



Fig. 1. Aerial view of the Farnham Castle complex from the east. © Farnham Castle.

Farnham

6. Farnham

Excavations revealed a fascinating sequence of events, starting with a classic motte with a timber tower whose lowest stages (of masonry) were buried within its centre. Sometime after 1155, the motte was later encased in a shell-keep rising above the motte from the level of the surrounding ground. It was not strictly curvilinear but multi-faceted with many pilaster buttresses. At least three of its four flanking turrets (rising from solid buttresses lower down) had rooms in their upper storeys (windows are visible on the Buck Brother's view of 1737, fig. 3) and the gate-tower - sitting above the fifth solid buttress - originally had one storey of rooms (now two) over the vaulted entrance, which was provided with drawbars and a portcullis.

The site underwent further change in the 13th century when the sloping shoulders of the motte were in-filled and the internal buildings developed. Fragmentary excavated foundations, two garderobe shutes on the north-east and a fireplace with adjacent garderobe near the western tower reveal that there were several buildings, including a hall (known from documentary sources to have stood behind the entrance tower), against various parts of the interior wall face by *circa*

1300. A century earlier, however, the planning must have been different, since the shoulder of the encased motte had yet to be levelled up and the rooms in the turrets were accessed only by timber plank-ways and stairs. In Tudor times, a wooden pentice corridor, some of whose stone foundation survives, ran around much of the circuit. At Farnham (as also at Berkeley, a motte whose full masonry encasing and shell-keep dates to around 1155), the surface area of the motte top was thus - eventually rather than immediately - increased by infilling the motte slopes. Thus the area covered by the final version of the shell-keep was much greater than the original motte top with its central tower.

Farnham was a castle of the bishops of Winchester. Bishop Henry de Blois built several in 1138, a date often assumed to mark Farnham's creation (but see below). Its transformation into an encased motte dates from after 1155 (when, according to the royal Pipe Roll, king Henry II slighted the bishop's castles), perhaps - to judge from the surviving architectural details - as late as 1180-1190. Later developments within the shell-keep date from the 13th century. It



Fig. 2. Farnham Castle, the gate-tower, with a rear two-leaved door, drawbar holes, portcullis (also to the rear), and originally a drawbridge. On architectural evidence alone, the shell-keep was probably built post 1155.

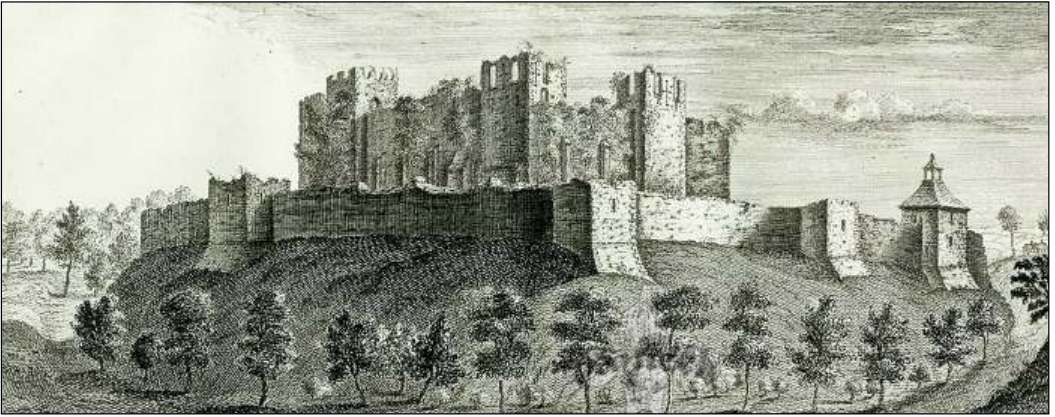
has been suggested that the castle built in 1138 was actually a motte added around an earlier tower structure (Riall 2003). This variant interpretation is not relevant to the periods when the castle was a shell-keep, as discussed here. But the well in the basement of this earlier tower is presumed to have continued in use during the life of the shell-keep.

Internal Diameter: 150ft (45.72m)

Area: 1963 sq yards (1640 sq. m).

Height from external (car park) ground level to the top of the shell wall: 35ft.

