

# Historic Building Survey

*Of*

**THE BISHOP'S PALACE GATEHOUSE,  
EXETER, DEVON.**

*By R. W. Parker*

For The Church Commissioners



**RICHARD PARKER  
HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING & INTERPRETATION**

11 Toronto Road, St James, Exeter, EX4 6LE.

E-Mail: [ryparker@btopenworld.com](mailto:ryparker@btopenworld.com)

Tel: 07763 248241

01392 423233

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Fig. 1 The south-western elevation of the gatehouse as seen from Palace Gate.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report concerns the Bishop's Palace gatehouse at Exeter (Fig. 1), a Grade I Listed Building lying in Palace Gate (SX 92119 92420). The report was commissioned by Mark Ledgard of Smiths Gore Chartered Surveyors & Property Consultants on behalf of the Church Commissioners, the owners of the building. The gatehouse is currently untenanted and it is proposed to convert it into the Bishop's offices. The proposed works will involve minor alterations and repairs to the building and therefore a programme of archaeological works was commissioned as part of the project. This report aims to clarify the possible development and significance of the gatehouse, which despite its obvious medieval origins and Listed status remains archaeologically unexplored.

The archaeological works on site were carried out in January 2013 by Richard Parker Historic Building Recording and Interpretation. The works included a rapid archaeological survey of the building, production of a photographic record and limited documentary research. Phased plans showing the suggested phasing of the fabric were produced, based upon existing survey drawings provided by Smiths Gore. The survey was not invasive and involved no stripping of existing decorative plasters or investigation of concealed or inaccessible fabric. The conclusions presented in this report and the suggested phasing of the building are thus provisional and may need to be revised in the light of any future investigation or research work carried out in relation to the building and its environs.

### 1.1. The site

The Bishop's Palace at Exeter lies to the south east of the Cathedral in large grounds which occupy a roughly triangular area, bounded on the eastern side by the City Walls and on the north by the Cathedral and the former Chancellor's house (Fig. 2). The western and south-western sides are

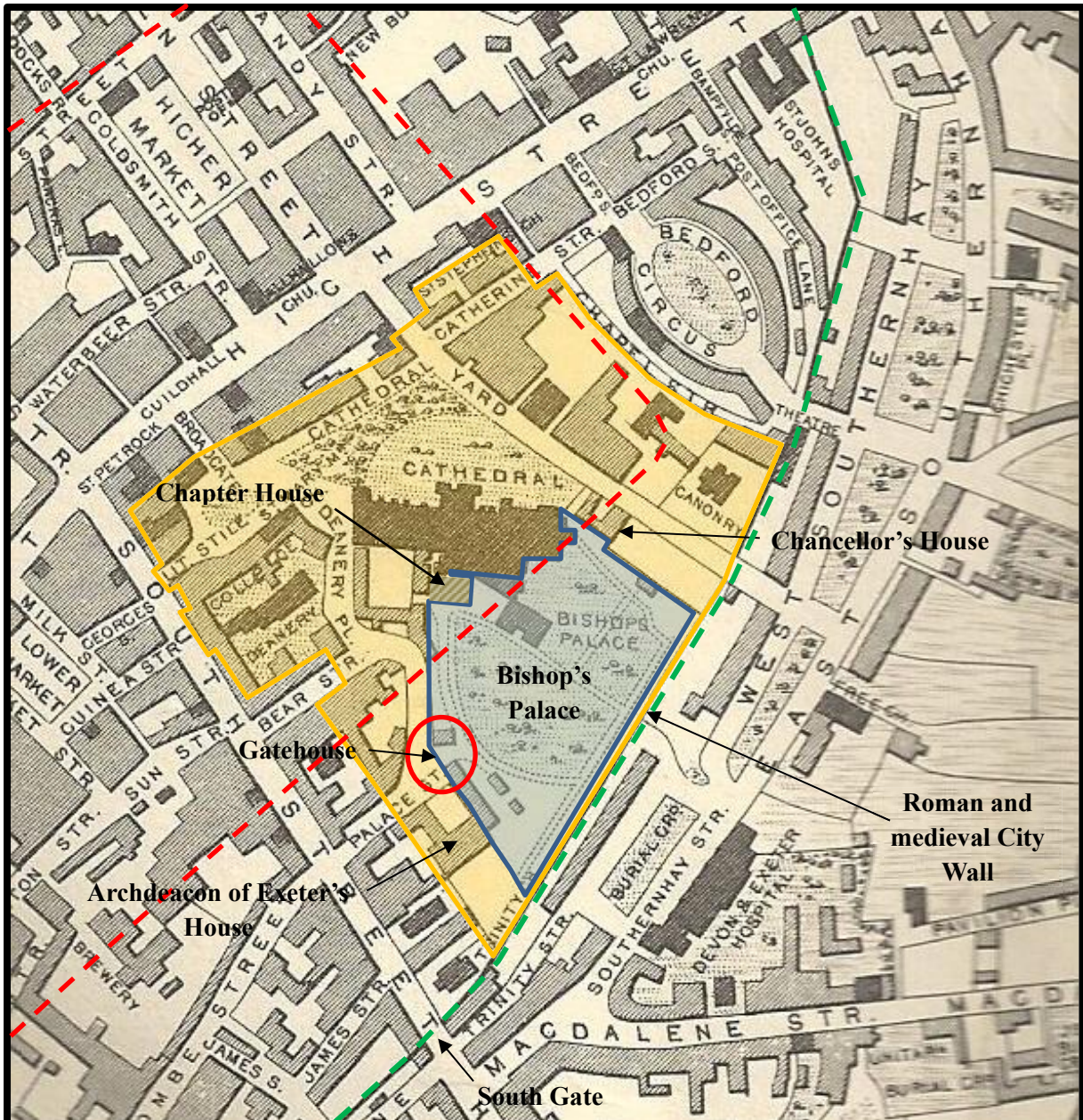


Fig. 2 Location of the site (Circled) showing the approximate boundaries of the Close (yellow), the Bishop's lands (blue) and the Roman fortress (red, dashed line) and civil-period defences (green, dashed line) superimposed upon J. Tallis & H. Winkles' 1850 map of the city.

bounded by Deanery Place, Palace Gate and by the house formerly assigned to the Archdeacon of Exeter. The area has been held by the Bishops of Exeter since at least the 12th century and possibly earlier (Lega-Weekes 1915, 91).

## 1.2 Previous archaeological interventions

The Palace buildings have been subject to several phases of archaeological examination, but this has rarely involved any work on the gatehouse. As the Bishop's lands were not owned by the Dean and Chapter they were not surveyed as part of the series of lease plans produced for the Dean and Chapter by John Tothill in the mid-to-late 18th century, or subsequently by Robert Cornish and others. The earliest archaeological observations of works at the Palace were made by Charles Tucker during the



demolition of its western wing in 1846. These were published in the form of brief notes in Volume V of the *Archaeological Journal*, (AJ 1848 pp 224-5).

The principal published source for the Palace buildings remains Prebendary J.F. Chanter's *The Bishop's Palace, Exeter and its Story* (Chanter 1932), though even this makes only a limited study of the gatehouse. Chanter made a thorough survey of the documentary resources available in the Diocesan and Cathedral archives in Exeter and also in record centres such Lambeth Palace Library, the Public Record Office and The British Museum. Most of the documents examined and catalogued by him locally are now held in the Devon Record Office.

Modern archaeological studies of the buildings have included a partial survey of the main residential part of the Palace, undertaken in July and August 1985 by Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit (later Exeter Archaeology). This resulted in the production of drawn sections, elevations and phased plans but did not include works to the gatehouse (Blaylock 1987, 36-9). This work was later published in the *Journal of the Royal Archaeological Institute* (Blaylock 1990).

The gatehouse was visited in May 1992 by Keith Westcott and a very rapid photographic survey was made. This was followed by a further visit by Exeter Archaeology over two days in December 1998, when the scaffolding of the building for repairs allowed the production of hand-measured elevation drawings at a scale of 1:50 by N.J. Goodwin, under the present author's supervision. Unfortunately circumstances did not allow either for the completion of the drawn record or the interpretation of the building, and access to the interiors was not possible. These latter records (EA Archive No. 282) are now deposited at the Cathedral Library and have been consulted as part of the present project.

More recently, in 2010-11 a survey of the west wing of the palace buildings was undertaken by Exeter Archaeology (Blaylock, forthcoming), while the installation of gas servicing within the Palace grounds in 2012 has allowed for further observations by the Cotswold Archaeological Unit (CAU forthcoming) and Oakford Archaeology. These trenches exposed the remains of the eastern parts of the medieval Palace and also elements of the defences of the Close, including the robbed-out footings of Palace Gate, the Close gate of that name which lay to the south-west of the Bishop's gatehouse (M. Steinmetzer pers. comm).

The following summary of the history and development of the Bishop's Palace and its defences is largely based upon Prebendary Chanter's research and works undertaken by the staff of Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit and Exeter Archaeology between 1971 and 2012.

## 2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Roman

The greater part of the Palace grounds lie outside the boundary of the Roman Legionary fortress established by the Second Augustan legion in AD 50-55, the south-eastern bank and ditches of which ran in a direct line from north east to south west, under the east end of the cathedral, the western parts of the Palace, the Chantry house and the Baptist church in South Street. The Roman settlement had expanded to the line of the present City walls by around AD 200 (Fig. 2). Evidence of extra-mural buildings of the Roman military period and later streets and buildings relating to the civil-period town could well survive below ground in the area of the gatehouse.

Another early topographical feature which seems certain to pass close to, if not actually beneath, the gatehouse is the Coombe Brook, which is believed to have sprung from a 'well-pool' in the area immediately north of the Palace Chapel and flowed in a south-westerly direction from there down Palace Gate and Coombe Street to an outlet in the City Wall which can still be seen immediately behind the Custom House (Hoskins 1963, 5). This stream appears to have been culverted at an early

date and does not appear on any early maps or plans of the city, but it is likely that it was employed during the middle ages as a drain, perhaps to flush garderobes in the main apartments of the Palace and in the gatehouse (see below).

## 2.2 Post Roman and early Medieval

Excavations in the early 1970s identified late-Roman and Anglo-Saxon cemeteries in the area of St Mary Major Church on the present Cathedral Green. These are assumed to be associated with a large Saxon minster and abbey church, which was subsequently replaced by the present cathedral. Although it is perhaps unlikely that these cemeteries extended as far as the Palace grounds, burials have been identified under many houses in South Street, and a disturbed deposit of human remains were recently discovered at the western corner of Palace Gate and South Street (EA Archives). These latter burials are possibly associated with the former Parish Church of St James and may be unconnected with the Anglo Saxon cemeteries further west; however, a chapel of St Radegund is known to have existed in the area of the gatehouse in the medieval period, and the possibility of other early churches or monastic buildings in the vicinity, perhaps pre-dating the establishment of the existing cathedral, cannot be ruled out (Orme 2009, 8).

The south-western boundary of the Palace lands, containing the gatehouse, was probably fixed by the end of the Saxon period. The large tenement occupied by the Archdeacon of Exeter's House is believed to be of Saxon date, though it is first mentioned in property deeds dating from the mid 12th century, *c.* 1150, which describe it as 'adjoining the Bishop's Gate' (Lega-Weekes 1915, 110; Parker 1999, 2- citing Bishop *et al.* 1994). This reference proves the existence of a walled and possibly defensive boundary to the bishop's property by this period, with an entrance more or less in the position of the present gatehouse. Although no fabric of such an early date has been identified in the gatehouse, there can be little doubt that the gatehouse and the high wall running along the north-eastern side of the Archdeacon's tenement from the side wall of the gatehouse to the City Walls perpetuate an ancient boundary and entrance. The unusual angle of the south-eastern wall of the gatehouse may also reflect lost boundaries or buildings pre-dating the construction of the present gatehouse. It is uncertain how many other entrances there may have been to the Palace grounds, though it is possible there were several. The 13th-century Bishop's Palace at Salisbury, for example, had at least two (RCHME 199, 53).

Although the Palace lands must already have been defined by walls and gates, parts of these boundaries were altered in the 13th century and afterwards as a consequence of the encroachment of the cathedral and its peripheral structures. These changes may have necessitated the rebuilding and improvement of the defensive walls and gates. The Chapter House close to the south tower of the cathedral, for example, is known to have been built on part of the Bishop's gardens in 1225. Its western wall incorporates parts of earlier buildings, including a large archway which has been interpreted as a gateway associated with the 12th-century Palace (Parker 1997, 4). The arch must pre-date the establishment of the cloisters on the south side of the nave of the cathedral church, which are assumed (on the basis of the late 12th-century 'Brewer door' cut through the Romanesque masonry of the nave) to have been laid out in the 1180s or 1190s. The arch must have been blocked at this time and this entrance abandoned. Nothing else is known of the 12th-century Palace buildings.

The existing Palace buildings are understood to have been begun in about 1224 during the episcopate of Bishop Brewer (Chanter 1932, 11). They included a chapel, with undercroft beneath; an open hall with eastern screens passage entered through a large porch; a buttery, pantry, kitchen and brewhouse in the eastern part beyond the screens and chambers and high-status apartments to the west of the hall. These structures were not aligned on the cathedral, or the cloisters, but at an angle to them, facing south-west. The reason for this is not known but may be connected with the alignment of

earlier structures on the site. The magnificent entrance porch, which still survives, was approached from the gatehouse by an avenue passing through a very large outer court which later developed to include long ranges of stabling and lodgings lying along its eastern side and a high wall to the west, separating the court from the Bishop's gardens. The position of the porch and the avenue demonstrate that the gatehouse to the south west was by this time the principal entrance to the Palace grounds and that any other approaches were either of lesser importance or had ceased to exist. The wall and avenue from the gatehouse to the porch survived until the early 19th century when they were replaced, before 1819, with a curving driveway.

### 2.3 Later medieval

During the late 13th and early 14th centuries further alterations were made to the Bishop's property which may have implications for the dating of its walls and gatehouse. The Chancellor's house and garden, to the north of the Palace, were carved out of the Palace grounds between 1281 and 1321, during the reconstruction of the eastern limb of the cathedral (Allan & Dyer 2005, 93; Lega-Weekes 1915, 126). The northern boundary wall of the Chancellor's garden has been interpreted as the original boundary wall of the Bishop's garden, pre-dating the establishment of the Chancellery (Allan & Dyer 2005, 96). Allan and Dyer propose that the construction of this northern wall may have been undertaken as a consequence of licences to crenellate granted to Bishop Quinel in 1290, or to Bishop Stapeldon in 1322 (*ibid.*). These licenses might provide a context for the erection of new defences for the Palace respecting the new boundaries, though, as noted above, this seems likely to have involved the improvement, or re-establishment of pre-existing boundaries which may already have contained defensive gateways. The architecture of the surviving gate would be consistent with the date of either of these licences to crenellate and it is possible that it was rebuilt during a general improvement of the Close defences in the years around 1280-1300.

