



Dead House, Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar

Dead House, Royal Hospital Haslar,
Haslar Road, Gosport, Hampshire, PO12
2AA

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Official list entry

Heritage Category:

Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1424218

Date first listed: 02-Apr-2015

List Entry Name: Dead House, Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar

Location Description: NGR SZ6173198889

Statutory Address 1: Dead House, Royal Hospital Haslar, Haslar
Road, Gosport, Hampshire, PO12 2AA

This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.

Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building.

For these purposes, to be included within the curtilage of the building, the object or structure must have formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948.

[Understanding list entries](#)

(<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/>)

[Corrections and minor amendments](#)

(<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/>)

Location

Statutory Address: **Dead House, Royal Hospital Haslar, Haslar
Road, Gosport, Hampshire, PO12 2AA**

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

County: **Hampshire**

District: **Gosport (District Authority)**

Parish: **Non Civil Parish**

National Grid **SZ6173198887**

Reference:

Summary

A mortuary dating from the mid-C19 with an 1869 addition, built for the Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar.

Reasons for Designation

The Dead House, the mortuary to the Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar, built in two phases in the mid-C19 is listed at Grade II, for the following principal reasons:

- * Architectural interest: the mortuary has two distinct phases representing contrasting architectural treatments, both of which are well-designed and executed, dignified and appropriate to the function of the building;
- * Intactness: the C19 form of the building is largely complete;
- * Historic interest: the different architectural treatments are reflective of the evolving attitudes to the treatment of the dead in the Victorian era;

* Group value: with the Grade II* listed main hospital building and other listed structures on the site.

History

The Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar, was the first hospital in England to be purpose-built for the Navy, begun in 1745-46 and completed in 1761-62. The need for naval hospitals had been recognized some years earlier, and in 1744 an Order-in-Council from George II accepted the memorial submitted by the Earl of Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty, requesting the construction of hospitals at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham. The first wing of Portsmouth's hospital at Haslar was opened in 1753, and additions to the grounds continued to be made throughout the C18, C19 and C20. A survey in 1755 recommended the addition of a number of facilities, including a mortuary, though it is unknown if the recommendation was implemented at that time. Initially, deceased patients were buried informally in an area to the south of the hospital; there is some evidence of mass burial, and in the 1820s there was a scandal related to the lack of respect shown for the dead, some of whom were buried without Christian ceremony. As a result, in 1826 a formal cemetery was laid out, and some of the bodies from the wider area reinterred.

The date of the earliest part of the mortuary, known as the dead house, is not known, but its form and detailing is very similar to that of the near-by laundry building, suggesting a date around the 1850s. It is possible that its construction was contemporary with the closure of the hospital cemetery and the opening of the new cemetery some distance away in 1859-60. This

change in arrangements may have necessitated the provision of a space to hold the dead prior to removal to the new cemetery.

The first phase of the building was a simple, single-cell box with a shallow hipped roof with a lantern. In 1869 the building was extended with the addition of a link corridor and a further single cell building with a porch. Its Gothic form is suggestive of a chapel, but there is no evidence to suggest that it was used as such; late C19 and early C20 plans refer to it as an 'Inquest Room' and 'post-mortem room'.

Between 1933 and 1952 a large extension was constructed to the south of the dead house, connected to the 1850s building by a link corridor on the southern side. The interior of the earlier building appears to have been reorganised at the same time, to create a sub-divided lobby area. The roof lantern was renewed in the C20, following the form of the original. The mid-C20 extension was demolished at some point after 1991, and the wall of the original building blocked and rendered, returning the building to its C19 form.

Details

A mortuary dating from the mid-C19 with an 1869 addition, built for the Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar.

MATERIALS: the earlier part of the building is red brick laid in Flemish bond with gauged brick arches and a hipped slate roof with a brick chimneystack. The 1869 addition is in red brick with

bands of blue brick, also laid in Flemish bond; it has stone dressings, gauged brick window arches and a tiled roof.

PLAN: a single-storey linear building orientated south-west to north-east. The earliest section is to the south, and is a single rectangular cell, linked on the north-east end to the 1869 addition by a short corridor which leads to a second single room with a substantial porch, now blocked, on its north-east end.

EXTERIOR: the 1850s building is two bays wide and three bays long, with an opening to each bay with a gauged brick flat arch. Windows are hornless, six-over-six pane sashes with projecting stone cills. The door is on the left on the north-west elevation. The south-east elevation is entirely rendered. There is a brick plinth and projecting courses of bricks below the eaves. The two windows on the north-east elevation are blind and are interrupted by the linking range to the 1869 building.

The 1869 building is a small square block with a pyramidal roof with small ventilating dormers. There is a pair of lancet windows to each side elevation; all windows are uniformly detailed and have round, gauged brick heads, chamfered surrounds with stone cills, and leaded lights with marginal metal glazing bars. The building has a brick plinth and there is a dentil cornice of bricks laid on the diagonal below the eaves. The porch, on the north-east end, is a pitched projection with a round-arched doorway with a gauged brick head and chamfered architrave; the door itself is solid timber with ornate strap hinges incorporating leaf motifs. The porch gable

has stone copings with shaped kneelers and a metal cross at the apex. The return elevations of the porch have a single window beneath a pitched dormer with dressed stone detailing. The pitched linking corridor has two small lunette windows on either side.

INTERIORS: the interiors of both sections of the building are plainly detailed and with modern floor coverings and skirtings. The earlier part of the building has an inserted partition creating an entrance lobby, leading to the original mortuary on the right, and the linking corridor on the left. The original mortuary is open to the roof, which has timber trusses and a lantern. The linking corridor has exposed rafters, and the secondary mortuary room has an inserted ceiling; the original roof structure survives above.

Sources

Books and journals

Richardson, Harriet, English Hospitals 1660-1948: A Survey of their Architecture and Design, (1998)

Birbeck, E, Ryder, A, Ward, P, The Royal Hospital Haslar: a Pictorial History , (2009)

Tait, W, History of Haslar Hospital, (1906)

Other

K Morrison, 1991, RCHME Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar English Heritage Archive, Swindon, ref BF 100117

Drawings for 1869 extension. English Heritage Archive, Swindon, ref MD95/2785 to 2788

Plan for building on Haslar site, English Heritage Archive, Swindon, ref MD95/2846

Legal

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



Map

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End of official list entry

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