

**Design & Access Statement, Heritage Statement and Heritage Impact Assessment**

**Monk Bretton Priory: West Gatehouse, South Yorkshire**



**Site Address**

Monk Bretton Priory, Abbey Lane, Barnsley, S71 5QD

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This document supports Scheduled Monument Consent and Planning applications for works to the West Gatehouse at Monk Bretton Priory.

It has been produced in accordance with NPPF, Section 16: *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*, paragraphs 207 and 208 to demonstrate the significance of any heritage assets affected by an application, carrying out a full assessment of the impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage assets involved.

Monk Bretton Priory is held in the Guardianship of the Secretary of State and managed by the English Heritage Trust.

## **2. THE SITE**

### **2.1 Site Location**

Monk Bretton Priory (NGR SE 37346 06525) is located in close proximity to the village of Lundwood, near Barnsley, in South Yorkshire.

The priory is in an urban location. The ruins are bordered to the north and west by residential housing. Parkland and decommissioned rail infrastructure lie to the south and east of the application site, with vegetation within the Priory grounds screening from view the Lundwood Waste Water Treatment Works located to the north-west.

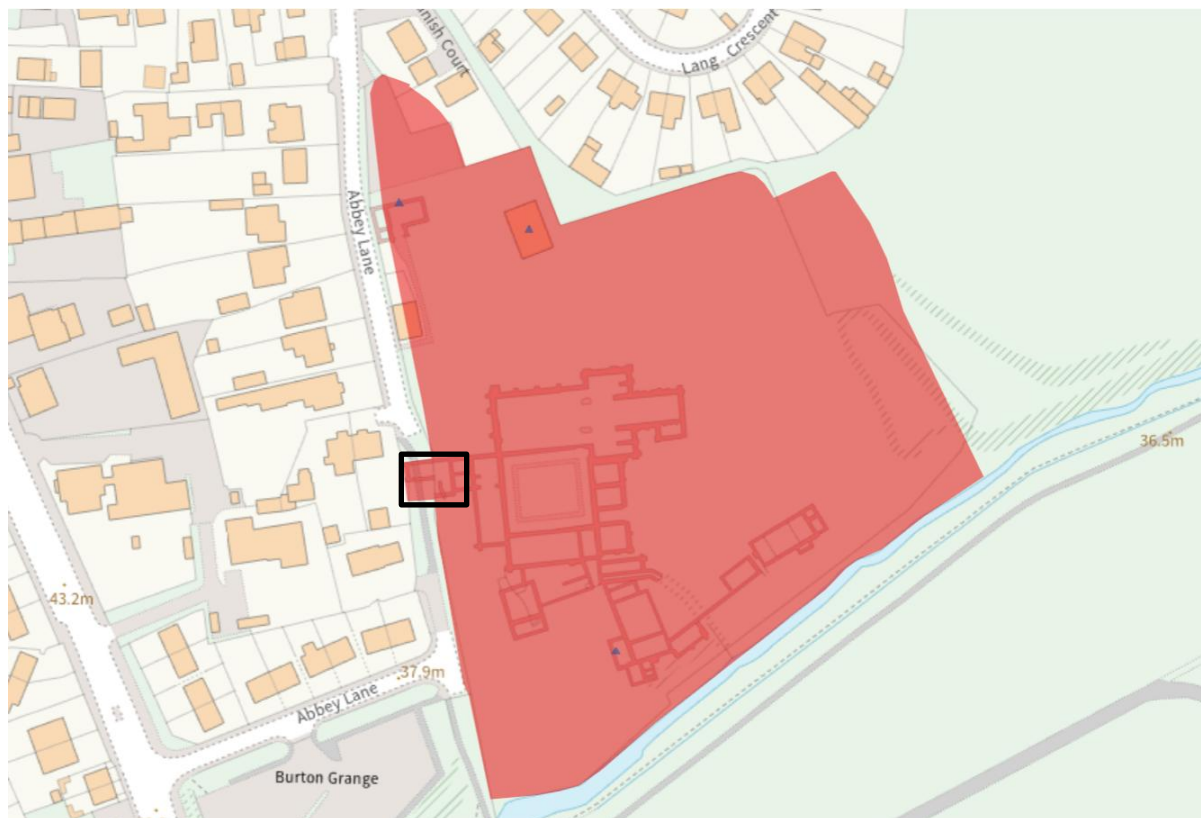
### **2.2 Ownerships**

Monk Bretton Priory was purchased by the Metropolitan Borough of Barnsley and subsequently placed into state guardianship in June 1932. The Priory is still under the ownership of the Borough and is managed by the English Heritage Trust.

A small carpark is available at the northernmost point of the scheduled area, within the gates and boundary wall lining the west of the site. A second carpark, Abbey Carpark, owned and operated by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council is located to the south-west of the priory.

