



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

**Archaeological building recording at
65 Sartoris Road, Rushden
Northamptonshire
June 2014**

**on behalf of
Bassetform Ltd**

**Archaeological building recording at
65 Sartoris Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire**

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Summary

A house, latterly used as offices, and adjoining single-storey, north-light, four-bay factory are to be demolished in advance of development. Building recording of the house to English Heritage Level II standards was undertaken to satisfy a condition applied to the planning permission. The house was built prior to 1899 and probably in 1895 and the adjoining factory was added in two phases during the early 20th century. The house and factory appear to have been associated with the boot and shoe industry of Rushden from their construction; for most of that period part of WW Chamberlain & Sons, leather dressers and heel manufacturers.

Introduction

Archaeological building recording was undertaken on buildings associated with a former boot and shoe factory at 65 Sartoris Road, Rushden prior to demolition (NGR: SP 949 669; Fig 1). The buildings comprised a two-storey house, latterly used as offices with north-light factory buildings to the rear and side. The house was subject to Level II recording in line with English Heritage guidelines (EH 2006).

The project was commissioned by Bassetform Ltd and carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by IS Heritage (2014) and a brief prepared by the Assistant Archaeological Advisor for Northamptonshire County Council (Mordue 2014).

The buildings associated with the former boot and shoe factory are due to be demolished and four terraced houses constructed (Planning application: 12/01480/FUL).

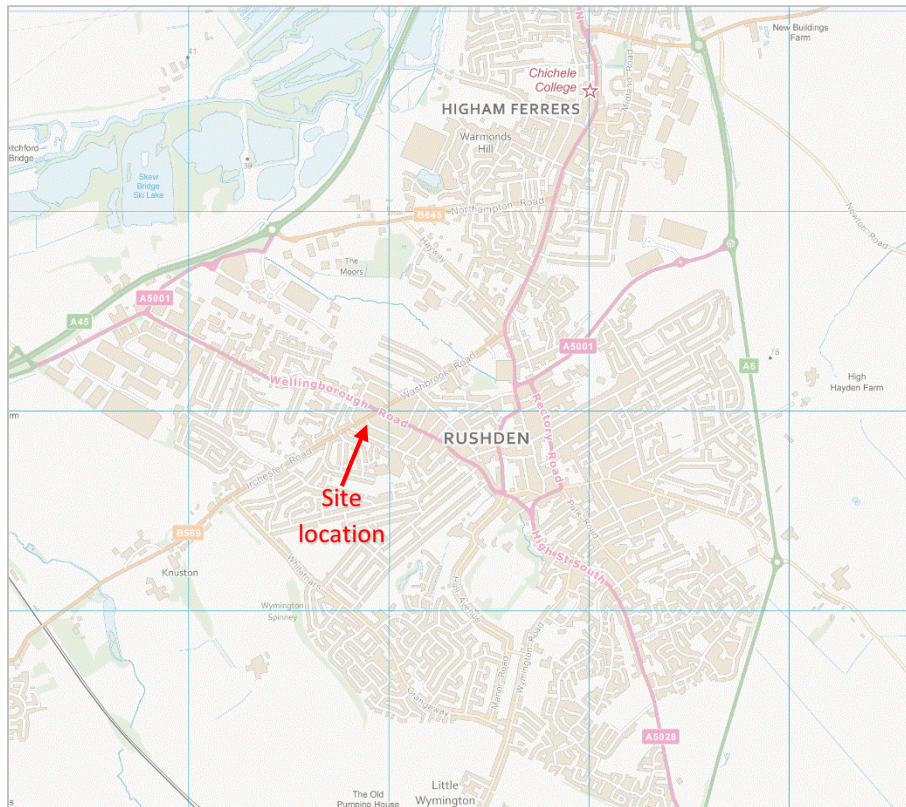


Fig 1: Site location. Contains Ordnance Survey data ©Crown Copyright and database right, 2014.

