



Tower House Old Priory Plympton
Plymouth PL7 1QS

Heritage Impact Assessment on behalf of Mr P Edwards

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Site	Tower House Old Priory Plympton Plymouth PL7 1QS			
Report for	Mr P Edwards			
Document	No.	Details	Checked By	Date
	089.2023	Planning Statement to LPA	EP	27/11/2023
Revision	a			
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1. INTRODUCTION

EJFP Planning Ltd has prepared the assessment to support an application for the demolition of a concrete block wall and the erection of a summer house on land at Tower House Old Priory Plympton Plymouth PL7 1QS.

Below, the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the site and the setting of listed buildings and other heritage assets is assessed.



2. METHODOLOGY

The heritage impact of the proposal has been assessed by taking the following considerations into account:

- a. An understanding of the overall significance of all heritage assets affected and the relative significance of each (set out in the Summary of Heritage Issues).
- b. Understanding the historic settings of all neighbouring heritage assets and how they contribute to their significance (also set out in the Summary of Heritage Issues).
- c. The quality of any structures needing to be removed, replaced, or altered.
- d. The proposed form, materials, scale, massing, proportions and detailing of the development.

The proposed scheme is briefly described, and potential benefits or harm identified, together with mitigating works if appropriate. In accordance with Historic England guidance on smaller projects, the impact has not been graded according to any formal classification system but described simply for each element.

3. THE SITE

The site is located in the Plympton area of the city of Plymouth. Plympton is on the eastern side of the city.

The site comprises the building and garden area of Tower House. The house fronts onto Old Priory Lane. The building is a substantial two-storey building. The garden area for the property lies to the south of the host dwelling.

Access to the site is taken from Old Priory Lane, which runs from the west and runs around to the south of the site. The existing point of access is sufficiently wide for one large vehicle.

The site does not lie within a conservation area. However, the Plympton Conservation Area does lie to the east of the site, approximately 500m from the application site. The host dwelling is grade II listed. To the north of the site, on the opposite side of Tower House from the application site, lies the Scheduled Monument of the Plympton Priory.

Summary of Heritage Issues

The application building is a grade II listed building (the listing is set out in section 7). It is a prominent building in the street scene, and as such, it is considered to be a building of significance that has a positive impact on the street scene of this part of Fore Street. Therefore, any potential work to the building could result in harm to its significance.

The application building also lies adjacent to but outside the Plympton Priory scheduled monument.

The Plympton Conservation area lies some 500m to the east of the site, and given the scale of the proposed building and the intervening buildings, the proposed building will not harm the setting of the conservation area.

There are no other listed buildings in the area that could be affected by the proposed development.

The plan to the right shows the site and the adjacent scheduled monument.





4. PROPOSAL

The proposal is a retrospective scheme for the erection of a summerhouse, including the demolition of a concrete block wall attached to the listed building.

It is worth noting that the works are retrospective and were carried out over approximately 12 months.

The concrete block wall that has been removed is shown in the photo below -



Methodology and specification

- i. Carefully remove the blockwork wall so as not to damage the listed building.
- ii. To make good any damage caused by the demolition of the concrete block wall.



5. **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Impact on the significance of the Listing Building and Scheduled Monument.

The proposal is for the demolition of a concrete block wall, and the erection of a summerhouse will not have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the listed building. Indeed, the removal of the items set out above will result in betterment.

The external appearance of the building will not change from that which currently exists.

The siting of the subservient building in the garden should be addressed as the potential impact on the setting of the listed building and, secondly, the Scheduled Monument.

In terms of the impact on the settling of the listed building, it is considered that the proposed building is acceptable. The building is subservient and is constructed with materials that are complementary to the character of the host building. The materials reinforce the subservient character of the summerhouse. It is not unusual or out of keeping for such dwellings to have subservient outbuildings as proposed. It will also be noted that there are many buildings adjacent to the application, and the proposed building will be seen in the context of all these buildings and not just the host-listed building. It is also important to note that the proposal has removed an unsightly concrete blockwork wall, which was considered to be detrimental to the setting and appearance of the listed building. Furthermore, the removal of the wall has opened up the outside amenity space, which is considered to be to the benefit of the setting of the listed building. Therefore, in terms of the setting of the listed building, the removal of the concrete block wall is a benefit, and the siting of the summerhouse is considered because the subservient character of the building will have a neutral impact.

