



<http://kentarchaeology.org.uk/research/archaeologia-cantiana/>

Kent Archaeological Society is a registered charity number 223382

© 2017 Kent Archaeological Society

'SPARE ME, KIND SIRs – SAVE ME TO-DAY'. THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY CAMPAIGN TO SAVE TEMPLE MANOR IN STROOD

JOHANNA ROETHE

On 2 September 1949, the *Chatham, Rochester & Gillingham News* published the latest in a series of letters from outraged locals demanding the immediate protection and restoration of the medieval Temple Manor in Strood. The author, Albert Charles Holliday of Rochester, cast his letter as a poem, based on Lord Tennyson's *Two Voices* of 1842, in order to highlight local concerns. The first voice belongs to a disused cabman's shelter at Rochester railway station who cries out: 'Remove me, sirs – take me away'. In contrast, the second voice is that of 'The Historic Remains of Temple Manor, Strood':

A relic of past days am I,
Where Knights of old held lordly sway:
Famed in my City's history –
Spare me, kind sirs – save me to-day.

The 'sirs' to whom the poem is addressed are the elected members of Rochester Corporation, the legal owner of Temple Manor and which for 20 years had left the property standing empty and increasingly vulnerable to vandalism. Little did Mr Holliday know that the long-running efforts on behalf of private individuals and conservation organisations, including the Office of Works (from 1943 the Ministry of Works), the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and the National Trust, were about to come to fruition, albeit at the eleventh hour. A few months after his letter appeared, the Corporation agreed to give the building in guardianship to the Ministry of Works and in 1951 a comprehensive repair and reconstruction scheme commenced.

While ultimately successful, the long story of attempts by local residents and national organisations reveals many missed opportunities to save the whole building, a picturesque ensemble with numerous medieval and post-medieval additions and accretions. The Council's failure to act over 20 years – chiefly due to lack of funding and the absence of a feasible use – caused the deterioration of the building until nearly all of the later additions were beyond saving. The debates about what should be done once money was available proposed a variety of options, ranging from saving only the thirteenth-century core of the building to saving the whole structure. When finally planning the repair works, the Ministry of Works decided to demolish some of the later additions while keeping and partly rebuilding others.

Unfortunately, no paperwork documenting the decision-making process appears to have survived. However, based on visual sources like photographs and drawings, this article reconstructs what exactly was revealed, repaired, reinstated and rebuilt and on what basis. The story that led to the 'saving' of Temple Manor also reveals the networks between conservation professionals and local residents, antiquarians and architects which were activated and used when Temple Manor was at risk of ruination and demolition.

The early history of Temple Manor

According to stylistic dating, the building now known as Temple Manor was constructed in the early thirteenth century, probably between 1228 and 1245. This two-storey stone and flint building joined an earlier complex of buildings at the manor of Strood, which in the 1150s had been granted to the Knights Templars by Henry II.¹ As no Templars were in permanent residence, Strood appears to have been a 'camera', i.e. a tenement of manorial size but without a resident knight. (The term 'camera' originally referred to such establishments of the Knights Hospitallers and has been applied to Templar property by analogy. It has also been used as an architectural term for structures like Temple Manor, containing a household within a household.²) The manor at Strood would have been primarily a source of income, but also provided accommodation for Templar officials travelling between London and Dover.³ The upper floor of the thirteenth-century building was probably divided into a private inner chamber and an outer chamber for meetings. With its richer decoration of carved and moulded arcades and doorways, and walls painted to imitate ashlar joints, the upper floor was clearly serving a more important purpose than the undercroft, whose chalk vault and doorway are competent but less elaborate.⁴

Shortly after the suppression of the Templars in 1312, Strood appears to have become a working farm owned by the Franciscan nuns at Denny Abbey (Cambs.), also a former Templar property. During the early fourteenth century, some of the older timber buildings of the manor, including the former hall, were demolished, and the first of several additions to the camera was built. A new ground-floor hall was erected against the north side of the thirteenth-century stone building, its long wall parallel to the camera. In the fifteenth century, another extension was added to the north, taking the form of a two-storey, jettied timber wing, giving the house an L-plan.⁵

Following the dissolution of Denny Abbey, the manor at Strood (then known as 'Strood Temple') passed through several hands, including the Cobham family and Robert Cecil (later Earl of Salisbury and Lord High Treasurer), whose son sold it to Barnard Hyde, a London lawyer.⁶ In 1640, Andrew Blake and his son Isaac bought the manor from the Duke of Richmond and Lennox. The Blakes were among the richest families in Strood and had been tenants of the manor for several years before.⁷ It seems highly likely that they were responsible for the brick extensions to the east and west of the thirteenth-century camera. The present west wing dates from around 1640 and may have been erected for old Andrew Blake as a 'grandsire-suite', as it consists of a self-contained suite of rooms over three floors. Probably at the same time a garret floor and a central chimney stack were



Fig. 1 A print entitled 'Preceptory near Stroud, Kent', J. Bonnor, *direxit*, published by S. Hooper on 26 December 1783, showing Temple Manor from the east. (Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre, DE402/12/66.)

inserted in the thirteenth-century building, and its gables were rebuilt as shaped gables. In about 1670 the current east extension was built, replacing an earlier extension of c.1640 (Fig. 1). It takes the form of a two-storey canted bay, whose upper room originally had a continuous mullion-and-transom window to give a view of the Medway.⁸

