

**A Photographic Survey of the  
Sangra and Shonki Buildings,  
Abbey Park Street  
Leicester (SK 5913 0578)**

Sophie Clarke

**For the LHA-ASRA Group**

Pre-Planning

**Checked by Project Manager**

**Signed: .....Date:**

**Name: .....**

University of Leicester Archaeological Services

Report No. 2007-108

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(101)

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## **A Photographic Survey of the Sangra and Shonki Buildings (formerly the Abbey Park Mills), Abbey Park Street, Leicester (SK 5913 0578)**

### *Summary*

*A photographic survey, linked to a short historic record of two industrial buildings known as the Sangra and Shonki Buildings located on Abbey Park Street, Leicester was carried out by ULAS on behalf of the LHA-ASRA Group. The buildings were originally constructed as part of the Abbey Park Mills, for Wolsey Ltd., a well-known Leicester-based hosiery manufacturer. The Shonki Building, located adjacent to the Grand Union Canal, is composed of three separately constructed buildings, the earliest element being a large warehouse at the northern end of the site, designed by architect J. Goodacre FRIBA and constructed in 1888. The Sangra Building, located on the corner of Abbey Park Street and Ross' Walk, was designed by architect W.H. Riley ARIBA and constructed in 1923. The photographic archive will be deposited with Leicester City Museums Service under the Accession Number A6.2007.*

### **1. Introduction**

This document presents the results of a photographic survey, linked to a short historic record of two industrial buildings, known as the Sangra and Shonki Buildings, located on Abbey Park Street, Leicester, centred on National Grid Reference SK 5913 0578 (see Fig. 1).

The work was carried out on behalf of the LHA-ASRA Group, in accordance with advice given by Chris Wardle, City Archaeologist at Leicester City Council, in response to a pre-planning enquiry concerning the redevelopment of the site for residential purposes.

### **2. Site Location**

The Abbey Park Mills Site is located at National Grid Reference SK 5913 0578, to the north of Abbey Park Road and to the east of the Grand Union Canal. The site lies within c. 0.5ha of land at a height of c. 53.5m aOD.

### **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, in order to provide a permanent record of the building in its present state.

### **4. Methodology**

The photographic survey was carried out on the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> of July 2007, by Sophie Clarke and Jon Coward of ULAS. A full set of survey drawings produced by Tower Services Ltd was supplied by the client, the LHA-ASRA Group; the accuracy of these was verified on site and they are used as the basis of this report. A number of additional historic architectural details identified during the course of the survey are recorded on a set of the architects drawings which are included as part of the site archive.

Photographs were taken using a 35mm SLR camera, with HP5 Ilford 400ASA monochrome film and a Pentax K10 digital SLR camera. Flash was used where appropriate. The selection of images was carried out in accordance with items 1-9 of the English Heritage Guidelines for photographic survey (EH 2006).

- Item 1: General views of the building.
- Item 2: The building's external appearance.
- Item 3: Further views, to indicate original design intentions of the builder or architect (as appropriate).
- Item 4: The overall appearance of principal rooms and circulation areas.
- Item 5: Any external or internal detail, structural or decorative, which is relevant to the building's design, development and use and which does not show adequately on general photographs.
- Item 6: Any machinery or other plant, or evidence for its former existence.
- Item 7: Any dates or inscriptions, any signage, makers plates or graffiti which contribute to an understanding of the building or its fixtures or machinery, if not adequately captured by transcription.
- Item 8: Any building contents or ephemera which have a significant history on the building's history.
- Item 9: Copies of maps, drawings, views and photographs present in the building and illustrating its development or that of its site.

Part of the post-fieldwork programme involved identifying relevant plans held in the Leicester Building Register series, held at the Records Office for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (ROLLR). 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 LLRRO and are indexed by street name.

The various other documentary and cartographic sources are listed in Section 8, below.

All work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Buildings or Structures*.

