

CAPE CANAVERAL AIR FORCE STATION,  
SOLAR ARRAY TEST BUILDING  
Northwest of Hangar Road, between NASA Parkway  
and Skid Strip Road  
Cape Canaveral  
Brevard County  
Florida

HABS No. FL-583-E

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Historic American Building Survey  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
100 Alabama Street, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### CAPE CANAVERAL AIR FORCE STATION, SOLAR ARRAY TEST BUILDING

HABS No. FL-583-E

**Location:** Northwest side of Hangar Road, Cape Canaveral Air Force Station (CCAFS)  
(between NASA Parkway and Skid Strip Road)  
Cape Canaveral, Brevard County, Florida

**Significance:** The Solar Array Test Building (Building No. 60540), constructed in 1966, is considered a contributing resource to a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)-owned CCAFS Industrial Area Historic District (Figure A-1), which is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, in the area of Space Exploration, and under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture. The Solar Array Test Building contributes to this district for its association with unmanned spacecraft testing and checkout in nearby hangars (Criterion A) and as a representative example of the utilitarian industrial architecture that defines the CCAFS Industrial Area (Criterion C).<sup>1</sup>

**Description:** The Solar Array Test Building is located approximately 590' northwest of Hangar Road, off of the parking area behind Hangar AM (Figure No. A-1). The building is a one-story masonry structure with approximately 1,186 square feet of space. Its longitudinal axis is oriented about 35 degrees east of due north; for ease of reference, the description will assume the longitudinal axis follows true north. A 30'-long, asphalt-paved access road extends from the parking area to the east side of the building. A concrete sidewalk leads from the road to each of the personnel entrances (Figure No. B-2).

The Solar Array Test Building is a rectangular structure with approximate overall dimensions of 76' in length (north-south), 26' in width (east-west), and 18' in height. The facility is comprised of two sections: an enclosed area to the south and an open framework to the north. The exterior walls of the enclosed portion are comprised of reinforced concrete columns and beams with concrete block infill. In general, the east and west elevations (Photo Nos. 1 and 3, respectively) of the building are divided into four 10'-4"-wide bays, and the north and south elevations (Photo Nos. 2 and 5, respectively) are divided into two 12'-6"-wide bays.

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<sup>1</sup> David Price, "Architectural Survey and Evaluation of NASA-owned Facilities on Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Brevard County, Florida" (survey report, New South Associates, Stone Mountain, GA, 2014), 62.

CAPE CANAVERAL AIR FORCE STATION,  
SOLAR ARRAY TEST BUILDING  
HABS No. FL-583-E  
Page No. 2

The east elevation of the Solar Array Test Building (Photo Nos. 1, 2, 5) serves as the principle façade of the building. The main entrance, a pair of one-light aluminum swing doors, sits roughly in the center of the building and is accented by a projecting concrete lintel. To the south of this entrance, in line with the access road, is a pair of aluminum bay doors that are 5'-3" in width and 12' in height; these larger doors (Photo No. 6) allowed solar array components and testing equipment to be brought into the building. Near the south end of the east elevation is another personnel entrance, a single aluminum swing door with no windows. The only other exterior door is a single aluminum swing door with a louver on the west elevation that provides access to the facility's mechanical room. There are no window openings on the building, but there is a louver on the north elevation to provide ventilation for the mechanical room. In addition, a non-original opening is on the west elevation above the door; research did not indicate when or why this opening was created.

The interior of the Solar Array Test Building was designed to contain three rooms: a test area at the south, a control room to the north and east, and a mechanical room in the northwest corner. The test area (Photo Nos. 8, 9) measures roughly 34' in length and 24' in width. It has exposed concrete block walls and a 6"-thick poured concrete slab floor with a layer of concrete hardener applied to its top surface. This space features a retractable roof comprised of steel beams supporting a 3"-thick concrete slab. The east and west ends of the roof are fitted with two 72"-diameter forged steel wheels that roll along a track attached to the top of the walls (Photo Nos. 7, 10). Near each wheel is an anchor to keep the roof locked in place. When the roof is in the open position, it is supported by the framework at the north end of the facility. The framework is comprised of reinforced poured concrete columns and beams (Photo Nos. 2, 3). At the time of documentation, the test area contained steel shelving units along the south wall, a desk and electrical controls on the east wall, a line of hooks near the top of the east wall, and a partitioned area with a mezzanine in the northwest corner (Photo No. 12). The mezzanine is fitted with a wood safety fence along the east and south and is accessible by a wall-mounted wood ladder; research did not indicate when this room was installed.

The control room (Photo No. 13) measures approximately 18' in length and 10' in width. It has exposed concrete block walls, a 4"-thick poured concrete slab floor, and an acoustical tile ceiling. The south wall features an 8'-wide, 2'-high observation window that provided visual access to the test area before the partitioned room was installed; below the window near the floor are seven 4"-diameter sleeves, through which wiring could be run between the control equipment and the component being tested. This wall also contains a single aluminum swing door into the test area to provide physical access between the

two rooms. At the time of documentation, the control room had a sink in the northwest corner and a cork board and white board on the north wall.

The mechanical room (Figures A-4, A-5) has approximate dimensions of 10' in length and 5' in width. It has exposed concrete block walls, a 4"-thick poured concrete slab floor, and an exposed concrete roof. At the time of documentation, it had electrical panels and conduits on its north and east walls and air handling equipment to the south.

