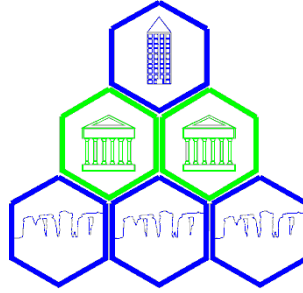


The Historic Environment Consultancy



Building Recording of
Blue Bird Park
Bromsgrove Road
Hunnington
Worcestershire
B62 0JW

National Grid Reference: SO 9659 8143

Planning Reference Number: 19/00592/FUL

OASIS ID: thearcha1-516388

HER Event No. WSM80084

Listing Reference Numbers:

1464601 (Administration Building)

1466995 (Canteen)

1466996 (Walls, Railings and Gates)

Dr Peter Wardle & Colin Lacey

Document Reference Number 2023/1681

Version 3

17/10/2023

Building Recording of: Blue Bird Park Dr Peter Wardle & Colin Lacey
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Dedication

This report is dedicated to the late Thomas Wardle, 131 Hagley Road Birmingham, Soldier, Footballer and Confectioner.

Building Recording: Blue Bird Park
Dr Peter Wardle & Colin Lacey

1. Summary

This report is a record of the buildings at Blue Bird Park before some were demolished and others re-purposed as apartments.

Toffee is a confection made by caramelising sugar (browning the sugar) or molasses along with butter and full cream milk, heating to 154⁰c before cooling and cutting into small pieces. Things such as nuts are often added. It's high sugar content meant that it was regarded as something to be eaten on special occasions such as Christmas. Now it is rarely eaten.

Sir Harry Vincent moved his factory in the Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham to a greenfield site 14km away, south of Halesowen and north of Hunnington, Worcester. This new site offered many advantages not least good clean water, bulk supplies of milk and butter, good transport links, readily available fuel and cheap land. The main disadvantage was the lack of labour so it was planned to build a worker's village of about 100 houses but only 24 were built.

The earliest buildings were constructed in 1925 with the latest in the years post 1982. The factory consisted of the main manufactory and administration building as well as a warehouse and transport building. Also there was a canteen building which provided meals to the workers as well as a leisure facility. It included a snooker room (snooker was invented by Sir Neville Chamberlain in 1875) and a library. A stage was present at one end of the main dining room which was used for theatrical performances and concerts. Dinners and dances were held in the dining room. Other facilities included a cricket pitch and bowling green complete with a pavilion, a shop and a post office.

The factory was designed by Samuel Nathaniel Cooks, a prominent Birmingham architect, with the administration building being in a neo-classical style with a Doric colonnade as the entrance. The factory was constructed by a Stourbridge firm of builders AH Guest Ltd with a total project cost of £250,000.

Doreen Vincent, the eldest daughter of Sir Harry, suggests that 1500 tonnes of toffee were produced per week which equates to 183 million individual toffees per week which equates to five toffees per week per person in the UK!

The factory closed in 1998 when toffee production ceased. The former factory buildings were most recently used as storage and office accommodation. The boiler room, with water tower and chimney, was demolished in 2007.

In 2018 Seven Capital, a Birmingham based multi-international property company purchased an option to redevelop the land. Their proposal included plans to retain the Administration and Canteen Buildings. On 18 October 2019 the Administration and the Welfare Buildings and the boundary walls were listed at Grade II. The other buildings were deemed not worthy of being designated as buildings of Special Historic or Architectural Interest. In December 2022 Planning permission and Listed building consent was granted for more or less the original scheme.

The first part of this report is a summary of detailed reports for each building. The detailed reports are described separately in an individual volume appended to this report.

2. Preface

2.1 Structure of Report

This report comprises a record of the former Blue Bird toffee factory on Bromsgrove Road, Hunnington, Worcestershire. Owing to the scale of the recording exercise, the report takes the form of several volumes. This volume provides an overview of the Blue Bird site and an introduction to the buildings. All pre-1980s buildings are recorded to Historic England Level 3. Each Level 3 report forms a separate volume. The remaining four more recent buildings are recorded to Historic England Level 1 and are presented in a single volume.

2.2 The Client

This report was commissioned by J Richards of Seven Capital (Halesowen) Ltd. and subsequently Malvern Estates Ltd.

2.3 Location

Site Address:	Blue Bird Park, Bromsgrove Road, Hunnington, Worcestershire B62 0JW
Grid Reference:	SO 96590 81436
National Co-ordinates	396590 , 281436
Latitude and Longitude	52.430839 , -2.0515800

The general location is shown in Figure 1 and the detailed location in Figure 2.

2.4 Date of Recording

Blue Bird Park was initially visited by Dr Peter Wardle in July & October 2019. Subsequent visits were made by Dr Wardle and Colin Lacey between this point and September 2022.

2.5 Circumstances of The Project

The recording of the building was required as a condition of a grant of planning permission and listed building consent reference Bromsgrove Borough Council 19/00592/FUL for:

“Part demolition and site clearance of the former Blue Bird factory site for its redevelopment to provide 116 residential dwellings (Use Class C3), consisting of both new dwellings and conversion of the Welfare and Administration buildings, along with associated landscaping; drainage; engineering; highways and access works”.

The wording of the planning condition is as follows:

No development shall commence until a programme of research and building recording including a Written Scheme of Investigation(s), has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:

- a) The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording which will include:

 - 1. A Level 3 historic building recording (as defined by Historic England) on all pre 1980s buildings. This will include documentary research.*
 - 2. A Level 1 historic building recording (as defined by Historic England) on warehouses, dating to the 1980s.**
- b) The programme for post investigation assessment.*
- c) Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording.*
- d) Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation*
- e) Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation*

REASON: In accordance with the requirements of paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2.6 Location of The Archive

The archive of this project consists solely in the form of digital records. This report contains 667 high resolution photographs and 40 plans and elevations. The drawings are appended to the report as layered vector files. Copies of this report in pdf format therefore represents the archive. Copies of this archive are therefore given to the Archaeology Data Service and Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment Record.

2.7 Methodology

The building was recorded according to the requirements set out in the English Heritage 2016 *Understanding Historic Buildings A Guide to Recording Practice* and the method statement. No difficulties were experienced during the recording process.

2.8 Reference Numbers

Planning Reference Number: 19/00592/FUL

OASIS ID: thearcha1-516388

HER Event No. WSM80084

Listing Reference Numbers: 1464601 (Administration Building) 1466995 (Canteen) 1466996 (Walls, Railings and Gates)

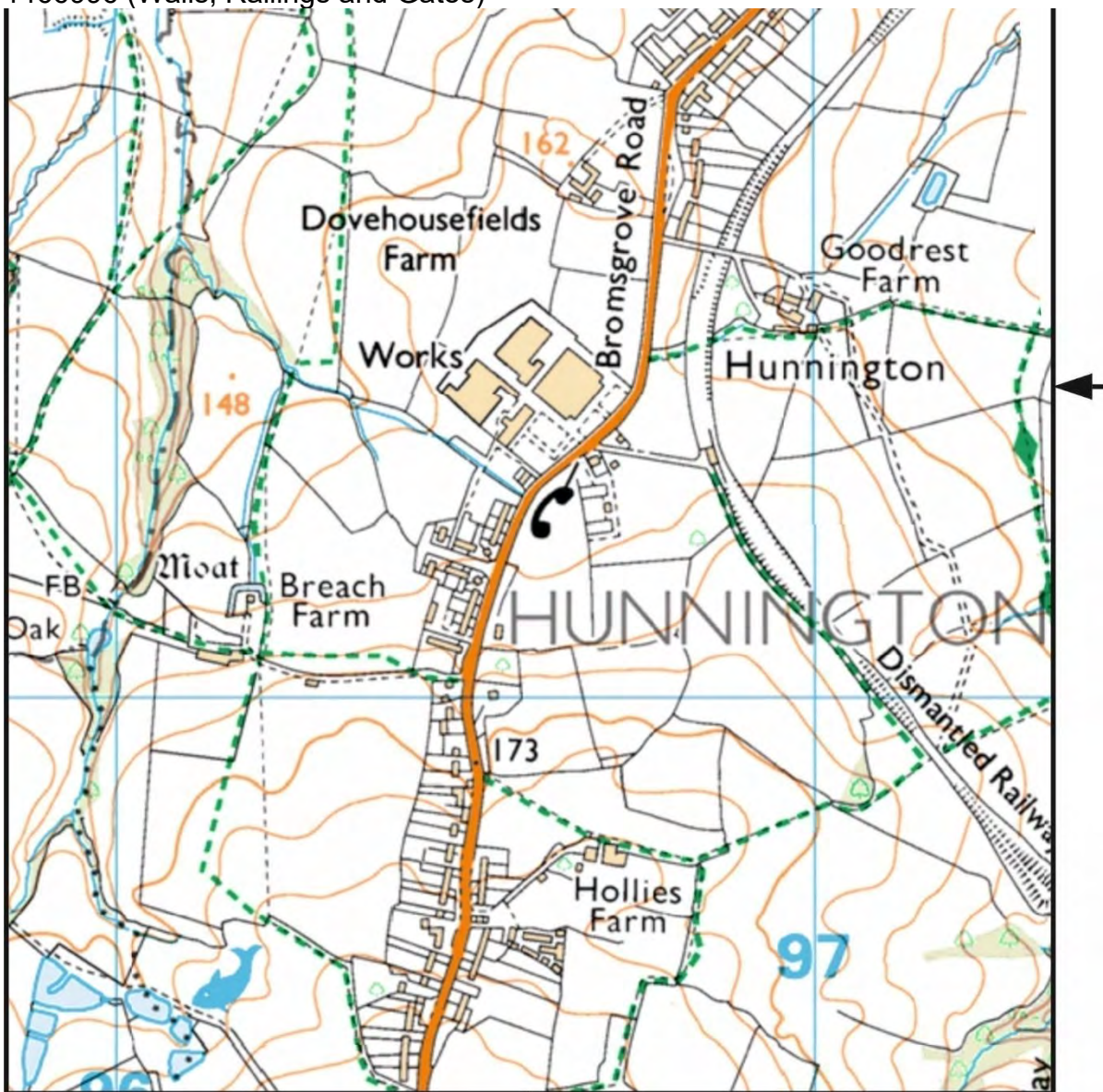


Figure 1 General Location Plan. Scale 1:50,000

3. Introduction

This report describes a series of buildings recorded before some were demolished and some re-purposed following the demise of a brand of confection which was a household name.

3.1 Toffee

Confectionery is a sweet dish or delicacy (OED) served as a treat which is rich in sugar and carbohydrates known from Ancient Times when honey was used to coat fruit.

Sugar itself was a luxury item until sugar was produced from sugar beet from 1747, allowing sugar to be produced in colder climates. Sugar plantations were established in the West Indies in the eighteenth century but its export to Britain was limited by the difficulties in transport. Sugar became highly popular throughout Europe and by the nineteenth century could be found in every household and was an essential food ingredient. Britain was a particularly high consumer of sugar with consumption rising from 2lb (907g) per head in 1750 to 90lb by the early twentieth century. From the 1960s and 1970s the association of excessive sugar consumption with obesity and other health conditions was widely recognised.

Confectionery has a traditional association with celebrations for example the wedding cake, or other occasions when the indulgence of eating sugary foods is seen as a special treat such as Christmas. This has increasingly become more so with many people eliminating confectionery from their diet completely.

Toffee is made by caramelising sugar along with butter and full cream milk heating to 154°C before cooling and cutting into small pieces. Things such as nuts are often added. Toffee has a glossy surface and textures ranging from soft and sticky to a hard, brittle material. Its brown colour and smoky taste arise from the caramelisation of the sugars.

Toffee made with full cream milk is known as English Toffee in the rest of the World. In England everybody of a certain age will remember consuming Blue Bird toffee at Christmas with a slab of toffee in a metal tray complete with a metal hammer to break it.



