

Victorian Forts and Batteries

Datasheets
on the Victorian Fortifications of
the United Kingdom

Isle of Wight



David Moore

<http://www.victorianforts.co.uk>

Freshwater Redoubt

Commenced	1855
Completed	1856
Cost	£
Map Reference	SZ 345856
Position	Isle of Wight / Freshwater Bay
Type	Coast Battery & beach defence
Ditch	Dry / Two land sides only
Guns	6
Barrack Accom.	3 Officers 39 men (in caponier)
Present use	Now private residence.
History	Practice battery for Golden Hill
Disposal	Sold 1928
Condition	Poor - Caponier derelict
Access	Tea rooms only - Q.F. battery by arrangement
Sources	Solent Papers No 2, Precis of correspondence prior to 1898

Armament

Original 4 x 68pr. SB 3 x 8-inch SB How.
1861-1889 2 x 7-inch R.B.L. 2 x 64pr. R.M.L.
 3 x 8-inch S.B. How.
1893 2 x 6pr. Q.F. (dismounted in RA charge)
 2 x 7-inch R.B.L. 2 x 64pr. R.M.L. 1 x 0.45MG
1895-1898 2 x 6pr. Q.F. 2 x 64pr R.M.L. 1 x MG
1899 2 x 4.7-inch Q.F. (dismounted in RA charge)
 2 x 6pr. Q.F. 2 x 64pr R.M.L.
Mounted 1901 2 x 12pr.QF 2 x 6pr.QF 1 x MG
Mounted 1902 2 x 6pr. QF Hochkiss 1 x MG
1903 2 x 5-inch BL mobile 1916 - Nil
1917 2 x 15pr BLC on field carriages
1922 2 x 12pr.QF 12cwt

Caponiers 1

Counterscarp galleries None

Haxo casemates None

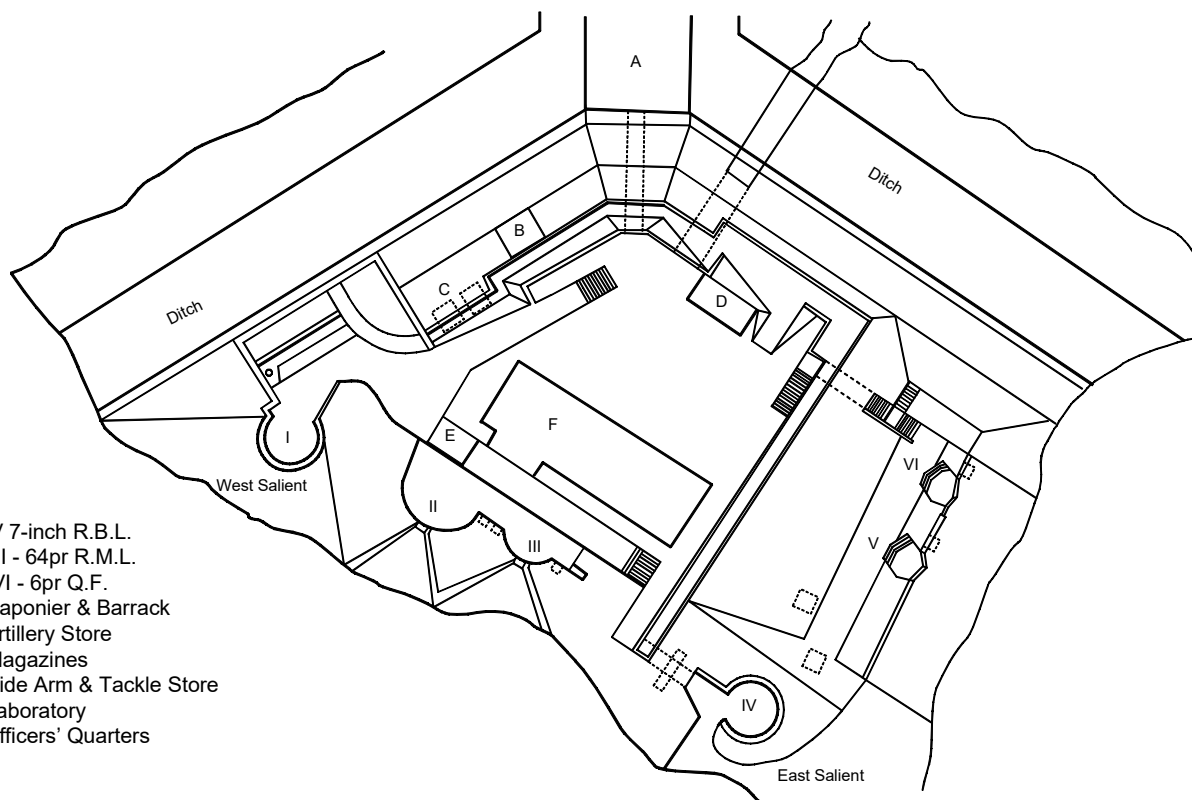
Moncrieff Pits None

History and Description

Freshwater Redoubt was constructed to defend Freshwater Bay, which was an good place to land troops in reasonable weather. A deep, brick lined ditch protects the landward approaches whilst to the seaward steep cliffs make a frontal assault impossible. The redoubt is entered over a drawbridge, to the left of which a large two-storey caponier projects into the rampart to provide flanking fire along it. On a small parade in the centre of the fort was constructed a barrack for Officers and NCOs. Twenty four men were accommodated in the caponier which is entered via a long staircase down from the parade. This caponier is now an empty shell, the floors having collapsed. Beneath the western rampart are the shell and cartridge stores.

The redoubt consists of a QF battery overlooking the bay and a four gun battery facing south. The south battery was originally armed with smooth bore guns but was remodelled in 1871 for two 7-inch RBLs and two 64pr. RMLs. The 64prs were originally firing through embrasures but were 'blocked up' to fire over the parapet in 1888. In 1889 the General Officer Commanding advised that an ironclad could easily silence Freshwater Fort in its present state and then a landing could be effected to take the defences of the western entrance in rear. He proposed to mount new guns in extra emplacements on the Down but the Defence Committee did not agree. They stated that the only danger to be apprehended at Freshwater was a landing and this could be met by mounting two 6pr. QFs and 1 Machine gun in the lower battery. In consequence the lower east facing beach battery originally mounting 8-inch SB Howitzers was remodelled in 1891 for two 6pr. QF guns and a maxim machine gun. In 1893 the 7-inch RBLs were removed and the upper battery emplacements 1 and 4 were to be remodelled for 4.7-inch QFs, the present 64prs. being withdrawn, but the idea was abandoned in 1898. The upper battery became an instruction battery for the nearby Golden Hill Fort school of gunnery in 1900 using two 12 pr. and three 6pr. QFs. An accident occurred with one in 1901 when a breech block blew out. In 1903 two 5-inch BL mobile howitzers were stored at the redoubt to defend the coastline. Only the lower battery was armed in the 1914-18 war. Two 12prs. were replaced with two 15 pdr. Ehrhardt field guns 1916-18. The fort was sold by the military in 1928. The barrack block was converted into a private residence in 1936. A new building used as a tea room was added overlooking the southern rampart. The redoubt has been converted for use as a residence with facilities for holiday flats and camping. It was put on the market for £3 Million in November 2016.

Freshwater Redoubt



1891

I & IV 7-inch R.B.L.

II & III - 64pr R.M.L.

V & VI - 6pr Q.F.

A - Caponier & Barrack

B - Artillery Store

C - Magazines

D - Side Arm & Tackle Store

E - Laboratory

F - Officers' Quarters



Old Needles Battery

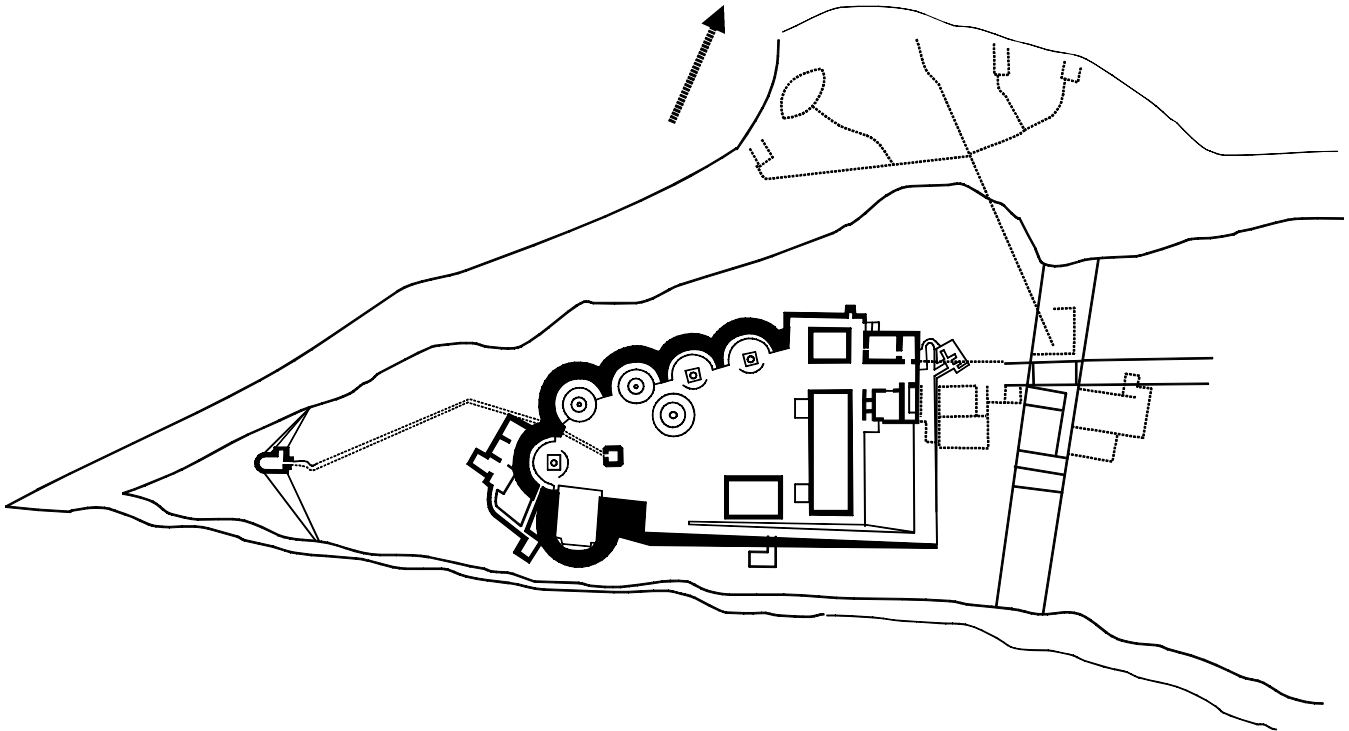
Commenced	September 1861	Armament	
Completed	June 1863	1869	6 x 7-inch R.B.L.
Cost	£ 7,656	1872	Authorised 2 x 9-inch 4 x 7-inch R.M.L.
Map Reference	SZ 296848	1873	Revised 6 x 9-inch R.M.L.
Position	Isle of Wight / West / Needles Passage	1886	Proposed 3 x 10-inch R.M.L.
Type	Coast battery	1892	2 x 6pr Q.F. tested
Ditch	Dry - land side only	1893	Mounted 6 x 9-inch R.M.L. Proposed 3 x 10-inch R.M.L.
Guns	6	1895-1899	6 x 9-inch R.M.L.
Barrack Accom.	1 officer 2 NCOs 21 men	Caponiers	None
Present use	National Trust managed property.	Counterscarp galleries	None
History	First AA gun tested 1913	Haxo casemates	None
Disposal	Moth-balled 1945. N. T. 1975	Moncrieff Pits	None
Condition	Good. Under restoration		
Access	Open to the public - Summer season		
Sources	Solent Papers No.2, Precis of correspondence prior to 1898		

History and Description

A battery was proposed for this site in 1855, to mount six 68prs to cover Alum Bay to the north. The Needles battery, later referred to as Old Needles Battery to distinguish it from the new battery built nearby, was constructed as part of the Royal Commission defences of the Needles Passage. It is a barbette battery built on the projecting point of the chalk ridge above the Needles Rocks, at an elevation of 254 feet above sea level. It commanded the narrow channel between the Needles Rocks and the Shingles, the edge of that shoal being a little more than 2,000 yards distant so that passing ships would be subjected to plunging fire upon their decks. The height of the battery protected it from potential counter-fire. It was designed for six guns, first being armed with 7-inch R.B.L. guns which were replaced with 9-inch R.M.L. guns, surplus from Hurst Castle, by 1898. The gorge of the fort is closed with a ditch cut through the chalk of the narrow ridge on which it stands. Access to the fort was over a rolling bridge. The other sides are protected by the precipitous chalk cliffs which surround it. It had accommodation for 1 officer, 2 NCOs and 21 men as well as the usual magazines, laboratory and stores. Water was supplied from rain-water tanks. The battery was only to be garrisoned in time of need, the men living in a barrack on the parade, now demolished. In peacetime a Master Gunner lived there to maintain it, whilst the garrison gunners lived in Golden Hill Fort.

In 1869-73 the gun emplacements were remodelled for two 9-inch and four 7-inch RMLs but in 1893 six 9-inch RMLs were installed. These were in place until 1903 when they were removed by throwing them over the cliff. All have now been recovered, two still in the fort on replica carriages. The other are scattered on the mainland. The battery was considered obsolete and a new one was built 1893-95 on the crest of the headland to replace it with three modern BL guns. In 1885 a tunnel was dug from the parade towards the Needles and a Submarine Mining Cell added. By 1887 a lift shaft was dug from the ditch to sea level and five emplacements built into the north cliff face for QF guns to counter torpedo boats. Experiments were carried out with searchlights 1890-92. In 1908 a Fire Command Post for all of the Needles defences was added. In 1913 Britain's first AA gun, a 1pr. Pom Pom, was tested on the parade. The battery was reactivated in WWII with a sentry beam fitted into the cliff emplacement and a Radar installed in 1944. Armament then consisted of a 3-inch AA and a 40mm Bofors. The battery was moth-balled in 1945 and was bought by the National Trust in 1975 who opened it to the public in 1982.

Old Needles Battery



New Needles Battery

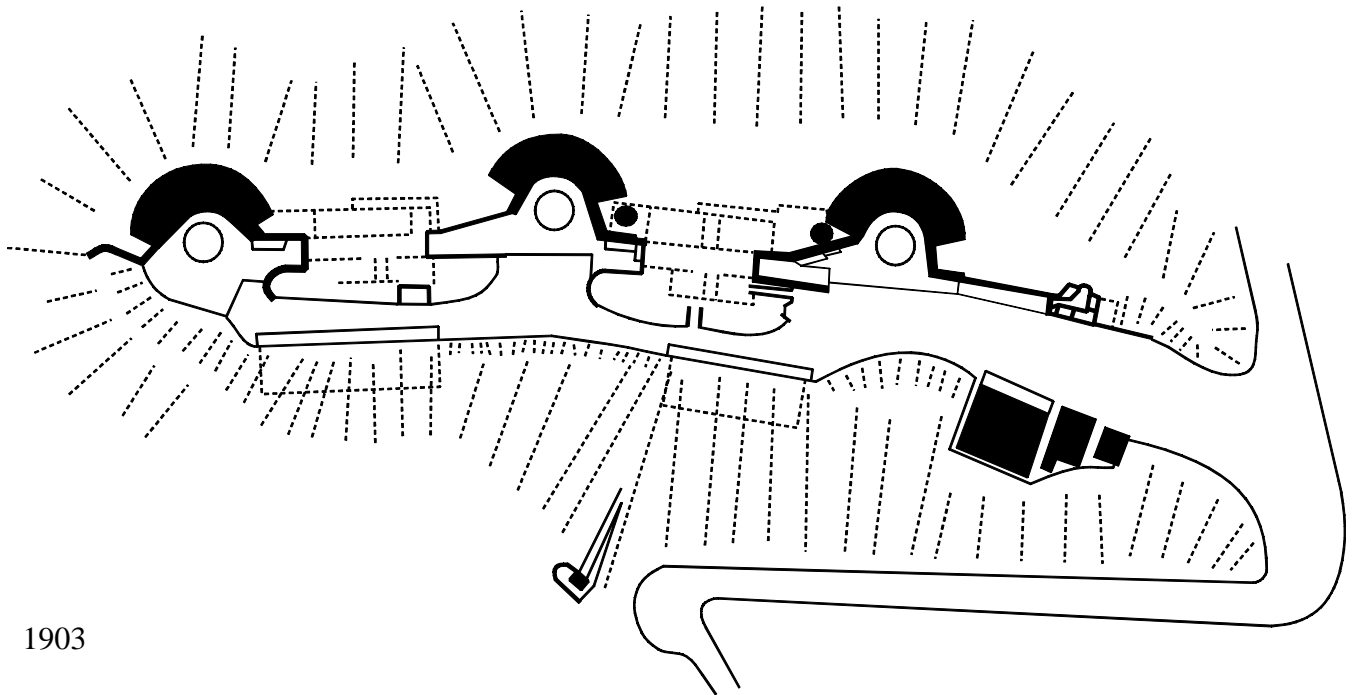
Commenced	1893	Armament	
Completed	1895	Approved 1898	3 x 9.2-inch B.L.
Cost	£	Proposed 1898	2 x 9.2-inch B.L.
Map Reference	SZ 300848	Mounted 1900	2 x 9.2-inch B.L. 'C' IX on barbette III
Position	Isle of Wight / West /Needles passage	Mounted 1903	3 x 9.2-inch B.L. IX
Type	Coast Defence Battery	1904-1907	2 x 3pr. QF for practice
Ditch	None	1915	3 x 9.2-inch B.L. IX 1 x 6pr. QF
Guns	3	1928	2 x 9.2-inch B.L.
Barrack Accom.	23	1942	2 x 40mm bofors (one soon removed)
Present use	National Trust (Coast guard use one pit)	1954	guns scrapped
History	Saunders Roe Rocket Test site 1956-71	Caponiers	None
Disposal	Moth-balled 1945. N.Trust 1975	Counterscarp galleries	None
Condition	Pits, magazines and BC post remain	Haxo casemates	None
Access	Open access - magazines sealed	Moncrieff Pits	None
Sources	Solent Papers No 2		

History and Description

The New Needles battery was proposed as a replacement for the Old battery, which is close by, to take three of the new 9.2-inch BL guns en-barbette which would give greater range and accuracy. This new battery was constructed on higher ground overlooking the old battery 390ft. above sea level facing north-west. Administrative buildings were sited behind the battery and underground magazines were fitted between the gun emplacements. Two 9.2-inch BL Mark IX were fitted in 1900 and the third was considered unnecessary. It was in place by 1904. Two 3pr. QF guns were fitted between the centre and northern emplacements for practice use but were removed in 1907. In 1900-02 a battery Command post was built on the down above the battery. A cookhouse and shelter for 23 men were built behind the southern emplacement. A Port War Signal Station was built east of the battery, together with coastguard cottages. In 1911-14 the gun emplacements were adapted for Mark VB mountings and the new guns were in place in 1914 although one was dismantled leaving two in use. A 6pr. QF was fitted south of the left emplacement for 'examination service'.

