



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

**Archaeological Building Recording at the former
Stromag factory, Wellingborough Road,
Rushden, Northamptonshire**

Charlotte Walker BSc ACIfA

Former Stromag factory, Rushden

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Archaeological building recording at the former Stromag factory, Wellingborough Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire

Charlotte Walker BSc ACIfA

(Fieldwork by Joe Prentice, Charlotte Walker and Iain Soden)

Summary

A former factory, incorporating a five-bay house dating to the early 19th century and various factory buildings dating from the mid-19th century onwards are to be demolished in advance of development. Building recording of the house to English Heritage Level 2 standards was undertaken to satisfy a condition applied to the planning permission. The house, originally a private school for boys, and factory appear to have been associated with the boot and shoe industry of Rushden from the mid-19th century, as part of Claridge's. From 1969 until 2003, the buildings were part of the engineering firm Stromag and much of the building layout reflects alterations and additions from this period.

Introduction

Archaeological building recording was undertaken on buildings associated with a former boot and shoe factory at Wellingborough Road, Rushden prior to demolition (NGR: SP 956 665; Fig 1). The buildings comprised a two-storey house, latterly used as offices, with an adjoining three-storey range extending back from the frontage and later three-storey gatehouse. To the rear are north-light factory buildings and modern steel-framed warehouse. The buildings associated with the former shoe factory were subject to Level 2 recording in line with the former English Heritage's guidelines (EH 2006). A relative abundance of documentation has allowed Level 3 to be brought to bear in some aspects.

The project was commissioned by HB Villages and carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by IS Heritage (2015) and approved by the Assistant Archaeological Advisor for Northamptonshire County Council.

The buildings associated with the former boot and shoe factory are due to be demolished and a new complex of assisted-living homes for the disabled constructed (Planning application: 14/01774/FUL).

Thanks are due to GKN Stromag for facilitating access to historic deeds held by their Solicitors in Birmingham.

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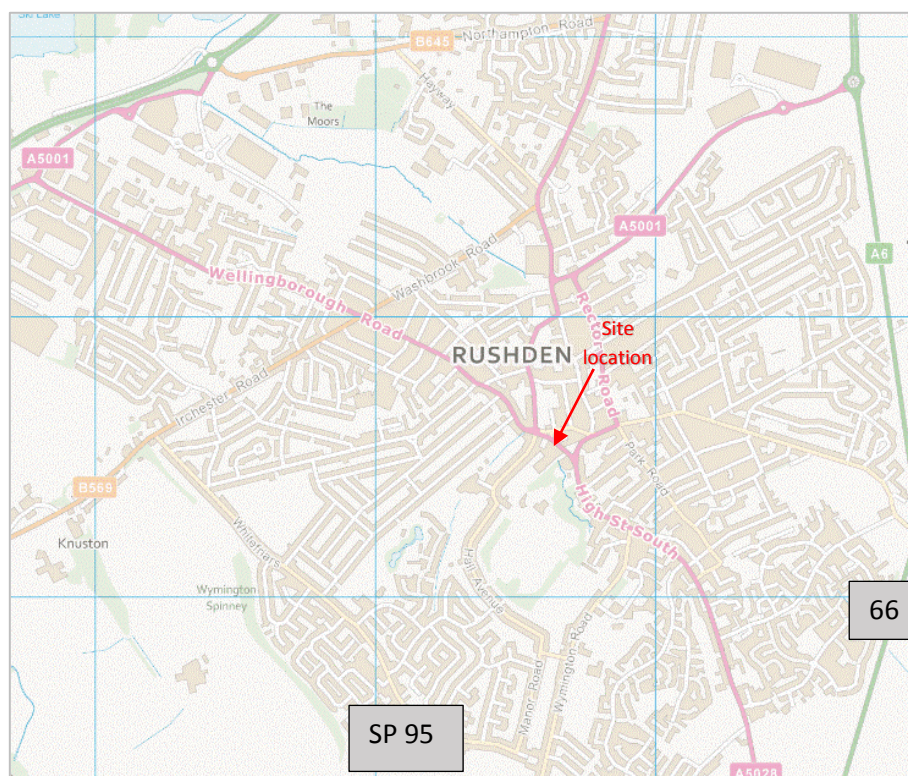


Fig 1: Site location.

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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 was previously surveyed as part of English Heritage's Rapid Survey of buildings associated with the county's boot and shoe industry (Rushden Site 54).

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Fig 2: Ordnance Survey First Series, 1834

The earliest historical records pertaining directly to this plot date to 1819, with the will of Samuel Achurch, which details a copyhold messuage of a tenement with the bakehouse and orchard, situated in Duck Street in Rushden. Although Duck Street today refers to a street further to the north-west, it extended further south at that date. It remained known as Duck Street rather than Wellingborough Road until around 1880. While the copyhold was with Achurch, the property actually belonged to the Manor of Rushden. Prior to Achurch's ownership, it was held by Samuel Hall, then William Hawkes. The property was subsequently sold to Sophia Sturges in 1840.

The earliest map of Rushden, the Ordnance Survey First Series of 1834, though not particularly detailed, shows a long building along the Wellingborough Road frontage. This is likely to be the house from which the frontage property known as 'Brookfied' evolved (see Fig 15 for its layout). There is no building on the frontage of the road to the west of the plot, and it is therefore most likely that this is the building referred to in the will and other documents.

William Claridge appears to have founded his company at Rushden in 1860 since the 90th anniversary of the company's foundation was celebrated in 1950. The early workshop was recalled as being behind a house in High Street South, but he quickly seems to have been re-located at the Duck Street/Wellingborough Road building. Claridge bought the copyhold of the Duck Street messuage in 1875 for £600 from William Sturges. At this date, however, he was already a tenant there and it was described as a shoe-factory, suggesting that some modification of the original tenement may have already taken place. The 1871 census suggests that Claridge was not resident at Brookfield, it was lived in by the Walker family. Mr Walker ran a private boys' school here in the 1870s.

The earliest detailed map of Rushden is of 1884 which suggests that at this date there was a long range along the street frontage, which likely comprised Brookfield and its continuation to the south-

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east (prior to its rebuilding in 1889). To the rear of the factory building were two distinct ranges, the one adjoining the factory was slightly narrower. To the rear, and of a presumably later date, was broader. A new warehouse was built by February 1879 and this may be the broader range to the rear.

On Saturday, the 1st inst., a supper was provided in the newly-built warehouse, of Mr. W. Claridge, shoe manufacturer, when the whole of the men, boys, and females employed by him, both on and off the premises, comprising the rivetters, finishers, carpenters, masons, machine girls, fitters, and all who had assisted the firm in any way whatever, sat down to a good substantial supper, provided by Mr. Hulatt, of the Coach and Horses Inn. About 200 persons were present and partook of the repast. (Wellingborough News 8th February, 1879)

This range appears to have survived later modifications to the factory. In 1889 the factory was 'rebuilt', as recorded on the gable of the frontage range *Rebuilt 1889 WC* (for William Claridge). Some early fabric, similar in form to the older parts of Brookfield, appears to have survived this rebuilding, but it was raised to three storeys. To the rear, the narrow range observed on the 1884 map was replaced by a ten-bay brick building with a carriageway passing through the central part (Fig 4).

A small brick house adjoining the north-western end of Brookfield was also present by 1884. It was a separate dwelling in the occupation of Charles Robinson by at least 1891, who was a foreman clicker (although it is not known whether he worked at Claridge's). The legal documents suggest that the house was built by William Claridge, probably not long before this date.

Of a later phase, but present by the 1900 Ordnance Survey map, was the gatehouse range, which partially wraps around the 1889 building (Fig 4). The gatehouse also adjoined a thatched cottage which was present to the south-east until the 1920s (Fig 5). Census records indicate that this property was inhabited by John Scott in the later 19th and early 20th centuries. Also present by 1900 were the ranges to the south including the north-light sheds and the further three-storey brick built range extending to the south-east. Further buildings also appear to have been erected behind the thatched cottage, although it is not clear whether these are associated with the main factory at this date.

