

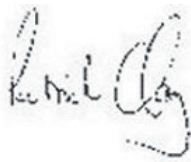
**An Archaeological Standing Building Survey of
Plot 30 and Canal side elevations of
Plots 29-32, Lawley Street Middleway,
Eastside, Birmingham (SP 083 873)**

Gerwyn Richards

Planning Application: N/A

**For: Birmingham City Council
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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned to undertake an archaeological standing building survey of a range of buildings in advance of the Eastside Regeneration in Birmingham. An archaeological desk-based assessment had identified the buildings as being of some historical and architectural significance (Driver 2005).

There was a variety of buildings, the majority of which were industrial in origin, and of mid to late Victorian in date, 'the boom time' for industrial Birmingham. Closer examination, however, indicated that earlier buildings survived, incorporated into the existing buildings. As a group the buildings represent both the industrial development and decline of Birmingham.

This report covers the survey of Plot 30 and canal side elevations of Plots 29-32 located on the south-west side of Lawley Street Middleway and north-east of the Digbeth branch of the Birmingham canal.

1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Wardell Armstrong Ltd, on behalf of Birmingham City Council, to undertake an archaeological standing building survey of eight buildings, the limited remains of a ninth, a possible military structure and to record the canal side elevation facing the Digbeth Branch Canal prior to demolition as part of the Eastside Regeneration. An archaeological desk-based assessment undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology (Driver 2005) indicated the potential for architecturally and historically significant buildings within the proposed development area. This report covers the survey of Plot 30 and canal side elevations of Plots 29-32 located on the south-west side of Lawley Street Middleway and north-east of the Digbeth branch of the Birmingham canal.

Eastside is located to the east of Birmingham City centre and is bounded to the north by Jennens Road, to the east by Lawley Street Middleway, to the south by Curzon Street and to the west by Bartholomew Row (Figs 1-2). The Eastside area is currently largely derelict, the majority of the buildings having been recently vacated. While the majority of the buildings are mid 20th century in date, there are, however, a number of 19th century buildings interspersed among them and in places the original street plan survives. The buildings appear to have mainly housed, small scale independent manufacturing businesses; such businesses are frequently located on the fringes of city centres, attracted by cheaper rents of older un-modernised buildings.

Cartographic evidence indicates that the majority of the development area experienced rapid urban development in the later part of the 19th century; until then the majority of the

area remained undeveloped and was used as orchards and possibly cultivated plots (Driver 2005, fig 10). It was only with the construction of the canal in 1790 that development began, limited mainly within the north-easternmost corner of the proposed development area, a triangle of land defined by Belmont Row to the south west, Lawley Street (now Lawley Street Middleway) to the east, and the since lost Prospect Row, a street which ran along the current line of Jennens Road to the north. The area is bisected by the Digbeth Branch Canal.

The first clearly identifiable buildings to be included within this standing building survey appear on the 1888 Ordnance Survey; some of the buildings are, however, clearly earlier in date. Some of the streets are clearly identifiable on earlier maps as plot boundaries within the orchards and cultivation plots (Driver 2005, fig 10).



Figure. 1. Site location (from Driver 2005 fig.1)

