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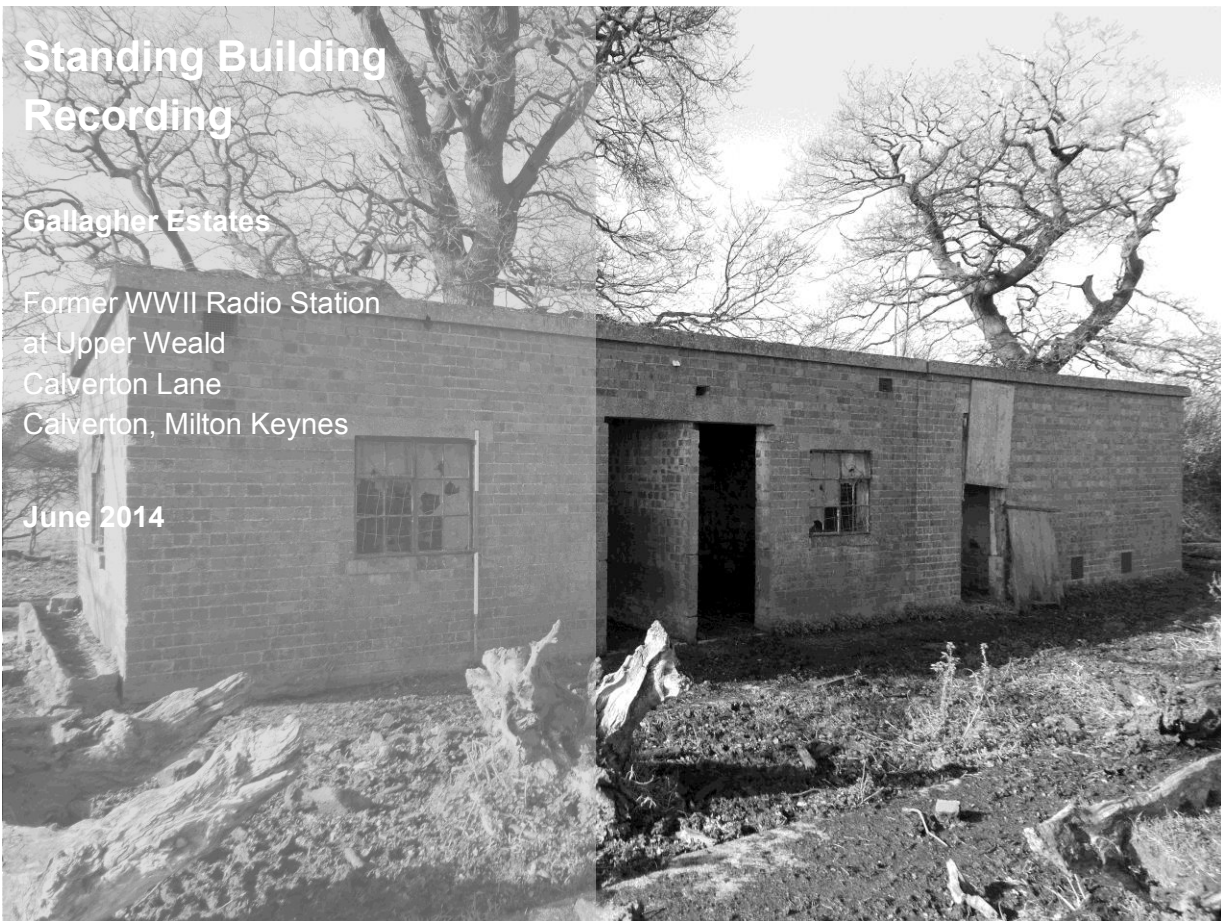
Commercial Archaeology
Working throughout England and Wales

Standing Building Recording

Gallagher Estates

Former WWII Radio Station
at Upper Weald
Calverton Lane
Calverton, Milton Keynes

June 2014



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1 Executive Summary

The programme of building recording to RCHME Level 2 undertaken by Border Archaeology on a complex of buildings within a field on the E side of Calverton Lane has produced the following results, which are summarized below:

- Consultation of documentary records and aerial photography relating to the study area established that the complex of buildings formed part of the Upper Weald Radio Station, one of a series of wireless stations established in the local area during the Second World War by Section VIII, the communications department of MI6, whose headquarters was based nearby at Whaddon Hall.
- The Upper Weald station appears to have functioned as a control centre transmitting and receiving communications from SOE and MI6/SIS agents overseas, mainly in France, Belgium, Holland and Denmark.
- The radio station was established in 1940 and further expanded in 1944. The station was eventually dismantled at some point between April and October 1946.
- The building recording programme surveyed the extant brick built structure with a sloping concrete roof (designated as Buildings A & B), which appears primarily to have been a generator building but could possibly have included an office/storeroom (at its SE end). Two distinct phases of construction were identified, although the similarity in construction suggests they are nearly contemporary with each other. To the rear of the structure was a toilet block (Building C).
- Immediately NE of the brick structure were the concrete foundations for a prefabricated hut (Building D) which probably also housed a second generator (based on the evidence for an extant concrete machine base). To the E of this building was the foundation pad for a free-standing toilet or wash-house block (Building E).
- To the SE of the brick built structure, two further rectangular foundation plinths for prefabricated huts were identified and recorded (Buildings F and H); it is likely that these represent the remains of the wireless station and an accommodation/recreation room for the wireless operators. The upstanding remains of a small brick built shed associated with one of the huts was also surveyed (Building G), it is possible that it may have served as a store room for batteries associated with the wireless station.

