

BETSY GRIMBAL'S TOWER AND THE STILL HOUSE, TAVISTOCK ABBEY, TAVISTOCK, DEVON

(NGR SX 48114 74326 and SX 48159 74260)

Results of historic building recording

Scheduled Monument: Tavistock Abbey (National
Heritage List no. 1020401)

Prepared by:

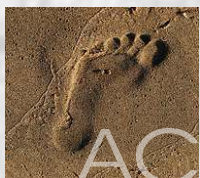
Liz Govier

On behalf of:

Le Page Architects

Document No: ACD1544/1/0

Date: February 2017



archaeology

BETSY GRIMBAL'S TOWER AND THE STILL HOUSE, TAVISTOCK ABBEY, TAVISTOCK, DEVON

(NGR SX 48114 74326 and SX 48159 74260)

Results of historic building recording

Scheduled Monument: Tavistock Abbey (National Heritage List no. 1020401)

Contents

	Summary	
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Aims	1
3.	Methodology	2
4.	Historical background	2
5.	Betsy Grimbal's Tower	4
6.	The Still House	6
7.	Concluding comments	8
8.	Sources consulted	9

List of Illustrations

Fig. 1: Site location

Fig. 2: Phased exterior elevations of the Betsy Grimbal's Tower

Fig. 3: Phased exterior elevations of the Still House

List of Plates

Plate 1: Location shot of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking east

Plate 2: West elevation of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking east-northeast. (1m scale)

Plate 3: North elevation of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking east. (1m scale)

Plate 4: East and north elevations of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking south. (1m scale)

Plate 5: North end of the east elevation of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking west-southwest. (1m scale)

Plate 6: South end of the east elevation of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking west-southwest. (1m scale)

Plate 7: South elevation of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking north-northwest. (1m scale)

Plate 8: East end of the gate-hall of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking east-northeast. (1m scale)

Plate 9: West end of the gate-hall of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking west-southwest. (1m scale)

Plate 10: North elevation and staircase stub of north wing of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking north

Plate 11: East elevation of north wing of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking south-southeast. (1m scale)

Plate 12: South elevation of north wing of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking east-southeast. (1m scale)

Plate 13: West elevation of north wing of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking west-southwest. (1m scale)

Plate 14: Drain in north wing and garderobe drain of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking northeast. (1m scale)

Plate 15: Ground-floor garderobe in north turret of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking west-southwest. (1m scale)

Plate 16: Exposed drain of first-floor garderobe in ground floor garderobe of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking south. (1m scale)

Plate 17: Ground floor of south turret stair of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking south. (1m scale)

Plate 18: First floor of south turret stair of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking south-southwest

Plate 19: Location of north elevation of first-floor room above the gate-hall of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking north-northwest. (1m scale)

Plate 20: East elevation of first-floor room above the gate-hall of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking east-northeast. (1m scale)

Plate 21: South elevation of first-floor room above the gate-hall of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking south-southeast. (1m scale)

Plate 22: West elevation of first-floor room above the gate-hall of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking east. (1m scale)

Plate 23: First-floor garderobe and stub of north elevation of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking west. (1m scale)

Plate 24: Joist sockets in north turret for first floor of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking west-southwest

Plate 25: Location shot of the Still House, looking southeast

Plate 26: North elevation of the Still House, looking east-southeast. (1m scale)

Plate 27: West elevation of the Still House, looking northeast. (1m scale)

Plate 28: South and west elevations of the Still House, looking east. (1m scale)

Plate 29: East and south elevations of the Still House, looking north-northwest. (1m scale)

Plate 30: North and east elevations of the Still House, looking south. (1m scale)

Plate 31: Ground-floor north elevation of the Still House, looking northwest. (1m scale)

Plate 32: Ground-floor east elevation of the Still House, looking northeast. (1m scale)

Plate 33: Ground-floor south elevation of the Still House, looking east southeast. (1m scale)

Plate 34: Ground-floor west elevation of the Still House, looking southeast. (1m scale)

Plate 35: First-floor north elevation of the Still House, looking northwest. (1m scale)

Plate 36: First-floor east elevation of the Still House, looking northeast. (1m scale)

Plate 37: First-floor south elevation of the Still House, looking southeast. (1m scale)

Plate 38: First-floor west elevation of the Still House, looking southwest. (1m scale)

Plate 39: Detail of first-floor corbels on west elevation of the Still House, looking east. (1m scale)

Appendix 1: 1998 and 2001 surveys

Client	Le Page Architects
Report Number	ACD1544/1/0
Date	22 February 2017
Status	Version 1
Report Author(s)	Liz Govier
Contributions	
Checked by	Andrew Passmore
Approved by	Andrew Passmore

Acknowledgements

The recording was commissioned by Le Page Architects, and managed for them by Simon Crosbie, and for AC archaeology by Andrew Passmore. Access to the buildings was facilitated by Jacqui Orange of Tavistock Town Council. The survey was carried out by Liz Govier and Paul Braken. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Stella De-Villiers and Leon Cauchois.

The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of AC archaeology and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

SUMMARY

Betsy Grimal's Tower and the Still House, which formed part of Tavistock Abbey, were recorded by AC archaeology in February 2017 to accompany a scheme for consolidation and repairs to the buildings, both of which form part of the Tavistock Abbey Scheduled Monument and are Listed Buildings.

Written and photographic surveys of the buildings were carried out by Exeter Archaeology in 1998 and 2001, and the current recording updated these surveys including using newly-prepared digital surveys produced to inform the repair scheme. A detailed photographic record was also prepared. Summary descriptions and phasing are outlined, and the more detailed descriptions prepared by Exeter Archaeology are included.

Both structures are 15th-century additions to the abbey complex, with Betsy Grimal's Tower incorporating the remains of an earlier building. Both buildings were altered in the later medieval period, and repaired during the 20th century.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

1.1 An historic building record of two medieval buildings forming part of Tavistock Abbey, Tavistock, Devon was carried out by AC archaeology in February 2017 on behalf Le Page Architects. The survey was undertaken to accompany a scheme for consolidation and repairs to the two structures: Betsy Grimal's Tower and the Still House, (NGRs SX 48114 74326 and SX 48159 74260 respectively; Fig. 1).

1.2 Betsy Grimal's Tower is situated on a corner position at the junction of Plymouth Road and the Bedford Hotel car park, whilst the Still House is situated within the grounds of the Vicarage at the junctions of the south and west precinct walls of the former abbey. Both buildings are included within the Scheduled Monument of Tavistock Abbey (National Heritage List no. 1020401), and are also Listed Buildings – Betsy Grimal's Tower at Grade I (National Heritage List no. 1326209) and the Still Tower at Grade II (National Heritage List no. 1105870). The buildings also fall within the Tavistock Conservation Area (designated in May 1969), whose boundary also defines Area A10ii of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site, inscribed by UNESCO in 2006.

1.3 The buildings are located at a height of approximately 80m aOD. The underlying bedrock geology is Carboniferous interbedded sandstone and argillaceous rocks of the St Mellion Formation, overlain by Quaternary alluvium of clay, silt, sand and gravel (British Geological Survey online viewer).

2. AIMS

2.1 The principal aim of the document is to appraise the buildings including their development to allow their significance to be assessed, and any impact of the scheme on this significance to be determined.

