

HERITAGE STATEMENT: Bldgs I, J, K & L, Torr Vale Mill, New Mills, High Peak, SK22 3HS

## **HERITAGE STATEMENT**

**TO ACCOMPANY APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR:**

**Outbuildings I, J, K & L to be refurbished as holiday-let properties.**

**Torr Vale Mills, Torr Vale Road, New Mills, High Peak, SK22 3HS**

**November 2012**

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## SECTION ONE: THE CONTEXT

Torr Vale Mill is a nationally significant cotton mill complex, Listed Grade II\*. The site is important for several reasons. It is an important example of the evolution of the cotton industry and claims the longest period of continuous use of a cotton mill site in England. The dramatic views of the mill within the gorge underline that the complex is an outstanding example of the influence of topography on early industrial development. There is still clear evidence of both water and steam power on site and an unusual layout of manufacturing processes. The complex demonstrates a remarkable degree of survival and the earliest features such as the Old Mill and the associated weirs, tunnels and mill races comprise a rare survival of late 18<sup>th</sup> C cotton industry structures. Torr Vale Mill is also the last extant mill in the Torrs, which formerly contained a string of water and steam powered mills which fuelled the development of the town of New Mills.

Torr Vale Mill is vulnerable for several reasons. A long term lack of maintenance has led to a general poor condition of the buildings in the complex. This physical decay is characterised by: outbreaks of dry rot, water ingress through roofs, and one completely derelict building. In addition, one building has been completely lost due to fire. The buildings are at risk due to the minimal current use of the complex. The complex will need further new mixtures of uses which are economically viable to guarantee the future of the site.

The proposals have been developed from an understanding of the significance and the vulnerability of the site. Also to the importance of the mill complex to the community, the proposed uses of the site are to enhance public appreciation through access intrinsic to the proposals.

The high significance of the complex requires the proposals aim to protect the 18<sup>th</sup> C. features, to enhance and reinforce the historic character and to retain all existing evidence of power systems and to retain historic interior elements and materials where possible.

As there will need to be some alterations as part of the proposed new uses, this has been limited to those areas where such alterations can be made without damaging the historic significance of the site or an individual building.

The only two proposed external alteration is the enlarging of the toilet block at the rear of House K to facilitate a new staircase to the upper floor the location and design of new enlargement is the minimum required and will be in the same material as existing to ensure that it does not have a detrimental impact on the fabric or setting of the complex. Also the squaring off of the rear wall of building L.

## SECTION TWO:

BUILDING DETAILS extracted from the buildings conservation plan prepared by Kathryn Sather & Associates on behalf of Derbyshire County Council in April 2001

## Building I Office

### Documentary Information

It was built between 1868 and 1879, and was probably built as offices.

### Description of Exterior Features

Materials	Coursed local sandstone to front and sides, brick to rear walls.
Plan	Rectangular, hallway along rear walls, Upper floor hallway extends beyond wall below into hill at rear.
Height	2 Storeys
Roof	Gable covered with slates
Chimneys	1 chimney at north end
Additions	Small brick WC to rear at south end
Door	Four panelled timber door, probably original
Windows	Level 1 Four Type R Level 0 Two Type R, Two Type S with stone mullion



Front elevation

### Description of Interior Features

#### Levels 0, 1

Exist use	Vacant
Past uses	"Office" in 1884, "Lodge, Offices" in 1889, "Offices" in 1903

### Description of Surviving Interior Elements

Ceiling	Plaster
Walls	Plaster, Timber panels below windows form office partitions. Vertical boarded wainscoting to exterior rear wall at ground floor
Floors	Brick rear wall to upper level access corridor Wooden boards to offices, Solid floor to upper level access corridors
Doors	Four panelled wooden doors to upper offices
Staircase	Exterior covered masonry staircase
Fireplace	Two fireplace surrounds removed
Fittings	Works time punch c. 1950, built in desks and cabinets



Interior of ground floor

### Historical Significance

The Office is rated Level A for its significance within the complex. The Office is from the phase of the development of smaller specialised auxiliary buildings and as such helps to document the evolution of cotton industry on the site. The building is virtually as built. The built in office furniture, plan form, and panelling are important internal elements. The alterations, such as the brick addition to the rear, have only a minimal effect on the overall historic and architectural integrity of the building. The scale of building, the materials of sandstone and slate, and the simple rectangular plan with gable roof contribute to the appearance of uniformity of the complex.

