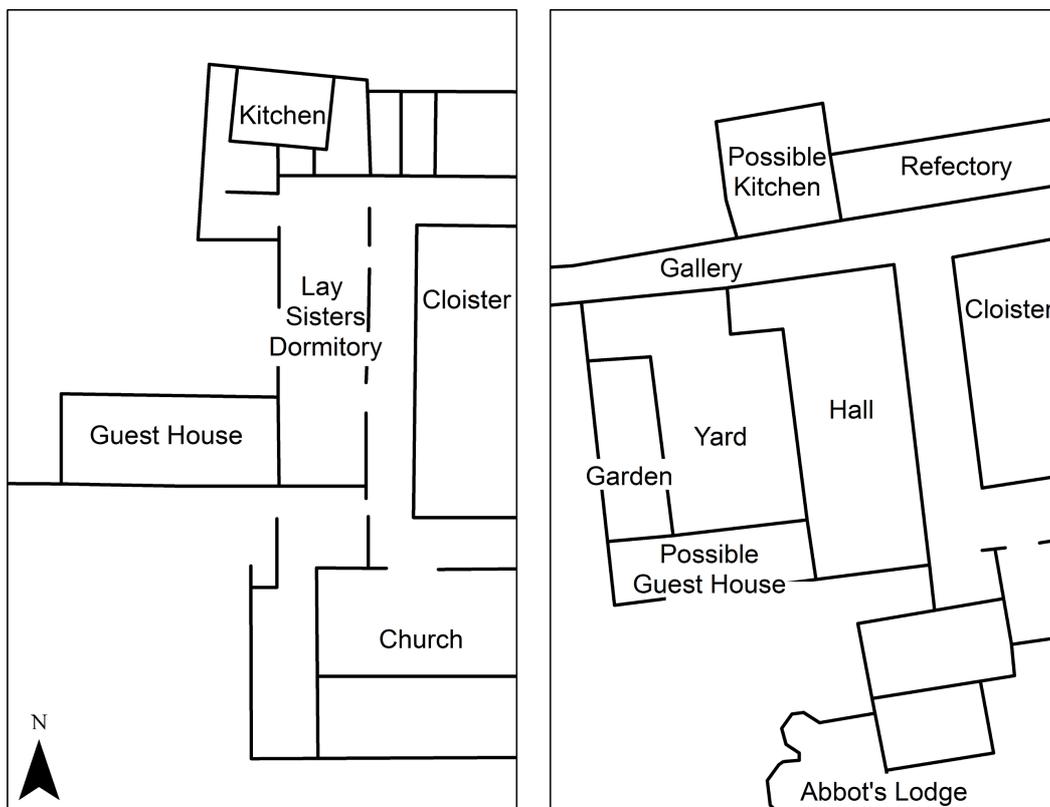


Figure 4 – The western ranges of the nuns (left) and canons (right) at Watton priory (after Hope 1901)

By the eleventh century this uniform arrangement of cloistral complex had become extremely common and Coppack (1990: 66) has stated that ‘...remarkably little variation in layout occurs’. This standardization is most apparent in the Cistercian and Augustinian houses, which more than other orders followed a distinct layout. The foundation dates for the 11 Gilbertine double houses (table 1) were all within the mid- to late-twelfth century, a time at which the format of the monastic house was well established. Considering the tradition of standardized form and function of the cloister and the associated ranges, variation within this tradition must be carefully studied. Differences may represent the unique needs of an order or individual house, or a unique interpretation of the monastic rule, that is to say that variation will have had either a pragmatic or spiritual motive. The simplest example of this is the practical positioning of the monastery’s kitchens close to the monks’ or nuns’ refectory to reduce the distance which food would have to be transported. In opposition to this is the spiritual motive influencing cruciform shape of the church, the most powerful of Christian symbols. Rather than being influenced by a practical structural motive, it allowed a linear progression of spiritual importance along its length, from the lay-brethren or sisters at the west end culminating at the east end with the altar and the prior or prioress. The positioning of other buildings within the monastery shared both practical and spiritual motivations. The infirmary was placed outside of the cloister not only to keep the sick separate from the healthy, but also because the inmates were not always the religious and as such were not permitted access to the cloister.

House	Foundation Date
Sempringham	1131 & 1139
Haverholme	1139
Chicksands	c.1150
Watton	1150
Alvingham	1148-54
Bullington	1148-54
Catley	1148-54
North Ormsby	1148-54
Sixhills	1148-54
Tunstall	1160
Shouldham	1193

Table 1 - Showing the foundation dates of the 11 Gilbertine double houses (after Knowles and Hadcock 1971)

As has already been noted, the majority of monastic sites of all orders had their cloister located to the south; traditionally it has been thought this was to ensure that the church did not block the sun from the cloister (Gilchrist 1990: 98). Coppack (1990) and Gilchrist (1994) have both remarked upon the tendency of nunneries to have the cloister on the northern side of the church, in comparison to male monastic sites, although both have attached a different degree of significance to the observation. Coppack suggests that the choice is influenced principally by drainage and other practical reasons rather than those more symbolically motivated. However, Gilchrist argues that the northern position of the cloister in female houses may have represented an idea of particular religious importance. Nonetheless, the placement of the cloister to the north due to

practical considerations should not be overlooked. Drainage has long been accepted as a major influence on the placement of the conventional buildings (Bond 1989), with the availability of an extant or easily convertible watercourse imperative for providing water to the kitchens and the flushing of waste from the reredorter. Gilchrist (1994: 129) asserts that accessibility to a pre-existing water source was, in the case of nunneries, more important to poorer houses, as they lacked the means to undertake the large-scale diversion via the construction of channels and drains.

The issue of cost as a barrier to the placement of the cloister to the south of the church does not fit with the circumstances of the Gilbertine double houses. Although the fortunes of the later foundations and eventually the order as a whole, would decline (see Chapter 5), the early monasteries had large foundation grants with which to construct complex arrangements of channels to ensure the efficient management of water. For example, at the double house at Watton, founded around 1150, although the priory's income often fluctuated over relatively short periods, in 1254 the temporal income alone was valued at £230 (Stephenson 2009: 14). Furthermore, the ditches that form the drainage for Watton are still of impressive size, measuring approximately 5 metres wide and 2 metres deep (English Heritage 1974).

A second possible reason given for the placement of a cloister to the north of the church was the position of a pre-monastic cemetery to the south. The position of the cemetery and the consequence of having to disturb the dead are considered to have been a great enough encumbrance to discourage the traditional placement of the cloister. This is thought to be the case at Tintern abbey where the cloister was a later addition to an earlier church with an established cemetery (figure 5). Likewise, two of the Gilbertine double houses are known to have been founded on the site of previous parish churches. The first was at Alvingham, where the arrangement of the cloistral

complex is unclear, whilst at the second at Watton, which was founded on the site of an earlier monastery, there is no evidence to suggest that this affected the citing of the cloister despite comprehensive geophysical survey (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 196). With the exception of these two examples, there is no evidence for a pre-existing foundation on another Gilbertine double house, which may have affected the conscious layout of the cloistral ranges. It is therefore unlikely that this can be used to explain the position of the Gilbertine northern cloister.

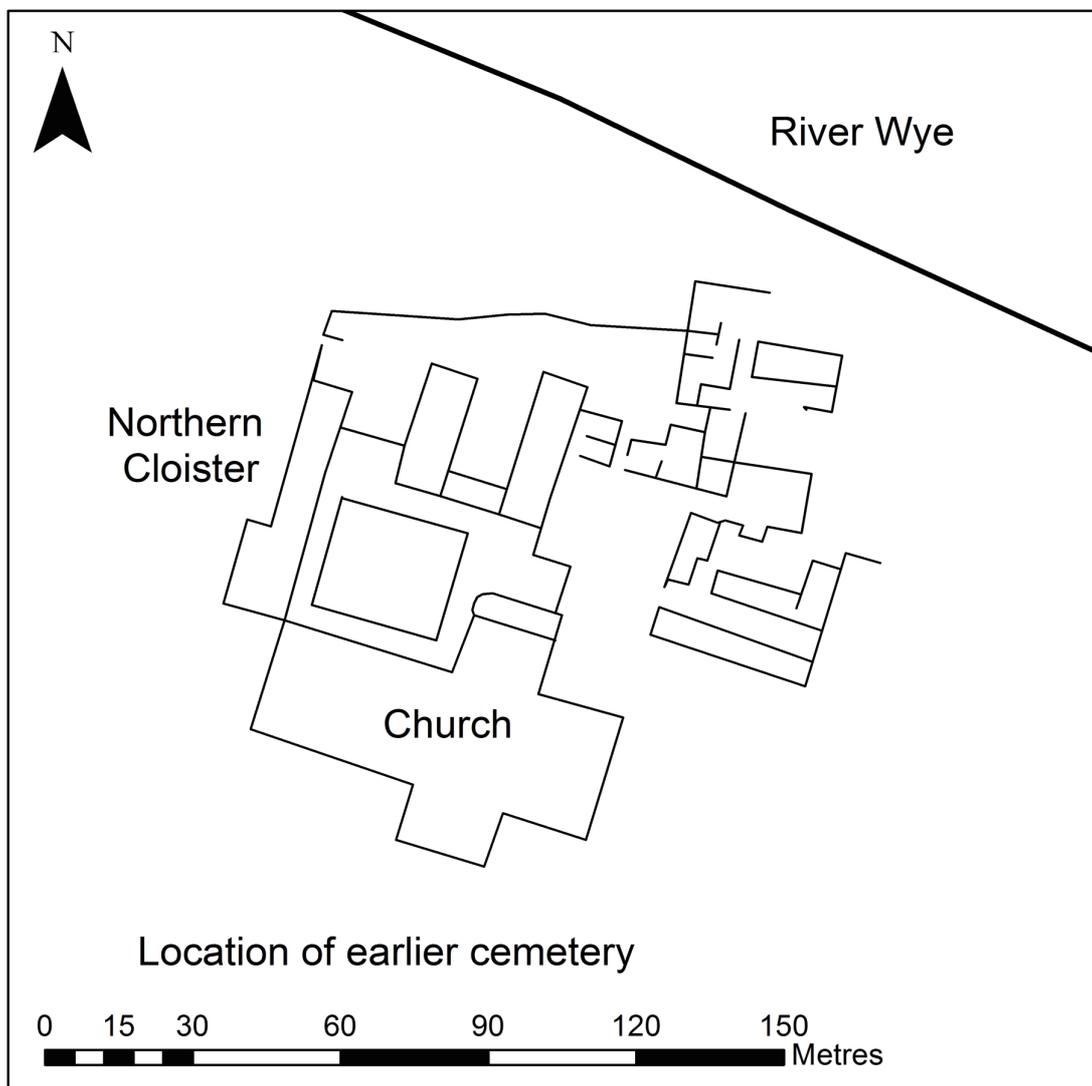


Figure 5 – The arrangement of Tintern abbey (after Brakspear 1910)

An English Context for Cloister Orientation

Other than a brief survey by Gilchrist (1994) of English nunneries, to date no collation of data comparing northern and southern cloisters in English monastic establishments has been undertaken. To redress this, this thesis presents data for sites with a known cloister orientation from two historical counties: Yorkshire and Lincolnshire (Table 2). The data was gathered from numerous sources following information from the English Heritage Scheduled Monument List and the relevant copies of Victoria County History. Lincolnshire was chosen as it allows a number of Gilbertine sites to be taken into account within the comparison, and Yorkshire due to the wealth of data following a large amount of excavation and clearance of sites. Of the 154 late-medieval nunneries, priories, and abbeys in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire the cloister orientation can be identified for 65. Of these 65 examples only 20% have their cloisters to the north of the church. If Gilbertine sites are removed from the calculation, the percentage of northern cloisters drops to 12.5%. This figure is suggestive of a strong trend towards the normal cloistral position for non-Gilbertine monastic sites being situated to the south of the church.

Gilchrist (1994: 128) has shown that 34.4% or 21 of 61 nunneries and double houses within England where the cloister orientation can be identified have northern cloisters. Of non-Gilbertine houses in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire the percentage that have northern cloisters is as low as 11%. If the percentage of Gilbertine double houses within the same area is calculated it is much higher, with 60% of houses for which cloister orientation is known to have been to the north. A similar pattern is found in the single priories within the two counties, with 67% of Gilbertine male houses having northern cloisters, opposed to only 16% of non-Gilbertine male houses. When this is applied purely to Gilbertine double houses for which the cloister orientation is known,

Order	Southern Cloister	Northern Cloister
Augustinian Canons	Bolton Priory Bridlington Priory Gisborough Priory Haltemprice Priory Kirkham Priory Newburgh Priory Nocton Priory Thornholme Priory Thornton Abbey	Warter Priory Woodkirk Priory Bourne Abbey
Benedictine Monks	Bardney Abbey Croyland Abbey Freiston Priory Lincoln (St Mary Magdalen) Stamford (St Leonard's) Whitby Abbey	Boston Priory Deeping St James Priory
Benedictine Nuns	Marrick Priory York (Clementhorpe)	Wilberfoss Priory
Carthusian Monks	Axholme Priory	Mount Grace Priory
Cistercian Monks	Byland Abbey Fountains Abbey Jervaulx Abbey Kirkstall Abbey Kirkstead Abbey Louth Park Abbey Meaux Abbey Rievaulx Abbey Roche Abbey	
Cistercian Nuns	Esholt Priory Kirklees Priory Synningthwaite Priory Ellerton Priory (N Yorks) Wykeham Priory Knaith Priory Nun Cotham Priory Swine Priory	
Cluniac Monks	Monk Bretton Priory Pontefract Priory	
Gilbertine Canons and Nuns	North Ormsby Malton Priory Bullington Priory	Ellerton Priory (E Yorks) Sempringham Priory Watton Priory Shouldham Priory York (St Andrew's)
Grandmontine Monks	Grosmont Priory	
Premonstratensian Canons and Canonesses	Orford Priory Beauchief Abbey Coverham Abbey Easby Abbey Newsham Abbey Tupholme Abbey Barlings Abbey	Swainby Abbey
Savigniac Monks	Revesby Abbey	
Tironensian Monks	Humberston Abbey	
Trinitarian Monks	Knaresborough Priory	

Table 2 - Showing the cloister orientation for sites in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire

the percentage increases. The position of the cloister is known for five of the 11 double houses and of these three are located to the north of the church, whilst a further two sites have probable northern cloisters. Although the numbers are too low to make anything other than broad conclusions, they contrast with the sample of male monastic sites within Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. It may also be significant that to date there have been no Cistercian sites identified within Lincolnshire or Yorkshire known to have a northern cloister. Gilbert is thought by many scholars (Graham 1913; Burton 1995; Golding 1995) to have based his foundations on the model of the Cistercians, following his failure to place the order under their leadership. It is therefore unexpected that no contemporary Cistercian house within either Lincolnshire or Yorkshire shares the trait of the northern cloister with the Gilbertines.

It is unclear whether the northern cloister was a tradition of the double monastery, rather than a purely Gilbertine trait. However, a few examples of double houses belonging to other late-medieval orders can be used as comparisons. The English motherhouse of the Swedish Bridgettine order, Syon House, contained both men and women. Geophysical survey and excavation has located the cloistral range on the site to the south of the church (Wessex Archaeology 2003). It is unclear from the results whether the cloister conforms to the traditional form, but given the layout of the Swedish motherhouse at Vadstena it is probable that it did. Although it is hypothesised that the site originally contained two cloisters, one for nuns and the other for canons (both followed a variation of the Augustine rule), no second cloister has been discovered to date (Wessex Archaeology 2003).

The motherhouse of the French order of Fontevrault near Chinon in Anjou was also founded as a double monastery containing both men and women (Esperdy 2005: 61). The English Fontevrault house at Nun Eaton was primarily a nunnery, but also

contained lay brothers and canons. It is unclear whether the order considered it a double monastery but it was referred to in the foundation charter as an 'Abbey' rather than a nunnery, suggesting that a number of male religious occupants may have been intended from the start (Cox 1908: 66). Traditionally the houses of Fontevrault contained men and women who followed the monastic rule of St Benedict, however at Nun Eaton the male occupants appear to have been canons regular following the secular rule (Andrews *et al.* 1981). This may have been due to the relatively late addition of the canons and the new preference within England for canons rather than monks. Excavation and survey at Nun Eaton has revealed that the two cloisters were on separate alignments, presumably with the canons added later. The nuns' cloister was located to the south of the church while the canons' cloister was located to the south-east. Both cloisters appear to have shared the same drain, the nuns' reredorter projecting from the south of the cloistral range and the canons' reredorter to the north (Andrews *et al.* 1981). There is no evidence of a second church at Nun Eaton, although the site has not been fully excavated.

These examples show that double houses belonging to other orders did not exclusively place their cloisters to the north of the church and thus did not always have a northern cloister. Those houses arising from orders previously established on the continent had the pre-existing architectural model of the motherhouse on which to base their arrangement. It is possible that the Gilbertine monastery, as a uniquely English establishment took this opportunity to create a distinct arrangement around the church at the majority of its double houses.

Archaeological Evidence from Gilbertine Double Houses

Of the 11 double houses founded by the Gilbertine order three have no information relating to the layout of the church or cloisters. The site of Sixhills has a large number of earthworks relating to the divisions of the inner precinct and water management on the site, but no trace of the buildings survives (Everson 1991). The site of Alvingham contains no extant buildings or building related earthworks and despite recent geophysical survey has yielded no evidence as to the layout of the monastic ranges (Bunn 2009b). The site of Haverholme priory was very partially excavated in the 1960s, however no report was produced and only large-scale plans of the work remain in Lincoln Museum stores. Study of these plans has failed to provide any meaningful understanding of layout, despite recent geophysical survey by the author (Townend 2013a). Without reference to a site diary or other report, it is not possible to establish the position of the priory church, or the cloisters.

In the following section, the arrangement of the church and cloisters will be considered for those sites where sufficient archaeological evidence is available. Focus will be placed on the character of the double church, with its lateral division and the presence or absence of transepts. The presence of a separate chapel for the canons of double houses will also be established where possible, as will the uniquely Gilbertine phenomenon of a window house connecting the two cloisters. In addition to this, the possibility of a split refectory at Bullington priory will also be examined. These aspects of the Gilbertine double priories have been examined with the aim of, for the first time, comparing all the available evidence. It will be argued that following the construction of Sempringham in 1139, later Gilbertine houses placed a focus on greater segregation between men and women.

Sempringham

Sempringham is the earliest example of a Gilbertine monastery. Before the construction of the large double house in 1139, Gilbert had first constructed a small number of buildings near the parish church to house the first novices of the order (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 194). On returning from the house of the Bishop of Lincoln around 1130, Gilbert became the rector of the church at Sempringham (Graham 1906a: 179), and upon his return he found that a number of women within his congregation wished to take up a chaste and monastic life. With the help of his former benefactor, Alexander the Bishop of Lincoln, Gilbert sought to found a community for the women within his home at Sempringham (Graham 1906a: 179). The Domesday Survey, completed in 1086, states that the holding contained 45 acres of meadow, 53 acres of woodland and a church (Cope-Faulkner 2008: 3). Gathering the support of the local landowners could have proved difficult for Gilbert, as Sempringham was divided between three manors. The largest of these was held by the Alfred of Lincoln, the next largest by Gilbert I de Gant and the third by Robert de Toden (Golding 1995: 199). However, half of the land held by Alfred was under the control of Gilbert's father, Jocelin, and all three men also had shared ownership over the church by which Gilbert planned to enclose his followers. All three would eventually, whether directly or under their auspices through their tenants, cede their land surrounding the priory to the order (Golding 1995: 199).

The first community to be established at Sempringham by Gilbert, in around 1131, was very different to what would later become known as the Order of the Gilbertines. Golding (1995: 198) goes as far as to describe the community as quasi-eremical at its inception. Indeed, Sempringham does not appear to have gained the

status of priory until after 1147, when the order underwent formal organisation (Golding 1995: 198). The original buildings are thought to have been constructed around 1131 against the northern wall of the parish church (Graham 1913: 6), although little evidence exists concerning the nature of the buildings and no archaeological remains have been recorded. The monastery was originally designed to house approximately seven nuns, with the later addition of lay sisters and lay brethren. It is highly probable that these groups would have been kept segregated, and to achieve this it is likely that a number of ranges would have been constructed in succession, firstly for the nuns, secondly the lay-sisters and finally for the lay-brothers, although it is also possible that the brothers would have lived outside of the complex, on the farms that supported the nuns. These ranges to the north of the church, for which no surviving archaeology remains, can be considered the first of two monasteries on the site.

Geophysical survey carried out in the fields to the north and south of St Andrew's church by Archaeological Project Services (Cope-Faulkner 2008), revealed a large number of features comprising the village of Sempringham and associated field systems (figure 6). The plot to the south of the church shows clearly the outline of buildings and divisions that made up the village. To the north of the church the remains of the medieval ridge and furrow can clearly be seen, along with ditched enclosures that made up the field system. In addition to the evidence gained from geophysical survey, field walking of the area revealed concentrations of pottery dating to the pre-monastic period of occupation directly to the north and south of the church (figure 7). Using these two sources of evidence it can be surmised that pre-monastic activity was limited largely to the area revealed on the geophysics to be the village and medieval field systems. The nucleus of this activity was the church that sat in the centre of these two areas.

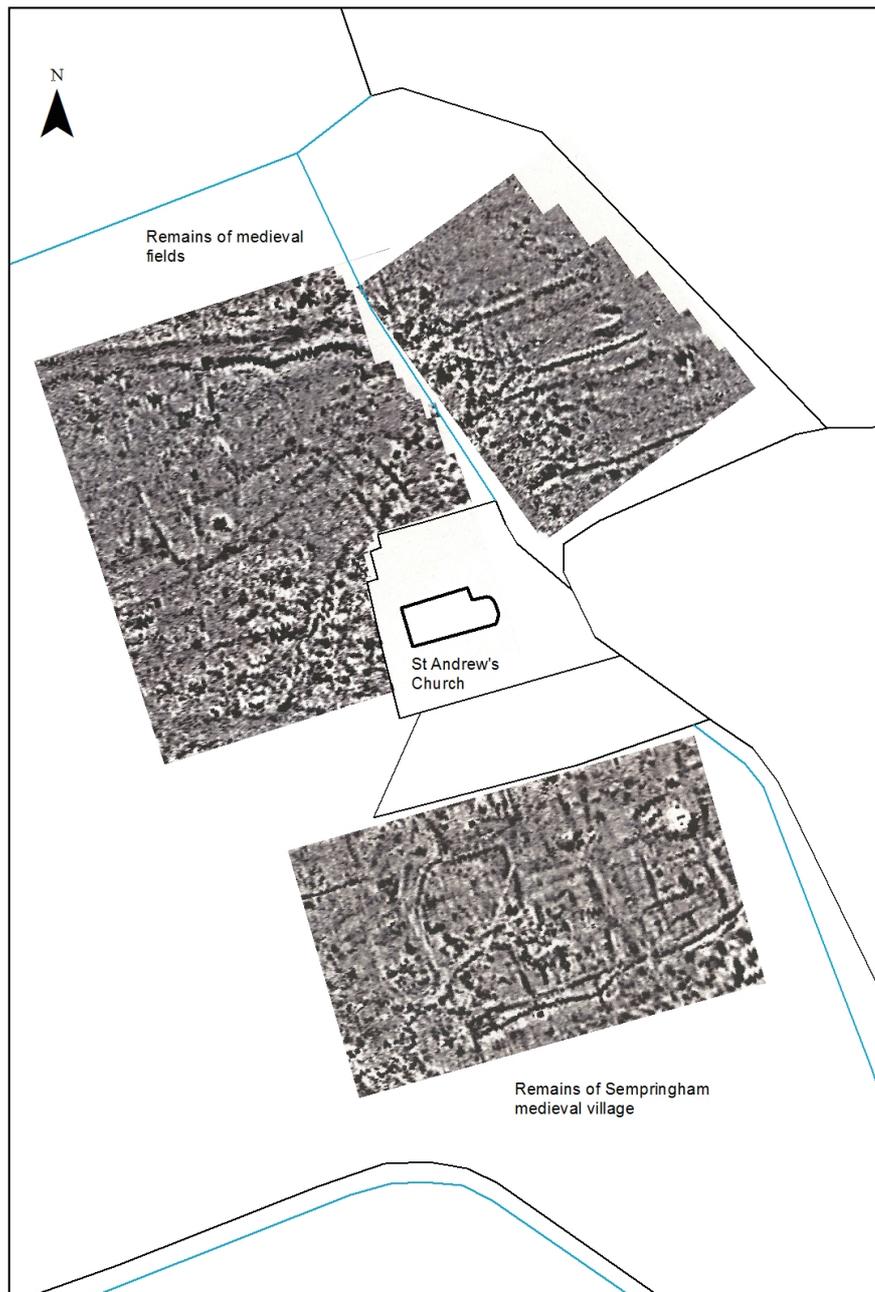


Figure 6 – Plot showing results of magnetometry survey at Sempringham priory (after Cope-Faulkner 2008)

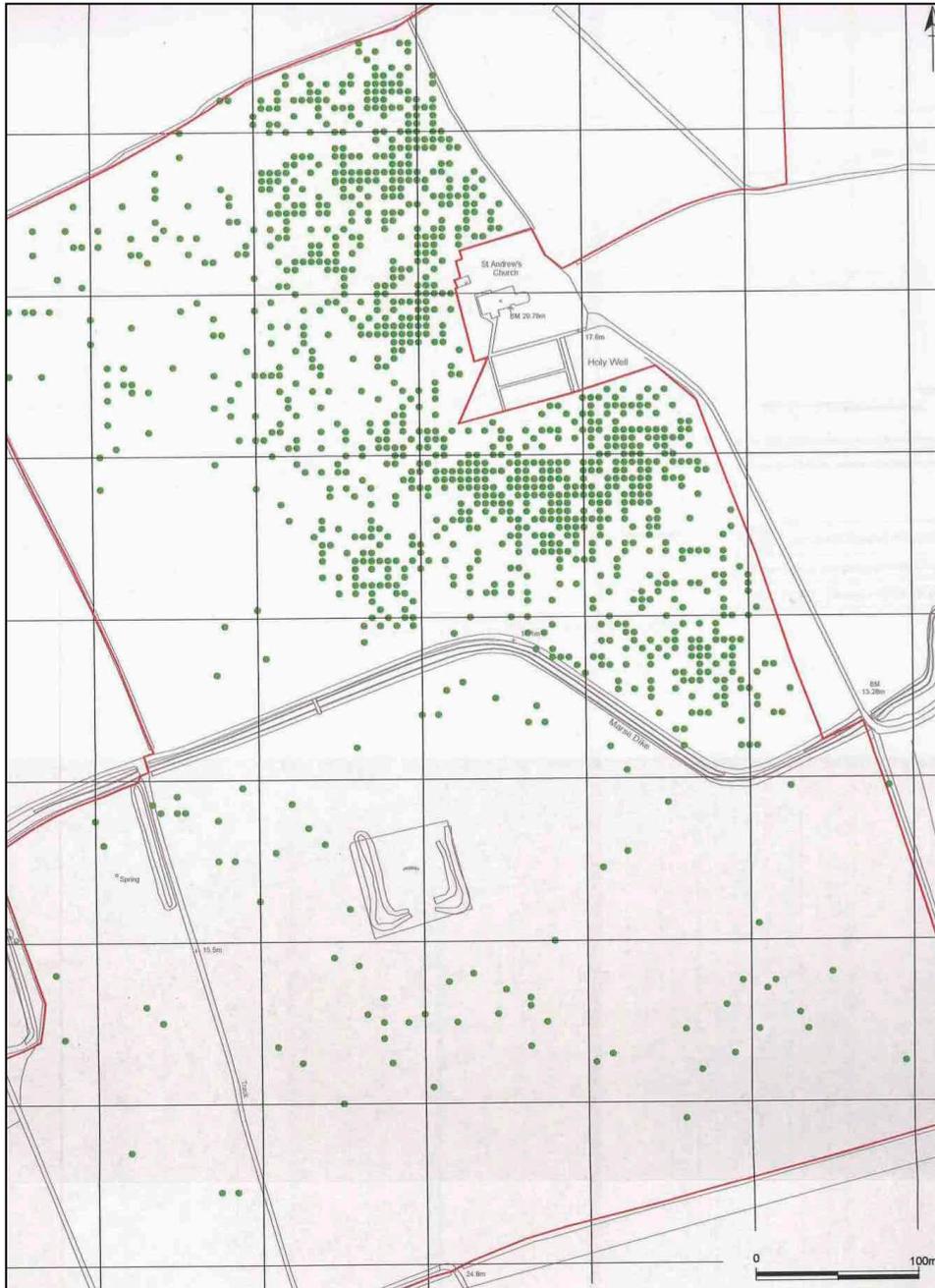


Figure 7 – Plot showing location of pre-monastic pottery scatter at Sempringham priory (Cope-Faulkner 2008)

It is probable that the location of the buildings that formed the first monastery to the north of the parish church can be attributed to the location of an earlier cemetery to the south, this was after all the parish church that would have served the associated village of Sempringham. The location of the village to the south of the church may also have been a factor that Gilbert considered when citing the buildings of the nuns. Given the need for the nuns to be separated from the rest of the community, both physically and spiritually, it would have made sense for Gilbert to locate the church between the laity and the religious. The *Book of St Gilbert* describes the nature of the buildings constructed for the nuns:

‘...dwellings suitable for the religious life were duly built, together with an enclosure sealed on every side.’

(Foreville & Kier 1987: 33)

Throughout the entirety of the section from which this passage is taken, emphasis is placed on the chaste nature of the women Gilbert took into his order and the extent to which he went to ensure their enclosure. It is unclear from the passage what was meant by ‘sealed on every side’. It may have been that a ditch and/or bank was constructed around the nuns’ quarters, however it is more likely to refer to a cloistral complex, closed in on three sides against the church, and surrounding a cloister. It is possible, given the short life of the original priory (less than 10 years) coupled with the fact they appear to have been occupied almost immediately, that these buildings would have been mainly constructed out of wood. Around 1139, following the growth of the community, the church and cloister at St Andrew’s could no longer sustain the number of inmates (Knowles and Hadcock 1971: 194). Gilbert of Ghent

provided land for the construction of a new church and cloister dedicated to St Mary (Graham 1906a: 180). This land was close to the original monastery but to the south of the village of Sempringham, rather than to the north (figure 8).

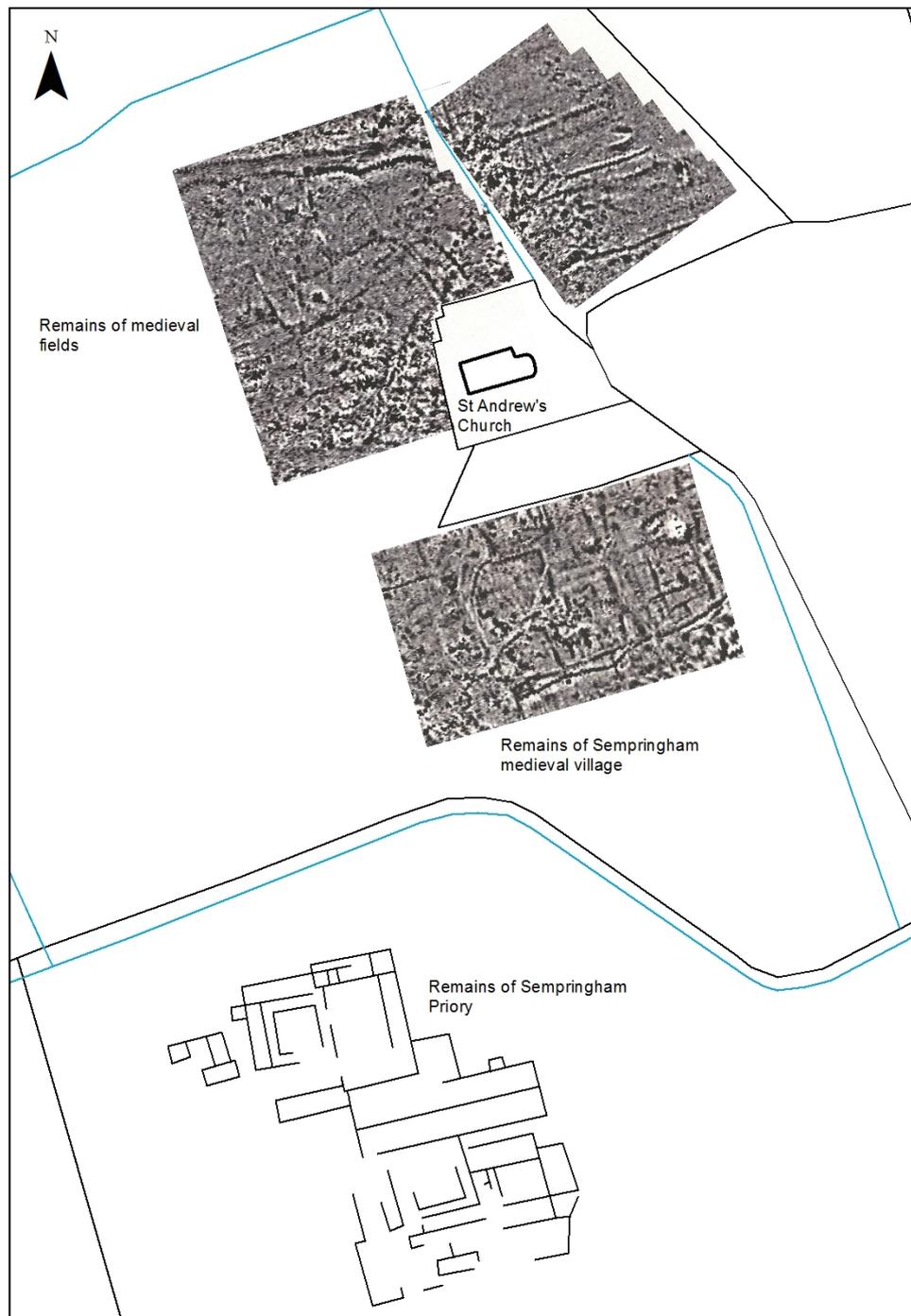


Figure 8 – Location of the second monastery at Sempringham in relation to Sempringham village (after Cope-Faulkner 2008)

The earliest archaeological work undertaken on the site of the second monastery at Sempringham, now to be referred to as Sempringham priory, was undertaken by Hugh Braun between 1938-9. Braun reports that at the beginning of the investigation it was assumed that there was only a single monastery and that it was located on the site of the parish church of St Andrew (Braun 1938: 1). This was most likely due to confusion between the location of the first monastery in the historical record being referred to as outside St Andrew's church and the construction of the new priory in 1139 to the south. This has subsequently led to the placement on the 1891 Ordnance Survey map of Sempringham priory (the later monastery) on the site of St Andrew's (figure 9). Following an investigation of the site and of the pertinent aerial photographs, Braun correctly located the site of the priory within the field to the south of Marse Dyke, referred to on the Ordnance Survey as 'Sempringham Hall'.

The 1938 season revealed evidence of a post-suppression house on the site containing reused monastic stonework, points A & B on Braun's plan (figure 10) (Braun 1938: 3). In addition to this, a medieval stone coffin was recovered from the excavation, which now lies in the parish church. The excavators followed the walls that made up the post-Dissolution house in the hope that they 'would echo the monastic plan' (ibid.). This plan failed and it was only the excavation of two trenches during backfilling on the earthwork to the south of the post-Dissolution house, which uncovered *in situ* monastic remains. These two trenches contained two walls that included no reused material, marked as K on figure 10 (Braun 1938: 4). At the end of the 1938 season Braun resolved to shift the focus of the excavation the following year to the earthwork where these walls had been uncovered.

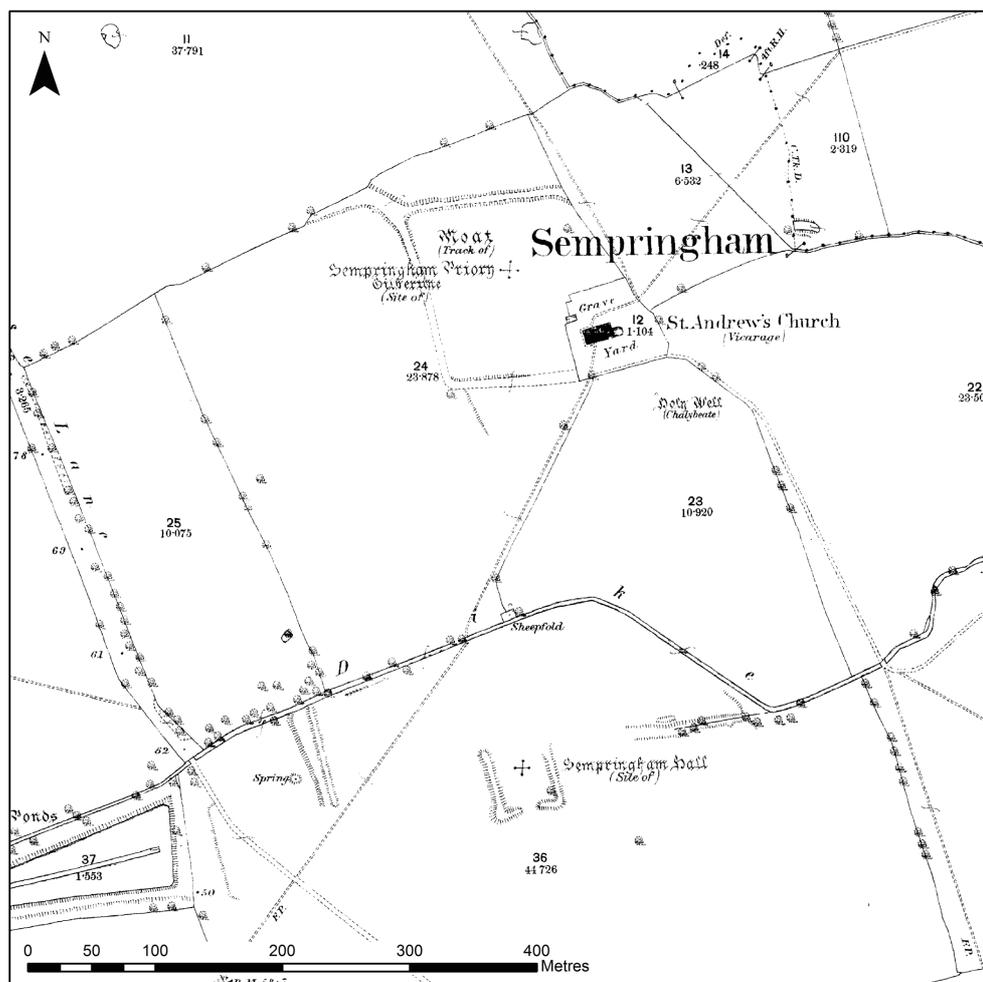


Figure 9 – 1891 Ordnance Survey map showing the incorrect location of Sempringham priory on the current site of St Andrew’s Church (OS 1891)

Investigation by Braun in 1939 revealed that the earthwork was in fact the remains of an early-seventeenth-century house (Braun 1938: 1), although later examination by Glyn Coppack (2008: 2) of photographs of Braun’s excavation, places the date of the house 100 or so years earlier, within the sixteenth century. Braun described this building as a mansion forming three sides of a courtyard, with projecting towers at the outer angles. Following the abandonment of the house, which Braun posits was never completed, although little evidence for this assertion can be found within the text of his report, the buildings were removed resulting spaces ‘filled-in’ with earth (Braun 1938: 1). This resulted in a u-shaped banked earthwork (figure 10), which Braun

Within the northern half of the church Braun identified the canons' nave, choir and presbytery. It became clear to Braun whilst excavating the canons' half of the church that the masonry he encountered dated to the fourteenth century (*ibid.*). This fits well with the historical record, as in 1301 the prior John de Hamilton set out to build a new church due to the state of disrepair of old one (Graham 1906a: 184). In addition to this, in 1306 the Hamilton gained permission from the papacy to acquire the churches at Thurstanton and Norton Disney for the purpose of making improvements to the priory buildings (*ibid.*: 180). This evidence suggests regeneration at the beginning of the fourteenth century, with these improvements coming in the form of a total rebuild of the canons' half of the church and northern transept and an extension of the nuns' presbytery of two bays to match the enlarged northern half. According to the report (Braun 1939: 3) the nuns' half of the church, to the south, was not completely explored, due to the poor survival of the remains and the outbreak of WWII, which brought an early end to the excavations.

Given the abrupt end to Braun's excavations it is not surprising that the report produced in the same year is short and the plan shown in figure 11 unphased. However, it is possible to gain an understanding of the layout of the latest fourteenth-century church begun by Hamilton. It is also possible to interpret the size and arrangement of the earlier twelfth-century church, referred to by Braun on the plan as 'Norman'. The layout of this earlier phase church is visible at the east end of the nuns' presbytery, and the southern and western walls of the nuns' church. There is also a fragment of the northern wall of the canons' nave at the eastern extremity of the church. Braun gives the internal length of the original Norman church as 76 metres, with a width for the nuns' half of 10.5 metres, and 9 metres for the canons. Following the fourteenth-century improvements the internal length of the church was approximately 100 metres, and the

of the northern half of the church, it is obvious that the canons' cloister was not connected directly to the church. It is possible that a passageway could have connected the two buildings, however none is evident from Braun's plan.

Recent work by Cope-Faulkner and Glynn Coppack (2008) using a combination of Braun's work, previous geophysical survey (Brooks & Laws 2005) and new aerial photography interpretation, at the second monastery at Sempringham, has revealed a large number of extant archaeological remains. Comprehensive geophysical survey of the area surrounding the priory church located both the nuns' and canons' cloisters (figure 12). The supposed allocation of the southern half of the church to the nuns also argues for them occupying the cloister to the south. This cloister is surrounded by a series of buildings that probably make up the cloistral ranges, due to the larger southern area partitioned within the church needed to house the great number of nuns. The number of inmates at Sempringham, as at other Gilbertine houses, was known to exceed the limits laid down at the foundation. In 1226 Henry III presented the master with 100 marks to support the nuns at Sempringham and in 1228 relieved the priory of the responsibility of providing food during the general chapter meeting (Graham 1906a: 180). The house was limited to 120 nuns and lay sisters. Despite this, 200 women were said to be present within the house in 1247 (Knowles and Hadcock 1971: 196). This would explain the large size of the nuns' cloistral complex relative to that of the canons. The eastern range at Watton is thought to be the nuns' dormitory, so similarly the range of buildings to the east of the cloister at Sempringham was most likely an extension of the nuns' dormitory to accommodate such a large number of inmates.



Figure 12 – Transcription of 2008 geophysical survey of the cloistral buildings at Sempringham priory (after Cope-Faulkner 2008)

Cope-Faulkner and Coppack (2010) have since refined this plan, where they seek to simplify the dense geophysical data and to display only the monastic remains by removing those related to the post-Dissolution house (figure 13). There is no evidence for a southern transept to the church and, if projected, the size of the cloister would suggest that cloistral walk to the north butted up against the southern wall of the church. The position of the nuns' chapter house can be identified to the south of the nuns' presbytery, forming the northern limit of the southern range. The position of the

kitchen to the south-west of the nuns' cloister has been identified by the pot scatter from field walking (Coppack & Cope-Faulkner 2010). The position of this kitchen matches that found at the single house of Mattersey, and is a mirror image of the nuns' northern cloister at Watton.

The canons' cloister is much more compact than that of the nuns. This is not surprising given that the number of canons within the Gilbertine monastery was limited to 12 and the prior, compared to the 200 nuns recorded in the house in 1247. As at Mattersey and the east range at Watton, the canons' cloister is enclosed on three sides by ranges, the eastern of these probably being the canons' dormitory and the northern range forming the refectory above a vaulted undercroft. The function of the western range is unknown, but the plan by Coppack & Cope-Faulkner, shows the ground floor as having consisted of nine vaulted bays with a separate vaulted room at the northern end. Unlike at the canons' cloister at Watton, the northern cloister at Sempringham does not appear to have a separate church or chapel for the canons. This function may have been performed by the building identified by Braun as a 'Norman building', located directly to and butting the west of the priory church. The size of this early building matches the size of the chapel found at Watton, to the south of the canons' cloister. This is supported by the assertion by Coppack and Cope-Faulkner (2010: 17), that the building is contemporaneous with the twelfth-century double church. This building would have been where the canons carried out their religious devotions, other than the mass, which would have been carried out in the priory church.

Glyn Coppack has placed a mid-twelfth-century date on the arrangement of the eastern portion of the nuns' ranges and likened them to that found at Fountains abbey, dating to this period (Coppack pers. comm.). He goes as far as to suggest that the majority of the nuns' cloister is in the mid-twelfth-century style. This is in contrast to

the date of the canons' cloister, or at least the western range of that cloister, which following an intervention by English Heritage in 1987 was dated as part of the fourteenth-century rebuild (Coppack & Cope-Faulkner 2010: 5). It would appear that the canons' cloisters benefited from the 1301 remodelling to a greater extent than the nuns', and this reflects the pattern seen in the church, and the re-construction and expansion of the northern half of the church, with only a small extension to the length of the nuns' presbytery. It may have been the case that due to its proximity to the medieval course of the Marse Dyke, the canons' cloister was more prone to flooding than the nuns', and that it required, if not remodelling, then at least rebuilding.

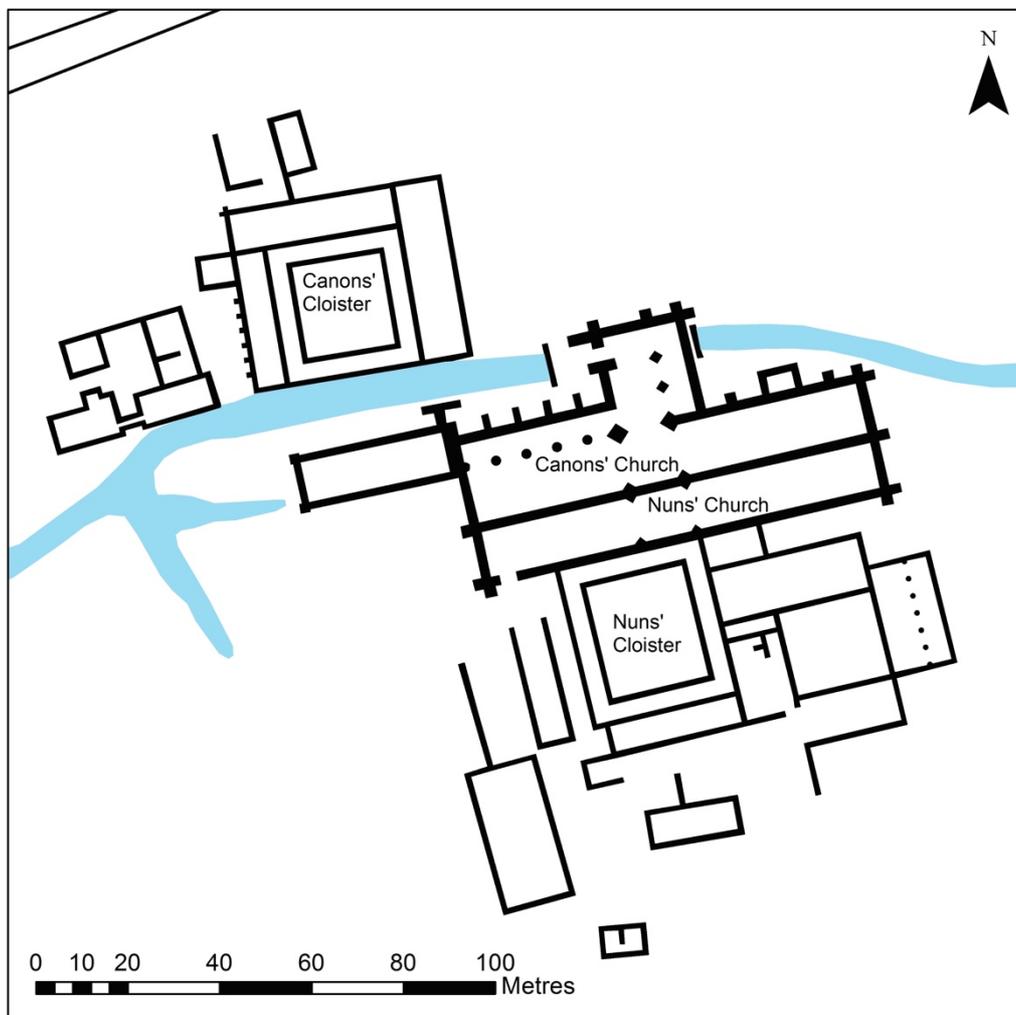


Figure 13 – Plan of the cloistral buildings at Sempringham priory (after Coppack & Cope-Faulkner 2010)

It is clear that an intentional decision was made to house the nuns to the south of the monastic complex and the canons to the north. As with the original placement of the nuns to the north of St Andrew's church, to keep them out of sight and separated from Sempringham village, it is likely that a similar reason was used to position the nuns at the new monastery. The village was now to the north of the church, and it and the buildings of the canons' cloister would have formed a barrier between the women and the villagers. The position of Marse Dyke would also have formed a barrier between the nuns and canons until its relocation in the early-fourteenth century. The significance of the site of Sempringham priory can be seen in its position as the motherhouse of the order, and it is likely that the layout of Sempringham would have been significant in the planning and construction of the later Gilbertine monasteries. This influence of the position and layout of the cloisters at Sempringham will also be seen in later chapters concerning the Gilbertine single house.

Watton

Watton priory is located in the parish of Watton within the East Riding, Yorkshire. The site lies at the foot of the southern edge of the Wolds in the Hull Valley, 7 miles north of the medieval town of Beverley and less than 6 miles south of Drifffield. The name Watton, meaning by the water, suggests that the land was once surrounded by marsh and fen and indeed it is relatively low at 13 metres above sea level (English Heritage 1994). The location is now the site of a manor house named 'Watton abbey', the remains of the fourteenth-century prior's lodging (Oswald 1935: 458). Eustace Fitz John founded Watton priory around 1150, and he also founded the Gilbertine house at Malton, and the first Premonstratensian establishment at Alnwick (Golding 1995: 215).

The site of Watton is the most comprehensively excavated of the Gilbertine double houses, and provides the most complete plan detailing layout and arrangement of the church and cloisters (figure 14). William Henry St John Hope carried out excavation there between 1883 and 1889 with the aim of recording the plan of the priory. As is characteristic of such early excavations, little was made in the way of records relating to deposits, stratigraphy or the classification of material culture, which now limits archaeological interpretation of the site. Surviving photographs of the excavations show that the method employed by Hope was to chase the main exterior walls once located and then to join up the interior divisions in plan (figures 15 & 16). Hope (1901: 8) also outlined the limitations of his excavation before setting out. He remarks that many of the walls were reduced to foundation level, some of which no longer displayed any extant remains, presumably other than as foundation or robber cuts. A second complication was the early-seventeenth-century removal of the ashlar facing to build nearby houses and farm buildings, and finally the appropriation of the chalk cores of the walls, which were subsequently removed and burned for lime following the suppression. The most dramatic period of destruction would likely have been in 1613 when stone was removed from the site to aid in the rebuilding of Beverley minster (Oswald 1935: 462).

The western of the two cloistral complexes was thought by Hope to be the home of the nuns and lay sisters (figure 17). Given the position of the prior's lodge as a later addition to the eastern cloister and the size and position of the divided church, this assumption is likely to be correct. The priory church will be discussed in detail later in the chapter, but in brief, Hope recovered the plan for both sides of the central division as well as a good plan for the northern transept of the church, which he suggested was a gathering place for old or infirm nuns, as it could not be used as a chapel without the



Figure 15 – Photograph showing Hope’s excavation strategy in the canons’ cloister, Watton priory (Hope 1901)

help of the canons. Hope did not identify a southern transept during his excavation, but relates that the area was largely unexcavated due to the presence of a number of trees.

The nuns’ cloister was rectangular, measuring 30 metres east-west by 34.5 metres north-south, and bordered to the south by the priory church 63 metres long by 19 metres wide (Hope 1901: 1). Directly to the north of the northern transept was the nuns’ parlour, with the chapter house forming the north wall. The chapter house was



Figure 16 – Photograph of Hope’s excavations of the north-west corner of the canons’ cloister, Watton priory (Hope 1901)

3.5 metres in width and as twice as long, with an arched ceiling that spanned the entirety of the room (Hope 1901: 14).

The nuns’ cloister was rectangular, measuring 30 metres east-west by 34.5 metres north-south, and bordered to the south by the priory church 63 metres long by 19 metres wide (Hope 1901: 1). Directly to the north of the northern transept was the nuns’ parlour, with the chapter house forming the north wall. The chapter house was 3.5 metres in width and as twice as long, with an arched ceiling that spanned the entirety

of the room (Hope 1901: 14). The remains of a tiled floor were recorded by Hope as evidence of stone benching around the perimeter of the room. Evidence from excavation suggested that the chapter house had been extended by one third, probably to the east, as to the west the cloistral walk would hinder expansion. Hope dates this expansion to the fourteenth century, based on the style of the architectural remains. Excavation revealed the remains of a lime-kiln within the western end of the chapter house, which can be seen on Hope's 1900 plan of the site as a 3.4 metres by 3.6 metres circular structure, with the flue extending through the western door of the chapter house out into the cloistral walk. Hope links this kiln to the processing of the chalk core of the walls at the suppression (Hope 1901: 14).

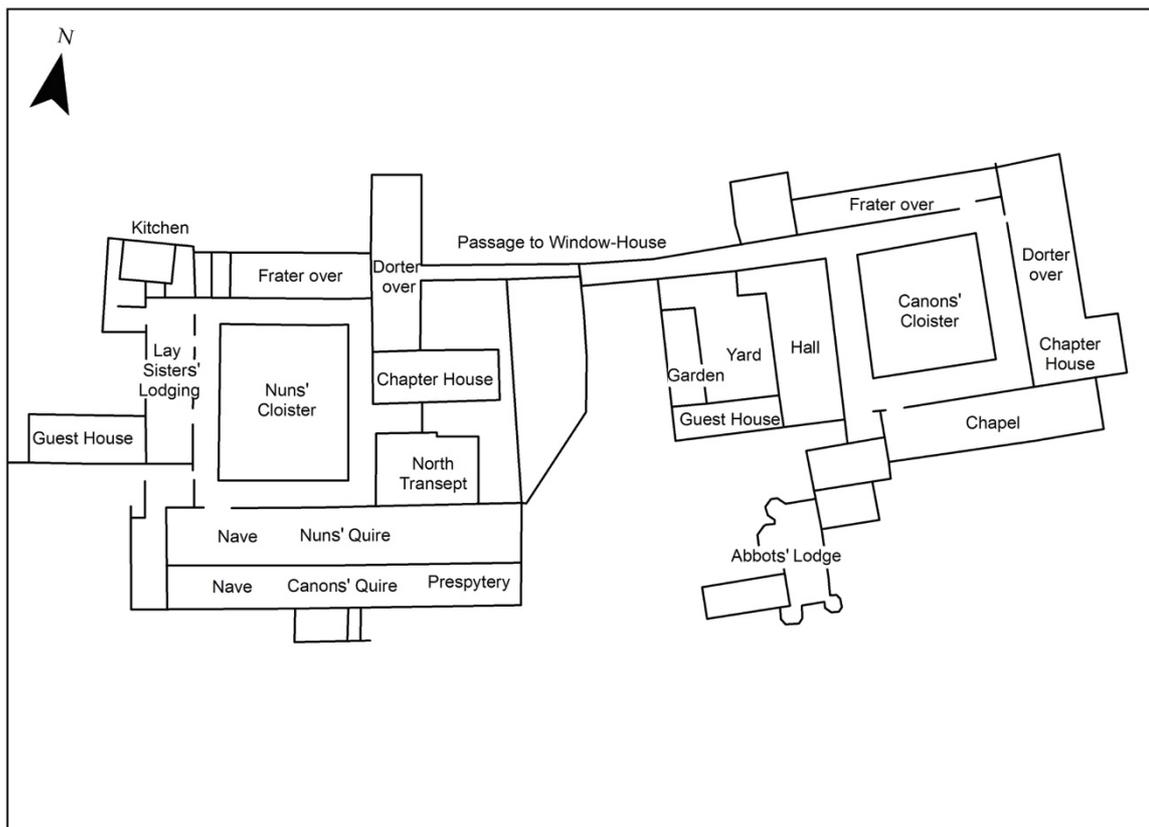


Figure 17 – The layout of Watton priory according to Hope (after Hope 1900)

To the north of the chapter house was located a vaulted undercroft forming the northern half of the east range. Hope identifies the southern half of this range as the warming house, due to its proximity to the chapter house (Hope 1901: 16). Despite a lack of excavated remains from the northern portion of this building, Hope designates it as the reredorter. In turn, this identifies the function of the room above as the nuns' dormitory. It appears from the 1900 plan that remains were scarcer and more disturbed to the north of the cloister, but despite this, enough remained to identify the vaulted undercroft of the nuns' refectory bordering the north of the cloistral walk. This can be recognised by the presence of a kitchen block to the west with evidence of a large fireplace set into the north wall. This building was set on a slight, yet perceptibly different, orientation to the surrounding buildings. This pattern of constructing the buildings that formed the corner of cloistral range on a different alignment is not uncommon within monastic architecture and is also evident at Ravenstonedale, Cumbria (Turnbull & Walsh 1992: 75).

The western range of the cloister appears to have been the best preserved, although not fully excavated with only the outer walls being traced (Hope 1901: 17). The range formed an L-shape with an undated extension to the east, most likely used to house female guests to the priory due to its size and the large number of lay sisters. The north-south portion of the range was segregated into a number of cells, probably used for storage as multiple doors onto the cloister were identified. As is the case with many monastic sites there is little evidence for the use of the upper floor, but it is probable that it quartered the lay sisters.

The cloister of the canons does not appear from the plans to have been excavated as thoroughly as that of the nuns. Hope refers to the investigation of the eastern cloister as an 'uncovering' rather than a full excavation (Hope 1901: 20). The eastern cloister

measured 30.5 metres in length and width, surrounded by a vaulted walk 4.2 metres wide. The work of amateur archaeologist Reginald Pexton in the early-twentieth century uncovered a number of fourteenth-century grave slabs within the cloister (Oswald 1935: 461). Little remained of the cloistral ranges during Hope's excavation, however he dated the remains to the fourteenth century suggesting a rebuilding or expansion of the canons' cloister in that period. Hope identified the chapter house as occupying a similar position to that of the nuns, to the north-east of the church. The canons' chapter house, also as with the nuns, had been extended by one third at some point in the fourteenth century. This is the only evidence that Hope gives to there being an earlier phase under the fourteenth-century cloister. The function of the eastern range was interpreted as the canons' dormitory with the warming house and cellar below.

The scant remains of the north range revealed a feature within the sixth bay from the east of the cloistral walk, which Hope (1901: 22) interpreted as a lavabo. No kitchen was recorded on the site of the canons' cloister, however the rule of the Gilbertines stated that the nuns were to provide food for the canons and the presence of the window house suggests that this was the case (Hope 1901: 20). Despite this, Hope recorded a potential location for the site of the canons' kitchen in the north-west corner of the complex, although there is little evidence outlined in the 1900 text for this location or indeed the existence of a kitchen.

The canons' chapel was located to the south of the cloister and was the most excavated portion of the canons' court (Hope 1901: 25). The chapel measured 35 metres long and 7.5 metres wide, and was presumed to be aisleless as no evidence was found of central supporting pillars within. Similarly, to the north and eastern ranges, the south and west walls of the chapel were dated stylistically by Hope to the fourteenth century, and suggested by Pevsner (1972: 360) to have been entirely rebuilt in this period. The

north wall was recorded as part of an earlier structure, again reflecting an expansion of the canons' court around the fourteenth century. The chapel had two entrances set into the north wall to access the cloistral walk and one to the west entering into the prior's lodge.

Hope's plan of the priory employs shading to indicate which areas he excavated and which he interpreted as having existed (figure 18), and this shows that the layout of the canons' cloister relied much more on his interpretation than does the nuns' cloister. Within the nuns' cloister Hope has physical evidence for every wall that he draws. Some of these walls have been extended, such as the south wall of the church and the walls of the kitchen, but they are reportedly based on real walls that Hope observed during the excavation. The northern wall of the north transept is the only one



Figure 18 – Comparison of the areas Hope excavated and his interpretation (adapted from Hope 1901)

for which Hope seems to have no evidence, although the position of the recovered vaulting pillars would have given an accurate measurement for the width of the range.

The plan of the canons' cloister relies on substantially less evidence than that of the nuns'. The canons' church is the most complete building within the cloister and the chapter house, east and north ranges appear to be extrapolations based on the observable masonry remains. However, the plan of the western range reveals that none of Hope's interpretations were based on excavated evidence. Rather than archaeological data, Hope greatly relied upon one historical source to support his interpretation of the western range of the canons' court, a post-suppression inventory of those buildings that had lead roofing.

Following the suppression of the priory Robert Holgate applied for a grant for life of the site in a letter addressed to Cromwell and dated March 1539. This grant was approved in July of 1540, by which time Holgate had been made Lord President of the Council of the North (Hope 1901: 30). The grant specifically gives over the precinct and the church to Holgate whilst retaining the contents of the greater church, or double church for the crown, along with all metal from the lead and bells of that church. This inventory covered, according to Hope, only the canons' cloistral complex and lists a number of rooms with their respective areas of lead. From this document Hope inferred the layout for the western range of the cloister, despite the lack of any surviving remains. Here Hope locates a large hall, referred to as the 'old hall' and the site of the canons' kitchen. The evidence for these buildings comes from the mention within the inventory of an 'old hall' and 'old kytchen'. Hope takes this reference to imply that there was a 'new hall' and a 'new kitchen', which he identifies as those within the prior's lodge (Hope 1901: 26-7). It would seem more likely that the reference to 'old' within the document, written following the Dissolution, would refer to the age of the

buildings rather than the presence of a later buildings carrying out a similar function. The size of the buildings within the inventory would not prohibit them from being those of the prior's lodge or even those within the nuns' cloister. Indeed, if much of the canons' cloister was rebuilt in the fourteenth century then the reference to 'old' may refer to the earlier buildings of the nuns' court.

In 2014 the author undertook a geophysical survey at the site to confirm the plan of the archaeological features put forward by Hope (figure 19), and in an attempt to answer questions relating to the veracity of Hope's western range and the southern transept of the church. Unfortunately, the construction of an access road to the north of the prior's lodge made the area of the southern third of the canons' cloister and chapel unsurveyable. It is worth noting that Hope's plan of the cloisters appears broadly accurate for both cloisters individually, however the two fail to join together with any precision. For this reason, figure 20, showing those areas identified by Hope and confirmed by survey, is purely schematic. The eastern end of the nuns' church faces east-south-east, while the eastern end of the canons' church faces east-north-east. The cloistral buildings for both houses share these respective orientations and are therefore approximately 40 degrees in difference. This is probably due to the two cloisters being planned separately at different times and then the two plans being combined at a later date.



Figure 19 – Geophysical survey of Watton priory (Townend 2014b)



Figure 20 – Comparison of Hope's 1890s excavation plan and 2014 geophysical survey (produced by the author)

The survey confirmed the layout of the east, west and north ranges within the nuns' cloister as described by Hope. In addition, the survey identified a number of other buildings surrounding these ranges that Hope did not recognize or uncover during excavation. There is evidence for a building projecting north from the north range, in the angle between the reredorter and the north range. This may be an extension of the reredorter and the nuns' dormitory, built to cater to the large number of nuns. Hope did not find the western wall of the reredorter during his excavation and it is possible that the results seen in the geophysics represent a single reredorter, much wider than that reported by Hope. A range of buildings was also identified to the west of the western range and kitchens. As with those to the north-east, these are probably extensions of the lay sisters' quarters and the priory kitchens. This pattern of activity within the nuns' cloister is also seen at Sempringham and Catley, and is probably the result of extensions to the kitchen and dormitories following the initial success of the houses. In the area to the south of the eastern half of the church, unexcavated by Hope, a large rectangular structure was evident. Given its position and size, it is certainly the southern transept of the priory church (figure 21). This would match the location and size of the southern transepts seen at the double houses of Shouldham and Catley.

Survey of the canons' cloister only took place over its northern half, and it confirmed the layout of the eastern and northern ranges as outlined by Hope. However, there is no evidence within the survey for the western portion of the western range. Instead, the survey shows a thin western range, similar in width to the eastern range depicted by Hope. Nor does it provide any evidence of the existence of a kitchen in the north-west corner of the canons' cloister. This suggests that the kitchen and hall side chambers shown on the 1900 plan were based purely on Hope's interpretation of the post-Dissolution lead survey, which as has already been suggested, can be assumed to

actually have referred to other buildings within the cloisters rather than these extensions to the western range.

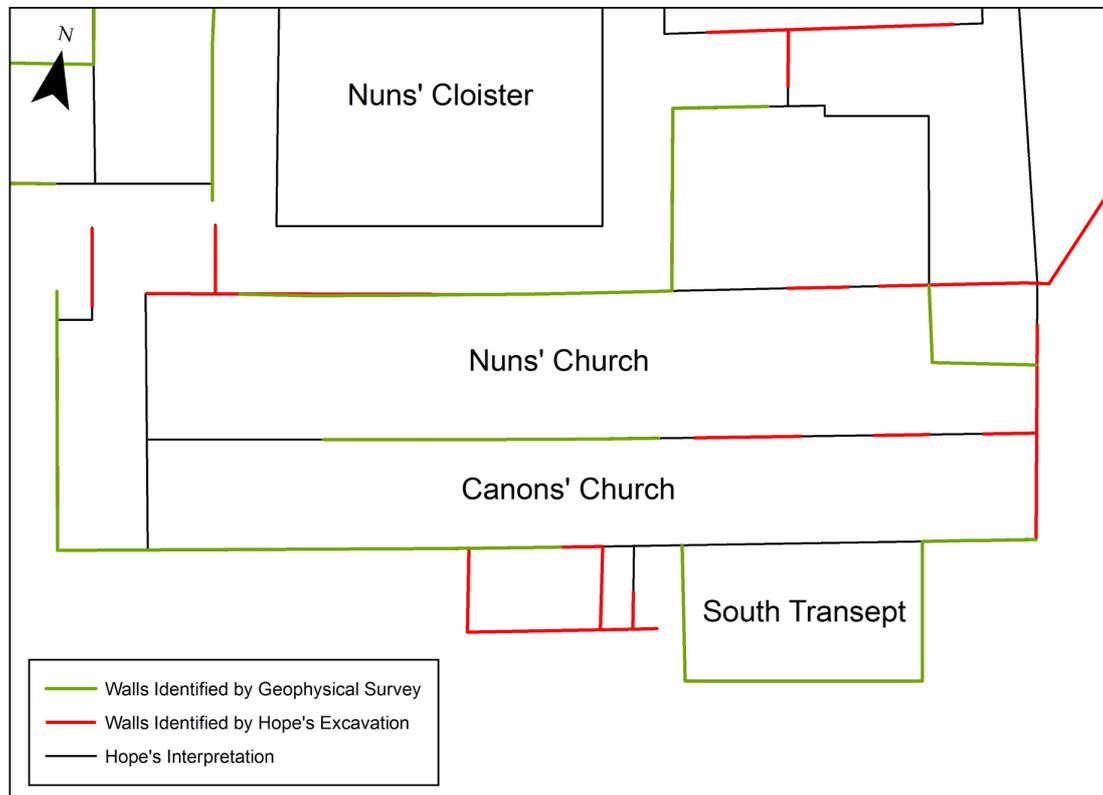


Figure 21 – Detailed comparison of Hope’s 1890s excavation plan and 2014 geophysical survey of the priory church at Watton (produced by the author)

The excavation by Hope at Watton provides the most complete evidence for the layout of a Gilbertine double house, and is at least as important as Sempringham in understanding the form of the Gilbertine monastery. Watton has often been used as a type-site to hypothesize the arrangement of other Gilbertine houses. The addition of the data collected from geophysical survey to this plan has allowed further questions about the monastery to be answered. The presence of a southern transept to the priory church has been confirmed, along with the addition of a number of other buildings bordering the nuns’ cloister. The theory put forward by Hope as to the layout of the western range

has, if not disproved, then at least brought into question. The lack of a west range at Watton would reduce the size of the canons' cloister and make it more comparable to the motherhouse at Sempringham as well as other double houses at Catley and Bullington.

Haverholme

Haverholme priory was located in Lincolnshire in the parish of Ewerby and Evedon. The site is situated five miles from the medieval town of Sleaford. Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln, founded the priory at Haverholme around 1139. The site was originally offered to the Cistercian order in 1137-8, to the abbot of Fountains, however the marshy aspect of the does not seem to have been to their liking and the site was given to the Gilbertines (Graham 1906b: 187). The house was limited to 100 nuns and lay sisters and up to 50 canons or lay brothers (ibid.). Little information exists for Haverholme for the period directly preceding the Dissolution. In addition, little is known concerning the location of the priory buildings or the precinct.

Rescue excavation was undertaken at the site between 1961-4 by the Ministry of Works (MOW) to assess the damage of deep ploughing, following the deposition of material on the surface by the plough. Although the excavations covered a large area, relatively little information survives as to the nature of the archaeological remains. No reports exist for the excavations, other than a series of short notes in *Medieval Archaeology* (1962-3, 1964 and 1965). Lincoln museum holds a number of plans and section drawings, probably from the final season of excavations, however following inspection; no conclusions can be made regarding the nature of the buildings. The scale of the plans is too large to allow for realistic interpretation and without any

accompanying records phasing of the remains is unknown. The notes within *Medieval Archaeology* do give some clue as to the function of the buildings identified by the excavation. The remains encountered during the work were thought to date to between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, suggesting they did not relate to the foundation of the priory (Wilson & Hurst 1962-3: 316).

In the same entry, the authors reference a soil survey undertaken by the MOW, showing the location of a platform on which the priory buildings were located (figure 22) (ibid.). This plan shows the platform to the north of the field that borders the River Slea. To the north of this field is the garden and terrace associated with the post-dissolution house. LiDAR survey of the site (figure 23) also shows the land dropping away towards the south, within the floodplain of the Slea. This survey and the presence of stone on the surface (ibid.) was most likely the reason that the MOW placed their trenches directly to the south of the garden terrace (figure 24). These trenches identified the incomplete plan of three buildings (Wilson & Hurst 1964: 242). The function of the buildings was not confirmed; however, they were identified as outbuildings, marginal to the cloistral ranges. The buildings appear to have been reused in the post-monastic phase of the site due to the identification of reused carved stone in the fabric (ibid., Wilson & Hurst 1965: 181).

The marginal nature of these buildings was confirmed by a magnetometry survey undertaken in 2013 by the author (Townend 2013a). This survey (figures 25 & 26) identified a number of positive linear anomalies, most likely related to backfilled cut features relating to both medieval and modern boundaries, possibly forming the southern limit of monastic buildings. The survey also revealed a number of probable buildings that do not appear numerous enough to represent the cloistral ranges of the priory. It is likely that these remains are outbuildings, located within the outer precinct.

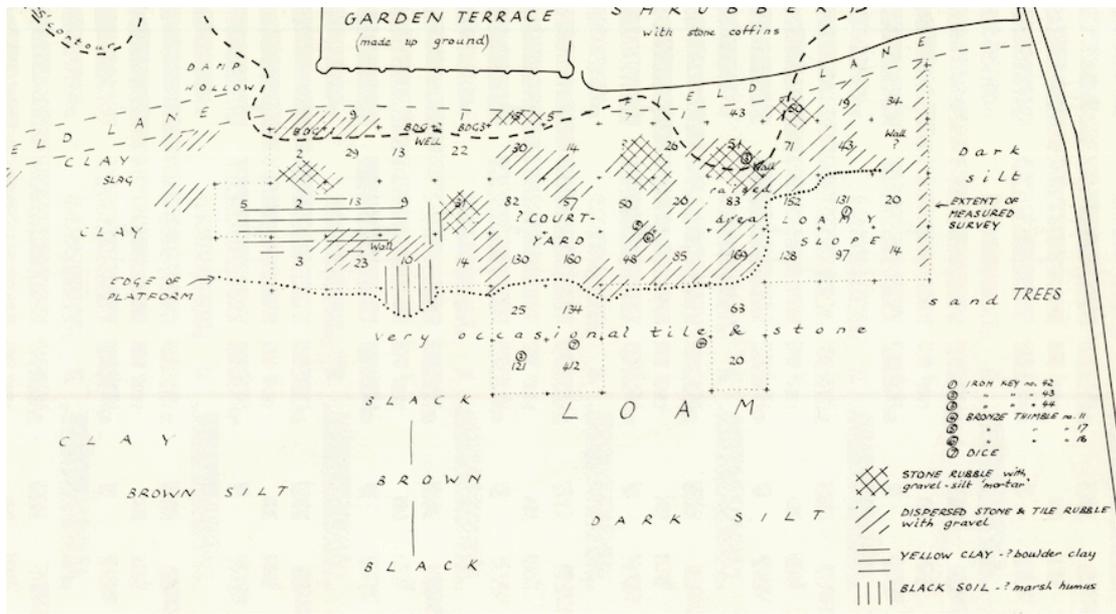


Figure 22 – 1960s plan of the soil survey at Haverholme priory (Copyright Lincolnshire Museum Services)

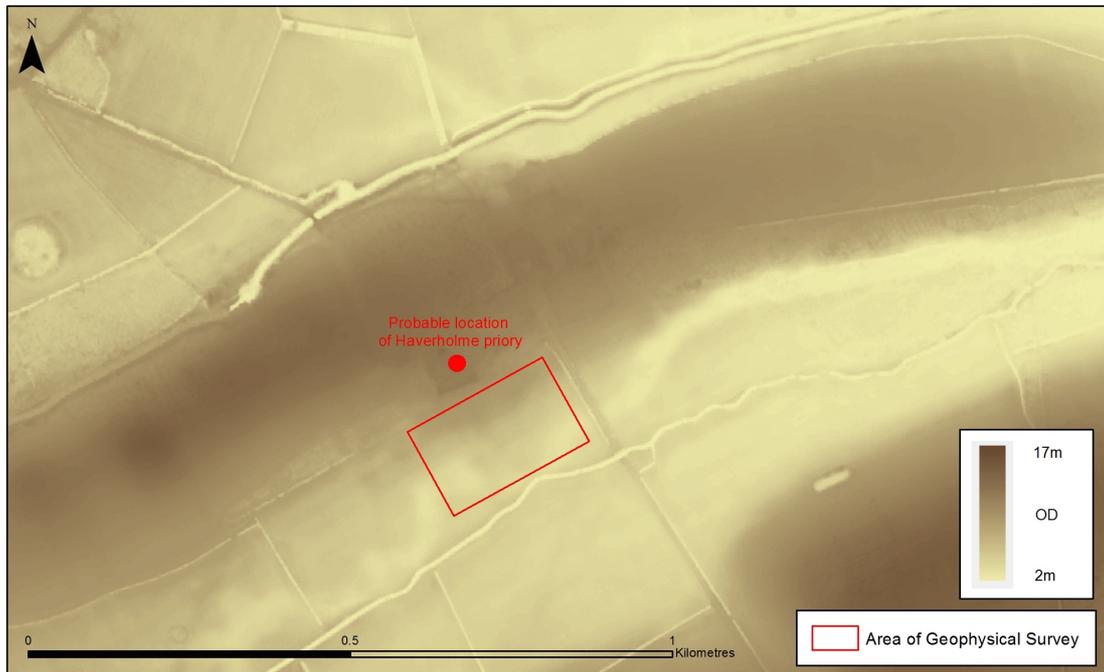


Figure 23 – LiDAR showing the land surrounding Haverholme priory (Environment Agency 2017)

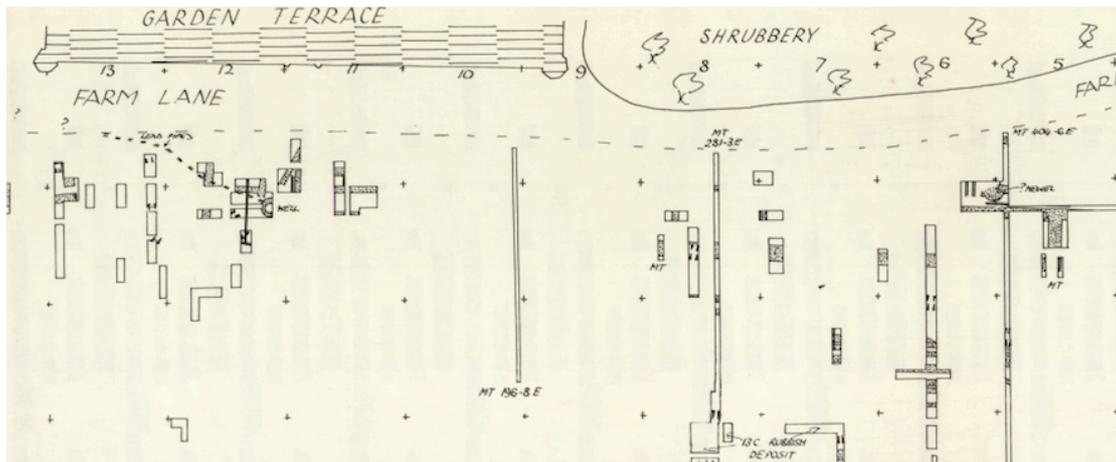


Figure 24 – Plan of 1960s excavations at Haverholme priory (Copyright Lincolnshire Museum Services)

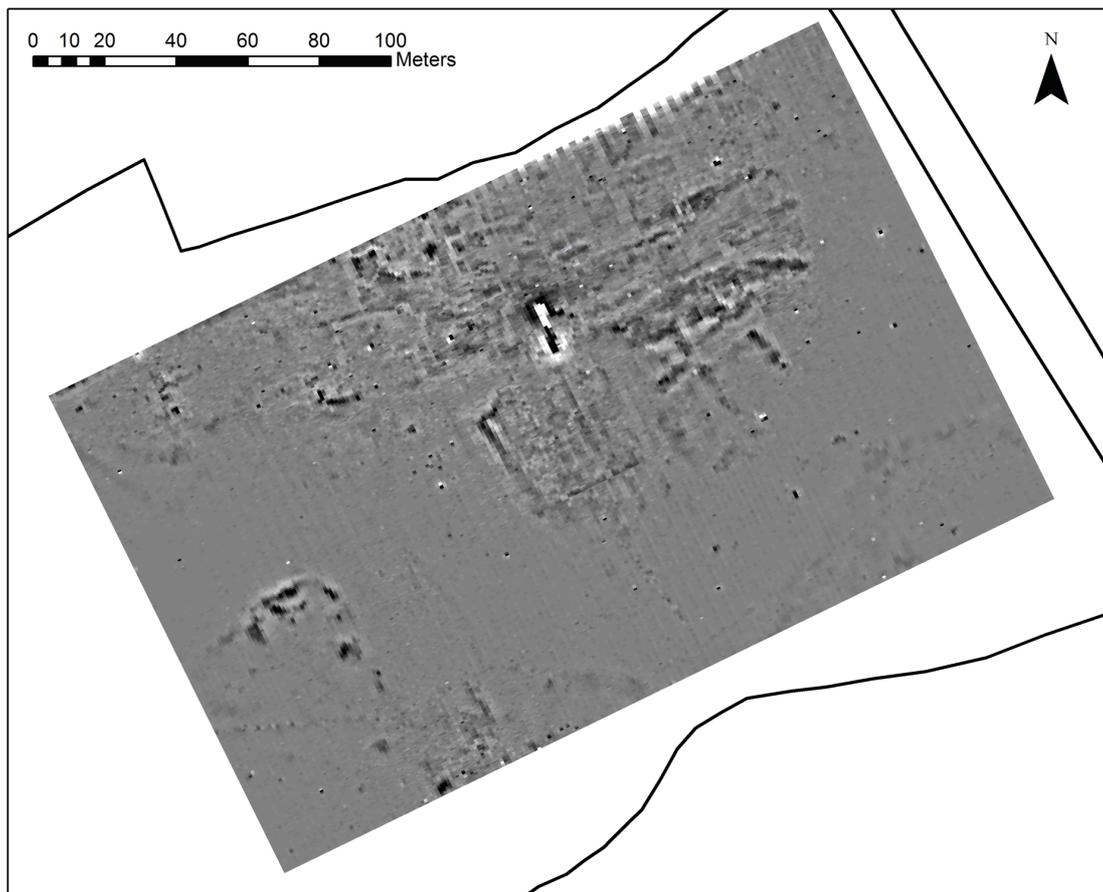


Figure 25 – Geophysical survey of Haverholme priory (Townend 2013a)

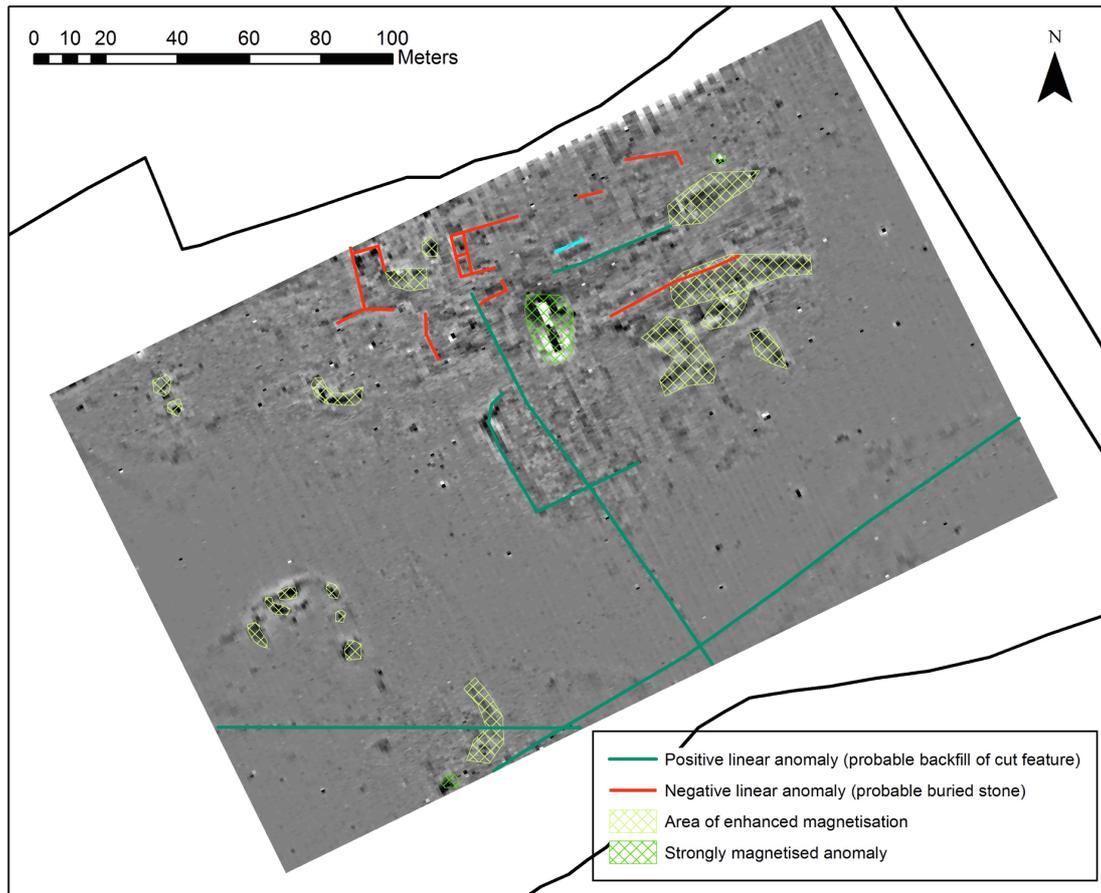


Figure 26 – Transcription of the results of geophysical survey of Haverholme priory (Townend 2013a)

Given the position of the priory outbuildings on the southern limit of the accessible land (figure 23), it is likely that the cloisters and church were located to the north, under the present site of Haverholme Abbey House and the remains of the post-Dissolution house. The excavation portion of the site most likely represents the outer court of the precinct, with the canons' and nuns' courts to the north. The detection of a cemetery between the two houses may suggest that the priory church was directly under the post-dissolution house, as it can be expected to have been to the west of the cemetery (Trollope 1872: 248). Trollope recounts that in the early 1870s works between the two houses revealed remains of the priory buildings, approximately 1 metre below the surface. Although there is no other evidence for this account it is probably accurate,

given the position of the excavated buildings to the south and the tradition of building later houses within, or over the remains of the cloisters.

