

## MILL ROAD HISTORY PROJECT

### BUILDING REPORT

# 186 Mill Road, Cambridge

Bootmaker and undertaker (c.1884–1910)

Watchmaker (1911–68)

Charity shop (1970s)

Cycle shop 1982 - present



**Katie Blyth**

The Mill Road History Project was officially launched in 2013 under the umbrella of Mill Road Bridges<sup>1</sup> to study the heritage of Mill Road, Cambridge, its buildings (residential, commercial and industrial), institutions and community. It was supported by a two-year grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

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Author: Katie Blyth

*Cover picture: 186 Mill Road (photograph Katie Blyth, 2014)*

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<sup>1</sup> 'Mill Road Bridges seeks to grow and maintain the community spirit, heritage and rich cultural diversity of the Mill Road area by improving the flow of information between and about individuals, businesses, voluntary organisations and local stakeholders.'

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## Abbreviations

*CIP*                      *Cambridge Independent Press*

*CEN*                      *Cambridge Evening News*

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## NOTE

This report was produced by Katie Blyth, a resident of Romsey Town, Cambridge and volunteer for the Project. The focus of the report is No 186 Mill Road, currently a local business trading as Gregs Cycles.

### Location

186 Mill Road, Cambridge, CB1 3LP

Tel: 01223 210678

The building is situated on the Romsey side of the railway bridge on the south side of the road.

### National Grid reference

TL 46555 57684

X: 546555    Y:257684

Latitude: 52.197914, Longitude: 0.14291009

## INTRODUCTION

This building was selected for research for the Mill Road History Project because as one of many independent shops trading on Mill Road it has a unique character which adds to the overall diversity of Mill Road. It is classified as a 'building of local interest' by the local planning authority (Cambridge City Council 2014). The shop front, which dates back to 1935, is one of the few remaining original shop fronts in the area and worthy of recognition.

## BACKGROUND

In 1881 on the Romsey side of Mill Road on the south side between the railway line and Cyprus Road there appear to be no shops as such and just twelve houses occupied by: railway workers, a laundress, a brewer, financial agent, builder, journalist and labourer. The last building on that side of Mill Road at the time was the 'Royal Standard' pub occupied by publican, Charles Watson. The north side of the road was more populated and the houses were occupied mainly by railway workers, labourers and tradesmen such as bricklayers, carpenters, a bookbinder, a blacksmith and a cab driver. There was also a dressmaker and a charwoman.

By 1910 a substantial number of shops and businesses had appeared along Mill Road to serve the growing community which was developing in and around Mill Road. The following list (taken from Spalding's Street Directory, 1910) gives a flavour of the variety of shops and businesses trading on the Romsey side of the bridge on the south side of Mill Road in 1910. There appears to be little in the way of everyday items from food to clothes that could not be purchased by residents of Romsey at that time. The list of businesses suggests a thriving self-sufficient community that would not need to venture into the city centre very often.

### *Stockwell Street*

Stockwell St Baptist Church

178 Sennitt George Henry, butcher and sausage maker

180 Bradshaw William, goods foreman G.E.R

182 Redhouse W, musical instrument dealer

184 Jacobs Harry, labourer

186 Bement William J, undertaker

188 Tingey Samuel, grocer, tea and provision dealer

190-192 Harmer T J, Milliner, hosier and draper

### *Cockburn Street*

194 Mansfield Walter, railway inspector, Vernon House  
196 Peacock Aungier, tram inspector, Richmond House  
198 Beacham F, Digswell House, G.N.R. guard  
200 Kelly, Edwin Robert, cab proprietor, Merton House  
202 Martin H J, Butcher  
204 Cox David, fruiterer, dairyman and confectioner  
206 Calcott Mrs, Melville House  
208 Kerry J W, Pontesbright House  
210 Moss and Palmer Chemists, Palmer J M, Fern Villa  
212 Tuck Mrs J, Penrose House  
214 Barton George, bootmaker  
216 Law George, tobacconist and confectioner  
218 Skipp J W, fishmonger etc  
220 Eastmans Ltd Butchers, Childs W, shopman

*Hope Street*

222 How Edward J, baker, pastry cook & confectioner, patent smoked ovens  
224 Walls S B & Sons, grocers, tea and provision dealers  
Risely Henry, college cook  
226 Maltby A, tailor and outfitter  
228 Hyde Mrs, greengrocer and confectioner  
Laboreau Mrs  
230 Watts J, newsagent and stationer  
Romsey Town post and money order office savings bank. Insurance and annuity office  
232 Martin J and Son, cycle agents  
234 Hyde Charles, engine driver  
236 Hurrell Simeon  
238 Wolfenden C J, railway porter  
240 Rayner Frederick  
Howard, Rev Charles MA Vicar, St Philips Vicarage  
Building land  
254 Towle Jas., superintendent assurance agent (Britannia)  
256 Williams Frederick, stonemason  
258 Lindsey Herbert John, fancy dealer and stationer, Councillor of the Borough

260 Freeman F, tobacconist and general dealer

262 Anderson Mrs, baker, pastry cook, confectioner and mineral water dealer

264 Radford Newman, family butcher, sausage maker etc.

266 Stalley Mrs Annette, general stores

268 Dawson A, greengrocer, fruiter, florist and seedsman

#### *Romsey Terrace*

270 Kerry & Co, Leeds House

272 and 274 Building Land



View of Romsey from the railway bridge c1910<sup>2</sup>. No 186 is located just beyond the bell tower of the Baptist Church on the right.

## THE BUILDING TODAY: DESCRIPTION

No 186 Mill Road is a two storey brick-built mid-terrace building with shops either side and opposite. The terrace is currently occupied by the following shops: Perfect Pizza (takeaway), Kailash (household goods, gifts, stationery etc); Inspirations (hair and beauty salon); Gregs Cycles, RSPCA charity shop, Cambridge Resale (second-hand electrical and other goods).

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<sup>2</sup> BMILLK17603 (Cambridgeshire Collection)

Across the road on what is known as The Broadway (a row of shops built in the 1930s on the site previously occupied by The Lodge) is an estate agent, a café, a florist, a locksmith, a barber shop, a hairdresser, a grocery/café, a fish and chip shop, an Italian restaurant, a fast food takeaway, two letting agents and a tanning studio.

The building comprises, on the ground floor two rooms – the shop area, which appears to have been two small rooms knocked into one, and a kitchen. There is an outside toilet and a long garden. There is also a cellar which is not accessible. The front of the shop has a frontage dating back to c.1935.<sup>3</sup> Shop fittings inside are minimal with just a single worktop/counter. The remaining floor space is taken up largely by bicycles. The shop itself does not appear to have been altered or modernised over the years and is one of the few in the area which has kept its original shop front.

On the first floor there are three rooms. The back room over the kitchen was added since the property was built, but it is not known when. The front room, which is used for storage, has a wooden bay window. The roof is constructed of slate, which is typical of buildings in the area. There is a chimney to the right of the building.



