



1878



1894



1914



1922

3.02 **Historical Development**

This is a very large building – or rather a diverse collection of different built elements within one urban block – with many phased developments historically, and complex form and layout. For ease, the various stages in the development and subsequent redevelopment of this Site can be broadly separated out into four principal phases.

John Harris and Ambrose Heal established the firm Heal & Son Limited in 1810. The original premises of the company were located at 33 Rathbone Place in Fitzrovia. The firm relocated to 203 Tottenham Court Road eight years later; looking to capitalise on the street's growing reputation as the 'Furnishing Street of London'. In 1840 the firm relocated again to the current Site (at 196 Tottenham Court Road). At this time the store occupied the ground floor of a residential terrace and established workshops toward the rear of this building, including a bedding factory. The success of the business led to the construction of purpose-built premises in 1854 under the direction of architect J. Morant Lockyer. His original grand Palazzo frontage building onto Tottenham Court Road has not survived, although elements of the workshops and showrooms extending into the rear of the Site (and Alfred Mews) in the later 19th century remain. This represents the first key phase in the development of the Site.

In 1916 the site was rationalised to designs by architects Smith and Brewer, following further incremental development. By this stage, the business had taken up most of the urban block between Torrington Place and Alfred Mews. As part of this key second phase, a new bed factory replaced older buildings to the

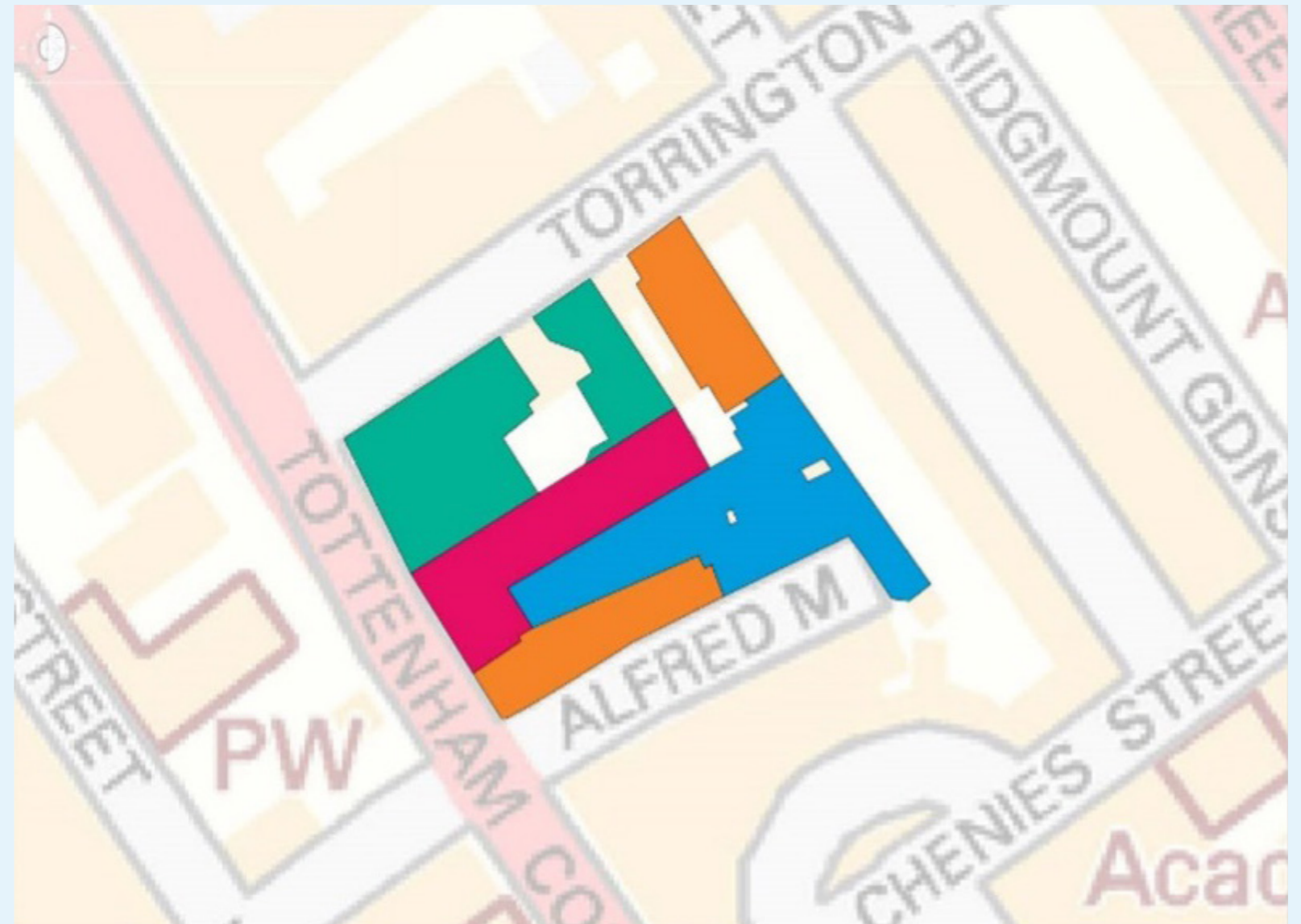


Heritage

rear of the Site, and most importantly a spectacular new sales building fronting onto Tottenham Court Road was constructed. The Smith and Brewer scheme retained some 19th century features, including an internal atrium and also introduced a striking spiral staircase to the rear of the new building.

