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**Former Castle Acoustics
Shortbank Road, Skipton
North Yorkshire**

Skipton
SD 9948 5157

*Archaeological Photographic
Building Recording and Assessment*

Report No. 1758

May 2008

C L I E N T

Burley Property Developments LLP

**Former Castle Acoustics,
Shortbank Road, Skipton**

SD 9948 5157

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Building Recording and Assessment**

NYCC HER	
SNY	12005
ENY	4206
CNY	6714
Parish	5063
Rec'd	04/06/08

Summary

In advance of demolition and redevelopment, a group of remaining sheds on the site of the former Park Mill were recorded photographically and the buildings were assessed in terms of phase and use. A development progression from west to east was noted with three clear phases of shed expansion from the 1880s to the early 20th century. Later additions to the sheds included a two storey office and storage areas. Historical research indicated Park Mill was established towards the end of the 19th century by John Wilkinson as a cotton weaving and finishing mill. The complex was put to other uses in the later 20th century and was last used in the early 21st century to manufacture audio speakers under the name of Castle Acoustics.

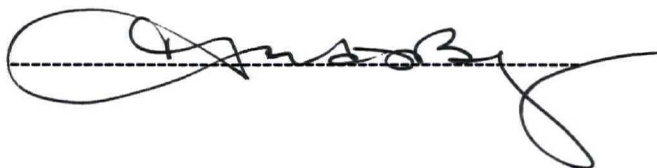


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Report Information

Client: Burley Property Developments LLP
Address: Township School, Main Street, Burley-in-Wharfedale, Ilkley
Report Type: Archaeological photographic building recording and assessment
Location: Castle Acoustics, Shortbank Road, Skipton
County: North Yorkshire
Grid Reference: SD 9948 5157
Period(s) of activity represented: Post-medieval, Modern
Report Number: 1758
Project Number: 3174
Site Code: FCS
Planning Application No.: 63/2007/7456
Date of fieldwork: October 2007
Date of report: May 2008
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Authorisation for
distribution:



ISOQAR ISO 9001:2000

Certificate No. 125

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Acknowledgements

Archaeological Services WYAS wish to acknowledge the collaborative role of the Planning Section of Craven District Council and the North Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service in the production of this report.

1 Introduction

Archaeological Services WYAS undertook Building Recording and Assessment work at the Former Castle Acoustics, Shortbank Road, Skipton on Thursday 18th October 2007. The work was undertaken at the request of Ian Ackroyd, Contracts Manager, and Michael Wormald, Chairman, of Burley Property Developments LLP.

Archaeological Building Recording and Assessment was required as part of a condition prior to the demolition of the buildings in advance of development (Planning Decision Notice 63/2007/7456).

A photographic survey and assessment was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation for Building Assessment provided by the County Heritage Section of North Yorkshire County Council.

The buildings comprise sheds, formerly part of the late 19th century Park Mill. The part of the building in separate ownership adjacent to Shortbank Road has not been included in this report.

The initial data were processed during December 2007 and January 2008 at Archaeological Services offices at Morley and an archive and report were produced.

Site Location and Topography

The former Park Mill, now Castle Acoustics, faces an open yard adjacent to Shortbank Road to the north-east and Waller Hill Beck to the north, centred at National Grid Ref. SD 9948 5157.

2 Aims and Objectives

The building recording and assessment at the former Castle Acoustics has two aims. The first is to identify and record by means of photographs any significant evidence for the original and subsequent historical form and functions of the building, and to place this record in the public domain by depositing it with the North Yorkshire Historic Environment Record.

The second aim is to analyse and interpret the buildings as an integrated system intended to perform a specialised function.

3 Methodology

A risk assessment had been prepared in advance. This emphasised the need to take care when working at height. Particular care was to be taken when working within the sheds to avoid sharp objects and discarded materials. Care was taken to wear safety clothing and to avoid touching the building fabric or objects on the ground.

Following initial field work a site archive was produced and sent for approval by the Planning Section of Craven District Council on 7th December 2007.

Drawn survey

A drawn survey was not required but a rapid ground and first floor plan was produced to aid the positioning of photographic directions. Annotation was added to reference parts of the report.

Photographic record

A medium format (Mamiya RB 6x7cm) camera was used to record, in general and in detail, the interior and exterior of the standing structures and their environs. The record was black and white using Kodak Professional TRI-X 220 film. This was supplemented by the production of a small number of 35mm colour transparencies which form part of the project archive. Parts of the buildings were recorded using 35mm black and white film.