Both images: https://www.bluebird-electric.net/blue_bird_toffees.htm

Doreen Vincent, the eldest daughter of Sir Harry, suggests that 1500 tonnes of toffee were produced per week which equates to 183 million individual toffees per week which equates to five toffees per week per person in the UK!

3.2 The Name Blue Bird

In 1922 Sir Malcolm Campbell painted his racing car blue and named it Blue Bird. He broke the land speed record in the following year. It became the name of racing cars and boats driven by himself and his son Donald who held the World Speed Record from 1924-1928, 1931-35, 1964 and on water between 1937- 1950 and 1955-1967. He named his cars Blue Bird after 'The Blue Bird of Happiness' written in 1908 by Belgian author Maeterlink. That is five years before the Construction of Blue Bird Park.

The war time song *There will be blue birds over the White Cliffs of Dover*, was written in 1941 by Americans Walter Kent and Nat Burton, and was made famous by Dame Vera Lynn in 1943. The song heralded a new optimism as the tide of war changed in the Allies' favour. Blue Birds (*Sialia sialis*) were introduced by the English naturalist William John Swainson in 1827 so not indigenous to Great Britain. The song may be referring to a **barn swallow** (*Hirundo rustica*).

3.3 The History of Harry Vincent Toffee Production



Plate 1: Sir Harry Vincent (Mid Pastures Green)

Harry Vincent came to Birmingham from Evesham in 1895, beginning his working life in the offices of the Worcestershire Preserve Company, before opening a small factory in Burbury Street, making boiled sweets, toffees and chemists' sundries. Vincent was aged 20 and had a great deal of technical knowledge of food manufacture. Within three years, larger premises were required and the factory moved to larger premises in Guest Street, where the practice of adding full-cream milk to the toffees was adopted. The business continued to expand and in 1901 again moved to larger premises on Park Road, Hockley.

In 1906 Vincent purchased the freehold of works in Wiggin Street, Birmingham. This was the biggest venture he had so far attempted (the works covered 98,712 square feet – 9170m²). This building had a capacity far in excess of the requirements of the business at that point.

At this time, manufacture was switched to solely toffee production, with a brief pause during the First World War when production turned to foodstuffs, particularly jams, for the military and civilians during the conflict.

3.4 The History of the Hunnington Factory

The erection of the new model factory at Hunnington was officially commenced on the 25th July 1925, when the foundation stone was laid at the entrance to the Administration Building. Vincent's toffee was originally called Harvino.

The factory was designed by Samuel Nathaniel Cooks, a prominent Birmingham architect, with the administration building being in a neo-classical style with a Doric colonnade as the entrance. The factory was constructed by a Stourbridge firm of builders AH Guest Ltd with a total project cost of £250,000.



Plate 2: The manufactory and the railway, 1936 (Britain From Above)

When Harry Vincent moved his factory out of the Jewellery Quarter in central Birmingham it offered many commercial advantages:

1. Plentiful clean water
2. Bulk fresh raw materials such as butter and milk
3. Good transport links via the nearby railway line
4. Readily available fuel, coal was mined in nearby Halesowen
5. Cheap Land

The manufacture of food stuff to be sold throughout Britain meant that it had to be:

1. Packaged for long distance transport the norm was “tin” boxed (steel plated with tin)
2. Despatched for short distance by lorry and onward by railway
3. Administration invoicing and collecting money from both wholesalers and retailers
4. Marketed

The main disadvantage was the lack of labour. The nearest town was Halesowen 3 miles to the north of the factory with its main industries being nail making and the manufacture of metal goods. The solution was simple build a new settlement on land next to the factory.

In 1921 The Prime Minister Lloyd-George promised a *land fit for heroes* and in 1924 the first Labour government was elected and immediately passed the Housing Financial Provision Act which gave subsidies to Local Authorities to build low cost housing for the low paid.

The Midlander originally published in 1927, which describes the construction of the original buildings by Mr Harry Vincent, together with sketch plans and drawings of the buildings. Mr Vincent had purchased the land, as well as additional land to the south, in order to develop a model factory specifically to make toffee, as his premises in Hockley had become too small for the company.

The land to the south was intended for a development of houses for the workers at the factory, and whilst the first twenty-four of these were constructed at the same time as the factory buildings (and remain forming the houses at The Close and to each side of The Close), the remainder were never started.

Whilst the factory was finished in the late 1920s, the Blue Bird Toffee Factory site first appears on an aerial photograph from 1936 (www.britainfromabove.org.uk) and on mapping from 1937 (Appendix 5). Whilst the surroundings are still considerably rural, some residential development is located to the north-east of the site, flanking the roadside and stretching between Dovehousefields Farm and Oatenfields Farm.

By the 1954-71 edition of the mapping, a post office, pavilion and recreational facilities have been built on land to the south-east of the factory site, presumably to provide leisure activities for the workforce (Appendix C4-5). This mapping also shows the expansion of the factory, with the footprint of the northern block expanding to the rear. Mapping from 1992 shows the further extensions made to the factory footprint – in its new use as warehousing.

The Blue Bird company left the Hunnington site in October 1998, and the company now trade in Hull as part of Needler's. The name changed after the acquisition of Blue Bird to become "Needler Bluebird". In 2002 Needler Bluebird was purchased by Ashbury Confectionery and discontinued all lines previously made by Needler's and Blue Bird.

4. The Overall Layout & The Buildings

4.1 Nomenclature

The functions of the buildings and their reference numbers is shown in the following plan

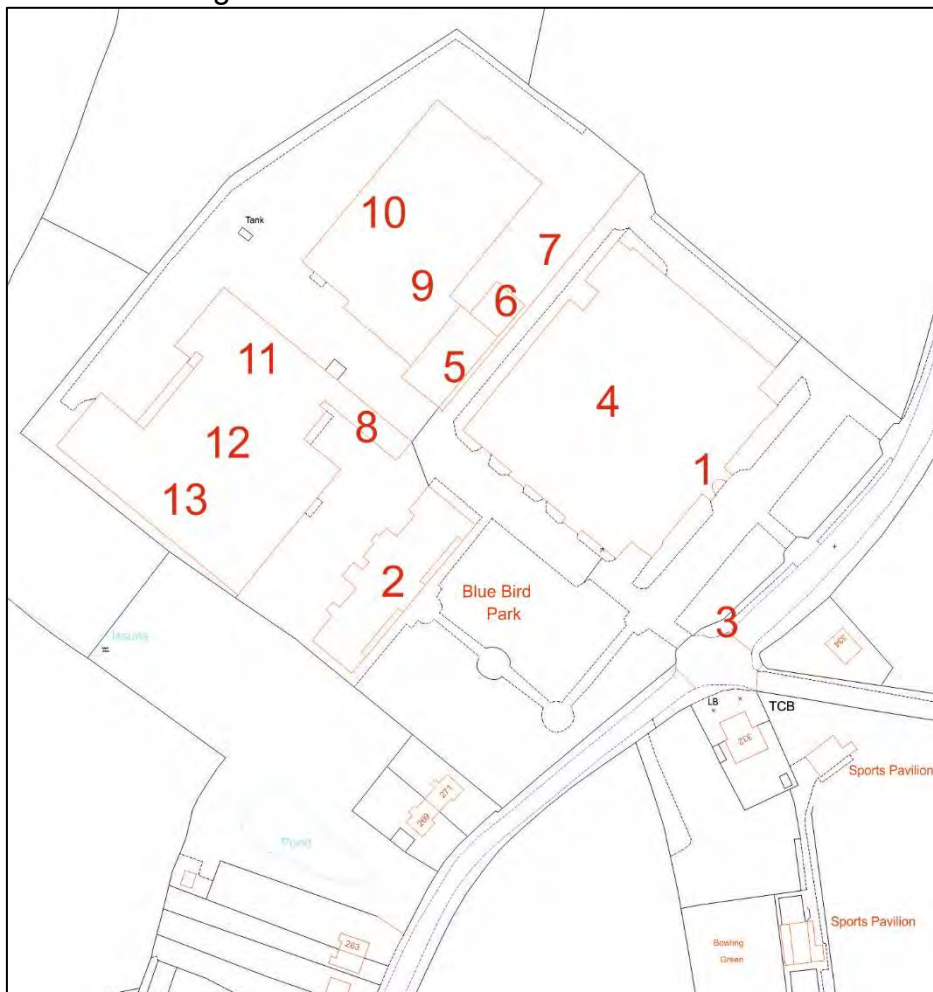


Figure 2 Location of Buildings, 1:2500 @ A4

Blue Bird Park Building Recording

Building	Name & Original Function	Date	Grid Ref
1	Administration Building	1927	SO 96680 81421
2	Canteen	1927	SO 96647 81438
3	Boundary Walls, Railings and Gates	1927	SO 96708 81402
4	Manufactory (Factory)	1927	SO 96574 81388
5	Laboratory	1927-1938	SO 96593 81460
6	Power House	1927	SO 96610 81477
7	Boiler House and Water Tower	1927	SO 96617 81490
8	Transport Building	1927	SO 96569 81443
9	Warehouse	1955-1968	SO 96595 81501
10	Warehouse	Post 1982	SO 96577 81518
11	Warehouse	Post 1982	SO 96531 81460
12	Warehouse	Post 1982	SO 96527 81434
13	Warehouse	Post 1982	SO 96501 81421



Plate 3: Aerial view, 1936 (Britain From Above)

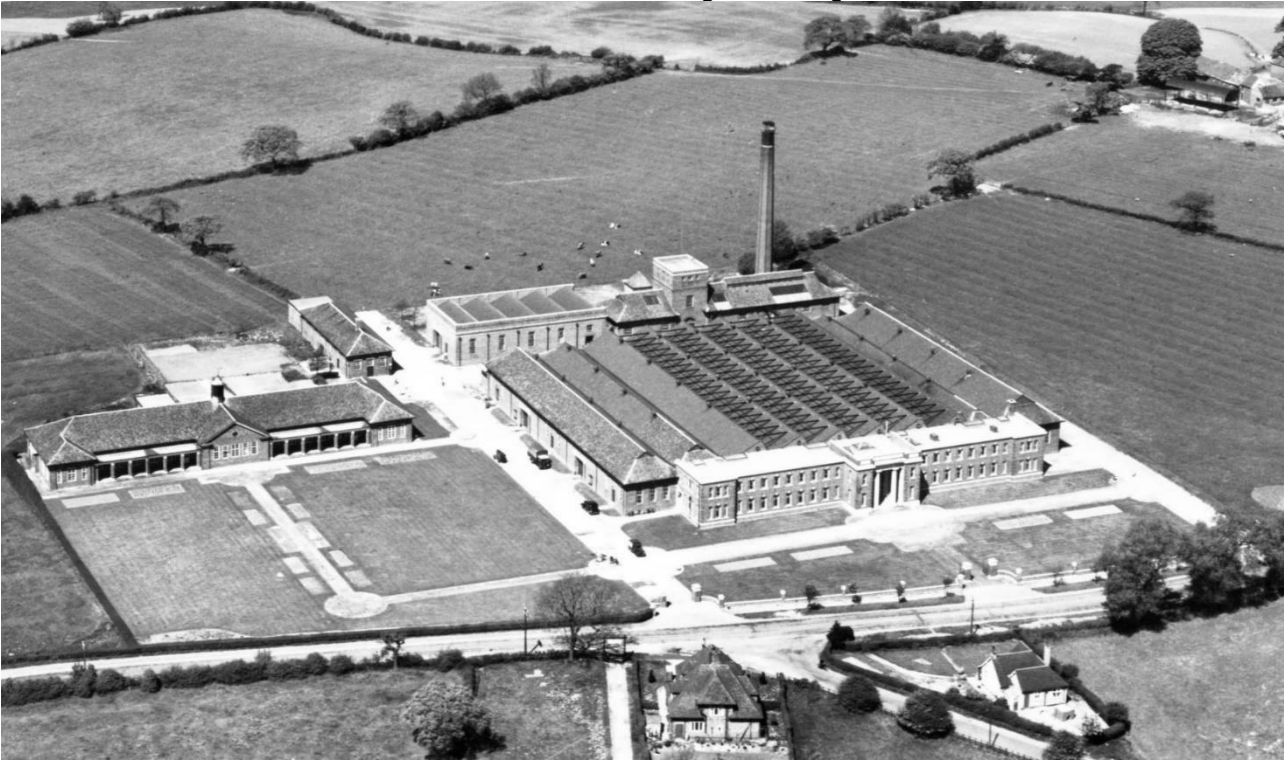


Plate 4: Aerial view, 1948 (Britain From Above)

