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PROPOSED REGENERATION, CONVERSION, EXTENSION AND NEW BUILD OF 99—109 CASTLE STREET AND AREA TO REAR OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT FRONTING 16—20 HILL STREET AND THE NARROWS, HINCKLEY.

HERITAGE STATEMENT

January 2008

Levitt
Partnership

99-109 CASTLE STREET, HINCKLEY, LEICESTERSHIRE

INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement records the historical formation of existing buildings located along and at the junction of Castle and Hill Street frontages together with later industrial building sited along The Narrows.

To enable the enhanced preservation and regeneration of the immediate locality, a number of sub-standard brick built structures of fairly modern composition are required to be demolished, whilst partially removing a modest (2 bay) portion of The Narrows building, thus facilitating the regeneration of the main bulk of three-storey buildings fronting Hill Street and Castle Street.

SITE LOCATION

Hinkley is the principal market town of south-west Leicestershire and is situated equi distant from Leicester and Coventry 21 kms. (13 miles). The town lies in close proximity, 3.2 kms (2 miles) of Watling Street (A5), a Roman Road which now forms a substantial part of the County boundary on the south-west and west side of Leicestershire.

Hill Street and The Narrows are situated at the eastern end of Hinckley's principal retail thoroughfare Castle Street and occupies an elevated position with the ground falling away noticeably to the south and west. This part of the town is identified as new areas of building that grew rapidly from nothing during the last quarter of the 19th Century and in its earlier period, north end, Hill Street and Castle Street combines residential and light industrial buildings in an unrestricted manner that portrays stylish brick details of the factories reflected in the decorative treatment of window surrounds and eaves in nearby terraced rows, such as Orchard Street and The Lawns.

ARCHIVE

Archive Evidence – Hill Street/Castle Street and The Narrows factory range

The First Edition of the Ordnance Survey's 1:2500 map of Hinkley shows the factory complex containing the development site that is the subject of this Statement. The map shows that in 1887 The Narrows footpath running along the southern boundary if the factory complex, was part of a longer footpath identified as Argents Path on the second and subsequent editions of the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey maps. Argents Path ran from the east end of Church Walk across an open piece of ground at the rear of Castle Street, skirting to the south side of the Castle Moat.

It then passed across another area of open ground to reach Hill Street at what, in 1887, was its southernmost point. The path then became The Narrows and ran through to its conclusion at a junction with The lawns.

The 1887 map described the Hill Street factory as a 'shoe manufactury'.

Kelly's Directory of Leicestershire and Rutland, 1888, records Henry Perkins, Boot and Shoe Manufacturer, as the only large scale commercial activity in Hill Street at that date.

In 1881, a time when no manufactories are recorded on Hill Street, he was recorded in premises on derby Road, Hinckley and by 1895 the Hill Street factory was occupied by Messrs. Allcock, Wood & Wheatley, Hosiery Manufacturers, who were recorded trading from premises in Stockwell Head, Hinkley in 1888. In 1899 the business became known as Wood & Wheatley and this name appeared in Trade Directories until at least 1916. By 1928 the firm of Frances & Wildebur, Hosiery Manufacturers, had replaced them and they continued to occupy the Hill Street factory complex until 1941 when the last of Kelly's 'county' Directories was published.

Baxter's *History of Hinckley* refers to the rapid expansion of the town during the final quarter of the 19th Century and the evidence in Hill Street would seem to confirm the rapid expansion of the town at that time. The 1881 *Kelly's Directory* contains no mention of factory premises in Hill Street, yet five years later by actual survey date, the 1887 Ordnance Survey map shows a factory complex covering virtually the same area as the present group of buildings. It is the rear i.e. south-east range of building within this complex lying alongside The Narrows that forms the central part of this record, being the unit to be partially demolished.

Residential accommodation seems to have expanded with similar rapidity. Orchard Street, which runs from Hill Street to the Lawns is not recorded on the 1887 Ordnance Survey map yet by 1903 the entire area is developed with terraced rows of hosuing. It is worth noting that several decorative details on the window surrounds, doors and eaves of the northern range of the factory buildings in Hill Street are repeated on the blocks of terraced houses in Orchard Street.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION – Hill Street/The Narrows factory range

The buildings forming the three distinct parts of this complex are all built of brick and have slated roofs. The two parts of the factory complex facing Hill Street can be seen to be of distinct and slightly different design, a detail which the scant evidence of archives would tend to confirm.