History: In May 1949, President Harry S. Truman signed the legislation to officially establish the Joint Long Range Proving Ground at Cape Canaveral; after numerous name changes, it became Cape Canaveral Air Force Station (CCAFS) circa 1973.<sup>2</sup> Construction of the various facilities at the station, including Port Canaveral and Launch Complexes (LCs) 1, 2, 3, and 4, began in July 1950, under the direction of the Jacksonville District of the United States (US) Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). Although not fully completed, the Army conducted the first successful launch from CCAFS, a Bumper rocket from LC 3, on July 24, 1950.<sup>3</sup>

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, Air Force activities at CCAFS focused on winged cruise missile research and development as a deterrent force in the weapons race between the US and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).<sup>4</sup> Over time, the southern area of CCAFS was developed for launching intermediate range ballistic missiles, and the northern area was developed for launching intercontinental ballistic missiles and space launch vehicles.<sup>5</sup>

In 1955, President Dwight D. Eisenhower announced that the United States would launch an unmanned satellite as part of the nation's participation in the International Geophysical Year, which was planned for July 1957 through

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<sup>2</sup> Cliff Lethbridge, "The History of Cape Canaveral," *Spaceline.org*, 2012, <http://www.spaceline.org/capehistory.html>. For ease of reference, it will be referred to as CCAFS (Cape Canaveral Air Force Station) throughout the text.

<sup>3</sup> Harry A. Butowsky, *National Historic Landmark Federal Agency Nomination, Cape Canaveral Air Force Station* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1983), 7-3 and 7-4; Lethbridge, "Cape Canaveral."

<sup>4</sup> Charles D. Benson and William B. Faherty, *Gateway to the Moon. Building the Kennedy Space Center Launch Complex* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2001), 6, 25; E.R. Bramlitt, *History of Canaveral District 1950-1971* (South Atlantic Division, US Army Corps of Engineers, 1971); Jacob Neufeld, *The Development of Ballistic Missiles in the United States Air Force, 1945-1960* (Washington, DC: USAF, Office of Air Force History, 1990), 239.

<sup>5</sup> Barton and Levy, *Cape Canaveral Air Force Station*, 4, 9; Denise P. Messick, Cynthia G. Rhodes, and Charles E. Cantley, *45<sup>th</sup> Space Wing Cultural Resource Management Plan*, Technical Report No. 386 (Stone Mountain, GA: New South Associates, 1996), 95; James N. Gibson, *Nuclear Weapons of the United States: An Illustrated History* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, Ltd., 2000).

December 1958. Initially, the US Navy's Project Vanguard was chosen to complete this task. However, after the successful Soviet launches of Sputnik I (October 4, 1957) and Sputnik II (November 3, 1957), and the failure of Vanguard's first attempt to launch a satellite (December 6, 1957), President Eisenhower and the Department of Defense approved the Army's Explorer Project.<sup>6</sup> The United States successfully entered the space race with the launch of the Army's scientific satellite Explorer I from CCAFS on January 31, 1958, using a four stage Jupiter C missile named Juno I.<sup>7</sup>

Realizing that the military's involvement in the space program would jeopardize the goal of using space for peaceful purposes, the President's Science Advisory Committee urged that a centralized agency be created to oversee the scientific exploration of space. The new agency, NASA, was established on October 1, 1958, as a civilian agency with the mission of carrying out scientific aeronautical and space exploration activities for both manned and unmanned programs. Several Army facilities at CCAFS were given to the agency, including various offices and hangars, as well as LCs 5, 6, and 26.<sup>8</sup> On March 15, 1960, President Eisenhower officially transferred the Army's Development Operations Division to NASA, naming the new installation the George C. Marshall Space Flight Center. This transfer included the Division's Missile Firing Laboratory stationed at CCAFS, which was designated as the Launch Operations Directorate on July 1, 1960.<sup>9</sup>

On May 25, 1961, sixteen days after the flight of Alan Shepard, President John F. Kennedy charged NASA with putting a man on the Moon by the end of the decade. Subsequently, NASA established the Merritt Island Launch Area directly west of CCAFS, from which the Apollo lunar missions would be launched. On March 7, 1962, NASA announced the Launch Operations Directorate would be an independent field installation, called the Launch Operations Center, effective July 1, 1962. Eventually, the Merritt Island Launch Area incorporated the Launch Operations Center as part of its jurisdiction; the entirety was renamed the John F. Kennedy Space Center (KSC) in November 1963 following the death of the President. KSC became NASA's primary Center for vehicle processing,

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<sup>6</sup> Benson and Faherty, *Gateway to the Moon*, 1-2.

<sup>7</sup> Roger D. Launius, *NASA: A History of the US Civil Space Program* (Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company, 2001), 21-8.

<sup>8</sup> Benson and Faherty, *Gateway to the Moon*, 1-2.

<sup>9</sup> The Launch Operations Directorate remained under the jurisdiction of the Marshall Space Flight Center. Francis E. Jarrett, Jr. and Robert A. Lindemann, *Historical Origins of NASA's Launch Operations Center to July 1, 1962* (Cocoa Beach, FL: John F. Kennedy Space Center, 1964),

<http://ntrs.nasa.gov/archive/nasa/casi.ntrs.nasa.gov/19650006747.pdf>.

assembly, checkout, and launch operations for both manned and unmanned space programs.<sup>10</sup>

Circa 1965, NASA and the ACOE hired Adair, Brady & Fishe Inc. of Lake Worth, Florida, to prepare plans for a Solar Array Test Facility to be constructed in the CCAFS Industrial Area (Figure Nos. A-2, A-3). The plans were completed in January 1966.<sup>11</sup> On February 24, 1966, the MILA Construction Company began construction of the facility, which was completed on May 17, 1966. The final inspection of the facility was completed by the ACOE on June 16, 1966.<sup>12</sup>

