

Naworth Castle

Naworth Castle has become a fine mansion without sacrificing its medieval character. Ranulf de Dacre obtained a license to crenellate in 1335. His castle, on a promontory two miles east of Brampton, consists of an irregular, quadrilateral courtyard surrounded by a curtain wall. The only level approach is from the southeast and this side has a tower at each end, named Dacre and Howard after the two prominent families who have lived here since the fourteenth century.

Dacre Tower is the original tower house. Five stories high with corner turrets, it flanks the original gateway through the curtain though it does not project at all from the southeast front. The doorway into its vaulted ground floor preserves an iron yert. The Howard Tower is probably one of Thomas Dacre's additions and as a defensive tower it is something of an illusion. It fills the acute angle between two walls and its inner sides are supported on arches above the residential buildings, so it is only a tower at the upper levels. In front of the southeast curtain was a narrow outer bailey, as indicated by the surviving gatehouse and the squat tower known as the Boat House.

There are courtyard buildings against the curtain on three sides. They are largely the work of Thomas, Lord Dacre, who proved to be a capable Warden of the Western march. The southeast range contained the solar and the chapel, the latter indicated by large windows at the Dacre Tower end. The hall occupies most of the northeast range. This lofty apartment contains four intriguing heraldic beasts - a bull, a gryphon, a dolphin and a sheep. These but little else survived a devastating fire in 1844. As a result of this fire, the interiors, while adhering to the old, are the work of Anthony Salvin. He also added the Morpeth Tower near the north corner.