3. METHODOLOGY (Appendix 1)

3.1 The survey was carried out with reference to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (2014), and Historic England's *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2016).

3.2 A rapid desk-based review of existing records relating to Betsy Grimbal's Tower and the Still House was undertaken, in particular to identify the scope of surveys and historic building records of parts of the medieval abbey undertaken by Exeter Archaeology in 1998 and 2001 (Blaylock 1998; 2001). These surveys included detailed descriptions and interpretations of the fabric of both of the towers, but only a drawn record of the exterior of the Still House was prepared. These written records and interpretations are set out in Appendix 1.

3.3 Prior to the current recording a full digital survey of both buildings was prepared by Preston Engineering Survey, which provides a detailed accurate record of the buildings. The recording included:

- Preparation of annotated elevation drawings to show architectural fittings and features and builds of different date; these form the basis of Figures 2 and 3;
- An updated written description with an emphasis on phasing to accompany the figures; and
- A photographic record including the overall character of the building, as well as detailed views of any architectural features and fixtures and fittings as necessary to illustrate the document. The extent of the coverage comprises a pre-works record of the buildings that conforms to the usual requirements of Historic England for works on Scheduled Monuments.

4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Tavistock is an historic stannary and market town situated on the western side of Dartmoor on the banks of the River Tavy. Prehistoric activity has been recorded in the surrounding areas of the town, which suggests that a small settlement existed on the site of the present town before the founding of the (pre-conquest) Abbey and the resultant medieval town built around it.

4.2 Tavistock Abbey is a ruined Benedictine abbey located in the centre of the town. The following excerpt is from the Schedule description prepared in 1924, with amendments made in 2001:

The Saxon foundation of the abbey places it amongst the earliest of the medieval religious houses founded in Britain, and it was in continuous use by the same Benedictine order for over five and a half centuries. Tavistock Abbey was closely linked with the Benedictine abbey at Buckfast which was founded at the same time, and the pilgrim route across Dartmoor which connected them can still be followed. Although the abbey suffered heavily at the time of the Dissolution, its plan and extent, and the positions of some of its major buildings are well known from previous studies and from its standing remains which are the oldest buildings in Tavistock. These buildings survive in good condition and they include two of the original gateways, and a substantial length of the precinct wall, including a corner tower. The survival of archaeological deposits, including burials which have produced medieval pewter chalices and cloth remnants, have been demonstrated by partial excavation, in the case of the abbey church, to lie just below the surface and below ground building remains are considered to be widespread. These archaeological deposits will

provide evidence of the development of the abbey from simple timber-framed Saxon buildings through to the richly carved stone architecture of the late Middle Ages and will provide further evidence about the lives of the religious community within the abbey and their relationship with the town just outside.

4.3 The remains of the abbey include: the gatehouse between Guildhall Square and Bedford Square (once the main entrance to Tavistock Abbey's Great Courtyard), the refectory that survived as the Abbey Chapel, Betsy Grimbal's Tower (the western gate and Abbot's lodging), the Still House and parts of the west and south precinct walls, and a fragment of standing masonry of the Cloister situated within the churchyard of the parish church.

4.4 The Listing description for Betsy Grimbal's Tower, prepared in 1951, with minor amendments made in 2011, is as follows:

Mostly C15. The Great Gate of the Abbey, west entrance to the precincts. Moulded segmental arches, (one blocked) with flanking towers. Under the arch stands the stone coffin found when the Chapter House was destroyed. The bones contained in it are now in St Eustachius' Church (gv). Named after corruption of the Blessed Grimwald. Scheduled Ancient Monument.

4.5 The Listing description of the Still House, prepared in 1951, with minor amendments made in 1983, is as follows:

Mediaeval. The 'Still-House' is a small square tower in the south-east corner of the Vicarage garden which was perhaps part of the infirmary buildings. Height about 20 ft. Built of granite with crenellated parapet and 4 centred arches windows with hood moulding and spandrels, one with cinquefoil facing the river. East of this there is a length of wall following the line of the River Tavy and originally forming the southern boundary of the Abbey precincts. Crenellated wall about 14ft in height built of granite and incorporating one pointed arched granite doorway. Scheduled Ancient Monument.

4.6 The growth of the town fluctuated throughout the centuries with episodes of rebuilding and repair occurring during periods of prosperity. Medieval wealth was based on tin mining and the manufacture of woollen cloth. The early 14th century and the second half of the 15th century were both periods of prosperity. The abbey was formally dissolved in 1539, with the majority of the land and property granted to John Lord Russel, the first Earl of Bedford. In 1540 an act was passed for rebuilding decayed houses of Tavistock, and former abbey structures were dismantled in order to reuse the building materials. In early 18th-century the merchant Jacob Saunders destroyed much of what remained of the medieval abbey buildings when he built 'Abbey House', now part of the Bedford Hotel. In the 1820s demolition of the remaining abbey buildings around the west side of the churchyard occurred and the foundations robbed out for usable building stone, which can be seen reused throughout the town. This remodelling, which saw much of the town rebuilt, including the creation of Bedford Square, took place following a copper boom and profits from the landowner's, the Dukes of Bedford, mines.

John Wynne's plan of Tavistock 1752 commissioned by the Duke of Bedford

4.7 The first detailed map to illustrate Tavistock is the 1752 Wynne plan of the town. Both the Still House and Betsy Grimbal's tower are depicted in basic detail. The Still House is shown as a square structure abutted by walls on its northeast, northwest and southwest sides. The two flanking turrets of the passageway of Betsy Grimbal's tower are shown along with an attached narrow building projecting to the north. The

passageway is shown as open on the eastern side, with the east elevation of the north wing missing. To the north is a detached building set within the curtain wall.

Wood's plan of Tavistock 1842

- 4.8 Much change to the town can be seen depicted on Wood's plan of 1842, as now the improvements by the 7th Duke had taken place. Bedford Street and Bedford Square have now been laid out; the creation of the former necessitated the demolition of the building to the northwest of Betsy Grimal's Tower. The tower itself is represented rather schematically as a rectangle with a projecting turret.

First edition Ordnance Survey 1:500 map of 1885

- 4.9 The Ordnance Survey depiction of Betsy Grimal's Tower is much more accurate than the earlier surveys, and correlates closely with the more recent digital surveys. Both exterior turrets are recorded as is the passageway and flanking room to the northwest.

5. BETSY GRIMAL'S TOWER (Fig. 2; Plates 1-24)

- 5.1 Betsy Grimal's Tower was the west gate of the abbey precinct. It is a two storey tower comprising an entrance archway flanked by two projecting semi-octagonal turrets; there is a first-floor room over the gate passage, a two-storied wing to the north, and to the south, abutting the tower, is a section of the west precinct wall that was rebuilt in the 19th century. It is aligned with the entrance northeast to southwest, but following conventions used in the Exeter Archaeology surveys and the Preston Engineering survey this orientation is described as east-west. No roof structure remains but there is a hint of a gable end on the east side of north elevation; there is however no evidence for an opposing west gable. The roof section above the first-floor room over the passageway may have been flat. The gatehouse is constructed of large Hurdwick stone quoins and a rubble facework of Hurdwick and slates, with granite and Hurdwick stone utilised for architectural details.

