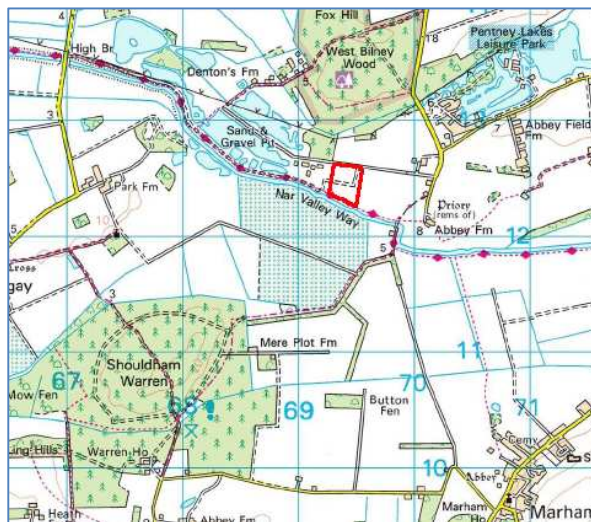




**Pentney Quarry  
Pentney  
Norfolk  
PE32 1JT**



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100043831

**Heritage Appraisal**

**July 2017**

**E:mail [andyjosephs@hotmail.com](mailto:andyjosephs@hotmail.com) • Telephone 07990 571908**

**16 South Terrace, Sowerby, Thirsk, YO7 1RH**

Andrew Josephs Ltd. Registered Office, Antrobus House, 18 College St, Petersfield, GU31 4AD. Registration no. 4547366

# 1. Introduction

---

## 1.1 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This Heritage Appraisal has been commissioned by Stephen Daw MRICS on behalf of Middleton Aggregates Limited to provide an overview of archaeology and heritage to accompany a proposed allocation of an extension to Pentney Quarry.

The location of the proposed allocation area (PAA) is shown on **Figure 1**, situated at NGR TF 694 124.



**Figure 1** Location Plan © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100043831

## 1.2 SCOPE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

Cultural heritage is represented by a wide range of assets and features that result from past human use of the landscape. These include historic structures, many still in use, above ground and buried archaeological monuments and remains of all periods, artefacts of anthropological origin and evidence that can help reconstruct past human environments. In its broadest form cultural heritage is represented by the landscape and townscape itself.

## **1.3 RELEVANT POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

### ***1.3.1 National Planning Policy Framework***

National planning policy on how cultural heritage should be assessed is given in National Planning Policy Framework, published in May 2012. This covers all aspects of heritage and the historic environment, including listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens, battlefields and archaeology.

### ***1.3.2 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)***

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was published in May 2014 as a companion to the NPPF, replacing a large number of previous Circulars and other supplementary guidance. In respect of heritage decision-making, the NPPG stresses the importance of determining applications on the basis of significance, and explains how the tests of harm and impact within the NPPF are to be interpreted.

### ***1.3.3 Historic England Guidance***

The key Historic England<sup>1</sup> publications relevant to mineral extraction are:

- Historic England 2008. *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*.
- Historic England 2015. *GPA 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets*. Historic England guidance.
- Historic England 2011. *Seeing The History In The View: A Method For Assessing Heritage Significance Within Views*.
- Historic England 2009. *Planning Mitigation and Archaeological Conservation – Resource Assessment*.
- Historic England 2008. *Archaeology and Mineral Extraction*.
- Historic England 2008. *Mineral Extraction and the Historic Environment*.

---

<sup>1</sup> Historic England includes publications by its preceding name English Heritage

## 2. Baseline

---

### 2.1 DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

The PAA lies about 450m to the west of the scheduled boundary of Pentney Priory and 700m from the priory gatehouse, listed Grade I and the 18th-century Abbey Farmhouse alongside, Grade II (Figure 2, Photograph 1).



Figure 2 Pentney Priory Designated Assets © Google Earth (base photo)



Photograph 1 Pentney Gatehouse and Abbey Farm

It is believed that Pentney Priory was founded late in the reign of Henry I (*circa* 1135) as a house of the Augustinian canons. Pentney was one of the larger Augustinian houses, probably with over 20 canons before the Black Death (1348), but only 12 in 1381. It appears to be one of the earliest examples of a monastery established on an 'island' site.

Other than the fine late 14th-century gatehouse the remains of the priory now consist of little more than foundations. Material from the priory has been re-used in Abbey Farm and its outbuildings which now occupy the site. Cropmarks to the south seen on air photographs may be associated with the site. Excavation has revealed pits apparently for burning stonework for lime production at the time of the dissolution. Geophysical survey has located the nave and transepts of the church.

