

THREE GREAT BENEDICTINE HOUSES IN KENT: THEIR BUILDINGS AND TOPOGRAPHY

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INTRODUCTION

The three largest and richest monastic houses in Kent were the three great houses for Benedictine monks at Canterbury (Christ Church Priory and St. Augustine's Abbey) and Rochester (St. Andrew's Priory). The buildings and topography of two of these houses are well recorded in early volumes of *Archaeologia Cantiana*, notably Volume vii (1868), pp. 1–206 on Christ Church Priory by Professor Robert Willis, Volume xxiv (1900), pp. 1–85 on St. Andrew's Priory by Sir William St. John Hope, as well as Volume lxvi (1934), pp. 179–94, a summary and plan of St. Augustine's Abbey, by Canon R.U. Potts and Professor A. Hamilton Thompson. However, more than fifty years have passed since these volumes were published and it is perhaps time for a re-assessment of the overall topography of these great building complexes in the light of more recent excavations and survey work, particularly at Canterbury.

This present essay will start with Christ Church, Canterbury, where the writer¹ has been carrying out a detailed study of the buildings for the last seven or so years. It will then look at St. Augustine's Abbey, where very recent excavations, surveys and documentary research have revealed a great deal about the outer courts of the abbey, and finally at Rochester Priory where recent excavation and survey work and some comparative work with Canterbury suggests possible new interpretations of the topography of the priory. Both at Christ

¹ He has been greatly assisted in this work by Mrs. Margaret Sparks (on the documentary side) and by John Bowen (whose excellent surveys and drawings illustrate this essay). Other members of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust, notably Paul Bennett, have also helped in this work as well as in the work at St. Augustine's Abbey.

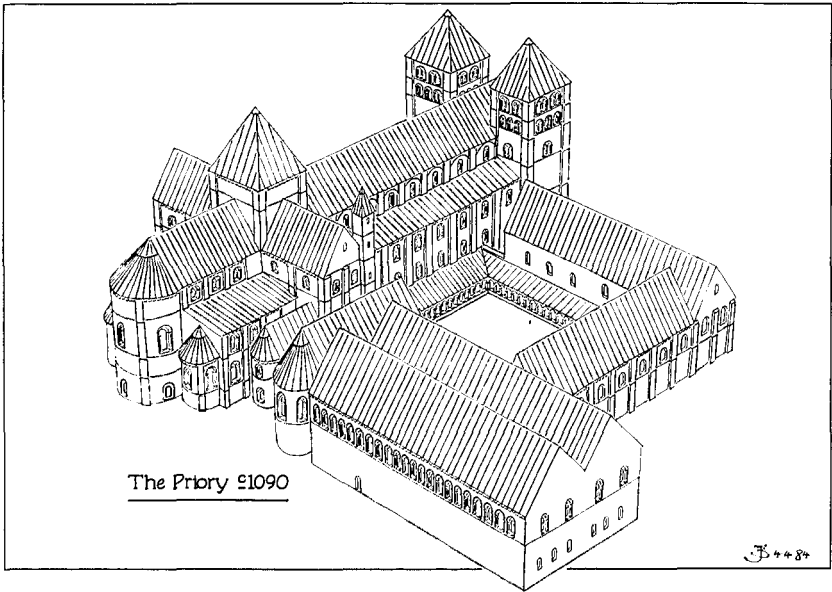


Fig. 1. Christ Church Priory, Canterbury, c. 1090 – a Reconstruction by John Bowen.

Church and St. Andrew's Priors, one is of course starting with the brilliant and very full studies of Willis and Hope, already mentioned, and it is only at St. Augustine's that there is sadly no full study, despite the many years of excavation by Hope, Peers, Potts, Saunders, etc.² Apart from the large phased plan first published in 1934 in the end pocket of *Archaeologia Cantiana* xlvi, one only has a series of interim or shorter reports on aspects of the abbey buildings and topography. Even Sir Alfred Clapham's official 'Blue Guide' of 1955³ is only a very brief summary of the monastic buildings and was clearly intended as an interim statement. One day one hopes that the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate (many of whose inspectors have worked at St. Augustine's) will publish a full report of all the excavations and finds. In the meantime one can only use the many small interim notes that have been published, quite a few of them in *Archaeologia Cantiana*.

² See article by Margaret Sparks, below pp. 325–44.

³ A. Clapham, *St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, Kent* (H.M.S.O., 1955).

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CHRIST CHURCH PRIORY, CANTERBURY

This great Benedictine house was one of the largest and best-documented houses in Britain, though before the Norman conquest virtually nothing is known about its buildings except, that is, the cathedral.⁴ With the advent of Lanfranc as William the Conqueror's first archbishop in 1070 the ruinous Anglo-Saxon monastery was pulled down and replaced by a large new Norman complex of buildings, which formed the core of all later work (Fig. 1). By c. 1090, a new cathedral had been built (1070–77) as well as all the principal buildings around the great cloister (Chapter House, Dormitory, Refectory and *Cellarium*). Building work did not then stop, however, and with the coming of St. Anselm as archbishop and Ernulf as prior (later to be Bishop of Rochester), an enormous expansion eastwards of both the cathedral and of the priory buildings took place, and it was only in the middle of the twelfth century that the main Romanesque buildings were complete and that Prior Wibert (1151–67) in Becket's lifetime could put in the monastic water supply and complete the building of a series of tall towers (including the central tower or 'Angel steeple') on the cathedral (Fig. 2). By happy coincidence, it is exactly at this time that the unique 'waterworks plan' (in reality a detailed pictorial map) was made, and by good fortune it has survived to become the only Romanesque monastic plan, apart from the St. Gall plan, to exist in the whole of Europe.⁵

With the turmoil that followed the murder of Becket in 1170, and with the large-scale rebuilding of the Choir that followed the great fire of 1174, very little else was done in the priory between about 1170 and the translation and dedication of Becket's shrine in 1220. In the Archbishop's Palace, however, a very large new hall was constructed (c. 1200–20) by Archbishops Hubert Walter and Stephen Langton once the dispute with the monks over the colleges at Hackington and Lambeth had been settled. This new hall, which replaced Lanfranc's original hall just north-west of the Cathedral, was on a truly monumental scale. The building extended right across the Palace precinct from the priory boundary to Palace (earlier St. Alphege's) Street and was fractionally short of 200 ft. long externally by 68 ft. wide. It was aisled and the main hall was eight bays long (internal dimensions 165 ft. by 61 ft.). Beyond the dais end of the hall on the

⁴ See H.M. Taylor 'The Anglo-Saxon Cathedral at Canterbury', *Arch. Journ.*, cxxvi (1969) 101–29 and N.P. Brooks, *The early History of the Church of Canterbury* (1984) 37–59.

