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SNY	11672
ENY	3943
CNY	
Parish	4035
Rec'd	15/08/2007

The Universal Garage Site
Silver Street
WHITBY
 North Yorkshire



An Historic Building Assessment
June 2007

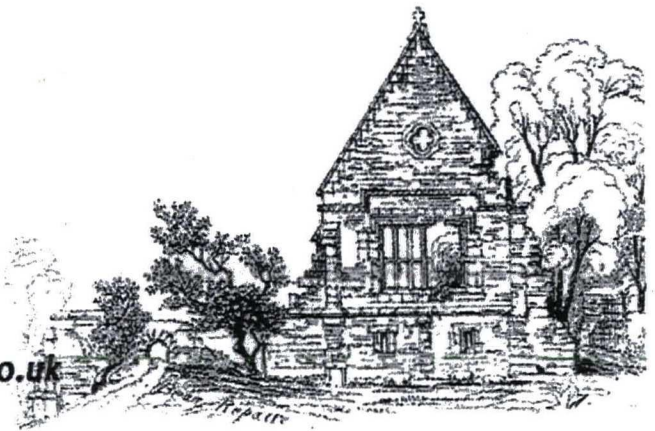


The site looking north-east

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(NB - NYCC did not advise this report be written)
C. 6996 + C7021

The Universal Garage Site and Buildings, Silver Street, Whitby Historic Building Assessment June 2007

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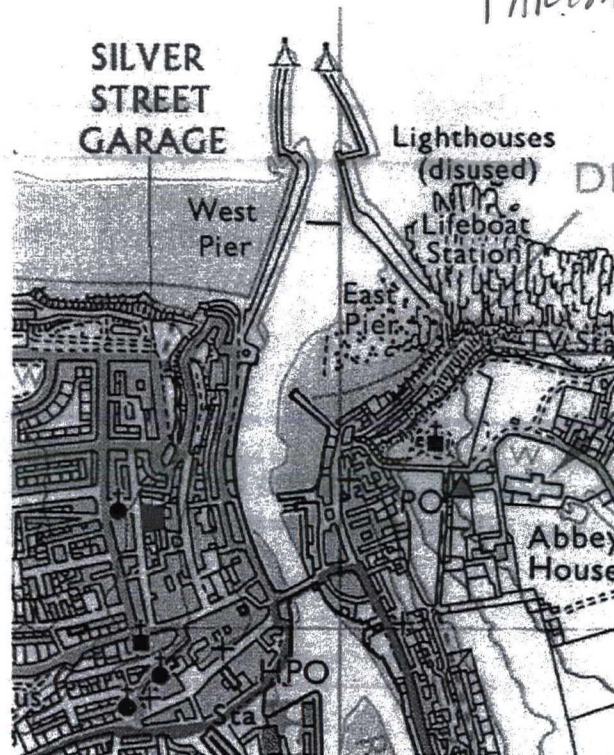
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Introduction

Silver Street forms part of an 18th century development on the West Cliff at Whitby, running north of Flowergate between Cliff Street to the east and Skinner Street to the west. The site with which this report is concerned is a plot roughly 35 m square on the east side of the street, its centre at 489715 511186, its northern third occupied by the former Universal Garage, now derelict, and the southern by a surfaced car park; as the ground drops eastward towards the harbour this is set at two levels, the eastern part c 2 m below the remainder, with an access ramp along the south side.

Location map, taken from OS Outdoor Leisure Series 1:25000 map 27. OS map licence 100045703