2 Introduction

Border Archaeology (BA) was instructed by Gallagher Estates to carry out a programme of Standing Building Recording to RCHME Level 2 on a complex of buildings currently used as livestock shelters, originally forming part of a former Second World War radio station located on the S edge of a pasture field to the E of Calverton Lane, approximately 150m NE of the village of Upper Weald, Milton Keynes. The grid reference for the site is NGR SP 80345 37817.

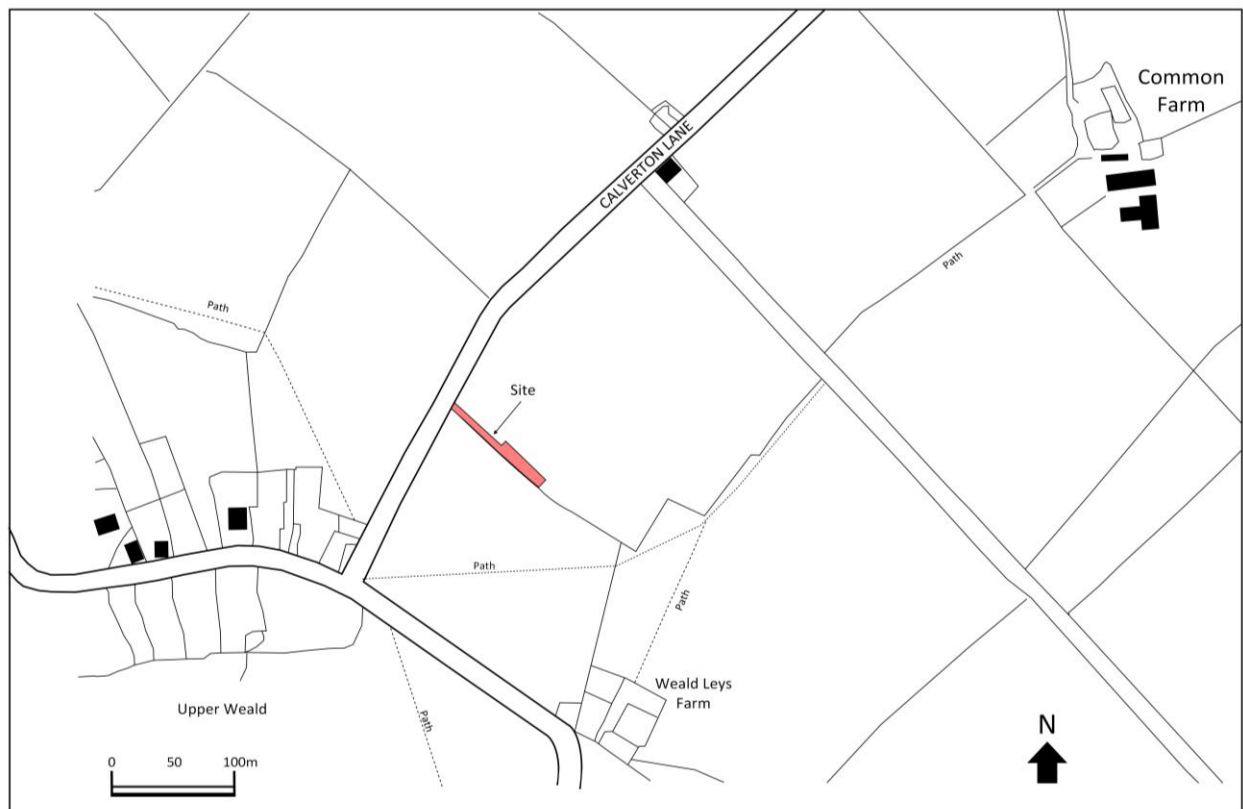


Fig. 1: Site location plan

2.1 Soils and Geology

The predominant soil type within the study area consists of typical stagnogley soils of the WICKHAM 2 series (711f) comprising slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy over clayey, fine silty over clayey and clayey soils overlying drift over Jurassic and Cretaceous clay or mudstone

3 Historical and Archaeological Background

The complex of buildings forming the subject of this programme of building recording formed the Upper Weald Radio Station, one of a series of wireless radio stations established during the Second World War by Section VIII, the communications department of MI6, who handled Ultra military traffic (*i.e.* German military messages encrypted using the Enigma machine), covert messages from the Foreign Office and overseas embassies and communications from MI6 and other Allied agents abroad.

