

# 3

## BODIAM CASTLE: A NEW SURVEY OF THE INTERIOR

*Catriona Cooper, Penny Copeland, Matthew Johnson<sup>1</sup>*

**Abstract.** This chapter discusses the form and interpretation of the internal layout of Bodiam Castle, East Sussex, England. It first reviews previous work before presenting new plans based on a detailed total station survey of the castle interior. The interpretation of the internal form of the castle is reassessed in the light of this new plan. We draw attention to the evidence for changes of mind and other inconsistencies behind what at first sight is a very regular layout. We go on to discuss the implications of Bodiam for wider interpretation of later medieval domestic spaces.

### Introduction

Bodiam Castle is one of the most famous and extensively discussed medieval buildings in Europe (Clark 1884: 239-47; Sands 1903; Thompson 1912: 322-7; Simpson 1931; Hohler 1966; Turner 1986; Coulson 1992; Goodall 1998b and Johnson 2002: 19-33, are a very few salient references in a vast literature). The nature and form of its external defences, and the nature of the landscape features around it, have been the topic of seemingly endless debate (Taylor *et al.* 1990; Johnson 2002; Liddiard & Williamson 2008; see also Whittick 1993). A striking omission from much of this discussion, however, has been the interior of the castle. Many scholars have concentrated on the landscape setting of the castle, and the impression conveyed by its external façades. Ironically, Bodiam has been treated rather as traditional architectural historians might approach a Classical building, in which an appreciation of the form and composition of the external façades has taken precedence over an understanding of the internal spaces. One of the purposes of this chapter is very simple: to remind scholars that whatever the debates over the landscape setting

of Bodiam and the wider interpretation of the castle's function, there is an interesting and complex domestic building here to be explored (Fig. 3.1), whatever one's view of its external walls and towers.

This chapter will first review previous interpretations of the interior of Bodiam, and evaluate issues in understanding it arising from later modifications and restoration activity. It will then present a new survey of the interior and discuss its implications. We highlight irregularities and evidence for changes of mind in the construction of a building that appears highly regular and symmetrical at first sight, and go on to discuss a number of interpretive issues that the building raises.

The introduction to this volume stressed the importance of lived experience in understanding the late medieval buildings discussed in this monograph. In our discussion of Bodiam, below, we suggest that an understanding of this and other late medieval buildings based exclusively on the plan view, and on stylistic and typological comparison with other buildings, is not the whole story. Discussions of the evolution of different plan forms need to be complemented by a more holistic, human understanding of space. Catriona Cooper will discuss these issues more fully with reference to her work on lived experience and digital technologies in Chapter Nine.

---

<sup>1</sup> Catriona Cooper and Penny Copeland undertook the survey reported on here, together with James Miles. Cooper, Copeland and Johnson wrote and revised the text of the chapter together.

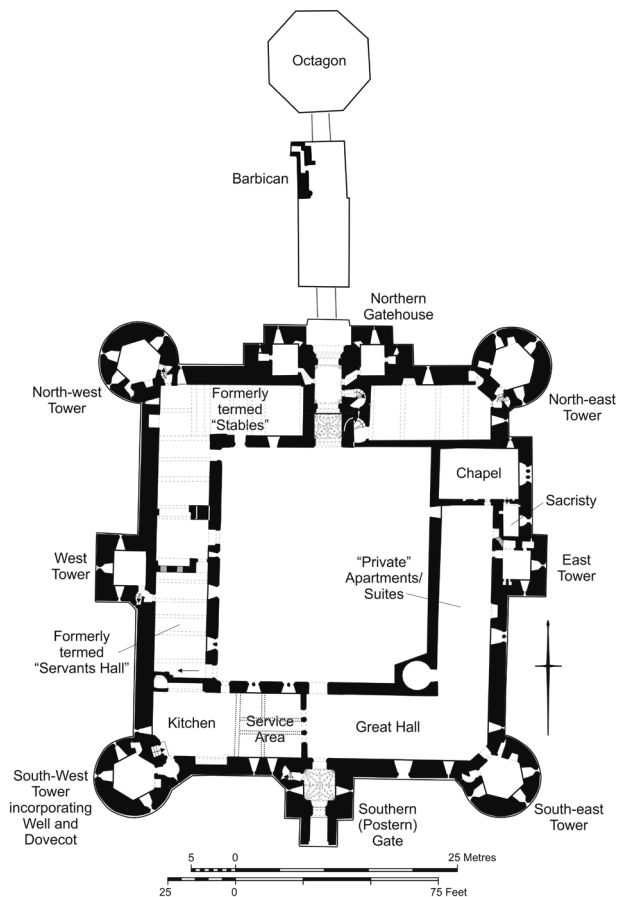


Fig. 3.1: Simplified plan of Bodiam Castle with key elements designated.

### Previous Interpretations

Though the interior of Bodiam has been generally less well discussed relative to the amount of ink spilt discussing its exterior, it is interesting that Bodiam has been the vehicle for two of the most famous examples of social interpretation in earlier generations. In the 1930s, Douglas Simpson discussed Bodiam as an example of his theory of 'bastard feudalism'. Simpson believed that late medieval castles were often garrisoned by paid mercenaries, and that the lord and household were almost as distrustful of their own unruly and potentially dangerous mercenaries as they were afraid of external attack. He interpreted the internal layout of late medieval castles, then, as one of division and segregation between the lord's family and household and what he saw as secondary and independent accommodation for mercenaries. At Bodiam, Simpson noted the (apparently) blank wall between kitchen and north range and saw it as just such an example of segregation, with the 'mercenaries' blocked from penetration into the kitchen-hall-upper suite (Simpson 1931; 1946). Though his views on bastard feudalism and segregation in buildings are

now completely out of favour, Simpson deserves credit for developing an early social interpretation of late medieval buildings based on an appreciation of the importance of spatial organisation.

In the 1960s, Patrick Faulkner also used Bodiam as a case study in a wider argument. In a seminal article, Faulkner used an early form of access diagram to illustrate the evolution of domestic planning in larger medieval buildings between the 12th and the 14th centuries (Faulkner 1963; Johnson 2012b; see Fig. 3.2). Faulkner pointed to the number and importance of lodgings in the later middle ages and talked of the multiple-household arrangement at Bolton, Bodiam and other buildings. We will look at the 'lodgings' at Bodiam more closely below.

Since Faulkner, there has been relatively little discussion of the interior of the castle. David Thackray and Nikolaus Pevsner both made brief comments in the guidebook and guide to Sussex respectively (Nairn & Pevsner 1965: 421; Thackray 1991: 42). John Goodall's comments on the interpretation of Bodiam in *The English Castle* say little about the interior, though they are accompanied by an impressive reconstruction drawing of the upper suite and do draw a key link with Edward III's work at Windsor (Goodall 2011: 314-7 and fig. 237). Charles Coulson assesses the building in terms of its degree of defensibility and makes remarks on its appearance and general aesthetics, but does not engage in detail with its internal layout (1992). Anthony Emery's gazetteer entry on Bodiam in his *Greater Medieval Houses* refers students to wider debates over the castle, again without closely discussing its internal organisation (Emery 2006: 317).

### Measured and Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) Survey

The standing building survey presented here is the result of a total of six weeks' intensive survey of the interior of the castle by Catriona Cooper and Penny Copeland, as well as James Miles, of the University of Southampton, under the direction of Matthew Johnson, latterly of Northwestern University (Fig. 3.3). The team was assisted by various undergraduate students. Work was spread over three seasons in 2010, 2011 and 2012, at the end of which the building had been viewed in different lights, at different times of the day and in both spring and late summer. During the process, a number of different experts on medieval buildings visited and offered their views on our provisional interpretations. At the end of the process Cooper and Copeland had developed a close eye for original medieval fabric versus post-medieval restoration.

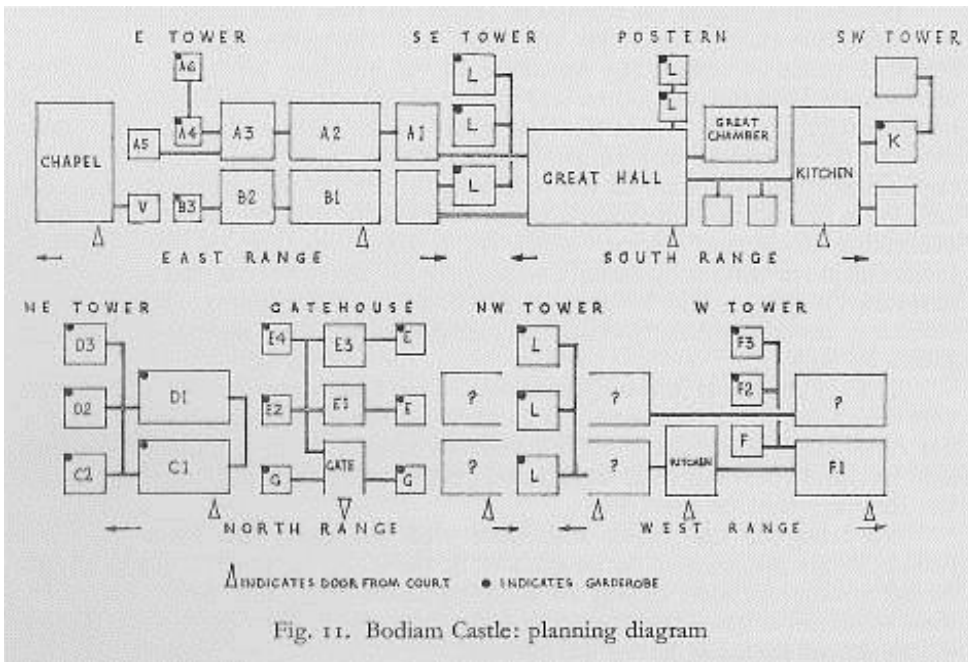


Fig. 3.2: Faulkner's access diagram (after Faulkner 1963, fig. 11).

The equipment used was a Leica reflectorless total station. TheoLt, a programme to download the data straight into AutoCad software, was used, so that the plans and drawings could be visualised instantly on screen as the work progressed. Two teams of three to four students and staff worked simultaneously. The drawings were then manipulated to produce the two-dimensional plans and elevations reproduced here; the final versions were then edited in CorelDraw. The AutoCad data was also used by Cooper to create visualisations in 3DSMax, which we discuss below.

Though perhaps more than 95% of the castle was examined in detail, it was not possible to gain access to all areas due to health and safety considerations (for example in the eastern part of the northern gatehouse). The restrictions on space in many of the small corridors and latrines made it impossible to carry the total station survey through to these areas and in these instances, measured survey was carried out on paper (Figs 3.4-3.8).

A GPR survey was also carried out of all areas of the castle interior where survey was feasible. Initial survey was carried out in 2010, directed by Kris Strutt. The team returned in 2016 to resurvey the area, and the results of this latter survey are presented in Figs 3.9 and 3.10, and are discussed below. A more detailed account and interpretation of the survey results is on file with Historic England.

In its latter stages, the survey and interpretation of the castle was helped considerably by the input of Paul Drury and his team, who undertook their own

survey of the building including elevations of the principal façades as part of their research for the 2016 Conservation Management Plan at Bodiam (Drury & Copeman 2016). We thank Paul and his team for



Fig. 3.3: Students from Southampton and Northwestern Universities at work. Photo by Matthew Johnson.

