



**Tollgate Service Area,
Northfleet**

Heritage Statement

Prepared by:
**The Environmental Dimension
Partnership Ltd**

On behalf of:
Rapleys LLP

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Section 1

Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP), on behalf of Rapleys LLP (hereafter referred to as 'the Client'), to inform a full planning application for new EV charging bays and forecourt canopy charging area (hereafter referred to as 'the site').
- 1.2 The report has specifically been produced to consider the heritage interest of the existing buildings within the site as requested by Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) as the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to accompany the planning application.
- 1.3 As such the aim of this assessment is to specifically address the potential heritage significance of the buildings within the site and the impact upon them as a result of the scheme. It does not address any effects on the archaeological resource. this matter is covered in a separate report prepared by EDP (edp7841_r002).
- 1.4 In terms of any effects arising through change in the settings of designated heritage assets, there are none within 1km of the site and the closest such asset is the Grade II listed Orchard house, c1.2km to the south-east of the site. As such, and given the nature of this and other assets within the wider area and their setting, it is considered that the proposals at the site would not cause any harm to the significance of any designated heritage assets and they are not discussed further.
- 1.5 The buildings within the site collectively comprise the former Tollgate Hotel, which originated as a wayside Public House in the 1920s but much expanded and altered in the latter part of the 20th century. None of the buildings are statutorily designated as listed building, nor have any been identified as a 'locally listed' building by GBC.
- 1.6 Notwithstanding this, previous applications on the site have identified some potential heritage interest. This statement has been prepared to clarify any heritage interest of the building, in accordance with national and local policies and guidance.

SITE LOCATION AND RELEVANT CONTEXT

- 1.7 The site comprises an approximately 1 hectare (ha) plot, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 564250 171213.
- 1.8 The site is located on the southern edge of Gravesend, sandwiched between the former and current courses of the A2 and accessed off the roundabout interchange with the A2 and A227, which lies to the west of the site. The site itself comprises areas of hardstanding and the buildings of the former Tollgate Hotel. This comprises the original 1920s building located in the north-western part of the site along with 1970s accommodation blocks located to the east.

- 1.9 The site is defined currently by hoarding by robust boundaries, particularly on the northern, western and eastern sides, which are formed by hedges. The southern boundary is defined by a close board fence.

PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 1.10 Prior to the current application, there have been numerous planning applications submitted at the site address. Most pertinent to these proposals are an application in 2013 (GBC ref. 20131018), comprising demolition of the former hotel and erection of a petrol filling station, and in 2016 (GBC ref. 20160215), which equally comprised the demolition of the buildings for the construction of a petrol filling station.
- 1.11 In relation to the 2013 application, this was the subject of decisions to grant conditional planning permission on 15 January 2014 and subsequently on 22 July 2015, although was quashed on Judicial Review due to Green Belt matters.
- 1.12 The 2016 application was also resolved to grant on 07 February 2018 but was also subject of a legal challenge and remitted for re-determination. This was latterly appealed on non-determination although subsequently withdrawn.
- 1.13 Neither of these two applications for demolition of the buildings identified that the former hotel was of such significance to prevent development of the site, and a Historic Building Record was recommended as a condition on any planning consent for both applications, in advance of the demolition of the buildings.
- 1.14 Previous to these recent applications GBC's planning pages list 34 applications in relation to this site dating from 1963 onwards which range from advertisement applications to extensive extensions and alterations to the building itself. These will be discussed below where relevant.
- 1.15 This statement has taken the previous position into account, but has also has examined the significance of the buildings and judged the scheme on its own merits in consideration of local and national planning policy and guidance.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 1.16 The proposed development is for the demolition of the buildings and erection of EV charging points and new petrol forecourt.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE

- 1.17 No consultation responses have been obtained for these proposals. However, the GBC conservation officer commented on the previous demolition proposals. Within these, the conservation officer identified that:

"With regards to their heritage significance, these 1920s building are not of national significance but might be considered to be of local historic significance because of their

association with early motorcar travel, when many such hotels sprung up along such routes."

- 1.18 The conservation officer raised no objections to the proposals and recommended a 'Level 2' building record be secured as a condition should the application be approved.