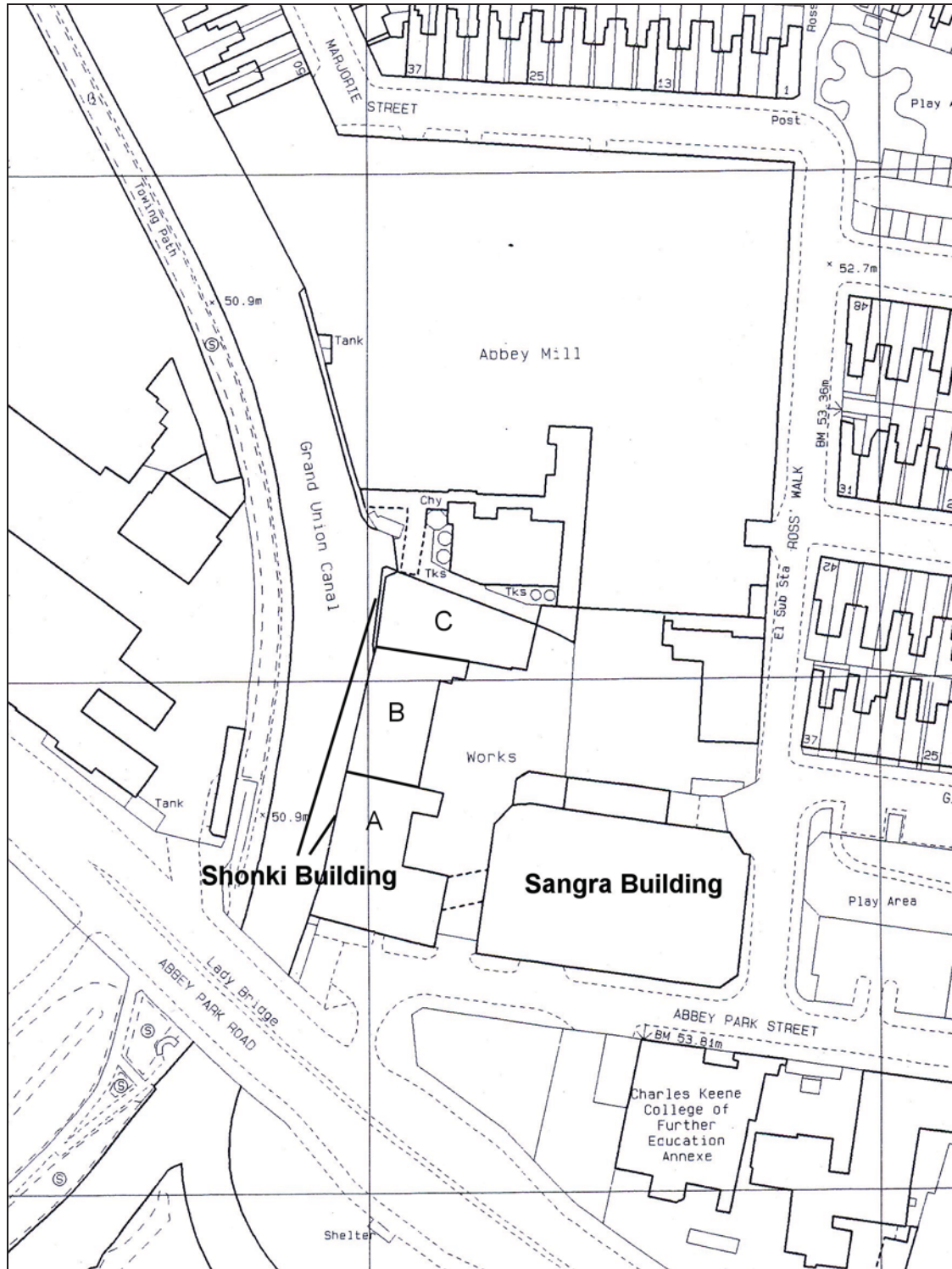


Figure 1. Location of Sangra and Shonki Buildings. Scale 1:1250

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## **5. Results**

### **5.1 Historical Background**

The Sangra and Shonki Buildings were originally constructed as a factory and warehouses, known as Abbey Park Mills, for the Wolsey company, a well-known Leicester hosiery firm whose headquarters are still located nearby, at Abbey Meadows.

#### ***The Wolsey Company***

Wolsey was founded in Leicester in 1755 by Henry Wood. Following his death in 1768, the business was maintained by his wife and sons, trading under the name of Ann Wood and Sons, producing hosiery, undergarments and knitwear. Robert Walker joined the company as a partner in 1842 and, following the retirement of Richard Wood, the company name was changed to Robert Walker & Sons. By 1883 this was the largest hosiery company in the Leicester region with goods exported world-wide. In 1920, R Walker & Sons merged with W Tyler and Sons; the business was registered as a public company and renamed 'Wolsey'. In 1967, the company became part of the Courtaulds Group, regaining its independent status in 1996. In 2002, the company was bought by Matalan.