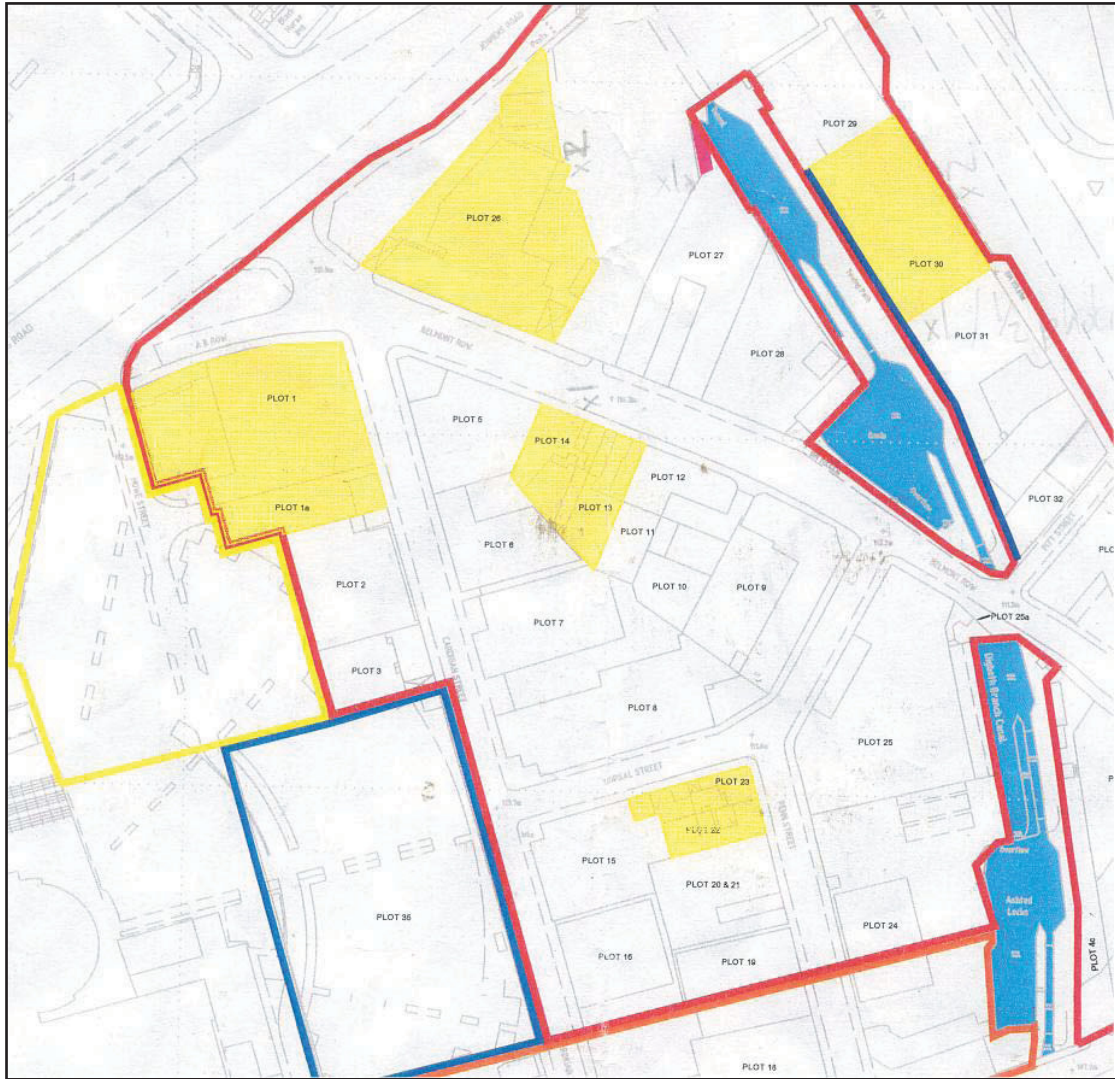


Figure 2 Site Location showing plots discussed in the text (29-31) in relation to other buildings in the study area. North to the top.

2. Aims and Methodology

The objective of the standing building survey as required by Birmingham City Council (*Birmingham City Council Eastside Demolition Phasing Plan April 2007*) was as follows:

- The preparation of a full documentary history carried out using all available documentary sources including maps, plans and written primary sources.
- A drawn record at English Heritage Level 3 which should include reference to building materials and method of construction.
- A full photographic record accompanied by a photographic register.
- An analysis relating the documentary history to the measured plans and elevations and the photographic record.

The standing building survey was undertaken by Gerwyn Richards. Photographs, in 35mm monochrome negative and colour transparency formats covered items 1-6 of the English Heritage guidelines (2006, 4; Appendix 4.1.2). The site visits for this phase of work were carried out between June 4th 2007 and July 11th 2007.

Plot numbers had been allocated prior to this standing building survey commencing (Figure 2) and these plot numbers have been retained for the purpose of this work and a letter added where internal sub-division is also required.

All work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Code of Conduct and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing buildings or Structures. Understanding Historic Buildings* (English Heritage 2006) has been used as a basis for defining levels of recording

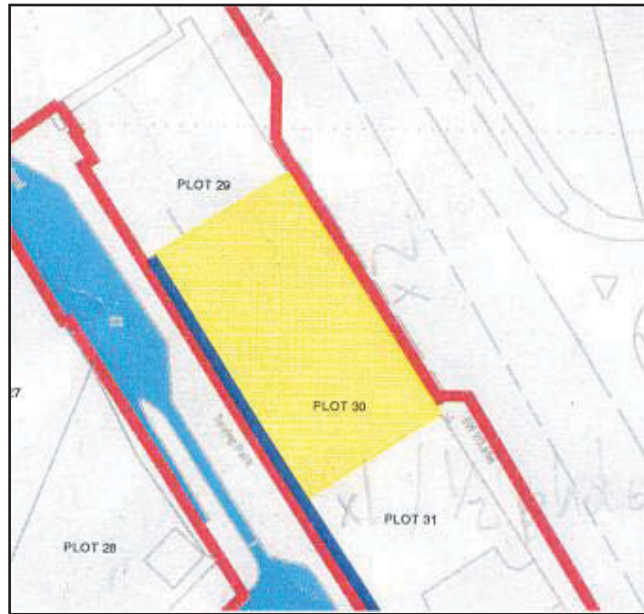
Plot 30(i)**Lawley Street Middleway (formerly 45-47, Lawley Street)**

Figure 3 Plot 30 (i) & (ii) Location. North to the top.

Plot 30 comprises two buildings in a row of warehouses which front Lawley Street Middleway to the north-east, with the Digbeth Branch Canal to the rear (south-west; Figure 3). These are described as Plot 30 (i) comprising the northernmost building and (ii) immediately to the south-east.

The Lawley Street frontage of Plot 30 (i) is a rather nondescript pebble-dashed factory building with steel roller shutters at ground floor level and low windows on the first floor (Figure 6). It is however the canal frontage (Figures 18 and 20) which really stand out in showing the building's true 19th century origins. Structurally Plot 30(i) is built in 9½ inch by 2¾ inch hand-made red bricks in a Flemish Bond, the rear wall having been raised with a new roof added (Figures 18 and 20). It retains the original windows at first floor level which have flat cambered brick arches above and possibly original twin wooden shutters. New windows have been added at second floor level, which although UPVC have been constructed to resemble 19th century iron framed windows (Figures 18 and 20).

Interior

An internal study suggests three different phases within the building, which is supported to a certain extent by the cartographic evidence. Bay (a) to the north-west of the building (Figure 7) is the earliest followed by bay (c) to the south-east and finally bay (b) was created by roofing over the open yard between (a) and (c) (Figures 4-5). Being much altered in the later 20th century means there is little of historic or architectural interest surviving. The different phases of building were clearly visible, with the original southern wall of bay (a) remaining as a series of brick pillars supporting the wall plate and roof and a six metre length of wall perpendicular to the plots rear wall, while the southern wall of bay (c) has been completely removed and the roof is supported by 8 inch (200mm) RSJ's.