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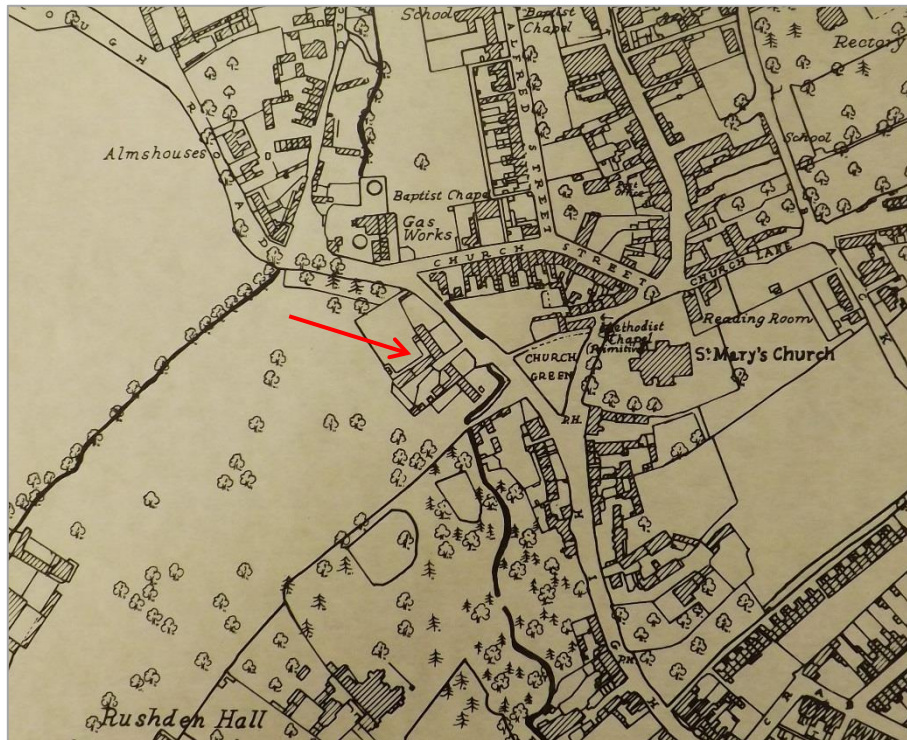


Fig 3: Rushden in 1884



Fig 4: Ordnance Survey map, 1900



Fig 5: The gatehouse and adjoining thatched cottage in which John Scott lived

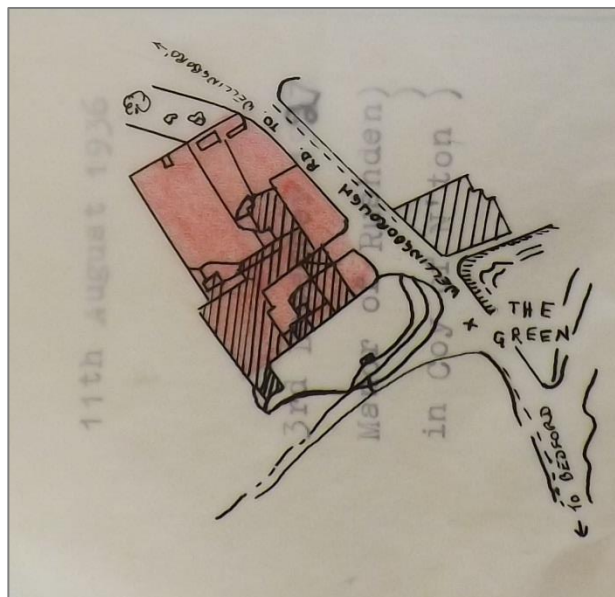


Fig 6: Plan showing land in ownership of the Claridge's in 1922

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Fig 7: Ordnance Survey map, 1926

A plan of the land in ownership of the Claridge's in 1922 shows that they held all the land and buildings on this plot on the Wellingborough Road (Fig 6). The buildings to the rear of Scott's cottage had been further extended by this date; the 1926 Ordnance Survey map indicates that one of the buildings was partially open to the north-west (Fig 7). This suggests that it was connected with the factory, since it opened into what was a yard at that date. There were few other alterations in the period between 1900 and 1926, other than the probable addition of the toilet block and the apparent relocation of the carriage-arch through the rear part of the 1889 block. In the 1900 edition, this feature is shown at a slight remove from the rear of Brookfield, in the 1926 edition it is shown directly behind the house. No evidence of the original carriage-arch was observed in the fabric of this range, although much of it was obscured by the modern addition.

By 1927, the thatched cottage seems to have been demolished (according to a pencil note on the legal documents). Certainly, by the 1960s, the cottage had gone, although the ranges to the rear remained; a photograph of around 1948 indicates that these may have been of single storey brick construction (Fig 8). It is possible that some of these buildings were incorporated into the buildings now associated with Orbit Tyres, although the thatched cottage frontage itself stood forward of the tyre premises, where its customer car park now lies.

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Fig 8: The area to the south-east of the factory, looking west, c 1948. One of the lost buildings associated with Claridge's is visible behind the bus to the right (Rushdenheritage.co.uk)

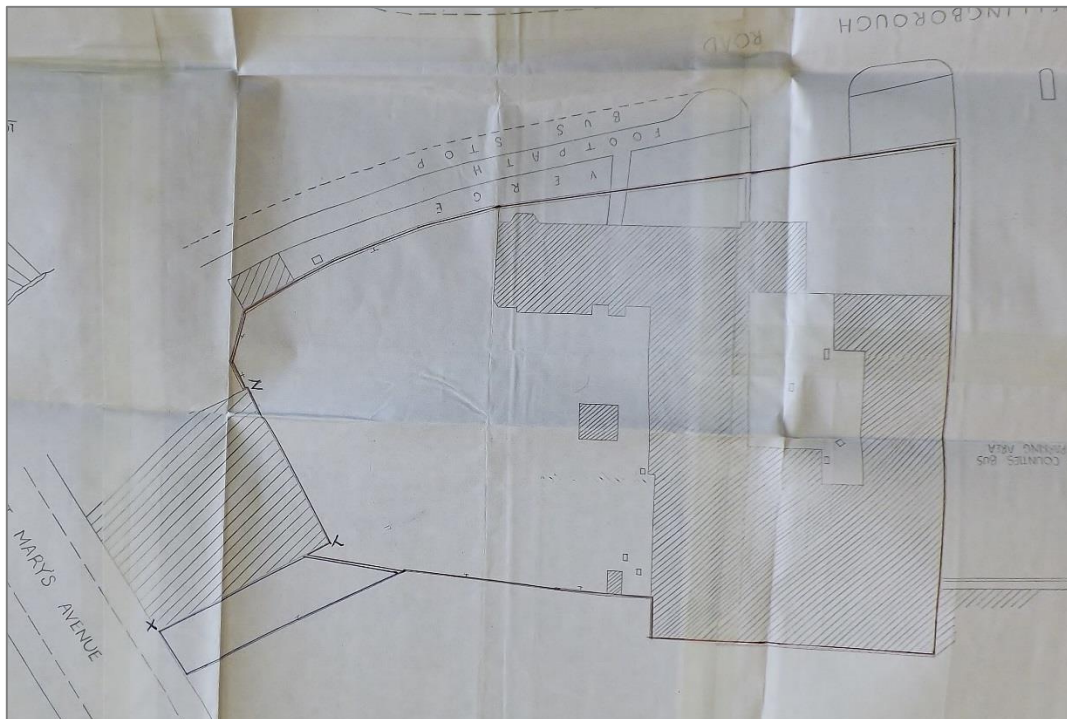


Fig 9: The factory in the 1960s, with further range to the east



Fig 10: The office at Claridge's, with the oriel window of Room F3, c 1922



Fig 11: The exterior of the factory c1922

In early 20th century photographs of the factory, the windows on the second floor of the gatehouse range are of Critall type, similar to those still in place elsewhere in the factory (ie room S8). A chimney can also be seen between the 1889 range and the gatehouse range; this has subsequently been removed, possibly when the gatehouse was re-roofed. A further chimney on the south-eastern elevation of the gatehouse has also been removed, although some of the fabric has survived. A wall divided the 1889 factory range and the gatehouse range. Since there does not appear to have been

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an entrance into the factory from the 1889 frontage, the only other entrance on this frontage was to Brookfield, John Claridge's house, it is likely this wall divided the domestic and commercial aspects of the buildings. Partial views into the yard area beyond the gatehouse show the rear of the 1889 range prior to the subsequent blocking of the windows (Fig 11). Anecdotal evidence suggests that the yard area was used as a small market during prior to the construction of the warehouse in the late 20th century; locals remember a greengrocer's stall here in the 1960s.



