

## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT: What does changing castle design tell us about the Middle Ages?

**[VOICEOVER]**

Welcome to the Lion's Lair. This week our three lions ask a simple question: which is the best-designed castle of the Middle Ages?

**[MASON]**

You said it was smart casual!

**[DESIGNER]**

Hello! Thank you for having me.

**[QUEEN]**

What do you have for us?

**[DESIGNER]**

Okay, so the year is 1066. You've just conquered England and you need to stamp your authority on the land as quickly as possible. You need... a Motte and Bailey castle!

Now, soldiers live in this fortified, high-up motte, and down here in the bailey you have got workshops, stables, and a chapel for daily life. Cheap to build, and you can easily assert your authority on the neighbourhood. You're never far from a Motte and Bailey!

**[MASON]**

Are you having a laugh?

**[DESIGNER]**

Sorry?

**[KNIGHT]**

It's made out of wood, man! It'd go up in flames at the sight of a torch. You're not scaring anyone with that!

**[QUEEN]**

He's right. King William built over a hundred of these all over England as a quick fix, but it's basically a giant matchbox. Next!

**[DESIGNER]**

Okay, so, let's fast-forward to the 12th century. Wood is a teensy weensy bit flammable and might rot, and the king...

**[QUEEN]**

Hmmm...

**[DESIGNER]**

...Or queen! Is having a spot of bother with the barons! It could erupt into civil war at any moment. So how about this? A beautiful, and strong, stone keep! No need for repairs. It's your 'forever' castle!

**[KNIGHT]**

Look at those thick walls! They could repel an attack from any local baron!

**[QUEEN]**

So tall! So square! Six whole storeys of magnificence!

**[KNIGHT]**

Everybody would know who's boss with that kind of business!

**[MASON]**

Err... guys...

**[QUEEN]**

What?

**[MASON]**

Your enemies will take one look at that and do two things.

**[DESIGNER]**

Two?

**[KNIGHT]**

That's more than one your majesty.

**[QUEEN]**

Thank you.

**[MASON]**

They'll attack vulnerable corners with the latest siege weaponry. Have you ever heard of a battering ram?

Then, they'll tunnel beneath foundations and set fire to the props holding up the towers. Just like King John did to Rochester Castle in 1215, burning the fat of forty pigs beneath your lovely towers. Then BAM! Flat as a pancake.

**[KNIGHT]**

Pigs?

**[DESIGNER]**

How did you know about the wooden props?

**[MASON]**

Don't play daisy boys with me mate! This ain't good enough.

**[DESIGNER]**

Of course... it's fine, I was actually hoping we would get on to the next one. It's the late 13th century and, if you're smart, you've been taking inspiration from the Crusades in the Holy Land. Behold the concentric castle!

Nice round towers, so they can't be battered or burned down! And have a look at that gatehouse. Now that's what I call impregnable!

**[KNIGHT]**

And look at those curtain walls! You've got two layers; inner and outer and your enemies don't want to get trapped between those, you can fire arrows at them and

pour boiling oil on them from great heights!

'Ooo, please Sir knight let us go, we promise we won't attack you' – 'NO! No! I have trapped you with my massive PORTCULLIS!' Boom!

**[QUEEN]**

Ok, it's not like castles are always being attacked. Sometimes it's about how powerful they look!

I mean, I bet when Edward I built these after he invaded Wales, they didn't know whether to kiss his boots or run for the hills!

**[MASON]**

Aye, no expense spared on those Welsh castles! I hear Beaumaris in North Wales cost over £15,000.

**[QUEEN]**

How much?

**[MASON]**

Fifteen-thousand.

**[KNIGHT]**

That's more than one your majesty.

**[QUEEN]**

Oh right... well... Perhaps we better start with a sort of basic, cheap, old castle and then just have upgrades as we go along, to deal with the latest weaponry. And we don't need this big, long wall – it seems to take a lot of men to defend it. Perhaps we could see a different design?

**[DESIGNER]**

Oh, err yes... I'm really glad you said that, I wanted to show you this next one anyway. Well, as you said your majesty, by the 14th century it's really more about building castles to look powerful, yes? It's not all boiling oil and murder holes! So how about this moated castle?

**[QUEEN]**

Ooo it looks simply wonderful! It's my favourite.

**[KNIGHT]**

But your majesty, what if it gets attacked? Those arrow-slits are too narrow to shoot through and the moat is so shallow that the enemy could easily drain it and walk right through. And those battlements are too narrow, a hulking hunk like me could never move through them. It's useless!

**[QUEEN]**

No-one would dare attack it! It's too strong!

**[MASON]**

From a distance maybe. They're better off building it on higher ground, it's a sitting duck there with all that water.

**[DESIGNER]**

Okay, okay, okay! Picture this alright, really try! Picture it in your brain, right? Right, it's the 15th century and

England is more peaceful than it has been for a long time. Castles are built for prestige, for design, like this manor house!

Now the real thing will be made out of brick. Brick is in, guys. Brick!

**[QUEEN]**

I like those wide doors and staircases. Oh, great for entertaining guests – big banquets and dinners!

**[KNIGHT]**

Well, it would fall over if it looked at a cannonball! Has this man heard of gunpowder?

**[MASON]**

Nice to relax in after a hard day's work.

**[QUEEN]**

Yes... I'm not quite sure which one I like the most... Could we start again?

**[DESIGNER]**

Aaaaaargh!