4 Historical Background

Historical research was undertaken in November 2007 and involved the consultation of historic maps, trade directories and secondary sources available at Bradford Library and Ilkley Library.

Skipton is an ancient market town in the district of Craven and the Honor of Skipton (White 1854). It is located 10 miles north-west by north of Keighley and 25 miles west-north-west of Leeds (White 1854). Skipton was an important centre for cotton production in particular (Giles and Goodall 1992, 5), but worsted manufacture also took place (White 1854).

Map Regression

First Edition Ordnance Survey, 1854 (Fig. 3): There does not appear to be any structures present in the location of Park Mill (Castle Acoustics).

Ordnance Survey 25 inch, 1909 (Fig. 4): Park Mill is shown and annotated on this map.

Ordnance Survey 25 inch, 1946 (Fig. 5): The same structure is depicted on this map, but with an extension to the eastern end of the building.

Trade Directories

Post Office, 1861, Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire: Wilkinson, John Richard, Cotton Spinner

Kelly, 1881, Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire: Wilkinson, John Richard and Son, Primrose Mills, Embsay, Skipton, Cotton Spinners and Manufacturers

White, W., 1894, Directory of the City of Leeds followed by a trades directory of the whole of the clothing district: Wilkinson and Son, Park Shed, Newmarket Street and at Nelson, Skipton, Cotton Weavers

Kelly, 1908, Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire: Wilkinson, John, Park Shed, Skipton

Kelly, 1917, Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire: Wilkinson, John, Coloured Cotton Goods Manufacturer, Park Shed, Skipton

Kelly, 1920, Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire: Wilkinson, John, Coloured Cotton Goods Manufacturer, Park Mill, Skipton

Kelly, 1927, Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire: Wilkinson, John (Manchester and Nelson) Ltd, Coloured Cotton Goods Manufacturer, Park Mill, Brougham Street, Skipton

Historical Summary

Castle Acoustics was previously known as Park Mill, Park Shed or Wilkinson's Mill. It was built in 1889 by Thomas Wilkinson (<http://www.skiptonweb.co.uk/history/mills.asp>), although the trade directories only mention a John Wilkinson. It is probable that the first John Wilkinson (Kelly 1881) was Thomas's father, whilst the second (from 1908 onwards) was his son. This mill is unusual in that it is the only mill in Skipton not to be built right next to the canal (<http://www.skiptonweb.co.uk/history/mills.asp>). It functioned as a cotton mill as attested by the trade directories. It is uncertain when the extension to the mill occurred, but must have been sometime between 1910 and 1949 according to the mapping.

5 Building Description

The property known as Castle Acoustics comprises the greater remaining part of Park Mills. The building has developed over a number of years; the older part comprises seven and one half bays of sheds on the western side. The sheds are five bays deep. On the eastern side,

developed post-1909, are further sheds and a later two storey structure occupying an angled plot at the apex of Shortbank Road and the lane running up to Brougham Street. More recent additions include a two-storey triangular block attached to the northern wall and a small single storey block of toilets to the west on the same side. A culverted water course running east to west passes under part of the building adjacent to Shortbank Road. The building will be described first externally and then internally.

External Appearance

The description starts at the northernmost point with the later two-storey addition. The external wall is of stone and faces north-east. At the projecting northern corner is an arrangement of door and blocked window features separated by monolithic head bands, sills and architraves. Within the first-floor stone blockings are inserted modern windows (Photograph 1). The top of the wall has a hidden parapet with stone copings. The doorway on the ground-floor has chamfered reveals and a double centre opening with a wooden door (Photograph 2). Beyond the valley fall-pipe are a number of first-floor features. A central stone-blocked square opening is flanked by ornate ventilator grilles. Occupying a slightly higher position is a cast-iron bolting plate for an internal transmission bracket (Photograph 3). To the east is a window opening with a two-over-three frame and small ceramic ventilators below. Further to the east, and probably of earlier date is the angled gable of a two-pitch shed (Photograph 4), the second gable being hidden by the later two-storey structure. Adjoining the shed at its north-east corner is the quoined north-west corner of a later two-storey structure (Photograph 6). On this façade the structure has openings to both floors. At first-floor level are six equally spaced window openings, three with original two-over-three top-opening casements and three later two-over-one top-opening casements. From the east on the ground-floor are four pairs of twin window openings all with two-over-three frames. To the north-west is a tall door opening with two windows of differing widths beyond (Photograph 5). The tapered point of the structure has a truncated flat eastern face with a wide wagon entrance (Photographs 7 and 8).

