= Canterbury city walls =

 Canterbury city walls are a sequence of defensive walls built around the city of Canterbury in Kent , England . The first city walls were built by the Romans , probably between 270 and 280 AD . These walls were constructed from stone on top of an earth bank , and protected by a ditch and wall towers . At least five gates were placed into the walls , linked to the network of Roman roads across the region . With the collapse of Roman Britain , Canterbury went into decline but the walls remained , and may have influenced the decision of Augustine to settle in the city at the end of the 6th century . The Anglo @-@ Saxons retained the defensive walls , building chapels over most of the gates and using them to defend Canterbury against Viking incursions .

 The Norman invaders of the 11th century took the city without resistance , and by the 12th century the walls were ill @-@ maintained and of little military value . Fears of a French invasion during the Hundred Years ' War led to an enquiry into Canterbury 's defences in 1363 . The decision was taken to restore the city walls and for around the next thirty years the old Roman defences were freshly rebuilt in stone , incorporating the older walls where they still remained . 24 towers were constructed around the circuit , and over the coming years many of the gatehouses were rebuilt in stone and brick , defended by some of the first batteries of guns in England . Parts of the wall were deliberately damaged by Parliament during the English Civil War of the 17th century and the doors to the city 's gates burnt ; with the restoration of Charles II in 1660 , new doors were reinstalled .

 During the 18th and 19th centuries , Canterbury 's city walls came under extensive pressure from urban development . All the gates but one , West Gate , were destroyed and extensive parts of the walled circuit were knocked down to make way for new roads and buildings . German bombing during the Second World War caused further damage . Despite this , the remaining walls and gatehouse survived post @-@ war redevelopment intact and some portions were rebuilt entirely . Over half the original circuit survives , enclosing an area of 130 acres (53 ha) , and historians Oliver Creighton and Robert Higham consider the city wall to be " one of the most magnificent in Britain " .

= = History = =

= = = 3rd ? 4th centuries = = =

 The first city walls in Canterbury were built by the Romans . Canterbury , then called Durovernum Cantiacorum , was initially probably defended by a small fort but had not required any other civic defences . The security situation in Britain deteriorated in the late 3rd century AD and a circuit of defensive walls were built around the city , probably between 270 and 290 . They enclosed an area of 130 acres (53 ha) , cutting off the old industrial parts of the western side of the city , but incorporating a cemetery area to the south @-@ east that had formerly been outside the city boundary . New coastal forts were also built across the region at around the same time , and a headquarters for them may have been established in Canterbury .

 The walls were typically 7 @.@ 5 feet (2 @.@ 3 m) inches thick and built of flint and mortar , with some limited use of larger sandstone blocks . The height of these walls is uncertain , but sections have survived that are up to 20 feet (6 @.@ 1 m) high . The walls stood on a bank of earth between 20 feet (6 @.@ 1 m) and 30 feet (9 @.@ 1 m) wide and at least 7 feet (2 @.@ 1 m) high , protected by a ditch , typically 59 feet (18 m) wide and 16 @.@ 5 feet (5 @.@ 0 m) deep , but in places up to 82 feet (25 m) wide . A 10 feet (3 @.@ 0 m) wide cobbled berm ran between the ditch and the wall .

 The walls had at least five gates , typically positioned near angles in the city wall , although , judging from the location of Roman roads , it is possible that another two Roman gates may also have existed . The gates linked to the network of major roads that ran across Kent . The Riding Gate , which took its name from the red bricks with which it was built , had two protective towers and a pair of entrance arches for pedestrians and carriages , as probably did Burgate . The Worth Gate ,

the London Gate and the Queningate had simpler entrance arches . A sequence of square towers protected the walls , and at least one additional wall tower was constructed following the Saxon invasion of Britain in 367 .

= = = 5th ? 11th centuries = = =

During the 5th century , Canterbury went into decline and its Roman institutions and buildings crumbled , although the city walls survived . In 597 , Augustine was sent to Kent by Pope Gregory I to convert the local population to Christianity . Augustine established Canterbury Cathedral within the city , possibly because the walled site gave them additional protection or because it was symbolically important as a former Roman city . Canterbury , now called Cantwaraburh , prospered and its population and trade increased . Much of the land within the walls had become water meadows and farmland , and an palisade may have built around the cathedral and its precinct to form a secure inner stronghold .

In the late Anglo @-@ Saxon period , the internal street layout of Canterbury was remodelled , but the line of the outer walls remained the same . A cattle market was created outside the city to the south @-@ east , and Newingate , later renamed St George 's Gate , was inserted into the walls to allow easy access to it . During this the period the main axis of the city shifted from the older line of streets running from London Gate and Riding Gate , to the new route between West Gate and Newingate . A lane was built running around the inside of the walls , in a similar way to the intramural streets built around the same time at Exeter and Winchester . Churches and chapels were built over the gates , including St Mary 's above the North Gate ; the Holy Cross over West Gate ; St Michael 's over Bargate ; St Edmund 's within Riding Gate ; and , potentially , St George 's Chapel over Newingate . Canterbury 's walls were mentioned by the early chronicler , Bede , in his history of England .

