

Dyserth Castle is a well-documented royal castle built on a limestone crag by Henry III in 1241, but largely quarried away in the early 20th century. These notes relate to the *first* castle site, which was evidently at another location nearby and was abandoned at the king's request.

This original castle is considered to have stood on Craig Talargoch (now the headland of Y Graig Fawr and owned by the National Trust). In *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 1912 Thomas Edwards published an account of both sites, and included a rough plan of the original, abortive castle. There have been doubts about the veracity of this report (now and in Edward's day), but it is possible to see a series of stony earthworks and rock-cut ditches fronting an area of gently rising ground, just north of the modern car park, which appears to mark the remains of the first castle (approx SJ 0615 8015). The accompanying sketch plan (not to scale) gives an indication of the remains, which are now very overgrown.

The rock-cut features are far too narrow to be defensive ditches, but could represent marking-out trenches which would have been enlarged had the work progressed. The remains appear to form the basement level of a building range backing onto the rising ground. A twin-towered gatehouse seems to be suggested. Presumably the main part of the castle would have been situated above and behind (north) of the existing features.

In truth, the whole site is so vague that it could be dismissed as a series of old mining trenches or stone quarries, were it not for the presence of a fallen mass of well-built masonry on the east side of the site. This is not so easy to dismiss. It seems to have formed part of the gatehouse foundations, and there are slight traces elsewhere of stonework poking through the grass. Although these features appear to mark the remains of the abortive castle, the setting is quite unsuitable for a fortification since it is overlooked by higher ground and is completely lacking in any natural defences. It is no wonder the king advised a move further away, where the sheer cliff edge would have provided more suitable protection to his new fortress.

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