### Condition

Roof leaks, rear brick wall very wet, some floors rotten, extensive timber fungal infestation.



Clocking in machine

#### **Recommendations**

The front door should be retained. The plan form, panelling and window partitions of the interior should be retained in any future use. The internal panelled doors should be retained, as should the timber flooring. If possible, the interior furniture such as the desks and drawing tables should be retained for use in situ, although relocation might be acceptable within the scope of a sensitive scheme for reuse.

#### **Sources**

Plans from 1879 onwards.

*Front Door*



## Building J Workshop Block

### Documentary Information

The ground floor was built between 1879 - 1884, and the second floor added before 1896. A small single storey addition was added to the rear between 1889 and 1896.

### Description of Exterior Features

Materials	Local coursed sandstone
Plan	Rectangular
Height	2 Storeys
Roof	Gable covered with slates
Chimneys	One to addition at rear
Additions	Small addition to rear at first floor level, built into the hill houses a forge and has a chimney, added 1889 - 1896
Door	Three external doors
Windows	Level 1 Six Type T Level 0 One Type T



Front elevation



Rear elevation

### Description of Interior Features

#### Levels 0 & 1

Exist use	Vacant
Past uses	Workshop in 1884, "Mechanics & Joiners Shop" in 1889 The addition was used as a smithy for the mechanics

### Description of Surviving Interior Elements

Ceiling	Suspended ceiling in upper level
Walls	Stone to external walls, internal partitions of timber and hardboard
Floors	Stone flags to ground floor, timber boards to upper level
Staircase	Stone steps along south wall
Machinery	20' cast iron lathe in the upper level of the main block, reputedly around 100 years old. The lathe may have been installed when the building was built, as its large size would make installation in a completed structure difficult. The lathe would have been used in the maintenance of the shafting and engine.
Decorative Scheme	Blue and white limewash



*Forge*

#### **Historical Significance**

The Workshop has been scheduled at Significance Level A. The Workshop is from the phase of the development of smaller specialised auxiliary buildings and as such helps to document the evolution of cotton industry on the site. The building has not been altered significantly since the second floor was added. The lathe and forge are particularly important surviving elements. The alterations, such as the taking in doors, have only a minimal effect on the overall historic and architectural integrity of the building. The scale of building, the materials of sandstone and slate, and the simple rectangular plan with gable roof contribute to the appearance of uniformity of the complex. The lathe in the main block, and the forge and chimney in the smithy to the rear document the necessity of the mechanics work for the steam power system.

#### **Recommendations**

The lathe should be retained as evidence of the former use of the building. Other machinery and parts should be offered to interested museums. The chimney and forge in the blacksmiths addition should also be retained. The timber flooring should be retained. The walls should remain unplastered.

#### **Sources**

Plans from 1884 onwards

*Lathe*







Front elevation



Brick addition



Iron railings



Cupboards

## Building K House

### Documentary Information

The building was built between 1879 and 1883, and probably after 1881 when Lowe bought the 999 year leasehold from Ashton following Lowe's sub-lease which would have expired in 1883. The top two stories are shown on the Lomas painting of 1883. The room on the lowest level is only accessible from the office.

### Description of Exterior Features

Materials	Coursed local sandstone
Plan	Central stairway, one room each side of the stair
Height	3 Storeys
Roof	Gable covered with slates
Chimneys	1 Central, square plan, 2 clay chimney pots
Additions	Small brick toilet block to rear
Door	Four panel, damaged
Windows	Level 2 One Type G, Two Type U Level 1 Two Type U, One boarded window Level 0 One boarded window

### Description of Interior Features

#### Levels 0,1,2

Exist use	Vacant
Past uses	House, described as a cottage in 1884 and a dwellinghouse with three stories in 1889.

