



*Fig. 1. Warwick Castle. The top of the motte as seen from the gatehouse. Late medieval and post-medieval interventions, especially those in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century Romantic period add to the difficulty in determining its original form and plan.*

## **Warwick**

### **18. Warwick**

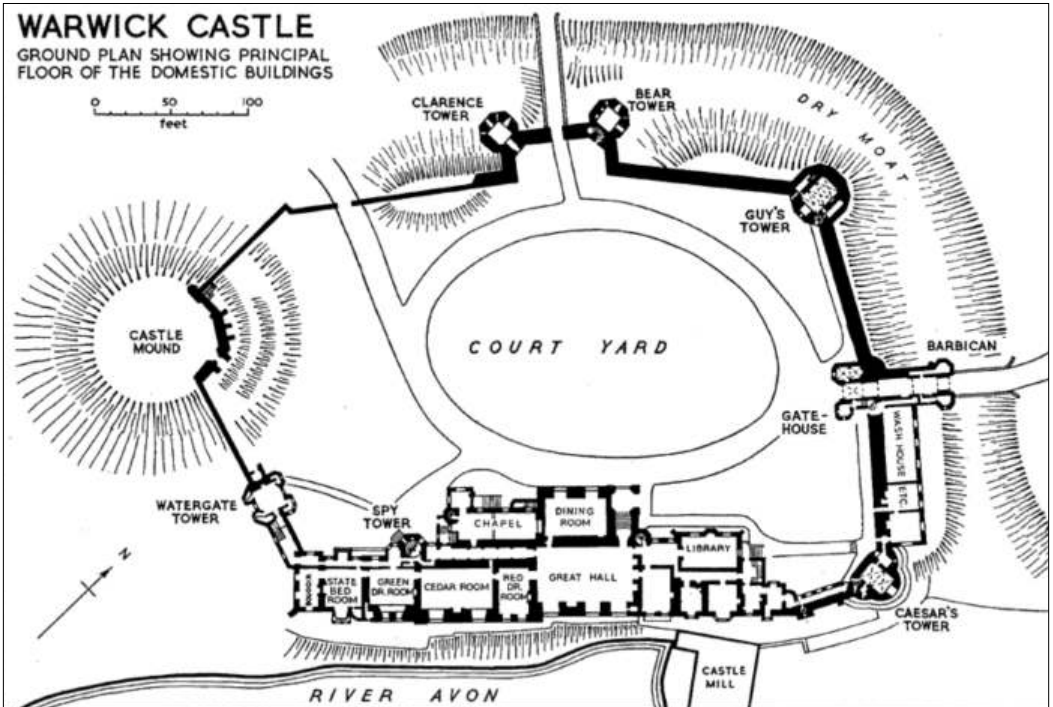
The castle was founded in William the Conqueror's campaign against the English rebellions in 1068 and was immediately granted to Henry de Beaumont, who was made earl of Warwick in 1088 by William Rufus. The castle stayed with successive earls in the same family until 1242. Then after a period of several changes, it passed to the Beauchamp family as earls from 1268 and stayed with that family until the 15th century.

The published accounts assume that the motte and bailey lay-out belongs to the first castle. The lay-out of most of the present remains (bailey buildings and defences) arises from a major 14th-century rebuilding of the site. Fragmentary remains of a presumed shell-keep survive on the motte-top. Renn (1968, 340) noted: "Three faces of a polygonal shell-wall on the motte may be early, but are now refaced and buttressed". The structure is commonly held to be 12th-century in date but limited excavation in the motte-top revealed its foundation trench and this contained 13th-century pottery. It was also apparent from this investigation that the motte had been heightened for the construction of a 1640s gun battery (Booth & Palmer 1996). By Leland's day, this "dungeon" was in ruins. The published plan (VCH, 454) is based on a survey made in 1842. This shows

wing walls ascending the motte and joining the surviving part of the shell perimeter. An entrance to the shell lies adjacent to the eastern wing wall. The medieval work on the motte has been incorporated in an 18th century folly structure, whose appearance now dominates. Toy (1953, 54-55) thought that the surviving medieval fabric suggested a polygonal shell-keep of eight or nine sides, perhaps about 55 feet in diameter"

Neil Guy's (unpublished) on-site observations suggest that much of what now stands on the motte arises from the post-medieval rebuilding. The surviving medieval work, which is probably mid-to-late 13th century in date, is confined to the shell-keep entrance and the masonry on either side of this entrance, which overlays what is probably a mid-12th century masonry base. The shell-keep appears to have been of one storey only. No signs of its internal buildings survive. The wing walls descending the motte also contain some 13th century fabric, and footings of a possibly earlier wing wall are visible. One wing wall, at its lower end, may show evidence of a blocked postern doorway.

*Published refs:* Renn 1968, 340; VCH 1969, 452-464; King 1983, II, 484; P. B. Chatwin (1956) [in W.R.O.]. Booth & Palmer 1996.

