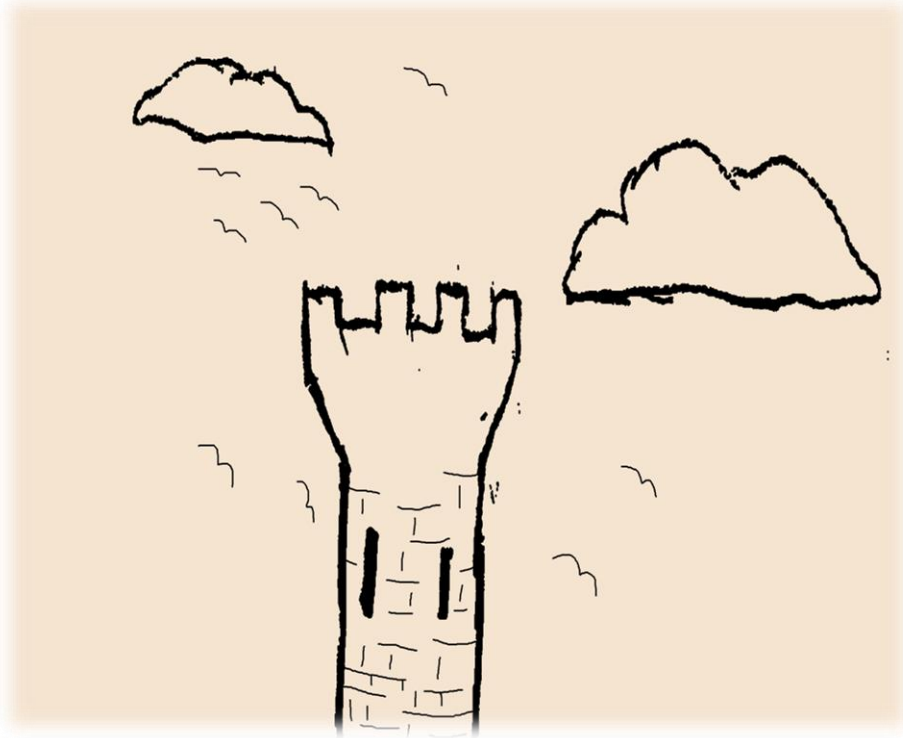


Castle Builder



By James Embry



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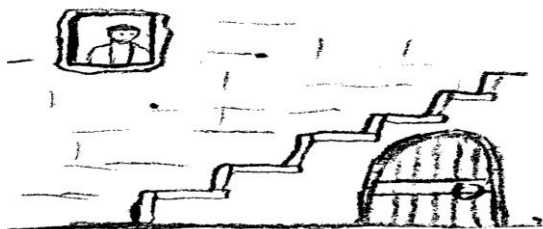
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A castle is a large and imposing military fortress and strong hold. It serves as the center of power for a lord or king. A castle was also the home and residence of the ruler and their family, as well as other nobles and servants. Castles come in a huge variety of shapes sized and styles.

In this book I am going to be glossing over a lot of the historical context of castles because I am mainly going to be dealing with how they can be used in a role playing environment. Historical castles really didn't have to deal with the possibilities of magic or flying or subterranean attacks or attacks from magical creatures so there is one disconnect.

The second reason, is because there are people who have devoted their lives to studying historical castles and know much more about them than I could ever hope to. Castles are actually very complicated with many of their own terms and structures that while very important and significant would likely not be all that useful in a typical role playing situation. So if you want a detailed analysis of historic castles there are many resources that can be used, but this book is not one of them.

All that being said, I am going to try to stick to the real world as much as possible. If magic or flying creatures are present in the setting I am going to assume that they are so rare that they haven't had a significant impact on the way castles are defended. If fireball throwing mages or knights on dragon back are fairly common in your setting, then the entire concept of castles starts to fall apart without some considerable alterations to the way that castles work.



