

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment in advance of Development at 2 Palace Cottages, Charing Palace, Charing, Kent

NGR: TQ 95412 49439



Report for
The Spitalfields Trust

November 19th 2014

SWAT. ARCHAEOLOGY

Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company

School Farm Oast, Graveney Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8UP

Tel; 01795 532548 or 07885 700 112

“Some 14 miles W.S.W. of the metropolitan city of Canterbury lies the still picturesque village of Charing, with its church and the remains of the Palace lying just eastwards of the main street. Its situation, roughly midway between Maidstone and Canterbury, make it a convenient halt for the archbishops and their attendants in the slow progress of medieval travel, along ways far less direct than those of this age.

Apart from convenience, the position of Charing must always have had its attractions, for it is sheltered by the downs from the north winds and the gently falling ground southwards affords a pleasing and sunny prospect. The Palace became, in due course, a residence of importance and was enjoyed occasionally by successive archbishops until that fateful day when Cranmer surrendered it to Henry VIII, and the Manor became part of the Royal possessions”

(Kipps, P.K., 1934. The Archaeological Journal Vol. 90 pages 78-97).

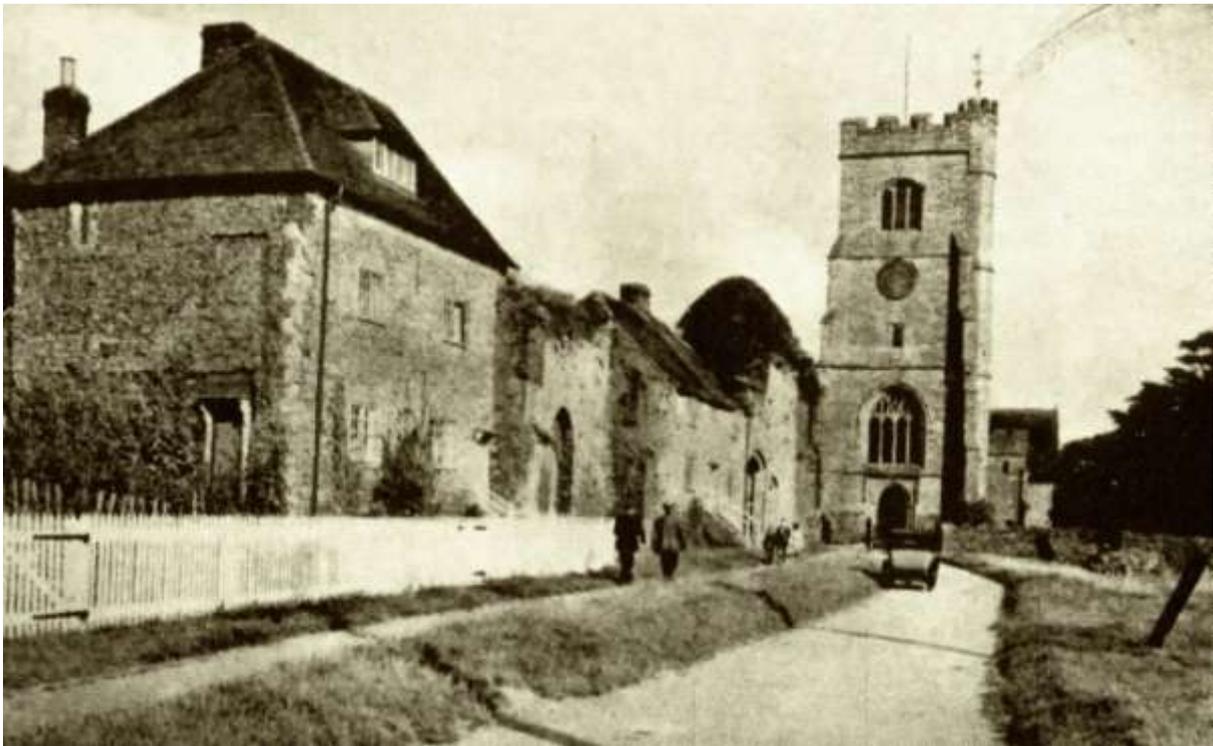


Plate 1. The Gatehouse Range from the south-west, and the Parish Church (Kipps 1934)

1. Introduction

The Spitalfields Trust are about to undertake development at 2 Palace Cottages in the curtilage of the Archbishop's Palace at Charing in Kent. This desk-based assessment collates the data available which will inform the planners of the importance of the Site.

