The Landmark Trust

Woodsford Castle

History Album Volume I

by Charlotte Haslam
with help from Peter Bird and Nicholas Cooper

Re-presented in 2014

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BASIC DETAILS

Dates from: 1370 -1390

Acquired by Landmark:	**1977**
First phase of restoration:	**1978-80**
Landmark's Building Adviser	**Tom Dulake**
Architect:	**John Scofield**
Builders:	**G & L Barnes**
Thatcher:	**JD Martin**
Grant for repairs	**Historic Buildings Council**
Second phase of restoration:	**1987-92**
Architect: Peter Bird, Caroe & Partners	
Re- thatching	**2008-2011**
Thatchers:	**Dave Symonds**

Contents

SUMMARY

The Woodsford Castle we see today dates from 1370 - 90, and was probably added to an existing group of buildings. In 1335 William de Whitefield, then lord of Woodsford, was granted a licence to "crenellate the dwelling place of his manor" - in today's terms, planning permission to fortify his house. We don't know whether he actually did this, because so much of the castle has disappeared. However, this was a time of unrest leading up to the outbreak of the Hundred Years War with France in 1337. Many of those living near the South Coast felt the need to strengthen their defences against possible raids, and it is likely that William de Whitefield did the same.

By 1370 Woodsford had a new owner who was more closely linked to state affairs. In 1367 it had been bought by a great magnate, Sir Guy de Bryan. Sir Guy was a close friend of King Edward III, and held a number of important posts from Steward of the Royal Household and Keeper of the Great Seal, to Ambassador to the French court, and Admiral of the Western Fleet. In 1370 he was made a Knight of the Garter. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, 200 years later, he was still remembered by the historian William Camden as a famous warrior. Camden describes Woodsford as the place where Sir Guy had a "little castle of his own".

We do not know whether Sir Guy rebuilt the whole castle, but it is likely that all he did was add to it what is really a very grand apartment block. All the evidence shows that although the existing building was only one side of a quadrangle, the other three sides were much less substantial. There was a gatehouse opposite the present main door, and towers at the corners, linked by walls with smaller buildings against them. Traces of these could still be seen in the 1780s, and they are shown on a map of about the same date.

A medieval castle had to accommodate a number of different households. The chief of these was that of the lord himself. Guy de Bryan's main estates were in Devon, so he would not have visited Woodsford very often, but the best chambers would have been kept for him and his family. Then there was the Constable, the only full-time resident, who would have had his own set of rooms. Lesser officials, and the garrison, would each have had their own lodging. There would also be rooms for guests, varying in status according to the status of the lord himself - and at Woodsford they could have been of the very highest, as recorded in the traditional names of the rooms. What we have at Woodsford is one main apartment (now the Landmark), consisting of the King's Room, the Queen's Room, the chapel, and rooms in the adjoining towers. In spite of the names, it is likely that this was for Sir Guy himself. At the south end is a slightly less grand apartment, probably for the Constable. It has a main room and, again, rooms in a now vanished tower. Each of these two had its own kitchen on the ground floor. Between them are two smaller lodgings.

After Guy de Bryan's death Woodsford passed by inheritance to the Stafford family and then, around 1500, to the Strangways, who later became Earls of Ilchester. In 1630 the castle was in ruins, but about 1660, the main range was transformed into a very large farmhouse, tamed by the addition of a thatched roof. Floors were inserted above the King's Room and the chapel, with new windows. Barns and lean-to buildings, all thatched, clustered round the walls. A wing was added on the north-west corner in the 1790s, and an attic floor above the Kings Room.

In 1850 a thorough and most scholarly restoration was carried out under the supervision of John Hicks of Dorchester. The builder was a Mr Hardy, whose son, Thomas, later joined Hicks' office to train as an architect before later finding fame as an author and poet. It is even possible that Hicks first met Thomas at Woodsford. Thereafter, Woodsford was once more a house of some status, centre of a large tenant farm. 120 years later another round of repairs was needed, and in 1977 the castle was sold to the Landmark Trust - the first time in 600 years it had changed hands except by inheritance.

RESTORATION BY THE LANDMARK TRUST

When the Landmark Trust bought Woodsford Castle in 1977, the great thatched roof was in danger of collapse. The most urgent task was therefore to make the building safe and watertight. The whole of the main roof was rethatched, and in several places the roof structure was completely renewed. As part of the same operation, chimneys were repaired, and one chimney over the great kitchen fireplace rebuilt; and the walls were repointed where necessary.

Because the castle was still lived in by tenants little more could be done at that time. Ten years later, however, the tenants moved out and a second stage of repair could begin, this time inside the building. The intention was to return Sir Guy de Bryan's grand apartment to something approaching its original arrangement, a task which was completed in 1992. A great deal of work was involved, most of it carried out, with only occasional help, by one man, Leonard Hardy, under the supervision of Caroe and Partners, the architects.

Before any repair could begin, it was necessary to strip out the many later accretions, in order to learn more about the building. Plaster was removed, walls and floors opened up, and most significant, the floor in the King's Room taken away, so as to revealing its earlier and true proportions. This exercise revealed much about the original construction of the castle, and its varied history, not least that the restoration of 1850 was much more extensive than we had supposed.

It was felt that, with respect to our medieval forebears, the vaulted ground floor was not the best place for a modern kitchen. These rooms were simply limewashed, their stone paving repaired, and, like the rooms at the south end, left open for visitors to explore. Instead, the kitchen, with bathrooms and extra bedrooms, would go into the pleasant 18th-century wing. Here floors were taken out at the northern end to allow space for a new staircase, and the windows, with the panelled linings of the window reveals, were repaired and renewed.

In the King's Room the removal of modern and Victorian plaster revealed surviving areas of thin medieval plaster; this has been left in place, and the surrounding areas replastered in fine lime plaster to an equal thickness. At the same time as the removal of the floor, some 18th-century first floor windows were blocked up, and surviving remnants of earlier windows repaired. This enabled us to repair the heads of the medieval windows and to build, in new Purbeck stone, arches on the inner faces so as to reinstate their embrasures. All the windows have been reglazed with lead lights. The new oak ceiling follows the marks left in the walls by the medieval roof

In the chapel, substantial remains of the very fine east window were found, blocked up in the 18th century by the present wooden casements. The reveals of the casements have been rebuilt neatly, and the infill wall consolidated before replastering in lime to reveal the line and remnants of the medieval window. There was a temptation to remove the inserted floor altogether, but this was resisted. It seemed equally important to leave some evidence of Woodsford's later history, and the way in which it had been altered over the years. A new staircase was built to give access to the upper floor, however. In the Queen's Room a new floor of Purbeck stone flags was laid, over the top of the vault below. We have left a small time capsule under one of them.

The surroundings of the castle were greatly improved when the farm buildings in the adjoining field to the east were cleared away. Further landscape works were carried out, and new trees planted, so that the castle can once again stand against a wooded background, as old photographs show it to have done in the past. In 2008 a major re-thatching campaign was undertaken, of what is the largest thatched in Dorset.

Wishful thinking on the part of architect Peter Bird

INTRODUCTION

The first mention of a castle at Woodsford occurs in October, 1335, when William de Whitfield was granted "licence to crenellate the dwelling house of his manor" by King Edward III; in other words planning permission to fortify his home. Any buildings put up at this time disappeared long ago, however. Stylistic detail in the surviving range shows it to date from a single building phase later in the same century. It is most probably the work of Guy de Bryan, the magnate to whom the next de Whitfield sold Woodsford in 1367.

There can have been no need for a stronghold to guard a small ford over the River Frome. The wish to strengthen the defences of a manor house was either a response to local unrest, or arose from a general sense of insecurity felt by those living near the South Coast, even before the official start of the Hundred Years War with France in 1337. In addition to the main campaigns, the war was largely carried on by private ships from both sides of the channel, making lightening raids on the ports and coastal areas. The French attacked the Isle of Wight, for example, in 1336.

The same conditions applied around 1370, when Guy de Bryan owned the manor. He himself had been Admiral of the West, and so played his part in the war against the French at sea. He was a trusted servant and councillor of the King, and by the time he added Woodsford to his already extensive estates, was sixty years old. Much travelled, an experienced soldier as well as a sailor, and governor of more than one castle (including Lundy), he perhaps felt happier in a fortified dwelling than in a more conventional manor house, and so followed this inclination in his work at Woodsford. Besides, a castle carried with it a great deal of prestige, then as now.

Handed down through descendants, latterly the Earls of Ilchester, let to tenants of varying degrees of wealth and status, and following the usual pattern of periods of decline followed by repair and revival (most notably in 1850-1 by John Hicks of Dorchester), Woodsford has intrigued many historians. Not seemingly a castle, nor a tower house, most writers since the last century have sought to reduce it to the status of a fortified manor house. But that answer doesn't quite fit either - in fact it is described in *The Buildings of Britain: Dorset* (1972) as having "a quite exceptional plan".

The most recent restoration began in 1987, ten years after the Landmark Trust acquired the castle. Advantage has been taken of this opportunity to attempt a closer understanding of the building, a project to which many have contributed. The results of this study form the basis for the architectural and historical accounts that follow. To suit different tastes, these have been served up in varying lengths which sometimes, inevitably, overlap.

A Summary of the Castle's History and Development

Pre-castle

The Domesday Survey of 1086 records that the manor or small estate of West Woodsford, as distinct from East Woodsford (now Woodsford village), already existed in 1066. Held first by the Belets, in 1320 it was owned by the de Whitfields. By then there was undoubtedly a manor house, for which, on high ground above the watermeadows but near a ford, it was a well-chosen site.

