

## Polhawn Battery (Fort)

<b>Commenced</b>	1862	<b>Armament</b>	
<b>Completed</b>	1864	<b>1867-1885</b>	7 x 68pdr
<b>Cost</b>	£ 8,850	<b>1885</b>	7 x 64pr RML
<b>Map Reference</b>	SX 420492	<b>1893</b>	7 x 64pr RML
<b>Position</b>	Polhawn Cove, Whitesand Bay	<b>1899</b>	
<b>Type</b>	Coast Defence Battery	Proposed	2 x 6pr QF
<b>Ditch</b>	Dry	Mounted	Nil.
<b>Guns</b>	7		
<b>Barrack Accom.</b>			
<b>Present use</b>	Private rental accommodation		
<b>History</b>	Officer accommodation, prison, Hotel & tea rooms	<b>Caponiers</b>	3 for musketry
<b>Disposal</b>	1928	<b>Counterscarp galleries</b>	None
<b>Condition</b>	Excellent conversion		
<b>Access</b>	Permission or hire (expensive!)	<b>Haxo casemates</b>	None
<b>Sources</b>	1893 Precis of Correspondence, 1869 report, Historic Defences of Plymouth Woodward and Pye	<b>Moncrieff Pits</b>	None

### History and Description

Polhawn Battery was built overlooking Whitesand Bay on the Rame peninsula. Designed by Captain Du Cane it was approved in 1861 and completed in 1864 as a self contained casemated work with a narrow ditch and loopholed gorge on the landward side. It was sited on a steep scrub covered slope beneath Rame Head. Its primary purpose was to guard the western approaches to Plymouth and to prevent a landing at Whitesand Bay. It was connected to Tregantle Fort by a military Road. The name appears to have changed to Polhawn Fort when the building was sold by the War Dept., into private hands in 1927.

It was first armed with seven 68-pdr guns and was defended by a loopholed gorge on the landward side. The 1869 Committee recommended that Polhawn be remodelled for heavier guns to oppose ironclads. In 1880 the Defence Committee again reported *The small battery at Polhawn requires improvement and heavier guns*. In 1885 it was described as *exposed and weak* and by then the guns had been replaced by seven 64pr RML guns. These guns remained in place until 1898 when it was recommended that they be replaced by two 6pr QF guns from Picklecombe Fort but no evidence exists to show that was done. During the first World War the Battery was used as accommodation for gunnery officers from Whitesand Bay Battery and the magazine as a cell for errant soldiers, some of their writing is still on the walls!

The battery is a two-storey limestone structure dressed with granite and interior brick vaulting. The main entrance is via a drawbridge at the roof level. It has two caponiers one to the rear and one to the west, it has a machicolation (murder hole) in the east wall of the battery. In the 1930's it was used as a Hotel and teas rooms. During the Second World War it was sold and purchased by a family who sub-divided it up. It was later put up for auction in 1986. The present owners purchased it in 1988. It has been sympathetically refurbished as a self-catering hotel sleeping up to 20 people. The fort is hired out mainly for Weddings, and special occasions.

On the gun floor, accessed by a spiral staircase from the roof, four of the original gun positions form the Grand Hall and the other three positions are bedrooms. In the basement the rooms have been turned into bedrooms and service rooms. Lots of original features still exist and the owners have gone out of their way to use them to enhance the fort. The

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