The battery was placed in care and maintenance in 1918 and was reactivated in 1926 for Territorial use. The battery was used again in 1939 for counter bombardment against blockships attempting to close the Needles passage. In 1941 a Radar was installed. In 1942 two 40mm bofors were added but one was soon removed. In 1945 the battery was moth-balled again and was put up for disposal in 1952. The guns were scrapped in 1954 and from 1956 to 1971 the site was used by Saunders Roe for testing Black Knight and Black Arrow space rockets with two test gantries constructed on the cliffs to the south of the battery. The National Trust bought the site in 1975 and demolished most of the buildings. The gun emplacements and associated magazines remain. The right emplacement now has a coast guard station built into it. In Summer 2005 the magazines were opening for visitors with displays on the history of the Black Night missile site.

New Needles Battery



1903



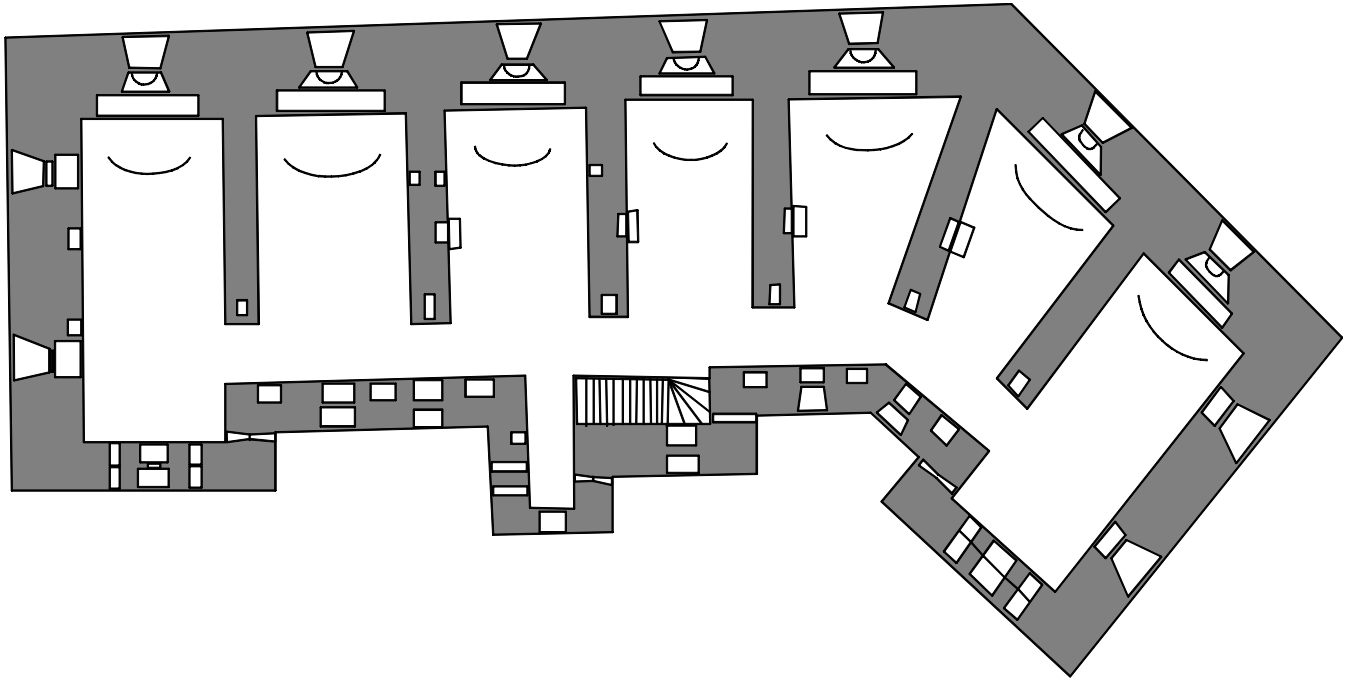
Cliff End Fort (Fort Albert)

Commenced	1852	Armament	
Completed	1856	Original	7 x 68pr SB 14 x 8-inch SB 6 x 32pr. SB 2 x 8-inch How.
Cost	£	1861	68prs. replaced with 7 x 7-inch R.B.L.
Map Reference	SZ 330890	Withdrawn 1872	14 x 8-inch SB 6 x 32pr SB
Position	Isle of Wight / west	Proposed	7 x 7-inch R.M.L.
Type	Sea Front	1887	7 x 7-inch & 2 x 8-inch How, removed
Ditch	None - Sea in front	1893 - 1898	3 x 3pr. QF 3 x 0.45 MG 3 x 6pr on field carriages. to be added
Guns	29	1902	3 x MG parapet c. 3 x MG infantry c.
Barrack Accom.		1903-1909	3 x MG pc
Present use	Private luxury flats (eight)	1910	2 x MG
History	Coast defence Brennan torpedo station	1922	2 x 12pr. 12cwt. on QF1
Disposal	Sold 1965	1941	2 x twin-six 1942 1 x 40mm bofors
Condition	Damp - sea leaks into basement.	Caponiers	None
Access	None - can be viewed from cliff top	Counterscarp galleries	None
Sources	Solent Papers No 2, Precis of correspondence prior to 1898	Haxo casemates	None
		Moncrieff Pits	None

History and Description

This fort was designed by William Drummond Jervois, later Inspector General of Fortifications. The original intention was for a semi-circular fort of approximately 41 guns on Warden Ledge but this idea was abandoned because of costs and unstable ground. The beach at Cliff End was chosen for the new fort but shortage of money resulted in the construction of a small brick fort for 29 guns in four tiers. The north flank of the fort was 'refused' to protect against enfilade. The basement magazines were prone to flooding from the very start. The original armament was seven 68pr SB on the ground floor, seven 8-inch shell guns on each of the first and second floors with six 32pr. SBs and two 8-inch howitzers on the roof. A loopholed roof gallery covered the slopes behind the fort with musketry, the ground being higher than the fort. An access road wound down to the fort and the entrance was over a wooden gangway into the first floor via some steps. The 68prs. were replaced by seven 7-inch R.B.L.s in 1861. The other SB guns were removed after 1972 when it was proposed to fit 7-inch RMLs. This was not done and the remaining 7-inch RBLs and SB Howitzers were removed in 1887 when the fort became redundant as a gun platform, being used instead as an infantry barracks. In 1886-88 a portion of the fort was converted for use with a Brennan Torpedo installation. A lean-to was added to the north section with a launch ramp and associated engine room and torpedo handling room. The northern portion of the fort was filled to the roof with sea sand to protect the installation. The remaining casemates were used for accommodation. Between 1893 and 1899 three 3prs QFs on field carriages were allotted to the fort with three more mounted 'on cones in permanent emplacements below Cliff End Fort'. Next in 1898 three 6prs. were proposed to replace the 3prs. The 3prs appear to have remained whilst those outside were replaced. (The 1900 return no longer refers to 'near Cliff End Fort' but proposed 2 x 4.7-inch guns 'near Cliff End Battery' which may be the same site.) In 1907 two searchlight emplacements were added to the fort. In 1909 the fort replaced Freshwater Redoubt as a practice battery for Golden Hill School of Gunnery with four rooftop 12prs. in place until 1915-16. Two rooftop 12prs were again in place in 1925. They were dismantled in 1941 when two twin 6prs with director towers were added to the roof. The filled casemates were emptied for use as magazines. In 1942 a searchlight and 40mm bofors were added. The fort has now been modernized and converted into eight luxury flats. The Brennan installation has been completely removed.

Cliff End Fort (Fort Albert)



Cliff End Fort Brennan Station

Commenced	1887	Armament 1887 to 1907 Brennan Torpedoes.
Completed	1889	
Cost	£	
Map Reference	SZ 330890	
Position	Added to Right side of Fort Albert.	
Type	Brennan Toredon Station	
Ditch	The sea	
Guns		
Barrack Accom.	In the fort.	
Present use	Demolished. Fort converted to apartments.	
History		
	In use 1887 to 1907 as Brennan station. Then reverted to fort use.	
Disposal Condition	Remains of Station Demolished	
Access	None	
Sources	The Needles Defences - Cantwell The Brennan Torpedo - Beanse	

History and Description

Although obsolete in fortification terms by the time the Brennan was adopted, Cliff End Fort (Fort Albert) proved suitable for adaptation as a Brennan installation. The installation there was situated just ahead of the controlled minefield off Fort Victoria.

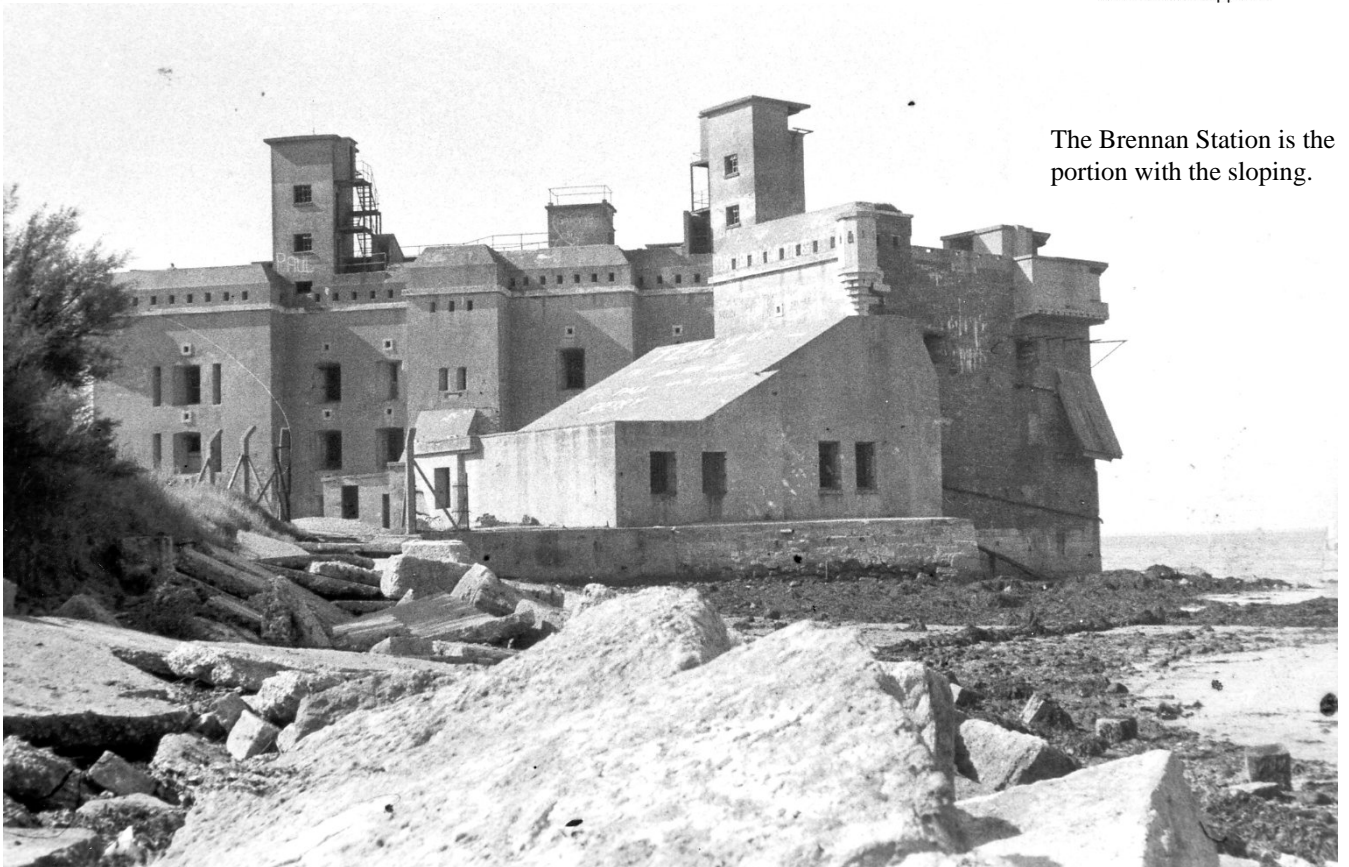
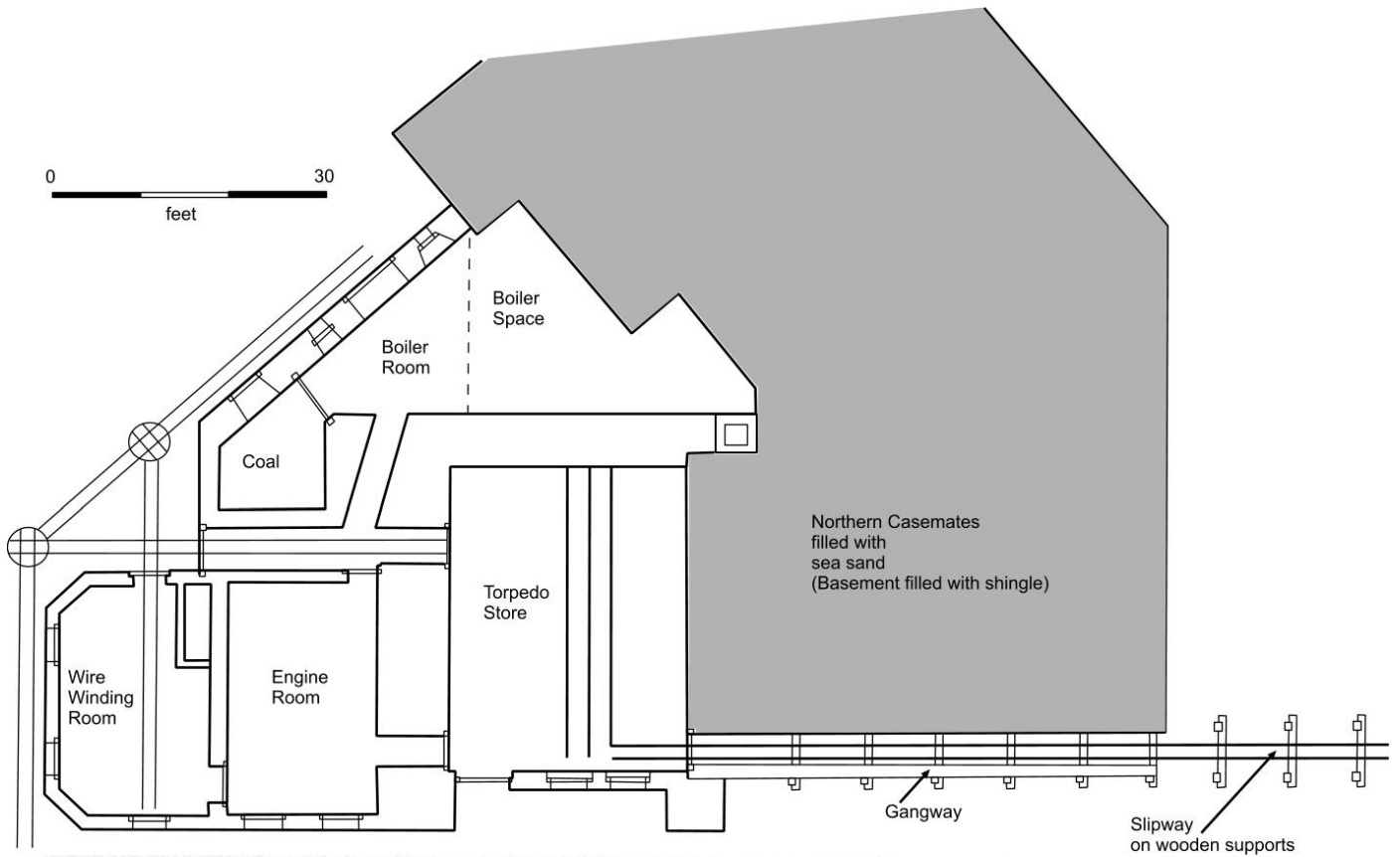
A plan exists for an installation here dated 1887. One unusual feature of this drawing is the rail gauge, shown as 9 inches rather than the 7 inches that was the standard. This suggests that Albert may have existed by 1887 and could indicate its use as an experimental station before the torpedoes' adoption. While a torpedo with integral wheels is shown on these rails, the 9-inch gauge could originally have been for the launch trolley, used before the adoption of integral wheels and, perhaps, initially carried over to this later design.