What is a Castle

As stated, as castle is a large fortified structure that also serves as a living space. Castles could be very bleak and depressing. They could also be very luxuries and comfortable. The atmosphere of a castle is determined by the age of the castle, the wealth of its inhabitants, and their character. But, first and foremost a castle is a fortified defensive structure. A castle could allow a lord or king to control huge area of countryside against all but the most determined and well equipped military forces. A castle could be defended by only a very small number of people against much larger forces. Lastly, castles were expensive and could not be built by just anyone, in that since castles were a very visible displays of power.

Parts of a castle

Walls: One of the most important parts of a castle is its walls. A building without walls can hardly be considered a castle. Castle walls would need to be made of stone and have an average height of about 30ft, but shorter or taller walls are possible. Castle walls would also need to be think to withstand bombardments from siege weapons such as catapults or trebuchets, but also to allow men such as archer to move freely across them without the risk of falling off. A width of about 5ft should be considered the absolute minimum thickness for a castle walls, but they could me much thicker.

On the tops of the walls there should be stone barriers that archers could stand behind for cover from enemy projectiles. There should be gaps in the floor to allow archers to fire directly down on enemies that had gotten close to the walls or to pour hot sand or oil on them.

Walls would also need to extend down underground for some distance as well to prevent attackers from digging under them.

Towers: Towers provided the men of the castle with a better vantage point within which to see the surrounding area. They also provide a greater height for archers to fire down at attackers. A tower could be just about any height, but remember that if the tower becomes too tall, the weight of the tower itself could start to crush the bricks on the bottom of the tower. Assume that a tower has a maximum height of double the height of the walls, this way the walls can help support the weight of the tower.

Courtyard: A courtyard is an open space within the wall, but outside the keep. It may be used for gatherings, small military formations, or official announcements from the lord or lady of the castle.

Gate Houses: A gate in a castle is by definition a weakness. It is an open portal through a barrier. Thus gate houses were ways to mitigate some of those weaknesses. A good gatehouse would need thick heavy doors of wood or in some cases metal on both sides of the wall. There should be a portcullis on both sides of the wall. Once attackers breach the first gate, they would be trapped inside by the second gate. At this point they would be under assault from any number of defenses that the men of the castle could conceive of. This could include archers firing from interior arrow slits inside the wall, burning sand or oil being poured on them from murder holes above, or perhaps even pits being opened beneath them. Being stuck inside a gate house would be one of the worse places a defender could find themselves.

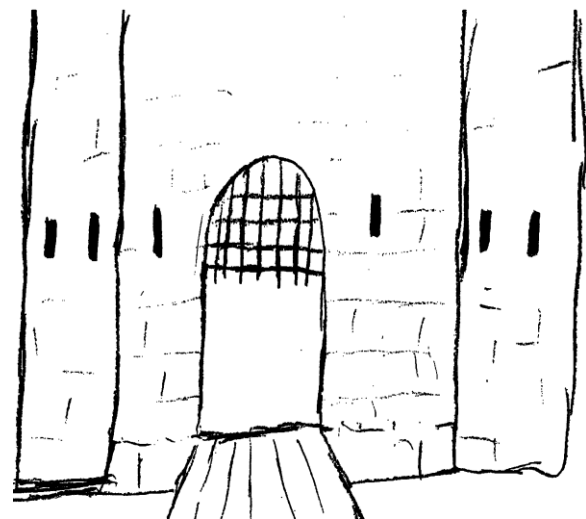
Keep: A keep is the primary central structure of a castle. The keep is essentially just a strong stone building at its most basic. The keep itself can be any size really, from a small central stone building, to a sprawling complex. Many keeps would have additional fortifications such as additional towers, arrow slits, and a heavy

reinforced gate of its own if not an entire gatehouse.

Castle Defense

Castles work based on the idea of redundancy when it comes to their fortifications. If one wall would be difficult to overcome, why not use three walls? Castles were designed to funnel attackers to exactly the points where they would be the most vulnerable. Even if an attacker was able to overcome the first line of defenses, they would find that they now had to do the exact same thing again.

