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Digbeth and Deritend, Birmingham, West Midlands: Outline Historic Area Assessment

Olaf Bayer, Peter Herring, Rebecca Lane and Johanna Roethe

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DIGBETH AND DERITEND
BIRMINGHAM
WEST MIDLANDS

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Cover image: An oblique aerial view of Digbeth and Deritend looking north-west, taken on 14 June 2017 (33191_034)

SUMMARY
This outline area assessment is designed to provide an overview of the history, development, character and significance of Digbeth in order to inform further phases of work on the area. It provides archaeological and historical background, before assessing the character and significance of the area as it survives today. It also provides recommendations for further research on the area.

CONTRIBUTORS
The report was drafted by Rebecca Lane. Olaf Bayer contributed the section on the archaeological background. Peter Herring wrote the section on 'Digbeth: place, landscape and values' and provided some additional comment on the overall text. The appendices were researched and written by Johanna Roethe. Photography is by James O. Davies and aerial photography by Damian Grady. Some additional photography is by Steve Baker. Graphics are by Sharon Soutar and Amy Wright.

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DATE OF SURVEY AND RESEARCH
The historic area assessment took place between February and May 2017. Additional research was undertaken in June to October 2017. Photography took place between February and November 2017; aerial photography in June 2017.

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INTRODUCTION

Digbeth now forms an inner city area of Birmingham, lying east of the city centre. Its precise boundary is hard to define, as it merges into Deritend and Bordesley to the east, which historically formed separate areas. It is now roughly defined to the south by the main route into the city from the south-east (variously known as the Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Street), to the east by the ring road and to the north by Curzon Street. To the west it runs up to the Bull Ring area of the city centre.

This outline area assessment was commissioned by Historic England's West Midlands office in order to inform further work on the area. Digbeth is an area likely to undergo considerable change in the near future, with the arrival of the High Speed 2 line to the north of the area, adjacent to the former Curzon Street Station. The creation of the station is likely to lead to development pressure on the area to the south, which is currently a mix of light industrial and commercial spaces, particularly used for artistic and cultural activity.

Previous assessment

The development of Digbeth has been relatively well studied as part of the development of the city as a whole. This has included detailed work on the urban morphology of the area by Nigel Baker, based on extensive map regression, previous archaeological analysis and documentary studies.[1] The Birmingham Historic Landscape Characterisation exercise has also looked at the area, and provided a broad-grained assessment of its current character, as well as collating and geo-referencing extensive historic mapping. Digbeth's architecture has also been looked at as part of the Pevsner Architectural Guide to Birmingham.[2] Appraisals of the two conservation areas within Digbeth have also characterised their respective sections, highlighting their value and significance as coherent historic streetscapes.[3]

In recent years the redevelopment of areas of the city centre, and in particular the anticipated effects of the creation of the HS2 train line in the north of the area have seen a number of exercises in characterising or assessing the heritage aspects of the Digbeth, Deritend, Fazeley Street and Bordesley area. These have identified individual buildings of note, and, through conservation area character appraisals and masterplanning exercises, attempted to identify the distinctive elements of the area's wider townscape. These have generally focused on discrete elements of the area however.

The subject of this outline historic area assessment is the southern two-thirds of Birmingham City Council's Curzon HS2 masterplan area, i.e. the land south of Curzon Street, north of Digbeth and Deritend High Streets and west of Watery Lane Middleway (Figure 1). This masterplan for growth was published by Birmingham City Council in February 2014.[4] It seeks to 'maximise the potential' offered by the proposed HS2 rail links with London and northern England by, amongst other things, 'seeking to ensure the station is fully integrated into the urban fabric of the City Centre', including Digbeth, in which seven Enterprise Zones have been identified.[5] The Digbeth and Deritend area has been identified as a 'place for growth'

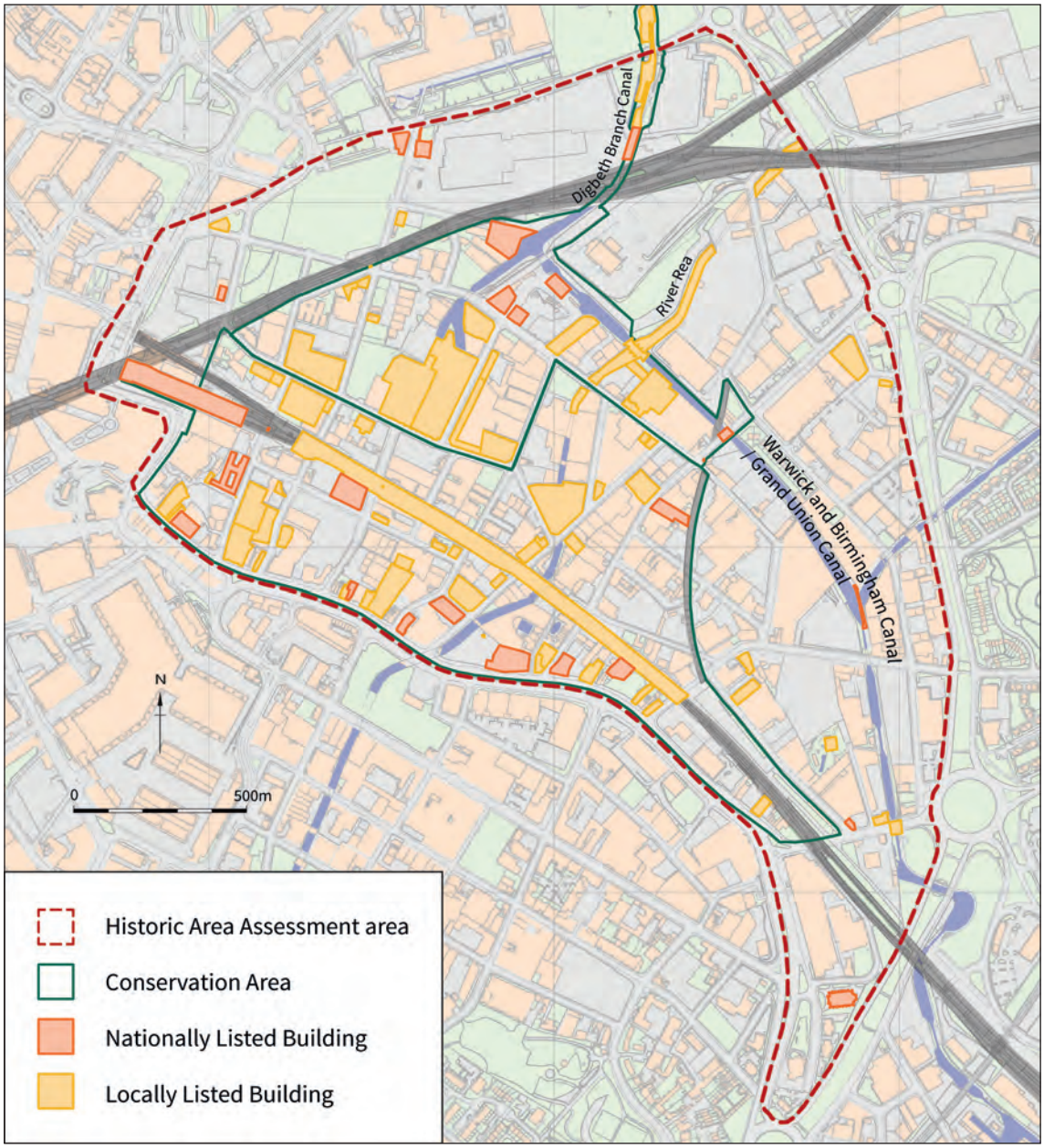


Figure 1: Location map showing the boundaries of the historic area assessment and relevant designations (derived from OS mapping © Crown copyright [and database rights] 2018 OS 100024900; additional information derived from Birmingham HER)

whose emphasis would be on the 'Creative' and 'Arrival', the latter the area adjacent to the new Curzon Street station – other nearby areas would have different growth emphases, on 'Retail', 'Visit', 'Business' and 'Learning and Research'.[6] Connectivity will be increased in part by running a new metro line from the proposed Curzon Street station along Liverpool and Adderley Streets.[7]

The 'Arrival' area would include four open public spaces to be known as Curzon Square and Curzon Promenade to the north of Curzon Street station, Station Square to its west and Paternoster Place to its south.[8] The original Curzon Street station building (grade I listed) will be integrated into the design of Curzon Square and care

will be taken to ensure that access to the grade II*-listed Gun Barrel Proof House will also be protected.

The 'Creative' place for growth is centred on Digbeth, which 'has the ingredients to become one of the most distinctive vibrant creative quarters in Europe.' The masterplan aims for, amongst other things, 'an authentic distinctive character with historic environments complemented by exciting new buildings', 'a vibrant mixed use neighbourhood that enlivens the area 24/7', 'a high quality sustainable residential neighbourhood focused around the canals', foci for 'cultural activities – growing the arts and live music scenes' and 'innovative public art'.[9]

The masterplan notes that 'Digbeth has already established itself as the home of a diverse and dynamic working community of digital and creative businesses. The area's distinctive 19th century industrial urban character, much of it in a conservation area that includes a number of listed buildings and archaeological remains, has been utilised by these businesses with the Custard Factory and Fazeley Studios key focal points. HS2 provides the opportunity for this economic activity to grow and prosper both utilising and enhancing the area's unique environment, historic significance and existing strengths'.

'Development will be both refurbishment and innovative, quality new-build, with the emphasis on retaining and developing the unique character, atmosphere and experience that sets Digbeth apart from other areas of the City'.[10] There is reference to the area's 'very distinctive urban character'. 'The cathedral-like rail arches and gritty architecture' and the bringing of visitors 'closer to the authentic character and roots of Digbeth'.[11]

Places within Digbeth already identified for refurbishment and development are the Typhoo Wharf complex, including the former warehouses (locally listed);[12] the area between Fazeley Street and Digbeth High Street, and the sides of the Grand Union Canal where 4-5 storey residential development is suggested.[13]

This historic area assessment sets out to contextualise the masterplan by considering the recent and longer-term histories that have resulted in the diverse and dynamic inherited character and the equally diverse and dynamic creative, cultural and small-scale industrial uses that set Digbeth apart from most other places in Birmingham.

This document will not seek to repeat the work of the previous smaller area or character assessments, but to build upon them, providing a holistic overview of the area. The intention is to look at the character and significance of the whole area, rather than to identify or assess individual buildings.

Existing heritage designation

The distinctive character of the Digbeth area has been recognised through the creation of two conservation areas (Figure 1). The Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Street Conservation Area (designated in 2000) is focused around the north side of main thoroughfare into the city and includes several streets to its north.

Further north again and contiguous to that conservation area is the Warwick Bar Conservation Area (designated in 1987 and extended in 2000), which is focused on the area's canal-related heritage, including stretches of the Grand Union Canal and the Digbeth Branch Canal. The council are currently consulting on proposals to merge these two conservation areas, and amend their boundaries.

A number of buildings in the area are statutorily listed. There is one grade I-listed building; the former 'Principal Building' of the 1830s Curzon Street Station.[14] There are three grade II* -listed buildings. Two of these reflect early phases of the city's development; the late 15th or early 16th-century former guildhall on High Street, Deritend, and the early 19th-century Gun Barrel Proof House just off Andover Street.[15] The other grade II* listed building is the former Floodgate School building, a late Victorian Board School of exceptional quality. The remainder of the listed buildings are grade II. Typically these are the Victorian and early 20th-century public buildings of the area, including Moor Street Station, two churches, and some of the distinctive cast-iron public conveniences. Other grade II-listed buildings relate to the area's canal heritage including the Banana Warehouse. A few relatively 19th and early 20th-century industrial buildings are also protected including what is now known as the Custard Factory (former Devonshire Works), the former umbrella factory on Allison Street (listed as RTP Crisps) and the former Ice Factory and Cold Store on Digbeth High Street.

In addition to those statutorily protected, Birmingham City Council has designated a number of locally listed buildings. These are ranked (in descending order) at levels A, B and C. These encompass further elements of the Victorian development of the area, including large infrastructure set-pieces such as the main viaduct link to Moor Street Station, and the culverted River Rea. Also designated are a number of high-quality 20th-century buildings including the former Typhoo Tea Packing Works and other warehouses and works.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Location, geology and topography

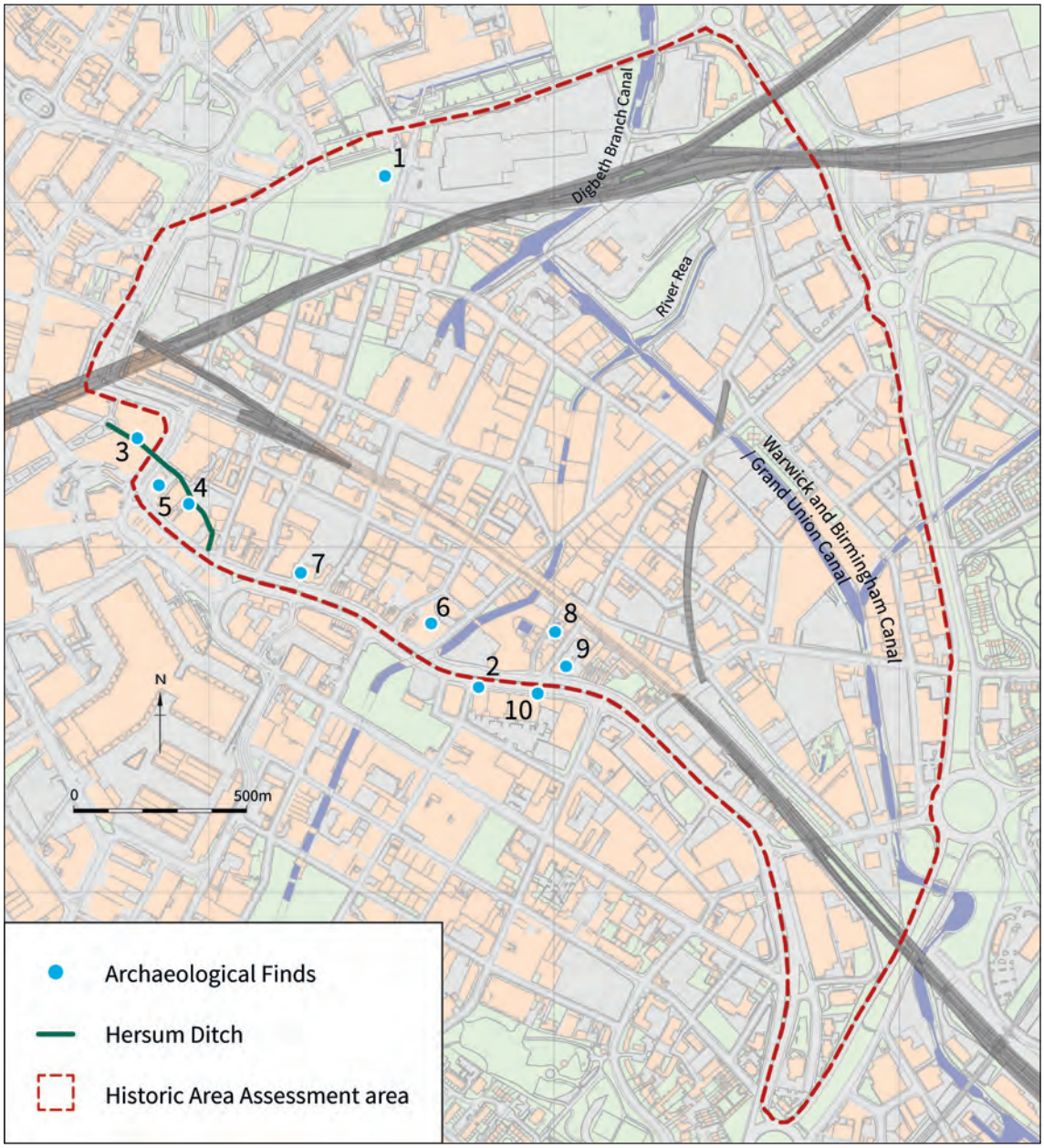
The study area lies close to the centre of the Midlands Plateau.[16] Its topography is determined by a south-west to north-east running geological fault that causes an abrupt change in solid geology and significantly influences local hydrology. To the north and west of the area solid geology comprises a ridge of free draining Triassic sandstone of the Bromsgrove Formation and to the south and east of this fault line the area is underlain by impermeable Triassic mudstone of the Mercia Group.[17]

The shallow valley of the River Rea, an upper tributary of the Trent/Humber catchment, runs north-eastwards parallel with, and to the south of, the fault line. It cuts through the softer mudstone to form the central axis of the study area at approximately 100m OD and its valley sides rise to approximately 125m in the area's north-west and south-east extremities. Here the solid geology is overlain by glacial sand and gravel, whilst the valley bottom is overlain by alluvium from the Rea.[18] Water draining through the sandstone on the western side of the area collects against the faultline creating a series of springs which then drain eastwards towards the Rea.[19] The availability of water from the river, springs and latterly wells has been a significant influence on the development of Digbeth.[20] Today the River Rea exists in a straightened and culverted state. However, in its pre-urban form the river is likely to have taken a less direct course, and have been a far more prominent feature on the valley floor. Recent excavations have highlighted the potential for the preservation of waterlogged deposits across the study area, not only in proximity to the River Rea.[21]

Before Digbeth

Today it is hard to imagine Digbeth as anything other than a cityscape. The prehistory and early history of the study area is difficult to grasp. Prior to the 12th century the area appears as a blank on summary maps of the archaeology of the West Midlands.[22] Traces of early activity here have for the most part been removed, disturbed and fragmented by the development of Birmingham from the medieval period onwards. A handful of artefacts and deposits in or adjacent to the study area do however hint at the inhabitation of this landscape prior to the development of Digbeth (Figure 2).

The earliest traces of human activity in the study area come from recent excavations at Banbury Street at the base of the sandstone ridge as it levels out on the western side of the Rea valley (point 1 on Figure 2). Here a series of organic clay sediments were discovered beneath *c* 2m of post-medieval industrial truncation. Two struck flints of probable late Upper Palaeolithic or Early Mesolithic date were recovered from beneath an extensive burnt deposit dated to the Early Mesolithic (*c* 8500 -8250 BC). This indicates an Early Mesolithic presence in the study area, and potentially provides evidence of Mesolithic communities using fire to manage their landscape.[23] They would probably have been nomadic people, moving in small groups with the seasons around a territory that included this part of present-day Digbeth, subsisting from gathering, fishing and hunting.



1. Lithics and peat deposits	6. Floodgate Street
2. Neolithic axe	7. Hartwell Smithfield Garage
3. Bullring excavations	8. Gibb Street
4. Burgage plots	9. Old Crown
5. Digbeth Coldstore	10. High Street Deritend

Figure 2: Location map showing the boundaries of the historic area assessment and relevant archaeological finds (derived from OS mapping © Crown copyright [and database rights] 2018 OS 100024900; additional information derived from Birmingham HER)

A Neolithic polished stone axe was discovered on the valley floor close to the River Rea during road widening in the 1950s (point 2 on Figure 2).[24] The axe, made from Cumbrian volcanic tuff between *c* 3800 and 3500 BC, suggests the presence of

early farming communities in the study area who were keyed into wide ranging networks of contact and exchange. The very small assemblage of prehistoric worked flint recovered from medieval and post-medieval contexts at the Bullring hints at the potential for further evidence of earlier prehistoric activity to be found in the area.[25]

No direct evidence of the more settled agricultural landscapes of the Bronze Age or Iron Age has been discovered within the study area. The presence of Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement in the wider Birmingham area suggests that that it may well have once existed.[26] Several Bronze Age and Iron Age sites in the area have produced little by way of durable material culture, and in the absence of structural remains it is probable that activity from these periods would be hard to detect.[27]

Direct evidence for Roman activity is similarly lacking. The study area lies approximately 5km to the north east of the Roman fort at Metchley and substantially to the east of the projected line of Icknield Street, the north to south Roman road which runs to the west of Birmingham city centre.[28] A small quantity of Roman pottery was recovered during excavations in advance of the recent regeneration of the Bullring area (point 3 on Figure 2).[29] Given the paucity of ceramics from Roman settlement in the wider area, the Bullring assemblage is seen as significant and may indicate a minor Roman rural settlement immediately outside the western edge of the current study area.[30]

Archaeological evidence for Early Medieval activity is limited to four sherds of possible Anglo Saxon pottery from the Bullring excavations, again immediately outside the western edge of the current study area.[31]

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

'Birmingham has, without much regard, torn down or ill-used its past; it has almost a transatlantic penchant for renewal, as befits its performance in post-war central area redevelopment'.[32]

Notwithstanding Birmingham's reputation as a city with a 'penchant for renewal' the origins of the urban settlement have, inevitably, had a significant impact on the form and function of the later city, and thus on its current character.

Birmingham gained a market charter in the 12th century, and around the same time a market place appears to have been created in the area that is now the Bullring, around St Martin's Church.[33] The medieval settlement was small but appears to have had recognisably urban characteristics, and to have been moderately successful, reliant on trade of corn, livestock and wool, although production and trade in metal goods had started by the mid-13th century.[34] This took advantage of the settlement's position near the scattered villages of the Black Country, which had already begun producing coal and iron in this period. In 1340 the town ranked third in Warwickshire, jointly with Stratford, in the levy on traded goods, suggesting it formed a moderate-sized market town.[35] The foundation of two guilds in the later medieval period attests to its success as trading centre.

As part of this early urban settlement phase the approach route through what is now the west end of Digbeth appears to have been laid out with long burgage plots stretching north and south from the road.[36] Hislop suggests that present day property boundaries on the western edge of the study area (the area bounded by Digbeth High Street, Park Street, Allison Street and Well Lane) are likely to be derived from medieval burgages (point 4 on Figure 2).[37] He goes on to propose that the slightly angled northern ends of these plots may preserve the vestiges of reversed-S pattern ridge and furrow cultivation from the pre-12th-century landscape. Excavations in this area have revealed a substantial ditch forming the northern and eastern edge of these plots.[38] Demidowicz suggests that this feature is the '*Hersum Ditch'*, a watercourse forming the north-east boundary of 12th-century Birmingham (Figure 2).[39]

The River Rea represented the boundary between the parish of Birmingham and that of Aston to the east. In the 13th century the de Birmingham family gained a strip of land on the eastern side of the river, allowing them to lay out their manorial corn mill across the river.[40] Heath Mill Lane represents the original route from the main road to the mill, which sat to the north.[41] The growing settlement to the east of the river formed the origins of Deritend, originally administratively separate from Digbeth on the western bank of the river. Deritend appears to have originated as 'Deer gate end'.[42] It is variously referred to in early documents as 'Dyrty' or other variants on this name.[43] In the 14th century the settlement along the road was significant enough to warrant the creation of a chapel of ease, a subsidiary of the main parish church at Aston. Dedicated to St John the Baptist the chapel sat immediately east of the River Rea, and represented an important marker on the route into the town. The guilds appear to have had a significant role in the area. The

Figure 3: The former guildhall of the Guild of St John the Baptist, now the Old Crown public house, 186-188 High Street, Digbeth (DP195933)

Guild of St John the Baptist built their guildhall on the north side of the High Street (Figure 3), and later the Guild of the Holy Cross was considered responsible for the maintenance of the stone bridge over the River Rea.[44]

Several excavations along the northern edge of the High Street have shown the potential for traces of medieval/early post-medieval domestic and industrial activity to survive as 'islands' of preservation below and between truncation caused by later buildings and cellars.[45] Medieval features are limited to pits, post holes, ditches and gullies concentrated towards the street frontage at Digbeth Cold Store, Floodgate Street, Hartwell Smithfield Garage and Gibb Street (points 5-8 on Figure 2).[46] Particular concentrations of medieval pottery at the Old Crown and High Street Deritend indicate manufacture nearby (points 9 and 10 on Figure 2).[47]

By the 16th century Birmingham was well established as a growing centre for the metal working trade focussed on the main route into the town along Digbeth High Street, via the crossing of the River Rea. Leland, visiting the town in 1538, described approaching the town by 'Dyrtey' (Deritend) where 'dwelles smithes and cuttelers'.[48] Tanning was also a significant trade in the Digbeth area at the time, reflecting the availability of water from the River Rea. For example, evidence for increasingly industrialised tanning from the 16th century onwards was identified during excavations at Floodgate Street.[49] Beyond the main road the area remained largely open, however, with large areas of parkland to the north and south (Little and Holme Parks respectively).

Figure 4: The East Prospect of Birmingham, Charles Westley, 1732

The growing success of Birmingham as a whole appears to have ensured that by the late 17th century most of the land available for housing was already built upon. Much of the land to the north and west of the settlement remained part of private estates and was yet to be released for construction.[50] This led to the intensive exploitation of the long burgage plots of the earlier settlement, with alleys or cut-throughs allowing development to the rear of the plots. This characterised older sections of the settlement in the 18th century. Digbeth remained an important thoroughfare throughout this period, and its earlier burgage plots appear to have seen the same intensification of use as observed elsewhere in the town. Early 18th-century plans of the city, and a view from the east (Figure 4), show that beyond the High Street development in the area was still relatively limited, probably partly due to flooding of the lower-lying land by the river, and also to the unavailability of privately-held land for development.

In the 18th century the release of the former private estates saw considerable development on new land, particularly to the north of Birmingham. These areas allowed for more planned settlement, built around squares and grid pattern streets, which contrasted with the character of earlier areas of the settlement. The development of further areas of Digbeth began with the extension of the canal network to Birmingham from the late 18th century (Birmingham and Fazeley Canal 1780s; Warwick and Birmingham Canal, later drawn into the Grand Union Canal, 1790s). The pattern of interconnected waterways, with locks allowing them to climb up the gently sloping valley sides, was elevated above the level of the River Rea and created both economic encouragement for and physical constraints on the establishment of further streets, industrial and commercial buildings and dwellings (Figure 5).

The construction of the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal in the 1780s on land that had previously been part of the private Gooch state brought significant development to the northern part of the area. The laying out of the street pattern in this area has

Figure 5: Aerial photo looking east, showing Warwick Bar (in the foreground) where the Warwick and Birmingham Canal (W&BC) and the Digbeth Branch Canal cross, as well as the crossing of the W&BC over the river Rea (centre), and Fazeley Street, laid out in parallel with the W&BC (33191_002)

been identified by Baker as taking place in the few years after the construction of the canal.[51] Covering a 50-acre area this created a pattern of axial streets, including Fazeley Street and Bordesley Street, with further streets intersecting to create a grid pattern, albeit one constrained by the differing orientations of the existing features within the area. Baker estimates that within 10 years of the street layout roughly half of the area had been redeveloped.[52] This redevelopment coincided with the evolution of new manufacturing trades in the city – moving away from the traditional smiths and cutlers, and towards the production of small metal items such as buttons and jewellery and other goods such as guns.

Development in the area created a mixture of domestic and industrial spaces, with industry remaining relatively small scale, and intermixed with extremely densely packed residential areas in the form of courts around which would be rows or terraces of two and three-storey brick-built dwellings, often back to back with other rows opening onto adjacent courts. For example the 1895 Goad insurance map shows on the western side of Oxford Street a warren of courtyards with tiny dwellings (usually less than 6m by 4m in plan) reached by extremely narrow alleys that passed through yards that also contained anvil and vice works, forges, cupola furnaces, moulding and grinding shops, stables, van builders and warehouses (Figure 6). Public houses were closely spaced, there being eleven in the small area east of Park Street, north of Digbeth High Street, south of Coventry Street and west of Oxford Street, many on the street corners.

Figure 6: Goad Insurance map of 1895, sheet 18

In the mid-19th century the arrival of the railways had further significant effects on Birmingham as a whole and Digbeth in particular. A site to the north of the canal was chosen as the terminus of the London to Birmingham Railway, with the large 'Principal Building' at Curzon Street of 1838 marking the end of the line, the world's first main line passenger railway terminal (Figure 7). The Birmingham and Oxford Junction Railway, which opened in 1852, ran from the north-west to the south-east (from Snow Hill and Moor Street stations). It was elevated above the southern part of the study area on a massive brick-built viaduct which also took it over the London to Birmingham extension to New Street station, built at around the same time (opening

Figure 7: The former 'Principal Building' at Curzon Street Station, photographed in 2014 (DP164909)

in 1854). The opening of New Street Station saw the end of services to Curzon Street. A third curving viaduct linked the two main lines, passing over Liverpool Street (and numerous other streets) and the Grand Union canal.

In the late 19th century changes in demand and sales led to further shifts in Birmingham's industrial pattern, with a movement towards engineering and assemblage of larger goods.[53] Such goods required complex processes to manufacture, very different from the small-scale items previously being produced. This demanded larger-scale premises, and much of the city centre proved inadequate for laying out such works. Notable set-piece factories developed on the edge of the city, setting the form for much of the city's future manufacturing scale. Coinciding with this shift in the economic grain of the city was increasing concern for the welfare of the urban poor, with much focus on housing conditions. Birmingham's housing seems never to have gained the notoriety of the conditions observed in the

industrial cities of the North, but nonetheless by the early 20th century much of the housing in the city centre was considered inadequate.

As noted, the Goad insurance plans of 1889 and 1895 show that Digbeth typified the city centre development by this time, providing a rich and dense mix of small-scale, mostly poor-quality housing and the type of limited factory and works provision that had characterised earlier phases of the city's success (Figure 6). Late 19th-century attention on the conditions in the area saw the development of a number of amenity buildings – including schools, churches and other institutional provision. Some larger scale works had started to emerge, including the Devonshire Works (Alfred Bird & Sons, custard powder manufacturers), which presaged the more extensive changes to come in the 20th century.

By the early 20th century more direct action on the conditions of the working poor was starting to gather pace. This was coupled with increasingly large scale interventions into the earlier townscape to provide up-to-date transport links, and other civic and commercial premises. The process of undertaking clearance and change therefore had two-fold pressures – both economic and social. Nonetheless the early 20th century, and the two world wars, prevented large-scale changes to the Digbeth area, although in the second war the area of Digbeth suffered some bomb damage (especially from raids in October and November 1940). Instead limited demolition and consolidation of plots appears to have taken place on a piecemeal basis.

Several substantial municipal complexes were established in the interwar period, including recycling and waste disposal on Montague Street (with good mid-century offices) and the large and beautifully finished inter-war brick and stone Birmingham Corporation bus depot on Liverpool Street (see Appendix 1). Larger-scale industrial structures were also still being built in this period and two of the finest were set up in relation to the then still active canals: The Typhoo Tea complex at the southern end of the Digbeth Branch Canal and the fine Fellows, Morton and Clayton Ltd Canal Carriers building on Fazeley Street of 1935 (see Appendices 2 and 3).

By the 1950s and 1960s the majority of the surviving housing provision and many of the Victorian workshops and small-scale manufactories in the area were in the process of being swept away, replaced instead by consolidated industrial units (see Appendix 4). The area appears to have maintained a diverse output however, with a mixture of warehousing, garages, light industrial units and other types of accommodation. Such mixed use continued into the late 20th century, although adversely affected by the massive reduction in manufacturing output in the city in the 1970s and 1980s. Thereafter units have typically been regenerated, with many acting as studios, offices, and other commercial premises, but there is still considerable industrial and quasi-industrial activity.

Most recently, at the end of the 20th century and in the present, the area has become better known for its creative industry, its fast-changing music and art scene and its often startling street art and graffiti. Some of this transformation was stimulated by the conversion of the Devonshire Works into the 'Custard Factory' providing creative

Figure 8: Aerial view of the former Devonshire Works, looking north (33193_005)

industry units; the business moved to Banbury in 1964 and the buildings (Victorian to mid-20th-century) have been gradually redeveloped from 1992 (Figure 8). Kenneth Budd's 1960s mosaic of President JF Kennedy, commissioned by the city's Public Works Department, was re-erected on the corner of Floodgate Street in 2013. This may be seen as being the epicentre and more substantial and more permanent focus of the enormous splash of bright and sombre, graphic and symbolic graffiti, almost all of it executed with great skill and applied to surfaces of all kinds in the south-western half of the study area.

CHARACTER AND SIGNIFICANCE

Previous heritage assessments have provided baseline information on a wide range of structures within Digbeth. This section will consider instead the area as a whole, and the architectural and other elements that, collectively, create the unique character of the area.

Character may be defined as a place's essential features and qualities, those that make it distinctive and which those who live in, work in or know a place value most. It is a term much used in the National Planning Policy Framework and in ways that are directly relevant to the future of Digbeth.[54] Planning should:

- 'take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas' (para 17);
- local and neighbourhood plans should, 'respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation' (para 58);
- 'permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions' (para 64);
- 'and rather when determining planning applications local authorities should take account of 'the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness' (para 131).

Birmingham City Council's master plan for the area indicates that there is 'an authentic distinctive character with historic environments complemented by exciting new buildings'. When planning for the future of the area there will be an 'emphasis on retaining and developing the unique character, atmosphere and experience that sets Digbeth apart from other areas of the City'.[55]

Infrastructure

The framework of the area is provided by the large set-pieces of transport infrastructure which spread across it. These provide both chronological and physical layers to the area, and have dictated the orientation and form of much of the streetscape and buildings. The earliest and, physically, the lowest of these features is the River Rea, crossing south to north through the area (Figure 5). Although canalised and partly culverted in the 19th century its route reflects an historic boundary within the area, dividing what was originally Birmingham from Aston parish and providing a barrier that had to be crossed to enter the settlement. The river is crossed by the Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Street which represented the principal medieval approach to the settlement and remains an important transport route.

Crossing the area further north, and raised above the river, is the canal network, its waters fringed with scrub and trees, and its tranquillity occasionally disturbed

Figure 9: Narrow boat on the Warwick and Birmingham Canal, under the disused Great Western Railway viaduct, near Great Barr Street (DP195949)

by a narrow boat working its way between locks (Figure 9). This provides routes east and west through the area, with some basins still *in situ*, and others reflected in gaps between buildings and paving. Above this are the railway viaducts, again predominantly running west to east through the area but fanning outwards from the nodes of the main stations further west. These provide dominant visual features in the area, characterised by the rounded arches of the viaduct profiles, with solid brick parapets above, and with inter-city and local trains regularly passing along them and numerous small-scale businesses housed in the buildings inserted under the arches.

Much of the streetscape is dictated by the need to cross over or under these set-pieces. Where the roadways cross the river or canal these are typically marked by a brick bridge, in engineering brick, often with stone capping. These provide low-key but significant features on several streetscapes including Fazeley Street and Heath Mill Lane. They provide important view points from the roadways down onto the canal network, allowing an inter-visibility which is important to the legibility of the area.

The viaducts in the area are pierced by frequent roadways, often running at right-angles to the viaduct and parallel with each other. Where these pass under the viaduct the view of the streetscape beyond is framed by the arch (Figure 10). The

Figure 10: Looking north along Allison Street under the railway viaduct (DP196454)

principal viaduct through the area, that built for the Birmingham and Oxford Railway, leading up to Moor Street, is also characterised by tall arched openings within the brick piers supporting the track. This economised on the number of bricks required, enabled easy passage between arches and in terms of architectural drama provide views down through into the sequence of bays of the viaduct.

Buildings

As the historical development of the area has illustrated Digbeth has developed in a piecemeal fashion, with layers of history from the medieval onwards which are reflected in the current diverse streetscapes. Birmingham's evolution as an industrial centre was markedly different from that of other notable towns like Manchester and Leeds in the small-scale nature of most of its workshops until the early 20th century. The city was characterised therefore by a mixed townscape of housing and workshops. The Jewellery Quarter is perhaps the best-known survival of this type of area. In the late 19th and 20th centuries this was superseded by a demand for larger premises, as the type of industrial output of the city changed. Coupled with social pressure for the clearance of poor areas of housing this led to a transformation of areas near the city centre into predominantly working districts. In Digbeth this process is still legible, which makes it distinctive from other areas of Birmingham. Digbeth reflects a long transformation whose surviving fabric largely derives from the mid-19th to mid-20th century, although with notable earlier survivals. This is largely set within the framework of lines created by the canals and railways and the

Figure 11: The former board school by Martin and Chamberlain of 1891 on Floodgate Street (DP195928)

pattern of streets that was partly created in medieval and post-medieval times (the High Street and Heath Mill Lane), and partly much later, being developed in relation to the canals and rivers.