The third, separate factory unit lies alongside the northern boundary of The Narrows, though superficially appearing of significantly later date, a building is recorded on the 1887 Ordnance Survey map. All three buildings have extensive ranges of iron framed windows.

Internally the roofs of all three buildings are supported by slightly different arrangements of deal, bolted and strapped, tie-beam trusses, with raked struts.

The 1887 Ordnance Survey map shows a gap between the southern range of building and the present north end range. This gap now forms the entrance gateway to the factory complex. The building lying to the north of the entranceway appears to have been in separate ownership in 1887. This would help explain the range of windows in the north end of the south range of buildings facing onto Hill Street. This evidence, together with the presence of a gap between the two factory units overlooking Hill Street in 1887 and a property boundary line running eastwards at the rear of the northern factory, also marked in the 1887 map, suggest Henry Perkins' shoe factory only occupied buildings lying to the right of the present Hill Street entranceway. The 1903 Second Edition of the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map shows a first floor building spanning the gap creating a continuous façade overlooking Hill Street, such an arrangement only makes sense if the two units are in common ownership. At the rear at first floor level a doorway was cut through the north brick gable wall of the southern range of buildings and a short passageway lead to a point where the south gable of the north range was broken through providing access into the northern range.

The southern range of factory building ran to a facetted angle at the point where The Narrows joined Hill Street, and the factory's south end wall formed the northern boundary of The Narrows and continued to form a brick wall that now conceals the base of the brick factory chimney and its associated boiler house. The various types of brick identified in the section of walling are testimony to numerous alterations and additions having been undertaken over time. Immediately north-east of the present factory chimney there is a simple two-storey, five-bay brick factory unit. There is a distinct change in the type of brick used for the walls of this building with three bays using a 19th Century Stock Brick and the eastern two bays being raised in Fletton brick as replacement for earlier brickwork. The First Edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map shows a building standing in this position in 1887, which would suggest there was some reason to rebuild this section at a later date.

The evidence of the various editions of the Ordnance Survey's large scale map shows that the last addition to the factory complex was the factory chimney. This is not shown on the First (1887), second (1903) or 1924 editions but is shown on the 1960 edition. The design of the brick chimney with metal straps at regular intervals is similar to that of other light industrial chimneys raised during the inter-war period, 1920-1939.

Comparative examples, now demolished, have been noted at Primethrope, Broughton Astley, on the site of an old brickyard and at New Star Brickworks, Barkby Thorpe Lane, Leicester. Two circular, steel banded chimneys of similar vintage survive at factories on Burgess Road, Leicester.

Factory Unit: The Narrows

External

The factory unit lies to the rear of the main factory range on Hill Street. Its south elevation forms the northern boundary of The Narrows as it runs in a north-easterly direction from Hill Street to The Lawns. The five-bay factory unit is built of brick and has a Welsh slate roof supported by a series of deal, bolted, king-post trusses with raked struts supporting the principal rafters. Single, diagonal set purlins, supported by wooden chocks nailed to the topside of the principal rafters pass through the length of the building.

The factory is lit on The Narrows, i.e. south side, by a series of ten iron, framed windows. The five windows on the ground floor have sixteen panes with a four-pane inner opening centre vent. One the north, i.e. yard elevation, where the brickwork has been painted white, possibly to provide additional reflected light into the main factory building, a single thirty paned, iron framed window, with a segmental arched head, appears to be the only window from a earlier series to have survived. The five, first floor windows have twelve panes. The upper three panes on the left and right hand sides are casements with a single pane, centre vent window at the top. Four similar windows occur on the opposite i.e. yard elevation of the building and the north-east gable wall has a single window of similar pattern. There is also a boarded door at first level, now sealed, as the building this door gave access to has now been reduced to a single-storey, mono-pitched roofed store.

An inclines, wooden, lap-boarded link corridor runs at first floor level from the rear of the main factory range down onto the first floor range of this unit. A self-contained external flight of concrete stairs with brick enclosure rises from the yard area to first floor level in the corner of the building where the boarded, link corridor enters the first floor area of the same unit.