Gregs Cycles 2014, situated between RSPCA charity shop and Inspirations Hair and Beauty<sup>4</sup>

Since 1982 the premises have been used as a cycle shop trading as Gregs Cycles. The building is owned by private landlords who let it to Greg Coleman, proprietor of the business.

<sup>3</sup> KCB/2/SE/3/9/10981 (Cambridgeshire Archives)

<sup>4</sup> Photograph by Katie Blyth, 2014



## HISTORY OF THE SITE AND ITS OCCUPANTS

It is not known who owned the land or who built the property. The earliest records of the property found so far are from 1884, where it was listed in Spalding's Street Directory.

### **William Bement - bootmaker and undertaker c. 1884 – c.1910**

Spalding's Street Directory for 1884 lists five buildings between Cockburn Street and Stockwell Street. Although street numbers were not given at the time, the fifth building along from Stockwell Street is assumed to be what is now No 186. It was occupied by William Bement, bootmaker and broker. (When street numbers were first indicated in the street directories in 1898 No 186 was still the fifth building after Stockwell Street and occupied by William Bement so it can be assumed that he occupied the same premises in 1884. Neighbouring land and occupants between Cockburn Street and Stockwell Street in 1884 were as follows:<sup>5</sup>

Building land

Bement, Wm, bootmaker and broker

Carter, Charles, greengrocer and fruiterer

Ratcliff, Lemuel, writer, grainer, gilder and plumber

Clark, Edmund, fishmonger's assistant

Stearn, butchers assistant and sausage maker

Baptist church

The building appears on an Ordnance Survey Map of 1888<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Spalding's Street Directory, 1884

<sup>6</sup> Ordnance Survey 1888 XLVII.3.21 scale 10.56 feet to one statute mile (Cambridgeshire Archives)



Ordnance Survey map 1888 (detail) © Crown Copyright

This close-up of the above map shows 186 Mill Road marked with a cross.



Ordnance Survey map 1888 (detail) © Crown Copyright

The 1891 UK census<sup>7</sup> lists William Bement (age 43, born in Cambridge), as a shoemaker living with his wife Sarah (45, born in London) and son George (14, born in Cambridge) in Mill Road. Again, no street numbers are indicated. An older William H. Bement aged 70, also a shoemaker, is listed on the 1891 census with his wife, Mary (48) and niece, Gertrude (20) at a separate address on Mill Road. It is likely that he is the father of William Bement. The UK census record from 1851<sup>8</sup> shows William Bement aged 3 living at 74 East Road, Cambridge with his father William (30, hairdresser) and mother Sarah. Ten years later in 1861<sup>9</sup> they were residing at 65 East Road where William Bement senior is a shoemaker and his wife Sarah is a shoe binder, William Bement junior is 13.



The newspaper cutting shown above from *Cambridge Independent Press*<sup>10</sup> dated 7 September 1894 provides some description of the property and the three adjoining properties in the terrace:

Each containing Five Rooms, with Wash-house, Coal-house, WC, &c, with Gardens at the back, and having a frontage to Mill Road of 58 feet 6 inches (more or less), and a depth of about 100 feet.

<sup>7</sup> 1891 England census (RG12/1285 Ancestry.co.uk)

<sup>8</sup> 1851 England census (RG HO107/1760 Ancestry.co.uk)

<sup>9</sup> 1861 England census (RG9/1024 Ancestry.co.uk)

<sup>10</sup> CIP 7 September 1894. British Newspaper Archive (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)

It also shows us that all four houses were rented and Mr Bement is identified as one of the tenants.

Street numbers appear in Spalding's Street Directory in 1898 and W Bement is listed as occupying No 186. His occupation is shown as 'boot and shoemaker and warehouse'.

By 1899 William Bement appears to have changed his occupation to that of 'undertaker' and was still residing at No 186.<sup>11</sup> The 1901 England<sup>12</sup> census lists him at this address with his wife and again with his new occupation.

Between 1899 and 1904 Mr Bement provided his services as undertaker to the Cambridge Workhouse on Mill Road. The newspaper cuttings below show reports from the Cambridge Board of Guardians' meetings where his tenders for undertaker services at the Workhouse are accepted.

#### **TENDERS**

The following tenders were received :- House draper, Messrs Child and Cork, Petty Cury; grocers, Messrs Nichols and Son, Bridge Street; baker, Mr. G. P. Hawkins, Fitzroy-street; butcher, Mr. E Bulman, Hills-road; dairyman, Mr. Curtis, Mill-road; coal merchant, Messrs. Coote and Warren, St. Andrew's-street; undertaker, Mr. Bement, Mill-road; hairdresser, Mr Woolfenden, Mill-road...

*CIP*, Friday, 15 September 1899<sup>13</sup>

#### **TENDERS**

The board then considered tenders for the supply of goods to the House, when the following were accepted:- for the Workhouse – Draper – Messrs Laurie and McConnal; grocers – Messrs T Nichols and Son; baker – Mr G P Hawkins; butcher – Mr E Bulman; milk – Mr G Ambrose; coal – Messrs Coote and Warren; undertaker – Mr W J Bement; hairdressers – Messrs Pepper Bros....

*CIP*, Friday, 27 September 1901<sup>14</sup>

#### **TENDERS**

The following tenders for the supply of necessities to the Workhouse were accepted:- Drapery – Messrs. Laurie and McConnal; groceries – Messrs S.B. Wallis; bread – Mr. G.P. Hawkins; meat – Mr Bullman; milk – Mr Pepper; coal – Mr James Owen; undertaker – Mr. Bement; hairdresser – Mr. G. Woolfenden....

*CIP*, Friday, 13 March 1903<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Kelly's Street Directory, 1900

<sup>12</sup> 1901 England census RG13/1530 Ancestry.co.uk

<sup>13</sup> *CIP*, 15 September 1899 (British Newspaper Archive [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk))

<sup>14</sup> *CIP*, 27 September 1901 (British Newspaper Archive [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk))

<sup>15</sup> *CIP*, 13 March 1903 (British Newspaper Archive [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk))

### TENDERS

The tenders of the following tradesmen for the supply of goods to the Workhouse were accepted:- Messrs. Laurie & McConnal, drapery; Mr G.P. Hawkins, baker; Mr. S.B. Wallis, grocer; Mr. Bullman, butcher; Mr. Bainbridge, milk; Mr. James Owen, coal; Mr. S. J. Bement, undertaker; and Mr. H. W. Woolfenden, hairdresser...

*CIP*, Friday, 11 March 1904<sup>16</sup>

In January 1902 his reliability and reputation as an undertaker is thrown into question as it is reported that in the space of a month he failed to screw down a coffin and kept mourners waiting at a funeral.

