

Birkenhead Priory Conservation Management Plan



Volume 2: Gazetteer

LLOYD EVANS PRICHARD

AHP |

GAZETTEER

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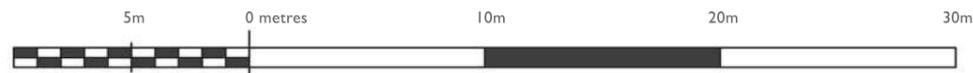
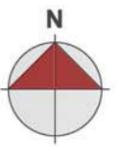
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BIRKENHEAD PRIORY

CHRONOLOGICAL PLAN



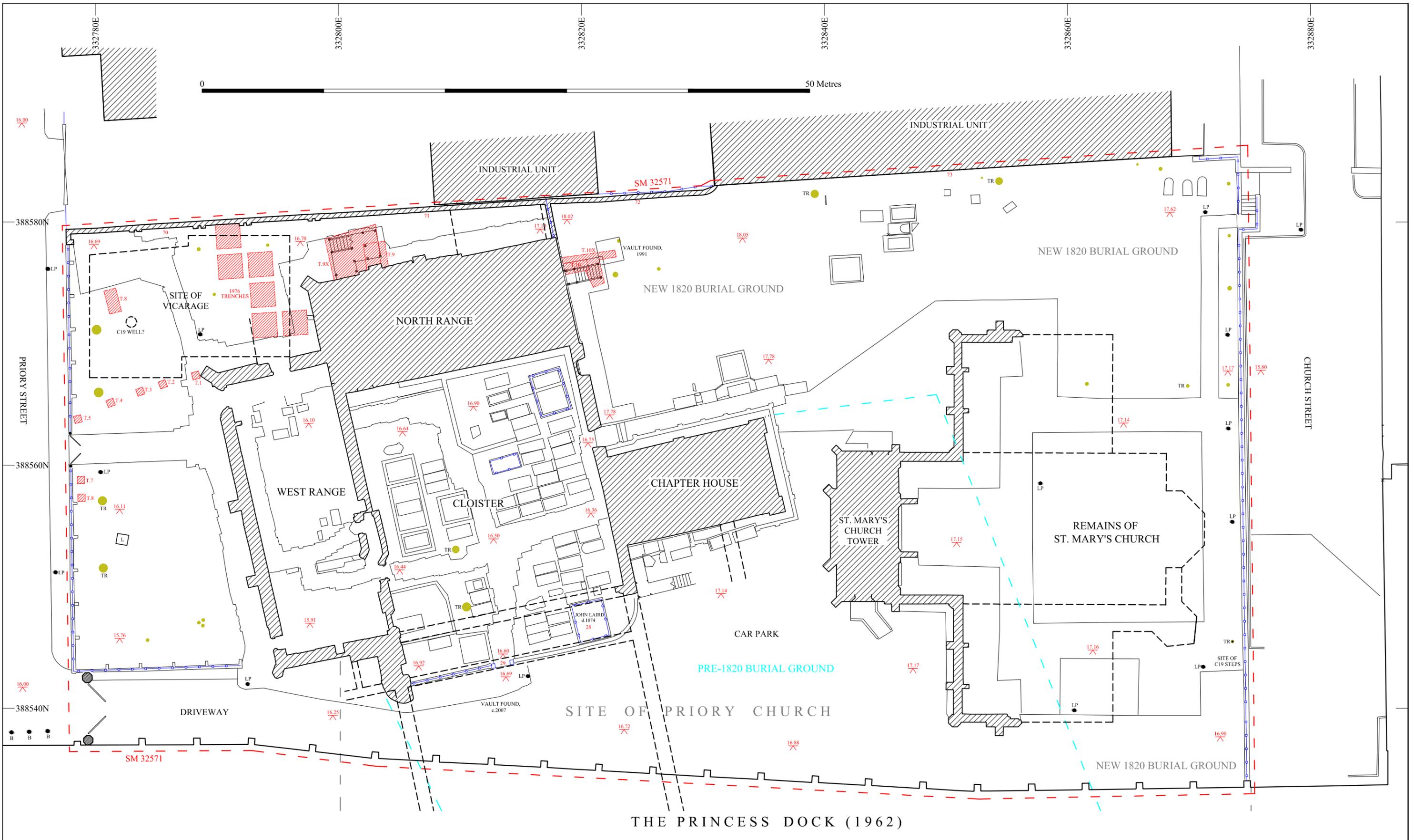
THE PRINCESS DOCK (1962)

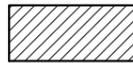


- PRE 1540 ■
- c.1820 ■
- c.1832 ■
- C 19 ■
- LATE C 20 ■
- BLOCKING ■
- EXTENT OF SCHEDULED MONUMENT —
- DEMOLISHED STRUCTURE ---

Birkenhead Priory, Wirral, Merseyside -
Chronological Site Plan

LLOYD EVANS PRICHARD
CHARTERED ARCHITECTS LTD



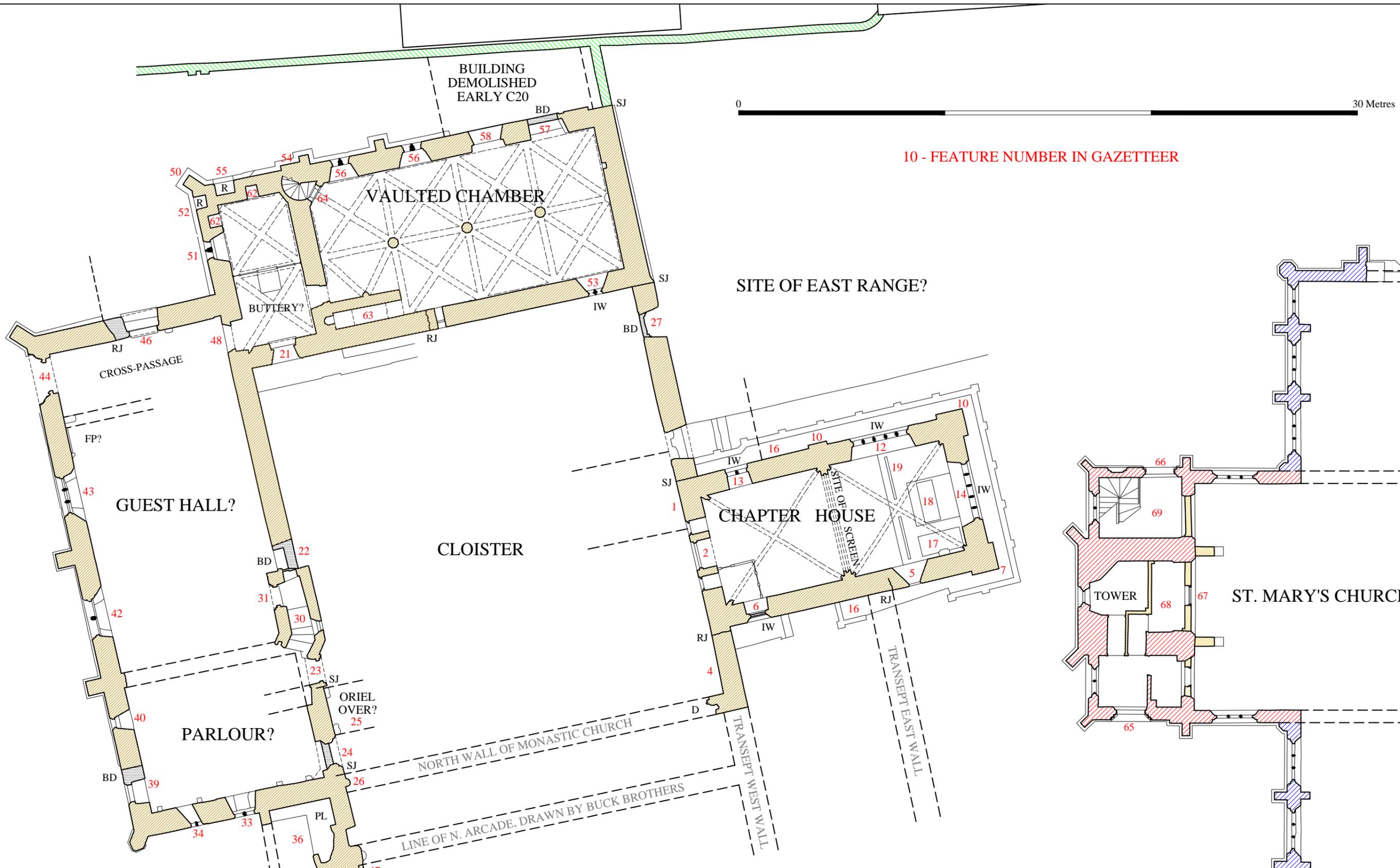
-  - STANDING STRUCTURE
-  - ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

-  - EXTENT OF SCHEDULED MONUMENT
-  - DEMOLISHED STRUCTURE
-  - EXTENT OF PRE-1820 BURIAL GROUND (LIMITS OF MONASTIC BUILDINGS?)
-  - EXTENT OF POST-1820 BURIAL GROUND
-  - FEATURE NUMBER IN GAZETTEER



**BIRKENHEAD PRIORY,
WIRRAL, MERSEYSIDE**
Archaeological Site Plan

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10 - FEATURE NUMBER IN GAZETTEER

**BIRKENHEAD PRIORY,
WIRRAL, MERSEYSIDE
Buildings Ground Floor Plan**

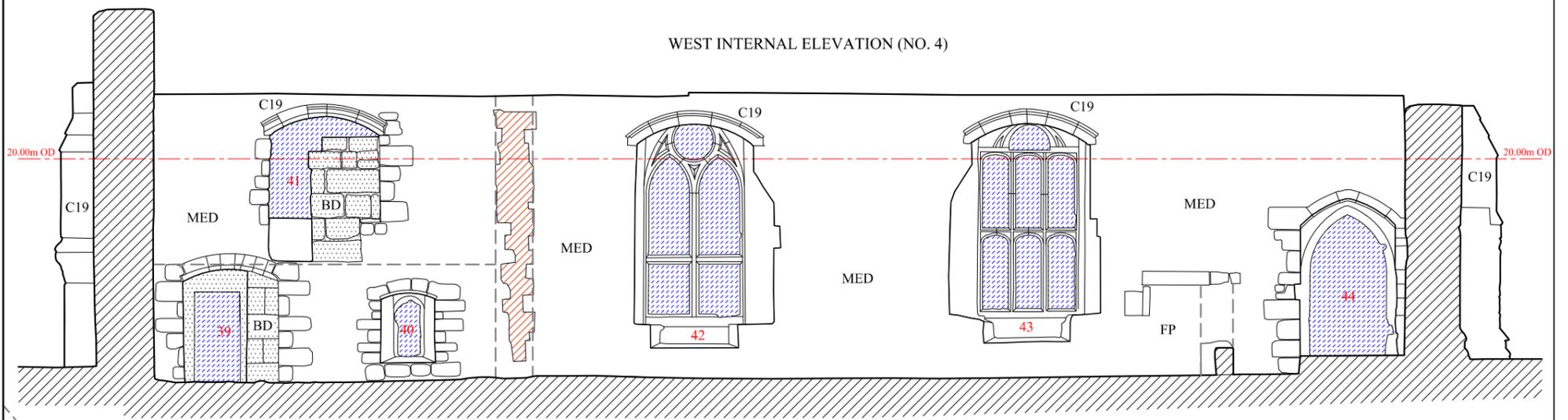
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- PRE-1540
- c.1832
- LATE C20
- c.1820
- C19
- BLOCKING

