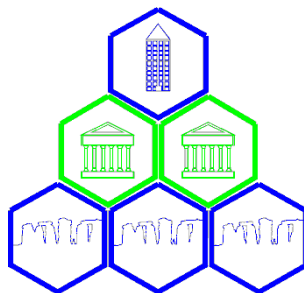


# The Historic Environment Consultancy



## Appendix 3: Level 3 Building Recording of **Boundary Walls, Railings and Gates**

Blue Bird Park  
Bromsgrove Road  
Hunnington  
Worcestershire  
B62 0JW

National Grid Reference: SO 96708 81403t

Planning Reference Number: 19/00592/FUL

OASIS ID: thearcha1-516388

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20/6/2023

Dr Peter Wardle & Colin Lacey

**Building Recording of: Boundary Walls, Railings and Gates**  
**Dr Peter Wardle & Colin Lacey**

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## Version Control

Version No	Draft	Content Added/Omitted	Date
0.7	LPA Draft	Client Comments	
1	Issued Report	OASIS Ref	9/6/23
2	Issued Report	LPA Comments, HER ref	20/6/23

<b>Appendix 3 Blue Bird Park Building Recording Wall and Gates</b> <b>Dr Peter Wardle &amp; Colin Lacey</b>
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## 1. Summary

The structure is formed by the boundary wall, railings and gates along the pavement of Bromsgrove Road.

Current Function	Boundary wall, railings and gates
Original Function	Boundary wall, railings and gates
Period	Modern
Century	20th
Precise Date	1925-7
Architectural Style	
Architect	S N Cooke FRIBA.
Materials	Brick, iron
Designation	Listed Grade II
Conservation Area	Not located within a conservation area

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 The Building

The wall, railings and gates along the southeast side of the former Blue Bird factory site were purpose-built for the Blue Bird toffee factory during the initial construction of the factory site in 1925-7.

### 2.2 The Client

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

### 2.3 Copyright

The copyright of this report belongs to the Historic Environment Consultancy. No liability to third parties is accepted for advice and statements made in this report.

### 2.4 Location

Site Address:	Wall and Gates Blue Bird Park Bromsgrove Road Hunnington Worcestershire
Post Code:	B62 0JW
Grid Reference:	SO 96708 81403
Latitude and Longitude	52.430593 , -2.0498476

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

### 2.5 Date of Recording

The building 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.

### 2.6 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.*

*3. Investigative works prior to and during construction works to recover structural information.*

*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*

*f) Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation.*

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

## **2.7 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.

## **2.8 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.

There were no difficulties experienced in the recording process.

