



Fig. 1. Restormel castle, from the west. Stonework substantially late 13th & early 14th century.

Appendix - Restormel

21. Restormel

The site was acquired by Richard, earl of Cornwall (d. 1272) and was rebuilt by his son, Edmund (d. 1299), whose chief Cornish residence it became when he moved the earldom's administrative centre from Launceston to Lostwithiel. He converted the 11th -12th century castle, comprising a ringwork with a rectangular bailey, into a magnificent new residence but no written record of his works survives. The ringwork and bailey form was retained, but the original ringwork earthwork was altered and only its gatehouse was retained in the new fabric. The ditch was recut and much earth piled around the base of the new shell wall, to create an impression of a traditional motte (paralleled at Lydford, Devon, also rebuilt by earl Edmund or his father, Richard).

Works on buildings in the bailey are recorded in 1343-1344, when the earldom was in the king's hands, and repairs are documented through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. By Leland's day, however, the site had become neglected and major decay followed. The most important written source for understanding the site is a survey of 1337, when the Duchy of Cornwall was created, which identified some of the fabric being in need of repair. It was described as "well walled round" with a hall, three

chambers with cellars, a chapel, a stable for six horses, and three chambers above the gateway. Outside the gateway, stood a hall with two cellars and a kitchen, a chapel, three chambers with cellars, a bake-house, and two old stables for twenty horses. A lead conduit system brought water into the castle. This description implies a castle divided into two social units: apartments within the shell-keep (so-called: see below) for the use of the lords when here (but documented visits of earl Edmund and his successors, the dukes of Cornwall, are actually very few); apartments in the bailey for the day-to-day use of the lords' officers, servants and keepers of the deer-park. None of the bailey buildings remain standing above ground. The defences of this bailey seem always to have been of timber.

The central, surviving structure, it has been observed, was not designed by earl Edmund for defence but for display and comfort. Although its wall-walk was (and is) crenellated, this may have been - in this case, but certainly not at all castles by this date - a repetition of what had become a traditional element in the repertoire of castle design. The lord's chamber (the most "private" room in the castle, see below) had its own stairway to the wall-walk, suggesting that the latter's use was mainly for "promenade" and for



Fig. 2. Restormel 'shell-keep' or circular castle. Directly ahead - Gatehouse. Right (first floor): Guest Chamber / Hall of the Guard. Left: Kitchen & Hall; Camera viewpoint: From wall-walk near the chapel.

enjoying views over the deer-park. Nevertheless, we know from 14th-century expenditure recorded on the maintenance of wooden hounds, that the crenellations and wall-walk did not always afford an unobstructed view. Given our impressions of the site in general, it is likely that these hounds were installed "to impress" on particular occasions. Sockets for the beams supporting the hounds survive in the upper masonry of the shell. Restormel departed from the shell-keep tradition in having - in addition to inward-looking windows - some very large external windows in its perimeter wall giving views outward from the castle into the parkland, rather than into its bailey. These windows were located in the hall and in the two chambers, emphasising their "leisure" quality.

The entrance was, nevertheless, a very secure one: it had a drawbridge operated from a two-storey tower built on the front of the gatehouse tower retained from the earlier castle. The latter, now largely gone, was originally of three storeys, with two levels of chambers above the original entrance passage. Behind

it were now added two stairways giving access to these upper chambers, to the wall-walk, to some garderobes in the shell wall and to some arrow-loops. At ground level, a porter's lodge lay immediately inside and to the left. It is likely that the earlier gatehouse performed a more defensive function and that the "strong entrance" of the late 13th century was, like the crenellations, largely a symbol of status and privacy.

