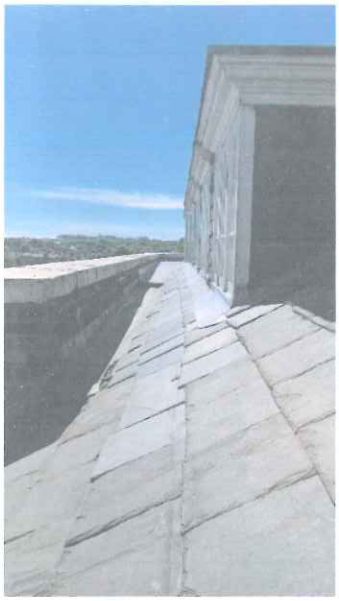
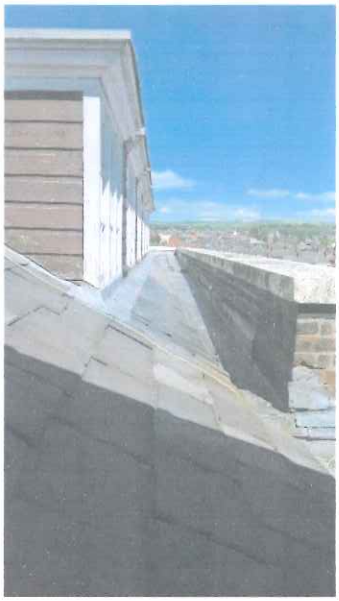
SMD/2019/0288

Heritage Statement (incorporating a Design and Access Statement) for Proposed Safety Rail at Waterloo Mill.

Waterloo Mill was built in 1894, one of several silk mills in Leek. Over time the mills have ceased manufacturing and become empty. In the mid 2000s Waterloo Mill was converted into 27 residential apartments.

This application does not seek to alter any of the architectural features or extend the building in any way. It is simply seeking permission to put up a permanent safety rail to ensure that the building can be maintained in order for it to continue to be a monument to Leek's industrial past. No part of the building will be altered either at the installation phase, or permanently, except the points at which the safety rail will be attached to the inside of the parapet wall.





The roof is a traditional pitched roof with slate tiles as well as flat roof dormer windows and a rainwater gulley protected by a low parapet wall with a mix of materials meaning regular inspections and maintenance is required to ensure that the water collected is taken away and not allowed to permeate into the building causing long lasting damage.

The roof area at Waterloo Mill is accessed from the top floor. A parapet and gulley surrounds the roof but currently has no fall protection for anyone working on the roof. This needs to be addressed in order for the building owners to comply with current health and safety legislation. As it stands no one can be permitted to access the roof area in order to carry out any maintenance. In the past, as a temporary measure, scaffolding has been erected around the parapet to facilitate major works however if this is done a number of times it will cause damage to the brickwork and so should not be seen as a solution, as well as not being practical for regular minor repairs and inspections.

As can be seen from the photographs above, it is also possible for residents of the upper floor to climb out of their windows and on to the roof area. Whilst this is not permitted under the terms of their lease there is nothing to stop a determined resident from accessing the roof, and there is no protection for them should they do so.

A permanent safety rail is the only solution to allow regular access to the roof area and is compliant with the requirements of 'Working at Height Regulations 2005' which give collective protection measures priority over personal protection measures, as detailed in the attached summary report from Arco Total Access.

The rail itself will be made from tubular stainless steel, compliant with all current British and European standards, and attached to the inside edge of the parapet wall and provide continuous protection around the entire building. The gulley falls away towards the centre of the building to provide run off for water and so the height of the rail, to remain constant from the gully (where contractors will stand and move around), will reduce in height relative to the top of the parapet wall as it goes towards the middle of the building.

This rail will enable the building owners to effectively and efficiently repair and maintain the building ensuring the safety of all contractors and the preservation of the building for future generations.

The visual impact of this will be minimal. From street level the height of the building is such that the dormer windows can barely be seen. The highest point of the rail will be at the top of the windows and with it being mounted on the inside edge of the parapet wall, ensuring that the coping stones on top of the parapet are not damaged, will mean that only the highest part of the rail can be seen from the ground. From further away the rail may well be visible however as it is at a similar height to the dormer windows it will not stand out from the structure of the building.

Ultimately this safety rail could be removed and the building returned to its original state should there be any reason for it no longer being necessary.

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Our Ref: Q111873 MW001
Your Ref:

14th November 2018

Attn: Mr Andrew Leighton

Waterloo Mill Ltd
Waterloo Street
Leek
Staffordshire
ST13 8AT

Dear Sirs

Ref: Waterloo Mill, Leek – Fall Protection

Further to your recent enquiry and our subsequent site visit regarding the above, please find below our offer to carry out the works as detailed.

During our meeting a number of options for safely accessing the half valley gutter around the perimeter of the building were discussed. The first option would be to fit independent anchor points to each dormer window. This would require the removal of some internal dry-lining within the top floor apartments to allow anchors to be fitted back to suitable structure. This would also only allow access to the immediate area outside of each window and would not allow access to areas of the perimeter not covered by windows. It would also require internal access to private apartments by contractors. For these reasons independent internal anchors were discounted.

The remaining options are guardrail to the perimeter or a wire-based fall arrest system back to the roof.

The guardrail fixed to the perimeter parapet wall, provides the highest level of compliance, in accordance with the hierarchy of risk. It can be fitted directly to the structure and doesn't require any other trades, so additional/further costs are negligible, however, it is the most expensive.

The wire-based fall arrest system fitted back to the roof structure is less desirable in terms of the hierarchy of risk, as this requires more training and competency's as well as robust rescue procedures. This needs to be fitted back to the roof structure and so would require the roof slates removing in certain areas and making good after. It would also require full perimeter scaffold to allow the multiple trades and works to go ahead. This is the least expensive of options, however due to the involvement of other trades is probably the most expensive in real terms.