Fig 12: Interior of the north-light sheds (G3),
with overhead belt drives (rushdenheritage.co.uk)



Fig 13: The north-light sheds (G3),
with brick columns of the possible 1870s range to rear right (rushdeheritage.co.uk)

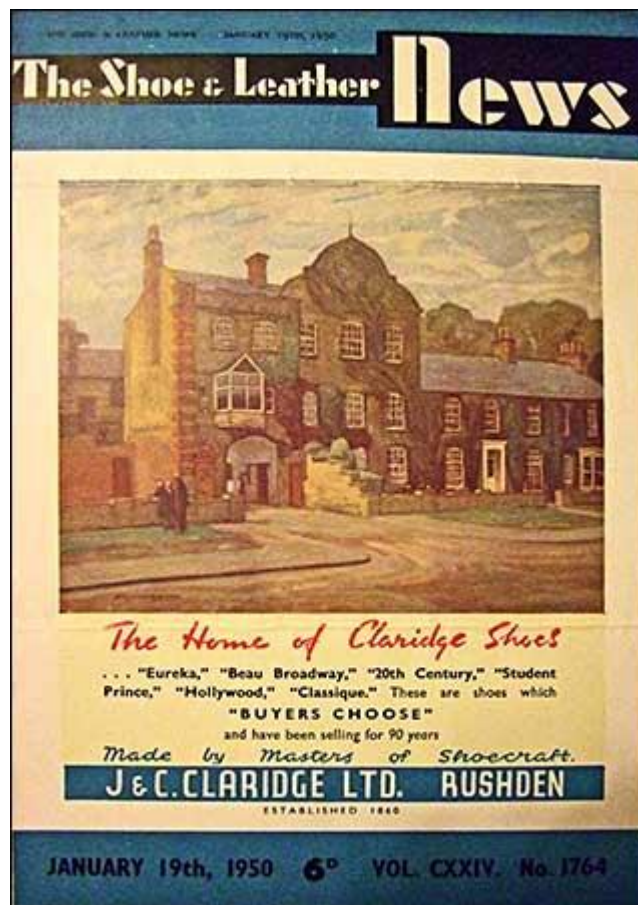


Fig 14: The exterior of the factory, 1950

The casement windows in Brookfield and the second floor of the 1889 block were inserted at some point after 1950, in all probability under Stromag's tenure around 1969. In 1950 the chimneys were still all present.

Timeline

Pre-1819- messuage belonged to Samuel Hall, then William Hawkes, before passing to Samuel Achurch.

1819-Will of Samuel Achurch: Messuage or tenement with bakehouse and orchard belonging to Samuel Achurch.

1840 Authority from the Cestuisque Trust under the will of the late Mr Samuel Achurch to the trustees to sell real estates: *sell and surrender all that messuage or tenement with the bakehouse and orchard thereunto belonging situate in Duck Street in Rushden aforesaid late in the occupation of our said late father deceased and now of John Robinson with the appurtenances to Sophia Sturges late of Stymington in the county of Bedford.*

1841- Executors of Samuel Achurch sell to Mrs Sophia Sturges £262. 10s.

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1875- William Claridge buys copyhold for £600; however, the property is at this date described as a shoefactory already and tenanted by Claridge from William Sturges; there may therefore be work pre-dating 1875. At this date it is described as: *All that messuage or dwelling house with the shoe factory, gardens, orchard, and outbuildings thereunto belonging and adjoining situate in Rushden aforesaid and then in the occupation of the said William Claridge and also that cottage or tenement with the yard, garden and outbuildings thereunto belonging and adjoining lying contiguous to the last mentioned premises and then in the occupation of John Scott. All which said premises lay together and were bounded on or towards the east by the road leading from Rushden to Wellingborough...said premises were formerly known and described as all that messuage or tenement with bakehouse and orchard thereunto belonging standing in a certain street called Duck Street.*

Apparently John Scott (born in 1859) moved out of his father's thatched cottage in Skinners Hill when he was about 25 (so in 1884).

1879- new warehouse built by this date (newspaper article of Feb 1879)

1884- the north-western end of Brookfield is shown as a separate dwelling at this date. The rear wing of the factory might be present by this date (that is F7/S7 on the plans); a new warehouse is recorded as being built in 1879- may be this or the range to front which was subsequently rebuilt in 1889..but shows Claridge was making his mark.

1889- Main factory rebuilt

1891- William Claridge died. John and Charles take over.

1889-1900- gatehouse built; the added range to the south-east (F8/S8 on plans) and the north-light sheds.

1900-1926- the brick hall along the rear of Brookfield and extension was built during this period, probably after 1922.

1921- Company of Messrs J&C Claridge Ltd registered with a capital of £20,000, prior to this had been trading under name of William Claridge.

1921- Copyhold becomes fee simple ownership. John Claridge noted as living at Brookfield.

1921- Charles Claridge dies.

1922- tenement built by William Claridge (probably the brick extension to the north-east of Brookfield) had C Robinson living in it, but which was then occupied together with Brookfield as one dwelling by J Claridge; the conversion of the two dwellings into one was probably undertaken soon afterwards. Trademarked shoe types noted on a brochure cover of this date included Eureka, Riviera and Beau Broadway.

1927- tenement occupied by John Scott was demolished by 1927- this was the thatched cottage lying to the south-east of the gatehouse range on the Wellingborough Road frontage.

1936- J&C Claridge sell part of frontage to Northamptonshire County Council for road widening-necessitates removal of shed and rebuilding

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1950- Claridge's celebrated its 60th anniversary. Makes of shoes at this date included Eureka, Beau Broadway, Hollywood and Classique.

1954- premises sold by J&C Claridge to the House of Langham.

1955- premises sold by the House of Langham to John White Footwear Ltd.

1955- permission granted to develop Brookfield from dwelling house to canteen and rest room for John White Footwear

1961- sold by John White Footwear to a syndicate, including Oberman and Sons (electrical contractors). Described as all that factory and premises situate in and having a frontage to Wellingbrough Road, Rushdenwith the fixtures in and about the same and the yards, outbuildings and appurtenances thereto belonging together with the premises formerly a messuage or dwellinghouse known as Brookfield but now used as a canteen and rest room adjoining the same on the north west side thereof with the gardens orchard outbuildings and appurtenances thereto.