Catley

Catley priory is located 1-mile south-west of the village of Walcott, Lincolnshire. Lincoln, containing the Gilbertine single house of St Katherine's, is 15 miles to the north-west and 10 miles to south the town of Sleaford, the location of a castle held by the Bishop of Lincoln in the early-thirteenth century. The nearest Gilbertine monasteries to Catley were the double houses of Haverholme, 5 miles to the south, and Bullington, 10 miles to the north. The priory is situated in the centre of an area of high ground, approximately 8 metres above the surrounding level (figure 27).

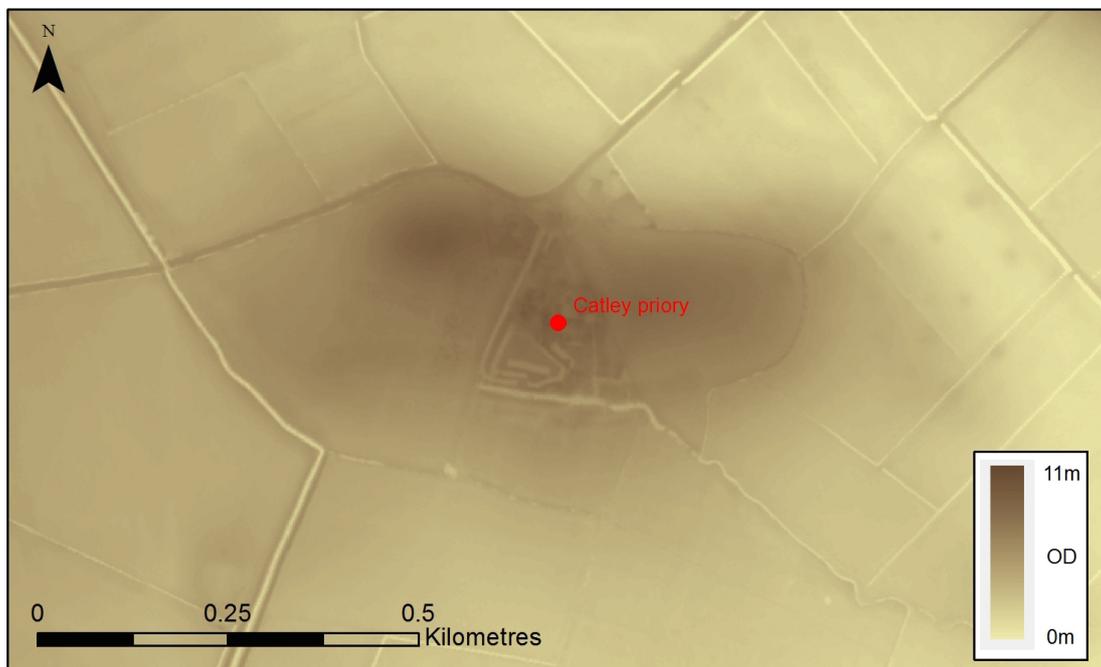


Figure 27 – LiDAR survey of Catley priory (Environment Agency 2017)

In his 1856 *History of Lincolnshire*, White reports that the site of the priory was cleared around 1790, when a number of grave slabs, skeletons and painted window glass were discovered (White 1856: 354). A similar account by Trollope writing in 1872 reports the removal of ‘some’ stones from the site to aid in the building of a nearby cottage. It is possible that the two authors are recounting the same event as neither gives an exact location for the excavation. However, Trollope’s (1872: 300) account relates the discovery of the church ‘pavement’ six feet under the surface complete with aisled arcades and grave slabs. Other than these possible clearances the site has never been excavated and no masonry is currently visible above ground (Knowles 1952: 250). As can be expected from early clearance, no record remains as to the area that was cleared or to the nature of the material removed.

The most prominent aspects of the site are its substantial earthwork remains. The Scheduled Ancient Monument designation places the church to the north of the central group of earthworks (English Heritage 1998). Two distinct sets of ranges are described as surrounding two cloisters, adjacent to one another, one to the north of the church, the other to the south. However, this description does not seem to tie in with the observable earthworks at Catley or data from the Ordnance Survey (figure 28). The Ordnance Survey map from 1979 clearly shows a large east-west oriented building that can only be the site of the priory church. To the north of the site of the church are a series of buildings forming a range around a central square area; this is certainly one of the cloisters. To the east of the first cloister is a second series of buildings focused on a square around another open area. It is likely that this series of buildings represents the second cloister. An aerial photograph taken from above the site in 1978 (CUCAP 1978) confirms the position of the earthworks shown on the 1979 map (figure 29). This aerial photograph clearly shows the layout of the priory church and the position of the two

cloisters. The earthworks transcribed onto the Ordnance Survey may in fact have been taken from this aerial photograph.

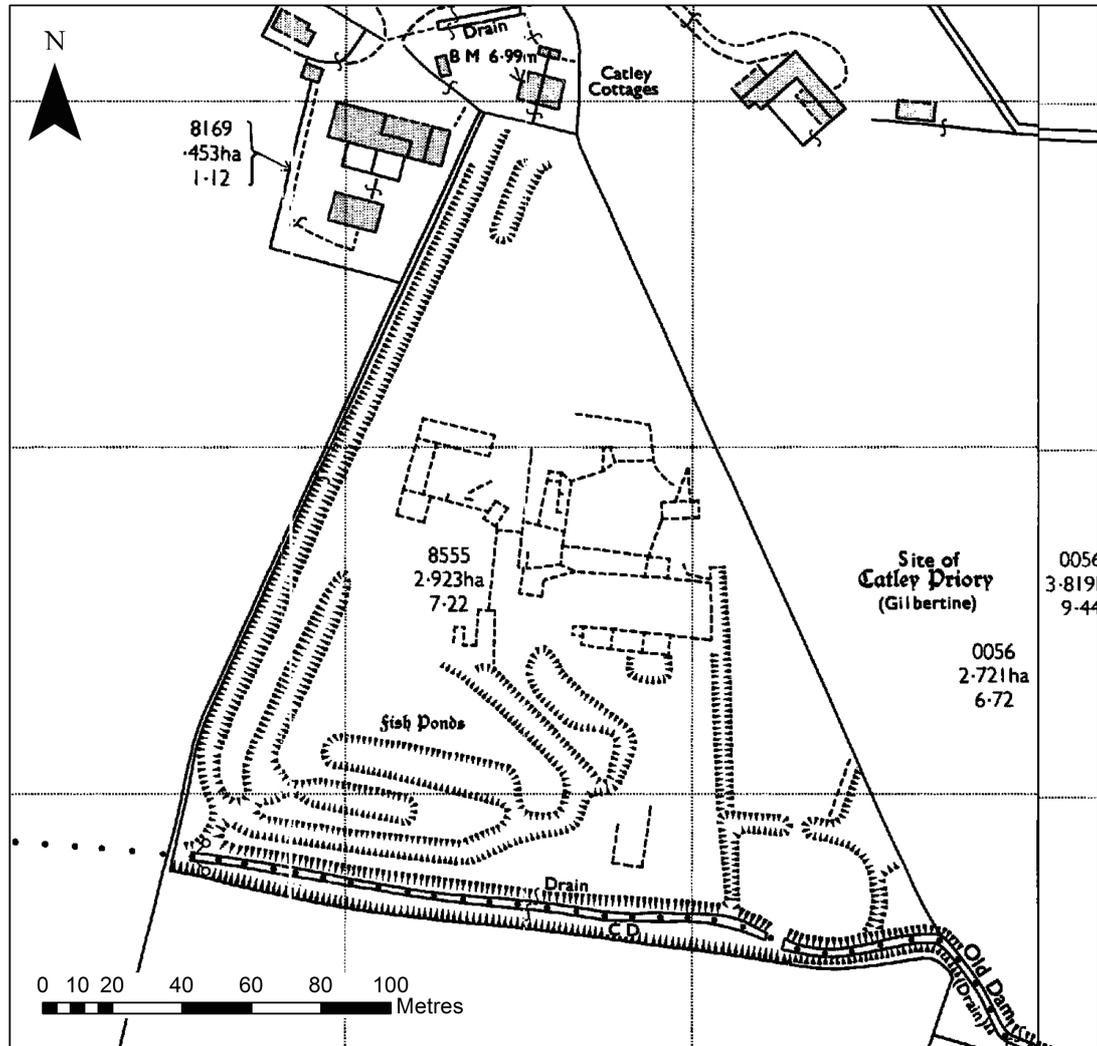


Figure 28 – Map of the earthworks of Catley priory visible on the 1979 OS (Ordnance Survey 1979, Crown Copyright 2016)

Using the 1978 aerial photograph in conjunction with a second from 1955 (CUCAP 1955), it is possible to identify the position of the priory buildings. Using these photographs production of a plan of layout of the church and the two cloisters can be accomplished with a high degree of certainty (figure 30). The location of the priory church is the same as that found on the 1979 map. The remains of the central division

within the church do not survive as a prominent earthwork. However, the width of the church suggests the presence of the division, measuring approximately 18 metres in length. The churches of the Gilbertines were elongated, at double and single houses, as can be seen at the canons' chapel at Watton and the examples of Mattersey and York. It is highly unlikely that a church of this width would not have a central dividing wall and it is probable that this wall, and the outer walls of the church fell victim to the eighteenth-century robbing of stone described by White and Trollope. The church had a southern transept at the eastern end, but appears to have lacked a northern transept,

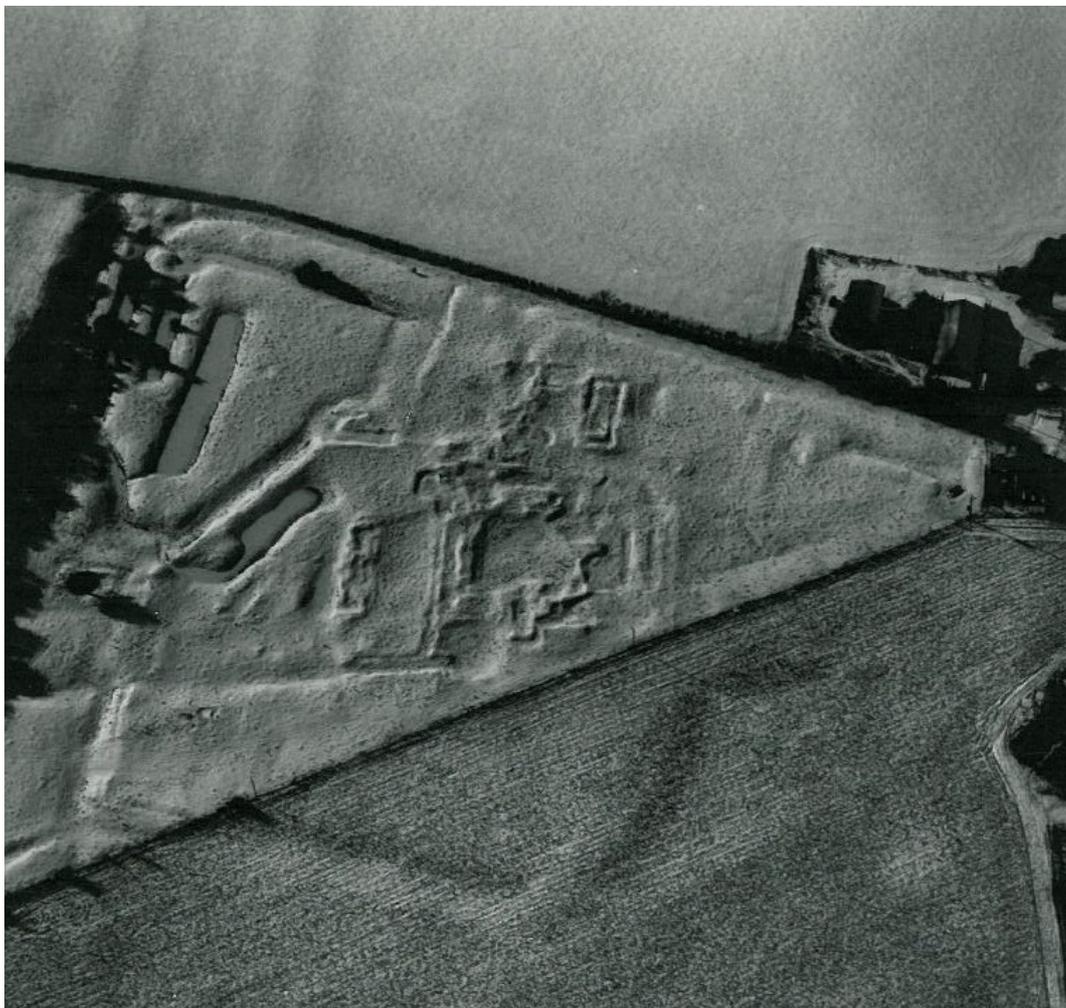


Figure 29 – Aerial Photograph of earthworks at the site of Catley priory (CUCAP 1978)

suggesting that the northern half of the church was for the use of the nuns and the southern half for the use of the canons. Given the evidence for the allocation of the northern half of the church to the nuns, it is highly likely that they would have occupied the cloister to the north. From the earthworks, it is possible to identify the location of the western range of the nuns' cloister.

There is no evidence as to the location of the chapter house that should have been located here. This is possibly due to the removal of stone in the eighteenth century, or that the chapter house itself did not project from the range, as is found at the single house at Mattersey. Catley was one of the poorest of the Gilbertine double houses and was only valued at £30 in 1254 (Graham 1906c: 196). This valuation had increased by 1291 to £55, and although nearly doubling the income of the priory still remained low (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 195). Therefore, it is unlikely that the priory would have been able to maintain the full complement of inmates intended at its foundation (Golding 1995: 144) and perhaps it could not afford to upkeep of a large chapter house. If one had been constructed during the original phase of the priory it may have been removed during a later remodelling or downsizing. The western range would have housed the nuns' dormitory, and it is possible to recognize the reredorter projecting to the east of the range, which would have been flushed by water flowing through a channel visible of the aerial photograph. The function of the north and western ranges is unknown, however the projection at the eastern end of the northern range may represent a portion of the priory's kitchens. This building would be positioned to take advantage of the flow of water before it passed through the nuns' reredorter.

The canons' cloister was located to the west of the church and the nuns' cloister, and there is little space for the canons' cloister to fit within any other location in the ditched enclosure that makes up the priory precinct. The western cloister at Catley is

much smaller than that of the nuns. At the foundation limits were set on the number sisters to 60, split between the nuns and lay sisters, and 12 canons and lay brethren (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 195). This difference in numbers would explain the difference between the sizes of the cloister. This same variation in size of cloister is also seen at Bullington and Sempringham, both of which share the significant difference in numbers between nuns and canons. The more modest size of both cloisters may also be due to Catley not only having to contend for benefactors with its sister house at Haverholme but with the Augustinian houses of Kyme and Nocton Park and the Cistercian house at Kirkstead (Golding 1995: 210). Catley was poor enough to be freed by the Crown from tallage in 1304, and this also happened in 1361 when taxation was withheld by the prior and the Bishop of Lincoln was required to certify that the priory's goods were insufficient to maintain the community and provide the tenth required by the church (Golding 1995: 446).

Lack of modern excavation of the site, limits the conclusions that can be made regarding the function of the canons' ranges. It is clear that the southern range of the building takes up the entire length of the cloister. It is highly likely that this acted as the canons' chapel, given the position of the chapel at Watton and those at later Gilbertine single houses at York and Ravenstonedale. In addition to the two cloisters a segregating wall is visible between the two. This wall separates the nuns' cloister from the canons, but still allows access for the canons to the southern side of the church. This wall is similar in location to the one recorded by Hope at Watton that stretched from the east of the church to the window house passage, nominally blocking access by the canons to the nuns' dormitory and chapter house.

The layout found at the priory at Catley is much more similar to Watton and Bullington priories than to the motherhouse at Sempringham, albeit with the location

of the canons' cloister to the west rather than the east as at Watton. As at Sempringham the canons' cloister is considerably smaller than the nuns', and given the difference in numbers this is not remarkable, however it brings into question the considerable size of the canons' cloister at Watton. Although the order was limited to 12 canons, the canons at Watton had a cloister the same size as that which reportedly held up to 140 nuns. Due to the reduced wealth of the house at Catley it is unlikely that the priory underwent any large-scale remodelling or sizable extensions. Any work that was carried out was probably limited to maintenance and small-scale building. It is likely that at Catley there is a surviving plan that follows an early version of the twelfth-century monastic arrangement.

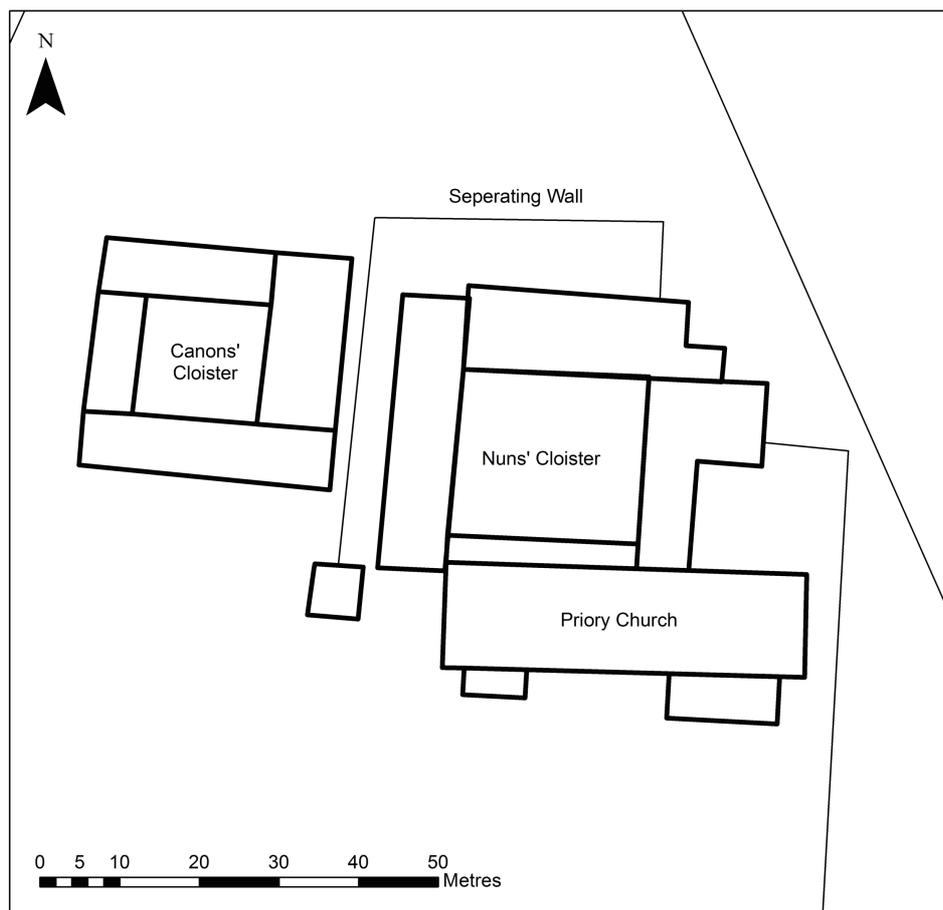


Figure 30 – Proposed position of the church and cloister at Catley priory (produced by author)

Chicksands

The priory at Chicksands was founded between 1150-3 by Payn de Beauchamp and his wife Rohaise (Sister Elspeth 1904a: 390). Chicksands was the only early double foundation to be located outside of Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, however it was still within the Lincolnshire diocese (Golding 1995: 217). The priory was well endowed at the foundation and probably able to support a large number of inhabitants (Sister Elspeth 1904a: 390). The restrictions placed on the house by Gilbert included a limit of 120 nuns and 55 lay brothers (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 194). These limitations were similar to Sempringham and Watton, attesting to the high value of the priory's income and the confidence the order placed on the foundation. However, the priory may have over extended itself following a series of poor seasons prior to 1257, when Chicksands was forced to transfer 50 nuns and 10 lay brothers to other Gilbertine houses (Sister Elspeth 1904a: 390). This movement of the priory's inhabitants may have been successful as the income in 1291 was recorded at £124, rising to £212 by 1525 (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 195).

The only remaining evidence for the medieval priory lies in the southern portion of a largely eighteenth-century house (figure 31). These remains have been comprehensively surveyed and reported on for English Heritage and the RAF, who now own the buildings (Morris 1996). The phasing and dating of these remains is complex, due to the rendering of much of the masonry, both inside and outside the property. No evidence of the earliest twelfth-century phase of buildings remains within the fabric of the house. As with other double houses, it is probable that the first structures following the foundation were built from wood. The majority of the western range of the cloister dated to the thirteenth century (Morris 1996: 113). The range consisted of a room

containing seven equally spaced vaulted bays (figure 32). It is suggested by Morris (1996: 115) that although the walls of the other three ranges are no presently visible, that it is reasonable to assume that they date to a similar period.

The next identifiable phase of activity has been dated to the late-fifteenth century, and although the historical evidence for the fortunes of the priory suggest that Chicksands was greatly impoverished in 1400s, the fortunes of the house clearly changed in the latter half of that century. The late 1460s saw the rebuilding of the south and east ranges of the priory in the current late-Perpendicular style (*ibid.*). The cloister walks were probably incorporated into the ground floor and included traceried windows on the side of the cloister. It is unclear if the north range was rebuilt in this period, however due to its width, it may only have functioned as the cloister walk or passage, rather than a series of rooms. The dating for this period comes from analysis of the roofing timbers in the south and east ranges, which were also constructed during this phase. The date for the felling of the trees falls between 1468-9, suggesting that the remodelling occurred shortly afterwards (*ibid.*). The large-scale remodelling of Chicksands at this late date is unusual for a Gilbertine house and will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

The arrangement of the monastic ranges can be inferred using the evidence that survives in the current building. The lack of a developed north range and the presence of the doorway in the north wall of the west range suggest that the priory church was probably located to the north of the cloister (Morris 1996: 115). However, this is not necessarily the case, as the size of the cloister suggests that it was occupied by the canons. The maximum size of the cloister at Chicksands is over 10 metres smaller than those found within the nuns' cloisters at Watton and Sempringham. The limits for the number of nuns at all three houses differ only by 20, suggesting that a similar sized

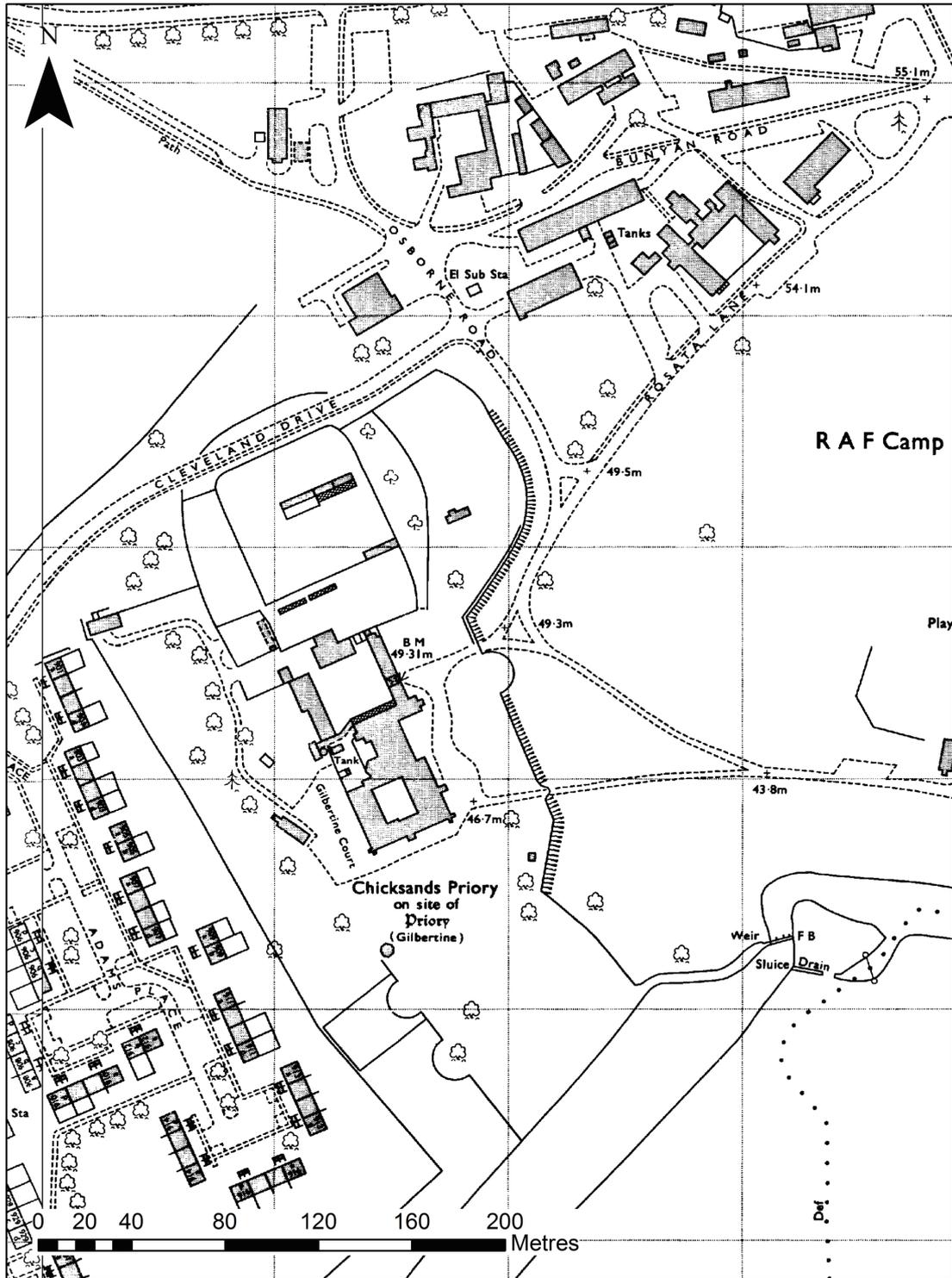


Figure 31 – 1976 Ordnance Survey showing the location of Chicksands priory (Crown Copyright 2016)

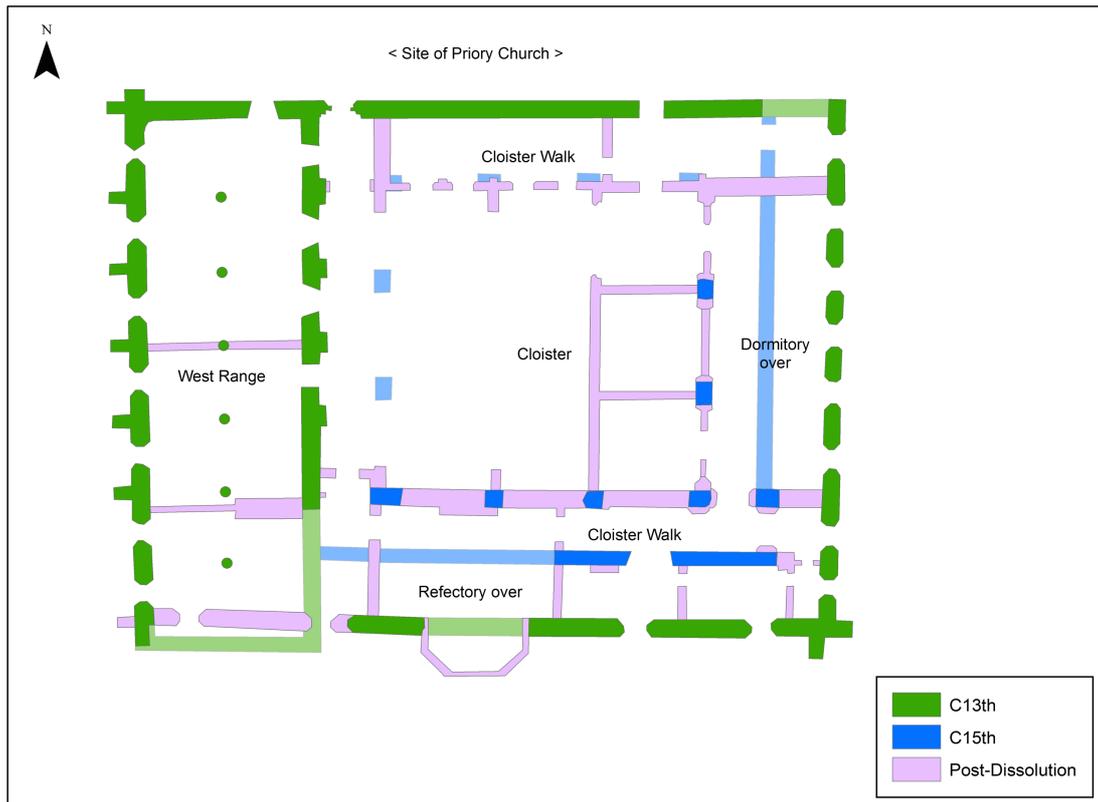


Figure 32 – Phased plan of the nuns’ cloister at Chicksands priory within the post-medieval house (after Morris 1996)

cloister would be needed to house them. At Sempringham and Watton geophysical survey has revealed a large number of buildings attached to the nuns’ cloister, providing extra space for the nuns and lay sisters. At Chicksands there is no evidence of buildings attached to any of the ranges, or the presence of blocked up internal doorways. Therefore, it suggests that the extant cloister actually represents that of the canons.

At all other Gilbertine double houses for which evidence exists, the nuns’ cloister is connected directly to the priory church. This arrangement occurs at Sempringham, Watton and Shouldham. The connection of the nuns’ cloister to the priory church ensured that the nuns remained enclosed at all times. At all of these sites, the canons’ cloister is set close by, but no connected to the priory church. This was presumably to distance the two cloisters and to allow for the presence of a boundary

separating the two groups. At Sempringham the cloister is located to the south of a narrow range, similar to the north range at Chicksands. It is possible that both cloisters were connected to the priory church at Chicksands, however comparisons with other sites suggest that this is unlikely.

The position of the nuns' cloister is unclear. It has been suggested that it may have been to the north of the canons' cloister, having since been covered by later buildings and a courtyard for the post-medieval house. Bedfordshire CAS uncovered a large stone footing within a stable forming part of this northern range. The size and form of this wall suggest that it was related to an earlier medieval building, possibly a part of the nuns' cloister (Morris 1996: 113). In 2001, Time Team carried out an excavation and survey at Chicksands for Channel 4 Television. Investigations were made to the east and west of the house, using a combination of excavation and geophysical survey, with the aim of locating the second cloister. Excavation to the east of the buildings discovered what were probably the remains of the monastic infirmary, whilst work to the west revealed a number of inhumations associated with lay burial on the site (Time Team 2004: 5). Given that the evaluation uncovered no evidence for the second cloister surrounding the east or west of the canons' cloister, it is likely that the nuns' complex was located to the north. The priory church was probably located between the two cloisters, as at Sempringham, some small distance to the north of the canons' cloister.

North Ormsby

North Ormsby priory, a double house located in eastern Lincolnshire, was founded before 1154 by Robert of Ormsby. It supported up to 100 nuns and lay sisters

and 50 canons and lay brothers (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 194). The house was partially excavated in 1966 by Ann Dornier. The excavation revealed the probable site of the priory church consisting of three 1 metre wide walls (figure 33), and given the thickness of these walls and their position, is it likely that Dornier correctly identified the nave of the church. The church was partitioned from east to west by the central dividing wall, the southernmost half was approximately 2.8 metres wider than the northern half, suggesting that the southern half was occupied by the nuns and the north half by the canons.

The excavated remains of the nuns' cloister walk were exposed on the north, east and west sides, and found to be constructed of stone and tile. This allowed for the calculation of a cloister width of approximately 12 metres. The chapter house was identified and partially excavated within the eastern range, as were the remains of a number of tombstones, one belonging to the prioress Margaret Halktan (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 4). Excavation of the southern range revealed a series of floors within partitioned bays on the ground floor, and these presumably represented storage areas with the refectory located above (Dornier 1966: 3). The western range of the nuns' cloister was also partially excavated, but not enough evidence was recovered to determine the function of the building. However, due to the presence of the passage to the canons' cloister (outlined below) it is possible that the western range contained the monastery's kitchens, as at Mattersey the priory's kitchens were also identified in the south-western corner of the cloister.

Close to the north-west corner of the nuns' cloister was the canons' cloister, possibly extending east and bordering the western portion of the church to the north. Only the northern section of the canons' cloister walk was excavated to the north-west of the nuns' cloister. There is room, given the position of the southern range for the

canons' cloister to be approximately the same dimensions as the nuns'. Dornier makes this assumption due to the parallels with Watton and the lack of partitions within the trench. Although the 1966 excavation did not create a definitive plan of the site, a number of conclusions can be made. The nuns' cloister was located to the south of the church with the canons' cloister to the north-west. It is probable that the canons' cloister was not connected to the northern side of the church and that it lay close to it, suggesting a layout similar to that at Sempringham, albeit on a smaller scale.

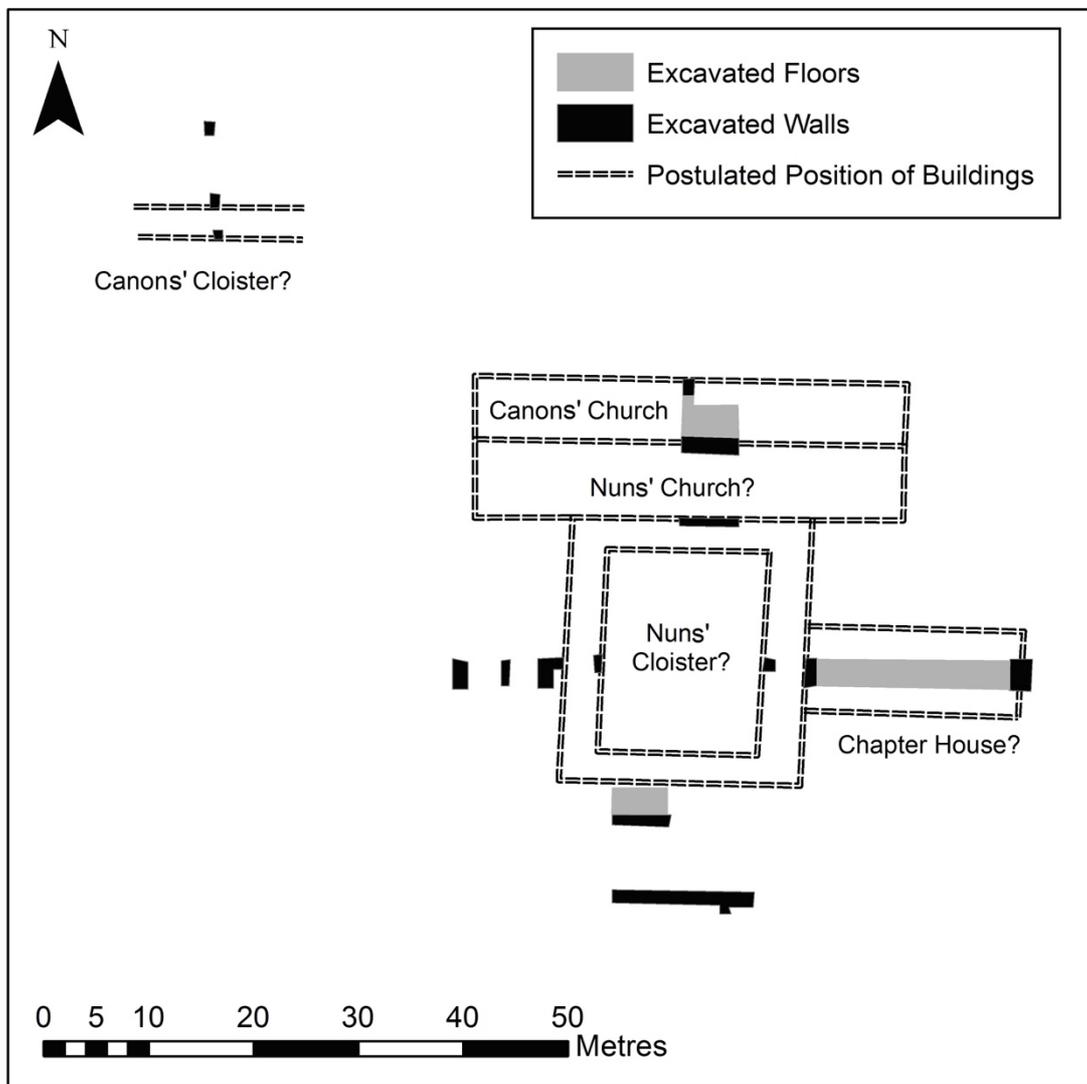


Figure 33 – Position of excavated features and proposed layout of North Ormsby priory (after Dornier 1966)

Bullington

The priory of Bullington was located in central Lincolnshire, less than 10 miles from Lincoln. The best evidence for the layout of the buildings at Bullington comes from aerial photograph transcribed by Hadcock in 1937. An original copy of this photograph is unfortunately no longer available and the reproduction within the 1937 article in *Antiquity* is of relatively low resolution. However, digital enhancement of the image has provided a clearer picture of what Hadcock was basing his interpretation upon (figure 34). The site was under pasture at the time the photograph was taken, but was subsequently cleared and heavily ploughed between 1953 and 1970 (Everson undated: 1). A visit by the author in 2014 confirmed that any earthworks that were visible in 1937 are no longer extant above the ground surface, although the area appears to have been taken out of the ploughing regime.

Hadcock's transcription of the aerial photograph clearly shows the monastic church to the north of an arrangement of buildings forming a cloister (figure 35). The church is split laterally from east to west by a partition wall. As at Watton and Sempringham the earthwork created by this wall suggests that it was equal in size to the northern and southern walls of the church. Due to the size of the partitions within the church it is postulated that the nuns' cloister was situated to the south. It is hard to calculate the size difference of the two halves of the church due to the quality of the photo, but the southern side is clearly greater in width. In addition to this, there is evidence of a transept to the north of the church. As with other sites, this would usually signify that it belonged to the canons, as the nuns would be unable to perform the mass in these chapels.



Figure 34 – Enhanced image of aerial photograph (now lost) of Bullington priory (Hadcock 1937)

The cloistral range of the nuns follows the same pattern as the traditional monastic site, although the chapter house is located further south from the church than at Sempringham or the other Gilbertine single houses. Nonetheless, the distance is comparable with that found between the church and chapter house within the nuns' cloister at Watton (however this is likely due to the presence of a transept on the nuns' side of the church at Watton). The function of the building between the chapter house and the church is unknown, but it is likely an extended parlour or sacristy. The nuns' dormitory certainly formed the upper floor of the eastern range, as the reredorter is

clearly visible to the south. Also visible is the channel that would have flushed out the reredorter. The direction of flow is indicated due to the probable location of the kitchens in the south-west corner of the cloister, as suggested by comparison to the layout of Sempringham, Mattersey and Watton, all of which have their kitchens on the opposite corner of the cloister to their chapter houses. The function of the west and south ranges remains unknown. It is possible that the south range served as the refectory as at Mattersey. The west range may have housed the lay sisters, as is suggested at Watton and at monastic sites of other orders.

The only great variation in arrangement from other Gilbertine double houses is the building to the south-west of the cloister. This structure mimics the shape of the church and appears to be partitioned down the centre. There are various possibilities as to the function of this structure; first it could be the remains of an earlier church. However, this is unlikely as it is on a noticeably different alignment to the church to the north. Second, it could represent a split dormitory that contained the nuns or lay sisters. Surviving Gilbertine texts state that if the dormitory is to be divided in two then the presence of a prioress or sub-prioress was required in both halves (Golding 2008: 671). However, this explanation also seems unlikely, as it would be extremely unusual for the inmates of the priory to be sleeping on the ground floor, thus requiring a partition foundation.

The third and most probable theory is that of a split refectory. The nuns of the order were not allowed to eat with the canons, but according to the rule food had to be provided from the same kitchen (Golding 2008: 672). A split refectory could have been a reasonable solution to this problem, as with the church it would have allowed the two groups to eat in the same location without allowing them to see or speak to one another. Golding refers to the breaking of bread within the monastery as ‘the essence of

community and equality’ and a ‘core value of monastic life’ (ibid.). Given the importance of this daily ceremony it would not be peculiar for the order to construct a specialized building to fulfil the purpose of allowing the nuns and canons to eat together whilst still obeying their respective rules. Without further investigation, the function of this building remains purely hypothesis.

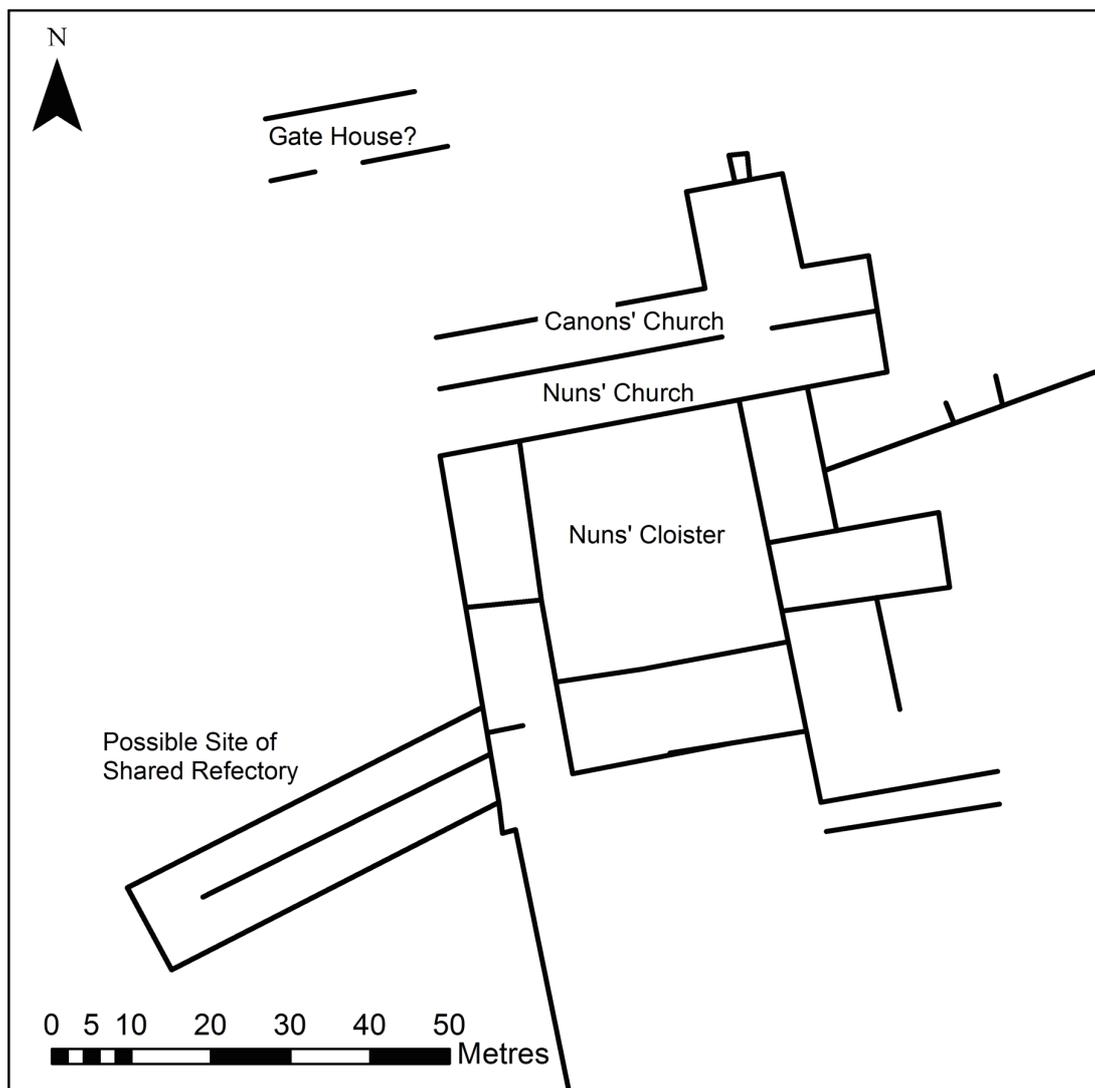


Figure 35 – Layout of the remains of Bullington priory (after Hadcock 1937)

The aerial photography used by Hadcock for his interpretation of the site gives no clue as to the location of the canons’ cloister. Hadcock took the presence of the wall

directly south of the church and the corridor-like structure to the east of the southern range suggest that the second cloister may be to the east of the nuns. However, a 1963 aerial photograph in the Lincolnshire HER suggests another possibility (figure 36). The aerial photograph was taken from an oblique angle looking north, and was centred on the site of the church and nuns' cloister. The feature to the north-west of the priory church probably represents the canons' cloister. This feature is a square depression bounded on all four sides by raised earthworks. The central depression most likely denotes the location of the canons' cloister, in a similar fashion to the earthwork that relates to the nuns' cloister, and the surrounding raised earthworks indicate the positions of the ranges that surrounded the cloister. The nature of the individual ranges is unclear other than to suggest the general shape of the cloister. The lack of definition in the earthworks of the canons' cloister compared to that of the nuns' may be due to greater robbing of the nuns' cloister down to the foundation level leaving more extreme variations between walls and interior demolition. This feature is barely visible on the photograph Hadcock was using and is only observable in the 1963 photograph due to the low angle of the sun.

The size of the canons' cloister is smaller than that of the nuns', however this may be unduly exaggerated by the poor survival of the earthworks, and material from the cloister arcade may have collapsed into the cloister. This is the case at Watton, where the eastern side of the cloister is obscured by 1-2 metres of material from the western range. The size of the canons' cloister at Bullington is comparable to that found at the Gilbertine site of Catley priory, both survive solely as standing earthworks. This difference in size between the two cloisters is also seen at Sempringham, where the nuns' cloister is extended on all sides. In comparison, the canons' cloister is relatively simple, bounded on three sides by ranges.



Figure 36 – 1963 aerial photograph of Bullington priory (CUCAP 1963)

From the data available for Bullington it is possible to reconstruct the layout of the church and the nuns' cloister. The function of some of the buildings within the nuns' cloister can be ascertained, whilst others can only be hypothesized. The location of the canons' cloister to the north west of the church is probable given the earthworks transcribed from the 1963 aerial photograph.

Shouldham

The site of Shouldham priory is located 1 kilometre to the north-east of the village of Shouldham, Norfolk. The site is less than 10 miles south of the major medieval settlement of King's Lynn and equidistant from the medieval towns of Swaffham to the

east and Downham Market to the west. The site of the priory is now occupied by Abbey Farm and has undergone major changes, mainly over the last 100 years, including significant landscaping of the area previously occupied by the church and cloisters. The priory was founded towards the end of the twelfth century and dedicated to the Holy Cross and the Blessed Virgin Mary by Geoffrey Fitz Peters, Chief Justiciary of England, and later Earl of Essex (Knowles and Hadcock 1971: 196). Following the foundation Geoffrey removed his deceased wife's body from Chicksands priory to Shouldham, with whom he was eventually interred with following his death in October 1212 (Chambers 1829: 61). Golding (1995: 242) sets the date of foundation between 1197, as this date marks the death of his wife, and 1199. This later date is due to the title of Earl of Essex with which Geoffrey signed the foundation document and which he did not formally acquire until May 1199. The priory is the only Gilbertine double house to be founded after the mid-twelfth century and the only one to be founded after the death of St Gilbert (Burton 1995: 99).

Aerial photography at the site of Shouldham priory has revealed a large number of extant remains in the ploughed field to the east of the modern farm that relate to the church and cloistral buildings (figure 37). The double priory church is clearly visible, and to the north of the church can be seen a range of buildings most likely forming the nuns' cloister (figure 38), this assertion being due to the larger size of the northern portion of the church compared to the south. Perhaps due to the late date of foundation, no limit is recorded for the number of nuns resident within the priory, although as at other Gilbertine double houses it can be expected to be somewhere around 80-100. In addition to the size of the northern half of the church, an elongated transept that continues as far as the eastern end of the presbytery wall replaces the traditional arrangement of the canons' transept, as found at the southern transepts at Watton and

Catley. This is in contrast to the southern transept of the church at Catley that forms the southern half of the traditional cross shape and matches closely those examples mentioned above. One explanation for the strange arrangement of the northern transept is that it was part of the nuns' portion of the church. Its use may have been different to that of the canons' transept as is suggested by its partitioning into two long rooms. One of these areas may represent the night stair, leading from the nuns' dormitory to the church.

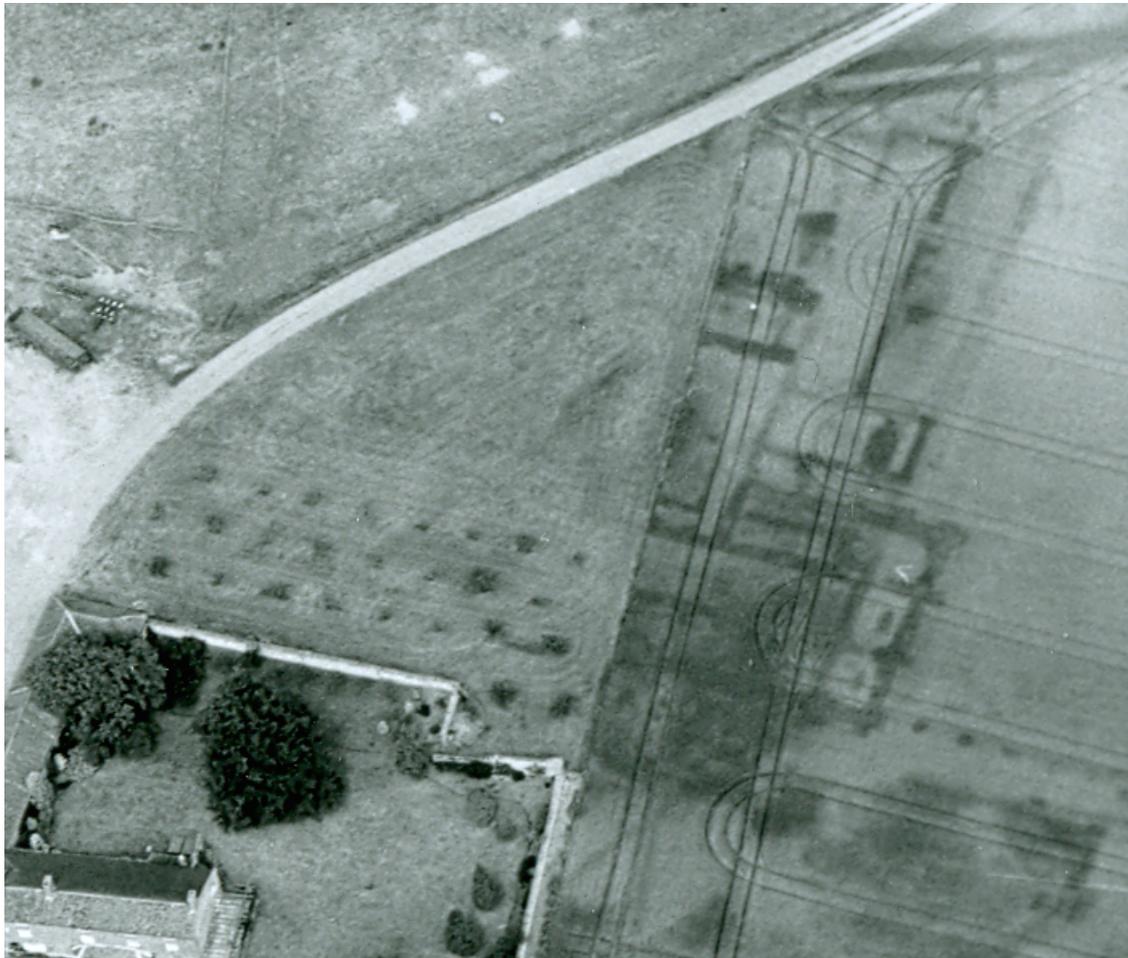


Figure 37 – Aerial photograph of crop marks at Shouldham priory (Edwards 1989)

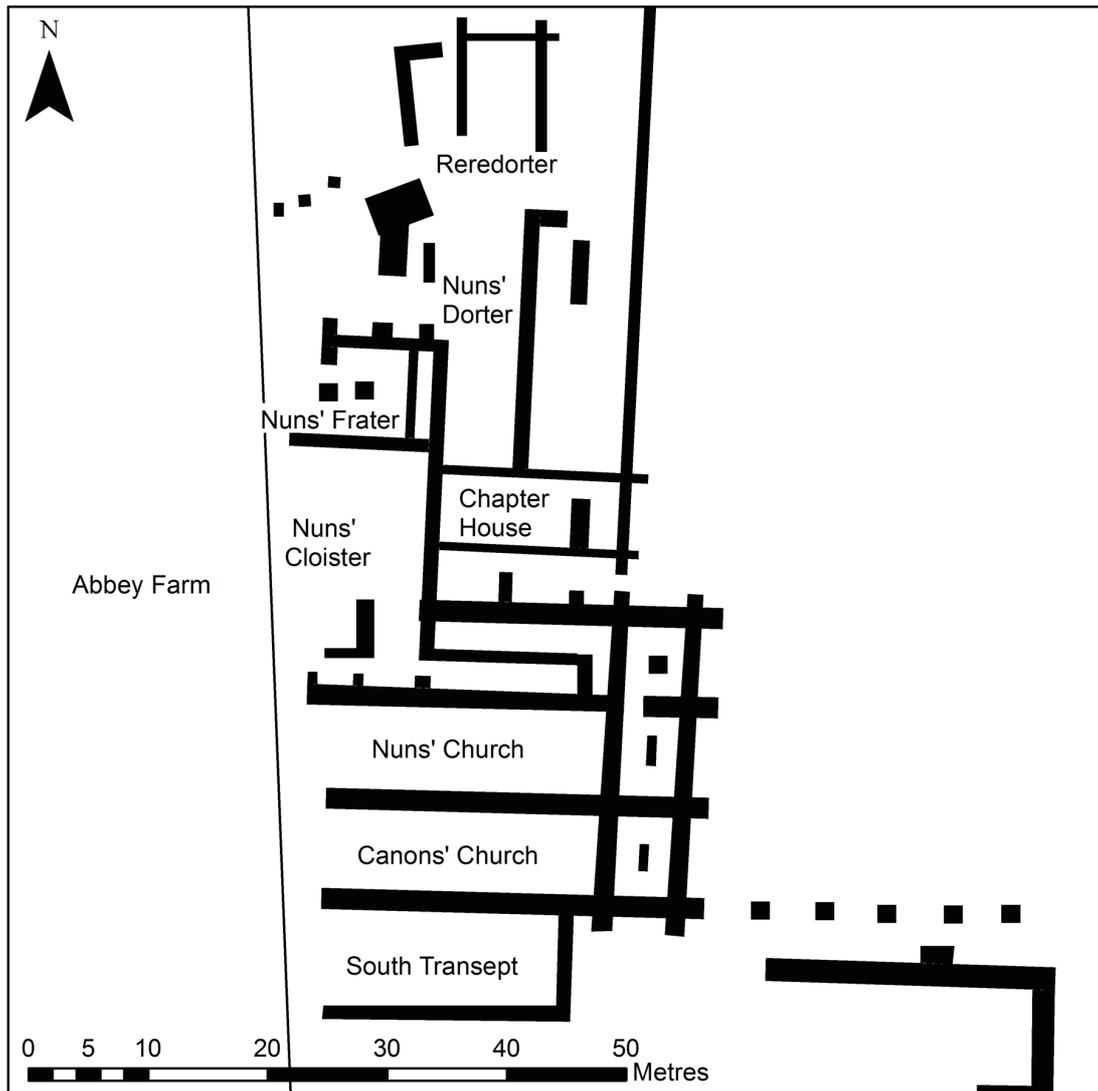


Figure 38 – Plot of cropmarks at Shouldham priory (partly after Edwards 1989)

As at other double sites the position of the nuns within the northern half of the church suggests that they occupied the adjoining cloister as well. To the north of the church is a small room, possibly the parlour, to the north of which is a rectangular east-west orientated building that be identified as the nuns' chapter house and may at some point have been extended to the east due to the presence of a north-south crop mark at the eastern end that may relate to an earlier eastern limit of the building. To the north of the chapter house the eastern range continues and extends further north than the northern range. This section of the eastern range can be identified as the nuns'

dormitory, with the reredorter projecting northwards. The crop marks reveal no evidence of a channel to carry water to flush the reredorter, although this must have once been present.

To the west of the eastern range is the cloister, in the south-east corner of which survives the internal wall of the cloistral walk. The eastern side is not visible in the aerial photograph but a width from north to south of approximately 19 metres can be calculated. The northern range is clearly visible with what appears to be central columns to support vaulting. Three bays are visible within the aerial photograph, with the range continuing to the west. Geophysical survey by the author in 2013 in the orchard to the west of the field containing the crop marks revealed a number of anomalies that relate to the continuation of the nuns' cloister in this direction (figure 39). The southern wall of the northern range is clearly visible continuing to the west, forming the northern limit of the cloister. This width matches the measurement from north to south across the cloister given on the aerial photograph. Fragments of the north and west walls of the northern range are also visible on the geophysical survey. These show the northern range continued to the west for a further three bays, giving it a total length of six bays.

The geophysical survey also successfully revealed aspects of the layout at the western end of the church. The western wall of the church can be identified and gives the church a total length of 52 metres. The results also show the nuns' cloister extended some considerable way to the east of the church. The fragmentary nature of the survey results makes it difficult to provide a precise form or function to these buildings; however, the northern most of these buildings is a square structure butting onto the western side of the west range. Given the pattern at other Gilbertine houses of the kitchens being on the opposite corner of the cloister to the chapter house it is possible

that this building formed part of the priory kitchens. Its shape is also similar to that of the block identified by Hope as the kitchens at Watton priory.



Figure 39 – Geophysical survey at Shouldham priory (Townend 2013b)

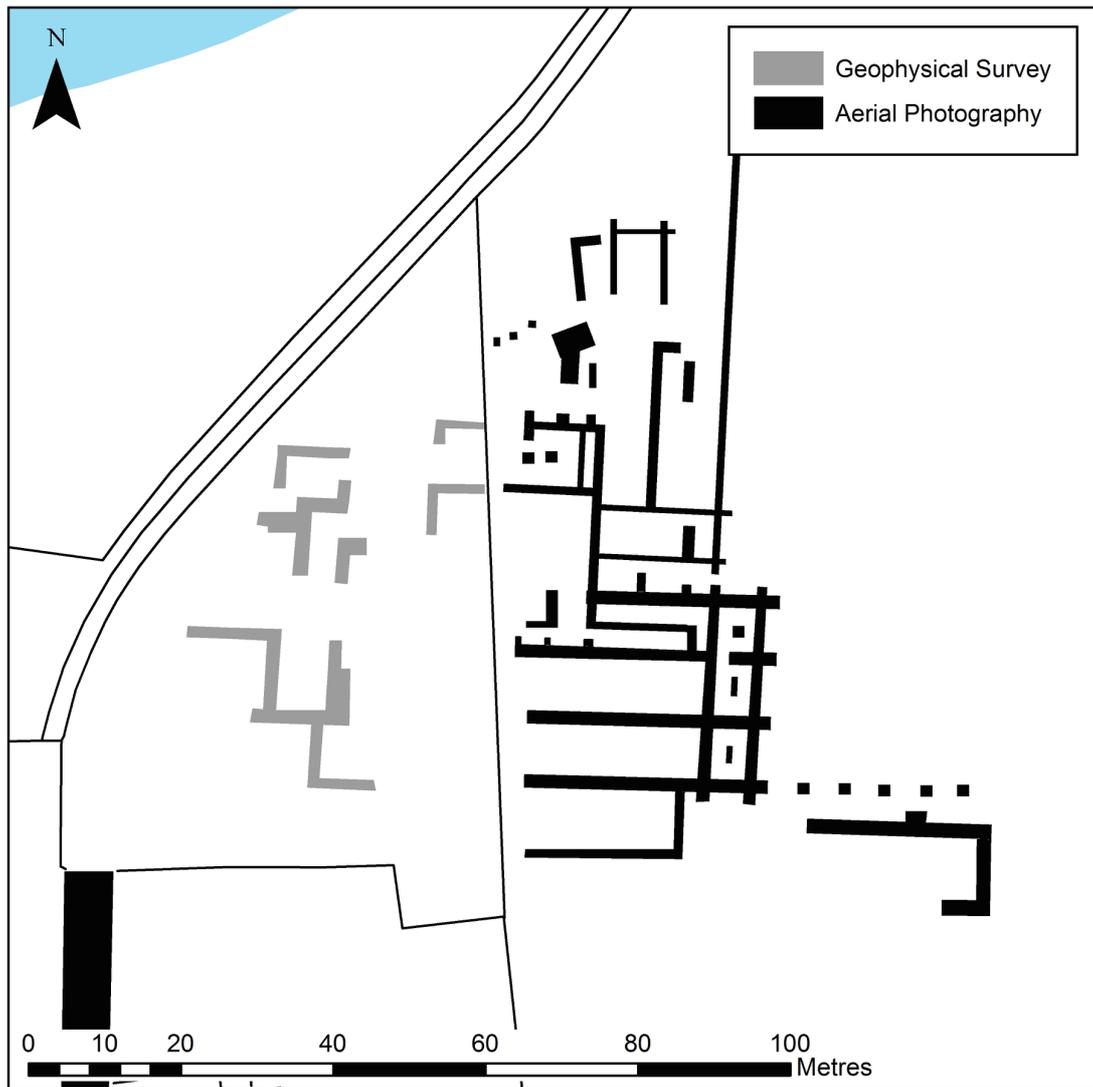


Figure 40 – Transcription of geophysical survey at Shouldham priory (Townend 2013b) and previous aerial photographic transcription (partly Edwards 1989)

The location of the canons' cloister at Shouldham is unclear from the aerial photography. The absence of any cropmarks to the east and the lack of finds reported from the excavation of a lake to the north of the priory suggest that the canons' cloister is located either to the south or west. In addition to the work to the west of the church the author also undertook geophysical survey to the south of the priory church, within the garden of Shouldham farm and in the field to the south. No archaeological features were detected within these areas, other than two small areas of high resistance. These

were most likely due to the clearance of demolition from the southern side of the church during the landscaping of the garden. Given the lack of evidence for the canons' cloister to the north, east or south of the site, it is highly probable that the remains are located to the east of the church under the modern farmyard (figure 41).

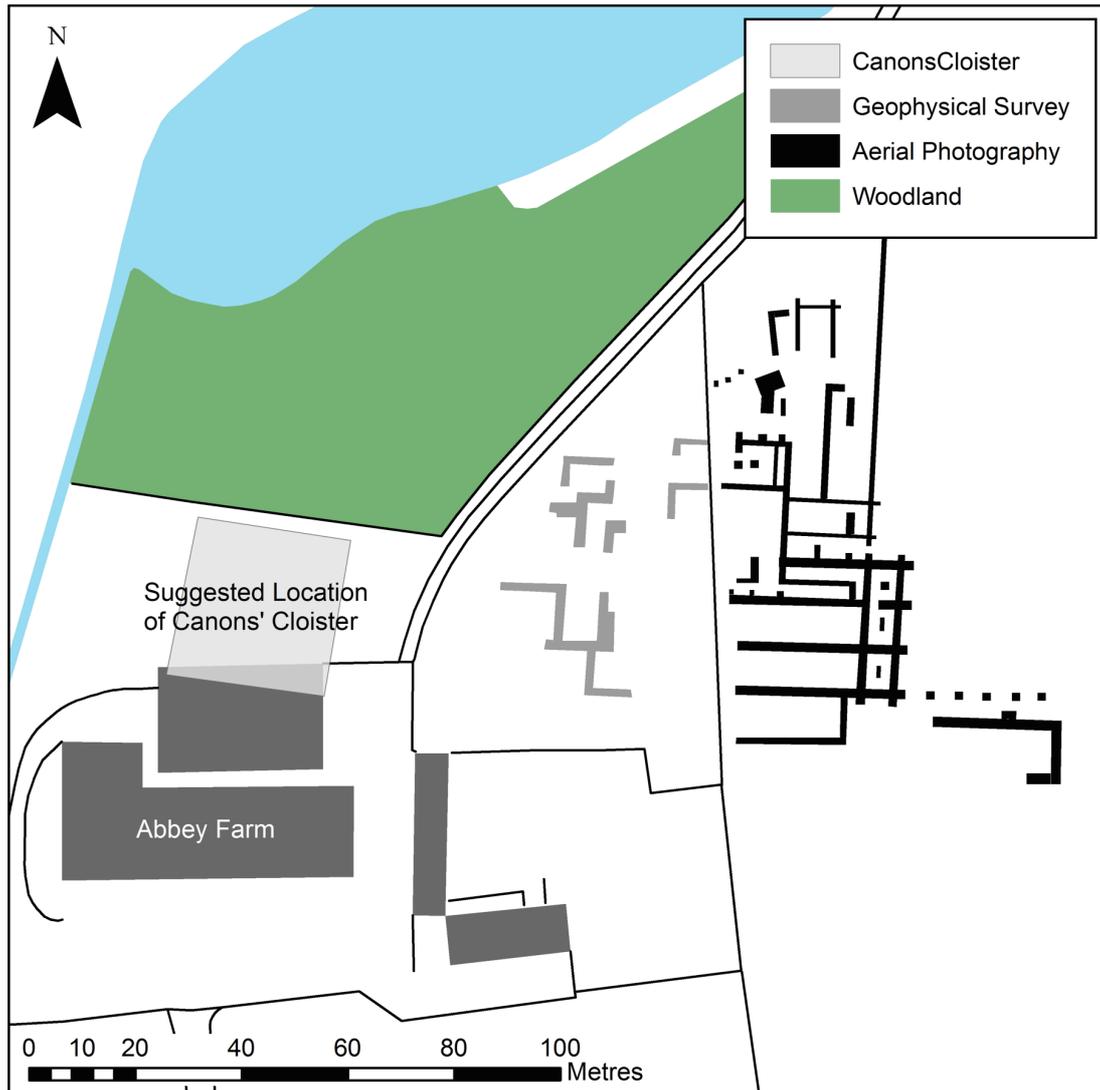


Figure 41 – Suggested location of the canons' cloister at Shouldham priory (produced by author)

Excavations took place in this area in 1957 during the development of the farmyard, and these revealed the presence of a tiled floor and other *in situ* masonry

remains (Norfolk CC 2012). Unfortunately, no records for the excavation survive other than the location of the intervention. The presence of this floor underneath the current farm, when compared to the aerial photograph transcription would place it to the east of the nuns' cloister. Previous work, only recorded within the Heritage List (English Heritage 1995) also suggests the presence of substantial architectural remains under the modern farmyard, including walls and evidence of further tiled floors. In the late-nineteenth-century glazed tile was recovered from the site to the south of the church, indicating the presence of buildings within this area. It is probable that the site was used as a quarry for local buildings and the first evidence of substantial clearance work on the site is in White's (1854: 636) *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Norfolk*, which describes the removal of some of the remains of priory in 1831, and the discovery of several stone coffins and medieval window glass. Ploughing of the land in the latter half of the nineteenth century also uncovered two stone coffins to the south of the church (Norfolk CC, Undated).

The evidence from excavation, sparse though it is, when coupled with the geophysical survey showing that the priory buildings continue far to the west of the nuns' cloister is highly suggestive. It appears likely that the canons' cloister was located to the west of the nuns. This would make it comparable in arrangement to the cloisters at Catley and North Ormsby, where a similar pattern can be seen.

The Significance of the Gilbertine Plan

The Passage and 'Window-house'

One area of specific interest within the monastic complex is the passage connecting the two cloisters and the associated window house. Excavation in the north-

east corner of the cloister at Watton revealed a passage 1.5 metres wide and 24.5 metres in length running from the undercroft of the nuns' dormitory to the remains of a buildings midway between the two cloisters (Hope 1901: 19). Few remains survived of this building in the late-nineteenth century, but Hope describes a single structure split by a north-south wall into two rooms. This room was interpreted by Hope as the window house, a room that contained a small window through which the nuns and canons could communicate, and a turntable (similar to that in the church) through which food could be passed. Connected to the window house on the southern side was a wall that ran to the north-east corner of the church. This wall was thought by Hope to enclose the priory cemetery and to contain a door opening on the eastern side. A later wall was then constructed from the passage of the nuns across to the church, presumed by Hope (1900: 20) to cut off any view of their cloister from a later addition to the prior's lodge. No evidence of the passage leading from the canons' cloister to the window house existed, however Hope included a possible location on his plan (figure 42). Neither is any evidence for the window house visible on the geophysical survey. However, the plot does display evidence for two linear features that may represent two passages that led between the two cloisters.

At North Ormsby the 1996 excavations reported the presence of a covered passage by which the two cloisters were linked (Dornier 1996: 2), and this passage connected the eastern range of the nuns' cloister to the southern range of the canons. Dornier suggests that the passage may have been for the conveyance of food prepared by the nuns or lay sisters to the canons and lay brothers, and asserts that the passage led directly away from what she identified a kitchen block connected to the southern cloister. The passage appears to have gone out of use within the life of the monastery as a later drain cuts through the floor and a possible capped well was recorded at the

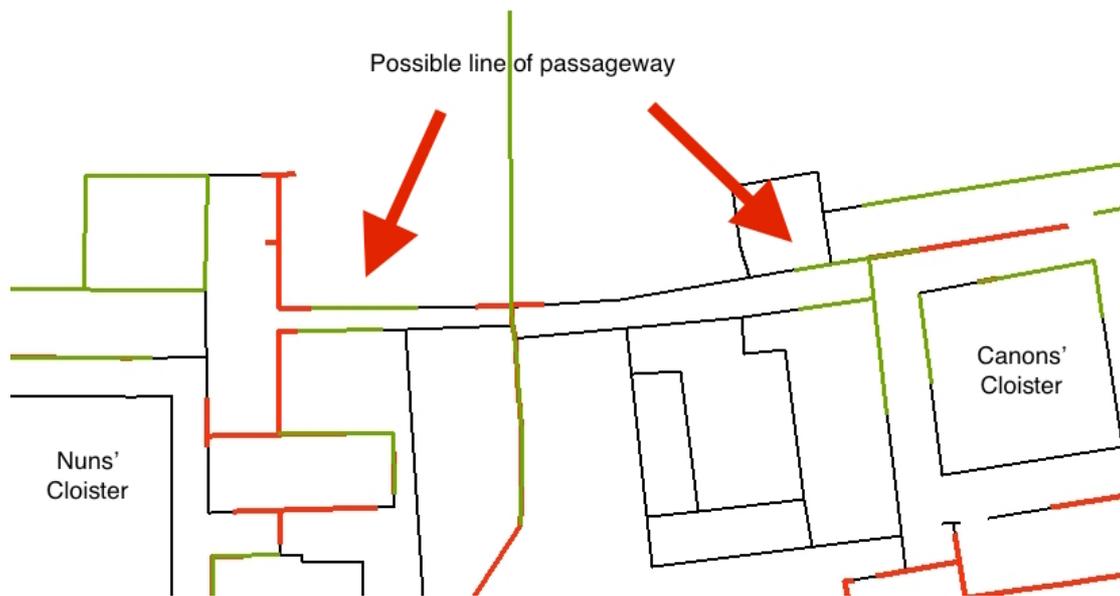


Figure 42 - Possible location of the window house passage at Watton priory (partly after Hope)

north-east end. There is evidence of a possible later kitchen within the south range of the canons' cloister that may have been constructed to replace the passage as their sole source of food (Dornier 1996: 5). The presence of a canons' kitchen supports the hypothesis that the passage went out of use, and may explain the poor condition of the remains of the passage and presence of the later kitchen block in the canons' cloister at Watton. Unfortunately, no excavation was carried out at the midpoint of the passage between the two cloisters. It is therefore uncertain whether a window house would have existed at North Ormsby comparable to the one at Watton.

Other than the aerial photographs outlined above much of the archaeological data for Shouldham dates to the late-nineteenth century and as a consequence is incomplete and the locations of finds or remains are also unknown. An account within Norfolk HER (Undated) relates that during the excavation of stone from the site in the 1840s a passage 27 metres long was uncovered. It is tempting to speculate that this

passage was the evidence for the jointing between the two cloisters as was found at Watton, especially as one of the potential locations for the canons' cloister is to the west of the church.

Division of the Priory Church

The second unique facet of the Gilbertine monastery, and the most relevant from a liturgical aspect, is the divided church. At all of the double houses of the order the church was divided from east to west to create two spaces, one to the north and the other to the south. It is presumed that the larger half would have held the female inmates, due to the greater number of nuns and lay sisters within the monastery when compared to the canons and lay brothers.

Watton provides the only example of an excavated Gilbertine double church. Hope's plan divides the church either side of the central dividing wall into three areas, the nave, the quire and presbytery. The presbytery is split into two halves on the nuns' side of the church by three steps, an identical arrangement partially surviving in the south half of the church. Between the two upper halves of the presbytery in the central dividing wall was an opening or doorway approximately 1.5 metres wide. The stonework surrounding the opening showed no evidence for a doorjamb and the stone paving of the floor continued through from one side to the other. 1 metre to the west of this opening was a second aperture approximately 1 metre from floor level that Hope describes as, 'two rebated apertures with gradually converging sides, opening into a hexagonal recess'. This structure is clearly the *fenestra versatilis*, the opening into which a turntable was set (figure 43). Hope furnishes his publication with a reconstruction of this simple device, designed to allow the passage of sacred objects between the nuns' and canons' churches without the two groups seeing one another

(Hope 1901: 10). Stephenson (2009: 9) has suggested that this feature may be a later thirteenth-century addition, a product of rumours concerning the relationship between men and women within the priory.

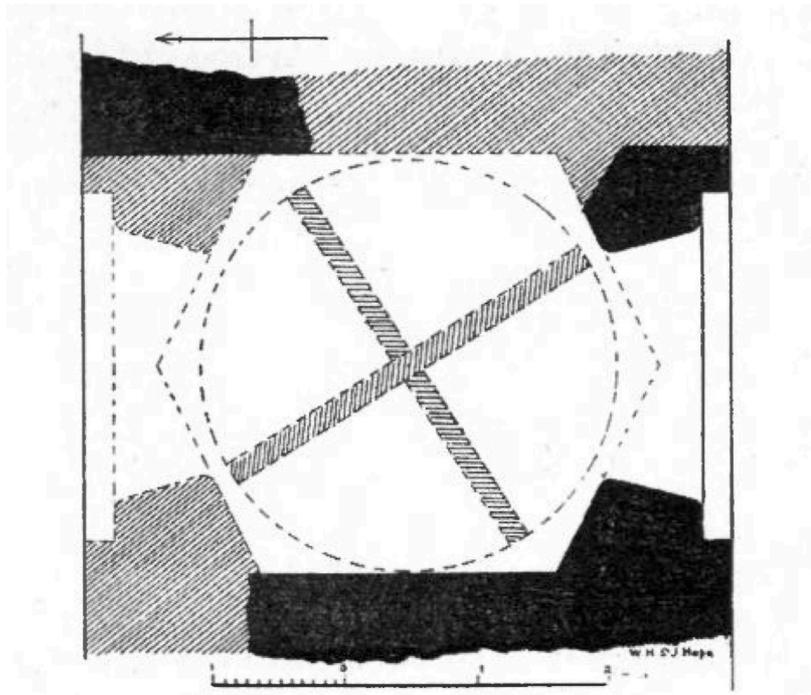


Figure 43 – Hope’s depiction of the turning window in the dividing wall of Watton priory church (Hope 1901)

There is little evidence other than the foundations for the central dividing wall within the western half of the church. These foundations appeared to stop 1-2 metres from the west end explained by Hope by the presence of a narthex or internal porch (Hope 1901: 12). There appears to have been only two entrances between the church and cloister, one of these opened into the north transept, which also contained a small chapel. The second entrance was from the nave into the south cloistral walk. This would presumably have been shared by the nuns (occupying the quire), and lay sisters (occupying the nave) with the door at the east end of the north wall being reserved for the prioress and her attendants. Access to the church by the canons must have taken

place through the south transept or western end as there is no evidence for an entrance within the southern wall of the church.

Hope dated the archaeological remains of the church to around 1170 based on architectural evidence in conjunction with the historical record. The Meaux abbey Chronicle, a nearby Cistercian house, relates the story of Adam the first abbot who retired to Watton in 1160 (Hope 1901: 12). Seven years after Adam settled at Watton, the chronicle recounts a fire, which burnt the church to the ground. Hope did indeed observe the remains of an earlier structure beneath the later phase church, which was, according to Hope, built on a replica plan of the original. It seems somewhat extreme to replace the entirety of the church from the ground up, however the use of chalk as a rubble core within the walls may explain this. It is possible that the temperature of the fire may have turned the chalk core to lime and resulted in damage extensive enough to require the wholesale replacement of the original building, presumably constructed directly following the date of foundation.

At Shouldham the crop marks clearly show the eastern end of the church and a cloister to its north. The layout of the church appears to be similar to that of Watton, being divided laterally down the centre into two halves. To the north of the church are the remains of the north transept, large enough to contain a number of chapels. At the east end of the church is a third partitioned area that may represent a raised dais from which the prior or prioress could lead the daily services. Significantly this area also appears to contain the central partition, suggesting that even the highest members of the priory were not allowed to see or hear one another.

The division within the church at Sempringham is very similar to that at both Watton and Shouldham, in that it appears to have a more developed northern transept than to the south. The excavation of the church at North Ormsby was limited to a trench

approximately 5 x 11 metres orientation north to south with an extension of approximately 1 x 11 metres to the north (Dornier 1966). The church appears to have been divided from east to west by an off-centre partition. The wider section of the trench was located over the larger, southern portion of the building, the partition wall and around three quarters of the northern portion. The north 1 metre wide extension covered the remaining quarter of the building and the northern wall. The southern nave was thought by Dornier to belong to the nuns, with the south to the canons, due to the formers larger width. A surface of crushed plaster that may have held a stone or tiled floor within the northern (canons') nave, while to the south there was evidence of a raised stone floor (ibid: 4).