The exterior (Plates 1-7)

- 5.2 The principal west façade comprises the moulded segmental entrance archway flanked by the two turrets with the south turret housing stairs. There are 10 windows, five to each floor, with only two confidently appearing original to the primary construction of the tower – the ground-floor arrow-loop style window on the northwest face of the south turret and the first-floor window on the southwest face of the north turret. The two ground-floor monolithic pierced quatrefoil window frames may too be original. The jambs, lintels and sills of the two round-headed arched windows at first-floor level within the turrets look to be later insertions within original openings, with the original voussoirs visible above the lintels. The two round-headed windows on the wing to the north also appear to be later insertions; masonry associated with the remaining two primary windows on the north turret has been robbed and the openings infilled. There is a single infilled window at ground-floor level on the southwest face of the north turret. This is blocked, which is likely to have been carried out in the 19th century. The elevation has a uniform finish and the masonry appears to be predominately of a single phase of 15th-century construction, with evidence of a pre-existing building being incorporated into the masonry. This is visible at the north end where a section of the south gable end of the older building has been encased in the 15th-century construction of the gatehouse. The window alterations and an area of repair at first-floor level on the southwest face of the north turret are all probably 18th or 19th century in date.

- 5.3** The north elevation displays two phases of construction with later alterations. In comparison to the main façade of the gatehouse the elevation has a much rougher appearance. The earliest phase relates to an earlier building, aligned north-south, the south gable end of which was encased into the north elevation of the gatehouse. The second phase is the north elevation of the gatehouse that was constructed around and above this earlier gable wall. At first floor level, set within the primary masonry, there is a rounded-headed window slightly off-centre to the east; this appears to be a 18th/19th-century insertion, perhaps added when the attached building was demolished. At ground-floor level there is some 20th-century repair at the junction of the two phases of masonry.
- 5.4** The east elevation displays evidence for the 15th-century gatehouse with several phases of later post-medieval repair and remodelling. The majority of the masonry relates to the gatehouse, and this incorporates the inner archway with four putlog holes above. The second phase is a 18th/19th-century alteration comprising the rebuilding of a primary first-floor window above the arch. Three of the original voussoirs survive above the later lintel. The east elevation of the north wing has two phases of repair and re-build; the first is located at the north end and probably dates to the 18th/19th century; it may be associated with the removal of the building to the north. The second, 19th-century, repair is more extensive, and is an underpinning of the remaining lower section of the elevation. Here the masonry incorporates many large blocks of Hurdwick stone. There are three more alterations which have been assigned to the 19th and 20th centuries; the first is the addition of the 19th-century gate pillar for the Bedford Hotel, which abuts the gatehouse to the north of the passageway. The second is the infilling of the archway of the passageway, and the third is an adjacent repair to the south of the passageway.
- 5.5** The south elevation has extensive patches of repointing masking any separate phases of construction; however, the fabric generally appears to be the 15th-century south wall of the gatehouse. A row of three contemporary putlog holes are visible at first-floor level along the west side of the wall. Also at first-floor level is a central robbed out window. A roof scar of a single storey lean-to building with two joist slots is visible at the west end of the elevation, along with sockets for an associated wall plate and purlin. Along the east face of the south turret a roof line scar continues, below which is a single associated socket.

The interior

- 5.6** The building originally had two floors, with only the room above the gate-hall now remaining at first floor level. The staircase in the south turret continues above this room to provide access to the (now lost) roof level. In addition to the passage or gate-hall, the building has three rooms – the ground- and first-floor north wing rooms and the first-floor room above the gate-hall. The north turret contains garderobes at ground- and first-floor levels with an additional closet space on the first floor.

Ground floor (Plates 8-16)

- 5.7** The gate-hall is a single gate-passage with an unribbed barrel vault; due to the 19th-century re-landscaping, which involved raising the ground level by up to 2m, only the upper two-thirds of the archway (and whole building) are visible above the present ground surface. The current floor is cobbled and presumably of 19th-century date. There is a single round-headed doorway leading to the south turret stair at the west end of the south elevation; the door is rebated on the stairwell side

opening into that space. The masonry appears uniform and to be of a single phase of, 15th-century, construction

- 5.8** The north wing ground-floor room no longer has any access point; the masonry on the north, south and west elevations appears to be of a build. However, the east wall has been repaired and a potential doorway reveal at the south end of the repair is visible. This suggests that the principle access point to this room was from within the precinct rather than the gate-hall. Towards the north end of the east elevation there is indication of a staircase, which is more evident at first-floor level. The north turret, located in the southwest corner of the room, houses a garderobe, with the drainage channels within the wall from the first-floor garderobe are also exposed. In the east elevation there is a rebated doorway to the garderobe, the south side jambs of which have been robbed out. and a window set within a splayed reveal. Within the turret there are three windows. The floor level has been reduced to the sub-floor level, with a stone-lined drain located on the south side of the room, aligned northeast-southwest (draining to the southwest) connecting to the base of the garderobe. There is no floor to the room above, however there are three corbels in the north elevation and two at the east end of the south elevation, as well as a ledge in the west elevation.
- 5.9** The stair turret accessed through the gate-hall, is an anti-clockwise newel stair contemporary with the 15th-century gatehouse. There are some remnants of plaster surviving on the walls.

First floor (Plates 17-21)

- 5.10** There is currently only access to the first-floor room over the gate-hall from the south turret stair, but originally there would have been additional access to the first floor of the north wing via a separate, now removed, staircase (see above). The floor surface is heavily vegetated with mosses and grass and there is no longer a roof structure above. The elevations appear to be largely of a continuous phase of construction with some alterations to the masonry around the south, west and east elevation windows. The north elevation – originally a partition with the north wing – is no longer present, although there is a stump of the wall is visible in the west elevation keyed into the north turret, where there appears to be the remains of a straight door jamb. The west elevation now has a levelled ledge with flat capping stones between the two turrets acting as a viewing ‘balcony’ over towards the Vicarage; this may be a 19th-century alteration. In the northwest corner of the room a round-headed opening leads into the north turret garderobe. Internally, there is a ledge visible for the timber seat and the rectangular drain in the floor.
- 5.11** The elevations for the first-floor room of the north wing can be viewed from the room above the gate-hall and the ground-floor of the wing. The north and west elevation appear to be of a single phase of construction, and there is no evidence for the gable of the earlier building that is visible on the exterior. This earlier structure must therefore have been externally refaced when the gatehouse was constructed. There are only partial remains of the east elevation at first-floor level, with the rebuild at the lower level underpinning the remaining original masonry. Towards the south end of the east elevation is a reveal, although its purpose is unclear. It could be a window, but this seems unlikely since it is much lower than the other first-floor windows. It is possible that it could be a door opening to a wall walk, which seems more plausible when considering the height of the reveal and that there was a wall projecting east from this elevation on Wynne’s plan of 1752. In the northeast corner of the room the stub of a staircase is visible along with some of the corbelling of its ceiling and an associated jamb projecting from the north elevation.

At the south end of the west elevation is a rebated rectangular doorway to the north turret. This area could not be accessed, however from ground level several joist holes for the floor could be identified.

