

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

WORLD HERITAGE LIST

N° 372

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Fountains Abbey and Saint Mary's Church in Studley Royal

Location : North Yorkshire

State Party : United Kingdom

Date : December 23, 1985

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the condition that the nomination be modified and resubmitted.

C) JUSTIFICATION

The United Kingdom is nominating to the World Heritage List two groups of monuments located in the immediate surroundings of Studley Royal Park and administered by the National Trust : the ruins of Fountains Abbey and St. Mary's, a neo-Gothic style church.

The abbey, which was founded in 1132 by thirteen monks of St. Mary's of York who were searching for an ideal of life in closer keeping with St. Benoit's teachings, owes its success to its early affiliation with the Cistercian order : as early as 1133, Fountains (Sancta Maria de Fontibus) was recognized as a daughter house of Clairvaux. St. Bernard sent Geoffroi d'Ainay, one of his favorite disciples, there to supervise the construction of the first buildings. From the very start the abbey benefitted from large donations. In 1135 the Dean of the Chapter of York, along with two canons, retired there with his library and his fortune. The precarious community which Abbot Richard wished to place under the protection of St. Bernard was saved. In the 13th century its land wealth grew to enormous proportions and as some contemporaries observed, one could cover 30 miles (48km) without ever leaving the lands of the abbey. When the monastic community was broken up after 1530, Fountains was the richest abbey in the kingdom.

These four centuries of prosperity are reflected in the utter magnitude of the ruins of the buildings which constituted the largest monastic complex in Great Britain. Its construction lasted from the 12th to the 16th century. Abbot Hubey's high

tower had just been built at the north end of the transept (1495-1526) when the abbey was abolished by Henry VIII.

The nave of the abbey church, with its characteristic structure combining Burgundian-type elevation comparable to that of Fontenay and Anglo-Norman decorative elements in arcade moulding design and in capital and corbel design, is close to the pristine ideal of Cistercian austerity. But the east end of the church with its massive "chapel of Nine Altars" which intersects the apse as would a second transept (1211-1247), is a deviation from the pure Bernardine plan and reflects the growing prosperity of the community in the 13th century. The rich array of monastic buildings grouped together to the south in a bend in the Skell River in accordance with traditional criteria of the order of Cîteaux also testifies, owing to its complexity of plan and specialization of functions, to the deep-seated changes occurring in a community which rapidly grew away from the pristine ideal due to its land wealth and its spiritual influence (Fountains, in its turn, founded seven daughter houses, one of which in Norway).

Around the cloister, to the east, can be seen the remains of the Chapter House, perpendicular to the gallery, separated from the transept by a vestry. To the south, there is a refectory, also running perpendicular to the gallery, flanked by a calefactory and a kitchen. To the west there is an immense storeroom, still standing and the lay brothers' refectory. The monks' dormitory, located on the upper floor of the east wing, is no longer there.

All sorts of annex buildings were added in the vicinity of the cluster of regular and characteristic structures making up the Cistercian abbey. At the southwest corner there is the lay brothers' infirmary which is partially built over the Skell River, adjacent to the guests' building. To the east there is a long corridor leading to various quarters : abbey lodging and prison, mortuary chamber, the monks' infirmary with separate kitchen, storeroom and chapel.

Near the main complex can also be seen the ruins of the abbey's mill, bakery and malt house.

The second entity covered by the nomination is St. Mary's Church in Studley Royal, one kilometer north of Fountains Abbey. It is typical of the neo-Gothic style of the Victorian period. It was built between 1871 and 1878 for the Marquis and Marchioness of Ripon by William Burges.

We at ICOMOS feel somewhat uncomfortable in attempting to reconcile in one coherent justification two monumental entities which are not of the same period and value.

