

**JAMES GROVE & SONS
BLOOMFIELD WORKS
STOURBRIDGE ROAD
HALESOWEN
WEST MIDLANDS**

**Historic Building Record
And Ornamental Audit
2007**

Checked by

Supervisor..... date.....

Project Manager..... date.....

Project No. 1621

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**James Grove and Sons Ltd, Bloomfield Works,
Stourbridge Road, Halesowen, West Midlands**

**Historic Building Recording
and Ornamental Audit**

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**JAMES GROVE AND SONS LTD, BLOOMFIELD WORKS,
STOURBRIDGE ROAD, HALESOWEN**

Historic Building Recording and Ornamental Audit, May 2007

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SUMMARY

Birmingham Archaeology undertook a programme of historic building recording and an ornamental audit in May 2007 at the surviving office block of the former Bloomfield Works of James Grove and Sons Ltd., button manufacturers, Stourbridge Road, Halesowen, Dudley, West Midlands.

The work was required as a condition of planning consent prior to the demolition of the building and the redevelopment of the former factory site for mixed use. The street elevation in particular was recorded in detail including the animal head motifs at the head of the applied brick pilasters which articulate the elevation.

The structure as recorded represented an interesting though unremarkable example of an early 20th-century office building. The recent demolition of the remainder of the associated factory complex has served to remove the building almost completely from its historical context, and to reduce the contribution it formerly made to its contemporary streetscape. The building has lost its original exterior fenestration and an elaborate entrance porch, illustrated on original architect's drawings. Internally, however, the building was found to survive much as built, and retained a high proportion of original fittings including carpentry detailing and brass door furniture.

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Historic Building Recording and Ornamental Audit, May 2007

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned by the Building Design Practice of Wolverhampton, on behalf of James Grove and Sons Ltd., to undertake a programme of historic building recording and an ornamental audit at the surviving office block of the former Bloomfield Works of James Grove and Sons Ltd., button manufacturers, Stourbridge Road, Halesowen, Dudley West Midlands.
- 1.2 Survey work was carried out over a two day period on 21st and 22nd May 2007.

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The Bloomfield works is located on the northern side of the Stourbridge Road, approximately ¾ mile WNW of the town centre of Halesowen, Dudley, West Midlands (NGR: SO 9610 8390; Figure 1).
- 2.2 The factory site is bounded to the south by the Stourbridge Road (A458) and to the west by the rear of a series of newly erected properties facing onto Bloomfield Street West. To the north, the site is again bounded by domestic properties and to the north-east by the Halesowen Town football ground.
- 2.3 The former 19th-century factory complex has recently undergone extensive demolition works. At the time of survey, the office block, located on the southern site boundary facing directly onto the Stourbridge Road, represented the only surviving element of the once extensive complex (Figure 2, Plate 1).

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Planning Permission (Ref: P07/0132) was granted by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council for the demolition of the two storey office block of the former James Grove and Sons Ltd. Bloomfield Works fronting onto Stourbridge Road, Halesowen in advance of redevelopment of the former factory site for mixed use purposes.
- 3.2 Condition 13 of approval stipulated that '*no development, including demolition works, shall commence until the Local Planning Authority is contacted and provided with an opportunity for themselves or representatives nominated by them, to record the office building to be demolished*'.
- 3.3 The record was required based upon the '*degree of conservation merit of the building, in terms of its local character and distinctiveness, specifically its heightened presence within the public realm and interesting architectural features of its frontage*'.

3.4 The demolition forms part of a wider redevelopment scheme of mixed industrial and residential purposes.

3.5 The recording was undertaken in accordance with Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Birmingham Archaeology (2007).

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 The objective of the project, as stated in the WSI, was to make ‘an adequate written, photographic and measured record of the building, including an ornamental audit, prior to demolition’.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The Written Record

5.1.1 A written record of the buildings was made, externally on an elevation-by-elevation and internally on a room-by-room basis, using *pro-forma* building and room recording sheets.

5.2 The Drawn Record

5.2.1 The drawn survey comprised the generation of measured floor plans at ground and first floor levels, carried out by hand measurement at an appropriate scale (1:100).

5.3 The Photographic Record

5.3.1 The photographic survey comprised monochrome print accompanied by high-resolution digital photography. Where possible, photographs included a graduated photographic scale. Details of photographs were recorded on *pro forma* index sheets, and included location, subject and orientation.

5.4 Laser Scanning

5.4.1 The southern (street) elevation of the office building was recorded by means of high resolution 3-D laser scanner. This allowed for the accurate 3-dimensional recording of the elevation including architectural detail such as the animal head motifs at the head of the applied pilasters.

5.5 Documentary Research

5.5.1 No programme of documentary research was undertaken as part of the current survey, however a rapid regression analysis of readily available historic Ordnance Survey 1:2500 maps has served to put the office building within the general context of the development of the factory as a whole (see §.6 below).

6 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 6.1 The company of James Grove and Sons Ltd. was established in 1857. Originally based at a manufactory on the corner of Birmingham Road and Cornmow in the centre of Halesowen, it moved to the present Bloomfield site on the north side of the Stourbridge Road in 1865.
- 6.2 The outline development of the factory site can be traced through a comparison of the historic Ordnance Survey 1:2500 maps, presented here as Figure 3.
- 6.3 The office block building fronting onto Stourbridge Road dates to the early part of the 20th century, probably the later 1920s or early 1930s: it is not shown on the O.S. 2nd revision of 1918-20 (Figure 3c) though it is present by the time of the 3rd revision in 1937 (Figure 3d).
- 6.4 A 'bird's eye' view engraving of the factory, supplied by the client (Figure 4) is unfortunately undated, though the extent of the factory buildings correlates reasonably well with the arrangements illustrated on the O.S. edition of 1918-20 (Figure 3c).
- 6.5 An original architect's drawing, including plans and elevations of the office block as built (Figures 5–8) has been useful in helping to identify original fabric and later alterations to the standing building. Unfortunately, the inscription on this drawing is somewhat unclear and does not allow for the positive identification of either a named architect, or for a date of construction (legible extent: 'Arthur, February 19...').

7 ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

7.1 General Arrangements

- 7.1.1 The building as recorded can be broken down into a series of separate elements, reflecting both functional and developmental differences, as follows:

- A** The office accommodation proper, located to the front (south) of the building (Rooms G1-G11, G14, F1-F7).
- B** The dispatch bay, located at the north-west corner of the building.(Room G12 @ GF)
- C** The covered yard, located to the centre/north part of the building (Room G13 @ GF)
- D** The 'Polishing Room' block at the north-east corner of the building, representing a single bay of a formerly more extensive range (Rooms G15/F9)

Elements A-C are contemporary, element D represents part of an earlier phase (early 20th century). At first floor level, elements B and C combined form a single space, identified as a 'Pattern Room' on the architect's original drawing (Figure 6).

- 7.1.2 A concordance of rooms numbers employed during recording with current and historic room use is given below as Appendix A.

7.2 The Exterior Elevations

7.2.1 The South (Street) Elevation (Figure 12, Plate 2)

The main southern (street) elevation of the building is of two storeys and is of red brick construction, laid to English bond, over a low blue-grey brick plinth. The elevation measures c.19m long and stands c.8m tall to the head of its parapet; it is of five bays, alternately wide and narrow, articulated by a series of applied pilasters of brick and red sandstone construction. The pilasters are embellished below the level of the capital by round plaques with animal head motifs in relief (Plate 6), and support an entablature comprising plain fascia and frieze of red sandstone, set between projecting decorative brick strings and cornice. The first floor level is articulated by a moulded stone string course extending between adjacent pilasters. Fenestration is of alternating three and two light windows at ground and first floor level, set within moulded and eared cases with moulded cills, which display small, paired stone brackets beneath each opening. The windows themselves have been replaced with modern UPVC double-glazed units throughout, though reference to the architect's elevation (Figure 7) confirms that the present pattern reflects the original scheme. The original windows included 9-pane upper lights, corresponding with original detailing recorded throughout the interior of the building (see §. 7.3 below). The principal entrance to the building is located in the fourth bay from the west; this bay lacks the flanking pilasters of the rest of the elevation, having originally been furnished with an elaborate porch of flanking Tuscan columns with ball finials (Figure 7). This feature has been previously removed, though the 'ghost' of the pedestals and capitals remain visible within the brickwork to either side of the doorcase (Plates 3 and 4). The architect's elevation indicates that the original doorway was considerably more ornate than its modern, utilitarian replacement, with flanking pilasters and semi-circular fanlight. At the far western end of the elevation, the springing of a former flanking, arched entranceway (Figure 7) survives within the corner pilaster (Plate 5).

The front of the building is enclosed by a low wall of red brick construction with a plinth of blue-grey engineering brick and red sandstone coping. The returns of the wall at the west end and to either side of the entrance door are curved. Embedded in the red sandstone coping stones are the remains of a former low iron railing, originally standing c.40cm high, removed during the National Salvage Drives of the Second World War.

7.2.2 The North (Rear) Elevation (Figure 8b, Plate 7)

The rear of the building does not present an elevation as such, representing as it does a party wall between the front range and a series of factory buildings to the north, now demolished. To the eastern side of the standing building (block **D**), the elevation represents the bay division of a block formerly extending further to the north (see Figure 10/11 inset). At ground floor level the elevation is of brick construction, laid predominantly in stretcher bond, with a single double-door to the east and a hatchway to the east. At first floor level, the elevation presents an open bay division with a central RSC supporting a horizontal RSJ. The roof structure itself comprises two asymmetrical, east lit sky-lights.

