

EP/37/11/L.

Town & Country Planning Solutions

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS



Heritage Statement

Town & Country Planning Solutions Ref No. TCPS 411
March 2009



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement relates to a disused garage building known as Manor Road Garage. Located on the northern side of Manor Road adjoining Nursery Close, it is situated within a predominately residential part of East Preston, West Sussex (see aerial photographs and General Location Plan contained in appendix 1).
- 1.2 It is understood that the garage was used for the sale of fuel and the repair of motor vehicles until the owner and operator (Mr Reginald Lillywhite) retired in the mid 1980's. The garage has remained disused ever since.
- 1.3 Mr Lillywhite died in 1997 and the ownership of the premises passed to Mrs Lillywhite until she died in September 2007. Since then, the land has been vested in the ownership of the Trustees of Mrs Lillywhite on behalf of Mr Henry Lillywhite, who is the sole beneficiary.
- 1.4 Shortly after Mrs Lillywhite died, the garage building (including the stand of 4 petrol pumps at the front of the site) was formally listed as Grade II on the 16th November 2007 and, despite a subsequent appeal, the listing was confirmed on 25th April 2008. A copy of the letter confirming the listing and the slightly revised listing details is contained in appendix 2.
- 1.5 A structural survey report of the building was produced in December 2007, but internal access to parts of the building was restricted by used cars and machinery. Once these were cleared, a second structural survey report was produced in January 2009 and this is reproduced in appendix 3. This confirms that following such a long period of disuse, most parts of the building are now in an advanced state of decay.

1.6 Given the building's declining structural condition and its listed status, there is now an urgent need to find a suitable and viable new use that will safeguard its future upkeep and maintenance. This Heritage Statement has been produced to document the research of the building's history so as to provide information to be taken into account in considering options and alternatives for its future reuse.

2. Description

- 2.1 Photographs of the building are contained in appendix 4 and a drawing showing the elevations is contained in appendix 5. The front of the building which faces south towards Manor Road has an art moderne appearance, typical of the mid-1930's with the emphasis on strong horizontal lines and the use of curved corners. This part of the building is faced in white painted render over brickwork and concrete.
- 2.2 On either side of the building are two lower, forward projecting (originally symmetrical) showroom wings with two horizontal recessed bands above the former showroom windows (see photographs 1 – 10). The corners are curved with wrap around windows (with part of the eastern one extending down to the ground level).
- 2.3 These two showroom wings are connected by a taller frontage with a parapet wall capped by a single layer of bricks. The projecting central part of the frontage also has rounded walls and contains a second floor with two narrow rectangular windows. Access to the second floor is from a simple timber staircase leading up from the ground floor behind the large sliding entrance doors to the workshop (see photograph 27). Attached to the central part of the building are raised metal letters reading 'Manor Road Garage'.
- 2.4 There might once have been another front entrance on the western side of the building which has since been closed up and now contains two boarded up windows. The forecourt area in front of the building contains a concrete plinth with four 'Shell' branded petrol pumps. These narrow and rectangular pumps have facing dials and one almost complete fuel hose, but all the original 'globe' structures that would have been on the top of the pumps, are missing.
- 2.5 Internally, immediately to the rear of the front entrance to the workshop, are two parallel brick walls which project into the workshop

area (see photographs 17 and 18). These are painted red brick with pilasters containing metal framed windows, which appear to be the original external window openings to the building. This part of the building has a hipped roof with metal or light steel trusses.

2.6 Extending north from these two brick walls is a corresponding hipped light steel roof of king post type with metal trusses (see photograph 24). On either side of this central hipped section are mono-pitched side sections that have iron girders either supported by steel columns or the central brick walls (see photographs 19 – 23). Both these workshop wings of the building have sections of roof lighting. This part of the building is covered with metal corrugated iron sheeting (or similar). There is a second entrance to the rear workshop area from doors positioned approximately mid-way along the building's west elevation (see photographs 11 – 13).

2.7 To the rear of the front facade and to the west of the main workshop entrance at the front of the building, there is a small ground floor office/reception (see photograph 25) with a storeroom above (see photograph 27). There are other adjoining storerooms to the west containing shelving. The workshop part of the building has a concrete floor with a number of inspection pits at the northern end (see photograph 23).

