Farnham Castle

Management Plan 2018 to 2028

Farnham Castle

Board of Trustees

Farnham Castle is managed by the Farnham Castle Charity (No 00596938) on behalf of the Church Commissioners for England

The Objects of the Charity are to advance the education of the public in the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment by the maintenance, repair or restoration of Farnham Castle which is of historic and architectural interest.

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Foreword

I am grateful to the Farnham Castle Board of Trustees and Farnham Castle Operations who have collaborated in the production of this plan which will be of interest to readers with a passion for the past, present and future of this wonderful historic and architectural treasure.

The Keep remains ever popular with local and international visitors achieving a year on year improvement in visitor numbers with 25,738 visits in the 12 months to the end of September 2017.

The Bishop's Palace has benefited from considerable investment in the interior decoration since 2012 and continues to flourish as a prestigious, international wedding and business venue. The castle provides a uniquely romantic, photogenic and memorable venue for couples starting their married lives. The ongoing success of the commercial use of the Bishop's Palace is essential for providing the funding for castle maintenance, conservation and improvement.

I would also like to thank all the knowledgeable and friendly volunteer guides who give up their time at weekends and during the week to welcome visitors to the Keep and Bishops Palace.

I am personally delighted to support this plan and look forward with confidence to the next 10 years in Farnham Castle's long history.

Martin Butcher

Chair of Trustees

Introduction

Farnham Castle has stood sentinel over the market town of Farnham on the western border of Surrey for almost 900 years and consists of a medieval Keep and Bishop's Palace.

The Keep has been a ruin since 1648 when it was rendered 'indefensible' at the end of the English Civil War and is a scheduled ancient monument in the care of English Heritage. The Bishop's Palace is a complex of Grade I and II listed buildings, including the gatehouse, moat, curtain wall and grounds and has been sub-let as a commercial weddings and events venue since 2012.

Responsibility for the castle lies with the Farnham Castle Charity who have produced this plan in collaboration with the Farnham Castle tenants (Farnham Castle Operations - FCO).

This document outlines the Charity's plans over the next 10 years to conserve, protect and improve the fabric of the buildings, maintain public access and improve public awareness of the buildings and their history.

History and description of the Castle

The start of Farnham Castle's story

Caedwalla, an Anglo Saxon King, signed a charter in 688 CE granting certain lands in Farnham to found a 'Monasterium'. In 803 the land was passed to the Bishop of Winchester. Little is known of the early period but the monks at Waverley Abbey mentioned the existence of a castle at Farnham in 1128.

The importance of the Castle to the Bishops of Winchester

The diocese of Winchester was regarded as one of the wealthiest in Europe and early Bishops wielded immense power. Nine Bishops of Winchester were Chancellors of England and three were also Papal Legates, giving them a status above that of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The castle has benefited greatly from its proximity to London and the Channel ports. The journey to London was a frequent one for Bishops whose diocese, for most of its time, stretched to Southwark. Being practically midway between the capital and Winchester, the Castle provided a convenient stopover.

The vast, dense forests nearby offered good hunting for red and fallow deer as well as wild boar, giving Bishops the opportunity to entertain sport-loving Kings and Queens across the centuries. Multiple visits have been recorded for many monarchs from King John to Charles II. Queen Mary Tudor stayed more than two weeks at Farnham Castle before her marriage to Philip of Spain at Winchester on July 25th 1554.

Queen Elizabeth I made at least six visits, including possibly one for the summer of 1583. And James I leased the whole castle from Bishop Bilson from 1608 to 1616 as a hunting lodge.

The Castle as we see it today

The Castle buildings today can be divided into two main elements, the round Keep and the Bishop's Palace, laid out in the form of a traditional 'motte and bailey' structure.

Excavations in the c20th showed that a 3- or 4-storey tower formed the original Keep, built from ground level with earth being piled up around its base. 1138 is generally accepted as the date for the beginning of the tower's construction, instigated by Bishop Henry de Blois, grandson of William the Conquerer and brother of King Stephen. This tower was demolished in the reign of Henry II, not long after it was built, but its remaining foundations and well have been preserved for the benefit of visitors.

The current impressive ring wall or 'shell keep' was probably erected at the end of the c12th. The gatehouse with its drawbridge retains evidence of a portcullis and 'murder hole' or meurtrière. Some original elements of the Keep's towers and structure were modified in c17th to form platforms suitable for mounting cannon.