Section 2

Legislation and Planning Guidance

- 2.1 The following section summarises the key legislation and national/local planning policies which are of relevance to this assessment.
- 2.2 The primary legislation affecting built heritage assets is the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, which set out the duties of LPAs in respect of the treatment of listed buildings and conservation areas through the planning process.
- 2.3 As the building is not listed nor in a conservation area, this legislation does not apply.
- 2.4 In relation to planning policy, the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023) sets out, at Paragraph 200, the consideration of heritage within planning applications, stating that:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.”

- 2.5 As none of the buildings in the site represents a designated heritage asset, it is clear that Paragraphs 205, 206 and 207, outlining 'substantial' and 'less than substantial' harm to designated heritage assets, and the application of 'great weight' do not apply in this instance.

- 2.6 In relation to non-designated heritage assets, Paragraph 209 states that:

“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”

- 2.7 The National Planning Practice Guidance (2019 Paragraph: 039 Reference ID: 18a-039-20190723) describes 'non-designated heritage assets' as follows:

“...buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.

A substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets.”

- 2.8 This commentary covers off non-designated heritage assets in their totality and identifies that a non-designated heritage asset represents a 'material consideration' within the planning process but carries no additional protection. It also identifies that some buildings may have some (little) heritage significance, which equally may not be sufficient to represent a material consideration. Planning applications which affect non-designated heritage assets should be considered with regard to the level of the significance of the assets in question and the extent of impacts upon that significance, as per Paragraph 209 of the NPPF.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

- 2.9 In terms of local planning policy, the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted in September 2014 and reviewed in 2019.

- 2.10 Policy CS 20 concerns heritage assets and states that:

“The Council will accord a high priority towards the preservation, protection and enhancement of its heritage and historic environment as a non-renewable resource, central to the regeneration of the area and the reinforcement of sense of place. Particular attention in this regard will be focused on those heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. Securing viable, sustainable and appropriate futures for such assets at risk will need to be reconciled with the sensitivity to change that many present.

Proposals and initiatives will be supported which preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance of the Borough’s heritage assets, their setting where it contributes to the significance of the asset and their interpretation and enjoyment, especially where these contribute to the distinct identity of the Borough.

These include:

- *Gravesend Town Centre, its development as a heritage riverside town, and its setting;*
- *The Borough’s urban and rural conservation areas; and*
- *Surviving built features and archaeology relating to the Borough’s maritime, military, industrial and transport history.*

When considering the impact of a proposed development on a designated heritage asset, the weight that will be given to the asset’s conservation value will be commensurate with the importance and significance of the asset. For non-designated assets, decisions will have regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”

- 2.11 Of relevance in this case, should the building be identified as a non-designated heritage asset, is that decisions will have regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asse, in line with the policy of the NPPF.

- 2.12 The core strategy sets out that the council maintains a list of locally important buildings and that:

“It is intended that this will be updated and included in a Supplementary Planning Document on heritage and the historic environment in due course. This work will set out and consult on clear criteria (including architectural, historic and townscape significance) and the process to be followed for identifying locally important buildings.”

- 2.13 To date, no Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on this has been adopted and there is no local list, as confirmed by GBC.

- 2.14 The plans and policies above have been taken into account in relation to the formulation of this assessment.

Section 3

Methodology

- 3.1 This statement has been produced in the first instance to establish the heritage significance of the built form within the site. Secondly, it identifies the potential effects arising through the proposed development of the site.
- 3.2 The 'significance' of the buildings under consideration has also been assessed in terms of the definition provided in Annex 2 of the NPPF; i.e. comprising their architectural, archaeological, artistic and historic interest.
- 3.3 The consideration of significance is considered in relation to Historic England's *Statements of Heritage Significance* (HE 2019). This defines significance as:

“Archaeological interest

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Architectural and artistic interest

These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.

Historic Interest

An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.”

