

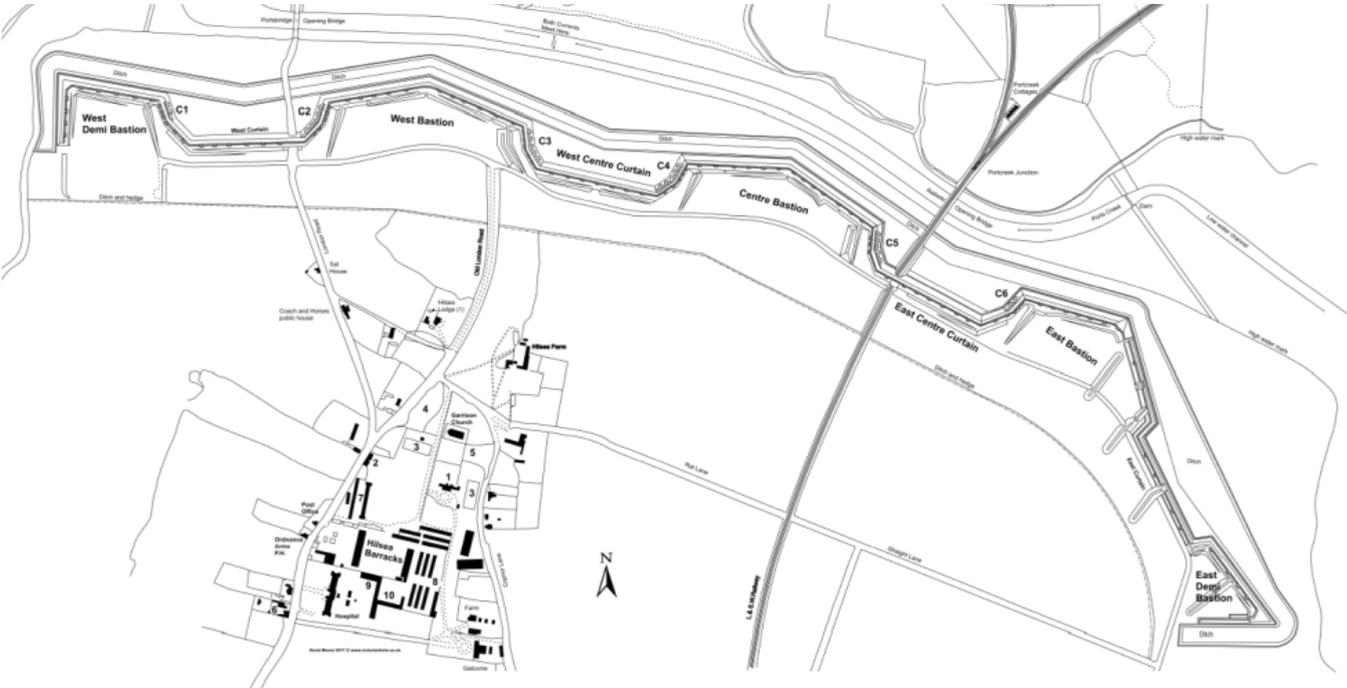
## Hilsea Lines

<p><b>Commenced</b> 1858</p> <p><b>Completed</b> 1869</p> <p><b>Cost</b> £ 209,254</p> <p><b>Map Reference</b> SU 650045 to SU670 040</p> <p><b>Position</b> Northern Portsmouth Approaches. Hilsea Channel</p> <p><b>Type</b> Continuous rampart &amp; bastions</p> <p><b>Ditch</b> In front only : wet : navigable</p> <p><b>Guns</b> 218</p> <p><b>Barrack Accom.</b> 408</p> <p><b>Present use</b> Mostly owned by Hampshire County Council. Some industrial.</p> <p><b>History</b> Modified many times</p> <p><b>Disposal</b> Bought by Portsmouth</p> <p><b>Condition</b> Overgrown, East end demolished</p> <p><b>Access</b> Public access along most of its length</p> <p><b>Sources</b> Solent Papers No 4</p>	<p><b>Armament</b></p> <p><b>Original</b> Terreplein - 168 smooth bore Flank Casemates - 50 smooth bore</p> <p><b>1893</b> 23 x 7-inch RBL 3 x 7-inch RML of these (4 on short carriages 6 on Moncrieff 16 on sliding carriages)</p> <p><b>1907</b> Disarmed</p> <p><b>Caponiers</b> None</p> <p><b>Counterscarp galleries</b> None</p> <p><b>Haxo casemates</b> None</p> <p><b>Moncrieff Pits</b> 6</p>
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### History and Description

The Hilsea Lines, in their present state, date from Jervois' design and rebuilding of 1858. The original lines of 1747 were completely demolished and the ground levelled. Trouble with contractors delayed the completion of the lines until 1869 when the R.E. had to finish the job. The 1869 report concluded that the lines were in a secure and stable condition, were well and skilfully constructed and were adapted to the requirements of a modern armament. 'The enormous obstacles presented by two wet ditches, combined with the powerful flanking fire from guns both in casemates and on the ramparts, render their defensive power unusually great.' The lines followed the natural canal, called the Hilsea Channel, joining Langston and Portsmouth harbours which cut off Portsea Island from the mainland. The line lies on an arc whose chord is 2,700 yards, and versed sine 450 yards. It was constructed with four bastioned fronts of three whole and two demi bastions with sides 770 yards and lines of defence 500 yards. The flanks were designed with casemates for 50 guns, before the introduction of rifled artillery and at the time of building were considered to be out of the range of guns on Portsdown Hill. The merlons which covered the embrasures were found to be insufficient protection and alternate embrasures were subsequently blocked. The terreplein has a command of 30ft. over the countryside to the north and was provided with bombproof chambers in traverses and six Moncrieff pits. Additional positions were to be filled with movable armament in time of need. The flanking positions in the casemates were for five and ten gun batteries for 7-inch guns on traversing platforms. The crews were accommodated in barrack casemates, separated from the gun floor by a pressure shields of iron. The ditch in front of the rampart was constructed in addition to the natural creek. It was 130 feet wide at top and 90 feet at bottom to hold 8 feet of water. Dams were added to the tidal creek to hold back the water and allow gunboats to cooperate in the defence. The London road was diverted across the ditch and creek and through the left curtain. The railway passed under the right centre curtain. Behind the lines was a camping field for a large body of troops. The Lines are still intact for most of their length but the extreme east end has been demolished. The bastions were later numbered from West to east. No.1 bastion is now changing rooms for the nearby sports fields, No.2 bastion has been demolished for the main Portsmouth road, No.3, 4, 5 bastions are intact: No.3 Bastion is used by the Countryside Wardens, No5 Bastion is heavily damaged by vandals and is derelict. No.6 bastion is a WWI Remembrance Centre. The main magazine was situated under the salient of East Bastion (no.6) and was fairly intact up to recent times.

# Hilsea Lines



Taken from a plan In Solent Papers No. 4 'Hilsea Lines' by Garry Mitchell

