

Steynewood High Angle Battery

<p>Commenced 1889 Completed 1893 Cost £ unknown Map Reference SZ 641869 Position Bembridge, East Isle of Wight</p> <p>Type Coast Defence High Angle Fire Ditch Firing trenches Guns 6 Barrack Accom. 4 men in guard room or 1 caretaker Present use Private residence</p> <p>History Short use for coast defence</p> <p>Disposal Disarmed 1899 Condition Fair, much remains Access By appointment with owner</p> <p>Sources <small>Precis of correspondence relating to Portsmouth prior to 1898 plans in PRO - WO78 2623</small></p>	<p>Armament</p> <p>Proposed 6 x 9-inch 12-ton High Angle mountings Mounted 1896-1898 4 x 9-inch 12-ton High Angle mountings 1898 6 x 9-inch 12-ton High Angle mountings 1899 disarmed</p> <p>Caponiers None</p> <p>Counterscarp galleries None</p> <p>Haxo casemates None</p> <p>Moncrieff Pits None</p>
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History and Description

Steynewood battery for 9-inch RML High Angle guns was built at Steynewood on the Isle of Wight overlooking the anchorage of St. Helens Roads and the approaches to the Nab Passage. Its purpose was to prevent ships lying off Sandown and bombarding Portsmouth Dockyard. The battery, constructed between 1889 and 1893, consisted of six gun emplacements in an arc, in three groups of two, with expense cartridge stores (formerly shelters) between each pair and shell stores, each serving three positions, between the centres guns and the outside pairs. It was built according to the new Twydall principles experimented with at Chatham in the construction of the new land forts there. It employed fire trenches with steel palisades in front of each pair of gun emplacements as protection against a frontal assault. A parados with a rearwards facing firing step ran across the battery separating the gun emplacements from a rear parade, or camping field. Another fire trench was extended around the rear of the fort. To the left of the entrance was a guard room which was also suitable for conversion to a caretaker's quarters. Four 9-inch H.A. R.M.L. guns were in place by 1893, but not yet mounted and by 1898 six were mounted with a proposal to add two more. In 1899 it was decided to disarm because 'it would not deter ships which would dare to face the powerful interior batteries. These guns are very slow in their fire and not very accurate'. The battery was sold off and has since been used as a private residence for two halves of the Thorncroft family, in whose possession it remains.

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