

**A Photographic Survey in advance of  
redevelopment at the former Mosan Mills,  
12 Sanvey gate,  
Leicester (SK584 050 area )**

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**For Thomas Fish and Sons Ltd**

Planning Application No: 2002/0662

**Checked by Project Manager**

**Signed:** .....**Date:**

**Name:** .....

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## **A Photographic Survey in advance of redevelopment at the former Mosan Mills, 12 Sanveygate, Leicester (SK584 050 area )**

### *Summary*

*A photographic survey was carried out by ULAS for Thomas Fish and Sons Ltd in January 2004, on buildings at 12 Sanveygate, Leicester, in advance of proposed alteration and redevelopment. The archive will be deposited with Leicester City Museums Service under accession number A21.2003 in due course.*

### **1. Introduction**

This document presents the results of a photographic survey in advance of the proposed alteration and redevelopment of the former Mosan Mills and associated buildings at 12 Sanveygate, Leicester, (SK584 050 area).

### **2. Site Location and Description**

The former Mill is the major building of a group which occupied a block bounded by Sanveygate to the north, and St Margarets Way to the east. When built, the group would also have been bounded by Olive Hill to the south west, although this lane was subsequently closed. The subsidiary buildings have since been demolished. The Mill building runs approximately east - west across the site, and comprises four floors plus a basement.

The site has been subject to previous archaeological work, including a *Standing Building Assessment* (L - P Archaeology, 2002), *Additional Archaeological and Historic Building Information* (L - P Archaeology, 2002), and a *Desk Based Assessment* (John Samuels Archaeological Consultants, 2003).

This document presents the results of a photographic survey of the main Mill building itself, in the form of a selection of photographs from the survey archive. In addition, a short written account is presented.

### **3. Aims and Objectives**

The aim of the survey was to record the main points of interest of the building before its alteration, and to compliment the Standing Building Assessment. It addresses paragraph 5.2 of the *Brief for an Historic Building Assessment and Photographic Survey* issued by the Archaeology Section, Leicester City Museum Service. It does not address paragraph 5.1. which is a different phase of development and will be done at a later date. It is envisaged that the research necessary for the later phase may add to the information known about the mill building itself.

#### **4. Methodology**

The photographic survey was carried in January 2004 out using 35mm SLR cameras, using HP5 Ilford 400ASA monochrome film and Fujichrome Sensia 400ASA colour slide film. Tripods were necessary for many of the shots, due to the low interior light levels. Flash was used where appropriate. The position of the photographs was recorded on floor plans of the Mill, which will be included in the archive.

The written description draws on information contained in the building assessment carried out by L-P Archaeology, and should be read in conjunction with it.

#### **5. Building description**

The Mill is of brick construction with a slate roof in a long rectangle. Research for the building assessment indicates a build date of between 1885 and 1898. The floors are open, with no constructional walls present in the main circulation areas. Instead the floors are supported on longitudinal timber joists, which in turn rest on substantial squared timber cross-beams running laterally between the outer walls. These cross beams are held up by a central spine of cast iron columns common to all floors except the top, where the timber roof trusses span the entire width of the building. The layout would have been designed to maximise the amount of natural light, and would tend to simplify the transmission of motive power around the workplace, although little evidence for the original power supply arrangement has survived. The main load bearing outer walls follow the common pattern of increasing in thickness internally towards the basement. The basement itself is lit by a long continuous light sink along the south facade; on the north face, there appears to have been a series of separate light sinks subsequently blocked by later works.

Although now standing in splendid isolation, the mill building was designed to be seen from the south courtyard which existed before the recent phase of demolition. The south facade is of fifteen bays, with the east and west ends brought forward to flank the face. An ornamental gable (plate 5) is present over the central bays. The west flanking bay is asymmetrical in plan due to being constrained by Olive Hill. This bay contained the original staircase, the lift, and paired toilets on each floor.

The north face has a toilet block protruding from the north east corner on each floor. The building assessment noted a change in brick bond at this point. Although presumed to be original build, it may be an afterthought to the original design at least: a plan in the building assessment report shows that the toilet block is of different wall thickness than the main range, it is provided with a slightly awkward lean to roof (plates 2,3) instead of being incorporated into the main roof structure, and the internal doors accessing the block are of unusually narrow width. Perhaps these door apertures were kept narrow for fear of weakening the load bearing corner, and some structural failure is in fact evident here (plate 18).

