Summary

This report covers seven buildings which formerly formed part of Fussell's Brewery, and are annotated A - G on the accompanying site plan. The brewery grew up behind the Cross Keys Inn, in the village of Rode, which lies between Frome and Bradford-on-Avon. The buildings comprise what could have been a small brew-house, of 19th century date or earlier, which was extended in two stages probably in the late 19th century, and again in the mid 20th century (A); a brick-built tower brewery, built in 1903 and extended circa 1935 (B); a brick-built engine house, built 1934 (C); a brick-built water storage and general storage building, built circa 1934 (D); a brick-built cold room complex and bottling area, built in 1903 and enlarged circa 1934 (E); a brick-built storage building, built circa 1934, and extended in the 1960s to provide loading bays (F); a pedimented feature, formerly part of a building, fronting onto the Townsend Street which is probably of 19th century date, but which may have been restored in the 20th century (G). Brewing ceased when the company was taken over by Bass, Mitchell and Butlers in 1962, after which the site acted as a bottling plant and distribution depot. Both these functions had ceased by 1992. The 20th century brewhouse and its chimneys now dominates the street scene while Building A, which lies to the rear of the Cross Keys Inn, probably represents the earliest building on the site associated with brewing. The buildings covered in this report are not specifically listed, but lie within the curtilage of the Cross Keys Inn, which is listed Grade II. This report was written as part of the statutory recording work of the Emergency Recording Section of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England prior to the possible redevelopment of the site for housing.

Introduction

Fussell's Brewery lies at the centre of the village of Rode, between Frome and Bradford-on-Avon. The brewery appears to have grown up from a small-scale brewhouse, which is known to have existed behind the Cross Keys Inn by at least 1818. The presence of a reliable well immediately to the south of Building A, must have been a factor in the choice and growth of the business. The brewery...
expanded greatly in 1903 and 1934, to the extent that it must have served more than the immediate needs of the village. The reason for its expansion in 1903 is not clear, however a reorganisation of the company’s finances in 1934 probably facilitated the brewery’s expansion between 1934 and 1937. The brewery buildings constructed at that time now dominate the street scene. This report also covers a variety of other buildings dating from the first half of the 20th century which form part of the brewery complex (see Fig.1). The buildings fronting onto Townsend Street are not covered by this report. In the early 20th century the entrance to the brewery was immediately to the west of Building B. There was formerly an exit past the Methodist Chapel, which was probably closed off in the 1960s.

Summary of the Documentary Evidence

The earliest documentary reference to the Cross Keys Inn is in 1730. The first certain reference to a brewhouse is in 1818. The Cross Keys Inn and the brewhouse came into the ownership of Henry Fussell in 1857. He was also a baker, and he added a bakery to the complex at this time. Between 1879 and 1886 the business was acquired by Sidney Fussell, from his ten brothers and sisters. The brewery was greatly enlarged in 1903 and 1934-5.

Evidence from Maps

The Tithe Map for Rode, which is dated May 1840, appears to show a range running east to west in about the position of Building A. However, the scale of this map makes it difficult to interpret with great accuracy. Buildings are also shown on the site of the present Building B. None of the other buildings discussed in this report are shown on the Tithe Map.

The First Edition ordnance survey, which was surveyed in 1884 and published in 1886, appears to show a building which occupies part of the site of Building A. Buildings are also shown in the same position as Building B. The building of which Building G once formed a part, is also shown. The Second Edition ordnance survey map which was published in 1899, shows that Building A had been extended to the west by that date.

Buildings Report

Building A

Structural evidence and evidence from maps suggests that the eastern end of Building A, including the wall which contains the chimney stack may pre-date 1840. The building was rebuilt and extended west, in two phases during the 19th century, when the building could have functioned as a small brewhouse. Further alterations took place in the early and mid 20th century. The development of the building was difficult to assess due
to lack of light in certain areas. The following Interpretation should be viewed as a hypothesis.

