

196	Case ref. no:	Y17/0204/SH
Property Address:	Land adjoining The Patio, Beach Street, Folkestone	
Proposals:	Erection of new public access stair structure incorporating lift	
Application Type	Planning and Listed Building Consent	
Agent:	Martello	
General Comments Operative Conditions?		
Listing / C/A?	Grade II, Conservation Area	
Date Consult Received:	07/03/2017	
Date Comments Sent:		

Comments:

General Description:

The disused railway viaduct descends sharply from the North running alongside The Tram Road before crossing the approach into the old harbour (The Stade) on a series of low brick arches and then crossing the harbour basin dividing into an inner and outer harbour. At the southern end there is a substantial iron swing bridge (now disused), and beyond this, the disused Folkestone Harbour Station which curves around and contains a large area used for car parking.

The site of the proposed lift tower and stairway is at the northern end of the Viaduct, on its west side, close to the harbour side and a public space called the patio.

Historic Building Description and Significance:

The present day Folkestone Harbour was constructed by Thomas Telford in 1809. The railway arrived in 1843 with arches constructed across the harbour to provide a level standing for trains. It was taken to the South Quay in 1849 with the construction of the swing bridge (not the current one). The original Harbour Station stood close by the South Quay but rails were extending southwards after 1876, with the harbour arm extended in two stages during 1881-1883 and 1897-1904.

The harbour played a significant role during WWI and was a major embarkation point – 10 million men and 1 million tonnes of freight passed through the harbour during the Great war. Continental rail services declined in the 1970s and finally closed in 1984, although a roll on roll off terminal was constructed in 1972.

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This continued until 1991 but the port continued after that as a hovercraft and then a Seacat terminal until 2000. Since then the harbour has only been used for small boats and the viaduct and harbour station have become disused and derelict.

The immediate area of the proposed stair tower has been transformed in modern times. Older maps show three property blocks in the area west of the viaduct arches at Beach Street. All of this has been cleared away in the post war years, leaving only the pub as a reminder of the former street layout. More recently the area between Beach Street and the harbour has been landscaped with pavements, street fountains and a seafood kiosk.

The old maps show that the area once had a very tight and enclosed character with narrow streets, leaving only two small triangular spaces between the buildings and the viaduct. All of this sense of enclosure is now lost.

The viaduct has also changed over time. The original 1843 brick arched viaduct was previously flanked by two platform areas added to either side but now removed. The 1929 map shows that the West platform area had already been removed by this date.

The tower shown in the 1932 *Priestman* painting was not there on the 1897 map but had appeared by 1907. The painting suggests that this was a timber signal box tower with an external access stair on its South side.

Interestingly, the older maps also show spur lines extending back (North) from these platforms to connect with the spaces in Beach Street and, on the East side, to a turntable with a spur line extending eastwards alongside the fish market along The Stade. These would have been lines allowing railway wagons to be taken up from the Wharf Side to connect up to the main line but it is unclear how these worked due to the differences in level which would have suggested that these tracks would have been steeply inclined.

These access tracks were still here in 1897 (and the one on the East side survived into the 1900s but had disappeared by 1929). The 1907 plan shows that the West side branch had been removed by this time and had been replaced by the signal box tower.

On this West side, there is now no trace of either the platform, spur railway line or the timber signal box tower, and the only surviving feature is the rectangular brick platform extending out of the viaduct. This feature presumably replaced the timber signal box after 1932.

Development Proposals and Comments:

The current proposals are part of an initiative by the De Haan Trust to regenerate the harbour for use for leisure activities.

The proposals are a part of a wider project to repair the viaduct and re-landscape the tracks area making it safe for pedestrian traffic, providing a link between The Stade and Rocksalt Restaurant and The South Quay, which is also being converted for leisure uses. The idea is to convert the viaduct into a park walkway rather like the *Highline Park* in New York.

