

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING
OF THREE BUILDINGS AT
NORTON MANOR CAMP,
NORTON FITZWARREN, SOMERSET**

**Prepared for
Debut Services (South West) Ltd**

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Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. General description of the buildings	1
3. Building 46	1
4. Building 38	2
5. Building 39	3
6. Discussion	3
Appendix 1: Photographic registers	4

Plates

- Pl. 1 Interior view of building 46 showing double span plan and roof truss arrangement.
- Pl. 2 View of the roof trusses in building 46.
- Pl. 3 South end of the east elevation of building 46 showing windows and sliding doors.
- Pl. 4 South end of the west elevation of building 38 showing windows.
- Pl. 5 Interior of building 46 showing vehicle exhaust vent system.
- Pl. 6 Interior of building 46 showing sanitary area, battery charging room and offices.
- Pl. 7 Building 38, west garage.
- Pl. 8 Middle part of the south elevation of building 38 showing altered opening and masonry.

1. INTRODUCTION

A photographic record of three Motor Transport (MT) sheds was prepared by Exeter Archaeology on 1 December 2008 prior to their demolition. The work was commissioned by Debut Services (South West) Limited. A photographic record comprising black and white print film and digital photography (a register appears as appendix 1) was prepared along with a written description of the buildings. Building 46 was fully recorded. Access to the interior of buildings 38 and 39 was limited due to operational and security restrictions.

2. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDINGS

The buildings flanked three sides of a parade ground, with the fourth side being occupied by building 40. The latter has been converted into a swimming pool, and although extensively altered it was evident that the building had originally been of the same design as the other MT sheds.

The buildings were of double-span construction with steel trusses supported on vertical steel posts located along the sides and the centre of the building. The trusses had tie beams with king posts and diagonal braces above and further braces below the trusses attached to the vertical posts (pls 1 and 2). These posts were stamped 'British Steel Dorman Long & Co Ltd Middlesborough England 2'. The reference to 'British Steel' and the 'Dorman Long & Co Ltd' name may indicate a mid-1960s date prior to the formation of the British Steel and Tube company in 1967, of which Dorman Long & Co Ltd was part. The roofs were covered with asbestos sheets incorporating rows of skylights, and were internally clad with plasterboard panels. All the drainpipes were modern. The bays between the trusses were infilled with either concrete block walls containing windows, doors, or an original design of upward sliding doors for vehicles (pl. 3). In building 46 the windows were tall, metal framed with 20 panes, with the central four-panes opening. In buildings 38 and 39 the windows were also tall and metal framed but with 15-panes, with the central two panes opening (pl. 4). The floors were concrete with vehicle maintenance bays located opposite the doors defined by stripped yellow paint.

Buildings 46 and 38 had been refitted with modern services partly installed to comply with health and safety regulations. These fittings included two types of strip lights, high level heaters and vents for exhaust fumes. The latter took the form of pipes attached to the central posts that were fitted with nozzles onto which hoses from vehicle exhaust pipes could be attached. The pipes were attached to extractor fans at roof level (pl. 5).

3. BUILDING 46

This building was 17 bays long and internally was largely open as a garage but with some subdivisions. There were two fire doors in the northwest elevation. The northeast elevation incorporated four original doors for vehicles and a smaller door for pedestrians, as well as an inserted roller door for vehicles. In the southwest elevation were two doors for vehicles and a fire exit. There were no openings in the southeast elevation. All other bays incorporated the standard windows, except in the southwest corner of the building where two two-pane top-opening windows with wooden frames lit the kitchen.

Attached to the southwest side of the building (away from the parade ground) was a series of sheds, described below from northeast to southwest: (a) a brick chemical store with wooden

doors and vents, (b) a separate two-room brick oil store with wooden doors, internal strip lights and 'full' and 'empty' painted signs; (c) a brick battery store with wooden doors and vents, and (d) a steel mesh cage with three doors for the storage of hazardous substances.

