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**THE OLD PARADE GROUND (STAND-BY SET HOUSE),
NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD,
NORTH WEALD, ESSEX**

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

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NGR: TL 49265 03884	Report No. 3456
District: Epping Forest	Site Code: NWBPG 09
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 2779
Signed:	Date: December 2009

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Project name	<i>The Old Parade Ground (Stand-by Set House), North Weald Airfield, North Weald, Essex. Historic Building Recording</i>		
<i>Summary</i>			
<i>In December 2009 Archaeological Solutions Ltd. undertook a programme of historic building recording on the Stand by Set House at the Old Parade Ground, North Weald Airfield, North Weald, Essex (TL 49265 03884). The work was carried out as part of a planning condition attached to the approval to construct 126 apartments and houses and associated infrastructure.</i>			
<i>The building was constructed during the inter-war period, as a back-up power station in case the main power supply to the airfield was destroyed or incapacitated. At a later date, during the Cold War period, the building was heavily remodelled, being given several additional features. Several years of redundancy and neglect have left the structure in poor condition. Almost none of the original plant survives, apart from a few ephemeral fixtures and fittings.</i>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>9th November & 4th December 2009</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>
P. number	<i>2779</i>	Site code	<i>NWBPG 09</i>
Type of project	<i>Historic building recording and detailed desk-based study</i>		
Site status	<i>Site of historical significance</i>		
Current land use	<i>Derelict WWII structures</i>		
Planned development	<i>Apartments, houses and associated infrastructure</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Stand by Set House</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Epping Forest</i>	<i>North Weald Bassett</i>
HER for area	<i>Essex County Council Historic Environment Management Team</i>		
Post code (if known)			
Area of site			
NGR	<i>TL 49265 03884</i>		
Height AOD (max)	<i>c.89mAOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Adam Garwood (HEM)</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Lisa Smith</i>		
Funded by	<i>Crest Nicholson Eastern</i>		
Full title	<i>The Old Parade Ground (Stand by Set House), North Weald Airfield, North Weald, Essex. Historic Building Recording</i>		
Authors	<i>Smith, L. Prosser, L.</i>		
Report no.	<i>3456</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>Dec 2009</i>		

THE OLD PARADE GROUND (STAND-BY SET HOUSE), NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD, NORTH WEALD, ESSEX

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

SUMMARY

In December 2009 Archaeological Solutions Ltd. undertook a programme of historic building recording on the Stand by Set House at the Old Parade Ground, North Weald Airfield, North Weald, Essex (TL 49265 03884). The work was carried out as part of a planning condition attached to the approval to construct 126 apartments and houses and associated infrastructure.

The building was constructed during the inter-war period, as a back-up power station in case the main power supply to the airfield was destroyed or incapacitated. At a later date, during the Cold War period, the building was heavily remodelled, being given several additional features. Several years of redundancy and neglect have left the structure in poor condition. Almost none of the original plant survives, apart from a few ephemeral fixtures and fittings.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In December 2009 Archaeological Solutions Ltd. undertook a programme of historic building recording on the Stand by Set House at the Old Parade Ground, North Weald Airfield, North Weald, Essex (TL 49265 03884) (Figs 1 & 2). The work was carried for Crest Nicholson Eastern Ltd out as part of a planning condition attached to the approval to construct 126 apartments and houses and associated infrastructure (EPR/0081/09 and EPR/0291/09). It is proposed to demolish the structure.

1.2 The relevant planning policies which apply to the effect of development with regard to cultural heritage are Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 '*Planning and the Historic Environment*' (PPG15) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 '*Archaeology and Planning*' (PPG16) (issued by the former Department of the Environment). PPG15 (1994) is the national guidance which applies to the conservation of the historic environment by protecting the character and appearance of conservation areas and protecting listed buildings (of architectural or historical interest) from demolition and unsympathetic change and safeguarding their settings as far as is possible. This condition is also widely applied by local authorities.

1.3 The project was conducted in accordance with a brief issued by Essex County Council Historic Environment Management Team (HEM: Adam Garwood, dated October 2009) and a specification prepared by AS (dated 26th November 2009). The building recording was carried out to Level 3 as defined in the English Heritage document '*Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*',

2006 and the Royal Commission's '*Recording Historic Buildings: A descriptive specification*' RCHME (3rd edition), 1996. It was also carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' (IFA) '*Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures*' (revised 2001). The relevant sections of *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Paper 14/ALGAO (Gurney 2003) and the IFA '*Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments*' (revised 2001) were also followed.

1.4 The objectives of the historic building recording were, as set out in the brief and the English Heritage guidance documents:

- to compile a comprehensive and high quality record of the buildings proposed for conversion, and original features/equipment to be altered or removed, with analysis and interpretation of that structure in conjunction with an associated documentary survey;
- to provide a review of the local and regional historical context of the structures recorded by the project. These to be adequately detailed to place the findings of the archaeological recording in context.
- to produce a high quality, fully integrated archive suitable for long-term deposition in order to 'preserve by record' the buildings in their current form prior to alteration.

1.5 The brief and specification allowed for further observation works during the development phase if these were felt to be justified. However, all elements of the building were visible for analysis and it was not considered that additional works would give any substantial further insight.

1.6 The brief also required a detailed desk-based assessment of the remainder of the proposed development site, to include the recently-demolished Operations Block, Sick Quarters and Ambulance Block. This will be carried out by military historian Fred Nash, and presented as a subsequent report.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE (Fig 2)

2.1 North Weald Airfield was one of the crucial strategic centres of co-ordination for operations during the Battle of Britain in 1940. Established as part of a defensive ring in the countryside around London in the First World War, the base lost much of its importance in the 1950s and '60s, before finally being decommissioned in 1964, after which it was effectively abandoned. The stand-by set house formerly lay in strategic isolation at the edge of an extensive complex of military buildings, which included permanent structures and more ephemeral Nissen huts and temporary barracks based loosely on a large, open parade ground. Over time many of the buildings simply disappeared, while suburban development transformed the immediate area in the late 1960s and 1970s. The Operations Block, Sick Quarters Annex and Ambulance Block were still present in the early 2000s, but demolished in recent years. Ultimately the set house became one component in a terrace of modern housing, and at the time of the survey was the last complete building from the military complex to survive.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Detailed Desk-Based Study

3.1.1 A detailed desk-based study was undertaken by Fred Nash of Essex County Council and is included as Appendix 1 of this report.

3.2 The building

3.2.1 A brief, preliminary site visit was conducted on 9th November 2009 to assess the building. A second visit was made in order to undertake the technical analysis and undertake the drawing and photographic work. Lisa Smith and Lee Prosser compiled the written descriptions and carried out the photographic recording and Kathren Henry completed the drawing work. Floor plans, sections and elevation are included with annotations (Fig. 3).

