

7.THE CONCEPT AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Visitor Attractions — Investment is Essential

7.1 As evident from the economic context, Warwick Castle, as a visitor attraction, operates within a highly competitive sector of the economy and just retaining visitor numbers is a challenge, especially for those businesses where there is a degree of repeat business. Essential factors in retaining visitor numbers include meeting rising customer expectations and standards, and providing a range of experiences that can attract people of all ages and interest. Warwick Castle has been innovative in terms of developing its offer, within the context and requirements of a historic site. Since TTG acquired the Castle in 1978 a number of sensitive 'attractions', of a limited development nature, have been added to the Castle and within the grounds. This limited level of development has enhanced the existing assets whilst providing new opportunities for visitors:



Opening of the 'Castle Dungeon' experience



Use of land for 'glamping' site (seasonal to 2022)



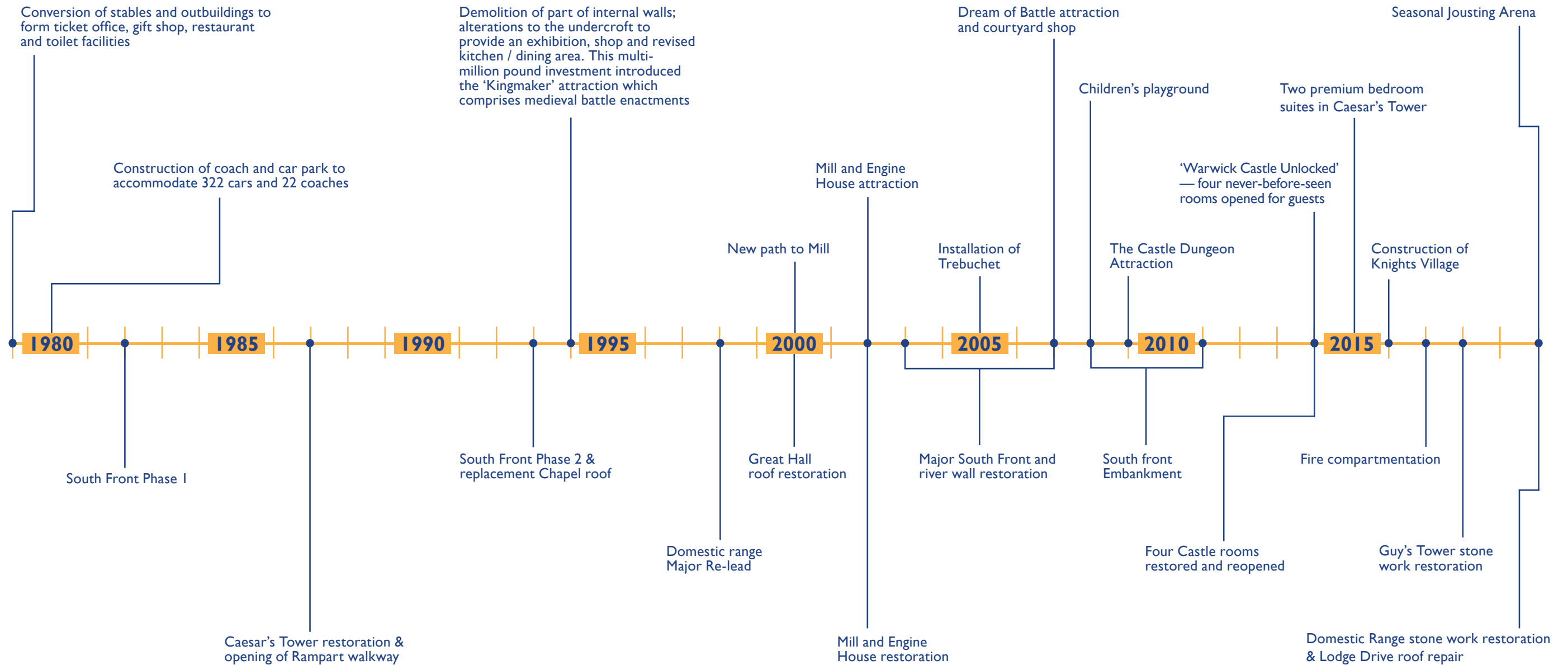
Construction of base for trebuchet (siege machine) on river island



Erection of 14 permanent semi-detached lodges (28 units) for visitor accommodation

Major Investments Since 1978

Development



Restoration (£25 million)

7.2 The managers of the Warwick Castle undertake visitor surveys and assess the feedback against key performance indicators (KPIs). These help inform decision about projects that should be progressed.

7.3 The feedback identifies dissatisfaction with:

- Catering facilities
- Toilet provision
- Disabled access
- Covered / sheltered areas (especially on hot or wet days).

