

WALTHAM ABBEY
ACADEMIC ADVISORY
BOARD MANUAL

WASC
RDX

III. RDX building

Brief History

- 1) The buildings in the RDX section were erected during the late 1930s to manufacture the experimental high explosive RDX. The research Department, Woolwich and Waltham Abbey were instrumental in developing the manufacturing process. This process was later given to the Americans by the Tizzard mission in 1940.

Practicalities

- 1) We propose that one building and all the small equipment (1 or 2 remote electric motors) in this area are kept.
- 2) The buildings are of a light steel frame construction covered by asbestos sheeting.
- 3) We advise that the asbestos sheeting should be disposed of by the South Site decontamination project and that only the steel frame (?and wooden fittings?) should be moved to north site. This could be lifted whole, or preferably numbered and dismantled.

Importance to the project

- 1) We believe the RDX used in the bouncing bombs was produced at Waltham Abbey in these buildings.
- 2) The building could be used as a centre piece to develop the theme of Anglo/American defence co-operation during and after the war.
- 3) The building could be used as a centre piece in an exhibition to examine the relationship between the Research Department Woolwich and Waltham Abbey, generally and particularly during the inter-war years.
- 4) It illustrates a type of explosives building not represented in the North Site assemblage.
- 5) We believe the precision high explosives used in the post-war British and American nuclear programme were produced in these buildings.

B. ARTEFACTS

(i) Larger artefacts

(a) Horizontal Press

Manufactured by Greenwood and Batley

The Greenwood and Batley Horizontal Press is of a type manufactured in the late 1930s to extrude large diameter cordite charges. Machines of this type were first installed at the Royal Naval Cordite Factory Holton Heath, Dorset about 1936.