The central part of the elevation formerly backed onto an (?)open yard. At ground floor level the elevation comprises a metal-framed, part glazed wall with a single, central doorway. At first floor the elevation is divided into three equal bays by steel columns supporting a flat roof; the eastern two bays are furnished with a low brick wall with large window openings over, while the western bay is fully open, with rendered and painted jambs, suggesting a former

doorway (though Figure 8b shows three symmetrical window bays); the removal of the factory buildings to the north has served to obscure the details of former arrangements.

The western section of the elevation forms a party wall between the front range and former warehousing to the north. At ground floor level the elevation is fully open, while at first floor is a wall of brick construction, laid in stretcher bond, with two segmental headed doorways. Reference to the architects' drawings indicates that western part of the building formerly backed onto warehousing and, to the far west, to a lift. A series of sloping roof scars suggest that the arrangement indicated in the architect's drawings was altered significantly prior to recent demolition works.

7.2.3 The East Elevation (Plates 8 and 9)

The east elevation can be broken down into two elements. To the south the end wall of the corner pilaster and northern return wall of the recorded office building can be seen above the internal gable end and ridge stack of the two-storey house formerly abutting the structure to the east. To the west, the elevation represents the remaining bay of a former six-bay block extending to the north (illustrated in Figure 4). The elevation is of exposed brick, laid in Flemish stretcher bond, with internal bays articulated by projecting piers of brickwork and furnished with large metal framed windows at first floor and wooden windows and door at ground floor level. Reference to historic maps and the original architect's drawings suggest that the lower level may formerly have been fully open, forming an entranceway through to the covered yard (G13).

7.2.4 The West Elevation (Figure 8a, Plate 10)

The west elevation follows the pattern of the street elevation being of two storeys, of brick construction laid in English bond, articulated by four applied pilasters of brick and red sandstone construction, paired to the north and south of the elevation with a wide bay between. Only the southern pilaster extends the full height of the elevation, those to the north terminate at first floor level, the lower part of the elevation formerly being obscured by a covered passage (see Figure 8). Pilasters each display a plain roundel below the level of the capital, though they here lack the animal head decoration of the street front. The upper part of the elevation matches the decorative frieze and cornice details of the south elevation (§.7.2.1). Fenestration at first floor level comprises a single, double-light window (lighting the front office) and paired single-light windows (lighting the WCs), with plain concrete lintels, moulded cills and plain brick jambs. To the north of these are two inserted, iron-framed casements lighting room F8. Fenestration at ground floor level matches the primary openings at first floor, though the southern window is of three lights as opposed to two and the cills are of plain, rounded brick. The southernmost window displays a large area of brick patching below the cill. Windows themselves have again been replaced with modern UPVC double-glazed units.

7.3 Interior Description

7.3.1 The Basement (Figure 9, Plates 11-13)

A small basement is located beneath the south-eastern section of the standing building. It is accessed via a straight flight of 10 brick steps descending from Room G14, lit by a glass-tiled panel in the ceiling, borrowing light from the landing of the dog-leg stair between ground and first floor levels (Plate 12). The basement comprises two separate spaces (B1 and B2) served

by a narrow passageway (B3), aligned north-south and terminating in a small lobby area. The larger of the basement rooms (B1) is accessed to the west via a narrow doorway with semi-circular arched head. It measures 3.7m (E/W) x 4.5m (N/S) and stands 1.85m tall to the underside of a flat concrete floor slab. The north, west and northern part of the east wall have a low (0.37m high) brick ledge against them, while the west wall displays a central projection 0.24m deep x 1.5m wide, splaying outwards just below ceiling level (Plate 11). This projection does not relate to any surviving feature at ground floor level and may indicate that the basement survives from the building pre-dating the present office block, illustrated in Figures 4 and 7). At the time of survey, the room was lined out in polystyrene insulation blocks. Room B2 forms a small store 2m (E/W) x 2.4m (N/S) including its lobby with which it shares a brick barrel vault, aligned north-south (Plate 13).

7.3.2 The Ground Floor (Figure 10, Plates 14-28)

At ground floor of the building can be broken down into four distinct elements, as outlined above (§.7.1.1). To the front of the building are a series of offices (G3-G9) with an entrance lobby (G1) located towards the eastern end of the elevation. These offices are served by an axial corridor (G10) which runs across the back of the block. A stair (G2/F1) rises from the eastern end of the corridor, serving the first floor, while toilet facilities (G11) are located to the far west end. To the rear of the office accommodation are a series of three industrial spaces: a dispatch bay (G12) to the west, former covered yard (G13) to the centre, and a single surviving bay (G15) of a factory block, formerly extending a further five bays to the north (Block D).

Room G1

Room G1 measures 2m (E/W) x 4m (N/S) and forms the principal entrance lobby of the office building. It is entered from the south via modern double, glazed doors set within the area of the original entrance doorway towards the east end of the street elevation. The space is subdivided into outer and inner lobby by a further set of modern glazed double doors. The outer lobby is fully enclosed while a small hatch in the west wall of the inner lobby connects to the area of the main office (G4). To the east, a modern glazed door serves Room G3. Both inner and outer lobby have been refurbished in the recent past and retain no significant original furnishings.

Room G2 (Stair)

Beyond the inner lobby, Room G2 forms the base of the dog-leg stair to first floor level. The stair is 1.38m wide with concrete treads, and rises through two straight flights, with a landing against the south wall of the building. The bottom flight is enclosed by masonry walls to north and south and has a plain timber balustrade set into the northern wall rising to a square section newel (Plates 14 and 15) at landing level. Set into the floor surface of the landing are two square panels, each of four glazed tiles lighting room G14 and the basement stair at ground floor level respectively. The tiles are set within iron frames with a manufacturer's mark of 'Hayward Brothers, London' (Plate 16). The upper flight of the stair has open, square section balusters (two per tread) rising to a further square newel. The stair was originally lit by a large square lightwell with moulded cornice, subsequently obscured by the introduction of a modern suspended ceiling.

Room G3

Room G3 was not accessible at the time of survey. The room measures approximately 3.8 m (E/W) x 4.3m (N/S) and was formerly divided to form a telephone exchange and waiting room, heated by a fireplace with in the east wall (Figure 5). The west wall of the room is formed of modern timber glazed partition with frosted glass windows. A single, three-light window is located centrally within the south wall. The survival of the fireplace in the east wall could not be verified, though it is assumed to have had details similar to those recorded at first floor level.

Room G4

Room G4 represents the principal office accommodation, located to the west of the entrance lobby (G1) and accessed from the foot of the staircase (G2). The room measures 4.7m (E/W) x 5.7m (N/S), with a modern suspended ceiling and a recessed, built-in cupboard in the northern part of the west wall. The door is original, of four sunk panels below a glazed upper panel and retains a decorative brass finger plate and keyhole cover (Plate 17), of a type recorded elsewhere throughout the building. A three-light window is set towards the eastern end of the south wall while the north wall comprises two three-light windows opening onto the axial corridor (G10). These windows are of a distinctive form with fixed, single-pane lower lights and six pane upper lights, the outer of which are top-hinged. The western light of the west window has been blocked at the time of the sub-division of the general office by the introduction of the secondary partition wall between G4 and G5/6 and its associated built-in cupboard. A small hatch in the centre of the west wall opens onto the inner entrance lobby.

Room G5

Room G5 was not accessible at the time of survey. The room lies to the west of G4 and has maximum dimensions of approximately 5.4m (E/W) x 3.5m (N/S). It was formed by the secondary sub-division of the open, general office as shown in the architect's plan (Figure 5). The room is lit by a two-light and a three-light window in the south wall. The northern side of the room is formed by a series of secondary studwork partition walls.

Room G6

Room G6 is a small storage cupboard measuring 1.2m (E/W) x 2.1m (N/S) formed by the introduction of a series of ephemeral studwork partitions towards the western end of the building in the area of the original 'general office'. It retains no significant original fabric.

Room G7

Room G7 is a small lobby area measuring 1.25m (E/W) x 2.1m (N/S) formed by the introduction of a series of ephemeral studwork partitions towards the western end of the building in the area of the original 'general office'. It is accessed from corridor G10 to the north via an original doorway (door removed) and gives access to store G6, office G5 and kitchen G8. It retains no significant original fabric.

Room G8

Room G8 is located to the far west end of the office range and is accessed from lobby G7. The room measures 3.95m (E/W) x 2.12m (N/S) and was formed by the introduction of a

series of ephemeral studwork partitions into the area of the once open 'general office'. The room is lit by a three light window in the west wall and is fitted out as a kitchen with modern cupboards and sink unit (Plate 19). The room has lino flooring and a suspended ceiling and, save for the door to strong room G9, retains no significant original fabric.

Room G9

Room G9 is a strong room located in the far south-west corner of the front range, and presumably represents either a secondary introduction or an adaptation of the original design, as the architect's drawings indicate a fireplace set centrally within the west wall of the general office (though the outline of G9 has been added – see Figure 5). Accessed from the south-west corner of room G8 via a heavy, metal door bearing the manufacturer's plate of 'Whitfields Safe and Door Co., Birmingham', the room measures approximately 1.7m (E/W) x 2.8m (N/S). The interior of the strong room was not accessible at the time of survey.