The Bishop's Palace

The Palace is a much larger and complex structure. The original Great Hall was constructed in the late c12th - an aisled room, with two rows of oak posts running down its length supporting a beamed roof.

In addition, probably dating from the c12th are a Norman Chapel and Kitchen. The chapel has a barrel vault roof, round headed windows and door arches of Romanesque style. Pointed Transitional arches were added in the c13th, one of which is blocked by a half-timbered Tudor Lodging Range.

Probably built just after the Chapel and Kitchen was the Bishop's Camera or private room. Built above ground level, it offered storage and stabling space below.

The main brick entrance tower leading to the Great Hall, commissioned by Bishop Waynflete, can be dated to 1470-75. An additional tower was added to the entrance by Bishop Fox in the early c16th..

Adjacent to the entrance tower remain traces of a further chapel, which has long since been demolished.

The English Civil War and the Restoration of the Monarchy

Originally held by Parliamentary forces, Farnham Castle was attacked and taken by Royalists before being retaken by the Parliamentarians under Colonel Sir William Waller. From their base in Farnham Parliamentary forces won back Alton and Arundel in 1643 and were successful at the turning-point battle at Cheriton in 1644.

At the end of the war the Palace was in bad repair, suffering from use as a barracks, a gunpowder store and as a holding place for prisoners of war. The restitution of the monarchy in 1660 meant the return of the Bishops to Winchester and the arrival of one of the most significant figures in the Castle's history, Bishop George Morley (1662-1684), who set about its repair and reconstruction.

The Great Hall was made far grander than its lower and longer c12th predecessor. It now included a Minstrel's Gallery, raised flat ceiling with upper gallery or walkway, and a large fireplace with oak fire surround. An imposing staircase was added which leads to the Bishop's private accommodation and a new Bishop's Chapel. The entrance doors to the chapel include several double-sided sun carvings said to have been given to Morley by Louis XIV, the 'Sun King'. Many decorative oak carvings in the style of the school of Grinling Gibbons are found throughout Morley's additions.

Georgian and Victorian influences

During the c18th and c19th a number of small but important changes and additions were made to the Palace. Revisions were made to both the layout and stained glass window in Bishop Morley's Chapel. A new fire surround and bay window were added to the Bishop's Camera.

And in the Great Hall three new stained glass windows were added to depict the coats of arms of nine Bishops who were also Chancellors of England, including three, before the Reformation, who were also Papal Cardinals.

Farnham Castle - the later years

The Castle also played its part in the second World War, set up by the War Office as a Camouflage Development and Training Centre. Early students included notable figures from the world of art, architecture and stage design, as well as r e g u l a r army officers.

Prior to the war the diocese of Winchester was divided and Farnham became part of the new diocese of Guildford, remaining the residence of the Bishop of Guildford until 1955.

Ownership

When the Church of England's assets were amalgamated in 1840, ownership of the Castle passed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and their successors, the Church Commissioners. The Bishops of Winchester continued to use the Castle as a residence until 1927, when it provided accommodation for the newly-created Bishop of Guildford. In 1962, when the Guildford diocese decided that it could no longer justify its use, the Castle was leased to the Charity that is now known as Farnham Castle for a term that currently expires in 2036. Although the rent paid to the Church Commissioners is minimal, there are strict obligations on the Charity to maintain the Castle and its grounds, which is a significant financial commitment.

The Charity which leases the Bishop's Palace

'Overseas Services' was the name of the original charitable company set up in 1958 with the objective of training managers and diplomats who were posted to work abroad. The main clients were multinationals, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office who required such staff to be familiar with the language and culture of the country in which they would be living. The demand for this training was such that in 1962 the Charity leased Farnham Castle to serve as its base. In 1993, recognising its wider role, the name of the Charity became 'The Centre for International Briefing' and because the Castle became synonymous with this activity, the name was again changed in 2001 to 'Farnham Castle'. In the early years of the century, reduced demand for these services meant that the Charity broadened its educational activities to include wider aims, including informing the public about the Castle and its history, and increasing the level of commercial activities, providing sufficient funds to ensure its maintenance.

