ROCHESTER CASTLE

CONSERVATION PLAN

PART 1

UNDERSTANDING AND SIGNIFICANCE

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October 2009

CONTENTS

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FIGURES

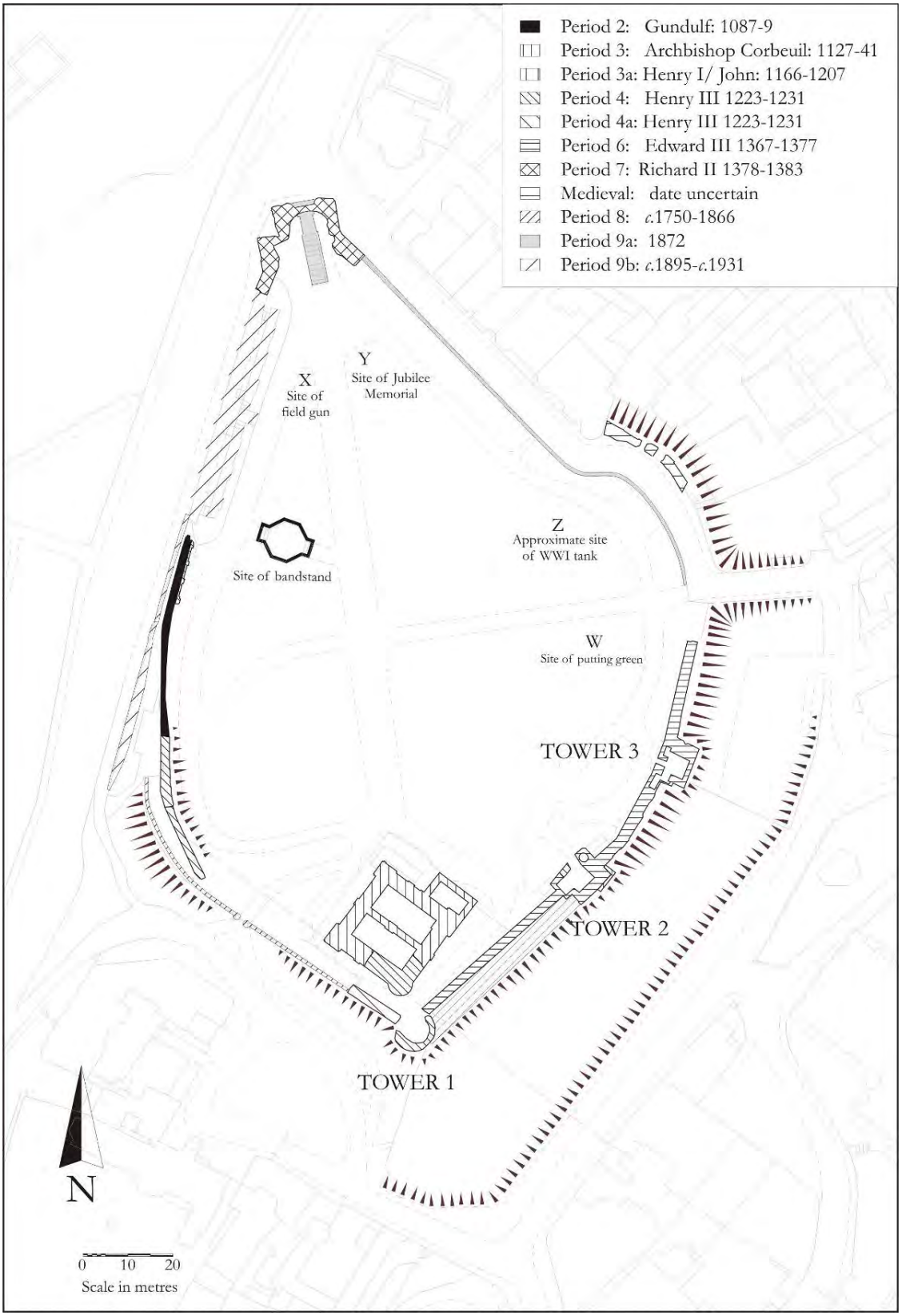


Fig. 1: Rochester Castle: Phased plan

ROCHESTER CASTLE CONSERVATION PLAN

UNDERSTANDING

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rochester Castle has had a complex and dramatic history. It was founded as an earth and timber castle before 1086, the main defences being rebuilt in stone by Bishop Gundulf between 1087 and 1089. The great square keep was erected by Archbishop Corbeuil between 1127 and 1136. In 1215 the Castle was besieged for two months by King John, falling after a mine brought down the south-east corner of the keep. Henry III repaired the Castle and built a suite of apartments in the bailey. The Castle was again besieged during the Baron's war of 1264. This time it was held for the King against Simon de Monfort and Gilbert de Clare and, despite being damaged, held out successfully. After a period of decay the Castle was repaired and renovated during the reigns of Edward III and Richard II, during which time the curtain wall was strengthened.

1.2 The decline of the Castle set in during the 16th century, during which time stone began to be robbed for building projects such as Upnor Castle (1588). James I gave the Castle to Anthony Weldon in 1610; by the 1660s it was ruinous. It was leased by the City of Rochester in 1872, bought outright in 1884 and was taken into Guardianship by the Ministry of Works in 1965, with responsibility passing to English Heritage in 1984. The City of Rochester (now Medway Council) assumed responsibility for the day to day running of the Castle in 1995 under a Local Management Agreement.

2 BACKGROUND: ROCHESTER BEFORE THE CASTLE

2.1 The Roman period

2.1.1 Rochester was strategically sited at the point where Lower Watling Street, linking the port of entry to the Roman province of Britannia, *Rutupiae* (Richborough) to the provincial capital, London, crossed the Medway. The Roman name of the town, *Durobrivae,* although Celtic in its etymology, means 'bridge(s)-fort', clearly a description of the place soon after the Roman conquest (Rivet & Smith 1979, 346-8). While reference is often made to a Belgic settlement with its own mint (Keevil 2003:4), the sole evidence for this appears to a group of coin moulds, which are likely to be Saxon. There is as yet no archaeological evidence for the location of this putative fort, but it was succeeded by a small Roman town ranged along Watling Street, extending eastwards from the bridge (or successive bridges: Hassall 2006, 2-3; Tatton-Brown 2006, 22).

2.1.2 The core of the settlement was surrounded by defences, initially a ditch and rampart, to which a stone revetment wall was added in the early third century (Gifford 1997b:6). The provision of earthwork defences in the late second century, reinforced by stone walls in the first half of the third century, would conform to the norm for towns in southern Britain. The foundations of the south-west corner of the wall are still visible at the base of the south-west corner of the Castle's curtain wall, and further foundations were uncovered between the Keep and the south-east corner tower in 1905 (Medway Archives MTC/EL/LEI/LIM/EM/1/93). A further stretch of wall leading south-west from the south-west corner tower was uncovered in 2007 during excavations led by Graham Keevil in connection with work undertaken in preparation for the laying of a new security fence at the base of the Keep (Keevil 2007). This section of walling was found to be in unexpectedly good condition. The course of the complete circuit is known with reasonable certainty, not least because of its medieval reuse.

2.1.3 From its location, and inclusion in the Antonine Itinerary, the town would almost certainly have included a *mansio*, an official rest house or inn (Hassall 2006, 3-4). The plan of the defensive circuit indeed suggests its location on the site of the Castle, for whilst on the north-east side of Watling Street, the defences are parallel to the street and probably follow the backs of plots addressing it, on the south-west side the wall line encloses a much larger area of land towards the west. The relationship of the late second century earthen defences to the pre-existing *mansio* at Chelmsford, Essex provides a parallel (Drury 1988, fig. 2).

2.1.4 In 1976, a sequence of Roman features was found during an excavation just east of the curtain wall (Flight & Harrison 1978). A 'gully' (almost certainly a bedding trench for a cill beam) was found parallel to a Roman masonry wall, stopping just short of another wall at right angles. Between them were six domestic type ovens (Fig 3 below). The section (*ibid*, 36) shows a layer of fallen plaster between wall and trench, sealing an oven; the trench was filled with 'dirty brickearth', probably upcast from the wall foundation, which was spread out westwards as make-up. The gulley and wall, and more approximately the ovens, share the same alignment, which is that of the Roman town wall to the south-west, not Watling Street. The simplest explanation of this sequence (a more complex one could easily be constructed) is a timber-framed building represented by the slot and the masonry wall lines, containing the ovens (the plan of oven 5 appears to be squeezed against the wall) perhaps under a lean-to roof; followed by reconstruction of the main walls (alone) in masonry. The wall was rendered on its western face, as presumably, had been its predecessor. The slot was said to be filled with pottery 'not later than AD 200'[1], which suggests that the masonry building

[1] Which cannot now be checked since the material does not survive.

dated from perhaps the later second century, placing the timber-framed phase rather earlier[2]. The masonry walls evidently stood in some form through the rest of the Roman period, with dark soil containing 'a considerable quantity of late Roman pottery' and some 753 coins, all but two ranging from Claudius II to Arcadius and Honorius, suggesting deposition from the later third century to the very end of the Roman period.

2.1.5 The known plan of the walls is too restricted to suggest firm interpretation, but in that it does not readily fit small town domestic buildings, it would not be inconsistent with a public function. The only clue is provided by the quite exceptional number of coins from so small an excavation. The fact that all are bronze and spread over 150 years rules out a dispersed hoard. The most likely explanation is a temple or shrine, which would not be inconsistent with a location near a *mansio*.

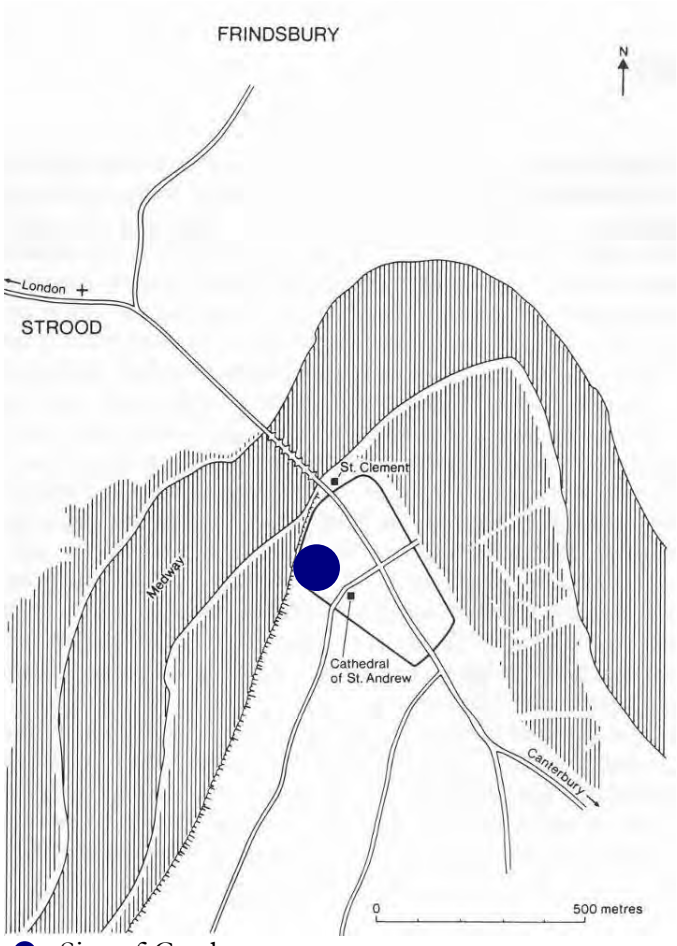


Fig. 2: Roman Rochester (from Brooks 1994)

[2] A coin of Allectus from 'oven A' (on the plan they are numbered) was probably intrusive

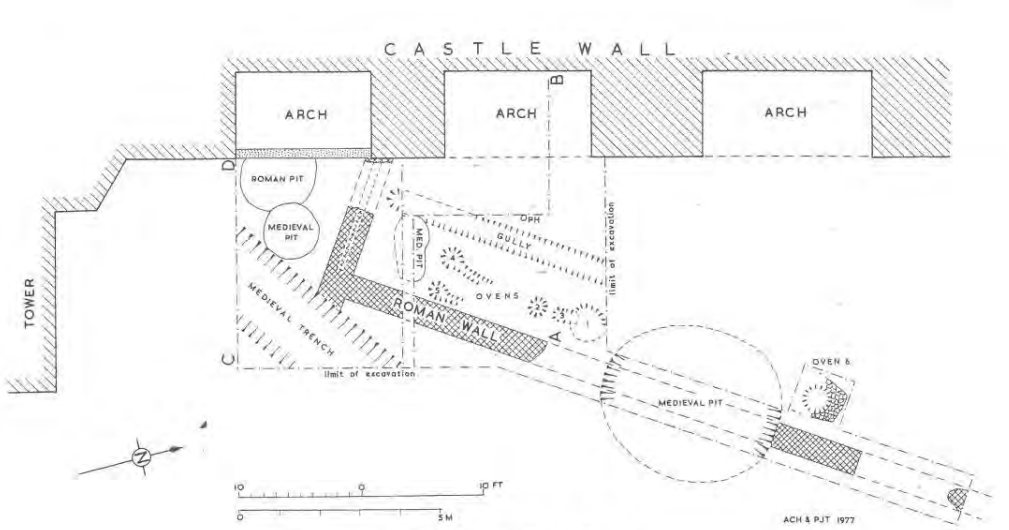


Fig. 4. Rochester Castle: Site Plan.

Fig. 3: Excavated Plan of Roman building found in Castle ditch, 1976

2.2 Post-Roman and Saxon

2.2.1 Rochester's fate in the immediate post-Roman period is unclear, although it seems likely that there was continuity of occupation into the Saxon period (Gifford 1997b:6). The Bishopric of Rochester was founded in 604 and the first phase of the cathedral is presumed to have been started shortly afterwards. The whole area within the Roman walls south-west of Watling Street belonged to the Bishopric from an early date, probably indeed from 604, although the documentary evidence for this is flawed (Brooks 2006). On the Castle site, the remains of the Roman masonry building were covered by black soil which included sherds of grass-tempered, early to middle Saxon, pottery[3].

2.2.2 The remaining parts of Rochester within the walls were given to the Bishopric in 861 and 868 respectively. In 885 the city resisted a siege by a detachment of the Viking army, who made a fortification by one of its gates (Brooks 2006, 15), making clear that it was at that time capable of functioning as a fortified burgh. After Canterbury, it was the largest and most important urban centre in Kent (Keevil 2003:4), with suburbs to the south along Boley Hill (Ward & Linklater 1997) and south-east, outside the walls. It is likely that the pre-existing Roman defences, including those underlying the Castle walls, would

[3] Flight & Harrison 1978, Fig5, A-B, layer 7; pottery not reported, but deposited in Rochester Museum.

have been used as the basis for the fortifications of the Saxon burgh, though there is no archaeological evidence for this.