## **2.9 Reference Numbers**

Planning Reference Number: 19/00592/FUL

OASIS ID: thearcha1-516388

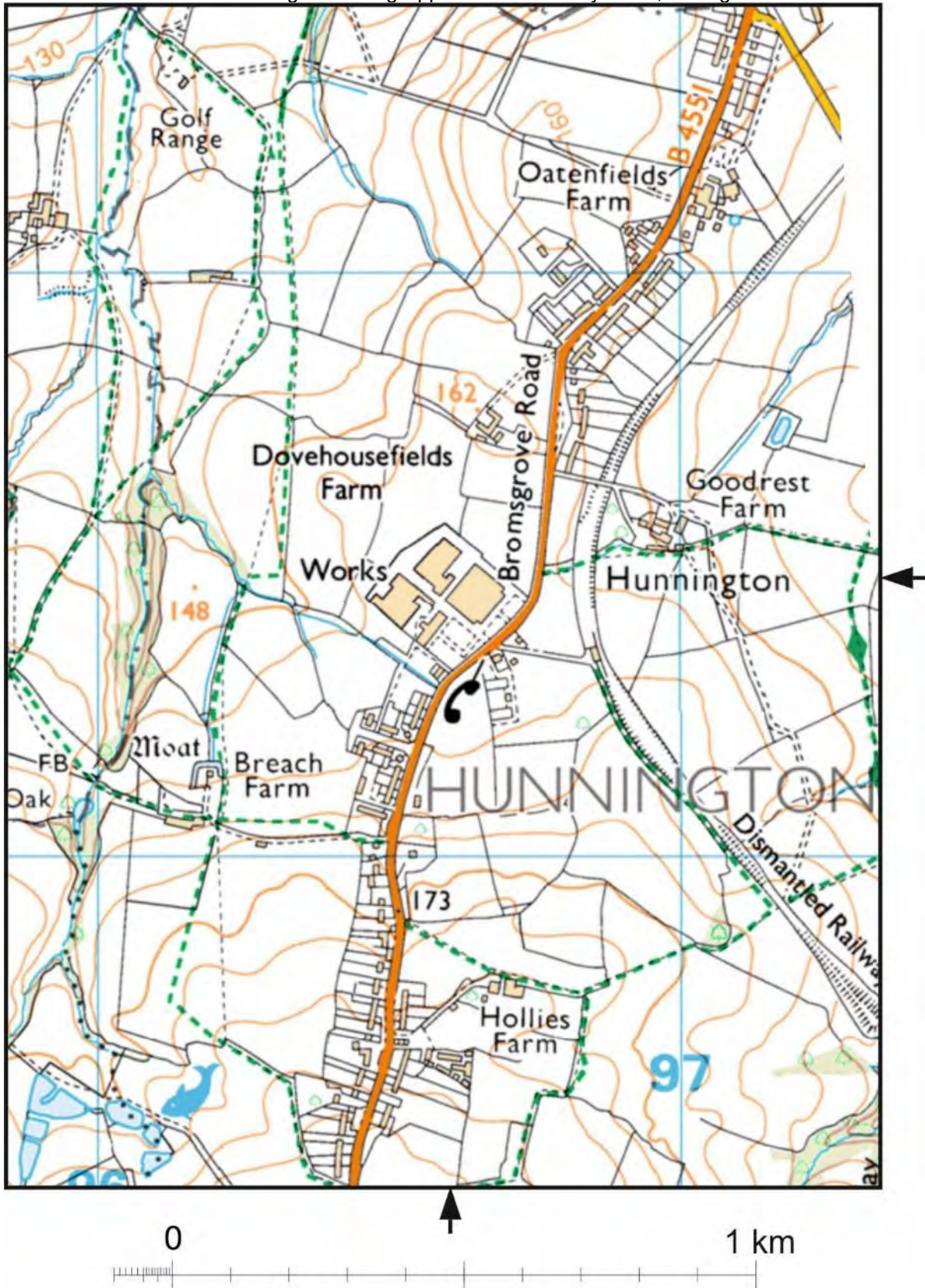
HER Event No. WSM80084

Listing Reference Numbers:

1464601 (Administration Building)

1466995 (Canteen)

