

THE ARCHBISHOP'S MANOR AT FORD, HOATH

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The site of the archbishop's manor at Ford lies in the chapelry of Hoath, on the east side of the Roman road from Canterbury to the fort of *Regulbium* (Reculver), at a point where the road negotiates the steep slopes of a small valley. The bottom of the valley carries a stream which runs east towards the marshes of the former Wantsum Channel, and this road crossing, now by way of a brick bridge, was presumably the ford which gave its name to the site.

The chapelry of Hoath in the ancient parish of Reculver was within the monastic estate originally given by King Egbert of Kent to a priest named Bassa in the year 669, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. The church of the monastery was the nucleus of the now ruined church of St Mary, Reculver, whose twin towers still stand on the cliffs, 2½ miles north of Ford.

After nearly 300 years the monastery reached a low ebb; its position on the north coast of Kent between the mid-ninth century Vikings' wintering sites on Sheppey and Thanet must have made it a target for the raiders, and its records stop suddenly around that date. However, in 949, King Eadred granted the monastic estate to Oda, Archbishop of Canterbury, according to a charter (S.546, BCS 880) which purports to have been written by St Dunstan by his own hand – though none of the surviving, and varying, copies are of such an early date (Gough 1992, 89-102). The terrier appended to the charter can be reasonably shown to represent the later parish of Reculver, itself divided in 1310 by the formation of the daughter-parishes of Herne and St Nicholas-at-Wade, and the chapelry of Hoath. The same area formed the greater part of the manor of Reculver, shown in Domesday Book as belonging to the archbishop.

The Hoath portion of the parish and manor is a compact area east of Herne, encompassed on the other three sides by Chislet (which belonged from early times to St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury). The northern part, where Ford Park is situated, lies on the Tertiary Woolwich and Thanet Beds, with a capping of Head Gravel along the north boundary. These sandy formations are deeply cut by the stream,

and provide a surprisingly rolling landscape in the Park. In the Middle Ages, the road here was notorious for its 'foundrous' state in the winter; so much so, that the inhabitants claimed in 1398 that they were unable to take their dead to be buried at the mother church of Reculver, and so obtained a graveyard of their own. One can visualise the state of such an unmetalled road when some of the traffic was generated by the retinue of visiting archbishops.

On both sides of the road there have been excavations for sand and gravel at various times, providing archaeological finds, such as Roman cremations containing Samian and other pottery and a small glass mirror, and also Saxon remains including a claw-beaker and a drinking cup. Thus the area seems to have been favoured for burials rather than habitation in early times, and it is difficult to explain why this valley site should have been chosen later for an important residence, apart from its water supply - the stream itself, and springs near it on both sides of the road. One of these, that on the west side, is said in J. R. Buchanan's *Memorials of Herne* (1887), to have been called St Ethelburga's Well; how much earlier the name can be found is unknown, but it has given rise to an interesting speculation, which may perhaps have some relevance.

There is a familiar medieval tradition that King Ethelbert gave his residence in Canterbury to St Augustine, and then retired to Reculver (Stanley 1857, 23, 30). The *prima facie* site for a royal residence there might be sought at the Roman fort itself, but many years of observation and excavation there have failed to identify many Saxon remains; a cremation outside the fort, presumably pagan, a seventh-century spear-head in the cliff, two clay bottles, Jutish or Frankish, also outside, and an unstratified *sceat* - hardly compelling evidence for a Christian king's palace. However, the palace, if it ever existed, could have been on the Roman road from the city to the fort, for obvious reasons, and thus Ford's position would be reasonable.

Bede relates the story that Ethelbert's daughter, Ethelburga, the widow of Edwin of Northumbria, returned to Kent after her husband's death in 633, with her young daughter Eanflaed, the missionary Paulinus and one of Edwin's thegns named Bassus. They were received by King Eadbald and Archbishop Honorius (Bede, 102). Bede does not tell us where the King lived, or where he installed his sister and her daughter - was it Ford? Lack of excavation leaves us free to suggest it as the site of the Saxon palace, and Ethelburga's home, and thus to link it with the (nineteenth-century) name of the spring. The name of Eanflaed is also recalled by one of the boundary points, Eanflaedmutha at the mouth of the Wantsum, on the terrier of Eadred's tenth-century charter, as though her brief residence from childhood to marriage had

become imprinted on the local geography (Gough 1992, 93-4). The name of Bass the thegn echoes that of Bassa the priest to whom the Reculver estate was given for a monastery thirty-six years later. All very pat - but without a shred of document- ary or archaeological evidence!