The south-facing elevation runs the length of the back lane between Shortbank Road and Brougham Street. At the eastern end is the rear of the two-storey structure; it is interesting to note that this elevation is faced entirely in brick. At ground-floor level are six equally spaced square window openings with stone heads and sills and three-over-four frames (Photograph 8). At first-floor level are five erratically spaced smaller window openings with more recent single pane frames (Photograph 9). Towards the western end of the two-storey structure, above the tops of the first floor windows, are two cast-iron hinged hatch covers (Photograph 10). Both are of similar design and have a cast inscription which reads 'J. VARLEY IRON FOUNDER SKIPTON'. The twin gables of the double pitched shed follows to the west (Photograph 11). At the western corner is a large square patress plate with four through-bolts. Along the line of the wall are eight cast-iron plates each with two through-bolts. The position of these features is indicative of the likely presence of transmission brackets on the inner wall face. To the west the long, low brick wall of the east to west aligned sheds has a

continuous gutter supported on a series of moulded brick corbels (Photograph 25). At the eastern end of the wall are two small window openings with one-over-one frames (Photograph 26). To the eastern side of the emerging dividing wall and straight-joint are two blocked window openings, whilst to the west of the straight-joint is a blocked doorway (Photograph 27). All shed roofs, where observed, are clad with slate.

Moving round to the front-facing northern elevation, to the west of the later projecting two-storey structure is a ramped stair leading to a side door into the building (Photographs 12 and 15). The facing stone wall of the east to west aligned sheds has within it a number of twinned ashlar blocks with bolting and plate positions. These are interspersed and possibly related to a number of cast-iron brackets, each with two through-bolts to support internal brackets (Photographs 13 and 16). Projecting from the wall is the culverted beck that runs under the building (Photographs 14 and 15a). Beyond the line of the beck is a modern roller-shutter door with a straight-joint on its western side (Photographs 17 and 19). The corner of the adjacent earlier shed is quoined. A further taking-in door lies to the west. Projecting from the wall which it butts against is a later toilet block. Most of the structure has a lean-to roof, but a later addition is flat-roofed (Photographs 20 and 21). Two east-facing doors give entry to the later part (Photograph 18). On the far side of the lean-to toilet block is a narrow door leading into the shed, beyond which is a pronounced straight joint with ashlar quoins to either side (Photograph 22). Immediately to the west is a recently installed wide roll-door with concrete lintel (Photograph 23). Interestingly, the door is set into what must be a remnant internal brick gable, clearly belonging to a structure of earlier date than the shed wall which surrounds it (Photograph 24). To the side is a narrow modern doorway with concrete lintel and flat-panel door. At the end of this wall is the three-storey part of the mill that is in separate ownership (Photograph 24a).

Internal Appearance

For ease of description, the interior of the building has been allocated room numbers. For the most part the sheds comprise a grid of columns or stanchions supporting the structure of a saw-tooth roof. Room 1 is the earliest part of the shed and is accessed by a door set into the north wall (Photograph 59). This modern door is set within a wider blocked segmental-arched opening of earlier date. The inner faces of all walls are of brick. The room is lit by the saw-tooth roof; there are no windows in the external walls. A breeze-block wall divides the shed from the adjacent part of the building to the west that is in different ownership (Photograph 58). The room has been divided by a later brick partition wall (Photograph 60) on the eastern side, Room 2 originally being part of this early shed. Within this partition wall are two blocked doorways (Photographs 54 and 56) and a blocked cast-iron wall-box. This wall-box would have been used to transmit power into the room. Further evidence of power transmission is noted by the counter-shaft bracket-plates, which can be seen at regular intervals on the valley-gutter soffits (Photograph 61). The cast-iron columns have bolting plates, which may also indicate a power transmission line. These support steel beams, which

in turn support the valley-gutters and the upper roof structure (Photograph 63). A modern timber panel has also been added in the centre of the room, although this is not shown on plan as it is a temporary partition (Photograph 62).

Access to Room 2 is through two doorways in the east wall of Room 1, which is a later brick partition wall. The north wall also has a doorway leading into Room 3 (Photograph 66). The east wall is the original gable end of the shed and now has a doorway leading to Room 4. To the south of this is a brick-blocked opening with lintel above. The south wall has a modern fire exit accessed by steps (Photograph 53).