From the data available, there appears to be two types of layout for the Gilbertine double monastery. The first is that seen at Sempringham and Catley with the church bordered to the north and south by the two cloisters. The second layout is that recorded at Watton, Shouldham, Bullington and North Ormsby, where both cloisters are arranged on an east-west alignment with the nuns' cloisters to the east being attached to the divided church. The position of the church to the south of the nuns' cloister is understandable due to the strict rules by which the nuns' lives were governed. This arrangement would mean that the nuns would not have to cross between the cloisters and risk being observed by the canons. Also, the segregation of the cloisters meant that the two sexes were clearly kept apart, and at Watton this was emphasized by the position of a large water channel dividing the cloisters.

Authors including Hope (1901) and Gilchrist (1994) have implied that Watton is the standard plan for the Gilbertine double house. This approach of classification by religious order is in danger of over simplifying the monastic layouts of individual houses. In fact, it would appear from the data presented for Sempringham, Catley and

Chicksands, that Watton, Bullington and North Ormsby deviate from the plan of the order's motherhouse and these other double houses. The view of Watton as representative appears to arise purely from its position as the earliest, and until recently only example of a thoroughly researched Gilbertine double house.

It is possible that the layout of the double cloisters to the north and south of the church was a feature of the earlier Gilbertine double house. For this reason, it is unfortunate that no information regarding layout can be surmised at Haverholme priory, the only other Gilbertine double house contemporary with Sempringham. It may be that these two earlier houses, and possibly Chicksands built shortly after, displayed this north-south arrangement. Having returned disappointed from Cîteaux abbey in 1147, due to the Cistercians refusal to administer houses containing both men and women (Golding 1995: 27), there may have been a conscious effort on the part of Gilbert to highlight the separation of the sexes. This emphasis would have been best achieved by housing the nuns and canons in totally separate buildings. Indeed, Braun's 1939 excavations at Sempringham provide evidence that the canons' cloister, although extremely close to the church was not joined to it, as was the nuns'. This could explain the continuity found at Watton of placing the canons' cloister to the north of their church. In this instance the arrangement of Watton, although different to Sempringham in terms of the distance of separation of the cloisters, can be seen to be mimicking at least this aspect of arrangement. This is supported by the evidence that Roger of Malton, as head of the order, would later imitate the pattern of canons occupying the northern cloister in the construction of single houses during his time in power (see Chapter 3).

All identified examples of churches at Gilbertine double houses are split from east to west, creating two distinct halves. This is the area in which the liturgy identified and debated over by Sorrentino (2002) and Sykes (2009) would have been played out.

Unlike at nunneries, where the canons were purely facilitating the worship of the nuns, at Gilbertine houses the two groups shared the church and the act of worship. Gilbert could not rewrite the precepts of the church and allow men and women to fulfil the same role. Nonetheless, as Golding (2008: 657) has observed, the monastic rule was ‘subject to constant mutation’, and Gilbert had found a way to reconcile the monastic and secular rules. He provided a space that both adhered to the Church’s strict rules on the segregation of the two sexes and still allowed them to worship together. This was particularly clear within the two presbyteries, linked by the *fenestra versatilis* and by which the service between the two groups became one. In particular the opening between the two halves of the church as recorded at Watton generates a number of questions regarding the segregation of the two sexes. The lack of evidence for a doorjamb is not unequivocal evidence of the lack of a locked partition. However, the possibility of a curtained or otherwise unsecured aperture is intriguing. If this was the case then the rules for the prior and prioress, the people with access to the east end of the church, may have been different to the regular nuns and canons regarding contact with one another. If this was the case, the presence of the *fenestra versatilis* may have taken on a more symbolic role, and Stephenson’s (2009: 9) theory that the central division within the church of the Gilbertine double house was a later addition would become more probable.

The possible evidence for an additional shared refectory at Bullington priory cannot be corroborated without further excavation or survey. However, this building, like the divided church, would have provided a shared space in which the inmates would have undertaken very prescribed activities together. It would not be inconceivable to have a shared refectory as the idea of equal standards and environments was explicitly stated within the Gilbertine rule. The nuns and canons had

to consume the same food and drink, and cellarers for both male and female infirmaries were ordered to provide the same quality of fare (Golding 2008: 660). The very existence of separate infirmaries for men and women, although not identified within the archaeology suggests another aspect of the duality of the monastery.

The importance to the order of keeping the nuns and canons separate cannot be overemphasized. Two key events within the history of the order highlight the importance of segregation of the sexes to avoid scandal. The first of these is the rebellion of the lay brothers in the late-1160s. One of the charges laid against the order was that the 'close proximity of the nuns and canons had been the cause of serious moral lapses' (Knowles 1935: 469-70). Knowles, balancing the accusation against the evidence from the Crown and episcopal testimony judged the charge as false. However, the very fact that the lay brethren attempted to connect the order with such immoral behaviour suggests that it was not impossible for such scandal to arise within the community. Indeed, the order and the master were acquitted by the Papacy, however the damage to their reputation may already have been great. It would certainly appear from the archaeological evidence that the order was concerned with giving the appearance of strict sexual segregation within their architectural arrangement.

The second event that cast doubt on the moral discipline of the order was the scandal of the Nun of Watton, which took place during the 1170s. The account, related in a letter by Aelred of Rievaulx has been comprehensively reviewed by Constable (1981) and as a consequence will only be briefly outlined here. Aelred recounted that a girl of four years was taken into the priory at the behest of the Archbishop of York. Some years later the girl had an affair with a lay brother and became pregnant. Upon her discovery, the nun was beaten and chained, whilst the lay brother was beaten and castrated by the other nuns. Having been left chained within some part of the priory,

the girl was visited by an angel, and the unborn child and the woman's chains removed. The attendant nuns, and eventually St Gilbert, declared it a miracle and released the offending nun. The validity of the tale does not concern us as much as the information that can be gleaned from it regarding the order. At the time of the account, early in the life of the order around the middle of the twelfth century, questions were already beginning to be asked concerning the propriety of the Gilbertine double houses.

The story of the Nun of Watton implies that the majority of the community would not tolerate these actions if they did take place. This is enforced by the fact that the girl is an outsider who is taken in at an abnormally young age by the priory at the request of the Archbishop of York. Aelred comments that, 'I praise not the deed but the zeal, and I approve not the shedding of blood but so great a striving of the nuns against evil' (Constable 1981: 08). The punishment carried out by the nuns demonstrates the piety of the insiders or 'regular nuns'. Aelred also relates that the nuns feared that the action of the individual would reflect upon the group as a whole, and that the violence of their reaction was a safeguard against this association. The male offender being a lay brother and not a pious Gilbertine canon again enforces this idea. It would be difficult to consider a situation in which such a tale as the Nun of Watton could take place other than a double monastery.

Both of these events take place within the twelfth century and appear to have been quickly and forcefully addressed by the order. However, despite this the scandalous reputation of the Gilbertine double house appears to have remained. The song *The Order of Fair-Ease* dates to the late-thirteenth or fourteenth century and systematically accuses each monastic order of poor discipline and lax morals (Douglas & Rothwell 1975: 913). The entry for the Gilbertine order contains the passage:

...that at Sempringham there must be between brothers and sisters
(a thing which displeases many,) ditches and walls of high measure;
but in this Order of Fair-Ease there must be neither ditch nor wall, nor
any other impediment, to hinder the brethren at their pleasure from
visiting the sisters, nor shall there be any watch-word. Their intimacy
shall neither be separated by linen nor wool, or even their very skins.

(Cross 1996: 141-2)

Although the song is obviously anti-papist if not wholly anti-monastic, the direction of attack reflects the order's reputation at the time of writing. A consequence of this was the vigour with which the segregation of the sexes was enforced and the design of the buildings to ensure that contact was kept to a minimum.

The Chariot of Aminadab

Many references have been made concerning the description by St Gilbert's hagiographer of the similarities between or the basis of the Gilbertine order and the 'Chariot of Aminadab' (Golding 1995; Burton 2001; Sykes 2009). The passage in the Life of St Gilbert describes the order as having, like the chariot, two sides, firstly one half of men and the second half of women. Along these two halves are set the four wheels, two of them male, consisting of clerks and laymen, the canons and lay brothers. The remaining two are described as being made up of educated and uneducated women; the nuns and lay sisters of the order. The chariot rider is depicted as St Gilbert, who guides the order, directs the chariot and unifies the four groups (Sykes 2009: 236).

The image of the two sides of the chariot is mimicked in Gilbertine architecture by the existence of the two cloisters, occupied by the male and female inmates. The four groups are also represented the church by the two naves and the two quires. These spaces were quite separate from one another, on one side placing the lay sisters to the west and the nuns to the east and on the remaining side separating the canons to the east and the lay brothers to the west. Also within both halves of the church were the two presbyteries reserved for the prioresses, priors, sub-priors and sub-prioresses. These two spaces became one as they were linked through the turning window. The whole of the chariot of Aminadab appears to have been included within the architecture of the double church of the Gilbertine monastery.

Summary

The Gilbertine cloisters appear to deviate from the normal distribution seen at non-Gilbertine sites. Janet Burton (1995: 149) has argued that the layout of the double house, especially the site of Watton, can be seen as a viable solution to the problem of housing two sexes together but in isolation of one another, that is to have two of everything. In this situation, the standard would be a double house consisting of two 'Cistercian' or 'traditional' houses. The lack of examples of a northern cloister at any Cistercian sites within Lincolnshire or Yorkshire suggests a different emphasis being placed on tradition of arrangement between the Cistercians and Gilbertines. The Gilbertines appear, not only in the arrangement of their buildings, but also in their exegesis of liturgy, to be less conservative.

It has also been suggested in this thesis that the canons' cloisters at Watton and Sempringham did not include a kitchen, as the rule of St Gilbert explicitly states that it was the duty of the sisters to provide the canons and lay brothers with food provided

via the window-house (Golding 1995: 127-8). This original arrangement is also evident at Bullington, with the possible existence of a double, segregated refectory to the south-west of the cloister. If this is the case then the 'two of everything' rule does not apply. Consequently, the contact between men and women increases as a symbiotic relationship is formed, with the canons providing the nuns with spiritual sustenance in the form of the mass, and the nuns' providing for the canons' physical needs, in the form of food. This relationship is evidenced by the existence of contact points within the church and the window-house, the former for the canons to provide for the nuns' religious needs and the latter for the sisters to provide for the canons' temporal necessities.

As the motherhouse of the order, the priory at Sempringham must be viewed as the progenitor for the other double houses. There is a clear pattern begun at Sempringham of connecting the nuns' cloister to the priory church and the canons to the north. This is the case at all sites for which there are sufficient archaeological data to make conclusions as to the arrangement of the priory buildings. The canons' cloister was then located close to the priory church, but far enough away to be distinctly separate. As has been discussed, this distinction would have been important to the order. The nuns and canons could honestly claim that they did not occupy the same buildings as others of the opposite sex. At Watton and Bullington this pattern is continued with the nuns being placed on the northern side of the priory church, away from the main access to the site from the south. At Bullington, North Ormsby and Catley the nuns' cloisters are located to the south of the church with the canons to the north. At all three of these sites the main access to the monastery would have come from the north. In the same way that the church was separating the canons from the nuns it would also segregate the female inhabitants from any visitors to the priory.

Given this evidence it is hard to produce a 'type site' for the Gilbertine double house. The use of Watton as a 'type site' by early scholars, such as Graham and Hope, was certainly due to it being the only example of a double house for which evidence was available. Following the work in this chapter it is clear that the majority of Gilbertine double houses for which evidence survives were much more similar to Sempringham, with the canons' cloister being located on the opposite side of the church to the nuns', although examples at Bullington, Catley and Watton suggest that this was not a firm rule. This chapter has discussed how authors such as Gilchrist (1994) have tried to explain the proliferation of northern cloisters at nunnery sites with respect to religious symbolism. The fact that the Gilbertines placed the nuns to the south of the church at Sempringham argues against any liturgical need for the nuns to occupy the northern cloister. Instead the evidence presented in this chapter argues for the opposite and that the Gilbertines seem chosen the location of the nuns' cloister based purely on practical motivations. However, the pattern of placing the canons to the north of the priory church is one that would be continued in the later single houses of the Gilbertine canons and will be addressed in the next chapter.

This chapter has demonstrated that the Gilbertine double house was a distinct entity, separate from the traditional monastic house or nunnery. Unique architectural traditions made the Gilbertine establishments containing both men and women more than just 'mixed communities', but along with a small number of European orders in England, one of a number of uniquely double monasteries. The order appears to have tried to create a distinct identity through the construction of unique shared spaces, through liturgy and cloistral location, evident at the first foundation at Sempringham, to the north of the parish church. It did this whilst not deviating enough to put itself outside of the confines of what the church deemed acceptable. This was exemplified by

divided church as both a shared and segregated space of worship consisting of two distinct areas that became one at the presbytery through the medium of the *fenestra versatilis*.

Chapter 3 - The Gilbertine Single Monastery

Despite the traditional view of the Gilbertines, as an order primarily focused on the experiment of the double house, the order did in fact have almost twice as many houses that contained only canons; of the total 27 houses that the order founded, or attempted to found, only 11 were ever intended to house both nuns and canons. This chapter will focus on these Gilbertine single houses.

The chronology and distribution of the houses will be considered and placed within the wider context of the growth and changing nature of the order at the turn of the thirteenth century. This period within the history of the order saw a marked shift away from the foundation of the double Gilbertine priory, which housed both nuns and canons, towards the proliferation of the single house. Those single houses founded in the same period as double house (up to *c.*1193), were very similar in style to the typical foundation practice common to the Cistercian or Augustinian orders. The surviving archaeological evidence from the single houses, dating to the latter half of the twelfth century, contemporaneous with the foundation of double houses, illustrates this. The layout of these examples, found at Malton, Mattersey and Clattercote are almost exact copies of Cistercian houses and are different in style to both Gilbertine double houses and later Gilbertine single houses.

The three surviving examples of the five single houses founded between 1148 and 1189 all appear to mimic the Cistercian style of layout. The foundation of the last double monastery at Shouldham in 1193 marked a revival of an original style of Gilbertine priory layout. Although this revival was not strong enough to encourage the foundation of any further double houses after this date it is possible to observe traditions in layout within single houses being carried through from the double foundations. These

similarities are manifest in the bias towards the existence of a northern cloister and the lack of a southern transept within the priory church.

Of the 16 identified Gilbertine single houses, archaeological evidence relating to priory layout survives for only seven; Mattersey (Nottinghamshire), Malton (North Yorkshire) and Ravenstonedale (Cumbria), all of which have some elements of extant upstanding remains, whilst excavation and survey at St Andrew Fishergate (York), Ellerton (East Yorkshire) Clattercote (Cambridgeshire) and Hitchin (Hertfordshire) will be explored. The layout, date and distribution of these sites will then be compared to the data relating to double houses to illustrate areas of continuity and diversity. It is advantageous that the foundation dates of the surviving examples fall within a wide distribution (table 3). These include the priory at Clattercote; one of two possible houses, in addition to St Katherine's, Lincoln to be the first single foundation following 1148. The dataset also includes the final Gilbertine foundation, the 'Biggin' at Hitchin, dated to 1361. The remaining five houses are relatively evenly distributed between these two dates providing a characteristic sample of the foundations.

Dates of Foundation

Between 1148 and 1361 the Gilbertine order was responsible for the foundation of 16 single religious houses for canons within England. Although, the exact dates of foundation for a number of the sites are unclear, the following table has been compiled from the dates outlined in Dugdale's *Monasticon* and the county appropriate *Victoria County Histories*, included within Knowles & Hadcock (1971), and Golding (1995). The years displayed are the earliest and latest likely dates for each of the single houses. Where dates differ between sources, such as that for Newstead-on-Ancholme, the best-supported date has been given. Following the chronology of the foundations four main

groups can be identified within table 3. In most cases the average foundation for each group takes place around 50 years apart from one another. In addition to the date of foundation, the houses are in some cases distinguished by location, related events and function. The first two groups are less obviously divided by date, but are separated by the death of St Gilbert c. 1190.

Site	County	Foundation	Groups
Lincoln	Lincolnshire	1148	Group 1 Founded during the rule of Gilbert
Malton	North Yorkshire	1150 – 1151	
Clattercote	Oxfordshire	1150 – 1166	
Newstead-on-Ancholme	North Lincolnshire	1164- 1171	
Mattersey	Nottinghamshire	c.1185	
Marlborough	Wiltshire	1194 – 1199	Group 2 Founded during the rule of Roger
York	York City	c.1200	
Holland Bridge (Bridge End)	Lincolnshire	1200	
Ravenstonedale	Cumbria	1200	
Marmont	Norfolk	c.1203	
Ellerton	Humberside	1199 – 1203	
Fordham	Cambridgeshire	1204	
Cambridge	Cambridgeshire	1290 - 1291	Group 3 Educational Halls
Stamford	Lincolnshire	1292 – 1301	
Poulton	Gloucestershire	1348 – 1350	Group 4 Final Foundations
Hitchin (New Biggin)	Hertfordshire	1361 - 1362	

Table 3 - The dates of foundation of Gilbertine single houses, (after Knowles & Hadcock 1971, pp. 194-9; Golding 1995, pp. 448-9)

The first of these chronological groupings (Group 1) is comprised of the five priories at Lincoln, Malton, Clattercote, Newstead-on-Ancholme and Mattersey, dating to between 1140 and 1185. These single foundations were being established within the lifetime of St Gilbert at the same time that the order was founding double houses at Alvingham, Bullington, Catley, Chicksands, North Ormsby and Sixhills. The locations of the three priories are dispersed throughout England. The house at Lincoln was within the centre of the Gilbertine area of influence. Gilbert himself had studied and worked under the Bishop of Lincoln and it made sense for the order to have a presence within the city. At the time of its foundation Malton would have been the most northerly Gilbertine house and Clattercote was the most southerly. These two foundations were both over 90 miles away from the motherhouse at Sempringham. This represented a wider expansion than had previously been seen in the relatively conservative locations of the mainly Lincolnshire-based double houses. These first three houses appear to have had significant secondary roles, if not integral to their existence as priories. St Leonard's priory at Clattercote was first granted to the order between 1148 and 1166 by Bishop Robert de Chesney, as a leper hospital (Salter 1907: 105). The order maintained the hospital until the middle of the thirteenth century, when its function changed to purely that of a single house. St Katherine's priory in Lincoln, also founded by Bishop de Chesney, was responsible for the hospital of the Holy Sepulchre. The hospital had been founded earlier in the twelfth century to care for orphans and women of the city who could no longer support themselves. The foundation at Malton was made responsible for a number of hospitals by its founder Eustace Fitz John: one in Malton and two in Norton and Broughton (Fallow 1913a: 253). The hospitals gave the priories two distinct functions, first that of a Gilbertine monastery, and secondly as a hospital caring for the sick and infirm. At Lincoln, the organisation of the houses was

spilt accordingly, with separate limits for the lay brethren and sisters within the two sites. The holdings of the priory and the hospital were also listed separately despite both sites being presided over by a single prior. Golding (1995: 232) remarks that this method of organisation was unique within the order to the priory at Lincoln, and not reproduced at Clattercote and Malton where the hospitals appear to have been included with the figures of the priory.

A number of historians have argued that, in addition to its role as a hospital, the priory at Malton also fulfilled the role of school and retreat for the canons (Burton 1995: 99, Thompson 1996: 75-6). It may have been that the time the canons could spend within the presence of the nuns, or at least if not in their presence then in double houses, was limited. Canons may have been required to visit Malton, Lincoln or Clattercote to remove them from temptation, if not only for a short while. It was also the case that, by the time Malton was founded, medieval colleges had not yet become as popular as they would be 150 years later; colleges at Oxford had not yet been established and it would not be until the turn of the fourteenth century that canons' colleges would become common (Knowles 1955: 14-28).

However, as Golding (1995: 220) has pointed out, there is no historical or archaeological evidence for either of these theories, nor are there any parallels within other orders. Evidence from Lincoln and Clattercote suggests the presence of women at both hospitals (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 198), and it is likely that women would have been present in the hospitals at Malton, although not on the site of the priory. Therefore, it would seem unlikely that any of these priories could be seen as a retreat from womankind, as has been suggested by Burton and Thompson. This was especially true at Malton, which held the advowsons for churches at Old Malton, Brompton, Winteringham, Langton and Norton (Jennings 1999: 143). Canons based in Malton

would be much more likely to mix with public of either sex whilst undertaking their parochial duties than those closeted away in the rural double monasteries. In addition to this, there appears to have been no reason why canons could not undertake their education within their home priories, rather than travelling to Malton. The theory that those with a particular aptitude for learning were sent to Malton may have arisen from the priory being the home of Gilbert's eventual successor to Master of the order, Roger, Prior of Malton.

It is likely that the foundation of Newstead-on-Ancholme was as early as the 1160s. This date derives from a charter dated 1164, referring to an unnamed Gilbertine house for which Knowles & Hadcock (1971: 199) suggest Newstead as a possible candidate. Their attribution is likely correct, as the earlier date would fit within the period when the order was establishing a large number of foundations within Lincolnshire. Mattersey was the latest single house to be founded within the lifetime of Gilbert, it was the poorest of those falling with Group 1, and the smallest of the early foundations. The circumstances of the foundation of Mattersey will be discussed later within this chapter, as it falls within the period between the handover of power to Roger of Malton, but before the death of Gilbert.

Group 2 includes the seven houses founded between 1194 and 1204, during which time Roger of Malton was master of the order. These priories are relatively tightly grouped chronologically. As with the priories within the earlier Group 1 there is not a strong correlation in terms of location. However, excluding Marlborough and Ravenstonedale, each monastery established would have been within 30 miles of a pre-existing double house. Indeed, the choice of the order to found houses at Marlborough and Ravenstonedale, so distant from other Gilbertine foundations, appears unusual when compared to the other foundations taking place at this time. A 1229 confirmation

charter for the priory at Marlborough reveals the founder to have been Henry II (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 198), and it is unlikely that the order would have rejected the opportunity to receive a royal foundation, even though it was only intended to house a maximum of five or six canons (Chettle & Kirby 1956: 316). With the Crown's sustained support, the monastery expanded and Henry III continued to be a generous benefactor throughout the thirteenth century.

The location of Ravenstonedale offers no such obvious reason for the choice by the order to found a monastery there. There is no evidence as to the presence of a prior at the site and a number of historians have taken this to mean that the foundation was a cell of Watton rather than a fully-fledged priory (Golding 1995: 250, Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 197, Turnbull & Walsh 1992: 67). However, as will be discussed later, the archaeological evidence for the site supports the claim for a larger institution that was more akin to a priory, such as that found at Mattersey, rather than a cell to a larger house. Furthermore, the foundation coincided with a failed foundation at Owton in County Durham in 1204, and if this had been a success it would have increased the order's holdings in the north, and there would have been less than 50 miles between the two houses. The Gilbertines also made an abortive attempt in the 1220s to found a house within Scotland, at Dalmulin (Edwards 1904: 9), and it is possible that Ravenstonedale and the failure at Owton were intended to act as logistical staging posts for this effort (for an historical account of the Gilbertines in Scotland see Edwards 1904: 7-16 and Golding 1995: 252-256).

The establishment of the Group 3 houses is separated from the first two by almost a century and contains two foundations dating to the 10 years leading up to the end of the thirteenth century. Both of these foundations were centered on the education of the canons, and were two of the first ecclesiastical halls of learning within England.

The priory of St Edmund at Cambridge was the second college and the first religious college within the city, established *c.* 1290 (Ellis & Salzman 1948a: 254). Both of these houses were also relatively close to large double foundations, Cambridge was less than 30 miles away from Chicksands and Stamford around 20 miles from the motherhouse at Sempringham.

The final cluster of single houses, Group 4, date to the middle of the fourteenth century and are the last two Gilbertine houses to be founded in England. Like many of the single houses established after the twelfth century, both Poulton and Hitchin were extremely poor. The priory of St Saviour at Hitchin was only worth £2 at its foundation and has risen to only £13 in the ensuing 140 years (Stephenson 2005: 77), with a total occupancy of 2 canons and a prior in 1381 and a value of £13 at its suppression (Val. Ecc. iv: 276). Other than the priory at Marlborough these foundations are the two most southerly Gilbertine houses. Hitchin is located less than 9 miles to the south of Chicksands priory, however Poulton although less than 30 miles from Marlborough is not located near to a major Gilbertine house.

When studied through a combination of location, chronology and to a lesser extent function, the pattern of the foundation of the Gilbertine single houses displays a number of demonstrable trends. The distribution of the majority of the single houses falls largely within the three medieval dioceses of York, Lincoln and Ely. The greater parts of this group of foundations were within the Lincoln diocese; this is unsurprising, as has been outlined in Chapter 1, the relationship between the bishops and the Gilbertine order was a strong one. The four houses found within the diocese of York; Ravenstonedale, York, Malton and Ellerton were all founded before 1203. There appears to have been an early intention to expand the order north of the Humber,

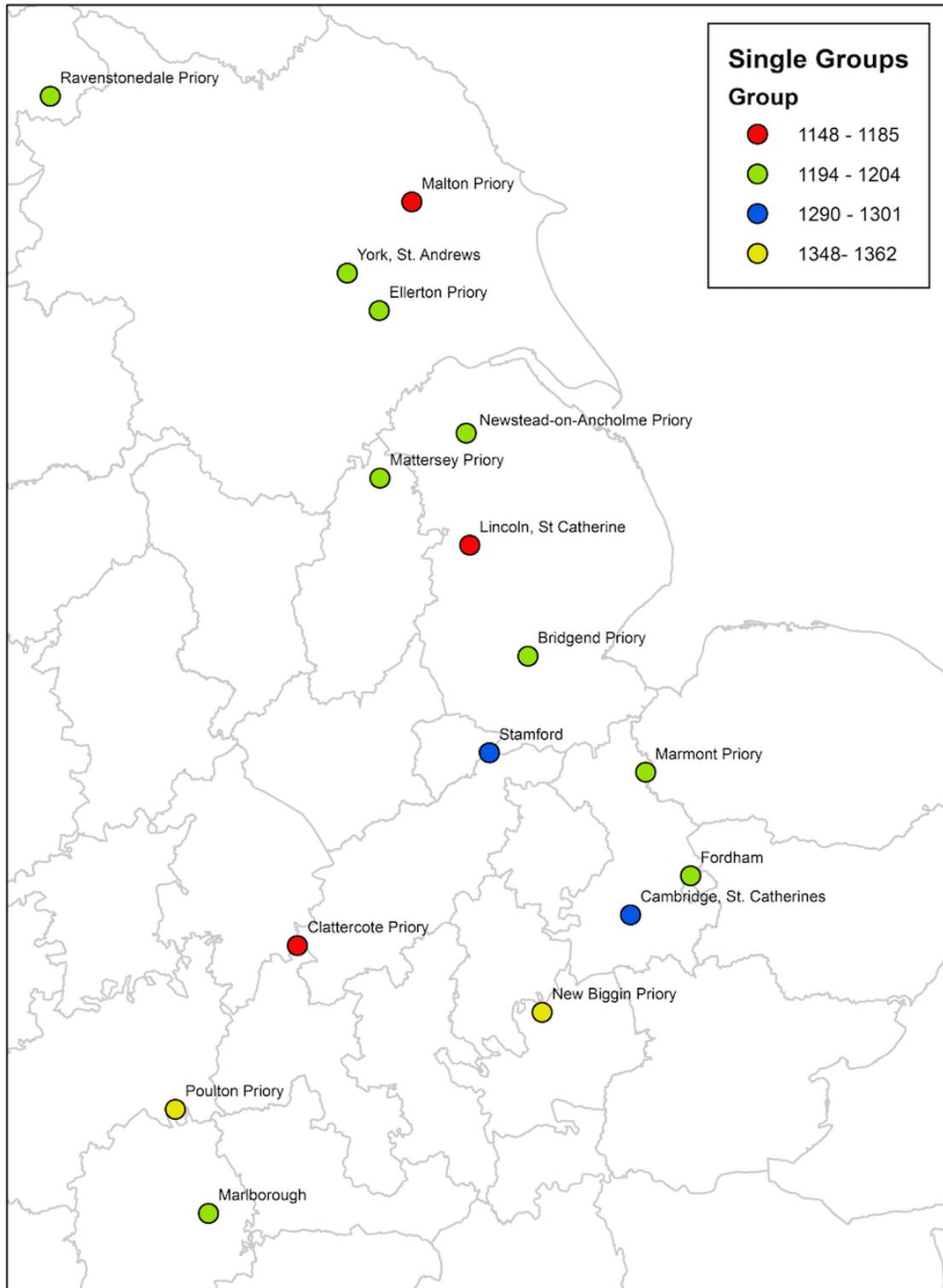


Figure 44 – Map showing group locations of Gilbertine Single Houses in England (produced by author)

however following the failure of Ravenstonedale and the Scottish foundation this attempt seems to have been abandoned.

The majority of houses founded around 1200 follow a similar pattern of establishment. Excluding Ravenstonedale, Clattercote and Marlborough, single houses were founded in and around Lincolnshire and the East Riding. This initial expansion of the order through the foundation of single houses, reflects the distribution of that of the Gilbertine double houses. The single houses are either located close to, or can be directly associated with, the double foundations, such as Bridgend priory which became, and was most likely envisaged to be, little more than a cell of Sempringham (Graham 1906f: 199). As with the Augustinians and Cistercians, foundations of Gilbertine priories were focused across the East of England (Robinson 1980: 22-30). Other than at Ravenstonedale, an effort does not appear to have been made to penetrate west of the Pennines to the north-west of England. Robinson (1980: 17-19) has argued that this was due to the Benedictine tradition of monastic settlement within England – itself relating to pre-Norman land use and politics. For the Gilbertines, a continuation of this trend is not surprising; Lincolnshire was Gilbert's home county and the Bishopric of Lincoln stretched from the Humber down the east coast, to London.

The dates of foundation of houses within Group 2 appear to directly follow the death of St Gilbert. The foundation of the houses at Lincoln, Malton, Clattercote, Newstead and Mathersey would certainly have been sanctioned and overseen by the Gilbert. Gilbert himself would also have heavily influenced the decisions of location, layout and style of the foundations. The priories within Group 2 appear to have been founded shortly after the election of Roger of Malton in 1177, and the sheer number of foundations for which Roger was responsible evidences this shifting focus towards the creation of the single house, rather than double houses favoured by Gilbert. Indeed, in

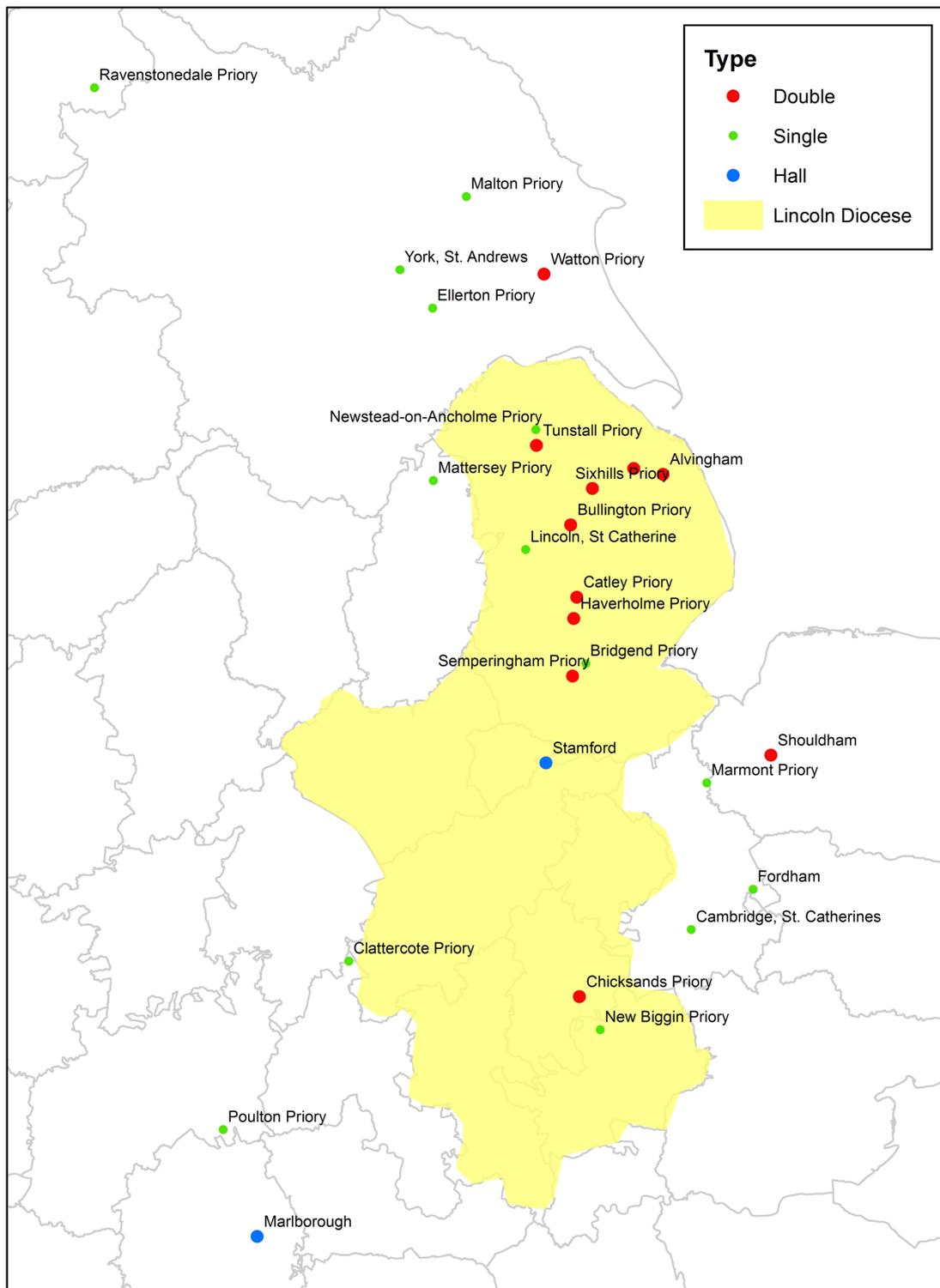


Figure 45 – Map showing Gilbertine houses and the Diocese of Lincoln (produced by author)

the years between 1193 and 1204 Roger was responsible for the formation of seven single houses and only a single double house, at Shouldham in 1193. This increase in

the foundation of the single houses came to an end in 1204, with the creation of the priory at Fordham. This cessation in the foundation of new houses coincides with the end of Roger's term as master of the order and the election of John in 1204 (Graham 1906a: 187). Following this surge, no more new houses would be founded until the two halls of learning in the 1290s and two very poor houses in the mid-fourteenth century.

Archaeology of the Gilbertine Single House

As with the majority of Gilbertine houses, archaeological data from large-scale modern excavation is often lacking for single houses. However, information from antiquarian and small-scale modern excavations, geophysical surveys, and the topographic mapping of earthworks has been utilized to provide plans of the houses. Of the five Gilbertine houses founded before the death of Gilbert (Group 1), complete plans exist for the church and cloisters at Malton and Mattersey, and partial plans can be reconstructed for Clattercote and Newstead. The location of the house at Lincoln is known and some archaeological excavation has taken place, however the overall plan is unclear. Of the seven houses founded in the period during which Roger of Malton was master of the order (Group 2), only York has been subject to modern excavation, and plans can also be reconstructed for Ravenstonedale and Ellerton. The exact locations of Marlborough, Marmont, Bridge End and Fordham are currently unknown, however possible locations are addressed in Chapter 4. The layout of the priory at Hitchin is examined within this chapter as it relates to a distinctly Gilbertine tradition. Archaeological data for the remaining houses founded between 1290 and 1362 will be addressed in Chapter 5, due to the lack of detailed evidence relating to the layout of the cloistral ranges.

Single Houses Founded During the Lifetime of Gilbert (1148 – c.1185 - Group 1)

Malton

St Mary's priory at Malton is located on the southern limit of the village of Old Malton, North Yorkshire. The upstanding monastic church is the only Gilbertine site still currently active as a place of worship. The River Derwent borders the site to the south and east of the priory, and there is little evidence its course has changed dramatically since the medieval period. The priory of St Mary at Malton was founded 1150 by Eustace Fitz John for the Gilbertine canons (Fallow 1913a: 253). Of the three other houses for canons founded within the twelfth century, Malton was of a larger and grander scale than the others. At the time of its foundation, Eustace endowed the priory with the churches of Old Malton, Brompton and Winteringham, and later with those at Langton and Norton. By the Dissolution, the priory had also been endowed with the churches at Walden, Hertfordshire and Morton-In-Galtres and Winterton in Lincolnshire (Jennings 1999: 143).

Of the surviving buildings, the earliest portion is the nave of the church and dates to the twelfth century (NYHER: 2012: 1). The size of the church has been greatly reduced, following the demolition of the northern aisle towards the end of the fifteenth century and the destruction of the southern aisle by fire shortly thereafter (Dennison 2008: ii). In the fifteenth century, at the same time as the size of the church was reduced, a pair of towers were constructed at the western end of the church, of which just one has survived, on the southern side of the eastern facade (figure 46). Only a modest amount is known concerning the post-Dissolution history of the site, however the cloisters of the church were not demolished until as late as 1728 (Purvis 1943c). Abbey House is located close the present-day church, to the south of the site. The house dates

to the seventeenth century and is known to contain a medieval undercroft that likely formed the western half of the southern range (Dennison 2008: ii).



Figure 46 – Western façade of St Mary's church at Old Malton, North Yorkshire (author's photograph)

Little interest was shown in the medieval phase of the priory until the early-twentieth century. A plan purporting to show the layout of the priory and dating to

between 1924 and 1936 is held by the National Monuments Record (NMR AL0265/030/02). This plan (figure 47), shows the church as approximately twice the size of the current structure with the cloistral range to the south. Although it conveys the general outline of the complex, historical research and subsequent excavation shows that this plan is not based on evidence gained by earlier excavation or survey. The plan appears to show a stylised arrangement based on an archetypal design rather than the actual position of the monastic buildings. The arrangement of the eastern end of the church is shown as being almost identical to that found at Foundations abbey. Rather than projecting out from the eastern range, as is found at other Gilbertine establishments, the chapter house at Malton is shown as measuring no more in length than the width of the range (approximately 8-9 metres). It would have been unusual for a well-endowed house such as Malton to have a chapter house of such reduced size. For example, the priory church at Watton is comparable in size to that recorded at Malton, and the chapter house there was almost double the size of that recorded on the undated plan.

Excavations were undertaken on the site between 1942-3 by a local cleric and antiquarian Reverend J. S. Purvis. Work began in October 1942 with the excavation of three small trial trenches. Within the first trench, located to the south of the church, one wall and doorjamb were discovered. Purvis reports that no floor layers were revealed when the deposits were excavated to a depth of six foot (1.8 metres) (Purvis 1942a). Usually it would be reasonable to assume that due to the depth of excavation it is likely that the floors levels within the trench were removed at the time of demolition and that Purvis was excavating below floor level. However, overlying the architectural remains throughout the site was a layer of stone and mortar 3 foot (0.9 metres) in depth. Purvis (1942b) also describes the layer as containing large amounts of window glass and

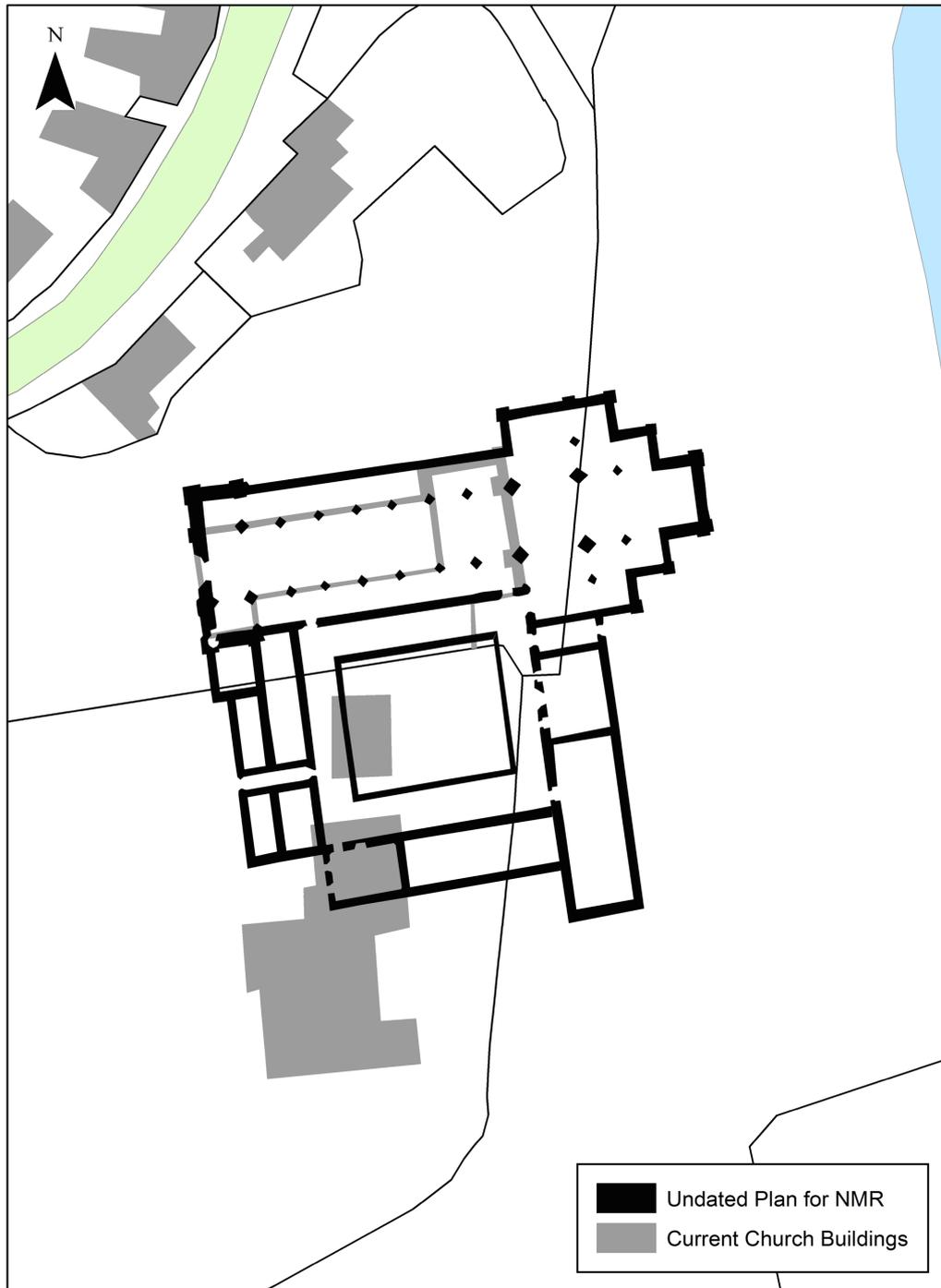


Figure 47 – Transcription of plan dating 1924-1936, showing the layout of Malton priory (after NMR AL0265/030/02).

sculpted stone. This overburden would appear to have represented a demolition layer dating to when the cloistral ranges were finally fully dismantled in 1728 (Purvis 1943c).

To the south-east end of the church two columns, 9 ½ inches (0.24 metres) wide, were excavated in another trial trench. Purvis tentatively identifies this as the molding from the vestibule of the chapter house (Purvis 1942b). According to the article published in the 1943 *Parish News* this hypothesis proved to be correct with the discovery, in an extension of the 1942 trench, of a stone bench running the length of a wall. Due to its position and proximity to the church, it would be unlikely that this wall could have any other function than that of the north wall of the chapter house. Work was then carried out to try to identify the south wall of the chapter house, of which only a rubble core remained (Purvis 1943b). Those areas of the floor exposed within the chapter house had been heavily robbed and were made up of a combination of stone flags and green glazed tiles (Purvis 1943c). Although no detailed drawing exists of the excavation, Purvis produced a ‘sketch plan’ of his interpretation of the layout of the priory. This plan was based on his own excavations and an illustration of the priory following the Dissolution, dating to 1728.

The only other trench referred to by Purvis (1942b) is located to the east of the modern church, between the cemetery and the Derwent. Evidence was found for the current church continuing for some distance in this direction. Large wall foundations were observed to be running on the same line as the existing south wall of the church, and Pevsner (1966: 232) argues that the priory buildings reached all the way south to the bank of the river. This would appear unlikely when considering the 1940’s excavation plan or when superimposing it onto modern mapping (Figure 48).

Despite no records remaining for further excavations, the plan drawn by Purvis and held at the church at Old Malton shows the complete layout of the church and cloistral range (figure 48). It is possible that Purvis was using an unmentioned and unreferenced source to complete his plan of the monastery or reconstructing the house

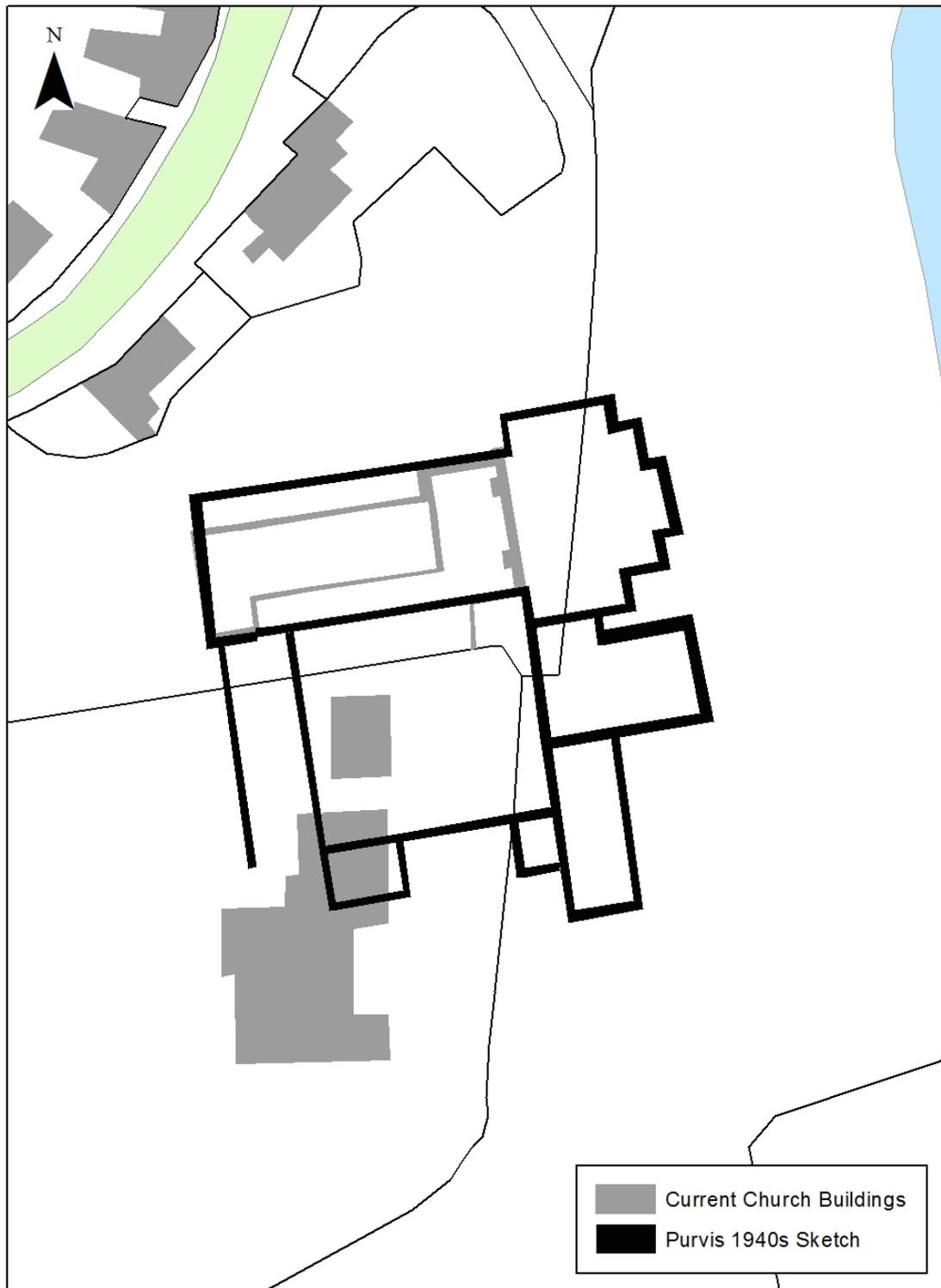


Figure 48 – Transcription of sketch plan of Malton priory produced by Purvis (Purvis 1942b)



Figure 49 – Geophysical resistivity survey to the east of Old Malton church
(Ovenden-Wilson 2001)

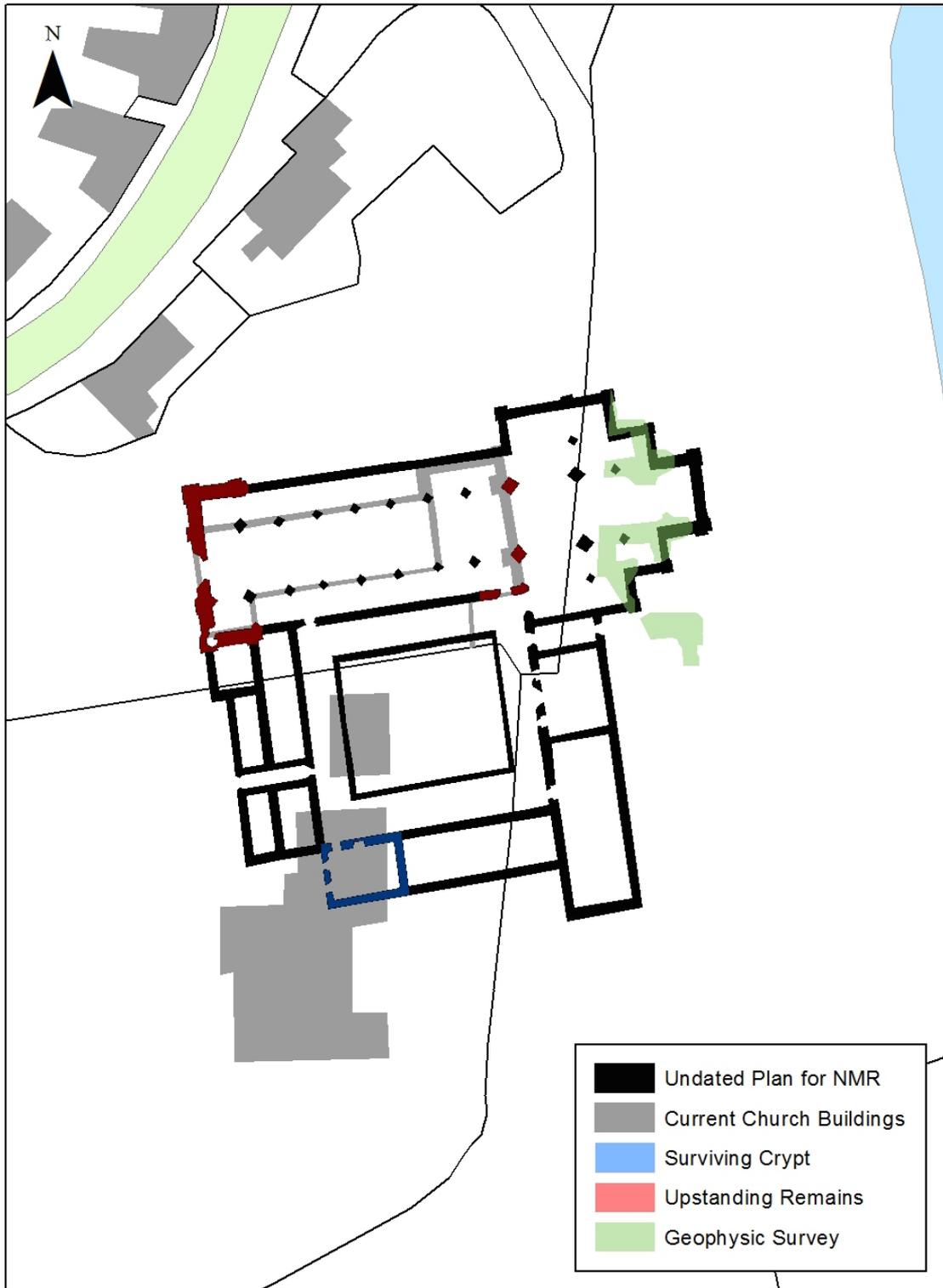


Figure 50 – Transcription of the undated NMR plan of Malton priory, with geophysical interpretation and surviving undercroft overlaid (produced by author)

using guesswork. However, it seems likely that further excavations were undertaken in the 1940s for which the records no longer survive. This seems probable as the plan shows some walls as foundations whilst showing others as extant structures. In addition to this the position of a number of features shown on the plan were confirmed in 2001 following a survey by GSB prospection (Ovenden-Wilson 2001). The resistivity survey shows two high resistance linear anomalies projecting from the east end of the church (figure 49). This matches Purvis report of his excavation between the river and the church. The position of the chapter house is also supported by the geophysical data, but is in contrast to the earlier plan of the buildings found within the National Monuments Record (figure 50). Once again this suggests that the information Purvis used to create his plan was gained from excavation rather than the study of previous sketches or comparison with other monasteries.

It is likely that the veracity of the location and size of the various ranges on the plan produced by Purvis differs between buildings. The size and location of the church at least is known, as the western end can be located by the position of the surviving façade. At the eastern end of the church the bases for two supporting pillars survive indicating that the priory church continued further east than the current building (figure 51). The resistivity survey data show the extent of the church to the east and suggest a slightly shortened version of the church shown on the NMR plan.

Within Group 1, the remains at Mattersey and Malton present the only two surviving examples of Gilbertine churches. However, the church at Malton provides the only known form of the eastern end of the church within Group 1. As will be shown later, this form differs greatly from the priory churches founded under the rule of Roger, as it includes both north and south transepts. In addition to this it is likely that, given its width, the church incorporated north and south aisles. The inclusion of north and

south transepts is not seen at any other Gilbertine churches other than at Watton, and the existence of aisles is not displayed at any other site. The presence of aisles is not possible at double houses, due to the church being split down the centre between the nuns and canons. At the single houses of Mattersey and York both churches are much thinner than Malton and do not allow for aisles.

From the data outlined above it is possible to reconstruct the position of the priory church. The size of the church compared to those at the other Group 1 priories attests to the wealth of the house at Malton. The holdings and income of the priory grew rapidly in the years following its foundation. The number of granges held by Malton rose from three in 1178 to 11 by 1244 (Graham 1904: 139). One of these holdings recorded in the mid-thirteenth century was of 1300 acres (Jennings 1999: 143). As with the other monastic orders in Yorkshire, most of the priory's income came from the sale of wool and it is this trade that accounts for the large annual income (Graham 1904: 152). This business allowed the priory to have an expenditure of over £691 in 1253 (Fallow 1913a: 254).

The accuracy of the position and dimensions of the chapter house that Purvis outlines in his plan appears to be more probable than that shown on the NMR plan. The anomalies shown on the southern edge of the resistivity survey match the position of the north-east corner of the chapter house as suggested by Purvis. The chapter house that Purvis presents is also similar in size and orientation to those seen at the Gilbertine double houses at Watton and Shouldham. However, without further survey or accounts from Purvis, it is impossible to know how much the position of the remainder of the eastern range is supposition or based on reliable data. This is also the case for the eastern portion of the southern range, although the western end of the probable refectory is provided by the position of the undercroft within Abbey House. This undercroft, along



Figure 51 – Transcription of 1940s sketch plan of Malton priory produced by Purvis, with geophysical interpretation and surviving undercroft overlaid (produced by author)

with the position of the church and chapter house provides two opposite corners for the cloister, and thus allows for the width of the cloister to be calculated. As with the size of the church, the cloister at Malton is considerably larger than those

at other Group 1 sites, making it comparable with the larger double houses at Watton, Sempringham and Shouldham.

The lack of detail relayed by Purvis as to the layout of the western range suggests that this area was never excavated. It is likely that Purvis was simply projecting the western range from the western end of the church to the position of the extant undercroft in Abbey House, as well as estimating the position of the western range relative to the church using the 1728 illustration. This illustration shows the remains of the church and cloisters. The viewer is shown the façade of the church and the western wall of the west range looking east.

Clattercote

The site of Clattercote, or St Leonard's priory, lies within the parish of Claydon with Clattercote in Oxfordshire. 6 miles to the north of the town of Banbury, Clattercote occupies the western side of a valley (OS 1882). The farmhouse presently occupying the site consists of a seventeenth-century remodelling of the medieval building with further rebuilding in the late-eighteenth to early-nineteenth centuries, and the addition of a western wing (DoE 1988).

The earliest recorded medieval occupation of the site as a monastic complex was as a leper hospital granted to the Gilbertine order. The date of foundation is calculated from those of the probable founder, Bishop Robert de Chesney, who held office from 1148-66 and is mentioned in the hospitals deed of foundation, and according to this Robert held Clattercote as part the larger manor of Cropredy. The early life of the hospital appears to have been one of relative success with a 1216 papal

confirmation citing ownership of property in Banbury, Little Burton, Appletree, Ratley, Wormleighton and Fenney Compton (Salter 1907: 105).

Very little is known concerning the size, layout and nature of the buildings forming the early leper hospital. However, one account states that the infirmary had the capacity to care for up to 55 patients suggesting that it would have covered a considerable area. The size required for these buildings can be further increased when the number of canons, lay sisters or brethren needed to care for the sick and maintain the site is considered. Sometime between 1246 and 1258 the site ceased to function as a leper hospital, but continued to be occupied by the priory (Salter 1907: 105). It is unknown whether the hospital building(s) were abandoned after the mid-thirteenth century, however it is possible that they would have been downsized to act as an infirmary for the canons.

There has been no large-scale excavation or survey at Clattercote, however a number of interventions have been undertaken in the process of recent building renovation. The first of these took place in 1998 with an analysis of the upstanding architectural remains as well as a watching brief on the installation of a new drainage system carried out by Cotswold Archaeology. The analysis of the architectural remains provided no indication of the Gilbertine leper hospital but did provide confirmation for substantial single-phase medieval remains in the south range of the house. The report records evidence for the south-eastern corner of the cloister and the gable end of the monastic eastern range (figure 52) (Morton 1998: 41). The eastern range would most likely have considered for a vaulted storage room on ground floor level with the canons dormitory above. Directly to the west of the eastern range the location of the southern range was established with a vaulted passage approximately 4 metres wide that would have provided access from the outside into the cloister (Morton 1998: 41). The presence

of the passage within the south range precludes it from being the priory church, supporting the hypothesis of a church to the north of the cloister.



Figure 52 – Photograph of the gable end of the southern end of the east range of Clattercote priory (author's photograph)

The cloister, as well as both of the ranges, would have continued to the north and to the west. A western range would almost certainly about the southern range enclosing the cloister on three sides. The south wall of the church would likely have formed the north side of the cloister, although no evidence was discovered for the remains of the church in the architectural report. Morton does note that, 'Significantly, there is also a slight but distinct drop in ground level in the field to the north of the site on a straight west-east alignment' (Morton 1998: 41). Based on orientation and the fact that the earthwork is parallel to the southern range and at a right angle to the eastern range, Morton suggests that it relates to the northern wall of the church. In addition to

the architectural analysis of Clattercote, Cotswold Archaeology undertook the excavation of a series trial trenches and test pits (figure 53) (Morton 1998: 41).

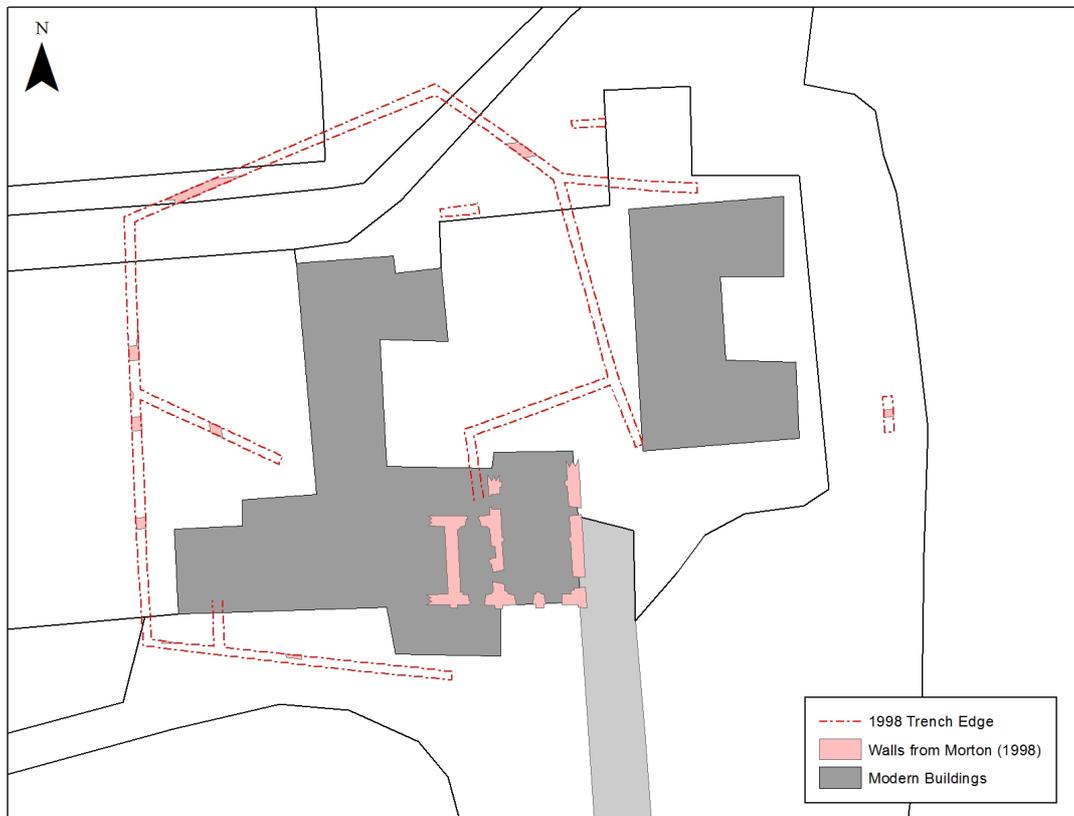


Figure 53 – Plan showing the south-eastern corner of the south and east ranges and archaeological remains of Clattercote priory recorded during trenching (after Morton 1998 and WMFS 2008)

A number of walls were found within the trenches, interestingly the most substantial of these examples were found to the north of the house on an east to west orientation, in the area hypothesised to contain the church (Figure 54). The 1998 excavation provides strong evidence that the medieval priory occupied a large area to the north and west of the current buildings. This is supported by a report on a watching brief undertaken by Warwickshire Museum Field Services in 2008 which records the finding of a number of walls or surfaces of medieval character to the north of the house (WMFS 2008: 10).

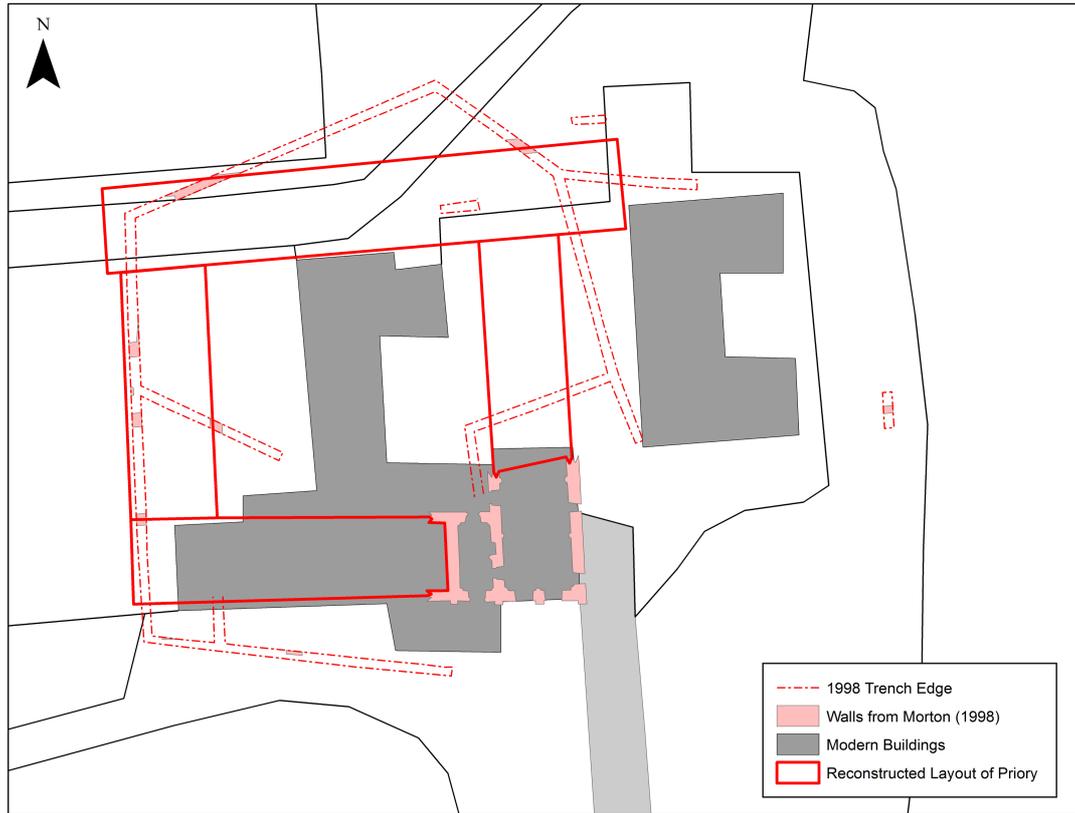


Figure 54 – Hypothesised location of church and cloistral ranges at Clattercote (after Morton 1998 and WMFS 2008)

Geophysical survey carried out by the author in 2012 also supports this suggestion (figure 55 & 56). The survey revealed an area of high resistance to the north of the current house, and these anomalies most likely suggest the presence of a demolished building to the north of the location of the cloister. Given its position relative to the cloister the most likely building to occupy this position is the church. In addition, survey to the south house also supports the suggestion of a northern church, as it did not reveal the remains of any buildings. Survey of the area to the west of the house discovered the presence of two high resistance linear anomalies thought to indicate the position of the north-south running walls of the west range. This also strengthens the argument for the reconstructed layout of the priory.



Figure 55 – Geophysical survey carried out by the author at Clattercote priory (Townend 2012)

Using the available data, it is possible to reconstruct the layout and relative position of the cloistral ranges of the priory. The data does not provide enough detailed to grant an idea of the position or specific dimensions of rooms or their functions. However, comparisons between Clattercote and other Group 1 sites can be made on the macro scale. Based on the size of the cloister, the scale of the cloistral complex at Clattercote can be said to have been similar in size to that at Malton. This is not surprising as both Clattercote and Malton were two of the three early single houses founded whilst the order was rapidly expanding.



Figure 56 – Layout of Clattercote priory combined with geophysical (Townend 2012)

Newstead-on-Ancholme

The site of Newstead-on-Ancholme priory lies 2 miles to the south of the town of Brigg within the parish of Cadney in Lincolnshire. The site is located less than 4 miles from the Gilbertine double house of Tunstall near the village of Little Redbourne. The priory is sited on the northern side of the small Isle of Rucholme (figure 57), which is around 400 metres wide east to west and under 1 kilometre in length (Instone 1998). The priory would have been six metres above sea level, approximately 3-4 metres above the surrounding landscape. The site is currently occupied by Newstead priory Farm, which overlies the site of the original monastic buildings (Ordnance Survey 2012).

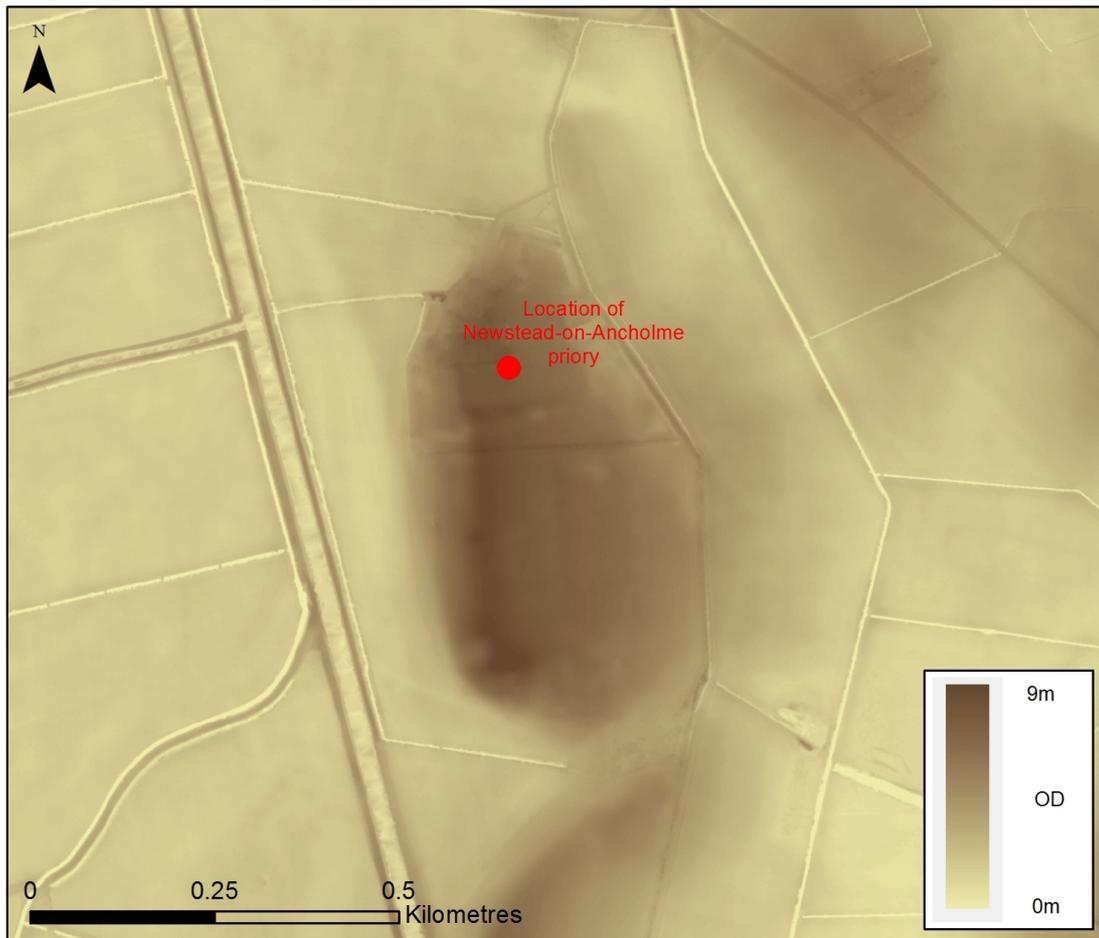


Figure 57 – LiDAR survey of Newstead-on-Ancholme on the Isle of Rucholme (Environment Agency 2017)

The house at Newstead-on-Ancholme, uniquely for the Gilbertines, was dedicated to the Holy Trinity. The priory was established between 1163 and 1171 (Golding 1995: 223), and was one of two Gilbertine houses founded by Henry II. The priory was granted land at Cadney and Hardwick and was valued at £17 on its foundation. The occupancy of Newstead was limited by the order to 13 canons and lay brethren (Dugdale 1655: xcvi). The imposition of these limitations appears to be part of a common system within medieval monastic orders to ensure that the number of canons did not exceed the resources of the house and have to be supported by the larger, wealthier priories.

The ground floor of Newstead priory Farm contains the remains of the vaulted undercroft (figure 58) of the chapter house or refectory of the medieval priory (Pevsner 1964: 322). Recent survey has confirmed the authenticity of the twelfth or thirteenth-century origins of the farmhouse (North Lincolnshire Council 2004: 3). In addition to these *in situ* masonry remains, reused medieval material has been recorded within the fabric of the surrounding farm buildings (Atkin 2000).

The situation of Newstead-on-Ancholme priory on the Isle of Rucholme can be compared with that of Thornholme priory nine kilometres to the north-west, which was also located on an 'island' 3-4 metres higher than the surrounding land. Excavated in the 1970s, results from Thornholme revealed that the ground surface had been artificially raised in the post-medieval period (Instone: 1998). It is possible that this is also the case at Newstead as the floor level within the surviving medieval room is over 1 metre below the level of current ground surface. This could explain the lack of archaeological data relating to the medieval phases of the site due to the remains being masked by the deposition of material to protect against the patterns of flooding that are common to Lincolnshire.

A number of recent archaeological interventions have taken place on the site of Newstead-on-Ancholme priory, although none of these investigations have revealed any archaeological evidence concerning the medieval priory. The most relevant of these studies is the excavation of an area to the south-west of the modern farm buildings. The evaluation trench stretched the entire length of the eastern edge of the building containing the remains of the medieval priory (YAT 2001: 8). No structural remains were encountered within this trench suggesting that any continuation of the cloisters was to the west of the house. Given this orientation it is therefore likely that the vaulted

room within the house relates to the eastern range of the cloister and the chapter house or the canons' dormitory.



Figure 58 – Photo showing the vaulting within the current building (photograph by author)

Mattersey

The priory of Mattersey is located within the district of Bassetlaw in Nottinghamshire, approximately 1 kilometre east from Mattersey village. The site is situated on the Isle of Mattersey and bordered to the east by the River Idle. It is likely that at the time of the foundation of the monastery the site would originally have been surrounded by low-lying marshland similar to the surrounding area (Charlton 1972: 4). The house at Mattersey was established and dedicated to St Helen about the year 1185 by Roger, son of Ranulph de Mattersey. The establishment appears small when compared to other Gilbertine houses within Group 1, and the houses founded at Lincoln, Malton and Clattercote can be seen to be significantly grander and of a larger scale. Mattersey priory was intended to quarter only six canons and was limited to the enrolment of 10 lay brothers (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 198).

Mattersey displays some of the best surviving upstanding masonry for a Gilbertine priory (figures 59 & 60). The priory passed into the guardianship of the Commissioners of Works in 1912, and during the subsequent three years the site was cleared and the upstanding remains repaired. The academic culmination of this work was a report in the 1930 *Archaeological Journal* by C. R. Peers containing a brief outline of the phasing of the site accompanied by a plan (figure 61).

Peers reported that the layout of the priory was typical of the medieval monastic house, consisting of a cloister bounded on the north by the church and surrounded on remaining east, west and south sides by three ranges. The church was aisleless and no evidence was found of the internal divisions or for the east wall. It was noted by Peers that at the east end of the church the walls appeared to thin considerably and were not buttressed (Peers 1930: 18). Peers suggests that the church may not have been rebuilt

after a fire on the site in 1279 and that over the top of the ruined north wall lies the remains of a buttress and the south wall of a tower. This would make the tower later than the original church and Peers suggests a fifteenth-century date, however presents no other evidence to substantiate this possibility (Peers 1930: 19).

The eastern range was observed to have been subdivided with the northern portion containing two altar bases. Peers took this in combination with the evidence from the church to indicate that the chapel in the east range served as the principal centre of worship following 1279 (Peers 1930: 19). However, the grant placing the priory into the possession of Anthony Neville in the sixteenth century mentioned both a church and steeple as part of the holding that was purchased following the suppression (Gairdner & Brodie 1895: 219). This would imply that the church was rebuilt and placed back into active use following the fire, supported by a grant in 1402 from the Papacy to help repair the church (Peers 1930: 19).

It is possible that this improvised chapel served as a temporary substitute for the church during rebuilding. Peers (1930: 19) notes the lack of a chapter house in the east range (the usual location for such a building) and it is possible that the former function of the converted chapel was that of a chapter house. This would seem the most likely choice, as the chapter house would be, following the church, the most important space within the priory and therefore the most fitting to become an area of worship.

An independent study in 1993 by Gerry Campion outlined several new interpretations and provided some new evidence for the existence of a phase of rebuilding. Campion identified a soil mark from aerial photography to the north of the southern wall of the church (figure 62). The original aerial photograph from which Campion transcribed the crop mark is no longer available, however parch marks can be seen on modern aerial photography (figure 63).



Figure 59 – Photograph of the west range and kitchen at Mattersey priory (photograph by author)



Figure 60 – Photograph of the north transept and 'tower' at Mattersey priory (photograph by author)

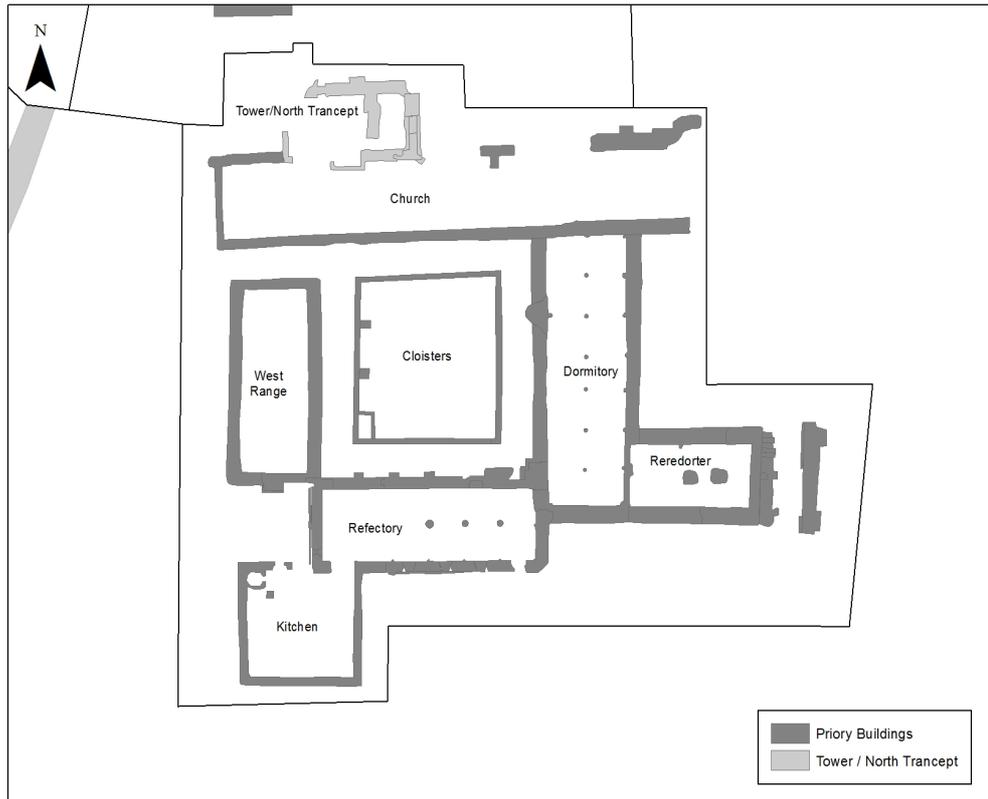


Figure 61 – Transcribed plan of excavation by Peers at Mattersey priory (after Peers 1930)

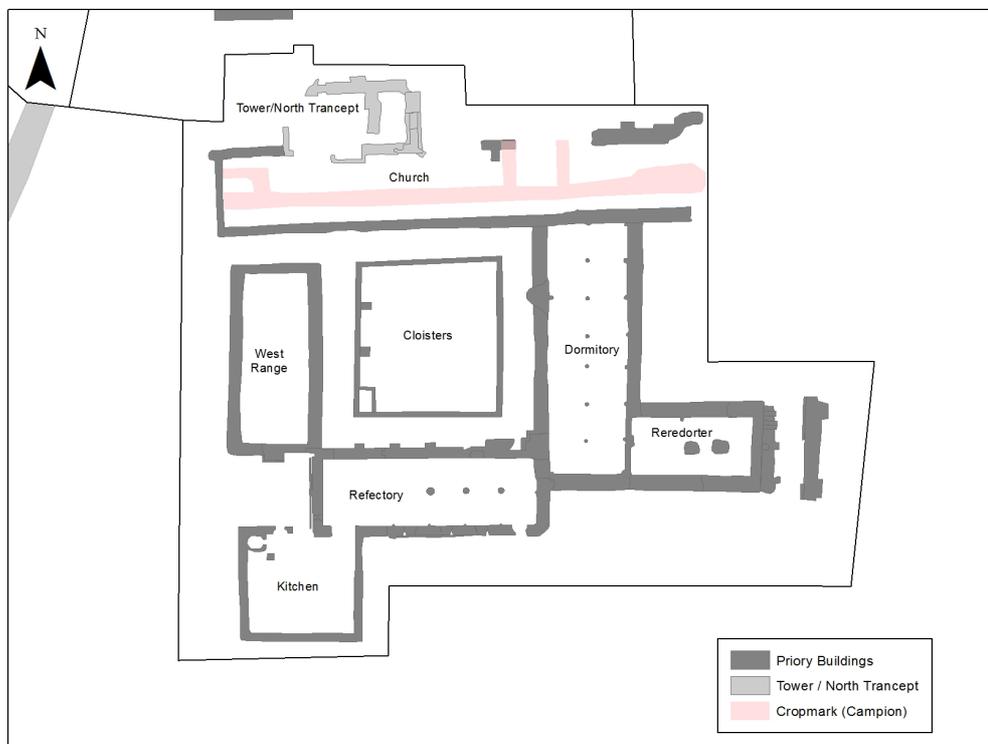


Figure 62 – Transcribed plan of parch mark in Mattersey priory church from earlier aerial photographs (after Campion 1993)



Figure 63 – Aerial image of Mattersey priory detailing parch mark in the church (by author)

The parch mark shows an east-west wall running approximately 1-2 metres to the north of the south wall of the church. It was thought by Campion (1993: 5) that this wall represents the first phase of the church before its destruction by fire. Two further parch marks were observed within the church running north-south within the eastern end of the church. These most likely represent internal divisions relating to the presbytery and high-altar, with the most easterly possibly being the remains of a chapel (Campion 1993: 4). This evidence for a wholesale rebuilding of the church following the fire provides two distinct phases of church (figure 64).