3.2.2 The photographic recording was conducted using medium format (4.5 x 6cm) black and white film and included all external views and general internal shots. This utilised a Zenza Bronica ETRS camera and Ilford HP5 IOS 400 120mm film. Colour photographs were taken using a Canon 1000D (10 megapixels) digital camera, duplicating the black and white photography. Architectural detail was captured using 35mm black and white film. Supplementary colour photography used 35mm Ektachrome colour transparency film. External lighting and weather conditions were good at the time of the survey. A scale was used wherever possible, and a flash was employed for internal shots. A pictorial index of the digital photography and selected colour plates are included below together with location plots (Fig. 3).

4 THE BUILDING (Stand-by Set House) (Figs. 2 & 3)

Exterior

4.1 From the exterior, the Stand-by Set House appears as an anonymous, utilitarian structure of red brick with few features, much colonised by vegetation and characterised by neglect and vandalism (Plate 1). However, closer inspection reveals subtlety in architectural and material detailing and some sophistication in its layout. The brick is of fine quality while a central block with a low-pitched slate roof seems to rise from inside the high perimeter wall.

4.2 The building is constructed of hand-made red-orange bricks with straight skintles, laid in Flemish bond with some decorative chequer-work visible in certain places, all characterised by precise pointing. Some structural failure has been caused by the growth of woody shrubs on flat roofs which have dislodged the brickwork in places, while the south-east corner is supported by large iron straps from ground to parapet level. The east and south facades are fairly plain; the south, facing the road adorned only by a shallow stepped parapet which gives the façade some slight articulation, and a small adjoining enclosure fenced with high steel railings to protect a switch box. Access is given from a baffle and blast wall on the

west, while a pair of double doors on the north side allowed the installation of the plant, though these are now rendered redundant by internal blocking with concrete bricks. The surviving doors are vertically-boarded with strap hinges stamped 'Charles Collinge, Lambeth' (Plate 2). Adjacent to the east, a full-height aperture has been partially weather-boarded at its upper extent. Where it has pierced the original fabric, the construction make-up is exposed, showing a wide internal cavity, filled with gravelly ballast as would be expected.

Interior

4.3 The layout is fairly simple with a central, roofed block flanked to the east and west by narrow yards: that to the east formerly held a fuel tank, while the west yard is open to the baffle entry and presumably provided additional blast protection for the generator house. The internal space is now open-plan, but divided into three distinct areas; an engine room, a switch-gear chamber and transformer chamber.

The engine room

4.4 A large central chamber dominates the internal space and would have housed 3 or 4 Lister generators (Fred Nash *pers. comm.*) (Plate 3). The inner face of the walls rise to c. 1.35m in glazed bricks. Where fractured these appear to be yellow gault-clay, wire-cut bricks, probably from the Arlesey brick-fields, but the upper areas consist of a pale, grey/white fabric, probably of Fletton-type shales, which is granular. The roof is hipped and constructed of softwood rafter-couples clasping a ridge-board, though this is only visible through apertures in an asbestos-boarded ceiling (Plate 4).

4.5 The area is floored in ceramic tiles with a series of iron-framed ducts and low concrete pads indicating the position of machinery and routes of cabling or pipework. All were probably enclosed with a metal grille, now absent. All traces of the original engines have been removed and disturbance in the floor surface has rendered their arrangement uncertain. The only remaining plant is an electronic transformer case constructed from galvanised steel made by Ferguson Pailin Co., possibly dating from the 1950s and no longer in its original position.

4.6 Large apertures supported by concrete lintels frame the north and south walls of the engine room as shallow apses, and additionally support a large lateral steel girder manufactured by 'Dorman Long & Co' of Middlesbrough. This continues to the outer wall where it terminates above the lintel for the double doors. It would have functioned as a crane system for moving machinery within the building.

4.7 Two high-set louvred apertures flank the girder on the south, while a third existed on the north, but is now blocked. A larger window set high in the western wall faces into the small protective yard; it is blocked with breeze blocks. The western doorway has also been partially blocked. The original door survives *ex situ*, it too is vertically boarded, in keeping with the double doors noted above.

The switch gear chamber

4.8 The shallow concrete-roofed apse to the south housed the switching gear which remains *in situ* within iron fuse-boxes on the east and west walls. Although in poor condition, ceramic fuse holders and lengths of cabling supplied by the Enfield Cable Co. survive (Plate 5). Two bulkhead lights are mounted on the south wall; elsewhere pendant lighting was once present but now removed. Residual fixtures and fittings can be seen throughout the building including electric cables, pipes and safety signs, but these now allow for no meaningful interpretation or appear as later additions.

The transformer chamber

4.9 A small chamber in the north-east corner of the complex may have housed the transformer. Remains of a collapsed and partially-burned timber screen may have formed a timber partition from the main generators, but this can not be ascertained with certainty. To the north ventilation was once provided by a large weatherboarded aperture, now blocked but expressed on the exterior as noted above. To the south, a low circular aperture and doorway led to the fuel yard adjacent (Plate 6). The door was latterly blocked, but subsequent partial unblocking allows access.

4.10 Substantial modification is evident in the area. The upper walls have clearly been raised by 14 courses in pink Flettons, while the south wall appears to have been constructed at the same time. The lower, earlier walling corresponds with the height of the external yards, suggesting that the chamber has been taken in from the yard at some point.

Fuel storage area

4.11 The fuel storage area once supported a large tank on a concrete base to the south (Plate 7). This has entirely disappeared, though some pipes and a stop-cock remain. A vertical steel ladder on the east (Plate 8) once gave access to the roof where a small brick shelter survives, though this is now truncated and the roof is no longer safely accessible.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 The stand-by set house is now a pale shadow of its former self, having been stripped of any useful salvage and latterly used for anti-social activities and as an occasional shelter. Despite prolonged neglect, it remains generally sound. When constructed it was a simple, utilitarian building which was not meant to be noticed, and has remained anonymous to the present day. In design and layout it was constructed with great care and logic to the task in hand, with protective blast walls of immense thickness, filled with insulating ballast for near misses. It appears that the building was not constructed in haste. The quality of construction is very high, and care was taken even to distribute a few darker bricks in chequer-work on the façade to achieve a homogenous appearance.

5.2 Some alteration is discernible, presumably for upgrading or re-deployment. All of the upper walls were raised prior to the outbreak of World War II although the building maintained its original plan form. During later years the east yard was taken in for a transformer, and also the large double doors at the north end inserted, as these compromise the general defensive nature of the building and do not have queen closers, suggesting insertion. A little shelter on the roof was also added later.

