

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

S O U T H

**Tangmere Airfield Nurseries, The Old Airfield,
City Fields Way, Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex**

Building Recording

by Genni Elliott

Site Code: TAC15/69

(SU 9193 0598)

**Tangmere Airfield Nurseries, The Old Airfield,
City Fields Way, Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex**

**Building Recording
For West Sussex County Council**

by Genni Elliott
Thames Valley Archaeological
Services Ltd

Site Code TAC 15/69

May 2015

Summary

Site name: Tangmere Airfield Nurseries, The Old Airfield, City Fields Way, Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex

Grid reference: SU 9193 0598

Site activity: Building Recording

Date and duration of project: 12th May 2015

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Genni Elliott

Site code: TAC 15/69

Planning application number: WSCC/074/14/TG

Summary of results: The two buildings, whilst of similar style, do have distinct differences in construction, which may suggest that they are of similar but not contemporary date. Documentary evidence shows they were built between 1949 and 1962 and most likely after the hangar, given the numbering used in the 1962 plan.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at The Novium Museum, Chichester in due course.

This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website: www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 28.05.15
	Steve Preston ✓ 28.05.15

Tangmere Airfield Nurseries, The Old Airfield, City Fields Way, Tangmere Chichester, West Sussex Building Recording

by Genni Elliott

Report 15/69

Introduction

This report documents the results of building recording at Tangmere Airfield Nurseries, The Old Airfield, City Fields Way, Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex (SU 9193 0598) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr John Mills on behalf of West Sussex County Council, West Street, Chichester, PO 19 1RQ.

Planning consent (appln no. WSCC/074/14/TG) has been granted by West Sussex County Council for the erection of a solar farm. The consent is subject to a condition which requires building recording and archaeological watching brief. This report documents the results of the building recording.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the County's policies on the historic environment. The fieldwork was undertaken by Genni Elliott on 13th May 2015 and the site code is TAC 15/69. The work followed a written scheme of investigation approved by, and based on a brief prepared by, Mr John Mills, Senior Archaeologist for West Sussex County Council.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at The Novium Museum, Chichester and a copy sent to the National Monuments Record in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The buildings are located on the eastern side of the former Tangmere Airfield, on the east side of the perimeter road, in the vicinity of a former hangar and, more recently, a skid pan (Fig. 2). The concrete skid pan is screened from the former airfield by a small belt of woodland. To the north, east and south is open grassland with woodland and hedgerow demarking the boundaries. The site lies at approximately 10m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology consists of Aeolian deposits ('brickearth') consisting mainly of silts in part contaminated with gravel at the northern end and Head Gravel (clayey gravel) at the southern end (BGS 1996).

Historical Background

The history of the airfield has been summarized in the project brief prepared by Mr John Mills (WSCC 2015). In summary Tangmere was first used as an aircraft landing ground in September 1917. The first squadron of Sopwith Pups was based at the airfield between March and July 1918. The airfield was scheduled for development as a training Depot Station for the United States Air Force. After the First World War the USAF remained for only a short period, after which the airfield was closed in 1919.

The airfield reopened in 1925 as a storage facility for Coastal Command's forerunner organization, receiving its first active squadron including the biplane Gloster Gamecock in 1926. By the Second World War, it was home to two Hurricane squadrons and was enlarged in 1939 to become a major Fighter Command Station. It was bombed a number of times by the Luftwaffe, with the worst bombing in August 1940. By 1942 Typhoons were based at Tangmere with Spitfires arriving in 1943. After D-Day operational units moved to France, and between 1945–1946 the airfield was used for fighter development before becoming operational again.

After the war, Meteors were based at the airfield for a decade with fighter operations ending in the late 1950's. The airfield then passed to No. 90 Signals Corps with a number of Canberras based there, before passing to Transport Command in 1963. The airfield closed in 1970 before being auctioned in 1979, during which time a gliding school operated.

A number of other sources were consulted to try to pin down the date of the structures subject to this recording, namely aerial photographs and map evidence. The Ordnance Survey map of 1937–1939 gives no indication that the site is an airfield, showing only fields. It is not unusual for military installations to be obscured, or not depicted, on Ordnance Survey mapping. An aerial photograph from 1949 shows small structures and hard standings alongside the eastern perimeter road, but does not show the hangar, nor structures A and B. A schematic plan from the 1950s is at too small a scale to show the two structures, but it does show the hangar and two curving accesses from the perimeter road. The Ordnance Survey 1:10560 map of 1961 shows the hangar, the curving access roads and two small buildings to the east of the hangar, but neither structures A nor B, again this may simply be a matter of scale. A plan from January 1962 (Fig. 3), made by the Air Ministry Directorate General of Works shows the two structures adjacent to the hangar. The hangar is numbered 261 with structure A numbered 325 and structure B numbered 326, other buildings in the vicinity are numbered 262 and 263. The hangar and structures A and B can again be seen on the 1975 larger scale Ordnance Survey map. A drainage plan from c. 1978 shows the buildings in slightly more detail with a path around structure B and detail of the cesspit (Fig. 4).

Methodology

The building survey was carried out in accordance with guidelines set out by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments for a level 2 record (RCHM(E) 1996) and as guided by English Heritage (2006). The survey comprised a photographic survey, paying attention to the methods of construction, chronological development and alterations, and features of special interest. The building has been recorded photographically both digitally and on 35mm format using colour print and black and white media which are catalogued (Appendix 1).