The Solar Array Test Facility was constructed specifically to test solar panels on unmanned spacecraft, such as the anchored Interplanetary Monitoring Platforms (IMPs) and Surveyors. As such, the building was fitted with a manually-operated retractable roof over the test chamber so the solar panels could be “exposed to the sun for calibrating their voltage output.” Once in space, these panels would convert the sun’s energy into power for the spacecraft.<sup>13</sup>

The IMPs were part of the Explorer program operated out of the Goddard Space Flight Center (Goddard) in Greenbelt, Maryland. Goddard was formally established on January 15, 1959, with the mission of “managing scientific, communications, and meteorological satellite projects; developing sounding rocket and orbiting spacecraft experiments in basic and applied science; managing the Thor-Delta launch vehicle project; operating NASA’s Space Tracking and Data Acquisition Network and the Manned Space Flight Tracking Network.”<sup>14</sup> Goddard initiated the IMP program in the fall of 1961. The purpose of the program was to study the environment of near-Earth orbit and interplanetary space in an effort to define the conditions that the Apollo astronauts would encounter. At the same time, the program would provide new data about space phenomena, such as magnetic fields, plasma, and energy particles that scientists could use in the general studies of space.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Benson and Faherty, *Gateway*, 65-68, 96-98, 105, 133-137, 146-48; Jarrett and Lindemann, *Launch Operations Center*, 79-80.

<sup>11</sup> Adair, Brady & Fishe Inc., “Solar Array Test Facility,” January 1966, on file, KSC Engineering Documentation Center.

<sup>12</sup> NASA KSC, “Real Property Record, Building 60540,” on file, KSC Real Property Office.

<sup>13</sup> “Solar Test Facility Supports Satellite,” *Spaceport News*, February 18, 1966, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Jane Van Nimmen and Leonard C. Bruno (with Robert L. Rosholt), *NASA Historical Databook, 1958-1968, Vol. I: NASA Resources* (Washington, DC: NASA, Scientific and Technical Information Office, 1976), 283.

<sup>15</sup> The project was initially designated Interplanetary Monitoring Probe; ‘Probe’ was changed to ‘Platform’ in 1962. P.M. Butler, *Interplanetary Monitoring Platform: Engineering History and Achievements* (Greenbelt, MD: NASA, Goddard Space Flight Center, 1980), 1.

Altogether, there were ten IMPs (designated IMP A through J), which were divided into five groups based on their characteristics and development stages. IMPs A through C were the first group, D and E the second, F and G the third, I the fourth, and H and J the fifth group.<sup>16</sup> IMPs D and E were considered the 'Anchored' IMPs (or, AIMP) supported by the Solar Array Test Building. The AIMP were distinguished from the others because they were destined for lunar orbit as opposed to Earth orbit. On their way to the Moon, these spacecraft were to study interplanetary magnetic fields, solar plasma, energetic particles, and micrometeorite fluxes near the Moon, and the lunar gravitational field.<sup>17</sup> AIMP D was launched on July 1, 1966, from Launch Complex 17, Pad A, atop a Delta E rocket. It failed to attain lunar orbit, and its mission was subsequently altered to study the environment in an elliptical high-Earth orbit. AIMP E was launched on July 19, 1967, from Launch Complex 17, Pad B, atop a Delta E rocket. Unlike its sister spacecraft, AIMP E successfully attained lunar orbit.<sup>18</sup>

The Surveyor Project was assigned to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), which is operated by the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California. JPL began its working relationship with NASA in December 1958, when its government-owned facilities and the personnel who had been working with the Army Ballistic Missile Agency on the Explorer 1 program, were contractually transferred to NASA. Through its contract with NASA, JPL was assigned responsibility for various unmanned spacecraft and the NASA Deep Space Network.<sup>19</sup> Development of the Surveyor Project began in 1961 and, along with the Ranger Project, represented NASA's first efforts to explore the Moon. While the Ranger spacecraft were designed to relay photos and data before crash-landing onto the Moon's surface, the Surveyors would assist NASA in developing technology for soft-landing on the Moon, as well as provide data about the lunar surface in preparation for the Apollo lunar missions.<sup>20</sup>

Seven Surveyor spacecraft (numbered 1 through 7) were launched atop an Atlas-Centaur rocket from Launch Complex 36 between May 30, 1966, and January 7, 1968. Five of the Surveyors (1, 3, 5-7) successfully landed on the Moon, each at a different location; Surveyor 2 crashed on the lunar surface and Surveyor 4 exploded 2.5 minutes before it was to land.<sup>21</sup> From the five Surveyors that safely

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<sup>16</sup> Butler, *Interplanetary Monitoring Platform*, 5.

<sup>17</sup> "Solar Test Facility Supports Satellite;" Butler, *Interplanetary Monitoring Platform*, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Butler, *Interplanetary Monitoring Platform*, 60-68.

<sup>19</sup> Van Nimmen and Bruno, *NASA Historical Databook, 1958-1968, Vol. 1: NASA Resources*, 456.

<sup>20</sup> NASA, "Press Release No. 67-85: Project: Surveyor C," April 8, 1967, 1, <http://nix.nasa.gov/search.jsp?N=123&Ntk=All&Ntt=19670012742&Ntx=mode%20matchallpartial>.