**Building A Pre 1840**

The lower part of the cross wall containing the chimney, the lower part of the eastern gable end, and the eastern end of the southern wall, may represent part of a building shown in this position on the Tithe Map of 1840. The walls of this building were constructed from limestone rubble, unlike the later building phases when the construction was of limestone rubble and brick. The eastern part of the southern wall is also aligned slightly differently in relation to the remainder of the present building, and a straight joint is visible in the southern wall below the eaves east of the present cross wall.

**Building A 1840 - 1884**

The building shown on the Tithe Map appears to have been largely rebuilt and extended one bay to the west between 1840 and 1884. The style of construction suggests that the rebuilding took place towards the end of this period, as it is very similar in style to the extension to the building which took place between 1840 and 1884. The new building was constructed from brick, faced in limestone rubble. It was characterised by segmental-headed door and window openings with brick dressings, with ears four bricks deep. The extended building was rectangular in plan and comprised two rooms of almost equal size, with a basement. The number of floors is not known, as these have been removed and may have originally been more like platforms. The form of the roof and its covering is not known. Some segmental-headed window openings survive. Some of the windows retain frames of 19th century date, which pivot from a point half way up each jamb, although some have now been blocked up. The use of the building at this period is a matter of conjecture, but it is possible it could have functioned as a small brewhouse, with cool storage in the basement area which was entered from a yard behind the Cross Keys Inn, immediately to the north. The basement had a jack-arched roof constructed from brick supported on iron beams. At the south-western corner of the basement a section of the jack-arching was formerly left as a void suggesting that the basement and ground floors may have been linked in some way at this point.

**Building A 1884 -1899**

Evidence from the comparison of the First and Second Edition ordnance survey maps, together with structural evidence, indicates that the building was extended further to the west between 1884 and 1899. The extension comprised the addition of a single bay at the western end of the building, and the addition of a two-storey lean-to south of the new extension. The extension was constructed in a similar fashion to the previous extension. However, the brick dressings around the window openings differed in
that the ears are only two bricks deep, and the windows have projecting stone cills. A new roof was constructed. This roof was supported on brick piers which extended for about one metre below eaves level. The type of infill between these piers is not known, but it may have been louvred.

The western part of the extension was used as a carpenter's workshop. The south-eastern part of the extension provided an office at first-floor level. The basement was also extended to the west by one bay. The extension to the basement contained a water tank.

It is possible that the building may have functioned as a small brewhouse with different floor levels from those which exist today.

**Building A Circa 1903**

In about 1903 the range which ran east to west was reroofed and the upper parts of the brick piers, which had supported the roof, were partially removed and replaced with a louvred timber framework which extended about one metre down below the eaves. The degree to which the louvres could be opened was controlled by levers with fixing chains. The roof structure was ipped and comprised three full bays with two half bays at either end. The roof was supported by three queen strut roof trusses with a single staggered purlin on each side. The queen struts had expanded heads and feet which were bolted. Firing pieces on the upper sides of the rafters, formed a slight vent which ran along the ridge. The roof was covered with double Roman tiles which were stamped 'Midsomer Norton Brick and Tile Company.' The top floor rooms were used as cooling rooms for beer from the new brewhouse which was constructed to the north of Building A at this time.

An electric motor may have been installed on the ground floor at the western end of the building at this time. The motor operated line-shafting which powered a pump situated directly over a well, which lies within the line of the southern wall of the late 19th century extension, but is respected by it. The engine also powered machinery in the new brewhouse to the north, as indicated by a flywheel which projects out from the northern wall. The line-shafting relating to the engine still survives.

**Building A 1934 - 1960s**

In about 1934, at the same time as the construction of Phase II of Building B, the floors in the eastern half of Building A were probably removed and the floors in the remainder of the building largely replaced by floors constructed from concrete slabs supported on steel beams, and new stair positions established. Evidence of the former floor levels survives in the form of empty joist holes in the northern face of the southern wall, below the windows in the western half of the building. Differences in the paintwork in the southern face of the northern wall...
also provides evidence of the position of an earlier stair and different floor level.’ Towards the end of this period the louvred side walls were covered internally and the upper-floor room at the western end of the building was used for beer tasting.

