

Defensible Barracks

Commenced	1841	Armament	
Completed	1846	1848-1883	16 x 24pr SB
Cost	£ 39,323.9s.8d.	1886	10 x 24pr SB (saluting)
Map Reference	SM 961031	1895	1 x 7-inch RML (drill) 1 x 7-inch RBL (drill) 9 x 24pr SB (Saluting and time) 1 x 64pr RML (Repository drill) 2 x 24pr SB (Repository drill)
Position	On a ridge to the south overlooking the dockyard	1901	9 x 32pr SB (saluting Battery)
Type	Bastioned Defensible Barracks	1903	9 x 32pr SBBL (saluting Battery)
Ditch	Dry	1904?	1 x 5-inch BL Vavasseur
Guns	16	1923	Armament withdrawn
Barrack Accom.	9 Officers 159 men	Caponiers	None
Present use	Mostly empty. Part occupied. Grade II* Scheduled Ancient Monument: Depot and HQ	Counterscarp galleries	None
History		Haxo casemates	None
Disposal	South Pembrokeshire Council 1956	Moncrieff Pits	None
Condition	Fair		
Access	With prior permission		
Sources	1858 & 1868 Committee Reports, Precis of Correspondence prior to 1893 National Archives. WO33,44,55,78,192 CAB3 and 36		

History and Description

The Pembroke Dockyard was founded in 1813 and was slowly provided with defences; to the south of the dockyard was a ridge that overlooked it and to guard against an attack from the south the ridge was to be occupied by a redoubt which became the Defensible Barracks. Construction took five years and subsequently it received its armament. In 1887 it was decided that the barracks may be disarmed. For most of its military existence it served as a barracks, a depot and a headquarters. When the forts and batteries protecting Milford Haven estuary were completed the defensive role of the barracks ceased and it was scheduled to be disarmed in 1886; thereafter such armament as was mounted there was for drill, practice and saluting, although in 1911 the Barracks is shown as having two machine guns on field carriages for the defence of the dockyard.

From 1908 the Barracks became a drill centre for the local Territorial Forces, whilst in the First World War it was a Siege Training School for the Royal Artillerymen. The training role continued into the period in between the World Wars and into the Second World War when it became the headquarters of the Milford Haven coastal batteries and this role continued until 1956 when the coast defences were abolished. The Ministry of Defence sold the Barracks after 1956 to the South Pembrokeshire District Council who used it as a store and leased part of it to a local golf club that used it as a clubhouse. In 1987 it was sold to a developer, ostensibly for conversion into an hotel; by 2003 the Barracks were empty and derelict but appeared secure. In 2004 a feasibility study by the Prince's Regeneration Trust offered several sustainable solutions to bring regenerative uses to this Grade II* Scheduled Ancient Monument. In 2006 the Barracks was owned by The Defensible Barracks 1844 Limited who have so far not agreed with the Pembrokeshire County Team a way to rescue and repair the structure which is deemed to be "At Risk".

The Barracks is a regular four sided work with a bastion at each corner, set within a deep dry ditch. Much of the enceinte is loopholed for musketry and the gun embrasures and concentrated at the salient of each bastion except for two embrasures on the eastern curtain. The entrance is over a drawbridge, through a loopholed gatehouse and onto the parade ground, around which are the barracks.

There is a basement where there were two powder magazines, above this there are two floors, the outer faces of which were loopholed for musketry to cover the rampart; on each face there is a turret that could provide flanking fire along each face. There is access from the parade ground to each of the bastions. Over the years various extra buildings had been built against the outer faces of the barracks or into the bastions.

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