

**Date: 02/03/2023**

Ref: CAM4790

Dear Requester

Thank you for your request for information dated 22/02/2023 about research regarding the origin of a building in 60 Whitefield Street. We have dealt with this under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

**Response**

The council holds the information requested.

**I'm currently doing a little of research regarding the origin of a building in 60 Whitefield Street London, and was wondering if you would be so kind to assist me.**

**The company I work for, started in London by George M. Whiley as a goldbeater in a building in Whitfield Street 60. I can supply images if needed. The technology of gold beating developed by George M. Whiley has developed over the decades and is now manufactured as a hot stamping foil, which we still manufacture in Scotland at API Foilmakers.**

**I'm very keen to learn more about the history of the building itself.**

The Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre holds a book called "Streets of Fitzrovia". This says:

'No 60 is a striking early 20th century building, pilastered and with two curving dentilled pediments. It was built for several firms of gold beaters – hence the carvings below the cornice – that were based here from the 1860s until WWII. The building now houses the Doctors Laboratory, established in 1987. It is the largest independent provider of clinical laboratory diagnostic services in the UK. The building covers the site of No 54, where William Mertens published a German language newspaper called Freiheit. In 1882 it applauded the Phoenix Park murders in Dublin as a 'heroically bold act of public justice', for which libel Mertens was imprisoned for 18 months'.

They also hold an edition of "Fitzrovia News" from December 1997 which says:

'This could be an obituary for a building whose demise was intimated at the Fitzrovia Festival in July at the Charlotte Street Association stall. The building is 54-60 Whitfield Street and is next to the Nursery Playcentre. It used to be the premises of George M Whiley & Co., a company specialising in the production of gold leaf. George Manning Whiley was a goldbeater and had a workshop in the street since 1896. Unfortunately a development company St George North London Ltd., want to demolish it, together with the neighbouring office building to make way for a "luxury" block of flats. The building has an imposing presence in Whitfield Street; it is an asset to the streetscape and part of local history. It was completed in 1919; the architect was Ernest H Abbott – of whom little is in known. It is a good example of Industrial Architecture of the period

that continues to provide much needed workshop/studio space in Fitzrovia. It is hoped that the “Goldbeaters Building” will be protected by the Camden Council policy of retaining workshop accommodation in Fitzrovia for light industrial uses. However, you could help by writing to the Council’s Environmental Department, urging that any planning application for redevelopment requiring the demolition of this building, be rejected’.

They also hold a planning report for the proposed redevelopment of the building in 1997 which can be viewed in Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre any time during our opening hours: <https://www.camden.gov.uk/about-the-local-studies-archives-centre>

There is an illustration of an advert of the company with some information in CHS newsletters 102 and 103 which can be viewed online on the Camden History Society website - <http://www.camdenhistorysociety.org/research-room>

### **Further Information:**

We do not give our consent for any names and contact details provided in this response to be sent marketing material. Any such use will be reported to the ICO as a breach of General Data Protection Regulations and the Privacy and Electronic Communication Regulations.

Why not check our Portal [Open Data Camden](#) before making a new request as your question may already be answered by a previous [FOI response](#) or in one of our many useful and interesting datasets.

### **Your Rights**

If you are not happy with how your response was handled you can request an Internal Review within 2 months of this letter by email to [foireviews@camden.gov.uk](mailto:foireviews@camden.gov.uk) or post: Information and Records Management Team, London Borough of Camden, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE. Please quote your case reference number. If you are not satisfied with the Internal Review outcome you can complain to the Information Commissioner’s Office at [casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk) telephone 0303 123 1113, or post to Information Commissioner’s Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. The ICO website [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk) may be useful.

Yours sincerely

**Philip Lewis**  
**Information Rights Officer**