

**Department of Historic Resources  
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

**Accomack**

**DHR Id#: 001-0027-0119**

**Resource Identification**

Property Name(s): ..... WFF # Y-050 – Rocket Test Cell {Current}  
 Property Date: ..... 1950  
 Address(s): ..... Island Road {Current}  
 County/Independent City: Accomack  
 Vicinity of: ..... Chincoteague  
 State, Zip: ..... Virginia 23337  
 USGS Quad Name: ..... WALLOPS ISLAND  
 Surrounding area: ..... Rural

**National Register Eligibility Status**

Property is Historic (50 years or older)

**Resource Description**

Ownership Status: ..... Public - Federal  
 Acreage: ..... 0.5

**Primary Resource Exterior Component Description:**

<u>Component</u>	<u>Comp Type/Form</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Material Treatment</u>
Chimneys		Concrete	Chimneys - Block
Foundation	Foundation - Slab	Concrete	Foundation - Poured
Porch	Porch - Flat	Concrete	other
Roof	Roof - Flat		Roof - Not visible
Structural System	Structural System - Masonry	Concrete	other
Windows	other		other

Site Description: ..... Located south of Island Access Road behind Y-45 (001-0027-0118).

<u>WUZIT Count:</u>		
<u>No.</u>	<u>Wuzit Types</u>	<u>Historic?</u>
1	Laboratory	Historic

NR Resource Count:

**Individual Resource Information**

WUZIT: ..... Laboratory

Est. Date of Construction: .... 1950 {Owner/written data}      Accessed? ..... Yes  
Primary Resource? ..... Yes      Number of Stories: ..... 2.0  
Architectural Style: ..... Other      Condition: ..... Good  
Interior Plan Type: ..... Irregular      Threats to Resource: ..... None Known

**Description:** The building has a poured concrete slab foundation and a flat roof; the roof materials are not visible. A one-story section abuts the north side of the two-story section, which contains a large door opening on the east and west elevations. The opening on the west contains an aluminum roll top door while the opening on the east is filled with a large yellow fiberglass pattern, arranged in a block pattern; the fiberglass panel is likely a later alteration. On the east elevation, two concrete steps lead up to two adjacent steel doors placed beneath a concrete canopy. Located in the corner where the two sections abut one another, the two doors, which are separated by a concrete wall, provide access to the interior of the two sections. On the second story, the north elevation contained a series of window openings with aluminum frames that have been boarded up. One opening contains a short door that provides access onto the roof of the one-story section. A tall masonry chimney rises from the north elevation of the one-story section and is flanked by round exhaust vent caps on each side. A similar vent is found in the upper east corner of the south elevation. On the west, a small, fixed-pane window with a metal frame is recessed into the thick concrete walls; the window has been blocked in. A concrete wall about the same length as the building, with east and west sides that taper inward, is placed to the immediate east. On the east side there is a mounting apparatus constructed out of steel I-beams and set into the ground. The apparatus may have been used in the testing of igniters and squibs. The concrete wall protected the building from any possible explosion.

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*Cemetery Information*

*Bridge Information*

*National Register Eligibility Information*

*Historic Context(s):* ..... Technology/Engineering

*Historic Time Period(s):*..... S- The New Dominion (1941- Present)

*Significance Statement:* This two-story building was built in 1950 and was part of the second phase of permanent NACA construction efforts on Wallops Island. The building originally housed technicians and a work area for checkout and testing of igniters and squibs (explosive devices used in rocket ignition). The interior had a space for housing liquid rocket engines with a test cell and an observation room separated by a concrete wall with a special periscopic mirror viewing system. A concrete wall was built on the east side of the building in case of accidental explosions. Only one rocket engine was tested in the cell; later uses include testing of other fuel types and tanks and to house a dynamic balancing machine, used in the preparation of payloads. The building is now part of WFF and is currently used for storage. It is located on Wallops Island on the west side of Island Road within a fenced area. The building is located at the end of an access road that runs perpendicular to Island Road and is surrounded on the south and west sides by dense vegetation.

The building is associated with a technology/engineering property type built during the New Dominion Period (1945 – present) period. The building was constructed as a component of a rocket research facility operated by the Pilotless Aircraft Research Station (PARS) under the direction of NACA from 1946 to 1958. Until becoming part of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in 1958, PARS functioned as a rocket research facility that continually refined its capacity to collect aeronautic and scientific data through improvements in radar tracking, radio telemetry, and photographic techniques that provided significant data for the development of Cold War missile technology and manned spaceflight during the Space Race.

The Rocket Test Cell has been evaluated both as a contributing resource in a historic district and as an individual resource. Issues of significance, integrity, and district boundaries were carefully considered. A proposed district comprising this resource lacks integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association due to the demolition of many of the buildings from the period of significance (1936 to 1959), the removal of much of the historic fabric from the majority of extant buildings, and the construction of later buildings. Thus a historic district here is not eligible under Criterion A, B, C, or D.

The resource is not eligible for listing in the National Register or the Virginia Landmarks Register under Criterion A, B, C, or D. It does not by itself sufficiently embody a quality of significance associated with events in order to be eligible under Criterion A, nor does it sufficiently embody a quality of significance associated with a person in order to be eligible under Criterion B. While the resource retains its location, setting and association, alterations to the building have adversely affected its integrity of design, materials, workmanship and feeling, including the in-fill of original openings and the replacement of original windows and doors. Therefore the resource is not eligible under Criterion C as it does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values, or represent a significant or distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. This property does not have the potential for providing additional information in history or prehistory under Criterion D.

*Bibliographic Documentation*

**Department of Historic Resources  
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**DHR Id#: 001-0027-0119**

*Reference #:* 1

*Bibliographic RecordType:* ..... Book

*Author:* ..... Joseph Adams Shortal

*Citation Abbreviation:* .....

*Notes:* ..... Shortal, Joseph Adams. "A New Dimension—Wallops Island Flight Test Range: The First Fifteen Years." National Aeronautics and Space Administration Scientific and Technical Information Office: 1978.

***Ownership Information***

***Graphic Media Documentation***

<i>Medium</i>	<i>Depository ID #</i>	<i>Photo Depository</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>File Name</i>
35MM B&W	21540	DHR	2004/07/99	Frames 10-12

***Cultural Resource Management (CRM) Events***

*CRM Event # 1,*

*Cultural Resource Management Event:* ..... Reconnaissance Survey

*Date:* ..... 2004/07/99

*Organization or Person:* ..... URS Group

*VDHR Project ID # Associated with Event:* .. 2003-0571

*CRM Event Notes or Comments:* ..... 200 Orchard Ridge Drive, Suite 101  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

*CRM Event # 2,*

*Cultural Resource Management Event:* ..... Reconnaissance Survey

*Date:* ..... 2003/08/08

*Organization or Person:* ..... URS Group

*VDHR Project ID # Associated with Event:* .. 2003-0571

*CRM Event Notes or Comments:* ..... 7101 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 700  
Bethesda, MD 20814