

KENNELS AT WALTHAMSTOW STADIUM, CHINGFORD ROAD

Grade: II

Date first listed: 23-May-2007

II Kennels to Walthamstow Greyhound Stadium. 1930s. Concrete construction with steeply pitched red tiled roofs. A splayed linear arrangement sited at the east end of the track. EXTERIOR: To the centre is the tall tote board, which has a later face, flanked by original tall walls that curve down to the rear. Flanking and in front of this is the lower kennel range comprising individual kennels under pitched roofs. In front is a colonnade on single posts, those to centre with a pair of curved braces, and under corrugated roofs. At the end of each side wing that splays slightly forward, are end pavilions, these with steeply pitched octagonal roofs that kick out at the bottom and have prominent ribs with flashing. The windows in these are late-C20 replacements. The plinth has horizontal fluted detailing. Linking the end pavilions and enclosing the yard in front, is a low concrete wall. INTERIORS: Not inspected, but the interiors appear to consist only of kennels, which open directly to the open courtyard. HISTORY: The stadium was first built in 1931, on the site of the former Walthamstow Grange football club, by the Chandler family, who still own the successful enterprise. The complex has had a number of improvements and additions since it first opened, such as rebuilt spectator stands in the years just after construction, new glazed-in stands in 1965, and a new main entrance (to the north side) in 1969, but the notable frontage range (which is listed separately) remains as built in 1931. The kennels were built as part of this first phase. A license was obtained under the Parliamentary Totalisator Betting Act in 1934. The stands were rebuilt in 1934 and again in 1938, the latter being the date of the concrete south stand that survives, albeit altered. A photograph of 1952 for the Coronation shows the front lit up with neon lights in the same design as now, but with additional swags and reading, 'Long live Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II'. The complex underwent considerable updating in the 1980s, its second heyday. This is when the post-modern red tubular detailing was added, and the hospitality suites updated.

Greyhound racing evolved as a sport from the 1920s, out of hare and rabbit coursing, a much older leisure pursuit. It was the invention of an Oklahoma entrepreneur, O.P. Smith who invented the mechanical hare, and the idea came to England in 1925. The Belle Vue Greyhound Stadium in Manchester was the first facility established here, and another followed at White City in London. By 1939, there were 100 tracks in Britain, and London had at least ten. It was a hugely popular activity, and in 1946, attendance numbers rivalled those for football. The

number of surviving tracks is much lower, and 56 operate in Britain today.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE: These kennels form an integral part of the first phase of construction at Walthamstow Stadium, the best surviving and most architecturally interesting vintage greyhound stadium in the country. The kennels have special interest as purpose-built kennels that feature a mini tote board and eccentric pavilions, altogether in a similar Art Deco-inspired style and materials of the Entrance Range with Tote Board, which is listed separately. The stadium has special historic interest as the best surviving and most celebrated Inter-War greyhound stadium, **a nationally loved building type expressive of developments in Inter-War mass culture and entertainment.**

ENTRANCE RANGE INCLUDING TOTE BOARD AT WALTHAMSTOW STADIUM,
CHINGFORD ROAD

Grade: II

Date first listed: 23-May-2007

II Entrance range and totaliser board for greyhound stadium. 1932 with later-C20 alterations. Architect unknown. Concrete construction in Art Deco Style.

EXTERIOR: Landmark frontage to Chingford Road has tall central parapet (the tote board to the reverse) with stepped detailing to top and central clock. This carries the prominent lettering with WALTHAMSTOW slightly cambered over a racing greyhound over STADIUM. This is even more visible at night when the neon lights of 1951 (installed for the Coronation) illuminate the lettering and greyhound. In front of this is a wide low concrete range used for parking, but also Art Deco in its detailing. The open ground floor has wide bays with a splayed arch, then a fluted entablature, then tapered obelisks holding the upper, open air parking deck. There are horizontal tube railings, and the curved balustrade is a 1980s red tubular affair. There are integral car park ramps through the end bays to the upper deck, and all this is set on a low plinth with similar fluted detailing. Deep beams run back the depth of the car park range, which is open at the ends, and the fluted detailing continues to the return. Set back to right is a two storey entrance range with first floor offices that have a parade of single windows with three panes arranged vertically, and then a continuous horizontal band that takes the curved corner, in a streamlined manner. The entrance, marked 'Popular' is at the far right. To the left, the plinth curves round to the front into a low wall with fluted detailing. The rear of this prominent parapet is the tote board. This faces the track and the stands, and was computerised in the 1980s, but is otherwise as it appears in early photographs. Attached and to the southwest is the former stand, converted to a restaurant 'Classic Diner' in the 1990s, but this is of lesser interest. Not of special interest are

the separate north and south spectator stands, which while of some interest as parts of the larger complex, they are not special in terms of technological innovation, and both stands have been altered later in the C20, particularly the north stand which carries the main entrance of 1969 and which has been much altered and extended to the east in the later-C20. INTERIOR: There are few interiors of significance in the front section. 'Popular' entrance to south has metal turnstiles. HISTORY: The stadium was first built in 1931, on the site of the former Walthamstow Grange football club, by the Chandler family, who still own the successful enterprise. The complex has had a number of improvements and additions since it first opened, such as rebuilt spectator stands in the years just after construction, new glazed-in stands in 1965, and a new main entrance (to the north side) in 1969, but the notable frontage range (which is listed separately) remains as built in 1931. The kennels were built as part of this first phase. A license was obtained under the Parliamentary Totalisator Betting Act in 1934. The stands were rebuilt in 1934 and again in 1938, the latter being the date of the concrete south stand that survives, albeit altered. A photograph of 1952 for the Coronation shows the front lit up with neon lights in the same design as now, but with additional swags and reading, 'Long live Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II'. The complex underwent considerable updating in the 1980s, its second heyday. This is when the post-modern red tubular detailing was added, and the hospitality suites updated.

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SUBSIDIARY: The east entrance from Chingford Road is flanked by a pair of slightly tapered pylons, with fluted detailing to plinth and top. The Kennels are listed separately.

SOURCES: Historic photographs in the collection of the Vestry House Museum, LB Waltham Forest. 'The Gamble that paid off' in *The Walthamstow Guardian*, 1st April 1955. 'The Stow is beating slump in dog racing' in *Walthamstow Guardian*, 21st Nov. 1969. Genders, R. *National Greyhound Racing Club book of Greyhound Racing* (Pelham, 1990) Inglis, S. *Played in Manchester: The architectural heritage of a city at play*. (English Heritage, 2004. Cherry, B., O'Brien, C. and Pevsner, N.

Buildings of England London 5: East (Yale University Press, 2005)

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE: The Entrance Range and Tote Board at Walthamstow Stadium meets the listing criteria for its special architectural interest as the key component of the best surviving and most architecturally interesting vintage greyhound stadium in the country, with bold Art Deco influences in the stepped and streamlined detailing. It is also a major East London landmark, with the neon lighting of 1951 design on earlier lettering being a fitting use of such architectural advertising. Furthermore, it has special historic interest as the best surviving and most celebrated Inter-War greyhound stadium, a nationally loved building type expressive of developments in inter-War mass culture and entertainment.