Miller's Organ Works, Hobson Street, Cambridge



c.1928, Hobson Street looking North. Published in the *Cambridge Chronicle*, 3 April 1929, page 9.
B.Hob.14241 Cambridgeshire Collection.

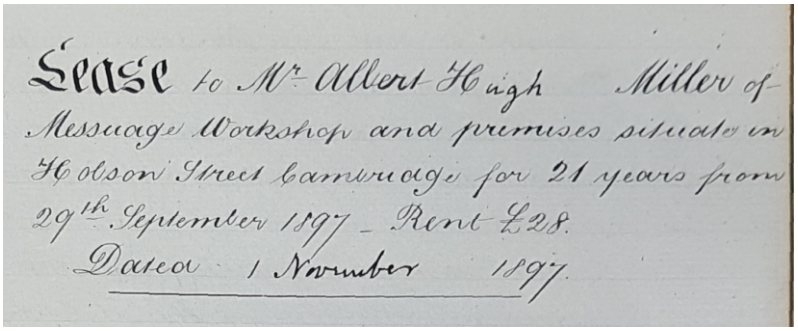


c.1928, Hobson Street looking South showing Miller's Organ works and early signs of deterioration of adjacent buildings. *Museum of Cambridge 116/52.*

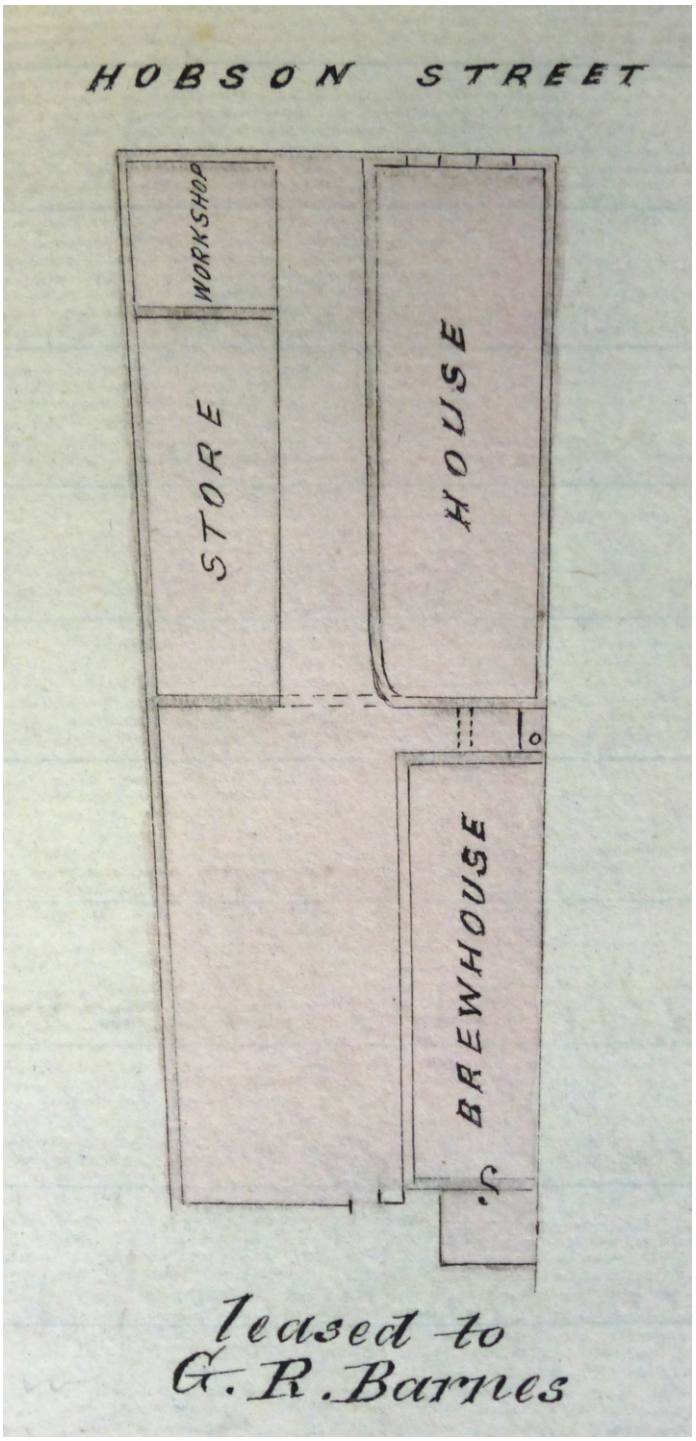


March 1930, Hobson Street 'Island site' during demolition. *Museum of Cambridge 148/54.*