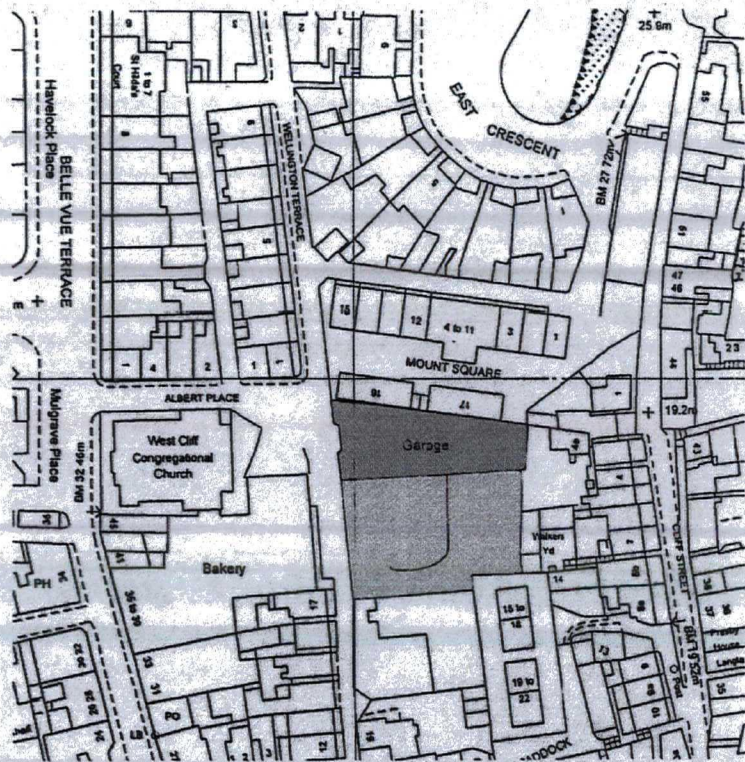


The Garage Building

The garage building itself occupies a wedge-shaped site c 73 m east-west, 16m wide at its street frontage to the west, tapering to c 9.5 m at its east end. The offices (street frontage) of the garage are in brick, rendered, lined to simulate ashlar and the street front cream-washed; the blue slate roofs have a decorative coping of pierced orange ridge tiles. The garage itself, to the rear, has a brick basement and timber superstructure, with roofs largely of blue slates but partly replaced in corrugated sheeting.

The west elevation, towards the street, is roughly symmetrical. A central opening has a pair of boarded double doors beneath a segmental arch, with above it a large panel framed by a moulding, its lower and upper borders curved to parallel the arch below, beneath a simple shaped 'Dutch' gable. On either side are matching two-storeyed blocks containing the offices, their return walls flanking the central arch being set diagonally, and each originally containing a segmental-headed door beneath a window; the doorway of the southern block has been later reduced to a window. The two-bay front elevations of the blocks themselves have segmental-headed windows, except for the northern ground-floor one of the northern block which has a timber lintel that originally served a wider opening extending further to the north. The corresponding window of the southern block also appears to have been a doorway at some time. All the windows are simple four-pane sashes, with horns. Both blocks have coped gable ends and small stacks at the outer ends of their ridges. The north gable end of the northern block is plain, with faint remains of a painted inscription '....R. & SON' on the grey render. The south gable end of the southern block has later 20th-century windows inserted on both floors.

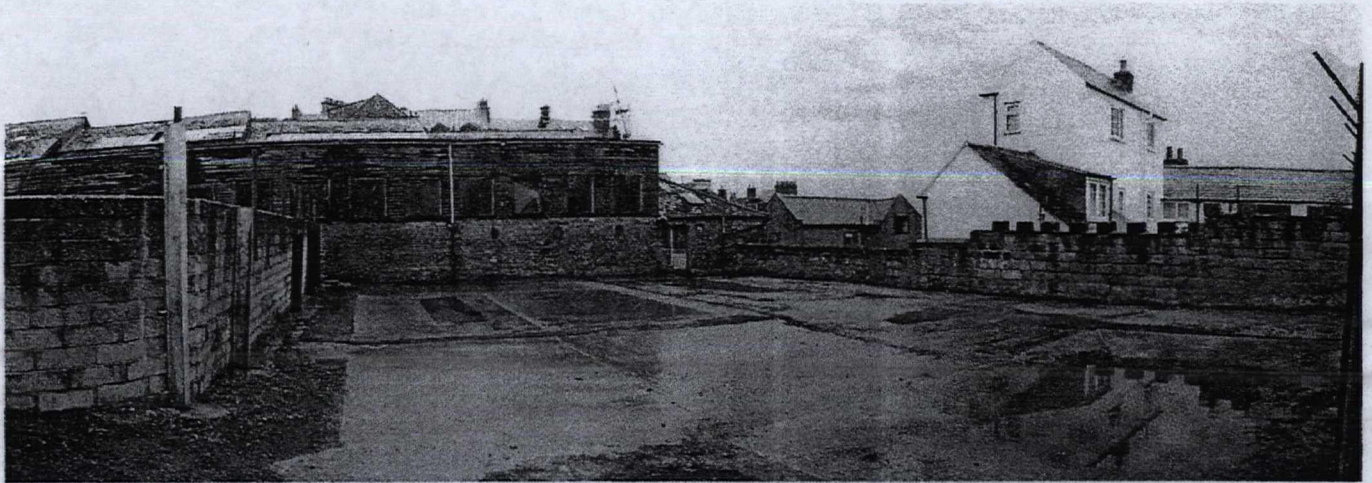
Plan taken from OS1:1250 map, showing the garage and yard to the south. Silver Street is the north-south road immediately to the west of the garage; its northern section is here labelled 'Wellington Terrace'. OS map licence 100045703



