

South Bastion Ex- TOC H Site

Statement of Significance



Prepared by The Gibraltar Heritage Trust
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Fig 1: Site plan

The Brief

The Gibraltar Heritage Trust has been asked to prepare a statement of significance to inform any development and works at the ex-Toc H site, South Bastion.

Legal Status:

The South Bastion is a listed monument under the Gibraltar Heritage Trust Act, 1989, any works to it require a license from the Minister for Heritage in consultation with the Gibraltar Heritage Trust. Even though it is only the Bastion that is listed, there are other buildings and features of historical interest within the complex. This report aims to identify these and give a better understanding of the site and its context.

The Site

Located at the Southern end of Main Street the Site is located within the boundaries of the South Bastion (marked in red Fig 1). This report will focus on the area marked in blue, that being the site of the Ex TOC H Hostel.

Historical Evolution of the bastion

The South Bastion, also known as Baluarte de Nuestra Senora del Rosario in Spanish times, marks the point where the fortifications swing inland and form the southern land front. This marked the limits of the town. The south land front consisted of the South Bastion on the seafront, the Southport Gate (Puerta de Africa) set in the middle of a curtain wall, the Flat Bastion and then a further curtain wall which ran east to a redoubt designed in the form of a demi-bastion called the Redoubt of S. Philip or Genoese Battery.



In 1540 the Spanish fortified the southern defences with the construction of Charles V Wall which zigzags up the western slope of the Rock providing numerous flanking positions for covering the ground in front and below. In front of the lower end of the line and before the South Bastion there was a ditch separated from the sea by a timber palisade but capable of being flooded. However, there appears to have been no bridge so the ditch must have normally been dry.

A number of construction phases and periods can be observed in the South Bastion, marking its evolution and adaptation as military technologies change over the centuries. Its evolution can be observed in contemporary watercolours and technical drawings.



Fig 2: 1597 watercolour. Artist unknown. Shows a gun platform and little else

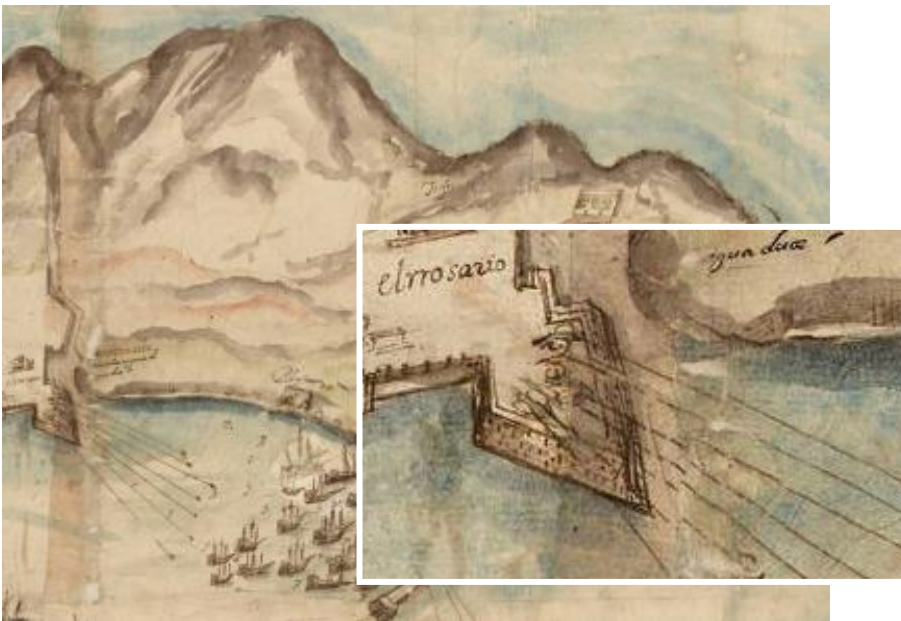


Fig 3: 1608, by Cristobal Rojas, Military Engineer, showing lines of fire from the bastion

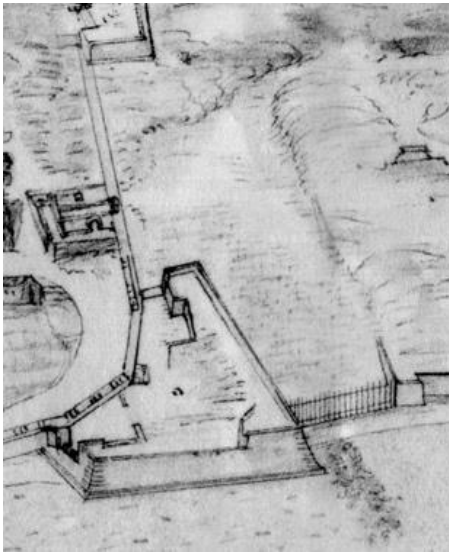


Fig 4: 1627, plan by Jose Luis Bravo, shows some more internal architecture to the bastion but it still mainly consists of earth filled ramparts.



Fig 5: 1700, South Bastion and Southport Gate showing the *bartizan* or *guerite*, a small watchtower, at the SW corner of the bastion.

