

The Automobile Palace Llandrindod Wells

Level 3 Historic Building Record



Richard Hayman

for

Powys County Council

July 2021

Crynodeb

Comisiynwyd Richard Hayman i ymgymryd â chofnodi adeilad hanesyddol yr Automobile Palace, Llandrindod, ym mis Mehefin 2021. Mae angen cofnod adeilad hanesyddol, sy'n gyfystyr â Lefel 3 Historic England, ar gyfer addysgu Aseiad Effaith Treftadaeth arfaethedig, a fydd yn ffurfio rhan o gais cynllunio a chais caniatâd adeilad rhestredig ar gyfer adnewyddu, trwsio a thrawsnewid yr adeilad. Mae Lefel 3 yn gofnod dadansoddol sy'n cynnwys disgrifiad ac wedyn gyfrif systematig o wreiddiau'r adeilad, ei ddatblygiad a'i ddefnydd.

Adeiladwyd yr Automobile Palace rhwng 1906-11 ar gyfer Tom Norton a dyma'r ystafell arddangos ceir gyntaf, hyd y gwyddys, i'w hadeiladu yng Nghymru, ac un o'r enghreifftiau cyntaf oll sydd wedi goroesi yn y DU gyfan. Cafodd ei ymestyn yn 1919 yn yr un arddull â'r gwreiddiol ac mae'n nodedig oherwydd ei ddefnydd cynnar o 'faience' gwyn yn ffasadau'r adeilad, ac am y manylion arddull Art Deco, yn enwedig ar y drysau. Roedd Tom Norton Ltd yn asiant ar gyfer nifer o gwmnïau ceir yng Nghymru, gan gynnwys bod, am sawl blwyddyn, yn unig asiant ceir Ford yng Nghymru. Tua diwedd yr ugeinfed ganrif, dirywiodd y busnes a chanfuwyd sawl modd arall o ddefnyddio'r adeilad, gan orfodi gwneud newidiadau i'r tu mewn, a rhai newidiadau allanol. Mae'r adeilad wedi bod yn gartref i'r Amgueddfa Feiciau Genedlaethol ers 1997 ac fe'i defnyddiwyd yn rhannol hefyd fel lleoliad i swyddfa.

Mae'r adroddiad yn archwilio hanes yr adeilad drwy gyfrwng darluniau cyfoes, ffotograffau a hanes cyhoeddedig. Drwy gymharu ag adeiladau eraill a gysylltir â'r diwydiant moduro cynnar, a'r twf mewn pensaernïaeth Art Deco, sefydlwyd lle'r Automobile Palace yn gadarn fel safle o bwys cenedlaethol, ac fel enghraifft eithriadol gynnar sydd wedi goroesi'n arbennig o dda o fath o adeilad masnachol arwyddocaol yn yr ugeinfed ganrif; mae newidiadau diweddar wedi cael eu gwneud mewn dull sy'n gydweddus ar y cyfan. Roedd cam cyntaf yr adeilad yn un o'r adeiladau ffrâm ddur cynharaf ym Mhrydain, ac mae'r ail gam, a gwblhawyd yn 1919, yn enghraifft gynnar brin a oroesodd o adeiladu gyda choncrit cyfnerthedig.

Summary

Richard Hayman was commissioned to undertake historic building recording of the Automobile Palace, Llandrindod Wells, in June 2021. A historic building record, equivalent to Historic England's Level 3, is required to inform a forthcoming Heritage Impact Assessment, which is to form part of a planning application and listed-building consent application for refurbishment, repair and conversion of the building. Level 3 is an analytical record that comprises a description followed by systematic account of the building's origins, development and use.

The Automobile Palace was built 1906-11 for Tom Norton and is the earliest known car showroom to be built in Wales, and one of the very earliest surviving examples in the UK. It was extended in 1919 in similar style to the original and is notable for its early use of white faience in the facades of the building, and for the Art Deco style detail, especially its doors. Tom Norton Ltd was agent to many car companies in Wales and was the first and, for many years, the sole agent for Ford cars in Wales. In the late twentieth century the business declined and alternative uses were found for the building, necessitating changes to the interior and some exterior alterations. The building has housed the National Cycle Museum since 1997 and has also been partly occupied as office accommodation.

The report examines the history of the building through contemporary illustrations, photographs and published accounts. By comparison with other buildings associated with the early motor industry and the rise of Art Deco architecture, the Automobile Palace is firmly established as having national importance as an exceptionally early and well-preserved example of a significant twentieth-century commercial building type, to which recent alterations have been largely sympathetic. The first phase of the building was one of the earliest steel-frame buildings in Britain and the second phase, completed in 1919, is a rare-surviving early example of reinforced-concrete construction.

The Automobile Palace Llandrindod Wells

Level 3 Historic Building Record

Richard Hayman

© Richard Hayman, 2021

Contents

1 Introduction.....	1
2 Aims and Objectives.....	2
3 Methodology and Standards	2
4 Historical Background.....	2
4.1 Tom Norton and the Automobile Palace.....	2
4.2 The Building.....	3
5 Description of Building.....	7
5.1 Exterior.....	7
5.2 Interior.....	10
6 Interpretation.....	15
7 Statement of Significance	18
8 References	22
8.1 Documentary and cartographic sources.....	22
8.2 Online sources.....	22
Tiles and Architectural Ceramics Society, Tile Gazetteer, online at https://tilesoc.org.uk/tile-gazetteer/wales.html	22
8.3 Printed sources.....	22
9 Archive	22
10 Plans showing direction of photographs.....	24
Appendix 1: Digital Photographs.....	28
Appendix 2: Measured survey drawings	38
Appendix 3: Listed Building Report.....	45

List of figures

Figure 1 Location plan.	1
Figure 2. Engraving showing the Temple Street front in the 1930s.	4
Figure 3. Components for sale in bay three of the Temple Street front, 1969	4
Figure 4. Petrol pumps and kiosk on Temple Street in 1969	5
Figure 5. Entrances in bays 7-9 in 1969	5
Figure 6. Ground floor plan surveyed in 1990.	6
Figure 7. First-floor plan, 1990.	6
Figure 8. The Temple Street front of the Automobile Palace.....	8
Figure 9. Princes Avenue front.....	8
Figure 10. Doors to bay two, Temple Street.	9
Figure 11. Fascia detail of the 1906-11 front to Temple Street.	9
Figure 12. Ground-floor plan.	11
Figure 13. Central foyer (G.3) created for the National Cycle Museum c1997.....	12
Figure 14. Art-Deco style door introduced c1997 for the National Cycle Museum (G.1).	12
Figure 15. First-floor plan.....	13
Figure 16. First floor of the original 1911 section of the building.	14
Figure 17. Hoist mechanism in room 2.1	14
Figure 18. Doors to Princes Street in 1990 and 1996 surveys.	16
Figure 19. Ground floor, phases of construction.	17
Figure 20. First floor, phases of construction.	18
Figure 21. The Hennebique system of reinforced concrete construction.....	21
Figure 22. Detail of concrete pier and beam in room G.9.....	21
Figure 23. Ground-floor photographs.	24
Figure 24. First-floor photographs.....	25
Figure 25. Lift shaft photographs.....	26
Figure 26. Exterior photographs.	27
Figure 27. Ground plan.....	38
Figure 28. First-floor plan.....	39
Figure 29. Roof plan.....	40
Figure 30. Temple Street (NW) front.	41
Figure 31. Princes Avenue (E) front.	42
Figure 32. Western Promenade (SE) front.	43
Figure 33. South-west front.	44

I Introduction

The Automobile Palace in Llandrindod Wells stands at the junction of Temple Street, Spa Road East and Princes Ave, at SO 06046 60916 (fig 1). A historic building record is required to inform a forthcoming Heritage Impact Assessment, which will form part of a listed-building consent application for refurbishment, repair and conversion of the building to business units. This report and the associated photographic and measured survey archive fulfil that requirement and takes the form of a historic building record equivalent to Historic England's Level 3.

The Automobile Palace is listed grade II* (Cadw ref 9064). The building has otherwise not been studied. Although it has been recorded in the National Monuments Record (nprn 32134) and the regional Historic Environment Record (prn CPAT30012), the entries rely on the listed building record written in 1985. The building is described briefly in the Buildings of Wales (Scourfield & Haslam 2013, 358).

Originally a bicycle and car showroom, with maintenance depot, the building was converted to alternative uses in the late-twentieth century, but remains partially empty. It has two separate office spaces on the first floor and hosts the National Cycle Museum in the ground floor. The building was visited and photographed on 25 June 2021. Access to all but one of the rooms (G.8) was possible.

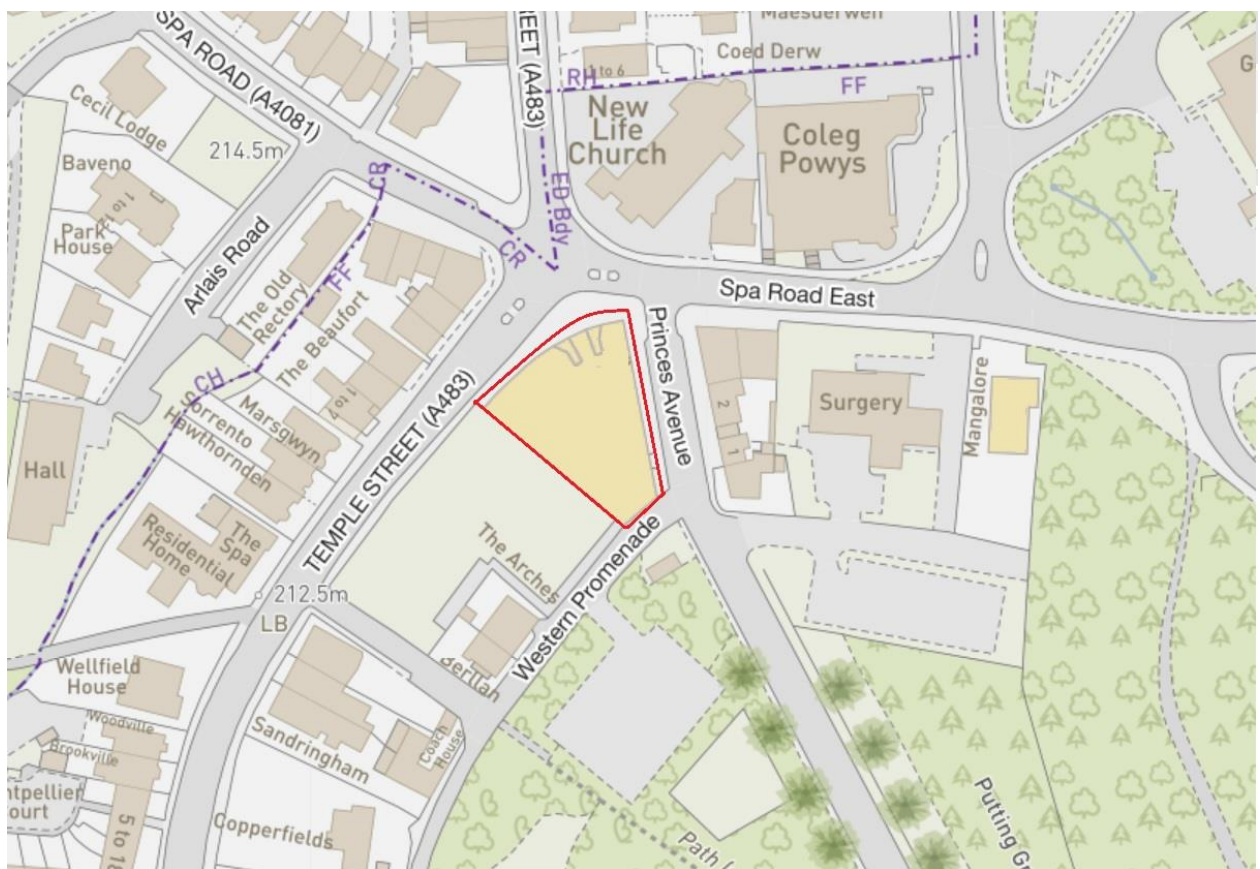


Figure 1 Location plan.

