



making sense of heritage

Harnham Bunker Old Blandford Road Salisbury, Wiltshire

Historic Building Record



Planning Ref: 15/10290/FUL
Ref: 112250.01
March 2016



**Harnham Bunker
Old Blandford Road
Salisbury
Wiltshire**

Historic Building Record

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by The Sound Emporium to create an historic building record of an underground concrete bunker at Old Blandford Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire. Planning permission was granted in January 2016 by Wiltshire Council to change the use of the structure from a disused communications bunker into a youth music and education facility.

Prior to the change of use and redevelopment works, the Assistant Archaeological Officer at Wiltshire Council requested that an English Heritage/Historic England Level 2 (descriptive) record be carried out to ensure that the bunker was adequately documented prior to the works. The building recording exercise was duly carried out in February 2016 and consisted of a measured survey, digital photographic record, documentary search and written description. A limited oral history programme was also carried out with local residents who had memories of the bunker in the early post-war period.

Harnham Bunker was constructed in an existing 19th century chalk quarry probably during World War II with anecdotal evidence gathered during the oral history phase indicating that the chalk pit was sold to the War Office. The bunker was constructed from cast reinforced concrete in the base of the existing quarry and then buried. It was created with a long access ramp which led to a sealable entrance lobby. Here there was a decontamination shower before entering the main body of the bunker. It was equipped with self-contained generator room and air filtration plant which were vented via vertical concrete shafts to the surface. Along with the utility rooms the bunker was equipped with communications room, main control room, a kitchen and toilets allowing essential workers to survive for weeks below ground during a national emergency. In the event of blockage of the main entrance, there was an escape passage and vertical shaft fitted with a ladder for escape to the surface.

Following the war, the use of the bunker appears to have been surplus to military requirement and by 1950 at least part of it was being used as a youth club called the 'Under the Hill Club'. Curiously, a surviving planning application from 1954 reveals a change of use from a Post Office exchange to a carpet-beating depot, although its civilian use appears to have been short-lived. By 1962-3, the bunker had been re-fitted and used as the Salisbury Urban District Civil Defence Control Centre. The building appears to have functioned in this capacity until the end of the Cold War.



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Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by The Sound Emporium and is grateful to Ross Sanderson in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank the following people for their help and assistance during this project: Clare King, Assistant Archaeological Officer, Andrew Minting, Conservation Officer and Adam Fothergill Planning Liaison Officer at Wiltshire Council, Reg Williams and Cathy Titcombe at Salisbury City Council, Charis Abraham, Archivist at the Historic England Archive, Fridy Duterloo-Morgan, Designation Adviser at Historic England, and the staffs of the Wiltshire Swindon History Centre and Salisbury Library. Particular thanks goes to those individuals who were willing to share their early memories of the bunker: John Orchard, Reg Davis, Reg Rattue and Alan Hayes, and to Cheryl Hill for her assistance in facilitating the oral history exercise.

The survey, research and reporting was undertaken by Bob Davis and Grace Flood with illustrations prepared by Bob Davis and Nancy Dixon. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Matt Rous.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by The Sound Emporium to create an historic building record of an underground communications bunker at Old Blandford Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP2 8DG. Planning permission was granted (Ref: 15/10290/FUL) by Wiltshire Council, subject to certain conditions, to change the use of the structure from a disused communications bunker into a youth music and education facility. Condition 2 states:

No works shall commence on site until an appropriate programme of building recording has been carried out in respect of the structure concerned. This record shall be carried out by an archaeologist/building recorder or an organisation with acknowledged experience in the recording of standing buildings which is acceptable to the Local Planning Authority. The recording shall be carried out in accordance with a written specification, and presented in a form and to a timetable, which has first been agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To secure the proper recording of the building.

- 1.1.2 Following discussions with Clare King, Assistant Archaeological Officer at Wiltshire Council (AAOWC) in August 2015, an enhanced English Heritage/Historic England Level 2 (descriptive) survey of the structure was required to ensure that the structure was documented prior to its redevelopment. Levels of record are described in the document: *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006).
- 1.1.3 The building recording exercise was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Wessex Archaeology 2016) which was approved in advance of the works by the AAOWC.

1.2 Site location and description

- 1.2.1 The Site is located at the junction of the Old Blandford Road and Grasmere Close in the suburb of Harnham, approximately 0.9 km south-west of Salisbury city centre. It is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) 413948, 128753 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.2 The bunker is situated within a narrow wedge-shaped strip of woodland and, being a subterranean structure, little evidence is visible from the road. The fenced-off main entrance is located on the east side at the west end of the narrow wooded track leading off the junction between Grasmere Close and Old Blandford Road. Visible above the ground surface are several square concrete towers constructed for ventilation purposes

and an emergency escape hatch. Above the structure is a modern telecommunications tower, which stands in its own small fenced-off compound.

- 1.2.3 Disused for many years, the bunker previously operated as the Salisbury Urban District Control Centre which utilised a former WWII underground military telephone exchange. The bunker purportedly replaced the former control centre in the basement of the Council House in Bourne Hill, Salisbury in September 1963.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims and objectives

- 2.1.1 The aim of the historic building recording (HBR) exercise, as set out in the WSI, was to make a permanent record (to English Heritage Level 2) of the underground bunker prior to its change of use and redevelopment works. The principal objective was to ensure that the results are made available to interested parties. This was achieved through a photographic, drawn and written record and documentary research.

2.2 Fieldwork methodology

Site visit

- 2.2.1 A site visit was made on 2nd February 2016 by two buildings archaeologists from Wessex Archaeology. During this visit all areas of the bunker were viewed. For clarity, each room was assigned a unique identifier and hard copy plan drawings were annotated with this information. The direction and number of each photograph was also annotated onto the drawing. Notes were taken of significant historical features and identifying markers also noted.

Documentary Research

- 2.2.2 A comprehensive programme of documentary research was carried out in various repositories in an attempt to find information relating to the origins and development of the bunker. This included the National Archives, the Historic England Archive, the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre (WSHC), the Wiltshire Council Planning Department and Salisbury library, as well as from available secondary sources. Perhaps due to the secret and/or military nature of the structure's origins, very few official records were found and, in particular, no relevant records were present at the National Archives or Historic England Archives.

Oral history

- 2.2.3 Through previous contact with the AAOWC and Andrew Minting, Conservation Officer at Wiltshire Council, a small number of local residents were identified who had memories of the bunker from the early post-war period. This enabled a limited programme of oral history to be carried out which took place on an individual basis over the telephone.

Survey and drawings

- 2.2.4 The drawn record comprised the reproduction of the 'as existing' building plans which had been previously surveyed and provided by the Client. Hard copies of these drawings were taken onto site during the recording programme and checked on site for accuracy.
- 2.2.5 The resultant plan was annotated, with information such as evidence of historic alteration to the fabric, and fixtures and fittings and enhanced in line with accepted English

Heritage/Historic England drawing conventions for presentation within the report (**Figure 5**).

Photographic record

- 2.2.6 High quality digital images were taken using a Canon EOS 5D MkIII full frame digital camera (with 22.3 megapixel capability). Where possible, a photographic scale of appropriate size was included in all general and specific detailed views.
- 2.2.7 All photographic views were recorded on site on hard copies of the 'as existing' site plans. These were complemented by photographic registers which, as a minimum, gave the direction of the view, location and a brief description of the subject. A selection of the digital photographic record has been used to illustrate the report (**Plates 1-36**).
- 2.2.8 The full photographic record, together with copies of the marked up plans and the photo gazetteer will be included in the site archive.

2.3 Monitoring

- 2.3.1 The AAOWC was given notice prior to commencement of work being undertaken, and was allowed access to the Site to monitor the work.

