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Heritage Appraisal and Proposals for The East Bank Lighthouse (Sir Peter Scott Lighthouse)

PE12 9YT

Date 01/02/2021

Ref: SPS/HA

1. History

Heritage Category	Listed Building
Grade	II*
List Entry	1281069
Date first listed	1 st April 1980
Statutory Address	East Lighthouse on bank of bank of Nene, East Bank Road
County	Lincolnshire
District:	South Holland
Parish:	Sutton Bridge
Listing Details:	This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest. There are C20 additions and alterations.
Last permissions:	Replacement of the tower external render and windows, alterations to the garages, construction of new ponds and visitor centre under Listed Building and Planning Consent H18-0321-11 (present owners)

2. Introduction

The East Bank Lighthouse was built around 1830 as one of two lighthouses at the mouth of the River Nene (East Bank and West Bank). They were constructed to celebrate the final draining of the Fens, to guide ships into the river and to house river workers. The East Bank Lighthouse, with some justification, is also known as the birthplace of global nature conservation due to occupancy by Sir Peter Scott from 1933 – 1939 there is a blue plaque on the tower in recognition.

The trust has a maintenance and upkeep responsibility which the current owners have taken on for many years. They have invested considerable resources into the property in order to conserve and protect this heritage building. This has been a financial burden on the trust and the owners and in recent years they have looked to alternative solutions to continue to protect the building. They have tried to attract the interest of various wildlife bodies and organisations such as the National Trust without success and reluctantly put it on the market in 2018. With all interest seeming to be from people intent on carrying out uninformed or unauthorised alterations that would have led to significant damage to the architectural and historic nature of this Listed Grade II* building the owners withdrew it from the market.

The owners and trustees now strive to take a more conservation-based approach which will respect the character the important historic features and aesthetic details of the Sir Peter Scott period. Many of these features were lost due to dereliction and in an effort reduce energy consumption during ill-advised restoration during the 1980's. They hope to enable

these improvements through holiday rental income which gives them continued control over this important historic building.

3. Aims and Objectives

To improve various inappropriate or potentially unsafe aspects of the living accommodation to create a holiday letting specification. This will permit families and groups to experience this unique property as well as enabling the upkeep, local supervision and continued uses by the owners.

To carry out internal improvements to the kitchen and bathroom

To reverse the harmful incorporation of UPVC windows to the kitchen by replacement with timber windows and alterations to the fenestration more in keeping with the original designs.

To sympathetically upgrade the thermal insulation of the kitchen externally and completely re-render to a uniform specification

To re-instate the now missing staircase to the basement

To sympathetically upgrade thermal insulation of the basement and improved standards.

To investigate if any of the 1933 panelling to the second floor survives with Peter Scott murals. Instruct a local artist to interoperate any findings in a sensitive manner.

To sensitively reflect the lost Sir Peter Scott Sketching Window to the studio.

To remove wall

To replace all existing storage radiators with modern storage radiators that will be approximately 34% more energy efficient

To re-coat the outside of the tower with potassium silicate masonry paint as previously approved under approval H18-0321-11. This will also be applied to the new external render of the kitchen.

4. Limitations

The East Bank Lighthouse benefits from being designated as Grade II* listed. All works must be proposed and carried out by informed design and craftsmanship to comply with a conservation based approach and philosophy.

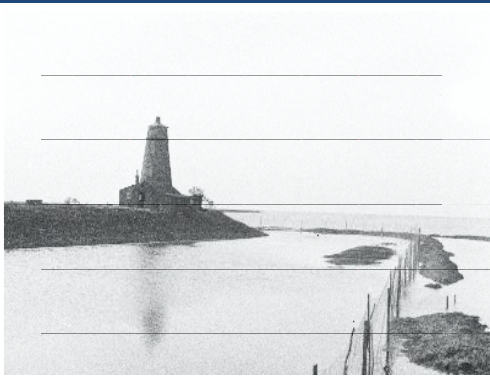
Materials and designs must take into account that historic building fabrics need to pass water vapour through any finishes. Materials must be considered and aesthetically compatible.