English Heritage, the guardians of the Keep

In recognition of its historical importance, the Castle was scheduled as an Ancient Monument in 1975 and English Heritage assumed the guardianship of the Keep. In 2009, recognising an opportunity to improve the condition of the Keep and the

need to enhance the overall visitor experience, the Charity and English Heritage submitted a joint bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. A successful restoration/development project of approximately £1 million was completed in 2010. Although the Keep remained in the guardianship of English Heritage, the day-to-day management of the entire site became the responsibility of the Charity. Opening hours for the Keep were increased and access became free for visitors.

Farnham Castle Operation (FCO), responsible for day-to-day management of the entire site

As demand for the Charity's traditional training activities declined, the Charity recognised the need to diversify its activities and increase the revenue at the Castle. Weddings became an important source of income and consent was sought for both religious and civil weddings to be held at the Castle. Before these full consents were obtained, the Charity recognised that it lacked the specific expertise necessary to develop this fully and the Castle was sublet to Farnham Castle Operations Ltd - an independent commercial company. As

well as paying rent to the Charity, FCO has also assumed all the Charity's obligations in respect of maintenance of the site and continuing public access.

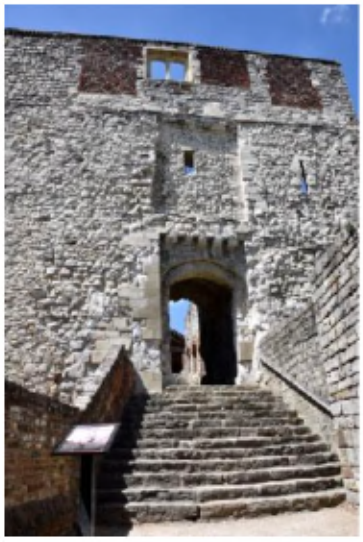
Maintenance

Introduction

Under the terms of their underlease, FCO is responsible for keeping the Castle in good repair. The task is a considerable and a challenging one. For example, the Bishop's Palace has 220 windows which need cleaning twice yearly and 10 boilers needing regular maintenance to provide sufficient hot water and heating. Some of the many Palace roofs were constructed over 600 years ago and each offers its own unique problems if the historical integrity is to be upheld.

In the Castle grounds cutting the lawns alone takes two to three days to complete, and the extensive garden borders and numerous trees need continual attention if they are to be kept in good order.

The Keep



The maintenance of the Keep is governed by the Management Agreement between English Heritage and Farnham Castle Operations (the current five-year agreement runs from 1st January 2017). FCO is responsible for the day-to-day care and management of the Keep; whilst English Heritage retain responsibility for the fabric of structures.

Maintenance planning

On an annual basis, FCO present plans for ongoing maintenance and repairs to the Charity and Church Commissioners for their consideration. The Bishop's Palace was subject to an independent structural survey in 2018 which provided a baseline understanding of the condition of the buildings and will form the basis of a preventative maintenance plan for the next ten years.

Changes and improvements

FCO has invested considerable sums improving the facilities at the Castle and in particular to developing an award-winning wedding venue.

During the first five years of their tenancy, FCO refurbished the Gatehouse, Lantern Hall, Stone Hall, Great Hall, Library and Tindle Room; as well as adding a bar to the Minstrels' Gallery and a luxurious bridal suite at the top of Waynfletes's Tower that overlooks Farnham and the surrounding countryside.

Investment has also been made to improve the meeting rooms and general facilities at the Castle. In addition, the removal of trees from the moat has opened up views of the Castle from the Park revealing the full depth, scale and completeness of the medieval moat.

With support from the Charity, Farnham Building Preservation Trust, the Farnham Society, Waverley Borough Council, Farnham Town Council and Surrey County Council; FCO has improved the historic Bishop's Steps which link the Castle to the town of Farnham.

Investments have also been made to update and improve catering and kitchen facilities, electrical installations, security and fire alarm systems, IT and WIFI networks.

Over the coming years FCO will continue to invest in Castle facilities, further developing its wedding, conference, meeting and events business.

Routine maintenance

To maintain the buildings and gardens, FCO's management company employ a dedicated full-time staff who are supported by specialist contractors and temporary seasonal staff.

Public Access

Introduction

The Castle welcomes the public to the Keep and Bishop's Palace. Under the terms of the sublease from the Charity, FCO is committed to open the Bishop's Palace on one half-day each week. FCO's management agreement with English Heritage also requires that the Keep is open to the public on at least 300 days of the year.