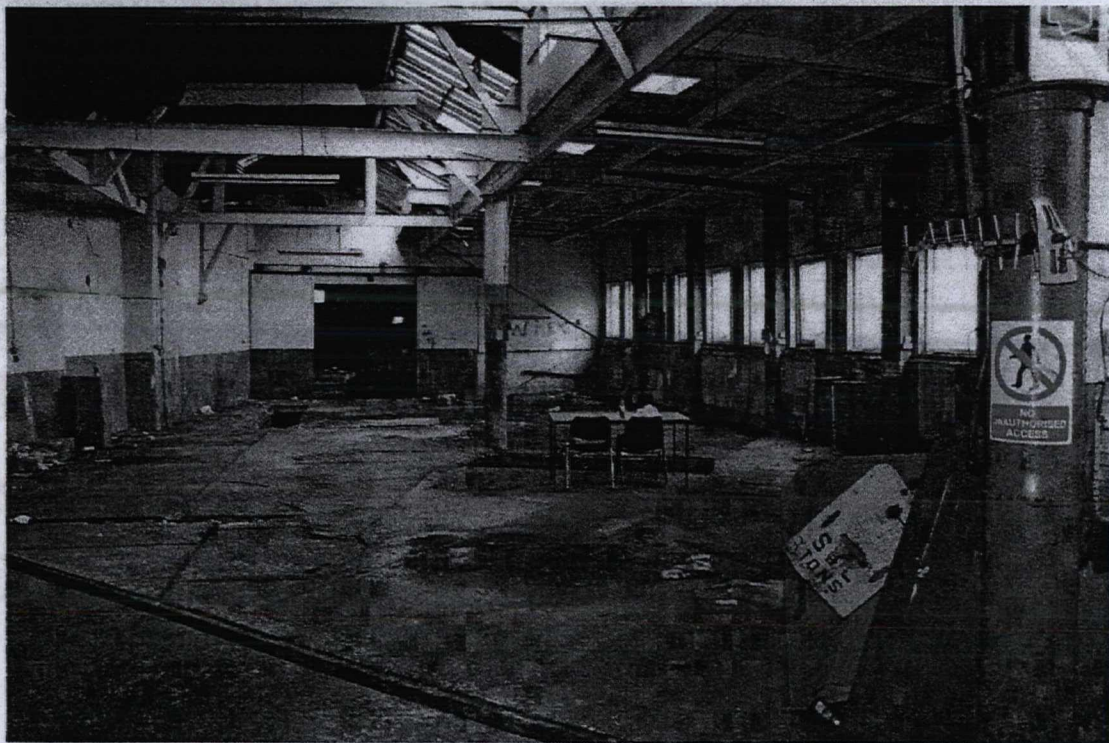
The garage behind has a gabled roof to its main body and a shallower-pitched or flat roof to an 'aisle' on the south, the division between the two parts being formed by three cast-iron piers carrying a plate. The ground falls quite steeply to the east, permitting a series of pits and a basement beneath the eastern part of the building; the east end is formed by a workshop with its floor at a lower level than the main garage. It is clear internally that the east wall of this part is formed by an older stone boundary wall raised in brick; the north wall also seems a remnant of some earlier structure, and is of stone, with a bricked-up window (?) opening. To the west of this the north wall seems to be of brick, although largely concealed by internal cladding. The south wall has a series of openings, now blocked, with circular metal vents in stone surrounds; four of these are set towards each end of the wall.



