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Dr Jeremy Ashbee (English Heritage)

The Tower of London as Royal Residence 1066-1399

Dr Ashbee stressed that the Tower contained a functioning medieval palace. It was built in 1275-81 and demolished in 1774-1800, in order to make way for the Ordnance Office. The White Tower is the only surviving eleventh-century palace in Europe. It was often used for royal crown wearings. Dr Ashbee used illustrations from the poems of Charles d'Orleans, who had been a prisoner there, to show the evolution of the Tower. Henry III was an exceptional royal builder, 'a curator's king'. He spent thirty-two weeks there, Edward I twenty-one days. The barons disliked the Tower as did all medieval chroniclers; in 1387 they refused to go there, since 'they distrusted the place'. Roger Mortimer had been imprisoned there, as was the King of France in 1360.