2 Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the historic building record is to provide a written, drawn, and photographic record of the building before any alterations are made to it. As a Level 3 'analytical' record, it takes the form of a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use. The record includes an account of the evidence on which the analysis has been based, allowing the validity of the record to be re-examined in detail. It also includes the drawn and photographic records required to illustrate the building's appearance and structure and to support an historical analysis. The report then measures the significance of the building against established criteria for the significance of historic buildings.

3 Methodology and Standards

The work has followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Code of Conduct and adheres to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (CIfA 2016).

Historic England's guidelines, *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2016), have been used as a basis for defining levels of recording. The Historic Building Record for this project is at Level 3.

The measured survey was undertaken by Heart of Wales Property Services in 2021 and was checked during the fieldwork for this project. The fieldwork included written descriptions, interpretation, and photographic record, and was undertaken by Richard Hayman

4 Historical Background

4.1 Tom Norton and the Automobile Palace

Tom Norton (1870-1955) founded his business in Llandrindod Wells in 1898, initially selling bicycles from rented premises in High Street. He was an agent for Raleigh cycles. At the turn of the century, he began selling cars, acting as agent for Singer, Excelsior, Swift, Ariel, Sunbeam and Daimler models, among others. In 1906 he also began one of the first public bus services in Wales, from Llandrindod to Newtown, and by 1911 was advertising sightseeing bus tours of the Elan Valley.

By 1906 his business had outgrown the original premises and work began on new premises on Temple Street, on what was previously undeveloped land. When it was completed in 1911 it was known as 'The Palace of Sport'. Meanwhile, the business had become Tom Norton Ltd in 1908. In addition to his relationship with other car manufacturers, Norton was the sole agent for Ford cars in Wales after a factory producing the Model-T was opened at Trafford Park, Manchester, in 1911. During the 1914-18 war Norton was commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture to supervise ploughing of land in Wales using Ford, Titan, Ferguson and other early tractors. He subsequently became agent for Fordson and David Brown, among other makes. In 1918 he signed a contract with Herbert Austin to

be the agent in Wales of Austin Motors, which was the beginning of his most long-running business relationship. Later he also sold commercial vehicles including Crossley, Dennis and GMC lorries.

By 1925, when the business changed its name to The Automobile Palace Ltd, there were several additional premises, including in Wrexham, Cardiff, Knighton and Rhayader. Later, depots were opened in Conwy, Llanfairpwll, Rhyl and Penrhyn Bay. The business also expanded into making motor accessories under the Notron brand. As a business, therefore, the Automobile Palace was at the centre of a dealership that spanned much of Wales.

Norton also foresaw a market for aircraft and intended to display them in his showroom, although it is not known whether any aircraft were actually sold. He invited the aviator Gustav Hamel (1889-1914) to give displays in Llandrindod Wells, taking off from the old racecourse below the Rock Park Hotel. In 1933 he hosted Sir Alan Cobham's Circus, which gave flying displays from the same field. Universal Aircraft Services began flights from the aerodrome in 1933, offering services to Cardiff and London, and sight-seeing flights over the Elan Valley, but Norton is not known to have been associated with it.

By the 1960s Norton's son, also Tom, had taken over the business, but the Automobile Palace closed in the early 1990s.

4.2 The Building

The building was begun in 1906 and was completed in 1911 at a cost of £11,000. It originally comprised five bays to Temple Street and four bays to Princes Avenue. The architect was R. Wellings Thomas of Llandrindod Wells. There was a significant enlargement of the building in 1919, constructed mainly in reinforced concrete by Holbrough & Co of Gloucester, who were licensed users of the Hennebique system of reinforced-concrete construction. At this time a further four bays were added to the existing five-bay front to Temple Street, and a further five bays were added to the existing four bays of the Princes Avenue front, with two bays facing Western Promenade. These details were built to match the original work, creating consistent architectural façades to all three of the streets faced by the building, and suggesting the continued employment of Wellings Thomas.

Early engravings, although small in scale, show the original arrangement of entrances in the nine bays facing Temple Street (fig 2). There were recessed entrances for pedestrians below bays two, four, seven and eight, and an entrance for vehicles in bay 9. The engravings also indicate that cars were displayed in the showrooms on both floors.

As the business continued to expand in the mid-twentieth century there were some changes, chiefly the addition of a large adjoining workshop and additional showroom in 1962. The appearance of the building in 1969 is revealed in a series of photographs by Geoff Charles, deposited with the National Library of Wales. They show that part of the interior was used for the sale of components, and that there were petrol pumps on the roadside facing Temple Street (fig 3, 4). (The petrol tanks below the road are said to remain in place.)

The photographs also show a different arrangement of entrances in the Temple Street front. The entrance below bay seven was no longer recessed, as it had been in the 1920s and 1930s, and bay eight was no longer an entrance (fig 5). In bay nine there are double doors flush with the front wall, with an overhead, whereas the earlier engravings suggested that doors to this vehicle entrance were originally either set back, or were full-height.

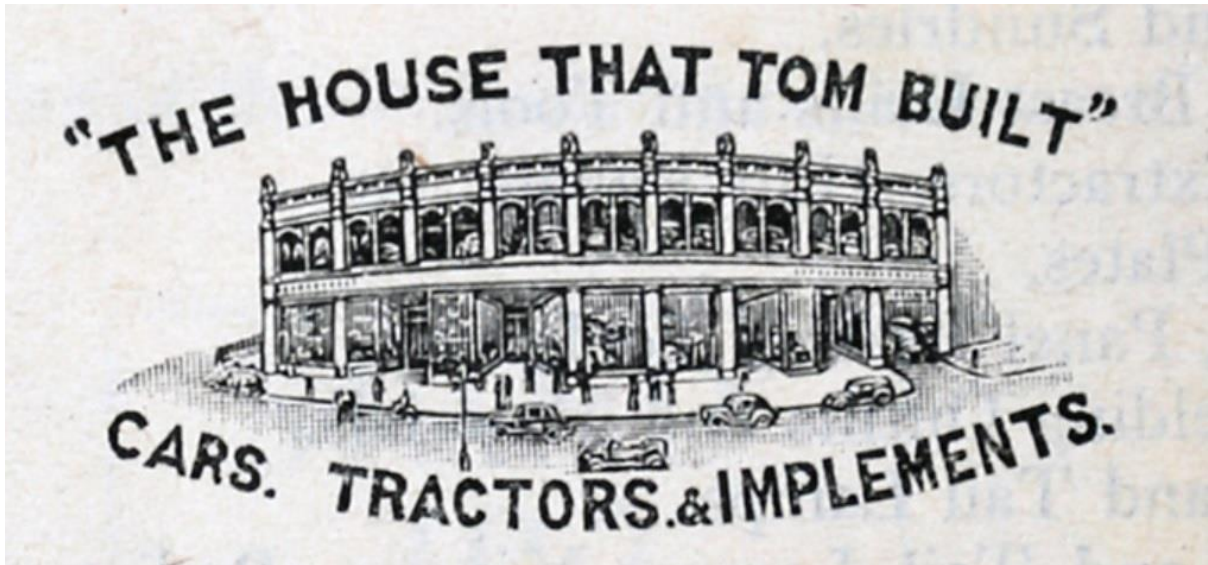


Figure 2. Engraving showing the Temple Street front in the 1930s.



Figure 3. Components for sale in bay three of the temple Street front, 1969. (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 UK)



Figure 4. Petrol pumps and kiosk on Temple Street in 1969. (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 UK)



Figure 5. Entrances in bays 7-9 in 1969. (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 UK)

A plan of the building in 1990 is shown in figs 6-7, which suggests that there had been only cosmetic changes to the interior since 1919. On the ground floor, there were office rooms at the north and east ends, but otherwise it was largely three open spaces, with one dividing wall separating the 1911 and 1919 parts of the building, and another dividing wall

presumably to separate the showroom and depot areas of the 1919 extension. The original stairs was at the rear of the 1911 section. The first floor was also largely open, with lift shaft toward the rear, and some partitions added to the original 1911 building. This floor is described on the plan as offices and warehouse.

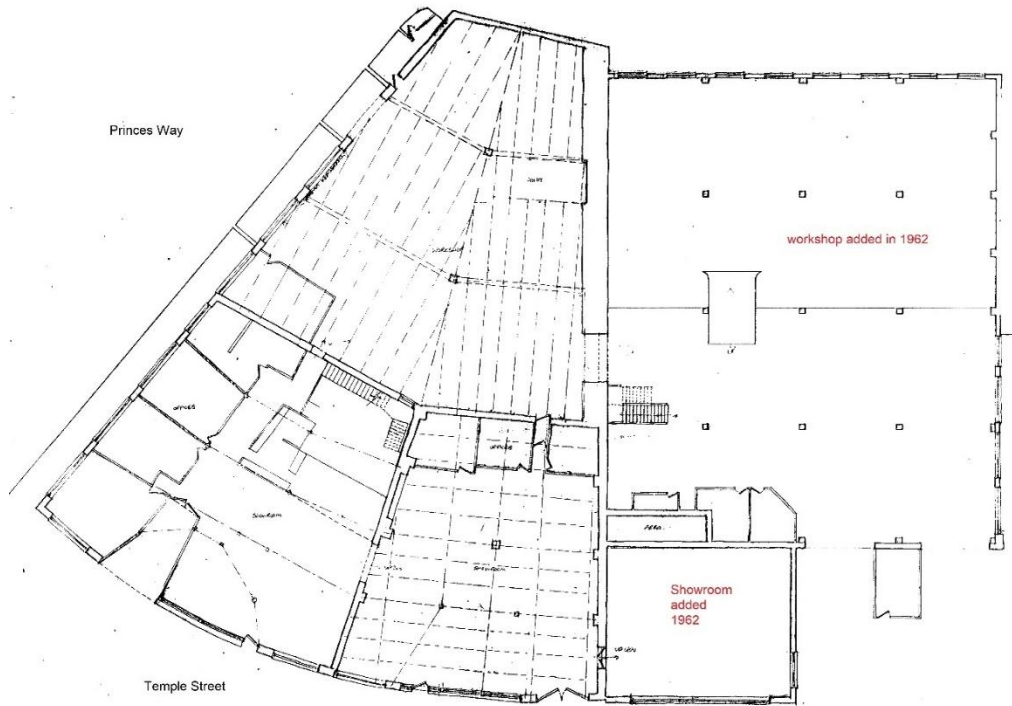


Figure 6. Ground floor plan surveyed in 1990.