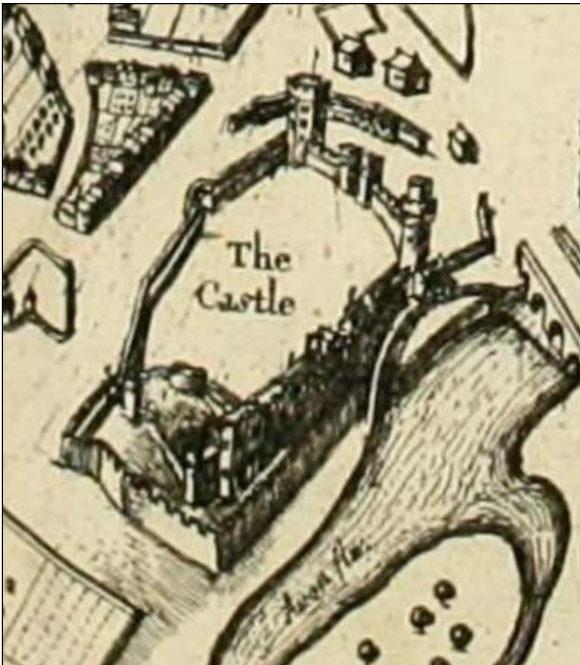
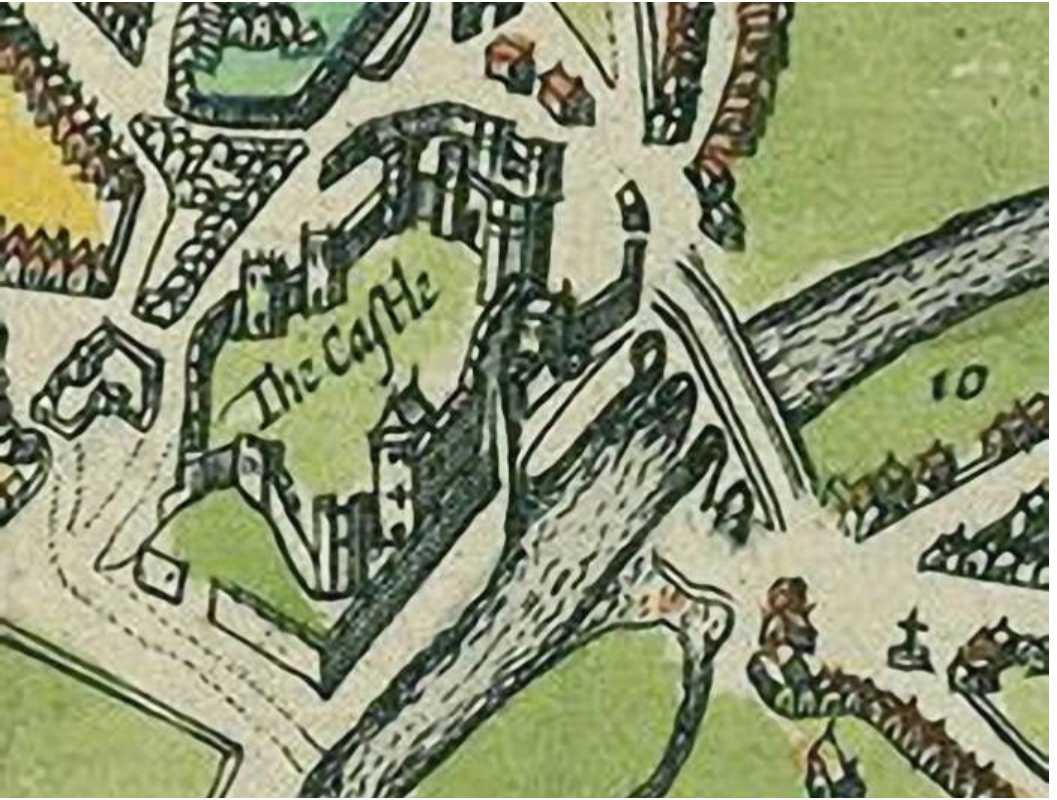


ABOVE: Fig. 2. Warwick Castle plan. © VCH Warwickshire, Vol 8, (1969), p. 454. Retrieved from British History online: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/warks/vol8/pp452-475>. Note the thinness of the wing walls to the castle mound and the odd quirk in the northern circuit.

BELOW: Fig. 3. View of Warwick Castle, from the south-east (detail) by Francis Harding. c. 1765. 'Warwick Castle' oil on canvas. Source: [www.wikigallery.org](http://www.wikigallery.org), used under Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; Water Tower and landscaped exterior of the motte. Stonework absent from the south side of the mound.

