

Sandown (Granite) Fort

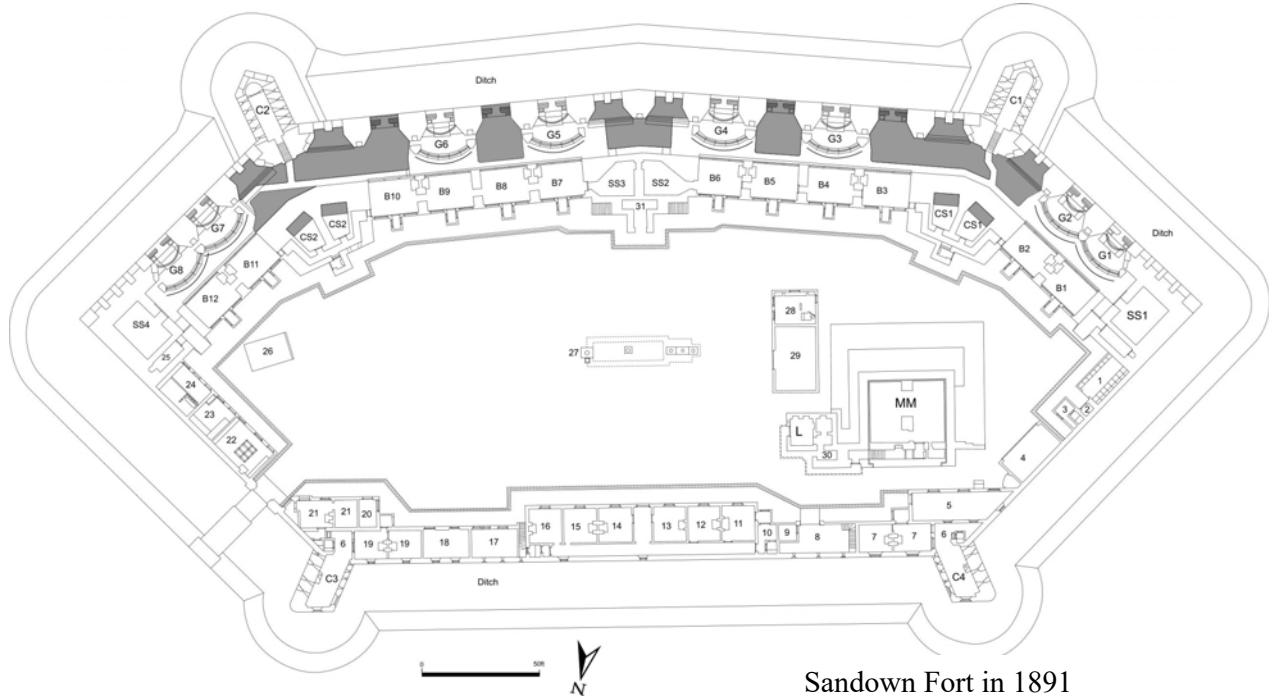
<p>Commenced April 1861 Completed September 1864 Cost £ 73,876 Map Reference SZ 597839 Position South Isle of Wight, Middle of Sandown Bay Type Coast Defence, casemated Ditch Dry Guns 28 Barrack Accom. 4 officers, 67 men Present use Zoo and reptile house</p> <p>History Barracks, Volunteer practice battery Disposal Sold about 1930 Condition Much altered internally Access by payment to visit the zoo</p> <p>Sources Precis of Correspondence - 1893, Solent Papers No 2, 1891 Armament book</p>	<p>Armament</p> <p>1876 Proposed 8 x 10-inch, 4 x 9-inch R.M.L.s 1886 Mounted 8 x 10-inch, 4 x 9-inch R.M.L.s 1891 6 x 10-inch R.M.L. 2 x 9-inch R.M.L. 1895 6 x 10-inch, 2 x 9-inch, 2 x 64pr. R.M.L. (1 x 32pr. SB 1 x 8-inch S.B. parade) 1898 6 x 10-inch, 2 x 9-inch, 1 x 9pr. R.M.L. (for practice) 1904 RML guns removed.</p> <p>Caponiers 4 Counterscarp galleries None Haxo casemates None Moncrieff Pits None</p>
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History and Description

Referred to as 'Granite' Fort in later documents, this fort was constructed close to the beach in the centre of Sandown Bay. It consisted of a granite faced fort for 18 guns in casemates behind iron shields. Ten guns were proposed in an earthen battery on the terreplein above in place of an infantry parapet first proposed. This decision was reversed in 1878 due to the construction of supporting batteries at Yaverland, Sandown Barrack and Redcliff. The main magazine on the interior parade proved to be damp and the ditch needed improved drainage and ventilation for sanitary reasons. The gorge of the work was closed with a wall and the whole enceinte surrounded by a ditch flanked by four musketry caponiers. Originally designed for eighteen 9-inch R.M.L. guns the work was believed that it was too cramped to be remodelled for heavier guns when they were introduced, In 1881 it was reported that the armament had been increased in power by substituting 11-inch 18-ton guns in the seaward casemates and its defensive strength increased by the addition of 5 inches to its armour. In 1887 it was decided to reduce the guns by removing two 9-inch guns from the East Face. These were to be replaced with 2 x 10-inch R.M.L.s from centre of the left half of the southeast face; and the removal of 2 x 10-inch R.M.L.s in centre of right half of southeast face. These were to be placed at Sandown Barrack Battery on High Angle mountings. The vacant positions were filled with concrete at a cost of £1,000 to act as traverses and the expense magazines were given additional front protection against sea attack.

In 1897 there were proposals to mount three 3-pounder QF guns on the terreplein of the fort on travelling carriages from Hurst Castle but these were probably not fitted. In 1895 some SB guns were mounted on the parade and 1898 a 9pr. R.M.L. was mounted in the east face for practice. In November 1904 the RML guns were withdrawn and the fort became a practice battery with six 5-inch B.L.s and three 3-inch Q.F.s on top. The fort was used for accommodation only. The fort was sold in about 1930, the rear of it was demolished and it is now a private zoo and little of the original fort can be seen from within. In 1943 the fort was used to shelter one of the terminals for PLUTO which carried fuel to the Normandy beaches. The roof of one of the two front face caponiers is just visible above the earth surround and some of the iron shields are still in place.

Sandown Fort



Sandown Fort in 1891