Surviving elements of the pre-20th-century streetscape include a number of 19th-century amenity buildings, residual elements built to serve the area when it had a larger domestic provision. This includes St Basil's Church, the former Board School on Floodgate Street (Figure 11), and the former chapel set back from the High Street at Deritend (formerly part of a charitable institution for the area). Some larger-scale 19th-century industrial buildings have also survived the changes in economic fortune, including most famously the Custard Factory (Devonshire Works; Figure 8) but also the former umbrella factory on Allison Street (now converted to residential use; Figure 12). Canal-related features are also extant – most notably at the junction of the Digbeth Branch Canal where the survival of canal offices, and warehousing between the canal and Fazeley Street represent an important survival (Figure 13). This includes not only the listed and locally listed buildings, but also the associated blocks which make strong reference to the canal side. Further east, another notable canal-side survival is the retort house of the former Adderley Street Gasworks (see Appendix 5).

The 20th century use of the area is represented by some notable large set pieces including Moor Street Station, the former Typhoo buildings (built between the 1920s and 1960s) and the former Birmingham Corporation bus depot. Aside from

Figure 12: The former umbrella factory at 78 Allison Street, built in 1872 for Corder & Turley, manufacturer of umbrella ribs (DP195878)

these examples, the wider area is chiefly characterised by buildings of the 1930s and 1950s, many of which have strong, repeating architectural features, and most are of high quality design, especially on their frontages, reflecting their position close to the centre of the city. Despite the piecemeal nature of the development of the area at the time, much of it, particularly west of the River Rea and south-west of the Grand Union Canal, has a strong and coherent streetscape. This western area is characterised by low rise industrial buildings which are consistent in scale and material. To the east the streetscapes break up, with more frequent large-scale industrial units. Nonetheless many of these have notable architectural features, including mid-20th-century entrance blocks or facades. The similar date range of the buildings, despite their different scales, connects the eastern area to the west, and provides an overall architectural coherence.

Brick dominates the area, in contrasting hues, from dark engineering brick in viaducts and canal buildings through to the brighter reds of inter-war or mid-20th-century industrial units. This is a notable recurring feature which helps the mid-20th-century phases blend well with those of the previous centuries. It is particularly remarkable as particularly by the 1950s a variety of alternative building materials were available.

Figure 13: The so-called 'banana warehouse' of *c* 1850 (DP219849)

Industrial complexes are typically characterised by entrance blocks or office blocks, which have often received more architectural embellishment, with light industrial sheds to the side or rear. A notable feature of the 1950s replanning of the area is the creation of corner blocks, where roads intersect, which often act as entrances for larger complexes (see Appendix 4). These are often canted, with the entrance angled towards the corner. Much of the development was evidently piecemeal, but the feature recurs across the area.

The predominantly industrial use of the area is reflected in the frequent large entrances, piercing what can be otherwise monolithic elevations. Where windows are used they are often basic and functional, although there is considerable variety in form and size. One particular strength of the streetscape is the survival of many contemporary window frames, including a wide variety of 20th-century metal-framed windows which are increasingly vulnerable to replacement in uPVC.

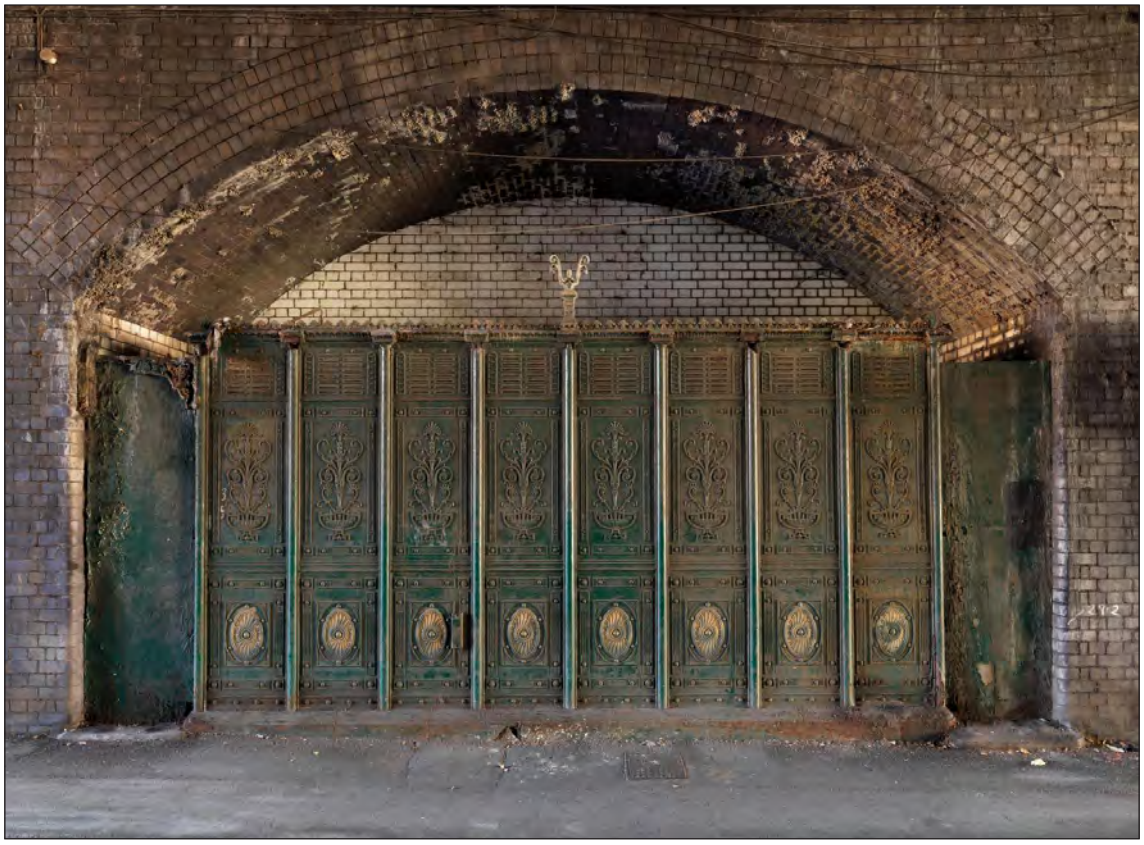


Figure 14: The grade II-listed urinal of c 1880-90 under the railway viaduct in Allison Street (DP219862)

Industrial use is also reflected in the frequent provision of north-lit sheds, which provides a varied roof profile to many of the streets. Often this is set against the rounded arches of the railway viaducts, providing considerable visual interest. Other sections of viaduct have been utilised to provide development with sheds and other industrial units set into the arches providing discrete plots for small-scale trade.

Public realm

Digbeth's character derives not just from individual buildings, but also from a distinctive public realm, which largely stems from surviving historic features. In many ways this builds upon, and complements, the larger historic features of buildings and infrastructure, with many elements of public realm integrated with the larger blocks to create coherent vistas and streetscapes. Surviving features include areas of paving, including street surfaces, boundary walls, and smaller features such as bollards or street signs. The several disused Victorian public conveniences that survive on street corners and underneath railway arches contribute much to the character of the area (Figure 14).

Historic paving is typically characterised by small setts. Perhaps the most notable surviving of this kind is on Pickford Street, where aside from some modern service trenches the curved pattern of the setts is preserved (Figure 15). Other stretches are on Allison and New Bond Streets and it also survives in some more contained

Figure 15: Number 28 Pickford Street with the surviving cobbled pavement in front (DP196456)

and private areas, including the surviving canal side yard accessed off Montague Street. It is likely that other sections of surviving historic surface survive under some modern tarmac surfaces, and these may be easily uncovered. They are reminders of both the hard and noisy wear the roads and yards received from shod horses and iron-tyred waggons and that the quality of finish given to the infrastructure of the streets matched that of the canals and railways.

DIGBETH: PLACE, LANDSCAPE AND VALUES

This section outlines some of the ways that developers, planners and communities can understand character in Digbeth, ranging from the material world (as described and interpreted in earlier sections) to the more intangible, but no less real aspects, those that can be encapsulated in terms like activity, association and affection. All can change quickly, but the ways they change are rarely abrupt; the present and future of each is influenced by its past. This initial report cannot exhaustively provide evidence for each of these, but can suggest how they contribute to character and should encourage master-planners and decision-makers to take them into account. Further work should be commissioned as necessary, so that plans are as responsive as they can be to people and community as well as to place, and decisions about the future landscape of Digbeth are taken as thoughtfully as possible.

As this brief report shows, Digbeth is a dynamic inner-city area, one of the most colourful and varied in Britain, 'slightly Bohemian', a 'pretty cool place', 'Birmingham's Shoreditch', or like 'Berlin's Kreuzberg'. It is a place that resident Pamela Pinski says is 'definitely not a quiet leafy suburb' and where another resident, photographer Andy Smart, finds 'beauty in the backstreets'.[56]

Bohemian, cool and beautiful, and a 'place'. The concept of place or places and the importance of nurturing them for the benefit of individual and communal wellbeing are threaded through all modern planning policy guidance.[57] Place was also celebrated in a millennial review of how society expects the multifarious ways by which it values and cares about the whole historic environment to be recognised by those who make decisions about its future. *Power of Place* was succeeded by *Conservation Principles*, which among other things set out the four principal ways that people care about place, via the four heritage values: evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal.[58]

Historic England defines place as, 'Any part of the historic environment, of any scale, that has a distinctive identity perceived by people'.[59] It could extend to the whole of the study area, a triangle delineated by busy roads (the High Streets, Curzon Street and the Ring Road along Watery Lane), or in many minds might be confined to particular parts of it. It includes the long sinuous medieval and modern High Street, the arty area between the Bond and the Custard Factory, the grittier stretch of flat-roofed factories and warehouses along the eastern side and the more mixed zone of commerce, residence, education, accommodation and entertainment in the western city end. Drilling deeper breaks these places into smaller more closely defined ones - the Custard Factory complex may be a place in itself, Gibb Street a place within that, and each of the two squares, with pools as their foci, places within that. But pulling back enables Digbeth and its plethora of places to become landscape.

Landscape is most succinctly defined by the European Landscape Convention: 'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'.[60] This is more than townscape, which concentrates on the ways that buildings, streets and spaces work together to create a place. Landscape is the lens that makes place personal and it helps us develop a

Figure 16: Pedestrian traffic in Gibb Street, passing through the Custard Factory complex, 2016 (DP195109)

sense of that place. It does this by recognising that we perceive places sensually, experientially as well as cognitively (through understanding). It also encourages empowerment and action, making landscape a force for good citizenship, allowing for discussion, including contestation of the values that decisions are based on. It inspires engagement with the world and through that is a way to further improve a sense of wellbeing. It is not a tool that is in the control of any one agency, whether government, business, or an interest group. It is instead recognition of the ways that people have experienced and created place for centuries and millennia, most obviously via the great designed landscapes of the early Bronze Age and the 18th and 19th centuries, more recently and more relevantly by way of urban movements and strategies. This includes the suburban impulse from the early 19th century, the Garden Cities that developed (in part) from the suburban idea and the government-supported zoning and social housing of the inter-war period and the post-war New Towns, and now through masterplanning. The masterplan currently being developed for Digbeth itself may be expected to respond to the inherited character of the area because new landscape that does so may be expected to be much more sustainable, culturally and socially as well as economically, than one that does not.

Activity

Activity varies in numerous ways, but principally by form, by volume and by coherence. In broad terms these activities would echo the patterns shown on any present-day and recent past land use mapping of the area.

Form includes those activities dependent on residence, work, commerce, entertainment, consumption, delivery (of goods and people), exploration (for pleasure or for business), and transit (passing through; Figure 16). Places of residence in Digbeth are increasing from a recent very low base (there being just a few handfuls of historic dwellings surviving within the whole study area). Very recently some former industrial complexes have been converted to residential and mixed uses and the masterplan expects many more residential units to be created through regeneration of existing structures and creation of new ones. Work includes many small and medium scale industrial businesses (manufacturing, processing and repair) and municipal activities (transport, waste disposal, etc), largely in the streets north-east of the Birmingham and Oxford Junction Railway (BOJR) viaduct and largely within units that were established before the 1970s, indicating how this pattern has been influenced by the recent and more distant past. The creative industry is focused on the area between River and Floodgate Streets and Heath Mill Lane, using former industrial and community buildings of a form and scale that lend themselves to subdivision and modular reuse. Commerce is mainly in the area south-west of the BOJR viaduct, along the High Streets (in historic shops, a few with surviving early 20th-century or earlier fronts) and in the streets immediately behind, though recent regeneration work is increasing commerce in the area of most intense creative activity between Fazeley Road and Floodgate Street.

Entertainment (largely drinking, eating, music, dance, etc) is largely provided from a mix of historic public houses, scattered through the whole area (but more densely clustered in the south-west quarter), and reused industrial buildings, mainly in the south-west, nearer the city centre. The patterns of delivery and exploration are quite directly determined by the patterns of activity, but those of transit may be regarded as impositions on the area, though largely in a period preceding that of the fabric that supports most other activity, so that transit may be regarded as the longest lasting activity in Digbeth. The lines of transit create barriers through their heavy dangerous flows (if roads) and their structure (if canals and railways), contributing greatly to the subdivision of Digbeth into blocks of land, each of which has developed its own peculiar character. These lines and blocks are all historically determined, being the strong lines of the medieval highways and lanes, post-medieval side streets and industrial period streets and squares, canals and railways.

Activity volumes, including levels of noisiness and tranquillity also reflect the past quite directly, echoing the patterns of activity and reflecting degrees of busy-ness of vehicle, pedestrian, train and boat activity on roads, streets, back streets, spaces, railways and canals. The considerable daily and weekly variation in Digbeth, from morning to late at night and from working days to weekends, largely reflects the relative absence of residents and the use of certain areas for entertainments.

Associations, affect and memory

Personal memories elicited by conversation, in person and online, and by researching or reading about Digbeth's history help draw out associations with the place. Immigrant communities might be the more obvious groupings of those who share such memories and associations; some such communities are still present, some

gone, some reduced – Irish, Italian, Polish. Others will recall other recent versions of Digbeth, as a place of work (such as those who packed Typhoo Tea at the great factory on Bordesley Street until the late 1970s), as a place to use to buy and repair cars. It is a place of industry, which a little research show can be traced back two or three centuries through metal working and small-scale factories (of which the Gun Barrel Proof House is a remarkable survival) to the long-lost industries powered by water. People may also learn that this was an area of medieval meadows and deer parks, grassy and treed, green not grey, the colours natural not painted.

The newly-established communities, who will be developing their own associations and attachments with the place, include those of artists, musicians and digital business people, the bus drivers whose depot is at the heart of Digbeth, the audiences and consumers who enjoy visiting and exploring this unconventional corner of the city. As the place continues to change, new groups make Digbeth the centre or part of their world.

The ways that such people – resident, worker, player – experience a place are multifarious and the ways that place then affects them also varies, by what they are doing, how susceptible they are to the various effects of a place, their senses of association and levels of emotional investment. The study of what is known as 'affect' in relation to place and landscape is rapidly growing and helps make the connection between the intangible and heritage values.

People tend to have affection for each other and for place, but affection can also be usefully extended or exploded to include other forms of emotion for both, from euphoria and excitement through distaste and disturbance to fear and loathing. Most evaluation has tended to emphasise the positive, working with the criteria that makes places special, but decision making can also benefit from fuller exploration and clearer exposition of what makes places less well valued. The Historic England Heritage Values (derived from those first established in Australia for the Burra Charter), and intended to draw in the values of the widest communities, the marginal as well as the dominant, do allow the full spectrum of values to be developed.

Figure 17: The Arch, Heath Mill Lane (DP219875)

REGENERATION

As noted, in the past 20 years the area (and especially that within the two conservation areas) has evolved to support creative and cultural uses, partly encouraged by low rents, access to the city centre and light industrial buildings which are readily adapted to new uses. There has already been some relatively low-key redevelopment as part of this process, some of which provides good examples of how the reuse and extension of older buildings can be viable while retaining character and how wholly new buildings can be designed with maintaining and enhancing the area's character in mind.

1. Former umbrella factory, Allison Street

This is an adaptation of a former industrial space to form residential units (Figure 12). The original listed building was retained, and new blocks of the same scale and massing provided. Whilst not providing a pastiche of the original, high gothic building these pick up key features, such as the floor levels and string courses, providing visual unity whilst distinguishing the new building from the old.

2. 'Rhubarb', Heath Mill Lane

A completely new building of office units built adjacent to the viaduct and opposite the Custard Factory, providing the opportunity for a humorous name, itself in

keeping with the area's tone. Its scale is in keeping with the existing buildings around it and the use of engineering brick means that it blends into the streetscape through the use of consistent materials (echoing those of the viaduct itself). Although the design is modern it picks up on features of 20th-century units in surrounding streets – no set-back from the pavement, flat roof, repeating rectangular windows, vehicle entry through the façade, etc.

3. Fazeley Studios, Fazeley Street

A Victorian Unitarian Chapel and Sunday School and adjacent light industrial unit from the 1920s, which have been adapted into studio space. The historic buildings were retained and are now used to provide flexible studio and meeting room space. The original north light roof profile was also retained.

4. The Bond and The Arch, Fazeley and Floodgate Streets

These are two complexes of canal and industrial buildings which have been refurbished and reused since 1988 and 1991 as office accommodation, meeting rooms, café, etc. retaining early features such as glazing while brought up to modern standards by using secondary glazing etc (Figure 17).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER WORK

This outline assessment is intended to provide an initial picture of the Digbeth area, and to guide recommendations for further work.

The historic area assessment recommended three areas of future research, which were undertaken in the second half of 2017 and are included as appendices to this report (see Appendices 1-7).

They are:

1. Further research on the 1950s redevelopment on the area, focusing on the elements of the plan within the current conservation areas and the area to its east that includes and lies south-west of the Grand Union canal (Appendix 4).

2. More detailed work on the history and evolution and significance of individual buildings in the north-west section of the study area, in order to inform responses to the likely redevelopment of this area following on from HS2 (Appendix 6).

3. Further research on buildings identified as potentially significant and/or poorly understood during the outline assessment, to be used as justification for local listing. This includes: the former bus depot (Appendix 1), the former Typhoo Tea Packaging Works (Appendix 2), the former Fellows, Morton and Clayton warehouse on Fazeley Street (Appendix 3), the former gas retort house in Adderley Street (Appendix 5) and the former Spotted Dog pub on the corner of Bordesley Street and Meriden Street (Appendix 7).

Two other recommendations indicate areas for future recording and research, to be undertaken by Historic England or externally. They are:

4. Further photography, capturing portraits of those living and working in the area in order to provide a record of the use of the area at the moment. This also might be used to promote the heritage of the area, highlighting the long tradition of metal working and other trades. They might be used for a local exhibition to celebrate and promote the industrial heritage of Digbeth.

5. Further research on the intangible heritage including on the patterns of types and volumes of activity. Work should also be developed that aligns all of Digbeth's heritage, the tangible and the intangible with each of the four *Conservation Principles* Heritage Values (from EH 2008): evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal.

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54 DCLG 2012

55 BCC 2014, 36

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APPENDIX 1: THE LIVERPOOL STREET BUS DEPOT

Address: Liverpool Street/Adderley Street, Digbeth, Birmingham

NGR: SP0835986451

Figure 18: Aerial photograph showing the bus depot, looking north-west, with Adderley Street in the foreground (33191_032)

Introduction

The municipal bus depot in Liverpool and Adderley streets was built in 1935-6 to a design by the architects Crouch, Butler & Savage. The single-storey depot occupies a roughly triangular site between Liverpool Street and the Warwick and Birmingham Canal, with, originally, only a short frontage to Adderley Street (Figure 18). Most of the depot is a roofed shed for maintenance and parking but there are also two brick office blocks in Liverpool Street and two vehicular entrances. The open yard to the east along Adderley Street is a recent addition. The bus depot is not listed, not on a local list and is not located in a conservation area.

The depot has three main roofs with skylights which run parallel to Liverpool Street. There are two gateways to Adderley Street and Liverpool Street, which feature the City's coat of arms and the lettering 'Birmingham Corporation Tramways & Omnibus Dept.' (Figure 19). Two blocks of offices flank the entrance in Liverpool Street: a short block at the north which originally contained a boiler house in the basement, offices (including 'pay-in') and lavatories on the ground floor and a

Figure 19: The Liverpool Street elevation, looking south-east (DP195883)

recreation room on the first floor; and a larger block parallel with Liverpool Street with a mess room, stores and a repair shop on the ground floor (Figures 20 and 21). The latter block is contiguous with a long screen wall along Liverpool Street of red brick in English bond with a blue brick plinth, and shallow giant arches, lintels and cills of blue brick. Groups of three arches are separated by red brick strip pilasters which now have small high level window openings and larger square headed windows below. Most of the other external elevations (where visible) are of red brick, including the north elevation of the north office block and the rear elevation to the canal which has irregularly-spaced windows, some of which have been blocked. The east elevation which originally abutted existing buildings is of white brick (Figure 18), as are, according to the original drawings, the inside elevations (Figure 21).

The interior has not been inspected but according to the plans of 1935 it originally included fuel tanks, oil and petrol pumps, overhead cleaning platforms, a washing area, inspection pits, a brake tester, and a sunken workshop (Figure 21).

Development history

Although located along the canal, the site of the bus depot was not built up until the early 19th century. By 1828, only the southern part of the site was occupied by buildings which on a map of 1839 are labelled 'Bordesley Steel Manufacture'. By *c* 1855, the whole site had been built up with a number of small light-industrial buildings on irregularly-sized plots as well as some back-to-backs along Adderley Street.[1] By the 1880s, it was the site of Bordesley Mills which produced brass tubes,

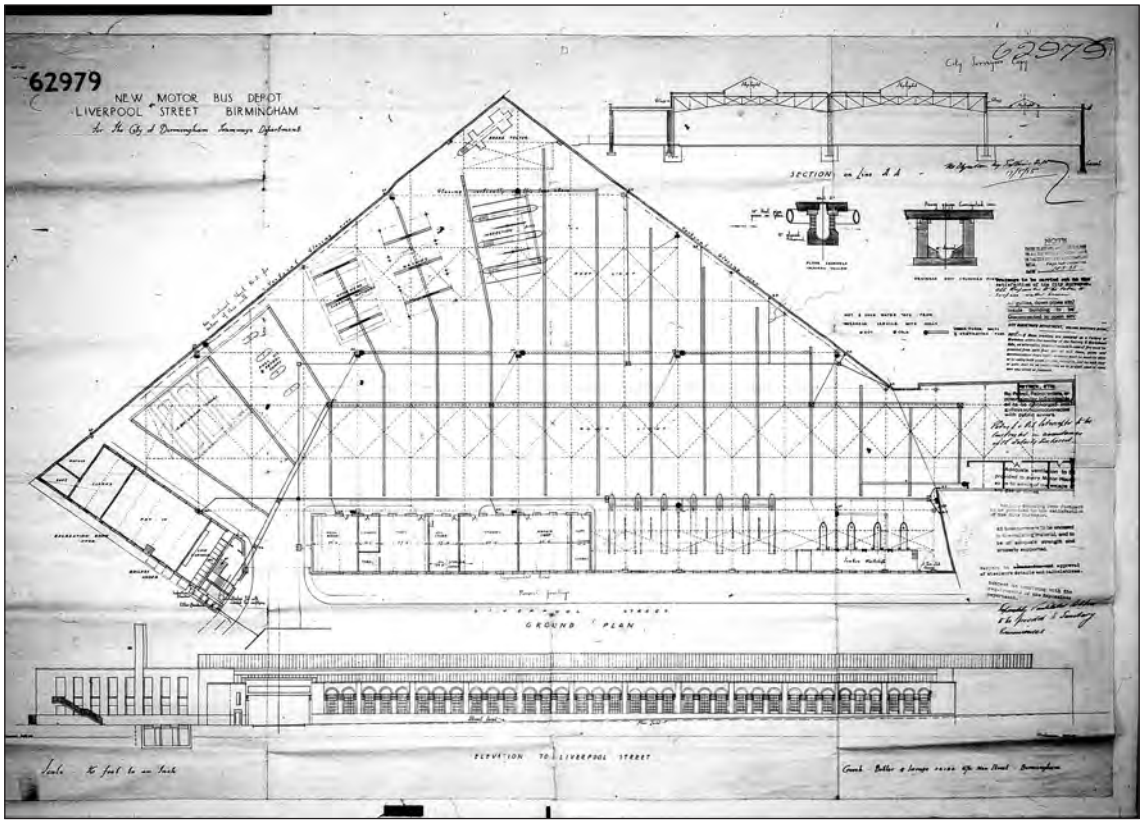


Figure 20: Plan, 1935, Crouch, Butler & Savage (Birmingham Archives and Collections, BBP62979 with permission of Sidell Gibson)

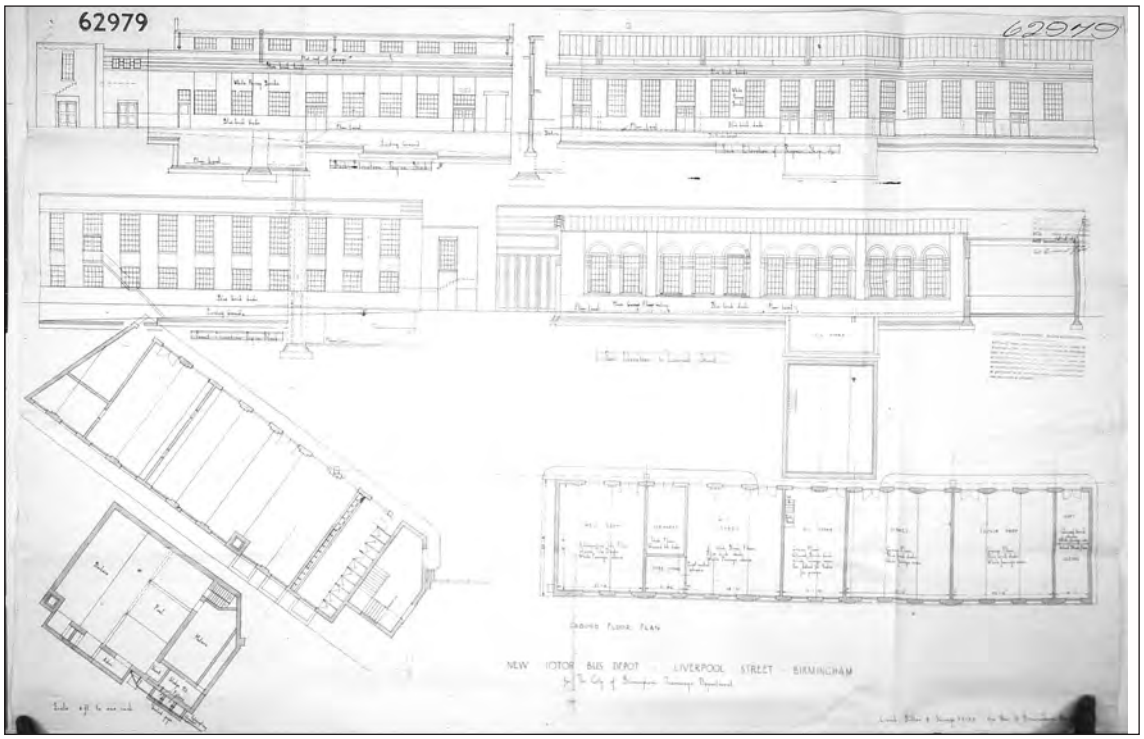


Figure 21: Elevations and partial plans, 1935, Crouch, Butler & Savage (Birmingham Archives and Collections, BBP62979, with permission of Sidell Gibson)

copper sheet and wire.[2] In 1928, the site was the Branscombe Glass Works Ltd, manufacturers of glass bottles.[3]

In May 1935, plans for a new 'motor bus depot' for the Council's Tramways and Omnibus Department were submitted to the Council for approval (Figures 20-23). The architects were Crouch, Butler & Savage of 67 New Street, Birmingham. The bus depot opened in September 1936.[4]

Later external alterations include the blocking of the entrance door to the small north block in Liverpool Street. The fenestration along Liverpool Street also differs slightly from the original drawings, suggesting an upper floor was added at some point. It is not clear if this was an amendment to the original drawings prior to construction or a later insertion after the building was completed.

In *c* 1985, the wire works to the east were demolished and the site incorporated into the bus depot, forming an open parking area.[5] This required the insertion of two new openings at the east corner (Figure 18). The bus depot remains in use and is today the Birmingham Central Garage for National Express West Midlands.

The architects

The architectural firm of Crouch, Butler & Savage was founded in 1885 or 1886 when Joseph Crouch (1859-1936) and Edmund Butler (1862-1936) went into partnership.[6] In *c* 1911, they were joined by Rupert Savage (1871-1956), previously their assistant. Joseph Crouch was a highly versatile architect with an interest in town planning. Between the 1880s and 1935, when Crouch retired, the practice designed a wide variety of buildings, from warehouses and factories to Arts & Crafts houses, schools, municipal buildings, the former Royal Birmingham Society of Artists (1912) and several Nonconformist chapels, mostly in and around Birmingham. Their most famous pupil was Frederick Gibberd (1925-30).

While the early work of the practice is relatively well researched[7], their inter- and post-war output is less well-known. Savage continued the practice after the two older partners retired. He is credited with increasing the practice's success in numerous competitions, including the training colleges in Hull and Dudley, the technical school in Sutton Coldfield, several free libraries and schools.[8] His designs were placed second in the final competition for the Methodist Central Hall in Westminster, and in the competition for Southampton's Civic Centre. Savage's works for the firm include the Masonic Memorial Temple of 1926-7 (now Masonic Hall), and the former South Staffordshire Waterworks headquarters (1931-2), both in Birmingham. He was also responsible for the design of several municipal bus depots for Birmingham, including those at Harborne (1926, demolished), and this one in Liverpool Street. He retired in 1952, handing over to his partner W. Cyril Moss. In 2009, Crouch Butler Savage Ltd was acquired by Sidell Gibson Architects.

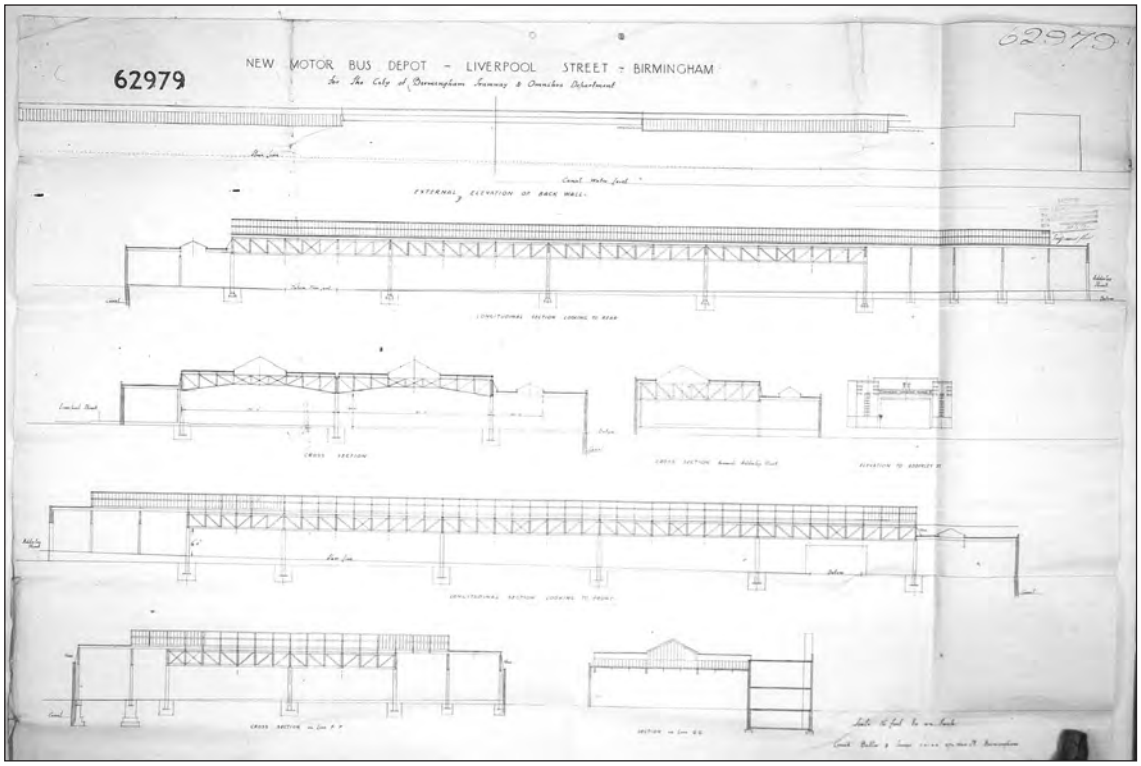


Figure 22: Sections, 1935, Crouch, Butler & Savage (Birmingham Archives and Collections, BBP62979, with permission of Sidell Gibson)

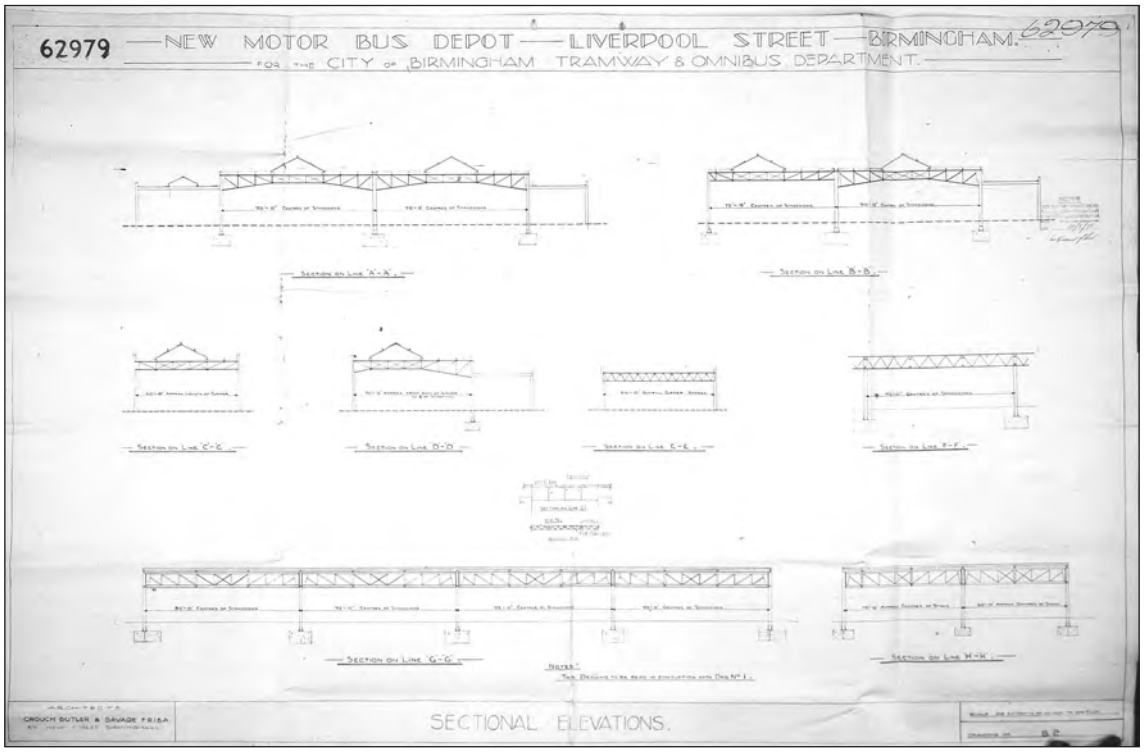


Figure 23: Sections, 1935, Crouch, Butler & Savage (Birmingham Archives and Collections, BBP62979, with permission of Sidell Gibson)

Birmingham's municipal bus service

In 1904, Birmingham Council had started to operate its own tramcar service, although it had built tramway lines for private companies as early as 1873. Ten years later, it also began to run regular motor omnibus services and in 1930 it started to convert its tram routes into bus routes, a process which was only completed in 1953.[9] Initially, the transport department was known as 'Birmingham Corporation Tramways'. In 1928, it was renamed 'Birmingham Corporation Tramways and Omnibus Department' – the name that features on the Liverpool Street building – and in 1937 'Birmingham City Transport' (BCT). In 1969, it became part of the West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive.