⁵ The 'Waterworks plan' was first fully studied by Professor Willis in *Arch. Cant.*, vii (1868), 174–81, and 196–9.

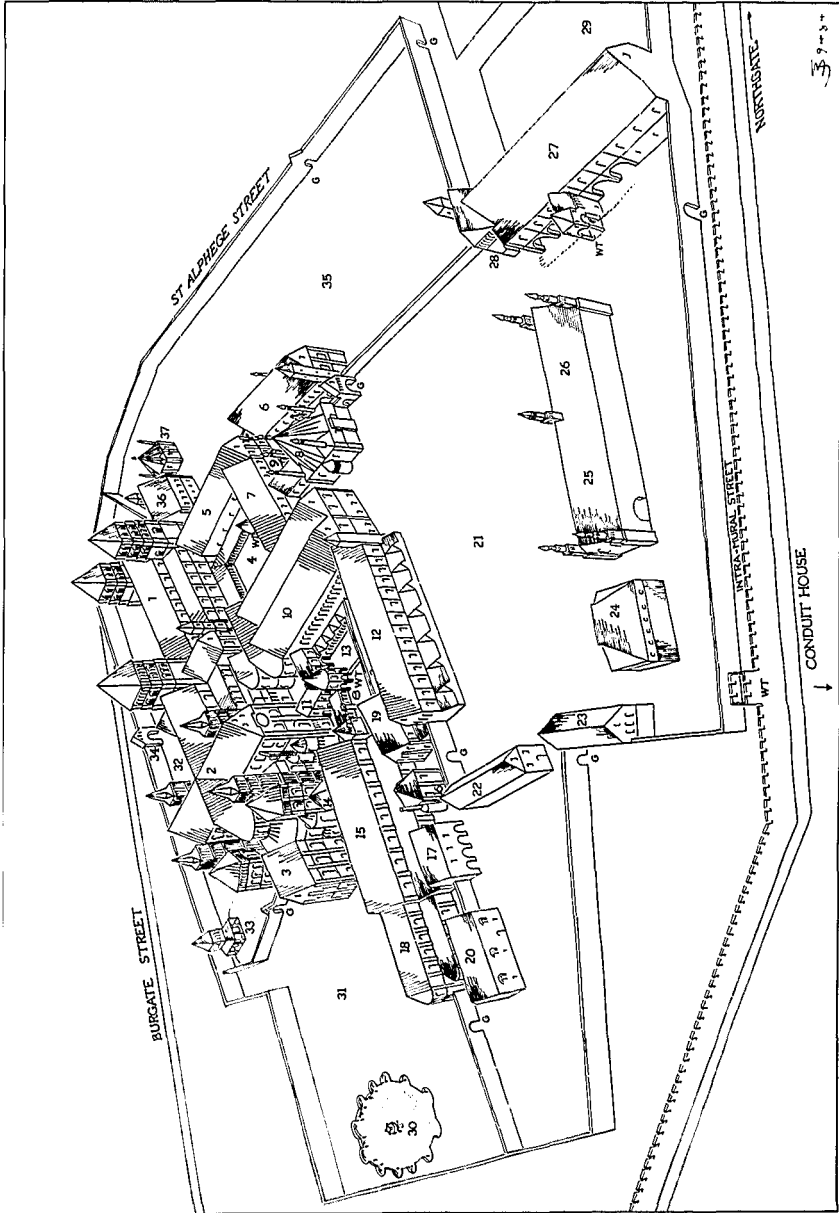


Fig. 2. Christ Church Priory, Canterbury, c. 1160 – a Reconstruction by John Bowen.

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Fig. 2. (Key)

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|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Nave | 21. Outer (Green) Court |
| 2. Choir | 22. Bath-house and Camera |
| 3. Trinity Chapel | 23. Barn |
| 4. Great Cloister | 24. Granary |
| 5. Cellarer's Range | 25. Bakehouse |
| 6. Guest Hall | 26. Brewhouse |
| 7. Refectory | 27. North (New) Hall |
| 8. Kitchen | 28. Court Gate |
| 9. Locutory | 29. Almonry |
| 10. Great Dormitory | 30. Fish Pond |
| 11. Night Passage | 31. Monks' Cemetery |
| 12. Necessarium | 32. Lay Cemetery |
| 13. Herb Garden | 33. Bell Tower |
| 14. Vestry/Treasury | 34. Cemetery Gate |
| 15. Infirmary Hall | 35. Archbishop's Outer Court |
| 16. Infirmary Kitchen | 36. Archbishop's Great Hall |
| 17. Infirmary Necessarium | 37. Archbishop's Kitchen |
| 18. Infirmary Chapel | WT Water Tower |
| 19. Prior's Old Camera | G Gate |
| 20. Prior's New Camera | |

east, and part of the same structure with it, was a very long solar block on a vaulted undercroft. This hall, whose full dimensions have only recently been realized, is therefore the second largest great hall in Britain after Westminster Hall.⁶

During the thirteenth century much new work was put in hand from the complete rebuilding of the Frater range (following on from the completion of the neighbouring archbishop's Great Hall), to the construction of a new Prior's Chapel (over an undercroft) in the Infirmary cloister and the building of a new *misericord* (or 'Table Hall', as it was called here) on the north side of the Infirmary, where certain monks could eat meat.

With the advent of Henry of Eastry for his very long reign as prior (1285–1331), we also have the first of a series of very detailed lists of works undertaken in the priory,⁷ but from this time onwards much of the work is refurbishing or rebuilding (though often complete rebuilding like in the Chapter House or Almonry) rather than putting up brand-new buildings. The exception however, is in the prior's own house, where Eastry was probably the first prior to construct a large, separate and very comfortable lodging for himself and his successors.

⁶ For a provisional study of this building, see T. Tatton-Brown, 'The Great Hall of the Archbishop's Palace' in (Eds.) N. Coldstream and P. Draper, *Medieval Art and Architecture at Canterbury before 1220* (1982), 112–9.

⁷ Henry of Eastry's list of works (as well as Thomas Chillenden's) were published by Willis in *Arch. Cant.*, vii (1868), 185–90.

Henry of Eastry is also famous for all his work of putting in order the priory finances, as well as for all his rebuilding work.⁸

After Eastry's death in 1331 a much leaner period follows in the middle of which was the Black Death. A new start was, however, made in 1379 on the complete rebuilding of the nave of the cathedral. This was originally on the initiative of Archbishop Simon of Sudbury (murdered in the Peasants' Revolt in 1381) but from 1390–1414 under Prior Thomas Chillenden, it was carried on and expanded to include the rebuilding of the great cloister, chapter house and many other buildings including many monastic guesthouses, like 'Meister Omers' and Chillenden's Chambers (to the north of the Great Kitchen), which still survive to this day.⁹ Chillenden is described by Leland as 'the greatest Builder of a Prior that ever was in Christes Church.'