6 THE STILL HOUSE (Fig. 3; plates 29-39)

6.1 The Still house is a small, square, two-storied tower located at the junction of the south and west precinct walls. It is built of Hurdwick stone, slates, and some granite, with a crenelated parapet. The name is thought to derive from distilling medicines; the building was located within the infirmary part of the abbey. The tower was converted into a summerhouse/gazebo in the late 19th-century and some of its features are of this date. Abutting the west elevation to the south of the doorway is the boundary wall of the vicarage garden – this is a 19th-century rebuild of a medieval precinct wall. The exterior fabric of the structure shows two phases of construction; both appear to be medieval in construction and both potentially date to the 15th century.

The exterior

6.2 The Still House at ground floor level is a single continuous build, and a break in the masonry can be seen (representing a secondary phase) consistently around the structure at first-floor level. The north elevation at first-floor level displays a large area of re-pointing to the phase two fabric. The west elevation includes what appears to a probable rebuild, identified by the predominant use of slates of consistent shape and size. This coincides with the insertion of a fireplace at first-floor level when the building was converted into a gazebo in the 19th century. It seems likely that the removal of the crenulations would have occurred in this area during the insertion of the flue, although it is possible that the flue of the chimney was worked into the pre-existing structure with little disturbance to the elevation itself. The roof could not be accessed and the formation or presence of a chimney could not be established. Although the other crenulations look to be original to the secondary phase build of the structure it is possible that these are later insertions of the 18th or 19th century. The extant roof structure is of a 20th-century date.

6.3 At ground-floor level there are four window openings; the windows on the south and east elevation have been infilled. The double lancet and monolithic pierced trefoil windows on the north elevation are both probably later insertions, with the double lancet appearing to have never truly functioned as a window. At first-floor level there are four windows. Those in the east, south and west elevations all appear to be later insertions, with the small lancet window in the north elevation being contemporary with the secondary phase of construction. On the ground floor there is an original doorway on the west elevation and another doorway/window on the east elevation possibly re-modelled. Access to the first floor is from an exterior staircase on the north elevation, through a phase two round-headed doorway. There is a central infilled doorway in the east elevation which would have opened out onto a wall walk.

The interior

6.4 The building has two floors, each comprising a single square room. There is no evidence for a second floor or roof access.

Ground floor

6.5 The masonry of the ground-floor room appears to be uniform with frequent patches of re-pointing. Other than reveals for the windows, there are no internal features.

The floor is a compacted dirt surface, and the ceiling a 20th-century concrete replacement.

First floor

- 6.6** The first floor is accessed from the exterior staircase on the north elevation. The west elevation displays an area of rebuild with brick inclusions, incorporating a central 19th-century fireplace with side flues passing around a window directly above; the mantel of the fireplace formed the sill of the window. The embrasures of the inserted/replacement windows in the south and east elevations have been lowered. At ceiling level there are four opposing corbels in the east and west elevations, with the roof structure above being a 20th-century replacement.

7 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

- 7.1** Betsy Grimbal's Tower was constructed in the 15th century, with the north end of the structure encasing the gable end of a pre-existing building aligned north-south. The gatehouse fell into disrepair when the abbey was dissolved in 1539. It was repaired during the 18th/19th centuries, with many of the present windows being inserted, salvaged from demolished abbey buildings. During the 19th century the section of the west precinct wall abutting the south turret of the gatehouse was re-built and the east elevation at the north end of the building was extensively repaired. Some additional repairs, stabilisation, and the infilling of the east side gate-hall archway occurred during the 20th century.
- 7.2** The Still House was constructed in the 15th century with two phases assigned to this period of initial construction. The tower fell into disrepair when the abbey was dissolved in 1539. In the mid-18th century improvements were made to the structure, including the insertion of a pyramidal roof. Further alterations and repair occurred in the 19th century when the building was converted into a summerhouse/gazebo. At this date windows were re-modelled, infilled and replaced with windows from demolished abbey buildings, and the granite fireplace was inserted. It is possible, although has not been conclusively proved, that the current crenulations were also added at this time. The first-floor structure and ceiling/roof above were replaced in the 1960s.
- 7.3** The proposals for repair and consolidation are sensitive to the architectural histories and significance of the buildings. The works mainly comprise repointing along with repairs to the walls tops. Other repairs are limited in extent and are being carried out to parts of the building that have been historically demolished or altered, leading to some of the current structural problems. No architectural features that aid interpretation of the buildings will be removed or covered up. Due to the location of the buildings the works will be visible from adjacent or nearby town paths, the scheme offers the opportunity for short-term interpretation of the structures through the provision of interpretation panels. The repointing works may expose masonry/historic mortars, analysis of which (through on-site monitoring and recording) may enhance this and previous architectural studies of the buildings.

8. SOURCES CONSULTED

Printed Sources

Blaylock, S., 1998, *An Assessment of the Physical Remains of Tavistock Abbey*, Exeter Archaeology report no. **98.75**.

Blaylock, S., 2001, *Tavistock Abbey, Devon: Further Recording of the Standing Fabric*, Exeter Archaeology report no. **01.82**.

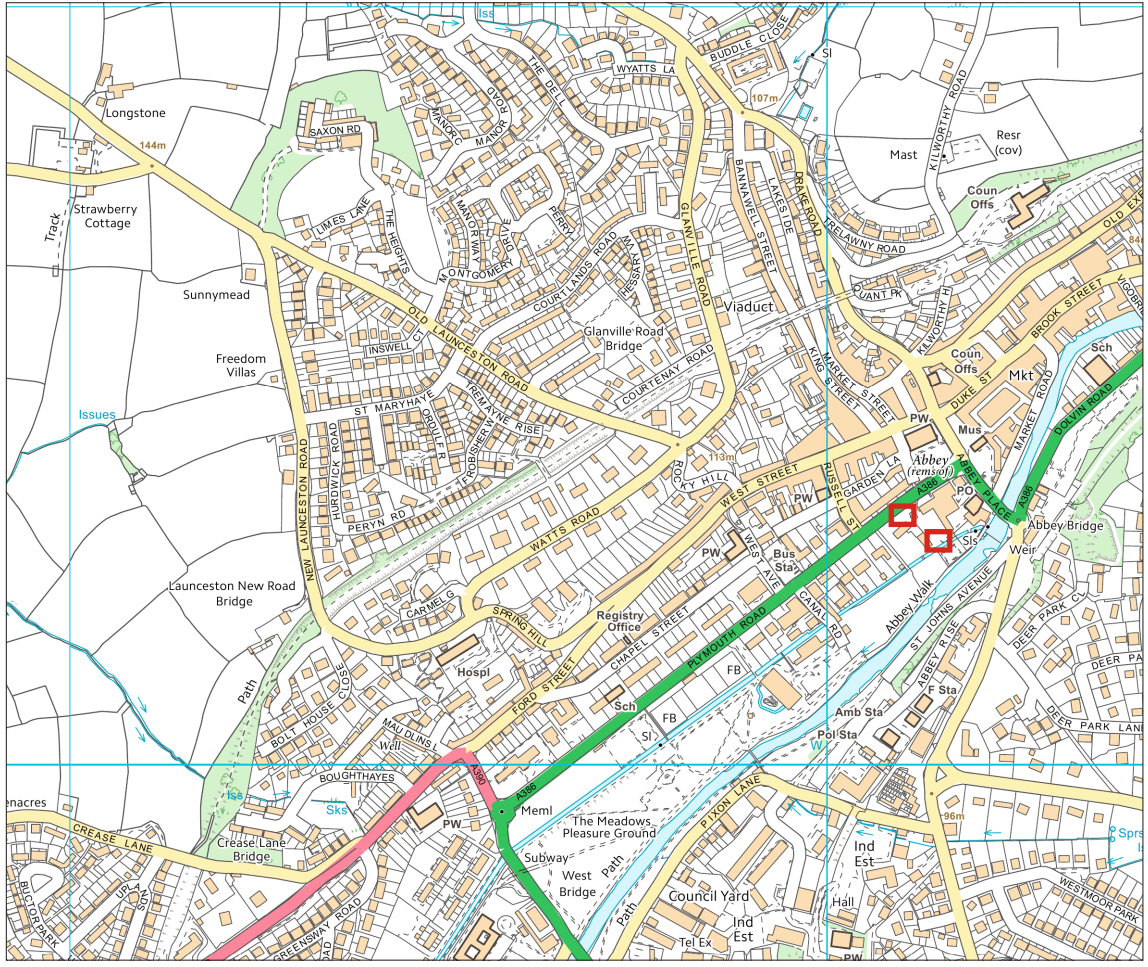
Websites (accessed February 2017)

