

= Hadleigh Castle =

Hadleigh Castle in the English county of Essex overlooks the Thames estuary from a ridge to the south of the town of Hadleigh . Built after 1215 during the reign of Henry III by Hubert de Burgh , the castle was surrounded by parkland and had an important economic , as well as defensive role . Hadleigh was significantly expanded and remodelled by Edward III , who turned it into a grander property , designed to defend against potential French attack as well as provide the King with a convenient private residence close to London . Built on a geologically unstable hill of London clay , the castle has often been subject to subsidence ; this , combined with the sale of its stonework in the 16th century , has led to it now being ruined . The remains are now preserved by English Heritage and protected under UK law as a Grade I listed building and scheduled monument .

= = History = =

= = = 13th century = = =

Hadleigh Castle was first built by Hubert de Burgh , the 1st Earl of Kent , who was a key supporter of King John . De Burgh was given the honour of Rayleigh by John in 1215 as a reward for his services , but chose not to develop the existing caput of Rayleigh Castle , instead building a new fortification south of the town of Hadleigh . The exact date of construction is uncertain , but it is now believed the work was conducted early in de Burgh 's tenure of the site , permission being retrospectively officially confirmed through a licence to crenellate in 1230 under Henry III .

The site was chosen on top of a local ridge , overlooking the Thames estuary , formed from a geologically unstable outcrop of London clay . In the 13th century , marshlands would have stretched away to the south of the castle , with the tide occasionally reaching up as far as the base of the hill itself , and the area would have been more wooded than today . By 1235 the park of Hadleigh had been formed around the castle , including woodland , a fishpond , stables and a park lodge , but the castle was also associated with a wider estate including Rayleigh , Thundersley and Eastwood Parks .

The first castle built on the site was probably of an octagonal design , running along the top of the ridge , protected by square and semi @-@ circular mural towers , with a barbican guarding the eastern entrance . It probably resembled White Castle , remodelled by de Burgh in the same period , or Bolingbroke and Beeston Castles , both built in the 1220s . The castle was built of Kentish ragstone and cemented by a mortar containing a large proportion of seashells , particularly cockleshells from the cockle beds of neighbouring Canvey Island . A valuable tidal watermill had been built by 1249 , essential for making bread for the castle ; recent archaeological work suggests that it was positioned on a wharf reaching out into the estuary just to the south @-@ east of the castle . Terraced gardens were built along the south side of the castle overlooking the estuary , probably including vineyards .

De Burgh finally fell out of favour with Henry III ; he was imprisoned and then finally stripped of Hadleigh Castle in 1239 . For the rest of the century , Hadleigh was retained as a royal castle , as part of an estate containing 142 acres (57 ha) of agricultural land , the park and the castle mill . By the 1250s , the castle had fallen into neglect and , despite some investment after it was given to Queen Eleanor in 1273 , it remained in relatively poor condition . Only the mill , vital for the operation of the wider estate , appears to have been well @-@ maintained . A new 17 @-@ metre @-@ wide by 9 @-@ metre @-@ long (56 foot by 30 foot) hall and an adjacent solar complex were built at the castle around 1290 , but collapsed due to subsidence shortly afterwards . In 1299 the castle was given to Queen Margaret , who complained about the quality of the building and insisted that repairs were carried out . Her husband , Edward I , visited the castle twice , using it as a base for hunting in the area .

= = = 14th century = = =

Edward II took a much closer interest in Hadleigh , leading to a period of renewal and rebuilding during his reign and that of his son , Edward III . Edward II first stayed there in 1311 , and work was done to renovate the castle before he arrived , including building new royal quarters and repairing some of the castle walls that had succumbed to subsidence . Amongst the buildings known to be in the castle during the period were the castle hall , larder , kitchen , cellar , a long house , prison , an " old chamber " and armoury ; they were guarded by a garrison of 24 soldiers during crises . Edward stayed there frequently during his reign up until 1324 , on occasion travelling to Hadleigh Castle from London on his royal barge , which docked at a wharf to the south of the castle .