Description

As currently existing, structures A and B are located to the east of the eastern perimeter road, off a curving access road, adjacent to a Tarmac skid pan (former location of the hangar). Structure A is located to the north with structure B to the south (Fig. 2). Both structures are aligned approximately north–south, and would have been parallel to the hangar (Pl. 1).

Structure A (Fig. 5)

The building is rectangular in shape with a gently sloping roof from east to west. It is brick built, with the bricks laid in stretcher bond, measuring 211mm x 100mm x 62mm (8 1/4" x 4" x 2 1/2") and bonded with cement mortar. The roof is of corrugated asbestos sheet and the floor of concrete or rendered brick. Above the door and windows are concrete lintels with that above the doorway being particularly long. This possibly suggests that originally there was a much larger door in the northern face, but the brickwork has been matched in, so this is not clear. It could just as easily be a prefabricated lintel that happened to be to hand. To the east of the door at ground level is a painted square of red outlined in white (Pls 2–5).

Internally it is a single room, painted white and entered via a wooden plank door in the northern wall (Pl. 6). In the eastern wall are two narrow Crittall type windows located just below the roof line. A third larger window is located in the southwest corner of the building, with views to the south and west (Pl. 7). This is also of Crittall type with three large panes below three horizontally hinged narrow casements. Within the east wall are four vents, two at ground level and two at roof level, these are mirrored in the west wall, with the exception of the absence of the roof level vent at the south end due to the presence of the window.

The roof structure (Pl. 8) consists of three 90° angle iron struts, two aligned north–south resting on a central strut aligned east–west. The struts were set into the cement mortar between the bricks. The asbestos sheets are

aligned east–west and rest on the north–south struts and the walls of the building. These are attached to the iron struts via (unseen) drilled holes through the asbestos sheet and a white painted wire hook around the strut. It is likely that externally there was a cushioned bolt but access to the external roof was not possible.

Structure B (Fig. 6)

The building is a purpose built latrine block, rectangular in shape with a gently sloping roof from east to west. It is brick built, with the bricks laid in stretcher bond, measuring 211mm x 100mm x 62mm (8 1/4" x 4" x 2 1/2") and bonded with cement mortar. Externally it is concrete rendered and there are three buttresses in the east and west walls; most likely to provide stability, as it is only a single skin wall (Pls. 9–12). As the building was rendered it was not possible to tell whether these were later additions or tied into the main walls, but on the basis of the single skin and the location of the buttresses at the corners of the building and on the same line as the internal wall, it is probable that these were an original construction design. The roof is of corrugated iron sheet and the floor of concrete or perhaps rendered brick.. Above the doors are probably concrete lintels and above the windows is the wooden wall plate. Doors are present in both the north and south elevations and to the east side of the doors there is evidence of signage. In the north elevation is the remains of a screwed sign and in the south elevation is a painted rectangular panel. A concrete path is present around the building (Fig 4). The west elevation is partially obscured by a large fuel tank, probably relating to use of the skid pan by the fire brigade, in the building's more recent history. At the north-east corner of the building is a drain cover, presumably a sewage pipe inspection chamber, with a possible buried tank some 34m to the east, now characterized by a dense patch of stinging nettles. The original drainage design can be seen in figure 4, although it appears that there may be some variation in the location of the inspection cover on the east side of the building.

Internally the building is divided unevenly in two with a solid wall, both sides are painted white. The northern room is the smaller of the two, and entered via a wooden plank door in the northern elevation (Pl. 13) and would have been the female toilet. Within the east elevation is a 'Critall' type window painted white: the one in the west elevation is missing. A single cubicle is partitioned off from the room for the toilet (now removed, although the cistern is still present mounted at roof level on the southern wall) (Pl. 14). The sink would originally have been beneath the window on the west wall; this has also been removed.

The southern room (male toilet) is entered via a door (missing) in the southern elevation. Within the east and west elevations are two 'Critall' type windows, painted white (Pl. 15). The one in the western wall was larger than the others within the building, being a double window, whilst the one in the eastern wall was a single

window, the same as all the others in the building. Two cubicles were partitioned off from the room, with the dividing wall partially blocking the window in the east elevation (Pl. 16). Once again the toilets, sinks and urinals had been removed.

The roof structure consists of two wooden beams aligned north–south which rest on two of the internal walls and are attached to a timber, nailed to the wall at the north end of the building via a notched joint; at the southern end of the building the timbers rest on the pipe-work at the top of the wall.. The corrugated iron sheets are aligned east–west and rest on these beams and the wall plate of the building. Asbestos roofing material was present within and in the vicinity of the building and most likely represents an earlier roof.

Conclusion

The two buildings, whilst of similar style, do have distinct differences in construction, which may suggest that they are of similar but not contemporary date. Building A has a double-skin wall with metal struts supporting the roof whereas building B has only a single skin wall, rendered in concrete, with wooden beams supporting the roof and different style windows. Documentary evidence shows they were built sometime between 1949 and 1962 and most likely after the hangar, given the numbering used in the 1962 plan. Their absence from the 1950s and 1961 maps may not be conclusive but may suggest a date later in this range.

