

## **Peter Mitchell: Nothing Lasts Forever**

### **ABC (Aerated Bread Company offices), Camden Road, London, 1979**

This square, colour photograph is of a shopfront with large letters 'ABC' on the storey above. The building fills the image, with glimpses of walls to either side, and a grey sky above.

The photograph is composed of a series of horizontal lines. The bottom quarter, nearest to us, is the roadway and pavement: first the black tarmac, with some dashed white road markings running left to right, and then the kerb, with single yellow vertical stripes at intervals to indicate parking restrictions, and the pavement with damp grey paving stones. From here, the ground floor of the building rises to the midpoint of the image. It's a functional mid-century building with stylish Art Deco features. In shot, there are three deep bay windows with angled corners, and two sets of glazed double doors set back between them, creating sheltered entrances to the building. The doors are boarded up from the inside. The central bay window contains three large square panels of plate glass, about a metre and a half square, divided up by slim metal mullions, with smaller, rectangular panels of glass above and to each side. Greyish Venetian blinds hide what's inside, even though some of the thin metal slats are slightly twisted out of place. Above the windows, there are folded up awnings, the sort that are opened by winding the mechanism with a metal pole.

Stretching right across the image, above the ground floor windows, there is a black panel at first floor level. It supports three slender capital letters, each about two metres in height, in faded red with black defining lines, spelling out 'ABC'. Above this, the top strip of the image is the featureless grey sky.

The Aerated Bread process was invented by John Dauglish in the 1850s to avoid the use of human hands in bread manufacture. The process used carbonated water in pressurised vessels instead of yeast, and was fast and cheap. Production was centralised in Camden in 1891, and a five-storey factory was built in 1924. The production of cakes ended in 1976 and the bakery closed in 1982.