The Bishop's Palace

The Bishop's Palace is open for guided tours on Wednesday afternoons between 2pm and 4pm (a charge applies). Visitors can join the tours without pre-booking although we advise visitors to telephone the Castle in advance to confirm their place and check if the scope of the tour adversely coincides with any events taking place that afternoon.

Palace tours are hosted by a dedicated team of extremely knowledgeable, volunteer guides.

The Keep

The Keep and Visitor Exhibition Centre are open most days of the year (except over Christmas and the New Year). Opening times are from 9am to 5pm weekdays, and 10am to 4pm at weekends (closing at dusk, if earlier). Since opening times can be affected by adverse weather conditions, visitors are advised to contact the Castle in advance if travelling from afar. No charge is made for admission to the Keep but the public are invited to make a donation to the Charity.

Access to the Keep is via a series of steep and uneven steps which make it unsuitable for those with mobility problems and can lead to its closure during icy weather.

At the weekend, volunteer guides are on hand to assist visitors and pass on their knowledge of and enthusiasm for the history of the Castle.

In 2016 the Keep was the location of one of 900 beacons across the country set alight to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday.

Events

The Castle is now more accessible than ever. As well as being available for weddings, private celebrations, meetings, conferences and events, the Castle also opens its doors for local events and activities.

The Castle will continue to host the historic Venison Dinner which dates back over 400 years to 1605, when bailiffs and burgesses offered a venison dinner to the townsfolk as a way of discouraging them from poaching the deer in Farnham Park. The Castle also participates in Heritage Open Days with various activities and demonstrations in the Bishop's Palace and on the Great Lawn.

Throughout the year, there are also events where tickets are made available to the public. The Castle has played host to outdoor plays, Burn's Night suppers, Mother's Day afternoon teas, Valentine celebrations and Christmas parties.

Local and national organisations also make use of the Castle's facilities for meetings, networking events, awards ceremonies and conferences.

Visitor facilities

Subject to availability, free parking is available for visitors to the Castle. If the car park is full, visitors are welcome to use the car park in Farnham Park. There are also public toilet facilities and an informative Visitors Exhibition Centre.

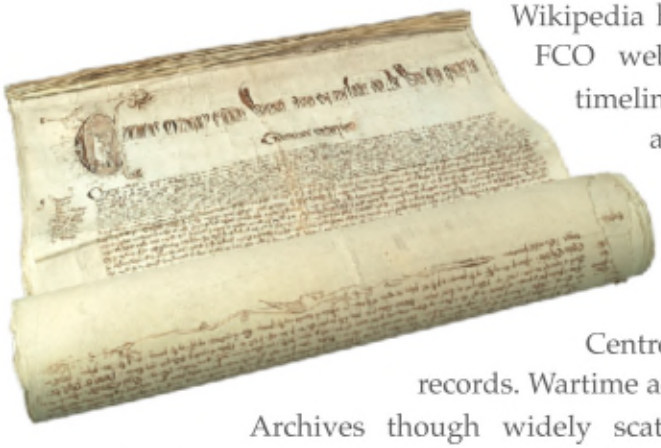
Advancing Public Knowledge

The current situation

Currently considerable information about the Castle and its history is published in a wide variety of digital and print formats. This information is widely scattered and often incomplete, relating to subjects such as Farnham history, the Civil War and the Bishops of Winchester rather than the Castle itself.

The current "900 years of living history" guide book provides an informative short history and visitor guide. It was funded by the 2009 Lottery Heritage Fund grant and is integrated with the visitor sign boards and information centre. There are no plans to change this guide book in the next 10 years although it may require a few minor updates and additional print runs.

The period up to the Civil War is fairly well researched though its use as a Bishop's Palace seems less complete. Publication of information is largely by association with events in history as opposed to a continuous history of the building itself.



Wikipedia has a section on the Castle and the FCO website has a high level historical timeline. There are unpublished archaeological archives relating to excavations within and around the curtilage. The Hampshire Record Office holds the Winchester Pipe Rolls and the Surrey History Centre holds the Guildford diocesan records. Wartime activities are recorded at the National Archives though widely scattered through various ministries' archives. The Museum of Farnham holds archives relating to the Castle and its relationship with the town and townspeople.

