HERITAGE STATEMENT

TO ACCOMPANY APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR:

Refurbishment of floor 0 in the main cotton mill.

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

February 2016

CONTENTS

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 18th 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 18th 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.

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 B Cotton Mill

Documentary Information

The mill was built in 1856 - 7. The tailrace tunnel and northeast corner base of the current mill are the only visible remnants of the earlier mill on the site. Presumably, the floor of the basement, which contained the waterwheels, and the two internal walls also date from this earlier building.

Description of Exterior Features

Materials	Local coursed sandstone The building is of fireproof construction, with the exception of the top floor which is open to the roof.
Plan	Rectangular, eleven bays long and six bays wide. The central bay is wider than the others due to the original waterwheel pit directly below it. The basement is slightly more than a quarter of the size of the Cotton Mill above.
Height	5 Storeys
Roof	Three long gables, each of which have one length covered with slate and one length with glass.
Windows	Level 2 29 Type A, 1 Type G Level 1 18 Type A, 8 Type B Level 0 6 Type A, 2 Type D, 3 Type K, 4 Type L, 5 Type M Level -1 7 Type A, 7 Type B, 2 Type D, 3 Type K, 2 part blocked with 2 panes Level -2 7 Type A

View from the North

Description of Interior Features

Levels -2 to 2

Exist use	Weaving on Level -1, hemming on Level 2
Past uses	In 1884 the Cotton Mill was used for a combination of weaving, preparation, carding, and spinning.

Description of Surviving Interior Elements

Ceiling	Level 2 suspended panels Levels-2 to 1: shallow brick arches supported on cast iron beams
Walls	Plaster
Floors	Stone flags, black quarry tiles, linoleum and screed
Cast Iron Columns	Two rows of ten cast iron columns with fluted capitals support cast iron beams which carry the eleven brick vaults. The cast iron columns act as down pipes for the internal roof valleys.
Fixtures/ Machinery	The steam engine was installed in the basement in 1856. The engine was a single cylinder beam engine and was coupled to the two waterwheels. The line shafting was located along the centre of the north wall, as evidenced by the tie plates and ashlar stone blocks on the exterior.
Decorative Scheme	Mostly gloss paint, earliest layers are cobalt blue distemper

Blue distemper under whitewash

Fluted capital of cast-iron column

Historical Significance

The Cotton Mill is rated Level A for significance within the complex. The building is an integral part of the mill complex from the phase of the major redevelopment and as such helps to document the evolution of cotton industry on the site. The scale of building, the materials of sandstone and slate, and the simple rectangular plan contribute to the appearance of uniformity of the complex.

The building is virtually as built. The alterations, such as a suspended ceiling, the loss of window glazing bars, loss of some original floor surfaces, loss of the earlier power systems and the alteration of fire doors, have only a minimal effect on the overall historic and architectural integrity of the building.

The tunnel entrance and the filled in pit of the original waterwheel and the surrounding internal walls are rare survivals of the late 18th C cotton industry. These features contribute to the last extant mill in the Torrs, which contained a string of water powered mills in the late 18th C. The tailrace tunnels, one visible externally under the northwest corner, the tie plates and remnants of shafting show the progression from original to the subsequent power systems.

The building is an example of an unusual layout of manufacturing processes as both spinning and weaving were carried out in the multi-storey Cotton Mill due to the constraints of the steep site. The Cotton Mill is also a good example of fireproof construction techniques. The large undivided internal spaces with the rows of cast iron columns is distinctive and intimately related to the historic function of the building. The room open to the rows of rooflights in the top floor is an important spatial element.

Southeast wall and fire escape

Condition

The ends of some of the visible trusses are in very poor condition. The internal gutters and downpipes are blocked.

Recommendations

The suspended ceilings should be removed from the top floor. At least some area should retain the open volume of space, the historic floor materials and historically correct paint colour. Remnants of shafting should remain. The two wheel pits in the basement should be re-opened to allow water to flow through. The fire escape should be retained. All brackets, floor traps and evidence of shafting should be retained.

Sources

Plans from 1793 onwards, historic photographs, Lomas paintings.