Room G10

Room G10 forms an axial corridor aligned east-west along the back of the principal office range. The corridor is 1.4m wide and 11m long and is divided part way along by a set of original double doors with glazed upper panels (Plate 20). Both north and south wall have two sets of three-light windows with single-pane lower light and six-pane upper lights, those to the south giving onto the main office (G4), those to the north giving onto the 'covered yard' (G13). To the eastern end of the north wall, a doorway with flanking windows formerly constituted the principal rear entrance to the office range from the factory complex. At the western end, opposing doorways give onto room G7 and formerly onto G12 (door blocked).

Room G11

Located at the far west end of corridor G10, Room G11, 3.3m (E/W) x 2.3m (N/S), contains toilet facilities. The walls are tiled to mid height with white ceramic tiles with black skirting and dado bands, and retains a tiled floor with decorative edging (Plate 21). The eastern part of the room comprises a single space and retains a large, ceramic twin handwash basin mounted on the south wall (taps replaced); to the west, the room is split into two cubicles with WCs, each is lit by a single-light window in the west wall. Outer and inner doors are of four lower, sunk panels below an upper glazed panel (frosted glass) and retain original brass finger plates, door knobs and hinged keyhole covers (Plate 22).

Room G12

Room G12 is located at the north-west corner of the recorded structure. It measures 6.5m (E/W) x 5.6m (N/S) and is accessed from G13 to the east via a set of double doors within a segmental headed opening (Plate 23). Its former function is denoted on the architect's drawing as a 'packing room' (Figure 7) while a surviving sign affixed to the exterior of the doors confirms its function as a 'dispatch bay' (Plate 00). A further original doorway (now blocked) in the south wall formerly gave access from corridor G10. The south and east walls are of brick construction, laid in Flemish stretcher bond, while the northern and western walls are, for the most part, open below RSJs at ceiling level (Plate 24). An area of brickwork at the western end of the north wall denotes the former location of a lift shaft, immediately north of the room. Flooring is of concrete over brick. The south-east corner of the room has been partitioned off with studwork and plasterboard partitions, concealing a two-light window looking onto the covered yard G13 to the east.

Room G13

Room G13 is located to the north of the main office range and to the east of the dispatch bay G12. The room measures 7.65m (E/W) x 5.65m (N/S) and is currently used for storage (Plate 25). The original architect's plan labels the room as a 'covered yard', and while the north wall currently comprises a metal framed wall, glazed above mid-height, the evidence of window details of the south and west walls, which all have rounded-brick cills and recessed frames, suggests that the space was originally 'external' to the main building, being open to the former yard to the north. Double doors beneath a segmental headed arch within the west wall give access to G12 (Plate 26); the left hand door retains a sign reading 'Despatch Bay'. Two three-light windows in the south wall give onto corridor G10 while a double-light window in the west wall gives onto G12. Within the central bay of the room, the ceiling includes three panels of glazed tiles, each panel containing 12 tiles, similar to those lighting G14 and the basement stair, and formerly lighting G13 from F8 above (Plate 27).

Room G14

Room G14 is located at the far east end of corridor G10. It measures 3.8m (E/W) x 2.4m (N/S) and has a low ceiling due to its location, partially below the upper flight of the stair serving first floor level. At the south-east corner of the room, a doorway leads to the basement stair. The room is lit by a three-light window in the north wall, a single-light window in the west wall and from above by four glazed tiles set in the ceiling (which forms the landing of the dog-leg stair).

Room G15

Room G15 is a storeroom located at the north-east of the recorded structure and is accessed directly from G13 to the west or from the exterior by a double door in the eastern, exterior wall. It measures 9.25m (E/W) by 4.5m (N/S) and represents the ground floor of the surviving southern bay of block **D**, which formerly extended for a five further bays (c. 22.5m) to the north. The north and south walls are of brick construction, laid in Flemish stretcher bond, while the east wall is formed of a low brick wall below wooden framed fenestration flanking double doors opening to the exterior. The western side of the room is fully open to G13. The ceiling is supported on three north-south aligned RSJs.

7.3.3 The First Floor (Figure 11, Plate 29-40)

At first floor level, the layout of the building reflects closely the arrangements of the ground floor. A suite of office accommodation (F3-F6) is again ranged along the south front of the building, backing onto an axial corridor (F2), with stair (F1) to the east and toilet facilities (F7) to the west end. A single workshop space (F8) occupies the combined area of G12 and G13 at ground floor level, while to the east is located the upper level (F9) of the southern bay of Block D.

Room F1

F1 represents the upper part of the stair, previously described. The upper flight of the stair rises above Room G14 and a panel of four glazed tiles in the landing (Plate 16) lights the lower room. At the head of the stair a short gallery runs along the north side of the stairwell, up against the brickwork of the outer wall of Block **D** (F9), while a further length of balustrade closes off the eastern side of the stairwell forming a short corridor leading to Room

F6 to the south. The stair was originally lit by a large square lightwell with moulded cornice, subsequently obscured by the introduction of a modern suspended ceiling.

Room F2

Room F2 forms the main axial corridor at first floor level, mirroring G10 at ground floor level. It measures 1.4m wide and c.12m long, and provides access to all rooms of the office range (F3-F6) to the south, to the toilets (F7) to the west, and to rooms F8 and F9 to the north. The north wall of the corridor is furnished with two triple-light windows (mirroring the arrangement at ground floor level) and a single, double light window to the eastern end. Doorways at the west and east ends provide access to F8 and F9 respectively; the latter door has been inserted into the south wall of F9 (Block **D**).

Room F3

Room F3 occupies the far west end of the office range and is accessed from corridor F2 to the north via an original door (damaged) with primary brass finger plate. The room is lit by two three-light windows, one in the south wall and a second in the west wall, to the north of a projecting chimneybreast which retains a wooden fireplace surround (Plate 30) matching that within F6 (Plate 33). The fireplace has been removed. Windows are replacement UPVC double-glazed units though the original wooden ledges survive. A doorway in the centre of the east wall, giving access to F4, also retains an original door and doorcase, though it has been boarded over to the west. The room has a modern suspended ceiling and carpeted floor over original softwood boarding.

Room F4

Room F4 lies to the east of F3 and is again accessed from corridor F2 to the north via an original door with primary brass fittings. It measures 4m (E/W) x 5.7m (N/S) and is lit by a single, two-light window in the south wall: the window is a replacement UPVC double-glazed unit though the original wooden ledge survives. To the east, the room is divided from F5 by a studwork partition wall which, though of unfamiliar type, displays similar skirting and doorcase details to the rest of the range and is presumably contemporary (see Figure 6) with three glazed panels and a (?)replacement four-panel door set off-centre towards its northern end. The room has a modern suspended ceiling and carpeted floor over original softwood boarding.

Room F5

Room F5 lies to the east of F4 and is again accessed from corridor F2 to the north via an original door with primary brass fittings. The room measures 5m (E/W) x 5.7m (N/S) and is lit by two windows in the south wall: the western window is of three lights, that to the east of two lights. Windows are replacement UPVC double-glazed units though the original wooden ledges survive. To the west, the room is separated from F4 by a studwork partition described above (F5). Again, the room has a modern suspended ceiling and carpeted floor over original softwood boarding.

Room F6

Room F6 occupies the eastern end of the office block range and is accessed directly from corridor F2 to the north via a short corridor, passing over the lower flight of the dog-leg stair

and flanked by a short wooden balustrade. The room measures 3.8m (E/W) and 4.25m (N/S) and is lit by a three-light window in the south wall: the window is a replacement UPVC double-glazed unit though the original wooden ledge survives. A projecting chimneybreast central to the east wall retains a wooden fireplace surround (Plate 33) identical to that within F3 to the west. The fireplace has again been removed. The room has a modern suspended ceiling and carpeted floor over original softwood boarding.

Room F7

Located at the far west end of corridor (F2), Room F7 measures 3.3m (E/W) x 2.3m (N/S) and contains toilet facilities, reflecting the arrangements at ground floor level (G11). The walls are tiled to mid height with white ceramic tiles with black skirting and dado, though the decorative tiled floor has been lost at this level, replaced by linoleum. The eastern part of the room comprises a single space and retains a large, twin ceramic handwash basin, here mounted on the north wall; to the west, the room is split into two cubicles with WCs, each is lit by a single-light window in the west wall. The inner doors are as at ground floor, with four lower, sunk panels below an upper glazed panel (frosted glass) and retain original brass finger plates, door knobs and hinged keyhole covers. The outer door from corridor F2 has a solid upper panel, split horizontally by a rail.

Room F8

Room F8 represents a large, well lit workspace measuring 14.75m (E/W) x 5.95m (N/S), and occupies the area of G12 and G13 combined at ground floor level. It is accessed from corridor F2 to the south via a short flight of two steps, the floor level of F8 being slightly above the main range. The room is lit by a large roof light (see below) and by two windows in the west wall, both inserted iron casements: that to the north is of two lights, that to the south of four with opening side lights and top hinged upper panels to the central lights. The south wall of the room has paired three-light windows and a further two-light window overlooking the corridor (F2) to the south. The western half of the north wall is of brick construction in stretcher bond with two doorway openings (not accessible) which formerly served to access warehousing (to the east) and lift (to the west), both previously demolished. The eastern part of the wall is of three bays, the eastern two having a low (1.15m) brick wall with large windows over, that to the west is fully open (this elevation was not fully accessible internally and has been described above in §.1.1.2).