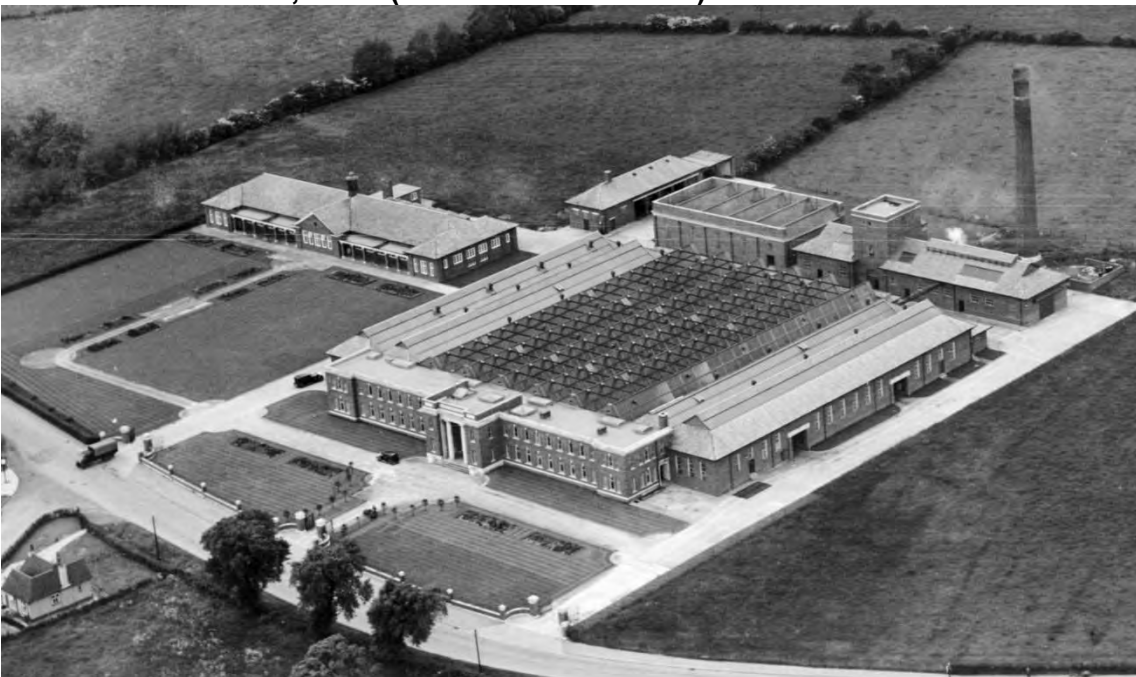


Plate 5: Aerial view, 1936 (Britain From Above)



Plate 6: 2022 Rectified aerial photograph

Raw material for the toffee production were brought into the factory via the north-east entrance. Packaging was brought in via the south east entrance and the finished product was despatched via the same entrance.

The central entrance provided access for the directors and administration workers and their cars.

4.2 Key Dates & Date of Buildings

Key Dates in the Buildings' History are as follows:

Date	Event
1925-1927	Factory Constructed
1927-1938	Building to the rear of the factory constructed - building 5
1955-1968	Building to the rear of the factory constructed - building 9
1977	Erection of single storey warehouse
1990	Warehouse extension
1998	Toffee production ceased
1998	Change of use of manufactory to storage
2007	Boiler House demolished
2019	Planning Application made
2019	Application to List the Buildings
2019	Some Buildings Listed

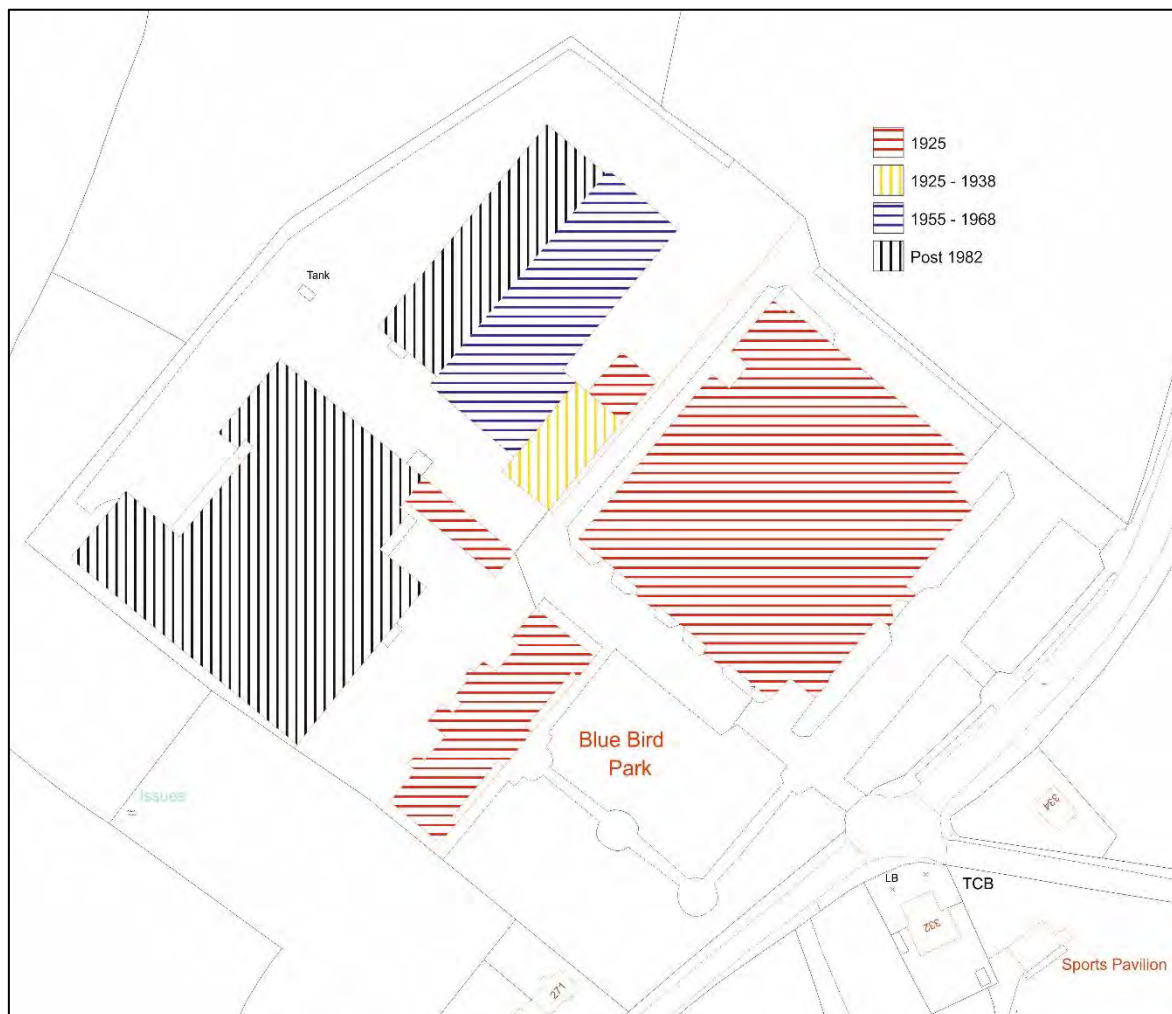


Figure 3 Dates of Buildings, 1:2000

4.3 The Buildings

Each building is given a brief description below. Each individual building is detailed fully in its own appendix.

5. Building 4: Manufactory

The *manufactory* is building in which confectionary was manufactured. The building is of red brick construction covering an area of 5412m². The North-east and South-west parts of the building are each formed by a pair of gable-roofed bays, with loading bays along the exterior walls. The central part of the building features a large open space, 2760 m², with a sawtooth roof with glazed bricks. A flat-roofed section to the rear houses ancillary rooms.

The layout of the building reflects this with a design to allow the efficient production. The raw ingredients being delivered to the factory milk in barrels with the ends painted white. As well as the sugar is in sacks. At the other end of the building a high value product with elaborate branding leaves.

The raw ingredients are prepared by measuring the required quantities. The toffee is made with heat from the power house with the shortest route possible. Bays where toffee in an unwrapped state was being prepared or handled were lined with glazed bricks. Ordinary bricks are use in the other bays and in the ancillary rooms.

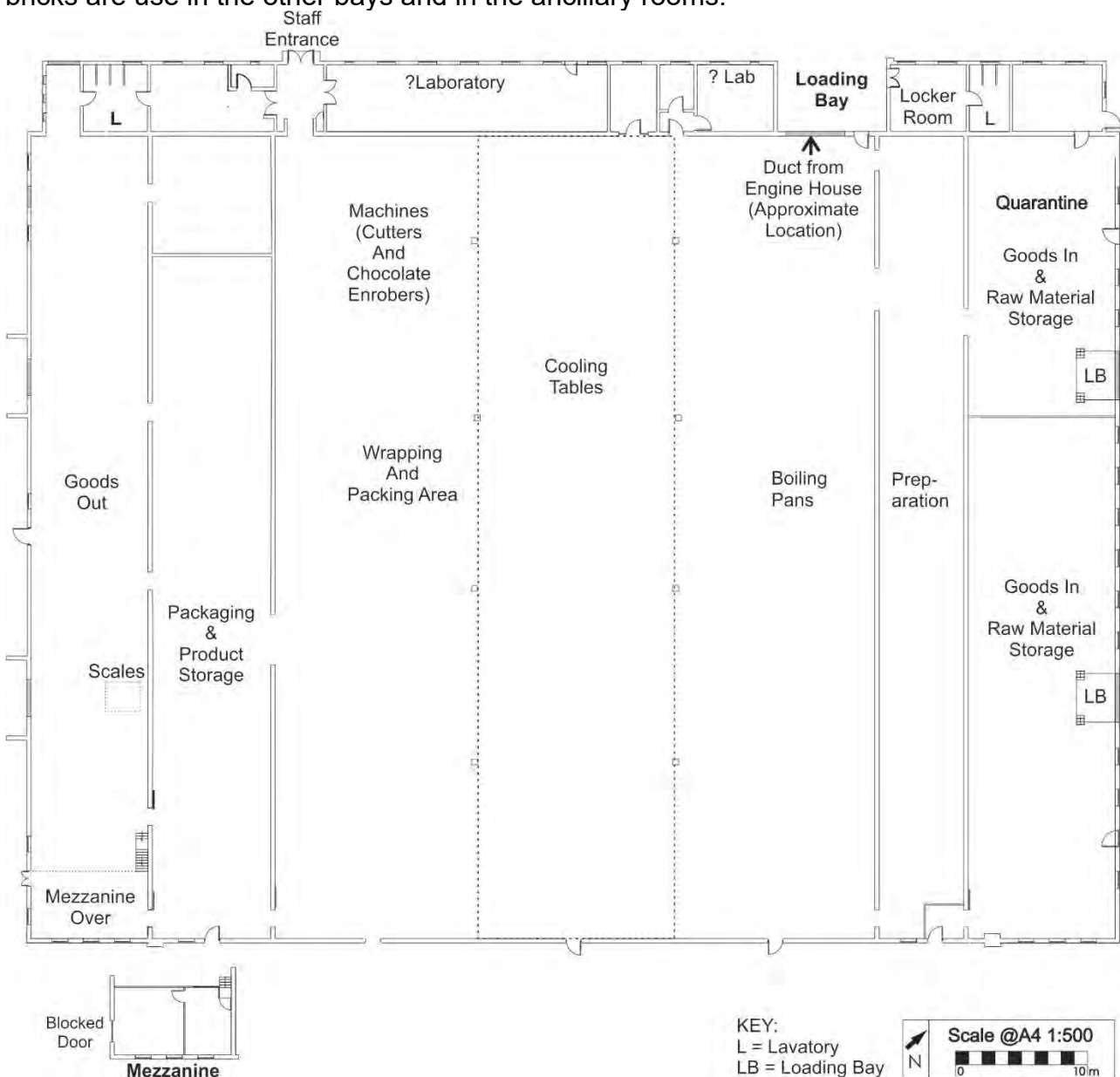


Figure 4 Manufactory Floor Plan



Plate 7: Manufactory loading bay, 1930s (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 8: Preparation and weighing of raw materials, 1930s (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 9: Manufactory boiling pans, 1930s (Mid Pastures Green)