References

- BGS, 1996, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 317, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- English Heritage, 2006, *Understanding Historic Buildings, a guide to good recording practice*, Swindon
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- RCHME, 1996, *Recording Historic Buildings: a descriptive specification*, 3rd edn, Roy Comm Hist Monuments (England), London
- WSSC, 2015, *Tangmere Airfield Nurseries, The Old Airfield, City Fields Way, Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex – brief for archaeological fieldwork*, West Sussex County Council, Chichester

APPENDIX 1: Photographic Catalogue

A. Digital

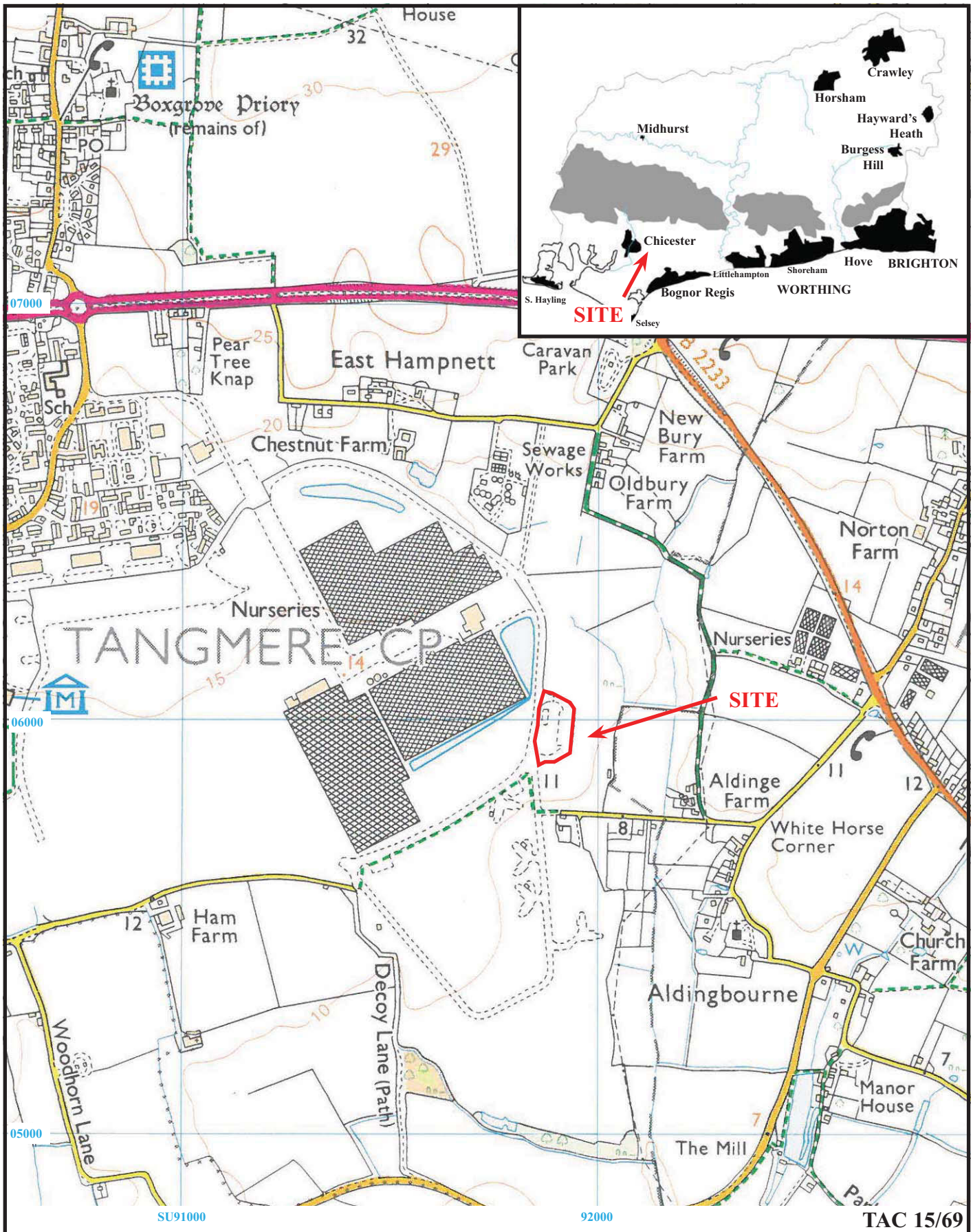
Cat. No.	Comments			
	Scales	Location	Direction	Description
1	-	External	SE	Location of buildings A and B
2	1x1m, 1x2m	Building A	E	W facing elevation
3	1x1m, 1x2m	Building A	N	S facing elevation
4	1x1m, 1x2m	Building A	W	E facing elevation
5	1x1m, 1x2m	Building A	S	N facing elevation
6	1x1m, 1x2m	Building A	SW	View to windows
7	1x1m, 1x2m	Building A	NE	View to door
8	-	Building A	S	Roof detail
9	1x1m, 1x2m	Building B	E	W facing elevation
10	1x2m	Building B	N	S facing elevation
11	1x2m	Building B	W	E facing elevation
12	1x1m, 1x2m	Building B	S	N facing elevation
13	1x2m	Building B	E	Ladies toilet
14	1x1m, 1x2m	Building B	NE	Door in ladies toilet
15	1x2m	Building B	NW	Window in mens toilet
16	1x2m	Building B	E	Mens toilet

