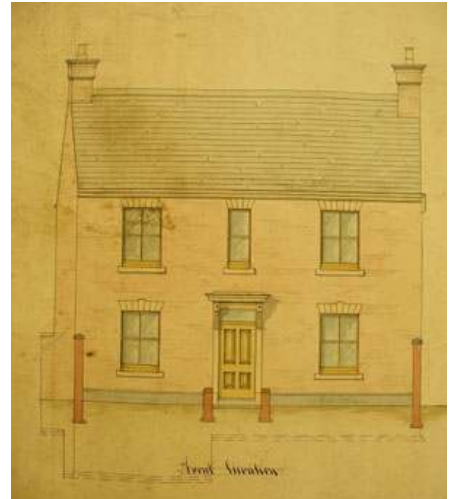


A lost Stratford house resurfaces

We don't often take in archive material which relates to something we don't know a little about already, but some house plans we have just been given are a bit of an exception. They relate to a house that once stood on the corner of Clopton Road and Arthur Road. We have since discovered that it is shown on early Ordnance Survey maps of the town, and the occupiers can also be traced in local directories from more or less the time it was built, in 1871, until its demolition in the mid 1960s. So there was no real excuse for us not knowing about it, even though we had no photographic record, and nor had anyone ever asked, or talked with us about it. So it was a real pleasure when these plans arrived on our desk, providing not only unique information but also giving us the excuse for a bit of delving.



Remember it? The architect's drawing of the house that once stood on the corner of Clopton Road and Arthur Road in Stratford. But does anyone have a photograph of it?

There was another bonus. From around 1851, new health, and then planning, regulations required builders of all new property in Stratford to submit plans to the local authority. We already hold a series of these wonderful plans (and very popular they are too for people researching the history of their house) and, when we looked in this collection, we found that we did already have a plan of sorts for this Clopton Road house. But what it showed was only the ground floor layout and details of how the property was to cope with water supply and drainage. The plans we have just been given show these too, but they also include a section through the whole house and an elevational drawing from the street. So, even though we have no photographs in our collections, we do at least now know what it looked like.

The house, which dates from 1871, was designed by local architect, Thomas Taylor Allen, and was built for Thomas Adkins. In early documents he is described as a blacksmith but by this date he had graduated to machinist or engineer. His workshop was built next to the house. He died the following year, aged only 50, but his wife carried on the business, with the help of her son, Albert, until her own death in 1892. Albert died in 1899 when the family business seems to have been wound up. The adjoining workshops were let to a succession of small businesses but the house remained in the family's ownership, and a daughter, Georgina, who had married the station master, Samuel Meredith, lived there with her husband, and later as a widow, until 1950. Shortly afterwards the whole site (house and workshop) was acquired by the Young family and the Pressavon business founded. In 1953 the house was converted into offices for the business but in the mid 1960s it was demolished when Pressavon re-located to Masons Road.

So to complete the picture, all we need is a photograph! Does anyone have one showing this house, or the workshop next door, at any stage in their history? If so, we would very much appreciate the chance to see, and perhaps copy it.

Robert Bearman

Living Archives from the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*

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