Plate 10: Manufactory Sugar Confectionery Section, 1930s (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 11: Chocolate coating machines, 1930s (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 12: Cutting and wrapping, 1930s (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 13: Wrapping chocolate toffees, 1930s (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 14: Wrapping machines, 1930s (Blue Bird Album)

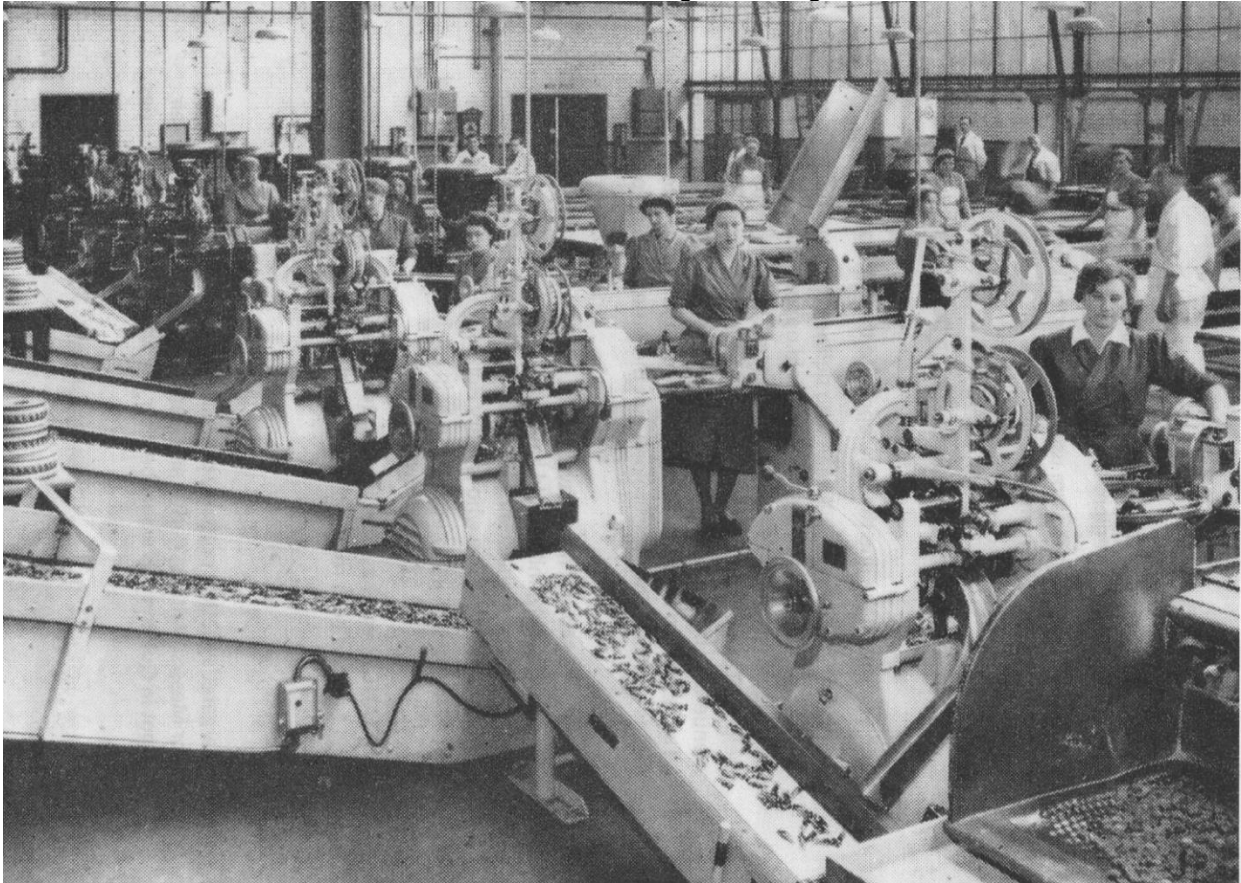


Plate 15: Manufacturing tables, 1930s (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 16: Packaging line, 1930s (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 17: Room 4, packing department 1930s looking North-west (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 18: Manufactory despatch department, 1930s (Mid Pastures Green)



Plate 19: Manufactory Despatch area, 1930s (Blue Bird Album)

The functional needs of the building a large open manufacturing space dictates how the building was constructed with 5 building supported by large rivetted beams supported on columns with cross braces to the saw tooth roof.

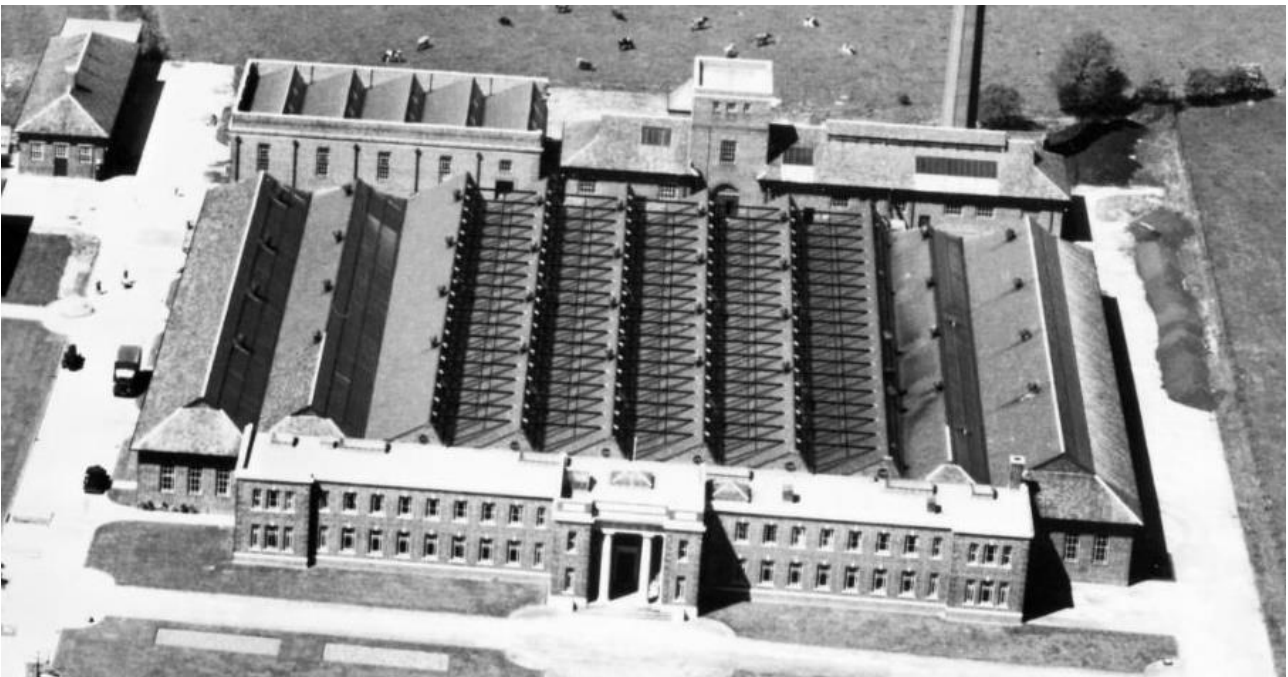


Plate 20: Aerial view, 1936 (Britain from Above)



Plate 21: Room 4, main manufactory area looking North-west



Plate 22: Elevated view of roof structure, room 4, main manufactory area



Plate 23: Supporting column, room 4, main manufactory area



Plate 24: Main manufactory area room 4 looking North-east



Plate 25: Room 6 goods in looking Southeast



Plate 26: Northwest part of South-west elevation, pre 1927 (Blue Bird Album)

6. Building 1: Administration Building

The administration building contained the offices for the Blue Bird Factory. The building faces on to the B4551 Bromsgrove Road. The building has altered little since its original construction, although some internal alterations have occurred.

The administration building reflects how businesses operated in the 1950s before the advent of commonly available machines to do such simple tasks as multiplication. Cheques have been commonly used from the eighteenth century but they were exchanged between banks in person. Most people were paid in cash and cash was used for most transactions. In the late 1950s even teachers were paid in cash. All business letters and other documents were typed by hand usually by women, the only men who typed were journalists or writers. In contrast men were involved in financial matters keeping hand written records.

Offices were often heated by open fires, at the Blue Bird building this was restricted to a few rooms, otherwise steam was used. Space was also needed for storing the paper records. These basic functional requirements therefore dictated what was required for the administration of a business such as Blue Bird Toffee. High numbers of people were needed.

6.1 The Exterior

The principal front is of neo-Georgian design with brick quoins and ashlar dressings to the mixed-bond brick elevations. The central portico entrance is in the Doric Order including two columns with entasis. The brick parapet above has inscribed tablets that read HARRY VINCENT LTD. Set back to either side of the entrance are eight-window wings plus corner bays breaking forward. The wings have ashlar plinths and parapets, and regularly-spaced openings with later-C20 margin-glazed frames, stone sills and flat brick heads with ashlar keystones. The flank elevations each have margin-glazed openings to each floor and a door with ashlar case. The rear elevation is enclosed within the factory building and finished with glazed tiles. The recessed, semi-circular main entrance has Doric pilasters between Flemish bond brickwork, and is stone-flagged. To the left is a foundation stone inscribed: THIS STONE WAS LAID/ BY/ MRS HARRY VINCENT/ JULY 25TH 1925. The central door entrance has a stone case with moulded architrave and hood. The double-leaf doors have bronze furniture and leaded glazing to a shell design. (Listed Building Descriptions)



Plate 27: Elevated view, façade, centre



Plate 28: The administration building, Post 1927 (Blue Bird Album)