Shortly after the acquisition of Whaddon Hall as the HQ of Section VIII in November 1939, a series of outlying wireless stations were established in the following year, two being located at Whaddon (Windy Ridge and Main Line) and another two stations situated at Nash and Upper Weald. The Upper Weald station appears primarily to have functioned as a control centre transmitting and receiving communications from SOE and MI6/SIS agents overseas, mainly in France, Belgium, Holland and Denmark (Pidgeon, 2008, 82-83). During 1943, the Upper Weald station also communicated with 'Slocum's Navy', a fleet of clandestine vessels sailing from Cornwall or the Scilly Isles to rendezvous with French intelligence agents in Brittany. It appears that the radio station was originally powered by batteries charged by a generator, which was subsequently replaced by mains electricity in 1944, when it appears that the station was expanded and new transmitter masts and aerials erected at nearby Calverton (Pidgeon 2008, 294-295).



Plate A: Extract from aerial photograph taken on April 9th 1946 showing Upper Weald radio station

The radio station at Upper Weald consisted of two prefabricated huts, probably constructed of wood (of which only the foundation plinths survive), which appear to have served as the wireless station and a recreation room/accommodation for the wireless operators and a brick-built single-storey structure (still extant) which appears to have been used as a generator/battery room and offices. Located immediately opposite the brick-built structure is the plinth for a third hut that also appears to have been used as a generator room, to the SE of which are the foundations for another block, probably used for toilets or a washhouse. A metalled driveway ran NW from the radio station to Calverton Lane, with evidence for a possible sentry post at the field entrance. These buildings are all visible on a RAF vertical photograph of the area dated April 9th 1946 (Calverton Records Society). The station at Upper Weald was apparently dismantled shortly after the Second World War, between April and October 1946; the 1946 aerial photograph still shows that the buildings were extant at that time; however, an OS 6-inch map of 1953 only shows the brick structure housing the generator/battery room and offices and the driveway providing access to Calverton Lane.

4 Standing Building Recording Survey

4.1 Methodology

This Standing Building Recording survey was carried out to RCHME Level 2, as defined within *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage, 2006), consisting of 'a written, drawn and photographic record of all standing fabric likely to be affected by the proposed development'.

The work also followed guidance contained within *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (IfA 2013). Border Archaeology complied throughout with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (2013) and *Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in archaeology* (2008). The aim of the programme of historic building recording was to allow for the preservation by record of all standing building fabric of historical interest that is likely to be affected by the development. The survey thus comprised a photographic and descriptive survey of the extant complex of structures.

A limited documentary assessment was carried out prior to fieldwork in order to assess the historic importance of the buildings. Copies of relevant information, including historic mapping, aerial photography and HER data, were obtained from the Milton Keynes Council Historic Environment Record and the National Monuments Record Swindon.

The programme of Standing Building Recording consisted of the following elements:

1. High-resolution digital photography (16MPX capacity), all with suitable scales, of the following.

- All external elevations
- All internal room spaces and roof structures (where accessible)
- Details of any architectural or functional fixtures, fittings and features relating to either the function or development of the building. Each feature was photographed and placed into a wider context (*i.e.* the surrounding elevation), individual features being photographed as separate items and in detail
- Photographs illustrating the buildings relationship to surrounding buildings and setting

2. Collation and annotation of existing survey drawings

The report contains:

- An annotated plan of the building, with photo locations clearly marked, and a location plan related to the national grid
- An annotated elevation drawing
- Appropriate additional illustrations that help support findings and the interpretation of the buildings
- Additional illustrations of dateable fixtures and fittings (mouldings, catches, hinges, latches etc.)
- A summary description of the building in its current form in the format of a typical Listed Building description

The paper archive (including the report, photographs and annotated survey drawings) will be deposited with Milton Keynes Museum and the digital archive will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service.

5 Structural Description

5.1 General Building Plan

The complex of buildings recorded at Upper Weald comprises eight separate components. Lying parallel to the S boundary of the field is a single storey brick structure oriented NW-SE comprising two separate components (Buildings A & B) with a toilet block attached to the rear (Building C). Immediately to the NE of Buildings A & B is the foundation plinth for a prefabricated hut (Building D) with another foundation pad for a freestanding toilet/wash-room block (Building E) lying to the E of that building. Lying to the SE of Buildings A & B are two further rectangular foundation plinths for prefabricated buildings (Buildings F and H) together with the extant remains of a small brick built shed associated with one of the huts (Building G).

