

= Bass Maltings , Sleaford =

The Bass Maltings in Sleaford , England are a large group of eight disused malt houses originally owned by the Bass Brewery of Burton upon Trent . Constructed between 1901 and 1907 to Herbert A. Couchman 's design , the maltings are the largest group of malt houses in England ; they have been designated Grade II * on the National Heritage List for England , recognising them as " particularly important ... of more than special interest . "

Part of the predominantly agricultural county of Lincolnshire , the Sleaford area was a major producer of barley in the 1880s . When germinated and dried to form malt , barley forms a key ingredient in the production of beer . Along with the town 's railway links , this attracted the Bass brewery company to the town . The use of more efficient techniques at Bass 's other plant led to the closure of Sleaford 's maltings in 1959 . Despite being used to rear poultry in the late 20th century , the buildings have not been fully occupied since Bass left and a fire in 1976 caused severe damage to three of the malthouses . Derelict since the 1990s , proposals to convert the buildings into office , retail and residential space were put on hold in early 2015 after lengthy delays over planning permission and the withdrawal of a major investor .

= = History = =

= = = Industry and vacancy = = =

In the late @-@ 19th century , the Sleaford area was a major barley producer and by the 1880s , Sleaford was a stop on railway lines connecting the town to Boston , Grantham , Bourne , Spalding and Lincoln . These qualities made the town desirable for the production of malt , a crucial ingredient in beer production . The brewers Bass , Ratcliffe and Gretton Ltd were attracted to the town and in 1880 proposed a new malting complex there , which would consolidate malting closer to the barley source and reduce costs by up @-@ scaling production . Drilling in 1892 revealed suitable artesian water sources under Sleaford ; plans were submitted nine years later and over 13 acres of land off Mareham Lane was purchased ; work started in 1901 and was complete by 1907 .

The company ran the complex at full capacity until after the Second World War ; however , in the 1950s , Bass installed new and more efficient pneumatic malting systems at their original Burton @-@ on @-@ Trent plant , making the Sleaford complex redundant and paving the way for its closure in 1959 . Vacant space was let to businesses , but the enormous complex was only ever partially occupied after Bass left . Vulnerable to damage and poorly maintained , fires started in 1969 and 1976 , the latter resulting major damage to three of the malthouses . Some of the space was used for chicken @-@ rearing by G. W. Padley (Property) Ltd. from 1973 into the 1990s .

= = = Regeneration = = =

A regeneration scheme was announced in 2004 ; supported by the Phoenix Trust , the maltings would be converted into residential , retail and business space . Public consultation took place in 2005 and 2006 , with around 90 % of participants supporting regeneration and three @-@ quarters asking for a cinema and entertainment complex . Lincolnshire Enterprise granted £ 200 @,@ 000 towards the regeneration scheme and the Gladedale Group came forward to develop the project . Over the next three years , they worked with the Prince 's Regeneration Trust to draw up plans for the site 's regeneration which protected the historic exterior . In 2009 , their proposals were submitted for planning permission . North Kesteven District Council approved the £ 50 million development in 2011 ; Tesco was also granted permission to build a £ 20 million supermarket as part of the redevelopment . The maltings would be converted into retail and office space , alongside 220 apartments .

However , in 2012 , Sleaford Town Council refused to grant permission for a link road connecting Boston Road to the site because of " concerns about closing a level crossing and the loss of trees "

at the Boston Road Recreation Ground . After a lengthy stalemate , the District Council served a compulsory purchase order on the site in 2014 , but Tesco announced early the following year that it would no longer be investing in the maltings complex following a series of financial setbacks to the company . Although Gladedale (by then known as Avant Homes) announced its commitment to converting parts of the site to residential use , the leader of North Kesteven District Council , Marion Brighton , stated that the plans were " effectively on hold " following the withdrawal of Tesco .

= = Architecture = =

The maltings were constructed to designs by Herbert A. Couchman , Bass & Co . ' s chief engineer . Built in red brick with Welsh slate roofing , the complex follows a rectangular plan along an east @-@ west orientation : a central four @-@ storey water tower is flanked by four malthouses . Behind the tower is a tall , octagonal chimney . The malthouses are identical in design and layout ; barley was fed into a granary section , before being moved onto the germination floors and eventually transported to one of the twin kilns , where malting took place . Their southern fronts consisted of a six @-@ storey building of five bays with a gable spanning three windows that faces the other ranges . Projecting northwards is a ten @-@ bay section of four @-@ storeys which formed the germination floors .

With a frontage of nearly 1 @,@ 000 ft and a total area of 50 @,@ 000 sq ft , the maltings complex is believed to be largest of its type in England ; the architectural historians Sir Nikolaus Pevsner and John Harris commented that " for sheer impressiveness little in English industrial architecture can equal the scale of this building . In 1974 , it was recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade II * listed building in recognition of its importance as an example of a large @-@ scale industrial malting complex in which " considerations of form , massing , symmetry and scale have produced a design of high aesthetic quality combined with clear functional expression " ; it also represents the importance of the English brewing industry in the late @-@ 19th and early 20th centuries and large @-@ scale malting at its peak . Owing to its derelict state , the building was also placed on English Heritage 's " at risk " register in 2011 .

There are five workers ' cottages along the path from Mareham Lane to the industrial site ; each are Grade II listed . The complex 's offices , storage depot , weigh offices , cartsheds , gateways , walls and mess rooms are also listed at the same grade .