



Historic England

Gunboat Yard Jetty and Crane

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: Gunboat Yard Jetty and Crane

List entry Number: 1432296

Location

Gunboat Yard Crane, Haslar Gunboat Yard, Haslar Road, Gosport, Hampshire, PO12 1SU

Haslar Road, Gosport

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Hampshire

District: Gosport

District Type: District Authority

Parish: Non Civil Parish

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 14-Jun-2016

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

The remains of a boat crane and jetty, 1861, by the Admiralty Works Department.

Reasons for Designation

The remains of the jetty and crane, 1861 by the Admiralty Works Department, are listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * Industrial interest: as a mid-C19 crane in association with a naval dockyard; * Historic interest: part of a unique facility built to house the gunboat fleet found so invaluable during the Crimean War, and one of a handful of sites built in reaction to the conflict; * Group value: with the other structures of the gunboat yard, and within the context of Haslar, Gosport, and Portsmouth as an important national centre of naval history and development.

History

Haslar Gunboat Yard is a unique naval site at Gosport, Hampshire. It operated as a yard for the housing and repair of British gunboats between 1856 and 1906, and subsequently for the gunboats' successors and other naval craft. The site comprises a series of original iron sheds for housing the gunboats, part of the traverser system used for their launch and movement and a collection of ancillary buildings relating to repair, maintenance and power provision both for the gunboat yard and the Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar on the opposite side of Haslar Road. The site is bounded by high walls with sentry posts, and has a guard house and police barracks.

The Portsmouth region has a long association with naval defence, thanks in part to its easily defensible natural harbour. A Norman motte and bailey towards the western side of the Gosport peninsula attests to a long history of occupation and awareness of the defensive characteristics of the area. Portsmouth had 'the merits of a good sheltered harbour, the proximity of the

New Forest as a source of ships' timber, and a reasonable communication with London' (Coad, 1989). The Earl of Sandwich wrote that Portsmouth was better able to be secured and defended than Plymouth and that 'Portsmouth is more central and happily situated for facilitating a junction of our ships from Eastward and Westward with a spacious and safe road for the rendezvous of the whole fleet' (J Coad, 1989).

The Royal Navy was responsible for much of the development and infrastructure of the Portsmouth area. There were supplementary sites such as the Royal Clarence Victualling Yard and the Haslar Hospital, but the development was focused around the shipbuilding, repair, maintenance, and storage of the Navy's fleet. This activity occurred largely in the Portsmouth Dockyard, which sits to the east of the main natural harbour. These developments meant that Portsmouth was for a long time one of the most heavily fortified towns in Europe, the defences entirely due to the importance of the naval base. As the principal naval port Portsmouth was consistently at the forefront of innovation and development.

The British gunboat fleet was developed in the 1850s with the Crimean War (1853-56); they were small, steam-powered craft with one gun, 'light, swift, commodious, well-armed, easily handled, independent of wind and tide, and capable of acting separately or in concert' (Mechanics' Magazine, 1857) and it was thought, at the time, that they would always be of use in the British Navy. Although in use by a number of countries, the gunboat had peculiarly British associations due to its widespread use across the globe, giving rise to the phrase 'Send a Gunboat!'. Initially gunboats were built of timber but, by the 1870s, composite boats of timber and iron were being constructed; by the C20 these vessels were made entirely of steel. Due to the nature of naval warfare being conducted, gunboats were ordered in large quantities during the 1850s and into the 1860s.

Following the Crimean War, it was deemed that a ready fleet of gunboats was necessary to ensure the safety of the English coast. Unlike their larger counterparts, gunboats were too small and too numerous (c120) to hold in existing dry docks in naval ports such as Portsmouth and as a result they were frequently left at sea. Their iron parts, which included hulls, engines, and boilers, along with the frequent use of unseasoned timber, meant that storage afloat was not practical. The solution was to construct a separate yard where such vessels could be stored and repaired on dry land, potentially for long periods of time, whilst remaining seaworthy and ready for action.

Although a number of sites were considered for the yard, including Chatham Dockyard, Royal William Victualling Yard at Stonehouse, Plymouth, and Keyham Yard at Devonport Dockyard, the final decision rested on Haslar. The site chosen was to the north of the hospital, bordering Haslar Creek, the waterfront access along the northern boundary enabling ease of launching vessels at high tide. Maps from the early nineteenth century show that the site was undeveloped farmland prior to the Navy's leasehold, though infrastructure associated with the hospital, such as wells, had encroached on the area.