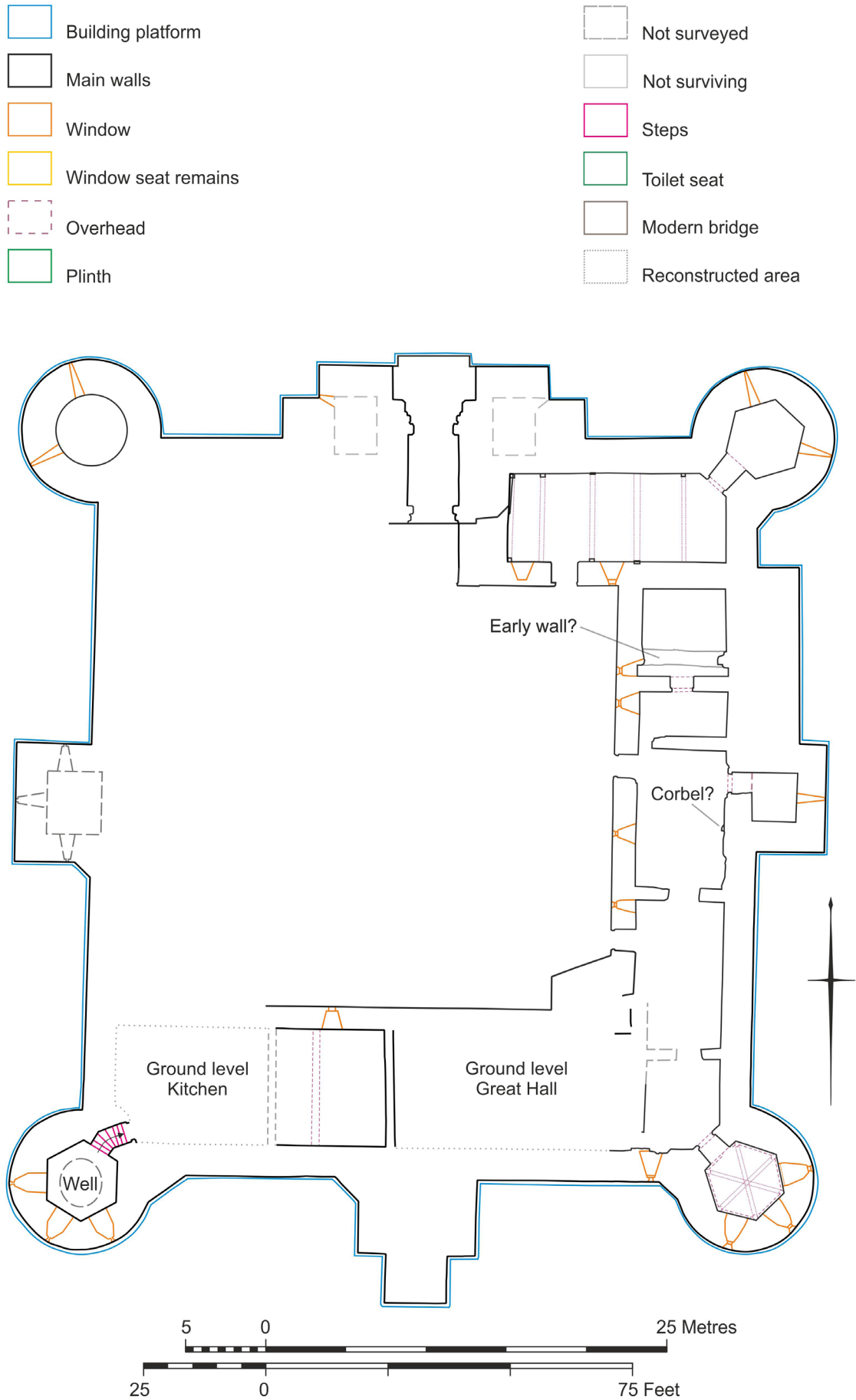


Fig. 3.4: Bodiam Castle, basement plan.

BODIAM CASTLE: A NEW SURVEY OF THE INTERIOR

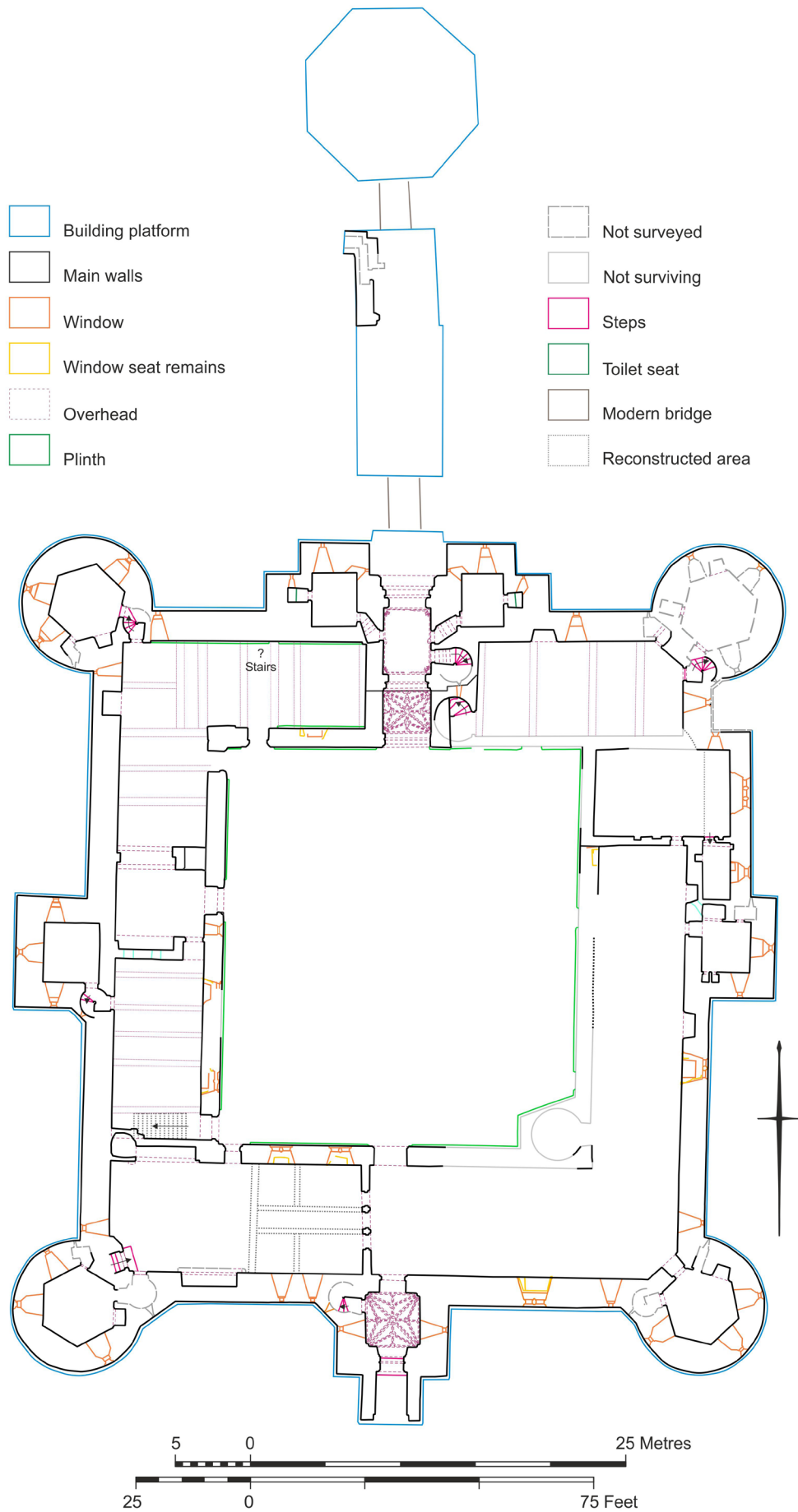




Fig. 3.5: Bodiam Castle, ground floor plan.

LIVED EXPERIENCE IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

- |   |                     |   |                    |
|---|---------------------|---|--------------------|
|  | Building platform   |  | Not surveyed       |
|  | Main walls          |  | Not surviving      |
|  | Window              |  | Steps              |
|  | Window seat remains |  | Toilet seat        |
|  | Overhead            |  | Modern bridge      |
|  | Plinth              |  | Reconstructed area |

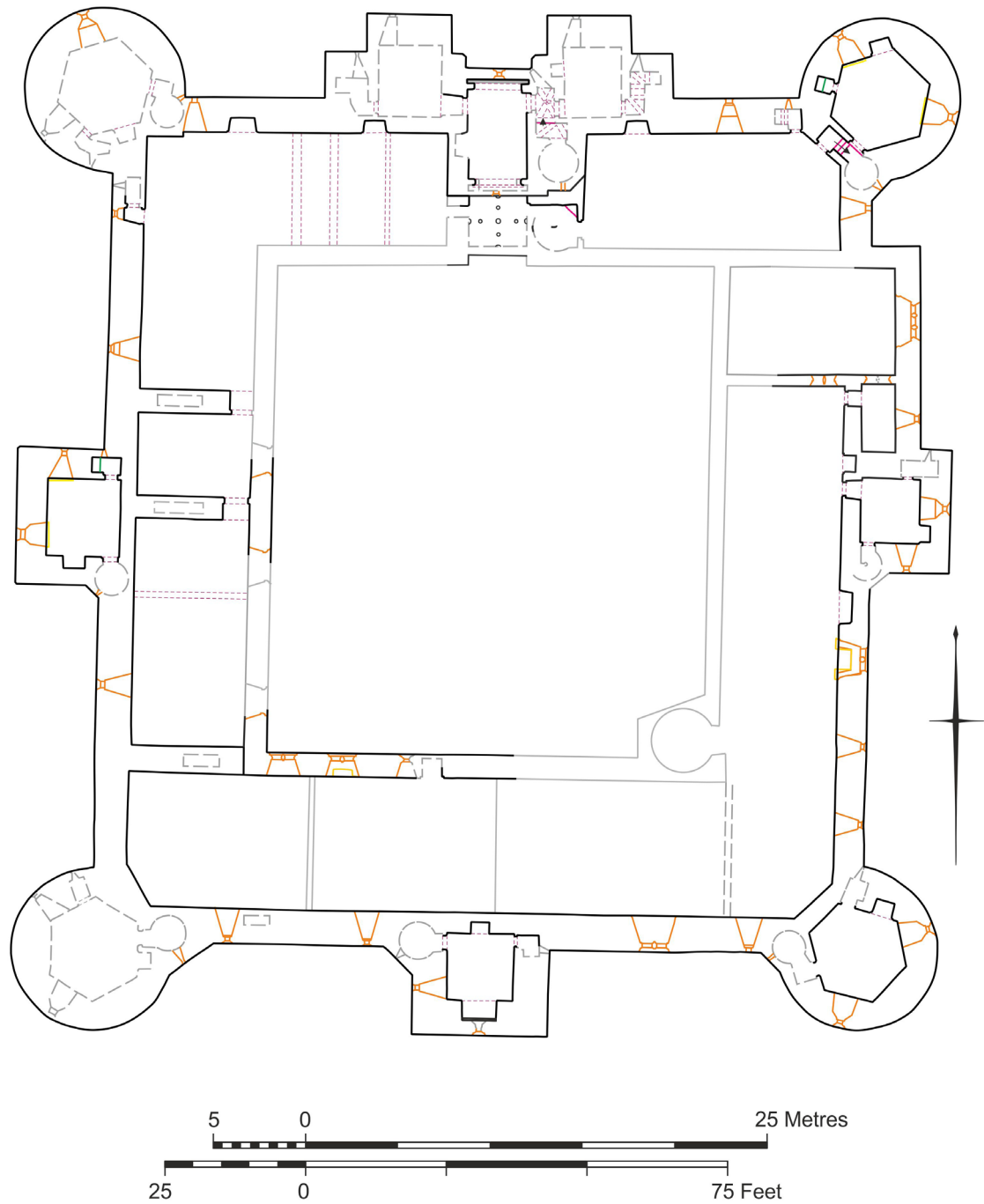



Fig. 3.6: Bodiam Castle, upper floor plan.