5.2 Analytical Description

5.2.1 Buildings A, B & C

Exterior Description

Buildings A, B and C have been considered together, as they form part of a single unit. Buildings A & B have been identified as a generator building (Pidgeon 2008, 83) and certainly appear to be utilitarian in character, although the presence of windows in the compartment at the SE end might suggest that this room may have also been used as an office/storeroom. Building A (*Plate 1*) is a single-storey structure of brick construction (laid in English Bond) measuring 8m long (NW-SE) × 4m wide (NE-SW) × 2.64m high with a concrete roof sloping to the rear. The principal NE-facing elevation of Building A is punctuated by a pair of doorways with concrete lintels set slightly off-centre and flanked by two 12-paned casement windows with concrete lintels; the casements are glazed with reinforced, frosted glass (*Plate 2*). At the upper left -and right-hand corners of the elevation are two ventilation slots with iron grilles, with another slot and a fitting, possibly for a light, above the pair of doorways. Inserted in the centre of the SE-facing elevation of the building is a single 12-paned casement window with a concrete lintel and a brick sill (*Plate 3*).



Plate 1: View looking SW showing principal NE-facing elevation of Buildings A & B



Plate 2: View looking SW showing detail of NE-facing elevation of Building A



Plate 3: View looking NW showing SE-facing elevation of Building A

Attached to the NW end of Building A is another single-storey structure (Building B), of similar brick construction with a sloping concrete roof (*Plate 4*), measuring 6.5m long × 3m wide × 2.64m high. It would appear from the evidence for a construction break and a slightly offset roof slab that Building B post-dates Building A, although the similarity in construction method suggests it cannot be very much later in date. In contrast to the adjacent structure, Building B is devoid of fenestration, with a single narrow doorway with concrete lintel giving access to a small compartment at the SE end of the building and a broad doorway inserted at the NW end, leading into a much larger compartment (*Plate 5*). Building B appears to be much more utilitarian in character than the adjacent building and has been interpreted as a generator room. Two square ventilation slots with metal grilles have been inserted in the NE-facing elevation of Building B, just above ground level.



Plate 4: View looking S showing NE-facing elevation of Building B

Attached to the rear of Building A are the footings of a small, narrow brick structure (Building C) measuring 4.30m (NW-SE) × 1.80m (NE-SW) comprising two compartments standing on a concrete plinth (*Plate 6*), which may be identified as a toilet block that was still extant in 2012 but appears to have been demolished shortly after that date. A photograph taken in 2012, shortly before its demolition, reveals that the toilet block had a concrete slab roof.

To the NW of the toilet block, attached to the rear (SW-facing) elevation of Building A, is a hexagonal concrete plinth measuring 0.90m long (NE-SW) × 0.40m wide × 0.30m high (*Plate 7*). The function of the plinth is unclear; it presumably was intended as a base for a machine or possibly a boiler. Evidence was noted for a circular hole inserted in the wall directly above the plinth (*Plates 7 & 8*).



Plate 5: View looking SE showing NW-facing elevation of Building B with broad doorway



Plate 6: View looking SE showing brick footings of a probable outhouse (Building C) standing upon a concrete plinth



Plate 7: View looking N showing SW-facing rear elevation of Building A with footings of Building C visible to right of picture



Plate 8: View looking NNW showing rear elevation of Building B

Internal Description

Internally, Buildings A and B are both divided into two compartments, all of which are heavily coated in whitewash. The larger of the two compartments within Building A (at its SE end) is four bays long and lit by two 12-paned casement windows with reinforced frosted glass in the NE and SE walls (*Plates 9-11*). Ventilation slots with grilles were noted in the NE and SW walls. Indentations for shelving and cupboards were visible on all the internal wall surfaces.

The smaller compartment within Building A is lit by a single 12-paned window in the NE wall (*Plate 13*); again, evidence of indentations for shelving and cupboards was noted on all internal wall surfaces, as well as an iron fitting with a handle attached to the SE wall, of unknown function. A circular hole was also noted in the centre of the SW wall, which appears to have been associated with machinery (or possibly a boiler) located on a hexagonal concrete plinth attached to the rear elevation of the building (*Plate 14*).



Plate 9: Internal view looking SE within compartment at SE end of Building A



Plate 10: Internal view looking NE within compartment at SE end of Building A



Plate 11: Detail showing 12-paned casement window with reinforced frosted glass within SE compartment of Building A



Plate 12: Internal view looking SE showing whitewashed wall with iron wall tie within NW compartment of Building A



Plate 13: Internal view looking NE showing 12-paned casement window in NW compartment of Building A



Plate 14: Internal view looking SW showing circular hole in centre of NE-facing wall of NW compartment of Building A



Plate 15: Detail showing indentations for shelving in SE compartment of Building B

Building B is similarly divided into two compartments of unequal size; the smaller of the two compartments was entirely coated in whitewash with evidence for numerous indentations for shelving on all internal wall surfaces, extending to ceiling height (*Plate 15*). The larger compartment, at the NW end of the building, may have been used to house the generator; again, the room is entirely whitewashed, although there is considerably less evidence of indentations for cupboards and shelving compared to the other rooms. Two ventilations slots have been inserted in the NE wall, close to ground level (*Plate 16*). No other fixtures or fittings of interest were noted.



