

Grain Fort

Commenced	1860	Armament	
Completed	1867 (may have been partially armed prior to	1864	16 heavy guns seaward 12 lighter gun landward mixture of 64 pr RML & 32pr SB 1876 to
Cost	£ this) 114,714	1888	4 x 9-inch RML east face, 1 x 11-inch RML SE salient, 1 x 11-inch RML NE salient, 3 x 11-inch RML east face, 1 x 11-inch RML NE face, 3 x 64pr NE face
Map Reference	TQ 890767	1890 -1905	2 x 9-inch RML SE face 2 x 11-inch RML East face, 2 x 10-inch B.L.H.P. NE Salient (replaced with 2 x 6-inch BL circa 1900) 1 x 11-inch RML north face, 11 x parapet machine guns (+ general defence Isle of Grain 3 x 9pr RML & machine guns) 1906 2 x 9.2-inch BL barbette
Position	Medway Channel, Isle of Grain	1914-1918	(No heavy guns but 2 x 6-inch BL possibly in position)
Type	Artillery fort with keep	1939-45	2 x 6-inch naval H.A.
Ditch	1 inner dry, 1 outer dry	Caponiers	4 outer ditch 2 inner ditch (2 demi)
Guns	16 x 68pr SB sea - 12 x 68pr SB land	Counterscarp galleries	3 inner ditch
Barrack Accom.	250 men	Haxo casemates	None
Present use	Waste land	Moncrieff Pits	None
History	Continuously garrisoned from 1865 to 1956		
Disposal	Sold to local council, Demolished 1962		
Condition	Mostly demolished		
Access	open access to site 'The Isle of Grain Defences' MacDougall K.D.R.G. J.D. Wilson 'Later Nineteenth century defences of the Thames, including Grain Fort' Army Historical Research Coalhouse Fort Archives		
Sources			

History and Description

Grain Fort, originally known as Fort Grain, was situated at the eastern extremity of the Hoo peninsula. It occupied the highest point of the island and together with Garrison Point Fort on the opposite shore of the 'island' dominated the entrance to the Medway. The earthen ramparts, heptagonal in form, had a continuous, dry, unrevetted ditch flanked by musketry caponiers. A 'D' shaped keep at its gorge contained a defensible barracks and provided flanking fire along the inner ditch from three caponiers, with a demi caponier at either end to enfilade the gorge and inner ditch. This ditch was also protected by a series of counterscarp galleries accessed from the inner caponiers. The fort was designed to prevent landings on the Hoo Peninsula, which would threaten Sheerness and Chatham, and to protect Grain Battery, which was subsequently to be known as Grain Dummy Battery. It was to mount sixteen heavy guns to bear on the entrance of the Medway, at a range of 1,500 yards to the nearest point of the channel, with 12 lighter guns on the land faces. During construction slippage happened in the construction the ramparts but when sand and shingle was substituted for the clay originally used, and the angle of the slope reduced, no further trouble was experienced after 1869. A magazine was built in the upper part of the keep to supply the guns on the roof. However, this was considered to be too exposed to shot passing over the rampart and the Main Magazine situated under the rampart was utilised instead. After construction the embrasures were considered to be inherently weak and proposals were made to adapt the fort for armament on the Moncrieff System. This was not carried out but the ramparts were remodelled with bonnets, although it appears that the proposed iron shutters were never fitted. A date of 1887 is suggested for this rearrangement. With its demolition in 1962 there was lost the most complex single work in the Thames/Medway area, which, in its many alterations and modifications, illustrated in a most graphic and complex way the developments in Coastal Artillery over 100 years. The above ground portions of the fort have now been completely destroyed. The site is now largely unrecognisable, all that remains are the ramparts and ditch, although the caponiers and some underground tunnels and magazines are intact but inaccessible.

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