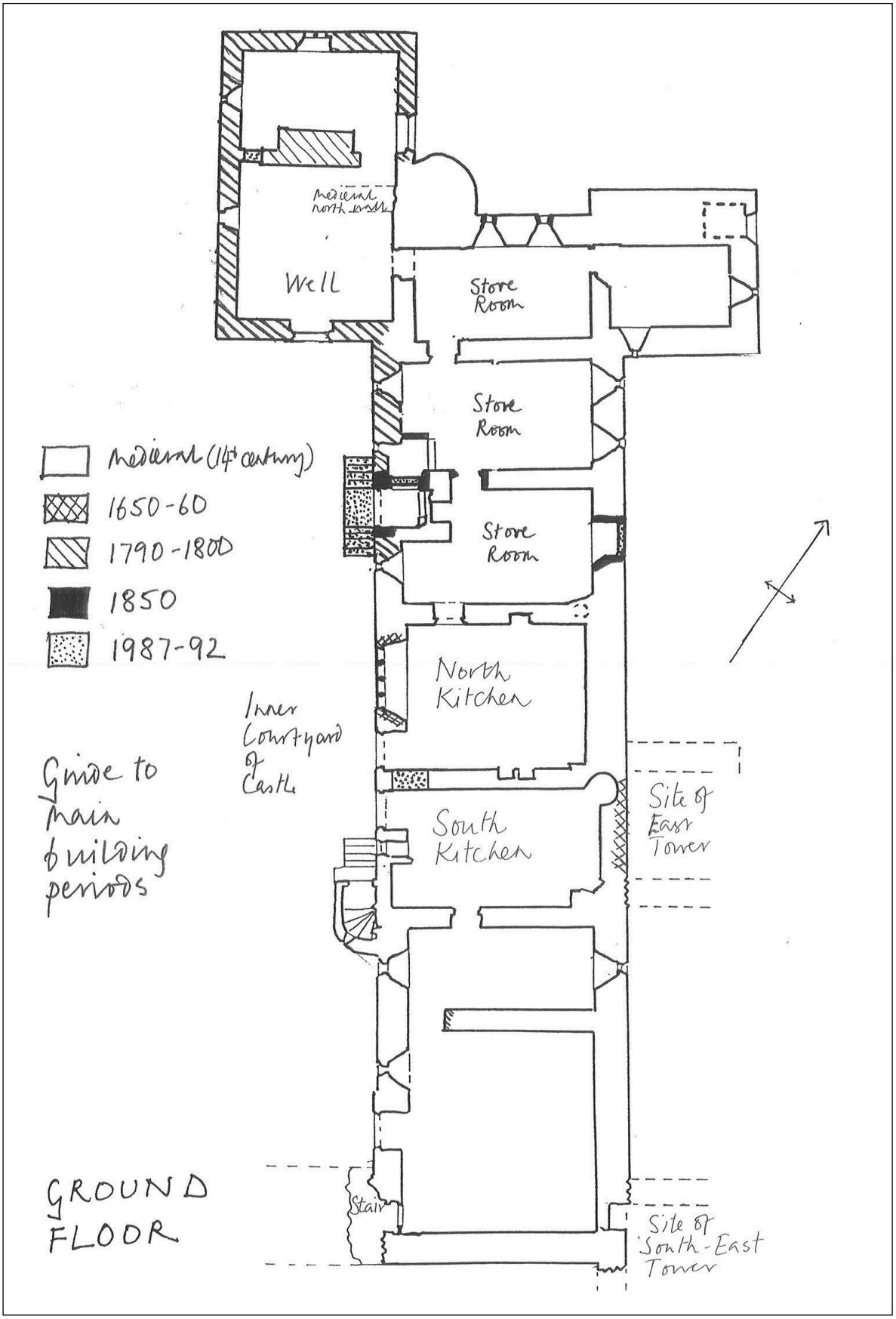
The first defences: 1335

Visible standing remains: none

A licence to crenellate, such as was granted to William de Whitfield in 1335, meant literally permission to add battlements. In the case of an existing dwelling this might mean surrounding it with a wall, or adding one or more towers, or raising the walls of the house itself. Which of these options was chosen at Woodsford, we do not know. Any structures of this date had all but vanished by 1850. The banks of a possible second enclosure exist in the field between the castle and West Woodsford Farm. This could belong to the first phase of fortification, perhaps, as an outer bailey or farm courtyard.

Sir Guy de Bryan KG: 1367-90

Visible remains: walls, main internal divisions and floor, except in the north-west wing; stair turrets, and external door openings on the west side; stone-headed doors leading into or out of King's and Queen's Rooms, South Hall and rooms between; fragments of chapel window; window openings in King's Room (north and east), Queen's Room, South Hall and rooms between; fireplaces in Queen's Room, South Hall and kitchens; chapel piscina and squint; basins in King's Room and north-east chamber; garderobes in north-east tower.

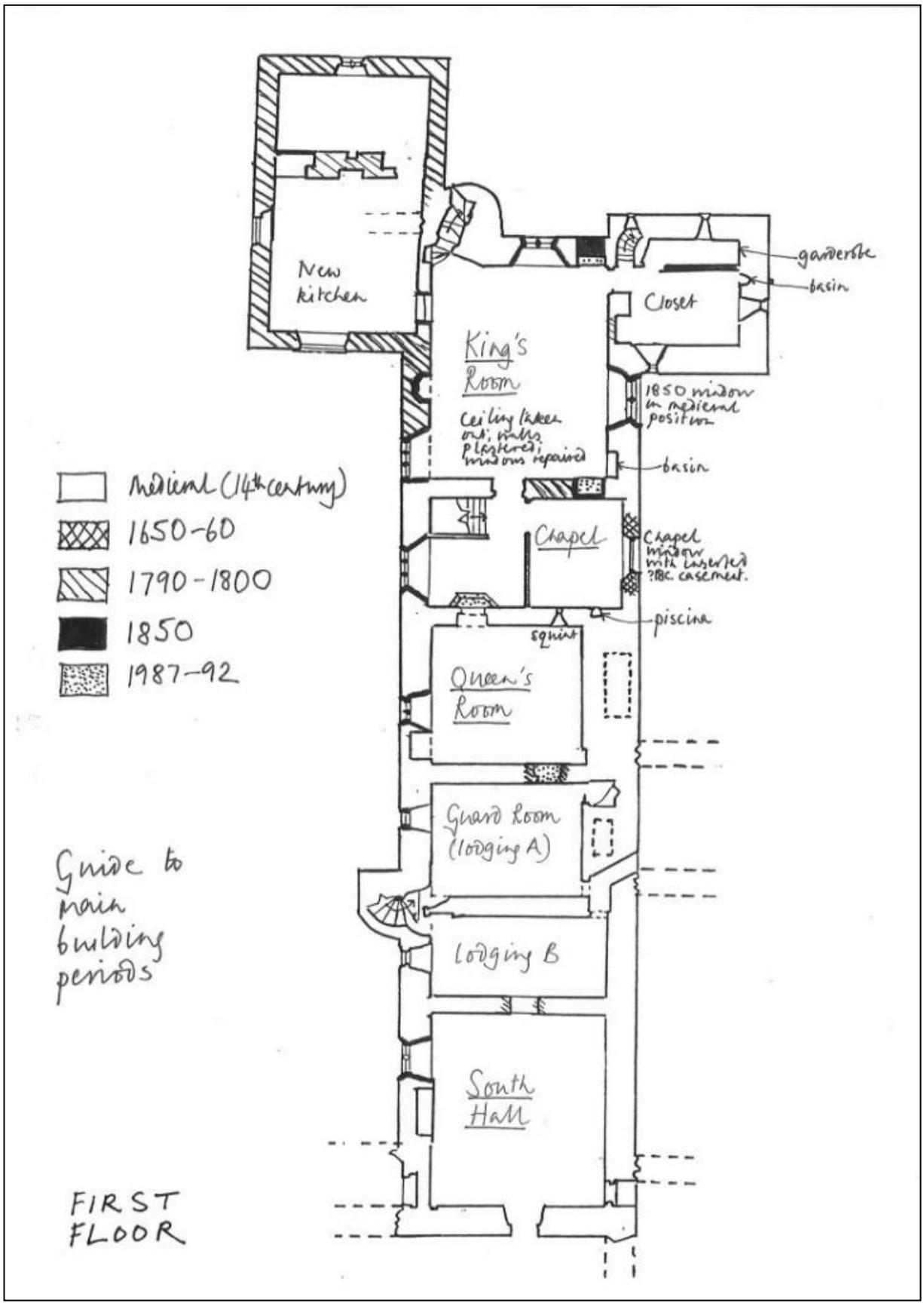

Well
Store Room
Store Room
Store Room
North Kitchen
South Kitchen
Inner Courtyard of Castle
Site of East Tower
Site of South-East Tower
Stair
Medieval (14th century)
1650-60
1790-1800
1850
1987-92
Guide to main building periods
GROUND FLOOR

As soon as Guy de Bryan acquired Woodsford in 1367, he must have embarked on building works, to create what was later described as "a little castle of his own". This is likely to have been partly a rebuilding and enlargement of existing structures, and partly new work. The resulting castle consisted of a walled quadrangle with, it is thought, a gatehouse on the west; another gate on the north; towers at the outer corners and smaller towers and turrets between; a residential range on the east side, containing two main dwellings at either end, each with its own kitchen, with two smaller lodgings or sets of rooms between; other buildings, such as additional lodgings, and stables, on the other three sides of the castle. Possibly also a great hall.