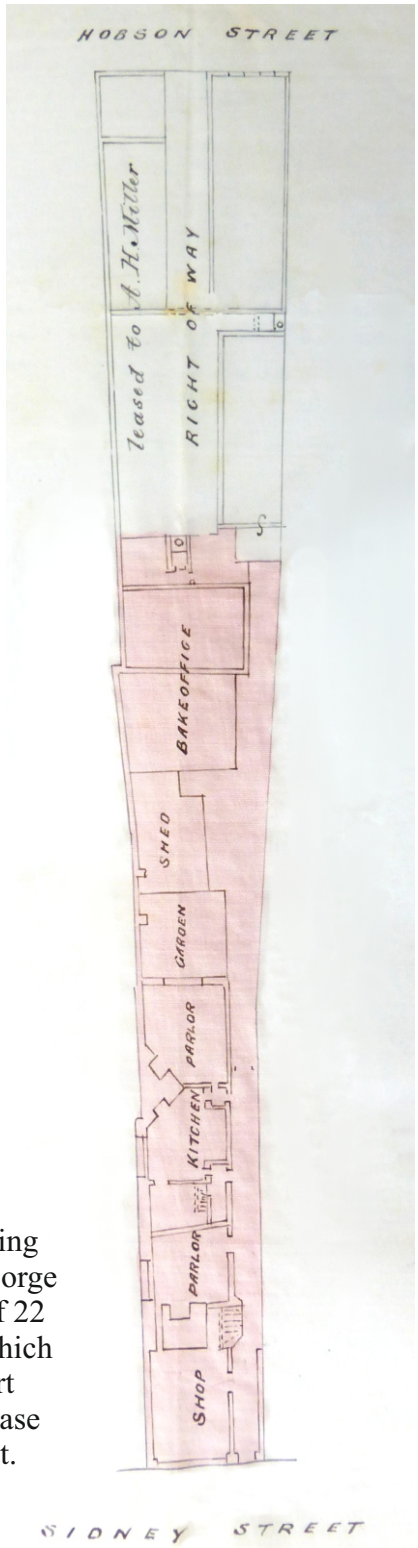
Miller's Organ Works, Hobson Street, Cambridge


Lease to Mr Albert Hugh Miller of Messuage Workshop and premises situate in Hobson Street Cambridge for 21 years from 29th September 1897 – Rent £28. Dated 1 November 1897.

Extract of 21 year Lease between the Reverend Henry Perowne Doctor of Divinity Master or Keeper of Corpus Christi College and the Fellows of the same and Albert Hugh Miller of 6 and 7 Sidney Street. Dated 1 November 1897. *Page 432.*