Relatively little is known about eighteenth- and nineteenth-century alterations to Temple Manor. At some point after 1783, the mullion-and-transom windows of the upper floor room in the east bay were replaced with sash windows and the shaped gables to the east and west were cut down to the line of rafters. In 1752, Mary Corke (née Blake) sold the estate to John Whittaker for £37,000. The Whittaker family remained lords of the manor (and absentee landlords) until they sold the estate in 1913. By the early nineteenth century, the gradual reduction of the estate (then known as 'Temple Farm') had begun, with parts being sold off, including Temple Place, which from 1856 was the home of the antiquary Charles Roach Smith (1806-90). By 1897, the Temple Farm estate comprised 1,340 acres (compared to 1,500 acres in 1539).⁹

The arrival of the railway further diminished the estate: in 1845, the North Kent



Fig. 2 A postcard of c.1900, showing Temple Manor from the north-west. (Author's collection.)

branch of the South Eastern Railway opened, followed in 1858 by the first section of the East Kent Railway (from 1859 the London, Chatham & Dover Railway).¹⁰ Temple Manor, by then part of a group of agricultural buildings, found itself within the strip of land between the two railway lines. It was located to the east of a pond, around which agricultural buildings were clustered, including a late medieval barn, and several oast houses (Fig. 2).¹¹

The initial involvement of the SPAB

In 1913, Thomas Whittaker sold the Temple Farm estate to Thomas Lake Aveling (1856-1931). Aveling was the son of Thomas Aveling (1824-82), a Rochester-based engineer acclaimed as 'the father of the traction engine' and who pioneered the manufacture of steam road rollers. From 1861, the company operated from the Invicta Works in Strood, south of Rochester Bridge. T.L. Aveling took over the family business, Aveling & Porter, in 1881 and concentrated on the production of steamrollers, of which the company remained a leading producer into the early twentieth century.¹²

Aveling leased the farmland and immediately made plans for the construction of several 'model cottages' on an old brickfield site near Cuxton Road, as well as for the conversion of Temple Manor into four cottages. In September 1913 these proposals were reported in the local press as an innovative private initiative to solve the local housing problem. However, such a conversion could, potentially, have destroyed the medieval parts of the house. While the journalist conceded

that 'archaeologists will no doubt very much regret to hear of the fate which is overtaking the Manor House', he concluded that using the house as four smaller dwellings was probably the only feasible use, due to Temple Manor's remote location.¹³

Edmund Farley Cobb (1870-1942), surveyor to Rochester Cathedral and the local secretary of the Kent Archaeological Society, forwarded the newspaper cutting to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB).¹⁴ The Society had been founded in 1877 by William Morris and others as the first organisation dedicated to conserving old buildings. It promoted the importance of historic buildings, in particular their historic fabric, in reaction to radical nineteenth-century restoration projects which attempted to 'return' a building to an earlier appearance which was frequently fictional. The SPAB campaigned instead for the preservation of existing fabric.

Prompted by the newspaper article, Augustus Alfred Arnold F.S.A. (1835-1932), a solicitor, antiquary and the former registrar and chapter clerk of Rochester Cathedral, also wrote to the SPAB, commenting on the apparent impossibility of preventing the conversion and subdivision of Temple Manor: 'I really don't know what can be done: I am afraid it would hardly be a case within the recent Act "for the better preservation of ancient Monuments &c" – would it?'¹⁵ Ironically, it was to be precisely this Act (The Ancient Monuments Consolidation and Amendment Act 1913) which would enable the Ministry of Works to take Temple Manor into guardianship in 1950.¹⁶

The SPAB sent the surveyor Charles Herbert Scriven F.S.I., estate manager for Lord Darnley at Cobham, Kent, to inspect Temple Manor. His report highlighted the crypt as the most interesting part of the building, the rest having been 'altered about a good deal from time to time', including a certain degree of subdivision of the interiors. 'Beyond a little panelling & 2 or 3 oak mantels' he found nothing of particular note in the interior.¹⁷

Having presented this evidence to the committee, Albert Reginald Powys (1881-1936), the SPAB secretary, wrote to Aveling, offering the SPAB's advice on the proposed conversion and asking to see the architect's plans. Tactfully, he wrote that 'the committee considers that the proposal to adapt the building as Cottages is one which, if carried out in a careful manner, is likely to prove the best way of preserving the building'.¹⁸ However, he never received a response and the conversion proceeded, apparently without any conservation advice. New window openings were made at first-floor level in the south elevation. A small external toilet block and additional chimney stack were built at the north-west, beside the stair turret. The internal plan was also further altered by new partitions to create four separate dwellings.¹⁹

In 1928, Thomas L. Aveling retired and the following year decided to sell the Temple Farm estate by auction. The sale particular described Temple Manor as the 'historical old-fashioned farm-house (now converted and used as four cottages)', standing near the new farmhouse, an 'attractive modern residence [...] erected about four years ago [...] of brick and tiled construction'. It highlighted Temple Manor's 'considerable historical interest and associations' as well as its 'mediaeval crypt, with stone and chalk work in excellent state of preservation'. The four dwellings in Temple Manor were also described in detail: '1) attic, two bedrooms,

two living rooms and lobby [all in the west extension], 2) two bedrooms and two living rooms, 3) three bedrooms, two living rooms and scullery, 4) two bedrooms and two living rooms'. Ancillary buildings included lavatories, as well as coal and wood stores. Two further cottages were nearby, as well as agricultural buildings and a pond.²⁰ The City of Rochester purchased the whole estate on 17 September 1929 for £17,000, with a view towards its development for industrial purposes.²¹

