The basement of the Windsor Curfew Tower c. 1227-30+ Once a powerful defensive and residential tower. The tower has two floors above the basement, at least one of which was also once equipped with wide, straight-sided, arrow-loop embrasures. Walls are 13ft (4m) thick at the base and the spacious basement chamber is 32ft (9.75m) long (east-west) by 22½ ft (6.86m) wide (north-south).

Neil Guy
Windsor Castle - The West Curtain Towers - earliest views

These first four introductory pages set out a chronological overview of the depiction by various artists of the west curtain at Windsor castle as seen after its completion (c. 1240). The earliest known is John Blacman c. 1440 (fig. 1). Norden adds further detail in 1607 (fig. 2), shown from the north, like Blacman. Fig. 3 shows a plan of the likely disposition of buildings in the Lower Ward as they may have looked in c. 1327, as drawn (from documentary sources) by Tim Tatton-Brown for ‘Edward III’s Round Table at Windsor’, but Hollar, c. 1658 delineates a fairly accurate bird’s eye view (figs. 5-7) from the south and west showing the relative heights of each tower in his day. The little known Francis Place sketch is shown (fig. 33), of uncertain date. It post-dates Hollar and could be c. 1700.

Fig. 1. Pen drawing of Windsor Castle (detail) c. 1440. View from the north, with the Curfew Tower nearest. The earliest known depiction of Windsor, added to a 15th-century manuscript of the Polychronicon of Ranolph Higden, probably by John Blacman, Fellow of Eton 1443-1453, who possessed a manuscript of Higden’s work. Ref: Eton College Library, MS 213, fol. XV. Reproduced here from St John Hope’s ‘Windsor’ 1913.

Fig. 2. Windsor from a drawing in possession of the Commissioners of His Majesty’s [James I] Private Property. A bird’s eye view from the North, based on Norden’s [c. 1547-1625] 1607 Survey (B. M. Harl. 3749). (Detail from the St. John Hope’s fold-out copy in the folio of plans). Courtesy of the Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2019. It shows various gabled ‘houses’ on the tops of both the Garter and Chancellor’s Tower.
Fig. 3. Windsor Castle. The disposition of buildings in the Lower Ward as they may have looked in c. 1327, as drawn up by Tim Tatton-Brown for the publication ‘Edward III's Round Table at Windsor’ - pp. 24-27. Tatton-Brown also makes the case for the Middle Bailey being created on the western side of the motte prior to the establishment of what is now known as the Upper Ward, probably in the 12th century. (pp. 18-24). Steven Brindle (2018, p. 19, note 13) follows this line of argument and credits T. T-B for this contribution to Windsor’s suggested early origins.

Fig. 4. William Daniell 1769-1837, c. 1827 (aquatint). Ref: RCIN 817109d. © Royal Collection Trust. H M Queen Elizabeth II 2019 and St George’s Chapel, Windsor © The Dean and Canons of Windsor. The Garter Tower right, above the sail, with its battlements approx. level with the wall.
Fig. 5. A bird's-eye view of Windsor Castle's lower bailey in 1658, from the south, by Wenceslaus Hollar (detail). The view suggests that the middle Garter Tower (Key 22) was no higher than the curtain wall or the Salisbury Tower (1); The Francis Crane building (3) has since been demolished. Image from the Fisher Library, University of Toronto Wenceslaus Hollar Digital Collection. Reproduced with thanks.

Fig. 7. Wenceslaus Hollar - The last mentioned of the following three prospects on the same folio page: ‘Prospect of Windsor Castle & Towne from South-S-West; Prospect of the Same Castle from West-South-West; Prospect of it, from West & by South (cropped). Date uncertain but probably 1670s. RCIN 700353 © Royal Collection Trust. H M Queen Elizabeth II 2019 and St George’s Chapel, Windsor, © The Dean and Canons of Windsor.
Windsor Castle - The West Curtain Towers - The Curfew Tower

1. The Curfew (or Clewer) Tower

At the north-western end of Windsor castle’s lower bailey stands the prominent Clewer, (Curfew, or Bell ) Tower, now the belfry of the College Chapel of St George. With walls 13ft (4m) thick at the base and standing 100 ft (30m) high, it was built between 1227 and 1230+ by Hubert de Burgh as part of the new castle defences following a damaging siege during John’s reign (figs. 1-4, 8, 11, 24, 51).