#### ***Building Description and Chronology***

##### ***Shonki Building***

The Shonki Building is composed of three distinct and separately constructed, brick-built elements (Fig. 1, above). Block A, is L-shaped in plan and located on the Abbey Park Street Frontage, consisting of five storeys, with a flat roof (Plate 5). A structure on top of the flat roof houses the motor and winding gear for a lift: this is of some architectural pretention having arch-headed windows and a steeply-pitched, hipped roof (Plate 8). The west facing façade, fronting onto the Grand Union Canal, is composed of 9 window bays and the south-facing, principal façade is composed of 6 window bays. Adjoining Block A, to the north, is Block B, rectangular in plan form and eight window bays in length, also consisting of five storeys, with a pitched, suspended queen-post, trussed rafter roof structure. Block C is a large warehouse, adjoining Block B to the north and is aligned east/west. This is sub-rectangular in plan, being wider at its western end and is four storeys in height, with a pitched roof. The roof structure is of suspended queen-post trussed rafter form, with trussed purlins carried on strainer beams, which support the upper flat-roof section (Plates 20-21).

The rear Block C warehouse appears to be the earliest extant structure on the site. The original architects drawings for the warehouse, held by the ROLLR (LBR Plan No. 18000), were approved by the Borough Sanitary Authority on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 1887, and show a warehouse, located along a backwater (now infilled), comprising three storeys plus basement, with a flattened queen-post roof structure. An amendment to the plan, dated 30<sup>th</sup> December 1887 proposes an additional fourth storey and notes the intended employment of 20 males and 40 females (LBR Plan No. 18098). The



architect of the warehouse was J. Goodacre (d. 1916; FRIBA) of architectural firm Goodacre and Goodacre, located at 5 Friar Lane, Leicester.

Original plans for Blocks A and B were not located during the course of this fieldwork; evidence from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey Maps XXXI.10 and 11 however, indicates that both elements were constructed between 1885 and 1904. LBR Plan No. 17573 shows additions to a series of single storey worksheds located along the Abbey Park Road frontage and along the Grand Union Canal. These were constructed of timber frame, with corrugated iron sheet walling and roofing material and were intended to house 5 male employees, with a view to incorporating a further 40 female employees over the course of the following two to three years. These plans were approved on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 1887 and assuming that they were implemented, it would seem most likely that the present brick buildings (A and B) were constructed around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### *Sangra Building*

The Sangra Building is a substantial brick-built factory, of five storeys plus basement, with principal entrance located on the corner of Abbey Park Street and Ross' Walk. The 1923 date on the east facing façade can be confirmed by documentary evidence as the date of its construction. LBR Plan No. 25096, approved on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 1922, is entitled 'Plan of New Warehouse in Abbey Park Road and Ross' Walk for Mssrs. Wolsey Ltd'. The attached note reads 'Shows a five-storey and basemented (sic) factory of reinforced concrete throughout with 170ft frontage to Abbey Park Road and 90ft to Ross' Walk. Proper air space is provided; also staircase and lavatory accommodation. The plan will be in compliance if the detail drawings of the ferro-concrete work are submitted to the City Surveyor before the work proceeds'. The architect of the building is recorded as W.H. Riley ARIBA, Architect and Surveyor, of Horsefair Street, Leicester. No further details of the architect are known.

### *Recent History*

The site was purchased from HJB Plastics in the early 1980s by Leicester property management firm Shonki Brothers. At this time, each building was subdivided into a series of individual units, which are presently let to a variety of independent businesses, including manufacturers of knitwear, hosiery, belts and plastic sheeting, in addition to importers of spices and exotic foods.

## **5.2 The Photographic Survey**

In accordance with the methodology outlined above (Section 4) a full photographic survey of each building was undertaken to include all external elevations, in addition to general shots of the principal rooms, circulation areas and significant internal detail. At the time of the photographic survey, all floors of each building were subdivided by inserted partition walls of varying materials, including brick, plaster board and plywood, creating a number of smaller units. Many of these were still in use and occupied by tenant business operations and a number of these were locked and inaccessible.

An index to the photographs held in the site archive has 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 Accession Number A6.2007.

Selected images, plates 1-37( Appendix III) are used to illustrate this report: these have been located, along with the archived photographs, on a set of building plans supplied by the developer and included here as figures 2 – 12, Appendix II.