BODIAM CASTLE: A NEW SURVEY OF THE INTERIOR

- |   |                     |   |                    |
|---|---------------------|---|--------------------|
|  | Building platform   |  | Not surveyed       |
|  | Main walls          |  | Not surviving      |
|  | Window              |  | Steps              |
|  | Window seat remains |  | Toilet seat        |
|  | Overhead            |  | Modern bridge      |
|  | Plinth              |  | Reconstructed area |

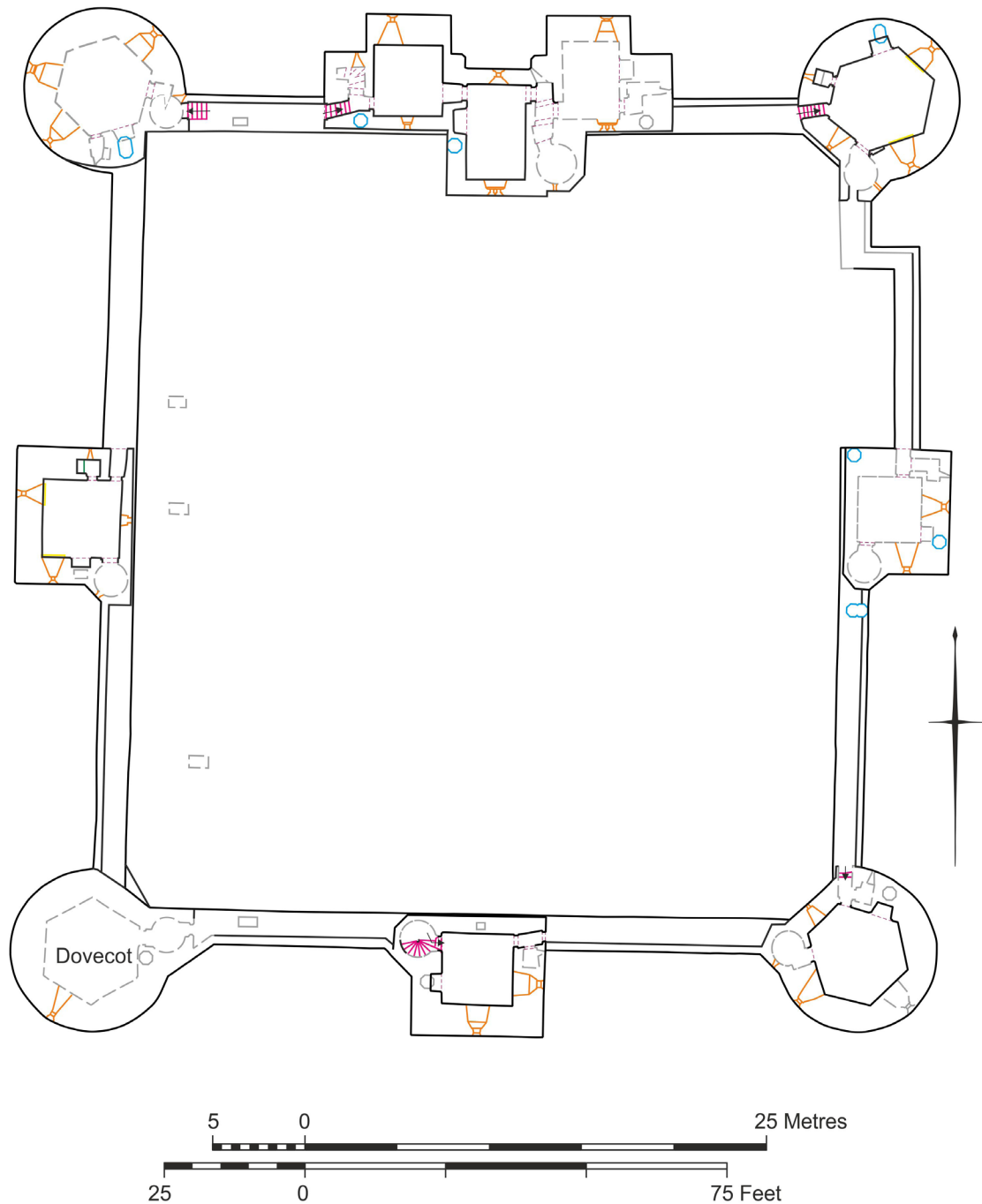
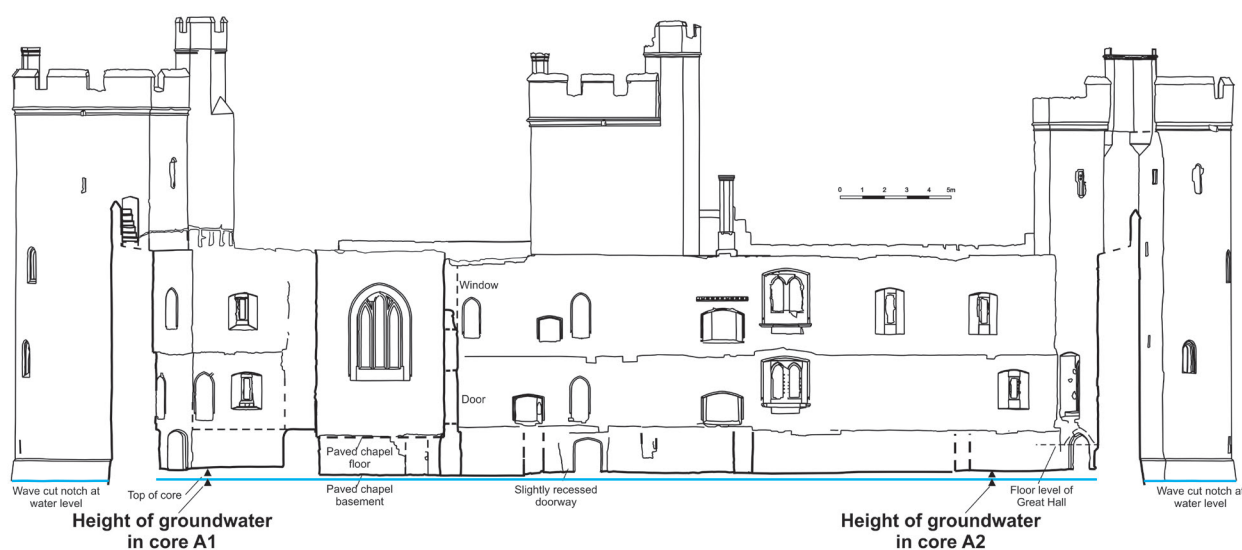


Fig. 3.7: Bodiam Castle, upper chambers plan.



*Fig. 3.8: Elevation of east curtain wall, as seen from the courtyard looking east.*

their collegiate attitude in sharing their work and in comparing notes on different aspects of the building.

In what follows we describe the castle closely. The reader may find it helpful to consult with Fig. 3.1, a simplified plan of the castle with key elements designated. To be clear about terminology: all the main ranges have at least two floors which we designate ground floor and upper floor, following the British system. There are basements underneath the ground floor on the eastern and southern sides of the buildings (see Fig. 3.4). The towers all have a chamber above the upper floor of the main ranges.

### Post-Medieval Use and Restoration

As is characteristic of so many medieval ruins, the fabric of Bodiam was altered in the course of 'restoration' in the 19th to 20th centuries, and these alterations need to be mentally peeled away before an assessment of the medieval fabric can begin. Eighteenth-century watercolours on display at the castle today show the castle in decay, with a small cottage built up against the ruined south range and vegetable gardens in the courtyard (see Chapter Five). Close inspection of the watercolours indicates that this cottage did not simply occupy the space of the former hall; it extended forward into the courtyard, and its rooms possibly extended back into the postern tower. Evidence for this cottage was found in excavations in this area (Barber 2007a); it is visible in joist holes surviving in the masonry above the northern cross-passage door, and also a blocked hole indicating a fireplace in the postern tower that has been opened and reblocked. Pollen evidence from cores taken in the inner courtyard confirms the watercolours' impression of tilled gardens adjoining this cottage (Scaife 2013; see

also Chapter Five). There is also evidence in many of the tower rooms of inserted floors to provide more space (Fig. 3.11). It could be related to agricultural storage but when and why this was done is not clear.

It is known that John 'Mad Jack' Fuller bought the castle to save it from destruction in 1829, and that Fuller spent considerable sums on the estate as a whole (Curzon 1926: 48; Thackray 1991: 26-7; Holland 2011). The nature and extent of Fuller's work on the fabric of the castle itself, however, is quite unclear.

George Cubitt also engaged in restoration work following his purchase of the castle in 1864 but the best known of these restorations is Lord Curzon's work in the years before 1921. Curzon also makes reference in his publication to the earlier work of Cubitt. According to Curzon (1926: 83-4), Cubitt emptied the moat to recover fallen stones and restored them to their (presumed) correct location on the battlements. He also strengthened the foundations of the castle with sandstone and concrete. Cubitt did extensive repairs to the south-west and postern towers, including roofing the postern tower so that views could be taken in from its battlements, and commissioned measured drawings by Tavernor Perry (Curzon 1926: 18, 84), which are of a high quality for their time (Fig. 3.12).

Curzon's work included draining the moat, dredging the outer areas, recording the foundation timbers for the bridges, and doing more work in lifting fallen stones from the moat and strengthening the foundations; his concrete 'apron' or render to the plinth is visible when the level of the moat is low (Fig. 3.13). Curzon also discovered and emptied the well in the south-west tower,



