

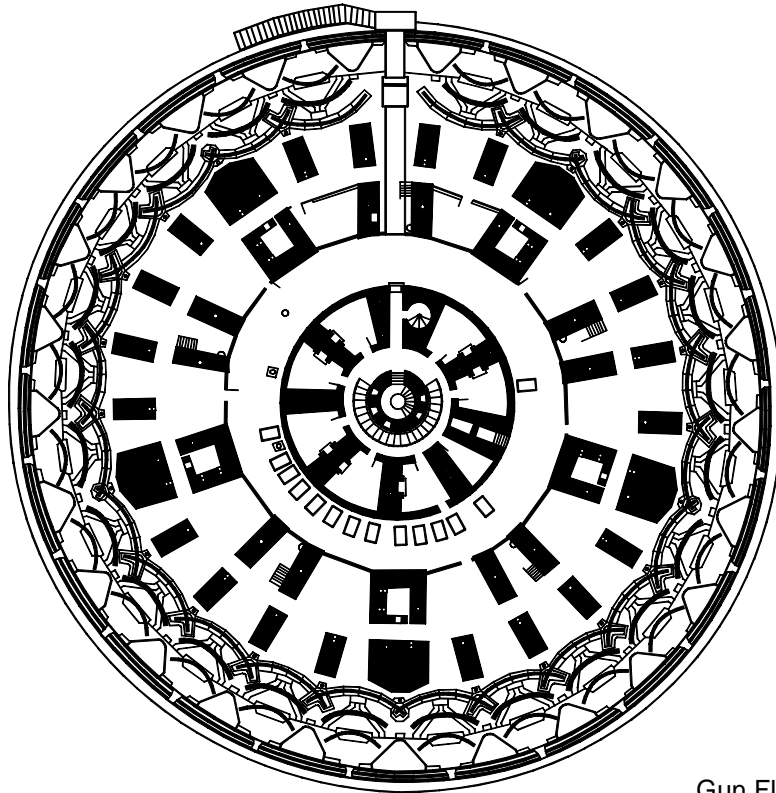
No Mans Land Fort

Commenced	July 1861 & March 1865	Armament	
Completed	March 1880	1886 - Mounted	
Cost	£ 462,500	Lower - 12 x 12.5-inch RML	
Map Reference	SZ 639938	Upper - 12 x 10-inch RML	
Position	In the sea at Spithead, Eastern approaches to Portsmouth Harbour	1893 - Mounted	
Type	Sea Fort, circular, casemated iron/granite	Lower - 8 x 12.5-inch R.M.L., 4 x 12-inch B.L.	
Ditch	None, in the sea	Upper - 9 x 10-inch R.M.L., 4 x 12-inch B.L.	
Guns	49 in two tiers plus roof	1898 - Mounted	
Barrack Accom.	5 Officers, 72 soldiers + hammocks	Lower - 8 x 12.5-inch R.M.L., 4 x 12-inch B.L. 12 x 6pdr.QF Upper - 9 x 10-inch R.M.L., 4 x 12-inch B.L. 12 x 6pdr.QF	
Present use	High security conference centre	1912 - Mounted	
History		3 x 6-inch BL guns, 3 x 12-inch BL (12-inch removed 1918)	
	In active use by the military up to 1957	1925 - Mounted	
Disposal	1987 sold to a developer	Roof - 2 x 6-inch BL	
Condition	Restored/converted to modern use	1943 -45 Mounted	
Access	None except on business but can be viewed from the sea.	40mm Bofors 1948 & 1951 all remaining guns removed.	
Sources	Solent Papers No 1 'Spitbank and the Spithead	Caponiers	None
		Counterscarp galleries	None
		Haxo casemates	None
		Moncrieff Pits	None

History and Description

No Mans Land Fort is identical in most respects to its twin, Horse Sand Fort and the description for that fort will suffice also for No Mans Land. Minor difference in the armaments of the two forts reflected their different positions in the eastern approaches to the harbour. Various proposals were made and tests carried out to find a more efficient method of loading and firing the heavy guns. In July 1877 tests were carried out on hydraulic machinery for loading and firing one of the 12.5-inch 38-ton guns. An average time over four rounds from load to ready was 2 minutes 11 seconds. In July 1880 the Inspector General of Fortifications declared No Mans and Horse Sand Forts to be complete and satisfactory works, but unarmed. The lower batteries had been completed for the 12.5-inch gun but the supply of guns and racers had been postponed pending the possibility of the introduction of a BL gun. In 1882 the armament was revised to allow for four 12-inch 45-ton BL guns on each tier. In 1886 mounted on No Mans Land Fort were twelve 12.5-inch 38-ton guns and twelve 10-inch 18-ton guns, all bearing on the deep-water channel. It was reported that none of the 38-ton guns could be fired with full service charges because the shorter 6ft. recoil carriage had to be used owing to the lack of space. In May 1887 eight emplacements for the 45-ton BL guns on No Mans Land Fort were proposed but were said to be in a backward state. Between 1889 and 1895, on No Mans Land Fort experiments were carried out to operate the 12-inch guns by hydraulic machinery. Under the supervision of Maguire Bates, Inspector of Iron Structures, machinery was installed that could supply power for raising ammunition from the basement and loading it into the gun. Traversing and elevating was also achieved hydraulically, making it the first Fort in England, perhaps Europe to utilize hydraulic or other power for such a purpose. It was also the first to be lighted throughout by electricity. By 1898 6pdr. QF guns were added to the main armament. In 1902 a 4.7-inch QF gun was installed on top of the Fort as an examination gun. A 1906 inspection revealed that No Mans Land Fort had only one of the three proposed 6-inch guns mounted. By 1925 two 6-inch guns were still in place. In 1943 it was armed with a 40mm bofors which was removed in 1945. The fort was scheduled as an Ancient monument in 1967 and was finally released by the military in 1987. It was bought by a developer who converted into a luxury residence but failed to find a millionaire buyer. It is now owned by a business consortium who have plans to convert it to a high security conference centre.

No Mans Land Fort



Gun Floor

