

= Castle Hill , Mere =

Castle Hill , also called Mere Castle , was a medieval fortification built by Richard , the Earl of Cornwall , in 1253 on a hill overlooking the village of Mere , Wiltshire , England . The castle was constructed in stone , with six towers , inner buildings and gates . It was abandoned in the 14th century and stripped of its stone and metalwork . Only earthworks remain in the 21st century .

= = History = =

= = = Construction = = =

The village of Mere was a small and unimportant settlement in the early 13th century . In 1243 Richard , the Earl of Cornwall , acquired the manor . Richard was the brother of Henry III and immensely rich . In 1253 he began to build a castle at Mere .

The castle was built on Long Hill , a chalk ridge overlooking the village ; the hill was flattened and scarped , with a 5 @-@ metre ( 16 ft ) deep ditch cut into the west side . As archaeologist Phil McMahon describes , documentary sources imply the castle was " a rectangular stone @-@ built structure with six towers , incorporating a hall , an inner and outer gate , a deep well and a chapel " , and it may have resembled a smaller version of Framlingham Castle . The castle was probably entered from the west , with a possible road running up the south side of the hill . At the same time the village was expanded into a planned town with an unofficial market . The castle was renovated in 1300 , possibly in response to the threat of rebellion in England at the time .

= = = Decline = = =

Richard 's son Edmund inherited the property , but on his death it was taken back by the Crown . Edward II gave it to his royal favourite , Piers Gaveston , whom he made Earl of Cornwall . Edward II and Gaveston fell from power in 1327 and John , Edward 's second son , took possession as the new Earl of Cornwall . Edward III then reacquired the castle , which became a permanent part of the Duchy of Cornwall .

During the 14th century , however , the castle had declined and became abandoned . In 1398 Richard II had the lead taken from the castle roofs for reuse at Portchester Castle . In 1660 , visitors ' accounts imply that the stonework had all been dismantled , and 18th @-@ century accounts suggest that this was reused for construction work in the town below , which had prospered from the wool and later linen trade .

= = = 21st century = = =

In the 21st century the site is protected under law as a scheduled monument . It is owned by the Duchy of Cornwall , and leased to the local parish council . A flagpole , which is illuminated at night , and a memorial to the 43rd ( Wessex ) Infantry Division are located on the castle site . A ceremony is held at the castle site each Easter .

= = Archaeological investigation = =

Archaeological excavations of the site were carried out in 1887 by T. H. Baker and C. N. Wyld , but most of the results of their work were subsequently lost .