Historical background

Rushden had been, at the beginning of the 19th century, a mid-sized agricultural village that was considered as an ‘appendage’ of Higham Ferrers as late as 1854 (Ballinger 2000). It underwent a process of rapid industrialisation, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which was in the main associated with the growth of the boot and shoe industry. The town was virtually rebuilt during this period with only a small number of pre-19th century buildings still surviving.

The main reason for the specific growth of Rushden, rather than similar settlements in the same area has been credited to the many small landholders in the parish, which allowed for piecemeal development and no large landholders to block it (Ballinger 2000). Certainly, communications in Rushden, were no better than in many other places.

The factory at Sartoris Road was previously surveyed as part of English Heritage’s Rapid Survey of buildings associated with the county’s boot and shoe industry (Rushden Site 6).

Late 19th-century mapping of the area shows that this part of Rushden was, as yet, mostly undeveloped. There were small numbers of terraced houses along the Wellingborough and Irchester Roads and the Oakley public house was already present at the junction of the two.

Only fifteen years later the second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1900 illustrates that rapid period of growth that the settlement underwent in the late 19th century, with a whole system of streets laid out and almost entirely developed. A detached house with two substantial outbuildings to the rear are shown on the Sartoris Rd site. These may have functioned as garden workshops; suggesting that

65 Sartoris Road, Rushden

the house may have been associated with the boot and shoe industry from its construction. The land to the north-west remained undeveloped at this date (Fig 2).

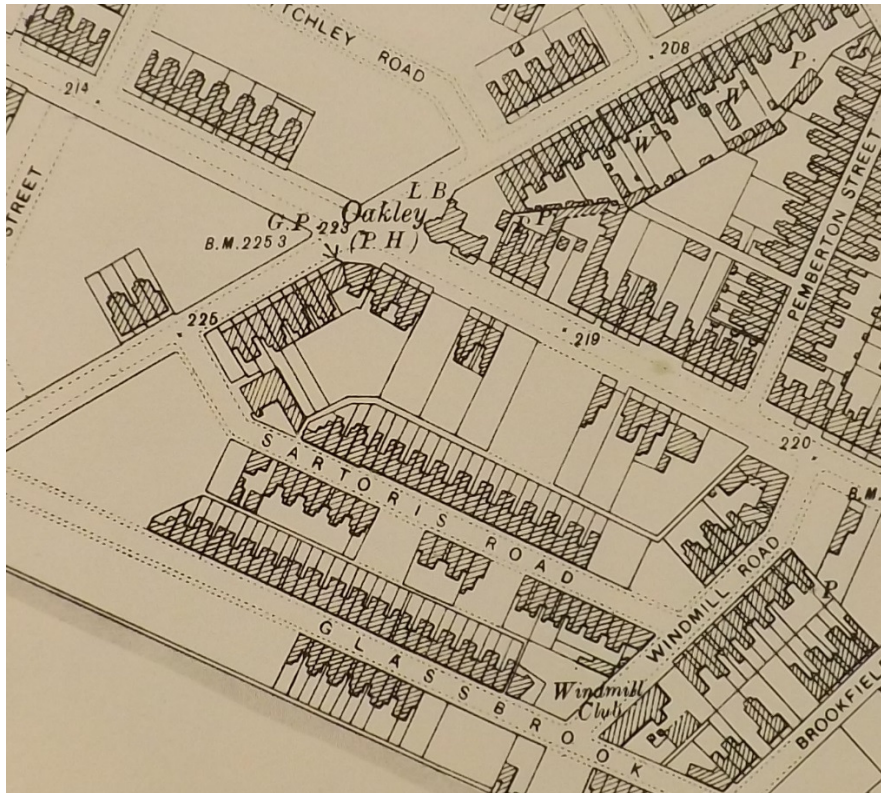


Fig 2: Second edition Ordnance Survey map, 1900

The early history of the buildings is unknown but by 1913, the company of W W Chamberlain was based at Sartoris Road.

An extract from the Shoe and Leather Biographical Index for 1916:

This business was started about three years ago, on a small scale, which very quickly developed on finding that the "A. L. Board" Stiffeners were approved and used successfully by some of the largest manufacturers in the county. Since then machinery has been quadrupled, the factory doubled in size, and millions of these stiffeners have been made for Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, South Africa and India, and not a single complaint or return has been received.