Room 3, which was previously part of Room 1, is a small porch area with a recently constructed mezzanine floor supported by steel stanchions and breeze-block in the north-east corner. The breeze-block wall abuts the earlier east wall. The north wall also has a large double door with a smaller door set within it. The west wall previously had an opening into Room 1, but this has been infilled recently by breeze-block (Photograph 67).

Room 4 is accessed internally by a doorway from Room 2 in the west wall. The west wall has clear evidence of its former use as an external wall with cast-iron fall pipes draining the valley gutters still extant. There is also a decorative modillioned band running along the top of the fall pipes (Photograph 52). At the north end of this wall is a large brick-blocked opening that previously contained a cast-iron wall-box (Photograph 69). This would have aided power transmission through the shed. The north wall has a modern roller-shutter entrance and a doorway leading to Room 10 (Photograph 79). An original cast-iron bracket that supports the side gutter has also been noted on this wall (Photograph 70). The east wall has an opening at the northern end leading to a toilet area (Photograph 76). To the south of this are several blocked openings. The first is a large breeze-blocked opening within the brick wall that would have provided access into Room 5 (Photograph 81). To the south of this is a small bricked-up opening that truncates a previously bricked-up, segmental-arched opening. Within this are two pattress plates indicating support (Photograph 51). Further south is a doorway into Room 5. In the south-east corner is a mezzanine store supported on steel stanchions (Photograph 49). A straight joint is visible in this corner. The south wall provides extra lighting through two one-over-one windows, although two blocked window openings are also identifiable further west in the brickwork. The roof is generally supported by steel stanchions (Photograph 50), but some of the original cast-iron columns are still present. There is at least one that is set on a raised stone plinth and has a single bolting face for a drive shaft hanger indicating power transmission (Photograph 48). The roof is supported by cast-iron roof trusses (Photograph 80) and has evidence of power transmission with the former position of a drive hanger (Photograph 78).

Room 5 was originally one room that has been subdivided by a glazed timber partition on the north side. The area to the south of the room is accessed through a door from Room 4 on the west wall. The south wall is lined with brickwork piers that help support the mezzanine floor above (Photograph 47). The east wall has a doorway leading to the loading bay in Room 6. A

possible wall-box has been noted in this wall on the first-floor (Photograph 43). The rest of Room 5 is accessed through the two doorways on either side of the glazed partition wall. The mezzanine area extends into this part of the room as well and is supported on a steel framework (Photograph 44). The north wall of this part of the room is a later timber partition wall with three doorways leading to the toilet area and offices. The east wall is a brick wall with two openings leading to Room 7 (Photograph 46). The roof is supported by steel 'I'-section stanchions and bolted steel roof trusses (Photographs 45 and 46).

Room 6 comprises a loading bay which is accessible internally from Room 5 or externally at the east end of the building through large wooden double doors (Photograph 39). The loading bay is lit by six three-over-four windows with softwood frames in the south wall. A stone step runs along the bottom of this wall (Photograph 40). The west wall has three doors, two of which access stairways to the first floor and one enters into Room 7. The wall between the two staircase doorways is a later softwood partition wall, which contains a timber-blocked opening. A stone step runs along the bottom of this wall (Photograph 41).

Room 7 is triangular in plan and was probably added at about the same time as the loading bay. The room has been subdivided by a later partially-glazed timber partition wall and a breeze-block wall, which has two staircases leading to a mezzanine floor (Photograph 36). Within this partition wall is a doorway and corridor leading to a lobby area at the north end of the room (Photograph 32). This north end has a small porch leading to the fire exit on the north-east wall (Photograph 33). The partition wall has another entranceway into a small office area below the mezzanine floor. The west wall has two openings into Room 5, one from the north end of the room and one from the south. The south wall partly consists of a timber partition wall and partly a brick wall (Photograph 35). The north-east wall provides lighting from the eight two-over-four windows with softwood frames (Photograph 38). The room is supported by a mixture of cast-iron columns and steel stanchions and steel beams (Photograph 35). The cast-iron columns have a single bolting face for a drive shaft hanger (Photograph 34).