The RSJ's are stamped "DORMAN LONG & Co LTD MIDDLESBOROUGH ENGLAND" a company which began production of iron and steel bar and angle in 1875 mainly for the ship building industries of the north-east. Obviously the bar and angle was used for construction also, confirmed by the RSJ's within Plot 30 (i). When Dorman Long acquired the concerns of Bell Brothers and Bolckow and Vaughan in the late 1920's they began to specialize in bridge building and the Sydney Harbour Bridge (1932) is without doubt their most well known product. The company is still in existence and most recently took part in the construction of the new Wembley Stadium in London.

The final central bay (b) consists of the roof built over the original open space (Figures 4-5). The roof is a simple steel frame in 2 inch (50mm) angle with a central raised vent and clad with corrugated asbestos cement sheets (Figure 8). It was not possible to examine the steelwork closely but it is likely to be contemporary with that in bay (c) and from Dorman Long also.

There is a partial first floor to Plot 30 (i), which occupies the Lawley Street frontage of all three bays and the full length of bay (c). First floor access is via an open timber staircase within bay (c), where again as with the ground floor extensive alteration has left little in the way of original features, the Lawley Street frontage in particular having considerable 20th century alterations and partitions. The first floor of bay (c), however, appears largely unaltered being open plan with painted brick walls and exposed floor boards and the small wing perpendicular to the bay at the rear illustrates the original plan of the bay.

Discussion

As with some of the previous buildings mentioned above, the documentary evidence relating to this plot is difficult to trace because the plots were made up of several pre-existing buildings. Later these became one building before again being subdivided into two. An examination of early maps indicates that Plot 30 (i) was originally numbers 45 and 47 Lawley Street, the right hand bay and canalside bay are clearly visible on the Piggot Smith map of 1855 and is recorded as a malthouse. The earliest documentary mention of number 47 Lawley Street in the Post Office Directory of 1872, however, lists a public house on the site, suggesting, therefore, that the street numbers have altered over the years.

Kelly's Directory of 1880 does record Joseph Key, maltster, occupying numbers 45, 47 and 49 Lawley Street. Joseph Key remained on site until the late 19th century but by 1900 the site was occupied by H. Wilton Stockham, a porter bottler. Porter was an early eighteenth century dark brown beer, becoming a jet black blend of brown ale, pale ale and stale ale in the 19th century; it was known as 'porter' because of its popularity among London street workers, mainly because of its alcoholic strength. The strongest ales at this time were known as 'stoutest' and porter was known as 'porter stout', before later becoming known simply as stout. Porter bottlers would buy bulk stout in hogs heads from the brewery and then bottle it themselves using their own label, frequently not even mentioning the brewery, trading on their own reputation. This practice had all but died out by the late 19th century, making Stockham one of the last in the business.

From the 1900s onwards the buildings were used mainly as warehouses for a number of different occupiers. In 1910 numbers 45, 47 and 49 were occupied by Newark & March Company Limited, described simply as merchants, who remained until the late 1920s when all the buildings were taken over by Electricars Limited, electric vehicle makers. The

company was established in 1919, producing electrical powered chassis onto which any number of bodies could be installed, most commonly dust carts and milk floats. The company is still in existence and is now located in Warwickshire.

By 1940 the building had returned to warehouses, A.B Gibson Limited provision merchants occupying numbers 45 and 47 only. Gibson's stayed there until the late 1960s. By 1971 the plot had been sub-divided; number 45 was occupied by Hawkins Brothers (Birmingham) Limited, upholsters, while number 47 was RJH Plastics Limited a polythene bag manufacturer.