3. Art Moderne and the history of British petrol filling stations

(i) Art Moderne

3.1 Art moderne buildings (typically constructed between 1930 - 1945) were a design response to the new age of transport relating to cars and aeroplanes. These buildings tend to have soft or rounded corners, flat roofs, flat wall surfaces and horizontal bands of metal framed windows and occasionally, curved corner windows. The overall design effect is to make the building look as streamlined and aerodynamic as possible (imitating the design of early mass produced cars and early passenger aircraft). Any ornamentation is usually in low relief to maintain the smooth line of the walls. Horizontality and rectangularity distinguish art moderne from the angularity of art-deco buildings which usually have sharper, hard-edged, angular ornamentation, vertical emphasis and a more machine-like quality.

3.2 Due to the limited construction that took place during the great depression years of the late 1920's and early 1930's, art moderne became a style used to 're-face' older commercial buildings particularly by small businesses. This was a cheaper way of modernising buildings and making a design statement without the expense of total demolition and replacement.

(ii) The history of British petrol filling stations*

3.3 While petrol driven cars entered the American mass market in 1908 with the foundation of General Motors and the production of Henry Ford's Model T, it was not until 1931 when Morris produced the first £100 car, that motoring began to expand beyond the privilege of the wealthy. The improvement of the road system and the ability to undertake longer journeys created demand for petrol supplies.

4. The history of Manor Road Garage

(i) Assessment of OS based map extracts

- 4.1 The formal listing states that *"The central part of the workshop probably dates from 1919...."*, although neither English Heritage (EH) nor the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) has been able to produce any evidence to support this claim.
- 4.2 Ordnance survey map extracts for the area are only available for the periods 1911/1912 and 1931/1932 (reproduced in appendices 6 and 7 attached). No ordnance survey maps were produced between these periods.
- 4.3 It can be seen that there was no building on the site in 1911/1912, but by 1931/1932 a 'T' shaped building had been constructed. For ease of viewing, appendix 7 also contains an enlarged extract of the OS plan showing the footprint shape of the building at this date.
- 4.4 By the time the next OS map review took place in 1943 (contained in appendix 8), the shape of the building had changed to something similar to its current footprint configuration. Appendix 9 contains an up to date version of the OS map showing the current footprint area of the building compared to that of the building in 1931/1932. Appendix 9 also contains a site survey of the building's existing floor plan (including the position of windows and roof trusses) with the 1932/32 footprint added (drawing no. CW 200.08.207).
- 4.5 Appendix 9 shows the existing floor plan of the building compared to that in 1943.
- 4.6 These drawings demonstrate conclusively that by 1943, the front part of the original building shown on the 1931/1932 OS map, no longer existed.

(ii) Assessment of Planning History

- 4.7 The formal listing states that *"On 22nd May 1930 an application was submitted by an F. H. Songhurst (the owner or architect) for an extension to Manor Garage. The builders were Bolton & Paul of Norwich, a firm of note who also had a tradition of supplying prefabricated buildings and motor houses publishing a catalogue of the latter"*.
- 4.8 The formal listing continues: *"On 22nd January 1934 an application was submitted by a Mr E. R. Peacock for alterations and additions to Manor Road Garage, which was approved that month. These are likely to have included the Moderne Style frontage building"*.
- 4.9 Upon formal request, neither DCMS nor EH have been able to produce any historical evidence to confirm these statements and both organisations have confirmed that they do not hold any such records or any drawings. Arun District Council do not hold any planning records that date back to the 1930's and East Preston Parish Council and the East Preston Preservation Society have also confirmed that they do not hold such records. It is understood that only West Sussex County Council's Archive Office is likely to hold such records.
- 4.10 Appendix 10 attached contains a note made by Mr C. Wiggins who visited the County Archive and Records Library in February 2009. While the County Archive and Records Office has details of applications made, no drawings have been saved.
- 4.11 The first recorded application related to a *"Brick built garage"* which was approved on the 1st December 1921. The applicant was an E. G. Cundy and the appointed builder was Peskeff & Sons (who it is understood were local builders in the area). The reference in the application entry to a *"Brick built garage"* is significant, as the central part of the garage at the front has two brick walls which extend back

into the workshop area and contain what appears to be original external metal framed windows (see description in section 2 and photographs in appendix 2).