Edward III acquired Hadleigh Castle in 1330 , when he recovered it from his mother , Isabella of France , who had taken it from Edward when she deposed him in 1326 . Edward paid little initial interest to the castle , but in the 1360s decided to make much greater use of the property , ordering large parts of it to be rebuilt at a cost of more than £ 2200 . Between 1361 and 1363 the internal buildings were renovated and new royal lodgings built along the south walls , after which the east side of the castle was rebuilt entirely , with two large circular towers installed in a new stretch of curtain wall , completed by 1365 . The north side of the castle was rebuilt to include a main entrance with a portcullis and a drawbridge , protected by a barbican and a large circular tower called the " High Tower " , which was complete by 1370 . The work was probably overseen by William of Wykeham .

Originally , historians believed that Edward 's decision to rebuild much of the castle was in response to the growing tensions with France ; in this version of events , Hadleigh would have formed an importance coastal fortification along the Thames estuary , protecting it from French raids . Current historical opinion plays down this motivation , noting that at the time of the work on Hadleigh relations with France were unusually good . Instead , it is suspected that the increasing elderly Edward intended Hadleigh more as a personal retreat close to London , where he could stay in privacy and considerable comfort . Whilst the entrance on the inland side remained relatively basic , the building work created a grander impression from the estuary ? any visitors to London , English or French , would have passed by Queenborough Castle on the south bank and Hadleigh on the north , the combination communicating a strong sense of royal power .

= = = 15th ? 19th centuries = = =

Edward III 's grandson , Richard II , made little use of Hadleigh , and the use of the castle was granted to Aubrey de Vere until his death in 1400 . The castle was passed amongst a number of high @-@ status owners during the 15th century , but saw little use by the crown . Edmund of Langley and his son Edward of Norwich , the Dukes of York , used the castle in the early years , before passing it on to Humphrey of Lancaster , the Duke of Gloucester . Richard , Duke of York , used the castle next , before it passed to Edmund Tudor in the middle of the century . The tradition of the castle forming part of the queen 's property was then reinstated and it was granted to Elizabeth Woodville , the wife of Edward IV . Henry VIII made no known use of the castle himself , but it formed part of the dower of three of his wives - Catherine of Aragon , Anne of Cleves , and Catherine Parr - and the castle 's parks were used as sources of timbers for his navy .

After 1544 the estate began to be broken up ; first the parks were sold and then the castle itself , bought by Lord Richard Rich from Edward VI for £ 700 in 1551 . Rich dismantled the castle for the value of its stone , primarily between 1551 and 1575 , and the castle , now thoroughly ruined , passed through Rich 's descendants .

The English painter John Constable visited Hadleigh in 1814 and made a drawing of the castle as preparation for ten oil sketches and a single painting . The oil painting Hadleigh Castle was produced in 1829 and exhibited at the Royal Academy in the same year . One of the sketches is currently displayed at the Tate Gallery , London , while the painting now hangs in the Yale Center for British Art at New Haven , United States . Constable 's painting , " one of his most monumental works " according to the art historians Tammis Groft and Mary Mackay , depicts the early 19th @-@ century Hadleigh Castle as a decaying , man @-@ made structure , succumbing to the elemental

power of nature .

William Booth purchased Hadleigh Castle and its surrounding site in 1891 for the use of the Salvation Army , which established a farm to train the English poor prior to them being sent overseas to the British colonies . Considerable subsidence and slippage on the ridge occurred between 1898 and 1923 , causing a collapse of the southern curtain wall .

= = = Today = = =

The Salvation Army gave the castle to the Ministry of Works in 1948 , and it is now owned by English Heritage , classed as a scheduled monument and a Grade I listed building . Subsidence and landslips have continued ; the north @-@ east tower largely collapsed in the 1950s , and further major slippages occurred in 1969 , 1970 , and 2002 . One of the three @-@ storey towers at the eastern side stands to nearly full height with narrow rectangular windows in the upper levels . The second tower has only about one @-@ third of its original form . Some sections of the curtain wall have survived , as well as the foundations of the great hall , solars , and the kitchen .

The castle is still surrounded by the 19th @-@ century Salvation Army farm , and beyond that by Hadleigh Country Park , owned and managed by Essex County Council and a Site of Special Scientific Interest with special regard for invertebrates . In 2008 , Hadleigh Farm , close to the castle , was announced as the venue for the mountain biking competition in the 2012 Summer Olympic Games .