

'REDISCOVERING TAVISTOCK ABBEY PROJECT'

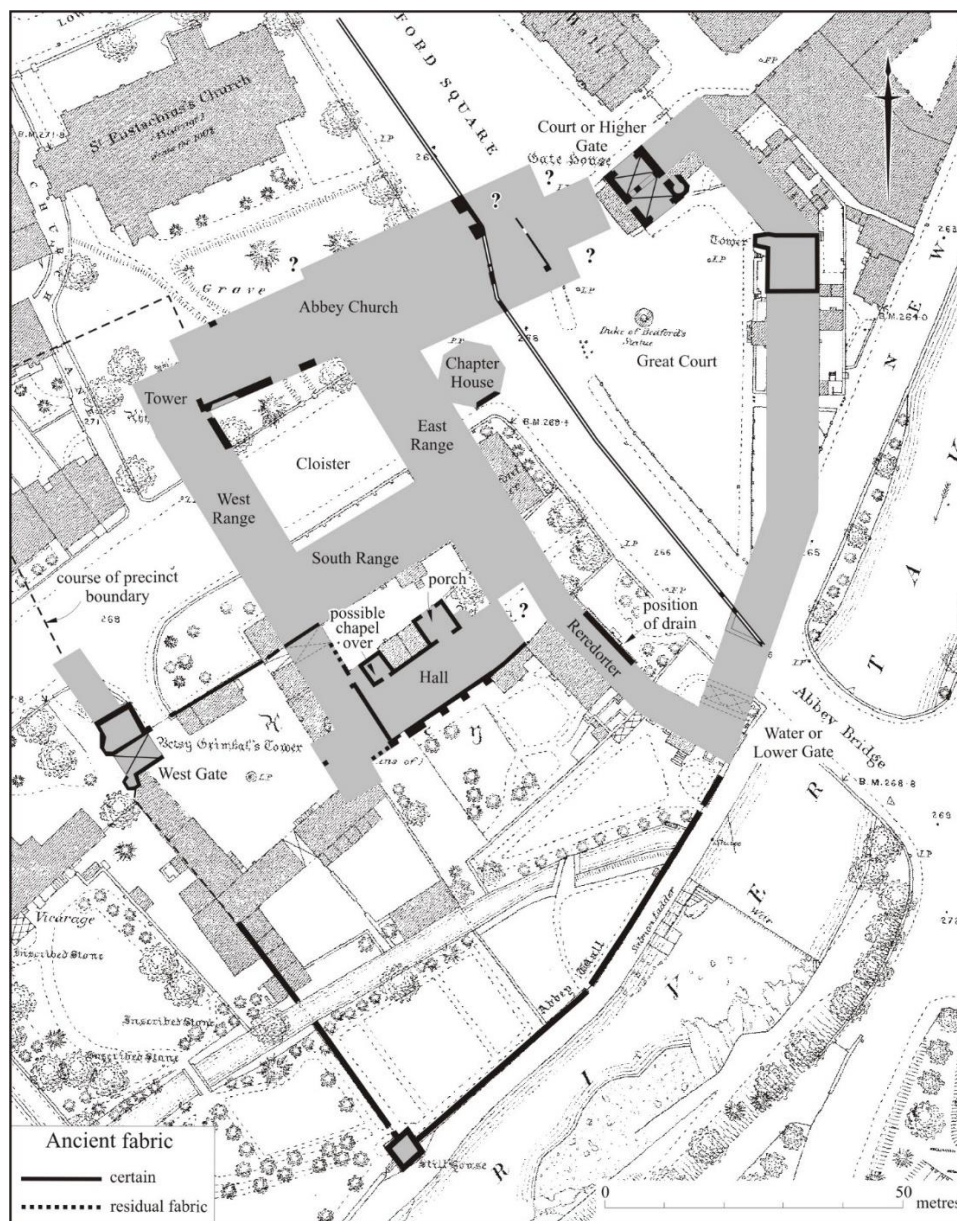


Fig. 4 Conjectural reconstruction of the main elements of the plan of Tavistock Abbey, superimposed on the OS 1:500 town plan of Tavistock, sheet CV.8.17, of 1885 (revised version of Blaylock 1998, fig. 3; and Stead and Blaylock forthcoming, fig. 11).

Fig 1: A copy of Dr Blaylock's plan of the abbey

BRIEF

FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYOR TO ESTABLISH, BY NON-INTRUSIVE MEANS, THE LOCATION, LAYOUT AND SEQUENCE OF BUILDINGS WITHIN THE ABBEY PRECINCT AND DEFINE THE POSITION AND OUTLINE OF THE ABBEY CHURCH, CLOISTER AND CHAPTER WHICH FORMS PART OF THE 'REDISCOVERING TAVISTOCK ABBEY PROJECT'

1. Summary

Tavistock Town Council as Client and Accountable Body invites tenders from consultants with the relevant skills and capability to carry out an archaeological geophysical survey (CIfA standards) of the area shown on drawing J26.014. The method suggested and to be priced for, due to the site conditions and project aims, is Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR). Alternative methods, with associated rationale as an addition to the price schedule will be accepted as part of the tender submission.

Due to the time sensitivities relating to the overall wider project deliverables, on appointment, contractors are required to apply for the necessary consents to enable the survey work to take place, which includes the Section 42 licence and production of the accompanying method statement. When considering pricing the works and the drafting of the method statement, the locations and associated activities need to be considered. e.g. the site plan includes a churchyard which has funerals and ceremonies, a highway/public footpaths and a busy public realm (Bedford Square which has regular markets). Allowance should be made when surveying the highway for unsociable hours/traffic management arrangements.