The Office of Works report of 1934

The remaining tenants of Temple Manor appear to have moved out shortly after the sale in 1929, leaving the building empty and increasingly vulnerable to decay and vandalism. By early 1934, local people were beginning to be alarmed by the condition and lack of use of the building. William Cobbett Barker JP (a Kent County Council alderman and former councillor) wrote to the SPAB: 'If you can do anything to persuade Rochester Corporation to care for Temple Manor [...] it would be work well done'.²² E.F. Cobb saw the main problem as one of lack of use due to the building's difficult location: 'the real problem here is clearly the maintenance of a large derelict farm house deprived of its land in a hopelessly bad position for a residence or any ordinary purpose except cottages which are detrimental and very costly to maintain'.²³

Barker's letters to Rochester City Council prompted the Council to look for expert advice.²⁴ In March 1934 William Law, the City Surveyor, wrote to Jocelyn Plunket Bushe-Fox, the Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments at the Office of Works, explaining that the Council did not know what to do with the building and asking for advice.²⁵

Established in the fourteenth century, the Office of Works was traditionally responsible for the construction and maintenance of Crown property but its remit had broadened over time. The Ancient Monuments Department was established with the Ancient Monuments Act of 1882, which for the first time allowed the Office to accept monuments by gift or purchase, and which established the post of Inspector of Ancient Monuments. The role of the Department had been consolidated under Charles Reed Peers (1868-1952), Inspector from 1910 and Chief Inspector from 1913 until his retirement in 1933, and by acts of parliament passed in 1900, 1910, 1913 and 1931. Since the 1913 Act, the Department's key responsibilities were administering the scheduling system and preservation orders, managing guardianship sites, and providing conservation advice to owners.²⁶

Office of Works staff duly visited the building in May 1934, made a measured survey, took photographs, and prepared a report. Their plans showed the amount of later accretions to the north, and numerous internal subdivisions to convert the building into four 'cottages'. The report stated that the building was 'of great architectural interest and should be preserved'. It correctly concluded that the 'crypt' and the 'great hall' above were the earliest parts, although the investigation was somewhat restricted by the unwillingness of the Corporation's representative to disturb the plaster on the walls and ceilings or to take up floor boards; thus, the earliest parts were wrongly dated to the fifteenth century. The condition of the medieval building and the west and east extensions was found to be generally good, while that of the timber wings to the north was poor, with dry rot in the floor

boards. The report went on to make recommendations for further examinations and repairs, estimating the cost of full repairs between £2,000 and £2,500. The adjacent medieval barn was also examined. While its timbers were generally found to be sound, the condition of the brick walls was poor and the thatched roof in need of overhauling. The cost of repairs to the barn was thought to be around £400. While acknowledging Temple Manor's isolated position, the report also made suggestions for its future use, ranging from a branch library or offices to a pavilion for the nearby sports grounds (using the barn for the storage of equipment).²⁷

In October 1934, the report was sent to, and discussed with, the City Surveyor who agreed that finding a new use was vital to the preservation of the building. The Council's Temple Estate Sub-Committee considered the report's recommendations in November 1934. It expressed its 'sympathy with preserving and restoring so [*sic*] much of the old part of the buildings as is practicable'. As a first step, it recommended that the City Surveyor should remove internal partitions in the first-floor hall in order to inform any decision on future restoration work.²⁸

In 1937, the National Trust was approached by Mrs M. Tyler of Rochester whose letter described in detail the decay of Temple Manor. The 'National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty' had been founded in 1895 to focus on acquiring areas of beautiful and threatened countryside as well as historic buildings to protect them from development. Thus, the Trust's approach to building conservation was linked to ownership, and as this was not an option with Temple Manor, the Trust's secretary, Donald Macleod Matheson (1896-1979), passed the matter to the SPAB.²⁹ William Palmer, the SPAB secretary, asked the Rochester architect and SPAB member Charles C. Winmill (1865-1945) for his opinion on the situation before approaching Rochester Corporation. Winmill was clearly frustrated with the Council's unwillingness to halt the decay of the building: 'the whole is like beating an Elephant with a toy whip - to think you can move the Local Council'.³⁰

In October 1937, the Council's Temple Estate Sub-Committee considered again the Office of Works report. The committee members agreed that the building should be preserved and repaired but that the money should not come out of the rates. It was also agreed that the dilapidated medieval barn should be demolished.³¹ The Town Clerk was instructed to apply to SPAB for funding.³² The SPAB replied, however, that they did not generally make grants but would contribute a small donation in the case of a fundraising appeal.³³

Sir Herbert Baker's report of 1938

In 1938, the Corporation sought the advice of the eminent architect Sir Herbert Baker (1862-1946).³⁴ Baker was well-known for his work in South Africa and India, as well as his major buildings in London, such as South Africa House, India House and the rebuilding of the Bank of England. He was born in Kent and after his return to England he divided his time between London and his birthplace, Owllets, near Cobham. In Rochester, he would have been known as a national and local figure (his mother was from Rochester), as well as an architect who had undertaken several local projects, including the war memorial in Rochester and work for the Rochester Bridge Trust.³⁵