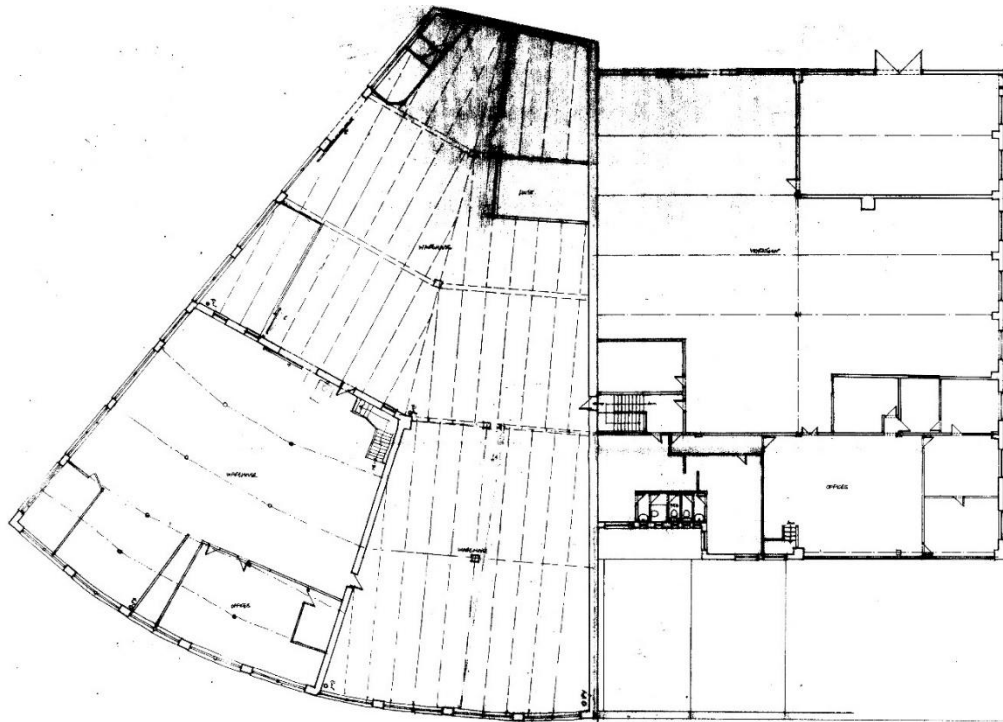


Figure 7. First-floor plan, 1990.

Substantial changes were made in the 1990s after it ceased to be a car sales and service centre. The first phase was granted listed building consent in 1993. A new first-floor entrance was created in Princes Avenue and a fire-escape stair was built allowing access from Temple Street by re-opening the entrance below bay seven. The listed-building consent issued by Cadw indicates that part of the fascia to Temple Street was also repaired under this consent.

The Employment Service, now Job Centre Plus, has occupied offices on the first floor since c1997. Some changes were made to accommodate this change of use. The original doorway to Princes Avenue was altered with the replacement of the existing doors by the Art Deco design used elsewhere in the building. The interior of the building, which already had some partitions for toilets, was fitted out with new partitions, but the present internal arrangement is later, following listed building consent granted in 2004.

Since 1997 the National Cycle Museum has occupied the ground floor of the building. Further alterations were probably made at that time, creating the present arrangement of ground-floor foyer and rooms, and the entrances from Temple Street.

On the first floor the office occupied by the North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent was created c2004, as there are photographs of that date showing the space before it was converted. It occupied the front section of the 1919 building to Temple Street.

The workshop and showroom that had been added in 1962 were demolished after 2004. The site remains disused.

5 Description of Building

5.1 Exterior

The building is mainly in Art Nouveau style of two storeys under a flat roof, consisting of a curved nine-bay front to Temple Street, nine-bay front to Princes Avenue and two bays to Western Promenade, which is the rear of the building (figs 8, 9). The ground slopes upwards from west to east. The Western Promenade front is therefore at first-floor level. On Princes Avenue the gradient of the road has required a narrow passageway, or lightwell, at ground-floor level, retained by a wall with iron railings to the street. Toward the rear there is a hoist which is housed in a roof-top structure under a pitched roof.

The front is faced in white faience, with a parapet concealing the flat roof. Although the building is of nine bays, on the ground floor the bays are less regular and less coherent than the upper storey. The ground floor has large plate-glass windows, with entrances to bays two, seven and eight. In bay two the doorway is set back in a recess with tiled floor, and where there are thin ornamented cast-iron ventilation strips above the glass. The panelled ceiling here has ornate plaster in low relief. Double doors have sinuous lower edge, and matching paired sinuous chrome or stainless steel handles across the width of the door (fig 10). Bay seven incorporates a much shallower recess to similar doors. In bay eight there is

an asymmetrical recess, with exposed newels of an internal stair, to similar doors. Bay nine to the right differs from the remainder by having floor length two-light windows (replacing doors shown on a 1969 photograph). Between the bays are pairs of rusticated pilasters, above which, in place of pinnacles, there are lions *sedant*, twenty-two in total. The parapet has a moulded cornice with egg-and-dart frieze. On the first floor are two-light display windows with arched heads, over a sill band with egg-and-dart moulding. The fascia between floors has inscriptions in raised upper-case letters. This reads, to the original Temple Street façade, 'CYCLES', 'TOM NORTON LIMITED' and 'MOTORS' (fig 11). The 1919 extension has 'TOM NORTON LIMITED' and 'AIRCRAFT'.



Figure 8. The Temple Street front of the Automobile Palace.



Figure 9. Princes Avenue front.



Figure 10. Doors to bay two, Temple Street.



Figure 11. Fascia detail of the 1906-11 front to Temple Street.

Because of the rising ground toward the rear of the building, part of the nine-bay Princes Avenue front is two-storey to the road, and the rear part one-storey. At ground floor level, therefore, materials and style match those of the Temple Street front, but towards the rear, where the ground floor is not visible from the road, the material is painted brick and the pilasters are just simple buttresses. Otherwise the building is similar to the Temple Street front. Bay two has a pediment with lettering 'No 2 GARAGE'. The fascia is lettered: 'TOM NORTON LIMITED DEPOT' on the four original right-hand bays; and 'SPORTS' in bay one and 'NOTRON REGd ACCESSORIES' in bays three-five. In the narrower bay six there is an inserted doorway, recessed and reached up stone steps. It has double doors which are similar to the main showroom doors to Temple Street, but with only a single sinuous stainless-steel rail for each door instead of a pair. The overlight incorporates a thin moulded arch similar to the upper-storey display windows. Bay two has similar double doors opening directly to the street.

Facing Princes Street the building is set back behind Art Nouveau iron railings on dwarf stone walls. There is a short return to Temple Street, but here the railings have been removed.

To Western Promenade the two bays have upper storey windows, the left-hand bay blank, but otherwise the details are the same as the other principal fronts. The south wall is brick, left exposed when the adjoining showroom and workshop were taken down, with an irregular parapet concealing the flat roof. In this wall there is a blocked doorway on the left side, above which there are two shallow brick corbels that supported the former showroom roof. In the centre is a wider doorway infilled with blockwork.

The roof-top structure has a brick wall continuous with the main south wall of the building, glazed panels to the walls on dwarf brick walls, and hipped roof of similar glazed panels. All of this has lately been renewed.

5.2 Interior

For ease of reference the rooms have been numbered either individually or, where there are small clusters of rooms divided by modern partitions, grouped under a single number. The interior of the front of building has been remodelled on the ground floor to a depth of four bays (fig 12). The doorways in bays two and eight open to a roughly rectangular central foyer (G.3), from which there is access to individual closed units (G.1, G.2, G.4, G.5, G.6, G.7, G.8) (fig 13). The ceiling of the foyer is supported on three unequal round piers which support very deep coving. Above them are modern ceiling panels. Originally the first floor was supported by a dividing wall that separated the two main phases of the building, which has been partially removed. The first floor is probably supported on steel beams, but they are not visible. There are cast-iron posts that supported the beams in the recessed opening of bay 2 (room G.4) and in room G.1, which was within the original recessed entrance in bay four. These posts are similar to those seen on the first floor.

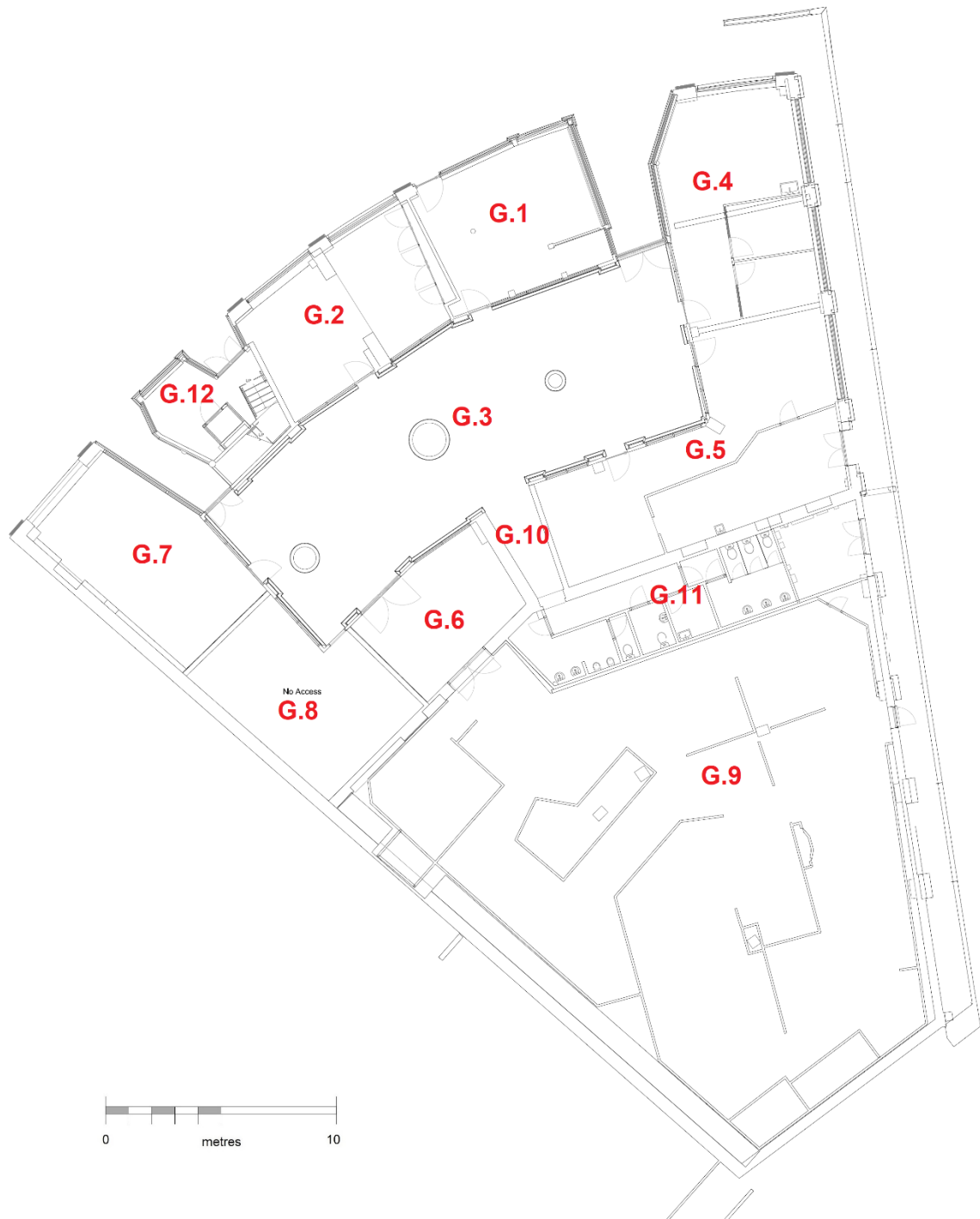


Figure 12. Ground-floor plan.