The street front; late 19th century Stables/Coach House Entrance, with later alterations



The eastern part of the yard, looking north. On left is late 20th-century blockwork wall between the two levels of the car park, at rear eastern part of garage (lower wall and vents probably late 19th century, upper parts 20th century reconstruction) and on right eastern boundary wall (probably c 1825-1850)



Interior of the garage looking east. Older boundary walls are incorporated at the east end, and in part on the north, but the visible structure here is apparently of mid-20th century date, post-dating the takeover of the late-19th century stables/coach house premises by the Universal Garage in 1935

The Boundary Walls

The boundary wall on the east of the site appears older than the garage buildings; it is of coursed and square stone, and clearly of two different builds. The northern part (the end of which is incorporated in the garage building) is c 1.2 m high; there is a ragged joint where this meets the southern section which is of larger diagonally-tooled stone and up to c 2 m high; this part, which steps up in height towards the south, has a simple 'crenellated' coping of square blocks.

At the south-east angle of the site the boundary wall makes a small re-entrant; this section is all of later 20th century blockwork.

The greater part of the southern boundary of the site is formed by the northern wing of an Auction Hall; this is largely of brick and looks like a building of early 20th century character, but the lower part of its north wall is of coursed squared stone with the characteristic 'herringbone' tooling seen in 18th and early 19th century buildings in this area.

Historical Notes

A map of 1778¹ shows the area as part of a series of gardens; two maps of the 1820s² show a trapezoidal walled area backing buildings fronting onto Cliff Lane, to the east; the area now occupied by the garage and its yard occupies roughly the south-western quarter of this. The 1st edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of 1853 seems to show the present site as a walled enclosure, without any buildings in it. The 2nd edition of 1895 shows what appears to be the present garage building, or one occupying the same distinctive footprint; this is confirmed by the 3rd edition of 1928 which shows the street front, with its central splayed recess, as at present.

Universal Garage was established in 1935³, by Harry Cockerill, William Henry Benson and George R. Hill, and took over premises that were originally 'old coaching houses and stables', selling Singer and Opel cars, and Dodge trucks. In 1940 the company embarked on another venture and for nearly 30 years sold and serviced Fordson tractors; it also got involved with motor marine and agricultural engineering and took on work repairing fishing boat engines and agricultural plant. The garage moved to new premises on Enterprise Way in November 2005.

¹From Charlton's *History of Whitby*, reproduced in *The Buildings of Georgian Whitby* (White 1995) p.13

²White op.cit, 14 & 15

³Information from website <http://universalgarageltd.co.uk/>

Discussion

The site is of no known archaeological significance; map evidence shows that it lay as open land until the later 19th-century. The plot of land occupied by the garage seems to have been divided off from a larger garden area at some time in the second quarter of the 19th century, and it is to this period that the old wall which forms its eastern boundary must date, at least in part⁴.

Map evidence shows that a building on the site of the present garage was constructed in the second half of the 19th century. This presumably served as the 'coaching houses and stables' recorded as being taken over by the garage in 1935. The street frontage of the present structure, with its central archway flanked by two small blocks of offices, is of late 19th-century character, although somewhat altered. The garage itself, to the rear, has been more extensively altered; the brick basement with its circular vents may survive from the late 19th century building, but the utilitarian superstructure is largely of the mid-20th century and of no interest.

The block fronting the street is a minor but not unattractive late-19th century building with its limited architectural pretensions no doubt dictated by economy; had it been a purpose-built motor garage of before say 1920 it might have been of some local historical importance, but it is clear now that the Universal Garage took over a pre-existing coach house and stables - presumably a fairly common conversion at this period - and so it has no such claim.

Peter F Ryder June 2007

⁴The southern boundary may be older; it is not clear whether the stone lower section of the north wall of the Auction Rooms here (an early 20th century building, first appearing on the 1928 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map) represents an in-situ boundary wall or re-used stone, but its fabric is broadly of 18th-century character..