<sup>21</sup> Clifford J. Lethbridge, "Cape Canaveral Launch Chronology," *Spaceline.org*, 2014, [http://www.spaceline.org/statistics/Cape\\_Canaveral\\_Launch\\_Chronology.html](http://www.spaceline.org/statistics/Cape_Canaveral_Launch_Chronology.html).

landed, NASA was able to obtain vast data about the lunar surface, including topography, surface structure, and geology; chemical composition; radiation levels; strength and density of surface and near surface material; and temperatures.<sup>22</sup>

Research did not indicate how long the Solar Array Test Building was used for its original purpose. At some point in time, it was used as a mechanical shop, and more recently, it served as an auxiliary storage building. At the time of documentation, the facility was vacant.

**Sources: Primary**

Adair, Brady & Fishe, Inc. "Solar Array Test Facility." January 1966. On file, KSC Engineering Documentation Center.

Jaffe, L.D. and R.H. Steinbacher. "Introduction." In *Surveyor: Program Results*, edited by NASA, 1-11. Washington, DC: NASA, Office of Scientific and Technical Information, 1969.

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<sup>22</sup> L.D. Jaffe and R.H. Steinbacher, "Introduction," in *Surveyor: Program Results* (Washington, DC: NASA, Office of Scientific and Technical Information, 1969), 1-11.

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Rosenthal, Alfred. *Venture into Space: Early Years of Goddard Space Flight Center*. Washington, DC: NASA, Office of Technology Utilization, 1968.

Van Nimmen, Jane and Leonard C. Bruno, (with Robert L. Rosholt). *NASA Historical Databook, 1958-1968, Vol. 1: NASA Resources*. Washington, DC: NASA, Scientific and Technical Information Office, 1976.

**Historian:** Patricia Slovinac, Archaeological Consultants, Inc., Sarasota, Florida  
November 2014

### **Project**

**Information:** The documentation of the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Solar Array Test Building, was conducted in 2014-2015 for KSC by ACI, under contract to InoMedic Health Applications (IHA) and in accordance with KSC's Programmatic Agreement Regarding Management of Historic Properties, dated May 18, 2009. The field team consisted of architectural historian, Patricia Slovinac (ACI), and independent photographer, Penny Rogo. Assistance in the field was provided by Barbara Naylor, KSC Historic Preservation Officer, and Nancy English, KSC Cultural Resource Specialist. The written narrative was

prepared by Ms. Slovinac; it was edited by Joan Deming, ACI Project Manager; Elaine Liston, KSC Archivist; Ms. Naylor; Ms. English; and Jane Provancha, Environmental Projects-Manager, IHA. The photographs and negatives were processed by Zebra Color, Inc., an independent photography and processing studio.

The Scope of Services for the project, which was compiled based on the Programmatic Agreement, specified a documentation effort following HABS Level III Standards. Information for the written narrative was primarily gathered through informal interviews with current NASA and contractor personnel, the KSC Archives Department, the KSC Institutional Imaging Facility, the CCAFS Cultural Resources Department and Infrastructure Operations and Maintenance Service Engineering Documentation Center, and various NASA websites. In addition, the Air Force Space and Missile History Center was contacted, although to no avail. Selected drawings were provided by KSC's Engineering Documentation Center, which serves as the repository for all facility drawings. For the Solar Array Test Building, this included the original as-built drawings. It should also be noted that KSC does not periodically produce drawings of their facilities to show current existing conditions.

CAPE CANAVERAL AIR FORCE STATION,  
SOLAR ARRAY TEST BUILDING  
HABS No. FL-583-E  
Page 10

**APPENDIX A: Additional Photos of the Solar Array Test Building**



Figure A-1. Location of the Solar Array Test Building (denoted by arrow) within the NASA-Owned CCAFS Industrial Area Historic District. Dashed lines indicate historic district boundaries.

Source: Google earth.

CAPE CANAVERAL AIR FORCE STATION,  
SOLAR ARRAY TEST BUILDING  
HABS No. FL-583-E  
Page 12



Figure A-2. Aerial photograph with Solar Array Test Building (denoted by arrow),  
December 15, 1966.  
Source: John F. Kennedy Space Center Archives, 116-KSC-66-24012.

CAPE CANAVERAL AIR FORCE STATION,  
SOLAR ARRAY TEST BUILDING  
HABS No. FL-583-E  
Page 13



Figure A-3. Aerial photograph with Solar Array Test Building (denoted by arrow),  
April 17, 1973.

Source: John F. Kennedy Space Center Archives, 116-KSC-373C-548.23.



Figure A-4. Mechanical Room of the Solar Array Test Building, facing southeast,  
August 26, 2014.

Source: Archaeological Consultants, Inc.



Figure A-5. Mechanical Room of the Solar Array Test Building, facing northeast,  
August 26, 2014.

Source: Archaeological Consultants, Inc.

CAPE CANAVERAL AIR FORCE STATION,  
SOLAR ARRAY TEST BUILDING  
HABS No. FL-583-E  
Page 16

**APPENDIX B: Architectural Drawings of the Solar Array Test Building**  
(PDF Scans of each Drawing at the original size are located within the Field Notes)