By the time of the photographic survey, most of the original fixtures, fittings, and plant noted in the building assessment had been removed, with the exception of the pulley for the lift counterbalance on the top floor (plates 23,24). However, access into the basement was possible. The basement has a lower ceiling height than the floors

above, with cast iron supporting columns over a brick floor. As postulated in the building assessment report, the lift does indeed serve the basement. The lift cage was neither present nor visible in the shaft above, as far as could be seen with a torch. The interior of the lift door on the ground floor above was visible: it is provided with a handle, indicating the lift could have been used for passengers as well as goods. There is a modern brick lined pit (plate 10) under the position of the post-war lift, and several smaller shallow brick pits which could be original build, presumably sumps or housings for machinery flywheels.

Internally, the floors are more or less identical, the exceptions being mainly modern alterations. There are several extant and blocked apertures on the lower floors (e.g plates 15,16) in the west gable to provide access into the adjacent building, whilst on the top floor blocked apertures indicate original windows, and block and tackle hoists or similar. Two curious hatches (plate 18) in the east gable on the first and second floors may represent further hoist positions.

There is no obvious position for the main power plant within the Mill building. In the basement of the demolished east wing were indications that there had been a boiler present; as the east wing and the main Mill building appear to be the same build, it is possible that the original plant was also situated there. A large well still visible in the basement could have provided water for it. Throughout the main building are vents in the brick piers, which might be part of an original heating or ventilation system.

## **6 Bibliography**

Constable, C., and Williams, M., 2002 *Standing Building Assessment of 12 Sanveygate Leicester* L-P : Archaeology (project reference LP/0180L)

Constable, C., and Williams, M., 2002 *Additional Archaeological and Historic Building Information for land at 12 Sanveygate Leicester* L-P : Archaeology (project reference LP/0180L)

JASC 2003 *An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment of Sanveygate, Leicester* John Samuels Archaeological Consultants report number JSAC 1072/03/01

## **7. Acknowledgements**

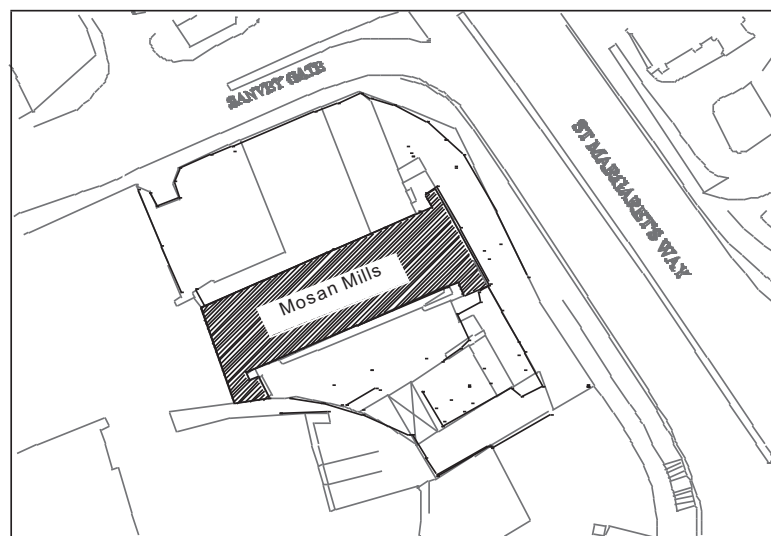
The survey was carried out by Jon Coward of ULAS. Project management was by James Meek of ULAS. ULAS would like to thank Simon Houghton, of Thomas Fish and Sons Ltd, for his assistance.

## 8. Archive

The archive consists of:

- 57 colour slides
- 2 contact sheets of monochrome photographs
- 2 rolls of monochrome film
- 5 sheets of floor plans showing the position of all archive photographs
- 1 CD containing digital copies

It will be deposited with Leicester City Council Museums Service under accession code A21.2003 in due course.