Description:

This tower, one of three built (with Garter and Salisbury) consists of a basement, a main floor and an upper floor. It is horse-shoe / D-shaped with the flat side closing towards the bailey. It was refaced with ‘firestone’ (Reigate stone) in 1863, when the contour of the tower was dramatically changed by the addition of Salvin’s steep gabled roof. Owing to the fall of the ground and partly to the tower having been built in the Norman ditch around the lower bailey, the basement has to be reached by steps down to the ground level before approaching its central rear entrance; this consists of a wide doorway of two orders with depressed head. (figs. 9, 12), flanked by two wide square-headed lights. Inside the doorway is another descending flight of stairs to the earthen floor (since covered with raised modern flooring).

Basement:

The basement, 32ft (9.75m) long (east-west) by 22½ft (6.9m) wide (north-south) is, in plan, a half-octagon abutting a half-square. The impressive pointed rib vault is simple and elegant; plain chamfered members springing from moulded corbels about 6½ft (2m) above the original floor level. In each of the five sides of the half-octagon is a deep straight-sided looped embrasure about 8ft (2.44m) wide x 8ft high at the apex and with depressed head (figs. 9, 14-16, 18-20). There are similar rectangular recesses on each side of the half-square section of the chamber, and that on the south has a further opening off it. Masonry throughout is all of excellent ashlar. The tower walls are 13ft thick, yet the flat wall facing the courtyard is just 5ft (1.52m) thick. The tower, being on a strategic critical angle on the NW corner is equipped with five loops with a combined field of fire or traverse that covers 180 degrees.

Main Floor:

The main floor has a modernised entrance to the south side of the flat east face. North of this entrance is a modern window of three lights. Between these two features is the back of the medieval? fireplace (figs. 10, 22). The entrance is now reached by a flight of six stairs leading up to the wide doorway. This retains, within, its old original depressed rear-arch and opens into a lofty hall or chamber. Round the outer curve are six broad and deep window embrasures with depressed pointed heads and square-headed loops, symmetrically disposed. In each of the long sides of the chamber are cut two deep vertical
Windsor Castle - The West Curtain Towers - The Curfew Tower

Fig. 9. The Clewer/Curfew Tower - Basement ground plan from St. John Hope (1913), showing the two-bay vaulting pattern and lights / arrow loops within five straight-sided embrasures.

Fig. 10. The Clewer/Curfew Tower. First-floor plan from Hope. Original wooden ribs (removed) that supported the upper floor, but the chases remain. The 12 beams supporting the belfry added in 1478.

Fig. 11. John Lessels (1808-83), Thames Street, Windsor, looking south, with the Clewer / Curfew Tower. Dated 1855, 46.0 x 37.6 cm (whole object) RCIN 917410. This view is drawn prior to the Salvin refacing and shows the original configuration of the bell chamber / cupola at the top. From street level to wall-walk the height of the tower is about 100ft (30.5 m). It also clearly shows the external latrine shaft in the north angle with the north curtain. © Royal Collection Trust. H M Queen Elizabeth II 2019 and St George’s Chapel, Windsor, © The Dean and Canons of Windsor.
chases for the timbers that carried/supported the floor above. The north-east corner of the chamber is now partitioned off by pieces of Henry Emlyn’s wooden reredos (1785) removed from the Chapel to form a living space for the bell-ringer, and has within it the remains of a fine hooded chimney. North of the bell-ringer’s chamber there is an L-shaped passage leading to an original garderobe seat / shaft in the north-east corner of the tower (figs. 10, 11). The door on the south side opens off to a lobby before it descends to a staircase down to the tunnel and sally-port (see below).

Upper Floor (second storey)

A massive wooden straight staircase (14th century?) (figs. 13, 17) against the south wall of the main floor leads to the Upper Floor of the tower, which is similar in plan to the Main Floor. It has in the east wall four
Windsor Castle - The West Curtain Towers - The Curfew Tower

Fig. 14. An engraving of what is now known as the Dungeon (Basement) in the Clewer / Curfew Tower. Signed ‘WAD’ - (W A Delamotte) - and TW. Cut from a publication (text on verso). 1843, RCIN 700723. There are a number of discrepancies when compared with the Buckler/Jewitt engraving (fig. 13), e.g. the door with a straight lintel on the right (south). © Royal Collection Trust. HM Queen Elizabeth II 2019 and St George's Chapel, Windsor, © The Dean and Canons of Windsor.