### THE UNDERTAKER TO EXPLAIN

The CLERK read a letter from the Chief Constable respecting a misunderstanding as to the funeral and removal of a dead body from the mortuary. He sent the reports of police officers, from which it appeared that the undertaker (Mr. Bement) should have arrived at 1.30, the time arranged, but he did not do so until three, and then he borrowed a screw driver from the police, it being the second time he had gone to the mortuary without the necessary tools

The RELIEVING OFFICER (Mr. Beaumont) said he arranged with the undertaker to be at the Police Station at 1.30, but he did not turn up.

It was resolved to ask Mr. Bement for an explanation.

Extract from report of Board of Guardians' meeting  
*CIP*, 3 January 1902<sup>17</sup>

### DELAY AT FUNERALS

A letter was read from the Rev. W. H. Hinde, complaining that on January 1<sup>st</sup> he was kept waiting an hour at a funeral because the undertaker (Mr. Bement) had neglected to screw down the coffin. When he remonstrated with him, he said it was not his fault, although he admitted it was part of his contract to screw down coffins.

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<sup>16</sup> *CIP*, 11 March 1904 (British Newspaper Archive [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk))

<sup>17</sup> *CIP*, 3 January 1902 (British Newspaper Archive, [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk))

The CLERK read a letter from Mr. Bement, undertaker, 186 Mill-road, with reference to the delay caused at two funerals. Mr. Bement said a Mrs. Moore had been to see him with reference to Charles Smith's funeral, and she complained of the funeral being hurried on. He replied that she could choose the day, and she said Monday would be more convenient than Saturday. He heard no more regarding the funeral until 2.30 on the Saturday afternoon, when he was conducting another interment at Mill-road, and he was told that the mourners were waiting at the mortuary. He went straight to the Police Station without his tools. He asked there for a screw-driver, and they brought him a toy. Having heard nothing further from Mrs. Moore, he thought the day had been altered, as she promised to acquaint him as to the time the funeral should take place. With regard to the funeral of John Smith, Mr. Bement said he had received communications from the Relieving Officer, saying the matter had been taken from his (the officer's) hands. He was waiting for further instructions, but they did not arrive until 3 o'clock on the day fixed, and he accordingly carried them through.

Mr. WARD said the explanation was entirely satisfactory.

MR. HEAL moved that the next business be proceeded with, and this was carried.

Extract from report of Board of Guardians' meeting  
CIP, Friday, 1 January 1902<sup>18</sup>

As shown below, the number of bootmakers trading in the area increased quite significantly between 1885 and 1910. A struggle to compete with the new bootmakers may explain why he switched trades. The emergence of bootmakers in some of the side streets whose premises may have had cheaper rents may have contributed to increased competition.

### **Other bootmakers and shoemakers trading in Mill Road at the time of William Bement**

In 1887 the only bootmakers listed in the trade section of Spalding's Street Directory for Mill Road are:

Bement W H 43 Mill Road

Remington George 5 & 6 Market Passage and Mill Road

(William Bement from 186 Mill Road is not listed here in the trade section but he does appear in the street section.)

In 1895 the following boot and shoe makers were trading on the Romsey side of the bridge<sup>19</sup>:

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<sup>18</sup> CIP, 17 January 1902 (British Newspaper Archive [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk))

Bement, William at 186 Mill Road

Edwards, John at 152 Mill Road

Furniss, James at 266 & 268 Mill Road

And on the town side of the bridge were:

Freeman Hardy & Willis at 62 Mill Road

Kerry, Edward at 102 Mill Road

There were no bootmakers trading in any of Mill Road's side streets at this time.

By 1910 many more boot- and shoemakers had started trading in Mill Road and some of the side streets:

Barton 214 Mill Road (Romsey side)

Benstead 94a Mill Road (Town side)

Freeman Hardy and Willis 60 Mill Road (Town side)

Gilson 50 Catharine Street (Romsey side)

Germany 134 Gwydir Street (Town side)

Houghton 302 Mill Road (Romsey side)

Kerry and Co 270 Mill Road (Romsey side)

Marshall 77 Mill Road (Town side)

Reed 32 Argyle Street (Romsey side)

White 87 Mill Road (Town side)

Kelly's Street Directory for 1904 shows him occupying both 184 and 186 Mill Road as an undertaker while Spalding's Street Directory of the same year lists him as boot- and shoemaker at No 186 only. Number 184, according to Spalding 1904, is occupied by Mrs Scotcher (greengrocer, fruiterer and confectioner).

Land Value Records of 1910<sup>20</sup> tell us that the owner of the premises at 186 Mill Road was J. Harmer of 192 Mill Road (see photos below) and confirms that the occupier was Mr Bement. Sometime between 1910 and 1911 William Bement left No 186 and the premises became occupied by watchmaker, George William Talbot.<sup>21</sup>

Newspaper articles from the period in which Mr Bement inhabited No 186 reveal something about his interests and hobbies. He appears to have been a keen amateur gardener who

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<sup>19</sup>Spalding's Street Directory, 1895

<sup>20</sup> Land Value Records 1910 (Cambridgeshire Archives)

<sup>21</sup> Spalding's Street Directories, 1910, 1911

regularly exhibited vegetables and flowers at local horticultural shows. He also appears to have been a member of the Working Men's Liberal Club.

The cutting below, from the *Cambridge Independent Press*, 16 August 1890,<sup>22</sup> describes the Working Men's Liberal Club annual flower show which was held 'in the beautiful grounds adjoining "The Lodge" Mill Road' across the road from No 186 Mill Road.

#### **WORKING MENS LIBERAL CLUB FLOWER SHOW AT CAMBRIDGE**

The annual garden party and show of flowers, fruit and vegetables, in connection with the Cambridge Working Men's Liberal Club Horticultural Society, was held on Thursday, in the beautiful grounds adjoining "The Lodge", Mill Road, which had been kindly lent for the occasion by Mr. George Smith. The schedule was divided into two main classes, the first being open, and the second limited to cottagers. There were also numerous special prizes. The number of entries was much larger than on previous occasions, and the exhibits, which were tastefully staged in a commodious marquee, and in the open air, were of much finer quality. Amongst the vegetables, the potatoes were specially praiseworthy, some very good specimens being shown. The phlox *D rummondii* and *antirrhinums* were also extremely fine. The beauty of the show was further augmented by a number of exhibits, not for competition. Mrs. Darwin showed a collection of coleus, fern fuchsias, &c, and several bunches of splendid cut gladioli and herbaceous phloxes. Mr. A Chater exhibited 24 magnificent trusses of zonal geraniums, and twelve cut double hollyhocks, including "Mr. Gladstone". Messrs G Bull, C E Porter, and F J Prime also had some zonal geraniums on view. Mr W Bond showed numerous plants and Mr W H Apthorpe had some gigantic autumn-sown onions, 12 spikes of lovely gladioli, and three stands of 12 double dahlias and two stands of pompom dahlias. Mr S L Young also showed some plants and Mr J Tyler some honey. The judges were Messrs Crasfield, Bourn, J Chater, and Fenner. A promenade concert was given by the Sawston Reliance Band, under the conductorship of Mr F Moe, and refreshments and other amusements were provided...