Figures 1, 2 Location of Site

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## 9. Photographs selected from the survey archive



Plate 1 South façade



Plate 2 North façade



Plate 3 East gable



Plate 4 West gable





Plate 5 South facade central gable



Plate 6 South facade east wing

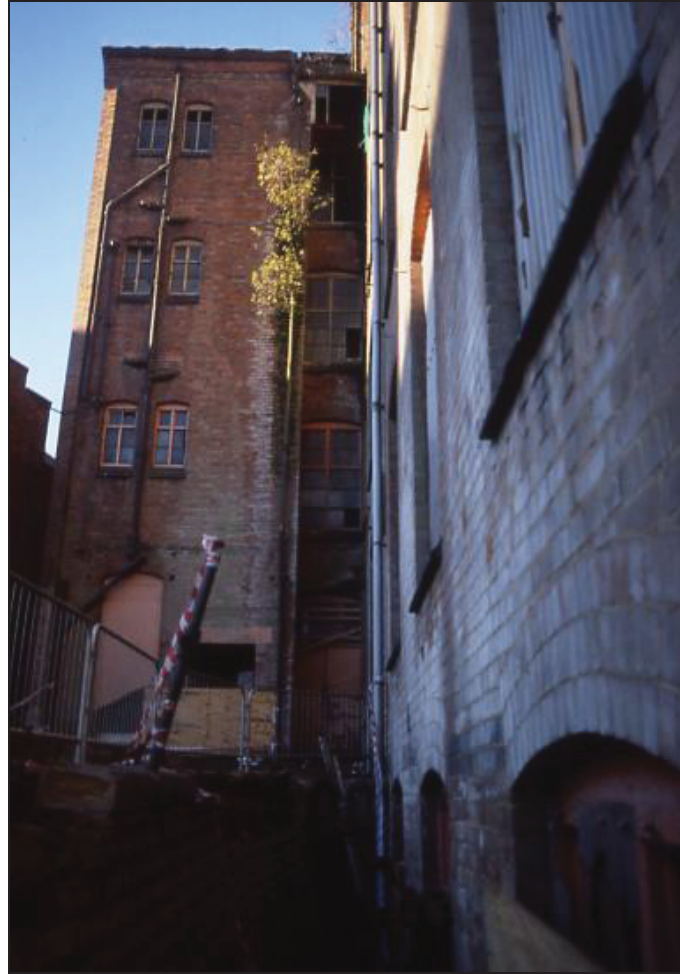


Plate 7 View along south façade towards west wing



Plate 8 Basement looking west



Plate 9 Detail of column in basement



Plate 10 Modern lift base in basement



Plate 11 West staircase in basement



Plate 12 Base of lift shaft



Plate 13 Ground floor looking east



Plate 14 Part of lift power mechanism originally on top floor



Plate 15 Ground floor looking to south west corner



Plate 16 First floor looking west



Plate 17 Second floor looking east



Plate 18 Second floor looking into north east corner



Plate 19 Second floor looking into south east corner



Plate 20 Second floor looking west





Plate 21 Top floor looking east



Plate 22 Top floor looking east



Plate 23 Top floor exterior: part of lift mechanism in south west wing

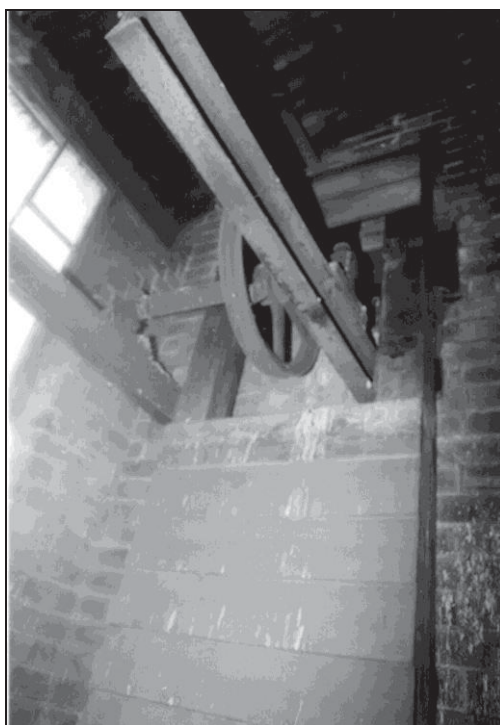


Plate 24 View of lift mechanism from interior