

Plan of the Borough Town of Warwick, 1806 (CR1886/M38)

February's Document of the Month is this plan of the Borough town of Warwick. Created in 1806, it shows the town of Warwick as it was at that time. It measures 48 inches by 58 inches and is drawn to a scale of 100 feet to 1 inch. The plan is part of the Greville family of Warwick Castle collection held here at the Record Office (catalogue reference CR1886/M38). Places shown include Warwick Castle, St Marys church and the Priory (where the Record Office is now located!) It was commissioned by the Estate Manager for the Earl of Warwick, William James.



Plan of the Borough Town of Warwick, Warwickshire County Record Office, CR1886

The map highlights certain properties within the town of Warwick in red. These are the properties which were owned by the Earl of Warwick. At the time, this was the 2nd Earl, George Greville. It is presumed this plan was created in an effort to reassert control over the Earl's finances. The 2nd Earl of Warwick spent a great fortune making improvements and additions to Warwick Castle, including acquiring works of art by the likes of Rembrandt. The latter part of his life was spent in debt, and after his death, the sum is estimated to have been £70,321¹. This is the equivalent of just over £4 million today².

Warwick

In AD 914, Ethelfleda (daughter of King Alfred the Great) established a defended settlement called a *burh*. This burh was located on a hilltop site overlooking a Saxon settlement on the River Avon and was referred to as *Waerinc Wicum* on a deed of 1001. The burh was 1 of 10 to be established. It proved successful in the wars against the invading Danes, and it was made the county town of the new shire of Warwickshire. We now know it as Warwick.

In 1068 a wooden motte and bailey castle was built, which would later be replaced by the stone Warwick Castle which stands today.

The town continued to develop. A detailed survey of the manor of Warwick during the reign of Elizabeth I can also be found in the Warwick Castle collection at reference CR1886/Cup 4/18. However, the town we see on our Document of the Month is largely of 17th and 18th century origin. Much of the medieval town centre was destroyed by a fire in September 1694, which has become known as the "Great Fire of Warwick"³. By the time the fire died out, it had damaged or destroyed 250 properties. Help for the people affected was organised by the local gentry (including Lord Brooke) and an Act of Parliament was passed which outlined the requirements

¹ Information gathered from *Plan of the Borough Town of Warwick*, Adam Busiakiewicz, Our Warwickshire, <https://www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk/content/article/plan-borough-town-warwick> (accessed 06/01/2021).

² Calculated using The National Archives Currency Converter, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/#currency-result> (accessed 06/01/2021).

³ Information gathered from *Warwick*, Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warwick> (accessed 07/01/2021).

for rebuilding the town⁴. Some medieval buildings, such as the Lord Leycester Hospital, survived the fire and can still be found in the town today.

Greville of Warwick Castle collection (CR1886)

The Greville collection was purchased by the Record Office in 1978 when the then Earl was selling the collection. It spans over 800 years of history and it is one of the biggest collections in the Record Office's care.

The first attempt to catalogue the collection was by estate agents Buck and Baker in the 1840's. Part of the collection was rearranged by the Reverend Harvey Bloom in the 1900's. Then in the 1960's, the Warwick Castle librarian, Mr Pepys, did some more work on some of the unsorted material. However, the collection still remains only partially catalogued. A short video showcasing some of the items (including this plan) that have been discovered in the collection can be found on the Heritage and Culture Warwickshire YouTube Channel (<https://youtu.be/UJTEWV54ymE>).

⁴ Information gathered from *Warwick: A Short History & Guide*, Christine Cluley Amberley Publishing, 2011.