

Egg Buckland Keep

Commenced	1863 (contractor failed 1866)	Armament	
Completed	by engineers 1871	1875	proposed 5 x 7-inch RBL
Cost	£ 14,642	1885	unarmed
Map Reference	SX500581	1893	3 x 0.45MG R.C.
Position	North East Defences, Right Flank		
Type	Land front, defensible barrack		
Ditch	Dry		
Guns	None intended		
Barrack Accom.	230		
Present use	Heritage site		
History	store to 2018	Caponiers	4
Disposal Condition	1947 Grade II Listed 1973 Reasonable and maintained.	Counterscarp galleries	None
Access	Owner's permission required	Haxo casemates	None
Sources	1868 report : Precis of Correspondence relating to the Defences of Plymouth 1893. Historic Defences of Plymouth by A. Pye and F. Woodward	Moncrieff Pits	None

History and Description

Egg Buckland Keep stands 357 feet above the sea, 400 yards to the east of Bowden and 800 yards from Austin on the right. It occupies the most commanding point of the position and was designed as a barrack keep (one of four proposed) to provide accommodation for the garrisons of the adjoining works (Bowden, Forder, Austin) and well as to increase their defensive power. It has revetments 30ft. High flanked by musketry and completely protected by its glacis. The two-storied, five sided, casemated barracks contain accommodation for 230 men with ample stores for powder and shell. Single storey musketry caponiers with pitched roofs project from each corner to flank the ditches. The rooms on both floors of the barracks are arranged along either side of a central corridor, those on the outside being barrack accommodation, whilst those on the inside served as stores. The magazines were situated underneath earthworks at each end of the gorge. Two spiral staircases led to the roof, which was intended to be armed. An earthen rampart ran along all sides of the roof except the gorge, which has a loopholed parapet wall. This protected the entrance in the centre of the rear casemates. A doorway and drawbridge to the front (NE) leads to the tunnel to Forder Battery. The drawbridge is no longer there but the lifting apparatus is still in place. During WWI the keep was used as a prison for conscientious objectors. During WWII it was used as a naval communications hub, especially for operation Dynamo (Dunkirk) as well as being a Plymouth area anti aircraft fire control centre. Post War it was used until 2018 as a building materials store with some rooms converted for storage and as a fitness centre. The new owner is actively maintaining the structure as a Heritage Centre.

The military road leading to the keep was built into a cutting to provide cover for troops entering and leaving the keep

A 400 yard tunnel connects this keep with a caponier flanking the ditch to the front of Forder Battery, which it overlooks. At the east end the tunnel forks. a spiral stair leading in one direction from this tunnel to the parade of Forder Battery allowing its garrison to reach their actions stations under cover. This is now blocked, as is the other branch that leads down some stairs to the reverse caponier in the Bowden Austin ditch, which now forms the basement of a house and is inaccessible.

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