[**[Mapping Issues] Towers, Keeps, Forts and Castles**](https://www.thepiazza.org.uk/bb/viewtopic.php?p=22715#p22715)

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In the [Darokin 8 miles per hex](https://www.thepiazza.org.uk/bb/viewtopic.php?f=22&t=590) thread, Simone brought up the issue of the Orclands settlements. These settlements, which include populations of as many as 10,000 humanoids, are marked with tower/keep symbols. This is problematic, because a tower/keep is generally supposed to be a small compound or even a single building.  
  
This is just part of a wider issue involving the "military buildings" symbols: Tower/Keep, Fort, and Castle. In many cases these symbols seem to be used indiscriminately, without thought to the difference between them. As a result, that difference does not seem to be well defined.  
  
Simone's proposed solution was as follows:

**Zendrolion wrote:**Then why they indicated Dast (an orc settlement, IIRC) with the "village" symbol? :?  
Along those that was done with Fort Doom (Karameikos), which has been indicated with the "fort" symbol instead of "town" one (despite having 10,000 inhabitants), we could use "fort" symbol also for these humanoid strongholds.  
We could use the "fort" symbol for any fortified settlement with mostly military purposes but also with a civilian population, within the "town" range regarding the number of inhabitants (from 1,000 to 14,999). This would save the use of "fort" symbol for Darokinian forts, which, IIRC, have all (ar almost all) a population higher than 1,000 (considering civilians + military). Strongholds with less than 1,000 inhabitants could be represented with the "castle" symbol. "Keep/Tower" symbol could be used instead for fortified holdings without civilian population.

You have a good point here, Simone. In official maps I often feel that the distinction between the Tower/Keep and Fort symbols is almost non-existent, but this shouldn't be the case. Perhaps we should as you say redefine these symbols more clearly. Let's come up with some concrete definitions so we can make usage of these symbols more consistent.  
  
I agree with your deduction that the Fort symbol can be used for a primarily military settlement, even if it includes a reasonable civilian population. In these cases, it can replace the town or village symbol. I too would not want to replace the city symbol with it, though - that would be a step too far. Moreover I feel that Fort Doom's icon cannot be changed - it's too iconic - so this solution is a very good one.  
  
Now then, the only place I have contradicted you is in regard to villages. I'm divided on this issue. I think that perhaps a fort should refer to a walled enclosure containing a number of buildings with an overall military purpose, whereas a tower or keep should refer to a lone building (or perhaps a very small compound). The fact that towers are often not military buildings (just look at Glantri) complicates this matter considerably.  
  
But what is the difference between castles and towers, and castles and forts for that matter? There are actually relatively few castles marked on the official maps. I always got the idea that a castle was supposed to be a grander, more permanent, better built version of a tower or fort - with formidable defences, and quite probably a sizeable population.  
  
Let's see what official sources have to say on this.

**Glantri: Kingdom of Magic poster map wrote:Buildings**

* **Castles** consist of a keep surrounded by a curtain wall. These fortifications usually house only military personnel, though occasionally a local ruler will choose to reside in a castle.
* **Towers and keeps** commonly serve as the homes of wizards and nobles. Some consist of just a single tower jutting skyward; others are large stone houses or a small complex of structures with a protective wall. The map shows the keeps of nobles only.

Despite looking through numerous PDFs I can't really find any other official info on this. However, it looks like the Fort symbol was a late addition: originally there was only castle, then tower was added (in the Companion Set I think), and finally Fort symbols appeared.  
  
(To make matters even stranger, on both Expert Set maps of Karameikos Fort Doom was marked with the ruins symbol! The Haunted Keep which later became Koriszegy Keep was marked with a castle symbol.)  
  