Published refs: Thompson 1960; Thompson 1961; Renn 1968, 187-189; King 1983, II, 465; Riall 2003, Hutton 2012.



ABOVE: Fig. 3. Farnham Castle, from the north. Samuel & Nathaniel Buck, 1737. The outer ring of wall towers is now fragmentary. The inner ring shows the towers almost at full height and the impression here is (wrongly) of a square keep. The gatehouse tower(s) are at the far left of the inner ring.

BELOW: Fig. 4. Farnham Castle plan of the shell keep. From the HMSO (Dept. of the Environment) guidebook, 'Farnham Castle Keep'. © Crown Copyright, 1978.

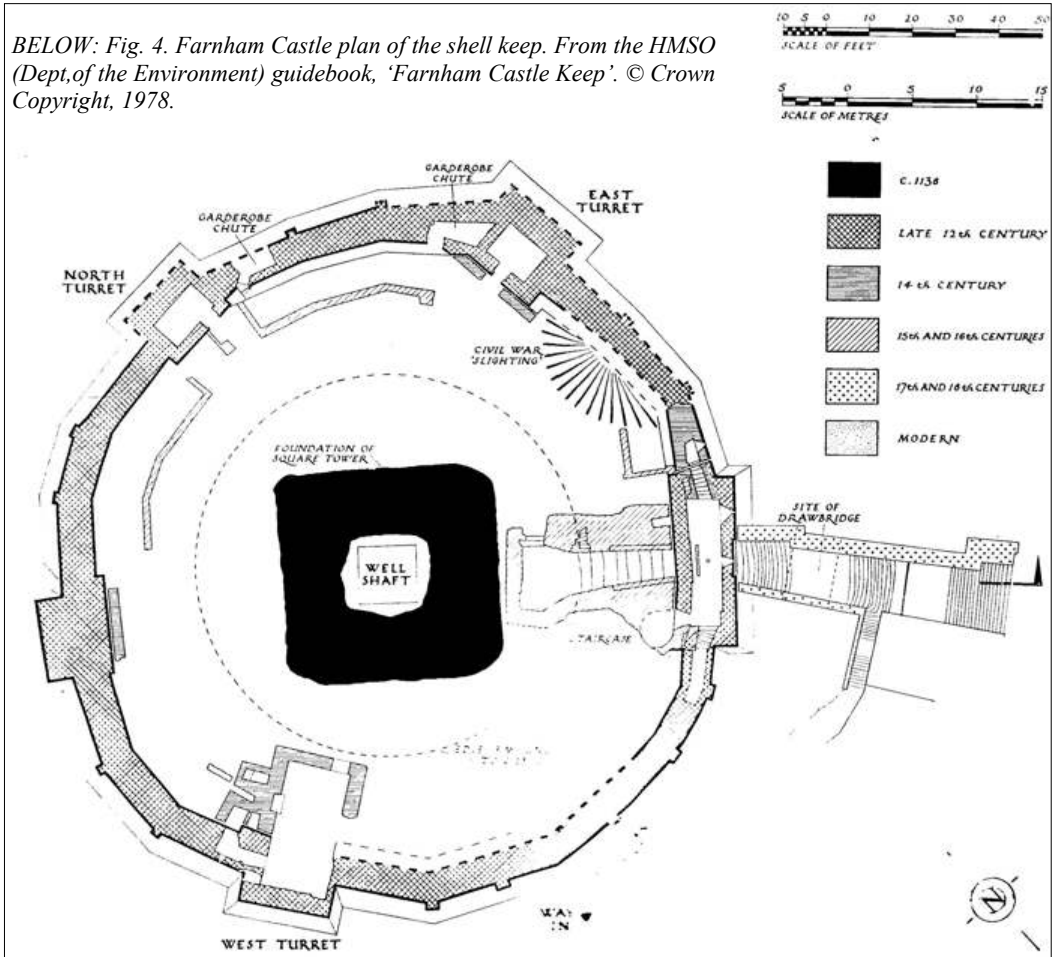




Fig. 5. The shell-keep & solid west turret from the south. From the position of 'A' on the plan below

