

**Historic Building Survey
of a 19th century warehouse
adjacent to the Grand Union Canal,
Memory Lane, Belgrave Gate,
Leicester (SK 5896 0051)**

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**For RPS Planning
on behalf
British Waterways Board**

Planning Application No: 2006/1079

Checked by Project Manager

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Report No. 2006-120

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Summary

A programme of historic building survey of a 19th century warehouse, located adjacent to the Grand Union Canal, on Memory Lane, Belgrave Gate, Leicester (SK 5896 0051) was carried out by ULAS on behalf of RPS Planning and British Waterways Board. The warehouse is thought to date to c.1862, when it was the premises of Joseph Johnson, Bone Manure Manufacturer. From 1899 until 1969, the building was used by the Anglo-American Nitrogen Company. The warehouse is presently unoccupied and its demolition has been proposed, as part of a wider scheme of redevelopment within the area. The building survey archive will be deposited with the Leicester City Museums Service under the Accession Number A26.2006.

1. Introduction

This document presents the results of a programme of historic building recording and survey of a 19th century warehouse (also referred to as the British Waterways Warehouse), located adjacent to the Grand Union Canal, off Memory Lane, Belgrave Gate, Leicester, National Grid Reference SK 5896 0551.

Planning Permission (2006-1079) has been granted for the demolition of the warehouse, as part of the outline planning permission for the redevelopment of the wider area. The warehouse has previously been identified by the Leicester City Planning Authority as being of local interest or significance (reference number L/383). The warehouse presently forms one part of a larger complex, with a parallel range located to the north and a smaller factory range projecting at right angles from the long axis of these structures. The northern range consists of a steel-framed warehouse, with brick wall infill and asbestos cladding, probably dating to the middle decades of the 20th century. The factory range, consisting of a single storey brick building with slate roof, appears to be somewhat earlier and may broadly be dated to the first quarter of the 20th century. Neither of these buildings have been identified as being of historical significance and do not form, therefore, part of this building survey.

The programme of historic building recording and survey was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) in accordance with the Brief issued by the City Archaeologist in his capacity as archaeological adviser to the planning authority (Wardle 2006 '*Brief for Building Recording at Leicester College, Abbey Park Campus, Belgrave Gate, Leicester*'). The overall project was managed by RPS Planning.

2. Site Location

The warehouse is located at National Grid Reference SK 5896 0551, just to the south of the Grand Union Canal, within the Belgrave Gate area of Leicester City. The Grand

Union Canal was a product of the great expansion of canals that took place between the late 18th century and the first half of the 19th century. By 1814, with the linking of the Leicester and the Grand Union Canals, Leicester became fully integrated with the national canal system and the north-eastern areas of the town became a focus for industrial activity, with a series of factories, wharfs and warehouses extending along the southern bank of the canal (Wardle 2006).

3. Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the building survey was to provide a record of the building prior to demolition, and to produce an archive in order to facilitate future interpretation of the structure, within the context for which it was originally designed and which subsequently evolved.

4. Methodology

The methodology employed during the course of the building survey followed procedures set out in the project design specification (ULAS 07/500_2006). The fieldwork was carried out on the 4th September 2006 by Sophie Clarke and Gavin Speed of ULAS.

A visit to the Records Office for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (ROLLR) was made in order to consult the Leicester Building Register series. From 1849, it was required that plans for all new buildings and significant alterations to existing buildings in Leicester were submitted for approval to the Borough Sanitary Authority. The plans for 1849-1957 are held by the ROLLR and are indexed by street name. No plans relevant to the present site were found during the course of the search.

The photographic survey was carried out using 35mm SLR cameras, using HP5 Ilford 400ASA monochrome film and Fujichrome Sensia 400ASA colour slide film. Flash was used where appropriate, in conjunction with additional halogen lighting for all internal shots.

A set of internal floor plans was produced on site, in order to locate the photographs, within and without the building. These were hand drawn at a scale of 1:100, using A3 permagraph sheets and have been reproduced for the purposes of this report, using TurboCAD software Version 11, to English Heritage (formerly RCHME) Level 2 standard (English Heritage 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*).

All work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Code of Conduct, adhering to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures*.

