

ENNISKILLEN CASTLE

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East Bridge Enniskillen Factsheet



Fermanagh & Omagh
District Council
Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí



The East Bridge, Enniskillen

Key to the development of Enniskillen as Ireland's only island town was the construction of bridges at both the east and west of the town. While these bridges would allow access to the town, they would both be defended by a battery.

Wooden Draw Bridges

The first bridge on this site would have been built by planters in the early years of the 17th century. It was made from wood and had a drawbridge.

The early road at the east drawbridge was Bower Lane and ran from the drawbridge to the present location of the Enniskillen Hotel.



A Fort of Sods

In 1689, at the time of the Williamite Wars, the Governor of Enniskillen raised a fort of sods on the summit of Camomile Hill (Forthill as it is now known).

The fort was laid out in line with the East Bridge; a covered way between the two is thought to have survived until the end of the 18th century.



The original bridge was replaced in 1688 by a stone arch bridge 15 feet wide and 174 feet long. “

This, one of the most celebrated bridges in Irish history, forms the core of the present East Bridge.”

List of Historic Buildings, Groups of Buildings, Areas of Architectural Importance in the Town of Enniskillen, UAHS, March 1972-74 by Hugh Dixon.

The first Ordnance Survey, 1834, shows four breakwaters, suggesting it had five arches.

The bridge was modified in 1823; it was widened and a footpath added on the north side. It was further widened in 1892 with a footpath added on the south side.



The Ramp

The construction of the so-called “ramp” at the time of the building of the Queen Elizabeth Road allows pedestrian access under the bridge.

As an architectural feature the “ramp” merits little note, as Dixon highlighted: *“Thrust into an impossible geographical situation it offers nothing and gives less to the visual amenity of the area. Few Enniskilleners look at it - no wonder!”*

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The best view of the bridge is from Ceithleann’s Island.