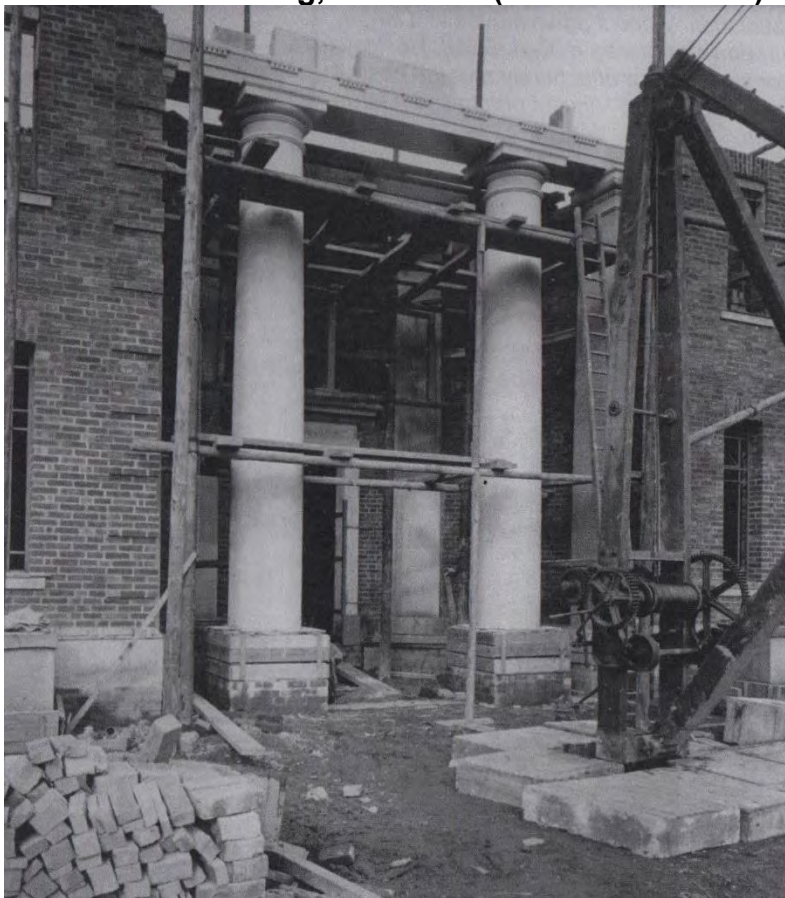


Plate 29: Entrance to administration building 1925 (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 30: Admin & manufactory buildings under construction (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 31: Aerial view, 1936 (Britain from Above)



Aerial view, 1936 (Britain from Above)



Plate 32: 1930s photograph looking south (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 33: Administration Buildings 1930s (Blue Bird Album)

6.2 Plan Form

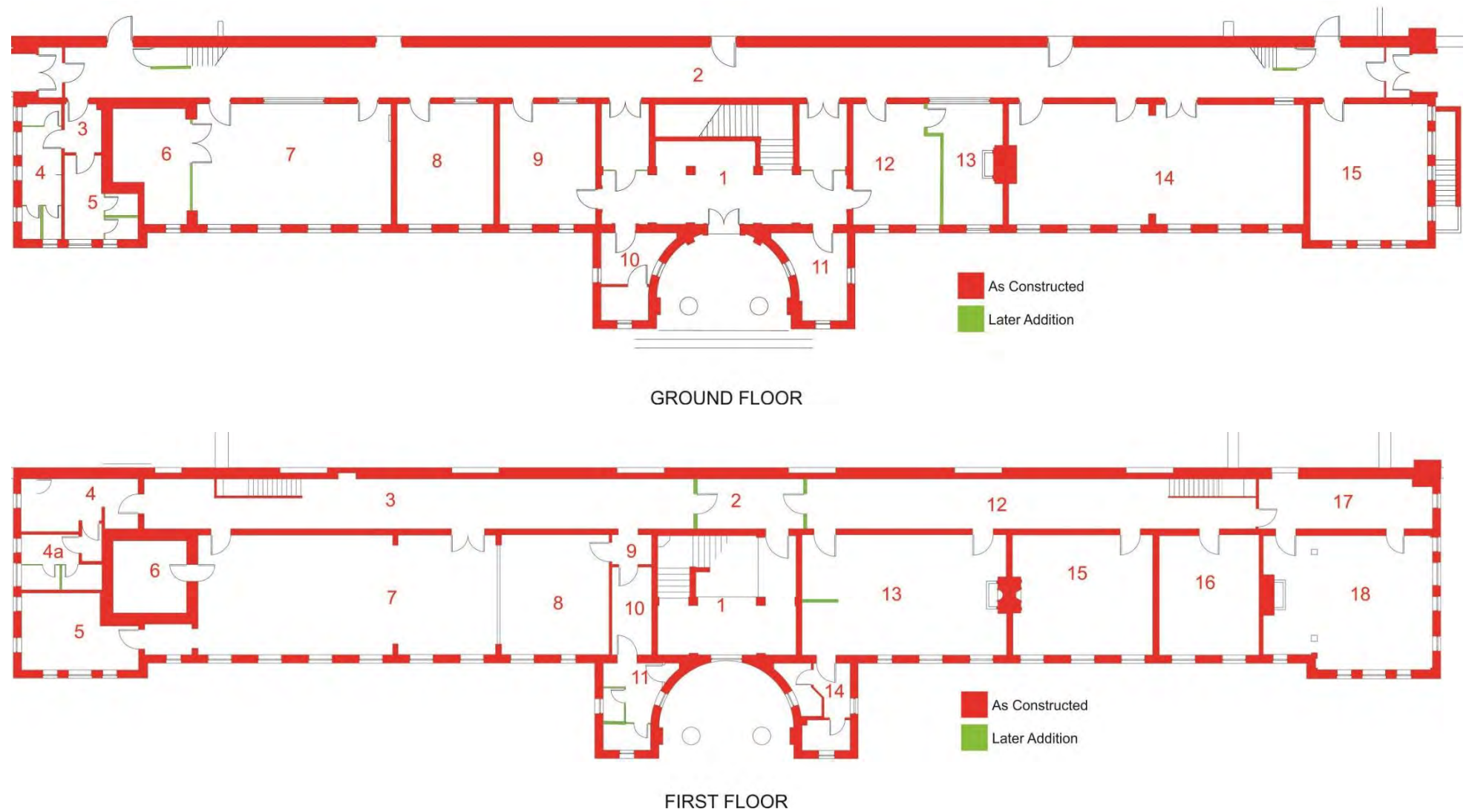


Figure 5 Manufactory Floor Plan,

6.3 The Entrance Hall

The Entrance Hall is marble lined with Art Deco lampshades. It is described by Historic England as follows:

INTERIOR: the entrance vestibule and open-well staircase is clad in stone. The staircase has a steel balustrade with stone newels. The balustrade is carried through to the upper level landing that is lit by a lantern. A stone block to the half-landing wall is inscribed: SIR HARRY VINCENT/ LLD/ 1874-1952/ FOUNDER OF THIS COMPANY/ A man of hope/ and forward-looking mind/ Even to the last. Late-C20 double-leaf doors lead to the tiled first-floor corridor, which is lit by four lanterns. There are single-flight stairs at each end of the corridor with oak handrails, square newels and stick balustrades, which have been enclosed in later glazing at ground floor level.



Plate 34: Entrance Hall (Romsley & Hunnington History Society Blue Bird Album)



Plate 35: Entrance Hall



Plate 36: The central stairs at first floor level



Plate 37: Art Deco Light Fitting



The Memorial plaque reads
Sir Harry Vincent
LLD
1874-1952
FOUNDER OF THIS COMPANY
A man of hope
and forward-looking mind
Even to the last

Plate 38: Memorial Plaque to Sir Harry Vincent

A bust of Sir Harry was on this plinth until Blue Bird Ltd vacated the factory. The bust was by William Bloye a prominent Birmingham Architect who was responsible for many civic sculptures in Birmingham.



Plate 39: Memorial Bust of Sir Harry Vincent (Harding & Mills 2022)

6.4 The Owner's Office

The owner's office is an example of the surroundings of a wealthy business man with a large amount of space, ample heating and lighting, all of which are decorative. This room would not be out of place in a mansion. It is complemented by a drinks cabinet as well as a more casual table. It is described by Historic England as follows:

At the north end of the first floor is the Director's office, fitted with oak panelling and columns, a marble chimneypiece with bronze grate, and light fixtures.



Plate 40: The owner's office



Plate 41: Fireplace in the owner's office as well as proofs of marketing material



Plate 42: Owners Office Light Fittings



Plate 43: First Floor Room 18 Owner's Office Looking South-west

6.5 The Strong Room

On the first floor is a strong room with door by Whitfield's Safe and Door Company, London. This company went into voluntary liquidation in 1952. It was in fact a Birmingham Company (see [F. Whitfield and Co - Graces Guide](#)).

The walls on the first floor are considerably thicker than the supporting walls on the ground floor.



Plate 44 The Strong Room

6.6 Director office

The adjacent office to the Owner's Office has oak wainscoting and a stone chimneypiece with *marble* tiling.



Plate 45: First Floor Room 15 Looking South-west



Plate 46: First Floor Room 15 Looking North-west

6.7 First Aid Room



Plate 47: The First Aid Room Looking Southeast (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 48: Ground Floor Room 8 Looking Southeast

6.8 Other Rooms



Plate 49: Ground Floor Room 14 Looking South-west

At the rear of the building there is a corridor lined with tiles that runs the entire length of the building.



Plate 50: First floor corridor looking northeast

7. Building 2: Canteen

7.1 The Exterior

The building is set well back from the road behind a lawn. The principal elevation has a central gable with a clock to an open pediment and open arcades to each side under a deep pitched roof with central bell turret. At each end are cross wings with hipped roofs. The elevations have brick pilasters and openings with brick heads and timber casements and doors. The rear elevation has four entrance lobbies of differing plans, and that to the main entrance incorporates washrooms. The left roof slope has seven dormers under pyramidal roofs.



Plate 51: Front elevation

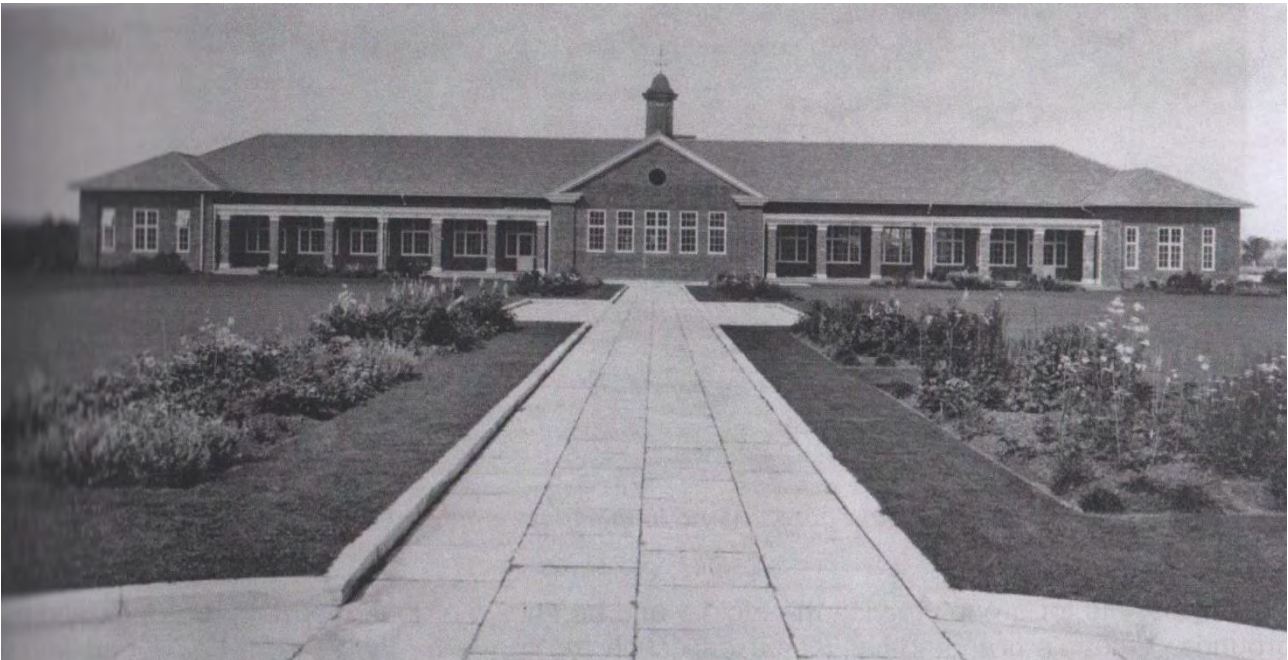


Plate 52: 1930s view of front (southeast) elevation (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 53: Staff in front of the canteen building, 1930s (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 54: Historic view of front (southeast) elevation, 1930s (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 55: Aerial view, 1936 (Britain from Above) The South East Elevation