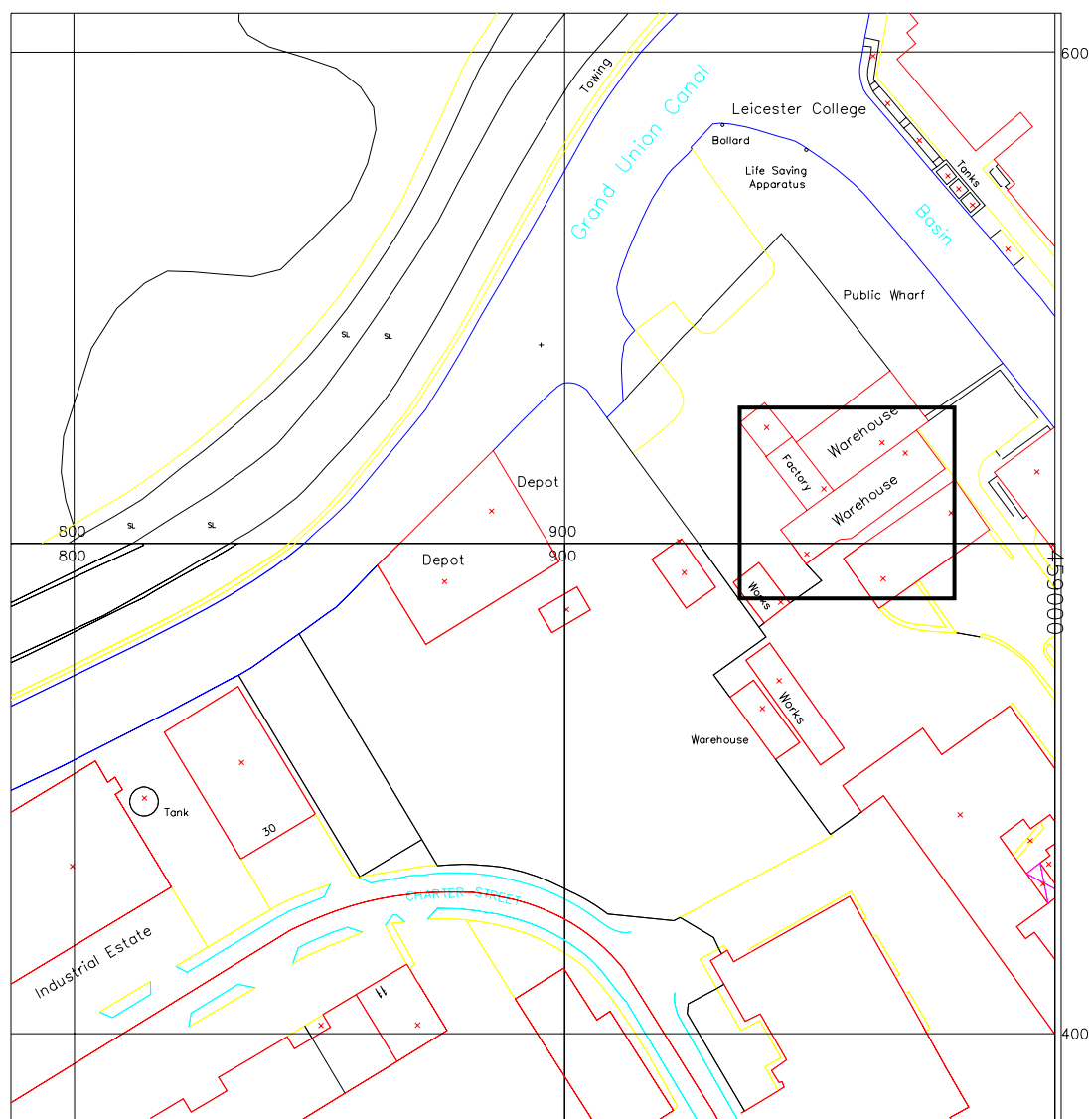


Figure 1. Site Location. Scale 1:1250

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5. Results

5.1 Building Description

The British Waterways Warehouse is a two storey, red-brick building, rectangular in plan form and roofed in Welsh slate. The building is aligned north-east/south-west and is composed of two distinct elements, with the earliest of these being the main warehouse, measuring some 24.5m in length, located to the north-east. Built up to the south-western gable end of this, on the same alignment, is a smaller range, hereafter known as the warehouse annexe (Plate 1). This element measures approximately 8.5m in length, and is also of two stories, with access through to both floors of the main warehouse via apparently original openings through the south-western gable end wall of the earlier building.

On the front, south-east facing elevation the main warehouse has wide loading doors, with segmental arch-heads, on both floors. To the north-east of these, on each level are four segmental arch-headed windows, all of which are now blocked with brick. On the south-western side of the loading doors, on each level, there are three segmental arch-headed windows (Plate 2). The windows themselves consist of cast-iron, multi-pane casements, with a central hinged opening. The south-western corner of the building is chamfered on the ground floor, with corbelled brick-work supporting the corner on the upper floor (Plate 3). The north-east facing gable end of the building has four, symmetrically placed windows, with two on each floor level (Plate 4). The rear elevation was originally 'blind', with no window or door openings made during construction (Plate 5): the blocked doorway recorded here on the ground floor is a later insertion.

The south-east facing elevation of the warehouse annexe falls behind the plane of that of the main warehouse, respecting the position of the chamfered corner (Plate 1). There is a wide, flat-headed loading doorway entrance, centrally located on the ground floor, with three segmental arch-headed openings to the first floor. These have cast-iron multi-pane casements, with cambered heads following the curve of the opening and appear to have been non-opening. The rear, north-west facing elevation has three original window openings to first floor level: the middle window has been truncated by an inserted doorway (now blocked). On the ground floor is a second flat-headed loading door, mirroring the position of that on the front elevation (Plates 5 and 12).