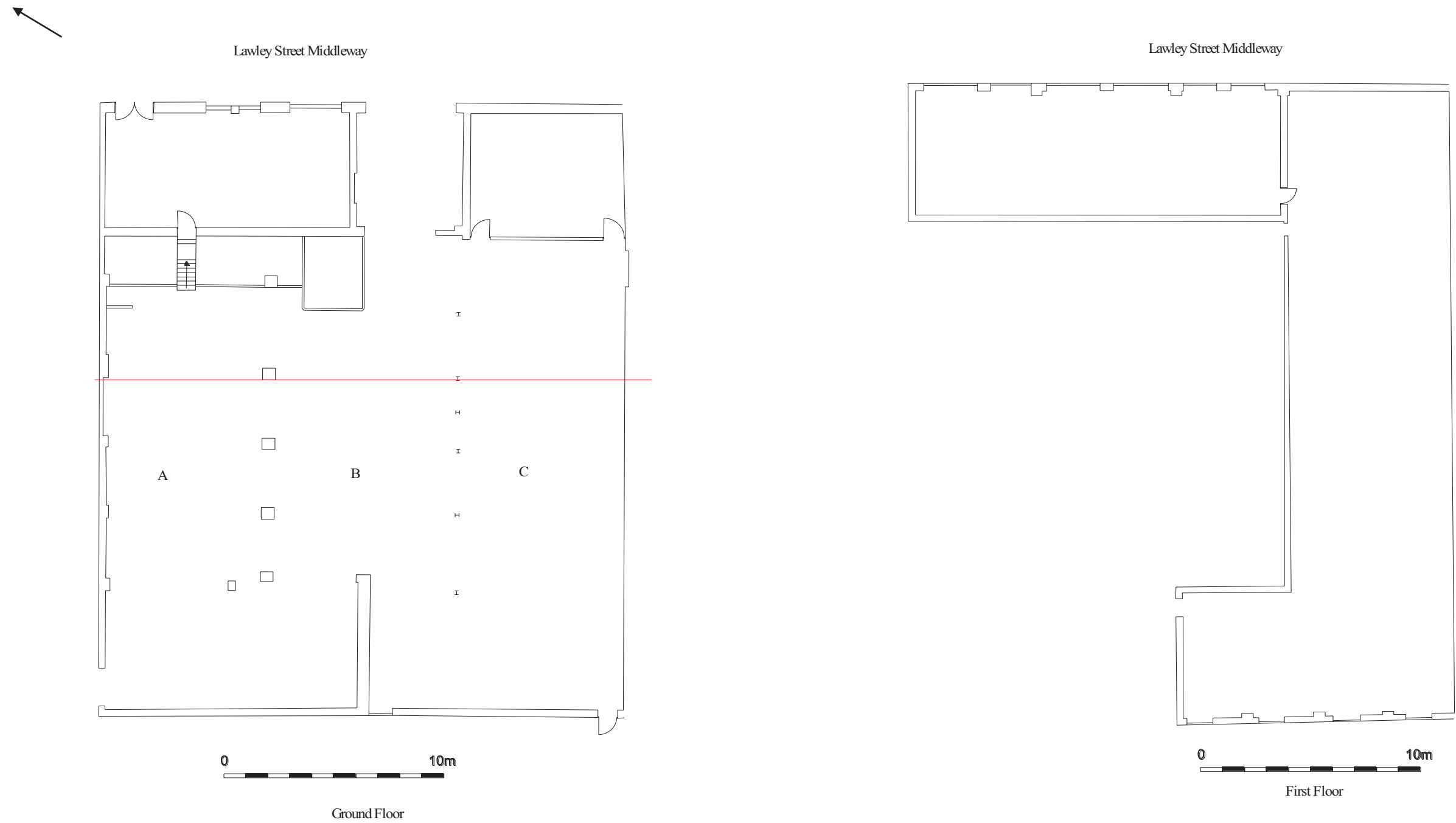
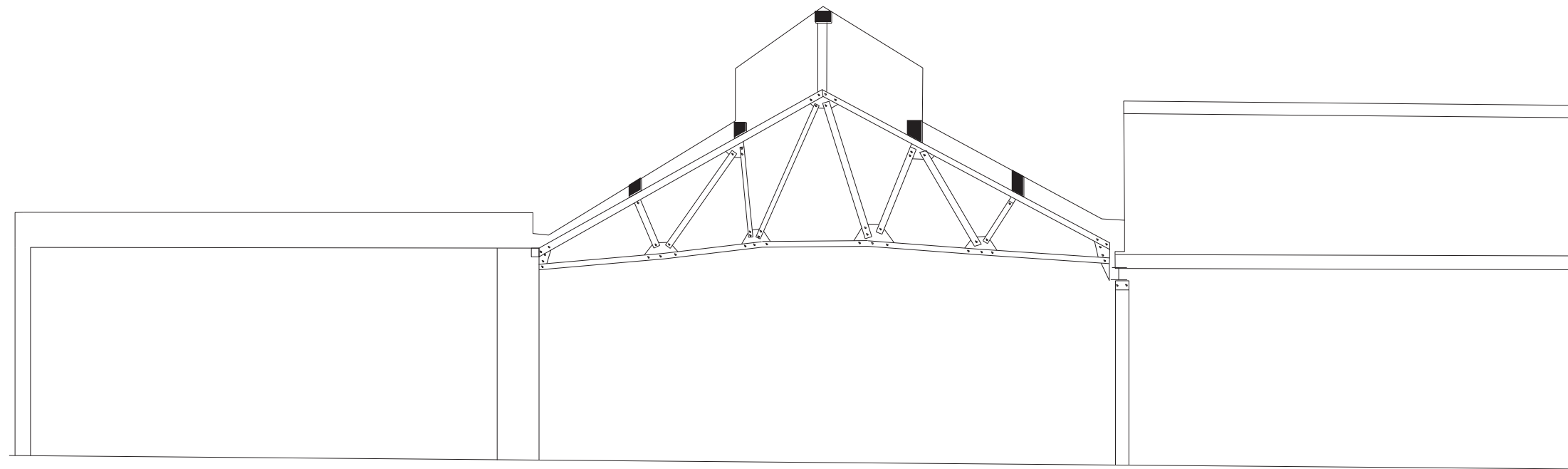


Figure 4 Plot 30 (i) Ground Floor (Left) & First Floor Plan (Right) Plan. (Profile location in Red; North arrowed).



Profile

Figure 5 Plot 30(i) Profile.



Figure 6 Plot 30(i) Lawley Street Middleway Frontage.



Figure 7 Plot 30(i) North-western Bay.



Figure 8 Plot 30(i) External Roof

Plot 30(ii) Lawley Street Middleway (formerly 49 and (?) 57 Lawley Street)*Exterior*

Plot 30(ii) is immediately to the south-east of Plot 30(i) and again the Lawley Street frontage is rather nondescript, although in this case the original brickwork can be seen (Figure 11). The south-eastern bay may actually be original with two ground floor doors and seven tall narrow first floor windows. A blocked window with a cambered arched brick lintel above can be seen at ground floor level indicating a late Victorian date for this part of the building although the first floor windows are clearly later in date (Figure 12).

Again, as with Plot 30(i), it is the canal frontage which stands out (Figures 18 and 20); the brickwork here is machine made 9 inch by 2 ¾ inch red brick in a Quarterstretcher Bond with at least two visible phases of building. The earliest brickwork is identical to that within Plot 30(i), of which most survives within the north-western bay; the central and left-hand bays are approximately three quarters new build. It is possible, therefore, that these bays replaced an earlier building similar to Plot 30(i). This lower phase also contains two blocked doorways over which are chambered arches of blue brick and a series of cast iron vents (Figures 18 and 20).