3 HISTORIC BACKGROUND

3.1 Cartographic evidence

- 3.1.1 The earliest map that shows clear evidence of the bunker is the 1952 Ordnance Survey (OS) map. Prior to this date earlier historic mapping indicates that the parcel of land where the bunker was constructed was a chalk quarry. The OS map of 1881 (**Figure 2a**) shows the parcel of land as a long narrow plot denoted 'Chalk Pit' on the north side of Old Blandford Road bounded at its south-west end by a coppice of trees. The Site appears in a semi-rural setting with the nearest development consisting of a large private house to the east denoted 'The Cliff' which stands in substantial wooded grounds.
- 3.1.2 The OS 1901 edition shows no basic change to the Site (**Figure 2b**) which is still labelled as 'Chalk Pit' and located between the coppice of trees and the grounds of Cliff House.
- 3.1.3 By 1925 the area around the Site had been developed with the establishment of detached properties with generous gardens along Bouverie Avenue to the south of the Old Blandford Road and along Folkestone Road to the north. The 1925 OS map also shows Harnwood Hospital to the west of the chalk pit (**Figure 2c**). The Cliff is now additionally named 'Government House' following its purchase by the War Office. The chalk pit is clearly depicted on this map with cartographic conventions indicating its rock-cut nature and considerable depth.
- 3.1.4 The OS map of 1937 (**Figure 2d**) is little changed from 1925 except that 'The Cliff' is now solely referred to as 'Government House' and had been further extended on the south-west side, losing its adjoining building (probably a stable block) in the process. It is not until the 1953 OS edition that the bunker features are depicted in the available mapping (**Figure 2e**). The chalk pit is now referred to as 'Old Quarry' indicating that it no longer functioned as a working quarry by this time. While the bunker is not denoted as such on the map (military or sensitive government installations were often deliberately omitted from Ordnance Survey maps), evidence for its presence can be seen from the annotations which denote three 'air shafts' and a small square entrance on the north-east side. This entrance is accessed via a wide track to the north-east, as exists today. There are no

other features except for slope hachures indicating that the bunker had been buried beneath. The area on top appears to have been landscaped.

3.2 Documentary evidence

- 3.2.1 Despite an exhaustive search for documents relating to the bunker, very few sources were found and no official government records relating to the bunker were encountered in the National Archives or Historic England Archives. It is considered that the bunker may have been related in some way to the communications at the nearby Government House to the east, which is reported to have been the residence of General Office Commanding Southern Command, although there is no firm evidence for this.
- 3.2.2 Documents concerning civil defence were also sought in order to try and find evidence for the bunker's use by the local authority during and after World War II. A Salisbury District Council (SDC) document entitled 'Earmarking of Premises Civil Defence' (ref G23/132/196) dating from 1949 to 1957 lists houses and other premises used for Civil Defence purposes including during the war. The list provides a description of the property and the intended use. The bunker at Harnham is not mentioned in any of the lists therefore it is assumed that it was not intended for civil defence use during this period.
- 3.2.3 The earliest document found which relates directly to the bunker was a planning application dated 6th September 1954 (SDC Planning Application reference 4943). This application includes an attached plan of the bunker at this time (**Figure 3**). Although not detailed, and only partially annotated, it does demonstrate the plan form as basically as seen today. The plan does annotate parquet flooring, air conditioning plant and 'lavvy's' (WCs) indicating they are original features.
- 3.2.4 The attached application document, dated 6th July 1954 (application No 4943) gives permission to 'Messrs Morris and Chivers' to change the use of the bunker from a 'underground Post Office exchange' to a 'Carpet Beating Depot'. The permission was granted with conditions that include 'no nuisance arising by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit'. The document reveals that the likely original purpose of the bunker was a telephone exchange and that it was no longer needed for military purposes and so transferred to civilian use.
- 3.2.5 No further official documents were found relating to the structure until 1973, although sources suggest that the bunker had been acquired by the local authority to replace the former control centre in the basement of 'The Council House' in Bourne Hill in September 1963 (Subterranea Britannica website).
- 3.2.6 The bunker was surveyed in detail 1973. The plan and cross section, numbered L.1187 is entitled 'Survey of existing Civil Defence – County Sub-Control, Harnham' (**Figure 4**). This plan is very detailed and annotated with information including steel sealing doors, telephone switchboard, high level water storage tanks, generator and fire escape tunnel and shaft. It is unknown how frequently the bunker was used by SDC, however, it was considered important enough to have undergone upgrading of its internal fittings and refurbishment, most recently in the 1980s (Historic England 2015).

3.3 Oral history

- 3.3.1 A number of local older residents were contacted about their early recollections of the bunker. While individual memories varied, and many of the individuals were children during the late 1930s and 1940s, the general view is that the bunker certainly existed during World War II.

- 3.3.2 Mr Alan Hayes, born in 1934, recalls that the chalk quarry was owned by his uncle Jack Handford. Mr Handford apparently sold the quarry to the Army and Mr Hayes recalls the bunker as being referred to as 'Churchill's bunker'. A link between the Army and the origins of the bunker is plausible due to the close proximity of Government House and the need for a reliable or reserve telephone exchange nearby.
- 3.3.3 Mr Reg Davis, born in 1933, recalled his father, a member of the Home Guard, complaining about bunker guard duty.
- 3.3.4 Mr Reg Rattue, born in 1931, remembers there being a narrow gauge rail system in the quarry during the bunker's construction. The rails perhaps needed for transporting the concrete and other materials.
- 3.3.5 Mr John Orchard remembered that the bunker was referred to as a 'back-up bunker' during the war, which may also fit with it originally being a telephone exchange, perhaps in use as a stand-by exchange if the main exchange was destroyed by bombing or other enemy action, or reserved for military purposes.
- 3.3.6 It seems that by the end of the war, the structure was surplus to requirements as a communications bunker and most of the people spoken to recalled the bunker as being in operation as a youth club by 1950. The premises were known at this time as the 'Under the Hill Club'. This was a popular venue for the teenagers of the day. Two possible names were given by the participants as having run the youth club: a Miss Pointing and Mrs Overton. Mr Reg Davis recalls it very well, as he met his future wife at the club in 1950.

4 BUILDING DESCRIPTION

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The following description has been broken down into separate rooms or spaces for clarity. Each room is shown on **Figure 5** and, where the purpose of a room was known, is also shown on the figure. They have been numbered alphanumerically and the number and direction of plate used in the descriptive text are also shown in **Figure 5**.

4.2 Bunker entrance A1

- 4.2.1 The bunker entrance is located on the east side and is approached via a track, now lined with trees (**Plate 1**). The parcel of land in which the bunker has been built was originally a chalk quarry. It is likely that, to save extensive excavation, the existing base of the quarry was used as a foundation level. The bunker was then constructed, predominantly from cast concrete and buried beneath excavated chalk.
- 4.2.2 The entrance is dog-legged in plan with cast concrete walls. The present fenced and gated entrance may be a later feature as they have been adapted to fit the slope of the perimeter fence of the small telecommunications mast standing above the bunker (**Plate 2**). The entrance has a small length of concrete path leading south to the main door (**Plate 3**). The path is flanked by high concrete walls approximately 2 m in height.
- 4.2.3 The main door has a steel plate welded to the outside face. This is considered to be a later security feature as behind the plate are wooden boards fitted to a gate of steel pipework (**Plate 4**). The wooden boards are charred reflecting fire damage, likely due to vandalism. The gate itself is formed from sections of steel pipe fitted together with straight and 'T' collars and hung on iron pintles set into the east wall. The wooden boards are fitted to the gate in a rather light-weight manner as they are only fixed by screws passed

through small wooden fillets. It is possible therefore, that the gate was originally an open grille.

