

= Netley Castle =

Netley Castle is a former artillery fort constructed in either 1542 or 1544 by Henry VIII in the village of Netley , Hampshire . It formed part of the King 's Device programme to protect against invasion from France and the Holy Roman Empire , and it defended Southampton Water near the Solent . The castle included a central , stone keep with two flanking gun platforms and was garrisoned by ten men . It was decommissioned during the English Civil War and by 1743 it was overgrown and in ruins . In the 19th century the property was gradually converted into a private house , being extended in a Gothic style , complete with octagonal towers . Between 1939 and 1998 it was used as a nursing home , until the high costs of maintenance led to its closure . Following an archaeological survey , it was then converted into nine residential flats . It is protected under UK law as a Grade II * listed building .

= = History = =

= = = 16th ? 17th centuries = = =

Netley Castle was built as a consequence of international tensions between England , France and the Holy Roman Empire in the final years of the reign of King Henry VIII . Traditionally the Crown had left coastal defences to the local lords and communities , only taking a modest role in building and maintaining fortifications , and while France and the Empire remained in conflict with one another , maritime raids were common but an actual invasion of England seemed unlikely . Modest defences , based around simple blockhouses and towers , existed in the south @-@ west and along the Sussex coast , with a few more impressive works in the north of England , but in general the fortifications were very limited in scale .

In 1533 , Henry then broke with Pope Paul III in order to annul the long @-@ standing marriage to his wife , Catherine of Aragon and remarry . Catherine was the aunt of Charles V , the Holy Roman Emperor , and he took the annulment as a personal insult . This resulted in France and the Empire declaring an alliance against Henry in 1538 , and the Pope encouraging the two countries to attack England . An invasion of England appeared certain . In response , Henry issued an order , called a " device " , in 1539 , giving instructions for the " defence of the realm in time of invasion " and the construction of forts along the English coastline .

Netley Castle was built next to Southampton Water between the mouths of the Hamble and Itchen rivers , 250 metres (820 ft) south @-@ west of the remains of Netley Abbey . Netley Abbey had been recently dissolved by Henry , and material from the site was reused to build the castle . William Paulet , later the Marquess of Winchester , was in charge of the construction , which took place in either 1542 or 1544 and Henry granted him various estates to pay for the support of the fort and its garrison . The castle took the form of a central keep , 19 @.@ 5 by 14 metres (64 by 46 ft) across with deep embrasures along the battlements , and a gun platform on either side ; its design resembled that at nearby Southsea . It was initially garrisoned with two soldiers , six gunners and a porter , under the command of a captain .

It was still garrisoned in the mid @-@ 1620s and was probably still in active service at the start of the English Civil War between the supporters of King Charles I and Parliament in 1642 . Captain Swaley , a Parliamentary naval commander , seized Netley at the end of that year and decommissioned it as a fortification . During the Interregnum , the castle was restored to use , due to concerns about a potential Royalist invasion , but was abandoned as obsolete after the restoration of Charles II to the throne . By the time that Alexander Pope visited in 1734 , the castle was overgrown and in ruins .

= = = 18th ? 20th centuries = = =

William Chamberlayne inherited the castle in 1826 and built a crenellated tower on the south @-@

east end of the property the following year , inspired by a proposal by the antiquarian Horace Walpole that the castle be made habitable . A description of the castle around this time suggested it stood " in the midst of a thicket of trees , on a little hill close to the beach " and formed " a striking object seen from the water " . It became popular with artists , and J. M. W. Turner visited and sketched the castle and its new tower , probably in 1832 .

George Hunt leased the castle in 1841 and it was turned into a private house under the supervision of the architect George Guillame . Hunt remained at Netley until 1857 , by when the castle had an oriel window overlooking the sea , and the battlements had been blocked in to allow the construction of a second storey to the building . George Sherriff leased the castle between 1868 and 1873 , building a stone wall around the front of property .

Sir Henry Crichton bought the castle in 1881 , along with the surrounding gardens , orchards , pond and a boat house . The architect John Sedding remodelled the castle between approximately 1885 and 1890 , creating a Gothic styled house , adding another storey and a new wing . After Crichton 's death in 1922 his wife remained in the house until her death in 1936 , when the property and the surrounding grounds were sold at auction .

Middlesex County Council bought the castle in 1939 and converted it into a nursing home for elderly men ; it passed into the control of the National Health Service in 1948 and continued to be used as a nursing home . It proved expensive to maintain and the surrounding land was gradually sold off , until the Southampton University Hospital NHS Trust finally decided to close it in 1998 .

= = = 21st century = = =

Fairmist Limited , a firm of property developers , purchased Netley Castle in 2000 and converted it into nine private residential flats , at a cost of £ 1 @. @ 7 million , during which process an archaeological survey was made of the property . It is protected under UK law as a Scheduled Monument and a Grade II * listed building .

The castle is now approximately 62 by 14 metres (203 by 46 ft) across and 13 @. @ 5 metres (44 ft) tall , surrounded by 1 @. @ 54 hectares (3 @. @ 8 acres) of land . The castle comprises three wings , with the original 16th @- @ century fort incorporated into the centre of the property . The north wing is three storeys tall , decorated in a restrained Gothic style and has an octagonal turret on one corner . The central range is two storeys tall , with round corner turrets and battlements . The southern wing is two storeys in height , with elaborate Gothic detailing and another , larger octagonal tower . The castle features a substantial staircase , fitted with a musical organ , and a wood @- @ panelled billiard room . Other buildings around the main castle include the converted boat house and a former ice house .