

Newhaven Fort

Commenced	1865	Armament	
Completed	1871	sea front	
Cost	£ 80,000	3 x 10-inch and	
Map Reference	TQ 446 002	6 x 9-inch RMLs	
Position	Top of cliff on west side of Newhaven Harbour	lower sea front	
Type	Land front with coast defence	4 x 64pdr RMLs	
Ditch	battery	land front	
Guns	Dry	1 x 64pdr RMLs and 2 x 13-inch mortars	
Barrack Accom.	12 plus 1 mortar	eastern front	
Present use	5 officers 240 men Museum	2 x 9-inch RMLs on Moncrieff carriages	
History	Restoration began 1981.	1906	
Disposal	Administered by Lewes District Council	2 x 6-inch VII on CPII	
Condition	Disposed of by Army 1962.	2 x 12pr. 12 cwt on QFII	
Access	Good	Caponiers	1 at base of cliff
Sources	All year round Newhaven Fort, a History and Guide.	Counterscarp galleries	1
		Haxo casemates	None
		Moncrieff Pits	2

History and Description

Newhaven Fort stands on the cliff overlooking the entrance to Newhaven harbour. It was commenced in 1865 and was very nearly finished by 1871, the barracks having been occupied for some time and the sea batteries being ready for armament. On the sea front it was intended to mount 3 x 18 ton guns en barbette, 6 x 12 ton guns in embrasures, 2 x 12 ton guns on Moncrieff carriages. The land front had space enough to mount 10 or more guns beside 1 in a Haxo casemate at the salient. An old battery armed with 4 x 68 prs. smooth bore guns was included in the enceinte and a more recent work armed with 6 x 68 prs. stood on the beach to the south east of the fort. The enceinte on the north consists of a ditch 40ft. wide and 30ft. deep revetted with concrete and flanked by two counterscarp galleries at the salient, each having three embrasures and fifteen loopholes. At its eastern end the north ditch dropped into a wet ditch in front of the eastern face having a coupure in the harbour embankment to secure the old lower battery. It was intended to construct two small caponiers to flank the wet ditch at the foot of the west cliff. The west ditch runs out on the summit of the cliff at a point still subject to encroachment by the sea. Its revetments terminated in a drop ditch where the escarp joins a revetment thrown across a deep but narrow fault in the chalk on the south face. This return in which there is a sally port is flanked by a musketry gallery in the west counterscarp. The magazines were to store 2,678 barrels of gunpowder and 5,000 loaded shells. The work was reported as being well designed for its object i.e. securing the harbour of Newhaven, denying to an enemy the use of the anchorage of Seaford Bay and commanding the beach. commissioners. The fort received two 9-inch RMLs on Moncrieff carriages, the only two of this type to be mounted in the UK. In the early 20th century the coast battery was re-armed with 6-inch Mk 7 BLs and these remained until 1941 when they were replaced by 6-inch Mk 24s in a battery to the west of the fort. The fort was abandoned by the Army in 1962 and later in the 60s there were plans to convert the fort to a holiday village. These fell through and restoration of the fort began in 1982. The fort is now preserved and interpreted by Lewes District Council and is full of excellent fortification and military history displays.

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