CAPE CANAVERAL AIR FORCE STATION,  
 SOLAR ARRAY TEST BUILDING  
 HABS No. FL-583-E  
 Page 18

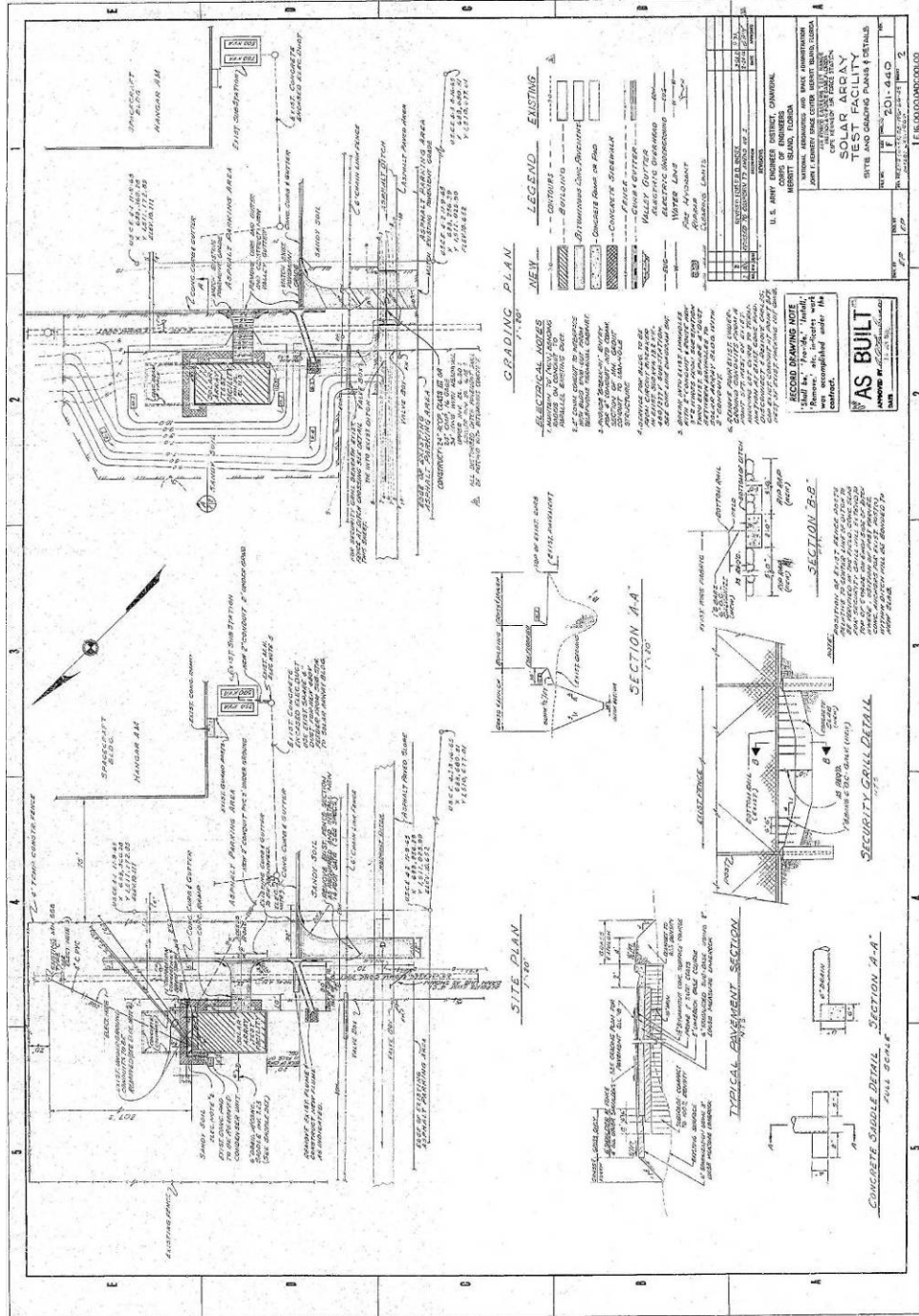


Figure B-2. Adair, Brady & Fische, Inc., Solar Array Test Facility, Site and Grading Plans & Details, January 1966, Sheet 2.