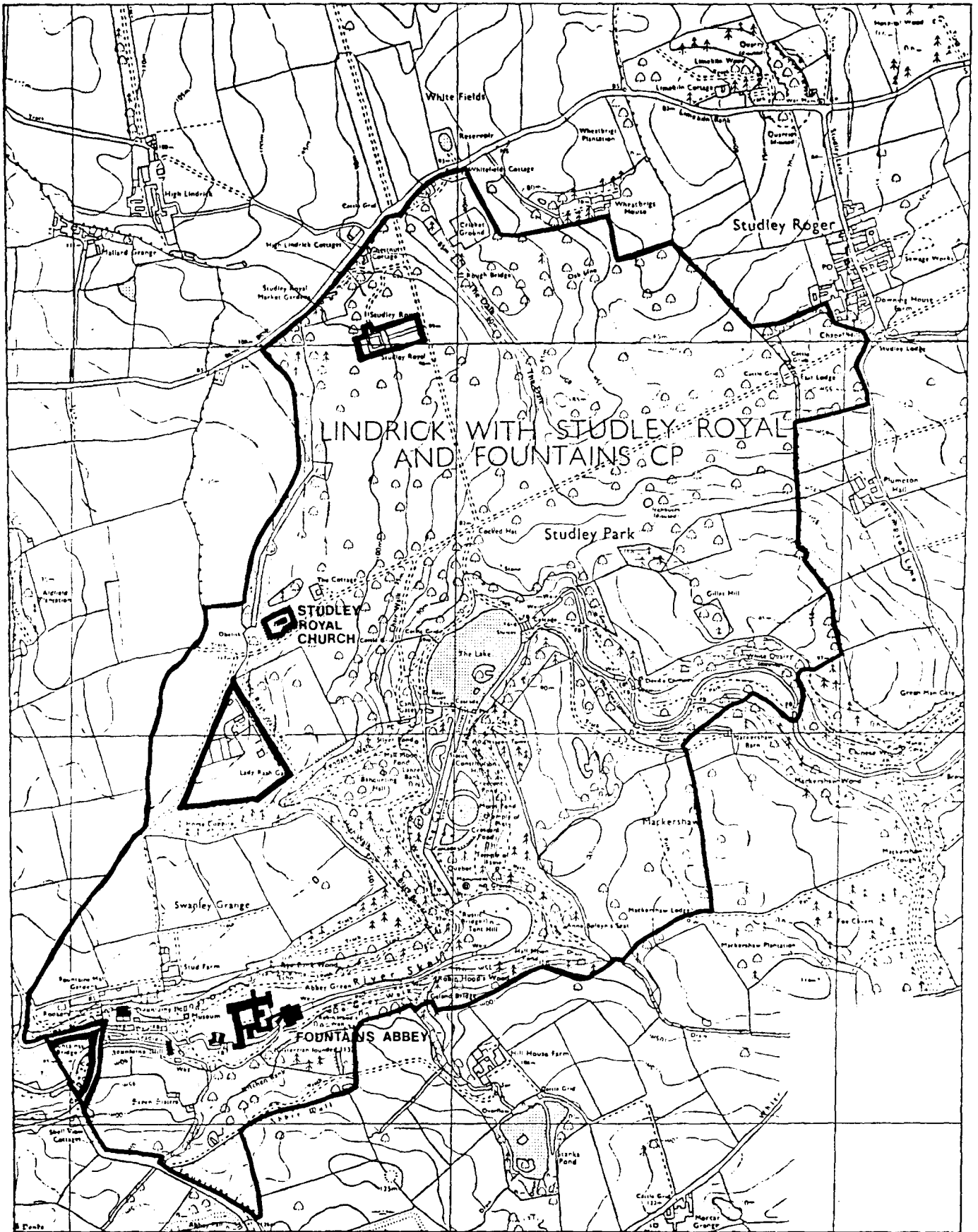
In spite of its historical value, William Burges's small church is overshadowed by the great constructions of Pugin, Scott and

Barrie, any one of which, along with another contemporary construction in France, Germany or the New World, could serve to illustrate the neo-Gothic phenomenon on the World Heritage List.

If considered separately, Fountains Abbey could be given preference over that of Rievaulx (also in Yorkshire) to serve as testimony to Cistercian expansion in England. But this would raise a problem which was already mentioned during the meetings for the harmonization of tentative lists (April 19-20, 1983 and April 10-11, 1984), i.e. the number of properties representative of Cistercian monasticism which are to be included on the World Heritage List, on which Fontenay, an early and comprehensive example, has already been included (1981).

