

# Sample Listing Application Summary

## Application Type

New listing application

## Identification

Site name: Farmhouse  
County or Unitary Authority: District Council

## Location

National Grid Reference: SUXXXXXXXXX  
Postal Location: Farmhouse, Place, County, Postcode

## Extent



## Ownership & Occupancy

Details of owners and/or occupants of the site, and the extent of their ownership, where known, should be input here.

## Planning

This asset is the subject of a current planning application, permission or marine consent.  
Planning Application Ref Number: 11/XXXXX/FUL

## Reasons

### Historic interest:

The existing house was designed in 1953-4 by the architect Erno Goldfinger RA (1902-1987) for his long-standing clients Paul and Marjorie Abbatt, the advanced Toy Makers, as a house for a farm manager on the land that they owned in Buckinghamshire - a site not far from the furniture-making factories of High Wycombe where it is likely that many of their toys - mainly wooden - were made. For reasons unknown they wished to move to Hove c. 1955 but evidently to retain the farm. The Abbatts are recognized as important in their field and there are many examples of their toys in the V&A Museum of Childhood and details of their career on the website. Examples of their toys designed by Goldfinger in the 1930s can also be seen at 2 Willow Road, Hampstead, Goldfinger's own house now owned by the National Trust and open to the public. The Abbatts were some of Goldfinger's most significant clients. He met them even before moving to London from Paris at the end of 1934 and thereafter he designed the important Wimpole St shop (destroyed) an apartment in Tavistock Square (destroyed), a range of furniture, a logo, and some toys for them, including play alphabets etc. Following on from this

connection with them Goldfinger was appointed to design the children's section of the British Pavilion at the 1937 International Fair in Paris (Pavilion designed by Oliver Hill) and the children's section of the MARS Group exhibition in London in 1938. They became close family friends of the Goldfingers. The Farmhouse was only granted planning permission after a planning enquiry at which the Abbatts spoke eloquently in support of the beauty of Goldfinger's design (recorded in an article in *Architect and Building News* 4 Feb 1954), but they then seem to have cut back on the design, omitting for example the extended porch at one end, one can only assume for reasons of cost - and thus reducing the architectural impact of the final result. However this house is the only built survivor of this important relationship in one of the most important architect/client relationships of that period, a rare relic of an architect who built little but is recognized as one of the major figures of his time.

#### **Architectural Interest:**

Though this house presents a very plain and unassuming appearance on first sight, has lost some of its original steel windows, and has had minor extensions added at either end, its qualities can in fact be appreciated and be seen to be very much in harmony with the landscape. The valley of its 'butterfly roof' lies parallel with and echoes the shape of the valley within which it lies. The bottom of the 'valley' roof is extremely low, barely above door head height, so an exceptionally long low rectangular profile is created, which would have been even more marked had the original design been completed - as published in *Architectural Design* April 1954 - with the butterfly roof projected out towards the east and supported on free-standing posts. As built however, the tapering 'V' of the barge boards has been carried out. Similarly, it would seem that some intended detail around the living room windows was not carried out, but care was obviously taken with the internal plan to create projections and recesses from the basic rectangular plan. A fine recess is created to frame the main entrance, whilst on the other side the living room is made to project forward, creating a composition out of each facade. The cheapest brick has evidently been used, again presumably for reasons of economy. The butterfly roof is a form found on the roughly comparable caretaker's houses of Goldfinger's Brandlehow and Westville Road Schools, from the early 1950s, both listed. Designs from this period, though pre-dating what might be seen as Goldfinger's mature style of the 1960s manifested in Balfour Tower (Grade II listed) and Trellick Tower (Grade II\* listed), are nevertheless very interesting in showing the underlying values from which he developed his mature masterpieces. The architect's recorded comments at the planning enquiry reveal a concern also for the horizontality of the house towards the verticality of the trees around it - an idea that evidently also influenced his last design, the Perry House at Windlesham (Grade II or II\* listed) of 1968, where the low horizontal of the flat roofed bungalow clearly offsets the tall pines around it. So the Farmhouse lies within the core of Goldfinger's small oeuvre and manifests his central concerns at a critical period, and needs to be conserved for that reason. A devotee of his work, of whom there are now many, could easily upgrade this house technically, replace the missing original windows, and extend the butterfly roof as originally intended to form a very desirable dwelling.

#### **Threat**

A current planning application proposes the demolition of the house and its replacement

#### **Photographs**





## Documents

### Uploaded documents

1. Architect and Building News 4 Feb 1954 report of planning enquiry
2. Architectural Design April 1954.pdf

### Bibliographic References

1. Book Reference - Author: Dunnett, James and Stamp, Gavin - Title: Erno Goldfinger (Works 1) - Date: 1983 - Page References: 59, 65, 85
2. Book Reference - Author: Elwall, Robert - Title: Erno Goldfinger (RIBA Drawings monographs) - Date: 1996 - Page References: 42-43
3. Website Reference - Author: V&A Museum of Childhood - Title: Paul and Marjorie Abbatt - Date: 04/07/11

## Comments

The site lies within a Conservation Area, a picturesque medieval village much used as a film set. It is thus doubly interesting that a modern house of quality designed by Goldfinger should also be found here. The Chiltern Way public path passes nearby. The Farmhouse was occupied for twenty years by the farm manager, hired by the Abbatts, who is alleged to have used the farm buildings as a setting for a music club where attendees had to sit on straw bales to hear leading folk and jazz musicians during the 1960s and 1970s.

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