

FIRST LOOK

Squire and Partners completes Brixton Windmill community centre

14 SEPTEMBER 2020 - BY FRAN WILLIAMS



1/22

Source: Jack Hebbhouse

The 154m² education and community centre, funded by Lambeth Council, will support activities hosted at the Grade-II* listed Brixton Windmill in south London

The 1816 Brixton Windmill, originally a flour mill, sits at the end of Blenheim Gardens just off Brixton Hill. Its new facility will provide a flexible space for school groups, adult education initiatives, community groups and local residents, and act as a visitor centre for the Windmill's management charity, Friends of Windmill Gardens (FoWG).

It will also facilitate the expansion of milling activities and the development of a social enterprise to sell Brixton Windmill flour to local bakeries, restaurants and shops, and to run baking workshops.



The original brick mill is the last remaining tower mill in inner London, and Squire and Partners describes the new building's design for clients Lambeth Council and FoWG as a response to the site's architectural history.

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This building consists of a contemporary crafted, pitched-roof structure using a Douglas fir timber frame. The exterior is clad in a dark weatherboard, while the structure is bookended by two black brick gable walls – of soot-washed Staffordshire blue – which reference the tar-sealed windmill tower.

The main internal space features an exposed timber frame and full-height bi-fold glazed doors, which open to a decked terrace overlooking a park. Sliding panels formed of vertical slats allow light into the space, as well as providing security when the building is unoccupied.

Other facilities include a grain store, a kitchen, administration space, cycle parking and toilets.

Squire and Partners' £360,000 Brixton Windmill centre was approved in March 2017.



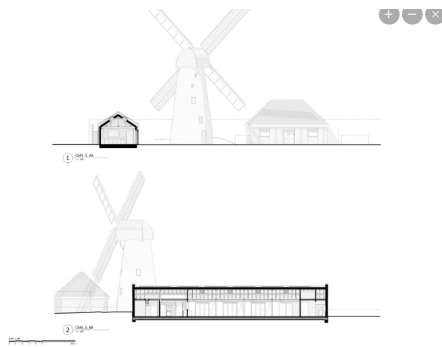
Architect's view

In its bicentenary year, Brixton Windmill's cultural ambassador Eley Kishimoto – along with Friends of Windmill Gardens and Lambeth Council – reached out to us to unlock a 10-year stalled project to create an education and community centre.

The new building offers a self-sustaining future for the working windmill, enabling it to be enjoyed for another 200 years. A flexible frame allows the centre to be incrementally opened up for a variety of community, education and fundraising events, while durable and timeless materials create an accelerated vernacular on the site of previous miller's outbuildings.

The centre supports the love and generosity of Friends of Windmill Gardens, and offers a symbol of hope for windmills everywhere – celebrating their sustainable role in communities.

Tim Gledstone, partner, Squire and Partners



Project data

Start on site November 2018
Completion August 2020
Gross internal floor area 154m²
Gross (internal + external) floor area 170m²
Form of contract or procurement route JCT Intermediate 2011
Construction cost £750,000
Construction cost per m² £4,411
Architect Squire and Partners
Client Lambeth Council and Friends of Windmill Gardens
Structural engineer Heyne Tillett Steel
M&E consultant Hoare Lea
QS Equals Consulting
Main contractor Logisfit Construction
CAD software used Revit 2016



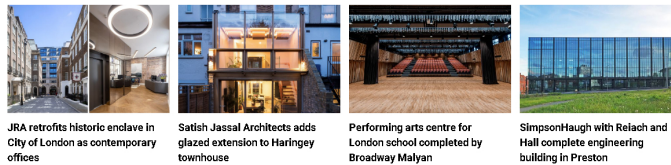
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One comment

Robert Wakeham

14 September 2020 at 3:09 pm

An excellent project, but I wonder whether the choice of such dark external finishes to the new building – to reference the tiered brickwork of the windmill – was such a good idea, when it results in the whole building group looks so sombre even on a bright sunny day?

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