On more solid ground, however, Eadred's charter, or something like it, certainly put the lands which later became the manor of Reculver into the hands of the Archbishops, though there is no clear explanation of how Ford itself became the site of the Manor House and Park. 'Sometime before the Conquest' says Hasted cautiously, adding that 'from the few remains left of it, it appears to have been the most antient palace excepting that of Canterbury, which had been erected for the archiepiscopal residence' (Hasted 1800, 97). An eighteenth-century writer cites a number of documents dated from Ford during the period 1351-1426 (Wilkins 1737, vol. iii, *passim*), so there is written evidence of a residence there in the fourteenth century. In fact a standing length of stone wall, apparently the northern end of the Great Hall, which survived until 1964, embodied a string-course scroll moulding which suggested a late-Decorated date of around 1300. The mixture of materials in the wall itself, flint, Roman brick, ragstone and local sandstone, looked as though they had been quarried from the fort at Reculver, a similarity noted more than a century ago (Dowker 1878, 250). Quite apart from all the upper part of the fort wall (a matter of 2,400 substantial linear feet of perimeter now long gone) about 150ft of the lower courses at the south-west corner have been robbed to the foundations, and may well have been transported to Ford by the road which leaves the fort area at that corner. The Manor's chapel, now also destroyed, and surviving or rebuilt pieces of the outer wall of the buildings, were of a similar mixture.

According to Hasted (1800, 98), Archbishop John Morton almost rebuilt Ford, and that archbishop is well-known as a great builder. A commission issued on 26 July 1493 empowered John Tulle to impress stone-masons, bricklayers and other workers for the building and repair of divers lordships, mansions and other buildings in Kent, Surrey and Sussex belonging to the Church, which John Morton was about to make afresh and build at his own expense (Calendar of Letters Patent, 1493, m. 18 d.). He certainly carried out works at Canterbury, Lambeth, Maidstone, Aldington and Croydon (Hook 1867, 496-7), but what he did at Ford seems to be unrecorded. However, C. Hewett and T. Tatton-Brown, in their paper on Bell Harry Tower and the South-East Tower of Canterbury Cathedral (*Archaeologia Cantiana*, xcii (1976), 133, fn.), drew attention specifically to the similarity of the surviving brickwork of the barn and gatehouse at Ford to that of Morton's brick core of Bell Harry Tower, dated 1494-1497.

Any work attributed to him would be expected to be of brick rather than stone, and it would appear that quite a lot of brick was to be found at the time of the Parliamentary Survey of 1647 (Hussey 1904, 123), which states that 'most of the aforesaid premises, viz., mansion-house and outhouses aforesaid, are built with brick' although a study of the text shows that where materials are specified, only the tower, garden walls and stabling seem to be of brick, rather than the stone which is given for the Hall, Chapel and a 'little stone house' next to the Kitchen. The numerous chimneys mentioned were also probably of brick.

The present farmhouse, which incorporates at least features of the 'out-gatehouse or lodge', is of brick of several periods; otherwise only one significant piece of brickwork survives outside the main house and barn area, part of one of the 'garden walls'. Nothing of the great brick tower survives, and even its position is a matter for conjecture.

After Morton, one Archbishop closely associated with Ford was Thomas Cranmer, who seems to have been particularly attached to the place, and he involved the Manor House inextricably with the progress of the English Reformation. To support him he made Nicholas Ridley his chaplain in 1537; he relied considerably on the younger man in the development of his Protestant views. When the adjacent vicarage of Herne became vacant in 1538, he appointed Ridley to be Vicar there. Over the years other benefices came Ridley's way, up to the rank of Bishop, but by the convenient custom of holding these *in commendam*, he was able to maintain his link with Herne and Ford until 1549. In 1547, Grafton the printer presented his production of 'Matthew's' (i.e., mainly Coverdale's) Bible to the Archbishop at Ford; the latter wrote to Thomas Cromwell from there in August, commending it as an admirable translation (Gower 1883, 123). It appears that Cranmer's reason for being at Ford at that time was the presence of plague at Lambeth.

