

## Tattershall Castle

Tattershall Castle possesses one of the most splendid of later medieval tower houses. It has justly been described as the finest piece of medieval brickwork in England. Ralph, Lord Cromwell, erected this tower in the years 1434-1436. Rising over a hundred feet to the top of its corner turrets, with a view stretching from Lincoln Cathedral to Boston Stump, it dominates the surrounding fenland, all the more so because the rest of the castle has perished.

There had, in fact, been a castle here since 1231 when Robert de Tattershall obtained a license to crenellate. Weir moats enclose an inner bailey and a concentric platform, which is divided into two outer baileys. Unfortunately, the thirteenth century curtain has been totally destroyed though excavations have left on view the stone bases of two rounded flanking towers.

The corner turrets rise well above parapet level and are finished off with decorative brickwork emulating machicolations. Between the turrets on all four sides is a covered fighting gallery projecting outwards on genuine machicolations. The gallery has embrasures in its outer wall and there is an embattled parapet above. This elaborate crown gives Tattershall its unique dignity, but the present isolation of the tower is misleading. Originally, it was connected to the main residential buildings of the castle and that is why the angle turrets do not project at all on the bailey side. The tower basically formed a suite of apartments for Lord Cromwell's personal use so it was not a self-contained keep in the old sense.

There are five stories in the tower, including the vaulted basement, each level comprising one grand apartment with extra accommodation provided in the angle turrets. The first floor contained a hall. The second floor is conjectured to have been Lord Cromwell's audience chamber. Above that was the solar.