Plate 16: View looking SE showing whitewashed interior of large compartment at NW end of Building B with ventilation slots visible to left of picture

5.2.2 Building D

Located immediately opposite Buildings A & B is a rectangular, chamfered concrete foundation plinth measuring 9.80m long (NW-SE) × 6.10m wide (NE-SW) × 0.05m high (*Plates 17-19*). The plinth is evidently the foundation for a prefabricated structure, probably of wooden construction, which appears to have housed machinery, most likely a generator. Located roughly at the centre of the structure is a rectangular concrete machine base measuring 3.00 long × 1.30m wide × 0.29m high with evidence for a series of metal pins set into the top of the base, which is likely to have supported substantial machinery, almost certainly a generator. This likelihood is further reinforced by evidence for heavy copper cabling noted projecting from the foundation plinth just beneath the SW end of the machine base (*Plate 20*). It is unclear whether this represents the original generator for the radio station or whether it could represent a back-up generator that was added when the radio station was expanded in 1944. This building is visible on an aerial photograph of the area dated April 1946.



Plate 17: View looking NW showing concrete machine base, probably for a generator, standing upon a rectangular foundation plinth for a prefabricated structure (Building D)



Plate 18: View looking SW showing detail of concrete machine base in Building D



Plate 19: View SW showing foundation plinth for Building D in foreground with concrete base visible to right of picture



Plate 20: Detail showing heavy copper cabling projecting from plinth of Building D

5.2.3 Building E

Located approximately 3m SE of Building D is another rectangular concrete foundation plinth, measuring 3.80m long × 2.80m wide (*Plate 21*). This foundation was probably intended to house a toilet block or washhouse, indicated by the evidence for the division of the structure into four regularly spaced cubicles (*Plate 22*). No other fixtures or fittings of interest were noted.



Plate 21: View SW showing concrete foundations of probable toilet or washhouse block (Building E)



Plate 22: Detail showing divisions for cubicles within the toilet or washhouse block (Building E)

5.2.4 Building F

Located approximately 6m SE of Building A are the partially denuded footings of a rectangular, raised concrete plinth (designated as Building F) measuring approximately 11.80m long (NW-SE) × 5.30m wide (NE-SW) × 0.05m high (*Plate 23*). This appears to represent the plinth for one of the prefabricated huts recorded as forming part of the radio station complex at Upper Weald; the structure is visible on an aerial photograph dated April 1946. It is unclear whether this represented the hut actually housing the wireless station or an accommodation/recreation room for the wireless operators. The truncated remains of a cast-iron pipe were noted, projecting roughly from the central part of the plinth, which may have been inserted to provide a water supply to the hut.



Plate 23: View SE showing rectangular concrete plinth for prefabricated hut (Building F), with Building G in background

5.2.5 Buildings G & H

Located approximately 3m SE of Building F is a small square brick structure (laid in stretcher bond) with a sloping corrugated asbestos roof (Building G) measuring 1.95m × 1.95m × 2.37m high (*Plate 24*). A door originally appears to have been inserted on the right-hand side of the NW-facing elevation; however, most of the surround appears to have been removed together, with a section of the wall to the left of the doorway and a wooden lintel inserted at a later date, presumably when the building was converted to agricultural usage. Within the interior of the structure (which is not whitewashed) are the footings of a brick partition (*Plate 25*).

The function of this building is uncertain; however, it is evidently associated with another rectangular chamfered concrete plinth located immediately SE of it, which appears to have been the foundation for another prefabricated hut (Building H) visible on an aerial photograph dated April 1946. (*Plates 26 & 27*) This foundation plinth appears to have been slightly larger in size compared to its counterpart to the NW, measuring 16.5m long (NW-SE) × 6m wide (NE-SW) × 0.05m high. A narrow concrete drainage gully runs along the NE side of the plinth. It is unclear whether this hut housed the wireless operating room or was used as an accommodation/recreation room. It is possible that Building G may have housed batteries associated with the wireless operating room; a

supposition enhanced by the presence of a circular hole (possibly for cabling) in the SE wall abutting the site of Building H.



Plate 24: View NE showing NW-facing elevation of Building G, with concrete plinth for prefabricated hut in background to rear



Plate 25: Internal view looking SE showing interior of Building G with evidence of brick partition



Plate 26: View WSW showing SE-facing elevation of Building G and a concrete foundation plinth for a prefabricated hut to the SE



Plate 27: View W showing full extent of concrete plinth for hut to SE of Building G

5.2.6 Driveway and Spoil-Heap

Extending NW from the generator/battery room and offices (Buildings A & B) is a concrete driveway, approximately 55m in length, which leads to a gateway giving access to Calverton Lane. The driveway is largely obscured by undergrowth, although sections of kerbing defining the edges of the driveway are still discernible (*Plate 28*). Running immediately SW of and parallel to the driveway is a metalled footpath, approximately 1.5m wide and again heavily overgrown. Inserted in the S field boundary fence adjoining the footpath, towards its NW extremity, is a gateway now disused and covered with barbed wire (*Plate 29*), which formerly provided access into the field immediately to the SW, which was one of the fields housing the radio transmitter masts.