The east wall of F8 is interesting in that it represents the former exterior elevation of Block D, evidenced by the detailing of the projecting, rounded brick cill. With the building of the current office block, this wall became an internal partition, at which point the fenestration of this elevation was renewed and a door introduced at the southern end to provide access between the two blocks, via a short stair, the floor level of F9 being some 0.20m higher than F8.

The roof is supported on a series of five north-south aligned RSJs (steelwork is by Dorman Long and Co. Ltd. of Middlesbrough) and the space is lit by a large, ridged and fully glazed roof-light occupying the central part of the ceiling (see Figure 11). A modern galvanised steel and polystyrene panel suspended ceiling has been introduced to west end of room. The floor structure is laid with modern carpet tiles and the underlying structure was not exposed.

Room F9

Room F9 represents the upper floor of the southern surviving bay of a former six-bay, north-south aligned Block **D**, and measures 9m (E/W) and 4.5 m (N/S). Flooring is of 5 ½ in. softwood boards, aligned east-west. The steelwork frame of the range (again by Dorman Long and Co. Ltd. of Middlesborough) can be seen to be formed of regularly spaced RSCs in the east and west walls, set between alternate piers of brickwork which project externally. The southern wall is of brick construction laid in Flemish stretcher bond and includes a blocked doorway, 0.92m (36in.) wide x 2.14m (7 ft.) tall, with segmental arched head (Plate 39). No direct access from F9 to the office range is indicated on the original architect's drawing (Figure 6) and the blocked door may pre-date the building of the present office block; it may have originally provided access between Block D and the former building fronting onto Stourbridge Road, though the evidence of the bird's eye engraving (Figure 4) would not appear to support this. A new door has been formed further to the west, accommodating the newly created dog-leg stair and allowing easier access between the ranges. This door formerly gave onto small lobby in south-west corner of F9, with access through to F8 to the west; the outline of the lobby can be traced both in the floor and in the ceiling of F9 (Plate 40).

The ceiling of F9 is of north-south aligned joists supported upon transverse steel joists, closed to the bottom with east-west aligned softwood boarding (Plate 36). In the northern half of the surviving bay, twin, asymmetrical east-lit skylights survive, an arrangement that formerly extended to the north (Figure 4).

8 INTERPRETATION AND SIGNIFICANCE

- 8.1 The demolition of the majority of the former factory complex during previous stages of the redevelopment project negates the establishment of any meaningful phased development of the factory site as a whole. As noted above, however, reference to the relevant Ordnance Survey maps allows for this development to be defined in broad terms, while other documentary sources, not consulted as a part of this recording exercise, may possibly serve to add detail.
- 8.2 The basement below the south-eastern section of the office building is of interest in that it does not relate well to the standing structure, and may represent a survival from an earlier building. Reference to the pre-1937 Ordnance Survey maps indicates a building c.10m long x 5m wide, with an entranceway to the west, partially occupying the site of the current block; such a ground plan would correlate well with the proportions of the basement as recorded and may indicate that this feature is a partial survival from the earlier structure.
- 8.3 Block **D**, formed by rooms G15/F9 at the north-east corner of the surviving building (Plate 9) represents a single bay of a former two-storey, six bay block clearly visible on both historic Ordnance Survey maps (Figure 3) and the early 20th-century engraving (Figure 4), and thus pre-dates the recorded office block.
- 8.4 The bulk of the office building as recorded (**A**, **B** and **C**) is of contemporary build, and appear to have survived, internally at least, much as shown in the original architect's drawings. The interior detailing of the building includes distinctive heavy, rounded carpentry mouldings and fenestration of upper multi-pane lights over plain lower lights (a pattern formerly repeated in

- the exterior elevations). Original door furniture including brass finger plates, doorknobs and hinged keyhole covers have also survived well throughout much of the office range.
- 8.5 Additions to the structure as built include the masonry partition wall between rooms G4 and G5/G6 and the series of ephemeral studwork partitions introduced at the western end of the main office range forming G6-G8. The strong room at the south-west corner of the building also seems to be a secondary introduction. More recent alterations to the building include the removal of the original, ornate entrance porch with flanking columns and the associated main door, being replaced with modern utilitarian, steel-framed glazed doors. The exterior fenestration of the building has been replaced throughout by UPVC double-glazed units.
- 8.6 The building as recorded represents an interesting though unremarkable example of early 20th-century office architecture. The recent demolition of the remainder of the associated factory complex has served both to remove the building almost completely from its historical context, and to reduce the contribution it formerly made to its contemporary streetscape. Though the building is little altered internally, and retains much original detailing, the replacement of original fenestration to the street elevation and the removal of the decorative porch and principal entrance door, as illustrated in the architect's drawings, have together had a significant detrimental effect upon the architectural merit of the exterior aspect of the building.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 The watching brief was undertaken by Michael Lobb and Ric Tyler and was managed by Malcolm Hislop of Birmingham Archaeology. The current report was written by Ric Tyler and edited by Malcolm Hislop. The illustrations were prepared by Ric Tyler and Bryony Ryder of Birmingham Archaeology.

Appendix A

Concordance of room numbers and recent / historic uses (room names underlined appear on the original architect's drawings).

G1: Entrance
G2: Corridor
G3: Telephone Exchange / Waiting Room
G4: General Office
G5: General Office
G6: Cupboard
G7: Lobby
G8: Kitchen
G9: Strong Room
G10: Corridor
G11: Ladies Toilets
G12: Packing Room
G13: Covered Yard
G14: Tax and Insurance Office
G15: Store

F1: Stair
F2: Corridor
F3: Mr GH Grove
F4: Mr E Grove
F5: Mr H Grove
F6: Mr AI Grove
F7: Gents Toilets
F8: Pattern Room
F9: Polishing Room



Fig.1

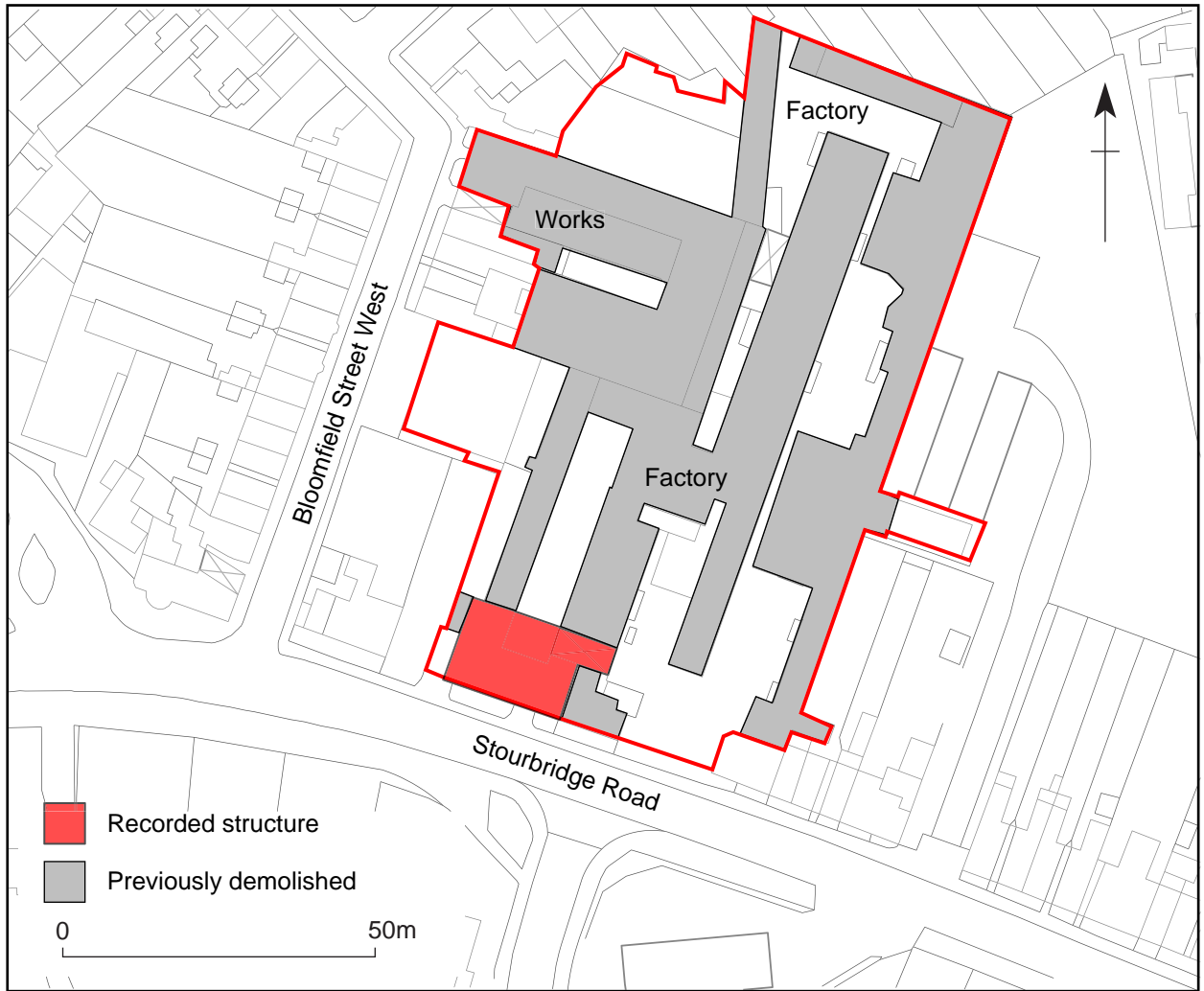
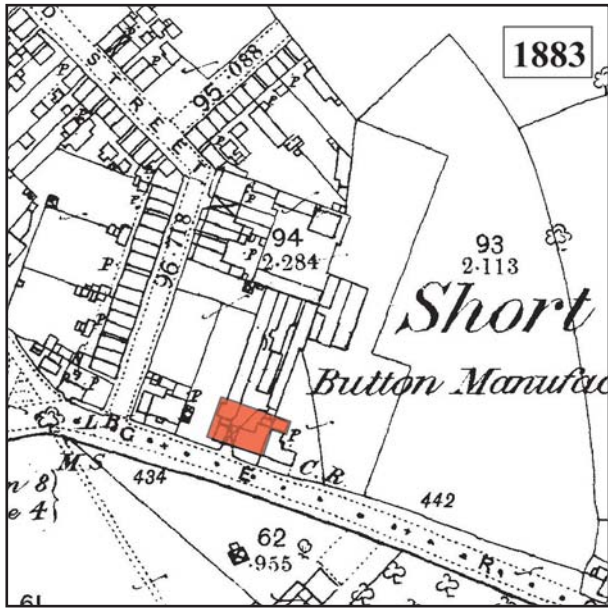