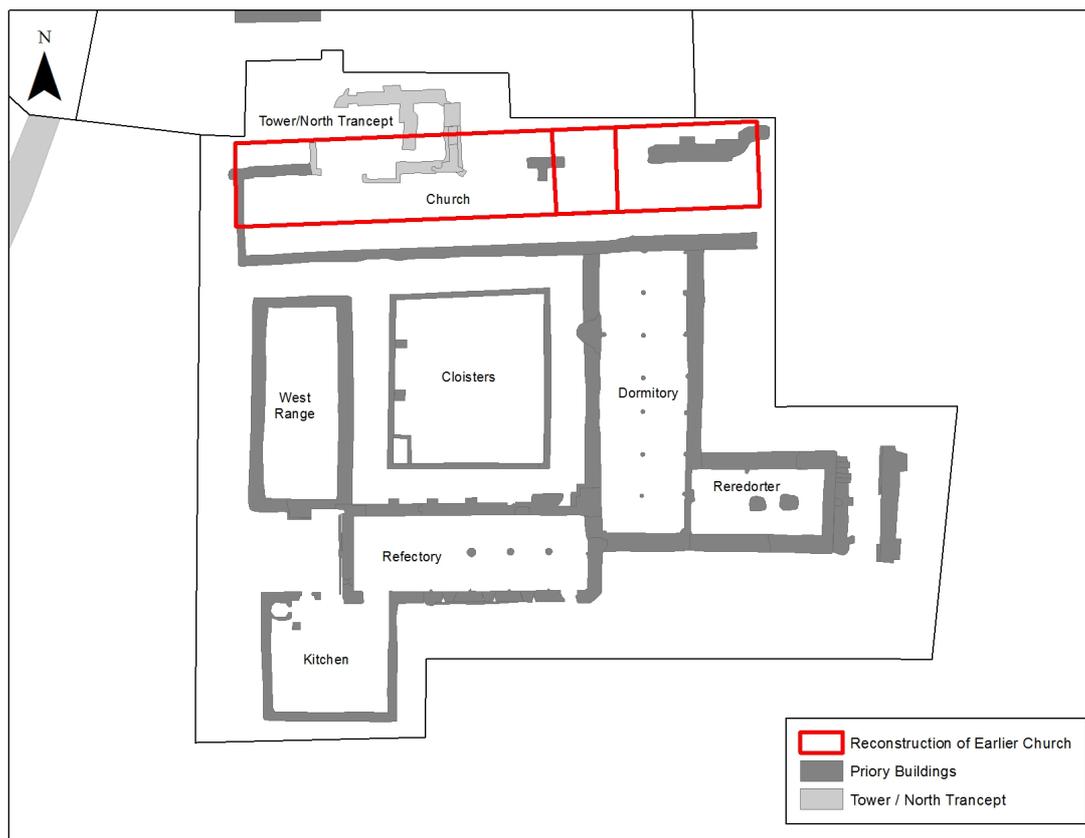


Figure 64 – Reconstruction of first phase church at Mattersey, based on parch marks (produced by author)

Within the typical monastic layout, the canons' dormitory should be located on the upper floor of the eastern range and the position of the reredorter as a range jointed onto the south-east half of the range confirms this. Peers (1930: 19) identifies a problem with the location of the reredorter noting that the level of the contemporary River Idle is markedly lower than would be required to flush the drain or to feed a channel to provide the same function. However, as outlined above, it is likely that the water level and the river were substantially higher in the medieval period and that the priory would have stood on an island surrounded by marsh (see the later chapter on the Gilbertine Precinct for further discussion). Peers relates little concerning the western range of the cloister other than to give its dimensions and to state that only foundations remain extant.

The southern range was dated by Peers (1930: 20) to the end of the thirteenth century, after the fire that destroyed the church. Nevertheless, it is uncertain what this dating was based upon and a thirteenth-century date, pre-dating the fire, cannot be ruled out. The insertion of three windows into the south wall and the division of the lower level of the range into four separate compartments gives indication of a change in function. The upper level of the south range is the typical setting for the refectory, and it is possible that following the destruction by the fire in 1279, the lower level (probably formerly a storage area) was redesigned. The insertion of windows and the division of internal space may have combined the function of the lower level into both storage area and refectory. To support this there is a kitchen built onto the south-west corner and post-dating the southern range.

The reduction in the size of south range fits well with the historical evidence for a decline in fortune of the order and the decrease in the number of canons, ultimately to just four and the prior at the Dissolution. The cost of rebuilding the church would have hindered the reconstruction of the south range and a more economical conversion may have been seen as a preferable option. The one aspect of the site that appears to oppose the hypothesis of decline is the existence of the tower to the north of the church identified by Peers as dating to the fifteenth century and post-dating the rebuilding of the church. This late date suggests an increase, if only temporarily in the wealth of the house. The construction of the tower can possibly be associated with the 1402 papal grant to improve the church. A soil mark identified by Campion (1993: 7) may relate to a north-south wall lining up with the east wall of the tower and representing a shortening of the second phase church. This would also explain the thinning of the church walls and the lack of any wall towards the east end as building stone was reused in the construction of the tower.

The form of the buildings at Mattersey is very different to that recorded at Malton. The church lacks an aisle to either the north or the south and there is no evidence of transepts on either side. The relatively small size of the monastery makes it the smallest within Group 1. It is more comparable in size to the Group 2 foundations at York and Ravenstonedale than to the early-twelfth-century priories at Malton, Clattercote and Ellerton.

Group 1 Summary

Of the houses considered above, none suggest a unique style of layout or form distinct to the Gilbertines. The priory church at Malton is very similar in form to Cistercian examples found at Coombe and Roche, and this is unsurprising as at the time of foundation Gilbert appears to have been looking to the Cistercian order for inspiration. The foundations seem to share no similarities with the double houses founded around the same time. Between 1148 and the end of 1150s there was little in the way of examples of Gilbertine priories from which to draw inspiration. In contrast to the examples given below, all of the evidence suggests that these early foundations had their priory churches to the north of the cloistral ranges in the style usually employed by other orders in this period.

The first two single foundations were similar in that they were both sited on the edge of existing settlements, at Malton no effort appears to have been made to distance the foundation from the town. The third foundation at Clattercote, although more rural in nature, was located less than 6 miles from Banbury. The houses founded under the stewardship of Gilbert between 1148 and c.1185 represent the richest of the single houses at foundation, and the size of the foundations reflects this high valuation. This

is especially true of the three earliest single houses at Lincoln, Malton and Clattercote; in addition to being larger foundations, these houses appear to have begun with the primary function of caring for the sick through the presence of hospitals on the sites, and this function probably explains their proximity to urban centres. Within Group 2, only Ellerton has evidence for the existence of a hospital on the site (Golding 1995: 220).

There is no evidence for the presence of hospitals at the foundations at Mattersey and Newstead. This is not the only difference between these slightly later foundations and the first three, as the houses at Mattersey and Newstead are significantly smaller in size than the earlier examples. Although they still display southern cloisters, the church at Mattersey was modelled after the long, thin churches of the double houses. This is a reflection of the reduced value of these later houses following their smaller foundation grants. Furthermore, they are also rural in location, perhaps accounting for the smaller size of the church at Mattersey and the diminished size of the house at Newstead.

Single Houses Founded During the Mastership of Roger of Malton (1194-1204 - Group 2)

York

The Gilbertine priory at York was located in the medieval suburb of Fishergate, outside of the medieval core of the city. Other than the house at Lincoln, the house at York was the only Gilbertine priory to be founded within an urban centre. Hugh Murdac, Archdeacon of Cleveland, gave the church of St Andrew and the surrounding land for the foundation of the priory around 1200 (Dugdale 1655: 966), and as with

other Gilbertine single houses the grant was intended for the upkeep of 12 canons, including the prior. The buildings of the priory adjoined those of the Benedictine nuns of St Clement (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 199), although there is no evidence that the canons at St Andrew's took any responsibility for the religious instruction of the nuns. Indeed, all of the income for the priory appears to have been temporal with no evidence of *spiritualia*. Other than the details of the priory's foundation, little documentary evidence survives for the history of the priory, Golding (1995: 246) goes as far as to identify St Andrew's as one of the least documented of all the Gilbertine houses.

The priory at York is the only Gilbertine house to have benefited from modern excavation, undertaken by the York Archaeological Trust between 1985-6, in advance of redevelopment (Kemp 1996). The excavation revealed the plan of the eastern three quarters of the priory and a number of phases were successfully identified and dated (figure 65), the western portion of the site having been destroyed by the construction of a factory (Graves 2000: 362). The original buildings of the priory (1200-1300) consisted of an aisleless cruciform church, with north and south transepts. These transepts were remarkably thin, with an internal width of less than four metres (Kemp 1996: 123). To the north of the church was a cloister garth surrounded on all sides by walk. On the eastern side of the cloister and built directly against the north transept of the church was the chapter house, with a possible western vestibule (Graves 2000: 362). The discovery of artefacts associated with manuscripts within the northern portion of the east range suggests that this area had the function of library (Kemp 1996: 132). Above this room and the chapter house would have been the canons' dormitory. To the north of the dormitory was a small room that would have served the function of the canons' latrine, probably at first floor level.

The north range of the cloister consisted of the refectory at first floor level and a storage area below, and the undercroft was divided up into three rooms, each containing two bays. The presence of a fireplace within the central room suggests that this was the location of the canons' warming room. This series of rooms appears not to have been vaulted, but instead had pads for posts, supporting a timber floor above (Kemp 1996: 131). The destruction of the western range is unfortunate as its function at Gilbertine sites (and other monastic sites), although usually explained as the lay brothers' or sisters' dormitory is often hard to prove. Following its initial construction, the church and cloisters underwent small modifications sometime between the late-thirteenth and early-fourteenth century. These included burials and subsequent levelling within the church and the rebuilding of the arcade surrounding the cloister.

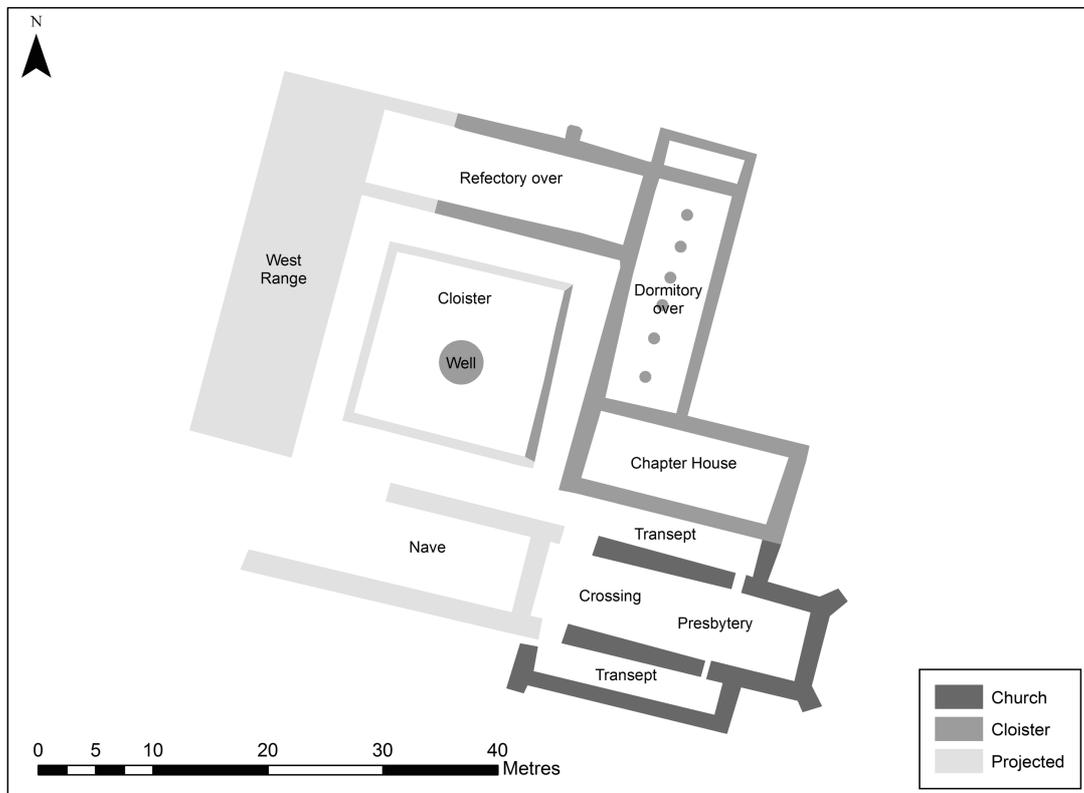


Figure 65 – Plan of the layout of the earliest phase of the St Andrew's priory, c. 1200-1300 (after Kemp 1996)

The excavation also identified a much larger programme of reconstruction in the early- to mid-fourteenth century (figure 66) (Graves 2000: 362), and this phase of works affected most parts of the priory. Following this major phase of reconstruction, the priory continued to undergo alterations throughout the following centuries until its dissolution in 1538 (Graves 2000: 365). The first of these alterations saw the majority of the eastern portion of the church demolished, and the north and the south walls of the transepts were saved and incorporated into the north and south walls of the new church, which was widened and shortened at the east end. Much of this work was done using reused Roman stone unlike the original build, which had used freshly quarried limestone (Kemp 1996: 180). Kemp (1996: 181) notes that the floor space of the first phase was reduced by 45%, and posits that the decreased need for space was a result of the shrinking needs of the community. This explanation is probable, as by 1380-1 there were only three canons and the prior recorded at the priory (Graham 1903: 194).

The east range of the priory also saw a reduction in size of approximately 58% (ibid: 187). The width of the original range was reduced and a series partition walls constructed to divide up the range. A garderobe was added to the east side of the building and the latrine to the north was demolished. The earlier chapter house had been incorporated into the range, and the southernmost partition on the east range now possibly served as the new chapter house (ibid: 188). Changes within the northern range of the priory also included an increase in the number of divisions at ground level. Kemp (1996: 189) argues that this may have reflected a change in function to that of a kitchen and refectory at ground floor level with the dormitory above. These changes in function and their significance will be looked at in Chapter 5.

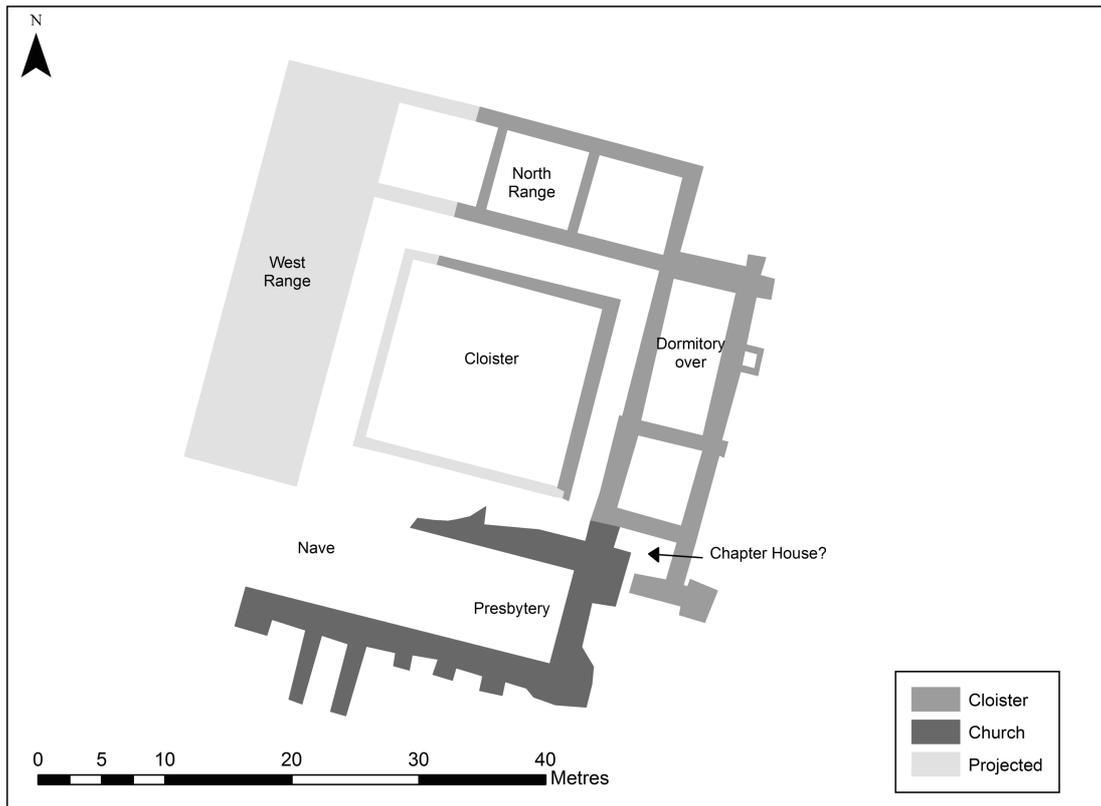


Figure 66 – Plan of the layout of the early- to mid-fourteenth-century reconstruction of St Andrew’s priory (after Kemp 1996)

The house at York began as a compact example of the Gilbertine single house. This may have been due its urban setting and it is unknown as to what limitations of space the planners had during the initial construction. The size of the house is not surprising, as Knowles and Hadcock (1971: 199), and Golding (1995: 246) agree that although the original foundation intended for the appointment of 12 canons within the priory, it is likely that far fewer would have actually been established. As at Hitchin, evidence was found for a well inside of the priory suggesting the need for a local water supply, again due to the urban nature of the site. The later downsizing of the monastery can be seen as a direct response to the decline of the fortunes of the order, and indeed most monastic orders, during the fourteenth century.

Ravenstonedale

The village of Ravenstonedale is located within the parish of Eden, Cumbria. The site lies on the confluence of Stone Gill and Scandal Beck within the area of Ravenstone Common. The site of the Gilbertine priory adjoins the current site of the eighteenth-century church of St Oswald. The priory stands 10 metres from the course of Scandal Beck within the churchyard. In the late-seventeenth-century remains of the Gilbertine buildings were still visible, as Machell, writing 1681, stated:

‘...on the north corner [of the church] has been a large quadrangle, the inner court being twenty yards square, as may be seen by the ruins, and the breadth of the rooms about six or seven yards, with vaults underneath them...’ (cited in Frankland 1929: 280).

This description appears to illustrate the traditional monastic layout, complete with cloister surrounded by ranges with the church on the south side. There is a discrepancy within the historical accounts as to the size and nature of the site; namely whether it is a cell or small priory. A number of excavations over the last 80 years, in conjunction with the historical data may make it possible to provide a more definitive answer.

The first recorded excavation at the site took place in 1928-9 by Edward Percy Frankland and William Potter. The excavation was characteristic of the time and entailed the clearance of overburden along the lines of walls and the production of a measured site plan. Little importance was given to stratigraphic relationships or the association of artefacts with individual layers or deposits. Frankland was working with two assumptions. The first was that the main body of the eighteenth-century church, rebuilt between 1738 and 1744 was located, ‘more or less upon the lines of the old

building' (Frankland 1929: 281). He based this on the fact that no reconsecration was granted following the rebuilding so it was likely that the footprint of the new church was similar if not identical to the old. The second assumption was based on the contracts associated with the eighteenth-century rebuilding of the church. From these Frankland inferred that the medieval tower of the church was located on the north side rather than at the west end. These theories very much informed what was recorded during the 1928-9 excavations. Consequently, the plan published in 1929 (figure 67), following the 1928 season shows a tower base directly to the north of the east end of the church that appears to form the southern half of a range projecting north (Frankland 1929: 283).

This tower is less pronounced on the final plan published in 1930 which shows the north-south range extending approximately twice as far as was depicted in 1929, with a building projecting off to the east on a slightly different alignment. Following the description by Machell, Frankland also postulated in his final plan that the excavated remains formed the eastern limit of the cloistral range. This hypothesis is supported by the remains of two parallel walls running east to west that emanate from the western side of the northern end of the east range (Frankland 1930: 144). The lack of stone by stone recording by Frankland is problematic when reinterpreting his plans; subsequent excavations in 1989 and 1992 have led to more reliable reconstructions that fit better with the available evidence.

The transfer to the Gilbertines of the land holding at Ravenstonedale include a pre-existing church rather than virgin land on which to establish a new foundation. Turnbull & Walsh (1992: 69) make the point that it was most common for burials to be located on the south side of the church and that this may explain the relocation of the monastic buildings to the north. There are other examples of this change in orientation such as at Tintern abbey in Wales and Chester Cathedral; where the practice appears to

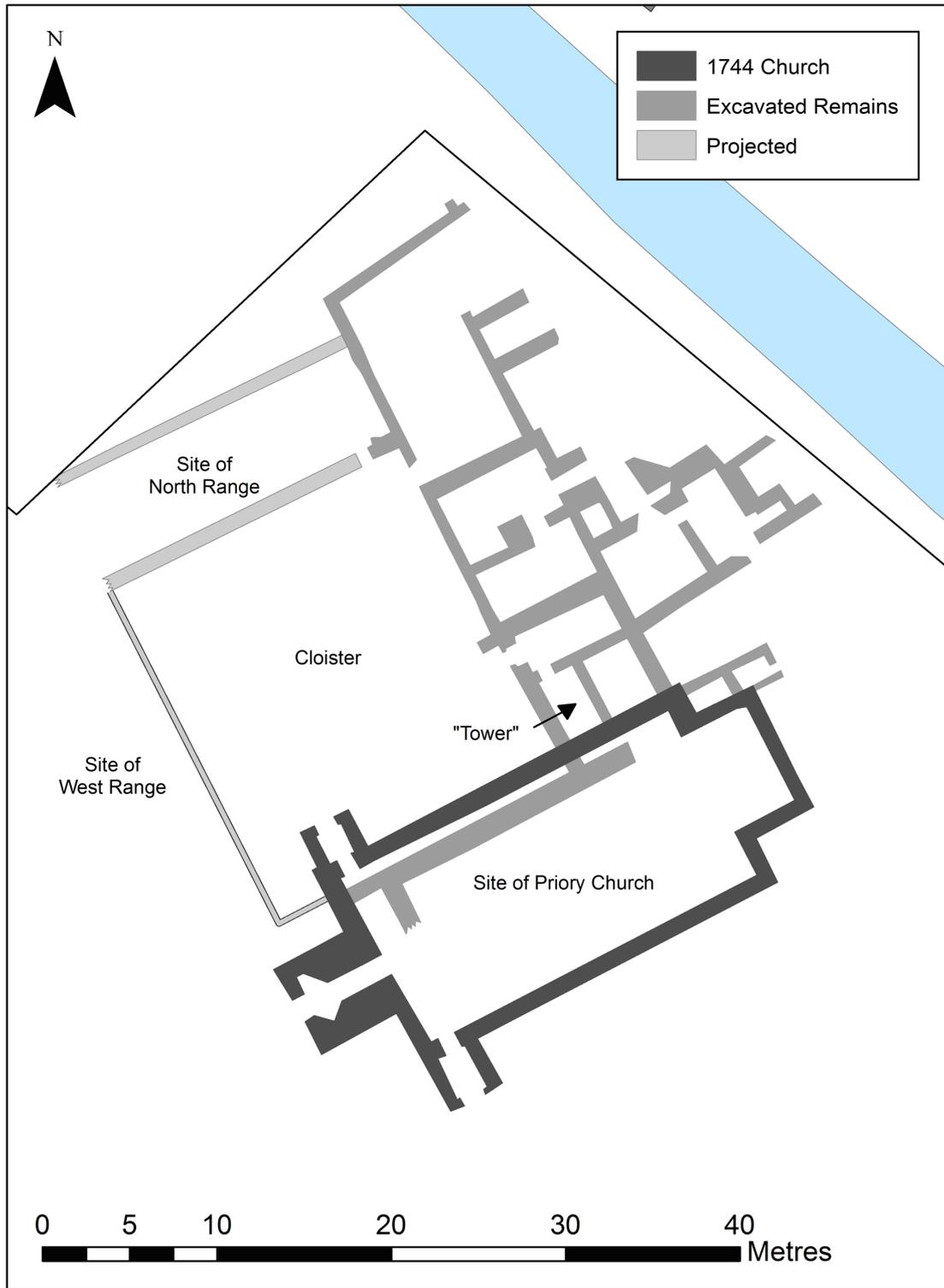


Figure 67 – Frankland’s 1929 published plan of Ravenstonedale (Frankland 1929)

be driven by practicality rather than by any kind of religious motivation. However, given that all the Group 2 houses for which evidence of cloister orientation exist have a northern cloister, it is more likely that this was a specific decision made by the order, the reasons for which will be addressed further in this chapter.

The site was re-excavated in 1989-80 by Philip Blackburn with a brief to clear away the overburden that had accumulated since 1930 and reconsolidate unstable wall remains. Blackburn considered that the building to the north of the church might not have formed the eastern range to a monastic complex, but may have existed in isolation as the first phase of a much smaller site. He theorized that it consisted of a single range of rooms with the later addition of the small eastern range on a slightly different alignment, representing the dwindling fortunes of the order and thus interpreted the inner divisions of the range as resulting from seventeenth-century occupation and redevelopment of the original medieval building (Blackburn 1989: 9-11). However, this argument does not seem to take into account Machell's description of a large court or the remnants of walls to the west of the main buildings (the supposed remains of a northern range) identified by Frankland.

The most recent, and most probable hypothesis has been put forward by Turnbull and Walsh (1992: 67-76) following a revaluation of the available evidence, and some small scale measured survey of the upstanding remains. Despite the problems encountered by the removal of floor levels by Frankland down to the natural substrate, Turnbull and Walsh created a three-phase plan of the remains (figure 68). They relied on the differences in construction style and the identification of faced walls to put forward an argument that appears (in the first two phases at least) to fit with the existing data. First, the pair rejected Frankland's idea that the remains directly to the north of the church represented a tower and followed the argument that the upstanding masonry

typifies the eastern range of the traditional small cloistered monastery (Turnbull & Walsh 1992: 70). The size of the suggested cloister would be comparable with that found at other small Gilbertine sites such as Mattersey (approximately 20 metres corner to corner).

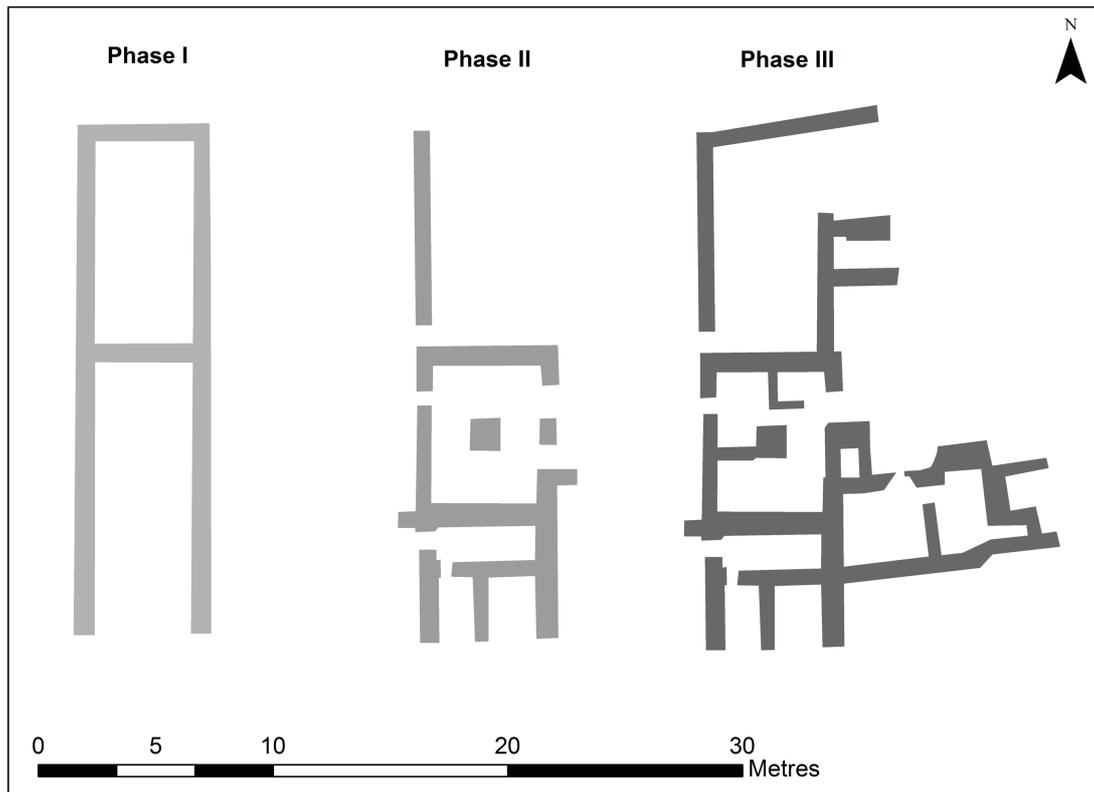


Figure 68 – Three phases of the east range at Ravenstonedale (after Turnbull & Walsh 1992)

This traditional cloistered layout with north and west ranges forms the first phase of the building. It was accepted that the original church was located on the same orientation as the modern one, but following Frankland (1930: 145) was set back 2-3 metres to the south. It would seem likely, when compared to other Gilbertine sites, that this long eastern range served as storage area with the canons' dormitory above. Turnbull and Walsh, and Frankland all comment that the scale of the original house

appears oddly bold when compared to the nature of the historic evidence for those years following its establishment. However, this pattern is visible at the small Gilbertine monastery of Mattersey, Lincolnshire, of a similar scale to that at Ravenstonedale, which was only ever meant to house six canons and declined in fortune greatly after an ambitious foundation (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 198).

Stone mouldings dating to the late-thirteenth or early-fourteenth century indicate a drastic remodelling of the eastern range (phase II), during which the bays within the eastern range are split into separate rooms (Turnbull & Walsh 1992: 73). Turnbull and Walsh (1992: 74) attribute the third and final phase of the buildings to a long and protracted series of piecemeal extensions, rebuilding and reorganizations. The most obvious of these is the extension to the east of what appears to be a service range containing a fireplace and a flagged yard. This structure, and the changes dated to phase III, were thought to have taken place in the post-medieval period due to the fact that a medieval burial was discovered underneath the floor of the eastern service extension (Turnbull & Walsh 1992: 75). However, there does not appear to be any diagnostic stonework or datable artefacts such as pottery or glass to support this assumption. Indeed, it is not uncommon for medieval burials to be discovered underneath medieval floors, especially within special areas such as monasteries or religious houses. This would be even more likely if one of the divisions within the eastern range acted as the chapter house, as it was common for the higher-ranking member of the order to be placed there. It is also worth noting that Fothergill writing 1677 and Machell writing 1681 make no account of any structures being in use and refer to the buildings as ruins.

The later evolution of the eastern range at Ravenstonedale will be further addressed in Chapter 5, however it would seem much more probable that the piecemeal rebuilding and small-scale extension of the property was a result of the downsizing of

the phase I monastic house, and possibly an increased secularisation of the site into an administrative centre rather than an overtly religious one (Hughes 2001: 8). There is also the practical aspect of the remodelling, and it is possible that the changes were a direct outcome of the need for a new service range following the abandonment (whether completed or not) of the northern and western ranges.

The theory that the principal plan for the house was ambitious in scale is substantiated by data from a resistivity survey undertaken in 1986 (Hease 1986). The position of boundary wall on the north side of the priory does suggest that a north range was at least planned, and space accounted for it. This data, and the size of the monastic precinct will be addressed in a later chapter. Given the evidence from excavation and survey, it seems likely that Ravenstonedale, although poor, was a conventionally-sized monastery, rather than a single range attached to a church. The scale of the priory was still relatively small when compared to the richer houses at Malton and Clattercote, and the cloister size appears to have reflected not only the initial value of the monastery at foundation but also the fortunes of the priories throughout their lifetimes.

Ellerton

The priory of Ellerton on Spalding Moor lies to the west of the village of Ellerton in the East Riding of Yorkshire. The house is 15 miles to the south of York and the site of St Andrew's priory and 30 miles to the south-west of Old Malton and the priory of St Mary. The site is bordered to the west by the River Derwent and is currently grazing land. Little historical information exists concerning the priory and to date the site has not been excavated.

The house at Ellerton was founded at the beginning of the thirteenth century, probably around 1209, when the priory was established by William Fitz Peter as a hospital for the care of 13 poor persons (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 198). Ellerton received landholdings from Alan of Wilton at Holme on the Wolds and Habton, near Malton (Dugdale 1655: 918). At around 1250 Peter, the son of Peter de Mauley, confirmed the gift of the land within the village of Ellerton and the church therein. The priory also held land in Holme-on-the-Wolds and Habton (to support an altar to St Lawrence), as well as an income of salt from West Coatham courtesy of Alan of Wilton (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 198).

In April of 1387 it was decided that the then patron to Ellerton, German Hay, the lord of the manor of Aughton, and his successors would have the right to select nine of the poor cared for by the priory. Previously the benefactor had only the power to appoint one of the 13 inmates (Dugdale 1655: 918). In 1380 the house contained the prior and four canons, although in keeping with the rule of the order it is probable that the intended total number would have been 13.

The church that currently stands on the site of the priory, and dedicated to St Mary and St Lawrence, was built between 1846 and 1848, and until its construction it is thought that the nave of the medieval priory church had served the local populous (MAP 2009: 5). Although the remains of some of the priory buildings survived until 1847, when they were removed to make way for the construction of the parish church, no plans or depictions of the ruins survive (Midmer 1979: 203). In 1995 and 1998 Geophysical Surveys of Bradford undertook resistivity surveys in the area to the north of the church (figure 69). The survey showed a large concentration of rectilinear anomalies to the north of what would have been the nave of the priory church (Gaffney 1995: 8).

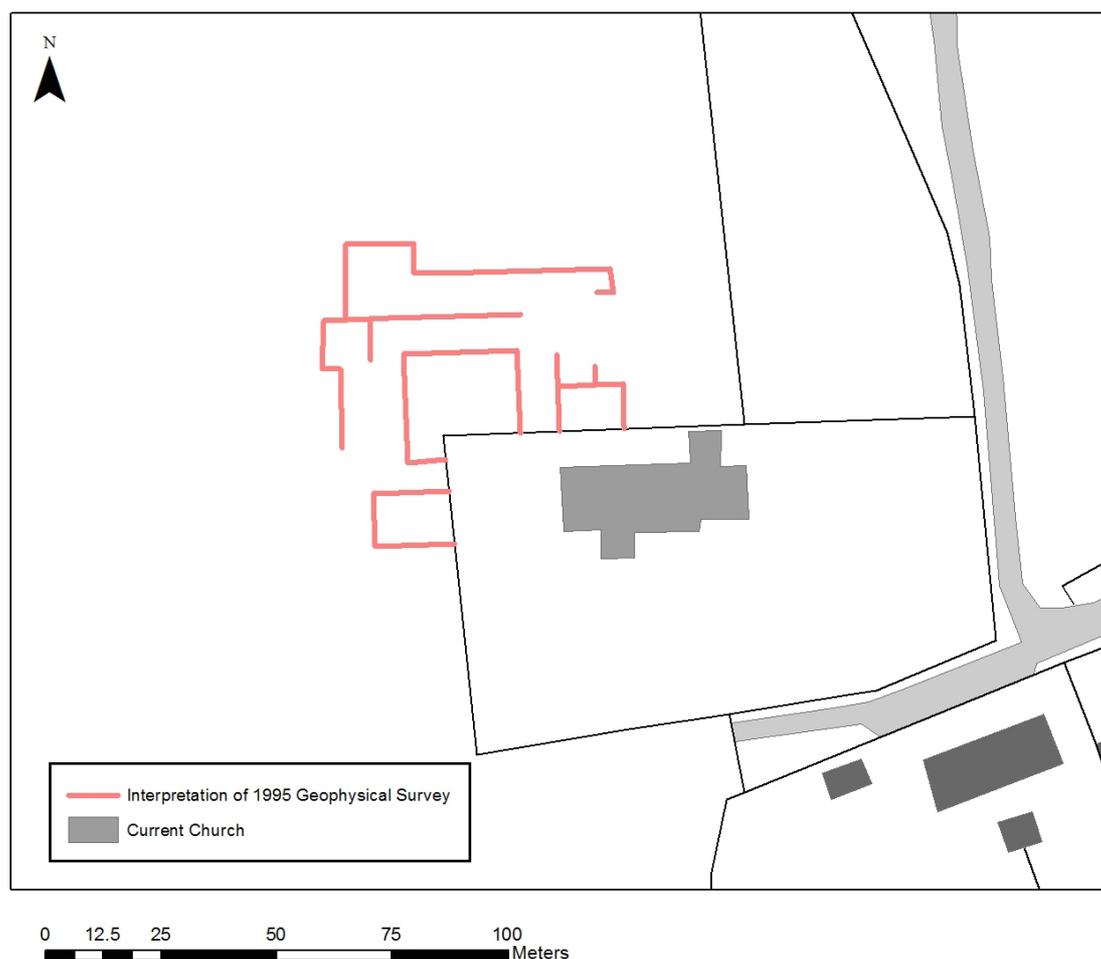


Figure 69 – Interpretation of geophysical resistivity survey at Ellerton priory (after Gaffney 1995)

These high resistance anomalies are almost certainly the remains of wall lines or drains of the priory (further features detected within this survey will be addressed in the Chapter 4 covering the Gilbertine Precinct). Although no survey has been carried to the south of the church it appears likely that the cloistral ranges were located to the north. As the nave of the priory was completely destroyed in the nineteenth century (MAP 2009: 5), it is no longer certain that the position of the current church relates to the position of the priory church. However, using the anomalies presented in the

geophysical data it is possible to reconstruct the position of the various priory buildings (figure 70).



Figure 70 – Reconstruction of the position of priory buildings at Ellerton priory (produced by author)

Although the position of the current church does not give an exact location of the priory church, the identification of the priory nave in the late-nineteenth century argues for the church's position to the south of the cloister. In addition, the geophysical features that form the north range make it unlikely that this was the church. The majority of this range on the east side is made up of a long thin range measuring 6.5 x 20 metres, probably serving as the canons' refectory. The western portion of the north range is made up from a square building protruding to the north, approximately 10 x 10

metres in size. The western range of the priory cloisters is shown on the geophysical survey to be extremely narrow with a width of less than 5 metres. The range is an L-shape with a west protruding room at the northern end. Again, this is similar to the layout seen at Watton and may have formed a portion of the kitchen buildings.

The cloister of the priory can be identified on all four sides, giving a cloister size of approximately 16 x 16 metres. The size is comparable to the excavated Group 2 example at Fishergate, York, which measured 17 x 17 metres. The eastern range consists of a narrow range to the north approximately 6 metres in width, with a larger room, 9 metres wide to the southern limit of the survey. At the Gilbertine sites of York and Malton the room occupying this position has been identified as the chapter house. Given its shape and its proximity to the church this is also likely to be the case at Ellerton. Given this measurement it is probable that the church had a northern transept, however any evidence for a southern transept, as had been found at York, is no longer available. The church itself is long and thin, 10 metres wide and estimated to measure 30-35 metres in length. The width of the church is similar to that found at York and the nave at Malton, due to this narrow width it is unlikely to have had aisles on the north or south sides. Although the archaeological data for Ellerton priory is sparse, it is possible to reconstruct the layout with some confidence by comparing the priory to other houses of the order.

Group 2 Summary

The houses considered within Group 2, dating to the period during which Roger of Malton was the head of the order, all share a common pattern of layout. All of the monasteries have their cloister located to the north of the church, and this is in contrast

to those within Group 1, founded during the lifetime of Gilbert. The northern cloister is a phenomenon observable at both the urban house in York and the more rural houses at Ravenstonedale and Ellerton. By the time these houses were being planned, after 1194, all of the Gilbertine double houses, with the exception of Shouldham had been constructed. The number of double houses by 1194 outweighed the number of single houses 11 to 5, and it is likely that the single houses within Group 2 drew the inspiration for their arrangement from the already well established double houses.

Unlike the Group 1 houses, there is less emphasis placed on the role of caring for the sick in Group 2 houses. Unlike at Lincoln, even at the urban site of St Andrew's priory in York there is no documentary source to link the house to any of the large number of hospitals within the city (Fallow 1974b: 336-352). As at Mattersey, there is evidence at York and Ravenstonedale of the economic decline of the order within the archaeological record, and this will be addressed in a later chapter.

The Fourteenth-Century Single House at Hitchin

The Halls at Cambridge and Stamford, and the later priory foundation at Poulton provide minimal surviving archaeological evidence. Given this lack of evidence, discussion must be limited to the location of the houses and as such will not be discussed within this chapter.

The priory of St Saviour is located in the centre of the medieval town of Hitchin, Hertfordshire. The house is referred to in modern works as New Biggin priory to distinguish it from Hitchin priory; a Carmelite Friary located approximately 150 metres to the south-west (Reddan 1914: 443). To the north of the house is the parish church of St Mary's, formally a Benedictine monastery. The River Hiz runs very close to the north-west of the priory through the centre of the city. The priory became an almshouse

following the Dissolution and is currently private residential accommodation (OS 1880).

Sir Edward de Kendale founded the priory between 1361-2, making it the last Gilbertine foundation in England (Knowles and Hadcock 1971: 198). The distance of the site from Lincolnshire explains this late foundation date, as the order was slow to spread from Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. The value of the house when established was only £2 (Stephenson 2005: 77). This low value at foundation reflects the decline in popularity and fortune of the order following the death of Gilbert and into the fourteenth century. The house was meant to accommodate a prior and two canons, however by 1381 there was reported to be only a single canon and the prior living in the house (Knowles and Hadcock 1971: 198).

The priory at Hitchin has to be considered within the context of its proximity to Chicksands priory, which is located less than 9 miles to the north. The priory at Chicksands was a large double monastery accommodating 120 nuns and up to 55 canons (Knowles and Hadcock 1971: 195). It is inconceivable that the two did not have close links and it is probable that the prior and canons at New Biggin were drawn from the population of Chicksands. Stephenson (2005: 78) goes as far as to argue that New Biggin may have been a retreat where the nuns of Chicksands could visit to take confession, as it was part of the Gilbertine rule that this must be conducted by a priest. The reason for this link is that Tanner incorrectly identifies the site as that of a nunnery, and Stephenson hypothesized that this identification may have some truth to it. However, it seems unlikely that given the strict rules of segregation in the fourteenth century between men and women within the order, that the nuns would be allowed to travel freely between sites.

The buildings on site of the priory remained in use as an almshouse until 1933 when it was no longer deemed fit for purpose. Following its listing as the 'Biggin' in 1951 the site was surveyed and reported to date to the early-seventeenth century (Hillelson & Fitzpatrick 2009: 6). However, a further survey in 1954 by Beresford-Webb revealed a number of features indicating an earlier date for the buildings. A panel found in the upper story and in the sixteenth-century style was discovered to have the date 1577 carved into it, and records were discovered of painted panels in the south range having been commissioned in the late-sixteenth century by Robert Savage (d.1606). The earliest dating was established from a window in the south range assigned to the fourteenth century (Hillelson & Fitzpatrick 2009: 4).

The 1954 Beresford-Webb survey recorded medieval building styles in the north, south and east ranges, however there did not appear to be enough space to accommodate the entirety of the church and the cloistral ranges. Beresford-Webb suggested that the north and south ranges of the buildings were fourteenth century in date and had been shortened towards the eastern end when it was converted into a house following the Dissolution (Hillelson & Fitzpatrick 2009: 5). This concept was tested during excavations carried out between September 1968 and July 1969 by Beresford-Webb.

Little survives of the site record for the excavation. Beresford-Webb (1969) produced an interim report in 1969 as an appendix to a study of the Biggin. Despite its incomplete nature, the interim does contain information about the possible layout of some of the priory buildings. Archaeological features were overlain by demolition deposits presumably dating to the destruction of the building subsequent to the Dissolution. It has been suggested by Stephenson (2005: 77) and Hillelson & Fitzpatrick (2009: 8) that the structure consisted of low walls that would have supported

timber Fitzpatrick. However, there is no evidence from the original report to support this. In fact, it would be very unusual for the church to be timber rather than stone at this late date of foundation and in the centre of a town.

The report records a series of foundations stretching to the east of the buildings following the line of the extant walls. The excavated features make the buildings approximately twice its current size, providing space for the church and cloistral ranges (figure 71) (Beresford-Webb 1969: 102). As only the eastern portion of the priory was excavated, the record of the building is incomplete. The floors of the priory were packed chalk that would have originally have held a ceramic tile floor. Underneath the floor, sherds of fourteenth-century pot were recorded whilst the earliest found above dated to the sixteenth century, placing the period of construction firmly within the phase of monastic habitation (Hillelson & Fitzpatrick 2009: 6).

Beresford-Webb (1969: 99) identified what he recognised as the curved apse of the church forming the east end of the south range. As has been mentioned in the descriptions of other Gilbertine houses post-dating the twelfth century, the church is located on the south side of the cloister. Beresford-Webb (1969: 99) states that this is the 'typical Gilbertine' arrangement, however in the 1960s the only available Gilbertine plan was that of Watton (where both nuns' and canons' churches are on the south side) and thus it would have been impossible to say what was typical or not. Only a small portion of the north range was excavated, however some inferences may be made from the 1969 plan (figure 72).

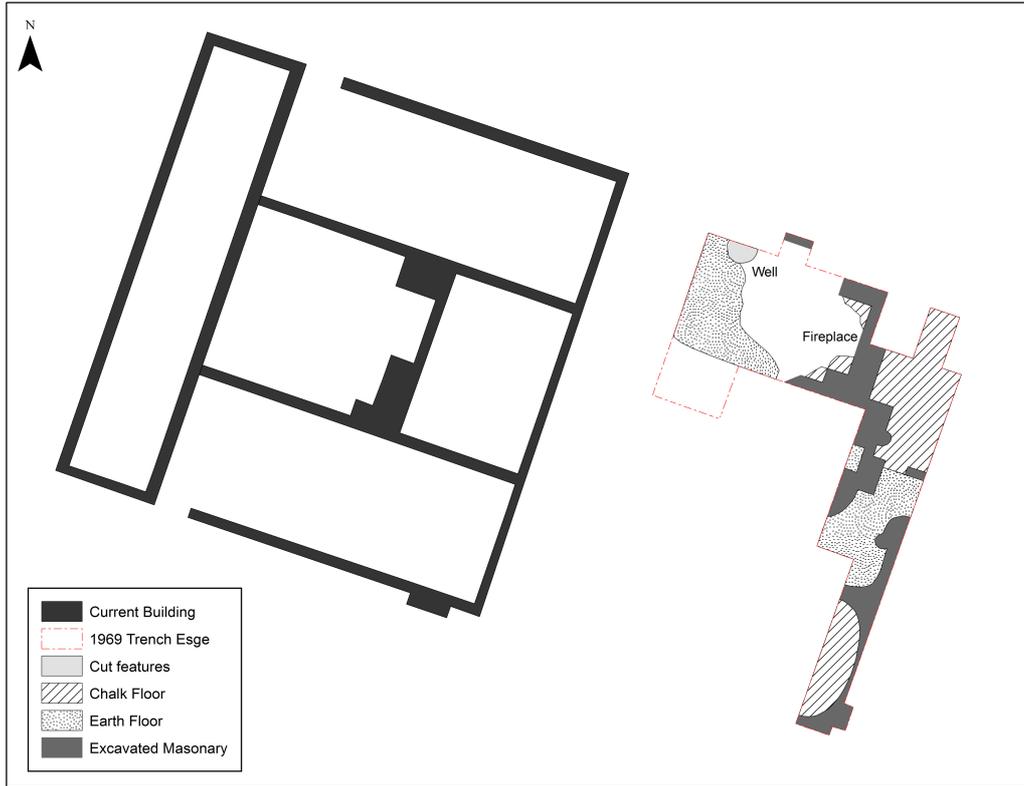


Figure 71 – The current building and excavation plan of the Beresford-Webb excavation (Beresford-Webb 1969)

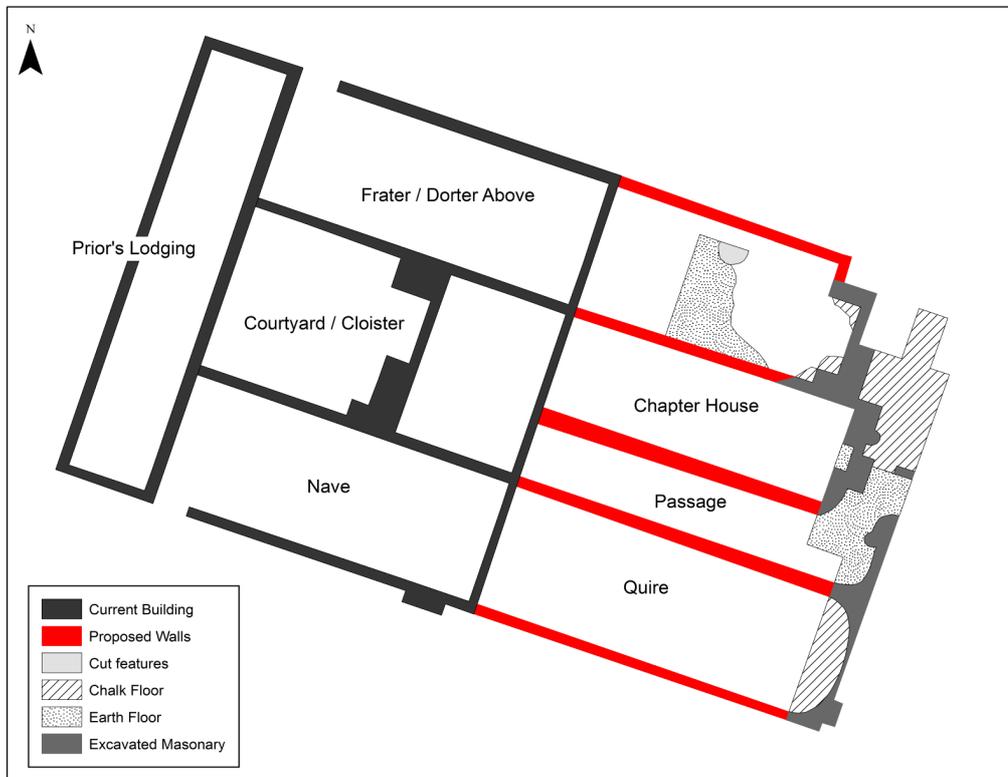


Figure 72 – Reconstruction of Hitchin priory (partly after Fitzpatrick 2009)

It can be suggested that the church would have extended from the apsidal-ended quire at the east through to the nave, located within the current building, whilst the chapter house would need to have been located close to the eastern end of the church; the position of the passage directly to the north of the quire would suggest the location of the chapter house to the north of this. These two spaces would have formed a shrunken east range. The presence of a possible well and fireplace within the northern range suggests its function as a store and kitchen probably with the refectory and/or dormitory above. The remaining rooms formed the west range of the building and may have acted as the prior's residence. The space in-between these four ranges may have formed a courtyard, acting as a reduced cloister for the inhabitants. It is difficult to make further conclusions about the arrangement of the priory other than to say it was modest in scale and unlike the larger rural priories it used space efficiently as would be expected from an urban property.

Summary

The arrangement of the priory buildings at the sites of single houses reflects a marked difference between chronological Groups 1 & 2. The houses within Group 1 all exhibit a cloister to the south of the priory church, in what would be called a 'traditional' monastic layout (see Chapter 2). This is the case at Malton, Clattercote, Malton, and probably at Newstead. Those in Group 2 all have their cloisters to the north of the canons' church. The main chronological differences between the two groups is that the Group 2 houses are constructed during the period in which Roger of Malton controlled the order and at a time after all of the Gilbertine double houses had already been constructed. This difference in cloister orientation seems to mark a distinct change between the chosen planning styles of Gilbert and his successor Roger. It is with this in

mind that the reasons for the shift away from double houses, in favour of single houses, and the position and motives of Roger of Malton, must be considered.

Although no archaeological evidence remains for priories falling within Group 3 and only the house at Hitchin remains for Group 4, it is possible to make some conclusions regarding the later evolution of the Gilbertine plan. The plan of the house at Hitchin demonstrates the continuation of the Gilbertine style of layout, lasting as late as the mid-fourteenth century. There is no evidence to suggest that the priory was an addition to an earlier building, such as a church or chapel, and for this reason the decision of the builders to place the rooms of the priory where they did must be considered significant. The long, thin, church seen at Hitchin echoes the form of those within Group 2, found at Ellerton and York. It also reflects the size and shape of the divided churches found at the double houses, if the canons' half of the church were to be isolated from the whole, it would provide a similar shape and size. At Watton the canons' chapel is also of a similar form and lacks north or south transepts. The choice to place the church to the south of the cloister can also be interpreted as a continuation of this distinct Gilbertine layout. As with the earlier Group 2 foundations, it is clear that in the decision to layout the priory in such a way, the canons were seeking to emulate, albeit on a much smaller scale, the canons' portions of the double houses.

Chapter 4: The Gilbertine Precinct

The monastic precinct refers to the central monastic enclosure, usually made up of various courts and enclosures (Aston 2000: 101). In addition to the monastic church and cloisters, the space used for religious practices of the inhabitants, the precinct would have provided space for a variety of other activities, including agricultural and industrial processes. The precinct made up the principal holdings of the priory and in most cases represented the first land endowed to the priory at its foundation. Over the last 25 years, the study of the wider monastic precinct has become more common, although prior to this, the focus of monastic archaeology had tended to be on the church and the cloistral ranges of the inner court. There is now an increased interest in the monastic precinct, with the aim of placing the monastic buildings within their wider context (Coppack 1990, Greene 1992, Aston 2000, Bond 2004).

Before the archaeology of the Gilbertine precinct is considered, it is useful to define the various areas usually expected to be found at monastic sites. The outer perimeter of the precinct was often made up of a combination of walls and moats, although the use of these differed between sites and was usually influenced by aspects of the landscape and the availability of building materials. At Fountains abbey, a 3.4-metre-high wall surrounded the 28-hectare precinct (Coppack 1993: 62); this was due to the position of the abbey within a natural valley, with the precinct boundaries located at the top of the valley sides. At Thornton abbey, a large moat with a width of over 6 metres bounded the site on three sides, with the Skitter Beck to the east, separating the canons from the surrounding landscape (Oswald *et al* 2010: 16). At Thornton, it was logical to use moats to delineate the precinct, due to the low-lying land and the lack of readily available stone.

The church and cloister of the monastery would be enclosed within an inner court. As with the precinct perimeter, the divisions that creating the court could take a number of forms, dependent upon the surrounding landscape. The inner court at Ulverscroft in Leicestershire was surrounded by a large moat (Aston 2000: 120), whilst at Tintern abbey the monks made the best use of the natural environment, using the River Wye to form the northern boundary of the inner court (Brakspear 1910: 6). Often, as at Kirkstall, the great drain would define a portion of the court, providing water to the monastery and flushing waste. The inner court would restrict access to the buildings within to the religious inhabitants of the monastery or invited visitors. Furthermore, within this court would be the guesthouse, the infirmary for the residents of the monastery and the prior's or abbot's lodge. At Gilbertine double houses this arrangement was complicated by the existence of a second inner court for the nuns, which contained the nuns' cloister and the priory church.

The outer court of the monastery would often be divided up into various enclosures that had specific, non-religious functions. To the north of the church at Thornton an area of 1.3 hectares was divided for the monastic mill and the great barn (Willmott & Townend 2011: 4). Similar divisions are seen at Llanthony priory in Gloucestershire, where fields are divided up for agriculture to the south of the inner court (Aston 2000: 121). In addition to mills and barns, the outer court would have contained smiths, granaries, brew and bake houses, with many of these buildings being associated with the production of food for the monastery (Aston 2000: 101). Fishponds were also often found outside of the outer court of the precinct (Bond 2004: 197). Indeed, fishponds can be seen as one of the most ubiquitous of the features preserved at monastic sites, due to their size and often continued use following the Dissolution.

This chapter aims to identify the layout of the Gilbertine precinct and to

characterise its extent and nature. The presence of both male and female religious has already been shown to affect the arrangement of the central priory buildings, and thus a similar distinct layout might be expected in the layout of the wider Gilbertine precinct. Precincts of both double and single houses have been compared in an effort to establish any distinct differences between the two. A comparison between rural and urban houses has also been made to identify the factors influencing the arrangement of the urban monastery and how it differed to its rural counterpart. A further aim of the chapter is to suggest a type-site, from which the layout of the Gilbertine precinct can be broadly recreated. A model will be presented containing the features of the Gilbertine precinct that are common across all known sites.

Data from a number of sources has been utilised, including LiDAR, geophysical survey, topographic mapping, aerial photography and historic maps. However, using this data, and interpreting parch marks and earthworks have a number of limitations. The most critical of these is the presence of post-medieval activity on the sites following the closure of the monasteries. This often took place a very short time after the Dissolution and could be continuous up to the present day. This is especially evident at those sites that were, or are now, located in urban centres. The problem is not restricted to the urban environment, as modern and early-modern enclosure has changed the nature of the medieval landscape; the appearance of medieval features, especially large water filled moats are easily identifiable, however later drainage features can be very similar in form.

Rural houses

Of the 27 Gilbertine foundations in England, 22 were located in rural locations. As with the evidence discussed in previous chapters for the archaeology of the church

and cloisters, the majority of available information comes from double houses rather than single. This is particularly true for evidence recovered from earthworks and aerial photography.

Double houses

Eight of the double houses founded by the Gilbertines provide extensive evidence for the arrangement of the precinct and the inner courts. The exception is Chicksands, where later disturbance and landscaping for the post-Dissolution house and later the Royal Air Force base, has destroyed any evidence of the arrangement of the precinct. Nonetheless, the remaining eight houses discussed below supply enough evidence to hypothesize the layout of a typical Gilbertine precinct.

Sempringham

The site at Sempringham was the earliest of the Gilbertine monasteries and as such would have likely influenced the arrangement of later precincts. However, the site presents a number of problems when an attempt is made to trace the monastic precincts of the priory. The most obvious of these is the post-medieval occupation of the site and the subsequent changes made to the surrounding landscape, principally the construction of a water garden. Such post-Dissolution features can be seen at a number of Lincolnshire sites, including Bardney abbey, Thornton abbey and Nun Cotham priory, both of which are similar in form to that found at Sempringham. This later construction, once abandoned and levelled, is difficult to distinguish from phases of monastic activity (figure 73). The second limitation is caused by the subsequent farming practices that have affected the site. The construction of land drains, early-modern enclosure

boundaries and subsequent post-war clearance, limits the conclusions that can be made regarding the original medieval layout of the precinct.

Consequently, it is not possible at Sempringham to reconstruct the full limits of the outer precinct, although it is possible to trace the limits of the inner court of the priory enclosing the priory church and cloisters. As Sempringham was a double house, this inner court was then divided to make up two areas containing the nuns' and canons' cloisters. The Marse Dyke bounded this inner court on the north side. The modern course of the Marse Dyke was established in the fourteenth century, following the expansion of the northern half of the priory church (Braun 1939: 3). The original course of the Marse ran between the two cloisters and under the northern transept of the priory church (figure 74). The shift of the Marse was almost certainly due to the unstable nature of the watercourse and its propensity to flood. As discussed in the previous chapter, this flooding rose to a height of six feet in the fourteenth century, engulfing the church and cloisters (Graham 1906a: 185).

There is no evidence for an earlier northern boundary to the site on the LiDAR or geophysical surveys (figure 73). It is therefore hypothesized that at the time when the dyke was rerouted in the fourteenth century, it was located over the site of an earlier boundary feature. This earlier boundary would have taken the form of a ditch and bank (and may even have been fed with water from the Marse, creating a moat around the inner court). It is highly likely that the old course of the Marse Dyke was diverted along this previously existing route and the current course of the Marse reflects the position of the pre-fourteenth-century northern boundary of the inner court. Before the movement of the Dyke to the north, the waterway in would have functioned as a division between the two cloisters.

The choice of the location of the monastery at Sempringham can be seen as a

direct result of the presence of the Marse Dyke. The decision to place the church and the nuns' cloister to the south of the dyke and the canons' cloister to the north must be viewed as an attempt by the order to use a pre-existing structure to separate the sexes. This arrangement has been discussed in an earlier chapter, however the importance of the segregation of the sexes cannot be overemphasized. It is highly probable that following the redirection of the dyke in the fourteenth century, a water filled ditch would have been retained as a separation between the cloisters. Indeed, Coppack & Cope-Faulkner (2010) point to the fact that the development of the later post-medieval house and gardens respects the medieval position of the dyke, which suggests that it was still open or at least partially open following the suppression.



Figure 73 – LiDAR survey from Sempringham priory (Environment Agency 2017)

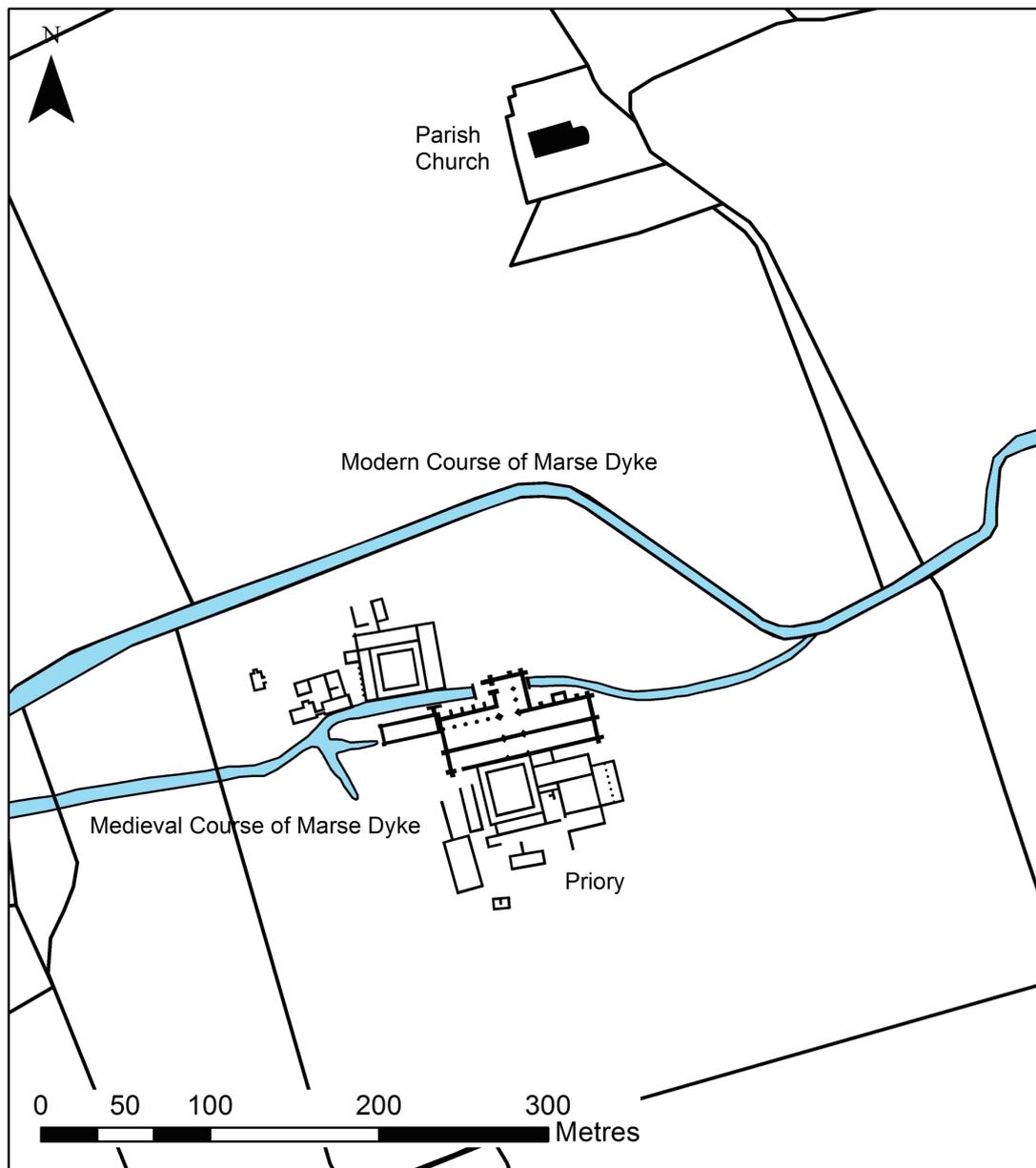


Figure 74 – The modern and medieval courses of the Marse Dyke at Sempringham priory (partly after Coppack & Cope-Faulkner 2008)

The southern limit of the precinct is shown as one of a number of earthworks visible on the 2-metre resolution LiDAR available for the site. The majority of these boundaries relate to the post-Dissolution phase of the site and are orientated on the same alignment as the later house. However, the southernmost east-west running earthwork

(figure 75) likely relates to the monastic phase due to its position and differing orientation. This boundary represents a wall that runs south from the Marse Dyke approximately 150 metres and turns west, forming the southern limit of the precinct. The southern boundary runs along the limit of the area from within which these monastic buildings have been identified.

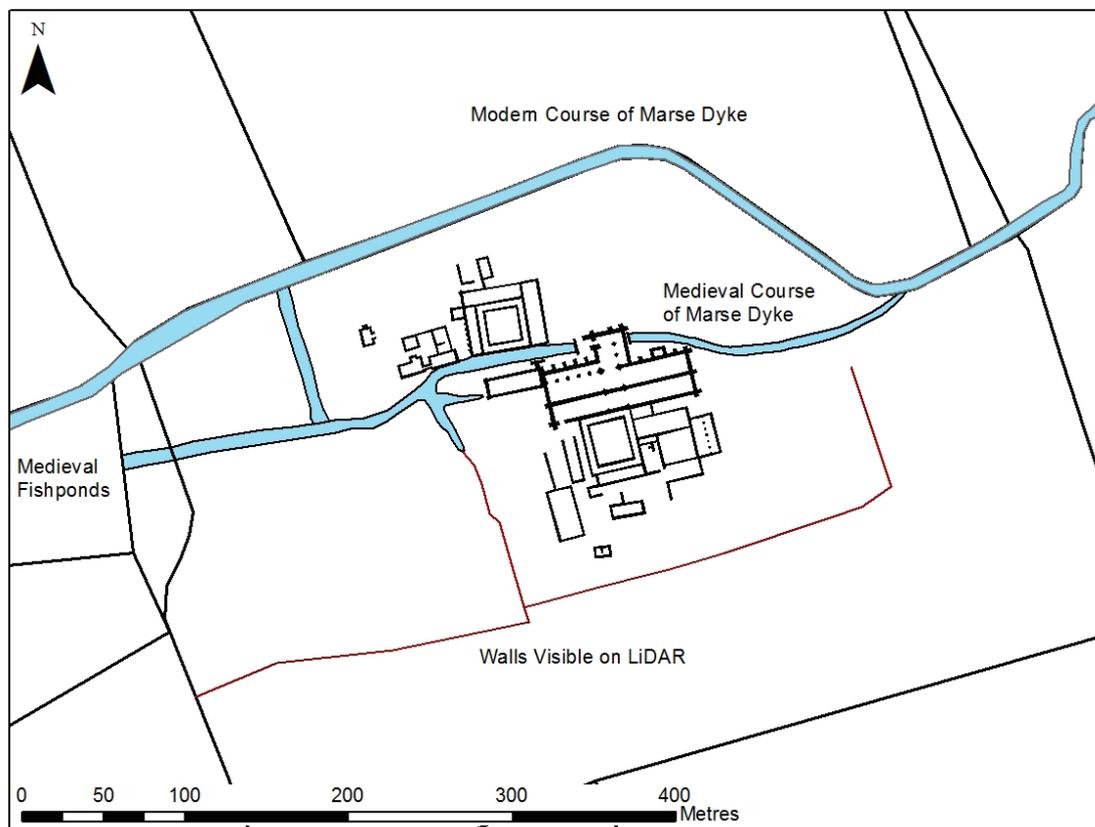


Figure 75 – Location of the inner courts and the Marse Dyke at Sempringham priory (partly after Coppack & Cope-Faulkner 2008)

The southern wall of the nuns' inner court returns north and connects with a spur of the medieval course of the Marse, forming the western boundary. To the west of the nuns' and canons' courts is an enclosed area that forms a portion of the outer court, to the west of which are a series of monastic fishponds, identified on the 1888 Ordnance Survey map (figure 76). Fishponds are often found on the edge of the inner court, as

can be seen at the Gilbertine sites of Catley and Sixhills. The location of the fishponds at Sempringham would place them close enough to the monastery to be accessible, but far enough away to be out of the view of visitors to the priory.

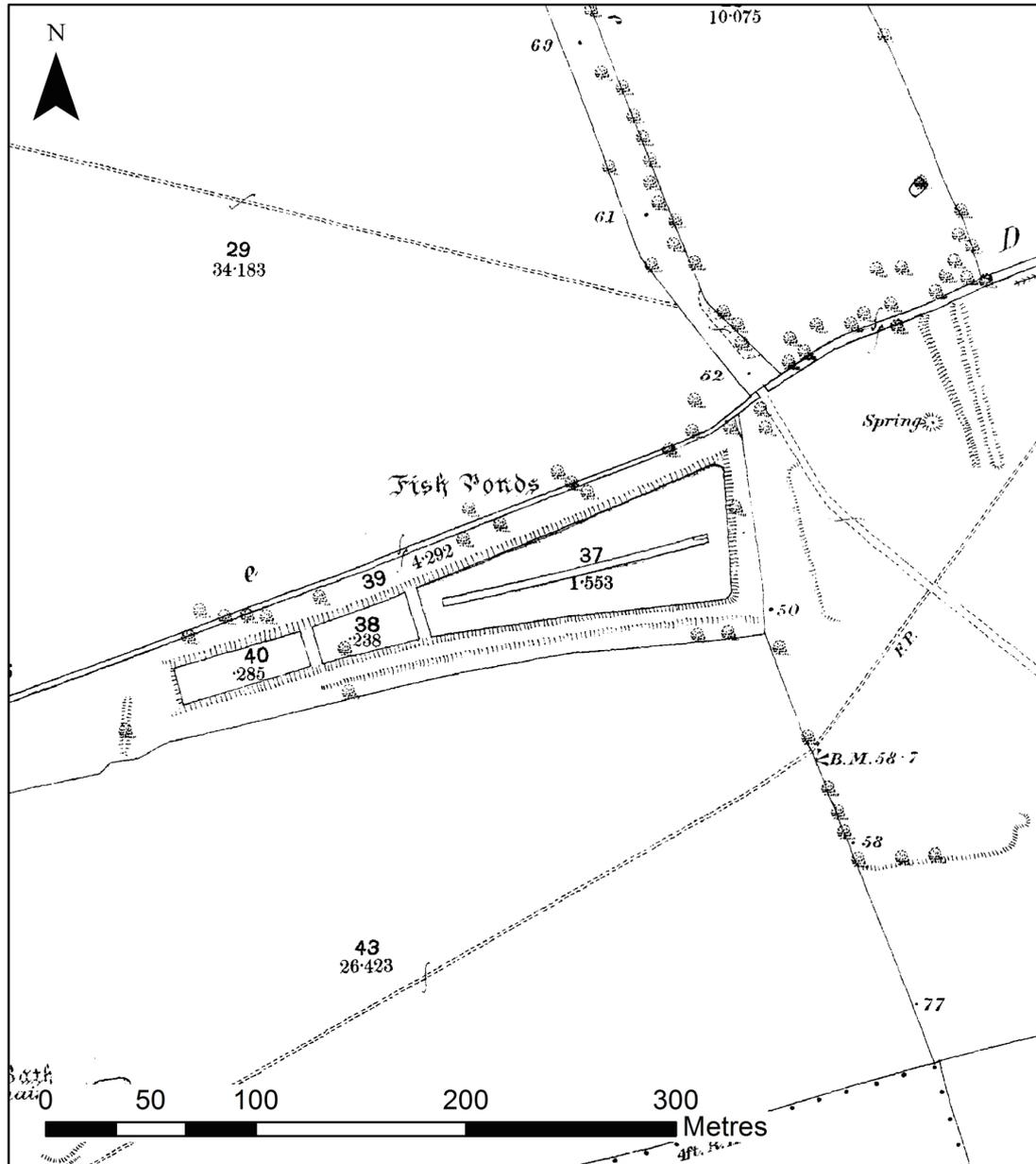


Figure 76 – 1888 Ordnance Survey showing the location of fishponds at Sempringham priory (Crown Copyright 2016)

It is probable that the boundary surrounding the inner court of the canons at Sempringham was formed by a moat on all four sides and was fed by the Marse Dyke.

To the south, the nuns' inner court was bounded on the north by the old route of the Marse and to the south by a stone wall. Although it is not possible to reconstruct the entirety of the outer court of the precinct at Sempringham, however a portion to the west of the inner court is identifiable. Information relating to the area to the north of the monastery is extremely complex due to the position of the early-medieval village. Given the continuity of occupation and farming practices into the monastic phase of the site it is very difficult to separate one from the other. It is probable that the majority of the outer court would have been located to the north of the site, closer to the canons' cloister than to that of the nuns. It is also probable that the monastery took over the majority of the village by the end of the fourteenth century, including the farmland to the north of the church. Modern farming and enclosure have destroyed the area to the south of the site and no conclusions can be made with confidence as to monastic activity within this area.

In addition to the limits of the inner court, it is possible to identify a number of structures that surround the cloisters (figure 77). The first of these was partially excavated by Braun (1938: 3) and identified a medieval aisled building with a secondary structure at the southern end, but further excavations were abandoned shortly afterwards. This building (a) was to the north-east of the cloisters, close to the western bank of the Marse Dyke. Coppack and Cope-Faulkner (2010) identified a hollow way directly to the east and west of this building, although the structure outlined by Braun does not appear on their plan. The hollow way leads from the direction of Sempringham village towards the monastery and probably represents the eastern access to the site. It is possible that building (a) is identifiable as a gatehouse, probably relating to a causeway or bridge spanning the Marse Dyke. As at other Gilbertine sites, the access to the priory was through the canons' cloister rather than that of the nuns. This choice

of access reflects the nature of the different religious rules to which both groups subscribed. It also reinforces the argument made in Chapter 2 that the nuns' cloister was located on the south side of the priory church to remove it from view and cut off access from the village of Sempringham.

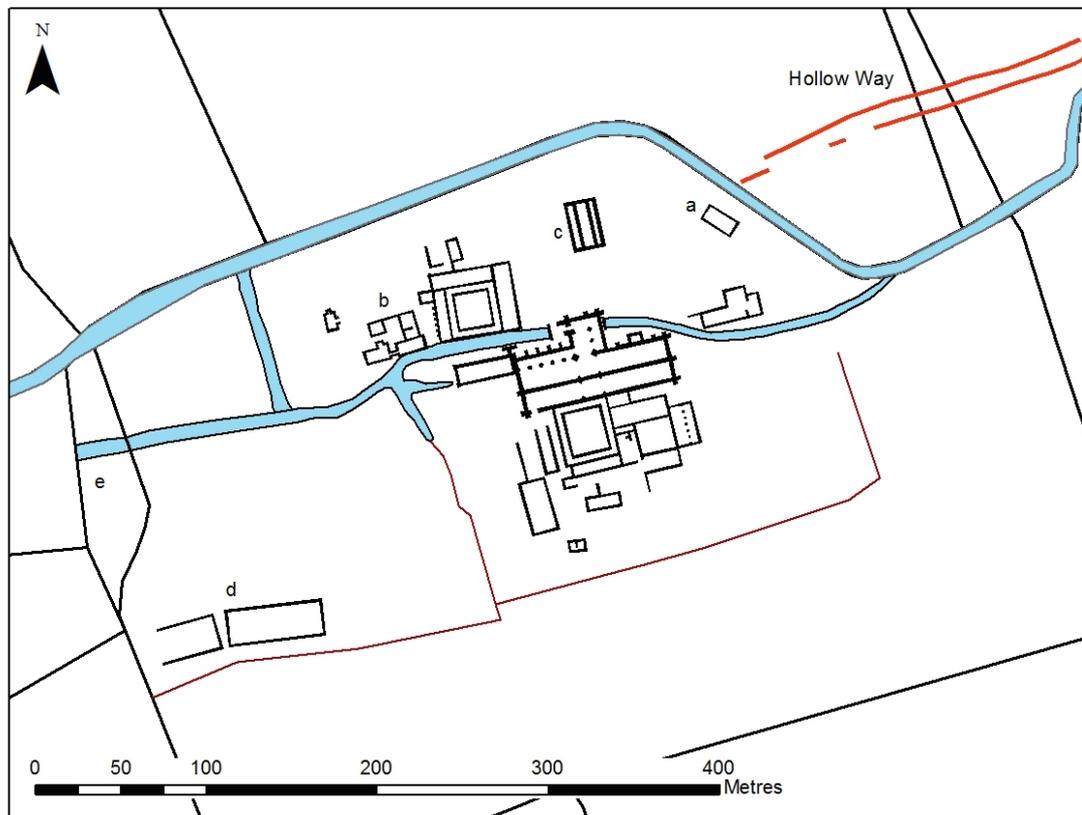


Figure 77 – The buildings within the monastic precinct at Sempringham priory (partly Coppack & Cope-Faulkner 2008)

The remainder of the buildings within the inner court have been identified by Coppack and Cope-Faulkner (2008 & 2010). The building to the west of the canons' cloister has been identified as the canons' guesthouse. This building (b) consists of a pair of halls and accommodation wings, linked by a corridor. To the east of the canons' cloister was another service building (c), a double aisled structure that would later be converted into the kitchens for the Tudor house. To the east of the nuns'

cloister, abutting the projecting eastern range was the infirmary building, on a north-south orientation and probably consisting of six double bays. To the west of the priory, within the outer court, survey has revealed a pair of barns close to the western boundary of the inner court (d). These are probably related to the mill located to the west of the millpond, identified by Coppack and Cope-Faulkner (e). It is unclear as to whether this mill was relocated following the diversion of the Marse Dyke, however it is possible that it remained in the same location and the mill race was channelled north east, joining the current course of the waterway.

Watton

The earthworks at Watton provide one of the most complete examples of the Gilbertine precinct. Here it is possible not only to trace the extent of the outer court, but also the layout of the nuns' and canons' inner courts. These divisions are constructed from a complex arrangement of moats, ditches and banks or walls, which separated the courts of the canons and nuns from one another, from the outer court and from the surrounding landscape.

The precinct of the priory was surrounded on the east, north and west by a large moat and bank (figure 78). The ditches that form these channels measure approximately 5 metres wide and 2 metres deep, and would have carried running water. The Watton Beck forms the southern border of the precinct. The moat that borders the east side of the precinct stops when level with the canons' cloister to the south, and a separate section continues north, approximately 25 metres to the west. This strange arrangement is probably due to the backfilling of the moat following the Dissolution, to provide access to the eastern half of the site. It is also probable that the inner courts of the nuns

and canons were the original extent of the precinct, and that the northern outer court was a later addition. This is supported by the presence of a wide ditch stretching from the western limit of the precinct moat, which may represent the western half of the original northern boundary. Both the western and east moats continue north approximately 260 metres and turn to form the northern boundary of the precinct.