Another documented occasion of Cranmer's connection with Ford during this period was in 1552, when he had been suffering from the ague during the summer at Croydon, he retired to his low-lying and rather damp manor house in October. Together with Ridley, he had been drafting the Forty-Two Articles of Religion, and had submitted them to the Privy Council. The Council sent them back to him in November for revision; it is recorded that the messenger reached him in three days (Strype 1812, 390). It is clear then that the Archbishop regarded Ford as a retreat from the unhealthy atmosphere of the London area, near enough to Canterbury without actually being in the city, where religion and politics sometimes formed a dangerous mixture.

Between these two occasions connected with the religious life of the time, a brief but rather more splendid event took place. In June 1544, Henry VIII visited Cranmer at Ford, breaking his journey while on his way to France. He had travelled to Gravesend by barge, and thence by horse to Ford, where he dined with Cranmer before continuing towards Dover (Sampson 1784, 112).

Cranmer, however, like Ridley, was to lose his life for his reforming zeal after Henry's death, and it was at Ford that the summons from Queen Mary's Council reached him, ordering him to appear before them in person.. The Counter-Reformation which led to Cranmer's death did not last long; but Elizabeth's Archbishop Parker did not find Ford so attractive as Cranmer had done. He preferred Bekesbourne; for one thing the Little Stour provided fresh trout for his table. Parker, when near the end of his career, planned to demolish at least some part of Ford, and use the materials to improve the Palace at Canterbury and the house at Bekesbourne. He would leave sufficient at Ford to accommodate the 'Keeper' who leased the estate as a farm, keeping the manor in order for the reception of the archbishop on occasion demanded.

For this drastic reorganisation the Queen's permission was necessary, and Parker, who had previously been snubbed by her, tried to channel his request by way of Lord Treasurer Cecil, to whom he wrote in March 1573 a very tendentious letter, perhaps not to be taken literally as a true picture of the place. Ford, he wrote, was larger than Bekesbourne, but very inconvenient, old, decayed, wasteful, unwholesome and desolate. It was in such a corner, and the soil such, as he thought no man would have any delight to dwell there if he had any place nearer to Canterbury.

The Lord Treasurer, however, does not seem to have gone out of his way to put the matter before the Queen. Later in the year Parker reminded Cecil of his requests, but apparently the Puritans at Court, headed by Leicester, blocked the matter. Eighteen months later Parker was dead, and Ford remained untouched (Pridden 1787, 217).

Traditionally, Whitgift enjoyed hunting in Ford's deer park of about 166 acres, and he is noted for the splendour of his household and retinue, but there does not seem to be any record of his presence there. The next Primate to bring Ford into notice was George Abbot, best remembered by most people as the man who killed a keeper while hunting in Hampshire in 1621. Six years later he was in trouble again. Charles I was already making himself unpopular by his demands for forced loans, and some of the clergy tried to persuade their flocks to contribute by invoking the idea of the Divine Right of Kings. The Vicar of Brackley preached a sermon at Northampton in

February 1627 on the text 'Render therefore to all their dues' (Romans, xiii, 7), and was eager to have it printed with a dedication to the King, in the hope of obtaining preferment by flattery. He sent a copy to the Duke of Buckingham for approval, and the Duke, who disliked the Archbishop, saw a chance to put him in a dilemma. If the Primate passed it, he would be unpopular with the people; if he rejected it, the King would be offended. Abbot considered the sermon in detail, and refused to license it for publication on the grounds that the Vicar was weak in both theology and history.

The King ordered the Archbishop to withdraw to Canterbury and retire from his duties; Abbot however was involved in a legal wrangle with the city authorities, and was unwilling to transfer his household to a hostile place. He asked the King's permission to go instead either to Ford or Bekesbourne, and to be given time to make suitable preparations at whichever house the King specified. He wrote in July:

I have reason to know the resolution thereof because I must make my provision of wood and coals, and hay, for some definite place; and when I shall have brewed, it is fit I should know where to put it, or else it will not serve the turn; it is an unseasonable time to brew now, and as untimely to cut wood, being green in the highest degree, and to make coals, without all which my house cannot be kept. But when I know what must be my habitation, I will send down my servants presently to make the best provisions they can.

This was a reasonable request, and the King agreed that Abbot should retire to Ford, which the Archbishop later described as a 'moorish (*i.e., marshy*) Mansion place'; however, by Christmas he was restored to his duties (Carpenter 1971, 188).