2.2.3 Buried under the earliest Castle bank on the east side, Flight and Harrison found a number of pits and a trench which contained much Saxo-Norman pottery, all similar to the latest material in the 'black soil' layer which extended under the bank. All is fresh, and seems to belong to a period of intense domestic activity, a conclusion supported by the presence of five loom weights and a clay spindle whorl. The pottery is all shell-tempered save for Pingsdorf type ware and a very fine grey sandy ware vessel with finger-impressed strip decoration, either imported or a regional copy of imported wares[4]. None of this material need post-date the 1060s, and given that it would be hard to contrive circumstances in which these features could have been dug once the Castle defences were in place, it seems logical to regard them all as evidence of a revival of the city in the early 11th century (Tatton-Brown 2006, 25). Its nature – similar to domestic occupation found outside the east gate – suggests that at this time the area of the later Castle was briefly developed as a residential and commercial part of the city, separate from the Cathedral precinct itself. The features of this period are aligned at right angles to the High Street, from which the plots (between which the 'medieval trench' on Fig. 3 probably served as a boundary) would most logically have been laid out.

[4] Flight & Harrison 1978, Fig 6.27. The material is in Rochester Museum. Fragments occur in the pit containing the loomweights (Group II), the large pit (Group 3) and the trench (Group 4). Otherwise all the material from these features is the same coarse shelly ware, save for the Pingsdorf vessel from Group II.

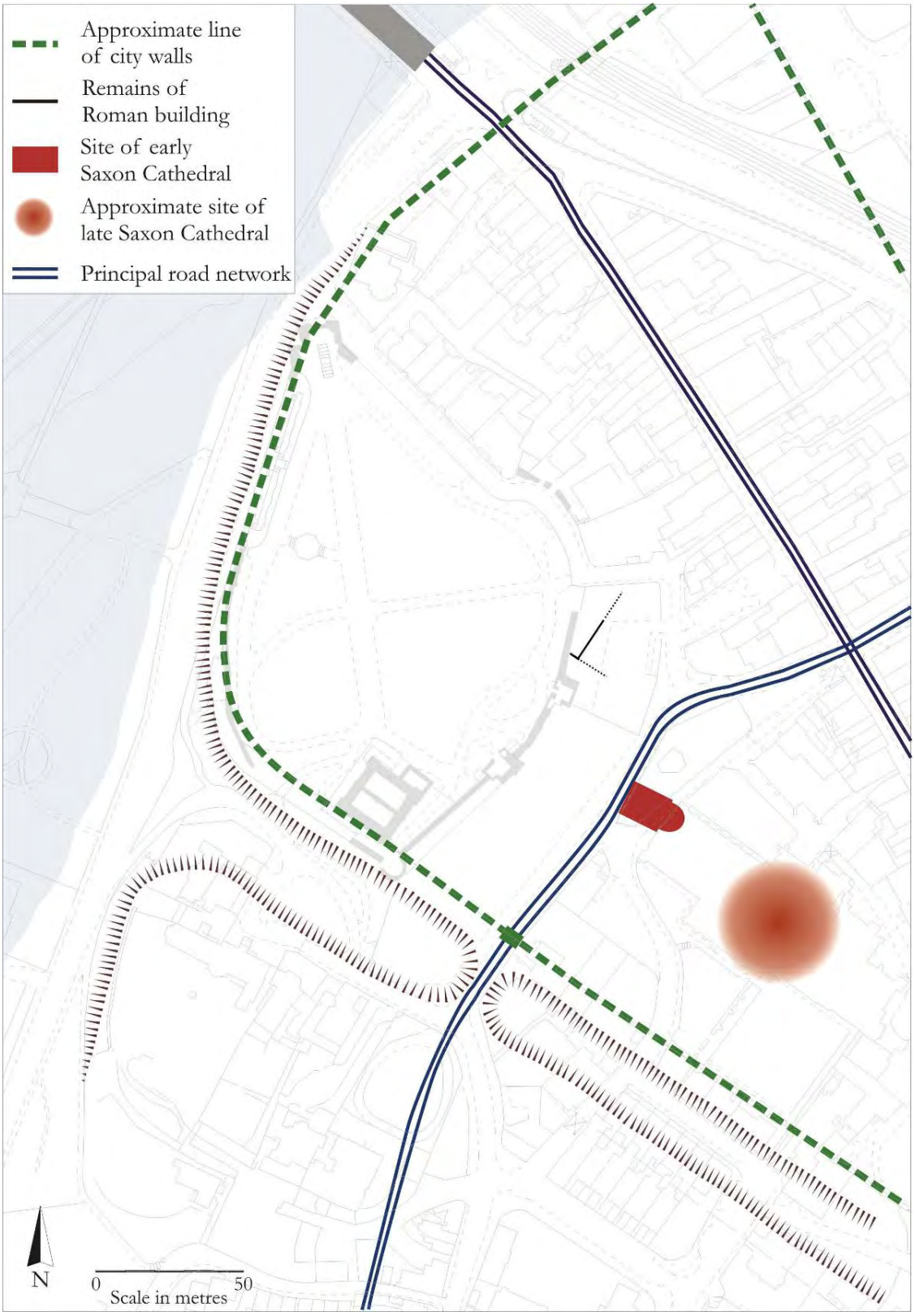


Fig. 4: Roman and Saxon Rochester

3 PERIOD 1: THE POST-CONQUEST CASTLE

3.1 The form of the first Castle

3.1.1 The first mention of a castle at Rochester is in the Domesday book of 1086. This records that the Bishop of Rochester was given land in Aylesford 'in exchange for the land on which the Castle stands' (Morgan 1983:I,26). At this point the Castle, along with the rest of Rochester, was held by Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, Earl of Kent and half brother of William I. Odo was one of most important of the post-conquest nobles, serving as Justiciar[5] for the King during William's absence in Normandy and using Rochester as his Kentish powerbase (Keevil 2003:4). The *Textus Roffensis* suggests that the Castle stood beside the river and guarded the medieval bridge over the Medway; and that it was well manned, with at least sixty fiefs, each owing the service of a knight, being assigned to it (Allen Brown 1986:7). The precise date of building of the Castle is unknown. However, the strategic importance of the site suggests that the Castle was erected relatively soon after the conquest.

3.1.2 This first phase of the Castle almost certainly consisted of a ditch in front of an earth bank crowned with a timber palisade that followed the approximate outline of the extant curtain wall. This was demonstrated by Flight and Harrison, who positively identified traces of earth banks under the current curtain walls on the south-west, west and north sides of the bailey (1978:30-34). It has been confirmed by recent work by Keevil (2007), which indicates that the bank on the south-west side of the bailey lay outside the line of the Roman wall, which was used as a revetment supporting the rear face of the bank. It is unclear why the builders of the earth and timber castle did not simply cast the earthwork up over the existing wall. The most likely explanation for this is that the builders of the earthwork castle wished to follow the lip of the Roman ditch and that the wall, in line with standard Roman practice, was set back from the lip, with a berm[6] in between.

3.1.3 The line of the defences probably deviated from the current curtain walls to the north-west and south-east. The current north-west corner of the bailey, which forms a projecting spur, appears to have been added during the reign of Richard II (Tatton-Brown 2006:33). The curtain wall in this area has now been destroyed but its line is shown on the first edition of the 25" OS map (sheet XIX2.25, 1866). This shows a straight section running east-north-east which then kinked sharply to meet the north-west bastion (fig. 36). This rather unnatural kink is unlikely to be original, and as built the bank probably continued to run east-north-east before curving gently round to meet the Roman wall (fig. 6). Ashbee (2006:251) has disputed this, citing 18th century antiquarian drawings (BL add. MSS. 32370 fol.213) that show the west side of

[5] chief minister

[6] a level space between the defensive wall and the ditch

the curtain standing on what appears to be a natural chalk cliff, which it would have been foolish to exclude from the original defences; furthermore, these drawings show no trace of a filled ditch. However, if the line of the curtain shown on the 1866 OS map is followed, the junction of the north and west curtain walls takes place only slightly to the south of the current north-west bastion, including the cliff and resolving this difficulty.

3.1.4 The south-east corner, with its sharp change in alignment, is unlikely to represent the original course of the bank, which probably followed a gentler curve. In order to do this and avoid disturbing the remains of the Roman city wall, which is known to survive just below ground level between the keep and current south curtain (Medway archives MTC/EL/LEI/LIM/GM/1/93), the original curtain would have had to have been sited to the east of the current wall, which it would have rejoined at tower one.

3.1.5 As built, and in subsequent phases, the ditch around the Castle would have been deeper than the extant remains on the east side, and for the most part dry. The relatively high situation of the Castle, on a cliff overlooking the river, and the way in which the ditch rises and falls with the topography, suggest a largely dry moat, with only the parts of the ditch adjacent to the river flooding with the tide. The undulating topography of the ditch would have made it impossible to create a wet moat by means of a dam. Epaul Lane is likely to stand on the line of the original entrance road from the south. It is also likely that Two Post Alley is a survival of a road connecting the main gate to Watling Street that has been encroached upon during the post-medieval period.

The ditch, east side showing fall of land

3.1.6 No evidence of a motte[7] has yet been found. Ward and Linklater (1997) have suggested that one could have existed in the south east corner of the Castle, on or near the site of the keep. The evidence cited for this is that the south-eastern corner of the Castle is considerably higher than the rest of the bailey and the presence of a layer of sand indicates an artificial raising of the ground

[7] A raised earth mound, usually topped with a timber structure

level. This is considered unlikely. The precise alignment of the 12th century keep on the Roman wall suggests that this was visible, or only just below the surface, when the keep was built. The complete levelling of a motte in the 12th century to make way for the keep would entail a vast amount of effort and would be completely unprecedented. Normally mottes of this type are incorporated into later stone defences, with the building of a shell keep, or a tower enclosing the motte, such as at Windsor, Berekely and Farnham. Furthermore, sand does not represent a good stable material for building a motte. While there is a parallel for this at Hastings, its use at Rochester would seem unusual given the availability of more suitable materials. The relationship of a motte in this position with the outer rampart, if this followed the line of Gundulf's walls, would also be rather unusual, though not unknown, with similar examples from Tonbridge and Launceston (Ward and Linklater 1997).

3.1.7 It is more likely that the first phase of the Castle was a simple ring work[8]. This appears to be common in important castles of very early date, including Exeter (Renn 1968:185), the White Tower at London (Renn 1968:326, Impey 2009) and Winchester (Renn 1968:347). It is also likely that the defensive focus of the earth and timber Castle was in the south-west corner. This was clearly the highest point of the medieval bailey. The alignment of arrow slits in the southern curtain wall shows that the ground rose towards the west, a fact that is made clearer in antiquarian drawings that show the wall in a better condition than now (A.L. Kent Red vol. IV p.3c). This feature may have been a small mound, the remains of which are the bank found by Flight and Harrison in 1976, or a timber tower.

Fig. 5: South-east view of Rochester Castle, c.1670 (detail). BL Maps.K.top.17.10k

[8] a defensive enclosure bounded by a bank and ditch

3.1.8 It is also likely that the earthworks on Boley Hill, to the south of the Castle, are connected with this earth and timber phase. These have never been thoroughly investigated, and understanding of them is hampered by the presence of a group of houses dating from the 16th century onwards. However, it is certain that there was a substantial ditch running east-west along the north side of Love Lane, which encloses a bank, the highest point of which is to be found in the south-east corner, under what is now Boley Hill House. Antiquarians of the 18th and 19th century interpreted this area as a 9th century Danish siege castle (Flight and Harrison 1978:29). Later Armitage (1912:195) and Wheatley (1929:129) proposed that it was the site of the first earth and timber Castle. This view was generally accepted until Flight and Harrison's investigations of 1976. The Boley Hill earthworks are now generally thought to be an outwork, which may be connected with a later phase of the Castle, possibly constructed after the siege of 1215 had revealed the vulnerability of the Castle to attack from the high ground on this side, or the remains of a siege castle constructed during either the 1088 or 1215 sieges (Allen Brown 1986:6).

3.1.9 We believe that this earthwork is in fact associated with the first phase of the Castle. The depth of the surviving ditch, and its clear link with the late medieval southern postern (shown in antiquarian views e.g. B.L. Maps K.Top.10.k) suggest that Boley Hill had a permanent fortification designed to resist attack from the south, rather than a siege work. Given that there is no evidence of this area ever being fortified in stone[9], and that accounts of the 1215 and 1264 sieges suggest that even the main bailey was rather too large to be defended successfully for any length of time, these works are unlikely to be a later addition. A similar arrangement of a ring work and bailey was not uncommon in earth and timber castles, with examples surviving at the Tower of London, Basing, Hedingham, Rising (where two baileys flank a ring work) and Saltwood (Renn 1968:103, 202, 296, 305).

3.1.10 Nothing is known about the internal plan of the Castle. It is presumed that it would have contained living accommodation in the form of a timber hall, there was possibly a separate chamber for the King, and it is certain that there would have been numerous ancillary structures and possibly a timber tower.

[9] A re-examination of stone wall in the grounds of Satis House, interpreted by Livett as being part of a stone curtain (Livett 1895:53), suggests that these are in actual fact 18th century garden features.

