

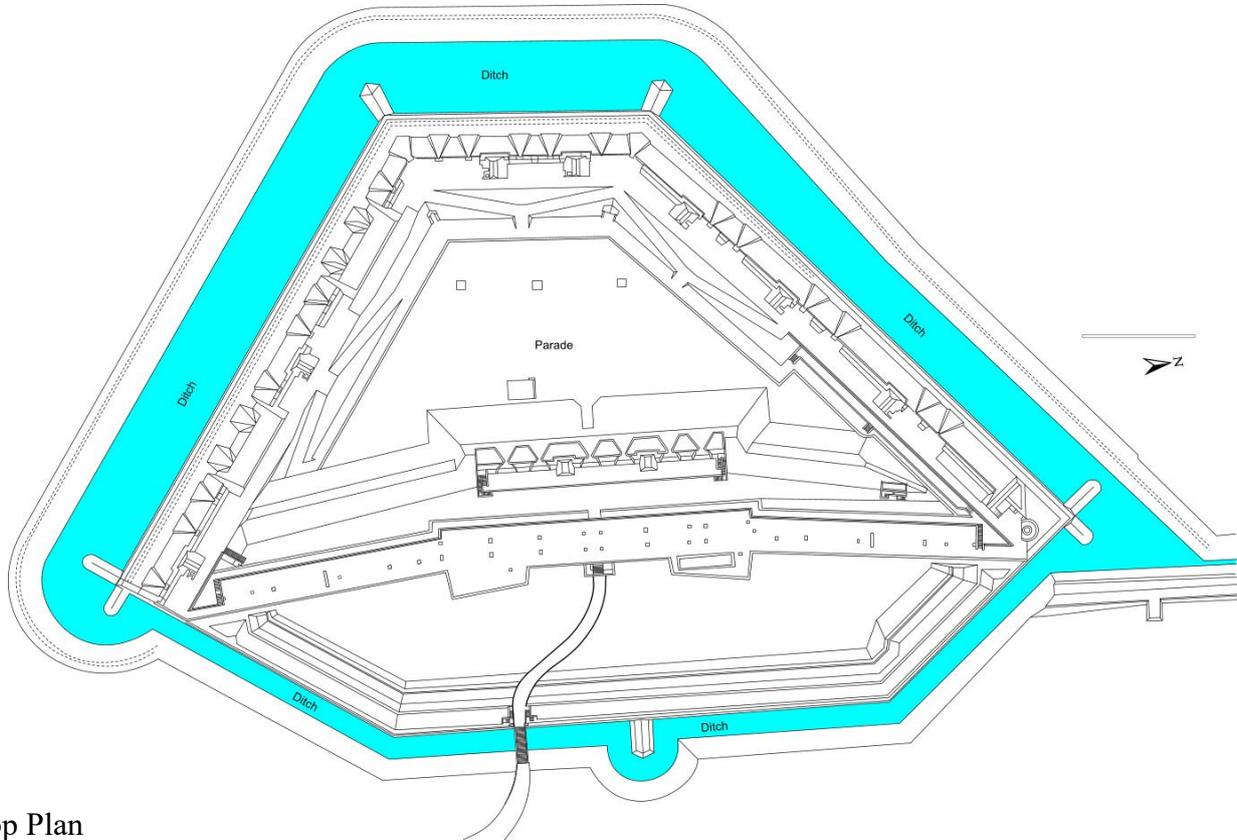
Fort Elson

Commenced	1855	Armament	Designed for 28 guns on the ramparts and the cavalier
Completed	1860	1872 mounted	4 x 10-inch SB, 6 x 8-inch SB, 10 x 68 pr. 8 x 32 pr.
Cost	£ 61,180 (actual) £63,740 (Est)	1886 mounted	18 x 7-inch 82 cwt. RBLs, 3 x 13-inch mortars.
Map Reference	SU 599029	1898	14 x 7-inch RBLs (3 on Moncrieff)
Position	Western Flank, Gosport Advanced Lines	1901	Disarmed
Type	Land Front, Early Polygonal	Caponiers	7 x musketry flanking galleries
Ditch	Wet	Counterscarp galleries	None (escarp gallery)
Guns	73	Haxo casemates	Four (2 x double)
Barrack Accom.	300	Moncrieff Pits	Three
Present use	Retained by M.O.D / recently listed		
History	Army Barracks/ Wartime use mines and topedoes		
Disposal	Soon ?		
Condition	Derelict and heavily overgrown		
Access	None		
Sources	Solent Papers No 6		

History and Description

Fort Elson was the second of the Polygonal forts and, since the destruction of Fort Gomer in 1964, it is the oldest surviving polygonal fort. It is also unique in plan, this time completely abandoning the bastions of earlier fortifications in favour of earth ramparts constructed 'en decharge'. The gorge is closed with a fortified barracks and between this and the central parade is a cavalier with positions for six guns. The main ramparts had the usual mixture of 7-inch RBL guns and 64 pr. RML guns. The southern flanks had two double Haxo casemates and in the 1880s three Moncrieff disappearing mountings for 7-inch RBLs were added. The magazine arrangements, although primitive, were an improvement on those at Fort Gomer. The main magazine chamber is situated underneath the main west rampart. A gallery run within the length of the ramparts, primarily as a means of effecting the *escarp en decharge*. Twelve casemated chambers for accommodation and stores are built underneath the north flank. Seven musketry galleries project into the moat to provide flanking fire along it. The fort closed off the northern end of the western approaches to Portsmouth harbour. A sluice connected its moat with the harbour. On the eastern side of the short connecting moat was a prepared rampart for more guns. The fort was disarmed in 1901 and was used to store torpedoes and depth charges during the Second World War. It was incorporated into the naval munitions depot of Bedenham and Frater and although no longer in use, still lies within its jurisdiction. It was surveyed by English Heritage (1990) prior to listing it. It is very heavily overgrown and parts of its tunnels and casemates are reported to have collapsed. It has now been left to decay under an English Heritage policy of 'controlled ruination that is to allow the fort to deteriorate under a controlled and planned manner ensuring adequate records and safety aspects are addressed'.

Fort Elson



Top Plan

