

APP/19/00703

Langstone Technology Park, 2B Langstone Road, Havant, PO9 1SA

Heritage Team Leader

Overview

Langstone Technology Park consists of four main buildings of modular construction with minimalist landscaping linking around the buildings.

The site is a 'campus style' industrial park with buildings dating from the early 1970s. Originally built for IBM it housed one of two manufacturing plants in the UK. Building 7000 and the first two bays of building 1000 were the first to be built on the site and appears in the In-house Arup Journal April 1971 the caption refers to the building being completed in 1970.

The buildings were designed and built by Arup with landscaping for the courtyard and grounds by James Russell. Design 39 Journal – VADS reports that 'the Financial Times award for industrial architecture 1972' was won by 'the new plant at Havant, Hampshire, designed by Arup Associates'.

In terms of social history, the sites links with the development of the computing technology is of significance. Taking account of the above I would consider the Arup buildings to be non-designated heritage assets. It should be noted that building 6000 has been put forward to Historic England for listing. The outcome of this has yet to be decided.

Proposal

Part-demolition of Building 1000 and associated works; the erection of new flexible use industrial units; and a new parking layout with associated works to layout and access.

Assessment

The current buildings because of their design/construction provenance and social history significance should be considered collectively as non-designated heritage assets. Whilst the existing building are quite plain by today's standards they do represent an era of design and have by their association to Arup a certain level of standing in terms of design. Therefore, any proposed alterations would need to have some gravitas in its own design. I have considered each part of the proposal below:

Part demolition of Building 1000

This relates to the proposed demolition of the two eastern bays of Building 1000, the former manufacturing floor, and replacement to provide additional car parking capacity. The assessment of Building 1000 identifies it as being part of the factory complex to undertake the manufacturing process, with some office space at the eastern end within Bay 1, of which only the dated appearance of the conference room remains. The two bays of the building to be demolished were an **original** component of the complex and was in situ when the plant received the 1972 Financial Times award for industrial architecture. The building was subsequently extended (by 3 further bays) over time, each time replicating the established 'bay' pattern of the building with central brick service 'core' and large open floor space.

From a heritage perspective the demolition of the two original bays would result in the loss of part of a significant local heritage asset which as part of the group of Arup buildings makes a positive contribution architecturally. It also has local distinctiveness, which provides a historic link to the

area's link with the high-tech computer industry that once took place on the site. Nonetheless, the two bays in question have been clearly altered internally on a number of occasions to suit the needs of companies who have subsequently used the building. I can also understand that the building would only suit a niche area of the rental industrial market as it is a large single storey expanse with limited natural light.

The new design of the elevations is considered appropriate and sympathetic within its context. It will also allow for some further natural light enhancing the internal space. However, replacing the existing building with car parking is disappointing. Whilst provision is made for landscaping, the car parking is relatively non-descript and does not add anything to the site other than providing car spaces which will be lost due to the new flexible industrial units proposed.

A balanced judgement will be needed on this point. The planning officer should also be convinced that there is sufficient marketing evidence in the application to support that the units can't be used.

Erection of new flexible use industrial units

In principle I would have no objection to the construction of new appropriately designed units on the site. The existing buildings and landscaping within LTP provide an attractive context for the development and it is considered important to maintain the high standard of commercial buildings and the harmonious appearance of the site. The design of the units should therefore seek to pick up on the existing colour scheme of the buildings and design features whilst recognising the need to provide modern and adaptable premises for future occupiers. However, I do not believe the current design or siting of the proposed units currently meets this requirement.

The design of the buildings appears to be very standard for this type of industrial use and offers very little in detailing or appearance that harmonise the units with the rest of the site. In particular the relationship between units 6-9 and building 6000 appears unnecessarily tight for what is a large site. The units also turn their back to the existing buildings which means that a very large and blank rear elevation at 16m in height faces the main site. This gives the appearance that the new units are an insular and separate industrial site where the case should be that this forms part of the wider campus style that currently exists.

New parking layout with associated works to layout and access

From a heritage perspective I have no objection to these parts of the scheme.