

The Old Pin Factory



The Old Pin Factory was probably part of a burgage plot - a narrow strip of land owned by a burgess in medieval times - extending from the associated High Street retail frontage. The original single storey stone building is thought to have been a stable in the 17th century.

William Johnson acquired the entire property in 1875. It was rented to William Meadows a draper until 1898 when WF Taylor Jewellers moved in. The Taylors later took ownership and members of their family lived in the Old Pin Factory at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. After that time the building was used as an office and a storeroom, before becoming derelict.

In 2004 the property changed hands again. During restoration by its current owner lots of pins were discovered under the floor confirming The Old Pin Factory's manufacturing past

Finely made pins were valuable and Stony Stratford was well known for pin making during the 18th century. Adam Smith in his "Wealth of Nations" in 1776 drew upon the example of a pin factory when describing the benefits of division of labour.

In a report on the conditions in a pin-making factory in 1842 an observer noted:

"It will be seen that children are employed at an extremely early age at pin-heading; that they are actually capable of performing the work even when no older than five years and a half. One of this age I saw sitting at a stamping-block on my first visit to the pin factory"

The fine work demanded good eyesight and no doubt young eyes were particularly suited to the task. Windows in The Old Pin Factory are typical of those found in buildings which housed the delicate work of pin manufacture.

The side windows on the top floor are facing south, making this room exceptionally well lit. Both good light and air were essential and the tiny fragments of metal resulting from grinding were a health hazard.



The Old Pin Factory, now sensitively restored, is currently used for office accommodation.