

# 5.4 Medieval Castle Designs

## What is a Motte and Bailey castle?

Motte-and-Bailey Castles (10th-12th centuries): These were some of the earliest medieval castles, consisting of a wooden or stone keep (the "motte") situated on a raised earthwork mound, often surrounded by a courtyard with a wooden palisade or stone wall (the "bailey"). They were common in the early medieval period, particularly in Norman-controlled England.

## Why were they built?

William the Conqueror built nearly 700 Motte and Bailey castles across England and Wales to secure his rule across the country. These castles were favourable as they were relatively quick to build.

## What is a Stone Keep Castle?

Stone Keep Castles (11th-13th centuries): As stone construction techniques improved, the motte-and-bailey castles evolved into stone keep castles. These featured a strong stone keep or tower as the central defensive structure, often with thick walls and a moat. The bailey area could also have stone walls and additional structures. Stone keep castles were prevalent in the 11th to 13th centuries.

## What is a Concentric Castle?

Concentric Castles (12th-13th centuries): Concentric castles were a more advanced form of defensive architecture. They had multiple layers of walls, often with a central keep surrounded by one or more curtain walls. The concentric design made it extremely difficult for attackers to penetrate the inner sanctum. Famous examples include Dover Castle in England.

## Why were they built?

Edward I built concentric castles in Wales to ensure he held his newly conquered lands. The circular walls meant that they could be easily defended, and inner and outer walls added an extra layer of protection.

## What is a Manor House?

Manor House (15th century): Grand, homely structures with wide doors and staircases. Better designed for entertaining guests. Built with brick, and much more vulnerable to attacks from cannons. These structures have little defences and no surrounding walls or moats.

## Why were they built?

After the 15th century, England was the most peaceful it had been in a long time. Therefore, castles did not need to provide protection, but were rather built for prestige and appearance.