

# 434-452 Old Kent Road Southwark



## Historic Building Recording



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## *Historic Building Recording*

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## 434-452 Old Kent Road, Southwark

### *Historic Building Recording*

#### **Summary**

*Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by RSK Environment Ltd to carry out historic building recording to English Heritage level 1 - 2 on a former car dealership and garage at 434-452 Old Kent Road, Southwark, London. The main focus of the recording were the remains of of an 1850s villa.*

*The buildings consist of a car showroom and offices facing onto the Old Kent Road as well as storage space and a large workshop behind. A separate two bay garage is also situated to the rear of the site. The buildings are in the main modern in appearance with the only external visual evidence suggesting an older date being the double pitch mansard roof forming a small second floor to the main dealership building. The remains of the 1850s villa are limited to the first and second floor of the north eastern block of this range of buildings. Externally this is visible in the roof line and second floor of the building facing onto Old Kent Road, internally the evidence can be seen in the timber staircase to the second floor; lath and plaster walls and ceilings and the moulded cornicing and door frames. Some opening up revealed a blocked fireplace on the first floor and storage areas and lath and plaster work on the second floor.*

*The buildings at 434-452 Old Kent Road demonstrate the multi use and multi phase activity of this site which was for a long period residential accommodation in the form of terraced houses in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and then a car dealership/garage in the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The later demolition and rebuilding removed almost all evidence of the former 19<sup>th</sup> century accommodation, particularly at ground and first floor level.*

*The buildings were photographed with appropriate scale and written notes were taken providing an archive record of the structure which is to be demolished to make way for new build housing.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by RSK Environment Ltd to undertake a programme of building recording at the site of a proposed housing development at 434-452 Old Kent Road, Southwark, London.
- 1.1.2 The work is being undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission granted by Southwark Council (Planning reference no: 11-AP-1180). The building is not listed but there are elements of an earlier structure within the fabric.
- 1.1.3 The recording was carried out to English Heritage Level 1 / 2 and was undertaken on 10th April 2012 by Alison de Turberville, Buildings Archaeology Supervisor for Oxford Archaeology (South).
- 1.1.4 The site is located on the southern side of Old Kent Road (A2) and is bounded to the west by Glengall Road and to the east by Ossory Road. The building forming the basis of this survey is a former car dealership with showroom, offices, workshop and other associated facilities.

### 1.2 Aims and Objectives

- 1.2.1 The overall aim of the building recording was to:
- investigate and record for posterity the building on the site which will be impacted by the proposed works;
  - determine the extent of survival of the historic building (1850s villa);
  - analyse and study the recorded data;
  - make the record publicly accessible through a report (a public document) and a project archive deposited with a public institution.

### 1.3 Methodology

- 1.3.1 Overall the work comprised two principal elements: a photographic, drawn and written survey. The *photographic survey* consisted of general views and specific details and was undertaken using a Caplio 400G 3.2 megapixel digital camera and 35mm black and white photographs were taken on a SLR camera to produce an archive-stable photographic record.
- 1.3.2 The *descriptive survey* complemented the photographic survey adding analytical and descriptive detail. A plan of the main building was used during the survey and descriptive detail was added to this and further enhanced with recording sheets.

### 1.4 Historical background

- 1.4.1 A full and detailed desk based assessment has been produced for this site by Alan Baxter and Associates (2011) and therefore no further research was undertaken. A brief summary of the property from map and historical records evidence is below.
- 1.4.2 Originally farmland, the area was primarily residential from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards and buildings are first depicted on the site on the 1746 John Rocque map where three rectangular buildings are shown unevenly placed with the road and surrounded by cultivated fields or orchards. The Greenwood map of 1830 shows this layout has been removed and replaced with a series of terraces and associated plots behind with frontage



onto the road. The site has two small terraces called Upper Sussex Place and Gloucester Place. The 1871 OS map shows terraced housing again, however the open space between terraces is no longer there and there is an increase in neighbouring buildings and to the rear of the site.