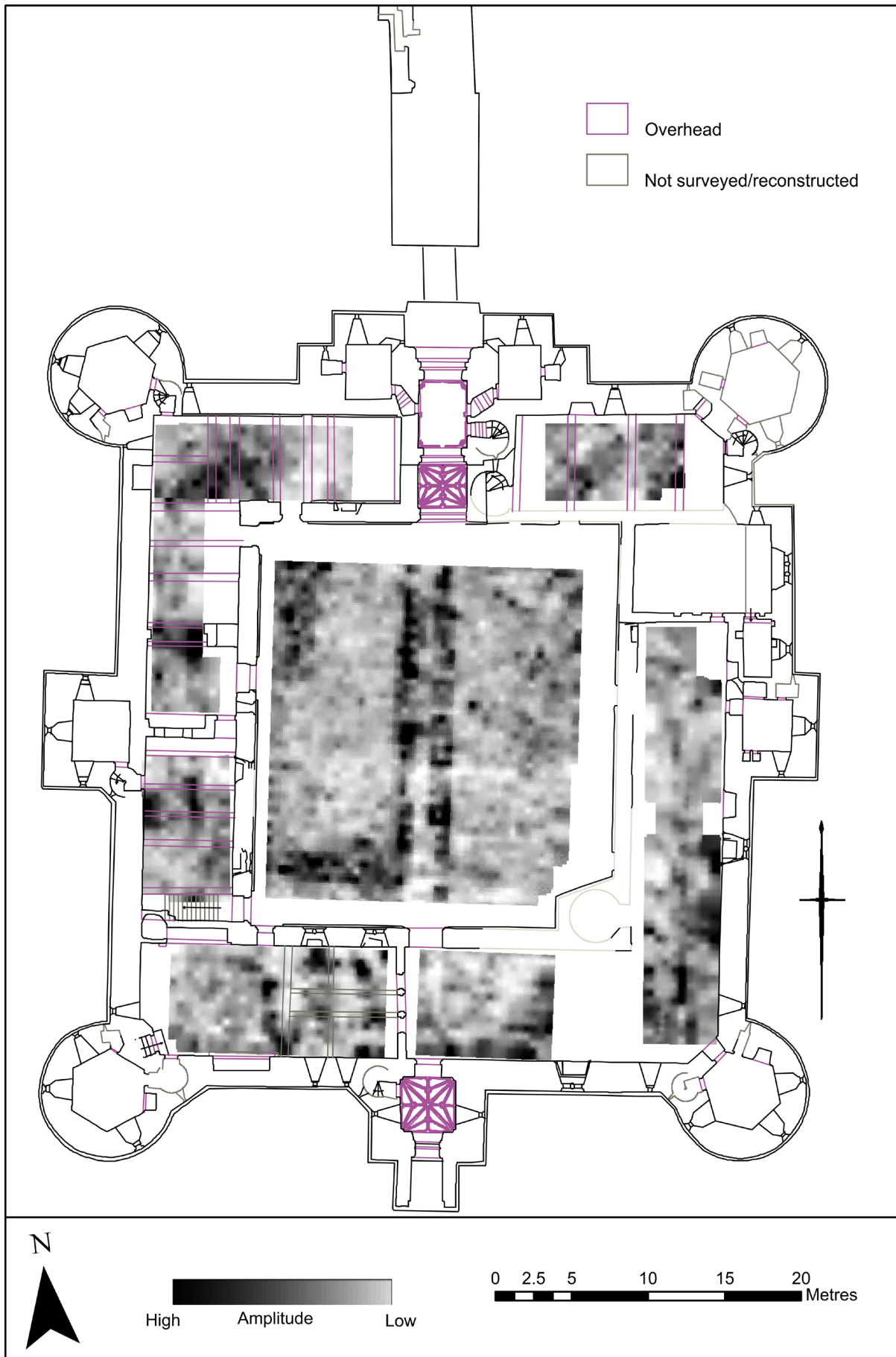


Fig. 3.9: Bodiam Castle, GPR results.

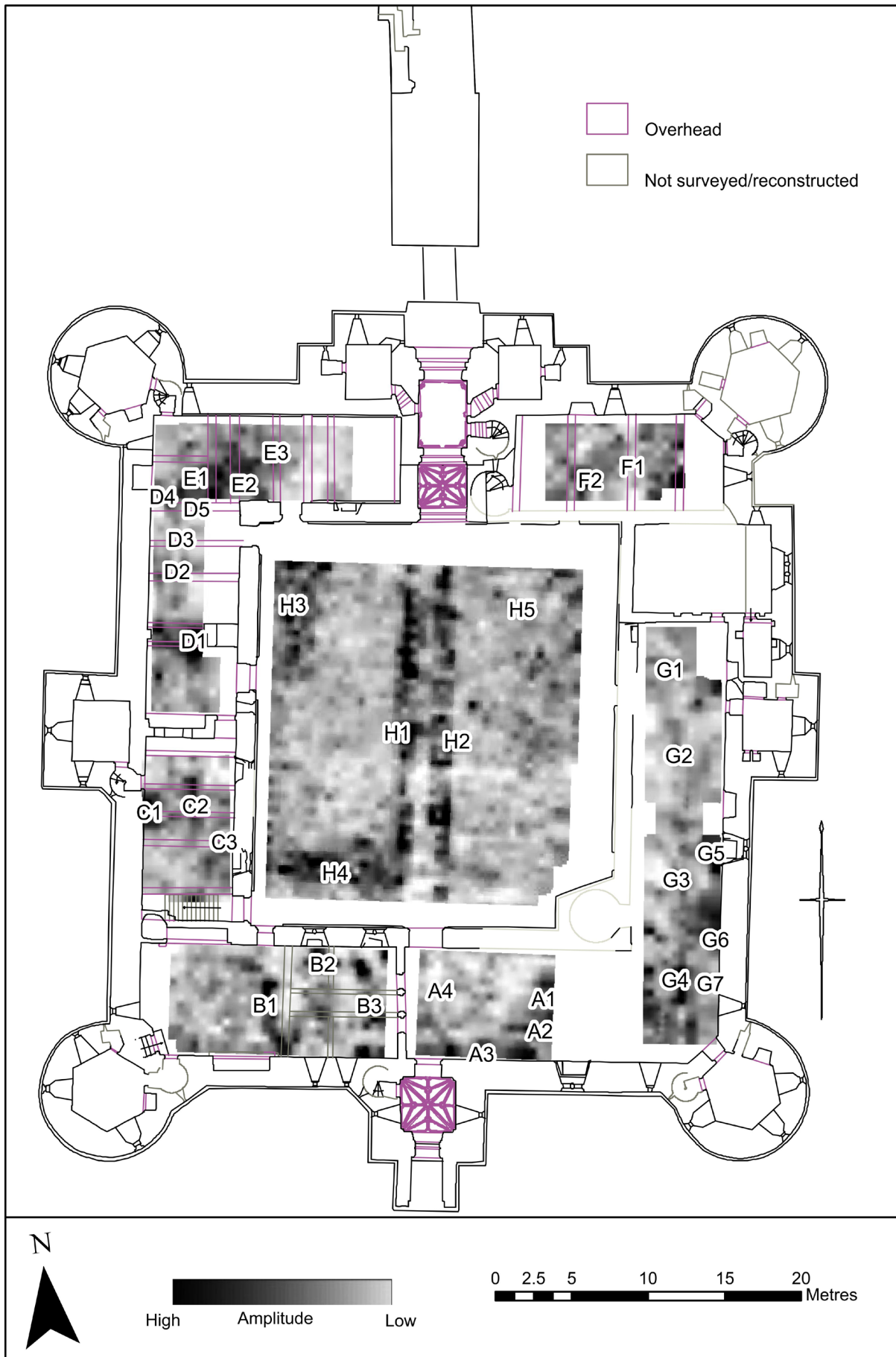


Fig. 3.10: Bodiam Castle GPR results, with key added.



Fig. 3.11: Evidence for inserted floors, western ground floor room of gatehouse. Photo by Penny Copeland.



Fig. 3.13: Curzon's render to the plinth or 'apron'. Photo by Penny Copeland.

strengthening the wall of the tower which in places only survived to a thickness of one stone. He cleared out fallen debris and trees from the interior of the castle, clearing the basements in the process. The courtyard was laid to lawns at this time. The central north-south pathway would have been relaid, but Lambert's 1780s drawing suggests it was done so along an earlier line; the GPR results show the feature running to a great depth, perhaps indicating that it is of some antiquity (Fig. 3.10, H1 & H2).

It is not always easy to distinguish Curzon and Cubitt's work from the original medieval fabric, particularly as original stone was reused and subsequent repointing has concealed changes in mortar. Although the outer walls stand nearly or completely to their full height, the ruinous state of the internal walls hampers

interpretation. Much of the battlements are missing, and where they appear complete, they may well be reconstructions following the salvage of stones from the moat during Cubitt's and Curzon's dredging.

Close observation of the fabric has led us to conclude that there are a number of areas which are most likely to be the work of Fuller, Cubitt and Curzon. The most obvious area is the supporting of the inner cell of the northern gatehouse on the east side (Fig. 3.14). The buttressing wall thickening was built over a spiral staircase and probably uses stone from the first floor of the gatehouse. Obvious restoration was also observed in the large fireplaces in the west range where the openings or chimney walls have been supported by stone voussoirs. In the wall above the window of the great hall very large blocks can be observed which appear out of place. On

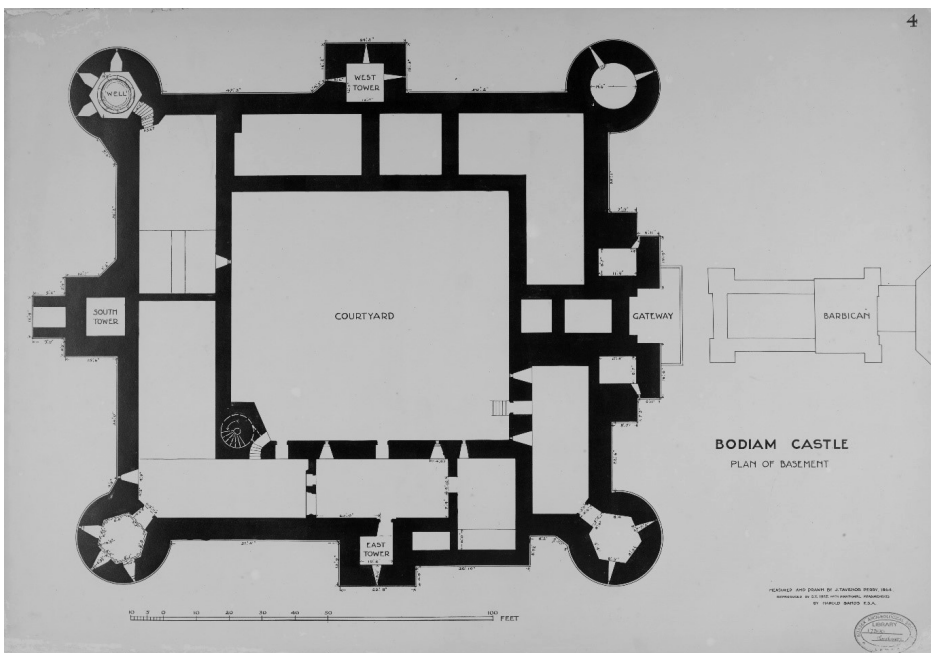


Fig. 3.12: One of Tavernor Perry's drawings, commissioned by Lord Curzon in the 1920s.



Fig. 3.14: Buttress against gatehouse, built up against stair to reach chamber. Photo by Penny Copeland.

the same elevation, the wall above the pantry and buttery around one of the windows appears to have been rebuilt using slightly irregular, less prepared, smaller stones. It is also clear that part of the courtyard wall of the east range has been substantially rebuilt, and this may account for discrepancies in the basement plan of this area between Tavernor Perry in 1864 and the present location of one of the windows. Finally, it seems likely that Fuller is responsible for the roofing over of the postern gatehouse vaulting. There is surviving evidence in the first floor room of lead flashing being pinned to the wall, close to floor level and sloping towards the portcullis grating. This entailed cutting the usual groove in the wall, including through a chamfer stop. The location of the iron pegs also suggests it may have happened when the fireplace was blocked on the inside.

The castle has been in the National Trust's custodianship since Curzon's death in 1925 and much of the work carried out to make the castle accessible and safe for visitors is clearly identifiable, for example the new stairs installed in the chapel since our work commenced in 2010, and the concrete roofs on the towers, dated 1962. Other work is not so obvious or so easily dateable. However, sufficient fabric exists to indicate the nature of much of the late 14th-century interior. First, the nature of interior spaces is indicated by the

presence of fenestration and other piercing of the largely surviving external walls. To clarify, external walls are pierced by, for example, the window lighting the upper end of the hall, windows with window seats for the private apartments and other spaces, doorways into towers and so on. Second, interpretation is helped by the abandonment of Bodiam as a dwelling in the 17th century, and the consequent absence of later structural changes during the life of the castle as a residence that might have obscured or destroyed original detail.