6 OTHER STRUCTURAL REMAINS

6.1 As the remaining buildings of the base are rapidly succumbing to destruction, a brief observation was made of the surviving elements, which comprise the operations block, sick-quarters annex and ambulance garage. The former parade ground had been grubbed up by the time of the visit, but a few of its original perimeter slabs remained. The majority of the operations block, which was once a sleek, low and partly subterranean building had already been removed with almost surgical thoroughness, leaving only a small section of outer wall, electric chamber and a steel door leading to a truncated stair case. It was constructed of London brick with a reinforced concrete roof. In its original form the entire structure would have been surrounded by earthen banks, a short fragment of which remained. Other traces of standing walls were visible though none were intelligible.

6.2 About half of the sick-quarters annex remained. The outer walls were very thick, constructed of salmon-pink Flettons capped with an immense reinforced concrete slab roof in a sandwich enclosing a metre of gravel, and retained by a concealed shuttered parapet above the slab. The whole arrangement was roofed a second time with a 0.20m concrete slab and layer of asphalt. Evidence of an asphalt lining on the exterior walls suggests that this building was also surrounded by an earthen bank. The building was accessed via a short external passage remaining *in situ* with Crittall type casement windows in timber surrounds. Nothing remains of the ambulance garage except a collapsed slate roof, buried in the undergrowth.

DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

The requirements for archive storage will be agreed with Epping Museum. The archive will be deposited within six months of the conclusion of the fieldwork. The archive will be prepared in accordance with the UK Institute for Conservation's *Conservation Guideline No. 2* and other relevant reference documents. The archive will be adequately catalogued, labelled and packaged for transfer and storage in accordance with the guidelines set out in the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation's *Conservation Guideline No. 2* and the other relevant reference documents. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Crest Nicholson Eastern Ltd for commissioning and funding the project (in particular Messrs Matt Parsons and Mel Taylor for their kind assistance).

AS is also grateful to Mr Fred Nash of Essex County Council for his advice and support.

AS would like to acknowledge the input and advice of Mr Adam Garwood of ECC HEM team

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APPENDIX 1

**DETAILED DESK-BASED STUDY OF WARTIME BUILDINGS
AT THE OLD PARADE GROUND, NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD,
ESSEX**



The Battle of Britain Operations Block at North Weald airfield, as it appeared in September 2002.

**Fred Nash
Historic Environment Branch
Essex County Council
February 2010**

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INTRODUCTION

In October 2009, a brief was prepared by the Historic Environment Management Team (HEM) of Essex County Council for a programme of archaeological survey in advance of the construction of 126 two, three and four bedroom apartments and houses with associated roads, parking, ancillary buildings and landscaping on and adjacent to the site of the former Parade Ground, North Weald Airfield, North Weald.

In response to this, on 22 October 2009, a written scheme of investigation was prepared by Archaeological Solutions providing, as required by the brief, for a detailed record of the extant Stand-by Set House and a desk-based study of the recently demolished Operations Block, Sick Quarters Annex and Ambulance Garage.

The desk-based study was undertaken by Fred Nash, Military Archaeologist, in January/February 2010 and this report was presented to Archaeological Solutions at the end of February 2010.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It was in August 1916 that an airfield was first established at North Weald Bassett. Two years after the commencement of hostilities, attacks from Zeppelins had been growing and a number of landing grounds for the aircraft of the Royal Flying Corps were being built to defend the approaches to the capital. The site at North Weald Bassett was laid out on former farmland with the major part of this development north and south of the Epping to Ongar road. In this early construction period a total of 45 buildings were erected.

The value of the airfield was proved when, some weeks later, 2nd Lieut. Wulstan Tempest, in his B.E.2c. shot down Navy Zeppelin L31 over Potters Bar. From September 1917, 'B' and 'C' Flights of No 39 (HD) Squadron and, from June 1918, 'A' Flight of No 75 Squadron were stationed there. Operational flying ended with the Armistice in November 1918 and the following year the airfield closed down.

Plans to reconstruct it as a base for two fighter squadrons were mooted several years later. With the regrowth of militarism in Germany, work began in 1926 and in 1927 RAF North Weald, as it was now designated, was reopened. Now, the accommodation and other facilities had been greatly developed, particularly in the area north of the Epping to Ongar road. With two new 'A' Type hangars replacing the WWI sheds, over 70 buildings were grouped in the south-east corner of the site.

In October 1927, the first of the airfield's two fighter squadrons arrived, No. 56 flying Siskin 111A's from Biggin Hill. This was joined six months later by No. 29 Squadron, with similar aircraft, from Duxford. By 1928 North Weald had become part of the Fighting Area, one of nine airfields forming a defensive ring around London.

The RAF's expansion programme of the mid-1930's saw the next major phase of growth. A site plan for 1935 shows around a hundred buildings and other structures either built or at the planning stage. By the outbreak of war in September 1939 the site occupied 400 acres between Weald Hall Lane, Church Lane and the Epping to Ongar road. There were two permanent runways, one 933 yards long and the other 923 yards.

The two 'A' Type hangars had been augmented by eight Blister hangars. Such was the importance of RAF North Weald that it had become a Sector Station within 11 Group.

Its two resident squadrons were by now Nos. 56 and 151, both equipped with Hurricanes, squadrons which were to become synonymous with the chronicles of North Weald. During the Battle of Britain the initial targets of the Luftwaffe were Britain's airfields. On 24 August 1940 nearly 200 bombs were dropped on North

Weald, damaging many buildings. Ten days later, on 3 September, a force of 30 Dorniers arrived to continue the destruction. Over 200 bombs fell on the hangars, the living quarters, the technical buildings and stores. Few buildings escaped some damage. On 29 October more bombs were dropped. This time the guard room was virtually destroyed.

North Weald's airmen were in the thick of the fighting during the Battle of Britain and throughout the Second World War, its pilots coming not only from Britain but from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Canada, the United States and New Zealand. In defence of Britain and in operations over the Continent, North Weald's aircrews could claim over 500 enemy aircraft destroyed.

After D-Day, 6 June 1944, operations gradually slowed down and in early 1945 they ceased completely. At the end of the war there followed a period of uncertainty for the airfield. For a brief while it was part of No. 46 Group, Transport Command. From 1945 to 1948 it became No. 9 Personnel Despatch Centre. In 1949, with the looming threats of the Cold War, the airfield once again became a fighter station with jet Vampires, Meteors and, in 1953, with Hawker Hunters. Thereafter, various reserve flights were based there before, in 1958, the last squadron left and the station was downgraded to a 'care and maintenance' status. In September 1964 the former World War One and World War Two fighter airfield, RAF North Weald, finally closed.



2009: The 'gate guardian', North Weald.

