

What are we looking at? The keep



What do we know? 'Residence' of dignitaries and inn for queens



The Zapata family, always loyal to the Crown, 'loaned' their residence in La Alameda to the royal justice system to be used as a 'prison' for various disgraced Court dignitaries. In 1580, Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, 3rd Duke of Alba, the famous and feared governor of Flanders, was imprisoned there after some disagreements with the King. In 1622, the same fate befell Pedro Téllez de Girón, 3rd Duke of Osuna and Viceroy of Naples, who ultimately died in his prison in La Alameda. However, the castle was also the scene of less mournful events. In 1599, it was used as accommodation for Queen Margaret of Austria before her entry into Madrid after her wedding to Philip III in Valencia.



Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, 3rd Duke of Alba, by Titian (Collection of the Dukes of Alba)



Pedro Téllez-Girón, 3rd Duke of Osuna



Queen Margaret, painted by Diego Velázquez in 1634 (Prado Museum)



The 'homage' was a formal act in which the lord and vassal sealed a pact of loyalty: in exchange for the lord's protection and rights or land, the vassal pledged to provide rents and serve him with arms



What do we know? The keep symbol of the lord

In Spanish, the keep is known as the 'torre del homenaje,' or the 'tower of homage'. Following the usual pattern, the tower was designed to rise above the walls and all the surrounding territory. With its height and strength, it symbolised the lord's power over his jurisdiction. Additionally, in the throne room, the lord received the 'homage' of his vassals, hence its name.

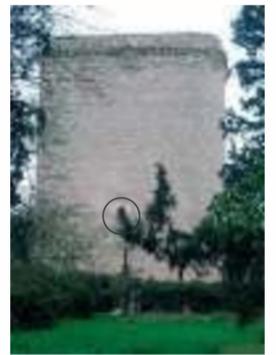
What was it like? The keep



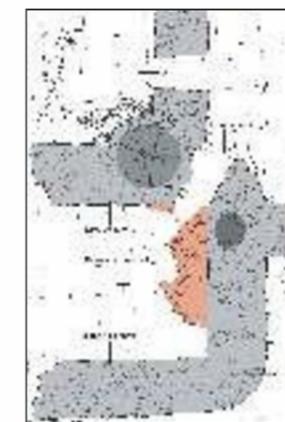
The castle must have looked very different when its most prominent feature, the keep, was still standing. We only have half of its foundations and the brick pavement of the ground floor, but we can imagine what it looked like thanks to similar towers from the same period that have been preserved, such as the one in Pinto.

The Lord's residence

The tower was likely divided into three or four storeys, each containing one room. For defensive reasons, the entrance was on the first floor, which served as the main floor (the throne room). The second floor was the lord's private chamber. The ground floor was used as a storeroom and cellar.



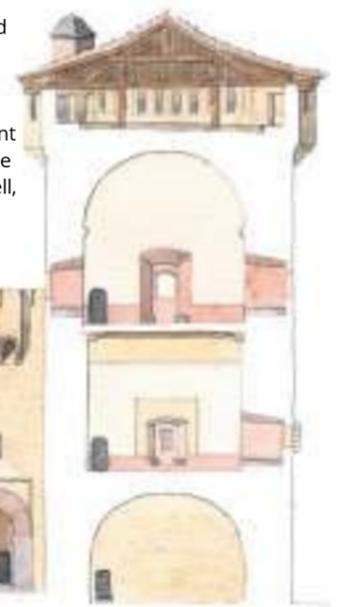
The Pinto Tower, also with rounded corners and its original elevated entrance



Plan of the excavation of the keep

The staircase and the well

The floors were connected by a spiral staircase built into the wall, which extended down to the basement; its starting point can still be seen today. The tower also had its own well, ensuring it was not dependent on external sources in the event of a siege.



Remains of the well and the flooring of the lower floor of the tower