Purpose-built bus depots built by the Council included the following eight sites, none of which are listed or locally listed:[10]

- Lonsdale and Serpentine Roads, Harborne, 1926 (demolished); by Crouch, Butler & Savage, the Council's first purpose-built garage

- Harborne Lane, Selly Oak, opened July 1927 (extant); a three-gabled brick and terracotta street elevation, with a small two-storey administrative block to the south; now used for storage

- Fox Hollies Road, Acocks Green, opened June 1928 (extant); a four-gabled building of brick and terracotta, with a two-storey administrative block to the south; in use by National Express

- Wellhead Lane, Perry Barr, the Corporation's largest garage, in use by August 1931 (extant); a thirteen-gable building in a brick modernist style, with the two-storey administrative block at the front; in use by National Express

- Liverpool Street, Digbeth, opened September 1936 (extant); by Crouch, Butler & Savage; in use by National Express

- Yardley Wood Road, Yardley Wood, opened November 1938 (extant); the three gables of the depot are parallel with the street and behind the two-storey neo-Georgian administration block; in use by National Express

- Corner of Ridgacre Lane and Ridgacre Road, Quinton, planned in 1939-40, opened in October 1949 (demolished)

- Crossfield Road, Lea Hall, opened April 1955, BCT's last bus garage (extant in 2015); a modest, two-gabled shed with a single-storey administrative block to the street; used for storage

Bus depots

There appear to have been few architectural studies of bus depots and garages, as distinct from bus/coach stations and tram depots. Early bus depots were shared with trams, which buses gradually came to replace during the interwar years.[11] In 1914, only eighteen local authorities had provided a public bus service; by 1928 this had risen to 90.[12] Bus and coach stations – as the more publicly visible buildings – appear to have received more architectural attention and the distinction between the two was underlined by the architect Gordon Wallet Jackson in 1931: 'Stations must be stations and not glorified garages'.[13]

The Liverpool Street bus garage appears to be a fairly standard example of an inter-war bus garage with a steel-framed roof. As the Listing Selection Guide for transport buildings states:

> Purpose-built bus garages or depots usually combined offices and a covered parking area, the latter generally top lit, single-storey and spanned by steel-framed roofs without intermediate support to facilitate vehicle movement and storage. A few important garages with concrete roofs were built in the late 1930s and early 1950s, partly following continental models, and partly responding to restrictions in the use of steel after the Second World War. These can be architecturally distinguished, for instance, Wythenshawe in Greater Manchester (1939-42; listed grade II*), and Stockwell in London (1951-54; listed grade II*) ... For depots, garages and stations, intactness, architectural quality and structural interest are the key considerations.[14]

There are nine listed purpose-built bus depots in England, of which only three date from the inter-war period: the Greek Doric-style United Bus Company Depot (grade II) of 1930 in Newcastle, the neo-vernacular London Country Bus Services Limited bus garage of 1931-2 in Reigate (grade II), and the concrete-roofed Wythenshawe Bus Depot by G. Noel Hill of the Manchester City Architect's Department.

Conclusion

The bus depot in Liverpool Street appears to be a typical example of an interwar bus garage with facilities for vehicle maintenance and offices. It is a functional building and decoration has been concentrated on the two vehicular archways and the brick detailing of the Liverpool Street elevation. Based on an external inspection, there have been some limited later alterations, particularly to the elevations of the two office blocks.

The building was designed for the Corporation by a notable local firm who designed at least one earlier municipal bus depot which, however, is no longer extant. Comparison with surviving bus depots in Birmingham shows that they were designed in a wide variety of architectural styles and materials, and that there was no house style. For example, none of the surviving bus depots feature an arched brick elevation like that on Liverpool Street. This makes the Liverpool Street example distinctive, and its long elevation is a notable feature of the Digbeth streetscape.

Endnotes

1 Birmingham Archives and Collections, Pigott Smith's *Survey of Birmingham*, 1850-55

2 OS town plan of Birmingham, scale 1:500, 1885-87

3 Post Office Directory for 1928

4 Keeley, Russell and Gray 1977, 168

5 Birmingham City Council, planning application number 04827019 and 04827020

6 Brodie *et al*. (vol. 1, 475) gives 1885 as the start of the partnership; Herbert and Shackley have 1886. Herbert and Shackley 2009, 452

7 Herbert and Shackley 2009, 451-478

8 See obituaries in the architectural press and his biographical file in the RIBA Library

9 Stephens (ed.) 1964, 351-2

10 Based on Keeley, Russell and Gray 1977, 166-69

11 Holder 2004, 192

12 Ibid, 196

13 Quoted in ibid, 194

14 Historic England 2011

APPENDIX 2: THE FORMER TYPHOO TEA PACKING WORKS

Address: Bordesley and Pickford Streets, Digbeth, Birmingham

NGR: SP0781086709

Figure 24: The Typhoo buildings with Bordesley Street in the foreground, looking north-west (33192_015)

Introduction

The former Typhoo tea packing works and warehouses are located on the north side of Bordesley Street and to the west of Pickford Street. They were built partly on the site of the former Bordesley Street Wharf of the Digbeth Branch Canal. The current buildings are mostly three and four storeys in height (Figures 24 and 25). They were built in several phases between 1929 and the 1960s and were designed by the architectural practice of Harry W. Weedon. The elevations facing Bordesley Street include two post-war blocks with alternating red and blue brick courses which flank an inter-war block of blue engineering brick with stone dressings. The Typhoo buildings are locally listed, with the exception of the 1947 block at the west. They are located in the Warwick Bar Conservation area. The interior was not inspected.

Sumner's 'Typhoo' Tea Ltd first moved its tea packing works to the Bordesley Street Wharf site in 1925 and remained at the site until 1978. The first buildings were a converted timber saw mill of *c* 1900 (destroyed by bombing in 1941), which served

Figure 25: The Typhoo buildings with the remains of the wharf in the foreground, looking south-east (33192_031)

as a bonded warehouse with the packing rooms above. In 1929, the first purpose-built extension was constructed to a design by Weedon, who was to design all subsequent extensions on the site. Initially, all tea arrived ready-blended from Ceylon but over time, some blending also took place at Bordesley Street. In November 1978, the Typhoo works were closed as the production was transferred to Moreton in the Wirral.

The phasing of the current buildings

The remaining former Typhoo buildings belong to five main phases (not counting any upward extensions), all of which were designed by Harry W. Weedon (Figures 26 and 27). In chronological order these are:

1. The earliest remaining building at the site is a five-bay block of blue engineering brick with stone dressings which dates from 1929.

2. The north-west rear corner is a red brick extension of 1932, with a second floor of 1935.

3. At the centre, along Bordesley Street is a large block of 1937-8 which matches the 1929 building in style and materials.

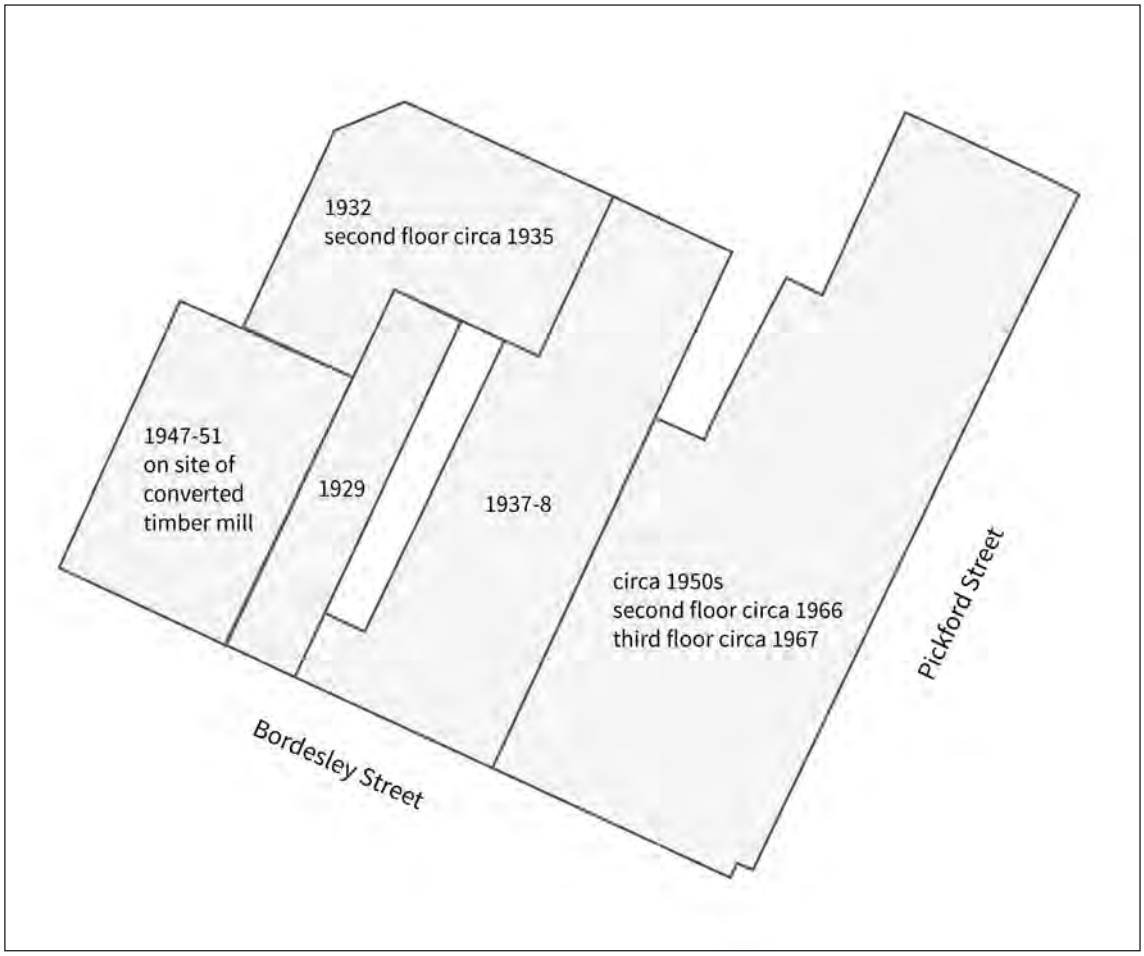


Figure 26: Sketch plan showing the approximate phasing of the current buildings

4. At the far west is a plainer block of red and blue brick begun in 1947 which was built on the site of a bomb-damaged building.

5. To the east is a large L-shaped corner block of red and blue engineering brick, which was designed as a four-storey building but was built in three phases. The lower two storeys were built probably in c 1954, the second floor was built in c 1966, and the third floor was added in c 1967.

Company history

Typhoo Tea was founded in 1903 by Sir John Sumner but it grew out of the family's grocery and chemist business which had been founded by his grandfather, William Sumner (born *c* 1796), in 1820.[1] William took over the grocery and druggist shop of Pratchett & Noble in the Bull Ring, Birmingham. He soon established a branch in Coleshill Hill Street (closed 1892) and in 1845 his son, John (1824-1907), joined him in business. By 1850, the name had been changed to 'William Sumner & Son'; in 1852, it became 'W. & J. Sumner' as William retired and handed over to his sons, John and William. In 1863, the two sons divided the chemist/druggist (97 High Street, Bull Ring) and grocery/tea dealer parts (no. 98) of the business between

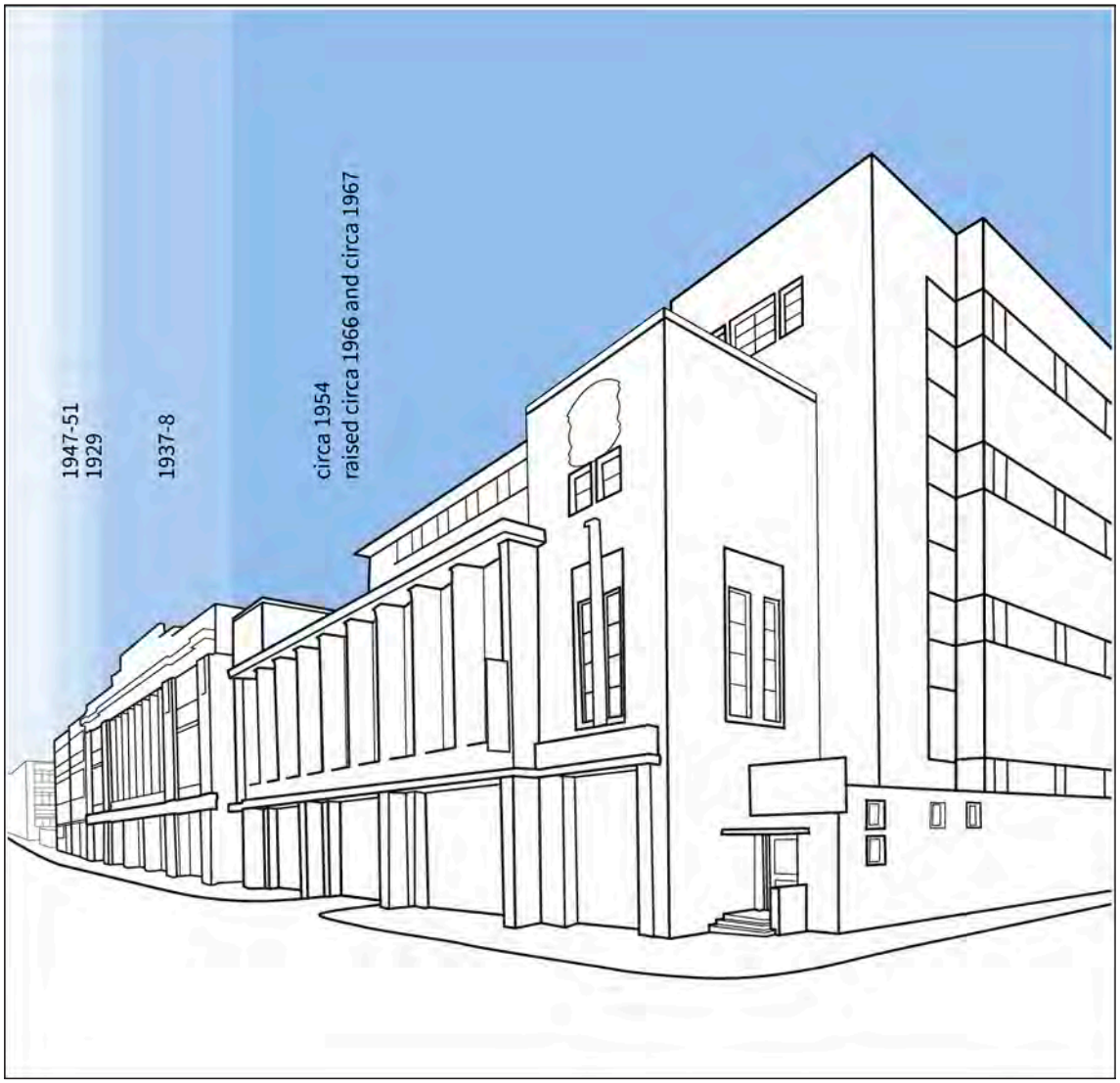


Figure 27: Phasing of the street elevation to Bordesley Street

them, the latter being continued by John. In 1894, the grocer's shop moved from 98 High Street to Hutton House at 25 and 26 High Street.

John Sumner junior (1856-1934) joined his father in the grocery business in 1888. In 1903, his sister, Mary Augusta, recommended the tannin-free tips of tea leaves for indigestion and Sumner bought 30 chests which he sold in branded packets as 'Sumner's Typhoo Tipps Tea'. He chose the name 'typhoo' (apparently derived from the Chinese word for 'doctor') because it was alliterative with 'tea' and because it sounded suitably Oriental. He registered the name but the word 'tipps' could not be registered and was subsequently much copied (including the double 'p' which is said to derive from a printer's error). Sold through chemists and grocers, Typhoo Tipps was an instant success, allowing Sumner to sell the family grocery business and concentrate solely on tea. Sumner's 'Typhoo' Tea Ltd was incorporated on 29 July 1905. By late 1906, the company had moved to new premises in Castle Street.

In 1909, Sumner visited Ceylon where he appointed an agency to buy, blend and ship the tea, leaving only the packaging to be done in Birmingham. The blending operation continued to take place exclusively in Colombo until the 1930s when part of the tea was blended at Bordesley Street.

Sir John Sumner retired in 1926, shortly after the company had moved to Bordesley Street. His son, J.R. Hugh Sumner (died 1972), succeeded him as chairman of the company, while his nephew, Roland Sumner Kneale, became general manager. In 1941 the name 'Sumner's' was dropped from the company name, and in March 1949 a new holding company called Typhoo Tea (Holdings) Ltd was floated on the stock market. From the 1950s, India replaced Ceylon as Typhoo's main tea supplier, and

Figure 28: Bordesley Wharf as shown on sheets 127 and 128 of John Pigott Smith's Survey of Birmingham of 1850-55 (Birmingham Archives and Collections, reproduced with the permission of the Library of Birmingham)

deliveries reached the Bordesley Street works by road, rather than canal boat. By 1960, Typhoo was the leading brand in the grocery trade and made record-breaking profits. In 1968, Typhoo merged with the food division of Schweppes, forming Typhoo Schweppes; the same year, John Black Sumner, Sir John's grandson and the last family member to be actively involved with the company, retired. In 1969, the new company merged with Cadbury to form Cadbury Schweppes. Typhoo successfully adapted to containerisation, computerisation and the public's preference for tea bags over loose tea.

In November 1978, Typhoo production was moved to a factory complex in Moreton. In May 1986, the beverages and foods division of Cadbury Schweppes formed a new company, Premier Brands Ltd. In August 2005, Premier Brands sold Typhoo to the Apeejay Surrendra Group for $140million.

Bordesley Wharf before 1925

Bordesley Wharf was built together with the Digbeth Branch Canal of 1790. Between 1819 and 1824, a second basin was dug, and a third one in the 1840s.[2] By 1795, there was a steam mill on the south side of Fazeley Street, beside the canal. The town plans by Kempson of 1808 and 1810 show the area west of the two canal basins as built up. John Pigott Smith's map of 1828 provides more detail about the buildings, including the mill south of Fazeley Street (by the 1880s known as Fazeley Street Rolling Mills), and also shows the plot between the east basin and Pickford Street as gardens. By then, Engine Street and Cotton Street, two short streets of back-to-backs which formed an L-shape, had been laid out which also provided access to the west basin from (New) Canal Street and Fazeley Street, respectively. By 1839, the gardens had been repurposed as coal wharves.

By the 1850s, the west side along New Canal Street was still the most densely built up area of the wharf (Figure 28). The west end of Bordesley Street had a mixture of residential and industrial buildings but the part of the street south of the middle and east basins had far fewer buildings, including a few cottages and a long linear building near the corner to Pickford Street. Between the middle and east basins and on the site of the former gardens only a few scattered sheds are shown. The 1868 Post Office Directory lists under Bordesley Street Wharf the Birmingham Canal Company's agent, seventeen coal merchants, Lewis' Mill and the timber merchants Knight & Gosling at Bangor Wharf.

By the 1880s, the back-to-backs in Engine and Cotton streets had been demolished and the street names no longer appear on OS maps. There were two markets on the east side of New Canal Street, namely the Provincial Hide, Skin & Fat Market to the north of the former Engine Street and the Birmingham & Midland Counties Hide, Skin, Fat & Wool Market to the south. The area between the west and middle basins was occupied by a timber and slate yard, and the Star Works, which produced 'enamelled slate' and chimney pieces.[3] The former gardens and coal wharf remained largely empty. The whole Wharf site bounded by Bordesley, New Canal, Fazeley and Pickford Streets was surrounded by a boundary wall with several vehicular gates. By

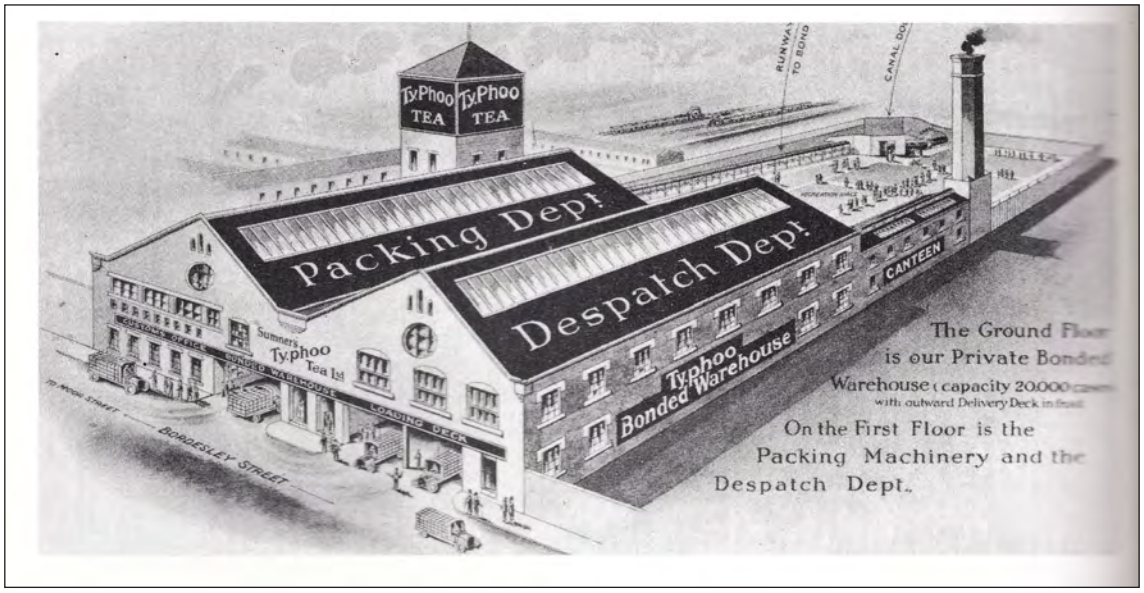


Figure 29: The converted saw mill in c 1925 (Williams 1990, 78; copyright holder not traced)

1888, there were thirteen coal merchants, the Star Works, and the timber merchants Tailby & Co at Bangor Wharf.

The latter company first appeared in the 1880 directory as Tailby & Cooper, timber and slate merchants, having taken over Knight & Gosling's business. According to map evidence, their building on the site of the former Star Works in Bordesley Street was built between 1890 and 1905; in 1923 it was described as having been erected 'some 25 years earlier'.[4] It was this building which became the first Digbeth base of Sumner's Typhoo Tea Ltd.

Typhoo in Bordesley Street

In 1923, Typhoo was about to start extending their Castle Street works when they heard that the site of a timber mill and depot at Bordesley Street Wharf was for sale, a building large enough to allow them to operate their own bonded warehouse on site. The site also had the advantage of having its own canal dock. Ronald Sumner Kneale, Sir John's nephew, recalled his first impressions of the old mill buildings:

> 'We found ourselves first upon the ground floor in a great square, empty, echoing place, considerably larger than the interior of the Birmingham Town Hall, a little dangerous by reason of the yawning sawpits on all sides, for it had been erected some 25 years earlier and since used by a large firm of timber importers. Three rows of iron pillars – 25 in all – supported the floor above. 'What a place for a bonded stores [sic]!' remarked one of our directors.'[5]

In September 1923, they received permission from Customs and Excise to operate a bonded warehouse. A 66-year lease of the site, starting from 25 March 1923, was signed with the vendors, The Butchers Hide Skin & Wool Co. Ltd, in December 1923. In February 1924, they signed a contract with Jeffreys & Sons Ltd for converting the

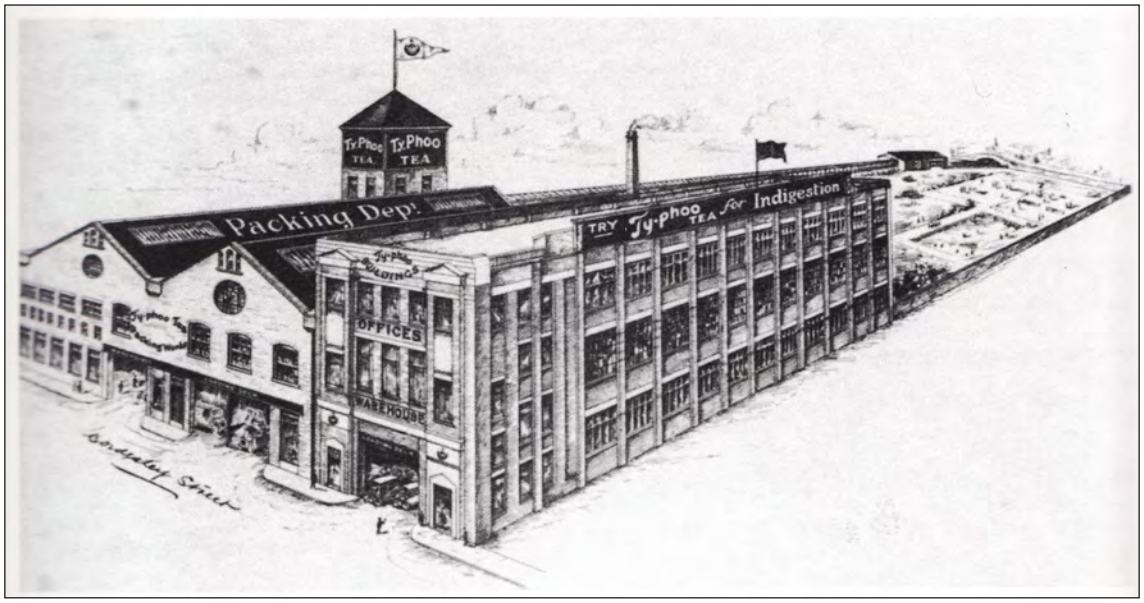


Figure 30: The Typhoo complex in c 1929 (Williams 1990, 88; copyright holder not traced)

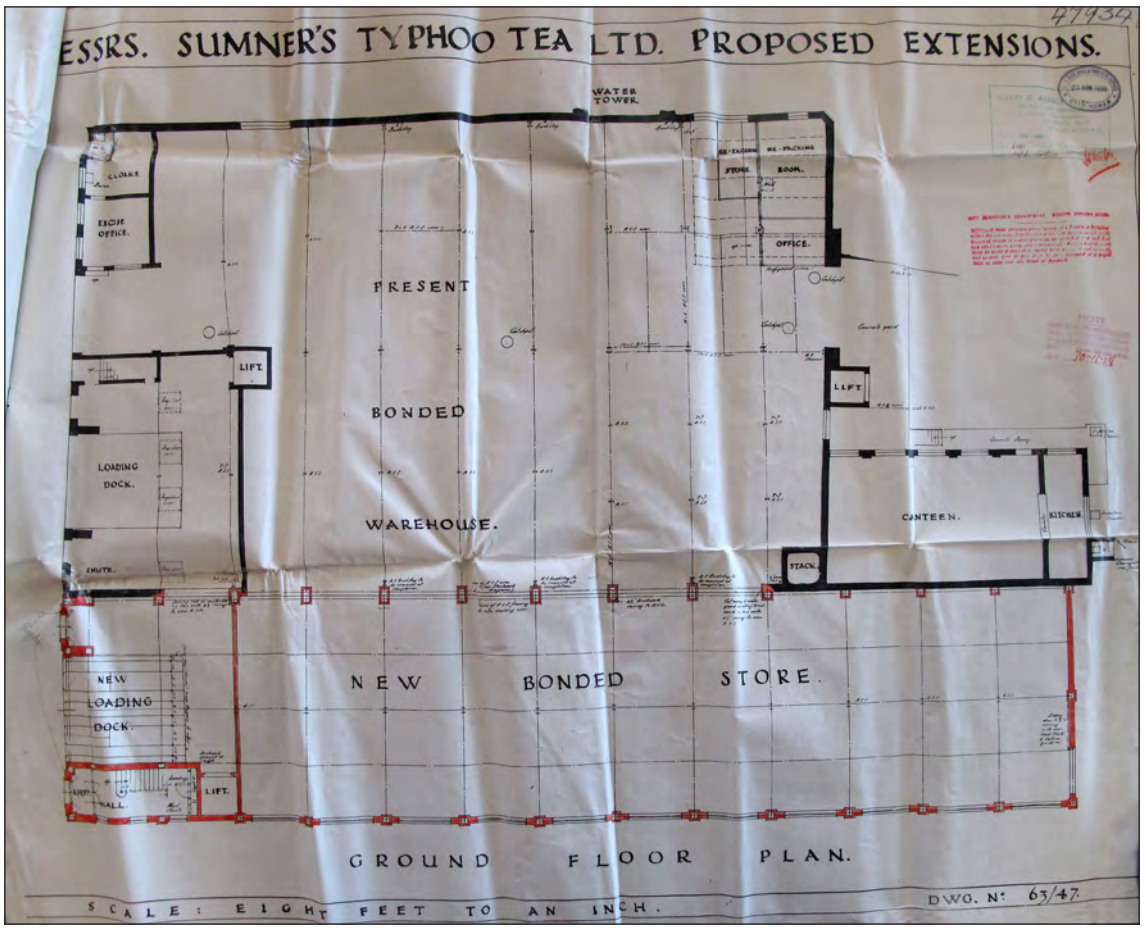


Figure 31: Ground floor plan of the Typhoo packing works with the former timber saw mill at the top (west) and the extension of 1929 at the bottom (east), H.W. Weedon, drawing of 1928 (Birmingham Archives and Collections, BBP47934, reproduced with the permission of Weedon Architects)

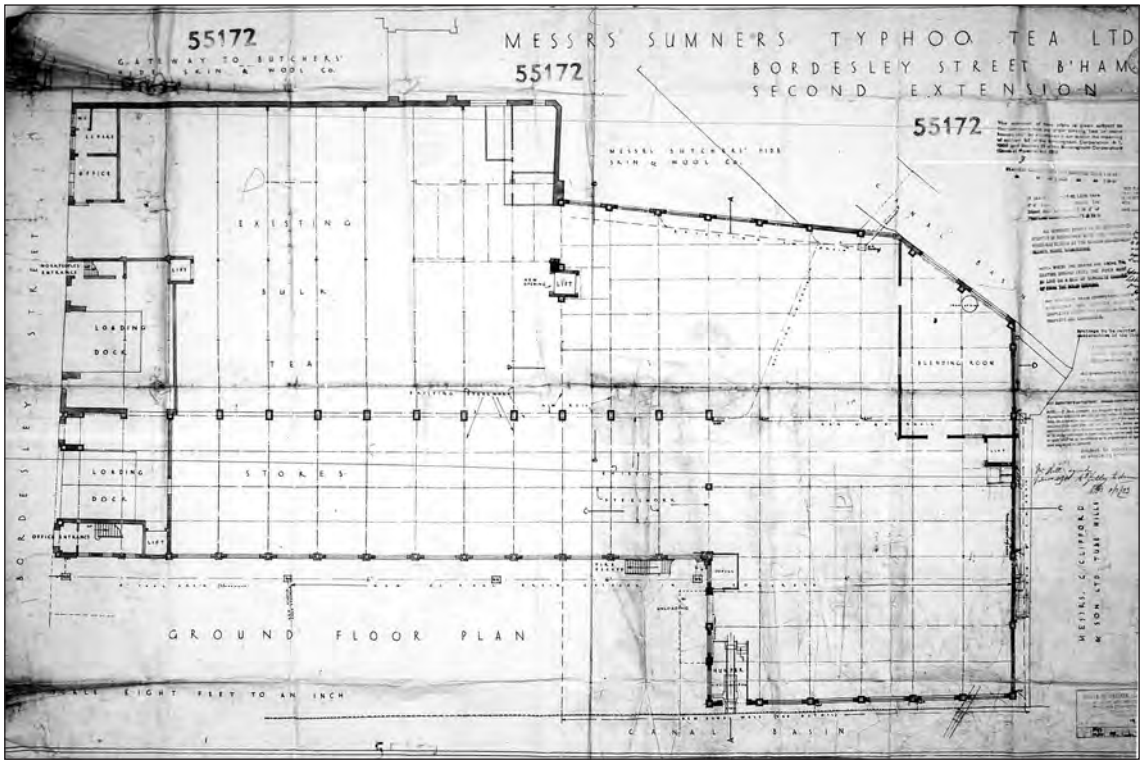


Figure 32: Figure 32: Ground floor plan of January 1932, showing the rear (north) extension at the right, H.W. Weedon (Birmingham Archives and Collections, BBP55172, reproduced with the permission of Weedon Architects)

existing buildings.[6] The saw pits were filled in, a reinforced concrete floor laid and the first floor reinforced.

The converted buildings opened in 1925, housing initially only the packing and despatch departments, while offices and sales remained at Castle Street (Figure 29). (The 1927 OS map erroneously labelled the building 'timber and slate wharf'.) The bonded warehouse (with a capacity of 20,000 cases) on the ground floor had a loading bay and the customs office to the front and a canteen to the rear. On the first floor was the large packing room with some offices, lavatories and ancillary spaces. The new works included up-to-date electrically driven machinery. Tea chests arrived by canal, and within the warehouse were moved on 'portable' platforms (an early form of pallet). A band-and-bucket elevator carried the loose tea to a 1 ½ (imperial) ton capacity hopper at the top of a tower (possibly the water tower), from where it fell to automatic weighing machines where teams of women filled the packets. Five-pound parcels of smaller packets were wheeled away on pallets for despatch.