Few records survive of the Palace staff, but a 19th-century transcription of the accounts of the executors of Bishop Bitton records that, at his death in 1307, at about the time the gatehouse was erected, he employed two gate-keepers or porters: one named Richard and another named Robert, described as *Janitori Exonie*, who was also the keeper of the Bishop's prison but who had been so remiss in his duties that the Bishop chose to leave him no legacy (Chanter 1932, 56; Hale & Ellacombe (eds) 1874, 33). The Bishop's prison is located by Chanter within the western part of the Palace buildings, close to the Bishop's private apartments (Chanter 1932, 63) rather than in the gatehouse, though this might be considered a more likely place for it. Six felonious priests imprisoned here are recorded to have escaped this prison by night in August 1389, murdering the Chaplain and Warder of the Palace, Simon Prescott, and the Gatekeeper, Thomas, and seriously wounding the Chamberlain, another Thomas, in the process, plundering their chambers as they went (*ibid.*, 59). Unfortunately we are not told where the murders took place but, as it is clear that the gatehouse contained the apartments of an important official and that the Palace gates would have been shut and guarded by the porter at night, we may reasonably speculate that the assault upon Thomas the Chamberlain and Thomas the Gate-keeper might have taken place within the present gatehouse.

In 1288 a licence to crenellate was granted to the Dean and Chapter by King Edward I, allowing the Cathedral Close to be enclosed with sections of defensive wall and gates. As with the Palace, it is probable that some form of gated enclosure had already existed earlier and was now improved (Lega Weekes 1915, 19). Two of the Close gates, 'Bear Gate' and 'Palace Gate', stood near the Bishop's gatehouse. The last-named gate must not be confused either with the street known as 'Palace Gate' or with the Bishop's gatehouse. These gates are depicted on an early drawing of this part of the city (Fig. 3), probably made in c.1560 (D&C, Exeter M/10). This provides a rare glimpse of the medieval topography of the area and shows a variety of architectural forms for gatehouses, drawn

with an apparent attempt at accuracy. The gatehouse of the Archdeaconry of Exeter is shown as a gabled building breaking the roofline of a long, low range of buildings lying at right angles to the Bishop's gate, which has an uninterrupted roof covering the chambers and the gateway, two windows on the western side of the gateway and a three-light window in its western gable. The wall linking the gatehouse to the porch of the Palace is clearly shown behind it. Both Palace Gate and Bear Gate are shown in the drawing as simple timber structures, resembling Churchyard lych-gates, but the Deanery gate is shown as a crenellated tower flanked by lower wings or lodges. The Archdeacon's gatehouse has been entirely demolished. Fragments of the Deanery gatehouse survive built into Nos 1 and 2 Deanery Place and the remains of other, more modest gatehouses are discernible built into the fabric of many of the canonries on the north side of The Close, but only the Bishop's gatehouse remains recognisable today.

The form of the gatehouse and Palace buildings in the late medieval period was also recorded in two further late 16th-century drawings. John Hooker's two 'Platts' of the Close, made *c.*1590, which show the buildings of the Close at probably their fullest development, before the depredations of the Civil War, and before the partial demolition of the Palace buildings in phases between 1695 and 1846. The first of the two 'Platts' (Fig. 4) depicts the gatehouse in a very similar way to the 1560s drawing, with the wall extending to the palace porch beyond it, but with two windows to the east of the gateway and a single window to the west. The western gable shows several storeys of windows, or two large windows on the first-floor and smaller ones in the attics. That this is a storeyed building with upper floors is evident from a small window shown on the ground-floor to the east of the main gate. There appear to be two chimneys or vents in the roof. The other 'Platt' by John Hooker (Fig. 5) shows the building obliquely, looking from the west, with the wall and avenue across the Palace courtyard clearly shown and a chimney above the roofline, rising from the rear wall. The ground-floor window is not shown. Although there are many differences in detail between these three early depictions of the building it is likely that the same building is being represented. Many of the features shown in the 1560s drawing can still be identified with reasonable confidence today.

#### 2.4 Post-medieval and Civil War period

Chanter paints a melancholy picture of neglect and decay at the Palace during the second half of the 16th century and the first half of the 17th century (Chanter 1932, 71-81). We are told that the buildings were seldom occupied by the bishops, whose falling revenues made them difficult to maintain. Some parts of the Palace were leased for use as warehousing by local merchants (*ibid.*, 74) however the buildings are believed to have remained essentially intact throughout this period.

During the upheavals of the Civil War the Palace was unoccupied and became colonised by those dispossessed as a result of the Civil War. Soon afterwards the Bishopric was abolished and the buildings seized on behalf of the Parliament. As a result of this process a detailed survey was prepared of the layout of the Palace, describing all the buildings, rooms and their uses. A further survey in 1647, appended to the earlier survey, assessed the value of the Palace as building materials, should it be demolished. The original documents for the Parliamentary surveys survive among the Bishop's Archive at the Devon Record Office (DRO Bishop's Archives Chanter ref. 1098).

The buildings were then occupied by 'poor people of the City and suburbs, whose howses were burnt down in the severall sieges against the citty' and were held to be so dilapidated that it would cost more to repair them than the building materials were worth. The Palace was subsequently sold to the City Chamber who (uncharacteristically) did not pull the buildings down. The survey (Fig.6) allows a confident reconstruction of the medieval Palace buildings and includes the gatehouse, which is described as follows:

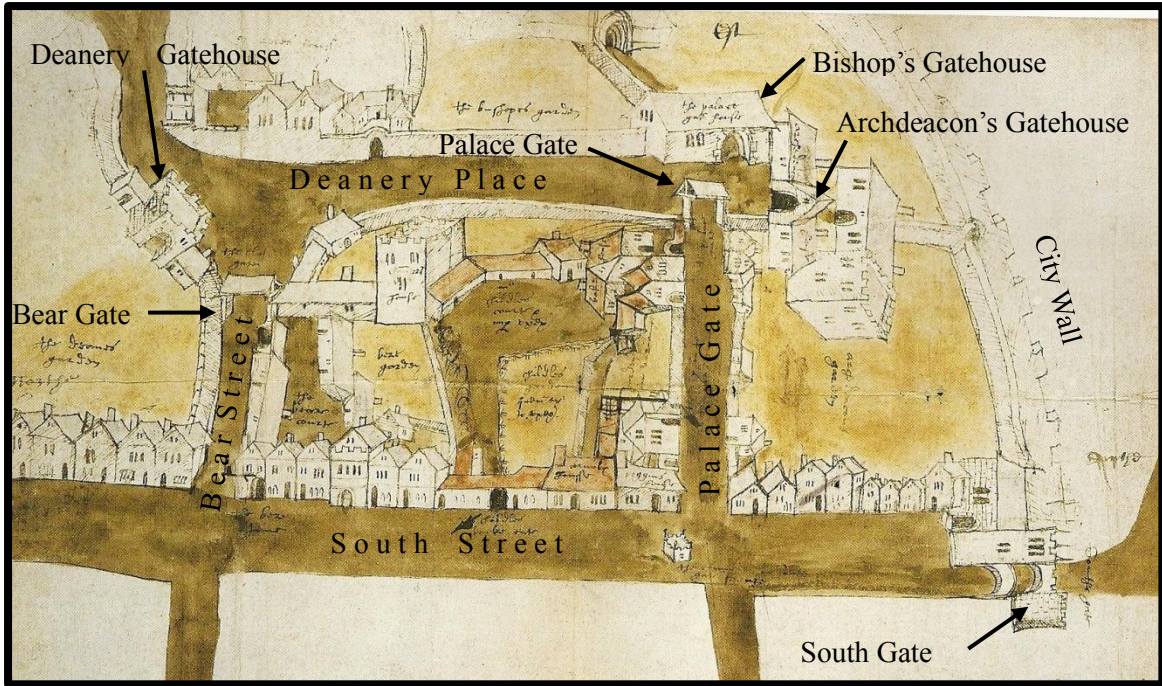


Fig. 3 A 16th-century map dating from c.1560, with modern street names added, showing the Bishop's gatehouse (top right) with the wall extending to the porch of the Palace behind it and, for comparison, two of the Close gates (Bear Gate and Palace Gate) and the gatehouses of the Deanery and the Archdeacon of Exeter's house (D&C, Exeter M/10).

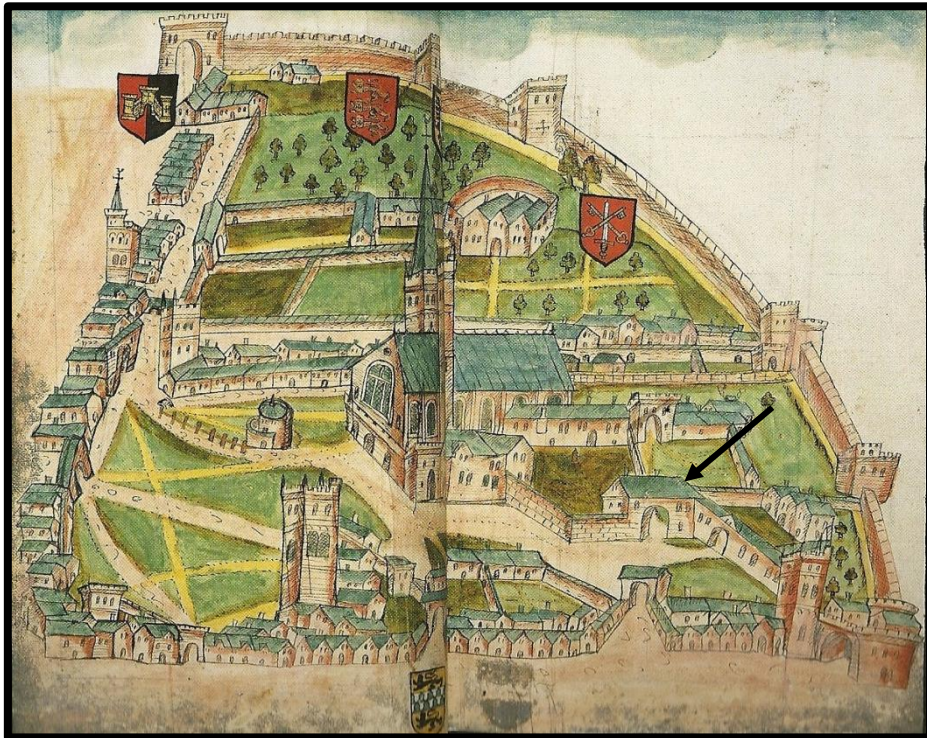


Fig. 4 One of John Hooker's 'Platts' of the Close, made in c.1590, showing the entirety of The Close, with South Street in the foreground - a view similar to the 1560s drawing at Fig. 3. The gatehouse (indicated by an arrow) is shown in similar form, with the wall behind it linking the gatehouse to the crenellated porch of the Palace (DRO ECA Book 2).

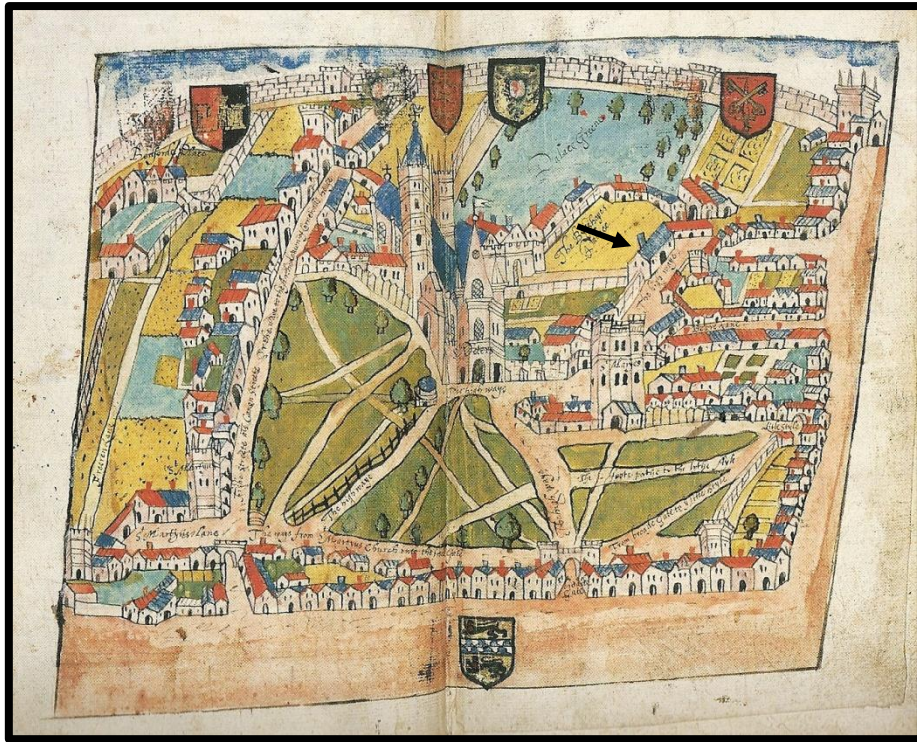


Fig. 5 Another of John Hooker's 'Platts' of the Close, made in c.1590, showing High Street in the foreground and the Palace buildings surrounding a yard crossed by a wall, with the Bishop's garden to the west. The gatehouse (indicated by an arrow) is shown as above with at least one chimney rising from its rear wall (D&C, Exeter 3530).