The yard elevation of this building has been subjected to more alterations and changes than the other two elevations. Apart from the external staircase which runs diagonally across a substantial section of the yard elevation, a double door loading area was formed at the north-east corner of the yard elevation. This appears to have removed another segmental arched window similar to the one already described above.

Internal

If there was any unique internal evidence relating to the ground floor area of the factory it has been removed. The area consists of an open space, with a concrete floor and has a small, separate area set at the north-east gable end of the range. A series of eight bull-nose, brick piers, four on either side of the building, rose from the floor to support four steel girders that carried the longitudinal beams holding the joists supporting the boarded upper floor. The piers reduce to half their original size as they pass through to the first floor area where they rise to support the tie-beams of the roof trusses.

At first floor level part of an earlier boarded partition can be seen situated adjacent to the second king-post truss. As the greater part of the floor of this level has been removed, insufficient material survived to ascertain whether this partition entirely closed bays 1 and 2 from the remaining bays at this level or not. The building is open to the roof, which was lined with tongue and groove boarding.

The brick chimney rises in the acute angle between the factory building alongside The Narrows and the southern range of the Hill Street factory. For this reason the inclined link corridor passing between the main factory and the smaller factory on The Narrows is cranked. A brick infill set partly on the north and partly on the east side of the chimney contained toilet and wash-room facilities. The toilet area has a window on its north side that cannot be used owing to the close proximity, 45mm, of the boarded link corridor. Similarly a window originally set in the south side wall of the boarded link corridor was subsequently sealed over because it could not be opened as the brick wall of the first floor toilet facilities was set too close to it.

CASTLE STREET

One of the main streets of the town, and probably the oldest, traversing the site of the Castle, the Parish Church and the Market Place. Due to the natural topography of the land, the junction of Castle Street with Hill Street is referred to as 'Upper' Castle Street.

Within the immediate locality of the application site are buildings which formed part of the Co-Operative Society premises, founded in 1861.

The building at the Road junction was referred to as the Co-Operative Hall, a property rented for 5 years in 1889 and then purchased in 1891 for £650. Plans by Joseph Ball of Hinckley portray an imposing edifice of three storeys, with a commodious shop on the ground floors, store rooms on the second floor and a large Public Hall with a seating capacity of 300 on the upper storey.

The contractors of the original building were T. Bassett and Thomas Jones. Opened on 19th April 1892, the public hall at the Hinckley and District Co-Operative Society's new buildings in Castle Street was opened to the public on Easter Tuesday with tea and entertainment.

The new stores formed a very handsome erection and were a most creditable addition to the business premises in the town, occupying a prominent position in Castle Street, with frontages to that street and Hill Street.

The building comprises cellar, ground floor, first and second floors. There are also large single storey back store rooms with exceptionally small private yard. On the ground floor are two large rooms – one with an area of 660 sq. ft. for the then Grocery department, and the other for Drapery, with an area of 275 sq. ft.

On the first floor there are two large rooms, one with an area of 700 sq. ft. and 440 sq. ft. respectively, and an ante room.

The large hall on the third floor averages 3784 sq. ft. and contains an area of 1684 sq. ft. superficially. The room is well lit and ventilated and capable of seating 300 people at least. This hall was let for public gatherings, for which it was eminently suitable.

A handsome clock is fixed at the angle of Castle Street and Hill Street, which originally was lit by gas at night. (Statement from the Hinckley Times – 23/4/1892).

In 1903 the building was extended at a cost of £358 along its Castle Street frontage to provide a two-storey addition which connected with a poorly designed 'round topped' gable front shop unit (No. 109) up the street.

99-109 CASTLE STREET

The interior of the buildings fronting 99-109 Castle Street have, over the years, been extensively structurally altered to create at ground floor level a fairly large expanse of open floor area, utilised as a public bar facility, whilst the upper first and second floor structural levels remain on the whole undisturbed, with current decorations dating back to the 1970's or earlier.

However, the building at 99 Castle Street, with its Hill Street junction, has very recently suffered structural roofing and upper level brickwork failures, caused primarily through a change of original slated roof covering to modern heavy concrete roof tiling. Current work is being undertaken to arrest this building via the immediate removal of the offending concrete roof tiling.

Returning to the interior of the ground floor level, the existing floor comprising suspended timber floor boards over basement area, all of which are to remain in 99 Castle Street, whilst 109 will be totally removed.

