3.0 HISTORY OF SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

C ETON GARAGE AND THE ETON RESIDENTIAL BLOCKS ON HAVERSTOCK HILL

Fig. 3.18: 1903 photographs of the front and rear pf Nos.5 and 7 Haverstock Hill.

Eton Garage and the Eton residential blocks on Haverstock Hill built in 1938-9

3.8 Leases to the Eton College Estate began to fall in the late 1920s. By 1939, the row of dwellings with large gardens facing onto Haverstock Hill were replaced by six storeyed, five wing brick blocks in neo Georgian style, designed by the architects Toms and Partners and built by the developers Bell Properties Trust Limited. The three residential blocks of Eton Hall, Eton Place and Eton Rise and their grounds were bounded by Haverstock Hill, Eton Road, Eton College Road, and Adelaide Road. The combined number of flats was around 118, with 99 year leases starting from 1935[4]. Aerial views from 1938 show the construction of the blocks in progress (figs.3.19 to 3.21).

3.9 Eton Garage, the subject site of this report, was built by 1939 as an ancillary building to the neighbouring Eton residential complex. The construction of ancillary garaging blocks was relatively common by the 1930s. The garage replaced Nos.5 to 17 Haverstock Hill (fig.3.18), two short rows of houses with extensive gardens, and it adjoined Chalk Farm Station to its south. The architects were, as in the case of the Eton residential blocks, Toms and Partners.

3.10 The six floor garage was designed in the neo Georgian style of the neighbouring residential flats. The design of its elevations suggested a residential aesthetic, in accordance with the requirements laid out by the County Council in 1932, yet remained utilitarian. An article in the Architect and Building News of 6 January 1939 (fig.3.22) describes the building in detail stating that it included a motor showroom for 60 cars, offices, waiting rooms and lavatory accommodation for the garage and office staff. The Adelaide Road frontage included a petrol station, workshop and six lock-up shops. The car park was designed on the staggered floor principle in six storeys on ten different floor levels, while spiral ramps provide for independent up and down traffic without crossing.

Fig. 3.19: 1920 aerial view of the area prior to the construction of the site (Britain from Above).

Fig. 3.20: 1938 aerial view showing the construction of the garage in progress (Britain from Above).

Fig. 3.21: 1938 aerial view showing the construction of the garage in progress (Britain from Above).

3.0 HISTORY OF SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

C ETON GARAGE AND THE ETON RESIDENTIAL BLOCKS ON HAVERSTOCK HILL (CONTD.)

