

Heritage Statement

Climping Mill, Climping Street

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On behalf of:	Mr Gary Love	Ref:	0270

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Ignus Froneman, Director at Cogent Heritage, in consultation with Simply Planning and the Applicant, Mr Gary Love.
- 1.2 The application involves the excavation of a pond and construction of flood defence gates and earth bunds at Climping Mill (The Mill Lodge at The Mill, Climping). Climping Mill is a grade II listed former windmill, now converted to a house, and first listed on 5 June 1958. It is described in the list description as:

"Originally a windmill, built in 1799. Smock type. Only the ground and first floors now remain, faced with flints and weather-boarding. The remainder was demolished in 1954. To the south was a mid-C19 mill-house. Two storeys. Four windows. Faced with cobbles with red brick dressings, quoins and flush stringcourse. Tiled roof. Glazing bars intact. In 1954 this was joined to the remains of the mill by a curved porch with one storey over. Architect Sir Richard Garton."
- 1.3 This Heritage Statement supports the (retrospective) application for planning permission for the works described above. The works being applied have already been partially implemented, with the pond and flood defences in place. A previous application (LPA Ref. CM/25/20/PL), which was not accompanied by a proper assessment of the proposed development, was refused. The Heritage Statement assesses the effects of the proposed development on the significance of the listed building. More specifically, it considers the effects on the setting of the listed building, and whether the proposed development change affects the contribution of the building's setting to its significance.
- 1.4 The proposed development does not affect the listed building itself, and there is no application for listed building consent.

2 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 2.1 This section starts by considering the historic background of the mill, and the evolution of the building and its setting, which informs the assessment of significance after the historic background, towards the end of this section.
- 2.2 **Historic background:** The historic background below was largely drawn from the *Victoria County History*¹, with specific aspects of the area's history relevant to this application highlighted, such as sea and river defences, ponds and trees.
- 2.3 The parish of Climping, which includes the former parishes of Cudlow and Ilsham, lies along the coast on the west bank of the river Arun. The ferry at Littlehampton, mentioned from the later 13th century, evidently plied to Climping, and by 1606 was reached by a road that ran north-east from Climping mill. Only the north-western and north-eastern corners of Cudlow parish remained in 1991, with the rest having been lost to the sea; the north-eastern part is represented by Littlehampton golf course and West Beach.
- 2.4 The area of Climping parish expanded as longshore drift caused the mouth of the river Arun to be deflected eastwards. The ancient parish was enlarged in 1880 by the addition of two detached parts of Littlehampton, the larger of which contained Bailiffscourt, otherwise known as the Atherington estate². The western part of the ancient parish, including the settlements of Climping, Ilsham, and Atherington (Bailiffscourt), lies on brickearth, of which Climping windmill occupies an outlier further east.
- 2.5 Further south, some marshland had been reclaimed by the early 16th century on Atherington manor, where a defensive wall, presumably meaning an earth bank, was mentioned in 1511; it may have followed the line of the surviving track running north-east from Climping mill, which existed by 1606. By 1540 there were at least 110 acres of demesne 'marshland pasture' at Atherington (Bailiffscourt). The river defences continued to be kept up in the early 18th century; by 1731 Christ's Hospital, as landowner, had constructed groynes alongside its lands in the NE, though because of the hindrance to navigation the Littlehampton harbour commissioners ordered them to be abandoned in 1761. Land between the various defences and the river was saltmarsh pasture, known as slipes, which in 1792 were flooded at every spring tide.

¹ A P Baggs and H M Warne, 'Climping', in *A History of the County of Sussex: Volume 5 Part 1, Arundel Rape: South-Western Part, Including Arundel*, ed. T P Hudson (London, 1997), pp. 126-147. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/sussex/vol5/pt1/pp126-147> [accessed 13 January 2021].

² *Atherington* manor may originate in the moiety of Climping which earl Roger gave to Sées abbey (Orne) after c. 1082; since it was used by the abbey as a residence for the bailiff of its English lands, it was later alternatively called *Bailiffscourt*.