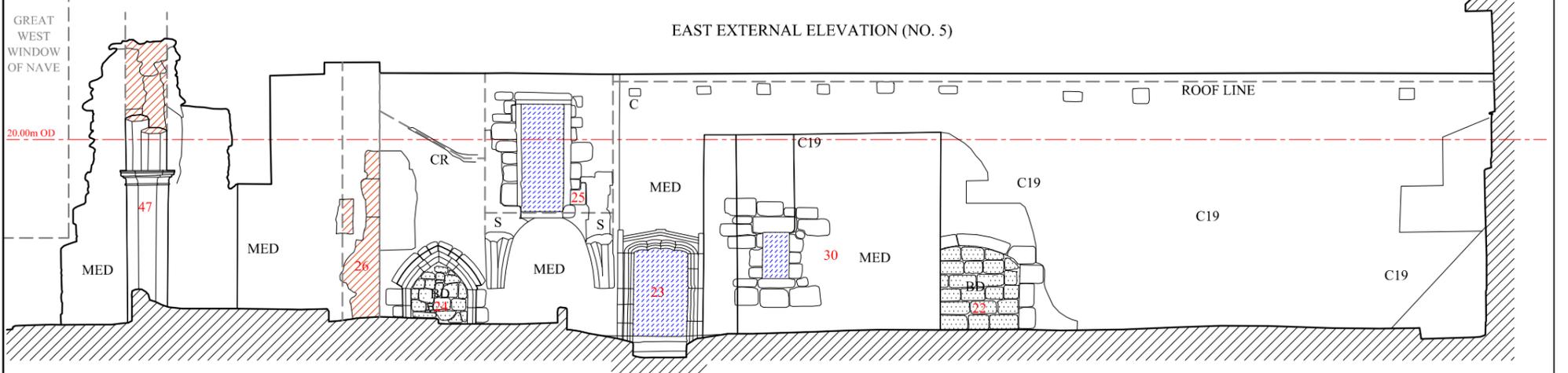


0 20 Metres

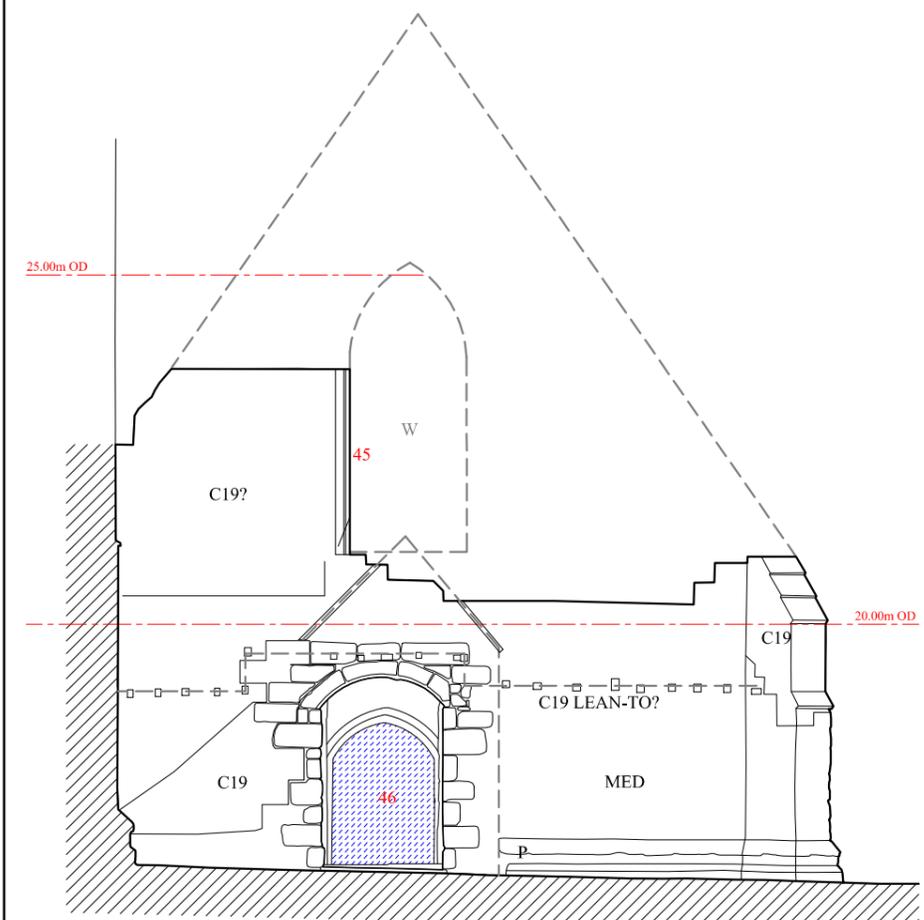
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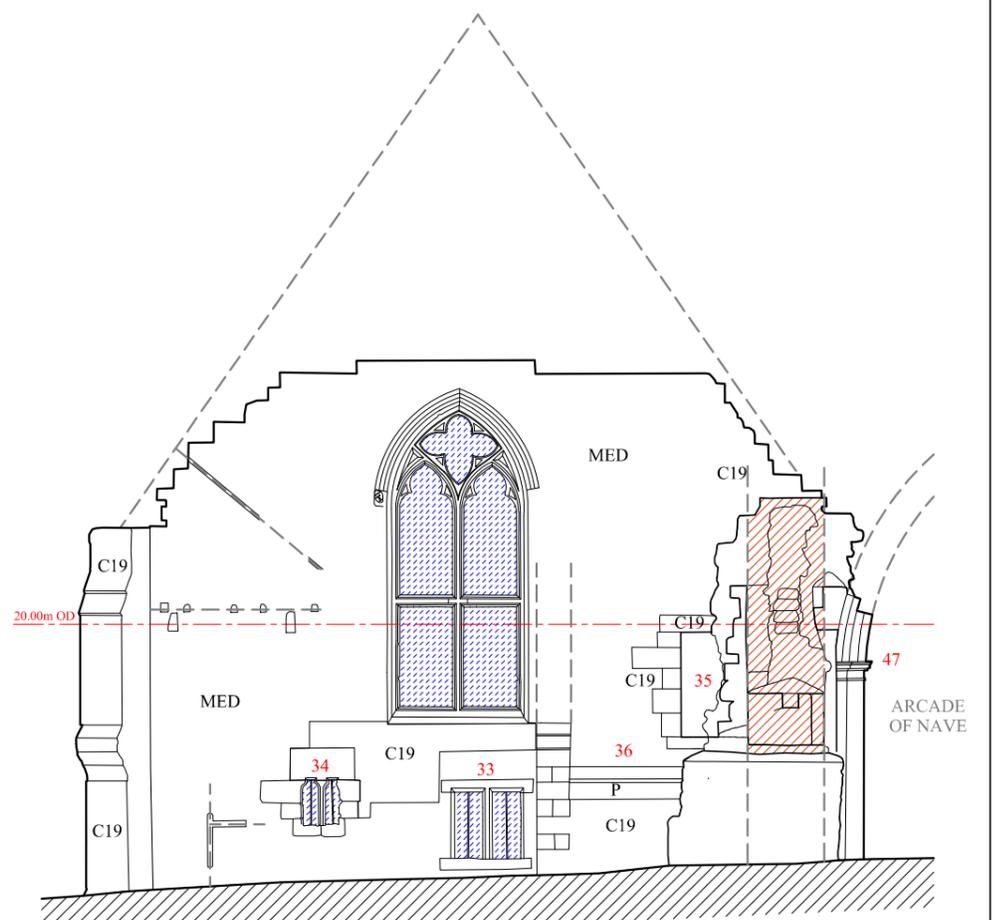
EAST EXTERNAL ELEVATION (NO. 5)



NORTH EXTERNAL ELEVATION (NO. 8)



SOUTH EXTERNAL ELEVATION (NO. 6)



 - RUBBLE CORE

 - BLOCKING

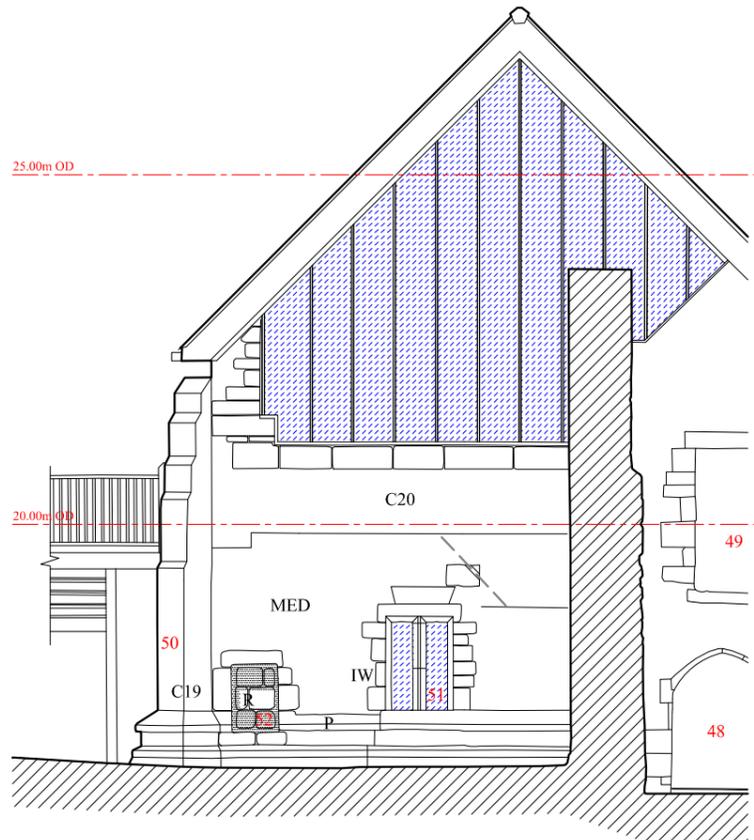
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**BIRKENHEAD PRIORY,
WIRRAL, MERSEYSIDE**
West Range Elevations

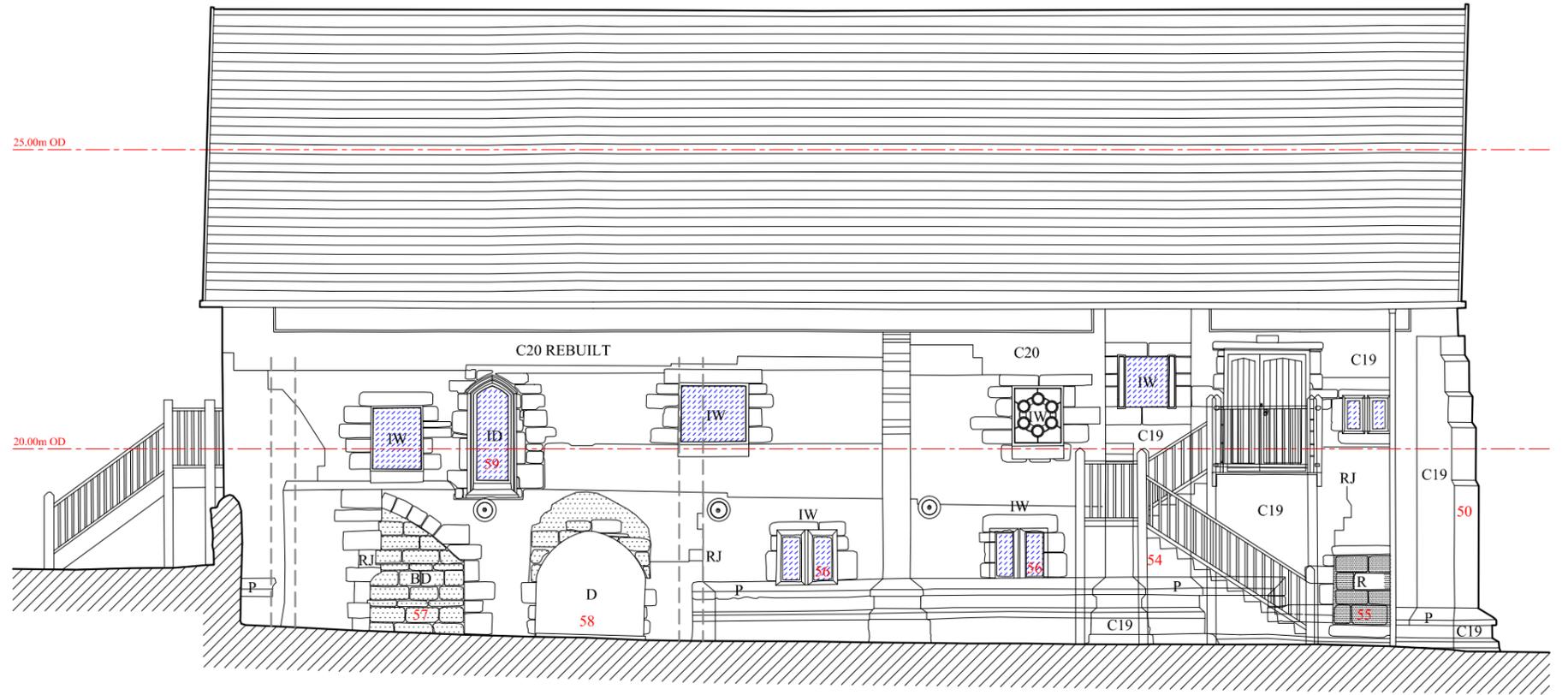
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Drawing no. Arch/04

