

## St. Catherine's Fort, Tenby

<b>Commenced</b>	1867
<b>Completed</b>	1870
<b>Cost</b>	£ 16,260 (with shields £40,000)
<b>Map Reference</b>	SN 1396 0003
<b>Position</b>	St. Catherine's Island just offshore from Tenby, Bristol Channel.
<b>Type</b>	Coast Defence Battery
<b>Ditch</b>	Dry on one side. Sea on the other.
<b>Guns</b>	15
<b>Barrack Accom.</b>	150
<b>Present use</b>	Unknown
<b>History</b>	R.N.R. 1895-1907. Army re-purchased the fort in 1940.
<b>Disposal</b>	1918 and 1945
<b>Condition</b>	Fair
<b>Access</b>	Was open during the summer. Closed end of 2016.
<b>Sources</b>	1858 & 1868 Committee Reports, Precis of Correspondence prior to 1893 National Archives.

### Armament

#### 1886

South Casemates 3 x 7-inch R.M.L.  
North Casemates 3 x 7-inch R.M.L.  
Upper Battery 3 x 9-inch R.M.L.s

#### 1893

Mounted 6 x 7-inch R.M.L. 1 x 9-inch R.M.L.  
Approved 9 x 7inch RML

#### 1904/5

1 x 5-inch B.L.C.

<b>Caponiers</b>	2 for rifles plus 2 flanking galleries
<b>Counterscarp galleries</b>	None
<b>Haxo casemates</b>	None
<b>Moncrieff Pits</b>	None

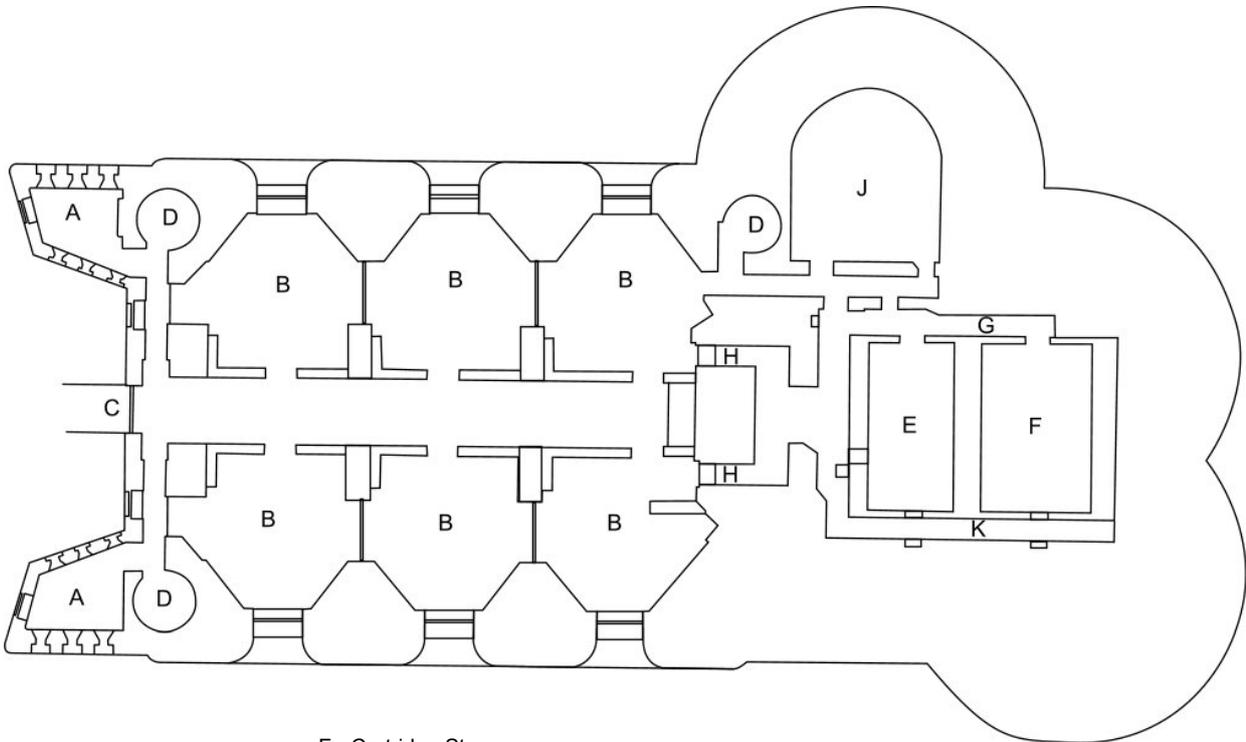
### History and description

This fort was ordered as part of the Royal Commission on the Defence of the UK and was constructed on the small rocky island just off the shore at Tenby. It was designed to prevent a landing at Tenby, which could have served as a bridgehead, thereby securing the nearby Milford Haven from a possible overland attack from that direction. It formed the major work of a proposed defensive line running along the coast to Trewent consisting of batteries at Tenby, Caldy Island, Lydstep, Freshwater East and Freshwater West.

The building, a simple rectangular work, was begun June 1867 and the fort was complete by 1867 with the exception of the guns and shields. By 1880 the fort on St. Catherine's Island at Tenby was the only one to be constructed. The Defence Committee at that time reported that its shields had not been provided and they should be. They had been fitted by 1886 and the cost including shields was £40,000. The fort consists of a series of gun casemates facing north to cover the harbour of Tenby and the beach towards Saundersfoot and to the south to flank the south beach towards Penally and Manorbier. Each face held three 7-inch RML guns firing through iron shields. Two small caponiers or rifle galleries protect the west face and entrance of the fort which is approached over a drawbridge. A spiral stair in each connects the upper and lower galleries. At the east end of the basement level are a powder magazine (cartridge store) and a shell store. Another spiral stair leads up to a mezzanine level on which are situated two more flanking galleries and stairs up to the roof. The roof was fitted with three gun platforms for 9-inch RMLs facing south east, one of which could achieve 360 degrees of traverse. In 1886 the Defence Committee reported that *St. Catherine's Fort has now been completed and is incapable of adaptation to modern requirements. Its position commanding the anchorage in Caldy Roads, is, however, such that an armament should be retained capable of acting against a single cruiser. For this purpose the 9-inch guns are uselessly heavy, and may be replaced by 7-inch R.M.L. the remaining armament of 7inch R.M.L. being retained.*

The fort was garrisoned from 1873 to 1910 and then from 1914 to 1918 and 1939 to 1945. Different detachments served in the fort including the Royal Marines, 4th. Defence battery R.A., elements of the Belgian Army, The Home Guard, LAA(R.A.) and an R.A.F. ASR detachment. The fort was released by the Military after WWII In 1959 it was advertised for sale for £10,000 having been converted into a private residence called Gun Fort House. It was then used as a small zoo for a period of time until being abandoned once more. Various plans have been proposed for the fort, none of which have come to fruition.

St. Catherine's Fort, Tenby



- A - Flanking Gallery
- B - 7inch RML casemate
- C - Entrance
- D - Spiral stair
- E - Shell Store
- F - Cartridge Store
- G - Shifting Lobby
- H - Issuing Hatch
- J - Artillery Store
- K - Lighting Passage

