



**University of
Leicester**

Archaeological Services

**A Level 2 Historic Building Recording
on land off Upperton Road, Leicester**

NGR: SK 57927 03415

Andrew Hyam



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A Level 2 Historic Building Recording

On land off Upperton Road,

Leicester

NGR: SK 57927 03415

Andrew Hyam

Approved by:

Signed:



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A Level 2 Building Survey on land off Upperton Road, Leicester.

NGR: SK 57927 03415

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Summary

A Level 2 historic building survey was undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on land off Upperton Road, Leicester on the 18th of August 2014. The survey studied a former Great Central Railway engine shed which had subsequently been used as a wagon repair shop, warehouse and light engineering workshop. The now redundant building formed part of a complex of buildings and railway sidings to the south of the Leicester Central railway station which closed in 1969.

Although the building, which was constructed in 1897, has had a number of uses during its lifetime there have been remarkably few changes to the basic plan and fabric. The redevelopment entails a number of modifications to windows and other openings along with the insertion of a mezzanine floor to create a new first floor. The southernmost end of the building will also be shortened by approximately 7 metres.

The redundant building is currently undergoing conversion to provide a retail space at ground floor level and accommodation on the newly inserted first floor level. The survey was carried out paying specific attention to those parts of the structure which are to be demolished as part of the scheme.

The report and archive will be deposited with Leicester City Museums under Accession Number A25.2014

Introduction

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* this document forms the report for an historic building survey (Level 2) on a former railway building on land to the south of Upperton Road, Leicester. Level 2 historic building surveys are defined in the English Heritage guidance document – *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2006). Under planning application number 20132143 the building is currently being converted to light retail uses with a newly inserted upper floor as ancillary student accommodation. Modifications to the planning application to reduce the number of new openings required and to shorten the building prompted planning application 20140729. Planning permission has been granted for this application (20140729) with a draft Planning Condition 2 which states:

Before any works are undertaken in relation to the demolition a full recording survey shall be undertaken of the former railway building in line with a level 2 record as defined in Understanding Historic Buildings; a guide to good recording

practice (English Heritage 2006). The survey shall be submitted to the City Council as local planning authority for approval and then sent to the records office for archiving. (In the interests of the historic environment and in accordance with Core Strategy policy CS18).

Upperton Road lies in the Westcotes ward on the western side of the city centre (Fig. 1). The single storey building is located on the southern side of Upperton Road near to the bridge over the River Soar (Fig 2.). Until recently the building was screened by a long over bridge which ran for most of the length of Upperton Road. This bridge has now been removed resulting in the building forming a prominent landmark within a newly redeveloped area. The building lies to the east of a large block of student apartments and north of a range of smaller residential properties.

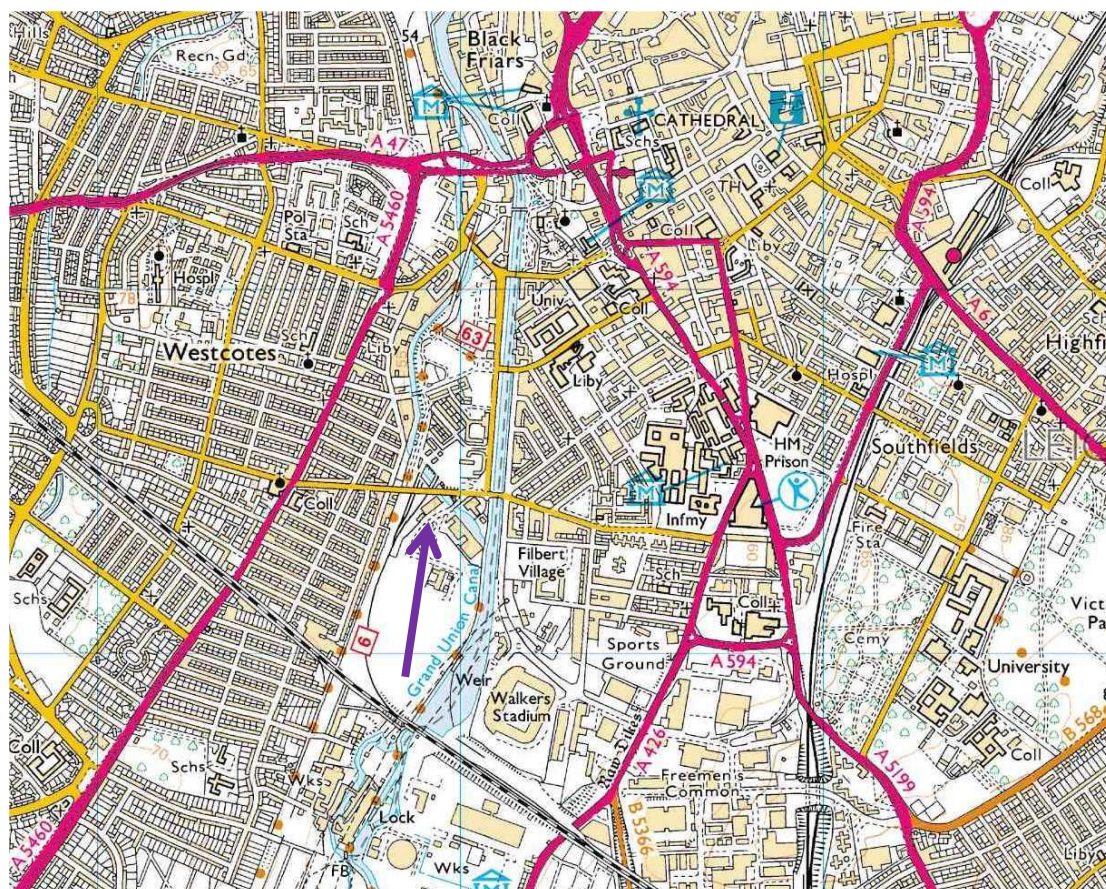


Figure 1 Site location

Map shows site before the surrounding redevelopment took place. Arrow shows building location
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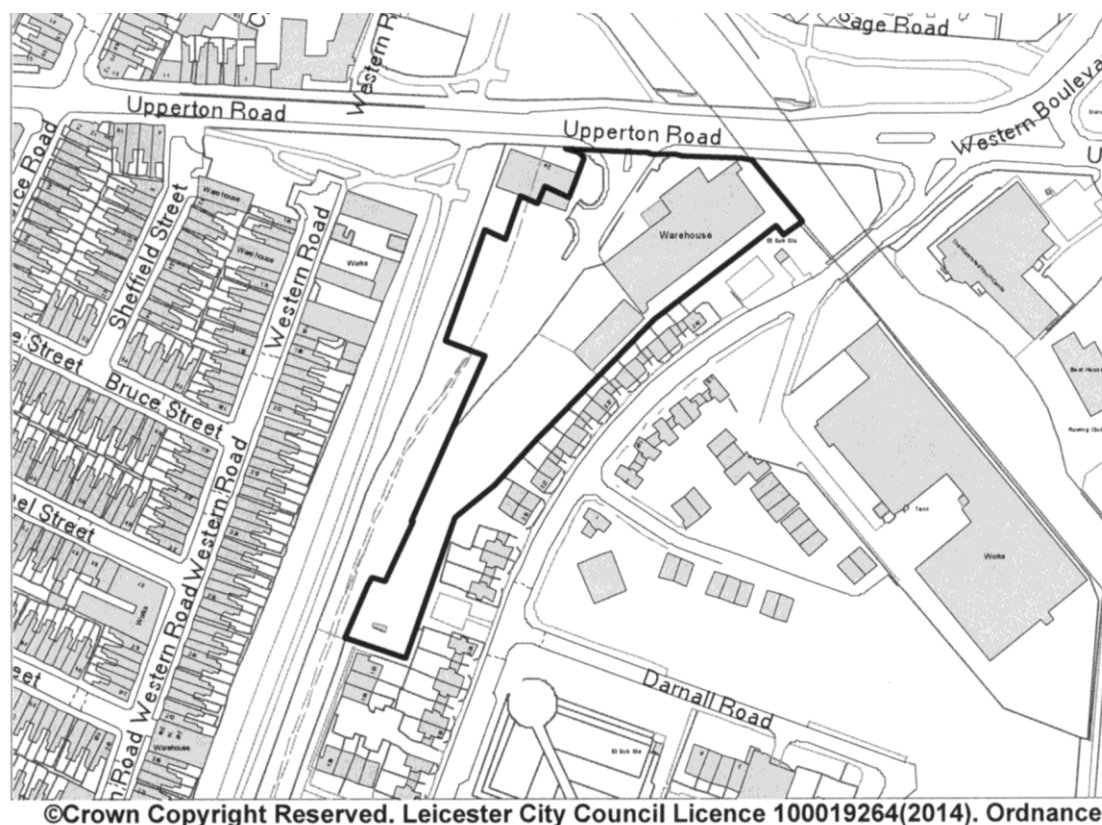