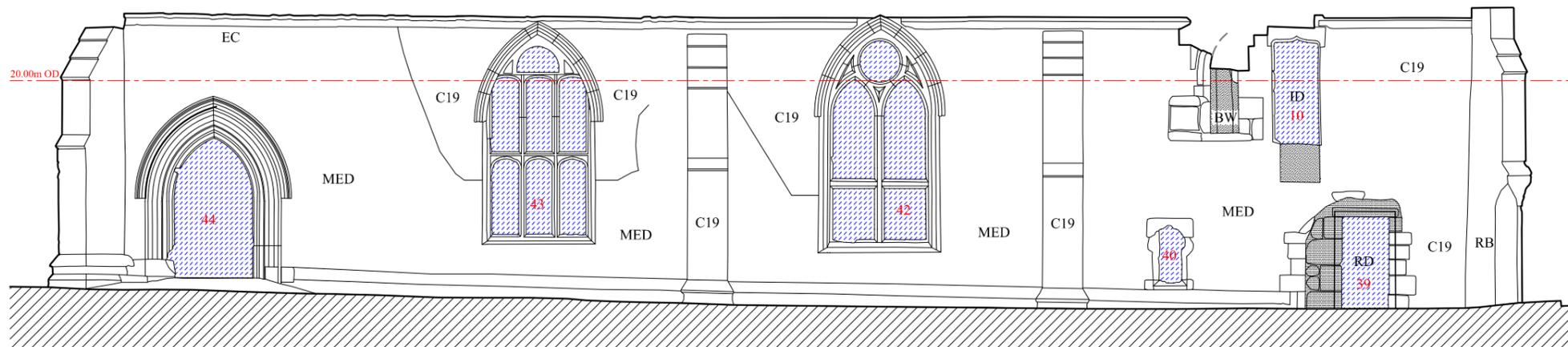
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NORTH RANGE, WEST EXTERNAL ELEVATION (NO.9)



NORTH RANGE, NORTH EXTERNAL ELEVATION (NO.10)

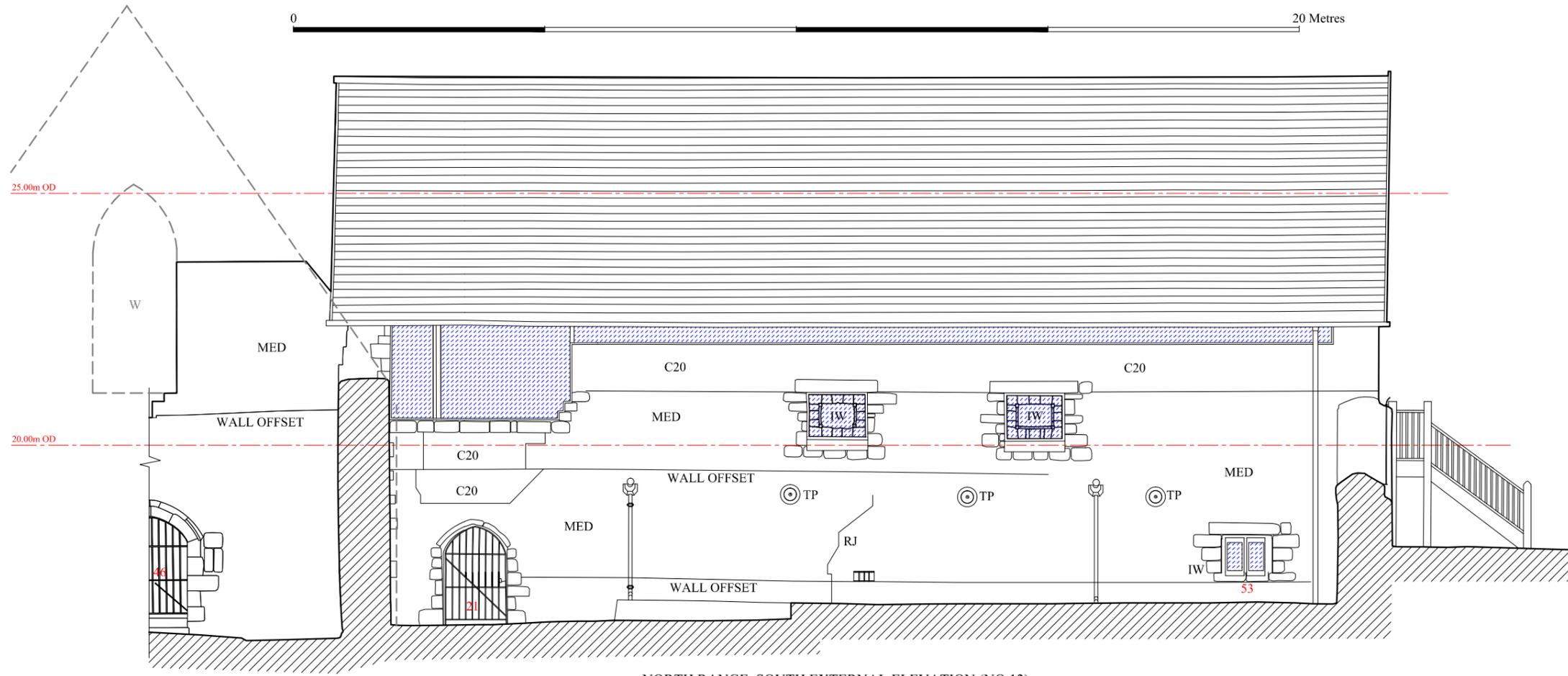


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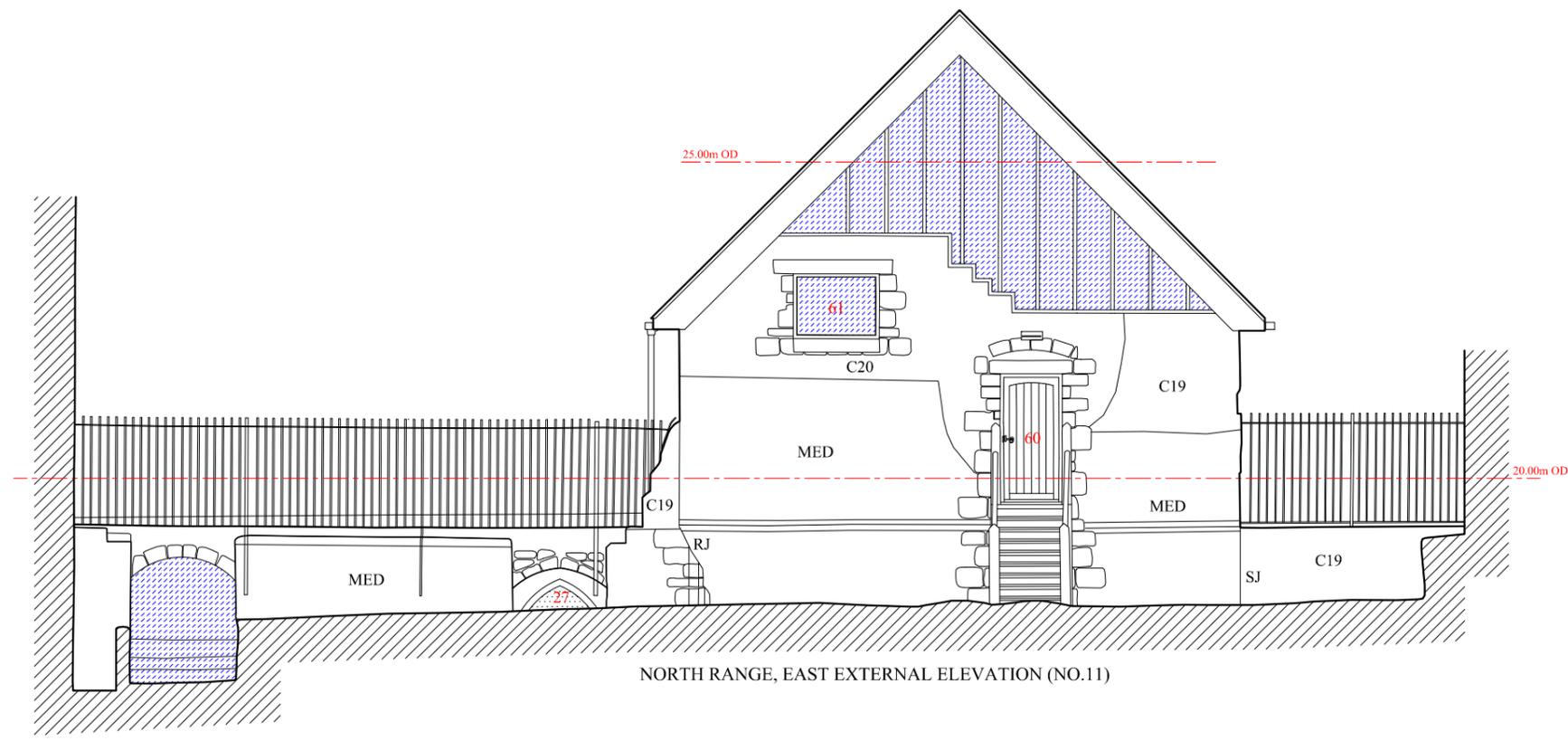
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-  - BLOCKING
-  - PROJECTED WALL/FLOOR/ROOF

**BIRKENHEAD PRIORY,
WIRRAL, MERSEYSIDE**
North & West Range Elevations

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NORTH RANGE, SOUTH EXTERNAL ELEVATION (NO.12)