It was a daunting prospect that many would be attackers simply chose not to attempt.



Attacking a Castle

The first rule of attacking a castle is: don't. Not if there are any other options. It isn't that castles couldn't be taken, but simply that the cost and time of taking one might make it not worth the effort.

If it is absolutely vital that a castle be taken by force, an attacker has a few options available to them.

Ladders: Ladders could be used to climb over the walls of a castle. This would of course mean that the attackers would have to get close enough to the walls to put up the ladders and then climb them while under a constant barrage of arrows or whatever else the defenders could use. Once on top of the walls, the attackers would need to physically fight the men up there guarding the walls.

Siege Towers: Siege towers were mobile towers on wheels that would be pushed against the walls so that the attackers could get on the walls faster. Siege Towers also protected the men inside from arrows. Siege towers would require resources such as wood to build however and would need to be rolled to the castle wall. For this reason, castles were normally built on the tops of hills with earthen barriers before attackers could even reach the walls which would make rolling the tower very difficult.

Battering Rams: A battering ram is a large wooden log, with a reinforced end that can be used to beat against a wall until it breaks. More advanced battering rams would have handles, protection for the men operating it, and probably be suspended by ropes or chains from a wooden frame on wheels.

Sapping: Sapping is the practice of digging under the walls of the castle. The sappers might make tunnels that would allow the attacker to enter the lower levels of a castle unharmed, or if

explosives are available, to plant them in such a way that they could bring a section of the wall down. It would be very difficult to defend against an attack by sappers. The only real downfall to this method of attack was that it required a considerable amount of time and dedication on the part of the attackers.

Catapults and Trebuchets: These siege weapons would launch heavy stones against the walls and towers of the castle causing death and destruction as well as damaging the structure. These powerful weapons had outstanding range, but depending on the thickness of the castle walls their effectiveness might be limited. If explosives are available, they could also conceivably be lobbed at the castle walls or the men inside.

Siege: One of the only weaknesses of a castle was that it could not supply itself. An attacker could surround a castle and cut it off from its supply lines and hope to starve out the people inside until they surrendered. This could be costly and time consuming because the people conducting the siege would also need supplies as well. Also, an army besieging a castle would be vulnerable to forces friendly to the castle coming to its aid over the weeks or months it could take to force the castle to surrender. Because of this, castles normally had considerable storehouses of food and water inside the walls in order to outlast a siege that an enemy attempted.

Building a Castle for Your Game

This section will help you to build a semi random castle for your game. It should provide sufficient detail for the castle that you can describe it to the players in a way that makes it unique.

Basic Castle

For a starting castle, we will assume that we have the following parts.

Keep: This is a square stone building. A basic keep includes just a grand hall and the living quarters for the lord and his or her family as well as a kitchen and servant quarters.

Wall: The keep has a single 30ft stone wall about 10ft thick around its perimeter. There is a single gate house to access. The walls have sufficient defensive structures for archers.

Towers: Assume that the castle has four 60ft towers. One on each corner of the walls. These towers have arrow slits that allow for observation of the area surrounding the castle as well as allows archers inside the towers to fire at attacker that may have made their way onto the castle walls.

Storehouse: A storehouse is a secured location where a castle can keep food supplies in the case of a siege.

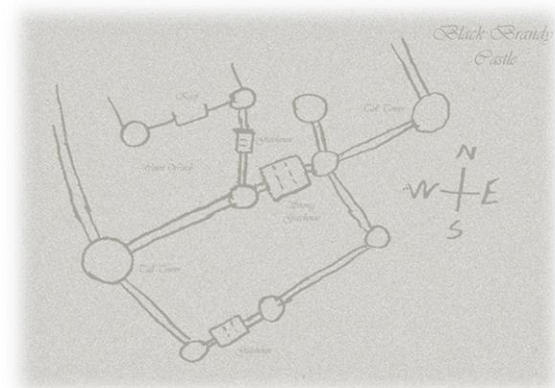
Barrack: A barracks is where the guards of the castle can live and train. A barracks will also include an armory stocked with weapons and armor for the defense of the castle.