The patterned floor is of pale and black tiles, of various sizes, which are carried up as the walls of the individual shop units (most of these shop units are not faced internally, where painted blockwork is exposed). The single or double doors match the exterior doors in having glazed panels with sinuous bottom edge, and sinuous chrome or stainless steel handles (fig 14). There are also chrome or stainless steel kick plates on the outer sides of the doors. Access to the first floor is from a stairway (G.12) in bay seven, where there is an

external door. It is a closed-string staircase in concrete, with full-height round newels similar in style but thinner than the piers in the foyer, with wooden caps.



Figure 13. Central foyer (G.3) created for the National Cycle Museum c1997.



Figure 14. Art-Deco style door introduced c1997 for the National Cycle Museum (G.1).

The foyer also opens to a corridor (G.10) that leads to the toilet block (G.11) behind the shop units. This has retained a concrete floor and plaster walls, with plain doors. The largest of the rear shop units (G.6) opens, via double doors each with a single large panel, into the formerly open space at the rear, now divided up with temporary but not full-height partitions, as part of the National Cycle Museum (G.9). Here the roof is supported by plain and functional concrete beams, with concrete piers and corbels (see fig 22).



Figure 15. First-floor plan.

In the first floor the original five by four bays remains largely unaltered (1.1) (fig 15). There is a single large room with pine floorboards and ceiling supported on cast-iron posts with I-section beams supplied by Dorman Long of Middlesbrough (fig 16). Interestingly, the placing of two converging lines of posts does not match the exterior bay structure. The rear of the original bays has been partitioned off to create a lobby (1.2) and corridor (1.3) from the added entrance in Princes Avenue. This also has inner double doors.



Figure 16. First floor of the original 1911 section of the building.

The remainder of the first floor has been divided into two office units, with numerous sub-partitions (1.4-1.9 and 1.10-1.12). The stairs from Temple Street lead to a large landing on the upper floor (1.5), where a lift has been inserted. It is also reached by a corridor (1.4) from modern the Princes Avenue entrance mentioned above. These provide access to a large office (1.6) and smaller rooms (1.7-1.9). An original concrete pier survives in the centre of 1.6. The second office space was at the rear, using the original entrance from Princes Avenue. Two concrete piers remain here (one boxed) in the large room (1.10), with smaller sub-partitions (1.11 and 1.12). None of the partitions in the latter (1.12) correspond with the lift shaft above.



Figure 17. Hoist mechanism in room 2.1.

The top of the lift shaft is on the roof (2.1). It retains a gear wheel and flywheel, turning a winding drum, but there is no evidence of the original motive power, perhaps an electric motor (fig 17).

6 Interpretation

There have been several changes to the exterior of the building, beyond its two main phases (which are only discernible inside the building), which have been largely sympathetic to the original design. In 1911 the building was of five bays to Temple Street and four bays to Princes Avenue. The entrances were in Temple Street, beneath bays two and four. When the building was extended in 1919 there were recessed entrances below bays seven and eight, and a vehicle entrance in bay nine, in the Temple Street front. Facing Princes Avenue there was an entrance below a pediment with the words No 2 garage. Until the 1990s changes to the exterior concerned mainly the Temple Street front. Bay four was still a recessed entrance in 1969, but by 1990 the recess had been removed and the existing door inserted in the street front. In 1969 there were also a single door in bay seven, double doors in bay nine, and the bay eight entrance removed, all of which are shown on the 1993 plan and were alterations from the original design. Changes in these bays were the reinstatement of a recessed entrance in bay 7, contemporary with the fire-escape stairs for which listed-building consent was granted in 1993; and the reinstatement of the entrance in bay eight, with replacement windows in bay nine, probably c1997 when the National Cycle Museum opened, and contemporary with the changes to the ground floor interior discussed below.

The Princes Street front has seen less change. The first-floor entrance in bay six was inserted after listed-building consent was granted in 1993, as part of which a section of the dwarf wall and railings were removed. However, new railings, matching the original section, were installed flanking the steps to the new entrance. The door to Job Centre Plus offices in bay two was inserted c1997. Previous doors are shown on the 1990 and 1996 surveys of the building (fig 18). The earlier, which was a half-lit boarded door (or double doors?) with small-pane glazing, was probably the original.

Phases of construction in the ground floor are shown in fig 19. Early engravings indicate that cars were displayed on both the ground and first floors and in order to do this the floors must have been open (fig 2). However, the ground floor is now divided into small units. The 1990 plan indicates that there were some smaller rooms here before, but only the wall between G.4 and G.5 appears to be original (fig 6). Cast-iron posts were not used to support the steel beams above, as they were on the first floor, except in the recessed entrances. The original dividing wall between the 1911 phase and the 1919 extension has also mostly been removed, although parts of it survive as a partition between G.6 and G.10, and across G.4. The foyer (G.3) and the rooms leading from it are essentially a modern creation, probably of 1997 when the National Cycle Museum opened. This also included the installation of the toilets (G.11) and associated corridor (G.10). The tiled floor and sills of the recess in bay two seems to have acted as the model for the treatment of these rooms,

all of which are tiled facing the foyer, although many have blockwork on the inner sides, concealed only by paint. The piers and coving in the foyer, as well as all of the doors, were intended to continue the Art Deco theme of the building.

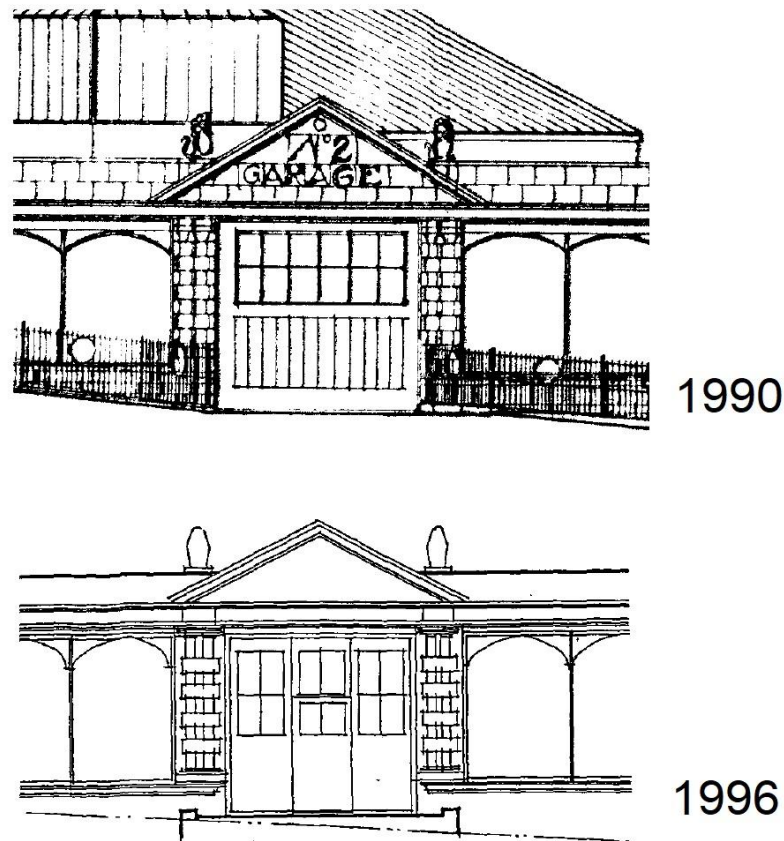


Figure 18. Doors to Princes Street in 1990 and 1996 surveys.

The stairs to the first floor, from G.12 to I.5, was part of the 1993 listed-building consent (fig 12, 15). The first floor was originally open, the only dividing walls being those separating the 1911 and 1919 phases of the building. Internal partitions shown on the 1990 plan appear to have been additions and have all been removed (fig 7). The extant partitions and false ceiling panels on the first floor all belong to the period c1997-2004, but it appears that the original structure of both sections of the building remains intact – cast iron posts and steel beams for 1911 (rooms I.1, I.2, I.3), concrete piers and beams for the remainder (fig 20).

The rear part of the 1919 building, occupied by Job centre Plus on the first floor, was altered first c1997 and again c2004. In the earlier phase the existing doors were replaced in Art Deco style, matching those of the rest of the building, and partitions were created inside the building, although the original lift shaft was retained. The interior was altered c2004 by reordering and adding new partitions and removing the lift-shaft walls (I.11, I.12). At approximately the same time the office of Mid and North Wales Trunk Road Agent was created (rooms I.4-I.9), which included a corridor leading from the first-floor entrance on Princes Avenue to the lobby at the top of the fire-escape stair. The extant lift was also probably inserted at this time.

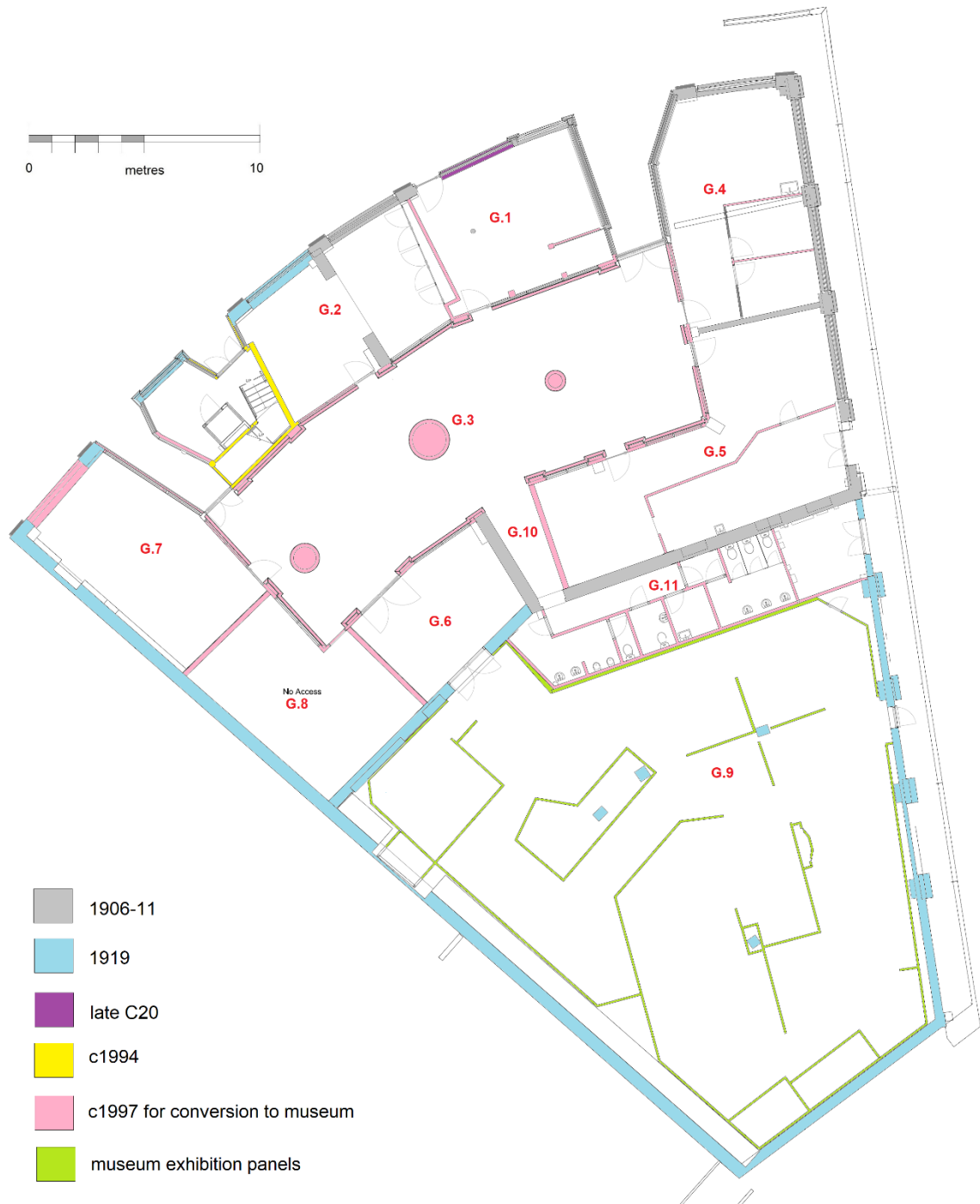


Figure 19. Ground floor, phases of construction.