It is not on top of a motte. Its ring-work-influenced shape gives it a very large interior. It is geometrically circular. It has large external windows. Its interior retains - and in a very good state of preservation to a height of 10m - what may have existed (though on a humbler and smaller scale) at some shell-keeps: a continuous series of buildings surrounding a central courtyard and integrated to form a coherent and inter-connected whole. Current opinion is that, except for some fabric of the earlier gatehouse, the deep pits (which may be cellars of earlier buildings) and the castle well, all the work now visible is late 13th century and contemporary: most internal walls are not bonded



Fig. 3. View looking south. Left: Lord's Chamber or Solar with private stairway to wall-walk in the window recess/embrasure; Great Hall; well, in the courtyard. View from the wall-walk above the chapel / ante-chapel.

to the shell wall but this does not reflect different building phases. The domestic buildings comprised, progressing anti-clockwise around the circuit: a kitchen with large fireplace; a servery giving access to a (covered) external stair up to the hall; the hall itself was raised above a storage cellar (timber ceiling, not stone-vaulted); adjacent lay a chamber - normally identified as the lord's - which also had a cellar beneath as well as its own fireplace and garderobe; next came an ante-chamber to the chapel and the chapel itself, situated in a substantial rectangular projection and breaking (though it is not a secondary addition) the shell-perimeter: another indication that the latter was not seriously defensive; beyond the chapel was another private chamber with its own fireplace, normally identified as the lady's chamber; finally, a long room, sub-divided by a timber partition so that the garderobe lay in the larger half, providing two guest-chambers above storage rooms (possibly quarters for guards).

It has been convincingly argued that Restormel, in its final (and surviving) form, was not designed solely as a high-quality domestic facility for occasional lordly use, nor simply (or additionally) to provide outward views over the adjacent park-land at whose centre it lay. Also crucial was its location on a false crest, easily

(and impressively) visible from the park and the Fowey valley below.

Thus, this structure was part of a deliberately designed landscape within a medieval tradition that, centuries later, provided rich country houses in heavily manipulated and landscaped surroundings. In the present context, we might note that such structures, elevated and with a continuous wall-walk and crenellations, leant themselves well to this role in the later middle ages (and perhaps earlier) (fig. 22).

Restormel is included as an *Appendix* to this *Catalogue* because it has so often been called a shell-keep in the published literature. But it does not deserve this label and should be seen as an example of the separate tradition of the circular castle (see General Discussion, pp. 33, 57).

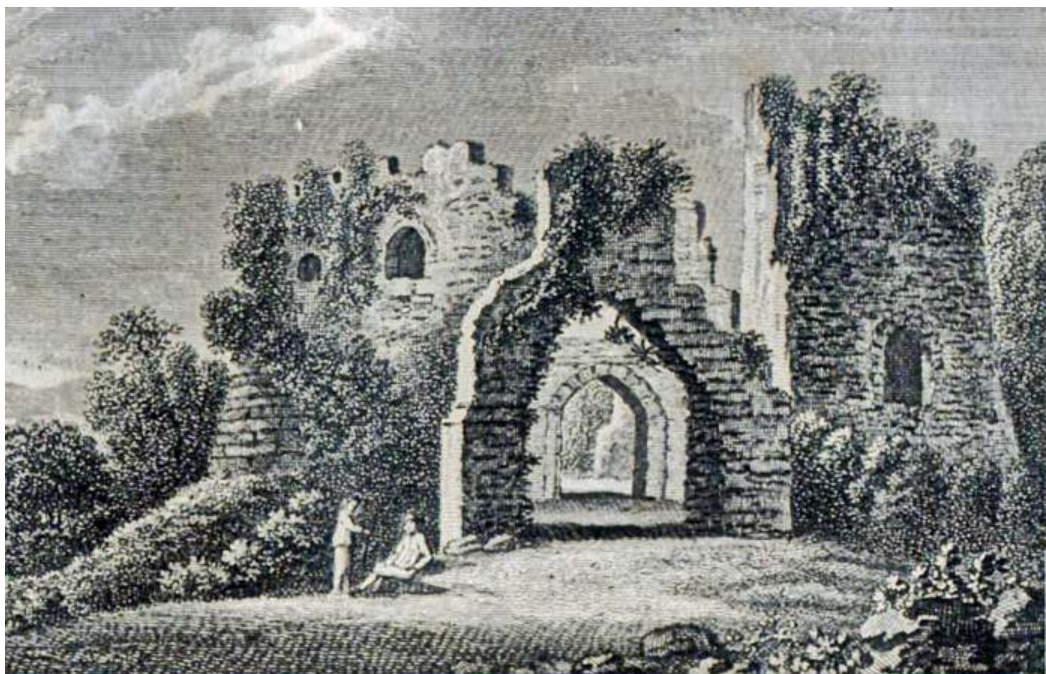
Internal Diameter (exactly circular): 110ft (33.53m); *Height*: 34ft (10.2m) from internal ground level.