Internally, three separate, single-storey rooms, situated along the southwest side of the building, had been subdivided from the main garage (pl. 6). These were all constructed of concrete block and plasterboard on wooden frames. In the west corner was a kitchen with surviving fittings including a heater, water heater, sink and storage unit. A door from this kitchen led into a small store and a shower and a separate water heater. Towards the centre of the building was a small battery charging shop containing a Belfast sink, wooden racks and a charging bay. Adjacent to this room were two offices with surviving fittings of notice boards, curtains and a lino floor.

The eastern two bays of the garage had been subdivided into two stores using steel mesh grills. Opposite the offices bays 4 and 5 had been 'subdivided' into a semi-enclosed metalsmith's shop using low metal plates and wooden boards. This area retained its storage racks, a bench guillotine, a folding machine and a drill.

There were various fittings surviving within the main garage. Adjacent to the battery shop was a small sanitary area with a Belfast sink, water heater, and soap and paper towel dispensers. Elsewhere there were fittings for a fire alarm system, as well as numerous health and safety signs, areas for fire extinguishers (that were painted red) and safe systems of work notices. There was also a vehicle inspection pit with safety rails.

4. BUILDING 38

This building was slightly smaller than building 45 and was 12 bays long. The building was not aligned perpendicular to the other MT sheds around the parade ground and its orientation must reflect the position of earlier buildings or roads to the north. The southwest elevation incorporated three original doors for vehicles, an inserted roller door for vehicles and a set of double doors for pedestrians. In bay 5 a door opening, possibly for a further set of double doors, had been blocked. In the southeast elevation there was a double door for pedestrians and a low top-opening 12-pane window. In the northwest elevation was a fire door. Attached to the exterior of the northwest elevation was an oil/hydraulic fluid store that returned along the northeast elevation.

Internally, the building had been partitioned using concrete blocks into two main garages with a smaller garage occupying the western three bays, and a larger garage within the rest of the building. The smaller garage contained two vehicle inspection pits (pl. 7), one with raised ramps. The fittings in the garage included safety features as present in building 46 and services such as pipes (providing for example water for windscreen washing) as well as a small sanitary area with wash basin and water heater. The garage also contained portable shelving that was not present in building 46 (presumably having been moved to its present location when the building was vacated).

The larger garage had been subdivided with offices and a recreation room (with modern fittings) attached to the northeast and southwest elevation. Against the partition with the smaller garage was a further office serving, and only accessible from, the smaller garage. This garage was not latterly used for major maintenance and other than the safety features

described above the only significant feature was a sanitary area with units, a washbasin, a water heater and a hand dryer.

5. BUILDING 39

This building was the same size – 12 bays long – as building 38. In the southeast elevation were four original doors for vehicles and two single doors for pedestrians. One of these doors had been inserted into an original window opening and above which was a window filling the larger opening. To the northeast of this door the masonry between the opening and adjacent roller door was constructed from concrete blocks laid on their sides rather than their bases. The reason for this is unclear and it is unknown whether this masonry was part of the original construction or a later alteration. The other door appeared to be original. There were no openings in the southwest elevation. There were no doors for vehicles in the northwest elevation and all bays, except the eastern bay that contained double doors for pedestrians, incorporated windows. In the northeast elevation there was a single door for pedestrians and two UPVC windows lighting offices.

Two store buildings had been constructed against the northwest elevation. At the south end of the building scars on the MT shed and a surviving raised plinth indicated the position of a former store. At the north end of the building was a modern brick ‘petroleum spirit’ store with a vented wooden door.

Internally, the northern two bays of the garage had been converted into an office and a locker room/toilet divided by a central corridor. The remainder of the building had been divided into two sections with central concrete block wall. As with the similar division in building 38 the concrete block partition appeared to be an original feature.

Apart from the office and locker room at the north end, the building was largely latterly used as stores, and as such, unlike buildings 46 and 38, had not been modernised with modern garage fittings and fixings or safety features. Two heaters had however been added to the storerooms. The stores and offices contained (modern) shelving and office equipment respectively reflecting their last use. In the stores, most of the materiel was stored on portable pallets or in boxes. The offices and locker room were also served by modern services.