- 3.4 It also considers and makes appropriate reference to HE's extensive three volume study on the Inter-War Public House (2015).
- 3.5 The statement was primarily a site-based exercise, with remote searches of archival information of relevance undertaken. Historic map sources have been consulted, along with consultation of the HE Archives for historic aerial photographs. The list of sources consulted comprise:
- Kent Historic Environment Record;
 - Kent Archives and Library Centre;
 - Historic England Archives;

- London Metropolitan Archives;
- Historic Mapping; and
- Site visit.

- 3.6 In light of the above, the assessment of significance employed in the preparation of this report, focused on the completion of a site survey, which was undertaken in September 2022 and concentrated on identifying the significance of the building. Good access to the external areas of the building were gained, although access to the interior was not possible due to the presence of asbestos in combination with the building's disused state. Client supplied images of the interior give some indication of its condition.
- 3.7 In light of the above, this statement has been prepared in a robust manner, employing current best practice professional guidance and giving due regard to the methodology detailed above.

Section 4

Assessment

- 4.1 This section of the statement considers the heritage significance of the building and its level of importance and how this may be affected by the proposals, in accordance with Paragraph 200 of the NPPF.
- 4.2 The potential asset in question, as identified by the LPA's Conservation Officer in the two previous applications, is the former Tollgate Hotel building. That being the original building located in the western part of the site. The remaining buildings, represented by the later hotel accommodation, have not previously been identified as potential heritage assets and as such are not considered in this report.

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

- 4.3 The first public house in this area was built by the junction of the Gravesend to Tunbridge Road and Watling Street, which prior to the early 20th century was merely a backroad running along the line of the former Roman Road whilst the main traffic utilised the route through the centre of Gravesend to the north.
- 4.4 The exact date of that early pub is unknown although it existed in the 19th century and early photographs of the building show the building of typical early 19th century style. The original building was owned by Russell's brewery of Gravesend. Russell's originated in 1858 following the acquisition of Plane and Heathorn¹. This building is clearly visible on Ordnance Survey (OS) Mapping of 1841-1907 and was located c60m to the north-west of the current building.
- 4.5 This pub was demolished after the route for the main A2 trunk road was chosen to run along Watling Street and the route upgraded and widened in 1922. It is not known exactly when the new pub was built, although it certainly appears on the 1929 OS map and is likely to date from the mid-1920s.
- 4.6 No records, plans or references to this pub could be found within the archives, other than appearing on an inventory of public houses for Russell's Brewery. Likewise, no records could be found of the pub following the takeover of Russells by Truman's in 1930.
- 4.7 Early photographs, undated but pre-war judging by the motor vehicles on display, show the original form of the 1920s version of the pub². These show the main elevation of the pub how it would have originally appeared by the roadside. It is brick built of a simple butterfly plan with a centre two storey block flanked by two angled single storey wings. In style, the main section comprises a single range with tall chimneys and varying roof pitches. A small panel of fake timber framing is attached to the centre of the main elevation. The northernmost of the two wings appears to have originally been a garage structure with

¹ http://breweryhistory.com/wiki/index.php?title=Russell%27s_Gravesend_Brewery_Ltd

² <http://www.dover-kent.com/2014-project-c/Toll-Gate-Gravesend.html>

double timber doors and a simple pitched roof. The southwestern wing is also single storey with an end stack.

- 4.8 The lettering of the Tollgate Inn can clearly be seen as well as 'Shrimp Brand Beers', which was a beer offered by Russell's and confirms its association with that brewery.
- 4.9 A postcard of likely similar date shows a wider view³ which shows that there was a small associated petrol filling building, in similar style located directly adjacent to Watling Street.
- 4.10 This arrangement is shown on the 1929 OS Map, which is the first to show the pub on the site (**Image EDP 4.1**)