Building B

Building B comprises the early 20th century brewhouse which today dominates Townsend Street. The buildings shown on the Tithe Map of 1840 and on the First and Second Edition ordnance survey maps, appear to have been demolished to make way for a new brewhouse which was constructed in 1903, and extended to the north in 1934. Building B 1903

Building B was constructed circa 1903. The new building comprised a tower brewery. It was constructed from limestone with brick dressings. The building was of four storeys and two bays. The fourth storey was subsequently rebuilt. The ground floor was at the same level as the basement of Building A. The building was characterised by segmental-headed windows and doorways with brick dressings and stone cills. There was a square brick-built chimney at the south-western corner. The building was entered via a single-width doorway in the western elevation, which is now blocked. The southern side of the building was linked via a timber ‘bridge’ at first-floor level with Building A. There were taking-in doors at first and second-floor levels in the western elevation, close to the north-western corner of the building. The floors were of timber with herring-bone strengthening, although only the second floor survives in this form. There is a height gauge on the inside of the southern wall at first-floor level. This recorded the level of the hot liquor in the tank in the attic.

Building B Circa 1935

The brewhouse was extended northwards by two bays in brick circa 1935. The upper storey of Phase I was rebuilt at the same time. The former northern gable end was removed. A further loading-in door was constructed above the loading-in doors of Phase I. Iron beams were placed either side of all three loading-in doors to support a timber casing for a hoist. A square brick-built chimney was constructed at the north-western corner. The extension had concrete floors supported on iron beams. Some of the concrete floors were jack-arched. Concrete floors were inserted at first and third-floor levels in the earlier part of the building, and new stair positions established. The roof was of four bays and was supported by bolted king posts with
expanded heads and raking struts. Four tanks were situated in the roof space. One bore the name plate ‘Llewellins and James of Bristol’ and was constructed from bolt-together cast-iron panels. A tank of similar construction lay to the south of it. There were two galvanised tanks at the northern end of the roof space. One of these tanks was labelled ‘HLT No. 6’ suggesting that it was a Hot Liquor Tank.

**Building B Post 1962**

After the purchase of the business by Bass, Mitchells and Butlers in 1962 further alterations were made to the brewhouse. The tank at the south-eastern corner of the first floor of Building B was moved, blocking what appears to be a former doorway in the southern wall. The tank is believed to have been for dissolving sugar. A new doorway was formed to the west in the same wall and a timber floor inserted between Buildings A and B at first-floor level, thereby linking the buildings.

**The Brewing Process**

The mash tuns and coppers and hop storage were at second-floor level. The liquor would have been boiled in the coppers with sugar and the resulting hot liquor pumped up to the hot liquor tanks in the roof space. The liquor would then have been passed, in pipes, through shallow cooling tanks housed on the upper floors of Building A. The liquor would then have been fermented and passed into casks for conditioning. In most tower breweries the cooling process would have taken place on the top floor, however, at this site the preexisting building was used.

**Building C (Engine House) 1934**

A new engine house was constructed to the east of the brewhouse 1934. It was built from brick using pilaster and panel construction and is of five bays. The central three bays are of four storeys with a pitched Roman tile roof. The two end bays of three storeys with flat roofs. There is a single-storey lean-to at the northern end. The windows have metal frames and glazing bars and are of fifteen panes on the ground floor and nine panes elsewhere. The upper part of each window pivots. There is a double door north of the centre on the ground floor on the western side. There are two double-width taking-in doors and a projecting iron beam and a small beam below the eaves, which would have formed part of the hoist relating to these openings. Access to the first floor was via external stairs at the southern end. The first and third floors are of concrete slab construction supported on steel joists. The second floor is of timber supported on steel joists. Two Ruston and Hornsby diesel engines, each of 78 horse power, were housed on the ground floor. There were also two Crompton Parkinson generators and switchboard, providing 110 D.C. electrical supply. On the first floor there were 57 accumulator cells, each of 1.85 volts.
The second floor was used for general purpose storage. In the 1940s dances were held there for village people. There is a diesel storage tank on the flat roof at the southern end of the building. The lean-to at the northern end was first used as a dairy for Ormeage Farm then as toilets.

