



Fig. 1. Kilpeck Castle, Herefordshire. From the south-east. It has two remaining sections of walling, the largest to the north, and one to the west. Image courtesy of CBS Conservation (cbsconservation.co.uk) who undertook major consolidation works to stabilise the structure in 2013.

Kilpeck

8. Kilpeck. The site was probably founded as a motte and bailey in the late eleventh century by the fitzNorman family, tenants of earl William fitzOsbern. In the twelfth century, with the development of second and third baileys, it became also an enclosed village or small planted town with church (famous for its carvings). King John paid three visits between 1211 and 1214, when the site was held by William de Cantilupe (steward of the royal household and sheriff of Hereford) after the death (in 1204) of John of Kilpeck. At this point, it has been observed, “it can be assumed that ... the castle had a reasonable degree of luxury” (Shoesmith 1992, 165). Excavated and documentary data suggest the whole settlement, including the castle, declined in the fourteenth century.

The motte bears two surviving stretches of masonry representing the remains of a polygonal shell-keep, with walls 1.75m thick, which had buildings against its inside face, apparently of a single phase of construction. In the first (south wall), there are: one side of a probable window, part of an inward-

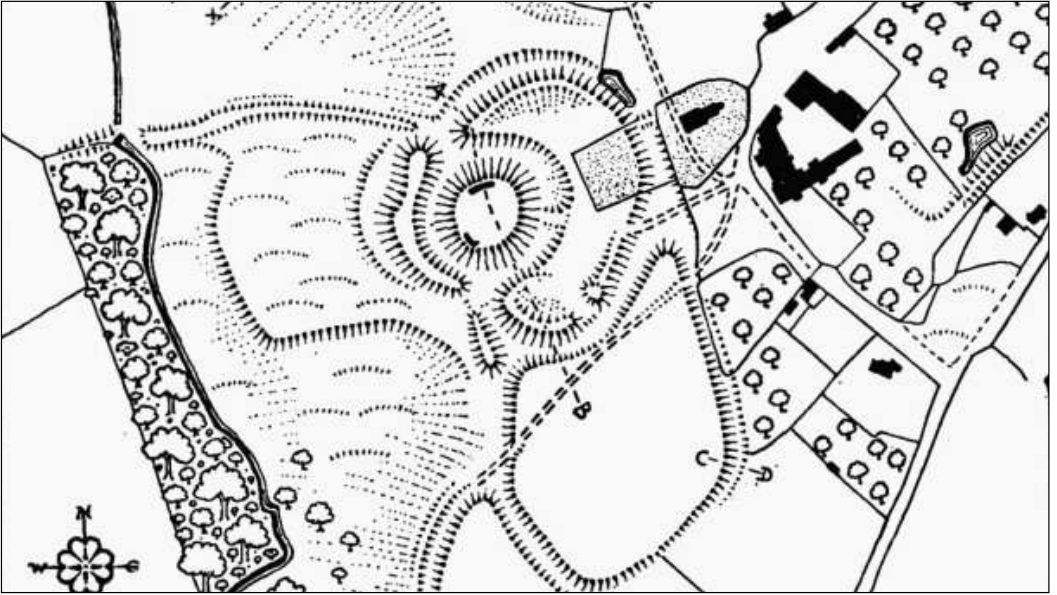
projecting cross-wall, a fireplace/hearth, a drain/urinal (fig. 5). In the second (north wall), there are: a pitched roof-line, a fireplace, a recess for garderobe or stair-case, a drain/urinal, part of an inward-projecting cross-wall (fig. 3). It has been suggested that, together, these two groups of features suggest a range of single-storey buildings, with perhaps four rooms in total, around a small central courtyard. A date before 1200 was suggested by Impey (1997, 106) on the basis of the style of the fireplaces. Thus the shell-keep was built by one or more of three successive lords of Kilpeck: Hugh (died 1169 and a member of the *curia* of Roger de Gloucester, Earl of Hereford); Hugh (died 1193); John (died 1204).

Diameter (estimate only): 75ft (24m).

Height of shell wall: approx. 20ft (6m).

Motte height: 27ft (8.23m)

Published refs: Clarke 1884, II, 162-168; RCHM 1931, 159; Renn 1968, 216; King 1983, I, 207; Shoesmith 1992; Impey 1997.



ABOVE: Fig. 2. Kilpeck. Site plan by the RCHME, 1931 (detail). For a full view of the plan see Part 1, fig. 5.
BELOW: Fig. 3. The northern section of shell wall that includes part of an inward-projecting cross-wall, a fireplace/hearth, and a drain/urinal.





ABOVE: Fig. 4. The aerial view of Kilpeck motte & bailey, with south-west at the top, walled churchyard to the east encroaching into the bailey. Image courtesy of CBS.Conservation (cbsconservation.co.uk).

BELOW: Fig. 5. Fragment of shell wall to the south-west, (the south wall) including a pitched roof-line, a fireplace, a recess for garderobe or stair-case, a drain/urinal, part of an inward-projecting cross-wall.





ABOVE: Fig. 6. Conservation /stabilisation work on the eastern side of the motte and on the north wall in 2013. Image courtesy of CBS Conservation (cbsconservation.co.uk).

BELOW: Fig. 7. The on-site plaque with details of the castle and the features in the remaining fragments. 'The strong point, and main residence, was on top of the motte. Originally wooden, this was covered to a stone shell keep on the later 12th century with accommodation suites and a hall for the lord and his guests backing onto the roughly circular wall'. (Whitfield Estate / Natural England).