After the war Heal's acquired much of the northern part of the urban block and implemented a bold extension to the building in 1936. This was designed by Sir Edward Maufe and replaced significant parts of the later 19th century buildings. It also sought to unify the building's main street frontage; seamlessly continuing the Smith and Brewer designed façade. This extension also allowed Maufe to introduce the highly distinctive and then innovative curved shop glass along the extent of this frontage. This represents phase 3.

Further development came in 1962 with the acquisition of the cinema (damaged by enemy action during WWII) and public house located on the north-west corner of the urban block. This was replaced by a Modern extension undertaken by Fitzroy Robinson. This extension provided the firm additional space for showrooms, and new fabric and curtain departments; allowing them to diversify. The upper floors were intended for use as offices and studio space.



KEY

- 19th Century and earlier, J. Morant Lockyer
- 1916, Smith and Brewer
- 1930s, E Maufe
- 1960s, Fitzroy Robinson

3.03 Heritage Significance

The significance of this listed building is closely related to the way in which this highly complex and multi-phase urban block records the historical development of the celebrated firm of Heal and Son; from the first purpose building in the 19th century; through later stages of expansion and redevelopment through the 20th century. This collection of different built elements together provide tangible evidence of the waxing and waning fortunes of this furniture business, and also an insight into the changing tastes and styles of retail architectural design over this period.

Historical associations with the well-known architects, particularly Smith and Brewer, contribute to the overall significance of these buildings; shedding light on the ideology and application of commercial retail space in the later 19th and 20th centuries. And also the intent of famous individuals, particularly Ambrose Heal, to display their commercial and design innovation and success through new architecture of quality and individuality.

The more than special interest of this listed building is principally invested in the distinctive external form, grand scale, style and quality of materiality and detailing of the main retail store as it addresses Tottenham Court Road, and also its role as a local landmark within the surrounding townscape. The centrally positioned Smith and Brewer redevelopment is of particularly high significance; together with the sympathetically designed 1930s range by Maufe that extends to the south and also into part of the mews. The later 1960s extension to the north is of less relative heritage interest. Overall, there are numerous and intertwining component buildings on this Site, which are each of varying architectural and or historic interest depending on the phase they represent, degree of intactness, functional importance and overall design quality.

The significance of this designated heritage asset is also derived from key elements of its historic plan form and quality internal fabric and features, which help to illustrate its former use and also complexity of functions across the site. The areas or elements of greater heritage significance are those more public retail areas (at ground floor level and also towards the Tottenham Court Road frontage) related to the Heal's store as part of its early 20th century and inter-war phases. Of particular interest internally are the part original spiral staircase deeper within the plan of the early 20th century building, and also the 1930s stair and lift core to the south west corner of the block. The basement and other upper storey levels within the main store (and also the 1960s extension) are as a general rule of lesser heritage interest by comparison with the main retail space at ground floor and the key circulation areas. The retained early 20th century barrel vault on the fourth floor level above the main store is a noted exception.

To the rear and within the depth of the Site (and also at the end of Alfred Mews), remnants of the earlier phase 19th century store and its workshops / factory (and also intervening yards) are legible alongside the later redevelopments. These elements also hold a moderate degree of heritage interest, but are otherwise more utilitarian in character and or have experienced a greater degree of alteration from that historic. Across the entire Site there is clear evidence of more modern interventions as each of the different internal spaces have been variously adapted and successively refurbished for changing uses and also new tenant occupiers. Existing modern introductions such as office partitioning, kitchen and bathroom facilities, flooring and services are of no special interest.

Heritage



Messrs. Heal's original shop front that was demolished. One of the first buildings to make use of cast iron construction, built between 1854-64.



1930s extension to Messrs. Heal & Son's Ltd originally designed as a principal goods depot, warehouse and workshop accommodation. Steel-framed construction with reinforced concrete floors and roofs.



Loading up new mattresses for delivery in the yard off Torrington Place in 1897



Existing Circular Staircase designed by Messrs. Smith and Brewer for Heal's shop.

3.04 Heritage Significance Plans

Turley, the Heritage consultants have reviewed the entire building in regards to each elements relative heritage significance. We have utilised these throughout the project to best determine strategies of demolition and intervention.

Our area of question and how this has informed our process can be seen in more detail on pg 34 - 6.02 Area of Significance.