### **2.3 Designations**

The application site is located within the scheduled ancient monument of 'Monk Bretton Priory Cluniac and Benedictine monastery: monastic precinct and two fishponds' (NHLE no. 1010057). The priory ruins are also a grade I listed building ('Monk Bretton Priory Remains', NHLE no. 1151178). Also within the northern portion of the scheduled area is a grade I listed administration building (NHLE no. 1151179) and grade I listed gatehouse (NHLE no. 1315023).



*Extent of scheduled ancient monument shown in red, with listed buildings marked with blue triangles – approximate application site shown in black*

## 2.4 Accessibility

Hoardings will be erected across a portion of paved public footpath. A footpath diversion has been in place since early 2025 due to risks to health and safety posed by walls within the application site. The course of the footpath has been moved within 2m east of the existing paved path. There will be no change to highways and no other change to accessibility provisions as a result of the proposals.

## 2.5 Site Description

The West Gatehouse at Monk Bretton Priory sits at the westernmost point of the scheduled monument. The priory was originally built in the twelfth century – when the gatehouse was first constructed – and was significantly extended in the thirteenth century. Following the Dissolution in 1538, the Monk Bretton site passed to the Blichman family who appear to have retained the claustral buildings as a residence. The site was then acquired by George Talbot, 6th Earl of Shrewsbury, and his wife, Elizabeth (known more widely as ‘Bess of Hardwick’) in the early 1580s. The couple constructed a range of residential buildings attached to the West Gatehouse and extending westwards from it.

The gatehouse and surrounding buildings were altered many times in the succeeding

centuries. As detailed in the accompanying Historic Building Assessment produced by FAS Heritage, the most recent alterations occurred during the twentieth century, when the monument was within the care of the Ministry of Works. The Historic Building Assessment concludes that the upper portion of the western wall – while preserving a cast of earlier building fabric in the cement render present on its east elevation – does not contain any historic fabric.

The West Gatehouse is located to the west of the boundary wall which runs north-south along the western edge of the Monk Bretton Priory scheduled area. The application site comprises three walls which are cared for as a ruin by the English Heritage Trust, along with the rest of the monument. The West Gatehouse is not roofed and the wall heads are hard-capped with mortar.

A public footpath runs north-south through the application site. There are concerns about the safety of the western wall and the possibility of collapse due to considerable mortar loss and structural vulnerability. A footpath diversion was made as a result of these concerns in 2025. It was extended in January 2026 for a further 12 months.

## 2.6 Proposed works

This application is for the erection of temporary hoardings at the West Gatehouse at Monk Bretton Priory. The hoardings will enable the dismantling and rebuilding of the upper portion of the western wall within this part of the site, which will also include the installation of new interpretation.

## 3. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### 3.1 Introduction

This assessment has been carried out in accordance with the method used for assessing heritage significance set out by English Heritage (later Historic England) in *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment (2008)*. This significance is further assessed in terms of heritage values.

The principal values considered here are:

- **Architectural value** – the aspects of the building such as its original and historically important decorative features, layout, plan form and fabric of interest.
- **Aesthetic Value** – which can derive from the design of an asset, or perhaps through more fortuitous occurrences over time. It derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

- **Evidential** – the physical aspects of a building or a place that yield evidence about its past and how an asset can connect us to the past, usually through illustrating aspects of the past, or by association with noteworthy people, movements or events.
- **Historical** - the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present – it tends to be illustrative or associative.
- **Communal Value** – relating to what a place means for people, whether it is the commemorative or symbolic values of a place that people derive part of their identity from or have particular memories of, or the social value that accrues to a place which performs a community role through its distinctiveness or function.

