

**Scottish Coal**

**Happendon Prisoner of War Camp,  
Happendon**

**Archaeological Standing Building  
Survey**

**8<sup>th</sup> April 2008**

## Document Control Sheet

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# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 General**

- 1.1.1 This report describes the results of a desk based assessment and a Level 1 historic building survey which was undertaken in February 2008 at Happendon Prisoner of War Camp 19 (NGR: NS 85261 33342, centred.) This was done in order to record the attributes of the upstanding remains of the camp situated within the site boundary of the proposed OCC mine at Poneil, South Lanarkshire. The remains are set within a large rectangular area and are predominantly comprised of a series of building foundation platforms dating to the Second World War

## **1.2 Objectives**

The objectives of the survey were

- To undertake a Level 1 historic building assessment, as defined by English Heritage (EH, 2006) and The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS, 2004), in order to record and note features of Cultural Heritage interest.

## **1.3 Geology and Topography**

- 1.1.3 The solid geology of the Midland Valley comprises of Carboniferous sedimentary rocks ranging from red sandstones to mudstones and coal. The solid geology is overlain by drift geology comprising of Upper Red Barren Measures of mottled clays.



## 2

**Methodology****2.1 General**

- 2.1.1 Jacobs UK conforms to the standards of professional conduct outlined in the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of conduct, and relevant Standards and Guidance documents. Jacobs is a Registered Archaeological Organisation (RAO) with the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and this status ensures that there is regular monitoring and approval by external peers of our internal systems, standards and skills development.
- 2.1.2 A level 1 survey is defined as *essentially a visual record, supplemented by the minimum of information needed to identify the building's location, age and type. This is the simplest record and will typically be adopted when the aim is to gather basic information about a large number of buildings for planning purposes and whenever resources are limited and much ground has to be covered.*
- 2.1.3 Happendon Prisoner of War camp (hereafter POW) is located to the north east of Douglas, situated to the west of Happendon Services on the M74 (NGR: NS 85261 33342, centred). The camp was constructed during the Second World War to intern German and Italian prisoners.

**2.2 Desk-based study**

- 2.2.1 A basic desk-based assessment was undertaken in order to assess the historical context and background information to the development of the site. Readily available desk-based sources held by West of Scotland Archaeological Services (hereafter WoSAS), were consulted, as well as secondary documentary sources and aerial photographs. Data on the historic environment was acquired from the following sources:
- *South Lanarkshire Council Sites and Monuments Record for archaeological sites and monuments (SMR) and Vertical Aerial Photographs ;*
  - *National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS)*
  - *Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS).*

**2.3 Building Survey**

- 2.3.1 A photographic record was maintained during the site survey using a digital Fuji S5800 camera. An appropriate photographic record was made of upstanding remains and a selected representative of these images are included in this report (Plates 1-6).

**3****Historical Development of the site****3.1 Documentary and Archival Sources**

- 3.1.1 There is little information regarding the historical background of the POW camp at Happendon or its layout in the form of military architectural plans. The majority of the information gained was sourced from accounts of the activities within the camp from staff members noted on forums.
- 3.1.2 The site is composed of a complex of three camps on the northern bank of Douglas Water. The main camp is located to the immediate west of the smaller camps and set within a large rectangular area. The M74 construction would have destroyed the other two camps and possibly compromised the eastern most corner of the central camp.
- 3.1.3 Documentary evidence suggests that the camp was constructed during the early phases of WWII. The camps were used to hold German and Italian military prisoners. Some of the prisoners were German civilians who had been interned in America and were subsequently transported to Europe to be held in Happendon. It is estimated that about 300 of the prisoners within the camp were forced to work on local farms and quarries.
- 3.1.4 It was noted that as the years passed the level of security within the camps greatly relaxed to the extent that some of the prisoners were allowed to reside at the farms which they laboured at. Regular reference is made to the lack of food within the camps, indicating that much of the provisions that were for the prisoners was pilfered before it reached the camp. As a result, the prisoners went to great lengths to gain additional food and cigarettes by trading in scrap, clothes and even collecting road kill to eat. However the local community seems to have had a general fondness for the prisoners, resulting in many of them staying on in the area after the end of the war.

