

ADDRESS

Queensgate Market, HUDDERSFIELD

Parish HUDDERSFIELD
District KIRKLEES
County WEST YORKSHIRE

Case UID: 157164

Date First Listed:

Formerly Listed As:

RECOMMENDATION

Inspector: Ms E Harwood

Outcome: Yes, list Recommended Grade: II 12-MAY-2004

Advice Comments/Reason for No Previous Listing:

Reason For Decision: I have looked at all the papers on this file and other relevant information and have carefully considered the architectural and historic interest of this case. In my view The criteria for listing are fulfilled.

Huddersfield's Queensgate Market was built in 1968-70 to the designs of the J Seymour Harris Partnership, specialist retail architects, with Mr K Wood as job architect. The site came under long-term threat last year when proposals were made to redevelop Huddersfield town centre. The library and art gallery on an adjoining site have already been recommended separately for listing.

Recommendation

A thematic study of commercial and retail buildings undertaken by English Heritage in 1993-4 identified Huddersfield's Queensgate Market as a building of special interest that should seriously be considered for listing, potentially at grade II*. when it became eligible under the Thirty Year Rule. More detailed research on individual market buildings has shown that this is a building type under particular threat, and that Queensgate Market is the best surviving example of a retail market from the 1960s and 1970s. It is now over thirty years old and is recommended for listing in grade II.

Background

Huddersfield saw the massive redevelopment of its town centre in the 1960s and early 1970s. In 1959 the Corporation realised that it owned a large and potentially very valuable town centre site on Ramsden Street, which included not only the retail market but also the Theatre Royal, swimming baths and police station. Provided the Borough Treasurer's office could be moved to new premises, the council stood to gain a great boost to its coffers. With controls on the rate income they could levy from industry, the late 1950s and early 1960s saw local authorities acknowledging the consumer boom and looking to exploit their town centres. Huddersfield was in a very advantageous position because it owned the freehold of such a large site. Once Dame Evelyn Sharp had given loan sanction for new council offices, the council was secured a deal with a new property company, Murrayfield, the enterprise of property developers Walter Flack and Alan Wright, working with the Birmingham Labour councillor Sir Frank Price. The combination was a shrewd and successful one for dealing with the largely Labour-controlled authorities who were looking to develop their assets.

The deal with Huddersfield was struck in 1961, whence the site passed to Jack Cotton and Charles

Clore. Murrayfield selected the architects, however. The J Seymour Harris Partnership were architects to Ravenscroft, one of the earliest and architecturally more inventive of the post-war speculators, but it also designed St George's Centre in Preston, the largest of Murrayfield's schemes and which opened in 1966. At Huddersfield, negotiations continued throughout 1963-4, the outline redevelopment plan was drawn up in 1965 and the detailed designs for the market were made in 1966. Work began on site in March 1968, undertaken by Token Construction of Croydon, but following the merger of Cotton and Clore's City Properties with the Land Securities Investment Trust in late 1968 the contract was reassigned to McAlpine's.

Huddersfield Corporation bought the market rights and tolls from the Ramsden family in 1876 and built the market hall for combined retail and wholesale trading. In 1888 the wholesale market moved out, but the retail market survived a serious fire in 1923 and increasing difficulties of vehicular access until its closure in late March 1970. This Victorian market building, a largely symmetrical Gothic composition by local architect Edward Hughes with a prominent tower, was a much-loved building and a great loss to the town. But it seems to have inspired its successor to be more technologically interesting - a Gothic building in modern form - by means of its mushroom vaults and clerestorey glazing. The Yorkshire Coat of Arms from the old police station, built on the site in 1898 and demolished in 1967, is also incorporated into the new building.

The new market hall marked the second phase of the redevelopment, following the building of the adjoining shopping parade between Ramsden and Princess Streets. The old market hall was demolished only after the new one opened, and more shops were then built on its site.

