

Littlehampton Fort (West Bank Fort)

Commenced	1853	Armament	
Completed	1854	1876: 3 x 68pdr SB	
Cost	£ 7,615	2 x 32pdr SB	
Map Reference	TQ 027 011	1888 Proposed	
Position	West bank of River Arun	Nil	
Type	Coast battery, defensible		
Ditch	Dry		
Guns	5		
Barrack Accom.	2 Off. 1 m-gunner, 35 N.C.O.s & men		
Present use	Ruinous		
History		Caponiers	3 open bastions
	Reported dismantled c.1900, barracks demolished 1960s	Counterscarp galleries	
Disposal Condition		Haxo casemates	
Access	Open site (golf course & conservation area)	Moncrieff Pits	
Sources	Goodwin, <i>The Military Defence of W. Sussex.</i>		

History and Description

Littlehampton Fort was similar in many respects to the work at Shoreham, except it had positions for five guns instead of six and it has open bastions for musketry at the salients in place of roofed caponiers. In trace it is a lunette, or straight-sided crescent. The dry ditch, 27ft. wide, has a detached loopholed Carnot wall 12ft. high at its bottom. The fort is sited on sand dunes on the coast to guard the navigable River Arun. At the rear of the fort the open ends of the ditch were closed by another loopholed wall and a defensible barracks almost identical in plan to that at Shoreham. The barrack accommodation was supplemented by a hut outside the fort for a further 20 NCOs and privates. Two underground magazines were sited at the ends of the gun battery and shell recesses were provided near to the guns on the terreplein.

In 1888 the R.A. and R.E. Works Committee reported that *Littlehampton has an insignificant commercial importance, and there is no justification for special defences. The existing fort is so feeble that its retention or re-armament is unwarrantable. The close proximity of Portsmouth, and the railway that now runs for many miles close to the shore, are the best guarantees for its security. The armament, which is not required for practice, should be withdrawn, and no expense should be incurred in maintaining the work.*

The barracks were demolished in the 1960s and the fort is now ruinous neglected and covered by sand and vegetation. It is situated on the edge of a golf course and together with the sand dunes is designated a conservation area for birds. An active group of volunteers is working to conserve this fort.

See - Aldsworth, *A Description of the Mid-19th Century Forts at Littlehampton and Shoreham* (Sussex Archaeological Collections, 1981).

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