This first design utilised the northernmost casemate of the existing structure to contain the winding engine, with a large single boiler in the basement below. A torpedo store was built onto the back of the existing structure and the wires from the winding engine were lead back into it, then round pulleys into line with the slipway. The slipway ran along the side of the fort, under a lean-to roof, into the sea.

The first service installation abandoned the use of the existing fort entirely. The boiler and engine rooms were re-positioned to the rear, side by side, beneath the torpedo room. The casemates in the fort had their fronts blocked with concrete giving a total wall thickness of 12 feet and a concrete wall 5 feet thick was built through the centre of the fort dividing the casemates in two. The front half was filled with sea sand to provide protection to the installation. The rear half of the casemates were still available for accommodation. Finally the basement-level boiler and engine rooms were abandoned in favour of new ones at ground level. The new engine room was built onto the rear of the torpedo room and the boiler room on to the side. A wire winding room was built against the rear of the engine room. The disused old engine and torpedo rooms were to be filled with shingle though there is some doubt if this was done.

It was intended to add a second slipway here with additional engine and torpedo rooms. A different design of winding engine would have been used; similar to the vertical engine used for the trials but with wider drums split into four sections allowing four torpedoes to be run in succession. The layout would have permitted either engine to drive either slipway and would have reduced the chance of the station being put out of commission. Also shown by those plans were armoured cowls to protect the ends of the travelling pulley girders, these were exposed and damage to them could have put the station out of action. The only directing station known here was built into the roof of the lean-to cover over the slipway, a somewhat precarious location. The fort (Albert) was converted to modern apartments and the annex containing the Brennan Station was retained at first. It was finally demolished after 2007.

Cliff End Fort Brennan Station



The Brennan Station is the portion with the sloping.

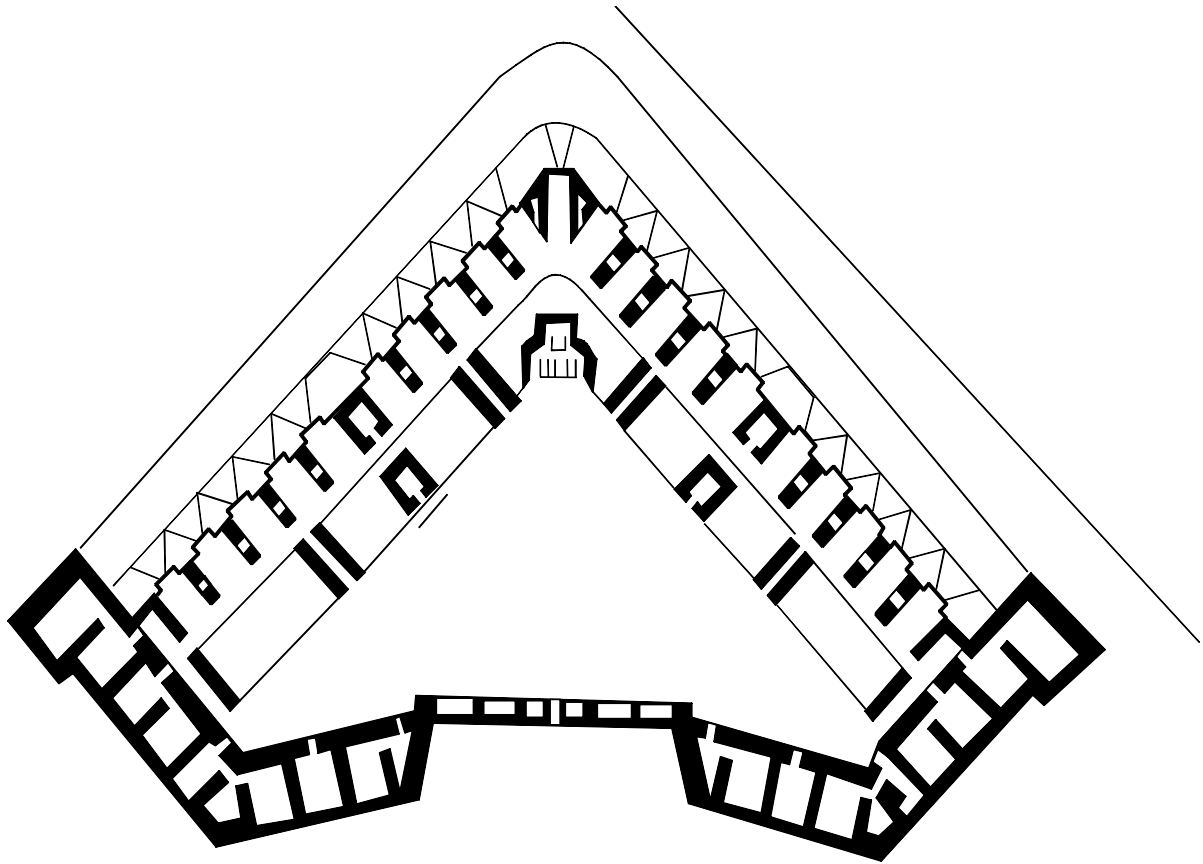
Fort Victoria (Sconce Point Battery)

Commenced	1852	Armament	
Completed	1855	Original armament	10 x 68pr. SB western, 11 x 10-inch SB shell guns northern, 6 x 32pr. SB on each barrack roof
Cost	£	1861	3 x 7-inch RBL salient casemates Withdrawn in 1872 3 x 7-inch RBL 8 x 10-inch S.B. 10 x 68pr. 12 x 32pr. Proposed 13 x 64pr. R.M.L.
Map Reference	SZ 339898	1876	Disarmed
Position	Isle of Wight / West	Caponiers	None
Type	Triangular Casemated Sea Battery	Counterscarp galleries	None
Ditch	Wet	Haxo casemates	None
Guns	33	Moncrieff Pits	None
Barrack Accom.			
Present use	Sea facing casemates remain, part aquarium, tea room and shop.		
History	Infantry barracks. Submarine mining depot		
Disposal	Vacated by Army 1962		
Condition	Partly demolished 1969		
Access	Open to the public all year round		
Sources	Solent Papers No 2, Precis of correspondence prior to 1898		

History and Description

The same invasion scare of the 1840s that led to the construction of Fort Albert resulted in the construction of Fort Victoria on Sconce point to cover the deep water channel. The original plans called for two casemated batteries meeting at an obtuse angle, the flanks terminating in square towers and a loopholed wall closing the fort off to the rear. Again money dictated another plan and the resultant triangular fort was complete by 1855. The two seaward casemated batteries meet at a right angle with the flanks refused to protect against enfilade. The gun casemates had open upper portions to allow enemy shell fire to pass through rather than cause it to burst inside injuring the gun crews. A broad parados stood behind the casemates to protect the inner barracks which closed off the gorge. An earthen glacis protected the front of the sea facing casemates. This sloped down to a wet ditch which protected the fort against infantry attack. The rear of the fort was closed by two barrack blocks each of two storeys joined by a loopholed wall with the entrance in the middle fitted with a portcullis and drawbridge. Six 32pr. SB guns on traversing platforms mounted on each barrack roof could fire seawards over the top of the lower casemated sea batteries. Additional gun ports facing seawards were sited on the upper floors of each barrack but were never armed. The fort was briefly armed with an additional three 7-inch R.B.L.s but in 1872 the Defence Committee recommended that the fort be dismantled. The fort was disarmed in 1876 when it had become increasingly used purely as a barracks. The Royal Engineers took over the fort in that year and it was converted into a submarine mining depot, the casemates were used for storing sea mines. The parados was removed and buildings added as offices. A tramway was constructed allowing loaded mines to be run out to the pier for placing on mine-laying boats. The north ditch was filled with cable tanks and a test room was built into the hillside. An experimental sea-saw searchlight pit was fitted west of the fort in 1888. Three searchlights were added in 1898-99 to illuminate the minefield. The Royal Engineers left in 1920 and the fort was placed in care and maintenance. It was used as a store for towed targets for the nearby practice batteries in 1939. From 1941-43 it served as a barracks for the 72nd. Coast Training Regiment, R.A. It also served for various units training prior to D-Day. The fort was relinquished by the army in 1962 and the local council demolished the barracks completely in 1969. The seaward casemates survive as a tea shop, aquarium and small display area. Access is possible at all times.

Fort Victoria (Sconce Point Battery)



Fort Victoria in 1967



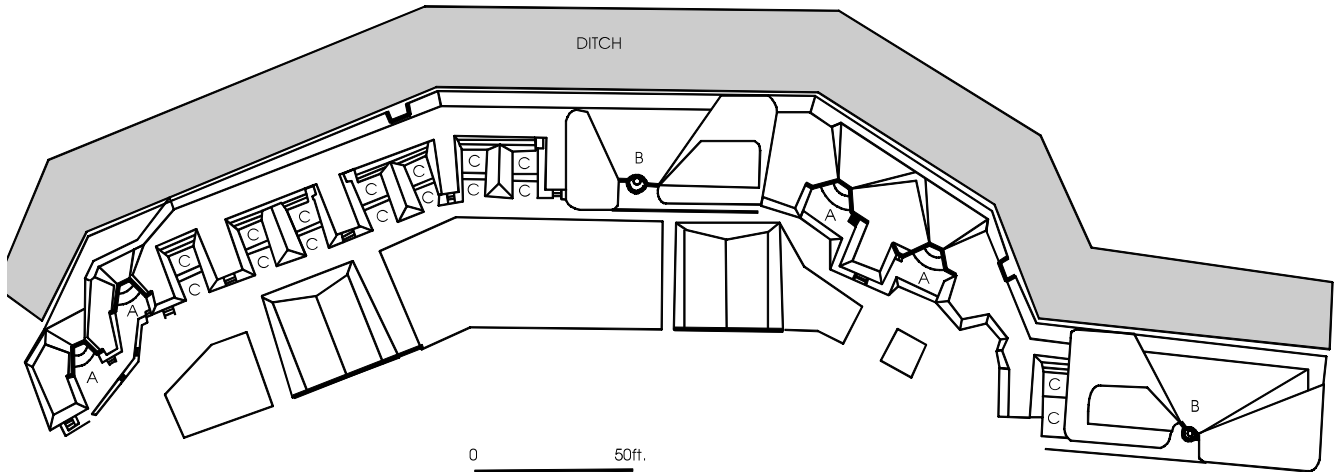
Puckpool Mortar Battery

Commenced	1863	Armament	
Completed	March 1865	1886	4 x 11-inch R.M.L. 30 x 13-inch mortars
Cost	£ 2,0864	1887	4 x 11-inch R.M.L. 22 x 13-inch mortars
Map Reference	SZ 615923	1895	4 x 11-inch R.M.L. 2 x 10.4-inch R.M.L. Protected Barbette 1 x 32pr. Drill, 4 x MG.
Position	Isle of Wight Puckpool Point /Spithead defences	1900	3 x 11-inch R.M.L. 1 x 10.4-inch P.B.
Type	Sea Battery / Mortar Battery	1901	3 x 11-inch 1 x 10.4-inch 2 x 6-inch B.L.
Ditch	Dry	1902	1 x 11-inch 1 x 10.4-inch R.M.L. 2 x 6-inch B.L. 4 x MG
Guns	30 mortars (final 4 guns)	1904	2 x 6-inch B.L. 2 x 9.2-inch B.L.
Barrack Accom.	4 officers 67 men	1907	2 x 9.2-inch B.L.
Present use	Recreation & gardens. Tea shop.	1910	1 x 9.2-inch B.L. (1 x 9.2-inch BL in reserve)
History	Modified many times. Armstrong Protected Barbette emplacements.	1927	Disarmed
Disposal	Sold 1928 to District Council	Caponiers	None
Condition	Parts demolished. Some intact	Counterscarp galleries	None
Access	Free all year	Haxo casemates	None
Sources	Precis of correspondence relating to Portsmouth prior to 1898. "Puckpool Mortar Battery", A.	Moncrieff Pits	None

History and Description

In 1862 the Defence Committee approved the construction of 'a battery for 27 guns and 30 mortars with necessary barrack accommodation' at Puckpool Point, Isle of Wight. Construction began in 1863 but in June 1864 they again considered the proposal and decided that the armament should be '50 of the heaviest mortars and it appeared that that number could be mounted without crowding if the work be considered as a battery wholly for vertical fire and not for part guns and part mortars as hitherto proposed. It was thought unnecessary to provide barrack accommodation'. The battery was supposedly completed in 1865 with seven rows of mortars, three to a row with five light guns to cover the beach, but in 1867 the Defence Committee again considered the battery. The proposal was to place the 13-inch mortars in two rows, one behind the other, with a traverse between each pair. The Royal Artillery Officers considered that there was no objection, provided that if both rows were fired simultaneously the front detachments should retire to the rear and fire their mortars by lanyards. The battery was reconstructed for thirty eight mortars (3 for practice). A barracks was built to the rear for 4 officers and 67 men (now the cafe). Four 11-inch R.M.L.s were fitted in 1873 to cover Spithead. In 1883 the mortars were test fired and in 1887 the number was reduced to twenty-two. In 1887 the Committee recommended that the remaining 22 mortars be removed and the 11-inch R.M.L. be made available for high angle fire by placing them on C pivot racers to command a larger arc and the parapet revised. The idea was abandoned and in 1888 under the provisions of the Imperial Defence Loan two 10.4-inch R.M.L. guns were proposed for Puckpool. These were in place by 1892 on protected barbette carriages. These were originally intended for Gibraltar and were the only examples of this type of mounting in the U.K. In 1901 the battery was upgraded with barbette positions for two 9.2-inch B.L. guns to counter battleships bombarding Portsmouth from Spithead. Two 6-inch B.L.s were fitted to engage cruisers and blockships. In 1909 the two 6-inch guns were transferred to Spitbank Fort and by 1910 one of the 9.2-inch guns was in reserve. The battery was manned in WW1 by RGA as a depot for coast gunners transferring to the Western Front. After the War the battery was put into Care and Maintenance. In 1927 the remaining gun was withdrawn. Puckpool was sold to the Council in 1928 and was opened as a public garden in June 1929. From 1939-1942 it became HMS Medina to train men for the Fleet Air Arm. After the War it became a public garden once more.