A new business has been added in the manufacture of Stiffeners for the British Army and Navy, and many, many thousands for the Russia Ankle and Cossack Boots have been turned out, with every success.

New premises have been acquired in Higham Ferrers, which will be used entirely for the manufacture of Leather Stiffeners, and high-class Heels.

Mr. Chamberlain is assisted by Mr. W. H. Chamberlain, and also Mr. Donald Chamberlain. The latter enlisted in the R.G.A.(Royal Garrison Artillery) some 12 months ago, and is now serving in France.

Mr. Chamberlain is well known over a wide district, and, besides the above business, caters very successfully for the leather trade and holds considerable stocks. He thoroughly understands the business, having had a wide experience with the best houses.



Fig 3: Mr W W Chamberlain
(from Shoe and Leather Biographical Index 1916)

By 1926, the house had been incorporated into a series of factory buildings, which surrounded it on three sides. It is marked as a leather dressing works (Fig 4). Subsequent to this date there appears to have been little external alteration to the site.

WW Chamberlain & Sons was located at Sartoris Road until as late as 1973 (County of Northamptonshire Register 1973). By 1974, it was run as the Cut Sole Department of Ashford and Campion Ltd, also heel manufacturers and leather dealers. The main premises were at Newton Road. In the late 1970s the two factories employed about 80 people

(<http://www.rushdenheritage.co.uk/Villages/commerce/ashford+campion-hf.html>).

65 Sartoris Road, Rushden

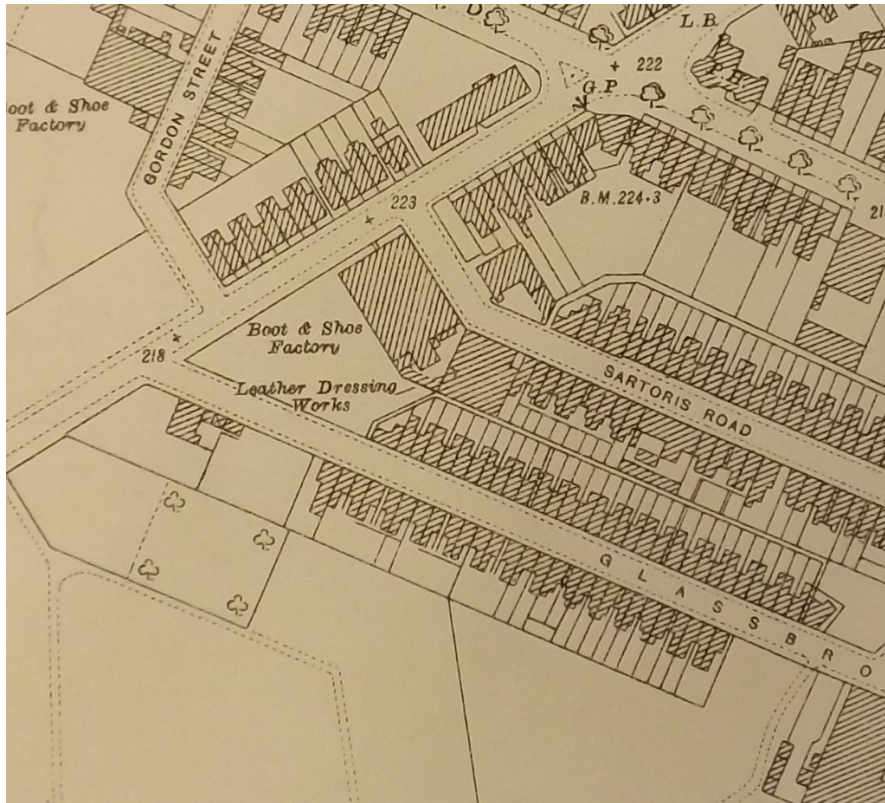


Fig 4: Third edition Ordnance Survey map, 1926

William James Shoes was present until at least 2009, testified by insurance details and a certificate still present on the wall of the factory.

