

Fort Camden

Commenced	February 1862
Completed	1874
Cost	£ 75,979
Map Reference	
Position	Cork harbour entrance
Type	Coast Defence
Ditch	Dry
Guns	25
Barrack Accom.	7 Officers 268 men 35 Married
Present use	Actively maintained by volunteers
History	Brennan Station added in 1898.
Disposal	Irish Authorities 1938
Condition	Now being conserved by Volunteers
Access	Tours available
Sources	1868 Report on the Construction, Condition and Costs of Fortification. Redan No. 42.

Armament

1886	7 x 10-inch R.M.L. 6 x 7-inch R.M.L. 4 x 40pr RBL 2 x 20pr RBL (Movable) 2 x 64pr R.M.L. (Practice) 2 x 10inch SB mortars	
1898	Approved 2 x 9.2inch B.L. 2 x 6-inch B.L. 4 x 10-inch R.M.L. 4 x 40pr R.B.L. 2 x 20pr R.B.L. 3 x 12pr Q.F. 3 x 6pr Q.F. 4 x 32pr S.B.B.L. 4 machine guns	Mounted 7 x 10-inch R.M.L. 4 x 40pr R.B.L. 2 x 20pr R.B.L. 2 x 20pr R.B.L. 3 x 6pr Q.F. 4 x 32pr S.B.B.L. 2 machine guns
1905	2 x 6inch B.L.MkVII 5 x 12pr Q.F.	
1926	3 x 12pr Q.F.	

Caponiers 1

Counterscarp galleries (1 scarp flanking gallery)

Haxo casemates None

Moncrieff Pits 3

History and Description

This fort was commenced in February 1862 and consisted of a ditch and rampart on the land front with casemated batteries and batteries en-barbette to command the sea front. The fort was built on the site of Ram Head Battery opposite Fort Carlisle together with which it commanded the entrance to the harbour. A casemated barracks on the north front (north-east corner) held the garrison and commanded the road to Crosshaven which it was necessary to build. The road enters the fort with a bridge across a deep rock cut ditch. Immediately to the right of the entrance is the guard house. A two-tiered musketry gallery in the casemated barracks covers the ditch down to the water's edge. The barracks although of one tier was designed to hold guns on its roof in three sections each for two guns, with two expense magazines acting as traverses. The barracks and road were completed in September 1864 and in February 1865 a further contract was commenced for the completion of the land front. This proved to be unsatisfactory and the contract was wound up. The work was then completed by military labour.

The terreplein on landward side of the fort continues in an arc from north-west to south with five expense magazines but no fixed gun positions, instead movable armament was supplied and two ramps gave access. The landward side is protected by a 40ft deep ditch 28ft wide. At its centre point a two-storied caponier has positions for eight guns with the usual flanking galleries. This was armed with four 32pr S.B.B.L. guns by 1898. At the southern corner the ditch slopes sharply down to the sea front. Here it is protected by a loopholed gallery. At the southern corner of the fort is another casemated barracks from which steps lead down to the flanking gallery that covers the ditch. In the centre of the fort a spiral staircase leads down to the main magazine beneath which consists of one vaulted chamber.

The lower battery was adapted for ten guns behind shields extending along the sea front and incorporating the site occupied by an old battery. Above this two batteries, Left and Right Upper batteries, en-barbette for three guns each were designed on each side of the existing officers' quarters at a height of 170ft above sea level. To secure the sea landing beneath a zig-zag scarp with slight ditch was cut in the rocky slope between the upper and lower batteries defended by a musketry gallery. The 1869 report suggested the removal of the officers' quarters and the construction of another three gun battery on the site but this was not done.