The plan of the market hall was designed to dispose shoppers evenly across the site, with two entrances from Ramsden Street and more direct access from Peel and Princess Streets. The alleys through the market follow the lines of the roof structure above. There are 187 market stalls and 27 shop units, all of which can be let individually or in multiples, as tends to be the case. The market was originally designed with a central cafe set up stairs and enjoying views of the town through the clerestorey windows, but instead this became the market offices.

The novelty of Queensgate Market is that its roof is made up of hyperbolic paraboloid shells, mushroom columns in other words but deliberately asymmetrical and rectilinear ones. The Architect in September 1972 (p.95) described Huddersfield as 'the first retail market in Europe to be covered by a roof form of this type'. There are 21 in all, four rows of four expressed internally and a row of five facing outwards towards the ring road of Queensgate. The system was devised by the engineers Leonard and Partners, and substantiated by tests at Southampton University. But the real interest is in the inventive way in which the columns are used. The columns themselves are of differing heights - alternating in one direction (north/south), in the other stepping upwards towards the east, then descending. As the land falls from west to east, the effect is particularly dramatic, while the sharp drop in the land allows for service access and car-parking to be set unobtrusively under the market with direct access on to the ring road.

Another feature of Huddersfield Market which sets it apart from other post-war market buildings is its incorporation of works of art. Nine relief panels face Queensgate, set above a wall of randomly coursed facing stone from the local Elland Edge quarry. The panels form a sequence of organic forms in rough-textured ceramic that contrast with the inorganic nature of the basic building and give distinction to the delivery or business end - the service entrance that is left unadorned in most retail buildings. The panels were designed and made by Fritz Steller, a German-born refugee architect who had settled in Stratford-upon-Avon. He also designed the metal relief on the north wall of the market hall.

Queensgate Market in Context

A number of market halls were built in the post-war period. The earliest are those replacing, wholly or in part, markets destroyed in the war, of which the most notable examples are the listed Pannier Market in Plymouth and the Central Market in Coventry, both built in 1959-60. Rather later are a group of market halls in northern towns which were built as part of the comprehensive redevelopment of their town centres. The need for municipalities to maximise the income from their town centres has already been explained, and added to this was the need to entice people to shop in their town rather than go elsewhere. Market halls, being large, low buildings and generally owned freehold by the local authority, were particularly ripe for redevelopment. The wholesale rebuilding of so many historic towns may now be regretted, but in the market hall the property companies and their architects could often produce one space of both structural and architectural interest. Many of these 1960s halls are being threatened with redevelopment in their turn, and the fine hall of 1961 at Accrington, the only hall of a quality that approached that at Huddersfield, has already been demolished. The subject of market halls was raised as part of the thematic study of commercial buildings undertaken in 1993-4, but detailed research has had to await the series of spotlisting requests we have recently received, for first the Pannier Market, then Bury (rejected for listing in December 2003) and now Huddersfield. Visits to other markets have confirmed that Huddersfield's Queensgate Market is the pick of the crop.

Conclusion

Huddersfield's Queensgate Market is recommended for listing as a dynamic, imaginative structure that combines light-weight concrete technology with innovations in patent glazing to produce a dramatic space full of natural lighting. The building gains added interest from its sensible plan that makes maximum use of the sloping site, with deliveries and car parking for the stall holders set immediately under the market off the ring road. Finally, there is the aesthetically pleasing use of natural stone with exposed concrete and the incorporation of abstract art by a distinctive emigre sculptor.

Decision Precis: Market hall of 1968-70 by the J Seymour Harris Partnership, with relief panels in ceramic and steel by Fritz Steller. The hall is of particular interest for the way it combines hyperbolic paraboloid roof shells supported on mushroom columns with patent glazing to provide an even natural light for the market stalls below.

VISITS 07-

MAY-2004 Internal

COUNTERSIGNIN

G First Countersigning Inspector: Mr P Smith

Comments: Agreed.