### Description of Surviving Interior Elements

Ceiling	Plasterboard
Walls	Plaster
Floors	North room on ground floor: stone flags All other rooms: wooden boards
Doors	Interior doors modern
Staircase	Timber
Fireplace	Ground Floor removed, First floor replacement c. 1950
Fixtures	Built in cupboard with panelled doors next to ground floor fire
Decorative Scheme	Paint and white and blue limewash

### Historical Significance

This building is rated at Level A for its significance within the complex. The House is from the phase of the development of smaller specialised auxiliary buildings and as such helps to document the evolution of cotton industry on the site. The building is virtually as built. The addition of the brick addition to the rear has only a minimal effect on the overall historic and architectural integrity of the building. The scale of building, the materials of sandstone and slate, and the simple rectangular plan with gable roof contribute to the appearance of uniformity of the complex.

### Condition

Roof leaks, plaster, plasterboard, and stairs in poor condition

### Recommendations

The internal cupboard and external iron railings should be retained. The brick toilet addition to the rear may be demolished if it is not necessary.

### Sources

Plans from 1884 onwards, Lomas painting of 1883



## Building L Open Store

### Documentary Information

The Open Store was originally built as a single storey open shed between 1868 and 1879. The second floor was added some time between 1896 and 1903. The original use of the upper floor is unclear.

### Description of Exterior Features

Materials	Brick wall to rear, vertical weatherboarding lined with tar paper to front and south side of upper floor
Plan	Rectangular
Height	2 Storeys
Roof	Single pitch towards hill to rear, covered in slates
Additions	Second Floor added 1896 - 1903.
Door	Part glazed and part panelled
Windows	Long row of windows to front

### Description of Interior Features

#### Levels 0 & 1

Exist use	Parking to ground floor, storage to upper floor
Past uses	"Shed" in 1884 and an "open shed" in 1889.

### Description of Surviving Interior Elements

Ceiling	Ground floor ceiling is floor above, suspended panels to upper floor
Floors	Solid to Ground floor, Wooden boards to upper floor
Staircase	External to building, shared with Office
Columns	2 Cast Iron to ground floor

### Historical Significance

The Open Store is rated at Level B for its significance within the complex. The Open Store is from the phase of the development of smaller specialised auxiliary buildings and as such helps to document the evolution of cotton industry on the site. The building has not been altered significantly since the second floor was added. The scale of building, the materials of cast iron columns and slate, and the simple rectangular plan contribute to the appearance of uniformity of the complex.

### Recommendations

The open aspect of the store at ground level should be respected. The area is currently used as parking and would function well as covered handicapped parking.

### Sources

Plans from 1879 onwards

*Front elevation*



### SECTION THREE: THE APPLICATION

The application relates to the refurbishment of the outbuildings at the Torr Vale Mill complex for a new sustainable use as holiday rental properties which will compliment the overall focus of core leisure and tourism use for a long term sustainable future for this nationally important heritage site.

Pre-application advice is receptive to the proposed change of use, providing a sensitive scheme can be provided that retains and exemplifies the historic spaces, features and finishes. To this end we have limited any external alterations to the minimum and always on an aspect and within a setting that will limit any intrusion of the form and massing of the range of outbuildings. Internal finishes will be kept as existing and renewed as existing where necessary.

The retention of the screening and floor plan of the office bldg I combined with the retention of remaining interior elements such as the wooden screen and clocking-in machine are seen as positive aspects not only for the conservation of the heritage but the attraction of the buildings as holiday rentals.

Intrinsic to the use is some sub-division of space particularly relevant to the first floor of the workshop block bldg J. The suspended ceiling is proposed to be removed and the rooms opened up to the roof to allow some sense of the space to be enjoyed and the first half of the floor plate will be open plan to facilitate further an understanding of the previous use of the space.

The external facades of the building will be as originally intended except for two proposed amendments to create the space required to make the holiday lets desirable. In both instances the visual impact will be minimal and not observable from the public aspects of the buildings.

The first and more significant proposed alteration is the enlargement of a current single-storey brick built lean-to toilet block on the south-east gable of the Fireman's house building K. The structure is proposed to be extended to floor above with an enlarged ground footprint to finish flush with the south-west gable to form a new entrance doorway replicating existing. The majority of the visual impact to this aspect will be the door and the slate roof rising from the first floor-floor level to the first floor-roof level.

The current window on the south-east gable will be enlarged to form a doorway and this window replicated in the new second storey of the stair structure.

Reclaimed bricks from the site will be used to provide visual uniformity with the existing structure.