### Bodiam 1400-1650

As just noted, there are relatively few changes to the internal fabric of Bodiam that can be dated between the initial build of the 1380s and the abandonment of the building in the 17th century. There is relatively little information on the history and occupation of the castle after the 1380s. The castle passed to the Lewknors in the later 15th century, where the ownership was split among the family until the 1630s when it was united under the Earls of Thanet (Johnson *et al.* 2000: 36). It was probably finally abandoned in the 17th century having quickly changed hands during the Civil War; there is no secure date for this abandonment, but it is perhaps revealing that much of the most visible post-abandonment graffiti in the castle dates to the later 17th century (Cooper 2010). The partial dismantling of the castle interior has been attributed to Nathaniel Powell around 1645, who was building his own house at Ewhurst Place (Johnson *et al.* 2000: 34-9); however, that house is principally built of brick, and it is perhaps more likely that stone went to the early 17th-century rebuilding of Court Lodge (see Chapter Four). The GPR results indicate areas of possible demolition debris in the courtyard (Fig. 3.10, H2, H4 and possibly H5, though this last may alternatively indicate a drain). There is heavy wear on most of the treads of staircases in the castle, and numerous examples of knife sharpening wear on fireplaces, but it is unclear precisely how much of a period of use this wear might indicate.

There appears to be a complex arrangement of fireplaces in the partition walls of the west range; the GPR survey also indicated a series of anomalies in this area that are difficult to explain (Fig. 3.10, C1-C3, with D1 a possible hearth and D2-D5). It has been assumed in the past that this whole area in the western range of the castle is best interpreted in terms of a sequence of changes that were 15th or 16th century in date (for example Goodall 2001). The southern fireplace may have been reduced in size and then shifted in orientation, so that the opening faced north rather than south. It is noteworthy that knife sharpening had



*Fig. 3.15: Southern cross wall of western range showing relieving arch and flue or stoke holes. A further retaining arch is visible on the northern side. Note knife sharpening effect on doorway. Photo by Penny Copeland.*

taken place on the door jamb in that room; such marks are more commonly found on or next to fireplaces (see Fig. 3.15). The GPR results (Fig. 3.10, D1) appear to show that the northern fireplace had a backing wall to the south suggesting the hearth opened to the north, presumably the earliest arrangement. There is also a door immediately to the east of this fireplace that has been blocked. The date of this blocking is uncertain but there is no indication of a door on Cubitt's plan so it must have been early. However, Paul Drury believes that although the fabric in this area dates from a late period of primary construction, it is not a much later phase, noting that the hearths are integral with the cross walls.

Having discussed later alterations and restoration activity, we can now turn to the surviving remains of the building as it was first constructed in the 1380s.

### **Building Irregularities**

Over the last two decades, the use of advanced survey techniques on high-status medieval buildings, combined with close and informed observation of medieval fabric, has produced new understandings. In particular, evidence has been found of unexpected changes of mind, conflict between builder and client, and other irregularities and anomalies (for example Dixon & Marshall 1993a; 1993b; Impey 2008). Bodiam is no exception. At first sight, it appears to be a single-phase structure of remarkably regular plan with an overall impression of symmetry. However, when one starts to look at the details, a series of anomalies reveal a more complex picture – a picture of builders and owners changing their mind, of different work patterns, of mistakes and changes in alignment – a picture that raises issues in its turn of landscapes of work and lived experience.

We will first list the most significant of these irregularities, working round the castle from the gatehouse in a clockwise fashion, before discussing their interpretation.

#### *Northern gatehouse*

It is well known that the rear of the gatehouse incorporates changes of mind, apparently towards the close of the building campaign. The rear, southern, chamber of the gatehouse has a straight joint visible on the east and west sides to indicate that it has been added to the main structure at the front (Fig. 3.16). As a result, the chamber over the rear section is not connected to other chambers in the gatehouse, but is accessed independently from a separate staircase (Fig. 3.14). It is possible that this separate southern staircase gave access to the upper floor of the north-east range, and also, via the room above the southern gatehouse chamber, to the north-west range as well.

Less well known is the leafy boss (Fig. 3.17). This is the centrepiece of the vault in the narrow corridor linking the gatehouse stair to the first floor chamber over the gate passage and also to the chamber in its east tower; it was first pointed out to us by David and Barbara Martin. This boss is the only surviving piece of figurative sculpture in the whole building; Coulson has noted that the building as a whole is remarkably plain (1993: 76-7). There is an oral tradition that the boss has been moved to this location from the now-ruined barbican, where such a boss is visible in a watercolour of 1784 by S.H. Grimm. However the extant boss is carved as a single piece with four radiating ribs and looks particularly well built in to the surrounding stonework. The Grimm drawing shows the barbican boss with six radiating ribs which, if it is accurate, must rule out its identification with the extant boss. It is possible that there were further carved bosses in



*Fig. 3.16: West side of gatehouse showing the straight joint between the original and the southern sections. Photo by Matthew Johnson.*



*Fig. 3.17: Leafy boss in the first floor corridor of the gatehouse. Photos by Penny Copeland.*

the castle but apart from the south-eastern tower basement, there are no other surviving vaulted ceilings of a similar type, and although similar locations could have been used their vaulting generally consists of a series of substantial single ribs. The extant vaults in the north-western and southern gatehouses do not have bosses of a similar type. The boss appears to have been lime washed or some other application at some point but apart from the heraldry on the gates, which was presumably painted, there is no evidence anywhere in the castle for decorative paint, though there is pecking for plaster on many surfaces.

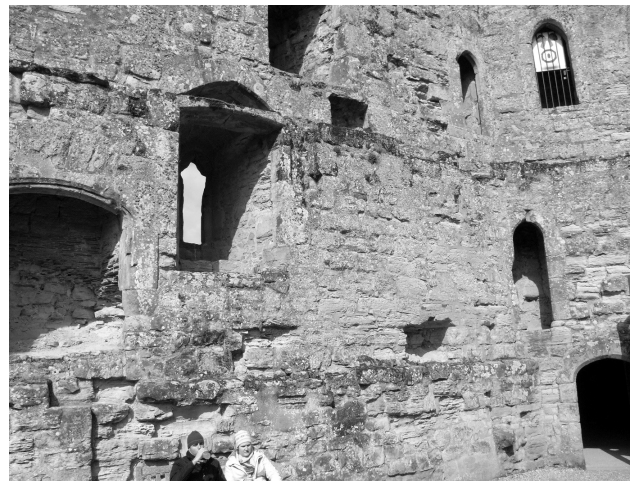
A further anomaly exists at basement level to the east of the gatehouse. What appears to be a small plinth



*Fig. 3.18: Plinth to the east of the gatehouse showing a slight misalignment reused to support a beam. Photo by Penny Copeland.*

protrudes from the northern half of the gatehouse, on a slightly different alignment from the wall above. A further small plinth protrudes at a lower level on the southern half of the gatehouse (Fig. 3.18). Both these plinths would be concealed on the western side if they exist, as there are no basements on this side. Neither of these plinths has corresponding features on other walls.

The small turret housing the newel staircase at the southern side of the gatehouse has a change in diameter close to the top of the tower rooms, reducing in size marginally at this point. This turret is anomalous in the design of the gatehouse as it is the only part with a string course. The south-east tower also has a definite change in the shape of its corresponding staircase turret where the diameter of the turret just below the string course increases noticeably.



*Fig. 3.19: Window in north-east range of unusual design. Photo by Penny Copeland.*



Fig. 3.20: Straight joint in external wall to east of gatehouse. Photo by Penny Copeland.

*North-east side of castle*

The curtain wall east of the gatehouse has fireplaces and windows consistent with lodgings over two storeys. However, there is one window that is anomalous (Fig. 3.19). Its apex is too high for the ceiling of the lower floor, and is also of a unique design within the building. A further window in the south side of the north-eastern range has the top of the window apparently above or very close to the floor level above. Unrelated to the window, there has been a possible subsequent insertion of a cross wall dividing up this range, indicated by a low amplitude trench in the GPR (Fig. 3.10, F1) running from north to south, lining up with a corbel and roof timber notch.

On the exterior wall between the gatehouse and the north-eastern tower there is a straight joint in the masonry (Fig. 3.20). This is probably no more than the result of masons working in different teams or in different building seasons but there may have been some ancient structural failure here as a crack seems to have been filled between seasons. There are stones above the crack which appear to be original but do not display signs of cracking.

In the topmost floor of the north-eastern tower, the location of the door onto the spiral staircase, close to the door onto the walkways, has resulted in the wall

having to be slightly recessed to allow the door to open. The recess is capped by a shouldered arch at a matching height to that of the adjacent window, making the recess a decorative feature while supporting the wall above (Fig. 3.21). This is strongly suggestive of a change of mind, perhaps for access to the stairwell.

*Eastern range*

The interpretation of the eastern range, particularly in the area of the chapel, the eastern tower and the adjacent areas, is particularly complex. There are a number of reasons for this. First, Paul Drury and his team have discovered that an earlier stone structure consisting of two rectangular cells is embedded in the lower levels of the east range, its north wall within what is now the chapel, its south wall running a little south of the western tower and its east and west walls embedded in the later castle walls (Drury & Copeman 2016, fig. 14). It is unclear how much earlier this structure is, and whether it relates to an earlier phase of occupation on the site; but it is probable that it dates to no more than a few years before the castle proper.

Second, there are indications of changes of mind during the early stages of castle construction. The external chapel and sacristy wall is on a slightly different alignment

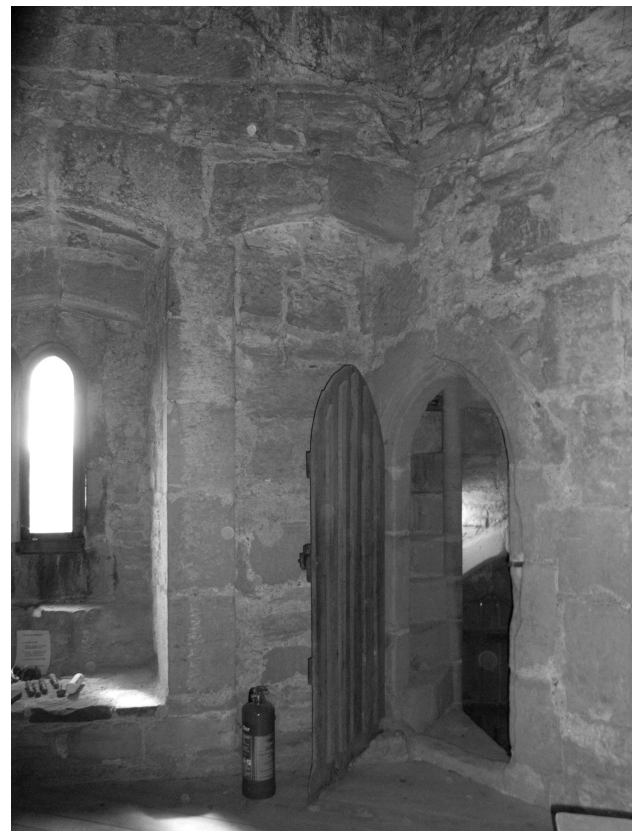


Fig. 3.21: Recess with lintel in wall of chamber floor of north-east tower. Photo by Penny Copeland.

to the rest of the east curtain wall, extending into the moat from the line of the curtain wall. The line of the main curtain wall appears to continue as the line of an internal wall through the basement of the chapel and the ground floor of the sacristy. This internal wall however is thinner than the other curtain walls of the castle, so the extension of the sacristy and chapel into the moat cannot be a later addition. A stub of a wall remains in the chapel basement which is too close to another wall to define a corridor or second room but which on Drury's analysis formed the north wall of the earlier structure (Fig. 3.22), removed when the south wall of the chapel basement was built. Curzon states clearly that foundations of this wall, over two feet thick, were found

*running parallel to the south wall of the nave and leaving a space or passage of about two feet between them. The wall appears to have been cut off where it abutted on to the retaining wall of the sanctuary and the west wall of the chapel*

(Curzon 1926: 103)

Interpretation of this area is hampered by Curzon's extensive restoration here.

