

Fort Blockhouse

Commenced	1714 updated 1845, 1892, 1898	Armament	
Completed	1847	1872	6 x 7-inch R.B.L. 15 x 8-inch S.B. 9 x 18prs.
Cost	£	1891	3 x 64pr. R.M.L. 3 x 0.45 M.G.
Map Reference	SZ 625994	1897	5 x 12pr. Q.F. 4 x M.G.
Position	Portsmouth Harbour Mouth west side	1902	5 x 12pr. 12 cwt. Q.F. 2 x M.G.
Type	Coast Battery	1911	6 x 12pr. QF, 2 x M.G.
Ditch	Wet	1922	6 x 12pr. Q.F.
Guns	28	1940	Twin 6pdr 2 x 12pdr
Barrack Accom.	3 officers 92 men	1943	2 x 40mm Bofors.
Present use	M.O.D.	1956	all guns withdrawn
History	Submarine mining establishment. H.M.S. Dolphin, home of Navy submarine fleet.		
Disposal	Always been in Military hands		
Condition	Actively Preserved		
Access	By Arrangement with M.O.D. "Earlier Fortifications of Gosport"-		
Sources	Williams		

History and Description

Fort Blockhouse occupies the the end of the spit of land overlooking the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour on the western side. The first blockhouse erected on the site was a tower built in the reign of Edward VI (1552) to hold one end of the boom defence. It was regularly modified and enlarged and in 1813 the whole fort was remodelled, according to an inscription above the main gateway. In 1825 the seaward battery was converted to a casemated battery with 13 embrasures. In 1845 the bastions were altered and in 1863 the stone parapet was thickened and the terreplein extended to provide guns at the rear. A high wall and living accommodation was added. The sea facing casemates were altered to provide two tiers of guns.

It became known as Fort Blockhouse in the mid eighteenth century. The 1859 Commission did little to update the armament at that time of fifteen 36-pounder and fifteen 18-pounder SB guns. In 1875 the Royal Engineers took over Blockhouse as a sea-mining base and by 1880 the 4th Company were quartered in Blockhouse. New buildings were added and piers built along the creek. The Portsmouth Militia Division (Submarine Miners) moved from Monckton to Blockhouse in 1892.

In 1891 Blockhouse was armed with two 64pr. 58cwt. RMLs on sliding carriages with another on a 6ft. parapet slide. This was supplemented with three machine guns on parapet carriages. By then it was part of a Royal Engineers Submarine Mining establishment. In 1897 it was armed with 5 x 12pr. Q.F. guns at a cost of £363. By 1899 they were dismantled temporarily. They were sent to Woolwich in 1900. Two 12pr. B.L. guns were held as movable armament for the defence of the beach between Blockhouse and Fort Monckton. 5 x 12prs. were back in place from 1901 to 1910. In 1911 this was increased to 6 x 12prs. on Q.F.1 mountings. By 1917 there was no armament listed for the fort when the 12prs. were withdrawn from the approved armaments for anti-aircraft purposes list. They were back in 1922 in care and maintenance, that is the guns, mountings and cradles were dismantled separately and kept in a covered place in the vicinity of the emplacements.

In 1905 the Submarine Boat Station was established at Blockhouse. A 1915 armament return shows 2 x 3pr. and 2 x 6pr, QF guns at Blockhouse on naval mountings as anti-aircraft guns. In 1931 the whole of Fort Blockhouse was transferred to the Admiralty on condition that they provided the War Department with certain accommodation when necessary. In 1943 the fort had 2 x 40 mm Bofors gun in place. In December 1940 a Twin 6pdr was added on the sea curtain. After the War the fort was incorporated into the submarine establishment of HMS Dolphin. It was disarmed in 1956. The submarines were withdrawn in 1994 and Blockhouse was declared surplus to requirements in 1996. To date (2013) the QF position on North Bastion survives as does the one on the west end of the sea battery. In the centre of the sea battery QF position no.3 also survives with positions for two QF guns and a second emplacement close by together mounting four Nordenfelt 3pr. QF guns as a Naval saluting battery. Blockhouse is now occupied by 3rd Field Hospital of the British Army.

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Fort Blockhouse April 1892

- 1 Main Magazine
- 2 Married Soldiers' Quarters
- 3 Master Gunner's Quarters
- 4 Store (Field Gun Shed)
- 5 Stores
- 6 Soldiers' Quarters
- 7 Loaded Mine Store
- 8 Loading Shed
- 9 Officers' Quarters
- 10 Stores

Armament

- a 64pr R.M.L. Nos 1 to 7
- b 64pr R.M.L. No.3
- c 64pr R.M.L. No.2
- d 64pr R.M.L. No.10 on 6ft parapet carriage and slide.