In the last years of Abbot's life, a programme of repairs was carried out at some of his manors, and a page of accounts headed 'Disburstments for Reparacōns at Forde Anno 1631 and 1632' shows that in the period from November to October of those years a total of £11 15s. 6d. was spent on materials and labour. For example, 'a day and a halfes work for palings' cost 2s. 3d., and '300 nayles for the palles' cost 1s. 6d. Bricks cost 7s. 6d. for 500, while loads of tiles, and the cartage of them, came to 19s. 4d. a time (Lambeth Palace Library [LPL], TG56, p. 6).

At the end of the sixteenth century and in the early years of the seventeenth, a number of baptisms and marriages were celebrated in the chapel at Ford; these were recorded in the registers of Herne, Reculver or Hoath, whose incumbents had presumably officiated. Robert, son of William Ewell was baptised in September 1598; Richard Lancaster a London goldsmith married Anne Cornewall, widow, in September 1606 and on the same day and in the same place, his sister Ann married Richard Rippington of London, vintner; Thomas,

son of John Knowler of the adjacent farm of Shelvingford was baptised in April 1607 - father and son were both, later, mayors of Faversham; Francis, son of Sir Thomas Perryn, or Peryent, was baptised 'in ye chappel of Forde' in September 1620, and Foulke Cockett and Mary Harris of Reculver were married there in November 1621. Apart from Ewell and the Knowlers, and Mary Harris, the parties to these events were not local, and their presence is some indication of the social status of the manor estate when Sir Stephen Thornhurst was Keeper there.

The King's demands upon his subjects were among the causes which led to his deposition and execution, so the incident of the Archbishop's refusal to license a political sermon and his sequestration to Ford were links in the chain of events which resulted in the demolition of the manor house, and thus to our present knowledge of its extent and layout. The Parliament which asserted its authority over the affairs of State and Church, sent Commissioners to survey the properties which it had acquired from the latter Establishment. The Parliamentary Survey of 1647 (LPL Comm. XIIa/23) provides most of our knowledge of the dimensions of the manor house, and even then much of that has to be inferred since only some of the features are actually sized. In 1933, B. J. Bennett, a professional surveyor, studied the text of the Ford Survey, and a bird's-eye view of the house which appeared on an estate plan, and published a reconstruction drawing which appeared in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, xlv, facing page 169. It is not entirely acceptable, and a more recent examination of the actual site offers some alternative details, but as a block diagram it gives a useful idea of the layout of the building.

The bird's-eye view referred to was discovered in the early 1930s among the papers of a family once connected with the farm (**Plate I**). It had been part of a larger plan, and showed only the park area, embellished with rolling hills dotted with trees, and spotted deer. The date 1624 was pencilled lightly across the plan, but the similarity of the deer, and the lettering of the word 'Parke', to those on a plan of Scott's Hall, Smeeth (Centre for Kentish Studies, U274 p. 1) which shows a house with similar conventions, drawn by Thomas Boycot of Fordwich in 1656, makes it likely that it is by the same man, and that the date should be later than that suggested. Unfortunately the rest of the plan has never materialised, and the Ford Park fragment has now been lost; only the photograph taken for Bennett's paper survives, and a copy has been placed in the Centre for Kentish Studies (TRP 429/1).

The combination of the Parliamentary Survey (Hussey 1904) and the bird's-eye picture (see **Fig. 1, top**) shows that there was a quadrangular layout of buildings set around one large courtyard, 89ft by 80, and two smaller ones, 52 by 49, and 52 by 30. For consistency, and

