

Southsea Castle Flanking Batteries

<p>Commenced 1863</p> <p>Completed July 1868</p> <p>Cost £ 40,854 plus £35,025 for shields.</p> <p>Map Reference SZ 643980</p> <p>Position Southsea sea front, Portsmouth,</p> <p>Type Sea Front, Open batteries</p> <p>Ditch Dry</p> <p>Guns 36</p> <p>Barrack Accom. 3 officers & 61 men (keep of castle)</p> <p>Present use Pleasure gardens</p> <p>History Coast Artillery until 1956</p> <p>Disposal Bought by council 1960</p> <p>Condition Some emplacements still visible,</p> <p>Access At all times</p> <p>Sources R.A. Institute papers. 1891</p>	<p>Armament</p> <p>1868</p> <p>1 x 13.3-inch RML 22tons (Big Will of 1863)</p> <p>22 x 9-inch RMLs 12 tons</p> <p>9 x 7-inch RMLs 7-tons</p> <p>1884 2 x 12-inch, 4 x 11-inch, 5 x 9-inch</p> <p>1 x 7-inch 7 ton R.M.Ls 3 x 6pr. QF 2 x M.G.</p> <p>1893 3 x 11-inch, 5 x 9-inch, 4 x 7-inch,</p> <p>Caponiers None</p> <p>Counterscarp galleries None</p> <p>Haxo casemates None</p> <p>Moncrieff Pits None</p>
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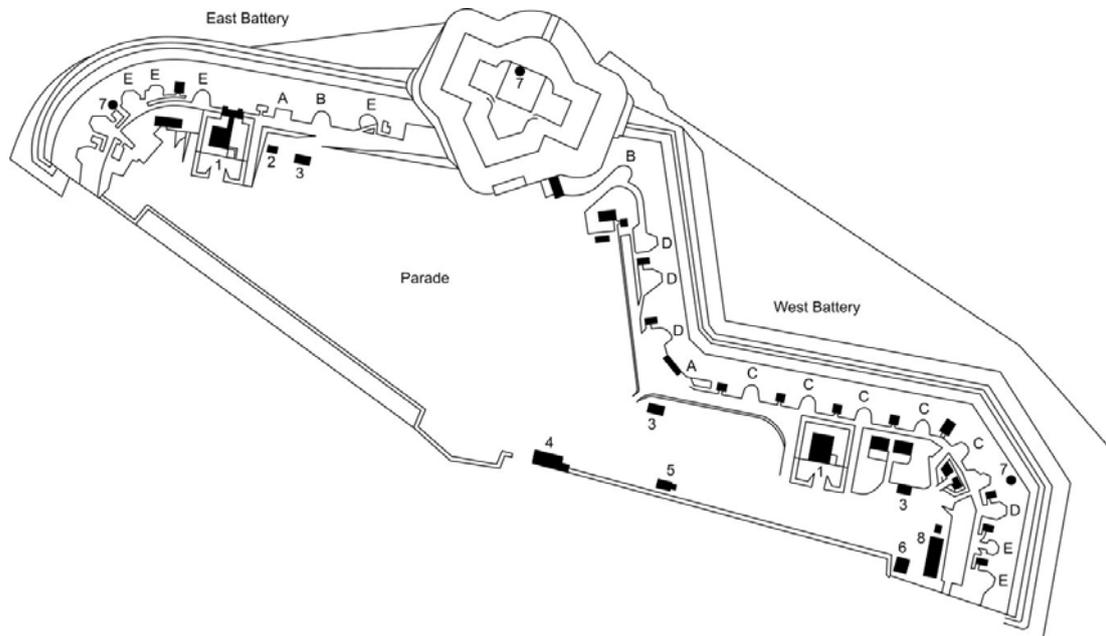
History and Description

The Royal Commission ordered two flanking batteries for 32 guns to be added to the existing Southsea Castle, armed with one rifled 13.3-inch gun on the left flank of the west battery together with 22 x rifled guns of 9 or 10-inch and 9 x 7-inch guns for flank defence with four mortars. The batteries were considered to be sufficiently complete to be handed over to the Royal Artillery in July 1868. When the 1869 Commission visited they found the protection to the guns and magazines to be insufficient to withstand the heavy projectiles of the present day. The gorge of the work was closed with a brick wall, loopholed for musketry defence, a section of which remains.

In 1901 it was proposed to remove the 11-inch and 9-inch R.M.Ls. A 4.7-inch Q.F. gun was added to the west battery and two 6-inch B.L. VII guns were fitted on the east battery. In 1903 these were supplemented with two 9.2-inch B.L. guns. The new B.L.s were to counter attacking vessels attempting to block the entrance to the harbour. By 1914 Southsea East Battery was still armed with the 6-inch and 9.2-inch B.L.s and Southsea West was armed with 3 x 12pr. Q.F.s. The 1917 return states that 2 x 12pr. QFs and 1 x 4.7-inch QFs were in place. By 1922 the 6-inch and 9.2-inch BLs were still in place as were 3 x 12pr. Q.F.s.

During World War Two a 4-inch A.A. gun was fitted to the end of the West Battery. A Coast Artillery Maintenance Battery continued in service at Southsea Castle until 1956, when coast artillery was abolished. Southsea Castle then became surplus to requirements and in July 1961 Portsmouth Council acquired the whole site for £35,000. Most of the gun positions were destroyed or filled in to form gardens. The 6-inch and 9.2-inch B.L. gun concrete aprons remain intact but the emplacements have been landscaped and converted to modern use as apart of an open park and garden. One of the 9-inch R.M.L. barbette positions remains intact to the west of the castle keep. A Portsmouth City spokesperson indicated that the Victorian magazines were blocked and covered over but remain beneath the grass. The brick loopholed gorge wall to the rear is mostly intact. The 4.7-inch Q.F. position on west battery has been completely removed but the Q.F. positions are recognisable.

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9-inch R.M.L. barbette