

The Nothe Fort

Commenced	1860	Armament	
Completed	1869	1873	4 x 9-inch RML 6 x 10-inch RMLs 2 x 64pr. RMLs (casemates 3 &5)
Cost	£ 117,049	1899	Proposed 7 x 12.5-inch RML 2 x 6pdr. QF 3 x 10-inch RML 2 x 64pdr. RML
Map Reference	SY 687787	1904	2 x 6pdr. QF
Position	Weymouth harbour	1907	3 x 6-inch BL Mk VII on CPII
Type	Granite casemated sea battery	Caponiers	1
Ditch	Dry on south. Sea on other sides	Counterscarp galleries	None
Guns	10 in casemates	Haxo casemates	None
Barrack Accom.		Moncrieff Pits	None
Present use	Tourist attraction		
History	Coast defence, AA ammunition storage, territorial practice battery		
Disposal	1956		
Condition	Much 'restored'		
Access	Most of the year		
Sources	1869 Committee Report FSG Fort supplement Vol. 9 1981. Fort Guide Book.		

History and Description

The Nothe Fort was intended as a casemated battery with open earthen batteries. The earthen batteries were dispensed with leaving a casemated granite fort for ten heavy guns and two lighter ones, protected by iron shields, with two light guns, to protect the entrance to Weymouth Harbour. The foundations were begun in 1860 by contract. The contract was taken over by the military in 1862. The upper earthen parapet was complete by 1869 but there was no intention of fitting heavy guns there. The shields for the lower battery were still not fitted. Modifications were necessary to alter the shell and powder recesses, giving greater protection. The magazine accommodation was also altered so that *the service of the guns will be well provided for*. The completed fort is roughly shaped like a horse shoe with twenty six casemates, closed at the rear with a high gorge wall defended by a single caponier at the east end. The entrance is at the extreme west end of the gorge wall and is defended by a machicolation in a small chamber above. Many photographs dated 1865 exist at Chatham showing the fort under construction by the Royal Engineers. In 1887 the fort was armed with 4 x 9-inch, 6 x 10-inch and 2 x 64pr. RMLs to cover the land face. The first two casemates from the entrance were used as the guardroom and cookhouse. Next came the reading room, canteen, Sergeant major's quarters, pay office and tailor's shop. The Officers' quarters with rooms for servants and the mess room were at the other end. The magazines were on the basement level. Seven of the RMLs were replaced with 12.5-inch RMLs in the 1890s. By 1891 recommendations were made to alter the fort for QF guns on the roof. First two 6pdr. QFs were installed. In 1902 two 6-inch BL guns were in place and another was added shortly afterwards. In 1912 the RMLs were removed and broken up. Two searchlights were added, one on each side of the fort. Between the two world wars one 6-inch BL was removed leaving guns 1 & 2 as the WWII armament. A Battery Observation Post was added on top at the south-west corner with a Watkin DRF. Other weapons were added outside the fort during WWII, including a 3.7-inch AA battery to the south west of the fort on the glacis. Some of the casemates and magazines on the south side of the fort had been converted to store AA ammunition. On the north side of the fort, with access through one of the embrasures, a small concrete bunker for a close defence gun for Weymouth harbour mouth was also added. After the War The Nothe became a territorial practice battery. In 1956 the fort was closed and disarmed. Weymouth Corporation bought the fort in 1961 and turned the glacis into a park. In 1980 Weymouth Civic Society turned the fort into a tourist attraction with a lot of voluntary labour. It remains open to the public and is visited by many thousands of visitors each year.

The Nothe Fort