- 2.6 The open coastline and lack of roads made Climping an obvious place for smuggling in the 18th and early 19th centuries. A riding officer had been appointed to combat it by 1730, and one was drowned, possibly nefariously, in the pond opposite his house in 1802. One purpose of the new roads and ferry of c. 1824 was the suppression of smuggling. Much oral evidence of smuggling in the past was still available at the beginning of the 20th century.
- 2.7 A feature of the parish in the mid 19th century was its ponds: between four and six at each of the centres of settlement, besides others in the fields. Stakers pond or pool mentioned in 1606 was perhaps one of the ponds at Atherington hamlet, the land beside which was registered as common land in 1979.
- 2.8 The amount of wood in the parish was greatly increased in the 1920s and 30s by Lord Moyne of Bailiffscourt, who planted belts of fully grown trees all over the southern half of the parish. Many of the trees were destroyed in the great storm of 1987. It is not known whether the trees recorded at Climping Mill on the 1932 Ordnance Survey map (**Appendix 2.4**) and 1939 aerial photos (**Appendix 3.1**) were planted at that time, but that seems at least a likely proposition, though they might also have been planted as part of the conversion of Climping Mill to a dwelling in the 1920s.
- 2.9 Settlement in the parish has always apparently been scattered. By 1606 there were apparently houses in the present village street which, as the chief road in the parish leading to the sea, later became the main centre of settlement. By the later 18th century it had the largest concentration of dwellings in the parish, around 15 or more. By 1825 it was known as Climping Street, and in the 20th century the settlement came to be called Climping village. Buildings are of various dates between the 18th and 20th centuries, with materials including red brick, flint, and beach pebbles, with some rendering.
- 2.10 The *Victoria County History* has a small section on mills in Climping parish, which mentions Climping Mill, and this is quoted below:

"There was a windmill on the Hospitallers' estate at Ilsham in 1338 and a mill on Cudlow manor at the same period. A windmill on Atherington manor [Bailiffscourt] is mentioned from 1378. In 1485 and later it was called Totsham mill [also Tottisham] and by 1780 alternatively Climping mill. The present octagonal, weatherboarded building of 1799 is an early example of a smock mill. In the 19th century it was kept by members of the Barnard family. A steam engine had been added to supplement wind power by 1895, but the mill ceased to be used soon afterwards. By 1914 it had become two cottages, and in the 1920s it was converted into a single dwelling with the addition of dummy sails. The top storey was removed in 1962 [this was said to have been because it was infested

with death-watch beetle]. *From c. 1959 the mill and adjacent buildings were used as a school* [the site is still sometimes referred to as Climping College].”

- 2.11 **Appendix 1.1** shows an extract of the 1813 First Series Ordnance Survey map, showing Climping Mill and Atherington. The roadway leading to Climping Mill and the path leading NE from it, towards the ferry and said to have been a sea/river defence, can also be seen. The 1843 tithe map at **Appendix 1.2** records Climping Mill at that time, described in the apportionment as ‘House, mill, garden’, owned and occupied by William Barnard. The map records four distinct structures, with the mill easily identified as a circular structure. To the east must have been the house, with the barn to the south of it, and a smaller ancillary building at an angle to the west. It is notable that the plot at this time was delineated as a straight 90 degree boundaries to the south/SE and with a curved plot to the north/NW. A buttressed flint wall still denotes this boundary. The approach to the mill from the south was relatively straight, with a 90 degree kink in front (east) of the mill house, leading NE. A footpath to the NW is also recorded.
- 2.12 The 1878 Ordnance Survey map (**Appendix 2.1**) shows a similar broad arrangement, though with a more compact collection of buildings around the mill (this difference may simply be due to the differences in cartographic representations between the tithe map and the Ordnance Survey map). There had been some apparent increase in footprint/built form around the mill, which by now was physically abutted by both the mill house and the building to the SW. The plot was of similar shape as per the tithe map, but now incorporated the roadway to the shore. The land to the east was evidently marsh, and groynes are shown on the shore.
- 2.13 The 1898 Ordnance Survey map (**Appendix 2.2**) shows a similar arrangement, but with some smaller structures to the south of the mill, and with part of the marshland to the east now having been reclaimed and clearly delineated.
- 2.14 The 1912 Ordnance Survey map (**Appendix 2.3**) labels the mill disused, and shows a similar broad arrangement, albeit now with the western boundary of the mill’s plot slightly adjusted to make a straight line. The marsh to the east seems to have retreated by this time.
- 2.15 The 1932 Ordnance Survey map (**Appendix 2.4**) shows notable changes, not only to the mill, but also to the land surrounding it. By now the mill had been converted to a dwelling for Sir Richard Garton. The building had become detached from the building to the south, which had either been rebuilt, or with the northern part retained and a southern extension added to form an L-shape. Although the list description attributes the “*a curved porch with one storey over*” to 1954, this structure (**Appendix 4.1**) can be seen on the 1932 Ordnance Survey map, which also records a rear extension to the mill house. The