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<sup>22</sup> *CIP*, 16 August 1890 (British Newspaper Archive, [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk))



The article goes on to show that William Bement won numerous prizes at this show:

VEGETABLES – Broad beans – 1 T Munsey, 2 W Bement, 2 W Tookey, Longpods – 1P Banyard. French beans – 1 W J Bement, 2 A H Willis. Scarlet runners – 1 J Thompson, 2 A H Willis, 3 J Tyler. One cabbage – 1 T Bidwell, 2 W Bement. One red cabbage – 1 T Bidwell, 2 A M Smith. One cucumber – 1 T Phillips, 2 B Mills. Two cabbage lettuces – 1 T Munsey. Two cos lettuces – 1 W Bement. Six onions (autumn-sown) – 1 J Coe, 2 L Watts. Six onions (spring-sown) – 1 A M Smith, 2 T Munsey. Peas – 1 J Morley, 2 T Penny. Coloured kidney potatoes – 1 O G Smith, 2 J Thompson, 3 A H Willis, White kidney potatoes – 1 A M Smith, 2 J Coe, 3 P Banyard. Coloured round potatoes – 1 Phillips, 2 T Penny, 3 J Tyler and W Bement, White round potatoes - 1 T Penty, 2 D Digby. Six turnips – 1 J Tyler, 2 T Munsey. Six horn carrots – 1 W Bement, 2 D Digby. Six intermediate carrots – 1 D Digby, 2 C Flack. Six parsnips – 1 O G Smith, 2 T Munsey. One vegetable marrow – 1 T Mansfield, 2 T Penny, 3 T Munsey. Tomatoes – 1 T Phillips, 2 P Banyard, 3 B Mills.

SPECIAL PRIZES – Window box of plants (given by the President) – 1 T Mansfield, 2 C Porter, 3 A Bainbridge. Collection of potatoes – 1 T Penny, 2 W Bement, 3 D Digby. Basket of vegetables (given by the Committee) – 1 T Phillips. Collection of vegetables, for railway men only (given by a friend) 1 J Coe. One begonia (given by a friend) 1 H J Banyard, 2 T Mansfield 3 A Bainbridge.

#### **THE ROMSEY TOWN LIBERALS.**

##### **TEA AND GARDEN PARTY.**

The Romsey Town Liberal Association had its first tea and garden party of the season in the grounds of the Lodge Mill-road, kindly lent by Mr George Smith, on Thursday evening. Unfortunately the evening was very dull and cold. An excellent tea was provided under the trees; the wants of the visitors were actively attended to by Mrs Ward, Mrs Negus, Mrs Taylor, Mrs T Sizer, Mrs E Sizer, Mrs Jaggard, Mrs C Harradine, Mrs F Harradine, Mrs Peck, Mrs Lockwood, Mrs Brook, Mrs Marriott, Mrs and Miss White, Miss Bebee and Miss F Few. There were upwards of 250 at tea; the tables were decorated with plants lent by Mrs Lockwood, Mrs Peek, Mr Twinn, and Mr J W Bement. After tea the visitors amused themselves about the grounds. Mrs Peek and Mrs E Sizer presided over a stall of useful articles, the proceeds of which were given to purchase teathings for the Association. Mr F H Peek delighted the children and shocked the young ladies with a galvanic battery; while the Liberal Club Band entertained all with a selection of music. During the evening the company gathered round the platform to hear an address from Mr David. Mr Negus presided...

The above extract appeared in the *Cambridge Independent Press* in 1895<sup>23</sup> and reports that Mr Bement was present at the Romsey Town Liberal tea and garden party where he is mentioned as providing plants to decorate the tables.

By 1910 Mr Bement is a committee member of the Mill Road, Barnwell and New Town Amateur Gardener's Association.<sup>24</sup>

Until c.1910 evidence suggests that Mr Bement was an active member of the community – a tradesman providing services to the local community, a keen and competitive amateur gardener regularly taking part in local competitions and a member of the Working Men's Liberal Club. Some time between 1910 and 1913 circumstances changed for him. For reasons unclear he was driven into poverty and had settled illegally in Hackney, London. An order dated 2 May 1913 on behalf of the Hackney Union was made to return him to Cambridge where he legally belonged. However by the end of the month the order was abandoned following his death at Tooting Bec Asylum.<sup>25</sup>

The correspondence between the Hackney Union and the Guardians of the Poor in Cambridge concerning Mr Bement's 'removal' and subsequent death in Hackney are shown on the following pages.

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<sup>23</sup> *CIP*, 7 June 1895 (British Newspaper Archive [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk))

<sup>24</sup> *CIP*, 19 August 1910 British Newspaper Archive [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk))

<sup>25</sup> Document Ref No GC/A/S/19/11 (Cambridgeshire Archives)

## HACKNEY UNION, IN THE COUNTY OF LONDON.

*In the Matter of William James Bement a Pauper.*

To the Guardians of the Poor of the *Cambridge*  
 Poor Law ~~Union~~ Parish, in the County of *Cambridge*

**Take Notice,** that the above-named *William James Bement* now residing at *Tooting Bee Asylum (considered to be)*, in the Parish of Saint John at Hackney, in the said Hackney Union, has, ~~together with~~

become and now ~~is~~ chargeable to the said Union and ~~is~~ now receiving relief from the Common Fund of the said Union, and that an Order of two of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace, acting in and for the said County of London, has been obtained for ~~his~~ removal to your *Parish*, as containing the Parish, Township or place of ~~his~~ last place of legal Settlement, a copy of which Order, and also a Statement of the grounds of removal, including the Particulars of the Settlement relied upon in support thereof, are herewith sent.

And take notice that the following are the grounds of the said Removal, including the Particulars of Settlement relied upon by us in support thereof :

For that the said *William James Bement* ~~with~~ hath come to inhabit and ~~is~~ now inhabiting in the said Parish of Saint John at Hackney, in the said Hackney Union, and before and at the time of the making of the said Order, ~~was~~ and still ~~is~~ chargeable to the said Hackney Union, and receiving relief from the Common Fund of the said Union, such relief not being made necessary by sickness or accident, ~~which will produce permanent disability in the said~~

And also for that :

That said *William James Bement* hath not acquired a status of irremovability in the said Hackney Union.