The Archbishop's Palace, Charing is an important heritage site first mentioned in the Domesday Book as land held by the Archbishop of Canterbury at 'Meddestane', and was developed as a palace.

This was one of a string of medieval palaces at Charing, Otford and Croydon, serving the archbishops travelling between Canterbury and London.

The Archbishops' registers indicate that a palace at Charing was in regular use from the time of Archbishop Peckham (1279–1292). Later both Henry VII and Henry VIII stayed at the Palace, the latter on his way to the Field of the Cloth of Gold. The property was seized by the Crown after the Dissolution in 1545 and was subsequently leased to and later owned by local farming gentry, notably the Honywoods and the Whelers. The present owner's family acquired the complex in the 1950s. In 1952 the palace was designated a Grade I Listed building. The buildings are also a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

In 2004, the Archbishop's Palace was one of the featured buildings, and a finalist, in the BBC/Endemol TV series *Restoration* (presented by Griff Rhys Jones, Ptolemy Dean and Marianne Suhr, produced and directed by Paul Coueslant).

2. Description

Charing Palace, as an archiepiscopal manor house, is one of a small number of high status residences built in England during the medieval period. The history of the palace and the manor of Charing can be traced back to the eighth century AD, when the land was presented to Christchurch priory at Canterbury, and the records of the convent and cathedral then document the series of building works carried out by subsequent archbishops. The palace is known to have been the favourite residence of several of these archbishops. The buildings which survive are mostly well preserved, and many are still private dwellings or in use by members of the public.

They give a good indication of the layout of the original complex, and historic records provide further details of the original function of each structure. The precinct boundary wall survives, indicating the full extent of the palace precinct, while the lack of disturbance to the interior has meant the survival of upstanding and buried archaeological remains relating to the occupation and use of the site. The monument, which is set back from Charing High Street to the north of the parish church, includes the remains of the archiepiscopal manor house, associated buildings and precinct where this has been unaffected by recent development. The buildings, which date principally from the 14th century, include the Great Hall, part of the chapel, the gatehouse and the precinct boundary wall, part of the west range and the present farmhouse. Land on which to build a house or palace in Charing was given to Christchurch priory at Canterbury in AD 788 by Kenulph. This land remained under the control of the priory until 1545. The buildings forming the palace complex surround a quadrangle which is entered from the south through the original gateway.

The barn to the east of the courtyard dates from the 14th century, and was originally the Great Hall, thought to have been built by John Stratford (1333-1348). The farmhouse was begun in the 13th century, but underwent alterations in the 16th and 18th centuries. It was originally part of the north range of the quadrangle, and includes part of the chapel in its north-west corner. All that remains of the western side of the courtyard is an outhouse dating from the 14th century. Numbers 1 and 2, Palace Cottages form the south side of the quadrangle, along with the gatehouse.

They all date from the 14th century and comprise the gatehouse and porter's lodge, also thought to have been built by John Stratford. Much of the precinct boundary wall is also still standing around the palace enclosure on the north, east and south sides, while on the west the original wall has been rebuilt more recently. The medieval wall stands to a height of between 1.5m and 2m in some places, and was built in flint and mortar.

