

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Lyddington Bedehouse: a medieval bishop's palace and post-medieval almshouse with moat, gardens, fishponds and cultivation remains

PARISH: LYDDINGTON

DISTRICT: RUTLAND

COUNTY: RUTLAND

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 17156

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SP87669710

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes Lyddington Bedehouse, a Grade I Listed Building incorporating the standing remains of a medieval palace of the bishops of Lincoln. In 1085 Bishop Remegius acquired a manor at Lyddington which was enlarged and developed throughout the following century, and in the early 13th century the presence of an episcopal residence on the site was first recorded. The palace was extensively rebuilt in the early 14th century and further altered during the 15th and early 16th centuries. In 1547 it was seized on behalf of the king and later passed to the Cecils of Burghley who in 1600, converted part of the palace into an almshouse known as the Jesus Hospital. Later known as the Bedehouse, it continued in use as an almshouse until 1930. In 1954 it passed into the care of the Ministry of Works and was subsequently restored. The monument includes the standing and buried remains of the medieval palace and post-medieval almshouse, and the buried remains of the moated manor which preceded them; these features were partly excavated between 1976 and 1983. It also includes the earthwork remains of the palace gardens, fishponds and associated features, including ridge-and-furrow cultivation. The monument lies near the centre of the village of Lyddington, south, east and north east of the village green. It takes the form of a series of standing structures, earthworks and buried features extending from Main Street on the west to the River Hylde on the east. In the western part of the monument are the remains of the palace, almshouse and moated site; to the east is the area which served as a garden of the palace, formerly known as 'Little Park', and where the earthwork remains of fishponds and ridge-and-furrow cultivation are located. The present Bedehouse and surrounding walls are in the care of the Secretary of State; these structures are included in the scheduling. All other standing buildings, walls and fences are excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath them is included.

The Bedehouse is a stone built structure of rectangular plan situated on the north west side of the churchyard. Aligned north east to south west, it is constructed of coursed ironstone with white limestone dressings and ashlar additions, and dates principally from the 14th to 16th centuries. In the main part of the building are three internal storeys: on the ground floor is a large central chamber with a smaller chamber at each end, all later subdivided by timber-studded partitions to form 13 smaller rooms with fireplaces; on the upper floor are three chambers corresponding to those below, of which the one at the north eastern end is subdivided into two smaller rooms. Above is an

attic storey with post-medieval dormer windows on the north western side. Attached at the southern corner of the main part of the building is a smaller structure on a slightly different alignment, separated from the ground floor chambers by an internal passage but linked through both the upper and attic storeys. This and the main part of the building represent the remains of the cameral range (private chamber) of the medieval palace, begun in the 12th-13th centuries and rebuilt in the early 14th century. Here the bishop's private chambers were located. The central chamber on the upper storey, originally open to the roof and later fitted with an ornate timber ceiling, served as the bishop's private hall; the north eastern chamber served as a chapel and the south western chamber as the bishop's presence chamber or office. The rooms attached to the south include a private oratory and washroom. This range was converted into an almshouse in 1600 by the partition of the ground floor chambers and one of the upper chambers into living accommodation for 14 poor and one warden; the bishop's hall was used as the common hall of the almshouse, where meals were served. Further alterations were made in the 17th and 18th centuries, including the addition of a covered passageway on the north west front. The present Bedehouse represents only a fragment of the former bishop's palace, the larger part of which survives as a series of buried deposits identified by part archaeological excavation. The cameral range has thus been found to have extended further to both the north east and south west of the present Bedehouse. Projecting from the north west front of the Bedehouse is a rectangular tower representing the standing remains of a structure which extended north eastwards along the face of the original range; this tower houses a stone stair which originally led up to the bishop's chambers from the eastern corner of the great hall which joined the cameral range at right-angles. The buried remains of the hall extend north westwards from the Bedehouse towards Bluecoat Lane and include stone wall foundations, floor surfaces and hearths. The hall was found to have been constructed in the early 14th century over the remains of a smaller 12th century hall; measuring 20m by 12m, it is one of the largest known episcopal halls in the country. Adjoining the north western end of the hall, and running parallel with the cameral range, are the buried remains of the service and lodging range of the palace. The remains of this range extend northwards beyond the Bedehouse grounds, lying beneath and to each side of Bluecoat Lane. The cameral range, main hall and lodging range of the palace may thus be seen to have enclosed three sides of an open courtyard in the area now occupied by the northern part of the Bedehouse grounds.