5. Planning History

The Historic England Website lists the date of the latest amendment as being 6-Nov-1987. It is known that the last major however inappropriate restoration of the lighthouse occurred in 1985 and presumably this was the application date.

The present owners carried out extensive conservation works in 2013 under Listed Building Consent H18-0321-11.

6. Setting



When built, the East Bank Lighthouse was at the very end of a three mile long sea wall, surrounded by water on three sides at very high tides. Marshland reclamation and enclosure for farming over the years (the last in 1970) mean the lighthouse is now effectively half a mile inland from the sea with only the River Nene to the Western elevation and the lighthouse ponds to the East. Ships of up to 6,000 tons however still pass by whilst traveling to the docks at Wisbech and Sutton Bridge.

The lighthouse still stands on top of the original sea defence wall with breath-taking 20 mile views across the open landscape of the Wingland Marshes and the Wash.

The setting is free of modern distractions and proximate dwellings. The nearest neighbour being the West bank Lighthouse 200 metres to the west on the other side of the River Nene. The next proximate dwelling being Lighthouse farm, one kilometre to the south set below the level of the sea wall.

The original lighthouse lanterns seem to have been missing for at least the last hundred years. During the 1985 restoration the then owners of the East and West lighthouses bought a pair of antique Trinity House condensing lanterns and converted them to electric operation. Both East and West lighthouses have been lit every night for the last thirty five years. The lights continue to be a significant feature of the landscape whilst also aiding river pilots bringing ships in and out of the River Nene. The lighthouses continue to maintain their marine heritage and positive impact within the landscape.

In 2011 permission was granted for a visitor centre under planning permission H18-0321-11. This would have been approximately 100 metres to the South and set at a lower level, some works have commenced but this addition has yet to be completed.

7. Building Appraisal



The tower itself may be the only original 1830 fabric. There is an etching that supports this. The kitchen shown in this 1910 photograph was added at some later date but probably fairly soon after. Examination of the 1910 photograph shows that the single storey lean-to brickwork courses do not align with those on the tower and are of a different appearance.

Since this photograph was taken in 1910, lighthouse has seen significant changed. These include rendering inside and out, loss of the blind windows and most of the original joinery.

Since the 1930's to date, the building has seen numerous other additions and extensions, including Sir Peter Scott's sketching room and the later addition of the gallery room.

7.1. Ruin

Steeply sloping walls and porous brickwork have continually led to significant water penetration of the interior and windows that lean inwards (by design) in their height with fine Georgian type beading, meant few sliding sashes seem to have lasted more than around ten years or so. Add extreme coastal exposure and it is no surprise that the lighthouse regularly become uninhabitable and then ruinous. Probably tongue in cheek but with a fair touch of truth, Sir Peter Scott said of his time there in his book (*The Eye of the Wind*), that more water used to run down the inside walls of the tower than the outside when it rained. A very early 1900's photograph shows a window more or less completely rendered over to hold it together.

Sir Peter Scott first arrived in 1933 to find the lighthouse uninhabitable. He carried out significant restoration including completely refitting the tower internally, repointing the exterior and renewing the windows. In addition, he constructed all the timber framed single storey additions to the east of the tower, including the studio.

In 1939 the army requisitioned the lighthouse for the duration of the war but finding no use for it left it empty. Within ten years it was again a ruin.

Wealthy industrialist (Mr Gandy) took on the lease in 1950 and restored the interior including (yet again) fitting new windows to the tower and the kitchen (including significant new kitchen window fenestrations) plus adding an extension to the kitchen. His works included rendering the outside of the tower for the first time, concreting all rotted timber floors and adding the formal, sunken' garden and tool storage undercroft to the front.

Following his death In 1965 the lease was taken on by a wildfowling club. Unfortunately very little maintenance work was carried out and by the end of their ten year lease, the lighthouse was left empty and had once again become uninhabitable. Between that date and 1985 the lighthouse was left to become a ruin once more.



