

Fort Southwick

Commenced	1861	Armament	
Completed	1870	1876 Approved	
Cost	£ 94262	35 x 7-inch RBL	
Map Reference	SU 628069	10 x rifled Howitzers	
Position	Portsdown Hill / Northern	20 x SB flank guns	
	Approaches Land Front /	1893 Mounted	
Type	Polygonal	8 x 7-inch RBL	
Ditch	Dry	9 x 64 pr. RML	
Guns	78	6 x 8-in Howitzers	
Barrack Accom.	226	Required to complete	
Present use	Recently released by M.O.D. Navy	6 x 64pr RML	
History	Army then Navy Barracks	8 x 32 pr. SBBL (fixed amm conv.)	
		Caponiers	1 full 2 demi
Disposal	Soon, when developer is found	Counterscarp	(1 ditch gallery)
Condition	Altered for modern usage. Good	galleries	
Access	No public access. Rear can be viewed from road	Haxo casemates	none
Sources	Solent Papers No 3 Garry Mitchell	Moncrieff Pits	2

History and Description

Fort Southwick is 2,400 yards east of Fort Nelson. It is one of two central forts designed to house a larger complement of men in an inverted U shaped barrack block in the centre of the gorge. It is similar in trace to Fort Widley, apart from one minor deviation to the ditch and rampart at the southwest corner. Its ditch is revetted on the scarp and counterscarp in brick and flint. It has one full caponier at its main north salient with two smaller demi caponiers at the shoulders. A small musketry gallery crosses the ditch at the south west angle to cover a minor branch of the ditch. Behind the demi caponiers and set into the rampart are mortar batteries for five mortars each. The rampart has positions for the usual armament of 64 pr RMLs, 7-inch RBLs and 6.6 inch howitzers. A central spiral stair from the parade allows communication with the four main tunnels running of it radially. These lead to the barrack block and caponiers with stairs to the mortar batteries and chemin de ronde. Off the tunnel from the barrack to the north caponier is the main magazine. Southwick occupies the high point of the hill and held the water storage tanks for the other forts, feeding them through a brick lined aqueduct. This, despite rumours to the contrary, was the only connection between the forts.

During World War Two Southwick served as a H.Q. for Allied Commanders. (1943 for Canadian and U.S. Forces). From 1938 to 1940 it held a section of the Ordnance Survey. A large complex of underground bunkers and command positions were excavated beneath the Victorian tunnels. Until recently it was occupied by the Navy (as HQ and offices for C. in C. Home Fleet) and is largely intact, its underground portions are no longer in use.

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