1977- Stromag become owners of factory

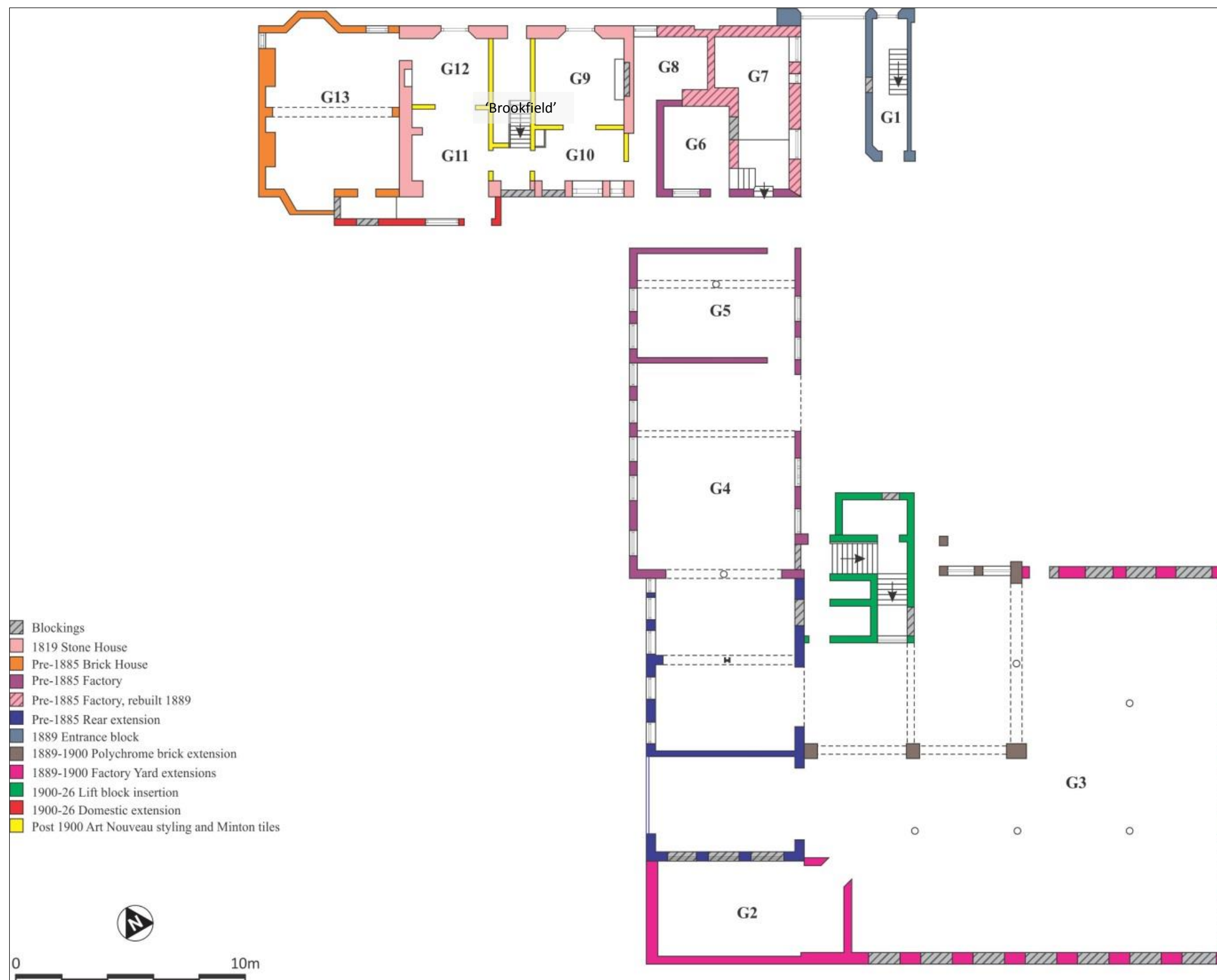


Fig 15: Floor plan – ground floor, phased

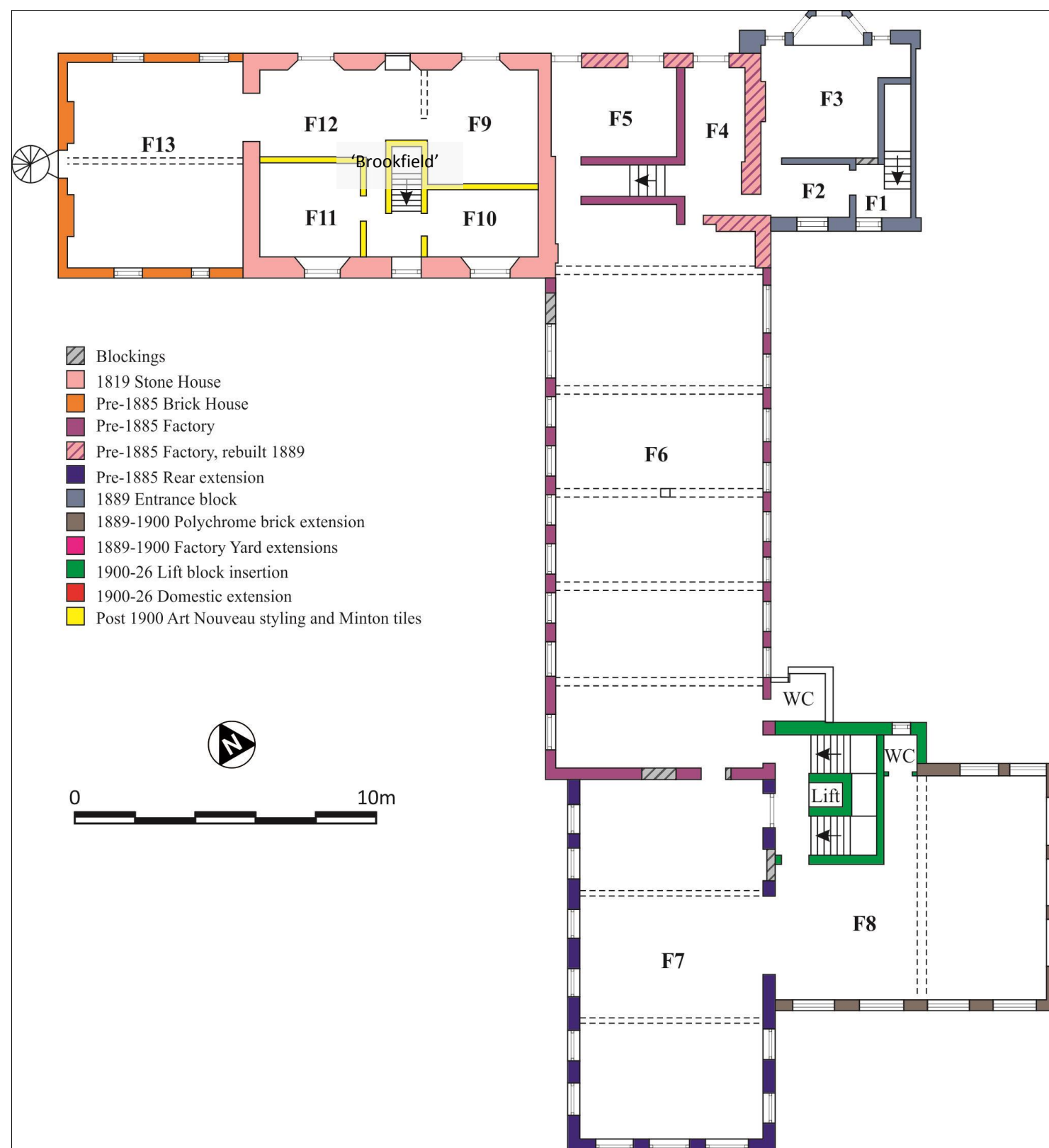


Fig 16: Floor plan – first floor, phased

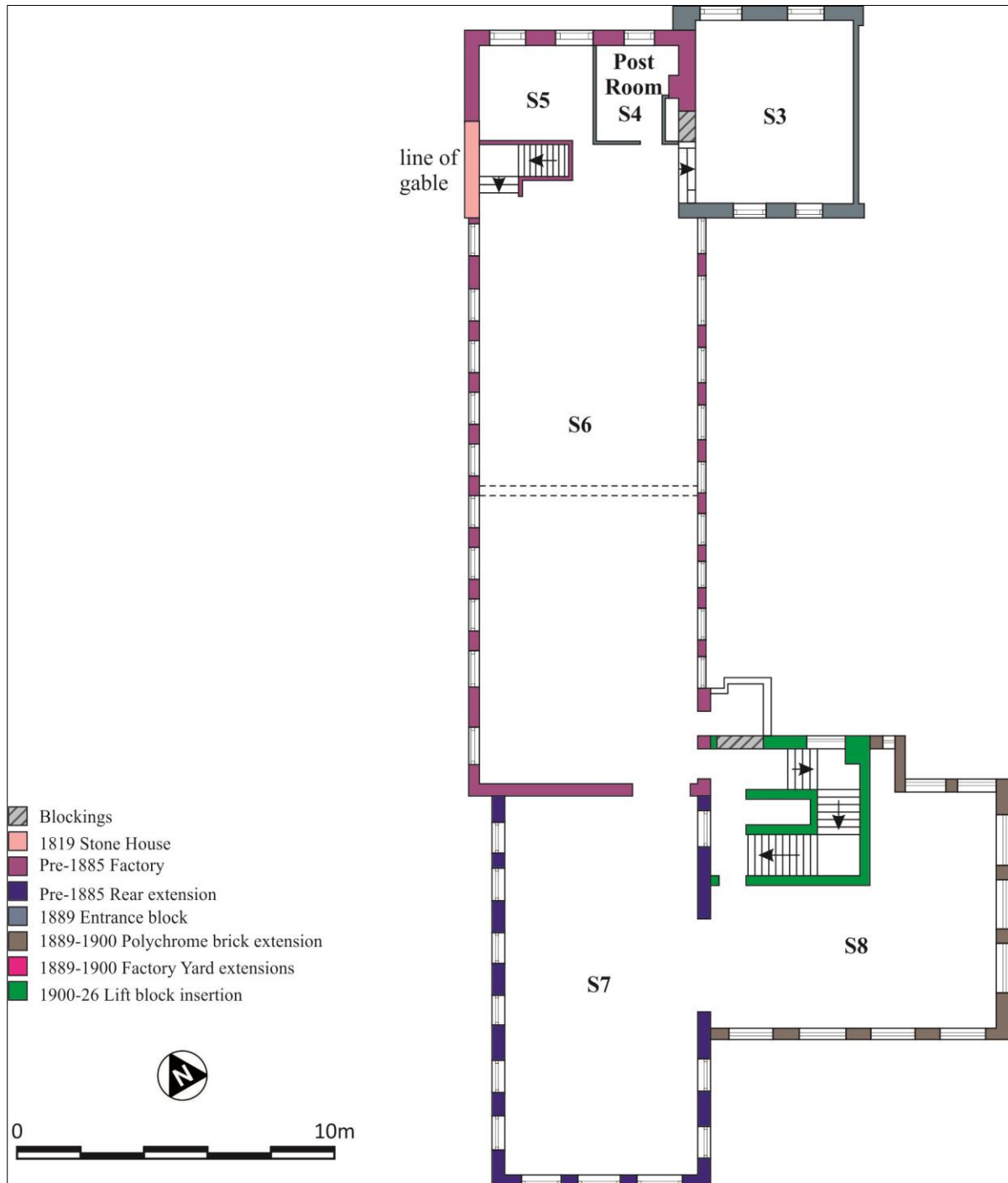


Fig 17: Floor plan – second floor, phased

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Building description

For all Ground (G), First (F) and second (S) floor room numbers hereafter, see Figs 15, 16 and 17.