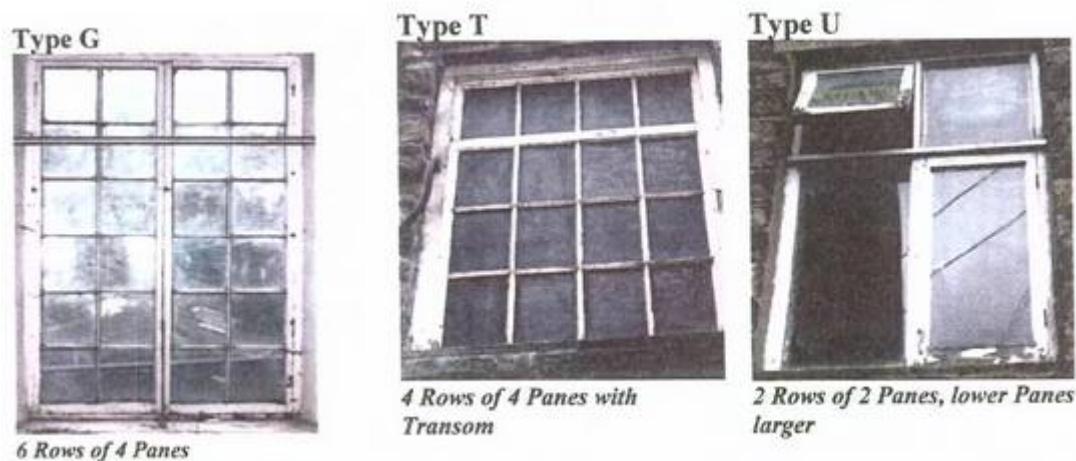
Internally coupled with the removal of the staircase, the first floor opening between the two rooms will be moved from the North-West gable side of the internal chimney breast wall to the south-east side nearest the enlarged brick lean-to and a small corridor formed

replicating the space formerly occupied by the toilet to facilitate access to the two first floor rooms from the new stairs.

Internally the moving of the staircase allows for 2 reasonable size bedrooms, a bathroom and a kitchen/living area. The previous layout in effect made the building one room downstairs one room upstairs with little space left in the other room on each floor due to the stair case.

All other aspects of the interior of the building will be repaired as existing.

Additionally the two existing Type G windows in the south-west gable will be repaired and the modern casement Type U windows in the remaining windows will be replaced with the original Type T windows as shown below



The second amendment is that the rear wall of the wooden structure over the open store [bldg L] be squared off instead of following its original dog leg pattern. All the other buildings in this contiguous range are of a uniform rectangular form hence this proposed alteration would only serve to enhance the uniformity of their pattern. Also an additional window of the same type and size is proposed in this elevation.

#### SECTION FOUR:

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE extracted from the buildings conservation plan prepared by Kathryn Sather & Associates on behalf of Derbyshire County Council in April 2001

##### 4.1 Overview of Significance

Torr Vale Mill is a nationally important cotton mill complex. The whole complex is listed Grade II\*, which places it among the top 6% of listed buildings. A RCHME survey of textile mills in North-west Derbyshire rated the site of “high significance”, one of only eight in the survey area. The site is also in the New Mills Conservation Area.

There are several reasons why the mill complex is significant:

- Important Example of the Evolution of Cotton Industry

The extant buildings document the evolution of the industry from the late 18<sup>th</sup> C. small water powered “room and power” mills to the large floorplate, steam engine powered, integrated cotton spinning and weaving mills supported by specialised smaller auxiliary buildings. Torr Vale Mill is one of only six integrated cotton mills surviving in North-west Derbyshire.

\_ Potentially Longest Period of Continuous Use of a Cotton Mill Site in England

From its inception in the earliest phase of powered cotton mills, in the 1790's, this mill complex has manufactured cotton, which may be a record.

- Remarkable Degree of Survival

The mill complex that now exists is that which existed before the turn of the century. No buildings have been lost, and the minor recent additions do not detract from the significance of the site.

- Outstanding Example of the Influence of Topography on Early Industrial Development

The relationship of the mill complex to its setting documents the importance of a damp micro-climate, water power, level platforms and stone for building to the development of industry in the area.