The south-west facing gable-end of the warehouse annexe would originally have faced directly onto the dock of the canal basin (now infilled). On the ground floor, the original opening spanned the width of the building, before being partially blocked by brick. The present opening is centrally located. Above this, on the first floor, is another loading door, with the remains of a timber canopy surviving *in situ* (Plate 6).

Internally, the main warehouse is open-plan at ground floor level, divided by a series of overhead transverse beams, into eight structural bays (Plate 7). The timber beams are supported by a double row of cast-iron columns – whilst the row located centrally within the building forms part of the original construction, the second row on the north-western side appears to be a later insertion. At the south-western end of the main warehouse is a timber staircase which leads up to the first floor level (Plate 9). The first floor is also of open-plan arrangement, but is divided here by a series of six king-post roof trusses into seven structural bays (Plate 10). From the south-western end, the remains of timber hoisting equipment are supported between trusses two and three, corresponding with the position of a hatch in the floor structure below (Plate 11). The remains of a second hoist, with cast-iron hoist wheel (Plate 13), are present above the first floor loading door in the south-western gable end of the warehouse annexe, which would have originally faced directly onto the canal basin (now infilled), facilitating, therefore, the loading and unloading directly from narrow boat cargoes.

5.2 Chronological Development

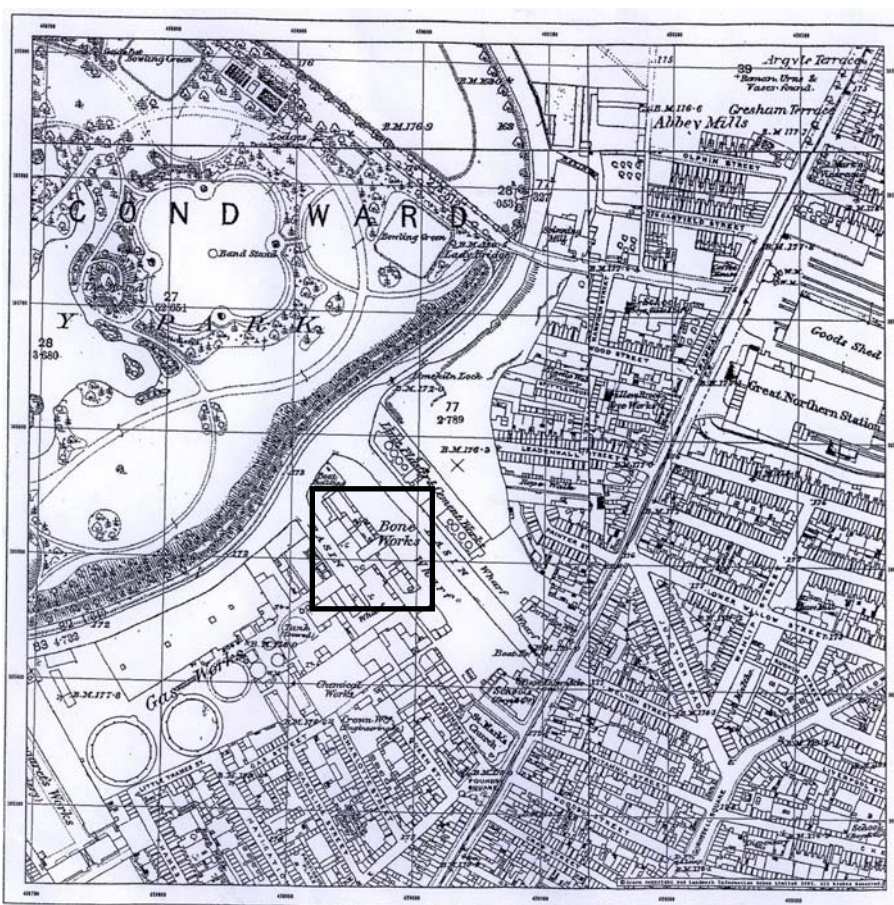


Figure 2. 1st edition Ordnance Survey of 1887, with site location outlined.

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Map evidence shows that the main warehouse was certainly constructed by the time of the first Ordnance Survey, published in 1887 (Fig. 2), with the warehouse annexe added between this date and the second Ordnance Survey of 1904 (Fig. 3, below).

Both maps indicate that the buildings formed the premises of a 'Bone Works'. The 1899 edition of Kelly's Trade Directory of Leicestershire and Rutland, has a listing for one Bone Manure Manufacturers, located on what was then known as the Public Wharf, with the manager recorded as Joseph Johnson. The business is first recorded on the site in 1862, having relocated from Gas Street in 1861. It seems entirely likely that this may represent a construction date for the building, given its form and the nature of the materials used within it. In 1899, the premises appear to have changed hands, briefly occupied by the Gallow Hill Glue and Chemical Company, then by the Anglo-American Nitrogen Company. This changeover appears to coincide with the construction of the warehouse annexe, representing perhaps, a need to adapt the building for a new use. The Anglo-American Nitrogen Company remained on the site until at least 1969.