Plate 28: View looking SE along driveway leading to the radio station complex, with evidence of kerbing and spoil-heap to left of picture

Adjoining the NE side of the driveway is a substantial grassy mound, measuring 27m long (NW-SE) × 14m wide (NE-SW) and standing to a height of roughly 1.8m, upon which a significant scatter of brick and concrete building debris is visible. It was originally hypothesized that this might represent the remains of a blast shelter; however, it is not visible on an RAF aerial photograph of the site taken in April 1946 and a more likely explanation is that this represents a spoil-heap of building debris deposited after the majority of the buildings associated with the radio station were demolished (*Plate 30*).

At the NW extremity of the driveway, immediately NE of the gateway leading to Calverton Lane, the remains of a small rectangular concrete pad, measuring roughly 3m (NE-SW) × 2m (NW-SE) were identified, heavily obscured by undergrowth. It is possible that this represents the footings for a sentry post controlling access to the radio

station complex from Calverton Lane; a machine gun emplacement appears to have been situated immediately opposite on the other side of the road.



Plate 29: View looking SW showing disused gateway leading to field immediately SW of radio station



Plate 30: View looking SE showing spoil-heap to left of driveway and remains of metalled footpath to right of picture

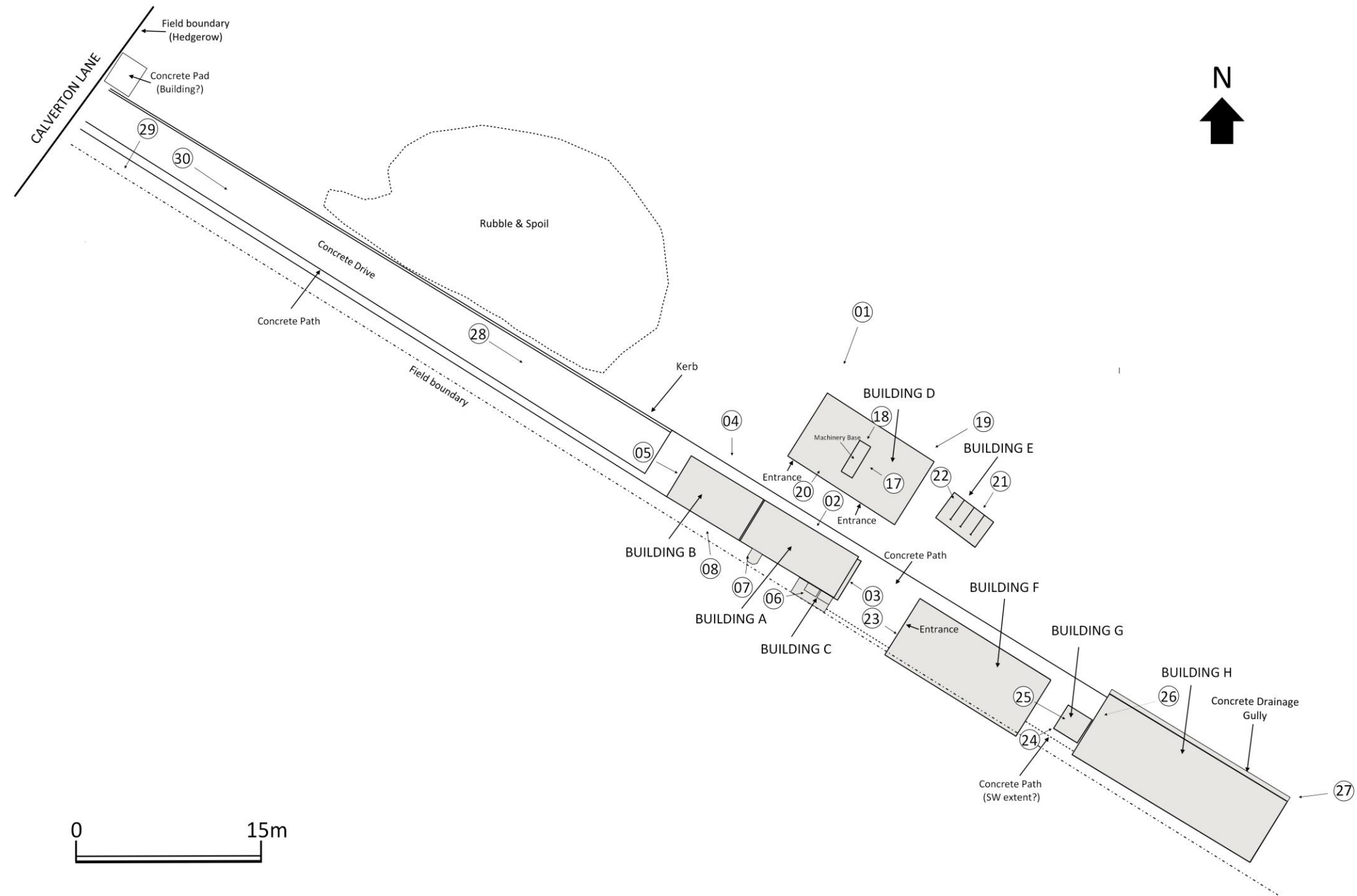


Fig. 2: Plan showing layout of former complex of buildings at Upper Weald Radio Station

