

# [Warwick castle essay](https://assignbuster.com/warwick-castle-essay/)

Warwick castle was first founded in 914 as an Anglo Saxon hilltop settlement built for defensive reasons.

Then in 1068, Normans built a Motte and Bailey castle so therefore further increasing the defensive qualities of the site, and by the middle of the 13th century, the wooden wall had been replaced by a stone wall. These further developments carried on as new rulers came into ownership of the castle to strengthen and modernise the defensive features of the castle. In the second half of the 14th century, more reconstruction took place and now an imposing gatehouse and barbican were added. Also the guy and Caesar towers were built which could see all the way around the castle which was an extremely defensive feature for a castle to have at this time. Finally in the late 1640’s cannons were added into the towers and the mound as new technology was introduced.

By the late 16 and 1700’s, the castle and rooms were changed to make an impressive stately home. So now the castle was no longer needed for defence, but for comfort and entertainment. Change of purpose! We can learn a lot about the development of castles over time, simply by looking at them and analysing them. We can also learn about castles from looking at the sources made. However we are not sure how reliable these sources are. First we can look at the castle itself.

From visiting and analysing the site of Warwick castle, you can see that there have obviously been changes and developments of the castles defensive features, many of these features still remain at the castle today, but you do have to consider that the castle is a tourist attraction made to please. However we can still take valuable points from the castle and its grounds. There are both natural and physical defensive features at Warwick castle. We can see by these that Warwick castle has always been a castle designed for defence. The natural features which you can still see today are that the castle is on a hill, there is a wide view from towers, there are hills all around, two rivers and there is a steep slope, all surrounding the castle. You can see that these have always been in existence because of the fact that they are completely natural.

Another one of the main defensive features of the castle is Etheldas mound; this is where the first motte and keep would have been made. The first inhabitants of the castle would have built around these features and would not have built them themselves. The physical defensive features of the castle would have been developed and changed over time; they would have started off simple then become more advanced as technology also advanced. One main obvious change which you can see from visiting the castle is the development of the arrow loops. The arrow loop used at Warwick castle is the ‘ cruciform’.

This was an advance from the previous form of arrow loop. At the castle site you can not see that the arrow loops have changed or developed, because they are all cruciform’s. But from looking at sources of how the castle used to be, you can see that there used to be two other types of loops; a slit and a slit with an eyelet. These developments were made to further improve the defence at the castle.

The original slits would have been used to fire arrows out from the castle to enemies below using a simple bow, but when the crossbow was introduced, they needed to make a hole more suitable for it. So they decided to make all of the arrow slits into cruciforms. The castle walls are still surrounded by a large ditch and we can see that the historians were correct in their imagery of this feature. Historians can also look at Warwick during the 14th century when the concentric ideas were beginning to develop.

The towers are good examples of this. Although parts of the towers may have been changed but the pure fact that the towers are still standing shows the castle did undertake some concentric changes. Also the barbican and the gate house were added for defence and these still stand. Primary sources that I have looked at which help us to understand this are the evidence we have seen at Warwick castle itself.

We can also gather a good idea of this from looking at images drawn of Warwick from over time periods and cross referencing them to how the castle looks now. The final stage of Warwick castle is the most questionable of the development stages. This is the manor house period of the castle. You can see that this would have been ideally for luxury and comfort but not for defence because of the many luxurious state rooms, an electric generator, formal gardens and the large glass windows.

All of these features would have been useless when it came to defence, and this shows us that the castle has become a status symbol showing wealth and power. But from all of these physical features we cannot be totally sure what exactly it would have looked like at this a stage of time back then. The castle has been vastly restored and probably refurnished since then so we must use other non physical sources to decide what the castle was really like. We now need to look at these sources taken at the time when the castle was built. In general, primary sources are useful because they tell us what people were thinking and what it was like at that time.

However these sources may not be 100% reliable as they could be used to make someone like or dislike the castle. They are most likely to be reliable but could be biased depending on who they are written or drawn by. These primary sources can be of any sort, from a speech to an art piece. Many of the primary sources will be engravings by various artists. The first source made in 1729 is a picture of the castle which is a positive drawing but it also has some negative points. The artist has drawn the towers and the large glass windows from this time well.