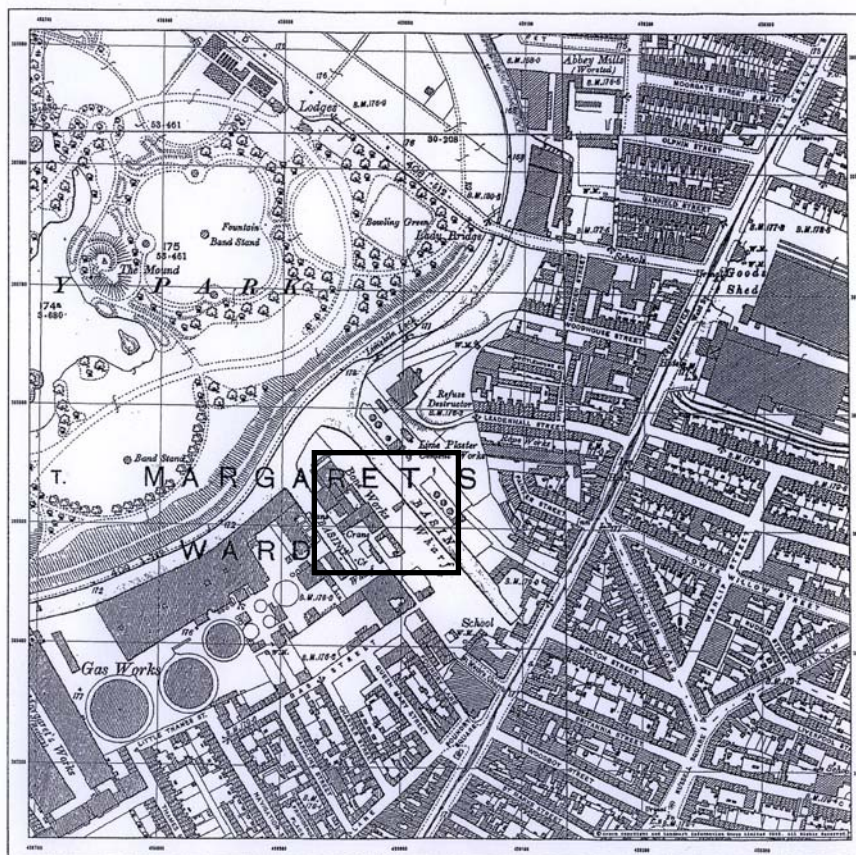


Figure 3. Second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1904, with site location outlined. Reproduced from the SK 5806 SE Scale 1:2500 OS map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. © Crown Copyright 1994. All rights reserved. Licence Number AL 10002187.

5.3 The Photographic Record

A full photographic survey of the building was carried out, including all external elevations in addition to general shots of the principal rooms, circulation areas and significant internal detail as appropriate. At the time of the photographic survey, the premises were unoccupied and had clearly been vacant for some time. All windows were boarded up and there was evidence of pigeon infestation and water ingress. The building had been identified as being in structurally poor condition, with significant damage apparent to the roof structure at the north-eastern extent of the building. For reasons of health and safety therefore, all photographs were taken from the south-western end of the building.

An index and key to the photographs held in the site archive have been included here as Appendix I, located at the end of this report. The site archive will be deposited with the Leicester City Museums Service under the Accession Number A26.2006.

Selected images are used to illustrate this report: these have been located on a set of building plans produced on site at a scale of 1:100 and included here as Figures 4 and 5.