Although contemporary, three distinct styles are used in the later phase in order to raise the height of the buildings. The north-western bay (Figure 9 A) is a simple shallow pitched roof; the central bay (B) uses a north-light roof construction while the south-eastern bay (C) uses a more steeply pitched roof. Tall narrow windows with concrete lintels and sills, of which one is blocked, are used in the south-eastern and central bays. The north-western bay, with the exception of one blocked window and insert, however, retained its original iron framed windows with cambered arches of red brick and blue brick sills; the windows had been blocked internally.

Interior

Internally there are two distinct phases, with the north-western bay (A; Figures 9-10 and 15) being the earliest, a fact supported by cartographic evidence (Figure 23) followed by the central (B) and south-eastern (C) bays (Figure 14). The original south-eastern exterior wall of the north-western bay is largely intact with only a new opening towards the rear of the plot. As with the other buildings there is very little of historical and architectural interest within this bay, comprising an open plan factory space with some modern partitions along the Lawley Street frontage. The roof is a simple steel frame with the trusses supported on brick pillars; the 2 inch (50mm) angle is, once again from Dorman Long Ltd (Figure 15).

The central (B) and south-eastern (C) bays appear to be contemporary but the use of brick pillars to support the wall plate may suggest that a wall has been removed; the wall plate is a 15inch (380mm) RSJ stamped “FRODINGHAM IRON & STEEL C^o L^{td} ENGLAND” (Figure 17). The Frodingham Ironworks did not successfully produce steel until 1890, so this RSJ must be later than this to bear the stamp and this part of the building is therefore likely to be early 20th century in date. There are number of partitions on the Lawley Street frontage including a stairway/foyer which if not original would have been an early addition, while the remainder is open plan

factory space. The central bay has a timber-built north-light roof (Figure 16) which appears to have suffered fire damage at some point and the south-eastern bay has a bolted timber king post roof with raking struts; both roofs are clad with corrugated asbestos cement sheets (Figure 15).

As with Plot 30(i) there is a first-floor fronting Lawley Street Middleway, and it is likely that this is original as the floor is concrete, while an inserted floor is more likely to have been timber. Metal framed windows with chamfered window surrounds front on to Lawley Street Middleway (Figure 17). This floor has been subdivided extensively into offices by the use of half-glazed partitions, located off a full length corridor. The corridor shows a change in floor between the central and south-eastern bays and the wall at this point is a full 600mm wide, suggesting an exterior wall, and indicating that the two bays were not likely to be contemporary. The corridor also has an iron fire door approximately one metre before the partition between the north-western and central bays. Some panel removal within the first floor of the south-eastern bay revealed painted brickwork indicated that the walls were not originally plastered. The rear of this bay has an apparently inserted mezzanine level accessed via an open timber staircase.

Discussion

As mentioned in relation to plot 30 (i) (above), tracing documentary evidence relating to plot 30(ii) is difficult because both plots have frequently been used as individual premises. Plot 30(ii) was originally number 49 Lawley Street and possibly also number 57 Lawley Street.

The earliest mention of plot 30(ii) as a separate building is in 1940 when *Kelly's Directory* lists the rather unusually named Leopold Lazarus Limited, metal merchants, of which little information can be found. There is a Leopold Lazarus Limited which has recently merged with MacSteel International based in London, a steel stockholder. Unfortunately no link between the two could be found and MacSteel has no existing records of a site in Birmingham.

By 1950, Leopold Lazarus had moved on and was replaced by Maconochie Brothers Limited, food product manufacturers. Maconochie Brothers were a very large national company manufacturing and selling pickles, potted meats & fish, jams, marmalade and other preserved foods, most notably peanut butter. The company had large contracts with both the Admiralty and the War Office supplying military rations during both World Wars. One of their largest sites on the Isle of Dogs was badly damaged during the 1940 Blitz causing them to re-locate to numerous sites throughout the country.

Maconochie Brothers were bought out by HS Whiteside Limited in 1959, which changed their name to Rowntree Sun-Pat Limited in 1987. In 1990 Rowntree Sun-Pat Ltd ceased to be a trading company and became part of Nestlé UK.

No other references to number 49 Lawley Street could be found.

