

Although one of the more impressive castles of South Wales, Carew has received little attention from historians and archaeologists. Several plans and brief descriptions exist of the masonry structures, the surrounding earthworks have, however, been ignored by past writers.

An earthwork survey was undertaken in February 1984, and an attempt made to match the earthworks with 16th and 17th descriptions of the castle.

The defensive line of the outer ward is the most obvious earthwork feature. It is trapezoidal in area, 70m x 60m, its northern boundary is the crest of a steep natural slope. This slope has been artificially steepened to create a more formidable defense. The northern wall of the walled garden is the remains of the outer ward curtain wall. At A the foundations of the curtain wall can be traced, and on the slope to the north rubble represents the demolition or collapse of the wall. The remains of a ditch may exist to the north of the outer ward. A silted up defensive ditch certainly exists to the north east of the outer ward. This ditch appears to terminate at B where it has been partly infilled, probably with rubbish taken from the walled garden. The eastern wall of the walled garden is of a different build to the northern and is not the original wall of the outer ward despite its location on the line of the curtain wall.

The foundations of a gatehouse, 10m x 10m are clearly marked in the turf on the eastern side of the outer ward. Immediately to the north of the gatehouse a gap in the outer ward defenses marks the position where a modern track gains access to the outer ward.

The south and south east boundaries of the outer ward are clearly defined by an artificial slope some 2-3m high topped with the foundations of a curtain wall and flanked by a ditch. A slight rectangular earthwork 7m x 8m may indicate the site of a south gate to the outer ward. The line of the curtain wall from the south gate to its function with the middle ward has been destroyed by a post medieval quarry.

Very few surface undulations exist in the outer ward to enable the surveyor to pinpoint building foundations. Amorphous lumps to the north of the south gate indicate a quantity of buried rubble. A 24m length of the south wall of the walled garden contains four 'slit' windows and probably represents the remains of a south wall of a building, possibly a barn or stables.



A Civil War ravelin is the most obvious feature in the outer ward. This triangular bastion projecting out from the middle ward gatehouse is very ruinous. A trackway has been smashed through it. In 1886 the ravelin was described as knocked about but yet in parts it retains its original face. Very little of its ashlar face now survives.

A stone lined ditch outside the middle ward gatehouse cuts through and destroys half of the northern arm of the ravelin. This ditch, despite being thought medieval by earlier writers, is probably post Civil War, and was probably excavated during occupation of the castle in the 17th century and was used as a rubbish or cess pit.

To the east of the outer ward gatehouse is situated a 'green' or 'square', 40m x 40m, bounded by the foundations of walls and containing the foundations of several buildings, probably houses. Two houses, C and D are clearly marked in the turf. Others at E, F, and G are less obvious. To the east and south other house sites may exist at H, I, and J.

The position and proximity of the outer ward gatehouse in relation to the houses to the east is unusual. The inner, middle and outer ward gates are on the same alignment. However the main village street must have entered the 'green' or 'square' on its northern edge before turning sharply to the south and entering the gate. The deep cutting in which the modern track is situated was probably excavated in 1822 when the main road through the village was lowered.

To the south west of the main castle, at K more building foundations are visible, and at L a one metre wall shows in the quarry face. At M a small circular earthwork may indicate the site of a lime kiln shown on an engraving of the castle dated 1755. (The quarry was presumably excavated to feed this kiln). This area of building is bounded by a stone revetted slope, N. This slope continues as a low terrace to the north east up to the castle and to the west where it forms the edge of a building platform O.

Along the edge of the present mill pond a straight length of terrace may be the site of a quay. Part of wall foundations are evident in this terrace where it has been eroded at P.

At Q a channel may be the remains of a mill leat constructed before the tide mill came into being in the 16th century.

To the south of the castle, on the opposite side of Castle Lane, is situated a moated site, ie a rectangular area of land 50m by 20m surrounded by a ditch. On the 1st edition of the 1 inch O.S. map a building is shown occupying a position approximately in the vicinity of the moat. A spread of rubble in the corner of the park, R, probably represents the ploughed out remains of a building.

A series of shallow depressions, S, 2m in diameter to the north of the castle along the shore of the mill pond are of unknown function. Cobb in 1886 indicates one as being a well, but this is probably an incorrect interpretation.

In the 16th and 17th centuries surveys and descriptions were made of the castle enabling some flesh to be added to the bare bones of the earthworks.

An early 17th century biography of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, describes a tournament held at Carew castle in 1507. Part of this account is worth quoting: "In the front court which was the platea or common place wherein people did use to walke, two hundred tall men were arranged all in bleu coates, who made them a lane into another lesser courte, called Piracotheca, in which the images 'scutcheons, and coat armours of certaine of Sir Rice's ancestors stood and weare displayed'. The platea must be the outer ward of the castle and the Piracotheca the middle ward. A full account of the tournament can be found in Fenton.