Figure 2 Site location

Background

The building was constructed in 1897 as part of the Great Central Railway's London Extension line. As the GCR was the last main line railways to be built in the country it had to cut through a number of newly developed late 19th century city suburbs in several towns. This was the case in Leicester where a series of brick-built viaducts had to be constructed in order to reach the new station to the north of the building survey site. However, the goods yard, of which this building was a component of, was to the south-west of the expanding suburbs. The 1888 First Edition Ordnance Survey map shows the whole area west of the River Soar as fields and open countryside with no sign of any of the current road system. The next edition of the map published in 1904 shows the entire goods yard and also the surrounding housing development and road system much as it survives today. The building is present and is labelled as being a four track engine shed set at an angle to the rest of the goods yard and main line which run to the west of it (Fig. 3). The plan outline of the building appears to be the same as at the present time although a small rectangular addition can be seen on the north-west side. A much larger engine shed was also built at the same time but in the southernmost end of the goods yard. The subsequent Ordnance Survey edition published in 1915 shows very little changes to the layout but it is no longer labelled as being an engine shed which may suggest a change of use. Certainly by the time of the 1930 Ordnance Survey map the building is identified as being a wagon repair shop which might indicate that the number of locomotives allocated to Leicester had reduced and that they could all be stabled in the larger shed. This may reflect the change in ownership from the Great Central Railway to the London and North Eastern

Railway in 1923. The next available map is from 1955, seven years after nationalisation, and the building is labelled as being a warehouse with only a single set of tracks entering it. The plan of the building still appears to remain in the same state. At this time however the main line was still a thriving railway and it was only in the 1960s when the whole rail network was being rationalised that the former Great Central line was run down and finally closed in 1969. A brief search of readily available records has yielded only a single photograph of the building seen at the back of a general shot of the goods yard (Fig. 4).

After closure the goods yard became part of a large scrapyard specialising in locomotive and carriage breaking. This continued up to the late 1980s and it is not clear what purpose the building was used for. During the 1990s CPH Thurmaston, a sheet metal fabricating company, was using the building as a light engineering premises with the open shed being ideal for such work. More recently the whole of the area has been redeveloped to create a mixed residential area and it is this new population which the redeveloped building will serve.

Surveyed drawings were commissioned by the client prior to any redevelopment work. These are shown in Figure 4 below to illustrate the elements being removed or demolished during the works. Most of the windows on the north-west side are to be lengthened but will retain their original width and arched heads. A mezzanine has been inserted into the building to create a first floor. The whole building is to be shortened slightly by removing the end two bays at the southern end. Drawings of the building as it exists on the 18th of August 2014 are shown later in this report in Figures 28 and 29.