The siting of the summer house in relation to the scheduled monument will result in a neutral impact regarding the significance of the scheduled monument. The reason is an intervening building between the application building and the scheduled monument. It will be noted there is little or no intervisibility between the application building and the scheduled monument. This is demonstrated by the plan on page 5 above. Furthermore, there are no wider public views of the application building in the context of the scheduled monument. As such, the proposal should be supported.

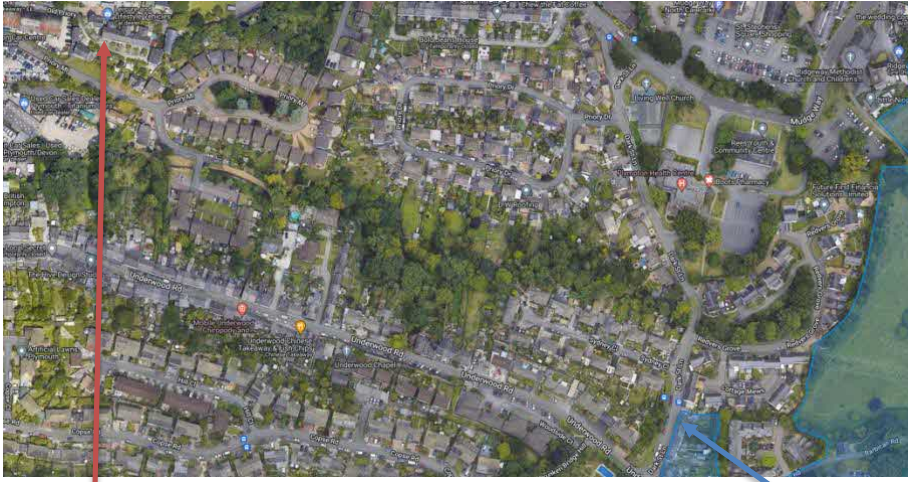
Impact on the setting of heritage assets.

Aside from those listed above, there are no listed buildings in the immediate vicinity that would be affected by the proposed summerhouse because of distance and intervening buildings, which leads to a lack of intervisibility. This is demonstrated by the plan to the right.





In terms of the potential impact on the setting of the Plympton Conservation area, it is considered that due to the distance and intervening buildings between the site and the conservation area, there is a lack of intervisibility. Thus, the proposal is acceptable in



terms of the conservation area. Please see the plan to the left.

Application site

conservation area



6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the proposed summer house is modest in scale; the proposed materials are in keeping with the existing building. Such a building is typical of such outbuildings. The proposal removes an existing unsightly concrete block wall, which is considered to be an enhancement to the character and appearance of the building and its setting. The removal of this wall has opened up the amenity space around the building and enhanced its setting.

In terms of the setting of the nearby scheduled monument and conservation area. The statement confirms that there is no intervisibility between the application building and the two listed heritage assets referenced above.



7. LISTING - TOWER HOUSE

Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1386302

Date first listed: 29-Mar-1960

List Entry Name: TOWER HOUSE AND ATTACHED WALL AND GATE PIERS (REMAINS OF PRIORY)

Statutory Address 1: TOWER HOUSE AND ATTACHED WALL AND GATE PIERS (REMAINS OF PRIORY), OLD PRIORY

Location

Statutory Address: TOWER HOUSE AND ATTACHED WALL AND GATE PIERS (REMAINS OF PRIORY), OLD PRIORY

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District: City of Plymouth (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

National Grid Reference: SX 53756 56178

Details

PLYMOUTH

SX5356SE OLD PRIORY, Plympton 740-1/40/440 Tower House and attached wall and 29/03/60 gate-piers (Remains of Priory)

II

House incorporating remains of former priory. C12 doorway and part of ground-floor walls, otherwise mid-late C19. Killas rubble with granite and freestone dressings; dry slate roof with front attic gable and brick stack on left; crested clay ridge tiles and shaped barge board and fascia board. Small rectangular plan plus lean-to towards rear on right and conservatory in the angle. EXTERIOR: 3 storeys plus attic; 1-window range. Attic gable lancet, probably C13 and re-used; 2-storey oriel with slate-hung aprons to upper floors and with early or mid C20 3-light leaded casements plus sidelights, and C12 moulded doorway to ground floor, now fitted with window. Right-hand return wall incorporates several small medieval windows. INTERIOR: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: high rubble garden wall in front of house on the left with pair of square brick gate-piers on its right. The piers have plinths, rendered shaped panels with central vermiculation, moulded cornices and stepped caps to moulded finials. (The Buildings of England: Pevsner N: Devon: London: 1989-: 685 & 686).