## **6 Archive and Publication**

The archive consists of:

- Monochrome film and contact print sheets
- Digital picture files (.tiff format) and contact print sheets
- Field notes
- Survey of existing building (provided by the developer) with location of plates noted.

It will be deposited with Leicester City Council Museums Service under the Accession Number A6. 2007, in due course.

A summary of this report will be submitted to the editor of *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* for inclusion in the annual summary of archaeology in Leicestershire and Rutland.

## **7. Sources**

Campbell, J.W. P., 2000 'Naming the parts of post-medieval roof structures' in *Vernacular Architecture* Vol 31, 45-51.

English Heritage, 2006. *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*. London EH.

Felstead, A. 1993 *Directory of British Architects 1834-1900*. London: Mansell

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

Kelly's Directories of the City of Leicester 1889-1955

ROLLR Records Office for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland: Leicester Building Register Plans 17573 (1887) and 25096 (1922); Ordnance Survey Maps XXXI.10 and 11, 1885, 1904, 1915, 1930, 1955; O.S. Maps SK5905 NW 1:1250.

Wright's Directory of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland 1889-1904

## **8. Acknowledgements**

ULAS would like to thank Gary, caretaker of the Shonki and Sangra Buildings for his assistance during the fieldwork.

## Appendix I: Index to photographs held in archive

### Colour

Image No.	Building	Floor	Description	Looking:
A6.2007_001	Sangra	G	Ground floor storage unit (polythene sheeting)	NE
002	“	G	As above	N
003	“	G	As above	SE
004	“	G	As above	S
005	“	G	Ground floor packing area (exotic foods)	S
006	Sangra	Ext.	Rear loading bay	W
007	“	“	Rear loading bay, with Shonki B +C to rear	W
008	“	“	General view	SW
009	“	“	As 007	W
010	“	“	General view	SW
011	“	G	Internal door, principal entrance	S
012	“	Ext.	Principal entrance	NW
013	“	“	As above	NW
014	“	“	As above	NW
015	“	1 <sup>st</sup>	Early lift	SW
016	“	“	As above	SW
017	“	“	As above	S
018	“	“	First floor corridor	W
019	“	“	First floor unit 4a	NW
020	“	“	As above	NW
021	Sangra	1 <sup>st</sup>	Unit 4c	NE
022	“	“	Unit 4	E
023	“	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Unit 6c	E
024	“	“	Unit 6- abandoned belt makers' workshop	SW
025	“	“	As above	S
026	“	“	Unit 6d	W
027	“	“	As above	E
028	“	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Abandoned knitwear manufacturer	N
029	“	“	As above	NW
030	“	“	Empty unit	NW
031	“	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup> floor unit, empty	SE
032	“	“	As above	S
033	“	“	North-eastern unit, empty	SE
034	“	“	As above	NE
035	“	“	As above	NW
036	“	“	North-western unit, caretakers' storage	NE
037	“	“	As above	W
038	Shonki	Ext.	Canal side elevation	E
039	Shonki	Ext.	Abbey Park Street elevation	NE
040	Sangra and Shonki Buildings	Ext.	General view	N
041	“	“	As above	N
042	“	“	As above	N
043	“	“	As above	N
044	“	“	As above	N
045	Shonki A	Ext.	Rear view of winding-gear tower, taken from roof top	SW
046	Sangra	Ext.	View of 4 <sup>th</sup> floor, taken from 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor roof	E
047	Shonki B & C	Ext.	View of Shonki Building B & C Blocks, taken from roof of skywalk between buildings	N