Table 1: Chronological development of 65 Sartoris Road

Date	Development
c 1895	Suggested date of construction
1899	House and buildings in yard shown (OS 1:2,500)
c 1913	W W Chamberlain business established
1916	WW Chamberlain, leather factor, currier and stiffener manufacturer
1916-1923	Three single storey north-light bays were added to the west bay of the house during this period. A fourth was subsequently added before 1923
1922	WW Chamberlain, leather dressers and heel manufacturers, Sartoris Road
1923	<i>Leather Dressing Works</i> shown built around the house (OS, 1:2,500)
1937	As 1922
1973	WW Chamberlain & Sons listed in County of Northamptonshire Register
1974	<i>Cut Sole Factory</i> (OS, 1:2,500)
1974	Ashford and Campion Ltd, Cut Sole Dept (painted sign)
1999-2009?	William James Ltd

A variety of abandoned objects reflecting the building's recent past were recorded. These included wooden and plastic shoe lasts and steel dies for cutting shoe soles. A number of box labels were also present; these were largely for riding boots.



Fig 5: Shoe lasts and steel dies



Fig 6: A selection of labels and an insole found at the property

Little information was available concerning most of the labels. The Regent brand, which produces riding boots and associated items, is still a going concern. In 2002 it was acquired by Sanders and Sanders of Rushden. Ambassador Footwear appear to have been another Rushden company. New & Lingwood are a Jermyn Street based company, founded in the 19th century at Eton to serve the pupils of the eponymous school. They are now known for bespoke shirts and tailoring. In 1972, Poulsen Skone, a renowned boot and shoe company was acquired by the firm.

Building description

No access to view the entire rear of the building was possible, since the factory roof prevented it.

Exterior

The building is two-storey, two-bay with no direct access in the front elevation; an original yard access is located on the south-eastern elevation, now beneath a flat-roofed corrugated iron porch, boarded up and not accessible from the outside. The porch provided direct access into the factory sheds to the rear by means of a large wooden sliding door.

The house is constructed of cream/white-painted red brick laid in Flemish bond with courses of alternate stretchers and headers and queen closers at each corner, with a coggled eaves course (Fig 7). A rectangular area of white paint between the ground and first floor windows probably indicates the position of a former sign. The roof covering is Welsh slate with ornate clay ridge tiles. There is a central chimney stack.

There are arch-headed windows beneath a segmental brick arch with drip mouldings above on the ground floor. The windows are wooden sash with single large panes of glass above and below. Both are screened by thick wire mesh. The first floor lintels have ogee mouldings with stopped chamfers. The windows themselves have been removed and are boarded up. The window sills are all stone.

The upper rear portion of the house is largely obscured by the adjoining factory sheds. The north-western half of the rear wall had been removed at some time in the past, possibly when the factory was built. Historic maps suggest that there was a projecting rear wing on the western side of the house prior to the construction of the factory buildings and this may be the result of its removal. At ground floor level a load-bearing steel joist had been inserted at ceiling height. The stub of the projecting rear wall survived (to the left of the photograph) and original skirting board survived on the factory side of the wall (Fig 11). A wider door opening had been partially blocked with chipboard and a modern door inserted. At first floor level a change in the quality of brickwork and the insertion of a small window with a concrete lintel indicated some degree of alteration.

The two-bay south-eastern elevation is only partially visible above the porch. It contains square headed windows under shallow brick segmental arches and stone springers. In the first bay of the ground floor is the original entrance. The entrance is set into a recessed porch which has a semi-circular brick arch (Fig 8). The six-panelled door has three glazed upper panels with a simple rectangular fanlight above. The door has a centrally-placed letter box with integral doorknocker, both overpainted. Either side of the porch are downpipes, with a simple hopper on the right. Just beyond is a sign saying *office*.



Fig 7: Front elevation of the house



Fig 8: Original side entrance with recessed porch

65 Sartoris Road, Rushden

The upper storey of the north-western elevation is blind; the ground floor has been obscured by the addition of the factory buildings.

The adjacent single-storey, north-light brick-built factory buildings, which were constructed in the period 1919-1920, are abutted, with a butt joint in the brickwork. A single brick key from the factory to the house was visible.