The troubled years of the fifteenth century following this saw, however, a decline in building work, but despite this many very fine rebuilding campaigns were undertaken and completed, particularly in the cathedral (south-west and north-west transepts, south-west tower, etc.) but also in the priory. Perhaps the most important building in the latter was the construction in 1444 of a magnificent new library over the Prior's Chapel.¹⁰ Sadly, this was destroyed without trace in the seventeenth century. At the very end of the fifteenth century, one other great rebuilding was completed, though not without change of plan, and that was of the great central tower ('Bell Harry' Tower). This huge two-stage tower was paid for by Archbishop John Morton (whose acquisition of a cardinal's cap from the Borgia Pope in 1493 it perhaps celebrates) and built by Priors Selling and Goldstone II. Just after 1500, it was completed by its great architect, John Wastell, with a superb fan-vault.¹¹

The final phase of rebuilding, also under Prior Goldstone II (1495–1517) was the rebuilding of the Cemetery ('Christ Church') Gate. This very late Gothic and Renaissance structure, which like the upper stage of 'Bell Harry', is also largely made of brick and may have been a memorial to Prince Arthur, Henry VIII's elder brother.¹²

In 1535, Christ Church Priory had a gross income of nearly £3,000 and was the third richest ecclesiastical house in Britain after West-

⁸ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England I* (1948), 49–54.

⁹ For Chillenden's list of works, see note 7 above.

¹⁰ See M.R. James, *The Ancient Libraries of Canterbury and Dover* (1903) for a discussion of the books and catalogues in this library.

¹¹ See C. Hewett and T. Tatton-Brown 'New structural Evidence regarding Bell Harry Tower . . .' *Arch. Cant.*, xcii (1976), 132–4.

¹² P.H. Blake, *Christ Church Gate, Canterbury Cathedral* (1965).

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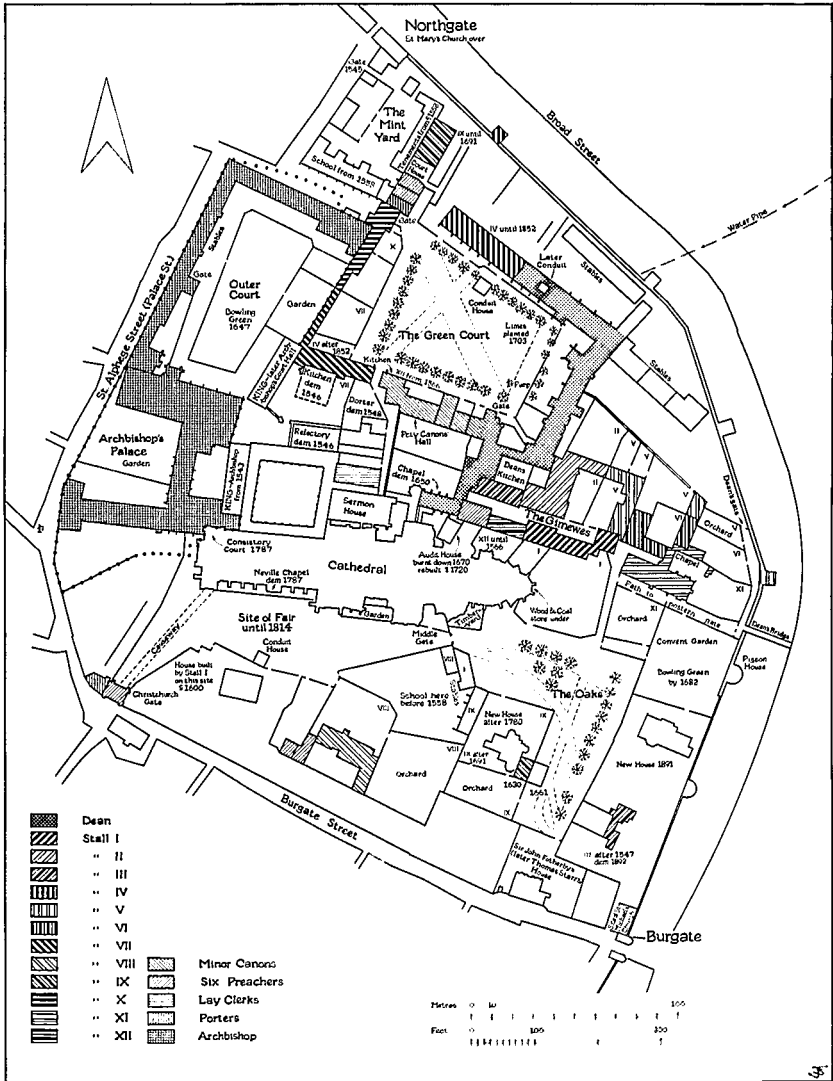


Fig. 3. Canterbury Cathedral Precincts, as adapted after 1541 for the Dean and Chapter.

minster and Glastonbury Abbeys.¹³ Only a few years later, however, it was dissolved like all the other religious foundations and was replaced in 1541 by a 'New Foundation' for a dean, twelve canons, minor canons, six preachers, lay clerks, porters, masters and pupils of the school, etc., (Fig. 3). As a result of this, however, many of its non-communal buildings were re-used straight away, and quite a few of these have survived unscathed to the present day despite some later destruction work particularly in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁴

The new surveys carried out by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust (Figs. 3 and 4) have now tried to plot and reconstruct the positions of all known buildings of the medieval priory.¹⁵ To do this, a detailed examination has been made of all the buildings in the Cathedral Precincts (many of which contain hidden medieval features, particularly roofs) as well as a detailed study of all surviving medieval documentation¹⁶ – all of this carrying on the work of Professor Willis. On top of this, a careful examination has been made of all known early maps, plans, engravings, drawings and photographs (though this cannot pretend to be exhaustive) while in the last seven years quite a number of rescue excavations in the Precincts have been undertaken which have thrown a great deal of extra light on the now-demolished buildings like the Archbishop's Great Hall, Almonry Chapel, *Aula Nova* and the north range of 'Meister Omers'.¹⁷ The sites of some buildings like the Sacrist's House (south of the lay cemetery), prior's great barn and the fishpond (*piscina*) can only be approximately located, but these unlocated buildings are very few, and this new plan of Christ Church Priory must be one of the most complete plans of a great medieval monastic house to exist anywhere. It has also helped (by comparing topographical arrangements) to reconstruct some aspects of the plans of other great Benedictine priories, notably Rochester (see below).