Baker and his assistants visited Temple Manor in June 1938 and, with the permission of the Corporation, were able to inspect previously hidden elements. They removed render from the first-floor walls, which exposed blocked medieval lancet windows, medieval wall painting in the form of simulated ashlar joints, and internal arcades, whose mouldings and capitals clearly dated the building to the early thirteenth century. (Baker's report was not sent to the Office of Works, who did not learn of this earlier date until 1944 when they saw the exposed medieval features.) Baker concluded that this discovery was 'of great importance' and urged the Council to preserve and repair the building. He suggested a future use as a museum or a recreation centre, with the west wing as caretaker accommodation and the first-floor hall reinstated as one large room.³⁶

In his reply to Baker, the Town Clerk stated that the Council 'would very much like to carry out the restoration on the lines suggested by you'. However, they felt that 'they cannot possibly spare the money necessary to carry out the restoration and preservation of the Manor, and they are reluctantly compelled to abandon the project for the present'.³⁷

Baker did not let the matter rest there and wrote to the Rochester Bridge Wardens in the hope they might make a small grant of £500, which was, however, turned down.³⁸ He also wrote to Sir Edward Harrison, Hon. General Secretary of the Kent Archaeological Society, to discuss further options to help the Council finance the repairs to Temple Manor.³⁹

However, when James Lees-Milne (1908-97) of the National Trust expressed an interest and asked if Baker considered it a suitable property for the Trust, Baker disagreed: 'as I once told the Trust in the case of Restoration House, Rochester, cities s[houl]d itself [*sic*] be the trustees of such things'.⁴⁰ Baker was by no means opposed to the National Trust. He was a member of its Council from July 1931 to October 1944 and in 1937 he presented Owletts to the Trust.⁴¹ However, in the case of Restoration House and Temple Manor, he thought it was the obvious duty of the local council to restore such buildings and look after them. It seems likely that this is also the reason he did not contact the Ancient Monuments Department of the Office of Works in regard to his findings and the Corporation's unwillingness to spend ratepayers' money on Temple Manor.

Local engagement

During the late 1930s, several architects visited Temple Manor for the purpose of measuring and drawing the medieval work. While they were alarmed at the increasingly poor condition of the building, the Council made only minimal repairs such as repairing holes in the roof and boarding up the windows.⁴²

In November 1938, there was an informal meeting at Temple Manor, comprising the mayor, local residents, architects, antiquarians, and members of the Kent Archaeological Society, to view the discoveries made by Baker. This event prompted two attendees, Barker and Henry Smetham, author of *A History of Strood*, to ask the Office of Works for the urgent scheduling of Temple Manor.⁴³ 'Scheduling' was first introduced by the 1913 Ancient Monuments Consolidation and Amendment Act which gave the Office of Works powers to protect monuments deemed to be of 'national importance'.⁴⁴

In their letters to the Office of Works, Barker and Smetham highlighted the neglect and vandalism the building was suffering, and the reluctance of the Council to spend any money on its repair.⁴⁵ The Office of Works followed the local efforts from a distance. Paul Kenneth Bailie Reynolds (1896-1973), the Inspector for England, concluded that at this point any official action, such as scheduling, might not be helpful as it might 'prejudice people who would otherwise be favourable, and would undoubtedly [*sic*] lead to the erroneous supposition that we could contribute financially'.⁴⁶

In early 1939, a petition was sent to the Mayor and Corporation of the City of Rochester asking for the preservation of Temple Manor 'for all time'. Signed by Lord Harris, three bishops, six knights (including Sir Herbert Baker), several MPs, and around 50 prominent local residents, it demanded that 'the city should, out of the profits made from this estate [the Temple Farm estate], devote some of its acres round this old house as a green oasis amid the welter of factories'.⁴⁷ The Council received similar petitions from the Dartford District Antiquarian Society and the Gravesend and District Scientific and Archaeological Society.⁴⁸

Further letters from Barker to the Office of Works followed in early 1939, asking for scheduling, and expressing his fears that all the later additions and extensions would be demolished. The Office of Works response stated that due to financial constraints they would not be able to undertake the necessary repairs themselves, nor could they take the building into guardianship, if offered, and that therefore the preservation and repair of Temple Manor were 'a matter for local effort'.⁴⁹ While several guardianship offers were indeed refused on financial grounds during the inter-war period, few monuments deemed to be of 'first class importance' were rejected.⁵⁰ In the case of Temple Manor, the Office's lack of interest was probably due to its assessment of the building as not being important enough.

In 1941, Elizabeth Lascelles of Rochester wrote to the SPAB describing the damage allegedly done by workers of an adjacent factory: 'All the windows have gone long ago, the mantle [*sic*] pieces have been torn down, thrown on the floor, the panelling, doors and now they are getting busy on the floors and even blocks of stone'.⁵¹ Yet others thought that playing children and 'hooligans' were responsible for the damage or local people looking for firewood.⁵²