Pevsner architectural guide places this element in the 1920s, stating this was done for the brewer, Sir Richard Garton, who converted the mill to a house (and not by the architect, Sir Richard Garton, as is stated in the list entry).

- 2.16 A belt of trees can be seen on the 1932 Ordnance Survey map, from the shoreline, along the access track to the south and wrapping around the seemingly expanded rectilinear plot to the west of the mill, and continuing NW along the footpath. The golf course to the east is not yet shown. The trees may have been planted for Sir Richard Garton as part of the conversion of the mill to a high status house.
- 2.17 The Mill Archive holds many historic photos of "*Tottisham Mill, Climping (Clymping)*" and most of these are replicated **Appendix 4**. However, it would seem that the dates attributed to at least some of these are incorrect, showing the golf course on photos attributed to the 1920s (e.g. **Appendix 4.2**) and with different vegetation grown in some photos claimed to be of similar date. The photos nevertheless give a good sense of the mill with its intact top, and the immediately surrounding area, which by now had seemingly become a manicured garden (e.g. **Appendix 4.5**). The photo at **Appendix 4.6** is the only one to give a sense of the landscape setting of the mill at that time (claimed to be c. 1934). It looks as though there are some trees on the photo along the west of the track, and there are also trees in the middle ground, extending out of view to the west, and so this looks to be what the 1932 Ordnance Survey map (**Appendix 2.4**) also records.
- 2.18 The 1939 oblique aerial photos (**Appendix 3.1 & 3.2**) are perhaps the best in showing the situation at that time. There seems to have been a belt of saplings to the west of the access road, but no real established trees. There were a few trees to the west of the track, opposite the mill house, and a flint wall can also be seen here (see also **Appendix 4.8 & 4.11**). But the tree planting to the south and west of the mill is striking for its densely planted, apparently substantial coniferous trees. The impression is almost that of a small woodland adjoining the mill buildings, though the planting is too rectilinear to be a woodland. There were fenced tennis courts to the west of the trees, which must have been associated with Sir Richard Garton's dwelling.
- 2.19 The oblique aerial photos of 1952 (**Appendix 3.3 & 3.4**) show the growth of the trees over the 18 years since the 1939 aerial photos. By now there were belts of trees along the footpaths to the north, and along the east, separating the access road from the golf course to the east, and also to the west of the access track, with matured trees closer to the mill buildings. There was an additional paddock (complete with a horse rider, recorded on the aerial photos) in the location of the tennis court previously; this too had been planted with boundary trees.