Despite Canterbury 's walls , a Viking army successfully attacked the city in 835 , killing many of the inhabitants . Scandinavian raids recommenced from 991 onwards and in 1011 a Danish army demanded fresh tribute from the city . The city walls were used to defend the city during an 11 @-@ day siege , and the chronicler Roger of Hoveden recounts how the attacking Danes were thrown off the tops of the walls to their deaths by the citizens . Roger 's account may be an exaggeration , but the story shows that the city walls were in sufficiently good condition for such a story to be considered plausible at the time . After a fire broke out in the city , however , the Danes entered and pillaged Canterbury .

= = = 11th ? 13th centuries = = =

The inhabitants of Canterbury put up no resistance to the Normans during their conquest of England in 1066 . William the Conqueror instructed that a castle was to be built in the city ; Canterbury Castle was built on the south side of the city and formed part of the circuit of defence , with property being destroyed to make room for it . Despite its location along the walls , historians Oliver Creighton and Robert Higham have observed that the castle was not an " addition " to the defences , but more an " imposition " on the town within it . The first timber motte and bailey castle was later abandoned and a second , with a square , stone keep , built in 1123 . The Worth Gate became the south entrance to the castle site , and a new gate was put into the walls to the east for general use .

In 1086 , the Domesday Book recorded that 11 houses had been built in the ditches around the city walls , which by then appear to have been in a poor condition . The encroachment was possibly the result of population pressures on the inner , walled city , as Canterbury had spread out well beyond the walls by the mid @-@ 11th century . It is unclear how the walls were maintained during this period , and by the 12th century they were in ruins and of little practical defensive value . In the late @-@ 12th century , the walls were assigned some limited royal funding through the local sheriff , probably for the maintenance of existing structures , and just over £ 5 was spent in 1166 ? 67 on these repairs .

Wooden " bars " had been placed outside many of the city gates to regulate the flow of traffic by the 12th century , including Riding Gate , Worth Gate and North Gate . One area of the city beyond the wall , called the baggeberi , may also have been protected by its own earthworks during the middle of the 12th century . Canterbury was divided into wards by the 12th century , although these may potentially have been created as early as the Anglo @-@ Saxon period . These administrative districts , named after the city gates , were termed berthae and were linked to maintenance and manning of the city walls . The wards took the form of segments , spreading out from the centre of the city , incorporating the relevant gate and sometimes the suburbs beyond that had spread outside the walls . By the 1160s Canterbury 's wards included Burgate , Northgate and Newingate , with the wards of Riding Gate , Worthgate and West Gate being formed by the end of the century .

After the 12th century , work on the walls appears to have stopped until the second half of the 14th century . The city walls fell further into disrepair as a result . In some places , over 1 foot (0 @.@ 30 m) of debris came to cover the remaining stonework of the old Roman walls , while in another case a building was constructed directly over the top of the former defences .

14th century

In the early 1360s , during the Hundred Years War , there was an increased level of concern about potential French raids or invasion along the south of England . Canterbury was particularly important for the defence of the south @-@ east , as it formed a potential barrier to any invaders marching on London . An enquiry was carried out in 1363 into the state of Canterbury 's defences , which concluded that the city was in a parlous position , as " the walls of Canterbury are for the most part fallen because of age , and the stones thereof carried away , and the ditches under the walls are obstructed " .

Canterbury 's bailiffs were ordered to repair the walls , with similar instructions being issued to the authorities in vulnerable cities such as Colchester , Bath and Rochester . The result was what historian Hilary Turner has described as a " well @-@ planned operation " , designed to build the walls rapidly , but which still took around 30 years to complete . The city and the cathedral authorities worked closely together on the project , an unusual situation , given the local political tensions that existed between them .

Money was needed to pay for this work . During the previous century , a method of taxation had been introduced to support the creation or maintenance of city walls , called murage , which was authorised by the king and applied to trade entering a city . In total , Canterbury was assigned 31 years of murage grants for its walls , starting in 1378 , when five years of murage was granted by Richard II , along with a writ allowing them to use stonemasons from across the county . In 1379 , a new 10 @-@ year murage grant was issued . In 1385 , £ 100 from the issues of Kent was given to Canterbury , and the murage tax extended for a further five years . In the financial year of 1385 ? 86 , approximately £ 619 was spent on the walls . Despite the walls , during the Peasants Revolt of 1381 , Wat Tyler and his army were able to enter Canterbury unopposed . 1399 saw another five years of murage granted , followed in 1402 by a final grant of three years .