The said *William James Bement* resided for  
 a period of three years or more prior to about the year 1911 ~~month of~~  
~~18~~ in tenements situate and being  
*186 Mill Row* and  
 elsewhere in the Parish of *Cambridge* in the  
 County of *Cambridge* and in the  
~~Poor Law Union~~, in such manner and under such circumstances in each  
 of such years as to acquire a status of irremovability therefrom and a  
 settlement therein in accordance with the Statutes in that case made and  
 provided

*Been nine years  
 left bet 1891 & 1911 - Confirmed  
 fact  
 now George*

And take notice that, unless Notice of Appeal against the said  
 Order be received by the Guardians of the said Hackney Union within  
 twenty-one days from the sending hereof, or in case of your application  
 for a copy of the Depositions on which such Order has been made, within  
 a further period of fourteen days after the sending of such copy, the said  
 Pauper will be removed to your said ~~Union~~ Parish in pursuance of the  
 said Order, and no appeal against such Order shall afterwards be allowed.

Given under my hand this

*second* day of

*May*, in the year of our Lord One Thousand  
 nine hundred and *Thirteen*, in the name of the Guardians of the said  
 Hackney Union.

*James B. B. B.*

Clerk to the  
 Guardians of the  
 Hackney Union.

I posted a Copy of Depositions in  
this case to

County of  
London,  
to wit.

Order dated 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1913.

To the Guardians of the Poor of the HACKNEY Poor Law Union in the  
County of London;

AND

To the Guardians, Churchwardens and Overseers, of the Poor of the  
*Cambridge* Poor Law ~~Union~~ Parish, in the County of  
*Cambridge* and to each and every of them.

**Whereas**

Complaint hath been made unto Us, two of  
His Majesty's Justices of the Peace acting in and for the said County of  
London, by the Guardians of the Poor of the said Hackney Poor Law  
Union, that

*William James Bement* aged about 66 years  
(hereinafter called the "Pauper") has come to inhabit and is now  
inhabiting in the Parish of St. John at Hackney (the same being one  
of the Parishes comprised in the said Hackney Union), endeavouring to  
settle there contrary to Law, not having gained a legal Settlement there,  
nor in any other Parish of the said Union, nor having produced any certifi-  
cate acknowledging him to be settled elsewhere, nor being exempt from  
removal by any provision of the Law, that ~~he is~~ now actually chargeable  
to the Common Fund of the said Union in respect of relief not made  
necessary by sickness or accident, ~~which will produce permanent disability~~  
in the said *William James Bement* and that the Parish  
of *Cambridge* in the County of *Cambridge* (being one of  
the Parishes comprised in the said ~~Poor Law Union~~),  
is the Place of his last legal Settlement: ~~We~~, the said Justices,  
upon due proof thereof, as well as by examination of Witness upon Oath  
as otherwise, and upon due consideration of the premises, do adjudge the  
same to be true, and that the place of the last legal settlement of the  
said Pauper is the said Parish of *Cambridge*  
in the said County of *Cambridge* and  
~~Union aforesaid; and we are satisfied that the sickness or accident of the~~  
~~said~~ ~~will produce permanent~~  
~~disability in the said~~

These are therefore, in His Majesty's name, to require and order  
you, the said Guardians of the Poor of the said Hackney Union, or some  
proper person or persons to be employed by you at such a time and in  
such a manner as by Law is provided and directed in that behalf, to  
remove and convey the said Pauper from and out of your said Union to  
the said *Cambridge* ~~Union~~ Parish, and him  
deliver, together with this our Order, or a duplicate or true copy thereof,  
unto the Guardians of the Poor there or at the Workhouse of the said  
last-mentioned ~~Union~~ Parish, and the Guardians of the said last-mentioned  
~~Union~~ Parish are hereby required to receive and provide for him  
according to Law.

Given under the hands and seals of us, two of His Majesty's  
Justices of the Peace, acting in and for the County of London, this

1913, at *Second* day of *May*  
*Stepney*

*M. Cursham Corner*



*Frank Corner*



No. B53, 1000-29-1-1913.  
T. B. & S., London, E.C.

## HACKNEY UNION.

FRANK R. COLES,  
CLERK TO THE GUARDIANS,  
AND  
CLERK TO THE UNION LAMENESS COMMITTEE.  
TELEPHONE NO 5115 LONDON  
Next Board Meeting 4.6.13

*Clerk's Office,  
Sidney Road,  
Homerton, N.E.*

22nd May 1913

Dear Sir

re William James Fement

In reply to your letter of the 21st inst: I beg to inform you that the nearest way to Tooting Bec Asylum is from the Bank station (City and South London Underground Railway) to Clapham Common and thence by Electric Tram-car to Tooting Bec Road,

The Depositions upon which the Order was made are in my keeping.

Yours faithfully

Clerk

J. Congreve Esq  
Clerk to the Guardians  
Parish of Cambridge  
55 Saint Andrew's Road  
Cambridge

W.G.C.

1010:

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**HACKNEY UNION.**

FRANK R. COLES,  
CLERK TO THE GUARDIANS,  
AND  
CLERK TO THE UNION ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE.

TELEPHONE N° 666 DALSTON.

Next Board Meeting 4.6.13

*Clerk's Offices,  
Sidney Road,  
Homerton, N.E.*

27th May 1913

Dear Sir,

re William James Bement  
under Order of Removal

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the  
26th inst: with reference to the above named.

As this patient died in Tooting Bec Asylum on the 7th  
inst I am enclosing herewith Notice of Abandonment of the  
Order instead of Copy Depositions as requested.

Yours faithfully



Clerk

J. Congreve Esq  
Clerk to the Guardians  
Cambridge Parish  
55 Saint Andrews Street



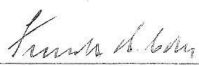
**HACKNEY UNION.****Notice of  
Abandonment  
of Order.**

To the Guardians of the Poor of the Cambridge  
~~Union~~ Parish in the County of Cambridge

TAKE NOTICE that the Guardians of the Poor of the Hackney  
Poor Law Union in the County of London, do hereby ABANDON the  
Order of M. Curshaw Corner and Frank Corner Esquires,  
two of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace acting in and for the County  
of London, bearing date the Second day of May  
One Thousand Nine Hundred and Thirteen whereby the  
Settlement of  
William James Bement aged about 66 years

was adjudged to be in the Parish of Cambridge in the  
County of Cambridge and in the  
~~Poor Law Union.~~

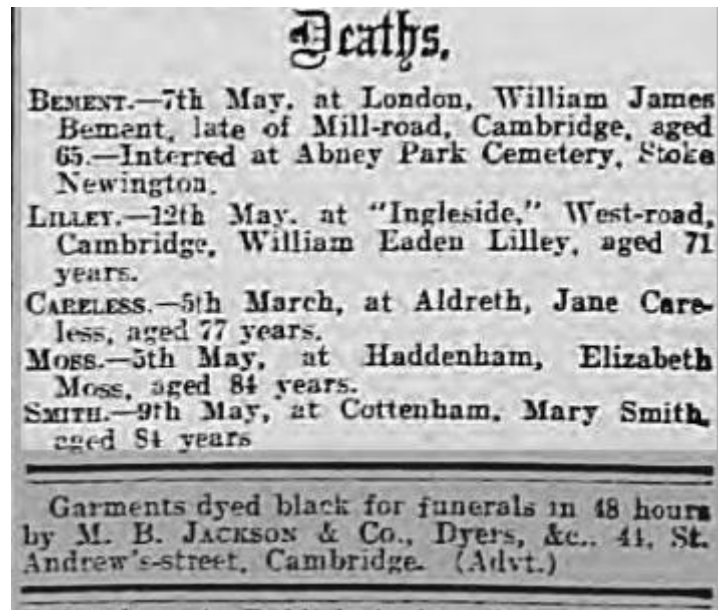
Given under my hand this Twentyseventh day of  
May One Thousand Nine Hundred and Thirteen  
on behalf of the Guardians of the Poor of the said Hackney Union.