The mezzanine floor is accessed by two wooden staircases (Photograph 37) and a lift (Photograph 94) and comprises eight rooms which extend over Rooms 6 and 7. They have been subdivided by timber walls (Photograph 83) and breeze-block walls (Photograph 84). The rooms have recently functioned as offices and a kitchen. The rooms by the north-east wall are lit by six casement windows (Photographs 88, 89 and 90). Those by the south wall are lit by five casement windows (Photographs 93 and 95). Three cast-iron columns have remained running through the central part of the mezzanine floor in a north-south direction (Photographs 86 and 87).

Rooms 8, 9 and 10 form another extension on the north side of the building, which is also triangular in plan. Room 8 is a toilet area with brick walls to the north-east and west wall (Photograph 30) and a breeze-block wall divides the ladies' and men's toilets (Photograph 31). The north-east wall has four cubicles with toilets and a window.

Room 9 was used as an office on the ground-floor with a staircase leading to the first floor on the north-west wall (Photographs 74). There is a double-doored fire exit on the north-east wall (Photograph 73). Above this is a kitchen and rest room on the first-floor (Photographs 28 and 29). The north-east wall is a brick wall with a pair of windows. The south wall is brick with ashlar blocks showing evidence of a straight joint, which relates to the first extension on the original shed. Within the bricked part of this wall is a patress plate (Photograph 29).

Room 10 is rectangular in plan with a an entrance door and large side-opening fire door in the west wall. To the east of this wall is a later breeze-block store room (Photograph 71). A concrete machine bed lies on the floor in the south-east corner (Photograph 72). Concrete steps in the south wall lead to a basement area.

6 Phasing

The earliest evidence of building on the site is the remnant brick gable wall incorporated into the northern wall of the early shed. It is clear that this must belong to a now demolished structure that extended beyond top the north. It has to pre-date the shed in which it has become incorporated, which was probably built by John Wilkinson in the early 1880s, although it is unlikely to be earlier than the second half of the 19th century. It may have stood long after the shed construction, and seems to appear on the Ordnance Survey plans of both 1909 and 1946.

The first major extant phase is the five by four and one half bay (originally more, but contained within the part of the site in separate ownership, therefore not inspected) north-light shed of the early 1880s. The east wall of this shed shown in Room 4 (Photograph 52) was originally external as the fall-pipes from the side gutter are still in place. Externally, a quoined straight joint is visible on the northern elevation, with a projecting wall and straight joint visible on the southern elevation (Photograph 26).

The next phase is a three-bay extension of the shed towards the east. Construction differs in the use of steel stanchions rather than cast-iron columns to support the structural beams and roofs (Photograph 50). This extension probably dates to around the turn of the century. Added to the east is a further five-bay double-pile shed aligned north to south. Interior structural elements are of steel. Dating from the early 20th century with later additions and subdivisions.

Of yet later date, possibly the 1920s, is the two-storey triangular block at the extreme east of the site. This may have originally incorporated first-floor office or storage areas. The ground-floor loading bay could be secondary to this phase. Possibly of similar date, with a facing north-east wall on the same alignment, is the small two-storey structure projecting towards the north. This appears to provide toilets and additional office or canteen space.

The latest additions to the site are the lean-to toilet block attached to the northern wall of the early shed and the later adjoining flat-roofed structure. The earlier part may belong to the

1930s or 40s; the later part may be 1960s or 70s. Some internal partition walls and raised mezzanine structures may be as late as the 1990s.

7 Discussion

The sheds at Park Mill were clearly only part of the wider mill complex, the remains of which has provided a useful record of the cotton industry in Skipton in the late nineteenth century. The reuse of former buildings within the structure of the sheds indicate that there were earlier structures on the site that may or may not have been connected with Park Mill. The development of the sheds with several extensions over the years suggests that the business was flourishing and there was a need for expansion. It may also indicate a change in function for the building as it is unknown when it ceased to produce textiles or what else it was used for.

The key features within the sheds are those that are indicative of the transmission of power, such as wall-boxes and drive shaft hangers. From the remaining evidence it is clear that the sheds were designed for weaving cotton and would have held a considerable number of powered looms. There is evidence in both the south and the north walls for the former positioning of main drive shafts. Cast-iron plates on both external walls would have held brackets to take line shafts. Bevel gears off the main drive shaft would transfer power at right-angles along north-south aligned counter shafts. There is evidence on the valley-gutter soffits for fixing plates at regular intervals. Equally, all of the cast-iron columns had side fixing plates to take counter-shaft brackets. The transfer of power from the countershafts to the individual machines was probably via a belt system (Giles and Goodall 1992, 160).