¹³ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England III* (1959), 473. St. Augustine's was the fourteenth richest house with a gross income of over £1,700.

¹⁴ Some of the nineteenth-century destructions, of the Sub-Prior's Chamber and *Necessarium* for example, were recorded by Willis.

¹⁵ To be fully published in *The Archaeology of Canterbury*, iii and iv (forthcoming).

¹⁶ Carried out by Mrs. Margaret Sparks; a new history of Canterbury Cathedral is also in preparation.

¹⁷ All these excavations will be fully published in *The Archaeology of Canterbury*, iii and iv (forthcoming).

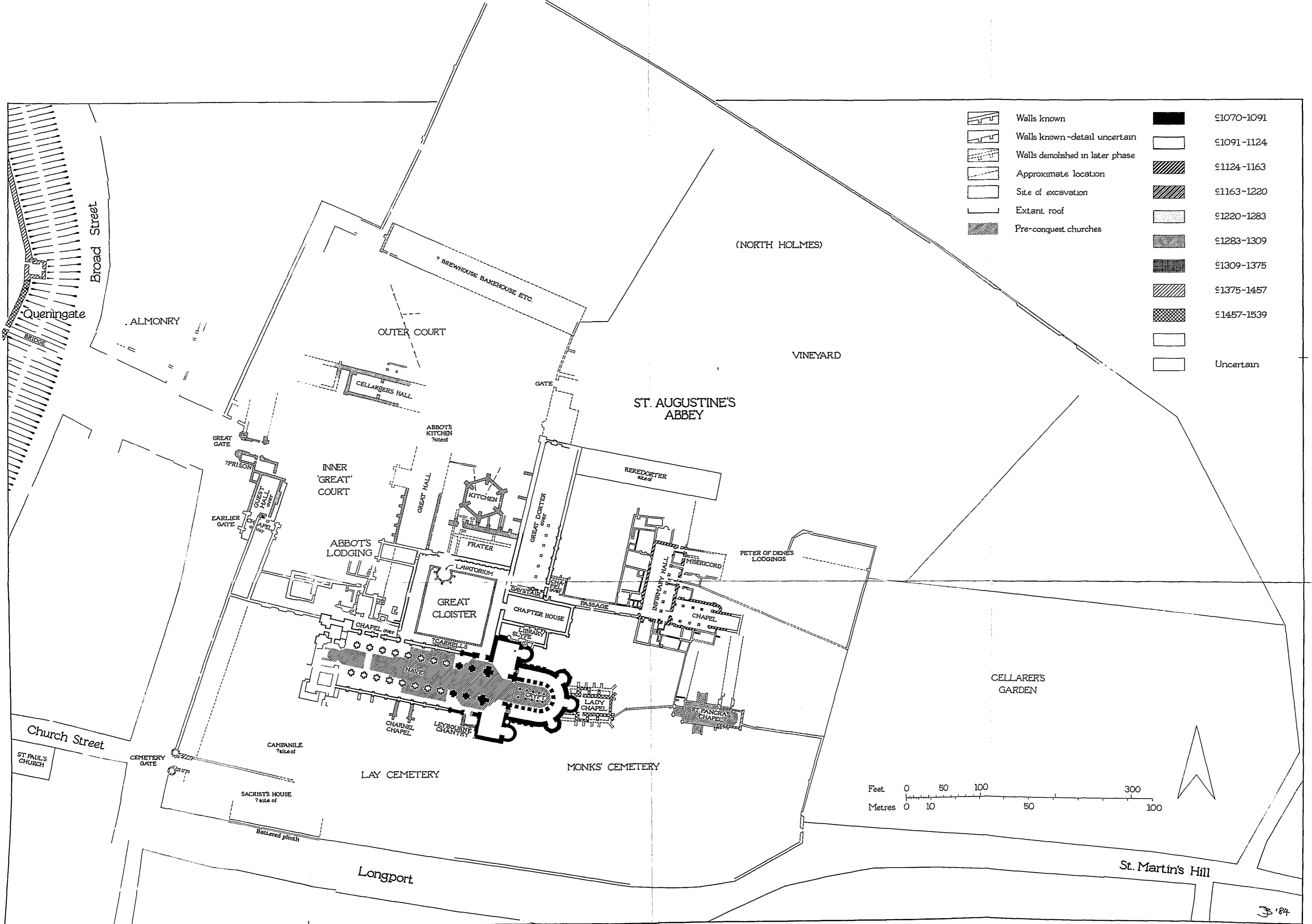


Fig. 5. Phased Plan of St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury.

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ST. AUGUSTINE'S ABBEY, CANTERBURY

This second large Canterbury Benedictine house¹⁸ was situated outside the city walls to the east, and although now very ruinous, much is known about the buildings from the long-drawn-out series of excavations that has been continuing for well over a century but have, as stated above, not been fully published. The most famous, and best discussed, buildings are the churches of a pre-Norman conquest date, and it is not proposed to discuss these further here.¹⁹ This discussion will try to look at the huge new monastery of the post-Conquest period and, in particular, the topography of its conventual buildings which has been little discussed.²⁰

Soon after the arrival of Lanfranc as archbishop in 1070, a monk from Mont St. Michel called Scotland was appointed Abbot of St. Augustine's. This 'dominant ram of his flock' (as a contemporary chronicler calls him) almost immediately demolished the seventh-century church of St. Mary and Wulfric's unfinished octagon to the west of it and in the years 1073–87 built the crypt, presbytery, transepts and two bays of the nave of a great new church. His successor as Abbot Wido or Guido (1087–99) demolished the original church of Saints Peter and Paul after having translated the bodies of all the early archbishops and kings to the various new shrines his predecessor had created for them in the new church.²¹ The translation ceremony was actually carried out by Gundulf, Bishop of Rochester, in 1091, and once this was done, work continued on the new nave which was probably completed early in the twelfth century under Abbot Hugh I (Fleury, 1099–1124). This abbot also probably completed the western towers of the church,²² and both he and his predecessor must have been responsible for the building of the

¹⁸ There was also a much smaller house for Benedictine nuns at Canterbury, St. Sepulchre's Priory; for a summary history of all these houses, see VCH (Kent), ii, (1926), 113–44.

¹⁹ See H.M. and J. Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture* (1965) 134–43, and A.D. Saunders, 'Excavations in the Church of St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury – 1955–58', *Med. Arch.*, xxii (1978), 25–63.

²⁰ Though see R.J.E. Boggis, *A History of St. Augustine's Monastery, Canterbury* (1901) 159–85 for an early discussion of the buildings.

²¹ This was recorded in great detail at the time by a monk called Goscelin, see *Historia Translationis S. Augustini Episcopi* (Ed. J.P. Migne), *Patrologia latina*, clv, 13–46.

