

It's just a phase we're going through

- Buildings like Breedon Priory Church were built over many centuries, with bits being added on and taken away. This can make it very difficult to work out what they may have looked like in the past.

- Archaeologists are like detectives, using clues around a building to work out how it has changed over time. Each of these changes is called a **phase**.

- Once they have worked out the phases of a building, archaeologists can start to date when these changes occurred.

- Building styles change over time due to technology and fashion. This means that the shape of a window or doorway can be an important clue for dating a particular phase.

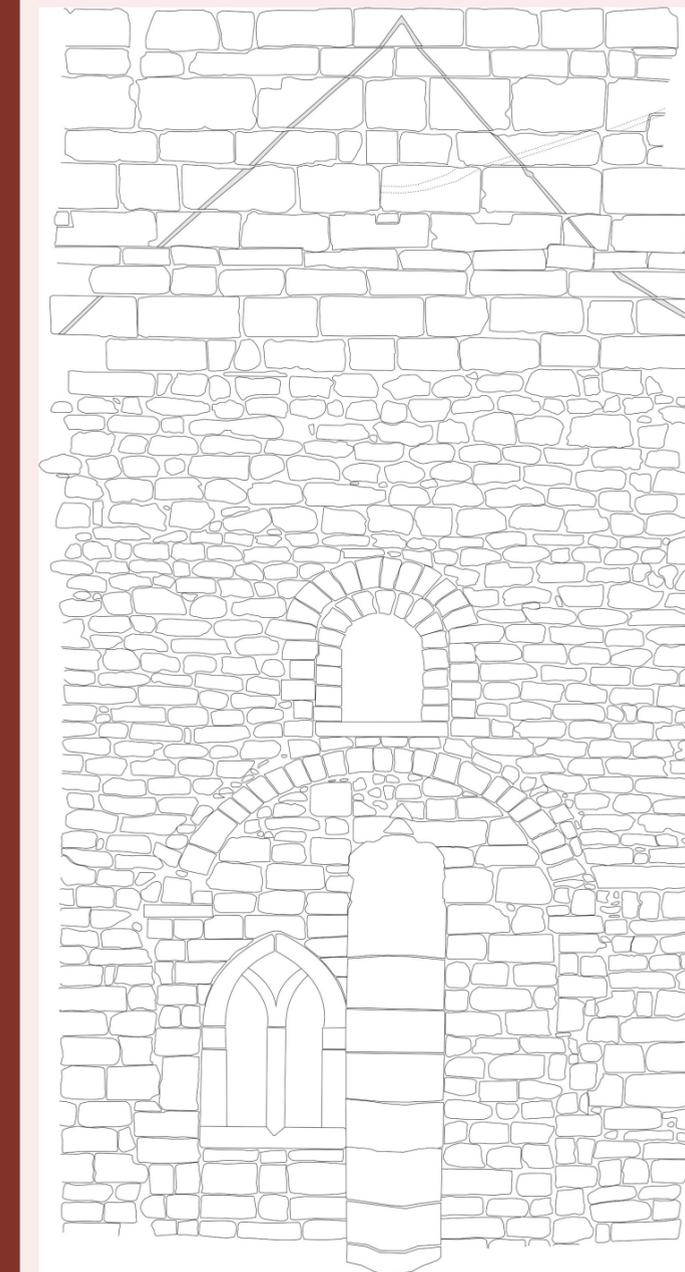
- Use this guide to find clues about how the church has changed over time, then try and solve our West Wall mystery!

8. Put your skills to the test!

Now you've seen some of the clues archaeologists use to 'read' a building, have a go yourself! Go outside the church and look at the section of the west wall drawn on the front cover.

- How many different building phases can you identify? Colour in the front cover using a different colour for each phase.
- Is there any evidence that there was another building attached here? Is there any evidence that this building changed over time?
- As you can't see inside the tower here's something to start you off – the upper window is shorter than when it was built and has been cut by something. Other things you might want to think about:
 - Look at the stones. Are there rows made up of different shapes and sizes? If so, they are probably of a different date
 - Identify features such as blocked archways and rooflines
 - Think about how things need to fit together, e.g. for a roofline to be on a building, the building must have been there at the same time or earlier
 - The column sticking out of the wall is rather odd. Can you see something like it inside the church?

