

New Tavern Fort

<p>Commenced 1869 (new battery) Completed by 1872 Cost £ unknown Map Reference TQ650747 Position South bank of Thames at Gravesend Type Ditch Open battery with shields Guns Dry Barrack Accom. 10 Present use In Milton Chantry 50 soldiers Interpreted and re-armed fort History co-existing with a public garden Disposal 1930 reverted to local council Condition much remains, being preserved Access Open to the public. Magazines open on Saturdays and Sundays Sources May-Sept.</p>	<p>Armament 1872 -1881 10 x 7-inch RML (or higher) one was removed for a year in 1875 1887 Garden face - 3 x 9-inch RMLs East face - 3 x 9-inch RMLs 1 x 12-inch RML North face - 3 x 9-inch RMLs 1895 9 x 9-inch 1 x 12-inch 2 x Machine Guns 1904 2 x 6-inch BL converted on north face Caponiers 1 Counterscarp galleries None Haxo casemates None Moncrieff Pits None</p>
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History and Description

New Tavern Fort was named after an early inn on the site. The first battery at New Tavern dates from 1780. In 1805 it was armed with two 32 pr. fourteen 24pr. and one 9pr. smooth bore guns. It was modernised with different armaments in the 1840s and early 1860s and continued thus until 1868 when it was strengthened with earthworks and RML emplacements after a recommendation by the 1860 report. Captain Clarke in his book 'Fortification' cited New Tavern as an example of an open battery with shields. Seven of the ten RML guns were placed behind the sort of shields usually provided for heavy RML guns in casemated positions. One shield remains with a replica 9-inch RML gun behind it.

The fort was rearmed after 1904 with two 6-inch BL guns on the north face. These remained in place for several years. A further two 6-inch guns were mounted from the late 1920s or early 1930s for the use of the Territorial Army. They remained at least as late as 1937. The fort was abandoned and reverted to the local council in the 1930s to become a public garden. It is now being re-armed and interpreted as a fort and developed as a military museum by the New Tavern Fort Project. Its magazines house displays relating to its past life. It also has a collection of artillery representative of its history, including two 6-inch BL guns and a 3.7-inch AA gun from Tongue Sands Fort in the Thames Estuary.

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