7.2 The Plan Form and Interior



Figure 6 The layout of the Canteen Building

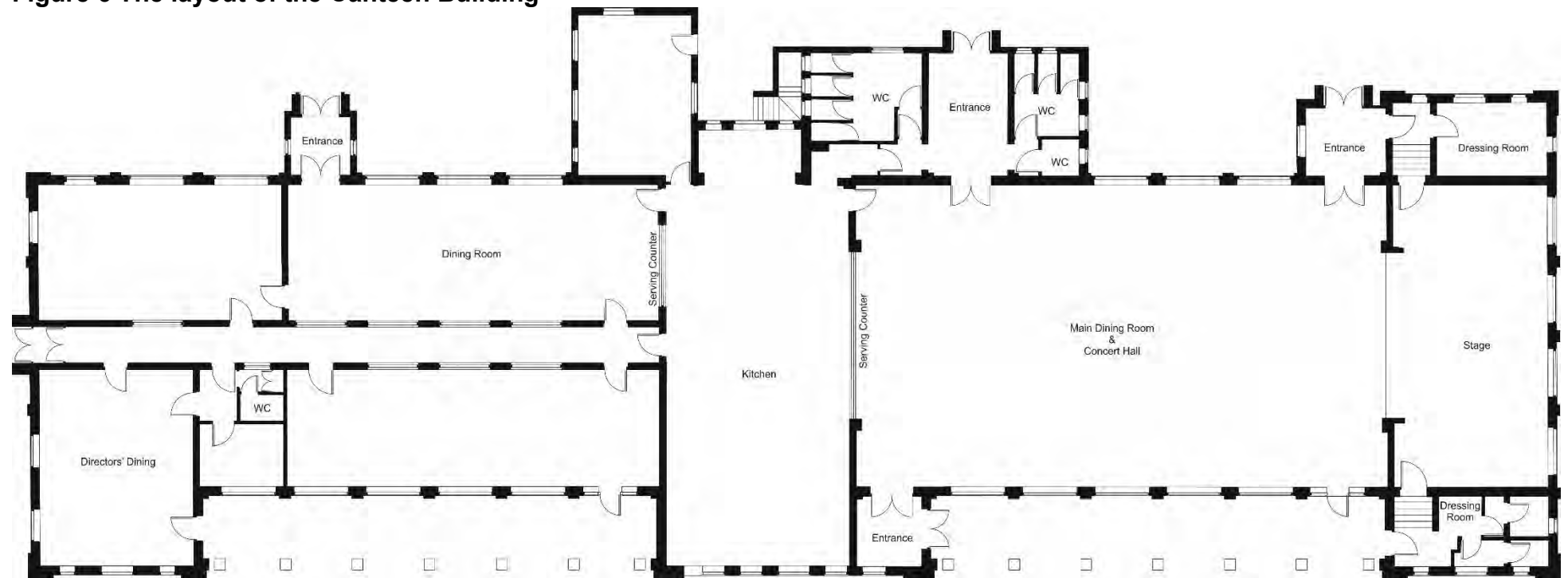


Figure 7 Plan of the The canteen as built

7.3 The Main Dining Room – Concert Hall

The main dining room had a capacity to seat about 200 people at a time. It was used by men and women with four people around a table. Food was served at the south-western end. On occasions it was used for more formal dining.



Plate 56: The Main Dining Room Looking South-west c. 1930 (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 57: The Main Dining Room Looking South-west c. 1930 (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 58: The Main Dining Room set up for a performance (c. 1930) (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 59: Main Dining Room 1930s, Room 27, Looking Northeast (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 60: Main Dining Room looking towards former stage

7.4 Directors Dining Room

This room is clearly in the canteen building as internal doors do not have windows above them in the administration building.

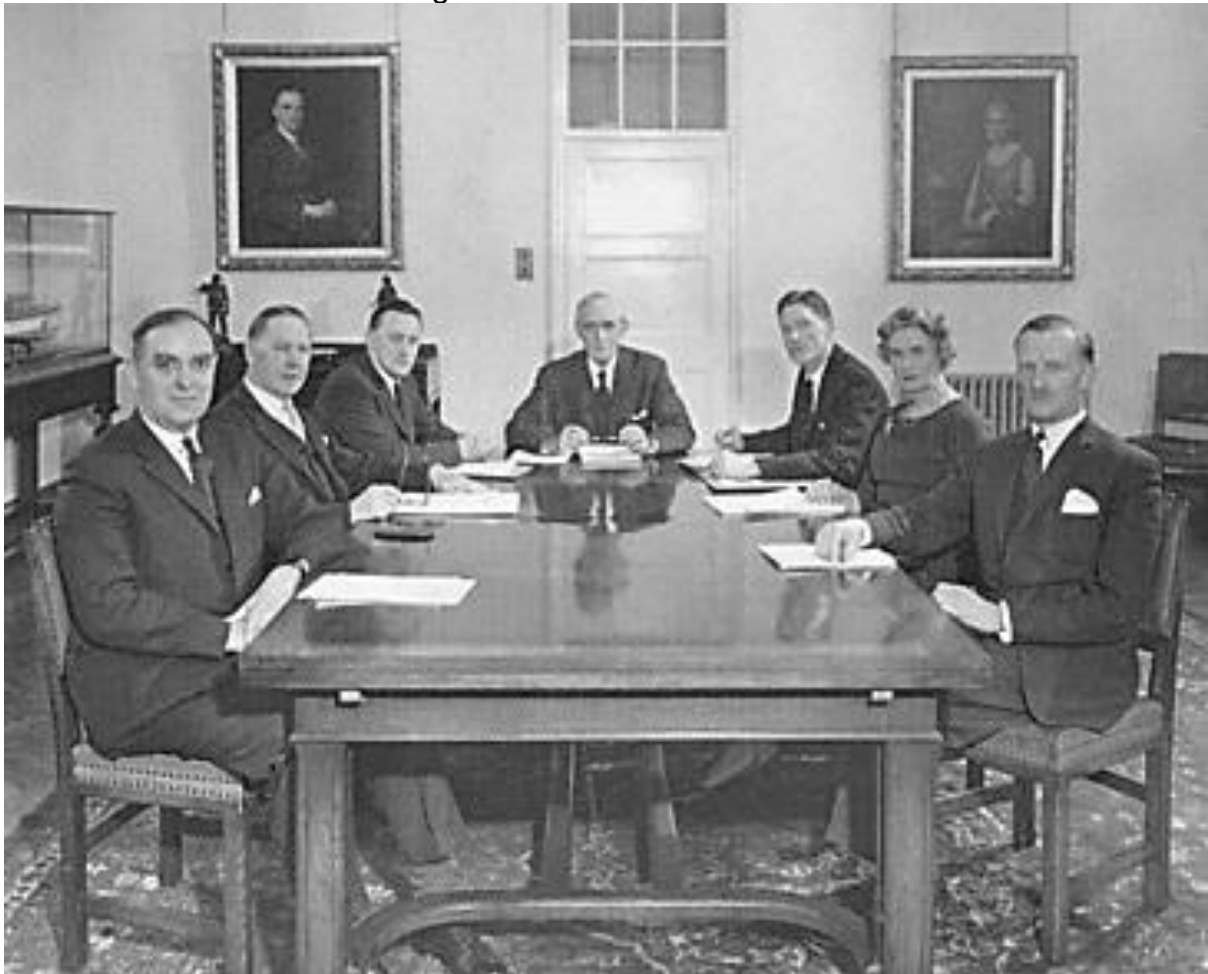


Plate 61: The board of directors in Room 8, c. 1930s (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 62: Room 8 Looking North-west



Plate 63: Room 8 Looking Southeast

7.5 The Kitchen



Plate 64: Room 22 Looking North-west (1930s) (Blue Bird Album)

8. Other Buildings

8.1 Building 5: Laboratory

It is considered likely the building was originally constructed as a warehouse, but later adapted to be used as a laboratory. Following the closure of the factory, the building was again used as a warehouse.



Plate 65: Southern elevation of laboratory, 1930s photograph (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 66: Interior of the laboratory, 1930s (Cowling & Hastiloe 2022:103)

