

Darley Abbey Mills and Stables

Strategy Document

Final



ATKINS

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Mid 20th century aerial
photograph of the Mills

Overview >

Darley Abbey Mills and Darley Park & Stables are a key part of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and a vastly underappreciated asset for Derby.

The aim of this Strategy is to transform them from a declining backwater to a vibrant destination for business, leisure, tourism and cultural activity and to make them a flagship project for the working conservation of the WHS and the rejuvenation of Derby as a City of Culture.

Currently, the Mills and Stables are generally run down and underutilised. Many of the buildings are deteriorating and there is a very real risk that some will be lost. Given the international importance of the buildings, doing nothing is not an option.

Transforming Darley Abbey Mills and Stables into a vibrant and high quality destination for business, leisure, tourism and cultural activities will deliver major conservation and economic benefits for Derby and the rest of the World Heritage Site. The creation of a clearly defined destination would complement rather than challenge the ongoing regeneration of the City Centre and would also help realise the 'Blue Corridor' through Derby.

There are however major obstacles that need to be addressed to enable this process to begin. These include: flood risk, vehicle and pedestrian access, planning policy use restrictions, the general condition of the site, urgent repair requirements, dereliction etc.

This draft Strategy sets out a proposed vision for the future of the Mills and Stables, with a prioritised programme of public sector investment and support to overcome the obstacles and create a positive environment for long-term investment from the private sector to deliver new uses for the buildings.

Key aspects of the Proposals include:

- A major programme of repair and conservation works for the historic buildings
- Creation of high quality public realm around the buildings
- Rationalised and improved car parking
- Improved pedestrian and cycle links with wider area and City Centre
- Replacement or upgraded vehicle bridge
- Improved public access to the Mills and Stables
- Upgrading of Haslam's Lane
- Flood defence works as part of the Blue Corridor Masterplan
- Development of a new planning policy framework
- Long-term change in the mix of uses on-site (led by private sector)

It is proposed that the above will be delivered by a partnership between Derby City Council and site owners; with support of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Partnership.



1. Introduction

1.1 Background to Project

Darley Abbey Mills and the Stables in Darley Park have been recognised as important places requiring further analysis and long-term intervention for a number of years. The 2005 Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (WHS) Economic Development Plan clearly identified the need for action; as did the WHS Management Plan and the 2006 Derby City Council Local Plan. In 2005 a Scrutiny Report from Derby City Council also highlighted the need for coordinated and planned action in this part of the World Heritage Site.

The Mills are a key part of the World Heritage Site (see Figure 1) and form, along with the Silk Mill, the major elements of the Southern Hub of the WHS. The regeneration of the Southern Hub is an established priority for the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Partnership and for Derby City Council. Delivering and funding change in this part of the WHS is as important as securing the future of the other two hubs further north at Belper and Cromford.

This draft Strategy is a response to a long acknowledged priority to deliver a viable and sustainable future for this vitally important part of the WHS. It is also timely given the current economic circumstances and the impact that this has had on the Mill Complex.

The Strategy has been commissioned by Derby City Council with European Regional Development and Single Programme funding from the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA). The development of the Strategy has been guided by a Project Team that included representatives of Derby City Council and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Partnership. English Heritage, the Environment Agency and EMDA have all been consulted during the development of the Strategy.

The development of the Strategy was led by Atkins with support from Savills and Abacus.

1.2 Scope of Report

The Strategy addresses the Darley Abbey Mills Complex, Darley Park Stables and the connections between them and the wider area (see Figures 2 and 3). The Strategy is not intended to act as a blueprint for the regeneration of the village of Darley Abbey, although its long-term implementation should benefit the residents and village.

1.3 Status of Document

This strategy has been prepared to help demonstrate a way forward for partners. It is hoped that the strategy will be adopted by the City Council in the Autumn 2010.