6. DISCUSSION

The three buildings were constructed as MT sheds, probably in the mid 1960s. Their plans and layouts are typical of post-war MT sheds, being generally bigger than some of those constructed during the Second World War. Their construction technique also reflects materials of the period, although the style of the roof trusses harks back to the earlier wartime period. The buildings 46 and 38 originally contained both offices and garages/workshops and in building 38 this dual use remains in use today. The fittings within buildings 46 and 38 also reflect the change in health and safety requirements and practices of the late 20th and early 21st century.

Appendix 1: Photographic Registers

The full photographic catalogue (colour digital) is listed below. Identical views were taken in black and white format.

EXETER ARCHAEOLOGY		PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER: DIGITAL	
Site name: Norton Manor Camp, buildings 38, 39 and 46		Date: 1 December 2008	Project no: 6723
No.	Description	View to	
	<i>Building 46</i>		
1	North elevation. 1m scale.	Southeast	
2	East elevation – general view. 1m scale.	South	
3	East elevation – north end. 1m scale.	Southwest	
4	East elevation – middle section. 1m scale.	Southwest	
5	East elevation – middle section. 1m scale.	Southwest	
6	East elevation – south end. 1m scale.	South	
7	East elevation – south end. 1m scale.	Southwest	
8	South elevation. 1m scale.	Northwest	
9	South and east elevations. 1m scale.	West	
10	South and west elevations. 1m scale.	North	
11	West elevation – south end showing storage cage. 1m scale.	Northeast	
12	West elevation – battery store. 1m scale.	Northeast	
13	West elevation middle section showing oil store. 1m scale.	Northeast	
14	West elevation – interior of oil store showing signs.	East	
15	West elevation – north end. 1m scale.	Northeast	
16	West elevation – north end. 1m scale.	Northeast	
17	West elevation – north end. 1m scale.	Northeast	
18	West elevation – north end. 1m scale.	Northeast	
19	Kitchen. 1m scale.	Southeast	
20	Kitchen viewed from inside of shed. 1m scale.	West	
21	North internal elevation showing electricity junction boxes. 1m scale.	Northwest	
22	East elevation – vehicle door. 1m scale.	Northeast	
23	East elevation – vehicle door. 1m scale.	Northeast	
24	East elevation – vehicle door. 1m scale.	Northeast	
25	Vehicle inspection pit. 1m scale.	Northwest	
26	Roof trusses.	Northwest	
27	Vehicle exhaust vent system. 1m scale.	Southeast	
28	Vent and heater.	Southeast	
29	Sanitary washing area and battery charging room. 1m scale.	South	
30	Interior of battery charging room.	South	
31	Folding machine and vehicle bay markings. 1m scale.	Northeast	
32	Metalsmith's workshop. 1m scale.	Southeast	
33	Offices. 1m scale.	Southwest	
34	Stores. 1m scale.	Northeast	
35	Stores. 1m scale.	Southeast	
36	General interior view.	Northwest	
	<i>Building 38</i>		
37	North elevation. 1m scale.	East	
38	West elevation – north end. 1m scale.	Northeast	
39	West elevation – middle section. 1m scale.	East	
40	West elevation – south end. 1m scale.	Northeast	
41	South elevation. 1m scale.	North	
42	South and west elevations. 1m scale.	Northwest	
	<i>Building 39</i>		
43	West elevation. 1m scale.	Northeast	
44	North elevation – west end showing scar of removed building. 1m scale.	Southeast	

EXETER ARCHAEOLOGY		PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER: DIGITAL	
Site name: Norton Manor Camp, buildings 38, 39 and 46		Date: 1 December 2008	Project no: 6723
No.	Description	View to	
45	North elevation – middle section.	East	
46	East elevation. 1m scale.	Southwest	
47	South elevation – east end. 1m scale.	Northwest	
48	South elevation – middle section. 1m scale.	West	
49	South elevation – west end. 1m scale.	Northwest	
	Building 38		
50	Interior showing store and maintenance area.	Northwest	
51	Offices.	Southeast	
52	Offices.	Northeast	
53	Sanitary washing area.	South	
54	Fire extinguisher point.	West	
55	Light.	Northwest	
56	Recreation area.	North	
57	West garage.	Northeast	
58	West garage.	Northeast	
59	West garage.	Northeast	
	Building 39		
60	East elevation	Southwest	



Plate 1 Interior view of building 46, looking north-west, showing double span plan and roof truss arrangement.



