



Historic England

# Police Barracks

## 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: Police Barracks

List entry Number: 1434287

## Location

Police Barracks, Haslar Gunboat Yard, Haslar Road, Gosport, Hampshire

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

Police barracks, 1861, by William Scamp, the Deputy Director of the Admiralty Engineering and Architectural Works.

### Reasons for Designation

The police barracks, 1861, by William Scamp is listed at Grade II\* for the following principal reasons: \* Architectural interest: one of a pair of buildings flanking the main gateway within the gunboat yard, built in a formal, restrained style and reflective of the great importance of security for the facility; \* Interest of the architect: built to designs by William Scamp, the Deputy Director of the Admiralty Engineering and Architectural Works, and resembling examples of his earlier work in Malta; \* Historic interest: a key 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' (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 long 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!'. 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. The brickwork was contracted to Messrs Rigby of London.

The importance of the vessels was reflected by the fortification of the site, with its high brick walls, sentry look-outs, police barracks and guard house.

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.

Plans of 1860 show a pair of buildings: one a police barracks, the other a guardhouse, situated flanking the main entrance gateway at the northern end of the yard. The gatehouses were designed by Scamp and bear a resemblance to his work in Malta. Plans from their original phase of construction, and subsequent renovations in the 1860s, show that each structure operated around a courtyard, although their internal layouts are different. These plans also indicate that choice of materials for their construction was carefully prescribed.

The police barracks had accommodation space for an inspector and three sergeants, with a dormitory for constables. There was a central courtyard onto which bathrooms opened out. The guardhouse was largely the same in plan form, although it had a larger courtyard. The interiors of both buildings have been modified. A house, demolished in the 1970s, for the master shipwright was located adjacent to the guardhouse on the south.

The guard house is also listed at Grade II\*, NHLE ref 1431192.

## Details

Police barracks, 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. Plans by Scamp identify him as the specific designer of the guardhouse and police barracks. The brickwork was contracted to Messrs Rigby of London.

**MATERIALS:** the building is constructed from red brick laid in Flemish bond, with limestone dressings.

PLAN: the guard house and police barracks stand just within the main, north-east entrance to the gunboat yard; the police barracks is the southern of the two. In plan they were originally an approximate mirror image of each other, each roughly square and with a central courtyard.

EXTERIOR: the front elevation of the single-storey building is a colonnade of eight bays with round arches and square piers. The piers have dressed stone bases and springers to the arches. There is a stone band to the base of the parapet. The hipped roofs are just visible behind, as are chimneystacks with brick detailing at their heads. Windows around both structures have round or segmental-arch brick heads and stone cills.

INTERIOR: not inspected.

## 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 Royal Navy, (1983)

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

SAVE Britains Heritage, , Deserted Bastions, (1993)

### 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

Plans and elevations, Police Barracks and Guardhouse, Haslar Gunboat Yard, Haslar, Gosport, Hampshire. Historic England Archive, Swindon, ref MD95/06506

Plans and sections, Police Barracks and Guardhouse, Haslar Gunboat Yard, Haslar, Gosport, Hampshire. Historic England Archive, Swindon, ref MD95/06507