Despite this , progress was not fast enough to suit the royal authorities . Richard II ordered the city to force workmen to repair the defences , and intervened in Canterbury 's local elections in 1387 to ensure that two trusted bailiffs ? Henry Lincoln and John Proude ? were returned to office , in order for the King to have confidence in the walls being maintained . In 1403 , Henry IV sent messages to the city complaining that the defences were not being adequately maintained , and that the city was still insecure .

15th ? 16th centuries

A survey in 1402 suggested that most of the city was walled , except for part of the stretch between the West Gate and North Gate . In 1409 , the city 's bailiffs were allowed to acquire lands worth £ 20 a year to support the maintenance of the walls , and Canterbury was permitted to draw funding from the royal customs duties for the walls . Murage taxes in Canterbury gave way to the introduction of

support through a system of rates , with each ward being tasked to raise money through local taxes on its citizens . The walls became an important symbol of the city , and 15th @-@ century art from Canterbury presents the cathedral and the city wall as having equal status as key features of the city .

The resulting circuit of walls followed the line of the former Roman and Anglo @-@ Saxon defences , incorporating them where they survived in good condition . Parts of the 14th century walls , for example along Burgate Lane , have been shown to 4 feet (1 @.@ 2 m) thick at the base and built of Kentish ragstone ; other sections incorporated the original Roman wall , which was still up to 8 feet (2 @.@ 4 m) high in places . The new walls had a continuous wall walk and were crenellated . Most of the circuit was protected by an external ditch . The city walls retained the older system of Roman and Anglo @-@ Saxon gates . West Gate was rebuilt around 1380 by the prominent mason , Henry Yevele , an unusually prominent architect for a city wall programme . As part of this work , Holy Cross Church was moved from over the gate to a nearby site . The old Roman Riding Gate was cut through by a new archway .

Defensive towers were built around the city walls , and archaeological and historical evidence suggests that there were 24 of these . The towers had a generally uniform appearance , with 16 half @-@ circular , or " horse @-@ shoe " , hollow @-@ backed towers and eight square towers . The horse @-@ shoe towers followed a fashion that had been popular from around 1260 to 1390 , making Canterbury 's towers a late example of the trend . The square towers were a newer design , and were built around the turn of the 14th and 15th century by Thomas Chillenden of Christchurch Priory .

The reconstructed walls also saw the introduction of gunports . West Gate was an innovative piece of defensive design in this regard , forming a powerful battery , carefully designed to have a wide angle of covering fire . Positioning of the gunloops is similar to those at Cooling Castle , built around the same time , and gave particular focus to the left flank along North Gate , the most likely route for any attackers . Gunports in south @-@ west corner of the city walls are put at alternate heights , for overlapping fire . The first documentary record of Canterbury 's guns appears in 1403 , when it is clear that there were several kept in the West Gate .

A second wave of work took place on the city walls in the late 15th century . Backed by substantial communal effort and financial contributions , Newingate was rebuilt between 1450 and 1470 , and probably closely resembled the West Gate in style . Burgate was rebuilt in brick from 1475 onwards , again thanks to public contributions , but it was not completed until 1525 , furnished with gunports and anachronistic battlements . Queningate was closed up at shortly after the 15th century , probably following the construction of a new postern gate nearby . West Gate was appointed the city gaol in 1453 by Henry VI , with Canterbury Castle serving as the county gaol .

In contrast to Wat Tyler 's entrance in 1381 , in 1450 , Jack Cade and 4 @,@ 000 rebels were barred entry from the city at West Gate . In 1533 , Canterbury reacted with concern to the news of Thomas Wyatt 's rebellion in Kent ; repairs were made to the walls , guns and ammunition mobilised , and the Riding Gate was blocked up . Queen Mary later thanked the city for their efforts .

= = = 17th ? 19th centuries = = =

By 1614 , the ditch outside the walls appears to have been partially filled in and the reclaimed land rented out . During the English Civil War , Canterbury was initially held by Parliamentary forces . In 1647 , however , riots broke out in protest over the actions of the city 's Puritan mayor and Canterbury declared its loyalty for Charles I. Parliamentary forces intervened and reoccupied the city , burning the wooden city gates and deliberately damaging , or slighting , the walls near Canterbury Castle . With the restoration of Charles II to the throne in 1660 , new wooden doors were installed at the West Gate .

Towards the end of the 18th century , horse @-@ drawn coaches became much more common in Canterbury , which lay at the centre of a new turnpike road system . This required extensive changes to the city streets and gateways , which were typically too narrow to be easily navigated by these vehicles . By 1779 , Northgate and Burgate had been destroyed to allow wider entrances for

the city . Riding Gate was demolished in 1782 , but in 1791 the local citizen James Simmons built a new , brick archway on the old foundations , which was rapidly occupied by a new house , blocking most of the gateway . An iron bridge was later built over the site of Riding Gate . The Worth Gate was demolished in 1791 and reused in a local garden , a new entrance being built in its place . Newingate 's drum towers were used as a water reservoir for the city , and the gatehouse was not demolished until 1801 . Sections of the wall were cut away to allow new roads to be built ; the walls near St Radiguns 's Public Baths were demolished in 1794 and the city wall around London Gate was demolished around 1800 .