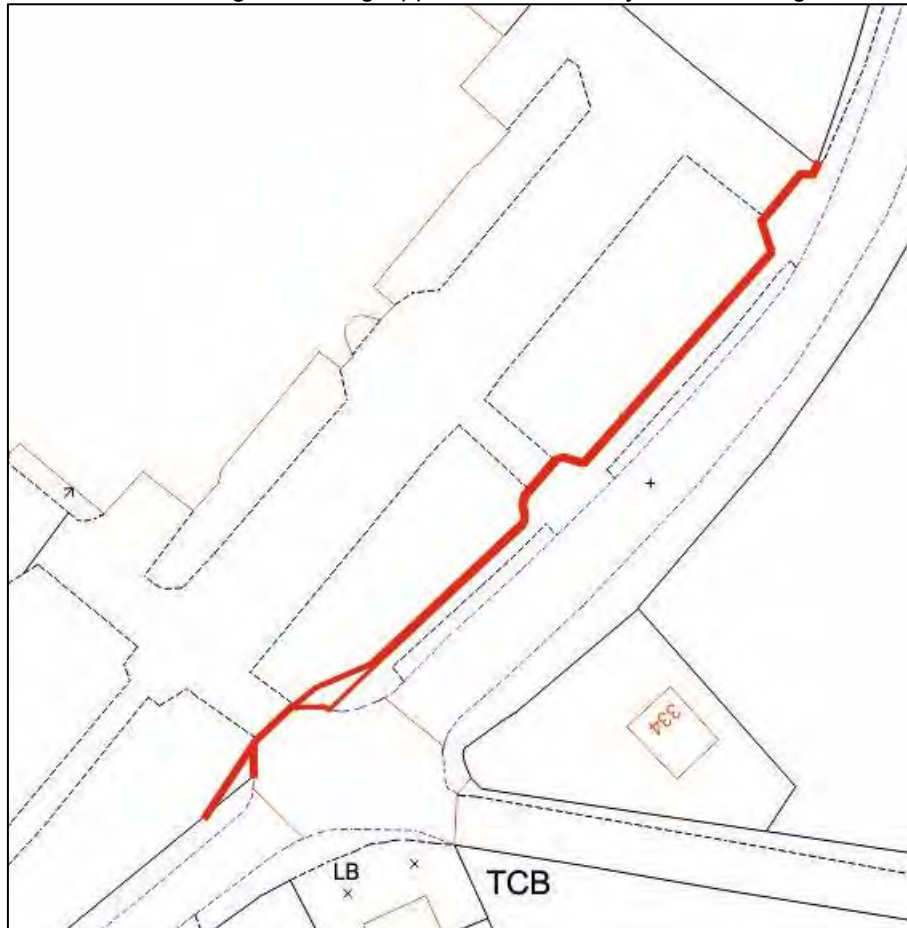
1466996 (Walls, Railings and Gates)



Metres 1:10,000 @ A4

Figure 1: General Location Plan. Scale 1:10,000





**Figure 2: Detailed Location Plan. Scale 1:1000**

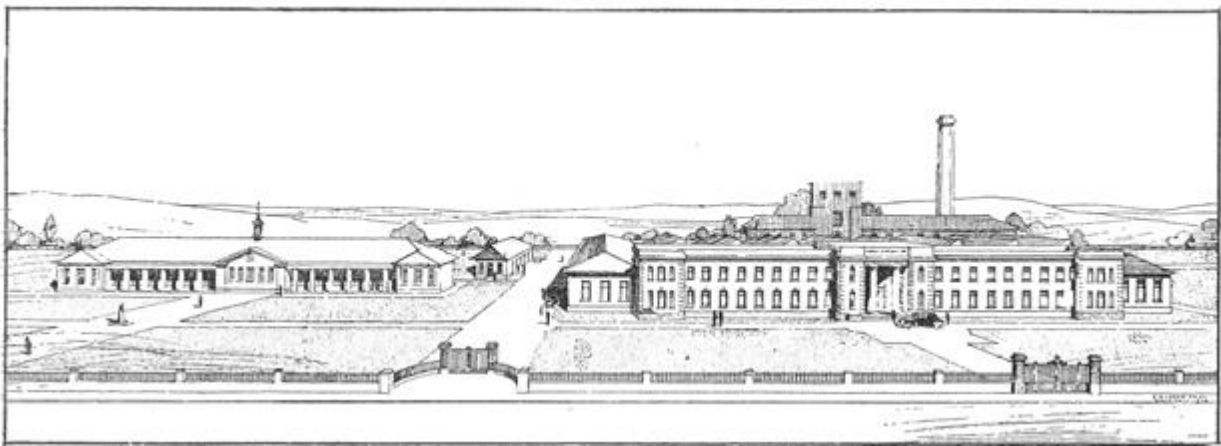


### 3. Historic Background

#### 3.1 Documentary Evidence

An article was published in *The Midlander* in February 1927. The article details the background behind the Blue Bird factory and the village of Hunnington describing the history of the Messrs Harry Vincent Ltd and Harry Vincent, himself. The article does not mention the wall.

The *Midlander* article is illustrated with a sketch of the factory from the southwest. This shows part of the boundary wall and railings and is considered to have been drawn prior to the construction of the wall, owing to a differing style around the second gate to what is present now and on historic photographs, and in the continuation of the wall in front of the canteen building, which is not considered to have been constructed.



**Figure 3: Sketch of the factory site in 1927 (The Midlander)**

A newspaper article from the *Birmingham Gazette*, published on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 1930, concerning the factory does not mention the wall.