- 1.4.3 The 1936-52 OS maps clearly show the buildings on site prior to the post 1950s works. The frontage has lost the even terraced housing and now the site is a mix of factory and open spaces intermixed with smaller plots with former terraced housing which has been truncated. A series of garages is situated to the rear of the site indicating the site's association with the motor industry prior to 1973.
- 1.4.4 A car dealership was certainly present on site by 1973 and is shown in some photographs taken at this time which are now held at Southwark Local History Library. These photographs show that the façade of the building fronting Old Kent Road has been substantially refurbished but nonetheless retains aspects of its mid 20<sup>th</sup> century appearance. The 1970s two storey office and showroom building to the west of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century villa still retains the same fenestration layout as seen in the photographs from 1973.
- 1.4.5 Records indicate the dealership was extensively refurbished in around 2006 and it is probable that the small single storey entrance porch to the north east of the showroom was added to the elevation at this time. It is assumed that the external metal cladding and rear workshops and store was also part of this phase of work.

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The majority of the structures are modern in date (late 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards) and as such were only cursorily inspected and recorded. The main focus of the recording was on the remains of an 1850's villa which forms part of the main dealership accommodation.

### 2.2 External description

- 2.2.1 The frontage facing onto Old Kent Road is very modern in appearance but is comprised of three distinct parts. A single sided entrance porch and rear workshop to the north east of the site; the central three storey mid 19<sup>th</sup> century villa; and the 1970s office building. The c. 2006 works has added extensive decorative PVU cladding and metal sheet cladding to the exterior of the building and the Volkswagon logo is prominently displayed above an entrance within the central section, between the former villa and the 1970s building, which is clad in yellow and beige horizontal panels. The windows are all modern casements with larger sheet glass for the showroom windows.
- 2.2.2 The second floor of the Victorian villa has a double pitched mansard roof with grey slate hanging tiles to the north and south elevations and brick gables with parapet detailing to the east and west. The profile to the Old Kent Road frontage has a single pitch and the rear elevation has a split profile and there is some obvious repair work to the east elevation parapet brickwork. The windows are all modern casements. Difficulty with access meant close inspection of the 19<sup>th</sup> century brickwork was not possible however it could be seen that the bricks are yellow/pink coloured London stock bricks. There is a lead covered parapet coping to the north elevation with a modern metal rail on top and there is red clay tile detailing on the sloping east and west parapet walling. There are no chimney stacks in situ on the roof, however there may be evidence for these within the

unseen roof structure. Access was not gained to the rear of this roof structure but it is assumed that the details are the same.

- 2.2.3 The windows of the western 1970s building are contemporary with that date and have metal frames. The 1970s building and the 21<sup>st</sup> century extensions have flat roofs. The building is set back from the pavement with parking for car sales outside. There are two entrances to the rear of the property, a large modern gateway to the east which provides access to the rear workshops and garage facilities and a smaller opening situated underneath the cantilevered west section of the 1970s building.
- 2.2.4 To the rear of the property the extent of the modern additions can be seen with a large proportion of the site taken up with the workshop facility. There is also a two bay garage situated to the southern part of the yard. Many of the walls surrounding the yard are brick with evidential scarring for the earlier garages which were located to the rear of the Old Kent Road buildings.