- 2.20 The 1972 Ordnance Survey map (**Appendix 2.5**) shows a clearing within the rectilinear tree enclosure, and the addition of a building to the east of the mill, and notably also a change in the routing of the southern access, near the shore.
- 2.21 The satellite images from 2001 and 2018 show changes to the vegetation and the accretion of buildings (**Appendix 5.1 & 5.2**). A long distance photo from 2008 shows the mill and building from the SW, largely obscured by boundary vegetation, and in a sorry state.
- 2.22 **Significance:** The remains of the mill and the mill house has historic interest, primarily illustrative, as representing an early and relatively rare example of a smock mill and miller's house, albeit with much of the mill now lost.
- 2.23 The mill has vernacular architectural interest, and also as a former remnant of pre-mechanisation industrialising, although historically it was retrofitted with a steam engine. The flint and brick house has architectural interest as an example of late Georgian domestic architecture, albeit in a vernacular idiom, and it has clearly been altered over the years, as part of the various uses it has been put to, and this includes the overhanging bow of the 1920s (**Appendix 4.1**). These alterations, on one hand, form part of the evolutionary narrative of the building, though on the other hand they have also diluted the original architecture and design intent of the late 18th century house. Although not internally inspected, any residual historic internal features, such as chimney pieces and joinery, as well as plan form, will add to its interest. Likewise, any residual mill machinery, fixtures, scars or other evidence of the workings/construction of the mill would add to its interest.
- 2.24 **Contribution of setting to significance:** It is clear from the map regression how the setting of the mill buildings has changed over the years; the expansion of the plot between 1912 and 1932 resulted in a notable deviation from the original small plot around the mill, accentuated by the addition of tree planting that has considerably changed the original arrangement. However, the curved, buttressed flint wall still exists to denote the original curved plot seen on the earlier maps, as can be seen on the overlay at **Appendix 6.4**. there is also a flint wall along the east of the mill site, though its construction date is unknown.
- 2.25 The barn and the now heavily altered/extended L-shaped building to the south may be said to add to the group value and understanding of the mill, with the more readily appreciable vernacular barn more notable than the unremarkable 20th century L-shaped building. The southern alignment of the approach to the mill has changed in the 20th century, as has the character of this approach, and the golf course has also notably changed the wider setting and context of the group.

- 2.26 The mill group therefore has a setting that has been characterised by considerable change over the years, and it can be said that in many respects the setting of the listed building bears very little resemblance to its original setting – aside from important elements, such as the barn, and the curved flint wall around it. These add to the appreciation of the significance of the mill, but the later elements, such as the added buildings and the enlarged plot and the structural planting that has occurred over the years, do not add to the significance of the mill buildings, or reveal what make these buildings significant. In the wider context the broad rural landscape setting also adds to the sense of the mill as historically something of an isolated outlier, though it is now hardly visible, as can be seen from the 2008 photo (**Appendix 4.12**).

3 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 The proposed development essentially encompasses peripheral groundworks along the present-day plot associated with the mill buildings, with the specific function/purpose of preventing flood damage to the buildings. A gate capable of preventing flooding, associated with the groundworks, is also proposed, though this has not been installed. A pond has also been created to the west of the mill, on what was historically tennis courts, and then a paddock, and later incorporated in a wider clearing to the west and SW of the mill.
- 3.2 Because the application is partially retrospective, it is possible to assess the flood defences, which can be seen in situ. These can also be seen, under construction, on the 2020 satellite images at **Appendix 5.3**, and overlaid with historic maps at **Appendix 6**.
- 3.3 Essentially, on the ground the groundworks manifest as peripheral low earth bunds, and vegetation has now started to take hold, making the bunds (as intended), soft green landscape features (e.g. **Photo 1**). Tree planting is also proposed, and has been undertaken, but the trees have not yet become established.



Photo 1: The peripheral earth bunds, appearing as soft green landscape features.

- 3.4 As **Photos 2 and 3** show, from a distance the bunds blend well into the boundary vegetation, although on those photos the trees that form part of the planted peripheral vegetation has not yet grown noticeably.



Photo 2: The peripheral earth bund, seen on approach from the south.



Photo 3: The longer view from the south.