British Geological Survey
(www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience)

Devon County Historic Environment Record
(www.map.devon.gov.uk/dccviewer/?bm=OSGreyscale&layers=Historic%20Environment;0;1&activeTab=Historic%20Environment&extent=210064;27188;338387;150088)

National Heritage List for England
(www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/)

The Tavistock Wynne Map Heritage Project
(www.tavistock1752.co.uk/)



0 250m
Scale 1:10,000@A4

Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2015. All rights reserved. Licence number 100022432

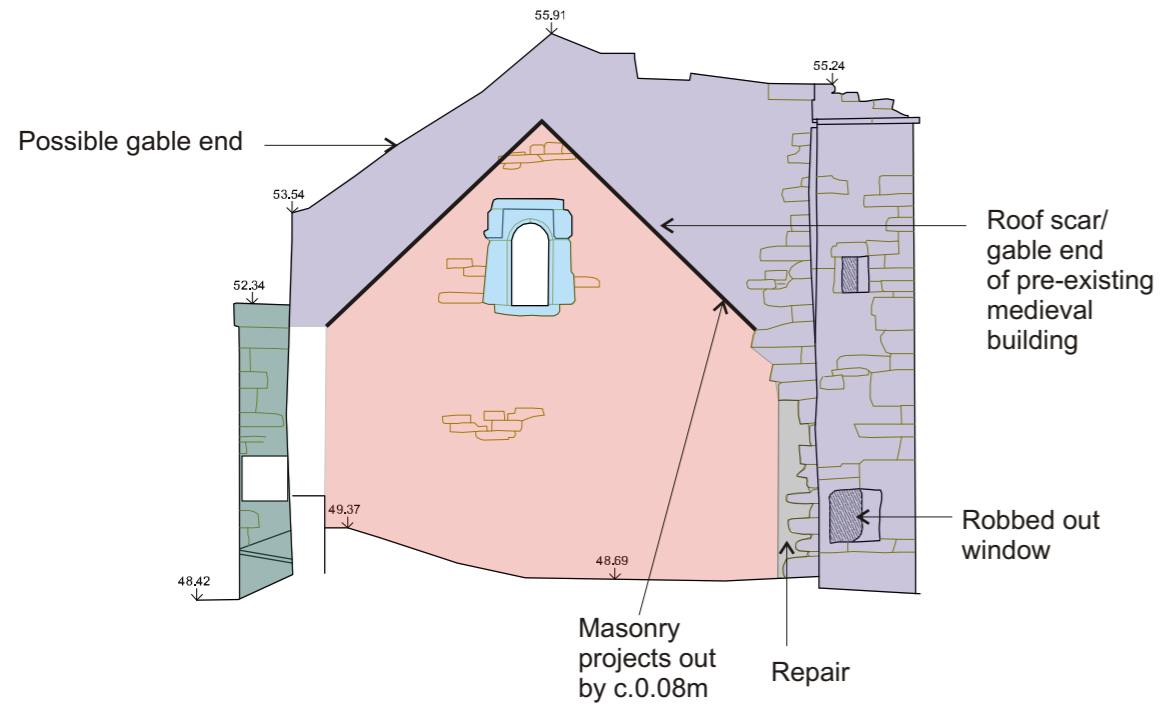
PROJECT
Betsy Gribbal's Tower and the Still House,
Tavistock Abbey, Devon