Listing NGR: SX5375656178



This is an A4 sized map and should be printed full size at A4 with no page scaling set.

Name: TOWER HOUSE AND ATTACHED WALL AND GATE PIERS (REMAINS OF PRIORY)

Heritage Category:	Listing
List Entry No :	1386302
Grade:	II
County:	
District: City of Plymouth	
Parish: Non Civil Parish	

For all entries pre-dating 4 April 2011 maps and national grid references do not form part of the official record of a listed building. In such cases the map here and the national grid reference are generated from the list entry in the official record and added later to aid identification of the principal listed building or buildings.

For all list entries made on or after 4 April 2011 the map here and the national grid reference do form part of the official record. In such cases the map and the national grid reference are to aid identification of the principal listed building or buildings only and must be read in conjunction with other information in the record.

Any object or structure fixed to the principal building or buildings and any object or structure within the curtilage of the building, which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July, 1948 is by law to be treated as part of the listed building.

This map was delivered electronically and when printed may not be to scale and may be subject to distortions.

List Entry NGR:	SX 53756 56178
Map Scale:	1:2500
Print Date:	27 November 2023





8. SCHEDULED MONUMENT - PLYMPTON PRIORY

Official list entry

Heritage Category: Scheduled Monument

List Entry Number: 1017594

Date first listed: 21-Dec-1976

Date of most recent amendment: 12-Mar-1998

Location

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District: City of Plymouth (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

National Grid Reference: SX 53762 56208

Reasons for Designation

From the time of St Augustine's mission to re-establish Christianity in AD 597 to the reign of Henry VIII, monasticism formed an important facet of both religious and secular life in the British Isles. Settlements of religious communities, including monasteries, were built to house communities of monks, canons (priests), and sometimes lay-brothers, living a common life of religious observance under some form of systematic discipline. It is estimated from documentary evidence that over 700 monasteries were founded in England. These ranged in size from major communities with several hundred members to tiny establishments with a handful of brethren. They belonged to a wide variety of different religious orders, each with its own philosophy. As a result, they vary considerably in the detail of their appearance and layout, although all possess the basic elements of church, domestic accommodation for the community, and work buildings. Monasteries were inextricably woven into the fabric of medieval society, acting not only as centres of worship, learning, and charity, but also, because of the vast landholdings of some orders, as centres of immense wealth and political influence. They were established in all parts of England, some in towns and others in the remotest of areas. Many monasteries acted as the foci of wide networks including parish churches, almshouses, hospitals, farming estates and tenant villages. Some 225 of these religious houses belonged to the order of St Augustine. The Augustinians were not monks in the strict sense, but rather communities of canons - or priests - living under the rule of St Augustine. In England they came to be known as 'black canons' because of their dark coloured robes and to distinguish them from the Cistercians who wore light clothing. From the 12th century onwards, they undertook much valuable work in the parishes, running almshouses, schools and hospitals as well as maintaining and preaching in parish churches. It was from the churches that they derived much of their revenue. The Augustinians made a major contribution to many facets of medieval life and all of their monasteries which exhibit significant surviving archaeological remains are worthy of protection.

Plympton Priory was the wealthiest monastic house in Devon and the fourth wealthiest establishment of the Augustinian Order in England and Wales. A good proportion of the site remains clear of more recent building development and exploratory archaeological excavations have revealed structural remains of high quality. The priory is unusual in appearing to be associated with a river frontage on a tidal creek. The site contains waterlogged deposits, some of which contain refuse from the priory, and which will



preserve evidence valuable to an increased understanding of earlier land use and climate. The priory replaced a college of Anglo-Saxon foundation which remained in existence into the early 12th century. This continuity of occupation over at least six centuries adds considerably to the archaeological importance of the site in the potential it contains for an increased understanding of the development of monasticism in the British Isles.