Building Materials

Castles need to be built out of strong material that can withstand bombardment from siege weapons. The building material will also affect the overall look of the castle.

1d6 Building Material

1	Clay, Dark
2	Clay, Light
3	Stone, Dark
4	Stone, Light
5	Stone, Red Brick
6	Stone, Uncut



Castle Modifications

No two castles should be alike, they will each have their own strengths and weaknesses as well as their share of unique amenities.

Before you start modifying your castle, consider for a moment what role you want the castle to play in your setting. Is it a strictly military fortress built on the boarder of two warring kingdoms, is it a luxurious and comfortable accommodation for a wealthy and powerful noble, or is it a crumbling ruin in some forgotten corner of the kingdom. Or, just roll randomly.

1d6 Castle Character

1-2	Fortress
3-4	Palace
5-6	Ruin

After you have decided or determined the castle's character, you can start modifying it from its basic form into what it is when the characters encounter it. Each castle should get a number of modifications. Feel free to adjust the number of modifications based on the needs of the setting however.

Fortress

2 fortifications +2d4 random modifications.

1d6 Modification

1-3	Fortification
4-5	Luxury
6	Weakness

Palace

2 luxuries +2d4 random modifications.

1d6 Modification

1-3	Luxury
4-5	Fortification
6	Weakness

Ruin

2d4 modifications

1d6 Modification

1-5	Weakness
6	Fortification

1d100 Fortifications

1-5	Barracks
6-10	Blacksmith
11-13	Dungeon
14-23	Gatehouse
24-26	Gatehouse, Internal
27-31	Kennel
32-34	Moat
35-44	Stable
45-54	Stores
55-100	Wall

1d100 Luxuries

1-11	Accommodations
12-19	Bathroom
20-27	Brewery
28-35	Chappelle/Sanctuary
36-46	Courtyard
47-54	Gallery
55-62	Garden
63-73	Hall
74-77	Hospital
78-88	Kitchen
89-92	Laboratory
93-100	Library

1d6 Weaknesses

1	Decayed Luxury
2	Poor Stores
3	Weak Barracks
4	Weak Gatehouses
5	Weak Keep
6	Weak Walls

Placing Modifications

When placing modification, you may end up with contradictory information, like a castle with fortified walls, but also weak walls. You can simply ignore such results and reroll if you like or say that they cancel each other out. Perhaps the castle does have fortified walls, but they were damaged recently in a storm or an attack and haven't been repaired yet, rendering them about as effective as normal walls. As all of this is just a guideline, do what makes the most sense for you game.

Also, you may roll double results. For instance, you may roll for an extra wall twice, in this case it is pretty easy to assume that the castle has three walls rather than two, but in other cases it isn't so simple. If you roll for a kennel twice, it isn't likely that the castle needs two of them, so in this case just assume that the castle has a single kennel of superior quality. The description for each modification will provide more advice in this matter.

Defenses

Barracks

1d10	Quality
1-9	Improved
10	Superior

Barracks, Improved

The castle has an improved barracks that allows it to house twice as many men as normally found in a castle.

Barracks, Superior

The castle has a superior barracks instead. The castle has a quality barracks manned by three times the number of men normally found in a castle.

Blacksmith

1d10 Quality

1-6	Average
7-9	Improved
10	Superior

Blacksmith, Average

The castle has a blacksmith within the castle walls, this means that the castle can make its own weapons and armor and thus the men of the castle are likely better equipped.

Blacksmith, Improved

The castle actually has a highly skilled blacksmith who was likely recruited specifically for their skill at metal work.