  
Clerk to the said Guardians of the Hackney Union.



Ironically, the man who once provided services to the Cambridge Union Workhouse as undertaker ended his days requiring the services of the Guardians of the Poor and died a pauper. Had he not died when he did and had the order for his removal to Cambridge been carried out sooner he might well have ended up in the Cambridge Union Workhouse.

William Bement's death was reported in the *Cambridge Independent Press* on Friday 16 May 1913.<sup>26</sup>



Events leading up to William Bement's departure from No 186 Mill Road and indeed from Cambridge and to his demise in a London asylum are not known. A 1911 census<sup>27</sup> record for an address in Tottenham, London suggests that by April 1911 William and Sarah Bement may have moved there where William was working again as a bootmaker. His son, George appears to be living at the same address in Tottenham with his wife and family.

<sup>26</sup> *CIP*, 16 May 1913, (British Newspaper Archive [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk))

<sup>27</sup> 1911 England census RG 1407308 (Ancestry.co.uk)

The following images show Nos 190–192 Mill Road, two doors along from No 186. William Bement's landlord, Mr Harmer, occupied these premises between 1901 and 1923 where he ran a haberdashery and drapery shop. These images show the shop when it was owned by Mr Norman from c.1923–c.1940 when it was also a drapery shop.



Norman & Sons, Nos. 190 & 192 Mill Road c.19??<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> B.Mill.K2 (Cambridgeshire Collection)



Above Norman & Sons, 190-192 Mill Road 1923<sup>29</sup> and below as it is today, Cambridge Resale<sup>30</sup>.



<sup>29</sup> B.MILL.K23 (Cambridgeshire Collection)

<sup>30</sup> Photograph by Katie Blyth, 2014

## George William Talbot, Watchmaker (1911–c.1926)

George William Talbot and his wife and four children occupied No 186 from 1911. The 1911 census record<sup>31</sup> shows the following:

Name	Relation to head	Status	Sex	Age	Occupation	Where born
George William Talbot	Head	M	M	44	Watchmaker (own account)	Lambley, Notts
Selina Elizabeth Talbot	Wife	M	F	47		Oxton, Notts
Eliza Ada Talbot	Dau	S	F	16	General servant Domestic	Poplar, London
Bertie Edward Talbot	Son	S	M	12	School	Heddingham, Essex
Alice Maude Talbot	Dau	S	F	10	School	Heddingham, Essex
Eve Violet May Talbot	Dau	S	F	4		Heddingham, Essex

## Bertie Edward Talbot, Watchmaker (c.1926–36)

George William Talbot's son Bertie took over the premises in c.1926 following in his father's footsteps as watchmaker.

During this period Minnie Barraclough lived next door at No 188 where her father ran a shop in which he sold radios and charged batteries.

... we were the first ones to own a television, and people would come and stand outside our house, our shop – and it was dark, because television didn't start until 8 o'clock in the evening then – and stand round and watch it ... He would show it to the door, so that anyone outside could see it. It was very small, about 8-inch screen or something like that; but I used to love to watch it.

She recalls the lodge situated opposite, before it was demolished:

It was a lovely house, beautiful big house, and grounds all round; it used to go from one road to the other. It used to go right across with a big brick wall. And they used to have garden parties there. So we would go up to my mother's bedroom and look out the window and see all the teas all spread out...<sup>32</sup>

In 1933 Bertie Talbot submitted plans for a shop front.<sup>33</sup> As we can see from the plans (shown on the following pages) the new shop front would replace the ground-floor bay window thus turning the conventional bay fronted house into a recognisable shop. (The outline of the original ground-floor bay window is shown on the plans). These plans, however, were not approved and were revised two years later.

<sup>31</sup> 1911 England census RG14 09119 (Ancestry.co.uk)

<sup>32</sup> Mrs. Minnie Barraclough, interview conducted by Linda Cockburn on 26 November 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Ref: CB/2/SE/3/9A/154 (Cambridgeshire Archives)





25

# To the Council of the Borough of Cambridge

Acting as the URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

I HEREBY GIVE YOU NOTICE, in accordance with Bye-Law 81, that it is my intention to erect certain buildings in this Borough, and that the following particulars relate thereto, namely:

No.	QUESTIONS.	ANSWERS.
1	Owner of Proposed Buildings:— Christian Name and Surname ... .. Address in full ... ..	<i>Mr Birnie Edward Talbot</i> <i>186 Mill Rd Cambridge</i>
2	Description of Buildings... ..	<i>New Shop Front</i>
3	Situation of Buildings ... ..	<i>186 Mill Rd Cambridge</i>
4	Distance from Street Line to front main wall of Building ... ..	<i>2'-3"</i>
5	Description of the Materials to be used in construction of same ... .. (Vide Bye-laws 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6).	
6	Description of the Materials to be used in construction of same ... .. (Vide Bye-law 17).	<i>Brick Walls Zinc Roof</i>
7	Level of Lowest Floor, with reference to surface of Street ... .. (Vide Bye-law 81).	
8	Area of clear open space at rear of Building exclusively belonging thereto ... .. (Vide Bye-law 58).	
9	Distance across such open space ... .. (Vide Bye-law 58).	
10	Width of Street, or open space in front of proposed Buildings ... .. (Vide Bye-law 57).	<i>40 FT Road + 2'-3" Private Path</i>
11	Height of Walls from footings to top of wall or half the height of gable ... .. (Vide Bye-laws 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6).	
12	Height of Walls from footings to top of wall or half the height of gable ... .. (Vide Bye-laws 24 and 25).	<i>12 ft</i>
13	Thickness of outside walls ... .. (Vide Bye-laws 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6).	<i>9"</i>
14	Thickness of outside walls ... .. (Vide Bye-laws 24 and 25).	<i>9"</i>
15	Description of the means of ventilating rooms in which fireplaces are not provided ... .. (Vide Bye-law 62).	
16	Size, inclination and description of Drains ... (Vide Bye-law 68).	
17	State if drains pass under any part of the house or building ... .. (Vide Bye-law 68).	<i>No</i>
18	Number of sheets of Drawings or Tracings ... (not including Drainage notice plan).	<i>One Two</i>
19	Particulars of Ashpit... .. (Vide Bye-law 75.)	