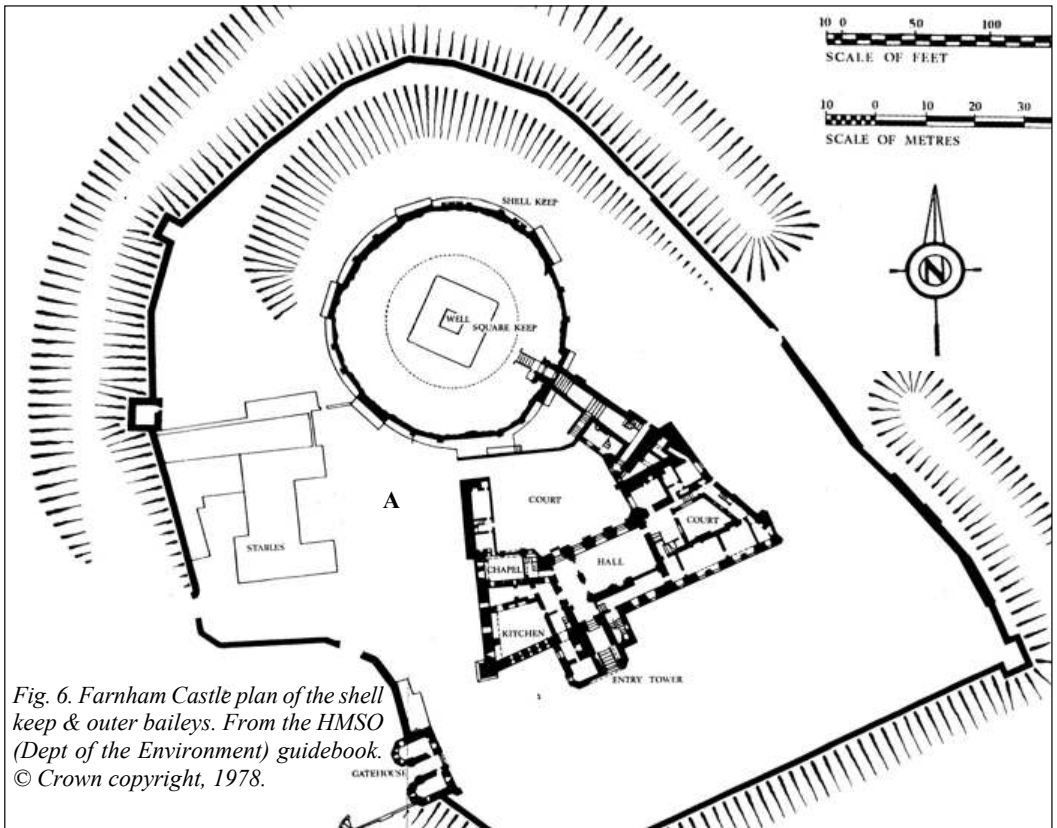


Fig. 6. Farnham Castle plan of the shell keep & outer baileys. From the HMSO (Dept of the Environment) guidebook. © Crown copyright, 1978.



Fig. 7. Farnham shell-keep. Entrance gate-tower from the east. The most recent guidebook (Hutton 2012) comments: 'We do not know exactly when work began'...No mention has been found in 12th century literature or records. But it certainly already existed in 1208 when financial accounts begin for the manor of Farnham'.



ABOVE: Fig. 8. Shell-keep interior looking back to the gate passage.

BELOW: Fig. 9. Shell-keep gate-tower from the interior (after enhanced safety measures installed). The top (second) storey of the gate-tower represents the remains of an additional storey built by Bishop Fox in the 1520s.





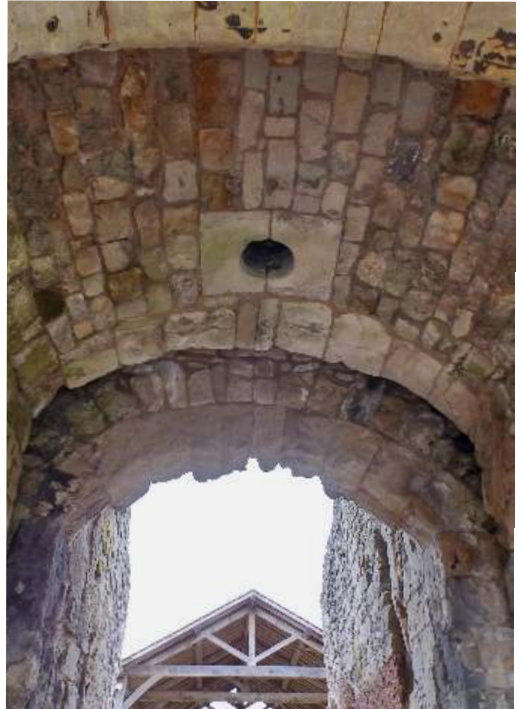
ABOVE: Fig. 10. Shell-keep interior looking west from the gate-tower. West turret top right.