However we have to take into account that the source is an engraving which are very difficult to draw and can not be fully accurate. The second engraving was done by Holler in 1652. The difference with this source however is that it dates back to before the first source. Even though there is this time gap, we can see the similarities between the two. In this source we can see that the castle is still being used for defensive purposes, these visible features include the arrow slits and crenulations.

We can see that the castle carving would have been an artist’s impression because of the fact that this time period would have been just after the civil war, and there are no damages to the castle. Another part of the carving that shows us it is an impression is the fact that there is a huge forest where the river should be on the one side of the castle. From these sources, even though they have their faults, we can tell that the castle has undergone a series of change including a change of purpose. The next source is a very good and reliable source to analyse.

It is a quote by a man named Orderic Vitalis; he said it in the early 12th century. The quote tells us that the kin had made many castles and where he had built them. Also this man was around at the time of the castle development stages so he would have witnessed first hand what was happening. The only problem which we can see by this source is that he does not specify which type of castle he is talking about. But from other sources we can tell that it was the period of the motte and bailey castle.

A similar source to this is a quote from 1072 by William of Jumieges. From this quote we can now see why and how he had built the castles. He says that he had built them to try to take control of England. The main problem with this source though is that we cannot be sure if it is reliable as it was written by a French man in favour of the French king at that time. These two sources help us to find out about the first stages of Warwick castles development.

It also tells us who built them and why. The final three primary sources which I have looked at are all floor plans of Warwick castle. I think that these sources are accurate in most aspects because they are all the original floor plans of the manor house. The first one is from 1900. It was made to show a pretty accurate floor plan of how the manor house was going to look and we can see this from visiting the castle as most features drawn on the floor plan are still there today. We no these sources were from the manor house period, because of the fact that they have a ‘ water room’, which is the first of its kind.

You would need to be very rich to get water pumped into your house, so this shows that the owner is a man of wealth and power. The next floor plan is of the upstairs of the manor from the same year, and it shows us that there are grand luxurious bedrooms and servants rooms. One point which shows us that the plans are not fully reliable is that the towers have been missed off, but they are not needed in the manor house. The final source is of the same house again but in 1851. We can see that the general layout is the same as the first two sources but not so much luxury.

These sources further show us how castles have changed and developed over time. Now we come to the secondary sources. These are copies of the original written or drawn sources. The problems with these sources are that they are redone to look better and will be made by what the artist or author thinks it should be like. The first secondary sources are the redone drawings from different periods. The first one is from 1550 and shows Tudor style buildings, which does fit as the Tudors were ruling England at this time.

Defensive parts of the castle were clearly shown such as the arrow slots and the crenulations. There is also a brew house and kitchen visible in the picture which shows that the castle was in fact starting to be used for comfort and entertainment. The second reconstruction from 1700 shows that the brew house and kitchen has now been removed and there is just a luxurious manor house with very few visible defensive features left. This shows us that the site has now fully become a home fully for entertainment and comfort.

The next source by Asa Brigs describes the first castles built. It not only tells you which types of castles they were, but also tells you how the castles were built. This source backs up the previous engravings and also how the king built the castles. The source by Fiona Macdonald also fits in nicely with this source as it tells us the reasons why the king actually built the castles. If we were to cross-reference this source with the primary source G, we can see that both of these sources tell us similar information and therefore back each other up.

And finally, all of the secondary sources two, four, five and nine all concentrate on the ways in which the castle changed and developed over time to finally become more luxurious and comfy. These four sources talk about castle details such as how the water mill generates electricity for lighting and other reasons. They also tell us about how over time the castle has changed its purpose and has became less defensive but is now more of a symbol of wealth and power. In a final conclusion about all of these primary and secondary sources we can see that there are in fact a lot of reliable sources present but also a few unreliable sources. We can piece all of these reliable sources together and find out the entire history and development of Warwick castle over time. We can see how the castle has changed and developed its defensive features from a motte and bailey castle right the way up to a fully defensive stone fortress and then finally changed into a luxurious manor house used for comfort and as a status symbol.

By using the physical, primary and secondary sources, we can use all of the information gathered to find which sources are reliable and which are not. And this is why it is important for historians to use all of the possible information gathered to collaborate their ideas.