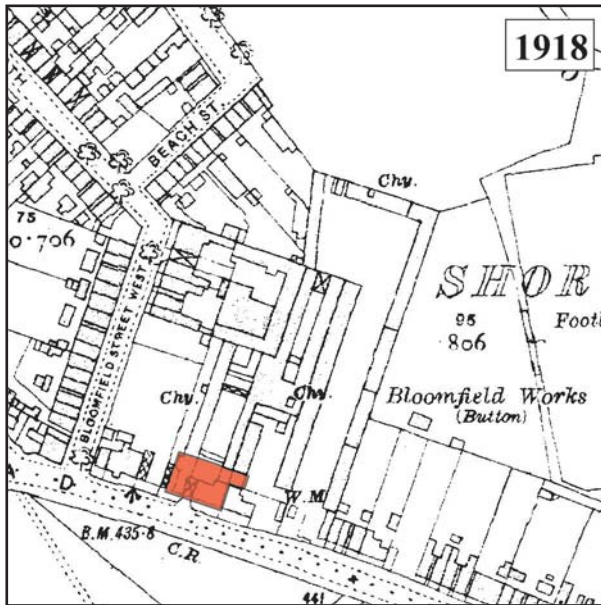
Fig.2



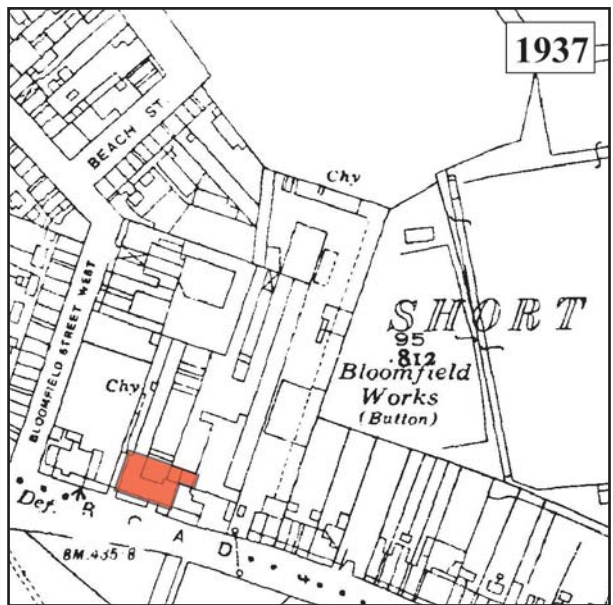
(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

