The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens for Medway



Bishops Palace, Halling

March 2015

Bishops Palace

Halling, Kent

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INTRODUCTION

This site description and accompanying dossier have been prepared by the Kent Gardens Trust as part of its wider review of ***The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens.*** This part of the review, carried out for Medway Council in 2013 -14, covers sites within the Medway local authority area with the aim to:

a) Review the historic nature, content, current state and significance of the sites currently identified in the ***Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens*** for the Medway local authority area along with others identified by Medway Council. The review has been undertaken using English Heritage's criteria for identifying the significance of local heritage assets to provide a consistent approach. The revised list of sites has the potential to support development of a Local List of historic sites in Medway should the Council wish to progress this in future[1]. The list of sites researched and evaluated in this review would be subject to consultation as part of any Local List development and is therefore not intended to be final.

b) Inform future funding applications for historic spaces by the identification of significance

c) Inform future conservation and/or any development of sites by the identification of the significance of key historic character, features and association including that of setting and viewpoints.

The extent of the area identified represents the current surviving area of the designed landscape, the boundary line generally reflecting the maximum extent of the historic gardens or parkland (although there are exceptions such as where land has been irreversibly lost to development). The boundary line takes no account of current ownership. Further information is available from the contacts listed below. The partnership would like to thank the volunteers and owners who have participated in this project and given so much of their time, effort and hospitality to complete this challenging and rewarding task.

Medway Council
Greenspace, Heritage
& Library Services
Gun Wharf
Dock Road
Chatham
ME4 4TR
www.medway.gov.uk

Kent County Council
Heritage Conservation
Invicta House
County Hall
Maidstone
ME14 1XX
01622 696918
www.kent.gov.uk

Kent Gardens Trust
www.kentgardenstrust.org.uk

English Heritage
www.english-heritage.org.uk

[1] English Heritage (2012) '*Good Practice Guide to Local Listing*'

KENT **BISHOPS PALACE HALLING**

MEDWAY

LOCATION

NGR 570545 163905

District: Medway Parish: Wouldham

The Bishops Palace lies adjacent to the east end of St. John's Church in the centre of Halling village on the east side of the High Street

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

In the absence of an historic designed landscape falling within requisite English Heritage criteria, we have not completed a full review

HISTORY

In the HER report the site is referred to as The Archbishop's Palace for the Bishop of Rochester at Halling, although there does not seem to be any evidence that it was built for or by any Archbishop of Canterbury. The first palace was built in 1077 possibly by Bishop of Gundulph of Rochester although no evidence of this remains. It was rebuilt in 1184, then repaired and enlarged the palace by Bishop Hamo De Hethe between 1322 and 1337. During the 18C most of the buildings were destroyed and the stone used in the cement works. Over the past 20 years the cement works have been replaced by modern housing estates.

DESCRIPTION

Very little remains of the Bishop's palace at Halling. All that is visible is a wall of the Hall. This is pierced by two window arches and forms part of the eastern boundary of the churchyard of the Church of St. John the Baptist. There is a small area of rough turf and a path between the wall and an embankment which at one time carried the tramway for cement works which used to surround the area. This small trapezoidal area (40m x 15m at its widest extent) constitutes what little could be regarded as a garden. The other side of the embankment has recently (after 2011) been landscaped as part of the Valley of Visions project which has been commissioned to improve the Medway valley between Maidstone and Rochester. The landscape is now largely taken up by a children's playground and has views eastwards over the river.

What little is known of the archaeology of the site is summarised in the Kent Historic Environment Record (HER Number TQ 76 SW27).