Although the building has routinely been described as an Art Deco building, the architecture would be better defined as Art Nouveau, which admittedly is a very loose definition in British architecture. The principal Art Deco feature is the distinctive doors. These have been considered to be an original feature of the building, but 1911 is exceptionally early for Art Deco style, which is usually associated with the 1920s and 1930s. It is more likely that they are later, of the mid-twentieth century, although that should not diminish the fact that they are integral to the architectural interest of the building.



Figure 20. First floor, phases of construction.

7 Statement of Significance

The significance of heritage assets is measured against agreed heritage values, as set out in Conservation Principles published by Cadw (2011):

- **Evidential value:** This derives from those elements of an historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity, including its physical remains or historic fabric.
- **Historical value:** An historic asset might illustrate a particular aspect of past life or it might be associated with a notable family, person, event or movement.
- **Aesthetic value:** This derives from the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from an historic asset. This might include the form of an historic asset, its external appearance and how it lies within its setting.
- **Communal value:** This derives from the meanings that an historic asset has for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. It is closely linked to historical and aesthetic values but tends to have additional or specific aspects.

The Automobile Palace has strong communal value as a well-known local landmark, and as a place of work for many people over many years. The high historical value of the building is in its association with both the town and the motor trade. The presence of an influential dealership in Llandrindod Wells is evidence of the town's former economic and commercial importance in central Wales, especially at the beginning of the twentieth century when Tom Norton founded and expanded his business. The only other major commercial building of the period in the town is the Central Wales Emporium on Station Crescent, built in 1881. The Automobile Palace is especially associated with early motor transport and aviation, and the growth of the sector in the twentieth century. Tom Norton founded a pioneering car and commercial vehicle dealership with a significant geographical reach, which was a business model widely developed throughout the twentieth century.

The building has outstanding aesthetic and evidential value. It is a major twentieth-century commercial building, urban in character (even if its original setting on the edge of town was semi-rural). Its architect was Richard Wellings Thomas (1877-1926), who practised locally. He was responsible for several buildings in Llandrindod Wells, including part of the Holy Trinity parish church (grade II, Cadw ref 9061), the Commodore Hotel (grade II, Cadw ref 9060) and the former police station. Elsewhere in Radnorshire, he built the Post Office in Rhayader in 1903. None of these buildings leads naturally to a building like the Automobile Palace, which takes a radical and prescient approach to motor-car showroom design, although the architect had experimented with other ceramic materials for his facades, such as the terracotta front of the Commodore and the Rhayader Post Office. Nevertheless, the Automobile Palace street fronts show a remarkable confidence in the building material and its possibilities. The curved front to Temple Street is an ingenious solution providing maximum visibility at a major road junction. The building has a flat roof, which is logical in a steel-framed or reinforced concrete building. The fascia, with its raised lettering, is incorporated into the fabric of the exterior, at a time when it was more common to have a painted fascia set between consoles.

This style of architecture was adopted elsewhere after 1918. In Wales, Humphreys Garage in Newtown displayed the names of the cars it was selling, as does Pritchards Garage in

Llandrindod, built in 1929, which is similar to, if less ambitious than, the Automobile Palace. It has a curved front appropriate to its corner site, is in a simplified Art Deco style and has lions on the parapet. The post-war Naughton's garage in Knighton continues the tradition of two-storey showroom with upper display windows. In Cardiff the Queen's and Royal Garage (grade II, Cadw ref 14126) in Westgate Street was built in concrete in the 1930s and also has a strong Art Deco façade, but it was built as a shared garage for two hotels, not as a showroom.

No other pre-war garages or motor showrooms are known in Wales, and there are few others surviving in the rest of Britain. Many early car dealerships grew, like the Automobile Palace, out of bicycle or carriage shops, like the listed Coopers of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which was previously a horse and carriage repository. The only listed example in England of a pre-1914 car showroom is the Minerva showroom in Camden, London (grade II). The Automobile Palace is therefore an exceptionally early and valuable example of a bespoke motor-car showroom, representing what was an ephemeral building type. Other early listed examples outside of Wales are post war, like the Wolseley garage in Piccadilly, London.

The Automobile Palace is the earliest known example in Wales of a façade faced with white faience, a type of moulded and glazed tile used for cladding, and manufactured from the late-nineteenth century chiefly by Doultons of London and Burmantofts Pottery in Leeds. There are other pre-war examples of faience in Wales, but of different colours. Ornate public house facades incorporating faience include the Golden Cross in Cardiff (grade II, Cadw ref 13647), built in 1903, and The White Horse Hotel in Aberystwyth (grade II, Cadw ref 10366), of c1900. Faience is also incorporated into decorative tiled façade of Merthyr Tydfil Town Hall, 1896-7 (grade II*, Cadw ref 111444). The interior of Cardiff's former Central Library (grade II*, Cadw ref 14111) has faience in its rib vaults (1882) and the surround of a fountain by Burmantofts (1896). There are also two notable faience drinking fountains in Wales. The war memorial fountain at Froncysyllte (grade II, Cadw ref 19961) is in pale green and white moulded faience, probably also by Doulton, and built in 1909. The dark green and mottled dark blue faience fountain outside St Woolos Cathedral in Newport (grade II, Cadw ref 3019) was probably made by Doulton and was set up in 1913. Both of these are minor works when compared to the Automobile Palace.

The Automobile Palace is also a notable early surviving example of reinforced concrete construction. The system of reinforced concrete invented in France by Francois Hennebique (1842-1921) was promoted in Britain through an agent, Louis Gustav Mouchel (1852-1908), who was the French consul in South Wales, based in Swansea. Early reinforced concrete in Wales is largely by Mouchel's firm, including the former Weavers Flour Mill in Swansea of 1897-8, demolished in the 1980s. Few pre-1914 examples have survived, the chief being probably Berw Bridge in Pontypridd, built in 1908. Other notable early reinforced concrete buildings in Wales are later, such as the Pier Pavilion in Penarth of 1929 (grade II, Cadw ref 13355) and the dome over the Grand Pavilion in Porthcawl of 1931-2 (grade II, Cadw ref 19364).

The 1919 extension of the Automobile Palace may not belong to the pioneering phase of reinforced concrete, but it is nevertheless a fine and well-preserved example of this first type of reinforced concrete construction. The pillars and beams span wider areas than, for example, the Weaver's flour mill, but otherwise the profile of these simple bold features is a text-book example of Hennebique construction (figs 21, 22).

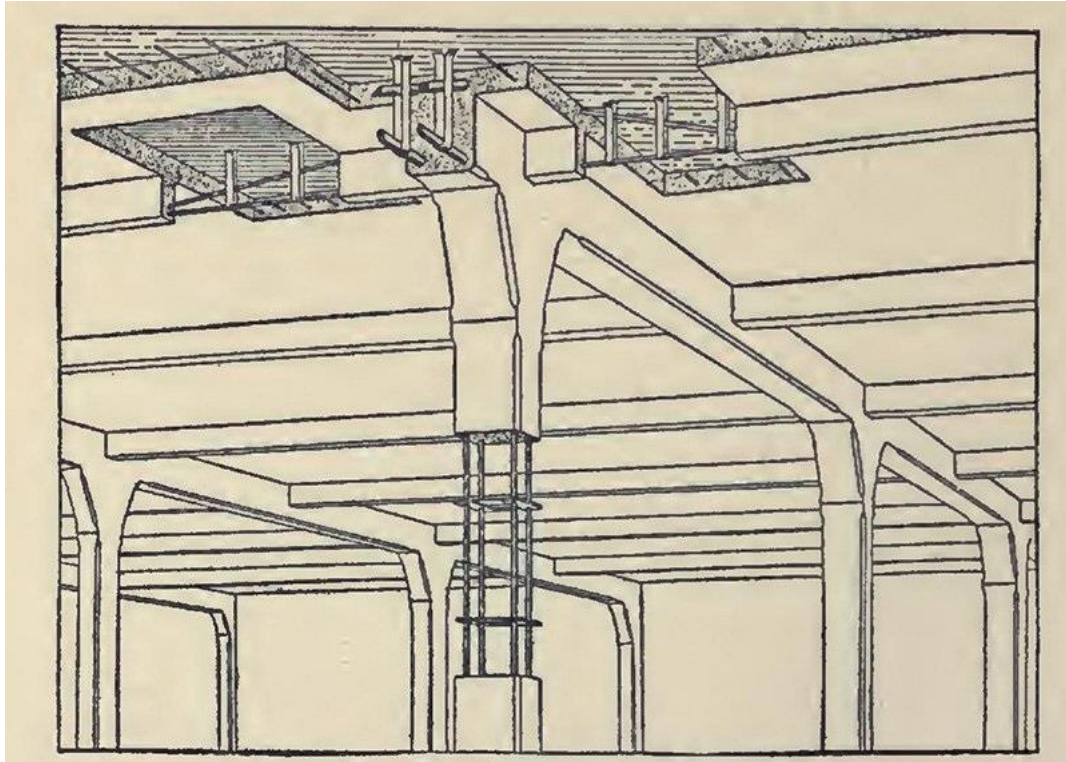


Figure 21. The Hennebique system of reinforced concrete construction.



Figure 22. Detail of concrete pier and beam in room G.9.

8 References

8.1 Documentary sources

National Library of Wales, The Automobile Palace, Llandrindod, and its collection of old bikes, cars and old letters, by Geoff Charles, 1969

8.2 Online sources

Tiles and Architectural Ceramics Society, Tile Gazetteer, online at <https://tilesoc.org.uk/tile-gazetteer/wales.html>

8.3 Printed sources

Archaeological Archives Forum, 2011, *Archaeological Archives. A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation.*

http://www.archaeologyuk.org/archives/aaf_archaeological_archives_2011.pdf

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures.*

<http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa>

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, *Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives.*

<http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa>

Boddy, Bill, 1963, A pioneer Welsh motor business, *Motorsport Magazine*, July edition, 539-540.

Historic England, 2016a, *Understanding Historic Buildings. A guide to good recording practice.*

Historic England, 2016b, *Buildings and Infrastructure for the Motor Car: Introductions to Heritage Assets.*

Scourfield, R. and Haslam, R., 2013, *The Buildings of Wales: Powys.* London: Yale University Press.