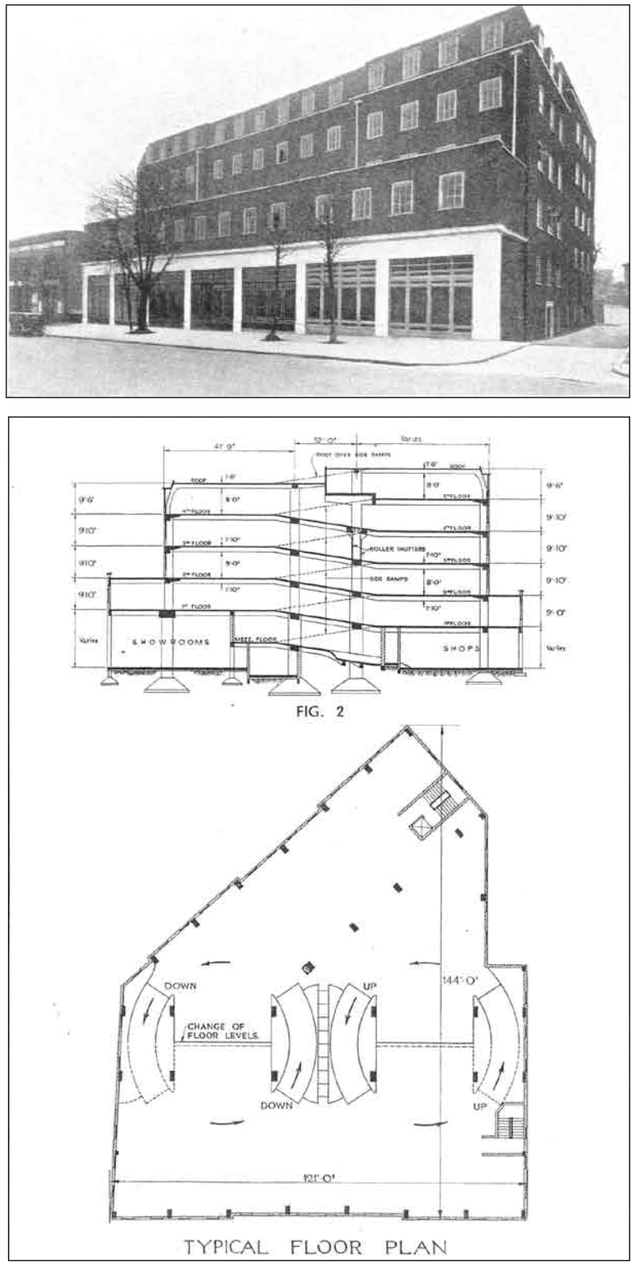

Fig. 3.22: Photograph and plans of Eton Garage published in the Architect and Building News of 6 January 1939.

3.11 Other large residential blocks replaced terraced dwellings along the north side of Adelaide Road by the 1940s. The area suffered some bomb damage during WWII but the garage suffered only minor, repairable damage (see bomb damage map at fig.3.11). The 1952 Ordnance Survey (fig.3.12) illustrates the layout of the garage in detail, with its row of shops overlooking Adelaide Road named 'Chalk Farm Parade'.

3.12 The Haverstock School premises opposite the site on Haverstock Hill removed the finer grain 19th century terraced dwellings. The area of the school increased by the 1960s (see the Ordnance Survey at fig.3.13). Later 20th century development consolidated smaller sites south of Prince of Wales Road.

3.13 The garage was later occupied by the Metropolitan Police. With the exception of the retail arcade, the premises are now vacant.

Fig. 3.23: 1974 view towards the site building (on the right) with the Roundhouse on the left.

Fig. 3.24: Current view of the Eton residential blocks.

Fig. 3.25: Current view of the Eton residential blocks.

3.0 HISTORY OF SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

D THE ARCHITECTS - TOMS AND PARTNERS

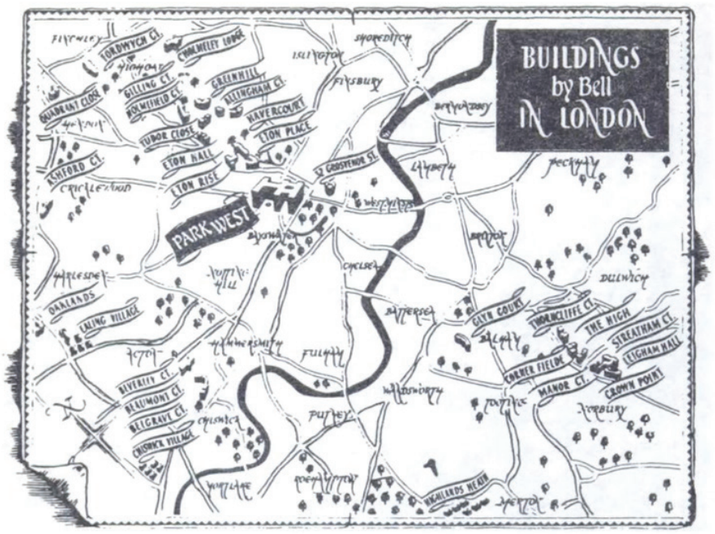

Fig. 3.26: Map illustrating all the 1930s residential developments by Bell Properties in London.

Fig. 3.27: Ealing Village (Grade II listed).

Fig. 3.28: Manor Court, Lambeth.

Fig. 3.28: Holmefield Court, Belsize Park

Fig. 3.29: Wavetree Court, Lambeth.

Fig. 3.30: Corner Fielde, Lambeth.

Fig. 3.31: Streatham Court, Lambeth

The architects Toms and Partners and their body of work

3.14 The architects Toms and Partners were founded by Reginald Toms (1892-1978) around 1930. He had begun trading with war surplus materials in the 1920s and amassed a large amount of capital. He met Anthony Somers while working at "Eagle Star Insurance Company" with whom he founded the real estate company "Bell Property Trust" by 1932[5]. The offices of Toms and Partners in Park Street, Mayfair, were shared with Bell Properties and the two firms specialised in the design and construction of mansion blocks.