In 1928, it was decided to build an office extension on the plot just to the east of the former timber mill. A lease for 60¼ years was obtained from the owners, the British Canal Navigation Co., commencing in December 1928.[7] The new building was erected in1929 – a date which can also be found on the rainwater hoppers – and the office staff had moved in by April 1930 (Figures 30, 31). The architect was Harry William Weedon who was to design all the future buildings for Typhoo's Bordesley Street site. All the stonework including the stones with the triple T logo (for 'Typhoo

Figure 33: The lift tower of the 1932 extension, seen from Benacre Drive (DP219840)

Tipps Tea') on the front elevation was provided by Empire Stone Ltd.[8] The extension contained a strong room in the basement, a loading bay and a bonded store on the ground floor (Figure 31), a new packing room, mess, rest and cloak rooms on the first floor, and offices and a board room on the second floor. The design of the steel supports for a large roof sign to the east had to be amended after objections from the City Engineer and Surveyor.[9]

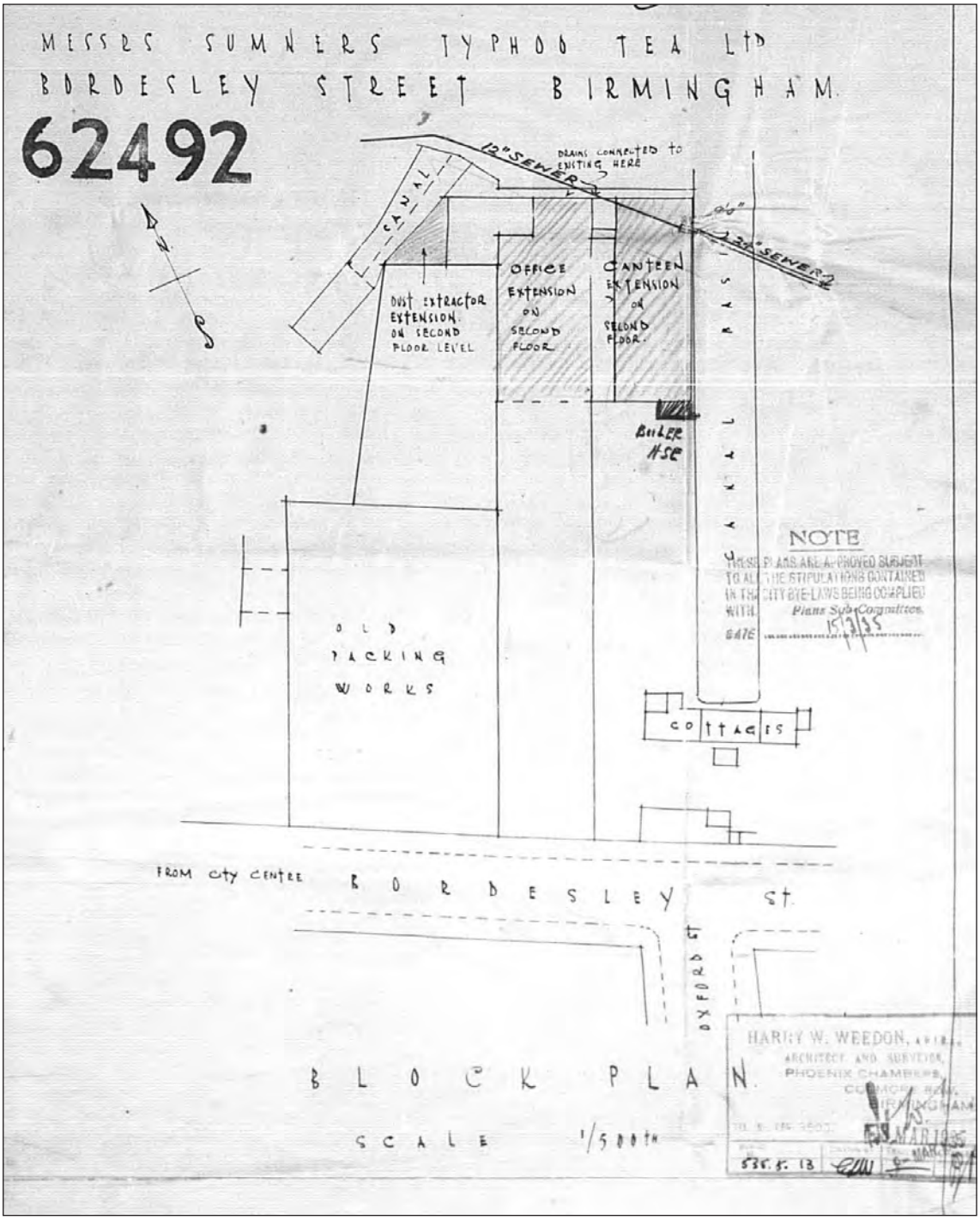


Figure 34: Block plan showing the upward extensions of 1935 (hatched), H.W. Weedon (Birmingham Archives and Collections, BBP62492, reproduced with the permission of Weedon Architects)

In 1931, the company submitted a planning application for a new 'humper shed' beside a new wharf, and a new blending plant.[10] In March 1932, additional land was acquired from the Birmingham Canal Navigation Company for £4,106 10s 8d.[11] Weedon designed another extension, this time to the rear on the site of the previous canteen (Figure 32). The two-storey building included a new canteen on the first floor and a landmark Art Deco-style lift tower with another 'Typhoo' sign (Figures

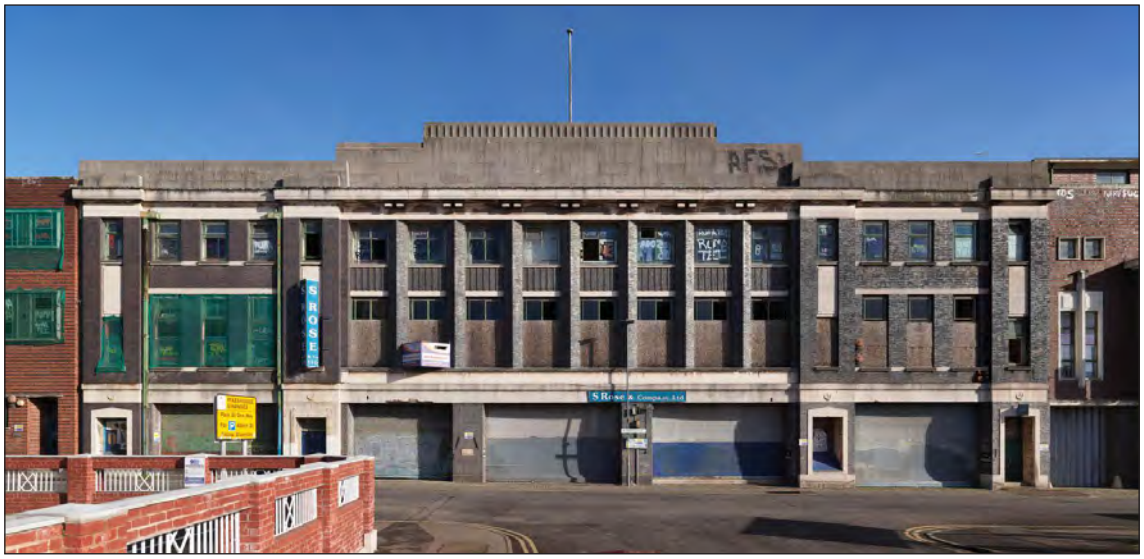


Figure 35: The central frontage to Bordesley with the five bays to the left (west) of 1929 and the remaining bays to the right (east) of 1937-8, photographed in 2017 (DP195919)

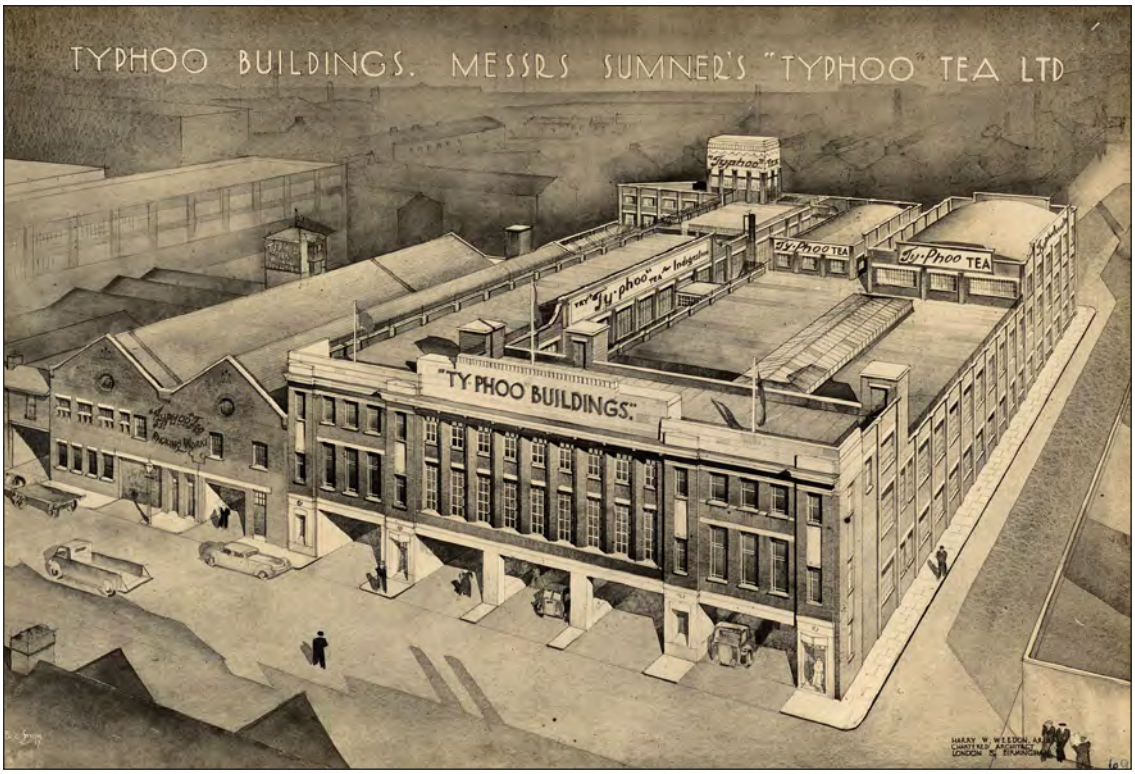


Figure 36: Perspective of January 1937, drawn by Eric Smith for H.W. Weedon, showing the extension of 1937-8 (reproduced with the permission of Weedon Architects)

33, 36); the design allowed for a future additional floor. Its canted north-west corner abutted the westernmost canal basin. The consulting engineer was G.W. Costain of Birmingham and the contractors were Maddocks & Walford whose tender was £23,349.[12] The rear extension had a new blending room where in 1934 a blending

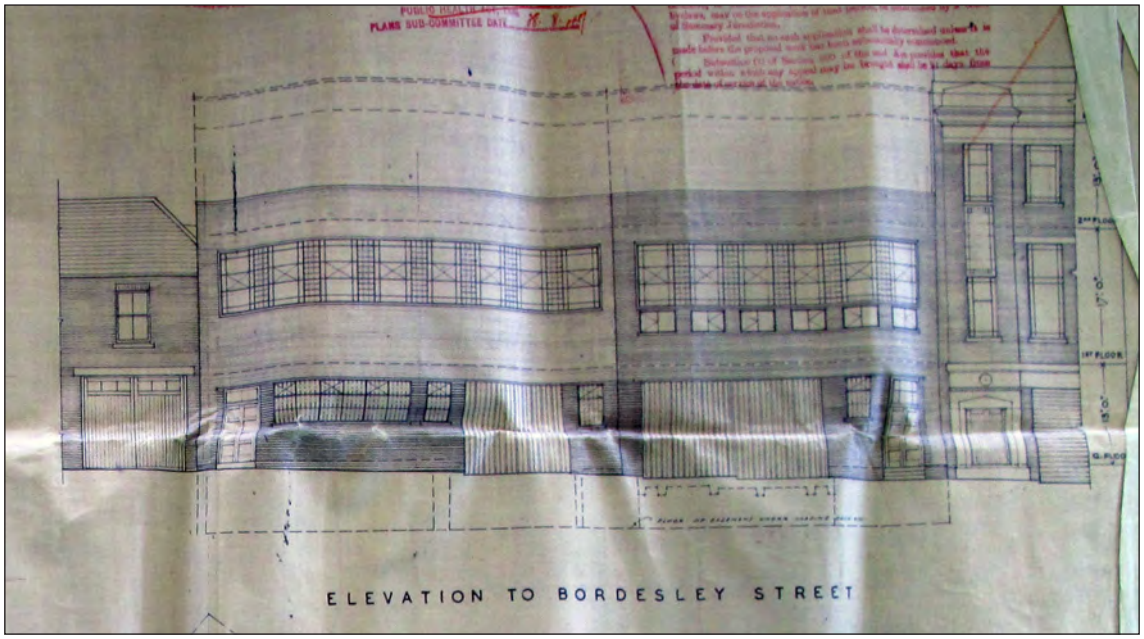


Figure 37: Elevation to Bordesley Street of the new packing warehouse, 1947, H.W. Weedon (Birmingham Archives and Collections, BBP84670, reproduced with the permission of Weedon Architects)

Figure 38: The 1947 warehouse from the south-east (DP195925)

Figure 39: Perspective drawing dated March 1954 showing the proposed corner building including its later upward extensions, Harry W. Weedon (The Birmingham and Five Counties Architectural Association, reproduced with the permission of Weedon Architects)

plant made by Freys & Chalmers of Kent was installed.[13] At that time, only half of the tea arrived ready-blended from Colombo, Ceylon.

In 1935, the company applied for permission for several upward extensions: a second floor was added to the 1932 rear extension which contained offices and another canteen, while a second-floor dust extractor was added to the corner closest to the westernmost canal basin (Figure 34).

In 1936, a further 2,556 square yards were acquired for future expansion, followed in 1937 by another 830 square yards.[14] In 1937-8, another extension followed to the east, with a frontage to Bordesley Street (Figures 35, 36). This required the demolition of two cottages south of the middle canal basin, and the infilling of the basin itself (Figure 34). The street elevation created a new symmetrical frontage with golden letters spelling 'Typhoo', with an east wing which matched the 1929 frontage (Figures 35, 36). The contract for £52,989 was let in June 1937 to B. Whitehouse & Sons, builders. Shortly before the Second World War, the first automatic packing machine, made by Job Davis of Leeds, was installed.

In 1940, several incendiary bombs fell on the Typhoo buildings but were soon extinguished. More severe damage was caused on 10 April 1941, when two bombs fell on the site: one landed at the rear between two empty air raid shelters, and one fell through the main canteen roof, causing a devastating fire throughout the building. Historic photos taken on 18 and 19 April 1941 show that the converted mill buildings were reduced to a shell and that the new buildings also had suffered severe damage.[15] Nevertheless, in December 1941 the directors took the decision to rebuild

and also to rename the company 'Typhoo Tea Ltd', dropping the prefix 'Sumner's'. The offices moved temporarily to 21 Hermitage Road, Edgbaston, and temporary single-storey warehouses were built along the canal basin.

In 1947, planning permission was granted for the construction of a new two-storey packing warehouse on the site of the former timber saw mills. The drawings show only the two lower floors but indicate a future upward extension (Figure 37). It is not clear when this was built but today the building has three storeys (Figure 38). It was still under construction in 1951, when the drainage to lavatories was amended.[16] Its layout roughly followed that of its predecessor, with a bonded warehouse on the ground floor and a packing department on the first floor, with ancillary spaces ranged along the street frontage. The street elevation was plainer than the confident inter-war buildings, using horizontal window bands and banding of red and blue engineering bricks.

Also in 1947, permission was granted for two functional structures: an additional dust arrester plant built at the rear of the site on top of a former air raid shelter, and a diesel generator house between the buildings of 1929 and 1937-8.[17]

In 1948, permission was granted for the erection of a temporary tea store.[18] The following year, plans for a single-storey L-plan warehouse along Pickford Street were submitted.[19] The steel-framing was by J. Thorn & Sons Ltd of Bexleyheath, Kent. In 1950, plans were submitted for new or altered lavatory accommodation[20], followed two years later by a new loading bay[21] and in 1953 by plans for a new tea storage room.[22] The latter appears to be identical with the two-storey building for the storage and processing of tea for which a planning application was submitted in July 1953.[23] In 1956, a new despatch bay was proposed.[24]

The current easternmost section of the works, on the corner of Bordesley and Pickford Street, appears to have been built in *c* 1954, replacing the single-storey warehouse built in 1949 and requiring the infilling of the east canal basin. (Foster and the conservation area appraisal date the current corner building to 1949-50.[25]) A drawing dated March 1954 survives in the archives of the Birmingham and Five Counties Architectural Association (Figure 39). This shows the whole building as envisaged with four storeys; however, initially only the ground and first floors were built. Undated drawings show it as a two-storey building which was later extended upwards twice.[26] There does not seem to be a corresponding planning application of 1954 but the proposed building may be the 1953 two-storey building for tea storage and processing.[27] The second-floor office extension proposed in 1966 appears to be the first extension for this building (Figure 40).[28] In *c* 1967, it was being extended by a third floor (Figure 41).[29] Slight changes in the brickwork confirm that the top two floors are later additions (Figure 42).

In 1959, a new building for despatch docks and tea storage received planning permission.[30] No indexes for the building plans submitted to the Council between 1960 and 1965 survive but it is likely that small-scale incremental additions continued during this period. In 1968, the re-arrangement and the extension of the

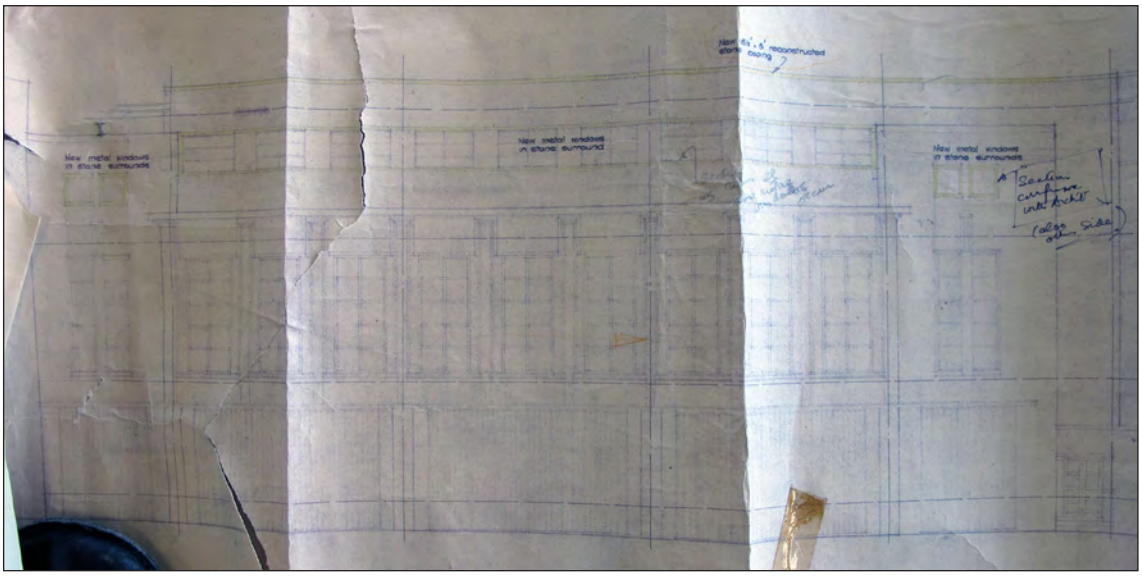


Figure 40: Bordesley Street elevation of the corner block with a second-floor extension, c 1966, H.W. Weedon & Partners (Birmingham Archives and Collections, MS1889/34, reproduced with the permission of Weedon Architects)

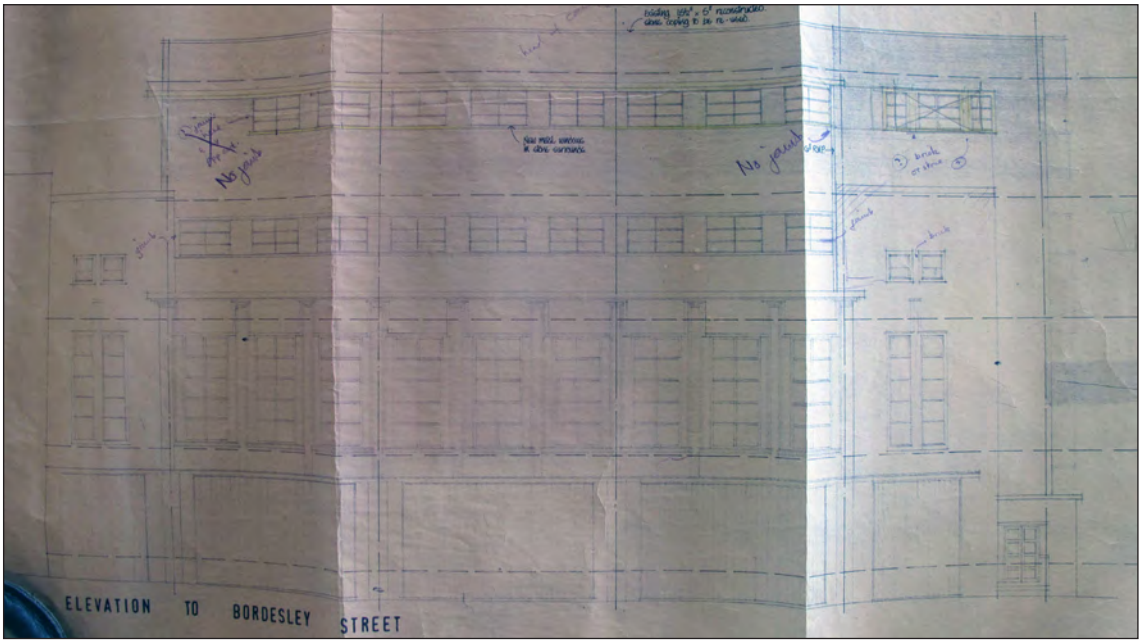


Figure 41: Bordesley Street elevation of the corner block with a third-floor extension, 1967, H.W. Weedon & Partners (Birmingham Archives and Collections, MS1889/34, reproduced with the permission of Weedon Architects)

administrative offices were proposed.[31] The following year, plans were submitted for an extension on an existing flat roof for the tea tasting department and offices.[32]

Planning applications of the 1970s are only for minor alterations: In 1970, a new boiler house was proposed[33]; in 1974, alterations to loading bays at Bordesley/New

Figure 42: The building of c 1954 from Pickford Street in 2017, looking south-west (DP195875)

Canal Streets were approved (architects: Crouch Butler Savage Associates)[34]; in 1975, it was proposed to change the layout of the ground-floor staff shop[35]; and in 1977, an application was submitted for the erection of a redundant machinery store.[36]

In the early 1970s, a strategic review was initiated in order to establish ways to modernise the Bordesley Street tea bag and packet tea factory. However, in April 1974 this foundered due to the failure of talks between Cadbury Schweppes and the Transport and General Workers Union about changes to shift patterns. Instead a new tea factory was established at Moreton in the Wirral, near an existing Cadbury factory. In November 1978, the Bordesley Street buildings closed and the production moved to Moreton.

Since then, the individual buildings have been in various light-industrial uses, notably by the wholesale clothiers S. Rose & Company Ltd. During the 2000s, there have been several planning applications for the demolition and conversion of the buildings. In 2017, part of the building was empty, while the 1950s corner building was used by the London School of Science and Technology.

The architect

The architect Harold 'Harry' William Weedon (1887-1970) was responsible for the design of all purpose-built Typhoo buildings at Digbeth. It is not known how he gained the commission. None of the Typhoo buildings appear to have been published in the main architectural journals; nor are they mentioned in Weedon's obituaries.

Weedon was born in Birmingham and served his articles with Owen P. Parsons (1904-8), in addition to training at the Birmingham School of Art.[37] In 1913, he started in private practice which was interrupted by his service with the Royal Flying Corps during the First World War. He resumed his practice only in 1928, due to a scandalous divorce. During the inter-war years, Weedon designed houses in Warwickshire as well as housing and commercial projects, including a circular filling station (1936, demolished) at Sheldon, Birmingham, and the Typhoo buildings in Digbeth. His work for Typhoo also led to the design of the neo-Tudor Colehaven almshouses at Coleshill (1931-2 and 1934) which were commissioned by John Sumner junior.[38]

Today, his practice is best known for their work for Oscar Deutsch's Odeon cinema chain, particularly during the 1930s when they were responsible for the cinemas north of Birmingham and in Wales.[39] Weedon first encountered Deutsch while working on a building for Deutsch & Brenner, the family's scrap metal business. His first commission from Deutsch appears to have been the design of the interior for the Odeon at Warley, Birmingham, for which Weedon recruited the twenty-three year old John Cecil Clavering as assistant. Clavering's design for a cinema in Kingstanding, Birmingham, in 1934 finally won over Deutsch who acquired the building for his chain.[40] Weedon's role was to oversee the work of his team of designers; those mainly responsible for the Odeons include Clavering (1910-2001) and his successor from 1935, Robert Andrew Bullivant (1910-2002). The Odeon commissions allowed Weedon's practice to expand enormously and in 1939 he formed a partnership with three of his senior staff. Apart from regional cinemas, Weedon also designed, together with Andrew Mather, the Odeon flagship cinema in Leicester Square (opened 1937). With the outbreak of war, Deutsch's death in 1941 and the take-over of the Odeon chain by the Rank Organisation, the golden era of Odeon cinema design and expansion came to an end.

As well as their work for Deutsch, during the inter-war years Weedon's practice still undertook non-commercial work, including inter-war country houses like Kenwood, Four Oaks, Warwickshire (1927) in a neo-vernacular style, and the Art Deco-style Condover House (formerly Villa Marina), Llandudno, Caernarvonshire (1936-7).

After the Second World War, the remit of the practice expanded further and its projects included industrial and commercial work, local authority housing (like the Holt estate in Birmingham of 1955), municipal buildings (including the civic centre at Solihull, 1952, demolished), flats, schools, shopping developments and licensed premises.

During the Second World War, Weedon was involved in the dispersal of vulnerable factories from city centres which after the war led to commissions from the motor industry.[41] In 1950, Harry Weedon & Partners were appointed consultant architects to Austin Motors, a role they continued to hold from 1952 under the newly-formed British Motor Corporation (BMC). BMC took the decision to make Longbridge, Birmingham, their headquarters and during the 1950s and 1960s commissioned a number of buildings for the South Works at Longbridge from Weedon & Partners.[42] These included the Styling Studio (1955), an exhibition hall (1955-6), the Design Block (1959, demolished), a nine-storey carpark of 1961 (demolished), a car assembly building (1961-3), and a circular showroom (1965) dubbed 'the Elephant House' (altered).[43] In the early 1960s, Weedon & Partners designed BMC factories at Cowley, Oxford; Kirkby, Merseyside; Llanelli, Carmarthenshire; and Bathgate, West Lothian.[44]

The partnership also designed car factories for other companies: a factory for Triumph in Coventry (1947), a factory and die-casting works for the Rootes Group in Linwood, Renfrewshire, Scotland (1960-4), and factories for the Pressed Steel Company Ltd at Linwood, Cowley, Swansea, West Glamorgan, and Swindon, Wiltshire (1957-62, demolished).[45] The latter building used precast concrete for framing and walling, with external walls of profiled concrete panels – with a completely different aesthetic result than his earlier industrial buildings of brick.[46] The practice continues today under the name Weedon Architects.

Comparison with Weedon's other work

In total, at least seventeen buildings by Weedon or his practice are listed, including five in Wales. Most of them are Odeon cinemas of the 1930s (all grade II), of which eleven are listed in England and three in Wales. Two of Weedon's inter-war houses are also listed: Kenwood, Four Oaks, Warwickshire, is a neo-vernacular country house of 1927, at grade II, while Condover House, Llandudno, is a modern design and listed grade II*. (The latter's contemporary gazebo and sea wall are separately listed grade II.)

While a number of Weedon's best-known works, including the Odeon cinemas, are protected by listing, others where his involvement is less well known have been lost. They include the Solihull Civic Centre and a number of his industrial buildings whose sites have been redeveloped (including Longbridge and Linwood).

Weedon's Odeon cinemas are the best known works by his practice and have been described by James Stevens Curl as being 'in a superior architectural league' compared to his other work.[47] The Odeon buildings generally employ a streamlined Art Deco aesthetic, in tune with the glamour of early cinema. They contrast brick with cream faience slabs, horizontal canopies and windows with vertical towers and fins, and angular with curved features. Some cinemas had relatively flat elevations, others – especially on corner sites, such as in Newport, Wales (1938) – featured complex massing of stepped volumes. While Weedon achieved a recognisable house style, the cinemas produced by his practice are highly varied. Several of Robert

Bullivant's designs, such as Chester and York, rely solely on well-detailed brick and angular outlines for effect, without cream faience or curved corners.

Of the Typhoo buildings the extension of *c* 1954 is most closely related to Weedon's cinema designs. Its motif of a prominent first-floor window divided by fins can be found in several Odeons, including Loughborough (1936), Dudley (opened 1937) and Bolton (opened 1937). Its stepped massing relates to more ambitions cinemas, mainly on corner sites, such as Sutton Coldfield (1935-6) and York (1937). Like many of the Odeon cinemas, the Typhoo corner block combines horizontal window bands and cornices with vertical features such as the corner 'tower' and projecting brick mullions and fins. By contrast, the 1929 Typhoo building and its 1930s extension aim for a classically-inspired symmetry – with a giant astylar 'order' including a cornice, modillions and a stepped and fluted parapet – which is closer to commercial pre-modernist architecture than the streamlined and frequently asymmetrical compositions of the Art Deco Odeon cinemas of the 1930s.

Compared to the Odeons, Weedon's industrial and office buildings are less playful but equally monumental. There are strong parallels between the Typhoo building of *c* 1954 and his 1950s buildings at Longbridge, in particular the exhibition hall of 1955-56. Both buildings are composed of cubical forms, mostly of brick and contrast horizontal and vertical features, although the exhibition hall also has two curved corners. In general, the Typhoo buildings compare well with Weedon's other industrial work of the 1930s-50s. Even though they were built piecemeal and in slightly different styles, they form a harmonious ensemble.

Other tea packaging works and warehouses

The vast majority of listed buildings relating to the production and consumption of tea in England are tea rooms and shops. Another group of buildings are warehouses, including one at Liverpool of *c* 1880 (grade II). In London there are also the 1835 entrance to Twining's warehouse and tea shop in the Strand (II), Sir Thomas Lipton's house, Osidge, in Barnet (II), and the tea clipper Cutty Sark (I) in Greenwich.

It is not clear how many tea packing works were built during the inter-war period and how many survive in England. The following list is based on rapid desk-based research and is by no means comprehensive.

Typhoo's current factory in Moreton dates from the 1950s-60s with later extensions.

Twinings, founded in 1706, still retain their historic premises on the Strand which were modernised in 1925. In October 1939, they acquired the Ibex Coffee Co Ltd of Thetford, whose factory enabled some war-time production to continue, despite air-raids and power-cuts.[48] In 2011, they closed their North Shields works in Tyneside. Their main UK factory is now at Andover in Hampshire which dates from the post-war period.

Horniman's Tea was founded in 1826 but moved in 1852 to London. Their factory was in Wormwood Street, London. In 1918, it was taken over by J. Lyons & Co and production moved to their Greenford site (see below).

J. Lyons & Co started as a chain of teashops in 1894 before developing a range of teas, produced from 1921 at Greenford in the London Borough of Ealing. This was a single-storey, saw-tooth-style factory whose design was developed with the advice of the architect George Edward Holman (1862-1922) of Holman & Goodrham.[49] The site was vacated in the 1995 and redeveloped from 1998 as the Lyon [sic] Way Industrial Estate.

Tetley Tea (now owned by Tata Global Beverages) was founded in 1837 as Joseph Tetley & Co, tea merchants. They relocated from Yorkshire to London in 1856, where they had works consecutively at Commercial Road and Cullum Street. They left central London after bomb damage, moving to the former premises of the Sterilised Milk Co. in Osborne Street, Bletchley. In 1957 they moved to new buildings in Denbigh Road, Bletchley, and in 1968 a new factory opened at Eaglescliffe, Stockton on Tees. In 1972, they merged with Lyons to form Lyons Tetley. At that time, they operated from three sites: Greenford, Bletchley and Eaglescliffe. The Bletchley factory closed in 1977 and the current Tetley factory is at Durham Lane, Eaglescliffe.

Thomas Lipton opened his first grocery store in 1871 and in 1889 moved into the tea trade. Lipton's Tea Building at the corner of Shoreditch High Street and Bethnal Green Road (1931-33, architect: Hal Williams) was designed for Lipton's as a bacon curing factory and was used from the later 1930s also as tea warehouse. Lipton's Tea is now part of Unilever.

The tea and coffee importing and blending company C. E. Taylor & Sons was founded in 1886 in Leeds by Charles Taylor. It was renamed Taylors of Harrogate in 1962 after being taken over by Bettys chain of tea rooms. Their factory in Plumpton Park, Harrogate, is a post-war building.

Brooke Bond & Company (now part of Unilever) was founded by Arthur Brooke in 1869 in Manchester, who set up a chain of tea shops and gradually moved into wholesale tea. In 1872, he moved to London and opened a tea blending warehouse on Whitechapel High Street. In the 1890s, he opened a warehouse in Leeds. In 1910 the company moved to a new a packing factory in Goulston Street, Stepney, London. In 1923, a new factory was opened in Trafford Park, Manchester, to serve the northern market. By the 1950s, the company had five packing and blending factories in the UK. Brooke Bond's most famous brand, PG Tips (abbreviated from Pre-Gest-Tee), was founded in 1930. The factory for both Brooke Bond and PG Tips is today at Trafford Park in Manchester, which in 2015 was the third largest tea factory in the world. According to historic maps and aerial photos, the 1923 warehouse there was remodelled and extended between 1955 and 1970.

Conclusion

As far as it is known, the Typhoo buildings at Digbeth were unique among British tea packing warehouses of the inter-war period in being designed by a prominent architect. They were clearly designed to be an architectural showpiece and advertisement and not just a functional shed-like factory. Today, they are also a rare surviving example of a tea packing warehouse which has not been rebuilt as part of redevelopment. The main elevations survive surprisingly little altered.

Within Weedon's oeuvre, the Typhoo buildings are perhaps more closely related to his factory and office buildings than his Art Deco cinemas. The earlier buildings on Bordesley Street are classically inspired, while the 1940s and 1950s buildings are typical of the post-war inflection of modernism using window bands and cubic shapes. Yet, some of the confidence and Art Deco influence of the Odeon cinemas is also apparent in the more muscular and sturdy tea packing works of *c* 1954, together with some Festival of Britain touches such as the delicate balconies on the Pickford Street elevation.

Endnotes

1 This brief history of the company is largely based on Williams 1990 and Winstanley 2004. The corporate archives of Typhoo have not been consulted for this project.

2 BCC 2008, 12

3 According to the OS maps of the 1880s and 1890s the Star Works produced 'enamelled slate'. According to the 1888 Post Office Directory, the Star Works produced chimney pieces.

4 Quoted in Williams 1990, 74

5 Ibid

6 Ibid, 77-78

7 Ibid, 85

8 Birmingham Archives and Collections, MS1889/1

9 Ibid, BBP47934

10 Ibid, BBP53212

11 Williams 1990, 90

12 Ibid

13 Ibid, 91

14 Ibid, 90

15 Birmingham Archives and Collections, WK/D1/661

16 Birmingham Archives and Collections, BBP84670

17 Ibid, BBP84818, BBP86323

18 Ibid, building plan index, BBP89372 (the plans do not survive); planning application number 0069300

19 Ibid, BBP93055; planning application number 00693001

20 Ibid, BBP97029

21 Birmingham City Council, planning application 00693002

22 Birmingham Archives and Collections, building plan index, BBP105241 (the plans do not survive)

23 Birmingham City Council, planning application 00693003

24 Birmingham Archives and Collections, BBP120535

25 Foster 2005, 181

26 Birmingham Archives and Collections, MS1889/34

27 Ibid, building plan index, BBP105241 (the plans do not survive)

28 Ibid, building plan index, BBP160085 (the plans do not survive). A planning application of 1963 (no. 00693007) proposes a similar extension.

29 Ibid, MS1889/34, BBP174703

30 Birmingham City Council, planning application number 00693006

31 Ibid, building plan index, BBP179361 (the plans do not survive)

32 Ibid, BBP185392

33 Ibid, BBP193266

34 Birmingham City Council, planning application number 00693013

35 Birmingham Archives and Collections, BBP143920

36 Ibid, BBP5200/77

37 This biographical account is based on obituaries in the architectural press, Eyles 2002, 50 and Grey 2011, 103-7

38 Pickford and Pevsner 2016, 197

39 Andrew Mather and George Coles designed most of the Odeons in southern England. Gray 2011, 104, 107

40 Eyles 2002, 50; Gray 2011, 103

41 *The Times*, 20 June 1970, 12

42 Collins and Stratton 1993, 187

43 Morrison and Minnis 2012, 36-7

44 *The Builder* 17 June 1960, 1168; *The Times* 20 June 1970, 12

45 Lever 1984, 203-4; Morrison and Minnis 2012, 36; Cherry and Pevsner 1975, 514; *The Builder* 14 October1960, 721 and 24 November 1961, 1019; *The Times* 20 June 1970, 12

46 *Concrete Quarterly* 38 (July - September 1958) 35

47 Curl and Wilson 2015, 830

48 Twining 1956, 79-80

49 Bird 2000, 122

APPENDIX 3: THE FORMER FELLOWS, MORTON AND CLAYTON CANAL WAREHOUSE (NOW CLIFTON STEEL LTD)

Address: Warwick Wharf, Fazeley Street, Digbeth, Birmingham

NGR: SP0801886806

Figure 43: Street elevation to Fazeley Street (DP195911)

Introduction

The former canal warehouse was designed by local architects Watson & Johnson for the canal carriers Fellows Morton & Clayton Ltd (Figures 43-45). It was built in 1935-6 on a site at Warwick Wharf. Since 1949 it has been in various warehousing and light industrial uses; it is now part of Clifton Steel Ltd.