As the Town grew, this southern line of defences became superfluous, but the western front of the south bastion was still of use. As a collection of historical monuments they are impressive.

The Evolution of the Bastion

As seen, in the Spanish period (16th and 17th Centuries) South Bastion was unfinished the fortification being a basic open gun platform. In 1757 Lord Tyrawley and Capt. Rainsford made a terreplein and erected a battery on the south face of the bastion and placed 12 embrasures to flank the earthwork entrenchments on the red sands. Two further embrasures were built to fire out into the Bay. In 1770 it was recommended that the bastion be armed with three 18 or 24-pdrs., one 8-inch howitzer and two 9-pdrs on the low flank and a 13-inch mortar in the salient. In the rearmament report of 1856 it was proposed to mount, in a battery of eighteen guns, six 8-inch guns, but this was probably not implemented. In 1859 it carried twenty-seven guns¹.



Fig 6: South Bastion in 1753, just before Tyrwley and Rainsford's improvements. Note the existence of the Barrack Master's Sheet House



Fig 7: 1869 ordnance survey showing powder magazine and other buildings on the site.



On 18 December 1880 construction work started for emplacements for three heavy 10-inch RML guns and the work was completed on 31 October 1881. The merlons slightly curved on their face to deflect shot, were cast in concrete and faced with masonry. These merlons contained expense magazines. The three guns were protected with 'Gibraltar Shields'. The main magazine was placed at the rear of the batteryⁱⁱ.

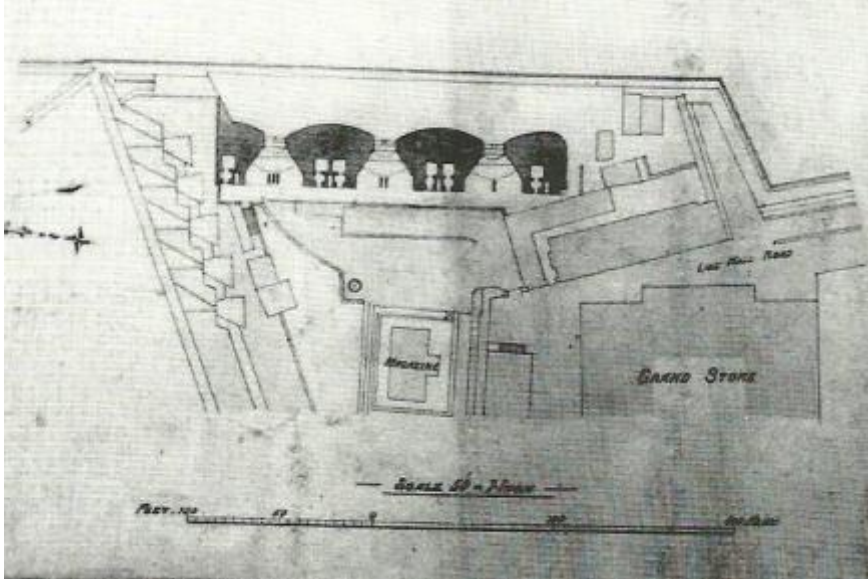


Fig 8: Western facing front of the South Bastion showing the 'Gibraltar Shield' emplacements, 1879.

The Site Today

Most of the South Bastion itself has been obscured by buildings. The College of Further Education sits atop its southern facing flank and the Jewish Retirement Home sits along its western face. The entrance and service areas of the bastion still exist however as does the powder magazine.

This area had operated as a Toc H (Talbot House) hostel since the 1950/60s.

The boundaries of the site is within what could be termed as the 'service area' of the Bastion. Buildings of note are the powder magazine and the barrack master's house along the inner southern wall.

Recommendations:

The ethos of the works should focus on conservation. Any breaches or demolitions will only be allowed in very exceptional cases.

The powder magazine is to be retained and restored as far as possible. A condition survey should be carried out to ascertain any other issues. The works to this building should be treated as a

restoration/ conservation project and including the repair/ replacement of the roof tiles and other unique features. Internally, works should retain original doors, openings and unique features.

All connecting accretions between the magazine and the barrack master's sheet house should be removed as well as internal 'garden' walls. However, some of the walls will have been the boundary/blast wall for the magazine (see fig 7) and should be kept and used as a feature.

The Toc H building itself is in a very poor state and of little historic value within the context of the battery. There would be no objections to its demolition. The building itself abuts the bastion wall so care should be taken in its demolition not to damage it further.

All demolitions should be carried out with care so as not to damage the parts of the monuments and buildings that are to be retained.

Works to demolish may expose other features of the monument which may be of interest, therefore a watching brief should be observed at the time of demolition.

A license from the Ministry for Heritage is required ahead of any works being carried out.

The Powder Magazine



**Barrack Master's Sheet house
(ground floor only)**



Toc H Hostel abutting the walls



Interior of embrasures facing east



Items of mobile heritage that should be stored and then reused on site





Existence of Tunnel under the site should be noted (see fig 7)



Other issues





ⁱ Source: Hughes and Migos, 'Strong as the Rock of Gibraltar', 1995.

ⁱⁱ ibid