Fig 9: Adjoining single storey, north-light factory sheds

The main delivery doors into the factory comprise a single sliding door raised off street level to enable easy loading and unloading from lorries. A small office window with margin glazing to the west and a long window with high sill to the east. There is a single chimney stack on the west gable of the frontage.

Interior

Factory sheds

All four ranges of the factory were brick-built with concrete floors and north-light roofs. Intermediate timber columns support the iron and timber roof structure (Fig 11). The roof is glazed on the north side with probably Trafford tile on the south. Internally the south side is clad in tongue and groove timber. All fixtures and fittings have been removed.

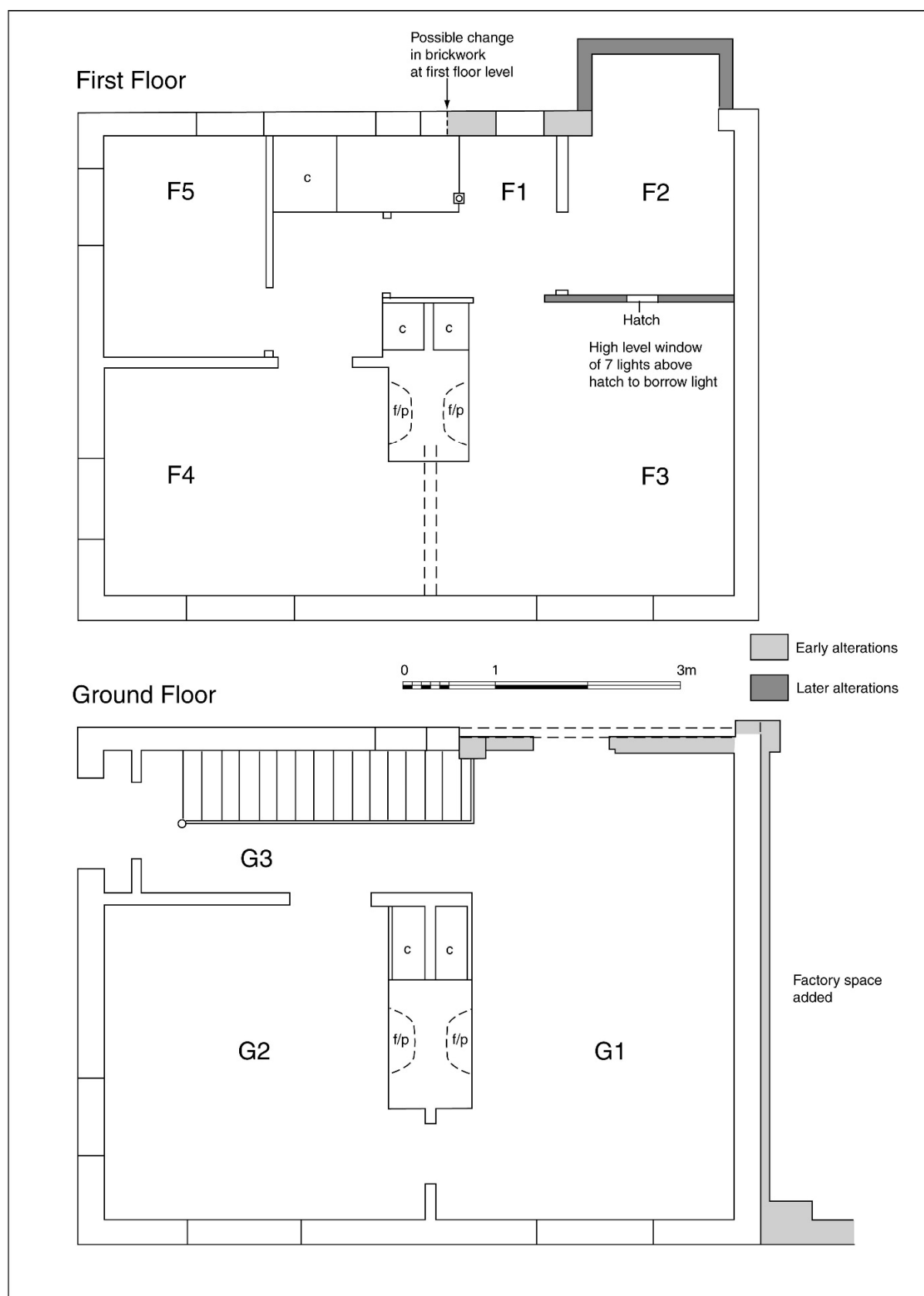


Fig 10: Floor plan of 65, Sartoris Road



Fig 11: The interior of the front range

The house/office

Room G1

Accessed from the main factory floor via a modern inserted door (Fig 10). This room is the larger of the two ground floor rooms and extends the full depth of the house. The walls had been papered with cream wall-paper, although significant portions had peeled away to reveal earlier paint schemes. The latest was two-tone comprising light green paint below and cream/light beige above, divided by a black strip at dado level (Fig 13). Small areas of dark brown paint were visible beneath the green. Ogee Skirting, 0.17m high, lined the room; similar skirting boards were present in all rooms other than room G2 and F2. The floor was carpeted.



Fig 12: Entrance from factory into G1; note the RSJ above and small painted-up window on right.

A chimney-breast was present in the centre of the south-eastern wall; the former fireplace had been entirely blocked (Fig 10). There was a door into room G2 on the northern side of the chimney-breast and to the south a set of floor-to-ceiling cupboards, a door into the hallway and a door into an under stairs cupboard (Fig 14). The cupboard had no internal features other than a small four-light window beneath a brick segmental arch which looked out into the factory floor behind. The glass had been painted-over (Fig 12).

The two floor-to-ceiling cupboards had plain doors; the lower had a single panel, the upper had two. Both had simple round Bakelite knobs from the period c1925-50. The door into the hallway (G3) and door into the under-stairs cupboard were surrounded by the same architrave, and were divided by the end of the panelling associated with the staircase beyond. The door into the hallway (G3) had a central hatch opening to the right, fastened with a catch.