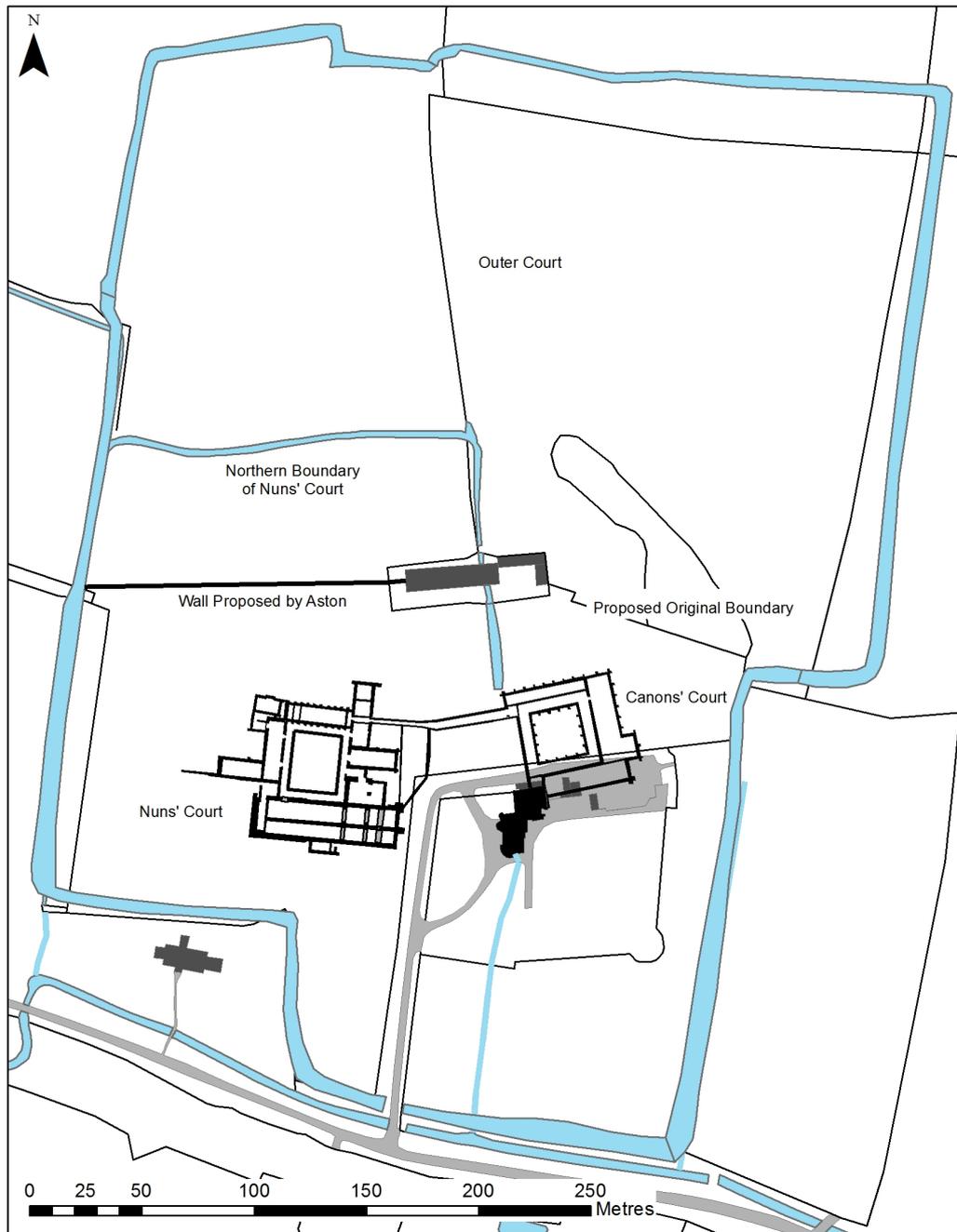


Figure 78 – The limits of the inner and outer courts at Watton priory (partly after Aston 2002)

Within the precinct the courts of the nuns and canons were also divided from one another as well as the outer court. The nuns' court was to the east and surrounded the nuns' cloister. Aston (2000: 95) uses parch marks from aerial photography to suggest that it was bordered to the north by a wall or hedge. This division would have run east, from the western moat across to edge of the building to the north of the priory. However, there is no evidence for this division on any early mapping for the site or from aerial photography. Furthermore, there is some discrepancy as to the date of the building to the north and it is doubtful that it was in existence when the limits of the courts were being laid out. It is more likely that the large ditch directly to the north of the suggested wall acted as the northern boundary of the nuns' court. This ditch turns south, parallel with the gap between the two cloisters and would have divided them on the eastern side of the nuns' cloister.

There is evidence from the 1892 Ordnance Survey for a ditch running between the western moat and the projecting western range of the nuns' cloister. This would have divided the western access to the church from the nuns' court and provided the southern limit of the court (the nuns themselves would have entered the northern half of the church from the cloisters). This ditch forms the northern boundaries of the inner court and turns south to pass through a later culvert underneath the northern range of outbuildings and the canons' cloister. This stream emerges on the south side of the prior's lodge and discharges into the channel, which forms the southern boundary of the canons' court. In this way, the nuns' cloister is totally enclosed, accessible only via the passage between the two cloisters, or the church.

The canons' court was enclosed on the south and east sides by the large perimeter moat of the precinct. On the west side the ditch following under the fourteenth-century prior's lodge continues south, bounding the court to the west. On its north side the

canons' court was probably limited by the moat suggested to form the northern boundary of the original court. It is also possible that a wall or hedge bounded the canons' court further north, following the line of the current field boundary. Great effort has been made to divide the nuns and the canons at Watton, and an emphasis appears to have been placed on the use large moats and water-filled ditches, rather than hedges or walls, as has been suggested by Aston. These boundaries would have provided a very public expression of the seriousness of the order in keeping the two sexes apart.

The main entrance to the outer precinct was thought by Hope (1901: 30) to be from the west side, although nothing remains of a gatehouse. However, at the majority of Gilbertine double houses, for which evidence survives, the entrance to the precinct is usually on the side of the canons' cloister and the church, rather than towards the nuns' cloister, and thus it is more likely that the original access to the priory would have been through the southern boundary, similar to that seen today. The ditch stretching from the southern moat to the prior's lodge would have bounded the entrance track to the east, whilst the ditch that now forms the eastern boundary of the graveyard of St Mary's church would have limited it to the west.

Particularly important at Watton was water management around the site, and the water for the moats and drains appears to have been fed from two sources (figure 79). The first was the Watton Beck to the south of the site, which formed its southern boundary. If the smaller size of the precinct in its first phase suggested above is correct, then this may have been the original and sole source of all of the water on the site. It would have been sufficient to fill the moats and to flush the kitchens and reredorters of the cloisters. However, the precinct was also fed from the north via the construction of a channel from the Scurf Dyke, approximately 1.2 kilometres to the north. It is likely that this channel was constructed at the same time as the expansion of the precinct to

the north, as more water would be needed to feed the larger network of moats and ditches. A series of well-organized fishponds have been identified, bordering the northern moat, within the outer court. Also to the north of the site, aerial photography and the 1910 Ordnance Survey show evidence for a millpond within the eastern half of the outer court. Although no evidence of a mill building survives at Watton, given the presence of the millpond it is certain that a mill would have stood in this area of the precinct.

There is also evidence for a number of other buildings within the inner and outer courts. Work in the early-2000s by Helen Fenwick and Henry Chapman helped to provide evidence for the existence of earthworks representing potential buildings to the north and west of the cloistral complex. The survey revealed a large number of earthworks to the north of the cloisters that may represent outbuildings traditionally associated with the monastic complex. This is especially evident at the north-west corner of the nuns' cloister, which appears to project north and west for some distance (Fenwick 2000: 188). Hope identified walls leading from the nuns' kitchen as dating to the fifteenth century and this area may represent a late expansion of the nuns' cloister. However, it is much more likely that the infirmary at Watton was located to the west of the nuns' cloister, housed in one of the buildings identified by Fenwick and Chapman, and present on the 2014 geophysical survey (see Chapter 2).

The most interesting of the extant buildings at the site are the outbuildings directly to the north of the priory complex. The structure is now roofless and in disrepair and has long been associated with the post-suppression phase of the site. However, recent work has begun to reevaluate this building as part of the medieval complex (Fenwick 2000: 188). The building is brick built and consists 11 bays forming the ground floor of two stories. A culvert at the east end covers the channel separating the courts of the

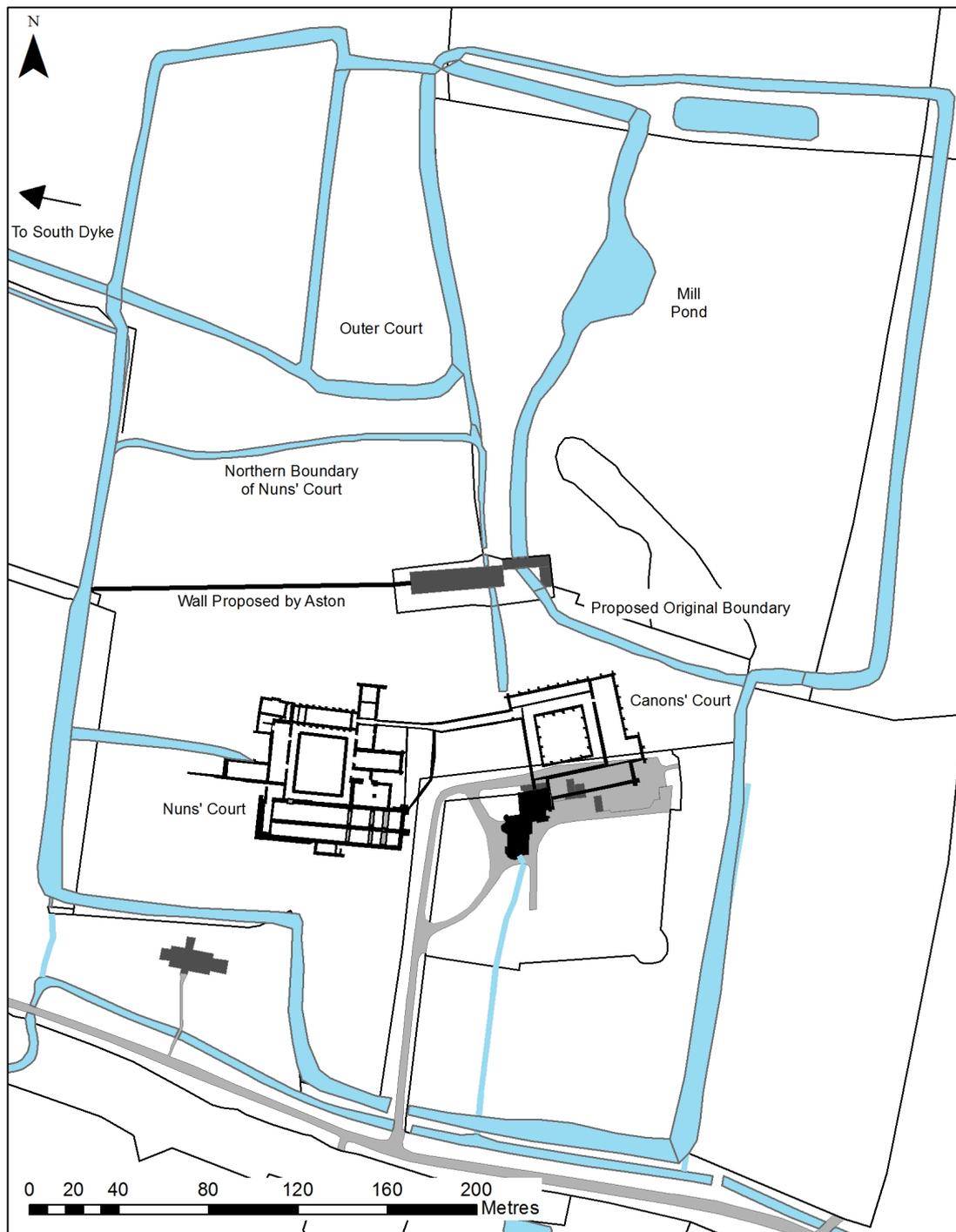


Figure 79 – Water management at Watton priory (produced by author)

nuns and canons (English Heritage 1987b). The presence of a culvert and the location of the building over the channel may indicate that it served an important purpose that

required the supply of fresh water. Hope placed the infirmary to the south east of the canons' cloister, despite that area being unexcavated and containing no promising earthworks (Hope 1901: 30). It is suggested by Hope that the upstanding roofless building may have served as the infirmary, its position between the canons' and nuns' courts would support this, as both groups would have a role to play in the care of the sick and dying. No firm date has been suggested for the building, and it is only the use of brick that has been used to suggest a post-medieval date. However, Bond (2004: 335) has suggested that brick was being used in the production of monastic buildings in the east of England as early as the twelfth century and that by the mid-fourteenth century, whole buildings were brick built. It is possible that this building is indeed medieval in date and could be linked to the phase of construction associated with the rebuilding of the canons' cloister and the prior's lodge in the fourteenth century.

In addition to the features mentioned above, two low mounds to the east of the prior's lodge have been previously interpreted as archery butts (English Heritage 1994). However, it is much more likely, given their location overlooking the garden of the post-Dissolution lodge, that they are post-medieval viewing platforms. Paul Everson has addressed the difficulties in identifying monastic features in the context of a post-Dissolution palimpsest. The viewing platform at Watton priory is similar to those identified by Everson (1996: 13) at Nun Cotham in Lincolnshire. Aston (2000: 95) has also made this observation designating them as 'later garden features'. Despite these later additions to the site following the Dissolution, remarkably little work appears to have taken place in the form of remodelling the monastic landscape. This has ensured that Watton represents the most complete example of the Gilbertine precinct.

Directly to the south-west of the site of Watton priory is located St Mary's parish church (figure 80). The church appears to date stylistically to the mid-sixteenth

to early seventeenth centuries and includes earlier stonework incorporated into the walls of the nave, which could possibly date to the medieval period. Other than this earlier stonework, there is no evidence of an earlier church. The cemetery is positioned to the south of the church and contains grave markers dating to the eighteenth century. The church and cemetery are enclosed on three sides by a bank and ditch, with the modern road forming the southern boundary.

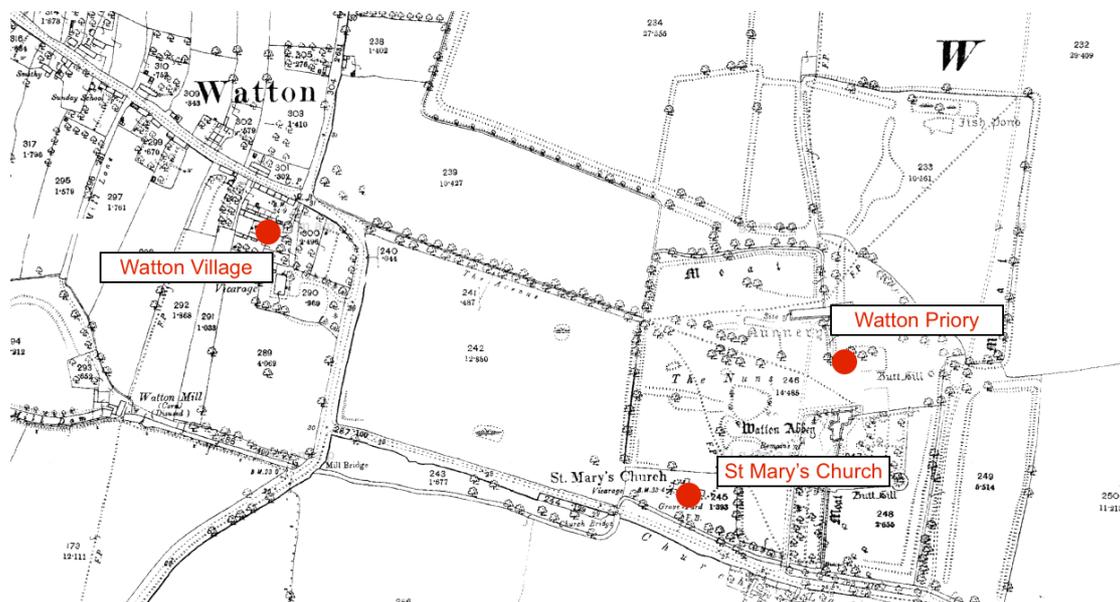


Figure 80 – Map showing the locations of Watton Village, St Mary’s Church and Watton Priors

The Domesday Survey records the village of Watton (Waton/Wattune/Watun) as containing one priest and one church at the date of compilation (Skaife 1896: 61). Although no architectural or archaeological evidence, this record demonstrates that a church existed in the village prior to the foundation of Watton priory in 1150. The two possibilities that exist are that; firstly, that the present-day church is built on the remains of an earlier Saxon church, secondly, that the church was moved from the village to the priory following the foundation of Watton priory. The latter of these appears more

likely in the case of Watton, as a church serving the population of the village would have likely been constructed within the village itself, rather than 600 metres to the south-east.

Despite the presence of a church at Watton, the population of Watton village given in the Domesday Book is very low. This suggests that the village itself was very small before the foundation of the priory. Given this evidence, it is probable that the village only expanded during the early thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The proximity of the church to the priory suggests that it would have been the canons who led the local service and provided the spiritual oversight for the parish church. As at Sempringham, the parish church at Watton suggests a connection between the priory and the local population that is not seen at other Gilbertine sites.

Despite this proximity of worship, the order ensured that the secular population did not get too close to the monastery's inhabitants. The boundaries to the west, north and east of the church survive in some places as 1.5-metre-high banks and ditches. These earthworks would have ensured that the two groups were kept separate, particularly in the case of the secular population and the nuns, whose cloisters were directly to the north of the parish church. As at Sempringham, where the priory church acted as a barrier between the nuns' cloister and Sempringham Village to the north, the priory church at Watton formed a secondary obstacle between the nuns and the parish church.

The religious spaces at Watton and Sempringham are both comprised of three churches. Each of these churches catered for a different group, with specific spiritual requirements. The parish church provided the local population with a space for religious devotion and provided a connection between them and the canons of the priory. The canons in turn had their own church or chapel, where they could attend to the spiritual

needs of the male inhabitants of the priory. Finally, the priory church provided a space for the nuns and the canons to worship, both together and at the same time separate from one another. The combination of these three spaces was a way of extending the ‘Chariot of Aminadab’ (discussed in Chapter 2). Instead of just the four groups: Nuns, Canons, lay-brothers and lay-sisters, the religious space included a fifth group, the local secular population.

Bullington

Scheduling currently protects the site of Bullington priory and the portion containing the priory is currently under pasture. However, this follows large-scale clearance of the site and deep ploughing, undertaken between 1953 and c.1970 (English Heritage 1964). Consequently, little survives of the earthworks visible at the site prior to 1953, although fortunately the extant earthworks were recorded on a 1930s aerial photograph and transcribed by Hadcock (figure 81) (1937). In addition to the photographs used by Hadcock, later aerials are available for the site, showing upstanding earthworks (figure 82). Using a combination of these aerial photographs, and twentieth- and nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey mapping, it is possible to define the inner court of the priory and reconstruct some of the water management on the site.

In his 1937 publication, Hadcock indicated the location of the buildings of the priory church and the nuns’ cloister (figure 83). Within Chapter 2 of this thesis the location of the canons’ cloister was identified from later aerial photography to the north of the priory church. Using later oblique photographs, unavailable in the 1930s, it is possible to reinterpret Hadcock’s original analysis of the position of the inner court

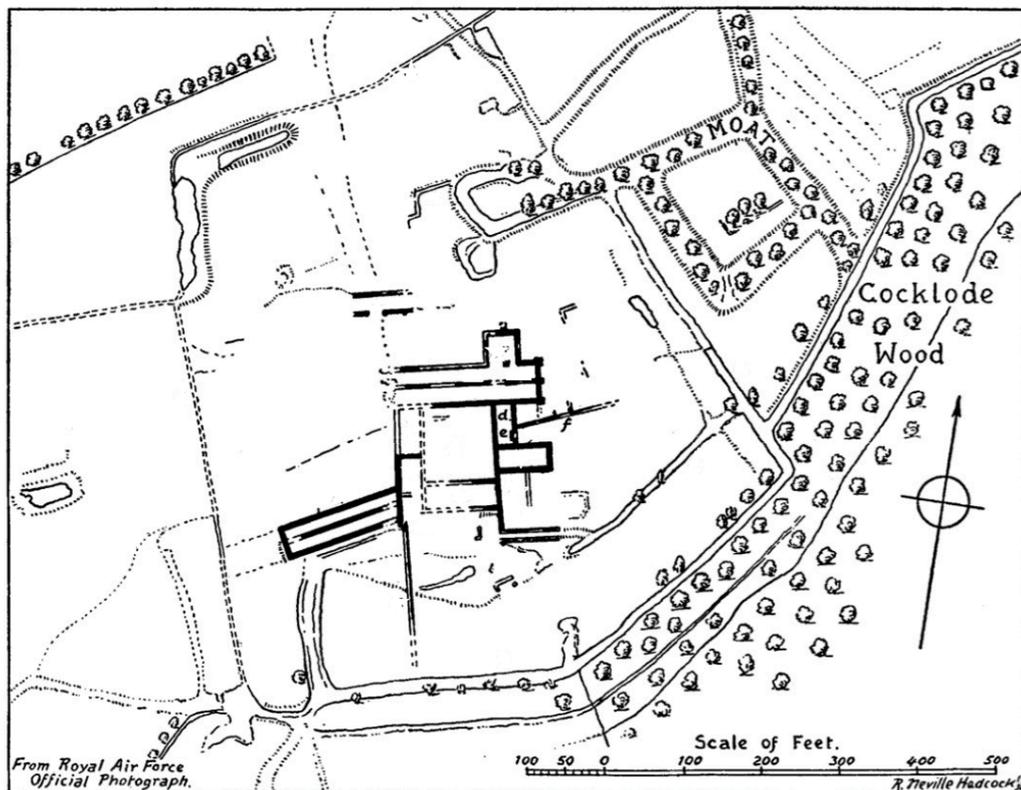


Figure 81 – Aerial photograph transcription of Bullington priory (Hadcock 1939)



Figure 82 – 1963 Aerial photograph of Bullington priory (CUCAP 1963)

(figure 81). The church (a), nuns' cloister (b) and canons' cloister (c) are clearly visible. The limits of the court must be traced on all four sides. This can be done on the south (d) and east (e) sides of the court, following the moat that encompassed the site and continues to the east. It is also possible to trace the moat continuing along the northern limit of the site (f) and turning to connect with the north-western corner of the moat, which is still extant in the 1963 aerial photograph. This is in contrast to Hadcock's original plan, which shows the northern limit of the inner court as a wall or hedge, however this may have been due to the fact that the photograph he was using did not extend far enough north to show the eastern portion of the northern moat. The western limit of the site (g) is somewhat harder to trace, probably having been filled in to allow the conveyance of farming equipment and to open up access to the site. It is also possible that this section of the boundary was made up of a wall, rather than a moat, as shown on Hadcock's plan.

The access to the site was probably through the gap in the moat that made up the northern limit of the court (j). It is unclear whether there was a gatehouse at location (j), however neither aerial photograph, nor Hadcock's plan provides evidence for one. The position of access within the northern moat would fit with the position of the canons' cloister, placing it in between the entrance to the court and the location of the nuns' cloister. Hadcock identified a track leading from the entrance in the northern boundary (k) towards the priory church. The location of this track remains unchanged, as does the possibility of a gatehouse (i) to the north of the church, identified tentatively by Hadcock. The proximity of this gatehouse to the canons' cloister would place it as having projected from the eastern range. The existence on the pre-1953 aerial photograph of a ditch (j), stretching from the gatehouse to the moat, supports this theory. The canons' cloister, inner gatehouse and ditch, would have formed a barrier

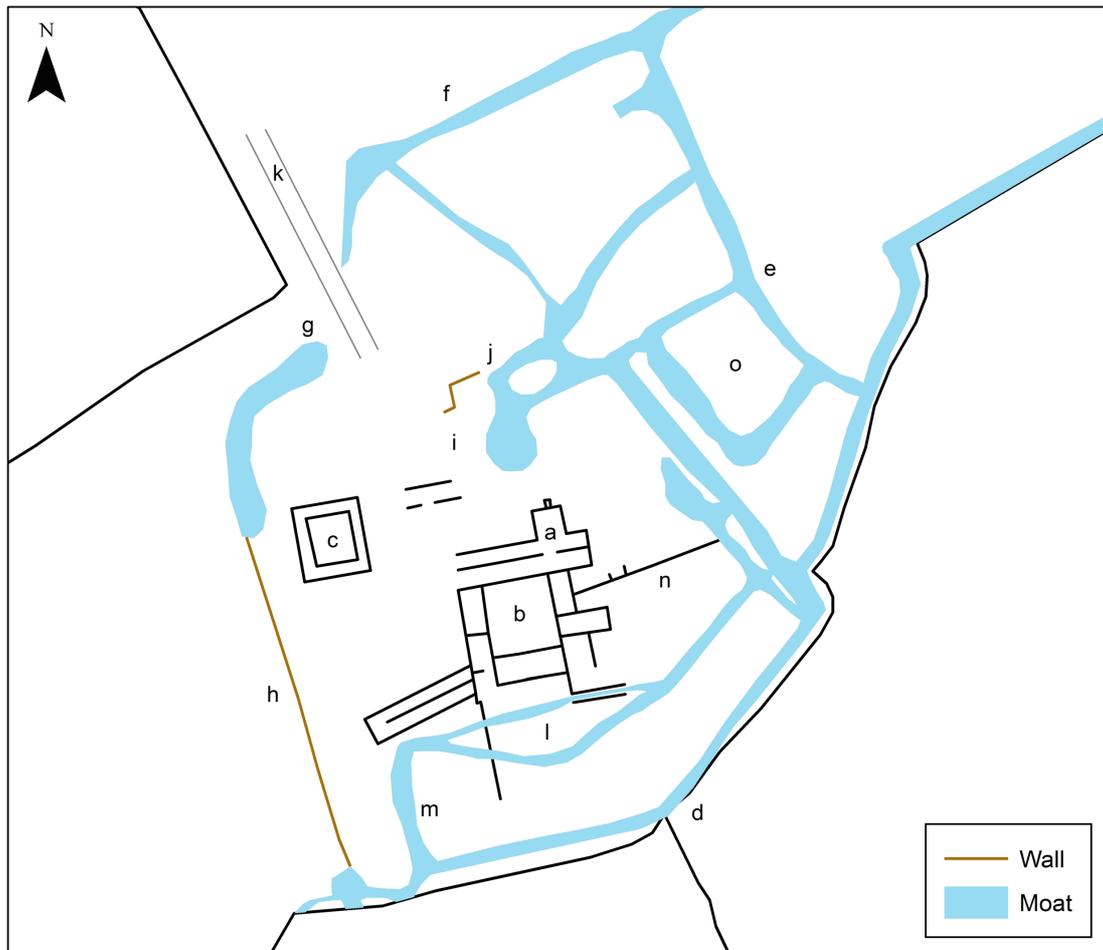


Figure 83 – Reconstruction of Bullington priory (partly after Hadcock 1939)

between the outer world and the nuns. The nuns' cloister was further enclosed by a waterway (l), identified by Hadcock, which carried water to the nuns' kitchen and flushed the nuns' reredorter. The wall on Hadcock's plan (n), stretching from the nuns' chapter house to the eastern moat, would have provided a division between the area to the east of the church and that area bordered by the nuns' cloister. The addition of a short length of moat (m), to the south-west of the nuns' west range running to the southern boundary moat, would ensure that the nuns' cloister was separated on all sides from that of the canons. This moat would also have provided a source of water (l) to the kitchens and reredorter.

There are a number of features shown within the aerial photograph that cannot be accounted for, the square island (o) formed by the moats, to the east of the inner precinct may have been the site of an industrial activity best kept away from the monastery, but which required an abundance of water. Similarly, a series of earthworks within the canons' court are evident, formed from a series of ditches or banks. These may mark divisions or enclosures for agriculture or other activities taking place within the inner court. Features (o) & (p) may also relate to the later life of the monastery, after the Dissolution, for which very little information survives.

This reinterpretation explains the features identified by Hadcock, as well as those visible on later aerial photographs. The wall (n) leading to the east, rather than connecting the two cloisters, appears to have been dividing them. The position of the inner gatehouse makes sense when seen as an access to the church. Indeed, as at Sempringham, the inner court is sub-divided into two, the north belonging to the canons and the southern half to the nuns. Walls and waterways divided these two inner courts from one another in a similar way to the central wall of the church divided the two halves. Unlike at Sempringham, where a pre-existing waterway appears to have been used to great effect, at Bullington a large number of moats and ditches would have had to be constructed to separate the nuns and canons.

Catley

The remains of the precinct at Catley priory only survive within the area that is protected by scheduling. The layout of the courts is discernible from a mixture of extant earthworks and soil marks from aerial photographs, and data from magnetometry survey. The most prominent aspect of the site is the substantial earthwork remains.

These earthworks were comprehensively surveyed (figure 84) for English Heritage in 1997 (Clark 1997), and this shows clearly the moats that bounded the precinct to the south and west. These large ditches are characterized as two channels eight metres in width and between 0.75 - 2.5 metres in depth. The original depth of these ditches would have certainly been much greater and the shallow remains suggest that they would once have contained running water that has since been cut off from its source and has silted up the moat.

A boundary to the east of the cloister (known as the King's Dyke) can be seen as earthworks and crop marks on aerial photographs (figure 85). These photographs of the site clearly show that a number the earthworks have changed over time. Photographs from 1955 show the King's Dyke as an earthwork (AP Cams 1955) whilst a later photograph from 1978 shows the dyke as a cropmark (AP Cams 1978). The earthwork appears to have been filled in between these dates to create a field to the east of the site, which now falls outside of the scheduled area. The King's Dyke formed the eastern and northern boundary of the precinct and was clearly a continuation of the moat seen on the earthwork survey (figure 86). The southern half of the precinct was much wider than the north, with only a small area to the north and the east forming the outer court. The size of the precinct is much smaller than that seen at Sempringham or Watton and reflects the value of the house as Catley was one of the poorest of the Gilbertine double houses; it was only valued at £30 in 1254 (Graham 1906c: 196), and at the foundation limits were set on the number sisters to 60, much lower than the 120 seen at Watton (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 195).

The scheduling document for Catley places the church to the north of the central group of earthworks (English Heritage 1998). Two distinct sets of ranges are described as surrounding two cloisters, adjacent to one another to the south of the church.

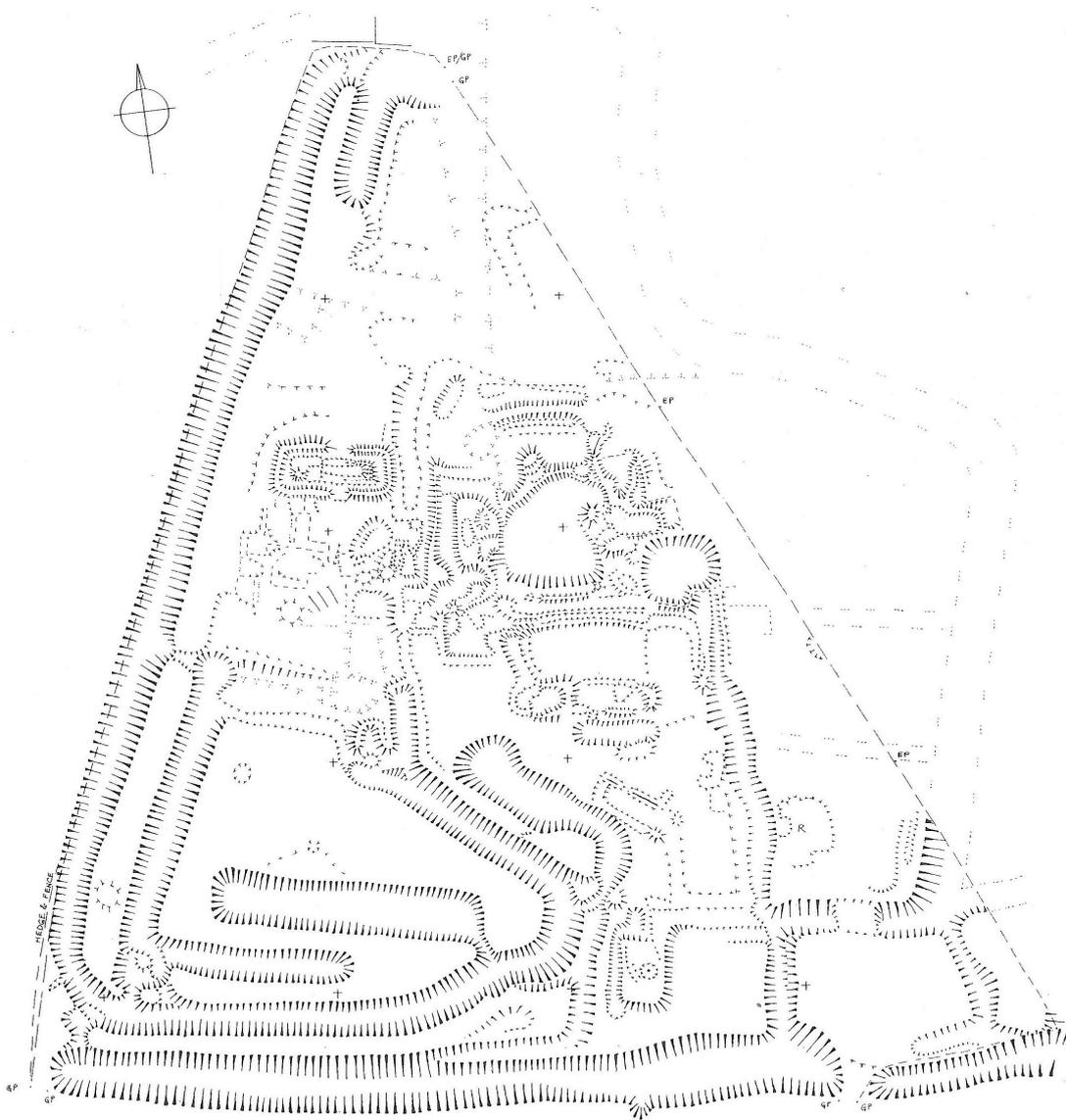


Figure 84 – English Heritage earthwork survey of Catley priory (Clark 1997)

The eastern cloister has been attributed to the nuns, due to it being larger than the western cloister, although this layout has since been refined by the author (see Chapter 3) and the arrangement of both cloisters is clearly visible from the earthworks.

The layout of the inner courts is easier to define for the nuns' court than for the canons. A ditch runs north from the southern moat of the precinct to form the eastern limit of the nuns' court. This ditch would have carried water to supply the kitchens and



Figure 85 – Aerial photograph showing the eastern limit of Catley priory precinct (CUCAP 1955)

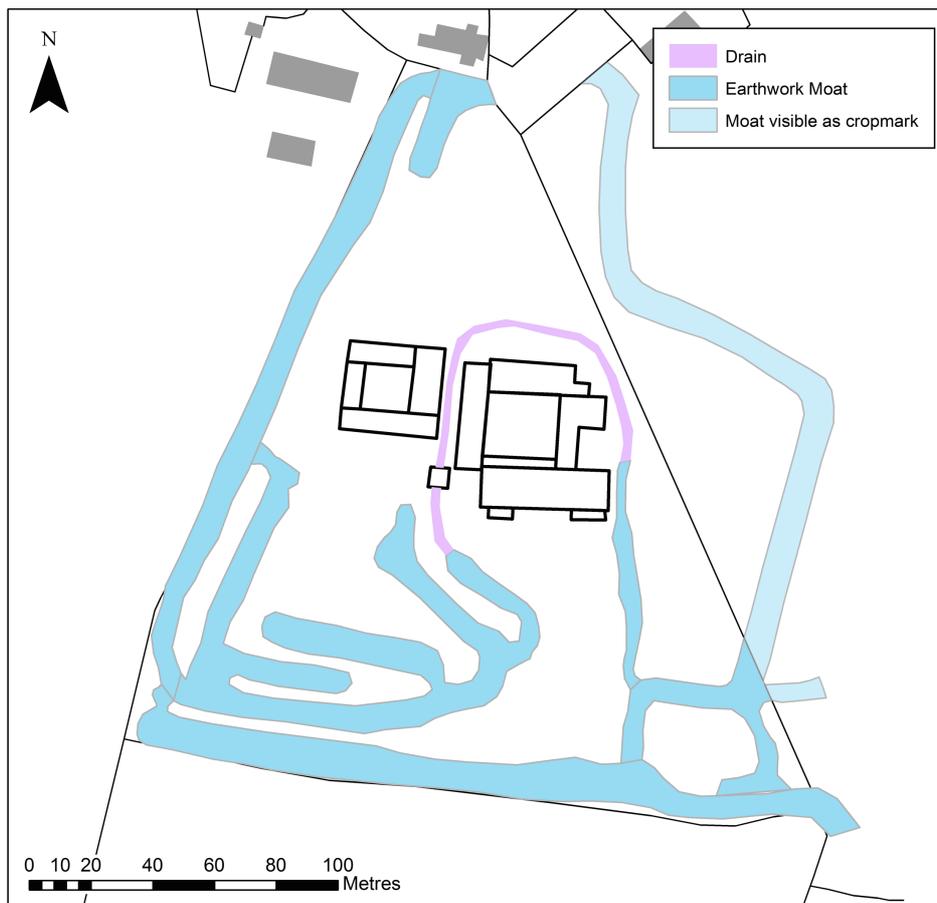


Figure 86 – Plan showing the moats and drain at Catley priory

to flush the reredorter of the nuns, whilst to the north a wall can be seen on the aerial photographs that follows the line of the nuns' north range and turns south following the line of the west range. This wall forms the eastern limit and would have separated the nuns' and canons' courts from one another. A second wall appears to connect the south-eastern corner of the canons' chapel with a building approximately 20 metres to the south, continuing the western boundary. This building is likely an inner gatehouse that gave access to the canons and visitors to the priory church, providing the only break in the wall and ditch that isolate this area of the site. On the south side the court is bordered by the precinct moat, a section of which runs north to block off access to the southern half of the nuns' court.

The layout of the canons' court is unclear from the aerial photographs and earthwork surveys. It is possible that a wall bordered the north and west sides of the canons' cloister as shown on the 1994 earthwork survey, and if the previous suggestion of an inner gatehouse were correct, then access to the site would have been from the north. There would likely have been an outer gatehouse in the northern most stretch of the moat, however this area has since been developed and no evidence is available. Visitors would have had to pass the canons' cloister to access the inner gatehouse. A similar arrangement is seen in the reconstruction at Bullington, with the path to the church passing the canons' east range and attached gatehouse. As at Bullington, this layout would have served to emphasize the separation between the sexes and the canons' position as guardians of the nuns.

To the south of the precinct are a number of linear earthworks that have been interpreted as fishponds (English Heritage 1998). However, Knowles has asserted that only one or two of the earthworks can be accepted as a fishpond with certainty and that the remainder likely relate to a complex system of water management (Knowles 1952).

To the east of these fishponds is a rectangular feature visible on aerial photography and the 1979 Ordnance Survey map. Although only a portion of the building is visible it is probable, given its size and position near the ponds and away from cloisters, that this building was a barn or similar agricultural structure.

In 1998 the Landscape Research Centre carried out a magnetometry survey around the periphery of the scheduled area. To the south of the precinct were recorded a second series of linear rectilinear anomalies most likely relating to service buildings outside of the central precinct of unknown function. The position of the dyke and the relatively noisy background seen on the survey may suggest the presence of industry (LRC 1997: 18). This is supported by evidence for the remains of a kiln on the south-west side of the precinct due to the recovery of a large number of roof and floor tiles, and two large pieces of vitrified flue (White 1976).

North Ormsby

The site of the Gilbertine priory at North Ormsby lies at the western end of a deep valley, approximately 1 kilometre to the west of the current location of North Ormsby Village. The priory is partly overlain, on the west side, by Abbey Farm and the associated outbuildings. The site of the priory church and the nuns' cloister was established by excavation in the 1960s (see Chapter 2). The excavation also suggested a location for the canons' cloister, to the north-west of the nuns (Dornier 1966: 5). There are a number of good aerial photographs for the site, which show a large number of earthworks bounding and intersecting in the area surrounding the priory buildings. However, the layout of the precinct at North Ormsby is confused due to the presence of the post-medieval farm and a set of formal gardens on the site (English Heritage

1996: 2). Despite these later features it is possible to trace the limit of the precinct boundary and a portion of the inner courts.

As at other Gilbertine double houses, the outer court at North Ormsby was mostly formed by a water filled moat (figure 87). This can be traced to the north, east and west of the priory, but the topography of the steep valley side to the south would have required the presence of a wall or bank. There is some evidence of a revetted path of a hollow way to the north of the priory, and it may have been that the valley on this side was seen as enough of a barrier that a wall was not required. To the east, a wide moat is still visible as an earthwork and shows up on aerial photography (figure 88). This eastern boundary moat flows into the stream that runs east, down the bottom of the valley towards North Ormsby village. To the north, the moat turns west and is visible as an earthwork until it meets the modern access road for the farm. It is probable that the northern boundary continued west on the northern side, or along the line of the road. There is however, no evidence from aerial photographs to support this, as the area to the north of the road has been quarried and used as woodland. Two hundred metres to the west, the northern boundary is again identifiable as a moat and series of fishponds, and at its eastern end the moat turns south and stretch of moat approximately 80 metres in length, forming the western boundary.

It is possible to identify some of the boundaries that made up the inner courts of the nuns and canons at North Ormsby (figure 89). The most complete of these is that of the nuns. During the 1966 excavation of the site Dornier recorded a bank (a) running to the south of the nuns' cloister, the same bank is also visible on aerial photographs as an earthwork. This bank runs for approximately 150 metres from east to west and forms the southern limit of the nuns' court. Dornier (1966: 6) excavated a portion of this bank and uncovered a rough, undressed wall that she identified as the boundary of the inner

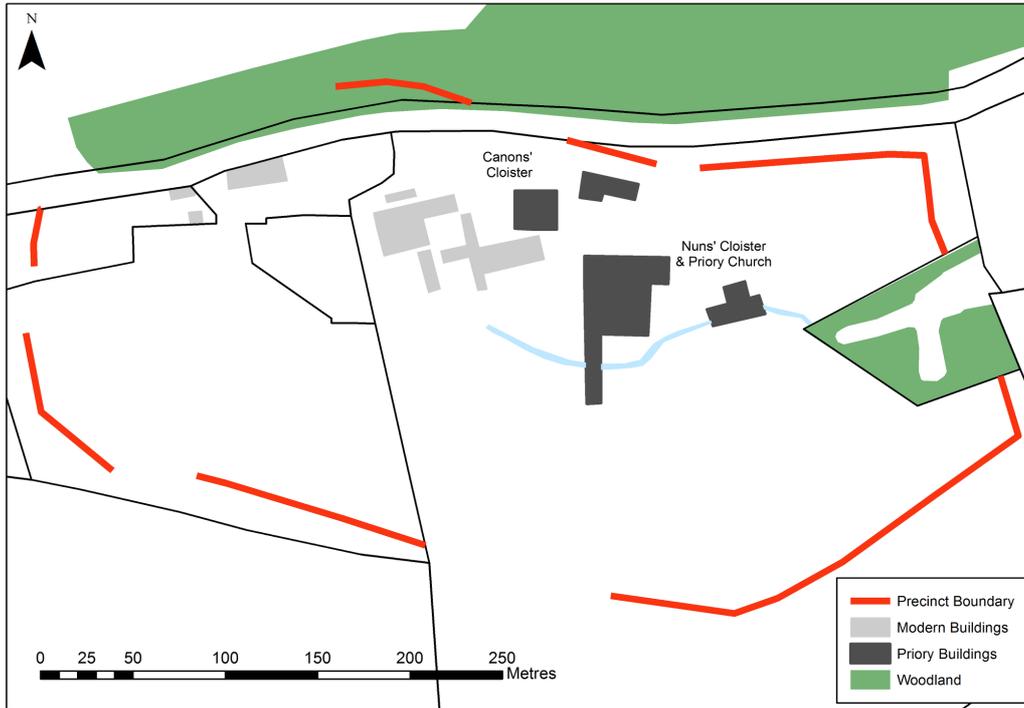


Figure 87 – Plan showing the precinct boundary at North Ormsby Village



Figure 88 – Aerial photograph showing the precinct boundary at North Ormsby Village (CUCAP 1951)

precinct. At its western end this wall connects to a second section of wall (d) that appears to have formed the southern portion of the eastern boundary. The earthwork of this wall is incomplete and has been disturbed by later activity. At its eastern end the wall (a) turns north for 67 metres, delineating the eastern boundary of the inner court. Dornier also identified the northern boundary as the return of this wall (a), turning west back towards the priory church. It is likely that this wall continued and connected into a similar banked earthwork (b) that probably also represents a wall line. Unlike at other Gilbertine sites, there is no evidence of a partition separating the priory cemetery from the nuns' court, although one likely would have been present.

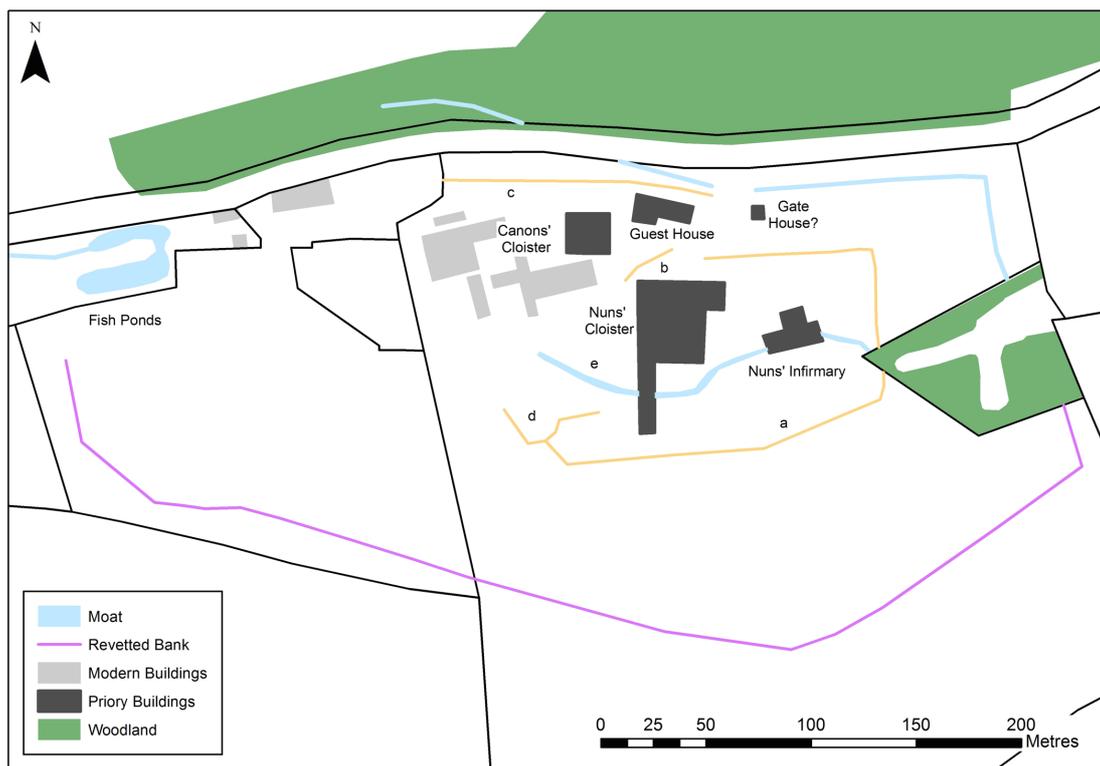


Figure 89 – Plan of North Ormsby showing the inner courts of the nuns and canons (partly after Dornier 1966)

There would also have been a boundary between the nuns' and canons' courts, although unlike at Sempringham and Watton this boundary does not seem to have been a water filled channel. It may have been that the drain for the canons' cloister separated the two, however given the proximity of the two cloisters it is likely that the canons' reredorter would have been located within the western range. To the north of the position of the canons' court, aerial photographs show the remains of a wall line (c) that would have formed the northern boundary to the court (this probably also represents the boundary of the whole precinct on the northern side). The remaining boundaries of the canons' court are no longer visible due to post-medieval and modern disturbance. Access to the site was probably granted via the small location as the modern farm track, to the north of the nuns' cloisters. This is supported by the identification by English Heritage of the gatehouse to the east of the road and a possible guesthouse or hospital to the west (English Heritage 1996: 3). Despite this, there is no actually documentary evidence for a hospital at North Ormsby and it is therefore more likely that this building acted as a guesthouse for visitors to the priory. As at other Gilbertine sites, visitors would have approached the priory from the side of the canons' court and the priory church. These buildings would have formed a barrier to the nuns' cloister, restricting not just access, but any view of the female religious.

Other than the gatehouse and possible guesthouse buildings to the north of the precinct, only one other building is identifiable within the inner courts. This structure is located within the nuns' court, to the east of the cloister and is seen as an earthwork. The building was partially excavated by Dornier but the function was not identified. Given its position, it is likely that this building acted as the nuns' infirmary. The position is very similar to the infirmary at Shouldham and Sempringham, located to the east of the nuns' cloister. Such a building would have required fresh water, but as with

the majority of the inner court the course of drains and channels changed at some time following the Dissolution. The construction of Abbey Farm has removed much of the evidence for water management on the site, including the removal of the channel connecting the cloister water supply (e), with its source to the west.



Figure 90 – Aerial photograph showing the remains of the canons' court at North Ormsby (CUCAP 1978)

To the north-west of the priory, against the northern boundary moat, was a pair of fishponds. These ponds lay parallel to one another and were fed by the stream to the north. There appear to have been two sources of water for the priory, one supplying the priory buildings and a second providing water to the fishponds and moat. The first was from a stream running down the south side of the valley, directly south of the nuns'

cloister. This stream supplied the north-eastern portion of the boundary moat and may have also provided water to flush the priory's kitchen and reredorters. The second was to the west and flowed down from the head of the valley. This channel supplied the fishponds and the north-west and western sections of the precinct moat. It is more likely that this second channel provided the water for the flushing of the reredorters as it passed from west to east along the valley bottom. It is presumed that this channel would have eventually connected to the stream that flowed east to North Ormsby village, however activity in the post-medieval and modern periods has destroyed any evidence of the route it took.

Shouldham

St Mary's priory is located to the north of the village of Shouldham and is the only Gilbertine double house within the county of Norfolk, and was located on an area of natural area of high ground within the Fens. Following small-scale excavation, it has been suggested that the priory itself may have been situated on an artificial platform approximately 1.5 metres higher than the surrounding land, built against a scarp to the north-west (English Heritage 1995). The shape of the precinct at Shouldham reflects the shape of the high ground, as the boundaries are formed from water filled moats. No above-ground remains survive on the site and following a visit to the site by the author, no monastic stone was observed in the farm house or surrounding buildings that now stand on the site of the priory. No earthworks are visible to the north of the site. A series of ditches remains to the south and a number of crop marks are visible on aerial photographs. In Chapter 3 these photographs have been used to identify the priory church and to speculate on the location of the cloisters. It is also possible to establish

the boundary of the precinct and to suggest the possible position of the nuns' and canons' cloisters.

The precinct was surrounded by large water-filled moats measuring between 8-10 metres in width and around 1.5 metres in depth (figure 91). The only point at which this moat survives is to the south-west of the site, close to the entrance to the modern farm. In a survey of the earthworks in this area of the site, Cushion & Davison (2003: 152) gave the function of this feature as a road or hollow way, however given its position in conjunction to crop marks of the moat, it is certain that (a) is a section of the precinct perimeter. An aerial photograph from 1977 (figure 92) shows the relationship of this extant section of moat to the rest of the boundary, and the moat continues north and turns north-east to form the western boundary of the site. At its most northerly limit the moat turns a ninety-degree angle and continues south, forming the eastern limit of the precinct. The eastern boundary can be seen as a crop mark or parch mark on aerial photographs (figure 93). To the south, the boundary is unclear; it turns west at a level below the cloister and church buildings, however it is no longer visible as a crop mark further west. Approximately 15 metres to the west, the boundary appears much narrower and is formed by a series of ditches that make up four rectangular enclosures. The boundary appears much wider on the eastern side; this may be due to the village of Shouldham being to the south-west of the priory. The southern and eastern boundaries would have been visible from the village, whilst it was only farmland to the north and east.

The layout of the courts of the nuns and canons is unclear due to the construction of the modern farmyard on the site of the cloisters. Despite this, some interpretation of the surviving cropmarks is possible (figure 94). To the north side of the cloisters was the great drain, which would have provided water for the nuns' kitchens and flushed

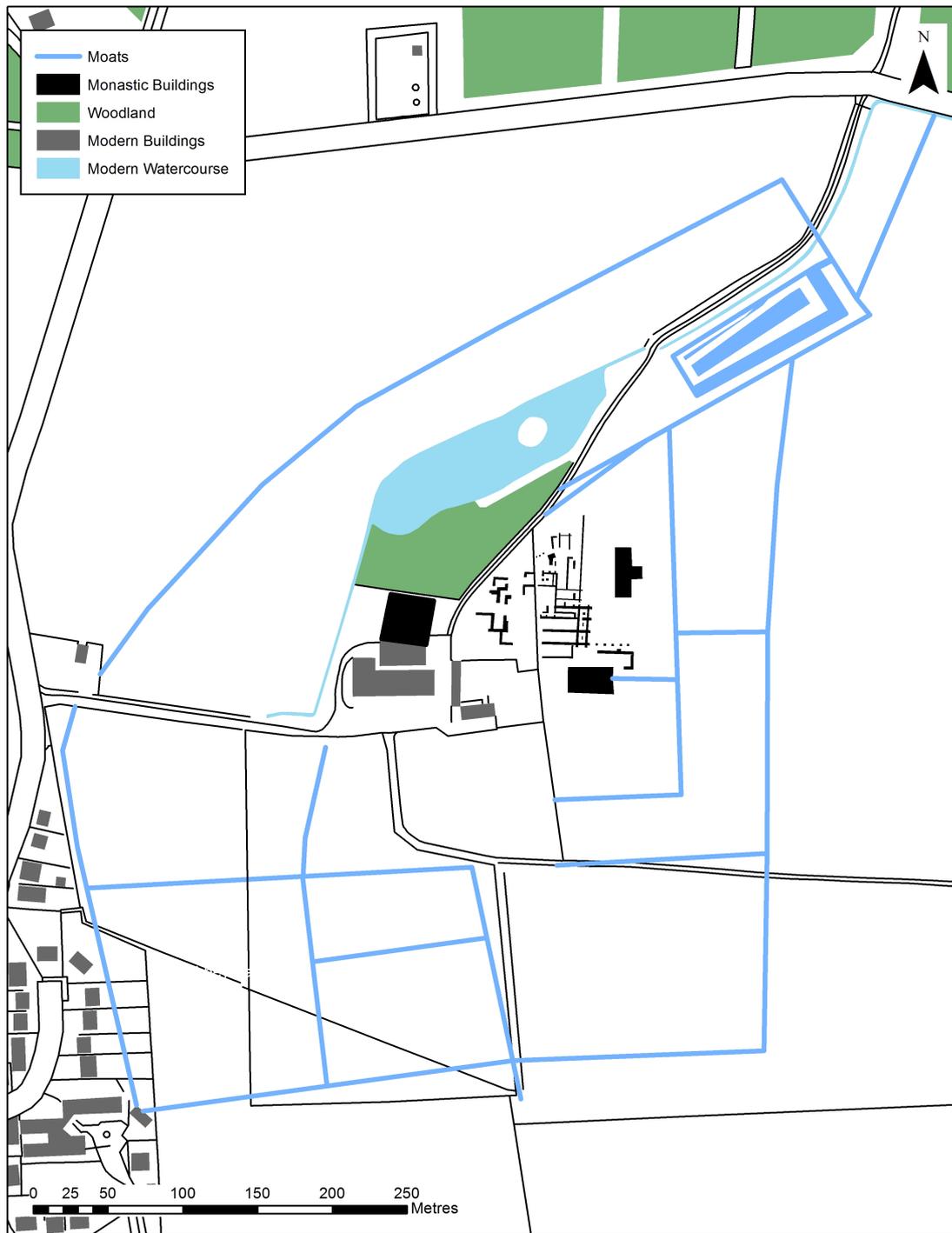


Figure 91 – Map showing an overview of the moated enclosures at Shouldham priory (partly after Edwards 1989)



Figure 92 – 1977 Aerial photograph showing the northern half of the precinct boundary at Shouldham priory, looking west (Edwards 1977, Copyright: Norfolk HER)

the reredorter of both cloisters. It has been suggested by English Heritage (1995: 2) that the source of water at Shouldham came from the north-west of the site. The portion of great drain that can be seen to the east of the cloisters (a) would therefore have provided the fresh water to the priory. The return of the drain can be seen on the north-east side of the priory (b) and is formed of two channels. To the east of (a) the drain probably splits with one channel to carry fresh water to the canons' cloister and a second to supply the nuns' kitchen, then to flush their reredorter. These channels then meet at (b) and the water carried to the north.

A wall (c) projects north from the north-east corner of the nuns' chapter house and meets the drain. This wall, visible on the 2006 aerial photograph, limits the eastern side of the nuns' court. A second wall (d) runs parallel to the first, to the east. This wall runs from the great drain, south to a second channel and would have marked the



Figure 93 – 2006 Aerial photograph showing south-eastern extent of the precinct boundary at Shouldham priory (Copyright: Google: Infoterra & Bluesky)

boundary between the inner and outer courts. The area to the west of this wall would have probably contained the nuns' and canons' cemetery and been accessible from the canons' court.

On the south side, the church would have bordered the nuns' cloister. Abbey Farm and the associated farmyard have destroyed any evidence of the southern limit of the canons' court. It is likely that a continuation of the east-west channel (e), would have bounded the canons' court and limited access to the church. Similarly, the farm has destroyed all evidence of the division between the two courts. However, the route of the northern section of channel (f) to the south of the cloisters may provide an explanation; if this channel continued north at this angle it would have divided the two cloisters and connected to the great drain. The use of a channel to divide the two cloisters is seen at Sempringham and Watton, and although not conclusive, the position of (f) is suggestive. The arrangement of the precinct and the position of the road leading from Shouldham village, suggest that the site was accessed from the west, close to the entrance to the present-day farm from Warren Road, although no evidence of a gatehouse remains (English Heritage 1995: 2). As at Sempringham, Catley and Bullington, this would have placed the canons' cloister between any visitors and the nuns. Furthermore, in a similar fashion to Bullington, it is likely that an inner gatehouse would have separated visitors from the church, and as with the canons, a channel or wall would have restricted access to the nuns.

In addition to the remains of the church and cloister, a number of buildings and channels are visible on the 1989 aerial photograph, within the field to the north-east of the farm (figure 95). To the north-east of the church are a number of rectilinear crop marks forming a rectangular building with a single internal division at the northern end, with a smaller room projecting to the east. This building probably served as the tithe barn for the monastery and is in similar size and form to the great barns at Coxwell (Aston 2000: 125) and Thornton abbey (Willmott & Townend 2011: 6). To the south of this barn is a rectangular building fed by a water channel from the east, although the

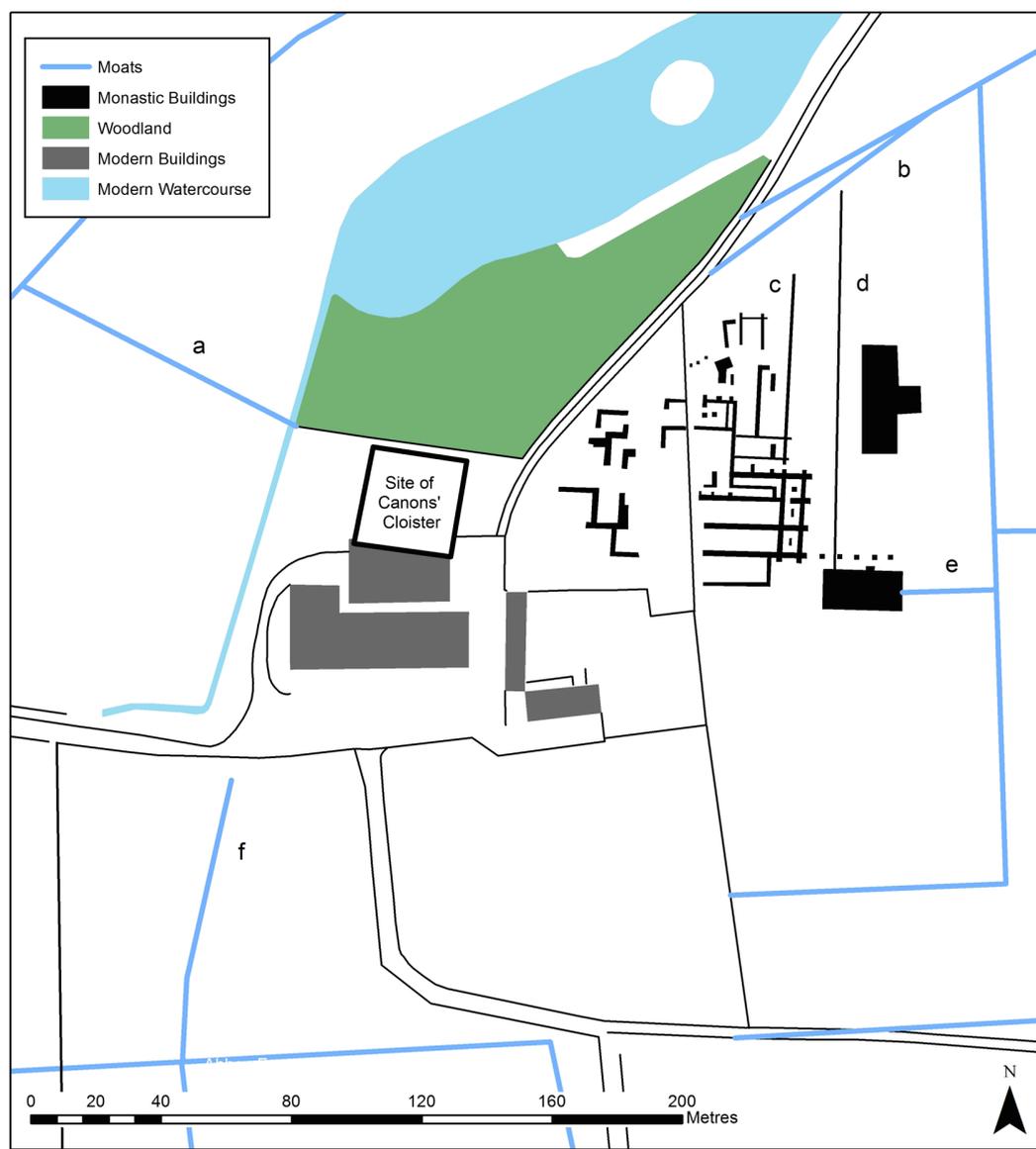


Figure 94 – Map showing the inner courts at Shouldham priory (partly after Edwards)

outflow from the building is unclear on the aerial photographs. Given this building's proximity to the church and cloisters, and the requirement for it to have a supply of water, it is highly likely that this building functioned as the monastery's infirmary.

To the north of the inner court, to the north-east of the priory, a series of large fishponds are visible from aerial photography (figure 95). The fishponds at Shouldham were similar in scale, if simpler in form, to those found at St Benet's abbey, in East

Norfolk. They consisted of a series of rectangular ponds fed by a channel to the north-east. Following disturbance by ploughing in the late-1960s a kiln (figure 96) was uncovered directly to the north of these fish ponds, approximately 0.3 kilometres to the north-east of Abbey Farm (Smallwood 1978: 45). The kiln was a rectangular structure with an internal measurement of 3.6 metres x 2.5 metres, with walls 0.76 metres thick constructed from chalk and clay. The walls were lined with tiles, horizontally set within the clay superstructure.

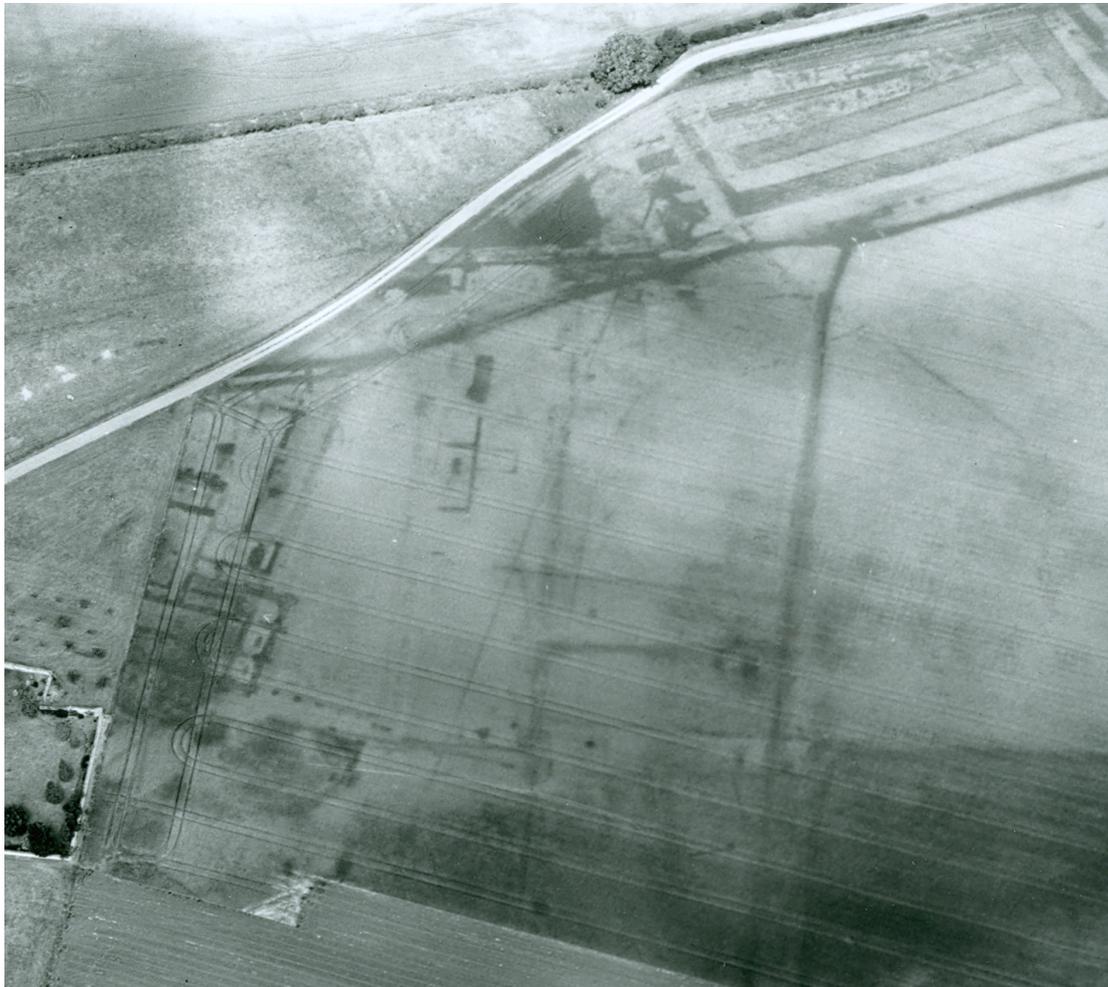


Figure 95 – 1989 Aerial photograph showing the fishponds, tithe barn and infirmary at Shouldham priory (Edwards 1989, Copyright: Norfolk HER)

The report on the excavations associated four phases to the life of the kiln, encompassing cycles of demolition and reconstruction. A lack of wasters meant that the products of the kiln had to be distinguished from the materials forming the later phases. These included roof tiles, finials, bricks and floor tiles, dated stylistically to the thirteenth century (ibid: 47). Given these dates and the proximity of the kiln to the priory there is little doubt of the association between the two and it is likely that the

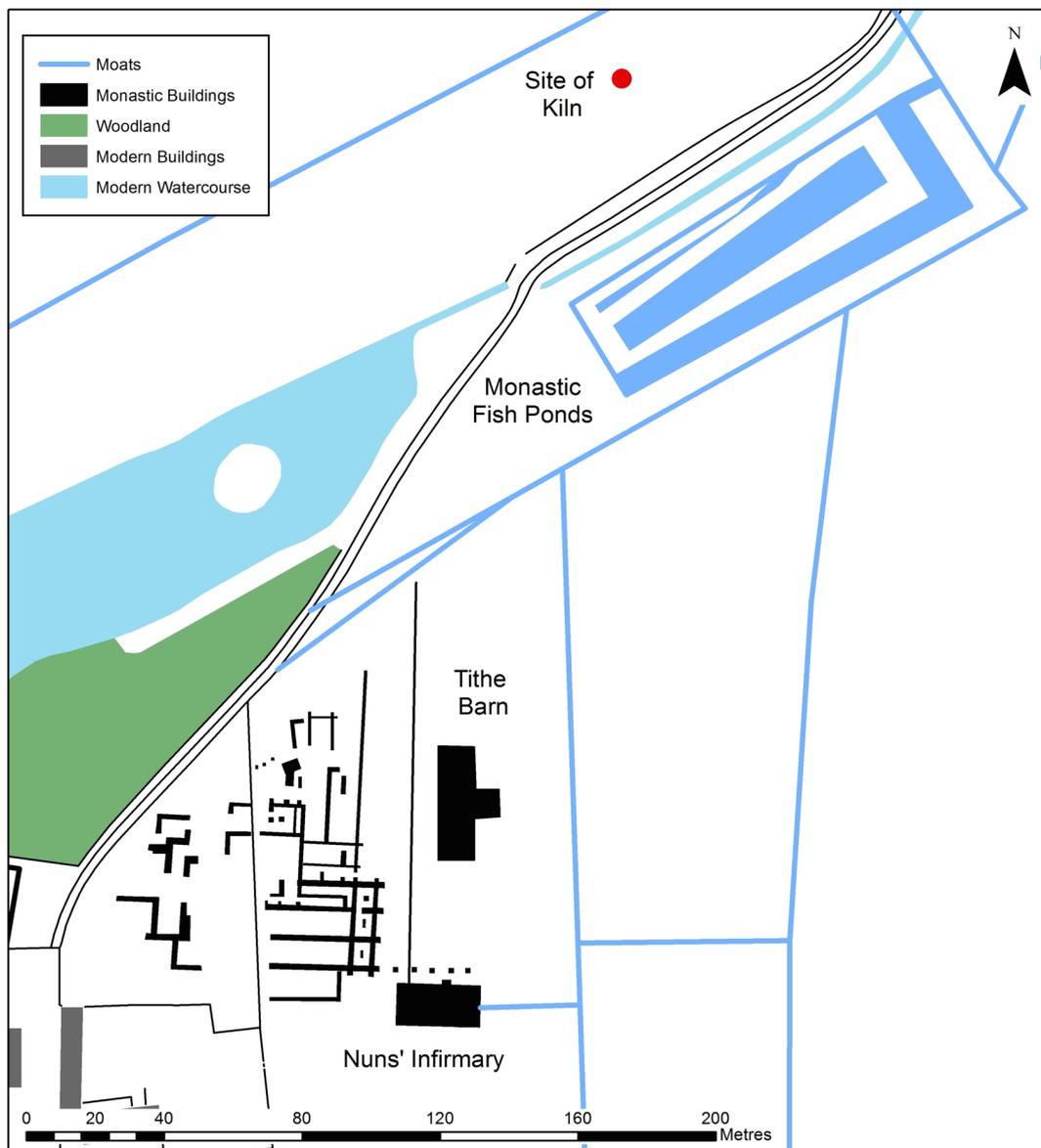


Figure 96 – Plan showing the, fishponds tithe barn and infirmary at Shouldham priory (partly after Edwards 1989)

kiln was used to produce material for repairs, rather than for the original construction of the priory buildings.

Despite the lack of standing remains or large number of earthworks at Shouldham, it is possible to reconstruct the limits of the priory precinct. The position of a number of boundaries of the inner courts can also be identified. It is clear that at Shouldham, as at Sempringham, Watton, Bullington and Catley, an emphasis was placed on use of water filled moats to enclosure both the priory and the courts of the nuns and canons. The water management system at Shouldham was complex and suggests that the majority of the precinct was planned before the church and cloisters were constructed, rather than piecemeal as the precinct evolved. This may have been due to relatively late date of the foundation of Shouldham, at a time when a workable arrangement had already been adopted at other houses.

Sixhills

Equidistant between Bullington, Tunstall and Alvingham was positioned the Gilbertine double house of Sixhills priory, less than 15 miles separating each site. Sixhills was positioned on high ground 81 metres above sea level, relatively high for the county and when compared with other Gilbertine sites. The aspect of the priory was similar to that of North Ormsby also located on the edge of the Wolds, with an availability of both pasture and arable land (Golding 1995: 212). The position of the cloisters at Sixhills are unknown, it is likely that the construction of the post-suppression house and the associated landscaping of the gardens were responsible for the lack of visible earthworks. It is unknown how much of the priory was reused in the construction of the post-medieval house, however the later building has done much to

obscure the medieval remains. Despite this, earthworks on the periphery of the site are visible on aerial photographs (figure 97) and have been transcribed by the RCHME. These photographs provide evidence of the layout of the priory precinct and possibly the water management strategy present on site. Surviving remains appear to relate to the precinct boundaries and portions of the inner courts can also be inferred from the earthworks.

A bank represents the northern limit of the precinct with a parallel water channel to the south continuing south at its eastern extent (a). The channel to the south of the bank turns south at its eastern end and continues for 135 metres, until narrowing and branching into a series of smaller channels. Everson (1991: 162) explained the function of two banks (a & b) as a pair of linear fishponds. If this is the case, then the form of these ponds is different to the fishponds seen at other Gilbertine sites. It is more likely that channel (a) represents an extant section of the perimeter moat that would have bordered the precinct, as the use of water filled moats is visible at the majority of other large double house sites. It is likely this arrangement underwent substantial reconfiguration following the Dissolution and it is possible that these sections of the monastic moat became the focus for a series of features within a Tudor water garden, suggesting a house with a northern or eastern aspect. The nature of the channels is similar to those that made up the Tudor water garden at Nun Cotham priory (Everson 1996: 13).

The eastern boundary of the inner court is delineated by the remains of a precinct wall (c), now only visible as a crop-mark within the field to the north-east of the site, and as an earthwork adjacent to the modern road (d). This wall would originally have had a road running north to south on the outside of the precinct, as is attested to by the discovery of a cobbled surface during field-walking to the east of the site (Everson *et*

al. 1991: 163). This road was relocated in the 1830s and moved to the west, cutting through the monastic precinct. This suggests that channel (b) is the eastern limit of one of the inner courts, rather than the precinct. The western and southern boundaries of the precinct are currently unknown, however the earthwork bank (e) to the west of the farm may represent its western extent. The modern roadway has probably destroyed the southern boundary of the site, but the presence of features associated with industry to the south of the road, suggests that it marks the limit of the inner court. The water to feed the moats and water garden came from the east of the site and is visible on aerial photographs (InnerVisions 1998, RAF 1948). Crop marks also clearly show the continuation of a channel to the east, broken by course of the old road (figures 98 & 99). This channel may represent the main water supply and drainage to one or both of the monastic cloisters.



Figure 97 – Aerial photograph showing the earthworks at Sixhills priory (RAF 1948)

The area to the south west of the present-day farm on the south side of the modern road has yielded a number of sherds of medieval pottery, broken tiles, wasters and kiln furniture, suggesting the site of a medieval kiln (f) (Everson *et al.* 1991: 164). This mirrors the position of a kiln identified by excavation at Haverholme priory, situated to the south of the site, and would suggest that the area to the south of the road was part of the outer court, as presumably any industrial activity would have taken place away from the inner courts of the monastery.

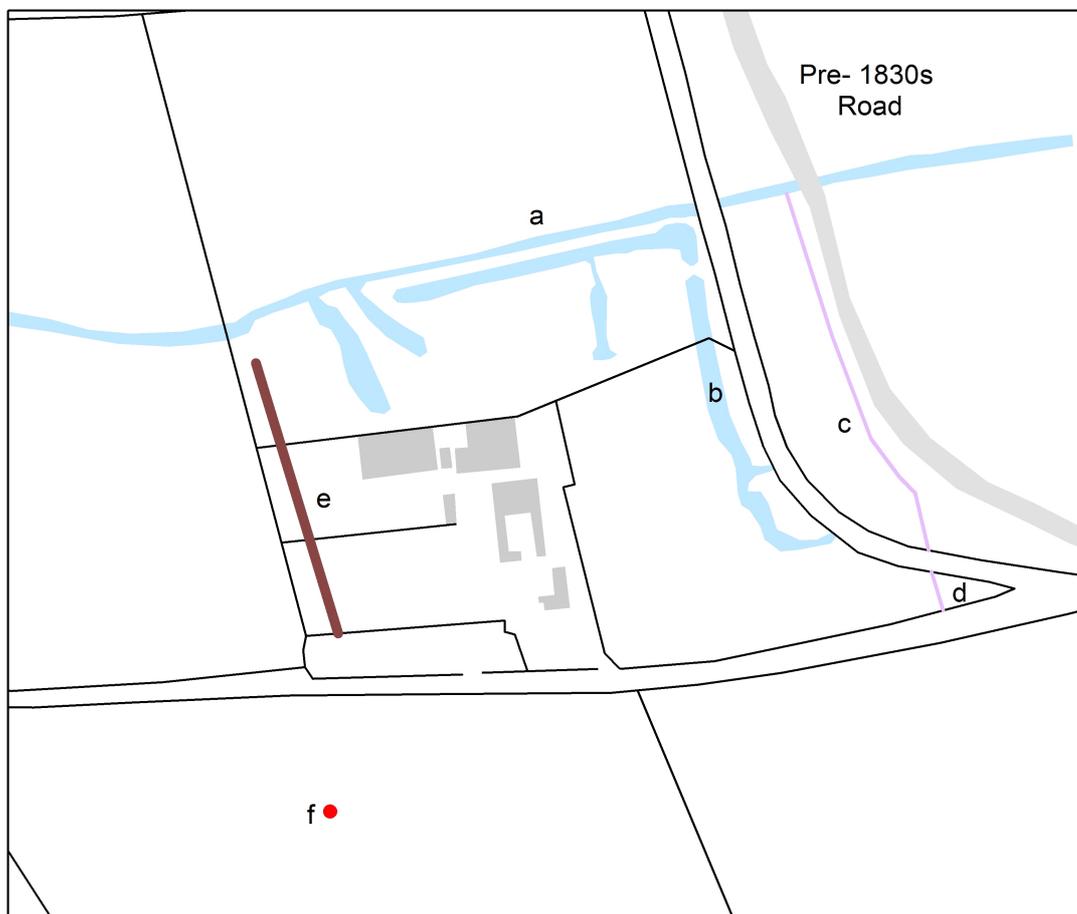


Figure 98 – Plan showing the position of the northern, eastern and western boundaries of the precinct at Sixhills priory (after Everson *et al.* 1991)



Figure 99 – Aerial photograph showing the pre-1830s road and associated features at Sixhills, looking south-east (InnerVisions 1998)
Alvingham

The site of Alvingham priory is located in the centre of the village of Alvingham, less than 1 kilometre to the north east of the village of North Cockerington. Alvingham is located less than 2 miles to the north of the medieval centre of Louth. The house at Alvingham was founded between 1148 and 1154 (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 194). The location of the cloisters and the priory church at Alvingham is unknown. However, a number of upstanding earthworks and parch-marks survive, and are visible on aerial photography (figures 100 & 101) and the Ordnance Survey.

One peculiarity at Alvingham is the presence of two parish churches within the same churchyard, to the east of the village (figure 102). The church of St Adelwold now acts as the parish church for Alvingham. Whilst St Mary's was the historic parish church for the North Cockerington, the parish that borders Alvingham to the south. Some confusion arises from the shared dedication of the church and priory, to St Mary. Despite this identical dedication, St Mary's was not the priory church and does not

stand on the same site. The earliest portions of St Mary's church date to the first half of the twelfth century, prior to the foundation of the double house (Esling 1972: 5). However, a papal indulgence granted in 1402 gives some idea as to the location of the priory in relationship to the church. The indulgence was to visitors who gave alms 'for the conservation of the chapel of St Mary the Virgin situated at the gate of the Gilbertine priory of Alvingham' (Redford 2010: 87). If this chapel were the parish church, it would suggest that it was located very close to the priory buildings. St Adelwold's church also has phases of construction that date to the early-twelfth century. Given the rarity and the date of the saint's name, the church was built on the site of an earlier Saxon church (Esling 1972: 2) (see Redford 2010 for a full discussion of the historical evidence for the churches at Alvingham).



Figure 100 – Aerial photograph of parch-marks to the north-east of Alvingham village (Cole 1999)



Figure 101 – Aerial photograph of earthworks to the south and west of Alvingham village (CUCAP 1951a)



Figure 102 – Map showing the location of the parish churches at Alvingham Village (Crown Copyright 2016)

Using a combination of Aerial Photography and Ordnance Survey mapping it is possible to reconstruct portions of the precinct boundary and the internal divisions of the courts (figure 103). To the north-east of the parish church and Abbey Farm is a double ditch and bank enclosure (a). This earthwork is approximately 20 metres wide and consisted of a pair of water filled ditches, forming the north-eastern boundary moat of the site. On the western side the Louth Navigation canal, constructed in the late-eighteenth century, cuts the earthworks. This navigation runs parallel to the River Lud and the boundary probably joined, and was fed by the Lud to the south of the canal, and this is the only surviving evidence for the large moated precinct boundary. The majority of earthworks and parch marks make up the inner divisions of the courts. As at other double houses there would have been one court of the canons' cloister, one for the nuns' cloister and the priory church, and the outer court, divided up for the tasks of agriculture and industry at the monastery. However, at Alvingham there may also have been a court for the parish churches of St Mary and St Adelwold. The channel (b) that runs to the west of the churches may form the western side of this court with the moat (a) limiting the eastern and northern sides. Both churches are known to have been active as parish churches throughout the lifetime of the priory and it would certainly have been a priority for the order to keep the local parishioners separate from the court of the nuns.