The vision

Our vision is to enhance the education of the public by working with partners to create an index of known historical information relating to the Castle and where it is located. The index will help identify gaps in the Farnham Castle story so that the Charity and its partners can target studies and research to fill the knowledge gaps.

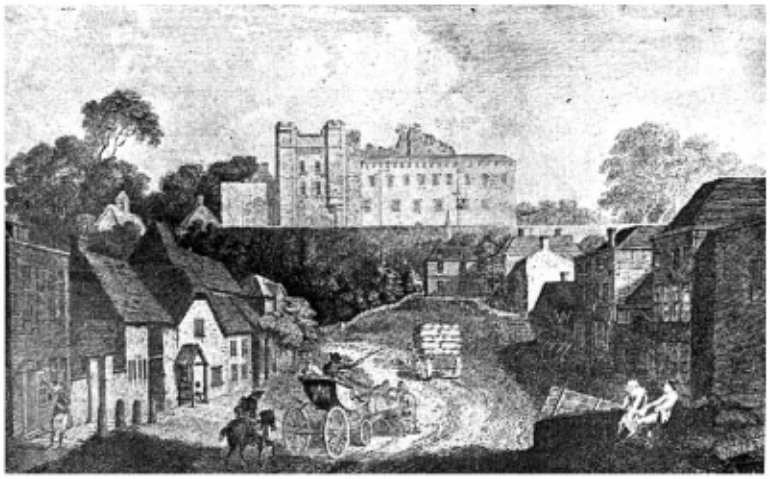
Once the Castle's history has been more fully documented and published, it is planned to present this information to a wide audience through innovative

exhibitions and events involving schools, community groups, organisations and the general public. This would include exhibitions and events in the Castle buildings and grounds alongside others further afield with the assistance of a variety of hosts, including our research partners.

Commissioning research

The research falls broadly into two categories: Research into already published sources (in print, manuscript or online), and research into primary record sources. The former could be used as part of an MA dissertation subject, while the latter, along with the writing of a complete history of the Castle from all sources would be more applicable to a PhD thesis.

The ultimate commissioner of the research will be the Charity acting under the guidance of a working party (of which it will be a member). It is anticipated that some research projects will require financial assistance from the Charity and other organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and local heritage charities. Ownership of the product of the research will be held jointly with the authors and the registered/accredited archives and museums amongst the partners. Publication relating to the various versions of the history will be the responsibility of those partners who have the experience and infrastructure to support online and print publication, ensuring that the published versions remain available to the public and academia. The Charity does not plan to publish anything other than pamphlets.



Working with partners

Initial approaches have been made to a number of potential partners - educational, statuary and archival - with whom the trust hopes to work on furthering this important aspect of the ten-year plan following its publication.