### **2.3 Internal description**

- 2.3.1 The internal spaces were examined and some key features noted within the former 1850s villa, these are shown on Figure 3. The ground floor is divided into four areas; showroom, offices/wcs, workshop and store and these are described below.
- 2.3.2 The showroom is a large irregular shaped space with modern plaster and suspended ceiling. There are two sections of internal walling which may contain evidence of the early building however this is unlikely. The south and west end of the showroom has a series of offices of varying sizes and mostly without natural light or external doors. Lavatories are also located within the south eastern part of the showroom. A dogleg stairwell is located to the centre of the 1970s extension and this has a skylight with architectural iron railing beneath the window. A further stair is located to the south west of the office space. All fittings and other details are modern, dating to the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The floor has a slope running north – south indicating the floor level for the 1970s extension is higher than the eastern former Victorian villa.
- 2.3.3 The first floor comprises of three areas of offices which have modern plasterboard partitions. The four west offices have doors leading off the west stairwell and there are two small wcs in this section. The central offices consist of three different sized offices to the north elevation and a larger open plan space outside of these. The removal of ceiling panels revealed soot blackened concrete suggesting there had been a fire in this location at some stage. One section of lath and plaster could also be seen which may be all that remains of the 19<sup>th</sup> century villa in this location. A corridor provides access from the south stairwell around this office space and into the east offices.
- 2.3.4 The east offices primarily provide welfare facilities with a kitchen rest room and training room, as well as stairs leading up to the second floor. It is in this area that the first indication of the presence of the early building can be seen. The training room and rest room both have blocked hearths centrally located on the east wall and the blocking of the training room fireplace was removed during the survey revealing a brick hearth, investigation of the fireplace in the kitchen revealed that this was blocked in with concrete blocks. Lifting of floorboards within this room also revealed a concrete base underneath small wood joists.
- 2.3.5 Several sections of walling were inspected in this area as part of asbestos investigations and it was ascertained that the internal walls were timber frame with lath and plaster finish. The north and south elevations were also timber frame with sarking board

coverings onto which the slate hanging tiles were fixed and with an internal finish of lath and plaster. The east and west walls were of brick construction with plaster covering.

- 2.3.6 The architectural details within these rooms was limited and most details had been removed during refurbishment works however it could be seen that some doors within the corridor of this section had moulded door frames, whereas the doorway for the stair and under stairs cupboard had not suggesting this area was blocked in at a later date. The under stairs cupboard has modern plasterboard against the stairs and a decorative wooden pendant on the underside of the stair corner. The stair has a painted wooden balustrade and rail that are very simple in design and moulded newel posts and pendants. The simple design of the stair reflecting the position within the former villa with less decoration within the less observed spaces. The doors on this floor within this section are modern fire doors.
- 2.3.7 Within the rest room it was observed that there was a lath and plaster ceiling and within a cupboard a section of plain chamfer cornice could be seen set forward from the wall (and existing corning) by about a foot suggesting the wall was at some time positioned differently. Both types of cornice appear to be later additions and not part of the original build. The kitchen appeared to have two levels of suspended ceiling and no lath and plaster could be seen.
- 2.3.8 The stairwell to the second floor has a small window which is mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century in date. The second floor is divided into five rooms. The north western room has a possible blocked hearth and the north western room has a hearth blocked with concrete blocks. All internal walls are lath and plaster as discussed previously. The east and west walls are brick with lath and plaster and the north and south walls are timber frame with sarking boards for hanging tiles and lath and plaster internal walls. The two southern rooms have blocked off voids under the slope of the roof. The south western room void is accessed via a low opening with double wooden doors. Within this space the brickwork of the west elevation can be seen, there is a large fragment of wallpaper attached to the bricks which is odd for this particular location. The paper is not an old pattern, probably dating to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The east elevation of this space is lath and plaster with the smooth face forming the wall of the stairwell. Several fragments of magazines dating to the 1930s were located in this area. The void has visible floor joists extending out to the frame for the external wall which has a sarking board covering as before. The void within the south east room was blocked with modern chipboard. This was removed to reveal a boarded storage area with painted uprights and painted wood boarding to the south, east and west elevation.
- 2.3.9 The second floor has a greater amount of decorative fixtures and fittings with most rooms having cornice, moulded door frames, dado and skirting board. Unlike the lower floors there are wooden doors with simple detailing which are early to mid 20th century in date.
- 2.3.10 The workshop and store are large spaces with modern fittings. The roof in these areas is pitched and metal framed with large areas of skylight. A concrete block wall runs north – south dividing the store area from the workshop. The north wall of both rooms has areas of painted brickwork laid in a stretcher bond (220 x 60cm) which indicates the rear wall of the 1970s dealership. The workshop is double height with a small mezzanine to the north end and the store has a ground and first floor with a central stair. The majority of the internal fittings were removed before the survey was carried out however the layout can be seen on electrical drawings from the 2006 works indicating the workshop had ten individual bays for repairs and the stores were organised within extensive shelving on the ground and first floor.

