

Honjo Castle Town Explanation board 2 “Honjo Castle’s Honmaru (main citadel) Ruins”

Honjo Castle's Honmaru which is located on the summit of Mt. Ozaki at an elevation of 25m above sea level has the maximum length of earthworks which is 124m in length from north to south and 96m from east to west. The difference in elevation from Sannomaru (third citadel)(Park Plaza) at the foot of the mountain is approximately 21m. The Ninomaru (second citadel) encircles the mountainside, and it is separated by man-made cliffs called “Kirigishi”.

The path leading up the slope from Ninomaru to Honmaru, there are 3 Masugata-shaped tiger gates on the north, east, and south sides to serve as defensive structures. Besides, according to the illustration from the 4th year of Jokyo era (1687), on the outer walls of the corridor on the earthworks surrounding the Honmaru, there are circular and triangular windows (crenel) installed alternatively for shooting guns and bows, indicating that the structure was designed with an emphasis on defense.

The earthworks are divided into two sections; a west earthwork, which is over 4m high and the east earthwork, which is about 1m high, to balance the elevation difference with the Ninomaru. The illustration depicts six turrets connected to a corridor built on the earthworks. Excavational investigation has confirmed the remains of the turrets in 3 corners: northeast corner of the earthworks, the south side of the east tiger entrance, and the southeast corner of the earthworks.

The Honmaru was the residence of the castle lord, and the domain office was located and served as the center of government affairs. However, this changed when the illustration map was produced in 4th year of Jokyo era (1687). The central function of the castle was moved to Sannomaru.

This explanation board is was founded by the East Japan Railway Culture Foundation for local cultural activities.