*Windsor Castle - The West Curtain Towers - The Curfew Tower*

**ABOVE:** Fig. 15. Basement of the Curfew tower - looking east (entrance) c. 1860-65

original window recesses now containing pointed lights. These windows are arranged in pairs and have between them the remains of a chimney like that on the floor below, but plainer. There are six other recesses or embrasures that are deep and straight sided (fig. 17). A seventh recess on the north opens into a garderobe chamber. Perhaps it should not be assumed that this floor was exclusively a fighting gallery. The Clewer Tower, with its fireplaces on the upper floors (unless they are all insertions) might have been properly partly residential right from the first, as an officer’s tower monitoring the garrison and sally port movements? thus emphasising the difference between it and the other two towers.

In 1477, King Edward IV effected the greatest change in its history by allowing the College of St. George to re-purpose the tower as a belfry. In 1478, a decision was made to move the chapel belfry from the Mary Tudor Tower (now the residence of the Governor of the Military Knights) to coincide with the building of the new St George’s Chapel. The Curfew Tower was chosen as the new location. A massive timber frame over 50ft (15.24m) high and 21ft (6.4m) square was constructed inside the tower to support the bell cage, using timbers from the old belfry (fig. 23).

Treasurer’s accounts in the College archives detail the expenditure on lead work, carpentry and iron work necessary for securing the bells in their new home. A clock was purchased from Windsor Parish Church for 6s 8d, mended and set up in the tower. This second-hand clock evidently proved unsuitable, because in 1490, Thomas Conygrave was paid £4 13s 4d for making a new clock. This was brought down from Westminster by water at a cost of 4s. This new clock was then replaced in 1689 when an Act was passed in Chapter: “1689, 23 May. Agreed that since the old clock is quite worn out, that John Davis make a new one for the Colledg, and when finished that Sir Christopher Wren be desired to sett the price”.
Figs. 18-20. Views of the basement of the Clewer/Curfew Tower, looking west. Below: One of the six embrasures now used for recreational and educational functions. Below right: The roof rib-vaulted structure represented by one quadripartite bay (east) and a six-ribbed apse (west).
This clock, engraved with the words \textit{JOHN DAVIS WINDSOR 1689}, is the one which can still be seen on the tower, over 300 years since its installation. Eight bells hang from the lower part of the timber frame, which was recently preserved and repaired as part of the ongoing College restoration program. The bells originally brought from the old belfry consisted of a ring of five and three hour bells. Structurally the tower remained little changed for centuries, until restoration work in 1863 carried out by Salvin. The images (figs. 21, 22) show the flat east face of the Curfew Tower before the changes were made in 1863, with the top part of the bell frame projecting above the tower parapets and covered in boarding and lead sheets. Salvin’s work included giving the tower a completely new stone face, raising the height of the upper walls and adding a large semi-conical roof modelled on one at Carcassonne (\textit{La Tour du Trésor}). It seems that Emperor Napoleon III suggested the new look while visiting Queen Victoria in 1855. Salvin’s alterations gave us the Curfew Tower as seen today, fulfilling its role as the chapel clock and bell tower, as it has done for over 500 years. More recent work has included stabilising the wooden frame (fig. 23).

\textbf{The curtain wall-walk from Curfew Tower:}

Whilst Hollar (fig. 5) shows no apparent access to the wall-walk from the Clewer tower there may have been at one time. However any evidence is now not visible as the whole curtain wall has been heightened (Salvin). The original wall-walk is now subsumed inside the line of domestic buildings that now abut the wall, clearly shown by the series of windows punched through the wall, facing Thames St. (figs. 3, 24).
Fig. 23. In 2007 the Canterbury Archaeological Trust carried out a survey of the Curfew Tower. The massive tower dates from around 1240, but the timber-framed belfry within was installed over 200 years later. Before repairs could be made to the belfry which had begun to move excessively during bell-ringing, it was necessary to understand the archaeology of the fabric. A set of measured drawings was produced partly using a 3D CAD model made by Plowman Craven. Reproduced courtesy and © of KAS. See also https://www.plowmancraven.co.uk/projects/curfew-tower-windsor-castle/
Windsor Castle - The West Curtain Towers - The Curfew Tower

Fig. 24. Windsor - The Curfew Tower from the west - Thames St. The curtain wall has been heightened (probably from just below the top white band) and it and the tower has been refaced in a harsh 'firestone' (Salvin, 1860s). St John Hope was not particularly impressed with the new Victorian roofline and re-facing of the Curfew Tower, writing in 1913 of the 'disfigurement' of the original structure and hoping that it could be reinstated. © The author.
The Thames St. tunnel and sally-port