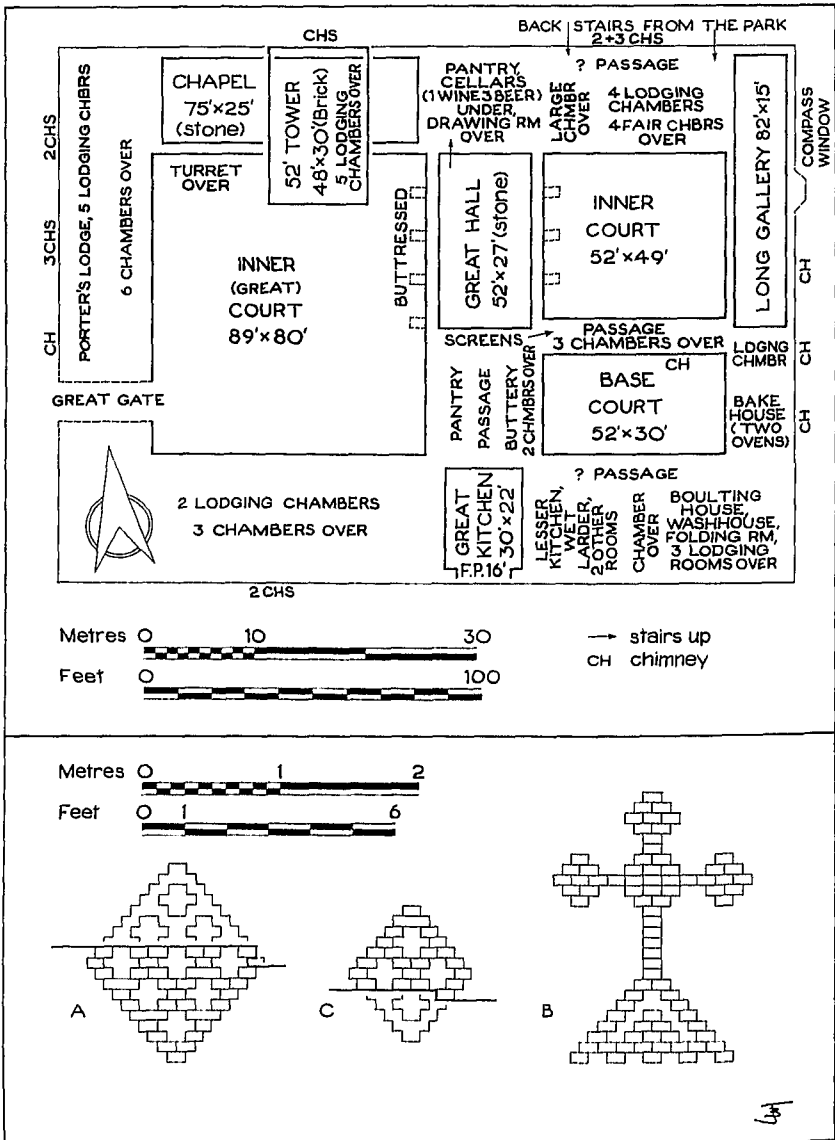


Fig. 1 Layout of buildings based on 1647 Survey, and patterns of brick on farmyard wall; drawn by John Bowen.



Seventeenth-century plan of Ford Park.
(Herne Bay Historical Records Society) Photo by T. A. Bennett

for the purpose of this paper, all measurements, whether quoted from the Survey, or estimated, or measured on the site, are here expressed in Imperial units of feet and inches..

Taking the Great Court first, to the west was the entrance gate and porter's lodge, set in a range of accommodation, with more lodgings on the south side. On the north was the Chapel, 75ft by 25, with a bell and a turret, pulpit and seats. East of the court was a range consisting of the buttressed, stone-built Great Hall, 52ft by 27, separated from the pantry and buttery by a screens passage which led from the Great Court on one side to a covered way dividing the two inner courts on the other. Above this covered way, or cloister, were three rooms, with windows looking on to both courts.

A passage between the buttery and pantry south of the screens led to the Kitchens. The Great Kitchen, which was 30ft by 22, with a fireplace 16ft wide, was equipped with two ovens, a cistern and a cauldron, both of lead, and a water supply, presumably drawn from the spring at the rear of the house. There was also a smaller kitchen, with dry and wet larders.

The buildings flanking the inner courts were mainly lodgings and domestic offices, including a bakehouse and a wash-house in the south and east ranges. At the north end of the Great Hall a staircase led to drawing rooms on an upper floor above the wine and beer cellars. From here there was access to the Tower. On the east end of the complex of buildings was a Long Gallery, 82ft by 15, with one large window and a 'compass window' or oriel, and what is described as a 'compass ceiling clouded' - evidently a vaulted ceiling painted to represent the sky.

These dimensioned rooms are all that we have to go on, but by putting them into their relative positions, as described, Bennett built up his block plan. The one part for which we have no measurements at all is the depth of the main west front range, but at least the ghost of the south-west corner with a buttress seems to have survived, and until 1964 a stone-walled shed appeared to include part of the west front wall. Until 1964, too, parts of the Great Hall and Chapel were standing, and these factors provide a basis for tentative overall dimensions. Putting these various pieces into place as Bennett did, and correcting certain assumptions from the remains there forty years ago, we can suggest an overall size for the complex of about 160ft by 210.