1.4 Strategy Aims

The aims of the Strategy are to:

- Outline a sustainable way forward for the Darley Abbey Mills Complex that will support their long-term repair and conservation;
- Identify a viable way forward for the Darley Park Stables to enable their repair, conservation and re-use;
- Ensure that the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage Site is conserved and communicated to current and future generations;
- Promote improvements in the immediate environs that can support the regeneration of the Mills and Stables and deliver local benefits;
- Establish a direction for realising the full tourism and economic potential of the area to secure its long term future;
- Provide opportunities for public access and engagement with the World Heritage Site; and
- Ensure that proposals deliver economic benefits for Darley Abbey, the City and World Heritage Site.

1.5 Consultation

Formal consultation events were staged in Darley Abbey in November 2009 and May 2010. The events took the form of a staffed exhibition. Attendees were able to view a series of exhibition boards and to discuss the project with members of the project team. Attendees were encouraged to fill out a questionnaire at the event or to take it and return in later.

In total c.240 people attended the events and a total of 108 questionnaires and a number of letters were returned.

Meetings have also been held with owners and occupiers in the Mill Complex, English Heritage, the Environment Agency, EMDA, Darley Abbey Society and local residents.

The responses have informed the development of this Strategy.

1.6 Supporting Documentation

Work on the Strategy commenced in late July 2009. Over the last 12 months a significant body of supporting documents and analytical work has been completed. Key elements of this include:

- Darley Abbey Mills Options Report (Atkins 2010)
- Darley Park Stables Options Report (Atkins 2010)
- Darley Abbey Mills Conservation Plan (Atkins 2010)
- Darley Park & Stables Conservation Plan (Atkins 2010)

Other supporting documents included:

- Tourism Potential Review (Atkins 2010)
- Planning Policy and History Review (Atkins 2010)
- Flood Risk Assessment (Atkins 2010)
- Public Realm Appraisal (Atkins 2010)
- Condition surveys for buildings within the Mills Complex (22 no) (Atkins 2010)
- Land Registry search (Atkins 2009) (confidential)
- Report on November Consultation (Atkins 2009)

None of the above would have been possible without the support of the owners and occupiers who enabled access to the buildings and supplied valuable historical and commercial information.

Figure 1: World Heritage Site



Figure 2: Relationship with Derby



Figure 3: Local Area



2. General Background

2.1 Location

Darley Abbey, including the Mill complex, Park and Stables, is located approximately two kilometres north of the centre of Derby. The village is located on the west side of the River Derwent with the Mill complex over the river to the east (see Figures 2 and 3).

The privately owned mill complex is defined to the north and west by the inside of a broad bend in the river. The buildings are situated either side of a private road known as Old Lane, which links the complex, via a privately owned toll bridge, to the village of Darley Abbey.

The Stables lie at the northern end of Darley Park on the southern edge of the village (see Figure 3).

2.2 Historic Context

Darley Abbey Mills, the village and Park are historically entwined and reflect the impact of the industrial revolution on the region. Although the area had been settled for millennia and had already seen major development e.g. a monastery, village, Darley Hall and Park and some earlier mills; it was the arrival of Thomas Evans in 1782 which truly transformed Darley Abbey.

With the support of the industrialist Richard Arkwright, Thomas Evans founded the Boar's Head Mills in 1782 with the building of Long Mill. This was followed by Middle, East, West and North Mills. These massive mills were surrounded by ancillary buildings used for cotton preparation, storage, bobbin spinning, a saw mill, coppice stores and stables.

The need for a regular workforce led to the foundation in 1790 of a workers' village in Darley Abbey. This historic settlement survives virtually intact and includes The Square, Four Houses, buildings in Mile Ash Lane and Lavender Row and Nos 3-16 Brick Row. The village School House was built in 1826.

The Hall and Park pre-date Thomas Evans. Their origin is linked to the former Augustine Monastery of St Mary. The 18th century Hall was designed by the eminent Derby architect Joseph Pickford whilst the Park was possibly laid out by William Emes, a leading landscape architect. Thomas Evans took ownership of the Hall in 1814. All that remains of the Hall now are the basements, Stables, Bakehouse and former Billiard Room (now the Terrace Café).