B. Colour Prints

Cat. No.	Comments			
	Scales	Location	Direction	Description
1	-	External	SE	Location of buildings A and B
2	1x1m, 1x2m	Building A	E	W facing elevation
3	1x1m, 1x2m	Building A	N	S facing elevation
4	1x1m, 1x2m	Building A	W	E facing elevation
5	1x1m, 1x2m	Building A	S	N facing elevation
6	1x1m, 1x2m	Building A	SW	View to windows
7	1x1m, 1x2m	Building A	NE	View to door
8	-	Building A	S	Roof detail
9	1x1m, 1x2m	Building B	E	W facing elevation
10	1x2m	Building B	N	S facing elevation
11	1x2m	Building B	W	E facing elevation
12	1x1m, 1x2m	Building B	S	N facing elevation
13	1x2m	Building B	E	Ladies toilet
14	1x1m, 1x2m	Building B	NE	Door in ladies toilet
15	1x2m	Building B	NW	Window in mens toilet
16	1x2m	Building B	E	Mens toilet

C. Monochrome Images

Cat. No.	Comments			
	Scales	Location	Direction	Description
1	-	External	SE	Location of buildings A and B
2	1x1m, 1x2m	Building A	E	W facing elevation
3	1x1m, 1x2m	Building A	N	S facing elevation
4	1x1m, 1x2m	Building A	W	E facing elevation
5	1x1m, 1x2m	Building A	S	N facing elevation
6	1x1m, 1x2m	Building A	SW	View to windows
7	1x1m, 1x2m	Building A	NE	View to door
8	-	Building A	S	Roof detail
9	1x1m, 1x2m	Building B	E	W facing elevation
10	1x2m	Building B	N	S facing elevation
11	1x2m	Building B	W	E facing elevation
12	1x1m, 1x2m	Building B	S	N facing elevation
13	1x2m	Building B	E	Ladies toilet
14	1x1m, 1x2m	Building B	NE	Door in ladies toilet
15	1x2m	Building B	NW	Window in mens toilet
16	1x2m	Building B	E	Mens toilet

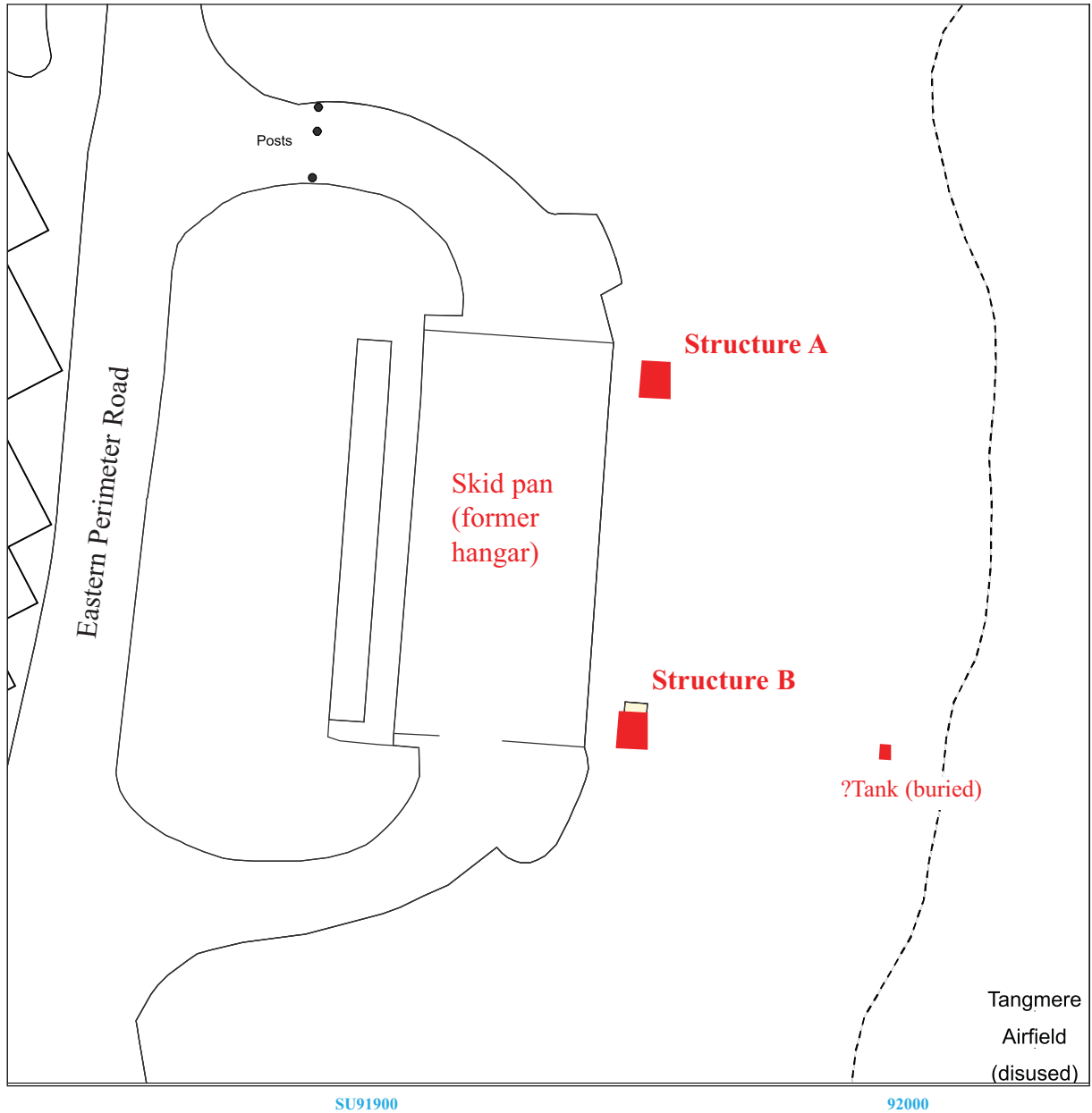


**Tangmere Airfield Nurseries, The Old Airfield, City Fields
Way, Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex, 2015
Building Recording**