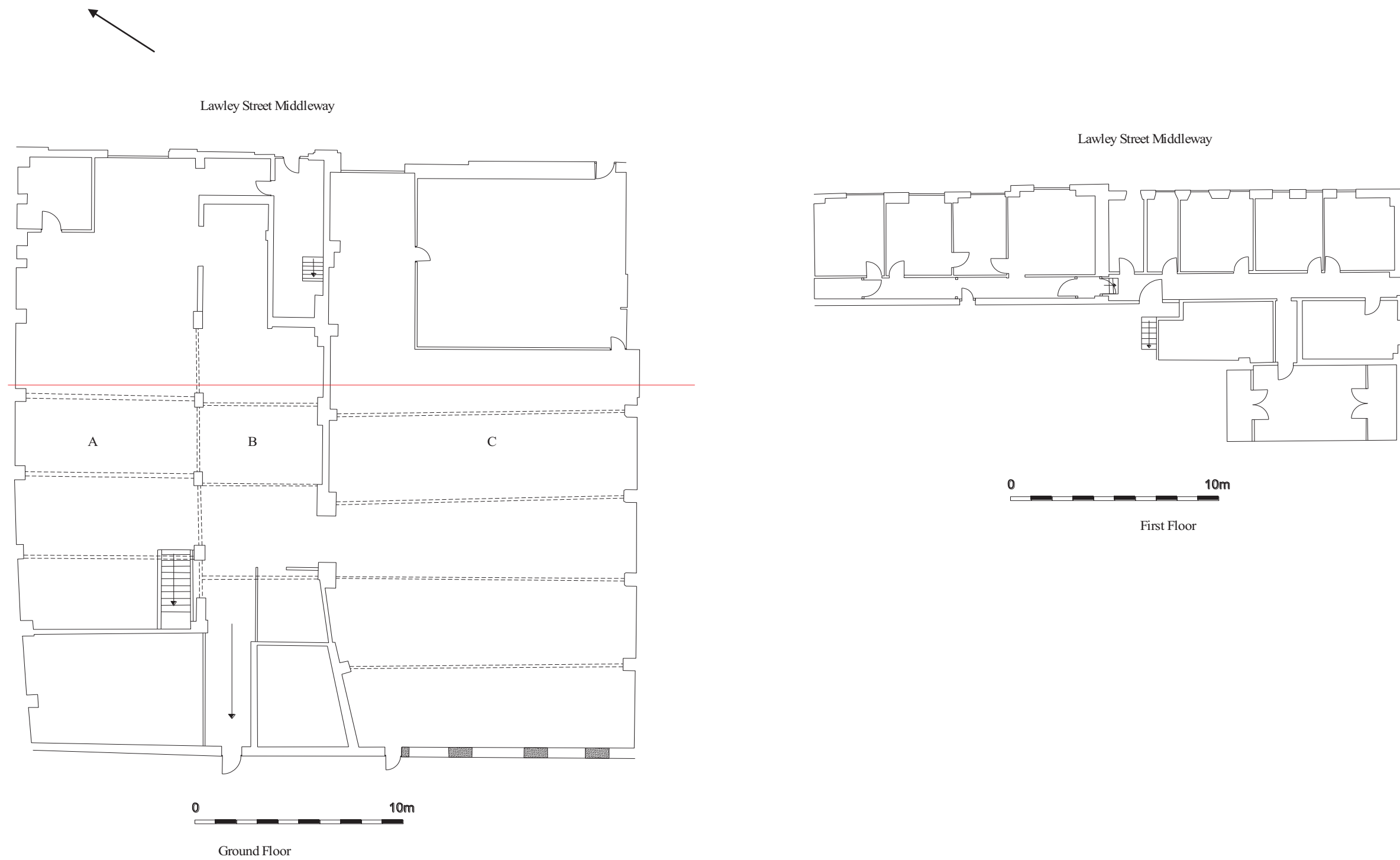


Figure 9 Plot 30 (ii) Ground Floor (Left) & First Floor (Right) Plans. (Profile location in Red; North arrowed).

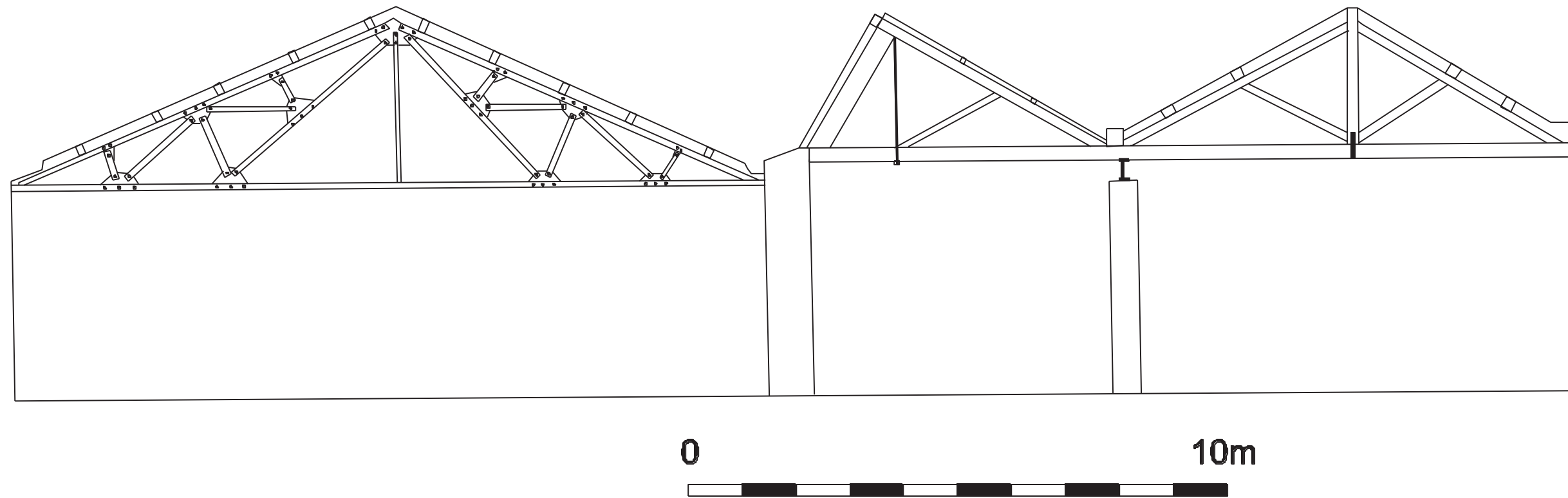


Figure 10 Plot 30(ii) Profile.



Figure 11 Plot 30 (ii) Lawley Street Middleway Frontage.



Figure 12 Plot 30 (ii) Blocked Window Detail.



Figure 13 Plot 30 (ii) South-eastern Bay.



Figure 14 Plot 30 (ii) North-western Bay.