Bennett's drawing sets the whole building too squarely to the road, as compared with the actual site, but the stable block and haystore described in the Survey remain in part as a fine barn, the position of this is rather limited by the hillside behind it, and so it lies somewhat obliquely to the farmyard. This forces anyone approaching the Manor

House site to tend towards the south, and it is probable that the entrance through the west frontage into the Great Court was more to the south than Bennett suggests. The Hall and Chapel walls already referred to had the same orientation as the barn, which helps to confirm the positive relationship of the barn to the house. The track through the present farmyard passes through a gateway at the position suggested for the main entrance.

There is one remaining feature of the Manor House, not located so far in this summary of the layout, and this is the Tower, which has long presented a problem. The Survey as printed by Hussey reads: 'Upon the north side of the whole fabric from the east angle westwards, a tower built of durable brick, the length 48 feet, the breadth 60 feet and the height 52 feet'. It had five storeys of accommodation and a lead roof. The apparent oddity of the wording, with the breadth greater than the length, led Bennett to have the wording checked against the manuscript at Lambeth, when he was advised that '60' should be '90', which merely made matters worse. A more recent examination of the Survey shows that the breadth is in fact 30ft, which at least restores the logic of the proportions. The real problem, however, is to locate this substantial brick building, probably one of Morton's additions. Bennett's placing of it north of the Chapel is not practicable, since until its demolition, the foot of the north wall of the Chapel still served as a retaining wall for the base of the hill flanking the site, and there was no room for a building beyond it. The bird's-eye view shows a tower, but it rises as part of the north face of the Great Court, and it now seems likely that it actually stood over the Chapel. It may be that the 25ft internal width of the latter, with walls about 2½ft thick on each side would have provided a suitable base for the tower's external breadth of 30ft. Wherever it stood, this brick structure, providing additional guest chambers, was perhaps Morton's most considerable contribution to Ford manor.

Between the Manor House complex and the road, the Survey describes yet another courtyard and a garden surrounded by brick walls, and the stableyard, nearly 300ft by 100 overall, with the stable building on the north side, 'joist and timbered for the storage of hay without boards'. There is now a fine old barn on this site, much of it clearly dating from early Tudor times, which evidently embodies much of the structure of the western part of this building (Fig. 2).

The late crown-post roof on early red brick walls suggests that the stables date from Morton's time. Five bays and a half survive with crown posts on tie beams in each main truss as well as (unusually) between the bays. The main trusses have the typical 'passing shore' construction which is found in many medieval barns in Kent, and one