THE TECHNICAL SITE

Airfields built or developed before the outbreak of World War Two followed a policy of 'compact' grouping in the layout of what are broadly classed as 'technical' buildings. These include the station headquarters, guardroom, operations block, stores, workshops, motor transport area etc. This policy could be clearly seen at pre-war North Weald where the great majority of these buildings were tightly grouped together in the SE corner of the airfield. Here, the concentration of buildings included the Operations Block, the Sick Quarters and its Annex, the Ambulance Garage and the Stand-by Set House.

This policy underwent something of a reversal once the bombing of airfields started. Airfields now followed a policy of dispersal, with living accommodation, communal facilities, recreation and many of the technical buildings now being relocated to dispersed sites within a mile or two of the main airfield complex. At North Weald, when the Operations Block received a direct hit in the 3 September 1940 air raid, the operations function was moved to Marden Ash, Ongar, although the North Weald building had in fact survived.

A 1948 site plan of North Weald includes not only the airfield but all of these Dispersed Sites. The operations facility was by now at Blake Hall but on the plan the original building is still labelled 'Operations Block' (Building No. 94). The Sick Quarters is shown at a Dispersed Site to the west of the airfield although, again, the Sick Quarters building (No. 38) and its connected Annex (No. 97) are also shown on the airfield. The Ambulance Garage is not detailed within the Sick Quarters Dispersed Site but is on the airfield (No. 73). The Stand-by Set House (No. 74) appears not to have been relocated.

During the course of research for this study, a number of plans have been acquired showing the technical site in various stages of its development. These are dated 1924, 1925, 1928, 1934, 1935, 1937 and 1948. The plans are included herewith.

OPERATIONS BLOCK (NGR TL 4932 0401)

During the lifetime of the airfield there were, in fact, four locations from where the control of operational flying was carried out. The first was built around 1926 and stood as a single-storey building to the north-west (NGR TL 4917 0393) of the parade ground, which was laid down around the same time. This date is reasonably reliable as the building does not appear on a site plan of 1924 (RAF Museum, Hendon, 1469/24), but is first referred to in an Air Ministry letter to the Treasury dated 16 October 1924 (National Archives File T161/1016). This lays out a new proposal for an establishment of 41 officers, 211 airmen and 60 civilians at North Weald, with a range of new buildings including an 'Operations Block' at £3,300. This initial period of reconstruction of the airfield started in 1926 (Action Stations 8, Military Airfields of Greater London, Halpenny, B.B., 1993) and this, the

first Operations Block, makes its appearance on a Site Plan dated 1927 (RAF Museum, Hendon, 1155/27) as Building No. 30.

Thereafter it is shown on Site Plans dated 1928, 1934, 1935 and 1937. During the Second World War, it was 'hit and partly destroyed' in the bombing raid of 3 September 1940 (Battle of Britain: then and now, Ramsey, W.G. ed, 1985), although by this time the operational facility had been transferred to a 'new' Operations Block (the second). Despite the bombing, the first continued to appear on Site Plans, 1948, and was photographed around 1979 'often used by ATC cadets on weekend camps' (Ramsey, p169). It was finally demolished in the 1980's.

The second Operations Block, the subject of this study, must have been built between 1937 and 1940. The building drawing for this type of Operations Block was not compiled until 1937 (RAF Museum, Hendon, Dwg. No. 5000/37). A proposal from the Air Ministry to the Treasury dated 24 May 1939 refers to 'alterations to Operations Block (additional provision)'. This almost certainly refers to additional facilities, the basic structure and cost having already been approved but not necessarily built. On 3 September 1940, this new block 'took a direct hit on the roof and survived' (Ramsey, p168). To narrow the dating down, it appears probable that this new block was built in 1939/1940.



2002: As extra protection, earth was piled up all round the thick walls of the Operations Block and then grassed over. The entrance came in through the embankment.

The function of the wartime Operations Block at North Weald would have been not only to control the squadrons of fighters directly under its command but also, as a Sector Station, those at its satellite stations. The group operations room to which North Weald reported would receive a wide range of information from radar sites, the Royal Observer Corps, balloon depots and Fighter Command filter rooms. Information was displayed on the map table, overseen and analysed from the balcony. Details of the plots were passed down to Sector Stations which had identical maps. Here, the 'Tote' board displayed with coloured lights 'which squadrons were available, which were available in 30 minutes, which were in readiness (5 minutes) or at cockpit readiness (2 minutes) and which were in the air' (Fighter, Deighton, L, 1977).

The building drawing shows a substantial construction with a thick cavity roof filled with sand and shingle as a bomb proofing measure. Wide soil banking around the structure, known as a traverse, protected it against near misses. Inside, was the main Operations Room encircled by the Receiving Room, the Plotting Room, Meteorological Office, Searchlight Room, Teleprinter Chamber and a variety of ancillary rooms.



2002: The roof of the Operations Block, converted to an Emergency Planning Centre in 1989. Note the air intake/filtration unit on the left.

After the 3 September 1940 air raid in which 'over 200 bombs, some delayed-action, landed squarely in the aerodrome' (Ramsey, p168), the Operations function was moved to Marden Ash, near Ongar. This was just two days after the air raid. It is not

known how much damage the block had suffered. It may be that the move, after two air raids in just three days, reflected the urgent need to disperse the important functions rather than the actual extent of the damage to the Operations Block.

Operations remained at Marden Ash, behind the Drill Hall, for two-and-a-half years until the final move to Blake Hall, near Bobbingworth, heralded the fourth location for North Weald's Operations facilities. Here, one wing of the great house was gutted, removing ceilings and ripping out rooms to provide the size that the Operations Room, with its overlooking balcony, required. The operations centre stayed at Blake Hall until the end of the war (Ramsey, pp 168-171).

In the meantime, the second Operations Block, on the Technical Site at the aerodrome, continued to survive, notwithstanding having been bombed. It no doubt had a change of role although, in 1948, it was still being described as 'Building No. 94, Operations Block' on the post-war Site Plan. In 1964 the airfield closed down and around 1979 After the Battle visited the site, describing the wartime Operations Block as still bearing the evidence of the direct hit. An accompanying photograph taken at ground level facing the south-east corner of the structure shows a clear change of brickwork around the top half, indicating that some of the side-walling had been replaced (Ramsey, p169). During the course of this present study over 200 aerial photographs have been examined. These date from 1942 onwards. The early photographs, taken vertically, show no obvious damage to the roof and it is therefore assumed that the work to repair the building was done within the two years after the 3 September 1940 air raid, probably including a new roof and replacement of some of the side walling. Thereafter, the image remains the same, the flat roof appearing undamaged.

In 1979, Epping Forest District Council purchased the airfield from the Ministry of Defence. In 1989, the wartime Operations Block was granted a new and different lease of life when it was renovated and converted into an Emergency Planning Centre. A filtration plant was installed and there were extensive modifications internally (North Weald Aviation Heritage, Moreton A). Externally, much of the roof is thought to have been renewed.