The warehouse is located on the north side of Fazeley Street and to the east of 122 Fazeley Street. To the north it abuts the Warwick and Birmingham Canal (since 1929

Figure 44: The warehouse, seen from the south-west (DP219841)

Figure 45: The warehouse, seen from the canal (DP219843)

part of the Grand Union Canal) and to the west a former canal basin (now filled in). The building is locally listed and located in the Warwick Bar Conservation Area.

The plan is oblong with a curved north corner which reflects the shape of the entrance to the former east basin of Warwick Wharf. The walls are of brick in English bond with several bands of stretcher bond while the gabled roof was originally of corrugated asbestos with patent glazing. The most decorative elevation is that facing Fazeley Street. It has a darker brick plinth and rusticated corners of brick. Beige and green glazed tiles spell out the company's name which, together with the red brick, might be an attempt to replicate the colours of the company's post-1921 livery (red, green and yellow). The gable has another tiled feature with the date '1935' in a circle with keystones. Directly above this is a projecting triangular-section brick fin which continues above the gable's apex along a brick upstand which formerly bookended the company's sign on the roof ridge. This sign is shown on the original drawings in Birmingham Archives and Collections.[1] Upright posts, which originally supported the letters of company name, sit at irregular intervals and remain *in situ*.

The south-east elevation always abutted existing buildings and thus was designed without any openings. The north-west elevation was the main 'working' elevation with a loading bay in a brick surround at the west end, closest to the road, and three 'portholes' beyond with bulkheads (now bricked up) above. Another porthole was at the short elevation facing the canal. The portholes and the bulkheads above originally had roller shutters; the remaining openings now have modern roller shutters. The interior was not inspected for this project.

Warwick Wharf

Located near Warwick Bar (Lock 58) and south of the junction of the Digbeth Branch Canal (dug in 1790) and the Warwick and Birmingham Canal (begun in 1793, completed in 1800), Warwick Wharf occupies a site which the Warwick and Birmingham Canal Company leased from the Gooch Estate in 1795.[2] The first warehouse was built in 1810, and from 1812 the canal carriers Pickford and Company were based there.[3] A first basin had been dug by 1828 and a second, L-shaped basin followed to the east in about 1840 (Figure 46). In 1843-4, Pickfords also built the canal company office and weighing machine keeper's house at 122 Fazeley Street (originally Lower Fazeley Street), which were designed by architect Edward John Lloyd (listed grade II).[4] Pickfords sold their London carrying trade in 1847 to the Grand Junction Carrying Company, who in 1850 built the cottages and offices at 106-110 Fazeley Street (probably by Lloyd; grade II).[5] Also in *c* 1850, the so-called Banana Warehouse (grade II; Figure 13) was erected facing the canal; it probably incorporates earlier fabric.[6] In 1876, the Grand Junction Carrying Company was absorbed by the London & Staffordshire Carrying Company; three years later, part of their business was taken over by Fellows Morton & Co.[7]

In the 1850s, the site of the 1935-6 warehouse was still empty but probably used as wharves for coal and timber (Figure 46). By the 1880s, there were only two small-scale buildings on the site, which were physically attached to the neighbouring Minerva Works to the south-east.

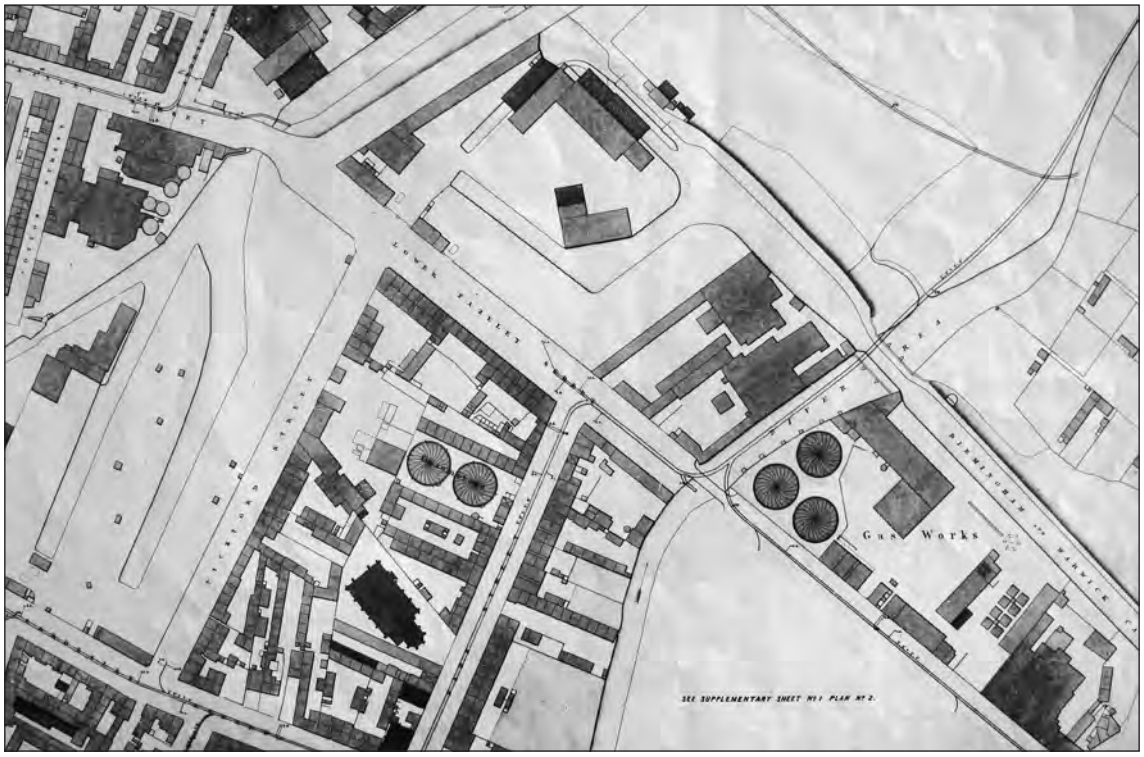


Figure 46: Detail from sheet 128 of John Pigott Smith's Survey of Birmingham, 1850-55, showing Warwick Wharf at the top centre and the site of the later New Warwick Wharf at bottom right, both on the Warwick & Birmingham Canal and divided by the River Rea (Birmingham Archives and Collections, reproduced with the permission of the Library of Birmingham)

By that time, 106-10 Fazeley Street were no longer in canal-related use; they are labelled 'Junction Works, confectionery' on the OS town plan of the 1880s. By 1937, they had become part of metal works.

Fellows, Morton & Clayton

The canal transportation company Fellows, Morton & Clayton Ltd originated in the canal carrying business of James Fellows (1805-1854), which was founded in 1837 at West Bromwich. In 1876, his son Joshua (1834-1900) went into partnership with Frederick Morton (born 1835), and the company's name was changed to Fellows Morton & Co (FM). In the late 1880s, they merged with part of the company of the late William Clayton, which had been continued by his son Thomas (born 1857). On 3 July 1889, Fellows, Morton & Clayton Ltd (FMC) was incorporated. In their heyday, FMC was one of the largest and best known canal carriers in England.

During the Second World War, FMC was taken over by the Ministry of Transport who relinquished control at the end of 1947. Working expenses were 120% of the pre-war figures, and the government authorised only gradual increases on the carrying rates. In 1948, FMC reported the first loss since 1889 and went into voluntary liquidation, reflecting the end of the canal transport era in general. Their assets were taken over by the British Transport Commission in 1949.

Fellows, Morton & Clayton at Digbeth

Fellows, Morton and Clayton operated from at least three sites in Digbeth from the late 19th century: Warwick Wharf (also sometimes known as Old Warwick Wharf), New Warwick Wharf (now known as The Bond), and a site in Liverpool Street. The two wharves are frequently confused and conflated in secondary sources.

In 1879, Joshua Fellows leased Warwick Wharf, which became FM's main wharf for dealing with traffic from the Grand Junction and Warwick Canals.[8] By that date, the wharf comprised two canal basins and various warehouses, offices and cottages built by Pickfords and the Grand Junction Carrying Company. FM also leased additional land from the Warwick & Birmingham Canal Company at the same site.[9] In June 1935, FMC took out a 99-year lease for Warwick Wharf from the Grand Union Canal Company and in November 1938 purchased the freehold for £17,500.[10]

Warwick Wharf is sometimes described as FMC's headquarters, probably due to the fact that FMC's registered office was at Birmingham by the early 20th century. FMC also had offices at New Warwick Wharf. However, a recent history of the company by Alan H. Faulkner does not mention the existence of a specific headquarters site or building.

After Warwick Wharf had been taken over by the British Transport Commission in 1949, buildings and plots were mostly converted to small-scale light industrial use. More recently, both basins have been filled in.

From 1883, FMC also leased a wharf and canal frontage at New Warwick Wharf. New Warwick Wharf was also on the south side of the Warwick and Birmingham Canal but further east than (Old) Warwick Wharf and south-east of the junction with the river Rea. The site had previously been a gasworks (1837-75; Figure 46) run by the Birmingham Gas Light and Coke Company and then an ice manufactory of the Patent Transparent Ice Company. The shell of a former retort house, which had been used as an ice house, survives today. FMC's wharf included stables and in 1886 they established a small boat-building yard.[11] In August 1889, plans were made for a major extension and small new basin. By September 1891, the canal basin was complete, wharf cranes had been installed, the yard had been roofed over, and the warehousing area extended.[12] In 1940, the warehouse was damaged by a bomb and four boats were sunk.[13] FMC's offices (1880s, enlarged in 1896), warehouse (1884-6, by builder Edwin Shipway) and covered wharf (1896, by Wigham) survive there (now known as The Bond and locally listed).[14]

In the 1880s, the company purchased 3,000 square yards of land in nearby Liverpool Street, where new stables for 83 horses were built, as well as a blacksmith's shop, a saddler's shop, and a house for a caretaker (exact location not identified). The buildings were completed in 1892 and the overall cost was £5,483.[15]

Development history of the warehouse

The warehouse at Warwick Wharf was built in 1935-6 to a design by the architects Watson & Johnson of Birmingham.[16] The consulting engineers were the Birmingham Concrete Steel Company. The building project was probably triggered by the new lease of the site of June 1935. Construction started on 19 August 1935 and was completed the following year.[17] The warehouse occupies the length and width of a linear plot abutting the east basin. A narrow gangway surrounded the building to the east and north. Facing the canal basin, to the north-west, was a covered dock for boats. Vehicular gates in Fazeley Street labelled 'way in' and 'way out' led to an open yard and the building's loading bay.

Since 1949, the warehouse has been converted to various uses. Later external alterations include the removal of the lettering on the roof ridge, of three projecting bulkheads on the north-west elevation, and of the covered dock. The entrance and exit gates to the left (north-west) of the warehouse have also been demolished. The canal basin was filled in *c* 1978.[18]

The architects

Very little is known about the architectural firm Watson & Johnson of 8 Victoria Square, Birmingham, who designed the warehouse. Joseph Walter Watson (1855-1937) was from 1908 in partnership with Mr Johnson (first name not identified).[19] Watson was originally from Sheffield and spent 25 years as the principal assistant to William Jenkins of Birmingham. He retired in 1935; according to his obituary, he was responsible for the Windsor Arcade in Bull Street, Birmingham, and several 'large blocks of offices and licensed premises'.[20] The Pevsner City Guide for Birmingham also lists a 'functional block' of 1938 in Constitution Hill, and alterations of 1908 to the *Victoria* pub in John Bright Street under the practice's name.[21] Watson Johnson & Stokes appear to have been the successor practice; they designed an office building of 1956-7 in Edmund Street.[22]

Canal warehouses

Between the late 18th and early 20th centuries, numerous warehouses were built at canal basins and wharves across England. Their main difference to other kinds of warehouses was the presence of loading facilities for canal boats, as well as road traffic.

It is not known how many canal warehouses used by, and built for, FMC survive today. Apart from Fazeley Street they operated from at least 31 other locations throughout England. Their late 19th-century offices, main warehouse and wharf at New Warwick Wharf survive today (now known as The Bond; locally listed). The FMC buildings at Nottingham may be the only ones which are listed: in 1895, the company built offices and a warehouse on a site leased from the City Council; they were designed by local architect William Dymock Pratt. The offices (now a pub) and the warehouse of 1895 (the former Canal Museum) are listed at grade II.[23] Also part of the complex are two wharf cranes, a gateway and railings (also listed grade II).[24]

There are over 70 listed canal warehouses in England, generally of an earlier date. Very few canal warehouses dating from after 1900 are listed and most of these are part of older complexes. The British Waterways Warehouse in Nottingham of *c* 1919 (grade II) may be the only listed single-phase warehouse from after 1900.[25] The former FMC warehouse in Digbeth appears to be an unusually late example of a canal warehouse, erected at a time when the era of canal transportation was inexorably coming to an end.

Conclusion

The warehouse of 1935 was built at a relatively late point in the history of canal transportation, although the history of canal carrying and warehouses at Warwick Wharf goes back to 1799. It provides an interesting counterpoint to the earlier group of FMC buildings, including a warehouse, at New Warwick Wharf (now The Bond). The exterior of the building itself has been altered, notably by the removal of the bulkheads, the covered dock and the roof signage. However, its plan is unaltered and the street elevation with its tiled inscription makes a distinctive landmark in the Digbeth area.

Endnotes

1 Birmingham Archives and Collections, BBP63598

2 BUFAU 1999, 73

3 Shill 1999, 109

4 Foster 2005, 187; NHLE 1075625

5 Foster 2005, 187; Shill 1999, 109; NHLE 1210764

6 Foster 2005, 187. The list description (NHLE 1075624) has a date of *c* 1840.

7 Shill 1999, 109

8 Faulkner 2010, 21

9 Ibid

10 Ibid, 98

11 Ibid, 22, 32. The conservation area appraisal (Birmingham City Council 2008, 13) erroneously identifies the 1935 warehouse as 'New Warwick Wharf'. See Shill 1999, 110

12 Faulkner 2010, 31

13 Shill 1999, 112; Faulkner 2010, 82

14 Foster 2005, 187

15 Faulkner 2010, 31

16 See the original drawings in Birmingham Archives and Collections, reference BBP63598

17 Faulkner 2010, 98

18 Birmingham City Council, online planning database.

19 Brodie *et al* (eds) 2001, 934

20 *The Builder*, 22 January 1937, 202

21 Foster 2005, 174, 200

22 Ibid, 132

23 NHLE 1271432, 1271308

24 NHLE 1246300, 1246516

25 NHLE 1271308

APPENDIX 4: THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIGBETH DURING THE IMMEDIATE POST-WAR DECADES

Introduction

Several factors shaped the development of the Digbeth area in the immediate post-war years. These included planning policies, plans for slum clearance and industrial zoning. More directly, post-war Digbeth was shaped by bomb damage sustained in 1940-43, subsequent redevelopment, and road widening in the 1950s. Unusually, there was no post-war reconstruction plan for Birmingham and although Herbert Manzoni, the City Engineer and Surveyor, did not subscribe to wholesale clearance, neither was he particularly fond of retaining historic buildings.

Sir Herbert Manzoni

Sir Herbert John Baptista Manzoni (1899-1972), was a major influence on Birmingham's development during the inter- and post-war years.[1] A civil engineer by background, he started his career in the borough engineer's department at Birkenhead. In 1923, he moved to a post in Birmingham and four years later rose to be Chief Engineer for Sewers and Rivers in the Public Works department. He subsequently became City Surveyor before being appointed in 1935 City Engineer and Surveyor, a post he held until his retirement in 1963. Until A.G. Sheppard Fidler was appointed the first City Architect in 1953, Manzoni was also in charge of the architectural staff.

According to Tom Caulcott, 'Manzoni's influence on Birmingham went far beyond what would in later years be the responsibility of any technical or professional chief officer'.[2] He dominated not only his department but also the Public Works Committee who merely approved his ideas.[3] While many of his road building and housing projects were developed before the war, the post-war period provided him with the opportunity to implement these. He thought it was more important to look forward than backwards: 'I have never been very certain as to the value of tangible links with the past. They are often more sentimental than valuable... As to Birmingham's buildings, there is little of real worth in our architecture. Its replacement should be an improvement, provided we keep a few monuments as museum pieces to past ages...'[4]

On the other hand, his approach was more realistic and pragmatic than the *tabula rasa* mentality of some post-war planners. While elsewhere bomb damage paved the way for large-scale redevelopment, Manzoni saw no need for radical replanning, given the existence of plans for roads, new housing, and zoning from the pre-war period. In 1941, Manzoni stated that 'we have not got to start replanning Birmingham. All we want is the opportunity to carry out the plans we have already.'[5] In 1955 he wrote that 'the idea of redevelopment in Birmingham was born in 1936'.[6] Thus, Birmingham did not commission or produce a city-wide reconstruction plan, of the kind Sir Patrick Abercrombie produced for London and Plymouth. (Abercrombie produced, jointly with Herbert Jackson, a plan for the West Midlands (*West Midlands Plan*, 1948) but this was a regional study and remained

unpublished.) Birmingham City Council set up a reconstruction committee; however, according to Peter Larkham, its influence was minimal.[7]

Among the pre-war planning schemes was one for central Birmingham, an area of 12,638 acres. However, by the outbreak of war this had not been formally adopted or approved. During the war this was abandoned because – Manzoni argued – development in the centre could easily be controlled due to the inner ring road scheme and the Council's ownership of land in Corporation Street.[8]

Manzoni influenced the planning of Birmingham from the 1930s to the 1960s. However, his legacy was not without controversy, in particular the primacy of the car in most of his schemes. A recent display in Birmingham's Art Gallery and Museum described his work as a 'failure'. Andy Foster, author of the Pevsner City Guide for Birmingham, has described Manzoni as typical of 20th-century Birmingham's preference for industry and engineering over aesthetics and heritage: 'Manzoni exemplified this perfectly: an engineer, ambivalent about town planning, indifferent to architecture and contemptuous of history'.[9]

Plans by other groups

While the City Council did not produce any plans during or after the war, several other groups did, some focusing on Birmingham and others on the wider region. In *c* 1934, the Bournville Village Trust established a research committee on housing conditions in the city and the effect of inter-war suburban developments. By March 1938, the research was nearly complete and the resulting study was published in October 1941 under the title *When We Build Again*. This was essentially a social study, intended to inform plan and decision making.[10] Manzoni had been consulted in the study's early phase and, although generally supportive, he pointed out that the Corporation had already undertaken a similar exercise and that the Trust's work should be supplementary. When interviewed in the 1960s, Manzoni stated that *When We Build Again* had no influence on the Corporation's planning decisions.[11] However, Peter Larkham concludes that Manzoni appears to be revising history when he thus asserted the primacy of his ideas.[12] In fact, he had been consulted in the early stages of the research, and Sutcliffe and Smith's history of Birmingham suggests that the Corporation saw the publication at the time as 'a most influential report'.[13]

The first post-war planning publication to include Birmingham was *Conurbation: a survey of Birmingham and the Black Country* which was published in 1948 by the West Midlands Group of Post-War Reconstruction and Planning, of which Manzoni was a member in a personal capacity.[14] This was one of four reports by the Group, which looked not only at post-war redevelopment but at wider rural and urban planning. Based on data supplied by the 24 local authorities of the conurbation, it casts its net geographically much wider than *When We Build Again*. Several maps in the book focus on Birmingham: for example, plate 10 is a colour-coded map of different classes of housing classified for replacement. Most housing in Digbeth is in category 1, for 'immediate replacement'. The corresponding map for the factory

buildings (plate 13) shows a more varied picture, with roughly equal numbers in class 1 (bad), 2 (moderate) and 3 (good).

In 1952, the Bournville Village Trust published *Birmingham – Fifty Years On*. Unlike the Trust's earlier work, this was both looking backwards and forwards, contrasting historic views with photos and plans of 1952 and a scenario for 2002. Chapters focused on themes such as 'homes and their surroundings', 'the factories', 'shops and markets'. At least some of the material was re-used from *Conurbation*, while some was supplied by Manzoni's department. In fact, the author, Paul Cadbury, thanked 'the enlightened Surveyor and Engineer, my friend Herbert J. Manzoni' in the foreword.[15] However, Peter Larkham concludes that the book had only a 'brief and local impact'.[16]

Bomb damage in Digbeth

Digbeth suffered extensive damage during the Second World War. A composite map of the 77 air raids between 1940 and 1943 shows that a similar density of incendiary and high explosive bombs landed on Digbeth as on the rest of central Birmingham.[17] The older buildings on the Typhoo site (a converted timber mill) were destroyed by bombs, as was the Catholic school at the west end of Bordesley Street. Fellows, Morton & Clayton's warehouse at New Warwick Wharf was damaged and four boats were sunk. A number of plots are shown as empty sites (in yellow) on the 1947 Land Use map (Figure 47).

Road widening in Digbeth

The widening of Digbeth and Deritend High Street was first planned in the 1930s – probably as part of the pre-war planning scheme for central Birmingham – and implemented in 1953-55.[18] The Birmingham Corporation Act of 1935 provided powers to acquire the necessary land and for carrying out the widening. Initially, a dual carriageway and a separate tram track were planned. But the project was delayed by the war, although the acquisition of sites continued throughout the 1940s. After 1945, there was further delay because of the need to economise. In 1951, the Public Works Committee asked the Ministry of Transport for permission to start the road widening which was granted in 1953. As buses had increasingly superseded trams, the planned tramtrack was omitted in the revised plans. The completed roads were opened on 22 July 1955 by J. A. Boyd-Carpenter, Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation.[19] The widening affected primarily the south side of the street (outside of the study area), where all buildings were cleared.

Slum clearance and development areas

The improvement of living conditions in slum areas had been a concern of the Corporation since the early 20th century. Despite the erection of a few experimental model housing schemes during the inter-war years, little progress had been made before the war. After Manzoni's appointment, his scheme for the redevelopment of part of Duddeston and Nechells (both to the north of Digbeth) was approved in 1937. This was to be a 'redevelopment area' as defined under the 1935 Housing Act which

Figure 47: Detail of the 1947 Land Use map showing Digbeth with the study area outlined in white. Key: pink/purple - industrial, brown - residential, yellow - vacant land, red - public building/education, grey – transport, blue – commercial, green – leisure/open space (Birmingham Archives and Collections, reference: ACC 2010/050: Birmingham City Council land use plans 1946 – 1947, sheet Warks XIV.5, reproduced with the permission of the Library of Birmingham)

permitted wholesale re-development of areas of more than 50 working-class houses of which a third were unfit for habitation and which were 'of bad layout and obsolete development'.[20]

Delayed due to the war, a revised scheme was approved by the Council in 1943 and ministerial approval was received in 1950. Four other redevelopment areas were designated in *c* 1946: Bath Row, Summer Lane, Ladywood and Gooch Street. In 1955, another 15 were defined by the Council, including St Andrews which extended slightly to the west of Watery Lane, covering a small part of the Digbeth study area.

While the removal of old and unfit housing in Digbeth was seen as desirable, this was not done as part of a designated redevelopment area as Digbeth had been zoned for industrial, not residential, use (see below). Most of the housing in Digbeth appears to have disappeared gradually during the inter-war period as well as the immediate post-war years. In 1927, Digbeth was still largely residential with court housing and back-to-backs; by 1952, only small pockets remained (see Figure 47). Further research might establish if the waves of clearance coincided with housing redevelopments elsewhere, displacing industries which then settled in Digbeth.

Post-war land use zoning

The Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 established modern planning principles and required each local authority to produce a Development Plan including a land use survey. (It seems likely that the resulting land use survey for Birmingham is identical with the land use map of 1946-7 (Figure 47).) The draft plan for Birmingham was approved by the Council in January 1952 and a public enquiry was held in February 1954. Ministerial approval was received only in December 1960, partly due to a disagreement about the zoning for industrial use.[21] The original plan proposed an increase of nearly a quarter for land zoned for industrial use (nearly 5500 acres), mostly for firms displaced from the redevelopment areas and to allow existing firms to expand. The Labour-led Council was keen to keep industry, and thus employment, in the city centre, in particular in regard to the increased income from business rates after the industrial de-rating in 1958.[22] But the Minister of Housing and Local Government thought this too great an increase and eventually succeeded in reducing Birmingham's allocation of land for industrial uses.

The 1952 Plan contained a written analysis, a written statement, a town map, a programme map and a designation map. The town map showed major proposals which were to form the planning framework for the future. The programme map depicted proposals which could be completed within twenty years (i.e. by 1972). The designation map showed areas of compulsory acquisition by departments of local or national government. While copies of the written analysis and written statement of 1952 survive in the Library of Birmingham [23], the three maps were not reproduced in order to keep down costs; readers were instead referred to the copies in the Town Planning department in the Civic Centre. (It is not clear if they survive as they have not been transferred to Birmingham Archives and Collections.) The Development Plan approved in 1960 was published with maps and it is likely that – at least in regard to Digbeth – these are similar to those in the 1952 version. On the town map

Figure 48: Detail of sheet 23 of the town map from the 1960 Development Plan (Birmingham Archives and Collections, LF87.BIR, reproduced with the permission of the Library of Birmingham)

(Figure 48), Digbeth is highlighted as an 'area primarily for industrial use' (In), with the exception of the area to the west of New Canal Street, which is 'primarily for business use' (Ba). New Canal Street was designated a 'principal traffic road' (R), and the canals as 'waterways of traffic importance' (WT). Other land was described as 'covered by water' (Wa) and a large refuse disposal works (RD) was located east of the river and north of the canal. The accompanying text recognised that while the

Figure 49: Aerial photo, looking north-west, showing two sites with canted corners: 90 Floodgate Street (centre) and 70 Bordesley Street (top) (33192_020)

projected land use should eventually be the predominant use, other ancillary and incidental uses might be permitted and that each case would be considered on its merits. No distinction was made between types of industry, but the plan emphasised that not all areas would be 'available for all classes of industry'.[24] There were no specific proposals for the Digbeth area in the programme or designation maps.

Design influence

A number of post-war industrial buildings in Digbeth are surprisingly similar, with common features such as the use of brick and canted corners, generally of no more than two storeys, and with parapets hiding the roof structure (Figure 49). There are at least twenty such corner buildings throughout Digbeth (see list below). Some of them are single-storey buildings, others of two storeys; some of them with a main entrance or vehicular access in the corner, others with a doorway to the side. While examples of post-war industrial buildings with canted corners can be found all over the country, their relative concentration in Digbeth is more unusual. This might be due to practical reasons, for example to provide easier access for vehicles or a gathering place for workers at the beginning or end of the day. But they also provided an opportunity for some display and design focus, even in relatively modest structures.

No evidence has been found that the Council influenced the design of these corner sites and it seems unlikely that there were any detailed design guidelines for

Figure 50: 70 Bordesley Street, Digbeth (DP195897)

industrial buildings in the immediate post-war period. However, no systematic search has been made of the minutes of the Public Works Committee, and the Town Planning Sub-Committee.

Likewise, it seems unlikely that a single landowner enforced design guidelines. Although the Gooch Estate historically owned much of Digbeth, by the 1950s landownership had become fragmented and this is difficult to capture now. (The records of the Gooch Estate are, apart from a few deeds in Birmingham Archives and Collections, still in private ownership.) Individual businesses used their own architects, who, however, are not always credited on the building plans submitted to the Council. For example, this is the case with the drawings for the site at the corner of Barn and Bordesley Streets which the clothing manufacturer Woolf & Blumenthal Clothing Co. submitted in 1953 and 1954; presumably they used an in-house architect.

Birmingham Archives and Collections hold a series of building plans from 1876 to 1991, which are indexed up to 1959 and again from 1966. A comprehensive search and analysis of these is hampered by the rudimentary handwritten indexes (alphabetically by street in annual volumes), the difficulty of identifying specific sites in the indexes, and the patchy survival of corresponding plans. Instead, the indexes for 1950-59 have been searched for addresses of known corner sites, where these could be clearly identified. This confirmed that in the early 1950s much development was accretive. Given post-war economies, many businesses erected temporary structures or smaller buildings to replace war-damaged buildings before committing to larger rebuilding projects. New corner blocks might provide, for example, offices and ancillary spaces for existing businesses whose warehouses or workshops were in older, adjoining buildings which were only gradually being rebuilt, often in matching materials and detailing. For example, the corner block built by Woolf & Blumenthal

Clothing in *c* 1953 had only one bay to Bordesley Street[25]; this was later extended by fourteen matching bays (Figure 50). This corner block replaced one whose corner was not canted, demonstrating how the post-war buildings altered and shaped the streetscape of Digbeth. There seems to have been only two pre-war buildings with canted corners, at 111 Fazeley Street and 54 Liverpool Street.

At least some of the 1950s corner blocks are steel-framed with concrete floors and brick outer walls, for example the block at 141-147 Fazeley Street erected in c 1955 by the architect John E. Graeme ARIBA for Lawrence Cabinet Ltd at a cost of £17,000.[26] But some hybrid buildings were also erected, possibly due to restrictions in the use of steel after the Second Wold War. For example, the building at the corner of Barn and Bordesley Streets used concrete on the ground floor and some steel framing, combined with a roof and first floor of timber.[27]

Comparison with Coventry

A comparison of the post-war redevelopment plans for Birmingham with those for Coventry provides a particularly telling contrast. In general, the post-war redevelopment of central Coventry was more radical than Birmingham's, and an example of the *tabula rasa* mentality which Manzoni eschewed. This was partly down to the officers in charge and partly due to the political climate and will in the relevant council.

Coventry had experienced rapid growth in the inter-war period, both in terms of population and expansion of the administrative area. A number of large businesses and industry – especially from the engineering sector – had moved to the city since the late 19th century. And yet there had been little planning for these increases in population and industry.[28] The work of the City Engineer and Planning Officer, Ernest Ford (1884-1955), was hampered by the absence of political determination and the necessary powers (such as the Birmingham Corporation Act of 1935) for large-scale projects. Apart from a few new roads in the city centre and a bypass, he achieved little during the 1930s.

A major difference between the two cities was the early appointment of a city architect at Coventry in 1939 – compared to 1953 in Birmingham. Donald Gibson's (1908-91) post was independent from the City Engineer's department and also had the backing of the Council's new Labour Party government who took control in November 1937.[29] (Labour only achieved a majority in Birmingham Council in 1946.) While Ford's department initially retained responsibility for planning, this became part of the remit of the City Architect's Department in 1949. In contrast with Manzoni's dominant style, Gibson's leadership and management was more democratic, encouraging debate within his department and input from all staff members.[30] Andrew Saint described him as 'a team man rather than a designer'.[31]

Immediately after his appointment Gibson's team began to plan a new civic centre and presented a scheme in early 1940 under the title *Coventry of Tomorrow*. The severe air raids of 1940-42 allowed Gibson scope to comprehensively re-plan the entire city centre of which 53 acres had been destroyed.[32] In 1941, the

City Redevelopment Committee endorsed Gibson's radical two-stage plan for redevelopment over Ford's more reticent rival plan. Gibson proposed a ring road around a rectilinear road grid with buildings grouped according to their function. The planning of the shopping precinct was particularly innovative, featuring the earliest British example of the strict segregation of people and cars.[33] The principles of the 1941 plan informed subsequent revisions like the 1944 Central Area model and the redevelopment plan agreed in 1945 with the local Chamber of Commerce. In July 1949, this was approved by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning; building work had already started in the previous year.

However, these plans were solely for the city centre. Initially, there was to be no industry at all within the ring road but the 1949 plan allowed for light industry between the ring road and Queen Victoria Road and Corporation Street, a zoning which, as in Digbeth, reflected the predominant – but not exclusive – use of the pre-war era.[34] Most of the post-war industrial buildings in these areas have now been replaced. Gould and Gould described them as 'for the most part...coarse grained, single-use and inaccessible buildings'.[35] This is in stark contrast to the post-war industrial buildings in Digbeth which are generally of some architectural quality and have frequently lent themselves to successful re-use and conversion.

Conclusion

The transformation of Digbeth from a mixed-use to a predominantly industrial area had started during the inter-war period. However, the redevelopment of bomb damage sites and the Council's zoning accelerated the process after 1945. New buildings were predominantly light industrial units of brick with characteristic canted corners facing junctions. These clearly proved to be the most suitable building type at the time, fulfilling the post-war demand for economy, flexibility and space for future expansion.

Post-war buildings with canted corners

This list includes all post-war buildings in Digbeth with canted corners, dating from *c* 1945 to the 1970s. Unless otherwise stated, dates are derived from the OS map sequence. The list is arranged alphabetically by street.

37 Adderley Street, west of the junction of Adderley, Liverpool and Allcock Streets

A single-storey brick building with a window to the corner, built between 1952 and 1965. Flat-roofed areas surround a pitched roof at the centre.

148 Adderley Street, east of the junction of Adderley and Lower Trinity Streets

A single-storey shallow brick building, with door and window to the corner and only one bay to Lower Trinity Street. Built between 1952 and 1965.

Adderley Street, east of the junction of Adderley and Upper Trinity Streets

A single-storey brick and corrugated metal building with two gables to Adderley Street and two vehicular loading doors, a pedestrian door and windows to Upper Trinity Street. Untypical example with no opening to the canted corner. It had been built by 1952 as sheet metal works.

30-31 Allison Street, east of the junction of Allison and Coventry Streets

A two-storey block built between 1952 and 1963, whose red brick corner is recessed between 'wings' of dark brick. The corner has a six-light first-floor window above the entrance. The elevation to Allison Street has a similar nine-light window above a loading bay. The elevation to Coventry Street is grander, with slim concrete piers dividing the five window bays. The final bay on that elevation has a three-light window above another loading door.

44 Bordesley Street, west of the junction of Bordesley and New Bartholomew Streets

A two-storey, flat-roofed brick building which was built after 1971. The canted corner has a roller-shuttered door and a window above.

70 Bordesley Street, north-west of the junction of Barn and Bordesley Streets

A two-storey, flat-roofed block built for Messrs Woolf & Blumenthal Ltd, clothing manufacturer; the architect is not credited on the drawings (Figure 50). A first planning application for the building was submitted on 12 May 1953, although the elevations were later revised. (The original drawings are in the collection of Birmingham Archives and Collections, reference BBP105140). The walls were to be of brick, the ground floor of concrete, some steel framing was to be combined with a first floor and roof of timber. The building had only one bay to Bordesley Street but a longer elevation to Barn Street. In November 1954, a proposed additional floor received permission, which however, remained unexecuted. The accompanying

drawings show the elevations as revised and executed. By 1963, the 1953 block had been extended in matching style to create the current, longer frontage to Bordesley Street. The parapet of the western block of the latter was later remodelled as a gable. The materials are brown brick laid in English bond with decorative brick courses (soldier bond and alternating soldier/stretcher bonds) and beige tiled string courses. Beige tiles are also used as door architrave and for the parapet. Door with window above to the corner. The building is locally listed.

East of the junction of Bordesley and Pickford Streets and east side of Pickford Street

A long two-storey brown brick building which was built as two separate works: Gravity Ladders (building of 1959) to the north and Perfecta Motors (1955-60). Both were later occupied by Trevelyans (Birmingham) Ltd whose signage survives in Pickford Street. Both were designed by Holland W. Hobbiss and M.A.H. Hobbiss. The canted corner bay is enriched with brick corner quoins, a door architrave and a moulded cornice to the parapet. The elevation to Bordesley Street has been extended several times. The building is locally listed.

