

Warden Point Battery

Commenced 1862
Completed 1863
Cost £ 12,899 (£6,000 for drainage)
Map Reference SZ 325876
Position Isle of Wight - West - Warden Point
Type Coast Defence barbette battery
Ditch dry - three sides only
Guns 8 (modified for 6 then 2)
Barrack Accom. 4 NCOs & men
Present use Holiday camp (closed down 1995)

History Coast Defence. 9 inch RML High Angle Gun test site 1885 to 1888
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 1891
Sources

Armament

1862/3 4 x 7-inch R.M.L.s 4 x 9-inch R.M.L.s
1873 8 x 9-inch R.M.L.s
1892/93 4 x 9-inch R.M.L.
 1 x 9-inch H.A. experimental
 1 x 9-inch L.R. experimental
1901-02 4 x 6-inch B.L. Mk.VII with 3 x 9.2-inch B.L. added outside.
1907 2 x 3 pounder QF guns added
1936 disarmed

Caponiers

Counterscarp galleries

Haxo casemates

Moncrieff Pits

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.

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