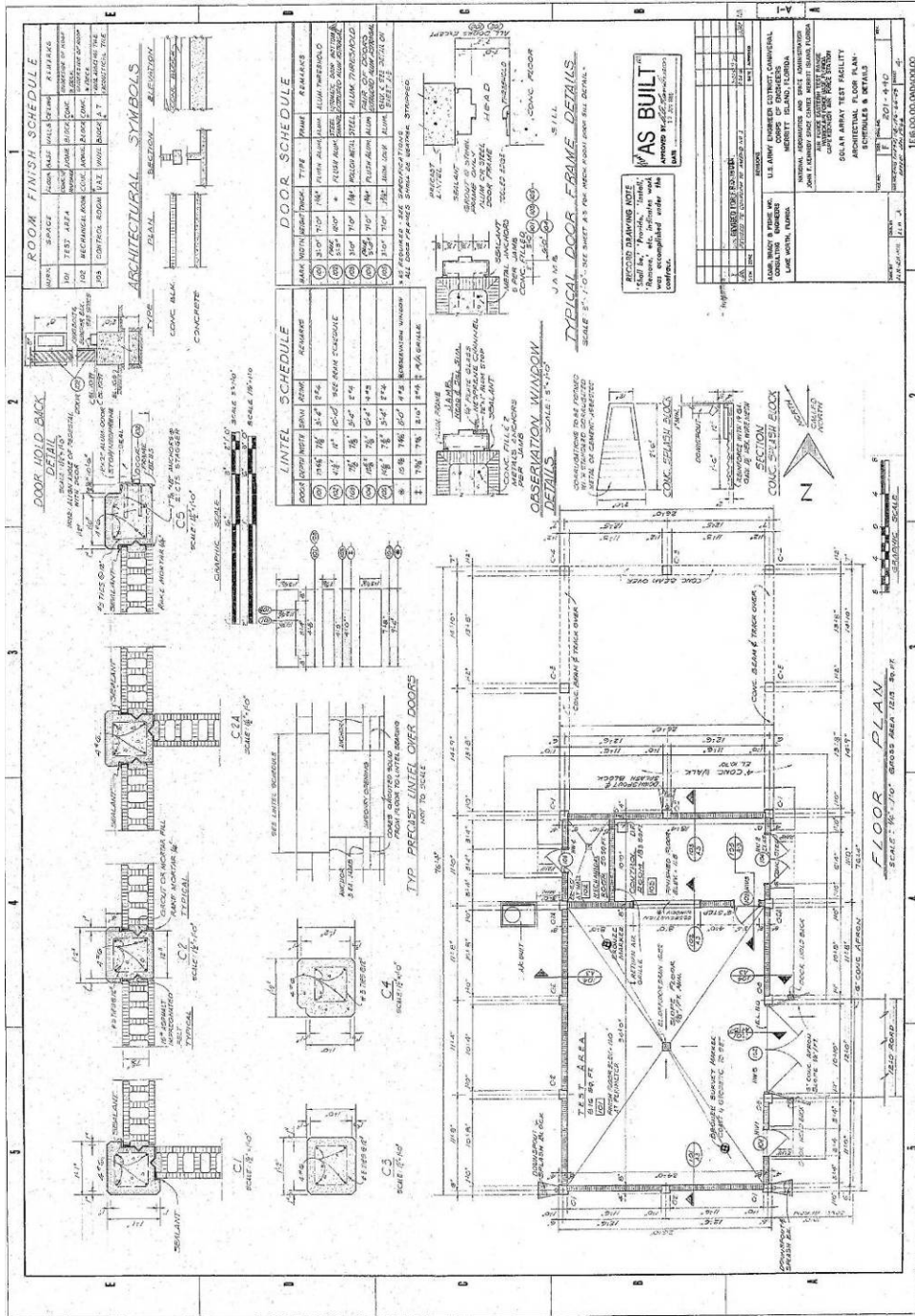


Figure B-3. Adair, Brady & Fishe, Inc., Solar Array Test Facility, Architectural Floor Plan-Schedules & Details, January 1966, Sheet 4.

CAPE CANAVERAL AIR FORCE STATION,  
 SOLAR ARRAY TEST BUILDING  
 HABS No. FL-583-E  
 Page 20

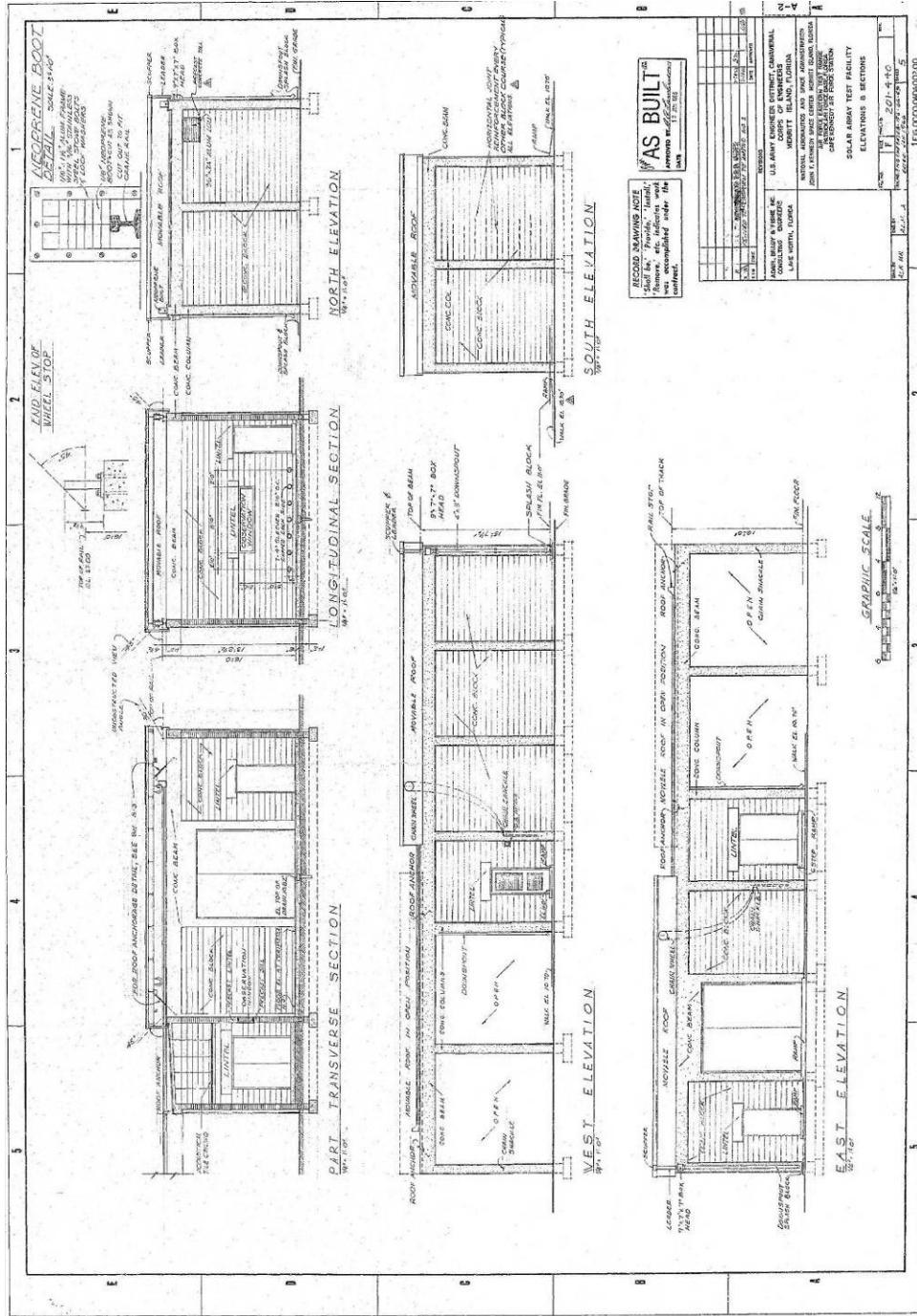


Figure B-4. Adair, Brady & Fishe, Inc., Solar Array Test Facility, Elevations & Sections, January 1966, Sheet 5.