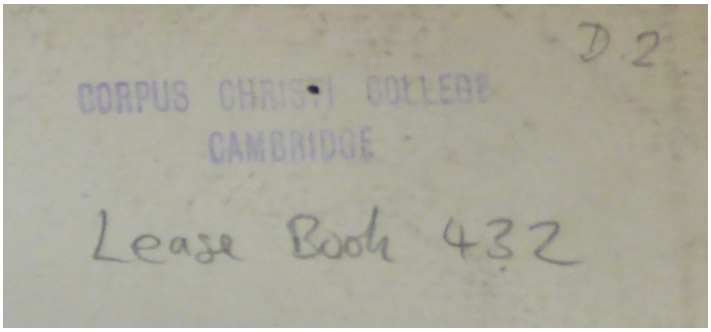


Plan accompanying 1897 lease. *Page 432.*



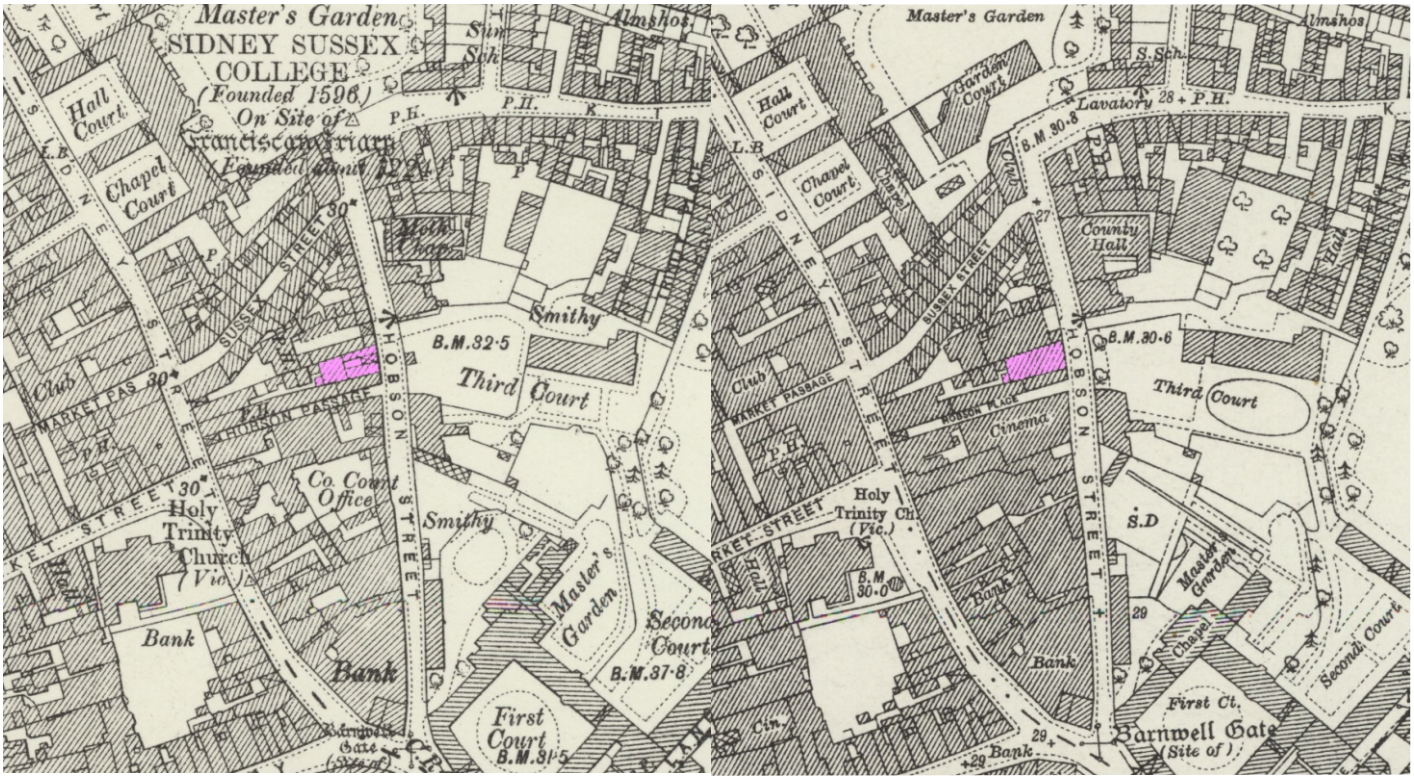
Plan accompanying 1897 lease to George Robert Barnes of 22 Sidney Street, which also shows Albert Hugh Miller's lease on Hobson Street.

Between pages 435 and 436.



Coprus Christi College Lease Book Lease Book 432.

