

CASE REF: 23/501008/LBC & 23/501009/FULL

SITE: CHORD ELECTRONICS LTD THE OLD PUMP HOUSE
FARLEIGH BRIDGE EAST FARLEIGH

DESCRIPTION OF WORKS

Listed Building Consent for erection of a third floor to create additional business space.

SIGNIFICANCE

Designation and context

The property forms part of a complex of former industrial buildings that were constructed as part of the water works. The Works, the adjoining building is Grade II. The submitted heritage statement provides background to the development of the site.

The complex was formed of different architectural styles, and the host building has a strong Neo-Romanesque style, and photographic evidence provided shows that the pump house was taller with a pitched roof. The Old Pump House is a tall building that housed the pumping gear, and this is reflected in the external appearance both in original height and the window configuration.

The setting is sensitive. Set within a valley, the area has developed and evolved. The earliest remaining structure, aside from the Church (late C11/early C12) which sits on the opposite side of the valley to the site, is the bridge (East Farleigh Bridge – GI & SM). The bridge is probably from the C14 and noted in the listing description as ‘possibly one of the finest medieval bridges in the south of England.’ Of a similar age is Gallants Manor (0.5miles SW) which tree-ring dating suggests c.1320. The current building is smaller than the original, and much altered.

The remaining properties started to be constructed from the C15 (such as Becketts Place & Gae House Farmhouse) and continued to be developed to include the GII East Farleigh Station (opened 1844), a simple painted weatherboarded structure, with a slate roof. The evolving character of the settlement adds to the character of the village, but most are centred on agriculture, and the Victorian ‘improvements’. These include the School (now parish hall) 1855 (which replaced the Butterfield School of 1846) of Gothic architecture, together with the associated Masters House; the adjoining Workers Cottages & Oast House (1869), the pumping station (1860 – James Philbrow, Engineer) and the proposed site, engine & boiler house (1878 – Henry Teague, Engineer)

These large Victorian structures would have changed the appearance and character of the village, introducing larger building in different architectural styles, such as Gothic (school) and mock- Egyptian (waterworks), as well as different materials, such as red and yellow brick and slate roof covering (station). With these buildings, there would have been changes to the everyday lives of the villagers.

Many industrial buildings fell from grace, deemed as dirty, unsightly (or not pretty) and many have been lost, but over recent years, the importance of these buildings have been recognised, both for the impact on the community, but also as feats of engineering. Where they remain (with original interiors and engines), they are now

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being restored (such as Crossness Pumping Station). The interior of the proposed site and the upper storey have been lost, and a new use (offices for Chord Electronics Ltd) has been found. The building responds to the changing recognition of our industrial heritage, and our changing views on Victorian architecture.

The property is not within a Conservation Area but is within the wider setting of East Farleigh Lower Road Conservation Area.

The Old Pump House is considered to be curtilage listed due to the connection with the GII Former East Farleigh Waterworks.

COMMENTS

Planning history

Pre-application advice was provided for this application, and the proposed scheme responds to the advice given.

Relevant policies

Form

The proposed scheme is to 'reinstate' the removed upper storey.

Design

The proposed pre-application design offered a more 'light-weight' structure, with large areas of glazing. This was considered to be in-appropriate to the existing structure as the original building had limited windows/ openings due to the original function as an engine and boiler house.

The revised design has responded to these comments, and whilst allowing for larger amounts of glazing than the original form, it responds to the existing architecture with the proposed scale and form copying that of the lost floor and roof structure. An element of contemporary architect is offered to compliment that on the Waterworks building and to allow for future understanding of the development of the host building.

Materials

The proposed materials respond to the main building but introduces modern materials. This ensures that the connection between the buildings is remained.

Impact on character and setting

The building is within a sensitive location, within the setting of the GI bridge, GII* Church of St Mary, and the GII Railway Station and Bridge House. Due to the height of the structure, it has the potential of more of an impact on the wider setting of the listed building within this part of the settlement (Beckets Place and associated Oast and the Station).

It is worth noting that the views from Lower Road Conservation Area (across the valley) are glimpsed to the wider landscape, and the view from Lower Road down Station Road are blocked due to the tree growth and built form, until just past River Close. The proposed site is set behind the Waterworks and the Malthouse but can be seen over the roof.

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Due to the valley, there is a strong visual connection between the site and looking back towards the setting of the CA & church. This is enhanced by the bridge and the river setting. The river and the valley forms an important of the setting of the listed buildings, and for the reason of the Waterworks.

Historic photographic evidence (within the submitted Heritage Statement) shows that the current building had an additional storey which would explain the slightly truncated appearance of the building which abruptly stops with a strange roof structure. The proposed scheme looks to reform the lost upper floor and roof structure, but in a contemporary design. This will allow the changes to be clearly visible but reinstate the wider appearance of the building. While many industrial buildings are often considered as ugly, or harmful to the more rural setting, they form an important part of our history and development, often forming key buildings within the landscape.

The interior of the building was formed when converted to an office, and has limited significance to the building, and the proposed internal works are considered to cause no harm to the curtilage listed building.

Solar panels are usually discouraged on listed buildings, but the use of modern technology on a former industrial building continues the ethos of the original building and in this case, the use of solar panels on the curtilage listed building is supported.

The proposed design is considered to cause no harm to the significance of the curtilage listed building, or the setting of the adjoining designated heritage assets as this is contemporary reinstatement of the original floor and roof structure. However, under the wording of the NPPF (para 201 & 202), it is considered the harm is less than substantial (at the lowest end of the scale), and this harm is mitigated with the public benefit of the building being in commercial use.

Conditions

- Samples of bricks and external materials
- Connection details (1:5/ 1:10) of how the new storey will connect to the existing structure – to ensure that no harm is undertaken to the original fabric.

CONCLUSION

Approve - I raise no objection to this application on heritage grounds

FURTHER GUIDANCE

For further guidance please click the relevant link.

- *Manual For Streets* ([LINK HERE](#))
- *Kent Design Guide* ([LINK HERE](#))
- *National Design Guide* ([LINK HERE](#))
- *Urban Design Compendium* ([LINK HERE](#))
- *Placecheck Users Guide* ([LINK HERE](#))
- *Setting of Heritage Assets* [LINK HERE](#)
- *Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings* [LINK HERE](#)

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- *Stopping the Rot* [LINK HERE](#)
- *Conservation Principles* [LINK HERE](#)
- *Listed Buildings and Curtilage* [LINK HERE](#)
- *BS 7913 2013*
- *Statements of Heritage Significance* [LINK HERE](#)
- *Traditional windows* [LINK HERE](#)