Figure 15 Plot 30 (ii) Roof detail



Figure 16 Plot 30 (ii) showing RSJ with makers stamp

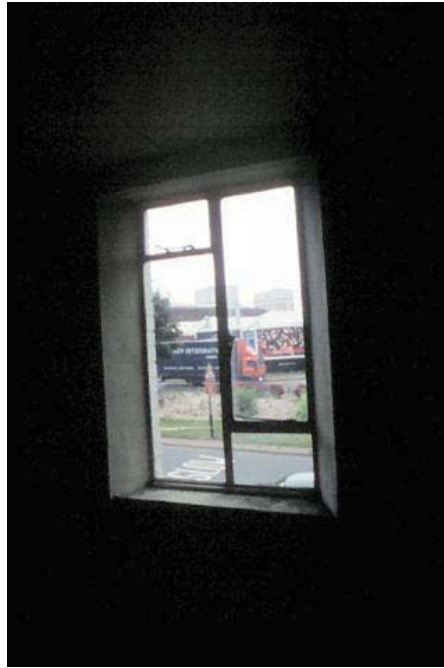


Figure 17 Plot 30 (ii) First floor north-facing window with chamfered surround

4. Canal Frontage

The development of the area around the Digbeth branch of the Birmingham Canal can be seen with the changing building profiles along the south-western facing plots adjacent to the canal (Figures 18-20). The canal basin is part of a Conservation Area and the northernmost elevations, south of the location of Ashted Pumping Station (Richards 2007) comprise the rear of the 19th century two-storey warehouse survivals (see above Plot 30) whilst those to the south (Plots 31-2) are more modern 20th century structures although remains of 19th century walling survives at a lower level.

The 1828 Pigott Smith map shows the area to be relatively open along the canal south of Belmont glass works (Driver 2007, Fig.13). The 1888 OS map shows considerable development along the canal and Lawley Street (Figure 23). Buildings can be seen following the north-eastern edge of the canal and traces of these are still visible within the frontage which probably include the earliest phases of Plot 30. By 1952 two large warehouses including plot 30 are present which appear to have incorporated some of the 19th century buildings to the rear (south-west; *ibid*).



Figure 18 Northernmost Canalside Elevation.



Figure 19 Southernmost Canal Side Elevation

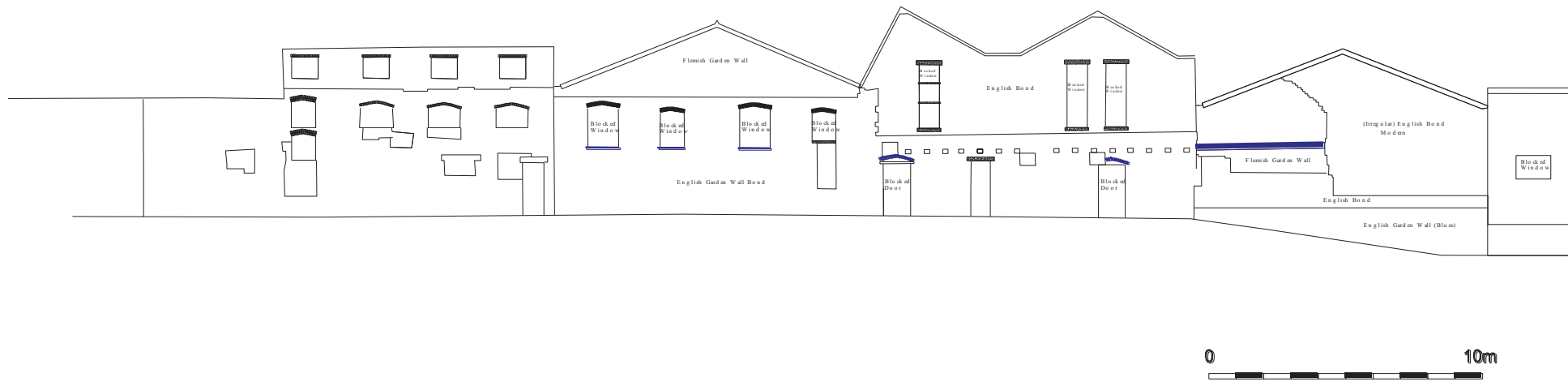


Figure 20 Canal Side Elevation.

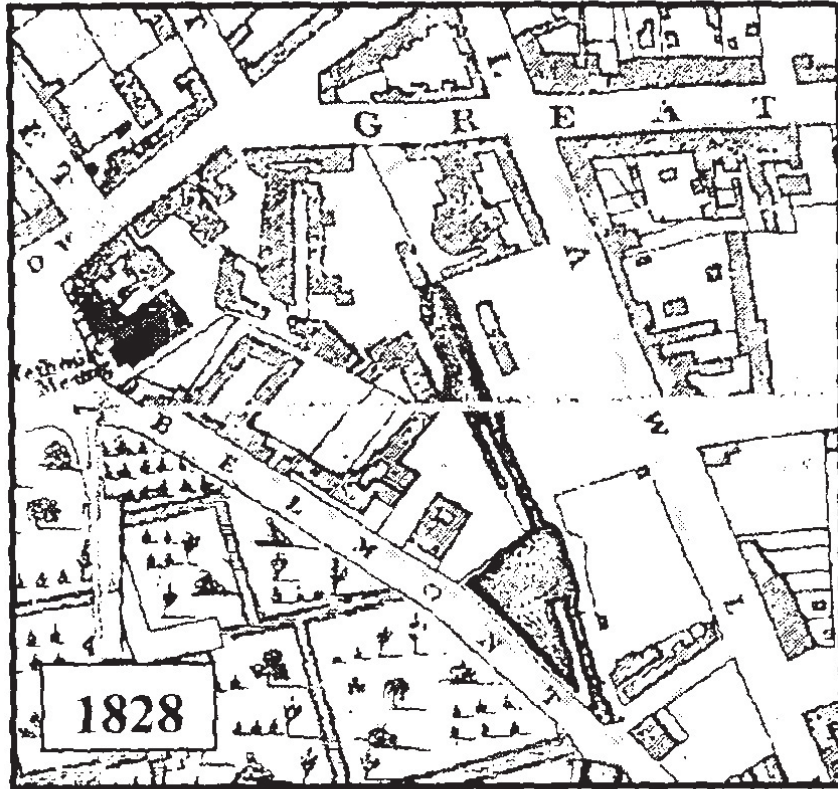


Figure 21 1828 Pigott Smith map showing canal basin area (from Driver 2007, fig 13)