71-77 Coventry Street, north-west corner of the junction of Coventry and Trent Streets

A two-storey brick building built between 1971 and 1978 as printing works, with six bays to Coventry Street and one bay to Trent Street. The corner has one window to the upper floor and three windows and the main entrance to the ground floor.

66 Coventry Street, north-east corner of the junction of Coventry and Trent Streets

A corner building with a single-storey block to the corner and Trent Street, and a two-storey block to Coventry Street with a loading bay. Built between 1937 and 1952, the building is of red brick with rusticated piers and corners. The corner has no openings.

North-west corner of the junction of Coventry and Meriden Streets

A single-storey corner block, built as a warehouse between 1952 and 1963. It has four loading bays to Coventry Street and six windows and a door to Meriden Street. The corner bay has a central door with a small window band to the right. A banner to the left may hide further windows.

70 Fazeley Street, north-east of the junction of Fazeley and New Canal Streets

A two-storey, flat-roofed block of pale brown brick with rendered areas, which was built as a depot between 1952 and 1963. The corner elevation has a door and windows.

Figure 51: 90 Floodgate Street, seen from the south-west along Floodgate Street, in 2017 (DP195896)

141-147 Fazeley Street, west of the junction of Barn and Fazeley Streets

A two-storey, flat-roofed building which was designed by architect John E. Graeme Edwards ARIBA of Birmingham for Lawrence Cabinet Ltd. in August 1954. (The original drawings are in the collection of Birmingham Archives and Collections, reference BBP107794). The executed design is a revision of a slightly earlier design of December 1953. The building is steel-framed with concrete floors and brick walls. The overall cost was £17,000. The structural engineers were T. Partridge & Co. Ltd. of Walsall & Birmingham. The building has a window bay at the corner.

East of the junction of Fazeley and River Streets

A small, single-storey corner block which was part of the post-war rebuilding of the screw-manufacturing Wellington Mills between 1951 and 1969. Most of the Mills building has a saw-tooth roof, only the small corner is flat-roofed. It does not extend to the street line of Fazeley Street, leaving a small fenced yard in front. To Fazeley Street is a band of metal windows and to River Street a former opening which has been largely bricked up around a recent door. The corner has a blind brick panel with a stone surround which extends above the parapet.

Figure 52: 60-69 Glover Street (DP195885)

90 Floodgate Street, north-east of the junction of Little Ann and Floodgate Streets and west of the junction of River and Floodgate Streets

A large, single-storey building erected between 1955 and 1967, with street elevations on three sides to Little Ann, Floodgate and River streets (Figure 51). It has a tiled panel above the corner door. A taller block with a staircase faces Floodgate Street. Labelled 'metal and brass pressing works' on the OS map, this was no. 4 works of the W.J. Wild component manufacture works. It is locally listed.

60-69 Glover Street, west of the junction of Adderley Street with Glover Street

A three-storey, flat-roofed building built as non-ferrous metal works between 1952 and 1965 (Figure 52). The elevations are dominated by brick piers which extend above the cornice into the parapet. There are three bays to the corner, and twelve bays to Adderley Street. The brickwork is predominantly of red brick, with decorative use of blue engineering brick headers. The latter pattern changes in the five bays to the west on Adderley Street.

119 Glover Street, north of the junction of Glover and Westley Streets

A two-storey brick corner block with a blank brick wall to Westley Street, which was built after 1969. Two bays with windows over two levels alternate with loading bays to Glover Street. The canted corner also has windows.

Figure 53: Corner of Great and Little Barr Street (DP196448)

South of the junction of Great Barr and Little Barr Streets

A two-storey brick corner building with a tall parapet to Great Barr Street and the corner with a decorative brick band (Figure 53). It was built between 1937 and 1951. The recessed corner bay has a white tile surround to the entrance and window over, above which is a short tiled canopy. The ground and first floor are dominated by slightly projecting window bands. Above the secondary entrances are circular windows. It is labelled 'Engineering Works' on the 1951 OS map and as 'Argyle Works (brush and mop)' on the 1969 map. The building is locally listed.

Progress Works, Heath Mill Lane, between Allcock and Bromley Streets

A large, two-storey brick building with two canted corners, built in 1955 for R. Lunt and Company, warehousemen. The corner to Allcock Street has a window, that to Bromley Street a roller-shuttered door with steps and (modern) lettering spelling 'Progress Works'. Due to the slightly sloping site, there is a raised basement to Heath

Mill Lane and Allcock Street but only a ground floor to Bromley Street. This was a warehouse by the 1960s.

South of the junction of Heath Mill Lane and Bromley Street, now Platinum car repairs

A red brick corner block with a shallow gabled roof which was built between 1952 and 1965. The upper part of the walls is clad in corrugated metal. Only the lower parts of two windows on the corner elevation and two on the Heath Mill Lane elevation are visible.

25 Trent Street, east of the junction of Trent and Bordesley Streets

A single-storey brick building which was built between 1951 and 1963. It has a roller-shuttered loading bay at the corner.

Endnotes

1 Caulcott 2013

2 Ibid

3 Ibid; Foster 2005, 31

4 Quoted in Foster 2005, 197

5 Interview in the *Birmingham Mail* of 27 February 1941, quoted in Larkham 2013, xii

6 Manzoni 1955, 90

7 Larkham 2013, xi

8 Cherry 1994, 194; Macmorran 1973, 91

9 Foster 2005, 38

10 Larkham 2013, xx

11 Ibid, xxiv

12 Ibid

13 Sutcliffe and Smith 1974, 122-23, quoted in Larkham 2013, xxiv

14 Macmorran 1973, 96

15 *When We Build Again* 1941, 10, republished in *When We Build Again*. *The Bournville Village Trust* 2013, 204

16 Larkham 2013, xxiv

17 Birmingham Archives and Collections, LF75.82, bomb damage map

18 Andy Foster erroneously gives a date of 1951-53. Foster 2005, 179. The date of 1953-55 is based on Black 1957, 345-6.

19 Black 1957, 345-6; BCC 1989, 85

20 Black 1957, 382

21 BCC 1989, 73; Cherry 1994, 194

22 Ibid

23 Reference: LF87.BIR

24 Manzoni 1960, 15, 18

25 See Birmingham Archives and Collections, BBP105140. block plan, plans (as then existing and proposed), and elevations for 70 Bordesley Street, an extension to the factory of Messrs Woolf & Blumenthal Co. Ltd., 1953

26 Birmingham Archives and Collections, BBP107794, block plan, ground floor plan and elevation for 141-147 Fazeley Street, John E. Graeme Edwards ARIBA for Lawrence Cabinet Ltd, December 1953, revised August 1954

27 Ibid, BBP105140, application form

28 Gould and Gould 2016, 1

29 Ibid, 7

30 Ibid, 33

31 Saint 2013

32 Gould and Gould 2016, 12

33 Ibid, 15

34 Gould and Gould 2009, 13, 63

35 Ibid, 63

APPENDIX 5: THE FORMER RETORT HOUSE, ADDERLEY STREET GASWORKS

Address: Behind 50 Adderley Street, Digbeth, Birmingham

NGR: SP0844286246

Figure 54: The retort house from the north-east (DP195945)

Introduction

The former retort house was built in 1909 on a gasworks site of 1841-2. It was designed by Birmingham Council's Gas Department, under the supervision of the Engineer-in-Chief Walter Chaney and with the involvement of the young gas engineer Cecil Carrington Barber. As the site where coal was carbonised to produce crude gas, a retort house was the heart of a gasworks. It contained benches of horizontal 'retorts', sealed vessels which were charged with coal and then heated by a furnace, releasing gas and leaving behind coke.

The former retort house is located behind (south) of 50 Adderley Street and to the west of the Warwick and Birmingham Canal. It is a steel-framed structure which was clad in brick and built on a long, oblong plan (Figure 54). The long elevations originally had arched openings over three levels but the interior actually comprised a cellar and a double-height main floor. The interior was not inspected for this project.

John Horne has published a brief article about the retort house in *Archive: The Quarterly Journal for British Industrial and Transport History*. The main primary sources for the history of the retort house are historic maps and photographs, and articles published in 1909 and 1911 in *The Journal of Gas Lighting, Water Supply*

and Sanitary Improvement.[1] The National Grid Gas Archive collections include a plan of 1928 showing the gasworks site (Figure 60), and published descriptions of the same year.[2] Birmingham Archives and Collections hold the archives of the Birmingham and Staffordshire Gas Light Company who founded the Adderley Street gasworks, and the municipal Gas Department who acquired the site in 1875.

Gasworks in Birmingham

Birmingham played an important role in the history of gas lighting and the production of coal gas. The inventor William Murdock (also spelled Murdoch; 1754-1839), an engineer at Boulton and Watt's Soho Works in Birmingham, is credited with the invention of retorts to produce gas from coal, and also with building the first circular gas holder, at the Soho Foundry.[3] He installed gas lighting there in 1798, the first fixed gas lighting in a factory.[4] The first specialist gas engineer, Samuel Clegg (1781-1861), also started his career at Boulton and Watt's; he was the consultant engineer for Birmingham's first gasworks at Gas Street.[5]

Before municipalisation, there were two private gas companies in Birmingham: the Birmingham Gas Light and Coke Company (founded in 1819) and the Birmingham and Staffordshire Gas Light Company (founded in 1825). The area supplied by each company was enlarged by acts of parliament in the mid-19th century, before being taken over by the Council's Gas Department in 1875.[6]

The gasworks in Gas Street were established in 1818 by John Gostling who had won a contract to supply gas for street lighting. The following year, Gostling founded the Birmingham Gas Light and Coke Co. to cope with the increased demand. The Company had two later gasworks: at Fazeley Street in Digbeth (opened in February 1837, closed in 1875) on the site of the later New Warwick Wharf (now The Bond), where the shell of a retort house of 1836 survives at the rear of 176 Fazeley Street (locally listed); and at Windsor Street (opened in December 1846).[7] The two gas holders in Barn Street, Digbeth, also belonged to them.[8] The works at Gas Street closed in 1850.[9]

In 1825, the newly-established Birmingham and Staffordshire Gas Light Company opened what was then the largest gasworks in the country in Swan Village, West Bromwich.[10] This was supplemented in 1841 by the Adderley Street gasworks and in the 1850s by new gasworks at Saltley.

Following an act of parliament promoted by Joseph Chamberlain, mayor and chair of the gas committee, Birmingham Borough Council took over the two gas companies and their sites in 1875. They rationalised and modernised the gasworks, which included the closure of the works in Fazeley Street. They also expanded the works at Saltley and established a new gasworks ('Nechells') on a neighbouring site. In 1910, there were five municipal gasworks sites in Birmingham: at Swan Village, Adderley Street, Windsor Street, Saltley and Nechells. The Saltley and Nechells works were the largest. The Saltley site had by then three retort houses, two of 1901-2 with inclined retorts, and one with horizontal retorts.[11] It also had a coke oven of 1912, a rare feature in British gasworks.[12] The Nechells works had two retort houses, one

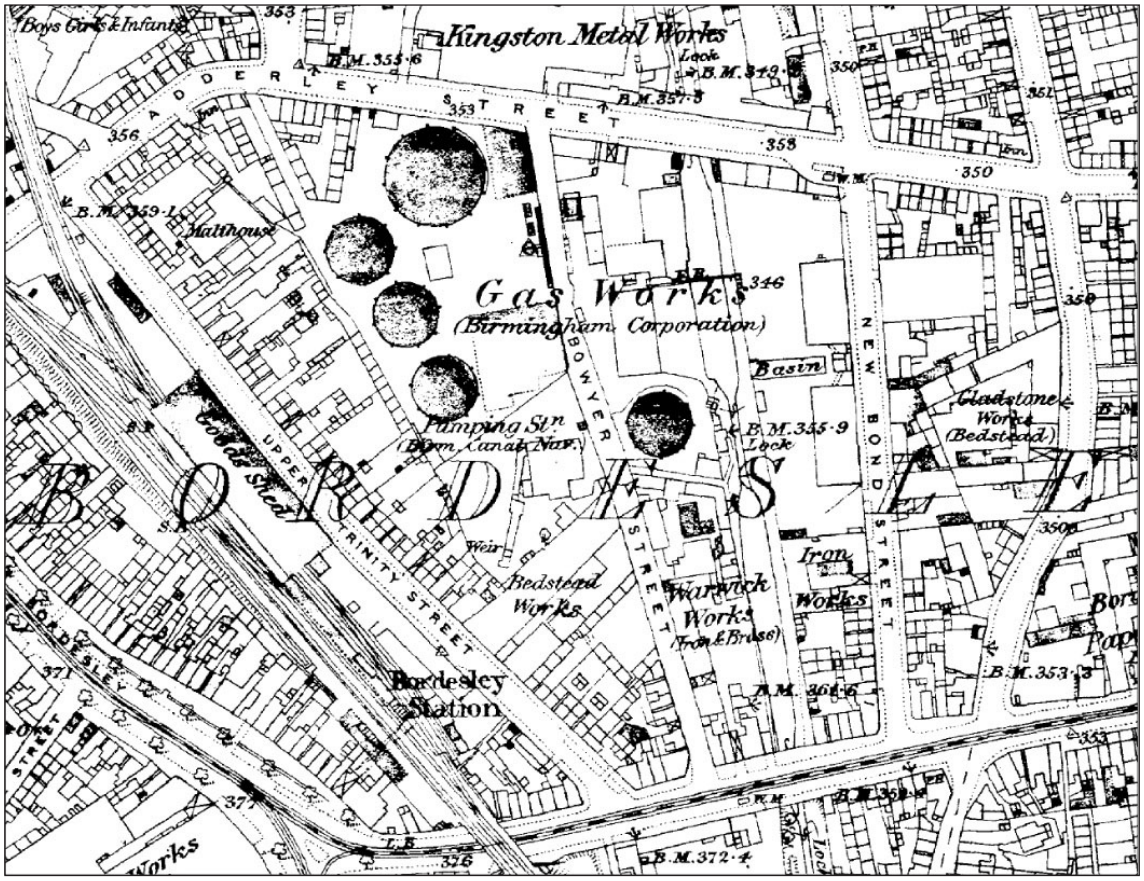


Figure 55: Detail from the 1890 Ordnance Survey map showing the gasworks site before the addition of the 1909 retort house (© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2018) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024)

of 1900 with inclined retorts and another whose construction had started in 1905 which had not been completed by 1910.[13] This might be the horizontal retort house of 1916 mentioned by Horne.[14]

Birmingham's Gas Department closed after the Gas Act of 1948 nationalised all gasworks. As of 2017, the sites at Saltley and Nechells have been cleared and redeveloped, and at Windsor Street and Swan Village only a few gasholders remain.

The Adderley Street Gasworks

In early 1841, the Birmingham and Staffordshire Gas Light Company bought the site of the Pagoda Foundry south of Adderley Street for a new gasworks to supplement their works in West Bromwich.[15] (The gasworks were initially known as the 'Pagoda Works'.) Gas production started in November 1841 and the works were completed the following year (Figure 55).[16] The site beside the Warwick and Birmingham Canal was primarily chosen due to its vicinity to consumers in central Birmingham and for its excellent transport links. Coal, the raw material for gas production, was delivered by canal, while the coke by-product could also be taken away by boat. This changed in the later 19th century, with coal increasingly coming by rail from Derbyshire and South Yorkshire. By *c* 1911, coal for Adderley Street arrived at the Landor Street

Goods Station about 1 mile away and was then hauled by road, at a cost of 1s per ton of coal.[17]

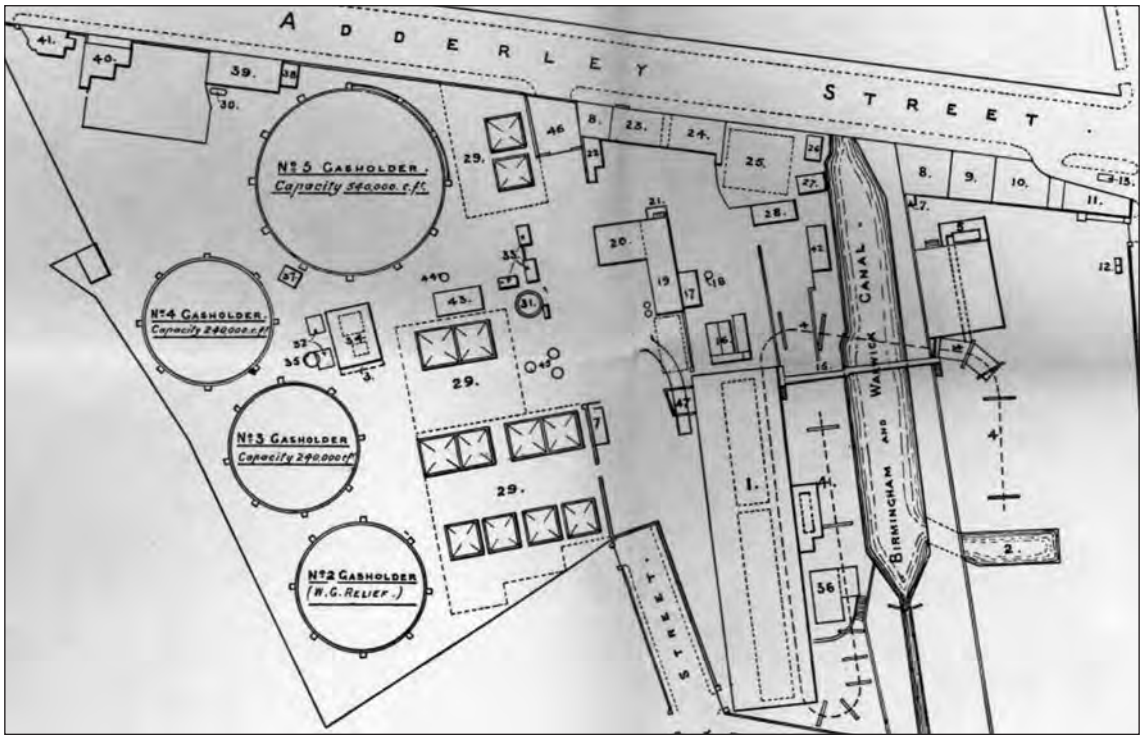
The site had a deep well pump powered by a vertical steam engine which by 1928 could produce 3,000 gallons of water per hour (Figure 56, numbers 17 and 18).[18] As the use of canal water was subject to licences, the water from the well was used for all processes in the gasworks, including, for example, the hydraulic main in the retort house and the coke quenching (i.e. cooling).

By the 1850s, the Adderley Street gasworks had four gasholders on the west side of Bowyer Street and another on the east side. The latter had disappeared by 1905. In *c* 1914-18, a free-standing blue water gas plant of the Humphreys & Glasgow type was built to the east of the retort house (number 36 on Figure 56).[19] The plant, with its attached engine house, was constructed using reinforced concrete and produced water gas from coke and steam (Figures 56, 60, 66). By the 1920s, the gasworks were the oldest and smallest working ones in Birmingham, occupying a site of about 5 ½ acres and employing about 150 people.[20]

It is not clear when the gasworks closed. They were still listed in the Post Office Directory for 1940. By 1928, the southern end of Bowyer Street had become a cul-de-sac, as its northern end had been incorporated in the gasworks site. On the 1952 Ordnance Survey map the gasholders are still labelled 'gasworks', while the retort house is part of United Wire Works. The gasholders were removed between 1951 and 1965.

The retort house

By 1900, the Adderley Street gasworks with its four hand-worked retort houses were outdated. However, their central location was still an advantage, for example for the supply of the coke market, and it was decided to modernise the gasworks. A new retort house, known as 'No. 2 Retort House', was built to replace three old ones. It was to be a large-scale trial of electric power drives as all previous retort houses in Birmingham had used compressed air or hydraulic power. A building application for the new retort house was submitted on 14 July 1909 by the Engineer-in-Chief Walter Chaney on behalf of the Gas Department.[21] The building was designed by the Department's engineers, including Cecil Carrington Barber, under the supervision of Chaney. The contractors were Messrs Gibbons of Dudley, who also built the retort benches inside. The site was cleared in November 1908 and construction commenced in February 1909. During its construction, the remains of an old brick and puddle gasholder were discovered on the site, which required backfilling with lime concrete (Figure 57). The retort house opened later that year and had the capacity of producing 1¾ million cubic feet of gas per day. Electricity for the coal-crusher, coal-elevator, coal-convenor and the charging machine was generated by a new 49 horse power Kynoch gas engine driving a 37kW dynamo by the Electric Construction Company.[22]



1. No. 2 Retort House	17. Water pumps	33. Washers
2. Canal basin	18. Deep well	34. Meter house
3. Oil tank	19. Exhauster house	35. Spent gas oil tank
4. Coke telpher	20. Power house	36. Water gas plant
5. Coke screening plant	21. Tar & liquor, pumps	37. Test holder house
6. Waste heat boiler	22. Bath room & lavatories	38. Valvemen's hut
7. WCs & urinals	23. Foreman's mess room	39. Governor house
8. Mess rooms	24. Carpenter's shop	40. Foreman's house
9. Workshops	25. Tar & liquor storage tank	41. Laboratory
10. Stores	26. Tar sales tank	42. Cyanogen liquor tank
11. Offices	27. Liquor sales tank	43. Cyanogen purifiers
12. Foreman's office	28. Fitting shop	44. P&A tar extractor
13. Weighbridge	29. Purifier	45. Water tube condensers
14. Coke	30. Vapourizer	46. Garage
15. Bridge over canal	31. Tower scrubber	47. Coal hopper
16. Boilers	32. Naphthaline washers	

Figure 56: Detail of a site plan of 1928 with the retort house at number 1 and key based on that provided in the original publication (National Grid Gas Archive, G11_BRM_30029, City of Birmingham Gas Department February 1928)

The new retort house measured 227 feet by 58 feet (69m by 17.5m) on plan and was built using a steel frame with rolled steel joists of up to 12 in by 6 in, which were apparently a fairly recent innovation (Figure 58).[23] The steel roof was covered with Bangor slates. The frame was clad in brick with historicising details, making it look – in the words of John Horne – 'fifty years older than it was'.[24] To the north

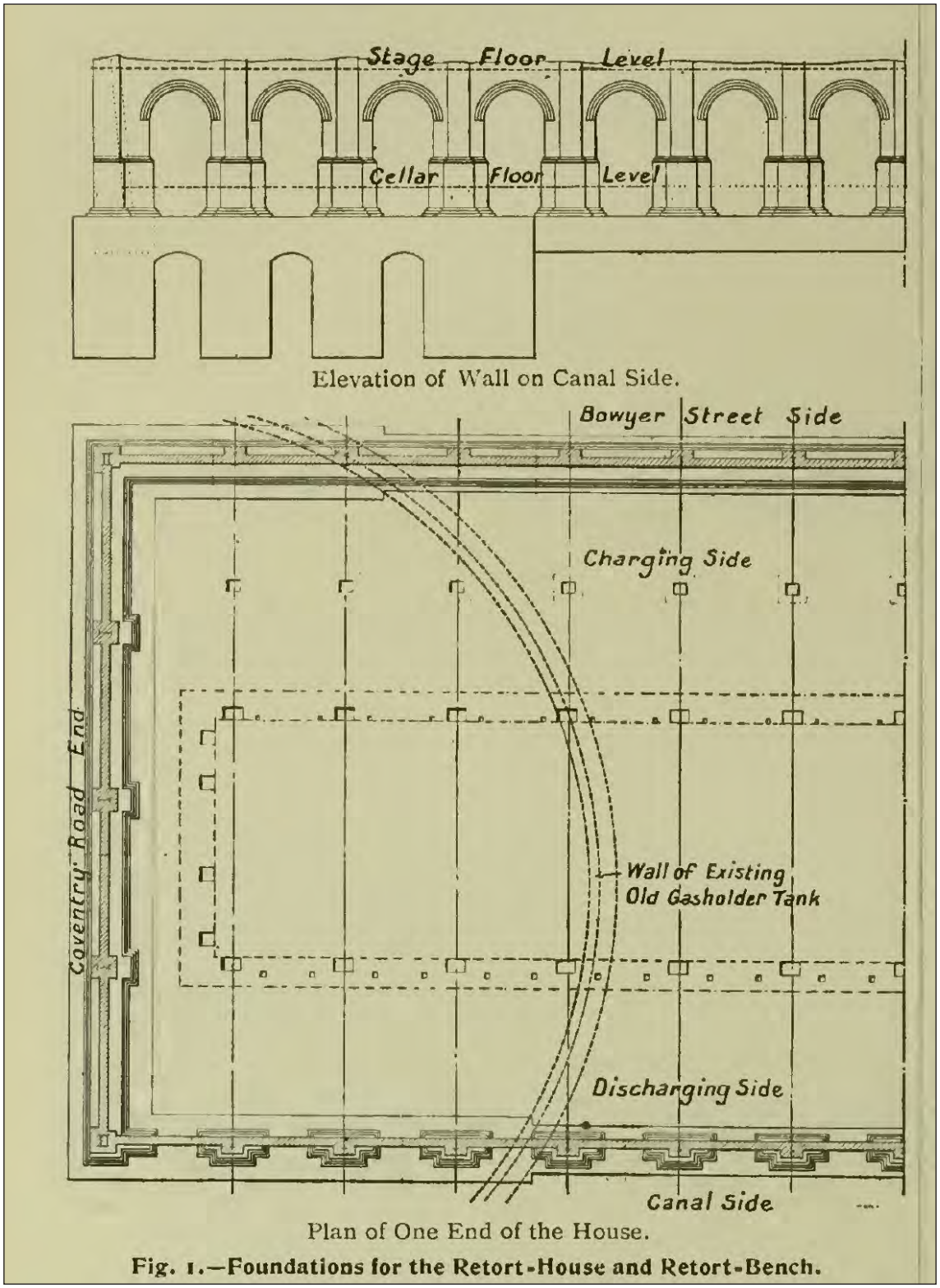


Figure 57: Partial elevation and foundations plan (The Journal of Gas Lighting, Water Supply and Sanitary Improvement, vol. CVIII, 14 December 1909, 748)

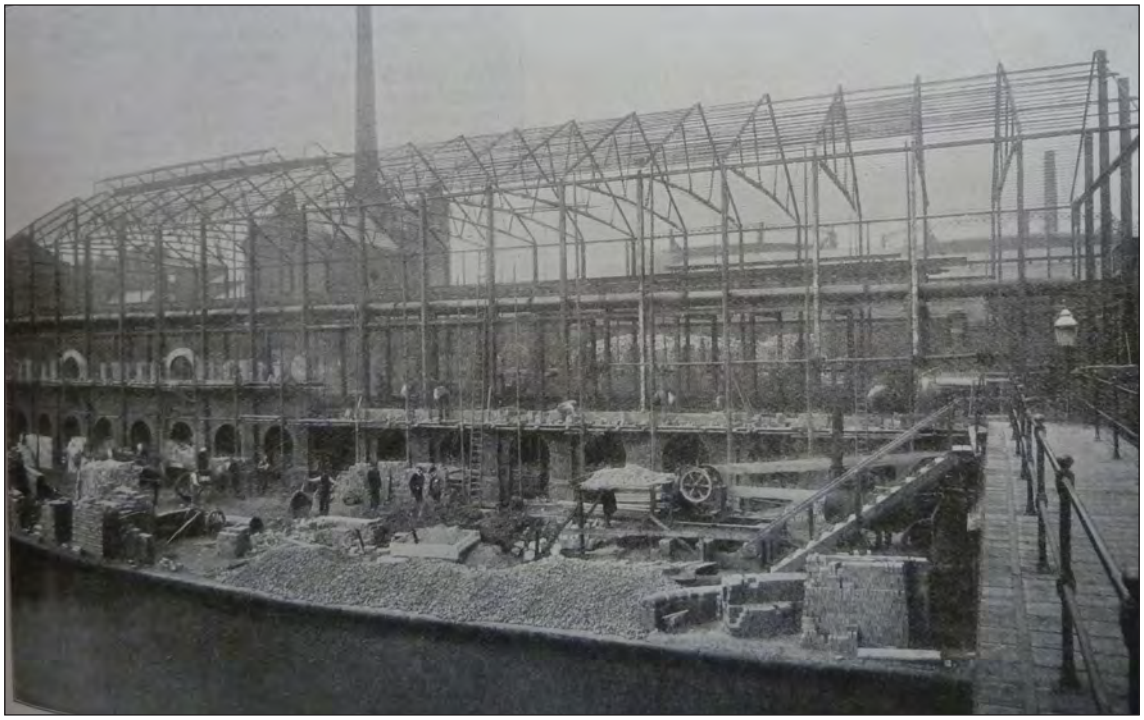


Figure 58: The retort house under construction in 1909 (The Journal of Gas Lighting, Water Supply and Sanitary Improvement, vol. CVIII, 14 December 1909, 747)

Figure 59: The east elevation of the retort house in 1909 (The Journal of Gas Lighting, Water Supply and Sanitary Improvement, vol. CVIII, 14 December 1909, 747)

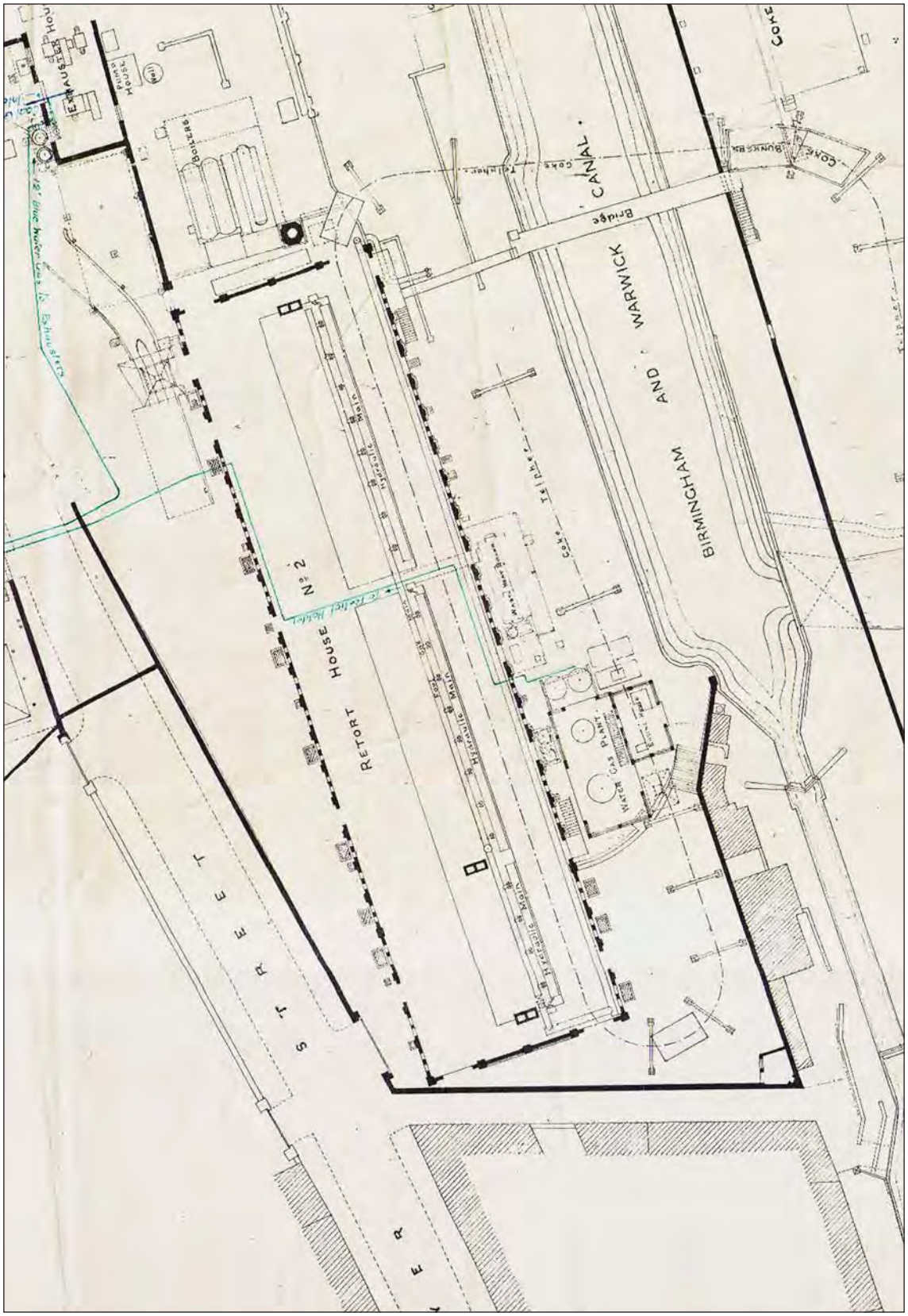


Figure 60: Detail of a 1928 plan of the gasworks, showing the retort house and the water gas plant to the east (National Grid Gas Archive, WM/BIC/ADD/E/E/1)

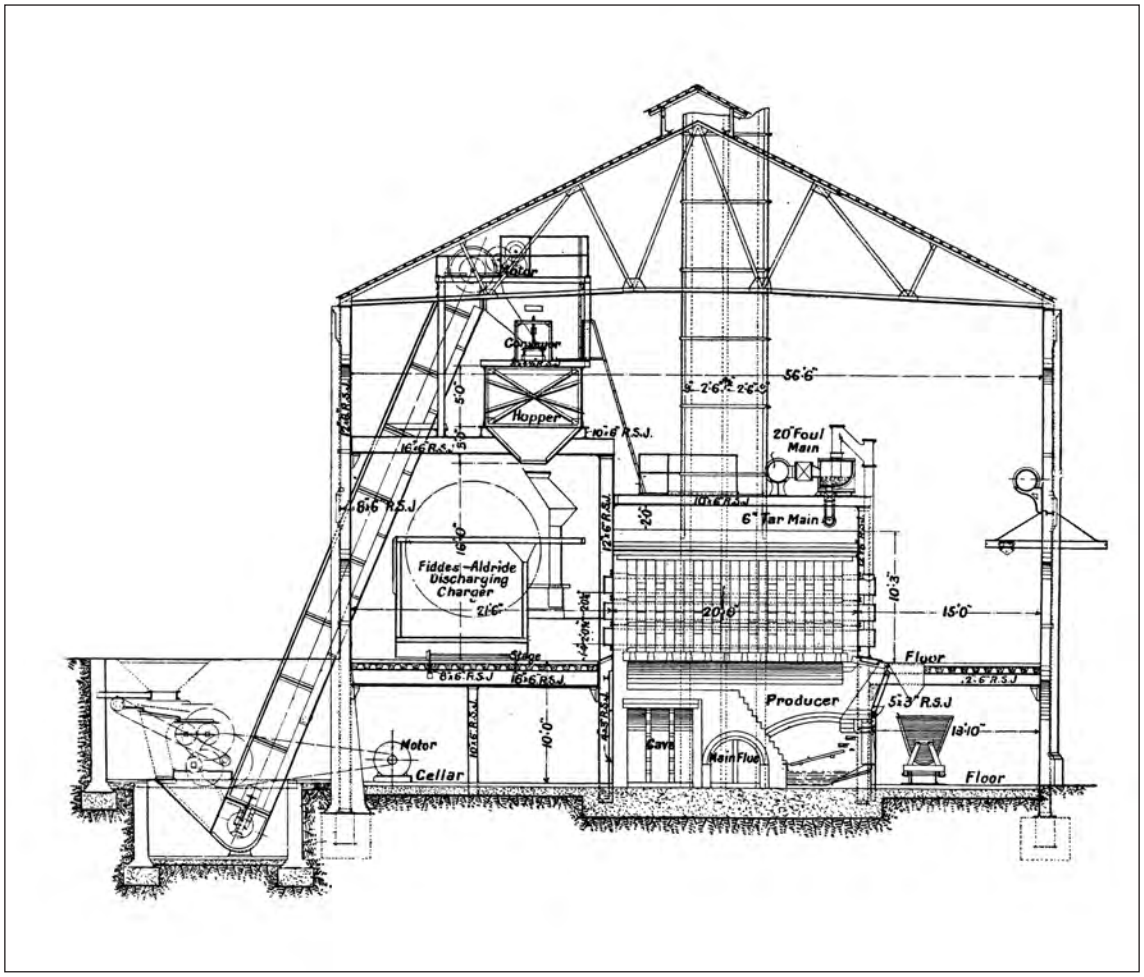


Figure 61: A cross-section through the retort house with the charging side to the left and the discharging side to the right (The Journal of Gas Lighting, Water Supply and Sanitary Improvement, vol. CVIII, 14 December 1909, 749)

was a tall, free-standing chimney for the furnace exhaust, which is shown under construction in Figure 59. The window openings were unglazed for ventilation.