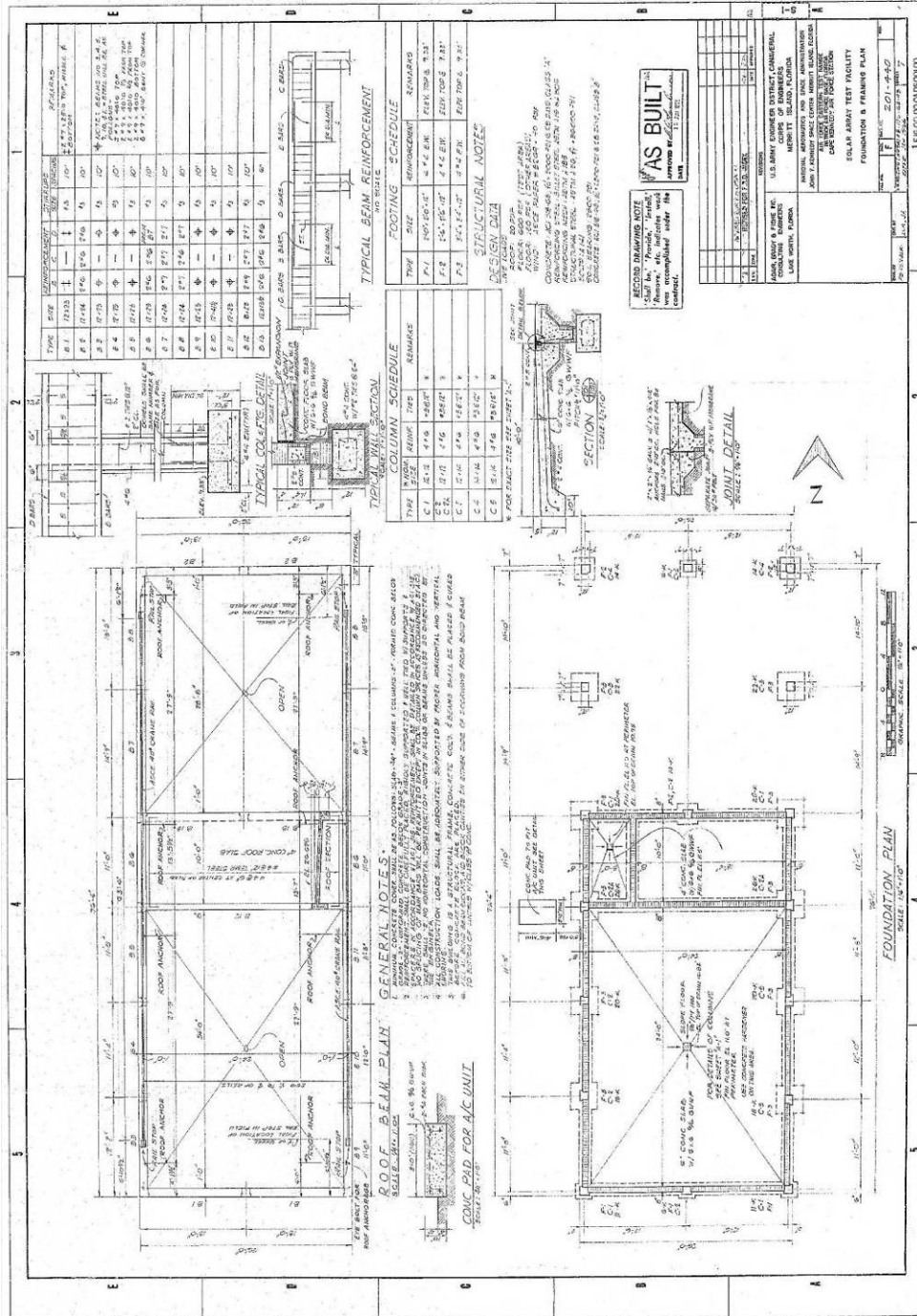


Figure B-5. Adair, Brady & Fische, Inc., Solar Array Test Facility, Foundation & Framing Plan, January 1966, Sheet 7.

