

Yaverland Battery

Commenced	23 April 1861	Armament	
Completed	30 March 1864	1869-1879	8 x 7-inch RBL guns
Cost	£ 15,183	1879-1892	8 x 64pr. RML
Map Reference	SZ 612849	1892-1898	7 x 64pr RML
Position	Isle of Wight /South, Sandown Bay	1898-1910	3 x 6-inch BL Mark VII
Type	Coast Defence Battery	1910-1915	2 x 6-inch BL Mark VII 1 x 6-inch VII in reserve
Ditch	Dry	1915-c1934	2 x 6-inch BL Mark VII
Guns	8 (later 3)	1943-1954	2 x 6-inch BL Mark VII
Barrack Accom.	2 officers, 55 men		
Present use	Sandown Bay Holiday Centre	Caponiers	4
History	Coast defence in RML & BL eras	Counterscarp galleries	None
Disposal	To private ownership	Haxo casemates	None
Condition	Remains overgrown and derelict	Moncrieff Pits	None
Access	Possible, with permission Precis of Correspondence 1893, Solent Papers No 2, 1891 Armament book, Nat. Archive		
Sources	WO33, 78, 192, 396 CAB 3,13,18		

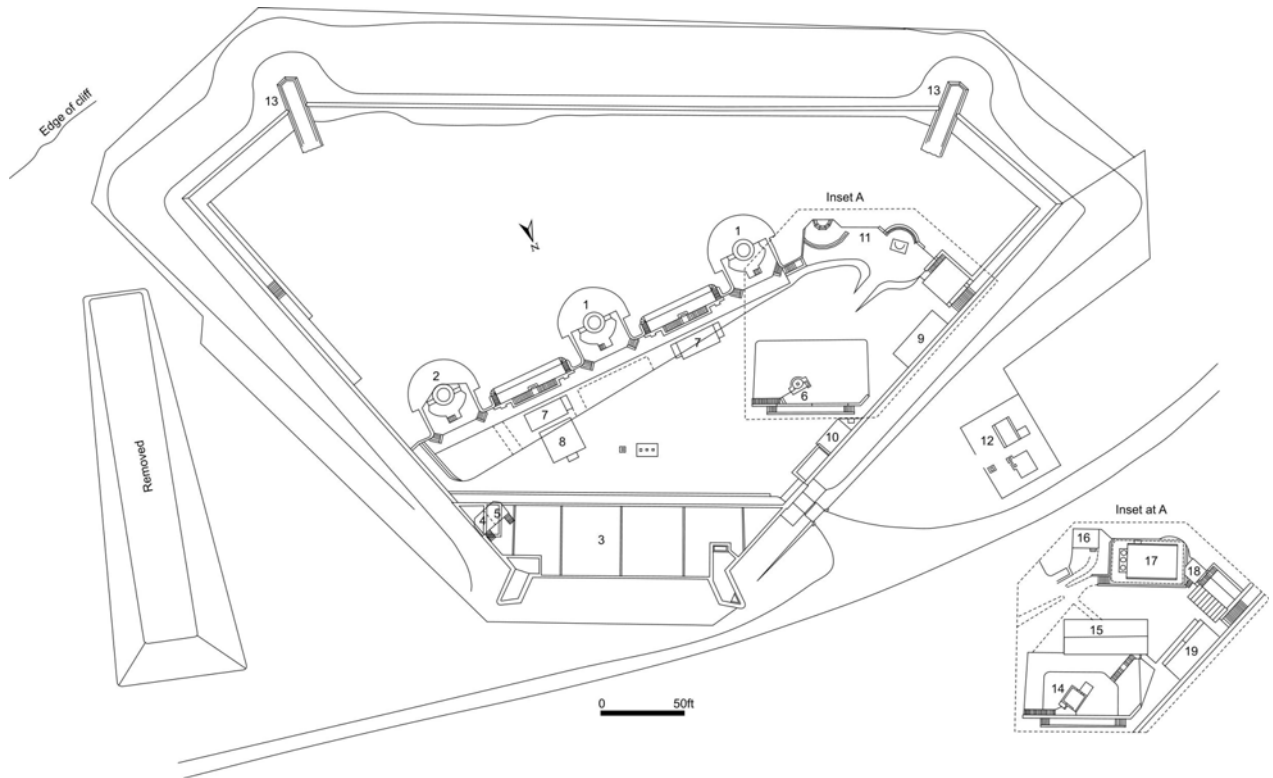
History and Description

This battery was constructed on a knoll on the downs about 1,800 yards to the east of Sandown Fort, at an elevation of 108ft. above sea level. It was to be armed with eight 7-inch R.B.L. guns and was well provided with magazine accommodation. It was enclosed with a loopholed Carnot wall and a ditch flanked by two musketry caponiers. The gorge was closed by a barracks with accommodation for 2 officers and 57 men. At either end of the barracks was a musketry caponier that covered the ditch and the landward face of the barracks. The 7-inch RBLs were replaced by 64pr RMLs by 1879. In 1887 it was decided to remove one 64pr. from the left flank of the battery and to construct a traverse instead to prevent ships from enfilading the battery from the Culver Cliff area. The remaining 64prs. were to be blocked up on 6ft. parapet slides, this work was carried out by 1892. In the 1890s it was proposed to fit 2 x 9.2-inch B.L. guns and 3 x 6-inch B.L. VII guns, however only the 6-inch guns were fitted as the two 9.2-inch guns were mounted at Culver Down.

Between 1898 and 1900 at a cost of £6131 the battery was remodelled to take three 6-inch B.L. Mark VII guns. The battery was assisted by a searchlight in the cliff east of the battery another at Sandown Fort. In 1910 the no 3 gun was classed as mounted in reserve and it left the battery in February 1915 for Inchkeith Island in the Firth of Forth. Further additional building were constructed in the period 1914 to 1915. In 1932 the battery was reduced to practice status and the guns scheduled for ultimate withdrawal. Between the Wars the battery was used for Territorial Army Summer camps and Kings Cup Shoots. During the 1920s two searchlights were installed in concrete shelters near water level for night practice. The Yaverland Coast Artillery Search Lights were closed down in 1942 when Culver Battery's night role was ended. The battery and its searchlights was re-activated in 1943 as a Home Guard installation covering Sandown Bay. It is clear that there were no guns at the battery at the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939, as Sandown Bay was defended by other means. In April 1943 the battery was reactivated when two 6-inch Mark VII guns were emplaced and it was manned by the Home Guard for the remainder of the War. In 1951 two 3.7-inch AA guns were also used for coast artillery practice.

In 1956 all guns were removed and the site sold off, and it now forms part of the Sandown Bay Holiday Centre. The concrete battery for the three 6-inch guns survives, with the pits filled and overgrown for many years. The glacis has been removed from the front of the gun aprons and the underground shelters were closed off with earth until 2008 when the current owners cleared the emplacements, magazines and ditch, revealing the Carnot wall and two front caponiers. The barracks at the gorge of the fort has been demolished but part of the west gorge wall with the pump house, bread and meat store and winch house are extant. A set of married quarters to the west of the fort are also existing.

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A caponier and section of the Carnot wall in September 2008