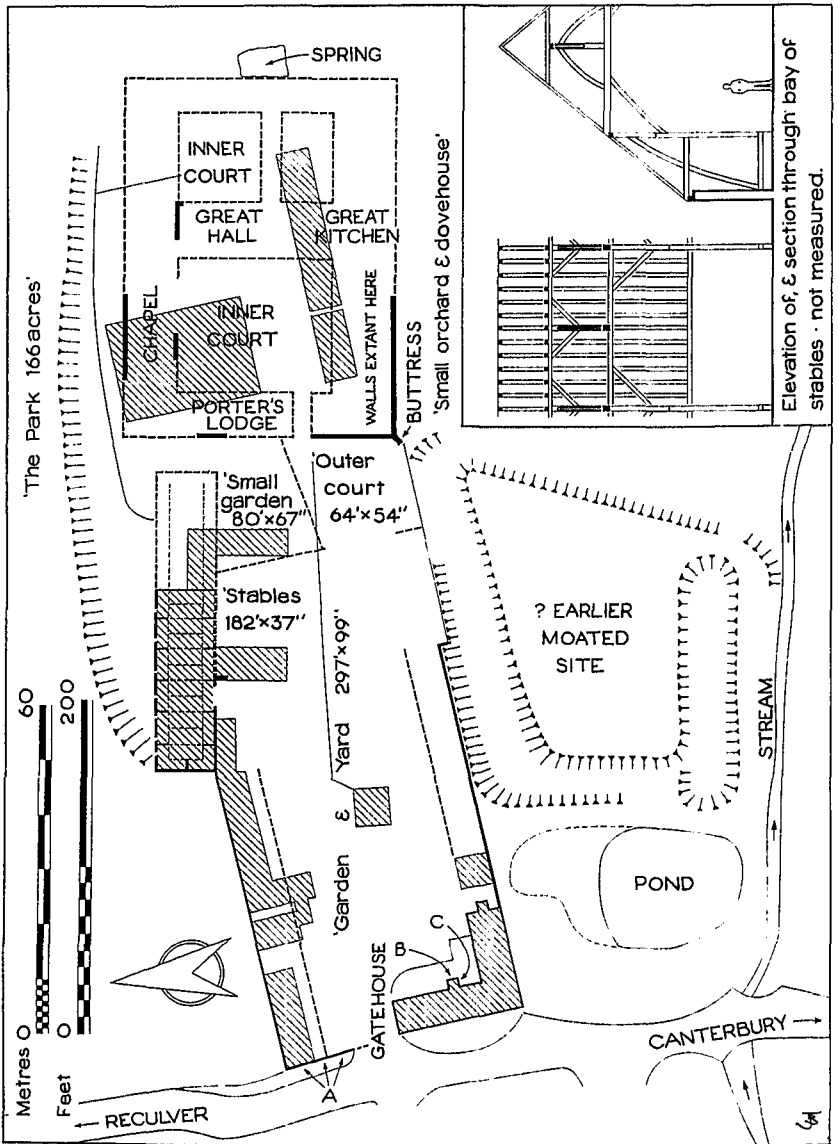


Fig. 2 Plan of Ford Manor farmyard with present and earlier buildings; *inset*: detail of Morton's stables, now a barn; drawn by John Bowen.

wallplate has a typical late medieval horizontally-halved scarf. The walls of the stable are 16in. thick and in English bond; in the north wall there are seven four-centred windows, while in the central part of the south wall were at least eight ventilation slits. The present eastern wall is clearly inserted between the north and south walls, confirming that the building has been shortened considerably from its original length of 182ft.

The farmhouse fronting the road, built of brick of several periods, incorporates features which must have been part of the 'out gatehouse or lodge, usually the housekeeper's, having four ground floor rooms, three above, and two stacks of chimneys, and about two bays of out-housing serving for a brew-house' (Hussey 1904, 123). In the east wall, at the back of the house, is a garderobe with some blue-header decoration in the brickwork. There is also some surviving diaper-work on the outside of the boundary-wall fronting the road (Fig. 1, *bottom*).

South of the mansion house and yard was an orchard with a timber dove-house. One of the duties of the Keeper of the Park, who held a lease of the estate, was to provide for the Archbishop all the young pigeons out of the dove-house whenever he stayed in Canterbury or within a twelve-mile radius. In this area between the modern farmyard and the stream is now a pond, and a series of depressions forming a lozenge-shape, suggesting a filled-in moat (see Fig. 2). The north and west sides of this 'diamond' were still shown as water-filled on the 1872 Ordnance Survey plan. Bennett (1933, 170) says 'Local tradition speaks of Fishponds on the site, and within comparatively recent years a moat adjoining the ruins has been filled in'. He concludes that as this is not mentioned in the Survey it may have been a later feature; only proper investigation would settle the point.

The Survey assessed the demolition value of the buildings at £820. The greater part of the house was pulled down not long afterwards, but the actual demolition was far from complete. Bennett (1933, 173) states that the materials actually realised £840.

After the Restoration, when the property came back into the archbishop's hands, the desolation was apparent. On 18 March, 1661, a visiting official reported that 'Ford pallace is so much ruonated (*sic*) as if the author therein did count it merit to make such destruction; the mannor house toally cast down... the Chapell made a barne'. He reported, too, that the pales of the perimeter fence were down (LPL TC3). The park was let to the local Stephen Knowler, and a twelve year lease of 2 December 1661 stipulated that he should plant at least 100 poles or rods (1,650ft) of double quickset hedge each year until it was fully enclosed (LPL TA656/1). However, Knowler was not a good tenant, neglected his hedging obligations and fell into

arrears with his rent, so that by 1667 he was asking for an abatement, or for leave to surrender his lease 'without one of which (*options*) hee is undone' (LPL TC4).

The gatehouse and the 'fayre large barne', which were not included in his lease, were badly out of repair, and in the following April, Ralphe Snowe, on his annual visit for Archbishop Sheldon, reported: 'I finde a greate part of ye large Barne falne to ye ground and ye gatehouse ... scarce habitable'. He had obtained estimates from a local mason and a carpenter to make them good, though he thought these rather high at £80 to £90 'besides Timber' which would be obtained from the archbishop's own neighbouring Blean Woods. Knowler's position was again reported on, and Snowe resolved to take legal steps to secure his grain crops - 'if not then to clapp Knowler in prison'. The tenant had also been doing some further demolition on his own account, selling six or seven loads of the best stone, 'but had paid dearly for them. For having to carry them to the waters side with his owne Teame, and ye Vessel in which they were to be put lying somewhat from ye shore he was forced to drive his horses into ye water (being very cold) where they stood so long in the water at ye severall unloadings that (as J. Somner tells me) every one of his horses died'.

