

Sandown Barrack Battery

Commenced	April 1861
Completed	September 1863
Cost	£ 62,331
Map Reference	SZ 594837
Position	Isle of Wight / South, Sandown Bay
Type	Sea Battery
Ditch	Dry
Guns	5 (later 4)
Barrack Accom.	3 in guard room (nearby barracks for men)
Present use	Public garden and teashop
History	Coast defence
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

Armament

1879 to 1891	5 x 64pdr RML
1892 to 1901	2 x 10-inch RML & 2 x 64pdr RML
1901 to 1907	2 x 6-inch BL Mk VII 2 x 12pdr QF
1907 to 1910	2 x 6-inch BL Mk VII
1910 to 1916	2 x 6-inch BL Mk VII M.I.R.
1916	Gun barrels removed
1926	Mountings and shields removed

Caponiers 2

Counterscarp galleries None

Haxo casemates None

Moncrieff Pits None

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.

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