Stafford, Strangways & Symonds: 1390-1630

Visible remains: few, possibly a door from the Queen's Room to the adjoining Guard Room (now blocked), and another door on the ground floor between the north-west wing and the main range.

After Guy de Bryan's death in 1390, Woodsford was inherited by three women in succession. Firstly his grandaughter, Elizabeth Lovell; then her daughter, Matilda Stafford; followed in turn by her daughter Avice, Countess of Oxford. Avice settled it on her husband, the Earl of Oxford, to be succeeded, it seems, by her cousin Humphrey Stafford, briefly Earl of Devon. These two were both executed in the course of the Wars of the Roses, in 1461 and 1469. Woodsford then passed, by way of another heiress, to the rising Strangways family, with whom it remained until 1977. About 1530-40, the castle was leased to a junior member of the Strangways clan, Thomas Symonds. Either then or before, the strict subdivision within the castle was broken down: new doors were made to increase circulation and allow it to be used as a single house. By 1600, the Symonds had abandoned the castle, and in 1630 it was "almost ruinated".


New kitchen
King's Room
Ceiling taken out; walls plastered; windows repaired
Closet
garderobe
basin
1850 window in medieval position
basin
Chapel
Chapel window with inserted ?18C. casement.
piscina
squint
Queen's Room
Guard Room (lodging A)
lodging B
South Hall
Medieval (14th century)
1650-60
1790-1800
1850
1987-92
Guide to main building periods
FIRST FLOOR

Major remodellings: c.1650-60

Visible remains: roof (much renewed since), gables and chimneys; windows beside old kitchen door and on second floor, west side; blocked second floor window, north end; window openings in chapel and bedroom over; inserted floor in chapel and lobby.

At some point in the middle of the 17th century major works were carried out, which had the effect of transforming the residential range of the castle into an overgrown thatched farmhouse. Certainly it was occupied by a tenant farmer around 1650. Floors were inserted to create a second storey through most of the building. The ground floors of east and south-east towers were adapted as lean-to sheds. Quite possibly, other parts of the castle were used for farm buildings, but the removal of stone from the walls, for buildings elsewhere, had probably begun, and was carried on over the next century until little but the footings were left.

Further remodelling: c.1790-1800

Visible remains: north-west wing; attic floor over hall, with window at north end and in north-east tower; window casements in chapel and bedroom over.

Robert Henning, the prosperous tenant of Woodsford from 1763-98, did much work, including re-thatching house and outbuildings in the 1790s, and adding a new wing. He also built several new barns east of the house, shown in an 1840s watercolour. The attic floor could be the work of his successor, John Beaton.

The first restoration: 1850-1

Visible remains: windows of King's and Queen's Rooms, South Hall and rooms between; King's Room fireplace and floor; Queen's Room and Guard Room ceilings; external door surrounds.

The Earl of Ilchester commissioned John Hicks of Dorchester to repair and make improvements inside the castle. Hicks took the opportunity to restore some lost features of the medieval building uncovered during the work. The builder was Thomas Hardy, Senior, whose son, at Hicks' suggestion, helped make a survey of the castle. On the strength of this, the younger Thomas Hardy joined Hicks' office in 1856 to train as an architect. Apart from the reappearance of medieval windows and doorways, and the return of the Queen's Room and Guard Room to full height by removal of the 17th-century floor, the chief result of the restoration was the removal of all farming activity from close beside the castle, and its replacement by gardens. A new farmyard had already been built on the site of the existing West Woodsford Farm. For the next century the Castle was of a higher social status than for the previous two.

Restoration by the Landmark Trust: 1978-9; 1987-92

Visible features: new thatch on roofs, chimneys repaired and repointed, west stair turret repointed; 17th/18th-century second floor windows blocked, north end and east side; outside door blocked east side; steps to main west door rebuilt; new oak main doors; King's Room restored to full height with new oak ceiling; walls of King's and Queen's Rooms replastered to match surviving medieval plaster; new stone floor in Queen's Room, chapel and chapel lobby; part unblocking of chapel window; new stair to rooms above chapel; new stair in north-west wing; new partitions in north-west wing; new kitchen and bathrooms; landscaping and tree planting.

In 1977, the Ilchester estate sold Woodsford Castle to the Landmark Trust. The main roof was on the point of collapse, and repairs to this were carried out, with other external works, as soon as possible. The castle was still lived in by farming tenants, however, who only moved out in 1987. The first task thereafter was the removal of the pig farm which lay just to the east of the castle. Work then began inside, under the supervision of Peter Bird of Caroe & Partners of Wells. For the first three years, all the work was carried out single-handedly by a local craftsman, Leonard Hardy, with only occasional help with the heaviest tasks. In 1992, Leonard was joined by Andrew Coward, to help him complete the restoration in June, 1992.

A TOUR AND DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING

Round the outside

Much can be learned by looking at the outside of any building, but the exterior of Woodsford Castle is particularly informative about its long and curious history. Windows of different dates tell the story of alterations inside, while rough sections of wall give clues to missing elements of the original design. A number of features tell us that this was indeed a fortification: the height of the building, the projecting stones or corbels on the north and east sides that supported projecting wooden galleries called brattices, the fact that there are no doors on the east side, and that the main rooms, lit by large windows, are on the first floor. A look at the west front on the other hand tells us that here the medieval inhabitants of the castle were free to pass in and out, evidence that this side was protected. The great thatched roof that gives the Castle its distinctive character today leaves us in no doubt that it has, since the 17th century, been put to domestic use.

The Castle now consists of a single long range. The steeply pitched roof is broken part of the way along by a tall gable, after which it resumes at a lower height. Once, there was a nearly flat roof, with only a low pitch, running at a single height from end to end. Hutchins, the 18th-century historian of Dorset, records a tradition that this was covered with lead. The walls were topped with battlements and in the 19th century, traces of these were seen. It is still possible to make out the surface of the original walk along the wall head.

The walls are built of oolitic limestone, probably quarried locally. There is no break in them where the roof height changes, telling us that the lower section is not an addition, as some writers have supposed, but part of the original building whose walls have since been lowered. This probably happened in the 17th century when the new roof was added.

The main range of the Castle was protected at its outer corners by towers, of which only the north-east is complete. Rough masonry, and stumps of projecting walls, show that there was a tower at the south-east corner, and another on the east side, just off-centre. The footings of these could be seen in 1861, standing a few inches above ground. The central east tower was apparently slightly shallower than that at the south-east, which projected to the south, protecting the corner and covering the south wall of the castle.

There is also evidence for further buildings on the inner corners of the building, but there is less certainty about their form, and whether they were towers, or longer ranges. That at the north-west corner has been replaced by a larger wing, dating from about 1790. 19th-century historians state that this was partly built on existing foundations, so that some of the masonry at its base could be medieval. In 1861 only slight traces the south-west building remained, but apparently enough to show that it extended a few feet to the south. How it was joined to whatever lay west of it is now impossible to say.

In the angle between it and the main range there was a newel stair, of which the curved wall can be seen. A further stair turret projects from the west front, and there is a third, with a solid stone base, at the north end. This stood in the angle between the main range and the building on the north- west corner, giving access to its top floor, or to the wall-walk. The north wall of this first building projected less far than the existing wing, however.

The North End

There are other things to notice on the north end. Firstly the large panel of dressed stone on the eastern tower. This was said by 19th-century writers to have been for a beacon, to guide travellers across the ford over the Frome to the north east of the castle. They reported traces of a bracket fixed to it, for a lantern, but nothing can now be seen of this. Another theory is that it was meant for a coat of arms, but never completed.

Also on the north face of the tower are a number of sockets. Some of these probably relate to an addition at this end of the building, which was removed in 1850. Others are for the timber scaffolding used during the construction of the castle, and are called putlog holes. Other such sockets can be seen round the building. Projecting from the main range is a large corbel for supporting a brattice, an overhanging timber gallery with a pierced floor, to give better coverage of the ground below.

The north end also has a variety of windows. The plain slits on the ground floor give a clue to its vulnerability and also its inferior status. Higher up, the little slit with a cusped head in the tower is medieval, and reflects the greater importance of the first floor. This is demonstrated most clearly by the large window in the centre, obviously lighting a main room of the castle. As it now exists, it dates from 1850-1, but copies what survived of an original window in this position, which was later blocked. Above is the drip-mould of a 17th-century window, into which a casement of c.1800 was fitted, which has in turn been blocked, because it was weakening the wall.

Above this again is another window of c.1800, evidence of an attic floor inserted at this date. The window looking east in the north-west wing is similar to this last one, while those looking north have reused 17th-century stone surrounds. The door into the wing also reuses earlier masonry.

The north end in 1978. The late 18th century window beneath the 17th century drip mould can be seen resting on the head of the restored medieval window, thus weakening the wall. The retaining arch over the window has now been fully reinstated.

The East Front

Going clockwise round the building, we pass along the east front. In the 18th century there were said to be traces of a moat here. The tall gable of the north-east tower, with its carved finial is, like the gable in the main range, 17th-century. Like the rest of the castle, the tower originally had battlements, and here again are corbels for a wooden brattice. The window in the gable is another one of c.1800. That on the first floor, with its cusped head, is medieval and of excellent quality. At the base of the tower is a retaining arch marking the shute of a garderobe or privy.