- 4.12 The next County Archive entry is that dated 27th May 1930 for an "Extension to garage" which is known to have been completed/inspected in July 1930. The applicant was F. H. Songhurst and the building was Bolton & Paul. Apart from a small discrepancy in the submission date, this lies in with the reference contained in the formal listing of the property.
- 4.13 The following County Archive entry is an application by Mr E. R. Peacock dated 17th January 1934 for "Alterations and additions" which were approved on 30th January 1934. Again, apart from a small discrepancy with the submission date, this lies in with the planning history referred to in the formal listing notification which adds that "These are likely to have included the Moderne Style frontage buildings". It is likely therefore, that these were the additions that resulted in the changed footprint of the building which appears on the 1943 OS map extract.
- 4.14 While the appeal against the listing was unsuccessful, it resulted in an amendment to the description of the history of the building. This now states that "Approximately half of the show room at the south-western corner of the building was demolished circa 1959, to enable access to the new housing development to the rear (north) although the curved east and south facades of this wing survive".
- 4.15 Records held by the Trustees include a copy of a planning application no. EP/6/60, which was submitted by Mr R. Lillywhite on 7th January 1960. This was approved on the 20th January 1960. A copy of the application form, drawing and decision notice is contained in appendix 11. The western part of the showroom was taken down in order to

construct the entrance road to the bungalow development to the north of the garage at Nursery Close.

- 4.16 There appears to be no other records of any planning applications after January 1960 and the existing footprint of the building shown on the up to date OS Map extract appears to have remained the same since this date.

(iii) **Assessment of Ownership**

- 4.17 The deeds to the property have been inspected and relevant extracts are contained in appendix 12 attached.
- 4.18 Edgar George Cundy acquired the site in April 1920 and made the subsequent application for a 'brick garage' in December 1921. Upon his death, the land was left to George Richardson Harding, but held in trust until he was 21 years old by George Satchell Harding, his wife Margaret Harding and his brother John Charles Harding. George Satchell Harding died in May 1928 and the Hardings then sold the land to Fred Hibbard Songhurst in January 1930.
- 4.19 This conveyance at schedule 1, refers to nothing being built in front of the 'building line' shown on the conveyance plan *"except a sign to indicate a Garage or Petrol Pump..."*. More significantly, the schedule goes on to state that *"nothing therein contained should prevent a Public Motor Garage being erected upon the said land"*. No building is shown on the conveyance plan.
- 4.20 It seems clear therefore, that at January 1930 there was no garage building on the site notwithstanding the consent for a brick garage granted to E. G. Cundy in 1921. It was shortly after in May 1930 that F. H. Songhurst made the application for an extension to the garage, which was completed in July 1930. It is possible therefore, that between January 1930 and July 1930, F. H. Songhurst built the brick

garage approved in 1921 and then at the same time (or a few months later), built the extension which together, comprises the building footprint shown on the 1931/1932 OS Map

4.21 On 1st April 1933, F. H. Songhurst sold *"the garage and buildings"* to Robert Alfred Thompson, who in turn sold the garage to Edward Robert Peacock on 4th July 1933. E. R. Peacock then submitted an application for alterations and additions to the garage building in January 1934.

4.22 The garage building was then leased to Richard Archer and Frederick Crowley (described as motor engineers) and their company called Archer & Crowley Ltd., who in turn leased the premises to Reginald George Charles Lillywhite in July 1939 for a period of 21 years (until 1958). The July 1939 lease describes the premises and includes the use of the landlords fixtures and fittings referring to *"four, 500 gallon tanks and four Bowzer electric pumps"*.

4.23 The garage building was retained in Edward Robert Peacock's ownership until being purchased by Reginald Lillywhite in 1959 together with nursery land to the rear. In order to develop part of the nursery land for bungalows, it was then that Reginald Lillywhite submitted a planning application to take back down part of the western showroom building in order to provide the access road now known as Nursery Close.

