

Geography Knowledge Organiser – Hylton Castle

Important Information

Hylton Castle was built by Sir William Hylton as his principal residence in about 1400. The rich Hylton family had estates in Yorkshire, Durham and Northumberland and by the 13th century had assumed the title of a barony within the Bishopric of Durham.

Hylton Castle was intended to reflect the family's status. Whether there were earlier buildings here is not known but the impressive gatehouse tower, the only part of the castle still standing, was almost certainly intended to be the dominant element of the new building. Other buildings were situated beyond the tower to the east, possibly arranged around a courtyard.

The Hilton's maintained their rank and wealth until the Civil War. Despite a reduction in their means, the family remained prosperous enough to refurbish the interior and add wings to the north and south side of the gatehouse in the first half of the 18th century.

The last Hylton died in 1746 and shortly afterwards the estate was sold. A century later it was bought by a local man, William Briggs, who demolished the 18th century wings, added larger windows and rebuilt the interior. The appearance of the 18th century house is, however, known from a number of antiquarian illustrations. Further deterioration in the 20th century led to only the exterior walls being saved.



Scan the QR code to see Hylton Castle before the restoration project began.

Key Vocabulary

aerial photographs	Is the taking of photographs from an aircraft or other flying object.
major	Important, serious, or significant.
landmarks	An object or feature of a landscape or town that is easily seen and recognized from a distance, especially one that enables someone to establish their location.
fieldwork	Practical work conducted by a researcher in the natural environment, rather than in a laboratory or office.
digital technologies	Electronic tools, systems, devices and resources that generate, store or process data.
industry	Economic activity concerned with the processing of raw materials and manufacture of goods in factories.
housing	Houses and flats considered collectively.
commerce	The activity of buying and selling, especially on a large scale.
identify	Establish or indicate who or what (someone or something) is.
classify	Arrange (a group of people or things) in classes or categories according to shared qualities or characteristics.

Sunderland grew as a port, trading coal and salt. Ships began to be built on the river in the 14th century. By the 19th century, the Port of Sunderland at Sunderland Docks had absorbed Bishopwearmouth and Monkwearmouth, owing to the growing economic importance of the shipbuilding docks. Following the decline of the city's traditional industries in the late 20th century, the area grew into a commercial centre for the automotive industry, science and technology and the service sector.