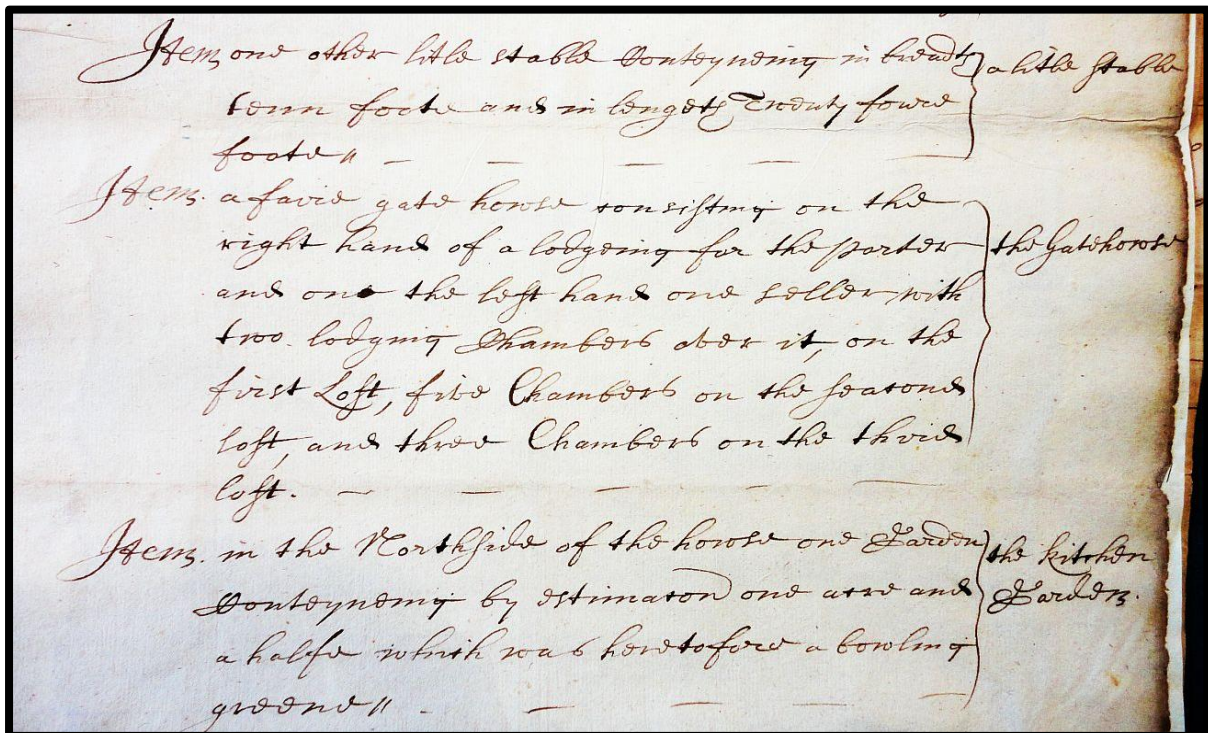


Fig. 6 Extract from the Parliamentary Survey of the Bishop's Fee, made in 1646-7 by Humphrey Lower and John Casebeare, providing a description of the 'faire gate house' of the Palace during its occupation by those dispossessed as a result of the destruction of housing during the Civil War (DRO Bishop's Archives Chanter ref. 1098).

*Item : a faire gate house consisting on the right hand of a lodging for the porter and on the left hand one seller with two lodging chambers above(?) it, on the first loft, five chambers on the second loft, and three chambers on the third loft.*

Interpretation of this description in relation to the present building is not unproblematic, though it clearly shows that the medieval building possessed, or had been divided into, at least three storeys before the 1640s. The word ‘above’ (if it has been read correctly) in documents such as this does not always imply ‘over’ in the sense of upstairs, neither does ‘below’ imply ‘underneath’. Both can mean ‘beyond’, or ‘adjoining’. Neither does a cellar imply an underground room. Nevertheless the sense appears to be that both the ‘two lodging chambers’ above the cellar ‘on the first loft’ and the five chambers ‘on the second loft’ were upstairs rooms, with the three chambers ‘on the third loft’ above them in the attics. This was Chanter’s interpretation, since he described the Gatehouse as having ‘seven first-floor chambers’ (Chanter 1932, 66) by which he presumably meant to include the two lodging chambers ‘on the first loft’ with the five chambers on the ‘second loft’ as first-floor rooms.

These ‘lofts’ were perhaps not necessarily full storeys rising in sequence, one above another, in the manner of ground, first, second and third floors, but perhaps independent storeys in different parts of the structure, which might have adjoined laterally, particularly if the gatehouse had already been extended to the rear and this extension was also storeyed. An alternative interpretation would be that the Porter’s Lodge and the cellar, with the lodging rooms ‘above’ (or beyond) it, should all be understood to be ‘on the first loft’ *i.e.*, on the ground floor.

Unfortunately the direction of approach of the surveyor is also unclear; the position of the Porter’s Lodge, for example, on the ‘right hand’ might be either to the east or the west of the archway depending upon the surveyor’s viewpoint. Nevertheless it is certain that the subdivision of some of the original interior volumes pre-dates the Commonwealth period, and that the subsequent leasing of the gatehouse to tenants for use either as a warehouse, or as a dwelling house, provides a likely context for additions and extensions to convert the accommodation for modern use and comfort.

## 2.5 Late 17th and 18th centuries

After the Restoration in 1660 the Palace was recovered for use by the Bishops. This was a long process since some parts of the buildings, including the gatehouse, were still let to tenants and the courtyard was by this time perceived as public property. Chanter quotes a letter from Bishop Thomas Lamplugh to Archbishop Sancroft, now at the Bodleian Library and dated July 4th 1682, in which the Bishop laments that:

*‘The outer court lay open to passengers at all hours of the night. The Gatehouse is let out by patent, and the Porter’s Lodge was swallowed up and much ado I had to recover it when I first came here, and no porter was known to be here time out of mind, so I was censured for denying the ordinary people the liberty to dry their clothing in the outer court’* (Chanter 1932, 101).

Lamplugh’s tenure thus seems a likely period for the reinstatement of the gatehouse as a controlled boundary, the installation of a Porter to guard the gates, and possibly other repairs and extensions to the gatehouse to make it fit for use by estate officers or tenants. Lamplugh also petitioned for the demolition of the medieval kitchen and brewhouse of the Palace, though these alterations were not carried out until the time of his successor, Bishop Trelawney, in 1695 (Chanter 1932, 105).

The history of the Palace gatehouse from this point onwards may be followed though historic maps, though not all of these are sufficiently detailed to show the precise footprint of the buildings. Rocque’s map of the city, dating from 1744, for example, shows the Palace buildings (including the

remains of those on the eastern and southern sides of the great courtyard) hatched dark in colour, whereas the gatehouse is shown simply as a trapezoidal block, stippled in colour like most of the secular buildings of the city. This use of conventions might be intended to show that the gatehouse was at that time leased as a private residence. Alternatively, since both the Treasury and the Chancellery are hatched dark while all the other canonical residences, including the Deanery, are not, it may be of no significance at all. Rocque's map shows the avenue from the gatehouse to the Palace still in place and the garden to the west of the wall dividing the court laid out as a formal garden with parterres and walks. The 'gatehouse' fills the whole southern area between the carriageway close to the boundary with the Archdeacon of Exeter's land and Deanery Place. This depiction does not distinguish the footprint of the building in any reliable way, but clearly shows that the trapezoidal area roughly represented by the present car park west of the gatehouse had already been separated by a wall from the Bishop's garden. This area may have included open yards and gardens and buildings and does not show individual structures, but it seems very likely that the origins of the present rear extension may be sought in this period.

The situation is little different by the time of the Chamber Map Book, drawn for the city Chamber in 1756 (Fig. 7). At which time the Bishop's garden is shown as a 'Bowling Green'. The great court is still in existence, complete with the medieval wall along its western side. On the eastern side the remains of the lodgings and stables are now marked as 'Garden House' and 'Coach House'. Adjoining the gatehouse is a rectangular block marked 'Stable', parts of which still remain and contain some late-medieval fabric which may represent the remains of the stables and slaughterhouses described in the Parliamentary survey. The gatehouse is shown in the same manner as Rocque's map, and does not differentiate between built-over land and open yards or gardens. Although the building was probably tenanted at this period part of it is marked 'Porter's Lodge', showing that at least some part of the building was reserved for a Palace official and that the gate was once again a boundary controlled by the estate staff. A similar depiction of the gatehouse on Tozer's map of 1792 reveals that there had been little change by the late 18th century.

At the south end of the bowling green a small square structure is shown in the Chamber Map Book lying close to the rear wall of the gatehouse, in an area which may be included within the boundaries of the modern car park to the rear of the gatehouse. This building is not identified on the map but may well be a garden house or gazebo which was constructed in 1717 following a dispute between Bishop Blackburne and his neighbour, Mr Nicholas Webber. Webber occupied a house called the Three Chambers, which stood on an unusual triangular piece of land between the Bishop's gardens and Deanery Place/Palace Gate. This property belonged to the Dean and Chapter and was probably created by annexing part of the street in around 1600 (A. G. Collings, in Parker 1997, 75). The garden was a narrow, triangular wedge running alongside the boundary of the Palace garden and is depicted in a Tothill plan of the property taken in 1773 (D&C lease 6003/81). Adjoining this house and garden was a longer, narrower triangular strip belonging to the Palace lands which had been leased to Dorothy Davy in 1684, the lease being renewed by Bishop Trelawny on Oct 27th 1694. This latter lease is marked (by a later hand?) 'N3 Lease of part of my garden to Weber (sic.), void'. The status of the land had clearly become disputed. A further document is annotated 'Mr Webber's wall and pretended lease'. In a letter from Webber to the Bishop in 1717 an apparently exhausted Webber undertakes to build a garden house for the Bishop in a manner which will avoid darkening the lower chambers of his (Mr Webber's) house and which would not be overlooked from his garret windows, those chambers not being used during the day (DRO Bishops Archives Chanter refs. 1092-1097). This garden house seems to have survived into the early 19th century and is depicted on Coldridge's 1819 map of the city (Fig. 8) as a 'Grotto'. This is a rare garden feature in an urban context and is of some



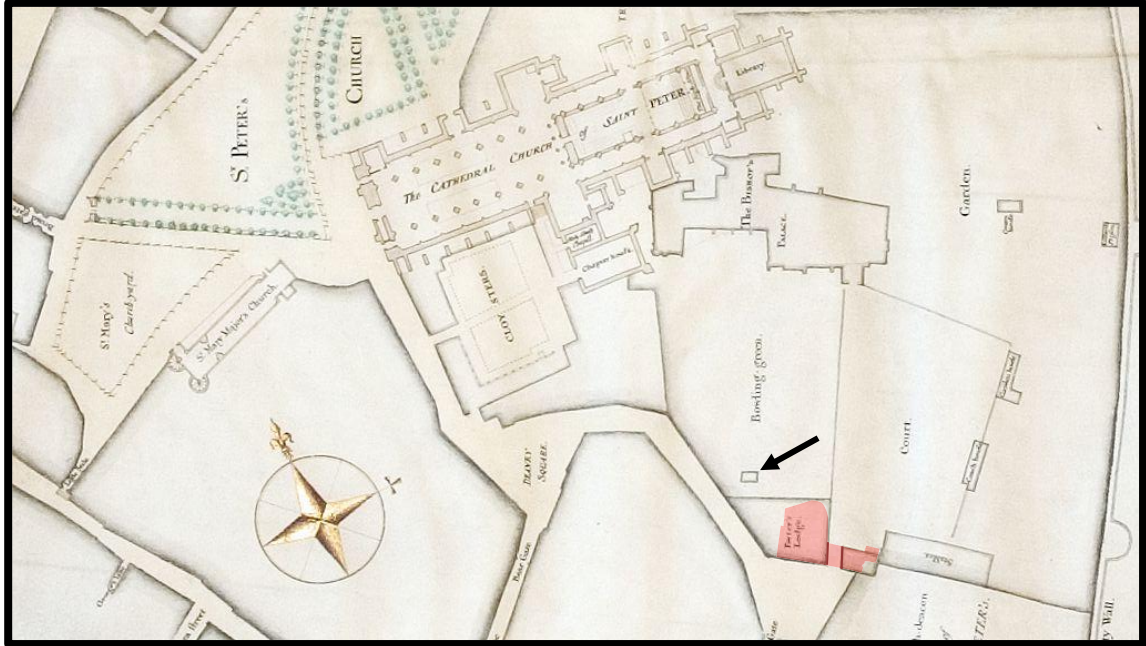


Fig 7 Extract from Map 11 of the Chamber Map Book of 1756, showing the Bishop's garden laid out as a bowling green and the western portion of the gatehouse marked 'Porter's Lodge' (DRO ECA Book 58, Map 11). The approximate footprint of the gatehouse as it is today is highlighted in pink and the grotto at the south end of the former bowling green is arrowed.



Fig 8 Extract from John Coldridge's 1819 map of the city showing the footprint of the gatehouse (highlighted in pink), the absence of the wall across the great court, the realigned driveway, and also the grotto (arrowed).



Fig. 9 Extract from an undated 19th-century map of the Cathedral Close c.1840 showing the realignment of the driveway to the west, the removal of the grotto and the footprint of the gatehouse highlighted in pink (DRO Bishop's Archives Chanter Ref. 1205).

archaeological importance as a landscape feature of the early 18th-century Palace grounds, lying in the immediate proximity of the gatehouse.

## 2.6 19th-century alterations

Good documentary evidence remains for the next intervention in the gatehouse, which involved its conversion into apartments for the Bishop's Chaplain. These apartments replaced rooms over the medieval buttery and pantry at the east end of the medieval hall. An Archbishop's faculty for alterations and improvements at the Palace, Exeter, dated 1st November 1812 survives, containing a petition to take down the eastern portions of the Palace 'formerly known as the chaplains apartments' and, 'as there were several rooms immediately over the entrance or gateway which had always been unoccupied',... 'our petitioner hath converted the same into rooms or chambers for the chaplains in lieu of those so taken down, the same being well calculated for that purpose' (DRO Bishop's Archives Chanter ref. 1201).

The same documents describe the re-arrangement of the Palace grounds 'for the purpose of obtaining a considerably better carriage approach to the Palace...and for the purpose of making a much more convenient entrance to the same at the eastern end' (*ibid.*). This was interpreted by Chanter as the creation of 'the present semicircular drive' in the place of the original direct route from the gatehouse to the Palace porch (Chanter 1932, 111). This does not appear to be the case, however, unless the realisation of the project was delayed, since Coldridge's map of the City, dating from 1819 (Fig. 8) shows the wall across the courtyard demolished, but the driveway moved to the *east* of its original position, rather than curving to the west. This would be consistent with the idea of providing a better approach to the eastern parts of the Palace rather than the western.

Coldridge's map also shows, for the first time, a reasonably reliable representation of the footprint of the rear extension attached to the western part of the gatehouse. This appears as a rectangular block stepping away at an angle towards the west, within the boundary wall of the trapezoidal area of land west of the gatehouse, which was presumably a garden. The gatehouse and garden are labelled 'Mrs Buller' who presumably was the tenant of the Bishop at that time. The eastern part of the gatehouse is shown with a small eastern projection which, though not exactly matching the footprint of the small square block attached to the east gable of the medieval building, is close enough in form to suggest that a building of roughly the same shape and size as the existing stair block stood here by this time. The alterations of 1812 are the most likely context for the addition of the present projecting bay and stair window lighting the staircase in the rear extension to the west of the gate and also the timber-framed structures of the first-floor rooms to the west of this. It is possible that the stepped form of the building shown on Coldridge's map is an attempt to reflect the picturesque irregularity of the rear elevation of the building at first-floor level. The curving form of the walls at ground-floor level may already have existed, or might be an addition of slightly later in the century when the driveway to the Palace was reconfigured to sweep past the building in a curve.

