

= Sandown Castle , Kent =

Sandown Castle was an artillery fort constructed by Henry VIII in Sandown , Kent , between 1539 and 1540 . It formed part of the King 's Device programme to protect against invasion from France and the Holy Roman Empire , and defended the strategically important Downs anchorage off the English coast .

Comprising a keep and four circular bastions , the moated stone castle covered 0 @. @ 59 acres ( 0 @. @ 24 ha ) and had 39 firing positions on the upper levels for artillery , with 31 gunloops in the basement for handguns . It cost the Crown a total of £ 27 @, @ 092 to build the three castles of Sandown , Walmer and Deal , which lay adjacent to one another along the coast and were connected by earthwork defences . The original invasion threat passed , but during the Second English Civil War of 1648 ? 49 , Sandown was seized by pro @- @ Royalist insurgents and was only retaken by Parliamentary forces after several months ' fighting .

By the 19th century , the castle was suffering badly from the effects of coastal erosion but remained in military use until 1863 . The War Office then demolished the upper levels with explosives , carrying out a second wave of demolition work in 1882 and destroying most of the surviving stonework in 1893 . The remains of Sandown were purchased by the town of Deal for £ 35 to form part of the local sea defences . The remaining masonry was encased in concrete in the late 1980s to form a sea wall but remains vulnerable to further erosion by the sea .

= = History = =

= = = 16th century = = =

Sandown 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 broke with Pope Paul III 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 Charles 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 .

Sandown and the adjacent castles of Deal and Walmer were constructed to protect the Downs in east Kent , an important anchorage formed by the Goodwin Sands that gave access to Deal Beach , on which enemy soldiers could easily be landed . The stone castles were supported by a line of four earthwork forts , known as the Great Turf , the Little Turf Bulwark , the Great White Bulwark of Clay and the Walmer Bulwark , and a 2 @. @ 5 miles ( 4 @. @ 0 km ) long defensive ditch and bank . Collectively the castles became known as the " castles of the Downs " and cost the Crown a total of £ 27 @, @ 092 .

The castle was built between April 1539 and the autumn of 1540 , by a team including Richard Benese as the surveyor , William Clement as the master carpenter , and Christopher Dickenson as the master mason . It was nearly identical to its sister castle at Walmer , with a tall keep , 83 feet ( 25 m ) across , at the centre , and flanked by four rounded bastions , also called lunettes , and a moat , which was surrounded in turn by a curtain wall . Its curved walls were 15 feet ( 4 @. @ 6 m ) thick . In total it was approximately 165 by 165 feet ( 50 by 50 m ) across , covering 0 @. @ 59 acres

( 0 @. @ 24 ha ) . The historian John Hale considered the castle to form a transitional design between older medieval English designs and newer Italian styles of defence .

Sandown had three tiers of artillery ? the heaviest and longest range weapons occupying the upper levels ? with a total of 39 firing positions , and 31 gunloops in the basement for handguns should close defence be required . The embrasures in the walls were all widely splayed to provide the maximum possible space for the guns to operate and traverse , and the interior of the castle was designed with vents to allow the smoke from its guns to escape . It was initially garrisoned by a captain , two lieutenants , two porters , ten gunners and three soldiers , at an annual cost of £ 174 a year .

= = = 17th century = = =

Although the original invasion threat passed , Sandown continued in military use into the 17th century . A 1616 survey nonetheless reported that a range of repairs were needed , at an estimated total cost of £ 437 , while a 1634 survey noted that work estimated at £ 1 @, @ 243 was required . In contrast , an inspection in 1635 showed the castle to be in reasonable structural condition , but antiquated in design . A report produced in 1641 suggested that £ 8 @, @ 000 of investment was required in the three castles of the Downs , including £ 3 @, @ 000 for additional sea defences .

Sandown Castle did not play a prominent role during the first English Civil War that broke out between the supporters of King Charles I and Parliament ; it was taken by Parliamentary forces at the start of the conflict in 1642 . Following the few years of unsteady peace after 1645 , the Second Civil War broke out in 1648 , this time with Charles ' Royalist supporters joined by Scottish allies . The Parliamentary navy was based in the Downs , protected by Sandown and the other Henrician castles , but by May a Royalist insurrection was underway across Kent .