Puckpool Mortar Battery



Puckpool 1889 : Based on a plan in 'Puckpool Battery', (Cantwell & Sprack)

- A - 11-inch R.M.L.
- B- 10.4-inch R.M.L. (Protected Barbette)
- C - Mortar Bay



9.2-inch B.L. emplacement



Protected Barbette emplacement

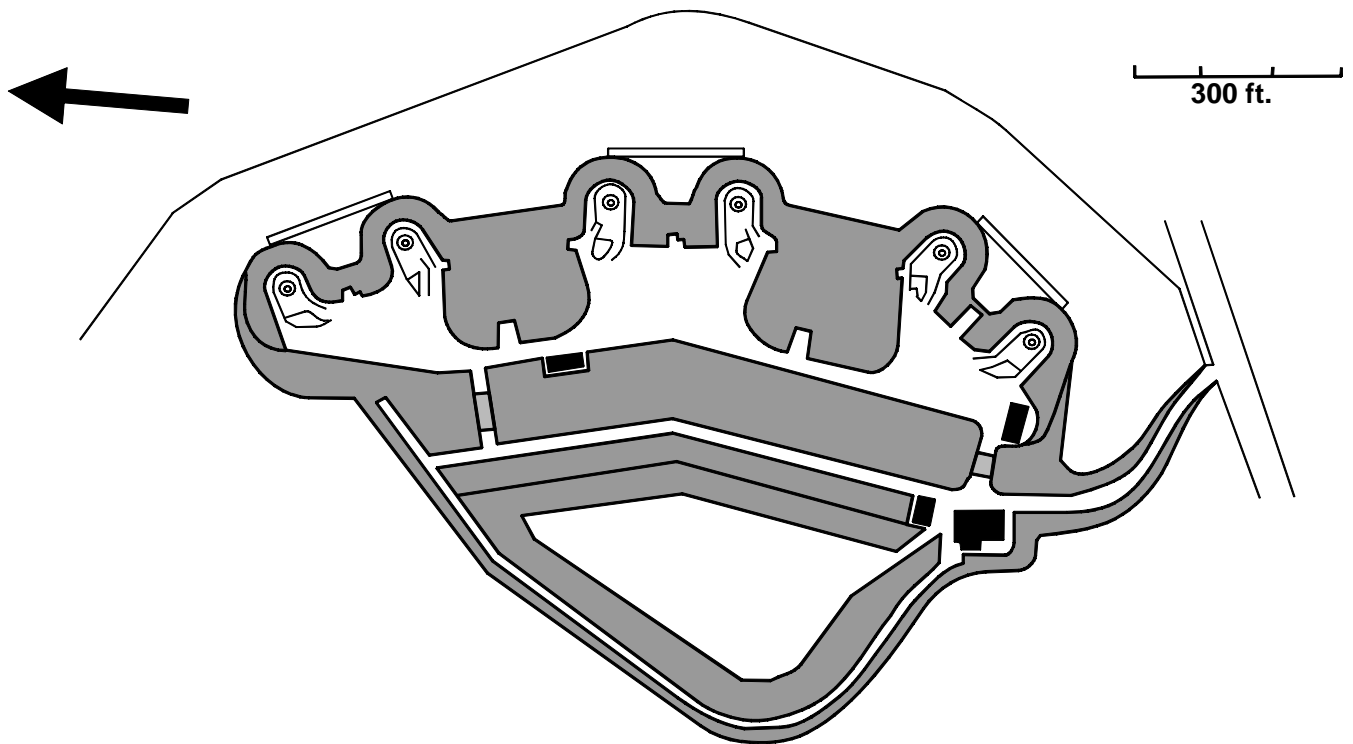
Steynewood High Angle Battery

Commenced	8 August 1889	Armament	
Completed	May 1894	Proposed	6 x 9-inch 12-ton High Angle mountings
Cost	£ 1,4501	Mounted 1896-1898	4 x 9-inch 12-ton High Angle mountings
Map Reference	SZ 641869	1898	6 x 9-inch 12-ton High Angle mountings
Position	Bembridge, East Isle of Wight	1899	disarmed
Type	Coast Defence High Angle Fire	Caponiers	None
Ditch	Firing trenches	Counterscarp galleries	None
Guns	6	Haxo casemates	None
Barrack Accom.	4 men in guard house/1 caretaker	Moncrieff Pits	None
Present use	Private residence		
History	Short use for coast defence		
Disposal	Disarmed 1899		
Condition	Fair, much remains		
Access	By appointment with owner		
Sources	Precis of correspondence relating to Portsmouth prior to 1898 plans in PRO - WO78 2623/5032		

History and Description

Steynewood battery for 9-inch RML High Angle guns was built at Steynewood on the Isle of Wight overlooking the anchorage of St. Helens Roads and the approaches to the Nab Passage. Its purpose was to prevent ships lying off Sandown and bombarding Portsmouth Dockyard. The battery, constructed between 1889 and 1894, consisted of six gun emplacements in an arc, in three groups of two, with expense cartridge stores (formerly shelters) between each pair and shell stores, each serving three positions, between the centres guns and the outside pairs. It was built according to the new Twydall principles experimented with at Chatham in the construction of the new land forts there. It employed fire trenches with steel palisades in front of each pair of gun emplacements as protection against a frontal assault. A parados with a rearwards facing firing step ran across the battery separating the gun emplacements from a rear parade, or camping field. Another fire trench was extended around the rear of the fort. To the left of the entrance was a guard room which was also suitable for conversion to a caretaker's quarters. Four 9-inch H.A. R.M.L. guns were in place by 1893, but not yet mounted and by 1898 six were mounted with a proposal to add two more. In 1899 it was decided to disarm because *'it would not deter ships which would dare to face the powerful interior batteries. These guns are very slow in their fire and not very accurate'*. The battery was sold off and has since been used as a private residence for two halves of the Thorncroft family, in whose possession it remains.

Steynewood High Angle Battery



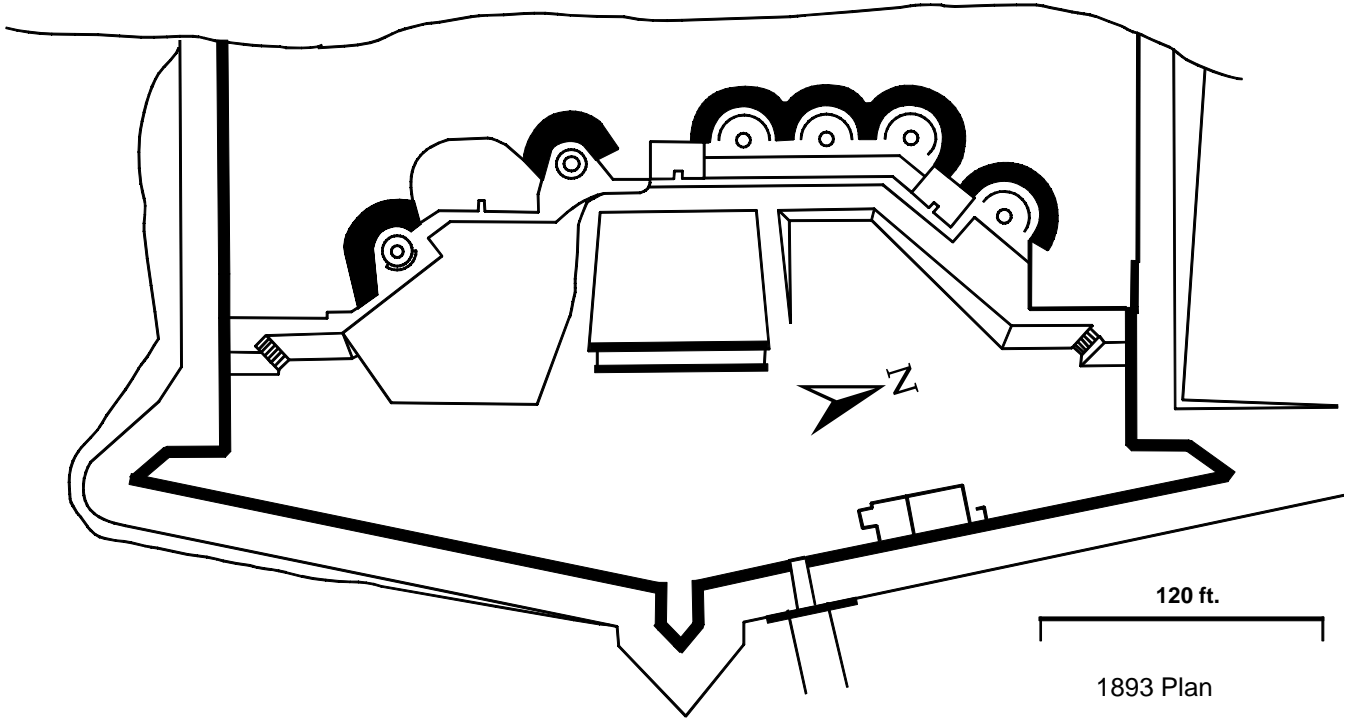
Warden Point Battery

Commenced	1862	Armament	
Completed	1863	1862/3	4 x 7-inch R.M.L.s 4 x 9-inch R.M.L.s
Cost	£ 12,899 (£6,000 for drainage)	1873	8 x 9-inch R.M.L.s
Map Reference	SZ 325876	1892/93	4 x 9-inch R.M.L. 1 x 9-inch H.A. experimental 1 x 9-inch L.R. experimental
Position	Isle of Wight - West - Warden Point	1901-02	4 x 6-inch B.L. Mk.VII with 3 x 9.2-inch B.L. added outside.
Type	Coast Defence barbette battery	1907	2 x 3 pounder QF guns added
Ditch	dry - three sides only	1936	disarmed
Guns	8 (modified for 6 then 2)	Caponiers	3
Barrack Accom.	4 NCOs & men	Counterscarp galleries	None
Present use	Holiday camp (closed down 1995)	Haxo casemates	None
History	Coast Defence. 9 inch RML High Angle Gun test site 1885 to 1888	Moncrieff Pits	None
Disposal	Sold 1957		
Condition	Walls remain, magazines buried		
Access	Permission of owner Solent Papers No 2 'The Needles Defences' A. Cantwell Portsmouth & Solent Armament Book		
Sources	1891		

History and Description

In 1794 an eight-gun earthwork was proposed for the site, but was never constructed. A two gun battery occupied the cliff-top in 1803 and the Royal Commission proposed a six-gun battery to replace it in 1860. The battery that was finally constructed had positions for eight guns, in two groups of four, firing en-barbette. The armament was four 7-inch of 7 tons with four 9-inch of 12 tons. In 1873 the 7-inch guns were replaced with the intended armament, another four 9-inch RMLs. At the centre rear of the gun positions was a large magazine. The landward side of the fort was protected by a loopholed wall with caponiers at the the northeast and southeast corners. Another projected out from the east wall to protect the entrance and flank the gorge wall. This, according to 1891 plans, served as a shell filling room and laboratory. A ditch ran around the landward sides of the fort. Barrack accommodation was not provided as the soldiers to man the fort were to be quartered in nearby Golden Hill fort. Between 1880 and 1895 several proposals were made to rearm the fort with heavier guns but nothing was done until 1892-3 when the left-hand RML emplacements were demolished in order to built two experimental emplacements for long-range and high-angle mountings, together with a magazine sited between the two emplacements. The trials proved to be a success and the gun emplacements at Warden Point were demolished in 1898 as the site was not suitable for a high angle battery. In 1898-99 four 6-inch BL Mark VII gun emplacements were fitted to the fort in two groups of two. At the same time two 9.2-inch gun emplacements were constructed to the south of the battery. A third one was added in 1900. The armament was in place by 1902. The four 6-inch guns were put in reserve by the Owen Committee recommendations in 1907. In World War One the fort saw a new lease of life with the 6-inch guns reactivated, but two were removed in 1914. Two 3-pounder QF guns had been fitted between the right and centre 9.2-inch BL guns in 1907 and were used until 1918. After the war the guns were used by the Territorials for Summer camps. The 6-inch emplacements had to be rebuilt in 1923-24 because of subsidence. One 9.2-inch BL was removed in 1929 and the others in 1936. Light AA weapons and searchlights were installed in World War Two, the fort serving throughout the War as HQ 530 Coast regiment. It was retained for storage after the war and was sold off in 1957. Until 1995 it was part of a holiday camp. The site has now been developed for housing; only the enclosing walls are now visible but the magazines remain under the site.

Warden Point Battery



Sandown Barrack Battery

Commenced	April 1861	Armament	5 x 64pr RML
Completed	September 1863	1892 to 1901	2 x 10-inch RML & 2 x 64pr RML
Cost	£ 62,331	1901 to 1907	2 x 6-inch BL Mk VII 2 x 12pdr QF
Map Reference	SZ 594837	1907 to 1910	2 x 6-inch BL Mk VII
Position	Isle of Wight / South, Sandown Bay	1910 to 1916	2 x 6-inch BL Mk VII M.I.R.
Type	Sea Battery	1916	Gun barrels removed
Ditch	Dry	1926	Mountings and shields removed
Guns	5 (later 4)	Caponiers	2
Barrack Accom.	3 in guard room (nearby barracks for men)	Counterscarp galleries	None
Present use	Public garden and teashop	Haxo casemates	None
History	Coast defence	Moncrieff Pits	None
Disposal	to Local Authority		
Condition	parts remain		
Access	Public garden		
Sources	1891 Armament book: Material in PRO WO33, 78, 192, 199, 396 CAB 3, 13 & 18		

History and Description

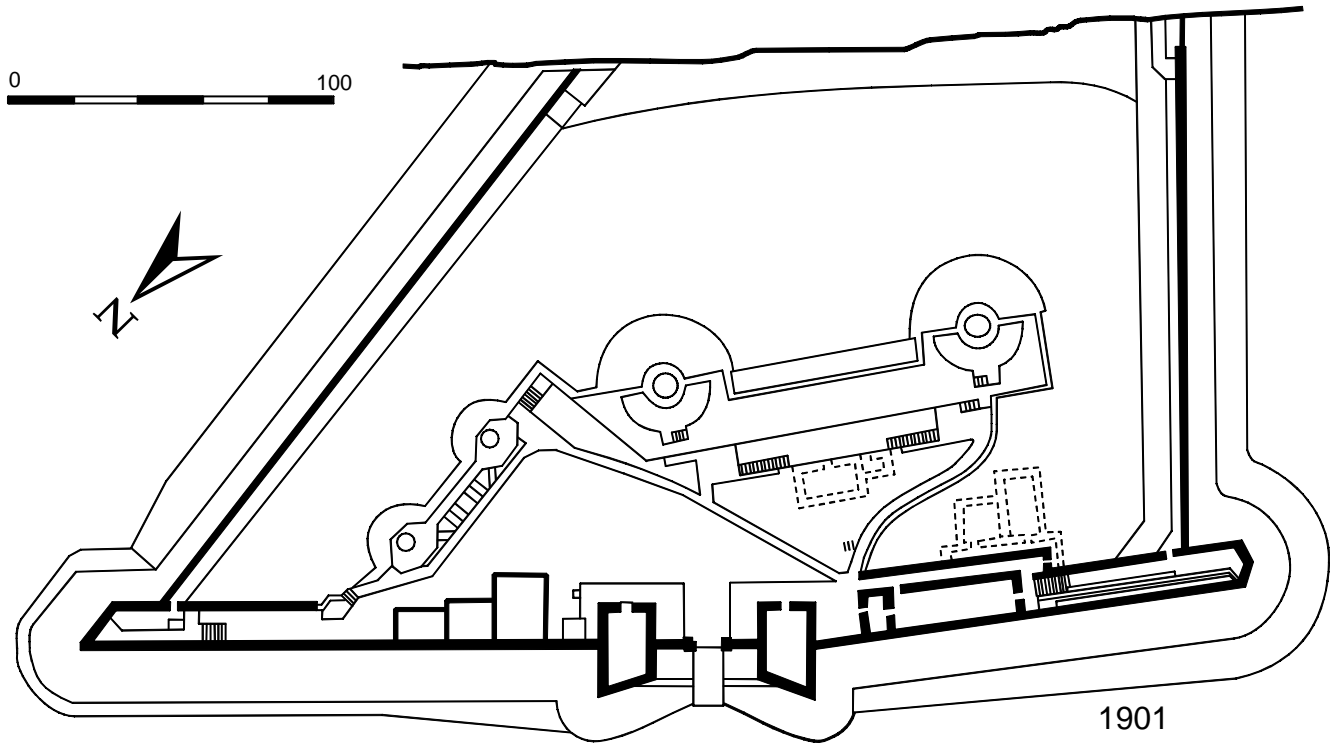
Sandown Barrack Battery was constructed as part of the Royal Commission defences of the Isle of Wight. It stands on the edge of a cliff, 140 feet above the sea and about 1,500 yards to the west of Sandown Fort. It was first armed with 5 x 7-inch R.B.L. guns on a parapet close to the cliff and it was considered that the sea washing at the base of the cliff would soon cause the parapet to be endangered. These were replaced by five 64pr RMLs by 1880.

In 1891 the main armament of the fort was 2 x 10-inch R.M.L. guns on long range mountings, fitted to barbette emplacements retired from the cliff edge, with 2 x 64pr. R.M.L.s as support. The ditch of the fort extends around it on the landward side, with a Carnot wall and caponiers defending the two flanks, the seaward face being protected by the high cliff on which the battery stands. The landward face has a gateway with drawbridge in its centre, on the left of which was the guardroom, whilst on the right was the artillery general store. Shell stores were situated in right flank where it joins the gorge with a cartridge store underneath and halfway between the two 10-inch emplacements. Two DRF pedestals were situated within the fort with a Position Finding Cell outside and to the left of the fort.