Figure 1. Location of site within Tangmere and West Sussex

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 121 at 1:12500
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
 SERVICES
 SOUTH



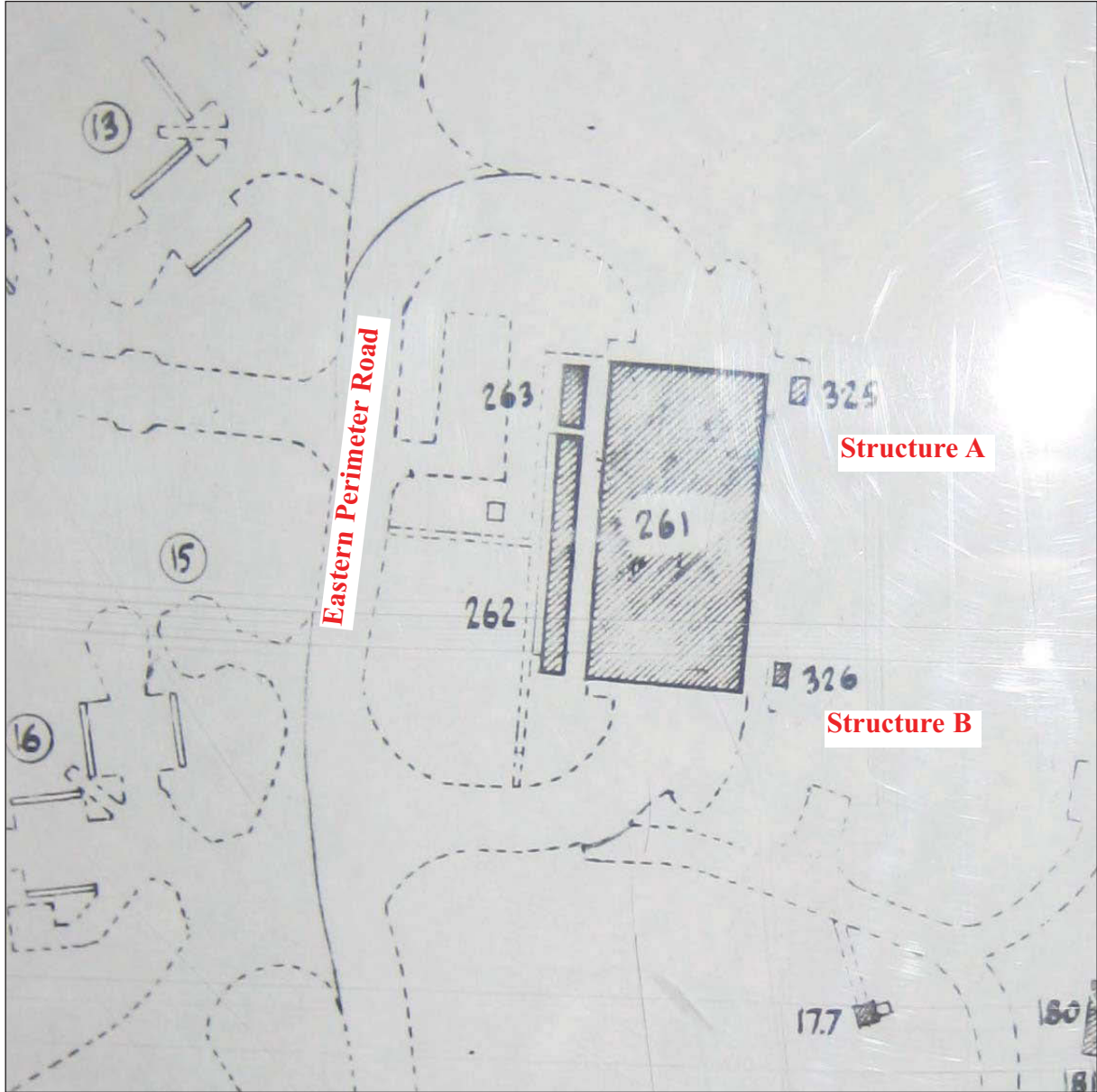
TAC 15/69



**Tangmere Airfield Nurseries, The Old Airfield, City Fields
Way, Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex, 2015
Building Recording**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site to the east of the former airfield.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Digital Mapping under licence.
Crown copyright reserved. Scale 1:1250