²² Much of the north-west tower survived till 1822, and there are several good drawings of it.

principal monastic buildings (cloister, slype,²³ chapter house, dormitory, frater and cellarer's range²⁴). Other buildings must also have been built at this time including the reredorter, the original abbot's chamber, the principal gates and probably the Brewhouse, Bakehouse, etc. It is also at this time that the lay cemetery to the south of the church was expanded southwards into Longport. Hugh of Fleury's successor was another Hugh (of Trottescliffe), who was a monk from Rochester. During his reign as abbot (1126–51), he almost certainly either built or completed various other main buildings of the convent of which only the Infirmary (Hall and Chapel) have been excavated. Other buildings including the Almonry and Sacristy as well as the abbot's mill in Canterbury are first mentioned at this time.²⁵

Again, as at Christ Church, the later years of the twelfth century are very difficult ones for the monastery, particularly under the notorious Abbot Clarembald (1163–76), and it is during this time that a large fire is recorded in the main church, in 1168. Clarembald's long-reigning successor Roger I (1176–1212) almost certainly rebuilt the choir, presumably trying to build, on a smaller scale, something as 'modern' as the great choir at Christ Church that was also being built at this time.²⁶

The middle and later years of the thirteenth century, under Abbots Roger II (1253–73), Nicholas Thorne (resigned 1283) and Thomas Fyndon (1283–1309) are a very great period of rebuilding and expansion in the abbey. In the 1260s the Refectory is being completely rebuilt and we hear of work in the Dormitory, on a new bath-house and on a new chapel over the gate.²⁷ This gate may well be the original main gate, which was probably 100 ft. or so to the south of the later Fyndon Gate (built c. 1300–09), and on the north side of this gate was built (probably at this time, though it is not documented) the new first-floor guest hall. This building, which still survives with its

²³ Probably the library and *vestiarium*, see M.R. James (note 10 above), where a late-fifteenth-century catalogue suggests *circa* one thousand nine hundred books in the library. 'The library' (i.e. a collection of books) is first mentioned in c. 1307, when it was annually taken into the Chapter House for checking.

²⁴ (Ed.) A.H. Davis, *William Thorne's Chronicle of St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury* (1934), 63, says that Abbot Hugh I 'built the chapter house and the dormitory from the foundations.' He also built the *pulpitum* in the church.

²⁵ Thorne, 68–9.

²⁶ For the few vestiges of this choir that have been discovered, see C. Miscampbell, 'A twelfth-century Rebuilding at St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury', in (Ed.) A. Detsicas, *Collectanea Historica: Essays in Memory of Stuart Rigold* (1981), 63–5.

²⁷ Thorne, 249–50. There was also a shaving-house next to the bath-house from c. 1264.

original late thirteenth-century roof,²⁸ was probably a guest hall (like the *Aula Nova* at Christ Church) and may have replaced the original Norman Almonry. In the 1270s and 80s, the great cloister was rebuilt (including the *lavatorium* in the north-west corner), and a little later work started on completely rebuilding the west range of the cloister as a very grand new house for the abbot.²⁹ At the south end was a large new first-floor chapel,³⁰ while at the north end a very big new first-floor hall was built, of which only the south end of the undercroft has been excavated.³¹ This range must originally have extended much further to the north (the hall was at least six and may have been eight bays long), and a mid-seventeenth-century engraving of the abbey ruins³² shows a large porch with a large chamber over it on the west side at the north end. It is also significant that in 1283, the abbot was allowed 'to enclose the lane between the door of the court of the Abbey and his land at Nordholm'.³³ This must indicate the first stage of an expansion to the north, as a further licence was granted in 1300 to enclose 150 by 80 ft. of land 'in the suburb of Canterbury adjoining their court for the enlargement thereof'.³⁴ Recent excavations by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust³⁵ have found part of a very large east-west range to the north of the present 'Great Court', and it seems very likely that this was a new late thirteenth-century cellarer's range built on the north side of an enlarged inner court to replace the west range of the cloister taken over for the abbot's house. North of this again are the ruins of a west wall and gable of what must be the brewhouse and bakehouse range, also built at about this time presumably to replace the Norman buildings.³⁶ We also know that in 1287-91 the new hexagonal kitchen was erected. The culmination of all this work came in 1308 when Abbot Fyndon was licensed to crenellate the Great Gate of the abbey, and this splendid gate, of course, still survives. Fyndon died in 1309 after being abbot for

²⁸ See J. Munby, M. Sparks and T. Tatton-Brown, 'Crown-post and King-strut Roofs in south-east England,' *Med. Arch.*, xxvii (1983), 123-5.

²⁹ In 1276, 'an inner chamber was added for the Lord Abbot next to the kitchen,' Thorne, 262.

³⁰ The tracery for the east window of this survived till the eighteenth century, see Buck's engraving of 1735 or Stukeley's drawing of 1722.

³¹ Now covered by William Butterfield's library for St. Augustine's College.

³² Drawn by T. Johnson and engraved by D. King for Dugdale's, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (1655).

³³ *Cal. Pat. Rolls.*, Ed. I (1281-91), 51.

³⁴ *Cal. Pat. Rolls.*, Ed. I (1292-1301), 527.

³⁵ See Paul Bennett in 'Interim Report on Work in 1983 by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust,' *Arch. Cant.*, xcix (1983), 247-51.

³⁶ Thorne, 249, says £30 was given in 1267 by brother Adam for 'changing over the Bakehouse and the Brewery'. The granary was presumably also in this area.

twenty-seven years and he can be compared in some ways with his great contemporary (and even longer-reigning), Prior Henry of Eastry. Like Eastry, Thomas of Fyndon is also recorded as a great builder, and we are told that he built the kitchen from its foundations, entirely renewed the dormitory roof, constructed a stone 'torale', and built the Abbot's Chapel with a new hall and the great gate as well as renewing 'the stalls in the choir and a window at the other end'.³⁷ Other things were also built in his time including the Charnel Chapel in the cemetery in 1287.³⁸ This chapel is probably the chapel on the south side of the nave of the church which has only recently been re-excavated.³⁹ It is incorrectly plotted on the 1934 plan. The Sacrist's House was also probably to the south of the church (as at Christ Church), and it may well have been in the south-west corner of the lay cemetery near the Cemetery Gate. The southern boundary wall of the abbey near here (on the Longport frontage) is certainly medieval and traces of buttresses of its south side can just be made out. These and the great width of the wall suggest a building to the north.⁴⁰

With the arrival of the next abbot, Ralph of Bourne (1309–34), we see more work taking place on major buildings like the Chapter House, and also the tidying-up and walling on all sides of a large area to the north of the monastery for vineyards. Thorne⁴¹ tells us that in 1320 a licence was obtained to close a road in this area, and that the shady holes and valleys were levelled, the thorns and brambles were rooted out, the bushes were cut down, and a choice vineyard was planted. The surviving wall along the south side of the present North Holmes Road was presumably one of those erected at this time. To the south-east of this was another large walled garden area (where the Sessions House and Prison were built in 1808), which is clearly shown on the c. 1640 map of Canterbury and on several eighteenth-century plans.⁴² This was certainly the cellarer's garden area, and Thorne confirms this when telling the extraordinary story of the escape of Peter of Dene from the monastery in 1330.⁴³ Peter had a large house on the north-east side of the Infirmary Chapel and after

³⁷ Thorne, 394.