TITLE

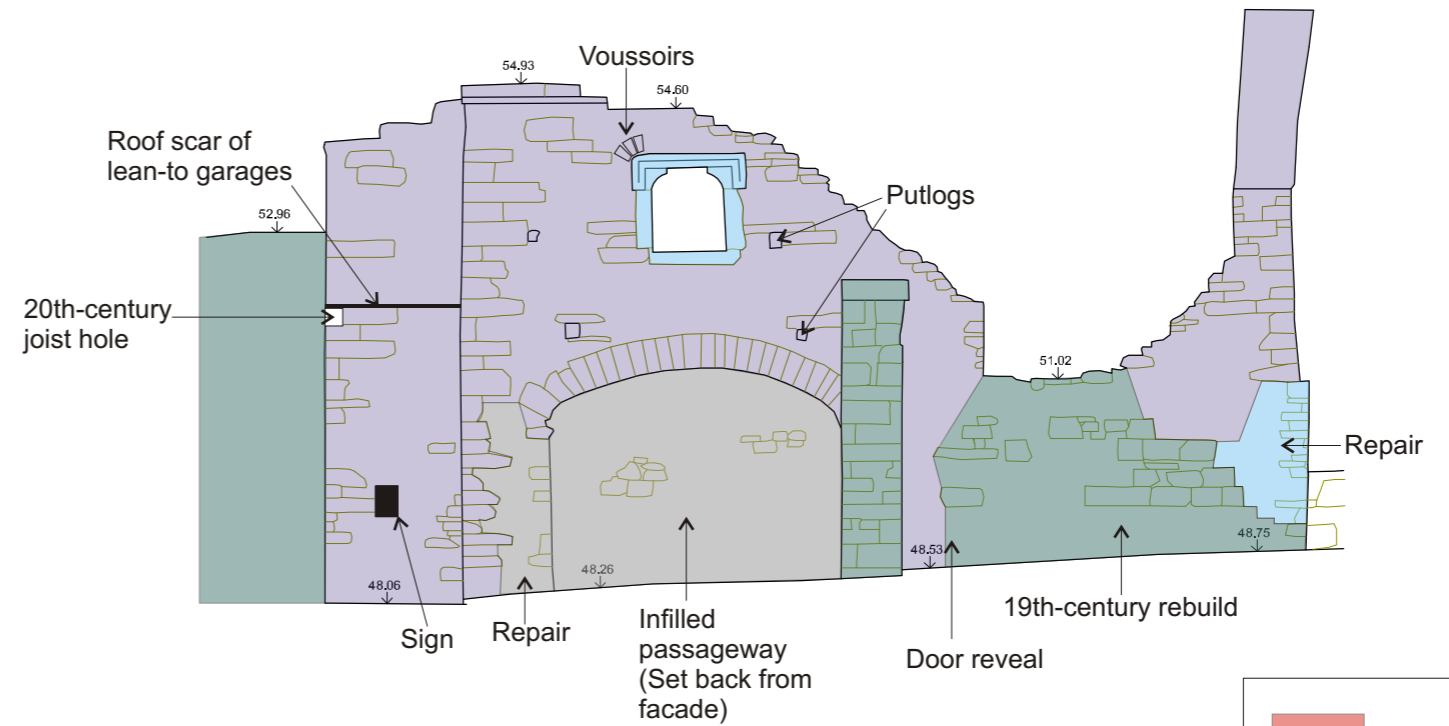
Fig. 1: Site location



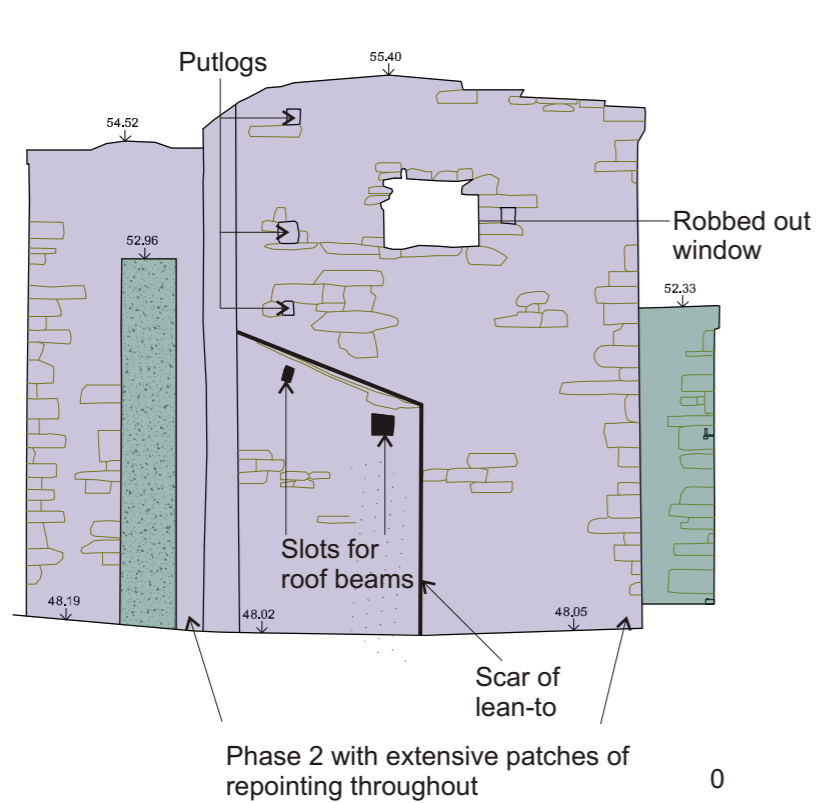
North elevation



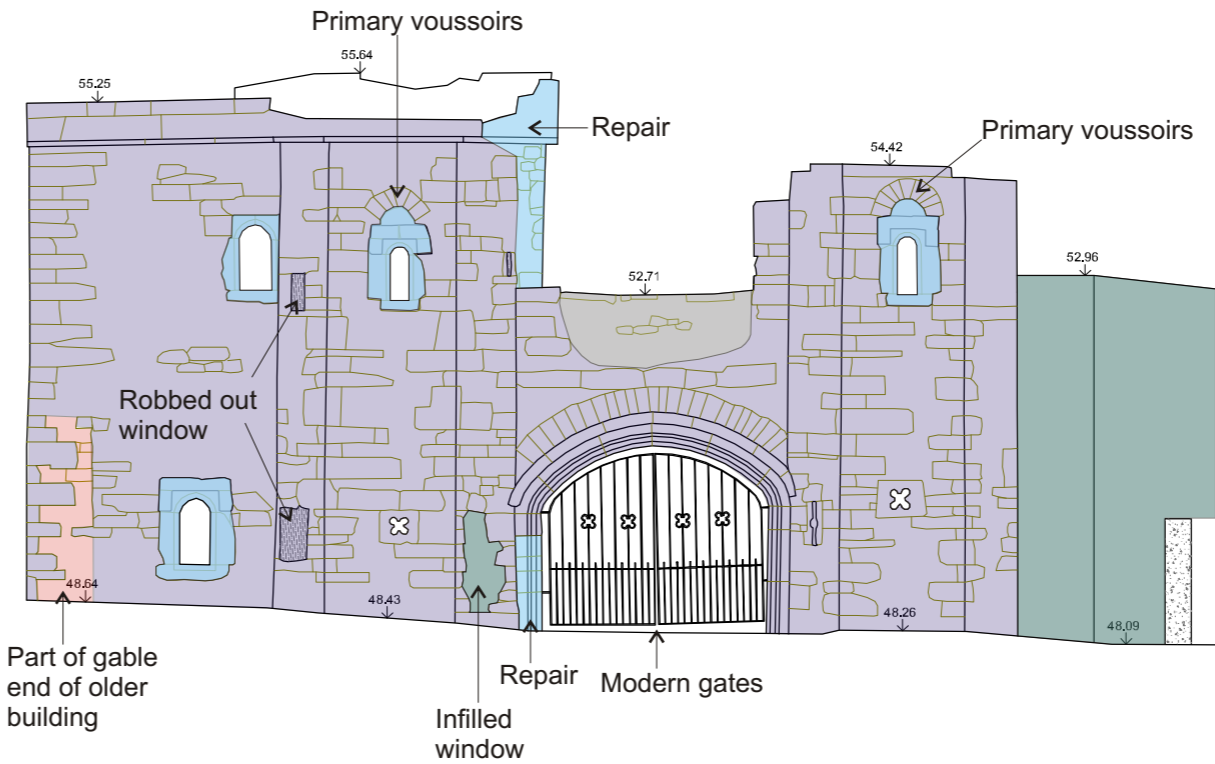
East elevation



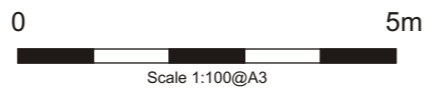
South elevation



West elevation



	Phase 1 - Pre 15th century
	Phase 2 - 15th century
	18th / 19th century
	19th century
	Early 20th century
	Modern