Vice @- @ Admiral William Batten had been forced by Parliamentary officials to resign from his post as Commander of the Fleet the previous year , and he now encouraged the fleet to join the Royalist faction . Sir Henry Palmer , a former sailor , accompanied by other members of the Kentish gentry , also called on the fleet to revolt , taking advantage of the many fellow Kentish men in the crews . Sandown Castle declared for the King , followed shortly afterwards by the garrisons at Deal and Walmer as well . With both the coastal fortresses and the navy now under Royalist control , Parliament feared that foreign forces might be landed along the coast or aid sent to the Scots .

Parliament defeated the wider insurgency at the Battle of Maidstone at the start of June , and then sent a force under the command of Colonel Rich to deal with Sandown and the other castles along the Downs . Walmer Castle was the first to be besieged and surrendered on 12 July . An earthwork fort was then built between Sandown and Deal , which may have been defended by around 150 men each . Deal was attacked in late July , and in August artillery assaults began on Sandown as well . The Royalists mounted an attack from the fleet on 10 August , with a second attack following on 15 August , involving a landing of 750 men supported by 50 soldiers from Sandown . Neither operation was successful and Sandown finally surrendered on 5 September , a few weeks after the surrender of Deal .

In 1649 , Parliament ordered that supplies of ammunition and powder be sent to Sandown and the other castles of the Downs . Fresh earthworks were erected during the Interregnum between Sandown and Deal to address with the threat of Dutch attack . The garrison at Sandown remained substantial during the period , with a governor and 21 soldiers , but when Charles II was restored to the throne in 1660 he reduced the numbers again to a captain and 18 men . In the Glorious Revolution of 1688 against Charles ' brother , King James II , the townsfolk of Deal seized Sandown Castle on behalf of William III , the Prince of Orange .

The former Parliamentarian , Colonel John Hutchinson , was infamously detained by the Crown at Sandown in 1664 ; his wife , Lucy , who subsequently widely publicised his case , described the castle as ruinous and his imprisonment there as inhumane . After several months Hutchinson died in the castle , his doctor blaming his physical decline on the conditions in which he had been kept .

= = = 18th ? 21st centuries = = =

In 1785 , the sea broke through the outer walls of the castle , and coastal erosion continued over the next few years . The castle was initially described as being " barely habitable " , but by 1793 it was considered " unfit for habitation . " It was repaired and garrisoned again during the French Revolutionary Wars , with two new artillery batteries being constructed to the north of the castle . Early in the 19th century the castle was used as by the early coastguard for the suppression of local smuggling .

Coastal erosion continued during the 19th century . As a consequence , the War Office sold off the reusable materials of the fortification for £ 564 in 1863 and demolished the upper parts of the castle , leaving a level platform across the lower parts of the keep and the bastions . Part of the stone was purchased by the Earl of Granville and used in his building work at Walmer Castle , while other masonry was reused in the construction of Deal Pier . The sea continued to erode the remaining stonework and destroyed one of the adjacent artillery batteries ? the other was converted for use by the coastguard . In 1882 the Royal Engineers used explosives to remove around 600 tonnes ( 590 long tons ; 660 short tons ) of masonry from the castle for use in the construction of an officer 's house at Dover Castle , causing further damage .

In 1883 architectural historian Hayter Lewis complained to the British Archaeological Association that more needed to be done to protect the ruins , contrasting their poor treatment with that of the other castles along the coast . Despite this , concerns continued to be raised about the safety of the ruins facing along the sea , and in 1894 the Royal Engineers blew up the bastions and the keep on the seaward side using guncotton . The town of Deal then bought the remains from the government for £ 35 for use as part of their local sea defences . Coastal erosion continued and between 1988 and 1989 the remains were encased in concrete to form a sea wall , although they remain vulnerable to further coastal erosion . The remains of the castle are protected under UK law as a scheduled monument .