Next in the main range is another tall window like that on the north end, lighting the same great chamber or hall. It too, apart from a small section of the surround, is Victorian, but again copies fragments of the original, which had also been blocked. In a view of the castle by W.W. Wheatley of c.1840, the drip-mould is visible.

The tracery at the top of these restored windows is typical for the mid to late 1300s. The heads of the lower lights are more unusual, with their shouldered arches. Known as Caernarfon arches, from their first appearance in the castle there around 1350, these are found in a few other buildings of about the same date, notably Berkeley Castle in Gloucestershire and the great hall of Compton Castle in South Devon (at that date only a manor house). Either ould have provided a model for Woodsford, because Guy de Bryan had estates near both. John Hicks, the architect of the 1850-1 restoration, based his new windows very closely on existing evidence in other respects, so we must trust that he was right in this detail as well.

Some confirmation of his care is found just to the south, where the outline of another tall window can be seen, one that Hicks did not restore. This shows the state in which he found the others, with a 1790 casement inside a 17th-century window in its lower half. It lit the castle chapel, and was only recently uncovered inside. Nothing of the transom survives, but the mouldings and fragments of tracery match the hall windows. None of this was visible in 1850, so Hicks' evidence must have been equally good.

All these large windows in the "outside" wall are evidence of the increasing comfort expected of life in castles in the 14th century. While advances in military science made some stronger than ever, other aspects were seen as equally important. Castles of this date, in fact, were the equivalent of a great house, with all the symbolism of status attached.

Above the hall window new masonry marks another recently blocked window relating to the 17th-century inserted floor. Over the chapel, however, the upper window survives, showing that here the inserted floor still exists.

Also above the chapel window are more corbels. Below is a recently blocked door. The surround of this is Victorian, but the opening probably dates from the time when the farmyard was on this side of the castle, in the 18th century or before. The last tenants, the Sherwoods, used the room inside as their kitchen and living room, but the ground floor is now left empty, so there is no need for a door on this side, where originally there was none.

East front, as painted by W.W. Wheatley c. 1840 and photographed in 1978

Next comes the site of the east tower, and openings into it from rooms inside can be seen. It probably had rooms on three levels like the north east tower, and a stair turret in the corner. Enough of its outer wall remained in 1861 to show that it also had garderobes. It is difficult to make out how its ground floor room was reached. The whole of the space inside it is taken up by a retaining arch, but Nicholas Cooper of RCHME suggests that this relates to a post-medieval deepening of the kitchen fireplace inside, in the course of which the original door was lost.

The chimney above the east tower must replace a medieval one, but apparently dates from 1850-1, since none is shown on earlier views. The great chimney just to the north is a 1979 rebuilding of a 17th-century one. Again, there must have been a medieval chimney, since it relates to another kitchen fire. The medieval chimneys would have been concealed within the battlements.

Apart from the fig tree, there is little else to see on this side. The fragments of the south-east tower follow the pattern of the others, with doors into its vanished rooms on the ground and first floors. Again there was probably an internal stair to its second floor, and a garderobe shute was noted in 1861. The whole of the southern end of the east front was concealed until 1851 by a lean-to, with a catslide roof of thatch.

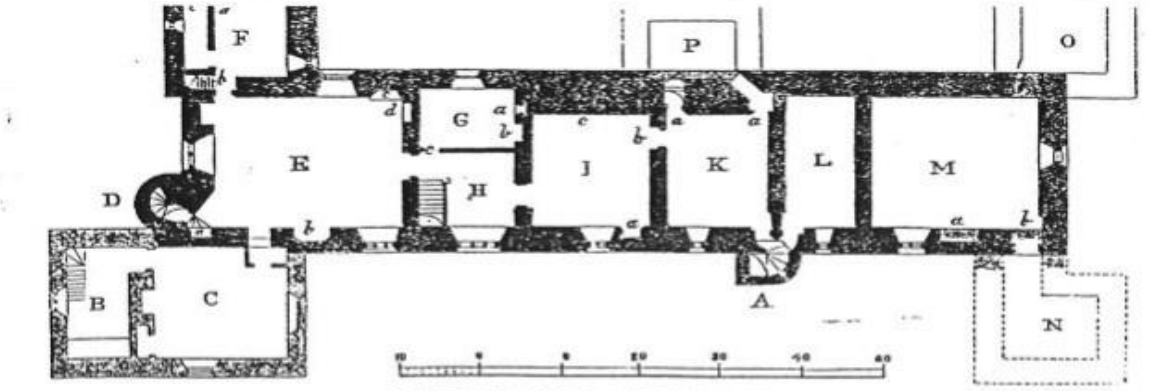
From the south-east, by H.J. Moule in the 1840s

Undated watercolour, possibly pre 1790 since it seems to predate the north-west wing

The South End

The south end presents a very different appearance to the north, with a bare expanse of stone punctuated by only one window. The ruinous state of this end of the castle is the result of its use as a stable and hayloft for two centuries or more. The window once had two lights, both with cusped heads, and divided by a central upright, or mullion. The 1840s views by W.W. Wheatley and H.J. Moule show a door on the ground floor of this end.

The stump of the return wall of the south east tower can be seen, meeting the main range on the angle. An unsigned but possibly 18th-century watercolour shows this wall with part of a door or window surround at first floor level, but the accuracy of this cannot be relied upon.



PLAN OF THE FIRST FLOOR, WOODSFORD CASTLE.

A, entrance to the guard chamber, &c., also marked A in the basement plan.

B and C, modern rebuilding, partly on old foundations.

D, turret, containing an ascent to the roof. A pointed door, which remains, was the entrance through the gable. Some of the steps continuing the ascent to the top of the turret itself also remain.

E, north hall: *a*, a square opening with segmental head; *b*, modern fireplace; *c*, sink; *d*, doorway, now closed.

F, Beacon tower, *a*, sink (see engraving, p. 452); *b*, ascent to the third story of the tower, which is still perfect; *c*, latrine.

G, Oratory: *a*, piscina; *b*, modern fireplace, over which a hagioscope was discovered; *c*, modern partition and entrance.

H, Open landing, with modern staircase to ascend to the chambers on the second floor, all which are modern additions.

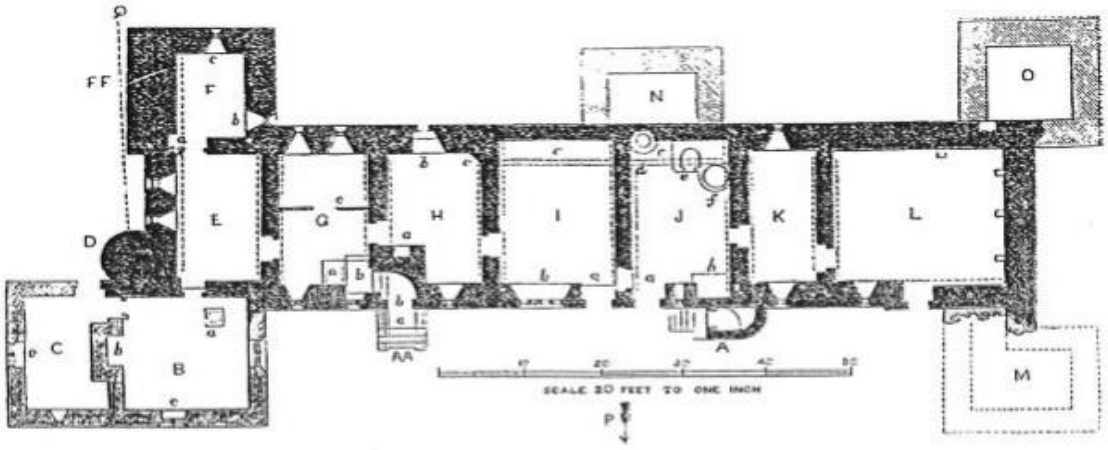
I, Solar or Queen's room, now used as a drawing room: *a*, modern fireplace; *b*, doorway, with moulded jambs and straight-sided head; *c*, chimney shaft from the kitchen below in the wall at this place.

K, Guard chamber: *a*, entrances to the central eastern tower, the second floor of which seems to have been designed and used as a dovecote, from remains of the holes for nests in the wall above. This tower was vaulted like the others, the imposts remaining, as well as a massive corbel, which carried a beam of its second floor.

L, Ante-chamber, retaining its original floor, paved with flints, set in strong mortar or cement.

M, South hall: *a*, large original fireplace in the thickness of the wall, with lintel constructed like those of the kitchens; *b*, entrance by south-east tower, N.

O, P, Foundations of towers, introduced into this plan, together with the supposed south-west tower, for explaining the use of the doorways, &c.



BASEMENT OR GROUND FLOOR PLAN.

EXPLANATION.—Deep shading, original work or restorations: middle shading, modern alterations; faint shading, foundations only standing: dotted lines, external, doubtful details; internal, hood arches and vaulting or impost strings.

A, ancient entrance and staircase turret retaining its stone weathered roof.

AA, modern ditto: *a* and *b*, common landing to basement and first-floor stairs.

B and C, portions of modern rebuilding, chiefly on old foundations, but much extended at C: *a*, an ancient well: *b*, modern brick piers; *c*, mullioned windows, 18th century.

D, solid basement of the north-west staircase turret.

E, vault before cellar.

F, the light or beacon tower. This basement vault is now the cellar; *a*, recess for door: *b*, one of the original arrow slits 2 inches in width; *c*, is another.

FF, solid basement bearing latrine on upper floor.

G, vault divided by modern partition at *c*: *a*, a table slab; *b*, landing.

