

= Caernarfon Castle =

Caernarfon Castle ( Welsh : Castell Caernarfon ) is a medieval fortress in Caernarfon , Gwynedd , north @-@ west Wales cared for by Cadw , the Welsh Government 's historic environment service . There was a motte @-@ and @-@ bailey castle in the town of Caernarfon from the late 11th century until 1283 when King Edward I of England began replacing it with the current stone structure . The Edwardian town and castle acted as the administrative centre of north Wales and as a result the defences were built on a grand scale . There was a deliberate link with Caernarfon 's Roman past and the Roman fort of Segontium is nearby .

While the castle was under construction , town walls were built around Caernarfon . The work cost between £ 20 @,@ 000 and £ 25 @,@ 000 from the start until the end of work in 1330 . Despite Caernarfon Castle 's external appearance of being mostly complete , the interior buildings no longer survive and many of the building plans were never finished . The town and castle were sacked in 1294 when Madog ap Llywelyn led a rebellion against the English . Caernarfon was recaptured the following year . During the Glyndŵr Rising of 1400 ? 1415 , the castle was besieged . When the Tudor dynasty ascended to the English throne in 1485 , tensions between the Welsh and English began to diminish and castles were considered less important . As a result , Caernarfon Castle was allowed to fall into a state of disrepair .

Despite its dilapidated condition , during the English Civil War Caernarfon Castle was held by Royalists , and was besieged three times by Parliamentary forces . This was the last time the castle was used in war . Caernarfon Castle was neglected until the 19th century when the state funded repairs . In 1911 , Caernarfon Castle was used for the investiture of the Prince of Wales , and again in 1969 . It is part of the World Heritage Site " Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd " .

= = Background = =

The first fortifications at Caernarfon were built by the Romans . Their fort , which they named Segontium , is on the outskirts of the modern town . The fort sat near the bank of the River Seiont ; it is likely that the fort was positioned here due to the sheltered nature and as traffic up the Seiont would have been able to supply Segontium . Caernarfon derives its name from the Roman fortifications . In Welsh , the place was called " y gaer yn Arfon " , meaning " the stronghold in the land over against Môn " ; Môn is the Welsh name for Anglesey . Little is known about the fate of Segontium and its associated civilian settlement after the Romans departed from Britain in the early 5th century .

= = Early castle = =

Following the Norman Conquest of England , William the Conqueror turned his attention to Wales . According to the Domesday Survey of 1086 , the Norman Robert of Rhuddlan was notionally in charge of the whole of northern Wales . He was killed by the Welsh in 1088 . His cousin the Earl of Chester , Hugh d 'Avranches , reasserted Norman control of north Wales by building three castles : one at an unknown location somewhere in Meirionnydd , one at Aberlleiniog on Anglesey , and another at Caernarfon . This early castle was on a peninsula , bounded by the River Seiont , the Menai Strait ; it would have been a motte and bailey , defended by a timber palisade and earthen banks . While the motte , or mound , was integrated into the later Edwardian Castle , the location of the original bailey is uncertain , although it may have been to the north @-@ east of the motte . Excavations on top of the motte in 1969 revealed no traces of medieval occupation , suggesting any evidence had been removed . It is likely that the motte was surmounted by a wooden tower known as a keep . The Welsh recaptured Gwynedd in 1115 , and Caernarfon Castle came into the possession of the Welsh princes . From contemporary documents written at the castle , it is known that Llywelyn the Great and later Llywelyn ap Gruffudd occasionally stayed at Caernarfon .

= = Edwardian castle = =

War broke out again between England and Wales on 22 March 1282 . The Welsh leader , Llywelyn ap Gruffudd , died later that year on 11 December . His brother Dafydd ap Gruffydd continued to fight against the English , but in 1283 Edward I was victorious . Edward marched through northern Wales , capturing castles such as that at Dolwyddelan , and establishing his own at Conwy . War finally drew to a close in May 1283 when Dolbadarn Castle , Dafydd ap Gruffudd 's last castle , was captured . Shortly after , Edward began building castles at Harlech and Caernarfon . The castles of Caernarfon , Conwy and Harlech were the most impressive of their time in Wales , and their construction ? along with other Edwardian castles in the country ? helped establish English rule . The master mason responsible for the design and orchestrating the construction of the castle was probably James of Saint George , an experienced architect and military engineer who played an important role in building the Edwardian castles in Wales . According to the Flores Historiarum , during the construction of the castle and planned town , the body of the Roman emperor Magnus Maximus was discovered at Caernarfon and Edward I ordered his reburial in a local church .