AND I herewith leave at the Offices of the Borough Surveyor complete Plans and Sections of every floor of such intended Buildings, drawn to a scale of not less than one inch to every eight feet, showing the position, form and dimensions of the several parts of such Buildings; and also a Block Plan drawn to a scale of not less than one inch to every forty-four feet, showing the position of the Buildings and Appurtenances of the Properties immediately adjoining, and Street or Streets.

AND I will give the Borough Surveyor the following notices in writing required by the Bye-laws:—1. Before beginning to erect the Building or execute any work. 2. Before covering up any drain foundation or damp course. 3. After completion of Building.

AND I am aware that the passing of these Plans by the Council does not entitle me to erect any building or any part thereof contrary to the provisions of any Bye-law.

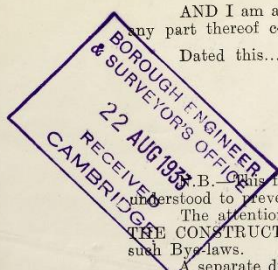
Dated this *21* day of *August* 193 *3*

Signature *H Twinn*

(Of Owner, Architect or Builder)

Address in full *286 Mill Rd*

*Cambridge*



This form is prepared and supplied for the convenience of Persons submitting Plans, but it is not to be understood to prevent the Council requiring further information in any cases, as may be seen fit.

The attention of persons intending to build is particularly directed to the BYE-LAWS FOR REGULATING THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BUILDINGS, and the penalties thereby provided in case of the contravention of such Bye-laws.

A separate drainage plan and notice, on forms which may be obtained at the Borough Surveyor's Office, must accompany the Building Plans.

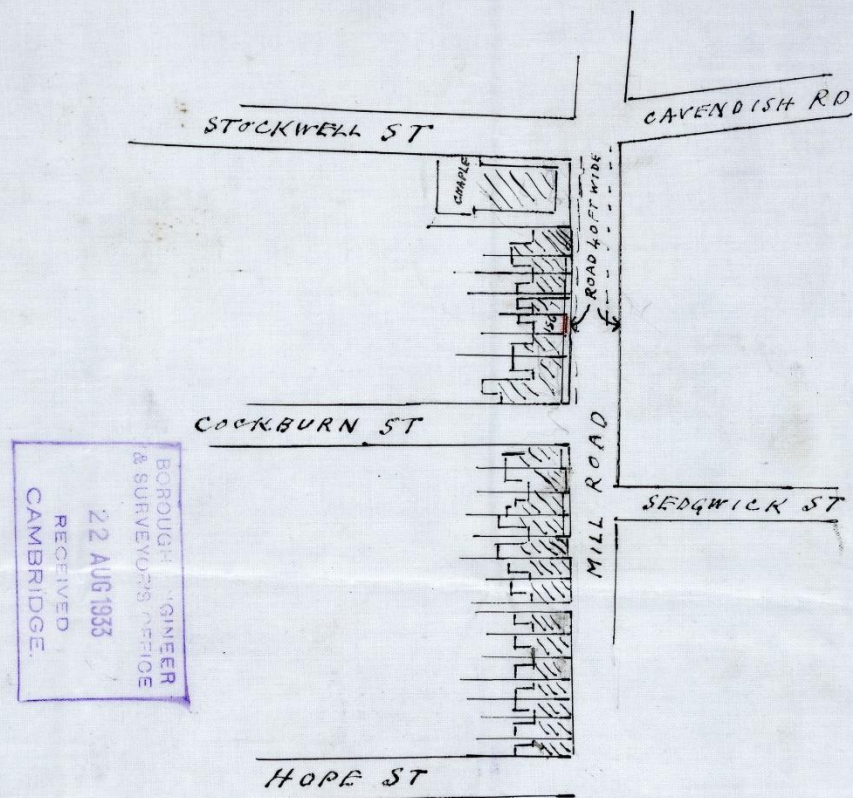
The drainage notice plan should be drawn in accordance with Bye-law 81 and to a scale of not less than 16 feet to an inch.



KEY PLAN FOR PROPOSED SHOP FRONT  
AT 186 MILL RD FOR MR TALBOT

SCALE 1"=1250'