#### 3.2 Historic Photographs



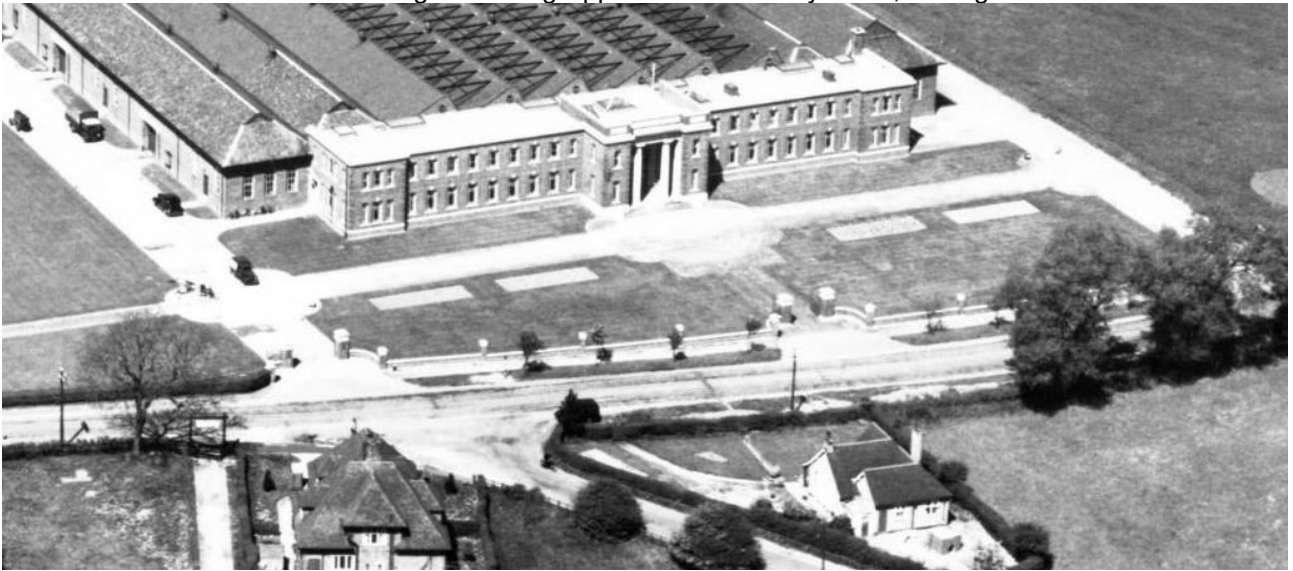
**Plate 1: 1936 aerial view (Britain From Above)**



**Plate 2: 1936 aerial view (Britain From Above)**



**Plate 3: 1936 aerial view (Britain From Above)**



**Plate 4: 1948 aerial view (Britain From Above)**



**Plate 5: 1948 aerial view (Britain From Above)**



**Plate 6: 1948 aerial view (Britain From Above)**





**Plate 7: View of central gates, c. 1990s**



**Plate 8: View of southwest gate, c. 1990s**

## 4. The Building

### 4.1 The Building

Current Function	Wall and Gates
Original Function	Wall and Gates
Period	Modern
Century	20 <sup>th</sup>
Precise Date	1925-7
Architectural Style	Utilitarian
Architect	S N Cooke FRIBA.
Materials	Brick, iron
Designation	Listed Grade II
Conservation Area	Not located within a conservation area

### 4.2 The Importance of the Building Listing Criteria

Date		For modern structures one of the other criteria has to be clearly met.
Rarity		Walls are a common type of historic structure.
Architectural Interest		
	Architect	The structure was designed by a prominent Birmingham architect.
	Type	There is little particular interest in the structure type.
	Innovation	This structure does not use innovative building techniques or materials.
	Virtuosity	The structure does not demonstrate a particularly high standard of craftsmanship.
	Plan Form	The plan form is not significant.
Historic Interest		This structure does not illustrate important aspects of the nation's history. It is not associated with a Nationally Important person.  The walls, railings and gates are constructed using good quality materials to a design redolent of their interwar date as a factory boundary treatment; * they survive well in their original form.
Group Value		There is group value with the other historic buildings of the Blue Bird factory site.
Contribution of Setting		Hunnington was developed in the spirit of the period: sited in a clean, rural location with good modern transport links and with improved standards of welfare and well-being; * the buildings are regionally significant as key elements of a continuation of model village development, begun nearby at Bournville in the late C19

