

Heinz Administrative Headquarters and Former Research Laboratories

Overview

Heritage Category:

Listed Building

Grade:

II*

List Entry Number:

1242724

Date first listed:

24-Nov-1995

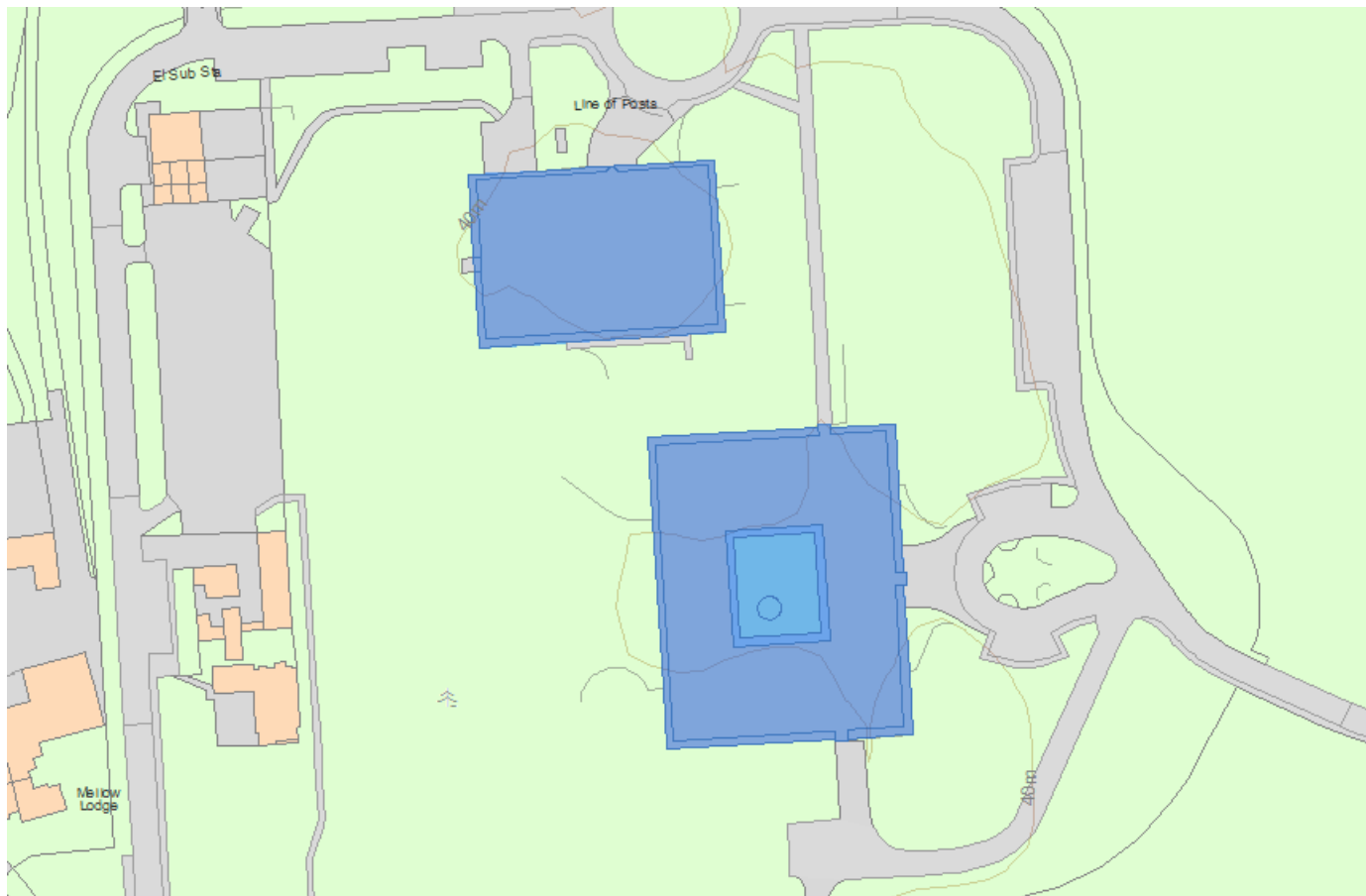
Date of most recent amendment:

26-Apr-2013

Statutory Address:

Hayes Park, Hayes, UB4 8AL

Map



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(https://mapservices.HistoricEngland.org.uk/printwebservicehle/StatutoryPrint.svc/475334/HLE_A4L_Grade|HLE_A3L_Grade.p

The PDF will be generated from our live systems and may take a few minutes to download depending on how busy our servers are. We apologise for this delay.

This copy shows the entry on 24-Aug-2021 at 16:15:26.

Location

Statutory Address:

Hayes Park, Hayes, UB4 8AL

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

Greater London Authority

District:

Hillingdon (London Borough)

Parish:

Non Civil Parish

National Grid Reference:

TQ0885182469, TQ0893282420

Summary

These two buildings were designed by Gordon Bunshaft of the American practice Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, and completed in 1965 as the administrative headquarters and research laboratories for Heinz UK. The non-structural interior fixtures, fittings and finishes are of later date and are not of special interest. The tunnel linking the two buildings is also not of special interest.

Reasons for Designation

The Heinz administrative headquarters and former research laboratories of 1965 by Gordon Bunshaft, are listed at Grade II* for the following principal reasons: * Architectural quality: the buildings are sophisticated and sculptural; an interplay of positive and negative space created through form, structure and a refined palette of materials applied with a quality of detail, and achieving a high-tech finish; * Authorship: this is the only British example of the work of Gordon Bunshaft, the most influential American office designer of the 1950s and 1960s, and one of only two buildings by him in Western Europe; * Historic interest: it is the most important early example in Britain of a headquarters complex on a greenfield site.