Plate 2 View of the roof trusses in building 46, looking north-west.



Plate 3 South end of the east elevation of building 46 showing windows and sliding doors, looking south. 1m scale.



Plate 4 South end of the west elevation of building 38, looking north-east, showing windows. 1m scale.



Plate 5 Interior of building 46 looking south-east, showing vehicle exhaust vent system, with the rear of a sliding door and the metalsmith's shop in the background. 1m scale.



Plate 6 Interior of building 46 looking south, showing sanitary areas, battery charging room and offices in the background. 1m scale.

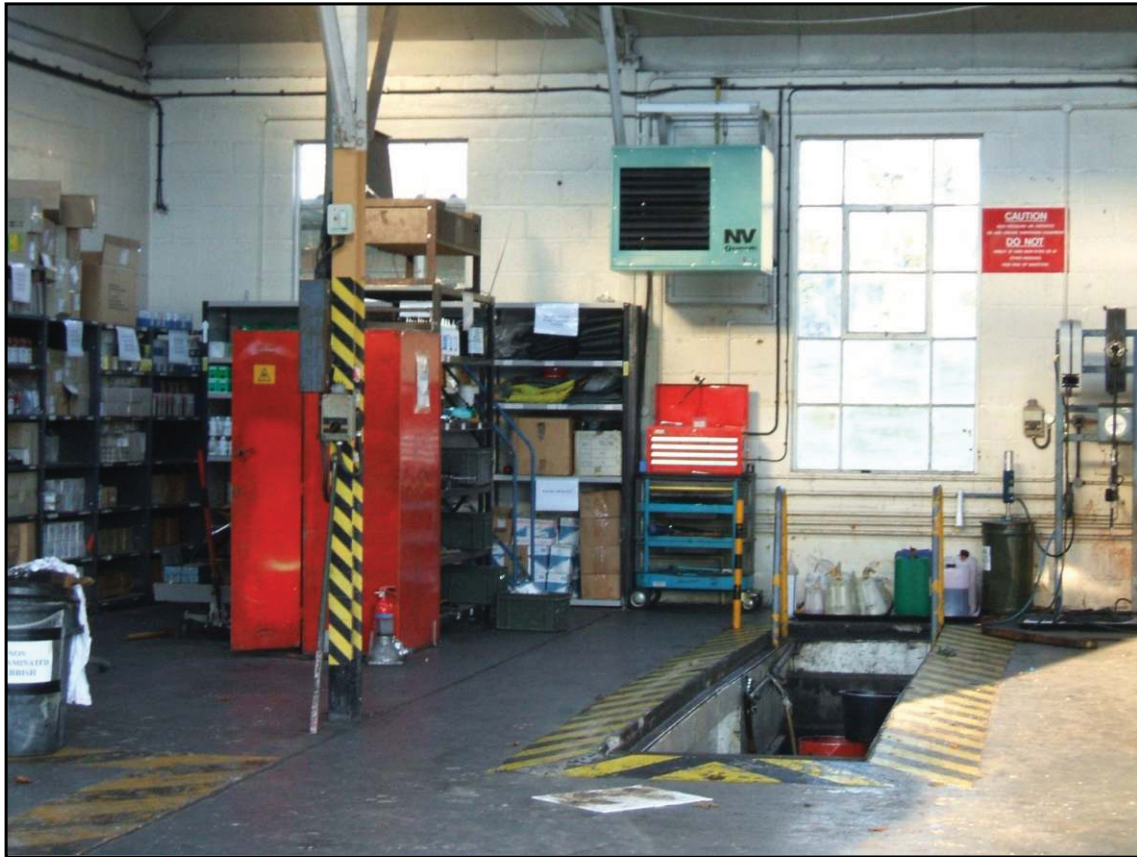


Plate 7 Building 38, west garage looking north-east.



Plate 8 Middle part of the south elevation of building 39 looking west, showing altered opening and masonry. 1m scale.