Between 1891 and 1892 the battery was partially reconstructed to take two 10-inch RML guns from Sandown Fort. These replaced three of the 64pdrs. Further work took place between 1901 and 1902 when the battery was completely remodelled to take two 12pdr QF and two 6-inch BL Mk VII guns. The 12pdrs were reduced to practice status after 1907 and the 6-inch classed as in reserve three years later. In September 1916 the barrels of all four guns were removed and the mountings and shields in 1926. By the end of the decade the battery had been handed over to local authority as surplus to requirements.

The fort is now a flower garden. It is rumoured that the two 10-inch guns are still buried close by.

Sandown Barrack Battery



Bembridge Fort

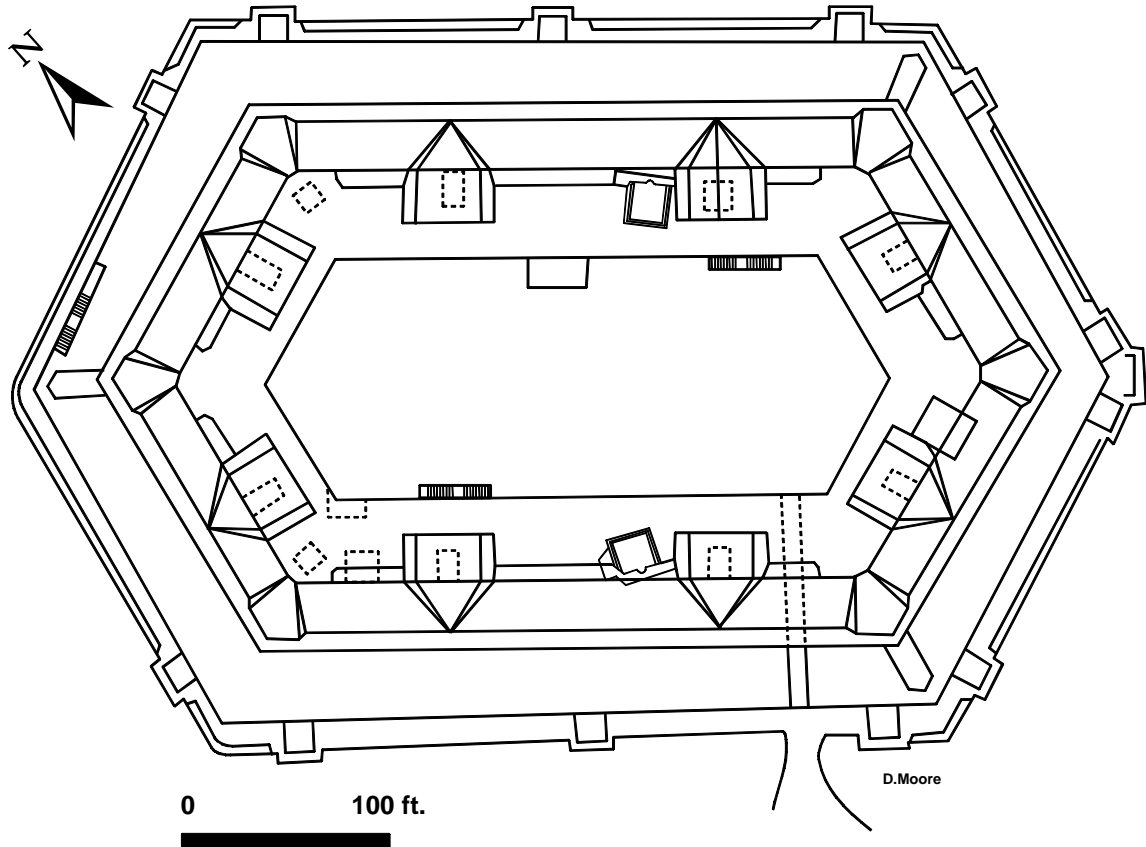
Commenced	May 1862	Armament	
Completed	July 1867	1869 to 18921	6 x 7-inch RBL
Cost	£ 48,925	1893 to 1900	2 x 4-inch B.L. 6 x 64pr. RML
Map Reference	SZ 624861	1900 to 1901	2 x 4-inch B.L.
Position	Isle Of Wight / Eastern Defences, Bembridge Down		Moveable armament stored in fort
Type	Land Front	1905	2 x 5-inch BL Howitzers, 3 x 9pdr RML 8 machine guns (field carriages)
Ditch	Dry	1907	2 X 5-inch BL howitzers, 6 x15pdr BL, 4 x machine guns (field carriages)
Guns	10	1910	2 x machine guns (field carriages)
Barrack Accom.	4 officers 106 men	Caponiers	3
Present use	National Trust/Industrial unit	Counterscarp galleries	None
History	1900s became a barrack and store. Test site for anti torpedo/submarine	Haxo casemates	None
Disposal	Relinquished 1945	Moncrieff Pits	None
Condition	Altered in places but mostly intact		
Access	By Arrangement with National Trust		
Sources	PRO WO33,78,192,199,396. CAB 3,13,18		

History and Description

Bembridge Fort, constructed as part of the 1860 Royal Commission defences of the Isle of Wight, was intended to be a keep to the four coast batteries in Sandown Bay. It occupies the heights on Bembridge Down, commanding the space between Brading Haven and the sea. It has a deep dry ditch surrounding it with a covered way and rifle parapet on the outer side, complete with crochets. The fort was to serve as a last stand if the Isle of Wight was invaded. It was to be armed initially with 20 guns. There were some alterations to the original design when single caponiers were substituted for double ones and the scarp and counterscarp were fully revetted. The original armament fitted consisted of six 7-inch RBLs that were replaced in 1893 by six 64pr. 71cwt RMLs on 6ft parapet carriages and two 4-inch B.L.s. on siege travelling carriages. The 64prs were removed in 1900 but the 4-inch BLs remained until 1903. The fort then stored the moveable armament for the eastern end of the island until at least 1910. Between 1880 and 1900 the fort was used as an experimental test facility for experiments with anti-submarine and anti-torpedo devices. Two cables ran from the fort to the sea and a magnetic field between was to be used to detect any metal objects passing. The fort, for much of its existence was used as a barracks and a store by various army units stationed in the locality; when Culver Down Battery was built the fort housed the BOP and a PF cell and this continued until the end of WWII. Because of this the fort acted as a co-ordinating point for the 9.2-inch guns at Nodes Point Battery and Culver Down Battery. Two Allen Williams turrets were installed on the roof. The fort was placed in the hands of a caretaker from 1945 to 1948 when it was relinquished. From then on to 1965 the property was heavily vandalised until the IOW council purchased the property in 1965 and the National Trust bought it from them in 1967.

In 2008 the fort was occupied by a light engineering firm. The National Trust have undertaken some clearance work within the fort and open it to the public on a limited basis.

Bembridge Fort



Hatherwood Battery

Commenced	1865	Armament	
Completed	1869	1870	4 x 9-inch 3 x 7-inch R.M.L.s
Cost	£ 5,825	1886	4 x 9-inch, 2 x 12.5-inch R.M.L.s.
Map Reference	SZ 308857	1891	4 x 9-inch R.M.L. 2 x 12.5-inch R.M.L.
Position	Isle of Wight / Needles / west East side of Alum Bay		Proposed 1 x 10-inch B.L.
Type	Coast Defence	1895	2 x 9-inch L.R. 2 x 9-inch 2 x 12.5-inch R.M.L.s.
Ditch		1900	4 x 9-inch, 2 x 12.5-inch R.M.L.s, 2 x 5-inch B.L. (practice)
Guns	earlier battery 7, later 6	1902	2 x Machine Guns on Infantry Carriages
Barrack Accom.	2	Caponiers	None
Present use	Open site	Counterscarp galleries	None
History	Coast Defence then Volunteer practice battery	Haxo casemates	None
Disposal		Moncrieff Pits	None
Condition	Four emplacements remain.		
Access	National Trust land		
Sources	Precis of Correspondence - 1893, Solent Papers No 2, 1891 Armament book		

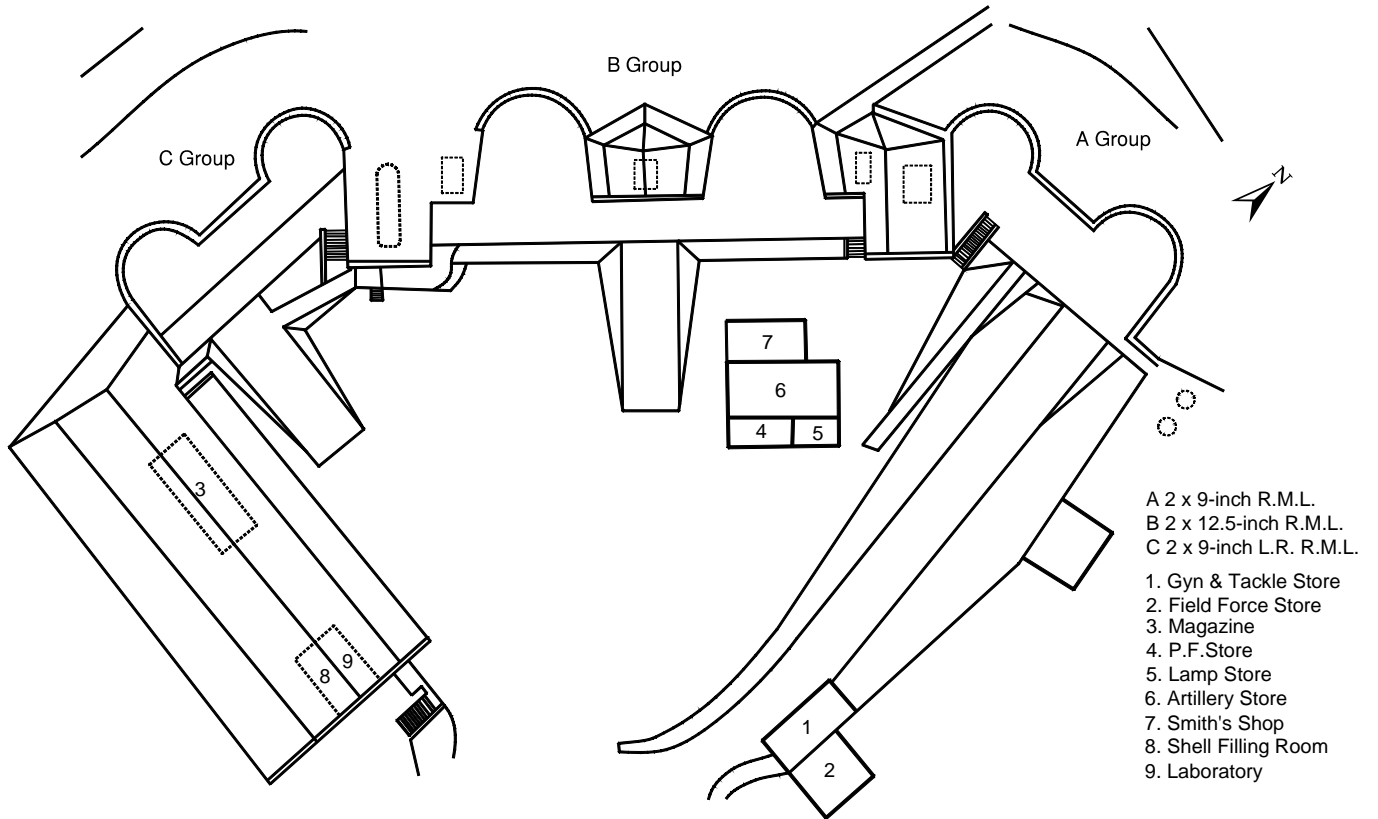
History and Description

Hatherwood Battery, proposed by the 1859 Royal Commission, was constructed to mount six 68pr. S.B. guns en-barbette at the same height above sea level as the Needles battery. Situated on Hatherwood Point, on the north east side of Alum Bay, it was designed to cross fire with that of the Needles Battery over the Needles Passage. Before it was completed it was decided to mount seven guns in three groups. two heavier 9-inch R.M.L.s in each of the flanks and three 7-inch R.M.L.s in the centre. The main magazine was situated in the rear of the battery underneath an earth mound. Barrack accommodation was originally intended for two officers and 50 men but this was omitted. Instead a small building in the rear provided accommodation for two married soldiers, the garrison being quartered in Golden Hill Fort. In 1873 it was proposed to remodel the three centre gun emplacements to take two 12-inch 36-ton R.M.L.s. Two 12.5-inch 38-ton R.M.L.s. were mounted instead by 1886. The main magazine was relocated to the left flank. In 1886 it was proposed to mount a 10-inch B.L. gun in place of the 9-inch R.M.L.s in the two left positions at a cost of £6,000 but by 1895 the idea had been abandoned.

In about 1886 a series of four Position Finding cells were added to the point above the battery at Headon Warren. In 1889-92 searchlight experiments were undertaken and fire control of the needles passage batteries was controlled from there. In 1890 and 1891 a searchlight was fitted in front of the battery with a temporary engine room to the rear of the battery. In 1895 the battery had a full complement of four 9-inch R.M.L.s (two on Long Range Mountings) and two 12.5-inch R.M.L.s. but it was proposed to replace the long range mounts with standard 9-inch mountings. In 1898 the Montgomery Committee noted that Hatherwood was "*slowly slipping away. In the event of a very wet Winter (it) may at any time be rendered unserviceable.*" The Committee proposed to mount two 9.2-inch and two 6-inch B.L. guns in a battery on Headon Hill overlooking Hatherwood and replacing it. This was not done. In 1899 it was decided to allow the battery to retain its armament "*while it still stands for practice only. It cannot be taken into account for defence*". In 1898 it was proposed to modify the battery yet again with two of the 9-inch guns being removed from the right (north) position and the two left (west) positions modified for two 5-inch B.L. guns on broadside mounts. This type of gun was often mounted for volunteer practice use. Two guns of this type were in place on the left battery by 1900 with two more proposed for the centre positions in 1901. These may not have been fitted as the battery was listed as having only two machine guns mounted in 1902. However the positions were prepared for them as traces of another two mountings on the centre positions can be found today. From 1903 the battery was officially disarmed.

Between 1940 and 1943 the site was used by the Royal Navy as part of an Indicator Loop station. All that remains of the battery now are four of the gun emplacements. No trace of any of the buildings, magazines or ramps now exist. The site is now slowly subsiding, the two right emplacements have already fallen down the cliff towards the sea. The two central emplacements are badly eroded. The two left ones are relatively intact and show signs of their modification for the 5-inch B.L. mounts.

