

22nd April
17/04/2009

500736

PRIDDY'S HARD
Shell Filling Rooms, Fuzing
Rooms and associated traverse
walls, approx. 60m SW of
southern demi-bastion to
Priddy's Hard Ramparts

GV

II

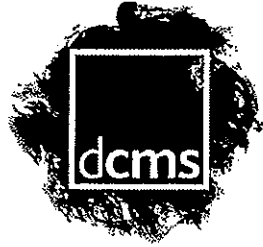
Suite of shell filling and fuzing rooms. 1886/7 to the designs of Colonels Ovey and Pridham, Royal Engineers and 1898. Brick in English bond, slate roof on timber trusses.

Four small gabled buildings, each approx 8 x 6m, the entrance gable with central pair of framed plank doors, flanked by a 12-pane sash each side; these all to brick segmental heads and central multi-pane arched window above door; the rear gable a repeat of this. The side has a pair of doors with large overlight. The later structure (formerly known as Building 346d) is similar, but smaller, and does not have the arched central light between the buildings. Substantial traverse walls in brick surround the whole group, the walls between the buildings being battered and with raked outer ends.

INTERIOR: retains timber trusses, plank lining and hot water pipe systems. Flooring was originally of tanned hides fixed with copper nails.

HISTORY: This important complex was built in 1886/7 to the designs of Lieut. Col. Ovey, the Gosport Commanding Royal Engineer, and Lieut. Col. Pridham, the Assistant Commissary of Priddy's Hard. They comprise the first and - despite the loss of one unit - most complete suite of purpose-built rooms for filling and fuzing shells in an ordnance yard, all separated by substantial brick traverse walls for protection against blast. After an explosion at the Shell Filling Room in 1883 it was decided to move this activity to outside the historic fortified boundaries of Priddy's Hard, and to distribute the activity among several small buildings. In 1886/7, therefore, a set of Shell Filling Rooms and a Fuzing Room, later joined by a Shell Filling Room for quick-firing shells (altered and not included), an Expense Magazine (qv) and Unheading Room, were built without the ramparts along the edge of Forton Creek. All the filling rooms were heated by hot water pipe supplied from a boiler house (later rebuilt and not included). These buildings were not only protected by traverse walling, but also were isolated within a moat, at the periphery of the main site, and outside the earlier ramparts. They were served by the narrow-gauge tramway, which not only passed through each building, but was linked across the front and rear; at the rear the tramway passed through arched passages formed in the traverse walls.

This is also a unique surviving group that directly relates to contemporary developments in naval ordnance and the changing character of the Royal Navy's ships, forming a model for later developments (which have been more extensively altered) on the other ordnance depots. The development of artillery meant a great increase in the use of filled shells and the fuzes required to detonate them, later 19th century developments requiring more sophisticated facilities than the Laboratories for the emptying and filling of shells. The development of new propellants and projectiles from the mid 19th century had taken place against the background of the arms race of the second half of the 19th century. Thus the construction of an armour-clad and steam-powered fleet, followed by the introduction of steel guns and rotating turrets, was accompanied by the development of ordnance which rendered the forts of the Palmerston government, initiated in 1859



22nd April
17/04/2009

in reaction to a perceived threat from the French, obsolete only 20 years after their construction. The smooth-bore 68-pounder had been the largest gun in service at the time of the Crimean War. Vast quantities of powder were needed as propellant and explosive filling for shells of the 110-ton monster guns of the 1880s, a decade which saw the development of more effective breech-loading systems and the emergence of the 12-inch gun as the standard naval armament.

The magazines and related structures at Priddy's Hard date from the late 18th century. The site's expansion from the mid 19th century was closely related to the development of land and sea artillery and the navy's transition from the age of sail, powder and solid shot to the Dreadnought class of the early 1900s. Priddy's Hard retains the best-preserved range of structures that relate to this remarkable history of continual enlargement and adaptation, one that encompasses that of Britain's dominance as a sea power on a global scale.

For further historical details on this site, see the description for 'A' Magazine

500110

PRIDDY'S HARD
Empty Powder Case Store
(Building 312), Museum
Buildings, to SW of Camber

GV

II

Empty Powder Case store, now part of Museum. 1891. Brick in English bond, slate roof on steel trusses.

A free-standing half-hipped shed in 7 bays, lying N/S near the S side of the Rolling Way (gc). Brick piers expressed externally on W side, and with 3 casement windows; the short S end has a wide opening with concrete lintel, and the E side adjoins the shed for Empty Powder Cases and Barrels (qv).

INTERIOR has steel trusses with angles for struts and bar as ties carry 4 purlins and rafters with boarding.

HISTORY: These stores are associated with the introduction of shells into naval service, each shell being individually packed into its own wooden box. Located immediately to the W of Building 418 (qv), it is one of a series of such rooms, comprising one of the core group of buildings on this uniquely important site. A probable rebuild of an earlier building on the same site. The rail system to 'C' Magazine (qv) passed through at the centre of the long sides.

The magazines and related structures at Priddy's Hard date from the late 18th century. The site's expansion from the mid 19th century was closely related to the development of land and sea artillery and the navy's transition from the age of sail, powder and solid shot to the Dreadnought class of the early 1900s. Priddy's Hard retains the best-preserved range of structures that relate to this remarkable history of continual enlargement and adaptation, one that encompasses that of Britain's dominance as a sea power on a global scale.

For further historical details on this site, see the description for 'A' Magazine.