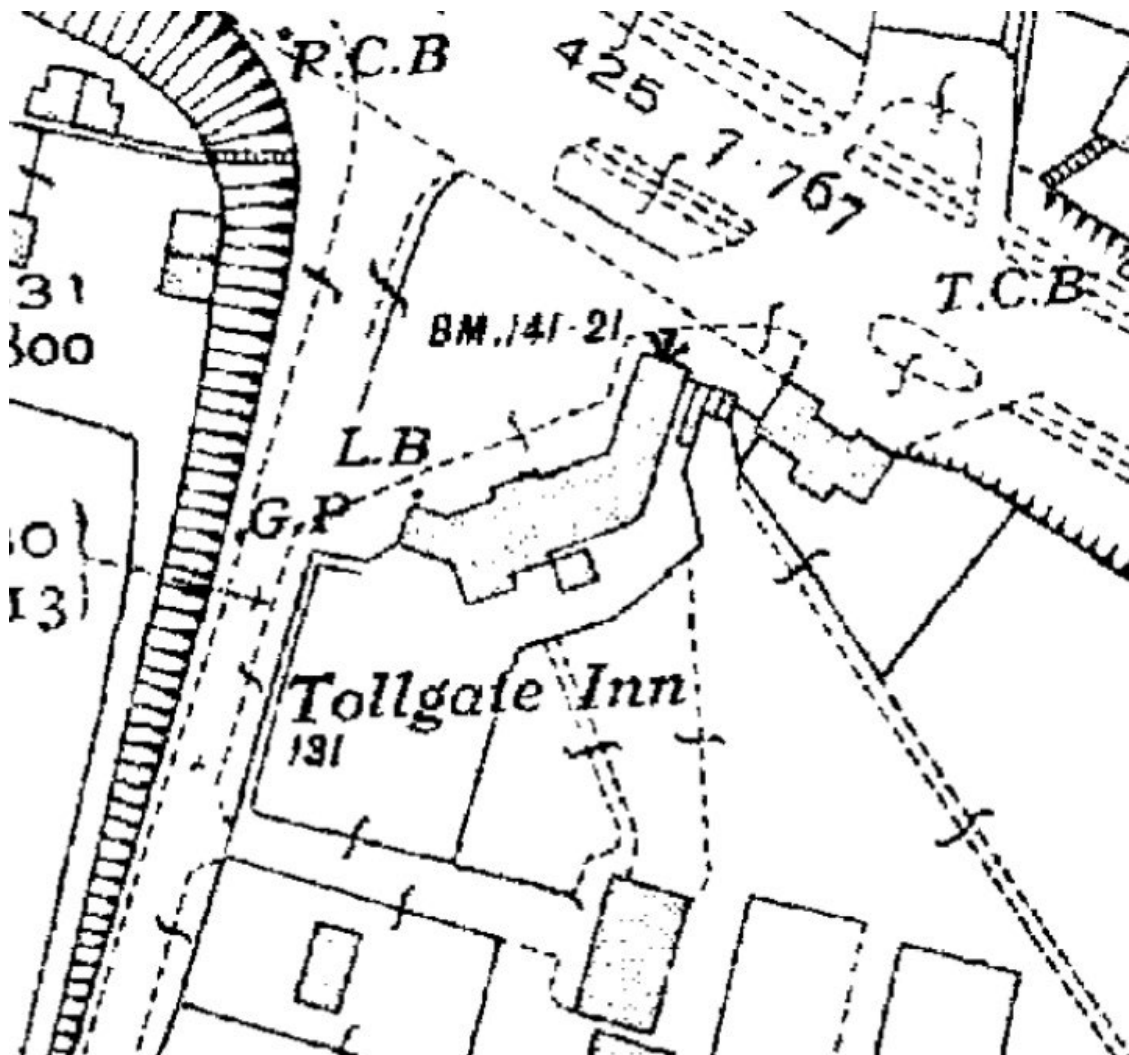


Image EDP 4.1: Extract from 1929 OS Map, showing the pub.

- 4.11 Aerial photographs from the 1940s and 50s show this arrangement quite well. A particularly clear aerial photograph from 1958 shows that the northern wing had been extended by that time, with an additional gable end chimney. It also illustrates the detached petrol filling area, a large area of car parking to the first of the building, and gardens top the south-west. The southern side of the building had not been extended by then.