Miller's Organ Works location highlighted in pink on various maps



1903 Ordnance Survey

1927 Ordnance Survey



2023 with earlier Ordnance Survey pre 1930s street alignment overlaid



1928 Hobson Street showing The Central Cinema, Hobson Place and, at the extreme right-hand edge, Millers Organ Works.



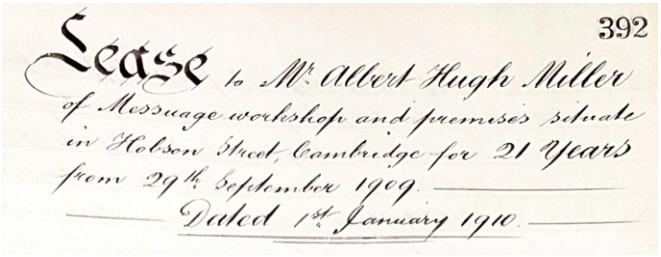
This 1929 photo of Miller's Organ works has several interesting features which add to the dating evidence.
There is a street sign showing Hobson Place and in the background Garden Court can be seen.
On the 1903 OS map, what is now Hobson's Passage is shown as Hobson Passage but on the 1927 map it is shown as Hobson Place.
Sidney Sussex's block of chambers, Garden Court, was built in the south end of the Master's Garden in 1923-5 and is depicted on the 1927 map.
The 1927 map also shows the old Central Cinema as depicted in the 1928 photo above. The new Cinema was built in 1930.

The conclusion is that Miller's Organ Works was located where what is now (as of 2023) part of Waterstone's Café at the back of their bookshop which runs between Sidney Street and Hobson Street.

Published in the Cambridge Chronicle, 3 April 1929, page 9.
B.Hob.14241 Cambridgeshire Collection.

The original 21 year lease was due to expire in November 1918, however, it was renewed in November 1909 for a further 21 years on different terms i.e. £28 per annum to increase to £34 after 1918.
Extract from the Corpus Christi Chapter book 1906-1929 for the meeting of 29th April 1910:
Item 7 (2) Lease to A H Miller of premises in Hobson Street for 21 years from Michaelmas 1909 at a rent of £28 for the first nine years and of £34 for the remainder of the term.

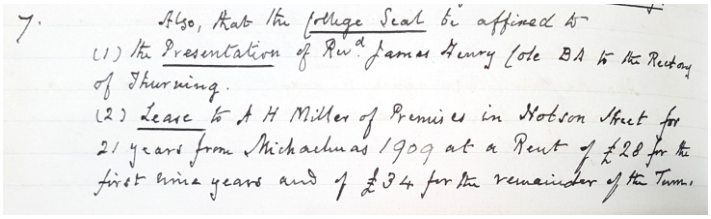
This increase in rent coincides with expiration of Albert Hugh Miller's original lease and the removal of the right of way through the Miller premises at the end of the lease of the adjoining property at 22 Sidney Street to George R. Barnes a baker and confectioner.


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Lease to Mr Albert Hugh Miller of Messuage workshop and premises situate in Hobson Street, Cambridge for 21 years from 29th September 1909

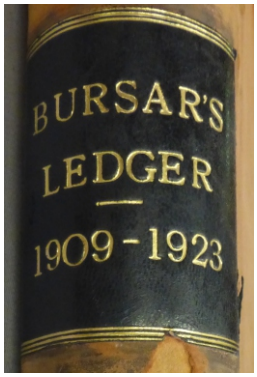
Dated 1st January 1910

Extract of 21 year Lease between the Master or Keeper of Corpus Christi College and Albert Hugh Miller of 6 and 7 Sidney Street. Dated 29th September 1909. Pages 392-395.