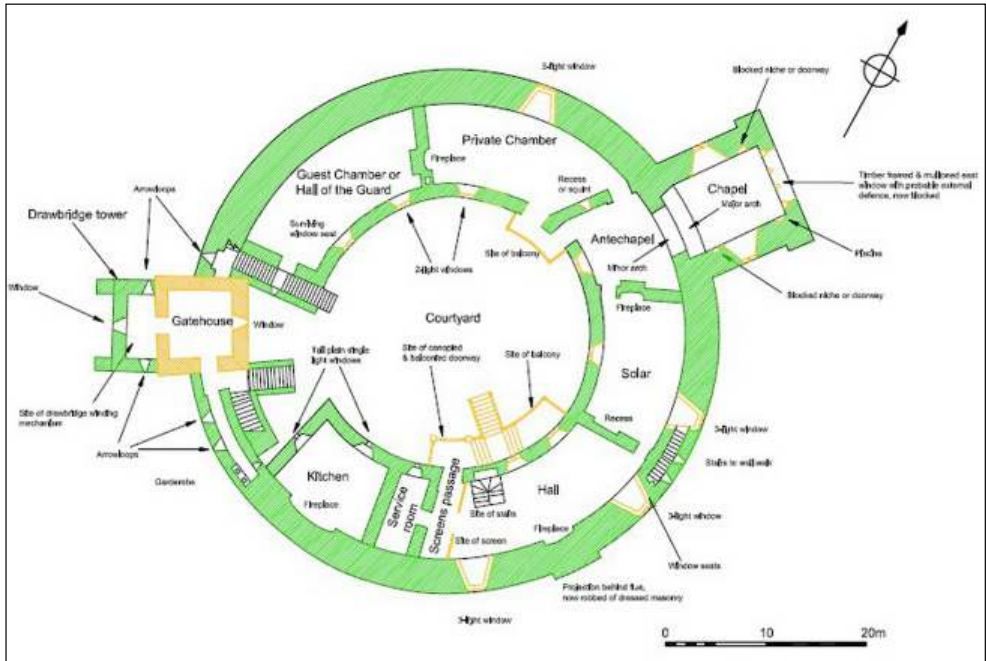
Published refs: Borlase 1769, 356-358; Toy 1933; Brown *et alii* 1963, II, 804-805; Renn 1968, 291-293; King 1983, I, 75; Thomas 2000; Herring 2003; Molyneux 2003; Creighton 2009, 16-22; Thomas, *et alii*, forthcoming. I am grateful to Jeremy Ashbee for having sight of his unpublished notes.



ABOVE: Fig. 4. Restormel Castle, from the west. S & N. Buck, 1734. (Detail). A rather attenuated, stretched view, but the forward drawbridge tower is shown as two storeys, although it appears to be rather detached from the gatehouse, of which only the entry arch remains today.