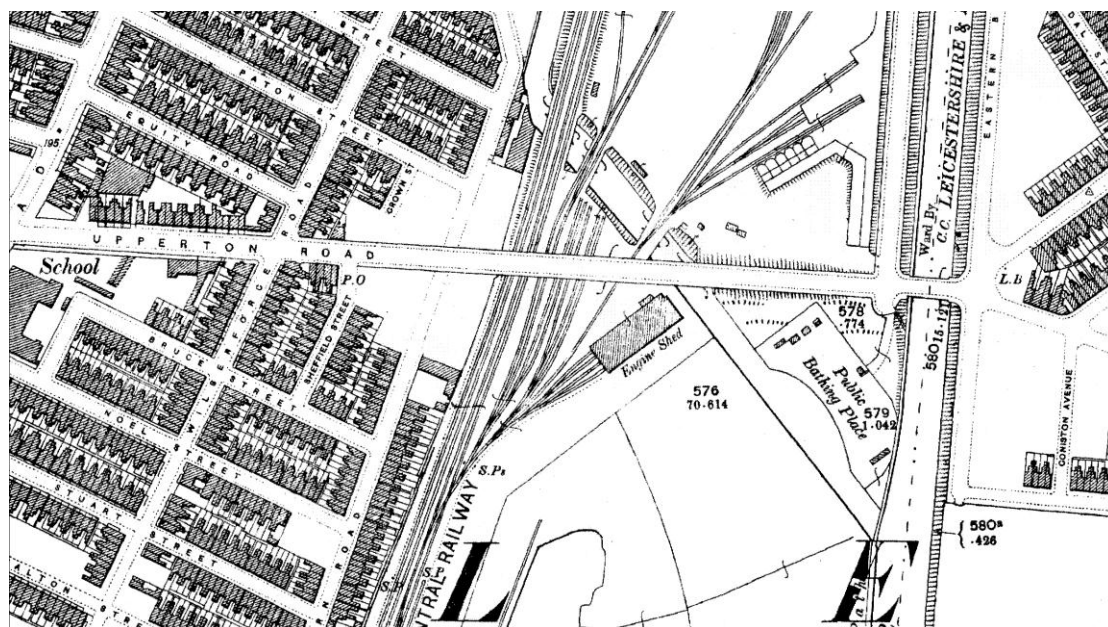


Figure 3 1904 Ordnance Survey map

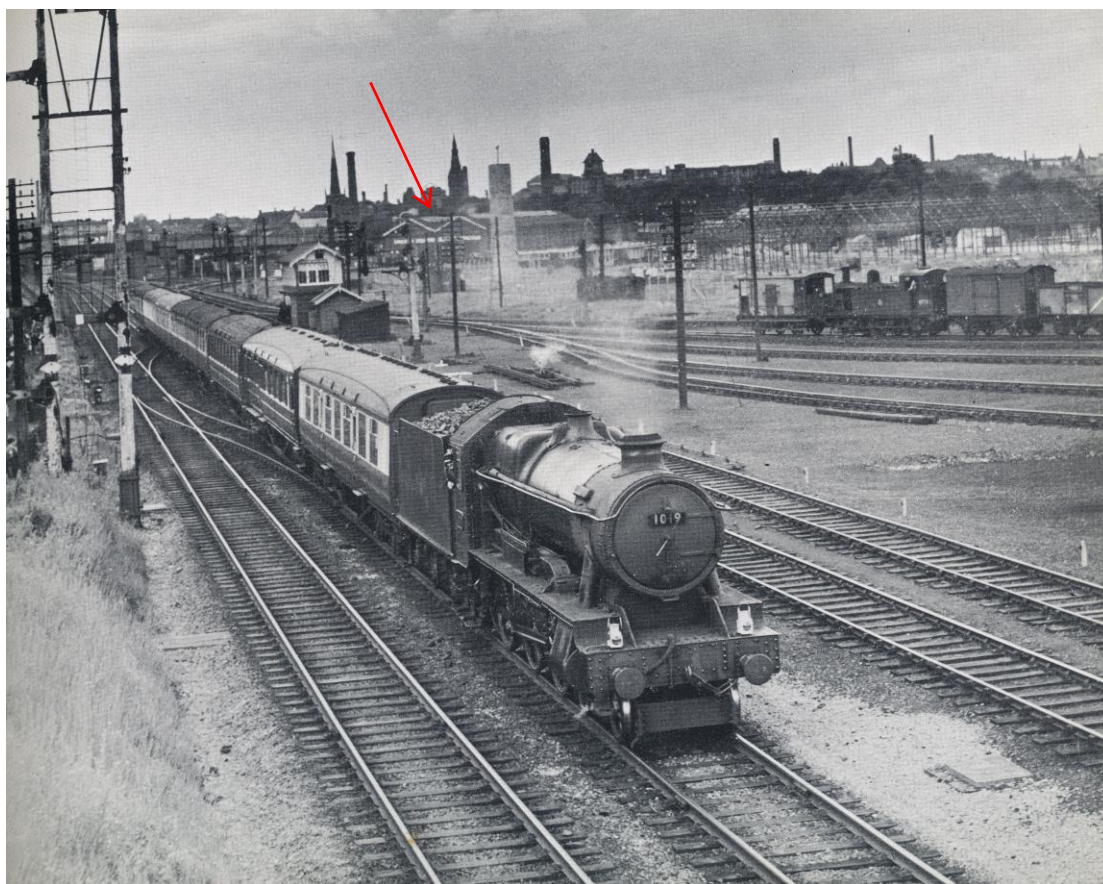


Figure 4 Leicester South goods yard looking north in the late 1950s
The building can be seen in the middle background highlighted by arrow
Photograph: C Walker

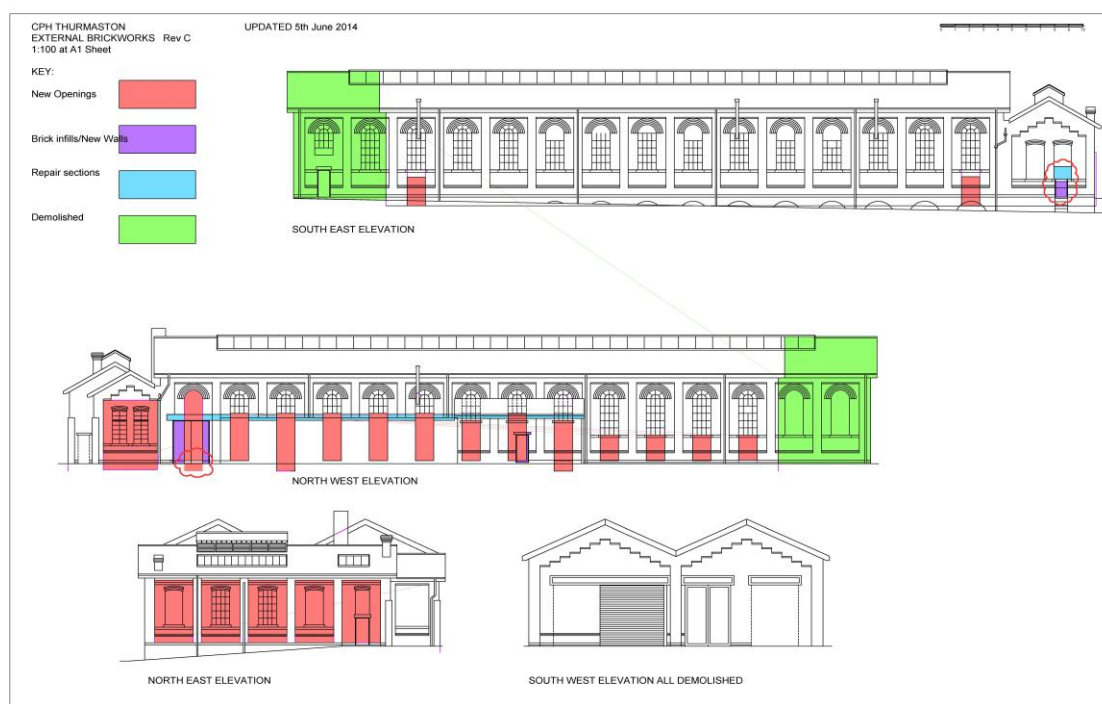


Figure 5 Client's survey drawings of proposed works
Updated June 2014

Objectives

The objectives of the historic building survey were:

- To provide a written, drawn and photographic record of all the buildings on site prior to the commencement of works with specific attention given to those elements proposed for demolition, conversion and/or alteration. This work to be undertaken to a standard that will allow the future interpretation of the building within the context for which it was originally designed and which subsequently evolved.
- To ensure the long-term preservation of the information through deposition of the record and a summary written report with an appropriate depository.

Methodology

Black and white 35mm photographs and digital colour photographs were taken throughout the survey. Notes and sketches were also made and scale site plans supplied by the client were used and modified to suit the purposes of this survey. The specific levels of detail used in the Level 2 survey followed the guidelines laid down in the RCHME (1996) and English Heritage (2006) specification, which were:

Survey Drawings

A measured survey of the buildings including floor plans and external elevations exists. Scaled printouts from the client's survey were verified on site for accuracy and amended as necessary with the addition of historic architectural details. These were then transferred to a CAD package and revised to conform to the architectural drawing conventions set out in the English Heritage guidelines.

The drawn record to comprise:

- Plans and elevation drawings (to scale or fully dimensioned) showing the location of any structural features of historic significance (eg blocked doors/windows)
- As necessary, sections to illustrate the vertical relationships within a building.
- Drawings to show the form of any architectural decoration.

Written record

A written record was maintained on site in the form of field notes and annotations on survey drawings.

The written component of the report was to include:

- The precise location of the building, by name or street number, civil parish, town etc and national Grid Reference
- A note on any statutory or non-statutory designations

- The date the record was made, the names of the recorders, and the location of project archive
- A brief statement describing the building's type or purpose, materials and possible dates of construction and alteration.
- A note of the buildings past and present relationship to its setting.
- A table of contents and list of figures or illustrations
- Full bibliographic and other references, or a list of sources consulted

Photographic record

A photographic record of the investigations was made to English Heritage Level 2, using a 35mm format SLR camera with black and white print film supplemented by colour digital photographs. The photographic record comprised:

- General views of the building in its setting or landscape
- A record of the building's exterior appearance.
- A record of interior space, fixtures and fittings

The photographic record made during the survey was also supplemented by the client's own digital photographs taken before any redevelopment took place (Figs 28-33). These photographs had the advantage of being unencumbered by the presence of scaffolding.

Results

As already noted the building now stands in isolation with no clear evidence that it once formed part of a large railway goods yard. The old Upperton Road bridge has been removed and the road rebuilt at ground level making the building clearly visible from the road (Fig. 6). To the west and south west is a newly constructed block of apartments. To the south is a small housing development. No other railway buildings survive nearby.



Figure 6 Relationship of building and surrounding developments
Looking south west. Photograph taken by client prior to redevelopment in August 2011

South-west facing elevation

As part of the redevelopment scheme this double gable-ended elevation will be completely demolished and shortened by approximately 7 metres. The elevation is built from red bricks laid in an English bond with chamfered blue bricks forming a low plinth that extends around the entire building (Fig. 7). At present there are three entrances reaching up to eaves height. The entrances have steel joist lintels which have been painted to create a slightly more decorative finish which appears to be original. The western entrance is of double width but, when first built, was a pair of single width doors as seen on the eastern side. Half of this has now been bricked up but care has been taken to match the bond and the chamfered blue brick detail. The two steel lintels above this have been bolted together and the original supporting pillar removed. The other two entrances are of single width with railway lines running into the central entrance. The central entrance has what appear to be the original doors which have been partially clad in steel sheet. The eastern doorway recently led into a breeze-block built shed which has now been removed. No doors survive but the door pintles remain in place (Fig. 8).