Blacksmith, Superior

The castle has access to an expert blacksmith that is known far and wide for their skill. Warriors from many lands seek out blades and armor bearing this armorers mark. The men of the castle are very well equipped indeed.

Dungeon

1d10 Quality

1-6	Average
7-9	Improved
10	Superior

Dungeon, Average

A dungeon is a network of underground cells designed to house prisoners. These accommodations are not comfortable and provide only the bare necessities for the prisoners. The cells are reasonably secure and escape is unlikely. A dungeon does have the defensive quality in that since it is underground, it makes attack by sappers more difficult.

Dungeon, Improved

An Improved dungeon is a feared place where prisoners will face not only the sparse conditions and isolation of a more mundane dungeon, but

also the cruel hands of the castle's torturer. Sometimes "interrogations" are intended to extract information, but more often than not they are simply a means to inflict additional torment on the condemned. Escape from such a place is highly unlikely.

Dungeon, Superior

A superior dungeon is a place of nightmares. Prisoners are held in cells specifically designed to inflict pain and torment. Worst of all, is the torture chamber, where the high inquisitor assisted by his or her assistants will use a wide variety of devious implements to break the will and sanity of those condemned to this hellish underground chamber. Escape is nearly impossible.

Gatehouse, Internal

In addition to the gatehouses in the walls and at the entrance of the keep, the castle also has an internal gatehouse that protects the main hall, this allow the hall to be used as a last fallback point for the lord or lady of the castle.

Gatehouse

1d10 Quality

1-9	Improved
10	Superior

Gatehouse, Improved

One of the castle's gate houses (your choice) is more heavily fortified than normal. It has a thick reinforced portcullis that is protected by many other defenses such as arrow slits and murder holes. It would take a very heavy battering ram to bring this door down.

Gate House, Superior

One of the castle's gatehouses (your choice) is very heavily reinforced and expertly defended by arrow slits, murder holes, and other defenses such as trap doors or other traps. The door itself

is so thick that only the most brutal of battering rams has a chance of opening it.

kennel

1d10 Quality

1-6	Average
7-9	Improved
10	Superior

kennel, Average

The castle has a kennel. Dogs are kept here and tended to by a kennel master. These dogs are useful for hunting as well as defense of the castle.

kennel, Improved

The castle has a superior kennel. Dogs are kept here and trained by a skilled hound master for war,

kennel, Amazing

The castle has a kennel where an expert hound master and his or her assistants breed and train some of the most feared war dogs in the kingdom.

Moat

1d10 Quality

1-6	Average
7-9	Improved
10	Superior

Moat, Average

The castle has a moat. This is a narrow ditch that surrounds the castle. During rainy weather the moat may become muddy and very difficult to cross. The bottom of the moat is lined with spikes or spears that make crossing it not only difficult, but dangerous. A moat makes attacks from siege towers and ladders almost impossible as well as significantly increases the difficulty of sapping the castle walls. The castle has a bridge that leads across the moat to the gatehouse, this

bridge will serve to funnel attacker to a fixed point.

Moat, Improved

The castle has a superior moat. This moat is wide and deep and filled with water. Crossing the moat is almost impossible.

Moat, Amazing

This moat is very wide and deep and filled with water. The bottom of the moat is lined with underwater spikes likely to injure anyone who attempts to swim across. The castle has a draw bridge that crosses the moat at the gatehouse which can be pulled up with chains to make accessing the castle all but impossible.

Stable

1d10 Quality

1-6	Average
7-9	Improved
10	Superior

Stable, Average

The castle has its own stable. The castle is able to field a small number mounted soldiers or knights directly from the castle.

Stable, Improved

The castle is able to field twice the number of mounted soldiers or knights directly from the castle.

Stable, Superior

The castle is able to unleash a host of mounted soldiers and knights directly from the castle.

Stores

1d10 Quality

1-9	Improved
10	Superior

Stores, Improved

The castle has double the amount of foodstuffs in storage for the event of a siege or famine.

