

ARTHUR'S HALL, DOVER CASTLE, KENT ANALYSIS OF THE BUILDING

HISTORIC BUILDINGS REPORT

Allan Brodie



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KENT**

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SUMMARY

Arthur's Hall was built in the late 1230s, although building fabric evidence, in the south-east wall, indicates that the remains of an earlier phase are incorporated within it. Although the form of this earlier building is unclear, the floor in the north-east corner of the hall is interrupted as if to accommodate a substantial stair up to the ramparts of the Inner Bailey. Arthur's Hall retains service doors at its lower end and scar evidence in the side wall where the doorway into the cross passage survives. At the upper end, in the south-west wall, there are remains of a tall doorway from the front of the dais out into the Inner Bailey and there is evidence for the dais at the upper end. Stratigraphic evidence in the front wall suggests that the floor level had been raised, perhaps twice, by the 16th century. Arthur's Hall remained a significant building until the 17th century, but its current appearance is a result of a programme to create barracks in the 1740s. Arthur's Hall was investigated as part of the Dover Great Tower Project, in support of the re-interpretation and presentation of the Keep and Inner Bailey.

CONTRIBUTORS

This report was drafted by Allan Brodie who examined the building with Gordon Higgott, Tom Cromwell and Kevin Booth. Barry Jones has read and commented on the text.

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This report was read by Christopher Phillpotts who was providing documentary research for English Heritage.

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INTRODUCTION

Documents reveal that Arthur's Hall was not the first hall built within the Inner Bailey at Dover Castle. In March 1214, timber was ordered from Sussex to build a hall for King John, a construction programme that may have been interrupted by the siege of 1216. This earlier hall, which stood to the north-west of Arthur's Hall, was soon augmented by a new hall and an adjacent chamber, built in 1238/9, ready by 1240 and with a kitchen added in 1243. This new hall acquired the name 'Arthur's Hall' in the 14th century. In 1246 a chamber at the end of the 'Great Hall' was being constructed, presumably a second chamber, as the previous example was only a few years old at that time. (Fig. 1) However, examination of the fabric of Arthur's Hall suggests it may have been the site for an earlier stair up to the ramparts of the Inner Bailey and in the south-east wall of the hall, above the service doors, there is an earlier arch. The implication is clear; this wall predates the late 1230s, though whether it was part of a building on the site of the hall, or part of an adjoining building to the south-east is unclear. A third possibility is that it may be associated with the phase of work carried out by King John towards the end of his reign, work that may have been effected by the siege of 1216.

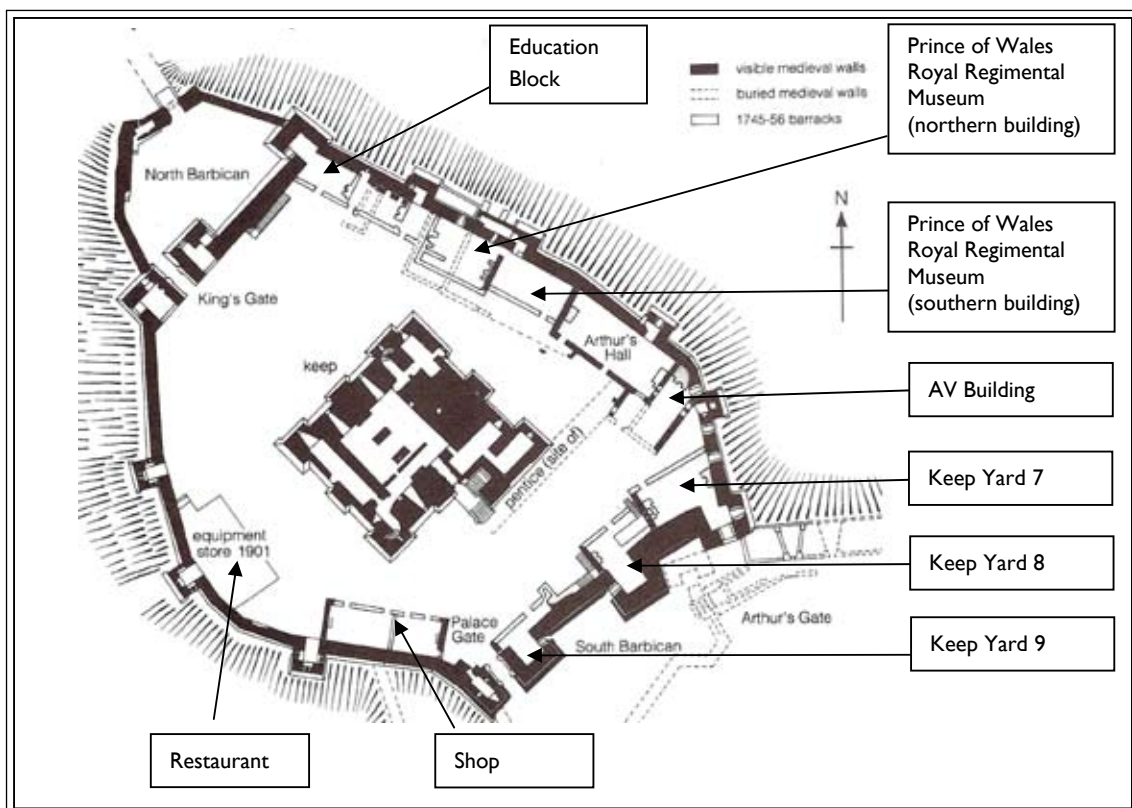


Figure 1. Plan of the Inner Bailey from Coad 1995

This construction programme of the late 1230s to the mid-1240s led to the creation of a series of buildings along the inside of the north-east wall of the Inner Bailey, with Arthur's Hall at their heart. To the south-east of this hall were the services and a passage through to the kitchen. The hall was entered by a large porch which had an oratory on its upper floor, and documents suggest that there may have been a chamber beside the oratory, probably over the services. To the north-west of the hall were one, or possibly two, chambers and perhaps the remains of the earlier 13th-century hall. These developments indicate a shift of emphasis in the way Dover Castle was being used. Built as a fortification, with an apparently impregnable and symbolically-defiant exterior, these new 13th-century buildings seem to echo the more domestic palace building programmes taking place at less fortified sites, such as at Clarendon Palace or at Westminster. Henry III (1216-72) added new accommodation at his main residences after his marriage in 1236 to allow his Queen to have her own suite of rooms. Normally this meant new accommodation for the Queen, but Dover is unusual because she seems to have been left in the accommodation in the Great Tower, if she ever visited, and the King provided himself with the suite of new buildings in the Inner Bailey.

