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Neil Dowlman Architecture

Planning | Design | Project Management

## DESIGN STATEMENT

### Proposed Conversion

**At:**  
**The Old Mill**  
**Mill Lane**  
**Sutterton**  
**Lincolnshire**  
**PE20 2EN**

**Job Number:**  
**B/3422**

**October 2020**

Architectural Consultants



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<b>Date:</b>	October 2020
<b>Project Number:</b>	B/3422
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<b>Revisions:</b>	-

# DESIGN STATEMENT

## 1. The Site

- 1.1 The mill is sited at the junction of Mill Lane and the old A17 trunk road approximately 1 kilometer to the west of the center of the village of Sutterton.

Access to the site is via Mill Lane and the area of the current ownership is approximately 0.12 hectares.

## 2. Previous Planning History

- 2.1 A single storey links the mill tower to a two storey granary building which was given planning permission for conversion to residential in February 2001 – ref B/99/0517. In May 2001, two further planning permissions were given. B/01/0160 sought the replacement of the mill's OGEE cap and the construction of a garage and external garden (link) wall.
- 2.2 B/01/0161 was for the same work but also sought the replacement of the windows, the construction of a balcony and the installation of an internal staircase. The conversion of the granary and the building of the garage and link wall are the only items of work that have actually been carried out, although there is a new timber terrace and steps, which have been constructed up to the main mill door (ground floor). These may, in fact, be the "balcony" referred to on ref B/01/0161.
- 2.3 A further planning and listed building applications were approved under B/06/0535 and B/06/0542 in August 2006 for the change of use of the mill to become domestic accommodation.

## 3. Current Status of Mill Tower

- 3.1 The mill tower currently stands devoid of any complete floor or staircase structures. The main front door seems to have been either well maintained or more likely replaced at some point in history and the roof is capped with a lead clad flat roof above the original brick corbels.
- 3.2 Most, if not all of the windows are in a very poor condition and the suspended walkway/balcony usually found at first floor level on the outside of such towers is now missing, there only being a series of sockets in the tower walls and some old photographs left to prove its original existence. The main access door threshold lines up with the floor of the single storey link referred to above, but the ground floor, like all of the other floors, is missing. There is currently a one meter deep sump where the ground floor is missing, which is full of pigeon corpses and excreta, decayed timber and other rubbish which has found its way through the broken windows. Because of the damaged windows pigeons are still accessing the tower and rainwater has been able to get in.

## 4. Basic Description of Mill

- 4.1 As stated above the ground floor of the mill would appear to have been originally constructed approximately one meter above the surrounding ground level. The location of windows and the remains of floor beams indicates that there were originally five floors within the mill. The main door is located on the tower's north west façade, above which there is a window on each of the other floors. These windows are of 4 panes with timber sills and brick arches over. The south west elevation has windows on all five floors each with a 4x4 pane Georgian configuration. These windows seem slightly taller than those on the north

east elevation, but have the same sills and brick arches.

- 4.2 On the south west elevation, there are windows only on the two lower floors, again with timber sills and brick arches, but here the upper window has 4 panes and the lower 16. The south east elevation looks over the single storey link towards the granary and accommodates a high threshold door giving access to the original timber walkway at first floor level. Above that are three levels of 16 pane Georgian windows.
- 4.3 At ground floor level there is a plinth, the top of which is ca. 500mm above the threshold of the main door and  $\frac{1}{2}$  brick wide and the outside of the tower has been painted with bitumen up to the level of the original gallery i.e. approximately the cill of the first floor windows.

## **5. The Proposals**

- 5.1 The proposal is that the original five floors of the mill be reinstated. However the levels of each floor may not be able to be set exactly as the original floors. The floor/floor heights indicated by the positioning of the windows are very low, particularly at the upper part of the mill and are very high at the ground level. The heights of the floors and positions of existing floor beams have not been able to be located precisely. In reinstating the number of floors, it is intended that the lower floor be used as a kitchen, that the first and second floors be bedrooms, that the third floor be used as a bathroom and the fourth floor be a living area.
- 5.2 With this arrangement in mind, there will be new floor joists and supporting beams to a structural engineer's calculations.
- 5.3 New studwork walls will be designed to support staircases which because of the need for fire precautions will need to spiral up the tower as a continuous stair. There is no evidence of the original staircase and in any case the typical arrangements of stairways would have not been acceptable on a fire safety basis. Therefore, the new stair spirals up the tower in a partitioned off, fire protected enclosure constructed independent of the existing walls in a simple stud and plasterboard construction. Elsewhere the internal faces of the brick tower, after careful cleaning and re-pointing (again in lime mortar) will be finished with an insulating lime based plaster (a.m.b. Limetec).
- 5.4 The existing flat roof is to be replaced by a new lead cap by a specialist which will be supported by cylindrical steel columns set internally within a panoramic continuous set of purpose made hardwood windows using all traditional joinery techniques and mouldings.
- 5.5 The windows of the mill at present are in a poor state of repair. Here the intention would be to replace the windows with new units of traditional details and styles. We have assumed that originally all windows would have been in the "Georgian" style replicated on the north eastern elevation. In all instances we would be looking to providing single side opening panels each with 4x4 panels and fitted with restrictors and other apposite ironmongery.
- 5.6 The final area of work is the reinstatement of the external gallery. There are photographs of the mill that indicate, from a distance, that the gallery was still in place into the 1920's. However research has failed to identify any close up photographs. From the evidence of the photographs referred to, it appears that the gallery deck was possibly in timber, but unlike other mills the balustrading was of wrought iron. To that effect the proposal is that a wrought iron balustrade be installed to a timber deck as detailed.

## **Conclusion**

The existing tower at Sutterton is currently in a seriously challenged state such that unless

some repair work is undertaken, sooner rather than later, the actual brick structure may begin to deteriorate. Our proposal, as well as providing the work outlined will include the necessary brick repairs, re-pointing in lime mortar and the reapplication of bitumen protection on the external walls up to first floor level. Any vents required for extract fans etc. will be terracotta or cast iron, and hopefully will be sited to minimize their visual impact. Drainage will be taken vertically down the building and will then be taken horizontal below the ground floor and into the ground through the walls below ground level thus obviating the need for any external drain pipes.

The resulting scheme will put the mill tower back into use as residential accommodation. It is unfortunate that some repair work has not been previously undertaken to keep physical evidence of the floors insitu, but apart from the skeletal remains these floors, all challenged by damp and rot, nothing remains to indicate how the floors were assembled and certainly there is no evidence of the size and timber type of the floor boarding. Should Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent be granted we shall be seeking to carry out all repairs and new work sympathetically.