(iv) Other information

4.24 The formal listing (under the History section) states *"An advertisement for Manor Road Garage, thought to be about 1937, survives in Richard Hollis estate agents guide. This specifies sales, service and repairs with cars for hire and a garage for 50 cars".* A copy of this advertisement has been provided by English Heritage and is contained in appendix 13 attached.

4.25 Appendix 14 attached contains a copy of the insurance for the garage building at the time it was owned by Edward Robert Peacock and is dated 6th March 1936. In addition to describing the building, the insurance certificate refers to its use as a motor vehicle showroom and garage, repair workshop, stores and offices. There is no mention of the four petrol fuel pumps at the front of the site. As pumps are described in the lease dated July 1939, it can perhaps be assumed that petrol pumps were installed sometime between the date of the insurance in March 1936 and the date of the lease in July 1939.

4.26 Appendix 15 contains a surveyor's report of the premises dated 13th January 1956. This describes the business as the general repairs and servicing and storage of cars and the sale of petrol, oil and accessories. *"There is a car showroom but at present the sale of new or used cars does not form an important part of the business".*

5. Assessment and Conclusions

- 5.1 The listed building schedule dated 25th April 2008 (contained in appendix 2) confirms that one of the reasons the building has been listed is because *"Historically, it represents three phases of early motoring, post-world war one, utilitarian workshops with a 1930's moderne style frontage and a full set of 1940's or early 1950's petrol pumps"*. As regards the first phase of early motoring, the listing claims that *"The central part of the workshop probably dates from 1919..."*.
- 5.2 This Heritage Statement has examined the history of the building in relation to Ordnance Survey map extracts, its planning history and the change of ownership over the years. This statement has also placed the building in the historical design context and the evolution of early petrol filling stations. This has established that while an application was made for a 'garage building' in 1921, there was no garage building on the site until after January 1930. By the early 1930's, with mass produced cars and the improvement of the road system, the second stage of motoring had begun to emerge. It would therefore, appear that the formal listing is incorrect in its assertion that part of the building is representative of the 'first phase of early motoring'.
- 5.3 Furthermore, the OS map evidence has established that part of the 'T' shaped building shown on the site in 1931/32 (which can therefore, be regarded as the original building) was demolished to make way for the art moderne style frontage, which was likely to have been as a result of the 'alterations and additions' approved in January 1934 and subsequently shown on the 1943 OS map extract. Four bowser electric pumps were erected on the site sometime between 1936 and 1939.
- 5.4 Unfortunately, there are no drawings of the building relating to the approvals granted in 1921, 1930 & 1934. Nevertheless, from the assessment contained in this Heritage Statement, it can be reasonably

assumed that the oldest part of the building that still remains are the two parallel brick walls with metal framed windows that extend into the workshop area, together with the steel frame extension of the same width to the rear as shown on drawing no. CW.700.08.207 contained in appendix 8. The post January 1934, art moderne frontage is readily identifiable, but it is less clear when the steel frame elements to the rear were constructed on either side of the central span of the building. It is possible that these steel frame extensions were built at the same time as the alterations to the front of the building, as no subsequent planning consent appears to exist other than the 1960 permission to demolish part of the western showroom in order to form Nursery Close.

- 5.5 From the evidence contained in this Heritage Statement, it is possible that the four petrol pumps at the front of the site are older than assumed in the formal listing of the building (although it is possible that the original 'Bowzer' pumps were replaced by the four current petrol pumps sometime during the 1940's or early 1950's as referred to in the formal listing).
- 5.6 Although the building remains listed, there must now be some doubt about its historical importance in representing the early phase of motoring, given that there is no evidence that the workshop dates from 1919 as implied in the listing. Instead, it represents a later stage of motoring that occurred during the 1930's. Not all the original building exists, as a significant part appears to have been demolished to make way for the addition of the Moderne style frontage.
- 5.7 To some extent therefore, the formal listing description and justification of the listing of the building appears to be factually flawed, but the fact remains that given the structural decay and lack of maintenance during the last 20 - 25 years, there is an urgent need to find a new use that will safeguard the future repair and maintenance of the building and petrol pumps. This Heritage Statement is an important component,

which needs to be taken into account in seeking and obtaining planning permission for a suitable and viable alternative use.

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March 2009