Fig.3

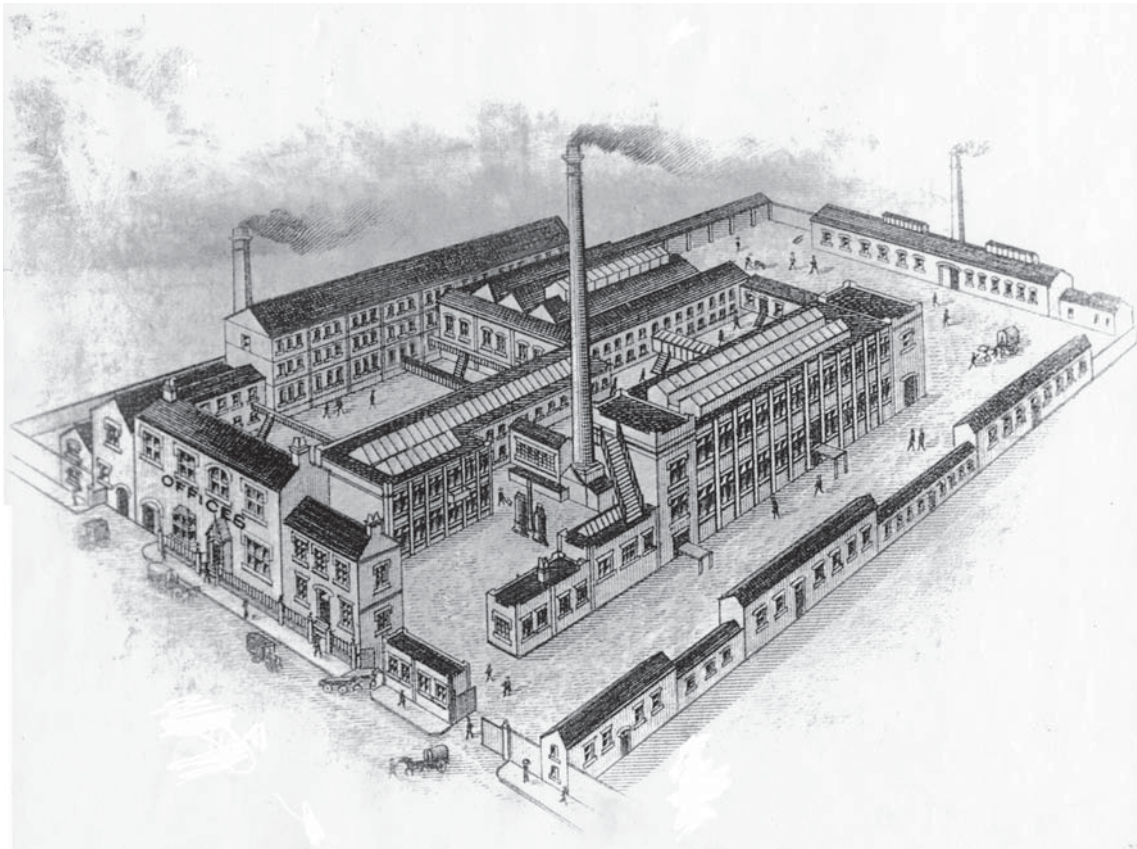
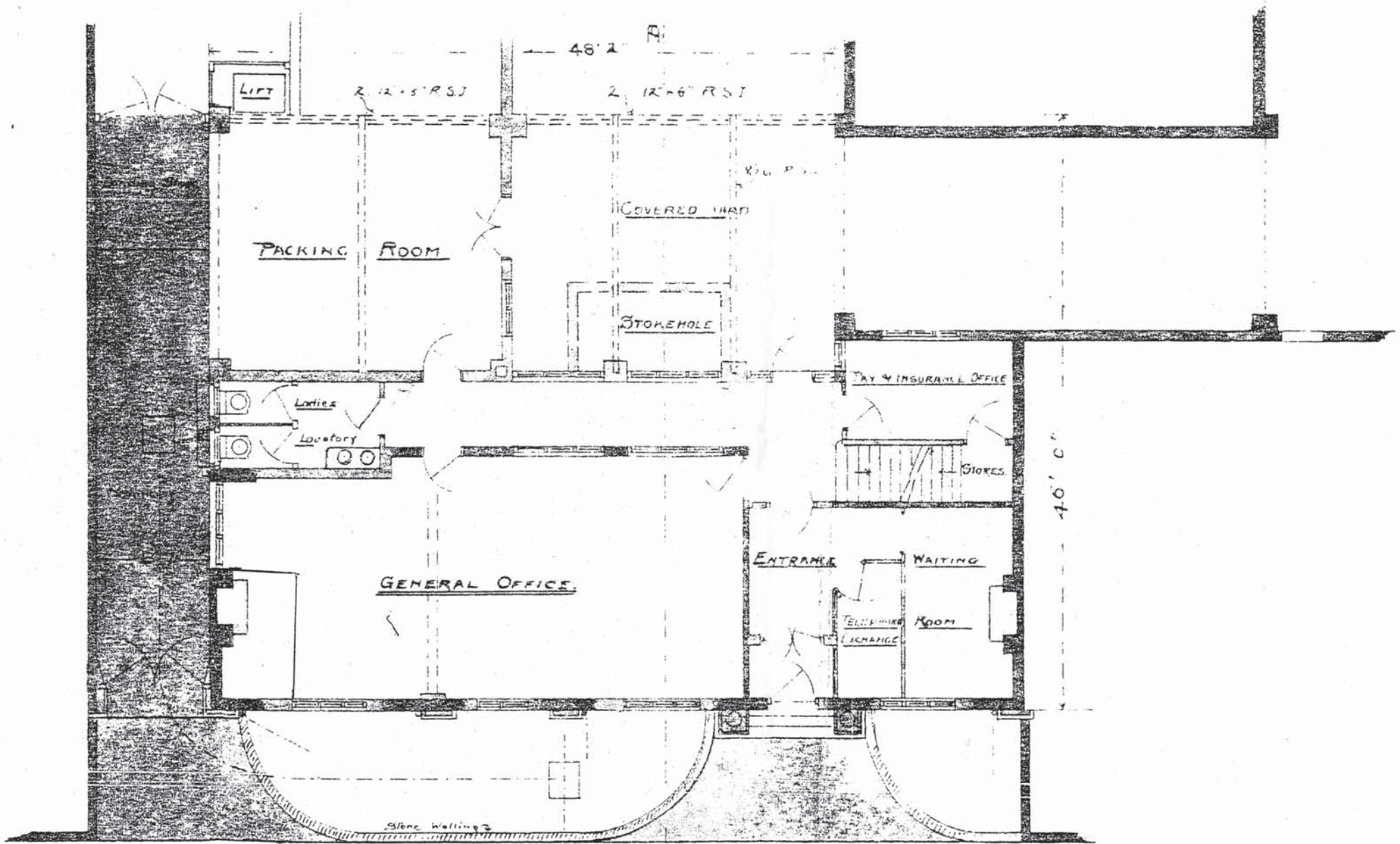
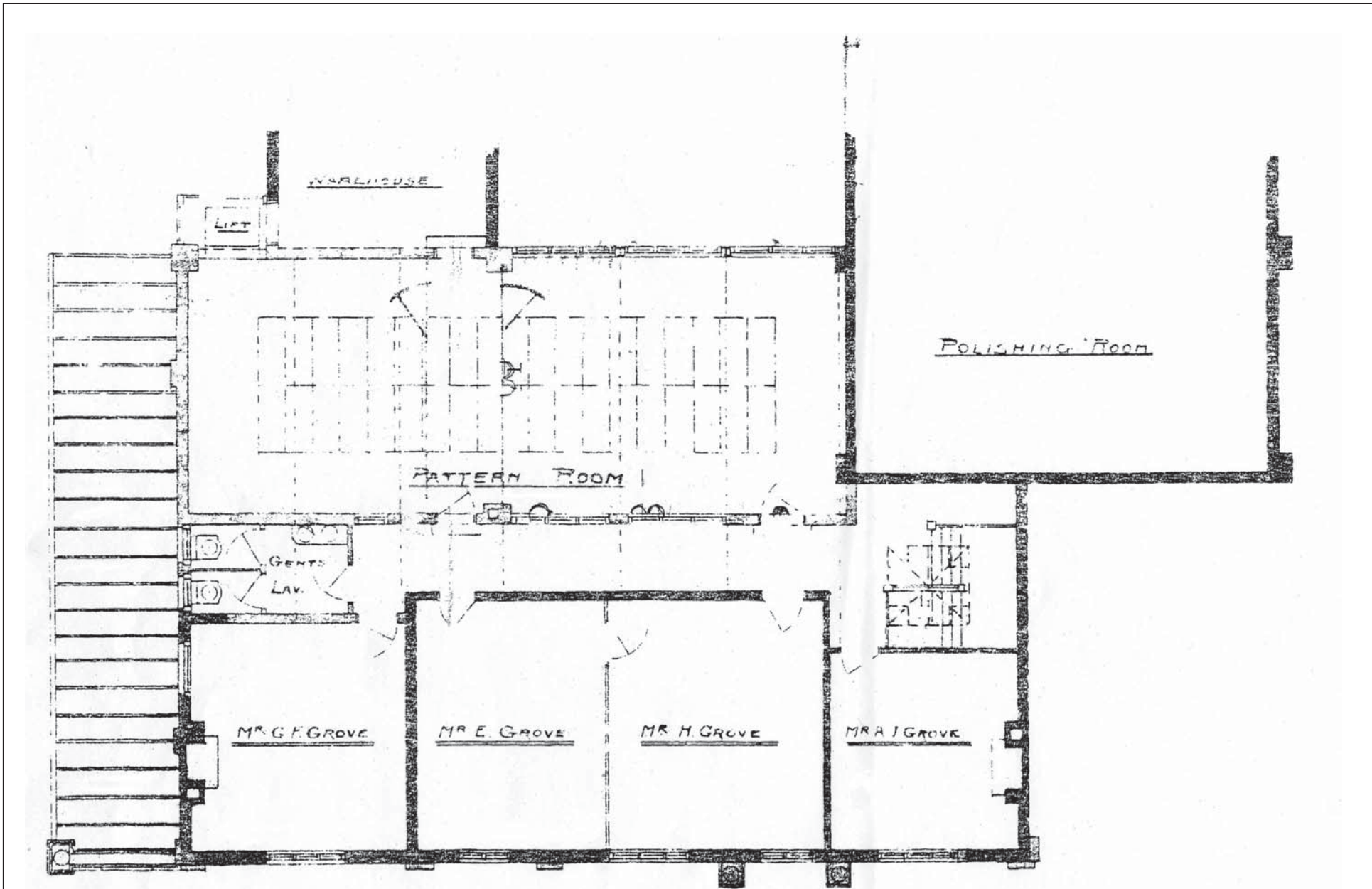


Fig.4



Ground Floor Plan, as built

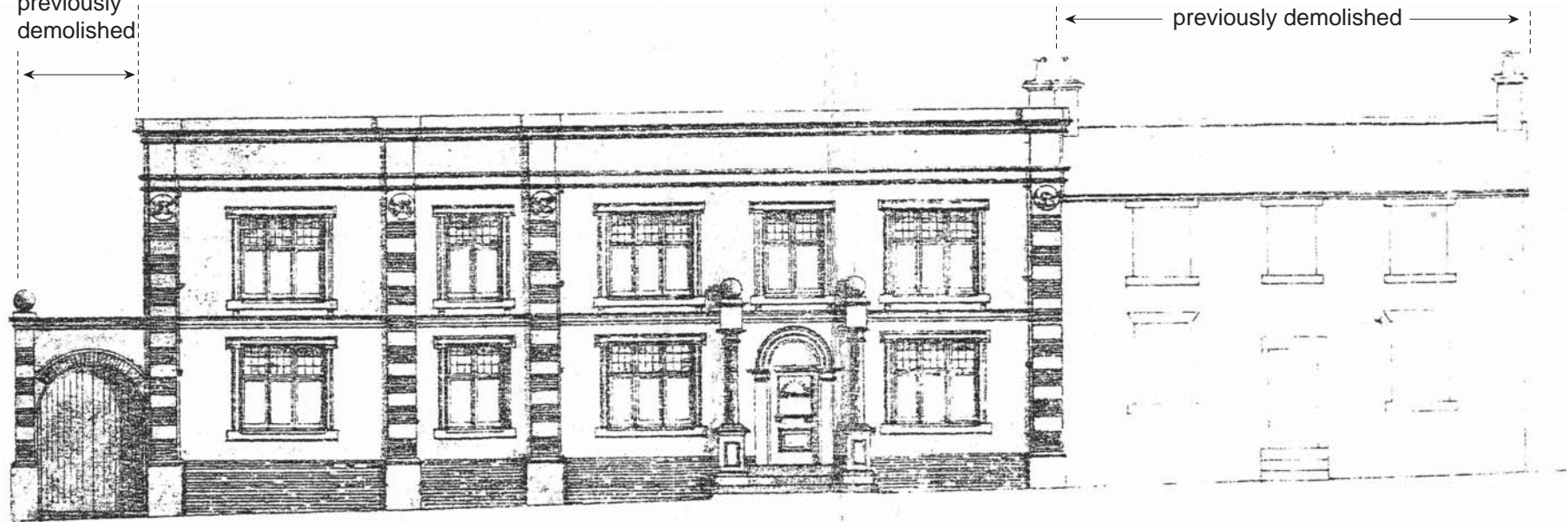
Fig.5



First Floor Plan, as built.