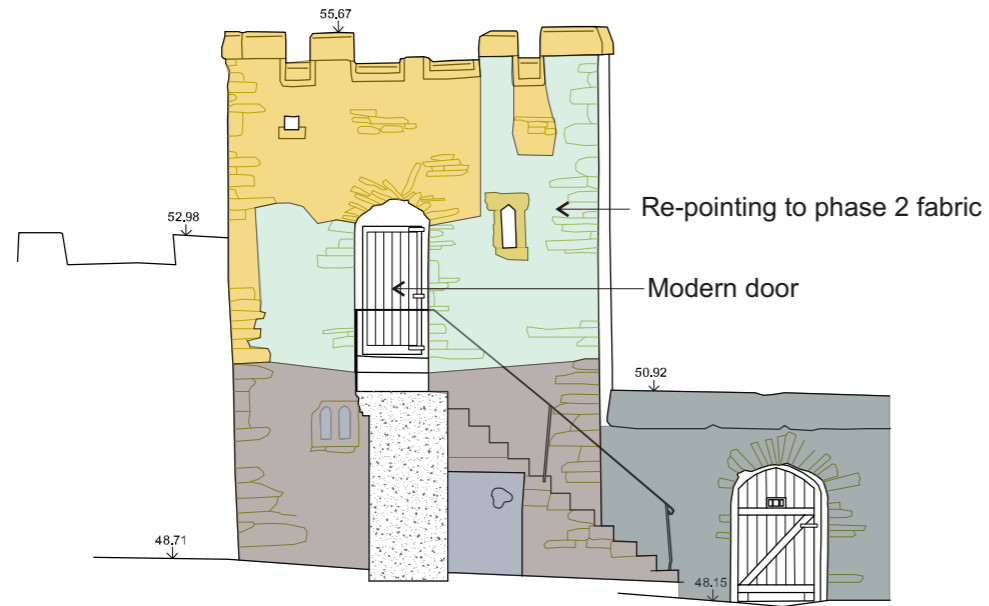
All levels arbitrary

PROJECT
 Betsy Grimal's Tower and the Still House, Tavistock Abbey, Devon

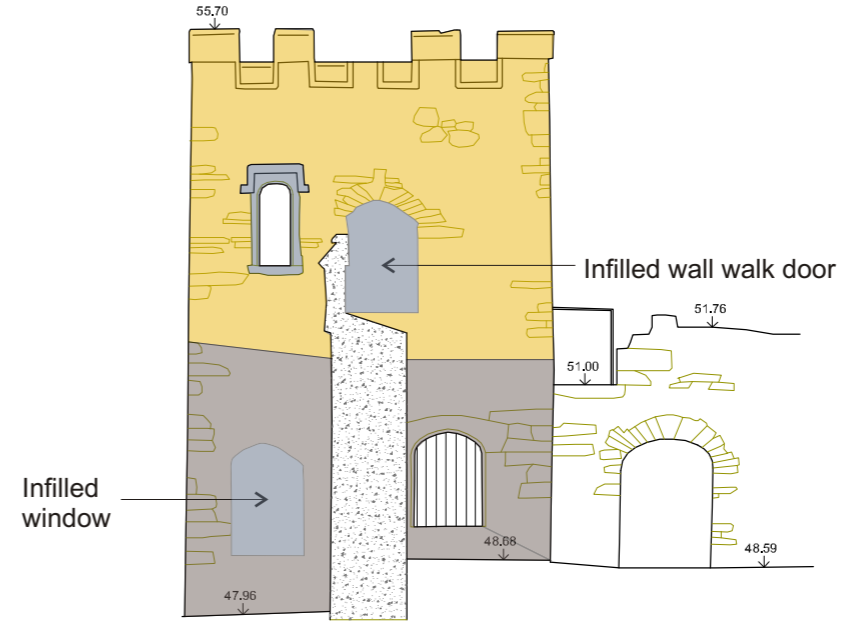
TITLE
 Fig. 2: Phased exterior elevations of Betsy Grimal's Tower



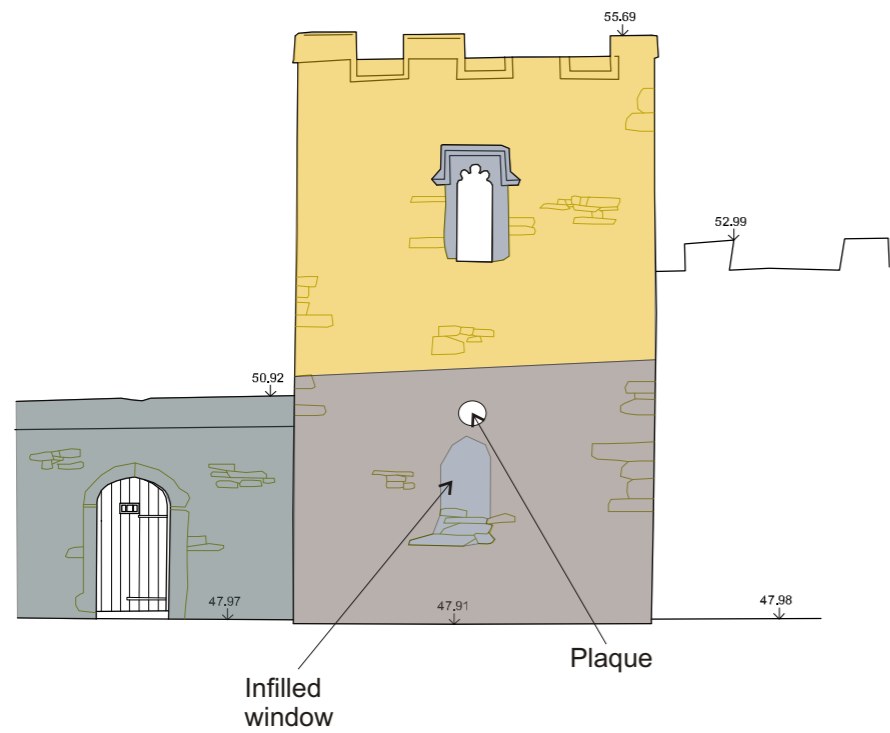
North elevation



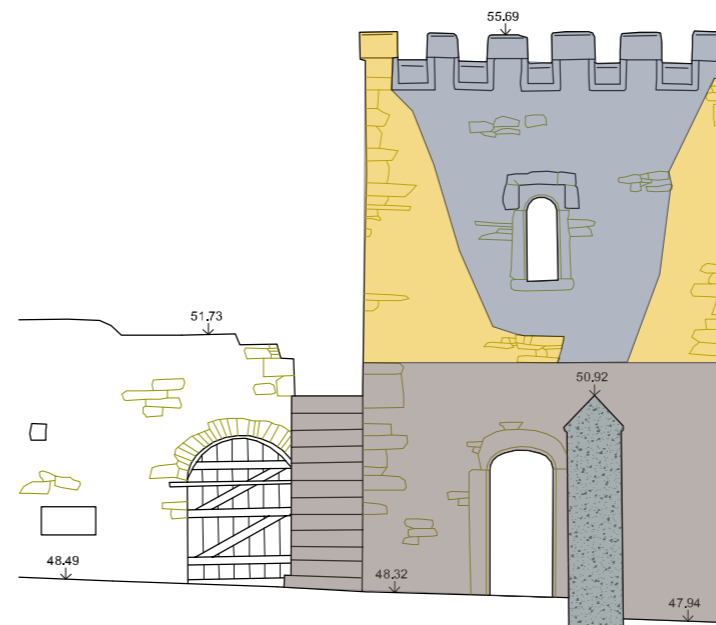
East elevation



South elevation



West elevation



PROJECT
Betsy Grimbal's Tower and the Still House, Tavistock Abbey, Devon
 TITLE
Fig. 3: Phased exterior elevations of the Still House



All levels arbitrary



Plate 1: Location shot of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking east