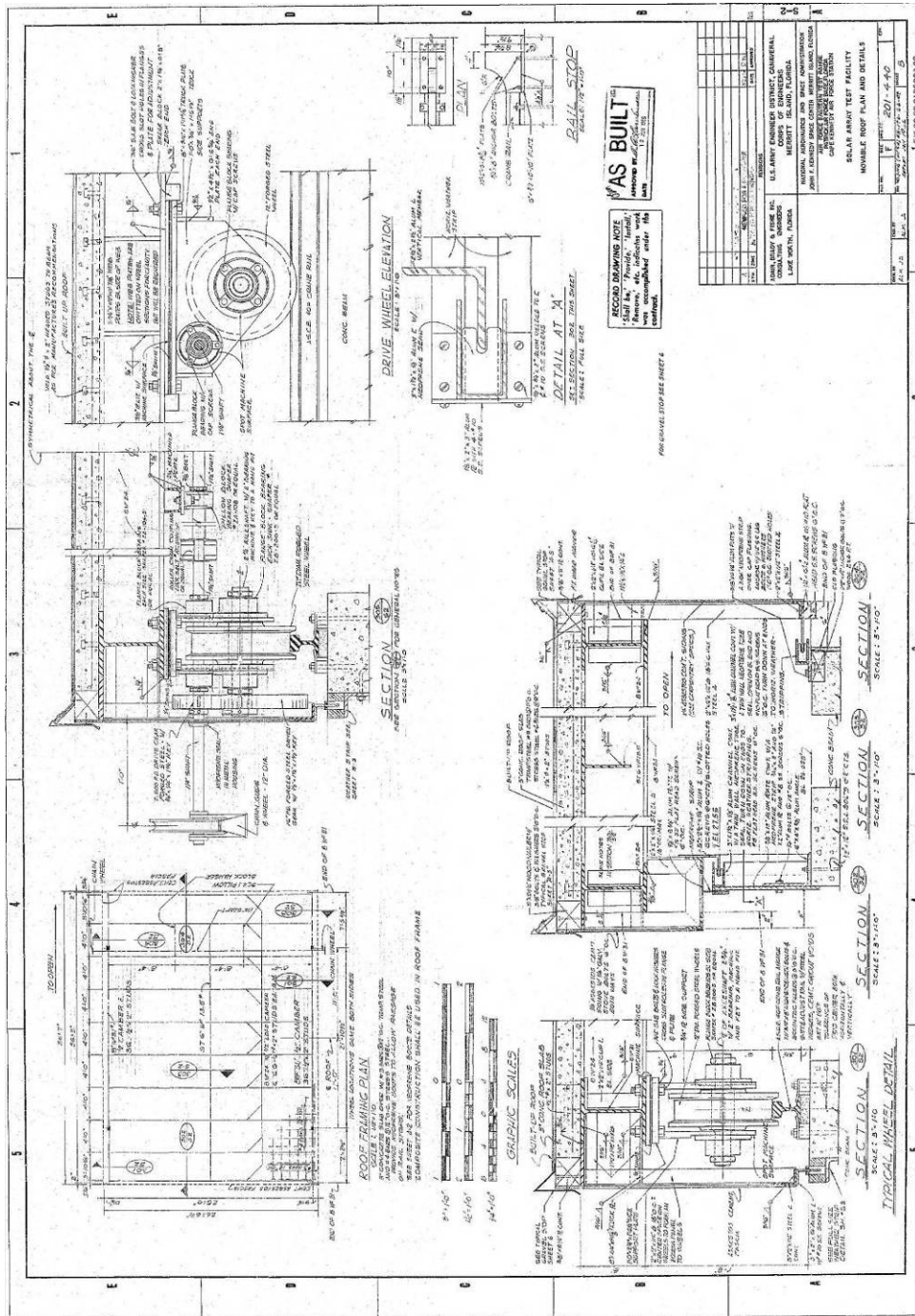


Figure B-6. Adair, Brady & Fische, Inc., Solar Array Test Facility, Moveable Roof Plan and Details, January 1966, Sheet 8.



HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS

CAPE CANAVERAL AIR FORCE STATION,  
SOLAR ARRAY TEST BUILDING  
Northwest side of Hangar Road  
(between NASA Parkway and Skid Strip Road)  
Cape Canaveral,  
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HABS No. FL-583-E

Penny Rogo, Photographer; August 2014  
(FL-583-E-1 through FL-583-E-13)

- FL-583-E-1      OVERALL VIEW OF THE EAST ELEVATION, FACING NORTHWEST.
- FL-583-E-2      OVERALL VIEW OF THE EAST AND NORTH ELEVATIONS, FACING  
SOUTHWEST.
- FL-583-E-3      OVERALL VIEW OF THE NORTH AND WEST ELEVATIONS, FACING  
SOUTH.
- FL-583-E-4      OVERALL VIEW OF THE WEST AND SOUTH ELEVATIONS, FACING  
NORTHEAST.
- FL-583-E-5      OVERALL VIEW OF THE SOUTH AND EAST ELEVATIONS, FACING  
NORTH.
- FL-583-E-6      DETAIL VIEW OF THE EQUIPMENT DOOR ON THE EAST  
ELEVATION, FACING NORTHWEST.
- FL-583-E-7      DETAIL VIEW OF THE RETRACTABLE ROOF PULLEY, FACING  
WEST.
- FL-583-E-8      OVERALL VIEW OF THE TEST CHAMBER, FACING SOUTHWEST.
- FL-583-E-9      OVERALL VIEW OF THE TEST CHAMBER, FACING NORTHEAST.
- FL-583-E-10     DETAIL VIEW OF THE RETRACTABLE ROOF WHEEL/TRACK  
ASSEMBLY, FACING WEST.
- FL-583-E-11     DETAIL VIEW OF A V-BELT TENSION MEASURING DEVICE,  
FACING NORTH.

CAPE CANAVERAL AIR FORCE STATION,  
SOLAR ARRAY TEST BUILDING  
HABS No. FL-583-E  
INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS (page 2)

- FL-583-E-12      OVERALL VIEW OF THE PARTITIONED-ENCLOSED ROOM WITHIN  
THE TEST CHAMBER, FACING NORTHWEST.
- FL-583-E-13      OVERALL VIEW OF THE CONTROL ROOM, FACING NORTHWEST.