H: *a*, solid masonry with a locker; *b*, entrance. *c*, drain from piscina in chapel.

I, kitchen: *a*, entrance; *b*, 18th century four-light window; *c*, great hooded fireplace.

J, second kitchen: *a*, entrance; *b*, small hooded fireplace; *c*, great ditto, whole width of vault; *d*, *e*, *f*, modern fixtures.

K, vault divided by a temporary partition.

L, present stable, now under a timber floor. Corbellings appear to have been partly for stone vaultings, partly for timber.

M, position of tower as suggested by ruins of junction with the main building, and by testimony as to foundation.

N, O, footings of towers, rising only from 1 inch to 3 inches above surface.

P, direction of supposed court-yard.

Q, line of bearing for crossing the ford; beacon face, kept just open, led safely across ditto.

From the 3rd, revised, edition of *The History & Antiquities of the County of Dorset*, by the Rev. John Hutchins, 1861

The West Front

On the south-west corner is evidence of a wall continuing west in line with the south wall. According to the authors of the 1861 Hutchins, this could then be seen to turn south, to form another tower, as shown on their plan. However, one suspects that they wished to find another tower here, and we do not know now how conclusive the evidence actually was. The "tower" could have been a longer range, or chamber block; or just a length of curtain wall.

This last suggestion is perhaps less likely, because beside the stump of wall, as we have seen, was a stair turret. Nicholas Cooper of RCHME suggests this had a solid base, like the other turrets, and no outside door. It was reached from inside the main range and it then led, in turn, to a gallery in the South Hall: the jamb of the upper door survives. Even if it also led to the wall-walk, it would be surprising if the builders went to all the expense of a turret if this did not also give access to further rooms to its west.

The opening inside the blocked lower door, with its "cartwheel" head, appeared for the first time in a photograph of 1857, taken after Hicks' restoration. However, it captures the broken-down character of pre-1850 Woodsford - and one writer has noted it as a new type of tracery.

Next to the stair is the first of several doorways on this west front, which tell us that this was the safe side of the building. That it is original can be seen in the 1840s views, in which it is shown blocked. These views also show the surviving tracery of the two light window above. The single light window to the north of it shows less clearly, but certainly existed. Both were restored in 1850-1, as were the other two "medieval" first floor windows. For the accuracy of these we have again to trust

Hicks, since the views all show 17th-century straight-headed windows in these positions.

The appearance of medieval buildings reflects the hierarchy of the rooms within. Thus we can see that the larger window lit an important room, but not quite the equal of that at the north end, or the chapel. The two single light windows on either side of the stair turret are clearly for lesser rooms, with one somewhere between to the north again, in that its window has two lights, but these are not so tall as the South Hall's. We see again plain slits for the ground floor service rooms.

The second floor windows are 17th-century, but only the northern one still lights a space inside; the others became dummies when Hicks restored the medieval ceiling levels inside. The straight-headed windows on the first floor are Victorian. Another 17th-century window survives on the ground floor.

Next to it are two medieval doors, and above them is a row of corbels. Higher again is a string course or weathering which runs all the way to the north-west wing (the last few feet being an 1851 replacement). Beneath these ran a pentice, or open gallery, making it possible to pass between all the doors north of the stair turret under cover. The weathering sealed the gap between wall and roof, and the roof-beams rested on the corbels. These, too, once continued further north. However, this next section of the west wall was rebuilt, probably around 1790, so some corbels may have been lost.

The present front door, reached by steps, is in the rebuilt section. Its arch does show in the possibly pre-1790 watercolour although at a lower level. It is in the same place as a medieval door, however, since the steps inside it follow the marks of a medieval flight, leading to the north rooms.

We have seen that the northern room of the castle was the most important, so can assume it was used for dining. Such a hall would normally have had two entrances, one for the owner (the "high") and another (the "low") for the servants bringing food from the kitchens. The existing low entrance is from within the north-west wing, but all evidence for access to it, either by a stair in the medieval wing or by outside steps, has been lost.

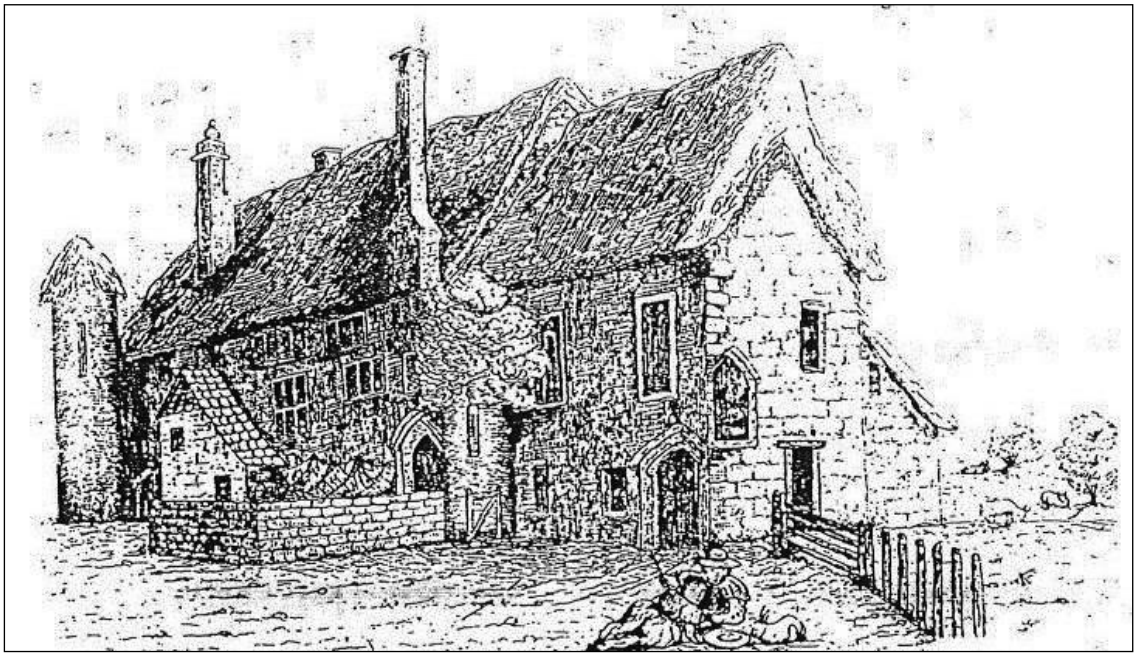
Luckily, the 1840s views help us again. Two of these show a small porch in the angle between main range and wing. That by Wheatley shows steps leading up to this. The scar where the door inside it was blocked in brick and then rendered can still be seen. It is possible that this was a survival of the medieval arrangement, and that from it you entered a landing or servery in the wing, before going into the hall. The pentice would only have gone as far as its foot, making Hicks' new length of weathering a mistake.

Further support comes from a primitive engraving apparently of 18th-century date, now bound into a special edition of Hutchins in the Dorset County Library. It has a plate and volume number, so must have come from an earlier, but at present unknown, book. Like the watercolour, it shows the west front before the wing was added. Instead, there is a turret with a sloping roof over what was presumably a stair, and a very rustic version of the pentice.

The two great chimneys are 1851 rebuildings of earlier ones, probably 17th-century like that on the east. Like the east chimneys, the southern one relates to a medieval fireplace, and it is likely that the northern one does too. It is in the rebuilt section of wall, so evidence for it has been lost, but it is difficult to see, when inside, where else the hall fireplace could have been. There must have been a third medieval chimney at the southern end, for the South Hall fireplace.

The north-west wing is of about 1790, except in so far as it contains earlier masonry. The door in its south wall had been blocked, and a window inserted in its upper half, but has now been opened up again.

W.W. Wheatley, c.1840



Undated engraving of unknown provenance, probably 18th century

Inside the building

Having seen that the castle has several doors, it will come as no surprise that what appears from the outside to be a single dwelling was in fact subdivided into several different and entirely independent ones. Such an arrangement was common in the tightly-planned castles of the later Middle Ages. The reasons were partly defensive, to create a series of internal barriers, and partly domestic: accommodation for several households and officials had to be crammed into the very restricted space dictated by an enclosing curtain wall. Each larger dwelling was referred to as a house "domus") in medieval documents. There are two such houses at Woodsford, one at the north end and one at the south. In between are smaller lodgings.

The north house coincides with what is now the habitable part of the castle. It contains the finest rooms, including a chapel, and was clearly for the owner's own use. In some great castles of this date the grandest set of rooms was reserved for a possible royal visit. In this case the traditional names of the two largest rooms, the King's Room and the Queen's Room (the latter first recorded in 1774) must surely be wishful thinking only, however much of a royal servant its builder was.

The house is entered by a door on the west from which a flight of steps leads up to a lobby on the first floor. In 1851, these steps were adapted to link via a door on the left at their foot with the ground floor, but there is no evidence that such an arrangement existed before then.

Immediately in front of you at the top of the stair is the chapel. The existing wall screening it from the lobby is a rebuilding of a Victorian wall, and no evidence has been found for the original arrangement. Other examples are known, however, where a chapel was separated by a simple wooden screen from such a lobby, and this perhaps was the case here. The chapel presumably served the whole castle, and such a screen would have made it possible for the lesser members of the household to gather outside.