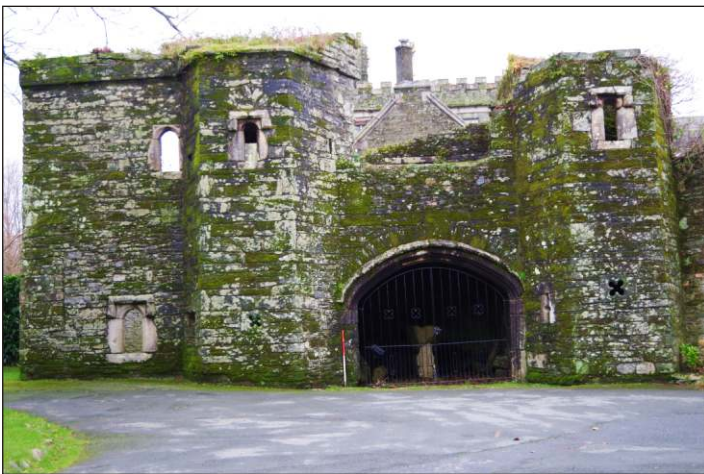


Plate 2: West of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking east-northeast. (1m scale)



Plate 3: North elevation of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking east. (1m scale)



Plate 4: East and north elevations of Betsy Grimal's Tower looking south. (1m scale)



Plate 5: North end of the east elevation of Betsy Grimal's Tower, looking west-southwest. (1m scale)



Plate 6: South end of the east elevation of Betsy Grimal's Tower, looking west-southwest. (1m scale)



Plate 7: South elevation of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking north-northwest. (1m scale)



Plate 8: East end of the gate-hall of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking east-northeast. (1m scale)



Plate 9: West end of the gate-hall of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking west-southwest. (1m scale)



Plate 10: North elevation and staircase stub of north wing of Betsy Grimal's Tower, looking north



Plate 11: East elevation of north wing of Betsy Grimal's Tower, looking south-southeast. (1m scale)



Plate 12: South elevation of north wing of Betsy Grimal's Tower, looking east-southeast. (1m scale)

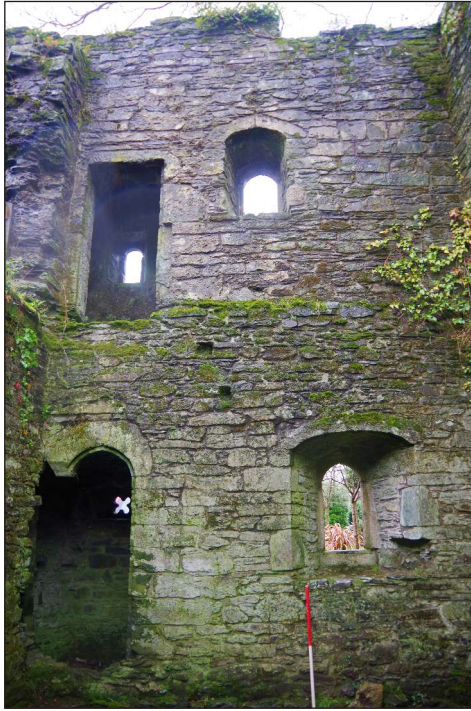


Plate 13: West elevation of north wing of Betsy Grimal's Tower, looking west-southwest. (1m scale)



Plate 14: Drain in north wing and garderobe drain of Betsy Grimal's Tower, looking northeast. (1m scale)



Plate 15: Ground-floor Garderobe in north turret of Betsy Grimal's Tower looking west-southwest. (1m scale)



Plate 16: Exposed drain of first-floor Garderobe in ground floor garderobe of Betsy Grimal's Tower. (1m scale)



Plate 17: Ground floor of south turret stair of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking south. (1m scale)

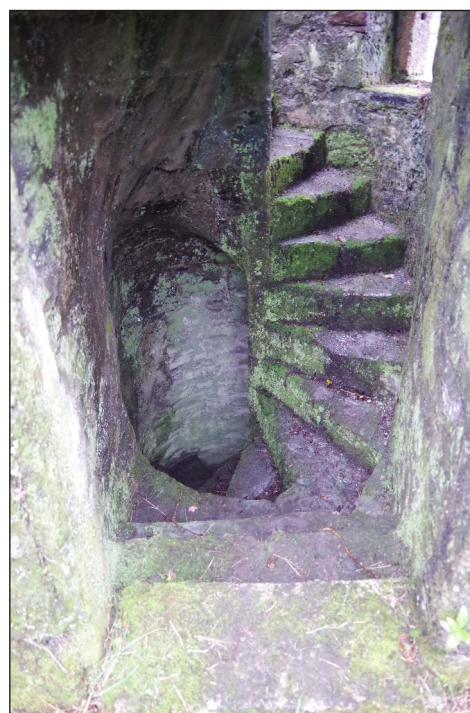


Plate 18: First floor of south turret stair of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking south-southwest



Plate 19: Location of north elevation of first-floor room above the gate-hall of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking north-northwest. (1m scale)



Plate 20: East elevation of first-floor room above the gate-hall of Betsy Grimbal's Tower, looking east-northeast. (1m scale)



Plate 21: South elevation of first-floor room above the gate-hall of Betsy Grimal's Tower, looking south-southeast. (1m scale)



Plate 22: West elevation of first-floor room above the gate-hall of Betsy Grimal's Tower, looking east. (1m scale)



Plate 23: First-floor garderobe and stub of north elevation of Betsy Grimal's Tower, looking west. (1m scale)



Plate 24: Joist sockets in north turret for first-floor of Betsy Grimal's Tower, looking west-southwest



Plate 25: Location shot of the Still House, looking southeast. (1m scale)



Plate 26: North elevation of the Still House, looking east-southeast. (1m scale)



Plate 27: West elevation of the Still House, looking east. (1m scale)



Plate 28: South and west elevations of the Still House, looking east. (1m scale)



Plate 29: East and south elevations of the Still House, looking north-northwest. (1m scale)



Plate 30: North and east elevations of the Still House, looking south. (1m scale)



Plate 31: Ground-floor north elevation of the Still House, looking northwest. (1m scale)



Plate 32: Ground-floor east elevation of the Still House, looking northeast. (1m scale)



Plate 33: Ground-floor south elevation of the Still House, looking east-southeast. (1m scale)



Plate 34: Ground-floor west elevation of the Still House, looking southeast. (1m scale)



Plate 35: First-floor north elevation of the Still House, looking northwest. (1m scale)



Plate 36: First-floor east elevation of the Still House, looking northeast. (1m scale)



Plate 37: First-floor south elevation of the Still House, looking southeast. (1m scale)



Plate 38: First-floor west elevation of the Still House, looking southwest. (1m scale)



Plate 39: Detail of first-floor corbels on west elevation of the Still House, looking east. (1m scale)

Devon Office

AC archaeology Ltd
Unit 4, Halthaies Workshops
Bradninch
Nr Exeter
Devon
EX5 4LQ

Telephone/Fax: 01392 882410

Wiltshire Office

AC archaeology Ltd
Manor Farm Stables
Chicklade
Hindon
Nr Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP3 5SU

Telephone: 01747 820581
Fax: 01747 820440

www.acarchaeology.co.uk