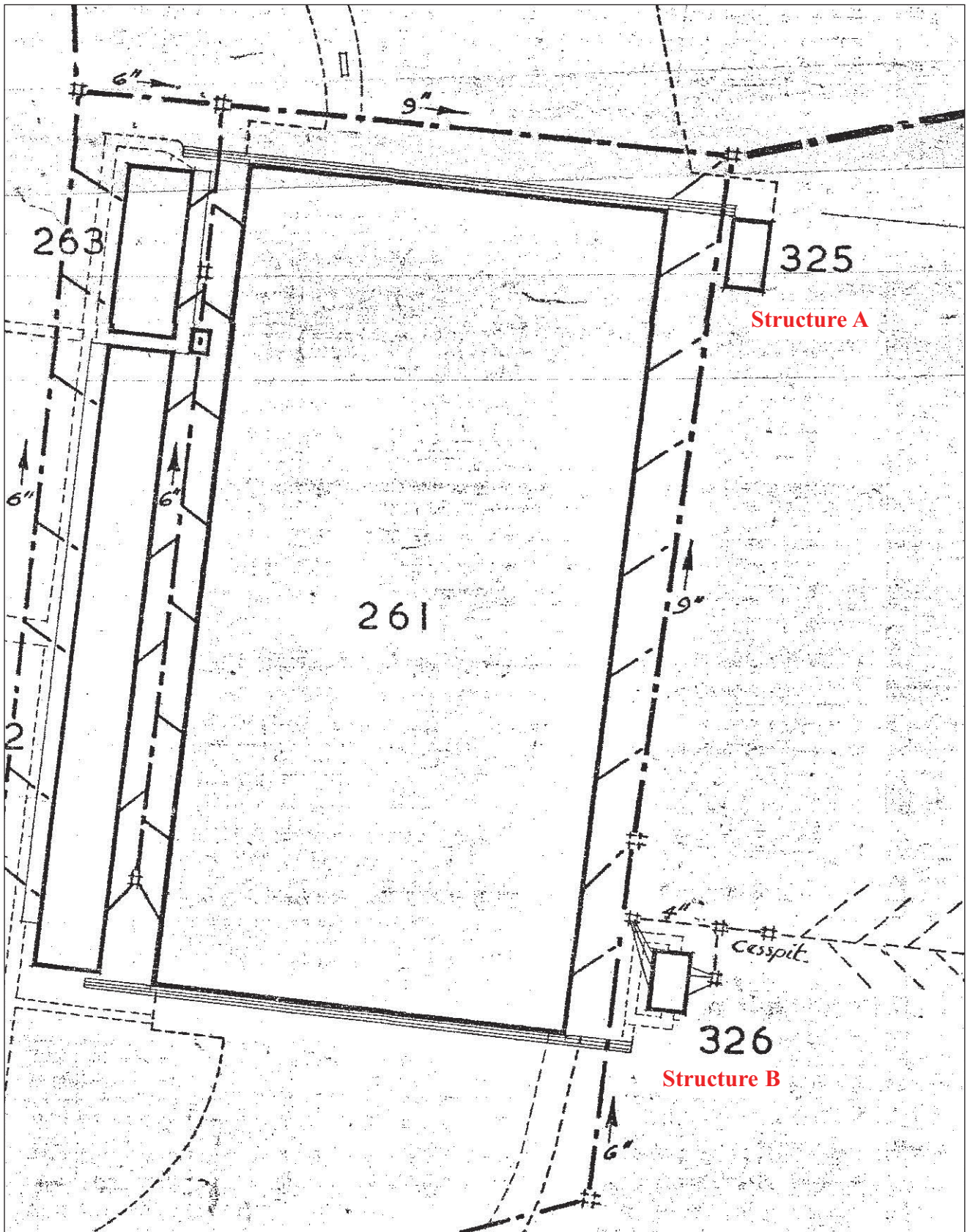
TAC 15/69



**Tangmere Airfield Nurseries, The Old Airfield, City Fields
Way, Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex, 2015
Building Recording**

Figure 3. Air Ministry Directorate General of Works plan of the
airfield, 1962

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
SOUTH



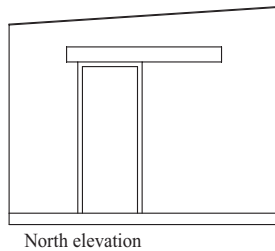
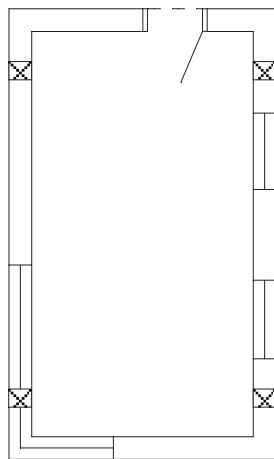
TAC 15/69



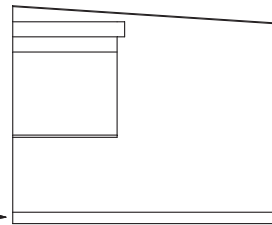
Tangmere Airfield Nurseries, The Old Airfield, City Fields
 Way, Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex, 2015
 Building Recording
 Figure 4. Drainage Plan, c.1978