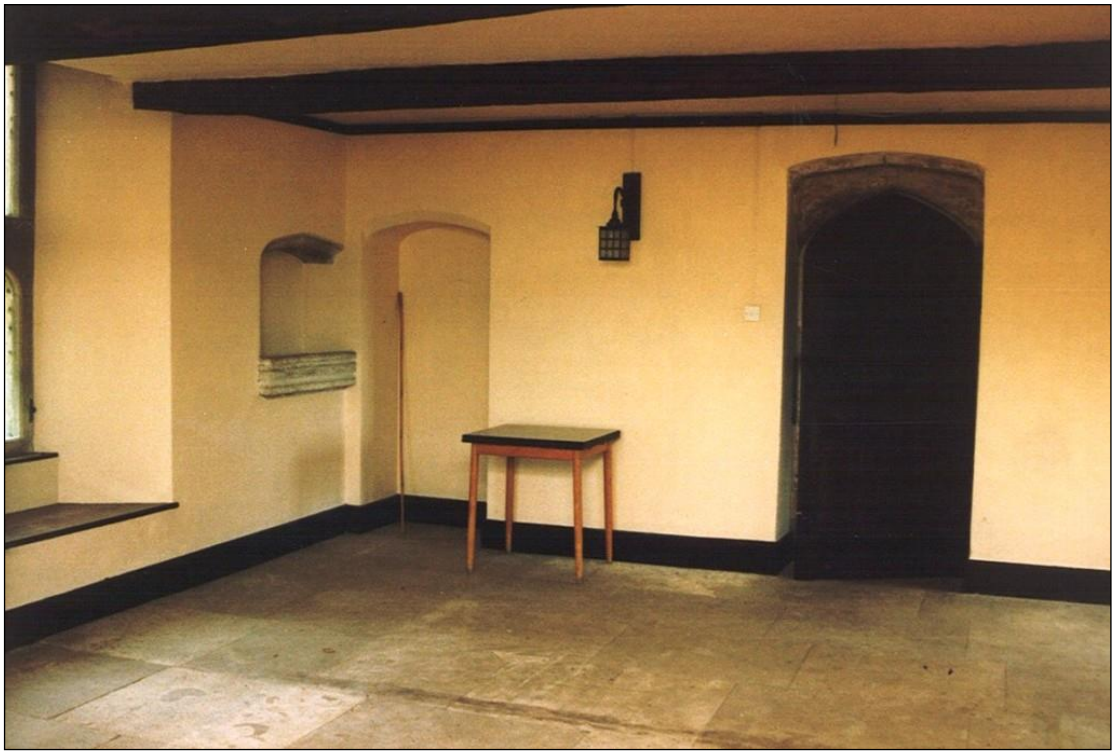
The head of the chapel window, appearing in the bedroom above.

The smooth surface of the medieval wall walk, still visible on the wall head

Inside the chapel are a finely carved piscina, for the holy water; and fragments of a great east window, discovered in 1988. The rear-arch over the window spanned almost the entire chamber, but its springers were hacked back when the upper floor was inserted. A great debate followed this discovery, with the case for full reinstatement of the chapel strongly argued. However, there were equally good reasons for leaving the window as a ruin, to tell its story of the decline in the castle's fortunes. With the inserted floor, it tells us much about the practical recycling of even fine buildings before the age of academic restoration. However, as a compromise, the ceiling was cut back to leave as much as possible visible from below.

Turning left at the top of the steps you pass into the central chamber of the north house, its hall, known as the King's Room. This would have served a variety of uses, convivial and official. With the removal of the inserted floor, this has now returned to its original proportions, with the great oak beams and boards of its new ceiling following lines left in the walls by the medieval roof. The beams rest in original pockets, and the boards rest on a corbel table of which fragments survive. Medieval plaster survives too, and the new has been applied as thinly as possible to match it. On the old plaster are very decayed traces of painted decoration, possibly with a chequered pattern, as of masonry. For its safe preservation, it has been covered with a coat of limewash. The stone floor, and the fireplace, are Victorian.

The high end of the hall was probably at the south, nearest the chapel, with the carved basin or lavabo at one end of the high table. If the medieval fireplace was in the same position as the present, Victorian, one, it would have given heat equally to the high table and to the body of the room. As already described, the low or service entrance was probably via the door from the present kitchen, reached by outside steps.



In 1987, after the Sherwoods moved out of the castle.

Beside this door is another opening which was once a doorway, although it was later partly blocked. It has a different head, being semi-circular and Hamstone, to any others in the castle, but this seems to be a later insertion. The door jamb was found to be bonded in with that of the door beside it, making it original. If the first door led to a servery at the head of outside steps, the second one could have led to other chambers in the north-west range.

The existence of the north-west wing makes it possible to have a group of bedrooms, or private chambers, off the more public hall, in the medieval fashion, but with greater comfort and convenience than could have been achieved in the north-east tower. There was also space for a modern kitchen right next to the hall. The kitchen has 18th-century shelves and panelling in the window embrasures, but the rest of the joinery, like the staircase in this wing, and the new oak doors on the ground floor, were all made by Leonard Hardy 1989-92. Also on the ground floor, under a stone slab, is a well.

In the corner of the hall's low end is the door to the north stair turret, now reached by Victorian steps. At the top of this stair is a door which opened outwards, either into a room or onto the wall-walk. It is not possible to explore freely beyond it, because of the risk of fire or accident. Just to its right, on the far side, is the stump of the original north wall of the castle. In the roof space are the remains of the 18th-century attics. The structure of the main roof at this end of the castle dates from 1979, when the old trusses and rafters proved beyond repair.

From the other corner of the hall, again at the low end, another door leads into the chambers of the north-east tower. That on the ground floor is equipped with a basin as well as a separate closet with a garderobe in it. The dividing wall is of 1851, but appears always to have been solid, while the garderobe in the room above had only a wooden partition to screen it. These chambers, together with any in the north-west range, would have been for the officials and pages of the lord's household.

The corbels over the hall fireplace supported the beams of the inserted bedroom floor. The blocked opening to these rooms can be seen as you go up the new stair leading to the rooms over the chapel. This replaces the Victorian staircase which, to reach the upper floor, cut across the lobby window in a very awkward way, so that a new and better solution was preferred.

New steps also lead to the Queen's Room. A number of features tell us that this was the owner's private chamber or solar: it is reached from the high end of the hall, and has a squint, or small window, looking into the chapel. It also has a fireplace, a window that is larger than those of the other chambers, and no other room opens off it, making it more private. A door in the south cross-wall, leading into the Guard Room beyond (now blocked), was a later Iteration. The door in the far corner is thought to have led to a garderobe closet, possibly in the east tower, although it is not clear exactly how this worked. As the best equipped room in the castle, this grand chamber could only have been for Guy de Bryan himself.

Inside the rest of the castle

Below the Queen's Room is a medieval kitchen. Like most of the rooms on the ground floor of the castle, it has a stone vault, but because it is larger than the others, the vault is taller, which explains the higher floor level above it. The great fireplace spans the entire width of the room on the east wall. The kitchen is entered by its own outside door, and had access to another room to its north, a pantry or buttery, but probably no further in the earliest arrangement. The builders took care to see that there was an effective fire barrier between the kitchen and the rest of the castle.

Immediately to its south, but entirely separate from it originally (and now again) is a second kitchen, again with its own outside door, and a great fireplace on the east wall, although this one was altered in the 17th or 18th century to provide a bread oven. There is a second fireplace on the west wall. This too had a second room opening out of it and might also have had access to the ground floor of the east tower.

Each kitchen, therefore, was self-contained, and equipped to serve a separate household. It is reasonable to assume that the northern one was exclusively for the north house, while the southern looked after the south house and the lesser dwellings. Comings and goings were sheltered by the pentice, although this does not seem to have extended beyond the west stair turret to the door of the South Hall. Nor, it seems, was there any internal link, since the door between the south pantry and the ground floor of the south house is fairly modern.

The south house (which occupies about two thirds of the lower range) differs from the rest of the building in that the ground floor, instead of a stone vault, had a wooden ceiling supported on beams. The first floor was therefore lower, which explains why its window, too, is lower.

There is some evidence that this reflected a change of mind by the builders. Putting other structural evidence together with the fact that the ground floor is entered by a wide doorway, while having in it only store-rooms, Nicholas Cooper has suggested that there was a wooden stair just inside the door, in the south-west corner, leading to the first floor.

Most of the first floor was occupied by a hall, heated by a fireplace in the west wall. At its southern end there appears to have been a passage or lobby, from which doors led to chambers in the south-east tower and, via the stone stair turret, to others in the suggested south-west range. The rooms in the south-east tower, at least, had garderobes. Over this passage there was a gallery, its beams resting on corbels, and reached from the stair turret.

The likelihood is that this south house was the permanent home of a steward or bailiff. An important figure, probably from a gentry family, he would have lived at the castle during its owner's long absences, seeing to the administration of his property there, and possibly in other parts of Dorset as well. The duty of overseeing manorial justice would also have fallen to him, and it is probably for this reason that there was a lobby, which also served as a waiting room, across the end of the South Hall.