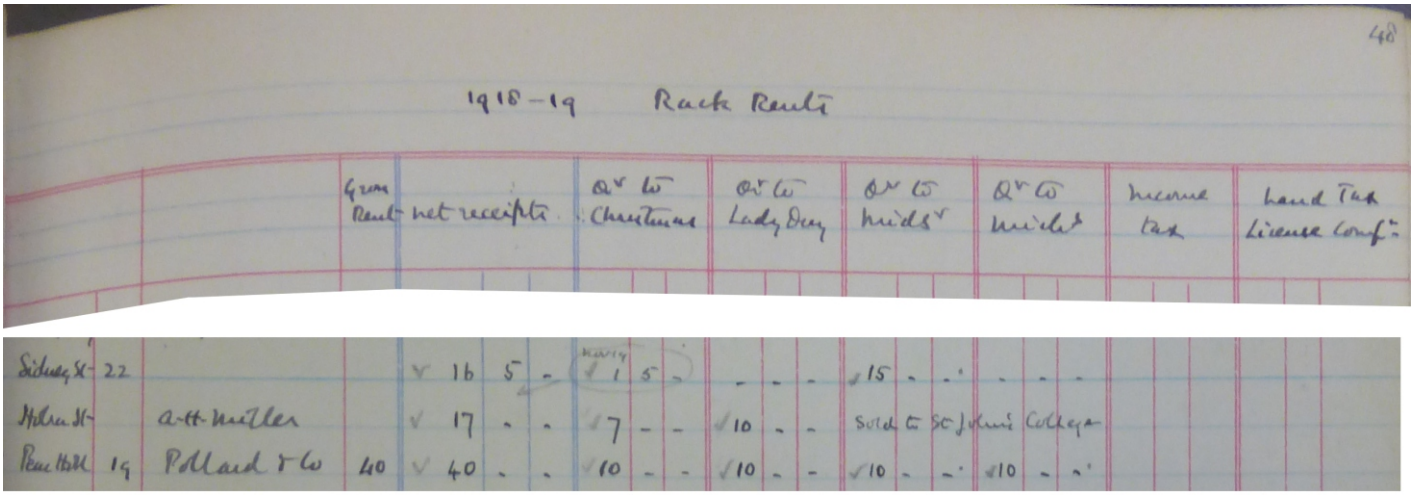

7. Also, that the College Seal be affixed to
(1) the Presentation of Revd James Henry Cole BA to the Rectory of Thurning.
(2) Lease to A H Miller of Premises in Hobson Street for 21 years from Michaelmas 1909 at a Rent of £28 for the first nine years and of £34 for the remainder of the Term.

Corpus Christi Chapter book 1906-1929 for the meeting of 29th April 1910.

Albert Hugh Miller continued to pay his £28 pounds rent until 1919 when, according to the Burser's Ledger 1909-1923, he only paid Corpus Christi £17. This was because in 1919 Corpus Christi sold the premises to St John's College.
Also in 1919, George P. Hawkins expanded his Dorothy Café from 20-21 Sidney Street into 22 Sidney Street which was by then Lambert's Bakery, G. Lambert having taken over George Barnes' lease in 1915.


BURSAR'S LEDGER
1909-1923

It is believed that Albert Hugh Miller's lease continued with St John's until its expiration in 1930 which is when the whole area was redeveloped and rebuilt including the new Dorothy Café complete with ballroom on the site of Miller's Organ Works (now Waterstones bookshop and cafe as of 2023).


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1918-19 Rack Rents

			Gross Rent	net receipts	Qrs to Christmas	Qrs to Lady Day	Qrs to midsr	Qrs to midsr	Income tax	Land Tax Licence Comfrs
Sidney St	22			£ 16 5 -	£ 1 5 -	- - -	£ 15 - -	- - -		
Hobson St		A H Miller		£ 17 - -	£ 7 - -	£ 10 - -	Sold to St Johns College			
Peas Hill	19	Pollard & Co	40	£ 40 - -	£ 10 - -	£ 10 - -	£ 10 - -	£ 10 - -		

1918-19 Rack Rent extract from the Corpus Christi Bursar's Ledger 1909-1923 showing sale to St John's College.

Acknowledgment: My grateful thanks to Dr Genny Silvanus, College Archivist and Records Manager, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, without whom this article would not have been possible.

Graham Sledge, October 2023