³ <http://www.dover-kent.com/2014-project-c/Toll-Gate-Gravesend.html>

- 4.12 This seems to have been the case until the 1960s and on the 1961-62 OS map the building was still shown as Tollgate Inn (PH) indicating its use as a pub rather than hotel. The 1960s showed the area beginning to change, firstly with the addition of a roundabout on the junction of A2 and the A227 to the northwest, but more majorly by 1967.
- 4.13 In 1966 the A2 opened as an upgraded three lane dual carriageway and the junction completely changed into a grade separated junction. The subsequent widening of the A2 and its junction slip roads caused the demolition of the detached petrol station element of the site and shrinking of the parking area in front of the building. Other changes saw some minor alterations to the rear of the building plus the utilisation of the gardens as a car park.
- 4.14 The early 1970s saw the transformation of the pub into a motel complex as is clearly visible on aerial photographs from 1971 and illustrated on the 1979 OS Map (**Image EDP 4.2**).

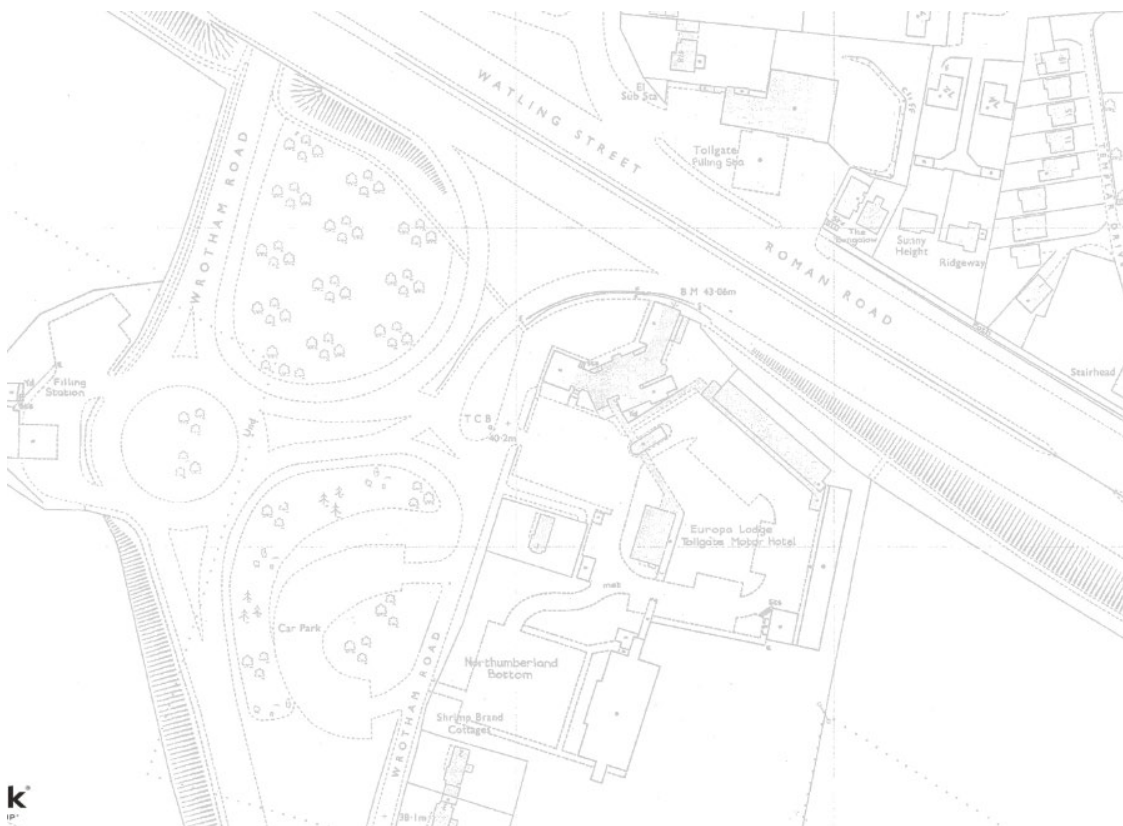


Image EDP 4.2: Extract from 1979 Ordnance Survey Map showing the changes to the site on transformation to a Motel in the 1970s.

