

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Lewes Castle

PARISH: LEWES

DISTRICT: LEWES

COUNTY: EAST SUSSEX

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 12872

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): TQ41391013

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes two mounds, the area between the mounds which includes some surviving Norman walling and vaults and part of the western ditch, all belonging to the Norman castle at Lewes, as well as the outer gateway added in the early 14th century.

The Norman castle, built for William de Warenne shortly after the Conquest in AD1066, consists of two large mounds, or mottes, each surrounded by a deep ditch and linked by a broad courtyard, or bailey. The mottes were surmounted by timber palisades which were replaced by stone 'shell keeps' around AD1100. The bailey area, some 135m south-west/north-west by 100m south-east/north-west, also had a continuous flint wall with towers at intervals and a rectangular gatehouse, of which only the east wall survives. Angular towers were added to the shell keep of the south-western motte in the 13th century and in the early 14th century the round-turreted outer gatehouse, or barbican, was built to strengthen the gateway. In the 18th century the south-west motte was extensively reconstructed to form a Georgian pleasure garden. Much of the walling of the castle was consolidated in the early 20th century. Finally, excavations on the south-west motte in 1985-88 revealed details of the domestic buildings of the castle which backed onto the shell keep wall. These included a hall, kitchen and chapel.

Included in the scheduling are the vaults under the Castle precincts and all surviving parts of the Norman and 14th century gatehouses.

Excluded from the scheduling are: the railway tunnel beneath the bailey; the metalling of all paths, roads and car parks; all modern structures, ie. Castle Lodge and the cellars on the eastern side of it; Castlegate House and its cellars; Castle Precincts; the Malthouse; Castle Precincts Cottage; Brack Mound House; and the service trenches to all these buildings. But the ground beneath these features is included.

The Castle, the Barbican and Inner Gatehouse are Listed Buildings Grade I; The Castle Lodge, Castlegate House, Curtain Wall, Brack Mound House, Castle Precincts Cottage, Bowling Green Pavilion, Malthouse and Castle Precincts are listed Grade II.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Motte castles are medieval fortifications introduced into Britain by the Normans. They comprised a large conical mound of earth or rubble, the motte, surmounted by a palisade and a stone or timber tower. In a majority of

examples an embanked enclosure containing additional buildings, the bailey, adjoined the motte. Motte castles and motte-and-bailey castles acted as garrison forts during offensive military operations, as strongholds, and, in many cases, as aristocratic residences and the centre of local or royal administration. Built in towns, villages and open countryside, motte castles generally occupied strategic positions dominating their immediate locality and, as a result, are the most visually impressive monuments of the early post-Conquest period surviving in the modern landscape. Over 600 motte castles or motte-and-bailey castles are recorded nationally, with examples known from most regions. As such, and as one of a restricted range of recognised early post-Conquest monuments, they are particularly important for the study of Norman Britain and the development of the feudal system. Although many were occupied for only a short period of time, motte castles continued to be built and occupied from the 11th to the 13th centuries, after which they were superseded by other types of castle.

The castle at Lewes is unique in having two mottes and hence illustrates some of the diversity of this class of monument. It survives well, with large areas of open space within which archaeological remains are considered likely to survive as well as with much original architectural detail. This is in spite of the disturbance caused by partial collapse of the motte, stone robbing, conversion to a pleasure garden, consolidation and partial excavation. Since it is opened to the public, the monument is of high amenity value.

SCHEDULING HISTORY

Monument included in the Schedule on 28th August 1915 as:

COUNTY/NUMBER: Sussex 5

NAME: Lewes Castle

Scheduling amended on 16th September 1963 to:

COUNTY/NUMBER : Sussex 5

NAME: Lewes Castle

Scheduling amended on 1st April 1974 to:

COUNTY/NUMBER : East Sussex 5

NAME: Lewes Castle

The reference of this monument is now:

NATIONAL MONUMENT NUMBER: 12872

NAME: Lewes Castle

SCHEDULING REVISED ON 24th October 1991