Welsh Archaeological Trusts, 2018, *Guidance for Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records.*

9 Archive

The archive deposited with the regional Historic Environment Record and the National Monuments Record consists of:

106 digital photographs (tif)

Report (pdf)

Written Scheme of Investigation (pdf)

Catalogue of photographs (Excel)

7 Measured building survey drawings

Field notes (to be retained by contractor)

10 Plans showing direction of photographs



Figure 23. Ground-floor photographs.



Figure 24. First-floor photographs.



Figure 25. Lift shaft photographs.

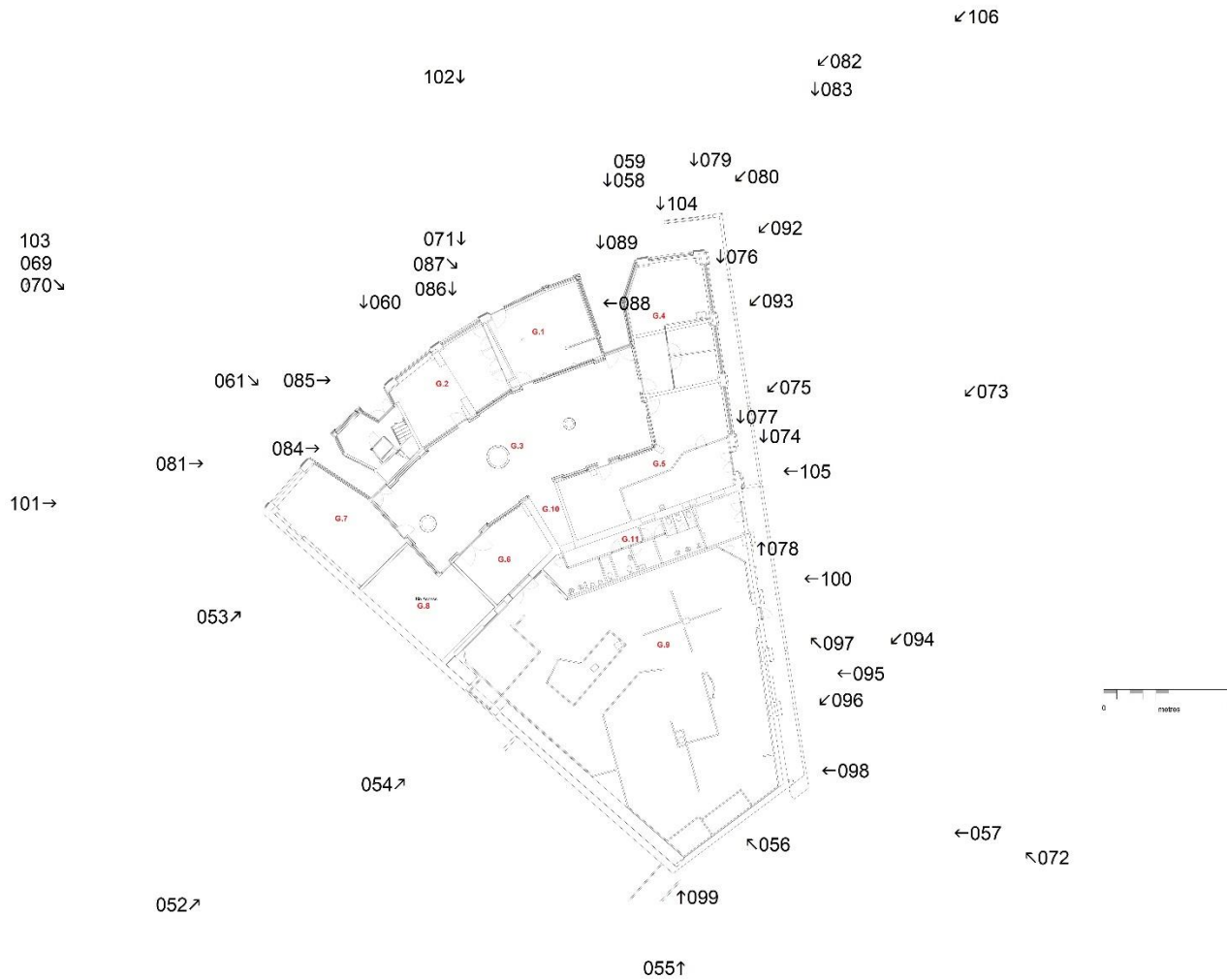


Figure 26. Exterior photographs.

Appendix I: Digital Photographs



AutoPalace2021.001.tif



AutoPalace2021.002.tif



AutoPalace2021.003.tif



AutoPalace2021.004.tif



AutoPalace2021.005.tif



AutoPalace2021.006.tif



AutoPalace2021.007.tif



AutoPalace2021.008.tif



AutoPalace2021.009.tif



AutoPalace2021.010.tif



AutoPalace2021.011.tif



AutoPalace2021.012.tif



AutoPalace2021.013.tif



AutoPalace2021.014.tif



AutoPalace2021.015.tif



AutoPalace2021.016.tif



AutoPalace2021.017.tif



AutoPalace2021.018.tif



AutoPalace2021.019.tif



AutoPalace2021.020.tif



AutoPalace2021.021.tif



AutoPalace2021.022.tif



AutoPalace2021.023.tif



AutoPalace2021.024.tif



AutoPalace2021.025.tif



AutoPalace2021.026.tif



AutoPalace2021.027.tif



AutoPalace2021.028.tif



AutoPalace2021.029.tif



AutoPalace2021.030.tif



AutoPalace2021.031.tif



AutoPalace2021.032.tif



AutoPalace2021.033.tif



AutoPalace2021.034.tif



AutoPalace2021.035.tif



AutoPalace2021.036.tif



AutoPalace2021.037.tif



AutoPalace2021.038.tif



AutoPalace2021.039.tif



AutoPalace2021.040.tif



AutoPalace2021.041.tif



AutoPalace2021.042.tif



AutoPalace2021.043.tif



AutoPalace2021.044.tif



AutoPalace2021.045.tif



AutoPalace2021.046.tif



AutoPalace2021.047.tif



AutoPalace2021.048.tif



AutoPalace2021.049.tif



AutoPalace2021.050.tif



AutoPalace2021.051.tif



AutoPalace2021.052.tif



AutoPalace2021.053.tif



AutoPalace2021.054.tif



AutoPalace2021.055.tif



AutoPalace2021.056.tif



AutoPalace2021.057.tif



AutoPalace2021.058.tif



AutoPalace2021.059.tif



AutoPalace2021.060.tif



AutoPalace2021.061.tif



AutoPalace2021.062.tif



AutoPalace2021.063.tif



AutoPalace2021.064.tif



AutoPalace2021.065.tif



AutoPalace2021.066.tif



AutoPalace2021.067.tif



AutoPalace2021.068.tif



AutoPalace2021.069.tif



AutoPalace2021.070.tif



AutoPalace2021.071.tif



AutoPalace2021.072.tif



AutoPalace2021.073.tif



AutoPalace2021.074.tif



AutoPalace2021.075.tif



AutoPalace2021.076.tif



AutoPalace2021.077.tif



AutoPalace2021.078.tif



AutoPalace2021.079.tif



AutoPalace2021.080.tif



AutoPalace2021.081.tif



AutoPalace2021.082.tif



AutoPalace2021.083.tif



AutoPalace2021.084.tif



AutoPalace2021.085.tif



AutoPalace2021.086.tif



AutoPalace2021.087.tif



AutoPalace2021.088.tif



AutoPalace2021.089.tif



AutoPalace2021.090.tif



AutoPalace2021.091.tif



AutoPalace2021.092.tif



AutoPalace2021.093.tif



AutoPalace2021.094.tif



AutoPalace2021.095.tif



AutoPalace2021.096.tif



AutoPalace2021.097.tif



AutoPalace2021.098.tif



AutoPalace2021.099.tif



AutoPalace2021.100.tif



AutoPalace2021.101.tif



AutoPalace2021.102.tif



AutoPalace2021.103.tif



AutoPalace2021.104.tif



AutoPalace2021.105.tif



AutoPalace2021.106.tif

File no	date	description	photographer
AutoPalace2021.001	25.06.2021	room 1.1, looking W	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.002	25.06.2021	room 1.1, detail of cast iron post and steel beam	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.003	25.06.2021	room 1.1, detail showing stamped steel beam	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.004	25.06.2021	room 1.1, looking SW	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.005	25.06.2021	room 1.1, looking SW, showing curve of front wall	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.006	25.06.2021	room 1.1, looking E	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.007	25.06.2021	room 1.2, looking SW to 1.3	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.008	25.06.2021	room 1.3, looking NE to 1.2	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.009	25.06.2021	room 1.3, looking NE to 1.2	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.010	25.06.2021	room 1.3, looking W to 1.4	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.011	25.06.2021	room 1.4, looking NW	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.012	25.06.2021	room 1.5, looking SW	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.013	25.06.2021	room 1.5 stair, looking S	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.014	25.06.2021	room 1.5 looking NE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.015	25.06.2021	room G.12, looking N down stairs	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.016	25.06.2021	room G.12 stair, lookin E	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.017	25.06.2021	room G.12 stair, looking S	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.018	25.06.2021	room 1.6 looking E	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.019	25.06.2021	room 1.6, looking S	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.020	25.06.2021	room 1.7, looking E	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.021	25.06.2021	room 1.6 to 1.8 and 1.9, looking S	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.022	25.06.2021	room G.3, looking SW	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.023	25.06.2021	room G.3, looking SW	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.024	25.06.2021	room G.3, round pier, looking SW	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.025	25.06.2021	room G.3, looking NE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.026	25.06.2021	room G.3, modern ceiling detail, looking N	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.027	25.06.2021	room G.3, looking NE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.028	25.06.2021	room G.3, looking SE to G.5	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.029	25.06.2021	room G.1, looking N	Richard Hayman

AutoPalace2021.030	25.06.2021	room G.1, looking SW	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.031	25.06.2021	1.1 door, looking S from inside room	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.032	25.06.2021	room G.2, looking SW	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.033	25.06.2021	room G.4, looking SE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.034	25.06.2021	room G.3 to G.5, looking SE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.035	25.06.2021	room 1.7, looking E	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.036	25.06.2021	room 1.7, looking SW, block door to former workshop	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.037	25.06.2021	room G.3 to G.6, looking E	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.038	25.06.2021	room G.3 to G.10 (toilets corridor), looking SE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.039	25.06.2021	room G.5, looking SE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.040	25.06.2021	room G.5, looking NE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.041	25.06.2021	room G.5, looking SW	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.042	25.06.2021	room G.9, looking SE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.043	25.06.2021	room G.9, looking SE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.044	25.06.2021	room G.6, looking SE, with doors to G9	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.045	25.06.2021	tile detail of exterior of G.7, looking SE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.046	25.06.2021	concret beam detail, room G.9, looking N	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.047	25.06.2021	concrete floor detail, room G.9, looking NW	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.048	25.06.2021	concrete pillar and beam detail, G.9, looking N	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.049	25.06.2021	room G.11 corridor, looking NE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.050	25.06.2021	room G.11 (gents), looking NE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.051	25.06.2021	room G.11 (gents), looking W	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.052	25.06.2021	SW front & site of workshop, looking NE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.053	25.06.2021	detail of SW wall, with corbels of former workshop roof	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.054	25.06.2021	SW wall, detail of blocked doorways	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.055	25.06.2021	Western Promenade front, looking NE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.056	25.06.2021	pilaster and cornice detail, Western Promenade front	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.057	25.06.2021	Western Promenade front, looking W	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.058	25.06.2021	bay 2 entrance from Temple St, looking SE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.059	25.06.2021	ceiling of bay 2 entrance from Temple St, looking SE	Richard Hayman

