

HERITAGE STATEMENT		FOR PLANNING	JOB NO. 4055
CLIENT	:	LRH Homes	
PROJECT	:	Proposed Extension to Care Home	
LOCATION	:	The Towers - Belmont Castle, Portsdown Hill Road, Bedhampton, PO9 3JY	
DATE	:	25 April 2014	

SU 60 NE	HAVANT	PORTSDOWN HILL ROAD
26.5.76 3/9		The Towers

SU 60 NE HAVANT PORTSDOWN HILL ROAD 26.5.76 3/9 The Towers II House in the form of a Tudor castle. Early C19. Main block of 2 storeys and semi-basement, of 3.1.3 windows, with an east side extension of 3 windows. Red brickwork in Flemish bond; crenellated parapet with stone copings, and a brick dentil band to the 2 shallow-¹/₂-octagon 2-storeyed bays, pointed arches, stone cills. Stucco features to the ground floor, with hood moulds and heavy cusping to the windows. ¹/₂-octagon stucco porch, with brick dentil eaves, small coupled and round headed light to the side, and an arched opening with quoin surround. Gothic sashes in reveals (several original), some Victorian sashes, and ground floor casements. 3 storeyed west tower with crenellated top and a central round tower at the rear, with crenellated and machicolated parapet.

Website link: <http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk/Details/Default.aspx?id=135461&mode=adv>

Background

In September 2007 a Planning Application Approval was granted for the extension of Belmont Castle Care Home by the Planning Department of Havant Borough Council. The application that PWP Architects prepared and submitted satisfied all the required planning conditions.

Following a seven year period where no works took place on site, the client has now decided to re-submit a slightly amended planning application which takes under consideration new local policy and the current regulations.

This Heritage Statement describes the existing building, explains the design concept for the proposed development, its impact and contribution to the historic character of the existing building and is set out below.

Heritage description and location

The site is located in Bedhampton, over the northern slope of Portsdown Hill. It is on the edge of the urban residential area and sited near the crest of the hill, enjoying views to the north across a large valley towards the South Downs. The North West of the site is screened by large trees that partially obscure the buildings from view, particularly from the A3 (M) and the Havant Gap.

The original building on the site is an early nineteenth century Grade II listed villa in a mock castle style, including castellations and a tower. The building was originally part of the Belmont Estate, which had a large manor house called Belmont House. Belmont Castle was built in its grounds as a belvedere. It is of brick with stone details creating a stripped Gothic style appearance. It has three floors with the lowest at semi-basement level. From the valley to the north, only the eastern end and tower of the original house are visible.

The Belmont house was demolished in the 1930s but the castle remained and was requisitioned by the Royal Navy. The castle became a care home in the 1980s and its use is continued to the present day. During the late 1980s, an extension of the building was added in a style which in some ways respected the original architecture. The newer wing is also of brick but uses reconstituted stone and simulated castellations. It has a more complex appearance with half octagon towers and large plain reconstituted stone surrounds to openings. The building's windows shape is a mixture of gothic style, squared and circular windows.

This part of the building steps up to three stories above ground as the slope of the hill begins to fall away and is screened from views from outside the site by the trees to the North West.



Significance Assessment

As a means by which a castle or tower building could act as a visual projection of lordship across a large area, Belmont Castle is an excellent example. Located on top of the Portsdown Hill, it offers to the visitor some remarkable views towards the south and contributes with its architecture to the historical character of the entire area. The half octagon 2-storeyed bays of the original building imitate similar design of medieval and gothic castles, and have a historical role since the towers were actually used as a trigonometrical point by the Board of Ordnance, later known as the Ordnance Survey, in 1794 for their first complete survey of the country at a scale of one inch to a mile. The building also uses catellation patterns to imitate the shape of nearby castles in the wider area such as Portchester castle but by using brick as the main material instead of stone.

Proposed Development

Based on the previous planning application, application number 06/52710/008, the proposal includes the construction of a detached 3 / 4 storey building of 1585 square meters in the grounds of an existing nursing home with allocated car parking.

Located on the very edge of the urban residential area, the new building uses as its precedents the existing buildings on the site and from the landscape beyond. The design offers a subtle response to the original building's Grade II listed status and to its position on a hill overlooking a rural area. The proposal is to build a new wing sited to the north of the existing buildings on falling ground within the existing tree screen. The location of the proposed structure forms an intimate central garden between itself and the existing buildings to create an open courtyard. The form of the proposed building is influenced by the contours as they curve through the site, in order to further embed it in the landscape.

The new proposal suggests an extension for the elderly and ensures minimal impact on the neighbouring properties as it is screened by mature trees which will remain unaffected by the scheme. No properties are located on the north side, while additional planting will be proposed along the western boundary to ensure that the detached house to the west will also have an obscured view.



As part of the design process, precedent studies of existing buildings were used by similar residential castles such as Castle Drogo in Devon (see left). This is a modern façade but one that pays utmost respect to the Gothic style without being pastiche. The facing material to this elevation is likewise of mass masonry, a solid thick brick curtain whose depth is revealed by the regular unadorned openings

that are punched through it. The proposed half octagonal stairwell tower relates to the existing

building, being an echo of its forms and style as well as a direct visual link with the opposing entrance tower of the 1980s wing. This vertical element breaks up the sweep of the brick façade and marks the entrance.

The North elevation will use a timber screen with irregular vertical timber cladding, in order to recall the tree trunks of its surroundings and as a way to disappear into the wooded hill when viewed from the Havant Gap, in order to minimise the impact of the proposal and preserve the character and appearance of the original building.

The two design elevations are joined by the roof structure and terrace. The large windows of the terraced structure allow views towards the north and south. The terraced structure steps back from the parapets in order to become less dominant within the landscape, allowing the original house to remain the focal point on site. The proposed development is completely detached from the original building, therefore no change will be made to the existing building and its original features. The materials for the proposal include brick to match the existing building, timber to mimic the trees behind it and similarly the ½ octagon bay preserves and blends harmonically with the shape and form of the existing building. Such features contribute to the character and appearance of the heritage asset by using similar architectural details, forms and materials, while blending with the environment and preserving the existing landscape.