Details

The monument includes much of the surviving remains of Plympton Priory which is situated on the east side of the city of Plymouth and the west side of the medieval town of Plympton. The priory lies within modern suburban development on a river terrace between the Tory Brook and Longbrook, tributaries of the River Plym, the estuary of which lies some 2km to the west. The monument consists of the upstanding remains and part of the buried remains of an Augustinian priory in occupation from 1121 until 1539. The priory occupies the site of a college of secular canons that was in existence by AD 904. The priory conforms to the traditional monastic plan in which a church and three ranges of two storied buildings were grouped around the central open square court of the cloister. The visible remains exist in the form of sections of the ruined walls incorporated into later boundary walls which preserve the outline of part of the layout of the church, cloister, and west range. The upstanding remains of the priory are Listed Grade II. The buried remains within the area of protection include the west range and parts of the east and south ranges. The remainder of the east and south ranges, together with other buried structures extend beyond the area of protection. Details of the church and west range have been recovered from archaeological excavations. The walls are of random-rubble construction utilising local limestone, with moulded stone in green laminated tuff, which would have produced a polychrome effect in the original structure, and in granite. Some worked stone was in Purbeck marble. The 12th century priory church was aligned ESE-WNW and was of cruciform plan. The nave was some 40m in length and 18m wide overall, with walls approximately 1.2m in thickness. It was aisled on both sides, with the bases of the columns of the arcades resting on sleeper walls, and with moulded pilasters in the walls of the nave to support the vaulted ceilings of the aisles. There were ten bays in all. A 20m length of the west end of the north wall of the nave survives up to 1.7m in height, and includes part of one pilaster and the scar of another. A 25m length of the south wall of the nave survives up to 3.2m in height, and contains part of the eastern reveal of one of the two doorways leading into the cloister. To the west of this wall there is an isolated fragment of wall 2.2m in length and 2.6m high with the scar of a pilaster. The west front had a central entrance, deeply recessed in a series of steps indicating that the original doorway was of typically ornate Norman design. Two fragments of the northern half of the west front, up to 1.3m high, remain visible. Within the church there were two phases of tiled flooring, the earliest tiles set in mortar. Two burials were found in the south aisle. The internal walls were rendered with white plaster, painted with a rectangular tracery in black and yellow to create a false ashlar design. To the west of the eastern door leading to the cloister there were the remains of a side chapel with a marble altar and fragmented stone mouldings painted in pink and gold. The interim excavation report outlines five phases of construction between the 12th and 15th centuries, with evidence of a fire in the latest phase. The extent of the presbytery and therefore the overall length of the church is not