Hatherwood Battery



Hatherwood Battery in 1891



Redcliff Battery

Commenced	April 1861	Armament 1869 to c1879 4 x 7-inch R.B.L. c1879 to 1892 4 x 64pr. R.M.L.s 1892 to 1897 3 x 64pr. 58cwt. R.M.L.
Completed	September 1863	
Cost	£ 4,776	
Map Reference	SZ 638855	
Position	South Wight, west of Culver Cliff, East of Yaverland	
Type	Coast Defence Battery	
Ditch	Dry	
Guns	4 (later 3)	
Barrack Accom.	None (3 in a small guard room)	
Present use	Nothing substantial remains	
History	Subject to slippage into the sea	Caponiers 2
Disposal	Abandoned	Counterscarp galleries None
Condition	Nothing remains	Haxo casemates None
Access	Site destroyed by land slippage	Moncrieff Pits None
Sources	Precis of Correspondence - 1893, Solent Papers No 1891 Armament book	

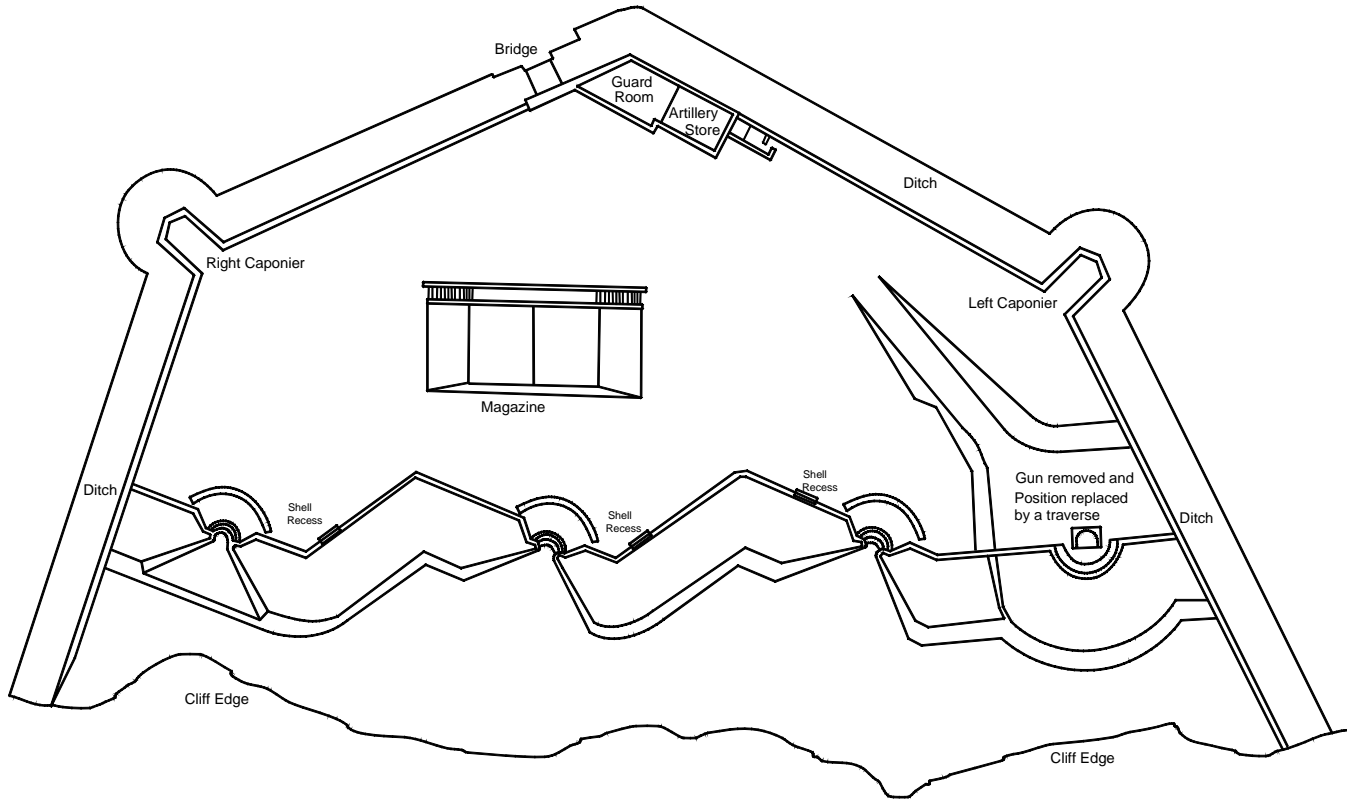
History and Description

This battery was built close to the edge of a cliff to the west of Culver Cliff, about 1,000 yards to the east of Yaverland Battery and 150ft. above the sea. Problems with slippage were evident right from the start. Its original armament was four 7-inch R.B.L. guns. The four guns faced seawards and behind no.2 gun was the main magazine for 190 barrels of powder. Beside the first three guns were shell recesses. A ditch and Carnot wall surrounded the battery and reached to the cliff edge on either side. Two musketry caponiers covered both ditch and the line of the Carnot wall. The entrance to the battery was on the north west side over a drawbridge and immediately inside was a single building which contained guardroom and an artillery store. Its purpose was to assist Yaverland and Sandown Fort in preventing a landing in Sandown Bay. On the left flank part of the cliff began to give way in 1867 and in 1868 it fell into the sea. In 1887 it was decided to remove one 64pr. from the left flank of the battery, no 4 gun, and to construct a traverse instead to prevent ships from enfilading the battery from the Culver Cliff area. The remaining 64prs. were to be blocked up on 6ft. parapet slides.

By 1891 Redcliff was being slowly eroded by the collapsing cliff and it was decided to abandon it. The landward ditch was filled and all structures demolished.

In 2008 a few vestiges of the concrete gun positions were visible in the collapsing cliff.

Redcliff Battery



Redcliff Battery : Below: The site in 2008



Golden Hill Fort

<p>Commenced 1863 Completed 1868 Cost £ 38,022 Map Reference Sz 339879 Position On Golden Hill, West Wight.</p> <p>Type Defensible Barracks Ditch Dry Guns 18 Barrack Accom. 8 officers 128 men Present use Being converted to apartments</p> <p>History Barracks, school of gunnery in 1888, Infantry training from 1914 Disposal Sold 1962 Condition Reasonably intact, some alteration Access Outside only.</p> <p>Sources Precis of Correspondence - 1893, Solent Papers No 2 , 1891 Armament book</p>	<p>Armament</p> <p>1886 6 x 40pr. R.B.L. 1891 6 x 40pr. R.B.L. on Special Traversing Slides</p> <p>Caponiers 3 Counterscarp galleries 3 Haxo casemates None Moncrieff Pits None</p>
--	--

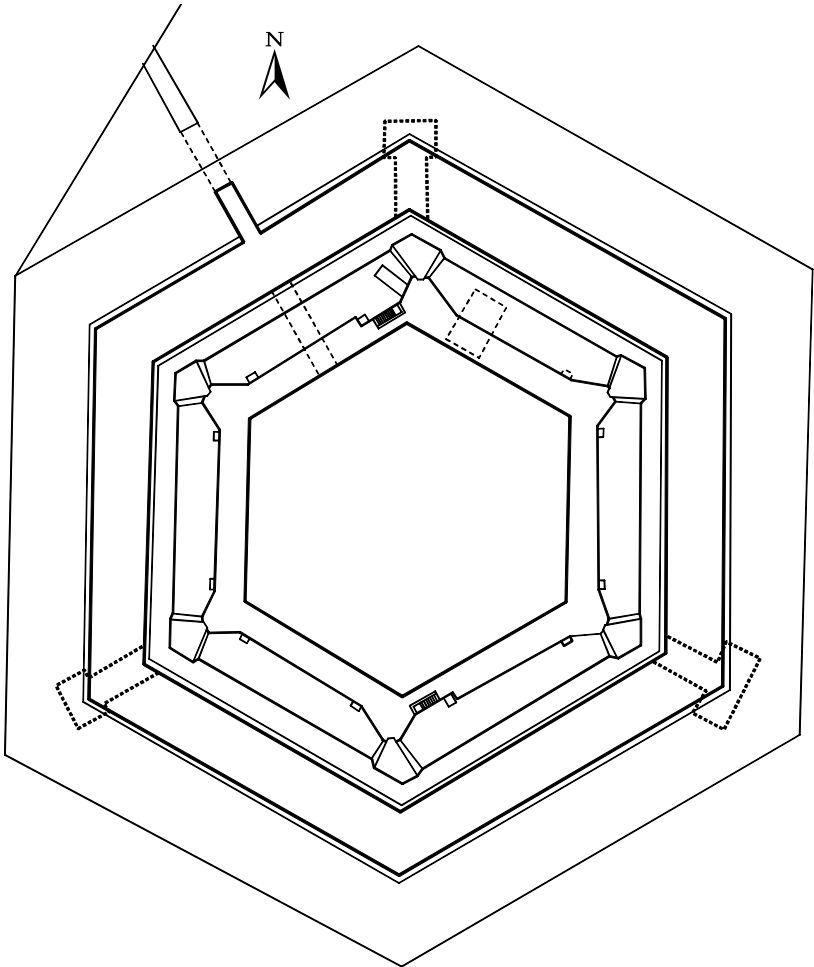
History and Description

The fort was constructed on a hill, so named because of the yellow laburnum bushes there, midway between Yarmouth and Freshwater, to the west of the River Yare. It was intended to be a defensible barracks and keep for the batteries defending the needles passage. It was originally designed as a much larger work for 250 men with the same barrack accommodation as the one that was finally constructed. In 1862 this was reduced to accommodate 8 officers, 128 men, a hospital staff and 14 patients. The work is hexagonal in trace with barrack rooms on two stories with scarps 31ft. high covered by a raised glacis and was designed for 18 light guns on the roof. The ditch is flanked by musketry caponiers at alternate angles. The entrance to the work is through a tunnel in the glacis and over a drawbridge. The parapets were constructed without berms on a slope of one to one. Slippage due to heavy rain resulted in remedial works of concrete and better drainage to sustain the parapets. The work was not designed to resist the attack of a strong force with artillery but was to hold two companies of gunners for the batteries at Cliff End and Warden Point and to provide a central point of support to troops opposing an enemy who may have landed on the island. An internal courtyard has a glass-roofed verandah on three sides at first floor level. This was supported on iron columns and served the barrack rooms of the east side, each for 14 men. The main magazine was situated on the north-east corner on the ground floor. The intended guns of the roof were not fitted, instead six 40pr. R.B.L. guns were placed, one to each salient. In 1891 the G.O.C. recommended that the 40prs be replaced with 4-inch B.L. guns but this was not agreed.

From 1869 the fort was occupied by two companies of coast gunners. In 1888 the fort became the Western District School of Gunnery, providing courses for Regulars and Volunteers. During the 1914-18 war it was used as an infantry training depot, training over 30,000 men of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry between 1915-18. During 1939-45 it was a depot for the British and Canadian infantry. In 1945 it was taken over by the RASC as a barrack for waterborne troops. Until 1962 the fort was used by them as their Junior NCOs' Training School.

The military released the fort in 1962. From 1969 to 1984 the fort was an industrial estate but from 1985 it was opened as a craft and light business park, with a small museum. In 1989 it changed hands again and was open to the public as a place of 'historical and general interest'. In 2005 planning permission was granted for the conversion of the fort to apartments.

Golden Hill Fort



Golden Hill Fort 1991

Sandown (Granite) Fort

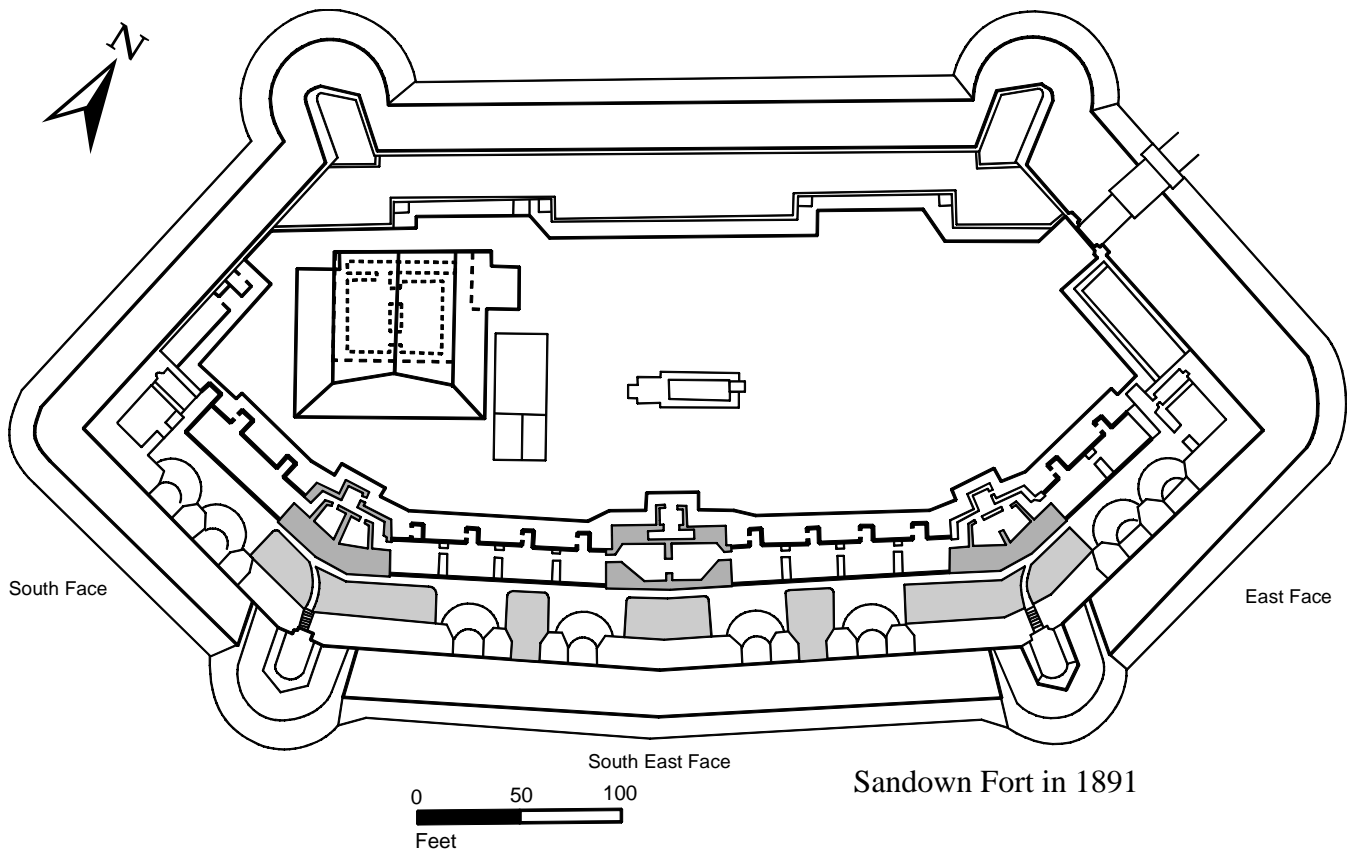
Commenced	April 1861	Armament	
Completed	September 1864	1876	Proposed 8 x 10-inch, 4 x 9-inch R.M.L.s
Cost	£ 73,876	1886	Mounted 8 x 10-inch, 4 x 9-inch R.M.L.s
Map Reference	SZ 597839	1891	6 x 10-inch R.M.L. 2 x 9-inch R.M.L.
Position	South Isle of Wight, Middle of Sandown Bay	1895	6 x 10-inch, 2 x 9-inch, 2 x 64pr. R.M.L. (1 x 32pr. SB 1 x 8-inch S.B. parade)
Type	Coast Defence, casemated	1898	6 x 10-inch, 2 x 9-inch, 1 x 9pr. R.M.L. (for practice)
Ditch	Dry	1904	RML guns removed.
Guns	28	Caponiers	4
Barrack Accom.	4 officers, 67 men	Counterscarp galleries	None
Present use	Zoo and reptile house	Haxo casemates	None
History	Barracks, Volunteer practice battery	Moncrieff Pits	None
Disposal	Sold about 1930		
Condition	Much altered internally		
Access	by payment to visit the zoo		
Sources	Precis of Correspondence - 1893, Solent Papers No 2, 1891 Armament book		

History and Description

Referred to as 'Granite' Fort in later documents, this fort was constructed close to the beach in the centre of Sandown Bay. It consisted of a granite faced fort for 18 guns in casemates behind iron shields. Ten guns were proposed in an earthen battery on the terreplein above in place of an infantry parapet first proposed. This decision was reversed in 1878 due to the construction of supporting batteries at Yaverland, Sandown Barrack and Redcliff. The main magazine on the interior parade proved to be damp and the ditch needed improved drainage and ventilation for sanitary reasons. The gorge of the work was closed with a wall and the whole enceinte surrounded by a ditch flanked by four musketry caponiers. Originally designed for eighteen 9-inch R.M.L. guns the work was believed that it was too cramped to be remodelled for heavier guns when they were introduced, In 1881 it was reported that the armament had been increased in power by substituting 11-inch 18-ton guns in the seaward casemates and its defensive strength increased by the addition of 5 inches to its armour. In 1887 it was decided to reduce the guns by removing two 9-inch guns from the East Face. These were to be replaced with 2 x 10-inch R.M.L.s from centre of the left half of the southeast face; and the removal of 2 x 10-inch R.M.L.s in centre of right half of southeast face. These were to be placed at Sandown Barrack Battery on High Angle mountings. The vacant positions were filled with concrete at a cost of £1,000 to act as traverses and the expense magazines were given additional front protection against sea attack.

In 1897 there were proposals to mount three 3-pounder QF guns on the terreplein of the fort on travelling carriages from Hurst Castle but these were probably not fitted. In 1895 some SB guns were mounted on the parade and 1898 a 9pr. R.M.L. was mounted in the east face for practice. In November 1904 the RML guns were withdrawn and the fort became a practice battery with six 5-inch B.L.s and three 3-inch Q.F.s on top. The fort was used for accommodation only. The fort was sold in about 1930, the rear of it was demolished and it is now a private zoo and little of the original fort can be seen from within. In 1943 the fort was used to shelter one of the terminals for PLUTO which carried fuel to the Normandy beaches. The roof of one of the two front face caponiers is just visible above the earth surround and some of the iron shields are still in place.

