

**A Photographic Survey in advance of
proposed residential
development at Rupert Street,
Leicester (SK 5860 0420)**

Jon Coward

For AMK Design

Planning Application No: 2002/2182

Checked by Project Manager

Signed:**Date:**

Name:

University of Leicester Archaeological Services

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Fig 1 **Location of Site.** © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved.
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A Photographic Survey in advance of proposed residential development at Rupert Street, Leicester (SK 5860 0420). Planning App. No. 2002/2182

Summary

A photographic survey was carried out by ULAS for AMK Land in November 2003 on the present factory and garage buildings at Rupert Street, Leicester, in advance of proposed redevelopment. The proposed development will heavily impact on the interior of the main factory building, and the garage will be demolished. The archive will be deposited with Leicester City Museums Service.

1. Introduction

This document presents the results of a photographic survey in advance of the proposed residential development at Rupert Street, Leicester (Planning Application No. 2002/2182, centred on National Grid Reference SK 5860 0420, see fig 1).

Planning Application No. 2002/2182 proposes the change of use of factory and four storey side extension for 26 flats, external alterations and replacement windows to factory.

2. Site Location

The assessment area comprises the site of the former hosiery factory of Hubbard and Kenning Ltd and the adjacent structure. The proposed development area is bounded by Rupert Street to the north east, Chancery Street to the south east and various buildings to the north west and south west (fig.1). The assessment area consists of c.0.1ha of land.

3. Aims and Objectives

The aim of the survey was to record the main points of interest of the factory before its conversion into residential units.

4. Methodology

The photographic survey was carried out using 35mm SLR cameras, using HP5 Ilford monochrome film and Fujichrome Sensia 400ASA colour slide film. Tripods were necessary for most of the shots, due to the low interior light levels at the time of the survey. Flash was used where appropriate.

5. Description (incorporating elements of the description in the desk-based assessment)

Exterior

The existing factory building consists of four storeys with a basement. The main Rupert Street elevation shows partial steel frame construction divided and supported by five substantial brick piers, the space between filled by large multi-paned casement windows, with opening transoms. The three central piers project above the eaves line with decorated stone coping, above a floral relief panel.

There are dentil courses at eaves level and between the third and fourth floors. A slight but clear difference in the brickwork suggests a rebuild above the third floor level.

The main entrance consists of panelled wooden double doors into a passageway, with a further door in the passageway leading to the main staircase on the right. Adjacent to the exterior double doors is a square headed doorway, in dressed sandstone or oolitic limestone from Ketton. Above the doorway are *art nouveau* leaded windows and above these on the first floor, are two canted, oriel windows with sliding sashes, which sit beneath a canopy.

Interior

The main building is a T shape, the head of the T being the Rupert Street frontage. A series of parallel steel 'I' beam supports run transversely across the rear and longitudinally across the frontage. The steel framing for each floor is supported on slim brick exterior piers at the rear, and the side walls at the frontage. A regular series of cast iron columns (one in the basement stamped 'Goodwin Barsby', a Leicester firm) provides interior support on each floor to these beams. There seems to have been no structural brickwork save the front stairs/lift construction in the interior of the building. The rear curtain wall is brick, encasing the rear stairs and toilets. The use of the steel beams does not appear to have been for fireproofing, as the ceilings are wooden boards.

The lift runs from the basement to the third floor, and has an external loading door out into the passageway between the main building proper and the garage area to the south. It appears to be of original build, although the doors have been replaced. None of the doors could be opened, and the mechanism above the top of the shaft was unfortunately not accessible.

The *art nouveau* door adjacent to the main entrance on Rupert street leads to a lobby and staircase of superior construction up to the first floor, with an office of high status over the passageway facing the street. An original moulded plasterwork ceiling has been covered over by a suspended modern one. To the rear of this office is a toilet, presumably for the use of the manager or any 'white collar' staff. The rest of the first floor has been heavily altered in recent years by the insertion of cinder block walling. The second and third floors are relatively open .

The basement has a wall cupboard containing an electrical supply in the form of interconnected Leclanche cells, an early form of wet battery which continued in use well into the 20th century. This was probably an emergency back-up for the mains supply, perhaps for a fire alarm system.

To the west of the main building at the basement level is a boiler room and large fuel oil tank, with a timber structure over and brick chimney rising up the south west corner of the main building. No original plant was present in the boiler room area, and nor was there any obvious indication of how any original power supply would have been routed through the factory, if indeed it had been originally built as a factory rather than a warehouse; the boiler room structure could well be a later addition rather than original build.

Despite the use of steel framing in the rest of the structure, the roof is a complex arrangement of trusses in substantial squared timber. The basic form along the frontage is a series of transverse king post trusses, joggled with raking braces, spaced between the north and south gables, with a boarded roof over twin purlins per side plus a ridge piece. The rear of the building is however higher, and accommodates a central 'balcony' arrangement to give a partial extra floor. The trusses here run perpendicular to the ones at the front, and of unusual design: a large open queen post, the tie beam supported centrally by a slim column to the floor, with a subsidiary king post arrangement over the strainer beam. Purlins are partially jointed into the principals and cleated, with roof boards rising to a ridge plate housed in the top of the king post. Metal strapwork is used at the principal joints. The arrangement at the junction of the two roofs is complex and best envisaged through the photographs. The author is not aware of any appropriate terminology to describe the roofing arrangement in this building; it is of note that one of the ranges of Alexandra House in Rutland Street appears to use the same 'king-post over queen-post' truss design (Finn, forthcoming). The juxtaposition of confident steel framing with large (and presumably expensive) timber roofing members seems curious; perhaps the roofing trade exploited steel later than the rest of the building profession.

Garage area

8.2.1 South of the factory a garage area is separated from the main building by a passageway. The garage area is a single-storey structure, with a roof carried on a light steel frame. The floor is constructed of individual concrete slabs roughly 3 x 4m. A drain runs east-west across the middle of the garage. In the southeast corner of the site is a petrol pump.

6 Bibliography

George, S., and Gnanaratnam, A. *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment For The Proposed Residential Development At Rupert Street, Leicester (SK 5860 0420). Planning Application No. 2002/2182* ULAS report 2003-185

7 Archive

The archive consists of:

- 1 roll of monochrome film
- 1 sheet of monochrome contact prints
- 26 colour slides
- 1 annotated plan of the buildings as per proposed conversion,
with photographic shot positions and other notes
- 1 cd with digitised photographs in .jpg format

It will be deposited with Leicester City Council Museums Service in due course.

PLATES



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4



Plate 5



Plate 6



Plate 7



Plate 8



Plate 9



Plate 10



Plate 11



Plate 12



Plate 13



Plate 14



Plate 15



Plate 16



Plate 17



Plate 18



Plate 19



Plate 20



Plate 21



Plate 22



Plate 23



Plate 24



Plate25



Plate 26



Plate 27



Plate 28