Figure 22 1888 OS map of the area with Plot 30 and canal frontage highlighted

5. Conclusion

The Eastside redevelopment area is indicative of a run-down city centre industrial area, ignored while large investment has been pumped into the adjoining commercial and shopping areas. This lack of investment, however, ensured the survival of the earliest buildings recorded during this survey; even though extensive mid to late 20th century development has occurred elements of the original early 19th century development has survived, including street plans and buildings.

Elements of the rear of Plots 30 and 31 probably also date from this initial development which was driven by the opening of the Digbeth Branch Canal, the towpath of which runs to the immediate rear of the buildings. The bulk of the buildings date from the mid to late 19th century, built during Birmingham's boom into an industrial city.

The area also reflects the decline of the city centre as the favoured location for industrial development. Industry abandoned such sites for purpose built factories on the outskirts of the city, leaving the building to ruin or in the case of Eastside to be taken on by smaller companies employing perhaps less than a dozen staff, who working on a tight budget were

attracted to the area by its lower rental costs. It is this more than anything which has preserved the buildings, the bare minimum of maintenance and redevelopment was carried out in this period, thereby ensuring the survival of the bulk of the buildings in near original condition.

5. Photographic Index

Colour No	B&W No	Description	Plot Number
119	119	Canalside elevation	30/31
120	120	Canalside elevation	30/31
121	121	Front Elevation General	30b
122	122	Front Elevation General	30b
123	123	Front Elevation Proper	30b
124	124	Front Elevation Proper	30b
125	125	Blocked Windows	30b
126	126	Blocked Windows	30b
127	127	Front Elevation Proper	30a
128	128	Front Elevation Proper	30a
129	129	Front Elevation	30/31
130	130	Front Elevation	30/31
249	249	Ground floor, front to back, general	30 (i)
250	250	Ground floor, front to back, general	30 (i)
251	251	Ground floor, front right to rear left, general	30 (i)
252	252	Ground floor, front right to rear left, general	30 (i)
253	253	Central bay, roof construction	30 (i)
254	254	Central bay, roof construction	30 (i)
255	255	Central bay, roof detail	30 (i)
256	256	Central bay, roof detail	30 (i)
257	257	Makers stamp	30 (i)
258	258	Makers stamp	30 (i)
259	259	Ground floor, rear left to front right, general	30 (i)
260	260	Ground floor, rear left to front right, general	30 (i)
261	261	First floor, left, back to front, general	30 (i)
262	262	First floor, left, back to front, general	30 (i)
263	263	First floor, left, front to back, general	30 (i)
264	264	First floor, left, front to back, general	30 (i)
265	265	Central bay, external roof	30 (i)
266	266	Central bay, external roof	30 (i)
267	267	First floor, front, newer partitions	30 (i)
268	268	First floor, front, newer partitions	30 (i)
279	279	Canalside elevation, detail	30 (i)
280	280	Canalside elevation, detail	30 (i)
281	281	Canalside elevation, detail	30
282	282	Canalside elevation, detail	30
283	283	Canalside elevation, detail	30
284	284	Canalside elevation, detail	30
285	285	Canalside elevation, detail	31

286	286	Canalside elevation, detail	31
287	287	Canalside elevation, detail	31
288	288	Canalside elevation, detail	31
289	289	Bay "A" front to back, general	30
290	290	Bay "A" front to back, general	30
291	291	Bay "A" back to front, general	30
292	292	Bay "A" back to front, general	30
293	293	Bay "A" roof construction	30
294	294	Bay "A" roof construction	30
295	295	Bay "B" & "C" back to front, general	30
296	296	Bay "B" & "C" back to front, general	30
297	297	Bay "B" & "C" front to back, general	30
298	298	Bay "B" & "C" front to back, general	30
299	299	Bay "C" roof construction	30
300	300	Bay "C" roof construction	30
301	301	Bay "B" roof construction	30
302	302	Bay "B" roof construction	30
303	303	Bay "B" makers stamp on steel wall plate (Mounted upside down)	30
304	304	Bay "B" makers stamp on steel wall plate (Mounted upside down)	30
305	305	First floor steel fire/security door	30
306	306	First floor steel fire/security door	30
307	307	First floor, central corridor	30
308	308	First floor, central corridor	30
309	309	Bay "A" makers stamp on steel truss	30
310	310	Bay "A" makers stamp on steel truss	30
311	311	First floor chamfered window surround	30
312	312	First floor chamfered window surround	30
313	313	First floor unplastered walls	30
314	314	First floor unplastered walls	30
315	315	Chimney in rear yard	31
316	316	Chimney in rear yard	31

6. Archive & Publication

The site archive comprises:

410 monochrome negative and contact prints

411 colour transparency picture

17 A2 Permatrace Drawings

1 A3 Permatrace Drawing

8 A4 photographic index sheets

Field Notes & Sketches.

This will be deposited with Birmingham City Council Heritage Services.

A version of the summary (above) will be published in the appropriate publications in due course.

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