Fig 13: Former paint schemes in G1



Fig 14: Full-height cupboards (left), door into hallway (centre) with central hatch and under-stairs cupboard in G1 (right)

Room G2

A simple room, with blocked fireplace and floor-to-ceiling cupboards in positions backing onto those in room G1 (Fig 10). Windows to the south-east and north-west aspects. The glass of the lower part of the sash window in the south-east had been painted white for privacy. The upper pane is patterned, rolled glass, again probably for privacy.

The floor was largely carpeted as G1. The walls are painted white. The skirting boards are 0.28m high, significantly taller than those in G1, and possibly original. The door into hallway G3 is a typical four-panelled internal door with a 'mouse-moulded' panel bead within the house. There are bolts to the top and bottom of the door. There were significant areas of damage in the floor and ceiling. The floorboards had been partially removed beneath the window in the south-eastern side of the room and replaced by chipboard. This too had rotted.



Fig 15: Room G2, typical four-panelled door and floor-to-ceiling cupboards



Fig 16: Window in south-east elevation, room G2

Hallway G3

The hallway was aligned along the rear of the house, the stairs rising just in from the front door (Fig 10). Access to room G1 was at the far end and access to room G2 opened halfway along. The floor was covered with black and white linoleum tiles and the walls were papered with beige/cream and white striped wallpaper. The newel posts and balusters of the staircase are typical examples of a modest late Victorian house (Calloway 1991; Fig 17).

There were two windows on the staircase, both had simple square frames, but the windows had been removed and had been blocked.



Fig 17: Front door, hallway and staircase, G3

Room F1

The landing provides access to all four rooms on the first floor (Fig 10). The walls are painted white in the main, although the same wallpaper as used in hallway G3 is present above the door into room F4, and the floor is covered with faded grey marbled linoleum tiles. The wall adjacent to the door into bathroom F5 is timber-clad, painted white.