Brookfield exterior

The original house is of two storeys with three-bays of coursed limestone rubble (Fig 18). The ground floor windows have flat stone arches and stone sills; the window to the left of the central doorway retains its long sash window of 24 lights, which almost extends to floor level. To the right the window, which is boarded up, has been partially blocked at the base by horizontal wooden panelling. The central entrance has two steps up to a shallow porch with a simple wooden surround. The simple rectangular fanlight is glazed with a decorative leaded light bearing the name *Brookfield*. The door itself is unpainted panelled oak with a diamond in the upper half. The windows on the first floor, also with flat arches over, have all been replaced with 2-light casements. To the rear much of the ground floor has been obscured by a later red-brick extension. Two former openings immediately to the right of the brick extension have been blocked with brick. Two windows survive in the south-eastern bay; a 2-light casement window with a stone sill and wooden lintel and a small 6-light casement window also with a stone sill and wooden lintel. The latter is likely a former pantry window. On the first floor the three windows are all replacement 2-light casements, with stone sills and timber lintels that are almost at eaves height. The roof is modern concrete tile.



Fig 18: Frontage of Brookfield, looking south-west

A later two-storey extension to the north-west is two-storey of two unequal bays constructed in yellow brick laid in Flemish bond. It was initially a separate dwelling and had been built by 1884, but does not appear to be much earlier than that date. On the ground floor the window to the left has a stone sill and a stone, stop chamfered lintel. The window is boarded up. Blocking brickwork below the current window sill indicates that this was originally the principal entrance. To the right is a flat-roofed, splayed bay window, also boarded up. The window is timber framed on a stone sill. The north-west gable elevation is constructed in red-brick laid in Flemish Bond. There is a door on the left-hand side of the gable on the gable with a single glazed panel and a similar door, centrally placed, on the first floor accessed by a spiral staircase. This is a later insertion, probably added when

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the lower and upper floors were separated in the later 20th century. There is a yellow brick chimney on the north-western gable. The rear elevation, also constructed in red-brick has a concrete render (Fig 19). There is a splayed bay window opposing the one on the frontage, but it has been largely truncated by the later brick extension, so that only the north-western glazing panel survives. The unequal windows of the frontage are mirrored in the rear; the sills of the first floor windows are of chamfered blue engineering brick, the lintels are obscured by the render, but are likely flat brick arches. The central window is glazed with decorative leaded glass. The roof is of concrete tile; both this phase and the earlier phase have been retiled in a single phase.

The later narrow red-brick extension, which was probably built when John Claridge united the two dwellings in c1922, runs along the rear of the two properties and provides access between the rear rooms (Fig 19). It has a pitched concrete tiled roof against the rear wall of Brookfield. A pair of plywood doors have been inserted into the front of the former bay. To the right of the doors the brick wall extends outwards slightly with bull nose bricks on the corner. A former wooden lintel is present in the short length of wall extending outwards from the double doors, indicating the presence of a former entrance; modern brick infill is also identifiable (lintel indicated by arrow on Fig 16). A further blocked doorway is also present on the extension. A 16-light, unhorned sash window on the rear wall is likely to have been moved from another location prior to its insertion, as it is stylistically too early. It may have been located in the original rear wall of the house. A pair of braced and ledged doors are located to the right of the window.



Fig 19: Rear of Brookfield and 1889 factory range, looking north-east

Brookfield interior

The two houses had been knocked through, probably in the early 20th century, when John Claridge took over both parts as a dwelling. Later modifications included blocking internal access between

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the ground and first floors creating separate office spaces; the ground floor was occupied by Stromag, while the first floor was latterly occupied by HGV Recruitment Ltd. Extended use of both floors by commercial interests have resulted in much of the historic fabric either being covered up or stripped out; this was particularly evident in the upper floor.

The main entrance allows access to the first floor only via a staircase rising just inside the front door (Fig 20). The hall has blocked doors either side and is tiled with patterned encaustic tiles. Skirting boards, dado rail and cornicing extend up the staircase. The wooden newel post of the staircase is plain, the handrail is of mahogany, and the remainder had been boxed in.



Fig 20: Brookfield hallway with Minton-type tiles

The upper hallway is lit by the decorative leaded casement window to the rear of the building. There is direct access into rooms F10, F11 and F12. The entirety of the upstairs is carpeted and, apart from the hallway which is papered below the dado, the walls are painted.

Room F10-bathroom

Room F10 had been a bathroom and is situated at the rear of the house. Access is via a four-panel door from the hallway. The room is lit by a 2-light casement window with splayed reveals (Fig 21).

Fittings included a toilet with overhead cistern, hand basin and cupboard. An enclosed shelf to the right of the window may have been a boxed in bath (?).



Fig 21: Room F10, bathroom, looking south

F11-Kitchen

Room F11 is accessed from the first floor hallway via a four-panelled door and is situated at the rear of the house. It is lit by a 2-light casement window facing onto the yard area. The window has splayed reveals, as in the bathroom. There is a range of modern kitchen units (of mdf) including sink situated below the window.

F12- Office

Accessed from the hall via a glass panelled door. Former office area that has been sub-divided with partitions (Fig 22). Two 2-light casement windows with splayed reveals facing onto Wellingborough Road. A former room division is apparent from front to back, located midway between the two casement windows.



Fig 22: Office F12, with modern partition and evidence of former room division above

F9-Office

Access from F12 via glass panel door. The two rooms are divided by a modern glass panel. A single 2-light casement window with splayed reveals faces onto Wellingborough Road. In the south-eastern wall an air vent in the skirting indicates the presence of a former fireplace.

F13-Offices

Accessed from room F12. Room F13 is in the extension and the access from room F12 has been created by knocking through the original side wall of the house, which was c0.50m thick. An original room division, from side to side, had been removed and modern partitions had been inserted to create separate offices.

There are two 2-light casement windows to the front and two to the rear, though without the splayed reveals as the windows in the older part of the house. There are two chimney breasts on the north-west wall, one for each of the former rooms; both are blocked.

Brookfield ground floor

Entry into the ground floor of the house is either via the factory or from the yard; there is no access from the front.

G9

A room on the frontage with red-painted floorboards. A large floor-length window onto the frontage which has been blocked, but which would have originally had shutter boxes. On the north-western wall is a blocked doorway into the hall and on the south-eastern wall is a blocked fireplace. A picture rail extends around three sides of the room. The rear wall between this room and G10 has been largely removed; there is a wooden threshold between the two. It is likely that this room was originally the front parlour. No other fixtures or fittings remained.

G10

Access to this room is from the corridor to G8 from the main factory. Situated to the rear of the house, this room has red scullery tiles which have been painted red (Fig 23). There are two windows and a blocked doorway to the rear of the room. The central window is a non-opening 2-light casement with a ledge below for a sink. The small 6-light casement window to the left has a splayed reveal on the southern side and a tiled sill. In the north-western corner of the room is a built-in pantry cupboard (Fig 24).



Fig 23: Room G10, looking south-west into factory yard; scale 1m

Hallway between G10 and G11

A short cross hall between G10 and G11, to the rear of the principal entrance hallway. The floor is tiled with patterned encaustic tiles, as with the hall between G12 and G13 (Fig 22). There is a below-stairs cupboard, with a four-panel door with brass handle and 19th century 9" floor tiles.



Fig 24: Room G10, built-in pantry cupboard

G11

This room is situated to the rear of Brookfield and also incorporates part of the added brick extension added onto the rear. The entirety of the former rear wall of the earlier building has been removed when the extension was built. The flooring is pine floorboards.

A pair of ledged and braced doors and a window occupy the rear wall. The window is a 16-light unhorned sash. The window predates the brick extension and may have been moved from its original location in the rear of the earlier building. A recessed area in the north-western wall may be the location of a former inglenook fireplace.

It is likely that rooms G11 and G12 formed the 'polite' end of the house, while G9 and G10 formed the 'service' end.

G11 into G13

A short length of hallway between rooms G11 and G13 is tiled with an elaborate pattern of encaustic tiles (Fig 25).



Fig 25: Minton-type tiled hallway floor, G11 into G13; scale 50cm

G12

A large splayed window looking out onto Wellingborough Road, with boarded up shutter boxes surviving to either side (Fig 26). The floor is of untreated knotty pine floorboards, suggesting that an overlying floor covering had been stripped out. There is an off-centre brick fireplace with a gauged brick arch on the north-western wall. The fireplace may have inserted during the 19th century. In the south-east wall there is a boarded up door which would have led into the entrance hall. There is a picture rail around much of the room. The rear wall has been largely knocked through into G11. Much of the room was taken up by metal storage shelves.