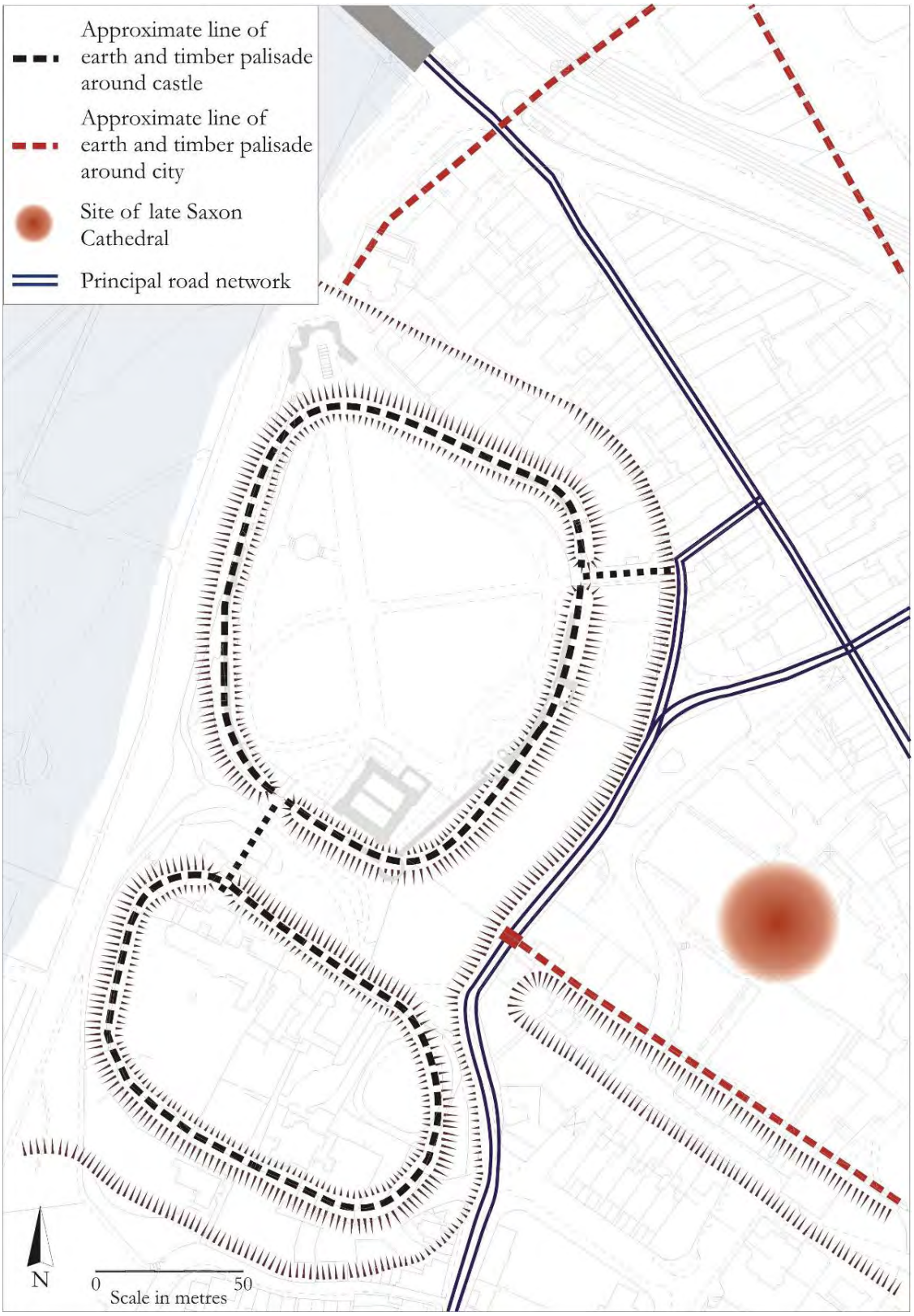


Fig. 6: Conjectural reconstruction of Rochester Castle c.1088

3.2 The first siege of Rochester - 1088

3.2.1 In the spring of 1088 a large section of the Norman baronage, dismayed at the division of Normandy from England on the death of William I, rose in rebellion, supporting Duke Robert of Normandy in his claim to the English throne against his younger brother, King William II. Bishop Odo was one of the leading rebels and chose Rochester as his headquarters.

3.2.2 Odo was captured at Pevensey and forced to agree to surrender Rochester. He was thus taken to Rochester by a small force of Royalists, who on arrival demanded that the city gates be opened to them. Instead of complying, the defending garrison made a mounted sortie and succeeded in capturing the entire party, freeing Odo. In May of that year the King besieged the city, constructing two siege castles. The defending garrison, plagued by heat, flies and disease, sought terms, with Odo and the other nobles involved preserving their liberty but loosing their lands in England (Allen Brown 1986:5). The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* indicates that Odo held out within the Castle (almost certainly the first earth and timber castle rather than Gundulf's stone castle, see 4.1 below) rather than elsewhere in the city (Douglas, Tucker and Whitelock 1961).

4 PERIOD 2: BISHOP GUNDULF'S CASTLE OF 1089

4.1 The earth and timber castle was rebuilt in stone by Gundulf, Bishop of Rochester (incumbent 1077-1108). This was carried out to secure the possession of the Manor of Haddenham for the monks of Rochester. The manor had been granted to the monks by Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, during the reign of William I. However, his son wanted a concession of £100 to confirm the grant, which neither Lanfranc nor Gundulf were able to afford. The situation was resolved by Robert fitz Hamo and Henry Earl of Warwick, who suggested Gundulf build a castle in lieu of the money (Allen Brown 1986:6). In the event the Castle cost £66. Building must therefore have begun between the accession of William II in September 1087 and the death of Lanfranc in May 1089 (Renn 1968:299). Given that this arrangement implies that Odo was not in possession of the Castle building works probably began after the 1088 siege, in the spring of 1089. It may have been prompted by inadequacies in the defences of the town exposed during the siege (Allen Brown, Colvin and Taylor 1963:807) or the perceived need for a royal castle in a potentially rebellious area.

4.2 It is assumed that the Castle built was a simple stone ring work that followed the line of the earth and timber castle's ramparts. It is likely that these walls were set on slight foundations on the earlier banks, as was common practice at that time (e.g. at Colchester and Norwich, where they have largely

disappeared) and therefore not particularly stable. The only area of masonry that can be reasonably suggested to date from this phase is a section of walling on the west side, overlying an earlier section of Roman city wall. The herring-bone walling of this clearly suggests an early Norman date (Newman 2002:491). This wall survives in good condition and includes the remains of its original embrasures[10], several of which have been blocked and replaced by more widely spaced examples during the 18th century (fig 7). An offset below a line of sockets is also visible on the inner face, indicating that a timber wall walk existed. This probably consisted of longitudinal planks supported by transverse beams embedded in the wall, which in turn were braced by struts resting on a longitudinal timber plate. It should be noted that this section of wall is not of substantial construction, as is shown by the way it has been thickened in the later medieval period to support buildings. This may have been due to its riverside position, which meant that it would not have to withstand a concerted attack, or be an indication that the entire first stone circuit was relatively weak.

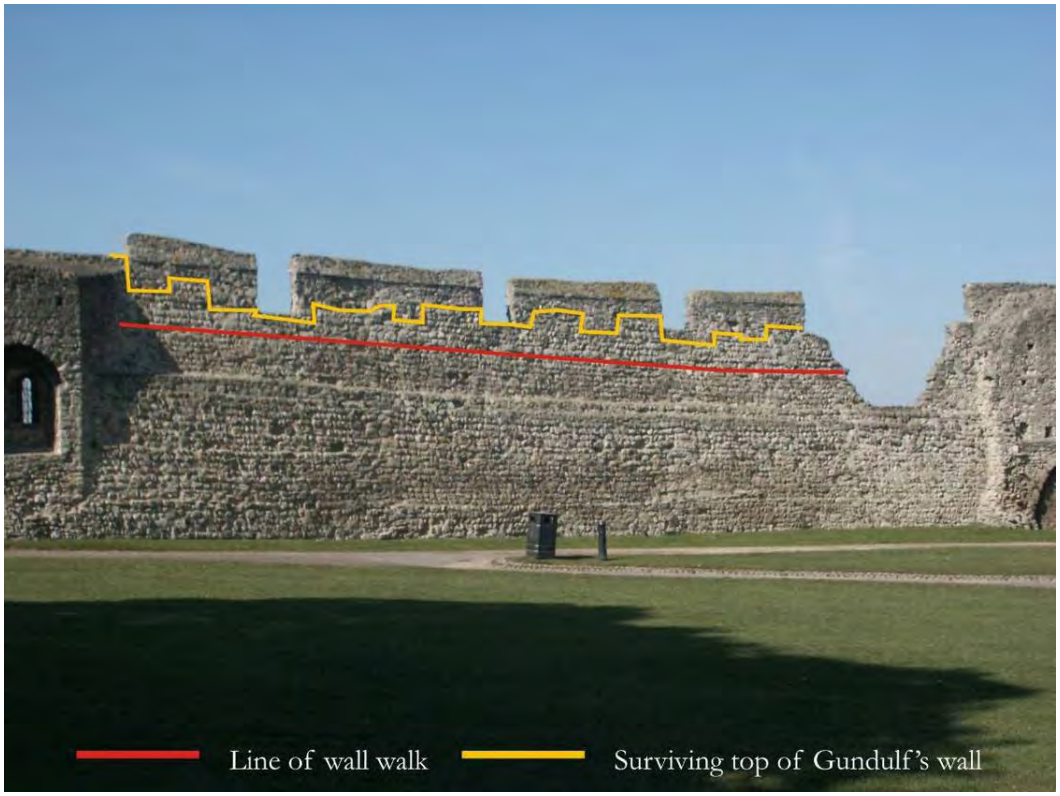


Fig. 7: Surviving section of Gundulf's wall

[10] An opening in the a battlement between two raised solid portions, or merlons.

West curtain wall: Norman walling above Roman foundations and 20th century retaining wall with inserted 13th century windows

West curtain wall: Norman walling above Roman foundations and 20th century retaining walls with 18th century crenelations[11]

4.3 Two other sections of wall have generally been attributed to Gundulf (e.g. Flight and Harrison 1978). The first is in the south-west corner and the second is to the north-east, and has been incorporated in the rear garden walls of properties on the High Street. They only survive as much rebuilt rubble cores, but both are much more substantial than the west curtain wall, and the

[11] The distinctive pattern of multiple rectangular spaces cut out of the top of the wall

south-west section at least must be later, being of one build with the pointed relieving arch incorporated in the 13th century rebuilding of the curtain at this point to accommodate a building.

Walling attributed to Gundulf in south-west and north-east corners of curtain wall

4.4 As discussed above, it is likely that the earth and timber curtain wall ran on an alignment to the east of the southern section of the present east curtain and it is therefore also likely that Gundulf's wall followed this line. It is also likely that the northern portion of Gundulf's east wall ran on an alignment slightly to the east of the present (14th century) curtain, as this, with its arched foundation, does not appear to be built on top of an earlier stone wall. It is unlikely that there were any mural towers, as these are unknown in fortifications of this date, although it is probable that there was a simple square gate tower to the north-east, of a similar form to the early tower at Exeter (Allen Brown 1976:63), and an entrance in the south wall leading to the Boley Hill earthwork.

4.5 Gundulf's precise role in the creation of the Castle is not known. He was a prolific and experienced builder, being responsible for the White Tower in London, the keep at Colchester Castle, the rebuilding of Rochester Cathedral and the nunnery and St Leonard's Tower in West Malling. The vast difference in complexity between the White Tower and this relatively simple curtain wall need not suggest that a different hand was responsible for the design, as the intention at Rochester was to construct a stone castle as cheaply as possible. Allen Brown considers that his role is likely to have been that of an administrator in charge of the project, rather than being the designer (Allen Brown 1986:7), a view shared by Harvey, who regards him as an enlightened patron and able administrator with a special knowledge of building (Harvey 1954:120).

4.6 As with the first phase, nothing is known about the internal layout of the Castle at this time. Domestic buildings associated with the earth and timber Castle may have been retained or rebuilt.

