

## **102<sup>nd</sup> Amendment, dated 13.07.06**

The following building shall be added:-

**494332**

**GREAT EASTERN STREET  
Shoreditch**

**Nos 40-42**

**II**

Showroom-warehouses, now offices with café. 1877 by J. W. Brooker for the cabinet ironmongers Edward Wells & Co.

PLAN: 4-storey corner building with 5 bays along Great Eastern Street, a wide splayed corner and 3 bays to the return along Curtain Road.

MATERIALS: Cream Gault brick with blue brick, stone and terra cotta dressings in an eclectic style with Gothic, Italianate and Venetian influences.

EXTERIOR: The building makes the best of its prominent location by having a splayed corner and a ground-floor porch. The façades are a pleasing mix of Gothic, Italianate and Venetian elements, with more ornamentation than was the norm for Great Eastern Street. The ground floor is almost entirely glass, with wooden glazing bars in the form of lancets, and a corner entrance porch of polished red granite columns, stucco and brick pointed arches, and a square clock supported by a wrought-iron bracket. The café within the ground floor of 42 retains its console brackets, but has otherwise been altered. The upper floors are of cream brick detailed in blue brick and stone dressings, with unusual stone bosses between the second and third floors. The first and second floors have continuous windows set within a giant arcade with pointed arches and floral terracotta panels. The third floor has paired shouldered windows with mock machicolation and battlements above, except for the splayed corner, which has terracotta panels in the spandrels of rounded arches and a steep pediment. The exterior of 40 was painted over in the mid-1980s and the quality of detail here is less good.

INTERIOR: Not inspected. Café of 42 noted to have been modernised.

HISTORY: For almost a century, from the mid-C19 to the mid-C20, South Shoreditch was the hub of the international furniture trade. The area manufactured, sold and supplied furniture of all types and quality to retailers in the West End, provincial cities and throughout the British Empire. As a result, South Shoreditch has a consistent and unique combination of factories, warehouse and showrooms, a concentration of interrelated building types which creates a distinctive historic character. 40-42 Great Eastern Street was built in 1877 as part of a group of four showroom-warehouses that included 73-75 Curtain Road. The architect was J. W. Brooker and it was built by James Morter for the cabinet ironmongers Edward Wells & Co. Wells took the lease of several plots on Great Eastern Street from the Metropolitan Board of Works during 1877, apparently intended as a speculative development as the firm was building new premises for its own occupation elsewhere, at 125-130 Shoreditch High Street, around the same time. The other pair of showroom-warehouses that adjoined 40-42 were built for Henry Vaughan, furniture manufacturer, and in May 1877 Wells and Vaughan invited tenders for the

new properties. Construction seems to have commenced soon afterwards. Although 40 and 42 Great Eastern Street boasted one of the most prestigious locations within the South Shoreditch furniture district, it was initially occupied by an auction house and a specialist clothing manufacturer. The stay merchants, W. Ruddick, remained at 42 until the 1930s, expanding into the adjoining building (44) in the early-C20. By 1899 the corner premises, 40, were being used by Rubery & Stockwell, furniture manufacturers, but their occupation was relatively short lived as they were gone by 1908. The building was then used for a time by a motor accessories merchant and the entrance reworked in 1937. At the end of the C20 both properties were taken over by an estate agent, Stirling Ackroyd.

**SUMMARY OF IMPORTANCE:** A showroom-warehouse of 1877 by local architect J.W. Brooker for cabinet ironmongers in South Shoreditch that has architectural interest for its eclectic Venetian Gothic elevations and historic interest as one of the best surviving and grandest of this distinctive building type in South Shoreditch, the significant quarter that manufactured, sold and supplied furniture of all types and quality to retailers in the West End, provincial cities and throughout the British Empire.

**SOURCES:** Smith, Joanna 'An Industrial Suburb': The Commercial Buildings of South Shoreditch 1850-1980 (Unpublished English Heritage Architectural Investigation, 2004)

The Builder, 12 May 1877, 489.

Buildings of England London 4: North, 525