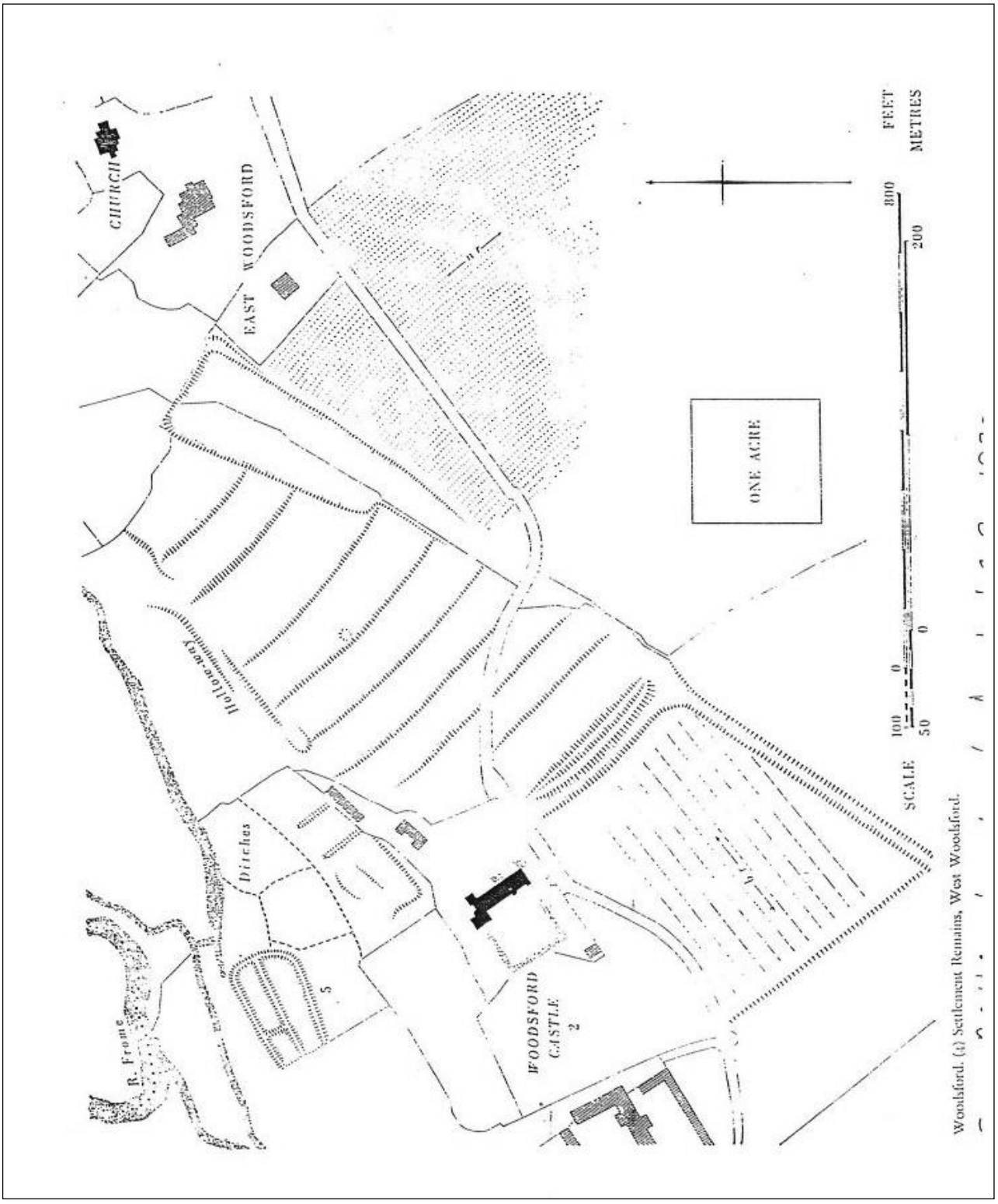
In the middle of the building, and sharing the same stair, are two lodgings, each apparently consisting of an outer room, with either a shared inner room in the east tower, or possibly individual rooms, one above the other. The outer rooms are well-lit, but had no fireplaces. The northern lodging has a second door which could have led to a garderobe, or perhaps a stair to the wall walk. Its traditional name, the Guard Room, suggests that the original occupants were members of the small permanent garrison. The southern lodging could have been for the constable (although the constable's lodging was more often in the gatehouse), or for other retainers or guests.

UNDERSTANDING THE CASTLE

When studying Woodsford, there are three main questions that are asked. The first concerns the site: why a castle here? The answer to this seems to be that it is accidental. The castle began as a fortified manor house, and the manor house was there already. The reasons why manor house became castle have been touched on already, and will be dealt with more fully later.

The second question is when was it built? A variety of dates have been given. The 19th century made it the work of Guy de Bryan from 1367, adapted and improved by the Staffords in the 15th century. Around 1900 it began to be suggested that the taller northern end was de Bryan and the lower southern end was Stafford. In 1935, Arthur Oliver produced the licence to crenellate (giving it wrongly as 1337) and put the whole building back by thirty years, though allowing Guy de Bryan its completion. The Royal Commission in 1970 stuck to 1335, but allotted shares equally to de Whitfield and de Bryan, in one long-drawn-out programme. The historian John Harvey, in a report for the Landmark Trust in 1978, put the north end as 1340-60, and the south later, after 1380, from the design of the windows.

The collective opinion of those studying the building 1987-92 is that the surviving range is quite certainly of one build, that none of it is likely to be earlier than 1350-60, while very possibly it all dates from about 1370. Taken with documentary evidence quoted below, Guy de Bryan has returned to favour as chief builder, with de Whitfield and Stafford in minor roles.



From RCHM, Inventory for Dorset, Vol 2 1970

A more difficult question, that arises again and again, but can never be fully answered, concerns the other buildings on the site. How do you interpret what is left without a knowledge of the whole of which it once formed part? It is tempting to examine the existing range in isolation, but it is in reality only a fragment of something larger, the rest of which must not be forgotten.

The observation that Woodsford was originally a quadrangular castle, an enclosure of four roughly equal sides, was first made in 1774 by the Rev. John Hutchins in his *History and Antiquities of Dorset* based on quite substantial ruins of the other sides which then existed. Since Hutchins apparently chose a different orientation to subsequent writers, his description is confusing at first. However, a close reading suggests what he has done. The present building runs from NNW to SSE, and most writers, for simplicity, describe it as running North-South, and forming, therefore, the east side of the original enclosure. Hutchins, however, apparently thought the building ran from west to east, occupying the north side of the castle as a whole.

If this is taken to be the case, his description then fits with the existing building. Moreover, it also fits a mid-19th-century copy, in the Ilchester estate papers, of an "old map" of perhaps a century earlier, since Sir J. Nappier is given as the neighbouring owner, who died in 1765. The castle is shown as a square, with solid ranges on north and east sides, and the other two sides drawn in outline only. The range on the north is shown with a break in its centre. Hutchins (with the usual orientation in brackets) says:

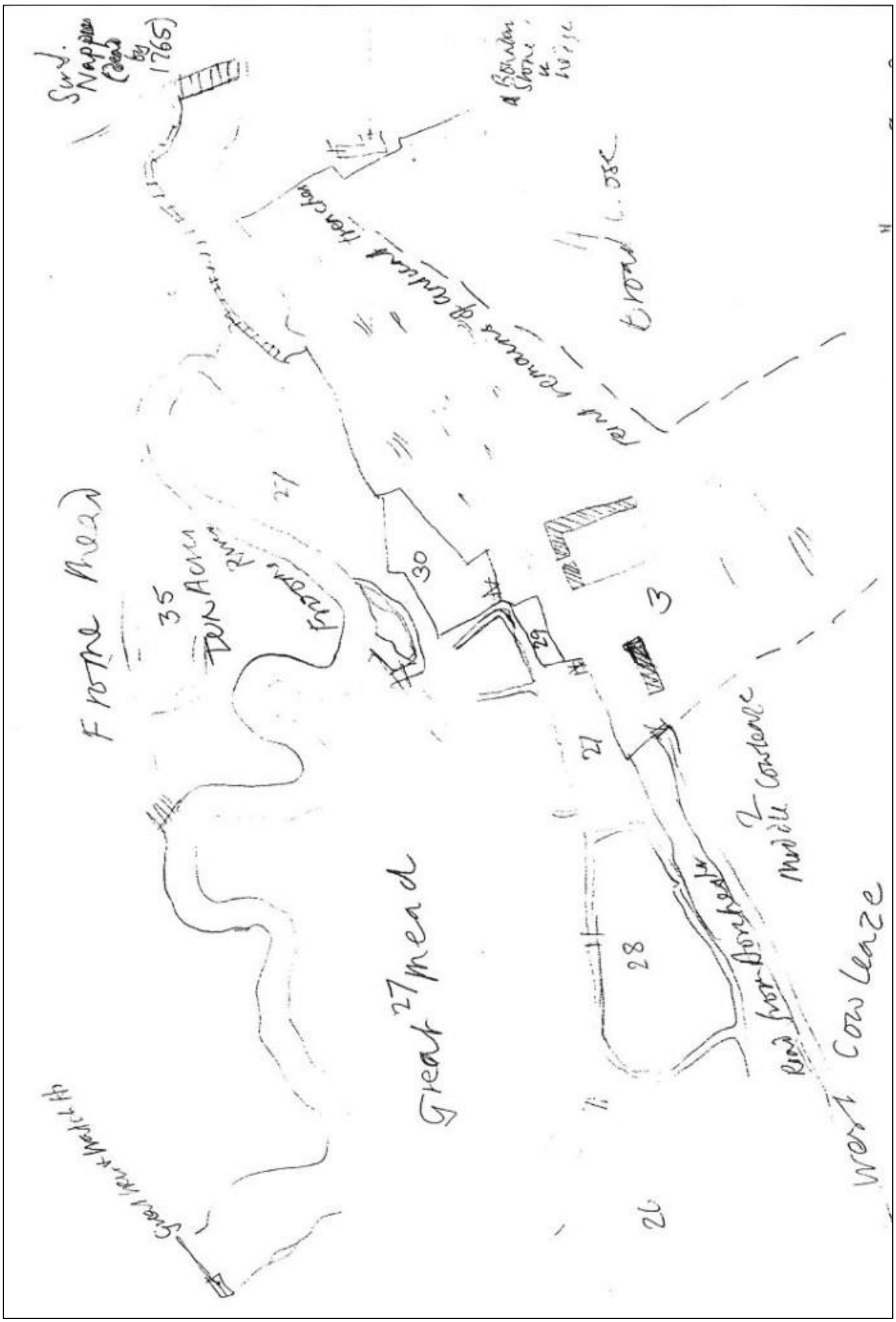
> What remains of this castle is a large lofty building, now a farmhouse, which seems to have formed one side of a quadrangle; the E. [South] and W. [North] sides of which are demolished; but there are some remains on th e S. [West]. The principal entrance was on the west [North], on which side is an ancient stone stair-case [the existing complete stair turret] higher than the house; which shews that it has been taken lower by the removal of the

> battlements. It is said to have been once covered with lead. There is a small stair-case in the S.E. [South West] corner [the ruined stair turret]...Traces of a ditch run round the house a considerable distance from it. On the W. [North] is a pretty large track of ruins. Here are a variety of old windows. The offices below the first floor are all vaulted with stone. A room here is called the Queen's room; in another is a nich, which seems to shew it was a chapel.