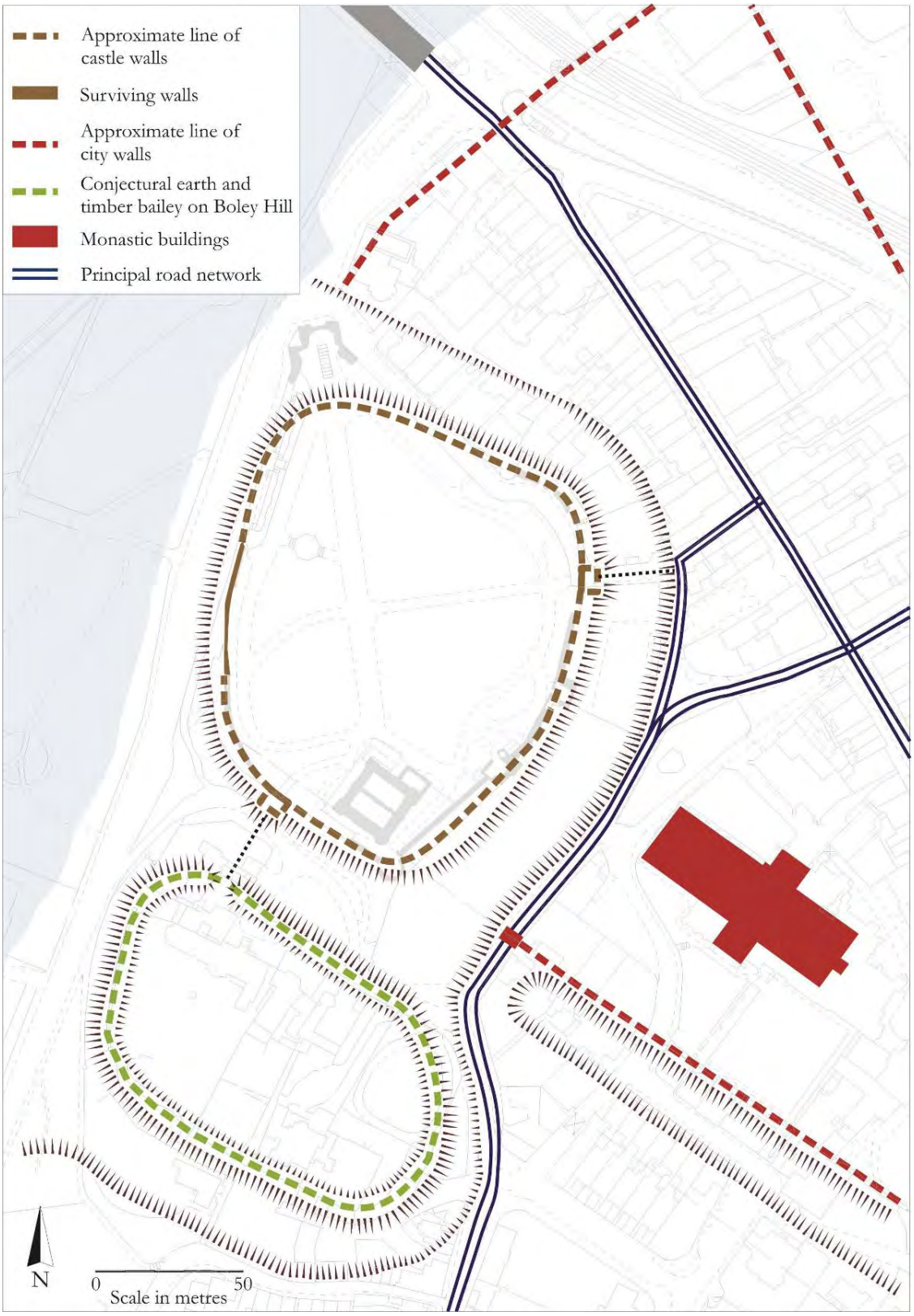


*Fig. 8: Rochester Castle c.*1089

5 PERIOD 3: THE BUILDING OF THE KEEP: 1127-1141

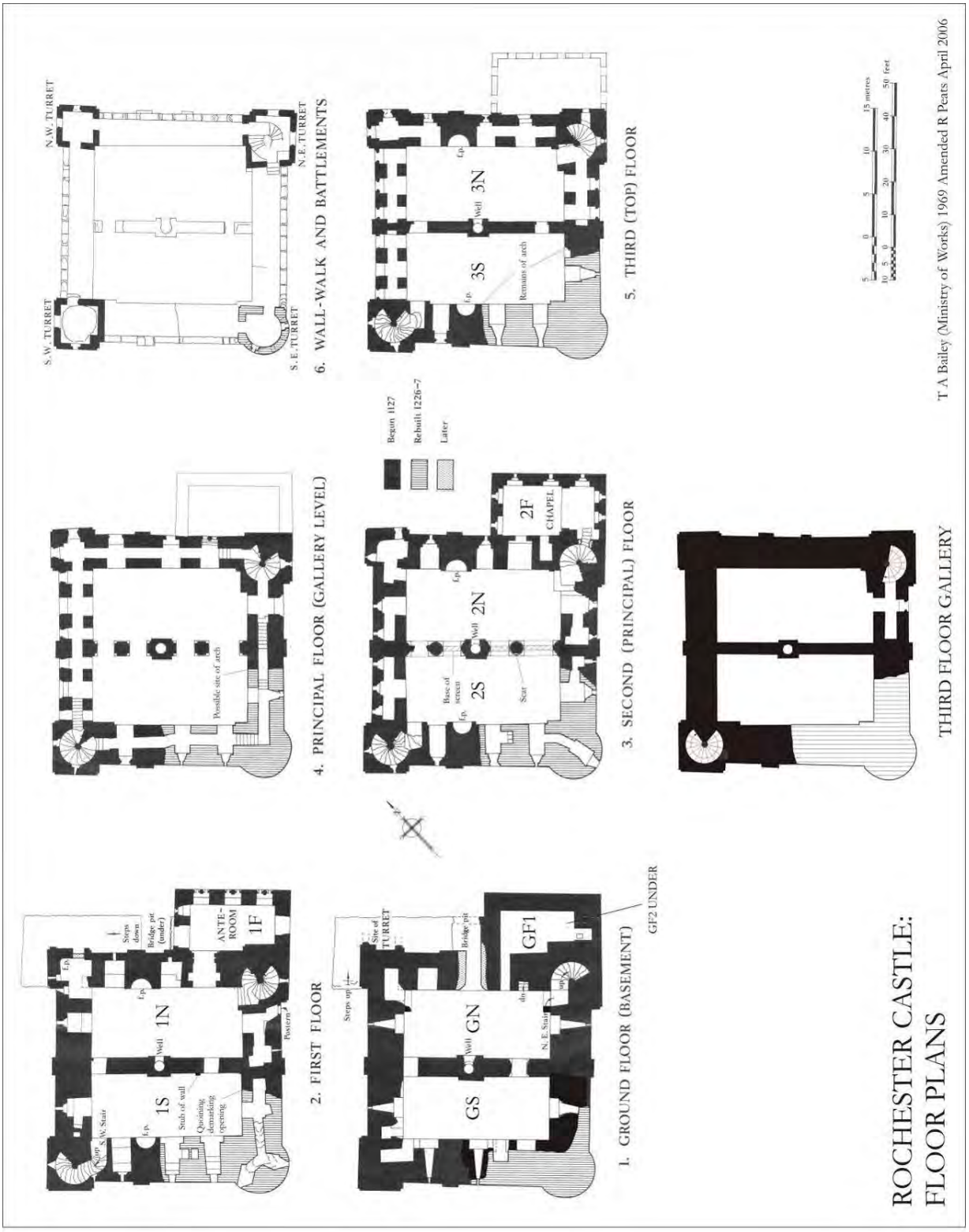


Fig. 9: Rochester Castle, floor plans of Keep

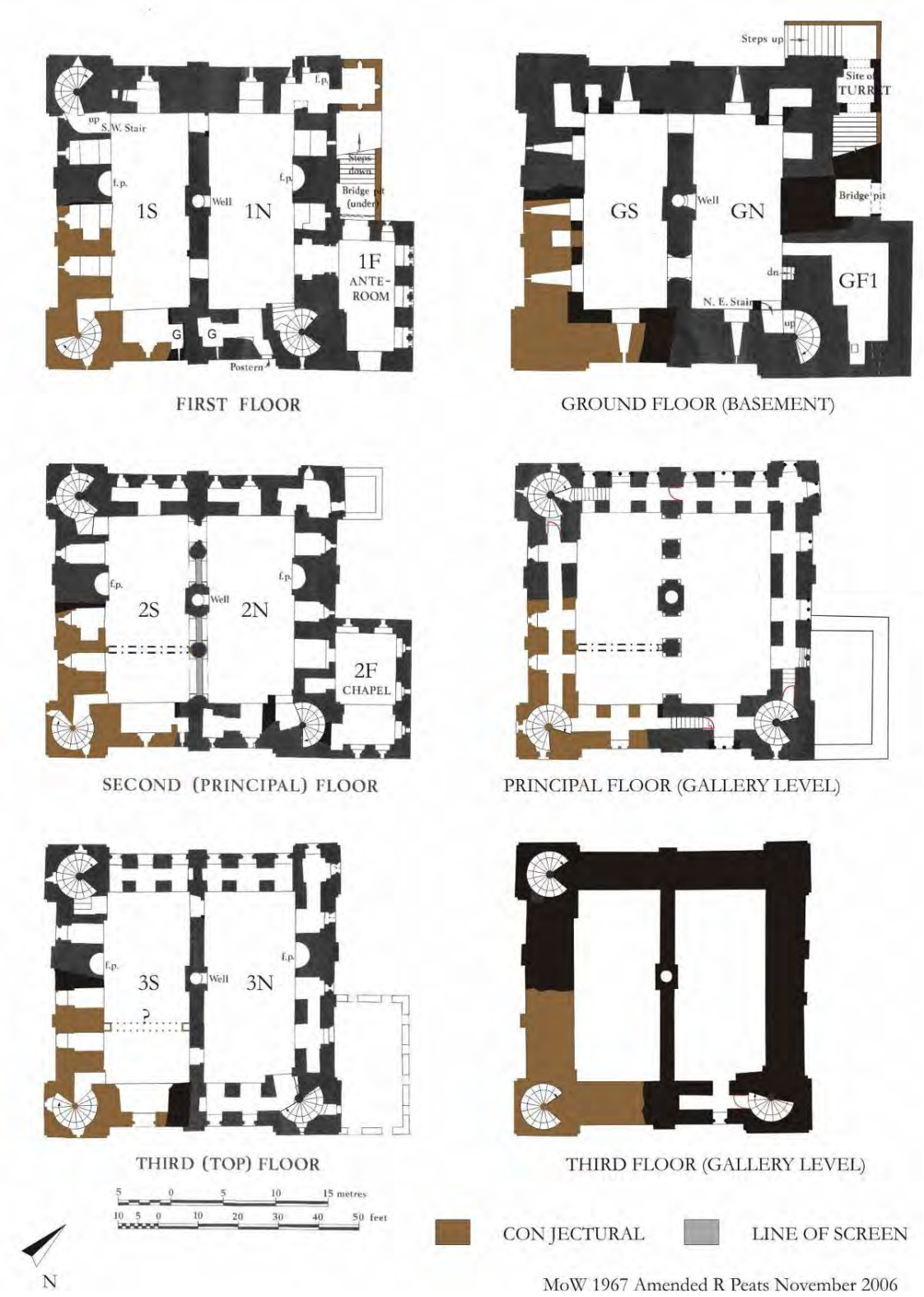


Fig. 10: The Keep, conjectural reconstruction

EAST ELEVATION (INTERNAL)

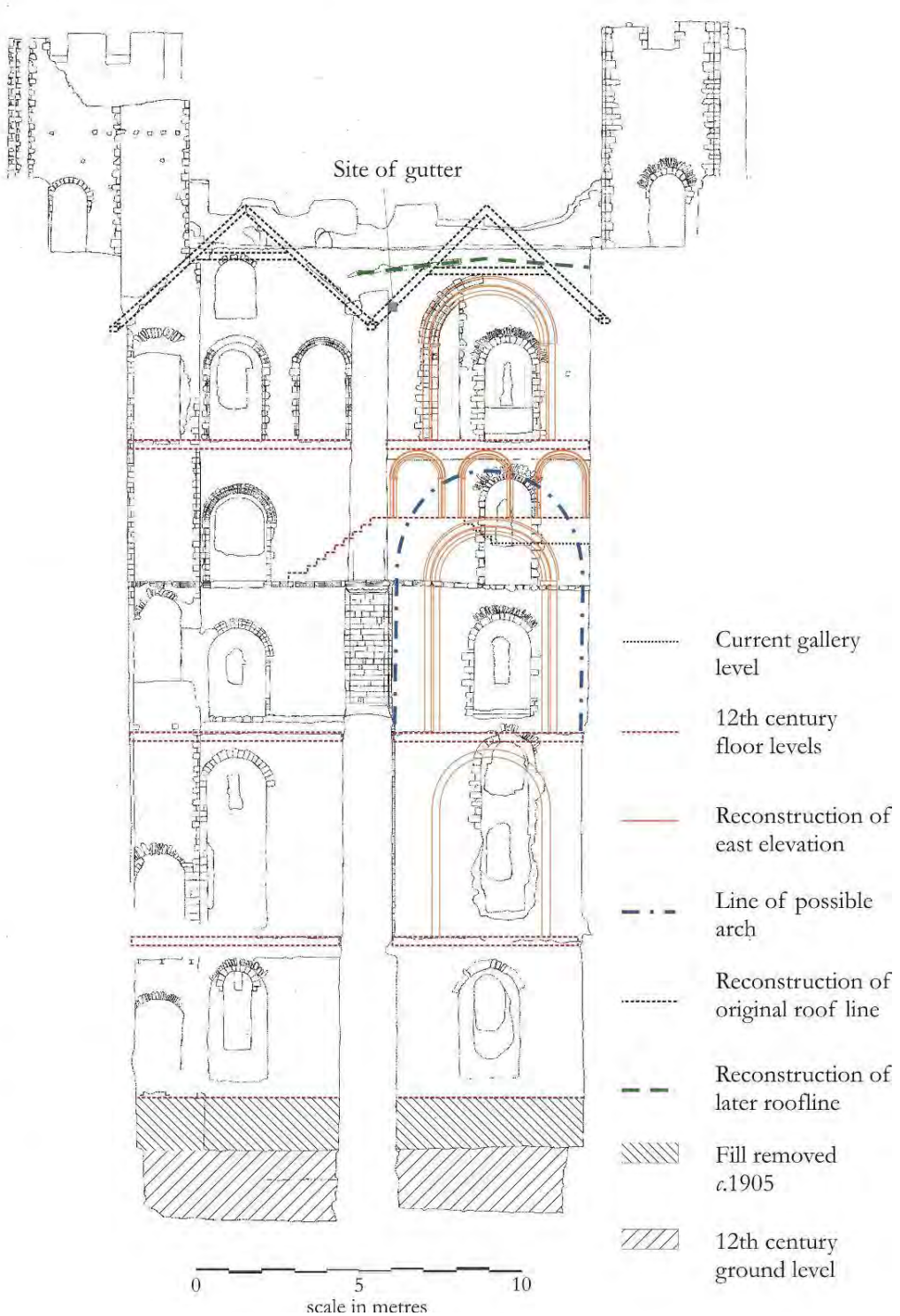


Fig. 11: The Keep, east internal elevation

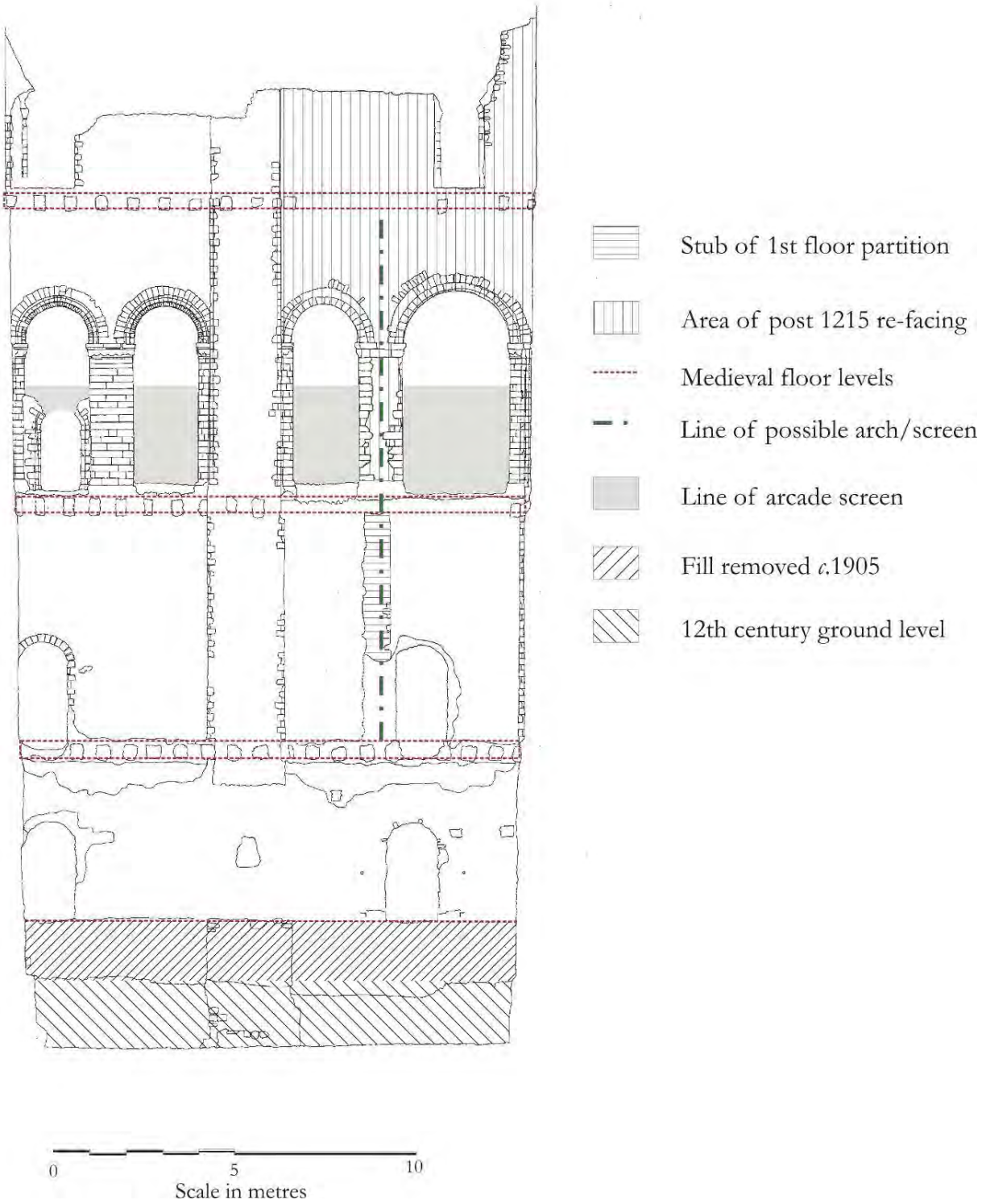


Fig.12: Cross wall, looking south

5.1 The keep

5.1.1 In 1127 Henry I granted custody and constableship of the Castle to Archbishop William de Corbeuil of Canterbury in perpetuity, with permission to build an *egregiam turrim* (great tower). On the assumption that construction began in 1127 and work progressed at a rate of around 10ft per annum (Renn 1968:2) the keep would have been finished by Corbeuil's death in 1138. It was certainly complete by 1141, when the tower was used as a prison for Robert of Gloucester (Renn 1968:41). The building of the tower, and de Corbeuil's responsibility for it, was also recorded by Gervase of Canterbury. The existing arrangements for garrisoning the Castle (as documented in the Domesday book) were to be retained (Allen Brown 1986:8).

