

CLIENT : LRH Homes
PROJECT : Proposed Extension to Care Home
LOCATION : Belmont Castle, Portsdown Hill Road, Bedhampton, PO9 3JY

Preamble and response to Planning Officer's comments dated 19th August 2014

1. Listed Building Application. In the light of the Conservation Officer's comments we are proposing to withdraw the Listed Building Consent application. I would be grateful if you noted that we did not submit a Listed Building application for precisely the reason that the link was no longer part of the scheme. However, Havant Borough Council's letter of 8th May 2014 insisted on such an application being submitted in order for the application to be validated.
The new building does not have kitchens but my client is intending to have each floor's lounges equipped with mini kitchenettes facilities. The hot meals will be delivered from the main house kitchen to the new building with trolleys.
2. Parking. My clients transport consultant has been sent your comments and is in the process of acquiring the further studies you requested together with proposals about short and long term bicycle parking. The results of both the survey and the further studies will be forwarded to the planners in due course.
3. Building Changes. We are happy to help as much as we can so that you can see the differences between this new proposed scheme and the previous 2006 design. It is inevitable that with the passing of time any designer is going to re-evaluate a design some eight years later. However the main reason for the change is very much a management decision based upon current forms of nursing care and the resident's requirements. The previous scheme showed a home that was unified. All meals would be served to residents on the upper floor and this is where the majority of day space was as well. Residents would be moved up and down within the building. LRH Homes have now reconsidered that due to the various groupings of elderly infirmity and in some cases the desire not to mix these groupings has changed the way they view the extension. Rather than the vertical model each floor has the potential to have a group devoted to it and this has meant that day space is incorporated into each floor rather than massed on the upper floor. As day space is obviously important to the residents we felt it right to reflect this in the architectural language of the southern elevation. The day space is positioned here as this has given the best light and also the ability to see 'comings and goings'. This is why we created the feature on the eastern end of the south elevation. Initially we thought that retaining the 'entrance tower' as well as this new feature would create a duality. However on your suggestion we have re-introduced the 'entrance tower' and strengthened this feature. The first view visitors would see from the main road/ parking area would be the day space feature but as the south elevation opens up the 'entrance tower' is revealed and the additional features we have added to this has meant that the visitor is clear which way to proceed towards the entrance. Obviously the roof is less glassy because it no longer contains all the day space for the home. Careful thought has gone into its transformation

into a horizontal wing of the home. We have retained the use of the same high quality zinc cladding material as it reinforces the otherness from the strong brickwork below. We have avoided a 'mansard' aesthetic as this would be obvious and disappointing, instead we have relied on the form, the slightly oversailing roof (causing a good strong shadow line) and the step back from the line of the main walls below, to show that this floor is lighter, different and terminates the verticality of the building well. We have also raised slightly the level of the 'entrance tower' so that this feature breaks into the upper storey zone.

4. All plans and drawings have now been updated, no longer referring to previous conditions and therefore avoiding any confusion. The enclosed link has also been removed from all drawings and is replaced by a footpath on plans. Additionally, materials have now been changed as at the time of the agreed discharged applications. More specifically, drawing 4055/1307 C does no longer refer to the link and is proposing the use of agreed Michelmersh Red Stock brick with mortar colour to match the existing building and the use of Rheinzink standing seam zinc for the roof in dark grey.

All submitted drawings, drawing titles and details have now been revised and no previous permissions and conditions are mentioned or referred to in order to avoid confusion. Any previous conditions therefore are no longer related to the current application. There is consequently no need for a list of plans referred to previous conditions or statement, or a statement clarifying that referenced conditions do not relate to the current application.

Background

In September 2007 a Planning Application Approval was granted for the extension of Belmont Castle Care Home by the Planning Department, (Ref No: 06/52710/008) of Havant Borough Council. The application was prepared and submitted by PWP Architects by satisfying 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 current regulations.

Our preliminary Design and Access Statement describes the new proposal and is set out below.

Local Context and Environment

The site is located in Bedhampton, atop the northern slope of Portsdown Hill. It is on the edge of the urban 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 a nineteenth century Grade II listed villa in a mock castle style, including castellations and a tower. 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.

An extension of the building was added in the late 1980s 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 window shapes 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 well screened from views from outside the site by the trees to the North West.



Local Planning Policy

Policy CS7, Community Support and Inclusion, of the Havant Borough Core Strategy (Local Development Framework 2011) identifies the need for new services for older people, stating that:

'4.15 The projected population figures for the borough indicate that the over 60 age group is expected to grow disproportionately within the overall population until 2026. This presents specific challenges in relation to housing, health and care needs.'

'4.17 ... The borough currently has the second largest number of over 60s in Hampshire (28,000 in 2007) or 20% of the population; this is projected to rise to 27% by 2026.'