AutoPalace2021.060	25.06.2021	bay 7 entrance, Temple St front, looking S	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.061	25.06.2021	bay 8 entrance from Temple St, looking S	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.062	25.06.2021	room 1.10, looking S	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.063	25.06.2021	room 1.10, looking NE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.064	25.06.2021	room 1.10, looking S to 1.12	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.065	25.06.2021	room 1.10 looking NW	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.066	25.06.2021	room 2.1, hoist pulley wheels looking SE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.067	25.06.2021	room 2.1, axle and cable drum of hoist, looking NE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.068	25.06.2021	room 2.1, hoist flywheel and gears looking W	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.069	25.06.2021	Temple Street front looking E	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.070	25.06.2021	Temple Street front looking E	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.071	25.06.2021	pilaster and fascia detail, Temple St front	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.072	25.06.2021	Princes Avenue front, looking NW	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.073	25.06.2021	Princes Ave front with modern entrance, looking W	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.074	25.06.2021	railings Princes Ave front, by modern entrance, looking SW	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.075	25.06.2021	railings, Princes Ave front	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.076	25.06.2021	lightwell, Princes Ave front, looking S	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.077	25.06.2021	lightwell, Princes Ave front, looking S	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.078	25.06.2021	lightwell, Princes Ave front, looking N	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.079	25.06.2021	dwarf wall to Temple St in front of lightwell	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.080	25.06.2021	dwarf wall and lightwell to Princes Ave, looking S	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.081	25.06.2021	Temple St front, bay 9	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.082	25.06.2021	Temple St front looking S from junction on Temple St	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.083	25.06.2021	Princes Ave and Temple St fronts, looking SW	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.084	25.06.2021	recess to bay 8 entrance from Temple St, looking SE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.085	25.06.2021	Temple St front bays 6 & 7, looking E	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.086	25.06.2021	fascia detail, Temple St front	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.087	25.06.2021	fascia detail, Temple St front	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.088	25.06.2021	bay 2 entrance Temple St, window & grille detail	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.089	25.06.2021	doors to bay 2 entrance, Temple St	Richard Hayman

AutoPalace2021.090	25.06.2021	window, grille & cast iron post detail, bay 2 entrance on Temple St	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.091	25.06.2021	bay 2 entrance, Temple St, ceiling detail	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.092	25.06.2021	fascia detail, Temple St front	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.093	25.06.2021	fascia detail, Princes Ave front	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.094	25.06.2021	pediment, bay 2 entrance Princes Ave	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.095	25.06.2021	glazing-bar detail, Princes Ave	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.096	25.06.2021	fascia detail, Princes Ave front	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.097	25.06.2021	fascia detail, Princes Ave front	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.098	25.06.2021	lion finial, Princes Ave front	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.099	25.06.2021	lion finial, Western Promenade front	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.100	25.06.2021	railing detail, Princes Ave	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.101	25.06.2021	Temple St front looking E	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.102	25.06.2021	Temple St front, looking SE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.103	25.06.2021	Temple St front, looking NE	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.104	25.06.2021	fascia detail, Temple St front	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.105	25.06.2021	pilaster and fascia detail, Princes Ave front	Richard Hayman
AutoPalace2021.106	25.06.2021	view S down Temple St (A483)	Richard Hayman

Appendix 2: Measured survey drawings

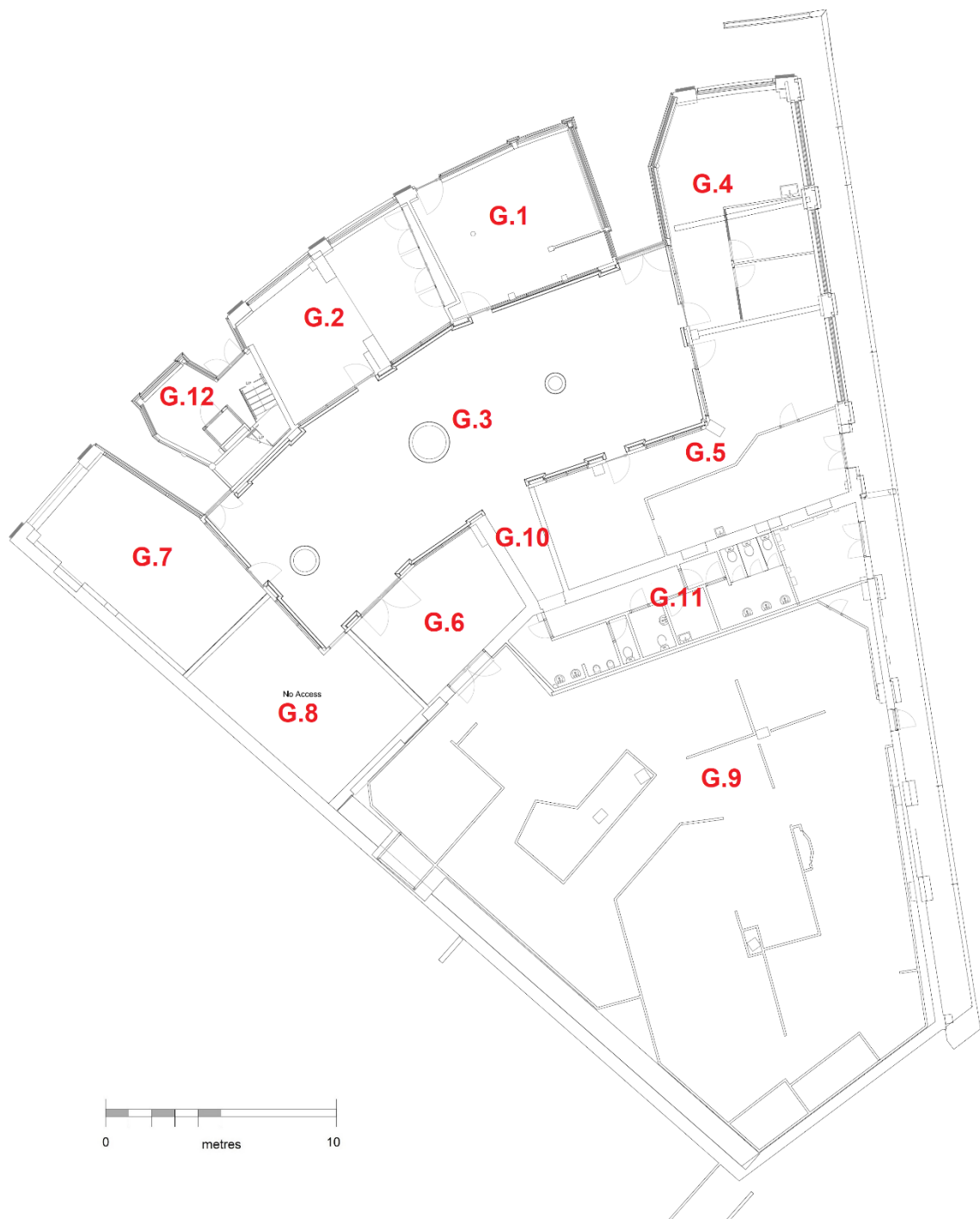


Figure 27. Ground plan.

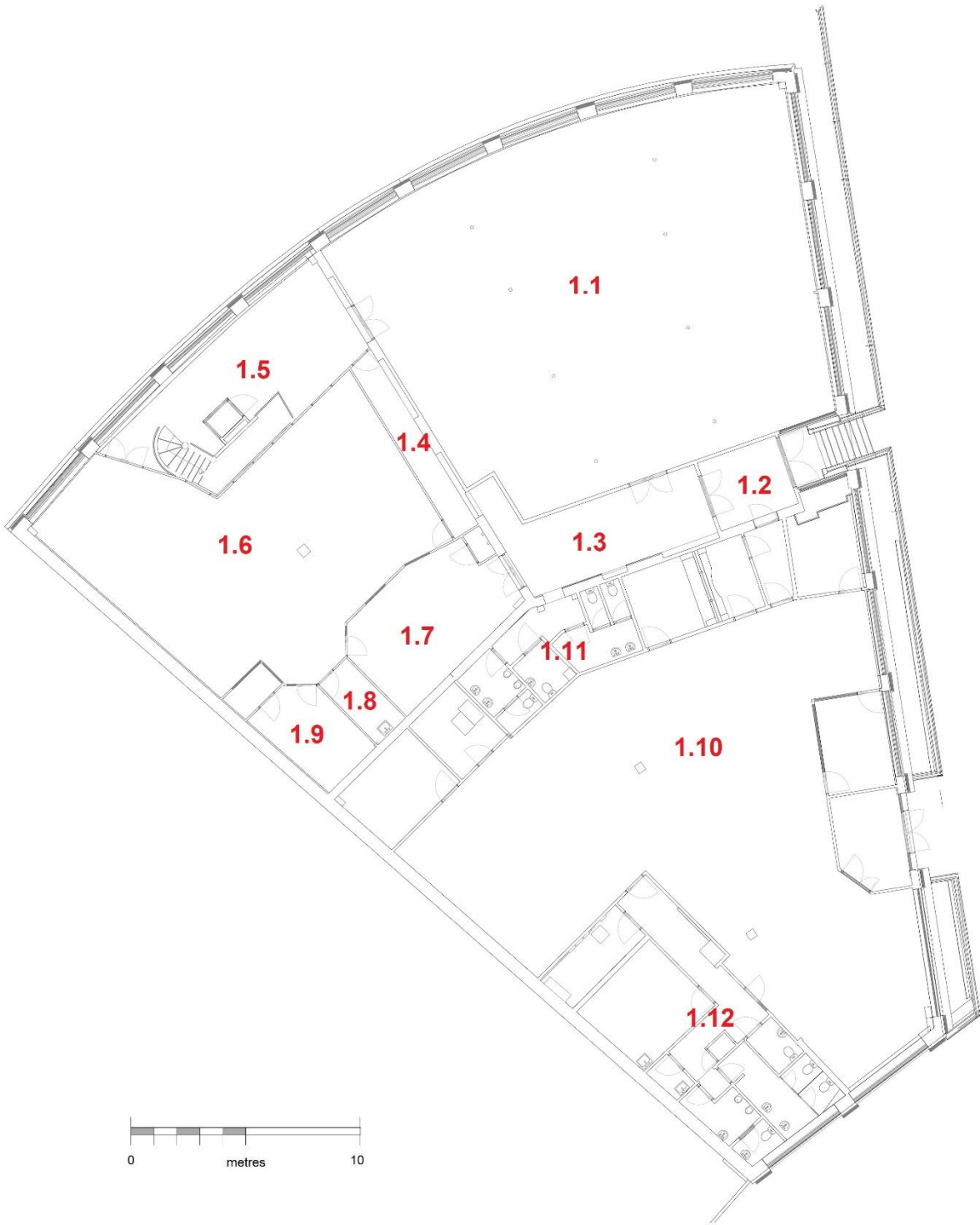


Figure 28. First-floor plan.