### 4.3 Importance of the Building Understanding Heritage – Values Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance 2008

Evidential		The structure dates from a period when the physical evidence of the building adds little novel information.
Historical		
	Illustrative	Low The structure does not illustrate an unusual historic connection.
	Association	Low The structure is not associated with a notable person, family, event, movement or cultural heritage.
Aesthetic		
	Design	The wall is a utilitarian structure and design is not a factor.
	Detailing & Craftsmanship	The structure does not demonstrate a very high standard of craftsmanship.
	Architect	The structure was designed by a prominent Birmingham architect.
	Innovation	This structure does not use innovative building techniques or materials.
Communal		The wall and gates are clearly visible from the public realm, with the pedestrian footpath running alongside the wall. This gives a strong communal value, supplemented by the social value from those that worked in or visited the factory and passed through the gates.

### 4.4 Designations

The wall and gates were listed to Grade II on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

The Listed Building Description follows:

#### Summary

Boundary walls, railings and gates to the former Blue Bird Toffee Factory, of 1920s date.

#### Reasons for Designation

The boundary walls, railings and gates to the former Blue Bird Toffee Factory (Harry Vincent Limited), Bromsgrove Road, Hunnington, Worcestershire, are listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

#### Architectural Interest:

- \* the walls, railings and gates are constructed using good quality materials to a design redolent of their interwar date as a factory boundary treatment;
- \* they survive well in their original form.

#### Historic Interest :

- \* Hunnington was developed in the spirit of the period: sited in a clean, rural location with good modern transport links and with improved standards of welfare and well-being;



\* the buildings are regionally significant as key elements of a continuation of model village development, begun nearby at Bournville in the late C19.

#### Group Value:

\* the buildings form a legible grouping of the administrative and social focal points of a notable interwar factory at the centre of a new model village.

#### History

The factory was designed and built in 1925-7 for Harry Vincent Limited of Birmingham, manufacturers of Blue Bird toffee. The factory scheme was by S N Cooke FRIBA., of Birmingham, and included a model village (24 of the planned 100 houses were built) village shop with post office, cricket pavilion and other leisure buildings. The modern and hygienic factory design was noted in the Birmingham Gazette in May 1920, as part of an article tracing the swift rise to prominence of manufacturer Harry Vincent. It also remarks on the generous facilities provided for the workers and villagers.

The factory is shown on the Ordnance Survey Map of Worcestershire of 1938 (Epoch 4). At the end of the C20 the factory ceased operation and parts of the site have served other uses since that time. In 2019 the buildings were subject to proposals for redevelopment.

#### Details

Boundary walls, railings and gates to the former Blue Bird Toffee factory, of 1920s date.

DESCRIPTION: built along the edge of Bromsgrove Road, the structure comprises low red brick boundary walls and piers with ashlar caps, iron gates and railings. The north and south vehicular entrances carry the Blue Bird insignia to each gate. The centre gates are set within a recessed pedestrian entrance that visually frames the main entrance to the Administration Building.

#### Sources

##### Books and journals

Pevsner, N, Brooks, A, The Buildings of England: Worcestershire, (2007), 581

##### Websites

Romsley & Hunnington History Society: An Industrial Romance, The Midlander, February 1927, accessed 10/07/2019 from <https://www.rhhs.org.uk/local-history/bluebird.html>

##### Other

'Messrs Harry Vincent's Model Factory and Garden Village.', The Retail Confectioner, January 1927, 13-17

One of the largest toffee makers in the world, Birmingham Gazette, 13 May 1930

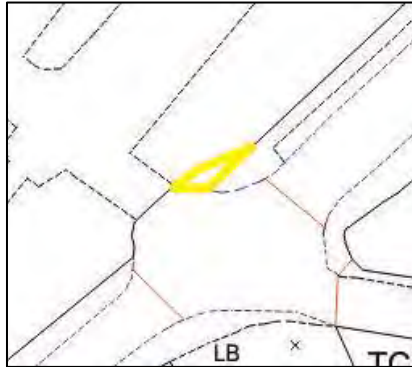


#### 4.6 The Date of the Structure

The structure was initially built in the years between 1925 and 1927.