3.15 Toms acquired quantities of Georgian and Victorian properties and redeveloped their sites, many in with what we now regard as typical inter-war blocks of flats – red brick with concrete or stucco bands and rounded balconies[6]. In the six years between 1933 and 1939 Toms and Partners and Bell Property Trust erected at least 2700 'up-market' flats in and around London (see plan of Bell properties at fig.3.26). Toms retired from architecture and property development by the 1940s. With his wife Mary he settled in the Château de Coinsins, close to Geneva in the 1950s and acquired a large collection of early tapestries.

3.16 The body of work of Toms and Partners in association with Bell Property includes:

1933 Wavertree Court, Wavertree Road, Lambeth (fig)

1934 Ealing Village, Ealing (Grade II listed, fig)

1934 Holmefield Court, Belsize Park

1935 Manor Court - Leigham Avenue (Lambeth)

1936 Streatham Court (Leigham Hall Mansions) (Lambeth)

1937 The High Stretham (174 flats)

1937 Corner Fielde, Streatham High Road, Lambeth

Park West, Marble Arch (550 flats)

Highlands Heath, Putnery (144 flats)

Greenhill Hampstead (135)

3.17 The business acumen of Reginald Toms and his success as both an architect and property developer are impressive. Many of his mansion blocks are not considered architecturally significant, but a selection of them show design flare and a pleasing aesthetic. Notable amongst these is Ealing Village of 1934 (Grade II listed, fig) in brick, painted white with red dressing, green pantiles to roof and painted brick chimneys. Three evenly- spaced entrance and stair towers (one at centre) having curvilinear gables and decorative brick panels linking door surround and windows above, the attic window narrower and round arched. The complex was designed with a swimming pool and sports grounds, still in use today.

3.18 In the context of R Toms and Partners the subject site of Eton Garage is not considered a notable example. It does not represent an innovative type of building and is part of the large but architecturally uninspiring Eton residential complex in neo-Georgian style which compares poorly with other works by the same architect and developer.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING SITE

Eton Garage, 5-17 Haverstock Hill

4.1 The development site is neither statutorily listed nor has it been considered for listing following Historic England's Car Park thematic study. The building is not locally listed by Camden and is not within a conservation area, but lies immediately north of the Grade II listed Chalk Farm Underground Station.

4.2 The present building on the site was constructed in 1939 by the architect Toms & Partners. The six-floor garage was built with a block of flats and is located on the trapezoidal site adjacent to Chalk Farm Station. The building is designed in an overpowering neo-Georgian style typical of the late 1930s. The elevations were designed as though all flats and are suggestive of a residential character rather than a garage.

4.3 As well as the garage, a motor showroom for 60 cars, offices and waiting rooms were provided. On the Adelaide Road frontage there was a petrol station, workshop and six lock-up shops. The car park was designed on the staggered floor principle in six storeys on ten different floor levels, while spiral ramps provide for independent up and down traffic without crossing.

4.4 The building is presently unoccupied following the expiry of lease by the Metropolitan Police, with the exception of the ground floor retail arcade along Adelaide Road.

Fig.4.1: Eton Garage, Adelaide Road frontage.

Fig. 4.2: Eton Garage, Haverstock Hill frontage.

Fig. 4.3: The fenced in area of the site building.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING SITE

Townscape Context

4.5 5-17 Haverstock Hill is located between Chalk Farm Underground Station, Haverstock Hill, Adelaide Road and Eton Place.

4.6 The building is located in an area that includes buildings of different scales, heights, ages, materiality, architectural style and quality. Directly south of the site is the Grade II listed Chalk Farm Station designed by Leslie Green and to the north is the group of 1930s mansion blocks Eton Place, Eton Hall and Eton Rise.

4.7 The mansion blocks Eton Place, Eton Hall and Eton Rise were built just before 5-17 Haverstock Hill and replaced a row of c1830s villas lining Haverstock Hill. The mansion blocks are built in a similar style to 5-17 Haverstock Hill with the same red brick but to a more bespoke double "Y" plan form. They are seven storeys high. To the east of the site is Haverstock School which was redesigned in 2006 by Feilden Clegg Bradley Architects. To the west is a mixture of mid 19th century semi-detached and terraced villas and further mansion blocks.

4.8 The overall architecture and townscape character of the area around the site can be described as mixed with a number of buildings of mediocre architectural quality interspersed with historic villa and terraced development, such as the Eton Villas, and the industrial buildings of the railway and Regents Canal. The Chalk Farm Underground Station stands apart as a prominent element of the townscape in this area, forming the focal point of Chalk Farm Road.