Within the paddocks inside the precinct boundary wall are a number of low earthworks which are associated with the palace buildings. Henry VIII acquired the palace through exchange with Cranmer in 1545. There is no evidence that he made any alterations to the buildings, and no subsequent monarch made any use of the manor house, but let it out to farm. In 1559 Archbishop Parker made an attempt to become the tenant and farmer of the estate, but he was outbid by Sir Richard Sackville, and the estate passed into private ownership.

Palace Farmhouse, the barn, Palace Cottages and the outhouse to the west are all Listed Grade I, while the boundary wall to the complex is Listed Grade II.

3. Description of 2 Palace Cottages by P. K. Kipps writing in the *Archaeological Journal* in 1934

‘The Gatehouse range on the S. and those buildings W. of the Courtyard appear to belong to the same period as the Hall. This range is 15ft. wide and may be considered to be that part extending from the churchyard to the easternmost of the two buttresses on the S. front; a distance of 78 ft. The space between these buttresses corresponds to the internal width of the W. range. Further westward, for an average length of 25ft. is a separate building, now a cottage.

It is of the same width and frontage line as the Gatehouse range. The room over the gateway was probably an apartment of some importance and on the N. side are remains of a fireplace with carved corbels adjoining.

The W. range appears, structurally, to intersect the Gatehouse range as indicated by the buttresses previously mentioned. From its southern wall it extends northwards for a length of about 95 ft. And its northernmost wall practically aligns with the S. front of the private apartments. On its W. side and 31ft. from the N. end is a two-storied building now used as a stable. It is 22 feet from E. to W. By 15 ft. N. to S.

The Gatehouse Range

In the eastern part is the gateway, 10 ft. wide and with a separate foot passage ft. wide, east of which is an apartment 7 ft. in width, possibly a porter's room. The building immediately W. of the gateway for a length of 40 ft. has been partially converted into a cottage, while the remainder is roofless and its western partition wall has disappeared. The walling is of flint rubble with ashlar dressings to the openings, etc.

The gateway openings on the S. side have two centred and low pitched arches of two orders, with the chamfers continued down the jambs. At the S.E. end of the range are restored buttresses with splayed offsets. The front of the present cottage has traces of original two-light windows and further westward is a blocked two-light window with remains of trefoil headed lights; internally it has splayed jambs but the rear arch is gone.

On the N. side the gate openings have two centred and chamfered arches of low pitch, the larger one of two orders, and square jambs below. Immediately W. is a large blocked doorway, with two-centred arch.

Continuing westward is more blocking, probably the position of a window, and close to the end of the wall is a blocked two-light window uniform with that opposite; the rear arch is also missing. E. of the gateway is a single trefoil-headed light with one splayed and one straight jamb internally, and next to it is a blocked doorway with a two-centred and chamfered arch. These belong to the 'porter's room' which is now entered by a modern doorway from the churchyard. Above the doorway, and also in storey over, is a blocked single-light window with trefoil head.

The gateway passages are separated by a wall which is pierced by a two-centred and chamfered arch. The wall between the larger way and the cottage has a narrow blocked doorway with a two-centred and chamfered arch. Next to it is a rectangular loop light. A vault above the wide gateway appears to have been contemplated as there are corbels in the angles; these are broken and one has a grotesque head supporting the springer of a double-chamfered diagonal rib. It is doubtful whether the intended vault was built. In the N. wall above the gateway are the remains of a fireplace with projecting chamfered jambs finished by rounded corbels which formerly supported a hooded top, but this has disappeared.

Adjoining the jambs are two carved corbels with foliage and moulded abaci of early fourteenth-century character. The back of the fireplace is of tiles laid herring-bone. In the S.E. angle of the 'porter's room' is a large square projection of sufficient size to contain a circular stair but there is no entrance visible.

The W. range of buildings appears on plan to intercept the Gatehouse range, and its southern end, flanked by two buttresses, continues the same frontage line which is carried further westward by a twostoried building, now a cottage, and which is of the same depth as the Gatehouse range.

