

HOW WAS THE MONASTERY BUILT?



There were no diggers, lorries, excavators, cranes, chainsaws, electric drills or cement mixers in mediaeval times. What tools did builders use?

Look at the picture to find out.

To lift the heavy blocks of stone they used a windlass - a type of crane. Here they would turn the large wheel and hoist up a load of stone. How is the wheel being turned?

Modern builders wear special safety equipment - helmets and steel-capped boots. What are these builders wearing?

Some tools have hardly changed - can you find the hammer and the trowel?

The architect is the man on the left, holding a set square, used to draw right angles.

WHO'S WHO ON THE MONASTERY BUILDING SITE?

To build a large monastery in mediaeval times would have been a very large job. The monks would have gathered together a large team of masterbuilders and craftsmen:

Architect	to design and oversee the building
Stonecutters	cutting stone from a quarry
Stonemasons	laying the stones on site
Mortar Mixers	mixing the mortar to cement the stones together
Woodcutters	to cut down the many trees needed to build the workshops, arches, the roof, ladders and scaffolding
Sculptors	carving the stone into statues or decorating the stone carving the roof bosses into intricate shapes
Carpenters	making lifting equipment for the stonemasons, building the framework of the roof, arches, platforms, ladders and scaffolding.
Plasterers	plastering the walls and ceilings
Roofers	putting roofs and gutters on the buildings
Blacksmith	repairing and sharpening metal tools, make nails, church doors, door handles, gateways and iron wheels for carts
Locksmith	making locks and keys
Glass makers & artists	- designing and making the stained glass windows



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There were many other trades needed to make sure the building work went well:

The **Cartwright** provided large carts needed to transport stone, wood and other materials to the building site.

A **Ropemaker** would have been very busy making the many ropes that were used to lash scaffolding together, haul stone, and for many other uses.

The **Saddler** would be used to make leather saddles and collars for the horses and bullocks used to pull the carts.

The **Candlemaker** made the beautiful candles to go into the Priory Church and smaller ones for the monks to use.

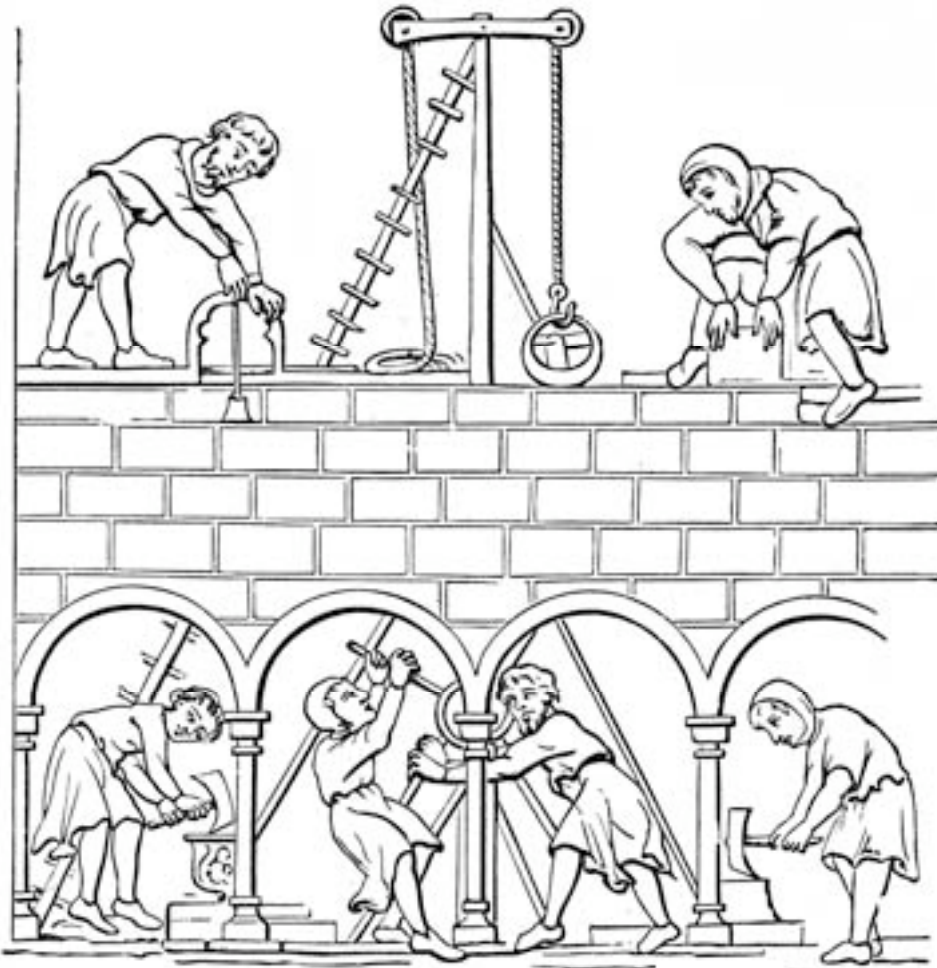
Bellmakers would make fine bells for the church.