My conclusion is that we need to work out what the existing maps mean by these symbols for each nation, and revise them accordingly. Let's compile all these ideas into some definitions:

* **Tower/Keep** - indicates the dwelling of a noble or wizard. Generally the population is the household only, and is therefore in the village range (up to 1,000). The symbol may indicate a single tower, a stone keep or stronghold, or a small complex, and may include a protective wall. Small military keeps may also be marked with this symbol.
* **Fort** - indicates a fortified military settlement. A Fort generally includes some civilian population, but it rarely exceeds 10,000. If the civilian population is 15,000 or more, the city symbol should be used instead (even if it is a military or heavily fortified city). The size of the settlement varies quite widely depending upon the population and military significance of the position. Usually it will consist of a number of buildings enclosed by a protective wall or façade.
* **Castle** - indicates a heavily fortified defensive compound. More elaborate and sturdy than a tower or keep, and more permanent and enduring than a fort, a castle consists of a formidable protective wall enclosing a compound of buildings. Often the buildings are built into the walls, so that the castle seems like a large and convoluted building. Castles represent the ultimate in defence. They can often hold the population of a village or town, but as the number of people rises to city levels, more and more buildings have to be built outside the castle walls, and the castle becomes the centre of a city.

\*\* SMALL MILITARY-ONLY BUILDINGS (without civilian population)  
Map Symbol: Tower/Keep  
These buildings have a military-only purpose, and the presence of a very small civilian population (under 100 or 500, we've to decide) is casual and/or temporary.  
Examples: Most nobles' keeps in Glantri.  
  
\*\* MEDIUM or LARGE MILITARY BUILDINGS (allowing for some civilian population)  
Map Symbol: Varies with population  
These are settlements whose purpose is still mainly military, but which have welcame some relevant civilian population (100+ or 500+, see above) within their walls or just outside them (a village rising out of a castle's wall, for example). Note that a symple defensive wall isn't enough to qualify for this category: the settlement must have originated as a military structure, or with main military purposes in mind; for example, Threshold, while being a fortified town, doesn't qualify for the "fort" symbol, becouse it's most of all a frontier city, not a military one.  
Map symbols to be used are:  
- CASTLE, for settlements within village range (up to 1,000 inhabitants); examples: the forts of Glantri and the keeps of Karameikos (small garrisons).  
- FORT, for settlements within town range (from 1,000 to 15,000 inhabitants); examples: the forts of Darokin (with a large garrison), the "outposts" and forts of Thyatis.  
  
ANY settlement, military or not, above 15,000 population, should be marked with the "city" symbol.  
  
I think these categories manage to keep most symbols in official maps intact; only few changes are needed (Karameikos' keeps are perhaps the most relevants). ;)

**Keep** - "A keep is a strong central tower which is used as a dungeon or a fortress. Often, the keep is the most defended area of a castle, and as such may form the main habitation area, or contain important stores such as the armoury, food, and the main water well, which would ensure survival during a siege." ([Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keep))  
**Tower** - a wizard's tower, the home of a noble. As the name implies, it's usually a single tower, although there may also be a small compound enclosing the tower.  
**Fort** - "Fortifications are military constructions and buildings designed for defense in warfare and military bases. Humans have constructed defensive works for many thousands of years, in a variety of increasingly complex designs. The term is derived from the Latin fortis ("strong") and facere ("to make")." ([Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fortification))  
**Castle** - "A castle is a defensive structure seen as one of the main symbols of the Middle Ages. The term has a history of scholarly debate surrounding its exact meaning, but it is usually regarded as being distinct from the general terms fort or fortress in that it describes a residence of a monarch or noble and commands a specific defensive territory." ([Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castle))

from the Wikipedia Castle article:

**Wikipedia wrote:Defining features**  
  
The chief distinguishing features of castles, as opposed to other defensive structures, can be defined as follows:

* Castles were places of protection from an invading enemy, a place of retreat. This is the purpose behind such stereotypical castle features as portcullises, battlements and drawbridges.
* Castles were also offensive structures, built in otherwise hostile territories from which to exert strategic control over surrounding lands, as forward camps from which to conduct offensives. In particular, during the High Middle Ages, castles were often built for territorial expansion and regional control. A castle was a stronghold from which its occupants could control surrounding territory.
* Castles were either built as, or evolved into, residences for the monarch or their feudal vassals who built them.