In the upper storey, N. side, is a blocked singlelight window with chamfered jambs and two-centred head, and in the storey below is a square-headed loop, also blocked. The W. end and S. side have loop windows, one in each storey

and all of which are blocked. The present doors and windows appear to be late eighteenth-century insertions and it was probably during this period that the one-storey washhouse on the N. side was built.

The range of buildings W. of the courtyard are now ruined and incomplete. The S. end wall, previously mentioned, is two stories in height and is flanked by two buttresses with splayed offsets. In the lower storey is an eighteenth-century or modern doorway and in the upper storey is an original loop window with splayed jambs internally. The first floor level is indicated on the inner side by a set-back. The lower part of the W. wall remains for its entire length, also parts of its superstructure. The southernmost part forms the side of the cottage at the W. end of the Gatehouse range and is set back at first floor level.

Next to the S. wall is some rough blocking to a former doorway and above is a second and narrow blocked doorway with ashlar jambs and two-centred arch. Between the cottage and the building now used as a stable, for a length of 26J-ft. the wall has been reduced to one storey. Its internal face is much broken and retains four blocked openings, one only of which is perfect. The middle one was possibly a doorway and is now marked by a recess on the outside. Northwards is a fairly well preserved window of one light with chamfered angles, trefoiled head and splayed jambs internally. Southwards are parts of the outer jambs of two small single-light windows, also the remains of a two-centred and chamfered rear arch belonging to one of them. The northern half of the W. wall is two storied.

It contains two rough doorways opening to the ' stable ' building and its loft over. Northwards is a single-light trefoil-headed window uniform with the one described. Above this are the jambs and sill of a similar window. Near to the N. end of the wall is a smaller single-light window with chamfered angles and two-centred head. Between the windows are pieces of a rough two-centred arch with patched walling below. The internal surface is much broken and partly destroyed. This part of the range has been used as a cowshed over a long period. The N. end wall, with broken internal surface, partly encloses the cowsheds, and the remainder eastwards together with a fragment of the E. wall is but a few feet in height. The southern half of the E. wall is left, a length of 40 ft. N. of the Gatehouse range and one storey in height. It has two blocked doorways with chamfered angles and two centred arches. Between them is a blocked two-light

window with jambs remaining, also traces of what may have been another window.

The range is still divided by the lower half of a cross wall and southwards is the broken end of a cross wall that continued the northern face of the Gatehouse range.' (*Kipps, P.K., 1934. The Archaeological Journal Vol. 90 pages 78-97*).

4. The HER Data (18/11/2014)

The Archbishops Palace is a Scheduled Monument (Fig. 5) DesigUID: DKE 19062. The Assessment of Importance says:

'Bishops' palaces were high status domestic residences providing luxury accommodation for the bishops and lodgings for their large retinues; although some were little more than country houses, others were the setting for great works of architecture and displays of decoration. Bishops' palaces were usually set within an enclosure, sometimes moated, containing a range of buildings, often of stone, including a hall or halls, chapels, lodgings and a gatehouse, often arranged around a courtyard or courtyards.

The earliest recorded examples date to the seventh century. Many were occupied throughout the medieval period and some continued in use into the post medieval period; a few remain occupied today. Only some 150 bishops' palaces have been identified and documentary sources confirm that they were widely dispersed throughout England. All positively identified examples are considered to be nationally important.

Charing Palace, as an archiepiscopal manor house, is one of a small number of high status residences built in England during the medieval period. The history of the palace and the manor of Charing can be traced back to the eighth century AD, when the land was presented to Christchurch priory at Canterbury, and the records of the convent and cathedral then document the series of building works carried out by subsequent archbishops. The palace is known to have been the favourite residence of several of these archbishops. The buildings which survive are mostly well preserved, and many are still private dwellings or in use by members of the public. They give a good indication of the layout of the original complex, and historic records provide further details of the original function of each structure. The precinct boundary wall survives, indicating the full extent of the palace precinct, while the lack of disturbance to the interior has meant the survival of upstanding and buried archaeological remains relating to the occupation and use of the site.'