Plan

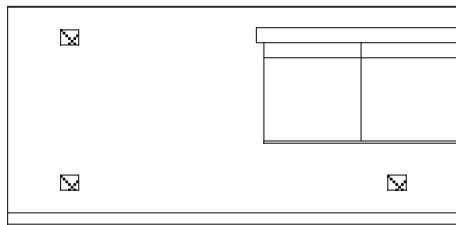


North elevation

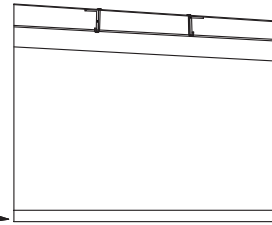


South elevation

Level of interior
concrete floor

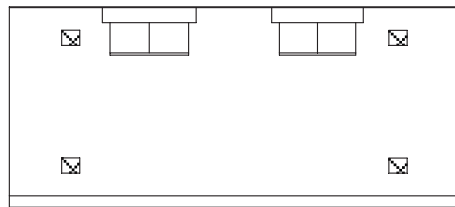


West elevation



Cross section showing roof structure
(not to scale)

Level of interior
concrete floor



East elevation

Level of interior
concrete floor

TAC 15/69

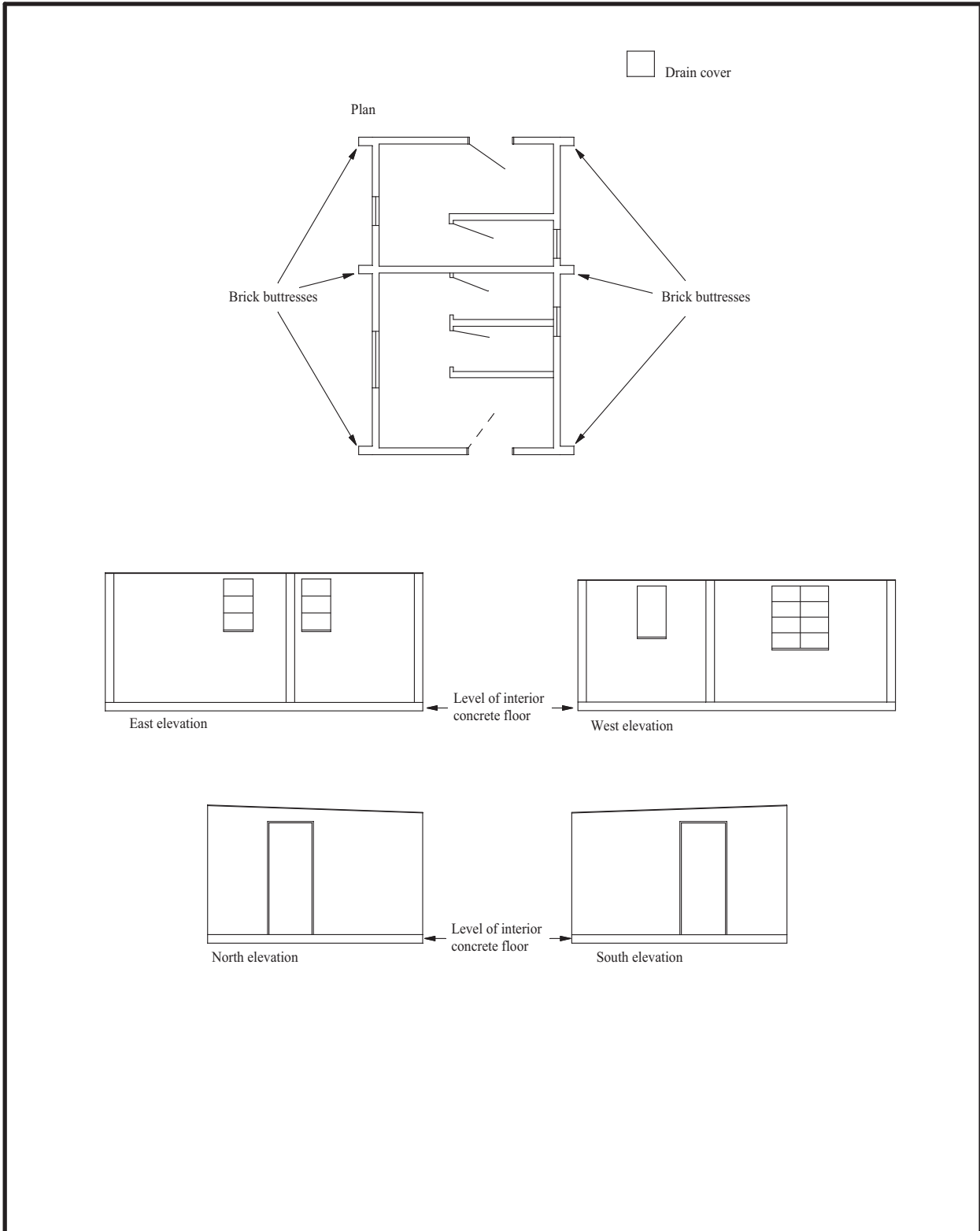


**Tangmere Airfield Nurseries, The Old Airfield,
City Fields Way, Tangmere, Chichester,
West Sussex, 2015
Building Recording**

Figure 5. Block A



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
SOUTH



TAC 15/69



**Tangmere Airfield Nurseries, The Old Airfield,
City Fields Way, Tangmere, Chichester,
West Sussex, 2015
Building Recording**

Figure 6. Block B



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
SOUTH



Plate 1. View to structures A and B, looking south-east



Plate 2. West facing elevation of structure A.
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 3. South facing elevation of structure A.
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. East facing elevation of structure A.
Scales: 2m and 1m.