The view from the PAA towards the Priory is shown on **Photograph 2**.



**Photograph 2 View from PAA towards Pentney Priory. The scheduled boundary is highlighted in white and the gatehouse is arrowed**

## 2.2 ARCHAEOLOGY

An examination of known sites<sup>2</sup> within the immediate vicinity of the PAA identified several isolated find spots of material ranging in date from the prehistoric to the medieval periods.

The earliest is a lower Palaeolithic hand axe (HER 40727) to the northeast of the PAA but it was found near a track and it was thought likely to have been brought in with gravel from elsewhere. Several Mesolithic flint blades were recovered to the southeast of the PAA (19882). These finds were also associated with other later flints and some unidentified pottery. A possible Mesolithic flint working site (24377) was identified about 1.4km southeast of the PAA on the edge of a former course of the river Nar, found during fieldwalking and subsequently examined by trial trenching.

---

<sup>2</sup> Source: Norfolk Heritage Explorer

Many of the other entries around the PAA relate to burnt stones either as part of a defined burnt mound (23183) identified during the Fenland Survey in 1986, as pot boilers associated with worked flints (19874 and 23179), or as a more substantial scatter (19880 & 19881). The first three of these sites lay to the south of the PAA in an area of fen and are assigned a broad prehistoric date of pre 42AD, the last two entries relate to scatters of pot boilers on the edge of Pentney Island.

Further evidence of prehistoric activity in the area includes finds of flints such as a blade to the southwest of the PAA (19669) and occasional prehistoric flint from a field directly to the south of the current workings (23810). What would seem to be a more extensive scatter of flints was identified to the east of the Priory (23012). Further finds are also known to the southeast of the PAA on the edge of Pentney Island (23196 & 23637).

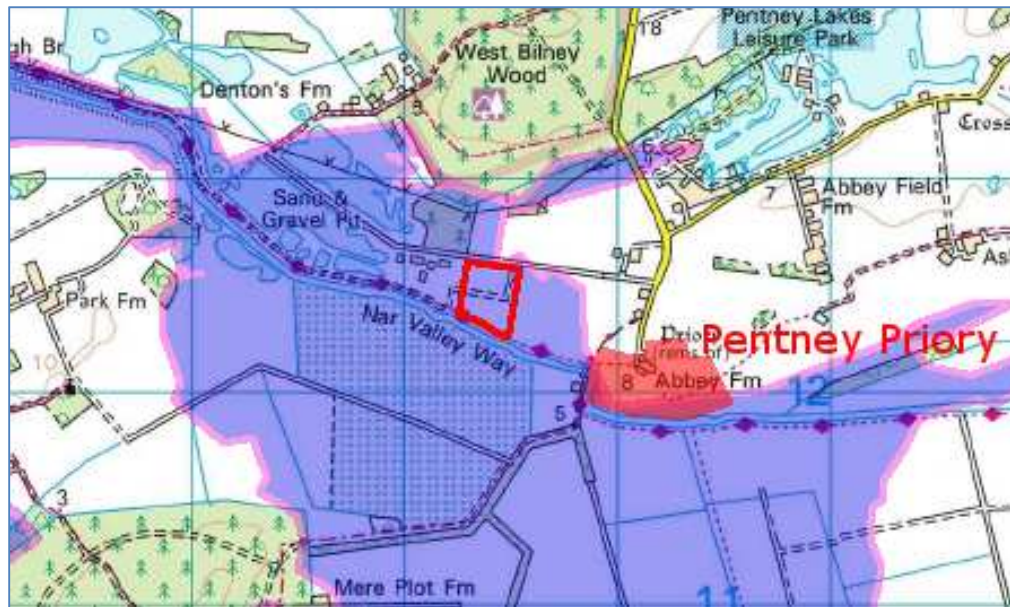
The number of finds of flints and pot boilers suggests there was activity during that period in the vicinity of the PAA, however the absence of coherent sites may suggest the activity was transient, exploiting the natural resources that the edge of the fen had to offer.

The Roman period is represented by the find of pottery sherds on the site of Pentney watermill (3471). This apparent absence of activity may reflect the marginality of much of the area around the PAA at that time. Some undated crop marks are known from the vicinity of the PAA including one group to the east (19182) and further southeast a large square enclosure (25774).