048	Sangra	1 <sup>st</sup>	First floor stairwell	W
049	Shonki B	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup> floor unit (photocopier machine supplier)	NE
050	“	“	As above, with queen-post roof structure visible	NE
051	“	“	As above, roof structure detail	SW
052	“	“	Weight-gauge device, associated with lift?	E
053	“	“	Stairwell down to 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor landing	E
054	Shonki C	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Knitwear manufacturer/assembly and packing	NW
055	“	“	As above, detail of line shaft bearing	E
056	“	1 <sup>st</sup>	Knitwear manufacturer/ knitting and cutting	NW
057	“	“	As above, detail of line shaft bearing	NW
058	“	“	As above, fire door mechanism	E
059	“	“	Early fire door to stairwell	E
060	Shonki C	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Store room- medical supplies and knitwear	SE
061	“	“	Hipped roof structure	N
062	“	“	Trussed purlin arrangement	E
063	“	“	Suspended queen post trussed rafter roof, with trussed purlins carried on the strainer beams, supporting the upper flat roof section	E
064	“	“	As above, detail	SE
065	“	“	As above, east gable end wall	E
066	“	“	As 063	W
067	Shonki B	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Knitwear manufacturer	SW
068	“	“	Detail of cast-iron column support	N
069	“	“	Window detail	W
070	Shonki B	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Jersey fabric manufacturer	S
071	“	“	Detail of cast-iron column support	S
072	“	1 <sup>st</sup>	Storage (jersey fabric)	S
073	“	“	As above	S
074	Sangra	Ext.	Rear of Sangra building, with link bridge and Shonki A to right hand side	S
075	Shonki A	Ext.	Rear view of building, taken from yard	SW
076	“	G	Small-scale knitwear manufacturer	SW
077	“	“	As above	S
078	“	1 <sup>st</sup>	Knitwear manufacturer	N
079	“	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Screen printers	NW
080	“	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Knitwear manufacturer	SW
081	“	“	Fire-door to lift	W
082	“	“	Stairwell to 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor landing	E
083	-	Ext.	Carriage Entrance to rear yard	N
084	-	Ext.	As above, detail	N
085	Shonki A	4 <sup>th</sup>	Storage Area	NW
086	“	“	Cast-iron column detail	NW
087	Sangra	G	Loading Bay	SW
088	“	G	Spice wholesalers	N
089	“	“	As above, detail of concrete and steel supports	W
090	“	1 <sup>st</sup>	Knitwear manufacturer ‘In stitches’	NW
091	“	G	Polythene manufacturer	E
092	Shonki A	G	Knitwear manufacturer/pattern cutting	SE
093	Shonki B	G	Knitwear manufacturer	N
094	Sangra	Ext.	Principal entrance	NW
095	“	“	As above, detail	NW
096	“	“	East-facing elevation, decorative detailing	W
097	Shonki A	“	Abbey Park Street elevation	N
098	Shonki C and B	“	Canal-side, west-facing elevation	SE
099	Shonki C	“	As above	E
100	Shonki A and B	“	As above	NW

101	Sangra	B	Basement car park	S
102	“	“	As above	SE
103	“	B	As above	NW
104	“	“	As above, concrete column and steelwork detail	SW

### Monochrome

Film/ Frame No.	Building	Floor	Description	Looking:
1/00	Shonki B and C	Ext.	Courtyard elevations	NW
1/0	“	“	As above	“
1/1	“	“	As above	“
2	“	“	As above	“
3	Sangra	G	Ground floor storage unit (polythene sheeting)	NE
4	“	G	As above	N
5	“	G	As above	N
6	“	G	As above	N
7	“	“	As above	N
8	“	“	As above	S
9	“	“	As above	SE
10	“	G	Ground floor packing area (exotic foods)	S
11	“	“	As above	SW
12	“	“	Office Area	E
13	“	“	As above	E
14	Sangra	Ext.	General view	SW
15	“	“	As above	SW
16	“	“	As above	SW
17	Sangra	Ext.	Rear loading bay, with Shonki B + C to rear	W
18	“	“	As above	W
19	“	G	Internal door , principal entrance	S
20	Sangra	G	As above	S
21	“	“	As above	S
22	“	G	Stairwell with early rail detail	N
23	“	“	As above	N
24	“	“	As above	N
25	“	G	Internal door, principal detail	S
26	“	“	As above	S
27	“	Ext.	Principal entrance	NW
28	“	1 <sup>st</sup>	Early lift	SW
29	“	“	As above	SW
30	“	“	First floor corridor	W
31	“	“	Early lift and window	SW
32	“	“	First floor unit 4a	NW
33	“	“	As above	NW
34	Sangra	1 <sup>st</sup>	Unit 4c	NE
35	“	“	As above	NE
2/00	Sangra	1st	Unit 4	E
2/0	“	“	As above	E
1	“	“	As above	E
2	“	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Unit 6c	E
3	“	“	As above	E
4	“	“	Unit 6- abandoned belt makers' workshop	SW
5	“	“	As above	SW
6	“	“	As above, store room	NW
7	“	“	As 2/4	S
8	“	“	As above	SE
9	“	“	As above	E