TAC 15/69

**Tangmere Airfield Nurseries, The Old Airfield, City Fields Way,
Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex, 2015**
Building Recording
Plates 1 - 4.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
SOUTH



Plate 5. North facing elevation of structure A.
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 6. View to door within structure A, looking northeast.
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 7. View to windows within structure A,
looking southwest. Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 8. Roof detail within structure A, looking south.

TAC 15/69

**Tangmere Airfield Nurseries, The Old Airfield, City Fields
Way, Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex, 2015
Building Recording**

Plates 5 - 8.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
SOUTH



Plate 9. West facing elevation of structure B.
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 10. South facing elevation of structure B.
Scale: 2m.



Plate 11. East facing elevation of structure B.
Scale: 2m.



Plate 12. North facing elevation of structure B.
Scale: 2m and 1m.

TAC 15/69

**Tangmere Airfield Nurseries, The Old Airfield, City Fields Way,
Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex, 2015
Building Recording**

Plates 9 - 12.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
SOUTH



Plate 13. Door in ladies toilet looking north-east.
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 14. Ladies toilet, looking east.
Scale: 2m.



Plate 15. Crittall style window in mens toilet,
looking north-west. Scale: 2m.



Plate 16. Mens toilet, looking east.
Scale: 2m.

TAC 15/69

Tangmere Airfield Nurseries, The Old Airfield, City Fields Way,
Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex, 2015
Building Recording

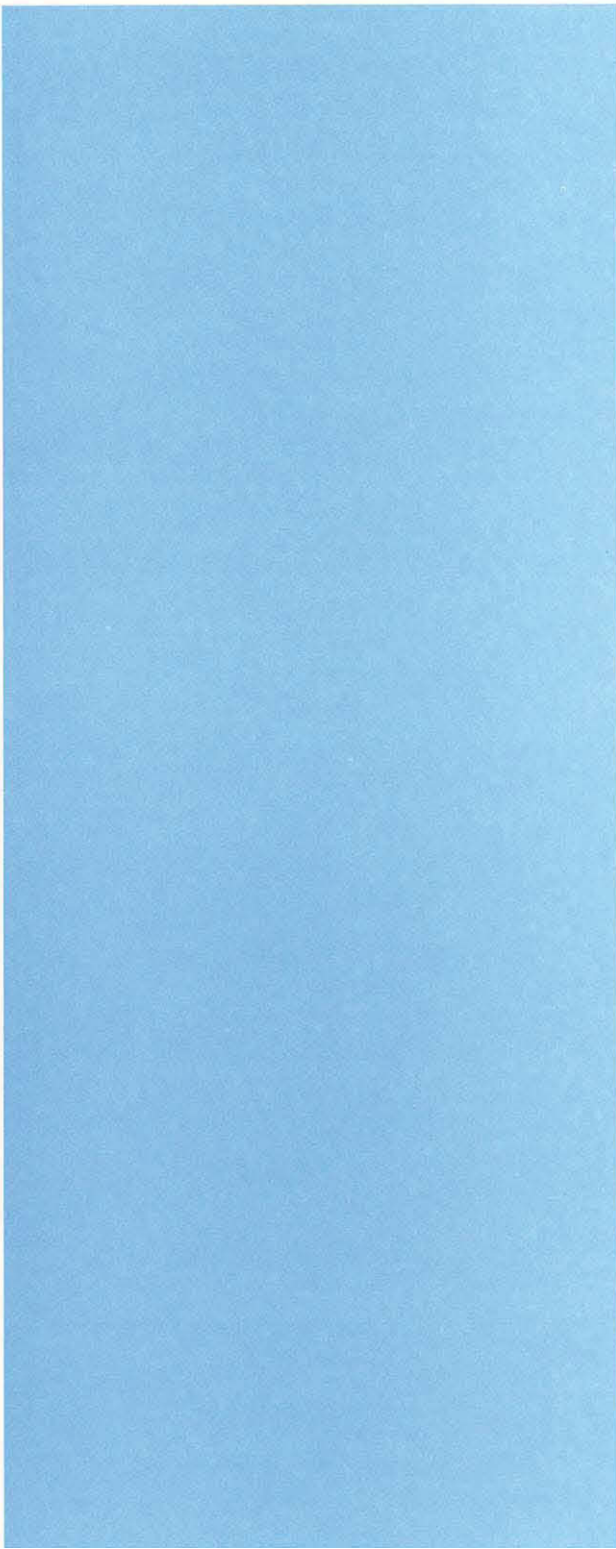
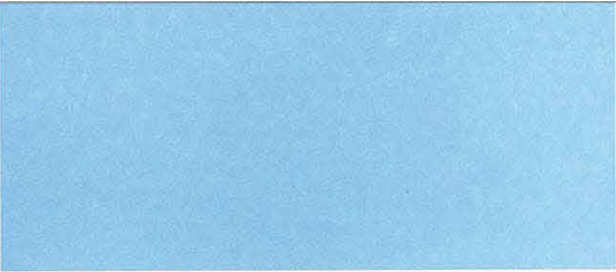
Plates 13 - 16.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
SOUTH

TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late -----	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle -----	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early -----	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





TVAS (South)
77a Hollingdean Terrace, Brighton
Sussex, BN1 7HB

Tel: 01273 554198
Fax: 01273 564043
Email: south@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk