

1137/0/10041

HMS DAEDALUS
Building No 119 (Westcliffe
House and attached terrace
walls)

GV

II

Large detached villa, formerly Officers' Mess and WRNS Officers' accommodation. Dated 1904 on W-facing stack. Flemish bond red brickwork with limestone dressings, some tile-hanging, and various built-in terracotta panels: decorative half-timbering to 3 gables. Plain tile roofs.

PLAN: A compact villa with service wing, 2 storeys, attic and basement, with principal entrance to the E, opposite the later Officers' Mess (qv), and with a small covered verandah to the S, leading to the terrace and steps. A broad entrance hall runs through the full depth of the house to a generous open-well staircase at the rear, flanked by the principal reception rooms; a deep service wing projects to the rear, right side.

EXTERIOR: The elevations are complex, with large plate-glass sashes. The entrance (E) front has, near centre, a broad panelled hardwood door with overlight, in a stone surround with Ionic three-quarter columns to a bold shell hood above an entablature, all to a short flight of steps. To the left is a small light, then an external eaves stack, carried on a corbel at first-floor height, with a terracotta panel, and tied back to the main roof slope with gabled weathering. Above the door is a paired sash with stone mullion, and a small 2-light gabled dormer. To the right is a paired sash with brick mullion, and at ground floor a canted bay with paired mullion to central stone mullion, but brick piers with stone caps and bases to the mullions at the ends and to the single sash returns; this all to a stone entablature with central pediment, and a brick balustrade with swept stone copings to a small balcony. The gabled return, right, has a further stack, the, at a slightly lower roof level, the set-back service wing. The twin gabled S front has canted bays detailed as for the E side, but conjoined by a continuous stone entablature, with 3 slender stone Ionic columns on small pedestals, fronting the verandah. Above the small balustraded balconies are 3 tall sashes, left and a paired sash with stone mullion, right; at the centre is a deep air of casements to a stone mullion. The rear wall to the veranda was one sash, and a blocked former doorway.

The W front has a complex wide eaves stack, with terracotta panel, and a small sash at ground floor, left. Then a wide tile-hung gable, with panel dated 1904, above a large 3-light sash, and a shallow square bay in 4 lights, with slender stone mullions, and a small central segmental pediment, all beneath a sweep of tile-hanging. This bay, like the others, includes Art Nouveau coloured glazing at the top of the lights. The ground falls away on this side of the house, and there is a deep plinth to brick offsets.

INTERIOR: A richly detailed interior includes original deep moulded skirtings, dado rail, picture rail, and moulded cornices, with brass fittings to 6-panelled doors in moulded architraves and complex heads. The entrance hall has a mosaic floor, Art Nouveau glass to a screen, and is dominated by a large fireplace with over mantel mirror, and Ionic columns to a shell niche. The staircase has alternative carved and turned balusters, and a panelled dado; service stair of simpler design. There is an electric range of fireplace styles, from Adam to Jacobean, with cast iron grates, from classical to Art Nouveau.

HISTORY: This is a characteristically exuberant Edwardian design, carried out in rich materials and with varied decorative external detail in stonework and terracotta; the interior has especially luxuriant trim. The house, which stood in generous grounds, was requisitioned in 1917 when the site was developed for military use, and has added interest on account of its close proximity to the much larger replacement Officers' Mess of 1933 (qv).

HMS Daedalus is a site which - in its diversity of technical and evolved domestic architecture - survives as the most complete surviving example of a seaplane base in Britain. There are buildings on the site which - whilst they might have experienced some alteration in the form, for example, of replacement windows - have significance as part of the overall grouping.



Established in 1917 as a temporary naval seaplane training school, this was first developed as a satellite to the Royal Naval Air Service base at Calshot, on the opposite (west) side of Southampton Water. In 1918 the RAF took over its administration, and in the 1920s training continued for the newly-formed Fleet Air Arm, training pilots for warship and later armed merchant cruisers in the Battle of the Atlantic. The site is immediately adjacent to the Solent, but severed from it by a road (Marine Parade).

Lt J G N Clifts was responsible for a number of buildings on the site from 1918, including the Power House of 1918. The whole base is closely woven into the adjacent suburban roads, houses predating 1917 being either demolished or reused: the most notable amongst these is Westcliffe House, a characteristic example of how early seaplane bases requisitioned earlier properties for use as officers' messes. A major rebuilding was undertaken after 1931 when the base became Coastal Area HQ. The most architecturally distinguished building relating to this phase is the officers' mess, a fine and unique composition by which fronts onto a large grassed area to its south. This is bounded to its SE side by a group of married quarters in the Garden City style characteristic of RAF expansion up to 1934. To the north is the station guardhouse (a 1926 design), institute and barracks square of 1932-5. Further additions in 1939 included the H-plan barracks blocks and Eagle Block, which served as HQ of Coastal Command until August 1939.

(Francis, P: HMS Daedalus, Report for Hampshire County Council, July 1996)

Dated: - 1st December 2005

Signed by authority of the
Secretary of State