The Bedehouse grounds are surrounded by a stone wall which on the north western and north eastern sides, and on the south eastern side bounding the churchyard, is principally of post-medieval date. Running south from the Bedehouse, between the Bedehouse garden and the churchyard, it overlies the remains of a medieval building which lay within the palace precinct. In the southern part of the Bedehouse garden, along Church Lane and Main Street, the present wall represents a rebuilding of part of the palace's precinct wall. Part excavation in this area has demonstrated that the first precinct wall was constructed in the 14th century, rebuilt on a slightly different alignment in the 15th century and finally replaced by the present wall in the 18th century. At the southern corner of the precinct is a projecting stone tower of octagonal plan which dates largely from the late 15th century. The remains of the earliest precinct wall were found to partly overlie an infilled moat, over 5.5m wide and 1.5m deep, with an internal rampart; these features represent the remains of the south and west sides of a rectangular moated enclosure, bounded by Church Lane and Main Street respectively. Constructed in the 11th-12th centuries the moat is contemporary with the early hall on the site, and together they represent the remains of a moated manor out of which the palace developed. The moat went out of use in the 13th century before the 14th century palace and walled precinct were established. The buried remains of the northern arm of the moat have been identified by aerial photography running across the lawns north east of the Manor House; in the western corner

of the large field to the east are the earthwork remains of a linear channel running north eastwards which is believed to have originated as an outlet leat of the moat. The eastern arm of the moat is thought to have run along the east side of the present churchyard. The moat thus enclosed an area of approximately 1ha which was subsequently enclosed within the palace precinct. In this area would have stood the palace gatehouse, domestic outbuildings such as kitchens and brewhouses, and associated yards and gardens. Also lying within both the moated enclosure and the later palace precinct is the present Parish Church of St Andrew, which is believed to have originated as the palace chapel. The earliest part of the standing fabric dates from the early 14th century, indicating that it was rebuilt at the same time as the main palace buildings to replace an earlier church known through documentary sources of the late 12th century. The present church is in ecclesiastical use and is therefore excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath it is included. Archaeological deposits associated with both the earlier and later churches, including structural features such as porches and covered passageways, are believed to lie within the churchyard. The area of the churchyard which lies within the monument is now out of use and is included in the scheduling. A small area east of the vestry (at the north east end of the church) remains in use and is totally excluded from the scheduling. The part excavation of a medieval building against the western edge of the churchyard indicates that the remains of other secular and domestic features of the palace precinct also survive in this area.

Adjacent to the north east of the Bedehouse grounds is a raised building platform which occupies a rectangular area measuring about 80m by 50m, including the small orchard and part of the garden to the rear of no 3, The Green, and extending north eastwards through the present farmyard to the south western part of the adjacent field. This platform is considered to represent the remains of an outer court of the palace where stables and other outbuildings would have been located. It is believed to overlie the remains of the eastern arm of the moat, representing the expansion of the palace complex north eastwards in the early 14th century. From this date the present pasture field lay within the bishop's 'Little Park', referred to in documentary sources, where gardens and orchards are thought to have been located. In this field, and in the paddock to the north of it, are the earthwork remains of ridge-and-furrow cultivation aligned north east to south west. Low in height and without heads, the ridges are partly overlain by the building platform and may thus be seen to predate the construction of the palace's outer court in the early 14th century. These remains are thought to be associated with a royal licence to till 20 acres which was obtained by the bishop in 1154, and thus represent less than 200 years of cultivation. In the north eastern part of the large pasture field are the earthworks of a substantial ornamental fishpond complex, intended to serve both as a series of ponds in which to raise fish and as an elaborate earthwork within an ornamental garden. Lying in the valley of the River Hylde, along the former course of the river, it occupies a large rectangular area measuring over 110m by 80m and bounded by a large outer bank up to 3m in height. Gaps in the bank at the north western and south eastern corners represent inlet and outlet leats respectively. The outer bank encloses a deep rectangular moat, which in turn surrounds a lower inner bank; this bank defines a rectangular area subdivided by further linear banks to create a series of interconnected rectangular ponds where the fish were raised. The large outer bank served both to protect the ponds from periodic flooding and as a feature within the layout of the gardens of the Little Park, enhancing the view of the ponds as seen from the palace and providing a raised walk. The earthworks of the fishpond complex partly overlie those of the adjacent ridge-and-furrow and are believed to date from the early 14th century when the Little Park was established. Adjacent to the south west of the main part of the fishpond complex is a single large fishpond, nearly 20m by 60m and 2m deep, believed to be later in date.

