

Cuyo Fort • Cuyo, Palawan



Cuyo was strategically located between the islands of Panay and the Palawan main land. The island served as a stepping stone that linked Palawan with the Visayas and Luzon. Cuyo's strategic position within a transportation and trade route made it imperative that it be fortified.

Built in 1683, the fortified church of San Agustin is attributed to Juan de Severo, OAR. The NHI historical marker at Cuyo gives as construction date as "about 1680." The next major renovation to the fortification was in 1827 when a belltower was built on top of one of the fort's bastions.

Cuyo's main municipal defense the complex housed both the church and *convento*. Cuyo fort provided a safe haven not just for the ecclesiastical but also for civil authority as Cuyo served as the first capital of the district known as Paragua (Palawan). Cuyo also function a convenient waypoint between the Visayan islands and the Palawan mainland. Hence, the town's importance.

The Cuyo fort has been described variously quadrilateral with bastions at the corner (Delgado), a stone church with stone fort and *baluarte*, a *fortaleza*. In fact, the fort is an irregular pentagon with the church forming one side and the convento originally located parallel to the church (but now at the rear and running perpendicular to the church) another. Curtain walls connect these two structures. However, the front curtain wall does not describe a straight line but is comes to an apex, where there is secondary entrance to the fort. This entrance does not lead directly into the fort but into a blind enclosure, apparently a type of blind opening to catch invaders off guard.

Bastions are found at four corners of the pentagon. The landward bastion and at the gospel side of the church forms the base of a bell tower built in 1827. The remaining three bastions have *garitas*. The fort's main entrance is through the church door, placed slightly off center of the nave's centerline.

Old photographs show that the convento was built parallel to the nave, however that is not the present position of the convento. Records have it that the convento was renovated in 1922. Most likely this was a new construction. The 1922 convento was repaired and renovated in 1995. At Lucbuan there is another quadrilateral fortification. Details about its construction are unknown, it might be a 19th century structure. The fort is greatly degraded and its walls are much reduced in height.

Ref.: <http://muog.wordpress.com/2008/01/30/cuyo-fort-%E2%80%A2-cuyo-palawan/>