5.1.2 The keep originally consisted of four stories with square corner towers and a forebuilding[12]. The north-east tower contains a stair running the full height of the building and the south-west contains a stair rising from the first floor to the roof. The north-west tower contains small chambers and it is therefore likely that a similar arrangement prevailed in the lost south-east tower. Further chambers were embedded in the thickness of the walls. Fireplaces are situated in the north and south walls, slightly off centre, and there are two stacks of garderobes[13], each in separate chambers, on the south side at first and second floor levels. The main internal space is divided into two equal parts by a central cross wall, running east-west, with a well shaft.

5.1.3 As originally built the ground floor would have had no external entrance and been just above (approximately 300mm) external ground level, as is indicated by the level at which the openings are set. This floor must have been solid, as there is no evidence of floor joists. The current ground level is the result of excavation *c.*1905 (see section 11 below). This arrangement, without an excavated basement, is usual in 12th century keeps. The rectangular opening in the south wall stands at the base of a garderobe shaft associated with the post 1215 rebuilding. It is unclear whether this represents the original exit of these shafts or is a post medieval insertion.

[12] A lower building guarding the entrance to the main tower
[13] a simple toilet consisting of a seat over a shaft

Basement south elevation, remains of rectangular opening

5.1.4 The main entrance was at first floor level, where a portcullis[14] guarded the door from the forebuilding. A postern[15] on the east side, near the north-east stair, appears primary, and probably opened onto a timber bridge connected to the wall walk of the curtain in a similar fashion to the keep posterns at Colchester and Norwich. A second postern in the forebuilding is therefore probably secondary, as it is unlikely that two doorways would be needed in this area. It also appears that there was a large arched opening, in the inner face of the east elevation of the southern room, possibly framing a window. Traces of the quoining[16] for this survive embedded in later (13th century) rebuilding work.

First floor, east side: quoining of blocked archway

Detail of quoining

[14] sliding defensive grill
[15] Secondary doorway
[16] stone blocks marking the corner of a building or opening

5.1.5 The principal reception area is likely to have been on the second floor. This is a double height space covering the entire storey, with a Romanesque[17] arcade (of uneven arch sizes, the easternmost arch being significantly larger than the rest) carrying the cross wall. A continuous high level mural[18] gallery is contained in the thickness of the walls. As built, this space appears to have been conceived to be used flexibly, with timber screens, the sockets for which are still visible, infilling the arches of the arcade. It is probable that these were replaced by a stone screen very soon after the keep was finished. Numerous early views of the interior of the keep (Medway Archives DE402/7/53) show a solid stone screen, the foundations of which are still visible in a reconstructed form. This cannot be primary, as there is a straight joint between this work and the columns behind. However, the arched head of the doorway in the western bay is of an identical style to the main arch, suggesting that it was inserted very soon after the initial construction of the building or even a result of a change in the design during the construction. Other large keeps, such as Colchester and Norwich, underwent a complex evolution during the building process, and it is likely a similar process occurred at Rochester. It is of course possible that the stone screen was inserted after the doorway to the north, but it is difficult to see what purpose this doorway would have on its own. The screen was certainly in place before the fire that gutted the keep, as scorch marks stop abruptly at the line of the screen (Goodall 2006:285).

Second floor: arcade

Socket for timber screen

[17] The dominant architectural style of the 11th and 12th centuries characterised by round headed arches
[18] Within the thickness of the walls

Fig. 13: Keep interior 1820

Inserted stone door in screen

5.1.6 The southern part of the eastern mural passage rises by six steps at the cross wall before falling three steps. The rise is clearly primary, while the fall of three steps is associated with the 13th century rebuilding of the south-east corner of the keep. Previous interpretation was that it was to strengthen the wall around the arcade and accommodate the latrine vault below (Clark 1884:414, followed by Payne 1905:180). However, this is unsatisfactory, as no such strengthening was necessary on the west side. Goodall has suggested that as built the gallery rose up six steps and remained level in order to clear an arch below. He tentatively identifies a block of Caen stone in the wall as a surviving fragment of this feature (Goodall 2006:282). This appears a satisfactory solution to this anomaly, the rise in the gallery being just high enough to accommodate an arch of the same dimensions as partially survives on the floor above. This arch may have framed a blind recess or a tall window. The remains of a series of doors are visible at gallery level. These would have enabled the north side of the gallery to be separated from the south side and the stair towers to be sealed off.

South-east corner of the keep, raised gallery

5.1.7 It is also likely that there was some sort of division running across the southern portion of the first and second floors. A pilaster[19] supporting this division can be seen running the entire height of the first floor. At second floor level there is a scar in the south side of the eastern column of the arcade, which rises to capital level. Unlike the arcade screen this feature was clearly primary, as it has been coursed into the arcade. The height and form of this division is difficult to assess, as the north face of this wall appears to have been rebuilt post 1215, a possible solution is a single arch spanning the southern half of the building, as this would frame views of the large arch in the east wall (Fig. 11). It is possible that the floor consisted of stone flags supported by timber beams. While unknown in later English contexts similar floors, consisting of boarding covered by an earth loam that forms a bed for tiles are common in medieval and later French buildings. An earlier version of the technique, using stone flags, is possible here and would account for the relatively wide space between the top of the joist slots and the base of the second floor window and door openings.

Eastern column, scar

First floor, southern section, pilaster

[19] a slightly projecting column built into or onto a wall

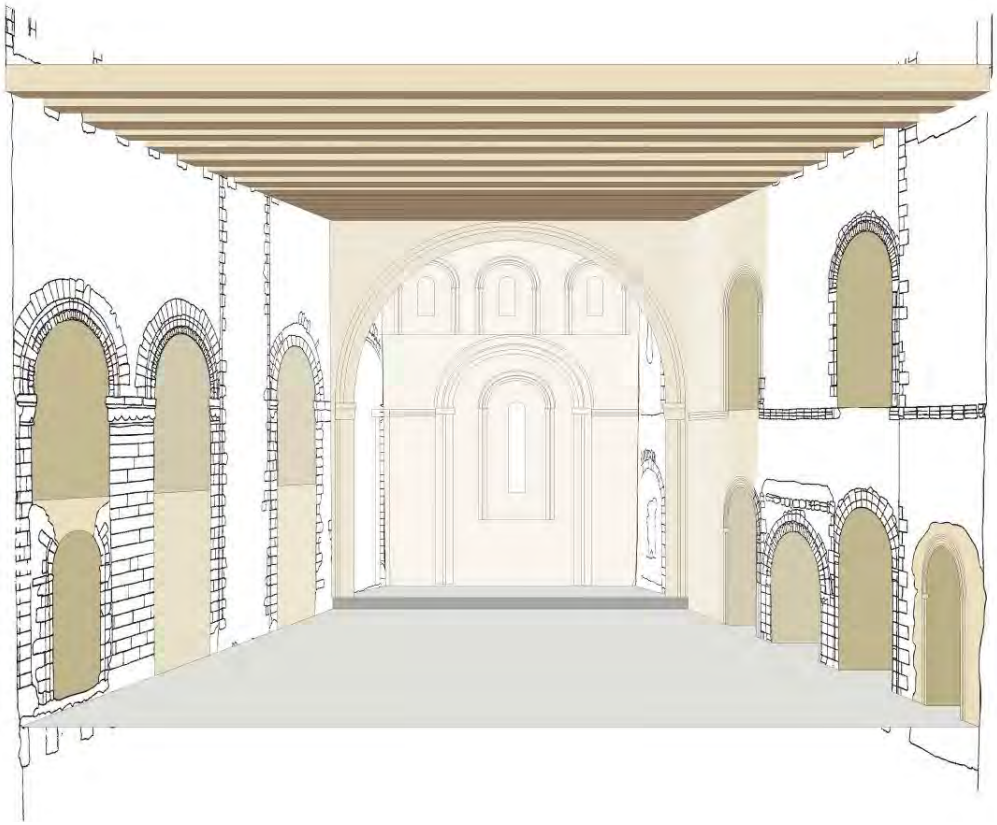


Fig. 14: Reconstruction of southern half of the second floor of the Keep interior, looking east

5.1.8 Compared to the second floor, the third floor is much simpler. It is again divided into two principal rooms, of which the southern preserves what appears to be a large arch. The positioning of the remains of a window jamb and the springing of a tightly-turned arch on the external face of this wall suggest that this was lit by three relatively small windows. This area could have functioned as a throne recess. As built, there were almost certainly twin steeply-pitched roofs forming an M shape (fig. 11). This is indicated by sockets surviving at the head of the walls on both the north and south elevations and a clear scar for a high pitched roof on the north half of the building. The precise form of this roof is difficult to ascertain, given the lack of evidence. The surviving slots for rafters (which are angled) suggest individual rafters were lodged on wall plates embedded within the wall. The angled nature of the rafter slots, and the presence of high level windows or large arches in the eastern walls of the northern and southern compartments, suggest that there were no tie beams and that each rafter couple was

strengthened with either collars or scissor braces[20]. Lead would have been the most likely original roof covering; the roofs were certainly leaded later (p50). Gutters would have been lead lined (the scar for this gutter, with original lead built into the wall) is still extant on the northern internal elevation). These would have discharged via drains through the east and west walls, which survive complete for the northern roof but have been largely blocked for the southern roof, only surviving externally on the northern side of the west elevation. Two tiers of nesting boxes for pigeons are extant in the north wall. These were extensively rebuilt during the 19th century Payne (1905:178) but a reference in Clark confirms that they are an original feature (Clark 1884:417). Goodall has convincingly argued that the wall walk was conceived as having brattices (oversailing timber hoardings) from the start, as the surviving slots for projecting timbers are significantly larger than those of the 13th century rebuilding works (2006:272). Payne identified blocked openings in the centre of the wall walks on all sides bar the south, via which the brattices were reached (Payne 1905:180). These are still visible externally.

Third floor southern compartment, blocked arch

Northern compartment, east wall, roof scar

North elevation, detail of rafter sockets and pigeon holes

North elevation, detail of rafter sockets

[20] overlapping diagonal braces forming a St Andrew's cross

N elevation, entrance to brattice

E elevation, remains of window jamb

5.1.9 The forebuilding stands against the north wall of the keep and consisting of a vaulted subterranean basement, a ground floor, a first floor entrance vestibule and a second storey chapel, with a vaulted semi-dome at its east end. Floor structures were even heavier than those of the main part of the keep, consisting of a grid of heavy timbers that has been replicated in the modern floor structure. This was entered via a set of external stairs set against the side of the keep which culminated in a drawbridge and bridge pit outside the forebuilding. The stairs were given protection by an additional two storey tower carried over the stair by arches attached to the north-west corner of the keep. The springing for the vault carrying this over the stair and the ceiling vault of the chamber above are still visible, as is the blocked connecting door with the first floor of the keep.

5.1.10 The subterranean basement of the forebuilding was finished in the same way as the rest of the interior, with a coat of lime mortar to even up the surface of the stonework. This is connected to the main structure via a passage, there is a single vent in the north side and a garderobe on the ground floor discharges into this space. It appears that this space was originally intended to feature a cross wall partitioning off the east end. However, this was demolished when partially built. A slot in the south wall may represent the housing for the framing of a timber stair. Unlike the rest of the interior of the keep the lower parts of the walls, up to the springing of the vault have not been coated with sooty deposits, indicated that the basement was once filled. The current external door is post-medieval. The garderobe chute and vent suggest that this space was used as a cess pit, though there is no obvious method of clearing it. It is possible that the space was designed to function as a septic tank, with waste liquefying and the excess running off through a drain on the site of the modern entrance. Use as a prison, often suggested, cannot be discounted.

Forebuilding, second floor, slots for roof timbers

Apse vault

5.1.11 As built the forebuilding had a flat roof. This can be deduced by the relatively large size of the beam slots in the chapel, which are far larger than the slots for the rafters of the main roof, and designed to take horizontal members, suggesting a flat capable of supporting a very heavy loading. This would have been reached via the extant door it the north-east stair, which is set at approximately the same level. The purpose of this roof is unclear. The high parapet extant appears primary, and would have needed a timber staging behind act as a wall walk. A cistern is also impossible, given the position of the primary opening lighting the gallery.

5.2 The bailey

5.2.1 After Corbeuil's death subsequent archbishops, including Thomas à Beckett, Hubert Walter and Stephen Langton, successfully asserted their rights to custodianship of the Castle on their accession. Beckett's demand for custodianship was one of the causes of his quarrel with Henry II (Allen Brown, Colvin and Taylor 1963:807). During a vacancy in the archbishopric the Castle appears to have been maintained at the King's expense. Henry II is recorded as carrying out repairs in 1166-67 and every year between 1170 and 1174 and John carried out works in 1206. The sums involved, £100 in 1172-3, £126 in 1173-74 and £115 in 1206, suggest extensive works, but their nature is not known (Allen Brown, Colvin and Taylor 1963:807, Allen Brown 1986:8). The archbishops also seem to have maintained and improved the Castle, at their expense, when in custody of it, with Hubert Walter being recorded as strengthening the defences of both Castle and city (Allen Brown, Colvin and Taylor 1963:807).

5.2.2 It is possible that one result of this expenditure was the first phase of mural tower[21] two as Flight and Harrison demonstrated that there was a building

[21] A tower built against the outer face of the curtain wall

break between these foundations and the current tower (1978:33). The presence of 13th century fabric associated with a curtain wall in the west face of the current tower suggests that there is unlikely to have been a 13th century tower on this site and therefore the tower must be earlier and date from the 12th century. However, it is more likely that the building breaks are the result of a complex 14th century construction sequence.

5.2.3 It is likely that a hall[22] was erected in the bailey during this period. Entries in the fabric roll from 1226 document repairs to the dispensary[23] and buttery[24] of the hall (Allen Brown 1986:14), suggesting that this building pre-dated the works of Henry III and therefore the siege of 1215. The accounts of the 1215 siege also suggested that there were buildings of a later date than the keep, and less solidly constructed, inside the bailey (Stubb 1873:226-227). The fact that a hall survived and was incorporated into Henry III's royal apartments suggests that it was a substantial structure, it is therefore is unlikely to have been associated with the earth and timber or early stone phases of the Castle. Reference to stained glass in the north gable suggests that the hall was orientated north-south, with the high end at the north (Ashbee 2006:259).

5.2.4 Ashbee has suggested that the hall could have been sited in the northern part of the bailey, as the pipe roll for Michaelmas 1233 states that the sheriff was recompensed for mending 'a breach in the wall of Rochester Castle between the gate (presumably the main, north-east, gate) and the hall of said castle' (Ashbee 2006).

5.2.5 It has also been suggested that the main (north-east) entrance was rebuilt at this time as a multi-towered gatehouse (Gifford 1997:4). This is unlikely, as while it is clear that there was an elaborate gatehouse, as the remains of one are shown on early illustrations (e.g. Buck's view of 1735 B.L. K.top.17.10.m), this has the appearance of a later medieval building. However, it is clear that works were done to the drawbridge in 1196-97 (*Pipe Roll 7 Richard I* 1929:2) and that works were carried out to '*turris Roffe'*, presumably the keep, in 1196 (*Pipe Roll 8 Richard I* 1929:281).

