



Ministry
of Defence

E-mail: NAVYACNS-SECFOIGroup@mod.gov.uk

FOI2021/00925

22 February 2021

Dear [REDACTED],

Release of Information

Thank you for your correspondence of 27 January 2021, in which you requested the following information:

"I respectfully request information on Whale Island alterations, specifically, what happened to the animal graves on the harbour side of West Battery? What happened to the 'Battle Teacher' cell with the 4-inch gun breech and overhead galleries for throwing water and thunder-flashes at trainees while doing gun drill? What became of the proofing cell by the field gun track - and were any original plans or drawings of West Battery structures attached to the planning application that saw the new headquarters construction, which I may have copies of? I recall that somewhere on the island (by the chapel?) was a museum or collection of historic training aids, including dummy ammunition and turret models. What became of this?"

Your enquiry has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

A search for the information has been completed within the Ministry of Defence and I can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held. In respect of the animal graves located on Whale Island, these were removed and disposed of professionally when Excellent House and Leach Building were built in the early 1990's. The Head Stones were removed and placed outside the Guardroom where they remain to this day.

With regard to the Battle Teacher Cell, along with all of West Battery this was re-developed on a number of occasions during the 1950s to 1990s and finally demolished to make way for Leach Building, Excellent House and the current West Battery building. The Proofing Cell located by the field gun track was also demolished as part of the redevelopment of the island to make way for the new Navy Command Headquarters (NCHQ).

In respect of original plans and drawings of West Battery structures attached to the planning application for the new NCHQ construction, I can confirm that no information is held in answer to this part of your request.

On a final note, I can advise that a small museum or archive still exists on Whale Island which houses course books and records dating back to the start of training on the Island along with drawings and training aids of weapon systems.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely

Navy Command Secretariat - FOI Section