Apart from the remains of the priory (see above) no medieval remains lie in the immediate vicinity of the PAA. Dr Paul Stamper has assessed the landscape at the time of the foundation of the Priory (**Appendix A**) and has concluded that *'it can be stated with certainty that the proposed allocation would not destroy a monastic landscape – that is fields or woods contemporary with, or associated with the priory. The fields are probably of 1809 or thereabouts, and are commonplace across this part of the county.*

*There needs to be care taken in designing the post-quarry restored landscape. It is understood that this will be to a mixture of open water and wet woodland with fringing reed. In the Middle Ages there was fenland and marsh here which was almost certainly liable to extensive seasonal flooding and this could be argued, with some credibility, to be returning to a more authentic monastic landscape than the current, early 19th-century, fieldscape.*

This is borne out by examination of current floodzones recorded by the Environment Agency (**Figure 3**) that show how Pentney lies on an island above and that the PAA sits lower in an area that before flood defence schemes and drains would have been wet.



**Figure 3** Flood zones (source data: <https://data.gov.uk/data>, accessed 07/07/17)  
© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100043831

### 3. Conclusion

---

The background data in the Norfolk Historic Environment Record, give a good indicator of the potential for archaeology within the PAA. Lying as it does within an area that would have been wet during history and prehistory, and probably under water for periods of time, it is not surprising that archaeology seems focussed on slight islands and higher ground at the peripheries of the fen.

Should the PAA come forward as a planning application, based upon current information a Strip Map and Sample approach to mitigation would seem appropriate, although this should be informed by further desk-based, and possibly field-based, assessment.

The setting of the PAA, approximately 0.5km west of the scheduled remains of Pentney Priory, has been considered. At that distance, the adverse effects caused by visual impact, noise and dust during operation are considered minor or negligible. The overall setting may in fact be enhanced through restoration of the quarry to water and fen-edge, which is more akin to the landscape of the Priory in the medieval period and before the wholesale reorganisation of its surrounds in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

On current evidence, there are no significant constraints to the allocation of this site and, from an archaeological and heritage perspective, the proposals conform to national planning policy and guidance.



## **Appendix A**

### **Assessment of the historic setting of Pentney Priory Dr Paul Stamper, FSA**

## PAUL STAMPER HERITAGE

25 Big Green, Warmington, Peterborough PE8 6TU  
[paul.stamper52@gmail.com](mailto:paul.stamper52@gmail.com) 01832 280344 07507 720397

### **PENTNEY PRIORY, NORFOLK**

#### Background history

It is believed that Pentney was founded late in the reign of Henry I (d.1135) as a house of the Augustinian canons.<sup>3</sup> The Augustinians were regular canons, that is ordained priests, living a quasi-monastic, regular life (i.e. life according to a rule) in a community. The Gregorian Reform Movement rekindled an interest in the communal life for canons and recognised the need for a new rule, which would cater for the needs of those communities of priests who lived together and *had all things in common*, but who were also deeply involved with the world outside the cloister.

The largest of the orders was the Augustinian canons, so-called on account of their adherence to St Augustine's 'Rule' and also known as Austin canons, or 'black canons' after the colour of their habits. They took vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and lived according to a monastic *horarium*, much as monks did. Unlike monks, however, their routine included a range of extra-claustral activities, such as the servicing of parish churches (they were, after all, ordained priests), the staffing and maintenance of pilgrims' hostels and hospitals, and other, similar duties, which brought them into close contact with the lay community. The regular canons were the numerically strongest religious group in the medieval British Isles, with around 170 houses in England.<sup>4</sup>

Pentney was one of the larger Augustinian houses, probably with over 20 canons before the Black Death (1348), but only 12 in 1381. The number of canons fluctuated a little in the late Middle Ages, but their number (alongside the prior) suggests a relatively prosperous and successful house: 17 in 1492, at least 12 in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, and up to 15 at the priory's dissolution in 1537.

#### The Augustinians and their estates

The Augustinian canons carried out normal priestly duties at some of the parish churches they acquired. A proportion of their income came from these churches, and they were less concerned than the Cistercians with the direct administration of the agricultural land they were granted. In the standard overview of monastic landscapes,<sup>5</sup> James Bond notes 'The Augustinian Canons ... had some landed estates,

---

<sup>3</sup> D. Knowles and R.N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses of England and Wales* (1953)

<sup>4</sup> Karen Stöber, 'Who were the Regular Canons?' <http://www.monasticwales.org/article/5>. Number of priories from [http://www.thereformation.info/augustine\\_orders.htm](http://www.thereformation.info/augustine_orders.htm)

<sup>5</sup> James Bond, *Monastic Landscapes* (2004), 34-5

but their relatively late arrival on the scene meant that they had generally missed out on the chance to acquire many grants of entire manors. Instead, Augustinian estates were usually made up of piecemeal gifts and purchases, improved by assarts and reclamation. Their demesne lands were often relatively small, being formed around a nucleus of glebe-land belonging to appropriated churches. A significantly higher proportion of their income (about 36 per cent on the eve of the Dissolution) was derived from their possession of churches.'