In addition the barn to the south-east of the Palace Farmhouse (HER TQ 94 NE 31) is a listed building dating to the 14th century and probably built by John Stratford, Archbishop from 1333-1348.

The Palace Farmhouse is a Grade I listed building (HER TQ 94 NE 219) with its main construction periods 1200 to 1799.

The Outhouse to the west of the Palace Farmhouse is a Grade I listed building (HER TQ 94 NE 156) with its main construction periods 1300-1399.

The remains of the Boundary Walls of the Archbishop's Palace (HER TQ 94 NE 168) a Grade II listed building with its main construction periods 1300-1399.

The Palace Cottages and the remains of the Gatehouse adjoining (HER TQ 94 NE 198) a Grade I listed building with its main construction periods 1300-1399.

A survey was carried out by RCHME in 1997 of the Archbishop's Palace (EKE 5130).

Tree-Ring analysis of timbers from the Archbishop's Palace was carried out by English Heritage in 1998 (EKE 5131).

Dendrochronology dating of the Great Hall and the East Block were carried out in 2000 (EKE 11684).

5. Bibliography

- National Heritage List for England Scheduled Monument Number 1011028, Legacy Scheduled Monument Number 24347
- National Heritage List for England Listed Building number(s) 1070757 , 1070756 , and others
- English Heritage (PastScape) Defra or Monument number(s) 419413; 1397493; 419458.

- County Historic Environment Record (or Sites and Monuments Record) number(s) TQ 94 NE 236 and others.
- Websites
 - http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/programmes/restoration/2004/se_archbishops_palace_01.shtml
Wikipedia entry
- Books
 - Goodall, John, 2011, *The English Castle 1066-1650* (Yale University Press) p. 393
 - Emery, Anthony, 2006, *Greater Medieval Houses of England and Wales* Vol. 3 Southern England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) p. 320-26
 - Thompson, M.W., 1998, *Medieval bishops' houses in England and Wales* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing) p. 171
 - Thurley, Simon, 1993, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England* (Yale University Press) p. 50, 267n89
 - Newman, John, 1983, *Buildings of England: North east and east Kent* p. 264
 - Colvin, H.M., Ransome, D.R. and Summerson, John, 1982, *The history of the King's Works, Vol. 4: 1485-1660 (part 2)* (London) p. 63-4
 - Hasted, Edward, 1801, *The history and topographical survey of the county of Kent* Vol. 12 p. 524-5 online transcription
 - Hasted, Edward, 1798 (2edn), *The history and topographical survey of the county of Kent* Vol. 7 p. 429 online transcription
- Periodical Articles
 - Pearson, S., 2001, 'The Archbishop's Palace at Charing in the Middle Ages' *Archaeologia Cantiana* Vol. 121 p. 315-49
 - Rigold, S.E., 1969, *The Archaeological Journal* Vol. 126 p. 267
 - Kipps, P.K., 1934, 'The palace of the archbishops of Canterbury at Charing, Kent' *The Archaeological Journal* Vol. 90 p. 78-97 online copy
- Primary

- E178/1111 (Survey of 19 Elizabeth) The National Archives reference
- Antiquarian (Histories and accounts from late medieval and early modern writers)
 - Chandler, John, 1993, *John Leland's Itinerary: travels in Tudor England* (Sutton Publishing) p. 225
 - Toulmin-Smith, Lucy (ed), 1909, *The itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543* (London: Bell and Sons) Vol. 4 p. 62



Plate 2. Palace Cottages in August 1883



Plate 3. Palace Cottages in 2014



Plate 4. The Great Barn in 2014



Plate 5. The Main House in 2014 and below (Plate 6) the HER data (18/11/14)