History

Heinz is a global food company dating from 1869. The administrative headquarters and research laboratories were designed in 1960-1 by Gordon Bunshaft and built in 1962-5. The two buildings are the only British works of Bunshaft (1909-90) who was the principal design partner of the massive and influential American office practice of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill.

In 1937 Bunshaft was taken on by Louis Skidmore to assist him with various designs for the New York World's Fair of 1939-40. It was through the World's Fair job that Skidmore and Bunshaft met H J Heinz II, with whom they formed a lasting friendship, and for whom Bunshaft designed a number of important buildings.

Heinz had had its UK headquarters and factory at Harlesden since the 1920s, but needed more room for their offices and laboratories. Heinz chose to build on the site of a run-down Victorian house in extensive grounds on the edge of the green belt in Hayes. Permission to build was granted on condition that only 10 acres of the 65-acre site were developed (with only 1.5 acres to be covered with buildings), and the parkland was restored. The three-storey buildings were sunk into the ground to overcome a two-storey height restriction imposed on the site, and the car park was hidden within the former walled garden. The office planning of the administrative building was considered advanced by the Architects' Journal in 1966, with a combination of open-plan offices facing into the internal courtyard, and a line of small private offices looking out over the park.

The increase in car ownership by the late 1950s made it increasingly feasible for large companies to build new corporate headquarters on greenfield sites, comfortable that most of their workforce could readily drive to work. These sites offered several benefits; firstly lower building costs, and secondly a quality of setting, which if teamed with high quality architecture, could create an impressive corporate identity. This trend was strong in America, where it was combined with technical experimentation by architects who were striving to use modern construction methods in a more refined, highly-crafted, way. Bunshaft's work in this area was particularly influential; his headquarters for General Life Insurance in Connecticut, built 1952-7, was regularly visited by European architects. For progressive British companies seeking a sleek and sophisticated headquarters in the late 1950s and 1960s, America was leading the way, and for Heinz the choice of Bunshaft as architect would have been obvious.

In the 1990s Heinz sold the Hayes Park site. During this decade the car park in the walled garden was developed to provide a new office building, and this involved the demolition of approximately two-thirds of the garden wall, severing its relationship with Bunshaft's buildings. In 2000 Heinz leased back South Building (the administrative headquarters), and Fujitsu took a lease on

North Building (the former research laboratories), which was converted to office use; at this time both buildings were completely re-fitted internally.

Details

MATERIALS: the buildings are formed of an externally-expressed reinforced-concrete frame. The external columns and slab edges are pre-cast and have a granite aggregate finish; the remainder of the frame is cast in-situ. Walls are fully glazed.

PLAN: the buildings have three storeys and flat roofs with the lowest storey sunk into the ground to clerestory height. They are both rectangular in plan, with South Building having a central open courtyard.

EXTERIOR: all elevations have roof and floor slabs projecting forward of the fully-glazed walls, linked by columns formed of two tapered sections which meet in an expansion joint. It is the sculptural rhythm of these vertical columns and horizontal floor slabs which give the buildings their defining aesthetic. Behind the columns is full-height continuous glazing in vertical sheets with blue opaque glass infill to the lower sections on the upper floors. The glass is held in a slender aluminium framework.

NORTH BUILDING (former research laboratories) This has 6 bays to the north and south elevations and 5 bays to the east and west elevations. To the north the main entrance (originally the service yard) approaches the building at grade (as does a new service yard which has been created to the west of the entrance). To the west the ground has been cut back around the lower ground-floor to create an outdoor seating area adjacent to the new canteen. To the south is a staff entrance where steps cut down to the entrance door.

SOUTH BUILDING (administrative headquarters) This has 6 bays to the north and south elevations and 9 bays to the east and west elevations. The elevations of the internal courtyard are treated to match the external elevations. Much of this courtyard is taken up by a shallow reflection pool with an off-centre island; these features remain but the pool is now in-filled with loose pebbles.

The main entrance to the building is to the east, where curved retaining walls expose the lower ground-floor of the building, which is at grade with the main approach road. A retaining wall originally stretched across the lower level of the building, screening the interior, and was broken only by the double door which provided the main entrance. The wall has now been pulled back, away from the building to reveal a glazed reception lobby. The sight-line through the building, from the entrance lobby through the courtyard and canteen to the landscape beyond, has been preserved. There are staff entrances to the north and south (where the ground is ramped down), and to the west the ground is cut away between curved retaining walls for five bays to provide outside seating for the canteen.

INTERIOR: the interior fixtures, fittings and finishes of the buildings have been renewed, and the layouts altered. Alterations to layout have been done with consideration given to their impact on sight-lines through these heavily-glazed buildings. The non-structural interior fixtures, fittings and finishes are not of special interest.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: the two buildings were linked at basement level by a subterranean corridor. This corridor remains but has now been blocked up. It is not of special interest.

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number:

443590

Legacy System:

LBS

Sources

Books and journals

Krinsky, C H, Gordon Bunshaft of Sidmore Owings and Merrill, (1988)

'Architect and Building News' in 11 August, (1965)

'Architectural Review' in August, (1965)

'Architects Journal' in 11 August, (1965)

'Concrete Quarterly' in Autumn, (1988)

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

End of official listing

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