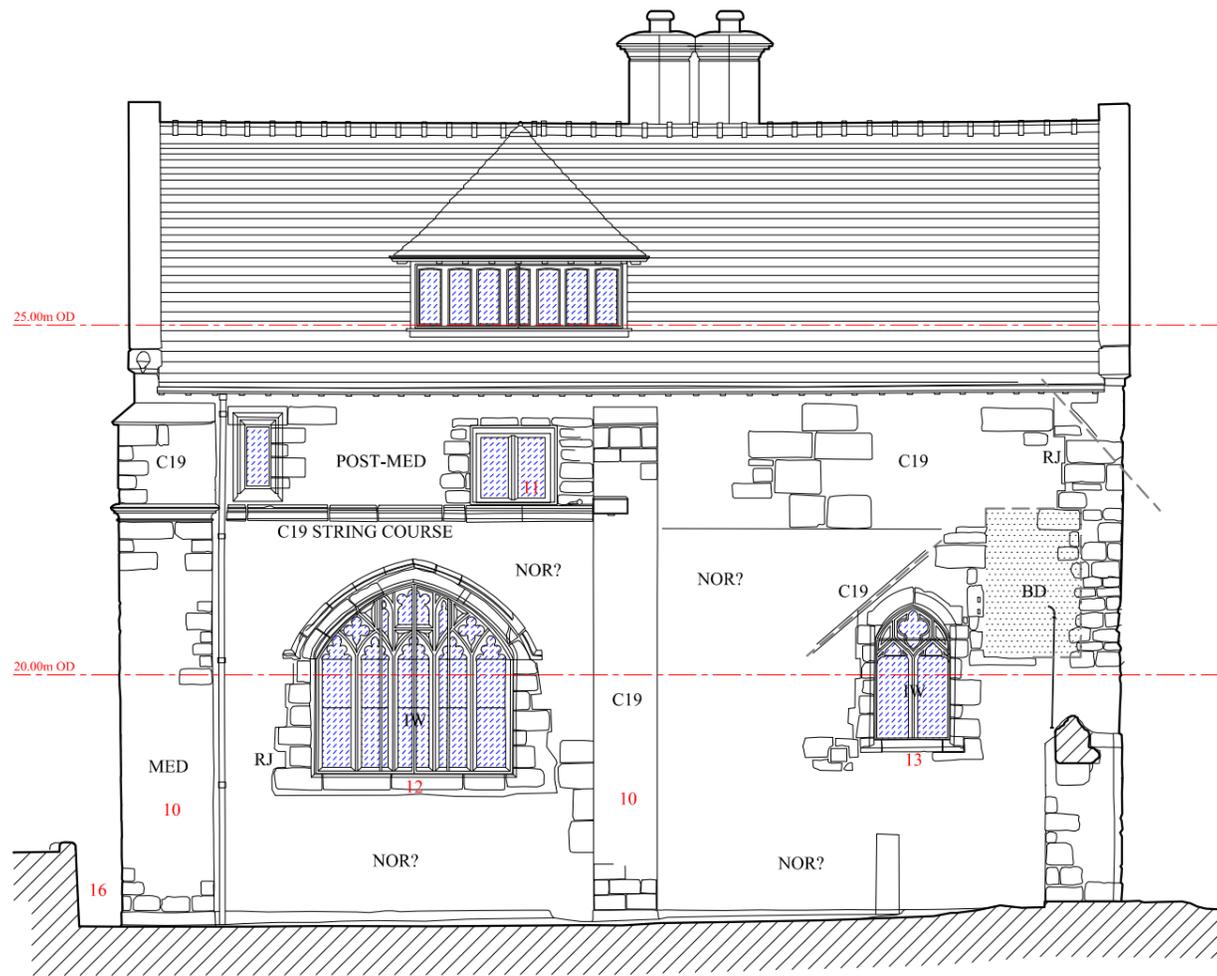


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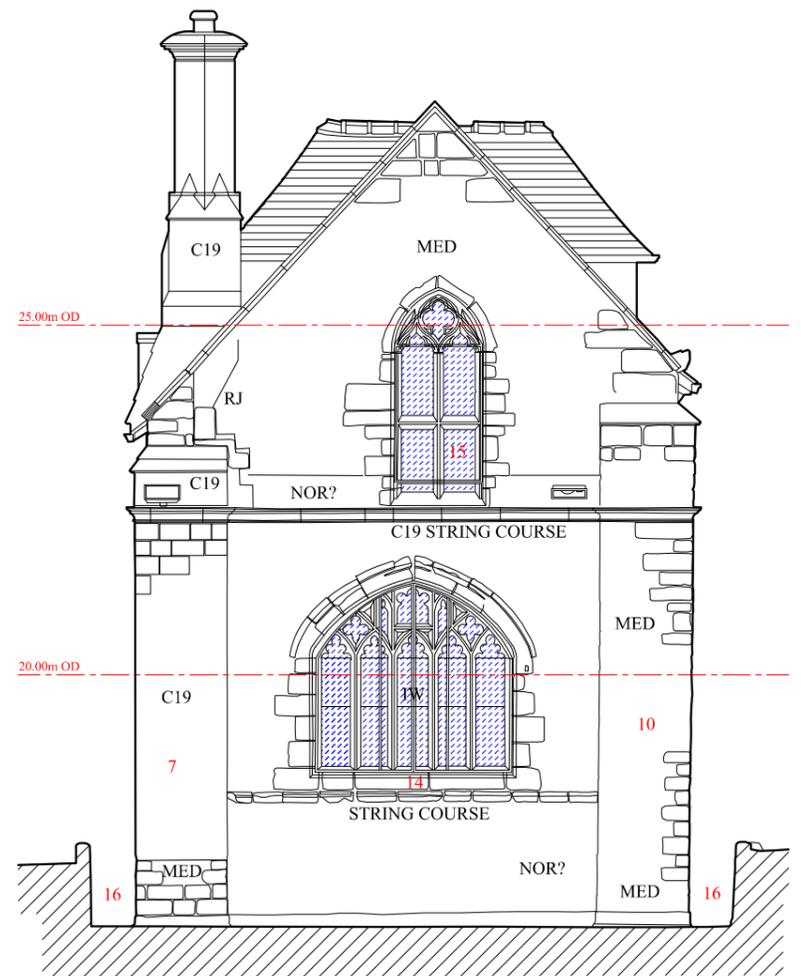
-  - RUBBLE CORE
-  - BLOCKING
-  - PROJECTED WALL/FLOOR/ROOF

**BIRKENHEAD PRIORY,
WIRRAL, MERSEYSIDE**
North Range Elevations

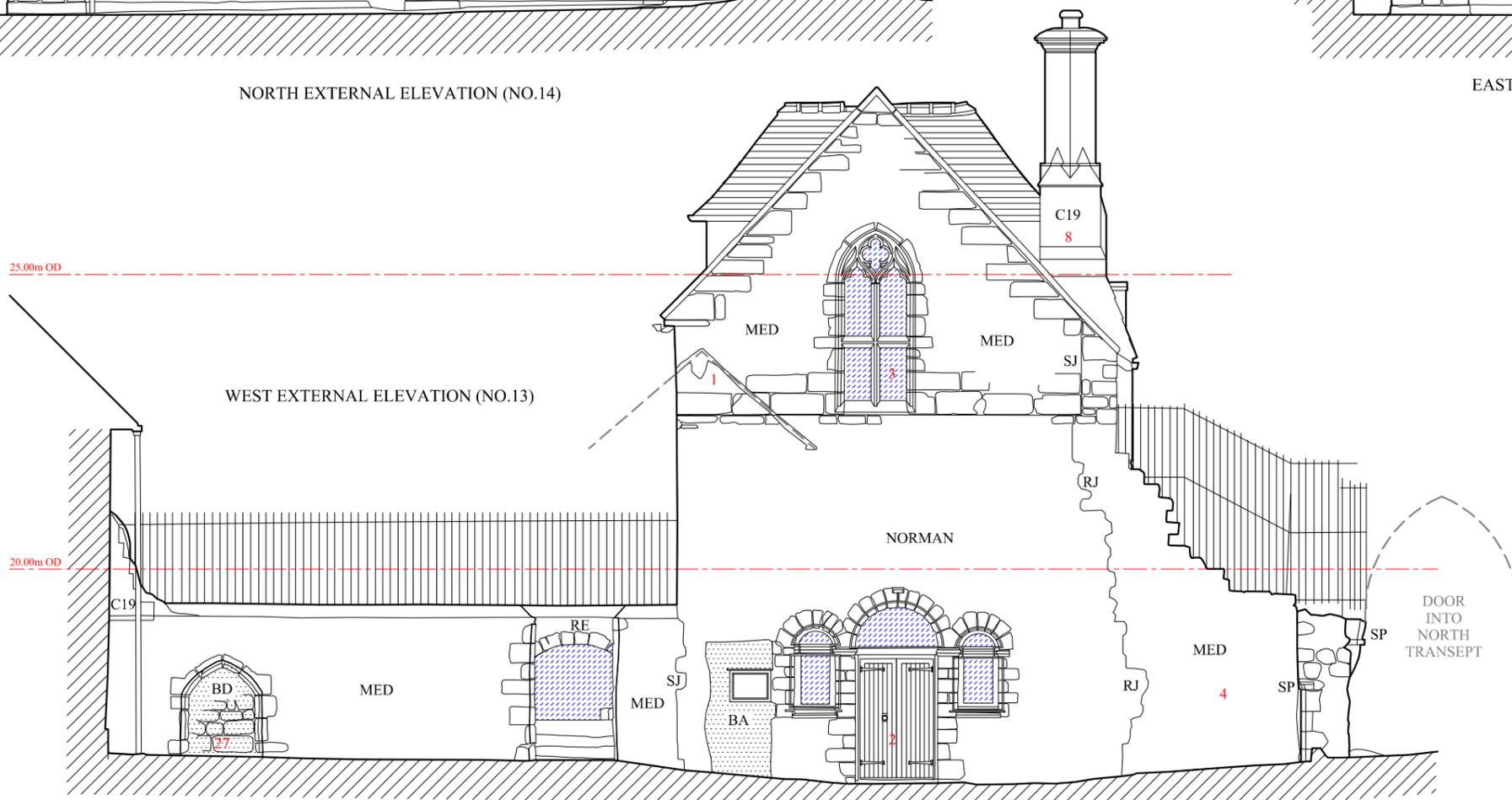
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NORTH EXTERNAL ELEVATION (NO.14)



EAST EXTERNAL ELEVATION (NO.15)



WEST EXTERNAL ELEVATION (NO.13)

-  - RUBBLE CORE
-  - BLOCKING
-  - PROJECTED WALL/FLOOR/ROOF

**BIRKENHEAD PRIORY,
WIRRAL, MERSEYSIDE**
Chapter House Elevations

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0 20 Metres

NOTES ON THE GAZETTEER

SIGNIFICANCE DEFINITIONS

In this Gazetteer rooms, spaces, and structures have been adjudged to be of either:

- **International significance:** the highest category of significance, and making a contribution to international cultural heritage.
- **National significance:** recognized as being of national significance principally through listing or scheduling, for buildings and garden structures particularly when graded I or II*.
- **Regional significance:** of interest and significance in the immediate county and wider regional area, but not sufficiently outstanding to rank as of national significance.
- **Local significance:** of interest because of local associations.

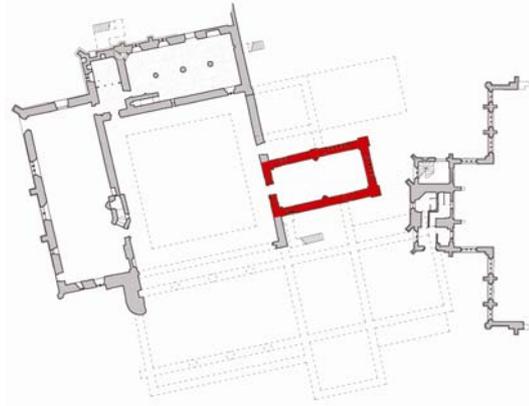
REFERENCES

Each building/space has been identified on the site wide plan by highlighting the relevant item in red on the location plan in the top right hand corner.

Throughout the gazetteer there are elements which are referenced as such (1), (2), (3) etc. These reference numbers refer to numbered elements on the elevational drawings so items can be visually interpreted.

Building:
Chapter House (exterior)

Area:
External elevations



Brief history:

- Probably built in about 1150 lying off the former east cloister walk and adjoining the former north transept of the priory church.
- Original use of the building not established with certainty, but its architectural character and location in relation to the cloister and priory church (following Chester) suggests that it was the chapter house.
- Evidence of a division across the centre of the ground floor space, as in the chapter house at Chester.
- May have originally served as the priory church until the building of the larger church in the mid-13th century.
- First floor was built later, in about 1375, was heated and is usually described as the scriptorium.

- Also in the late 14th century, large 5-light windows were installed on the east and north walls of the chapter house.
- Became a parish church in the early 18th century, following the much earlier Dissolution. The upper floor was much rebuilt about this time.
- Chapel restored and upper floor remodelled between 1913 and 1919 under the direction of Edmund Kirby, architect.
- In 1922 a stained glass window, designed by Sir Ninian Comper, was installed at the east end in memory of Robert Marsden, a member of the restoration committee.
- Stained glass from St Mary's church after it was demolished in the 1970s was installed.
- The ground floor is still in use for local parish worship, while the first floor has since 1996 housed a chapel and display devoted to HMS Conway.

Description:

- Coursed and squared solid stonework with a Westmorland green slate roof, two storeys, and two bays in length.
- **West elevation** - gave on to the former cloister; an indent for the roof flashing (1) of this is cut into the wall of the scriptorium.
- Central entrance and flanking windows forming a series of three round-headed arches with impostes (2). Above, a two-light foiled window (3) is set into the gable - rebuilt/restored in 1913-19.
- Abutting the west front on the south side is part of the west wall of the former north transept of the priory church (4).
- **South elevation** – two small windows; easterly one 12th century (5), though restored. Westerly window changed to a doorway in the 14th century to link to the priory church, but later changed back to a window (6).
- Corner buttress/pier at the east end (7).
- Upper storey mainly as rebuilt by Kirby, with corbelled chimney breast and paired stacks on the diagonal (8). Also a small gabled half-dormer to right of the chimney, and above this a large dormer in the roof, with leaded lights and a hipped roof.
- Modern doorway and a metal fire escape (9) have been installed at upper level externally.
- **North elevation** - attached buttresses at east end and at mid-way point (10) with string course between and small square-topped windows to the first floor. One window is two lights divided by a central mullion (11).
- Below is a large five-light window, probably late 14th century (12).
- *Ex-situ* 14th century two-light window in western bay, said to have been inserted in 1860 (13).
- Large roof dormer similar to that on the south side.
- **East elevation** - has a large five-light east window (14), similar to that on the north elevation, with first floor string course, offsets to the corner piers/buttresses and a two-light foiled mullion and transom window in the gable (15).
- Stainless steel wire guards over many windows.
- Perimeter drainage trench around building (16) excavated at time of Kirby's restoration.