7.4 The dissatisfaction with these aspects is magnified on busy days.

7.5 In addition, from a management perspective, office space is very limited and in some cases occupies rooms in the Castle that could be opened to guests. Whilst this would help provide more space for guests, it would present challenges for the operational side of the Castle. The Castle also needs adequate space for other operational facilities. The increased success of the Castle and demand for better and a more varied food and beverage offer, means that there is a need for accessible on-site storage space. At the moment some supplies are stored off-site which adds complexity to the operation of the Castle. This is often exacerbated by traffic in Warwick.

7.6 With the shift to more of our guests who visit the Castle travelling by car (versus a greater percentage who arrived by coach in the 1990s) we are reviewing how we manage the increased car volumes. The overflow car park in Leafield Farm is being used more regularly than originally expected (on neighbouring land). We will work with WDC on this, as their plans are also to develop town centre car parking to see if this can help our situation.

7.7 The visitor is the focus of the Castle's operation: they are essential to ensure the Castle is maintained, that it is able to employ staff and suppliers which, in turn, have many spin off benefits. However, as set out above there are challenges, especially from competitors both in the UK and overseas.

7.8 Accordingly Warwick Castle has to provide a range of facilities and features that draw visitors. In addition, a

visitor attraction requires significant 'infrastructure' to ensure it is managed efficiently, some infrastructure is related to the visitor, other infrastructure is required for the management of the estate. Due to the significance of the site there is the need for both buildings / structures and the landscape to be carefully maintained.

7.9 The facets of the overall operation of the Castle are, therefore:

- Visitor facing 'attractions'
- Visitor infrastructure
- Management infrastructure
- Building maintenance
- Landscape management.

7.10 All need to be addressed over the next 10 years or so. This section of the Masterplan outlines a number of concepts and guiding principles to enable the continued successful running of the Castle as a visitor attraction alongside ongoing maintenance and restoration of the heritage assets.

The Concepts

1. Visitor Facing 'Attractions':

- i. Upgraded existing 'attractions' — refreshing facilities that may have become dated or no longer meet visitor demands / expectations;
- ii. New 'attractions' to complement the existing offer of the Castle — a mix of permanent and seasonal facilities, shows, displays, access to the heritage asset.

2. Visitor Infrastructure:

- i. Rationalised food and drink offer to provide more high quality permanent facilities including opportunities across the site to help distribute visitors
- ii. Enhanced facilities for visitors to eat and drink, e.g. covered seating areas
- iii. Additional visitor accommodation on-site
- iv. Improved retail facilities
- v. Wheelchair access to more areas of the castle

vi. Improved / more integrated pedestrian access

vii. Provision of adequate overflow car parking.

3. Management Infrastructure:

- i. Office space for Castle staff
- ii. 'Back of house' improvements to provide better storage and maintenance areas.

4. Building Maintenance and Heritage Restoration:

- i. Domestic range masonry repairs east and west;
- ii. South Front repairs Phase 6
- iii. Tower's and ramparts
- iv. Mound curtain wall
- v. Conservatory window frames
- vi. Boundary walls.

5. Landscape Management:

- i. Ongoing management of the existing grounds
- ii. Opportunities for new tree planting.

Guiding Principles

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| 1. Consideration of the significance of the RP&G and preserving its values and significance; | 4. Any new build structures to remain subservient to the heritage asset(s) and respect their setting; |
| 2. Assessment of the significance of the Conservation Area and continued commitment to preserving or enhancing its character and appearance; | 5. Archaeological investigations to be carried out if foundations or below ground physical works are required; |
| 3. Careful consideration of any proposed physical alterations to the heritage assets: <ol style="list-style-type: none">i. loss of historic fabric should be minimised;ii. consideration of the reversibility of proposals in the future; and,iii. selection of historically sympathetic and high quality materials; | 6. Planting to be used, where historically appropriate, to reduce visibility of any new build structures; |
| | 7. Consider opportunities to enhance the aesthetic of an area, where appropriate. |
- Projects which are developed in accordance with the above concepts and which follow the outlined guiding principles will be capable of preserving the significance of the heritage assets, the RP&G and the CA.

Case Study

The opening up of the undercroft is a good example of how Warwick Castle resolved a problem over 20 years ago (1993 – 4) that achieved management, heritage and guest benefits. Feedback from guests identified that the Castle's medieval history was underrepresented. The undercroft was an ideal space to explain that aspect of the Castle's history but it was occupied by maintenance workshops and, in part, an apartment created in the late 19th Century.

The solution was to build a specific building, the Estate Management Building in Foxes Study, on a cleared area surrounded by woodland. This meant the workshops could be cleared out of the core of the Castle. This enabled the undercroft to be made accessible to visitors and became the location for the Kingmaker attraction. It was concluded that this overall scheme, including removal of the apartment, created benefits, including restoration and revealing another part of the heritage significance of the Castle.