Fig.6

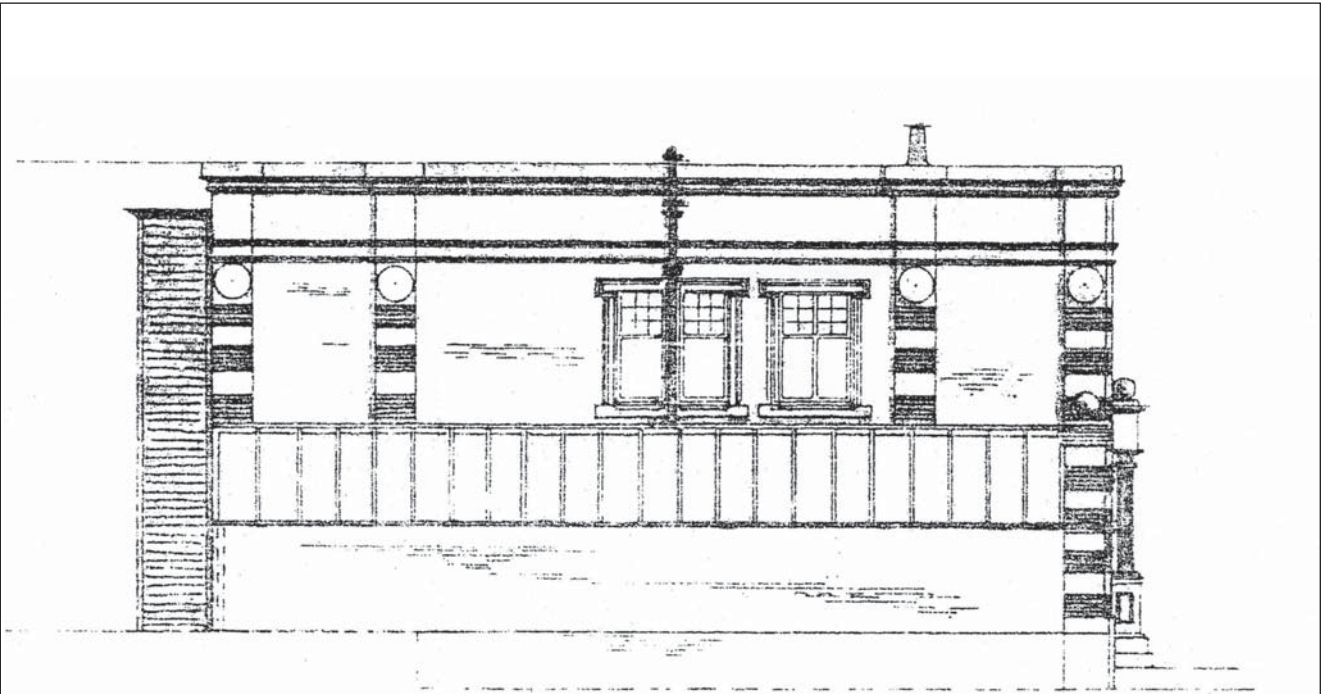
previously
demolished



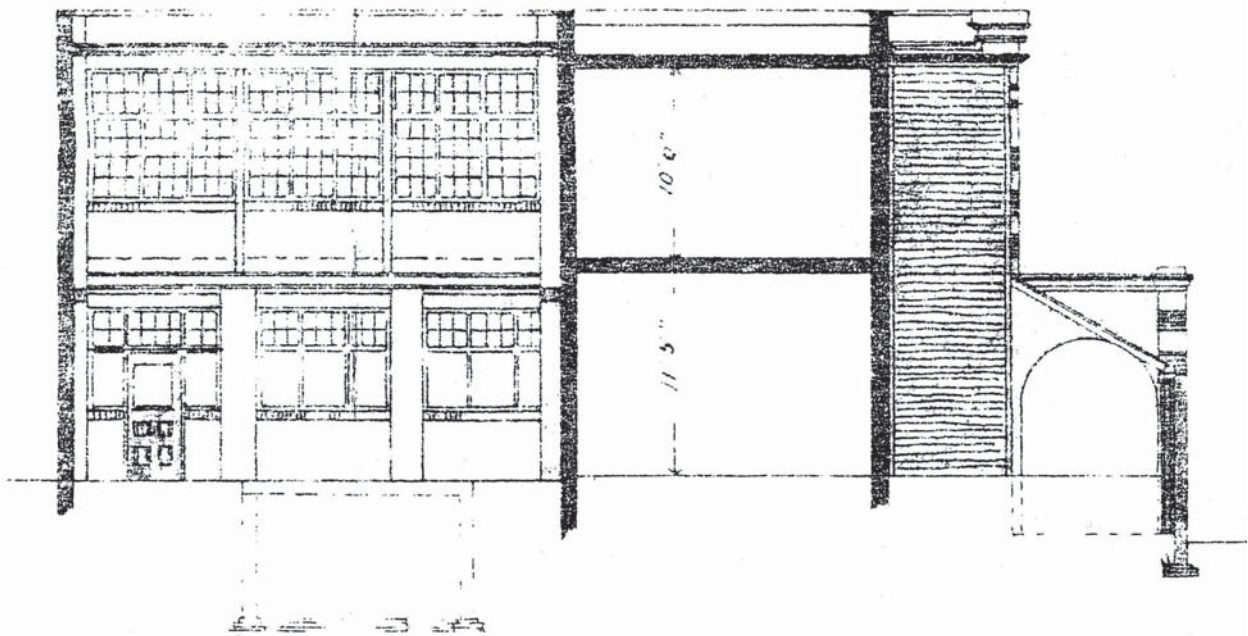
← previously demolished →

South (street) Elevation

Fig.7



(a) West Elevation



(b) North Elevation

Fig.8

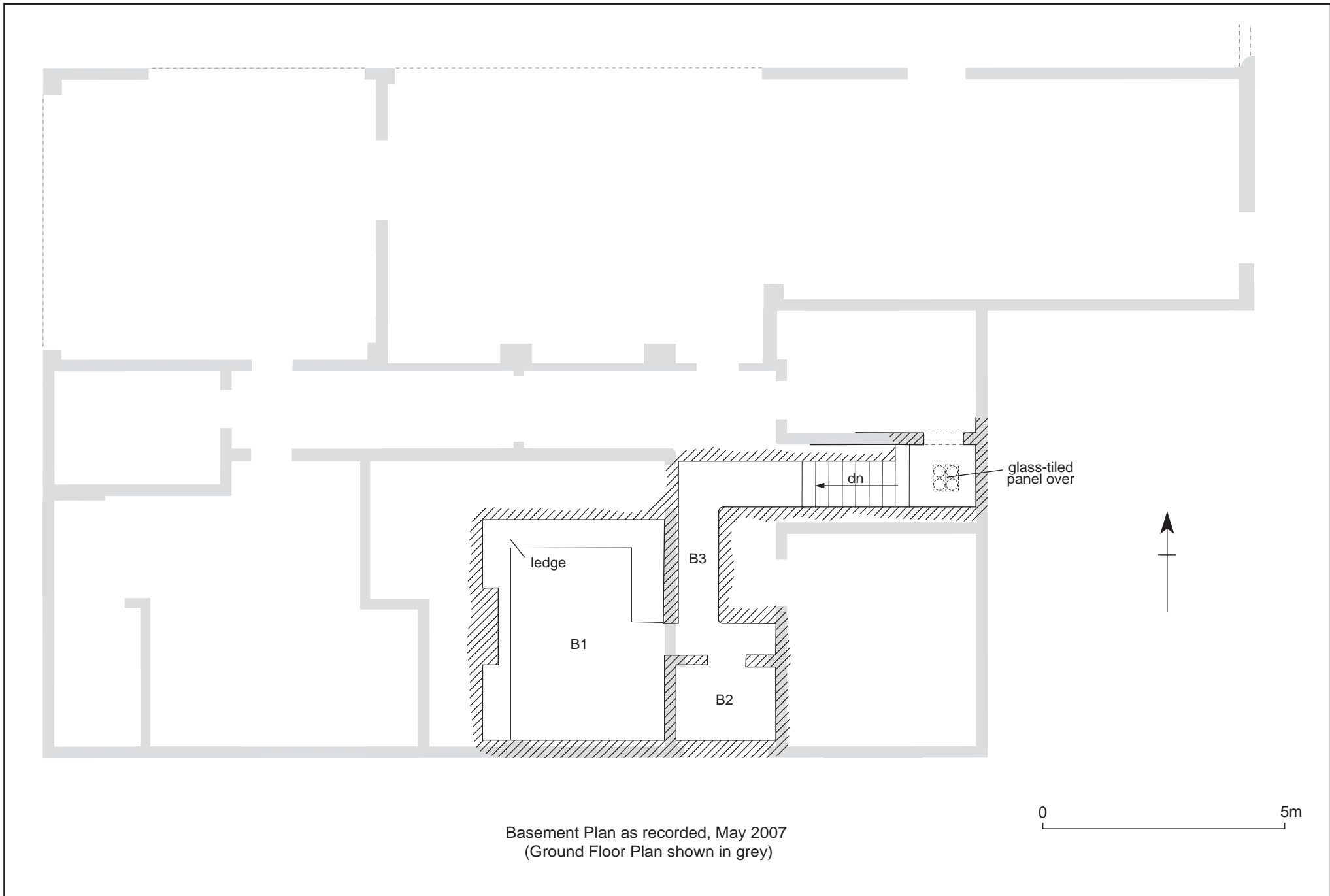
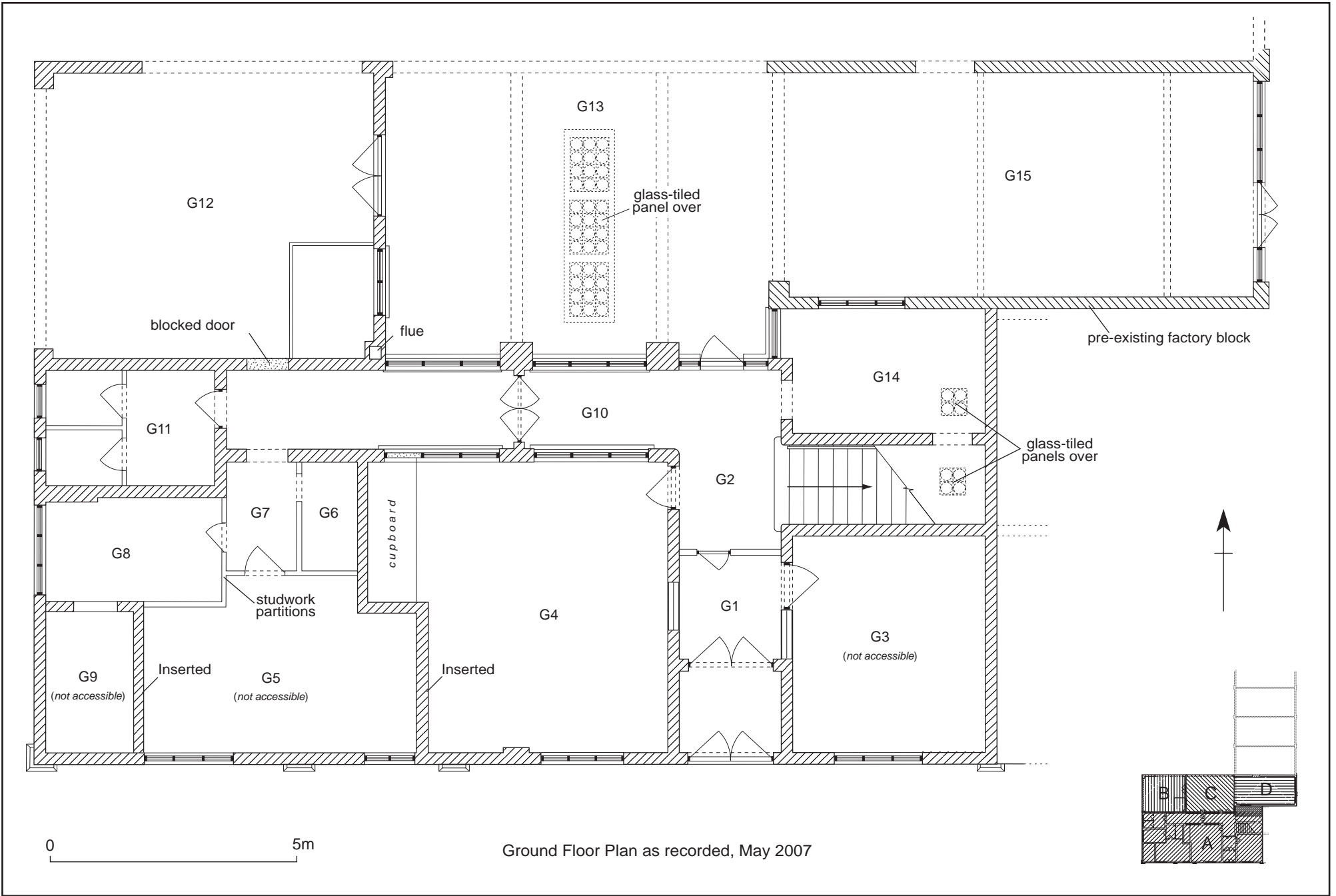