In the floor of the mural chamber outside the south doorway within the ‘Main Floor’ chamber (fig. 25), is a trapdoor leading down to stairs, postern passage and sally-port, through a brick archway constructed in 1892. This opens into a lobby 5ft (1.52m) square with stone plastered walls and a pointed barrel vault. To the south of the lobby is a pointed archway of the same width leading to a descending flight of 40 steps formed partly out of chalk and partly of harder stone. The sides of the staircase, on the inside of the curtain wall and runs parallel to it), are carefully built of coursed blocks of chalk and overhead is a pointed barrel vault, sloping with the stair formed of chalk blocks and plastered. The stair is 6ft (1.83m) wide and has at the bottom of the flight a square lobby of the same dimensions, with a tall pointed arch built of firestone, opening westwards. A point of interest is why the staircase descends only from the Main floor and does not start from the Basement chamber (see fig. 24 and caption).

Beyond this a second flight of steps descends below the ditch, but is now partly barred by a low wall and blocked inside the outlet. The upper flight of steps, including the lobby is 46ft (14m) long. The postern passage is contemporary with the wall alongside which is carefully constructed and therefore dates from c. 1227-40. It was repaired in 1320-21. The sally port would have opened out into the ditch, but the second flight of stairs is now dug deeper and continued below the ditch and is believed to have reached under Thames St. and opened out into properties on the other side of the street. Both the Curfew Tower tunnel and sally port, like the two other tunnels, and sally ports at Windsor, (the East and South Bow in the Upper Ward) were built in response to the siege of 1216, see Brindle, 2018 50-57). Hubert de Burgh was similarly involved in sally part / tunnel complexes on the north side of Dover castle.

Fig. 25. St John Hope’s 1913 plan of the west curtain and towers. The stair into the Clewer tower (marked*) should not be central as shown but are actually in the position marked S, to the south (see fig. 8). (The central stairs relate to the basement). He has usefully marked the position (in faint lines) of the access and the flight of stairs that lead down to the sally port that turns left, under the curtain and originally out into the ditch.
As shown in fig. 25, the flight of stairs is located adjacent and parallel to the curtain wall on the inside (left), rather than a mural stair within the wall thickness as one might expect. It is entirely possible that when built, the stair was not roofed, and was simply an open access staircase from the bailey inner ditch at the base of the wall to the top of the wall-walk. When the Horseshoe Cloister was built in the 1480s - much of it now hard up against the west curtain - the flight of stairs were probably covered over and walled on the east side to create a descending vaulted passageway.
Windsor Castle - The West Curtain Towers - The Curfew Tower

Figs. 27-29. Various views of the steps leading down to the sally-port under/adjacent to the Curfew Tower.

Left: The lobby at the top of the stairs with David Mercer, the undersigned, and Charlotte Manley.

Bottom left: The lower steps leading to the ditch and possibly continuing west under Thames St. The tunnel was apparently discovered in 1852. The flight of stairs goes down 40 stone steps to a passage which goes under Thames Street and still exists in a basement of a building in Curfew Yard. The link under Thames St is blocked.

Bottom right: The descent from the top of the stairs.

All internal images were supplied by and are courtesy & © Dan Tietzsch-Tyler.
The central or intermediate tower along the west side of the lower ward was originally known as the *Almoner’s Tower*, but since the 17th century it has been known as the *Garter Tower* (fig. 35). Ashmole, writing of the duties of the Garter King of Arms states:

‘There is a House appointed for his habitation within Windsor Castle and is the middle west tower of the Lower Ward, which whereupon hath gained the name of Garter’s Tower. It was by a Decree in Chapter annexed forever to the Office of Garter and restored to Sir William Segar’s possession the 2nd of May 1630’ (Elias Ashmole, 1672 from his *Institution, Laws and Ceremonies of the Most Noble Order of the Garter* (London)).

It is described by Sir William Dugdale, Garter, in his Diary of 1677 (W. Hamper, (London, 1827):

‘In Garter’s Tower are a Hall, and Kitchen, with a Buttrye, three chambers, one Closet, a large Garret, and two Cellar; but much out of repaire’. [Which suggests that by this time a linked annexe had been built to the east abutting the tower (figs. 5, 33)]

Although orders seem to have been issued from time to time for the repair of the tower, it was allowed to fall into ruin, and for a considerable period before its conversion into its present condition by Salvin from the 1860s, it was a roofless shell with the east side toward the bailey completely broken down (fig. 32).