- Rarity of 18<sup>th</sup>C Features

The Old Mill and the associated weirs and mill races are a rare survival of late 18<sup>th</sup> C cotton industry. Only a handful of these structures survive in the Greater Manchester area, and only two survive in North-west Derbyshire. Torr Vale Mill is also the last extant mill in the Torrs, which formerly contained a string of water powered mills.

- Visual Unity of Scale Materials and Form

The uniformity of the scale of buildings, of the materials of sandstone, gritstone and slate, and the simple rectangular plans with gable roofs create an important aesthetic contribution to the surrounding landscape.

- Dramatic Views of the Mill within the Gorge

The spectacular setting of the cluster of mill buildings in the river bend in the steep wooded gorge provides an impressive view from the high level of the town or the low level within the gorge.

- Clear Evidence of Both Water and Steam Power

The weir, mill races and tunnels, as well as the chimney, tie plates and remnants of shafting show the original and subsequent power systems.

- Unusual Layout of Manufacturing Processes

The constraints of the steep site necessitated both spinning and weaving in multi-storey buildings.

- Important Example of Methods of Mill Construction

The complex contains good examples of both conventional heavy timber floor construction and fireproof construction.

- Important Contribution to the Character of the Townscape and Landscape

The similarity of materials of roughly dressed sandstone, gritstone, Welsh slate, and simple, functional style of the mill complex reinforces the coherent character and style of the town of New Mills and the ruined mills within the Gorge.

- Remarkable Extent and Quality of Documentation

The unusually large number of detailed plans, and the survival of most of the deeds, mortgages, and leases provides a good understanding of the precise development, use, and economic history of the site.

- Influence on the Community

As an important employer, the mill complex influenced the development of the town and remains a reminder of the reason for the growth of New Mills. Remnants of this influence can be seen in the two rows of cottages built by the leaseholder with the plaque "Torr Vale 1864", and the two streets named after the mill complex.

## 4.2 Significance of Individual Buildings

### 4.2.1 Schedule of Significance

The various structures do not all have the same level of significance when assessed separately. The buildings have been assessed on their intactness, including intrusive elements within the building, their special interest, and their contribution to the wider significance of the site. There are 3 levels of significance; as well as an intrusive grade.

Level A: High Level of Significance.

Building is very intact, has a special interest, and makes an important contribution to the wider significance of the site.

Level B: Medium Level of Significance

Structure has been altered, has little special interest, and its contribution to the wider significance of the site is less important.

Level C: Low Level of Significance

Building is significantly altered, has major intrusive elements, and its contribution to the wider significance of the site is less important.

Intrusive: Historically unimportant, a negative visual impact on the surrounding buildings.

<b>Building Name</b>	<b>Letter</b>	<b>Level of Significance</b>
Old Mill	A	A
Cotton Mill	B	A
Northeast Shed	C	Intrusive
Old Mill Link Block	D	A
Belvedere	E	C
Weaving Mill	F	A
Stair 1	G	A
Chimney	H	A
Office	I	A
Workshop Block	J	A
House	K	A
Open Store	L	C
Stair 2	M	B
Boiler House	N	C
Weir, Mill Race and Tunnels		A
Foot Bridge		B
Gate Piers at Stable Site		C

Significance of the buildings Individually:

#### Office (I)

The Office is rated Level A for its significance within the complex and is important for these reasons:

- Important Part of the Mill Complex

The Office is from the phase of the development of smaller specialised auxiliary buildings and as such helps to document the evolution of cotton industry on the site.

- High Degree of Survival

The building is virtually as built. The built in office furniture, plan form, and panelling are important internal elements. The alterations, such as the brick addition to the rear, have only a minimal effect on the overall historic and architectural integrity of the building.

- Visual Unity of Scale Materials and Form

The scale of building, the materials of sandstone and slate, and the simple rectangular plan with gable roof contribute to the appearance of uniformity of the complex.

#### Workshop Block (J)

The Workshop, scheduled at Significance Level A, is important for these reasons:



- Important Part of the Mill Complex

The Workshop is from the phase of the development of smaller specialised auxiliary buildings and as such helps to document the evolution of cotton industry on the site.

- High Degree of Survival

The building has not been altered significantly since the second floor was added. The lathe and forge are particularly important surviving elements. The alterations, such as the taking in doors, have only a minimal effect on the overall historic and architectural integrity of the building.