The upper timber and steel beams floor levels are supported off independent columns and cross walls with 327mm thick external brick envelope walls.

Generally, the roof construction of the Castle street range of buildings consists of timber trusses, similar in fact to the Hill Street regeneration works currently underway, but the overall impression is of less substantial timbers and from a visual inspection they may be undersized for modern day loading requirements.

Unfortunately, due to the installation of concrete roof tiles, a timber truss and roof valley beam have fractured near roof level, with excessive deflection of this beam, resulting in the flank wall of No. 99 being pushed out at second floor level.

Corrective remedial building works are presently being carried out by specialist involvement.

The lower level roofs to 109, and adjacent two-storey (extension built 1903) structure are of no historical content and are merely standard timber 'cut roof' members.

UPPER CASTLE STREET - ABOUT 1960.



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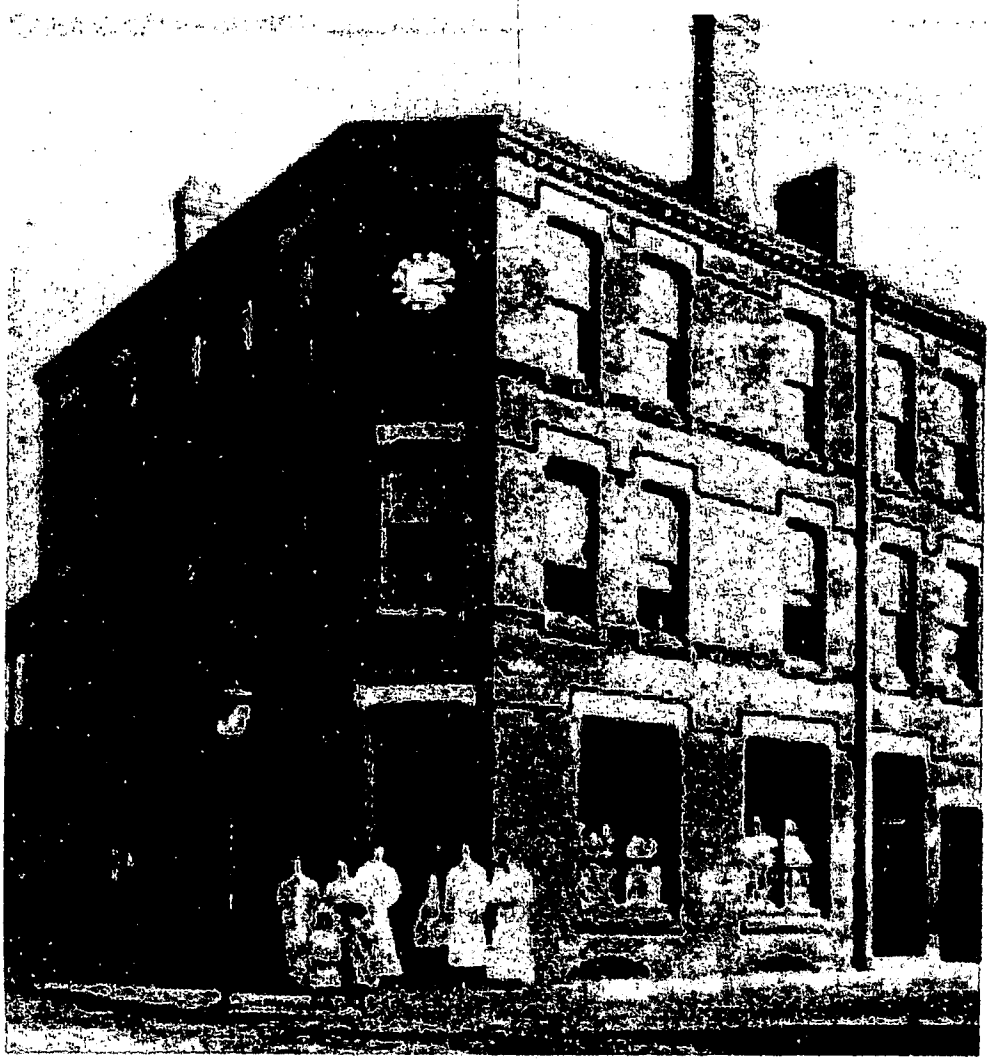

99, CASTLE STREET AT JUNCTION WITH HILL STREET. LATE 19th CENTURY.

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