

Timeline of St Peter's Church / Plume Building

- 1180** granted to the Premonstratensian canons when they moved from Great Parndon to Maldon
- 1244** St Peter's was united with All Saints – but was used by the Guild of the Assumption of Our Lady. The Guild was dissolved in 1549.
- 1577** The medieval church of St. Peter officially abandoned by its congregation, only used for occasional baptisms, marriages and burials and gradually fell into decay.
- 1628** *Charitable Brief (Letters Patent) for the repair of parish church of St. Mary, 1628* Mentions the poor state of St Peter's 'hauving the ruynes thereof (by the consent of the Bishop) converted to a publique School ...'
- 1690s** Plume decided to restore the Tower and, by 1699, erected the current brick building on the foundations of St. Peter's Church nave. The grammar school occupied the lower room, leaving the upper storey to accommodate his Library after his death in 1704, and the Plume Trust set up to administer the building.
- 1817** Eastern extension to accommodate National School.
- 1843** National School moved out and Library interior refurbished.
- 1875–6** The Tower had been a concern on a number of occasions. Reports were prepared in 1875 and 1876 and repairs carried out at a cost of £133.18.6.
- 1908** Further work was done by P.M. Beaumont, a Maldon architect.
- 1917** Discussion took place on the possibility of selling the books and pictures and using the proceeds for the erection of a more up to date institution which should be of more practical benefit to the town. Trustees agreed to close the Library at the end of the year and have the books and paintings valued. It was agreed later not to dispose of any of the books at that time.
- 1919** Rev. E.L.B. Kevill-Davies was pressing the Charity Commission to order his reinstatement as Trustee, and a Public Inquiry was held. He reported that it was the intention of the Trustees to sell the books and pictures of the Library and dispose of the proceeds by erecting a Church Institute, hence the Inquiry. The Commissioners were also approached by representatives of the Maldon & Heybridge Workers Union, urging the Commissioners to use their powers in trying to make the Library of more practical use to the town.
- 1920** When the inspectors of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments examined the Tower, they described its condition as 'bad', having been 'badly shaken by air raids ...'
- 1929** Surveyed by F.W. Chancellor, Tower declared unsafe and should be rebuilt. A suggestion was made that the new Parish Hall should be built on the site of the present Library, if demolished, and that a room sufficiently large to accommodate the Library, with its panelling and pictures, be incorporated in the Parish Hall building.
- A. R. Powys, Secretary to the *Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings* of the opinion that the Tower could be restored at a cost of £400 to £800.
- 1931-2** Repairs by David E. Nye (who went on to design Maldon's Embassy Cinema). The work involved underpinning the whole of the library building, including the insertion of a damp-course.
- 1933** The property is sold for £800 subject to the Corporation granting to the Trustees a lease of the upper floor for the term of 999 years. The Tower remained the property of the Church of England.
- 1976** The metal fire escape stair on the north side was added.
- 1979 – 81** Two Towers Appeal to raise funds for the repair of the towers of St Mary's and St Peter's Churches. The Church of England passed the Tower to the District Council
- 1985** Rumours circulate that there was a plan to demolish the Plume Building.
- 1996** The Tower and churchyard were conveyed by the Church Commissioners, and the Plume Building transferred from the District Council to Maldon Town Council.
- 2013** Trustees first consider plans to apply for a Heritage Lottery Grant to refurbish and extend Plume Building. The subsequent bid was unsuccessful.
- 2021** The previous Quinquennial report had advised that the Library's lathe and plaster ceiling be replaced due to cracks forming. Funding was raised from Heritage England, The Pilgrim Trust, The Headley Trust, The Aurelius Trust and a Sponsor-a-Shelf Scheme in 2019-20 and arrangements made to relocate the Library contents to the Essex Record Office in December 2020. The new ceiling and other improvements in fire-protection, lighting and heating were carried out in the first seven months of 2021.