

East Gate of Gloucester

Roman and medieval East Gate discovered during excavations in 1974-78

First Roman Gate – AD 70

Fortress possibly base for 2nd Legion was key to Roman campaign against Wales.

Gate was timber with two towers with a central passageway.

Fortress had bank of earth around with a timber palisade on top. Watch towers were at intervals around the walls.

1978 – four posts found that were 12” square, more than 5’ long of solid oak.

Outside the timber and earth defences was a v-shaped ditch.

Second Roman Gate

AD 96-98 became a Colonia – Glevum. For retired veterans of Roman Legion. Gate towers were rebuilt in stone. Stone wall also built about 100 AD.

C170 AD, wall was strengthened with internal earth banks and interval towers were added.

C 270 AD wall was rebuilt again

Early 4th century – a long stretch each side of gate was replaced. Oak timbers were piled – dated 310 AD.

Part of city walls visible in underground chamber in Kings Walk.

Sections at 71-3 Southgate Street and in the City Museum.

4th Century – wall had square/polygonal external towers – to support a ballista or catapult.

New ditch was dug – preparing to withstand attack from outside.

Late 4th century was time of civil war and disrupted economy

410 AD Roman Empire withdrew. Economic decline was rapid. Glevum lost trade and prosperity. Administrators continued to govern for about 200 years.

5th and 6th centuries – large parts of Britain were under control of the Anglo-Saxons.

577 – Battle of Dyrham – rulers of Gloucester, Bath and Cirencester were defeated.

600’s – Gloucester part of Saxon Kingdom of Mercia. Wooden buildings were erected in ruins of Roman Civic Centre.

Early 900’s Queen Athelflaed of Mercia restored Gloucester to vitality. New street grid laid out and defences repaired. St Oswald’s founded.

Royal palace at Kingsholm.

Norman Gate.

Roman East gate and wall survived until 11th century. The Roman gate was rebuilt with a tower and a room above.

1250 the Eastern defences were repaired using money raised by a toll – murage – on produce sold in the town.

Line of round towers added to the outside of the wall – foundations can be seen in Kings Walk viewing chamber.

East Gate rebuilt with two round towers with rooms above.

Baron's war – 1265. Town captured by Barons, damaged by King's part, refortified by Barons under Simon de Montfort.

East gate was defensive but also marked boundary of city and had porter to close gates at night, to collect tolls, etc.

Outside of gate was drawbridge.

About 1540 a stone moat was built in front of the gate with a horsepool for washing horses and carts.

1588 used as prison for women.

1616 used as meeting place for council.

1633 lodgings for porter

1643 – Siege of Gloucester. East gate filled with earth to withstand cannon fire.

Late 1600's Charles II had walls knocked down.

1703 – Bridewell and Dungeon / Poor School

1778 East Gate demolished.

In Chamber, Sally Port leads to South tower of the gate. 13th century tower with latrine. Tale of escape from latrine. Medieval moat, causeway and horsepool.