Figure 7 South-west facing elevation
Looking north east



Figure 8 South-west facing elevation. Detail of eastern doorway
Looking north. 1m scale

North-west facing elevation

The north-west elevation is formed of 15 repeated brick-built bays which create the main shed and two smaller gable ended structures attached to the north-east end (Figs. 9 and 10). The head of each window is built from four courses of brick headers with the top course being made of blue bricks (Fig. 11). The windows were originally metal framed but at the time of the survey only the end two bays which are to be demolished still retained their frames, which are hidden behind a temporary screen of breeze blocks. The remaining windows have been extended down almost to ground level to create larger window openings. Each window had a sandstone sill, most of which have now been removed. Blue brick detail continues round from the south-west facing elevation and at original sill height. Prior to redevelopment part of the northern end of this elevation was obscured by a small lean-to and a brick-built flat roofed structure. These were later additions to the building and had resulted in the partial blocking of nine windows at the northern end. A wide doorway had also been inserted at the northern end.

The roof is covered in Welsh slate with a raised skylight/vent running for most of its length although this is currently being removed. Presumably this would have been a larger structure to aid removal of smoke and steam when originally built as an engine shed. Most of the slates, with the exception of the southern end have been removed and re-laid. The north end buildings appear to be part of the original construction plan and are set at 90 degrees to the main shed. Brick detailing and materials remain the same (Fig. 12). At the time of the survey most of the windows and spaces between the brick pilasters had been removed.



Figure 9 Southern end of north-west facing elevation
Looking south. Photo taken by client prior in August 2011 to redevelopment



Figure 10 Northern end of north-west facing elevation
Looking east. Note extended length of new window openings

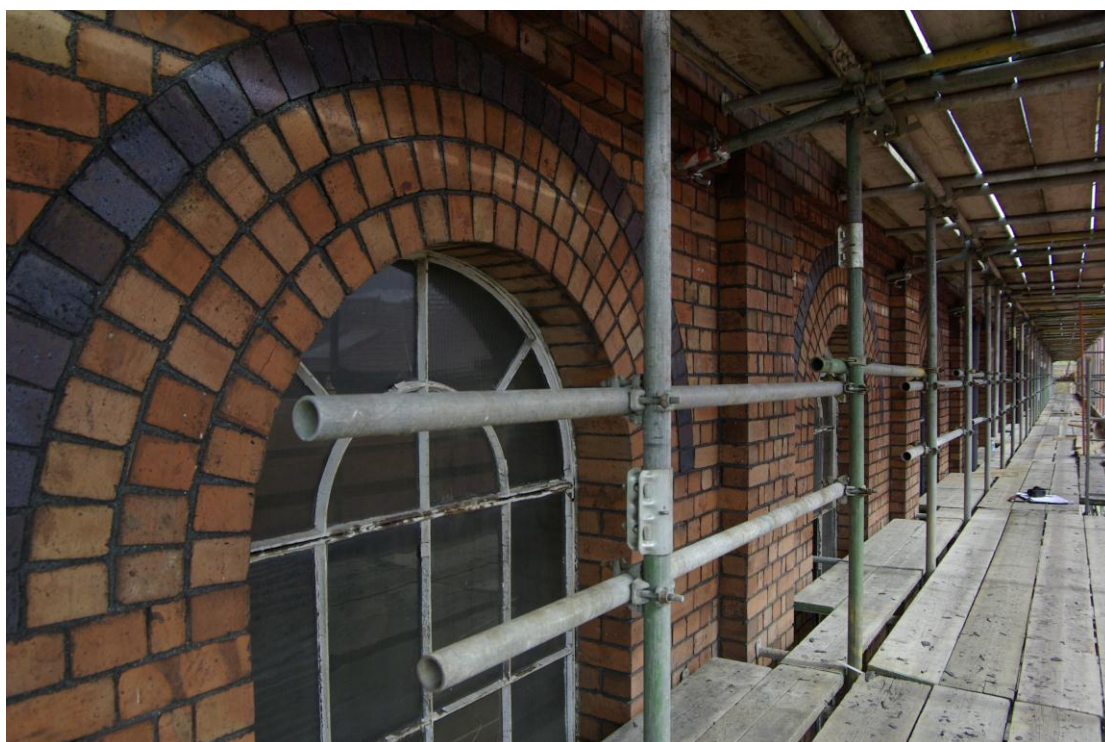


Figure 11 Window detail
End bays on south-east facing elevation



Figure 12 Building at northern end of shed
Looking south-east. Photo taken by client in August 2011 prior to redevelopment

North-east facing elevation

At the time of the survey most windows had been removed and the openings widened (Fig. 13). Prior to redevelopment the windows had arched heads which, although in the style of the main shed, were of a flatter design (see Fig. 6). The roof is covered in Welsh slate with a raised wooden louvred ventilator running along its length (Fig. 14).

South-east facing elevation

The main shed elevation was built to the same design as the north-west facing elevation but on this side none of the windows had been blocked by later buildings (Figs 15 and 16).



Figure 13 North-east facing elevation
Looking south-west



Figure 14 Roof of north end buildings
Looking north-west



Figure 15 North-east and south-east facing elevations
Looking west



Figure 16 South-east facing elevation
Looking west. Photo taken by client in August 2011 prior to redevelopment

At the far southern end of the main shed the end window is shorter than the rest to allow for a single doorway into the building. This appears to be part of the original construction as no evidence could be seen for any blocking below the window (Fig. 17). The two bays scheduled for demolition are the only two with their original metal frames in. At ground level a series of brick relieving arches can be seen below the windows as the ground dropped away to the north. The style of the arches mirrored those at the top of each window with the exception of the blue brick upper course.



Figure 17 South-east facing elevation, south end doorway
Looking north-west. 1m scale

Interior

When first built the main engine shed was a single open space divided down the middle by four cast iron pillars supporting a longitudinal riveted steel girder. The redevelopment has inserted a mezzanine floor to make use of the available height (Figs. 18 and 19). The mezzanine stops short at the intended end point of the refurbished building leaving the two end bays in almost original condition. A new

concrete floor has been laid so there is no evidence of any inspection pits which may have existed between the tracks. The window frames on both sides at the south end are still intact (Figs. 20 and 21). Parts of the door opening mechanism remain above the south end doorways as does the ground level latch mechanism on the central doorway (Figs. 22 and 23). A short length of rail extends into the shed with a sole remaining chair supporting one rail (Fig. 24).

The roof is made of relatively lightweight timber principal rafters and collar supported with iron shoes at each joint (Fig. 25). Lightweight steel T-section bars and steel rods stiffen the structure which rests on brick pilasters at each wall and in the longitudinal steel beam down the centre. Cleated purlins sit on the backs of the principals.

The northern end rooms were in a state of demolition and were not safe to carry out a detailed inspection. The southern corner room has a small triangular block of masonry in the eastern corner which may have been for a hearth suggesting that it was built as an office (Fig. 26). The larger block on the north end is divided into two by a low wall (Fig. 27).