The construction of the new stone castle was part of a programme of building which transformed Caernarfon ; town walls were added , connected to the castle , and a new quay was built . The earliest reference to building at Caernarfon dates from 24 June 1283 , when a ditch had been dug separating the site of the castle from the town to the north . A bretagium , a type of stockade , was created around the site to protect it while the permanent defences were under construction . Timber was shipped from as far away as Liverpool . Stone was quarried from nearby places , such as from Anglesey and around the town . A force of hundreds worked on the excavation of the moat and digging the foundations for the castle . As the site expanded , it began to encroach on the town ; houses were cleared to allow the construction . Residents were not paid compensation until three years later . While the foundations for the stone walls were being created , timber @-@ framed apartments were built for Edward I and Eleanor of Castile , his queen . They arrived at Caernarfon on either 11 or 12 July 1283 and stayed for over a month .

Construction at Caernarfon Castle continued over the winter of 1283 / 1284 . The extent of completion is uncertain , although architectural historian Arnold Taylor speculated that when Edward and Eleanor visited again in Easter 1284 the Eagle Tower may have been complete . The Statute of Rhuddlan , enacted on 3 March 1284 , made Caernarfon a borough and the administrative centre of the county of Gwynedd . According to tradition , Edward II was born at Caernarfon on 25 April 1284 . Edward was created Prince of Wales in 1301 , with control over Wales and its incomes . Since then the title has traditionally been held by the eldest son of the monarch . According to a famous legend , the king had promised the Welsh that he would name " a prince born in Wales , who did not speak a word of English " and then produced his infant son to their surprise ; but the story may well be apocryphal , as it can only be traced to the 16th century . In 1284 , Caernarfon was defended by a garrison of forty men , more than the thirty @-@ strong garrisons at Conwy and Harlech . Even in peace time , when most castles would have a guard of only a few men , Caernarfon was defended by between twenty and forty people due to its importance .

By 1285 , Caernarfon 's town walls were mostly complete . At the same time work continued on the castle . Spending on construction was negligible from 1289 and accounts end in 1292 . Edward I 's campaign of castle @-@ building in Wales cost £ 80 @,@ 000 between 1277 and 1304 , and £ 95 @,@ 000 between 1277 and 1329 ; by 1292 £ 12 @,@ 000 had been spent on the construction of Caernarfon 's castle ? of which the southern facade was furthest along ? and town walls . As the southern wall and town walls completed a defensive circuit around Caernarfon , the plan was to build the castle 's northern facade last .

In 1294 , Wales broke out in rebellion led by Madog ap Llywelyn , prince of Wales . As Caernarfon was the centre of administration in Gwynedd and a symbol of English power , it was targeted by the Welsh . Madog 's forces captured the town in September , and in the process heavily damaged the town walls . The castle was defended by just a ditch and a temporary barricade . It was quickly taken and anything flammable was set alight . Fire raged across Caernarfon , leaving destruction in its wake . In the summer of 1295 , the English moved to retake Caernarfon . By November the same

year , the English began refortifying the town . Rebuilding the town walls was a high priority , and £ 1 @, @ 195 ( nearly half the sum initially spent on the walls ) was spent on completing the job two months ahead of schedule . Attention then shifted to the castle and on finishing the work that had halted in 1292 . Once the rebellion was put down , Edward began building Beaumaris Castle on the Isle of Anglesey . The work was overseen by James of Saint George ; as a result , Walter of Hereford took over as master mason for the new phase of construction . By the end of 1301 , a further £ 4 @, @ 500 had been spent on the work with the focus of work on the northern wall and towers . The accounts between November 1301 and September 1304 are missing , possibly because there was a hiatus in work while labour moved north to help out with England 's war against Scotland . Records show that Walter of Hereford had left Caernarfon and was in Carlisle in October 1300 ; he remained occupied with the Scottish wars until the autumn of 1304 when building at Caernarfon resumed . Walter died in 1309 and his immediate subordinate , Henry of Ellerton , took over the position of master mason . Construction continued at a steady rate until 1330 .