The Ministry takes action

While Temple Manor's condition gradually worsened, this brought it once again to the attention of the Ministry of Works who finally got to see Baker's discoveries. In 1944, Barker applied to the Ministry of Town and Country Planning for a preservation order (under the Town & Country Planning Act 1932) in order to prevent the demolition of Temple Manor. A joint meeting with the Ministry of Works and the Acting City Surveyor was held in April 1944, which re-awakened the interest of the Ancient Monuments Department. While it is unlikely that the Department ever saw a copy of Baker's report of 1938, his uncovering of medieval features now clearly proclaimed the building's age and significance. Bryan Hugh St John O'Neil (then Inspector for Wales, from 1945 Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments) reported on the meeting and the discovery of 'so many excellent medieval features', concluding that 'the whole complexion of the case

has been altered'. If guardianship were offered now, O'Neil would certainly advise acceptance. He recommended the removal of the additions north of the medieval core, 'to show it as it deserves'. He also expressed his personal inclination to remove the east and west extension but conceded that they 'should probably be left in deference to modern public opinion'. G.L. Carpenter, the Acting City Surveyor, stated at the meeting that the Council wanted to keep only the medieval core but that no work of any kind, not even making the building watertight, could be done due to labour shortage. O'Neil and H.R. Wardill, the Regional Planning Officer, agreed that not enough remained of the medieval barn 'to warrant any attempt at restoration or preservation'. In regard to the suggested preservation order, Mr Wardill concluded that this was not necessary as the Council had no intention of demolishing Temple Manor. All parties agreed to return to the case after the end of the war, while the Council aimed to prevent further damage until a restoration and repair campaign could be initiated.⁵³

In 1947, during their first post-war visit, Ministry of Works staff were appalled to find the building in a 'shocking state of neglect'. Nearly all the floorboards and most of the staircases had been taken for firewood, and the building had no adequate protection from vandalism. However, Reynolds concluded that the building was 'by no means beyond repair' and suggested scheduling.⁵⁴ In reply to queries, the City Council claimed to have undertaken all possible measures of protection, such as boarding up windows and doors and erecting barbed wire fences, but that due to the isolated location of the building none of this was effective.⁵⁵

The scheduling of Temple Manor was fast-tracked, without waiting for the next meeting of the Ancient Monuments Board in November 1947 (the first post-war meeting). The building was scheduled on 20 August 1947 and a sign was erected, identifying it as a scheduled ancient monument.⁵⁶ From then on, the Ministry considered the start of repair works a matter of urgency and between 1947 and 1949 sent numerous letters reminding the Council of their stated intentions of repairing and preserving the building. However, the Council postponed the works from one financial year to the next, due to the lack of funds.⁵⁷

Another visit was made by Ministry officers on 21 March 1949, finding the roof in a particularly poor condition (Fig. 3).⁵⁸ In July 1949, John Holder reported to Rochester Council that half of the main roof had collapsed and that the west gable 'might fall any time'.⁵⁹ In August 1949, the Ministry of Works tried to bring the long story of the steady decline of Temple Manor to a close by threatening to take steps under the Ancient Monuments Acts 1913 and 1931, such as a preservation order and compulsory guardianship for the duration for the order.⁶⁰

On 19 November 1949, a delegation from the Ministry (including the Inspector of Ancient Monuments for England, the Architect and the Superintendent of Works) met the Mayor, Town Clerk and City Surveyor. The options of grants and guardianship were discussed, as well as urgent issues such as the demolition of the chimneys on the southern stack. Reynolds reported that the councillors' attitude had not changed: they were 'anxious that the Temple Manor should be preserved but were determined not to spend any of the Corporation's revenues on it'.⁶¹ Following the meeting, the Council decided to ask the Ministry to take Temple Manor into guardianship.⁶² The Ministry accepted the following month and the deed of guardianship was formalised on 13 November 1950, including the



Fig. 3 A photo showing Temple Manor in ruins, taken by Ministry of Works staff on 21 March 1949, view from the north. (© Crown Copyright. English Heritage, AL0935/005/01.)

building with 0.6 acres around it.⁶³ The building was listed grade I on 24 October 1950.⁶⁴

The 1950s repairs

Between 1951 and 1961, the Ministry of Works spent £22,190 on the repair and restoration of Temple Manor.⁶⁵ No paperwork on the details of the works and the rationale behind them seems to have survived – leaving photographs and drawings (measured, record and design drawings) as the main evidence for the detailed works, the approaches used and the timescale.

In general, the reconstruction was informed by the known appearance of elements before their deterioration. For example, the brick stair tower at the north-west was rebuilt according to its 1930s appearance. Likewise, the first-floor windows in the east extension were reconstructed as sash windows, not as the original mullion and transom windows. The east and west gables were not rebuilt as shaped gables. The large seventeenth-century central brick chimney stack on the first floor of the camera was left in situ.

On the other hand, several elements were returned to their original (medieval or seventeenth-century) appearance, based on precedents on site. For example, the ground-floor and second-floor windows in the west elevation of the west extension (a sash window and a casement, respectively) were returned to their seventeenth-century appearance with brick mullions and transoms and leaded quarry glass, presumably to harmonise with the other windows of this extension. In the thirteenth-century core of the building, post-medieval window and door openings were blocked and original lancet windows reopened or re-created. The internal arcades on the first floor were also largely recreated: new stonework was introduced, including pointed arches, capitals, bases and whole columns – although these were marked as modern work by the inscription 'AM [for Ancient Monuments Department or Inspectorate] / 1955' on the south arcade.⁶⁶ The seventeenth-century attic floor was removed, leaving only some timbers relating to its floor structure and the attic fireplaces in the chimney stack as evidence of its existence.

