



# MIJAS WATCHTOWERS

## Battery Tower La Cala

The Tower is "hoof shaped" (horseshoe), it is formed by half a prolonged circle with two lunette salient. Its perimeter is 35 meters approximately and it is more than 10 meters high.

Inside the tower are two floors, the lower or basement would be the "Santa Barbara" (at ground level outside). As indicated in a report of 1773, The "Reducto" Tower of La Cala del Moral was built in that year. A year later, another report mentions that the tower was equipped with two cannons of 16 or 24 pounds in weight and that they were in good condition.

In 1821, it was noted that Torre Cala del Moral Artillery needed new ground for two cannons of 8 pounds in weight and needed considerable works. Later, in a document of 1830, the tower is described as a circular tower of 11 "varas" (measurement considered to be nearly a meter) in diameter and enclosed with a fortification of 13 and a half "varas" high and a tower which was garrisoned by a corporal, three tower keepers and six soldiers.

In 1849, a report is made saying the tower is in a very bad condition and it is advised not to maintain it, nevertheless in 1857 it is mentioned that the tower had been re-paired and is in good condition. In later re-reports: 1860, 1873, 1906 and 1945, it is indicated that the tower is unarmed.

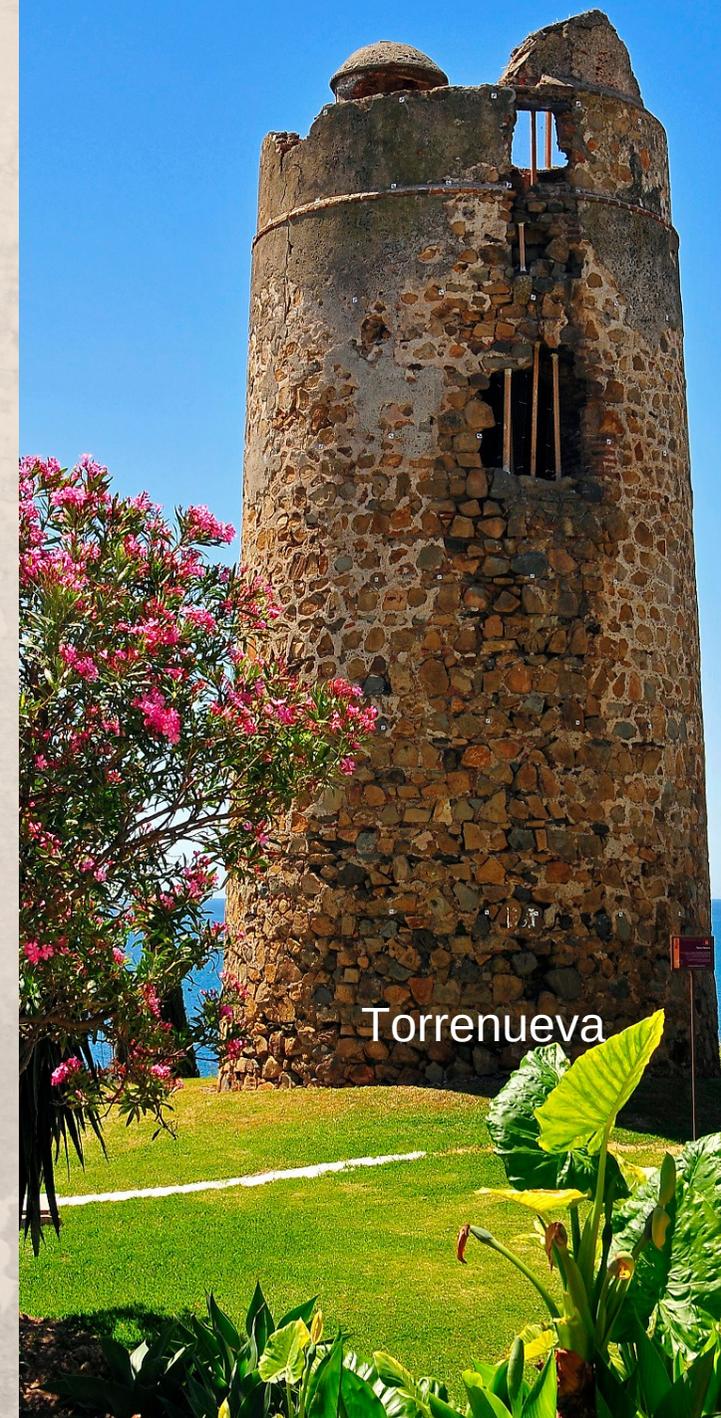
Some authors point out, incorrectly, that the tower was finished in the early sixteenth century.