Visited in January 2000, members of a research study group, Subterranea Britannica, reported that 'The control room has been little altered from WW2 days retaining its balcony with railings and a sunken well'. Other sections of the interior are described in detail, with a photograph. Clearly, the condition was reasonable at that time. The report concludes 'The Emergency Centre is still functioning although only occasionally used for exercises.' (www.subbrit.org.uk)

In September 2002, on behalf of the Historic Environment Branch of Essex County Council, the author of this report visited the remains of the Technical Site, taking external photographs of the Operations Block, the Sick Quarters Annex, Ambulance Garage, Stand-by Set House and parade ground. There was no internal access to

the buildings. Copies of these photographs are included herewith. Externally the Operations Block was in good condition. The subsequent site assessment, on the Sites and Monuments Record, now the Essex Historic Environment Record, advised that 'North Weald Airfield is an historic Battle of Britain fighter station..... The Operations Block, Ambulance Garage and Sick Quarters Annex all stand in a separate dacoit-fenced area. This area, within the fencing, should be protected by all means possible, ultimately to Scheduled Monument status' (SMR 10119). The Operations Block was demolished in December 2007 (Subbrit).

SICK QUARTERS ANNEX (NGR TL 4937 0396)

The first proposal to build a Sick Quarters (not the Annex) comes in a letter from the Air Ministry to the Treasury dated 20 February 1923. Among other construction proposals, the building of a Sick Quarters is estimated at £5,000 (National Archives, File T161/1016). Although agreed by the Treasury on 12 May 1923, a revised proposal, dated 16 October 1924, now quotes a building cost of £4,400, the total for a complete building programme encompassing wide ranging expansion of the airfield buildings costing £243,000. The Sick Quarters first appears complete on site plans in 1927 (NGR TL 4935 0395) as Building No. 38 (RAF Museum, Hendon, 1155/27), reappearing on subsequent site plans.

The first mention of a 'Gas Defence Centre, Decontamination Block and Sick Quarters Annex' is on an Air Ministry proposal on 24 May 1939 at a cost of £9,850. This annex was not simply an addition to the Sick Quarters but was specifically a cleansing and treatment area – decontamination – for personnel who had been gassed. Following the experiences of the First World War this would have appeared to be a sensible precaution despite the banning of gas in warfare under the Geneva Gas Protocol of 1925, which had been signed by both Britain and Germany (British Military Airfield Architecture, Francis, P 1996).



2002: The north entrance to the Sick Quarters Annex, or Decontamination Centre, protected by concrete and earth traverses.

It was probably constructed in late 1939/early 1940 and was a large building, around 100 feet long and 30 feet wide, protected by an all-round embankment of heaped earth. The main entrance, at the north end, was shielded by a high traverse of concrete and earth. The building was connected, at the south-west corner, to the Sick Quarters via a covered walkway/corridor. Gassed personnel entered into the Undressing Room, taking off their contaminated clothing for boiling in large, copper boilers. There was a toilet and separate storeroom for valuables. Passing through an airlock they entered into the Bleaching Room, the main cleansing area. Here, there were showers and sinks, a bleach store which was used in the treatment of mustard gas, and towels. Finally, the Waiting Room contained clean clothes and, for the injured, stretcher racks. The building drawing, No. 5384/39, clearly shows each of these functions with the various cupboards, cubicles and stores individually labelled. A copy is enclosed with this report (RAF Museum, Hendon, 5384/39).

A letter from the Air Ministry to the Treasury on 30 January 1941 (National Archives, File No. T161/1016) stated that damage had been sustained as a result of enemy action and proposed the re-siting of many of the airfield's buildings at Dispersed Sites. Among these were the Sick Quarters and its Annex, the Decontamination Centre.

A Site Plan dated 1948, three years after the end of the war, shows the complete layout of North Weald and its Dispersed Sites. The Sick Quarters building is shown as Building No. 38 and is labelled as such. The Annex is No. 97 and is labelled as

'Sick Qtrs. Annex'. To the west of the airfield, just south of Thornwood Common, is a Dispersed Site labelled 'Sick Qtrs. Site' with a number of buildings marked. Eight of these are identified, including sick quarters for airmen and WAAFs, but no decontamination centre. With urgency of treatment being an over-riding priority, it is highly probable that this function stayed at the airfield.



2009: The exit from the Site Quarters Annex, which led to a walkway/corridor to the main Sick Quarters building.

Thereafter, aerial photographs continue to show both the Sick Quarters and its annex until 1981 (ECC). In 1990, the Sick Quarters had gone leaving the Annex standing close to new development to its south and east.

In September 2002, the author photographed the building standing in dense thicket with only parts of its entrance and side wall visible. Copies of the photographs are enclosed herewith. Visited as part of this study on 4 December 2009, much of the area of the Technical Site had been cleared and the north end of the Sick Quarters Annex had been demolished.

AMBULANCE GARAGE (NGR TL 4935 0397)

A letter from the Air Ministry to the Treasury, dated 7 January 1935 makes the first mention of an Ambulance Garage at North Weald. The proposal includes £900 for a 'Guard House and accommodation for an ambulance' (National Archives, File No. T161/1016). A Site Plan, revised to 20 February 1935, shows the proposed layout of

new buildings and site 'I' immediately north of the Sick Quarters is outlined as the Ambulance Garage site (RAF Museum, Hendon, Drawing No. illegible). Two years later, a Site Plan corrected to 1 April 1937 (4830/37) shows the garage as Building No. 73.



2002: The brick walls and slate roof of the Ambulance Garage through the dense thicket of the Technical Site.

There are no details of the Ambulance Garage during the war. The eight buildings listed at the Sick Quarters Dispersed Site do not include such a building and it appears probable that Building No. 73 on the airfield continued to house the ambulance for potential casualties on the airfield. The 1948 Site Plan (2626/48) continues to show the Ambulance Garage noting that it was made of brick, to pattern 2752/34. In September 2002, it was photographed by the author, in dense thickness, as a small, brick building with a peaked grey slate roof. As part of this study, it was photographed by the author on 4 December 2009, now as a pile of brick rubble surmounted by the still-recognisable slate roof.

STAND-BY SET HOUSE (NGR TL 4938 0383)

The main power supply to the airfield came through the Power House. At North Weald, this was built in the mid-1920's, appearing as Building No. 21 on the 1927 Site Plan. Throughout wartime years and since, the building has continued to survive (NGR TL 4907 0379) and still stands, beside the main entrance.

In the event of failure through the Power House, essential services could still be provided with electricity through the Stand-by Set House. Automatic change-over gear in buildings vital to the operation of the airfield would switch the power to the stand-by circuit. These included the Operations Block, Control Tower and the airfield lighting.

