

A Photographic Survey
of
“Holm Leigh”
late Faculty of Crimonology,
University of Cambridge.
7 West Road,
Cambridge, CB3 9DP.

Grid Reference
TL 442 581
(544229, 258120)

Raymond Smith BA, FRGS.

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Purpose of Report.

This report is the presentation of a supplementary photographic record undertaken (on a voluntary basis) for the Brooking Collection of Architectural Detail (a national study resource, based partly at the University of Greenwich). The photography was undertaken by Raymond Smith whilst Charles Brooking of the Collection was on site supervising the removal of items for the Collection. This was by arrangement with the site architects and was in accordance with requirements of the planning permission for the demolition of the buildings that items of interest should be salvaged.

There were limitations on the accessibility of the site as site clearance and the demolition of peripheral buildings had already started at the time of the visit on 7th April, 2010 and heavy machinery was being used on the site. However this meant that some later internal fittings had recently been removed increasing the amount of original material that was visible. The photographs were all taken using natural light rather than flash giving a more even light distribution. This document is intended to conform with the English Heritage standards advised for photographic surveys, although the written content goes beyond that which is required for such reports. [Note 1.]

Summary of Site.

The building was a mid Victorian villa, one of the few surviving from a road of such buildings. It was set in a Conservation Area, in proximity to several mid 20th century listed buildings, amidst a variety of recent educational buildings. It had itself been in educational use and a utilitarian range had been added to it in the rear garden in the mid 20th century.

Beacon Planning report [Note 2.] that the house was occupied from 1899 by Professor (later Sir) Joseph Thomson, a leading physicist of his generation, and a Nobel Laureate. Two years before this he had presented work that is seen as the “discovery of the electron” at the Royal Institution [Note 3].

Archaeological work had been undertaken on behalf of the applicants as part of the planning application. Their Non Technical Summary states:

“A total of two test pits and two trenches were excavated at 7 West Road, Cambridge, during an archaeological evaluation of the site. The test pits and trenches revealed a potentially late medieval/Post Medieval field boundary and related features, evidence for Victorian quarrying, and a residual, potentially Anglo Saxon quern stone suggesting nearby activity dating to that period.” [Note 4.]

Note 1. “Understanding Historic Buildings A guide to good recording practice” English Heritage, 2006.

Note 2. Beacon Planning, “Heritage Statement and Justification for Demolition. Holm Leigh, 7 West Road, Cambridge.” June 2009, available with the application papers from Cambridge City Council's website, <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/planning-and-building-control/development-control/monitoring-an-application/monitoring-an-application-online.en> application reference 09_0699_FUL.

Note 3. From Nobel Lectures, Physics 1901-1921, Elsevier Publishing Company, Amsterdam, 1967 quoted on <http://nobelprize.org/>

Note 4. Collins, Matthew, “No. 7 West Road, Cambridge An Archaeological Evaluation.” Cambridge Archaeological Unit, University of Cambridge. September, 2009 available from Cambridge City Council's website application reference 09_0699_FUL.

Map analysis.

A cursory survey has been undertaken of historic maps viewable on the internet. The road that has become West Road was shown as a lane on the 1808 original drawings of the Ordnance Survey [Note 5]. This ran between fields. The side boundaries of Holm Leigh do not appear to coincide with field boundaries, but it appears that the rear boundary of the garden was a field boundary. These fields were presumably created in the implementation of an Enclosure Act of 1802 [Beacon Planning, June 2009, Note 1 above.]. A town plan and 1:2500 Ordnance Survey maps with dates in the late 1880's show, and name, Holm Leigh. It had a significant tree or shrub cover shown in the front and rear gardens. By 1903 most of these trees/shrubs had been removed, but the house outline appears unchanged. By 1927 there appear to have been some small extensions on the west flank of the building [Beacon date these to 1906]. A forward extension had also been made to the stable/garage block on the east boundary of the site. The next map available is from the end of the 1960's and shows the garden range.

Note 5. <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/ordsurvdraw/>

Figures.

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Figure 1. General view of principal elevation from NE.



Figure 2. Eastern end of principal elevation.



Figure 3. Western end of principal elevation.

Figure 4. Core of principal elevation.



Figure 5. Main entrance, principal elevation.



Figure 6. Staircase window in context, principal elevation.



Figure 7. Staircase window in detail, principal elevation, showing saltire mouldings in brick of tympanum, and deep, bracketed verges to gable.





Figure 8. Date plaque 1875 with “EC” monogram, principal elevation.

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Figure 16. First floor of lower service section of house (rear elevation)



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Figure 19. Rear section of main room suite on ground floor showing cornice from chimney breast to main bay (on right).



Figures 20 a & b. Rear section of main room suite on ground floor showing simplified cornice in small 1906 extension.



Windows.

Figure 21. Rear section of main room suite on ground floor, interior of main bay. Note lift up shutters. The panelling has been removed from the flank windows showing the shutters (in green) behind it. That on the left is in its lowered position and the right one is partially raised.



Figure 22. Rear section of main room suite on ground floor, interior of main bay. Detail of lift up shutter.



Figure 23. Rear section of main room suite on ground floor, interior of main bay, showing the recess partly below ground in which the shutter is normally stored.



Figure 24. Interior of “3 over 3” sash window on front ground floor in the service area of the house.



Figure 25. Interior of further “3 over 3” sash windows on front ground floor in the service area of the house. (Photograph enhanced to improve exposure.)



Figure 26. Interior of bay window on rear first floor in the main part of the house.



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Figure 28. Interior of oriel window on rear first floor in the main part of the house.



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Figure 30. Panelling on underside of main staircase.



Figure 31. Main entrance hall with staircase.

Figure 32. Ornamented lintel above staircase.



Figures 33 a & b. Lower section of main staircase, with internal front door shown closed and open. Note the foliate motif used in the balusters.



Figure 34. Central section of main staircase.



Figure 35. Central section of main staircase, in context of staircase window.



Figure 36. Landing balustrade seen from staircase.



Figure 37. Landing balustrade seen from landing



Figure 38. Detail of landing balustrade seen from landing, showing newel posts.



Figure 39. Detail of bracket where uppermost section of staircase meets the landing.



Secondary staircase.

Figure 40. View down into stairwell.



Figure 41. Balustrade and newel posts at head of staircase.



Fireplaces

Figure 42. A fire place on an upper floor, decorative tile surround remaining. Note the foliate design similar to that on the main staircase.



Figure 43. A further fire place on an upper floor, with the foliate design.

Figure 44. Detail of mantel piece bracket showing foliate design on fire place in Figure 44.



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Miscellaneous details.

Figure 52. Finial on porch gable seen from staircase window.



Figure 53. Finial on front of main roof seen from rear.



Figure 54. Window opening on rear elevation with ornamented bricks below sill.



Figure 55. Detail of ornamented bricks below sill on window opening in Figure 54. This motif was not seen elsewhere on the building.



Figure 56. Tiled flooring inside front porch.



Figure 57. Tiled flooring in the side room adjoining the front porch.





Figure 58. Lead soil pipe on east elevation.



Figure 59. Detail of fixing on lead soil pipe in Figure 58.



Figure 60. Detail of fixing on flush pipe in ground floor WC.

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Figure 61. View from a front window towards the listed University Library.



Figure 62. Junction of original building and the mid 20th century garden block.



Figure 63. View from a rear window over the mid 20th century garden block, towards new University buildings.