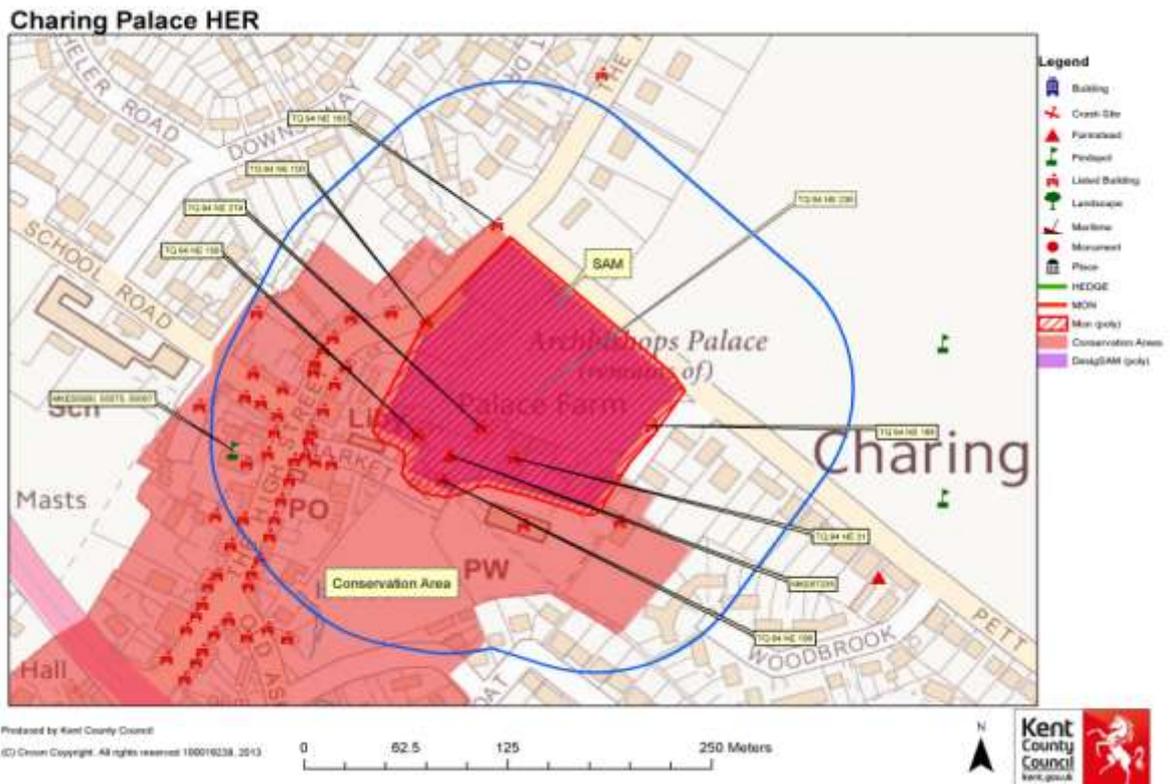
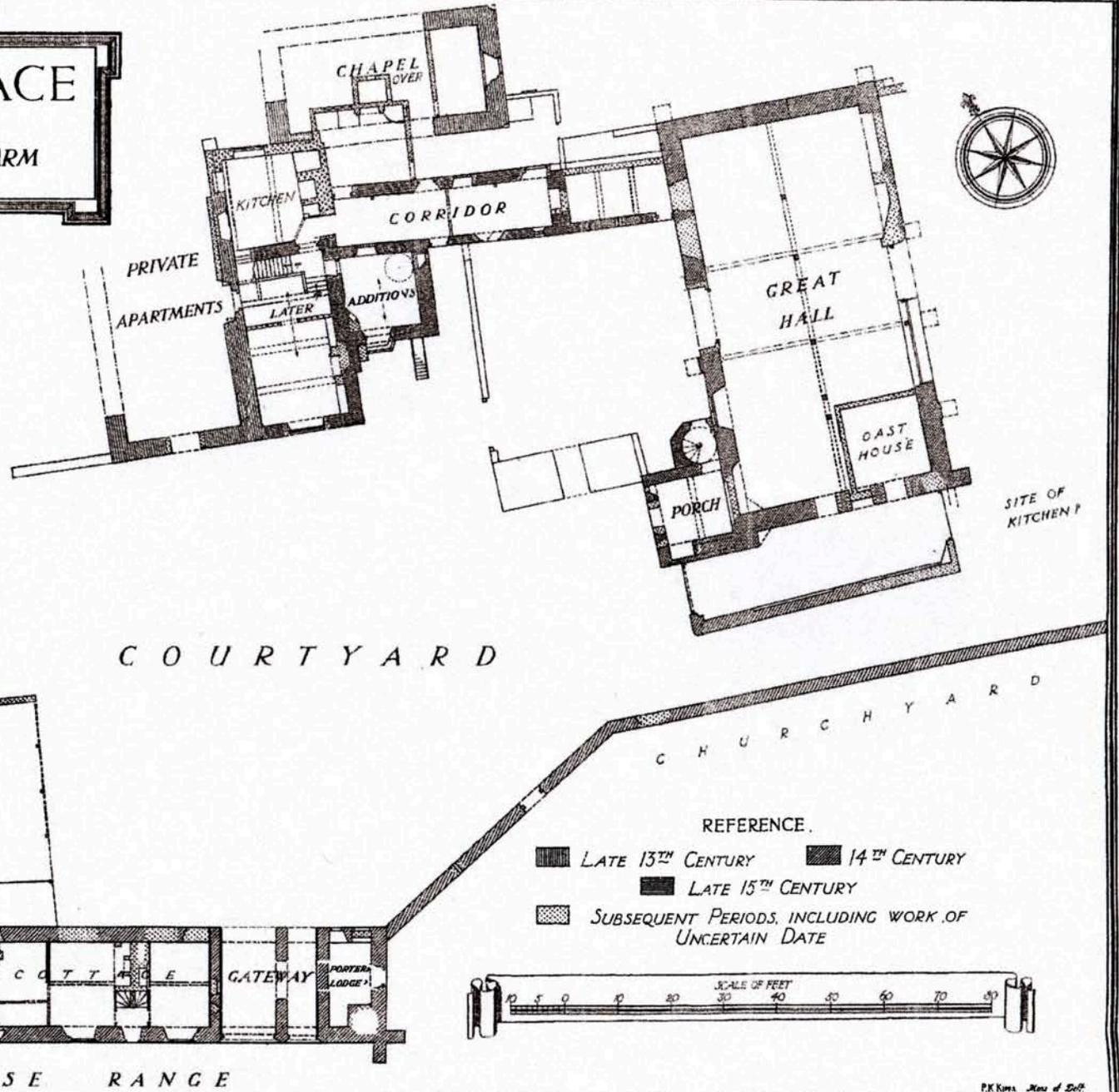
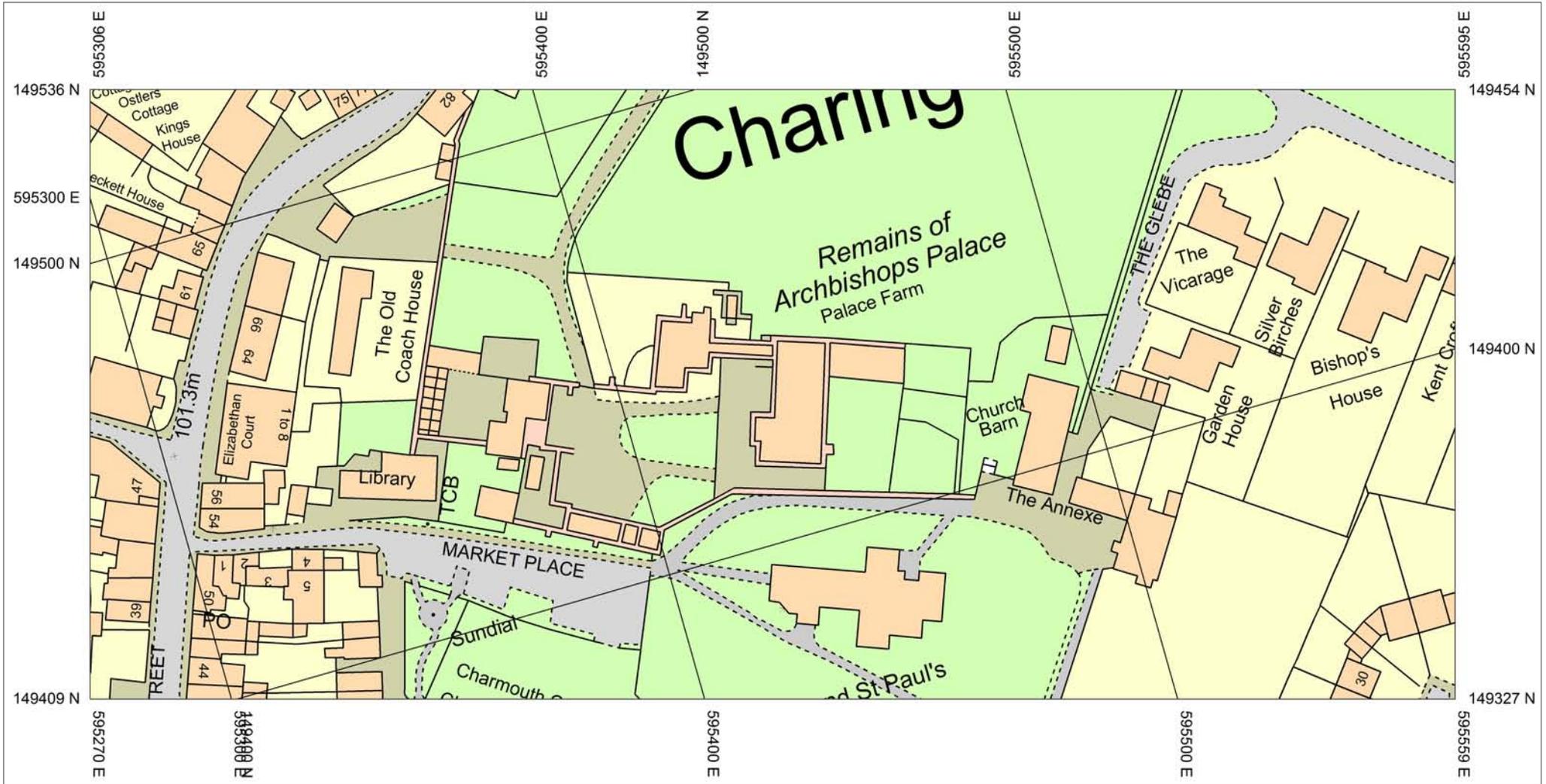




Plate 6. Google Earth taken 7/9/2013 at an eye altitude of 279m

CHARING PALACE
KENT. NOW PALACE FARM





Produced 11/19/2014 from the Ordnance Survey National Geographic Database and incorporating surveyed revision available at this date. © Crown Copyright 2014

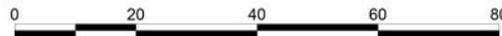
Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited without the prior permission of Ordnance Survey

Ordnance Survey and the OS Symbol are registered trademarks of Ordnance Survey, the national mapping agency of Great Britain.

The representation of a road, track or path is no evidence of a right of way.

The representation of features as lines is no evidence of a property boundary.

Charing Palace



Scale 1:1250

Supplied By: National Map Centre Kent

Serial number: 001156965

Plot Centre Coordinates: 595433, 149432