The speed at which the yard was constructed means that there is little map evidence to show the stages of the site's development. However, it is known that the building was phased, beginning with a row of ten sheds: those which remain standing today. A steam-powered traverser system (NHLE ref 1001810) was built to haul the boats out of the water, and to move them along and into the individual sheds. The designs for the facility were undertaken by the Admiralty Works Department, under Colonel Greene, the Director of Works and William Scamp, the Deputy Director of Engineering and Architectural Works. It was a project of great magnitude, with at least five contractors, each the most eminent in their field, employed to do the work.

By 1859 there are known to be 40 sheds. In the early 1860s a further ten sheds were erected, as well as a new jetty and crane at the north-east of the site, assisting with repairs and lifting heavy machinery without the need to remove boats from the water.

Following the end of the war and the emergence of problems with the gunboats, a vastly diminished number were retained to form the reserve. As a result, later in the 1860s 40 of the 50 gunboat sheds were moved to the Portsmouth Dockyard, and the traverser system was shortened. The yard was put up for let in 1870, though is known, by 1871, to have been back in use. By 1906, however, gunboats were considered obsolete naval technology and all had been scrapped or retired due to maintenance costs and the advent of new, smaller craft.

The changing role of gunboats had implications for the use and layout of the yard. It continued in general use through the First and Second World Wars for the service and repair of naval craft, including motor torpedo boats, the gunboats' successors. From 1939 until 1956 the eastern part of the site was part of HMS Hornet, the Coastal Forces Patrol. In 1955 a new slip was built, and the original steam locomotive, the Elephant, replaced with an electric

version. Following the decommissioning of HMS Hornet the site gradually went into use as a mooring yard for naval personnel, and in 1964 was officially opened as a naval yacht club. The rails embedded on either side of the 1955 slip appear to date from this period of use. In the 1970s the traverser system was abandoned, and the cradles and other machinery removed. The new Haslar bridge, opened in 1978 prevented large craft accessing the yard. Many of the sheds were removed in the 1980s and 90s. The south-west of the yard began to be used for the Admiralty's experimental works from the late C19. Since 2001 the south-western part of the site has been in use by a naval defence contractor, and the north-eastern part remains in use as a sailing centre.

It is not known at what stage the crane and its jetty fell into disrepair. The structure connecting the jetty stage to the land has not survived, though its footings are still visible. The crane has lost its boom, though the main base, with gear wheels, drum, and other elements, survive well.

Details

The remains of a boat crane and jetty, 1861.

ARCHITECT: the design of the gunboat yard was by the Admiralty Works Department, under Colonel Greene, the Director of Works and William Scamp, the Deputy Director of Engineering and Architectural Works.

MATERIALS: the jetty is built from timber, and the crane is cast iron.

PLAN: the jetty and crane were built towards the north end of the gunboat yard, between the mean high and low water lines in Haslar Creek.

DESCRIPTION: the remains of the low jetty stand disconnected from the shore, and consist of posts, rails and a few timbers providing a deck for the crane. The crane, of which only the base survives, retains the drum, gear wheels and frame.

Selected Sources

Books and journals

Coad, Jonathan (Author), Support for the Fleet - Architecture & Engineering of the Royal Navy's Bases 1700-1914, (2013)

Coad, J . Historic Architecture of the Roval Navv. (1983)

Coad, J G, The Royal Dockyards 1690-1850: Architecture and Engineering Works of the Sailing Navy, (1989)

SAVE Britains Heritage, , Deserted Bastions, (1993), 93

Other

Jonathan Coad, 'Appendix IV: History of Haslar Gunboat Yard', in [A. Kelly & Jon Gill], Guardrooms, Haslar Gunboat Yard, Gosport. Buildings at Risk II Survey (Unpublished Oxford Archaeology report for Defence Estates, 2007)