In the past century, the tower has been used as a home and a front door was opened at street level, as well as a window, into what was originally the ammunition depot. Later, it was restored by the Town Hall of Mijas, who turned the building into a museum. Currently it is the home of the Interpretation Centre of Watchtowers.



Sources: Municipal Historic Archive of Mijas.  
Gil Albarracín, Antonio; "Documents on the defense of the coast of the Kingdom of Granada"

These facilities have been provided by the Town Hall of Mijas for employing people with disabilities.



Torrenueva



## WATCH TOWERS

Even though this coastal defense system dates back to the Muslim period, since the arrival of the Arabs to the Peninsula, this system was motivated by political upheavals and was implanted in the mid- thirteenth century on the coasts of the Kingdom of Granada; they were given special attention, so much, that the monarchs of Granada built a series of watchtowers that subsequently, with the other towers were included in the Christian coastal defense system in the sixteenth century.

In principle, their defensive function was to give warning of the presence of enemy boats using fire at the top of the tower; the smoke could be seen by the surrounding towers and allow coastal guards know where to go to stop the attack of the “berberiscos”. They were later armed and became an active artillery defensive element.

After the conquest of Mijas in 1487 by the Christian troops of the Catholic Monarchs and the sale of its inhabitants as slaves. A policy was made to repopulate these areas that had been depopulated.

In 1492, the properties of the former inhabitants were granted to the new Christian settlers, who had moved to Mijas after the conquest, yet reassuring the presence of several Hispanic Muslim neighbors. However, within a few years, many of these settlers abandoned the land that was granted to them, due to various factors; such as the attacks to the coast of Malaga by pirates who came from ports located in the north of Africa, etc., Causing the coastal zone to remain uninhabited, being unable to repopulate the area of the castle of Fuengirola , which in those days belonged to Mijas , until 1841, when the coastal strip was segregated to form the present municipality of Fuengirola.

Due to this uncertainty, watchtowers were erected along the Mediterranean to control and prevent the attacks by North African pirates.

From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, the Calahonda Tower, the New Tower of La Cala del Moral, The Old La Cala del Moral Tower (Battery Tower current home of the Interpretation Centre of Watchtowers) The Tower of Calaburras and Blanca Tower (the latter disappeared and was situated in the municipality of Fuengirola), were built and all currently declared of Cultural Interest in the Monument category.

- **CALABURRA TOWER**

The Tower is known as “Calaburra” or simply by “Burras”. In a document of 1571, it mentions La Cala and the residence of las Burras, which indicates the existence of a small military settlement; but it wasn’t until 1574 when Francisco de Cordoba, General Captain of the Kingdom of Granada, handed over 75,000 maravedís to pay for the construction of the tower. The tower was finished a year later. The initial budget rose up to 200,000 maravedís (550 ducados).

- **CALAHONDA TOWER**

Even though the tower is situated in Mijas, it is very near to the municipality of Marbella. The tower is popularly known as “Lancón Tower” and was finished in 1575 with a budget of 560 ducados. Some authors have confused it with the medieval Tower of Calahorra.

The tower is boat tail in shape with a base of 7,35 meters in diameter, and a height that goes from 5,85 meters to 10,20 meters. The entrance to the tower is at 6,10 meters of height and has a protection wall with crenels.

- **TORRE NUEVA**

It has also been called The Tower of Cala del Moral , Tower Peseta and Torre Penta- Pesetas. According to some authors, the Tower began construction in 1513, but other authors state it was completed around 1568 .

In a document dating back to 1759, the New Tower appears stating “it is situated West of the Calaburras Tower and East of Calahonda.” it also states that “the tower is in good condition, but needs some plastering and works done to it.”

A few years later, in 1762, the tower is again described as “in a average condition with capacity for a 4 pound cannon.” Years later some documents indicate that there was actually two towers with 6 acres of land for its use.



Calaburra Tower



Calahonda Tower



Torre Nueva