Significance:

Exceptional: The surviving medieval fabric

Considerable: The fabric belonging to Kirby's restoration

Negative/intrusive: The metal fire escape, window guards

Designation: Listed grade II*. The chapter house is excluded from the ancient monument but the ground beneath it is included in the scheduling.

Specific items for consideration:

1. The external metal fire escape is a negative/intrusive feature and should be renewed or replaced with a more sympathetic design.
2. The external wire guards are negative features. If protection is required they should be replaced in time with stainless steel wire guards or other sheet protection fitted on brackets, shaped into the individual lights, and not over-sailing the stonework and tracery divisions.

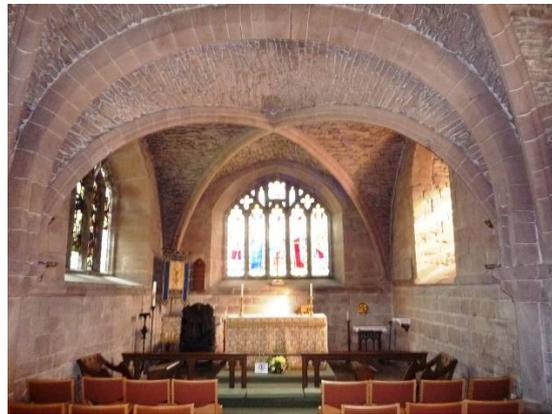
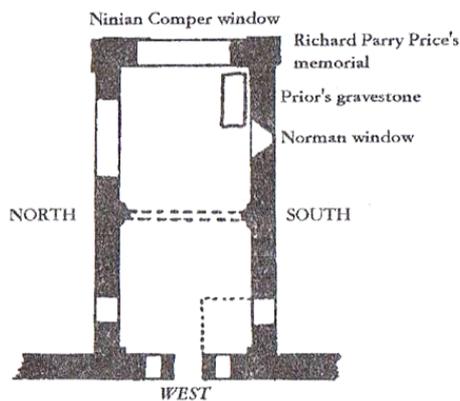
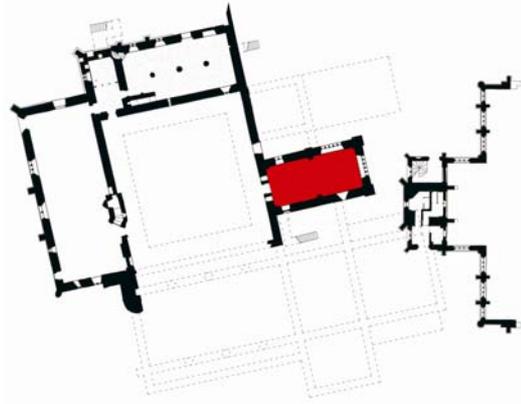
Relevant Issues & Policies:

4.1.5, 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.4.6, 4.6.3

Key references (Author/Year/Page): List description; Aldridge, 1892; Croasdale, 1994, 9; Maddison, 1978, 293.

Building:
Chapter House

Area:
Internal – Chapel



Brief History: See Chapter House (exterior)

Description:

- Two bays of quadrupartite stone vaulting, stripped of its plaster during Kirby restoration. Vaulting is carried on clustered shafts with trumpet corbels, the shafts cut to take a screen (now removed).
- East end ribs supported by corbels and at west end by piers (remains of what appears to be monks' seating at base of piers).
- Stained glass in east window by Sir Ninian Comper, depicting (from left to right) Hamon de Massey, the founder; the Virgin and Child; a beardless Christ blessing; St James the Greater and King Edward I.

- Stained glass the north window depicting the Adoration of the Magi that came from St Mary's church after its demolition in the 1970s.
- Smaller stained glass window on south side at the east end depicts Christ calming the tempest at sea.
- Other features and furnishings include a series of medieval coffin lids set into the chancel floor, found around the site and set here during Kirby's restoration. (include that of Prior Thomas Rayneford - d.1473) (17)
- A medieval coffin lid has been used for the lintel of the window on the north side (west bay) (13)
- Stone floor in the nave (overlaid by fitted carpet). It is described in the 1994 guidebook as 'a fine design of different coloured stone with a patterned strip running down the centre about 1.83 metres (6 ft) wide'
- Coloured glass in the window on the south side at west end with a panel set into the lower half of the opening recording the restoration of the chapel and the key individuals involved
- Clear glass in the west windows, with diamond quarries over the central door, opaque sheet glass in side windows
- An oak communion table with delicate openwork Gothic tracery front panels, c1919 (18)
- A large Jacobean-style oak chair in the chancel
- Oak Communion rail, c1920s (19)
- Two prayer desks, from St Paul's Birkenhead, 1898 and 1913 and accompanying chairs, 1898
- A monument on the south wall of the chancel, to Richard Parry Price (d.1792)
- A modern oak vestry at the west end
- Modern upholstered chairs for the congregational seating

Significance:

Exceptional: The surviving medieval fabric, including the *ex situ* coffin lids

Considerable: The fabric belonging to Kirby's restoration, including the communion table and Comper glass; the north and south stained glass windows; monument to Richard Parry Price

Some: The prayer desks and accompanying chairs; communion rail; chair in chancel

Little: Modern seating for congregation

Negative/intrusive: The vestry (in terms of visual impact on interior); fitted carpet; sheet glass in west windows

Designation: Listed grade II*. The chapter house is excluded from the scheduled ancient monument but the ground beneath it is included in the scheduling.

Specific items for consideration:

1. The building remains in ecclesiastical use and is therefore excluded from the scheduling. For the same reason it is exempt from listed building control, and subject to the Faculty jurisdiction of the Church of England that in turn, singles it out from the rest of the site and allows treatment to be carried out singularly without the necessity of involving the priory.
2. The chapter house building is the responsibility of the diocese (Chester) who is accountable for the upkeep of the fabric. The upper floor is used by agreement by the Friends of HMS Conwy.
3. The ground floor chapel suffers from dampness. Consideration should be given to the removal of the fitted carpet and allowing more ventilation via opening windows (if able), or leaving the door ajar for a few hours on a daily basis.

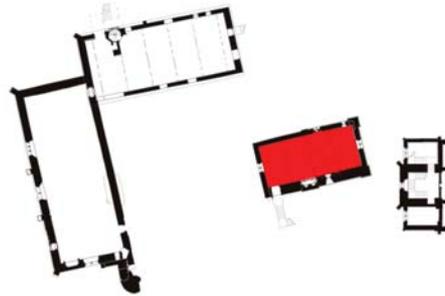
Relevant Issues & Policies:
4.1.1, 4.3.1, 4.3.2
Key references (Author/Year/Page): List description; Aldridge, 1892; Croasdale, 1994, 9

Building:

Chapter House

Area:

Internal – Scriptorium (Friends of HMS Conwy chapel)



Brief History: See Chapter House (exterior)

Description:

- Slightly larger than that below, due to thinner walls.
- Restored and largely rebuilt in 1913-19, including a new roof with cusped braces and decorative panelling springing from stone corbels.
- Panelling around perimeter wall at upper level, and boarded ceiling. Below the panelling, ashlar wall surfaces remain exposed. Wood parquet floor.
- Large dormer windows with leaded lights to either side.
- Large chimneypiece with moulded stone surround on south wall, similar to that on south side of the prior's apartment in west range.
- Pair of doors with leaded windows in upper panels lead out to modern outer doors (20), then to the metal fire escape.
- All fitted out as a display and chapel in memory of the naval training ship HMS Conway, including good modern (c2004) figurative stained glass in the east and west windows by David Hillhouse.
- Elaborate Jacobean-style communion table and assorted 19th and 20th century moveable pews and seating, some upholstered.

Significance:

Exceptional: The surviving medieval fabric

Considerable: The fabric belonging to Kirby's restoration

Some: The communion table, older seating, the Hillhouse glass

Little: Other furnishings belonging to the HMS Conway refit, including stained glass

The display is of considerable local significance, particularly to the Friend of HMS Conwy, but has no particular historic associations with the Priory.

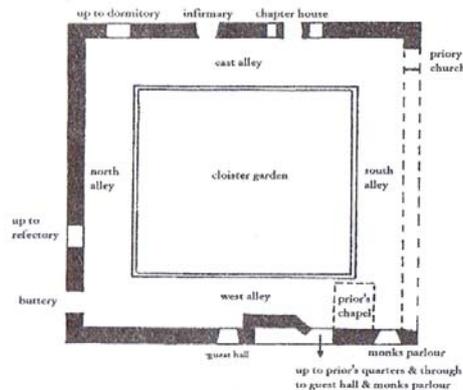
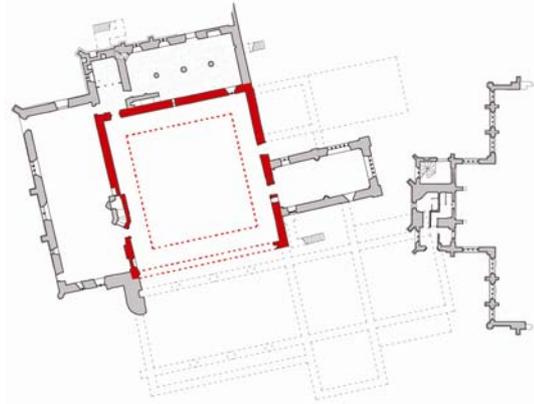
<p>Designation: Listed grade II*. The chapter house is excluded from the scheduled ancient monument but the ground beneath it is included in the scheduling.</p>
<p>Specific items for consideration:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The building remains in ecclesiastical use and is therefore excluded from the scheduling. For the same reason it is exempt from listed building control, and subject to the faculty jurisdiction of the Church of England. The appropriate control mechanism for the scriptorium (faculty jurisdiction or listed building consent) needs to be established.2. The chapter house building is the responsibility of the diocese (Chester) who is accountable for the upkeep of the fabric. The upper floor is used by agreement by the Friends of HMS Conwy.3. The scriptorium is not accessible for those in wheelchairs or with mobility difficulties; the desirability of improved access needs to be balanced against the possible visual and physical impact of change.
<p>Relevant Issues & Policies: 4.1.1, 4.1.3, 4.3.1, 4.3.2</p>
<p>Key references (Author/Year/Page): List description; Aldridge, 1892; Croasdale, 1994, 9</p>

Building/space:

Cloister

Area:

External



Brief history:

- Laid out around mid-12th century - buildings were built off it up until about 1400.
- Located north of the church – unusual, but also similar to the Benedictine houses at Chester, Gloucester, Sherborne, St Augustine's Canterbury and Canterbury Cathedral. North side was more sheltered so may have influenced the choice.
- Originally had covered alleys on each side, probably with fairly lightweight lean-to structures, enclosing a central hearth.
- Became used as a burial ground after chapter house became a parish church - marked graves are shown in the Nicholson lithograph of 1821.
- Most of present headstones are 19th century.

- The churchyard (mostly to the south, now lost to Princess Dock) closed in 1857, but provision made for continuation of burials under certain circumstances. Later burials include that of John Laird (d.1874).

Description:

- North cloister walk was single storey, with doors (21) at northwest corner leading to the buttery and up to the refectory.
- South walk ran parallel with nave of the priory church, also of one storey.
- East walk was two storeys - indent for roof flashing (1) set into the external west face of the scriptorium visible.
- West walk was also two storeys, indicated by corbels set high into east face of the guest hall.
- There were three doors off west walk, leading to the guest hall (22), prior's quarters (23) and monks' parlour (24).
- The prior's chapel (25) was located over the west walk between latter two openings, as indicated by arched springers on east face of the guest hall.
- To the south of the door to the monks' parlour tooting (26) for the priory church is visible.
- Cloister now part of the burial ground and contains a number of marked graves of 19th and 20th century date. Includes a large railed monument towards the northeast corner, the granite monument to John Laird MP in the southeast corner (28) with a railed enclosure, and an obelisk monument nearby.
- Ground level is now considerably higher, as can be seen in front of the blocked door (27) to the monks' parlour.
- Southern boundary of the 'burial area' enclosed by a cast iron gate (29) and railings of early 19th century character, incorporating trefoils and quatrefoils, possibly designed by or for Rickman.
- Railings to west of gate are largely obscured by a modern beech hedge; east of the gate there is also a hedge. Railings have been largely removed here at some point (visible in photographs of 1950).
- A similar gate is in the opening to the guest hall (former door to prior's quarters).