**Description:**

It is structurally the tower of 1227-30+, D-shaped in plan externally and initiated by Hubert de Burgh as part of the west curtain.¹

**Basement:**

The basement plan is a half-octagon joined to a part square, 20ft wide / 22ft deep and is now entered (via a post-medieval abutted building) beneath a 19th-century, wide, depressed archway with imitation 13th century mouldings springing from corbels - all the work of Salvin (fig. 30). On the south side is a deep original pointed recess and west, towards the ditch, three original similar large recesses or niche embrasures with narrow loops at the back. There is another low recess in the north wall. The present roof (ceiling) to the basement is a modern brick vault (St. John Hope).
First Floor:

The first floor (reached by a modern external stair up to the old doorway on the south), has three looped recesses or embrasures towards the west, but the remaining features all belong to Salvin. On the west side of the entrance lobby (fig. 31, marked A) is an original mural staircase up to the wall-walk [now a modern upper chamber]. There is a blocked doorway in the side of the northernmost window from which a flight of mural stairs led down to the area in the rear of the tower which may originally been partly open-backed. Also on the north side was evidently a garderobe chamber similar to the Curfew Tower. Norden (1607) shows the tower as surmounted by three small leaded structures or garrets, but Hollar shows one (figs. 2, 5) The known history of the tower is limited. St J. Hope does not comment on whether the basement was originally vaulted although Salvin did produce a sectional drawing (fig. 39) which indicates that he might have thought so. However, the internal structure does not clearly indicate this was the case (lack of evidence for corbel springers etc). Nor does Hope indicate the height or how many floors the tower may have had. It is probable that this and the Salisbury Tower were never completed to their planned full height (see below under ‘1307 Survey’). Whilst it had become a residential tower by the 17th century or earlier, it may not have
Fig. 33. Francis Place, 1647–1728 Title: View of Windsor Castle (from the west); undated, but one of the earliest views drawn after Hollar. The battlement level may have been heightened slightly. Medium: Grey wash and graphite on medium, slightly textured, blued white laid paper; Size (18.9 × 36 cm). Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection Accession No: B1975.3.1227. Probably dated to the early 18th century with similar features to the Vorsterman (fig. 34) below. Two or three chimneys or two chimneys and perhaps a soil stack on the Garter tower (right) and possibly a gabled extension to the rear (Place). It shows that the tower had a residential function in the late 17th and/or early 18th century.

Fig. 34. Unknown artist, early 18th century, after Jan Vorsterman, c 1643 – after 1685, ‘Windsor Castle Seen from the Thames’ detail, c. 1700. Oil on canvas Size (67.6 x 93.3 cm) Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection Accession: B1981.25.647. Curfew tower centre with its bell tower, and Garter tower right with tent or circular roof with possibly two chimneys.

Fig. 35. The Garter Tower from Thames St, today, completely refaced, sanitised and heightened by Salvin in the mid-late 1860s.
Fig. 36. Windsor Castle - from R-L: Henry VIII gateway, Chancellor’s (or Salisbury) Tower (re-floored and reconstructed by Edward Blore 1840s), Garter Tower, Bell chamber extension of the Curfew Tower. 1857. Rock & Co, London, No 3357. Note the height of the ruinous Garter Tower on the line of the wall-walk; even with some crenellations it would be no higher than the wall-walk.

Fig. 37. Windsor - Anthony Salvin’s drawing of the Garter Tower c. 1860, prior to restoration with a hint (bottom right sketch) that he thought the basement may have been vaulted. See fig. 39.

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**Windsor Castle - The Garter Tower**

Richard Tyrer, May, 1861. Black and white lithograph. Tyrer has shown a deliberately distorted view by unrolling three planes into virtually one. It is a later view than fig. 30, with the lobby on the left (south) side. Tyrer also shows an inserted oven and flue on the right (north) side. All the towers have offset, displaced loop embrasures as seen here.