This arrangement would suggest that the priory cloisters were located between the village and the outer moat, and there is a small amount of evidence as to the possible location of the cloistral ranges. Geophysical survey carried out in 2009 (Bunn 2009b) identified a possible range of buildings directly to the north-east of Abbey Farm. The scale of the individual structures was relatively large, suggesting that they may have represented the north-east corner of the priory ranges and church. Further to this, a watching brief carried out on the area directly to the south-west of the farm (Allen 2001)

identified two large medieval walls thought to relate to two large buildings. Together these interventions provide tentative evidence for the location of one set of cloistral ranges under the present buildings of Abbey Farm. Given the size of the cloister was large enough to have been detected on either side of the farm, it is suggested that this was the location of the nuns' cloister and priory church, rather than that of the canons.

The mill race and mill stream run through the site, starting at and returning to the River Lud. Its proximity to the possible site of the nuns' cloister advocates it function as the great drain, used to flush the reredorter and provide fresh water for the kitchens. This channel would also have fed the outer moats (a) and the ditches forming the inner divisions of the courts (b & d). It is a possibility that after the Dissolution the drain was adapted into a mill race and stream, whilst it is also likely that the channel served both functions during the lifetime of the priory; at Brinkburn priory in Northumberland the great drain served both its traditional function and that of powering the monasteries mill (English Heritage 1994b: 2). The priory of Alvingham is known to have had seven or eight mills in the local area, the majority of which have not been located (Redford 2010: 601). The presence of the mill race and mill stream within the outer precinct of the priory suggests that this was the location of one of the mills belonging to the order.

The entrance into the monastic precinct is unclear from the earthworks. However, due to the lack of break in the earthworks on the south, east and northern sides of the precinct, it is suggested that the original approach would have been from the village, to the east of the priory. If this were the case then it would be expected that, as at other Gilbertine site, the canons' cloister would be to the east of the nuns'. The great drain/mill race probably separated the two cloisters and visitors would have to have

passed the canons' cloister and over the water filled channel to gain access to the nuns' cloister and the priory church.

To the south-west of the churches are a series of fishponds, fed by a channel (b), that are extant as earthworks. The channel (b) continues south towards the canal and then turns west, crossing the millstream and continuing towards the village. This ditch appears to have formed the southern boundary of one or two of the inner courts. Two channels branch from the channel (b), the first of these is a north-south ditch (c) that was probably part of the portioning of the outer court. The second ditch (d), branches to the north and connects to a fishpond on the other side of the modern village. This channel may have formed the eastern limit of the canons' court, with the eastern being the millrace or great drain. To the south of the canal and the Lud are two large enclosures (f & g), which would have formed a portion of the outer court of the priory. There is also evidence that at this point the moats and drains returned to the River Lud and flowed away to the south.

Although the evidence for the Gilbertine priory at Alvingham is sparse, it is possible to reconstruct some of the wider monastic precinct. The western and northern boundaries can be established, whilst the southern and western have been destroyed by agricultural activity and the encroachment of the village from the west. This encroachment has also destroyed any evidence of the location of the canons' court and the expansion of Abbey Farm has left little evidence of the nuns' cloister. A separate court would have surrounded the churches, for the use of the parishioners of Alvingham and North Cockerington. This would have been unique to the double precinct at Alvingham and would have been in addition to the courts of the nuns and canons.

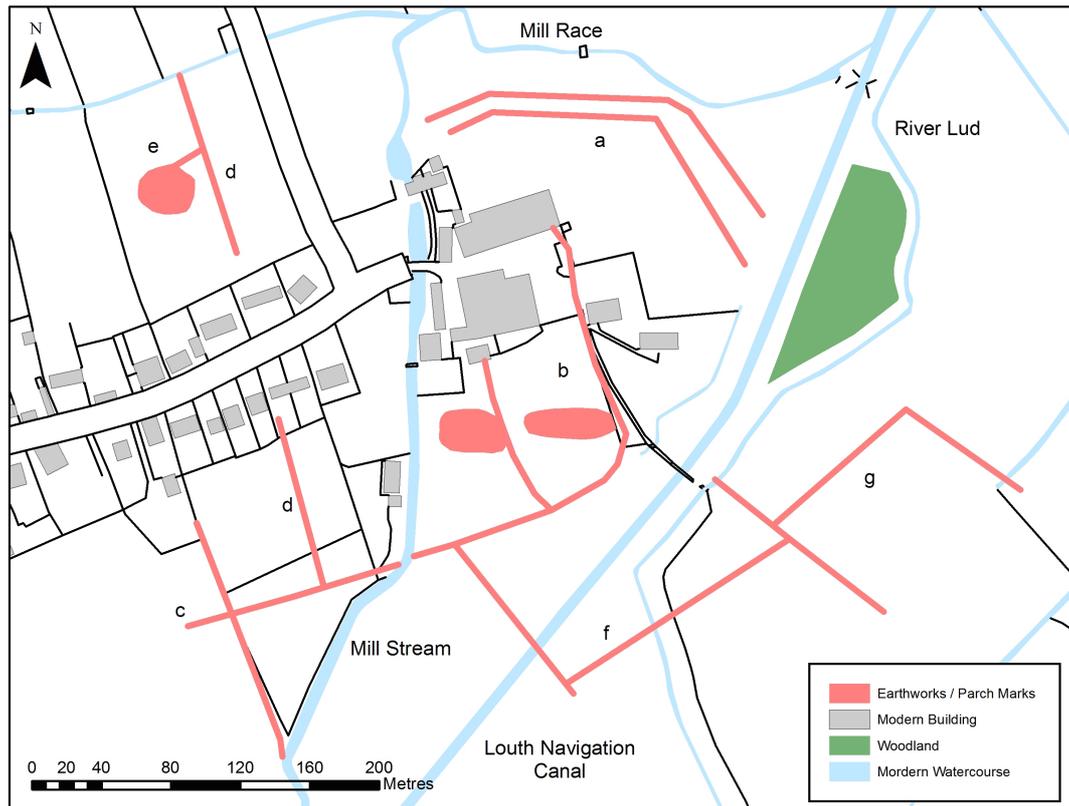


Figure 103 – Map of the priory earthworks at Alvingham (produced by author)

Double House Summary

Evidence from the double houses, clearly shows the importance placed upon the physical division men and women within the wider monastic precinct, and not just in the cloistral ranges. Furthermore, based upon the evidence from 9 double houses, it is now possible to present a schematic view of the idealized precinct of the double house (figure 104). This focuses on the divisions between the two inner cloisters, with the majority of the outer court surrounding the canons rather than the nuns.

Unlike other monastic orders that contained only nuns or canons, the Gilbertine double house required three separate courts; the outer court as well as two inner courts for the nuns and the canons. The majority of the monastic houses had watercourses separating the two groups. At Sempringham the Marse Dyke divided the two courts, at

Watton it was a channel that eventually flowed underneath the prior's lodge, whilst at Bullington it has been suggested that an offshoot of the priory's great drain divided the two cloisters. The use of water to divide the two groups was both practical and symbolic. In the same way that the order went to great lengths to separate the nuns and canons within the church, similar effort would have been expended in the construction and maintenance of these channels to separate their cloisters. At Catley and North Ormsby a greater emphasis seems to have been placed on the use of walls to form the divisions between the two groups, perhaps because these sites were relatively more remote than the other houses, and it may have been that the order was less worried about appearances than at the larger, more public houses at Sempringham and Watton.

Although at Sempringham the Marse Dyke separated the cloisters, the priory relied more on walls or banks rather than water channels to delineate the inner courts. It may have been that, as the first of the Gilbertine houses, the form of the precinct at Sempringham developed piecemeal, evolving to suit the needs of the inhabitants. The planning of later priories would have benefited from this evolution and a more complex initial plan may have been the result. It is clear that at the foundation of a number of the houses a plan was devised for the courts before the priory buildings were begun. The complexity of the water management at Watton and Bullington suggest the existence of a preconceived layout for the precinct that took into account availability of water and landscape. This is particularly evident at Shouldham, where the boundary of the precinct mimics the natural topography. The access route at all of the monasteries was via the court of the canons. Visitors would have to have passed through the canons' court before accessing the priory church, which could have been easily restricted. The canons' court and the church itself acted as a barrier between any visitors and the nuns.

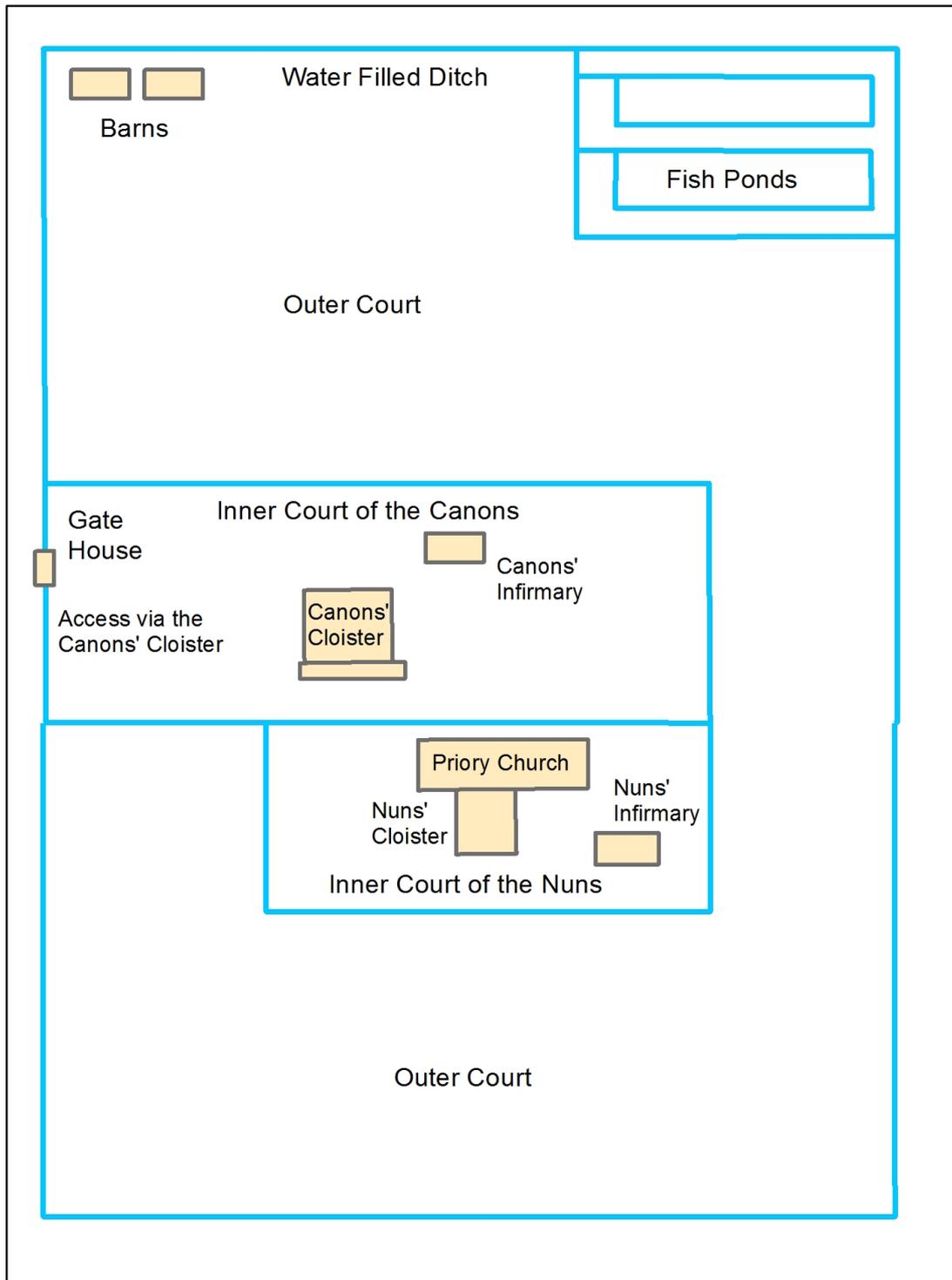


Figure 104 – Schematic Plan of the Gilbertine Double Precinct (produced by author)

Single houses

Extensive evidence of the precincts and inner courts at Gilbertine single houses only exists for four sites. The quantity of this data is variable and is likely a result of the small-scale of the single houses when compared to the larger double houses of the order. Despite this, it is possible, using this data, to characterise the layout of their precincts.

Clattercote

Clattercote priory was founded between 1148-66 by Bishop Robert de Chesney. The site is located within the parish of Claydon with Clattercote in Oxfordshire, 6 miles north of the medieval centre of Banbury. The earliest records for the site record the grant to the Gilbertines included a leper hospital (Salter 1907: 105). The suggested place name 'Clattercote' translates as 'cottage besides the clatter' (Gelling 1954: 418). This advocates for the priory having been located on the site of an earlier settlement, however no extant evidence of this earlier phase now exists. A largely seventeenth-century farmhouse that includes the southern range of the priory cloister currently occupies the site (WMFS 2008: 3). The house was largely remodelled in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the surrounding farm buildings mostly date to these periods (DoE 1988: 5).

Due to the surviving remains of the south range within the later house, the position of the canons' cloister can be located. Chapter 3 of this thesis has suggested the position of the priory church, based on geophysical survey and limited excavation. The location of the hospital, which was abandoned in the mid-thirteenth century, is currently unknown. The remodelling of the area surrounding the priory has disturbed

the remains of any earthworks or boundaries that may have acted as the limits of the inner court of the canons. Despite these limitations it is possible to trace the limit of the outer court using the position of the modern parish boundary and to locate a portion of the inner court.

The size and shape of the present-day parish of Clattercote appears to be a direct result of the lands owned by the priory at the time of the Dissolution. A good record exists for the life of the estate, after it passed to the Crown in 1538 (Mason 1972: 195), and it seems to have remained largely complete as it passed through the hands of various families in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is extremely likely that the current boundary of the parish represents those lands taken at the Dissolution (figure 105). The entry for the Banbury hundred in the *Victoria History of the County of Oxford* describes the estate of Clattercote, as a thin strip of land running east-west bordered to the west by the Warwickshire county boundary and to the north, east and south by small streams (ibid: 194). These features are identifiable on the modern OS mapping as the two tributaries of Highfurlong Brook, later diverted to feed the Oxford Canal.

These boundaries would have formed the total land holdings the order held directly surrounding the priory, rather than the precinct of the priory. It may have been that the enclosed area that contained the outer and inner courts was much smaller, although unfortunately, no evidence for walls or other divisions exists. The large size of the outlined outer precinct must also be viewed in the context of both a priory and a hospital. The size and nature of the hospital will be discussed further below, however the maximum number of inmates it was expected to contain was 55. It is extremely likely that the hospital and priory occupied separate courts, increasing the total area required for the site. This would have been even greater if the hospital contained both men and women, as was required by the endowment. Despite the lack of historical

information regarding segregation at Gilbertine hospitals it is probable that such a regime would have been in place. Evidence from the medieval hospital at Canterbury, founded 1080, suggests that separation of the sexes was being practiced (Watson 2006: 75). In this case of Clattercote the segregation of the sexes would have required either a large hospital with separate areas for men and women, or two buildings.

The Ordnance Survey from 1922 best shows earthworks to the south of the modern farmhouse (figure 106). The feature is a wide, water-filled ditch orientated east to west with two wings stretching to the north. This feature is marked on the 1882 OS as a 'moat' although it does not appear to fully surround the buildings but rather encompasses the garden to the south of the farmhouse. The relationship between the ditch and garden suggests that the moat relates to the post-medieval phase of the site and is most likely a decorative feature surrounding a formal garden belonging to the seventeenth-century phase of construction. It is possible that the later earthwork incorporated a portion of a medieval boundary possibly forming an inner precinct, however no evidence of this boundary survives. Given the position of the canons' dormitory in the south range, this was probably also the site of the reredorter. A channel would have been required to flush the kitchen and the reredorter and probably branched from the tributary to the Highfurlong Brook to the north-west and returned to it to the north-east of the priory. This channel would have bounded three sides of the inner court, with the tributary itself forming the northern limit.

The site of the hospital at Clattercote is unknown, however some information regarding it is present in the foundation documents. The hospital was to be capable of housing 55 patients (Morton 1998: 5). This would suggest that the hospital buildings would not have been insubstantial. It is unknown as to whether the hospital would have catered to both sexes, although it is suggested that the Gilbertines had a duty to take in

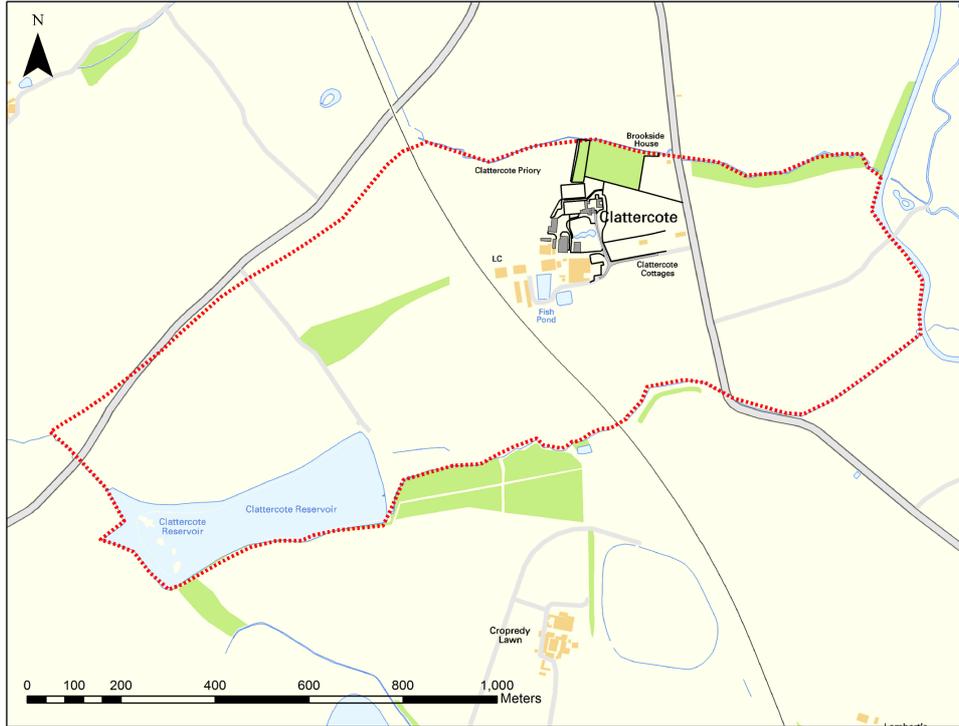


Figure 105 – Map showing lands held by Clattercote priory at the Dissolution (Crown Copyright 2016)

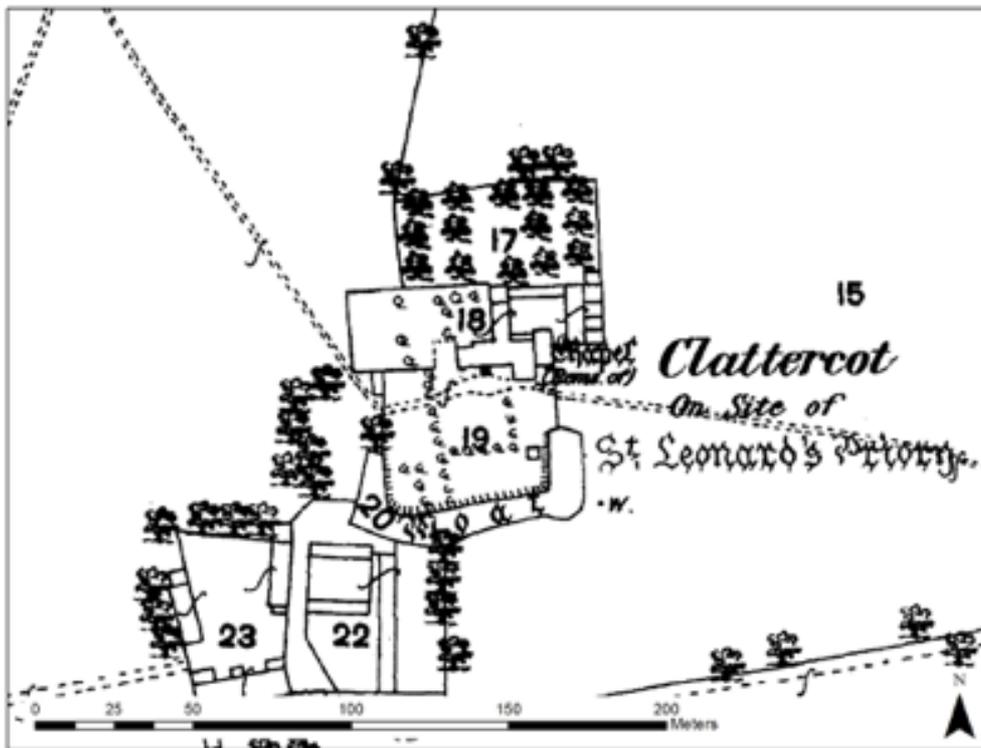


Figure 106 – 1882 OS Map showing the seventeenth-century moat and garden at Clattercote (Crown Copyright 2016)

all the sick, and it is therefore likely that men would also have visited the site (Morton 1998: 5). Knowles and Hadcock (1971: 197) state that the priory at Clattercote was only constructed following the abandonment of the hospital, the site was granted to the Gilbertines between 1148-66 and the hospital abandoned no later than the mid-thirteenth century. However, it would be unlikely that in the 100 years during which the Gilbertine site was both a priory and a hospital, that the order would not have constructed a priory church with attached cloistral ranges.

Morton (1998: 5) has suggested that the priory grew out of the hospital and that the canons and lay attendants would have occupied the hospital buildings along with the sick, yet due to the hospital caring for leprous patients it is unlikely that they would occupy the same buildings. Some form of segregation would at least be expected, and this is the case at Thornton abbey, which provides the only example of an excavated rural monastic hospital (Willmott & Townend forthcoming). The hospital of St James at Thornton is contained in a separate court to that of the canons, to the south of the outer court of the precinct. The hospital is enclosed on all sides and consists of a Norman church with thirteenth-century hospital conversion on the west side, formed by a series of brick buildings. The hospital and chapel at Thornton cover approximately 50 x 20 metres. The scale of the hospital at Clattercote must have been much greater. Despite the lack of physical remains at Clattercote a feature to the west of the precinct may suggest a potential location for the hospital and the reason why it was located in the area.

Approximately 600 metres to the south-west of the priory buildings is the Clattercote reservoir, constructed in the early-nineteenth century to serve the Oxford and Grand Unions canals. There is evidence that the construction of the reservoir involved the enlargement of an earlier body of water approximately 5 acres in size

(Hoste 1866: 288). This pool was known locally as ‘the leper’s pool’ and was associated with the location where the inmates of the hospital would have bathed. During a drought in the mid-nineteenth century the level of the water in the reservoir dropped to the extent that an ‘ancient sluice-gate’ was revealed. The eyewitnesses reported evidence of a paved walk around the circumference of the lake and the presence of the remains of a number of willow trees surrounding the pool (Hoste 1866: 288).

It is possible that the pool was used during the medieval period for the washing of the lepers, as water formed an important role in the treatment of leprosy in the period (Morton 1998: 7), and it may suggest that the hospital was located to the west of the priory holdings. This would explain the exceptional size of the precinct. The extent of the land holdings at Clattercote and the location of the healing pool to the south-west of the site indicate that the priory and hospital were located in separate courts, close enough to allow free movement of the canons to either site, but far enough apart to keep the inhabitants separate.

Newstead-on-Ancholme

Newstead-on-Ancholme priory lies 2 miles to the south of the town of Brigg in Lincolnshire, on the Isle of Ancholme. The island is around 400 metres east to west and less than 1 kilometre in length (Instone 1998). The priory would have been six metres above sea level, approximately 3-4 metres above the surrounding landscape. The location of the priory buildings at Newstead-on-Ancholme priory can only be located due to the presence of a portion of the southern range in the farm house buildings (see Chapter 3). Although little can be said concerning the layout of the church and

associated ranges, the position of the cloisters can at least be identified.

Despite the lack of evidence for the priory church, mapping of aerial photography has revealed a number of features associated with the precinct boundary (figure 107). To the east of the site is the old course of the Counterdike Drain (a), before the canalisation of the New River Ancholme. This watercourse would likely have formed the western limit of the precinct, supplying water to the priory as well as flushing the sewage from various buildings. The route of these channels has since been lost but would certainly have formed part of the larger system of ditches and drains that are visible to the south. To the west of the precinct (b) a double or triple ditch makes up the western boundary of the site, running from the priory in the north, southwards to the southern limit of the site. To the south a series of ditches fed another set of fishponds (c), which were enclosed on three sides. A ditch ran north from this group (d), dividing this portion of the outer court into two large enclosures. To the north of this a second series of fishponds (e) was situated close to the inner court. There were between seven and eight of these ponds measuring 30-40 metres in length on an east-west alignment and fed by the outer moat.

As can be seen at other Gilbertine sites, the outer moat of the precinct acted both as a barrier and as a way of transporting water to the various fishponds and enclosures surrounding the site. Although the position of the precinct boundary can be established, little evidence exists as to the arrangement of the inner court. Remodelling of the site in the years following the Dissolution and the construction of a farmyard in the nineteenth century has destroyed any evidence of the priory's great drain or inner court divisions. As has been discussed in Chapter 3, the raising of the ground level at Newstead may account for the lack of surviving earthworks and parch marks on modern aerial photographs.

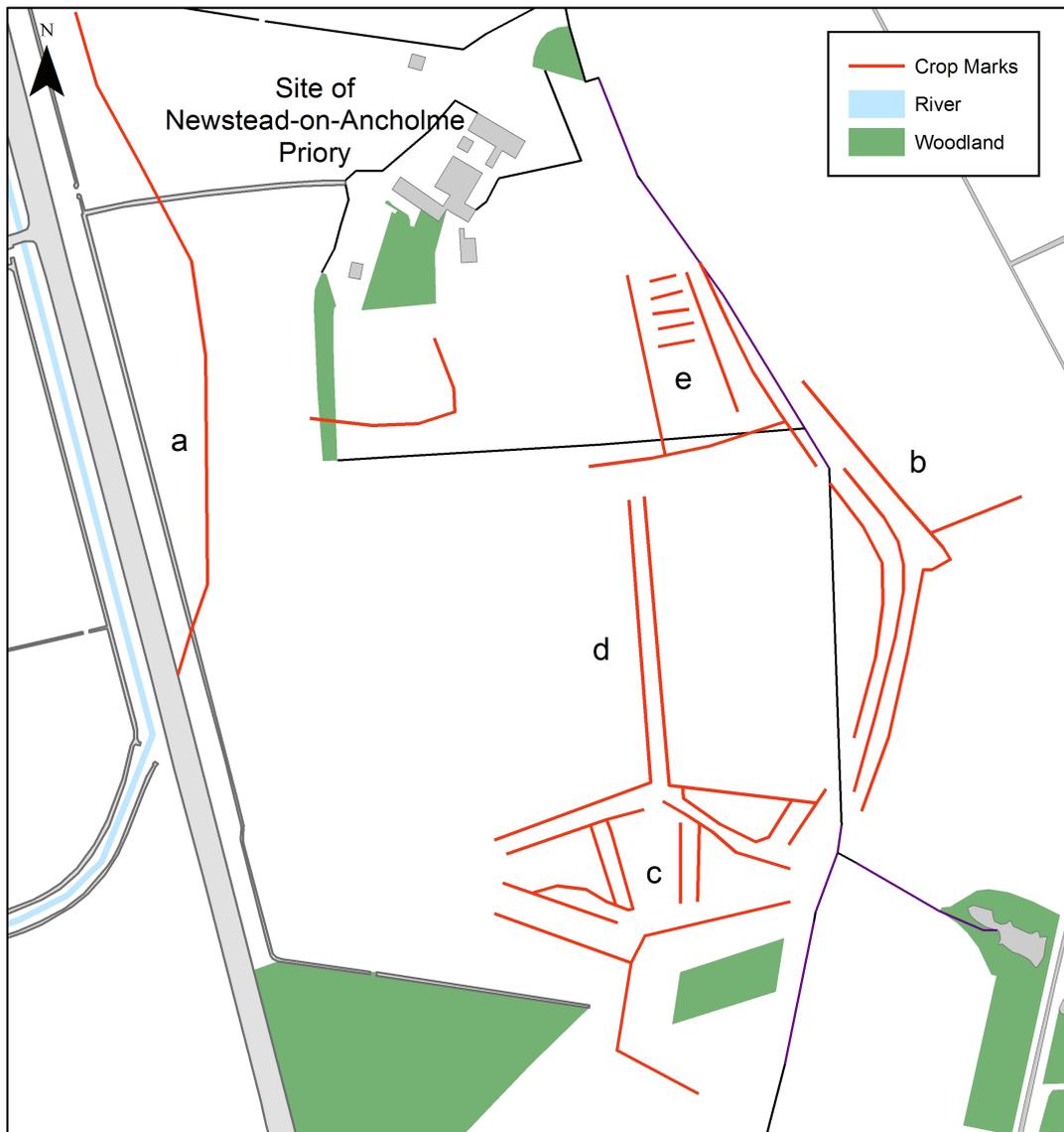


Figure 107 – Transcription of aerial photographs showing the extent of the monastic precinct at Newstead-on-Ancholme priory (after Kershaw 1994)

Mattersey

Mattersey priory was located on the Isle of Mattersey and was surrounded by wetland in the medieval period. LiDAR survey shows the priory situated on the east side of island, to the west of the River Idle (figure 108). The position of the priory

makes use of the route of the river to channel water through the Great Drain, used to flush the reredorter and the canons' kitchen.

Although much of the cloistral ranges survive at Mattersey, little remains of the precinct or the courts contained within. The only surviving evidence is a series of earthworks visible on the 1921 Ordnance Survey (figure 109). The earthworks to the north of the priory (figure 110) relate to the northern boundary of the inner court (a). A channel runs west from the River Idle approximately 30 metres and turns south, towards the priory, and its return east to the river creates a square enclosure to the north of priory. The southern limit of this enclosure would have formed the northern extent of the inner court, and where the ground drops away towards to north of the enclosure and would have likely represented the northern limit of the precinct. Geophysical survey by the author (Townend 2014a) revealed a partially stone-lined channel connected the south side of the enclosure (b), the priory's great drain that ran from the reredorter into the north flowing section of the Idle (figure 111).

The great drain flowed from the south (c) where it passed close to the canons' kitchen in the south-west corner of the cloister. It then turned east, forming the southern boundary of the inner court and after turning north, joined the reredorter. The exact route of the drain is unclear to the south; its source appears to have been the Horsen Beck 290 metres to the south. The majority of evidence for the boundaries of the inner court has been destroyed by the construction of Abbey Farm and the associated buildings to the north-west. The construction of drains and the remodelling of the landscape subsequent to the Dissolution has made the layout of the precinct on the south and west sides of the site impossible to trace.



Figure 108 – LiDAR survey of Mattersey priory on the Isle of Mattersey (Environment Agency 2017)

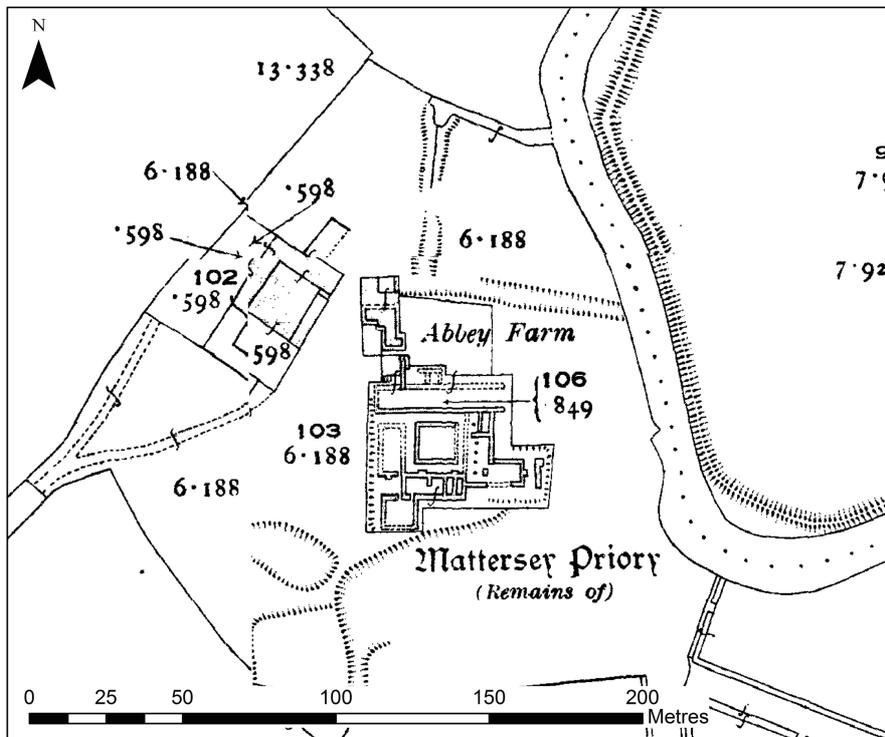


Figure 109 – 1921 Ordnance Survey showing earthworks north of Mattersey priory (Digimap)

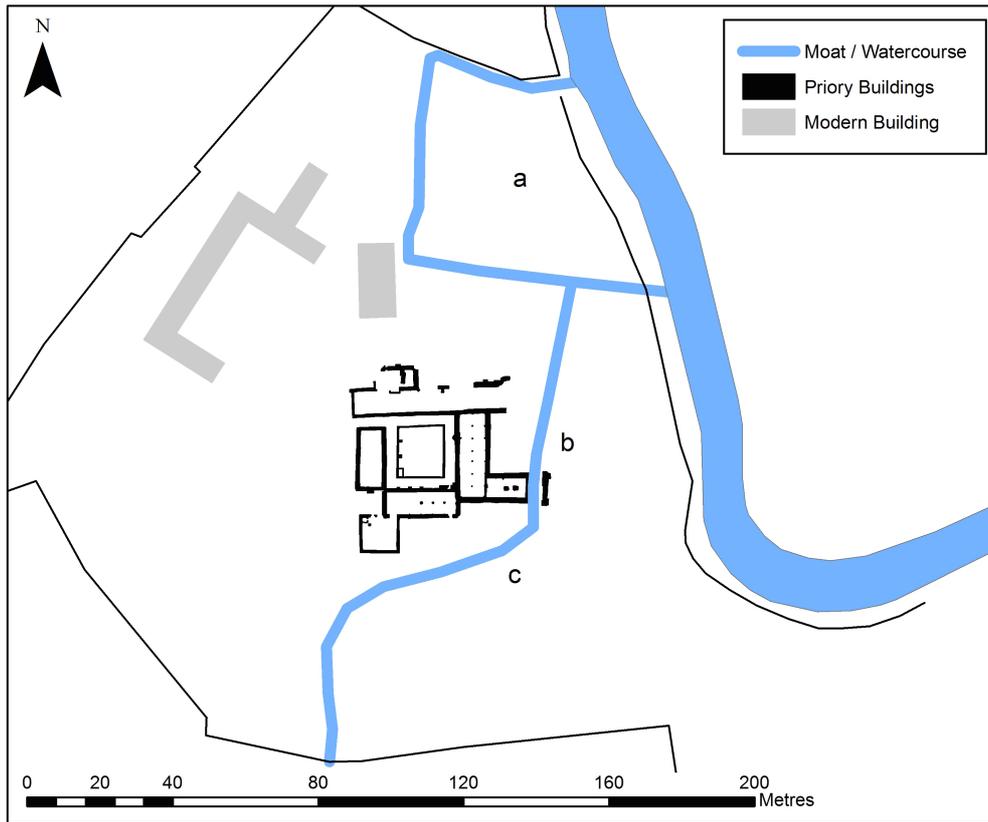


Figure 110 – Plan showing the northern enclosure and the great drain at Mattersey priory (by the author)

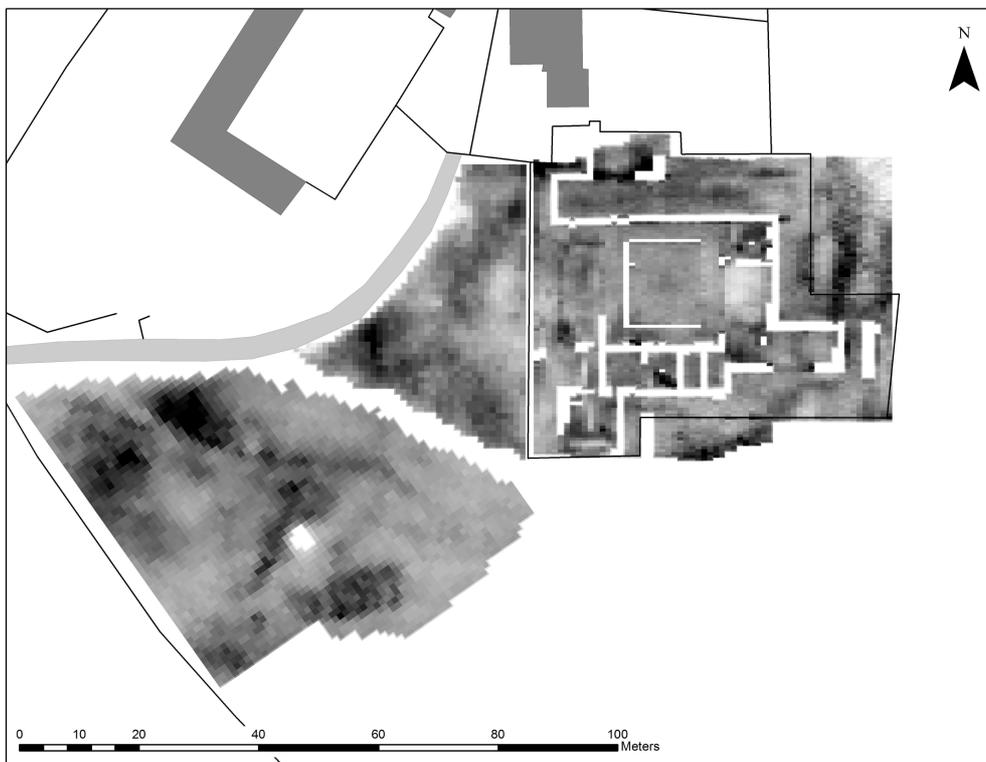


Figure 111 – Geophysical survey of Mattersey priory (Townend 2014a)

Ellerton

The site of Ellerton priory is located to the west of the village of Ellerton-on-Spalding Moor, within the parish of Ellerton and Aughton. The positions of the priory church on the site of the current parish church and the attached cloisters are to the north have been discussed at length in Chapters 2 & 3 of this thesis. Using the 1:2500 County Series Ordnance Survey mapping for 1909 (figure 112) it is possible to identify the northern and southern limits of the outer precinct boundary. These boundaries are also visible as crop marks on recent aerial photographs (figure 113). Using this data, it is possible to reconstruct the limit of the precinct of the priory and to identify inner divisions relating to water management and the placement of the inner court of the canons.

In addition to the data from historic mapping and aerial photography, the site has benefited from magnetometer survey within the field surrounding the parish church (figure 114). The limits of the precinct are characterised as large ditches that would have originally held water to form large moats (figure 115). This ditch is visible as an earthwork to the north-east of the church (a). To the south the boundary runs to the east of Ellerton House, and the eastern boundary of the precinct was located in 2009 by MAP Archaeological Services during the small-scale trial trenching. Within one of the trial trenches was discovered a bank with a broad ditch approximately 2 metres wide (MAP 2009: 9). The ditch was on the eastern side of the bank suggesting that the ‘inside’ of the enclosure was to the west making it probable that the bank and ditch formed the eastern extent of the precinct. The fill of the ditch contained a sherd of pottery subsequently dated to the twelfth to fourteenth centuries as well as late-medieval ceramic building material within the upper fills (MAP 2009: 10).

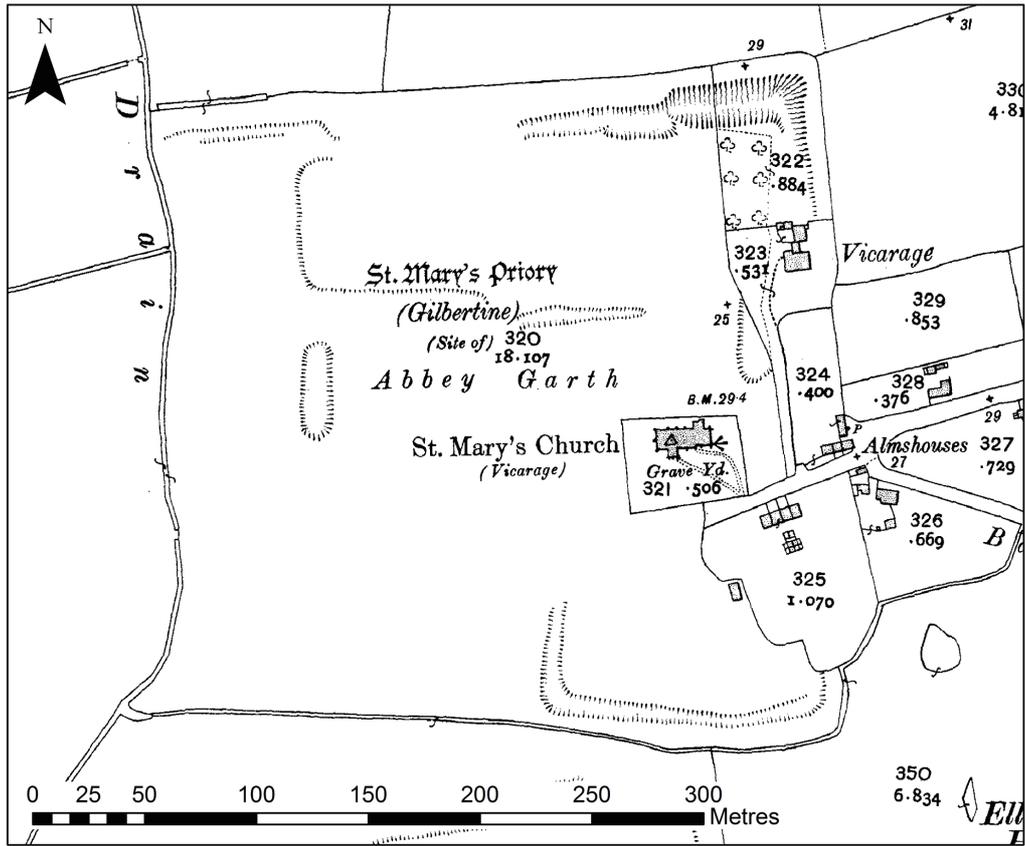


Figure 112 – 1909 OS map of Ellerton priory (Crown Copyright 2016)



Figure 113 – Aerial photograph of Ellerton priory (Dennison 2014)

The eastern boundary can be identified at its southern end as an earthwork to the south-west of Ellerton Village (b). It turns west and can be traced for 117 metres before turning north to form the western side of the canons' court. It is probable that the canons' court was laid out before the outer court, as the western portion of the south precinct boundary (c) continues as a narrower earthwork from the moat (b). The channel (c) continues west for approximately 140 metres until it meets the Ings Drain flowing from the north, the watercourse that forms the western boundary of the site (d) and provided the source of water for the boundary moat. To the north the boundary (e) runs from the drain to the surviving section of moat to the north-east (a). The outer boundary can be traced on all four sides by a combination of geophysical survey, aerial photography and earthwork survey. Inside the precinct the outer court and the court of the priory can be identified.

The results of a series of geophysical surveys carried out by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford in 1995 and the Ancient Monuments Laboratory in 1997 have helped to further establish the layout of the inner divisions of the courts (figure 116) (Bray 1998; Gaffney 1995). The results of the magnetometry survey show a magnetic anomaly running north-south through the centre of the plot (a). This high magnetic anomaly is probably explained by the presence of a ditch backfilled with material containing a higher magnetic value than the surrounding ground surface. This ditch lines up with the returns to south and north of the west side of the earthworks shown on the 1909 Ordnance Survey map and forms the western limit of the inner court. To the north of the cloisters the ditch turns east and can be traced to the edge of the field (b). This northern boundary of the court was likely the source of water to flush the canons' reredorter and would have fed into the moat forming the western limit of the precinct and the outer court.

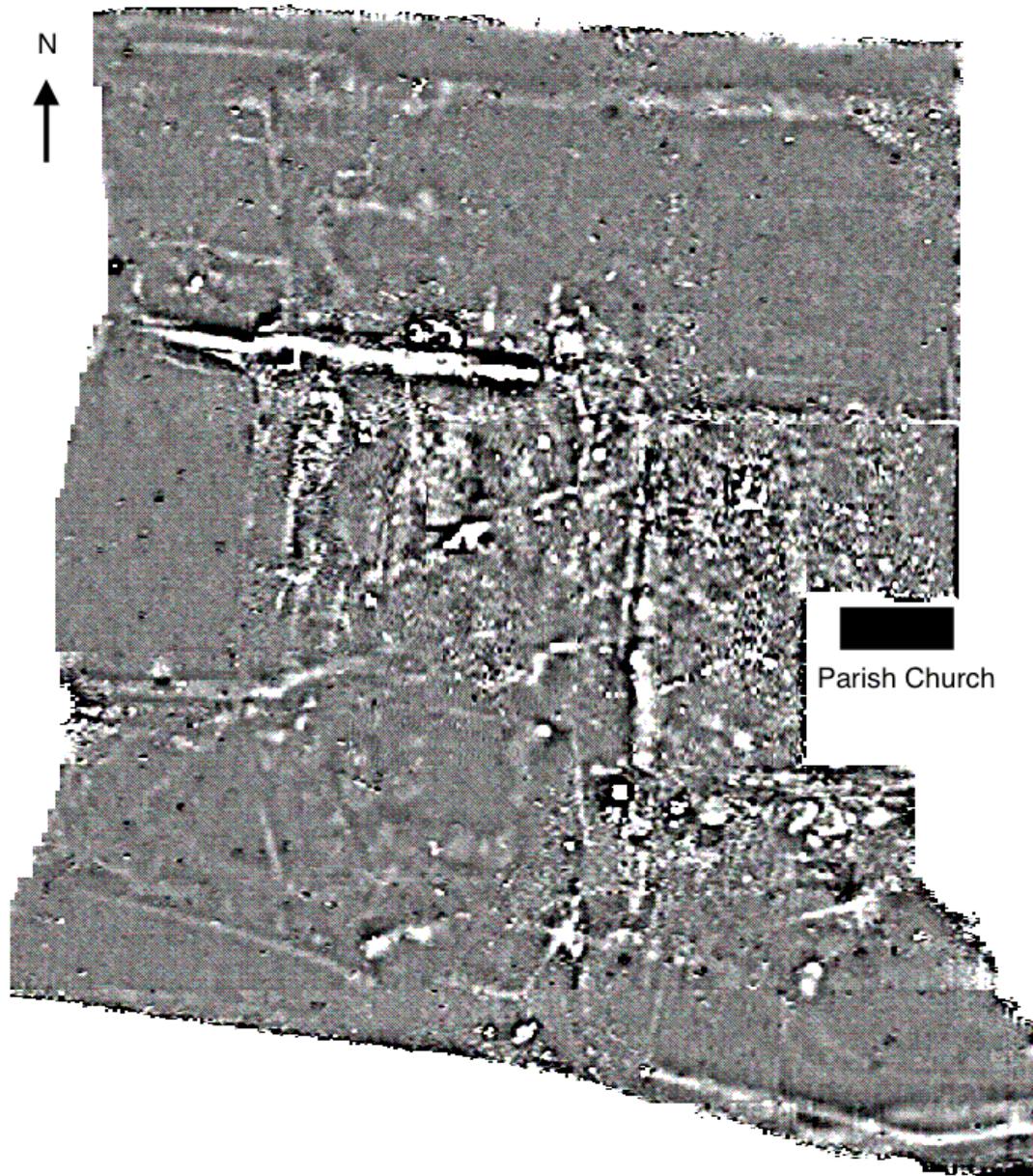


Figure 114 - Geophysical survey plot of the land surrounding Ellerton priory (Bray 1998)

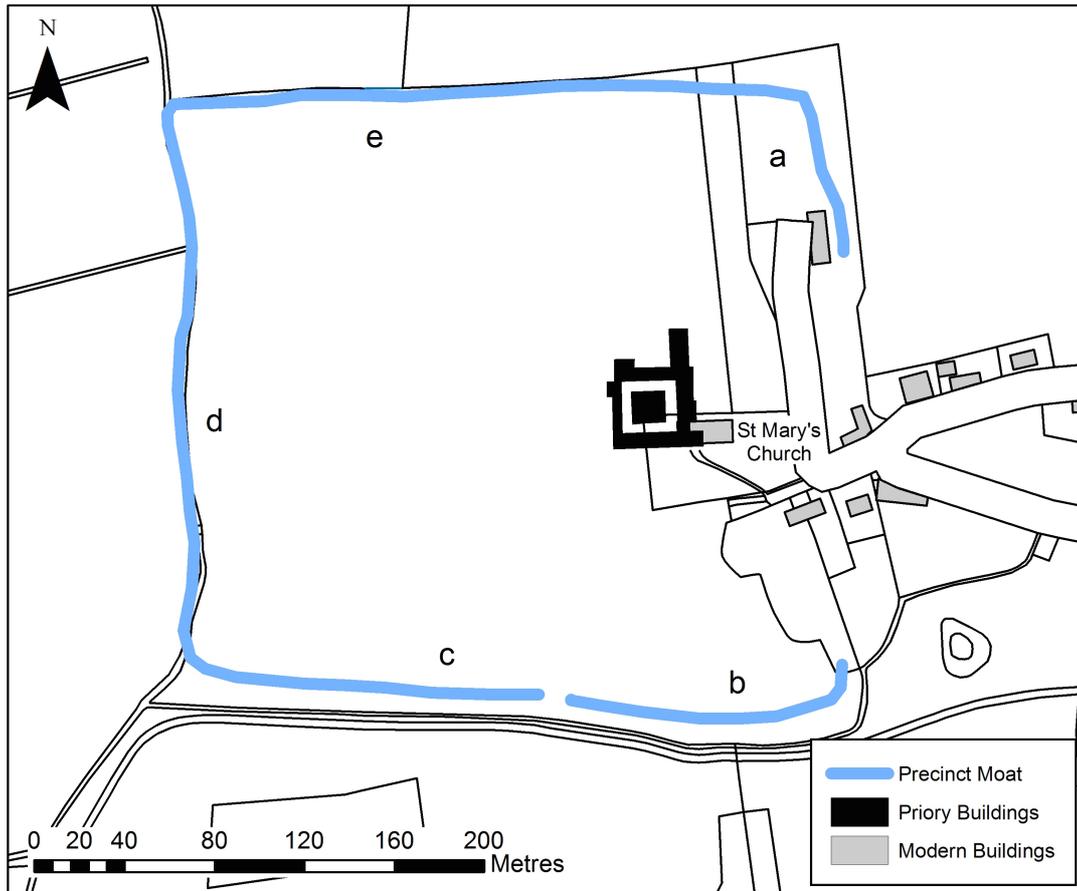


Figure 115 – The remains of the precinct moat at Ellerton priory (partly after Bray 1997)

To the west of the canons' court a channel (c) divides the outer court into two. To the south of this boundary are a series of ditches supplying water to a fishpond visible on the geophysical survey (d). This pond was probably one of a series that were located in this area of the precinct. In the north-west corner of the precinct a rectangular enclosure that may have also connected a series of ponds is visible (e). Despite the presence of geophysical survey reports within the local HER, the site at Ellerton has until now received very little attention in the way of identifying the location of the priory buildings and the precinct. The combining of the geophysical survey data with aerial photography and historic maps has allowed a large portion of the precinct to be

reconstructed. The precinct at Ellerton is similar in size to that found at other single Gilbertine houses of this period. The canons' court, located to the east of the precinct, would have separated the outer court from any visitors to the priory. It is likely that a gatehouse would have been located to the east of the current parish church, although no evidence for this any longer survives.

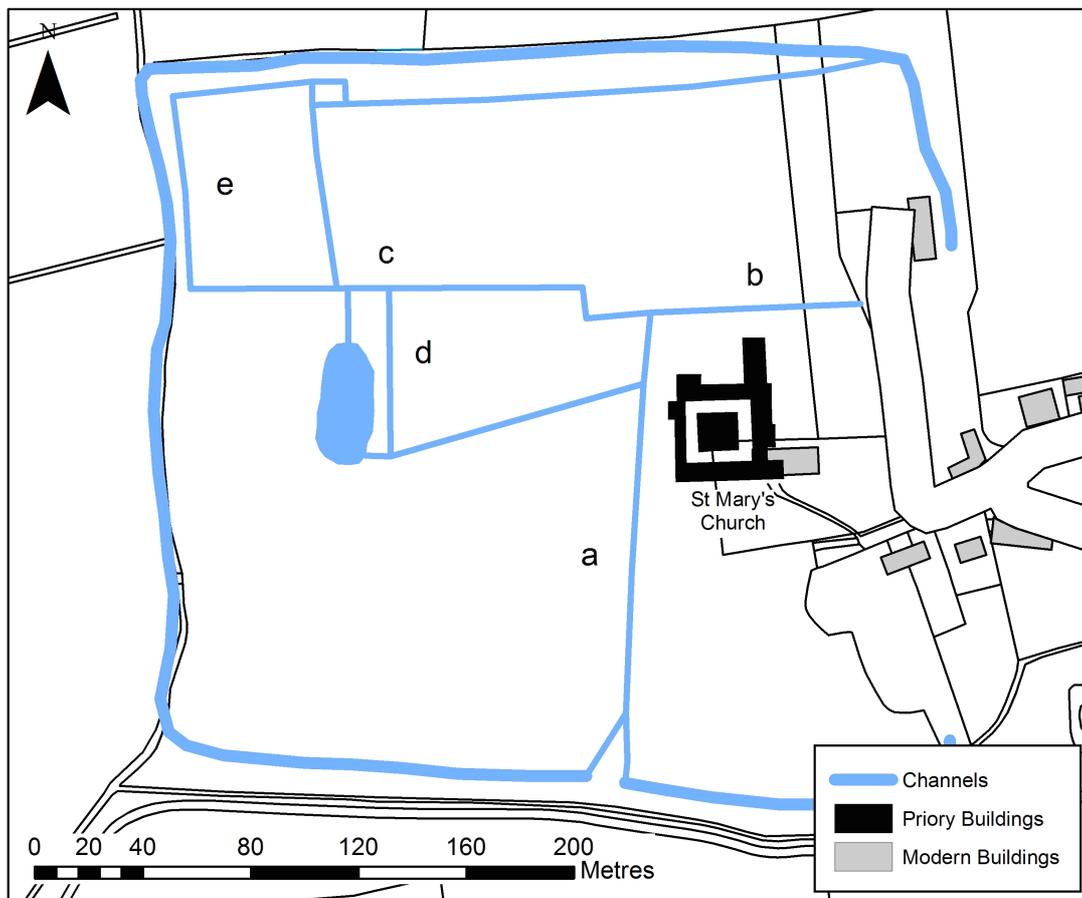


Figure 116 – The outer and inner courts of the canons at Ellerton priory (partly after Bray 1997)

Single House Summary

The remains of the precincts of the Gilbertine single houses are much scarcer than those found at the larger double houses. This is probably due to the scale of the works involved and the nature of the double houses placing an emphasis on the separation of the sexes. Without the presence of nuns at the single house, the purpose of the precinct was to symbolically delineate ownership rather than to deny access. The scale of the double houses was also often more than twice of that of the single houses, being necessitated by the space required for the two inner courts and the increased size of the outer court. As at the double houses (especially at Watton, Bullington, Shouldham and Catley) the outer moat of the priory acted as both a limit to the precinct and as a way of transporting water to different areas of the site. Occasionally, as at North Ormsby there was more than one source of water, however most relied on a single source to feed fishponds, to provide water for the kitchens and to flush the waste of the priory. This pattern is continued in the foundation of single houses. At all of the examples for which sufficient evidence exists, only a single water source is identifiable.

The precincts of the single houses cannot just be viewed as smaller versions of those found at double foundations. Unlike the double house there appears to be little uniquely 'Gilbertine' in nature in the layout of the single precincts. The arrangement of the courts is comparable to houses of other orders of similar wealth. In addition to this, unlike the arrangement of the double precincts, there appears to be no evidence of a central plan or tradition from which the arrangement of the single house was based. Although there was a prevalence in the later single houses for the location of the cloister to the north of church this was not reflected in the choice of location of the inner court, with no pattern of placing the inner court on any particular side of the precinct.

Urban Houses

A number of Gilbertine houses were founded in urban locations or on the periphery of towns. For a handful of these it is possible to trace the precinct boundary (see York and Lincoln below), at others only the location of the central courts can be identified (see Cambridge and Stamford), and three have no evidence available at all concerning the position of either the precinct or courts (Malton, Ravenstonedale and Hitchin). Although the locations of the priory buildings are known for these sites, too little remains of the courts to make any meaningful reconstruction. This is mostly due to either the limited size of the precincts due to the confines of building with a town or city, or the subsequent encroachment of later buildings over the site.

Lincoln

The City of Lincoln formed an important religious and monastic centre for the North-East Midlands, and it was within Lincoln that the Gilbertines founded the priory of St Katherine and the hospital of St Sepulchre. Lincoln is located on Ermine Street and formed part of the historic route leading from London to York. This position meant that the city was a regular stopping point for royal and ecclesiastic processions. The double houses of Catley and Bullington were less than 15 miles from Lincoln. The exact location and arrangement of the priory buildings is unknown; however, the priory is known to have been located outside of, but close to the city's south gate and it is possible to roughly trace the boundaries of the precinct.

The priory of St Katherine was founded by Robert de Chesney, Bishop of Lincoln soon after 1148 (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 198). The endowment granted to St Katherine's was a large one with the advowsons for churches at Newark, Marton,

Norton Disney, Newton-on-Trent Bracebridge and North Castle coming under the control of the prior. Along with this was a wealth of property and land within and around the city and one tenth of the toll of the borough (Graham 1906e: 188). An important facet of the priory was its responsibility for the hospital of St Sepulchre, founded in the twelfth century and given along with all its land holdings to the Gilbertines. The hospital was founded to care for the orphans and women of the City of Lincoln who could no longer support themselves.

St Katherine's was intended to provide accommodation for 13 canons and 16 lay brothers, in addition to this a maximum of 20 lay sisters were to be retained to serve within the hospital of St Sepulchre (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 198). Although the site has been previously referred to as a double house within the historical literature (Wilkinson 2007: 165, Cole 1940: 267), there does not appear to have been any nuns present within the priory or the hospital. The confusion may have arisen from the pensions granted to five of the lay-sisters following the Dissolution and the request by Edward II for the house to provide the allowance of a canoness to Eleanor Darcy, who was later housed within one of the order's double monasteries (Graham 1906e: 189).

The location of the priory outside of the south gate was defined by the position of the hospital of St Sepulchre and gave the priory access to the Crown and the nobility during royal visits. In addition to this, the newly ordained Bishops of Lincoln were required by statute to pass the night prior to taking up their office within St Katherine's (Cole 1940: 267). These factors insured that the Gilbertine order and the priory of St Katherine's would have been recognised by the Crown, nobility and the Bishops of Lincoln as an important local fixture within the city. The popularity of the priory is attested to by a meeting held within the house by Edward I and his parliament during a visit in 1301 (Hill 1965: 239). The work of the Gilbertines within the hospital adjoining

the priory would also have made the order known to the local people and gentry. The association of the priory with a charitable institution can have done nothing to harm attitudes towards them within Lincoln. In fact, it is clear within the historical record that little distinction was made between St Katherine's and St Sepulchre. They are referred to in tandem within the written record as the 'hospital of St Katherine and St Sepulchre' and the prior as the, 'Prior of the hospital of Lincoln' (Cole 1940: 267).

Sir Frances Hill gave some attention to the site of St Katherine's in his 1965 edition of *Medieval Lincoln*, in which he sought to locate the hospital and priory using extant historical accounts (Figure 117). Hill situates the priory and hospital to the east of the River Witham approximately 1 mile south of the city and to the west of 'The Malandry', or the Leper Hospital of the Holy Innocents. The distance of the site from the Lincoln and the lack of any other religious institutions, when compared to the areas closer to the city, may indicate that three institutions of the priory, the hospital and the Malandry formed an area specifically allocated to the care of the sick.

The lack of religious establishments other than the leper hospital within the area of the priory and its location on the city's periphery, close to the city gallows, supports the idea that within the medieval period the priory may have been positioned within a segregated area. Undoubtedly this would have been primarily for practical reasons, such as hygiene via the segregation of sick and space for the expansion of the hospital, and later the priory. A consequence of this would have been the removal of the sick and destitute from the city and out of the sight of the populous. It is possible that this service, provided by the Gilbertines could explain the high number of local donations and grants to the order.

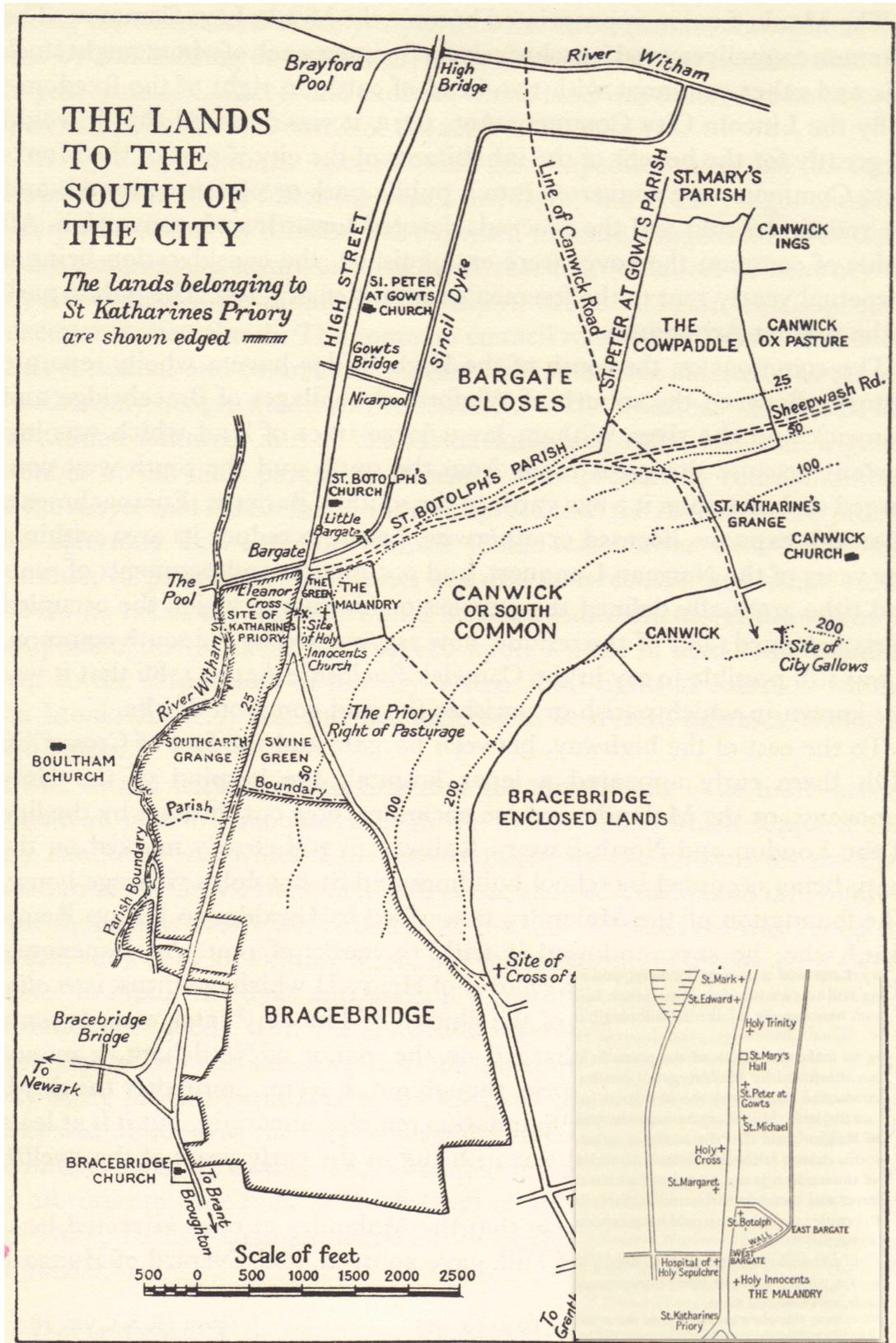


Figure 117 – The location of St Katherine’s priory, St Sepulchre and the priory holdings at Lincoln (Hill 1956)

Hill (1965: 334) also located a number of the lands belonging to St Katherine's that surrounded the priory. These holdings stretched south, parallel to the Witham and south-east into the area known as Bracebridge. In addition to these lands, there was also St Katherine's grange, close to the site of Canwick Church and near to the Canwick road. It is clear from the plan that the order controlled large estates surrounding the priory within the Witham Valley. There have been various archaeological interventions on the site of St Katherine's over the last 10 years. Most of these have been associated with the development of the site of St Katherine's church (Allen 2008a, Allen 2008b, Allen 2008c, Allen 2009, Field & McDaid 2005, and MJAS 2006). These investigations have focused on the east side of the site and stretch north-south following the line of the modern road. This modern road appears to overlie the medieval route (Hill 1965: 334) and roughly marks the eastern limit of the priory and hospital buildings.

The northern most excavations took place at the site of the modern church of St Catherine at the north-end of Colegrave Street. Limited work in 2006 revealed the foundation of a large stone buttress, that would have originally supported a large, two storey building (MJAS 2006: 4). Excavations in 2008 revealed a number of green glazed water pipes dated to the fourteenth century, were discovered beneath the medieval floor level (Allen 2008b: 5), suggesting that these buildings included a sophisticated water management system and were likely associated with the hospital (Allen 2008b: 4). Phasing of the archaeological horizons demonstrates that the hospital was expanded in the fourteenth century with the construction of large stone building and the installation of a fresh water supply (Allen 2008c: 3). This archaeological evidence represents the pre-plague early-fourteenth-century wealth of the priory rather than the later-fourteenth-century and early-fifteenth-century revival of the house's fortune.

Excavations further south at 21-25 St Catherine's Street (Field & McDaid 2005) established the survival of archaeological deposits 0.4 metres below the current ground level. The investigation discovered a limestone surface dating to the late-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth century (Field & McDaid 2005: 4). As with the data from St Catherine's Church, the evidence is suggestive of an expansion of either the priory or the hospital in the early-fourteenth century, following large donations and grants to the house.

Work that took place to the south of the probable site of the complex uncovered a number of inhumations containing adults and juvenile individuals within stone lined settings (Allen 2008a: 5). It is unknown whether the priory and hospital shared a cemetery, however it is likely that the canons of the house would have been interred separately to the poor of the hospital. The excavated remains, although disturbed, appear have been interred within a cemetery rather than have been redeposited from their original position. This conclusion can be made due to the scarcity of animal bone, characteristic of a graveyard assemblage rather than an area of occupation (Allen 2008a: 29). It is likely, due to the lack of pathological signs of physical deprivation that the graves were those of canons rather inmates of the hospital. Coupled with the retrieval of high-status, decorated window glass (Allen 2008a: 8), it is also likely that the priory church was located within the area of excavation. Given the information from excavation, it appears that Hill's plan is largely accurate. The general area of the priory is at least accurate, outside the south gate of the city.

York

Hugh Murdac founded the priory of St Andrew in Fishergate, York around 1200 (Fallow 1913c: 255). The priory was to have no less than seven canons and no more

than 12 and the prior (Burton 1996: 354). The initial grant to the priory included land within the city of York and outside. The property in York included: the land adjoining the church at St Andrew's, a group of houses at St Peter's and the use of a 'stone chamber' close to the site (Burton 1998: 52). The canons were also granted land in Ancaster, Clementhorpe, Bishopthorpe and Goodmanham. The priory received large endowments following the foundation and by the 1230s owned a large number of buildings within the city walls (ibid: 53).

The layout of St Andrew's priory in York has been discussed at length in Chapter 3 of this thesis, yet despite the recent excavations of the priory, no work has been carried out outside of the church and cloistral ranges. However, unlike rural sites, the nature of urban land appropriation makes it possible to trace the land owned within York directly surrounding the priory and to suggest the outline of the precinct within the modern city. The priory was situated to the east of the convergence of the River Ouse and the River Foss (figure 118), on high ground and the excavations show no signs that it was ever flooded (Kemp 1996: 43).

The extent of the precinct of the priory can be identified using evidence from historic maps. The River Foss would have formed a natural boundary to the west of the site. To the east of the priory Fawcett Street now occupies the medieval position of Fishergate, as the later street to the west does not appear on a map of the area until 1682 (Kemp 1998: 44). Fawcett Street would have been the limit of the priory cloister to the east. The 1892 Ordnance Survey for the area gives the name 'Stone wall Close', as well as the location for the priory (figure 119). Kemp (1998: 43) reports that an earlier map from 1852 marked the 'Remains of priory Wall' to the north and south of the close. These locations suggest the north and south precinct limits to the priory. Given this

information it is possible to identify the perimeter of the priory holdings on all four sides (figure 120).

This arrangement is supported by a plan, produced by Francis Drake in 1736 (figure 121), showing the plots of land to the south of York's city wall. The land between the Foss and the medieval route of Fishergate is divided into three parcels, with the central of these being labelled as the priory of St Andrew. The excavations to the south of the priory buildings, within Stone Wall Close, identified a deep layer of medieval agricultural soil suggesting that the southern half of the site would have been divided into the outer court of the complex, although no boundaries were encountered that could locate the court divisions.

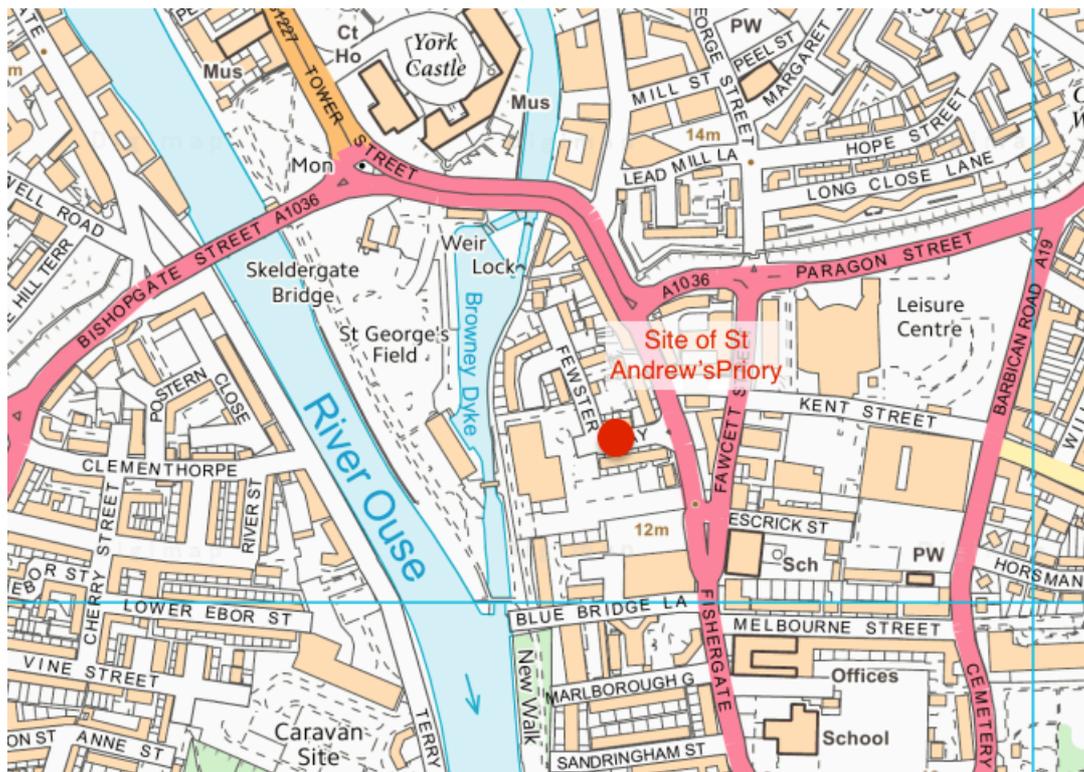


Figure 118 – Location of St Andrew's priory, York (Crown Copyright 2016)



Figure 119 – 1892 OS map showing the location of Stone Wall Close (Crown Copyright 2016)

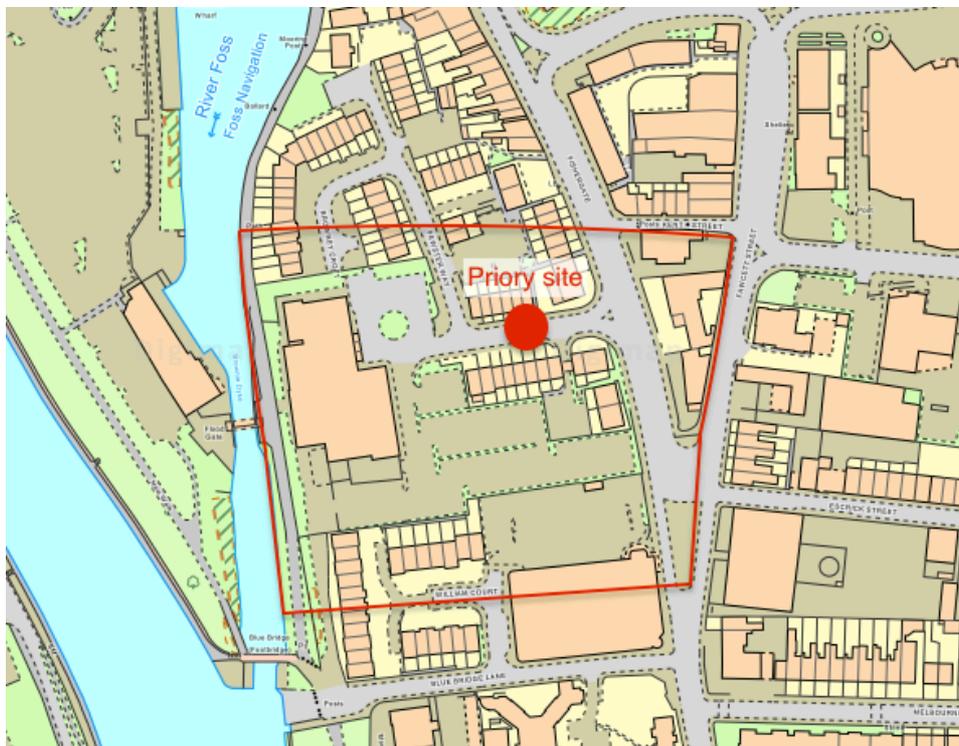


Figure 120 – The outline of the precinct at St Andrew's priory, York (Crown Copyright 2016)



Figure 121 – Drake’s plan of the religious houses of York, W denotes St Andrew’s priory (Drake 1736)

The Educational Halls at Cambridge and Stamford

At the sites of the educational halls of Cambridge and Stamford, no evidence exists of upstanding remains. Located in the medieval centre of Cambridge was the priory and theological college of St Edmund’s. The house was located on the eastern

side of Trumpington Street, close to the banks of the River Cam, less than twenty miles from the Gilbertine priory at Fordham and under thirty miles from Chicksands Priory and the house of New Biggin in Hitchin. St Edmund's was the second college and first religious college to be founded in Cambridge (Ellis & Salzman 1948a: 254).

The formation of colleges within Cambridge began in the mid-thirteenth century and by the late-thirteenth century the Gilbertine Order had established a tradition of sending canons to study within the city. Golding (1995: 171) relates that, before the construction of St Edmund's, the Gilbertines had begun studying at the Carmelite house close to Cambridge Castle. In 1290 Pope Nicholas IV planned to install the Gilbertine order within the residence shortly to be vacated by the Friars of the Sack, on the west side of Trumpington Street (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 197). The growth of the Friars of the Sack had been halted by a papal suppression sixteen years earlier prohibiting the order from recruiting new members, in effect guaranteeing its destruction. Despite this, the Friars did not vacate the property until well into the early thirteenth century (Ellis & Salzman 1948a: 254).

Shortly after the papal grant in 1290, the Gilbertines received a second offer of property within the city. Cicely, the daughter of William of St Edmund secured two acres or land and the advowson of St Edmund's Chapel (Golding 1995: 171). The site of St Edmund's was on the eastern side of Trumpington Street opposite the house of the Friars of the Sack (*ibid.*). Golding has taken the proximity of the two offers of accommodation to imply that the order was actively searching for a site to create a priory and college within Cambridge. In the same year the house in Cambridge was granted a papal license to keep a doctor of theology to teach the canons (*ibid.*).

It was only in 1291 that the Gilbertine order finally established themselves at St Edmund's and began to convert the private chapel into a priory and college. The income

of the priory increased in the late-thirteenth and early-fourteenth centuries from that of the original foundation with the addition of gifts from other Cambridge families. It is likely that the priory expanded quickly in this period due to the gifts from the local nobility, however the wealth of the house seems to have decreased quickly following the foundation. The income of the priory in 1340 from the properties and land owned by the college was £8, one of the lowest recorded for any Gilbertine house (Golding 1995: 173).

The site of the priory is in the area now occupied by Addenbrooke's Hospital, built in 1766 (figure 122). There is little archaeological evidence associated with St Edmund's, due to the early date of the hospital. The only recorded archaeological resource for the site is the discovery of human remains discovered within the grounds of the hospital. The skeletons found in the eighteenth century and in 1896 were linked to the priory, however no records now exist concerning their discovery (Ellis & Salzman 1948a: 255). It is unlikely that further archaeological remains will be revealed, as the majority of the site has been destroyed by the construction of later buildings during the expansion of the hospital in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Similarly, very little information exists concerning the Gilbertine hall or college at Stamford. The hall's exact location within the town is unknown, but is likely to be within the medieval centre. Stamford is less than 20 miles from the Gilbertine priory at Sempringham and would likely have been supported and governed from the motherhouse. Stamford is also close to the medieval ecclesiastical centres of Leicester and Peterborough.

The college at Stamford was named Sempringham Hall and was attached to the Gilbertine chapel of St Mary. The hall was founded shortly after the turn of the fourteenth century by a local land owner named Robert Luterel, although there appears

to have been a tradition of Gilbertine students studying within Stamford, attending the educational halls of other orders, since around 1266 (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 199). Most of the surviving information regarding the site relates to the initial foundation. In 1301 Edward I granted license to Luterel to give lands at Ketton, Cottesmore, Castlerton and Stamford to the order. In 1303 Luterel sent a letter to the Prior of Sempringham, ‘wishing that scholars, proportional to the augmented number of your convent, studying the scriptures and philosophy, may live in the manor’ (Golding 1995: 175).