A survey of 1539 provides a valuable insight into the nature of the castle at the time. After describing the main body of the castle the survey continues with the outer ward. It states it was defended with a dyke 20 feet broad counter-mured. It gives the dimensions of the base court, as it is called, as 225 feet by 189 feet (68.9m x 57.6m) and states that it contained a building on the south side 87 feet by 21 feet (26.5m x 6.4m), which contained a stable with a loft over and a brewhouse with a loft over. At the west end of this building was a bakehouse 18 feet by 15 feet (5.5m x 4.6m) with a chamber over. Also over the south side of the court a barn 75 feet by 30 feet (22.8m x 9.1m), and a smith's forge 33 feet by 18 feet (10m x 5.5m). All the buildings were covered with slate. A stable, 128 feet by 20 feet (39m x 6.1m) with a loft over next to the water, is included in the survey. However, it is not certain if this building is in the outer ward or outside. Logically it should be in the ward, in which case a well or other supply of water must also be situated in the outer ward.

In 1592 after the death of Sir John Perrot, a detailed survey of the castle and its demesne was undertaken. Not surprisingly the outworks had changed considerably since the previous survey 53 years earlier. The

massive remodelling and reconstructing of the castle on the lines of an Elizabethan mansion had extended to the subsidiary buildings and landscape.

The approach to the castle in 1592 was through two 'green courts'. The outer green court contained an ox-house and a house to lay fish in. These can be identified with earthworks C and F on the plan. A walled garden which lay outside the outer green court can be identified as the area enclosing the building platform H. The road leading up to the castle must have been on the line of the modern track in the deep cutting as there is no break in the linear earthwork that forms the eastern boundary of the outer green court except when the cutting has breached it.

The inner green court (outer ward) was subdivided into a court and a walled garden. Of the several buildings listed in 1539 standing in the court only the bakehouse and brewhouse remained in 1592. A hayhouse had been built in the intervening years, behind which stood a walled garden 100ft square (in the southern wall of the walled garden four 'slits' can be seen these are probably ventilation holes in the hayhouse wall).

The building at K on an outcrop of rock is almost certainly the dovehouse described as runious in 1592. Westward of the dovehouse stood a stable, 100 ft. long by 14 ft. broad. This is presumably the same 'stable' described in 1539 as being "nigh the water", i.e. close to the tidal mill pond. A small garden was situated to the north of the stables, and to the north of the castle, between it and the mill there was located a small deer garden.

The land attached to the castle called the 'ancient demesne' was also surveyed in 1592. The map attempts to locate this land. The acreage included with the field names is the quantity supplied with the survey. The figures in brackets refer to the modern acreages of the fields.

Sir John Perrot's improvements to the castle were, it appears, never finished and no individual was forthcoming to pay for their completion. In the early 17th century the castle passed from hand to hand slowly deteriorating. Several surveys of dilapidations were instituted. The one of 1610 was particularly detailed. It states that buildings in the outer ward needing attention included a stable, a brewhouse, bakehouse, slaughter house, poultry house, falconer's house, barn and a new walled orchard. Whether several of the buildings had been constructed since the 1592 survey or were not thought worthy of inclusion in that survey is not known.

The wall of the outer ward and the buildings within it were finally demolished during the Civil War. The construction of the ravelin situated in the outer ward would have required the demolition of buildings and walls

to provide a clear line of fire, presumably the walled garden escaped destruction. Several ex-Royalists, however, attempted to exploit the situation by accusing Mr. Power, a parliamentarian who controlled the castle, of spoiling the lead and timber and demolishing the outhouses without authority.

Since the Civil War the area known as Castle Green has been free of buildings, quarrying into the ruins for building stone and lime the only activity to have taken place until March 1984 when part of the eastern wall of the walled garden and an earthwork were breached.

The section through the earthwork sliced the end off a 5m wide stone building. The section is illustrated here. A quantity of charcoal and iron slag found in association with the building suggest it was an industrial structure.

No building is recorded in the area in the 1531 or 1592 surveys. The foundation trench or wall of the garden cuts the demolition of the building, therefore, the demolition pre-dates 1592 when the walled garden's existence was recorded. It seems probable that a stone structure with a slate roof would have been recorded in the 1531 survey, its absence suggests that demolition had occurred prior to the survey.

Ken Murphy May 84

Measurements in metres follow the original imperial figures so as to enable comparison with the plan and description of the earthworks as they survive today.