Together the village, Mills, Park and surviving remains of the Hall form an ensemble of outstanding cultural value that reflects Derby's world-wide status in the 18th and 19th century centuries.

2.3 Designations

The entirety of the study area is included within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, inscribed in 2001. The Mills and Stables also lie within the Darley Abbey Conservation Area.

Many of the buildings within the Mill complex are listed (see Figure 4). Long Mill, Middle Mill, East Mill, West Mill, Engine House, Bobbin Shop, Coppice Barn A, the Watch House and the Chimney are all Grade I Listed Buildings. This is the highest level of listing. North Mill, the 'proto-fireproof building' and the open fronted shed are Grade II* Listed Buildings, whilst the Saw Mill, Coppice Barn B, Nos 1-3 Old Lane and No 4 Old Lane are Grade II Listed Buildings. The other pre-1948 historic buildings in the complex form part of the curtilage and setting of the Listed Buildings.

The Stables and Bakehouse are grade II listed. The former Billiard Room is curtilage listed.

2.4 Policy Context

2.4.1 National & Regional Policy

Key national planning policy guidance relevant to the Mills and Stables include:

- PPS 1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (Including its Climate Change Supplement)
- PPS 3 'Housing'
- PPS 4 'Planning for Prosperous Economies'
- PPS 5 'Planning for the Historic Environment'
- PPG 13 'Transport'
- PPS 25 'Development & Flood Risk'

Key policies in the East Midlands Regional Plan (March 2009) include Policy 26: Protecting and Enhancing the Region's Natural and Cultural Heritage and Policy 27: Regional Priorities for the Historic Environment.

2.4.2 Local planning policy

The adopted Derby City Local Plan (2006) identifies the Mills as a Regeneration priority area under Policy RP6, this states that:

R6 Darley Abbey Mills

Darley Abbey Mills is identified as a site of significant architectural and historical value that presents a major opportunity for mixed use regeneration. Planning permission will be granted for the conversion of existing buildings for the following uses to secure the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of the Listed Buildings, providing they are compatible with its architectural and historical character:

- a. Business use (B1);
- b. Residential (C3)
- c. Non-residential institutions (D1)