Coal was fed into a hopper near the north-west corner where it passed through a coal-breaker of the double-crusher type by Messrs W. J. Jenkins & Co. Ltd. of Retford (Figure 61). It was transported into the building via a bucket-elevator and onto a coal-conveyor of the push-plate type which fed continuous hoppers connected to the Fiddes-Aldridge charging machine (Figure 61). In the centre of the building, occupying almost the whole length, were the retort benches, with the charging side to the west and the discharging side to the east, facing the canal (Figures 57, 60). There were two retort benches of eight beds; each bed having six horizontal, double-ended retorts, i.e. sixteen beds and 96 retorts in total. They were charged every eight hours with coal by an electrically-driven Fiddes-Aldridge machine for simultaneously charging and discharging the retorts, built by Aldridge & Ranken of Bath (Figure 63). It had been invented in 1904 by Walter William Fiddes (1846-1908) and Mr Aldridge. The machine enabled the mechanical emptying and filling of the retorts, replacing dangerous hand-operated processes. The machine's charging

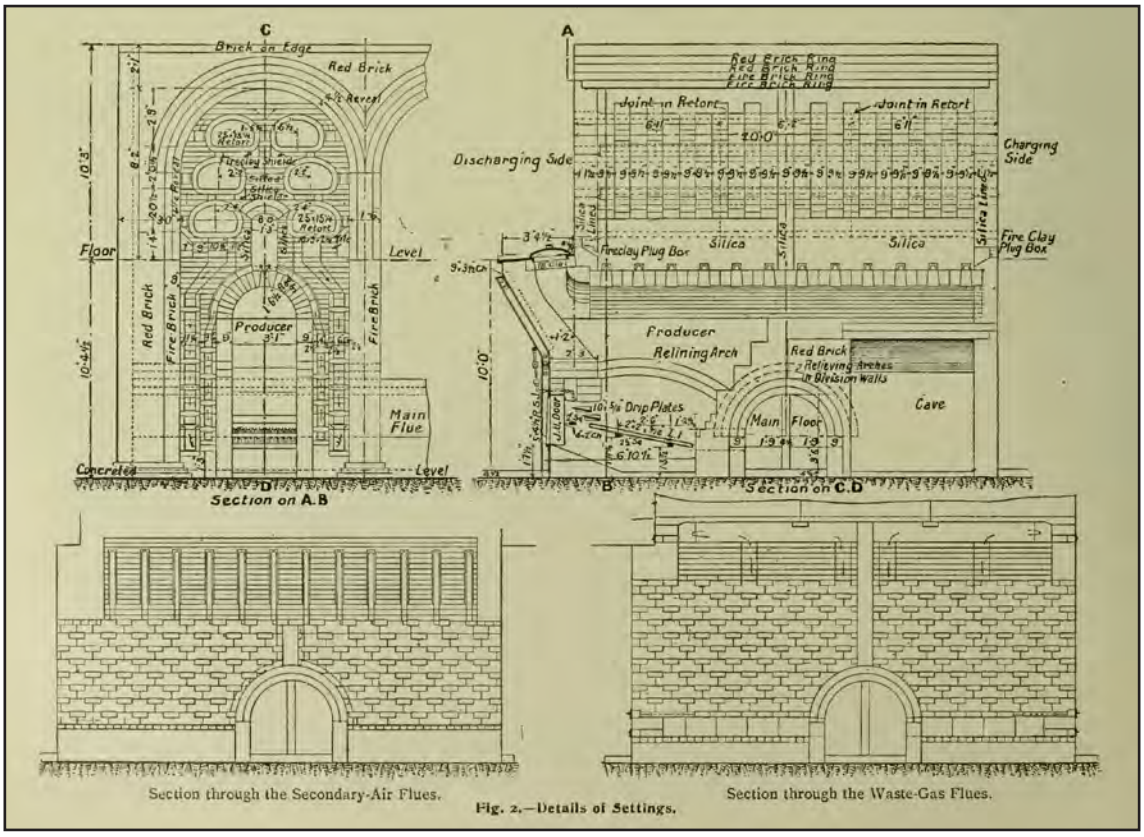


Figure 62: Sections through the retort house (The Journal of Gas Lighting, Water Supply and Sanitary Improvement, vol. CVIII, 14 December 1909, 748)

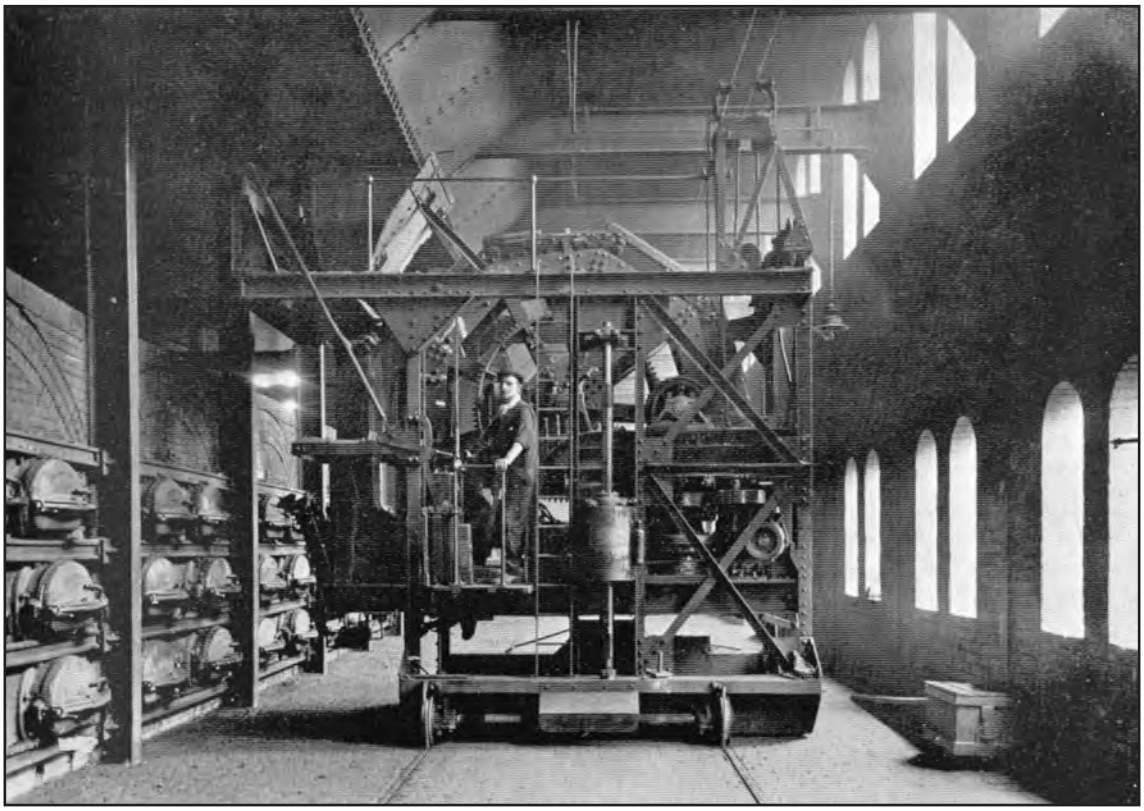


Figure 63: Internal view of the retort house's charging side, showing the Fiddes-Aldridge retort charging/discharging machine (centre), its coal bunker (top) and the retorts (left) (Horne 2009, 3)

Figure 64: Photo of c 1928 showing a Fordson tractor delivering coal to the hopper at the north-west corner of the retort house (National Grid Gas Archive, G11_BRM_30029, City of Birmingham Gas Department, Adderley Street Works, February 1928, 4)

process was powered by the centrifugal force of spinning the coal in a large wheel, which was based on an earlier invention by the Belgian engineer M. de Brouwer.[25] The retorts at Adderley Street were heated by Gibbons and Masters' patent A.B.C. regenerative furnaces, a type of gaseous-fired furnace.

In December 1909, Cecil Carrington Barber presented a paper about the new retort house to the Midland Junior Gas Engineering Association which was subsequently published in the *Journal of Gas Lighting, Water Supply and Sanitary Engineering*.[26] (As his father had recently died, his paper was read not by him but by the Association's Honorary Secretary instead.) The presentation of the paper and its publication gave rise to discussion about several aspects, to which Barber responded in print.[27] Criticism included the initial lack of a backup for the power plant – which was remedied soon afterwards – and the choice of only six retorts per bed instead of eight, nine or ten.

By 1911, an overhead electric telpher system of the Strachan & Henshawe type with two monorail cars had been installed, a structure which was built on the canal-facing, discharging side of the building.[28] The telpher skips of coke were quenched by immersion in water tanks before transporting it to a store and a coke screening

Figure 65: Undated photo from the north-east, showing the telphers and the coke chute about to load a canal boat below (Horne 2009, 2)

plant on the other side of the canal and finally on to canal boats (Figures 56, 60, 65 and 66).

Later alterations

In *c* 1913-14, only a few years after its completion, the retort house was extended to the south in order to satisfy increased demand for gas. A first proposal of January 1913 was postponed due to the high cost but a revised quote from Messrs Gibbons was accepted in May and excavations by Messrs Pearson & Sons of Birmingham were underway in June.[29] The slight change in brickwork is visible on the building's east elevation (Figure 67). The extension contained an additional retort bench of four beds, increasing the total from sixteen to twenty retort beds (Figure 60).[30] This increased the retort house's capacity from 1 ¾ million cubic feet (1909) to 2 million cubic feet of gas per day (1928).[31]

By 1928, a small laboratory extension had been built at the centre of the east elevation (number 41 on Figure 56). By 1952, this had been replaced by a shorter square extension, while at the west a longer extension followed the slightly slanting course of the former Bowyer Street. Between 1952 and 1965, the current large extension with a chimney was built to the east (Figure 54). This is most likely the boiler house approved in December 1956.[32] Other extensions built between about 1952 and 1960 include: a surgery and canteen extension for United Wire Works

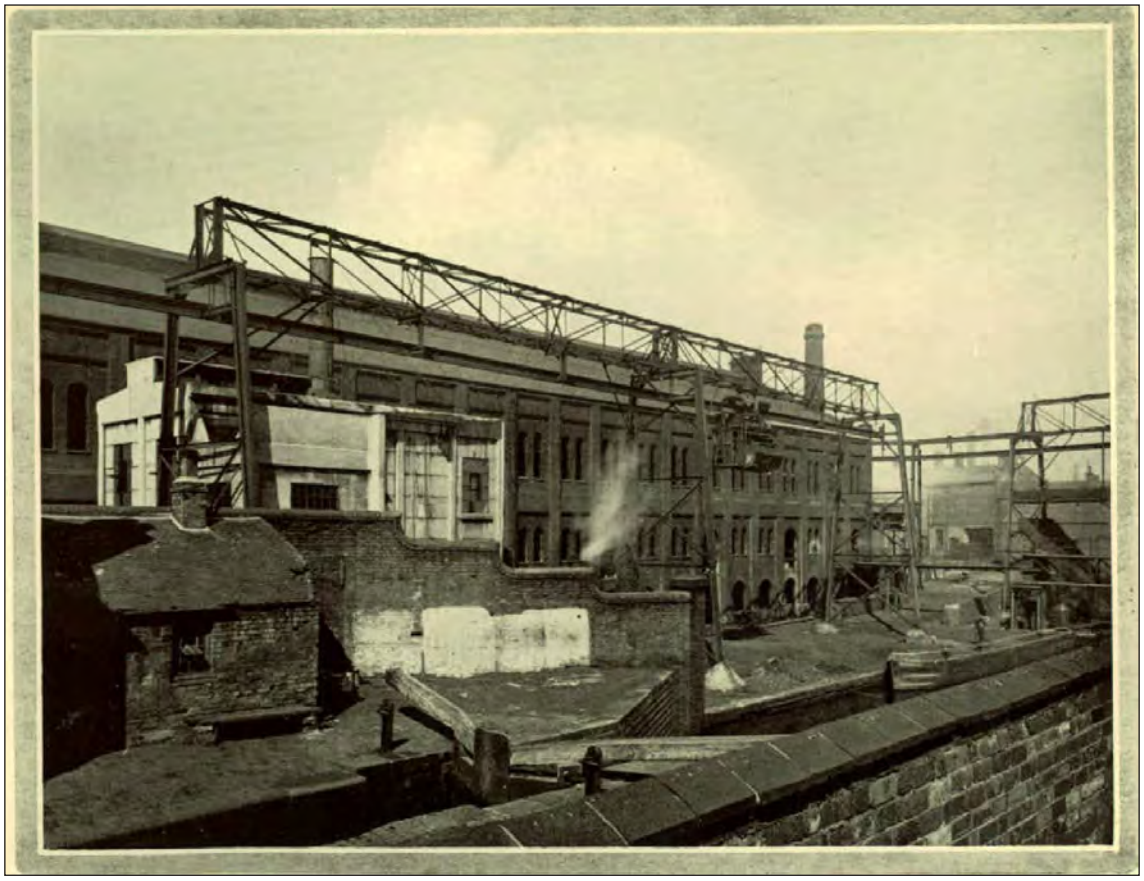


Figure 66: Photo of c 1928 from the south-east, showing the new blue water gas plant (white building to the left) (National Grid Gas Archive, G11_BRM_30029, City of Birmingham Gas Department, 'Adderley Street Works', February 1928, 2)

which received planning permission in October 1952; another application – probably a revision – relating to a surgery and canteen which was approved in January 1953; an extension to the extrusion shop of December 1954; and an extension to the fitting shop approved in September 1960.[33] Most of these are probably part of the incremental single-storey extensions along the building's east and west sides.

By 1970, just to the north of it, were two free-standing unspecified tanks (since removed). The telpher system and the chimney to the north of the retort house (see Figures 59, 60, 65) have long been removed. The east elevation has been altered – probably during the 1950s or 1960s – with the replacement of the twin first-floor window openings with larger glazed oblong windows, and the blocking of the ground-floor arches (Figure54). The slate roof has also been replaced by other materials.

The engineers

The building was designed by the Corporation's Gas Department, under the supervision of Walter Chaney (born *c* 1868), the Engineer-in-Chief for the gasworks at Adderley Street and Nechells. The design has been attributed to the twenty-three

Figure 67: The Retort House in 2017 from the south-east, showing the extension of c 1913 (© Historic England, photograph by Johanna Roethe)

year old gas engineer Cecil Carrington Barber (1886-1966) of the Gas Department, as he presented a paper about the retort house in December 1909.[34] However, he was most likely part of a larger team. By 1911, Barber was the superintendent of the Adderley Street gasworks.[35] He was the son of George Hampton Barber (1859-1909), the secretary of the Gas Department.

Retort houses

As the building where gas is produced from coal, a retort house was the core component of all coal-gasworks from the 1800s until the late 20th century. Retort houses could be found in gasworks of all sizes, from small works on country house estates, in schools, hospitals, asylums, mills and other industrial buildings, to medium-sized village and town gasworks, and large ones in cities.

The key process taking place within a retort house was the heating of coal in a sealed vessel called a retort over a furnace known as a producer (Figures 61, 62). Coal would be heated for about eight to twelve hours. This released the gas which rose up the ascension pipe into the hydraulic main, leaving behind coke. The crude gas was then purified by various stages of cooling and washing, starting in the water-filled hydraulic main in the retort house. This purified gas, known as 'town gas', was stored in a gasholder. While both vertical and horizontal retorts had been developed as early as 1805, most early gasworks had horizontal retorts which were initially of cast iron and later of fireclay. They were overtaken by inclined,

vertical and continuous vertical retorts in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The first continuous vertical retorts – which had the advantage that they could be continuously loaded with coal – were used in the Bournemouth gasworks of 1906. However, horizontal retorts were not entirely eclipsed and in 1956 they still provided a quarter of the gas industry's capacity.[36] The retort house at Adderley Street was one of the last horizontal retort houses to be built in Birmingham. A further horizontal retort house was opened at Nechells in 1916 but all subsequent ones were vertical.[37]

The Monuments Protection Programme (MPP) Step 1 report on the gas industry provides an indication of the importance of surviving retort houses: 'Any surviving examples [are] important, particularly with surviving plant'.[38] While most retort houses are of interest for their historical and technological significance, some are also of architectural interest. The MPP report sums this up as follows:

> Retort house designs varied from very plain to the very ornate, in accommodating the change from early low-profile buildings housing horizontal retorts to later tall buildings for vertical retort technology, with many stations employing classical features. Early noted classical compositions included the Hoxton gasworks by Francis Edwards in 1823, Canon's Marsh gasworks in 1819 and the Kendal gasworks in 1825. The monumental Beckton works of 1869-70 by F. R. Evans and V. Wyatt and built by Sir John Aird, employed classical brick facades for its vertical retort houses, with terracotta detailing for the wall ventilation, the interiors using elliptical-arch iron roofs supported by cast iron columns.[39]

Two scheduled gasworks include retort houses: the town gasworks at Fakenham, Norfolk (opened 1846, since 1987 the Fakenham Museum of Gas & Local History); and the gas plant of 1860-90 at Shaw Lodge Mills, a textile mill in West Yorkshire. There are also eleven listed retort houses in England – most of which are listed at grade II. Some were part of estate gasworks such as those at Cliveden, Buckinghamshire, St Audries, Somerset (*c* 1855), Lockerley Hall, Hampshire, and Appleton, North Yorkshire.[40] Another listed building at Hazlewood House, Devon, might have been originally a folly or a retort house.[41] Mills were early users of gas lighting as a safer source of artificial light, and a small hand-fired gas retort house is included in the listing of Grove Mill in Kettleshulme, Cheshire, a candlewick mill with 18th-century origins (grade II*).[42] A rural example is the retort house of 1865 at Felton, Northumberland.[43] London's Metropolitan Water Board built in 1913 a retort house adjoining the King George Pumping Station at Enfield.[44]

Only three listed retort houses were part of large-scale commercial gasworks, comparable to that at Adderley Street. At Canon's Marsh in Bristol there are two early listed retort houses built for the Bristol and Clifton Oil Gas Company, of *c* 1823 and *c* 1840 respectively.[45] They are substantial two-storey structures built from Pennant rubble and have recently been converted to residential use. An earlier surviving retort house in Birmingham dating from 1822 (listed at grade II*) in Gas Street was designed for the Birmingham Gas Light and Coke Co. by its engineer Alexander Smith.[46] Externally a modest brick structure, it is particularly notable for its innovative roof combining cast-iron trusses with wrought-iron tie rods.

Unlike gasholders, retort houses could be converted to alternative uses once gas production had ceased, albeit at the cost of the retort benches inside which generally were removed. The remaining retort houses in Birmingham – at Adderley, Gas and Fazeley streets –all survive because they were utilised for new purposes.

Conclusion

The retort house at Adderley Street is a curious mixture of contemporary technology – like the steel frame and the use of electricity – and some relatively old-fashioned features, for example, the use of horizontal retorts and the historicising brick skin. After its completion in 1909, the retort house, like the gasworks as a whole, was continuously adapted to improve and update production processes. For example, a power plant backup was added, and the building extended to accommodate additional retorts. Since the closure of the gasworks, the building has been altered and extended for new uses. It is one of probably only three surviving retort houses in Birmingham.

Endnotes

1 Barber 1909, 727-8, 747-753; Anon. 1911, 304-5

2 National Grid Gas Archive, references G11_BRM_6692, G11_BRM_30029, WM/BIC/ADD/E/E/1

3 Griffiths 2004; Thomas 2014, A3

4 Foster 2005, 288

5 Williams and Donald 1993

6 Stephens (ed.) 1964, 352

7 Demidowicz 1993, 1; LUAU *c* 2002, unpaginated

8 BUFAU 1999, 59

9 Demidowicz 1993, 1

10 Greenslade (ed.) 1976, 49

11 Anon 1910, 1317, 1319

12 Thomas 2014, A23

13 Anon 1910, 1320-21

14 Horne 2009, 9

15 Birmingham Archives and Collections, BCC/1/AY/D/4/2/1/1/7, minutes of the 31st General Half-Yearly Meeting of Proprietors on 31 August 1841, unpaginated

16 Ibid, minutes of the 32nd General Half-Yearly Meeting of Proprietors on 22 February 1842, unpaginated; minutes of the 33rd General Half-Yearly Meeting of Proprietors on 30 August 1842, unpaginated

17 Anon 1911, 305

18 City of Birmingham Gas Department 1928, 9

19 Horne 2009, 6; City of Birmingham Gas Department 1928, 10

20 City of Birmingham Gas Department 1928, 3

21 Birmingham Archives and Collections, BBP index for 1909 (the plans do not survive)

22 Horne 2009, 5

23 Ibid

24 Ibid

25 Thomas 2014, A20

26 Barber 1909, 747-53

27 Barber 1910, 92

28 Anon 1911, 304; Birmingham Archives and Collections, BCC/1/AY/1/51, reports of the Gas Department's treasurer, 9 February 1911, 269

29 Birmingham Archives and Collections, BCC/1/AY/3/1/33, minutes of the Works Subcommittee of the Gas Department, 23 January 1913, 8 May 1913, 5 June 1913, 10 July 1913, unpaginated

30 City of Birmingham Gas Department 1928, 3

31 Ibid, p. 5; Barber 1909, 749

32 Birmingham City Council, planning application number 04827008

33 Birmingham City Council, planning application numbers 04827002, 04827004, 04827005, 04827006, 04827007 and 04827012

34 Horne 2009, 6

35 Anon 1911, 304

36 LUAU 1997, 10

37 Horne 2009, 9

38 LUAU 1997, 36

39 Ibid, 34

40 NHLE 1165558, 1176001, 1339153, 1318277

41 NHLE 1108119

42 NHLE 1138938

43 NHLE 1154552; LUAU *c* 2002, unpaginated

44 NHLE 1079455

45 NHLE 1372318, 1282270

46 Foster 2005, 156-7; NHLE 1234330

APPENDIX 6: THE NORTH-WEST CORNER OF DIGBETH

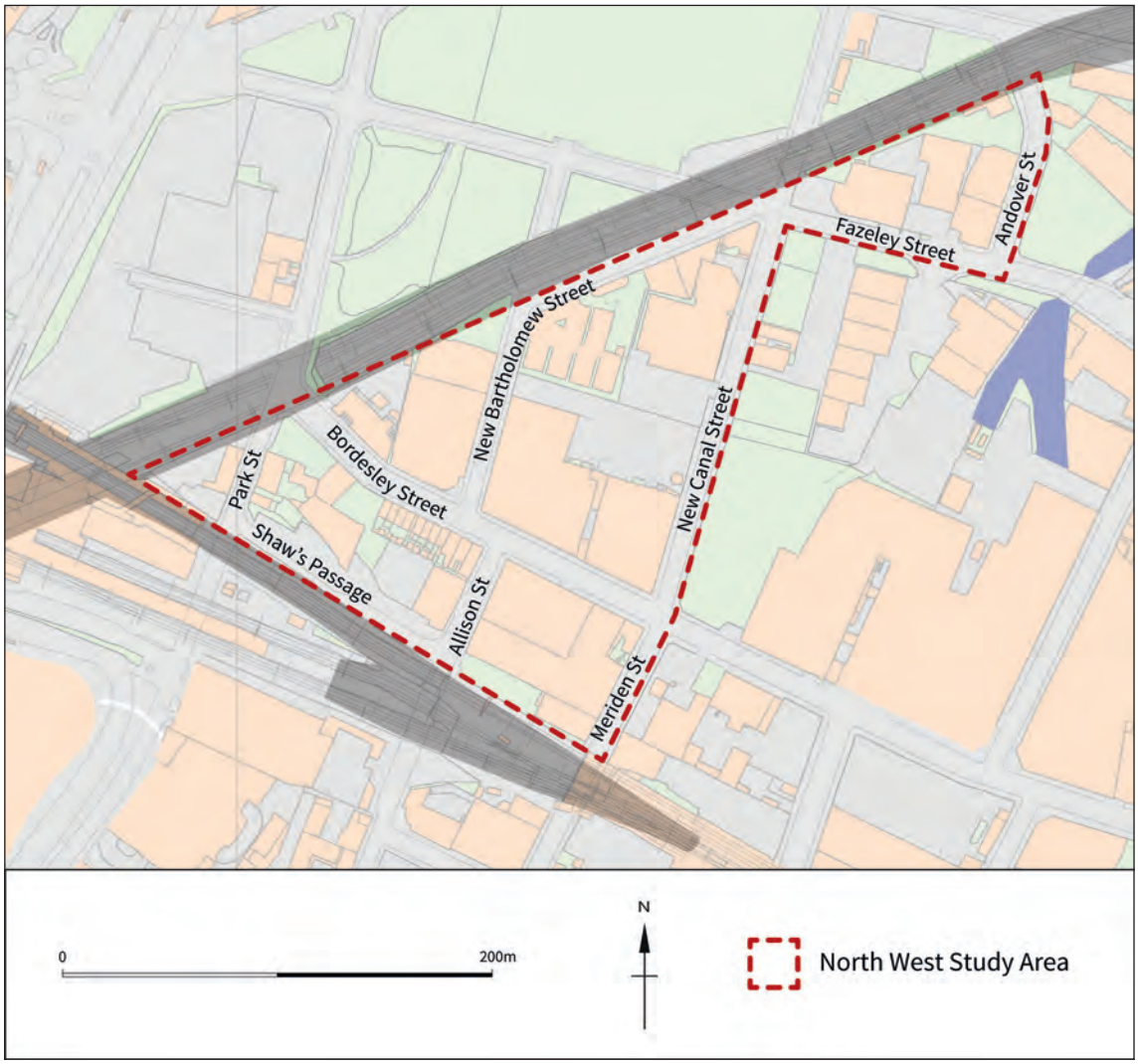


Figure 68: Map showing the north-west corner of Digbeth (derived from OS mapping © Crown copyright [and database rights] 2018 OS 100024900)

Introduction

The area is bounded by viaducts to the north-west and south-west, and Meriden Street, New Canal Street and Andover Street to the east (Figure 68). It includes the following streets (or parts thereof): Allison Street, Andover Street, Bordesley Street, Fazeley Street, Meriden Street, New Bartholomew Street, New Canal Street, Park Street and Shaw's Passage. This more detailed study is intended to inform responses to the likely development of the area prompted by the opening of the HS2 railway station just to the north.

Like the rest of Digbeth, this area has seen two major development phases: the main post-medieval development in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and the rebuilding after the Second World War. The current buildings primarily date from the inter- and post-war periods but several older buildings survive, principally in Bordesley Street.

Development of the area

Before the arrival of the railways

The area was on the eastern fringe of medieval Birmingham but relatively close to the markets which received a charter in 1166. Digbeth and its continuation (High Street Deritend) formed a major medieval thoroughfare lined with burgage plots; Park Street was probably a slightly later 'planned urban extension' by the de Birmingham family.[1] The southern end of Park Street (Little Park Street) – close to the markets – was the first to be developed. Until the mid-14th century, the area to the east of Park Street was part of the manorial deer park, known as the Little Park, bisected by the river Rea; around that date the Park was divided into meadowland.[2]

By the time of William Westley's map of 1731, there had been little further expansion, apart from the creation of a field road (labelled 'Lake Meadow Hill') running roughly west-east on the line of the current Bordesley Street. However, most of the area to the east of Park Street was still fields, gardens and orchards. By 1750, one of the formal gardens to the east of Park Street contained an oblong pool which had disappeared by the late 1770s.

In 1764, Sir Thomas Gooch, a Suffolk landowner, inherited lands in the former Little Park and an Act of Parliament of 1788 gave him the power to grant building leases. Five years earlier, an Act of Parliament had permitted the construction of the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal (joining the Birmingham Canal to the Coventry Canal), which included a branch to Digbeth (completed in 1790) which terminated at Bordesley Street Wharf. By 1784, Fazeley Street and Oxford Street had been laid out to provide access to the canal and its wharves. The Warwick and Birmingham Canal of 1799 followed, crossing the river Rea and joining the earlier canal north of Bordesley Street Wharf.

The cutting of the canals gave new impetus to the development of the area west of the Digbeth Branch Canal which was laid out and built up in the 1790s to 1810s. This included Bartholomew, Bordesley, (New) Canal, Andover and Banbury streets. Meriden Street first appeared in the levy book for 1810-13.[3] The new street grid was roughly parallel with and perpendicular to Digbeth but had little regard to the underlying field pattern. Nigel Baker has suggested that the slight difference in the character of the areas to the north and south of Bordesley Street might indicate two phases of development or two different developers.[4] As in most of Birmingham, residential development took the form of densely packed court housing and back-to-back houses (Figure 69). Some of them survived into the early 20th century, including on the north side of Bordesley Street and on the west side of New Bartholomew Street.

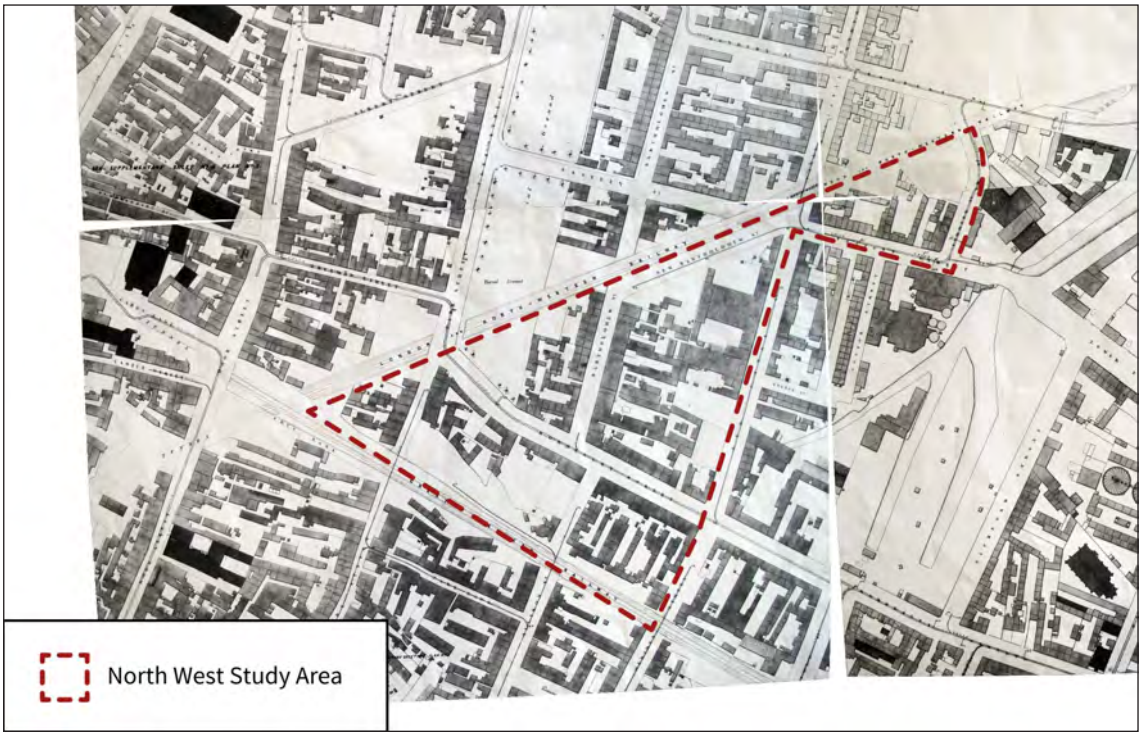


Figure 69: Detail of sheets 111, 112, 127 and 128 of Pigott Smith's Survey of Birmingham, 1850-55 (Birmingham Archives and Collections, reproduced with the permission of the Library of Birmingham)

The residential areas were interspersed with some larger-scale industrial works. By the end of the 18th century, there were two steam mills on the junction of Fazeley and Andover streets, and a large timber yard at the corner of Bordesley and (New) Canal streets.[5] By 1828, most development still clustered around the west ends of Bordesley and Fazeley streets.[6]

After 1837 to *c* 1900

The first railway lines in Birmingham opened in the 1830s: in 1837, the Grand Junction Railway connected Birmingham to Liverpool and Manchester, and the following year the London & Birmingham Railway connection to London Euston opened. Both lines terminated at Curzon Street station; the railway lines were carried over the canal on a viaduct, the first of several in the Digbeth area. The construction of a viaduct for the Great Western Railway Company (GWR) from Bordesley Station to a proposed junction near Curzon Street began in 1848 but remained unfinished due to disputes between railway companies (it is now known as the Duddeston Viaduct). Instead, the GWR built in 1852 a line to the new Snow Hill Station with a long viaduct to the north of, and parallel with, Digbeth/High Street Deritend. After 1854 – the year Curzon Street Station was closed to passenger traffic – a new viaduct brought the London & North Western Railway to New Street Station which opened that year.

These two viaducts of the 1850s dominate the north-western corner of Digbeth. A few streets of the late 18th and early 19th-century grid were slightly re-aligned to fit

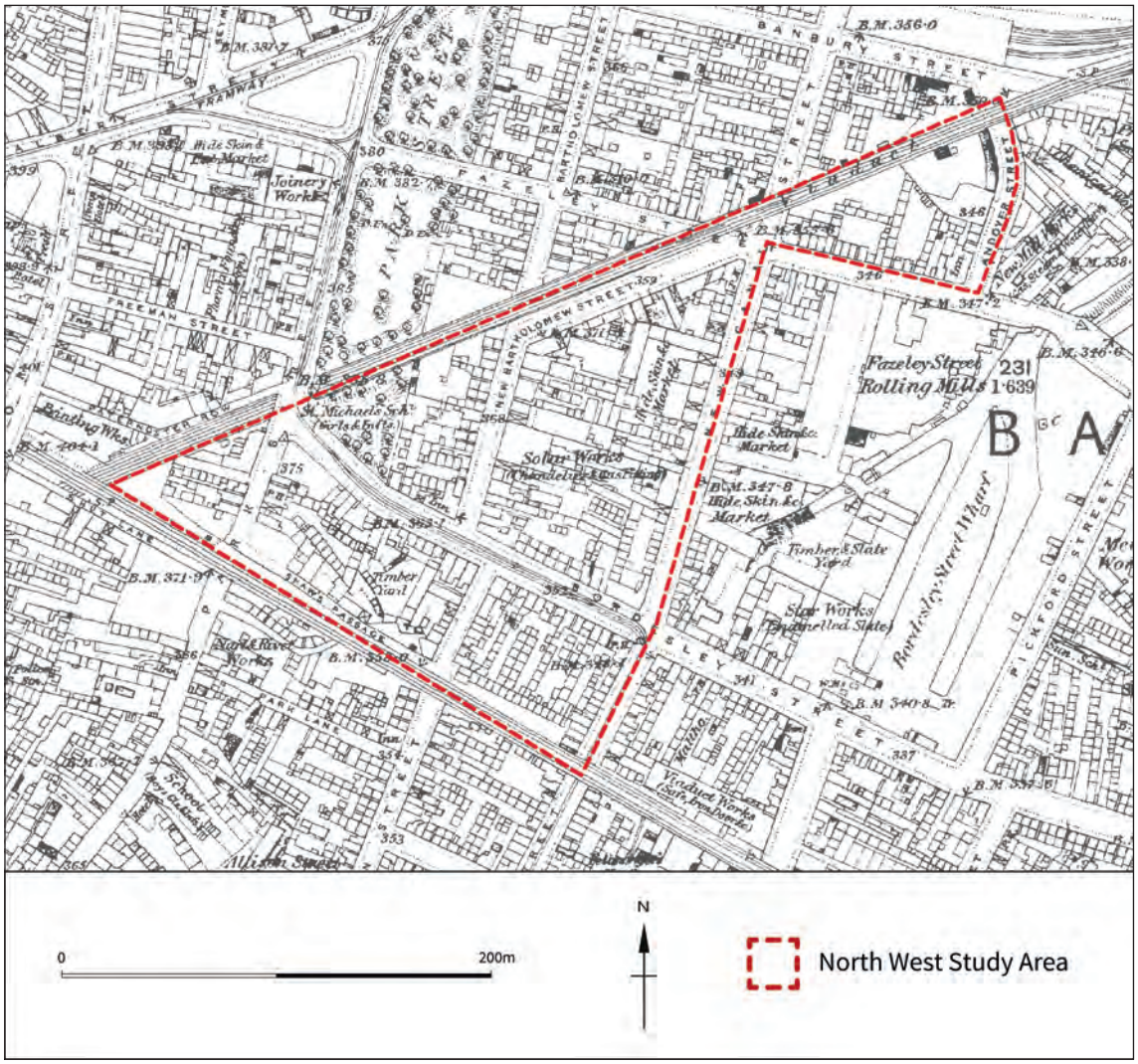


Figure 70: Detail of the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1890 (© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2018) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024)

in with them: Andover Street was curved to approach the northern viaduct at right angles; Bartholomew Street was bisected and its southern part – renamed New Bartholomew Street – was diverted to run parallel with the viaduct.