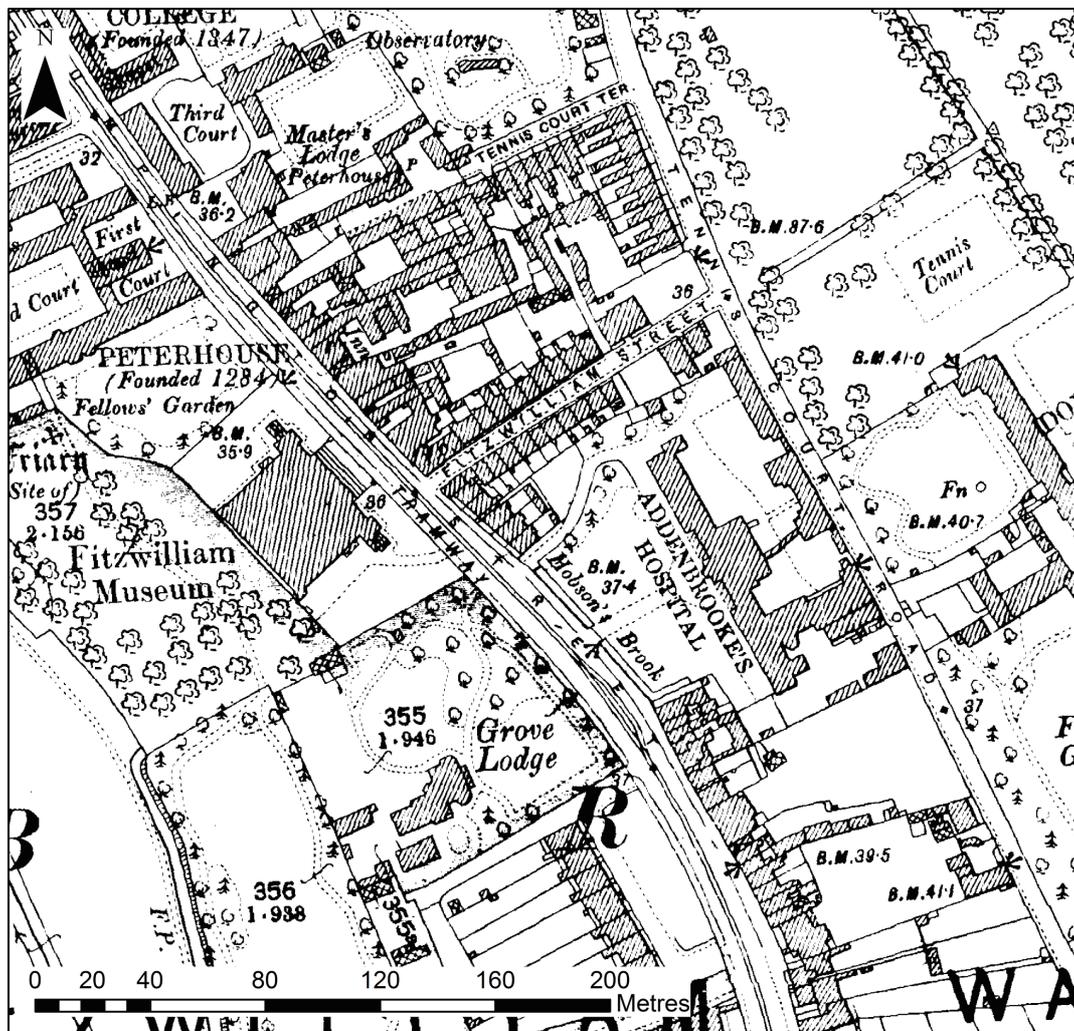


Figure 122 – 1880 Ordnance Survey showing the location of Addenbrooke’s Hospital, Cambridge (Crown Copyright)

It is uncertain as to whether the Gilbertines had planned to set up a house of learning at Stamford, as they had at Cambridge or whether they were compelled to do so by Luterel's offer of the accompanying grants of land. Rogers (1965: 55) contends that at this time Stamford was the centre of a thriving educational sphere. However, it has been argued by Golding (1995: 176) that there is little evidence of a well-established educational tradition. What is known is that it was pressure from the nearby colleges of Oxford that caused the educational halls of Stamford, including that of the Gilbertines, to be disbanded in the 1330s (Golding 1995: 175). It would have been hard for the Oxford masters to disband the colleges at Stamford if they had been in existence for a long period of time and it is likely that the foundation of Sempringham Hall reflected an attempt by the local gentry to emulate the success of similar establishments in Oxford.

The order did not maintain the house after this challenge and following its closure in 1334, students were dispersed and the site of the hall abandoned (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 199). In 1373 the Gilbertines paid 40s to alienate the hall and chapel into the care of the Augustinians, who wished to expand their holding within the town (Golding 1995: 176). Despite this, the Gilbertines kept the other lands gifted by Luterel (Stephenson 2011: 96), supporting the idea that it was the acquisition of these lands that were the reason the order has originally agreed to set up the hall.

It is likely that the hall was located within the area of the Stamford known as 'St Mary's' as this was the name of the chapel attached to the college (figure 123). Unlike the college of St Edmund in Cambridge, there does not appear to have ever been a priory at the site of Sempringham Hall, this the most likely reason as to why the order could abandon the site following the closure of the college. The evidence for both of these halls is scarce. Like the remains of single houses when compared to the doubles,

this is likely due to their reduced impact on the surrounding landscape.



Figure 123 – 1880 Ordnance Survey showing the area of St Mary's, Stamford (Crown Copyright)

The Lost Gilbertine Houses

There are a number of houses for which the location of the priory and the precinct is currently unknown. This section of the thesis will seek to identify these complexes and to discuss the evidence for the location of the priory buildings.

Tunstall

Reginald de Crevequer founded the double house at Tunstall between 1148-1164. Knowles & Haddock (1971: 196) report that the initial endowments of the priory may have been too small to support a double house. In 1189 Reginald's son, Alexander, united the house with that at Bullington and the priory became a cell (Graham 1906g: 192). The priory was endowed with land on the Isle of Tunstall and the Isle of Hades,

to the east of the village of Redbourne, five miles to the south of Brigg. During the medieval period, the marsh of the Ancholme Valley began to be drained and farmed. Settlement within the area was predominantly focused on the higher ground and islands within the marsh. A number of monasteries were located within the area, including the Gilbertine house at Newstead-on-Ancholme. It has been suggested by Clough (2003: 29) that the religious institutions may have been responsible for coordinating drainage in the valley, due to the area being drained at some point during the active foundation. The majority of these islands, including that of Tunstall have since been removed to provide space for agricultural practice. The precise location of the priory at Tunstall is unknown, although it has been attributed to two possible sites (figure 124). The first of these is on the site of Redbourne Hayes farm and the second is a group of earthworks to the south of the farm close to the Catchwater Drain and the Old River Ancholme.



Figure 124 – Map showing the possible locations of Tunstall Priory (Crown Copyright)

The site close to the river was recorded on the 1907 Ordnance Survey as a rectangular earthwork containing ditches (figure 125). This site has been suggested as the location of the priory due to the recovery, in 1948, of a collection of 160 sherds of pottery from the site (Hayfield 1984: 69). The pottery was initially dated to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however subsequent study by Hayfield identified the pottery as dating to the twelfth century. This provides an earlier date for the earthworks, contemporary with the lifetime of the priory, however the form that the earthworks take is unlike that seen at other Gilbertine sites. The size and shape of enclosure is more similar to the fishponds seen at other monastic sites, such as those at Shouldham or at Thornton Abbey (figure 126). No evidence of buildings was recorded within the earthwork boundary, and while it may be the case that the enclosure represents an early timber phase priory, it is more likely that the earthwork functions as a series of fishponds, fed by the Old Ancholme. Hayfield (1984: 70) also suggests evidence that the priory of Bullington maintained a fishery and grange at Tunstall. Given the nature of the remains, it is suggested that the earthworks recorded on the 1907 Ordnance Survey are more likely to be that of the Gilbertine Fishponds than the site of the priory itself.

The lack of evidence for the priory adjacent to the Catchwater Drain and the proposal that the remains are those of medieval fishponds, suggests that the priory was located within the immediate vicinity. The first location suggested was at Redbourne Hayes, to the north of the fishponds. A large complex of farm buildings now occupies this area and it is suggested on the 1954 Ordnance Survey that this was the site of the priory. A number of cropmarks have been recorded to the north of the farm, relating to enclosures and a small pond (Loughlin & Miller 1979: 208). To the north of Redbourne Hayes a number of earthworks and parch marks are visible on aerial photography

(figure 127). The earthworks form a triple enclosure, in the centre of which are the remains of a building. Given the size and shape of this structure, it is probably a barn, associated with the outer court of the priory or the grange of Bullington. The layout is similar to that seen to the east of the church at Shouldham Priory, Norfolk and the barns at Sempringham.

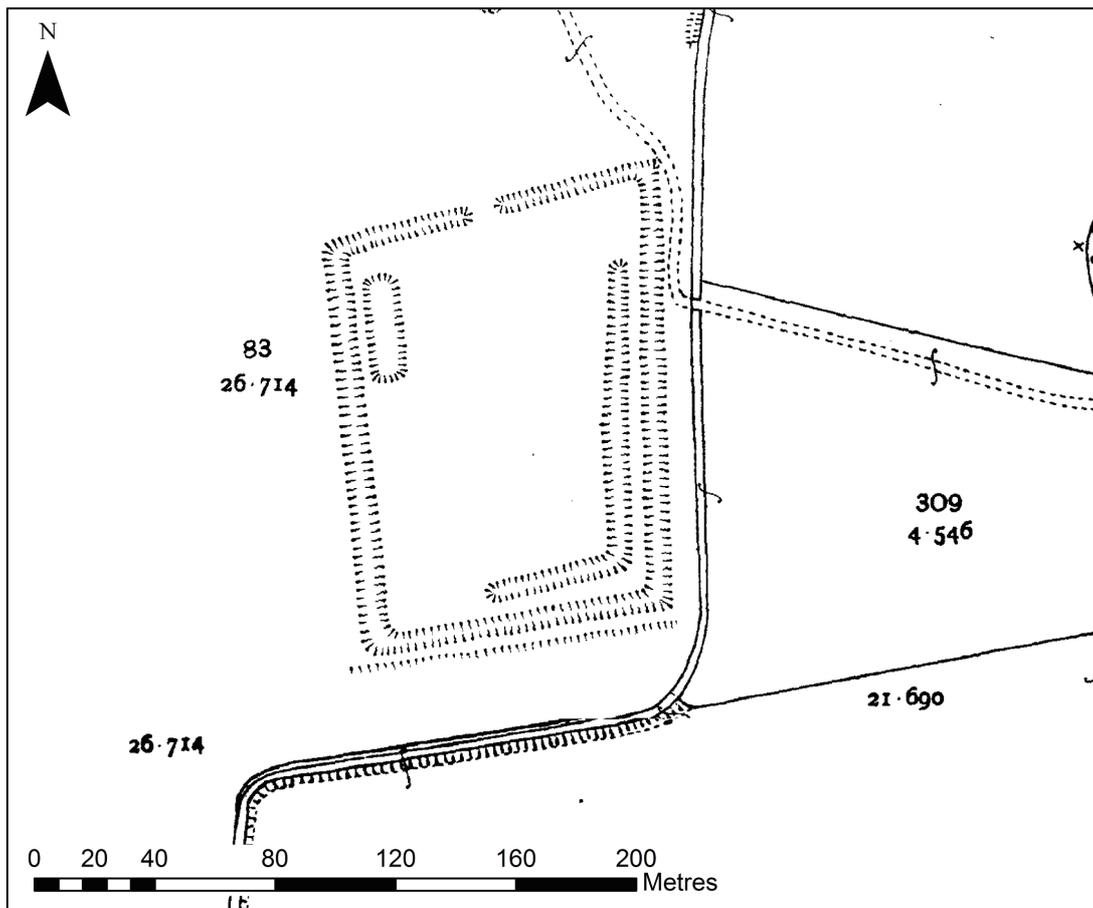


Figure 125 – 1907 Ordnance Survey showing the earthworks at Tunstall (Crown Copyright)

The holdings of the priory and later the cell at Shouldham appear to have stretched at least from the fishponds in the south, north to the site of the barn to the east of Hibaldstow. If the priory was located at Redbourne Hayes, little more can be said regarding the nature of the buildings or the precinct. The short life of the priory of no

more than forty years attests to the low value of the foundation endowments. It may have been that the first buildings at Tunstall were constructed of timber and will therefore have left little trace. The site of the priory most likely became an enclosed grange of Bullington and as such would be difficult to distinguish from the remains of a medieval farm.

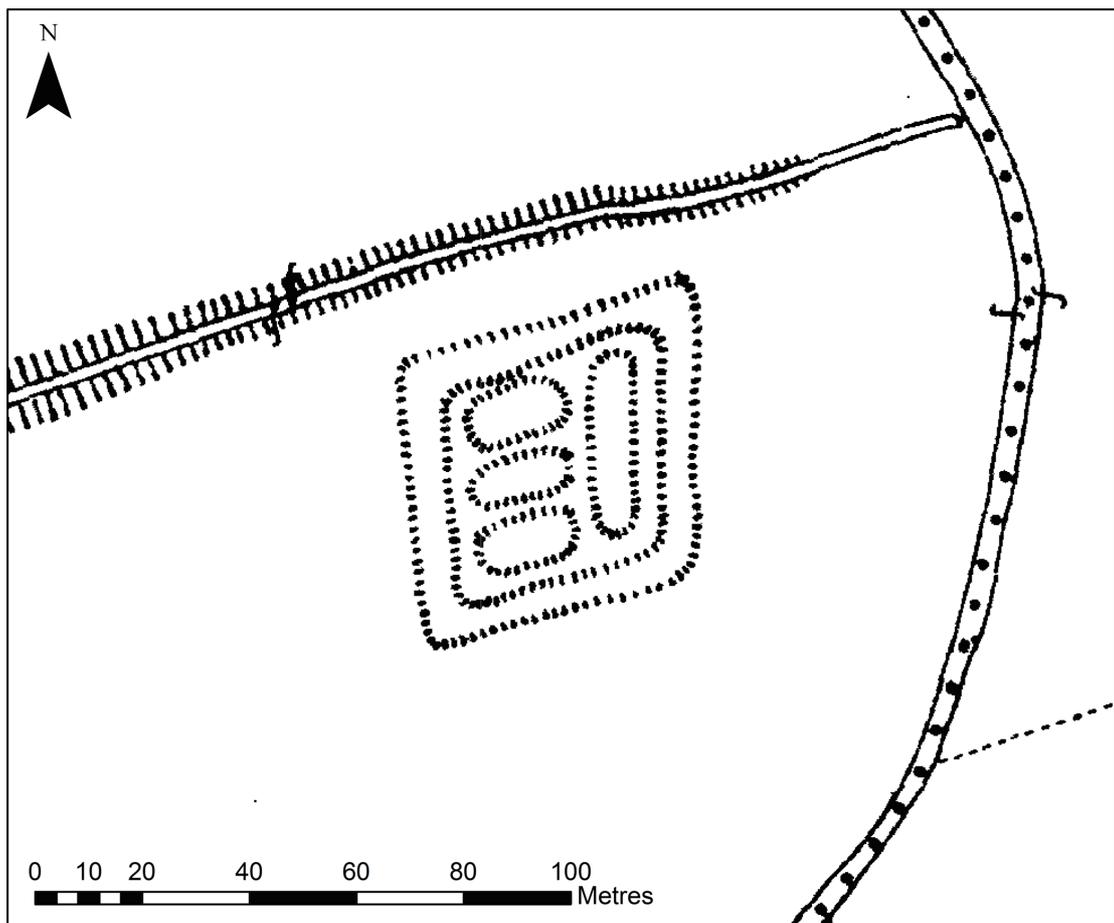


Figure 126 – 1908 Ordnance Survey showing the fishponds at Thornton Abbey, Lincolnshire (Crown Copyright)



Figure 127 – Aerial Photograph of the barn and enclosures to the north of Tunstall
(Copyright: Infoterra & Bluesky)

Bridge End

The site of St Saviour's priory is located at Bridge End within the parish of Horbling, Lincolnshire. The house is known by both the names Bridge End priory for its location, and that of Holland Bridge due to its proximity to the medieval crossing of Holland Causeway. The site sits at five metres above sea level on an island approximately three metres higher than the surrounding land. St Saviour's would have been less than three miles away from the Gilbertine motherhouse of Sempringham priory and it would have taken only a short time to travel between the two.

The priory was founded around 1200 by Godwin of Lincoln for two or three

canons and a similar number of lay brothers (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 197). Godwin founded the priory and granted it surrounding lands, with the agreement that the canons would be responsible for the repair and maintenance of the Holland Bridge Causeway, which navigated the fens close to the priory (Graham 1906d: 198). It is disputes and records concerning the causeway that make up most of the sources regarding Bridge End priory. Despite the support of Godwin, the priory appears to have had little success, in 1254 the site was valued at less than £10 and in 1263 a papal bull was issued for the house to collect money to maintain the causeway (ibid.). In spite of this, the value of the house dropped to below £6 in 1290 and a report in 1325 relayed that ten of the bridges under the authority of the priory were out of repair. This report appears to have begun an investigation into the expenditure of the priory, with the prior appearing before the courts in 1333 to show that the income of Bridge End was less than was needed for the upkeep of the house, let alone the necessary bridge repairs (ibid.).

The priory was greatly destroyed by fire in 1445 and the monies needed to rebuild the house were not readily available. The situation became so desperate that the Bishop of Lincoln issued a forty-day indulgence to all those who provided money to aid in the rebuilding of the priory (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 197). At this time, the priory was transferred to the care of Sempringham priory and became a cell of the motherhouse, surviving until the dissolution of the order in 1538. Bridge End priory does not appear to have recovered following the fire and at the time of the dissolution of Sempringham, the cell was valued at just over £5 (Graham 1906d: 198).

There is no longer any trace of the priory or any associated buildings above ground, however the farmhouse of Priory Farm contains fragments of decorated stone that appear to have come from a high-status building and are likely to be derived from the priory buildings (White 1981). The area of the farm and the fields surrounding it

have been heavily irrigated since the medieval period and there is no evidence as to any drains or ditched enclosures that can be associated with the priory. It is likely that the rebuilding of the site, as a cell of Sempringham following the 1445 fire, was of a smaller scale than at foundation. As can be seen at the site of Mattersey, the rebuilding of a priory, following its destruction, resulted in the reduction of the scale of a site and the number of inhabitants. This small cell was most likely abandoned at the dissolution and the building materials reused in the eighteenth century to construct Priory farm.

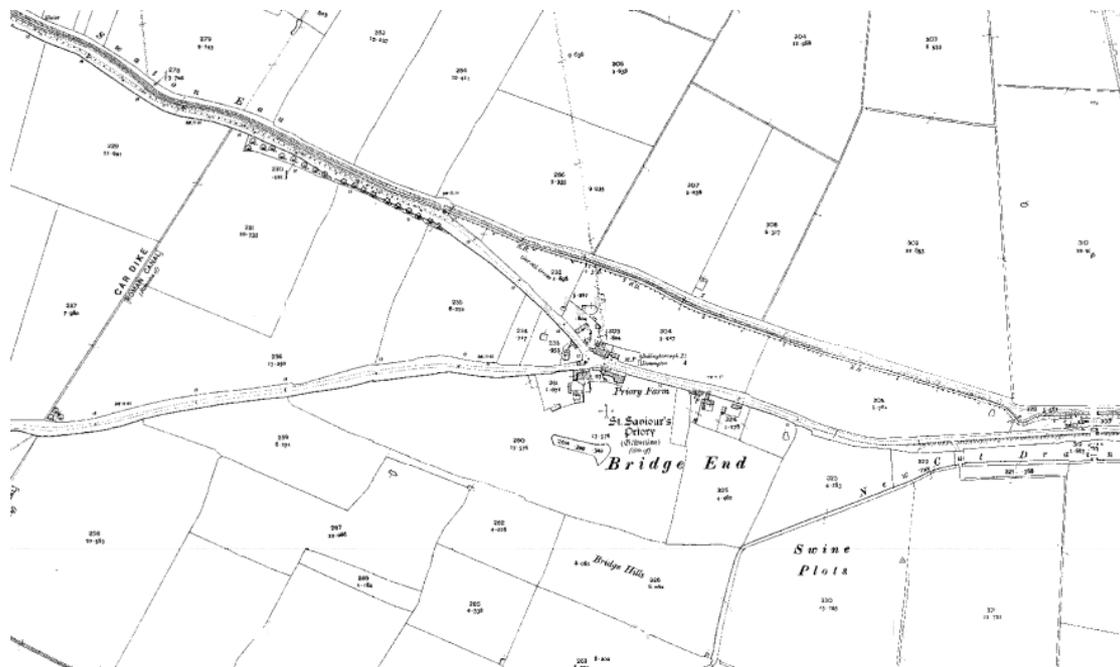


Figure 128 – 1905 Ordnance Survey showing the possible location of Bridge End priory (Crown Copyright)

Marmont

The site of the Gilbertine priory of St Mary at Marmont is located to the south of the village of Upwell, West Norfolk (formally within Cambridgeshire). Upwell village is located less than 30 miles south-west of the medieval centre of King’s Lynn and 20

miles north of Ely. Upwell lies less than 25 miles to the north of Fordham Priory and less than 14 miles from the Gilbertine double house of Shouldham. The site, known as Marmont Priory, sits to the north of the historic course of the River Nene. Marmont Priory Farm currently occupies the site of the priory and the surrounding area is used as arable farmland.

Ralph de Hauvill founded Marmont priory shortly before 1204, when it was confirmed by the King (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 198). De Hauvill founded the house to hold Mass for the souls of himself and his wife, and on confirmation King John commanded that the canons should also pray daily for his mother Eleanor of Aquitaine (Ellis & Salzman 1948c: 258). This Mass was to take place in the parish church, suggesting that the priory had no chapel or church of its own. At foundation, the priory was gifted the surrounding land either side of the Nene, with the stipulation that the de Hauvill family be allowed to pasture their livestock on the estate (*ibid.*). This suggests that the land around the priory had not been drained sufficiently to be suitable for arable farming. In conjunction with the average height above sea level for the area only measuring between two to three metres, the evidence suggests that the priory occupied an area of slightly higher land surrounded by marshland.

In the 1535 valuation of the monasteries, Marmont is referred to by the Crown's commissioners as a cell of Watton Priory (Ellis & Salzman 1948c: 258). In 1204 the occupancy of the house was recorded as three canons (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 198), this record does not include information regarding the existence of a prior, which could suggest governance from another Gilbertine house. In addition to this, the value of the house in 1291 was reported to be £25, much lower than all of the other known Gilbertine priory sites (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 198). There is however, a debate as to whether Marmont was merely a cell of Watton, as despite the scale of the house being small,

there are a number of factors that suggest it was a fully-fledged priory.

The first is the existence of a specific communal seal for Marmont (Ellis & Salzman 1948c: 258), implying that the house had its own identity separate from that of Watton. The second problem is one of geography; the distance between Watton Priory and Upwell is twice that of the distance to Shouldham priory, 15 miles away. Shouldham is also a large double house and the alignment of Marmont as a cell of Shouldham would be more likely than to Watton. The issue may have been one of prestige, with Ralph de Hauvill intending to associate himself with Watton Priory, as the wealthiest of the Gilbertine houses. However, if this was the case then Sempringham priory, the motherhouse of the Gilbertine Order is the same distance from Marmont as Watton.

There is no further reference to an association between Marmont and Watton priory in the historical record. This lack of information is not surprising due to the size and value of the house. At the Dissolution, it was surrendered by two canons and valued at less than ten pounds (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 198). It is possible that, as with other Gilbertine houses such as Bridge End, the site began as a priory and after either a decline in fortunes, or as it would seem in the case of Marmont, a failure to attract patronage and endowments, the site became a cell of one of the larger Gilbertine monasteries.

Given its valuation, the number of inhabitants and the lack of a priory church, the scale of the priory or cell at Marmont can be expected to be small when compared to other Gilbertine houses. It is also likely that due to its location on the banks of the Nene, the house had no problem with the supply of water for drainage or domestic use. Due to its size, it is doubtful that the house would have required a large system of drains or channels to be excavated and no evidence of any now survives. In addition to this, there

is no evidence of reused medieval material within the fabric of the present farmhouse or its outbuildings (English Heritage 1976). Excavation took place in 1955, in the fields approximately two metres to the north of the farm following the exposure of a wall during ploughing (Rose 1999: 5). Very little information concerning the excavation was recorded, other than the confirmation that a single wall and a pit containing human remains were uncovered. There is also a note within the Norfolk Sites and Monuments Record (Rose 1999) suggesting that the excavation revealed the remains of a chapel. Without further corroboration, it is impossible to substantiate the claims of a chapel or its connection to the priory or cell of Marmont.

Two small recent archaeological interventions have taken place within the vicinity of Marmont Priory Farm and recovered evidence of monastic activity within the area. The first of these was an evaluation that took place in 1999, carried out by Norfolk Archaeological Unit. The excavation uncovered two ditches running parallel to the modern trackway containing pottery dating to the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries (Phillips 1999: 2). Although it is unlikely that the ditches themselves were medieval (ibid: 3) the presence of medieval pottery, ceramic roof tiles and floor tiles indicates that the existence of a medieval building on or near the site of excavation.

The second evaluation was carried out in 2003, also by Norfolk Archaeological Unit, directly to the north of the present farm buildings. The excavation revealed a number of drainage ditches thought to date to the medieval period containing medieval pottery, brick and roof tiles (Penn 2003: 5). The ditches were thought to possibly relate to the draining of the land by the priory to improve the land for grazing (Penn 2003: 5-6), although this cannot be confirmed it appears highly likely given the dating of the pottery and the long span of monastic occupation on the site. From the information recovered during excavation, particularly the recovery of human remains from the area,

it is possible that the medieval priory was located in or around the modern farmstead. The presence of a large number of stone fragments disturbed by ploughing has been recorded in the area to the west of the farm, as well as a number of masonry fragments surviving within the farm support this theory (Phillips 1999: 1).

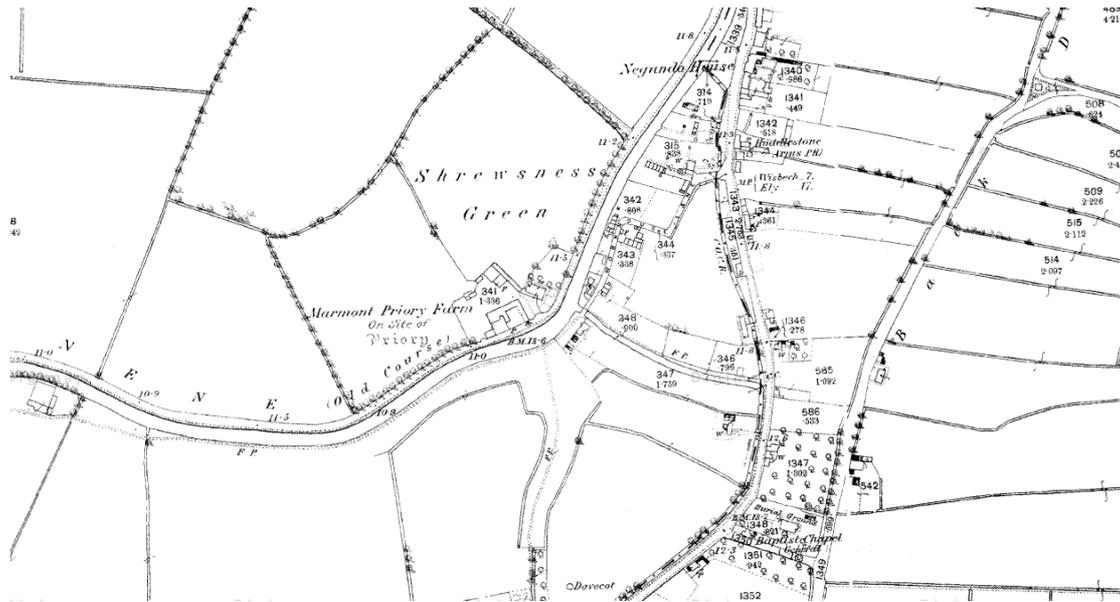


Figure 129 – 1887 Ordnance Survey showing the probable location of Marmont Priory (Crown Copyright)

Fordham

The priory of St Peter and St Mary Magdalene is located to the south of the town of Fordham in the county of Cambridgeshire (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 198). The priory site lies equidistant between the three major Cambridgeshire medieval settlements of Ely, Bury St Edmunds and Cambridge, 17 miles to the north-east of the City of Cambridge and 16 miles north-west of Bury St Edmunds. The site of the priory is now occupied by Fordham Abbey, a large Queen Anne house dating to the early-eighteenth century (Pevsner 1954: 310).

The priory was built by Henry the Dean and endowed by Hugh Malebisse in or shortly before 1227 (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 198). In addition to the priory, a hospital was founded at Fordham to supply food and shelter to the poor, as was common with Gilbertine houses. The income of the house in 1291 was under £32 and it is likely that the priory was intended for no more than four or five canons to reside within the house (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 198). The priory received various endowments during the thirteenth century, including holding the advowson for Burwell Church. The largest gift was received from Walter Robert's Son, who gifted 65 acres of land to provide for the upkeep of thirteen poor within the hospital (Rubin 1987: 137). As with other Gilbertine sites, the lack of Episcopal visitations means that there is no information concerning the priory within the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

There has been no archaeological excavation or survey that would suggest the layout or location of the priory buildings or the hospital. However, it has been assumed that the eighteenth-century house of Fordham Abbey lies upon the site of the priory (Ordnance Survey 2012; Pevsner 1954). Pevsner (1954: 310) notes that there is no evidence of reused medieval material within the fabric of the brick built house, however the Queen Anne style in which the house is built does not lend itself to the employment of ashlar. This may be explained by the period of over a century between the abandonment of the priory and the construction of Fordham Abbey House, in which time the site was most likely used as a quarry for the surrounding villages. This lack of reused material does not preclude it from being the location for the priory. The proximity of the site of the priory to Fordham Abbey House is attested to by evidence from the historic Ordnance Survey mapping.

The historic mapping from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries (Ordnance Survey 1887 & Ordnance Survey 1902) show a channel or drain running

along the east side of the priory site (figure 130) that was filled in by the 1970s. It is probable that this channel is medieval in origin and relates to the provision of fresh water and drainage to and from the priory buildings. There is also a loop in the channel to the south of the priory site, which diverges to the east for around sixty metres before it returns to join the drain (Ordnance Survey 1902). This loop is characteristic of a leet system, feeding a watermill, a property that the priory was known to have been endowed at foundation (Ellis & Salzman 1948b: 256). Other than these features, the area surrounding the house has been completely altered, obscuring any other possible remains of the medieval landscape.

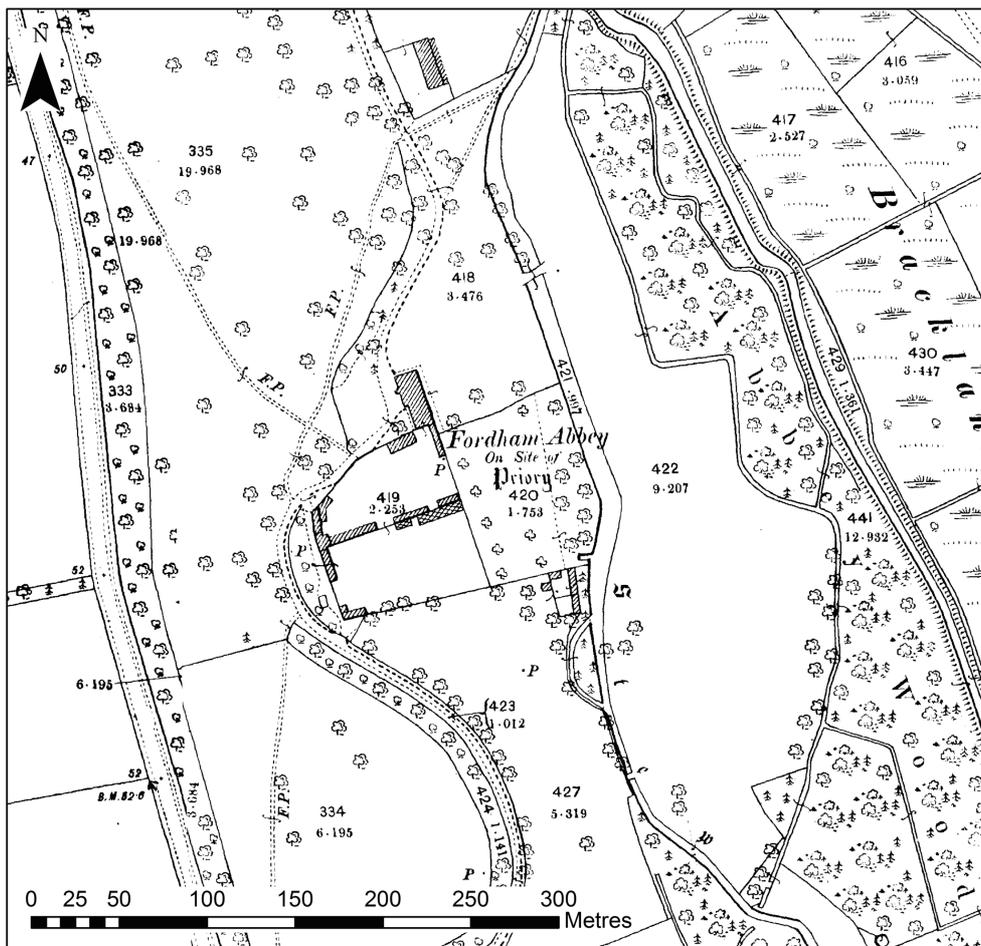


Figure 130 – 1902 Ordnance Survey showing the probable location of Fordham Priory (Crown Copyright)

Poulton

The site of Poulton priory is located directly to the south of the village of Poulton, Gloucestershire (formally within the county of Wiltshire, pre-1844). Poulton lies within the Cotswolds and is less than six miles to the east of Cirencester. The site of the priory sits on an area of relatively high land, 105 metres above sea level, approximately ten metres higher than the surrounding landscape. Although not designated as a scheduled monument, the site is surrounded by pasture rather than arable farmland, but appears to have been under the plough or heavily landscaped following the construction of Poulton Priory House in 1895 (Hart 2005: 10) as no earthworks are visible on aerial photographs or satellite imagery.

In 1348, Sir Thomas Seymour, who held the manor of Poulton, founded a chapel for the use of five chaplains (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 199). Two years after the foundation, Seymour gifted the land around Poulton and the advowson of the parish church to the Gilbertines (English Heritage 2010). The order founded the Priory of St Mary and incorporated the earlier chapel into the priory church (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 199). The foundation appears to have been a small one, as was common with the later Gilbertine establishments, having between four and five canons including the Prior (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 199). No historic information survives regarding the size or arrangement of the monastery buildings or indeed the exact location of the house.

Little archaeological work has taken place at the site of Poulton Priory House and the exact position of the priory church is unknown, despite its late demolition in 1873. It was accepted locally that Priory Farm lay over the demolished church, however there is now debate as to whether the priory was located on the site of the present-day farm (English Heritage 2010; Hart 2005). In the evaluation leading up to the site being

considered for scheduling, English Heritage (2010) asserts that no evidence existed for the location of the priory under the farm. However, the 1884 Ordnance Survey shows the previous site of the church within the centre of the range of buildings that make up Priory Farm. It is likely that the Ordnance Survey (1884) shows the location of the church accurately as it was produced only shortly after the demolition took place. One compounding problem is the large-scale renovation of Priory Farm and surrounding structures, making it impossible to identify any medieval monastic material that may have formed part of the fabric of the buildings (English Heritage 1975). Given the position of the church on the Ordnance Survey (1884), it appears likely that Priory Farm now occupies the site of the monastery.

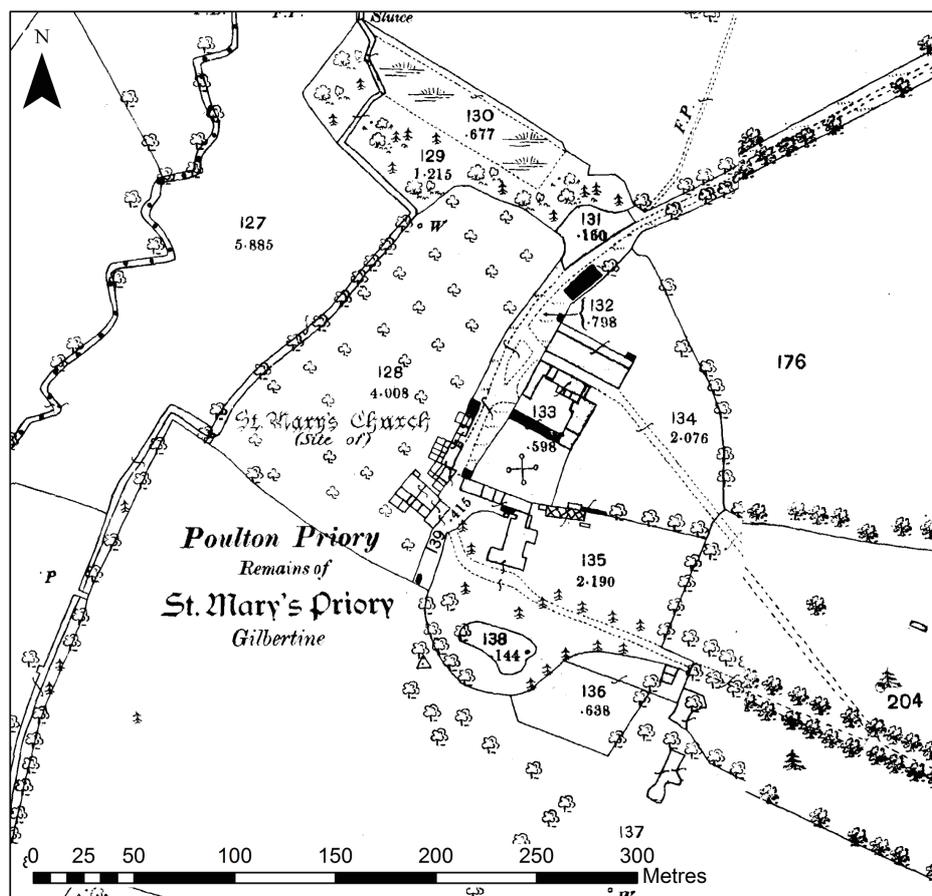


Figure 131 – 1884 Ordnance Survey showing the site of St. Mary's Church (Crown Copyright)

Marlborough

The Gilbertine priory of St Margaret is located to south of the town centre of Marlborough within the county of Wiltshire. Little is known about the exact location of the priory, however, *The itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543* states that the priory is located; '200 yards south of the town, on the south bank of the Kennet, to the west of the road' (1964: 130). The priory is shown on the 1900 County Series Ordnance Survey to the south of the Kennet within a large open area of grassland labeled as St Margaret's (figure 132). The land is currently a mix of residential and sports pitches.

St Margaret's priory was founded sometime before the turn of the thirteenth century, first referred to in a list of Gilbertine houses taken under the protection of King John, between 1199 and 1200 (Chettle & Kirby 1956: 316). The 1229 confirmation charter relates that Henry II founded the site and that a link between the priory and the Crown was maintained throughout the life of the monastery (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 198). The house was designed as a single sex house, with the original number inhabitants intended to be five or six canons (Pugh & Crittall 1956: 316). Henry III continued to be benefactor to the priory throughout the thirteenth century and due to this royal connection, more is known about the history of the priory of St Margaret than most other single Gilbertine sites.

A pupil at Marlborough College undertook an excavation in 1938. The excavation uncovered a track approximately 22 feet (6.7 metres) wide, constructed of flint and late-fourteenth century glazed tile in clay and chalk, overlaying a pure chalk base (Sewell 1938: 14). It is possible that this track dated to the monastic phase of the site, however

it is just as likely that the tile was reused following the Dissolution. The excavation also uncovered a rectangular stone structure that had been heavily robbed away, with three unfurnished burials found in close relation (ibid.). The report also relates that a number of bodies were found within the area of excavation and that their frequency and the scale of the area they appeared to inhabit was much too large to be explained as the private cemetery of the priory (ibid: 15). It is possible that the large number of burials within the area could be explained by the presence of a hospital at the priory, as has been found at the Gilbertine sites of Malton, Clattercot and Ellerton. This could also explain the support of the priory by the Crown, providing gifts of land and building materials for the care of the poor.

A second trench was excavated to the south of the trackway and a series of *in situ* ceramic tiles decorated with the fleur-de-lis were exposed (ibid.). The excavator recorded the whole of this area being covered with green glaze roof tile dating to the late-thirteenth and early-fourteenth centuries, as well as fragments of stained glass dated to the fourteenth century (ibid: 16). Due to the frequency of these fragments and the discovery of the *in-situ* flooring, it is possible that the excavation located the remains of the monastic complex, however due to the scale of the excavation it is impossible to make further conclusions. It is now also impossible to accurately locate the original excavation plan, as the buildings that he measured from are no longer standing. Further excavations within the area suggested as the location of the priory have produced no new evidence (WCC 2012: 1). However, this is not surprising considering the high level of residential redevelopment of the land and the clearance that would have been required for the sports pitches now found on the site.

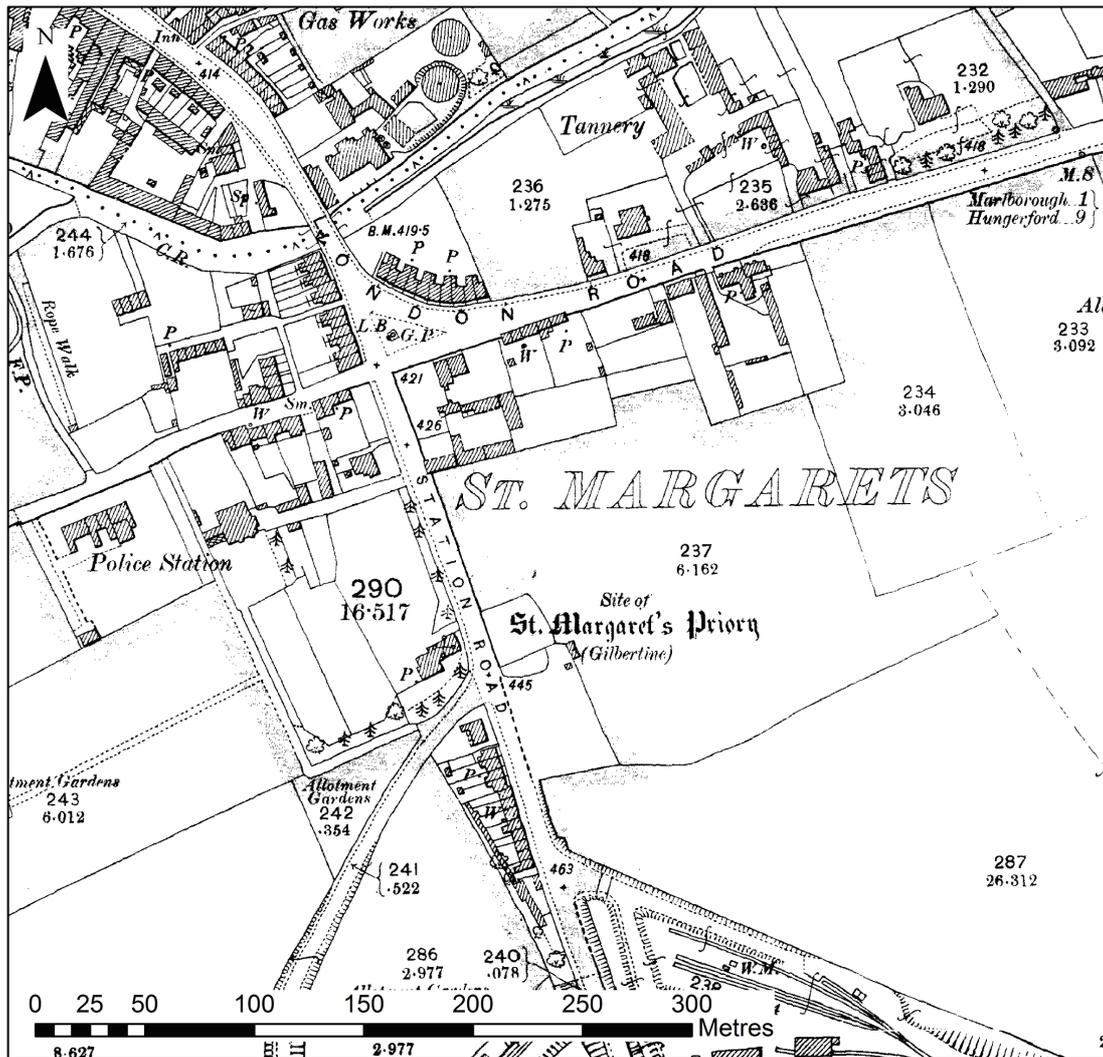


Figure 132 – 1900 Ordnance Survey showing the location of Marlborough Priory

Summary

In 1993 Mick Aston observed that traditionally the precincts of the canons have been less well studied than those of the Cistercians and Benedictines (1993: 107). Study of the Gilbertine precinct has proved to be as important to understanding the order as it was in studying the larger monastic orders. The monastic precincts of the Gilbertine double houses provide a key example of the archaeology of separation of the sexes. As the Gilbertines were one of the few monastic orders within England to unite both men and women within their monasteries, they provide one of the few examples of the

division of the inner court. The inner court can be seen as a single space divided into two, rather than two distinctly separate enclosures. Each inner court was bounded on three sides with a shared division between one another. At Sempringham and Watton the two halves of the inner court were separated by water, it is also suggested that waterways were used to divide the cloisters that Bullington, Shouldham and North Ormsby. The use of a moat as a form of division had both practical and symbolic value. It allowed water to be moved through the centre of the cloisters to other nearby buildings; at Shouldham and Bullington these drains linked both infirmaries and kitchens. It also provided a natural boundary between the sexes, more powerful than a simple bank or wall.

There is no evidence from any of the houses that the two courts were ever truly separate from one another. The decision to place the two groups within a single divided inner court, rather than two separate enclosures on opposite sides of the precinct is significant. Firstly, the proximity of the two groups was practical, the canons needed to be close to the nuns' cloister and the priory church, to carry out their role within the monastery. The sharing of a single court also reflected the layout of the priory church, a building in which the canons and nuns could be under one roof yet still segregated. Similarly, both groups shared a single divided space, the inner court.

The inequality in the size of the inner courts must also be considered. The canons, despite their lesser numbers, often had much larger inner courts than the nuns. This reflects the pattern in the larger size of the canons' cloisters when compared to the nuns, outlined in Chapter 2. This can be explained by the differing roles the two groups had within the monastery. The rule of the nuns required that they be enclosed, leading a highly regimented contemplative life. The variation of the Benedictine rule, by which the nuns lived, did not include physical labour as would have been expected from their

male counterparts. The nuns were not expected to leave their cloister and therefore the cloister became the focus of the inner court. The canons, following the rule of St Augustine, were allowed more freedom than the nuns and shared the inner court with the lay brothers. The position of the lay brothers at the Gilbertine priory has been discussed in Chapter 3 with the balance of evidence pointing to them occupying the western range of the canons' cloister.

The inner court of the canons contained a number of buildings not connected to the cloister. Within the canons' court at Sempringham the guesthouse and infirmary were separate from the cloister, and at Watton the prior's lodge was to the south of the canons' chapel. This was in contrast to the buildings of the nuns, which all appear to have been attached to the cloister. At Sempringham, a courtyard of buildings has been identified to the east of the nuns' cloister (Coppack & Cope-Faulkner 2008) and at Watton, recent survey (Chapman & Fenwick 2002; Townend 2014) has identified an extended west range serving the nuns and lay sisters. The small size of the inner court of the nuns and the lack of separate buildings can be viewed as an attempt to keep the nuns within the cloister, that is to say, within a controlled space. At Watton and Shouldham the exception to this seems to have been the monastery's (or possibly nuns') cemetery, located to the east of the priory church. At both sites, a wall was constructed to separate this area from the rest of the court and to restrict any view of the nuns.

Evidence from the single monasteries is relatively sparse compared to that from the double houses. The main reason for this discrepancy was the various scales of the single and double monasteries and their differing locations. Double houses tended to be much richer than the single monasteries; by the time of the suppression the average income for a single house was only £57, compared to £163 for a double house (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 194-7). This meant that the double house had the resources to invest

in a precinct of greater size, as well as the construction of the large-scale features that made up the boundaries. The majority of double houses were bordered by large moats, which were costly to construct and maintain. A second factor that limited the survival of the single house was its location. The single foundations where extensive surviving evidence remains were limited to rural contexts, with the majority of urban examples being encroached upon by urban expansion. This expansion of villages, towns and cities has destroyed many of the earthworks and repurposed many of the features of the precinct. This is particularly evident at Alvingham, where the village has obscured the cloisters and western half of the precinct.

Those sites located within an urban context provide an even greater challenge. The precincts of the priories at York and Lincoln were much smaller in scale than those of the rural single houses. This was probably due to the urban context in which the canons found themselves. The priories held granges and property within York and Lincoln, which paid for the upkeep of the priory. The position of the canons within the city, as priests rather than monks, would have meant that they would have ventured out of their cloisters, as their rule placed much less of an emphasis on enclosure. At Lincoln and York, the priories were outside of the walls and there would be relatively little restriction on space. Much more of a restriction would have been placed on the land available to the order at the time of foundation. For this reason, it is probable that the halls held only small parcels of land surrounding the hall and chapel.

The arrangement of the double precinct appears to have been much more regimented than that of the single house. There is a coherent pattern in the positioning of the different courts and buildings within the double precinct that is not evident at either the single precincts of the Gilbertines or the precincts of other orders. This uniquely Gilbertine arrangement reflected not only the regimented regime under which

the nuns lived, that was not shared by the canons, but also the view that the order wished to portray to outsiders. The use of monumental earthworks to define the boundaries of the precincts acted as the traditional display of wealth, commonly seen at other monastic sites, however it also reinforced the Gilbertine ideal of segregation between not only the canons and nuns, but also the nuns and the secular population outside of the monasteries.

Chapter 5 - The Decline of the Gilbertines

This chapter aims to explore the later history of the Gilbertines, from the fourteenth century onwards, a period that can be characterised as one of decline for the order. The reasons for the decline will be explored with reference to the failures of foundation in the order's early history. The centralized nature of the Gilbertine organization will be considered in order to determine whether this helped or hindered the prosperity of the monasteries, and archaeological evidence for the decline of the Gilbertines that is available from a number of sites will be reviewed. For example, excavation data from Mattersey, Ravenstonedale and York demonstrate the decline of the single house, whilst the large-scale fourteenth-century remodelling at Sempringham and Watton suggest that the double house did not suffer as badly during this period. Finally, the chapter will consider the order at the Dissolution and the role played by the last master of the Gilbertines, Robert Holgate.

One of the limitations of studying the order is the Gilbertine exemption from Episcopal visitations. Not only does the lack of any bishop's reports leave a gap in our knowledge for the domestic life of the monastery, but it also removes a potential source for the decline of the order as documented in the historical record (Jennings 1999: 154). For Gilbertine priories evidence for the value of the monastic houses can be found in the 1291 taxation record and the valuation at the time of the Dissolution. This historical data can be combined with the available archaeological evidence to help to suggest how the lessening fortunes of the order as a whole reflected on the individual priories and their inhabitants.

Golding's 'Failed Houses'

It was not uncommon for religious houses to fail or be abandoned shortly after their foundation. This possibility was further precipitated by a considerable increase in the number of monastic houses during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; by 1300 there were over 90 religious houses in Lincolnshire alone (Knowles & Hadcock 1971). Consequently, given the large number of foundations it is unsurprising that not all were successful. For example, the Augustinian house at Baxterwood, County Durham lasted less than 16 years before it became a Cell of Durham abbey (Knowles & Hadcock 1953: 126), whilst the Cistercian monastery at Bytham lasted less than one year before being moved to Vaudey (*ibid*: 106). However, these are examples of failure at foundation, rather than a gradual decline and the transition of a priory to a cell or a grange. Cases of failure at foundation exist for almost every monastic order, and the Gilbertines are not exempt from this pattern, indeed they had more failures than any of the other new orders.

Golding (1995: 248-9) records five Gilbertine priories as 'failures', classified as houses that he claims went out of use before 1300. The first of these was Tunstall, near Redbourne, which was founded as a double house and became a grange of Bullington less than 40 years afterwards, sometime before 1160. The reasons for this failure were two-fold. First, the nuns at Tunstall were unsuccessful in acquiring control of the parish church, which had been granted to the Benedictine house of Selby abbey some years earlier and who retained control following the foundation of Gilbertine priory. The second reason given by Golding for the failure of the monastery was the nature of the local land ownership. Several parties had holdings in the area of the priory and by 1212 there were six groups or individuals with interests in Redbourne (Golding 1995: 248). Given the low-lying position of the site, as outlined in Chapter 3, and the

sparse population of the area, it is likely that there was little demand or interest outside of the order in keeping the priory from failing.

The endowment at Owton, County Durham was made in around 1204 by Alan of Wilton, a benefactor of the priory at Ellerton. As at Tunstall, the earlier grant of the church to the Cistercians meant that the Gilbertines could not control the parish. Although the foundation grant was large, there is some dispute as to whether Alan was in a position to grant the lands in the first place. Although the precise reason for the failure is unknown, by 1210 the Gilbertines no longer considered the site as a priory, and the lands were granted to the hospital of St Nicholas in Yarm (Golding 1995: 251).

The priory at Ravenstonedale was founded in the mid-twelfth century and by 1200 is considered by Golding (1995: 250) to have been a grange of Watton. Golding cites Ravenstonedale as a failed foundation and questions whether it gained status as an independent priory. In Chapter 2 of this thesis it has been argued that there is archaeological evidence that Ravenstonedale was built as a complete priory. The priory church, chapter house and the east and north ranges were at least constructed, if not continuously occupied throughout the life of the priory. The value of Ravenstonedale at the Dissolution was over £93 (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 197), and this was the third highest income for a house of canons, suggesting that the failure of the priory was not economic. It may have been the distance for the priory from Lincolnshire and its isolated position on the western side of the Pennines that caused the house to be overlooked by the order. The presence of the cloistral buildings suggests that the intention had been to settle at the site permanently. However, as will be discussed further in this chapter, by the end of the fourteenth century the site has shrunk and only the eastern range appears to have been occupied.

The remaining Gilbertine failures were outside of England and therefore fall outside of the scope of this thesis (for a history of the house at Dalmulin in Scotland see Edwards 1901 and Golding 1994: 252-6). Also worthy of note, are the attempted foundations in Brachy, Normandy between 1170 and 1184, and Rome in the early-thirteenth century (Golding 1994: 258). The foundation in Brachy appears to have been for only canons, and as with the Scottish foundation the main reason for the failure appears to have been the distance to the motherhouse. The Gilbertines, at least in the early years of the order, were highly centralized in their organization, and the priory of Brachy was only bound to visit the general chapter every two years (Golding 1994: 259). Finally, the order received the offer of founding a nunnery in Rome between 1202 and 1207 from Innocent III, although by the time this offer was made the Gilbertines were reducing the number of new foundations and any plans for a Roman house were abandoned (Golding 1994: 259). Following 1207 only four more establishments would be founded in England: the two educational halls in the later thirteenth century, and the two small priories at Hitchin and Poulton in the fourteenth century.

Golding (1995: 262) has explained the failed foundations as ‘failures of will, not of resources’. It would appear that the order had little interest in expanding outside of England, or in reality any great distance from the motherhouse at Sempringham. Unlike the continental orders, the Gilbertines had no experience in managing property located abroad, and if the distance to Cumbria and to Scotland was considered too far to successfully administer potential monasteries, there was little chance the order would seriously seek new foundations across the Channel.

The Later Medieval Decline of the Gilbertine Houses

The Gilbertine experiment of the double house had fallen out of favour by 1200 (see Chapter 2). The last double house of the order of Fontevrault was founded at Amesbury in 1177 and the last double house in England was Shouldham in 1193. This not only marked an end to the foundation of new double houses, but a slowdown in the order's pattern of foundation overall, and by 1204 all but four of the order's priories had been founded. Part of the reason for this was the sheer numbers of monastic houses within England by this date and importantly this saturation meant that potential benefactors were not limited to supporting a local order. The hiatus in new foundations may also suggest that the order had over-extended itself financially. The recruitment of nuns from aristocratic backgrounds had brought in money initially, however once the monastery was full income would have dramatically decreased, and such opportunities for benefaction were vastly reduced in the smaller male-only houses.

The double monastery at Tunstall failed at sometime around 1190, probably due to a lack of recruitment and interest by the local gentry (Golding 1995: 249), and as such would have provided a stark reminder to the order of what could happen if the finances were stretched too far. The foundations by Master Roger of Malton, were much smaller in scale in contrast to those of his predecessor Gilbert, and appear to have been focused on not over-extending the order's finances. This would continue long after Roger's death, with the educational halls at Cambridge and Stamford not being founded until the close of the thirteenth century. Both of these houses were on a much smaller scale than the earlier priories (Cambridge had an income of less than £14 at the Dissolution).

During the middle of the fourteenth century, England experienced a number of events that shook the economy as well as the hundreds of monasteries across the

country. The first of these to affect the Gilbertines were the floods and crop failure of the late 1340s. In 1349, on the eve of Trinity Sunday a flood engulfed the priory at Sempringham. The reports state that the water rose within the church and cloisters to a depth of six feet, damaging the monasteries wool supplies and destroying a number of books (Graham 1906a: 182). Following this event, the Crown granted the church at Hacconby to the order to pay for the nuns' clothing. Given the impact on the house at Sempringham it is likely that the floods and the subsequent crop failures affected the other Gilbertine priories in Lincolnshire.

The arrival of the Black Death in Lincolnshire in the spring of 1349 had a devastating effect on the monasteries. Little evidence remains for the history of the order in the fourteenth century, however a decrease in the number of nuns and canons can be seen at Gilbertine priories. The most marked of these is at Sixhills, which seems to have been particularly badly hit by the plague. The number of nuns at Sixhills was limited to 120, however by 1377 only 11 were recorded as being present at the priory, by 1381 this had number had dropped to 5 (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 196). In addition to the initial effects of the Black Death on the communities, the resulting alteration in the labour market had a clear effect on the order. Knowles and Hadcock (1971: 196) go as far as to claim that, 'the order suffered perhaps more than any other order from the changed labour conditions in the fourteenth century'. Following the decimation of the population by the plague, the number lay brothers and sisters greatly decreased and it was these lay men and women were responsible for the much of the revenue of the monasteries through the provision of agriculture.

In 1315 Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, agent in England of the Bardi company of Florence, compiled a quota of wool from English monasteries (Bond 2004: 65). As would be expected, the Cistercians made up 85 percent (1468 sacks) of the wool exports

from England. Their holdings in Yorkshire provided vast areas on which to rear sheep and Fountains alone provided 76 sacks for export. The Gilbertines provided 293 sacks of wool for export, making it one of their main revenue streams. Malton and Watton produced the largest amount of wool for the order, 45 and 40 sacks respectively. The crash of the wool trade in England in the early-fourteenth century had a profound effect upon the order, for example value of Malton decreased from £691 in the thirteenth century to £197 by the end of the fifteenth (Graham 1903: 123-4). In 1335 Malton priory owed Thomas De Holm the sum of £1675, over twice the house's annual income. The priory was unable to pay and the money had to be provided by the Archbishopric of York (Jennings 1999: 155).

The Black Death and the period of crisis leading up to it have been well documented (see Campbell 1991, Ormrod & Lindley 1996, Platt 1996). For the Gilbertines this marked the beginning of an economic catastrophe that many of the smaller houses would never recover from, although this decline must be seen in the context of a more general pattern across the wider monastic world (Burton 1996: 52). The order of Fontevrault was similar in character to that of the Gilbertines, both being small independent orders and experimenting with the inclusion of men and women in double houses. In a similar fashion to the Gilbertines, the order declined in the fourteenth and throughout the fifteenth centuries, when the number of men and women within its ranks decreased steadily. This was only arrested in 1494 when the Abbess Renee de Bourbon used her own considerable personal wealth to remodel the motherhouse at Fontevrault and reorganize the order (Esperdy 2005: 73).

By the time these troubles struck, the Gilbertines was already in a precarious position. Their success in recruiting nuns into its double houses would become a problem in itself. By 1248 Bullington was home to 100 nuns, filling the limit set by the

founder, and at Watton, of the 200 women present in 1310 it is supposed that at least half were nuns (Golding 1995: 145). These excessive populations would have been a drain on the resources of the priories, and it is not surprising that following the Black Death, and the reduction in the number of lay brothers and sisters, that the number of nuns fell as a result as well. A second problem for the Gilbertines was the papal order of 1366 making it mandatory to gain papal authorization when taking over a church (Golding 1995: 257), as whoever controlled the church was instrumental in deciding grants of land within the parish. The order had previously relied greatly on the income for the churches, and thus the requirement for papal authorization made the acquisition of new churches slower and more problematic.

In 1291 Pope Nicholas IV compiled the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*, which recorded the value of monastic houses in England and Wales. These figures provide a valuation for the majority of Gilbertine houses and reproduced by Knowles and Hadcock (1971). For the double houses of the order all but one shows a distinct drop in value recorded between 1291 and the Dissolution. The only exception was the motherhouse at Sempringham; although this may be due to the holdings of smaller houses often being recorded as the property of the motherhouse. Nonetheless, despite its value at the Dissolution, in the fourteenth century, Sempringham had been in debt. In 1320 the priory owed £1000 and in 1337 and 1345 it failed to provide taxes to the Crown (Graham 1906a: 182). At North Ormsby, Catley and Sixhills the valuation had dropped by almost half in the 250 years following 1291. Catley in Lincolnshire was the poorest of the double houses and by the time of the Dissolution its value was given at £34.

The priory of Sixhills provides a further clear example of the drop in value and number of inhabitants during the fourteenth century. In 1252 the priory gained the right of free warren throughout their lands. This would have greatly increased the worth of

the priory's lands, which were valued in 1254 as £166, with £100 of these relating to temporal possessions and the remainder to the spiritualities (Knowles and Hadcock 1971: 196). Around 1280 the same time the priory gained the Manor of Toft, near Sixhills valued at £75 (ibid: 195) and also held the village of Legsby (Golding 1995: 284). Sixhills was much engaged with the English wool trade due to its location and the availability of good quality arable farmland. As with other Gilbertine priories like Watton and Malton, the priory was one of the leading exporters of wool within its area (Everson *et. al.* 1991: 162). Despite the high valuation in 1254 and the latter increase in property, by 1462 the total valuation of the priory had reduced to £40 (Knowles and Hadcock 1971: 196).

A similar pattern of decline is found in the number of nuns identified at the double houses from the fourteenth century until the Dissolution. Despite a limit of 140 being placed on the number of nuns at Watton, by 1378 only 64 women were recorded as being present at the house, and by the Dissolution only 15 were named. At Sempringham the limit was supposed to be 120, and by 1247 200 women were recorded at the site, yet by the time of the Dissolution this number had dropped to just 18. The single houses of the canons fared no better. As with the double houses the value of all but one of the single priories dropped between 1291 and the Dissolution, and during the 1530s, half of the single houses had less than 5 canons occupying the cloisters.

The Archaeology of Decline

The Single Houses

The layout of the Gilbertine houses has been discussed at length in Chapters 2 and 3, including the shift away from the double monastery to houses for canons at the turn of the thirteenth century. York and Ravenstonedale provide the most complete

records of the adaptation of the monastic ranges to suit the changing circumstances of the order. These sites provide evidence relating to the varying decline in fortunes of the order over the course of the fourteenth century and the affect this had on the arrangement and use of the cloisters. Study of Mattersey, Malton and Clattercote also provide examples of alterations in scale of the Gilbertine single house. The fourteenth-century foundations by the order at Poulton and Hitchin will also be considered, as during a period when the fortunes of the Gilbertines could be argued to be at their lowest, the order chose to found two new houses, the first in the 50 years following the foundation of the educational halls.

York

The founder of York, Hugh Murdac specifically granted the priory to ‘God and 12 canons of the order of Sempringham’ (Dugdale 1655: 962). The scale of the initial buildings at Fishergate suggests that the priory was deliberately constructed on a scale to be able to accommodate this number of the canons and a number of lay brothers (see Chapter 3). The eastern range of the priory had internal dimensions of 20 x 6.5 metres (Kemp 1996: 113), and this gives a rough estimation of the size of the canons’ dormitory above, easily large enough to accommodate 12 canons. The chapter house was also relatively large, providing an internal space of 17 x 6.6 metres (Kemp 1996: 114-115). As with the eastern range, the size of the chapter house suggests an intention to provide space for the maximum number of canons. Following the decline of the fortunes of the order during the fourteenth century this number had dropped dramatically by the end of the century; in 1380-1 there were only three canons and the

prior present at St Andrew's and by the Dissolution this number had dropped to two (Fallow 1913c: 255).

At York, this decline saw a reduction in the size of the priory following the decreased demand for space in the fourteenth century. This reduction is evident in both the church and the cloistral ranges (figure 133). The original nave of the church was demolished and a new structure built in its place (Kemp 1996: 165). The only walls left standing were the north and south transepts, which were incorporated into the new structure, and the north-eastern pier, which was repurposed as a buttress for the eastern wall of the presbytery. The presbytery and nave of the new church were 1.7 metres wider than the previous structure, which was shortened at the east end by approximately 26 metres, resulting in the new church being around 45% smaller than the twelfth-century building (Kemp 1996: 181).

The plan of the church was simplified from a cruciform to a narrow rectangular structure, removing the altars located in the twelfth-century transepts. This modified form was similar that found in the layout of the canons' chapel at Watton, which dated to the fourteenth-century reconstruction of the canons' cloister and will be discussed further later in this chapter. Graves (1996: 181-3) has compared this simple arrangement with that of high-status private and collegiate chapels of the thirteenth century, such as St Etheldreda, London (Bony 1979) and St Stephen at the Palace of Westminster (Colvin 1982). These churches would not only have required less resources for the order to construct and maintain, but would also suit the needs of a shrinking population within the priory.

To the north of the church, the size of the eastern range was also reduced. The eastern and northern walls of the range were removed and rebuilt. The north and south walls of the chapter house were retained, as was the outer wall of the north transept.

The north wall of the chapter house created a partition in the centre of the range. The north and south walls of the transept formed small room, which formed the canons' new chapter house (ibid: 364). The most significant aspects of this downsizing are the reduced size of the canons' dormitory and the chapter house, suggesting that the order no longer expected that the full contingent of canons would occupy the monastery.

The north range of the priory was also heavily altered in the fourteenth century. The outer walls of the range were not rebuilt in this period, however substantial changes to the internal chambers of the range imply a change in use (Kemp 1996: 189). The construction of a new drain and evidence of a hearth in the centre of the middle chamber suggest that the range was being repurposed from warming house to kitchen. Given the small number of canons at York in the later fourteenth century it is possible that the ground floor became both the kitchen and refectory. The original kitchens can be posited to have been located in the north-western corner of the cloister. It is possible that the reduction in number of residents meant that it was no longer practical to keep a separate kitchen, warming house and refectory.

Following this large scheme of rebuilding in the mid-fourteenth century few changes took place within the house. The money that the order had expended on the remodelling had taken its toll; by 1360 the Crown granted the priory protection because of its poverty (Burton 1996: 60). The fortunes of the house did not improve with the priory being exempt from taxation by the Crown in at least six years during the latter half of the fifteenth century. St Andrew's priory demonstrates the Gilbertine reaction to the decrease in the population of the monastery. The response was practical, space within the church was reduced and the north and east ranges rationalised to incorporate a number functions previously carried out by a greater number of buildings. This is a

pattern that was continued at other Gilbertine sites, especially at the single houses of Mattersey and Ravenstonedale.

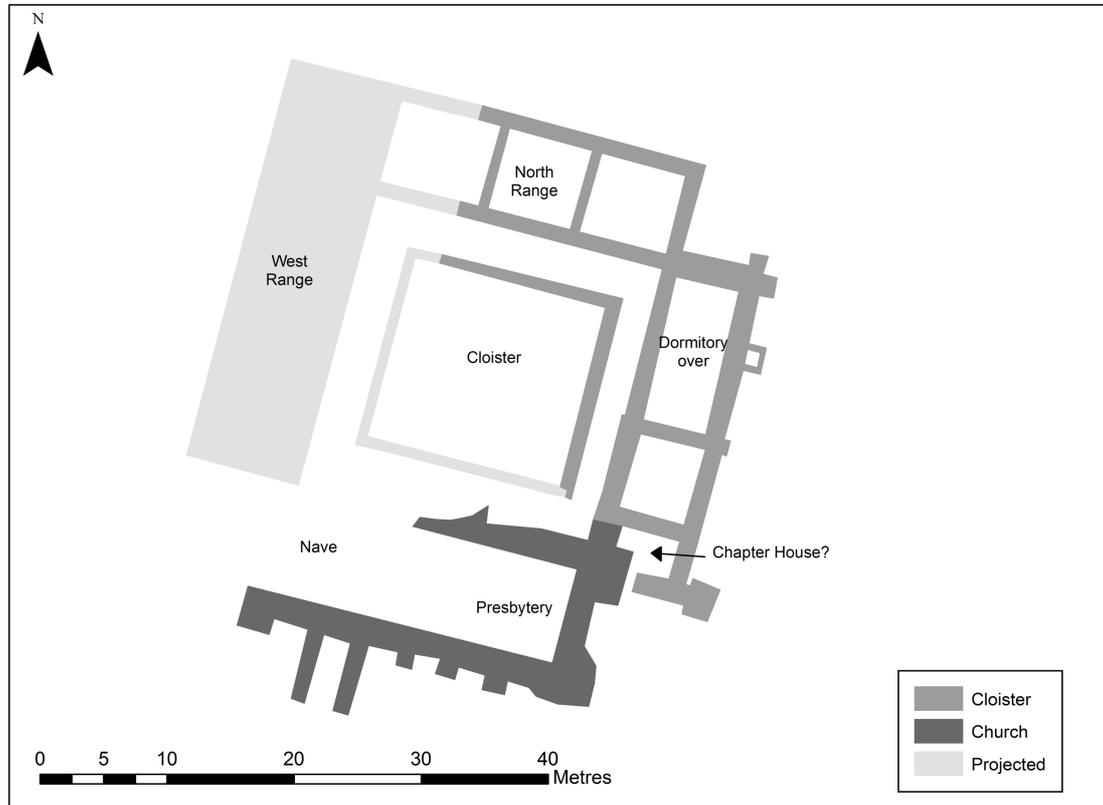


Figure 133 – Reconstructed layout of the early- to mid-fourteenth-century monastery at York (after Kemp 1996)

Mattersey

The priory at Mattersey provides a more complete example of a Gilbertine single house. The layout of the house and its precinct has been discussed in Chapters 2 & 3. The decline in fortunes of the house at Mattersey began much earlier than at York. Although the priory was established within the lifetime of Gilbert, the foundation was never a rich one. In 1279 a fire destroyed the church and cloisters of the priory (*ibid.*). This fire came at a time when the finances of the priory were already under strain, and

although the fire is said to have affected the church and cloister, there is no record of the specific buildings destroyed.

Evidence provided by Peers following the early-twentieth century excavation suggested that by the mid-thirteenth century a stone built priory church and eastern range had been constructed (figure 134). It is likely that both the eastern and southern ranges were constructed at the same point during the mid-thirteenth century. Evidence of burning on the stonework inside the south range also argues for a pre-1279 date. It is possible that the west range was still constructed out of wood in the late-thirteenth century, as the use of wooden buildings in the early life of monastic institutions was commonplace. At Fountains abbey, excavation has recovered the remains of the first wooden phase of the monks' chapel and dormitory (Coppack 2009: 24). Similarly, a wood church was identified at Fichale priory, County Durham, dating to the twelfth-century phase of the monastery (Peers 1935: 7). It is likely that by 1279 the priory at Mattersey would have had at least a south range, to act as kitchen and refectory for the canons. The presence of wooden buildings making up the west range would have made the consequences of the fire even more severe. Peers found no evidence for earlier buildings during his excavation, however his principal aim was to uncover the plan of the latest phase of buildings (Peers 1930: 20).

The 1279 fire appears to have totally destroyed the twelfth-century priory church. The eastern and southern ranges appear to have survived intact, providing the only evidence of the pre-1279 buildings. In October of 1280, due to the destitution of the priory following the fire, a grant was obtained for the appropriation of Mattersey village church (Cox 1910: 140). A new church was constructed at Mattersey in the years following the fire. The church was built against the northern wall of the east range, set slightly south of the position of its twelfth-century predecessor and appears to have

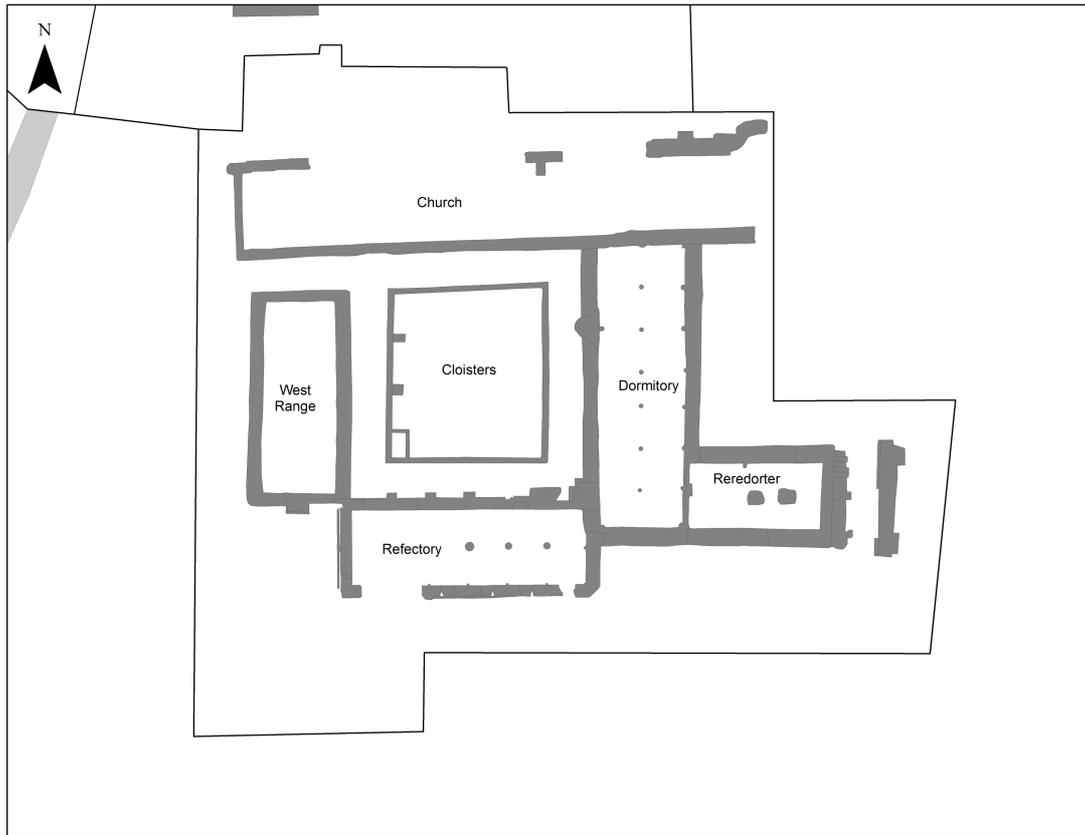


Figure 134 – Reconstruction of mid- to late-thirteenth-century Mattersey priory (produced by author)

been built to roughly the same dimensions as the original. Peers did not uncover an earlier church during his excavations and mistook the thirteenth- or fourteenth-century rebuild for the original priory church. He argued that the priory church was never rebuilt after the fire (Peers 1930: 19). This is unlikely as the suppression record of Mattersey specifically lists the church and steeple as passing from the order following the Dissolution (Gairdner & Brodie 1895: 219). In addition to this inventory, the 1402 calendar of papal registers lists an indulgence to those contributing to the repair of the church of St Helen at Mattersey (Bliss & Twemlow 1904: 548).

The exact date of the latest phase of construction of the church is unknown, other than it must have taken place before 1402. However, evidence from the northern half of the east range may suggest that the church was not reconstructed for a

considerable period. The two northern bays were blocked off from the rest of the range sometime after 1279 (Peers 1930: 19). This room was fitted with two altars, from which the bases still remain. This room may have fulfilled the role of the church following its destruction, suggesting that the priory was not in a position to rebuild it directly following the fire. The *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* gives the value of the priory as £52, making Mattersey one of the few priories that was worth more at the Dissolution than it was in 1291 (Cox 1910: 141). The poverty of the house may explain the failure to reconstruct the church directly following the 1279 fire. Peers suggests that the western half of the church went out of use in the fourteenth or fifteenth century and that a tower, constructed to the north, was a free-standing structure (Peers 1910: 18-19). The evidence from the Dissolution suggests that the church was still in use in some form by 1538, however it is possible that it was greatly reduced in size (figure 135). This could provide a reason for the altar bases not being removed from the eastern range following the reconstruction of the church. Both the east range and the remaining eastern portion of the church may have been used by the canons for the religious service.

At the Dissolution, there were only four canons and the prior present at the house (Peers 1930: 18). The poor preservation of the west range suggests that it may have gone out of use before the Dissolution. If this was the case then it may be explained by a reduction in the population of the house. This was likely due to a decrease in the number of lay brothers at Mattersey following the mid-fourteenth century. The south range was subdivided, with the east two bays being separated from the rest by a wall, incorporating one of the supporting columns. Peers hints at other subdivisions with the range but does not give any detail as to their location (1930: 19-20). These divisions within the southern range can be explained by the abandonment of the west range. In addition to these divisions, windows were inserted into the lower level of the south

range. This may suggest the abandonment of the upper floor of the range and the repurposing of the lower floor for the canons' refectory. As at York there was a need for the accommodation of a number of activities to be carried out within the confines of a smaller area. At York, this was in the north range, at Mattersey it was the south.

Charleston (1972: 6) placed the date for the priory kitchen and the tower to the north of the church at Mattersey within the fifteenth century. The motivation to add a kitchen to the priory in this period is at odds with the evidence of a diminishing number of inhabitants. It is more likely that the kitchen is closer in date to the remodelling of the southern range following the 1279 fire. The possible fourteenth- or fifteenth-century contraction of the church at Mattersey and the use of the east range as a chapel suggest that the fortunes of the house had declined to the extent that they could no longer afford

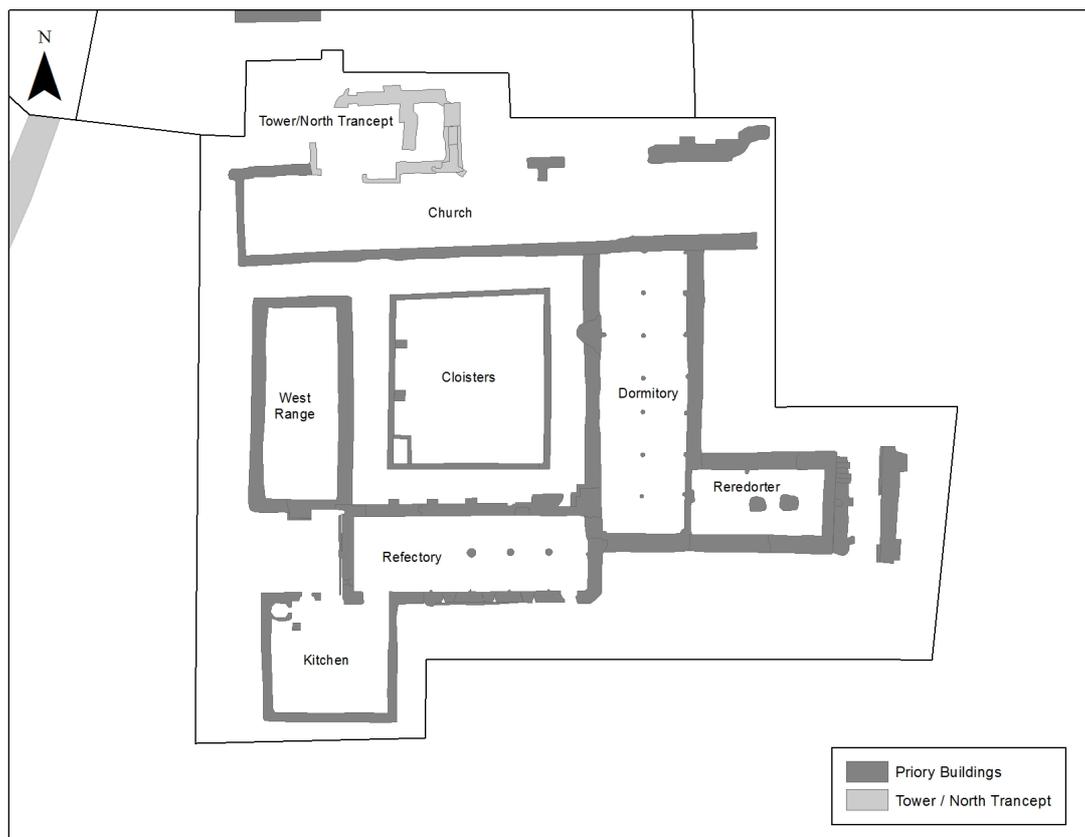


Figure 135 – Reconstruction of Mattersey priory following the post-1279 reconstruction (partly after Charleston 1972 and Peers 1930)

to maintain the priory buildings. As at York the practical response was to shrink the size of the buildings and to repurpose spaces to fulfil a number of functions.

Ravenstonedale

The general layout of the priory at Ravenstonedale has been discussed in Chapter 2. Turnbull and Walsh re-evaluated the priory in 1989 following excavations by E. P. Frankland in 1928. The house was founded in the mid-twelfth century and the initial phase of the construction took the form of the regularly laid out ranges surrounding the cloister, with the church bordering the south side. Golding classifies the house as a failure, as it reportedly became a grange of Watton by 1200 (1995: 250). The archaeological evidence suggests that the priory retained the traditional priory arrangement until the late-thirteenth or early-fourteenth century (Turnbull & Walsh 1991: 36). At the same time the northern range appears to have gone out of use and the eastern range was remodelled. There is no evidence for any changes to the church or west range at this date, but it is likely that, together with the church, the eastern range was the only one that remained upstanding (figure 136).