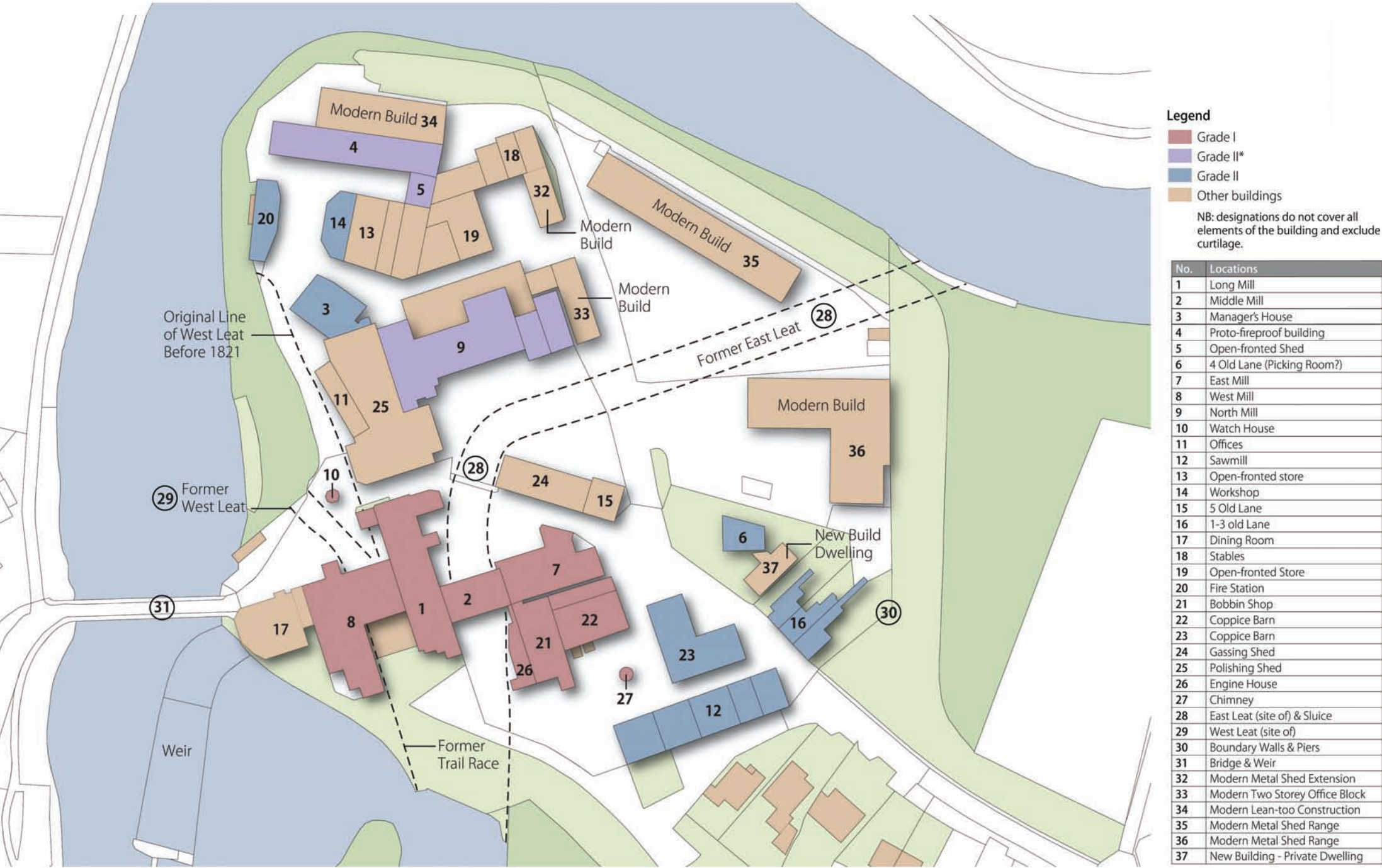
All development proposals should fully respect the high quality environment and conservation interests of the Mills complex and its important contribution to the World Heritage Site. To this end, the Council will restrict new extensions and where possible, will negotiate the removal of modern additions. Within the mainly open area in the north-eastern part of the site, built development will only be acceptable in exceptional circumstances where a convincing case can be made that the benefits of the development to the Mills complex outweigh its visual impact on the setting of the Listed Buildings and on the character of the Conservation Area and that of the World Heritage Site.

Other key policies include E18 'Conservation Areas', E19 'Listed Buildings & Buildings of Local Importance', and E29 'Protection of the World Heritage Site and its Surroundings'. The latter seeks to ensure that development which would have an adverse effect on the special character of the WHS is resisted. The policy seeks only to permit development which would:

- a) Preserve and enhance the special character of the area;
- b) Encourage the physical and economic revitalisation of the area;
- c) Ensure that new buildings enhance the area in terms of siting and alignment, use of materials, mass, scale and design; and
- d) To ensure that new development does not harm biodiversity and where possible conserves and enhances it.'

The Local Plan is due to be replaced by the emerging Core Strategy in late 2011.

Figure 4: Listed buildings in Mill Complex



3. Darley Abbey Mills

3.1 Overview

The Darley Abbey Mills, known historically as the 'Boar's Head Mills', are a large complex of internationally important cotton spinning mills and associated buildings on the River Derwent in Derby. The following provides a summary description, overview of their development and outlines their significance. Fuller details can be found in the Conservation Plan (Atkins 2010).

They were founded by Thomas and Edmund Evans in 1782 and operated under the Evans name until their closure in 1970. They formed, along with the Arkwright mills at Cromford and the Strutt mills at Belper, Milford and Derby, one of the three most significant late 18th and 19th-century textile enterprises of the Derwent Valley.