[22] The principle living/sleeping area in a medieval domestic building
[23] Area where food was distributed
[24] A store room for liquor

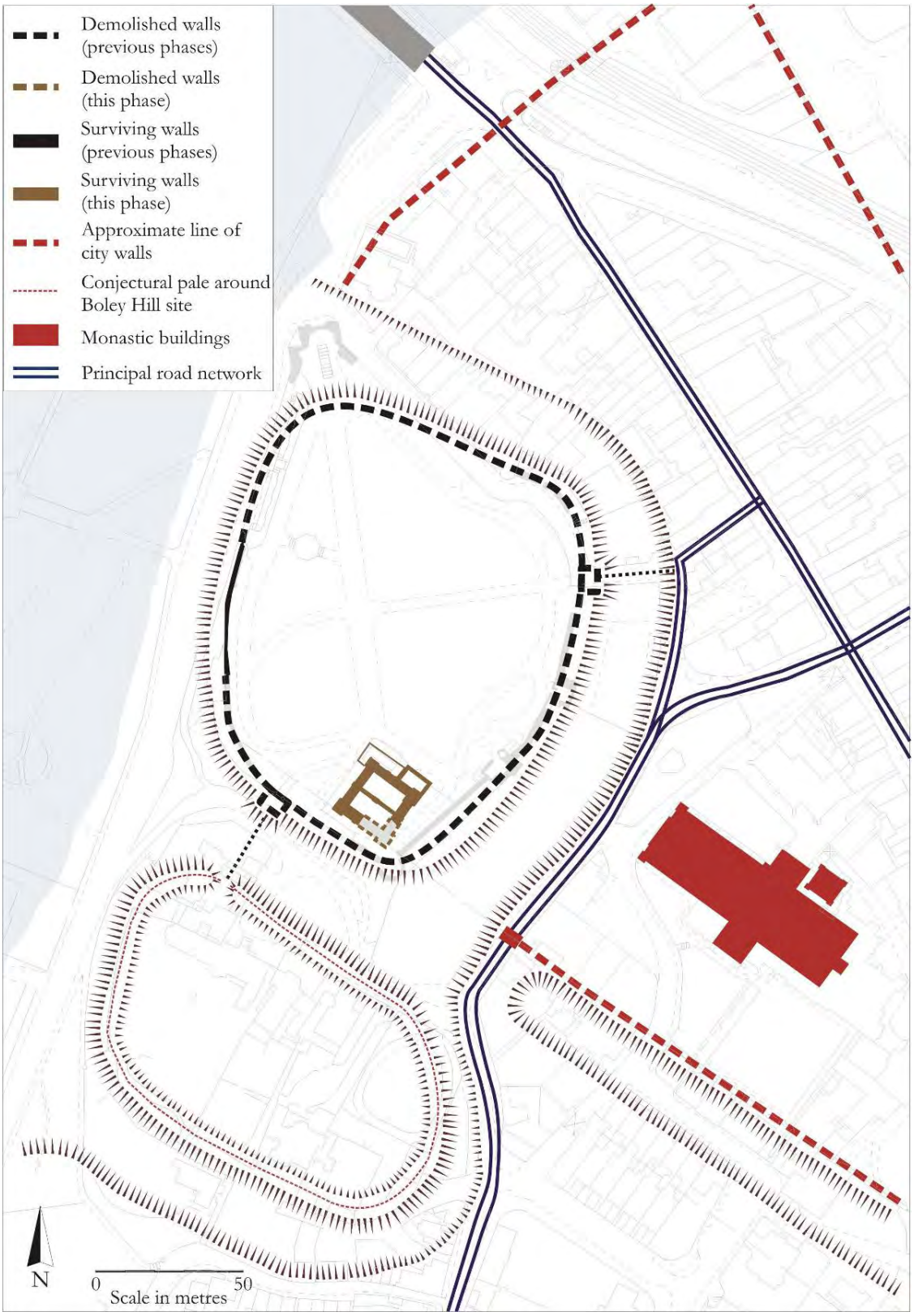


Fig. 15: Rochester Castle c.1150

5.3 Phase 3a: The siege of 1215

5.3.1 The Castle played an important part in the war between King John and several of his leading nobles of 1215-17, when it was seized by William de Albini, commander of the rebel forces, in September 1215, in order to block the King's approach to London. At the time the custodian of the Castle was Archbishop William Langton, who was no friend of the King, who had blocked his appointment for years, and the constable was Reginald de Cornhill. Cornhill appears to have willingly allowed the rebels to enter, and remained in the Castle throughout the siege. Whether Langton was directly involved in allowing the rebels to take control is unclear (Allen Brown 1986:9).

5.3.2 The siege by John began before the 11th of October, after the city was taken by surprise, and was the most ambitious operation of its kind in England up to that point. The curtain wall was breached relatively easily by the attackers. Meanwhile, an abortive relief effort organised by the rebel barons got as far as Dartford before turning back. The keep proved more difficult to storm. The Barnwell Chronicler and Roger of Wendover both record that stone-throwing engines were used against the defences, possibly from the high ground at the top of Boley Hill. However, these appear to have been relatively ineffective and it was not until a mine was dug under the south-east corner of the keep that any progress was made. A writ dated 25 November urgently requests that forty of the fattest pigs be supplied for setting a fire underneath the tower in order to bring it down (by burning the timber props supporting the mine). This brought down the entire south east corner of the keep. The garrison, after expelling those of their number least capable of fighting, withdrew to the line of the cross wall and continued to defend the northern half of the keep until, reduced to a diet of horseflesh and water, they surrendered on the 30th November (Allen Brown 1986:9-11).

5.3.3 An anomaly to the south of the keep identified by ground probing radar in 1997 has been interpreted as a mine trench (Idrogeo 1997: plan 2). This is unlikely, as the mine used was clearly a surface mine rather than a subterranean excavation. Evidence for this is found in the south-east corner of the basement, where primary fabric survives on the internal face up to the top of the ground floor, indicating that this part of the structure at least was not undermined. Instead the mine appears to have removed a section of the southern wall at surface level, suggesting that there was a weak point, such as a garderobe shaft in the keep at this point. This alone would have been enough to de-stablise the south-east corner and bring it down. The rebuilding of the east end of the southern face of the cross wall in the subsequent rebuilding suggests that this wall was also damaged by the collapse (fig. 12).

5.3.4 Flight and Harrison uncovered a medieval trench to the north of tower three of the curtain wall in 1976, which they interpreted as a siege trench and dated to the 1215 siege on the basis of pottery finds associated with it (Flight and Harrison 1978:38). However, this pottery has been re-dated to the period prior to the building of the Castle, and the trench probably relates to a late Saxon plot boundary (see above p.9).

5.3.5 Goodall (2006:268) has suggested that the fire damage visible in the keep, which is generally assigned to the post medieval period (Allen Brown 1986:33), took place during this siege. This assertion is based on the fact that there is no evidence of fire damage in the post 1215 parts of the keep, coupled with the lack of any known post-medieval reference to a fire, which due to its dramatic nature and is likely to have been recorded. This cannot be the case as there is no evidence for the rebuilding of the floors and roof of the north side of the keep. The existing joist holes and rafter sockets do not appear to have been altered to accommodate a new floor or roof. Neither is there any evidence of the joist holes being filled and replaced by a framed floor. The earliest views of the interior of the Castle, which date from the early 19th century, clearly show the presence of joist holes (Medway Archives DE402/7/51 (U)), and while Payne refers to the presence of these holes and their repair; he does not state that he exposed them (Payne 1895:103).

5.3.6 The Castle again changed hands in 1216, when it was captured by Prince Louis of France, who had invaded England at the invitation of the rebel barons (Allen Brown 1986:13). There is no record of any resistance and it is presumed the Castle was undefended at this time.

6 PERIOD 4: HENRY III'S REFURBISHMENT OF THE CASTLE

6.0.1 The Castle was repaired and strengthened in the 1220s during the government of the young King Henry. As there are no further references to the custodianship of the Archbishop of Canterbury after 1215, the Castle can be assumed to have remained in royal hands (Hasted 1782:15).

6.1 The royal apartments in the bailey

6.1.1 The first phase of works appears to have concentrated on the repair of the domestic buildings, with a new chapel and chamber[25] commissioned in January 1221 (Allen Brown 1986:13). The chamber, known as the 'King's chamber', is referred to as being entered via a flying staircase and timber porch and roofed with tiles. It was seemingly partitioned internally, as an account of

[25] The King's bed/sitting room

the 1270s refers to an 'outer wardrobe[26]', and featured an undercroft divided into two cellars, one under the wardrobe and one under the chamber (Ashbee 2006:257).

6.1.2 Ashbee interprets this as a reference to the remains of a sizable building preserved in the west curtain. These consist of a thickening of Gundulf's curtain wall to accommodate a two storey building with a principal room at first floor level lit by three twin-light windows with distinctive 13th century plate tracery within a semi-circular arch. Of these one was blocked relatively crudely before 1895 (Livett 1895: plate 1), another was blocked much more thoroughly in antiquity and a third survives in a fragmentary condition. The remains of a stub of walling, with a door to a wall walk at first floor level on the south side, indicate that this building was constructed entirely of stone. Under this are traces of an undercroft with an arcade of three blind pointed arches and a line of joist holes. The spacing of the windows and the arches suggests that the structure would have originally been at least four (undercroft) bays long. To produce a harmoniously proportioned structure it is likely to have been two bays wide. Ashbee also suggests that this was a simpler version of King John's *Gloriette* at Corfe Castle and was aligned north-south (2006:256).

6.1.3 There is little reason to doubt Ashbee's interpretation of this building and it is further supported by the fact that the mortar used is of the same type as other works, including the drum tower, that have been ascribed to this phase (Gifford 1997:25). However, his assertion that the ground floor was originally vaulted, also suggested by Allen Brown (1986), is doubtful. It is based on a reading of a drawing completed before Payne's restoration of 1903, which appears to show the base of a vault without the deep joist holes which are now visible (BL Add. MS 32370, fol. 183). Ashbee contends that Payne misinterpreted what survived and the blind arches now seen are largely a creation of the 1903 restoration. However, there are no signs of a vault in either the surviving masonry or the pre-restoration drawing of it. Furthermore, if there was a vault, the surviving masonry implies that it sprung from current ground level, which is clearly also historic ground level. This would be highly unusual in a medieval building, where vaults were generally sprung from partway up a wall. Documentary evidence indicates that this area ('the cellar under the King's chamber') was ceiled, the windows altered and wainscoted in April 1233 (Allen Brown, Colvin and Taylor 1963:809), suggesting a timber floor structure and vertical walls rather than a vault.

[26] At this time a room for storing clothes

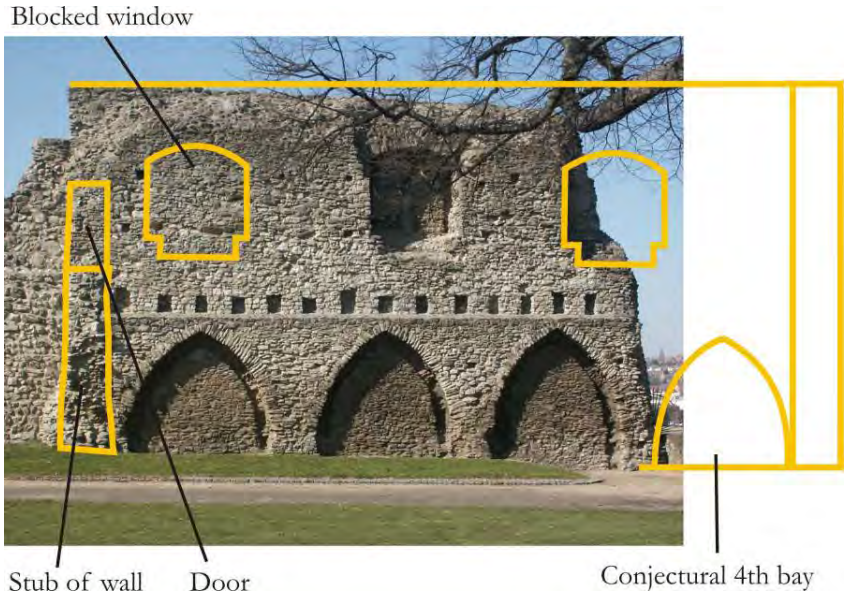


Fig. 16: Chamber Block

6.1.4 It is likely that the chapel described in the fabric rolls as being two storeys high, built of timber and entered via the King's chamber, that was ordered in 1244 and completed in 1246 was attached to the south-east corner of the chamber and projected eastwards. This proved unsatisfactory, as the only entrance to what was clearly a public chapel was through the King's chamber This was altered with the addition of a new, separate, entrance stair and timber oriel in the winter of 1254 (Ashbee 2006:258).

6.1.5 It appears that Henry III reused the 12th century hall (see p.36). Payment for a buttery in 1227 (*Pipe roll 11 Henry III*) Close to this was a further chapel built by the Sheriff of Kent in 1221. This was re-roofed, the exterior roughcast and whitewashed, and the interior, including a painting of Christ in majesty, repainted on the King's orders in 1239. It was connected to the hall by a covered pentice (Ashbee 2006:258). Also close to the hall was a kitchen, with a roof of four or six trusses, built in 1241. The positions of the almonry (chamber where alms for the poor were distributed), built in 1248, the stable, also of that year, and the 'salsary' (salt house) of 1249 are not known (Ashbee 2006:258, Allen Brown, Colvin and Taylor 1963:809).

6.1.6 The remains of a further building dated to the reign of Henry III, in the form of a single wall that forms part of the curtain, stand in the south-west corner of the bailey. Similarities of the mortar and the use of distinctive green sandstone in the rere-arches[27] suggest that these buildings are contemporary, or almost so, with the 'chamber block' (Gifford 1997:25). The grouping of

[27] The arch of the inner face of a window embrasure

the lancets[28] suggests that this building was divided into two rooms. Payne (1905:188) believed that he had identified the stub of Henry III's cross wall that divided the bailey (see below) between the two central windows. However, it is more likely that this feature is the remains of a stair leading to the wall walk. An indentation, with a later fill, probably forming the head of a stone vice can be seen in the head of the wall. Payne's excavations revealed no traces of the foundations for the cross wall and it is likely that the buildings in this area were timber-framed except for the curtain. This was suggested by the 1997 excavations in this area, which revealed traces of medieval footings of ragstone bonded with clay or chalk and relatively narrow in width. As the excavation was limited in scope no conclusions can be drawn concerning the plan of these buildings (Ward and Linklater 1997).