Figure 18 Internal view of main shed
Looking north-east



Figure 19 Internal view of main shed from mezzanine
Looking south-west

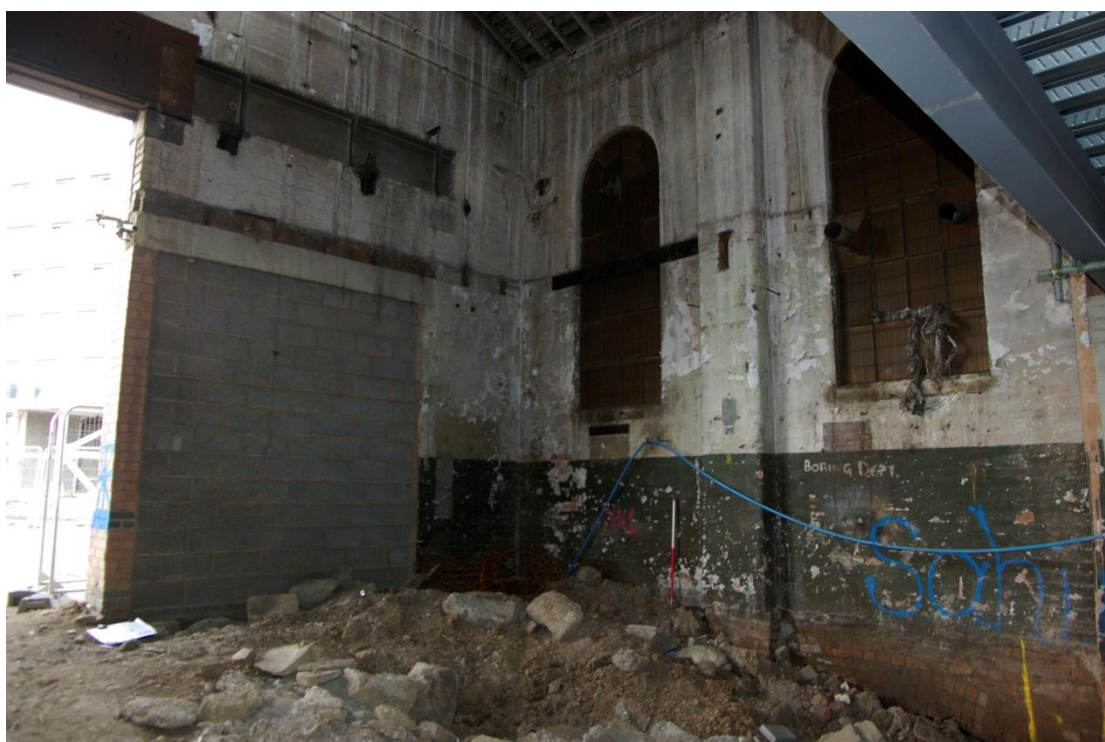


Figure 20 Southern end of main shed
Looking west, 1m scale



Figure 21 Southern end of main shed
Looking south-east. 1m scale



Figure 22 South end of main shed
Looking south-west. 1m scale



Figure 23 Door mechanism, south end of main shed
Looking south-west. 1m scale



Figure 24 Rail chair, south end of building



Figure 25 Roof structural detail
Looking south-west



Figure 26 Northern corner building room
Looking north-east. 1m scale



Figure 27 Northern building rooms
Looking north-east



Figure 28 Interior before insertion of mezzanine floor
Looking south-west



Figure 29 Interior view before insertion of mezzanine floor
Looking north-east

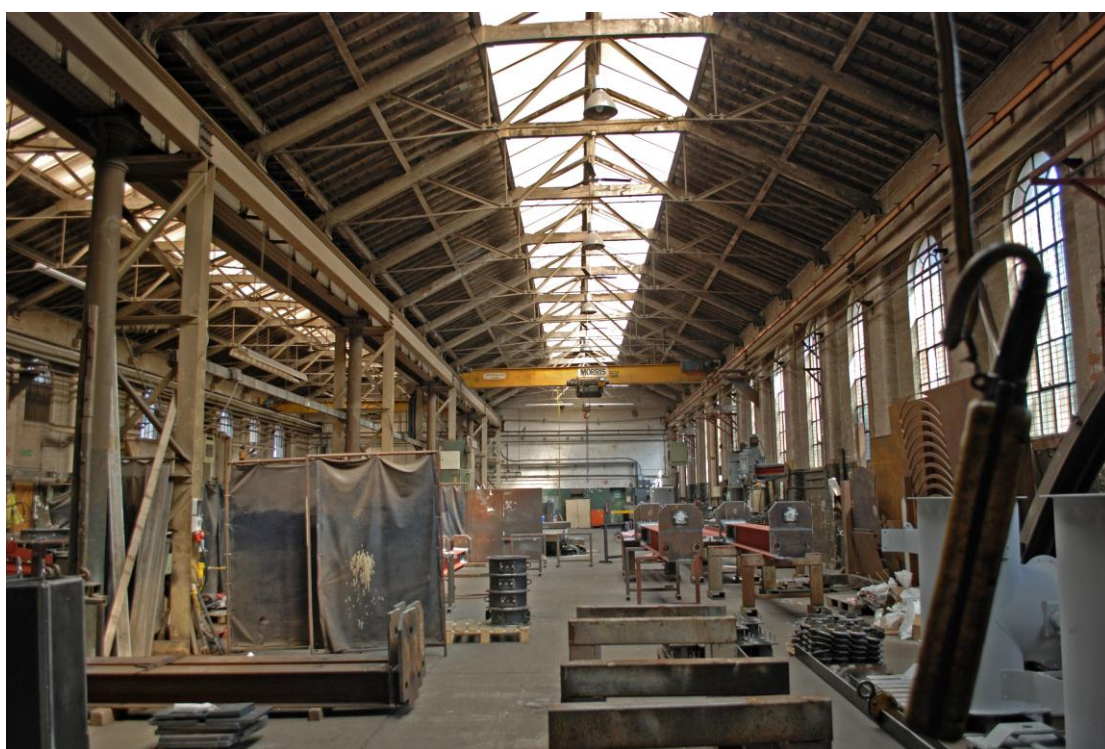


Figure 30 Interior view when in use by CPH Ltd
Looking north-east

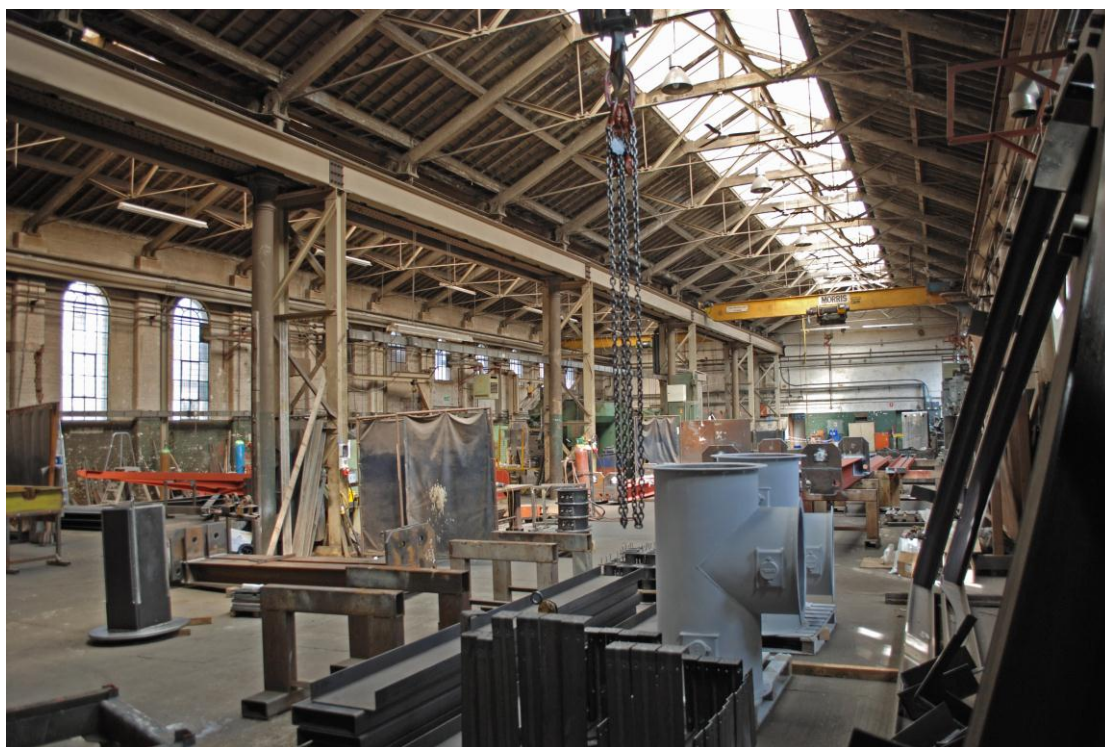


Figure 31 Interior view when in use by CPH Ltd

Looking north-east

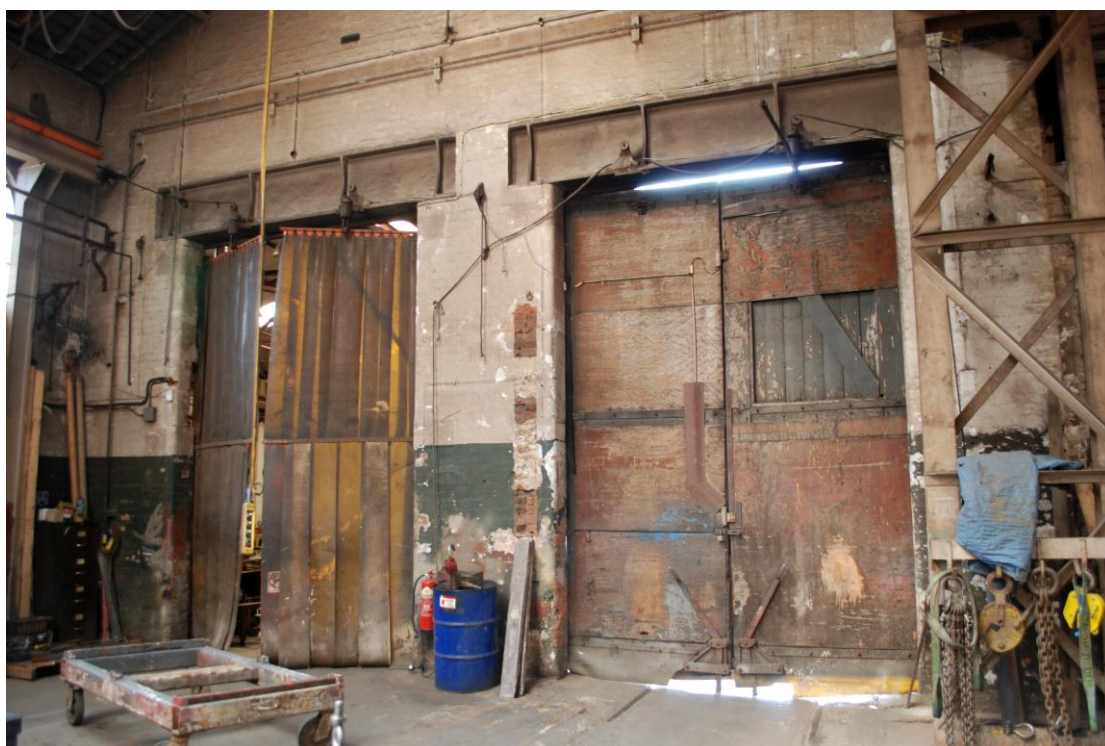