As part of the National Lottery Heritage Fund grant conditions, the project has complementary initiatives relating to community engagement. The appointed consultant should allow when surveying the churchyard/or Bedford Square for two half days working with community groups. (Note: this will include small groups, no more than 5 in number, either from the Youth Café or Heritage community partners).

The contractor should allow for contacting sector specialists and statutory bodies as part of a desk top exercise to ascertain what previous equivalent survey work exists which will inform the works programme.

On completion of the survey work, the contractor will produce a written report which is suitable to inform next steps with work commissioned to an appointed archaeologist, regarding possible excavation works. It should also be in an appropriate format for public perusal as the results will feed into a wider interpretation programme, both digital and physical. As a minimum the report should include: title page, summary of results, introduction, methods (techniques and methodologies), results, conclusions, acknowledgements, statement of indemnity, references, appendices and associated plots and plans, including interpretative plans/diagrams. These plans should be cross referenced to Blaylock's plan of the Abbey.

The contractor must allow for the costs of data archiving, within 6 months of completion of the report, including completing the online OASIS entry and depositing the digital archive with the Archaeological Data Service.

The brief is also available on the Tavistock Town Council website.

The estimated budget allowance for this project for the Geophysical Surveyor's fees is between £13,000 to £20,000 plus VAT.

The start date for contract and applying for consents is early October 2026, with survey work and completion of the report targeted for the end of December 2026.

2. Project Background

This contract forms part of the Rediscovering Abbey Remains Project. The objectives are wide and diverse; part of the project is to ensure the continuous repair and care of the Tavistock Abbey remains - Betsy Grimal's Tower and the Still House. Further elements include a geophysical survey, extensive archaeological investigations including the remains of the Cloister, research into the abbey and its life and power and the creation of AV interpretation of the finds and research. This will ensure long term interest both from the local community and visitors, and provide knowledge of the abbey (which until now has been rather piecemeal) as well as creating an educational resource for schools and research.

Tavistock Abbey is a Scheduled Monument SAM 1020401. **Refer to Appendix 2 for the area to be surveyed.**

This survey's outcome aims to reveal the sub-surface remains of the Abbey and assist the appointed archaeologist with their investigations. Further, the results of the surveys will contribute towards the creation of a more accurate plan of the Abbey buildings as they were when the monastery was still functioning, defining the position and outline of the Abbey Church, the Cloister and the Chapter House. On the western boundary of the survey area, locating the remains of a building known in the 18th century as the Apple Pound will assist in understanding the development of the buildings, as will surveying the floor within Betsy Grimal's Tower and the area to the west side of the tower arch to investigate the nature and depth of the medieval track through this gate and to trace a drain believed to flow south west from the tower.

Archaeological work as part of the project is necessitated by the partial and uneven knowledge of the structural remains of the Abbey, many details of which remain poorly understood. Within the area, part of the Cloister is visible today, and various archaeological interventions have picked up other walls of the buildings, including one believed to be a side of the Chapter House. There have been no research excavations within the Abbey precinct for over a century, and only a few very limited rescue interventions. The aims of the project are to locate the missing elements of the Abbey plan and achieve a better understanding of the existing remains. The proposed investigation includes within this brief the non-intrusive geophysical surveys and a separate tender includes a programme of targeted excavations.

The results of the survey will be included in digital and written displays for the general public in the Guildhall Interpretation Centre, and this aspect forms part of the brief as above.

The Rediscovering Tavistock Abbey Project is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund, thanks to National Lottery players.

6. Additional Site Information

See Appendix 1

7. Survey Site Plan Drawing J26.014

See Appendix II

8. Project Management

The Geophysical Survey contract will be managed by Tavistock Town Council in conjunction with Tavistock Heritage Trust and in liaison with the relevant landowners. Information about the Tavistock Town Council is available on www.tavistock.gov.uk, and the Tavistock Heritage Trust on www.heritageintavistock.org.

9. Submission requirements

Applicants should note that submissions should be made by **post** and must be received no later than the stated deadline. It is the tenderers responsibility to ensure that their tenders arrive at the office address and by this date and time. Tavistock Town Council does not undertake to consider late tenders.

If you are interested in tendering for this project please return your tender in writing in a sealed envelope by no later than **midday on Tuesday 29th September 2026** marked:

CONFIDENTIAL – REDISCOVERING TAVISTOCK ABBEY PROJECT: CAPITAL to:

The Proper Officer, Tavistock Town Council, Town Council Offices, Drake Road, TAVISTOCK, Devon, PL19 0AU.

For tender enquiries please contact Wayne Southall on 01822 616134 or via email wayne.southall@tavistock.gov.uk

For site access please contact Becky Rowe on 01822 616134 or via email becky.rowe@tavistock.gov.uk

Note – prospective tenderers are prohibited from contacting staff or councillors to canvass or encourage support for their tender outside of the prescribed process.

The tenders will be assessed 60% price, 40% technical return.

As part of the price submission, a half day rate and day rate should be included for any potential additional works commissioned.

The technical return should include:

- Methodology/programme for delivering the project scope
- Evidence of suitable insurance cover, including professional indemnity
- Schedule of anticipated stage payments
- QA documentation relating to key personnel and communication arrangements
- Two suitable references
- Evidence of experience in delivering/and or managing two projects of a similar scope/size