From 1284 to 1330 , when accounts end , between £ 20 @, @ 000 and £ 25 @, @ 000 was spent on Caernarfon 's castle and town walls . Such a sum was enormous and dwarfed the spending on castles such as Dover and Château Gaillard , which were amongst the most expensive and impressive fortifications of the later 12th and early 13th centuries . Subsequent additions to Caernarfon were not major , and what remains of the castle is substantially from the Edwardian period . Despite the expense , much of what was planned for the castle was never carried out . The rears of the King 's Gate ( the entrance from the town ) and the Queen 's Gate ( the entrance from the south @-@ east ) were left unfinished , and foundations in the castle 's interior mark where buildings would have stood had work continued .

= = Later history = =

For around two centuries after the conquest of Wales , the arrangements established by Edward I for the governance of the country remained in place . During this time the castle was constantly garrisoned , and Caernarfon was effectively the capital of north Wales . There was a degree of discrimination , with the most important administrative jobs in Wales usually closed to Welsh people . Tension between the Welsh and their English conquerors spilled over at the start of the 15th century with the outbreak of the Glyndŵr Rising ( 1400 ? 1415 ) . During the revolt , Caernarfon was one of the targets of Owain Glyndŵr 's army . The town and castle were besieged in 1401 , and in November that year the Battle of Tuthill took place nearby between Caernarfon 's defenders and the besieging force . In 1403 and 1404 , Caernarfon was besieged by Welsh troops with support from French forces ; the garrison at the time was around thirty . The ascension of the Tudor dynasty to the English throne in 1485 heralded a change in the way Wales was administered . The Tudors were Welsh in origin , and their rule eased hostilities between the Welsh and English . As a result , castles such as Caernarfon , which provided secure centres from which the country could be administered , became less important . They were neglected , and in 1538 it was reported that many castles in Wales were " moche ruynous and ferre in decaye for lakke of tymely reparations " .

In Caernarfon 's case the walls of the town and castle remained in good condition , while features which required maintenance ? such as roofs ? were in a state of decay and much timber was rotten . Conditions were so poor that of the castles seven towers and two gatehouses , only the Eagle Tower and the King 's Gate had roofs by 1620 . The domestic buildings inside the castle had been stripped of anything valuable , such as glass and iron . Despite the disrepair of the domestic buildings , the castle 's defences were in a good enough state that during the English Civil War in the mid @-@ 17th century it was garrisoned by Royalists . Caernarfon Castle was besieged three times during the war . The constable was John Byron , 1st Baron Byron , who surrendered Caernarfon to Parliamentary forces in 1646 . It was the last time Caernarfon Castle saw fighting . Although it was ordered in 1660 that the castle and town walls should be dismantled , the work was aborted early on and may never have started .

Despite avoiding slighting , the castle was neglected until the late 19th century . From the 1870s onwards , the government funded repairs to Caernarfon Castle . The deputy @-@ constable ,

Llewellyn Turner oversaw the work , in many cases controversially restoring and rebuilding the castle , rather than simply conserving the existing stonework . Steps , battlements , and roofs were repaired , and the moat to the north of the castle was cleared of post -medieval buildings that were considered to spoil the view , despite the protest of locals . Under the auspices of the Office of Works and its successors since 1908 , the castle was preserved due to its historic significance . In 1911 , Caernarfon was used for the investiture of the Prince of Wales for the first time when Prince Edward ( later Edward VIII ) , eldest son of the newly crowned King George V ; the ceremony was held there at the insistence of then Chancellor of the Exchequer David Lloyd George , a Welshman raised in Caernarfonshire . In 1969 , the precedent was repeated with the investiture of Charles , Prince of Wales . Although Caernarfon Castle has been the property of the Crown since it was built , it is currently cared for by Cadw ( English : to keep ) , the Welsh Government 's historic environment division , responsible for the maintenance and care of Wales ' historic buildings . In 1986 , Caernarfon was added to the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites as part of the " Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd " in recognition of its global importance and to help conserve and protect the site . The castle houses the Royal Welch Fusiliers Museum . During 2015 a new " entrance pavilion " was built , designed by architects Donald Insall Associates .