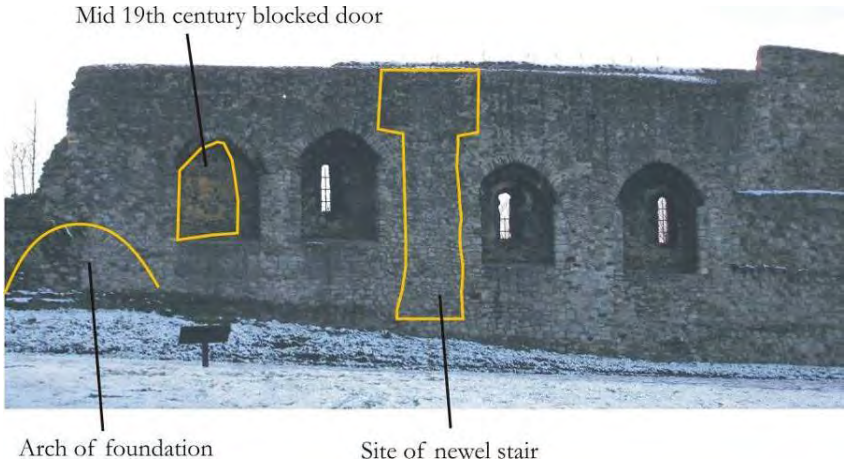


Fig. 17: South-West Building

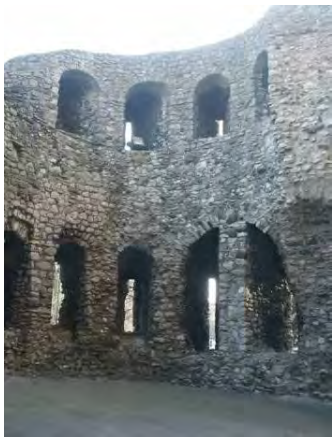
6.1.7 A further bailey building has been identified immediately to the north-west of the Keep by Keevil, who uncovered traces of a wall and floor running at right angles to the south-west curtain wall in 2007 (Keevil 2007). Although identified as medieval at present there is no evidence to date it. The only clue as to date is its relationship with the Keep. Its close proximity suggests a different date, since it is likely that as built it would have had an unencumbered by adjoining structures, both to give a clear field of fire and an appropriate setting to such a grand building. It is possible that this building may have predated the keep, as part of Gundulf's castle, but more likely was constructed as part of Henry IIIs palace, when there is known to have been extensive building in the bailey and the Keep had lost some of its former prominence and prestige. A later date (post-dating the destruction of the palace) is thought to be less likely, as the bailey was largely cleared of buildings following the abandonment of the palace. However, it may have been a small structure providing ancillary accommodation for the reinhabited Keep.

[28] Narrow windows with pointed arched heads

6.1.8 As Rochester was conveniently sited on the road from London to Canterbury and the Channel ports, the King made good use of the Castle and its apartments, visiting at least once a year and often more frequently. Many of the improvements to the domestic apartments were the direct result of these visits (Ashbee 2006:250).

6.2 Repair of the curtain wall

6.2.1 In 1223 a Royal writ ordered the Sheriff of Kent to make good 'the breaches of the wall of our Castle which formerly fell'. As a separate order is given to repair the keep in 1226 this presumably refers to the curtain wall (Allen Brown 1986:13). This must have included the building of the drum tower (tower one) at the south east corner of the curtain wall, as the curtain wall in this area would have been destroyed by the mining of the keep. As built, this tower appears to have been a two-storey structure with a timber floor. The position of the arrow slits on the upper floor suggests that only half the tower was floored, and that it was open to the gorge. There is a clear break between the ground and first floors of the tower, and a marked difference between the dressed stone arrow loops of the ground floor and the rubble finish of the first floor loops. However, the similarity of the first floor to other fabric dated to the 13th century, particularly the southern wall (discussed below) and the section of walling encapsulated in the west wall of tower two, suggests that this is the result of a construction break rather than an entirely separate phase. The suggestion that this tower was rebuilt and heightened in the 14th century (Gifford 1997:18) is thus erroneous. The insertion of a pillar into what appears to have originally been a large arch at ground floor level is likely to have been contemporary with the construction of the first floor. The west face of the tower would have originally contained an arrow loop on each floor which would have covered the face of the southern curtain wall; the springing for the rere-arch of the ground floor loop still survives.



Drum Tower (Tower One), interior

Drum Tower (Tower Two), exterior

6.2.2 The adjoining stretches of the south and east curtain walls must also have been replaced at this time, as they too would have been destroyed by the fall of the keep. As discussed above, this is clearly of a different built to the ground floor of the drum tower, as the way in which the two structures have parted company suggests that they were never coursed in together. However, similarities in the stonework suggest that the first floor and curtain are part of the same campaign.

South curtain wall, exterior

South curtain wall, interior

6.2.3 The east curtain wall was completely rebuilt in the 14th century. However, a section of the *c.*1223 wall has been preserved as part of the rear of the 14th century tower two. This contains an outward facing arrow loop with a segmental arch similar to those found in the arrow loops and windows of the south and south-west curtain, which indicate that the *c.*1223 wall ran on an alignment slightly to the west of the current wall. Previously this wall has been interpreted as crossing the foundations of the current western curtain wall to meet the northern face of tower one slightly to the east of the current curtain (Gifford 1997:18). This is unlikely, as there is no evidence (in the form of differential settlement) of any foundations under the current (14th century) east curtain wall. It is therefore likely that the *c.*1223 wall curved from the current joint between tower one and the curtain to the extant section at the rear of tower two.

Fig. 18: Tower Two – west elevation

6.2.4 A south gate is mentioned in 1225 and 1226 (Ashbee 2006:253) and also in 1237 when it is described as having a brattice[29] and drawbridge (Allen Brown, Colvin and Taylor 1963:807). Livett (1895:31) identified the south gate as standing directly to the south of the keep and it has been alleged that a chase in the stonework of the curtain wall marks its spot (Gifford 1997, drawing B0173:SK6). This cannot be correct, as Place's engraving of 1670 shows a tower well to the west, on the approximate site of the current south entrance to the Castle (BL Maps.K.Top.17.10.k). Place shows it as a simple square tower of a different build to the post 1223 south-eastern section of curtain wall. As all the gates of the Castle are recorded as having 'fallen down' by 1363 (Ashbee 2006:261), it likely that the gate tower shown in Place's drawing is a 14th century reconstruction of a 13th century gate on the same site.

[29] A timber gallery built out at the top of a wall

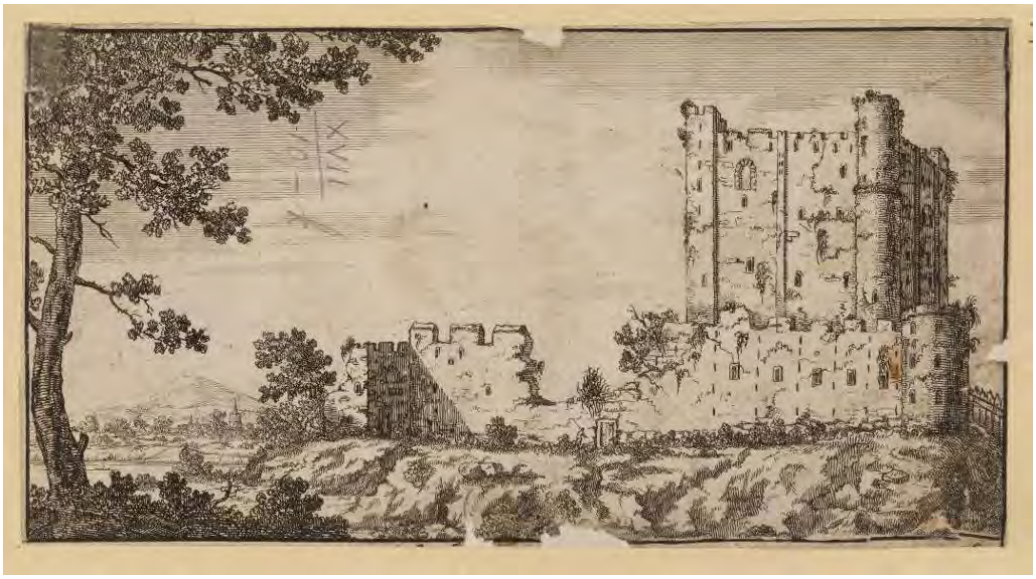


Fig. 19: Place's 1670 engraving

6.3 The building of the cross wall

6.3.1 During this phase the bailey was divided into two by a stone wall. This can be dated to 1230-31, when £20 12s 6d was spent on building a wall 'in front of the keep' (Allen Brown, Colvin and Taylor 1963:807). The eastern termination of a substantial wall is still visible in the west wall of tower two (though this is likely to be 14th century work designed to key into the earlier wall). This wall has traditionally been interpreted as crossing the bailey from east to west, terminating between the two pairs of windows in the south-western building. This interpretation follows Payne (1905:188), who believed that he had identified the stub of the western end of this wall in this position. However, he found no traces of such a wall when he excavated (Payne 1905:188) and it is more likely that this feature is the remains of a stair (as discussed above p.41 para. 6.1.6). A more likely route is that this wall ran in a straight line to meet the probable site of the south-east corner of the chamber block. This idea is supported by a group of robber trenches found by Ward and Linklater, which can be interpreted as traces of this wall and a gate house or minor wall and are perfectly aligned on a straight line between the known eastern termination of this wall and the posited south-east corner of the gatehouse. It is also possible that the other robber trench found by Ward and Linklater formed a rectangular enclosure around the keep in a manner similar to that around the White Tower (Ashbee 2006:254).

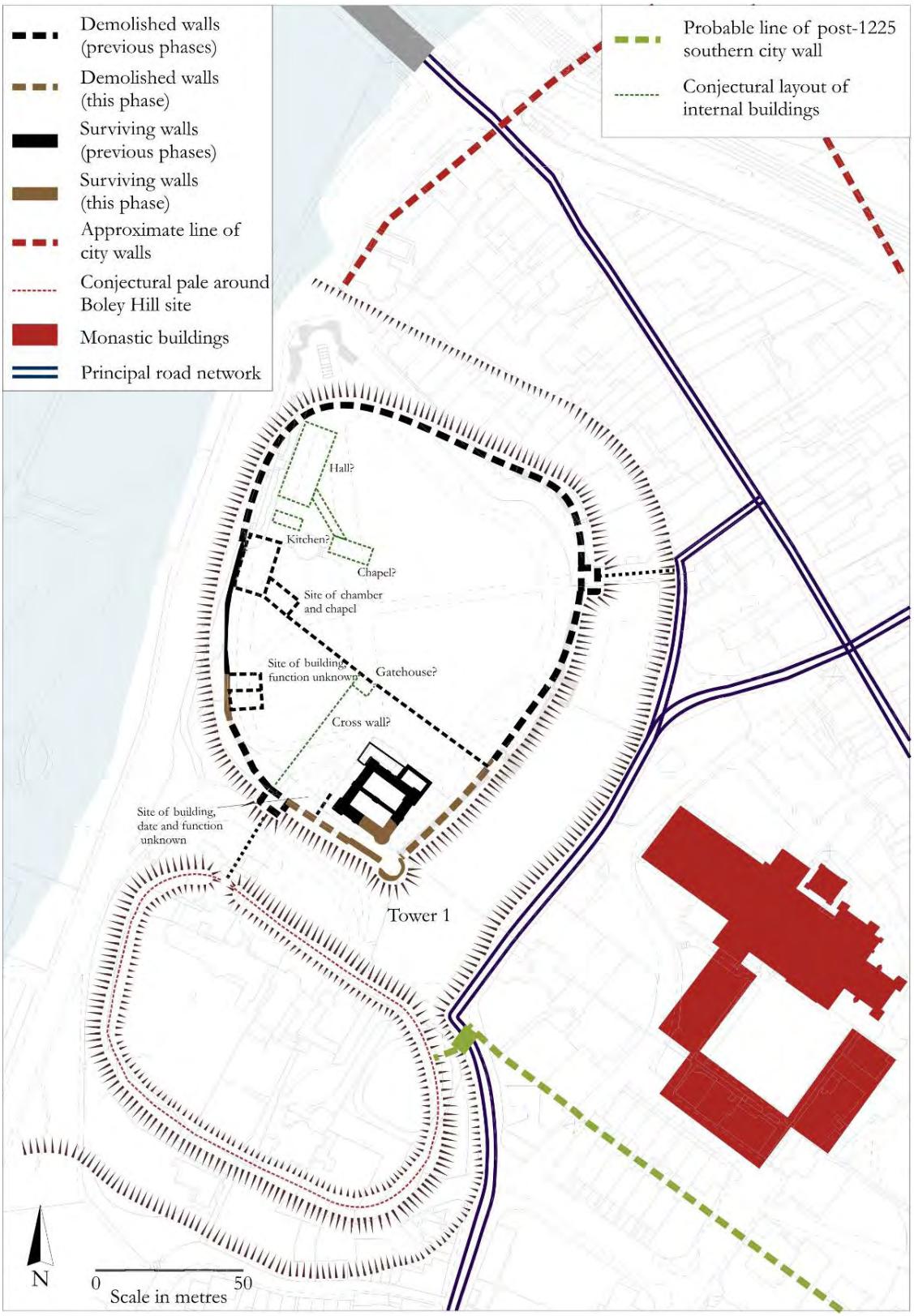


Fig. 20: Rochester Castle c.1250

6.4 Repairs to the keep

6.4.1 Repairs to the keep had begun by 1226, and the Sheriff was told to complete what remained to be done the following year. However, it was not until 1231 that the floors were laid and the roof covered with lead (Allen Brown, Colvin and Taylor 1963:807). A total of £530 was spent on the keep (Newman 2002:530).

6.4.2 The works to the keep in this era are easy to identify, as like the curtain walls, firestone from quarries in Reigate and Godstone has been used. The fallen south east corner tower was rebuilt as a solid round tower, presumably to offer improved protection against mining. Building breaks on both the east and south walls of the keep clearly mark the start of new work. Architectural unity is preserved in the rebuilding by the continued use of round-headed arches but the works are clearly much more utilitarian in character, with the 'original' wide arch of the east window of the southern upper chamber being crudely cut by the new work rather than being reinstated. The large arches in the eastern wall at second and third floor levels were not replaced; likewise the divisions at first and second floor level in the southern half of the building were not replicated. The eastern part of the central arcade was also refaced, with simple mouldings substituted for dogtooth ornament. The utilitarian nature of these works suggests that the keep had by then been superseded by the new royal apartments in the bailey as the principal residential and ceremonial centre of the Castle.

6.4.3 The new floors in the southern part of the building were clearly of framed construction, as there are only beam holes in the corners of the new work. Redundant primary joist holes may have been made good with a loose fill that has left no trace. The new floors were set at slightly higher level than the original floor, indicating either a thinner floor covering or a dias at the east end of the southern chambers at first and second floor levels.

6.4.4 The introduction of a new roof with a lower pitch over the southern part of the building, which is clearly indicated by scars in the masonry, has traditionally been attributed to this phase (Goodall 2006:268). However, this roof form is characteristic of 14th or 15th century structures, and is not known in any 13th century context. It is possible that this roof was associated with the repairs carried out in the 14th century. It is possible that the inserted postern in the first floor of the forebuilding was introduced at this point to link in with a reconstructed curtain wall and replacing the earlier postern to the south.

