

Defence At Kenilworth

There were many defensive features at Kenilworth castle. The first and most prominent was Mortimer's tower (see source 1). This was a gatehouse/barbican. It had two towers and was D-shaped. The evidence for a portcullis was gate hinge blocks (holes on one side), there were grooves for the portcullis in the walls and grooves and gate hinges. There was also a fireplace and a latrine which indicates the structure was garrisoned with soldiers. I know that Mortimer's tower would've been defended by arrow fire because there were arrow slits. Long bow for long range and cross bow for a short and powerful range. This was to protect the lake. The range from the right of Mortimer's tower was out to link with the outer wall. The range from the left was straight out in front and short range down one side. There used to be a back up line of fire from the outer curtain wall. The outer curtain wall is now missing though so we can only make an educated guess. We know Mortimer's tower had two stories because of the line of bricks and the fireplace on the left. The things that are there now and wouldn't have been in previous centuries are the stone at the front, level of earth, grates, signs, fences and the ticket office.

The next defensive structures are the outer curtain wall including the Constable's Lodging and Tudor Stables. There was an opening in the wall. I know this is not an arrow slit because it is not angled to prevent the archer getting shot. There is also no need for defence here because of the mere. I know that the wall would be higher because there is always another floor above fishtail arrow slits and battlements are one man tall. I think this would be 30ft tall. I can tell that the Constable's Lodging was not built primarily for defence because of the big windows with ornate frames; it has thin walls and a fireplace inside. The buttress was a defensive structure to stop undermining (see source 2). I think the Constable's Lodging would've been three stories high (45ft). I think this because of the brick lines and the fireplaces. The evidence of defence by arrow fire is the 1240 style arrow loops. We know the roof of the Tudor stables is from a different period from the rest of the curtain wall structures because there is hardly any defence. There are new bricks on the buttressing.

Another defensive structure was Lunn's tower. There is a rubbish chute and a guard robe, which is evidence of habitation. I know this structure would've been defended by arrow fire because of the crossbow slit and pour down fishtail. I know it had two stories because there would've been another story above the fishtail arrow silt. The other defensive features I saw were buttressing, thick walls, brick lines and a round tower (see source 3).

Along the curtain wall was a moat originally filled with water. We know the wall has been altered since it was first built because of the different brickwork, low wall, modern bricks, the bank of the moat is higher on both sides and there are pipes through the brickwork.

Along the curtain wall on the west side, the great mere extended 1km to the white farmhouse. Swan's tower on the west side is smaller and has fewer arrow slits than Lunn's tower. It is also square rather than round and is very damaged. The first gate we came to wasn't the original postern gate. I know this because it's ornamental, has thin walls and is 16th century. The defences of the

real postern gate were: it was smaller, had very thick walls and was protected by a line of fire from the keep.

The curtain wall on the south side was one more storey high. I know this because of the buttress and brick lines. The buttress was an anti-mining device. Arrow slits appear along this wall but not until quite further along. This is because they are not needed. The mere was defence enough.

The Inner Court

There are six main defences of Kenilworth, Brays, Causeway, Keep, Lunn's tower, Swan's tower and, of course, the great mere. The castle was granted to Geoffrey de Clinton in 1120. The first castle was probably made of wood and would've been rebuilt in stone in 1174 by Henry II. King John added the second set of outer walls and the water defences in 1210. The longest siege in Medieval England was in 1266 and lasted six months.

Inside the wall by the ticket office we looked at the cross-section of the wall. At this point it does not seem like a very defensive structure because it doesn't have very thick walls. Mortimer's tower and the mere make up for this defensively. Inside the guardhouse, the garbage chute is not designed like an arrow slit because the water level would've come up to the wall. It would've been too cramped. The evidence of habitation is a fireplace/chimney. There is evidence of desecration and that is graffiti. The originality of some of it is questionable. The line of fire available from here is back towards the keep. This was also known as the Killing Ground. The fireplace tells us that people lived up against the castle walls.

At the base of the outside walls of the Norman keep is a high plinth (See source 4). This was difficult to climb or put ladders against. It was defensive against anti-mining. The evidence of a fore building with a portcullis is grooves in the wall and a floor plan. There are three types of windows here, defensive arrow slits, square ornate windows and arched windows. I think there were two stories plus a roof and battlements but there were rooms at higher levels in the turrets. We know because the fish tail arrow slits were on the floor just below the top of the keep. The evidence of habitation is fireplaces, latrines, stains and a well. The walls are about 8ft thick.

The Tudor Stables had the distinctive black and white decoration (see source 5). It had two floors, the upper floor for the servants' quarters. It also had a chimney.

Entertainment At Kenilworth

The main entertainment features of Kenilworth were the Tiltyard, Leicester's Barn, the gatehouse and the great hall. Leicester's alterations were Leicester's gatehouse, the fore building and loggia, near the keep. John of Gaunt transformed the castle into a palace from 1361-99. He built the Great hall. In 1414, Henry V built a summerhouse called the pleasance. Between 1563 and 1588, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester changed the castle for Queen Elizabeth I. We can see evidence that Leicester put a Tudor clock on the keep from the forming square around the central hole at the top of the tower.

Inside the keep are three types of windows, 16th century tall windows to let in more light, open plan windows with round arches not pointed (see source 6), and one Norman round top slit window for light not arrows.

The evidence to prove Leicester's building was used for entertainment rather than defence is, huge ornate windows facing the sun, fireplaces, chambers, no arrow slits and high quality masonry. In the 16th century, it used to be attached to buildings built by Henry VIII from the keep (toothed walls).

There were kitchens next to the Great hall. These kitchens had large ovens. The evidence of this is the heat tolerant brickwork and large floor plans. Part of these kitchens was a warming room where a huge fireplace was, also with heat tolerant brickwork. This warming room was where food was kept before being taken into the Great hall. It would also have provided some heating for the Great hall.

The Great hall itself was built by John of Gaunt in 1357. It originally only had one floor and a very high roof. We stood in the servants' quarters. There were stone plinth bases to hold the upper floor. The entrance to the great hall would've been on the first floor. There was a huge ornate archway with stairs leading from the courtyard. The evidence to show this hall was used for entertainment is the columns, arches, roof (1347 Hammer beam), large ornate windows (see source 7), fireplaces, oriel windows and bay windows.

The main fore building of the keep has been made into a Loggia. That was then enlarged and more rooms were added, there were arches above the entrance and from the inner court to outer court gardens. The evidence for the purpose of these alterations is in the grand, ornate gardens (see source 8) and the walkway through. The gardens have a geometric shape and lavender and sage bushes. The only problem with the gardens is that they cannot be original. The plants and flowers would've withered every year. There are no fountains or statues but the water pipes leading to the centre of the garden suggests there was a fountain there originally.

The evidence of 20th century influence around Leicester's Gatehouse is the toilets. I can see this building was used for entertainment rather than defence because of the ornate door, windows and chimney. There are also no arrow slits and the battlements are artificial and ornate. I know this was a Tudor building from the Tudor rose and the initials either side, "RL".

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