#### The landscape around Pentney

Primary documentary research would be needed to begin to recreate the medieval and early modern landscape around Pentney. A fundamental point – bearing in mind the previous paragraph – is that there was not necessarily a 'monastic' landscape around Pentney, and certainly not a large demesne (home farm) or one that was exclusively monastic.

#### *The landscape of the Nar Valley: before the later 18<sup>th</sup> century*

While detailed research has yet to be undertaken on the central reaches of the River Nar in the Middle Ages and the earlier post-medieval centuries, the location of historic villages and other sites, including monasteries, clearly shows how settlement was confined to the slightly higher land, including 'islands', at the edges of the low-lying land either side of the river. Until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century this low-lying land was wetland, generally termed 'fen', which probably included a limited amount of wet woodland or carr.<sup>6</sup> Modelling of the modern flood zone suggests that much of this land would have been flooded during the winter months. That notwithstanding, this was a landscape – like many others across England, such as the Somerset Levels, and the Weald Moors in Shropshire - which was potentially rich in resources: seasonal grazing, fish, wildfowl, turves and reeds.<sup>7</sup>

William Faden's *Map of Norfolk* (1797) provides a detailed overview of the county just at the point when the wholesale transformation of its landscape was starting with the enclosure of open fields, commons and fens. It shows a broad swathe of fenland extending west from Narborough, principally although not exclusively extending south of the river, for up to 2.5km around Marham. This probably gives an accurate impression of landscape character in the preceding millennium.

#### *Enclosure of the wetlands*

The fenlands along this section of the River Nar were enclosed, allotted, drained and improved following a series of Acts passed in the 25 years after 1790, part of the great wave of enclosure of open fields, commons and fens seen across Norfolk at this time largely precipitated by rising corn prices.<sup>8</sup> The present landscape, a grid-like

---

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/pdf/reportsandpublications/Historical%20evidence%20report.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Sue Oosthuizen *The Anglo-Saxon Fenland* (2017)

<sup>8</sup> T. Ashwin and A. Davison, *An Historical Atlas of Norfolk* (2005), 131-2

network of fields now largely under arable cultivation, was created at that time. References to the various bills and Acts which facilitated this provide a chronology, even if detailed local research has yet to establish the details of who drove the process, or its mechanisms and costs.

The common lands of Pentney were enclosed in 1809.<sup>9</sup> In 1815 an Act was passed to drain Wormegay, Shouldham, Marham, Middleton, Pentney, East Winch and (West) Bilney<sup>10</sup> and it may have been after this that the greater part of drainage and land re-allotment along the Nar was undertaken.

The new landscape, probably still under construction, was mapped in 1815 by the Ordnance Survey as part of its national survey at two inches to the mile which formed the basis for the later published one-inch map. The two-inch drawing shows the new grid fields, although there may have been a degree of extrapolation – with work on the landscape perhaps in progress – as in places there is a lack of a precise correlation in terms of field layouts with those shown on the first edition 6-inch map of 1884. Be that as it may, comparison of the two-inch map with Faden's map of just 16 years earlier shows what a radical transformation there had been over this period along the reaches of the Nar.

#### *The landscape around Pentney Priory itself*

Air photographs clearly show that the priory ruins stand within a roughly oval land unit defined by tracks and hedge boundaries extending north-east from the River Nar for c.1 km. At its widest the oval is c. 400m across. These curving boundaries are very different from those of the late, straight-edged fields, which surround it. It would need further investigation, but it would seem a distinct possibility that this defines the outer precinct of the priory, as recently defined for Haughmond Abbey in Shropshire<sup>11</sup>. The Haughmond report includes a detailed discussion of how the precinct was defined, and of the range of buildings and other resources known, or likely, to have lain within the precinct. It also examines the management and exploitation of water resources in and immediately outside the precinct. This discussion would be highly relevant to any investigation of the priory ruins at Pentney and their immediate surrounds.