The majority of the wall and gates are considered to have been constructed in a single phase, however. There is clear evidence that the southwest gate and a section of the wall to the northeast has been altered and rebuilt in a different configuration. This is discussed below.

The date of this alteration is unknown.



**Figure 5: Rebuilt section of wall (yellow. 1:1000 @ A4)**

## 5. Description

The structure consists of a low wall with iron railings fitted to the top. This wall forms the southeast boundary of the Blue Bird factory site. The wall runs along the pavement of Bromsgrove Road for across most of the factory site. The boundary in front of the canteen is formed by a hedgerow, with the wall and railings stopping after the southwest gate.

Entry to the factory site from Bromsgrove Road is made via three double gates. The central gate is for pedestrian access whereas the northeast and southwest gates give vehicle access to the factory site. Each gateway is set back from the line of the wall, with a curved wall on each side leading back from the edge of the pavement.

The wall is of red brick in a variation of English Garden Wall bond, held in a mortar matrix. The brick is the same colour as that used in the other factory buildings of this date. Brick piers are located either side of each of the three gateways. The wall and piers are topped with ashlar caps.

Most of the vertical parts of the iron railings and gates are formed from round bar, whereas horizontal parts are of square / rectangular bar.

All bars and gates are painted. Originally a uniform white colour, the paint has faded and corrosion from the iron beneath has caused staining. Evidence from historic photographs shows that at one point the railings and gates were painted black, in a clear contrast to their current white colour, at some point between 1948 and the 1990s.

### 5.1 Southwest Gates



**Plate 10 Southwest gates (vehicle), open**

The southwest gates are set between two brick piers with ashlar heads. At the foot of each pillar, a low curved wall with ashlar cap runs to the pavement. To the northeast of the gateway, this wall continues along the edge of the pavement, creating a flower bed / planter between this low wall and the main front wall.



Comparison of historic photographs with modern photographs indicates that the wall, gates and railings have been altered. The gate opening has been widened slightly and the wall and railings to the northeast of the gateway have been moved away from the edge of the pavement, leaving the planter / flower bed in the intervening space. Owing to the wider gateway, the gates themselves must post-date this work. The date of the work is unknown.



**Plate 11: View of southwest entrance in 1936 showing original layout**



**Plate 12: 2022 Aerial Photograph showing current layout**

It is likely that numerous collisions occurred with vehicles turning off of the road, so the wall was moved away from the path of swinging vehicles. There is collision damage to the current lower wall since the main wall and railings were moved. This reinforces this suggestion.



**Plate 13: Corner of low wall to northeast of gate, showing collision damage**

There is no continuation of the wall to the southwest of the gateway, with the boundary in front of the canteen building being formed by a hedgerow. To the northeast, however, the wall, topped with ashlar and headed with railings curves back to the pavement and runs along the road to the northeast until it reaches the central gate.

The gates themselves are hinged from the substantial brick piers with ashlar capping. Each gate features a square panel bearing the Blue Bird insignia.

The gateway is a vehicle gateway, giving access from the road to the southwest side of the administration and manufactory buildings, to the canteen and the other buildings behind.