Significance:

Exceptional: The surviving medieval fabric in surrounding buildings (described in respective gazetteer entries)

Considerable: Railings and gate along south boundary; Laird monument; railed enclosure to monument in northeast corner

Some: Other monuments

Designation: Scheduled ancient monument

Specific items for consideration:

1. Some of the monuments are in need of repair. It is the families' responsibility for repair of individual monuments, although it is common for work to be carried out on their behalf as often families are either untraceable or unable to afford repair.
2. Reinstatement of the missing railings on the southern boundary should be considered, and possibly the removal of the hedge.

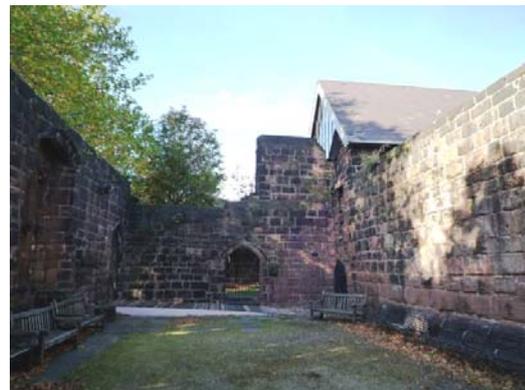
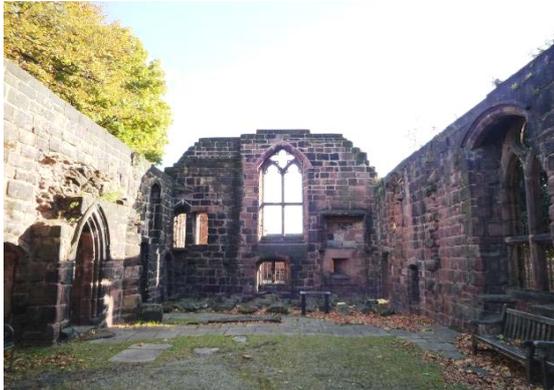
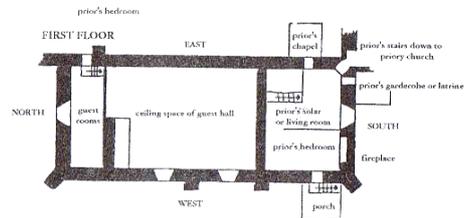
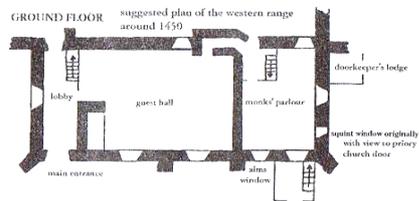
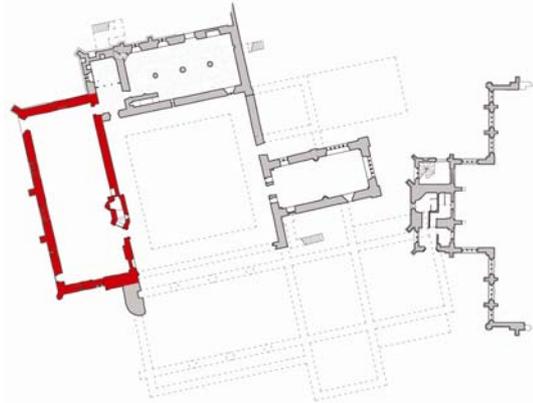
Relevant Issues & Policies:

4.4.6, 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.6.3

Key references (Author/Year/Page): Scheduling description; Aldridge, 1892;
Croasdale, 1994, 8

Building/space:
The west range

Area:
External elevations



Brief history:

- The west range was built sometime after 1250.
- Appears to have housed a double height guest hall, with monks' parlour and prior's accommodation to the south, and a smaller lobby leading up to guest rooms to the north (see plans indicating supposed layout).
- Became ruinous after the Dissolution - lost its internal walls, first floor and roof structure.

- In the 19th century was incorporated into the setting of the rectory built to the north - became a yard with a shed built against inner face of the east wall.
- This structure was subsequently removed and main walls repaired, including rebuilding of south wall, in 1897.
- Contains a number of stonemason's marks dating from the time of the restoration.

Description:

- Solid, coursed squared red sandstone rubble with dressed openings.
- **East wall** - large areas of rebuilding c1913, especially in the northern half.
- Originally had three doorways from cloister, connecting to the guest hall (22), prior's quarters (23) and monks' parlour (24). The first of these doors, to the guest hall, has been blocked on east face.
- The adjoining projection (30) originally housed a stair from guest hall to prior's accommodation; this has a pointed arched doorway (31) of several orders giving onto the internal space.
- Adjoining this is the prior's accommodation - door onto the cloister has a shallow cusped head (23) (photo bottom left). Within this doorway is a gate of early 19th century character (illustrated in Mason and Hunt, 1854), similar to southern boundary of the cloister/churchyard.
- Adjoining it are the springers and opening to the former first floor prior's chapel (25).
- Near the southeast corner is the door to the monks' parlour, now blocked (24).

- **South wall** - rebuilt in 1897, original stones numbered and mostly reused.
- Large two-light foiled Decorated window with mullion and transom, surmounted by a hood-mould (32). Off-centre below a two-light window with flat lintel and central dividing mullion (33), originally lighting the monks' parlour.
- Left (west) of this is a squint window with two narrow trefoil-headed openings (34), originally affording views of the priory church doors (the internal stonework much renewed in 1897).
- Right (east), opening (35) to the prior's garderobe (wc), located in position over a doorkeeper's lodge (36). Adjoining this there is another opening (37) which led through to stairs from the prior's solar down to the priory church (built into the corner on the internal face).
- Recess for a large fireplace to the prior's solar (38) on this internal face.

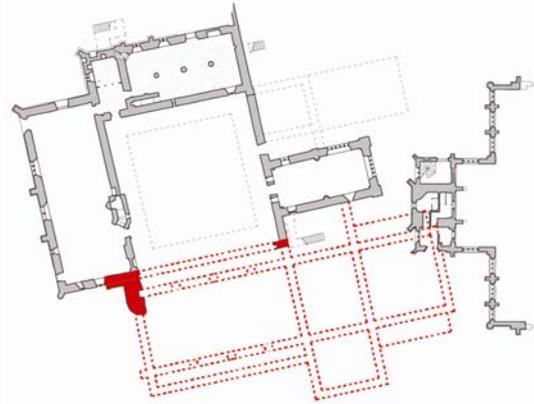
- **West wall** - partially blocked opening (39) with a cambered head in southwest corner, originally gave onto a two storey wooden porch.
- Adjoining this is a smaller alms window, also with cambered head (40), and above this a first floor window with ogee lintel (41).
- Two large windows that originally lit the guest hall; one 13th century character (42) (restored c1850) and the other, with six lights, late medieval adaptation (43) (tracery a restoration of 1897).
- At the northwest corner a pointed arched entrance (44) led originally to a ground floor lobby. Externally (photo bottom right) this wall has angled buttresses at the corners, and stepped buttresses between the windows, coinciding with the former dividing wall between the guest hall and the monks' and priors' accommodation, all apparently rebuilt 1897.

- **North wall** - survives almost up to full height from its junction with the guest room over the buttery to the eastern jamb of a former first floor window (45).

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Central doorway with hood-mould (46), which originally provided a link through to the kitchens to the north.• Modern demountable ramp leads down from doorway at northwest corner into internal space of the former western range.• Ground surface consists mostly of rough tarmac, with pathways laid out in stone flags.• At the south end in the area of the former monks' parlour a large amount of medieval masonry is laid out.
<p>Significance:</p> <p><i>Exceptional:</i> The surviving medieval fabric, including loose masonry stored in area of monks' parlour</p> <p><i>Considerable:</i> The stonework belonging to the 1897 restoration (including masons' marks); the early 19th century iron gate in the doorway from former cloister to prior's accommodation</p> <p><i>Little:</i> Ironwork railings in remaining doors and window openings; ground surface treatment for internal space of the range</p> <p><i>Negative/intrusive:</i> Demountable ramp in north west corner</p>
<p>Designation: Scheduled ancient monument.</p>
<p>Specific items for consideration:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The medieval stones at in the monk's parlour area appear abandoned – they require cataloguing and properly displaying with interpretation to make full use of them as an asset.2. The replacement of the demountable ramp with a more visually acceptable means of facilitating circulation is desirable, subject to SMC.
<p>Relevant Issues & Policies: 4.1.5, 4.2.3, 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.4.6, 4.6.3</p>
<p>Key references (Author/Year/Page): Scheduling description; list description; Croasdale, 1994, 11; Mason and Hunt, 1854</p>

Building:
The priory church

Area:
External



Brief history:

- The first priory church was rebuilt sometime after 1250.
- The new and larger church was about 120 ft long and 52 ft wide (at the transepts) and consisted of an aisled nave of four bays, north and south transepts, aisled choir and sanctuary.
- Abandoned at the Dissolution and became ruinous.
- On Buck's engraving of 1727 three bays of the north arcade are shown intact. Only two fragments now survive.
- In 1821 the tower and south porch of the new church of St Mary were built over part of the site of the east end of the priory church.
- The path approach to the church from Priory Street and the southern

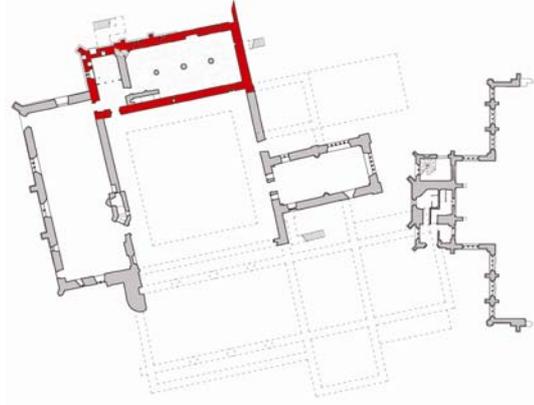
<p>churchyard were laid out over the remaining site of the church.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the early 1960s the southern churchyard was acquired for the expansion of the Cammell Laird shipyard and part of the below-ground remains of the south transept and southwest end of the nave were destroyed.• A high stone boundary wall was built over this area to separate the remaining churchyard from the shipyard.
<p>Description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only two fragments of the church survive.• At the west end is a section of core-stone abutting the western range (top photos). On its eastern face the ashlar respond and springing for the first northern arcade (47) is seen within the foliage.• A plinth of reused stonework has been built up around the base of this (shown in this form by Linton/Aldridge, 1888), topped by an iron railing.• The other surviving fragment (photo bottom right) is part of the west wall of the north transept, with toothing representing the junction with the north wall of the north aisle (4).• The whole area is surfaced with tarmac and used for car parking.• A hollowed out tree trunk, possibly a former water pipe is laid out in the car park. It is understood that this was unearthed at the time of the building of Princess Dock. It may be medieval, and part of the Priory drainage system.
<p>Significance:</p> <p><i>Exceptional:</i> The surviving medieval fabric, especially the respond and springing of the first nave arcade</p> <p><i>Considerable:</i> Hollowed out tree trunk (provisional assessment, subject to further study)</p> <p><i>Some:</i> The stonework plinth around the western fragment</p> <p><i>Little:</i> Ironwork railing surmounting this plinth</p> <p><i>Negative/intrusive:</i> Tarmac surfacing and car parking</p>
<p>Designation: The surfaces and parking areas are excluded from the scheduling, but the ground beneath these features is included.</p>
<p>Specific items for consideration:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The tarmac and car parking are scarcely ideal for the presentation and understanding of what was once the principal building on the site. Ideally this should be a pedestrian access only (except perhaps for deliveries and disabled access), with the car parking relocated and this area landscaped more appropriately.2. Aside from visual presentation of the area, there is no interpretation or images illustrating what used to be on this spot. Interpretation boards should be considered as a minimum.3. The hollowed out tree trunk in the car park should be recorded in detail, possibly with dendrochronological tests. It should then either be conserved and protected for display or reburied on site.
<p>Relevant Issues & Policies: 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.4.1, 4.4.2, 4.4.6, 4.6.3</p>
<p>Key references (Author/Year/Page): Scheduling description; Mason and Hunt, 1854; Croasdale, 1994, 11</p>

Building:

The north range

Area:

External elevations



Brief history:

- The north range dates substantially from the late 14th century, although it may incorporate earlier, possibly 12th century fabric (NWAT, 1991, 10).
- The north wall of the western range abutted its west elevation, providing ground and first floor links.
- Accommodation consisted of (on the ground floor) the buttery, where food was prepared, leading through to the vaulted undercroft, which may have been used for dining as well as storage.
- The main eating area was the refectory, on the first floor (where there was also a guest room, located over the buttery).