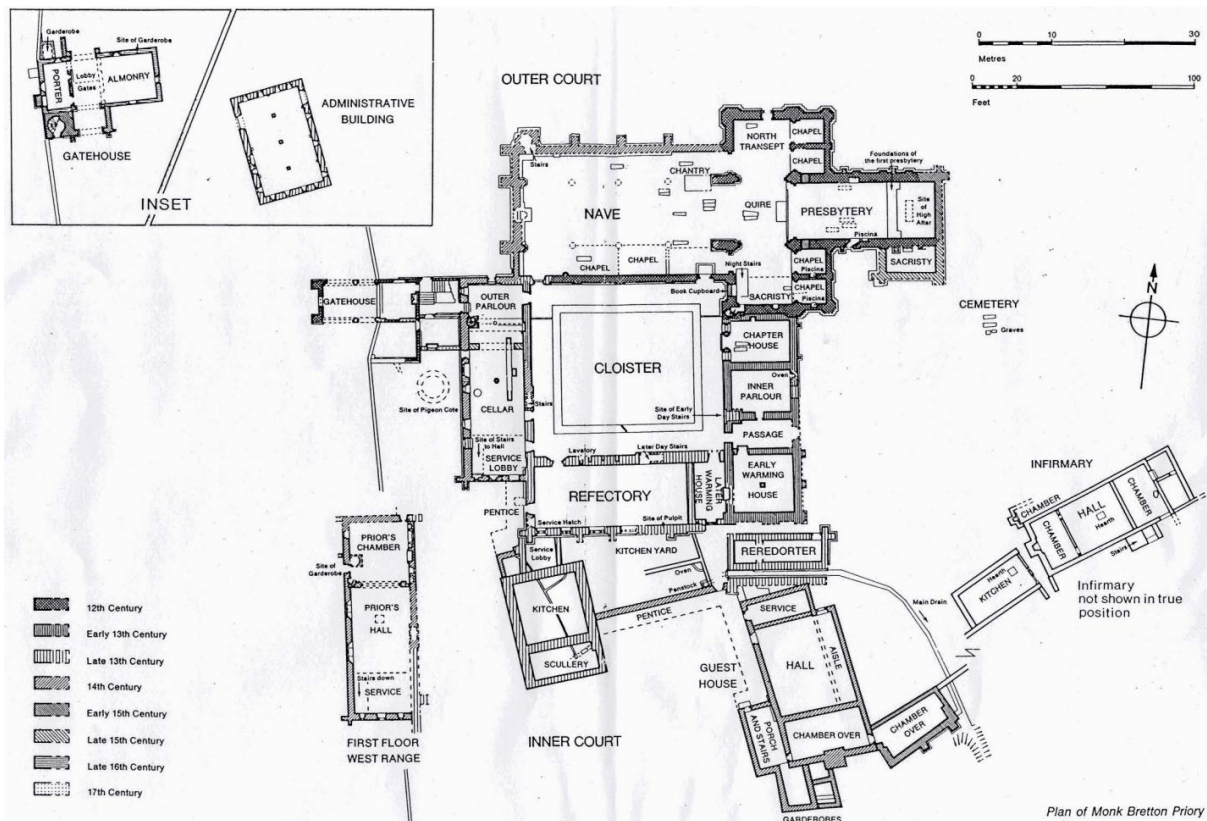
This assessment draws upon the study of historical development of the place and follows established conservation practice in using the following terms:

- **Exceptional significance** – the place or structure of the very highest historical, evidential and aesthetic value; of national or international importance.
- **High significance** – original or historic features that make a substantial contribution to the historical, evidential and aesthetic value of the heritage asset.
- **Moderate significance** – original or historic features which contribute to the historical, evidential and aesthetic value of the heritage asset; could also include relatively recent or humble features of particular interest.
- **Some significance** – original or historic features, which make a minor contribution to the historical, evidential and aesthetic value of the heritage asset, e.g. fabric located in an area that has undergone notable change, or more recent features which contribute positively to maintaining the site's character.
- **Neutral significance** – features which do not contribute positively to the historical, evidential and aesthetic value of the site, but also do not negatively impact on the appreciation of its significance.
- **Detracting** – features that obscure or detract from the historical, evidential and aesthetic value of the site.

### 3.2 Heritage assets

The standing remains of Monk Bretton Priory have their origins in the twelfth century. Elements of the priory church date from the earliest phase of building, along with some portions of the West Gatehouse as seen in the image below. The Priory, which was dedicated to St Mary Magdalene, was originally founded as a Cluniac house by Adam Fitzswane in 1154. However, by 1281 the community at Monk Bretton had aligned themselves with the Benedictine order. A considerable portion of the remains date from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when many of the buildings surrounding the cloister were constructed.

The standing remains exhibit elements of all the heritage values, particularly architectural, aesthetic and evidential, and are of exceptional significance.



*Phased plan of the site at Monk Bretton Priory*



*View of the West Gatehouse, looking north*

*Image: FAS Heritage*

The full history of the West Gatehouse is outlined in the accompanying Historic Building Assessment submitted along with this application. The West Gatehouse was not originally a gateway to the site and appears to have had a service function in its earliest iteration, possibly serving as a kitchen for the Prior's Lodging originally located to the east. The building appears to have been subsequently reworked in the fourteenth century, incorporated into the Prior's Lodging. Following the Dissolution in 1538, Monk Bretton passed first to the Blithman family and then to the Talbot family in 1580. The Talbots added a (now-lost) western range to the site, extending westwards from the site of the West Gatehouse.

Sir William Armine and his wife Mary appear to have been responsible for creating what is now the West Gatehouse in the 1620s. The gatehouse was inserted between the eastern block and the now-lost western range, with two arches added to accommodate carriages and pedestrians respectively. The gatehouse had an upper storey – accessed from the east – while a porter's doorway provided access into the lost western range at ground-floor level.