All interior finishes and joinery had been destroyed once more. Every window had rotted out, the tower render had fallen away in large patches. Gone was the Sketching Window and most of the rest of the exterior cladding front porch. It was sold for the first time in 1985 to Commander David Joel. His restoration used UPVC windows of financial necessity, profiled steel roof sheeting and modern internal finishes. The timber framed front entry porch was reconstructed in brickwork as was the main bathroom and the kitchen extended once more to become a second bathroom.

The present owners bought the lighthouse in 2010 and have carried out extensive and sympathetic conservation works under Listed Building Consent H18-0321-11 but otherwise the lighthouse is in essentially the same condition as it was after the 1985 restoration.

7.2. Existing External Condition

The external structural condition of the building is good with the Roman Cement rendering to the outside of the tower in 2013 appearing to have been totally successful in preventing water entering the structure whilst permitting it to breathe. The surface of the render shows a similar network of irregular fine surface cracking to that of the previous lime render coatings and it is therefore likely to be the expansion and contraction effect of rendering a tall circular and tapering structure that is causing them. That there has been no water ingress would appear to demonstrate the ability of this type of render to self-heal, the reinforcement successfully acting as an elasticated band to hold the base layer together and the ability of the render around the cracks to absorb moisture and then the potassium silicate mineral coating to breath it back out before it gets through to the interior.

The Accoya treated Georgian sash windows fitted to the tower in 2013 are in excellent condition and demonstrate the effectiveness of using this type of timber treatment in extreme exposure conditions.

Moss growth is beginning to appear on the sloping external tower walls and is looking unsightly. For that reason and the fact that moss can retain unwanted moisture in the render, the owners intend cleaning and recoating later this year with same potassium silicate mineral coating that was originally permitted. Tests show that this is the most breathable and suitable surface finish to apply and we are happy that this is the correct treatment to use

Most external timber cladding has been replaced over the years and remains in excellent condition. It was all repainted last year.

The profiled steel sheet roofing and flashings were overhauled in 2013 and are in good condition. Square profile plastic guttering and UPVC double glazed windows to the Studio, bedrooms and Kitchen from the 1985 restoration are in reasonable condition.

The kitchen structure has been extensively altered over the years with two extensions, the blocking up of doorways, alterations to the window fenestrations and by rendering with OPC sand and cement. In parts, this roughcast render is chipped or cracked and it is uncertain how much of the original structure remains.

7.3. Internal

8. General

No historic internal features remain other than the 1933 Sir Peter Scott fireplaces to the ground floor of the tower and studio and possibly some fibreboard wall lining of the tower. The present wall and ceiling finishes vary from painted fibreboard to plaster over a plastic dimpled wall damp proofing system, to plasterboard and gypsum skim.

The 2013 works seem to have successfully solved the problems of the tower leaking during wet conditions whilst permitting the inside of the tower to breath.

8.1. Bathroom

It is proposed to remove the wall between the toilet and bathroom that lie next to the studio. Investigation shows this to be of 100mm non-loadbearing modern brickwork (probably from the 1985 restoration) with a modern gypsum plaster finish. It is not considered to be of any historic or architectural significance and neither in our estimation will its removal adversely affect the character or appearance of the lighthouse.

8.2. Basement

Over the years The basement has been used for living accommodation as well as storage. When Sir Peter Scott arrived in 1933, a foreshore drifter was just about making out there in poor conditions but he soon left. The original wall finish would have been lime render. inspection shows just a small patch of lime base coat remaining. The ceiling joists show clear signs of timber lathing nail marks but no lathing remains.

The grating of the fireplace remains but the surround does not. The internal staircase from the ground floor is missing and there are no remaining floor or wall finishes other than bare brickwork. The 1985 restoration saw a mixture of glass wool and silvered plastic type bubble insulation between the joists. Where present, this is in poor condition or missing.

The basement ceiling joists also the floor joists of the ground floor of the tower. They are a mixture of timbers showing continual replacement over the years. Many of the joist ends have been 'cradled' with steel angles where the ends have rotted away and the ground floor is currently stabilised by the use of props. The new bathroom and staircase partitions are designed to structurally replace these.

The proposals leave the existing brick wall and floor intact.

8.3. Kitchen

Proposed works to the kitchen involve the complete or partial removal of internal walls, refenestration of the windows, insulation and rendering of the external walls and replacing the UPVC windows of the 1985 restoration.