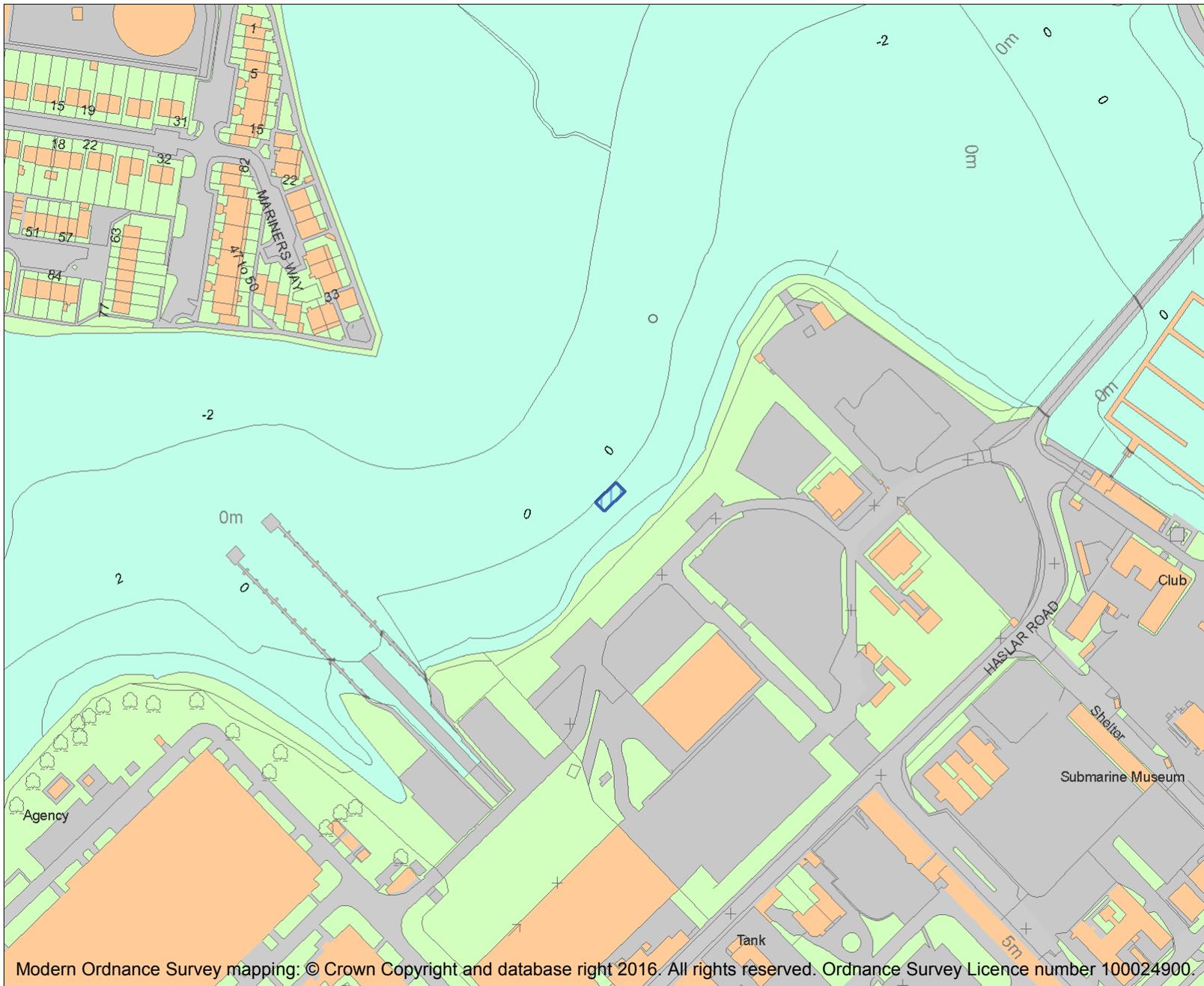
O Hickson, 2012 A Study of Haslar Gun Boat Yard with New Insights into Its History, Construction, Manufacture and Use. Unpublished MSc Building Conservation: Weald and Downland Open Air Museum with Bournemouth University

'Our Gunboat and Mortar-Boat Flotilla', Mechanics' Magazine, 3 January 1957, 5

Sarah PC Hendriks, Haslar Gunboat Yard, Gosport: Historic Buildings Report, 2014. Available at: services.english-heritage.org.uk/ResearchReportsPdfs/015_2014WEB.pdf

National Grid Reference: SZ6173799163

Map



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Heritage Category: Listing

County: Hampshire

District: Gosport

Parish: Non Civil Parish

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For all list entries made on or after 4 April 2011 the map here and the national grid reference do form part of the official record. In such cases the map and the national grid reference are to aid identification of the principal listed building or buildings only and must be read in conjunction with other information in the record.

Any object or structure fixed to the principal building or buildings and any object or structure within the curtilage of the building, which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July, 1948 is by law to be treated as part of the listed building.

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Grid Reference: SZ6173799163

Map Scale: 1:2500

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