### 3 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

#### 3.1 Summary

- 3.1.1 Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by RSK Environment Ltd to carry out historic building recording to English Heritage level 1/2 on a former car dealership and garage at 434-452 Old Kent Road, Southwark, London.
- 3.1.2 The buildings consist of a car showroom and offices facing onto the Old Kent Road and storage space and a large workshop behind. A separate two bay garage is also situated to the rear of the site. The buildings are in the main modern in appearance with the only external visual evidence suggesting an older date being the double pitch mansard roof forming a small second floor to the main dealership building. The remains of the 1850s villa are limited to the first and second floor of the north eastern block of this range of buildings. Externally this is visible in the roof line and second floor of the building facing onto Old Kent Road, internally the evidence can be seen in the timber staircase to the second floor, lath and plaster walls and ceilings and the moulded cornicing and door frames. Some opening up revealed a blocked fireplace on the first floor and storage areas and lath and plaster work on the second floor.
- 3.1.3 The buildings at 434-452 Old Kent Road demonstrate the multi use and multi phase activity of this site which was for a long period residential accommodation in the form of terraced houses in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and then a car dealership/garage in the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The later demolition and rebuilding removed almost all evidence of the former 19<sup>th</sup> century accommodation, particularly at ground and first floor level.
- 3.1.4 The buildings were photographed with appropriate scale and written notes were taken providing an archive record of the structure which is to be demolished to make way for new build housing.

Alison de Turberville

Oxford Archaeology

April 2012

## APPENDIX A. BIBLIOGRAPHY

### **Unpublished Reports**

Alan Baxter and Associates 2011 434-452 Old Kent Road Archaeological Desk Based Assessment

### **Maps and Plans**

John Roques 'A Plan of London' (1746)

Horwoods map of London (1813)

Green wood map of London (1830)

Ordnance survey map (1871)

Ordnance survey map (1896)

Ordnance survey map (19145)

Ordnance survey map (1938)

Bomb Damage Map (1939-45)

Ordnance survey map (1954)

(All Southwark Local History Centre)

### **Other**

Photographs of dealership in 1973 (Southwark Local History Centre)

Electrical As built drawings dated 23/11/2006 (Harrison Electrical Limited)  
Appendix B.





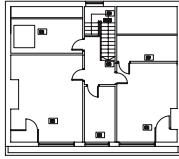
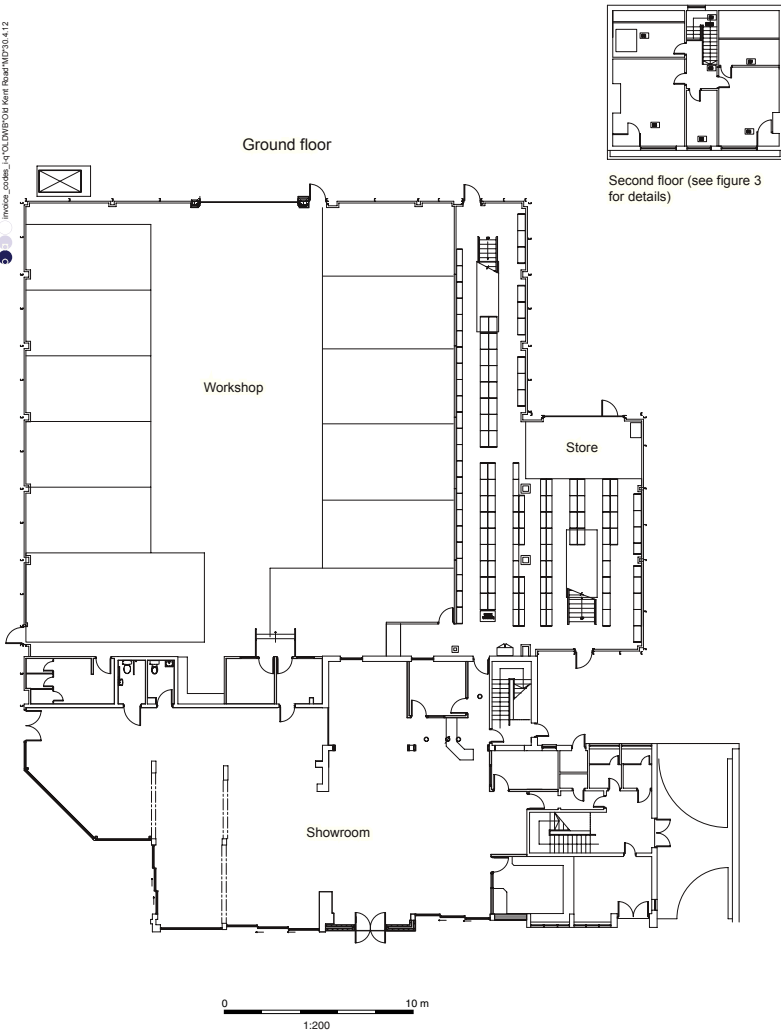
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Figure 1: Site location