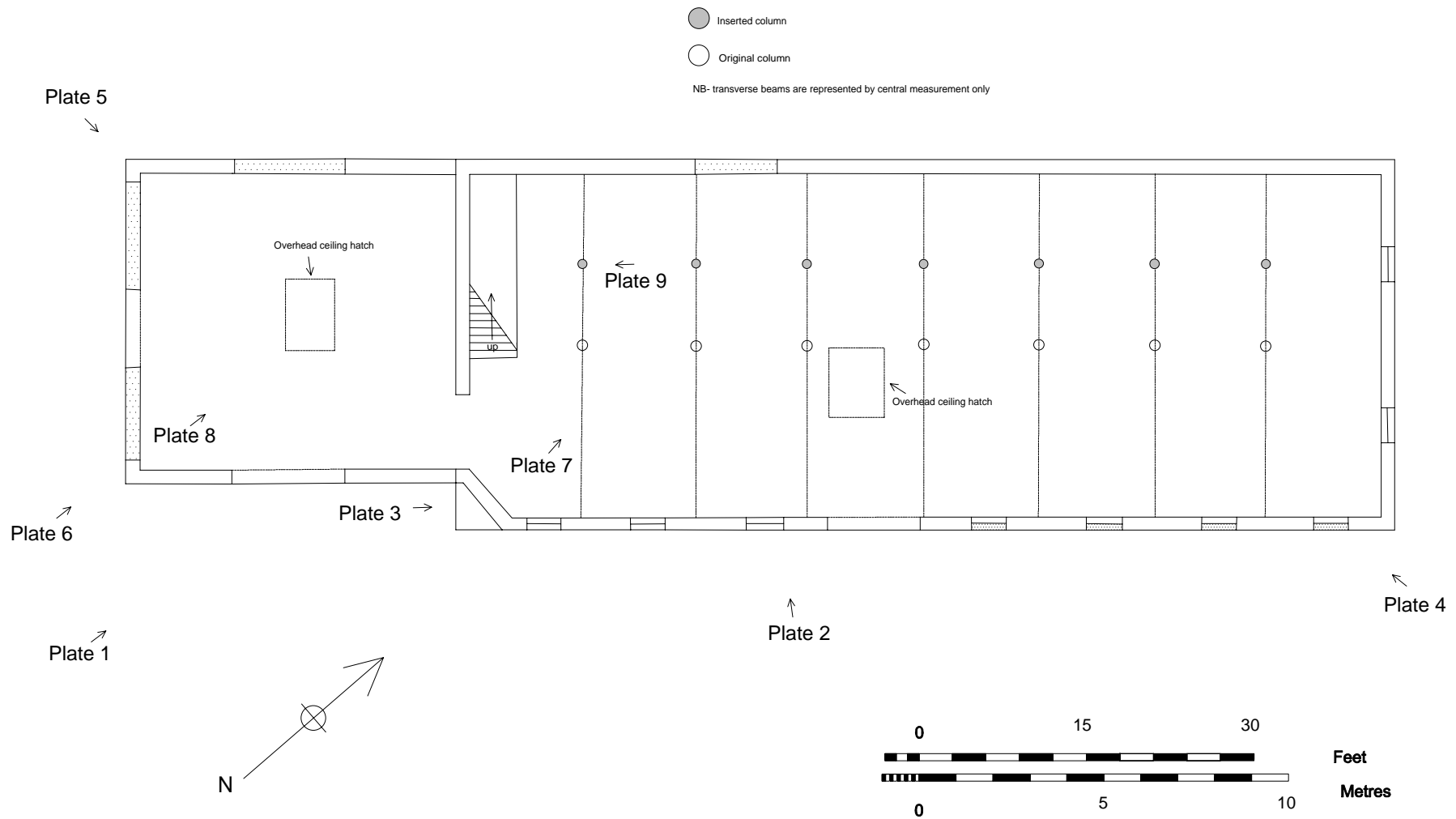


Figure 4. British Waterways Warehouse Ground Floor Plan

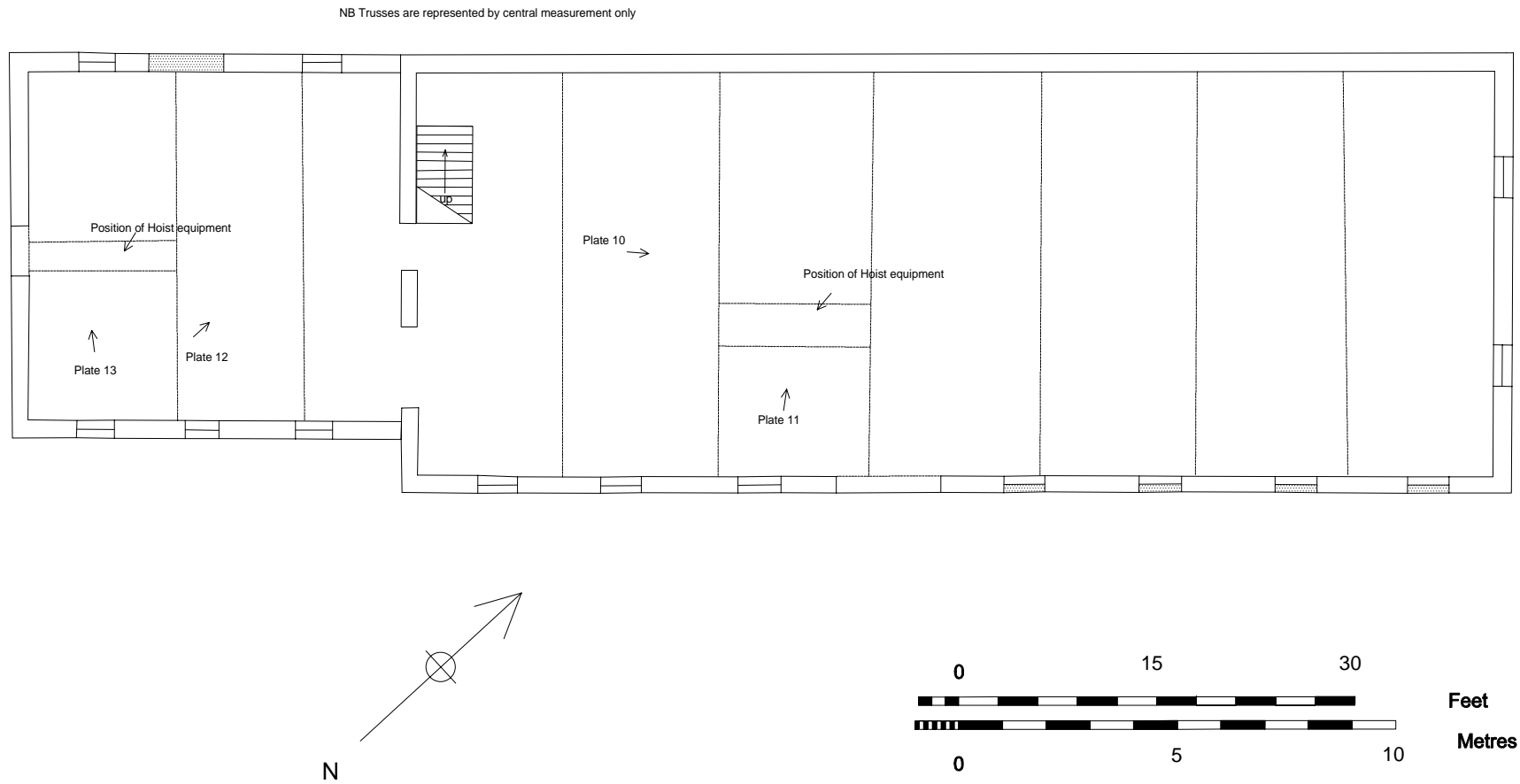


Figure 5. British Waterways Warehouse First Floor Plan



Plate 1. Frontage elevation. Looking north



Plate 2. Frontage elevation , main warehouse. Looking north-west.



Plate 3. Chamfered corner between main warehouse and annexe.
Looking north-east.



Plate 4. North-east facing gable end. Looking west.



Plate 5. Rear elevation of warehouse annexe. Looking east.



Plate 6. South-west facing elevation. Looking north