In other parts of Canterbury , the city walls became used for promenades by the more fashionable citizens . The Dane John Gardens were built between 1790 and 1803 by Simmons in the south @-@ east corner of the walls , remodelling the old castle motte , and incorporating the Roman bank and the medieval wall @-@ walk into the design . The ownership of the land was disputed , and the park was taken into the control of the city shortly after its construction .

West Gate continued to be used as the city gaol , resulting in it surviving the destruction of the other city gates . When the reformer John Howard visited the gaol in the mid @-@ 1770s , he noted that it contained a large day room for male and female prisoners and two small night rooms , but no courtyard for exercise . Prison reform became an important issue during the early 19th century , and the West Gate gaol was considered unsatisfactory , being condemned as dirty , cramped and insecure , resulting in the extension of the gaol into Pound Lane and the consequent dismantling of the adjacent city wall . There was a legal attempt to demolish the West Gate altogether in 1859 , in order to allow the Wombwell Circus to march a parade of elephants into the city ; the gatehouse was only saved by the casting vote of Canterbury 's mayor . In 1865 the prison was closed and the West Gate became used first for the storage of archives and then as a museum .

= = = 20th ? 21st centuries = = =

During the Second World War , part of the city walls near the Dane John Gardens were turned into an ammunition depot , dug into the bank of the wall . German bombing campaigns in 1942 caused extensive damage to Canterbury , including the city walls around Riding Gate . The bomb damage provided fresh opportunities for archaeological investigation , however , and work by the Canterbury Excavation Committee began in 1944 . This research disproved older theories about the shape of the Roman city walls , demonstrating that the Roman and medieval defences formed an identical circuit .

In the post @-@ war years , the city walls shaped the route of Canterbury 's modern ring road system , protecting the inner core of the ancient city , despite proposals under the Holden Plan of 1945 for a radical reshaping of the city 's road network . During the 1950s , a stretch of Canterbury 's walls were reconstructed , including two circular towers , as part of the redevelopment of the St George district . In the early 1980s , the volume of traffic around the West Gate was causing damage to the structure of the building . The remaining walls and West Gate are protected under UK law as scheduled monuments and as a Grade I listed building .

= = Architecture = =

Canterbury 's city walls in the 21st century are a mixture of survivals from the multiple periods of building , from Roman to the 20th century , but the majority of the visible walls are medieval in origin . Over half the original circuit survives , and historians Oliver Creighton and Robert Higham consider it " one of the most magnificent in Britain " . Of the original 24 medieval towers along the walls , 17 remain intact , and one entranceway into the city , the West Gate , also survives .

North Gate was destroyed in the 19th century , but its former location is marked by a " Cozen Stone " , a marker laid down by amateur archaeologist Walter Cozens in the interwar years . Moving clockwise around the circuit from Northgate , St Mary 's Church incorporates parts of the walls into its structure , and the original medieval crenellations can be seen in the stonework . Four square towers survive around the walls here , mostly somewhat reduced in height from their original

medieval form , and with their gunports converted to windows . The outline of Queningate is marked out on the local road , and parts of the Roman wall discovered in archaeological investigations are presented in a local display . A further two towers beyond Queningate survive , complete with their original gunports . The former site of Burgate is marked by another Cozen Stone , and on the next stretch of wall , one tower survives , used for a period as a water cistern and now incorporated into the 19th century Zoar Chapel .

 The south @-@ east stretch of the walls beyond the former site of Riding Gate , marked by a 19th @-@ century plaque , are particularly well preserved , including the Dane John Gardens , used as a public park and decorated with sculptures . The two towers near this stretch of wall are reconstructions from the 1950s on the original medieval foundations . Another four towers survive between the former sites of Riding Gate and Wincheap Gate , one of which remains near its original height and retains its defensive crenellations . Beyond the former site of Wincheap Gate the wall has mostly been destroyed , although one tower survives , converted into a private house ; the former site of Worth Gate is marked by a memorial stone .

 The West Gate has survived in excellent condition , and Creighton and Higham describe it as " one of the most monumental of all examples of town gate architecture " . Constructed from ragstone and flint , it has two large circular towers at the front , but has a square @-@ facing interior ; although fireplaces were built into each tower in the 14th century , their flues were designed to be hidden from sight so as not to spoil its military appearance . The West Gate hosts a local museum and cafe . A final three towers survive on the stretch of the walls between West Gate and the former North Gate .