moza\_cada\_1\COL\BPOD Kent Road\BPOD.412



Second floor (see figure 3 for details)

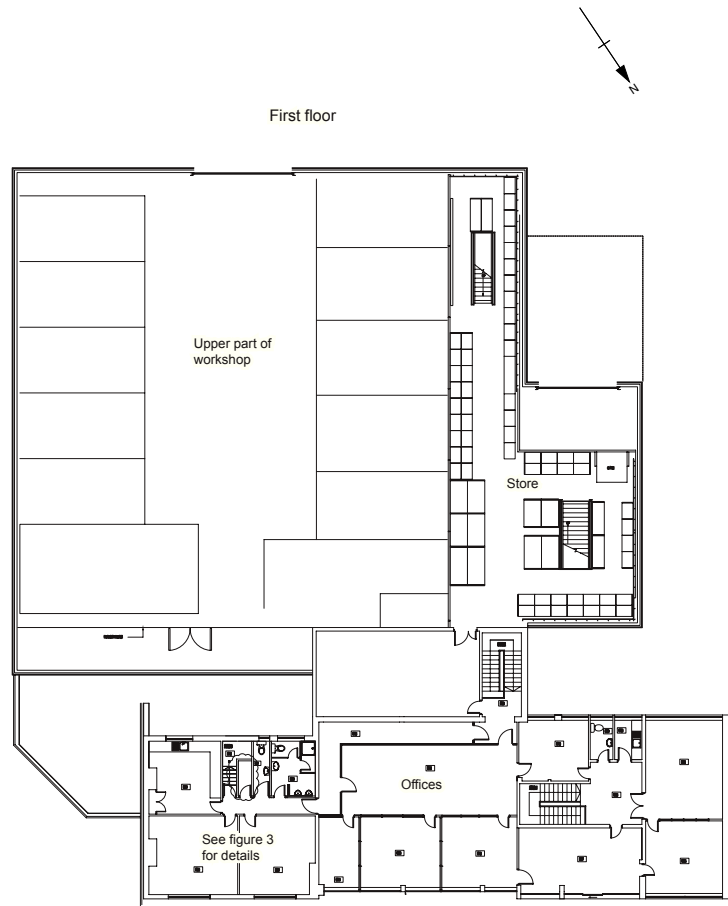
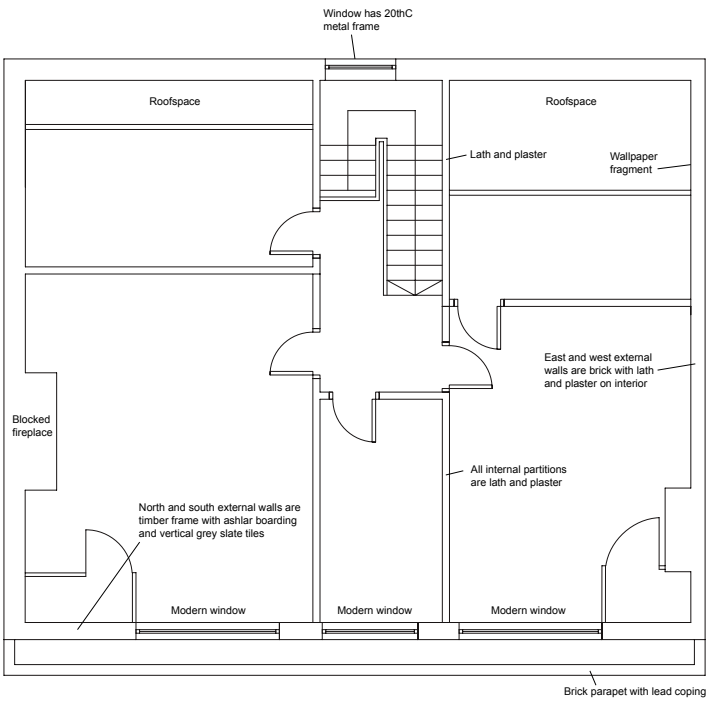