The new curving driveway to the Palace does not appear on Brown's Map of the city, dated 1835, which also shows the Grotto or garden house still in existence, but this map is not very detailed and may simply repeat elements shown on earlier maps. A more accurate plan showing the layout of the Bishop's gardens and also of the Gatehouse is found among documents at the Devon Record Office relating to the purchase of the City Walls from the City Council in 1843 by Ralph Barnes and the sale of the walls to Bishop Philpotts in 1853 (DRO Bishop's Archives Chanter ref. 1202; 1204). The plan (*ibid.*, 1205) is undated and perhaps schematic, but it shows the western wing of the Palace, which was demolished in 1846, and therefore it is considered likely to have been drawn in *c.*1843. The gatehouse is shown as on Coldridge's map, without the adjoining garden wall and without the grotto, which may have been removed for the landscaping of the new drive (Fig. 9). It is suggested that the curving driveway may have been an innovation of the early years of Bishop Philpotts' tenure at Exeter and that it perhaps dated from the 1830s. The rear of the gatehouse, which appears to be conceived of as a picturesque incident in the drive from the Palace to the town, might have been modified at this time. From this point onwards the gatehouse may have looked very much as at present, and any subsequent alterations to it were probably minor.

At this period, in 1831, the defensive functions of the Palace were tested for the last time. The Bishop's opposition to the Reform Bill so enraged local people that the Palace was attacked by a mob, and might have suffered the same fate as the Palace at Bristol, had it not been garrisoned for the defence of the Bishop and his property (Chanter 1932, 112).

Later in the 19th century, in 1866, work was undertaken at the Palace and 'lodge' under the Surveyor Edwin Luscombe. Very detailed specifications for this work survive, but those affecting the gatehouse appear to relate only to repainting, repairs of slating and windows, and other minor alterations and may not have left a significant mark on the building (DRO Bishop's Archives Chanter Ref. 1218).

After Bishop Philpotts' death, Chanter records that the gatehouse was restored by the architect William Butterfield, who was appointed surveyor in 1875 by the Ecclesiastical commissioners at the request of Bishop Temple (DRO Bishop's Archives Chanter ref. 1219). Butterfield removed the render covering the walls of the building and repaired or renewed medieval features which had previously been obscured. Evidence of this may be discerned in the stonework of many of the openings. Butterfield's work was relatively conservative, perhaps due to concern about the cost. For example, although he may have re-Gothicised some of the window openings he did not replace either the 18th- or early 19th-century sash windows in the western parts of the south-western façade or the Georgian windows lighting the staircase at the rear of the building.

Butterfield is reputed to have added a 'new top storey in half-timber style' to accommodate ordination candidates visiting the Bishop for their interviews (Chanter 1932, 67), but examination of the fabric shows that these structures are in fact much older, and cannot have been carried out by Butterfield. It is possible that Butterfield added facing in 'half-timber style' to effect a cosmetic improvement but, unfortunately, it has not been possible to trace any drawings relating to these works locally.

Despite its obvious medieval date and picturesque appearance the gatehouse appears to have been all but ignored by local topographical artists, photographers and antiquarians in the late 19th century. The only topographical drawing known of the gatehouse known from this period is a drawing of houses in South Street made by George Townsend in 1890 and entitled 'Corner of Palace Street, South St. Jan 15/90' (WCSL P&D06531). This pencil sketch concentrates on the remains of 16th-17th-century houses on the street corner, with the Palace Gatehouse crudely indicated in the far background. It is shown exactly as present. The footprint of the Gatehouse in the late 19th century is shown on the OS 1st-edition 1:500 maps of 1876, also more or less as now existing (Fig. 10).

## 2.7 20th-century alterations

From the early 20th century the Bishop's Palace was no longer used by the Bishops as a residence, though some official functions continued there. The Palace was utilised as hospital during the First World War, though the gatehouse, the chapel and some other rooms were reserved for use by the Bishop. Lord William Cecil, consecrated Bishop in 1916, chose to live elsewhere, and subsequent bishops also avoided the Palace. The Palace buildings were partly occupied at this period as Diocesan Offices and partly by the Ministry of Pensions, while the upkeep of the Palace buildings was transferred to the Ministry of Works (Chanter 1932, 124). The Palace grounds were a popular promenade for local people during the years before the Second World War, and the east end of the Cathedral with the Palace buildings in the foreground became the subject of many post-card views, although, as usual, the gatehouse does not seem to have been much noticed. Public access to the grounds ceased when the Palace was converted back into a residence for Bishop Mortimer in 1949 (Canon J.A. Thurmer pers. comm).

The Palace buildings, particularly the west wing, were substantially reconstructed in 1948. At this time the Palace was divided into two sections containing Diocesan offices and a new Cathedral Library in the west wing and a residence for the Bishop in the eastern part, within the shell of the medieval hall. It is probable that at the same time the 19th-century curving driveway was removed and the ancient route from the gatehouse to the Palace porch re-instated. The late 1940s are also the most likely date of some of the additions to the Gatehouse, such as the insertion of metal-framed Crittal windows in the rear elevations and in the western gable, the insertion of a staircase in the stair block to the east and possibly also the removal of internal features such as fireplaces. The gatehouse was listed Grade I in 1953. It was briefly occupied by the Exeter Branch of the Samaritans during 1964-5, and subsequently by a bank, being marked as such on 1970s editions of OS maps. None of these uses necessitated much alteration to the fabric beyond the subdivision of rooms to create offices and the replacement of historic doors for compliance with contemporary fire regulations. Phases of repair were undertaken in 1992 and 1998, at which time minimal archaeological observations were made, as noted above.

## 3 BUILDING SURVEY

The core of the building is a rectangular structure of volcanic stone rubble, with contrasting dressings of Beer and Salcombe stone. The plan of the building measures approximately 18 x 6.5 metres, the walls rising 6.75m high to the eaves, under a very steeply-pitched gabled roof broken by later

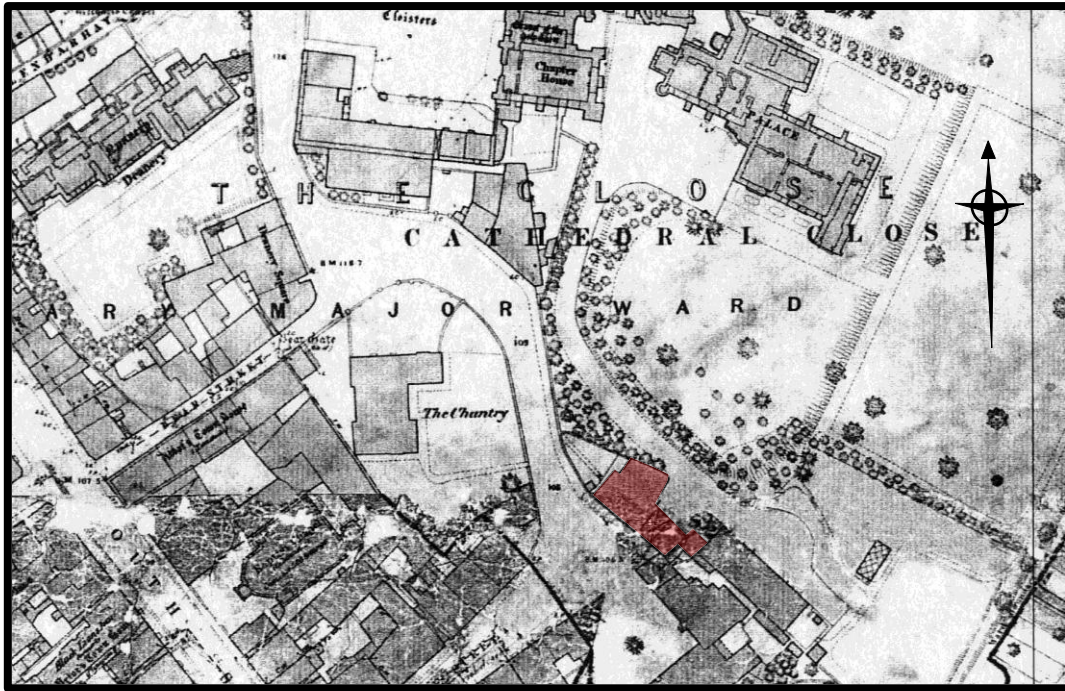


Fig. 10 Extract from a scan of the OS 1st-edition 1:500 maps Exeter sheets 80.6.22 and 80.6.17 made by Keystone Historic Building Consultants, showing the Palace buildings and grounds as they were in 1876, with the footprint of the gatehouse (highlighted in pink).

dormer windows at the western end. Although the front, rear and western gable walls are square to each other, the eastern gable wall stands at a slight angle to these, respecting the ancient tenement boundary of the Archdeacon of Exeter's property to the south-east. The gatehouse stands forward of the boundary of the Bishop's lands at this point; however, the western corner of its façade is aligned with the boundary, which is offset by the width of the gatehouse and extends in a curving line up Deanery Place/Palace Gate to the north. There is no discernible break between the gatehouse and the fabric of the boundary wall; in fact, the quoins at the western corner of the building do not extend to the ground, suggesting that the wall and the building are probably contemporary, though the former structure has clearly been much rebuilt. The rear of the building is largely obscured by the post-medieval extension added to the western part of the wall and, at the eastern angle, a small square structure containing a later staircase has been added. Only the upper parts of the gable walls are visible due to later structures built against them.

### 3.1 Exterior

#### *South-western elevation*

This is the principal elevation of the building. It is almost entirely of volcanic rubble, except for the dressings of windows and doorways and those places where features have been cut into the earlier masonry. The main archway (Fig. 11) has a depressed two-centred arch typical of the late 13th or early 14th century with two orders of mouldings; a bull-nosed moulding to the inner arch and a chamfer externally, under an ogee-moulded drip moulding with plain terminals. The dressings of the arch employ both grey Beer stone and brown/yellow Salcombe stone, both of which materials were in use for the construction of the Gothic east end of the Cathedral at that time. These materials also appear in the dressings of the other primary openings. The large doors are set in a rebate within this arch and there is no evidence of a subsidiary arch within the gate passage, as in some monastic and cathedral gatehouses. The doors are of planked construction with applied stiles and rails imitating



Fig. 11 Detail of the gateway, showing the arrow slits and varied geology of the window openings.



Fig. 12 Detail of the wall east of the gate, showing 19th-century windows and the remains of earlier features



Fig. 13 Detail of the wall west of the gate showing the dressings around the first-floor window openings and the ground-floor windows cut into the walling.



Fig. 14 Detail of the north-west wall of the gatehouse showing the remains of a very large arched window cut by a modern Crittall window.

panelling and a wicket gate with a segmental head. They are probably of late 18th or early 19th-century date and could not be inspected, since they could not be shut, the surface of the road between them having risen, and the hinges and pintles having been neglected to the point of collapse.

Above the archway, on either side of the central window but not quite centred upon the arch below, are a pair of cross-shaped arrow loops. There is no evidence that these are cut into the masonry or that they have been over-restored. The greater part of their dressings are of yellow/brown Salcombe stone and are probably of medieval date; only the topmost and lowest blocks and one block of the western jamb of the western slit are in a paler stone which probably represents restoration at the hand of William Butterfield in c.1875. The central window, as noted before, is not centred over the arch, though it is equidistant between the arrow loops. It is a two-light window with a square head and two chamfered orders, the upper parts of the lights trefoil-headed with blind tracery. Most of the dressings and tracery of this window appears to be 19th-century restorations and the existing sashes are certainly Victorian, but there is evidence of Salcombe stone dressings in the lower part of the eastern jamb and it is likely that this is a reasonably faithful restoration of the original form of the window.

To the east of the archway (Fig. 12) the ground- and first-floor windows appear to be restorations of c.1875, though they may replicate the form of earlier window openings uncovered during the 19th-century restoration. Both show signs of disturbance to their jambs and are surmounted by low relieving arches. It is unlikely that there would originally have been a large opening on the ground floor, since this would have compromised the security of the gatehouse, unless the window was very heavily barred. A window may have been inserted here at a later, more peaceful period. The plain, square-headed lights differ from the grander trefoil-headed lights on the floor above, perhaps reflecting the differing status of these rooms. Between the two windows is an enigmatic rectangular opening, now blocked, with a chamfered frame. This appears to be a primary feature. Its function is not known but it has been suggested that it might be an unusually placed small window, a ventilation shaft, or some sort of waste chute or hatch (R. Higham, pers. comm.).

To the west of the archway (Fig. 13) are pairs of tall 18th- or early 19th-century sash windows on the ground and first floors, lighting the principal rooms on each storey. These have segmental heads, which may imply that they were inserted in the early 18th century. The lower windows are clearly cut into the earlier masonry and incorporate much red Heavitree breccia. These may replace a blank wall, since large windows at this level would have compromised the security of the complex. The first-floor windows have dressings of Salcombe stone to both sides of the eastern opening and one side only of the western. This strongly suggests that there were two original windows, one of two lights (the same width as the existing sash) and another of one light only, which was widened to the east when the present sashes were inserted. Below the western window is a much damaged rectangular feature of uncertain function, which appears to be a primary feature. It is possible that this was a window, ventilation grille or chute similar to that on the eastern side of the gate, or that it contained a decorative feature such as a Coat of Arms or an inscription.

Close to the gateway on the ground floor is a tall window. This is almost certainly a 19th-century insertion, though it may represent an enlargement of an earlier slit window. A modern post box dating from after 1952 has been cut in the walling below this and, to the west, evidence of a coal hole and chute reveals the presence of cellars or underground chambers beneath the building which are no longer accessible.

#### *North western elevation*

The north-western gable of the building (Fig. 14) contains critical evidence for the internal layout, though it has been much compromised by later alterations. The Salcombe stone quoins of the western corner rise to the original eaves level, but are continued above this in a paler (?Beer stone) as the side of one of the later timber-framed dormer windows crossing the façade above the roofline. The gable is

now asymmetrical. The line of the original gable can just be traced, with care, in a good light, beneath the superincumbent masonry. At the northern corner traces of Salcombe or Beer stone blocks suggest that there were formerly copings to the gable with kneelers (see below), or that another structure was attached at this point.

Central to the original gable is the arched outline of a large window with a two-centred head, volcanic stone voussoirs and dressings of Salcombe stone (Figs 14, 18). This rises above eaves level and reveals, through its generous proportions, that the whole western part of the original building above first-floor level must have been occupied by a large chamber, open to the roof, lit by the two windows in the front wall and this fine window to the west. The window is large enough to have been of three or four lights. This must have been a very high-status room. The southern jamb has been cut by a modern, metal-framed Crittal window with a concrete sill and lintel. This window is so insensitive that it is surely impossible that it was cut through the wall in the 20th century, especially after the render was removed in the 1870s revealing the earlier arch; it perhaps replaces an earlier opening of similar proportions made when the second-floor was inserted in this part of the building before the 1640s.

The lower part of the wall is obscured by modern brick buildings, within which a wide arch with a segmental head has been cut through the thickness of the wall. This has unfortunately destroyed any evidence of earlier windows in this part of the wall.