³⁸ Thorne, 291 – 'chapel in the cemetery called Charner was finished' in 1287, but not dedicated till 1299.

³⁹ Note in *Med. Arch.*, xxi (1977), 225–6 and fig. 75.

⁴⁰ Workmen at the Abbey tell me that a tile-on-edge hearth was found here when a machine-cut trench was made behind (i.e. north of) the wall in 1972.

⁴¹ Thorne, 435.

⁴² Map 123 in Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library. See also Doidge's map of 1752, and the map in W. Gostling, *A Walk in and about the City of Canterbury*, (1777).

⁴³ Thorne, 465.

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going 'through his own cellar to a door which leads into the cellarer's garden, the lock of which he had previously broken,' he 'got across to the wall opposite the church of St. Martin' and then with outside help and ladders climbed out.

The great complex of buildings around the Norman Infirmary Hall and Chapel were dug out by workmen under the supervision of Sir William St. John Hope, and after his death Professor A. Hamilton Thompson wrote notes on these buildings in 1922 based on Hope's plans and notes. These were published in *Archaeologia Cantiana* in 1934,⁴⁴ and one can here perhaps put forward a few alternative interpretations of these buildings, which are suggested by our study of the similar complex of buildings north and east of the Christ Church Infirmary (called the Homors). Hamilton Thompson suggests that the *misericord* (first built for meat-eating in the late thirteenth century) was in the south end of the range to the west of the Infirmary Hall. This is too small an area, and it is much more likely that the *misericord* was the building on the north-east side of the Infirmary Hall. This building has almost identical dimensions to the Table Hall at Christ Church and also has connecting rooms in the earlier Infirmary Hall aisle in a very similar way to the Table Hall. On the north-west side of the Infirmary Hall is a complex of buildings thought by Hamilton Thompson to be a kitchen and bath-house. I would suggest it was only a large Infirmary Kitchen with associated service buildings. North and south of the Infirmary Chapel were excavated the remains of various thirteenth- to fifteenth-century buildings. Those north of the chapel, as Hamilton Thompson suggests, may have originated as Peter of Dene's suite of buildings, but it is very likely that this complex of buildings was much larger than Hamilton Thompson thought, and extended as a long range much further to the east (into the area now wrongly called the Cellarer's Garden), as well as much further south. Traces of two fourteenth-century ranges were found north of the chancel and west porch of St. Pancras' Church and these clearly extended north to abut the eastern part of the Infirmary Chapel. This complex of buildings in and around the Infirmary can be paralleled at many other places like Peterborough and Ely⁴⁵ as well as at Christ Church, and was probably used for the chambers of senior monks in the later fourteenth to mid-sixteenth centuries.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ *Arch. Cant.*, xlvii (1934), 183-91.

⁴⁵ T.D. Atkinson, *An Architectural History of the Benedictine Monastery of St. Etheldreda at Ely* (1933).

⁴⁶ Peter of Dene's range of houses (for himself, his large retinue and his treasure) was first built in 1312; Thorne, 399.

Outside Fyndon's Great Gate on the north side of what was later called Lady Wootton's Green, was the monastic Almonry. Though badly bombed in the last war,⁴⁷ a few large stone walls survive which have for the first time been plotted on our plan.⁴⁸ Somner, writing in the early seventeenth century, records that he saw the remains of the Almonry Chapel here 'rotting in its own ruins',⁴⁹ though it is not now possible to locate this building.

The very late fourteenth and early fifteenth century at St. Augustine's, as at Christ Church, was another period of rebuilding, particularly after the earthquake of 1382 when Thorne⁵⁰ records that the east window of the Chapter House was broken (presumably an early fourteenth-century window in the twelfth-century walls), as well as the west window of the church and several other buildings. A few years later (c. 1390) the sacrist, Thomas of Ickham, made many great benefactions to the abbey,⁵¹ including several bells (both for the detached campanile and for the western tower), and paying for a new roof on the north side of the church. He also gave money in 1387 to rebuild St. Pancras (the new chancel?) and to build a new Chapter House as well as for rebuilding the cemetery gate. This latter still exists though very heavily restored.

The only other known new building of the latest period is the new Lady Chapel, built onto the east end of the church in the fifteenth century. In the early sixteenth century, it was made smaller with the removal of two side aisles⁵² by Abbot John Dygon (1497–1510), and it was probably a highly decorated (with fan or even pendant-vaults, etc.) building similar to many other chapels of this time, the most magnificent of which was the Henry VII Chantry Chapel at Westminster Abbey. Sadly, it probably only survived for less than fifty years.

Our new survey (Fig. 5) has tried, for the first time to plot out all known buildings of St. Augustine's Abbey⁵³ and uses as its base the

⁴⁷ See note by Dr. W. Urry, who mentioned seeing a two-light fifteenth-century window there in D. Sherlock, 'The Account of George Nycholl for St. Augustine's, 1552–1553' in *Arch. Cant.*, xcix (1983), 44, note 49.

⁴⁸ Professor Frere also excavated a few fragments of medieval walls in this area (also plotted on the plan) see *The Archaeology of Canterbury*, viii (forthcoming).

⁴⁹ W. Somner, *The Antiquities of Canterbury* (2nd ed. 1703), 31.

⁵⁰ Thorne, 616.

⁵¹ Thorne, 673.

⁵² Canon R.U. Potts in his 'The Plan of St. Austin's Abbey, Canterbury', *Arch. Cant.*, xlvi (1934), 182, thought the building was of one period 'with flying buttresses.' This cannot be correct.