**Basement vaulting in 13th century curtain towers: 1220-60**

Discussion of the Curfew Tower dealt with the unusually simple, yet dynamic, elegant and powerful aesthetic of the tower’s basement vaulting (fig. 18). Salvin may have considered that the basement of the Garter tower was also once vaulted; hence his rough sketch on his 1860 A-B section (fig. 39). What early drawings of the ruinous tower there are, there are no longer any specific clues for this, such as the marks in the masonry for any removed corbel springers. However, the tall height, (fig. 38 above) of the basement level suggests vaulting could have been constructed or may have been planned, similar to the Curfew tower, although this tower’s dimensions are marginally larger. The roof-top floor, 24ft (7.32m) wide, would accommodate timber joists which, at the time, could span about 30ft. Similar basement, or ‘ground-floor-only’ vaulted 1220-50s curtain towers that are comparable are: Barnard (Durham) - Round Tower c.1200 (but with saucer vaults); Pevensey (c. 1254 - North tower - elegant two-bay ribbed vault by Peter of Savoy); Chepstow - SW tower (Upper Barbican - not vaulted but possibly open-gorged c.1230s). Henry III’s ‘king’s works’ curtain towers with known rib-vaulted basements include: Winchester, c. 1222-30 – the NE round angle-tower at the apex of the east and north curtain. This tower also has other similarities to the Curfew Tower including a series of underground sally-ports (see illustration p. 330, for the interesting affinities of the East Curtain towers at Winchester with the west curtain of Windsor), especially the strong apex/ angle towers; the north-east angle-tower at Winchester may have been vaulted; it was commissioned by Peter des Roche (d. 1238). Windsor (so-called Edward III tower in the Middle Ward c. 1224-28, since heavily remodelled; Rochester (Bastion tower), c. 1220-25, Cobb Hall (Lincoln, c. 1220-25, angle-tower, vaults at two levels); the Devereux (angle-tower) and Bowyer towers (Tower of London, c. 1240s). All these examples have/had two / three-tiered offset loops improving their firing traverse and mitigating any structural wall weaknesses, but are not solely angle-towers. Earlier pre-Henry III rib-vaulted examples include the Bell Tower (angle-tower, Tower of London c. 1190) and the Avranches Tower, Dover, c. 1190, gap-back but vaulted gallery.
The 1327 Survey (or Inquisition)

The documentary history of the castle during the reign of Edward III begins with an important survey made in September 1327. It is full of interest and greatly helps to inform much of the castle’s topography at the time. It notes:

‘They also say there are in the same place two towers between the Great Gate and the Clewer tower (which towers at some time were finished off with wooden tables) by diverse storms they are rotten and prostrate and it was ordained by the lord Edward, lately king of England, father of the present king, that the two towers aforesaid should be raised above and finished of with stones from Bustlesham quarry in the form and likeness of the Clewer Tower and the cost and expense are reckoned at £200…’

Edward II had ordered them to be heightened and finished of with stone ‘in the form and likeness of the Clewer Tower’. Evidently this was not acted upon, which explains their lower profile compared to the Clewer Tower, until they were raised in the 19th century by Blore and Salvin. Bustlesham quarry (near Bisham, Berkshire) was known for its chalk stone. The poor condition of the Garter Tower was captured in the 1860s (figs. 40, 41 above).

18th century proposals:

The National Archive holds numerous architectural plans for work both executed and unexecuted at Windsor. In 1734, plans were laid out to restore the Garter Tower (TNA ref RC1797199) - Windsor Castle: Garter Tower. Cellar, ground and first-floor plans, and elevation - Ref work 34/309. (figs. 42, 43). These proposals remained unexecuted but the drawings reveal details of the existing conditions and
Fig. 43. Ref 34/309. TNA. Proposals in 1734 to rehabilitate the Garter Tower. A - Basement-kitchen (cellars, stair descend), B - Main Floor, C - Upper Floor. Basement appears open-backed (between dotted lines with wall infill proposal; medieval garderobe re-used and central embrasure utilised for a series of fireplaces.

Fig. 44. Ref 34/309. Section of the Garter Tower proposals viewed from the east. Three storeys envisaged from a previous two-storey building. The plans show that the curtain wall drops down to the south, with a fuller height on the north side, which corresponds with Hollar’s view fig. 7.

The original design. What they seem to suggest is that the flat east face was probably open-backed, and the 1734 plan is laid out to create a suite of accommodation with an internal newel staircase. Three embrasures to the basement are as originally configured, but modified walls and lights in the chambers above, apart from re-using the existing garderobe chute in north. Access to the Main floor B was not directly from the basement kitchen but from a door from the south side accessed via stairs from the adjacent buildings (marked in yellow). The small-scale sketch plan from T. Tatton-Brown (fig. 3) also suggests that the Salisbury (Bishop’s or Maunsell) Tower may also have been open-backed, with access from each floor from an abutted building, perhaps timber-framed, (Bishop’s Lodging). Proposed fireplaces are marked F, and A-A denotes ‘Arch’. This proposal was not executed and it seems that the buildings languished until Salvin’s intervention.
Windsor Castle - The Salisbury Tower

The Chancellor’s or Salisbury Tower
(also known as the Maunsel Tower)

The only description of this tower is found in St John Hope’s *Windsor*, Vol II, p. 531. Because the tower has gone through a number of radical re-workings, he is necessarily brief and short on detail. Nonetheless, he does include vital ground-floor and first-floor plans.