CONCLUSION

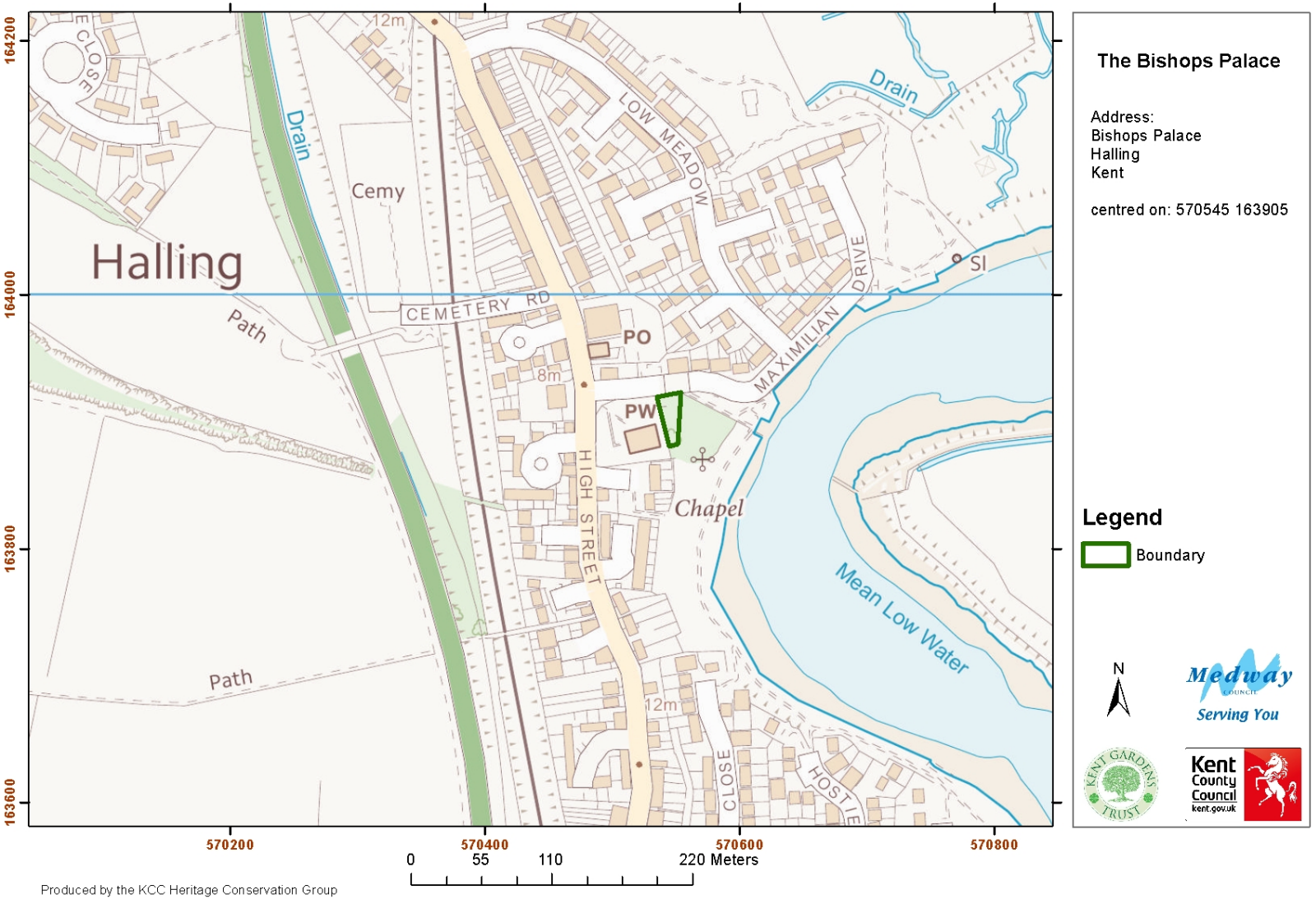
The Bishops Palace at Halling is a scheduled monument in a moderately attractive setting but there is not and has never been any significant garden,

Research and description by Paul Lewis

Virginia Hinze (editor)

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Fig. 1 Boundary map



Produced by the KCC Heritage Conservation Group

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Fig. 2 Looking west to wall of the main hall of the palace



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Fig. 3 Looking north with surviving wall on left



Kent Compendium of Historic Parks & Gardens – 2013 review of Medway

Fig. 4 Notice board on site of palace