Blue Bird Park Building Recording

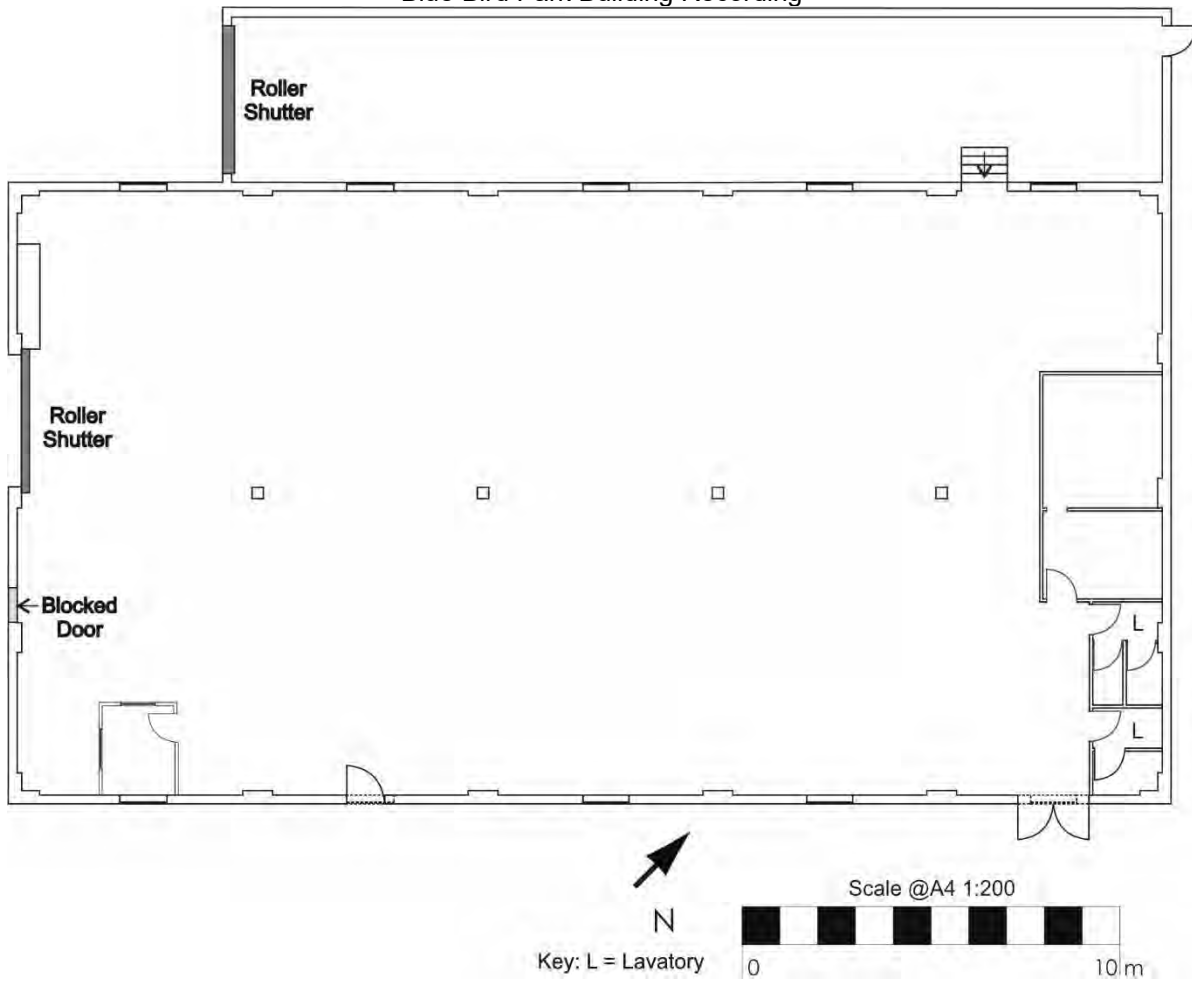


Figure 8 Laboratory Floor plan

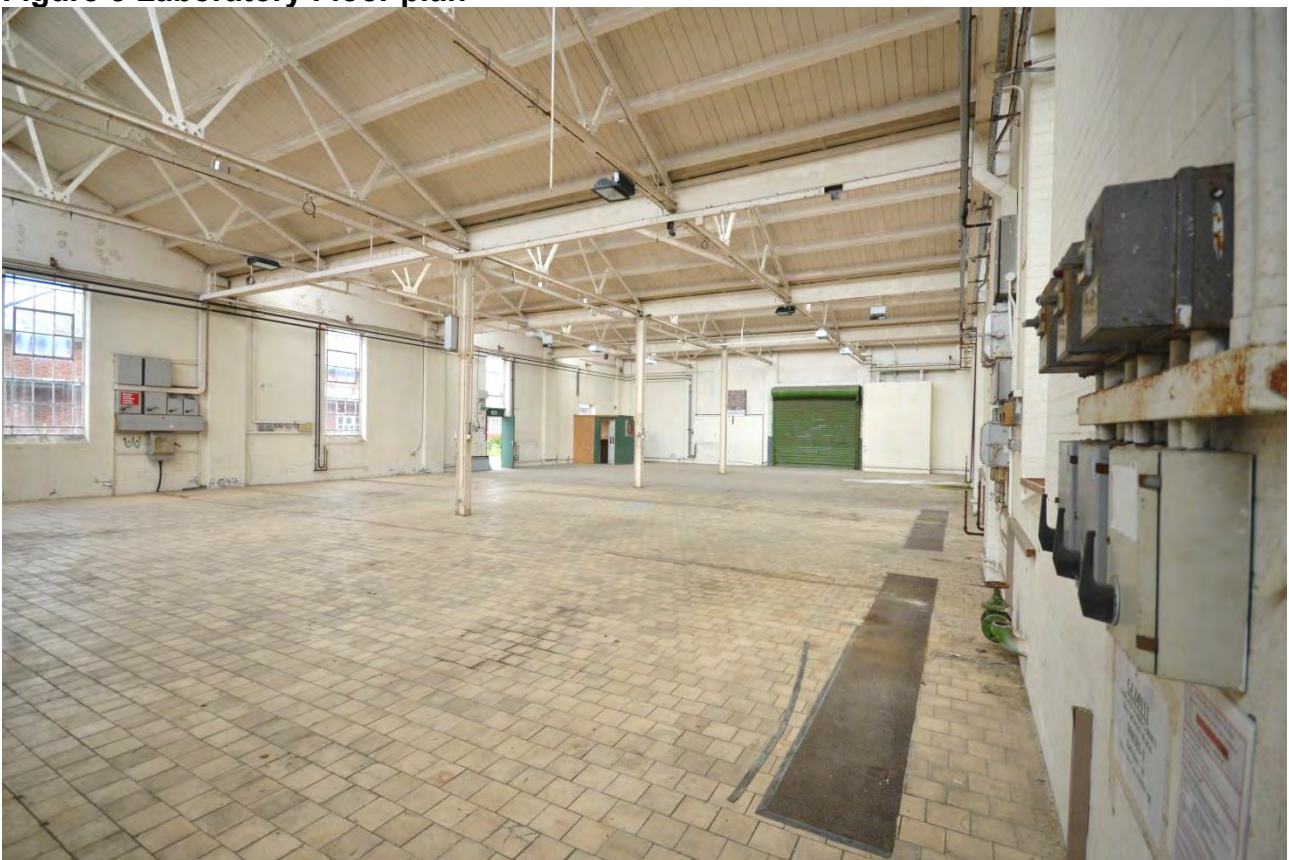


Plate 67: Laboratory Interior looking South-west



Plate 68: Laboratory Interior looking South-east



Plate 69: Laboratory Extension Interior looking South-west

8.2 Building 6: Power House

The building is a former power distribution building – purpose-built for the Blue Bird toffee factory. It was built during the initial construction of the factory site in 1925-7.



Plate 70: South-east elevation, power house



Plate 71: Boiler house and power house, 1926 (Blue Bird Album)



Plate 72: Boiler house and power house under construction, 1920s (Blue Bird Album)

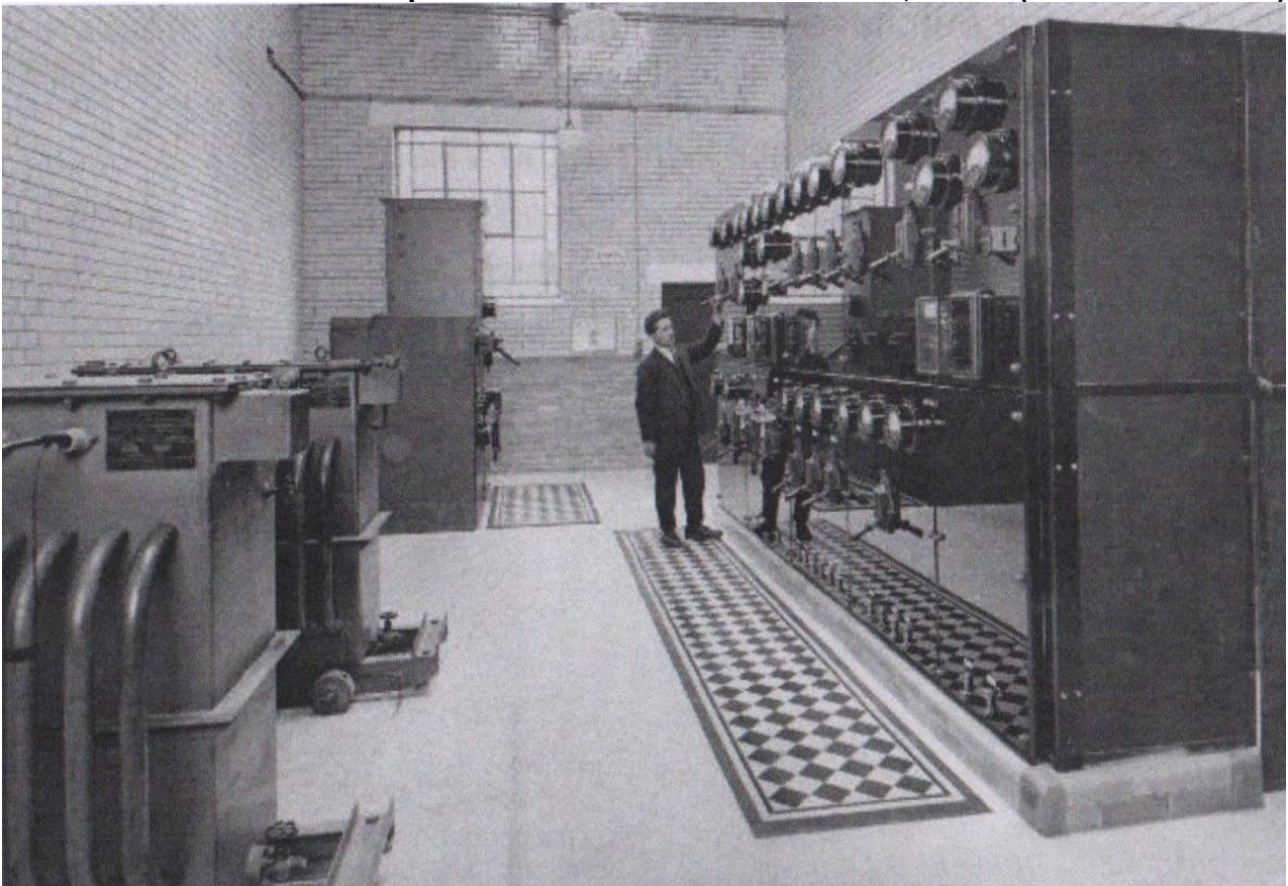


Plate 73: Interior of the Power House, 1930s (Blue Bird Album)

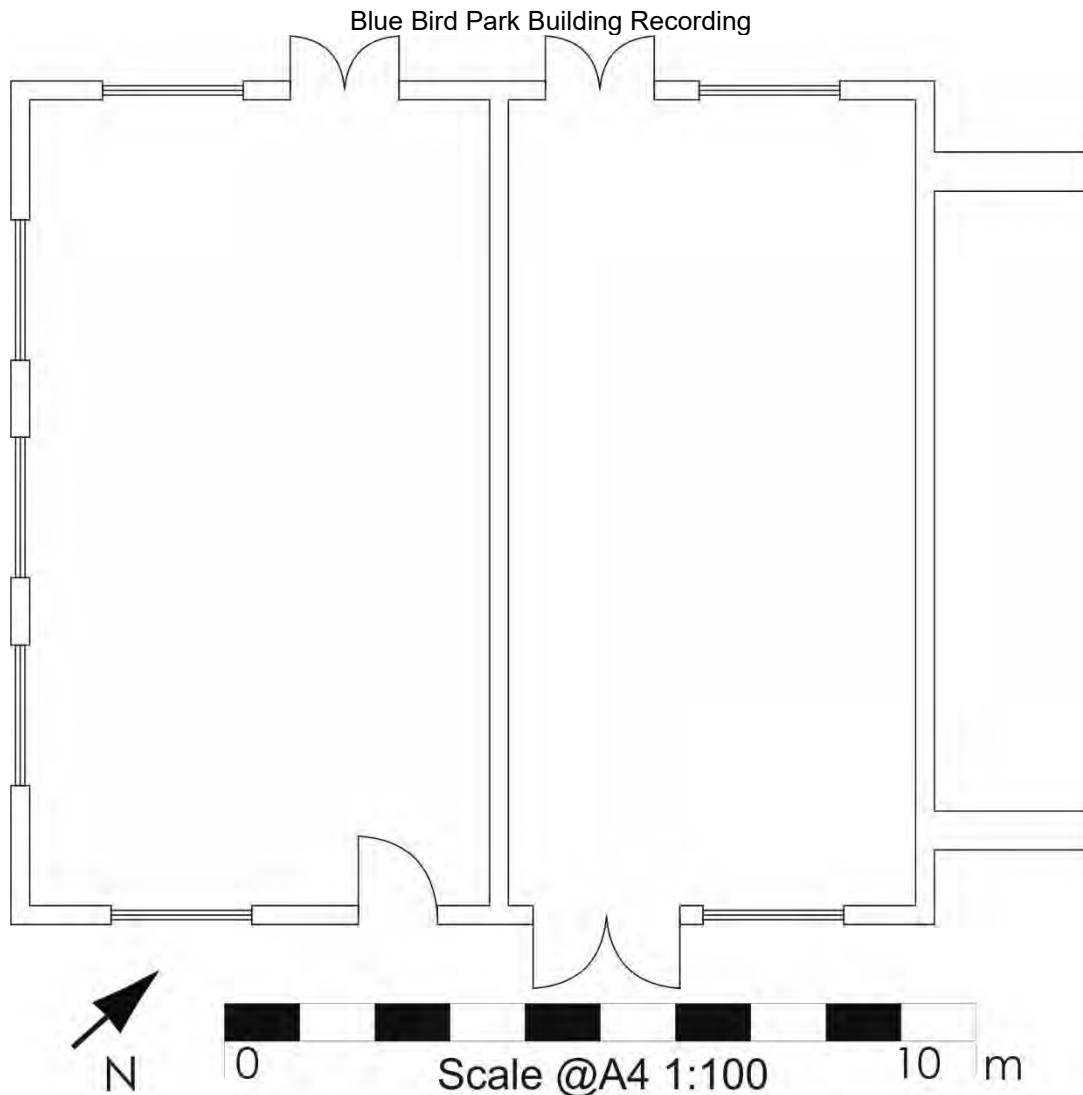


Figure 9 Power House The Ground Floor Plan



Plate 74: Power House Interior

8.3 Building 7: Boiler House and Water Tower

Building 7 was a boiler house with water tower located to the northeast of the power house. It was demolished in 2007.