As noted above, the cartographic evidence clearly shows that, even in recent centuries, the site of the priory – beyond the oval enclosure - was essentially an isolated wetland one. Faden's detailed map of Norfolk, published in 1797, marks the priory ruins alongside a minor road leading from the village of Pentney to a watermill on the south bank of the River Nar. The ruins stood (and stand) only c.200m from the river, and it would seem likely that the course mapped in 1797 – winding, and unimproved – was much as it was in the Middle Ages (later the 2 km stretch east of the priory was straightened to its present course). Other streams ran roughly east-

---

<sup>9</sup> <http://apling.freesevers.com/Villages/Pentney54.htm>

<sup>10</sup> <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/6c12fed2-798b-43d0-a22d-92c7313f36fe>

<sup>11</sup> J.J. West and N. Palmer (eds.), *Haughmond Abbey: Excavation of a 12th Century Cloister in its Historical and Landscape Context* (2014), especially chapter 3 (pp.37-68)

west to the north of the priory site, while extending northward to the Nar (and partly beyond) was extensive fenland.

Two large areas of heath or common in part defined the wetland to the north: Pentney Heath about 1 km to the north, and Pentney Common extending east and south of Pentney village as far as (and partly beyond) Pentney Hall, on or close to the site of the present Ashwood Lodge, 1.5 km east-north-east of the priory site. In terms of the proposed extension area, this extends east from (and perhaps extending slightly in to) what in 1797 was a tongue of fenland extending northward across the River Nar (a fen-like character is still indicated on the 1885 large-scale OS mapping). The modern Whitehouse Farm which stands just north-east of the north-east corner of the proposed extension appears on Faden's map, and it would seem likely that the majority of the proposed extension area was farmland associated with this, extending west to the fenland.

The boundaries of the proposed extension area are formed by the die-straight boundaries of grid-like field which extend widely along the banks of the Nar and beyond. They were almost certainly laid out when the parish was enclosed in 1809,<sup>12</sup> a product of the great wave of enclosure of open fields, commons and fens seen across Norfolk at this time.<sup>13</sup>

### Conclusion

With such a rapid survey it is hard to offer more than preliminary observations and suggestions, which would need to be amplified and tested by more detailed work on a much wider range of sources. That said, enough can already be seen to differentiate between the oval land unit, possibly its precinct, around the priory, and its surrounds. These comprised firstly the riverside reserves of the Nar, presumably exploited for meadowland and fishing, as well as for driving any watermill. The river may well have also been used for navigation – that is access of persons and goods – and the importance of water-borne transport in East Anglia in the Middle Ages is now well established.<sup>14</sup> Around the priory, in a wide swathe to the east, west and south was fen-like land, which will have provided a wide and rich range of resources for exploitation, although whether by the priory and its lay workers (the point is made above that Augustinians drew much income from the churches they held) is unknown. To the north and east were commons and heaths, offering other possibilities for exploitation.

It may be that this potentially rich hinterland helps to explain the otherwise curious choice for the priory site. Another factor may be that the site had long been thought of as 'special', with holy or ritual associations, as has recently been suggested for

---

<sup>12</sup> <http://apling.freeservers.com/Villages/Pentney54.htm>

<sup>13</sup> T. Ashwin and A. Davison, *An Historical Atlas of Norfolk* (2005)131-2

<sup>14</sup> J. Blair (ed.), *Waterways and Canal-Building in Medieval England* (2007)

various monastic sites in Lincolnshire which lie on or close to waterways and their crossing points.<sup>15</sup>

To conclude, it can be stated with certainty that the proposed extension land would not destroy a monastic landscape – that is fields or woods contemporary with, or associated with the priory. The fields are probably of 1809 or thereabouts, and are commonplace across this part of the county.

The principal issues likely to be faced with any application in terms of the priory ruins would be with to do with setting, and the proximity of the operational works to the designated remains.

There also would need to be care taken in designing the post-quarry restored landscape. It is understood that this would be to a mixture of open water and wet woodland with fringing reed. In the Middle Ages there was fenland and marsh here which was almost certainly liable to extensive seasonal flooding and this could be argued, with some credibility, to be returning to a more authentic monastic landscape than the current, early 19th-century, fieldscape.

Dr Paul Stamper, FSA  
19 July 2017

---

<sup>15</sup> Various publications by Paul Everson and David Stocker, e.g., ‘The Witham Valley; A Landscape with Monasteries?’, *Church Archaeology* 13 (2009), 1-15



consultancy | project management | expert witness

Specialists in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage ~ Telephone 07990 571908 - Visit our website at [www.andyjosephs.co.uk](http://www.andyjosephs.co.uk)