Plate 7. Ground floor, main warehouse. Looking north.



Plate 8. Ground floor, warehouse annexe. Looking north.



Plate 9. Staircase leading from ground to first floor. Looking south-west.



Plate 10. First floor roof structure, main warehouse. Looking north-east.

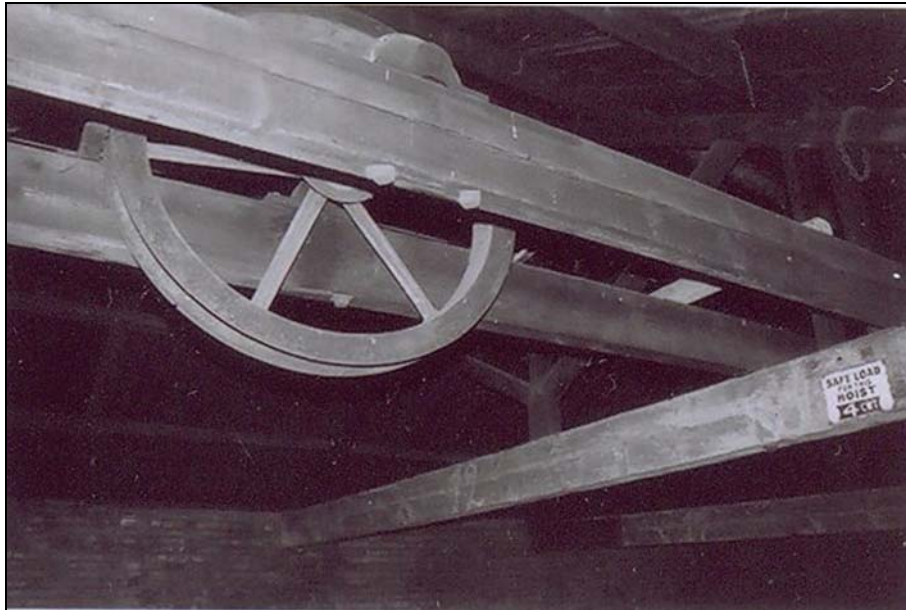


Plate 11. Main warehouse, hoist detail. Looking north-west.



Plate 12. First floor warehouse annexe. Looking north.

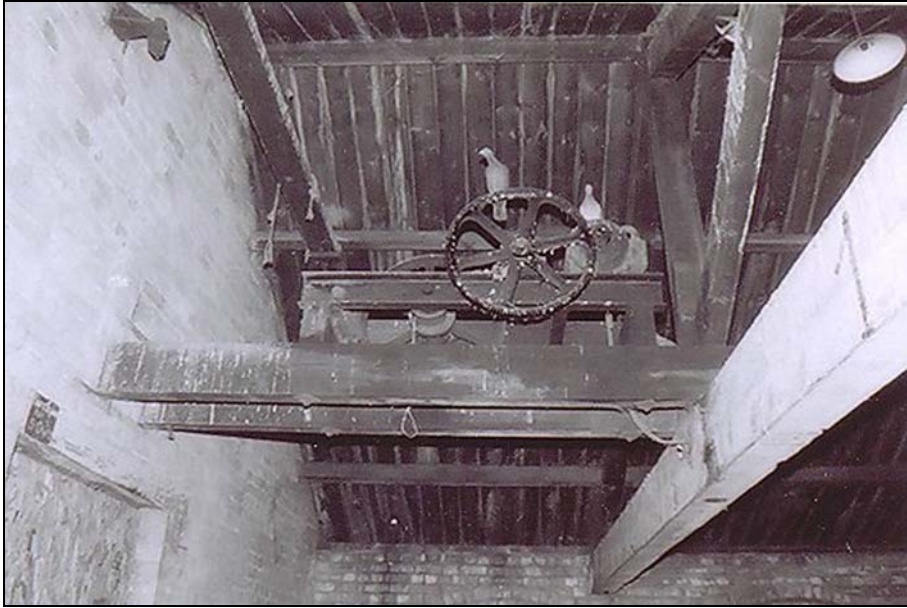


Plate 13. Warehouse annexe, hoist detail. Looking north-west.