Fig.9



Ground Floor Plan as recorded, May 2007

Fig.10

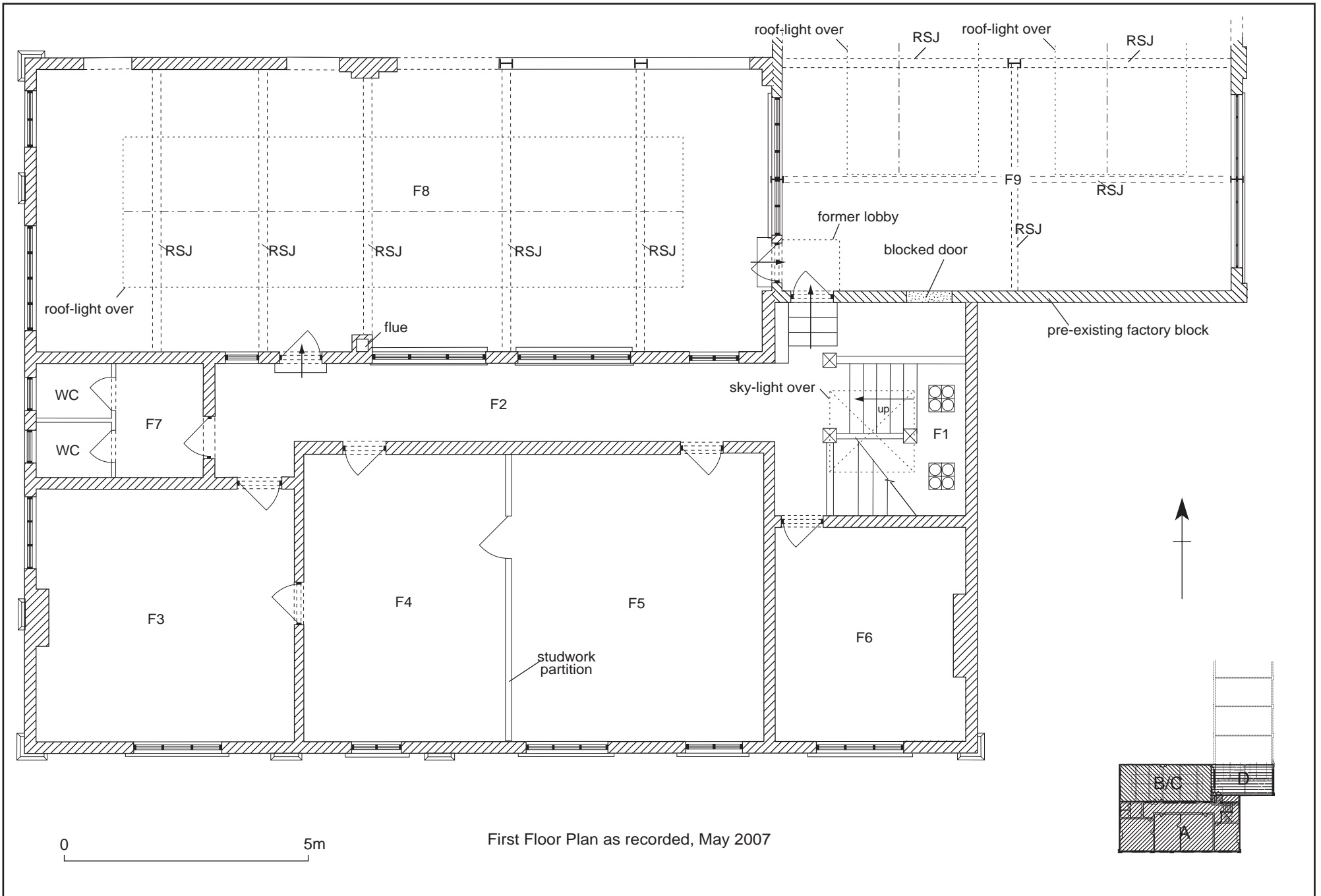


Fig.11



Fig.12



Plate 1: Contextual view from the south-east.



Plate 2: South (street) elevation.



Plate 3: 'Ghost' of former porch pedestal.



Plate 4: 'Ghost of former porch capital.



Plate 5: Springing of archway.



Plate 6: Animal head motif, detail.



Plate 7: North (rear) elevation.



Plate 8: East Elevation.



Plate 9: Block G15/F9.



Plate 10: West elevation, detail.



Plate 11: Basement Room B1; central projection within west wall.



Plate 12: Glass tiles lighting G14 and basement stair.



Plate 13: Basement Room B2 and lobby.



Plate 14: Stair, lower flight.



Plate 15: Stair, upper flight.



Plate 16: Glazed tiles of landing, lighting G14 below.



Plate 17: Primary finger plate (Room G4).



Plate 18: Studwork partitions to W end of range (G5-G8).



Plate 19: Room G8, looking west



Plate 20: Corridor G10, looking west.



Plate 21: G11, detail of tiled floor.



Plate 22: Room G11, original doors.



Plate 23: Room G12, looking south-east.



Plate 24: Room G12, looking north-west.



Plate 25: Room G13 (covered yard), looking west.



Plate 26: Doorway G13 / G12.



Plate 27: Glazed tiles in ceiling of G13.



Plate 28: Room G15, looking east.



Plate 29: Room F2, looking east.



Plate 30: Room F3, looking south-west.



Plate 31: Room F4, looking north-east.



Plate 32: Room F5, looking south-west.



Plate 33: Room F6, looking south-east.



Plate 34: Room F8, looking west.



Plate 35: Room F8, looking east.



Plate 36: Room F9, looking east.



Plate 37: Room F9, roof structure.



Plate 38: Room F9, west wall.



Plate 39: Room F9, blocked door (in red)



Plate 40: Room F9, south-west corner.