The structure will be located on the West side of the viaduct where this is a projection of the Harbour Wall side, adjacent to the viaduct. Here there is also a brick built structure projecting out of the West side of the viaduct which is to be demolished and replaced by the proposed structure which comprises a “vertical lift tower clad in vertically fluted dark concrete wall panels, capped with a zinc butterfly roof”. Beside this there will be a broad flight of stairs with a red brick enclosure, the size of the harbour side projection with walls rising off the harbour side wall on the South and West sides. These walls will be capped with a steel handrail and there is also a sliding gate to close off access to the viaduct when required. The structure is to be built as a reinforced concrete frame, clad in brickwork and paved as described below.

Materials will be:

- Reclaimed red brick to match the viaduct
- Tower cladding – dark, pigmented concrete fluted panels
- Tower roof – zinc (dark, anthracite colour)
- Paving and steps and forecourt area – granite paving
- Lift door and reveals – mirror finish

Relevant Documents:

9. List of Supporting Information / Drawings

2358 / 005 – Site location and ownership plan
161-ACME-GA1-XX-1122 – Proposed site & floor plan
161-ACME-GA2-XX-1222 – Proposed elevation sheet 1
161-ACME-GA2-XX-1223 – Proposed section sheet 1
161-ACME-GA2-XX-1224 – Proposed elevation sheet 2
161-ACME-GA2-XX-1225 – Proposed elevation sheet 3
161-ACME-GA2-XX-1226 – Proposed section sheet 2
161-ACME-GA2-XX-1227 – Proposed section sheet 3
161-ACME-GA2-XX-1228 – Proposed section sheet 4

Folkestone Harbour Company drawing 3074-1002A – Viaduct paving general arrangement drawing

Additional Information:

- Aerial views (Bing)
- Historic Map Extracts – 1871, 1897, 1907, 1929, 2016 (KCC HER)
- Historic photos

Comments:

The idea is to provide a new access connecting The Stade/Beach Street area with a newly repaved viaduct so as to provide a more direct access to the harbour and to create a circular promenade around the harbour. This is a very worthwhile objective which would surely help to regenerate the harbour area.

The design is, apparently, loosely based on the 1932 painting of the area which shows the vertical structure in this location. The design is not a reinstatement of the former signal box tower but instead is an entirely new modern erection, with a broad granite staircase contained within brick walls and with the access lift, designed with fluted concrete cladding and dark grey zinc butterfly roof forming a positive statement. As such it will be an entirely new intervention, the design of which stands on its own merits and will no doubt become a symbolic element of the harbour regeneration.

As such I can see no objection to this. It is not to my taste but it will make the impact which, no doubt, is intended. I have rather greater concerns over the design of the dark pigmented concrete fluted cladding panels to the tower. My concern is that these will appear rather gloomy and, worse, will not weather well. Dark stained concrete never maintains its initial fresh colour and will inevitably bleach out as time progresses. There is also the risk of staining if the detailing is not very carefully considered.

My concern is that the feature may appear very ugly in a relatively short timescale and wonder whether it would be better to clad it in a lighter coloured panel. In any event, we need to see details of the cladding panel designs and details, and a sample, so as to reassure ourselves that the detailing has been fully considered.

I have to say in passing that I consider that the heritage statement is rather disappointing – very light on detail and seeming ignorant of the industrial heritage of the immediate location that is apparent from the maps and as described in my comments above. At the very least there ought to be some sort of archaeological record made of the surviving features on site and of anything found in the excavations for construction of the new feature.

Recommendations:

Ask for further details of the cladding panel and samples of material. Make suggestions as to whether the dark concrete cladding panel finish might be reconsidered

Once as is resolved, I would recommend grant subject to the following conditions:

- Samples of material – brick, concrete panel, roof cladding, paving slabs
- Details of construction of eaves, verges, roof junctions, handrail, sliding gates and steps – scales 1:10 or 1:20
- Provision for an Archaeological watching/ recording brief