This remarkable Post-War building designed by J Seymour Harris & Partners and built 1968-70. This building has been identified as one of the very best retail market buildings of the 1960s and 70s. It is structurally exciting as well as visually intriguing. The huge columns supporting individual roof sections make for very visually exciting internal spaces. The 9 huge external relief panels by Fritz Steller form equally exciting external decoration.

Listable.

12.05.2004

Second Countersigning Inspector:

Comments:

Proposed List Entry

HUDDERSFIELD Queensgate Market 492030

GV

II

Market Hall. 1968-70 to the designs of the J. Seymour Harris Partnership, with Leonard and Partners as consultant engineers. Reinforced concrete, board-marked internally to columns and partly clad in local Elland Edge stone and ceramic panels, with patent glazing. Roof covering not seen. Rectangular building on a site that slopes steeply downhill from the town centre to the west towards the ring road, Queensgate. The structure comprises 21 "mushroom" columns each supporting an asymmetrical rectangular section / each 56ft long by 31 ft wide by 10ft deep - of board-marked hyperbolic paraboloid roof, four rows of four and one of five facing Queensgate, where the market is set over a delivery bay and car park. From north to south the rows alternate in height, and from west to east they step upwards, then down. This means that there are gaps of 4.6m between each

roof section which is filled with patent glazing to form clerestoreys, the glazing suspended from the upper hyperboloid to accommodate any movement which may occur and having aluminium bars. Further patent glazing over natural stone walling and expressed framework to facades on Princess and Peel Streets, whence there are direct entrances into the market hall £ from Peel Street via steps. Ventilation is by fixed louvers. From Ramsden Street the two entrances to the market are through shopping arcades, not themselves of any interest. The facade of the market hall on Queensgate incorporates five roof sections with patent glazing and is decorated with square ceramic panels by Fritz Steller, set over natural stone cladding. These continue across the facade of the adjoining shops, to make nine panels in all.

The interior was designed for 187 market stalls and 27 shop units, available singly or in multiple units. In the centre, panopticon like, is a former restaurant at first-floor level, heavily glazed, reached via steps and used as market offices. It is not known if it in fact ever opened as a restaurant, admired though it was for its views across the town. The north wall is decorated with a metal relief of abstract figures by Steller, and the Coat of Arms rescued from the police station (built 1898) formerly on the site. The shops and stall units themselves are not of particular interest save that they exhibit charismatic examples of c.1970 signage with their serif italic lettering. The interior also incorporates a 1935 "Jubilee" K6 telephone kiosk to the designs of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott.

The market hall forms part of a much larger redevelopment of central Huddersfield in the 1960s and 1970s, on land owned by the Corporation, by first Murrayfield and then by Jack Cotton and Charles Clore. The novel integration of structure and glazing, developed by Leonard and Partners and refined through tests at Southampton University, on one level defines the circulation pattern through the building, but it also offers a striking link, in modern form, with the Gothic style of the old market building (1876 by Edward Hughes) on an adjacent site that the present building replaced. The Yorkshire Coat of Arms from the old police station, built on the site in 1898 and demolished in 1967, is also incorporated into the new building.

The novelty of Queensgate Market is that its roof is made up of hyperbolic paraboloid shells, mushroom columns in other words but deliberately asymmetrical and rectilinear ones. The Architect in September 1972 (p.95) described Huddersfield as 'the first retail market in Europe to be covered by a roof form of this type with vertical patent glazing'¹. As the land falls from west to east, the effect is particularly dramatic. Another feature of Huddersfield Market which sets it apart from other post-war market buildings is its incorporation of works of art. Fritz Steller was a

German-born refugee architect who had settled in Stratford-upon-Avon.

The attached shops, mostly built 1970-4, are not of special interest.

Sources

Oliver Marriott, *The Property Boom*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1967, pp.124-30

Huddersfield Daily Examiner, 6 April 1970

Building, vol.223, no.6749, 29 September 1972, p. 82

The Architect, vol.2, no.9, September 1972, p.95

Glass Age, vol.15, no.4, November 1972