

## Fort Widley

|                       |   |                               |  |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Commenced</b>      | 1861  | <b>Armament</b>               |  |
| <b>Completed</b>      | 1870  | <b>1876</b>                   | Approved 35 x 7-inch RBL; 1 x 64 pr. RML (on CW); 10 x rifled Howitzers; 16 x SB flank guns  |
| <b>Cost</b>           | £ 93980                                       | <b>1893</b>                   | Mounted 10 x 7-inch RBL; 4 x 64 pr. RML; 4 x 20 pr. RBL; 2 x 8-inch RML Howitzers. 5 x 6.6-in Howitzers; 8 x 32pr. SBBL. Required to complete 2 x 20pr. RBL; 8 x 32 pr. SBBL (fixed amm conv.) |
| <b>Map Reference</b>  | SU 656075                                     |                               | Disarmed 1907  |
| <b>Position</b>       | Portsdown Hill / Northern Approaches          | <b>Caponiers</b>              | 1 full 2 demi  |
| <b>Type</b>           | Land Front / Polygonal                        | <b>Counterscarp galleries</b> | none   |
| <b>Ditch</b>          | Dry   | <b>Haxo casemates</b>         | none   |
| <b>Guns</b>           | 78  | <b>Moncrieff Pits</b>         | 2  |
| <b>Barrack Accom.</b> | 226   |                               |  |
| <b>Present use</b>    | Centre for Portsdown Park & Activities centre |                               |  |
| <b>History</b>        | Army barracks R.A. until 1939                 |                               |  |
| <b>Disposal</b>       | Portsmouth City 1961 / 1972                   |                               |  |
| <b>Condition</b>      | Partly restored                               |                               |  |
| <b>Access</b>         | by arrangement . Tours during Summer weekends |                               |  |
| <b>Sources</b>        | Solent Papers No 3 Garry Mitchell             |                               |  |

### History and Description

Fort Widley is 3,100 yards east of Fort Southwick. It is six sided in trace and is symmetrical about a north south axis. It is identical to Fort Southwick, apart from one small deviation. The east and west ditches are enfiladed by small two storey demi caponiers whilst the main north ditch is covered by a full caponier. The return angles of the gorge ditch and protected by small musketry galleries. The tunnel system and magazine arrangements are the same as those for Fort Southwick, as are the ramparts.

Widley saw a variety of uses during the Second World War. From 1940 it served as an 'Action Post, Fire'. From 1941 it had a R.E. Bomb Disposal Unit. From 1942 it was used briefly to house POWs. From 1943 it was used as an alternative control centre for Southwick House.

The fort is now maintained by Portsmouth City Council and is opened for public tours at weekends during the Summer months. The area surrounding it is designated as a conservation and study area.

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