

Fort Picklecombe

Commenced	1861 : remodelled 1864	Armament	
Completed	1867	1861	Proposed 42 x 68 & 110pr guns
Cost	£ 149,126 including shields	1864	proposed 19 x 10-inch 19 x 9-inch 4 x 7-inch RMLs
Map Reference	SX 455515	1885	Revised armament 18 x 10-inch RML 14 x 9-inch RML 4 x 7-inch RML
Position	Sea defences Outer Line	1899	10 x 10-inch 7 x 9-inch 4 x 7-inch RMLs
Type	Casemated Coast Defence Battery	Proposed	2 x 9.2-inch 2 x 6-inch 2 x 12pr QF
Ditch	None	1907	2 x 6-inch BL Mk VII 2 x 4-inch QF
Guns	42	1918	2 x 6-inch BL Mk VII
Barrack Accom.	200	WWII	2 x 6-inch 2 x twin 6pr QF 2 x 40mm Bofors 2 x 2pr Anti-Tank
Present use	Apartments and holiday lets	Caponiers	None
History	Coast defence	Counterscarp galleries	None
Disposal	1956	Haxo casemates	None
Condition	Converted for modern use	Moncrieff Pits	None
Access	Restricted		
Sources	Précis of Correspondence relating to the Defences of Plymouth prior to 1893		

History and Description

First proposed by Jervois in 1858, Fort Picklecombe was designed in 1860 as a casemated granite battery for 42 x 68 and 110pdrs in two tiers and 16 guns on the platform above, all protected by iron shields. A large detached magazine was to be constructed in the rear. It was re-modelled in 1864. the magazines were removed to the basement beneath the gun floors. The roof (platform) battery was omitted but the two tiers of gun were retained. The fort was completed in 1867, except for the shields, as a series of 42 granite casemates in two tiers with positions for guns on the roof. In 1871 the Defence Committee allotted six of the 50 x 10-inch RML guns available to Picklecombe. By 1872 the shields were fitted and the fort was armed with thirty two 10-inch, 9-inch and 7-inch RMLs. In 1872 'The Plymouth Sound Coast Artillery Tests' took place and reported many failings in the operation of the guns and supply of ammunition at Picklecombe. In 1880 the fort was reported as *complete and in good order... fully armed and equipped*. In 1885 the R.A. and R.E. Works Committee reported that the armament was complete apart from 1 x 10-inch and 5 x 9-inch RMLs *'Those now mounted to remain but the remainder not to be mounted for the present*. 1887 the Inspector General of Fortifications received a proposal to strengthen Picklecombe. It was reported *to make Picklecombe safe would entail expenditure incommensurate with the advantages obtained. The fort is faulty in every way, but he declined to retire from it or alter its armament until he could see his way to other and more powerful defences*. The guns were reduced in 1898 and two 6pr QF guns fitted. The 6prs were quickly removed and proposed for Polhawn Battery, but not mounted. In 1899 six 12pr Q.F.s were proposed for the roof. These remained until 1908.

In 1914-1918 the fort was manned by Devon RGA (TA) the 6-inch guns being used as the Examination Battery. In 1923 the guns were put into care and maintenance until 1938. The 4-inch guns were removed during this time. During WWII the fort became active again as the Examination Battery and crews from the Devonshire Heavy regiment manned the forts armament of 2 x 6-inch BL and 2 x 6pr QFs whilst the RE manned the Defence Electric Lights and the Navy worked the off-shore controlled minefield. In 1956 the fort was released by the Military. It was acquired for conversion but lay derelict until it was converted to 103 apartments in the 1970s and is now used as private accommodation, although some apartments are let as holiday flats.

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