Sandown Fort



Cliff End Battery

Commenced	1862	Armament	
Completed	1868	1886 - 1893	6 x 12.5-inch, 3 x 10-inch R.M.L.
Cost	£ 32714	1899 Mounted	6 x 12.5-inch, 3 x 10-inch R.M.L.
Map Reference	SZ 333890	Proposed	4 x 6-inch B.L. VII, 4 x 4.7-inch Q.F.
Position	Isle of Wight / West	1901	4 x 6-inch B.L. VII, 4 x 4.7-inch Q.F.
Type	Coast Battery	1903	4 x 6-inch B.L. VII on CP II, 6 x 4.7-inch Q.F. IIIB on QFIII mountings.
Ditch	None	1907	4 x 6-inch B.L. VII, 4 x 4.7-inch Q.F.
Guns	12	1910	4 x 6-inch B.L. VII, 6 x 4.7-inch Q.F.
Barrack Accom.	0	1929	2 x 6-inch B.L. 2 x 4.7-inch
Present use	Site used for holiday bungalows	1939	3-inch AA added
History	Coast Defence, Disarmed 1951	1944	3-inch replaced by 40mm Bofors
Disposal	1957	Caponiers	Two (for musketry)-
Condition	4.7-inch emplacements remain	Counterscarp galleries	None
Access	Possible	Haxo casemates	None
Sources	Precis of Correspondence - 1893, Solent Papers No 2, 1891 Armament book	Moncrieff Pits	None

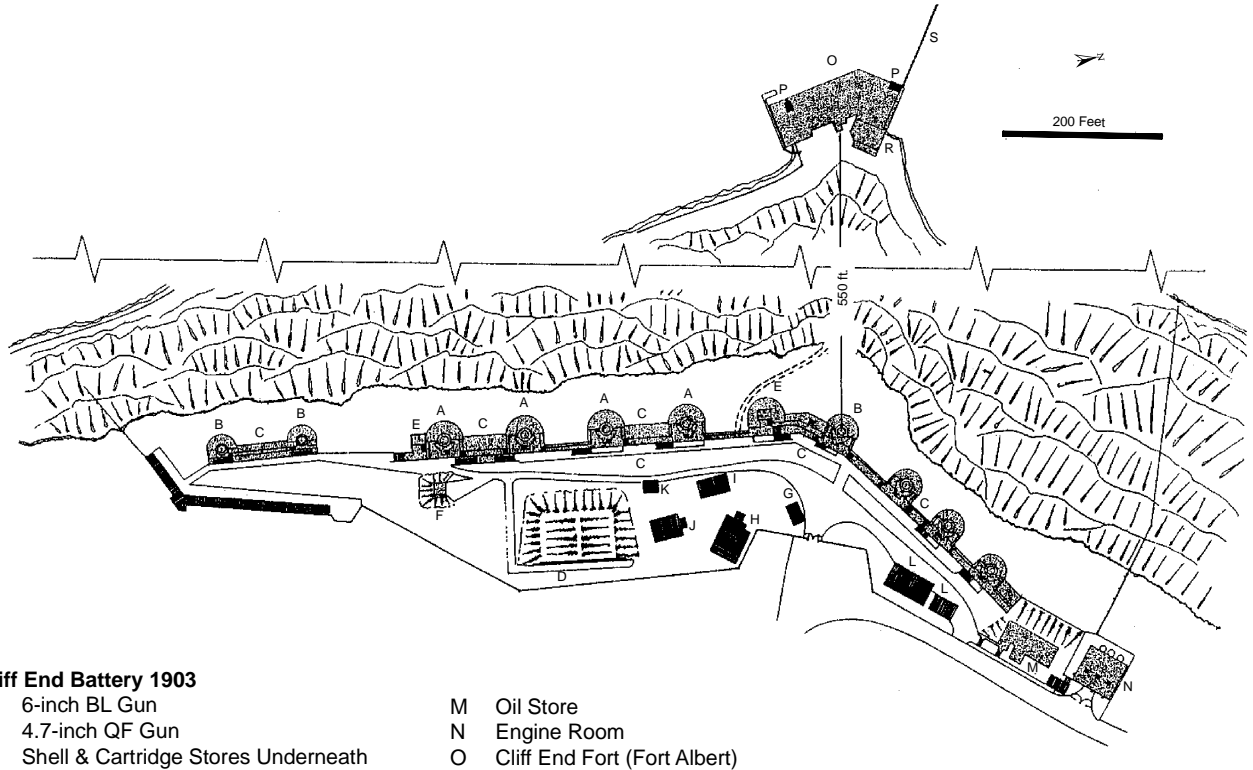
History and Description

As a result of the recommendations of the Royal Commission of 1859 the battery was constructed on the cliffs overlooking Fort Albert. It was designed to protect the ship canal between Hurst Castle and Cliff End it was original proposals were for a twenty-gun barbette battery, but the cliff proved to be unstable. No guns were mounted until 1877. The first armament was supposed to be 9-inch R.M.L. guns but more powerful 10 and 12.5-inch guns were fitted instead. In 1880 it was reported that the battery was complete and armed but it would be desirable to strengthen it with slight gorge defences. These consisted of a loopholed brick wall with caponiers at each end. A bombproof magazine was constructed behind the 12.5-inch gun positions. An old guardhouse of a former battery remained behind the 10-inch gun positions until about 1896. A tunnel through the ramparts gave access to Fort Albert below the cliffs.

In 1886 a bombproof engine room and submarine mining test rooms were added into the northern flank and five position finding cells were built to the north. In 1889 some experiments were carried out at the battery with searchlights, a 6pr. QF gun and machine guns. In 1898 a searchlight emplacement was built each side of the battery. In 1899 it was proposed to remove the R.M.L. guns and to fit four 6-inch B.L. Mark VII guns and four 4.7-inch Q.F. guns. These were in place by 1901. Another two 4.7-inch guns were added by 1903. In 1905 the Owen Committee report recommended the retention of the 6-inch guns for use against unarmoured vessels approaching through the western entrance at night. The 4.7-inch QF guns were considered suitable for use against torpedo craft.

By 1907 the number of 4.7-inch guns was reduced to four again. By 1910 it was back to six once more. In 1917 a 6pr. (Naval) was temporarily mounted for examination service duties. The battery received a series of guns through the ensuing years including experimental Mark XXI 6-inch B.L.s. The site was put into care and maintenance after WWII and the remaining 6-inch guns were transferred to Bouldnor Battery in 1951. The site was released in 1957 and was eventually sold for a bungalow development, which is its present use. Only the 4.7-inch emplacements now remain.

Cliff End Battery



Cliff End Battery 1903

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 6-inch BL Gun B 4.7-inch QF Gun C Shell & Cartridge Stores Underneath D Main Magazine E Battery Observation Post F Small Arms Ammunition Store G Guard House H Barracks I RA Store J Workshop K Fire Station L Officers' Quarters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> M Oil Store N Engine Room O Cliff End Fort (Fort Albert) P Searchlight Emplacement R Brennan Torpedo Establishment S Brennan Torpedo Launching rail |
|--|--|



Culver Down Battery

Commenced	3 May 1904	Armament	
Completed	21 July 1906	1906 - 1922	2 x 9.2-inch Mark X B.L. on Barbette V
Cost	£ Unknown	1922 - 1956	2 x 9.2-inch Mark X B.L. Barbette VI
Map Reference	SZ 638855	1939	1 x twin-6pdr temporary installation
Position	South Wight, Eastern edge Culver Cliff		
Type	Coast Defence battery	Caponiers	None
Ditch	Twydall profile	Counterscarp galleries	None
Guns	2	Haxo casemates	None
Barrack Accom.	None	Moncrieff Pits	None
Present use	Car park and viewing point		
History	Anti-bombardment battery. PWSS. Chain Home Low Radar Station		
Disposal			
Condition	Fair, recently excavated (1996)		
Access	Open site - National Trust		
Sources	Precis of Correspondence - 1893, Sandown Bay Defences - A.Cantwell		

History and Description

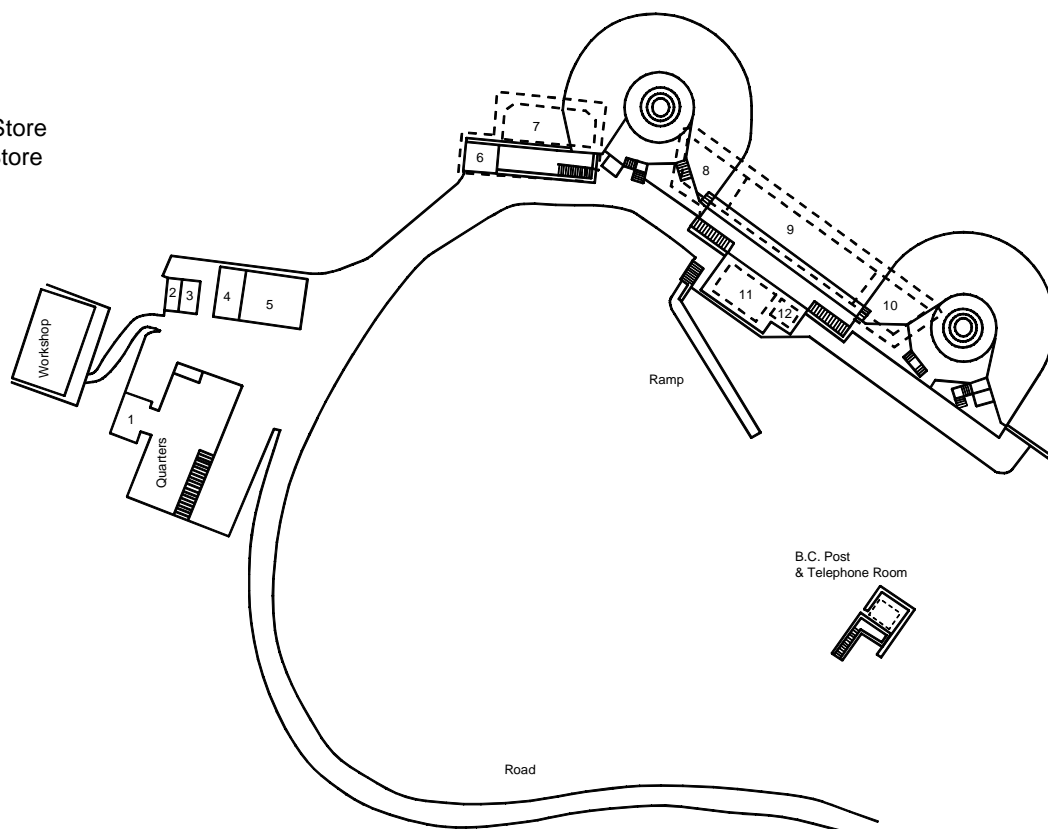
In 1887 it was proposed to build a battery at Culver Cliff to prevent ships from enfilading the batteries at Yaverland and Redcliff, It was to be armed with three 6-inch B.L. guns on H.P. mountings with two Q.F. guns in support. In 1889 it was decided that the Q.F. guns be replaced with 4.7-inch guns but still the battery was not built. In 1904-06 a battery was constructed near the eastern edge of Culver Cliff. It consisted of two 9.2-inch B.L. Mark X guns on barbette V mountings. The report of Major-General Dalton in 1906 stated *this important new work is now nearing completion it only requires a set of 1.8-inch accumulator pipes for A/2. Autosights and cams will no doubt arrive in due course. The ammunition for these guns is stored at Bembridge Fort. The position finding cell is well advanced.* The magazines were constructed, as usual for such batteries, between the two emplacements, underground. The rear was closed with an unclimbable fence and formed into a Twydall Profile. 9.2-inch guns in such a position were not intended to cover Sandown bay but to act as anti-bombardment defences for Spithead. The battery command post was combined in the same building with the Port War Signal Station, between the battery and Bembridge Fort to the north.

In 1922-4 the Mark V mountings at Culver were replaced by Mark VI which allowed elevations to 30 degrees and longer range. The Fortress Plotting system of rangefinding was tried out there experimentally in 1927. In 1934 three 6-inch B.L. mark VII guns were temporarily fitted on 45 degree mountings for long range trials. Late in 1938 a twin-6pdr was installed temporarily to test fire control. In 1939 its armament was listed as 2 9.2-inch B.L. guns to cover Sandown Bay and assist Nodds Point to prevent long range bombardment of Spithead and Portsmouth Dockyard over a range of 17,000 yards. Its night role was ended in 1942. By then a CD/CHL radar station had been built east of Culver Battery on the cliff edge. In 1947 two 6-inch BL Mark 24 high angle guns in turrets were erected in front of the 9.2-inch B.L.s for practice shoots with radar dishes on the roof of the Port War Signal Station. Two 3.7-inch AA guns were also used for coast artillery practice. In 1956 all guns were removed and the site sold off.

The final use of the battery is as a viewing point and public picnic area. The battery was completely filled with earth with only the apron of the pits remaining visible. In 1966 they were excavated and they are now accessible once more. The buildings of the PWSS and those that formed the administrative and maintenance parts of the battery have been

Culver Down Battery

- 1 Ablution Room
- 2 W.C.
- 3 Urinal
- 4 Coal, Oil & Paint Store
- 5 Artillery General Store
- 6 Ablution
- 7 Shelter
- 8 Filled Shell Room
- 9 Magazine
- 10 Filled Shell Room
- 11 Group Store
- 12 Lamp Room



Yaverland Battery

Commenced	23 April 1861	Armament	
Completed	30 March 1864	1869-1879	8 x 7-inch RBL guns
Cost	£ 15,183	1879-1892	8 x 64pr. RML
Map Reference	SZ 612849	1892-1898	7 x 64pr RML
Position	Isle of Wight /South, Sandown Bay	1898-1910	3 x 6-inch BL Mark VII
Type	Coast Defence Battery	1910-1915	2 x 6-inch BL Mark VII
Ditch	Dry		1 x 6-inch VII in reserve
Guns	8 (later 3)	1915-c1934	2 x 6-inch BL Mark VII
Barrack Accom.	2 officers, 55 men	1943-1954	2 x 6-inch BL Mark VII
Present use	Sandown Bay Holiday Centre		
History	Coast defence in RML & BL eras	Caponiers	4
Disposal	To private ownership	Counterscarp galleries	None
Condition	Remains overgrown and derelict	Haxo casemates	None
Access	Possible, with permission Precis of Correspondence 1893, Solent Papers No 2, 1891 Armament book, Nat. Archive	Moncrieff Pits	None
Sources	WO33, 78, 192, 396 CAB 3,13,18		

History and Description

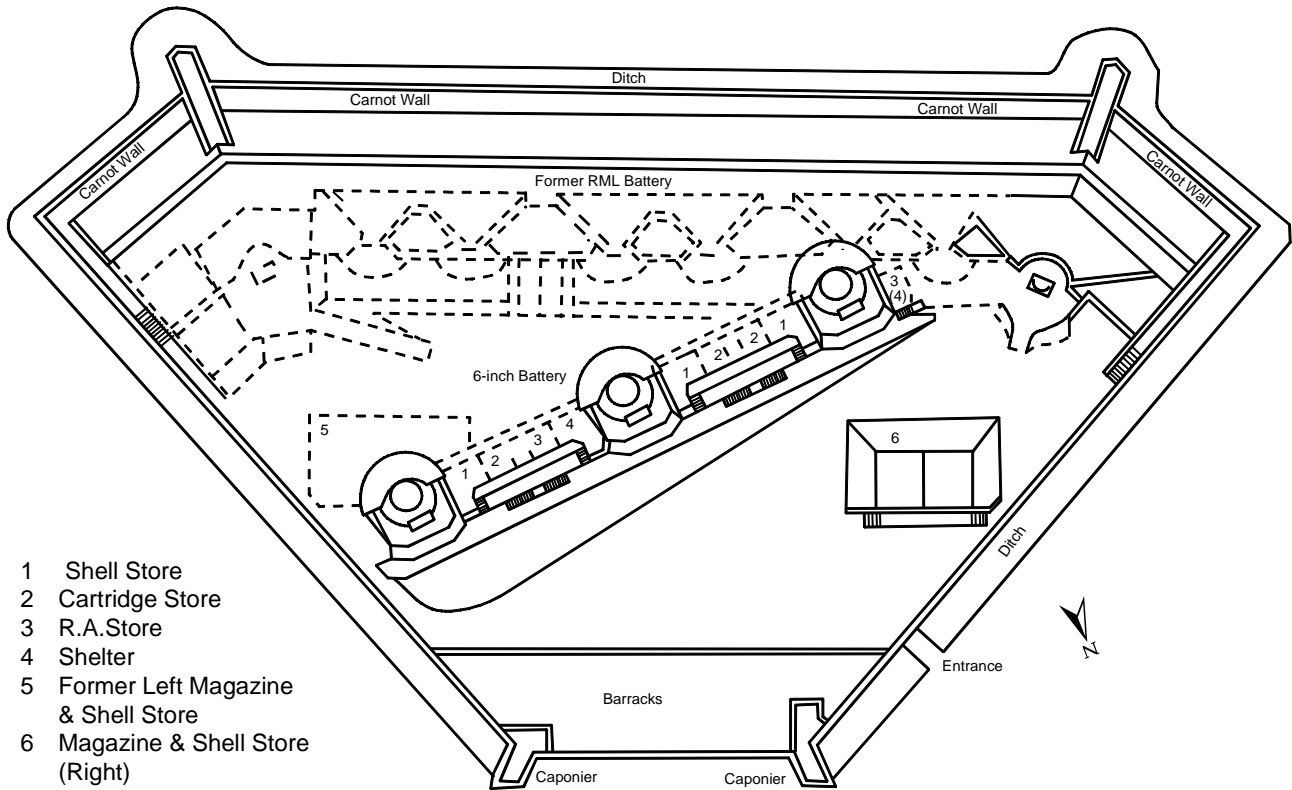
This battery was constructed on a knoll on the downs about 1,800 yards to the east of Sandown Fort, at an elevation of 108ft. above sea level. It was to be armed with eight 7-inch R.B.L. guns and was well provided with magazine accommodation. It was enclosed with a loopholed Carnot wall and a ditch flanked by two musketry caponiers. The gorge was closed by a barracks with accommodation for 2 officers and 57 men. At either end of the barracks was a musketry caponier that covered the ditch and the landward face of the barracks. The 7-inch RBLs were replaced by 64pr RMLs by 1879. In 1887 it was decided to remove one 64pr. from the the left flank of the battery and to construct a traverse instead to prevent ships from enfilading the battery from the Culver Cliff area. The remaining 64prs. were to be blocked up on 6ft. parapet slides, this work was carried out by 1892. In the 1890s it was proposed to fit 2 x 9.2-inch B.L. guns and 3 x 6-inch B.L. VII guns, however only the 6-inch guns were fitted as the two 9.2-inch guns were mounted at Culver Down.