#### *North-eastern elevation*

The greater part of the western end of this elevation is obscured by post-medieval extensions. The eastern part, however, is exposed (Fig. 15). The stump of the wall dividing the great court survives immediately west of the archway to the gate passage. This wall appears to be integral with the gatehouse and may have incorporated a stair turret giving access to the first-floor chamber, in the position of the present stair tower. The archway to the gate passage is similar to that of the main façade, but has two chamfered orders on each face without any rebate for gates: there can only have been one set of gates in the line of the front wall. The arch has a hood-moulding terminating with carved heads, one now almost entirely eroded. At the base of the jambs are carved stops of a type virtually identical to those found in a lodging block of c.1300 at Okehampton Castle (J. Allan & R. Higham pers. comm). Above the archway and not centred above it is a large two-light window with a square-headed frame and two chamfered orders containing two shouldered-headed lights, directly comparable with windows in the 14th-century lodgings of both Okehampton Castle and Dartington Hall (J. Allan & Higham, pers. comm.). This window appears unrestored, though its sashes are probably 19th-century insertions replacing either earlier sashes or casements. Unusually, it appears to have no provision for ferramenta, as would be normally expected. This is perhaps because of its position high in the wall above the gate. It is interesting, in this context, to note that the Parliamentary survey of 1646-7 describes the windows of the Palace as ‘all of stone except very few well-fenced with iron’ suggesting that barred windows were rare in the Palace buildings. Nevertheless they estimated the ‘Iron Barrs in the windows’ of the Palace to contain ‘thirty hundred-weight of iron’ (DRO Bishop’s Archives Chanter ref. 1098; Chanter 1932, 89, 90).

To the east of the arch, at first-floor level, is a two-centred arched doorway with Bull-nosed mouldings to the jambs and no drip-moulding. There are traces of carved stops at the base of the jambs but these are concealed by height and the raising of the threshold. Above the doorway are the triangular scars of the roofline of a covered staircase, and also traces of sockets for the cantilevering beams supporting the landing and the scar of the string of the stair. The door is blocked in late 18th- or 19th-century brick, rendered over. It may have been exposed by Butterfield and displayed, thus, in the restoration of 1875. At the eastern corner of the building traces of the original coping and carved kneelers of the gable remain (Fig. 16), while the lower part of the wall (Fig. 17) is cut by a 19th-





Fig. 15 View of the rear of the gatehouse, showing the first-floor doorway over the arch and the scar of the roof, sockets and string of an external covered staircase serving the principal chambers (dotted). The remains of the wall dividing the great court can be seen projecting from the rear of the gatehouse beyond the 19th-century bracket lamp. This wall was demolished beyond this point and rebuilt as a curved corner in c.1812.



Fig.16 Detail of the eastern corner of the gatehouse showing the remains of a primary coping and decorative kneeler.



Fig. 17 Detail of the rear wall of the gatehouse to the east of the gateway, showing the remains of doorways and window openings cut into the walling.

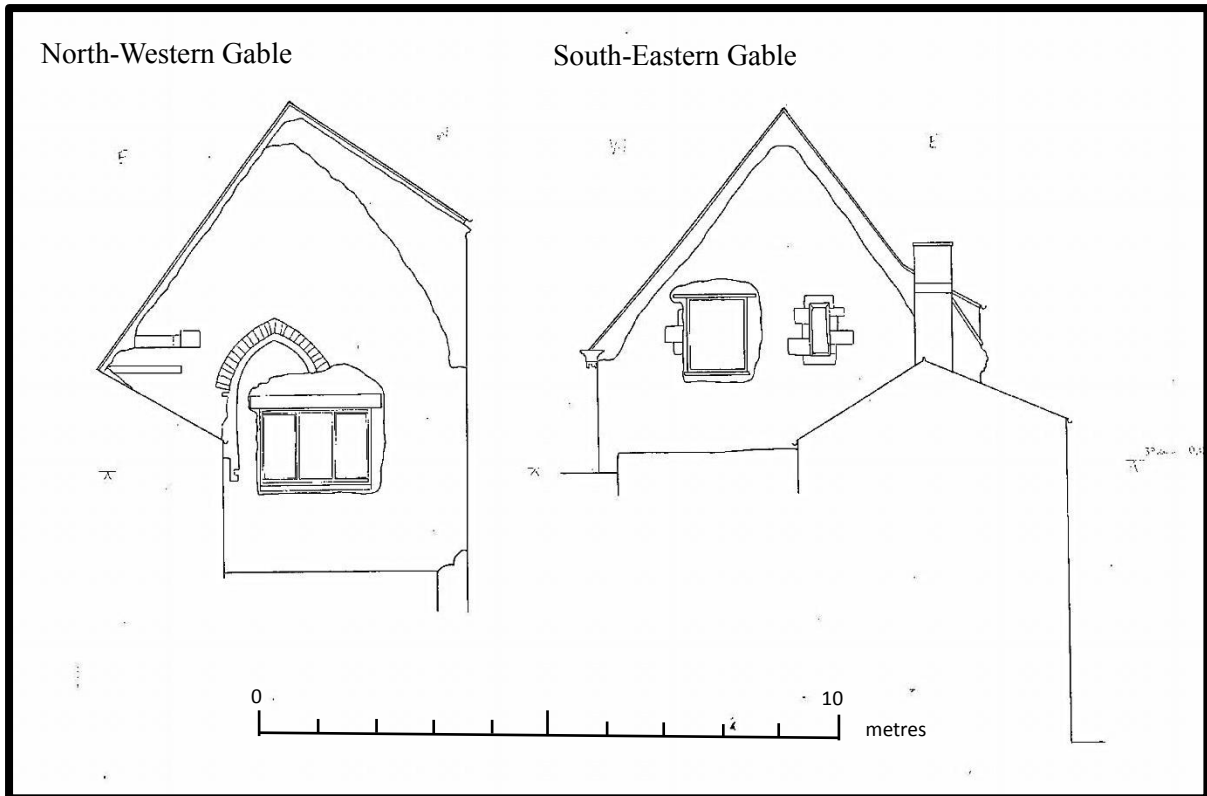


Fig. 18 Unfinished elevation drawings of the gable ends of the building made by Neil J. Goodwin of Exeter Archaeology in December 1998, showing features which were not accessible during the present survey



Fig.19 The north-western elevation of the projecting rear extensions, showing (extreme left) the angled wall possibly representing an early garden wall absorbed into a lean-to structure, the timber-framed structures at first-floor level above it and the later brick extension (right) underlying it against the original gable wall of the gatehouse.

century two-light window matching that in the south-western elevation. Closer to the archway are the remains of a post-medieval doorway with a timber frame, cutting two smaller blocked openings, one at a lower level than the other and offset slightly to the west of the doorway and the earlier window above. These windows appear to have lit a spiral stair in the corner of the room to the east of the gate passage. The door may have been broken through into the base of the stair subsequently to improve access to this room and the stair, possibly after the demolition of the medieval external stair.

The interior elevations and ceiling of the gate passage are rendered and show no medieval features. It is likely that there was a doorway from the eastern or western rooms to the gate passage allowing access for the Porter, but no trace of this remains. It is probable that this door occupied the position of the very handsome doorway with an 18th- or 19th-century classical door case with console brackets on the western side of the gate passage. There is a possibility that other features may exist in this wall such as, for example, a fireplace either serving the Porter's lodge or possibly, and bizarrely, the gate passage itself, as found in the Palace gatehouse at Salisbury (RCHME 1993, 50). The eastern side of the passage contains two metal-framed Crittall windows; it is uncertain whether or not these replace earlier windows in the same positions, or were cut through in the 20th century.

#### *South-eastern elevation.*

The south-eastern elevation of the building is almost entirely invisible except from the neighbouring property and it is partially concealed by later buildings. Fortunately the drawn survey made by N.J. Goodwin for Exeter Archaeology in 1998 shows this elevation and the features in it (Fig. 18). The gable contains two windows: a small rectangular window of a single light, offset to the north of the centre of the gable and now blocked by a later chimney, and a larger, two-light window offset to the south of the centre of the gable. This is fitted with modern casement windows, but it is likely that these replace an earlier window frame. The window may be an enlargement of an earlier opening comparable to and corresponding with the smaller window alongside.

The lower part of the eastern corner is concealed by the early 19th-century square extension, now containing a modern staircase, and probably an early 19th century stair block replacing the newel stair in the corner of the eastern rooms. It is certain that this conceals an early first-floor window, now converted into a doorway communicating with the first floor, and it is highly likely that the original doorway to the ground floor lay in this elevation, perhaps in the position of the present doorway communicating between the eastern part of the gatehouse and the ground floor of the stair block. Unfortunately the date and nature of these openings is concealed by modern internal plaster.

#### *Post-medieval rear extensions.*

The western part of the rear wall is concealed by a very complex structure consisting of numerous projections and lean-to structures, probably of many different periods (Figs 15, 19). The structural history of this part of the building is very obscure and cannot be determined with confidence on the basis of the visible evidence or indeed the map evidence; however, the following sequence is suggested, provisionally:

The origin of these rear extensions is probably a stair turret rising up the rear of the gatehouse in the angle between its rear wall and the wall dividing the great court from the Bishop's garden. Almost nothing of this structure now survives above ground, but its presence is suggested by the paired openings at first floor level at the head of the existing stairs. The turret possibly connected the large first-floor chamber with rooms on the ground floor, possibly the Porter's lodge, or rooms alongside it, but the precise arrangement and date of the turret can no longer be determined. It is possible, for example, that the turret was a late-medieval addition superseding the external stair which seems originally to have led to the first-floor apartments, and even that it formerly rose as high as the second floor, and was added in the context of the floor inserted within this chamber, at eaves level,

before 1640. Alternatively it may have been a primary feature. The turret seems to have been replaced the late 17th-century by (or incorporated within) a gabled wing extending at right angles to the original gatehouse, containing a staircase, with rooms alongside this to the north which may have been heated, the thickening of the south-eastern wall at first-floor level at this point suggesting a chimney breast. The basic shape of this wing, with its steep gabled roof can still be observed, though it is masked by early 19th-century additions. The small window of the 'closet' off this staircase, with its ornate catch (Fig. 20) is almost certainly of late 17th-century date and the roof structure may also be of this period. The staircase within this wing appears to have been replaced in the early to mid 18th century with a new staircase of which much survives, which extended through area formerly occupied by the northern rooms, and is now lit by the arched window in the early 19th-century bay attached to the earlier gable of the wing.

The angled wall running along the rear of the building at ground- floor level may be, in origin, the garden wall shown on the 18th-century maps enclosing the presumed garden attached to the gatehouse. This wall is very thick and contains unusual projections which may suggest that it contains chimney breasts and other features relating to rooms or buildings connected with earlier buildings. This may originate as a lean-to enclosing the area between the garden wall and buildings adjoining the staircase wing, which presumably contained first-floor chambers approached from the landing of the present stairs, through a blocked doorway which still exists.

The timber-framed upper section of the western part of the building is presumed to represent an early 19th-century remodelling or replacement of decayed parts of the 17th- or 18th-century buildings just described. The flattish pitch of the roofs of this part of the building and its relatively slight construction would be typical of the early 19th century. These rooms were heated by a new chimney stack built against the original rear wall of the gatehouse.

The western elevation of the building immediately beyond the medieval western gable may have over sailed at first-floor level above a small yard, presumably a service yard giving access to outbuildings and privies shown on the 1876 map. This was later enclosed within a 20th-century structure to form a red brick lean-to (Fig. 19, right) which masks the lower part of the western gable and yet appears to underlie the earlier 19th-century rendered structures above.

#### *Early 19th-century stair block*

The small square building lying at the eastern corner of the medieval gatehouse has walling of mixed-geology rubble which is almost certainly derived from the materials of demolished buildings and a very low-pitched roof. The building is entered through a small doorway with a low, four centred head in its north-western wall, and is lit by a pair of two-light windows with depressed four-centred heads in its north-eastern wall (Fig. 21). These are highly unlikely to be genuine medieval features, but are almost certainly of early 19th-century date.

This structure might relate either to the alterations made to the gatehouse in 1812, when it was converted into Chaplain's apartments, or alterations made at the palace in the 1840s, when the western parts of the Palace were being pulled down and remodelled under the direction of the Architect E.W. Gribble. The details of these windows and doors certainly resemble the kind of naive, pre-eccelesiological Gothic found in some Exeter buildings of the 1820s-1840s.

The interior of the building has been entirely gutted, but it appears to contain no means of heating and is most likely to have housed a staircase, as at present, and perhaps also services such as a water closet and bathroom. It is probable that this building was erected as a replacement for one of the earlier staircases in the building, probably the medieval newel stair in the northern corner of the eastern room, which must have been removed at this time to provide communication between the eastern and western parts of the building above first-floor level.

### 3.2 Ground-floor interiors

As originally constructed, the gatehouse contained accommodation on three levels at its eastern end, but on two levels only at its western end. This is clear from the layout of the primary windows in its gable walls, which show small, high-level windows at the eastern end consistent with three storeys and a very large window at its western end, suggesting low ground-floor rooms but a large chamber above first floor level, rising into the roof. The floor levels varied in different parts of the building, not least because the floor of the room over the gate passage is necessarily higher than the rooms at either end. Circulation was also complex, with at least three possibly primary staircases: one in a turret attached to the rear of the building, now represented by the existing main staircase; one external staircase sheltered by a roof, rising against the rear wall to the large first-floor doorway in the room over the gate passage, and a third stair rising as a newel stair or tight spiral in the corner of the eastern room of the medieval gatehouse. These need not all be contemporary, as it is possible that the stair turret was a later addition which superseded the external stair. Nevertheless it is probable that the various routes of access imply independent accommodation arranged in separate suites of apartments for officials or functionaries of differing status.

The three rooms at the eastern end of the gatehouse, for example may not have communicated with the room over the gate passage, and it is possible that the first floor rooms and the ground-floor rooms in the western part of the building were also originally independent. The rooms over the western end of the building seem to have been of very high status, and are likely to have been occupied by an important official, and not by the Porter who may be presumed to have been a significant, but not glorious figure in the life of the Palace. The lower rooms of the gatehouse appear to have been poorly lit, and may not have been residential, though the Porter's lodge would certainly have been located adjacent to the gate.



Fig.20 Detail of the 17th-century window casement in the stair wing added to the rear of the gatehouse, possibly associated with a 17th-century staircase.



Fig. 21 Elevation of the small square building added at the eastern corner of the building, possibly to provide a replacement for the medieval newel stair.



Fig. 22 View of the large ground-floor room to the west of the gate passage showing the extent of the post-medieval and modern alterations, concealing the medieval fabric.

#### *Ground floor rooms west of the passage*

It is difficult to reconstruct the medieval layout of the western part of the gatehouse, since few early features are visible. The character of this part of the building is determined by its conversion to an 18th- and 19th-century house and all the visible historic features are domestic and of this period.