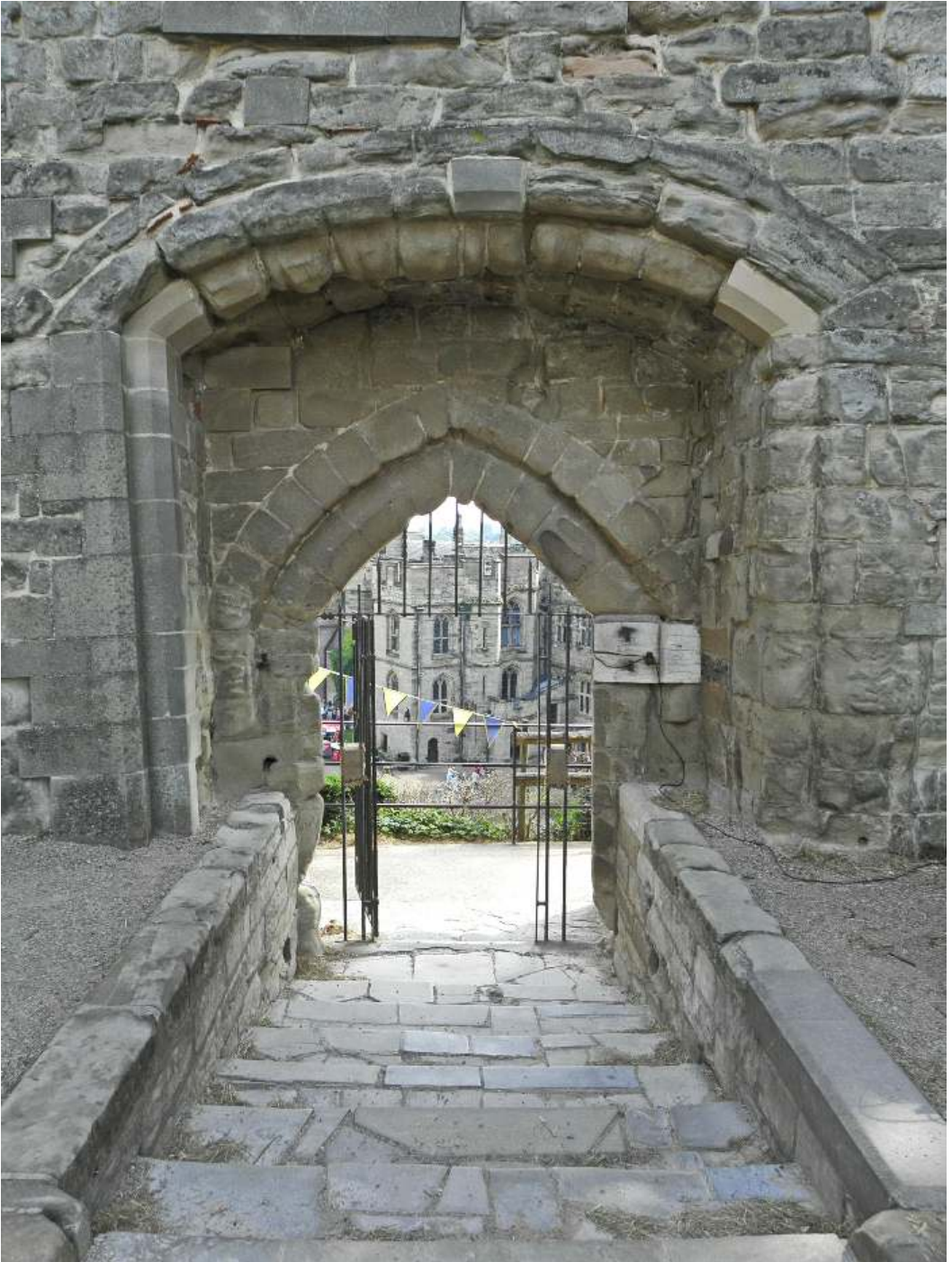






ABOVE: Fig. 4. John Speed's map of Warwick, including the castle, c. 1611. Individual features and towers are not as well defined as Hollar, below, but the overall form / street pattern is very similar. The motte top building seems to be complete but not as well defined in its circularity.

LEFT: Fig. 5. Hollar's bird's-eye view of Warwick Castle from a similar position as Speed. From 'The Antiquities of Warwickshire illustrated: from records, leiger-books, manuscripts, charters, evidences, tombes, and armes : beautified with maps, prospects, and portraictures' (sic) by Dugdale, William, Sir, 1605-1686; and Hollar, Wenceslaus, 1607-1677. published 1656. Hollar clearly shows the circular/polygonal shell keep on the mound, but appears to omit one of the twin towers to the north (The Bear and Clarence Towers). There also appears to be extra walling and towers in the outside lower part of the mound before the crenellated wall, which today appear unrecorded.



*Fig. 6. The entrance to the 'shell keep' courtyard, from the interior. The mouldings of the entrance arches are probably mid-late 13<sup>th</sup> century. The present low wall positions parallel to the steps prevents doors closing inwards, although there are hinges visible on the left to take the door. It is not clear if the ground level has been raised.*





*Figs. 7-10. 7: Exterior of the shell keep entrance looking NW. 8: Entrance looking SW. Buttresses appear secondary. 9: A line of badly worn steps running parallel to the south wing wall, possibly 12<sup>th</sup> century. 10: The exterior of the north wing wall from the point of the quirk or dog-leg to the SW. The lower part of this wall could be late 12<sup>th</sup> century with a blocked postern 2m in from the dog-leg.*