Fig 26: Splayed window with nailed-up shutter boxes, room G12

G13

This is the 20th century extension on the north-western end of Brookfield. It was formerly two rooms of equal size, one to the front and one to the rear, but has been knocked into one (Fig 27). It has a concrete floor. There are bay windows to the front and rear elevations, although the rear window has been largely removed by the later brick extension to the rear; there is a set of double doors through into the yard. A further window to the front is a former door opening, with brickwork blocking the lower portion. This suggests that this was a separate house, likely a two-up, two-down property. There are two chimney breasts on the north-western wall; the one in the former rear room comprises a modern brick surround that has subsequently been blocked up. There are no remains of the second fireplace, other than an air vent in the skirting. There is a doorway knocked through into G12 at the front of the room and a further entrance via the hallway to the rear.



Fig 27: Room G13, looking west

Factory exterior

The gable end of the earliest factory range forms the centre of the main frontage (Fig 28). The frontage is of three-bays and three storeys. It is constructed of coursed limestone rubble; there does not appear to be any distinct break with the stonework of Brookfield suggesting the first two storeys are part of the original linear arrangement depicted on the 1884 map (Fig 3). The gable is shaped and has ashlar terminal kneelers and copings and a finial. A roundel above the second storey windows contains the inscription: *Rebuilt/1889/WC*.



Fig 28: The 1889 range and later gatehouse block



Fig 29: The factory complex, looking north-west

There are two window openings in the ground floor, the left hand bay is blank and there is no evidence of a blocked opening. The window in the central bay has been blocked some time previously and window lights painted on. This window retains a flat stone arch lintel as those surviving on Brookfield. Just below the window opening, to the left, is a square niche. The window in the right, in common with the remainder of windows on this block, has been replaced with an ashlar stone lintel. The window itself is a horned sash of 12-lights. The first floor windows are the same, but are all un-horned sashes, the two left-hand bays are 16-lights, while the right hand bay is 12-lights. The second floor windows are all 2-light casement, with the upper portion opening outwards. Historic photographs indicate that these were 16-light sash windows until at least 1950.

The range extending back from the frontage is of ten bays. The north-western and south-eastern elevations of the building are distinct from each other and will be described separately. The north-western elevation is primarily of red brick laid in English bond with a cogged eaves course. However, where this side of the factory is visible over the roof of Brookfield from the street, the brickwork is buff-coloured, including the cogged eaves (Fig 31). The roof on this side is of concrete tile.



Fig 30: The north-western elevation of the 1889 range, showing change in brickwork from first to second storeys, looking south-west

The ground floor windows were largely hidden behind the modern steel and breezeblock extension, but were a mixture of metal and timber casements of 8 or 9-lights, with the central 2 lights opening outwards on a restricted hinge. The window openings have flat brick arches and sills of blue engineering brick with chamfered edges. There are a pair of wooden ledged and braced doors occupying the two bays closest to the frontage beneath a segmental brick arch, which has been blocked with a single course of brick at the top. Though the doors may not be original, this access through into the inner yard of factory is shown on the earliest maps of the building.

On the first floor, the windows of the first two bays have been blocked, although the brick arches are still visible. An inserted doorway has a concrete lintel and a pair of ledged and braced loading doors and gantry and pulley extending out. The remaining seven window openings have flat brick arches of two courses, the upper course of headers, the lower of stretchers, with blue engineering brick sills with chamfered edges. The windows are 6-light timber casement, the top two of which open outwards on a restricted hinge.

There is a change in brick colour to the second floor on this elevation, suggesting this storey was added at a different date (Fig 30). However, this change was not observed in other elevations. The window openings of the second storey have flat brick arches with blue engineering brick sills with chamfered edges; the windows are all 2-light casements. The upper light on each opens outwards on a restricted hinge. The window of the second bay from the frontage has been modified with a timber lintel and sill.



Fig 31: North-western elevation of factory, looking south-east, showing change in brick colour

Where visible the south-eastern elevation is of buff brick laid in Flemish bond. The ground floor has been subject to considerable alteration by later modifications to the factory, particularly the construction of the warehouse area to the south-east. Most of the window openings have been blocked or modified and the brickwork has been painted white. Where visible, the window openings had flat brick arches and sills of bullnose blue engineering brick. An entrance into rooms G4 and G5 has been knocked through the original elevation.

On the first floor the flat brick arches of the windows are of blue engineering brick (Fig 32, range to right of photograph). The windows have been shortened, being partially blocked at the base, probably when the warehouse was constructed. The original sills are still visible just below the roofline of the warehouse roof. These sills were replaced with timber ones. The remaining windows are 4-light casements with the upper two lights opening outwards on restricted hinges. Rectangular cast iron air bricks are present between many of the windows. The second storey windows have the

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same flat arches of blue engineering brick with chamfered sills of the same. The windows are 2-light casements, the upper light opening outwards on a restricted hinge. The windows of the rear bay and a half have been blocked/partially blocked by the construction of the red-brick toilet block, which seems to have been inserted during the 20th century, probably to provide additional washroom facilities for the workforce. Above is a coggled eaves course. The roof on this side is of welsh slate; the only roof of the factory complex, apart from those of the north-light sheds, that has not been replaced by modern concrete tiles.



Fig 32: Rear of factory, looking south-west from gatehouse block

Rear range –possibly built 1879

A three-by-seven bay range to the rear of the 1889 range and on the same alignment. Red brick to the north-west and south-west elevations, buff brick to the south-east elevation. Windows with blue brick segmental heads and sills to the south-west and south-east, red-brick segmental heads and sills to the north-west elevation and a coggled eaves course. Hipped roof to rear, concrete tiles with a slightly lower ridge than the adjoining range. There were no clear exterior views of this range due to the modern steel and breezeblock extension abutting the yard elevation. An entrance into the factory has been inserted at the rear of the range via a pair of ledged and braced loading bay doors (Fig 33). The doorway is supported by an RSJ.



Fig 33: The possible 1879 range, with inserted loading bay doors and modern steel and breezeblock extension adjoining

Post 1889 ranges

The gatehouse

The three-storey gatehouse block sits on the Wellingborough Road frontage and wraps around the south-eastern corner of the 1889 factory range, indicating that it was added at a later date, but was present by 1900. It has a blue brick base with rubble limestone above. The plain rubble limestone walls are recessed between two corner piers of alternating courses of ironstone and limestone above ground floor level. The quoins are ashlar. At the top of each pier is a lozenge motif. The parapet has ashlar copings and limestone and ironstone set in a chequerboard pattern. There are string courses at first and second floor height.

The voussiors of the windows have the same pattern of alternating ironstone and limestone. At the ground floor there is a pedestrian entrance with fanlight and a through-entrance to the former yard beyond; both openings have slightly dropped keystones. The central bay of the first floor is occupied by a canted oriel window, a distinctive feature for director's offices in this period. Either side of this is a narrow window, each of which has an elongated keystone. There are two casement windows at second floor height.

To the rear, this range is of red brick. Much of the ground floor is obscured by the modern buildings now associated with Orbit. There is a single blocked window to the right of gateway with a segmental brick arch and bull-nosed brick sill. There are two segmental brick arched windows with bull-nose engineering brick sills at both first and second floors. The first floor windows have been replaced with single light patterned rolled casements, neither of which open. To the second floor are

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Crittall-type 8-light casements; a single light at the top opening outwards on one side and a 4-light opening outwards on the other.

A later addition was a further three-storey wing added to the rear of the south-west end of the rear range. It is set back two bays and projects five bays to the south-east, with three bays at the south-east gable. The south-eastern and south-western elevations are of orange brick with segmental brick arches and a stepped eaves course. The north-eastern elevation is of buff brick with an orange brick string course (of three courses) at window head height. The ground floor of the wing is open to the surrounding north light sheds and the first floor is supported on brick columns.

The window heads are also of orange brick. The sills of chamfered blue brick. The interior windows (those on the first floor of the south-west elevation) are 4-light timber casement windows; the upper two opening individually inwards. All the remaining outside windows are 25-light, curved headed Crittall-type casement windows, with an 8-light central opening which opens inwards (Fig 34). The roof is hipped with concrete tiles. A central chimney-stack survives on the northern elevation, adjacent to the lift shaft (Fig 32).