A letter from the Air Ministry to the Treasury on 7 January 1935 proposes 'stand-by set accommodation and traverses' at a cost of £1,500 (National Archives, File No. T161/1016). Site plans revised to 20 February 1935 include the proposal for the Stand-by Set House, with the outline of the location where the building was eventually sited, shown as site 'L' (RAF Museum, Hendon, Drawing No. illegible). A Site Plan (4830/37) corrected to 1 April 1937 shows the Stand-by Set House erected, Building No. 74. The building must, therefore, have been built during the period mid 1935/early 1937. From the 1937 Site Plan it can be seen to have been built to a Type 974/35 pattern, confirmed on a 1948 Site Plan (2626/48).



2009: The doorway on the left was driven through the encompassing blast wall when it was absorbed into the central building. The addition of the flat-roofed tower was part of the redevelopment.

However, the building drawing for a Type 947/35 Stand-by Set House shows a very different design to that which was evident when visited in December 2009. Assuming it to have followed the Air Ministry drawings the original building was much simpler. It was constructed as a rectangular building 27'7" x 21'7", with

vertical brick walls 16'6" high surmounted by a pitched, slate roof. There was a single door in the west face, 6'4½" wide, with a louvred vent in the north face (and possibly in the south face). Inside there was, probably, a single diesel engine, with a switchboard position. Around this building was a 27" thick cavity blast wall filled with earth, standing 5'10' from the building. Curiously the drawing shows this wall as only 5'4½" high, although it was probably increased to full height at the beginning of the war once the bombing started. In the area between the building and the blast wall, there were other functions. Water cooling tanks filled much of the east area. Along this same side a large oil storage tank stood in a 7'6" deep pit. To the north was a 'Silencer Pit', presumably to deaden the noise of the engine. The only opening through the blast wall, known also as a traverse, was an entrance in the west wall facing the single doorway into the main chamber. Across the entrance in the traverse was another blast wall, 13'6" long.

It should be noted that the copy of this building drawing is very difficult to read and many of the measurements are unclear. Those quoted above are, therefore, based on best interpretation rather than absolute.



2009: Inside the expanded engine room a crane rail was installed. This allowed the heavy diesel engines to be lifted in and out through the new entrance.

Further clues into the development of the Stand-by Set House come from aerial photographs. It can be seen from 1942 and subsequent vertical images that the original design did indeed follow that above. The rectangular building, with its surrounding traverse and the above-ground water tank can be seen. However,

sometime between 1947 and 1960, probably in the Cold War development period of the early 1950's, the image changes, the building clearly heavily modified. Much of the surrounding area between the building and the traverse becomes incorporated into the main accommodation structure and flat roofing can be seen. This may have been done in order to increase the capacity from one stand-by engine to two, or even three, with increased oil and water storage facilities.

It appears from study of the original drawings, aerial photographs, the site visit in December 2009 and subsequent drawings, that the north side of the building was extended, with a flat roof, to cover the area between the building and the traverse. An entrance was opened in the traverse, now the north wall, to allow access. A full length RSJ allowed the engines, on a crane, to be lifted in and out. The cooling tanks were moved, possibly to the high flat-roofed tower built on the north-east corner. The oil storage tanks were moved to a tank at the south end of the east area. The south end of the building was also extended, knocking through almost the full width of the wall, as had the north end, to cover the previously open area to the traverse (this is the area that now contains the wall-mounted electrical boxes). A copy of Building Drawing No. 974/35 for the original Stand-by Set House is enclosed herewith (RAF Museum, Hendon).

When visited in December 2009, all the entrances into the building had been sealed up with blockwork, clearly as a security measure.

CONCLUSION

It is not known how many Operations Blocks, Sick Quarters Annex, Ambulance Garages or Stand-by Set Houses, of the same pattern as those which stood at North Weald, were built at other airfields across Britain.

In the case of Essex, and during the course of this study, the Site Plans of 22 airfields have been analysed. The great majority of these sites were built for the American forces and most of the buildings had a dating designation, as part of the pattern number, of 1940-1943, whereas the design numbers for the four buildings at North Weald came in the 1934-1937 range. At only one airfield was a match found. This is at RAF Debden, near Saffron Walden, where the 1939 Site Plan shows the Operations Block to be a Type 5000/37. This Operations Block still survives at the site, now Carver Barracks, having been designated a Listed Building in December 2005.

SOURCES

Archives

National Archives, Kew
English Heritage, Swindon
North Weald Airfield Museum
Essex Record Office, Chelmsford
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Publications

Action Stations: Military Airfields of Greater London, Halpenny, B B, 1993
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Fields of the First, Doyle, P
Battle of Britain: then & now, Ramsey, W.G. ed, 1985
Fighter, Deighton, L, 1977
North Weald Airfield in the Second World War, North Weald Airfield Museum

Maps, Plans, Photos, Records

Site plans of North Weald 1924, 1927, 1928, 1934, 1935, 1937, 1948
Aerial photographs 1942-1995
Essex Historic Environment Records
Pastscape National Monuments Records
Building drawing plans 1935, 1937, 1939
Ground level photographs 2002, 2009
2nd, 3rd, 4th Edition of OS Maps
1:2500 OS maps
Websites: Defence of Britain, National Archives, Imperial War Museum, English Heritage, Essex Record Office, Subterranea Britannica
Site plans of Essex airfields, 1939 onwards
Air Ministry/Treasury proposals 1923-1941

PHOTOGRAPHS
taken September 2002



Operations Block



Operations Block



Operations Block



Operations Block



Operations Block



Operations Block



Operations Block



Operations Block



Operations Block



Operations Block



Sick Quarters Annex



Sick Quarters Annex



Sick Quarters Annex



Ambulance Garage



Stand-by Set House



Stand-by Set House



Stand-by Set House



Stand-by Set House



Parade Ground



Parade Ground

APPENDICES

Letter and proposal from Air Ministry to Treasury, 7 January 1935, 2 pages

Letter and proposal from Air Ministry to Treasury, 24 May 1939, 2 pages

Air Ministry notes and proposal, 30 January 1941, 2 pages

Building Drawing No. 5000/37, 1935, Operations Block

Building Drawing No. 5384/39, 1939, Sick Quarters Annex

Building Drawing No. 974/35, 1935, Stand-by Set House

Site Plan 1469/24, North Weald, 1924

Site Plan 1145/27, North Weald, 1927

Site Plan 1324/28, North Weald, 1928

Site Plan 2882/34, North Weald, 1934

Site Plan ??26/35, North Weald, 1935

Site Plan 4830/37 (detail), North Weald, 1937

Site Plan 2626/48, North Weald, 1948

Schedule of Buildings 2627/48, North Weald, 1948

Tel. No. HOLBORN 3434.

