

Golden Hill Fort

Commenced	1863	Armament	
Completed	1868	1886	6 x 40pr. R.B.L.
Cost	£ 38,022	1891	6 x 40pr. R.B.L. on Special Traversing Slides
Map Reference	Sz 339879		
Position	On Golden Hill, West Wight.		
Type	Defensible Barracks		
Ditch	Dry		
Guns	18		
Barrack Accom.	8 officers 128 men		
Present use	Being converted to apartments		
History	Barracks, school of gunnery in 1888, Infantry training from 1914	Caponiers	3
Disposal	Sold 1962	Counterscarp galleries	3
Condition	Reasonably intact, some alteration		
Access	Outside only.	Haxo casemates	None
Sources	Precis of Correspondence - 1893, Solent Papers No 2, 1891 Armament book	Moncrieff Pits	None

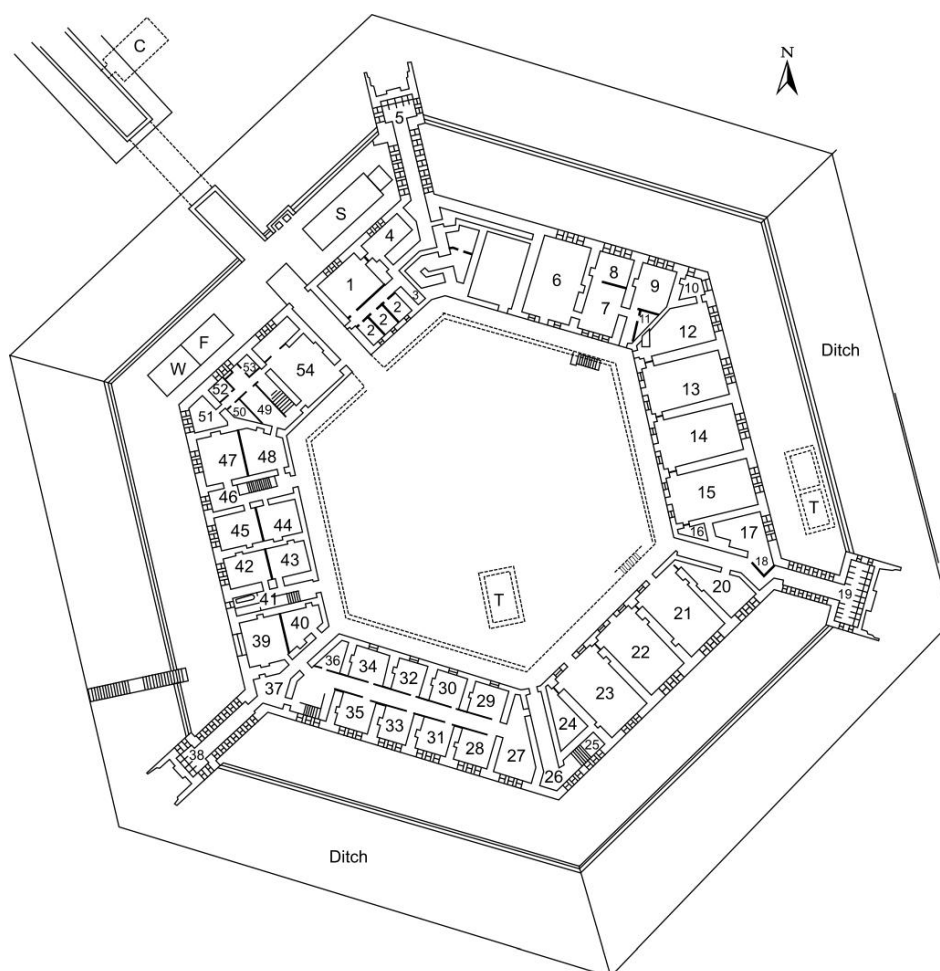
History and Description

The fort was constructed on a hill, so named because of the yellow laburnum bushes there (other sources state that this is wrong and the name came from the landowner who was Gordon), midway between Yarmouth and Freshwater, to the west of the River Yare. It was intended to be a defensible barracks and keep for the batteries defending the needles passage. It was originally designed as a much larger work for 250 men with the same barrack accommodation as the one that was finally constructed. In 1862 this was reduced to accommodate 8 officers, 128 men, a hospital staff and 14 patients. The work is hexagonal in trace with barrack rooms on two stories with scarps 31ft. high covered by a raised glacis and was designed for 18 light guns on the roof. The ditch is flanked by musketry caponiers at alternate angles. The entrance to the work is through a tunnel in the glacis and over a drawbridge. The parapets were constructed without berms on a slope of one to one. Slippage due to heavy rain resulted in remedial works of concrete and better drainage to sustain the parapets. The work was not designed to resist the attack of a strong force with artillery but was to hold two companies of gunners for the batteries at Cliff End and Warden Point and to provide a central point of support to troops opposing an enemy who may have landed on the island. An internal courtyard has a glass-roofed verandah on three sides at first floor level. This was supported on iron columns and served the barrack rooms of the east side, each for 14 men. The main magazine was situated on the north-east corner on the ground floor. The intended guns of the roof were not fitted, instead six 40pr. R.B.L. guns were placed, one to each salient. In 1891 the G.O.C. recommended that the 40prs be replaced with 4-inch B.L. guns but this was not agreed.

From 1869 the fort was occupied by two companies of coast gunners. In 1888 the fort became the Western District School of Gunnery, providing courses for Regulars and Volunteers. During the 1914-18 war it was used as an infantry training depot, training over 30,000 men of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry between 1915-18. During 1939-45 it was a depot for the British and Canadian infantry. In 1945 it was taken over by the RASC as a barrack for waterborne troops. Until 1962 the fort was used by them as their Junior NCOs' Training School.

The military released the fort in 1962. From 1969 to 1984 the fort was an industrial estate but from 1985 it was opened as a craft and light business park, with a small museum. In 1989 it changed hands again and was open to the public as a place of 'historical and general interest'. In 2005 planning permission was granted for the conversion of the fort to 18 luxury apartments. Only four of these were sold with a 999 year lease. The fort with the remaining 14 apartments was put back on the market for £2.4 million in May 2018.

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