- A two-storey extension, possibly a misericord (a room used by monks who had been dispensed from fasting) formerly gave off the north side of the building at its eastern end.
- After the Dissolution the building appeared to remain in (possibly domestic) use; there are a number of windows of 16th or 17th century type and the building is shown roofed in the Daniel King view of 1656.
- By the 18th century it had been abandoned, and the first floor was ruinous.
- In the 1850s the new rectory was built up against and incorporating the remains of the west wall and west end of the north wall, and the undercroft became ancillary accommodation to the rectory.
- A summerhouse was built over its most easterly bay, reached by a wooden stair from the west range.
- These and other mid-19th century accretions were removed at the time of the restoration in 1897, when the walls were capped and a new floor was laid over the undercroft.
- The building contains a number of stonemason's marks dating from the time of the restoration.
- The ground floor was adapted and converted to a museum by Wirral Borough Council in 1986.
- The upper floor remained a consolidated ruin until 1993, when it was roofed over in a contemporary manner to provide a space for concerts, educational events and weddings. The new roof structure sits lightly upon the old fabric.

Description:

- Coursed and squared red sandstone blocks, much restored at the upper level.
- Within the former west range is a medieval ground floor doorway (48) (photo bottom middle) with moulded jambs and evidence of a previous larger opening above. Above this, a doorway with a flat lintel (49) provided the first floor link between the two ranges.
- **West elevation** - raised on a sandstone plinth, (photo bottom left) the upper course is convex moulded, with a stepped angle buttress at the corner (50).
- Large two-light ground floor window with thick chamfered mullion and flat lintel (51) - a later adaptation of a door opening from the buttery to the kitchen, which lay to the west.
- Near the corner, the plinth is broken by a rectangular opening (52), for one of two stone cupboards set into the walls.
- First floor level stonework is much renewed.
- New fully glazed gable and modern roof work carried out in 1993.
- **South elevation** - (photo top left) would originally have had the northern cloister walk built against it.
- Moulded doorway (21), possibly a later insertion but of 14th century character, leading from the buttery to the west walk of the cloister.
- Post-medieval two-light window (53) with a flat lintel at the eastern end.
- Remainder of ground floor elevation is plainly treated, with regular courses and is the least altered of all the four external elevations.
- Pattress plates for structural ties are set into the wall at first floor level.
- The first floor much rebuilt during the 1897 restoration, including the two rectangular window openings (now containing more recent glass).
- The masonry at the western end was not built up at this time, and is now in-

filled with glazing.

- **North elevation** - more archaeologically complex (photo top right).
- Plinth of the west wall is continued approximately two thirds along the north elevation with two stepped buttresses, both with moulded plinths. The western one (54) extends up the full height of the building, incorporating an internal spiral stair (mostly renewed above plinth level).
- Low recess for a cupboard breaking through the plinth at the west end (55), and beyond this the plinth steps up.
- Low two-light mullioned windows (56) with flat lintels set upon the plinth; the second may be an adapted doorway (previously leading to the monastic kitchen garden).
- No plinth at the eastern end, but two wide openings with four-centred arches, one blocked (57) and one partially blocked (58). Appear to be former fireplaces or recesses associated with a northern extension, possibly a misericord.
- Mason and Hunt's survey of 1854 indicates a round arched opening in the place of the eastern recess, which may have been a re-used Norman feature, but is more likely to have been post-medieval.
- Moulded doorway above with four centred arch (59) that would have linked the refectory with the northern addition.
- First floor wall is thinner here, as it is generally beyond the last buttress.
- Pattress plates for structural ties are set into the wall at first floor level, the rectangular window openings also being renewed at that time.
- Overhanging eaves of the 1993 roof. A timber access stair also of the same period is located from a door at the first floor west end.

- **East elevation** - higher ground level and higher and simpler sandstone plinth.
- Timber fire escape stair and door lead from the refectory, the door with a flat lintel and cambered relieving arch (60).
- Above this are a (restored) rectangular window (61) and the semi-glazed gable.
- At undercroft level most of the walling is medieval but above this it is largely rebuilt, probably in 1897, although appearing to incorporate some reset 16th or 17th century window and door details.

Significance:

Exceptional: The surviving medieval fabric

Considerable: The fabric belonging to the 1897 restoration (including masons' marks)

Some: The modern roof structure

Little: The timber staircases which offer limited access up to first floor

Designation: Scheduled ancient monument; listed grade I

Specific items for consideration:

1. Structural movement and possible questionable detailing of new 1993 roof structure.
2. Inadequate access up into the first floor refectory (external, uncovered, inaccessible for more heavily disabled users)

Relevant Issues & Policies:

4.1.5, 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.4.6, 4.6.3

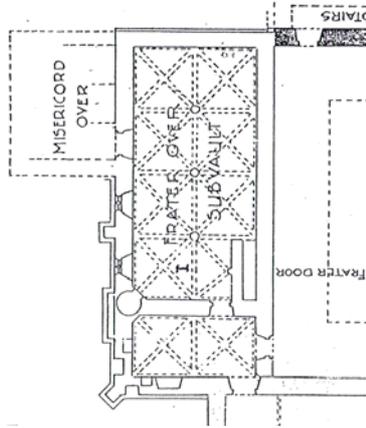
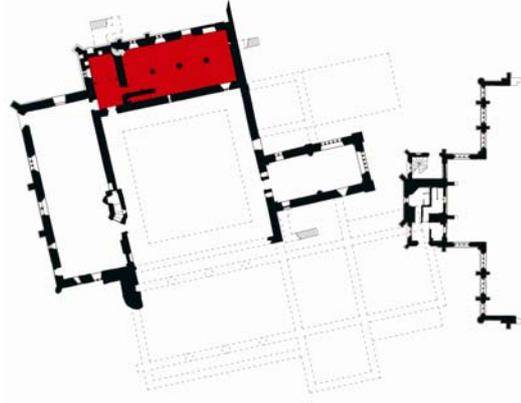
Key references (Author/Year/Page): Scheduling description; list description; Mason and Hunt, 1854; Croasdale, 1994, 12-14; NWAT, 1991

Building:

The north range

Area:

Interior – Undercroft and buttery



Brief history: See north range (exterior)

- Previously a buttery and storage area, or possibly dining
- The ground floor was adapted and converted to a museum by Wirral Borough Council in 1986.

Description:

- Western entrance leads into the former **buttery**. This consists of two bays of quadripartite vaulting with ogee-chamfered ribs springing from moulded corbels.
- Both bays are subdivided by a modern partition to form a lobby and office/sales desk.
- Two original cupboard recesses let into the wall in the current office (62), each

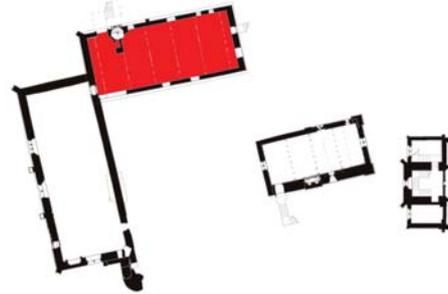
<p>rebated to receive a door.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby floor is uneven concrete rubble, suspended timber floor in the office. • An arched opening leads from the lobby into the undercroft (photo right), now used as the priory museum. Constructed of four bays east to west, each bay consisting of two quadripartite ribbed vaulted compartments springing from central octagonal columns without capitals and resting on moulded corbels at the walls. • Modern suspended timber floor but formed around the columns of original floor. • Running parallel with the south wall is a stone wall partition with a passage behind it (63), of uncertain purpose (see plan). • Original staircase to the refectory can be located where the vaulting compartment is truncated and lowered to accommodate the head of the former staircase. • In the northwest corner is a splayed opening with a shouldered arch (64) leading to a late 19th century stone spiral staircase to the refectory.
<p>Significance: <i>Exceptional:</i> The surviving medieval fabric <i>Considerable:</i> The fabric belonging to the 1897 restoration <i>Negative/intrusive:</i> The modern, out-dated, glass partition in the buttery and general use/management of this space</p>
<p>Designation: Scheduled ancient monument; listed grade I</p>
<p>Specific items for consideration:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The existing museum is somewhat outdated and static and does not make the most of the significance of building fabric or the space. Consider using this space for an activity workshop, or display of the space in context. Consider relocating the museum/display boards somewhere that is less significant architecturally (perhaps reduce volume and move up to one end of the refectory?) 2. The office in the buttery again requires a re-vamp, and does not 'invite' people in. Not making use of existing fabric/space's potential.
<p>Relevant Issues & Policies: 4.1.1, 4.2.3, 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.4.4, 4.4.6</p>
<p>Key references (Author/Year/Page): Scheduling description; list description; Mason and Hunt, 1854; Croasdale, 1994, 12-14; NWAT, 1991</p>

Building:

The north range

Area:

Interior – The refectory



Brief history: See north range (exterior)

- The upper floor remained a consolidated ruin until 1993, when it was roofed over in a contemporary manner to provide a space for concerts, educational events and weddings. The new roof structure sits lightly upon the old fabric.

Description:

- The former **refectory** is a large space, measuring 46 ft (14.02 m) by 22 ft (6.7 m). It is now used as an education room.
- Little original fabric remains; the most significant elements are the doorway on the north side which communicated with the northern addition, and a section of wall at the west end that marks the separation between the refectory and guest room.
- The prevailing character of the space now belongs to the remodelling of 1993, with a dramatic inverted timber roof truss.
- The smaller rectangular windows contain stained glass, including a charming representation of Noah releasing the dove from the ark (from St Peter's church, Birkenhead, demolished in 1994) and two specially commissioned panels by Martin Donlin, 1992, one biblical/monastic in theme and the other showing a modern shipyard worker.

Significance:

Exceptional: The surviving medieval fabric

Considerable: The fabric belonging to the 1897 restoration

Some: The modern roof structure; stained glass panels

Designation: Scheduled ancient monument; listed grade I

Specific items for consideration:

1. The refectory is not accessible to the disabled or those with mobility difficulties which limits its use and potential.
2. There are structural issues with movement of the roof on the existing wall fabric.

Relevant Issues & Policies:

4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.4.4

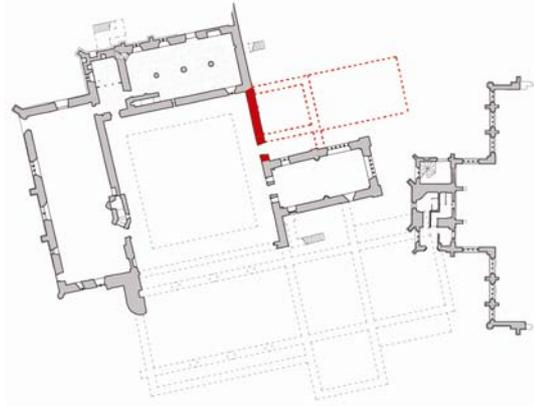
Key references (Author/Year/Page): Scheduling description; list description; Mason and Hunt, 1854; Croasdale, 1994, 12-14; NWAT, 1991

Building:

The east range and infirmary

Area:

External



Brief history and description:

- The east range housed the dorter (monks' dormitories, latrines and other rooms), with the infirmary giving off its east end, and the chapter house (see separate entry) to the south.
- Probably built in about 1250, excavations have revealed the dimensions of the range as 28 ft (8.53 m) by 20 ft (6.09 m).
- An original doorway (27), now blocked, survives at the north end of the east cloister wall.
- The infirmary gave off the south-eastern end of the dorter range, and was reached from the cloister by a passage between the dorter range and the chapter house, the doorway to which survives (photo left).
- The ground level on this area has been raised by some 5 ft (1.5 m) on account of burials. It is now laid to grass.

Significance:

Exceptional: The surviving above (east cloister wall) and below-ground medieval fabric.