6. Bibliography

Clarke, S. J. 2006 *Design Specification for Historic Building Recording: British Waterways Warehouse, Belgrave Gate, Leicester NGR SK 5896 0551*. ©ULAS developer report 07/500

English Heritage 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* © English Heritage

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1996 *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Buildings or Structures*.

Kelly's Trade Directory for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, all editions from 1861-1969.

RPS Planning, Transport and Environment 2005 *Historical Assessment: British Waterways Warehouse and the Leicester College Lero Building*. ©RPS

Wardle, C. 2006 *Brief for Building Recording at Leicester College, Abbey Park Campus, Belgrave Gate, Leicester*. Leicester City Council, Culture and Regeneration

7. Publication and Archive

A version of the summary will appear in *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. The archive, consisting of site plans, field notes, colour slide transparencies, monochrome negatives and contact print sheets, will be deposited with the Leicester City Museums Service under the Accession Number A26.2006.

Appendix I: List of Photographs included in the archive

Colour

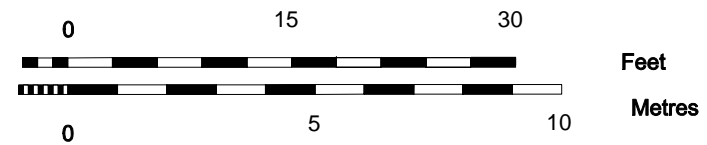
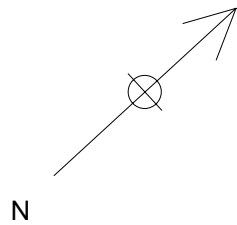
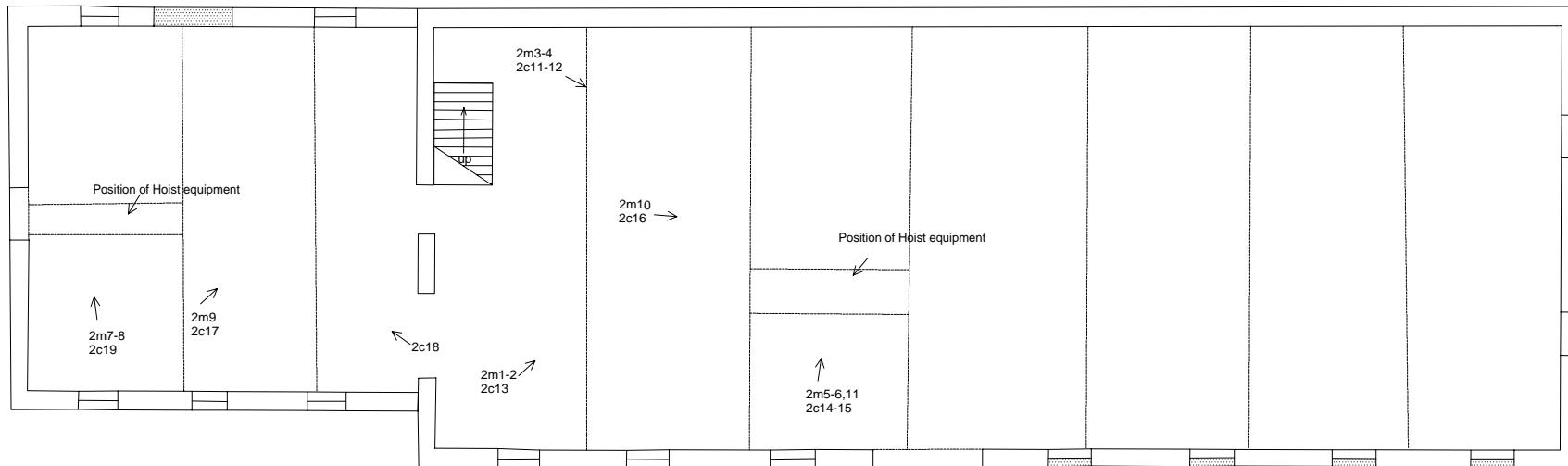
Film/Frame No.	Floor	Description	Looking:
2/1	G	Main warehouse	N
2		As above	N
3		As above	N
4		Main warehouse, loading doors	SE
5		Warehouse annexe	E
6		As above	E
7		As above	N
8		Staircase	NW
9		As above	NW
10		As above	SW
11	1st	Main warehouse, upper floor	E
12		As above	E
13		As above	N
14		Hoist detail, main warehouse	N
15		As above	N
16		King-post roof structure	NE
17		Warehouse annexe	N
18		As above, with roof structure	W
19		Hoist detail	NW