6.4.5 It is possible that the gallery window in the north elevation, which opened out onto the forebuilding roof, was blocked during this phase. The most likely cause for this would have been the conversion of this roof into a cistern. There are traces of internal drains under the roof level which may be

associated with this. Furthermore, the accounts of the repairs of 1367-70 indicate that lead from a cistern was reused in the roof repairs. This must have been situated in the keep to survive the years of neglect in the later 13th and early 14th century, and relatively substantial in order to merit a mention in the accounts.

Forebuilding, window blocked during medieval period

6.5 Later works of Henry III

6.5.1 In the latter part of Henry's reign work focused on the defences. The outer gateway reconstructed 1249-50 at cost of over £150 and in 1256 the keep repaired for £121 6s 7½d. In 1258-59 £33 5s. 8d. was spent on the keep, the great gate and the bridge outside it (Allen Brown, Colvin and Taylor 1963:809).

6.5.2 During the reign of Henry III the city defences were also strengthened at the King's expense. Of particular relevance to the Castle was the extension of the Cathedral precinct walls to include land to the south of the Cathedral and cloister (Flight and Harrison 1968:78, 1986:21-24).

7 PERIOD 5: THE SIEGE OF 1264 AND SUBSEQUENT ABANDONMENT

7.1 Rochester was again the site of a major siege during the Baron's war of 1264, during which John, Earl Warenne and the constable, Roger de Leybourne, held the Castle against Simon de Montfort and Gilbert de Clare. Action began on the 17th of April, when de Clare advanced from Tonbridge along the east bank of the Medway and the defending garrison set fire to the suburbs of the city and, possibly because it was too close to the keep or would grant cover to the attackers, the King's hall in the Castle. The next day de Montfort arrived from the west and, after being initially repulsed at the bridge, took the city. The bailey of the Castle fell on the 19th and the defenders withdrew to the keep. This held out for a week, after which the siege was lifted, de Montfort

and de Clare withdrawing on hearing that the King and his son, the future Edward I, were marching in force against them (Allen Brown 1986: 14).

7.2 The extent of the damage to the Castle is not known, but appears to have been extensive, as later inquests name individuals who were involved in attempting to undermine the walls (Ashbee 2006:260). The fact that after the conclusion of this siege no attempts were made to repair the damage, and for over a century the Castle was allowed to decay, with virtually no work apart from minor repairs being carried out between 1272 and 1367, also suggests that that the Castle was left in a poor condition after the siege. This idea is supported by a writ of 1273 which records that the main gate to the bailey had been 'destroyed' (Ashbee 2006:260).

7.3 The damage done during the siege was exacerbated by the pilfering of material from the Castle by those entrusted with caring for it. In 1275 local jurors reported that successive constables and others had stolen building materials including 3000 tiles removed from the King's Chamber and an oriel[30], presumably removed from the hall, chamber or chapel in the bailey. Furthermore, the Constable and two other men had used timber from the Castle for firewood and allowed over 60s worth of lead to be stolen (Ashbee 2006:260).

7.4 However, the Castle does not appear to have been totally abandoned during this period. In 1267 the constable repaired a 'small hall' (from the materials described this was probably a timber-framed structure, and was possibly built to serve a different purpose and later co-opted to serve as a hall). An account from 1273-4 mentions several functioning buildings including a hall (presumably the same small hall rather than the burnt King's hall), the outer wardrobe, a room over a gate, a stable and a prison. In 1281 the Constable (John of Cobham) was licensed to demolish a hall and chambers 'long since burnt' and use stone for buildings elsewhere in the Castle (Ashbee 2006:260-61.

7.5 A survey of the Castle in 1340 lists serious defects in the keep, including the crenellations, the leading and timbers of the roof, outer walls and the stair. In the bailey, the curtain wall was reported as being in a poor state throughout, with some areas in danger of collapse. The chamber over the gate in the cross wall and the south gate were singled out as being dilapidated, presumably because they formed separate living areas. In all it was estimated that £374 would be needed to repair the walls and £200 needed to be spent on the keep (Allen Brown, Colvin and Taylor 1963:810). Despite these defects it appears that the keep remained in use and had become the focus of domestic activity, with all the named rooms: the King's Hall, chapel, several chambers and the bakery (possibly in a turret) being located there (Ashbee 2006:261).

[30] a bay window projecting from a wall

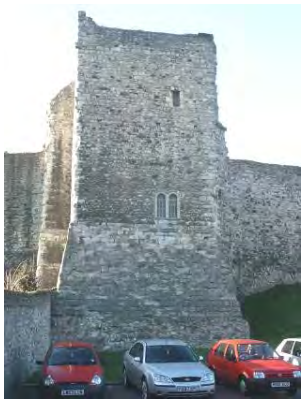
7.6 A further survey of 1363, in which no details are given, gives estimates for repairs to £666 13s 4d for the keep, £1000 for middle ward, £1666 13s 4d for outer ward, a total of £3333 6s 8d (Allen Brown, Colvin and Taylor 1963:811). In 1353 or 1354 the kitchen and stable finally collapsed, and by 1360 much of the hall had fallen and serious cracks had appeared in the stonework of the keep (Ashbee 2006:261). A final survey of 1369 records that the only building remaining in the Castle apart from the keep and gates was an old hall (probably the small hall mentioned in 1267) with a kitchen and a small stable, all of which were ruined. This also mentions that the neglect of the Castle was augmented by a 'great wind' of 1363 (Allen Brown, Colvin and Taylor 1963:811). By this point the small hall seems to have become uninhabitable, with the loss of most of its roof tiles and defects in its timber structure; the gatehouses had apparently fallen down completely (Ashbee 2006:261).

7.7 It is possible that the Boley Hill earthworks became separated from the Castle at this time. A vaulted undercroft in the Old Vicarage, one of the buildings on this site has been dated to the late 13th century (Wheatley 1922:139). Given the subsequent history of this area, which was certainly separated from the Castle and in the hands of several individuals by 1460 (see below p.56), and the dilapidated state of the Castle at this point, the undercroft is more likely to be associated with the privatisation and demilitarisation of Boley Hill rather than any Royal building works.

8 PERIOD 6: RENOVATIONS BY EDWARD III 1367-77

8.1 Between May 1367 and September 1370 Edward III spent £2262 on a major refurbishment of the Castle. The building accounts refer to the demolition of a tower and sections of wall followed by the erection of new walls and two towers, which were fitted out as houses (Allen Brown, Colvin and Taylor 1963:811). This presumably refers to the east curtain wall and mural towers (towers 2 and 3), the walling of which appears to be continuous with the adjacent curtain wall and the detailing, including shouldered openings, is 14th century in character. A new vault was also inserted into the cross wall gatehouse in 1368, above which a house was built. A new roof was inserted over the stairs to the 'outer' gate and a drawbridge was built in 1370. It is not clear whether these works were related to the north-east or south gates (Allen Brown, Colvin and Taylor 1963:812).

Eastern curtain wall



Tower Three

8.2 The keep was also repaired during this period. This included the formation of a new central gutter between the roofs and laying new lead on the turrets and great tower roofs. The lead was part new and partly reclaimed from an old cistern (Allen Brown, Colvin and Taylor 1963:812). As discussed above, the low pitch of the southern part of the keep roof suggests a later medieval date, and the structure may be connected with these works. It is also possible that the steeply pitched roof shown on 18th century views of the fore-building replaced the original flat roof at this point.

8.3 After a break of five years, when only £6 was spent on the Castle, further works took place between September 1375 and March 1377, when £1005 was spent on the King's Kentish properties and between March and June 1377, when a further £180 14s 10d was spent at Rochester (Allen Brown, Colvin and Taylor 1963:812). The nature of these works is not known, but alterations to the south gate and the north-east gate can be dated to the Edward III period and may form part of these later works.

8.4 The north-east gate appears to have been completely rebuilt. The gate shown on both Buck's view of 1735 (BL K.top.17.10.n), Kerrich's plan of *c.*1800 (BL Add MS 6735:141) and the Bridgewarden's map of 1717 features a central arch with flanking diamond-shaped towers connected to the curtain by a squinch projecting into the moat, and a stone causeway with arches leading up to the gate (Allen Brown 1986:20). The remains of this causeway, which featured simple pointed arches similar to those found in the foundations of the east wall, were uncovered in 1888 (Arnold 1889:197). Allen Brown suggested a 14th century date for the gatehouse as shown in these views, due to similarities with the gate of that date at Lewes, Sussex (Allen Brown 1986:20). The south gate shown in Place's engraving of 1670 (BL Maps.K.top.17.10m) is likely to date from this period, as all the gates are recorded as having 'fallen down' in 1363 (Ashbee 2006:261). The small rectangular structure shown has similarities with the rectangular gatehouses to the priory which survive nearby.

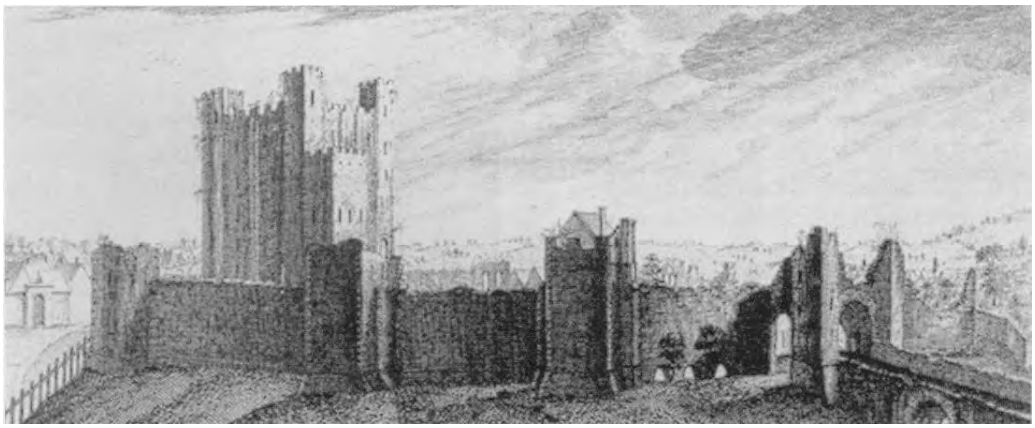


Fig. 21: Buck's 1735 view from the north-east

8.5 It seems that Henry III's apartments in the bailey were never rebuilt, as there are no references to the repair or rebuilding of domestic buildings. However, the cross wall appears to have remained, as a new vault was inserted into the gatehouse and the west wall of tower two has been keyed to receive the eastern end of this wall. The focus of domestic life in the Castle is therefore likely to have remained the keep. Later accounts from Edward III's reign mention trestles, forms and a cupboard belonging to the hall and chamber at Rochester (Allen Brown, Colvin and Taylor 1963:812), all of which could have been located in the keep. The failure to reconstruct these apartments was probably due to the Castle having fallen from favour as a royal residence, the King instead lodging with the monks of the priory the 14th century (Thurley 1993:57) or staging at the royal manor of Gravesend or the new castle at Queenborough, both of which were close at hand (Ashbee 2006:261). Hence from the 14th century the Castle was a barracks, ceremonial and administrative site rather than a royal residence.

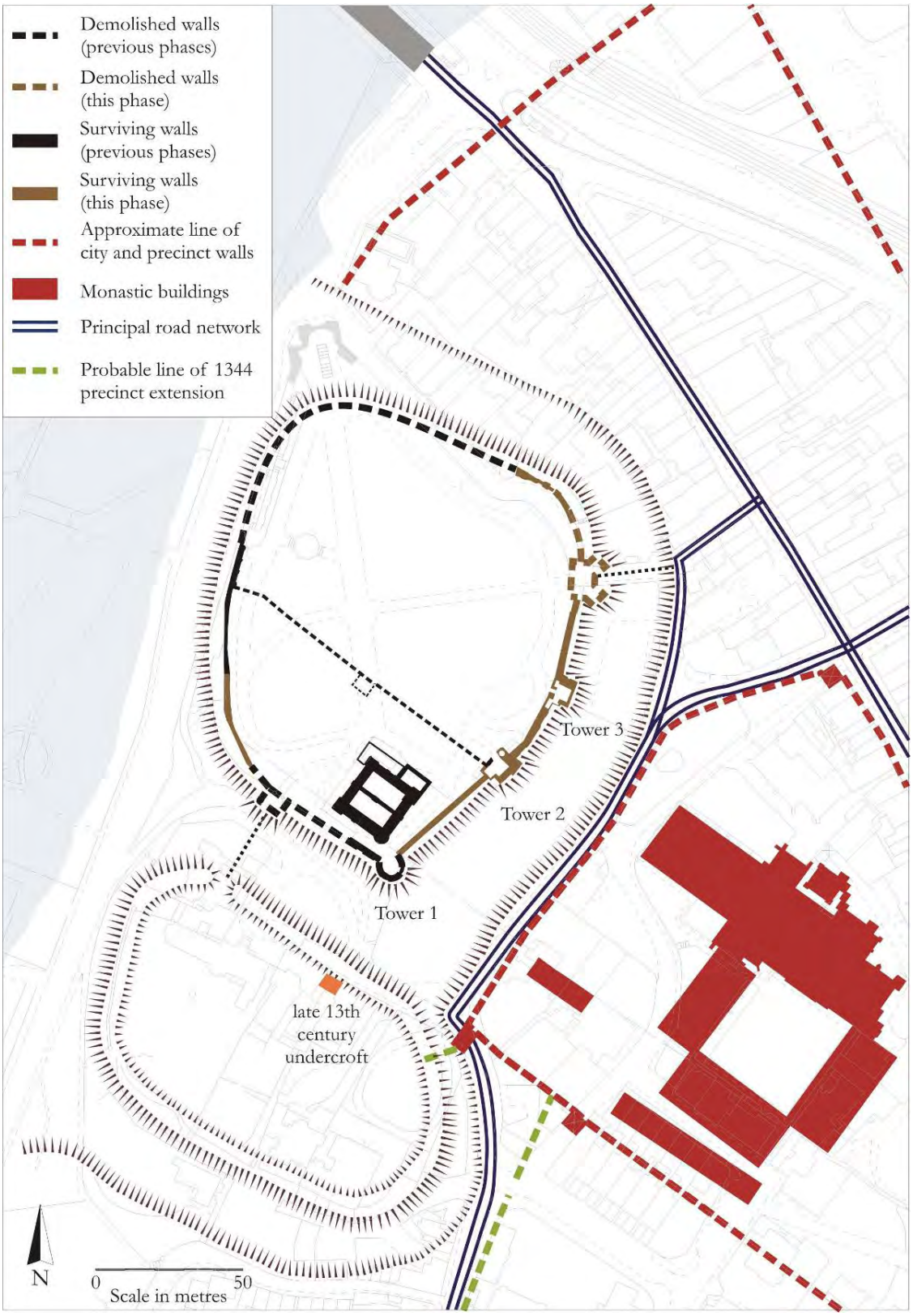


Fig. 22: Rochester Castle c.1378