Designation: Within the scheduled ancient monument

Specific items for consideration:

1. There is no reference or interpretation of the building on the site and the archaeology is uncertain.

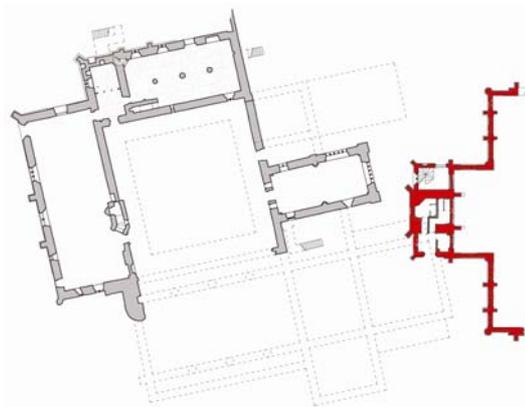
Relevant Issues & Policies:

4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.4.6, 4.6.2, 4.6.3

Key references (Author/Year/Page): Scheduling description; Croasdale, 1994, 14

Building:
Remains of the Church of St Mary

Area:
External elevations



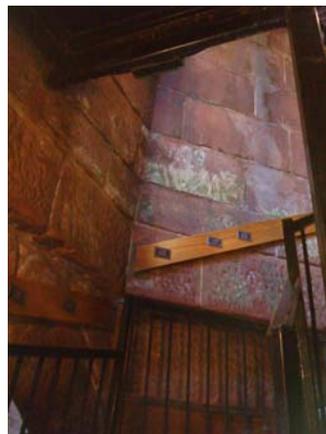
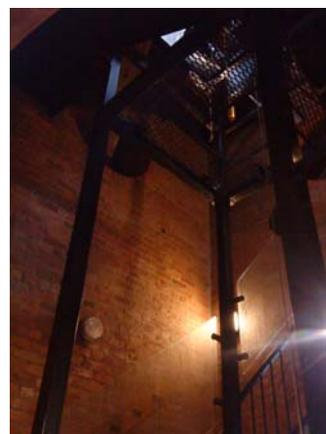
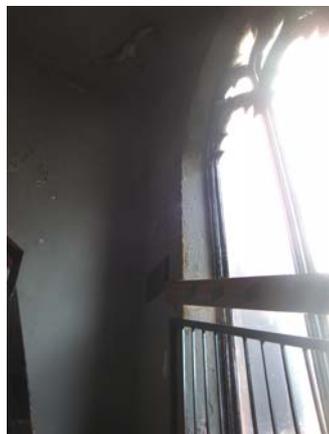
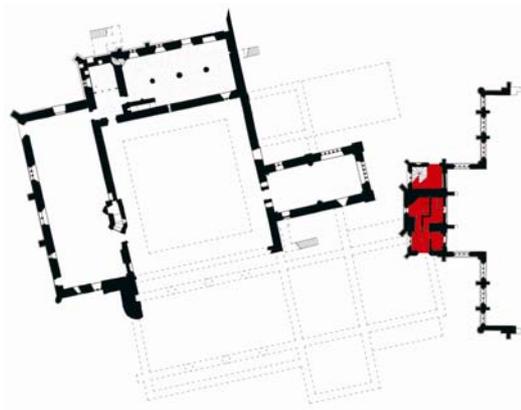
Brief history:

- Built in 1822 by Francis Richard Price, designed by the leading church architect of the time, Thomas Rickman.
- Extended in 1832 to Rickman's design creating a nearly cruciform plan.
- Closure of the church in 1971

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partial demolition in 1975 then bought by Wirral Borough Council.• Installation of staircase and lavatories, and the restoration of the clock tower in 1992 dedicated to the submarine H.M.S Thetis.
<p>Description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The tower, spire, porches, west walls and part of the south wall remain.• Finely coursed and squared (ashlar) sandstone with a solid brick core.• West tower is of two stages, with foiled lancet windows in the first stage and a clock over, and two-light belfry openings in the second stage.• Embattled parapet to head of tower walls, and tall recessed octagonal spire with lucarnes above.• Porches flank the tower; the main entrance being on the south side. Here there is a Gothic panelled door set within a moulded arch and crocketed gable (65). On the north porch is a boarded door with a plainer moulded surround (66).• The west walls, made up of three bays, remain. Divided by buttresses with pinnacles (some missing) and surmounted by an embattled parapet.• Windows are of two and three lights, and retain their original cast iron tracery but no original glass.• On the 'internal' elevations the plaster has been removed and the brickwork exposed; the former tower arch has been bricked up c1975, and a Gothic aedicule has been re-set within it (67).• The area to the east, previously taken up by the church, has been grassed over leaving no resemblance of the original form or plan.
<p>Designation: Scheduled ancient monument and listed grade II.</p>
<p>Significance:</p> <p><i>Considerable:</i> The remaining original and 1830s fabric, including the cast iron window frames; the south door and the Gothic aedicule set within the modern infilling of the tower arch</p> <p><i>Some:</i> The north door</p> <p><i>Little:</i> The modern brick infilling of the tower arch</p> <p><i>Negative/intrusive:</i> The modern glass in the windows</p>
<p>Specific items for consideration:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Like all ruined or-partially ruined structures, the building requires ongoing maintenance and repair. Because it is in some respects 'non-beneficial' and not part of the ancient priory (although included in the scheduling), there is a danger that these repairs may be afforded lower priority if funds are constricted. <p>The landscaping of the site of the main body of the church is looking a little tired. A landscaping scheme which delineated the plan form of the former church more clearly, perhaps with box hedging, would be more instructive and might create an attractive enclosed garden.</p>
<p>Relevant Issues & Policies:</p> <p>4.1.5, 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.4.6, 4.6.3</p>
<p>Key references (Author/Year/Page): List description; display panels in tower.</p>

Building:
Remains of the Church of St Mary

Area:
Internal



Brief history:

- See *external* for main building history.
- Installation of staircase and lavatories, and the restoration of the clock tower in 1992 dedicated to the submarine H.M.S Thetis.

Description:

- WCs (68) accessed from main south porch door, both appear tired and unappealing.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• North porch now a lobby (69) with plastered wall finishes and modern quarry tile floor. Part of the mizzen mast of HMS Conway is exhibited here.• Opaque sheet glass in the windows and concrete stair leading up to the second stage of the tower.• Timber rail to which are fixed plaques in memory of each of the 99 men lost in the submarine H.M.S Thetis running up stairs at dado height.• At the second stage there is a series of display panels setting out the history of the church and offering an account of the restoration of the clock.• The clock is enclosed within a modern frame which rises up the full height of the upper stage of the tower, at the top of which the 1830s Knox bell, cast by Taylor of Oxford, is mounted.• Metal stair wraps around frame, giving access to the tower parapet.• Dramatic views over the churchyard, priory, town, shipyard and over the Mersey to Liverpool can be seen from the parapet.
<p>Designation: Scheduled ancient monument and listed grade II.</p>
<p>Significance: <i>Considerable:</i> The remaining original and 1830s fabric, including the cast iron window frames; the clock mechanism and the bell <i>Little:</i> The stair to the first stage of the tower; the framework for the clock and bell above this; the metal staircase <i>Negative/intrusive:</i> The modern glass in the windows; the WCs</p> <p>The plaques to the men who died on HMS Thetis and the section of the mizzen mast from HMS Conway do not have particular historical associations with the Priory, but are of <i>exceptional</i> local significance.</p>
<p>Specific items for consideration:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Like all ruined or-partially ruined structures, the building requires ongoing maintenance and repair. Because it is in some respects 'non-beneficial' and not part of the ancient priory (although included in the scheduling), there is a danger that these repairs may be afforded lower priority if funds are constricted.
<p>Relevant Issues & Policies: 4.1.1, 4.1.3, 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.4.4, 4.4.6</p>
<p>Key references (Author/Year/Page): List description; display panels in tower.</p>

Building:

Gates, gate piers and railings

Area:

External, various locations around site



Brief history and description:

- The boundary wall of the medieval priory, shown in part in the King illustration from 1656 (illustration top left) had disappeared by the 18th century.
- The boundaries as reconfigured to delineate St Mary's churchyard are shown on William Lawton's plan of 1821. These remain unchanged apart from the southern boundary, altered to accommodate Princess Dock in 1962.
- At the west end of the site there is a pair of octagonal gate piers with later gates (photo top right). Probably date from the late 19th or early 20th century as well as the attractive spear head railings and pedestrian gate with cast iron piers with decorative Gothic panels. All are associated with the landscaping of the area in front of the western range.
- The eastern boundary has modern railings and faces onto the former Church Street, now a cul-de-sac and priory parking (disused). The stone wall on the other side of road is the retained lower part of the façade of former shipyard buildings.
- In the priory car park, there is a large amount of material being stored (now mostly forgotten), including large pieces of iron work from both ships and railway stations, as well as pieces of stone and what is thought to be an iron pew-end.

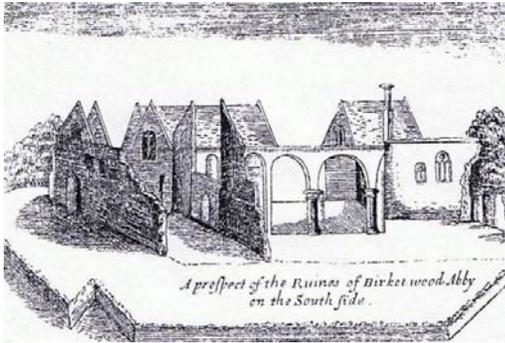
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most portions of stone are from St Mary's church and some could be re-used, such as the pinnacles.• There are however some very important pieces which appear to be from the priory, including an ornately carved top section of column or capital (photo bottom right, sat upside down).
<p>Significance: <i>Considerable:</i> The remnants of medieval fabric in the over-grown 'store area', the gate piers and railings facing Priory Street <i>Little:</i> Railings along eastern boundary</p>
<p>Designation: Within the scheduled Ancient Monument. The gates and railings on Priory Street are also listed by virtue of being pre-1948 structures within the curtilage of the listed Priory buildings.</p>
<p>Specific items for consideration:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Car park area requires clearing out, not only to make use of the facility as a car park, but also to enable to recovery and cataloguing of all the stonework and other artefacts stored there beneath the shrubbery.
<p>Relevant Issues & Policies: 4.1.5, 4.2.3, 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.4.1, 4.4.2, 4.4.6</p>
<p>Key references (Author/Year/Page): None</p>

Building:

Boundary walls

Area:

External perimeter



Brief history and description:

- The boundary wall of the medieval priory, shown in part in the King illustration from 1656 (illustration top left) had disappeared by the 18th century.
- The boundaries as reconfigured to delineate St Mary's churchyard are shown on William Lawton's plan of 1821. These have remained unchanged apart from the southern boundary, altered to accommodate Princess Dock in 1962.
- A new wall (photo bottom right) was built on the new alignment, faced in red sandstone, most probably salvaged from demolished dockyard buildings, with half round copings and concrete gabled copings to the piers.
- The northern boundary comes in four sections.
 1. A section of wall at the northwest corner (photo top right) running parallel with the north range and of eight, increasing to nine courses (above the present ground level). This is of squared sandstone, with a half round coping and paired attached buttresses with offsets on either side of 'embrasures' (70).
 2. This then becomes a plain un-buttressed wall of about 10 courses height (the ground has been lowered), with half round sandstone copings, returning towards the north range at its east end (71).

<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. East of this is a short low section of four courses above present ground level, which has lost its coping stones4. Then, east of this, the flank wall of an early 20th century warehouse – this is present on the 1911 OS map but not on the 1899 one (73).<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The map progression shows all sorts of small structures built up against the wall in the northwest corner, the evidence for which is not apparent on the present wall. It is likely that 1, 2 and 3 are late 19th or early 20th century rebuilds, possibly associated with the building of the Rectory in 1854.
<p>Significance: <i>Considerable:</i> The first three sections of the northern boundary wall <i>Some:</i> The southern boundary wall (being of appropriate materials and providing a visual screen for the shipyard)</p>
<p>Designation: Within the scheduled Ancient Monument. The northern boundary wall is also listed by virtue of being a pre-1948 structure within the curtilage of the listed Priory buildings.</p>
<p>Specific items for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The third section of the northern boundary wall is in need of repair.
<p>Relevant Issues & Policies: 4.1.5, 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.4.1, 4.6.3</p>
<p>Key references (Author/Year/Page): None</p>

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