- 3.5 When comparing these photos with the photo taken in 2008 (**Appendix 4.12**), it is hard to see very much of a change, and certainly nothing that has impacted on the significance of the mill or the associated buildings. Once the boundary vegetation on the groundworks has properly taken hold, it would be hard to see the change, even from within the mill site, with the peripheral earth bunds blending in with the existing trees and boundary planting.
- 3.6 When the landscaping has matured for a year or so, it is difficult to see how this change, in the context of the many changes to the mill, its use and its setting over the years, would cause any harm to its significance or its appreciation.
- 3.7 The gates would have more of a visual presence, and the perceived change brought about by the gates could be regarded as having a small harmful effect on the overall setting of the mill group, by segregating them from the landscape on an historically open approach. Due to the nature of the buildings, and the loss of the top of the mill, such views play at best only a very limited role in revealing the significance of the mill.
- 3.8 To the extent that the flood defences would be visible or appreciable, this intervention must be seen in the context of a listed building, and its setting, which has seen much change over the years. It is an area where there is a centuries-long history of sea and river flood defences. The incarnation of flood defences in the 21st century, against the broader context of acknowledged climate change and associated weather volatility and

flood events, should not be surprising or remarkable – especially not in this particular context.

- 3.9 Even though it is considered that there would be a degree of harm due to the proposed gates, much of the setting of the mill group would remain essentially unchanged, and the setting is only one component of the overall significance of the listed building. Therefore, such harm can only be of a very low level, well within the lower spectrum of less than substantial as described in the National Planning Policy Framework. That is dealt with separately below, but the pond is first briefly considered.
- 3.10 In the context of the pond, it is notable that the *Victoria County History* specifically mentions that ponds were feature of the parish in the mid 19th century, including field ponds. The pond is located on land that was clearly separated from the mill in the past (e.g. **Appendix 3.1 & 3.4**) and even by the 1972 Ordnance Survey map (**Appendix 2.5**) not shown as part of the plot of the mill. In fact, even the 1994 Ordnance Survey map (**Appendix 2.6**) does not appear to show this land as part of the same, well-delineated plot. This land has no meaningful historic relationship with the mill and the creation of a pond here would not affect anything that is significant about the mill, or its associated buildings.
- 3.11 Returning then to the low level of harm, this must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including heritage-specific benefits. The National Practice Guidance³ identifies three examples of heritage-specific benefits, including the two below:
- i. sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting; and
 - ii. reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset.
- 3.12 The proposed flood defences would certainly reduce (if not remove) risks of flooding to the listed mill and mill house. Removing the risk of flooding will sustain the significance of the buildings by ensuring their beneficial continual long term use, which would in turn ensure their maintenance and upkeep. When last sold, the buildings had fallen into a state of severe dilapidation. With the risks of potential future flooding events, investment in the buildings could again become seen to be risky, and the cycle of dilapidation could take hold once more. The flood defences would therefore help to sustain enhancing the significance of the listed building.

³ Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 18a-020-20190723 (Revision date: 23 07 2019)
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment#decision-making-historic-environment>

- 3.13 Therefore, the low level of harm would be outweighed by the heritage-specific benefits of the proposed development.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 There is a long history of flooding, and flood defences, in the context of Climping Mill, with the footpath to the NE believed to have been a flood wall historically. The proposed flood defences, against the broader historic context, and the context of climate change and associated weather volatility and flood events in the 21st century, should not be surprising or remarkable.
- 4.2 No harm has been identified in relation to the proposed earth bunds or pond. However, it is considered that there would be low a degree of harm due to the proposed gates, well within the lower spectrum of less than substantial as described in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.3 Balanced against this low level of harm are heritage specific benefits, namely reducing (if not removing) risks of flooding to the listed mill and mill house. This would also sustain the significance of the buildings by ensuring their beneficial continual long term use.
- 4.4 Therefore, the low level of harm would be outweighed by the heritage-specific benefits of the proposed development.
- 4.5 As such it is concluded that the proposed development would accord with the National Planning Policy Framework, and specifically the provisions of paragraph 196. Case law has established that the provisions of the NPPF are similar to the statutory duty in s.66 of the 1990 Act, meaning that the statutory duty in the Act is complied with. Whilst the harm would not be in accordance with Local Plan Policies HER SP1 or HER DM1, neither of these policies provide for the balancing exercise described in paragraph 196 of the NPPF. Therefore, when read in isolation these policies do not comply with the NPPF, which in such cases falls to be considered as a material consideration.
- 4.6 On the whole, therefore, this assessment finds the proposed flood defences to be acceptable in heritage terms.