Plate 75: Stub of North-west wall of boiler house, showing start of arch

8.4 Building 8: Transport Building

The transport building was originally used for the storage and maintenance of lorries used by the Blue Bird factory. It is likely that these vehicles were used both on site and further afield. The building featured five roller shutters on its northeast side, the South-east of which has been bricked in to form office space internally. The building has most recently been used for office and storage purposes.



Plate 76: Transport Building North-east elevation



Plate 77: Transport Building 1936 aerial view (Britain From Above)

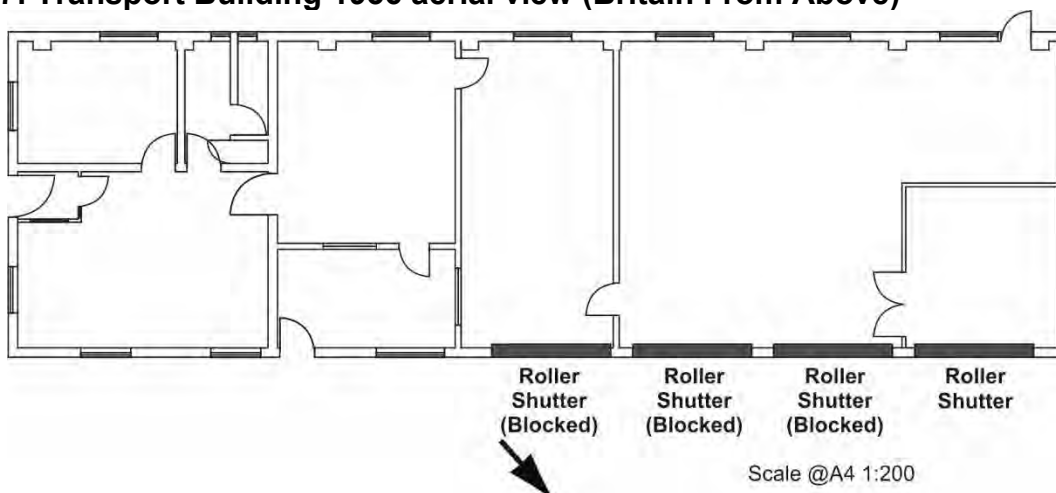


Figure 10 Transport Building Floor Plan Scale 1:200



Plate 78: Transport Building reception looking North-west



Plate 79: Transport Building room 9 looking North-west

8.5 Building 9: Warehouse

Building 9 is a warehouse located to the North-west of building 7. Internally, the building is comprised of two long warehouse spaces with roller shutters at each end. A set of weighing scales is built into the floor at the South-western end of the South-east bay.



Plate 80: Building 9 Warehouse looking North-east



Plate 81: Weighing scales

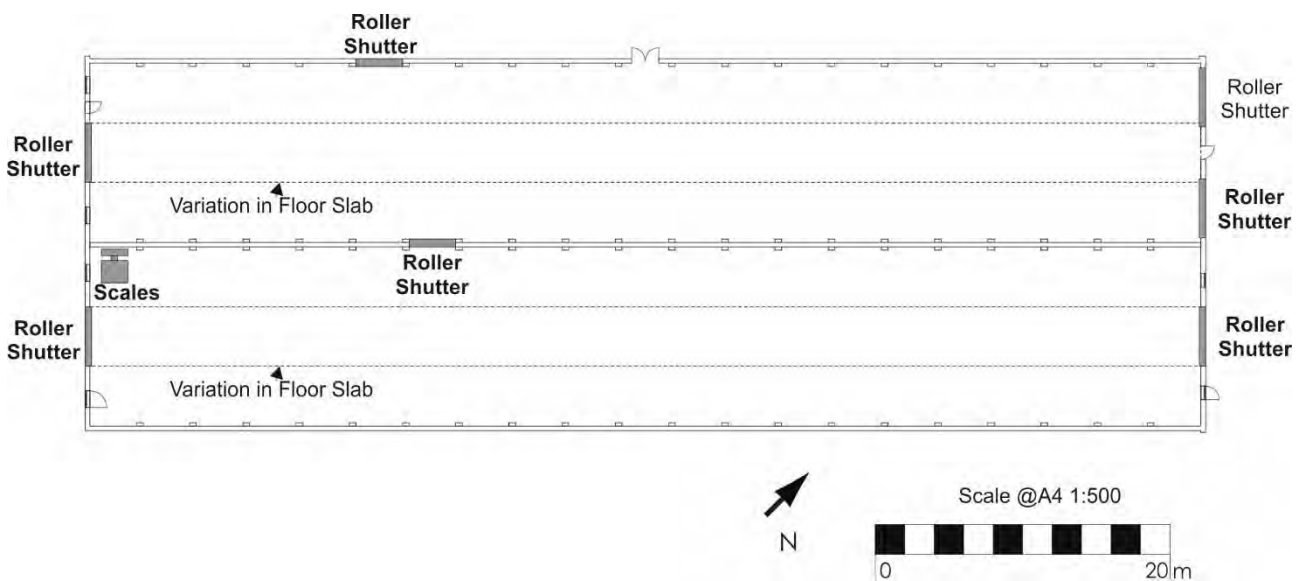


Figure 11 Warehouse Floor Plan



Plate 82: Warehouse Interior North-west bay looking North-east



Plate 83: Detail of Warehouse interior northeast wall

9. Conclusions

The Blue Bird Park illustrates the change of British Society from an aristocratic World Power with some benevolent employers fuelled by coal to a truly democratic society, where women have equal rights, with concerns about its health fuelled by cleaner energy. The Blue Bird brand has disappeared and virtually so has the consumption of high sugar foods and the use of coal as an energy source.

The sports facilities continue to thrive.

Dr Peter Wardle
18/10/2023

10. Bibliography

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Britain from Above

<https://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/>

For aerial photographs of the Blue Bird factory, perform a Map Search for "SO 9659 8143"

Harding & Mills 2022 *Growing Up In Blue Bird's Garden Village*. Hunnington: Romsley and Hunnington History Society, Book Printing UK

Midlands News: <https://www.macearchive.org/films/midlands-news-02061958-donald-campbell-blue-bird-toffee-factory>

New Bond: The Woolworths Staff Magazine

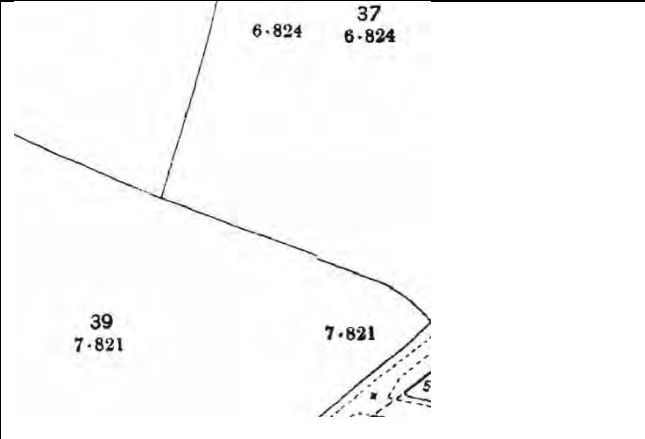
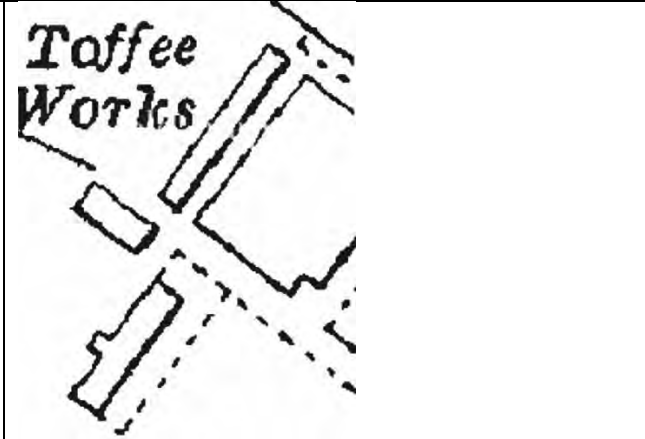
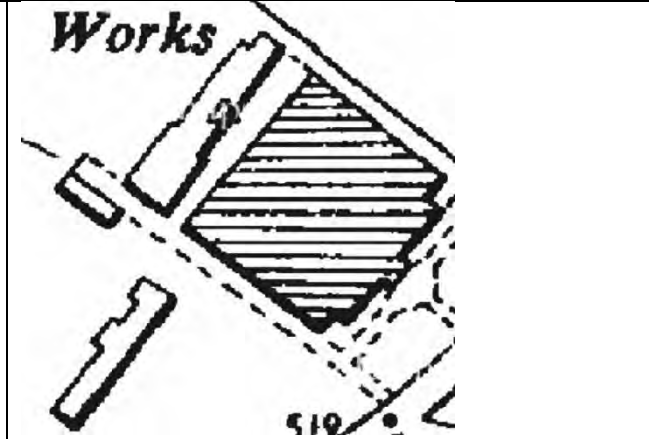
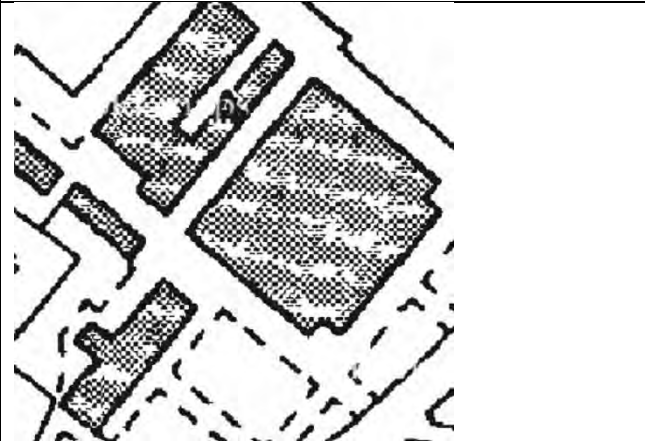
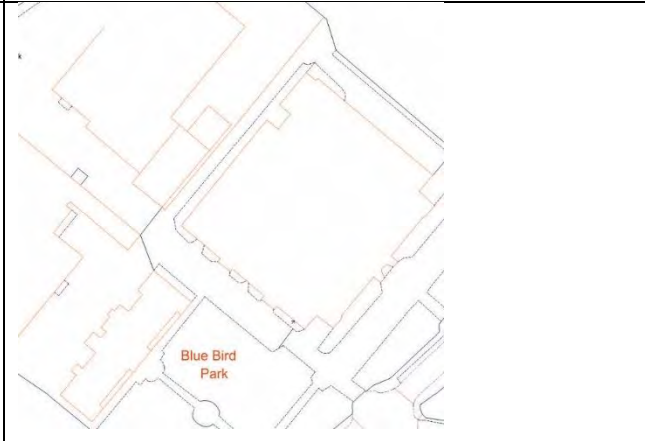
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Victoria County History 1913 '***Halesowen: Introduction, borough and manors***', in A History of the County of Worcester: Volume 3 (London, 1913), pp. 136-146. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/worcs/vol3/pp136-146> [accessed 9 May 2023].

11. Appendix 1: Map Regression Exercise

		
<p>The area of the Blue Bird factory is open farmland.</p>	<p>1938-46 OS 1:10,000 Map. The factory and other buildings have been constructed.</p>	<p>1968 OS 1:10,000 Map, The laboratory/ Power House / Boiler House buildings appear deeper to the North-west.</p>
		
<p>1973 OS 1:10,000 The warehouse North-west of the laboratory building has been constructed.</p>	<p>Modern Ordnance Survey map The buildings are shown in their current form, the boiler house has been demolished.</p>	