Work started in early 1951.⁶⁷ By June 1951, the remaining accretions and extensions to the north of the stone building had been demolished (temporarily retaining only one toilet block in the angle with the west extension which was demolished by October 1955) (**Fig. 4**). Scaffolding had been erected and the remaining part of the roof (at the west end) covered with corrugated iron sheets. By the end of October 1952, a new brick east gable had been constructed (replicating seventeenth-century features such as blocked windows), a new roof had been constructed (presumably incorporating any re-usable timbers) and tiled, and the top of the central stack rebuilt. The removal of cement render on the south elevation was in progress, as was the reconstruction of the upper portion of the brick bay to the east.⁶⁸

By October 1955, the west stair turret had been reconstructed with a new staircase and the west-facing ground- and second-floor windows of the west extension were in the course of being reconstructed with brick mullions and transoms. Inside the west extension, partitions were removed, fireplaces and small windows reopened,



Fig. 4 A photo of Temple Manor during the repair and reconstruction works, taken by Ministry of Works staff on 13 June 1951, view from the north-west. (© Crown Copyright. English Heritage, AL0935/015/01.)

and most of the walls re-plastered, while exposing the medieval window on the former external west wall of the camera. The east extension had been rebuilt above the ground floor level (probably reusing the original carved timber modillions), with a new tiled roof, new first-floor sash windows and without a small chimney stack. The upper part of the south-west chimney stack had been reconstructed. Brick patching in the internal and external walls was replaced by suitable stone. The floor level on the first floor was lowered down to the medieval level, which required the construction of internal steps up to the east extension which formerly had been on the same level. An oven was exposed in the south-west corner of the thirteenth-century first-floor room, together with an early opening which may have been a serving hatch. The westernmost first-floor window opening on the south elevation had been blocked and replaced by a stone lancet window, while the easternmost south window was yet to be replaced. In the north wall, the two post-medieval door openings at first-floor level in the north elevation had been blocked. The internal arcades on the south and north walls had been reconstructed, with partly new stone arches, several new capitals and bases, and four completely new columns (whose design was based on surviving capitals and bases, and the columns of the first-floor doorway). In the south-east corner, two curious irregular recesses, one of which had been largely destroyed by a later window, were uncovered.⁶⁹

By mid-1958, the works to the exterior and the interior of the building were largely complete. By then, archaeological excavations led by Stuart E. Rigold (1919-80) of the Ministry of Works were underway to the north of the building. They aimed to establish the sequence of the building's development, as well as the location of the original external stair. A trial trench was also opened to the south, which confirmed that the ground south of the building had never been built on.⁷⁰ During the excavations several items of pottery, metalwork and building-related materials (including Purbeck marble fragments, roof tiles, floor tiles and window glass fragments) were found.⁷¹ The excavations also located the postholes of the original external staircase.⁷² A new external staircase was designed in early 1958 and erected in approximately the original location.⁷³

On 20 May 1961, the building was opened to the public (**Fig. 5**).⁷⁴ Ironically, Temple Manor has been managed since 1995 by Medway Council (the successor organisation to Rochester Council) on behalf of English Heritage (the Ministry's successor in regard to guardianship monuments and sites).

Conclusion

In many ways, the story of Temple Manor is not unique. During the early twentieth century, several local authorities acquired mansions set in large grounds. If located in or near a city, their grounds tended to be used as public parks, while the buildings were used for a variety of purposes.⁷⁵ In the case of Temple Manor, however, Rochester Council had their eyes firmly on the value of the land surrounding Temple Manor and did not actively look for a new use or tenant for the building. The construction of the industrial estate around the building only served to cut it off from the town and make any community use unattractive.

However, apart from the loss of some of its extensions to the north, the story of Temple Manor ended happily. It is now protected as a scheduled ancient monument,



Fig. 5 A photo showing Temple Manor following the completion of the works, taken by Ministry of Works staff on 1 December 1960, view from the north. (© Crown Copyright. English Heritage, AL0935/043/01)

listed building and guardianship monument in the care of English Heritage. It continues to be open to the public.

However, things could have ended very differently, as the fate of a similar building shows. Moor Hall at Harefield (Middx) was a Hospitaller estate which included a stone-built camera of the 1220s. In 1926, the estate was sold to Uxbridge Urban District Council for redevelopment with housing. After a brief spell as a chapel in the 1920s, the disused building was scheduled in 1936. In 1952, the Ancient Monuments Board considered taking it into guardianship but rejected it as being of 'local rather than national importance'. Reluctantly, they gave permission for its demolition which was carried out in 1960.⁷⁶

Definitions of significance and value, of what should be saved for posterity and why, have changed over time. They have broadened to include a larger group of ever more recent structures of a wide range of building types. Temple Manor's true historical and architectural significance remained undiscovered until Sir Herbert Baker's investigation in 1938. Had his findings been brought to the attention of the Office of Works at the time perhaps it would have been scheduled sooner. But as the story of the camera at Moor Hall shows, designation alone does not guarantee preservation. In the case of Temple Manor, the efforts of interested locals kept national organisations informed and interested in its fate, leading eventually to its designation, guardianship status and the long-awaited repair works.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article draws on research for a Conservation Statement for Temple Manor. The author would like to thank her colleagues Neil Burton, Andrew Derrick and Frank Kelsall for their help and advice. Roy Porter of English Heritage and Chris Valdus of Medway Council provided access to information on the building and its history.

ENDNOTES

¹ Much of our understanding of the earlier history of the building is based on Stuart Rigold's research and excavations. Stuart E. Rigold, 'Two camerae of the military orders. Strood Temple, Kent, and Harefield, Middlesex', *The Archaeological Journal*, 122 (1965), 86-132.

² See discussion by Rigold (1965), 86, 118-121.

³ *Ibid.*, 88-89. See also, Sheila Sweetinburgh, 'Monastic Houses', in Terence Lawson and David Killingray (eds), *An Historical Atlas of Kent* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2004), map on p. 43.