The 'Housing Provision for Older People in Hampshire' (2009) report concludes that:

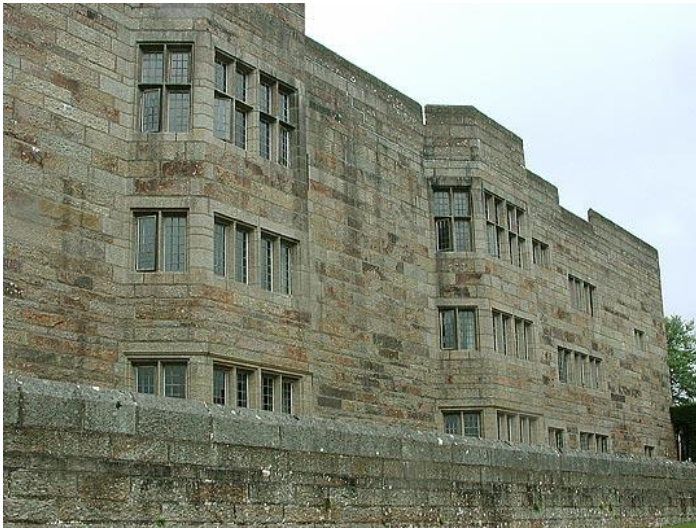
(7.33) 'Demand for care home places for older people is projected to grow in Hampshire by around 6,500 places (73%) by 2026, an average of 325 places a year over the 20 year period.'

Proposed Extension

Sited on the very edge of the urban area the new building takes as its precedents the existing buildings on the site and from the landscape beyond. The design seeks a sensitive 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 proposed building forms an intimate central garden between itself and the existing buildings without creating a fully enclosed courtyard. It takes its plan form from the contours as they curve through the site, so as to further embed it in the landscape.

The new proposal suggests an extension for EMI (Elderly Mentally Infirm) patients, which will cover the need that has been identified in the local area. It will ensure minimal impact on the neighbouring properties as it is well screened by mature trees which will not be affected by the scheme (see below). There are no properties to the north. Additional planting will be proposed

along the western boundary to ensure that the detached house to the west will have an obscured view of and will not be overlooked by, the new development.



The proposal has been designed using the precedent of the existing buildings, and other existing purpose-designed 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 offers a very different design solution in the form of a timber screen. The irregular vertical timber cladding recalls the tree trunks behind which it stands and when viewed from the Havant Gap the building begins to disappear into the wooded hill. Being set out from the wall of the building the screen will create patterns of light and shade that will blend with the wooded areas. Opening panels identify the location of windows and offer control over exposure to weather and access to light.



The two “faces” of the design are linked by the roof structure and terrace above. The terrace structure offers views through the large windows towards the north & south while linking the urban with the natural. By being stepped back from the parapets the roof space floats over and behind each elevation so that the building becomes less dominant in the landscape, allowing the original house to remain the focus on site. The use of materials such as glass for the large window openings, timber for the roof beams, standing seam composite roof and external walls cladding system of the building suggest consistency of materials for each elevation of the proposal, in order to offer a new design which blends harmonically within the environment and respects its surroundings.

Existing Trees Strategy

Arboricultural consultants CBA Trees have prepared a Tree Survey Report on the existing trees and the likely impact of the proposed development on them. The report concludes that, although the site does contain some significant trees, none of these would be affected by the proposed new development. In total the report identified that the development would result in the “direct loss of [nine] trees” but that “It may however be possible to transplant” some of those trees to “another location on site”. Additionally, the large common beech tree near the original house which is classified as category A1 would remain unaffected by the proposed new structure and could be protected during construction with the methods described in the Tree Survey Report by the arboriculturalist.

The report assesses the quality and condition of the trees that would be affected by development. As six of the trees are of category C1 and several are of only “fair” or “poor” condition the report advises that “Trees 1, 2, 3, 8 and 9 are not worthy of transplanting.” and that “it would be of more benefit to secure new planting of a moderate size” and put in place a “maintenance programme” to ensure their growth. The report continues that “Trees 5 and 7...would not survive transplant” and so they would advise that they too are replaced with new planting. For the remaining trees it states “It may be possible to transplant” trees 4 and 8 rather than replacing them.

The arboriculturalist suggests that the development may be achieved with a programme of tree replacement and some transplanting and by ensuring that the overall number of trees and species of tree on the site is maintained.

Car and Cycle Parking

The existing Care Home is located on a Local Distributor road served by at least 3 bus routes between Havant and Portsmouth. The site has two existing access points (which will not be altered) serving a tarmac hard-standing and gravel car park, used by staff, visitors and emergency vehicles. Please see the Green Travel Plan for further details.

Conclusion

Over the past years, the need for additional and larger care homes is increasing, along with the need for elderly people to ensure better living standards. Smaller care homes are closing down all over the country while the number of elderly requiring a care home rises. Life expectancy increases and new regulations require facilities that deliver a higher level of living standards.

Following Havant Borough Council's Planning Approval for our client's previous application, PWP Architects has re-designed a scheme that accommodates all the conditions and the local planning policy, while reflecting the heritage, architecture and local ecology of the surrounding area, in an attempt to offer back to the community a building which serves and improves the lives of the elderly.