Further changes may have been made in the later-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but this is not legible at the site owing to the wholesale removal of historic fabric during the early twentieth century. The entire range west of the gatehouse was removed at this point, with

buttresses constructed to support the northwest and southwest corners of the gatehouse. Remaining first-floor timber-framing was rendered with cement, reinforced with brickwork and an outer sandstone skin. This was apparently constructed from the western side as timber framing remains in position inside the gatehouse, but this has suffered ongoing losses throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries from both decay and deliberate removal.

The Historic Building Assessment concluded that the current fabric of the West Gatehouse represents only the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century phases of the site. It concludes:

*‘The earliest fabric is the west elevation, which represents the gable end of the range that extended westward, with stone-built ground floor and half-timbered first floor. The surviving timber-framing is fragmentary, but sufficient information is contained in the impressions in the cement to reconstruct the form of the framing. The western side of the elevation reflects late 19th or early 20th-century adaptation of the building following removal of the west range, made good with stone facing and buttresses. The north and south elevations of the gateway are early 17th-century in date, constructed against the west elevation to form a new approach to the residence. These have undergone significant alteration and repair work, with elements of the fabric showing where ranges were constructed in the 18th and 19th century, and floors inserted.’*

The proposed works will involve the erection of temporary hoardings around the western side of the West Gatehouse. Only the upper portion of the western wall (reworked in either the late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century) is proposed for dismantling and rebuilding.

## 4. IMPACT OF PROPOSED WORKS

### 4.1 Introduction

The likely magnitude of the impact of the proposed development is determined by identifying the level of effect from this development upon the ‘baseline’ conditions of the site and the significance of the heritage assets identified in the assessment. This effect can be either adverse (negative) or beneficial (positive). The criteria for assessing the magnitude of impact are set out in the table below.

#### **Magnitude of Impact criteria based on ICOMOS guidance for assessing heritage impact assessment of development affecting World Heritage Sites**

<b>LEVEL OF MAGNITUDE</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>
<b>MAJOR</b>	Change to key historic building elements that contribute to its significance such that the resource is totally altered. Comprehensive changes to the setting.

<b>MODERATE</b>	Changes to many key historic building elements such that the resource is significantly modified. Changes to the setting of an historic building, such that it is significantly modified.
<b>MINOR</b>	Change to key historic building elements, such that the asset is slightly different. Change to setting of an historic building, such that it is noticeably changed.
<b>NEGLIGIBLE</b>	Slight changes to historic building elements or setting that hardly affect it.
<b>NO IMPACT</b>	No change to fabric or setting.

## 4.2 Proposed works

### 4.2.1 - Hoardings

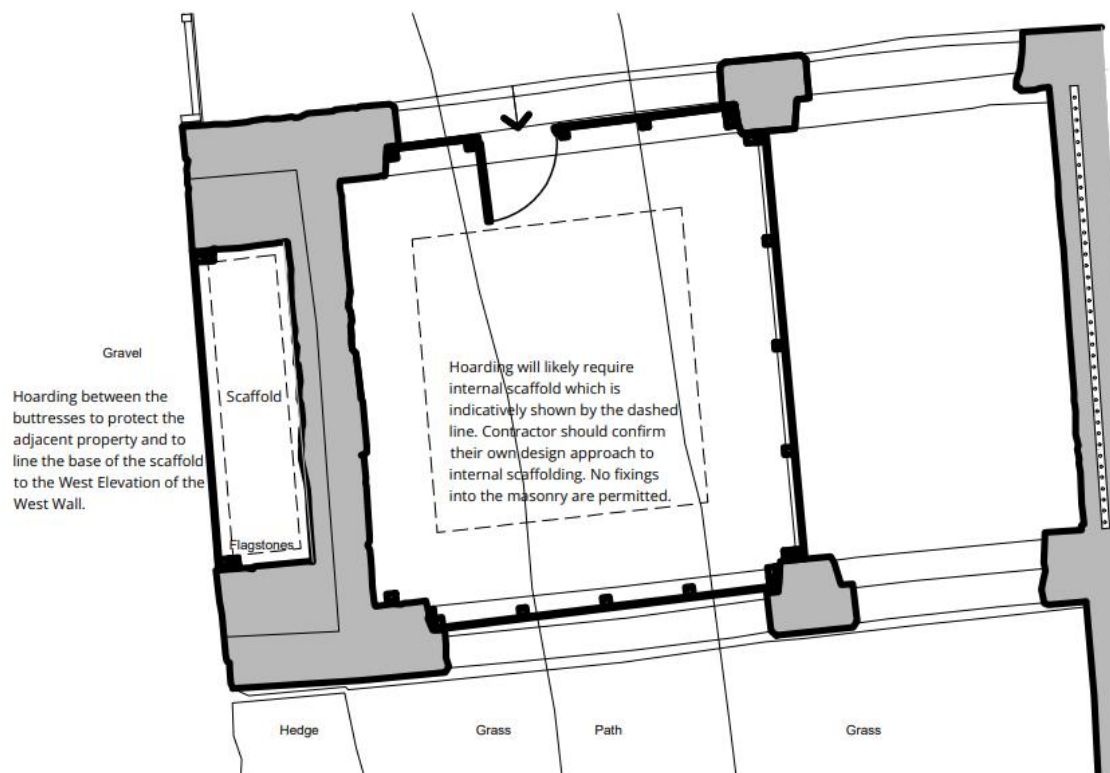
It is proposed to erect four temporary hoarding panels within the vicinity of the West Gatehouse at Monk Bretton Priory. The hoarding panels will provide protection to the public from the unstable western wall within the gatehouse and will form a compound for the dismantling and rebuilding of the upper portion of the wall which is also proposed within this scheme.