Fig 34: South-west elevation of added wing (S8 rear)

The three north-light sheds that enclose the southern and south-eastern ends of the factory were also built during this period. There are few accessible views of the shed walls from the exterior apart from at eaves level, where it is clear they were constructed from red brick. The ranges are gabled to the south-east and the southern and central ones are gabled to the north-west. Where the northern range meets the main factory, the roof is hipped. The south-western facing part of each roof is glazed, the north-eastern is of slate, with clay ridge tiles.

Factory Interior

Ground floor

G1-gatehouse entrance

The main entrance into the office areas of the factory, although the décor is very plain, with painted brick walls and red painted quarry-tiled floor (Fig 35). The door is a six-panelled modern replacement with a curved headed fanlight above. The glass in the fanlight is plain. On the western wall is a small blocked window with flat arched head. At the rear of the hallway is a small utility cupboard which has a 4-light horned sash window that has been blocked from the other, factory side. The wooden newel post of the staircase is plain, as are the balusters and handrail. The red-painted stairs emulate a stair-carpet. There is no access to any other ground floor area from here.



Fig 35: Gatehouse hallway, G1

G2- workshop

This room is partitioned off from the remainder of the factory working area, but occupies part of one of the north-light sheds (Fig 36). It has black and white chequerboard tiled floor, with concreted areas that are probably where machines once stood.



Fig 36: G2, workshop, looking east

G3- factory floor

This area comprises the three bay north-light sheds, which are aligned north-west to south-east, and the ground floor of much of the possible 1870s block, which is open to the north-light sheds and supported by brick columns (Fig 37). That half of the 1870s block facing onto the yard area was inaccessible during the survey, but formed a separate room.

The glazed roofs face south-west, the north-western side is tiled in slate. All three ranges were brick-built with concrete floors. Intermediate cast iron columns support the roof structure. The roof is of queen post truss construction. The roof is glazed on the north side with probably Trafford tile on the south. Blocked segmental arched windows are visible in the south-east, north-east and south-west elevations, to provide extra light to the factory floor (Fig 38). The overhead belt drives, as shown in historic photos of the shoe factory, have been entirely stripped out.

The main entrance to this part of the factory is via a pair of ledged and braced loading bay doors from the yard area.



Fig 37: G3, looking north-west to 1870s range



Fig 38: Blocked windows in the south-eastern elevation of north-light sheds

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G4 and G5

These rooms are accessed via an inserted opening through the south-eastern wall of the 1889 factory block. The opening is supported by an RSJ and has been partially blocked at the top. A former access into room/s to the south has been blocked, but was marked by a concrete threshold. The dividing wall between this area and G4 is a modern partition, while the entrance into G5 is through a brick wall and appears to be an original opening.

G4- workshop

Blue-painted brick walls on the western and northern sides, with a modern partition, also painted blue on the south side (Fig 39). An RSJ supports the roof above the modern partition. Two 8-light Critall-type windows on the yard frontage, the two central lights opening outwards individually. Heating-duct pipes along the yard frontage wall and at ceiling height. Concrete floor and suspended ceiling. A modern sink unit is present on the northern wall.



Fig 39: G4, looking west

G5-workshop

The walls of this room are entirely of painted brick and it appears to be an original space within the 1889 factory (Fig 40). The floor is of concrete. A single timber joist, aligned east to west across the room, is supported by a single timber upright. There are two 9-light casement windows overlooking the yard area, the northern window has been modified, with brickwork removed beneath the lower left-hand light, probably to allow access for a belt-drive or similar. Two further window openings survive in the south-eastern side of the room, much of the timber framed window had been removed in one and the other had been lowered, so that the bull-nose engineering brick sill to the

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outside had been lost. There is a ledged and braced door, beneath a timber lintel, in the north-eastern corner of the room, leading into the loading bay area to the north. Heating-duct pipes are present below the windows and just below ceiling height. A modern steel framework has been inserted at the western end of the room, along with a steel base for machinery.



Fig 40: G5, looking north-west

Rooms G6, G7 and G8

These rooms occupy the frontage of the 1889 factory block, but appear to preserve the rear and eastern walls of the earlier building and are in places similar in build to the early parts of Brookfield to the east (Fig 41). The walls, where visible beneath the paint and plaster, were a mixture of stone rubble and brick, the brick likely to be part of the 1889 rebuild.



Fig 41: Gateway through the 1889 range, with surviving elements of the earlier building



Fig 42: Entrance into G7 from gateway; scale 1m

G6-WC

The entrance into this room is via a short hallway and a 6-light door with simple rectangular fanlight above. The glass is patterned for privacy. There is a 9-light casement window also with patterned glass, inserted into brickwork and therefore part of the 1889 rebuild. The exterior has a bull-nose brick sill and a timber lintel. There is a red quarry-tile floor.

G7-plant room

This L-shaped room is accessed via a ledged door from the loading bay area to the south. The doorway has a timber lintel and has a splayed reveal. There are three steps down into the room, one of concrete, the second two of brick. There is a further ledged doorway into the gateway area to the east, this also has a timber lintel, which is shared with a small window to the south, which also overlooks the gateway area. The south side of the window has a splayed reveal internally and, externally, a chamfered red-brick sill. A further window to the south has been blocked and was only partially visible. It was possibly a former timber casement and a similar chamfered red-brick sill. The blocked window visible in the centre of the frontage was not visible inside.

The floor is of octagonal tiles at the southern end, which change to plain 9" tiles after c 2m (Fig 43). Subsequently there is a drop in floor level and the flooring changes to brick. The underside of a former staircase is present in the western corner of the room (Fig 44); the base of the staircase would have been in G6, but there was no surviving evidence for its continuation. A doorway, blocked with brick, was evident halfway along the western wall of the room (Fig 44). There was an exposed timber joist crossing the room from east to west. The joist was not sawn and probably dates to the earlier building.



Fig 43: G7, octagonal floor tiles; scale 50cm

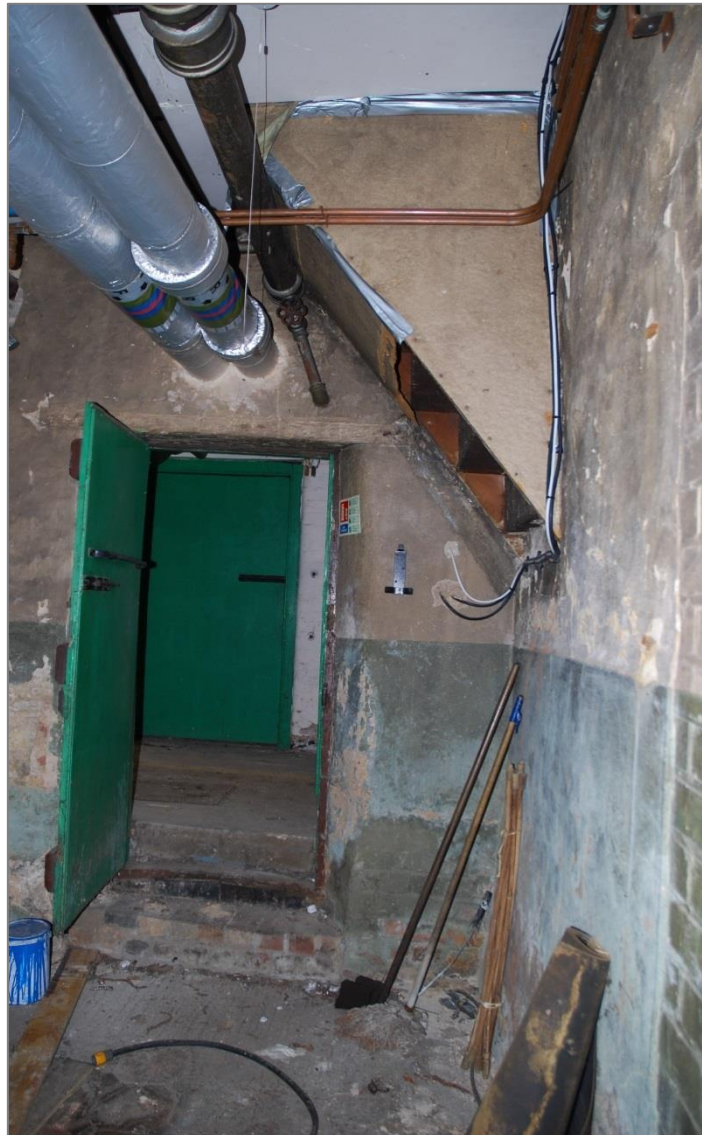


Fig 44: G7, south doorway and underside of stairs
(blocked doorway just visible on right-hand side of photograph)

The room has various pieces of plant, including a sprinkler system from the Automatic Sprinkler Co, Radcliffe as well as the large furnace for the hot air heating system that heated the main factory floors. These pieces of equipment may originally have been installed in the late 19th century phases of factory development, although the furnace had been later remodelled. A smaller gas boiler heated the office areas in the frontage ranges.