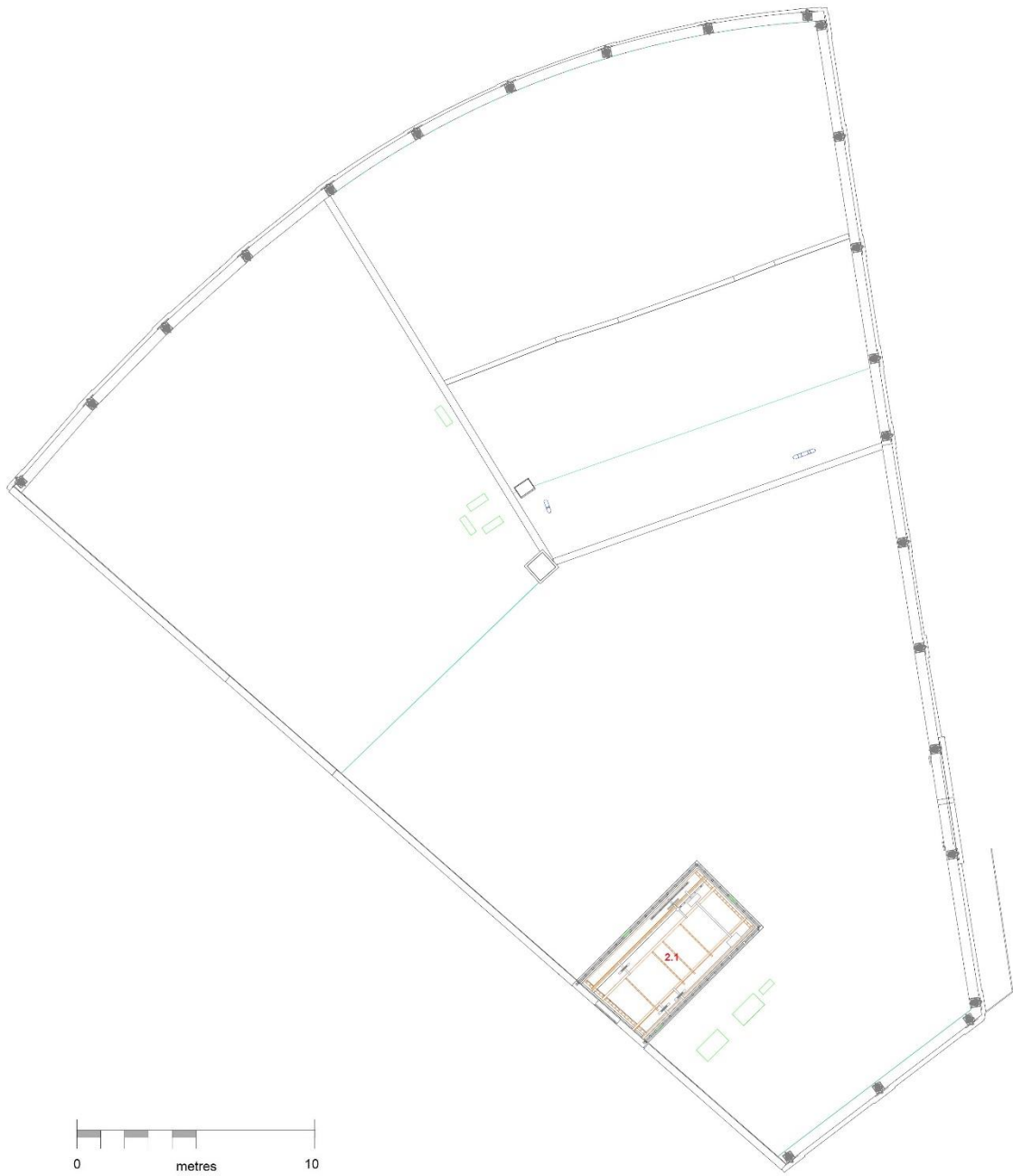


Figure 29. Roof plan.

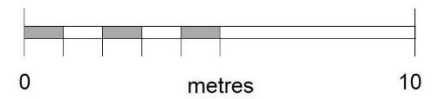


Figure 30. Temple Street (NW) front.

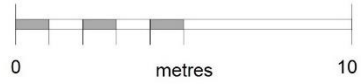


Figure 31. Princes Avenue (E) front.

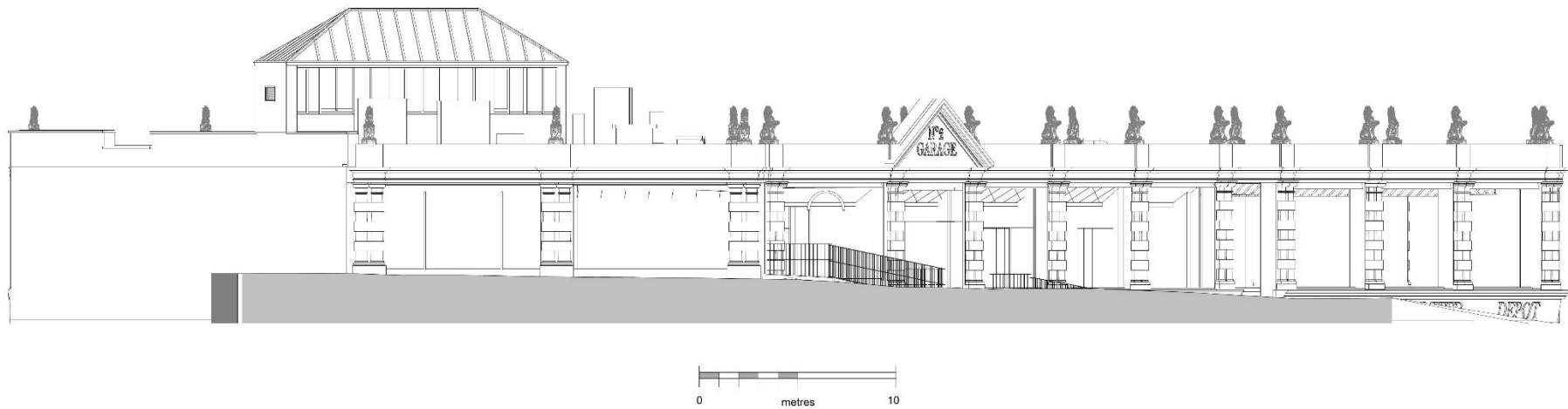


Figure 32. Western Promenade (SE) front.

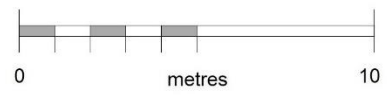
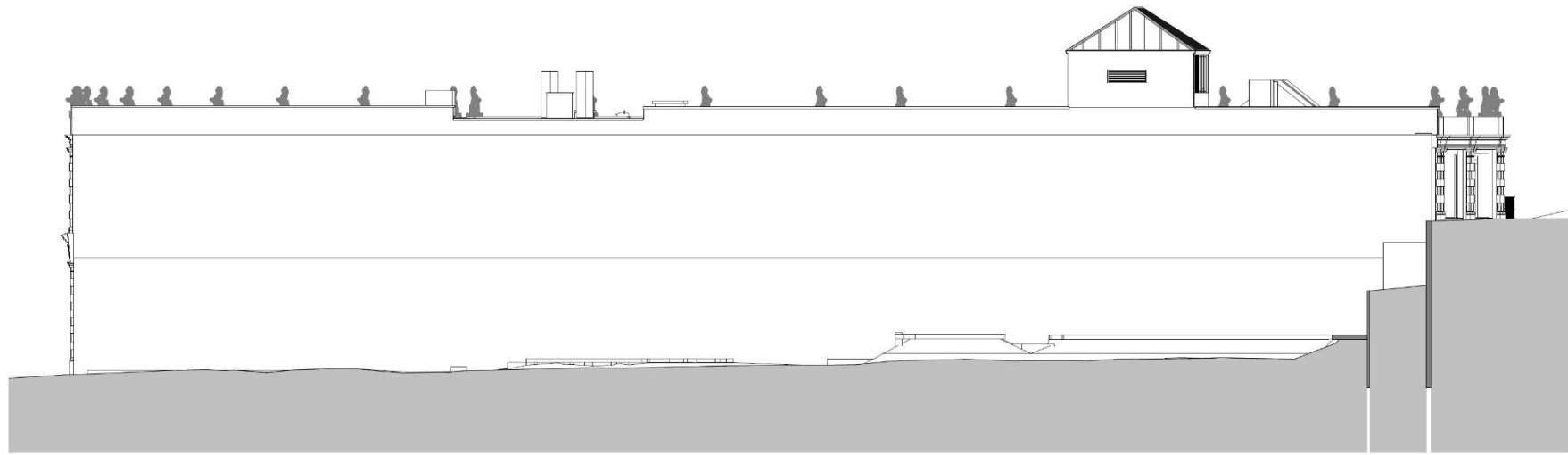


Figure 33. South-west front.

Appendix 3: Listed Building Report

Full Report for Listed Buildings



Summary Description of a Listed Buildings

Reference Number 9064	Building Number 	Grade II*	Status Designated	Date of Designation 30/09/1985	Date of Amendment 30/09/1985
Name of Property The Automobile Palace		Address 			

Location

Unitary Authority Powys	Community Llandrindod Wells	Town 	Locality Llandrindod Wells	Easting 306046	Northing 260916
Street Side 		Location On corner with Spa Road East and with flank elevation on Princes Avenue.			

Description

Broad Class Commercial	Period
----------------------------------	-------------------

History

Begun in 1906 and initially completed in 1911. It was founded by Mr Tom Norton and formerly known as "The Palace of Sport" and " Tom Norton Limited", becoming "The Automobile Palace Ltd." in 1925. The Architect was R Wellings Thomas (who remodelled Holy Trinity Parish Church); this early example of steel construction cost £11,000. In 1906 Mr Norton

started one of Wales' first public bus services and soon after brought aviation to Mid-Wales, becoming involved in early passenger aircraft - hence the lettering on the front "Aircraft". The first Ford Agency for the whole of Wales was in this building as well as, from 1918, the Austin Agency for most of Wales and that of Ferguson Tractors. The building was enlarged first in 1919 to about three times the size with the same design and constructed in reinforced concrete by Hobrough and Co, contractors of Gloucester. The further enlargement to right in 1962 is not of special interest.

Exterior

2-storey, 9-bay Art-Deco curving front with possibly the earliest use of faience facing in Wales. Flat roof, lions sedant (22 to whole building) with shields to plain parapet with egg and dart moulded cornice (removed to left bays). Paired rusticated pilasters between bays. Twin glazed shop fronts to first floor with arched heads, overall cill band with egg and dart moulding, letter fascia mostly obscured by modern sign. Partly altered ground floor but retaining original doors to showroom with sinuous handrails. 9-bay elevation in same style set into the slope of Princes Avenue with pedimented entrance to "No 2 Garage" at 1st floor level. Original lettering to pediments and ground floor fascia. 2-bay return elevation to Western Promenade.

Art Nouveau ironwork railings to Princes Street side. Said to retain some of the earliest petrol tanks in Wales below forecourt with pumps.

Interior

Reason for designation

An exceptionally early grid-pattern steel-framed building in Britain (cf. James Salmon's Lion Chambers in Glasgow (1905-6) and the work of Sir J J Burnet) surviving largely unaltered.