- 4.15 The changes evident on the 1979 map show the drastic changes caused by the upgrading of the A2 in the 1960s. They also show the accommodation blocks located to the southeast and south of the main building. The main building still retains its basic form, but a large square addition has been added to the western wing, which aerial photographs show to have originally been flat roofed and caused the removal of the original gable end chimney. Other changes to the original building also include the widening of the northern wing and additions to the rear.
- 4.16 Various changes were undertaken in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1988 a rear first floor fire escape was added (GBC ref 19880987). This application also includes a first floor interior

plan, showing the rooms in the first floor utilised as offices at this time. Other plans indicate the ground floor of the main building used as a restaurant, with bars located in the two wings, albeit no detail is shown. An application from 1994 (19940172) showed grand plans for extensive extensions to the building, although the only aspect seemingly undertaken was the additional of a hipped roof to the formerly flat roofed western extension.

- 4.17 This 1994 application is also accompanied by a ground floor plan at that time, which shows the main area as a restaurant and the two wings utilised as bars and the rear areas as food preparation rooms. There are very few partitions in the main areas, suggesting extensive internal alterations by this time. Certainly, the northern wing, formerly utilised as a garage structure, was in use as a bar at this point.
- 4.18 A 1995 application shows some scaled back proposals for a new rear extension to form a foyer and reception area (19950347). This does appear to have been implemented and became the main entrance to the building prior to closure in 2009. Since the opening of the new line of the A2 the old line to the north was closed and reinstated. Thus, traffic no longer passes along the line of Watling Street and the pub has lost its *raison d'être* as a wayside pub.

Current Description

- 4.19 These changes to the building and wider site have resulted in its current appearance. Externally the north-western elevation was formerly the main elevation but in its most recent use the secondary elevation. The main block is recognisable from the original form of the pub, being two storeys with varying pitches of roofs and tall chimneys and timber work on the ground floor. The brickwork is now whitewashed with a small panel of applied timber in a muted mock Tudor style. The windows are brick imitation of mullions.



Image EDP 4.3: North-western elevation of the main central block, looking south-east

- 4.20 The southern elevation of the main block comprises the 1970s flat roof extension and 1980s fire escape, which obscures much of the original ground floor elevation. The upper floor is plain with the same multi-pitched roofs as the frontage. There may have been an access through a centrally projecting section, although this is unclear and any evidence lost through the 1970s addition.
- 4.21 The eastern gable elevation is where the northern wing is attached, but otherwise has a bay window.



Image EDP 4.4: View of southern side of the building looking north-west, showing the 1970s flat roofed extensions.

- 4.22 The northern wing is single storey which has been added to on its western side by a flat-roofed extension, obscuring the original elevation. The gable end of this is not original, being part of a pre-war extension onto a former garage area. It retains its gable end chimney and applied timber framing. The eastern elevation is plain brick and obscured by some later toilet extensions.



Image EDP 4.5: View of the northern wing looking east, showing the flat roofed extension on its western elevation.



Image EDP 4.6: View looking north-east showing the western wing and 1990s entrance section.

- 4.23 The western wing is also single storey, which has been added to with a large oversize square addition in the 1970s which removed the original end gable and chimney stack. Within the angle of the western wing and the main block sits the 1990s entrance and reception alterations.

- 4.24 Of the interior, photographs demonstrate this is plain in decoration, with much of the original interior removed other than the main staircase, which is of mock Tudor style.