Drapers would have made fabrics for the church.

Bakers and butchers kept the workers fed.

Innkeepers and taverners rented out rooms to the workforce and sold ale to them.

Local people rented out sheds or stables and looked after some of the horses used on the building site.

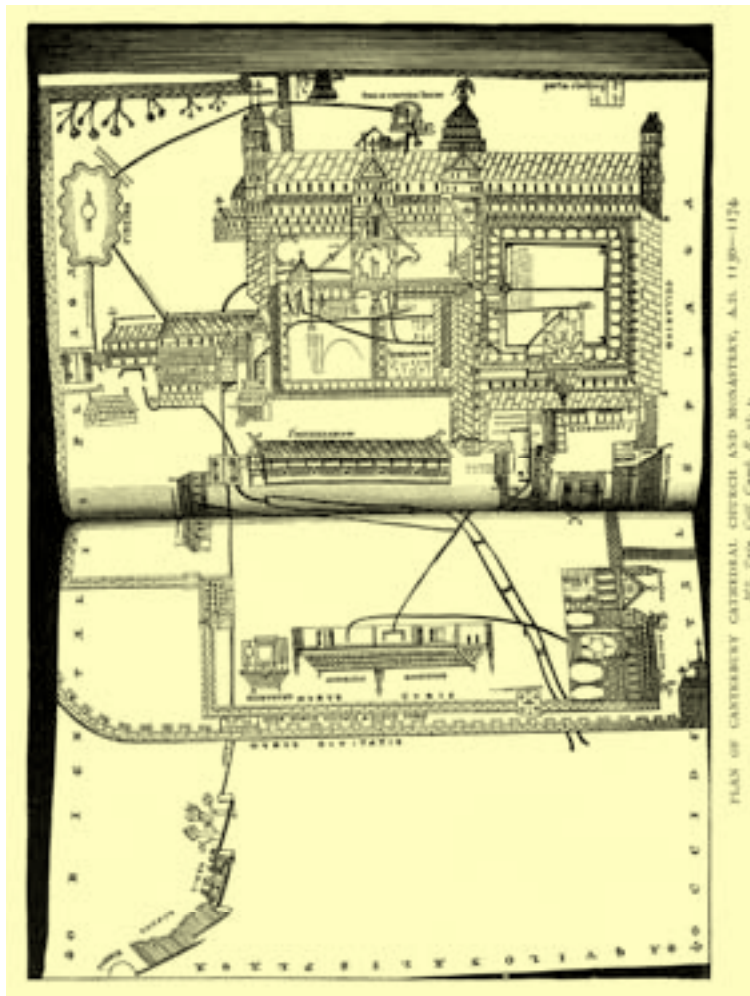


The monastery itself ought to be built so as to contain all necessities within it . . . so that monks shall have no need to wander abroad, as this is not helpful to their souls.

St Benedict, c. AD 535

There would be several buildings within the monastery walls, all with a special purpose. These would include:

- Church** - the heart of the monastery, used for 'public' worship
- Chapter House** - where meetings were held to discuss matters of business.
- Kitchen** - where all the food was prepared
- Cellar** - for storing ale and wine (often healthier than water!)
- Bakehouse and Brewhouse** - where bread, ale and wine were made
- Refectory** - the dining hall
- Dormitory** - where the monks slept
- Scriptorium** - where books were copied and written
- Library** - where books and manuscripts were stored
- Guesthouse and Stables** - for visitors and their horses
- Infirmary** - where the sick were cared for
- Prior's House** - where the head of the monastery lived
- Cloister** - a covered arcade
- Necessarium** - a mediaeval toilet block
- Gatehouse** - where all visitors would be met



This illustration shows a plan of the Cathedral of Canterbury with the monastic buildings and the drains and waterpipes that served the monastery. This is one of the first known plans which shows such a wealth of detail.

The layout of a monastery usually followed a standard plan. At the heart would be a large courtyard or garden, usually surrounded by a cloister, or covered arcade. In the shelter of the cloister the monks would walk with heads bowed in private prayer.

The monastery's church was the largest and most important building. Outside the monastery there would be fields, gardens and orchards where the monks grew food for the table and herbs for medicine.

Many monasteries also had a fish pond which, as meat was seldom eaten, was a valuable source of food.

LINKS WITH THE PAST!

There were a lot of monasteries, nunneries and friaries in mediaeval York. Many have disappeared, but there are still a lot of street names that remind us that they existed.

Can you find them on this map?

Priory Street, Nunnery Lane, Trinity Lane, Carmelite Street, Marygate, Monkgate.

