



22nd Audit

17/04/2009

Harbour defence mines had been the responsibility of the Royal Engineers until 1905, the Royal Navy only being concerned with offensive minelaying in enemy waters and the destruction of his devices by means of countermines; this building served that purpose, but by 1913 was being used as a guncotton store.

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.

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PRIDDY'S HARD  
Proof House and Cook House  
(Building 241)

GV

II

Cookhouse and attached proof house, converted in 1877 from part of a small arms factory of 1859. Brick in English bond, slate roof.

Long narrow gabled building entered through N end; the roof has two large glazed ridge lanterns. The N end has a central framed plank door to a cambered head flanked by tall sash openings, and below a square plain glazed light; the long E side has 3 + 2 similar openings, all to fine brick voussoirs and stooled stone sills, but all the openings blocked, presumably on 12-pane sashes. The roof lanterns are in 3 lights, glazed at sides and top.

HISTORY: After the 18th century example at Purfleet on the Essex coast and an early 19th century example at the Marsh Works in Faversham, this is the best surviving example of a Proof House for the testing of explosives. Half the building was a Cook House, and it was converted into a non-danger building in 1897. It also has special historical interest as it originated, like the much-altered range of buildings to the north, as a Small Arms Cartridge Factory in 1859. This followed the decision by the Secretary of State for War, Sidney Herbert, to lessen Britain's dependency on the great arsenals of the Thames. 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.

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