From photographs, previous planning permissions and physical inspection we have reached the following conclusions relating to the complete or partial removal of walls shown as walls 1 & 2 on the existing plan drawing LH/2021/1. We have been considerably aided by excellent photographs taken by Sir Peter Scott in 1933 (below).

Wall 2 is almost certainly the remains of the original 225mm thick external brick kitchen wall that was added some time after the lighthouse tower was built. Photographs clearly show this external kitchen wall projecting some meters to the north of the tower, with what looks like a small (1933?) toilet or larder addition to the north eastern side of it.

'Existing drawing' LH2001/1, shows only part of this wall now remains to the western side after the alterations of the 1950's and 1985. It is possible that even this may have been substantially rebuilt in order to make the brickwork secure.

Internal wall 2 is not therefore considered to be of any particular historic structural or original architectural significance or interest and neither in our estimation will the removal adversely affect the character or appearance of the lighthouse.



1933 photographs taken by Sir Peter Scott showing the kitchen wall

Kitchen wall 1' is of less interest because it is in the wrong place and too thin to have been part of an original kitchen external wall. We have considered the possibility that it might have been an internal larder wall, especially with the small window shown in the 1933 photograph on drawing LH/2021/1. It is however unlikely that a larder would have extended across an entire outside wall prone to catch the weather and even less likely that a larder would only be accessed from one end - as it would have to be if the present doorway was original. It is therefore more likely to be a new wall constructed during the 1950's restoration and rebuilding works. Other extensive alterations were made at that time including kitchen windows 1, 2 & 8 (see drawing LH/2001/1) being altered and installed and the roof appearing to have been slightly lowered. The single mid-span purlin supporting new roof joists rests on this wall and the external wall to the south. When the blocking up of the rear kitchen door shown in the 1933 photograph is also taken into account, it supports a total kitchen reconstruction theory.

There is a door of some age in wall 1 but as this is not shown in any previous external photographs and no doors or joinery from any part of the original tower or kitchen have survived due to ruin, it is likely to have been fitted as part of the 1985 works using a salvaged door from elsewhere.

The small triangular larder area to the north east side of the kitchen is not shown on the 1933 photographs and has therefore been constructed at a later date – possibly as part of the 1950's rebuilding works. and reinforces our view that these additions are not particularly historic or original.

No signs of any internal or external original features remain in the kitchen area. The floor has been concreted, roof joists and coverings renewed and there are no marks of where the stove or chimney would have been. With the extensive alterations and regular ruination of the lighthouse, it is likely that any internal wall finishes will have been renewed at least three times, including when the exterior was rendered. This has been rendered in a random mixture of both smooth and roughcast OPC cement and sand render.

Our view is that there have clearly been so many alterations and amendments to the kitchen, that no parts of it can be considered to be of any significant historic or architectural significance and neither in our estimation will the removal of the walls proposed adversely affect the character or appearance of the lighthouse.

The proposed replacement windows, changes to the external fenestration and new rendering are more likely to be architecturally and historically sympathetic to the exterior than the existing render, UPVC windows and fenestration.

9. Proposed Works

8.4. Proposed works

The existing and proposed plan plus Kitchen window works drawing is LH/2021/1
The proposed Sketching Window and basement works is drawing LH/2021/2

8.5. Kitchen

Remove remaining walls between the kitchen area, shower and W.C internally.

Insulate the roof internally with 100mm Rockwool, fix Hemp Wool boards on battens and lime plaster.

Hack off and replace small parts of existing internal failed lime plasterwork and where walls removed and make good with lime plaster.

Fit new kitchen and tiled floor

Removal of UPVC windows (1&2), alter opening and install one number set of wooden 'traditional cottage style,' double glazed, side hung French doors with side casements.