The western part of the building is now entered by a handsome late 18th- or early 19th-century doorway from the gate passage. This may occupy the position of a primary doorway communicating between the Porter's lodge and the passage. This is more likely than a doorway in the wall opposite, which might have conflicted with the spiral staircase to the upper floors in the eastern rooms. There remains a possibility that the doorway was located nearer the centre of the wall of the gate passage; however, if it were too far to the south it would have been fouled by the gates, assuming these to have opened in two leaves, and it is considered most likely that the present doorway is a modification of the original and that the lodge lay to the west of the gate passage, as it had in the 18th century. The doorway now opens into a narrow hallway with a wide early 19th-century arch opening onto the main staircase in the rear extension. This arch was presumably cut through the wall to open up access to the staircase following the demolition of the earlier stair turret which is presumed to have stood here.

The two ground-floor rooms within the volume of the original building have been much altered and now retain few early features (Fig. 22). The partitions dividing the rooms are modern, though they perpetuate, to a certain extent, an arrangement which may date from the 18th century. The smaller room to the south of the hallway has a discontinuity in the skirting boards of the south-western wall which shows that partition between this and the adjacent room formerly lay on a

line slightly further to the south east. These rooms all have shutters with raised-fielded panels typical of the mid 18th century, though the arrangement of these is unusual, in two vertical sections with panels of differing sizes, as though the windows have been modified and their embrasures enlarged. It is likely that the larger room was heated by a fireplace in its north-eastern wall, but this is now concealed by modern plaster. This may conceivably be a medieval fireplace, or, perhaps a later fireplace cut into the original wall in the late 17th or 18th-century when the room was first converted for domestic use. The smaller room may also have been heated by a fireplace in the wall alongside the gate passage, possibly a modification of an original fireplace serving the porter's lodge. The ceilings are obscured by modern plaster and could not be examined, but it is possible that sockets in the beams and discontinuities in the joists might preserve evidence of the original arrangement of rooms.

#### *Ground-floor rooms to the east of the passage*

To the east of the gate passage the gatehouse seems now contains a single room, though it is possible that this was formerly divided into smaller chambers. The windows in the north-eastern, and south-western walls are late-Victorian, and the openings in the north-western wall are modern insertions. It is possible, of course, that these are enlargements of earlier windows; but, unfortunately, evidence of these is likely to have been destroyed when the present openings were inserted. Even the location of the original entrance to these rooms is uncertain, though it is probable that the present entrance from the early 19th-century extension to the east may preserve traces of the original doorway. The only other early feature now visible is the disturbed recessed area in the north-eastern wall. This appears to represent the recess for a vice or newel stair built into the western corner of the room within an internal stair turret. The stair seems to have been breached by a doorway in the post-medieval period, possibly to improve access to this room from the great court. The doorway may not have disturbed the staircase, both of which might have co-existed, though it may have necessitated alterations to the stair windows, for which traces still remain. There is no evidence of a fireplace in this room, though it is possible that one lies concealed within the north-eastern wall. The ceiling and walls are covered with modern plaster or render, which might well conceal evidence of historic features.

#### *Ground-floor rooms in the rear extension*

The large ground-floor room in the extension to the rear of the western part of the gatehouse has an unusual shape, and contains such a variety of window sizes, as to suggest that this room was originally several distinct rooms, if not actually separate structures of different periods, which were amalgamated to form the present space by the removal of internal walls and partitions. The structural history of this area is obscured by modern internal plastering and ceilings and no historic features remain visible, but the following phases of development are suggested (Summarised in Fig. 35).

The most likely context for the addition of an extension to the gatehouse would be the late 17th and early 18th century, after the occupation of the gatehouse by tenants in the years after the Civil War. The angled north-eastern wall is of some thickness and may originate as a boundary wall defining the lands associated with the gatehouse, which appears on mid 18th-century maps (Fig. 7). At its centre this wall widens to form a wedge-shaped baulk of masonry which may represent a chimney breast containing a fireplace. The alignment of this protrusion at an angle to the presumed garden wall respects the rear wall of the gatehouse and it is suggested that it is related to a rear wing of the gatehouse containing heated rooms, possibly added at the same time as the adjacent gabled stair wing.

It is probable that these rooms were service rooms, perhaps including a kitchen, sculleries and domestic offices serving the more prestigious rooms within the older building and on the floors above. They may have been upgraded on several occasions and must certainly have been substantially remodelled when the structure was entirely rebuilt above first-floor level. This is assumed to have taken place in c.1812, when the gatehouse was converted into a residence for the Bishop's Chaplain.

The chimney breast was presumably at this time superseded by a new chimney stack added against the original rear wall of the gatehouse, and the earlier stack was reduced to the level of the first floor and capped off with a low-pitched lean-to roof. This alteration seems to have been necessitated by the creation of a doorway to the cellar under the main staircase immediately adjacent to the fireplace, which still survives, though now blocked. This doorway presumably led not only to the cellar under the stairs, but also to the lost coal cellars underneath the main building. The location of the entrance to these is not otherwise known, but they are served by a coal chute beneath the front elevation and are thus likely to be extensive. They may have been infilled or sealed up in the 20th century.

The windows in the north-western wall of this room are modern and have 20th-century tiled sills, but their size and arrangement may suggest that they formerly lit larders and pantries or other facilities. The lower brick lean-to at the north-western end of the building appears to be a 20th-century ablutions block and may replace earlier facilities including an outside lavatory or privy, which is shown as a small square structure on the 1876 map (Fig. 10).

The interior of the stair block now contains a handsome staircase rising over a low cellar (Fig. 23, 24). The stairs rise against the south-eastern wall and then return against the north-western wall in two long, shallow flights. The stair has a closed string, columnar newels and turned balusters typical of the early to mid 18th century; however, it is clear that the present arrangement of the flights is not the original. Close examination of the string of the lower flight in the passage leading to the under-stair area reveals the scars of former treads and risers facing the present stair well. These scars show that, though the string and balustrade of the staircase may well be genuinely 18th-century in date and *in situ*, the steps formerly rose on the other side of the string, *i.e.*, against the north-western wall of the stair compartment and then returned on its south-eastern side. This is confirmed by fainter traces treads and risers on the south-east-facing string of the upper flight, though these, being more visible, have been more-or-less effaced by successive schemes of redecoration. The reason for this alteration is very difficult to grasp since it would not have allowed any significant reconfiguration of the landings of the stairs and access to the adjacent rooms would have been possible with either configuration of flights. It is possible that the alterations to the staircase may have been undertaken to allow light to reach the ground-floor entrance lobby more easily from the large arched window in the gable end of the stair block, which is presumed to have been added along with the curved bay containing it at the alterations of 1812. Formerly the underside of the upper flight would have obscured a lot of the light from this window; reconfiguration of the stairs would have allowed the light to stream down the staircase and through the segmental archway into the ground-floor lobby.

### 3.3 First-floor interiors

#### *The first-floor stair landing*

Further evidence of alteration to the staircase is visible at the top landing, where the returning balustrade does not quite fit the width of the stair compartment. At the summit of the stairs are two archways opening through the thick rear wall of the medieval building, the wider opening lying opposite the head of the unaltered staircase (Fig. 24). These presumably represent the remains of doorways opening into an earlier stair turret, one perhaps serving ground to first floor and the other first to second, though this must be an alteration, since there was originally no second floor level in this part of the building. The small decorative caryatid corbel of a mer-boy (Fig. 25) is likely to have been added in the early 19th century. From the top landing a blocked doorway opens to the north west, presumably into rooms, no longer existing, within earlier 17th- or 18th-century structures lying alongside the stair wing, whose floors were removed when the upper storey of the rear extension was rebuilt at its present height in *c.*1812. Opposite this doorway is a curiously-shaped closet contained within a recess in the south-east wall of the stair compartment, and lit by a small 17th-century



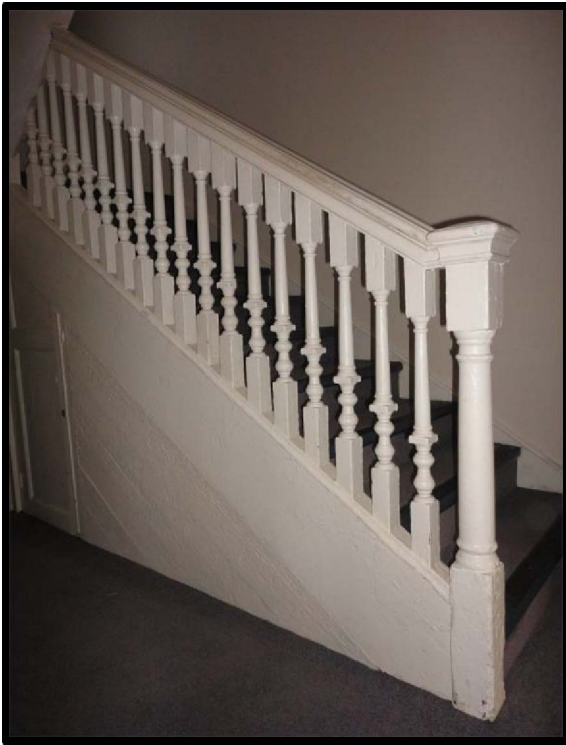


Fig. 23 Detail of the early 18th century balustrade of the staircase, modified in the 19th century so that the stairs climb on the other side of the string.



Fig. 24 View of the staircase showing the paired openings at the summit perhaps relating to an earlier stair turret.



Fig. 25 Detail of the plaster caryatid representing a mer-boy supporting the arches between the rear stair wing and the main building



Fig. 26 Detail of the archway between the western chamber and the room over the gate passage showing a two-centred medieval archway rebated for a door opening into the chamber.



Fig. 27 View of the brattished beam crossing the large first-floor chamber at eaves level, now sandwiched between two later ceilings. The brattishing appears to be applied ornament decorating the structure, which probably crossed open space at eaves level and supported a crown post at its centre providing lateral bracing for the roof. The beam retains evidence of historic blue/green and red paint.

casement window with a most elaborate window catch. Although the closet could have been designed to house a close stool it is unlikely that the magnificent window catch would have been provided for so small a room. The closet perhaps formed part of the landing of an earlier dog-leg staircase, rising in a tighter compartment at the south-western end of the present stair block and pre-dating the present staircase in either of its forms. This staircase may have provided access both to rooms to the north east and to the north west where a thickening of the south-eastern wall of the stair block and a possible aperture in the roof show the probable position of a fireplace and chimney stack heating a small room, now absorbed into the well of the 18th-century stair.

*First floor rooms within the large western chamber.*

The area to the west of the gate passage at first-floor level is currently divided into two rooms and a short corridor, connecting the room over the gate passage with a short staircase down to the rooms in the later extension at its western end. Both rooms are lit by 18th- or early 19th-century sash windows in the south-eastern wall, which retain 18th-century shutters with raised fielded panelling. These rooms were clearly at one time one large room, since traces of a moulded timber or plaster cornice run around all four sides of the ceiling, without reference to the present inserted partitions. This room may have been entered by either of the two archways from the main staircase, which may have been approached by the putative stair turret. It was also approached from the chamber over the gate passage by an arched doorway which still survives (Fig. 26) rebated for a door opening into the chamber. The room was heated by a fireplace in its south-eastern wall. This is now blocked, but the chimney piece remains and might retain its grate. A medieval or later fireplace may lie concealed in the north-eastern wall and, in the north-western gable tis the blocked embrasure of a very large window.

The most remarkable survival, however, lies above the ceiling, in a shallow void space between the ceiling joists and an earlier ceiling above this, which is clearly also inserted. Here, a very large beam can be seen crossing the building more or less at the centre of its western part (Fig. 27). The beam is decorated with brattishing, or ornamental battlements, and retains extensive traces of

historic paintwork, apparently coloured blue/green and red, beneath later limewash. The brattishing and mouldings of the beam appear to be carved upon planking applied to the sides of the beam. The beam supports a ceiling slightly above the brattishing, but this is clearly a modification and it is evident that the ceiling is a secondary insertion resting over the beam and that the joists run parallel with the building, resting on a chamfered beam applied against the face of the south-eastern wall of this room; a very thick stone wall rising above the western side of the gate passage into the roof space. Since the tall arched window in the western gable rises above the level of the eaves, and above the beam, it is probable that the beam originally crossed the void of an open roof at eaves level. It is highly likely that the beam supported a central crown-post structure rising to the support a collar purlin beneath the lower collar beams of the original roof, providing lateral bracing for the trusses. This is a rare form of roof in Devon; unfortunately its survival here can be no more than conjecture since its remains are so fragmentary. The insertion of the upper storey, before 1640 and the insertion of dormers and shallower-pitched roof structures in the 18th and 19th centuries appear to have removed most of the original roof above eaves level.

Just beyond the beam a second beam can just be discerned, without moulding or chamfers, which may represent the head beam of a later partition subdividing the chamber, perhaps contemporary with the secondary ceiling. All but the uppermost parts of this partition must have been removed when the tertiary ceiling was inserted, perhaps in c.1815, and the room was opened out again to its full width and depth.

#### *The chamber over the gate passage*

The chamber over the gate passage is now almost featureless, but historic features survive within its walls behind later plaster. Chief among these is a tall narrow recess lying just alongside the arched entrance to the western chamber. This is now sealed up and can be inspected only from above. It might be interpreted as a garderobe recess, perhaps served by a shaft running down within the thick stone wall alongside the gate passage, and emptying into a cellar, later utilised as the coal cellar, or perhaps continuing lower to be flushed by the Coombe Brook.

It is possible that an area of blocking which can just be discerned in the plaster of the wall alongside this may contain a fireplace, though whether a medieval fireplace or a later one is impossible to say. It is probable that the two arrow loops flanking the window over the gateway open into this room, though one of them must have an unusually splayed embrasure, since its position appears to conflict with the stone wall dividing this room from the western chamber.

The wall to the south east of this chamber is timber framed, though its construction is not visible from this room. The construction and date of the ceiling is also unknown. This room may also have been open to the roof originally, but was probably ceiled by the 1640s when the top storey is known from the Parliamentary Survey of 1646-7 to have contained three chambers.

The room seems to have been entered by the external staircase from beyond the rear wall of the gatehouse, and may not have been connected with the three chambers at its eastern end. The original doorway to the external stair survives behind a relatively modern staircase to the top floor at the northern corner of the room. The partition dividing the room from the existing corridor is modern.

#### *Eastern chamber*

This area contains numerous archaeological features and is now divided by a modern partition into a corridor and a small room alongside it. It may originally have been a single room, forming one of the three vertically-arranged rooms forming lodgings at the east end of the gatehouse, but it was later divided into two chambers by a timber screen or partition which does not survive. If these count as two of the five chambers 'on the second loft' mentioned in the Parliamentary Survey then this division will have been effected before c.1640.