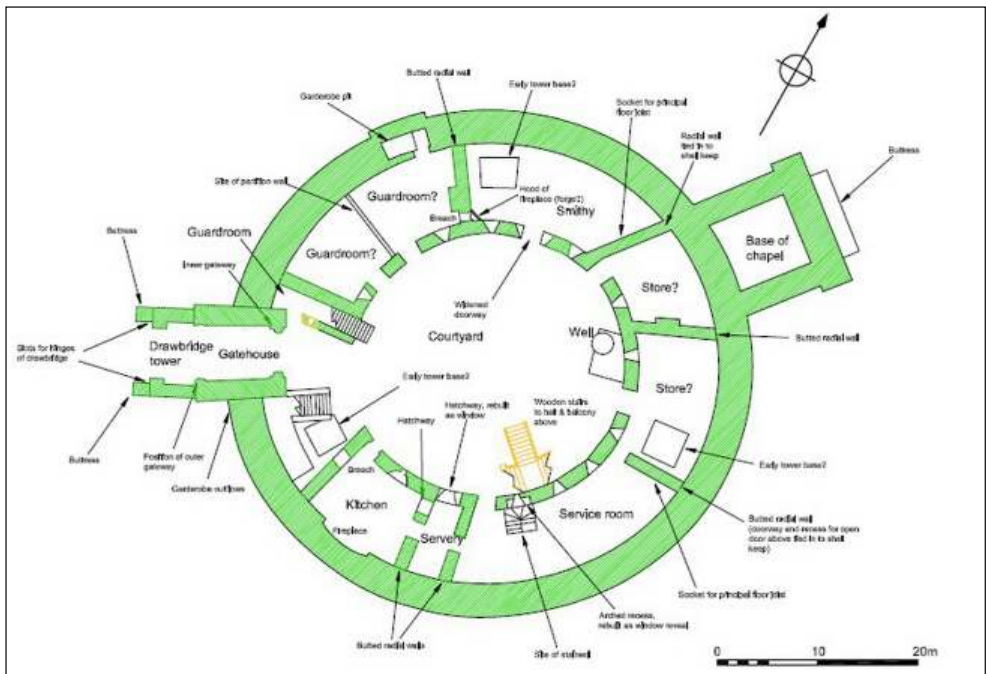
BELOW: Fig. 5. Restormel, from Francis Grose's *Antiquities of England and Wales*, Vol. 1. opp. p. 39, 1786. (detail). The artist has taken a few liberties adding larger windows on this side where none are recorded by Buck, apart from small lights or arrowslits.





ABOVE & BELOW: Figs. 6 & 7. Ground floor (below) and first floor plans. The three squares on the ground (below) mark the foundations of earlier towers.

Plans from: 'Restormel Castle, Cornwall: A reappraisal' (forthcoming) by Nigel Thomas with contributions by Eric Berry, Oliver Creighton and Peter Herring. © Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall Council, Historic England and the authors.





ABOVE: Figs. 8 & 9. Two views of the forward entrance drawbridge gatetower, near the ditch.

BELOW: Figs. 10, 11. The added, built out, section of the gatehouse housing the drawbridge with the upper chamber housing the winding gear. The forward drawbridge tower is late 13th or early 14th century. The gatehouse proper (fig. 12) is possibly early 13th century.