**Building D  Circa 1934**

Building D is very similar in appearance to Building C and was probably built at about the same time. It is constructed from red brick and has double Roman roof tiles. The building may be divided into three main sections which are in line, running north to south. It comprises a central range of four storeys and three bays, to the north and south of this were wings of three storeys and three bays. There is a two-storey lean-to in addition at the southern end. The windows have metal frames with pivoting sections of six panes. The floors are constructed from concrete slabs supported on steel beams. There are single windows at the centre of the eastern and western walls of the central range. There is an external height gauge to the north of the window in the eastern wall. The gauge relates to water tanks on the top floor of the four-storey section. There is an external staircase within the lean-to at the southern end, and a lift within the four-storey section. The remainder of the building was used for the storage of bottles, wines and spirits and tobacco prior to the takeover by Bass.

**Building E**

Building E runs along the eastern side of Building D. The northern end of Building E was constructed in 1903. The building was heightened and enlarged circa 1935. It is brick built with a pitched corrugated asbestos roof with a continuous ventilation louvre along the ridge. The roof is of galvanised iron construction with raking struts. A substantial area of the roof is glazed. The southern end was used for bottled beer storage while the northern end contained the bottling plant, conditioning and cold rooms, one of which retains an insulated door. A 65,000 gallon open-topped water tank was situated on the roof of the eastern part of the building.

**Building F  Late 1930s**

Building F was constructed in the 1930s and extended south after 1962. It is built from brick and has a double-Roman tile roof which contains large areas of glazing. The roof is of galvanised iron construction with raking struts. The building was used for bottled-beer storage and has a loading bay along the western side. A bridge within the building which was used to supervise the making up of loads.

**Building G - Pedimented Feature fronting onto Townsend Street**

In 1903 the entrance to the Brewery lay
immediately to the east of a pedimented feature which fronts onto the High Street. The pedimented feature appears to be all that remains of a narrow rectangular building shown on the First Edition ordnance survey map of 1884, and the Second Edition of 1899. The building housed two coal-fired boilers which were placed end to end with adjacent fire boxes to provide steam. The map evidence suggests that there might have been a chimney at the southern end of the building. The pediment facing Townsend Street bears the Cross Keys emblem, which was the die emblem of Fussell’s Brewery. A blind arch at the base of the feature looks as if it might have once housed a tap.

References

1. From notes by Captain B. Foyston.
3. From notes by Captain B. Foyston.
4. Ibid.
5. Ref. SCRO D/D/Rt 156.
6. In 1884 the brewery lay in Wiltshire, the boundary between Wiltshire and Somerset running along the centre of the street in which the brewery lies. Ref. First Edition ordnance survey map Sheet XXX.4 (Wiltshire part surveyed 1884, published 1886). The brewery still lay in Wiltshire when the Second Edition ordnance survey map was published in 1899.
7. See enprint no.290 I/24.
8. From notes by Captain B. Foyston.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.

Bibliography


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This piece is an extract from a report produced by English Heritage. We would like to thank them for permission to reproduce the above.
Main door and sign of the Cross Keys Inn, Rode.
High Street frontage of the Cross Keys Inn, Rode. Reading Room to left, entry to Lower Brewery Yard to right.
Refurbishment of the Tower Brewhouse.
Two large coal-fired boilers were housed in a building which lay behind this pedimented facade.
Close-up of the facade which features the Cross Keys emblem. The arches were filled in when the second boiler was fitted.

All the above photographs were taken by Jeff Sechiari