The two doors on the south side of the chapel, giving access to the private apartments and the sacristy respectively, are on different levels (Fig. 3.22); the stairs up to the sacristy have been restored, probably by Curzon. A difference in level between the altar space and the rest of the chapel is to be expected, but the sacristy is on a third, higher level again. This means that the door leading into the sacristy is higher than the door leading into the apartments. It is an unusual arrangement, with the areas below the sacristy and the chancel altar of the chapel being the only 'dead' spaces in the castle, with no access and no apparent purpose.



Fig. 3.22: Differences in floor levels in the chapel. Photo by Penny Copeland.

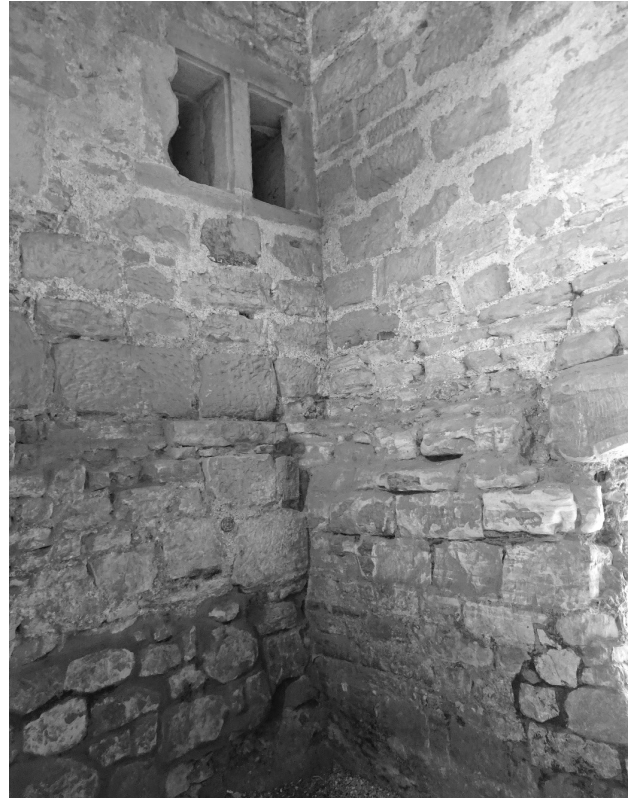


Fig. 3.23: Straight joint and rebuilt walls in basement level of east tower, also showing cupboards where stair access would normally be. Photo by Penny Copeland.

It is tempting to think that this dead space is due to the change in design once the new chapel arrangement had been proposed and the builders just trying to catch up.

The east tower is slightly north of where it should be to be precisely symmetrical with the west tower (see Figs 3.4-3.7). The interior of this tower shows many irregularities in construction (Fig. 3.23). At basement level, both inside and in the rooms outside the tower, the walls appear to have been reconstructed or thickened at a later date, so that the door to the tower is recessed. Entering the tower, the thicker, rougher wall continues around clockwise until it meets a straight joint in the south-west corner of the tower. Although this straight joint continues up to ground floor level, there has been some obvious rebuilding of the lower part of the west wall so interpretation is difficult. In the corner of the room above the basement is a pair of cupboards built into the thickness of the wall, with rebates for doors. The equivalent position on both the floors above is the doorway to a spiral staircase leading upwards. The lack of access to the stair at this point prohibits movement from ground to upper floor within these apartments. The cupboard is considerably shallower than the staircase suggesting a void or particularly thick wall behind it.

On the north side of the east tower at ground floor level there is now a doorway into a latrine. On closer





*Fig. 3.24: Fireplace in main range that connects through to east tower recess. Photo by Penny Copeland.*

inspection, the doorway replaces an earlier, now blocked, opening where the relieving arch survives in the same position to the window on the opposite wall. The position of the blocked window is such that it would have opened onto the thickness of the sacristy wall to its north. This is further evidence that the chapel is a later amendment. Externally, matters are further confused by the perfect course matching on the exterior stone between the tower and the chapel extension but the coursing is mismatched between the chapel and the east wall of the original build. Mismatched coursing is not unusual on the exterior face of the castle however, and should be considered the norm, and only the very lowest courses of the external castle walls are regularly bonded in at internal corners.

The fireplace heating the lower, inner room to the private apartments has an arch composed of tiles on its inner, southern face that now opens into the tower. From the apartment side, it looks like a bread oven framed with voussoir tiles (Fig. 3.24), but from the tower, it opens into a recess with a segmented arch above it; this segmented arch is of a similar form to relieving arches elsewhere in the castle. The purpose of this space remains uncertain but the connection is deliberate, and the recess has no flue so it is dependent on the connected fireplace for fuel such as charcoal.

Along the central part of the east range, it is noticeable that the wall surfaces are extremely poorly preserved, with no recognisable surface surviving. This is unusual within the castle and, together with a corbel, has suggested that there was stone vaulting here which has been robbed out. However, the floor level of the ground floor is easy to see and there is little height for such vaulting above the windows. It is possible therefore that some of the facing has been removed or sold off and the remainder of the damage is weathering.

To the north of the south-east tower the room east of the great hall is narrower than the rooms to the north - a clear change somewhere around the access to the spiral stair in the corner of the courtyard. There is no clear reason for this change in alignment, though it may be related to the width being defined by the masonry cross wall of the south range (that is, the wall behind the high end of the hall). It does suggest that the room dividing walls were not thought out at the same time as the external walls.

Above the basement level, there is almost no surviving evidence for room divisions in the upper floors of the east range, the only clues being the arrangement of the windows and doors. In other areas of the castle, there are mortices for beams or slots for roof supports but neither of these are clear here. The possible presence of a drain, indicated in the GPR results (Fig. 3.10, G2-G4) should also be noted here.

#### *Southern (postern) gatehouse*

In the upper floor chamber over the gatehouse, a pair of mortices in the southern wall, about 1.5 m above the present floor, might be made out. Copeland and Cooper interpret these as possible mortices for a drawbridge chain. Johnson is not persuaded that these mortices exist; it is certainly the case that if these really are mortices that were subsequently plugged, the plugging was done very neatly. Readers can make up their own minds (Fig. 3.25). There are also two mortices lower down in this wall, just above the present floor. These have been plugged with lead and stone, possibly at the same time the vaulting below was protected with a roof, an action we attributed above to Fuller.



*Fig. 3.25: Possible sites of mortices for drawbridge chain. Photo by Penny Copeland.*



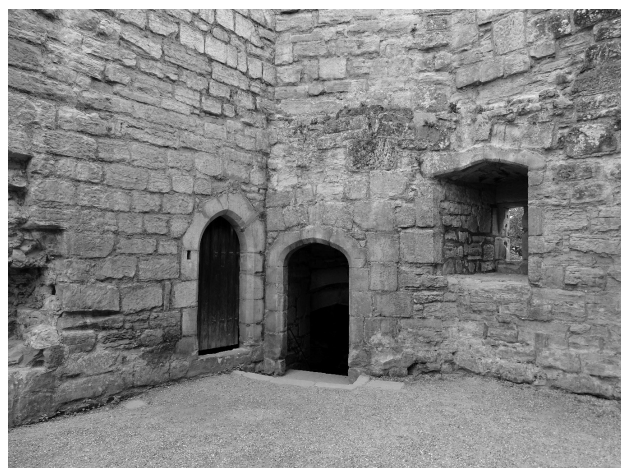
*Fig. 3.26: Window to basement of service range excavated by Curzon, also showing the substantial mortices for wall partitions. Photo by Penny Copeland.*

#### *The service range and south-west tower*

The northern wall of the service range (Fig. 3.26) features a small window which should give light onto a basement which Curzon is known to have excavated, and for which there is some evidence in the GPR results (Fig. 3.10, B1-B3). The height of the window would have overlapped with the floor level to either side if the floor in this area was not also raised over the basement. The height of the steps through the three doors in the cross-passage and large mortices in the walls suggest that the whole of the service end was raised over a basement, although the floor level in the kitchen itself appears to have been similar to the present day level.

There are a number of chamfer anomalies on the service and western range. For example, the door opening from the kitchen into the courtyard has a chamfer that is wider than the opening. The overlap is now visible on the west side but has been cunningly concealed to the east by small shaped stones. The southern, external face of the wall of the kitchen fireplace between the postern and the south-west tower has a straight joint visible and an irregular joint created by mismatched coursing. Like others in the building, this is probably no more than evidence for different masons' work or building seasons. The joints do not continue to the full height of the wall. The northern wall of the kitchen has a full height vertical straight joint meeting the corner of the internal courtyard wall. The corbelling of the fireplace suggests that it is part of the original design, so the joint is probably no more than an indication of the method of building.

The entrance to the chamber containing the well in the south-west tower protrudes slightly from the line of the wall above (Fig. 3.27). The first angle is almost



*Fig. 3.27: Kitchen layout showing the unusual ledge at upper floor level for a possible partition of the well and staircase areas. Note the difference in height and width between the staircase door and the well door. Photo by Penny Copeland.*

90 degrees from the south wall; it is then angled north-west to meet the west external wall. The wall above for the first floor has a single angle between the south and west walls, but the angle neither runs parallel to the tower or to either of the walls below. The change in angle of the first floor creates a ledge; however it is not clear what the ledge is for. The possibility that this supported a floor runs counter to the indication of the full height window and the assumption that the kitchen was two storeys high. There may have been a partition at this point with joists for a mezzanine resting on the ledge. A further detail of this area is the raised step into the staircase doorway next to the well. We can imagine the kitchen being mopped regularly and this raised step would have kept the water and grease out of the area. This might also explain the raised floor level in the pantry/buttery area.



*Fig. 3.28: Double latrine and window at northern end of western range with inconsistent chamfers. Photo by Penny Copeland.*

*Western range*

Another anomaly occurs in the window on the ground floor next to the double latrine towards the north end of the western range (Fig. 3.28). The chamfer above this window is of a standard type, stopping at a straight edge down. However, on the south side of the window, the outer edge of the jamb opening has been chamfered starting from the stone below the lintel. The north side is not chamfered. The double latrine, which is the only one in the castle, has a continuous chamfered opening on both sides and the top of the arch.

*North-west tower*

The north-west tower has an odd plan externally. Where the other towers have diagonal walls on the courtyard face, here there is an internal right angle, as if a 'bite' has been taken out of the plan. Just below parapet level on the east side of the tower above the wall-walk door, there is what appears to be a single corbel with no apparent function. The string course common to all towers without gates ends here just short of the corbel (Fig. 3.29). It is possible that the stones here were some of those replaced by Curzon, but there is no other indication of restoration at this point. A notch has been carved above this corbel, possibly to divert rainwater from its top, similar to treatment of chimneys against walls in other areas.

There is a straight joint between the north-west tower and the adjacent curtain wall, when observed internally, with the tower apparently built up against the wall. This may be another result of different masons' activities, particularly when it is considered in conjunction with the small but unique rebate with slight overhang/notch found where the northern elevation meets the north-western tower (Fig. 3.30).