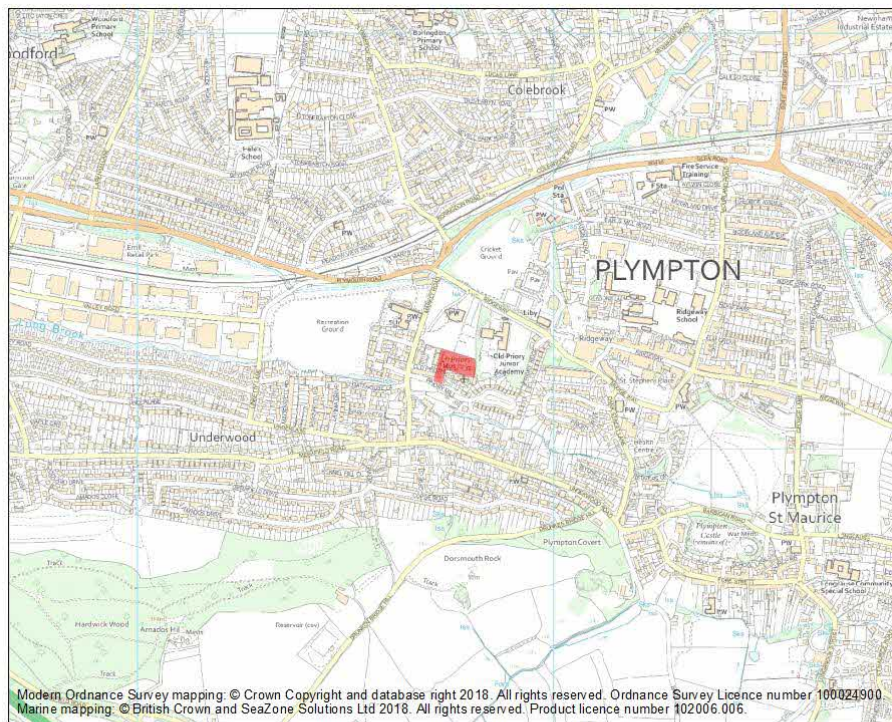


known, but can be estimated through comparison with similar sites to be some 65m. A pictorial map of Plymouth dated c.1539, which has been found to be accurate in its representation of major buildings, depicts the priory with a square tower at its west end. This could be the 'new tower' referred to in documentary sources. The monastic burial ground would have been located to the north and west of the presbytery of the priory church. The cloister stood to the south of the church, at a slightly lower level, and from the excavated foundations measured some 30m east-west, being overlain to the east by the present boundary wall. The boundary wall on the west side of the cloister appears to be roughly on the alignment of the wall of the cloister walk, about 4.6m to the east of the west range. The west range abutted the south side of the nave and was of some 9.6m overall width. The northern end had a floor of slate flags set in mortar, with a drain or conduit running east-west beneath the floor. The south end extends into the area to the west of No 11 Old Priory, and wall foundations have been revealed in this area in a sewer trench in c.1959, and an evaluation excavation in 1994. On the west side of the property boundary forming the west side of the west range, some 6m to the south of the Old Malt House, there is a fragment of wall aligned east-west, 1.2m in width and 1.4m high. The west range would have contained ground floor storage space, with a hall and the apartments of the prior above. On the assumption that the cloister was square, the south range now lies beneath the access road and beneath the Tower House in Old Priory to the south of the church. The Tower House, which is Listed Grade II, is a later structure incorporating Norman architectural fragments from a priory building that stood to the south east of the priory church but which was destroyed in the late 19th century. The precise location and form of the Saxon college is not known, it has been presumed that the priory overlies the college. The land forming the monastic precinct was traditionally enclosed behind a wall, and contained, in addition to the nucleus of the church and cloister, the buildings and structures, both agricultural and industrial, associated with the degree of self sufficiency that the priory was capable of sustaining. At Plympton the extent of the precinct is not known although its boundaries appear to have been delimited by a number of features: the Ridgeway to the north, an ancient east-west route; Market Road to the west; by the natural barrier of the Longbrook to the south; and by a long straight property boundary to the east. It would appear that the lower reaches of the Longbrook formed a tidal creek in the medieval period, and the west wall of the precinct appears to have contained a quay. The low lying ground on the north side of the Longbrook was a marsh, delimited to the north and north west by a low natural scarp. These features lie outside the area of protection. The earliest known reference to Plympton is a Saxon charter of 904 in which King Edward the Elder of Wessex (899-924) exchanged land with the Bishop of Sherborne in return for the monastery at Plympton. In the Domesday Book of 1086 the college consisted of a Dean and four prebendaries, and was attributed with four land holdings in south west Devon. In 1121 the college was disbanded by Warelwast, Bishop of Exeter, who granted the site to the Augustinian canons. The church was dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul. In 1311 the canons constructed a chapel to the north of the priory which later developed into the parish church of St Mary. In 1355 the Black Prince (the eldest son of Edward III) stayed at the priory for six weeks. By the end of the 13th century a substantial village had become established on priory lands along the Ridgeway. At the Dissolution there was a prior and 19 canons in residence. The Abbey was dissolved in 1539 and surrendered to Henry VIII. A condition of the subsequent sale of the buildings was that



they were to be rendered unfit for monastic use, and this was greatly assisted by the crown's sequestration of the roofing lead. In 1541 the site was granted by the Crown to Sir Philip Champenowne who immediately sold parts of the site for demolition. Payments in this context provide a partial inventory of the monastic buildings: in 1545 reference is made to 'five chambers forming the west part of the night chamber', and in 1547 to 'a house called court gate'. In 1562 some buildings were specifically excluded from demolition: 'the new tower, mill, poundhouse, great dorter and little dorter, houses called little chapel and little court gate, and all the outer walls'. In 1638 the site was sold to John Fownes of Whiteleigh, and thence to the Luttrells of Dunster Castle. The site was not developed as a major residence and appears to have been extensively robbed of stone and also to have become liable to flooding. Carved stones from the priory have been recorded in a number of buildings and locations in Plympton. Excluded from the scheduling are all modern structures including canopies, garages, store sheds, garden sheds, bee hives, a vehicle inspection ramp, the Old Furniture Depository (21-23 Market Street) and the tank to its rear, all made-up road surfaces, driveways, and hard standings, all gates, fencing, and telegraph poles, although the ground beneath all these features is included.

MAP EXTRACT The site of the monument is shown on the attached map extract.



Heritage Category:	Scheduling
List Entry No :	1017594
County:	
District:	City of Plymouth
Parish:	Non Civil Parish

Each official record of a scheduled monument contains a map. New entries on the schedule from 1988 onwards include a digitally created map which forms part of the official record. For entries created in the years up to and including 1987, a hand-drawn map forms part of the official record. The map here has been translated from the official map and that process may have introduced inaccuracies. Copies of maps that form part of the official record can be obtained from Historic England.

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List Entry NGR:	SX 53762 56208
Map Scale:	1:10000
Print Date:	27 November 2023

Name: Plympton Priory

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