The Mills complex is surrounded on three sides by the River Derwent. From the west the complex is accessed across a steel and concrete bridge, originally built to connect the mills with the workers' village. The bridge was rebuilt in 1934 although the piers may be earlier.

The complex feels detached from its surrounding landscape. Surrounded by mature trees on the river bank to the east, north and west, and bounded by the long range of the saw mill to the south, the complex is inward looking and has a self contained feel. The trees were however more actively managed in the past and there was greater degree of visual connection with the village and river.

It is effectively divided into two parts, with the main cotton spinning mills, except North Mill (Building 9), lying to the south of Old Lane (or Haslam's Lane) and most of the ancillary buildings lying to the north.

The earliest building, Long Mill, was erected in 1782-3 on the eastern bank of the Derwent and this was soon joined by other workshops, warehouses and a picking room. The mill was severely damaged by fire in 1788 and it is unclear how much of the original mill survives in the present building. However, it is likely that the brick and stone carcass of the mill survived the fire and that this was raised from four storeys to five plus an attic in the rebuilding.

An eastwards extension, later known as Middle Mill, was probably added between 1804 and 1805. This was severely damaged by fire in 1947, after which it was re-floored and re-roofed. Two other buildings are roughly contemporary with Middle Mill. Firstly, the now derelict Manager's House. Secondly, the 'proto-fireproof building' which is of great technological significance as it incorporates one of only two known in situ survivals of a proto-fireproof constructional technique pioneered by the Strutts of Belper in the 1790s.

The construction of East Mill, which is attached to Middle Mill, began in 1818. Unlike its precursors it is built in fireproof construction, with brick vaults supported by cast-iron beams, and is notable particularly for the form of its cast-iron roof. West Mill, also fireproof, was added in two phases beginning in 1821. It seems to incorporate parts of an earlier wheelhouse. It is likely that Long Mill was 'fireproofed' with sheet metal and the timber stair replaced in brick and stone at about the same time.

North Mill was probably built circa 1835. It resembles West Mill in its use of fireproof construction and in some of the details of its roof, but is more substantially built, suggesting that it was intended for different machinery or processes. A contemporary return range at the western end was demolished before the end of the 19th century.

All of these developments were accompanied by other building works within the complex including the excavation and frequent realignment of the mill leats, building of offices buildings, saw mills, coppice barns and numerous other ancillary structures that whilst not as impressive as the main mills were equally important to the functioning of the complex.

The complex operated continuously throughout the 19th century and through to the middle of the 20th century. However textile manufacturing, latterly confined to finishing processes, ceased in 1970. From the 1960s until recently two engineering firms, Ellison Metal Products Ltd and Patterns [Derby] Ltd, have been the principal occupants, but much of the site is also let to smaller firms.

The 20th century also saw the culverting and infilling of the leats, the removal of the machinery, including the large engines, wheels and gearing from within the mill buildings and the conversion of the mill buildings and ancillary structures to other uses.

However, the height and massing of the mill buildings, the functional use of brick, uniform use of sash windows, and the maze of ancillary buildings still evoke the innovation and feverous industrialism of the early factory development.

Although the nature of the industries within the complex has changed considerably over the last 50 years, it still remains a place of work and activity, although with high levels of vacancy. However, it has been in a state of physical decline since the mid 20th century. This has led to the loss of some significant elements and the introduction of some highly inappropriate modern sheds and new buildings.

The general condition of some of the buildings, poor quality of open space, signage and fencing, uncontrolled parking and traffic flow, and the nature of some of the industries on the site, all contribute to the degradation of historic character and the poor presentation of the mills complex. The appearance of the site is generally somewhat run down, which is detracting from the significance of the complex and wider World Heritage Site.