Monochrome

Film/Frame No.	Floor	Description	Looking:
1/1	-	SE Elevation	N
2	-	As above	N
3	-	As above	N
4	-	As above	N
5	-	As above	N
6	-	SW gable end	E
7	-	As above	E
8	-	As above	E
9	-	As above, with auxiliary buildings	E
10	-	As above	E
11	-	Modern auxiliary warehouse	SW
12	-	As above	SW
13	-	NE gable end	SW
14	-	As above	SW
15	-	As above	W
16	-	As above	W
17	-	As above	W
18	-	SE elevation, north eastern end of building	W
19	-	As above	W
20	-	As above	W
21	-	SE elevation	NW
22	-	As above	NW
23	-	Detail of corbelling	NW

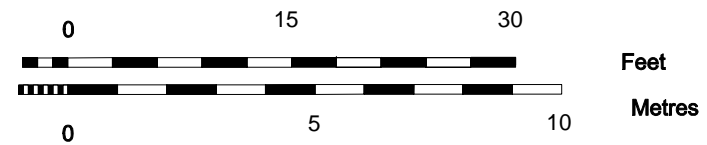
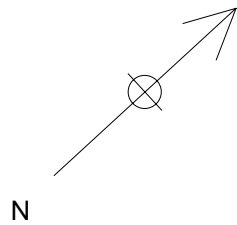
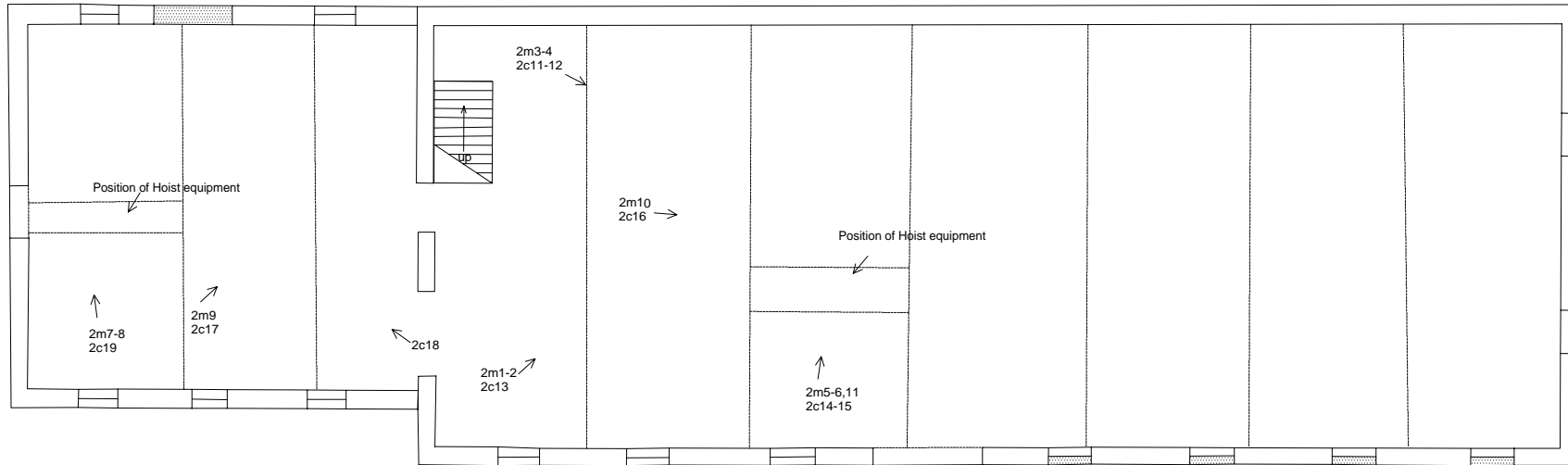
24	-	As above	NW
25	-	As above	N
26	-	As above	NE
2/1	1 st	Upper floor warehouse, with king-post roof structure	N
2	1 st	As above	N
3	1 st	As above	NE
4	1 st	As above	NE
5	1 st	Hoist detail, main warehouse	N
6	1 st	As above	N
7	1 st	Hoist detail, warehouse annexe	NW
8	1 st	As above	NW
9	1 st	Upper floor, warehouse annexe	N
10	1 st	Main warehouse, roof structure	NE
11	1 st	Hoist detail, main warehouse	N
12	G	Staircase	N
13	G	As above	NW
14	G	As above	SW
15	G	As above	SW
16	G	As above	NW
17	G	As above	N
18	G	Loading doors, main warehouse	SE
19	G	As above	E
20	G	Main warehouse	N
21	G	As above	N
22	G	As above	N
23	G	Warehouse annexe	N
24	G	As above	NW

NB Trusses are represented by central measurement only



British Waterways Warehouse Ground Floor Plan.
Location of Photographs held in the archive.

NB Trusses are represented by central measurement only



British Waterways Warehouse First Floor Plan.
Location of Photographs held in the archive