EXTRACT FROM A SURVEY OF 1531

The length of the base court is 225 feet (68.5 m) and in breath 189 feet (57.6m) wherein is builded these edifices ensuing:

First, over the south side of this court a house containing in length 87 feet (26.5m), and in breath 21 feet (6.4m), wherein is a stable of 60 feet (18.3m) long with a loft over the same, and a brewhouse of like breath and 27 feet long, (8.2m) with a chamber over. And at the west end of the same a house called bakehouse, in length 18 feet (5.5m) and breath 15 feet (4.6m) with a chamber over the same.

Item, over the south side the said court, a barn in length 75 feet (22.86m) and in breath 30 feet (9.1m).

Item, over the said south part a smith's forge, in length 33 feet and in breath 18 feet.

All these houses covered with slate.

Item, a stable nigh to the water containing in length 128 feet (39m) and in breath 20 feet (6.1m) with a loft over the same.

EXTRACT FROM A SURVEY OF 1592

The entrance and coming to the said castle is stately through two great green square courts, either of them enclosed with stone walls, the first whereof, lying full east of the castle, containeth 120 foot (36.5m) square, having upon the south side thereof an oxhouse built of stone crowned with slate 54 foot long (16.5m). And upon the north side of the entry into that court is a little stone house to lay fish in, built also of stone, crowned with slate of 30 foot long. On the other side of the entry into that court is a garden of 90 foot (27.4m) square enclosed with a stone wall.

The second court, being parted from the first only with a slender stone wall, is 200 foot long (60.1m) and 100 foot broad (30.5m), having on the south side thereof a bakehouse and brewhouse under one roof built with stone crowned with slate of 48 foot long (14.6m). And upon the north side of the said green a hay-house, built as aforesaid of 72 foot long (22m) behind which hay-house is a garden enclosed with a stone wall of 100 foot (30.5m) square. At the west end of the said green court is the entrance into the castle.....

Under the castle and upon the south side thereof is a common passage or highway and close to the south side of that way Sir John Perrot enclosed a piece of ground of 7 acres with a fair stone wall intending to make an orchard thereof and caused divers fruit trees to be planted in the same, but now they are all spoiled with cattle and that orchard by that means clear destroyed. Upon the west side of that orchard and within 60 paces from the south side of the castle is a small grove of ashes of 40-50 years growth containing about 2 acres. Between that grove and the castle is a dovehouse, but ruinous and without any doves in it and therefore of no value. And westward thereof about 60 paces from the castle is a stable of 100 foot long (30.5m) and 14 foot broad (4.3m) with a fair hay loft over it and covered in slate, behind which stable on the north side hereof is a garden of 160 foot long (48.8m) and 80 foot wide (24.4m). There is also an enclosure under the castle called by the name of the Deer Garden, having the millpond on the northside, the castle, barn and garden on the south side, and containeth an acre and an half.

Terrae Dominicales.

Mill Park. One enclosure called the Mill Park compassed with a stone wall and lying by the French Mill. Heretofore known by the name of Carew Park being pasture ground, and containeth 35 acres, each acre being worth 16d.

Great Meadow. One meadow commonly called The Great Meadow, containing 11 acres, lying on the east side of the way that leadeth from the Old Carew to the Churcheston, each acre worth 3s.

William Robin's Close. One meadow lying next to the said 11 acres and now adjoined thereunto without any severance, containing 10 acres, each acre at 2s.

Stable Park. One close called Stable Park, abutting partly upon the last named close.

EXTRACT FROM A SURVEY OF DECAYS 1610.

The decays in the water pipes, cisterns and conduits belonging to the castle. £97.13.14

The decay of the stable	53.10. 0
" " " " brewhouse	1.10. 0.
" " " " bakehouse	6. 0. 0.
" " " " slaughter house	1. 0. 0.
" " " " poultry house	4. 0. 0.
" " " " falconer's house	1.10. 0.
" " " " barn	1. 0. 0.
" " " " new orchard wall	12. 0. 0.
" " " " grove of wood near the castle	43. 0. 0.
" " " " French Mill	80. 0. 0.
" " " " Mill Park wall	49. 0. 0.

(The prices indicate the cost of repairs to the structures).

Cobb Carew Castle. Arch.Camb. 3 1866 .

Fenton Tour Through Pembrokeshire 1806

Howells The outworks of Carew Castle, Pembrokeshire in the Late
15th and 16th centuries

An unpublished undergraduate dissertation for the University
of Lampeter 1980.

King and Perks Carew Castle. Arch. Journal 119 1962.

Leach The History of the Civil War in Pembrokeshire 1937.

Spurrell The History of Carew 1921 .

Walker Carew Castle Arch.Camb. 105 1956 .