Figure 2: Floorplan of 434-452 Old Kent Road



Second floor



First floor

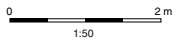
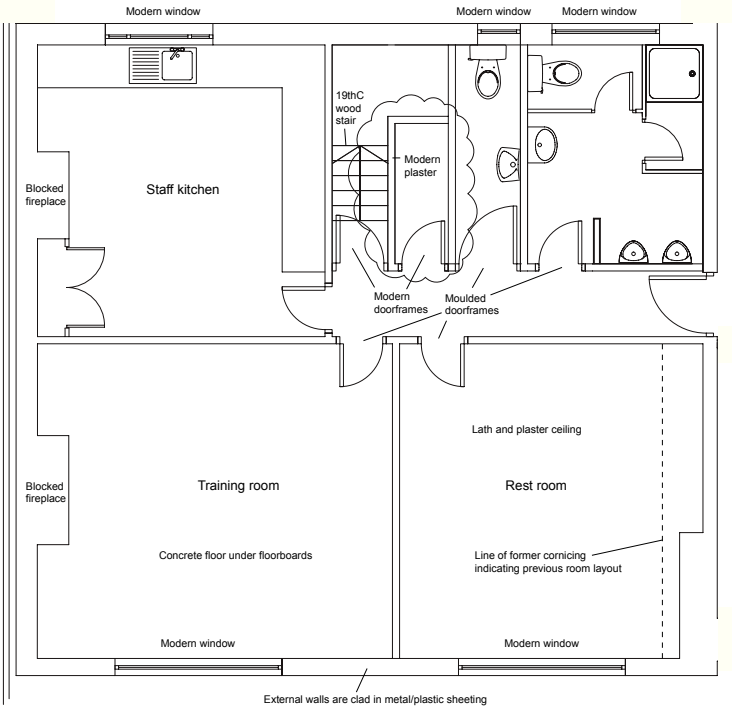


Figure 3: Annotated first and second floor plans of 1850s house





Plate 1: View of south elevation



Plate 2: View of two storey block forming the remains of Victorian house



Plate 3: Detail of mansard roof



Plate 4: View of modern entrance on north elevation and workshop on west elevation



Plate 5: Detail of west elevation of brick gable



Plate 6: View of modern workshop to rear of showroom



Plate 7: View of 1970s extension north elevation



Plate 8: View of east elevation showing join between 1970s extension and workshop





Plate 9: Internal view of showroom



Plate 10: Internal view of ground floor store room



Plate 11: Internal view of workshop showing 1970s brickwork



Plate 12: Internal view of central offices on first floor



Plate 13: Detail of former hearth within first floor training room



Plate 14: Detail of double cornice within rest room



Plate 15: Detail of removed floor boards within rest room



Plate 16: Exposed fragment of lath and plaster ceiling on first floor



Plate 17: View of stairwell to second floor



Plate 18: View of north east room on second floor



Plate 19: View of south east room on second floor



Plate 20: Detail of storage room on second floor



Plate 21: View within roof space on second floor



Plate 22: View of boarded storage area on second floor









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