Crayke Castle

http://www.gatehouse-gazetteer.info/English%20sites/2058.html

Also known as, or recorded in historical documents as;

Crek; Crech; Creche; Creic; Creca; Crec; Crake; Crage

In the civil parish of Crayke.

In the historic county of Yorkshire.

Modern Authority of North Yorkshire.

1974 county of North Yorkshire.

Medieval County of County Palatinate of Durham.

[OS Map Grid Reference](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/resources/maps-and-geographic-resources/the-national-grid.html): SE55907068

Latitude 54.12894° Longitude -1.14606°

Crayke Castle has been described as a certain [Timber Castle](http://www.gatehouse-gazetteer.info/key.html), and also as a probable [Masonry Castle](http://www.gatehouse-gazetteer.info/key.html), and also as a certain [Palace](http://www.gatehouse-gazetteer.info/key.html), and also as a certain [Tower House](http://www.gatehouse-gazetteer.info/key.html).

There are masonry ruins/remnants [remains](http://www.gatehouse-gazetteer.info/certain.html).

This site is a [scheduled monument](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/scheduled-monuments/) protected by law.

This is a Grade 1 [listed building](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/listed-buildings/) protected by law\*.

[**Description**](http://www.gatehouse-gazetteer.info/help.html#description)

Norman motte and bailey castle whose wooden fortifications were later replaced with a stone tower house and which was built over part of a pre-Conquest monastic cemetery; the castle was held by the bishops of Durham. The monument is situated in a commanding position at the top of a prominent natural outcrop 3km south west of the Howardian Hills. The motte lies beneath the later structures and is still visible to the north of the castle as an earthwork mound rising about 2.5m above the natural hilltop, forming a platform on which later buildings were constructed. The inner bailey defences have been altered over the years and only survive as earthworks at the south east side as a short section of bank, although the line of the southern edge to the bailey is retained by the present garden wall alongside Crayke Lane. The inner bailey occupied most of the crown of the hill above the 100m contour, extending to the north of St Cuthbert's Church and measuring up to 210m east-west by 90m north-south. Originally the buildings on the motte were constructed of timber but were quickly replaced in stone. Several phases of building and rebuilding are known to have occurred, culminating with work undertaken for Bishop Neville in the mid-15th century. Subsequently, the castle was made untenable as a fortress by an act of Parliament in 1646 and by the 18th century the main range was in use as a farmhouse. Two distinct and self-contained buildings are visible. Of these the larger block, known as the 'Great Chamber', has been restored and now forms a domestic residence. This was originally constructed in the 15th century but was slightly altered and added to in the 18th and 19th centuries. In its original form it had kitchen ranges appended to its rear, north side which linked it to a hall referred to as the 'Old Hall' in a description of 1441. Today the vaulted undercroft of the main kitchen range survives and is used as the modern kitchen: although no further remains of the north ranges are visible, their foundations will survive below ground. The construction of the stone castle included the creation of an inner bailey enclosed by a stone wall which roughly corresponded with the earlier bailey and also, at a later date, an outer bailey defined by a curtain wall which extended along the bottom of the steep slope to the north of the castle. The remains of the footings for a projecting tower in the inner bailey wall survive as a platform on the north edge of the outcrop approximately 40m north east of the castle. Small scale excavations at the east end of the bailey found evidence for the location of a gatehouse allowing access to the castle via a hollow way; this route still survives as Love Lane which runs northwards along the eastern boundary field. Within the inner bailey, the earthwork remains of a large rectangular building in the field north of the churchyard has been identified as a barn listed in the 16th century survey of the castle and depicted on a map of Crayke dating to 1688. Excavations in 1983 also indicated the presence of a medieval pottery kiln at the east side of the inner bailey. Further ancillary buildings will survive below ground in the undisturbed areas of this inner bailey. The curtain wall enclosing the outer bailey survives as a shallow bank and terrace curving round northwards from the western side of the motte to approximately 5m short of the hedge line. It then turns to extend eastward to the north east corner of the field where it then extends northward, following Love Lane. Within the outer precinct, along the slope are the remains of cultivation terraces some of which pre-date the castle. In the north eastern area of the outer precinct a number of building platforms are set amid the terraces. Partial excavation of these in 1994 indicated that they may have supported small timber buildings. The area of the outer precinct was probably enclosed in the 13th century and continued in use for agrarian purposes linked to the castle. In the area between the outer precinct wall and the hedge line to the north and west are further remains of the cultivation terraces pre-dating the castle which are also thought to have continued in use after the outer precinct was enclosed. Excavations to the north east of the church in 1957 and 1988 revealed that the castle bailey was built over the north western corner of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery. It is thought that further remains of the cemetery and possibly of the monastery itself will also survive below ground. The cemetery was of a monastery founded by St Cuthbert after he became the Bishop of Lindisfarne in 685. The Saxon bishops of Durham also held a manor house in the vicinity and Crayke was recorded as a possession of the see in the Domesday Book survey. The earliest documentary reference to the castle is for 1195, when Bishop Hugh Pudsey supped there en route from Durham shortly before his death. There were several royal visitors to Crayke; King John stayed in 1209, 1210-11 and again in 1211; Henry III stayed in 1227, Edward I in 1292, Edward II in 1316 and Edward III in 1333. (Scheduling Report)

Tower house with attached kitchen range to rear on which the vaulted undercroft alone survives and ruins on a further range - 'The New Tower'. Main range: Early C15 with C18 and C19 alterations and additions, it was built before the kitchen range which is documented to 1441-50. New Tower: probably second half C15. For the Bishops of Durham. Dressed sandstone. Roof of main range concealed, lead roof to kitchen. Main range: rectangular block 70 ft 9 ins x 28 ft 4 ins. Four storeys, each being set back slightly. Bands to floor levels and battlements. Tall, narrow chamfered square headed windows. The entrance to the south side is an C18 alteration, the original entrance being by an external staircase range on the north-east side (now disappeared) to the principal room at 1st floor level. The blocked doorways are 2-centred with hollow chamfers. C19 range attached to north-east. Interior is now subdivided but the moulded cross-beamed ceilings are intact. Fireplaces to ground and 1st floors. C18 features: a cut-string staircase with 2 turned or twisted balusters per tread and curtail with turned newel. Kitchen range: The west wall is partly rebuilt in later materials but has a corbelled-out embattled round turret for spiral staircase to the north-west corner. Chamfered doorway with key block. Interior: tunnel vaulted with 13 heavy unmoulded transverse arches or ribs. Now subdivided. (The undercroft is at ground floor level.) The New Tower: Completely detached building, now ruinous. Once a 3-storey L-shaped block (ground plan 1566-1570). All that remains are the barrel-vaulted undercrofts, stairs to 1st floor level and the walls of the porch. To rear of kitchen remains of foundations of a building that was described as The Old Hall in 1441. Stands on site of Norman Castle. Dismantled in 1647. In the C18 the main range was used as a farmhouse. (Listed Building Report)