

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Dunkeswell, East Devon	National Grid Reference ST 1289 0777	Number:
Subject: Archaeological recording of a WWII Personnel Shelter		Photo attached Yes
Planning Application no: 07/3417/FUL	Recipient museum: RAMM, Exeter	
OASIS ID: 40401	Museum Accession no: 158/2008	
Contractor's reference number/code: EA6445	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 26 March 2008	
<p>Description of works A record of a WWII personnel shelter was made prior to its demolition and the construction of a new aircraft hanger at Dunkeswell Airfield, Devon (Fig. 1).</p> <p>The brick shelter had been surrounded (but not covered) by an earthen blast mound (Plate 1), although this had been removed prior to the survey. Measurements taken on the ground of its approximate extent correspond with that depicted on modern Ordnance Survey mapping. The mound had been approximately 2.50m wide on the east, west and south sides, but only 1.10m wide on the north side. The mound had been formed from local stiff mottled yellow clay with flint, with a thin covering of topsoil supporting vegetation.</p> <p>The main brick-built structure was broadly rectangular and measured a maximum of 6.60m long, 4.45m wide and 1.50m high (Fig. 2). The entrance was at the north end (facing away from nearby dispersed hard standings) and was flanked by sloped masonry on the sides of the shelter. The entrance gave access to a 5.50m long corridor, which in turn led into two rectangular chambers, 2.65m long by 1.45m and 1.60m wide.</p> <p>The shelter was constructed of unmarked frogged coarse red bricks laid in English Bond, and bonded with cement (Plate 2). The upper course was set on edge. The shelter was constructed on a 0.15m thick concrete plinth. This plinth was not reinforced, and did not extend beyond the extent of the walls. There was no surviving roof, and there was no evidence (in the form of attachments on top of the walls or of fittings within the building) to indicate that the shelter had a roof. (A loose piece of reinforced concrete present on top of the shelter prior to its clearance was not thought into be <i>in situ</i>.)</p> <p>Internally, there were no fixtures or fittings such as benches. There were traces of green and yellow paint in one of the chambers and in the corridor respectively, but neither represents original decoration.</p> <p>Conclusion The structure had been a small personnel shelter, one of two shelters associated with a group of five dispersed hard standings on the western side of the airfield. The shelter was not fully enclosed – which is a common variant – and would have provided protection from strafing runs and light explosions.</p>		
Recorder: Andrew Passmore, Exeter Archaeology		Date sent to HER: 9 April 2008