The room was originally approached from ground floor level by the newel staircase or vice in the northern corner of the room. The recessed area for the newel stair survives alongside a short modern staircase descending from the level of the room over the gate passage (Fig. 28). It is presumed that the newel continued upwards to the chamber above and that the room originally had no means of communication with the rooms to the west. The doorway through the south-eastern gable of the building may have been converted from a window and communicates with the early 19th-century extension to the east of the building. This doorway is presumed to have been made after the newel stair was removed, presumably to allow access to a replacement stair in the small eastern extension.

At the eastern end of the north-eastern wall is a wide fireplace with jambs of Heavitree breccia, and a timber lintel supporting a stone chimney breast (Fig. 29). The lintel has straight-cut stops and the masonry above it is constructed from large blocks of reused stonework and small 'Dutch' style bricks. This appears to have been rebuilt. The eastern corner of the fireplace incorporates a pair of larger blocks, standing on end, which appear to be *in situ* and to represent the remains of a truncated hood or projecting stone canopy over the original fireplace, which presumably projected further into the room than at present. The present wooden lintel and the breccia jambs may have been inserted at the truncation of the fireplace, perhaps in the 17th century, when the partition was inserted to divide the room. The rear of the fireplace has also been rebuilt and contains a central recessed feature suggesting that the fireplace was for a time fitted with a range featuring two hobs on either side of a central grate. Adjoining the fireplace, but set unusually high in the wall, is a small oven with a domed vault of stone. This cannot be a conventional oven since it is at eye level and would have been difficult to use practically. It lies above a rectangular recess, now blocked and plastered over. The function of this is not known, though it might be a warming cupboard.

The remaining part of the chamber is almost featureless, though a part of the partition forming its north-western wall is visible. The stone wall to the east of the gate passage rises to a height of about a metre above the floor. Above this is an horizontal sill supporting, at its centre, a vertical post which rises to meet a beam crossing the ceiling parallel with the front and rear walls of the building. The post seems formerly to have projected into the room, perhaps in the form of a jowled head or bracket, but this has been truncated or sawn back. The large, square beam is without mouldings or chamfers, but has had a groove cut in its underside to fix a partition dividing the room into two halves. The joists are not visible. They have been reinforced with a further beam inserted below the ceiling. The two-light Gothic window in the south-western wall is a 19th-century insertion, but this almost certainly replaces an earlier window in the same position. The small rectangular feature below the sill of this window may have opened into this room or, by a steeply sloping embrasure, into the room beneath.

#### *Chambers within the rear extension*

The first-floor room within the rear extension is approached by a short staircase from the half landing of the main stair and also by a passage cut through the north-western wall of the medieval gatehouse, via a small washroom. This room has very thin, timber-framed walls probably dating from c.1812 and is heated by a fireplace in a chimney built against the rear wall of the original gatehouse. This retains its original chimneypiece and, perhaps also, the grate, though this is now obscured by a chimney board. The room is otherwise almost featureless, though it appears to have been of some importance in the 19th or 20th centuries, since it has been provided with a large, four light window with patterned glazing (Fig 30). The moulded window bars of this opening are of Gothic pattern, with pronounced hollows and may date from the late 19th or early 20th century, though close examination suggests that they have been entirely renewed in a recent refurbishment. The patterned glazing incorporates eight panels of Continental painted glass, dating from the 17th and 18th centuries. The images have all been severely cut down but represent an interesting collection, featuring a range of motifs including Coats



Fig. 28. The upper part of a newel staircase rising within the eastern chamber.



Fig. 29. Detail of the fireplace and oven in the eastern chamber, as rebuilt in the 17th-century by truncating a projecting hood.



Fig. 30. Eight panels of 17th-century German painted glass reset in the western window of the first-floor room in the rear extension.



Fig. 31 View of the roof structure over the western attic rooms showing two phases of 18th- or 19th-century roofs replacing the original trusses over the western chamber.



Fig. 32 View of the central section of the roof, looking east, showing common rafter trusses with upper and lower collars and the remains of a cob and timber partition to the eastern chambers.

of Arms, a merchant's mark, two studies of birds and a possible dedication inscription. The painted birds are from the Low Countries and are probably based on early 17th-century pattern books such as the bird books by Collaert. The other panels are probably German (Kees Berserik and David Cook, pers. comm.). The origin of the collection and the reason for its setting here is unknown.

### 3.4 Second-floor interiors

#### *Western chambers*

The rooms over the western chamber were probably inserted in the late 16th or early 17th century to utilise space originally given over to the display of a handsome open roof. The floor levels of these chambers would conflict with the upper part of the large Gothic window in the north-western wall of the gatehouse, which must either have been blocked up or reduced when these floors were inserted. The new floors were supported upon the earlier brattished beam spanning the roof space at eaves level, which presumably supported a crown post or some other structure providing lateral bracing to the roof. A new chamfered beam was inserted at the eastern end of the room and, very probably, at the western end, to support the new joists. The room was probably reached by passing through the rooms to the east or, possibly, by a turret, now demolished, attached to the rear wall of the medieval building. Following the demolition of the turret the present access route was broken through from the east. Unfortunately no dating evidence for this intervention remains.

The insertion of rooms within the roof would have begun the process of removal of the roof structure through the provision of dormer windows and other means of lighting. Since the roof was very probably continuous with the surviving roof over the eastern part of the building it is likely that it was of common-rafter construction rather than being divided into bays, with limited provision for lateral bracing such as purlins. The provision of dormers would thus have been more than usually destructive to the fabric of the roof and, ultimately, everything above eaves level was removed.

The rooms over the western chamber are now almost featureless. The space is divided into two by a partition containing a central doorway, which encloses a small room at the north-western end. This doorway is closed by a plank door featuring 'L'-hinges, which may date from the 18th century. The room is lit by a three-light casement window with modern catches and casement stays. There are no other visible features of archaeological interest, though the upper part of the large arched window must rise through the north-western wall and it is possible that medieval plaster and even painted decoration are concealed by layers of whitewash and plaster on this wall.

The room to the south east of this is also devoid of any significant historic fixtures. It has raised eaves to both sides forming dormers facing in both directions, one of which may have contained a doorway connecting to the putative stair turret. Evidence of several layers of historic plaster survives on the south-eastern wall, above the ceiling, showing that the original first-floor chamber was plastered up to the level of the upper collars, and possibly beyond, whereas the inserted second-floor room was formerly ceiled at level lower than this, but at a higher level than at present. The implication is that the lower collars and any structures beneath the level of the upper collars may have been removed when the room was first inserted, with possible consequences for the stability of the roof.

#### *Central Chamber*

This large room lies over the chamber over the gate passage, and has a floor at a lower level than the room to the west. This room also retains few features of archaeological importance, however it is contained within the original medieval roof, which survives over the entire eastern part of the building. Its south-eastern partition is of medieval date, dividing the original eastern chamber from what was, presumably, originally an open roof above a first-floor chamber. The room is ceiled at the

level of the lower collar beams, and these are supported by a large axial beam running the length of the room, below the lower collars. Although this may be inserted, there is a high probability that it represents the collar purlin of the original roof, and that there may have been some form of crown post or lateral bracing in this part of the building too, the supports for which may survive within the present second-floor structure.

The present floor was presumably inserted in the late 16th- or early 17th century, like that to the west. The room is divided by a modern partition to create a corridor along the north-eastern side of the attics, approached from the floor below by a modern staircase built against the embrasure of the doorway to the former external staircase. The original access route was probably from the eastern chamber, via the small newel staircase or vice, or by another doorway broken through the medieval partition separating the eastern and central part of the building. The modern stair may thus occupy the position of a stair dating from c.1812 or, possibly, Butterfield's restoration of the building in the 1870s.

#### *Eastern Chamber*

The eastern chamber is probably one of the few medieval volumes of the building to survive essentially intact. This room was originally open to the apex of the roof, but has been ceiled at the level of the lower collars. Plaster finishes relating to the medieval chamber rise to the apex within the roof space above. This room was possibly lit by small slit windows in the south-eastern wall, one of which is blocked by an inserted chimney stack. There were possibly a pair of such slits, one in the position of the present modern casement window in the south east wall. The room has been divided by a modern partition to form a lavatory, lit by a small late 17th or 18th-century leaded window with an arched head contrived at eaves level on the north-eastern side. This window may have been inserted to compensate for the loss of the second window through the insertion of the chimney.

The fireplace retains an exceptionally handsome chimneypiece of c.1700 with a moulded entablature breaking forward over the centre of the opening. The grate is obscured by a chimney board. All of the doors and the staircase climbing to the rooms to the west date from the mid 20th century.

### 3.5 **Roof structures**

#### *Roof structures over the western chambers*

The roof over the western chambers is divided into two parts, one supported by a steeply-pitched roof, of which one bay survives, replicating the pitch of the medieval roof (Fig. 31). This is constructed of pine, with principal rafters of large scantling tenoned and pegged together at the apex and applied collars with very large squared pegs. The purlins are tenoned through the principals and the common rafters rest upon them, flush with the tops of the principal rafters. Below the collar a timber remains with sockets for the joists of an earlier ceiling. These may never have been utilised. This roof is incredibly clean and well-built and, were it not for the fact that the carpentry techniques belong to an earlier, 17th-century tradition, one would be tempted to date it to the late 19th century. The room does not seem have extended any further to the east than this one bay and the roof presumably butted against part of the earlier structure at this point. The dormer on the south-western front of the building is later and built out over this part of the roof.

To the east of this bay the roof is of much cruder construction, representing 18th or 19th century cat-slide dormers on both sides of the roof. There are two crude 'A'-frame trusses notched and tenoned together at the apex, reinforced with later diagonal struts. There are nine rafters and trusses in all. This roof is perhaps of early 19th-century date.



### *Roof structure over the central and eastern chambers*

The primary roof of the building survives over the whole of the eastern part of the building (Fig. 32). Only the upper parts of the trusses can be inspected, as the construction of the eaves is everywhere concealed. This is a roof of exceptional interest and is, beyond reasonable doubt, integral with the building. This is apparent because of the relationship of the roof timbers with the thick stone wall rising on the western side of the gate passage, which is continuous into the roof space right up into the apex. The roof structure is continuous over the top of the wall, the timbers being trenched or embedded in the stone work in the same manner as the rafters of the 14th-century Vicar's Hall in South Street, where this constructional detail is still visible. One such trench is visible at the present entrance to the roof space. The original rafters may be housed in this way at the eaves and in the three stone gable walls.

Each truss appears to have been a common rafter truss consisting of a pair of common rafters tenoned and pegged together at the apex, with no provision for a ridge tree. Each truss had two levels of collars; an upper collar about 1m below the apex and a second collar about the same distance below this. The joints of these timbers were fully tenoned and pegged together, apart from a few which had notched lap joints suggesting either different reams of carpenters or the possible reuse of elements of an earlier structure. The upper collars were marked. It could not be established whether or not there were any struts or braces below this level, framing the roof into cants. There is little or no evidence of lateral bracing for the roof; there are no purlins in the upper part of the roof, though it is possible that these timbers lay below this level. The evidence for crown-post construction has already been discussed and it is likely that all the lateral bracing came from a braces radiating from crown posts to meet a collar purlin fixed below the lower collars at the centre of the roof. The roof was perhaps prevented from racking also by the solid gable walls and by the laths or sarking boards which, in addition to supporting the roof covering, may have provided additional stiffness.

Eight trusses survive over the eastern chamber, including the closed truss at the western end, which is infilled by a cob and panel partition supported by vertical studs and horizontal laths, embedded in cob and bearing limewashed plaster surfaces to the apex in both the eastern and central rooms. Counting from the south-eastern wall, trusses 1, 3 and 4 are incomplete above the upper collar and the apex is, in this part of the roof, nowhere well preserved.

Over the central part of the building nine primary trusses survive, Truss 11 (counting from the south-eastern gable) is incomplete above the upper collar. Truss 16 has a notched lap joint to the north-east side, but a conventional tenoned joint to the south west, which may prove reuse of some earlier timber. Most of the trusses appear to be marked, though only those in the central part of the roof were noted, the condition of the ceiling beyond this being uncertain and unsupported by a collar purlin. Truss 9 is marked 'XX IIC'; Truss 10 'IXXC'; Truss 11 'IIXC'; Truss 12 'IIIIIXC'. Truss 13 appears unmarked; Truss 14 is marked 'XIIC'; Truss 15 'CXI'; Truss 16 'XC'; Truss 17 'VIII<sup>0</sup>'; and Truss 18 'XC'. There appears from this to be some kind of a decipherable sequence, though some marks are repeated and there is one omission.

### *Roof structures over the rear extension*

The roof structure over the stair tower at the rear of the gatehouse is perhaps of 17th- or early 18th-century date (Fig. 33). It is of two bays supported by a central truss consisting of principal rafters crossed and pegged together at the apex to support a diagonally-set square ridge tree, the pegs being left protruding. The collars at ceiling level are applied to the sides of the principals and secured by pegs, again left protruding. There is a single level of purlins on each side of the roof, that on the north western side being slightly trenched into the back of the principal rafter. Most of the common rafters appear to be original. The closed truss at the north-eastern end of the wing is probably contemporary.



Fig. 33 View within the roof of the stair wing at the rear of the building showing typical trusses and the interruption of the end truss, perhaps to allow for a demolished chimney.



Fig. 34 View within the roof of the extension at the rear of the building showing crude 19th-century trusses and braces and the chimney rising against the rear wall.

consisting of vertical studs lath-and-plastered externally. This truss appears to be interrupted at its north-eastern corner, perhaps to allow a former chimney stack to rise above the roofline, serving a possible fireplace now concealed in the wall above the half landing of the main staircase. This would relate to a room now incorporated within the stair well. The rear of the medieval building is rendered, possibly with a surface pre-dating the construction of the extensions against the wall, though only a limited area could be examined due to the large chimney built against the rear wall of the medieval building, which blocked the view to the west. The moulded cornice which survives at the eastern end of the rear wall does not survive at the junction of the two buildings and it is possible that the original medieval wall has been rebuilt at the point where the stair block and the gatehouse meet. Certainly, a low, brick relieving arch is visible within the wall, which may represent an attempt to relieve the strain above the archways in this wall.