The hoardings will bisect and enclose a short section of public footpath running through the West Gatehouse. A footpath diversion was made in early 2025 due to safety concerns over the structural integrity of the western wall. Heras fencing was installed across the footpath at the northern and southern entryways to the gatehouse and inside the gatehouse itself, redirecting foot traffic onto the grass beside the footpath, in the eastern portion of the gatehouse.

The hoardings will enclose the western wall of the West Gatehouse and facilitate a more effective diversion away from the dangerous wall. Removing the risk of harm to the public in the immediate term, the hoardings will also be used as a compound within which dismantling and rebuilding works will take place. Following the dismantling of the upper portion of the western wall, brick and stone removed from the wall will be stored inside the compound until the rebuilding can take place.

The hoardings will be freestanding. They will be constructed from plywood and will be weighted internally. Their design has been carefully considered so as to prevent climbing and they will make no direct contact with the monument, minimising risk of damage to the stonework. The hoardings will be painted white to ensure maximum visibility (given their presence across the existing paved footpath). They will feature 'Conservation in Action' signage with imagery and text, including messaging about the works and their context and the

importance of conservation work at Monk Bretton Priory. Conservation in Action signage is regularly created and used by the English Heritage Trust and signs will be as attractive, engaging and easily comprehensible as possible, minimising blank space and aiming to discourage vandalism and graffiti. The site will be regularly monitored by volunteers and staff. Signage relating to the footpath diversion has also been discussed with the Rights of Way Definitive Map Officer and diversion signs will be attached to the hoardings.



Indicative Plan of the Gatehouse Hoarding Positions 1:100

#### *Positions of four hoardings panels at the West Gatehouse*

*(from drawing 'Drawing 1 Hoarding Outline Design')*

#### *4.2.2 – Dismantling of the Upper Portion of the Western Wall*

Following the installation of the hoarding compound and panels, it is proposed to dismantle the upper portion of the western wall within the West Gatehouse.