In the early to mid-19th century there were several private wells in Digbeth. In 1854, an artesian well was bored near Well Lane and Allison Street by a Mr Clark of Maida Hill in London. This produced 72,000 gallons of water daily which were sold for domestic use across Birmingham from 'a showily painted cart'.[7]

Infill development continued during the mid-19th century, and development to the east of the canals and river was complete by the end of the century. In around 1882, Shaw's Passage, a small lane leading to the premises of Henry Shaw, manufacturer of iron goods, was created.[8] By 1890, there were five public houses in the area, three of which survive: the Royal Oak at the corner of Andover/Fazeley streets, the Hope and Anchor at the corner of New Bartholomew and New Canal streets, and the Spotted

Dog at the corner of Meriden and Bordesley streets (see Appendix 7). In 1892, the Birmingham Home for Lost and Starving Dogs opened on the east side of New Canal Street, a site donated by Sir Alfred Gooch, Baronet.

In the second half of the 19th century, the transition from a mixed use to a predominantly industrial area gathered pace. In 1872, there was still a sufficiently large residential population in the area for the construction of St Michael's Roman Catholic School for infants and girls at the west end of Bordesley Street (Figure 70).[9]

By the end of the century, several large works had been established in the area, including the Solar Works in New Bartholomew Street, and a timber yard south of Bordesley Street. There were also several markets, probably established here as overspill from the Smithfield cattle market: several hide, skin, fat and wool markets on both sides of New Canal Street, and a short-lived pig market on the south side of Bordesley Street which was built in 1891 but by 1897 had been converted to other uses. Initially, these large 19th-century buildings replaced other industrial sites, filled gap sites or rear yards. But increasingly they also encroached on residential buildings. In 1890, the street block bounded by the railway to the south, Allison Street to the west, Bordesley Street to the north and Meriden Street to the east was still entirely residential, with back-to-backs along the street frontages and in courtyards to the rear (Figure 70). By 1905, nearly the entire site had been redeveloped with the pig market and other large-scale buildings. In general, by the turn of the century, only a small number of small-scale residential courts and back-to-backs remained, notably north of Bordesley Street and west of New Bartholomew Street.

1900 to 1939

In July 1909 a temporary railway station was opened at Moor Street, followed in 1911-16 by a permanent station with goods sheds, which opened to passengers in 1914.[10] The new station necessitated the widening of the 1852 viaduct by extending it to the north and south.

During the inter-war years, several further large works were built as businesses expanded. These included the Solar Works which between 1890 and 1937 expanded from their premises in New Bartholomew Street to new buildings along Bordesley Street which replaced some of the last remaining back-to-backs. The rise of the motorcar also had some impact on the area during the inter-war period. A garage was established south of Bordesley Street and by 1939 there was a petrol pump at the corner of Bordesley St with Meriden Street.[11]

1939 to present

A composite air raid map shows that at least three high explosive bombs and four incendiaries fell on this area during the Second World War.[12] In addition, several bombs nearby would also have caused significant damage. One of the destroyed buildings was St Michael's Roman Catholic school in Bordesley Street; the school subsequently moved to Floodgate Street Council School which had closed in 1940.[13]

Figure 71: Detail of the 1947 Land Use map. Key: pink/purple - industrial, brown - residential, yellow - vacant land, red - public building/education, grey – transport, blue – commercial, green – leisure/open space (Birmingham Archives and Collections, reference: ACC 2010/050: Birmingham City Council land use plans 1946 – 1947, sheet Warks XIV.5, reproduced with the permission of the Library of Birmingham)

After the Second World War, planning policy accelerated the trend of business and industrial use. The Land Use map of 1947 shows predominantly industrial uses, with only small pockets of residential, two pubs, and several gap sites (Figure 71). The 1952 Development Plan for Birmingham further inscribed this use in planning policy. Its accompanying maps have not survived but are likely to be similar to the 1960 versions. The 1960 town map shows the area between the two 1850s viaducts west of New Canal Street as designated primarily for business use (Ba), New Canal Street as a principal traffic road (R) and the area to the east of it as primarily for industrial use (In) (Figure 72). This designation appears to have accelerated the displacement or conversion of most of the remaining residential properties by industrial buildings. Nos. 1-10 Bordesley Street are rare surviving houses in the area.

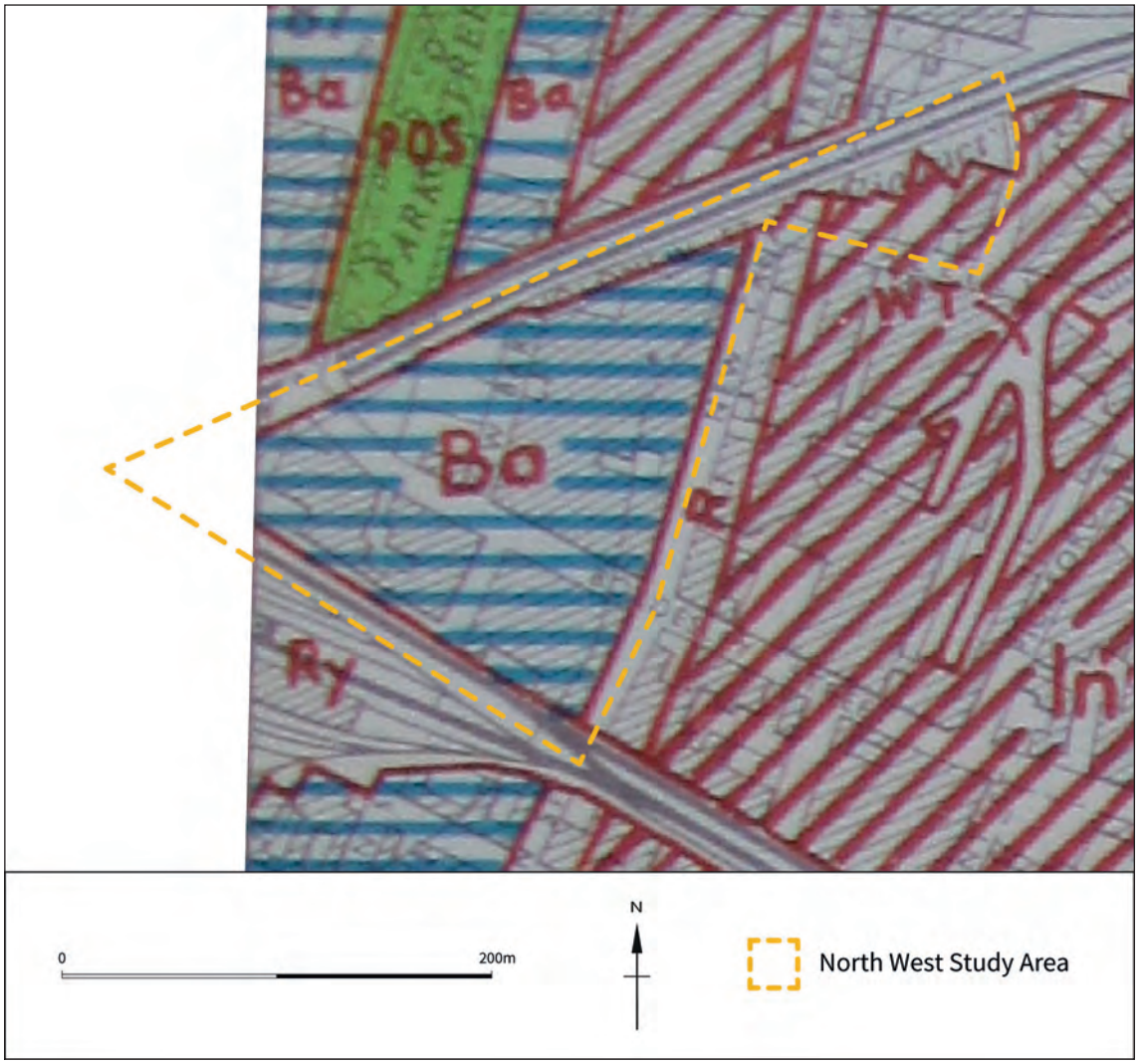


Figure 72: Detail of sheet 23 of the town map from the 1960 Development Plan (Birmingham Archives and Collections, LF87.BIR, reproduced with the permission of the Library of Birmingham)

Since the immediate post-war period, there have been only ad hoc developments. The dogs' home moved in the 1980s to a new building in New Bartholomew Street. Although locally listed, their old buildings in New Canal Street burned down in 2014 and the site is now a car park. The new buildings in turn have recently been closed as the home moved to a new site. The three former pubs in the area have all ceased to operate as such.

As elsewhere in Digbeth, older buildings have been converted to new uses by small companies, for example the cycle repair shop and café in Allison Street. Digbeth Hall, an Asian wedding venue, occupies several light industrial buildings.

Gazetteer of current buildings

The following gazetteer has been compiled using only readily available sources, including historic maps (Ordnance Survey (OS), Goad fire insurance plans, Pigott Smith of 1850-55, and pre-1890 maps on Birmingham Council's Local View website), historic photos from Birmingham Archives and Collections, and historic Post Office Directories (POD). Unless otherwise stated, dates are derived from the OS map sequence.

Allison Street (west side)

Warehouse Café
A three-bay, two-storey brick house built during the 19th century, possibly before 1850-55. Of single-pile plan under a gabled roof which is parallel with the street, with chimney stacks on the gable walls.

Natural Healthy Foods
A much altered two-bay and two-storey brick building with a flat roof, built between *c* 1855 and *c* 1887. The OS town plan of the 1880s shows a covered arch to a small yard behind. The two ground-floor openings share a lintel and may have been one large opening at some stage. The northern opening now has a roller shutter, the other has been blocked to form a shop front. The first floor was added probably in the post-war period.

Sprocket Cycles
A two-storey, single-bay gabled brick building of a deep, oblong plan, extending behind 8a-10 Bordesley Street. It was built between *c* 1855 and *c* 1887.

Rear extension to 10 Bordesley Street
A two-storey, flat-roofed extension which was built between 1927 and 1937.

Allison Street (east side)

The side elevation of the former pig market of 1891-2 in Bordesley Street (*qv*)

Andover Street (west side)

11 Andover Street
Three buildings under pitched roofs with gabled brick frontages. The southernmost gable has a screen wall painted to match the adjacent former pub and may have been used in conjunction with it. The two northern gabled blocks are of similar detailing and were built in 1930 for Venn & McPherson, transport contractors. In 1928 and 1933, Metal Ltd, stampers, were on the site. By 1963 the buildings were a garage. They are now used by Cambridge Car & Commercials Ltd.

82 Fazeley Street/1 Andover Street: see under Fazeley Street

Figure 73: Former Solar Works building of 1919, now Latifs, at the corner of New Bartholomew and Bordesley streets (DP195906)

Bordesley Street (north side)

Polish Millennium House
A flat-roofed modern brick building with a modern sculpture of the Madonna and child over the entrance. It was built in the 1960s for the Polish Catholic Association, on the site of the southernmost part of the former Park Street Burial Ground, which had been laid out as overspill for St Martin's cemetery. In 1967, a store room was added by the engineer S. Polyuan, who also extended the dining room the following year; the latter may be the current Polish restaurant.[14] Later in 1968, the architect J.H. Hadfield added a furniture store, and J.M. Chambers added a boiler house.[15]

44 Bordesley Street
A two-storey, flat-roofed brick building with a canted corner. It dates from after 1971. It was built on the site of St Michael's RC Schools (bombed) and The Mogul P.H.

Former Solar Works, now Latifs (incl. 108-109 Bordesley Street)
The buildings – collectively known as the 'Solar Works' – were the factory of Smith & Chamberlain, makers of chandeliers and gas fittings, and later of Chamberlain & Hookham, makers of electrical meters and fittings. There are several brick blocks built in different styles and at different dates: At the west is the return elevation of a three-storey red brick block in New Bartholomew Street, with wall strips between

Figure 74: 1a Bordesley Street (DP219827)

bays of steel windows and, mostly towards Bordesley Street, sparing Arts & Crafts detailing of tile and brick (Figure 73). This corner block dates from 1913 and 1919 and was designed by Arthur McKewan.[16] It has a decorative entrance labelled 'offices' in New Bartholomew Street. Just to the east is a slightly lower two-bay block, with windows under giant shallow arches. Further east on Bordesley Street is a two-storey, six-bay brick block – also said to be of 1913 – with arched first-floor windows and a chequerwork parapet. At the corner with New Canal Street is a six-bay, three-storey block of 1927 with large horizontal windows between brick piers. The western bay is taller with a segmental pediment. Several ground-floor bays of the centre and east blocks are now roller-shuttered. The buildings are locally listed.

Bordesley Street (south side)

1a Bordesley Street
This is a three-bay, single-storey inter-war building which was built as a garage between 1928 and 1933 (Figure 74). In the 1933 POD it is listed as 'Simpson's Garage'. The frontispiece to the street hides a building of roughly U-plan with monopitch roofs sloping down to a central flat roof with skylights. The central arch is flanked by square fluted pillars with ball finials. The left bay has a stepped parapet which hides a monopitch roof sloping down towards the central area. The

Figure 75: 1-8 Bordesley Street (DP219831)

right bay probably was originally similar but has lost its stepped parapet although the monopitch roof behind survives, albeit set further back. The part-glazed timber doors to the left of the arch are a later insertion and there are remains of the blind arches which mirror those in the right bay.

1-8 Bordesley Street
Eight three-storey terraced houses of brick (Figure 75). All of them have two narrow windows beside the entrance door but the fenestration on the upper floors varies between one and two windows per floor. Between numbers 4 and 5 is an arch, probably leading to a rear yard. Blue brick courses above the lower two floors follow the curves of the window heads; the elevations also have a base of blue brick. All eight have a decorative cornice and stepped keystones to the windows. Some of the plots were built up by 1850-55 but the current eight houses date from 1895.[17] Several houses retain original sash windows. All are locally listed.

8a-10 Bordesley Street
Three tall terraced houses of three storeys and attic with large gabled dormers (Figure 76). They have shop fronts on the ground floor and oriels on the first. All three houses share the same pitched roof. The gabled elevation to Allison Street has another door, a small shop window, and a window each on the upper floors. The plots had been built up by 1850-55 and the current houses were built in 1882-4, to a design by Jethro A. Cossins. Andy Foster has described them as 'very progressive for [their] date and deeply influenced by Philip Webb'.[18] They are locally listed.

The former pig market (including number 18)
This is a three-gabled brick building of 1891-2 by Owen & Ward (Figure 77). It was extended in 1898-1900. According to the conservation area appraisal, this was a short-lived pig market, which was out of use by 1897.[19] The main elevation to Bordesley Street is finely detailed, with brick pilasters, brick moulded cornices and circular windows in the gables. It also has a foundation stone with the inscription: 'This stone was laid by Joseph Horton Esq February 16th 1892'. The side elevations are more functional and have been altered, although a large arch in Allison Street

Figure 76: 8a-10 Bordesley Street (DP219834)

is flanked by brick pilasters. The building replaced back-to-back houses on the site which are shown on Pigott Smith's 1850-55 map. After it ceased to be used as a pig market, it was used by the Showells Brewery Co. Ltd. as bottling stores (by 1904), the Birmingham Syphon Co. Ltd, mineral water manufacturers (by 1912), J. & W. Witham & Co. Ltd, wine and spirit merchants (by 1928), and Pattinson and Co Ltd, confectioners (by 1933). In 1952 the building still housed a bakery and mineral water works; the OS maps of 1963 and 1971 just label the building 'bakery and works'. The building is locally listed.

Suki10c/former Spotted Dog P.H.: see detailed assessment in Appendix 7

Figure 77: The former pig market of 1891-2, seen from the north-west (DP219836)

Fazeley Street (north side)

70 Fazeley Street
A two-storey, flat-roofed warehouse of pale brown brick with rendered areas. Door and windows to the corner. It was built between 1952 and 1963 and is labelled 'depot' on OS maps.

Warehouse between nos. 70 and 82
A warehouse built between 1952 and 1963 with a later extension to the rear (north).

82 Fazeley Street (the former Royal Oak P.H.)
A pub called the Royal Oak existed on this site by 1841. The stylistic dating of the current building (e.g. the window architraves) suggests a mid-19th century date. Pigott Smith's map of 1850-55 shows a corner building with a very short return elevation to Fazeley Street which suggests that the pub was rebuilt or extended between *c* 1855 and 1890. The three-storey building is now heavily covered by black and white graffiti (Figure 78).

Meriden Street (west side)

Building to the north of viaduct
A two-storey light-industrial building built between 1937 and 1952. The front building has a flat roof; the rear is of a single storey under a pitched roof.

Figure 78: 82 Fazeley Street, the former Royal Oak pub, seen from the south-east (DP219852)

5 Meriden Street
This three-storey building appears to have been built at the same time as the former pig market of 1891-2 (see Bordesley Street). By 1904, it was the Birmingham Syphon Co. Ltd, mineral water manufacturers, who were still on the site in 1928. Until 1937, the block to Meriden Street is shown as two separate buildings on the OS map.

Suki10c/former Spotted Dog P.H.: see detailed assessment in Appendix 7

New Bartholomew Street (west side)

42 New Bartholomew Street: see 44 Bordesley Street

Warehouse to north of no. 42
A two-storey red brick warehouse, possibly dating from after 1971.

New Bartholomew Street (east side)

Latifs/former Solar Works: see Bordesley Street

The former Birmingham Dogs' Home
This is a former industrial building with kennels to the rear. It was opened in 1987

Figure 79: 15-17 New Bartholomew Street (DP196489)

by the Duchess of York and closed in *c* 2015 when the dogs' home moved to Solihull. The 1987 building was the successor to the 1892 Birmingham Home for Lost and Starving Dogs at 17 and 18 New Canal Street (destroyed by fire in 2014).

Narrow lean-to shed to north-east of the former dogs' home
Probably of post-war date, formerly part of the dogs' home

10 New Bartholomew Street
A two-storey brick building, built in *c* 1999 as the assessment centre and warden's flat for the Dogs' Home. The architects were Temple, Cox, Nicholls of Birmingham.[20]

15-17 New Bartholomew Street
A group of originally two or three Victorian industrial buildings built, according to the conservation area appraisal, in 1867/8 and 1898 (Figure 79). The three bays to the south have slightly different detailing. The northern three bays have fine tiled arches to a window and door on the ground floor. The street elevation of the northern two-thirds has a faded painted inscription 'W.R. Parker [...] Sheet Metal Worker, established 1921'. In the 1880s the site was a 'paper box & shade factory'. Number 16 and 17 were still used for that purpose in 1933 when A. Platt & Co, cardboard

Figure 80: 101 New Canal Street, the former Hope & Anchor pub, seen from the north-east (DP2198559)

box manufacturers, occupied the site. However, in 1952, the buildings were labelled 'Metal Works' on maps. The buildings are locally listed.

18 New Bartholomew Street
A two-storey, three-bay brick house. It may have been built by 1890. It continues the dentil cornice of the adjacent pub and may have been built in conjunction with it.

The former Hope & Anchor P.H.: see 101 New Canal Street

New Canal Street (west side)

101 New Canal Street (the former Hope & Anchor P.H.)
A pub of that name was on the site by 1841; it may have been rebuilt after the re-routing of New Bartholomew St in 1850s. The 1850-55 Pigott Smith map shows the current footprint but the current two-storey corner building (Figure 80) with terracotta dressings and Ionic keystones dates from 1906. It was designed by James and Lister Lea, the prolific local pub architects, who also designed the slightly earlier Eagle & Tun on the corner of Banbury Street and New Canal Street.[21] It is locally listed.

Figure 81: 27 Park Street from the north-west (DP219825)

111-115 New Canal Street (northern part of Digbeth Hall)
A two-storey flat-roofed building of red brick with black brick detailing. It was built in *c* 1991 as an extension to a retail warehouse; it is now an Asian wedding venue.[22]

117 New Canal Street (southern part of Digbeth Hall)
A two-storey red brick post-war industrial building. By 1952, this was used as 'radiator works'. Since *c* 2011 it has been an Asian wedding venue.[23]

Side elevation of Latifs/former Solar Works: see Bordesley Street

Park Street (west side)

88-90 Park Street
A two-storey, five-bay concrete-framed building. It was probably built between 1927 and 1937, and by 1943 was used as a button warehouse.

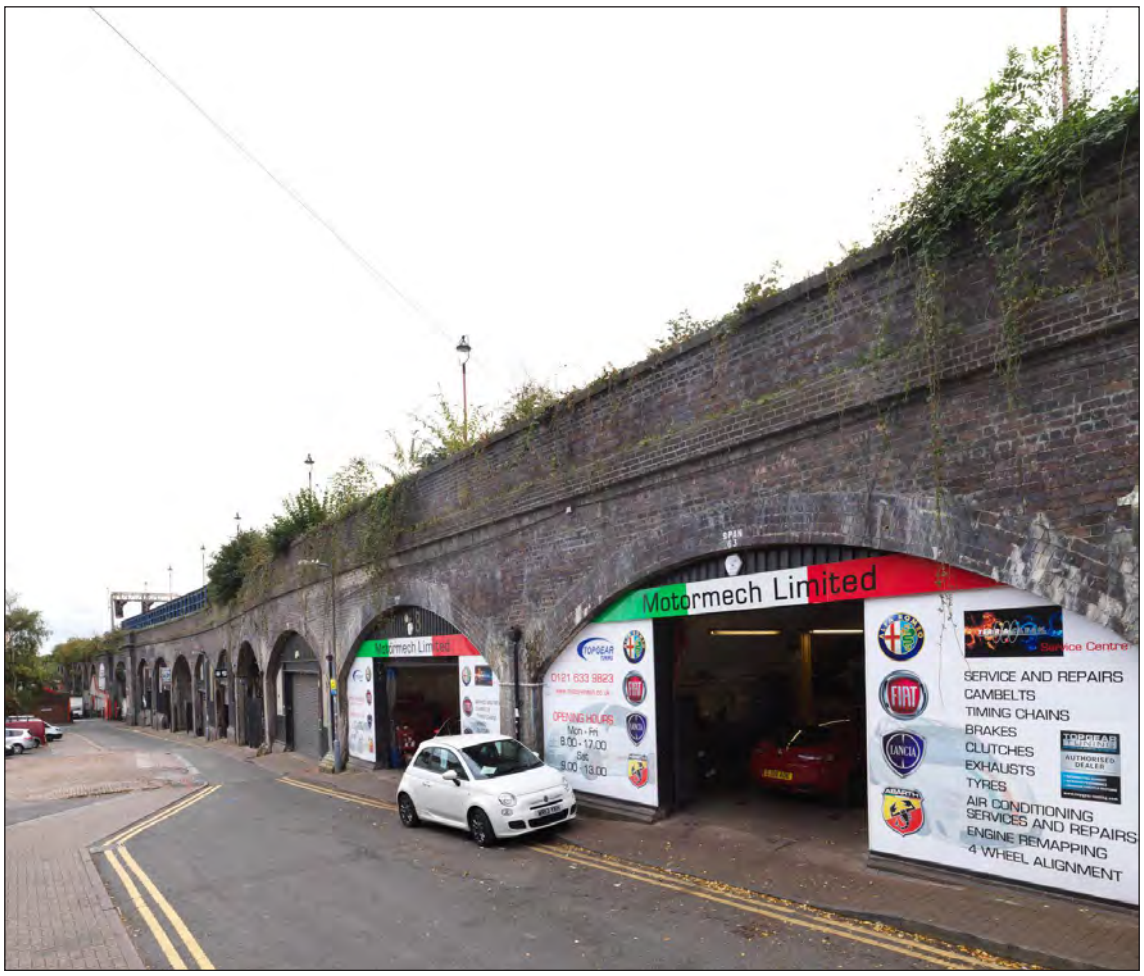


Figure 82: Shaw's Passage and the viaduct arches, seen from Park Street (DP219826)

Park Street (east side)

27 Park Street (Park St Tattoo)
A one-bay, three-storey brick house (Figure 81) built in the second half of the 19th century (between 1850-55 and 1885-87). In the 1928 POD it is listed as Purit Specialities Ltd, manufacturing electrical engineers. The street elevation has a well-detailed cornice of brick. The ground floor has now a roller-shuttered modern shop front, and the first-floor window opening has been remodelled. To the north is a roller-shuttered, single-storey extension. The south elevation appears to have been refaced or rebuilt in red brick.

29 Park Street
A two-storey, gabled red brick building, which possibly dates from the 1980s.

Shaw's Passage (north side)

Rear extension of 52-57 Allison Street
A red brick two-storey building with a circular window in the asymmetrical gable. It was built between 1890 and 1905.

Former works (behind 1a Bordesley Street)
This is an infill development built between 1952 and 1963 which replaced the former 'Cumberland Works'. Only a blind elevation (covered in graffiti) is visible from Shaw's Passage.

Shaw's Passage (south side)

Railway viaduct
The viaduct was built in 1852 by the GWR, terminating at the new Snow Hill Station. In the early twentieth century, it was widened for the new Moor Street Station by means of an extension on both sides. Moor Street Station opened in July 1909 with temporary station buildings, which were replaced in 1911-16 by a permanent station with good sheds.

Viaduct arches
By 1889, there were a number of uses in the viaduct arches, including stables, piggeries, and stores for vans, hardware and empties. In 1937, uses included several banana rooms, one garage, one wash house, a ladder store and a room used by an electrician. Today, the arches' eclectic uses include storage, car repairs (including a garage for Italian car brands only, a remnant of Digbeth's former Italian quarter), a burger restaurant, and an internet and gaming café (Figure 82). The visible infill is all modern.

Endnotes

1 BUFAU 1999, 13

2 BCC 2009, 10

3 Birmingham Archives and Collections, microfilm RB9

4 BUFAU 1999, 15

5 The steam mills are shown on Charles Pye's *Plan of Birmingham surveyed in the year 1795*. BCC 2008, 11

6 Bodleian Library, Oxford, C17:70 Birmingham d.3, Pigott Smith's 1828 map

7 Undated article from *Birmingham Weekly Post*, quoted in Williams 1990, 17-18

8 BCC 2009, 13

9 Stephens 1964, 534

10 Christiansen 1973, 77; Stephens 1964, 42; NHLE, list entry for Old Moor Street Station, number 1375972

11 Birmingham Archives and Collections, index entry for BBP73162

12 Birmingham Archives and Collections, LF75.82, bomb damage map

13 Stephens 1964, 534

14 Birmingham Archives and Collections, BBP173553, BBP180158

15 Birmingham Archives and Collections, BBP1814960, BBP 182220

16 BCC 2008, 16; Foster 2005, 181

17 BCC 2009, 16

18 Foster 2005, 181

19 BCC 2009, 14

20 Birmingham City Council, online planning records, application number 1999/04331/PA

21 BCC 2008, 17; Foster 2005, 189

22 Birmingham City Council, online planning records, application number 1991/00349/PA

23 Birmingham City Council, online planning records, application number 2011/08492/PA

APPENDIX 7: THE FORMER SPOTTED DOG PUBLIC HOUSE (NOW SUKI10C)

Address: 21 Bordesley Street/1 Meriden Street, Digbeth, Birmingham

NGR: SP0767786712

Figure 83: The former Spotted Dog pub, seen from the north-east (DP219838)

Introduction

The former Spotted Dog pub appears to date from *c* 1810 and was purpose-built as a pub or brew house (Figure 83). It may have been altered in 1830 when its valuation in the levy books more than doubled. The building faces the corner of Bordesley Street to the north-east and Meriden Street to the south-east. It is locally listed and located in the Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley High Streets Conservation Area. It is now used as a nightclub under the name 'suki10c'.

Historically, the Spotted Dog pub was numbered as 1 Meriden Street and appears under that street in levy books, ratebooks, the Census and Post Office Directories until at least the early 20th century. It is now generally numbered as part of Bordesley Street.

The materials are rendered brick with a slate roof and the plan is L-shaped. The pub is of two storeys with an attic under a hipped roof. The elevation to Bordesley Street is two bays wide, that to Meriden Street of three bays. The ground floor has a later shop front with one door to Bordesley Street and two to Meriden Street. The attic has 3 over 3-sash windows which might be the original window frames. Some of the first-floor windows are plate-glass sashes with horns and margin lights, under

flat arches of voussoirs and projecting keystones. There are three chimney stacks: one on the south party wall, and two at the north-west. The street elevations of the pub are painted black and covered with graffiti (including several women's faces and predominantly pink, blue and green colours) and large lettering. On the Meriden Street elevation are applied silver letters, spelling out 'suki10c'. The interior has not been inspected. There is a single-storey brick structure with a door and window with segmental brick arches to the west, which appears to be an ancillary building. To the south in Meriden Street is a plain brick wall and back yard entrance.

History

This area of Digbeth was developed in the late 18th century after an Act of Parliament permitted in 1783 the construction of the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal; the branch to Digbeth opened in 1790. Another Act of Parliament of 1788 gave Sir Thomas Gooch, the main landowner, the power to grant building leases. From *c* 1790, a street grid began to be laid out which was roughly parallel with Digbeth High Street.

Meriden Street first appears in the levy book for 1810-13, in which its name was initially misspelled 'Meridian Street' and later crossed out and corrected. It is probably named after the village Meriden, which is now in the borough of Solihull, West Midlands. The previous levy book dated from 1809-10, which suggests that the street was laid out and developed in around 1810. According to the 1810-13 levy book, several front and back houses were then still under construction but the corner building – the later number 1 Meriden Street – was already occupied by Mr Barnes, the publican, and its average value was £12. The next levy book for 1813-16 provides further details: Samuel Barnes was the occupier and the owner was a Mr Whittingham. The building was described as 'house, w [warehouse?] and BH [brew house]' and its average value was £15 10s, much higher than the adjoining houses. Over the next twenty years, the average value fluctuated slightly as assessments were revised and adjusted between rating periods and the description changed to 'Ho: [house] Bw Ho [brew house]'. Owner and publican remained the same until at least 1833. On 7 December 1830, the average value of the building increased steeply from £10 6s 8d to £24. As the value of the neighbouring houses was not adjusted, this might indicate some improvement, extension or rebuilding work.[1]

According to a directory for 1839, the publican was John Johnson at that time; the entry is also the earliest known appearance of the pub's name, The Spotted Dog, in a directory. By 1841, the pub was run by Joseph Knowles who stayed until at least 1843. At the time of the 1841 Census, he lived there with his wife and two sons. In 1843, the ratebook described the property as 'P[ublic] ho[use] Sta[bles] and gn [garden]'. By 1850-55, when John Pigott Smith surveyed the area for his *Survey of Birmingham*, the building's plan was L-shaped, similar to its current footprint (Figure 84).

By 1850 until *c* 1854, Thomas White was the publican. He was succeeded by Thomas Reeves (by 1867 until at least 1883). On Census day in 1871, Reeves lived there with his wife, nine children and one servant. Ten years later, at the time of

Figure 84: Detail from sheet 127 of Pigott Smith's Survey of Birmingham, 1850-55 (Birmingham Archives and Collections, reproduced with the permission of the Library of Birmingham)

the 1881 Census, Reeves was a widower and lived there with three daughters and two sons. The eldest daughter, Caroline, was at the age of 19 a licensed victualler (a person licensed to sell alcohol) like her father. Also listed in 1881 is 1B Meriden Street, which was occupied by James Payne, a labourer, his wife, six children and one servant; it suggests that number 1 may have been subdivided in some way to create another dwelling or that an extension had been built next to it. Number 1B does not appear again after the 1891 Census.

By 1891, Ellen O'Hare was the publican. She was a widow and lived there with her two daughters and her widowed sister, Elizabeth Jenkins, who is described as 'assistant publican'.[2] 1B Meriden Street was occupied in 1891 by Thomas Brown, a brush manufacturer, his wife and two daughters. In 1888-92, Tom Bird was listed in the directories as the publican of the Spotted Dog but it is not clear if he lived on site as in 1888 he was also responsible for a second pub, the Lion at 21 Lawley Street.[3] By 1900, he had been succeeded by Thomas Edkins and by 1904 by William Ashton. On Census day in 1911, Ashton lived there with his wife and four sons. The building was described as having ten rooms which included the kitchen but excluded

the scullery, landing, lobby, closet, and bathroom. By 1915 Samuel George Messenger was the publican who stayed until at least 1940.

In the 1900s, directories also briefly list number 21 Bordesley Street as a separate address which might relate to the separate use of the upper floors or part of the ground floor. In 1904, Ernest Vickers, a painter, is listed there and in 1912 Frederick Buxton, a butcher.

In *c* 1985, the Spotted Dog was run by the brewery Mitchells & Butler (founded in 1898); by *c* 1992, the owner was the Centric Pub Company and later Bass Inns.[4] In 1992, planning permission was granted for the upgrading of toilets, the erection of a covered yard and internal alterations.[5] The building was to let in *c* 2010 and has since become a nightclub called 'suki10c' ('suck it and see').

Context and significance

The former Spotted Dog pub appears to date from the first phase of development in the Meriden Street area, making it a rare survival of that period in the history of Digbeth. Dr Nigel Baker has stated that:

> The Spotted Dog Public House on the Bordesley Street/ Meriden Street Corner appears to be of late 18th-century date, possibly *c* 1790-1810. If this is indeed the case, it would appear to be a first generation building, constructed perhaps within a decade of the development of this part of the street grid. It may be the sole architectural survivor of this major episode of late-18th-century town planning.[6]

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the levy books and stylistic analysis, it seems likely that the building dates from *c* 1810. It may have been remodelled or extended in 1830. The ground-floor shopfront is of a later date, possibly the early twentieth century. An internal inspection might be able to clarify the construction date and the sequence of later alterations.

The former Spotted Dog pub is the earliest of numerous pubs in Digbeth, serving the needs of the area's workers and thus closely related to the manufacturing history of Digbeth and Birmingham in general. Located typically on street corners, a number of the historic pubs in Digbeth are now closed, like the former Royal Oak in Fazeley Street and the former Hope & Anchor in New Canal Street. However, they represent an important survival of Digbeth's social and architectural history.

Endnotes

1 Birmingham Archives and Collections, microfilm RB12, levy book for 1827-33

2 Census for 1891

3 Post Office Directory for 1888

4 Birmingham City Council, planning database, applications for changes to signage in 1985 and 1992

5 Birmingham City Council, planning database, application number 1992/02541/PA

6 BUFAU 1999, 15

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