Significance

- 4.25 Historically speaking, the pub was built at a time of much expansion of public house building in the inter-war period. The public house boom in this period was borne from the general desirability to improve the image of public houses, which had a reputation for bawdy and unruly behaviour. Between 1918 and 1939 breweries across the country rebuilt thousands of pubs. They needed to expand their appeal beyond their usual male clientele and leave behind the image of drunkenness associated with Victorian and Edwardian pubs (HE 2015).
- 4.26 These pubs were known as ‘improved’ pubs as they were built specifically to improve the reputation and attractiveness of pubs and according to HE between 5000 to 7000 pubs were built between the wars, with at least 1700 of them undocumented (HE 2015). The grandest of the ‘improved pubs’ had certain traits to distinguish them from earlier pubs as summarised by Gutzke: *“vast size, sale of specific beers, absences of advertisements, few entrances, opaque windows and spacious pull ins”*.
- 4.27 The development of these pubs went hand in hand with the construction of inter-war housing and, in particular, the expansion of the trunk road network. The major breweries started to appoint leading architects of the day and generally speaking developed a style akin to neo-Tudor in the 1920s and neo-Georgian in the 1930s (Gutzke 2005). Some experimented with ‘moderne’ architecture. Many of these ‘improved’ pubs featured in contemporary architectural journals of the period, which have been researched by HE in their 2005 study. Facilities provided in these ‘improved pubs’; often included service of food, function rooms, tea room, and the lounge, all aimed to attract a more varied clientele.
- 4.28 In terms of the Tollgate Inn, it falls into the period of ‘improved’ pub building and was the direct result of improvements in the trunk road system as a replacement for a demolished pub. No plans of the building could be found in various archives, although it appears to have been built by Russell’s brewery of Gravesend, which were taken over by Trumans, one of the largest London brewers, in 1930 by which time Russell’s had over 200 pubs.
- 4.29 As far as can be ascertained, the pub did not feature within the contemporary journals and does not appear in HE’s inventory which trawled the journals of the period (see HE 2015). The architect is unknown, but its design is likely to have been derivative of the wider movement albeit not being a particularly ambitious or notable example.
- 4.30 In external style, the pub resembles ‘neo-Tudor’ style, which is primarily expressed in the chimneys and the token small applied timber work. In the local area, Russell’s were building pubs of a kind of ‘Tudor-Bethan’ style even prior to the First World War, such as the Prince Albert in Broadstairs and the Queen’s Head in Northfleet which employed extensive applied timber framing. These pubs no doubt drew on the Tudor revival movement of vernacular architecture of the Edwardian period and featured extensive timber framing. Trumans seemed to have continued the tradition after their takeover in 1930, achieving more architecturally interesting pubs in the style such as the Whitehall Tavern and Old Prince of Orange within Kent.

- 4.31 Even by these standards the Tollgate Inn is not a particularly ambitious attempt at the style in its original form, and equally is one which has been altered, particularly to the rear, on the wings and internally.
- 4.32 Set against this context, it is considered that architecturally and historically, the Tollgate Inn has little heritage interest, being neither particularly ambitious in the context of inter-war pub building both nationally nor regionally. Interest lies at the local level, where the architecture contributes to the local scene in the development of architecture within the local area of Gravesend. In reference to the NPPF, it is considered the building has no artistic or archaeological interest.

Section 5

Conclusions

- 5.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by EDP in relation to a proposed new EV charging station and fuel forecourt. It has specifically been produced to identify the potential heritage significance of the buildings of the former Tollgate Hotel on the outskirts of Gravesend.
- 5.2 It has established that the building originated as a roadside pub built in the 1920s to replace an earlier pub which was demolished as a result of road widening. As originally built, the pub represents part of the inter-war 'improved' pub movement which was undertaken to improve over the negative pre-war image of pubs. As an example of such it followed the styles of the period established by the large breweries of the period whose architects become renowned within the contemporary architectural press.
- 5.3 The Tollgate Inn reflects such a movement, but is not particularly ambitious architecturally in comparison to others of the day and is not designed by any of the renowned architects. The building has also been subject of later alterations including extensions and on the interior. Given this, it is not considered that the pub is an exemplar of the type, but it does retain some local heritage interest within the context of the development of the area, in particular with reference to local road improvements and the changing attitudes to public houses in the inter-war period.
- 5.4 It is debatable whether this heritage interest is sufficient to warrant its status as a 'non-designated' heritage asset in accordance with Annex 2 of the NPPF. This is due to the building having only 'little' heritage interest. Notwithstanding this, taking a conservative view that it does qualify means that *a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset* under Paragraph 209 of the NPPF and CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy.
- 5.5 In this case, the proposals are for the demolition of the building. In consideration of the limited heritage interest of the building, in satisfaction of Paragraph 209, there is no reason to believe that this impact could not be mitigated through a suitable scheme of building recording secured on any subsequent permission as a condition. This is in line with the recommendations on both the 2013 and 2016 applications and represents an entirely appropriate response.
- 5.6 As such, it is considered that there is no reason to believe, on heritage grounds, that planning permission could not be granted in line with the policies of the NPPF and Gravesham Local Plan.



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