Removal of UPVC windows (3&4), form new opening and replace with one number new wooden 'traditional cottage style,' double glazed, side hung casement

Removal of three UPVC windows (5,6&7), block up one window and replace other where shown with new wooden 'traditional cottage style,' double glazed, side hung casement

8.6. Bathroom

1. Remove brick and plaster wall between bathroom and W.C. Insulate ceiling with 100mm Rockwool insulation, cover with Hemp wool boards and lime plaster finish.
2. Install new wall panelling using 'Medite' wall boards including dado rail and 150mm softwood moulded skirting.
3. Install 'Victorian' style bathroom suite and ceramic tiles to concrete floor.

8.7. Basement

Rebuild softwood staircase to the pattern of the ground to first floor replacement staircase.

Cover existing basement floor with 20mm expanded cork flooring and cover with 'Medite' 18mm OSB flooring boards.

Apply 15mm wood wool boards to all curving external walls using approved fixings secured into mortar joints and lime plaster.

New timber stud walls to bathroom enclosure to be covered with 12mm Magnesium Oxide boards and lime render.

Insulate between existing ceiling joists with 100 mm of Rockwool insulation and board with 15mm Hemp Wool slabs and lime plaster.

Install en-suite shower room with macerator type pumped drainage system to existing drainage system.

Replace UPVC window with timber 'traditional cottage style,' double glazed, side hung casement

Bathroom and general ventilation fan to be taken through wall underground to undercroft location as shown.

8.8. Studio ‘Sketching Window’

The studio wing was built by Sir Peter Scott in the 1930’s but lost all of the internal finishes including the external boarding, roof, windows and some walls during the 1940’s ruin period. This happened again during the 1970/80’s ruin period.

A significant loss to the very ‘DNA’ of the Sir Peter Scott lighthouse features was the loss of the studio ‘Sketching Window’. Sir Peter Scott had constructed a ‘simple’ timber bay window with side hung sashes to the east elevation of the studio as a ‘sketching window’. From here he could sketch and paint his extensive wildfowl collection. The bay window meant he was inside - but effectively outside too and each window set at a slightly different angles meant no distortion of vision as occurs when looking to one side through a flat window. Wildfowl on the ponds and banks would also come closer and act more naturally that they would if he was standing outside. To check the details or colours of any bird, all he had to do was to look out of the bay window with or without binoculars. Rather amusingly, in his book, he tells of claiming tax rebates against his considerable art income for the cost of keeping the geese as essential models.

Returning from war, Sir Peter Scott found the lighthouse in ruins once more. Moving to Slimbridge in Gloucestershire, he founded the Wildlife and Wetlands Trust. One of the most famous additions there that all visitors want to see is the sketching window he built overlooking the ponds and a worthy successor to the lighthouse Sketching Window.

The ‘Sketching’ Window was lost along with most of the external cladding during the 1970/80’s dereliction period and replaced with a 2.5 metre long UPVC window.

The owners wish to reconstruct this historic Sketching Window if funds permit.

- Remove existing UPVC window and replace with double glazed timber bay and windows to approximately match the one lost and in accordance with the attached drawing LH/2021/2 and photographs.

8.9. Studio: New log burner

No fireplaces are working and none can be brought into service. Heating is by electric storage and space heaters and that means that in the event of a power cut, there is no secondary heat source. A log burner located in the studio is the obvious choice for a second heat source. Location anywhere near the tower would lead to smoke blackening of the exterior and the proposed location is therefore in the north east corner of the studio where shown on drawing LH/2021/1 and external elevations on LH/2021/2. It is proposed that the external flue and wall plate where the flue passes through the wall are both in stainless steel finish to make them more architecturally sympathetic when set against the white cladding and open external nature of the site. Internally the walls to the rear of the log burner will be of wood wool slabs and lime render, with the log burner set above the timber T&G flooring on slate slabs.

8.10. Wall Mural Restoration/ Replacement

The second floor of the tower was the first bedroom of Sir Peter Scott. He insulated the inner walls of the tower with fibreboard and painted the second floor wall in various shades of green.



On them he painted white silhouettes of flying geese. He says in his book, 'The Eye of the Wind' that they would be 'forever circling the tower'.

It is unknown if any of his fibre walling board remains but this will be investigated and if so, it will be examined to see if any of the original murals remain and can be restored. If the boarding is from the 1985 restoration, the owners intend to recreate the shades of green and the 'forever circling geese' mural.