This is a hard task, so don't worry if you get stuck! You can find the answers in our 'Unpicking the West Wall' leaflet or on our website, www.breedonpriorychurch.org

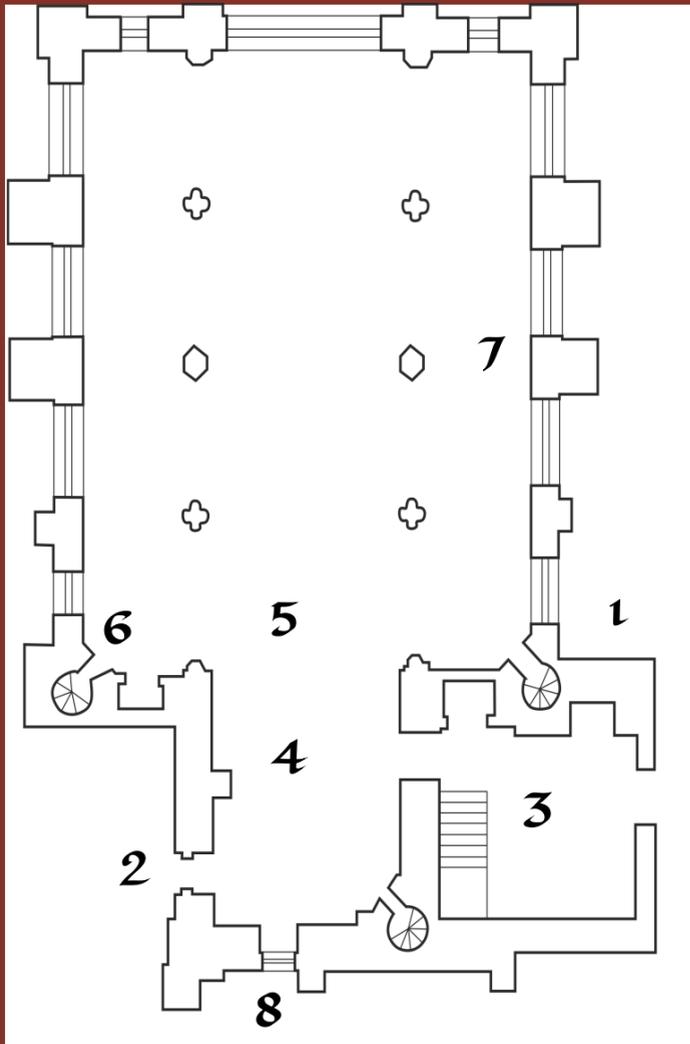


 **breedon
PRIORY
Church**

Building Detectives

*Unravel Breedon's hidden
history and unlock its
secrets*





Use this map to find the clues at each location. These aren't the only clues in the building— if you see any others, well done! You can add these to your map too.

1. There is a strange wall disappearing into the ground here. What might this tell us?

Buried walls tell us that buildings may have been a different shape in the past. When a building is demolished, the **foundations** are often left as these are below ground. Archaeologists can excavate these to work out what the earlier building looked like, although it can be hard. Here, we know there is a wall, but without more evidence we don't really know what it was part of. *What do you think?*

2. Look above the door. What do you think the groove running up from right to left might be?

This is a **roof scar**, where an old roofline once ran. This means either the roof of a building has changed or, as here, that there was once a building that has now gone. We know that Breedon was once the home to a group of monks known as Augustinian canons so this scar probably marks the cloisters, where the canons worked and studied.

See if you can spot other rooflines around the building.



3. Investigate inside and outside the porch. Can you work out which doorway was used during medieval times?

Blocked doorways or windows show how a building changes over time. Here, the medieval doorway is the blocked one under an elaborate arch. The door to the outside was inserted through a medieval window; you can see the difference in the stonework outside. The door to the main church has bricks in it, so it is younger than the blocked doorway.

Can you find three more blocked doorways around the church?

4. Look up! What do the slots in the wood tell you?

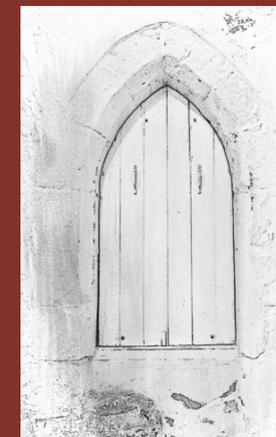
Slots like this suggest that there was once a wooden wall here. In fact, if you look on the wall opposite the porch door, you will find a photograph of it. However, be careful—big timbers are often re-used, so empty slots can also mean the wood was used in an earlier building before being recycled.



5. Compare the stone above the tower arch to the stone in the nave. What might this tell us?

Different time periods had different ways of building walls. Looking at differences in walls is an important tool in working out their **phasing**. If you look up above the tower arch, you can see how the wall here looks quite 'rubbly' when compared to the main nave. This suggests the tower is much earlier than the nave.

Can you see differences and similarities in other walls at Breedon?



6. Find the strange white painted cover in the wall and look underneath it. The stone is very worn, can you work out why?

Worn stones like this suggest they have been heavily used in the past. Here, it forms the bottom of a staircase that has been worn by many people walking up and down them. This was probably the night stairs, which the canons would have used to walk from their dormitory to the church for night time prayers.

7. Look closely at the wall. As well as the Saxon sculptures, there are other carved stones with lines and triangles. What do these tell you about this wall?

These **recycled stones** belong to an earlier window or doorway (the triangles, called chevrons, can still be seen over a tower window). These tell us that an earlier building has been knocked down and used to build a later wall. However, as stone is valuable, the earlier building does not have to be on this site—similar stones, probably from the church, also appear in a small prison called a lock-up at the bottom of the hill.