ICOMOS hopes, therefore, that a more aptly worded nomination is forthcoming which would make it possible to avoid this futile problem of comparison. The Fountains site owes its originality and striking beauty to the fact that a humanised landscape of exceptional value was constituted around the largest medieval ruins of the United Kingdom. In the definition of this cultural property it is essential that the small Fountains Hall Castle, the landscaping, the gardens and canal created by John Aislabie in the 18th century, the plantations and vistas of the 19th century and finally Studley Royal Church, as an additional element of the site, all be expressly included. The nomination could then be rightly termed Studley Royal Park and the Ruins of Fountains Abbey.

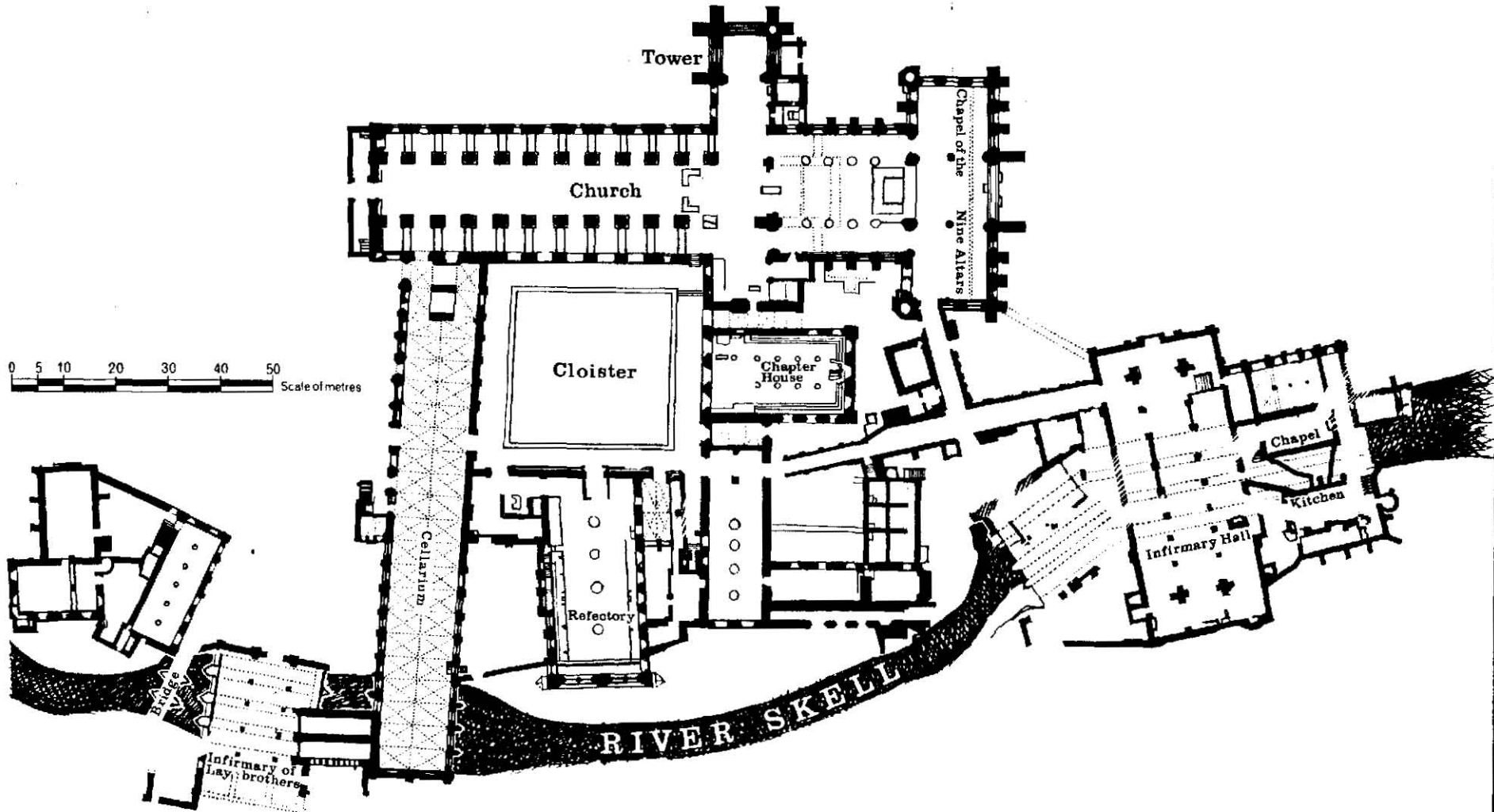
ICOMOS, April 1986.

