

## **【Structures Within the Main Bailey】**

### **Main Bailey**

The main bailey, or *honmaru*, is the core of the castle complex. If Hikone had ever come under attack, it is here at the top of Mt. Hikone, protected by multiple stone walls and surrounded by three concentric moats, that defending forces would have made their last stand. The lord of Hikone Ii Naotaka (1590–1659) had a temporary residence here until his private residence (*omote goten*) was completed in 1622, and the *honmaru* also contained several towers. The castle's main keep was saved from demolition during the Meiji era (1868–1912), but the other buildings were not. Their stone foundations can still be seen nearby.

### **Main Keep (*Tenshu*)**

The main bailey is the site of the main keep, a panoramic vantage point from which to survey the castle's surroundings that was often used to store arms and armor. This keep, completed in 1606, is believed to have been built using mostly materials from Otsu Castle, transported by boat from 45 kilometers away on the southwest side of Lake Biwa. Castles with impressive keeps, like those of Hikone, Himeji, and Osaka, were generally constructed during the Edo period (1603–1867), when the country was unified under the shogun and large-scale military conflicts were rare. The castles of that time were designed both as fortifications and as symbols of the power of the daimyo who controlled them. Hikone's keep, a National Treasure, reflects the wealth and stature of the Ii family.

### **Drum Gate Turret (*Taiko-mon Yagura*)**

This turret is a guard station for the front entrance leading to the main bailey. The turret contained a drum (*taiko*) that was used for communication within the castle complex.

### **Site of Arrival-Viewing Turret (*Tsukimi Yagura*)**

The *tsukimi yagura*, a two-story turret that stood on the highest ground of the castle complex, was demolished in 1868. From inside the tower, guards monitored the area to the northeast of the castle.