In the paddock which occupies the north western part of the site, lying approximately 100m to the west of the main fishpond complex, are the earthwork remains of two further fishponds. Each pond is about 15m wide, 35m long and 0.5m deep. The westernmost pond is aligned north west to south east with a leat at each end; that on the north west is linked to the adjacent stream. Running from the eastern side of the pond is a short leat connecting it to the south western end of the easternmost pond, which lies roughly at right angles to it. At the north eastern end of this pond are the remains of a leat running over 70m to the eastern corner of the paddock. Both ponds are bounded by broad linear banks.

Lyddington Bedehouse, which is Listed Grade I, and its garden walls with corner tower, which are Listed Grade II, are included in the scheduling. The small area of the churchyard remaining in use to the east of the vestry is totally excluded from the scheduling. All other standing buildings, walls and fences are excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath them is included.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Bishops' palaces were high status domestic residences providing luxury accommodation for the bishops and lodgings for their large retinues; although some were little more than country houses, others were the setting for great works of architecture and displays of decoration.

Bishops' palaces were usually set within an enclosure, sometimes moated, containing a range of buildings, often of stone, including a hall or halls, chapels, lodgings and a gatehouse, often arranged around a courtyard or courtyards.

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

The bishop's palace at Lyddington survives well in the form of both standing remains and buried features. A considerable accumulation of archaeological deposits indicates that remains of the medieval and post-medieval periods have been overlain, rather than destroyed by, later activity; part excavation has demonstrated a high level of survival for below ground remains while leaving the majority of deposits undisturbed. Structural, artefactual and ecofactual material, including organic material preserved by waterlogging, are thus likely to survive intact, preserving valuable evidence for social, religious, domestic and economic activity on the site.

The remains of the bishop's palace are associated with a variety of other features of the landscape, both contemporary and of earlier or later date. The survival of the relationship between the main palace buildings and the site of a church, which formed an integral part of the complex as the bishop's palace chapel, is one of few known examples and will preserve rare evidence for the evolution of this type of site. The development of part of the palace buildings into a post-medieval almshouse, and its subsequent abandonment and restoration, have resulted in the survival of the almshouse structure in a largely intact state including fittings which are rarely preserved elsewhere. The relationship of the fully developed palace complex to underlying features, such as the moated site which preceded it, have been elucidated by part excavation and documentary research; its relationship to the remains of early ridge-and-furrow cultivation is also preserved, with the result that these earthworks may be dated to a specific historical period. Further earthworks representing two separate groups of fishponds are similarly little disturbed and will preserve evidence for economic activity on the site. The integration of the principal fishpond complex into the ornamental layout of

the late medieval palace garden provides an additional, and rare, insight into the ideas governing the layout of medieval gardens. The relationships between these numerous and varying features will tell us how different elements of the medieval community functioned together in the context of a high status clerical residence, and how they developed through time.

Partly in the care of the Secretary of State and partly in countryside stewardship, much of the monument is accessible to the public and serves as an important educational and recreational resource.

SCHEDULING HISTORY

The scheduling incorporates two presently scheduled monuments, Leicestershire 180 and 181:

1: Monument included in the Schedule on 11th September 1947 as:

COUNTY/NUMBER: Rutland 4

NAME: Liddington Bedehouse

Monument placed in Guardianship on 19th August 1952 as:

COUNTY/NUMBER: Rutland 4

NAME: Lyddington Bede Hall

Scheduling amended on 1st April 1974 to:

COUNTY/NUMBER: Leicestershire 180

NAME: Lyddington Bedehouse

2: Monument included in the Schedule on 20th February 1953 as:

COUNTY/NUMBER: Rutland 15

NAME: Fishponds north east of the Church

Scheduling amended on 1st April 1974 to:

COUNTY/NUMBER: Leicestershire 181

NAME: Fishponds north east of the Church

The reference of this monument is now:

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SCHEDULING REVISED ON 18th October 1996