BRINGING FORWARD AS FAR AS BAY WINDOW  
ABOUT 1'-9" LEAVING ABOUT 2'-3" PRIVATE PATH



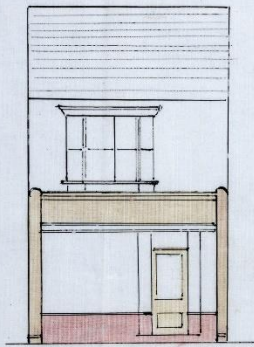
CAMBRIDGE CORPORATION

Dis APPROVED PLAN

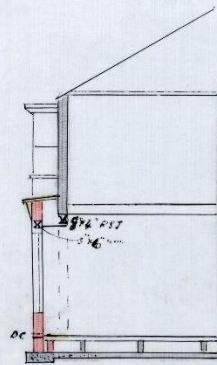
9778

NO. 154

PROPOSED SHOP FRONT AT 186 MILL ROAD  
FOR MR TALBOT SCALE 1"=8 FT



ELEVATION



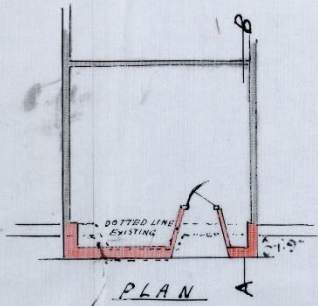
SECTION AB

CAMBRIDGE CORPORATION

Dis APPROVED PLAN

154

RECEIVED  
22 AUG 1933  
BOROUGH ENGINEER  
& SURVEYORS OFFICE  
CAMBRIDGE



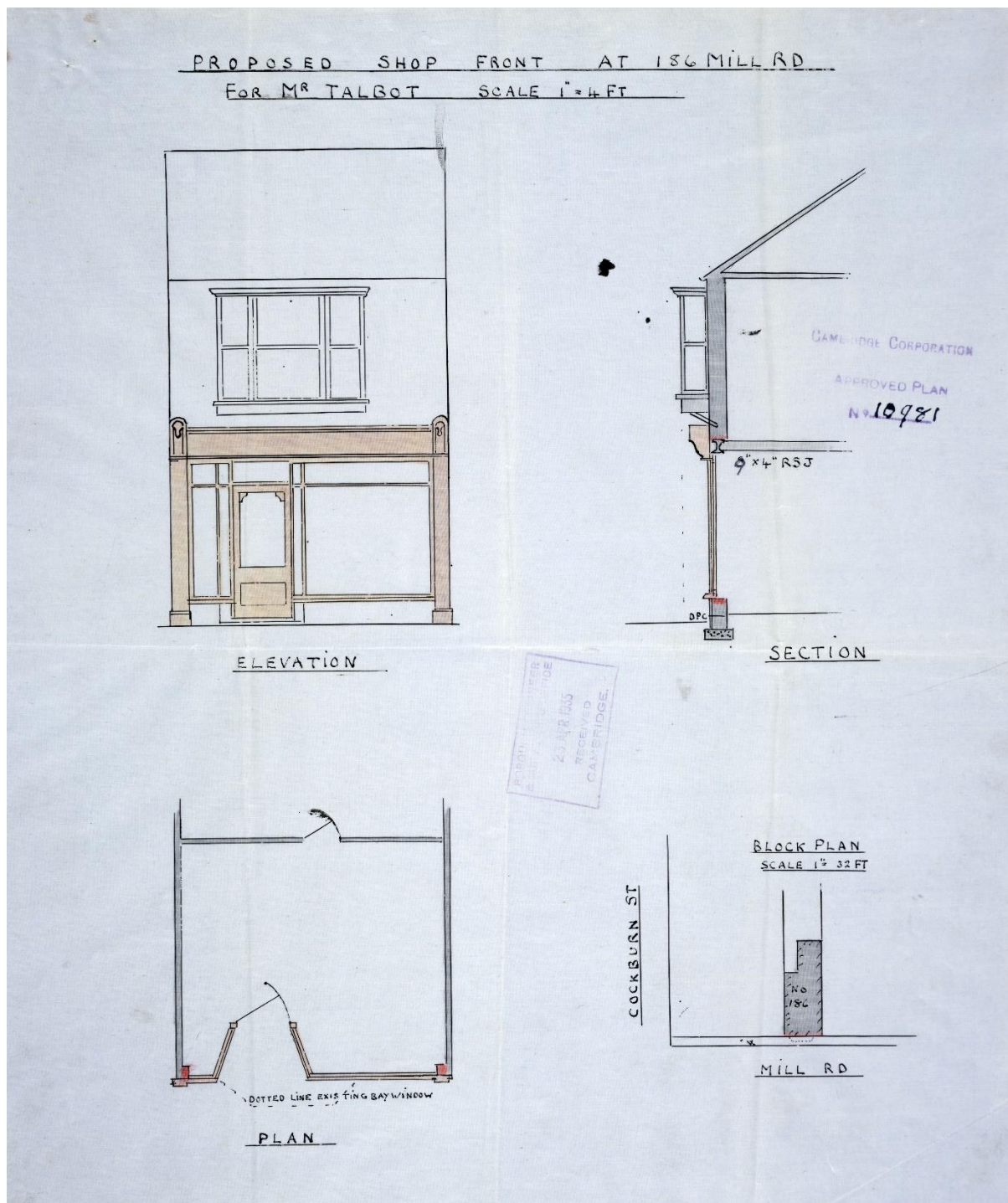
PLAN

BLOCK PLAN  
SCALE 1"=16 FT





In 1935 Bertie Talbot submitted revised plans<sup>34</sup> for his shop front which, on this occasion, were approved<sup>35</sup> and the work carried out. The shop front remains to this day.



<sup>34</sup> Document ref No.KCB/2/SE/3/9/10981 (Cambridgeshire Archives)





Mill Road, Romsey Town c1920, before building of the 'Broadway'<sup>36</sup>  
and below the same view as seen in 2015<sup>37</sup>

The shop on the corner in the above picture is Norman's drapers shown on pages 28. The building with the bay windows just beyond is No. 186. Note the bay window on the ground floor which was later replaced by the current shop front. Just beyond on the left is a sign for Hammond's (confectioner and tobacconist) at No. 176 on the corner of Stockwell Street. The railed wall in the foreground is the front of No 194 (Vernon House) occupied by Walter Mansfield, Railway Inspector from c1910 till at least 1939. A shop front may not have been added till the 1940s or 1950s when it became a shop. It is listed in Kelly's Street Directory of 1957 as Public Meat Company Butchers. The right hand side of the picture shows the entrance to 'The Lodge' which was demolished in the 1930s when the 'Broadway' was built. (See separate building report about 'The Lodge').



<sup>36</sup> B.Mill.K2 7614 (Cambridgeshire Collection)

<sup>37</sup> Photograph by Katie Blyth, 2015

## H S Hunt, Watchmaker (c.1937–c.1968)

Around two years after the new shop front was fitted Bertie Talbot left and another watchmaker, Horace Hunt, took over occupancy of the premises where he remained till at least 1968.<sup>38</sup>

Over the bridge at No 82 Mill Road (between Mawson and Tenison Roads) a Mr William Elias Hunt also sold watches and jewellery and later trophies. He started his business in 1918 which continued till 1984.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps the two Hunts were related.

The premises may have been empty in 1969 and 1970 as there is nothing listed in Kelly's Street Directory for those years.

## Sue Ryder Charity Shop (1970s)

During the 1970s No 186 was a Sue Ryder charity shop. It is not clear when in the 1970s it opened or when it closed but there is evidence to show that it was there between 1972 and 1975.

Below is a press cutting from the *Cambridge Evening News* dated 1972 mentioning the Sue Ryder Shop at No 186 Mill Road.<sup>40</sup>

### Postscript... on the Sue Ryder shop

CEN 27/4/72

**F**OLLOWING a recent article about local establishments which accepted gifts of articles and secondhand clothing, Cambridge and District Group of Friends of Sue Ryder wrote to say that I had omitted to mention the Sue Ryder shop at 186 Mill Road, Cambridge.

The shop in Mill Road, which would greatly welcome gifts for sale there, help to support two Sue Ryder homes in this area — Stagenhoe, near Hitchin, and Cavendish Home, Suffolk.

Patients at Cavendish are mainly survivors of the concentration camps, and as they grow older they feel very much the effects of their confinement.

The Stagenhoe Home receives chronically ill and disabled young people, in need of recuperative holidays. Last year a group of young girls, all physically disabled and aged from 14 to 28, went to Stagenhoe. One of them designed the tea towels which are sold in the Cambridge Sue Ryder shop.

<sup>38</sup> Kelly's Street Directory, 1968

<sup>39</sup> CEN, 19 January 1989 (Cambridgeshire Collection)

<sup>40</sup> CEN, 27 April 1972 (Cambridgeshire Collection)

According to Kelly's Street Directory it was still the Sue Ryder shop in 1974 and 1975.<sup>41</sup>

To date I have not been able to find any documentary evidence showing who occupied No 186 between 1975 and 1982.

The current occupant thinks it was a locksmith (K S Neil) for a year before he took it over in 1982. He also recalls it being an Italian restaurant.

### **Greg's Cycles (1982–present)**

In 1982 Mr Greg Coleman took over occupancy of No 186 Mill Road and opened his cycle shop, where he sells second-hand bicycles and carries out cycle repairs.



Greg Coleman, 2015<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Kelly's Street Directories, 1974 and 1975

<sup>42</sup> Photograph by Katie Blyth



Greg Coleman outside Gregs Cycles, 2015<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Photograph by Katie Blyth, 2015