

Freshwater Redoubt

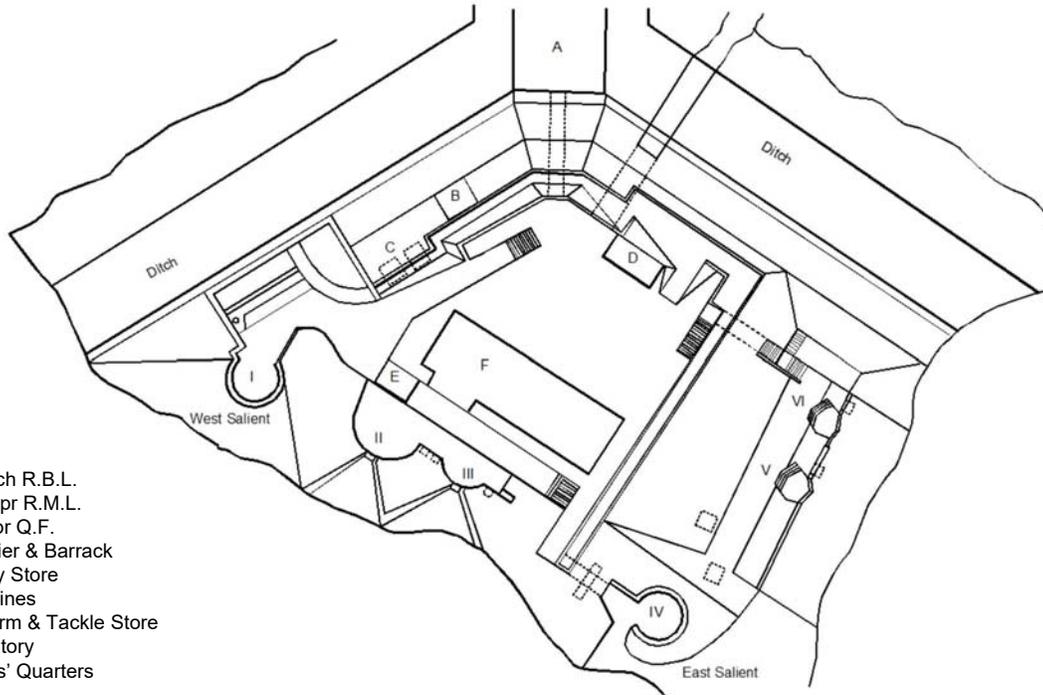
Commenced	1855	Armament	Original 4 x 68pr. SB 3 x 8-inch SB How. 1861-1889 2 x 7-inch R.B.L. 2 x 64pr. R.M.L. 3 x 8-inch S.B. How. 1893 2 x 6pr. Q.F. (dismounted in RA charge) 2 x 7-inch R.B.L. 2 x 64pr. R.M.L. 1 x 0.45MG 1895-1898 2 x 6pr. Q.F. 2 x 64pr R.M.L. 1 x MG 1899 2 x 4.7-inch Q.F. (dismounted in RA charge) 2 x 6pr. Q.F. 2 x 64pr R.M.L. Mounted 1901 2 x 12pr.QF 2 x 6pr.QF 1 x MG Mounted 1902 2 x 6pr. QF Hochkiss 1 x MG 1903 2 x 5-inch BL mobile 1916 - Nil 1917 2 x 15pr BLC on field carriages 1922 2 x 12pr.QF 12cwt
Completed	1856	Caponiers	1
Cost	£	Counterscarp galleries	None
Map Reference	SZ 345856	Haxo casemates	None
Position	Isle of Wight / Freshwater Bay	Moncrieff Pits	None
Type	Coast Battery & beach defence		
Ditch	Dry / Two land sides only		
Guns	6		
Barrack Accom.	3 Officers 39 men (in caponier)		
Present use	Now private residence.		
History	Practice battery for Golden Hill		
Disposal	Sold 1928		
Condition	Poor - Caponier derelict		
Access	Tea rooms only - Q.F. battery by arrangement		
Sources	Solent Papers No 2, Precis of correspondence prior to 1898		

History and Description

Freshwater Redoubt was constructed to defend Freshwater Bay, which was an good place to land troops in reasonable weather. A deep, brick lined ditch protects the landward approaches whilst to the seaward steep cliffs make a frontal assault impossible. The redoubt is entered over a drawbridge, to the left of which a large two-storey caponier projects into the rampart to provide flanking fire along it. On a small parade in the centre of the fort was constructed a barrack for Officers and NCOs. Twenty four men were accommodated in the caponier which is entered via a long staircase down from the parade. This caponier is now an empty shell, the floors having collapsed. Beneath the western rampart are the shell and cartridge stores.

The redoubt consists of a QF battery overlooking the bay and a four gun battery facing south. The south battery was originally armed with smooth bore guns but was remodelled in 1871 for two 7-inch RBLs and two 64pr. RMLs. The 64prs were originally firing through embrasures but were 'blocked up' to fire over the parapet in 1888. In 1889 the General Officer Commanding advised that an ironclad could easily silence Freshwater Fort in its present state and then a landing could be effected to take the defences of the western entrance in rear. He proposed to mount new guns in extra emplacements on the Down but the Defence Committee did not agree. They stated that the only danger to be apprehended at Freshwater was a landing and this could be met by mounting two 6pr. QFs and 1 Machine gun in the lower battery. In consequence the lower east facing beach battery originally mounting 8-inch SB Howitzers was remodelled in 1891 for two 6pr. QF guns and a maxim machine gun. In 1893 the 7-inch RBLs were removed and the upper battery emplacements 1 and 4 were to be remodelled for 4.7-inch QFs, the present 64prs. being withdrawn, but the idea was abandoned in 1898. The upper battery became an instruction battery for the nearby Golden Hill Fort school of gunnery in 1900 using two 12 pr. and three 6pr. QFs. An accident occurred with one in 1901 when a breech block blew out. In 1903 two 5-inch BL mobile howitzers were stored at the redoubt to defend the coastline. Only the lower battery was armed in the 1914-18 war. Two 12prs. were replaced with two 15 pr. Ehrhardt field guns 1916-18. The fort was sold by the military in 1928. The barrack block was converted into a private residence in 1936. A new building used as a tea room was added overlooking the southern rampart. The redoubt has been converted for use as a residence with facilities for holiday flats and camping. It was put on the market for £3 Million in November 2016.

Freshwater Redoubt



1891

I & IV 7-inch R.B.L.

II & III - 64pr R.M.L.

V & VI - 6pr Q.F.

A - Caponier & Barrack

B - Artillery Store

C - Magazines

D - Side Arm & Tackle Store

E - Laboratory

F - Officers' Quarters