*Fig. 3.29: Change from corbel to string course on the north-west tower. Photo by Penny Copeland.*



*Fig. 3.30: Possible straight joint between north-west tower and north wall. Photo by Penny Copeland.*

**The Building Process**

Many of these irregularities have no obvious or convincing explanation, but the following general comments can be offered. As seems to have been common practice with comparable buildings, the circuit of the outer curtain wall was largely built before the inner walls. It is most likely that building started around the northern gatehouse area and moved east and then south. Around the chapel/eastern tower area, before construction of the walls got beyond 2 m or so above ground level, the archaeological evidence suggests that there may have been a change of mind over the plan. If so, this change of mind was rapidly resolved and the building of the outer curtain wall continued, with some irregularities, around the south-west corner of the castle. At this point, that is with the outer walls built around to the south-west tower, the position of the upper chambers, hall, kitchen and latrines of the castle had all been thought out, as they were defined by the piercing of the hall and other windows, chimney flues and latrine chutes even if the inner walls were not yet in place. After this point in the building process the planning of the building becomes less integrated. The west curtain wall, and north wall west of the gatehouse, have few piercings and it is possible that the function of the western range had not been fully determined at

this point. Work then continued with construction of the inner walls. The problem with the inner walls and the need for an inner gatehouse became apparent very early. The completeness of the northern gatehouse before the inner gatehouse was added is apparent from the slit windows in the staircase on the first floor that were later concealed.

The change of mind over the chapel area was not the only design alteration during the building of the castle. There is evidence from the exterior of the castle that its design was changed either in the latter stages of the building campaign or immediately afterwards. Excavations by David Martin during draining and dredging of the moat in 1970 indicated that the stone causeway between the barbican and the main gate were inserted after the initial construction of a timber bridge. Martin noted 'evidence for a complete reorganisation of the main entrance layout soon after its initial construction', possibly due to problems with the functioning of the original bridge and drawbridge arrangements (1973: 17).

We can possibly attribute the change in style between the gatehouses with substantial machicolations and the towers with string courses but without machicolations to a change in design also. At neighbouring Scotney, built in the 1370s, the surviving corner tower is notable for its machicolated summit. We know that the north gatehouse at Bodiam was built early in the construction sequence and it seems possible that the unusual corbel on the north-west tower may be the point at which the design of the tower summits changed (Fig. 3.29).

The change in work between seasons is clearly visible in the stone work of the southern part of the east curtain wall (Fig. 3.31). The south-east tower has been completed up to the top of the ground floor window and the wall to the north is staggered downwards to a lower level. The top few courses are completed in smaller stones. When the next building season arrived, larger stones were used and had to be cut to shape over those in place. No attempt was made to continue a course.

The lack of surviving building accounts means that dating of the building campaign is not certain; the licence to crenellate of 1385 has no necessary relationship to the beginning, end or duration of building works. Whittick's assessment is that it probably marks the end of a campaign possibly stretching back to the late 1370s; Dallingridge was selling manors elsewhere in the country in the years before this, possibly to finance the building works (Johnson *et al.* 2000: 31). Drury on the other hand views it as likely that building started



*Fig. 3.31: Southern section of the east curtain wall showing different building seasons. Photo by Penny Copeland.*

later than this and continued into the early 1390s. The length of the building campaign can be estimated at five to ten years. The stylistic uniformity of the building is evidence for its rapid completion, and our general impression of the form and size of the pig joints suggest this also.

It is worth noting broadly that little attention has been paid to the economics of the castle-building process at Bodiam, as opposed to the supposedly defensive or display elements of the final product. The lack of building accounts also means that any assessment of the cost of the castle must be an estimate. At the contemporary Cooling Castle, accounts for almost £600 survive and the whole building at Cooling may have cost over double this (Goodall 2011: 314). Bodiam castle is built of Wealden sandstone of generally good but occasionally variable quality (Fig. 3.20). The source is not certain but may well be from a quarry site some hundreds of metres to the north of the castle, where the sandstone ridge is close to the surface. Batches of highly variable quality were used; it would seem that a single quarry or outcrop produced batches of variable stone. There are twelve mason's marks described by Curzon (1926: 112) and we have observed at least another two.

### **Understanding the Bodiam Layout**

In its broader outlines, elements of the Bodiam plan are quite standard for a later 14th-century building. The plan is centred around a ground floor hall with 'private' suites of rooms coming out from its upper end and a service range beyond the cross-passage, with triple doors leading to buttery, pantry and kitchen (for comparable examples see Wood 1965, and for the development of this plan see Gardiner 2000 and Johnson 2010b: 68-77). Other elements of the plan –

gatehouse, chapel, lodgings – are also to be found in most houses of similar date and social standing. There are however several elements of the Bodiam layout that are worth commenting on.

*'Regularity' and integrated nature of the plan*

As noted above, there are irregularities and apparent changes of mind in different elements of the castle. Nevertheless, the final result is a tightly integrated building, particularly on the east and south ranges of the castle. The plan is oriented to the cardinal points with a 1.2 degree of accuracy and the rectangle of the castle walls is almost perfect (Figs 3.4 & 3.5). Other later 14th-century buildings in south-east England are not so tightly integrated. The main domestic elements at Scotney lie in a solar-service range that runs across the middle of a roughly rhomboid enclosure with four corner towers, one of which survives. At Cooling the two courtyards cover a much larger area than at Bodiam; what remains of the curtain wall of the inner courtyard has few fenestrations and domestic buildings seem to have been built up against them. At Westenhanger the plan of the inner courtyard bears a superficial resemblance to Bodiam. Circular corner towers alternate with rectangular interval towers. However, the late medieval layout of Westenhanger is the result of piecemeal accretion rather than a single building campaign (Martin & Martin 2001).

In addition to the tightly integrated nature of the plan, the building is remarkably stylistically consistent. There is a range of different window and arch types including four-centred and segmented forms. Somebody standing in the inner courtyard at Bodiam would have been surrounded by ranges of doors and windows that would have been remarkably uniform. The most notable parallel here is Edward III's building in the upper court at Windsor, dating to the 1360s (Goodall 2011: 289). This building has a uniform and even monotonous series of very tall windows whose design and tracery are in the Perpendicular style. Goodall comments 'the regular proportions of the two-storey range enclosing the inner court are ultimately derived from the upper ward at Windsor'. The royal castle of Windsor is clearly a very different social level to Bodiam but the stylistic similarities are apparent. John Harvey has suggested that the design of Bodiam bears the influence of the architect/mason Henry Yevele. Yevele, like most master masons of his time, worked on a wide range of building projects from royal to gentry level and spanning both religious and domestic architecture (Harvey 1954: 358-66; Goodall 2011: 310-17).

On the other hand the uniformity of plan and architectural detail is less apparent on the west side of the building than on the east. The suite of private apartments of the hall clearly had a very regular design; the pattern of these designs is repeated in some elements on the west side. However, the west side is clearly not as regular, or at least is laid out to slightly different principles. The subsequent alterations on the west side make interpretation problematic here. In any case the inner walls are so ruinous as to make further comment difficult.

The closest parallels to the tightly integrated plan of Bodiam lie a little further afield: the later 14th-century castles of north-east England, particularly Wressle, Sheriff Hutton and Bolton. These castles were all of rectangular or subrectangular plan, they feature a multiplicity of lodgings, and the domestic ranges are integral to the external walls rather than simply being built up against them. Though their towers are rectangular or square rather than circular, they contain lodgings in a manner similar to Bodiam. Of these, Wressle and Sheriff Hutton were residences of the great Percy earls of Northumberland, but Bolton was built by Lord Scrope who was of a broadly comparable social standard to Dallingridge. Despite its bleak and imposing external appearance, and its lack of a moat and prominent gatehouse, the 'footprint' of Bolton is quite modest and of a comparable size to Bodiam.

*The western range*

The functions of the rooms in the west range of the castle remain uncertain. It was here that Douglas Simpson located accommodation for mercenaries, and following this line of thought, the southern room next to the kitchen has sometimes been misleadingly designated the 'servants' hall'. Though highly ruinous, enough remains of the inner walls to suggest that the fenestration and detailing of this part of the castle was conducted to the same integrated scheme as the rest, and with the same high standards of masonry and detailing. However, there are few windows piercing the western and north curtain walls, and the stairs on this side of the building are wooden flights rather than stone spirals. One possibility is that the intended function of this area may have been unclear to the builders as they constructed the outer circuit. (An alternative possibility is that windows were excluded from this area as being the area adjacent to high ground and therefore considered most vulnerable to attack, or more broadly that given that the west curtain wall faced higher ground and the north-west approach, this façade was intended to have a more severe appearance). This is, of course, the one area of the interior of the castle where there may have been substantial post-1380s changes.

It is perfectly possible that the service rooms with large fireplaces had a range of uses. The fireplaces are so large as to suggest a kitchen but this may be extended to a brewery, oast, laundry or light industrial use for example; magnetic anomalies found during geophysical work indicate that either iron or ceramic production took place in the area between the western edge of the castle moat and the eastern edge of the village tenements though the date of this activity is not clear (see Chapter Four for further discussion). The GPR results indicate a series of features in this area, including a possible drain, and deep hearth (Fig. 3.10, D3 and D1 respectively).

The north range west of the gatehouse has been identified as stables, and the position is at first sight a logical one. However the doorways appear to be too narrow for this purpose, and the plinths for a suspended floor argue against this, although GPR anomalies indicate possible subsurface drains both here and on the other side of the gatehouse (Fig. 3.10, E1-E3 & F2). Indications in the GPR results of foundations of a cross wall between 'stables' and western service range should also be noted here (D4 & D5). There is also evidence for a large window with a window seat (Fig. 3.32) – an unusual feature for a stable. If the stables are indeed not within the central court, they must be elsewhere, and we suggest below that they may have been sited on the ridge to the north as part of a detached 'base court'.

#### *Lack of a base court*

Bodiam is unusual in, apparently, lacking a base or lower court. Contemporary structures in south-east England such as Cooling, Scotney, and Westenhanger all have a base court; even the local moated site at Iden, licenced to crenellate in 1318, has a second or base court outside the inner moated enclosure. Amberley, Scotney, Cooling and Farleigh Hungerford all have two courts, created in all three cases by the laying-out of a roughly quadrangular curtain wall and ranges of buildings around an earlier hall-service-chamber block, thus creating courtyards on both the front and back sides of the block. The little-studied Halnaker House appears to have a similar arrangement with a court to the south of the hall and a second area to the north (Emery 2006: 299, 342 and fig. 77). Further afield, Bolton in north Yorkshire lacks a base court but the other great later 14th-century castles of the north-east (for example Wressle and Sheriff Hutton) do not. Warkworth has two 'courts' in the sense of possessing both the very large and complex donjon on the motte and the hall-service-chamber block in the courtyard. Chris Currie, in specific reference to the late 14th-century Dartington Hall (2004), has argued

that the use of base courts was not so widespread in the middle ages, but Emery (2007) is in fundamental disagreement. It might be considered puzzling then that Bodiam is of a single court plan.

One possible solution to this issue lies in the earthworks at the top of the hill. Named the 'Gun Garden', and interpreted as a viewing platform by the Royal Commission survey (Taylor *et al.* 1990), these earthworks probably mark the site of the earlier manor, as discussed in Chapters Two and Four. Documentary references indicate that the manorial court continued at this location into the 15th century (Johnson *et al.* 2000: 32). It is very possible, then, that this hilltop site served the functions that at other castles were carried out in the base court. They are admittedly quite a distance of c. 250 m from the castle. A possible alternative that has been mooted is that ancillary buildings including stables lay to the immediate north of the castle, underneath what was until 2015 the ticket office, but there is no archaeological evidence supporting such a suggestion.

If in fact the 'castle' of Bodiam is split between these two sites, then we might think of the inner courtyard, splendidly isolated within its moat and set apart from the rest of the landscape, in rather different terms: as a larger version of a gloriolite as at Leeds and the northern French castle of Hesdin, or as an isolated courtyard-keep.