= = Architecture = =

Caernarfon Castle 's design was partly influenced by a desire to make the structure impressive as a symbol of the new English rule in Wales . This was particularly acute as Caernarfon was made the centre of government in the northern part of the country . The Edwardian castle 's layout was mostly dictated by the lay of the land , although the inclusion of the previous castle 's motte played a part . It is a narrow enclosure , roughly in the shape of a figure eight . It was divided into two enclosures , upper and lower " wards " in the east and west respectively , with the eastern containing royal accommodation , although this was never completed . The divide was supposed to be established by a range of fortified buildings , however these too were never built .

Studded along the curtain wall are several polygonal towers from which flanking fire could be deployed . There were battlements on the tops of walls and towers , and along the southern face were firing galleries ; it was intended to include galleries along the northern face but they were never built . In the opinion of military historian Allen Brown , this combined to make Caernarfon Castle " one of the most formidable concentrations of fire power to be found in the Middle Ages " . Most of the northern towers stand had four storeys including a basements . The Eagle Tower at the western corner of the castle was the grandest . It has three turrets which were once surmounted by statues of eagles . The tower contained grand lodgings , and was probably built for Sir Otton de Grandson , the first justiciar of Wales . A basement level contained a water gate , through which visitors travelling up the River Seiont could enter the castle . Water was drawn from a well in the eponymous Well Tower .

Caernarfon 's appearance differs from that of other Edwardian castles through the use of banded coloured stone in the walls and in its polygonal , rather than round , towers . There has been extensive academic debate over the interpretation of these features . Historian Arnold Taylor argued that the design of the castle was a representation of the Walls of Constantinople . The conscious use of imagery from the Byzantine Roman Empire was therefore an assertion of authority by Edward I , and influenced by the legendary dream of Magnus Maximus , a Roman emperor . In his dream Maximus had seen a fort , " the fairest that man ever saw " , within a city at the mouth of a river in a mountainous country and opposite an island . Edward interpreted this to mean Segontium was the city of Maximus ' dream and drew on the imperial link when building Caernarfon Castle . Recent work by historian Abigail Wheatley suggests that the design of Caernarfon was indeed an assertion of Edward 's authority , but that it drew on imagery from Roman sites in Britain with the intent of creating an allusion of Arthurian legitimacy for the king .

There were two main entrances , one leading from the town ( the King 's Gate ) and one allowing direct access to the castle without having to proceed through the town ( the Queen 's Gate ) . Their form was typical of the time ? a passage between two flanking towers . If the King 's Gate had been

completed , a visitor would have crossed two drawbridges , passed through five doors , under six portcullises , and negotiated a right @-@ angle turn before emerging into the lower enclosure . The route was overlooked by numerous arrow loops and murder holes . A statue of Edward II was erected in a niche overlooking the town , above the entrance to the King 's Gate . In the opinion of architectural historian Arnold Taylor , " No building in Britain demonstrates more strikingly the immense strength of medieval fortifications than the great twin @-@ towered gateway to Caernarfon Castle . " The Queen 's Gate is unusual in that its entrance is above ground level ; this was due to the integration of the earlier motte , raising the ground level of the interior . Externally , the gate would have been approached by a stone ramp which is no longer present .

While the curtain wall and its towers survive largely intact , all that remains of the buildings contained within the castle are the foundations . While royal lodgings were in the upper ward , the lower contained buildings such as the kitchens . The kitchens were located immediately west of the King 's Gate . On the basis of their insubstantial foundations , Taylor suggests that the kitchens were not strongly built . The other key feature of the castle 's domestic side , was the Great Hall . Caernarfon 's abutted the south side of the lower ward and was 30 @. @ 5 metres ( 100 ft ) . Though only the foundations survive , in its heyday the Great Hall would have been an impressive building , featuring fine architecture , and used to host royal entertainment . Had Caernarfon been completed as intended , it would have been able to contain a royal household of several hundred people .