G8- washroom

Entrance is via the loading bay to the rear of this range and a short corridor with a red-quarry tiled floor. A 6-light door with simple rectangular fanlight and a red quarry-tile floor. A 12-light horned sash window overlooking the Wellingborough Road. There are several benches lining the room and a sink beneath the window.

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First floor of the factory

F1-First floor hallway

Accessed via stairs from G1, providing access to interior hallway, F2, via a modern door. Single light window with patterned rolled glass overlooking the rear of the factory. Rear of gatehouse block.

F2- interior hallway

Access from F1 and into F3. In the west wall there is access into the earlier factory range. A single window as in F1.

F3-office

This office lies on the first floor of the gatehouse block. The windows are the canted oriel window, which has a 4-light sash window in the centre and 2-light windows either side; all are horned (Fig 45). There is a raised timber dais in within the bay, and a small cast iron radiator under the main window. Either side of the bay is a small 2-light sash window, also horned; the window on the south side is hidden by an inserted cupboard.

There is a decorated cast iron radiator on the rear wall of the room, adjacent to the doorway, which is a modern door. The ceiling is decorated with simple raised plaster mouldings on a grid pattern.



Fig 45: Office, F3, with canted oriel window

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F4- Office

An office and staircase to the second floor, lying within the 1889 factory block. It has a sash window of 16 lights, unhorned, overlooking the Wellingborough Road. Heating-duct pipes below the window and along the eastern wall have been enclosed. No original features survive.

F5-Office

It has two sash windows, one of 16 lights and the other of 12 lights, both un-horned, overlooking the Wellingborough Road. Heating pipes below the windows. This office also lies in the 1889 range. Just inside the office entrance is an under-stairs cupboard.

F6- factory

A long rectangular space taking up the entire width of the 1889 range extending south-west from the frontage (Fig 46). There are seven windows overlooking the yard area and eight opposite, as described from the exterior. All the internal window reveals have bull-nosed bricks to vertical edges. The floor is of knotty pine floorboards and a blocked hoist hatch is visible in the north-eastern part of the room. The ceiling is supported on five boxed in RSJs.

A gantry and pulley at the north-western end of the room, at one end is an RSJ which is marked 'Appleby-Frodingham England 8x8'. The company was formed in 1912 when the Appleby Ironworks was taken over by the Frodingham Ironworks. They joined with various Rotherham based steelworks in 1918 to form the United Steel Companies Ltd, indicating that this was fitted at some point during the period 1912-18, and may indicate factory growth or specific orders to meet national needs during World War I. The gantry exits the building through secondary double doors which have replaced an eighth window, as described from the exterior. There are a number of work benches around the walls and heating pipes along the yard-side wall, as well as modern partitions.



Fig 46: Room F6, looking south-west, 1912-18 gantry above. Arrow marks blocked hoist hatch

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F7-factory

This room occupies the probable 1870s range. It is divided into two spaces by shelving units. There are six windows of 6 lights to the yard area and three wider windows of 6 lights to the rear (as described from the exterior). The ceiling is supported by two boxed-in RSJs and the floor is of knotty pine floorboards. Heating pipes extend around the three external walls of the room. There are no remaining fixtures or fittings within this area.

F8- factory

This room occupies the post 1889 range. The wall between F7 and F8 has been substantially removed and is supported by an RSJ. A further blocked in RSJ supports the ceiling of F8. There are four casement windows of 4-lights overlooking the interior of G3 to the south. A further three look out to the south-east; these are short arched headed casements of 2-lights. They are hidden from the exterior as they are obscured by the hipped roof of the north-light shed, but appear to have been partially blocked at the base. To the north there are two casements of 30-lights, with an 8-light panel in the centre opening inwards (Fig 47). The floor is of knotty pine floorboards. There are various work-benches and shelves around the perimeter of the room. In the northern part of the room is a WC and to the west a further exit to the lift shaft.



Fig 47: Room F8, looking north-east

Second floor of the factory

As on the first floor, the rooms along the factory frontage appear to have been offices, while the larger rooms to the rear were work-floors. The rooms on this floor had also been modified and largely stripped of original fixtures and fittings during the Stromag years. There was also significant modern partition.

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S3-Boardroom

A single large room comprising the entire upper floor of the gatehouse block (Fig 48). Three sides of wall panelled with fake veneer panels and there is a suspended ceiling. A further suspended ceiling had been inserted above, although elements of the roof were visible suggesting it was of king-post truss construction. The two windows looking out over the Wellingborough Road are both 2-light casements, each side opening, with monkey tail catches. Two further windows at the rear of the room were 8-light casements, half opening sideways and a single upper light on the opposite side opening outwards. Beneath each window was a cast iron radiator, painted gold.



Fig 48: Former boardroom, S3, looking west

S4- former post-room

A small room in the 1889 factory block, with a single 2-light casement window looking out onto the Wellingborough Road (Fig 49). There are enclosed heating ducts below the window and along the eastern side of the room. Entry is via a door, with four-lights of patterned, rolled glass in the upper half, from the second floor hallway. The remainder of the rear partition wall between the hallway and the room has a 6-light panel of the same glass in the upper half. The north-western partition wall, with room S5, has a 10-light glass panel in the upper half of rolled, patterned glass and a sliding door. The ceiling is partly gabled on the eastern side.

In the rear, south-eastern corner of the room is a double door cupboard, probably for stationary. Adjacent is a chimney breast, although there is no evidence of a former fireplace. In the north-eastern corner of the room is a small wooden cupboard with vertical trays hung on the wall; this may be a survivor of the earlier shoe factory.



Fig 49: Room S4, post-room, looking north-east

S5-office

A simple room with two 2-light casements opening onto Wellingborough Road. Entry into the room is via a single light door from the hallway and the sliding door from S4. Enclosed heating ducts are present beneath the window and along the north-western wall. Half gabled roof on the western side. Built-in, full-height cupboards along the rear wall, with sliding door.

The hallway is located in the part of the factory built in 1889; there are no supporting walls between the rear and frontage.

S6-offices

This former factory area has been sub-divided into a number of smaller office areas with modern partitions (Fig 50). There is a modern suspended ceiling and the RSJs are boxed in. Much of the lower

half of the walling has been boxed in and the windows have been shortened. There is, in short, very little, if anything, of the original factory fixtures and fittings remaining in this area.



Fig 50: Room S6, looking south-east

The roof of this part of the factory was of queen-post truss construction.

S7-offices

This area had also been utilised as offices, divided by modern partitions. It is the rear factory range, thought to have been built in 1879. There is almost nothing remaining of the original fixtures and fittings pertaining to the shoe factory.

The wall between S6 and S7 was painted brick on S7 side. The first bay on the north-western side of the building was occupied by a small single light window that appeared to be original to the build. The adjacent window, of four lights was typical of those on this side of the range, although a lintel wider than the window indicated past modification. There is a brick pier, with bullnose brick quoins adjacent to the window. The access between S6 and S7 had been partially blocked by modern partitions, but changes in brickwork visible in S7 indicated partial closure of the original wider access.



Fig 51: Northern sub-division of S7; showing small window and brick pier

S8-Storage and rest rooms

The second storey of this range had been used as storage and had had a small canteen added (Fig 52). It, too, had been subject to modern partition and suspended ceilings had been fitted.

All the original windows, Critall-type with curved heads and 30-lights, had been retained. The storage area is the only part of the range where the knotty pine floorboards were visible, elsewhere the flooring is linoleum. A lavatory, with a ledged and braced door and smaller 2-light window with rolled and patterned glass, may be an original space, although the fittings were modern. Heating ducts are present around the southern, eastern and part of the northern walls, ending at the entrance to the lavatory.



Fig 52: Canteen area in range S8, looking north-east

Conclusions

Archaeological building recording was undertaken of a former boot and shoe factory on Wellingborough Road, Rushden. The original house was probably built in the early 19th century and was initially a domestic tenement with bake-house and orchard. The property was bought by William Claridge in 1875, but appears to have been already occupied by him and used as a shoe factory at an earlier date. At least one warehouse had been constructed by 1879 and by 1884, there appears to have been considerable modification to the original tenement. Further major phases of building and modification were undertaken until the turn of the 20th century, but thereafter there was little change to the factory complex.

The factory was bought by Stromag, an engineering firm in 1969 and remained with that company until recently. Much of the internal evidence relating to the buildings origins as a shoe factory had been lost during Stromag's long tenure and most of the interiors were subdivided, with many windows being blocked.

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