Stores, Superior

The castle has four times the amount of foodstuffs in storage for the event of a siege or famine.

Wall

1d12 Quality

1-6	Average
7-9	Improved
10-11	Superior
12	Amazing

Wall, Average

The castle has an extra wall. This wall is of average height and thickness.

Walls, Improved

The castle gains an additional wall. This wall is thick and reinforced, making the wall durable against attacks from siege weapons such as catapults and trebuchets. The wall is also about 35ft tall making assaults from ladders and siege towers more difficult.

Walls, Superior

The castle gains an additional wall. This wall is very thick and heavily reinforced, making the wall very durable against attacks from siege weapons such as catapults and trebuchets. The wall is about 40ft tall making assaults from ladders and siege towers much more difficult.

Walls, Amazing

The castle gains an additional wall. This wall is extremely thick and reinforced to an absurd degree, making the wall almost impenetrable against attacks from siege weapons such as catapults and trebuchets. The wall is about 50ft tall making assaults from ladders and siege towers almost impossible difficult.

Luxuries

Accommodations

1d10	Quality
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1-6	Average
-----	---------

7-9	Improved
-----	----------

10	Superior
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Accommodations, Average

The castle has a number of guest rooms where it can house visiting guests.

Accommodations, Improved

The castle has additional accommodations that are spacious and luxurious. Soft beds and full wardrobes are just some of the amenities guests in these quarters can expect.

Accommodations, Superior

The castle has all of the previous accommodations as well as guest rooms that are fit for a king.

Laboratory

1d10	Quality
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1-6	Average
-----	---------

7-9	Improved
-----	----------

10	Superior
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Laboratory, Average

The castle has a small laboratory where a competent alchemist can mix potions and perform other simple experiments in the service of his or her lord.

Laboratory, Improved

The castle has a stocked laboratory of superior quality. Here an expert alchemist can perform all manner of strange and arcane research for his or her lord.

Laboratory, Superior

The castle has one of the best laboratories known to man. Here a master alchemist can

perform just about any work imaginable for his or her lord.

Bathhouse

1d10	Quality
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1-6	Average
-----	---------

7-9	Improved
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10	Superior
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Bathhouse, Average

The castle has a small private bath where guests and residents may go to wash themselves and relax.

Bathhouse, Improved

The castle has a large private bath where guests and residents may go to wash themselves and relax in warm water that is either heated by natural hot springs or brought by servants who keep the water at the desired temperature.

Bathhouse, Superior

The castle has a large private bath where guests and residents may go to experience the high of pleasure and luxury. Hot steaming water is maintained by a number of servants who will attend to the visitors as they relax in the water surrounded by statues and mosaics.

Brewery

1d10	Quality
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1-6	Average
-----	---------

7-9	Improved
-----	----------

10	Superior
----	----------

Brewery, Average

The castle has its own brewery where it can produce its own ale, beer, or wine.

Brewery, Improved

The castle has a superior brewery. Here beverages of excellent quality are produced and sold. The brewery brings in extra coin and prestige to the lord or lady of the castle.

Brewery, Superior

The quality of spirits made here is known throughout the land and the mark of this castle is known and respected.

Chapel/Sanctuary

1d10	Quality
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1-6	Average
-----	---------

7-9	Improved
-----	----------

10	Superior
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Chapel/Sanctuary, Average

The castle has a small private chapel that serves the religious needs of the residents. The chapel is tended to by a single clergyman.

Chapel/Sanctuary, Improved

The castle has a chapel large enough to hold religious ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, or hold services. The chapel is tended to by a clergymen and a small number of assistants.

Chapel/Sanctuary, Superior

The castle has a chapel so large some compare it to a cathedral. Stained glass window, mosaics, and paintings of religious scenes line the walls. The chapel is governed by a respected clergyman and a number of assistants.

