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DRINKSTONE POST MILL

Method Statement covering works of re-alignment to the timber frame of the Windmill Body to be carried out during the week commencing 1/8/05.

The body of the post mill has suffered spreading, deflection of timbers and settlement during its working life. The mill has never had any major remedial repair, just periodic patch-ups that have left it in a very weak state.

The original width of the body, as built, was 9‘ 6” as evidenced by the length of the crown-tree. The width today is 9’ 11” or more in most places. This spreading has caused many of the frame joints to come apart, and in some cases, to completely detach themselves. In a normal building, this might not be very important, but in a windmill, which is a free-standing machine, the result is unsatisfactory. Past attempts have been made to re-attach the joints, but these are very crude and mostly ineffective. The proposal is to eliminate as much of the spreading as possible, and to re-engage the parted joints.

The spreading has been permitted by the breakage of the left-hand vertical post that transmits the weight of the body on to the crown-tree. This has broken at crown-tree level, allowing the top frame to move outwards. It is proposed to pull the top half of this timber into better alignment with its lower half by pulling it inwards. A suitable pulling machine will be attached to the opposite end of the crown-tree, or other convenient attachment point to do the job. The new tail tie-beam will have to be removed and will need some subsequent re-cutting to make it fit.

The tenons of the horizontal members in the breast and tail walls have mostly pulled out of their mortises. It is proposed to attach suitable pulling machines across the corner posts at these points in order to pull the joints back together.

The existing weather-beam has been renewed fairly late during the working life of the mill, and has been made to fit the frame as it now is. The beam will have to be removed in order to accomplish the desired result.

Various extra pieces of iron and timber have been added during the mill’s latter working life to try and hold it together. These will oppose the re-

engagement of the joints, and will have to be removed. Due consideration will be given to the role that these additions may be playing in keeping the frame from falling to pieces, and suitable action will be taken to prevent any undesired movement.

The timbers carrying the floors and machinery have been affected by the spreading. Some of these are now only barely attached to the sides of the mill, and threaten to part company. Once again, less-than-adequate and very crude repairs have been done. These will be treated in the same way as those mentioned previously. Any joints that are misaligned will be raised to the proper height before re-engaging.

Careful consideration will be given to any minor components or joinery that may prevent the frame coming together again. This could include floorboards, weather-boards or fairing pieces that have been added at various times. The work will be approached in an unhurried way with due deference to the condition and importance of the building.

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31/7/05