⁵³ There is one late-medieval document, inserted on a blank page in an early fourteenth-century manuscript, which gives the dimensions (usually internal dimensions) of certain buildings at the abbey. These can be summarised as:

THREE BENEDICTINE HOUSES

1874 1:500 Ordnance Survey maps. This was supplemented by the coloured (phased) plan published in *Archaeologia Cantiana* in 1934⁵⁴ as well as by our study of the surviving ruins, some of which are not correctly planned on the 1934 plan (particularly along the south side of the nave of the church which was only fully explored in the 1970s). Many of the phasings shown on the 1934 plan are also wrong, for example the Chapter House and 'Slype' (in reality perhaps the Library)⁵⁵ are shown as fourteenth-century even though the clasping plaster buttresses shown on the plan are clearly twelfth-century in date. We have also studied all known earlier prints and drawings of the abbey ruins and have used these to roughly plot out buildings which have now vanished, for example the late-medieval building running north from the dormitory, shown on a print of 1787 by S. Hooper. The survey is not yet complete, but we hope this interim plan (Fig. 5) shows most of the buildings that can be plotted out to date. Only further excavation and re-excavation can reveal more.⁵⁶

ST. ANDREW'S PRIORY, ROCHESTER

In two successive volumes of *Archaeologia Cantiana* published in 1898 and 1900,⁵⁷ Sir William St. John Hope wrote a very full study of the architectural history of the cathedral as well as of the monastic buildings at St. Andrew's Priory. In these studies, he also produced detailed phased plans of the surviving ruins of the priory (Hope also 'dug out' some areas in 1881–85, and planned various walls that are now no longer visible), as well as doing a very full study of all known documentary evidence. I propose, therefore, in this essay to look only at some of the wider issues of the topography of the monastery.

Length of the church 333 ft. Width 72 ft.

Width of the nave of the church without *exedrae* (31½) 34 ft.

Length of the chapter house 87 ft. Width 33 ft.

Length of the dormitory 204 ft. Width 44 ft.

Length of the reredorter 192 ft. Width 24 ft.

Length of the studies (south aisle of cloister?) 104 ft. Width 11 ft.

Length of the refectory (100½). 103 ft. Width 41½ ft.

See (Ed.) E.M. Thompson, *Customary of St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury* (Henry Bradshaw Society, 1902), 32.

⁵⁴ *Arch. Cant.*, xlvi (1934), in the end pocket.

⁵⁵ See above, note 23.

⁵⁶ Though it is a tragedy that no excavation took place in the outer court/vineyard area before Christ Church College was built in 1962.

⁵⁷ *Arch. Cant.*, xxiii (1898), 194–328, and xxiv (1900), 1–85.

Rochester Priory was a much smaller monastery⁵⁸ than Christ Church though its history after the Norman conquest is very similar, and we know that it was Gundulf, the first Norman bishop (1077–1108) who completely rebuilt the cathedral and ‘also constructed all the necessary offices for monks as far as the capacity of the site allowed’.⁵⁹ The problem at Rochester is, of course, that the south side of the Roman walled area where the cathedral was situated is very small and from the early Norman period onwards, the area of the priory was rapidly expanded on the south. It could not go north because of the High Street, and the area to the west had been acquired by William the Conqueror for his new castle. The first extensions on the south are made in the later eleventh century and include an area for the ‘monks to make there their garden beside the wall outside the gate towards the south part of the City outwards, which they have now enclosed with a wall on every side’. This must include the area surrounded by the later medieval (fourteenth-century) priory wall as well as the area to the south known now as ‘The Vines’ and from a very early date, the Priory Vineyard.

Gundulf’s initial group of priory buildings, as well as his own *aula*, were all, as Hope has suggested, probably built on the south side of the cathedral nave, but early in the twelfth century a decision was clearly taken to move the cloister eastwards, and to have the south range (i.e. the refectory) beyond the Roman city wall. Bishop Ernulf (1114–24), who as Prior of Christ Church had earlier helped expand that priory eastwards, now set about erecting a new Dorter, Chapter House and Frater, and the ruins of these fine buildings, of course, still exist. He and his successors must also have erected a new Infirmary to the east⁶⁰ as well as a Reredorter at the south end of the Dorter.⁶¹ The real problem, however, is working out the new arrangements for the outer court and the position of the principal gate to the priory on the south.

Hope suggested that the Great Gate and Almonry were at the west end of the cathedral on the south side, but this cannot be correct both because this gate originally only led into the lay cemetery and because the Almonry was almost certainly just to the north-west of the Prior’s Gate. It is much more likely that the Great Gate was

⁵⁸ There were twenty-two monks when Gundulf started the priory in 1083 and more than sixty in c. 1107.

⁵⁹ *Textus Roffensis*, f.172 quoted in Hope, *Arch. Cant.*, (1900), 3. All other later references given here are taken from this article by Hope unless specified.

⁶⁰ Hugh of Trottescliffe, a monk who became Abbot of St. Augustine’s in 1124 (see above) is said to have built the Infirmary Chapel.

⁶¹ Prior Sylvester c. 1177 is recorded as having removed the privy that formerly adjoined the Dorter.