Courtyard

1d10	Quality
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1-6	Average
-----	---------

7-9	Improved
-----	----------

10	Superior
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Courtyard, Average

The castles has a courtyard, it is an open space inside the walls that is used for any number of events.

Courtyard, Improved

The castle's courtyard is large and paved with stones. The courtyard may be lined with a hedge row or other decorations.

Courtyard, Superior

The castle's courtyard is sprawling and paved with stones. The courtyard itself is lined with statues and flowers.

Gallery

1d10	Quality
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1-6	Average
-----	---------

7-9	Improved
-----	----------

10	Superior
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Gallery

A gallery is a room designed to show off the trophies or wealth of the lord of the castle. It could include suits of armor, valuable paintings, statues, or the skins and skulls of slain beasts.

Hall

1d10	Quality
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1-6	Average
-----	---------

7-9	Improved
-----	----------

10	Superior
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Hall

A grand hall is the main room of the keep. It can be a place where the lord will hold court, a dining hall, or a place where official proclamations are made.

Library

1d10	Quality
-------------	----------------

1-6	Average
-----	---------

7-9	Improved
-----	----------

10	Superior
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Library

The castle has a collection of books, scrolls, and manuscripts. At the very least this should contain detailed histories of the lord of the castle, his or her family, and past residents of the castle.

Great Library, Improved

The castle has a large and impressive collection of books covering a wide range of topics. Perhaps even a few rare or valuable books can be found here.

Great Library, Superior

The castles has a library that contains literally thousands of books on all manner of subjects, including many rare or hard to find books on strange and arcane subjects.

Garden

1d10 Quality

1-6	Average
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7-9	Improved
-----	----------

10	Superior
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Garden

The castle has a garden. This is an outdoor area where flowering plants and fruit trees are grown and cultivated. The garden likely includes hedge rows and stone walkways that wind their way through the tranquil paths.

Hospital

1d10 Quality

1-6	Average
-----	---------

7-9	Improved
-----	----------

10	Superior
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Hospital, Average

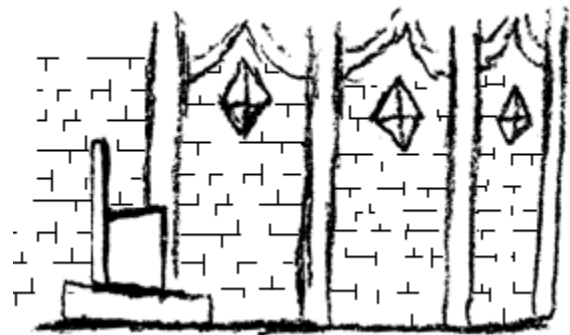
The castle has its own small hospital where the sick and injured can seek medical attention. The hospital is staffed by a single physician who can provide treatment and medicine to those in his or her care.

Hospital, Improved

The castle has a large and well stocked hospital. The hospital is staffed by a skilled physician and their small staff of assistants.

Hospital, Superior

The castle has an amazing house of healing that is famous throughout the realm. People will likely seek out the hospital of the castle for assistance with all manner of afflictions and ailments. The hospital is run by a master healer and their trained staff of knowledgeable assistants.



Weaknesses

Decayed Luxury

The castle has a luxury, but it is decayed and no longer useful.

Poor Stores

The castle is built from poor stone or perhaps the stone has degraded or been damaged. In other cases the castle was simply built quickly.

Weak Barracks

The castle has a poor barracks that can only support half as many troops as normal.

Weak Gatehouses

The castle has one gatehouse (your choice) that is poorly built or badly damaged. It cannot withstand even weak attacks from battering rams.

Weak Keep

The keep of the castle is very weak or poorly designed. It may have too many ways into the keep, or perhaps the gatehouse is poorly defended.

Weak Walls

One of the castle walls (your choice) is weak or badly damaged. The walls may only be about 20ft tall and are too thin to withstand attack from siege weapons.