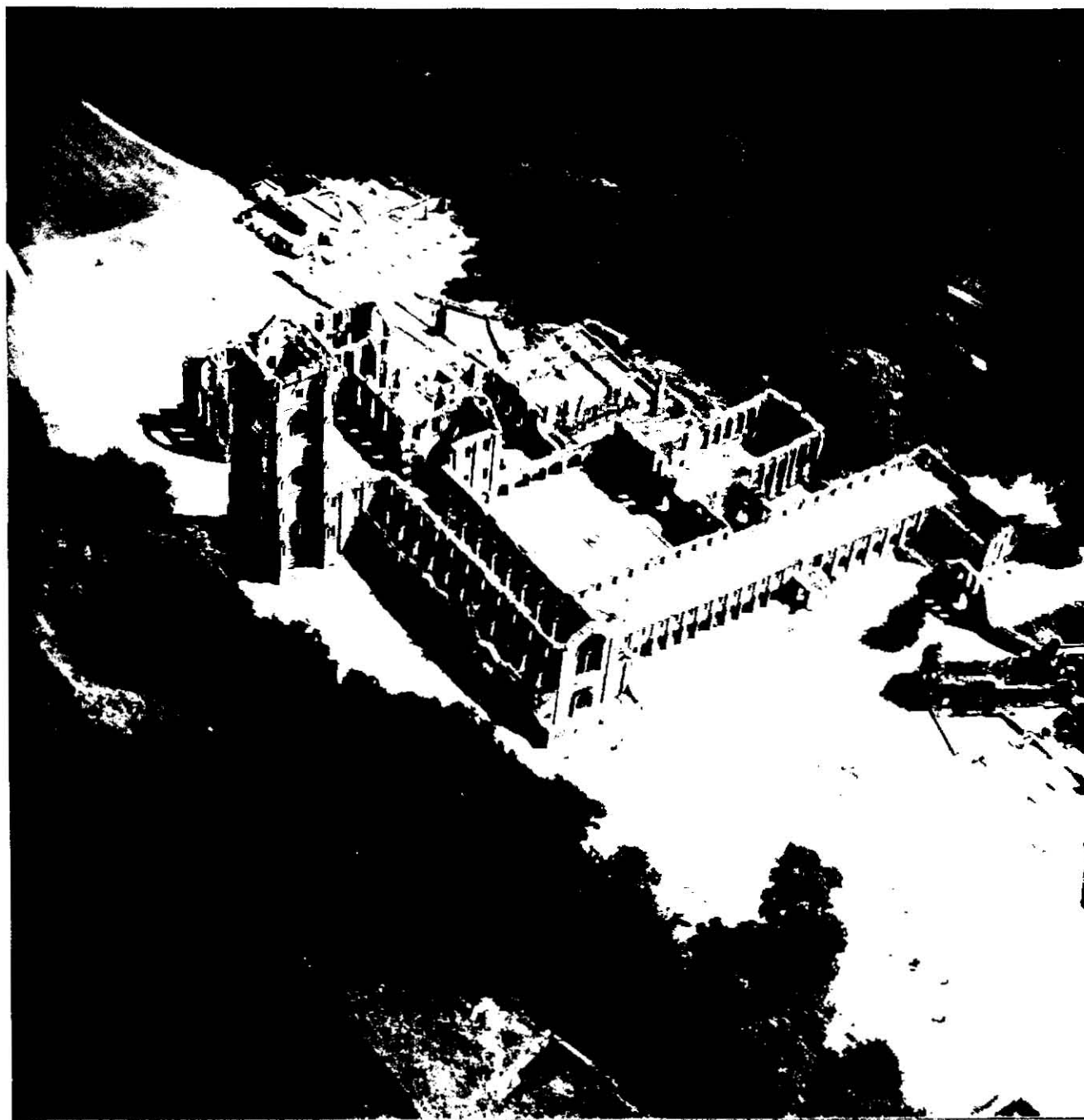


Fountains Abbey & Studley Royal Estate

National Trust boundary Nominated Area 0 100 1000 Metres

Fountains Abbey





OUNTAINS ABBEY
air photograph