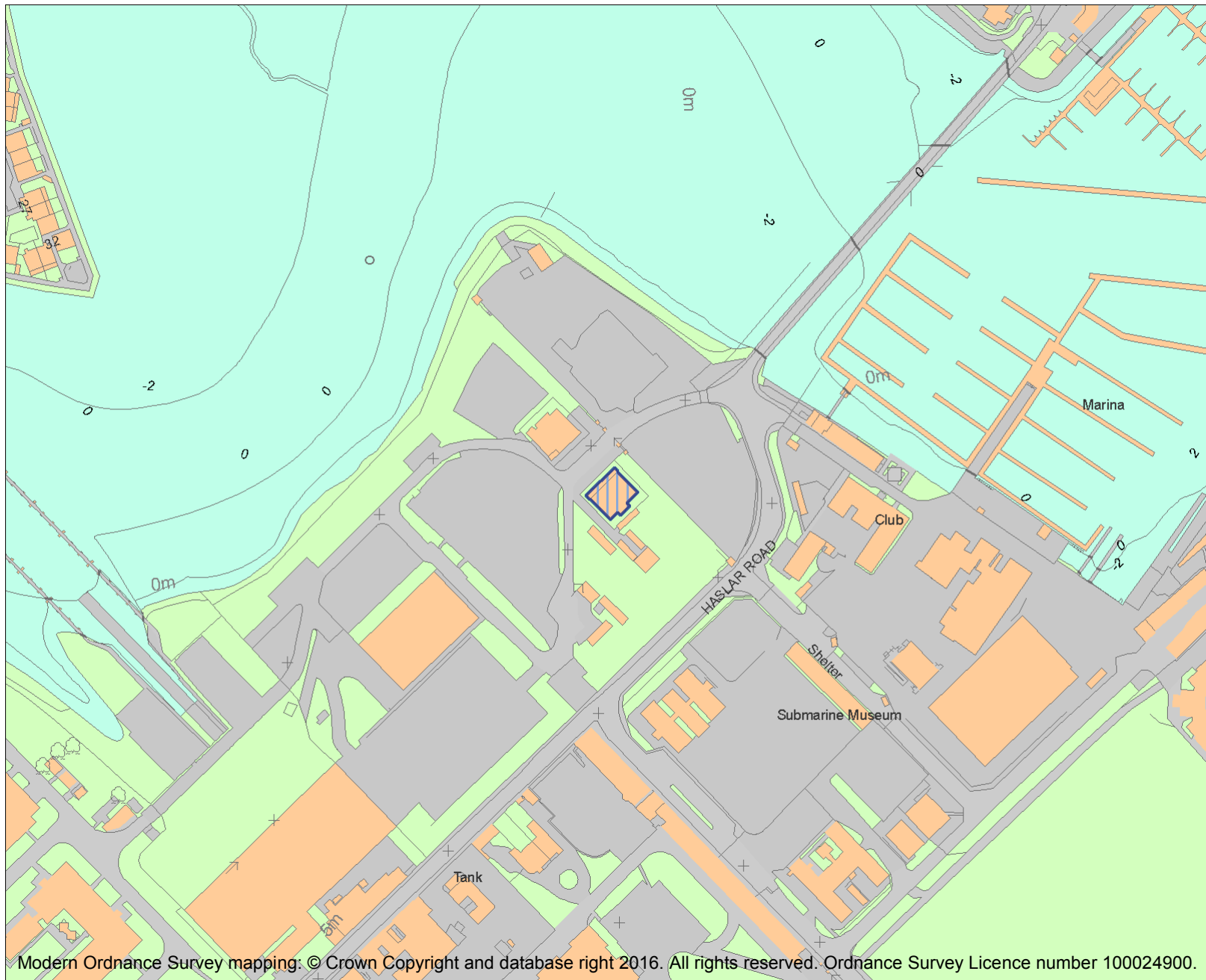
Plans sections and site plan for proposed alterations, Police Quarters, Haslar

Gunboat Yard, Haslar, Gosport, Hampshire. Historic England Archive, Swindon, ref MD95/06510

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

Sections, Police Barracks and Guardhouse, Haslar Gunboat Yard, Haslar, Gosport, Hampshire. Historic England Archive, Swindon, ref MD95/06508  
Sections, Police Barracks And Guardhouse, Haslar Gunboat Yard, Haslar, Gosport, Hampshire. Historic England Archive, Swindon, ref MD95/06509  
National Grid Reference: SZ6186499137

## Map



## Heritage Category: Listing

County: Hampshire  
District: Gosport  
Parish: Non Civil Parish

For all entries pre-dating 4 April 2011 maps and national grid references do not form part of the official record of a listed building. In such cases the map here and the national grid reference are generated from the list entry in the official record and added later to aid identification of the principal listed building or buildings.

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.

This map was delivered electronically and when printed may not be to scale and may be subject to distortions.

**Grid Reference:** SZ6186499137  
**Map Scale:** 1:2500  
**Print Date:** 10 May 2016

**Number:** 1434287\_1  
**Name:** Police Barracks

This is an A4 sized map and should be printed full size at A4 with no page scaling set.