Between 1898 and 1900 at a cost of £6131 the battery was remodelled to take three 6-inch B.L. Mark VII guns. The battery was assisted by a searchlight in the cliff east of the battery another at Sandown Fort. In 1910 the no 3 gun was classed as mounted in reserve and it left the battery in February 1915 for Inchkeith Island in the Firth of Forth. Further additional building were constructed in the period 1914 to 1915. In 1932 the battery was reduced to practice status and the guns scheduled for ultimate withdrawal.

Between the Wars the battery was used for Territorial Army Summer camps and Kings Cup Shoots. During the 1920s two searchlights were installed in concrete shelters near water level for night practice. The Yaverland Coast Artillery Search Lights were closed down in 1942 when Culver Battery's night role was ended. The battery and its searchlights was re-activated in 1943 as a Home Guard installation covering Sandown Bay. It is clear that there were no guns at the battery at the outbreak of of the Second World War in September 1939, as Sandown Bay was defended by other means. In April 1943 the battery was reactivated when two 6-inch Mark VII guns were emplaced and it was manned by the Home Guard for the remainder of the War. In 1951 two 3.7-inch AA guns were also used for coast artillery practice.

In 1956 all guns were removed and the site sold off, and it now forms part of the Sandown Bay Holiday Centre. The concrete battery for the three 6-inch guns survives, with the pits filled and overgrown for many years. The glacis has been removed from the front of the gun aprons and the underground shelters were closed off with earth until 2008 when the current owners cleared the emplacements, magazines and ditch, revealing the Carnot wall and two front caponiers. The barracks at the gorge of the fort has been demolished but part of the west gorge wall with the pump house, bread and meat store and winch house are extant. A set of married quarters to the west of the fort are also existing.

Yaverland Battery



- 1 Shell Store
- 2 Cartridge Store
- 3 R.A.Store
- 4 Shelter
- 5 Former Left Magazine & Shell Store
- 6 Magazine & Shell Store (Right)



A caponier and section of the Carnot wall in September 2008

Nodes Point Battery

Commenced	16 August 1901	Armament	
Completed	20 April 1904	1904-1909	2 x 9.2-inch Mk X BL 1 x 6-inch Mk IX BL 1 x 6-inch Mk X BL
Cost	£ 21,654	1909 - 1954	2 x 9.2-inch Mk X BL
Map Reference	SZ 635898	1918-1928	1 x 4.7-inch QF
Position	St Helens Point/Nodes Point; Isle of Wight	1932-1956	2 x 6-inch Mk VII BL
Type	Coast defence battery	Caponiers	None (4 blockhouses)
Ditch	Dry with wire entanglement	Counterscarp galleries	None
Guns	4	Haxo casemates	None
Barrack Accom.	None	Moncrieff Pits	None
Present use	Holiday Park		
History	Coast defence		
Disposal	Sold off for development 1956		
Condition	Drill hall and guardhouse survive		
Access	With permission		
Sources	Nat. Archives WO33, WO78, WO192 CAB7 CAB18		

History and Description

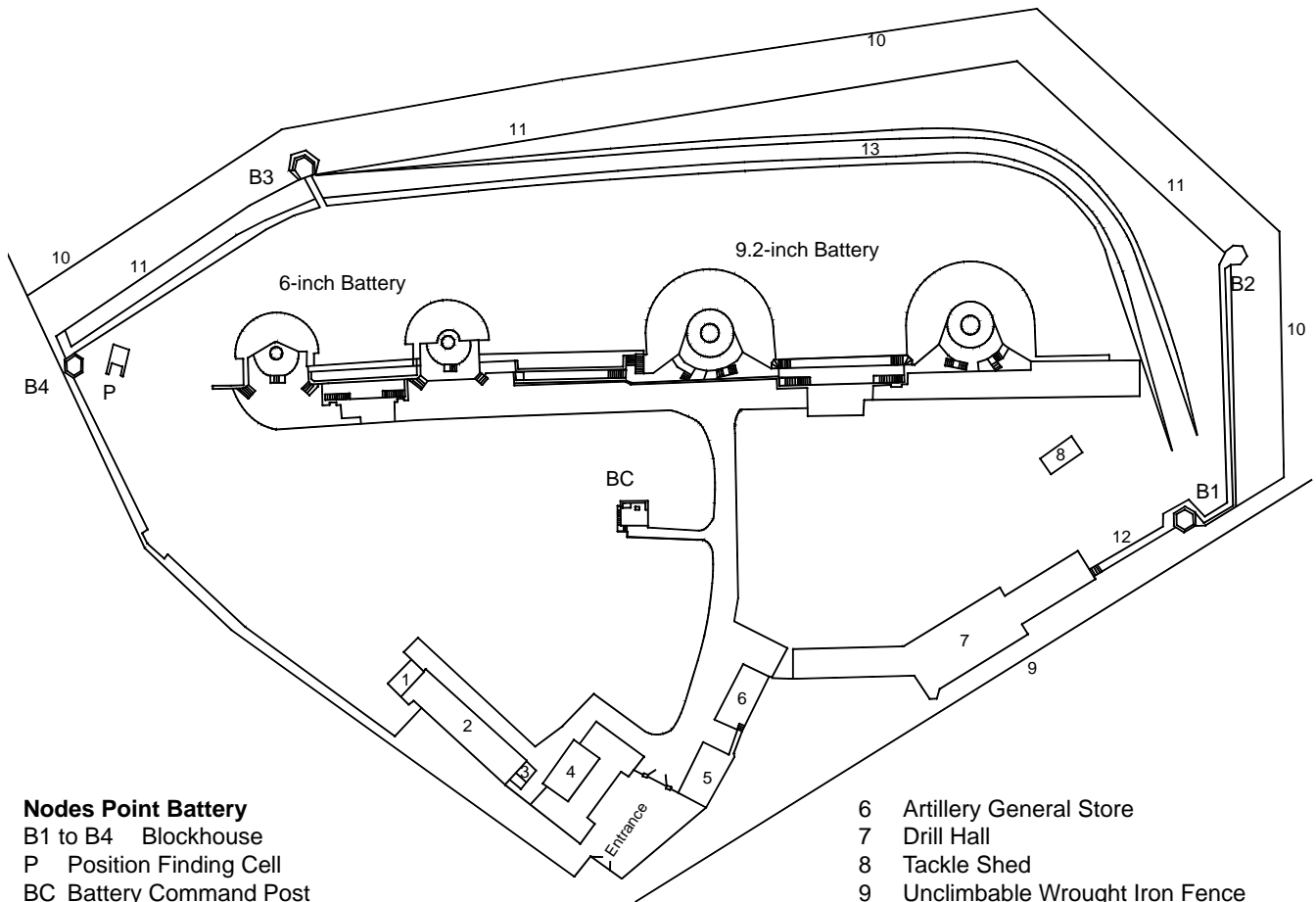
The idea for the battery was contained in the Royal Commission Report of 1860 when it was proposed to build a fort at St Helens Point to prevent a landing between Nettlestone Point and Bembridge; the fort was never built as it was eventually replaced by St Helens Fort. In 1899 the Montgomery Committee recommended that there should be an extra battery of 9.2 inch guns to cover the area off the north-east coast of the island not covered by other guns. Between 1901 and 1904 the Battery was built and mounted two 9.2 inch and two six inch guns. The Owen Report of 1905 decided that only the 9.2 inch guns were necessary, in a counter bombardment role, and that the six inch guns could be removed; they were withdrawn in August 1909. During the First World War the examination anchorage was transferred to St Helens Roads, however it was not until June 1918 that a 4.7 inch QF gun was sent from Southsea Castle as an examination gun and was mounted in the left-hand six inch emplacement; it remained until 1928.

St Helens Roads became the designated examination anchorage after 1928 so an examination battery was required; by September 1932 two six inch Mark VII guns were mounted in the vacant six inch emplacements. The Battery was operational ten days before the outbreak of the Second World War. In 1940 aerial protection mantlets were built for the six inch guns and the 9.2 inch guns received steel covers giving them a turret effect. The Battery was placed into care and maintenance in February 1945.

From 1949 the 6-inch battery was activated for Territorial Army training and practice; at the dissolution of coast artillery in 1956 the guns were scrapped and the site sold off. Two years before the 9.2 inch guns were scrapped on site between July and October.

The battery is now the Nodes Point Holiday Park; the gun emplacements have been either buried (9.2 inch) or demolished (6 inch) but their position is easily recognisable. The guardhouse and drill hall survive, the former is the reception area for the holiday park whilst the latter, considerably altered, is the dining and recreation area. The ferro-concrete wall survives to its full height and virtually its full length; the PF cell is extant and has been converted to residential use, the adjacent blockhouse (No 4) is derelict.

Nodes Point Battery



Nodes Point Battery

- B1 to B4 Blockhouse
- P Position Finding Cell
- BC Battery Command Post
- 1 Latrines
- 2 Shelter
- 3 Coal
- 4 Guard House 7 Quarters
- 5 Workshop

- 6 Artillery General Store
- 7 Drill Hall
- 8 Tackle Shed
- 9 Unclimbable Wrought Iron Fence
- 10 High Wire Entanglement
- 11 Steel Pallisade Fence
- 12 Ferro Concrete wall (10 feet high)
- 13 Ditch with Wire Entanglement



The ferro-concrete wall (thanks to Debs at <http://www.fortsandbatteries.co.uk/>)

Bouldnor Battery

Commenced	1937	Armament	
Completed	1938	1938	2 x 6inch BL Mk VII
Cost	£	1944	40mm Bofors added
Map Reference	SZ 379902	1947	Disarmed
Position	East of Yarmouth	1951	2 x 6-inch BL Mk VII from Cliff End battery
Type	Coast Defence Battery	1956	Stood down and disarmed
Ditch	None		
Guns	2		
Barrack Accom.			
Present use	Water storage		
History	Examination battery for East of Yarmouth	Caponiers	
Disposal	Armament removed 1947	Counterscarp galleries	
Condition	Derelict but Fair	Haxo casemates	
Access	Exterior views only. Fenced off.	Moncrieff Pits	
Sources	Solent Papers no.2 Anthony Cantwell		

History and Description

This battery was built in 1937-8 to cover the new Examination Anchorage east of Yarmouth. It was armed with two 6-inch BL Mark VII guns and had a battery observation Post west of the guns. An engine room for three Crossley oil engines was situated to the right of the battery. Two searchlights stood to the north of the battery, close to the seashore. Between the gun emplacements was a concrete shelter for the gunners, sunk into the ground. Each emplacement had its magazines below ground on its flank. In 1939-40 a number of huts were built behind the battery to accommodate the garrison.

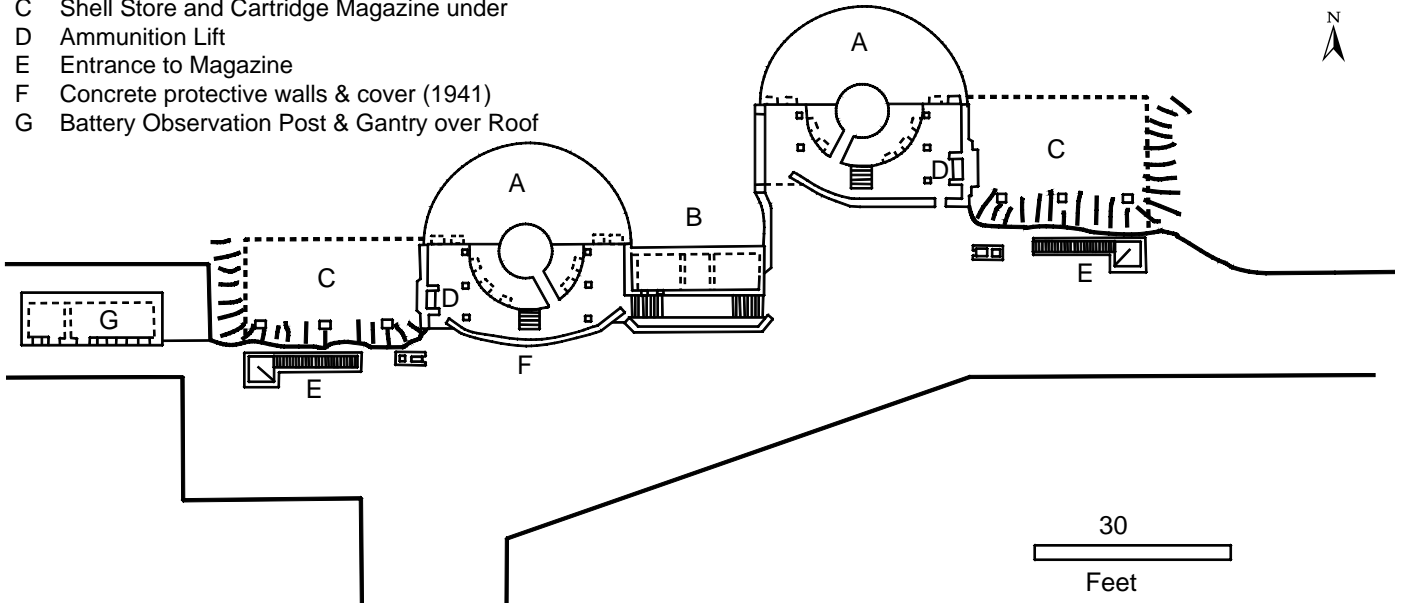
In 1939 an indicator loop was laid across the channel east of the battery. An anti-submarine boom and controlled minefield was added in mid 1940 at Hamstead point, east of Bouldnor, both operated by the Royal Navy. A rough concrete cover was added over each gun emplacement in 1940 to protect against straffing. In July 1941 the two MK VII guns were replaced with re-lined barrels. The battery was built on blue slipper clay and the two searchlights began to slide into the sea. Because of this the battery was stood down in December 1942 but a 40mm Bofors AA gun was added in 1944.

The battery was put into care and Maintenance in 1945 and the Bofors gun was removed. The guns and searchlights were removed in 1947. In 1951 the battery was re-activated when two 6-inch Mk VII from Cliff End Battery were installed. The eastern searchlight was built into a new wooden structure and the western one rebuilt in its old emplacement. Three Lister diesels were fitted into the engine room. Gun practice was carried out at the battery until November 1955 but hand operated hoists for ammunition supply from the magazines were used as the electric ones had been stripped out in 1948. When coast defence was disbanded in 1956 the battery was disarmed and everything was removed for scrap. The site was used for a while as a Naval Adventurous Training facility. In 1995 it was used as an innovative training facility by a company called SOL. The battery is still relatively intact although the overhead cover is in a dangerous condition and the magazines and crew shelters flooded for use as static water tanks by the Forestry fence which prevents access to them for safety reasons. In 2010 the trees in front of the battery were removed to give a view from the battery towards The Solent once more.

Bouldnor Battery

Bouldnor Battery 1941

- A 6-inch BL Mk VII CP
- B Troop Shelter
- C Shell Store and Cartridge Magazine under
- D Ammunition Lift
- E Entrance to Magazine
- F Concrete protective walls & cover (1941)
- G Battery Observation Post & Gantry over Roof



A gun emplacement in 2007