

OTFORD, ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE

External Repairs Phase II

Management & Maintenance Plan





# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The Management and Maintenance Plan

This Management and Maintenance Plan has been prepared in support of a second round application to Historic England for repairs to Otford Archbishop's Palace. It has been written by Thomas Ford and Partners based on an earlier inspection undertaken by the practice. Thomas Ford and Partners are conservation architects experienced in the repair and maintenance of historic buildings.

## 1.2 Consultation

Submitted to Sevenoaks District Council and comments taken into account.

## 1.3 The Scope of the Plan

The scope of the plan is the management and maintenance of the existing building.

The Project includes the repair of external walls and windows, with some internal repairs. This is the second phase of work designed to stabilise the structure and make it safe in advance of work to establish a long term future for the remnants of the Palace.

# 2. Understanding the Heritage

## 2.1 Description of the Heritage

2.1.1 The remnants of the Archbishop's Palace consist of the north western tower of the outer courtyard and remnants of the adjacent range and central gatehouse. Further remnants of the Palace exist in gardens of houses in Bubblestone Road and fishponds and water management works in gardens to the east of the Palace complex.

2.1.2 The Palace is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

## 2.2 How the Palace has changed through time

2.2.1 The Palace, or at least the Archbishop's lane holdings, are first mentioned in 821 when the land was granted to Archbishop Wulfred. The Palace was constantly developed during the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries when, in particular, the moat was greatly enlarged. By 1292 Otford Manor, as it was known, was at the centre of a complex of manors including Bexley, Northfleet and Wrotham.

2.2.2 During this early medieval period the Palace developed within a moated enclosure and included a substantial complex of chapels, Great Hall, the large gate, the Great Gallery and a series of flanking towers and gates. Some of these buildings were substantial, for example the chapel built in 1315 was 58 feet long, the Great Hall built by Archbishop Courtney in 1382 was over 100 feet long and the Great Gallery was in excess of 200 feet in length.

2.2.3 The complex also included detached buildings such as the Tithe Barn and stables and Almshouses, all set within the Deer Park of 222 acres.

2.2.4 William Warham was Archbishop to Henry VII in 1503 and was made Chancellor the following year, a post he held until 1515. It was in 1514 that Warham commenced work on a new courtyard at Otford to outdo anything else in England. Most of the medieval buildings were developed save for the principal structure, with the outer courtyard completed by 1518.

2.2.5 In 1532 Warham died at the age of 82, but his successor Archbishop Cranmer had to surrender the Palace to Henry VIII in 1537 along with Knole and other palaces. Henry made alterations to the Palace between 1541 and 1546 and it was a major palace on a European scale by the time of Henry's death in 1547.

2.2.6 The new outer courtyard, at 82 x 72m, was perhaps the largest in Europe at that time.

2.2.7 Following Henry VIII's death, the Palace started a rapid decline, with Elizabeth I perhaps only visiting once. The dilapidated palace was bought by Sir Philip Sidney in 1601 but he was bankrupt 40 years later and the Palace became a quarry. The surviving remnants were incorporated into farm buildings but were in a very poor state by the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1930s Sevenoaks District Council bought the remnants of the Palace, converting the range to affordable houses (now sold off) and retaining the tower and gatehouse.

### 2.3 Importance

2.3.1 The remnants of the Palace are locally very important and the focus of much interest in the village and beyond. The remaining tower in particular is a significant focal point to the south of the parish church and dominates Palace field.

## 3. Current Salvation

### 3.1 Responsibility

The remaining north western tower and fragment of gatehouse are in the ownership of Sevenoaks District Council. The linking range is split into three domestic dwellings, all of which are now privately owned. The Palace field is within the remnants of the Palace and is also owned by Sevenoaks District Council and the whole site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

### 3.2 Current Management

The remnants of the palace owned by Sevenoaks District Council are managed by them. In 2015/2016 significant work was undertaken to safeguard the ruins.

### 3.3 Condition

Since the 2015/2016 conservation project the condition of the gatehouse and, particularly, the north western tower have improved significantly. At present there are still conservation and repair issues with the fabric but the structures are structurally sound and reasonably weathertight.

### 3.4 The Project

The present proposals are to complete more of the conservation and stabilisation works to the north western tower. This will include the removal of more Portland cement-based pointing and repair and undertake selective replacement of elements to safeguard fabric structurally.

## 4. Risks

### 4.1 Natural Factors

The Palace stands on a platform well above the flood plain of the river Darent, and as such is not at particular risk of flooding. The site is also not particularly exposed.

## 4.2 Human Factors

The north western tower, because it is unoccupied and only roofed, is vulnerable to vandalism. However, damage in recent years has been minimal.

## 4.3 Resource Issues

Sevenoaks District Council have limited resources available to continue to repair and conserve the monument. The most recent phase of works is only possible due to a grant from English Heritage. Parts of the tower, particularly the roof, are not accessible without specialist equipment.

# 5. Aims and Objectives

## 5.1 Historic Asset

To keep the building in a good state of repair and potentially look at works to make the north western tower more accessible and usable.

To allow access to the historic building in due course.

## 5.2 Skills, Activities, Equipment and Facilities

To allow access to and interpretation of the historic asset.

To allow the future management of the building to be carried out financially neutral to the Council.

# 6. Action Plan and Costs

## 6.1 The table on the following pages describes:

- What needs to be maintained and managed
- What work is involved
- Who will do it
- When and how often it should be done
- What resources money/people/skills are needed.

What needs to be maintained or managed	What work is involved	Who will do it	Frequency and date	Resources Required
Flat roof of north western tower	Clear debris, check downpipe	Skilled contractor	Annually	Hydraulic platform
Tiled pitched roof of gatehouse	Check for missing and broken tiles. Replace as necessary.	Contractor	Twice a year	Ladder access
North western tower Internal downpipe	Check not blocked.	Contractor	Twice a year	No specialist equipment
Rainwater goods to gatehouse	Check not blocked or leaking.	Contractor	Twice a year	Ladder access
North western tower External walls	Check no loose material	Professional or skilled volunteer	Twice a year	Inspect from ground level and report defects
North western tower Interior walls	Check no loose material	Professional or skilled volunteer	Twice a year	Inspect from ground level and report defects
Gatehouse exterior	Check no loose material	Professional or skilled volunteer	Twice a year	Inspect from ground level and report defects
Gatehouse services	Check secure and complete tests	Skilled contractor	Annually	Access to the building
North western tower Lightning conductor	Check acceptable resistance	Skilled contractor	Annually	Specialist access

## 7. Review

### 7.1 Review

It is recommended that Sevenoaks District Council review the management and maintenance plan and present an annual report to the AGM or other suitable event. A strategic review of the plan should be carried out every five years.

### 7.2 Copies of Plan

Copies of the plan should be lodged in the building with other maintenance records.