3.2 Statement of Significance

Overview

The former Darley Abbey Mills at Darley Abbey is the most complete surviving cotton mill complex in the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. It includes within it some exceptional examples of early large scale factory buildings, notably the Long Mill (Built 1782, rebuilt 1788), Middle Mill (Built 1804-5, rebuilt 1947), East Mill (Built c.1818), West Mill (Built c.1821) and North Mill (Built c.1835), as well as the proto-fireproof building, an early and rare surviving example of pioneering fire-proofing technology (Built c.1797). The social historical significance of the site is illustrated by the school room in the attic of Long Mill (c.1792), which is the earliest known example of its kind, predating the better known examples at Strutt's North Mill in Belper (c.1803). The significance of the mills complex is heightened by the near complete survival of its associated workers' settlement at Darley Abbey on the opposite side of the River Derwent.

Darley Abbey Mills, together with the industrial complexes at Masson Mill, Cromford, Belper and Milford Mills, Lea Bridge, Peckwash Mill and the Silk Mill in Derby, form part of a cultural landscape of outstanding significance. Powered by the waters of the River Derwent, it was here that the modern factory system was established to accommodate the new technology for spinning cotton developed by Richard Arkwright. The insertion of industrial establishments into a rural landscape necessitated the construction of housing for the workers in the mills, and the resulting settlements created an exceptional industrial landscape that has retained its qualities over two centuries. In terms of industrial buildings, the Derwent Valley mills may be considered to be exceptional, in the sense that they were the first of what was to become the model for factories throughout the world in subsequent centuries.

The mills at Darley Abbey, also known as the 'Boar's Head Mills', was founded in 1782 and continued to develop and expand for almost 190 years until textile manufacturing finally ceased in 1970. The primary phase of development lasted from the building of Long Mill in 1782 (rebuilt 1789 following a fire in 1788) to about the mid 19th century, after which development became more piecemeal, with no further significant elements built after c.1897. Despite continuing use and adaptation during the 20th century, remarkably few elements of the complex have been lost or entirely compromised. It is, today, the most complete of the surviving cotton mill complexes in the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

Associations

Part of the significance of the Darley Abbey Mills is its association with the leading industrialists working in the Derwent Valley in the late 18th century. Prominent amongst these was Richard Arkwright, who pioneered the development of the water powered cotton spinning mill and provided the blueprint for factory scale production, and who encouraged and supported the Evanses in their development of the mills at Darley Abbey. Also closely associated with the Evans family through marriage and commerce was Jedediah and his son William Strutt. All were successful industrialists, whose economic interests extended well beyond cotton manufacturing. They were also enlightened employers who displayed a strong sense of responsibility for their workforce, their dependants and for the communities that came into being to serve the new industrial system. As such, the developments at Belper, beginning in 1776-77, at Milford in 1781, and Darley Abbey from 1782, provided early models for the creation of industrial communities.

The cotton spinning mills

The mill complex was not designed as a single entity, and the standing buildings reflect the development of mill building technology in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Following the disastrous fire that destroyed the original Long Mill in 1788, every effort was made to protect the buildings from fire. The proto-fireproof building (Building 4, c.1797-1801) is one of the most significant buildings within Darley Abbey Mills and is one of only two known surviving examples of fire retarding construction pioneered by the Strutts (the other being at Walton Works, Chesterfield). Buildings erected on the same principle by the Strutts in Derby, Milford and Belper have all been demolished, though important records of their form exist. The proto-fireproof building, adapted to test fire proofing technology after the devastating fire at Long Mill in 1788, demonstrates the close sharing of technology between the Evans and the Strutts families. The innovations developed within this building led to the construction of the fire proofing technology seen in East Mill, West Mill and North Mill, which are characterised by the use of brick 'jack-arch' ceilings, cast iron supporting columns and blue brick or tile flooring.

The ancillary buildings

The success of the mills was also dependent on the range of functions performed in the ancillary buildings that helped process cotton from raw material to final product within a single factory site.