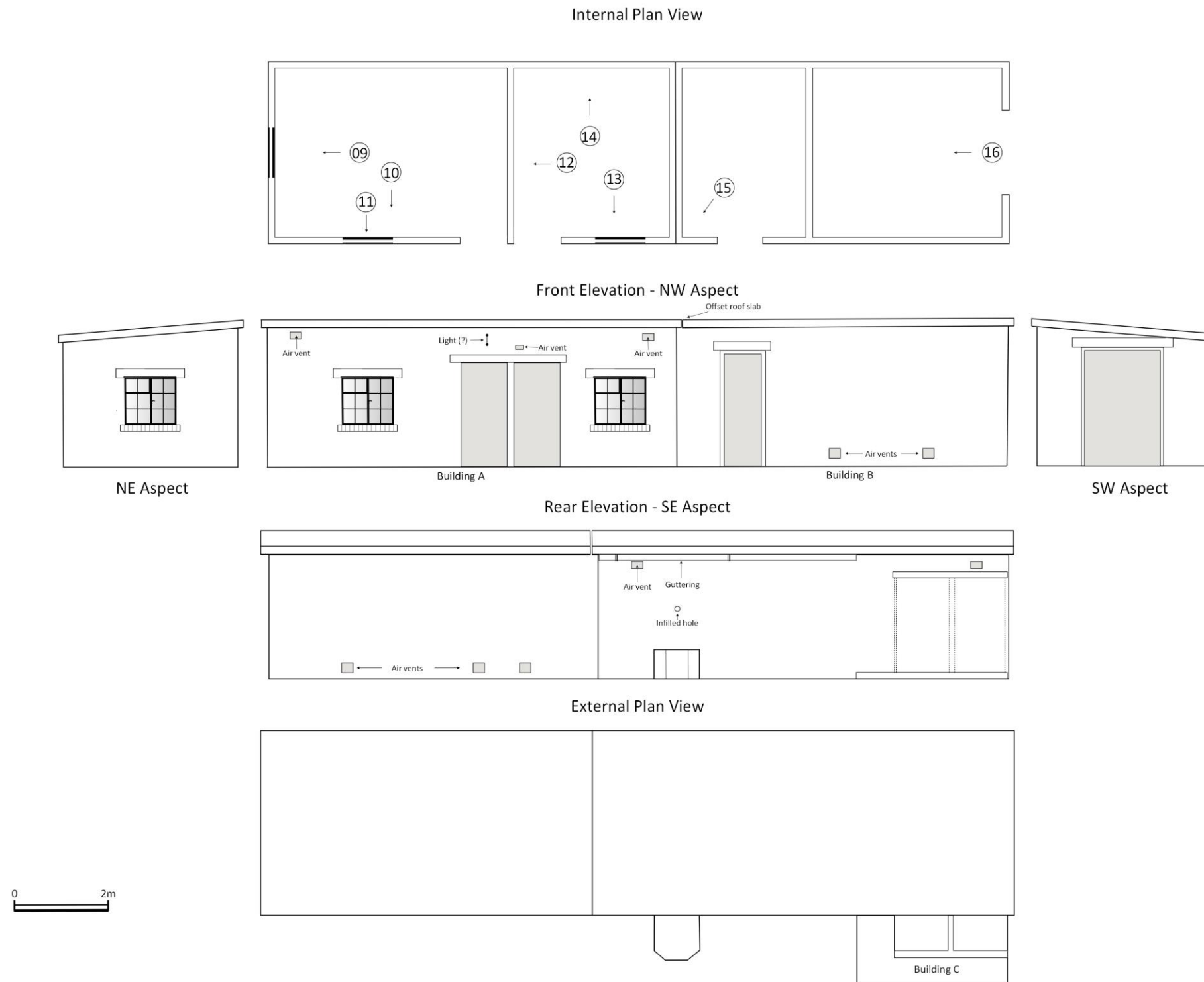


Fig. 3: Buildings A, B & C – Plans and Elevations

Plate No.	Description
1	View looking SW showing principal NE facing elevation of Buildings A & B
2	View looking SW showing detail of NE-facing elevation of Building A
3	View looking NW showing SE facing elevation of Building A
4	View looking S showing NE facing elevation of Building B
5	View looking SE showing NW facing elevation of Building B with broad doorway
6	View looking SE showing brick footings of a probable outhouse (Building C) standing upon a concrete plinth
7	View looking N showing SW facing rear elevation of Building A with footings of Building C visible to right of picture
8	View looking NNW showing rear elevation of Building B
9	Internal View looking SE within compartment at SE end of Building A
10	Internal view looking NE within compartment at SE end of Building A
11	Detail showing 12 paned casement window with reinforced frosted glass within SE compartment of Building A
12	Internal view looking SE showing whitewashed wall with iron wall tie within NW compartment of Building A
13	Internal view looking NE showing 12 paned casement window in NW compartment of Building A
14	Internal view looking SW showing circular hole in centre of NE-facing wall of NW compartment of Building A
15	Detail showing indentations for shelving in SE compartment of Building B
16	View looking SE showing whitewashed interior of large compartment at NW end of Building B with ventilation slots visible to left of picture
17	View looking NW showing concrete machine base, probably for a generator, standing upon a rectangular foundation plinth for a prefabricated structure (Building D)
18	View looking SW showing detail of concrete machine base in Building D
19	View SW showing foundation plinth for Building D in foreground with concrete base visible to right of picture
20	Detail showing heavy copper cabling projecting from plinth of Building D
21	View SW showing concrete foundations of probable toilet or wash-house block (Building E)
22	Detail showing divisions for cubicles within the toilet or wash-house block (Building E)
23	View SE showing rectangular concrete plinth for prefabricated hut (Building F) with Building G in background
24	View NE showing NW facing elevation of Building G with concrete plinth for prefabricated hut in background to rear
25	Internal view looking SE showing interior of Building G with evidence of brick partition
26	View WSW showing SE-facing elevation of Building G and a concrete foundation plinth for a prefabricated hut to the SE
27	View W showing full extent of concrete plinth to SE of Building G
28	View looking SE along driveway leading to the radio station complex, with evidence of kerbing and spoilheap to left of picture
29	View looking SW showing disused gateway leading to field immediately SW of radio station
30	View looking SE showing spoilheap to left of driveway and remains of metalled footpath to right of picture

Table 1: List of plates referenced in annotated plan and elevation (Figs. 2 & 3)

6 Conclusions

The programme of building recording to RCHME Level 2 undertaken by Border Archaeology on a complex of buildings within a field on the E side of Calverton Lane has produced the following results:

Examination of documentary records and aerial photography relating to the study area established that the complex of buildings formed part of the Upper Weald radio station, one of a series of wireless stations established in the local area during the Second World War by Section VIII, the communications department of MI6, whose headquarters was based nearby at Whaddon Hall.

The Upper Weald station was established in 1940 and appears to have functioned as a control centre transmitting and receiving communications from SOE and MI6/SIS agents overseas, mainly in France, Belgium, Holland and Denmark. It appears that the radio station was expanded in 1944 and eventually dismantled at some point between April and October 1946.

The layout of the radio station complex at Upper Weald is clearly shown on an aerial photograph taken in April 1946, shortly before its demolition and the programme of building recording undertaken by Border Archaeology has essentially confirmed the accuracy of this photograph.

The principal surviving structure, of brick construction with a sloping concrete roof oriented NW-SE, appears to be of two phases, Building A slightly predating Building B, although based on their close similarity in construction they appear to be almost contemporary with each other. This appears primarily to have been a generator/battery storage room with a possible office/storeroom represented by the large compartment at the SE end of Building A. To the rear of the structure was a toilet block (Building C).

Immediately NE of the brick structure were the concrete foundations for a prefabricated hut (Building D) which probably also housed a second generator (based on the evidence for an extant concrete machine base). It is unclear whether this represents the original generator for the radio station or whether it could represent a back-up generator that was added when the radio station was expanded in 1944. To the E of this building was the foundation plinth for a free-standing toilet or wash-house block (Building E).

To the SE of the brick built structure, two further rectangular foundation plinths for prefabricated huts, probably of wooden construction, were identified and recorded (Buildings F and H); it is likely that these represent the remains of the wireless station and an accommodation/recreation room for the wireless operators. The upstanding remains of a small brick built shed associated with one of the huts was also surveyed (Building G), it is possible that it may have served as a store room for batteries associated with the wireless station.

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Pidgeon, G., 2008 *The Secret Wireless War*, Richmond

9 Cartography and Aerial Photography

OS 1st edition 25 inch map – 1889

OS 2nd edition 25 inch map – 1900

OS 3rd edition 25 inch map – 1926

OS provisional edition 6 inch map -1953

OS 1:2500 map - 1972

Aerial photographs were consulted using records held at the National Monuments Record Swindon and records kindly supplied by the Calverton Records Society

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