Occasional documentary references suggest that the hall continued in use for several hundred years and the evidence of the fabric suggests a major alteration in the late Middle Ages. By the 16th century the floor level seems to have been raised 2 metres above the lower, early floor level, and Bereblock's drawing of c 1570 seems to show a main façade with late-medieval fenestration. The date for these alterations is not recorded, but Edward IV is reputed to have spent £10,000 on the castle, and this may be the date of these alterations.

Arthur's Hall seems to have been a key building in the castle until the 16th century, at the centre of the King's suite of rooms. However, by the early 17th century, when King Charles was greeting his new wife at the castle, and the Duke of Buckingham was improving his accommodation, expenditure was focussed on the Great Tower and the Lord Chamberlain's Lodgings beside the gate into the Inner Bailey. Arthur's Hall seems to have been retained as a secondary facility but its primary position in the royal accommodation had ceased. In the mid-18th century it was substantially refaced as part of the programme to create a series of superficially-unified barrack blocks around the inside of the Inner Bailey.

The discussion in this report should be read along with a separate report on the general development of the Inner Bailey.¹

ORIENTATION

Arthur's Hall lies to the north-east of the Great Tower. Its upper end is at the north-west of the building and its services at the south-east. The main façade of the building, on to the yard of the Inner Bailey, faces south-west. For the purposes of this report the strict geographical orientation will be used.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1214, timber from Sussex was acquired 'to build our new hall'.² Coad states that this hall was reputed to be in the north-western part of the Outer Bailey, and that Godsfoe Tower could have been a chamber block to this hall.³ But the language used in the documents is significant, because if it was simply described as a hall it could have been sited in the Outer Bailey, but as it is referred to as 'our new hall', it is perhaps more likely to have been built in the inner sanctum, i.e. within the Inner Bailey. In 1284/5 there are references to repairs to the King's Garderobe next to the Old Hall and the King's Chamber next to the Old Hall.⁴ When these descriptions of the location are combined with references to the position of the new hall, the most obvious interpretation is that the King's chamber lay to the north-west of Arthur's Hall, with the old hall to the north-west of the chamber. However, in 1284/5 there is also a reference to repairs to the kitchen and old hall next to the double door, as if they were adjacent in the south-east corner of the Inner Bailey. A possible explanation is that Arthur's Hall was now considered to be the old hall in some documents, since the creation of a 'hall' within the keep. A timber-framed structure was inserted into the western half of the first floor of the Great Tower in the mid-13th century and this may have come to be considered as the new hall.

In 1236 Henry III married Eleanor of Provence, who was probably 12 years old at the time, and at most Royal houses this meant a new building programme to provide the royal bride with chambers. However, at Dover the decision was made for the Queen to remain in the Great Tower while the King moved into new buildings in the Inner Bailey. In 1238/9 reference was made to an oratory over the porch of the new hall and the King's chamber at the end of the new hall is mentioned.⁵ On 1 July 1240 repairs were ordered to take place to the windows of the chapel and King's chamber, as a result of storm damage.⁶ During the same period the King's new chamber, the King's Chapel and King's old chamber were to be wainscotted.⁷ In 1240 the new hall was to be filled with poor people who were to be fed for one day prior to the King's arrival, suggesting that the hall was complete.⁸

The new hall was linked to the chapel by a pentice, and Bereblock's late-16th century drawing of a pentice between Arthur's Hall and the forebuilding of the Great Tower is a later depiction of a similar structure. (Fig. 2) There was also a passage between the new hall and the king's chamber, probably to the north-west of the hall. Both passages are referred to separately in the Liberate Rolls. On 13 July 1240 the instruction read as follows: 'Contrabreve ... to cause the penthouse between the King's Hall and the chapel to be repaired and renewed.'⁹ The documents refer to 'repaired and renewed' as if a pre-existing structure had to be renovated following the storm in 1240, though it may have been the new pentice built between 1238 and 1240 that required renewal rather than an older structure. Regarding the second passage, on 29 August 1240 the roll stated that 'Contrabreve ... to cause a passage to be made from the King's new hall of the castle to his chamber.'¹⁰ Other documentary evidence suggests that the King's chamber was to the north-west of the hall, while the chapel was still the one in the forebuilding of the keep, and therefore two separate passages are being described.

In April 1292 the roof of the hall porch was repaired.¹¹ An inquiry in 1324 described the poor state of the buildings in the castle and the need for £2,060 of repairs.¹² There are references to sporadic repairs in the 14th century, including £222 spent between 1361 and 1364.¹³ This work included repairs to the hall and other buildings in the Inner Bailey. In 1382 the roof of Arthur's Hall was repaired.¹⁴ In 1426-37 repairs were carried out to the windows of the hall and the roof, and two new windows and a door were created in the kitchen.¹⁵

The sums mentioned in these documents seem to have been modest compared to the work reputedly executed by Edward IV. Unfortunately official documents from his reign have largely disappeared, but William Lambarde writing in 1570 said that: 'Onely I reade in Iohn Rosse, that King Edwarde the Fourth, to his great expence, which others reckon to have been ten thousande poundes, amended it throughout.'¹⁶ The fireplaces in the Great Tower provide some insight into the money he must have invested, but it is unclear whether he also turned his attention to Arthur's Hall, though with such a large sum invested, every building of note may have been affected.

John Bereblock (fl. 1557–1572), who is most famous for his illustrations of Oxford colleges in 1566, drew the castle as it existed around 1570.¹⁷ (Fig. 2) It does not date from 1626 as was stated by Coad.¹⁸ A question that should be posed, but cannot yet be answered, is why Bereblock came to Dover to create this drawing, on his sole recorded excursion from Oxford? The commemoration of some significant event is the obvious conclusion, but no suitable occasion has yet been identified. Bereblock's view is a difficult source to use. It contains a wealth of plausible detail but contains some major errors, including reducing the width of the Great Tower by half and omitting many of the buildings in the Inner Bailey. Nevertheless, the depiction of the pentice from the hall to the Great Tower and aspects of the detail of the façade of Arthur's Hall may have been broadly accurate. His compression of the Great Tower also seems to have affected the Inner Bailey as the buildings he shows are too tight to encompass the whole range. In fact his depiction would be roughly equivalent to the size of Arthur's Hall leading to the apparently-obvious conclusion that a series of bays were added to it in the late Middle Ages. However, this is not supported in the physical evidence of the main façade, and a more plausible interpretation is that Arthur's Hall is the small area between the two right-hand bay windows, where the pentice reaches the Inner Bailey. This requires a considerable compression of reality, similar to Bereblock's omission of half of the Great Tower.

In the 1620s considerable money was spent on embellishing the entrance to the Great Tower, tidying up its apartments and improving the King's lodgings near the gate.¹⁹ Among the works were repairs to 'the timbers that runeth under the Caves of Arthurs Hall and the Gable endes of the Pastery'.²⁰ There are no formal cellars beneath Arthur's Hall, but what this probably refers to is the space between the original 13th-century floor level and the raised late medieval floor, approximately at the height of the current walkway. John de Critz also undertook some work on the 'the dore of Arthurs Hall, the Pastery dore, and the Gaurde chamber dore cont in all 85 square yardes at 4d the yarde 33s 4d,'. The plasterer's account for the same period also mentions work on 'the Ceelings of the pastery and the roomes over them and the p[ar]ticons there with the ceelings over the

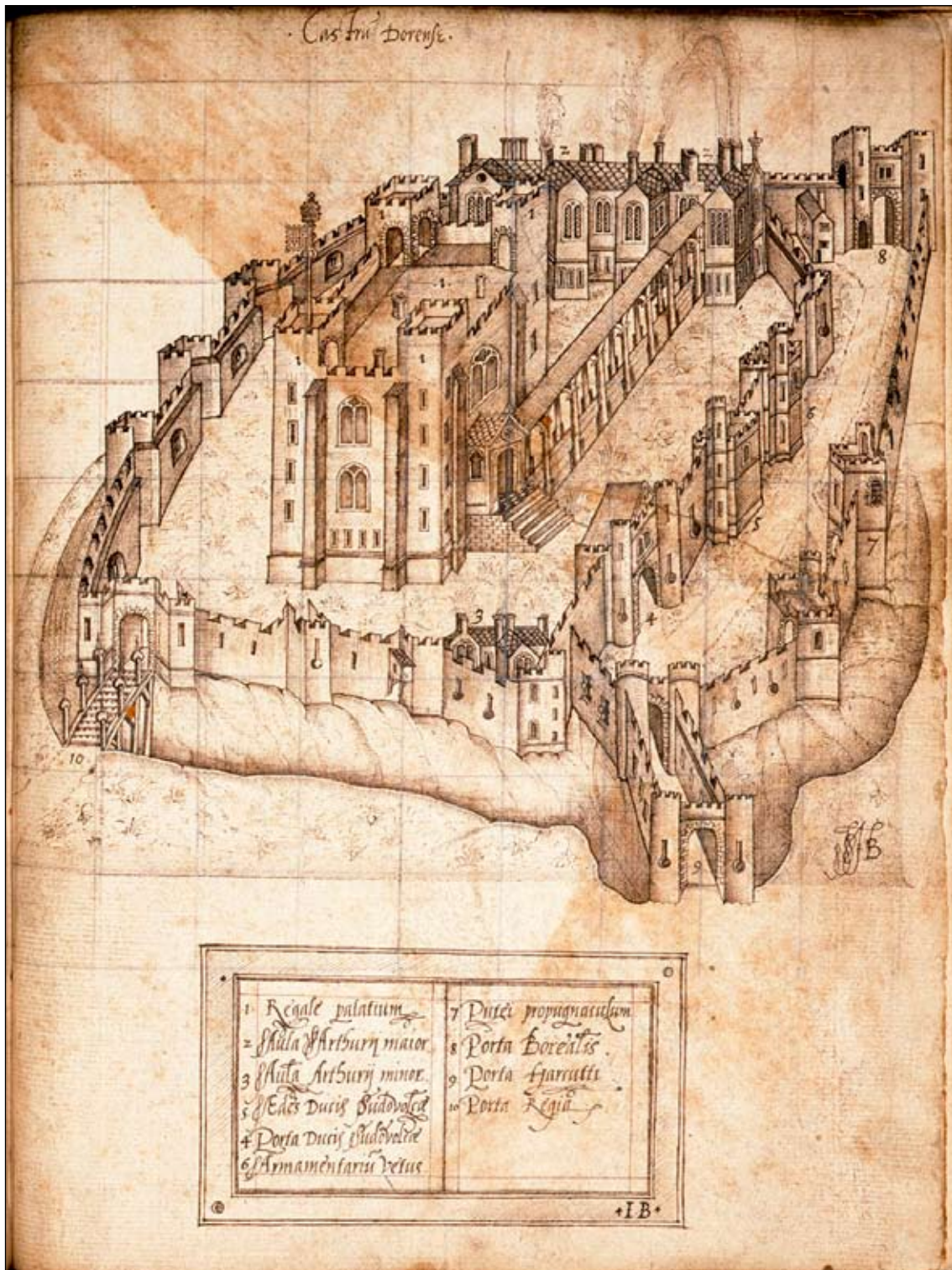


Figure 2. John Bereblock's view c 1570. (Reproduced courtesy of the College of Arms)

portch going into Arthurs Hall'.²¹ A summary of the expenditure that took place between October 1625 and September 1626, prepared by Henry Weekes, Clerk of Works, includes 'mending divers decayed places in the ffront of the portche entring into Arthurs Halle'.²² The sum of these references points to Arthur's Hall and the attached services as still being important buildings in the castle: buildings worthy of refurbishment.

After the 1620s Arthur's Hall seems to have been little used, and by the early 18th century it was probably in a similar state of disrepair as the Great Tower. In the mid-18th century the hall was converted into barracks and divided into two floors. A series of maps in the National Monuments Records Centre and documents in the National Archives and the Centre for Kentish Studies describe the programme. Discussion of this will be pursued in detail in the accompanying report on the buildings of the Inner Bailey.²³

THE SITE BEFORE ARTHUR'S HALL

The south-east wall of Arthur's Hall, which contains three service doors from the 1238-40 campaign, retains some evidence of an earlier arch. (Fig. 3) In the wall above and between the left service door and the central one, there are seven voussoirs of a plain arch, probably from around the outside of a narrower opening. The presence of this feature suggests that a significant part, if not all, of the south-east wall predates 1240. Further support for this assertion is provided by the area of stone work above the central of the three arches. The rubble in this area has been disturbed, apparently when the arch of the service door was inserted.

The detailed significance of the existence of the early, blocked arch is unclear, but what it does suggest is that there were buildings including some stone walling along the inside face of the Inner Bailey, prior to Arthur's Hall being erected. It could suggest that there was a building on the site of Arthur's Hall prior to 1238, and if so, could the lower parts of the main façade belong to the late 12th century or early 13th century, rather than dating from 1238-40. Unfortunately the joint between the south-east and south-west walls is plastered and disturbed and so the relationship between the contrasting areas of walling is unclear.

If a building did exist on the site of Arthur's Hall, it was probably smaller in area than the present hall. In the north-east corner of the hall there is a disturbed area of stonework on the floor with a drainage channel around it. This seems to have been the base for a stair up to the ramparts of the Inner Bailey. Was it ever built? If so, its removal to create



Figure 3. Line of voussoirs and stonework patch above service doorways

the 1240 period floor area of Arthur's Hall represented a major commitment. On the other side of Arthur's Hall there was a wall projecting into the Inner Bailey yard. A small part of this wall projects into Arthur's Hall, and it seems to predate the construction of the main façade. However, this is a very small piece of wall, one or two courses high, and this may be a result of the relative laying out of the two walls in the 1230s. It may have continued across Arthur's Hall in some form to serve as the support for the front of the dais. If it had been a major wall of the earlier phase, perhaps more signs of its existence would persist in the fabric of Arthur's Hall. This wall does not align with the footprint of the putative stair and it is difficult to reconcile the evidence at floor level with the overall development of the hall.

There is a lack of definitive physical evidence to establish what existed on the site of Arthur's Hall, but the length of the 13th century hall can be used to argue in support of there being an earlier structure that was lengthened. The hall is trapezoidal with an overall internal length of c 22.2m and an internal width of c 8.85m. This ratio of the length being 2.5 times the width is exceptional, 1.5 times being more typical in 13th century halls. If 4m is removed from the length, a reflection of where the possible cross-wall existed, the ratio is just over twice: still long but more in keeping with other contemporary examples. Was this the site of King John's Hall, and Henry wished to have something on a still grander scale?

An alternative interpretation for the south-east wall before 1238 is that it was part of a building to the south-east of the 13th century hall, on the site of the services. The problem with this assertion is similar to the objection to a building on the site of Arthur's Hall: the absence of any wall parallel, or perpendicular, to it that can definitely be associated with it. One possibility is the wall defining the northern end of the kitchen, in the south-east corner of the Inner Bailey, dates from the late 12th century or early 13th century. Its only dateable feature is the blocked arch of a doorway at 13th-century floor level in its eastern end. However, this chamfered arch could be a functional entrance to the kitchen at any date from the late 12th century to the mid-13th century.

A third possibility is that the south-east wall of Arthur's Hall, with its former arch, was a remnant of a building being erected at the same time as King John's work on his hall, late in his reign. This work was hindered or interrupted by the siege of 1216 and in its immediate aftermath there are obvious records of payments to continue the work.²⁴ Perhaps the south-east wall of the hall was part of a scheme that was never completed, and was reused when Henry III sought to create his suite of King's Lodgings in the 1230s.

HENRY III'S HALL – 'ARTHUR'S HALL'

Arthur's Hall was the centrepiece of the suite of King's Lodgings established in the 1230s and 1240s. It is trapezoidal in plan with its overall internal length being around 22.2m and its width being approximately 8.85m. Originally the floor level of the hall was approximately 1.6m below the current walkway, the later reflecting, approximately, the level of the raised floor that probably dated from the 15th century. The upper end of the hall was at the north-west end of the building with the cross passage and service doors at the south-east end of the hall. Due to later reconstruction there is no evidence of the original windows or roof, but much of the form and function of the hall can be determined.

I Upper end of hall, lighting and heating

There is clear evidence of a dais in the fabric of Arthur's Hall. There appears to be a slight thickening of the wall at the level below the blocked door in the north end of the south-west wall of the hall. (Fig. 4) This setback exists from a short distance to the south-east of the blocked door opening and continues to the north-west wall of the hall and along this end wall up to the inserted fireplace. Less evidence exists at the other side of the upper end of the hall. There is no obvious projection as this wall, part of the Inner Bailey defences, predated the construction of the hall. However, there may be stones aligned from north-east to south-west that may represent the front of the dais. The base of the door in the south-west wall and the level of the setback suggest that the dais was 0.48m high above the current floor level, therefore approximately 0.6m above the likely 13th-century floor level.



Figure 4. Line of stonework beneath 13th-century doorway where dais was located

Part of the evidence for the dais is supplied by the blocked doorway in the south-west wall of Arthur's Hall. This arch is roll-moulded around the inside face and its overall height is 2.3m: 0.10m higher than the central service door. (Fig. 5) While its position 0.48m above the current floor level proves the existence of a dais, its position, opening on to the front of the dais is unusual. (Fig. 6) In conventional halls, the communication with buildings attached to the upper end would usually be through the end wall, or in the corners of the side walls, or by the cross passage. Excavations in the 1960s revealed the stub end of a medieval wall projecting from the south-west wall of the hall, just beyond where the door on to the dais existed.²⁵ There is no evidence of this wall above ground today, so any assessment must be speculative. However, it could be a remnant of a pentice or passage running from the hall north-westwards to the adjacent chamber. On 29 August 1240 a reference was made to a passage from the 'King's new hall of the castle to his chamber', and this seems to match the location of this proposed passage. An excavation in 2008 revealed that a part of this wall may have projected into the interior of Arthur's Hall.



Figure 5. Blocked doorway at upper end of hall

Essential features of a typical medieval hall include lighting and heating. There is no evidence in the fabric for either, but some speculation can be undertaken. The surviving 13th-century fabric of the south-west wall is limited to the north-west end, around the door on to the dais and the lower parts of the rest of the wall, and therefore any evidence for windows has disappeared. However, as the opening in the wall of the Inner Bailey is post-medieval and there could not have been windows in the lower parts of the end walls due to adjacent buildings, therefore the windows are likely to have been in the south-west wall. In this wall 13th-century fabric survives up to 1.3m above the floor. Could this have been approximately the level of the sills of the windows? One arrangement used in the 13th century for windows in halls, for instance at Stokesay Castle (Salop) or the Old Deanery at Salisbury (Wiltshire), involved placing windows within gablets rising to form the equivalent of dormer



Figure 6. Artist's impression of the upper end of the hall

windows. The remains of the south-west wall, uninterrupted at its base, would not contradict the existence of such windows. The most likely form of the window would be a plate tracery design of two trefoiled-headed lights with an oculus or quatrefoil above. An illustration of the upper end of the hall shows a window lighting the dais, in the position of the current door. (Fig. 6) There is no archaeological evidence to support this.

In the south-east wall of the hall, there is a blocked, wide arch in the centre of the gable. It seems to be late medieval in overall form. Therefore it could have been a window above the services lighting the hall after the floor was raised.

Regarding heating, an open fire towards the upper end of the hall is the most common arrangement in the first half of the 13th century. There is no evidence of any fireplace in the early fabric, but in the north-eastern part of the north-west wall there is some evidence of what might have been a low wide arch. Seven crude voussoirs arranged

diagonally appear to the right of the inserted fireplace. (Fig. 7) However, these stones are in a straight line, rather than being curved and the opening would have been very wide. An alternative explanation is that these stones relate to a later flue arrangement going into the inserted fireplace.



Figure 7. Line of voussoirs at upper end of hall

2 Lower end of hall

At the south-east end of the hall there is clear evidence for the services and cross passage. The standard arrangement in a medieval hall is to have a cross passage at the low end of a hall, with a screen separating it from the main body of the hall. From the cross passage there would be access through the wall at the lower end of the hall to the services.

The south-east wall of Arthur's Hall retains three arches that once opened from the hall to the services (that were located on the site of the current building containing the former AV room & education room). The tall, central arch is 1.59m wide and 2.2m high, and is flanked by two doorways 1.03m wide and 2m high. (Fig. 8) The left jamb of the left doorway has largely disappeared, but sufficient survives to establish this door's width. The three doorways are likely to correspond with the buttery, pantry and a central, wider passage providing access to a kitchen. Butteries and pantries did not have to be particularly large and the area of the AV building beyond the south-east wall of Arthur's Hall would have been more than adequate.



Figure 8. Service doorways at lower end of hall

The footprint of Arthur's Hall is well defined, despite later reconstruction, due to the substantial nature of its stone walls. The north-west wall of the building in the south-east corner of the Inner Bailey is similarly well defined as it is a substantial stone wall with a batter on its north-west face. (Fig. 9) The space between this building and Arthur's Hall, where the services were located, does not have such a clear definition today and one possible explanation is that the services were built in a less substantial way, perhaps being just a timber-framed block beside the hall. Such a form of construction would have been adequate and would have also served to distinguish the service block from the main hall.

In the south-eastern end of the south-west wall there are the remains of a door at 13th-century floor level, immediately below the later, higher door. (Fig. 10) There is a straight joint 0.92m high located 2.12m from the south-west corner of the hall. This crude

caesura seems to mark where the jamb of a door has been removed. Closer to the corner there are three haphazardly-arranged dressed stones, perhaps providing a hint of where the other jamb was located. A shaped medieval stone has been set into this infilling. In the front wall of the former AV building there is a 13th century moulded arch set on 18th-century jambs, entering the area of the porch in front of Arthur's Hall. Could this be the reset arch of the main door into the hall?



Figure 9. Battered wall on inside of AV room (former external face of kitchen wall)

3 Kitchen

The central arch in the south-east wall would have probably led to the kitchen that would have been located to the south-east of Arthur's Hall. On medieval sites, kitchens were often separate as they were prone to fire damage, but they also had to be convenient for the services and the hall. At Dover, the obvious location was in the south-east corner of the Inner Bailey, and there is evidence to demonstrate that there was a substantial medieval building in that location. To compensate for the lack of physical separation, this building had very substantial walls.

This building was squeezed into the south east corner of the Inner Bailey, convenient for Arthur's Hall and the range of buildings that probably existed along the south-east wall of the Inner Bailey. On the external face of the north-west wall of this building, on the inside of the former AV room, there is a 20cm deep batter (2.2m above floor level), the type



Figure 10. Joints marking site of 13th-century doorway

of batter found on walls that were meant to be external. (Fig. 9) However, this supposed 'batter' is actually a rectangular setback that has had an angled face created to smooth the transition from one wall thickness to the thinner one above. Does this indicate that the lower, thicker wall predates the slightly thinner, upper part?

The wall at the opposite side of this putative kitchen, which forms the northern wall of the barrack block (Keep Yard 9) in the south-east corner, is between 0.9m and 1m thick, 0.2-0.3m thicker than the walls in the other barrack blocks that were adapted or purpose-built in the 18th century. This wall contains a wealth of archaeological evidence, but this seems to relate to the 18th century. The whole of the wall is a consistent thickness, but only its western half is finished externally in neat courses with galleting, the distinctive, external finish of the mid-18th century phase. (Fig. 11) The remainder of the wall is of fairly crude rubble construction and separating the two types of walling is the stub of a wall that extended northwards towards the other side of the proposed building. (Fig. 12) This stub rises to 4.86m above ground level, where the start of the outline of a roof can be seen. This roofline rises to approximately 6.83m then descends to what appears to be a central valley with another similar narrow roofline to the east of it. (Fig. 13) This form of roof line mirrors the 18th-century roof of Arthur's Hall and is not a medieval arrangement. As well as the roof line, this wall retains evidence for a ceiling, located between 2.5m and 2.76m above the current ground level, but again these remnants appear to be post-medieval. Is this walling an 18th century reconstruction on medieval foundations, hence its greater thickness than other barracks walls?



Figure 11. Site of former building interior (to left of sash windows)



Figure 12. Vertical scar of former front wall of building, in south east corner of Inner Bailey

This evidence of internal arrangements relates to the current ground level rather than the lower, 13th-century floor level of Arthur's Hall. However, in the north-west wall of the proposed kitchen there are the remains of arches set at a lower level. In the corner there is the faint outline of two arches, one above the other. (Fig. 14) These are approximately 0.9m wide. To the left of these is a 1.5m wide chamfered, pointed arch. Both sets of arches are set at the original, 13th-century floor level of Arthur's Hall. The chamfer on the arch suggests that this is the direction from which people would approach the door, as if it is the end of the passage running from the kitchen to the hall?

There is documentary evidence that can be used to support the assertion that this is the site of the kitchen. The construction of the kitchen began in 1243.²⁶ The instruction stated that 'Contrabreve to make a kitchen belonging to the King's new hall in Dover castle'; therefore it was presumably located near the services of the new hall. A 1586 memo refers to an 80ft long passage linking the hall and privy kitchen to the Great Tower and the porch or entrance to the queen's lodgings.²⁷ This clearly links the location of the hall and kitchen, and supports the slightly earlier drawing of Bereblock. (Fig. 2) This reference is 350 years after the construction of the hall and kitchen, but the association still seems to work for the 13th century layout.



Figure 13. Outlines of roof line and former central division in upper storey



Figure 14. Blocked arches in corner of possible 'kitchen' at 13th-century floor level

SURVIVING MEDIEVAL FABRIC AND ACCESS TO ARTHUR'S HALL

The north-west wall of Arthur's Hall dates from the 1170s or 1180s as it is part of the Inner Bailey of the castle. The south-east wall, containing the service doors, has evidence of an earlier arch and seems to date from between the 1170s and 1240. Potentially, it could be part of the work carried out during King John's reign. The north-west wall seems to be substantially 13th century in character. However, the fabric of the south-west wall is more complex and needs to be considered along with the walls of the adjacent AV building.

At first sight there seems to be considerable harmony in the external fabric of the walls of Arthur's Hall and the AV building facing the Inner Bailey, but closer examination reveals that some of the fabric of the external faces is medieval, while other sections date from the 18th century. Lyon writing in 1814 stated that: 'In the year 1745, barracks were built upon the scite of these offices; and if the fronts of them were not carried up new from the ground, they were cased over, for they have a modern appearance, when compared with the ancient masonry.'²⁸ The mid-18th century fabric consists of regular courses of stone with galleting made of flint chips set into the mortar. In the north-west wall of the AV building the wall is more irregular with random rubble, though there is similar galleting in the mortar. (Fig. 15) At the south-western end of this wall there is a neat joint between the regular stonework that makes up the south-west wall, the main façade of the building, and the more irregular rubble. This joint occurs 1.13m from the end of the wall, at ground-floor level, but higher up there appears to be 18th-century fabric running along the whole length of this wall. This would suggest that the 18th-century building was higher than the 13th-century building, or at least taller than the parts of the medieval building that were retained.



Figure 15. North-west wall of AV Building showing 'buttress' and remains of blocked arch into porch set in medieval walling with more regular, 18th-century fabric above

This wall contains two clear phases and there is evidence of a similar break in the south-west wall of Arthur's Hall. Most of the wall is built in regular coursed stonework with galleting, but at the north-west end of the wall, between the two westernmost sets of sash windows, there is a change in the stonework to more irregular rubble with galleting. (Fig. 16) This type of stonework continues around on to the north-west gable wall of the Arthur's Hall. The location of the patch of apparently earlier fabric on the exterior accords with the evidence of the early stonework on the interior. The door on to the dais is important as it indicates where 13th century fabric survives in the south-west wall of the hall. (Fig. 17) However, to the south-east (left) of this arch there is a slight, but significant change in wall thickness. There is a setback in the wall 1.3m above the 13th century floor level. Above this position the upper part of the wall is set back by approximately 0.05m. This set back runs from just beyond the 13th century door, approximately 4m from the north-west wall, to around 14.4m along the inside of the south-west wall. Thereafter the setback ends, but the lower parts of the wall still seem to date from the 13th century.



Figure 16. Joint between regular 18th-century fabric and medieval rubble, to left of right-hand sashes

To more fully understand the stratigraphy of the rest of the south-west wall, it is necessary to consider the raising of the floor level in the hall, combined with the evidence on the inside of the south-west wall. On first inspection, Bereblock's view, produced c 1570, seems to show the hall with two large bay windows, but as mentioned earlier a more likely interpretation is that his depiction shows the whole range and that Arthur's



Figure 17. 13th-century fabric around door on to dias

Hall only accounts for the right hand part of the drawing. (Fig. 2) In the drawing, the lower parts of the bays and the buildings were lit by narrow vertical windows, while the upper levels and the main wall of the blocks usually have two light windows. Reset examples of the narrow, vertical windows have been inserted into the blockage of the arch in the north-west wall of the AV building and in the eastern end of Arthur's Lesser Hall, the current shop building. (Figs. 15 and 18) In the south-west wall of the hall the lower section of wall shows no interruption for any type of windows and therefore Bereblock's view seems to depict the arrangement after the floor had been raised. His drawing does not contain any topographical detail to confirm this, though his naïve perspective does seem to suggest that the land was relatively flat between the Great Tower and Arthur's Hall.

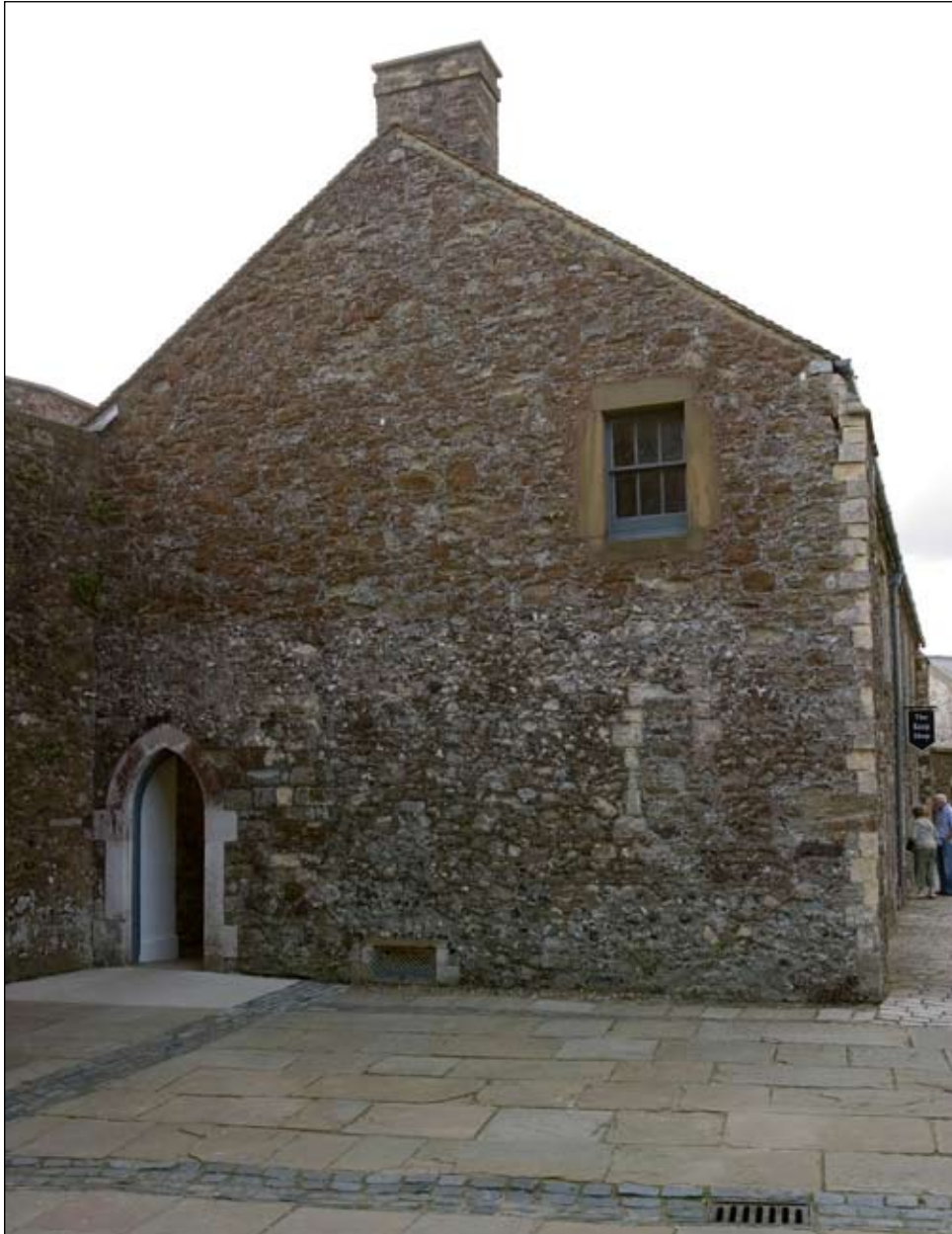


Figure 18. Eastern wall of Arthur's Lesser Hall, beside Palace Gate

There are other clues in the drawing that infer that the floor level had already been raised. The plan in the 1969 excavation report shows the pentice as a dotted line running from the south-east side of the forebuilding of the Great Tower to the corner where Arthur's Hall adjoins the AV building.²⁹ However, there are no indications of a door into Arthur's Hall at that point and examination of the drawing at the junction between the pentice and the projecting part of Arthur's Hall, suggests that the pentice stopped short of the front wall of Arthur's Hall, where the buttress is located. (Fig. 19) The term 'buttress' is slightly misleading as it does not buttress anything and its thickness seems appropriate for being the remnant of a wall. (Fig. 20) In the south-western bay of the north-west wall of the AV building there is a blocked, pointed arch with a simple roll moulding on its inside face. This suggests that people left the pentice through this side

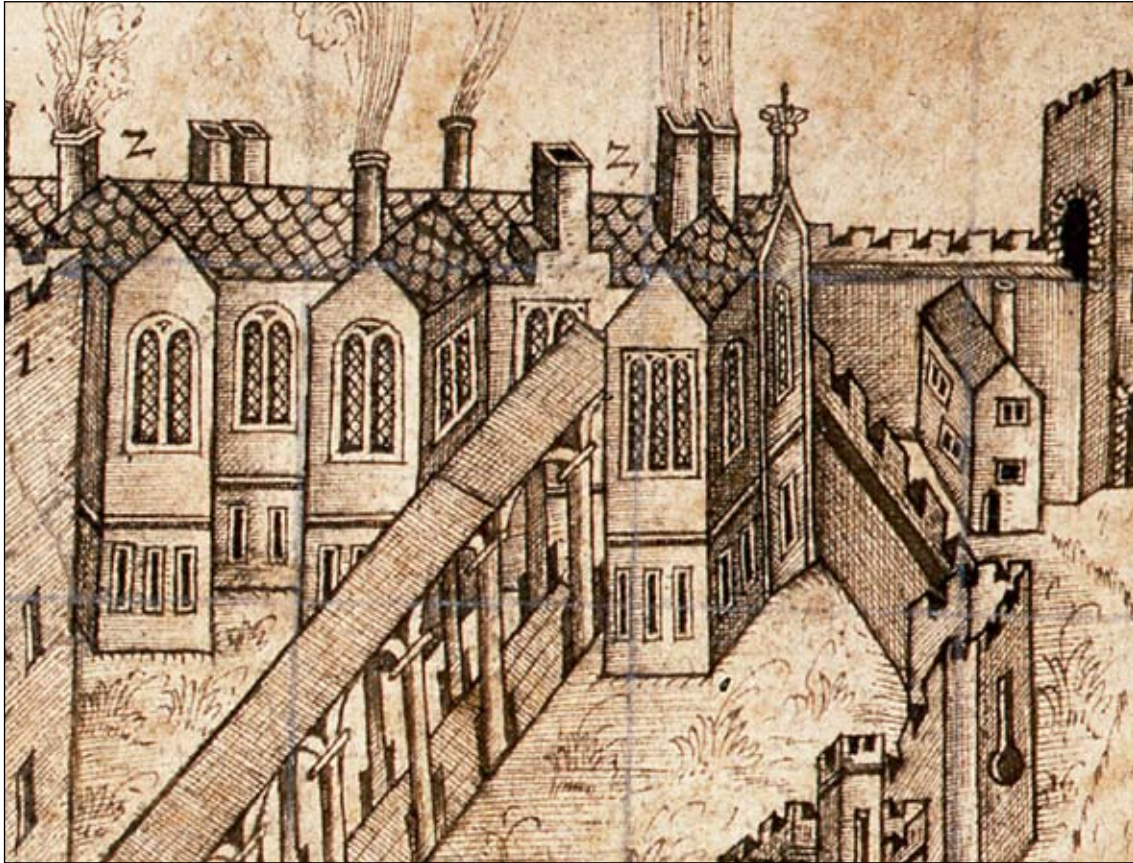


Figure 19. John Bereblock's view c 1570: detail of lower end of hall



Figure 20. North-west wall of AV Building showing 'buttress' and remains of blocked arch between pentice and 'porch', now incorporated into the building

wall into the large porch, before entering Arthur's Hall at the raised level. The level and the form of the arch suggest a late medieval date. Was it one of the measures taken by Edward IV while revamping the Great Tower? It seems clear from the reference to 'Caves' in the 1620s that the floor had already been raised by the 17th century.