#### *The northern gatehouse*

We commented above on the changes of mind involved in the layout of the northern gatehouse. In its original conception, the northern gatehouse consisted of a single chamber whose vaults were ribbed and provided with 'murder holes'. This single chamber had a staircase



*Fig. 3.32: Window seat and plinth in northern range often interpreted as stables. Photo by Penny Copeland.*



*Fig. 3.33: Suites at the upper end of the hall, viewed from the summit of the southern gatehouse; see also Fig. 3.7. Photo by Matthew Johnson.*

turret to its east and a pair of projecting towers flanking the doorway. The external walls are well provided with gunports suitable for smaller hand guns. In these respects, the original conception of the gatehouse was very similar to the Westgate, part of the city walls of Canterbury, first documented in 1380 and completed by 1385; the gatehouse of Saltwood in Kent, built in the last two decades of the 14th century; and further afield, the gatehouse of Caldicot in Monmouthshire, another 1380s building (Goodall 2011: 309, 336). Both the Westgate and Saltwood are also associated with Henry Yevele (Harvey 1954: 358-66). Both the Westgate and Saltwood have slim towers that are circular rather than rectangular but otherwise the similarities are striking. Internally, above the ground floor, the northern gatehouse at Bodiam is divided into lodgings, a feature it shares with Saltwood and the southern gatehouse. Parts of the wooden portcullis for the northern gatehouse survive within its original groove and housing and have been radiocarbon dated to the later 14th century, suggesting that they are original (Martin & Martin 2005).

#### *Suites above the hall*

At the upper end of the hall, running up the east range, are two suites, each indicated by fenestration and other features and divided up by now-vanished timber partitions (Figs 3.7 & 3.33). Both consisted of an unheated outer room, an inner chamber with fireplace and window seat, and a further inner chamber with fireplace and window seat facing onto the courtyard. Both inner chambers have doors to rooms in the east tower, which do not intercommunicate. This is the only tower where these two levels do not have a connecting stair. The lower suite has a door into the chapel, while

the upper suite has a northern window and door into a smaller chamber that looks down into the chapel. The two suites are linked with each other and with the hall solely through the now-destroyed spiral staircase at the junction of the two ranges.

The double nature is unusual for this date, and not easily explained. Pevsner, Goodall and Thackray all note this arrangement without proposing a convincing explanation. It is possible that Dallingridge and his wife Elizabeth Wardedieu had separate suites. The upper suite has a private chamber looking down into the chapel, a feature that Gilchrist (1999) has identified as characteristic of spaces for elite women. Gilchrist also observes that such women's spaces were often relatively inaccessible, and it is striking that the upper floors of the west tower confirm what Gilchrist would expect, although there is a wall-walk here linking the north and north-east towers. Enhanced provision for Wardedieu might also reflect her status in the area – the manor of Bodiam was originally that of her family, and only passed to Dallingridge on her father's death. However the upper suite also has the larger and more ornamented fireplace. A final possibility is that the lower suite was intended for a steward or other chief officer of the Dallingridge household.

However, the similar nature of these two suites may be overemphasised. Their plans are indeed very similar, but when considered as three-dimensional spaces, they might be considered as different. The lower suite had a relatively low ceiling and less lighting. The upper suite is more secluded in terms of access, had different access arrangements, at its northern end looked down into the chapel rather than having direct access to it. It does not have access to the south-east tower, as the lower suite does at its southern end. It was also probably open to the roof, suggesting a different, much airier impression to its internal spaces. It is important, then, to consider the lived experience of these spaces as much as their formal plan, a subject that Cooper will return to in Chapter Nine.

#### *Great Hall and service area*

The hall may have been heated by a central hearth; there are indications of anomalies in the GPR results which may relate to such a feature (A1 & A2 on Fig. 3.10). There may alternatively have been a fireplace embedded in the cross wall between the hall and chamber to its east. The presence or absence of an open hearth carries implications for the possible roof structure. The rest of the courtyard ranges had shallow-pitched roofs, but a steeply pitched roof, plus a louvre, would have been

necessary over the hall to disperse the smoke. If, however, there was a fireplace over the hearth, the hall roof could also have had a shallow pitch. The appearance of the four ranges of the courtyard would be more uniform if that were the case. The hall may have had a screens passage rather than a cross-passage; at the lower end of the hall, a linear feature of low amplitude can be picked out (A4), which may indicate the presence of a wooden screen here. The GPR results in this area must however be treated with caution as remains of the later cottage in this area may have affected them.

The stone partition at the lower end of the hall, west of the cross-passage, has three openings which is a standard arrangement in halls of this time. The partition does not appear to extend up to the upper floor so it is assumed that a wooden partition would be in place. It has been assumed that this is a straightforward pantry/buttery arrangement with a central corridor between the two rooms linking cross-passage and kitchen, an arrangement that is characteristic of late medieval service areas. However, the pairs of windows on both sides suggest that each side was not a single pantry or buttery but rather subdivided into two rooms. The mortices in the stonework for a large cross beam between the windows would provide support for a partition. The subdivision could not continue on the first floor where a window is located, although the mortices do confirm the partitioning of the kitchen from the space over the pantry/buttery. In the courtyard wall of the upper floor room, there are two interesting features: a narrow window, at a lower level to the adjacent, larger, window to the west, and next to this window evidence for a small door in the style of latrine doors, and slightly overlapping the stone wall below, providing evidence that the wooden dividing wall or partition was narrow, or perhaps jettied out over the cross-passage (Fig. 3.34). The small door suggests either a 'pot' cupboard or a cupboard linked to the use of the hall, which raises the question in turn of how the upper floor was reached.

It seems possible that the narrow window could relate to a stair to access the gallery and the upper room or rooms above the service rooms. It therefore seems likely that such a stair might also serve the basement, which may therefore have served as a wine cellar for the hall. The GPR results (Fig. 3.10, B1-B3) may indicate evidence for this cellar.

#### *The towers*

No two towers are exactly alike. The north-east, east, south-east and south-west towers follow a common pattern of separate external access to the basement



*Fig. 3.34: View down only narrow window jamb to west, and rebated door jamb to right. The door jamb sits slightly over the triple door wall at the end of the Great Hall. Photo by Penny Copeland.*

and to the floor above. The south-east tower has a vaulted basement (Fig. 3.35). The vault is now largely destroyed but enough remains to indicate that it was finely constructed in a manner similar to the gatehouse vaults. The function of this room is not certain but its location at the lower end of the private apartments and just off from the Great Hall suggests it may have been a strongroom similar to rooms found at Penshurst, Ightham and Great Chalfield. The south-west tower has a well in the basement and a dovecote in its upper storey; this tower was heavily restored by Cubitt and later Curzon (Fig. 3.36). Large parts of the dovecote have been entirely rebuilt but enough remains to demonstrate that it was an original feature of the 1380s.

The west and north-west towers and the east and west rooms of the main gatehouse are entered at ground floor level and have a room below that level that has



*Fig. 3.35: Vaulted basement room of the south-east tower. Photo by Penny Copeland.*





Fig. 3.36: Interior of south-west tower, with two lodgings and a dovecote above, partially restored. Photo by Penny Copeland.

no stair access but does have at least one small window. These rooms are accessed by trapdoor. One of them may have functioned as a prison. The north-west tower cellar or basement is a completely circular room with two windows. It is commonly referred to as the Oubliette and it certainly has no evidence for access at present, but that was also the case during inspection of the cellar of the west room of the main gatehouse. These rooms have been accessed in the 20th century to construct the floors.

Each tower has a small turret rising from the roof housing the spiral staircase for access to the roofs. However, there is no clear pattern to their alignment; they are positioned differently on each tower. Three of the corner towers have angled walls to the courtyard side, except for the north-west tower which as noted above has a 'bite' taken out of it. The corner towers may have had conical roofs: a slate shaped for a conical roof was recovered from the moat in 1970 (Martin *et al.* 2011: 336). It is



Fig. 3.37: Stair turret and chimney of the north-west tower. Photo by Penny Copeland.

interesting that the crenellated design is repeated on the turrets despite there being no access to their roofs, and therefore having no practical purpose, but it serves as a repeated design motif on the chimneys and the fireplace of one of the great chambers (Fig. 3.37).

#### *Lodgings*

A series of rooms all have a window, a fireplace, and a latrine reached through a separate door or corridor. They are quite uniform in appearance, and while at other castles such as Bolton such rooms are paired or multiple in nature, we term them 'lodgings' following Faulkner's insight. Lodgings can be found in the north range east and west of the gatehouse, and all the towers (for example Fig. 3.35). The various rooms above the northern gatehouse can also be interpreted as lodgings, though they are not so self-contained, for example that containing the portcullis mechanism. Depending on how one counts, there are between 22 and 26 lodgings in the castle.

#### *The wall-walks*

The majority of wall-walks are accessed from only one adjacent tower. There are doors allowing access via the wall-walk from one tower to the next in only two cases, between the northern gatehouse and the north-west tower, and between the north-east and east towers. This latter case is interesting, because as noted elsewhere this tower has a distinctive arrangement where its upper storeys do not intercommunicate. The other exception is the wall-walk between the west and the south-west tower which has no access from the towers. There is the faint scar, and mortices with a gap for a trimmer, for a wooden stair rising from ground to upper floor level against the north side of the north wall of the kitchen; however this may be coincidental as evidence that the stair continued to the roof is lacking (Fig. 3.38). Slots on the towers for the leaded gutters of the roofs suggest that the roof structure rested directly on top of the wall-walk, and probably had lead gutter runs. In some places, fragments of lead are still visible in the slots with the use of binoculars. The curtain walls are about 1.84 m (6 ft) thick but it would be necessary to allow 38 cm (c. 16 inches) for the battlement screen. It is also necessary to allow for the rafters and lead roofs to rest upon the wall-walk. In addition, there are a number of chimney flues that rise up to form chimneys directly on the parapet each of the curtain walls (Fig. 3.33). All of these elements place restrictions on the space available on the wall-walks, and the chimneys blocked the wall-walks completely.



*Fig. 3.38: Floor joists with gap for trimmer and faint scar in surviving plaster for staircase from ground floor against the external northern wall of the kitchen. Note the rebuilt oven below. Photo by Penny Copeland.*

The significance of these observations on wall-walk access is not clear, though it is a feature of some importance to ‘defence versus status’ enthusiasts. It might well have been perfectly possible to complete the whole circuit of the castle walls (with the exception of the main gatehouse) by walking on the roof, which would have had a very shallow pitch and for which the creasings for the lead cover are visible, rather than on the top of the masonry wall.

#### *Profiles and mouldings*

The shape of the fireplaces within the castle does suggest some organisation by status. There are three fireplaces with segmented arched heads (as opposed to shallow four-centred arches). Two of these are in

the main rooms of the apartments and one of those is the only decorated fireplace in the castle. The third fireplace with segmented arched head is located in an apartment directly to the east of the gatehouse. A further obscurity with this fireplace is that it is the only fireplace in the building with a rounded profile. The associated window of this apartment is the window with the bar across to support the floor above. Both this window and the window in the apartment above are arranged to suggest a window seat.

#### **Conclusion**

The survey of Bodiam has produced a series of new insights into this complex and fascinating structure. First, we have identified irregularities and changes of mind underlying an apparently regular and even symmetrical structure. Second, we have made a series of observations that reinterpret Bodiam in terms of its size, accommodation, and position within a traditional narrative of late medieval buildings. Third, we have made a series of comments on the interpretation of the castle, comments that link Bodiam into a discussion of its importance within late medieval buildings generally.

The overall direction of this discussion has been to understand Bodiam in terms not just of its formal layout, but also in terms of the nature and subjective experience of the spaces within the castle walls. Ultimately a full understanding of Bodiam is not possible without first considering its wider landscape context, and moving on to a more serious and sustained commentary on the nature of lived experience within this space. These are the subjects of Chapters Four and Nine respectively.