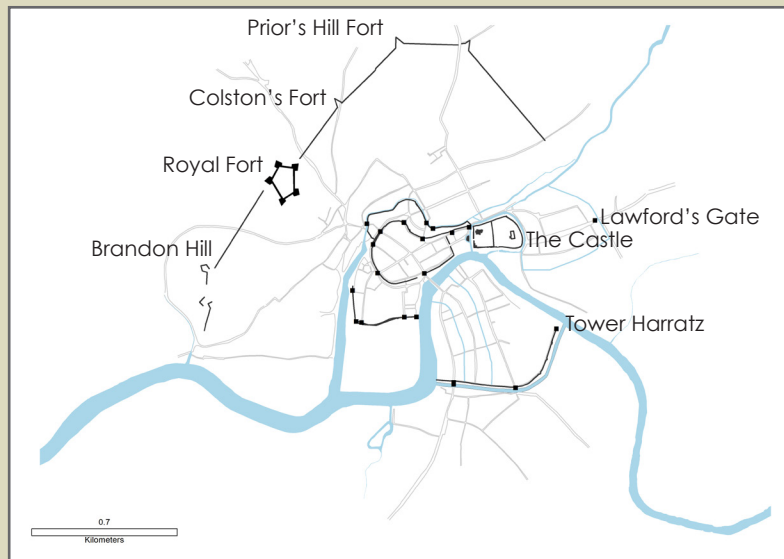


Castle Park

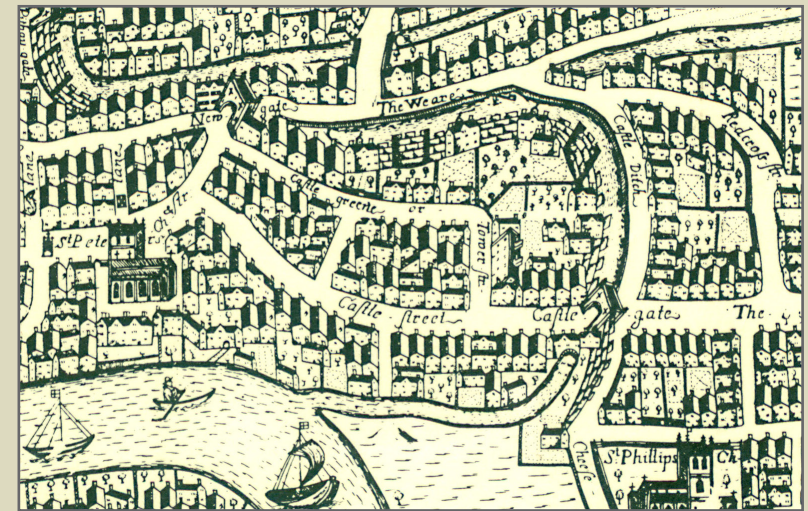
Post Medieval Castle

Many years ago, in the 1640s, Parliamentarians and Royalists were fighting each other in what later became known as the English Civil War. Bristol was defended by a chain of earthworks and forts built around the outside of the city. The king's soldiers were garrisoned at the castle, used at this time to store goods and weapons.



The Civil War defences of Bristol

After the Royalists were defeated by Oliver Cromwell's Parliamentarians, orders were given in 1656 to demolish the castle. The area was given over to the creation of new streets and houses including Castle Street and Castle Green. Despite the demolition of the castle a new gate, the Nether Gate was added at the end of Old Market Street and many of the castle walls were retained or reused within the new buildings as can be seen on



Millard's Map of Bristol, 1673



In the later 1700s, the Shambles area was redeveloped largely to the designs of local architect, Thomas Paty (also responsible for Royal Fort House on St Michael's Hill, The Corn Exchange on Corn Street and the Theatre Royal (now Bristol Old Vic) on King Street). Paty's recommendations resulted in many of the timber framed buildings being pulled down and new houses being built.



An illustration of Bristol Bridge and the buildings of Bridge Street and High Street that were all built to the designs of Thomas Paty. This view of the area from the south comes from the Braikenridge Collection at Bristol Museum, reference M2962

The most significant change was the construction of Bridge Street and associated terrace of over 20 houses along the river frontage as well as the reconstruction of Bristol Bridge, completed in 1768. During the 1800s, the Castle Street neighbourhood developed into Bristol's principal shopping area. By 1880, there were about 100 businesses including; grocers, ironmongers, drapers, butchers, wholesalers, chemists and clothes shops stretching along the street from St Peter's Church to the beginning of Old Market. On a Saturday, the street would be crammed with people and shops often continued trading late into the evening.



A photograph postcard looking down Castle Street in the early 1920s. Vaughan Collection postcard, reference 43207/9/36/25 courtesy of Bristol Record Office

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1880s Ordnance Survey map of the area now covered by Castle Park

By 1911, three of Bristol's earliest cinemas had been opened in the area; Pringle's Picture Palace later the Dolphin Picture House (nicknamed Kosy Korner Kinema) opened in 1910 on Dolphin Street, Queen's Hall, Bristol's first purpose built cinema opened on Peter Street in March 1910 and the Castle Street Picture House opened in 1911. The Queen's was unique in that part of its roof could be opened for ventilation.



The Queen's Picture House on Peter Street. 'For the Love of Mike' was a silent movie made in 1927. This image comes from the Hartley Collection of glass plate photographs held by Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives, reference 239393

With the introduction of 'talkies' in the 1930s the golden age of motion pictures began and the Queen's was demolished and rebuilt as the News Theatre in 1933.

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A photograph of Back of Bridge Street taken from Bristol Bridge in the early 1900s. Image courtesy of David Martyn