**Description:**

The Salisbury Tower is the third in the line of three towers on the West curtain and constitutes the D-shaped angle-tower to the south-west on the corner of Thames St and Castle Hill. It is of the same building campaign as the Curfew and Garter towers c. 1227-30+. It had a basement and first floor with roof-top battlements / parapet carried on corbels. Antiquarian illustrations (figs. 6, 7) suggest there were no more than two storeys when first built, plus a gabled roof-top garret. The flat side is toward the bailey. Internal restructuring has now accommodated four floors, whereas there were two originally.

**Basement:**

The basement, internally, is partly (fig. 45) circular and partly square - the only one of this type. In the rounded section (19ft, 5.8m diameter) remain the three straight-sided deep recesses or embrasures towards the ditch. In the square section (17ft (5.18m) wide) there is a deep pointed recess on the north and a descending flight of steps on the south from a spiral stair in the south-east corner. The wall toward the bailey shows a doorway and two flanking windows, like the basement of the Clewer Tower, but now blocked from the outside. The basement was never vaulted.

**First Floor:**

The first-floor plan is based on an octagon and a part square with a width of 19½ft (6m) and a length of 25ft (7.6m) (fig. 46). The plan appears to suggest the west section of walling is thicker than the basement below. The original layout is now obscured by partitions, to make it into a residence for one of the military knights, but it has three embrasures with loops towards the field (the central one of which is now filled up with a fireplace). There is a fourth smaller recess with a loop on the south. Further alterations have been made post-St. John Hope. Opening out from the northernmost recess is a narrow passage in the wall which was part of the latrine shaft removed by Edward Blore who re-cased the tower and rebuilt and heightened the upper storey, and the front toward the bailey in about 1840. (The former appearance of the front (fig. 47) compares favourably to its current appearance (fig. 44) above. Despite its heavy reworking, the tower is interesting, not least because it might contain what appears to be an early example of a Henry III vice-stair built within a curtain tower from new. Examination would be necessary to confirm that this is not a later insertion as its configuration does seem like an afterthought.1

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1. The only example of a Henry III vice-stair within a curtain tower from new is the one in the gatehouse at Caernarfon, which was built in the 1280s.
Windsor Castle - The Salisbury Tower

Fig. 45. Chancellor’s / Salisbury Tower - basement. Dimensions of the tower are 28ft (8.54m) wide x 35ft (10.67m) deep. Internal: 19ft (5.8m) wide and 23ft (7m) deep. The tower once included an integral latrine shaft on the north.

Fig. 46. Chancellor’s / Salisbury Tower - first floor. The spiral stair could one of the earliest examples of a spiral built into a curtain tower from new, but examination is required.

Fig. 47. Paul Sandby (1731-1809). Henry VIII Gateway and the Salisbury Tower from inside the Lower Ward (cropped). RCIN 923996. The 18th century picturesque Salisbury Tower is to the right of the Gateway. It was demolished and replaced in the 1840s by Edward Blore, in a neo-Edwardian (i.e. Edward I and II style, see fig. 44). Images © Royal Collection Trust. H M Queen Elizabeth II 2019 and St George’s Chapel, Windsor, © The Dean and Canons of Windsor.
Windsor Castle - The Salisbury Tower

Fig. 48. ABOVE: Paul Sandby (1731-1809). The Henry VIII Gateway from Castle Hill c. 1760. Pencil, pen and ink, watercolour and bodycolour 30.5 x 40.1 cm (sheet of paper). The Salisbury Tower to the left of the gateway. (RCIN 914547) © Royal Collection Trust. H M Queen Elizabeth II 2019 and St George’s Chapel, Windsor, © The Dean and Canons of Windsor.