4.3 Bunker entrance A2

4.3.1 From the main doorway, the access turns west and enters a long sloping passage A2 (**Plate 5**). The passage slopes down to the west and measures 18.3 m in length and 1.5 m in width. The floor is cast concrete and the walls and roof were painted white. There was modern lighting conduit running down the ceiling of the passage.

4.4 Entrance lobby B

4.4.1 At the base of passage A2 is lobby entrance B measuring 5 m by 1.52 m (**Figure 5**). This lobby provided a protected and sealable area before entering the main bunker complex. The floor and ceiling are concrete and there are three sets of identical double steel doors which have been identified by Historic England as being decontamination doors, which are believed to date from the 1940s and were to be used in case of a gas attack (Historic England 2015). There is a pair at the base of the sloping passage, the first set of sealable doors (**Plate 6**), a pair leading to generator room C and a pair leading to corridor D1 sealing off the main bunker operational rooms (**Figure 5**).

4.4.2 Originally, the doors were fitted with a seal around their inside edges to make them airtight, but these have subsequently been removed (they may have contained asbestos). Each door has two locking handles on the inside in order to prevent external access if required. Each door also has a small circular glazed view port and carries an embossed maker's plate of 'Haywards Ltd, London SE 1' (**Plate 7**). Door hinges are riveted to the doors and hung on pintle brackets set in steel frames.

4.4.3 In the south-east corner of lobby B is a small square shower base (**Figure 2, Plate 8**). This feature was used as a decontamination shower before entering the main rooms of the bunker. Only the base remains but, there is still a water feed pipe fixed to the south wall.

4.5 Generator room C

4.5.1 The generator room is located on the north side of the lobby and accessed via double steel doors. The generator room measures 4.1 m x 2.9 m (**Figure 5**). The concrete floor steps up on the north side where the main fuel tank and diesel powered generator are positioned (**Plate 9**). The generator is connected to an electrical switchboard on the west wall and was powered by a 'Lister' diesel engine fixed to a base frame with a manufacturer's plate stating the year of manufacture as 1963 (**Plate 10**) suggesting that it was installed when the bunker was converted into a control centre for SDC. The diesel engine is fitted to a Lancashire Dynamo & Crypto Ltd AC generator. The dynamo is not dated but carries a pre-1960 Manchester Trafford Park post district '17'.

4.5.2 Much of the electrical switchboard apparatus appears modern and was likely installed during the 1980s, however, some of the amp and volt meters may be of 1960s date. Other features of note within the generator room include a nine inch (23 cm) 'Vent-Axia' extractor fan high up on the east wall (**Plate 11**). This period feature is possibly pre-1960s in date and probably original. The inside face of the double steel doors was painted brown which may indicate the original colour scheme (**Plate 12**).

4.6 Corridor D1 and D2

4.6.1 Lobby entrance B has two further sealable steel doors on its west side. These lead into a divided access corridor D1 and D2 (**Figure 5**). The east end half (D1) has a raised ceiling

height and the floor is laid with parquet flooring. This corridor section measures 3.7 m in length and 1.5 m in width. The two doors at the east end could seal this area off from the entrance passage (**Plate 13**). The only other access from D1 is into the Communications room E on the south side.

4.6.2 Mid-way along the corridor are double wooden doors set in a wooden frame separating off the west side of the bunker (**Figure 5, Plate 14**). Each door consists of four plain recessed panels set in a wooden frame with simple chamfered architrave, which is typically of government/military buildings of the 1940s. There is a simple mortise lock with replacement plastic handle fitted to the east side.

4.6.3 The west half of the corridor, D2 also has raised ceilings and parquet wooden block flooring (**Figure 5, Plate 15**). It measures 3 m in length and 1.5 m in width. On the west side of the double doors the north door is fitted with top and bottom draw-bolts. Along the south wall of corridor is evidence of shelving in the form of paint scarring. At the west end of D2 there is evidence that there had originally been a second set of double doors between D2 and the control room I. The original hinge rebates have been infilled after the doors were removed.

4.7 Communications room E

4.7.1 The east corridor D1 leads into Communications room E (**Figure 5**), which, together with the room to the south (Situation room H) and a small room (BT room F) in the south-east corner), are later subdivisions of a much larger room.

4.7.2 The present Communications or 'Comms' room is 'L' shaped in plan measuring 4.25 m in length and 4.25 m in width at its widest point and is set out with six typing booths (**Plate 16**) where operators would have say receiving and sending information during a national emergency. A number of remnant period typewriters were observed during the site visit including a Remington Sperry Rand and a Triumph Matura 49. The floor is laid with parquet wooden blocks and original air ducting runs across the raised ceiling.

4.8 BT room F

4.8.1 This small room occupies the south-east corner of the 'Comms room E' and was partitioned off with softwood partition walls (**Figure 5**). It measures 2.35 m long and 1.45 m wide. The room was empty with the only fixtures of interest comprising late 20th century telecom connection points on the west wall (**Plate 17**). The fixtures together with its title: 'BT (presumably British Telecom) room' suggest that the bunker remained as an important communications hub into the late 20th century, which may be a continuation of its original role as a 'post office exchange' as described in the 1954 planning permission. A single air nozzle fed the room with air from the ventilation ducting located in the Comms room E. The door was a plain hardboard type with simple handle.

4.9 Vent plant room G

4.9.1 On the north side of corridor D2 is the Ventilation plant room G (**Figure 5**). This room measures 4.1 m in length and 2.75 m in width. Fitted to the east wall are three air circulation pumps and a late 20th century electrical fuse board (**Plate 18**). This air circulation system must have replaced an earlier system as the galvanised square section ducting was connected to the existing ducting via a reducer (**Plate 19**).

4.9.2 The floor is covered with parquet wooden blocks and, most recently, the room has been used for storage. Part of the stores included a 'Resources boards' (**Plate 20**). These

features were used by the Civil Defence Corps to allocate resources such as ambulances fire-fighting and other services and must date to the post-1963 use of the bunker.

4.10 Situation room H

4.10.1 This room is located mid-way along the south wall of the bunker and accessed from the Comms room E (**Figure 5**). It measures 4.65 m in length and 4.25 m in width. The room was empty at the time of the survey, however, the south wall is lined with fibreboard in order to pin maps and notices to. The floor was covered with parquet flooring and the raised concrete roof has a large concrete supporting beam. Along the south wall at high level is original air ducting with original characteristic cone shaped air nozzle vents (**Plate 21**).

4.10.2 This room has direct access to Control room I and the Dormitory room J (**Plate 22**).

4.11 Control Room I

4.11.1 This is the largest room in the bunker measuring 5.95 m in length and 5.85 m in width (**Figure 5**). At the time of survey, the room was empty but, similar to Situation room I, the north wall was lined with fibreboards in order to pin large area maps to. The flooring was parquet wooden blocks and air ducting vents ran along the east wall (**Plate 23**).

4.11.2 There is direct access into Escape passage K in the north-west corner of this main centre room of the bunker. Along the west side of this room is located the WC L and Kitchen M. The Control room was the focal point of the bunker so all other facilities were arranged around this hub.

4.12 Dormitory J

4.12.1 During a national emergency essential workers would potentially have to spend long periods of time, possibly several days or even weeks, working and living underground in the bunker, thereby requiring dedicated areas for rest. The dormitory room is small measuring 3 m in length and 4.3 m in width. It is located on the west side of the Situation room H and needs to be passed through to access the men's toilets in the south-west corner of the bunker (**Figure 5**).

4.12.2 As elsewhere, the floor is covered in wooden block flooring and serviced by air vents similar to those present elsewhere in the bunker. The room contained steel-framed bunk-beds and mattresses at the time of the survey (**Plate 24**) along with fabric modesty screens to allow some privacy. The door is a plain four panel design.

4.13 Escape passage and shaft K

4.13.1 The escape passage and shaft were deliberately located close to the main operating and living areas of the bunker (**Figure 5**). The passage would originally have been fitted with a sealable decontamination door similar to those in the entrance lobby B, although this has been removed and laid on its side (**Plate 25**). The passage is long and narrow measuring 6 m in length and 0.9 m in width. At the north-west end of the passage is a vertical shaft measuring 0.9 m square and 7.6 m in height with a set of iron ladder rungs set across the angle of the shaft (**Plate 26**). At the surface there is a metal hatch which, since decommissioning, has been welded shut to prevent unauthorised access.

4.14 Women's toilet L

4.14.1 This small toilet is located in the north-west corner of the bunker (**Figure 5**). It measures 3 m in length and 2.2 m in width. This room was organised with a single cubicle

constructed in brick and fitted with a flush toilet (**Plate 27**). There is a single late 20th century hand basin and original floor of red quarry tiles. In the small entrance lobby are original coat hangers (**Plate 28**).

- 4.14.2 The main door is a plain four vertical panel design similar to those seen throughout the bunker.

4.15 Kitchen M

- 4.15.1 The kitchen is located in the centre of the west end of the bunker (**Figure 5**) and measures 4.27 m in length and 3 m in width. The floor is laid with red quarry tiles. At the south end there is a ceramic Belfast sink with wooden draining board and shelving (**Plate 29**). High up on the east wall, and supported by two rolled steel joists (RSJ's), are a set of six galvanised water tanks (**Plate 30**). Copper pipe work runs from these tanks and is fixed across the wall surfaces. The door is a plain four panel design.

4.16 Men's toilet N

- 4.16.1 The men's toilets are located in the south-west corner of the bunker (**Figure 5**). The room measures 3.4 m in length and 3 m in width. The room is fitted with three hand basins and two original brick-built cubicles fitted with replacement late 20th century plastic chemical toilets and 'Patay DD120' hand pumps (**Plate 31**). As in the ladies toilets and kitchen, the floor is covered with red quarry tiles.
- 4.16.2 The doors to the cubicles are similar to that seen elsewhere in the bunker being plain four panel design with Bakelite handles. In similar fashion to the kitchen, four large water tanks are situated high up on the east wall which are supported on RSJ's (**Plate 32**).

4.17 External features

- 4.17.1 Little evidence is visible above ground of the bunker, however, there are three squared concrete structures still extant, which are depicted on the 1953 and subsequent OS mapping (**Figure 2.5**), relating to ventilation and emergency escape. The function of all the shafts is clearly denoted on the August 1973 plan of the bunker (**Figure 4**).
- 4.17.2 Along the north side is a double structure of air and exhaust outlet shafts, one low and one high (**Plate 33**) which have been constructed from cast concrete in timber formers, presumably at the same time as the bunker. The lower shaft has a horizontal rectangular aperture that faces east below an overhanging concrete cap. The higher element measures some 2.4 m in height and has a similar opening at the top, although facing west. The aperture on this side has been enclosed behind a series of metal grills (**Plate 34**). It is thought that the high shaft exhausted fumes from the generator below. The additional height being needed to disperse fumes so that they did not re-enter the fresh air intake.
- 4.17.3 These features are thought to connect with the underground generator room and the air vent plant room located below in the north-east corner of the bunker. They may not be directly over the room below which implies that there is a 'staggered' route for the shafts to follow. It would not be prudent to design an underground protected bunker if assailants could have easy access from the shafts above.
- 4.17.4 The west shaft was located directly above the escape shaft and consisted of a concrete square shaft protruding from the ground surface approximately 1 m in height (**Plate 35**). The metal hatch covering the shaft had been welded shut to prevent unauthorised access.

- 4.17.5 The air inlet shaft for the bunker is located on the south side of the bunker complex and close to the pathway on the north side of the Old Blandford Road. This shaft is approximately 2.5 m in height and similar in appearance to the exhaust shaft (**Plate 36**). This shaft appears located outside the footprint of the bunker below and its approximate position is indicated in the 1973 plan (**Figure 4**).
- 4.17.6 This shaft has been used as part of the boundary around the small telecommunications tower on top of the bunker.

5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1.1 As discussed earlier, despite an exhaustive search for documents relating to the bunker, very few sources were found, although oral history has provided some interesting and unexpected information on the use of the building during the early 1950s.
- 5.1.2 The bunker at Harnham would seem to have been built during World War II as a military or civilian back-up telephone exchange or communications hub, perhaps in case the main telephone exchange was destroyed by enemy action, although there is no firm evidence to support this theory. It's close proximity to Government House is intriguing and suggests that it may have had a purely military rather than civilian purpose. Whatever the reasons for its construction, we know that considerable effort was expended in constructing it and, as Mr Reg Davis recalled, in guarding it, indicating that it housed important military or civil infrastructure.
- 5.1.3 The bunker was fitted out as a bespoke secure facility rather than a public shelter. It is uncertain how the original wartime bunker would have functioned as the building appears to have undergone later redevelopment, although many original features and materials used in its construction remain, including its hard wearing parquet and quarry tile floors and solid utilitarian doors that are typical of the period.
- 5.1.4 Curiously for such an important infrastructure asset, it appears to have been, at least partly, transferred to civilian use by 1950. Most of the people interviewed remember the 'Under the Hill Club' as a vibrant centre for youth activity in the early 1950s and it is somewhat fitting that the bunker is now to be used as a new youth music centre. It is possible that parts of the building were set aside as a Post Office telephone exchange during this period, however, when asked, the people who remember the youth club do not recall its use as such.
- 5.1.5 After this early post-war period, the history of the bunker is rather mixed. The planning application documents from 1954 make for an unusual proposal for the bunker to be used as a carpet beating depot. It is difficult to understand how such a sealed environment could be used to beat carpets, although they may have been stored here for processing elsewhere.
- 5.1.6 Whether it was simply available for use or whether it was compulsorily purchased is unknown, however, we know that the bunker was redeveloped by Salisbury District Council as a Civil Defence Control Centre during 1962-3. Several of the features from this period, such as resources chalk boards, typewriters, phone booths, bunk beds and water tanks likely date from this period.
- 5.1.7 The bunker appears to have continued to be kept in a state of readiness until the end of the Cold War and appears to have undergone refurbishment as late as the 1980s. Power, light and heat were all provided in case the bunker was needed and are the reason behind

its good state of preservation today. Externally, the bunker provides a platform for a modern telecommunications mast, reflecting a continuation of one of its earlier roles.

- 5.1.8 The Harnham Bunker is an evocative building giving an interesting insight into the response to nuclear threat during the Cold War. Such buildings are a rare and little known resource and the future use and maintenance of the bunker will ensure that it survives for many years to come. Its use as a modern centre for youth development, is also a reminder of the more peaceful side of its history and a fitting conclusion to this enigmatic feature of Harnham.

6 STORAGE AND CURATION

6.1 Museum

- 6.1.1 Following approval by the AAOWC, a copy of the final report will be supplied to the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre (SHC) and the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record (HER).

6.2 Archive

- 6.2.1 The complete site archive includes paper records and digital photographic records. No other depositable archives were generated during the project. Any relevant archive will be deposited, in due course, with the WSHC, under Site Code **112250**. The archive will fully conform with the standards for deposition required and will be appropriately stored.
- 6.2.2 Details of the Site will be submitted online to the OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations) database.

6.3 Copyright

- 6.3.1 Wessex Archaeology shall retain full copyright of this report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved, excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the Client for the use of the report by the Client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the specification. Any document produced to meet planning requirements may be copied for development control, planning and educational purposes without recourse to the Copyright owner, the copyright owner to be given full acknowledgment in any reproduction of material.
- 6.3.2 This report and the archive generally, may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. All remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of this report.

6.4 Security Copy

- 6.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.
- 6.4.2 For small projects we may retain only digital copy of the records. The digital records will be submitted to the SHC, with a copy retained in the Wessex Archaeology security-copied

and backed-up digital archive storage facility, under its designated Wessex Archaeology project code 112250.

7 REFERENCES

7.1 Bibliography

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Catford, Nick, 2013, *Cold War Bunkers, Subterranean Britain* Folly Books

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Wessex Archaeology, 2016, *Harnham Bunker, Old Blandford Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire, Written Scheme of Investigation*, unpublished client report, reference: T10789.01

8 SOURCES

Wiltshire & Swindon Heritage Centre

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1881 Wilts Sheet LXVI .15 1:2,500

1901 Wilts Sheet LXVI .15 1:2,500

1925 Wilts Sheet LXVI .15 1:2,500

1937 Wilts Sheet LXVI .15 1:2,500

1953 Wilts Sheet LXVI .15 1:2,500 Revised Sep-Oct 1951

Salisbury District Survey of existing Civil Defence - County Sub-Control, Harnham

Item marked 51 02/7 Drawing Number L.1187 August 1973 Drawn by C. D. Scale plan & section 1:100

Cat No G23/132/196 Civil Defence Earmarking of Premises 1949-57

Cat No G23/132/197 Civil Defence Dispersal 1954 -1966

Cat No G23/231/5 Civil Defence Organisation 1960-62 + Booklet

Cat No G23/100/69 Salisbury City Council Minutes 1962-63 Civil Defence Committee 31 May 1962 item 269 Disused Telephone Exchange Old Blandford Road

Salisbury Library



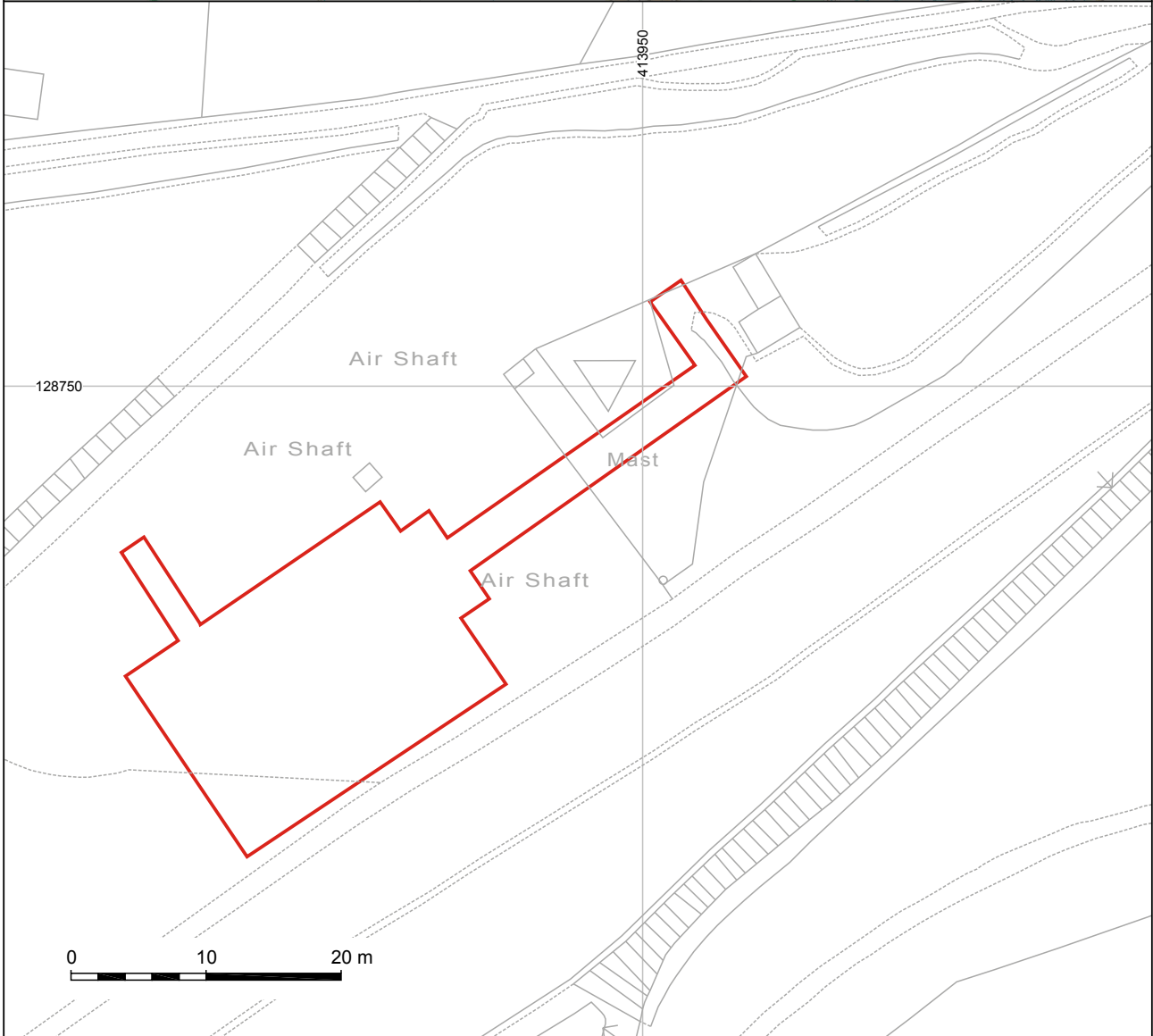
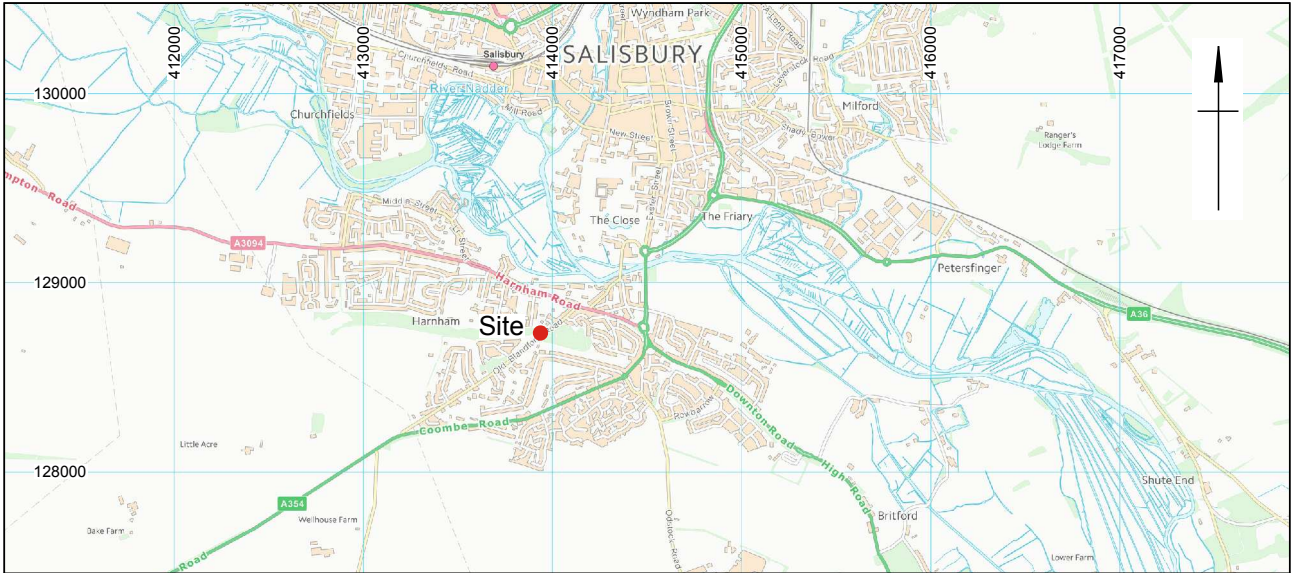
Harnham Historical Miscellany, Sarum Studies 4 Edited by Jane Howells 2013



Kelly's Trade Directories 1944, 1947, 1950, 1953, 1956, 1959, 1962, 1964

Online sources

http://www.subbrit.org.uk/rsg/sites/s/salisbury_ud_control/index.html

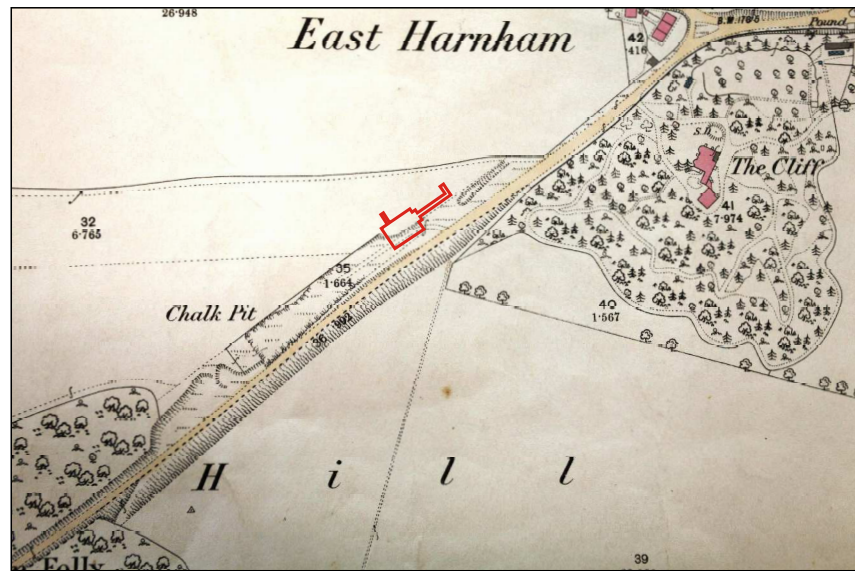
Accessed: February 2016



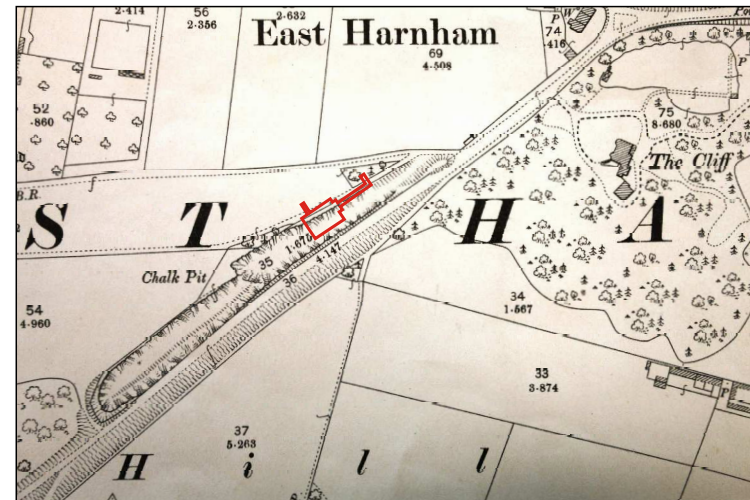
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Site location plan

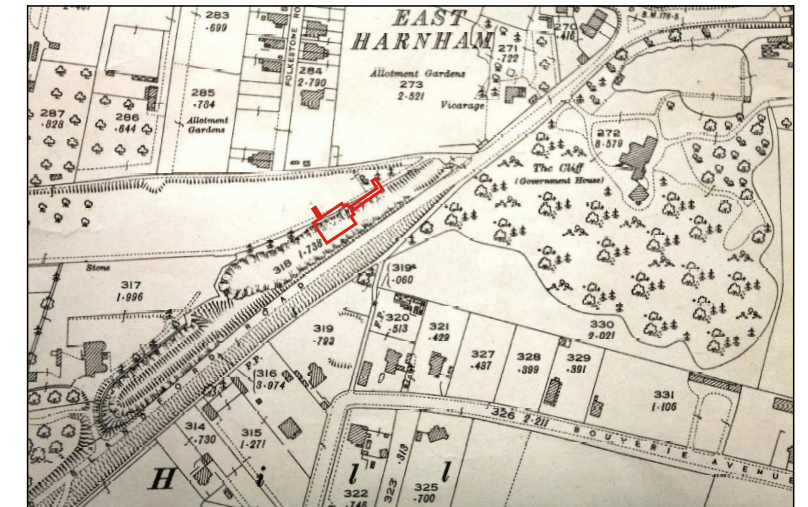
Figure 1



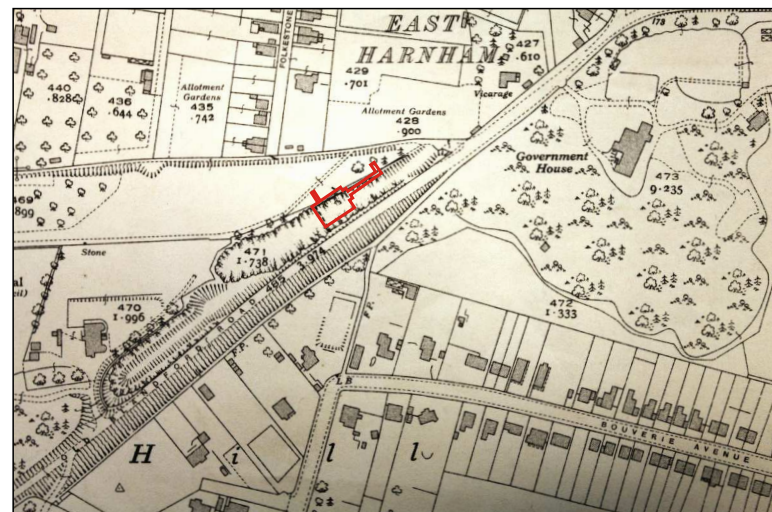
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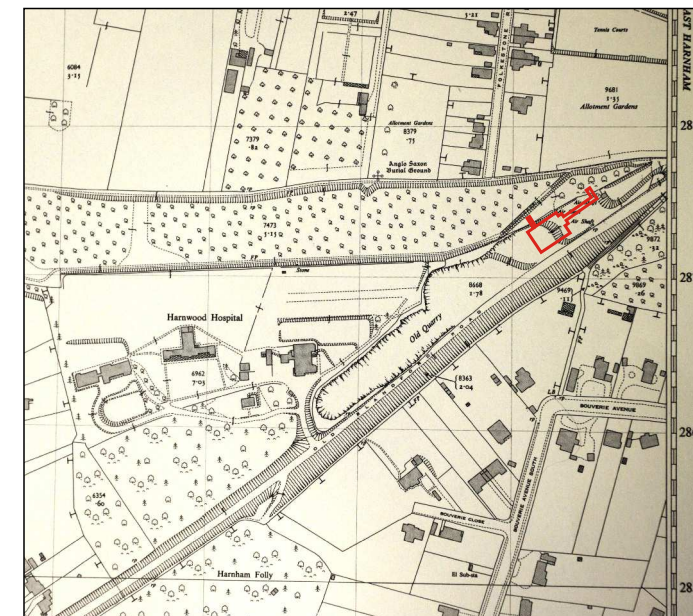
2.2: 1901 OS map



2.3: 1925 OS map



2.4: 1937 OS map



2.5: 1953 OS map

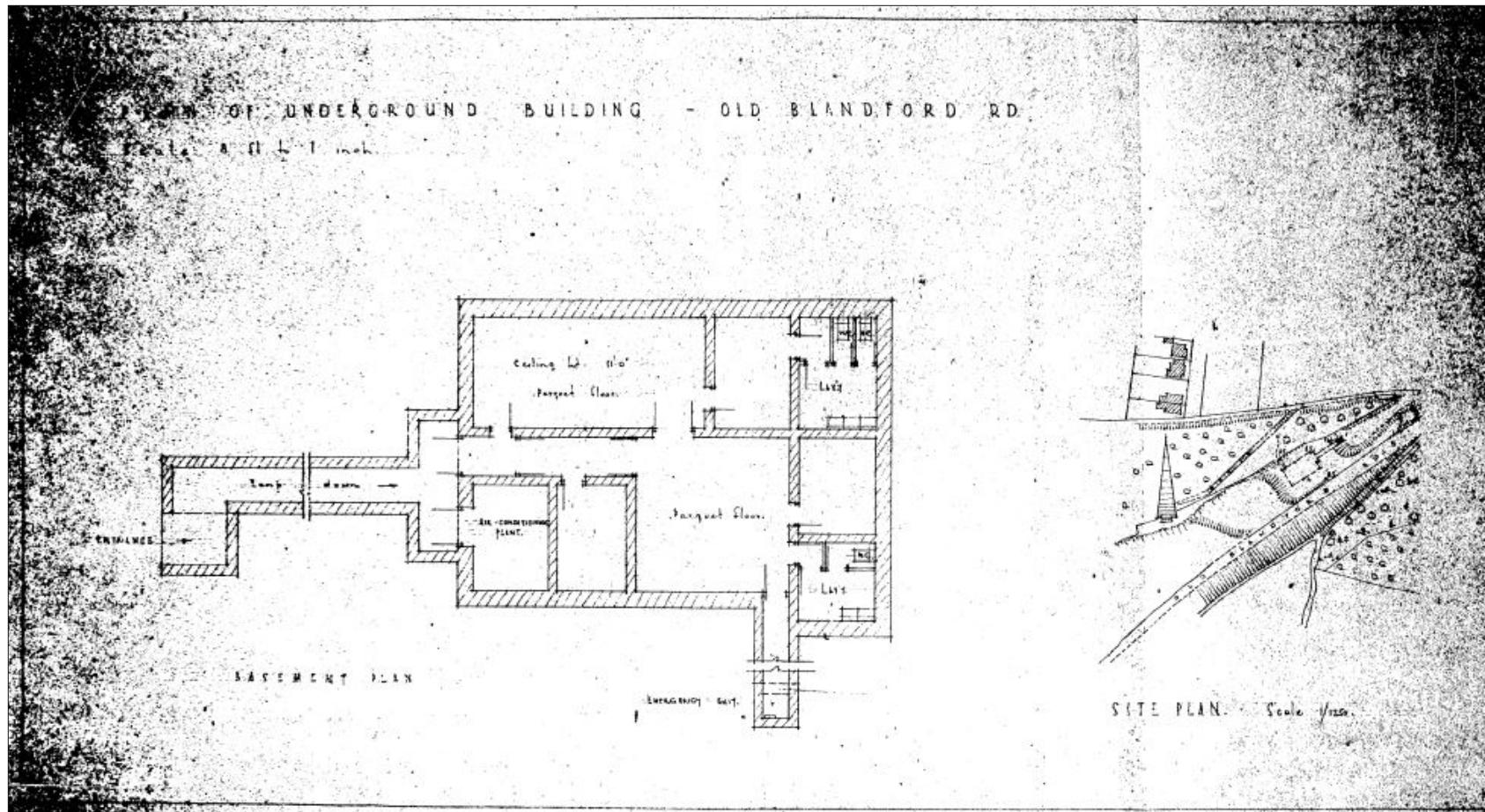



Site

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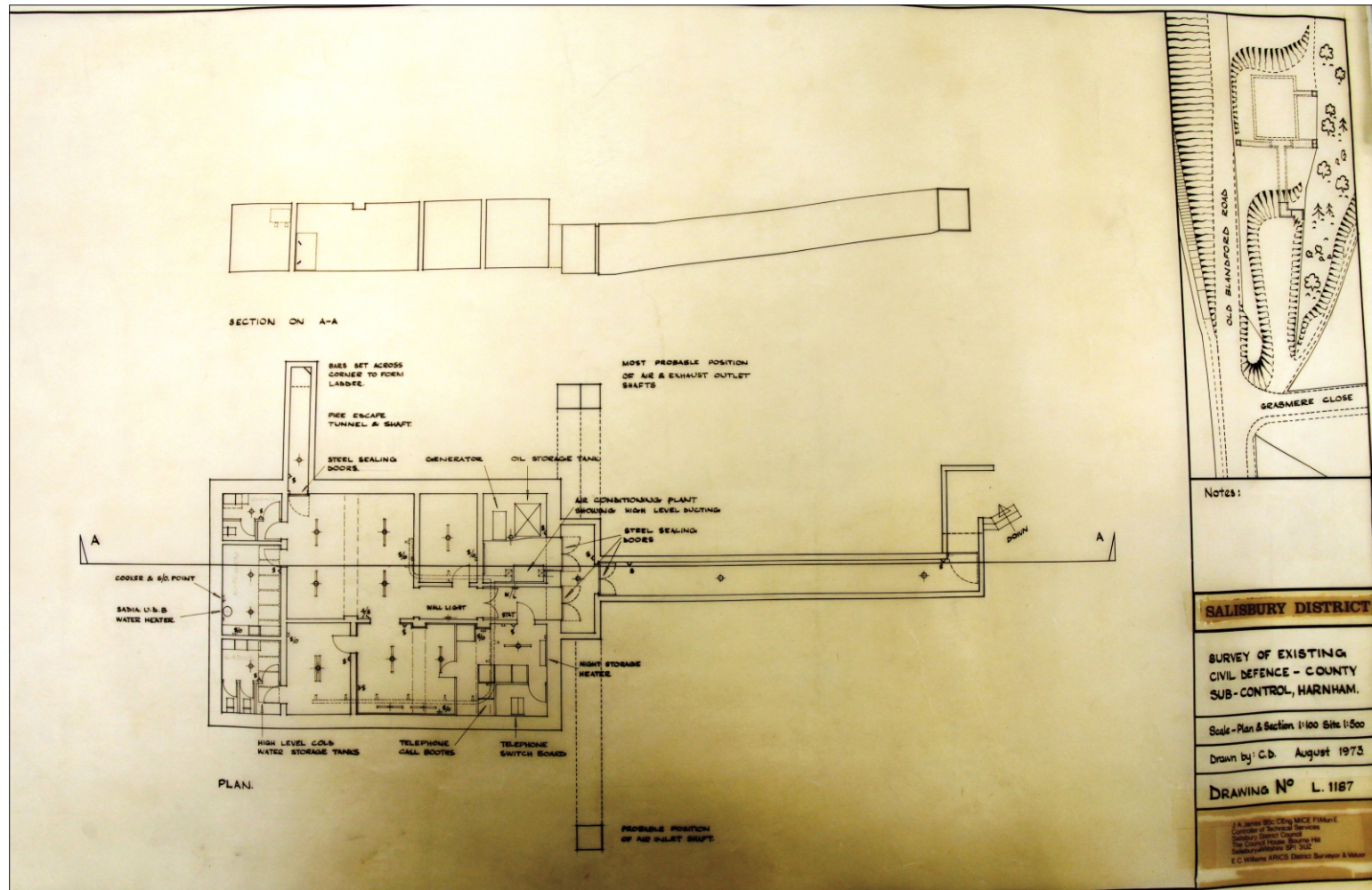
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Plan of bunker attached to Planning Application dated 1954

Figure 3



Notes:

SALISBURY DISTRICT


SURVEY OF EXISTING CIVIL DEFENCE - COUNTY SUB-CONTROL, HARNHAM.

Scale - Plan & Section 1:100 Site 1:500

Drawn by: C.B. August 1973

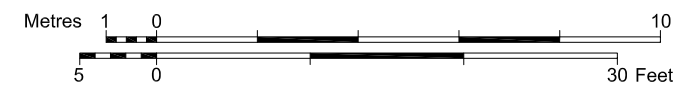
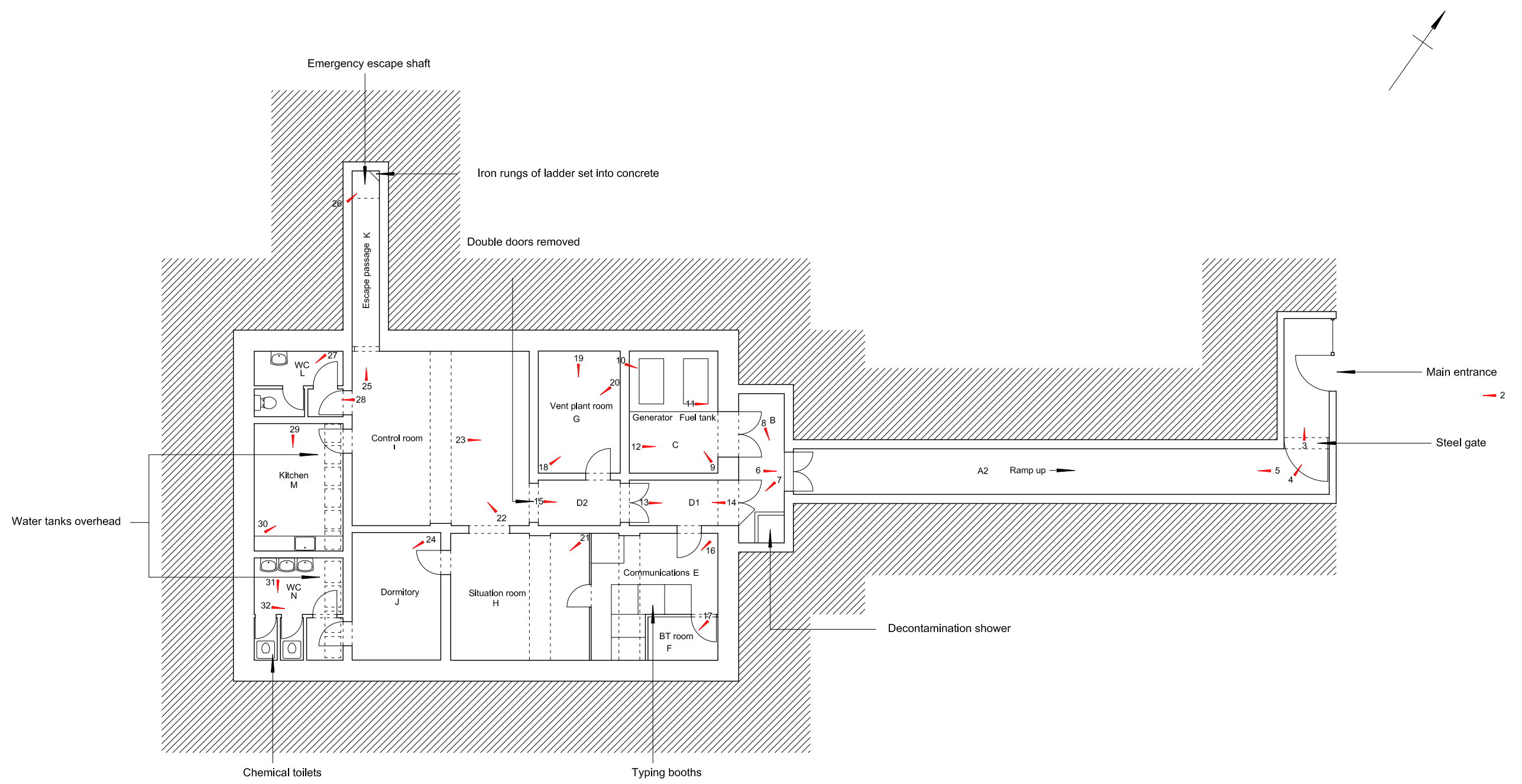
DRAWING No L. 1167


A British 1900 CEILING MICE FINISH
 Considered of Historical Importance
 Salisbury District Council
 The Council House, Bevington Hill
 Salisbury Wiltshire SP1 3JZ
 E.C. Wilkins ARCHITECTS District Surveyors & Valuers

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1973 Survey of existing Civil Defence-County Sub-Control, Harnham

Figure 4



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Annotated scaled plan of bunker

Figure 5



Plate 1: Looking west along access track to entrance of bunker



Plate 2: Fenced and gated Bunker entrance A1


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Plate 3: Entrance path A1 viewed from main doorway



Plate 4: Steel pipe entrance gate viewed from interior

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Plate 5: Entrance passage A2 viewed from east



Plate 6: Sealable doors at base of entrance passage A2

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Plate 7: Detail of manufacturer's plate on sealable doors



Plate 8: Decontamination shower base in lobby B


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Plate 9: Generator room C showing fuel tank generator and switch board



Plate 10: Generator diesel engine manufacturer's plate dated 1963


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Plate 11: Vent-Axia extractor fan in generator room C



Plate 12: Generator room C inside face of doors original colour scheme


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Plate 13: Corridor D1 showing sealed doors and parquet flooring



Plate 14: Corridor D1 showing wooden doors at west end

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Plate 15: Corridor D2 showing west side of doors and shelving scar to right



Plate 16: Communication Room E showing typing booths


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Plate 17: Telecom Room F



Plate 18: Air Ventilation plant room G showing modern circulation pumps


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Plate 19: Plant room G showing reducer from new to old ducting



Plate 20: Plant room G showing Civil Defence Corp Resources boards


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Plate 21: Situation room H showing fibre board wall and air ducting vents



Plate 22: Control room I showing fibre board covered wall and access to escape tunnel


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Plate 23: Control room I detail of cone air vents



Plate 24: Dormitory J


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Plate 25: Entrance to escape passage K showing removed steel door



Plate 26: Escape shaft K looking up and showing angled ladder rungs set in concrete


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Plate 27: Women's toilet L



Plate 28: Original coat hangers in women's toilet L


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Plate 29: Kitchen M sink and draining board



Plate 30: Kitchen M Water tanks


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Plate 31: Toilet N cubicles fitted with plastic toilets



Plate 32: Water tanks in toilet N


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Plate 33: North-east concrete double vents showing low air intake and high level exhaust shaft



Plate 34: North-east high exhaust vent with cover grills



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Plate 35: Top of escape hatch shaft north-west



Plate 36: South vent shaft

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