East corner of earlier cotton mill

Machinery parts in basement

SECTION THREE:
THE APPLICATION

The application relates to the refurbishment of the ground floor of the cotton mill building B at the Torr Vale Mill complex into a more viable layout which will complement the overall focus of a long-term sustainable-future for this nationally-important heritage-site.

Pre-application advice is receptive to the proposed modifications, providing a sensitive scheme can be implemented that retains and exemplifies the historic spaces, features and finishes. To this end we have limited any external alterations to repair or reinstatement as per the original. Internal finishes will be kept as existing and renewed as existing where necessary.

The works involve no exterior changes other than the refurbishment of existing windows and doors. Internally the existing wall and ceiling finishes will be cleaned and reinstated where necessary.

The existing stone floors will be cleaned of any loose debris and then a floating timber floor overlaid leaving the historic fabric intact and protected whilst allowing insulation, underfloor heating and service ducts to be run through the floating floor makeup.

Separate office spaces will be provided by stud partitioning similar in nature and feel to that used in the refurbishment of the floor above. The sub-division has been limited to the least required for creating a viable layout for the floor and has been sited to allow the maximum feel for the overall space of the floor to be retained with the central corridor containing one complete row of the cast iron columns leading from the wooden trap door on the south [entrance] side to the water powered bearing bracket on the north wall. Vision panels have been inserted in the partition to allow through views along the enclosed row of columns and along the corridor to allow light and a sense of the space to be appreciated from all aspects. A generous open entrance/recreational area has been allowed for with 2 complete bays left exposed bar the toilet cubicles towards the West corner. Allowing a sense of the space to be experienced as you enter the floor and being naturally drawn to the start of the line of columns which opens up and down the central corridor as you walk into the space.

Water and waste services are only required for the kitchen area and toilets which have been concentrated on the south wall to allow these services to run in a duct at ground level along this wall not requiring any alterations to the fabric of the building and being visually unobtrusive.

Toilet facilities will be provided with two unisex toilets one being Part M Compliant in stud partition plasterboard wall enclosed cubicles. The ceilings of these rooms will be dry-lined and the extraction from each combined into one duct and vented through a window pane exiting into the light well. Soil and waste will run at ground level next to the south wall [suitably boxed in] and connect into the existing internal soil stack in the south west corner of the floor.

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 18th 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 the1790'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 18thC Features
The Old Mill and the associated weirs and mill races are a rare survival of late 18th 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.

Building Name	**Letter**	**Level of Significance**
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:

Significance: Cotton Mill (B)

The Cotton Mill is rated Level A for significance due to several factors:

- Integral Part of the Mill Complex

The Cotton Mill is from the phase of the major redevelopment 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 alterations, such as a suspended ceiling, the loss of window glazing bars, loss of some original floor surfaces, loss of the earlier power systems and the alteration of fire 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 contribute to the appearance of uniformity of the complex.

- Rarity of 18thC Features

The tunnel entrance and the filled in pit of the original waterwheel and the surrounding internal walls are rare survivals of the late 18th C cotton industry. These features contribute to the last extant mill in the Torrs, which contained a string of water powered mills in the late 18th C.

- Clear Evidence of Both Water and Steam Power

The tailrace tunnels, one visible externally under the northwest corner, the tie plates and remnants of shafting show the progression from original to the subsequent power systems.

- Unusual Layout of Manufacturing Processes

Both spinning and weaving were carried out in the multi-storey Cotton Mill due to the constraints of the steep site.

- Important Example of Methods of Mill Construction

The Cotton Mill is a good example of fireproof construction techniques.

- Spatial Quality

The large undivided internal spaces with the rows of cast iron columns is distinctive and intimately related to the historic function of the building. The room open to the rows of rooflights in the top floor is an important spatial element.

SECTION 5:
THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED WORKS ON THE HISTORIC FABRIC

The fabric of the building will be completely repaired without any changes; within the existing space subdivision will be created which will have no permanent effect on the historic fabric of the building.

The subdivision will be the least necessary to provide a viable floorplate and be sympathetic to retaining as much of the open nature and feel of the floor as possible.

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 this currently unused part of the 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.