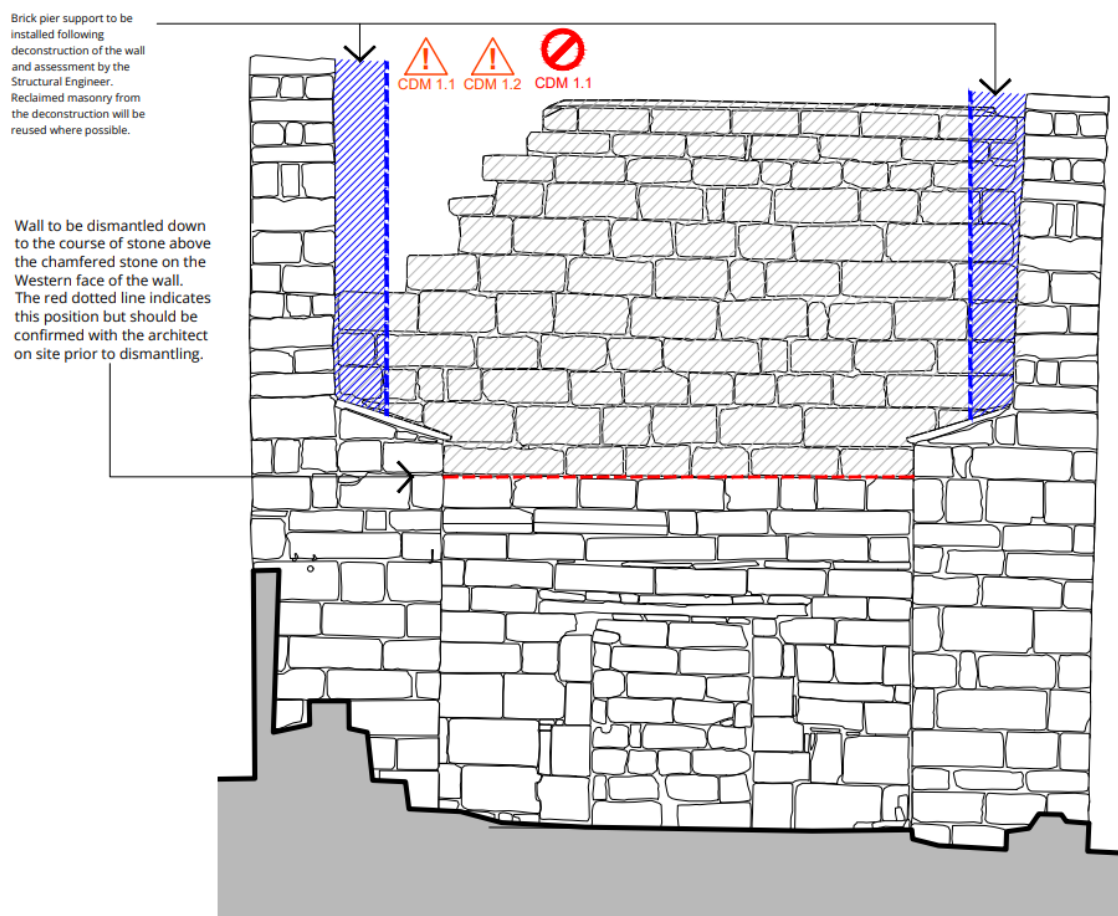
The wall will be dismantled based on the historical phasing of construction evident within the West Gatehouse. On the western elevation of the wall, the stonework will be dismantled down to the course above the chamfered stone. On the eastern elevation, the brickwork and

render will be dismantled to the position of the surviving timber lintel. The timber lintel will be removed and, if possible, dendrochronological work will be undertaken to further understand the age of this part of the wall and priory.

Upon dismantling, all stone and brickwork will be carefully stored within the hoardings compound. Bricks will also be examined and assessed upon removal. It is possible that historic bricks have been reused during previous works, and this can only be determined once the covering render is removed. Bricks will be reused wherever possible, depending on their condition, and any significant material in too poor a condition to be reinserted will be recorded and retained.

A soft lime-mortar cap will be applied to the top stone courses on both the west and east elevations of the wall. This sacrificial layer will provide weather protection and will be chamfered on both faces to ensure appropriate water shedding.

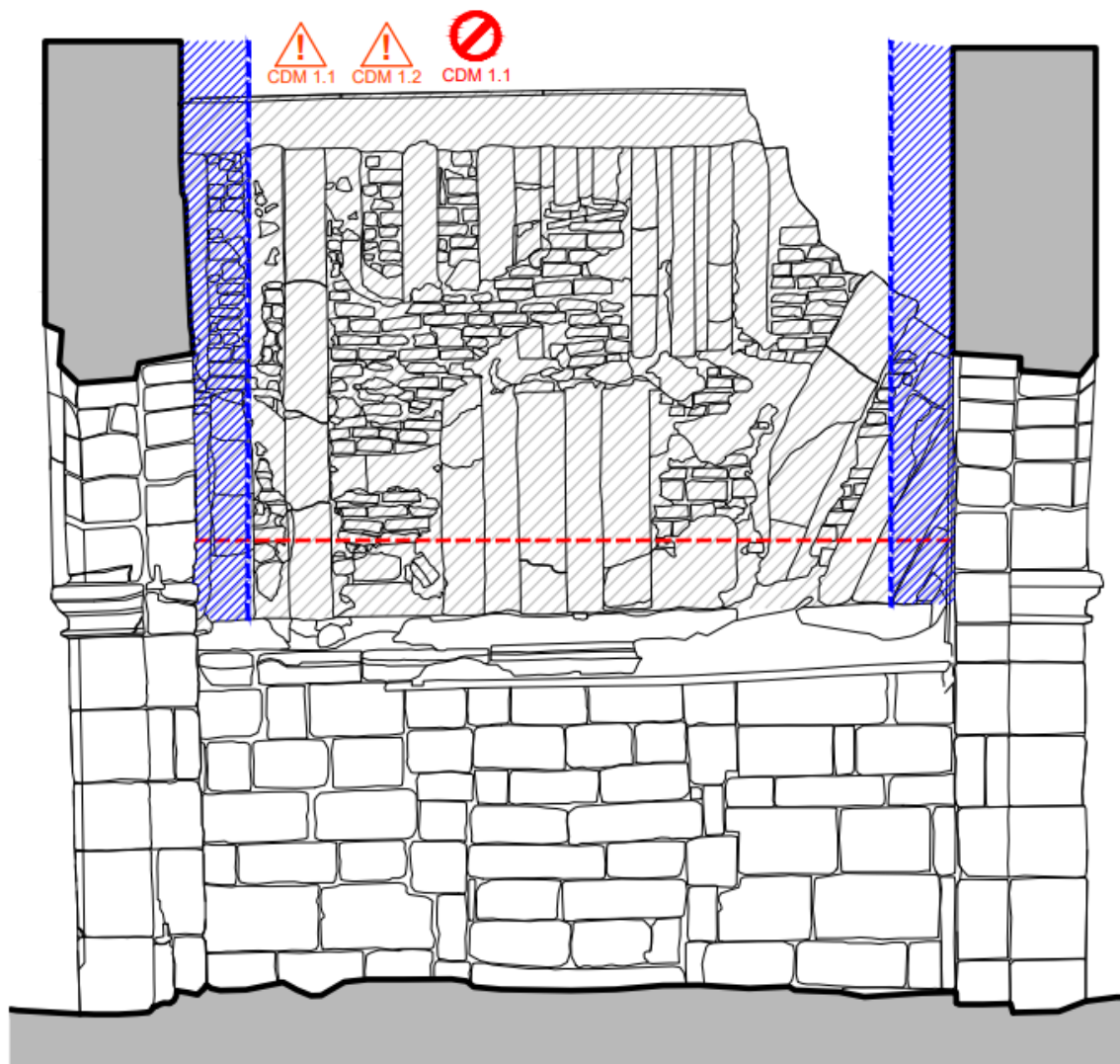
Two brick piers will also be constructed from reclaimed material already removed from the wall. The piers will provide additional support to the buttresses in close proximity to the area, stabilising the wall while the upper portion remains dismantled.