4.9 The building heights in the immediate site context vary between the 7 storey Eton Place, Eton Hall and Eton Rise, and Bridge House to the north and south of the site respectively. To the east are 2 to 3 storey 19th century houses and Haverstock Hill School and to the west are the 2 to 3 storey villas along Eton College Road, Provost Road and Eton Villas. The scale is primarily that of medium to large scale buildings interspersed with some smaller scale building beyond.

4.10 The permeability and legibility of the immediate context is mainly influenced by the large urban blocks and Victorian terraces which predominate in this area. The permeability around the site is particularly good to the north and south of the site with roads and pedestrian footpaths; however the busy traffic routes of Chalk Farm Road, Adelaide Road and Haverstock Hill create congested pedestrian experience at peak times. The legibility of the area is moderate owing to the remaining Victorian terraces and prominent industrial buildings. However, larger scale 20th century redevelopment has reduced the legibility of the area as a whole. Nevertheless, Chalk Farm Underground Station and the Roundhouse form recognisable landmarks in the area.

4.11 The urban grain has been transformed along the major transport routes owing to the large scale 20th century redevelopment of the area, although some fine grain terraces and villas remain along the smaller scale routes away from the principal roads.

Fig. 4.4: Residential development at Adelaide Road, Nos 23-33.

Fig. 4.5: View of Eaton College Road Estates and gardens.

Fig. 4.6: Mixed use building at Chalk Farm Road.

5.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

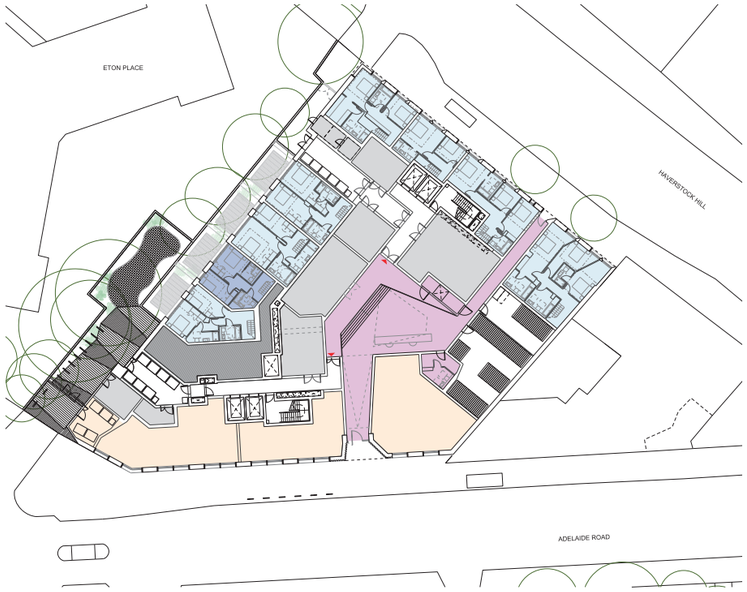

Fig. 5.1: Ground Floor Plan.

Fig. 5.2: Proposed corner balconies and curved windows on gable end.

Fig. 5.3: Haverstock Hill Elevation.

Fig. 5.4: Adelaide Road Elevation.

5.1 The proposed scheme is a very skilful design on a complex site. The complexity arises from the listed station building, with its prominent acute angled promontory of a corner, being only one storey and its virtual symmetry being expressed through two elevations of different length. The existing building is an expression of this difficulty with the bulk expressed by its southern facade, providing an unbalanced backdrop to the listed element. As well as being unbalanced from the point of view of bulk, the design is poor.

5.2 Piercy & Company's solution to the redevelopment is to treat asymmetry with asymmetry and to achieve this with simple forms. The wisdom of this design is its simplicity of concept. The design skill is in judging the bulk and sense of balance through the asymmetry. Further design skill is applied to the refinement of detail expressed in each element.

5.3 The simplicity is achieved by the proposition of two apparently separate blocks, one for each of the two streets, which open a gap between them in the most important view. The two blocks differ in height as a direct response to the adjacent listed station elevations. The choice of height is also a combination of what is considered appropriate for each street and achieving a balance through a differential in the two heights, when seen in combination with the listed station from the south. The depth of each