⁴ Rigold (1965), 93-4, 96-7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 91, 97.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 91-2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 92; Stuart E. Rigold, *Temple Manor, Strood, Rochester, Kent* (Swindon: English Heritage, first published 1962, revised reprint 2010), p. 13.

⁸ Rigold (1965), 99.

⁹ Rigold (1965), 92 (note 46), 99; *Chatham, Rochester & Gillingham News*, 27 September 1913; Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre (hereafter MALSC), DE0769, 'Temple Manor - Temple Farm, Strood. Some owners & tenants', typescript note by the City of Rochester Society.

¹⁰ John Newman, *The Buildings of England: Kent: West and the Weald* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 571.

¹¹ MALSC, Ordnance Survey map (sheets Kent XIX.2 and XIX.6, surveyed 1864 and published 1866, scale - 1:2500).

¹² *Chatham, Rochester & Gillingham News*, 27 September 1913; Jonathan Brown, 'Aveling, Thomas (1824-1882)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/38436>, accessed 23 August 2013].

¹³ *Chatham, Rochester & Gillingham News*, 27 September 1913.

¹⁴ Archive of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (hereafter SPAB), 37 Spital Square, London, file on Temple Manor, Cobb to SPAB, September 1913.

¹⁵ SPAB, file on Temple Manor, letter dated 27 September 1913; F. H. D., 'Obituary, Augustus Alfred Arnold, F. S. A.', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 44 (1932), 303-4.

¹⁶ While the idea of state guardianship first appeared in the Ancient Monuments Act of 1882, the powers of the Office of Works relating to guardianship were considerably strengthened by the 1913 Act.

¹⁷ SPAB, file on Temple Manor, letter dated 1 October 1913.

¹⁸ SPAB, file on Temple Manor, letter dated 3 October 1913.

¹⁹ *Chatham, Rochester & Gillingham News*, 27 September 1913. The details of the alterations to the elevations can be deduced from a comparison of the 1913 photographs in the SPAB file and later photographs at the English Heritage Archive (hereafter EHA), the National Archives (hereafter TNA), and MALSC.

²⁰ MALSC, RCA/TC1/28/03, sale particular of 1929.

²¹ English Heritage (hereafter EH), file WPE050985/002, draft text for exhibition panels.

²² SPAB, file on Temple Manor, letter dated 5 February 1934.

²³ SPAB, file on Temple Manor, letter dated 14 February 1934.

²⁴ MALSC, RCA/A2/1/18, Rochester Council, Estates and General Purposes Committee, minutes, 6 February 1934, p. 24.

²⁵ TNA, WORK 14/870, letter dated 2 March 1934.

²⁶ Simon Thurley, *Men from the Ministry. How Britain saved its heritage* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), pp. 24, 41, 68, 79; *Ancient Monuments Consolidation and Amendment Act 1913*.

²⁷ TNA, WORK 14/870, 'Temple Manor, Rochester. A report on its condition from an inspection made in 1934'.

²⁸ MALSC, RCA/A2/1/18, Rochester Council, Estates and General Purposes Committee, minutes, 16 October 1934, p. 84; 20 November 1934, p. 88; 15 January 1935, p. 103.

²⁹ SPAB, file on Temple Manor, Mrs M. Tyler to National Trust (hereafter NT), 10 June 1937; Matheson to Palmer, 16 June 1937.

³⁰ SPAB, file on Temple Manor, Palmer to Winnill, 3 July 1937; Winnill to Palmer, 6 July 1937.

³¹ The barn was not demolished for at least another ten years. In February 1947, the City Surveyor made a measured survey of the dilapidated barn. MALSC, MP/B/60/1, measured survey of Temple Farm tithe barn, February 1947.

³² MALSC, RCA/A2/1/18, Rochester Council, Estates and General Purposes Committee, minutes, 5 October 1937, pp. 343-4.

³³ SPAB, file on Temple Manor, Palmer to John L. Percival, Town Clerk of Rochester, 25 March 1938.

³⁴ MALSC, RCA/A2/1/19, Rochester Council, Estates and General Purposes Committee, minutes, 5 April 1938, p. 44.

³⁵ Daniel M. Abramson, 'Baker, Sir Herbert (1862-1946)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30547>, accessed 20 August 2013]; Royal Institute of British Architects, Drawings and Archives Collection (hereafter RIBA), BaH/34/7 and BaH/35/1-5, papers relating to Baker's work for the Rochester Bridge Trust.

³⁶ RIBA, BaH/34/6, Baker to Percival, 28 June 1938.

³⁷ RIBA, BaH/34/6, Percival to Baker, 29 July 1938.

³⁸ RIBA, BaH/34/6, P.T. Baker (Bridge Clerk) to Baker, 8 December 1938.

³⁹ RIBA, BaH/34/6, Baker to Harrison, 23 November 1938.

⁴⁰ RIBA, BaH/34/6, Baker to Lees-Milne, 13 December 1938. However, Restoration House remains today in private ownership.

⁴¹ Information from Darren Beatson (NT); *The Times*, 13 December 1937. In 1931, Baker also donated to the Trust the late medieval Yeoman's House in Sole Street, Cobham, which he had restored. RIBA, BaH/3/2.

⁴² MALSC, RCA/CS1/13/25, H.F. Wingent to Percival, 16 March, 21 March, 30 April, 24 June, 11 July 1939; memorandum, Law to Percival, 17 April 1939; memorandum, Carpenter (assistant city surveyor) to Percival, 6 September 1941.