During the same period the Churchwardens of Herne were recording the purchase of tiles from 'Forde', evidently more of the spoils of Knowler's enterprise. By the 1669 visit, Knowler was out, and the new tenant, Cullen, was a very industrious, honest man, and the gatehouse was now being made good, perhaps evidenced by the area of Flemish bond work of the front of the farmhouse. More than a century later, a survey of 1788 reported that the farmhouse and buildings were newly repaired in a substantial manner, and the pigeon house, mentioned in the 1647 Survey, 'being in a ruinous state is now converted into a well built Grainery' (LPL TC82). Thereafter the ruins fell into decay, or were adapted as time passed; they remained a quarry for stone when required. Two late eighteenth-century engravings record their appearance at that time (**Plates II and III**). A hundred years later still, the search for stones to build a rockery turned up a fragment of a Roman inscription which still defies interpretation, and is now in the British Museum (JRS, xxiv, 1934, 190-220). By 1958 there was only the northern end of the Great Hall standing significantly in the farmyard (**Plates IV and V**), with a low length of the Chapel wall against the hillside. On the south side of the site a length of low wall supported the farmyard behind some oasts, and its return along about 50ft of the west frontage seemed to have been rebuilt - one step of a spiral staircase is built into this. Northward of this another piece of wall formed part of a thatched shed on the same line.



Ruins of the Archbishopal Palace of Ford.

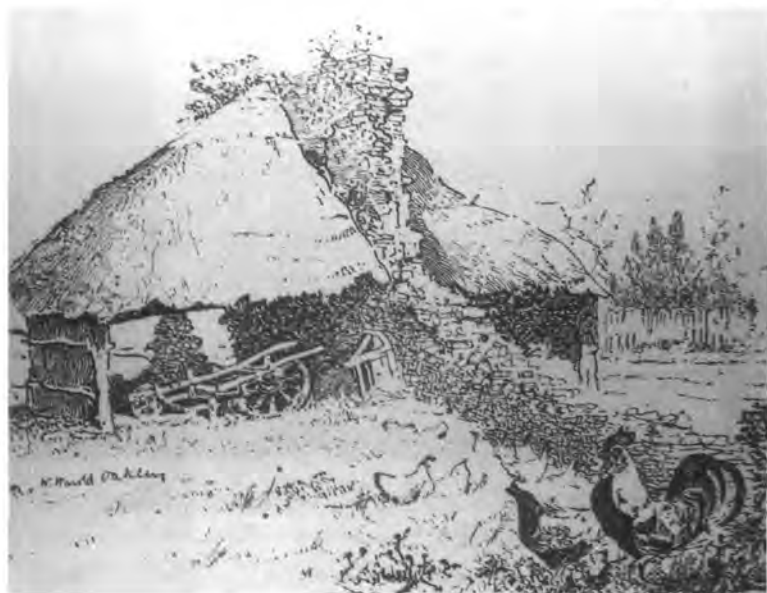
Ruins of Ford in 1774 from Duncombe's *History of Reculver and Herne*,
1784

In 1963 the Church Commissioners sold the farm, without any protective covenants regarding the ruins, and there was no statutory listing under the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. The new owner decided to clear the site, as he was doubtful of the stability of the standing wall, and to make way for a large utility building in the summer of 1964. The Ministry of Public Building and Works, alerted by the Ministry of Agriculture, began the then laborious process of scheduling the ruins. Unfortunately the notice of scheduling, sent to the owner's solicitors, was delayed by a postal strike, and was not finally delivered until the Hall and Chapel walls had been demolished on 24 July 1964. Nothing was built over the site until 1976, when a much smaller building was erected. It is understood that evidence of foundations was located during the laying of drainage from this building to the spring east of the site but the exact position was not recorded at the time.

PLATE III



Ruins of Ford in 1785 from the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1785)



North Wall of the Great Hall in 1889. Drawing by Harold Oakley, for S. T. Smith's *A Ramble in Rhyme in the Country of Cranmer and Ridley*

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North Wall of the Great Hall in 1958. Photo by H. Gough

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