The rebuilding of the east range followed the layout of the earlier building and probably incorporated its west wall into this phase (Turnbull & Walsh 1989: 13). It was formed of two rooms on a north-south orientation. These rooms represented the undercroft of the building and now only survive below the level of the vaulting springs. The northern room once extended to the east, but has been masked by later additions to the range. The southern room was sub-divided with a passage to the north of two rooms, the southern half of which have been obscured by the later church. The exact function of these rooms is difficult to ascertain due to the removal of the floors by Frankland

during the 1920s excavations. This level of the priory would have formed the kitchen and storage area, with the refectory and dormitory both being located on the floor above.

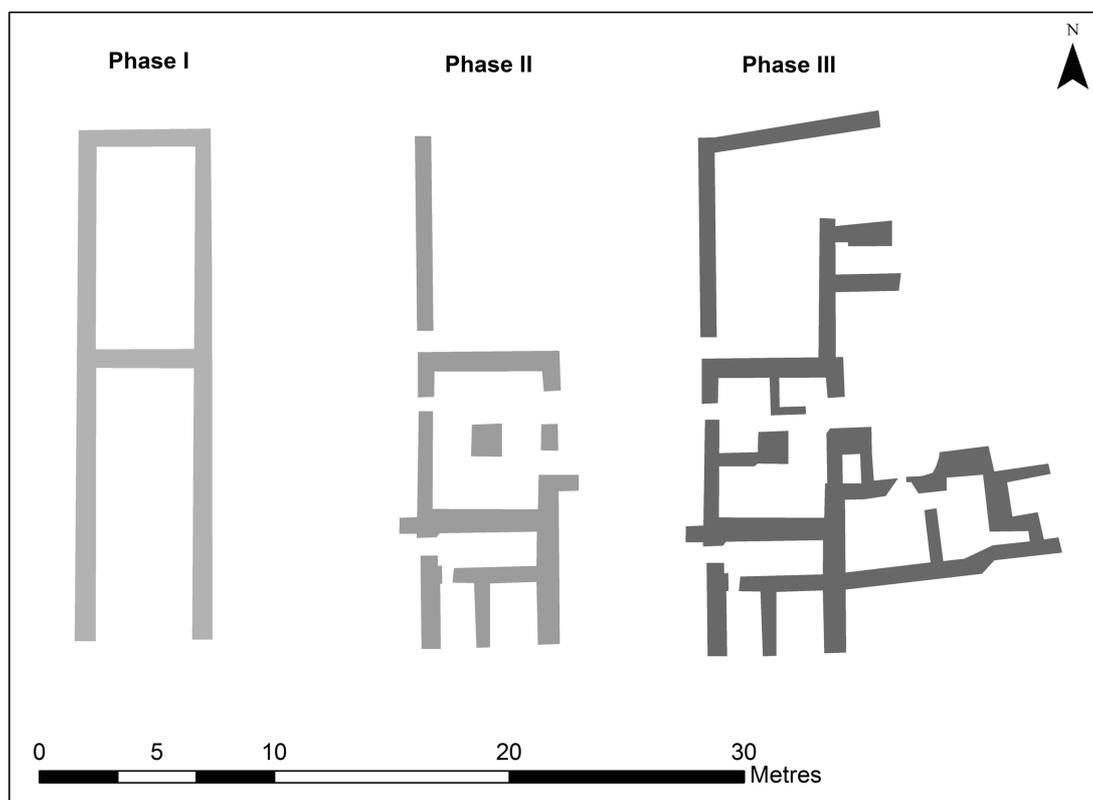


Figure 136 – Plan of the three phases of the east range at Ravenstonedale (after Turnbull & Walsh 1992)

Further remodelling of the priory took place in the following years. This was carried out piecemeal and included the construction of an eastern wing. This room contained a large fireplace, suggesting its function as the cell's kitchen (ibid. 1989: 16). This may have replaced an earlier kitchen in the eastern room of the earlier phase cell. It is unlikely that this final phase of rebuilding took place after the Dissolution, as by the seventeenth century, visits by Fothergill and Machel describe the buildings as uninhabited ruins (Blackburn 1989: 5-6). As with Mattersey and York, the

reorganization at Ravenstonedale appears to have been due to the need to rationalize space following a decrease in the number of inhabitants. It is likely that by the late-thirteenth century the priory had degenerated to an administrative centre for the Gilbertine holdings in the area, with perhaps only a small number of canons. This is supported by an enquiry in 1405 that was held, after claims that no canons had been within the house for some time (Turnbull & Walsh 1989: 6). This suggests an increasing secularisation of the site and a shift in emphasis, away from a religious focus.

The Later Foundations

Two anomalies within the chronology of the foundation of the Gilbertine priories are the houses at Poulton and Hitchin between 1348 and 1362. These two houses were founded at a time when the order was going through a decline in both its finances and the number of canons it could recruit. Golding places these houses within a separate grouping to the other priories, likening them more to ‘collegiate chapels’ rather than institutions akin to the earlier Gilbertine priories (1995: 262). Little information exists concerning the priory at Poulton in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries until the time of the Dissolution. In 1535 the house was valued at £22 (Chettle & Kirby 1956: 319), making it one of the poorer single houses, mostly likely due to its late foundation. Despite this low valuation the priory at Poulton was not closed during the suppression of the lesser monasteries and was only dissolved in 1539, surrendered by the prior and two canons (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 199). The house at Hitchin was originally intended to house three canons. It was even less well-endowed than that at Poulton, the value of the house being around £2 at the time of foundation (Stephenson 2005: 77). This value rose to £13 by the time of the Dissolution, and was home to the prior and a single canon.

The house at Poulton was likely similar in scale to that at Hitchin. Both priories were founded around a similar time and were the products of small foundation grants. There is little historical data to suggest that either house was successful during the 200 years following their foundation. However, Hitchin does provide a sense of the scale of the priories (figure 137); the house was much smaller than those at York, Ravenstonedale or Mattersey. Although it was centred on a courtyard or cloister there was no effect to emulate the form of the earlier monasteries. The focus of the building was the church or chapel, running almost the entire length of the southern side of the building. The church was a simple narrow rectangular structure, with no evidence for transepts or aisles being uncovered. As at York and Mattersey, there is no indication of internal division within the church, however later conversion to a house may have

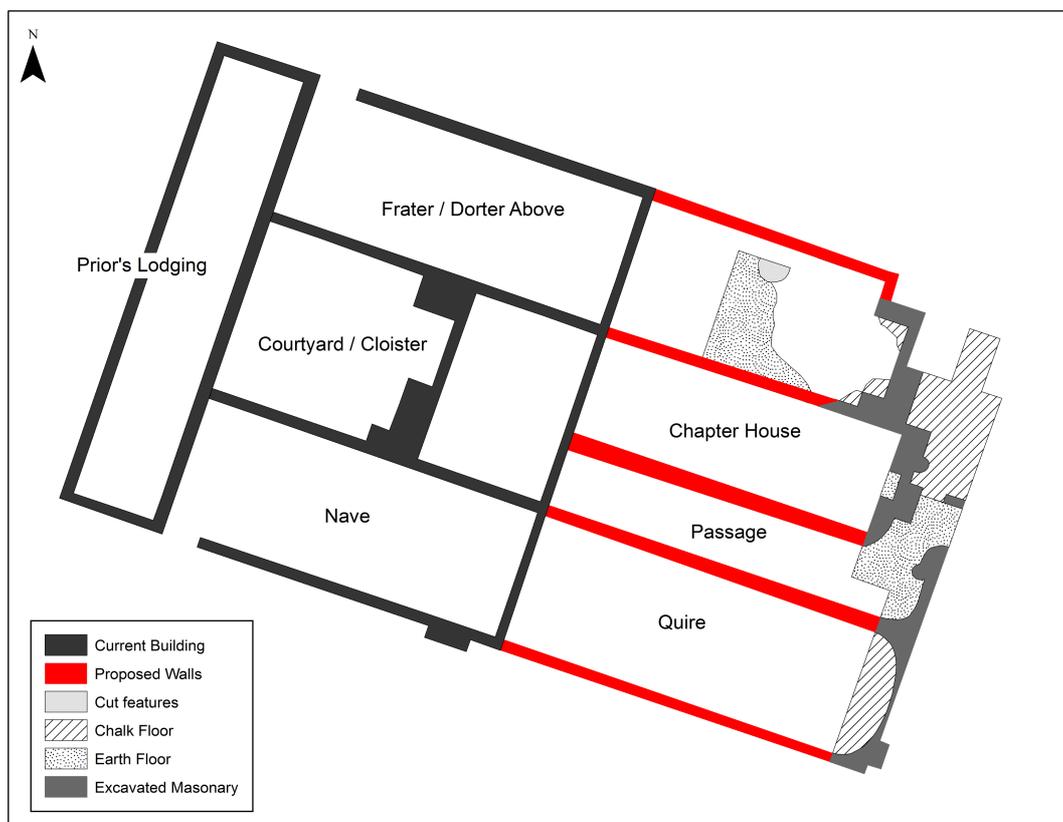


Figure 137 – The priory at Hitchin (partly after Hillelson & Fitzpatrick 2009)

destroyed any partition walls or plinths for screens. There is no evidence at Hitchin for a large number of lay brothers or canon, and the size of the church suggests that it was designed with the aim of the laity being present, probably in the nave, with the canons occupying the choir or presbytery.

It is unclear why the Gilbertines chose to found these houses at a time when the order as a whole was in decline. Neither of the founders were particularly powerful men, nor were the grants offered particularly generous. Both of the houses were to the south of the Gilbertine power base: Hitchin in Hertfordshire and Poulton in Gloucestershire. There may have been some value in the order expanding south as these counties were certainly less densely populated with monasteries than were Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. It may also have been that the order had no other offers of foundation grants in the intervening years, although the evidence of the failed houses in Scotland and the European mainland suggest that the Gilbertines were in no way an expansionist order. It is more likely that by the mid-fourteenth century the order was desperate to bring in new forms of revenue, and shifting focus to more individual contemplative devotion, especially within the urban centres, may have been seized on by the order. The characterization of these foundations by Golding as ‘collegiate chapels’ suggest that, as at York, the order’s single houses were pursuing a change in religious practice.

Changes in Religious Practice and the Decline of the Canons

The monastic orders of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century England saw a decline in the number of religious within their houses. At many sites, this led to a reduction in the space required and an alteration of the layout. Graves (1996: 193) has identified a number of sites that follow this pattern; at the Benedictine house at

Sandwell priory a number of changes were made to the arrangement of the buildings in the fourteenth century. The size of the church was greatly reduced and the transept chapels removed (Hodder 1989: 188-192). The chapter house, which had formerly been similar to that seen at St Andrew's York, was reduced in size and incorporated into the east range. The chapter house, which had previously extended east from the range, was moved south to occupy the position of the former north transept (Hodder 1989: 191-2). The reduction in the sizes of the chapter houses at Sandwell, as at Ravenstonedale and York reflect the small number of canons present at the sites following the end of the thirteenth century.

Finchale priory became a Benedictine cell to Durham in the mid-thirteenth century (Peers 1935: 7). At Finchale a chapel was removed to reduce the size of the church, as it was found to be too large for the small community. The chancel arches in the church were blocked and the aisles removed as part of the reduction (Peers 1935: 8-9). As at Ravenstonedale and York, this reduction can be seen as both a reaction to the decrease in number of canons and an attempt to reduce the cost of ongoing repairs to the monastery. A fire at the western end of the church at Malton priory was recorded in the late-fifteenth century. It is around this time that the north aisle was demolished and the northern tower, one of the pair that stood at the western end of the church, was pulled down (Jennings 1999: 150). In place of the north aisle a wall was constructed to close the church off to the north. It is probable that at this point the order could not afford the expense of rebuilding the northern aisle and the tower. The number of canons using the church could also account for the failure to rebuild, decreasing from over 20 in the thirteenth century, to 10 by the time of the Dissolution (Fallow 1913a: 254).

The naves of the churches at Mathersey and York were both shortened during the fourteenth century. This may have been a direct result of the decrease in the number

of lay brethren present at the sites. The removal of the transept chapels implies that the small number of canons within the priory could no longer provide mass for a large number of the local population. The fourteenth century also saw a change in burial practice within the church at York. In the 140 years between the foundation of the priory and the major reconstruction around 190 individuals were interred in the church, compared to around just 33 in the 200 years following the reconstruction (Kemp 1996: 186). Many of the individuals from both groups were females and must represent lay burial. This drastic decrease in the number of lay burials was probably a direct reflection of the decline in the number of canons and the priory's weakening association with the people of York.

The later churches at York and Mattersey show no evidence of segregation between the nave, choir and presbytery, although Graves (1996: 193) has argued that these segregations could have been made using wooden screens and movable pews and these features would not survive in the archaeological record, but could still have served to divide the various areas of the church. Nonetheless, a similar simplified architectural pattern also can be seen at Sandwell and Finchale, where only the long central choir of the church was left by fourteenth century. In part, this change may also have been brought about as a result of a shift of religious devotional practice, from communal worship towards more 'individual, internalized contemplation' (ibid.). Roberta Gilchrist has argued that this change affected the way in which monastic space was considered in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Gilchrist 1995: 129-130). The transformation of monastic space can be seen first in the growing desire for privacy in secular contexts as early as the twelfth century, with a shift in focus from communal halls to private rooms. Gilchrist (1995: 213) cites Elstow and Godstow as examples of

this change in monastic contexts, at both houses the communal dormitory and refectory were split into smaller units between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Michael Sherbrook's account of the suppression of Roche abbey relates that a monk tried to sell the door to his cell (Dickens 1959: 123), and it is clear that it was not uncommon, at least by the sixteenth century, for the monks of Cistercian houses to occupy individual cells rather than the communal dormitory. It is possible that a similar pattern was happening at Gilbertine houses. The best evidence for this is from Ravenstonedale, where the east range was characterized as a series of small rooms, rather than large communal spaces. The number of canons present at the smaller houses by the fourteenth century would have made this arrangement possible. The religious population of these houses appear to have been less than four or five at many of the monasteries, a small enough number to be housed within individual cells in the modified ranges.

In summary, it is clear that the remodelling and the reduction in size of the single houses in the fourteenth century was the product of two distinct factors. The first was the decline in the fortunes of the order. This decline was manifest in both the reduction of finances available to the houses to rebuild or maintain the priory buildings, especially after an event of immediate crisis, such as the fire at Mattersey. More importantly, it was evident in the number of canons that the smaller houses could support. At York, the low number of canons had a negative effect on the finances of the priory. The lack of canons meant less contact with the local populous and in turn less income from burial and the giving of mass. The second factor that affected the layout of the priory in this period was the changes in religious practice within the monastic house. The shift from a communal experience to a more solitary way of life meant that smaller churches were needed, exemplified by the size of the church at the late foundation at Hitchin. Those

areas of the priory used for communal activities such as the dormitory and refectory no longer served the needs of the community, and the subsequent division of large shared spaces to smaller intimate rooms can be seen at the three early Gilbertine houses discussed above. At Hitchin, the construction of a new building allowed this arrangement to be designed wholesale, incorporating a long thin rectangular church and rooms for the lesser number of prior and canons.

The Double houses

Despite the declining fortunes of the order in the fourteenth century, excavations and survey at the motherhouse at Sempringham and the priories at Watton and Chicksands have identified evidence of large-scale expansion at this time (Braun 1939, Hope 1900, Morris 1996). This is at odds with the evidence from the smaller single houses, which both historically and archaeologically display a pattern of decline during this period. At Sempringham the rebuilding took place predominantly within the northern half of the church, the area occupied by the canons. The fourteenth-century works at Watton and Chicksands included the wholesale reconstruction of parts of the canons' cloisters, and there is no evidence at Sempringham to suggest that the nuns' half of the church was significantly altered, nor at Watton is there any evidence of large-scale work in the nuns' cloister.

At Sempringham the whole church was extended to the east by approximately 15 metres (figure 138). Beyond the addition of this extension, the nuns' half of the church remained unmodified, whilst the canons' choir and presbytery were extended north by approximately 3 metres. In addition to this, the north wall of the nave was moved 8 metres to the north. This expanded the size of the nave of the church to twice its previous size. The extensions of the choir and presbytery are unlikely to be due to

an increase in the number of canons at the priory, as the rule of the order set the maximum number to 12 and the prior, and no evidence exists that the number of canons at Sempringham exceeded this limit. Furthermore, at the turn of the thirteenth century only nine canons, including the prior, were recorded there. Unlike the priory church, the canons' chapel, to the west of the church, does not seem to have been modified during the fourteenth century.

The nave of the priory church would have provided a place of worship for the lay brothers and sisters of the community, and to the laity who visited the canons' church on Palm Sunday and Good Friday (Coppack 2010: 17). The motivation of adding an aisle to the canons' cloister in the fourteenth century, a time when access to a large number of lay brothers had greatly decreased, is questionable. This was particularly the case at Sempringham, which had an agreement with the Cistercians in Yorkshire as early as the twelfth century for the division of hired labour between the monasteries of both orders (Graham 1906a: 182).

The reason why the canons widened their church may lie in the increased importance of pilgrimage during this period. Following the death and canonization of Gilbert, Sempringham became a site of pilgrimage, holding as it did the body of the Saint. When the Gilbert's canonization was confirmed in Canterbury in October 1202 it was in the presence of great crowds (Graham 1906a: 181), and following his translation, the Archbishop of Canterbury granted indulgences to those visiting Gilbert's shrine at Sempringham. As early as 1291 visitors to Sempringham were being invited to contribute to the cost of rebuilding the priory church (Braun 1939: 2), and the larger northern transept of the church likely maintained the chapels of the earlier church of Saints John, Stephen and Catherine. It may have been that the canons sought

encroachment onto the chapel suggests that an increased emphasis was being placed on the role of the prior and hospitality within the monastery.

At the same time the north and east ranges of the cloister were remodelled; the northern two bays of the east range were divided into the canons' cellar, with the space to the south divided between the warming house and the canons' chapter house. There does not appear to have been a division between these two buildings, with no evidence of access to the west, as would have been expected. It is probable that the original chapter house of the canons followed the line of the east range and was only extended in the fourteenth-century rebuild. The nuns' chapter house shows a similar pattern, having been lengthened by one third at the same time (Hope 1901: 15). However, this lengthening does not explain why the chapter house was open to the parlour and warming house to the north. It may be that Hope misidentified the northern portion of the eastern range as fourteenth century and that the chapter house was being added to a pre-existing structure. This is a distinct possibility as the nineteenth-century excavation uncovered only a small portion of the walls of the east range. Other than the extension to the nuns' chapter house, the only other evidence of fourteenth-century building within the eastern cloister can be found in the church, where at the north-west corner of the church a buttress was erected, possibly to support a staircase.

The lack of building within the canons' half of the priory church or the construction of chapels within the canons' chapel, suggest that Watton was not focused on improving their income from pilgrims, as has been suggested to be the case at Sempringham. Both the chapter houses of the nuns and canons were extended in this period, suggesting that, unlike other houses, the monastery did not suffer from a shortage of occupants; almost uniquely for the order, Watton had a full contingent of canons in 1291 (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 195). Indeed, priory was an anomaly in the

fourteenth-century history of the order, as it could afford to carry out repairs and major reconstruction without fear of financial ruin. By the time of the Dissolution the house had an income of £360, higher than the motherhouse at Sempringham (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 194).

In a similar fashion to Watton, the priory at Chicksands experienced large-scale remodelling of the canons' cloister, as outlined in Chapter 1 (figure 139). At Chicksands this took place in the latter half of the fifteenth century (Morris 1996: 115), and the renovation was in fact a wholesale rebuilding of the south and east ranges in the latest Perpendicular style. In addition to this rebuilding, the first-floor rooms appear to have been extended over the cloister walk. This suggests that the canons required extra space within the south and east ranges, enlarging them to the size of the thirteenth-century west range. As with Watton and Sempringham, the remodelling of Chicksands suggests that at least some of the double houses may have experienced resurgence in their fortunes in this later period.

The expansion also contradicts the evidence for the problems of recruitment experienced by the order during this period. Morris (1996: 115) suggests that there is evidence for the division of rooms at the first-floor level of both ranges, and these new rooms were much smaller than the open spaces for the dormitory and refectory that would usually be expected to occupy the upper levels of the south and east ranges. An explanation for these changes might be that, as at Watton, the prior was expanding his residency within the cloister. The south range may have been repurposed as both the dormitory and refectory for the dwindling number of canons at Chicksands, leaving the eastern range free for the prior's lodge and the associated guest rooms.

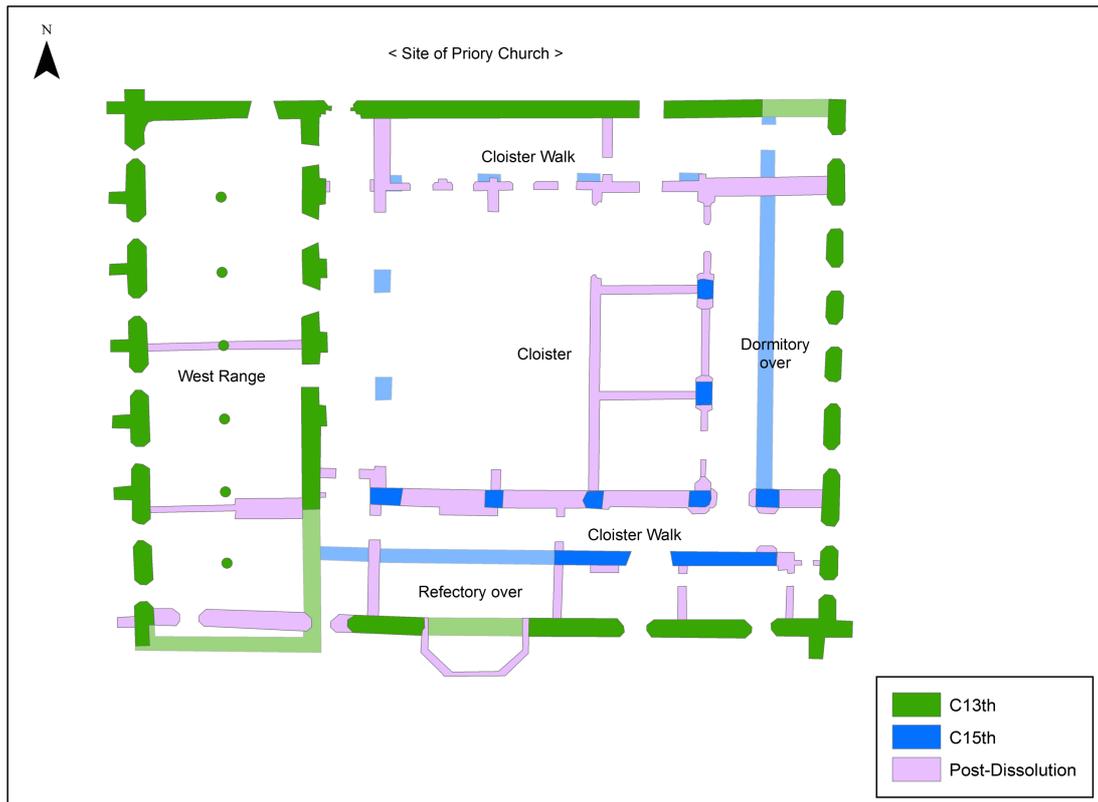


Figure 139 – Phased plan of the nuns’ cloister at Chicksands priory within the post-medieval house (after Morris 1996)

Graves (1996: 195-6) has highlighted this apparent contradiction between the declining fortunes of the order overall and the extensive remodelling of the double houses in the fourteenth century. Yet the priory at Sempringham was in a particularly precarious position financially, as unlike other Lincolnshire houses the assets of the motherhouse had seen little growth through the thirteenth century (Platts 1985: 50), whilst the flood in 1349 of the Marse Dyke may have necessitated the costly rebuilding at Sempringham. The later dyke was relocated to the north of the cloisters during the rebuilding of the church, having previously flowed directly to the north of the church. Despite these necessities, the order seems to have been in no position to undertake other large-scale buildings projects at its motherhouse.

The focus of the order was placed on improving the buildings of the canons rather than the nuns, and the need to enlarge the space within the priory church. Rather than a practical response to an increase in the number of canons at the double houses, the rebuilding must be seen as a reaction to a new way in which the canons were considered within the order. The order had been founded with women at its centre, however by the thirteenth century the role of canon and prior was of increased importance. Golding (1995: 134) has observed that 'no one examining grants made to Gilbertine houses at this time would realise from the wording of the charters that these communities included women at all'. The shift had focused to the canons within the community, especially within the later years of the order.

At a time when the single houses at York, Ravenstonedale and Mattersey appear to have been placing an emphasis on individual contemplation, the evidence from Sempringham suggests that the canons of the double houses were concentrating their efforts into improving the spaces of communal worship. For such a centrally-controlled order this difference in practice between the double and single houses might be seen as peculiar. However, this may have been a result of the mixed nature of the double houses, with the canons and nuns being bound by stricter rules than those who found themselves in a single house. Where smaller houses found themselves open to alterations in religious practice, the large established double houses may not have been so flexible in their ability to adapt. This hypothesis is supported by the construction of a large number of chapels at Sempringham, at the same time as York was removing both transepts from the church.

The Gilbertines in the Sixteenth Century

In 1535, following his break with Rome the previous year, Henry VIII ordered a survey, the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, to provide a review of all property and incomes received by the monasteries of England And Wales. In early 1535 Henry's parliament passed the Suppression of Religious Houses Act, which granted the Crown ownership of those monasteries whose values fell below £200 per annum (Cross 1993: 22). The act claimed that the houses low values were the result of a lack of endowments, in turn due to the 'manifest sin, vicious, carnal and abominable living' of the inhabitants of the monasteries (ibid.). From the start, it heralded the wide scale Dissolution of the Monasteries- by the time the second Act was passed in 1539, the vast majority of monasteries had already been closed down.

In the East Riding of Yorkshire only four of the 19 monasteries in the county could demonstrate an income above £200 (Cross 1992: 22). However, despite this, only four were closed during the suppression of the lesser monasteries, one Cistercian nunnery and three Augustinian male houses. Initially the Crown could not afford to suppress all of those houses eligible for closure, as by 1536 419 of the 900 religious houses within England were classed as lesser monasteries. Bernard (2011: 390) has suggested that by the beginning of the sixteenth century, one in every 50 men within England had taken religious orders, and thus the suppression of almost half of the monasteries would have placed great pressure on those institutions left to take in the displaced monks, friars, canons and nuns. A second factor that the Crown would have had to consider was the large number of pensions required for those who wished to leave religious orders. The result of this was a compromise, with 243 of the 419 eligible houses being closed in 1536 (Bernard 2011: 400).

House (Double or Single)	Value c. 1535 (£)
Alvingham (D)	128
Bridge End (S)	5
Bullington (D)	158
Cambridge (S)	14
Catley (D)	34
Chicksands (D)	212
Clattercote (S)	34
Ellerton (S)	62
Fordham (S)	40
Haverholme (D)	70
Hitchin (S)	13
Lincoln (S)	202
Malton (S)	197
Marlborough (S)	30
Marmont (S)	10
Mattersey (S)	55
Newstead (S)	38
North Ormsby (D)	80
Poulton (S)	20
Sempringham (D)	317
Shouldham (D)	138
Sixhills (D)	135
York (S)	47
Watton (D)	360

Table 5 – Valuation of the Gilbertine Houses c. 1535 (Knowles & Hadcock 1971)

The 243 houses closed in this first wave of suppression included monasteries of every order within England, with the sole exception of the Gilbertines; between 1536 and 1538 all of their houses remained active, despite only two of the single houses and three of the double houses having a value above £200. Indeed, even the poorest of the Gilbertine houses at Bridge End, Cambridge, Marmont and Hitchin were not closed, despite all having a value of less than £15. Three of the four houses suppressed in the East Riding had values of over £50. There was an obvious difference in the closure of the Gilbertine houses when compared to houses of other orders. The reason for this apparent disparity lies in the position of the last master of the order, Robert Holgate.

Robert Holgate

Robert Holgate became a member of the Gilbertine order before the age of 20, being ordained at St Katherine's priory, Lincoln in 1504 (Stephenson 2011: 245). The reasons for Holgate's choice to join the order are unknown, although it has been suggested that he was either local to Lincoln or that he saw the opportunity with the Gilbertines of rising quickly through the ranks of the order (ibid: 247). Unlike the continental orders, the Gilbertines had a particularly centralised hierarchy, which may have attracted an ambitious man like Holgate. Around 1513 he had moved from St Katherine's to St Edmund's priory in Cambridge, here Holgate gained a degree in divinity before returning to Lincoln by 1529 (Dickens 1937: 4-5). Soon after arriving back in Lincoln, Holgate was made prior of St Katherine's, a post he held until 1536 when he became master of the order (Stephenson 2011: 245), a role he took over from Thomas Hurtsky, who had been a prior of Watton (ibid: 252).

During the period in which Holgate came to power, the role of the master of the order had altered significantly from the time of the founder. The master was no longer

prior of the motherhouse at Sempringham, and the three masters before Holgate were all priors of Watton (Dickens 1955: 5), a tradition Holgate continued by becoming prior of Watton around the same time. Being master brought with it absolute control over the order, in the 1550s Holgate described his previous role as ‘sole master and prior of the same, all other priors dative and removable’ (Dickens 1955: 5). The institutions of the Gilbertines stated that following his ascension, the master would have ‘embarked on a continuous visitation of all of the Gilbertine Priors, visiting each one theoretically at least once in the year’ (Stephenson 2011: 252-3). In the time of Gilbert, the master would have been expected to resign his role as prior and to concentrate his energies on the whole of the order, yet this does not seem to have been the case with Holgate who maintained his role as prior at Watton until the Dissolution.

In 1537, whilst still master of the order, Holgate was made Bishop of Llandaff. This followed a friendship with Thomas Cromwell, having been recommended to King’s chief minister by John Hilsey, Bishop of Rochester (Stephenson 2011: 254). Holgate took advantage of his association with Cromwell and his position as one of the royal chaplains to ensure the continuation of the order up to the Dissolution (Ellis & Salzman 1948b: 257). An agreement appears to have been made between the order and the Crown, that not only would the order’s houses be exempt from the suppression of the lesser monasteries, but also excused from the visitations that Cromwell’s agents made of the religious houses (Stephenson 2001: 154). Despite this, visitations records survive for four Gilbertine houses. The first of these visitations was to Chicksands in 1535 where Dr Layton, who was initially refused entry to the house, eventually managed to gain access (Wright 1843: 91-2). Layton’s report accused two nuns of impropriety and recounted that they refused to confess in the presence of the commissioners. Following a visit to Shouldham in the same year, the commissioners

reported that two of the nuns were guilty of incontinence, both having borne children whilst in holy orders (Stephenson 2011: 156).

A third visitation took place in 1535 at Clattercote by John Tregonwell. Here the commissioner was successfully denied access to the priory, writing to Cromwell in the same year that:

At Clattercote of the Gilbertines I found a prior and three canons.

The house is old, foul, and filthy. They said that you had given authority to the prior of Sempringham to visit all their order, and begged to be excused from my visitation; so I departed, *negotio infecto*.

(Gairdner 1886: 146)

This account suggests that it was Holgate himself who was responsible for carrying out the visitations of the Gilbertine houses, and presumably it was also Holgate's role to perform any corrections or punishments resulting from the visits. As master of the order, visiting the priories and ensuring discipline was already Holgate's responsibility. It is likely that the priories would have seen little change to their established way of life in 1536. The final account is a letter from Dr Leigh to Cromwell in 1536, from the priory of Fordham. Leigh reported the presence of the prior and a single canon who, 'is in extreme aged and at death's door' (Wright 1843: 82). Leigh continues to recount that both of the inhabitants were happy to swear loyalty to the Crown and to do everything that was asked of them.

Cross (1992) and Stephenson (2011) have both suggested that the accusations levelled at the priories of Chicksands and Shouldham by the commissioners were unfounded, due to the evidence that their claims were greatly exaggerated at the houses

of other orders. However, they do show that the Crown commissioners, despite the agreement with the Gilbertines, visited some of the order's houses. It is also worth noting that it is only at the houses containing nuns, where the commissioners found fault; at Clattercote, Tregonwell does not appear to have pressed his right to access as Layton did at Chicksands, and at Fordham, Leigh describes the priory as 'a proper house' (Wright 1843: 82). All of the houses that were visited were located on the periphery of Gilbertine influence, with no records surviving of visitations at the Lincolnshire or Yorkshire monasteries. The failure to close even the poorest houses of the order in 1536 indicates that Cromwell was content to allow Holgate to deliver all of the order's houses together, which he was to do between 1538-9.

The Dissolution

The Dissolution of the remaining monastic houses of England commenced at the beginning of 1538. The first Gilbertine house to surrender to the Crown was St Katherine's priory, Lincoln in July of 1538 (Stephenson 2011: 172). This surrender was earlier than those of the other Gilbertine houses, which did not begin to until the September of the same year. The reason for this earlier closure was probably due to the individuals involved. Holgate had held the position of prior of St Katherine's before becoming master of the order, but his successor, Prior William Griffith had charged Holgate with having stolen property of the priory, a charge later to be found false (ibid.). Griffith was deprived of his position in 1536 after supporting the Pilgrimage of Grace against the Crown. Despite this, he forcibly entered the priory and retained his old position until the house was surrendered (Graham 1906e: 190). Griffiths was consequently an embarrassment to the order and to Holgate personally, being the only prior who supported the rebellion of 1536. Given Holgate's friendship with Cromwell,

it is likely that the early surrender of Lincoln was an attempt to rid the order of the shame of having a prior who openly defied the master and was not officially elected. The remaining Lincolnshire houses followed St Katherine, surrendering between 18 September and 2 October of the same year (Stephenson 2011: 172).

The second house to surrender was the priory of Sempringham. The motherhouse offered no opposition, and William Petre accepted the houses surrender on 18th September 1538 (Graham 1906e: 185). The choice of the commissioners to accept the surrender of Sempringham before the other houses of the order may have been a sign to the remaining priors that the end of the Gilbertines was now assured. By the beginning of October, the Crown had accepted the surrender of all of the Lincolnshire houses. It is unclear whether Holgate was present at each monastery during this process, but the short period of less than one month suggests that this was unlikely. Shortly after, in January 1539, the prior and four canons surrendered the house at Marlborough (Chettle & Kirby 1956: 318). In the same month Holgate attended with the prior to surrender the priory of St Mary at Poulton (Chettle 1956: 319). Not all the dates of surrender survive for the houses outside of Lincolnshire; however there appears to have been a hiatus in the capitulation of Gilbertine houses during the summer of 1539. Not until November of that year is there any record of the surrender of St Edmund's in Cambridge, when the prior was awarded his pension of £5 (Ellis & Salzman 1948: 256).

The final properties to be dissolved were the priories of Watton and Malton. These two houses were approximately 20 miles away from one another and were both extremely wealthy at the time of the Dissolution. It is not surprising that Holgate chose to make these the last houses to surrender to the Crown, as prior of Watton, the priory was his base of operations, and after the closure of Lincoln, Malton provided the

greatest income for the order. Malton was surrendered in December of 1539, although the exact date is unknown, it was probably before the surrender of Watton on the 9th (Hope 1901: 2). Watton was the final house to be handed to the Crown commissioners and was surrendered by the master, seven canons, two prioresses, and 12 nuns (Graham 1903: 199). Holgate received a grant for life of a large area of Watton priory, in gratitude of his service to the King in bringing about the peaceful submission of the order.

Summary

The archaeology of the surviving Gilbertines single houses provides evidence for a decline in their finances and ability to recruit after the thirteenth century. It is suggested that this was a product of a wider period of decline within monasticism in England, resulting in the need for a remodelling of the monastic buildings. This manifested itself differently at single houses of the order than at the larger double houses. This is evidenced by the reduction in size and the adaptation of the Gilbertine single houses at York, Mattersey and Ravenstonedale. These priories displayed a shift in focus towards individual centred worship, exacerbated by a decrease in the number of canons. At all three of these houses the modification of the church reflected this pattern, with the building decreasing in size and the number of chapels being reduced. Hitchin provides an example of how this change had developed by the late-fourteenth century. The priory was on a much smaller scale than the earlier single houses and does not appear to have included transepts within its simple arrangement.

Despite the failing economies of the double houses in the same period, large scale programmes of remodelling took place at the order's motherhouse and at Watton priory. In both cases, the focus of the work took place within the area of the canons.

This reflected a shift in power away from the prioresses and the nuns, over not just the finances of the individual priories, but over the order as a whole by the end of the thirteenth century. Unlike the single houses, there was no physical change in the manner of the inhabitants' worship, as manifested architecturally, probably due to the strict rules that governed the lives of the nuns. The lack of any change within the double church or the nuns' cloister would suggest that the same religious practices were being sustained in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as had been in the twelfth and thirteenth. At Sempringham at least, the renovation that took place may have been an attempt to increase the income of the priory by expanding the priory nave to accept more visiting pilgrims and the expansion of the three priory chapels. The financial position of the priory was not prosperous at the time of building and the work may have been seen as an investment for future returns.

How much the examples of Watton and Sempringham can be used to characterise the pattern of decline within the other double houses is unclear. Being the richest houses of the order, and given the position of Sempringham as motherhouse, they may not be representative of the poorer double foundations. The historical documentation that recounts the fourteenth-century remodelling at Watton and Sempringham does not exist for any of the other houses. This lack of evidence and the relatively low valuations suggests that remaining 10 houses probably could not afford to carry out such improvements. It is likely that the remaining double houses in Lincolnshire and the surrounding counties, as with the single houses, relied on smaller piecemeal improvements and adaptations, rather than large programmes of renovation.

By the time of the passing of the first Act of Suppression in 1535, the position of Robert Holgate as master provided certain advantages for the order. His friendship with Cromwell and his role as one of Henry VIII's chaplains allowed him to negotiate

the survival of those poorer houses whose value lay below £200. This served as equally beneficial for the Crown, who could not easily have suppressed all of those houses falling below the assessed value. The apparent agreement made between Holgate and Cromwell to provide the eventual surrender of the houses was preferable to both parties. However, unlike the other orders, the lack of evidence for visitations of the majority of Gilbertine houses fails to provide an insight into the conditions of many of the priories at the time of the Dissolution, although those visitation documents that do survive suggest that the commissioners looked more favourably on the single houses than they did the doubles. It is likely that many of the smaller houses, such as Fordham, were happy to surrender up their positions to the Crown in exchange for pensions. The evidence suggests that many were living in poverty within religious houses for which they could no longer afford the costs of upkeep.

Unlike other orders that still had houses on the continental mainland or in Ireland, the Dissolution of the Gilbertines marked the end of the order. The foundations in Scotland, France and Rome had either failed earlier or had never been realised, with the order having little interest in expanding beyond the confines of Lincolnshire and the surrounding counties. This was aggravated by the nature of the order as an English entity, at a time when the home of the 'New Monastic Orders' was in mainly in France and the movement as a whole was seen as a traditionally continental development. The order had no roots to fall back to outside of England and the Gilbertines ceased to exist on 9 December 1539, with the surrender of Watton priory.

Chapter 6 – Discussion and Conclusion

Whilst considering the complete dataset of all Gilbertine houses, this thesis has drawn upon a variety of diverse data. The arrangement of each house, single and double, urban and rural, has been reconstructed as completely as is currently possible using the available evidence. A number of conclusions concerning the order as an organisation and the population of the priories have been made, as have those regarding patterns of foundation, segregation, identity and decline. The thesis has also sought to hypothesise about those houses for which little or no evidence survives. This has been achieved by extrapolating from the available evidence, by identifying a ‘type-site’, and building a model that contains the buildings common to all Gilbertine sites, as well as locating their positions and arrangement based on surviving examples. This chapter will discuss these conclusions and their wider impact on the study of monastic and landscape archaeology, as well as providing recommendations for future work that could be undertaken, with the aim of testing the conclusions made in this thesis.

The ‘Cult of St Gilbert’ and the Pattern of Foundation

The most obvious pattern of foundation presented in this thesis is the shift away from the foundation of double houses to single houses, following the death of St Gilbert. This shift not only marks a change in the nature of the priory buildings required by the Gilbertines, but in the focus of the order as a whole. The role of the order was altered from that of an almost wholly segregated monastic setting, in which the nuns were enclosed, with their spiritual needs met by the canons, to a mixture of double and single houses. These newly founded single houses provided a purely male occupied space. In

the environment of the double house, the task of the canons had previously been to ensure the spiritual well-being of the nuns above all else. Without the presence of the nuns, within the 17 single houses, the role of the canons living within these priories would have differed dramatically; rather than inward looking institutions the priories should have become more focused on their surrounding communities. However, from the archaeological evidence available, this is reflected neither in the location chosen for the priory sites nor by a change in layout or architectural style.

The following discussion will explore the reasons why there was a move towards the foundation of single houses. It will be argued that the choice to no longer found double houses following 1193, reflected a negative alteration in the perceptions towards mixed communities, and that the location of later single houses marked a move away from expansion of the order (following a number of failed foundations), to its consolidation within Lincolnshire. This change followed the death of the founder of the order, Gilbert, and his personal influence will be considered as a factor relating directly to the early success of the order. Economic and political changes within England at the time will also be explored as factors relating to this radical shift. The arrival of the Black Death in 1348/9 could have done little to help the fortunes of the order and it is unlikely to be coincidence that the foundation of the last Gilbertine house dates to this period.

The Prevalence of the Single House

The end of twelfth century saw a marked change in the pattern of Gilbertine foundation. As part of this transition there was a clear change in the layout of the single house, and the positioning of the cloister in particular. The reasons for this must be addressed and the timeline of the foundations placed within their historical context. The

factors that affected this shift are varied. However, a significant influence was the change in leadership undergone by the order. The association between the period in which Gilbert was actively influencing the order's foundations and the dominance of the double house has been addressed briefly earlier in the thesis. Roger of Malton, who took control in 1189, appears to have been much more conservative in terms of founding only single houses, however these houses had a distinctly Gilbertine character of layout. Using information from the *Vita* and from comparing the timeline and dedications of Gilbertine foundations, the pattern of foundation and the emphasis on the canons can be seen in Roger's administration. The motivation of the two individuals will also be addressed, based on the different historical contexts in which they controlled the order, 'at a time when the position of women within male communities was becoming increasingly questioned' (Golding 1995: 9).

As outlined in Chapter 2, the trend for the co-occupancy of men and women within the monastic institutions began to fall out of favour by the turn of the thirteenth century. There appears to have been a growing resentment towards the establishment of double houses throughout the latter half of the twelfth century, following the spread of the Gilbertines throughout Lincolnshire and the surrounding counties. Golding (1995: 46) has identified passages within the *Vita* that address the issue of attacks on the order. He cites a passage from the introduction, in which the author states that despite his obvious worthiness in life, his critics: 'detract from what he did, contradict those who praise him, and oppose his veneration' (Foreville & Keir 1987: 8). This complaint implies that in the short period between his death and the application for his canonisation (the date of the penning of the *Vita*), a matter of around 10 years, there was a vocal opposition to the way in which Gilbert ruled the order. It must be assumed that this discontent grew from the laxity in the way the houses were governed and the

mixing of sexes within the communities. Golding goes as far as to say that one of the main aims of the *Vita* was to act as a 'pièce justificative', aimed at Gilbert's critics and detractors (ibid.).

The Later Twelfth-century Crisis

The story of the 'Nun of Watton' has been discussed at length in Chapter 2, and is the most infamous scandal to have taken place within any of the Gilbertine communities. However, there was a second and arguably more severe crisis that occurred some years later; the revolt of a number of lay brothers of high position within the order. Golding (1995: 33) refers to the period encompassing these events as the 'years of crisis'. The incident involving the nun at Watton took place in the early-1160s and the rebellion of the lay brothers sometime around 1165 (Golding 1995: 41).

The revolt appears to have been started by the actions of a small number of lay brothers, the most significant of whom was called Ogger, who was supported by a second, Gerard (Knowles 1935: 469). This was a blow to Gilbert, as both were in high positions within the lay brethren and Gerard had responsibility over all of the order's temporal income. The purpose of the pair appears to have been to secure less strict conditions for the lay brothers, and that all four arms of the order (canons, nuns, lay brothers and lay sisters) would be governed by the same rule; indeed, later Gilbert would relax restrictions on the lay members of the order, so it may be that their complaints were somewhat understandable (Knowles 1935: 469). When Gilbert did not bow to their demands, the group presented charges against the order to the Pope. One of these charges was that the physical proximity of the nuns and canons had resulted in gross indecency and that such interaction between the two was morally objectionable. The Pope took the claims of the lay brethren seriously and dispatched a series of letters

to Gilbert, although these no longer survive. Knowles (1935: 470) and Golding (1995: 43) assert that these letters were a command from the papacy to keep the double houses in better order and contained modifications to the rule, which would reduce the mixing of the sexes. In the case of another order, the local Bishop may have dealt with allegations of impropriety, however it is probable that due to the status of the Gilbertines as an order well known for its double houses and the lack of Episcopal oversight, the Pope was more likely to accept the accusations of the lay bothers.

Gilbert gathered support in England and three of his most powerful advocates sent letters maintaining the order's innocence. These included, the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of Winchester, and William of Norwich. At the same time Gilbert received letters of support from Henry II, encouraging him to resist any changes demanded by the papacy. Having received these letters, the Pope appointed four bishops to investigate the claims of the lay brethren, three of which were known supporters of Gilbert. Two inquiries followed the investigation some time before 1169 (Knowles 1935: 470). The revolt finally ended when Gilbert and the order were exonerated of any wrong doing, and the lay brothers were offered the opportunity to return to the community. Although the order was cleared of all charges of impropriety by the church courts at Lincoln and York, it cannot fail to have had a negative effect on the standing of the order. The association of the order with indecency so soon after the scandal of the nun of Watton cannot have failed to damage the reputation of the double houses.

There is some dispute as to the dates of the lay brothers' rebellion. Rose Graham (1903: 19) cites this to have taken place in 1170, however Knowles (1935: 468) and Golding (1995: 42) have successfully argued that the events began five years earlier, in 1165 (for a full account of the debate over the date of the lay brothers' revolt see Knowles 1935, 466-9). The Gilbertines were not alone in experiencing revolt amongst

the lay brethren in the latter half of the twelfth century, although they may be the first documented example in England. Later comparable rebellions also occurred at the Cistercian Schönau Abbey in Germany in 1168, although this time not concerning a theological or moral issue, but over the lack of footwear provided to the lay brothers (Golding 1995: 41). In 1180, lay brothers at the Grandmontine motherhouse in France revolted in frustration at the reduction of their powers and their transfer to the monks (Sykes 2012: 9). This was probably a similar situation to that at Sempringham, where the lay brethren resented the lifestyles of the canons and their power over them. Burton and Kerr (2011: 159) identify a rebellion at a Cistercian house in Denmark in 1191. Here the lay brothers occupied the monastery, took up arms, fortified the church and grazed cattle in the cloister. The revolt of the lay brothers at Sempringham did not extend this close to violent conflict, but the examples show that Gilbert was not alone in encountering problems with his lay brethren.

Gilbert appears to have been able to cast off the accusations of scandal during his lifetime, indeed he benefited from being in control of the order during a period when it was acceptable to found the double monastery, as was done by the Bridgettines and the order of Fontevraultine. However, by the end of the twelfth century the foundation of mixed houses had clearly waned. The culmination of the distaste towards the double house is evidenced by the poem *The Order of Fair-ease* (see Chapter 2), written during the reign of Edward I (1272-1307). Within this poem the Gilbertines receive attention in four stanzas, all of which is focused on the disreputable interaction of men and women within double houses. Upon Gilbert's death in around 1190, Roger of Malton was left with an order that had not only experienced the lay brothers' rebellion, but the scandal of the nun of Watton some years before. Through his influence with the Bishop of Lincoln, connections with the Cistercians and his royal patronage, Gilbert had been

able to save the order from being enveloped by this scandal. However, Roger was a man who had grown to maturity within the order itself, and it is unlikely that he would have had the resources or political power to continue to expand the number of double houses. More importantly it unlikely that potential founders would be willing to add their names to monastic houses that may have given rise to gossip of impropriety.

The Failed Cistercian Handover

The largest crisis the order faced took place with the death of the founder on Saturday 4th February 1189 (Golding 1995: 59). Gilbert had attempted to carry out preparations before his death, when he made an unsuccessful attempt to hand over the order to the governance of the Cistercians. Gilbert initially approached the council at Cîteaux in 1147, a time when the Gilbertines had only two houses, the double monasteries at Sempringham and Haverholme. Gilbert requested that the Cistercian order take control of these two monasteries, due to the similarity of the rules of the female inmates to those of the Cistercians. By the close of the council, Gilbert had failed to gain the support of the Cistercians, however he had made a favourable impression upon Pope Eugene III. Consequently, Gilbert was instructed by the Pope to continue his rule of the order and his good work (Golding 1995: 28). However, the question must be asked, why did Gilbert feel the need to hand over control of the order at this early stage?

Even 40 years before his death Gilbert appears aware that he may not be capable of successfully leading the order alone. The *Vita* explains that he offered the houses to the Cistercians ‘because he was conscious of his own weakness’ (Foreville & Keir 1987: 40). This admission can be understood in one of two ways: first that Gilbert did not consider himself spiritually equipped to lead the order, or second, as is favoured by

Golding (1995: 27), that there was some question as to Gilbert's physical ability to remain master for the time required to stabilise and expand the order.

Golding (1995: 27-8) has argued that the recent deaths of two of the order's biggest supporters, Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln and Abbot William of Rievaulx, may have contributed to the decision by the Cistercians not to accept the two houses into their order. Likewise, the death of these two men may also be a reason for Gilbert's attempt to divest himself of the position of master of the order. William had helped Gilbert to set up the rule for the nuns and advised on how to proceed with founding the order (Lawrence 2001: 206), whilst Alexander had provided land and support for the foundation of Haverholme priory (Dyson 1975: 16-17). Following the death of his two most powerful supporters, Gilbert may have no longer felt confident in his own ability to expand and control the order. Having failed in his attempt to ensure the continued life of the order by placing it under the control of the Cistercians, Gilbert's second scheme was to hand over his position to a successor during his lifetime.

Roger of Malton and the Transition of Power

By the end of the 1170s Gilbert's health had begun to fail him to the extent that he was obliged to promote his successor (for a full discussion of the chronology of the succession see Golding 1995: 56-8). This transition may have been hastened by the fact that Gilbert had by this point gone blind and would have been unable to undertake the administrative duties of being master of the order (Foreville 1987: 84). Gilbert chose Roger, Prior of Malton to succeed him in 1177. However, it is unclear from the *Vita* whether or not he gave Roger total control over the order. In the section entitled, *How he received the habit of a canon* the author states that, 'from the position of son he appointed him father, from disciple his own master' (Foreville 1987: 68). Later, when

referring to the inspectors that Gilbert had appointed under Roger, he writes that they ‘were always to refer the more serious matters to [Gilbert]’ (ibid: 88). It appears that Gilbert still had substantial control over the order until his death in 1189, and it is with this in mind that Roger’s influence on the order must be considered.

The handover of power from Gilbert to Roger marked a hiatus in the foundation of Gilbertine monasteries. From 1177 until the founder’s death in 1189 only the single house at Mattersey was established, and no double houses were founded. During this interlude Roger and Gilbert essentially shared power, however as the *Vita* suggests, it is unlikely that Roger had the power to lay down new foundations without the approval of Gilbert. It is apparent from his later actions that Roger favoured the foundation of single houses over double, and as has been discussed above, it was unlikely that there would have been a great desire for double foundations, following the earlier events of the century. The house at Mattersey was established about the year 1185 by Roger, son of Ranulph de Mattersey (Cox 1910: 140), and was the final of five monasteries to be founded within the lifetime of Gilbert designed to house only canons. Due to the late establishment of Mattersey, the foundation took place shortly before his death, it may have been that within the years directly leading up to this point, Gilbert was no longer in a position to make decisions, or to advise on the running of the order. The establishment is out of character with earlier foundations, both in its size and location.

The house at Mattersey appears small when compared to other Gilbertine single houses founded around the same time at Lincoln (1148), Malton (1150-1), Newstead (1164-1171) and Clattercote (1146-66), which all can be seen to be significantly grander and of a larger scale. The location of Mattersey is also singular when compared to the four earlier foundations. Lincoln and Malton had been established within urban centres, and along with Clattercote had been founded to administer hospitals. Even the

relatively small royal foundation at Newstead-on-Ancholme was located close to the settlement at Brigg. Mattersey appears to have been much more Cistercian in style, placed at least one day's travel from the nearest urban centre of Doncaster, the priory was located on an island within a particularly inhospitable marshland. This tendency to a more isolated lifestyle for the canons can be seen at a number of the foundations for which Roger was responsible. His later foundations at Holland Bridge, Ravenstonedale, Marmont, Ellerton and Fordham would all be located away from urban centres. The difference between these later foundations and Mattersey, was the lack of any distinctly Gilbertine pattern in layout. The later foundations for which archaeological evidence exists, all exhibit northern cloisters. It has been proposed by the author that this represents a conscious continuation of the Gilbertine tradition expressed at double foundations. In this context Mattersey can be seen as a compromise, between the earlier single houses for which Gilbert was responsible and the Robert's single priories, founded between 1194-99 and 1204.

Following Gilbert's death in 1189, Robert took full control of the order. The founder's death also marked an end to the hiatus in new foundations, between 1194 and 1204 Roger was responsible for the foundation of seven houses for canons. Within this period one anomaly was the foundation of the double house at Shouldham around 1197, this foundation taking place in the middle of Roger's period of control. The priory is the only Gilbertine double house to be founded after the mid-twelfth century and the only to be founded after the Gilbert's death (Burton 1995: 99).

It can be argued that as the establishment of Shouldham took place less than 10 years after the death of the order's founder, thus Gilbert might still have been instrumental in its foundation. In contrast to the Lincolnshire houses, the estate of Shouldham was mostly the creation of one family, that of Fitz Piers and his

descendants. This had the effect that unlike the houses in Lincolnshire, which were often funded by groups of benefactors and had estates located throughout different parishes and counties, the Shouldham estate was located mostly around the priory from which it derived approximately 45% of its income (Golding 243, 268). Whether the foundation at Shouldham was put in place by Gilbert before his death, or whether Roger accepted it alone, it would be unlikely that any order would refuse such a large foundation by an individual benefactor.

Roger himself had been the prior of the single house at Malton. Golding (1995: 135) refers to him as a 'natural candidate' for the role, having come from an environment where religious women were unknown. As master of Malton, Roger may have preferred the single house to the double; certainly, the single house would have played a large role in shaping his experience of the religious life. Whilst it is certain that during the handover of power he would have travelled to the double houses belonging to the order, these priories would have been very different to that in which he had served, the rites and customs of the inhabitants' alien to him. The choice of Gilbert to appoint his successor from amongst the minority of canons who served at single houses, suggests that he understood the new direction in which the order as a whole would have to travel. Despite these changes, Roger incorporated details of layout that were heavily influenced by the earlier Gilbertine double houses. The order may have had to change its patterns of foundation to survive into the new century, but the old double house, founded 50 years earlier still survived. Indeed, there was a danger that Roger would split the order into two, the old double foundations and the new single houses, and therefore the styles of layout common to the Gilbertines would have ensured continuity between the old and new houses, and more importantly, a familiar sight to those canons travelling between the two.

Roger's influence may be one of the reasons such effort was made to have Gilbert canonised (Golding 1995: 51). Along with Gilbert's chaplain Albinus, Roger was the driving force behind the production of the *Vita*, the hagiography written to outline the case for Gilbert's canonisation. This canonisation would have been a way for Roger to strengthen and ensure the continuation of the order following the founder's death. Roger's rule would be the last period of large-scale expansion within the order, with only four Gilbertine houses being founded over the next 160 years.

The Growing Power of the Canons

It may be that the very structure of the order, the four-pronged arrangement reminiscent of the *Chariot of Aminadab* (discussed in Chapter 2), was one of the factors that resulted in the dominance of the canons and the lack of double foundations after 1200. Furthermore, the introduction of canons to the order shortly after its foundation had, by the beginning of the thirteenth century, had a negative effect on the power of the nuns. Golding (1995: 134) has argued that the canons represented a 'Parasitic organism mutating Gilbert's original vision for his communities'. Certainly, the canons at Sempringham had become the dominant force in the monastery by the latter half of the twelfth century (ibid: 91), and in the power structure of the order as a whole, authority inevitably came to be with the canons. Unlike the prioresses of Fontevrault, women within the Gilbertine double houses had no control over the canons (Golding 1995: 106-7), and the Gilbertine prioress had full authority only over the women within the house and their care. It is unclear whether the prior had authority over the prioress in the double house, however both answered to the *magister* or head of the order, the role first filled by Gilbert himself.

The archaeological evidence suggests that that the movement of power away from the nuns to the canons was reflected in the layout of the monasteries. At the motherhouse of Sempringham the canons were housed to the north of the church and the nuns' cloister. The placement of the canons' cloister to the north of the church at the later single houses was a visual symbol of an establishment that followed the tenants of Sempringham, but without the need for the female religious. This emulation of a perceived Gilbertine heritage is one that appears very strongly within the *Vita*, with Gilbert's hagiographer stressing the meeting with Pope Eugene III, and his command to 'continue what he had begun in the grace of Christ' (Foreville & Kier 1987: 40-42). On the section on Gilbert's greatness, the author focuses on how Gilbert was willing to share his piety and wished for it to be spread (ibid: 90). Finally, in a letter from Gilbert to the canons of Malton, published in the *Vita*, the founder entreats the canons to carry on his work after his death by, 'keeping the rules and traditions of the order' (Foreville & Kier 1987: 165). Taking into account these extracts and Roger's close involvement with the publication of the *Vita*, it is clear that Roger viewed the document as a self-imposed mandate to carry on Gilbert's legacy.

The figure of Gilbert was the greatest influence within the order during his lifetime. He was responsible for the experiment of the double house and their large-scale establishment. The single houses founded during his lifetime tended to be in or near to towns, with the urban houses being intentionally founded to take responsibility for hospitals. The presence of women within these establishments would not have been unusual and the Gilbertines would have been seen as a prime candidate to look after their running. This was the case at Lincoln and Clattercote, where the priories were granted existing hospital sites. It is obvious from the *Vita* that at the time of the death of Gilbert it was considered important the order should continue his work.

Roger does not appear to have been as powerful as his predecessor and could not rely on the same cult of personality to attract benefactors to the order. The religious landscape in medieval England had also changed in a relatively short time. It had been 60 years since the establishment of the first Gilbertine double houses and it was no longer possible to find donors willing to support new mixed foundations. Having been the prior at Malton, Roger himself may have understood and supported the work of the canons more than the nuns, and the canons were a group whose power had grown in the order since their inclusions shortly after its foundation. Roger needed a way to continue the foundation of houses for canons of the order but not to lose the links with its origins, which had made it so popular during the twelfth century.

As stated in Chapter 1, the motherhouse of the order the priory at Sempringham must be viewed as the progenitor for all the later Gilbertine houses. This is especially the case with the single houses founded during Roger's time as master. Roger oversaw a change in the Gilbertine style of layout, away from the early single houses at Malton, Mattersey and Newstead with traditionally placed southern cloisters, to an arrangement that reflected the double houses for which the order was so well known. At the double houses of Sempringham and Watton the canons were positioned to the north of the priory church, so Roger reflected this arrangement in his foundations of single houses at York, Ravenstonedale and Ellerton. This layout was symbolic of returning to the roots of the order and at the same time a way for Roger to legitimize his shift towards a focus on the canons. Here, the archaeological evidence can be seen to reflect the historical narrative.

How 'English' was the Order?

Rose Graham subtitled her 1903 volume on the Gilbertines; '*a History of the only English Monastic Order*'. This title has survived and become prevalent throughout Gilbertine literature. It is certainly true that the Gilbertines were the only order to be founded within England, and to owe no allegiance to a motherhouse on the Continent. However, there is an implication in the title that the members of the order considered themselves to have a specifically English identity. The evidence presented within this thesis argues against this hypothesis. It seems improbable that Gilbert himself had in mind a strong English identity for the order. The failed handover to the Cistercians in 1147 suggests that Gilbert had no reservations about the Gilbertines becoming part of a European controlled order (Golding 1995: 59; Foreville & Keir 1987: 40). When it is considered that the arrangement of the order's hierarchy and its rule was based on the Cistercians and the Benedictines, any motivations by the founder to cement an English identity are unlikely.

Likewise, there is little archaeological evidence to suggest an English character to the Gilbertine priory. The tradition of the Gilbertine northern cloister (Chapter 2), although important to the order due to its wider symbolic significance of reflecting the layout of the motherhouse, was not a uniquely Gilbertine characteristic and can be found at other Cistercian houses, especially nunneries. Rather than an attempt to forge a distinctively English character, the evolution of the northern cloister appears to have been a response of the rules of enclosure, common to all monastic orders.

It would be advantageous to compare the arrangement of Gilbertine houses with double houses of other orders within England. The evidence that does exist for these houses is extremely sparse and is limited to the position of the cloisters relative to the priory churches. In all cases, for which evidence exists, the cloisters of double houses

belonging to other orders are located to the south of the priory churches. This supports the idea that the Gilbertine pattern of northern cloisters is a direct result of a tradition begun at Sempringham, rather than a symbolic association between female monasticism and a northern cloistral arrangement (Gilchrist 1990: 98).

Despite a lack of evidence of a strong English identity, there may have been some practical advantages to the Gilbertines being viewed as a local order. The pattern of the foundation of Gilbertine double houses within the latter half of the twelfth century, and the abandonment of further foundations into the thirteenth was also followed by other orders present within England, namely the Fontevraultine and Arrouaisian orders:

House	Foundation Date
Order of Fontevrault	
- Nun Eaton Priory	1155
- Westwood Priory	c.1155
- Amesbury Priory	1177
Order of Arrouaise	
- Harrold Priory	1136 – 1138
- Wothorpe Priory	c.1160

Table 4 - Fontevraultine and Arrouaisian double houses within England and dates of foundation.

The Fontevraultine and Arrouaisian orders established a number of houses across England in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. There were in total four Fontevraultine houses within England, three of which were double houses founded between 1155 and 1177. The fourth single house was established at Grovesbury in 1165, to act as an administrative centre for the order within England (Chettle 1942: 36). The house at Nun Eaton was by far the larger of the two, with 93 nuns present in 1234, compared to 18 religious recorded at Westwood in 1337. The 93 at Nun Eaton did not take into account the prior and any canons or monks, however the figure of 18 religious at Westwood presumably includes both men and women (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 105). There is no recorded evidence of scandal at either priory at the turn of the thirteenth century.

The double house at Amesbury was founded around 1177 and was the richest of the four English houses (Chettle 1942: 37). The priory was on the site of an earlier Benedictine nunnery, which was closed by Henry II following reports of impropriety of the part of the nuns (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 104). It is worth noting that the order of Fontevrault was invited to take over the site by the king following the expulsion of the Benedictine prioress and 30 nuns in 1177. At this point in the twelfth century at least, it appears that the monastic house was not judged purely on its double status, but of the actions of the religious within.

The Arrouaisian order had less than 10 houses in England, of these just two were double houses. The priory at Harrold in Bedfordshire was founded between 1140-50 by the abbot of Arrouaise. The land was granted by Sampson le Fort and later confirmed by David I. As with the houses of Fontevrault, there seems to have been a link between royal patronage and the foundation of double houses. A prior and a small number of canons were sent to the priory to provide the nuns with protection and

support (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 280). There is no evidence within the historic record of a scandal associated with the house in the twelfth century. Only in 1298 was a sister of the priory found guilty of breaking her vows of chastity (Elspeth 1904b: 387). Wothorpe priory was founded in Northamptonshire around 1160 as a double Arrosian house (Knowles & Hadcock 1971: 268). As with the priory at Harrold, little of the history of the house is known, other than that it suffered during the thirteenth century. The priory had a short life and only one nun was recorded living within the house in 1346. Five years later it was merged into the Benedictine nunnery at Stamford.

It is clear that neither of these orders continued the foundation of double houses later than 1177, the last being the Fontevraultine priory at Amesbury. This correlates with the dates of the Gilbertine double foundations, the final one being at Shouldham in 1193, suggesting that the difficulties encountered by the Gilbertines in gaining support for establishments that contained both men and women, were not unique. Rather than a top down change resulting from the whim or moral convictions of Roger of Malton, the evidence suggests that the founding of new double monasteries for any order within England had, by the end of the twelfth century, become untenable.

Despite the similarities in their patterns of foundation, the pattern of decline for the double houses of other orders is different to that of the Gilbertines. As early as 1200 the Harrold priory was made independent and appears to no longer have been a double house (Elspeth 1904b: 389). Wothorpe priory did not survive the Black Death, being dissolved in 1349, making over the church and property of the priory to the nunnery of St Michael in Stamford (Cox 1906: 101). Westwood priory was dissolved during the suppression of the lesser monasteries due to its low income (Calthrop 1906: 151), whilst the priories at Nun Eaton and Amesbury did survive until the Dissolution, but with much reduced fortunes (Cox 1908: 70). In comparison to those double houses of other

order, the Gilbertine double houses appear to have survived the decline of monasticism relatively successfully, and the all Gilbertine houses managed to survive until 1538-9. This may have been because of their continued royal support, possibly due to their position as an English order.

Consequently, Chapters 2 & 5 have demonstrated how the decline in the fortunes of the double house were not just a product of financial factors present within England at the time, but also a growing distrust in the mixing of men and women within religious houses. The Gilbertine order may have had an advantage due to their location within Lincolnshire. The North of England and particularly Lincolnshire had a tradition of female sainthood and female monasticism, dating back to the Anglo-Saxon period (Wilkinson 2007: 166). It is probable that, due to this tradition, the order encountered a population and clergy more accepting of mixed communities.

Segregation within the Double House

Referring to nunneries, Roberta Gilchrist (1995: 110) has stated that, ‘the concept of enclosure was integral to the concept of female monastic identity’ and that, ‘central to this tradition was the importance of female virginity and innocence, religious commodities which were defended by physical and psychological barriers’. This thesis has shown that the notion of enclosure was equally important within the Gilbertine double house. The arrangement of every double house, for which evidence survives, supports the idea that a major part of the planning of the Gilbertine monastery and the precinct was based on the segregation of men and women. Indeed, the importance of enclosure was elevated in the Gilbertine double houses, precisely because they contained both men and women. The rule of the order went as far as to prescribe that three marks should be spent per year to maintain the enclosure, specifically around the

nuns' cloister, and that 'No expense shall be spared until the view and approach of all is shut out from them' (Graham 1901: 57).

At many of the rural houses the enclosure of the nuns may have fulfilled a number of roles. At these sites, the nuns appear to have been enclosed on all sides, despite being located away from villages or towns. These enclosures may have created a psychological, as well as physical barrier, as the act of the nuns entering the enclosure of the nuns' inner court was symbolic of their vows to the order. This thesis has also emphasized the importance of reputation to the order; the use of banks and ditches provided large visible features separating the nuns from the canons, as well as from the outside world. One of the motivations behind constructing these highly visible earthworks was to impress outsiders with the idea that the order took seriously their responsibility to keep the sexes separate and protecting the innocence of the nuns.

Study of the plan of double houses has provided evidence from a number of buildings and adaptations, unique to the double institution, which aided in ensuring segregation of the sexes. The nuns' cloister was connected to the priory church and the canons' cloister was usually placed in-between the nuns and the main access route into the monastery, and thus the canons formed a barrier between the nuns and the outside world. This is particularly noticeable at Sempringham where the canons' cloister and the priory church divided the nuns from Sempringham village. Likewise, the arrangement of the priory church reflected the arrangement of the monastery as a whole. The divided church ensured that men and women were separate from one another with the nuns' half of the church opening directly into the nuns' cloister, ensuring that the canons or lay brothers did not view them. The canons were free to leave the church and travel through the inner court back to their cloister.

Despite the importance of the segregation of the nuns and canons, two factors ensured that they were reliant on contact with one another. The first was that the nuns were not capable of taking mass without the presence of a canon. For this the turning window in the central division of the church was used to pass the instruments of the mass from one side of the presbytery to the other. The second was the lack of a kitchen in the canons' cloister and the rule that the nuns should provide the canons' food, which ensured that the nuns could share responsibility for the maintenance of life in the priory. The canons were responsible for providing the religious requirements set down in the rule, and the nuns for providing for the temporal requirements of the canons. In this way, the balance of power within the monastery could be maintained and the two groups that rarely, if ever, saw one another could develop a symbiotic relationship.

This relationship was illustrated by Gilbert's hagiographer as the 'Chariot of Aminadab', and has been discussed at length by other Gilbertine scholars (Golding 1995; Burton 2001; Sykes 2009). Likewise, this thesis has examined how the arrangement of the chariot was reflected in the arrangement of the Gilbertine priory (Chapter 2), however one aspect of Gilbertine monasticism is lacking from the metaphor. The four groups included within the original wording of the hagiographic text are all religious (Sykes 2009: 236), they do not include the secular population who would have played a large part in the order. The presence of parish churches, close to the priories of Sempringham and Watton, attest to the relationship between the religious of the monasteries and the local populace. As with the nuns and canons, this fifth group were kept strictly segregated from the others. Banks, ditches and the priory church all formed barriers, physical and psychological between the secular and religious groups.

As the nuns relied on the canons for spiritual leadership, the local population relied on the monastery to provide canons to lead the mass, and as the canons relied on

the nuns for sustenance, the monastery relied on the local population for financial support through grants and donations from the local nobility. Gilchrest's assertion that enclosure was integral to the female monastic experience is true to an extent, however absolute enclosure and segregation, although perhaps an ideal in the eyes of the medieval church, had to be compromised for practicality. The proximity of the canons and the local population to the nuns is an example of this compromise, and the arrangement of the Gilbertine monastery can be seen as a reaction to it, a way of dealing with the problem of the groups needing one another and being forced by necessity, to interact.

The Decline of the Gilbertines

It has been argued by Brian Golding (1995: 4) that the order had begun to decline by the turn of the fourteenth century. However, this thesis suggests that the order did not fully recover from the death of Gilbert at the end of the twelfth century and the decline in the number of large foundations began 150 years earlier, in around 1200. This suggests that the figure of Gilbert himself was the main proponent of the double house experiment carried out by the order. His successor, Roger of Malton, could either not attract benefactors as founders, or did not wish to found double monasteries, and by the beginning of the thirteenth century the expansion of the order had ceased almost entirely. This period of the order's history has received little attention due to the lack of historical documentation for the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Similarly, the archaeological evidence for this period is sparse, yet despite this, conclusions can be made regarding the variation between the fortunes of double and single houses in this period.

The thesis has argued that the order as a whole saw a decline following the death of the St Gilbert at the end of the twelfth century. The incomes of the order's single houses varied greatly during this period, however overall, they appear to be lower than the double houses. Single and double houses deployed different strategies to counteract this decline. The single houses adapted by reducing their size, in some cases abandoning one or more of the monastic ranges and repurposing the others. This is apparent at Mattersey, York and Ravenstonedale, which all see the abandonment of the west range in favour of a reduction in size and redevelopment of the remaining buildings. This redesign of the monastic ranges also coincided with a shift towards more individual worship, and away from communal living. Taking into account the decrease in recruitment following the mid-fourteenth century, this may have resulted in the division of personal cells for the canons. In addition to the downsizing of the monastic ranges, the single houses also saw a reduction in the size of the priory church and often resulted in the demolition of the transepts of the monastic church.

The decline of the double houses of the order was less pronounced, probably due to their greater income from their large land holdings gained upon, or shortly after, their foundation. At the motherhouse at Sempringham the northern half of the priory church, reserved for the canons and lay brothers, was expanded, as was the northern transept containing the priory chapels. This was probably to encourage an increase in the number of pilgrims visiting the in order to generate additional income. At the time when the single houses were struggling to recruit canons and levels of poverty within the priories themselves were high, the larger double houses at Sempringham, Watton and Chicksands were undergoing large-scale rebuilding. This suggests that although a single master centrally controlled the order, the houses were financially independent. These redevelopments were centred on the areas occupied by the canons, with no

evidence of large-scale building within the nuns' cloisters. The original focus of the Gilbertines on the nuns had, by the fourteenth century, been abandoned and the purpose of the canons to serve the spiritual needs of the nuns had been replaced by a new focus on the male members of the order.

The Arrangement of the Gilbertine Precinct and the 'Lost' Gilbertine Houses

Little has been written regarding the particular arrangement of the Gilbertine priory church and cloisters, and even less work has been carried out mapping and analysing the arrangement of the Gilbertine precinct. In his 2004 work *Monasteries in the Landscape*, James Bond outlined the importance of placing monasteries within the wider setting of their precinct. David Stocker and Paul Everson (2011: 4-15), go further, and imply that it is impossible to understand the medieval monastic house without a firm understanding of the surrounding precinct and wider landscape. Many of the buildings that would have originally occupied this landscape are now no longer visible, however many of the earthworks and divisions of the precinct are still observable, either on the ground, on historic maps or by viewing aerial photographs. Chapter 4 of this thesis provides arrangements for the monastic cloisters of those houses for which evidence survives. There is a bias towards the double house, due to the earthworks on these sites often surviving better than the smaller single houses, often due to their rural location (for a full discussion of preservation see Chapter 4).

Landscape archaeologists have long focused on the landscape as a place of ritual and symbolism, and warned of the division of ritual and utility (Johnson 2006: 146; Everson & Stocker 2011: 8), and it is through the lens of symbolism that the Gilbertine precinct must be viewed. The arrangement of the three courts of the double houses relate to the segregation of the religious inhabitants just as much as the divided priory

church. The position of the nuns' and canons' cloisters within the precinct only begin to make sense when viewed in the context of routes of access into the outer court. In all cases, for which evidence exists, the cloister of the canons divides that of the nuns from entrance and approach into the site. Similarly, the priory church forms a barrier between the two inner courts, each one divided from the outer court by highly visible ditches and banks. The visitor to the Gilbertine double house would find themselves passing through a series of visually and physically impenetrable barriers to reach the nuns' cloister. This blend of symbolism and utility would have been evident not only to a visitor, but also to the inhabitants themselves. Enclosed in the inner court it is possible that the nuns, walled in on each side by banks and masonry, would not be able to see outside of the enclosed space.

The concluding part of Chapter 4 of this thesis focuses on the 'lost' Gilbertine houses, those priories whose exact location is no longer evident; the data available for the location and arrangement of these houses is particularly scarce. The locations of a number of these houses are based wholly upon their position on Ordnance Survey maps. This is particularly the case in urban contexts where later structures have obscured the remains of priories and their precincts, as is the case at the sites of the Gilbertine educational halls. The same is often true of smaller rural houses, at which post-medieval farms and their associated buildings have taken the place of the monastic complex. Often, the data from Ordnance Survey has been supplemented with evidence from geophysical or architectural surveys, for instance at Poulton, where there is some evidence of re-used monastic stone in the current farmhouse. However, without new evidence, gathered from excavation or new surveys, the accuracy of these hypothesized locations cannot be authenticated.

The Gilbertine ‘Type-Site’

One of the aims of the thesis was to identify a ‘type-site’ or Gilbertine house that is characteristic of the majority. However, due to the various types of Gilbertine site (double/single, urban/rural, hospital and educational hall) it not possible to classify one single site as characteristic of all houses. Furthermore, the evidence points to a large amount of variation within the Gilbertine doubles houses. The motherhouse of the order at Sempringham should be viewed as the progenitor for later double houses, thereby providing the closest example of a type-site for the double house. As such, many of the distinctly Gilbertine facets found at other houses relate to it; the tradition of the double church and the pattern of connecting the nuns’ cloister directly to the priory church seen at all other Gilbertine double houses, can be seen to have originated at the motherhouse.

The data presented within this thesis supports the use of Sempringham as a type-site as only Watton presents a divergent pattern of layout. Yet Watton was founded within one or two years of Sempringham, probably before the plan for the motherhouse has been fully established. As a consequence, Watton might be expected to exhibit its own parallel pattern of development, exemplified through the position of the nuns’ cloister to the north of the priory church, an arrangement not widely seen at the later double houses (but perhaps explained by the main access to the site being from the south).

The Gilbertine single house can be divided between urban and rural types. The single house can also be categorized between those with a foundation date before the death of Gilbert, and those that were founded after 1190. Due to these variations, a number of examples must be cited as characterizing these different styles of house. The number of Gilbertine houses for which a complete plan is visible limits the

identification of a type-site. The creation of the sub-categories of urban and rural, and pre- and post-1190 exacerbate this constraint. St Katherine's priory, Lincoln provides the only example of a pre-1190 urban Gilbertine monastery, and the evidence for the priory at Lincoln is sparse and relates to the position of the precinct and the hospital rather than the priory buildings themselves. The priory of St Andrew, York is the only post-1190 urban example for which good evidence of layout and phasing is available. The post-1190 urban houses at Marlborough and Cambridge fall into the same category as York, however no remains of the priory buildings have been identified. There is more data available for the single houses in a rural context, and the reasons for this have been discussed in Chapter 2. Malton and Mattersey provide comprehensive examples of priory layout for the pre-1190 phase of foundations. These two houses are very similar in layout if not in scale, together characterizing the houses built during the lifetime of Gilbert. Ravenstonedale is the only example of a post-1190 house for which the upstanding remains are still present. Data from other rural houses are limited to understanding cloister orientation and precinct arrangement. It is therefore not possible to provide a single example as a type-site.

Future Work

The limited number of sites for which layout can be established is problematic when trying to determine patterns in the arrangement of Gilbertine houses. Geophysical surveys carried out as part of this thesis have helped to establish the layouts at a number of houses. Further comprehensive resistivity and earthworks survey at a number of sites would be extremely valuable, and there is potential for this at the double houses of North Ormsby, Catley, Alvingham and Sixhills, as well as at the single houses of Newstead-on-Ancholme and Poulton. Similar survey, completed away from the priory

church would help to identify extra-cloistral buildings within the inner and outer precincts of the priory. This would be most effective at houses for which information for the layout of the cloisters already exists, such as Watton and Mattersey. Exhaustive survey of all potential sites is outside of the scope of this thesis. However, the conclusions made within this work could be supplemented and confirmed by a programme of targeted survey.

There is also potential to study aspects of the Gilbertine order that fall outside of the prevue of this thesis. The life of the inhabitants of the monasteries and the position of the institutions within a wider context could be established by a study of their material culture. Lincoln Museum Archive currently holds artefacts from excavation and surface collection at Haverholme, North Ormsby, Bullington and Sempringham. This archive consists of 138 boxes of mixed artefacts from the 1961-4 Jones excavations at Haverholme, 16 boxes of pottery and animal bone from Dornier's 1966 excavations at North Ormsby, 3 boxes collected from Bullington between 1976 and 1980, examples of pottery, quern stones and ceramic building material, collected by Hassock from Catley in 1980, and 81 boxes of mixed artefacts from Cope-Falkner's surface collection at Sempringham between 2001-2003. Although beyond the scope of this thesis, future study of these assemblages could answer questions regarding the activities carried out at Gilbertine sites as well as serving as a comparison to houses of other orders. One of the main aims of a study of Gilbertine material culture would be to identify, if possible, activities taking place within the cloister and to establish whether the female and male cloister are represented by differing artefact assemblages. A second area of study not addressed in this work is an evaluation of the aesthetic of the monasteries. Excavation reports for Watton, Malton and Sempringham are illustrated with a limited number of examples of moldings and decorated stonework.

Understanding the aesthetic of monasteries would provide a context for the lives of the nuns and canons. This would be especially relevant for the nuns' cloisters of the double house, as the women were subject to much stricter enclosure than the canons, resulting in their surroundings influencing their lives to a greater extent.

However, in both the cases of decorative stonework and artefact analysis, studies are likely to be limited in their success due to the incomplete nature of the available archaeological record and the lack of any context for the collection held at Lincoln Museum. Reports for excavations and surface recovery only exist for the 2001-2003 collection of artefacts from Sempringham, and as the survey was undertaken within the plough zone, it is unlikely that the spatial data would be accurate enough to link any artefact with any specific building. A second limitation for the study of the Gilbertine aesthetic is the lack of upstanding building remains. Those that do survive are not good candidates for study, the most complete of which is found at Malton. As with many other medieval churches, the interior has undergone substantial remodeling, leaving no evidence of its medieval appearance. The ruined priories of Mattersey and Ravenstonedale, although easily accessible and having undergone no post-Dissolution remodeling, display no evidence of decorative stonework and are mostly ruined below first floor level.

There is also the scope for small-scale excavation to answer specific questions at certain sites. For example, this research has highlighted questions regarding the way that the nuns and canons communicated with one another. The existence of a window house and turning window between the two cloisters has been questioned due to the lack of recorded evidence. Small-scale targeted excavation could be employed at Watton to reevaluate the results of Hope's excavation. At other sites, this information could be used together with geophysical survey to identify potential window-house

locations at double houses. A similar methodology could be used to reevaluate the turning window in the priory church at Watton, more importantly, as Watton provides the only recorded example, similar work could be undertaken at other double houses to confirm that this was an architectural feature ubiquitous to all Gilbertine double priory churches. Information regarding these contact points between the nuns and canons is particularly important, as they represent an aspect of monastic arrangement that is unique to the Gilbertine order and would help to better characterize the relationship between the nuns and canons.

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