- Visual Unity of Scale Materials and Form

The scale of building, the materials of sandstone and slate, and the simple rectangular plan with gable roof contribute to the appearance of uniformity of the complex.

- Clear Evidence of Steam Power

The lathe in the main block, and the forge and chimney in the smithy to the rear document the necessity of the mechanics work for the steam power system.

#### Open Store (L)

The Open Store is rated at Level C, and contributes to the significance of the complex due to its:

- Important Part of the Mill Complex

The Open Store is from the phase of the development of smaller specialised auxiliary buildings and as such helps to document the evolution of cotton industry on the site.

- High Degree of Survival

The building has not been altered significantly since the second floor was added.

- Visual Unity of Scale Materials and Form

The scale of building, the materials of cast iron columns and slate, and the simple rectangular plan contribute to the appearance of uniformity of the complex.

#### Significance: House (K)

This building is rated at Level A due to its:

- Important Part of the Mill Complex

The House is from the phase of the development of smaller specialised auxiliary buildings and as such helps to document the evolution of cotton industry on the site.

- High Degree of Survival

The building is virtually as built. The addition of the brick addition to the rear has only a minimal effect on the overall historic and architectural integrity of the building.

- Visual Unity of Scale Materials and Form

The scale of building, the materials of sandstone and slate, and the simple rectangular plan with gable roof contribute to the appearance of uniformity of the complex.

## SECTION 5:

### THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED WORKS ON THE HISTORIC FABRIC

#### Office I

The scale and materials will be as existing as the only proposed alteration is the installation of partition walls on the first floor to create a corridor and bathroom area. Unfortunately the built in office furniture is no longer present but the screens and all other aspects of the interior will be retained and refurbished to enhance the character of this building. Hence all other aspects of the conservation plan are being complied with in the proposed scheme.

#### Workshop J

The scale and materials will be as existing as the only proposed alteration is the installation of partition walls on the first floor to create bedrooms and bathrooms. Unfortunately both the lathe and the forge are no longer present due to extensive vandalism and metal theft. The rear currently bricked up windows will be reopened and identical window to those on the front elevation installed [Type T]. Hence all other aspects of the conservation plan it is possible to comply with are being complied with in the proposed scheme.

#### House K

The only aspect which differs from the existing footprint and elevations is our desire to situate the stair access to the second floor in an enlargement of the existing toilet addition at the rear of the property. This aspect is not visible from any of the public aspects of the property and due to it sitting tight next to the quarry level is only marginally visible from the rear at all. We have proposed it be enlarged in the same material as existing for the toilet block namely red brick and slate sloped roof.

Originally the stairs rised from the smaller internal room behind the chimney leaving very little useable space on either floor. By moving the stairs as proposed we can cater for a good sized two bedroom holiday rental. Due to the existing layout of the attached building I if we are not able to make the proposed change we will be left with only 1 bedroom rental properties which would mean we would only be serving the lower end of the holiday let market which we are trying to avoid to allow us to price the rentals at a figure to reflect their historic surroundings. Also when considered with our impending application for the other ancillary outbuildings we would have three properties in the same one bed criteria which would lead to higher void periods due to the lack of a suitable mix of number of bedroom properties available.

In itself the internal staircase would not seem to add to the historic value of the building and if anything opening up the second room on each floor to allow the uniformity of the shape of the

construction and its scale to be seen. An external staircase with a weatherproof covering is the method of accessing the upper floor of the attached property building I.

#### Open store L

The scale and materials will be virtually as existing as the only proposed alteration externally is to reinstate the rear wall flush with the existing portion carrying on the line of the workshop block thus accentuating the visual unity and simple rectangular plan exhibited by the surrounding buildings. Internally the only alteration is the installation of partition walls on the first floor to create a bedroom and bathroom areas. The ground floor will be left open and used for covered disabled parking as suggested in the conservation plan. Hence all other aspects of the conservation plan are being complied with in the proposed scheme.

## SECTION SIX:

### SUMMARY

The proposed internal and external alterations to this Grade II\* listed buildings have been carefully designed to be minimal. The proposals would allow these currently unused building to be brought back into a viable economic use having been completed refurbished with minimal impact on its historic fabric or the significance of the overall site and the building individually as identified in the buildings conservation plan serving the long term future of the heritage asset.