

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		

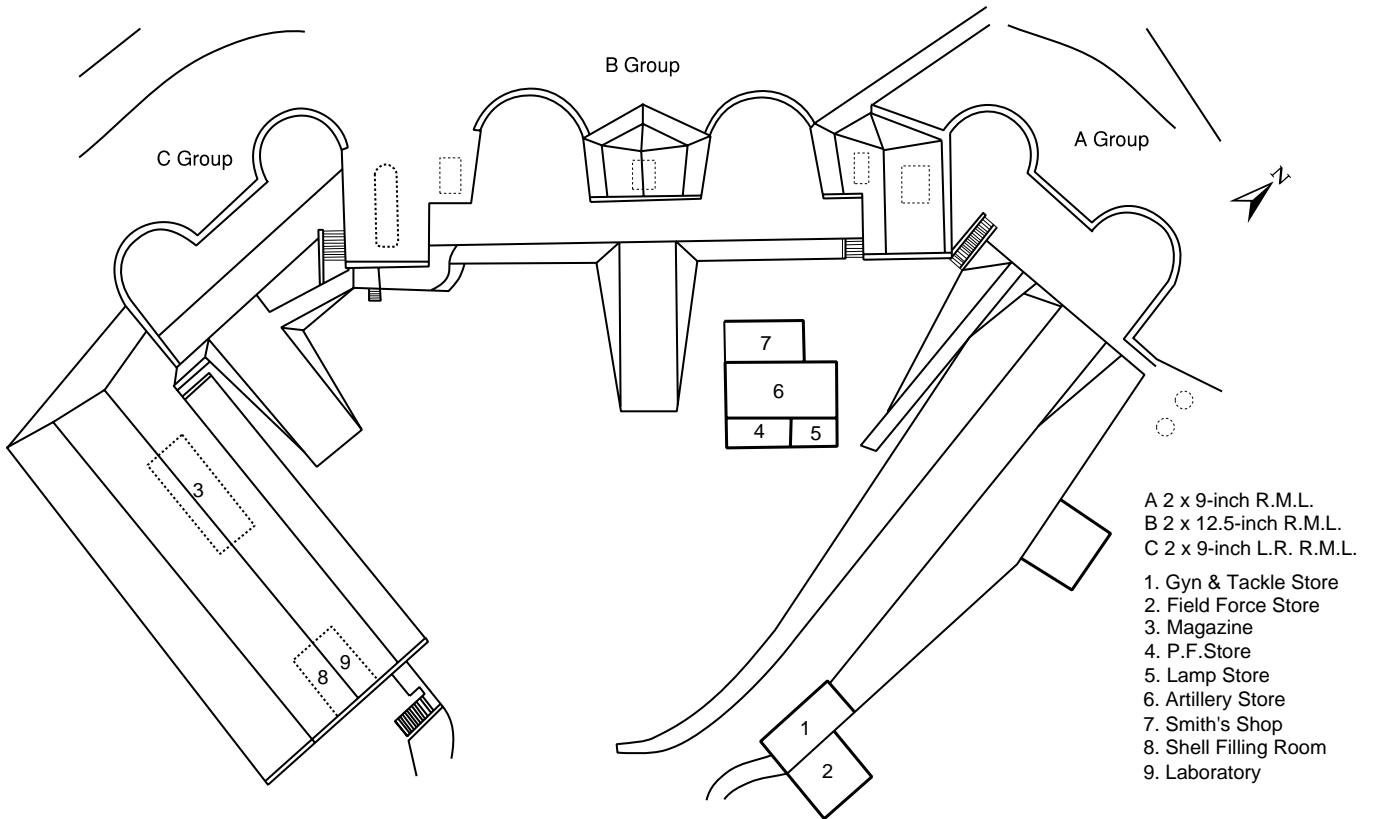
History and Description

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