## 4

## Standing Building Survey Results

## 4.1 General

- 4.1.1 The survey was conducted on the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2008 by a Jacobs Historic Buildings Archaeologist. The weather conditions during the survey were fair with sunny spells.
- 4.1.2 In general very little remains of the camp with only the occasional upstanding remains of brick chimney flues or water towers. The remains of the camp are encircled by trees from Long Plantation which extends to the M74 (see layout plan Figure 2). The camp is densely overgrown with grass and the occasional tree.
- 4.1.3 A walkover of the site revealed that the foundation platforms for the majority of the structures are still *in situ* (see layout plan Figure 1). An illustrated layout of the camp was extrapolated from the 1949 aerial photograph, indicating that the site consisted of about one hundred structures. The landscape gently slopes to the south west and as a result the foundations for the buildings which occupy the southern half of the site form a series of terraces cut into the ground. The foundations are composed of brick bases (9 courses high) with a concrete skin forming a platform and measure on average 5m by 36m. There are no remains of the building material however the semi-circle remains of a gable end wall confirmed that the site was composed of Nissen Huts which are synonymous with the First and Second World Wars.
- 4.1.4 Nissen Huts were created due to their economic use of materials, their portability and ease of construction. These facts led to the simple concept of bending a sheet of corrugated steel into a half cylinder and bricking up the gable ends, forming a secure hut. The Nissen huts within the camp were of a more permanent nature with fixed bases. It can be assumed when the camp was decommissioned the main fixtures and fittings (corrugated steel) would have removed for use elsewhere, leaving the basic brick and concrete elements of the structures.
- 4.1.5 Accommodation within the huts would have been basic and somewhat uncomfortable as they were not insulated against the harsh winter weather. Facilities within the camp are unknown; however there are two locations where there are clear structural indications to the provisions of toilets (Plates 3, NGR: NS 85221 33397) and the possibility of showers (Plates 4-5, NS 85114 33302). This latter feature was located on an upstanding gable wall, where it appears that individual shower cubicles have been formed. The occurrence of individual 'shower' cubicles is unlikely within the setting of a POW Camp therefore these features may have been provided for the guards who patrolled the camp. Adjacent to this are the remains of what is believed to be a double row of toilets indicated by a series of open salt glazed pipes. Associated with these features are the upstanding remains of water towers/chimneys. Reference has been made at other camps within Britain that hot showers were provided; therefore it is presumed that the water towers supplied warm water for the showers and general needs.

## **4.2 Additional Observations**

- 4.2.1 It was noted that the site has a number of trackways crossing it. It is evident that the main access track running along the northern section of the site falls between the northern most row of structures and the rest of the camp. There is no indication to the form of boundary that would have been used to contain the camp. The aerial photograph indicates the site was bound by a wire fence and regular watch towers.

## **5 Summary and Conclusions**

### **5.1 General**

- 5.1.1 A Level 1 standing building appraisal was undertaken at Happendon Prisoner of War Camp (NGR: NS 85261 33342) in order to assess the structural remains in respects of the proposed development at Poneil in the form of an OCC mine and associated features such as topsoil storage and water treatment.
- 5.1.2 The distinct lack of information relating specifically to the site means that little can be implied to the layout of the site and the purposes of the various structures.
- 5.1.3 General notes were taken regarding the extent of the structural remains relating to the Prisoner of War Camp. On the whole the remains were composed of a series of structural platforms which formed the base for the Nissen Huts.
- 5.1.4 The camp was constructed during the second quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and it is not known when it was decommissioned. The site is composed of dozens of Nissen Hut bases set out in a regular pattern within the bounds of a rectangular area.

## 6

## References

## Bibliographic References

English Heritage	2006	<i>Understanding Historic Buildings- A guide to good recording practice.</i>
RCHME	1996	<i>Recording Historic Buildings: A Descriptive Specification.</i> Third Edition, RCHME.
IFA	2001	<i>Standards and Guidance : For the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures. Revised version</i>
Thomas, R.J.C	2003	<i>Twentieth Century Military Recording Project. Prisoner of War Camps (1939 – 1948),</i> English Heritage.

## Vertical Aerial Photographs

Sortie	Frames	Date	Scale	Lib
106G/Scot/UK 87	3132-3133	1946	-	-



## Appendix A Photographic Plates



**Plate 1:** Foundation remains of barrack blocks from south



**Plate 2:** General photograph of landscape from south east



**Plate 3:** Possible remains of toilet block from south



**Plate 4:** Remains of possible shower block from south west





**Plate 5:** Detail of possible shower block remains from north east



**Plate 6:** Pre-cleared area

## Appendix B - Aerial Photograph



Aerial Photograph: 1946 (106G/Scot/UK 87: 3132, 3133).

## Appendix C - Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	South Lanarkshire
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Happendon Camp
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	B0905600
<b>PARISH:</b>	Douglas
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Claire Shaw
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Jacobs UK
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Standing Buildings Survey
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	NS 83 SE 24
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	Prisoner of War Camp
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	N/A
<b>NGR</b>	NS 85261 33342
<b>START DATE</b>	February 2008
<b>END DATE</b>	February 2008
<b>PREVIOUS WORK</b>	N/A
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b>	<p>A Level 1 standing building appraisal has been undertaken at Happendon Prisoner of War Camp (NGR: NS 85261 33342, centred) in order to assess the structural remains in respects of the proposed development at Poneil in the form of an OCC mine and associated features such as topsoil storage and water treatment.</p> <p>The POW camp dates to the Second World War and is comprised of a complex of three camps; the main camp is located to the west and set within a large rectangular area. The later insertion of the M74 would have destroyed the other two camps and possibly compromised the eastern most corner of the central camp.</p> <p>Currently the central camp is comprised of a series of brick and concrete bases which formed the base for the Nissen Huts which were used to accommodate Italian and German prisoners of war.</p>
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	N/A
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Scottish Coal
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	<p>Jacobs UK ,</p> <p>27 Abercromby Place</p> <p>Edinburgh</p> <p>EH3 6QE</p>
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	Alastair.rees@jacobs.com
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b> (intended/deposited)	NMRS