

History Around Us – Conisbrough Castle

KEY WORDS

Defence – to protect from attack

Resources – Materials available

Communications – ability to send messages

Control – to influence someone's behaviour

Psychological – Having an impact on someone's mental wellbeing.

Burh – defended town

Cyningsburh – Anglo-Saxon name for the area around Conisbrough meant 'King's Borough'

William de Warenne – the first owner of the castle

Defensive purpose: Castles were used primarily to defend against enemies or conquer new lands

Domestic purposes: castles were used for everyday life.

Turning point: a moment of significant change.

Status symbol – A Castle built to show off about someone's wealth and influence.

Hamelin Plantagenet – husband of Isabella de Warenne and half brother of Henry II – owner of Conisbrough

Barbican – fortified gateway.

Lady's maid: a female servant who tends to her mistress

Castellan: The Governor of the Castle who controls the running of most duties

Gong Scourer: Waste disposal servant

Ivanhoe – Book by Walter Scott which romanticised Conisbrough Castle

Physical features – the physical part of a structure

Tourism -visiting a site for pleasure

Heritage – a cultural location significant to our past.

Wars of the Roses – A civil war between 1455-5 between two families the Yorkists and Lancastrians.

Curtain Wall -stone wall that surrounds a castle for defence.

LOCATION (A)

Conisbrough Castle occupies a strategic position on a large knoll at the north-east end of the historic town of Conisbrough, which occupies a ridge that rises rather higher, running south-west. The castle's outer bailey is now roughly defined by Castle Hill to the west, and earthworks to north, east and south.

'Conisbrough' comes from the Anglo-Saxon word '**Cyningsburh**', meaning 'the king's borough'. It was an important Anglo Saxon town: a major church, now the church of St Peter, stood here, probably as early as the 8th century.

Nearby the castle: limestone quarries, evidence of forest areas, a local well providing water and the main Roman road leading to Doncaster.

WHO CREATED THE SITE AND WHY? (B AND C)

King Harold: owned the lands before the conquest.

William de Warrenne (?-1088) was given Conisbrough after the conquest. The castle was probably an earthwork enclosure and timber palisade.

Hamelin Plantagenet (d.1202): brother of Henry II inherited Conisbrough through his wife Isabel (William's great-granddaughter). It is believed Hamelin built the stone keep. Either he or his son William (d.1240) built the curtain wall, great hall, kitchen and chamber block.

John de Warenne (d. 1347) the last earl married Edward I granddaughter Joan. They lived apart with Joan living at Conisbrough until 1317.

Thomas Earl of Lancaster: besieged and captured Conisbrough in 1317 but was defeated by Edward II and the land returned to John in 1326.

Edmund Langley, Duke of York (d.1402): inherited Conisbrough from Edward III when Earl John died without an heir. Conisbrough was his secondary residence and was used more regularly – alternations to the domestic buildings may have been completed.

Richard of Conisbrough – lived in Conisbrough as a tenant after his brother Edward inherited it from Edmund Langley – here Richard plotted to kill Henry V for which he was executed.

Richard 3rd Duke of York – inherited Conisbrough from Richard. Richard led the Yorkists against the Lancastrian King Henry VI in the **Wars of the Roses** and was killed in battle in 1460. His 18 year old son Edward defeated the Lancastrians and became Edward IV.

Henry VIII – surveyed the castle and found the roof, floors, gatehouse and curtain wall had collapsed.

From here it was passed between various noble families who landscaped it to enhance its picturesque qualities.

SITE CHANGES (D, G AND J)

There have been 5 key stages in the development of Conisbrough.

Stage of site	Turning point	Use
Norman Occupation 1070	The Norman Conquest, 1066	Defence, status
Stone Building period, 1180	Hamelin Plantagenet's building work	domestic/defence/status
Years of disrepair, 1500s		
Romantic period, 1820	Walter Scott publishes Ivanhoe , 1818	Leisure/ tourism
Leisure period, 1940s	Public ownership, 1946	Leisure/ tourism

THE CRITERIA

The study of the selected site must focus on the relationship between the site, other historical sources and the aspects listed below.

- A. The reasons for the location of the site within its surroundings. History Around Us
- B. When and why people first created the site
- C. The ways in which the site has changed over time.
- D. How the site has been used throughout its history.
- E. The diversity of activities and people associated with the site.
- F. The reasons for changes to the site and to the way it was used.
- G. Significant times in the site's past: peak activity, major developments, and turning points.
- H. The significance of specific features in the physical remains at the site.
- I. The importance of the whole site either locally or nationally, as appropriate. The typicality of the site based on a comparison with other similar sites.
- J. What the site reveals about everyday life, attitudes and values in particular periods of history.
- K. How the physical remains may prompt questions about the past and how historians frame these as valid historical enquiries.
- L. How the physical remains can inform artistic reconstructions and other interpretations of the site.
- M. The challenges and benefits of studying the historic environment

PHYSICAL FEATURES (H, I AND K)

The ground plan for Conisbrough Castle shows how the physical features were built over time to meet the needs of its owners.

12th Century – the stone keep built by William De Warrene in the French style.

Around 1200 – the curtain wall was built for defence along with the Great Hall and apartments.

13th century – the barbican was built as a defensive structure as was common to castles of the time.

14th century – the castle became a secondary domestic residence and the solar (domestic chambers) were build next to the Great Hall.

Defensive Structures	Domestic Structures
moat, Curtain Wall, Barbican, Keep	Feasting Hall, Kitchen and Great Chamber and Solar.

SIGNIFICANCE (G AND I)

Conisbrough is significant for a range of reasons:

Economic, Cultural, Educational, Architectural and Community / identity / pride reasons.

TYPICALITY OF FUNCTION (D AND I)

Function (for Conisbrough)	Similar to?
Conquest (Norman)	Pevensey, Hastings and York
Defence (for Hamelin Plantagenet)	Deal (built by Henry VIII)
Status (for Hamelin Plantagenet)	Kenilworth and Framlingham
Administration (trials each month and local prison)	White Tower (Tower of London)
Living and working (range of work such as Lady's Maid and Gong Scourer)	all
Decoration (Great Chamber)	Kenilworth
Later use (tourism)	Kenilworth, Goodrich

Exam Style Questions

You will have to answer two 20 mark questions on Conisbrough Castle. (5 marks SPAG).

For example:

Choose a turning point in your site's history. Explain how and why this changed the importance of the site, either locally or nationally. Use physical features of the site as well as your knowledge to support your answer.

TYPICALITY OF FEATURES (I AND H)

Feature	Similar to?	Different from?
Motte and Bailey	Porchester, Carlisle	Carlisle (Bailey does not survive) Kenilworth
Stone Keep	Porchester, Kenilworth	
Curtain wall and moat	Porchester, Carlisle, Franlingham, Kenilworth, Stokesay	Franlingham (no moat)
Barbican	Porchester	Kenilworth, Stokesay
Gatehouse	Porchester, Carlisle, Franlingham, Kenilworth, Stokesay	
Great chamber	Carlisle	
Great hall	Carlisle, Franlingham, Stokesay	
Kitchen	Kenilworth	