

Toward Castle



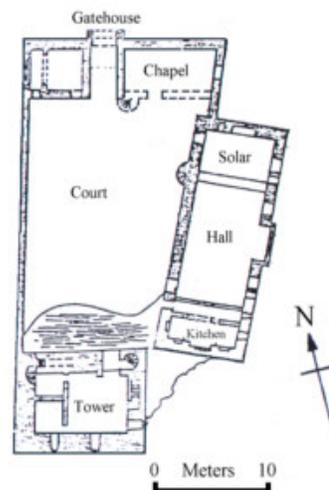
Toward Castle is located at the southeastern tip of the Cowal peninsula, and was built sometime in the mid 1400's. It served as the seat of the Lamont Chiefs until 1646, when it was destroyed by the Campbells. After its destruction, the Chiefs moved to Ardlamont at the southwestern tip of Cowal. It is impossible to tell exactly what the castle looked like in its prime, as no paintings exist. However, this much is known. The tower had two vaulted cellars of unequal size at ground level and a vaulted hall on the first floor. Entrance was at first-floor level in the south-west wall, with a mural stair in the east corner serving the cellars. The larger of these had a garderobe in the south-west wall, and in the south-east a small mural chamber which may represent a former ground-level entrance. There were two floors above the hall, of which little more than the north-west wall survives. The north-west side of the courtyard wall was a continuation of the shorter wall of the tower-house. The south-eastern wall extended outwards with a building of roughly twice the tower's area; this contained three rooms at ground level. The Hall had a door to the outside. The northern end of the courtyard wall had a sixteenth-century gateway, whose arch is still intact (though the gatehouse above has gone), and is a very fine example of early renaissance carving: rope moulding, chequers, plain roll and corbels. The gateway projects to allow for shot-loops giving flanking fire along the wall. Within the gate was a vaulted passage with guardrooms either side.

The ruins do not give the impression of a very large structure, but it was probably of average size for the time in which it was built. It was no humble pile of stones, as evidenced by the fact that Mary Queen of Scots, was entertained there in 1563.

Toward Castle is visible from, and accessible from the road A-815, running south from Dunoon. Distance is about 9 miles.



Appearance In 1600's



Plan of Toward Castle