Any communications on the subject of this letter should be addressed to:-

THE SECRETARY,
AIR MINISTRY,
ADASTRAL HOUSE,
KINGSWAY,
LONDON, W.C.2.

and the following number quoted:-

355111/34/F.W.



AIR MINISTRY,
LONDON, W.C.2.

7th January, 1935.

TREASURY
28 JAN 1935
S.23354/01

Sir,

I am commanded by the Air Council to refer to the correspondence ending in Treasury letter, S.23354/01, of the 27th September, 1930, on the subject of works services at North Weald and to ask that the following proposals may be laid before the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury.

The Council propose that one of the additional Fighter Squadrons to be formed in 1935 in accordance with the approved scheme for the expansion of the Royal Air Force should be temporarily located at North Weald pending the completion of permanent accommodation at Catterick in 1938. The scheme provides for a minimum of temporary accommodation at a cost of about £5,000, the remainder of the requirements, detailed on the attached schedule, being those necessary to complete the station for the two Squadrons permanently stationed there, the major items being for the provision of a stand-by generator and controlled lighting circuit and improvements to annexes to flight sheds in accordance with approved designs.

I am accordingly to ask that you will be good enough to move Their Lordships to sanction the opening of the necessary Part I works item, in Subhead B of Air Vote 4 for 1935 with a total estimate of £24,000 and provision for the year of £14,000.

I am,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

J. S. Rows

The Secretary,
Treasury,
S.W.1.

North Weald

Additions to accommodation to provide for two squadrons on a permanent basis with a third squadron on a temporary basis, with establishment :-

	<u>W/Cdr.</u>	<u>S/Ldms</u>	<u>F/Lt. & F/O.</u>	<u>W.O.s.</u>	<u>Sgts.</u>	<u>Airmen Pilots</u>	<u>Cpls. & A.Cs.</u>
2 Squadrons and Station H.Qrs.	1	2	23	3	29	12	198
3rd Squadron (Temporary)	-	1	10	-	12	6	89

Works Services:-

Temporary (Hutted) Accommodation:

Additions to officers' mess	800	
Barrack blocks	2,050	
Additions to dining room	400	
" " M.T. accommodation	<u>1,700</u>	4,950

Additions to Permanent Accommodation:

Sergeants' mess and quarters	2,000	
Accommodation for batmen	500	
Institute	600	
X Reconstruction of annexes to flight sheds	4,000	
Guard House and accommodation for ambulance.	900	
Married Quarter Gp.V	1,500	
Stand-by set accommodation and traverses	<u>1,500</u>	11,000
External Services		1,100
Mechanical & Electrical Services		5,200
Contingencies		<u>1,750</u>
		<u>£24,000</u>

Recd. Res.

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN 3434.
Extn. 459

Any communications on the subject of this letter should be addressed to:-

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE,

and the following number quoted:-

859624/38/F.5.



AIR MINISTRY,
LONDON, W.C.2.

24 May, 1939

TR
25 MAY 1939
File
S 23354/01 ✓

TDM

Sir,

I am commanded by the Air Council to refer to your letter of the 5th January 1938 (S.23354/01) on the subject of work services at North Weald and to request that the following information regarding additional requirements at this Station may be laid before the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury.

In order to meet the increases in the personnel establishment under the approved scheme of expansion, it is necessary to provide additional quarters for officers, to extend the Sergeants' Mess and quarters, and Dining Room and Institute, and to increase the barrack accommodation. Provision is also made in the revised estimate which is detailed in the attached schedule for additional married quarters, for extension to fuel stores, additions to M.T. accommodation and for a new central heating station. Allowance is included for a gymnasium, for gas defence centre, decontamination block and sick quarters annexe, for landing tracks, approval to the construction of which was given in Treasury letter of the 9th August, 1938 and improvements to the landing ground arising from the report of the Aerodrome Improvement Board and authorized in Treasury letter of the 28th March, 1939.

I am to request in the circumstances that you will be good enough to move Their Lordships to sanction the execution of the works services involved as a charge to the relative Part I Works Item No.128 of 1939, the Total Estimate for which will accordingly need to be increased to £284,000.

I am,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,

Charles Evans

The Secretary,
Treasury,
S.W.1.

NORTH WEALD

2 Fighter Squadrons

Establishment :-

<u>Wing Commander</u>	<u>Squadron Leaders</u>	<u>Flight- Lieu- tenants, etc.</u>	<u>Warrant Officers</u>	<u>Flight- Sergeants and Sergeants</u>	<u>Airmen Pilots</u>	<u>Corporals and Aircrafts- men</u>
1	3	31	5	33	20	368

Works Services:-

	Approved Estimate	£
		95,500
Additional Single officers' quarters		1,900
Extension of Sergeants Mess and quarters		8,000
Extension of Dining Room and Institute		7,000
Additional barrack accommodation		32,000
Married quarters:-		
	£	
2 Group V	4,200	
1 W.O.	915	
16 'B' type	9,600	14,715
Gymnasium		4,000
Gas Defence Centre, Decontamination Block and Sick quarters annexe		9,850
Extension to fuel stores, Link trainer accommodation, Station Offices, Parachute Store, new Watch office, etc.		12,300
Additions to M.T. accommodation, articulated trailer bay, alterations to Operations Block (additional provision) and new central heating station, etc.		18,000
Landing tracks (Treasury reference S.23354/01) improvements to aerodrome including approved recommendations of A.I.B. and recreational facilities.		29,600
External Services		18,000
Mechanical and Electrical Services		23,000
Contingencies		10,135
		<u>284,000</u>

TISC 324

30/1/41

Air Ministry

North Weald -
replacement of
accommodation.

Item 5

S23354/01

Mr. Courtney circulated Air Ministry memorandum No. 941 concerning the replacement of accommodation at North Weald. The memorandum stated as follows.

1. Damage has been sustained at North Weald as a result of enemy action and while the station has continued in operation replacement of accommodation is necessary for full operational efficiency.
2. It is proposed that the buildings on the main site which are still structurally sound should be adapted as far as possible in replacement of buildings destroyed or damaged beyond repair, e.g. it is proposed to convert the Institute to Headquarters Offices, the Sergeants Mess to Education Block and workshops to Armoury.
3. Part of the barracks is undamaged or repairable and it is proposed that these should be occupied by the Station Defence Force and military working parties, the remaining part of the Dining Room being suitable with repairs, for the messing of these personnel. The Officers Mess can be continued in use for the full Officer establishment.
4. It is necessary, however, to provide new quarters for officers and sergeants, new Sergeants Mess and Barracks and Dining and Institute accommodation for the airmen to the extent of 72 officers and 900 other ranks, and it is proposed to provide this accommodation on dispersed sites in accordance with the policy outlined in Air Ministry Memorandum No. 886, approved by the Committee at its 314th Meeting, Item 10. It is proposed similarly to reprovide the decontamination centre and sick quarters on detached sites. New provision is required by way of a watch office and four sleeping shelters at dispersal points while it is also proposed to proceed with the construction of the gymnasium, allowance for which has already been included in the approved estimate for this station. (Treasury reference S.23354/01).
5. The works services involved are detailed overleaf and the sanction of the Committee is requested to expenditure estimated at £95,000.