These three purposes distinguish the castle from other fortresses — which are usually purely defensive (like citadels and city walls) or purely offensive (a military camp) — or edifices that are entirely residential in nature, like palaces. Castles such as the Tower of London served as prisons.

I think this makes things pretty clear. All three can be military installations. Towers and keeps can be part of castles, and both usually signify the residence of someone important. Forts on the other hand are primarily for military groups. They can be permanent or temporary, but are usually less permanent and less well fortified than castles.  
  
I propose that we think of towers and keeps as the small equivalents of both castles and forts (i.e. up to village levels of population). Castles are the ultimate form of fortification, and also serve other purposes (such as holding the residence of a noble, and supporting the local population); forts are more temporary installations, and more focused exclusively on the military, although they may inevitably also have a civilian population.  
  
**Tower/Keep** - A single freestanding tower or keep, often the home of a noble or wizard, or a single garrison of troops. May also include a small compound. Population: up to 1,000.  
**Castle** - A large compound enclosed by formidable fortifications. Usually the home of a noble of some kind. Population: 1,000 - 14,999.  
**Fort** - A large compound enclosed by fortifications, housing a military garrison for offensive or defensive purposes. Population: 1,000 - 14,999.  
  
**Consequences**

* Fort Doom - "This town, once called Halag..." (GAZ1 page 5c) "It's a dreary, unhappy farming community of about 10,000" (GAZ1 page 6a). Despite its iconic nature, perhaps we should indeed change this to a town. :?
* Karameikos Forts - "Five important forts protect the frontiers of Karameikos. Because these are peaceable times, they have small garrisons (each has one battalion of 244 soldiers)." (GAZ1 page 40b) Even if they include a small civilian population, all five keeps can still be marked as Keeps.
* Glantri Fortresses - GAZ3 page 13 outlines Glantri's military. The five castles marked on the map each hold two banners, meaning 360-480 troops. It seems likely that there is also a small civilian population, so it doesn't seem unreasonable to assume each of them has 1,000+ people. (If this seems like a bit of a stretch, we could reduce the population of towers and keeps to 500, and make castles and forts 500 - 14,999, but it seems preferable to keep the same population distinctions as villages/towns/cities.)
* Glantri Towers - "Nobles' towers have a personal guard of 20 to 60 soldiers..." (GAZ3 page 13c) Counting family members and retainers, it seems likely that most towers will indeed have populations less than 1,000, and in most cases not exceeding a few hundreds.
* Rockhome - the GAZ6 map showed three forts, with one of them named "Karrak Castle". Perhaps because of the name, this one was changed to a castle symbol on TM2. Let's look at the descriptions: "*Fort Denwarf (Rak Denwarf):* This fort, built at the narrowest point of the Styr Valley, is the northern defense or Rockhome, responsible for protecting the nation from possible invasion from that direction." "*Fort Evekarr (Rak Evekarr):* This is a large, gloomy, miserable fortress built in the grim Evekarr Pass. Its business is to protect Rockhome from possible invasion along the Evekarr Road. It is manned from the beginning of spring to the end of fall, abandoned for the winter." "*Karrak:* (Also called Karrak Castle and Death Rock Fort) This enormous citadel sits over the Sardal Pass south of Dengar to protect the pass from any possibility of invasion from the south. Though technically a fort, it is effectively a major city with guard garrisons, mining and engineering projects, and a large civilian population." (GAZ6 page 6a) According to GAZ6 page 25c, Karrak Castle has 1,000 troops, as does Fort Denwarf, while Fort Evekarr has just 250. And page 58a-b gives us more detailed descriptions, as well as the total population figures: 1,500 in Fort Denwarf, 500 in Fort Evekarr, and 2,500 in Karrak Castle. Conclusion: Fort Denwarf is fine as it is, as a fort. Fort Evekarr is more problematic; although it has a low population, and indeed consists of a single keep, it also has two massive walls which straddle the entire mountain pass. A tower/keep symbol seems not good enough to convey this. Perhaps this is further evidence that the population difference between tower/keep and fort needs to be lowered to a borderline of 500. Finally, Karrak Castle nicely fits the mould of being marked as a castle, and we even have evidence that the official view was the same, since its symbol was indeed officially changed.