West Elevation of the West Wall of the Gatehouse 1:50

*Proposed approach to dismantling the western wall of the West Gatehouse*

(from 'Drawing 2 Dismantling the Wall')



East Elevation of the West Wall of the Gatehouse 1:50

*Proposed approach to dismantling the western wall of the West Gatehouse*

(from 'Drawing 2 Dismantling the Wall')

#### 4.2.3 – Rebuilding the Upper Portion of the Western Wall

Subject to budget constraints, the work will be phased across two financial years. First phase plans for hoardings and dismantling the wall were commissioned within the 2025/6 financial year and are included with this initial submission. If consented, the hoardings and dismantling work will be undertaken within the 2026/7 and 2027/8 financial years.

Proposals for the second phase, involving the rebuilding of the wall and the installation of new interpretation, will be commissioned within the 2026/7 financial year. The rebuilding work will

be subject to agreement of plans and designs with the local authority. The possibility of approving exact specifications and plans for rebuilding at a later date was confirmed during pre-application consultation with Conservation Officer Anthony Wiles. Rebuilding will then be carried out as soon as possible – and subject to budgets – either within the 2026/7 or 2027/8 financial year.

### **4.3 Impact of proposed works**

The hoardings will ensure the safety of the public from a vulnerable and potentially dangerous area of Monk Bretton Priory in advance of works. Hoardings will also facilitate crucial conservation work within the compound they will provide. While existing Heras fencing is regularly moved by members of the public who continue to use the section of footpath beneath the dangerous wall, the hoardings will provide a more robust solution to minimising risk. Moreover, the proposed design for the hoardings prioritises open communication about the works occurring on site and will provide an important interface between local people and those managing and caring for the monument.

The upper portion of the western wall was reworked in either the late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century. The upper portion of the wall is now in a decayed condition where it is likely to fall down in the near future if no intervention is made. The wall has already been recorded in substantial detail and photogrammetry has been produced. Additional recording will take place prior to dismantling, with analysis accompanying the removal of some material. The timber present within the wall, for example, has decayed considerably and is compromising structural integrity. Upon removal, and if there is sufficient material to do so, the timber will be dendro-dated. This has potential to reinforce the architectural, historic and evidential value of the site, allowing the many phases of the West Gatehouse to be better understood.

The hoardings will share information about the works and the heritage significance of this part of the site, addressing the closure of the footpath and informing the public of the importance of ongoing conservation. The hoardings will temporarily impact the setting of the wider Monk Bretton site and the aesthetic value of the West Gatehouse, hiding a section of it from view. However, the hoardings are key for managing health and safety risk and will support, maintain and improve the heritage values embodied within this area of the site overall. The public-facing designs will support and improve communal value, communicating the work which will be taking place inside the hoardings, while the provision of an internal compound will enable key rebuilding works, improving the aesthetic and architectural value of the West Gatehouse long-term.