#### *Roof structures over the rear extension*

The roof over the rear extension (Fig. 34) probably dates from c.1812 and is a relatively crude construction supported upon widely-spaced triangular trusses, consisting of tie beams at the level of the ceilings, suspended from the principal rafters by vertical ties. The principals are braced by raking struts notched and housed in their undersides. There is a single level of purlins passing over the backs of the principal rafters. Most of the common rafters appear to be contemporary, though the whole of the roof coverings have been renewed and there may be many replacement timbers. The chimney rising against the rear wall of the medieval gatehouse is probably of early 19th-century date, constructed of dark red bricks laid in a soft, lime mortar.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The gatehouse of the Bishop's Palace is one of the best-preserved buildings relating to the medieval Palace and surprisingly little known given its importance. The building probably stands on the site of a 12th-century (or even an earlier) gatehouse, but the greater part of the fabric that survives today is likely to date from around 1300, relating to known licences to crenellate granted to the Bishops of Exeter in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. The details of the gatehouse are closely comparable to the domestic lodgings at Okehampton Castle. The form of the gatehouse; a long range pierced by an arch, without flanking turrets and with a relatively simple arrangement of arched gateways (the gates being hung on the inside of the front wall) compares to the later 14th-century gatehouse at Dartington Hall in South Devon. The primary roof structure survives over the eastern rooms and is possibly the earliest secular roof to survive in the city. Its construction has affinities with the carpentry of the roof of the Cathedral and of other roof structures in the Close, dating from the 13th and 14th centuries, which now survive only in fragmentary form.

Most of the original building survives intact, including all the principal interior volumes, though these have been to a certain extent altered by later medieval or post medieval alterations. As it was originally constructed the building may have had a very plain façade towards Palace Gate, with few, if any openings in the ground floor to ensure security. The defensive features of the gatehouse, though simple, would have provided adequate protection against most likely forms of attack, as was proven during the last incident of this kind in the 1830s.

The first-floor rooms had larger windows, evidence of which survive in the jambs of many of the existing openings, and which were restored (to an unknown degree of accuracy) by William Butterfield in the 1870s. The façade of the building facing into the Palace grounds was more elaborate, with the remains of grotesques, carved heads and foliage decorations to the terminals of label stops, string courses and hood mouldings. These imply a building of considerable importance and status within the Palace complex. The suite of chambers on the first-floor, approached by an

external staircase outside the rear wall is highly likely to have been the residence of an important official, or to have served as a place for official functions, such as an estate office or courtroom.

The ground-floor accommodation must have incorporated a Porter's lodge, but the function of the other areas of the ground floor is not known. As the Porter of the Palace seems to have doubled as the keeper of the Bishop's prison, it is not improbable that the building incorporated cells or rooms for the detainment of felonious clerks. The two curious blocked rectangular openings in the south-western wall, for example, might, if they had very steeply raked splays opening out below first floor level, have provided both lighting and ventilation to detention rooms on both sides of the arch. These rooms would have been in close proximity to both the lodge and the Porter's private accommodation, which may have been located in the eastern end of the gatehouse on the two upper floors. It is surely more likely that prisoners would have been detained in this kind of fortified building on the periphery of the Palace enclosure, than within the Palace itself, close to the private apartments of the Bishop, as suggested by Chanter (Chanter 1932, 63).

The earliest known alterations to the gatehouse involved the addition of an extra storey by the inserting floor structures within the roof. This new storey may have been approached by the newel stair within the eastern rooms, though there is a strong possibility that a stair turret was added against the rear wall, linking the ground and first floor rooms with the second floor, and perhaps superseding the earlier external stair. The new storey was certainly added by the early 17th century and it is possible that the beginnings of the rear extension date from the same period. The most likely context for the development of the rooms within the rear extension and of domestic improvements to the gatehouse are its occupation by tenants of the Bishop during the late 17th and 18th centuries. Some fixture and fittings from this period remain, including the balustrades of the main staircase, window shutters etc., but the rear extension, staircase and roofs may have been remodelled in the early 19th-century after the buildings was converted for occupation by the Bishop's Chaplain. Subsequent changes, though perhaps detrimental to the domestic character of the interiors, have been minor.

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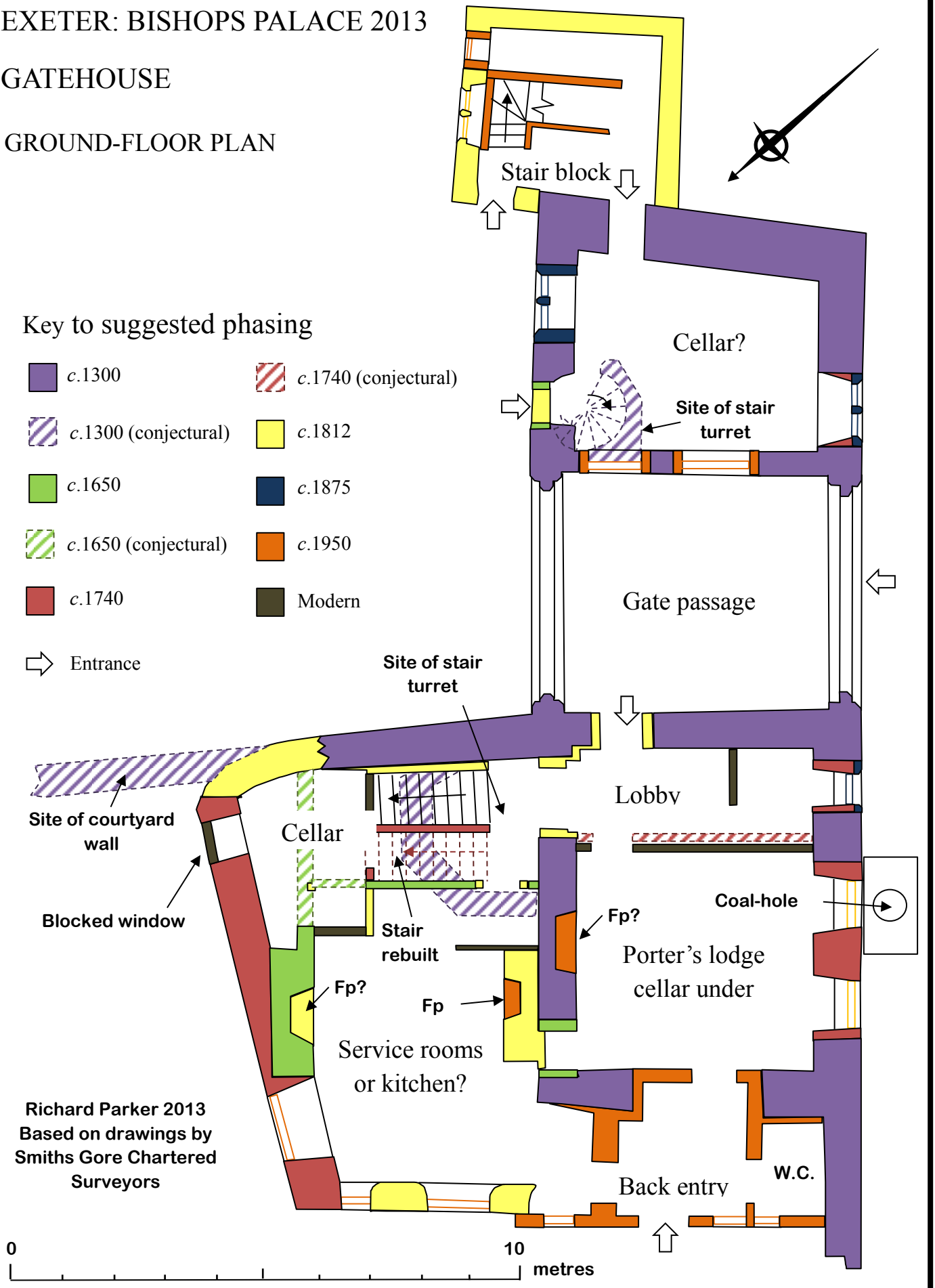
GATEHOUSE

GROUND-FLOOR PLAN

Key to suggested phasing

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  c.1300                |  c.1740 (conjectural) |
|  c.1300 (conjectural)  |  c.1812               |
|  c.1650                |  c.1875               |
|  c.1650 (conjectural) |  c.1950              |
|  c.1740              |  Modern             |

 Entrance














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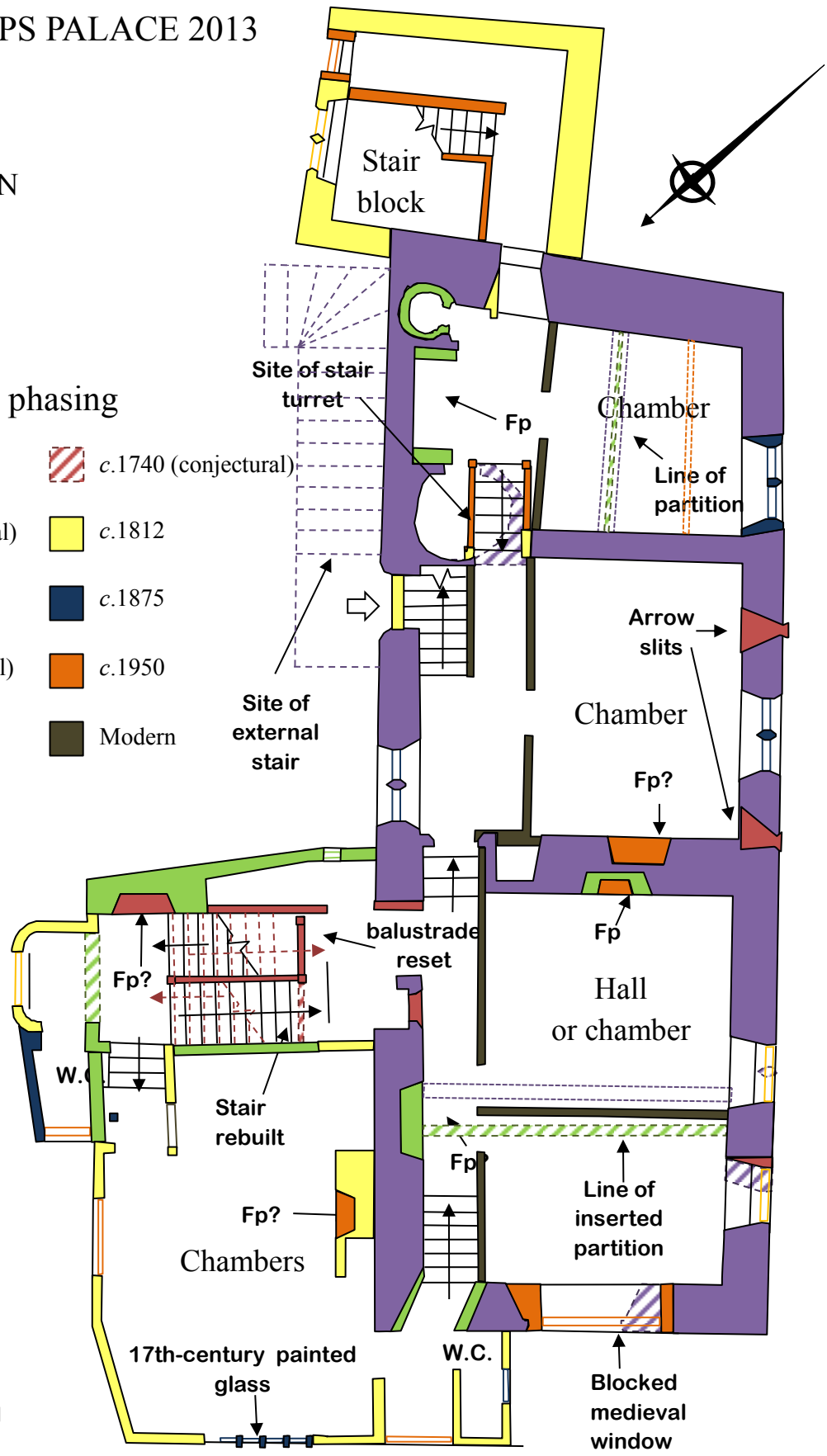
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GATEHOUSE

FIRST-FLOOR PLAN

Key to suggested phasing

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  c.1300                |  c.1740 (conjectural) |
|  c.1300 (conjectural)  |  c.1812               |
|  c.1650                |  c.1875               |
|  c.1650 (conjectural) |  c.1950              |
|  c.1740              |  Modern             |
|  Entrance            |  |



Richard Parker 2013  
 Based on drawings by  
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


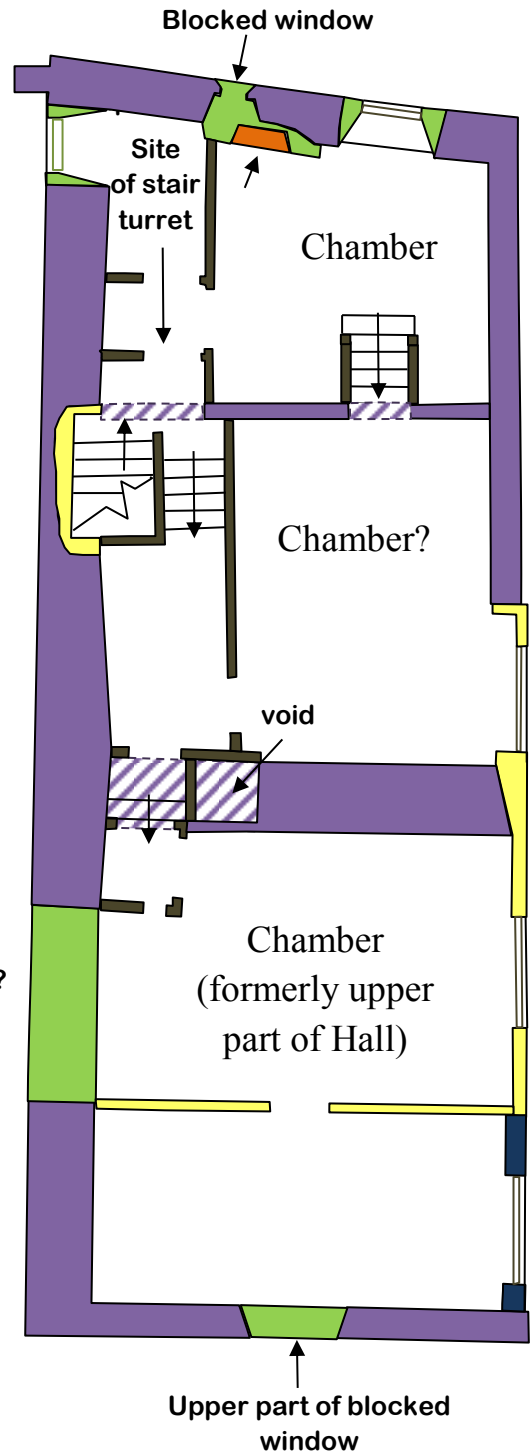
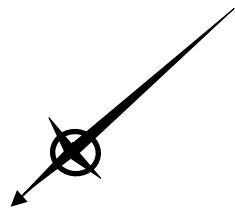
EXETER: BISHOPS PALACE 2013

GATEHOUSE

SECOND-FLOOR PLAN

Key to suggested phasing

- |  |  |
|--|--|
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|  c.1300 (conjectural) |  c.1812               |
|  c.1650               |  c.1875               |
|  c.1650 (conjectural) |  c.1950               |
|  c.1740             |  Modern             |
|  Entrance           |  |



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