**Plate 14: Southwest gates (vehicle), closed, viewed from outside**



**Plate 15: Southwest gates (vehicle), open, viewed from inside**





**Plate 16: Southwest gates (vehicle), open, viewed from inside**



**Plate 17: Detail of gate closure**



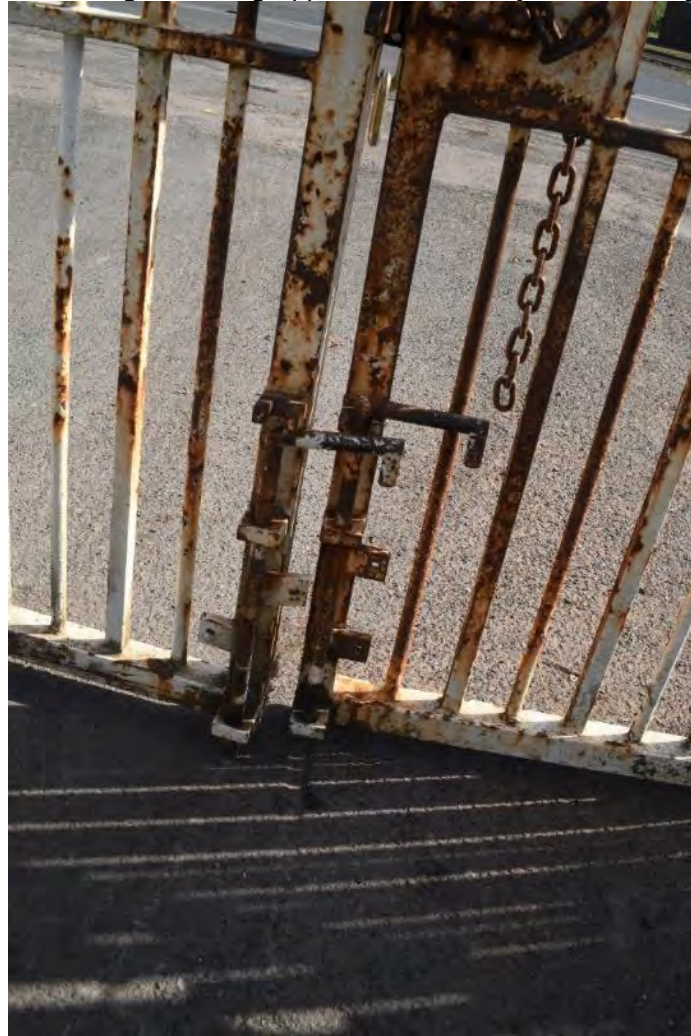


**Plate 18: Detail of gate latch (exterior)**



**Plate 19: Detail of gate latch (interior)**





**Plate 20: Detail of drop bolts**



**Plate 21: Detail of head of gate pier**





**Plate 22: Detail of Blue Bird insignia fitted to gate**

## **5.2 Central Gates**

The central double gates are thought to have been intended for pedestrian use. The gates are set back from the line of the pavement with a curved wall at each side. These walls have brick piers at each end and are fitted with ashlar caps and railings following the shape of the curve. There is no brand insignia on these gates.



**Plate 23: Central gates (pedestrian), outside**





**Plate 24: Central gates (pedestrian), inside**



**Plate 25: 2022 Aerial View of Gateway**

### **5.3 Northeast Gates**





**Plate 26: Northeast gates (vehicle), outside**



**Plate 27: Northeast gates (vehicle), inside**





**Plate 28: Detail of brick pier adjacent to northeast gate**

The northeast gates are vehicle gates, opening on to the northeast side of the administration and factory buildings. The gates follow the same pattern as the vehicle gates to the southwest, with a square panel bearing the Blue Bird insignia.



**Plate 29: 2022 Aerial View of Gateway**



#### 5.4 External Aspect of Wall

Views of the outer face of the boundary wall follow, taken from southwest to northeast (left to right). Along the length of the wall, railings supported by brick piers can be seen.



**Plate 30: Boundary wall, external**



**Plate 31: Boundary wall, external**





**Plate 32: Boundary wall, external**



**Plate 33: Boundary wall, external**





**Plate 34: Boundary wall, external**

### **5.5 Internal Aspect of Wall**

The internal face of the wall is depicted from northeast to southwest (left to right):



**Plate 35: Boundary wall, internal**





**Plate 36: Boundary wall, internal**



**Plate 37: Boundary wall, internal**





**Plate 38: Boundary wall, internal**



**Plate 39: Boundary wall, internal**





**Plate 40: Boundary wall, internal**



**Plate 41: Boundary wall, south of southwest gate, internal**