NORTH WEALDItem 5
(Contd.)Works Services :-(a) Aerodrome site:-

Conversion of existing buildings to provide Station H.Q. Offices, Guard House, Armoury, etc.	£ 3,500
--	------------

New sleeping shelters (4) & Watch Office (pill-box type)	1,600
--	-------

(b) Dispersal sites :-

Officers and Sergeants Quarters, Sergeants Mess, Barrack Blocks, Dining Room and Institute, etc. Decontamination centre, sick quarters, etc.	51,500
--	--------

External services (Roads, paths, drains, including replacement necessary on main site.)	12,000
---	--------

M. & E. services (including repair of underground cable system).	11,500
--	--------

Passive and Active Defence Measures

(Including Air Raid Shelters, reserve storage tanks, machine gun posts, rifle pits, etc.)	10,500
---	--------

Contingencies	4,400
---------------	-------

	£95,000
--	---------

The Chairman referred to the fact that the Air Ministry had powers to carry out repair work without submission to the Treasury. This, however, was not a work of repair so much as of reconstruction combined with a measure of dispersal.

In replying to the question from the Chairman Mr. Caines confirmed that the buildings would be, so far as was possible, erected in temporary construction.

The Committee gave its approval to the expenditure proposed in the memorandum.

APPENDIX 2

HER SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address:	<i>The Old Parade Ground (Stand-By Set House), North Weald Airfield, North Weald, Essex</i>
County: Essex	District: Epping Forest
Village/Town: North Weald	Parish: North Weald Bassett
Planning application reference:	EPR/0081/09 and EPR/0291/09
Client name/address/tel:	Crest Nicholson (Eastern) Ltd
Nature of application:	Redevelopment (126 apartments, houses and associated infrastructure)
Present land use:	Derelict airfield and buildings
Size of application area:	Size of area investigated
NGR (8 figures):	TL 49265 03884
Site Code:	NWBPG 09
Site director/Organization:	Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Type of work:	Historic Building Recording
Date of work:	December 2009
Location of finds/Curating museum:	Epping Museum, Essex
Related SMR Nos:	Periods represented: 20 th century
Relevant previous summaries/reports: -	
Summary of fieldwork results:	<p>In December 2009 Archaeological Solutions Ltd. undertook a programme of historic building recording on the Stand by Set House at the Old Parade Ground, North Weald Airfield, North Weald, Essex (TL 49265 03884). The work was carried out as part of a planning condition attached to the approval to construct 126 apartments and houses and associated infrastructure.</p> <p>The building was probably constructed either during the First World War, when the airfield was first established, or in the inter-war period, as a back-up power station in case the main power supply to the airfield was destroyed or incapacitated. At a later date, and most probably in anticipation of the outbreak of war in 1939, the building was remodelled, being given several additional features. Several years of redundancy and neglect have left the structure in poor condition. Almost none of the original plant survives, apart from a few ephemeral fixtures and fittings.</p>
Author of summary: Lee Prosser	Date of Summary: 5.01.2010

APPENDIX 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS BUILDING RECORDING ARCHIVE FORM

Site Details							
Site Name: The Old Parade Ground (Stand-By Set House), North Weald Airfield, North Weald, Essex					NGR: TL 49265 03884		
County: Essex				Museum Collecting Area: Epping Museum, Essex			
Site Code: NWBPG 09				Project Number: 2779			
Date of Work: December 2009				Related Work:			
Brief/s				Specification/s			
Date		Present		Date		Present	
October 2009		Yes		26 th November 2009		Yes	
Site Records (Description)							
Notes taken on site (5 pages A4)							
Site Drawings (Give Details of Formats & Size)							
3 x A3 sheet of draft film							
Architect's Drawings: n/a							
Digital Drawings							
Printouts of Drawings			Printouts of Data			Digital Data	
In report						Digital photographs and drawings in digital format on CD	
Reports							
Report No		Report Type				Present	
3456		Historic Building Recording				Yes	
Site Photographs							
Black & White Contact Prints					Colour Slides		
Film No	Film Type	Negs	Negs Present	Contacts Present	Film No	Negs	Present
1	120mm	1-15	Yes	Yes	1	1-4	Yes
2	120mm	1-5	Yes	Yes	2	16-18	Yes
3	120mm	12-15	Yes				
Photographic Location Plans Present? (Give Details)							
In report and separate printouts in archive folder							
Digital Photographs (Give Details):							
Digital photography. Index and selected plates printed in report. Separate printout of index included in archive folder and digitally on CD							

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1
East elevation, taken from the south-east



2
South elevation, taken from south



3
West elevation, taken from the west



4
North elevation, taken from the north-west



5
Area between blast wall and internal structure, taken from the north-west



6
Area between blast wall and internal structure, taken from the south-west



7
Engine room, taken from the south-east



8
Engine room ceiling, taken from the north-west



9
Engine room and machinery, taken from the north-west



10
Electric transistor case of galvanised steel, taken from the north-west



11
Switching gear, taken from the east



12
Switching gear, taken from the west



13
Baulk head light, taken from the north



14
Safety sign for iron girder, taken from the south



15
Transformer chamber, taken from the north-west



16
Fuel tank storage area, taken from the north-west



17
Transformer chamber, taken from the west



18
Extension to the engine room, taken from the east



19
Fuel tank and associated pipes, taken from the west



20
Metal ladder for roof access, taken from the east



21
Blocked apertures from fuel tank storage area into transformer chamber, taken from the south



22
Brick unit on roof, taken from north-west



23
External blast walls showing filled cavity, taken from north-west



24
Original door ex situ, taken from the north

PLATES



Plate 1 East elevation, taken from the south-east (DP 1)



Plate 2 North Elevation, taken from the north-west (DP 4)



Plate 3 Engine room and machinery, taken from the north-west (DP 9)



Plate 4 Engine room ceiling, taken from the north-west (DP 8)



Plate 5 Switching gear, taken from the east (DP 11)



Plate 6 Transformer chamber, taken from the north-west (DP 15)



Plate 7 Fuel tank storage area, taken from the north-west (DP 16)



Plate 8 Metal ladder for roof access, taken from the east