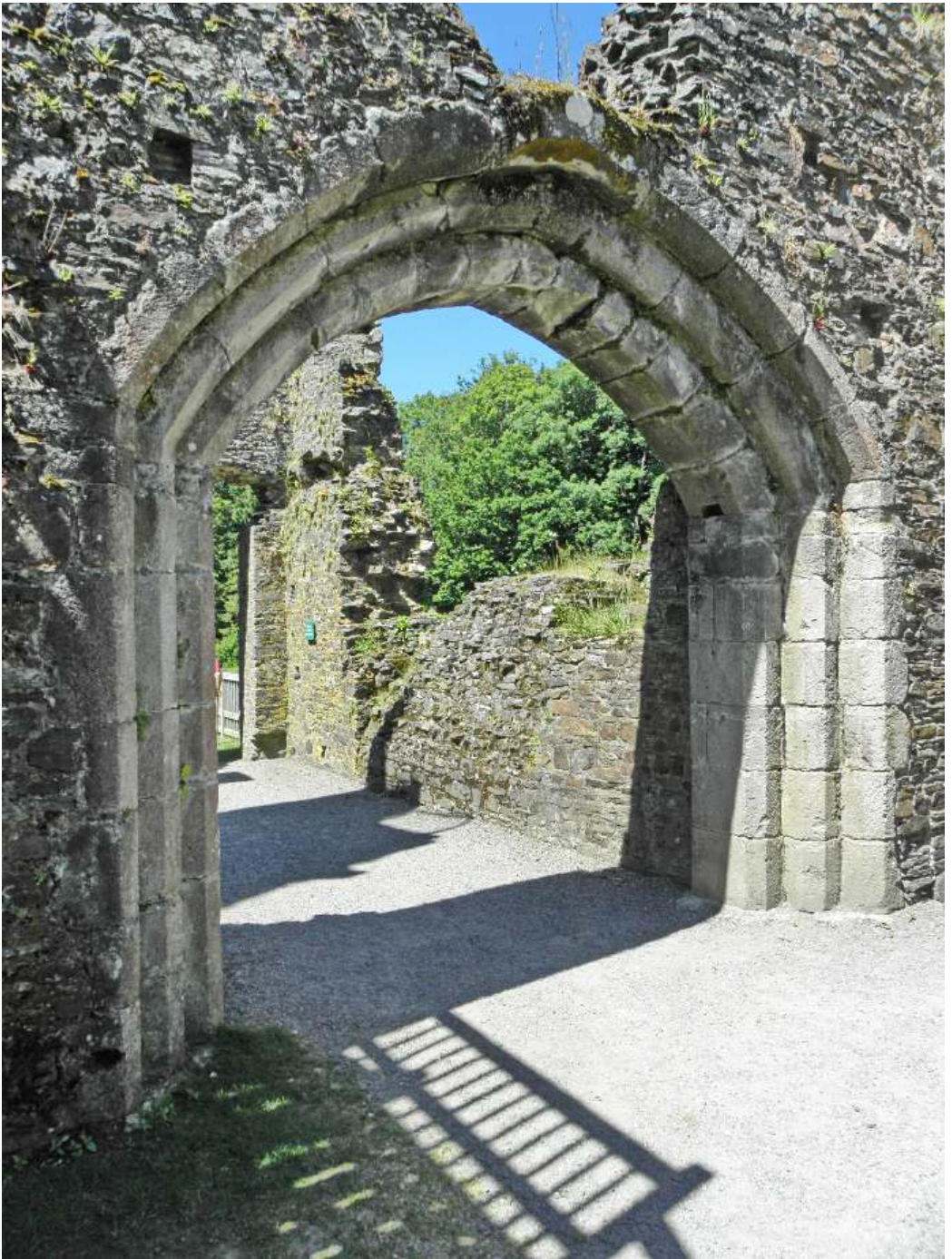


Fig. 12. Restormel Castle. From the interior side of the gatehouse looking out toward the drawbridge tower. The gateway is possibly early 13th century, but the archway itself appears to be later. The three orders of chamfered mouldings are on the interior of the courtyard, not the exterior and the stone is a fine white Pentewan.



ABOVE: Fig. 13. Artist's reconstruction of the interior, as it may have looked in the 14th century. Facing the Great Hall. Image taken from the on-site display panel.

BELOW: Fig. 14. The east (right) and north side of the courtyard. From L-R (first floor): Guest Chamber; Private or Lady's Chamber; Ante-chapel & Chapel. View from the Lord's Private Chamber or Solar.





Figs. 15-18. Exteriors, moving around the castle perimeter anti-clockwise. 15. Gatehouse & ditch from the south-east; 16. Looking east along the line of the ditch around the kitchen & hall. 17. The chapel from the south. The lower storey is a void, or perhaps a store. 18. The Lady's Chamber from the chapel (far left) looking north-west.





ABOVE: Fig. 19. The Great Hall (left) and solar from the south, with their large original (once traceried) windows. Chapel extension to the right.

BELOW: Left. Fig. 20. The gaps between the wall and the ring of buildings. They were not bonded to the walls. Right: Fig. 21. The outline trace for the principal kitchen fireplace. cf. Cardiff, Lewes.





Fig. 22. Restormel castle from the south. Near Restormel Manor House, Lostwithiel, in the Fowey valley.