⁴³ *Chatham, Rochester & Gillingham News*, 25 November 1938; TNA, WORK 14/870, letters of 23 and 26 November 1938.

⁴⁴ *Ancient Monuments Consolidation and Amendment Act 1913*; Thurley (2013), p. 78.

⁴⁵ TNA, WORK 14/870, letters of 23 and 26 November 1938.

⁴⁶ TNA, WORK 14/870, internal memoranda by R.M. [?] of 30 November 1938 and by P.K. Bailie Reynolds of 5 December 1938.

⁴⁷ TNA, WORK 14/870, petition 'To the Mayor and Corporation, City of Rochester'; W.C. Barker to Office of Works, 18 January 1939; *The Times*, 13 December 1938; RIBA, BaH/34/6, Henry Smetham to Baker, 10 December 1938; Baker to Smetham, 12 December 1938.

⁴⁸ MALSC, RCA/A2/1/19, Rochester Council, Estates and General Purposes Committee, minutes, 7 February 1939.

⁴⁹ TNA, WORK 14/870, Barker to Office of Works, 18 January and 1 May 1939; A. Miller (Office of Works) to Barker, 23 February 1939.

⁵⁰ Thurley (2013), pp. 118-9.

⁵¹ SPAB, file on Temple Manor, Lascelles to SPAB, 23 July 1941.

⁵² For example: TNA, WORK 14/2095, memorandum T.A. Bailey (Ministry of Works) to Reynolds, 25 February 1949; MALSC, RCA/CS1/13/25, Ministry of Works to city surveyor, 29 April 1947.

⁵³ TNA, WORK 14/2095, Wardill to O'Neil, 11 April 1944; handwritten report by O'Neil, 21 April 1944; MALSC, RCA/CS1/13/25, typescript report by Carpenter on 'Visit of Mr Wardill, Regional Planning Officer, and Mr O'Neil, Inspector to Ministry of Works, Ancient Monuments, 21 April 1944'; Carpenter to Wardill, 12 May 1944.

⁵⁴ TNA, WORK 14/2095, memorandum from Reynolds, 1 May 1947; MALSC, RCA/CS1/13/25, Ministry of Works to Law, 29 April 1947.

⁵⁵ MALSC, RCA/CS1/13/25, Law to Ministry of Works, 17 May 1947.

⁵⁶ TNA, WORK 14/2095, memorandum from Reynolds, 13 June 1947; memorandum by O'Neil 19 June 1947; EH, National Heritage List for England, list entry no. 1011805.

⁵⁷ MALSC, RCA/CS1/13/25, correspondence 1947-9; TNA, WORK 14/2095, correspondence 1947-9.

⁵⁸ TNA, WORK 14/2095, memorandum by Bailey, March 1949.

⁵⁹ MALSC, RCA/CS1/13/25, handwritten report by John Holder, 8 July 1949.

⁶⁰ TNA, WORK 14/2095, N. Digney (Ministry of Works) to Percival, Rochester, 24 August 1949.

⁶¹ TNA, WORK 14/2095, memorandum by Reynolds, 23 November 1949.

⁶² MALSC, RCA/A2/1/20, Rochester Council, Estates and General Purposes Committee, minutes, 21 November 1949, pp. 427-8.

⁶³ MALSC, RCA/A2/1/20, Rochester Council, Estates and General Purposes Committee, minutes, 19 December 1949, p. 435; 6 March 1950, p. 453; RCA/CS1/13/25, memorandum, Percival to Law, 16 January 1950; memorandum, Percival to Law, 6 December 1950.

⁶⁴ EH, National Heritage List for England, list entry no. 1120910.

⁶⁵ TNA, WORK 14/2095, memorandum of 28 April 1961 detailing the expenditure on Temple Manor between 1951 and 1960.

⁶⁶ The Ancient Monuments Department also incorporated inscriptions on new architectural elements at other buildings: for example, following an extensive repair campaign at the Great Hall of Eltham Palace in 1912-14 lead hopper heads were installed with the letters 'AMD'. Thurley (2013), p. 88.

⁶⁷ MALSC, RCA/CS1/13/25, memorandum from Percival to Law, 15 January 1951.

⁶⁸ EHA, AL0935, Ministry of Works photo album documenting the progress of the repairs at Temple Manor.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*; EHA, MP/TEM0008-0041, record and working drawings by the Ministry of Works; Rigold (1965), 97.

⁷⁰ Rigold (1965), 100. However, several eighteenth-century prints depict buildings to the south of Temple Manor.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 121-131. Rigold’s drawings and notes are in the EH file AA05985/INF A.

⁷² Rigold (1965), 94, 96.

⁷³ EHA, MP/TEM0035-041, the Ministry of Works drawings for the new external staircase.

⁷⁴ *The Daily Telegraph*, 4 May 1961.

⁷⁵ Examples include Pitzhanger Manor, Ealing (acquired in 1901 and used initially as a public library); Valentine’s Mansion, Ilford (acquired in 1912 and intended for use as a cultural centre); and Charlton House, Greenwich (acquired in 1925, initially intended as the Borough’s town hall and from 1928 used as a public library).

⁷⁶ Rigold (1965), 107, 109; TNA, WORK47/4, minutes and papers of the Ancient Monuments Board, 61st meeting on 14 October 1960, p. 6.