In November 1889 a Brennan Torpedo Establishment was constructed at Camden to command the entrance to Cork harbour. This was completed by November 1893 and was worked by the Royal Engineers. Sometime after 1900 a second slipway was added. A directing station and Brennan lookout was added on the headland above. By 1898 the fort was upgraded with two 6-inch B.L. Mk VI converted guns placed in Left Upper Battery with five 12pr QF guns in Right Upper and Left Lower Batteries (Left Lower was originally armed with three 7-inch RMs on Moncrieff mountings) with three 6pr Q.F. guns (Minefield Battery). It was decided to mount two 9.2-inch B.L. guns on a separate site at Templebreedy instead of at Camden.

The Owen Committee of 1905 recommended the removal of the three 6pr guns leaving the five 12pr QF guns as anti-torpedo boat defence. By 1914 the five 12pr QFs were still in place. During the war one 12pr was temporarily removed for Boom defence. In 1927 the 6-inch BLs were scrapped and two 12prs from Right Upper Battery transferred to Templebreedy for practice. In the inter-war years the 12prs were relegated to practice status. In 1938 the fort was renamed as Fort Meagher. In 1946 the garrison was removed from the fort. The fort is currently owned by Cork County Council and is being cleared for access and tours.

Fort Camden

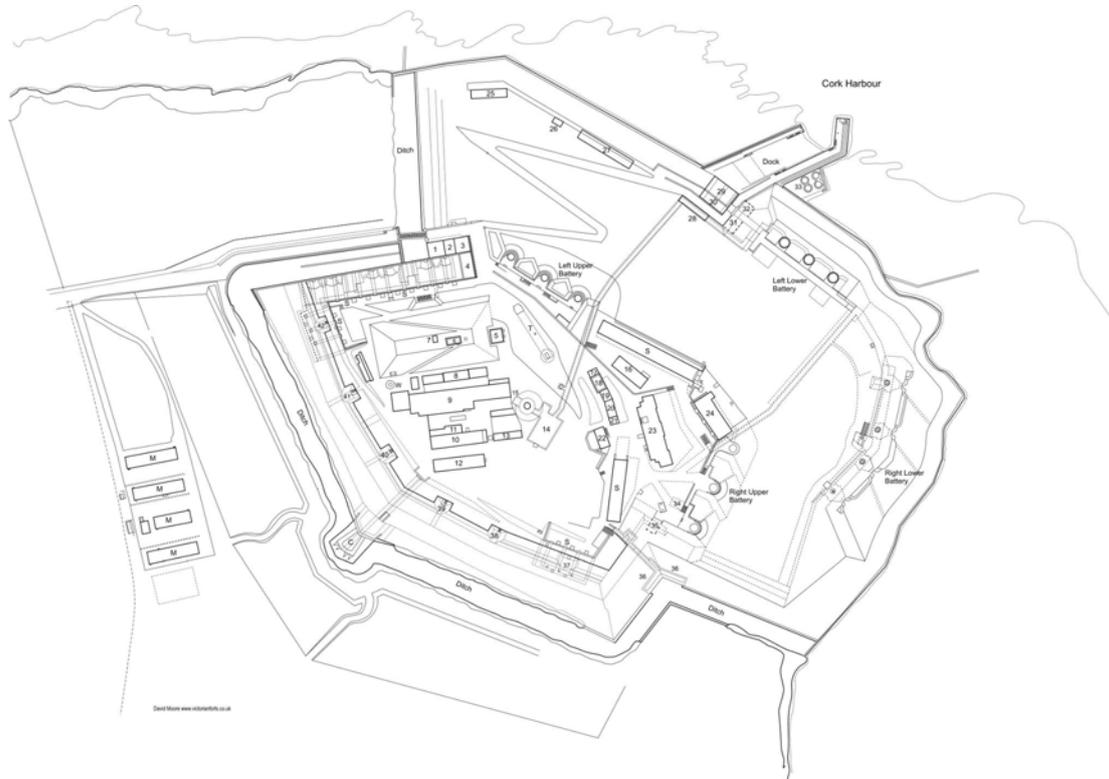


Photo: Save Camden project