

Rossetti Court, Lyell Road, Birchington

When these flats were built in about 1968 - 1970, the research done prior to building was not very thorough. The architects were unaware that the area had been used as the site for the soil excavated from the station area in 1863 and that nothing substantial had been built on it since. This meant that the earth had not been well compacted, so was not solid enough for the shallow footings on which the flats were erected.

Before the railway came, the site had held a seed mill in the centre of the plot. This was a timber structure on a brick base. Following its demolition and the dumping of the soil from the



station site, the only buildings that occupied the site were various wooden units – one of which can be seen in the aerial photo of 1938. So nothing of any great weight had been put on the land to help compact the ground.

Because the builders were unaware of these facts, they did not make allowances for the extra deep and sturdy foundations that were needed in the circumstances. During the late 1990s, cracks began to appear in the plaster of the walls inside the flats. Then the cracks became visible on the outside brickwork. Eventually, in c. 2001-2 a survey was carried out and the residents were asked to leave the building while repairs were made. These were carried out during February and March 2004 – see photos taken in March that year. Finally the residents were able to return to their homes once more, safe in the knowledge that their flats were now on very solid foundations.



Rossetti Court 2004