Figure 32 Interior view of south-western end when in use by CPH Ltd

Looking south-west

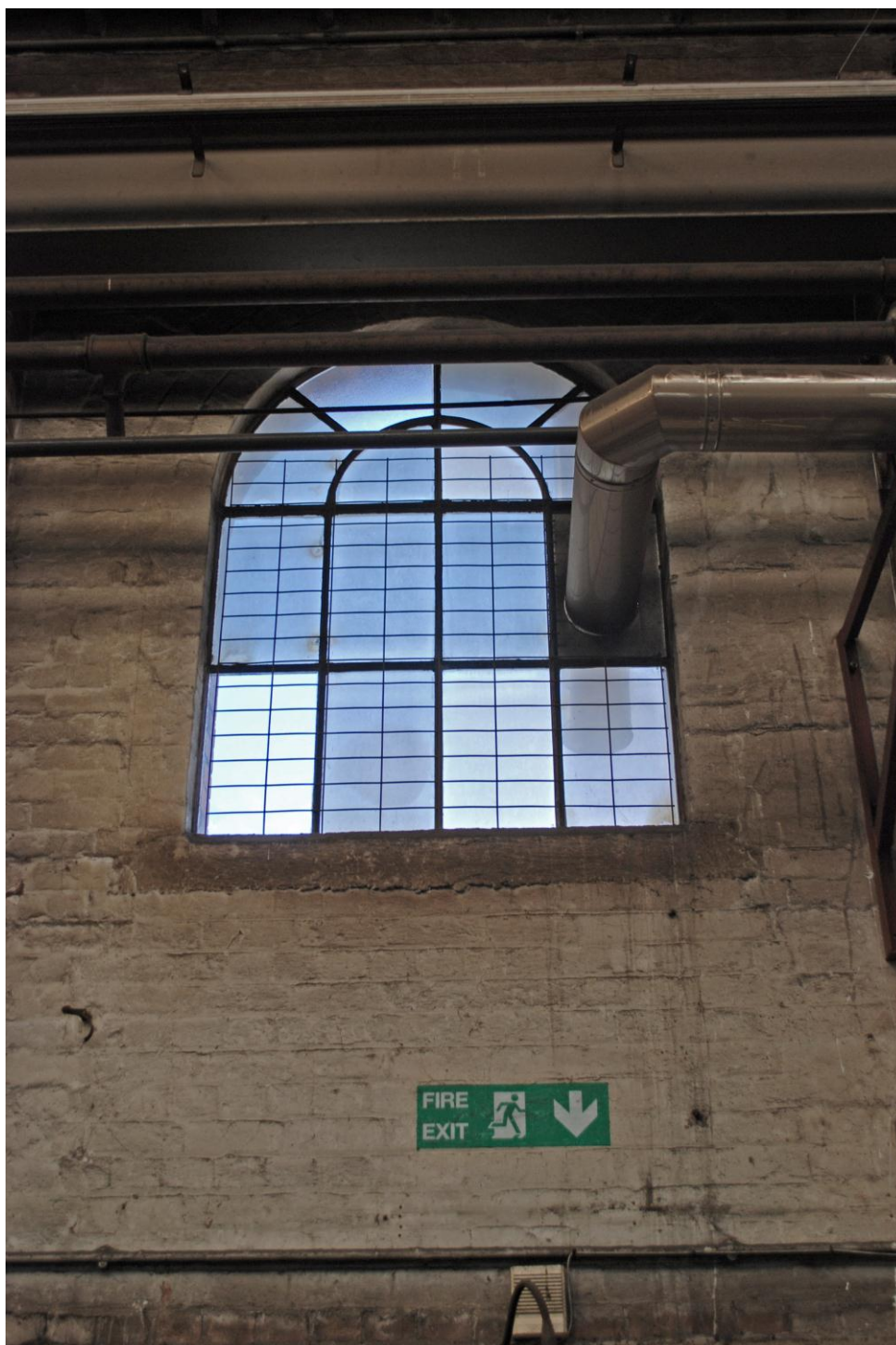


Figure 33 Window at south end of north-western wall when building in use

Looking north-west

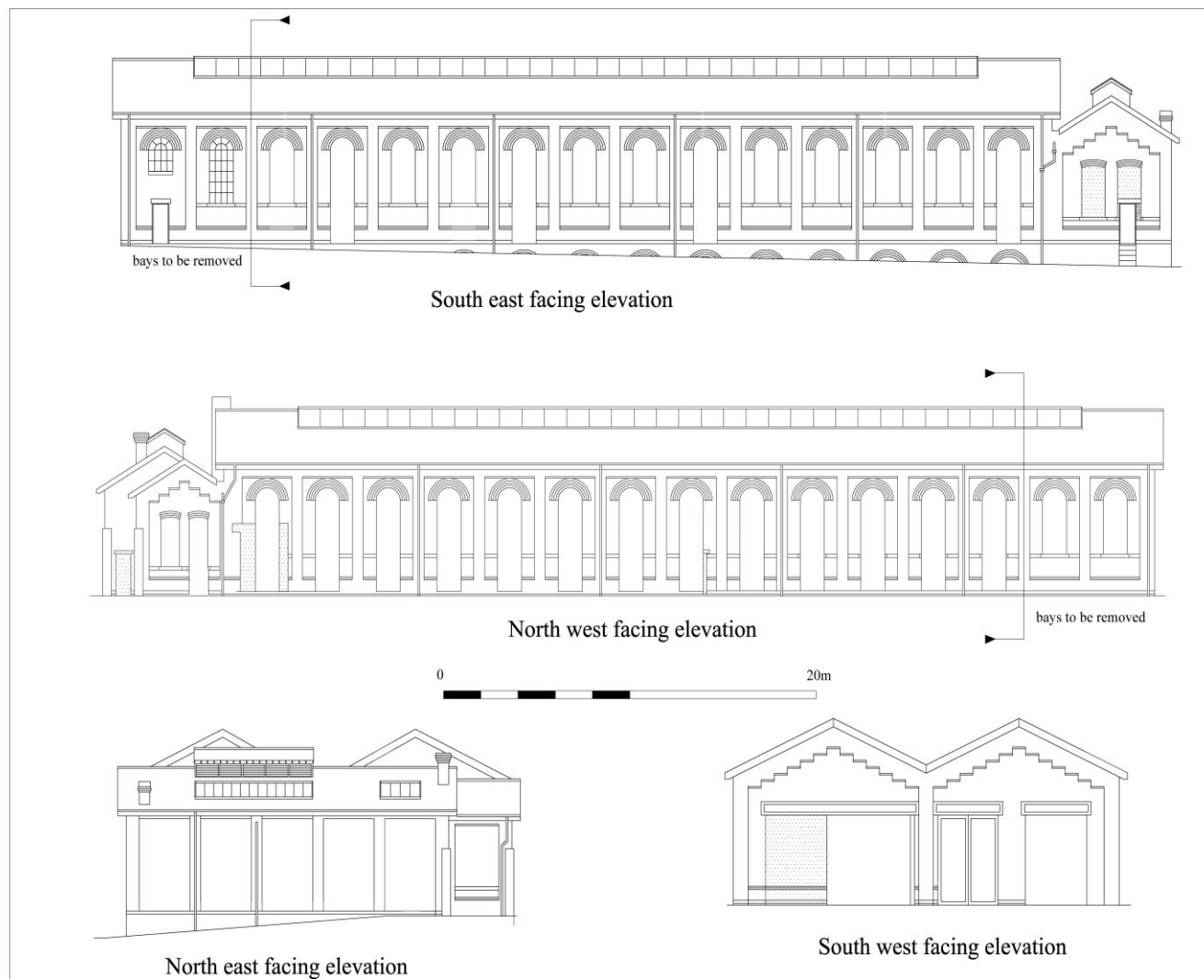


Figure 34 Buildings as surveyed on 18.08.2014

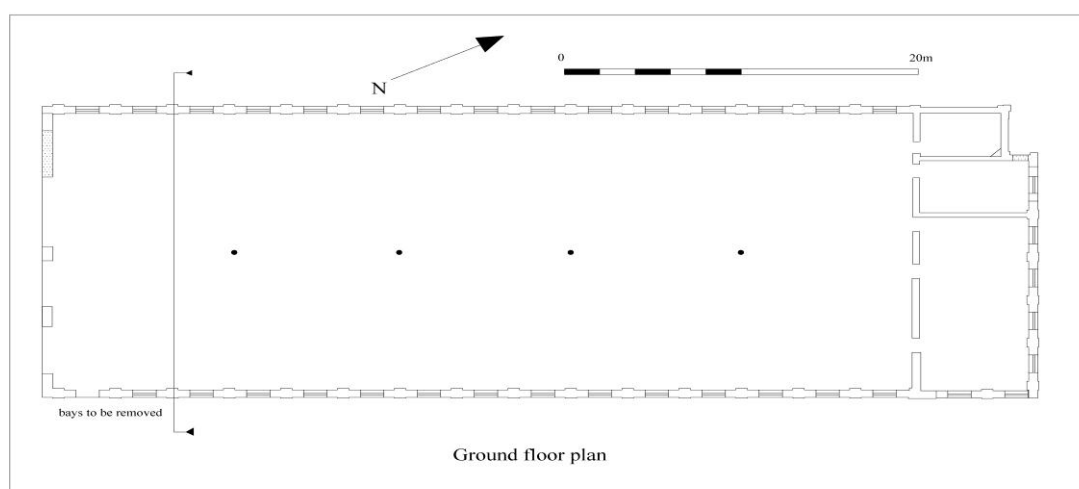


Figure 35 Floor plan as surveyed on 18.08.2014

Discussion

The former GCR shed appears to have had a number of uses during its lifetime none of which have had any significant effect or caused any major changes to the fabric of the building. Due to the change in use from a railway goods yard to a scrap yard the layout of the buildings and surrounding landscape remained fairly unaltered up until the early 1990s. Since that time however the scrapyards have closed and the industrial landscape has gradually changed to a residential area. As different parcels of land have been redeveloped the former railway building has become isolated and redundant but still relatively unchanged.