The current entrance to the AV room is effectively a large porch and it is possible that its upper floor contained a small chapel. Henry III apparently had an oratory over his porch and in Bereblock's view the upper floor is lit by the three-light window whereas other windows in the hall and associated buildings had only two lights. There are no indications now how this oratory was reached from below or how the upper floor was supported.

By the time Bereblock produced his drawing of the castle in c 1570, the access to the hall from the Great Tower was via a long pentice running towards the western end of the building. Bereblock's reliability makes his drawing a challenging source to use, but there is evidence to support his depiction, at least in general terms. The most obvious observation about his drawing is that the pentice was very tall. Bereblock's command of perspective is clumsy, but there is physical evidence to confirm its height. Along the south-west face of the forebuilding there is a long, horizontal patch of flints between 4.2 and 4.5m above the present ground level. (Fig. 21) This seems to be for a repair caused by the removal of a horizontal structure, perhaps where the roof of the pentice was attached to the forebuilding. Projecting this line towards Arthur's Hall, this level equates roughly with the top of the 'buttress' on the north-west wall of the AV building.



Figure 21. Line of flints along face of Forebuilding of Great Tower



Figure 22. Sash window in Arthur's Hall showing surrounding patching where the window was inserted into a pre-existing wall

By the late 15th century the hall's floor could have already been raised and this new pentice created. The style of the façade of Arthur's Hall in Bereblock's view is generically late medieval, but today most of the wall seems to date from the mid-18th century barracks phase. However, internally the Georgian sash windows have obviously been inserted into the wall. (Fig. 22) One has rough jambs, patched in brick and both have patches beneath their sills to fill up where the openings have been gouged out of an existing wall. There is clearly a discrepancy between the inside face and the external face, except where the 13th-century fabric survives at the north-west end of the wall. What can be inferred is that the rest of the inner face seems to date from between the late Middle Ages and 1745-56, with the outer surface being substantially a mid-18th century refacing.

The top section of the main façade predates the mid-18th century, while the bottom part belongs to the 13th century and there are traces of another phase of construction in the south-west wall, sandwiched between. (Fig. 23) This is most obvious to the left (south-east) of the current door, just below the modern walkway. A short stretch of wall, three courses high, is slightly thicker than the later walling above. Is this the only trace that has survived of Edward IV's work on the buildings?



Figure 23. Layers of fabric from different phases, in the south-west wall of Arthur's Hall. Some 13th-century fabric at base (green), with three courses of possible 15th-century stonework above

POST-MEDIEVAL ADAPTATION INTO BARRACKS

In the mid-18th century a series of barracks buildings for officers and ordinary soldiers were created around the inside of the Inner Bailey, through a mixture of new building and adapting existing buildings. Statham writing at the end of the 19th century concluded, erroneously, that 'These buildings were converted into barracks in 1745, and the alterations then made were so extensive as to amount to an entirely new construction.'³⁰ To cover the haphazard assortment of structures, a uniform external finish was employed in which the joints in the fabric were treated with galetting. Where the external face of a wall was new, usually coursed stone was employed, but where older fabric was being employed without being refaced, the existing rubble was tidied up. The south-west façade of Arthur's Hall exemplifies this twin-track approach, with the north-western end having rubble while the refaced section of the wall was coursed. (Fig. 24)



Figure 24. External face of south-west wall of Arthur's Hall. Coursed fabric to right, rubble to left

A major change to Arthur's Hall in the 18th century was the insertion of a floor to create two stories. The present roof structure consists of two pitched roofs with a central valley. (Fig. 25) The valley is carried on a line of central posts. The roof form is not visible from inside the upper storey. However, inside the upper storey of the AV room the roof

has kingposts with expanded bases and is wholly of pegged construction, suggesting it could date from the conversion into barracks. More discussion of the conversion into barracks is contained in the report on the development of the Inner Bailey.³¹



Figure 25. Upper barracks floor of Arthur's Hall

CONCLUSION

Arthur's Hall is the centrepiece of the range of buildings running along the south-east side of the Inner Bailey. The traditional story of the development of this building, as revealed in documentary sources, is of a new hall built in the late 1230s and ready for use by 1240. This is the date of much of the fabric of the building, but in the south-east wall, above the arches of the service doors, there are the remains of an arch from an earlier phase. This demonstrates that some building activity took place in this area before the 1230s and 40s, although the form of the building is unclear. In the north-east corner of Arthur's Hall the floor is interrupted as if this was the site, or the intended site, of a substantial stair up to the ramparts of the Inner Bailey. Excavations have revealed a stub of a wall projecting a short distance into Arthur's Hall, where the front of the dais of the mid-13th century hall was located. This wall may be the remains of an earlier wall across the site, but is more likely to be related to a structure housing a pentice outside Arthur's Hall.

The new hall, built by Henry III (1216-72), has retained its three lower-end service doorways. There is also scarring, in the side wall, where the doorway into the cross passage from the Inner Bailey survives. At the upper end, in the south-west wall there is the remains of a tall door from the front of the dais out into the Inner Bailey. This may have opened into a pentice that ran north-westwards to the King's chamber. The sill of the door is not at floor level, but 0.48m above the current level, approximately 0.6m above the floor in Henry III's time. This apparent anomaly is actually evidence for the existence of the dais at the upper end.

Documentary evidence of regular repairs reveals that Arthur's Hall remained in use, and largely unaltered, through much of the Middle Ages. However, Bereblock's engraving of c 1570 suggests that it had been provided with a new façade, and stratigraphic evidence for floor levels in the front wall suggests that the floor was raised, perhaps twice, by the 16th century. Arthur's Hall remained a significant building until the 17th century, but its current appearance is a result of a programme to create barracks in the 1740s. The hall was divided into two floors, a new roof was built and new windows and doorways were inserted into the pre-existing walls. Externally much of the building was refaced. Today the 18th century ground floor has been replaced by a walkway, and in 2010 Arthur's Hall became the introductory exhibition space for visitors to the Great Tower.

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ENDNOTES

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