10	“	“	Unit 6d	W
11	“	“	As above	W
12	“	“	As above	E
13	“	“	As above	E
14	“	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Abandoned knitwear manufacturer	NW
15	“	“	As above	N
16	“	“	Empty unit	NW
17	“	“	As above	SE
18	“	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup> floor unit, empty	SE
19	“	“	As above	S
20	“	“	North-eastern unit, empty	SE
21	“	“	As above	NE
22	“	“	As above	NW
23	“	“	North-western unit, caretakers' storage	NE
24	“	“	As above	W
25	Shonki C	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Trussed purlin roof structure	E
26	Shonki	Ext.	Canal side elevation	E
27	Shonki	Ext.	Abbey Park Street elevation	NE
28	“	“	As above	NE
29	“	“	As above	NE
30	Sangra and Shonki Buildings	Ext.	General view	N
31	“	“	As above	N
32	“	“	As above	N
33	“	“	As above	N
3/00	Shonki A	Ext.	Rear view of winding-gear tower, taken from roof top	SW
3/0	Sangra	Ext.	View of 4 <sup>th</sup> floor, taken from 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor roof	E
1	Shonki B & C	Ext.	View of Shonki Building B & C Blocks, taken from roof of link bridge between buildings	N
2	Sangra	1 <sup>st</sup>	First floor stairwell	W
3	Shonki B	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup> floor unit (photocopier machine supplier)	NE
4	“	“	As above, with queen-post roof structure visible	NE
5	“	“	As above, roof structure detail	SW
6	“	“	Weight-gauge device, associated with lift?	E
7	“	“	As above	E
8	Shonki C	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Knitwear manufacturer/assembly and packing	NW
9	“	“	As above	NW
10	“	“	As above, detail of line shaft bearing	E
11	“	1 <sup>st</sup>	Detail of line-shaft bearing	NW
12	“	“	As above	NW
13	“	“	Early fire-door to stairwell	E
14	“	“	As above	E
15	Shonki C	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Store room- medical supplies and knitwear	SE
16	“	“	As above	SE
17	“	“	Detail of suspended queen post truss, with supporting cast iron column	SE
18	“	“	Trussed purlin arrangement	E
19	“	“	Store room	E
20	“	“	As above, east gable end wall and converging purlins	E
21	Shonki B	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Knitwear manufacturer	SW
22	“	“	As above	SW
23	“	“	Detail of cast-iron column support	N
24	“	“	As above	N
25	-	-	-	-

26	Shonki B	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Jersey fabric manufacturer	S
27	“	“	As above	S
28	“	“	Detail of cast-iron column support	S
29	Sangra	Ext.	Rear of Sangra building, with link bridge and Shonki A to right hand side	S
30	“	“	As above	S
31	“	“	As above	S
32	Shonki A	Ext.	Rear view of building, taken from yard	SW
33	“	“	As above	SW
34	“	G	Small-scale knitwear manufacturer	SW
35	“	“	As above (dark)	SW
36	“	“	As above	S
4/00	Shonki A	1 <sup>st</sup>	Knitwear manufacturer	N
4/0	“	“	As above	N
1	“	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Screen printers	N
2	“	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Knitwear manufacturer	SW
3	-	Ext.	Carriage Entrance to rear yard	N
4	-	Ext.	As above	N
5	Shonki A	4 <sup>th</sup>	Storage Area	NW
6	“	“	Cast-iron column detail	NW
7	Sangra	G	Loading Bay	SW
8	“	G	Spice wholesalers, detail of concrete and steel supports	W
9	“	1 <sup>st</sup>	Knitwear manufacturer ‘In stitches’	NW
10	“	G	Polythene manufacturer	E
11	Shonki A	G	Knitwear manufacturer/pattern cutting	SE
12	Shonki B	G	Knitwear manufacturer	N
13	Sangra	Ext.	East-facing elevation, decorative detailing	W
14	“	Ext.	Principal entrance	NW
15	“	“	As above	NW
16	Shonki A	“	Abbey Park Street elevation	N
17	Shonki C and B	“	Canal-side, west-facing elevation	NW
18	“	“	As above	SE
19	Shonki C	“	As above	E
20	Shonki A and B	“	As above	SE
21	Shonki C and B	“	As above	SE
22	Sangra	“	General view	SW
23	“	“	As above	SW



## **Appendix II: Figures 2-12**