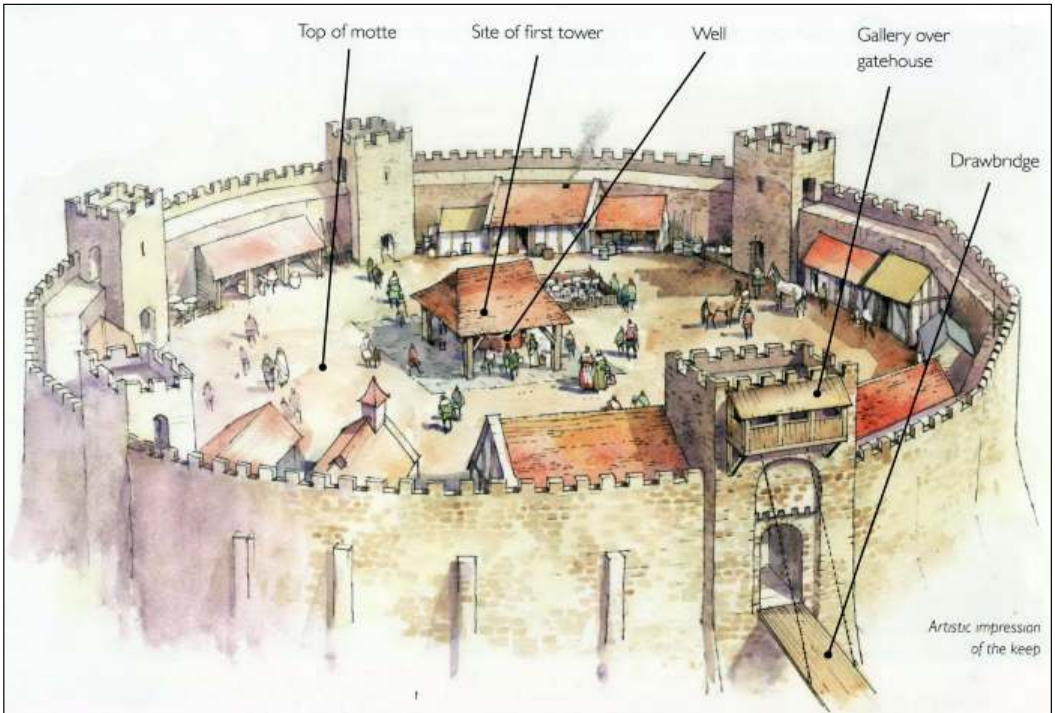
BELOW: Fig. 11. Shell-keep looking east from the gate-tower. Remains of the North turret centre and East Turret far right.





ABOVE: Fig. 12. The recently constructed protective shelter above the foundations of the central 1130s square keep with its integral well shaft. BELOW: Fig. 13, left: the corridor / narrow floor above the gate-tower entrance passage with marks on the floor indicating portcullis chase and 'murder hole'. Fig. 14. Right: From within the gate-passage looking toward the shell-keep interior with murder hole in the vault and chase for the portcullis.





ABOVE: Fig. 15. Farnham shell-keep from the south. Artist's impression of the keep as it may have appeared at the end of the 13th century. From the new guidebook 'Farnham Castle 900 years of living history - A short history and guide' Orian Hutton, p.8. Illustration by Chris Forsey. © Farnham Castle. Reproduced with thanks.

BELOW: Fig. 16. The formative process of the keep's development c. 1180. The motte top is yet to be sliced off and the inner face of the shell wall built up to the level of the doors on the internal side of the towers. From the exhibition of the castle's history in the stable block. One of a number of chronologically staged images.