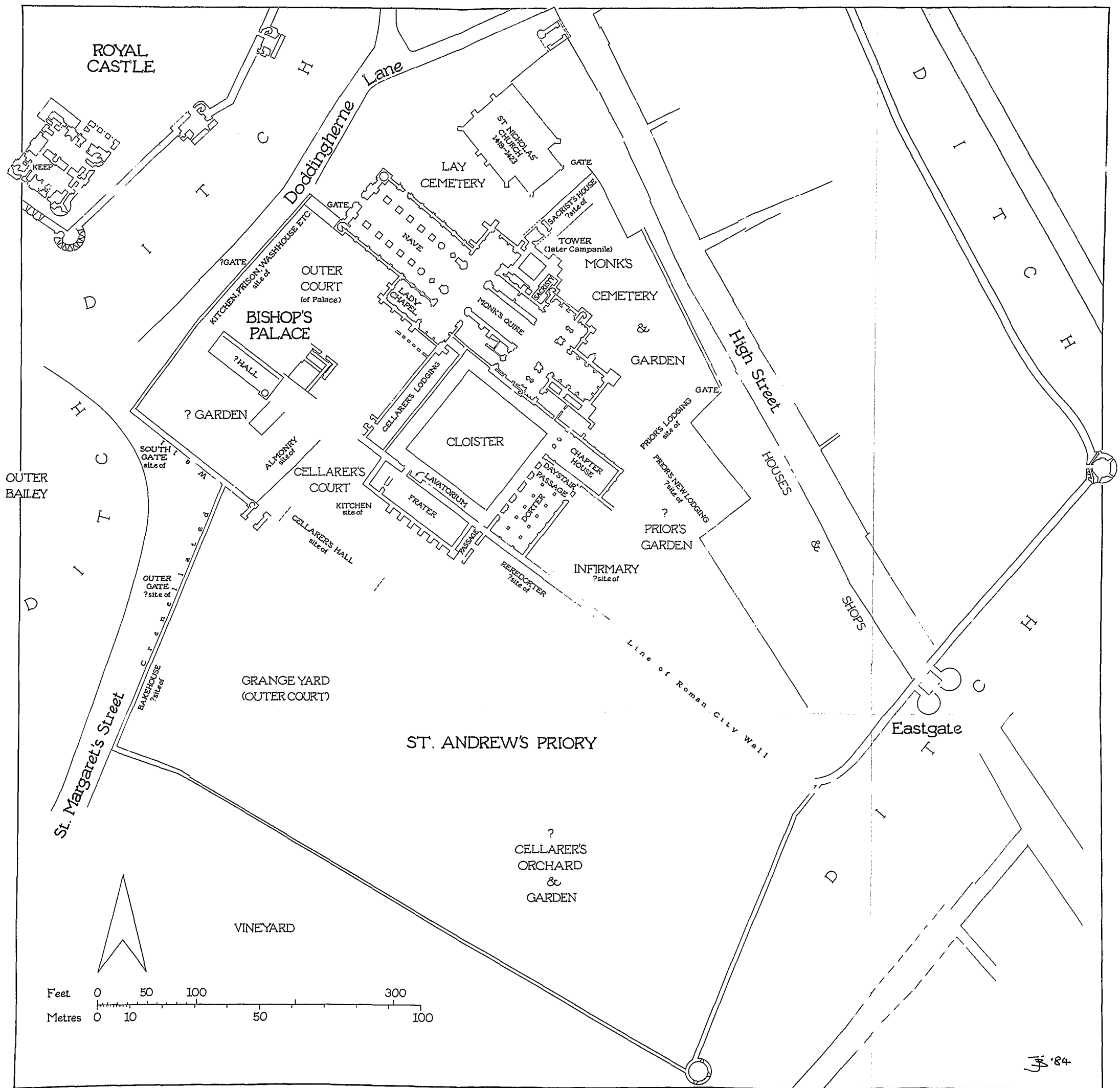


Fig. 6. St. Andrew's Priory, Rochester.

either the 'Prior's Gate' or more likely still a gate facing west and to the south of the Prior's Gate, which would have given direct access from St. Margaret's Street into the 'Grange yard' (now the area behind Minor Canon Row and occupied by the 1842 King's School buildings and the nineteenth-century houses for the canons of the second, fifth and sixth prebendal stalls). This yard, as its name implies, contained the granary and was presumably also an outer court containing the Brewhouse, Bakehouse, stable, etc. Bishop Ernulf is also recorded as having built a new bakehouse 'near the southgate and beside the vineyard,' which fits this very well. Another early twelfth-century document records that the gatehouse was the work of Luke the cellarer.

Minor Canon Row (built 1721–23) sits on the site of a 'long gallery called Cannon Place', as it is called in 1588, and I would suggest that this was originally the cellarer's range with the great kitchen on its north side at the west end. Another document refers to the cellarer's court *apud le Ameribenche*, and this court was perhaps just inside the Prior's Gate, the latter being the principal gate from the Outer Court to the inner part of the priory, i.e. the equivalent of the 'pentise' or 'larder' gate at Christ Church.

The boundary between the priory and the bishop's palace was just behind (i.e. west of) the Almonry (later the original King's School⁶² and demolished in 1840) and, by the early sixteenth century, the whole of the area south of the nave of the cathedral was probably taken up with the Bishop's Palace, making Hope's 'Great Gate and Almonry' (demolished in 1744) one of the gates into the Bishop's Palace. There was presumably also a main gate straight into King's Head Lane. Although most of the Bishop's Palace was destroyed in the mid-seventeenth century, a survey of 1534, mentions a very large number of rooms and galleries, and on an analogy with the Archbishop's Palace in Canterbury, one can suggest that the principal buildings were at the south end of the Precinct with the Great Hall on the north side and dividing them from the outer court further to the north. On the west (i.e. street) side of this outer court was a range of more menial buildings (kitchen, wash-house, prison, etc.,) while on the east may have been the site of the late-eleventh and twelfth-century Bishop's Great Hall. As at Canterbury, a new great hall was built c. 1200 by Bishop de Glanville and this is presumably the surviving large east–west range, though visible features in it are of a later medieval date.

The area on the north side of the cathedral is much easier to understand with the lay cemetery (or Green Church Haw) to the

⁶² Compare Canterbury where the King's School was in the Almonry Chapel.

north of the nave, and the fifteenth-century Cemetery Gate connecting this area with the heart of the city.⁶³ The eastern side of the lay cemetery was marked by a passage-way (from St. William's Gate to the north transept) and beyond this a wall in which still survives the Sextry (Sacristy) Gate. To the south of this fifteenth-century gate is the unique early Norman 'Gundulf's' tower which later became a campanile, (called 'Three Bell Steeple') and around which were added various chambers for the sacrist. Over and running north from the Sextry Gate was originally another range of buildings, and this may well have been the Sacrist's House. To the east of this is the Monk's Garden and cemetery and this was later bounded on the north-east by a wall (rediscovered in 1887 and probably originally built in 1345). Further east again and north of the Chapter House was the Old Deanery, and this was almost certainly the late medieval Prior's House. The last Prior of Rochester, Walter Phillips, alias Boxley, became the first dean, and the Distribution document of 1541-42 tells us that his house had 'two parlours, a kitchen, four chambers, a gallery and a study over the gate with all other housings'. The 'gate' was presumably another gate running from the monks' cemetery area into a court behind the Prior's House. Running east from the Old Deanery was another range which was almost certainly the prior's 'New Lodging'. This again is directly paralleled by the Christ Church Priory New Lodging. East of this was probably the prior's garden and the boundary of this garden on the north and east was presumably another wall which may well have followed the zig-zag line of the later parish/precinct boundary.

The eastern part of the Priory Precinct was certainly occupied by the Infirmary buildings, and presumably by several ranges of late-medieval chambers as at Christ Church and St. Augustine's, and the surviving length of Roman city wall east of the Dorter may well have been re-used as a principal wall for one of these buildings. South of this and in the extreme south-eastern area of the Precinct (and surrounded by the fourteenth-century crenellated wall with a round corner tower) was the area later called the King's Orchard and later still part of the huge Deanery Garden. This must originally have been the Cellarer's Garden (and ? orchard).

This brief study of St. Andrew's Priory, Rochester, is only a provisional re-assessment, and it is hoped that a much fuller study will follow,⁶⁴ after a more thorough examination of the still existing buildings.

⁶³ The nave of the Cathedral housed the parish altar of St. Nicholas until a new parish church was built, c. 1418-23, in the middle of the lay cemetery.

⁶⁴ I am very grateful to Mr. Arthur Harrison for helping me with aspects of this study.