There was a cupboard over the stairs, with a pair of waist-to-ceiling height doors with aluminium (?) handles. It covered the hot-water cistern and airing shelves. A small amount of stock had been left in the cupboard, including several boxes of different coloured laces. There is a further floor-to-ceiling cupboard adjacent to the doorway into F4. It was located in the recess adjacent to the chimney-breast and mirrored the arrangement on the ground floor, although these cupboards were not as wide.

A wide wooden shelf is situated just below ceiling height above the stairwell extending around all four sides (Fig 18).



Fig 18: Wide shelf above stairwell in room F1



Fig 19: South-west facing oriel-type window in room F2

Room F2

In this small room just off the stairs the walls are covered with pale yellow wallpaper, although both paper and underlying plaster had been removed in places down to the underlying brickwork, and the floors are covered with grey marbled linoleum. There is low-level rounded profile skirting. A pair of copper pipes against the window suggest it may have had a basin/sink. The south-west facing window in this room is an oriel-type window which projects out from the external wall of the house (Fig 19). The main body of the window is constructed from tongue and grooved timber similar to the ceilings of the single storey factory units. The base of the window partially protrudes into the factory ceiling below (Fig 12).

In the rear wall of the room is a centrally placed hatch, which slides upwards to open. Above is a high level window of seven lights to borrow light for room F3. They had been painted over for privacy.

Room F3

The room is painted white, although significant areas of plaster had been removed to the underlying brickwork. The bricks are 9"x 4 ½"x 3 ½" in size, with a rise over four courses of 13 ¼". The floor covering is grey marbled linoleum tiles, which extends without a break into adjacent room F4, indicating it had been laid after the two rooms had been knocked into one. The door into hallway F1 is the same as in G2 downstairs (Fig 20).



Fig 20: Borrowed light window and hatch, room F3; room F2 beyond

There was a floor-to-ceiling cupboard set into the recess adjacent to the chimneybreast in the same arrangement as the ground floor. The original partition wall between rooms F3 and F4 had been removed (Fig 21). Scars on the wall either side of the former partition wall indicate that there had been sets of equally-spaced shelves set against it.



Fig 21: Room F3 looking into room F4

Room F4

Room F4 is papered in light green/blue wallpaper and the same grey marbled linoleum as the rest of this floor. The walls and ceilings have been much affected by damp, particularly towards the front of the room. As in room F3 the front window has been removed and the opening blocked with a plywood board (Fig 21). The south-east facing window is a narrow sash with a single pane above and below (Fig 22).

Room F5

Room F5 is the bathroom, retaining a suite of sink, toilet and enamel bath. The walls are painted pink and the floors are covered with grey marbled linoleum. There are two windows, one facing south-east and the other on the rear elevation. The rear window comprises a sash with a single pane above and below both with patterned, rolled glass. The south-east facing window is similar, but with only the lower part in rolled glass. The toilet comprises a wall-mounted cistern. The toilet bowl itself has been placed in the corner of the room, presumably to save space.



Fig 22: Room F4, looking south-east



Fig 23: Room F5, the bathroom

Conclusions

Archaeological building recording was undertaken of a former boot and shoe factory on Sartoris Road, Rushden. The original detached house was probably connected with the boot and shoe industry from its construction, with two large garden workshops at the rear. The property was associated with the company of W W Chamberlain from around 1913 and the success of the business soon led to expansion in the form of a range of three north-light sheds adjoining the original property, replacing the previous workshops. A fourth was quickly added to the rear. The company were originally leather dressers, curriers and manufacturers of leather stiffeners for shoes, later heel manufacturers as well. The company remained at Sartoris Road until 1973. Subsequently, it was used as the cut sole department for Ashford and Campion and later by William James, present until at least 2009.

The house was probably used as an office connected to the factory sheds for much of its lifetime and the relatively sparse décor reflects this function.

Both the factory and house appear to have undergone little structural alteration or modification after the first flurry of expansion in the early 20th century. In the house the most obvious modifications were the blocked fireplaces, the insertion of the oriel-type window in room F2 and the removal of the partition wall between rooms F3 and F4.

Since the closure of the last company both have been stripped of equipment and fittings and there is now little remaining evidence of their connection with the boot and shoe industry.

Bibliography

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