Figs. 49 & 50 BELOW: Left: After Leonard Knyff (1650-1722) ‘A Prospect of the House at Windsor [Burford House]’ published in ‘Britannia Illustrata’ (1708). (cropped). (RCIN 700335). The tower appears a little lower than the Henry VIII gatehouse to its right and has a roof-top garret, but the whole drawing is skewed. (Compare fig. 5). Right: Salisbury Tower today from Thames St.
Windsor Castle - The West Curtain Towers

12th- and 13th-century round curtain towers: Windsor west curtain in context

Summary and conclusion

Regularly-planned square or rectangular enfilading curtain towers came into use in Britain in the late 12th century under Henry II. At the time most were open-backed (or open-gorged). Good examples include Dover from 1185, Windsor, Orford, Framlingham and Bamburgh, all probably prior to 1200. From King John (d. 1216) the population of round-fronted curtain towers proliferated (sometime loosely described as drum towers), and were introduced early at Dover along the inner and outer curtains. The flat-backed ‘D-shaped’ tower (or half-drum) was ideal for both castle and town-wall curtains, especially as intermediate towers along a straight stretch of curtain walling. Many of these D-shaped towers were ‘open-gorged’ at the back often with infill by means of timber, or sometimes additional structures bolted on to the rear, planned from the start or added later.

Open-backed examples, not exhaustive, include: Dover (e.g. Crevecoeur, Godsoe, Treasurer’s Towers, John, by 1215); Scarborough (cliff-wall curtain - Outer Bailey, John, 1207-12); Rochester (Bastion, c. 1225 Henry III); Corfe, North Tower Inner Bailey c. 1205, Outer Bailey, west curtain, 1215, and later the Horseshoe Tower c. 1250-70, Henry III); White (Inner Bailey, Chapel Tower?, Outer Bailey x 4, Prince Edward c. 1260s); Beeston (Outer Bailey x 6, Henry III c. 1240s); Chartley x 3 (Ranulf, 1220s); Helmsley, (South Barbican x 2, c. 1250-60s), Manorbier (North tower, c. 1230s); Chepstow (Northwest tower (Gilbert Marshal c. 1230s). Thus open-backed towers were built in large numbers throughout the 13th century, especially in those castles with large baileys and with a need for a large garrison.

Horseshoe-shaped towers, a variant of the D-shaped tower, are occasionally constructed at the angles or corners where wide 270° enfilading fire is required. The longer horseshoe-shaped tower was a compromise offering the best of a rounded and square tower. The semi-circular area (the one facing the field) could offer two or three floors of offset staggered embrasures which may have up to a total of six per floor (Clever - first floor), whilst the square or rectangular part at the enclosed area at the back offered internal accommodation space, with fireplaces and garderobes.

Early-13th-century examples of the closed horseshoe type, include Windsor (Clever), Lincoln (Cobb Hall), Devereux tower (Tower of London); they are all of a similar Henry III era c. 1225-50. Hubert de Burgh had been an advocate of both the open-gorged and enclosed flat-back curtain tower, with examples of each kind at White, Grosmont and Hadleigh, all completed by c. 1230. So there is little surprise that each tower along the west curtain at Windsor, commissioned by de Burgh, was designed differently to cover a mix of both residential and garrison use, all equipped with heavy-duty firepower, considering de Burgh’s previous military experiences. Completely circular towers at the curtain angles, continued, e.g. the NE tower at Winchester (by 1235), and at non-royal castles in the Marshal line.

Henry III was one of the greatest patrons of art and architecture in English royal history. One should therefore expect to see more time, money and elaborate attention lavished on his structural projects. The Clewer Tower set the standard for all future rib-vaulted basements and the size of this curtain tower is unprecedented; others are listed on p. 250. Garter and Salisbury were powerful but secondary garrison-type towers, probably open-backed, later enhanced for a variety of residential uses. They deserve to be better known, and if and when possible, opened up for greater public access.
Fig. 5. Early photo of the west curtain along Thames St. c. 1850s, looking north, prior to any work by Salvin. Note the poor condition of the Garter tower and the offset curtain stone banding near the Clewer Tower.

This is the only part of Windsor where anything of the great (Henry III) outer ditch still remains (cf. fig. 5). Henry III’s three towers and curtain walls are built in the earlier ditch (only obvious from the interior). Whilst the towers have been refaced, the curtain walls are little altered. They are well built of small squared stones laid in courses, with horizontal bands of larger and lighter coloured ashlars - similar to the kind of masonry used by Edward I at Caernarfon.

Notes

1 The account for works in 1227-30 include £432. 13s. 4d, spent ‘in the work of the wall with three towers by the king’s writ - TNA E 372/73. Hubert de Burgh was appointed ‘Keeper’ in 1224.


4 The plan in T. Tatton-Brown’s account (Munby, Barber and Brown, 2007), p. after 23, ‘Windsor Castle 1344’), suggests that the Maunsell Tower (also called the Bishop’s Tower) may have been open-backed as it was integrated with the Bishop’s lodgings and similarly configured with later buildings.

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