Plan Responsibilities

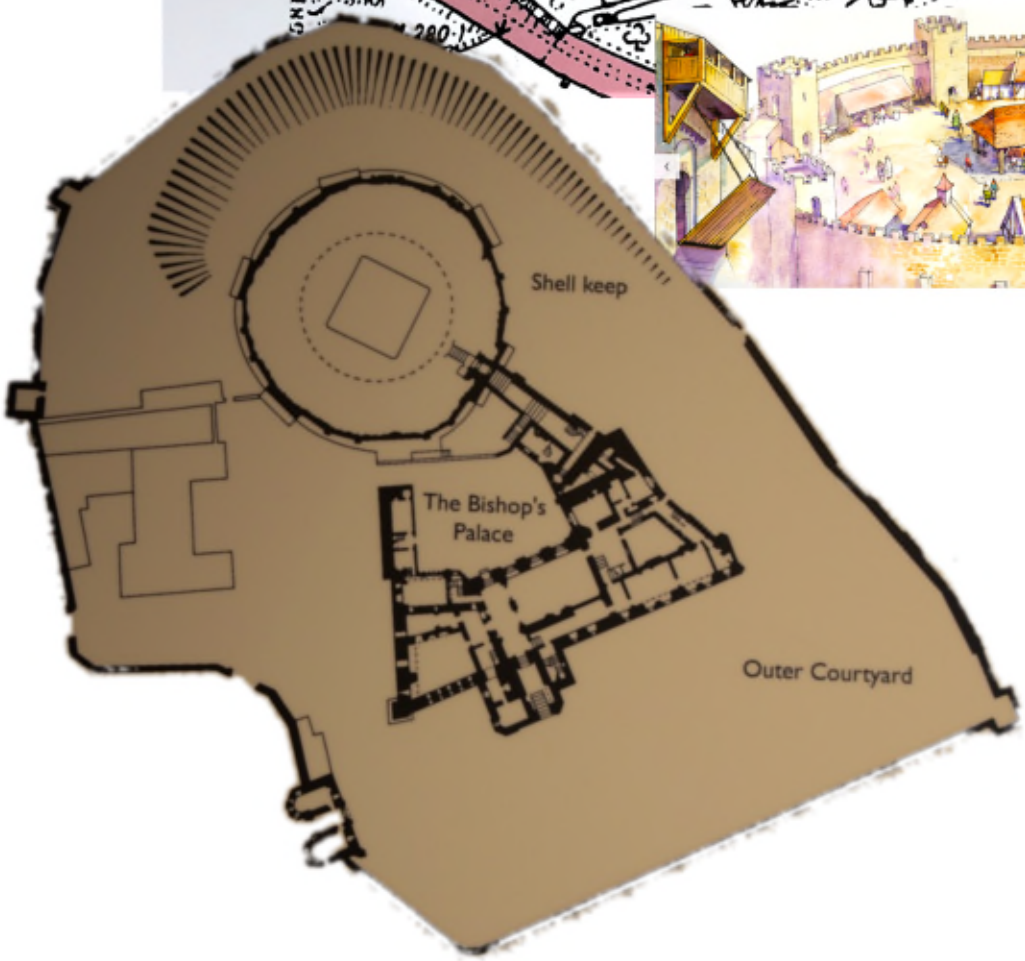
Organisation / Plan element	Farnham Castle Trustees	Farnham Castle Operations	English Heritage	Partner Organisations	Church Commissioners
Conserve, Protect and Improve					
• Maintenance planning and delivery	A	R			I
• Changes and improvements	A	R			C
• Routine maintenance and cleanliness (including Keep)	A	R			
• Keep maintenance (FCO/EH management agreement)			AR		
• Buildings insurance	A	R			
Public Access					
• Mid-week (Wednesdays) access to Bishops Palace	A	R			
• Keep daily visitor services, guide books and access		R	A		
Advancing Public Knowledge					
• Creating the 'Index' knowledge base	A	I	C	R	I
• Building relationships with partner organisations	A			R	
• Commissioning research	A			R	
• Publishing research	A	I	C	R	
• Creating the historical and architectural website and book	A	I	C	R	I

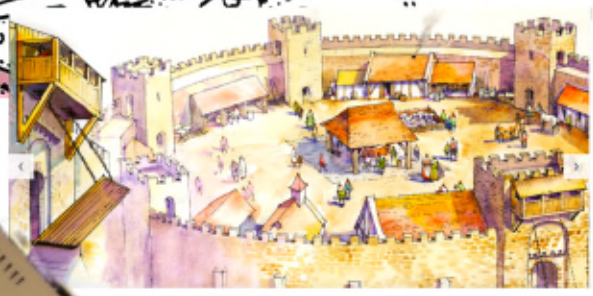
R = Responsible I = Informed

A = Accountable C = Consulted

An integral part of Farnham's heritage

Moat
Remains of
U.D.Bdy.
Keep
Remains of
6·713
Chapel
Bastion
Castle
Hill
Gate
B.M.351·6
F.P.
F.W.
47b
2·862
B.S.
47a
124
48a
233
49
·581
47
6·713
83a
·330


Shell keep
The Bishop's Palace
Outer Courtyard



Visiting Farnham Castle

Farnham Castle Keep and Visitor Centre is open most weekdays (except over Christmas and the month of January) from 9am to 5pm (or dusk, if earlier). The Keep is also open 10am to 4pm on Saturdays and Sundays. It is always advisable to contact Farnham Castle or check the website before travelling, as opening days and times can vary, and admission may be weather-dependent. Last entry is half an hour before closing.

The Bishop's Palace is open for interesting, enjoyable historic guided tours on Wednesday afternoons (from 2pm to 4pm, with the last tour starting at 3:30pm).

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