Further clarification comes in the third, much revised, edition of Hutchins, of 1861. This account notes that "on the north side, however, traces are still distinct enough to show the outlines of a square tower at the outer angle, and of another building occupying the remaining portion of that side, with two external semi-circular turrets".

The building with two external turrets sounds like another chamber block, with stairs to upper floors. The "square tower at the outer angle" presumably stood at, and defended, the north-west corner of the castle as a whole. This raises the question of whether there was a defensive tower at the north-west corner of the main range, too. W. Shipp and J.W. Hodson, authors of the revised Hutchins, saw the present building as having its own complete set of defences, regardless of the rest of the castle, and assumed the buildings at its two western corners to have been towers. This could have been so, since that on the north-west corner, at least, seems to have measured much the same from north to south as the north-east tower. Equally, it could have been a narrow range on the north side of the courtyard, containing more chambers.

Neither Hutchins nor his revisers mention any trace of a gatehouse. According to J. Pouncy, who based his account in *Dorset Photographically Illustrated* (1857) on information from him, the architect John Hicks thought the gatehouse was on the north side, from evidence of a road skirting the north side of the castle (as it seems still to do in the first edition of the Ordnance Survey 1-inch map of 1810). The "old map" certainly shows a break in the north range. However, it might equally have been on the west side of the castle, opposite the main range.



Mid 19th century copy of old map, in Ilchester papers

In 1990, while restoration was in progress, both an earthwork and a resistivity survey were carried out. The latter revealed very little, though the metalled surface of the courtyard was met with under the lawn, and the worn flint of a flintlock firearm was found, of the 1600s or later. The earthwork survey, however, did show traces of the north and south sides of an enclosure, and a much clearer bank on the west, with a gap in it which could mark the position of a gatehouse. To the west again, they detected a second enclosure, perhaps an outer bailey, also with an entrance on its western side. Another survey by the archaeological dowser, E.C.R. Fawcett, again showed a gatehouse on the west side. The gap on the north side could have been a postern opening onto the track to the ford.

There is plenty of evidence, then, to show that Woodsford Castle was once a roughly square structure, with each side about a hundred feet long, enclosing an inner ward or courtyard. There were buildings, as opposed to just a curtain wall, on at least two sides, east and north. If Hutchins is to be relied upon, there were more to the west, perhaps including a gatehouse. The architectural evidence implies that there was a building of some sort on the south-west corner, next to the vanished stair turret. There is the possibility that this building, and that on the north-west corner, were larger than the eastern towers.

Where does that leave us? How many of the foundations seen in 1774 and 1861 were Guy de Bryan's, how many were earlier, or even later? Did William de Whitfield after all begin, on a new site, a true quadrangular castle as seen elsewhere in the 14th century, with accommodation ranged round four sides of equal strength, a plan that Guy de Bryan merely continued? Or did de Whitfield simply add battlements to his existing manor house, with a walled forecourt, and perhaps a strong gatehouse - a scheme to which Guy de Bryan added, rising above the rest, a new residential range to replace the earlier manor house?

RCHME ground level survey, 1990. A,B and C represent the possible outlines of the castle, with a dip at C perhaps marking an entrance. D, E and F are the banks of an outer enclosure, with a possible entrance at E. H marks the remains of fish ponds while J is the site of the pig farm and also of banks associated with Woodsford Strangways

It is more and more likely that something on the lines of this last alternative was in fact the case. From the descriptions quoted earlier, and the recent study of the building itself, it seems that the buildings adjoining the existing range, even if some of them were contemporary with it, were on a smaller scale. There is no reason to think that this was ever a great castle such as the nearly contemporary Bodiam in Sussex. To quote the *Buildings of England; Dorset* again, "this can hardly be considered a true castle unless the demolished ranges were at least as strong as the range that survives, which seems unlikely, for this is self-sufficient".

It is perhaps unfair to rule out true castle-hood on these grounds, since until the 14th century many castles consisted of a strong curtain wall 18 - with buildings ranged here and there against it. By Leland, in his *Itinerary*lof the 1530s, and in Coker's *Survey of Dorset* of 1630, it was regarded as a castle. However, it is true that it appears not have been on the scale of some other 14th-century castles. And it is also true that the surviving range appears to have all that is needed in the way of accommodation within it, so that it is hard to see what it is missing apart, perhaps, from a great ceremonial hall for occasions involving all the castle's occupants.

The arrangement of the surviving range, however, shows a knowledge of the latest developments in the domestic planning of castles, and has far more to do with these than it has to do with manor house design in the 14th century as seen, at the grandest level, at Penshurst in Kent. Not only are a variety of different requirements, in terms of scale and quality of accommodation, met with in the most concise manner possible, but the needs of domesticity are fully combined and integrated with those of defence. Similar arrangements were identified by P.A Faulkner (Castle Planning in the Fourteenth Century in *The Archaeological Journal* Vol 120 1963) at castles such as Goodrich in Hereford-shire and Bolton in Yorkshire, where dwellings for several different house-holds, and single

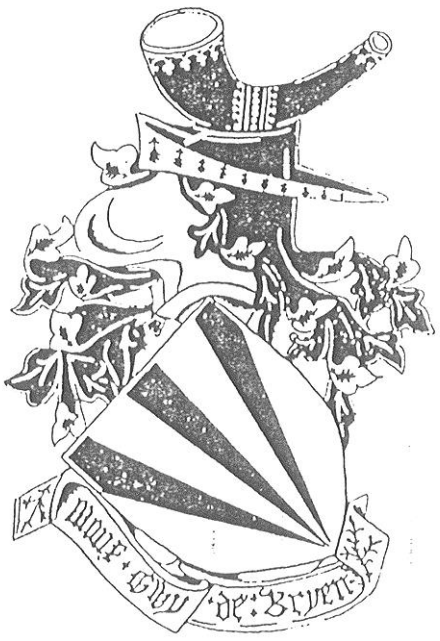
lodgings, were intricately contained under a single roof. It seems probable that the designer of Woodsford had fully learnt the lessons of compactness worked out in these larger fortifications, and simply reproduced them in one range rather than four.

Moreover the work itself is of high quality in its execution and design. John Harvey, in 1978, commented that: "The close likeness of detail to work at first-class monuments is noteworthy. The lord of Woodsford Castle undoubtedly employed architects and craftsmen of a high rank". Nicholas Cooper, of the Royal Commission, in a draft report of 1989, remarks that:

> Though the castle lacks any elaborate architectural decoration, much of the masonry detail is of considerable refinement. Fireplaces throughout are formed with joggled keystones, ensuring total stability though in most cases structurally redundant. Rear-arches to all original door and window openings have chamfered, freestone lintels, and the forms of masonry required by various openings at the head and foot of staircases has called for stone-cutting of some complexity.

There are two final pointers towards an understanding of Guy de Bryan's building, as it has come down to us. The first lies in the knowledge that his family had estates in Pembrokeshire, and had for some generations been minor Marcher lords. In that county, often known as Little England Beyond Wales, the fortified house, with the main rooms raised over a vaulted undercroft, became a local characteristic: George Evans in his *Description of Pembrokeshire* wrote that "most houses of any accompt were builded with vaultes verye stronglye and substancyalle wrought". Several of these survive, most notably in the Bishop's Palaces at Lamphey and St David's, where the Great Hall was added between 1327-1348. Guy de Bryan could have been reproducing at Woodsford the kind of building in which he grew up.

Secondly, there are the words used by William Camden in the chapter on Dorset in his *Brittania* This first appeared in 1607, in latin. English translations followed but in all of them the exact sense of Camden's own words was lost. He described Woodsford as being where Guy de Bryan "suum habuit castellulum": where he had his own little castle. This both confirms the impression that Guy de Bryan was closely involved in the building, and that Woodsford was never a castle on the grand scale. There is also an overtone in the diminutive "castellulum" which implies that it was in a sense a toy castle, making a conscious display of chivalry. As did Bodiam Castle and as, even more forcibly, did that company, membership of which crowned Sir Guy's career: the Knights of the Most Noble Order of the Garter.



52. *Stall plate of Sir Guy de Brian, 56th Knight of the Garter, in St. George's Chapel Windsor*
(By courtesy of Major T. G. Woolley of Hazelbury Bryan)