The dismantling of the upper portion of the western wall will have a negligible impact on the historic significance of the West Gatehouse. The wall has been reworked within the recent history of the site and, though potentially reusing historic materials, does not hold architectural or aesthetic value. The cement render holds some evidential value. The removal

of the render – although not itself constituting the historic fabric of the building – will result in some change. However, the render has been well-recorded and researched and any negligible impact will be mitigated by the installation of new interpretation specifically intended to preserve and improve the evidential and communal value of this part of the priory.

The rebuilding of the wall will positively impact the aesthetic, historic and communal value of the site. Rebuilding will remove the health and safety risk posed by the wall in its current state. This will enable the removal of existing fencing and improve the appearance of this area of the site, as well as facilitating access to the wall itself. The creation of interpretation during the rebuilding will also support the communal and historic value of the site, better communicating the history and significance of the West Gatehouse.

The project is key to protecting the West Gatehouse. It will enable the recording and long-term conservation of this area of the site and will contribute to sustaining and improving its heritage value.

#### **4.4 Justification**

Employers have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that non-employees (including visitors) are not exposed to risks to their health and safety under s.3 of the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974.

The area within the West Gatehouse and in the garden of the neighbouring property to the west has been identified as a significant hazard due to the decaying mortar and risk of collapse. The public footpath lies within a primarily residential area and is used by residents to access the main road to the west of Monk Bretton Priory as well as by visitors using the council carpark located south of the site. A footpath closure will need to remain in place until the risk is removed and the area is made safe. This can only be achieved by dismantling and rebuilding the wall.

The English Heritage Trust has five charitable objects enshrined in its governing document, as recorded by the Charity Commission. The first of these five objects is '1) TO PROMOTE THE CONSERVATION OF THE HBMCE HERITAGE ASSETS AND THE HBMCE COLLECTIONS, AND THEIR ENHANCEMENT FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT, INCLUDING BY THE PROVISION OF ADVICE, ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES TO HBMCE'.<sup>1</sup> The proposals outlined within this document are directly in line with this objective. The erection of hoardings and the subsequent dismantling and rebuilding of the West Gatehouse at Monk

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<sup>1</sup> 'Governing document', The English Heritage Trust, charity number: 1140351, (2015), *Charity Commission for England and Wales*, [[https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/en/constituency-search/-/charity-details/5015177/governing-document?\\_uk\\_gov\\_ccew\\_onereg\\_charitydetails\\_web\\_portlet\\_CharityDetailsPortlet\\_organisationNumber=5015177](https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/en/constituency-search/-/charity-details/5015177/governing-document?_uk_gov_ccew_onereg_charitydetails_web_portlet_CharityDetailsPortlet_organisationNumber=5015177); accessed 9<sup>th</sup> April 2026]

Bretton Priory are vital in conserving the heritage asset and enhancing it for public benefit, removing risk to the public and installing new interpretation to improve understanding.

#### 4.5 Biodiversity Net Gain

Less than 25m<sup>2</sup> of natural habitat is impacted by the development and therefore the *de minimis* exemption applies.

#### 4.6 Flood Risk

The Environment Agency locates the site within Flood Zone I with a low probability of flooding. There will be no alterations to ground levels or topography, so there is no anticipated change in flood risk.

### 5. CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Magnitude of impacts on significance and setting

Asset Name	Impact on Architectural & Aesthetic value	Impact on Historic & Evidential Value	Impact on Communal Value	Impact on the Setting	Overall Impact
West Gatehouse	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Minor	Minor

#### 5.2 Summary of the magnitude of impacts on the overall significance and resulting level of harm

Asset Name	Overall Significance	Overall Impact	Harm
West Gatehouse	Moderate	Minor	Less than substantial

#### 5.3 Concluding statement

This Heritage Statement and Heritage Impact Assessment has been undertaken to fulfil the requirement of NPPF, Paragraph 207, which obliges the applicant to study and describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided here is proportionate to the assets' importance and presented to facilitate the understanding of the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Overall it is considered that the proposed works will resolve a current risk to health and safety, will affect historic fabric to a minimal degree and will improve readability of the site's significance. As a result, the works will have only a minor impact on the character and significance of the asset. Concurrently, it is considered that the development will cause less than substantial harm to the significance of Monk Bretton Priory and the administration building and gatehouse as heritage assets.

The NPPF, paragraph 215, states that where a development proposal leads to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

The conservation repair works will be of public benefit in resolving a current risk to health and safety, protecting a now vulnerable area of this nationally important heritage asset. The subsequent rebuilding will also be accompanied by the introduction of new high-quality interpretation to the site, improving the readability of an under-appreciated area of the priory and aiding public understanding of its history.