The construction date of the building is clearly documented, as are many of its different stages in its life. The use of metal-socketed components in the roof structure matches similar industrial roofs being constructed elsewhere in late 19th century England. This reflects some of the differences between the relatively new Great Central Railway and other earlier more established railways of the period which often used more traditional construction methods.

Archive

The archive consists of:

This report,

97 digital photographs on 3 contact sheets,

48 35mm black and white negatives and corresponding contact sheets,

1 cd of this report and the digital photographs.

Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. A record of the project will also be submitted to the OASIS project. OASIS is an online index to archaeological grey literature reports.

Acknowledgements

The survey was undertaken by Andrew Hyam, ULAS. Mr R Parker of Jamie Lewis Residential Lettings supplied the scale drawings and pre-redevelopment photographs. The Project was managed by Patrick Clay, ULAS.

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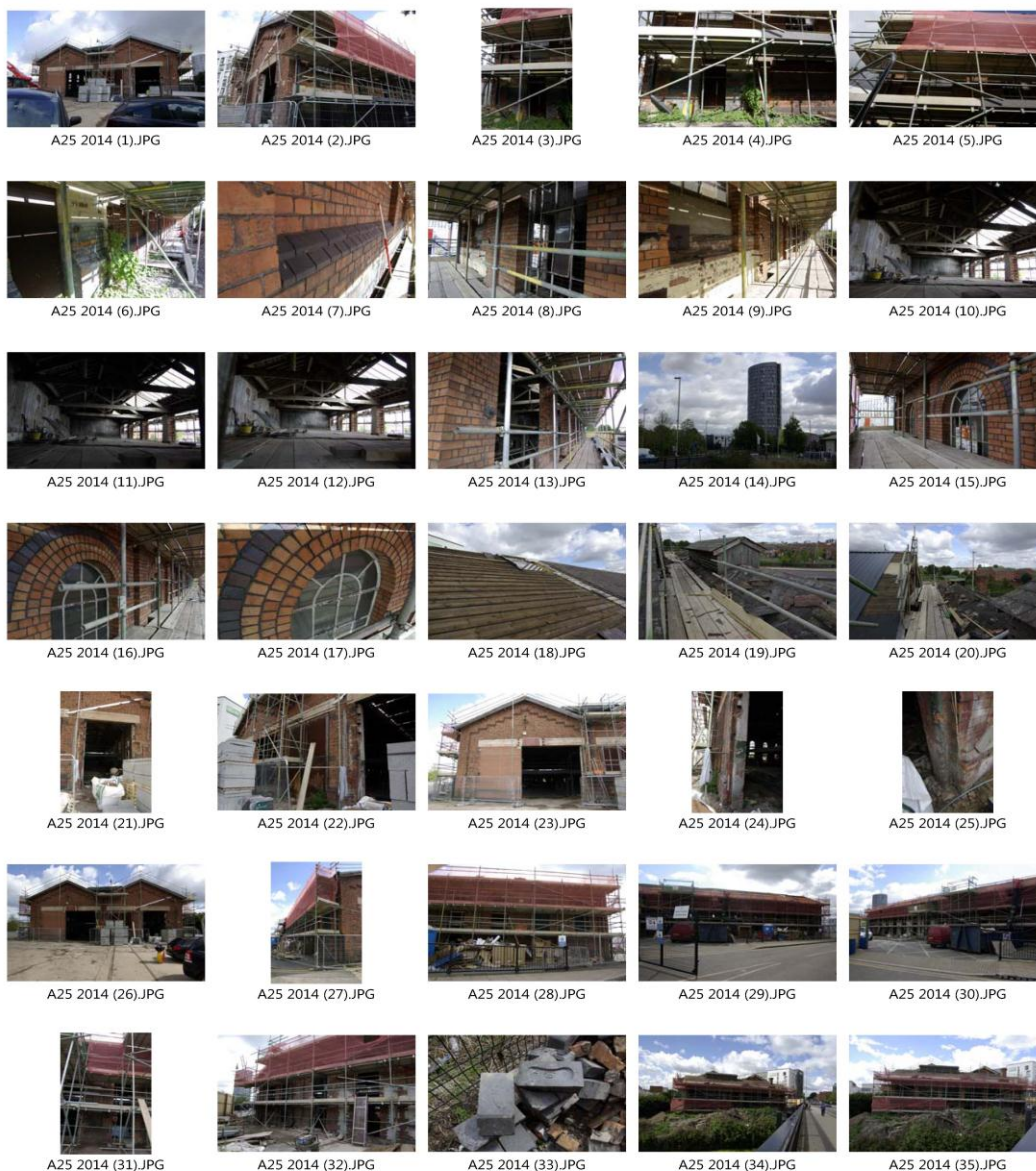
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26-08-2014