* Vestland - Seaforth Tower is the only military settlement marked on GAZ7's map, and its description in X13 (page 37c) says it has "16 men-at-arms". It is clearly a minor military garrison, so it stays as a tower.
* The Five Shires - Rollstone Keep is the only military settlement marked on the map. GAZ8 pages 39c-40c describe it as a "stout-walled stone fortress" with a population of 2,900 and all the usual features of a small town. On the other hand, "Over half of the population of Rollstone Keep consists of the standing army of the Eastshire Fangs... Most of the other hin in town are the Journeyfoot clan who lived here before the village was fortified..." Given the fact that this is clearly a town, and despite the name, the Tower/Keep symbol seems rather unsuitable, and should be replaced by a Fort symbol since this is now effectively a military town.
* Darokin Forts - Darokin's seven forts are described in GAZ11 pages 38c-41c. All seven forts have populations between about three and nine thousand, so they fit this definition well.
* Orclands settlements - C'Kag is described on GAZ11 page 35b as "a huge keep, with crude but effective earth-and-stone fortifications guarding the entrances to a large underground complex build into the side of a mountain." Additionally, "it is believed that nearly 600 trolls live in C'Kag." This does fit my definition of a keep above. Given the underground complex, it would not be a bad thing to change this to the Fort symbol, especially if we lower the keep population to 500 or less. Dast is "a heavily-fortified orc stronghold" (GAZ11 page 37c) with an estimated population of 8,000 orcs, "including some 5,000 warriors" (ibid). Clearly this is not a village. Dast's symbol symbol could be changed to a Town, but the clear military focus suggests a Fort symbol would also be suitable. Next, "Grukk is an orc keep in the Orclands of northwest Darokin. Grukk is the closest keep to The Broken Lands, and also the largest in the area, with over 12,000 orcs living in the extensive cave-and-tunnel complex dug in the side of a mountain. Nearly 7,000 of the humanoids who dwell here are warriors. The orcs of Grukk have also erected extensive fortifications outside their mountain, and 10% to 15% of the population lives outside." Again, a Tower/Keep symbol seems highly inappropriate. As with Dast, a Town symbol could be used, but a Fort symbol seems better given the military focus. Lastly, Xorg: "Xorg is an orc keep in the northwest part of Darokin known ad the Orclands. Xorg is smaller than Dast or Grukk, with only 4,500 orcs. Three thousand of these are warriors. Xorg is almost entirely underground, with only a few fortifications and small huts above ground to mark its location..." (GAZ11 page 44c) This one is more problematic... If we consider the underground complex as part of the fort, a Fort symbol seems best.

There are more areas to consider, but that's about everything I could find from the Gazetteers.  
  
Overall, it seems that my latest definition will allow us to keep a clear boundary between these things. Most changes to the maps will come in the form of Tower symbols being changed to Forts. The distinction between Fort and Castle is less well-defined, but all the castles on official maps can essentially be left as is, and we can infer from their status as castles that there is something special about them - whether it be their strategic importance, the presence of a noble of some kind, their size and grandeur, or whatever.

**Tower/Keep** - A single freestanding tower or keep, often the home of a noble or wizard, and/or a single garrison of troops. May also include a small compound. Population: up to 1,000.  
**Fort** - A large compound enclosed by permanent or temporary fortifications, housing a military garrison for offensive or defensive purposes. Population: 1,000 - 14,999.  
**Castle** - A large compound enclosed by formidable permanent fortifications. Usually the home of a noble of some kind. Castles are awesome structures, with a certain mystique and reputation which just makes them special in a way that forts are not. Population: 1,000 - 14,999.