Revised 09-09-2011

Appendix 1 Digital photographs





A25 2014 (36).JPG



A25 2014 (37).JPG



A25 2014 (38).JPG



A25 2014 (39).JPG



A25 2014 (40).JPG



A25 2014 (41).JPG



A25 2014 (42).JPG



A25 2014 (43).JPG



A25 2014 (44).JPG



A25 2014 (45).JPG



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A25 2014 (67).JPG



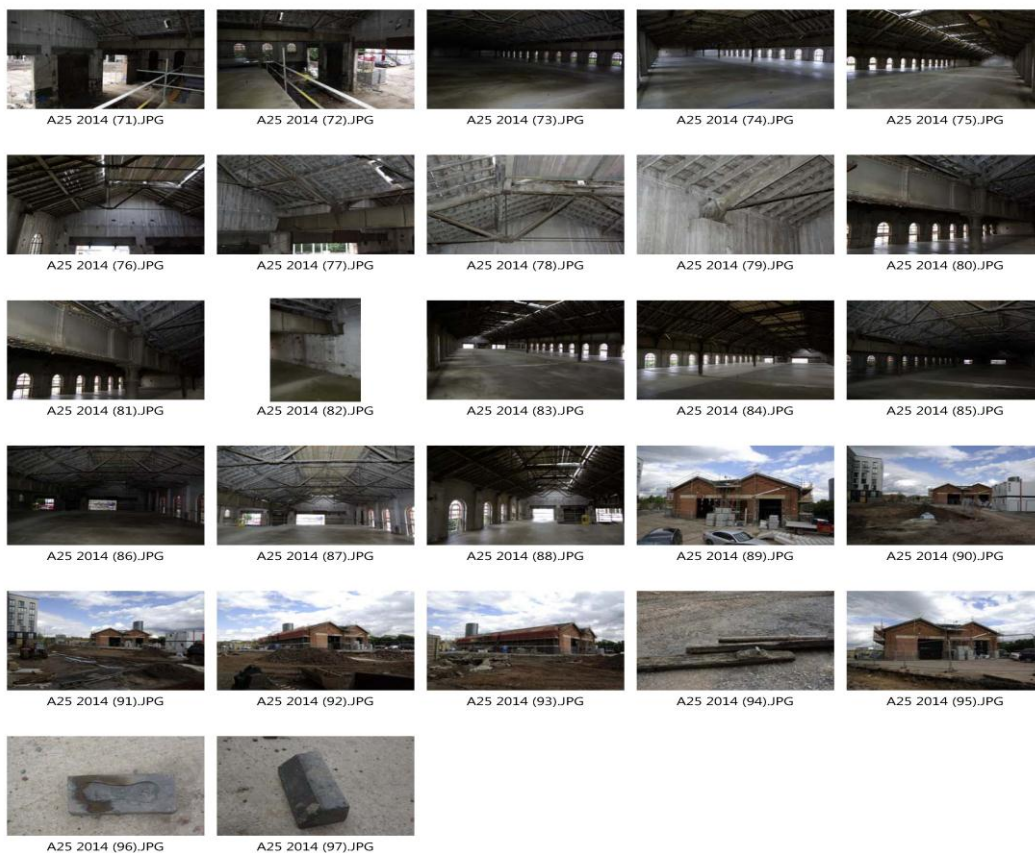
A25 2014 (68).JPG



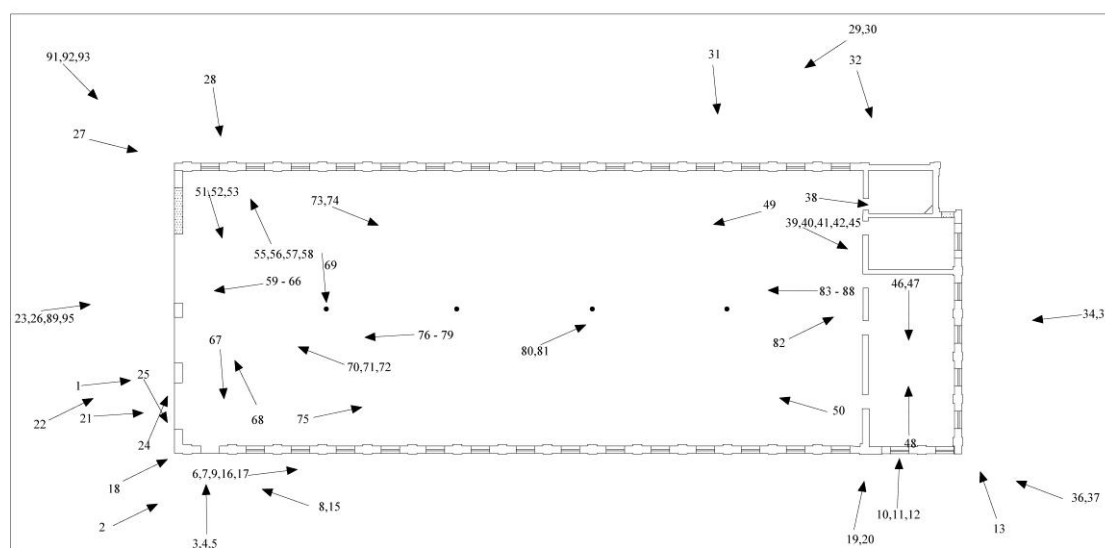
A25 2014 (69).JPG



A25 2014 (70).JPG



Appendix 2 Digital photograph locations



Appendix 3 OASIS information

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Project Name | Historic building survey on land off Upperton Rd, Leicester |
| Project Type | Level 2 survey |
| Project Manager | P Clay |
| Project Supervisor | A Hyam |
| Previous/Future work | None |
| Current Land Use | Workshop |
| Development Type | Redevelopment to retail space |
| Reason for Investigation | Planning condition |
| Position in the Planning Process | Condition |
| Site Co ordinates | SK 57927 03415 |
| Start/end dates of field work | 18.08.2014 |
| Archive Recipient | LCC |
| Study Area | 1170m ² |

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