These included picking rooms for selecting raw cotton, bobbin shops for turning the cotton reels, coppice barns for storing timber, a saw mill, stables for working ponies, stores and – essential given the ever present risk of fire – a building for a fire engine. The Evans' paper mill on the opposite side of the river also produced the paper to wrap and package the final products. It was these buildings that allowed the factory to operate effectively and competitively, and also contributed to the range of skills required from the workforce. The ancillary buildings are therefore an integral part of the complex and, to a greater or lesser extent, the Outstanding Universal Value of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

Social welfare

The buildings at Darley Abbey Mills are also significant in reflecting the social history of the workplace. Of high importance is evidence of the schoolroom in the attic in Long Mill, recorded in 1792, which is the earliest known example of its kind, predating the better known examples at Strutt's North Mill in Belper (c.1803). The existing partitioning, pegs and roof lights probably relate to the use of the attic as a school room. The Dining Room also illustrates the social provision of the mill owners for their workers, providing from the early 19th century a hot meal for all. The workers' village built by the Evans family on the opposite side of the Derwent has survived almost intact. Only the Evans' own mansions, their farm, and the paper mill have been demolished. There is no discernible pattern in the distribution of these houses, built over more than four decades from c.1790 onwards: this can in no sense be considered to be a planned or model community. However, in the range and diversity of house types it compares favourably with Cromford and Belper. The bridge over the Derwent, although a later replacement, is therefore significant, linking the worker with workplace.

The mills today

Although the cotton spinning machinery has been removed, the water wheels scrapped, the leats and tail race filled in, Darley Abbey Mills remains an exceptional example of an early industrial complex. The extent of survival, together with that of the workers' village, provides clear evidence of the scale of production of the mills at its height, as well as the diversity of different functions needed to support the factory process from raw material to finished product. Each of the surviving historic structures at Darley Abbey Mills are therefore attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

4. Darley Park and Stables

The Grade II Listed Stables and adjacent Bakehouse and the curtilage listed former Billiard Room, now Terrace Café are the primary focus of the Strategy within the village. The following briefly explores the history and significance of these in the context of the wider Park and former Darley Hall. Fuller details can be found in the Darley Park and Stables Conservation Plan (Atkins 2010).

4.1 Historic Overview

The final Darley Hall was built in 1727 (demolished in 1962), but the history of the area stretches back to at least the Roman period and is associated with the Roman Fort at Little Chester. The site of the medieval Monastery of St Mary, at one point the largest and wealthiest monastic house in Derbyshire lies in the area and it is likely that areas of the Park formed part of its precinct. The ridge and furrow seen within the Park is a notable feature illustrating the agricultural economy of Darley Abbey and subsequent changes in land use in the later medieval period, as well as the evolution of the designed landscape.

The former Darley Hall is of note due to its association with Joseph Pickford (1734-1782). Pickford was one of the leading provincial architects in the reign of George III. He moved to Derby in c.1759 and the house he designed for himself, Number 41 Friar Gate, is now the Pickford's House Museum operated by Derby City Council. He worked throughout the Midlands, primarily designing town and country houses in the Palladian style. Darley Hall, transformed from an earlier baroque structure to a modest but solid Palladian house, was typical of his works. Also of note is the association with the portrait painter Joseph Wright (1734-1797) who painted the owner Robert Holden in 1779. William Emes, a highly successful late 18th century landscape designer may have also been involved in the Park but this has not been confirmed.

It is the association with the Evans family that makes Darley Hall and Park particularly significant and justifies its inclusion within the World Heritage Site. By the time they had acquired the property in 1814, the workers' village and Boar's Head Mill on the opposite side of the Derwent were already well established. Although the Evans did not actually become resident until 1844, it was from here that Samuel Evans and later his son Walter oversaw the management of what by then had become a mature and successful industry.

Whilst the changes brought about by the Evanses were relatively minor – notably the alteration to the stable block, the construction of the Billiard Room and some planting within the parkland – they have endured and help characterise the surviving historic fabric and landscape.

Derby City Council has owned the Hall and Park since 1931 and has maintained and enhanced the landscape. This is now an important community resource.

Whilst arguably most of the structures and landscaping within Darley Park predate the ownership of the Evans family, it still stands as a good example of the wealth and tastes of the mill owning classes.

The development of the Stable complex

The historic fabric of the Stable complex reflects the development of the house and Park from the Dissolution to the early 20th century.

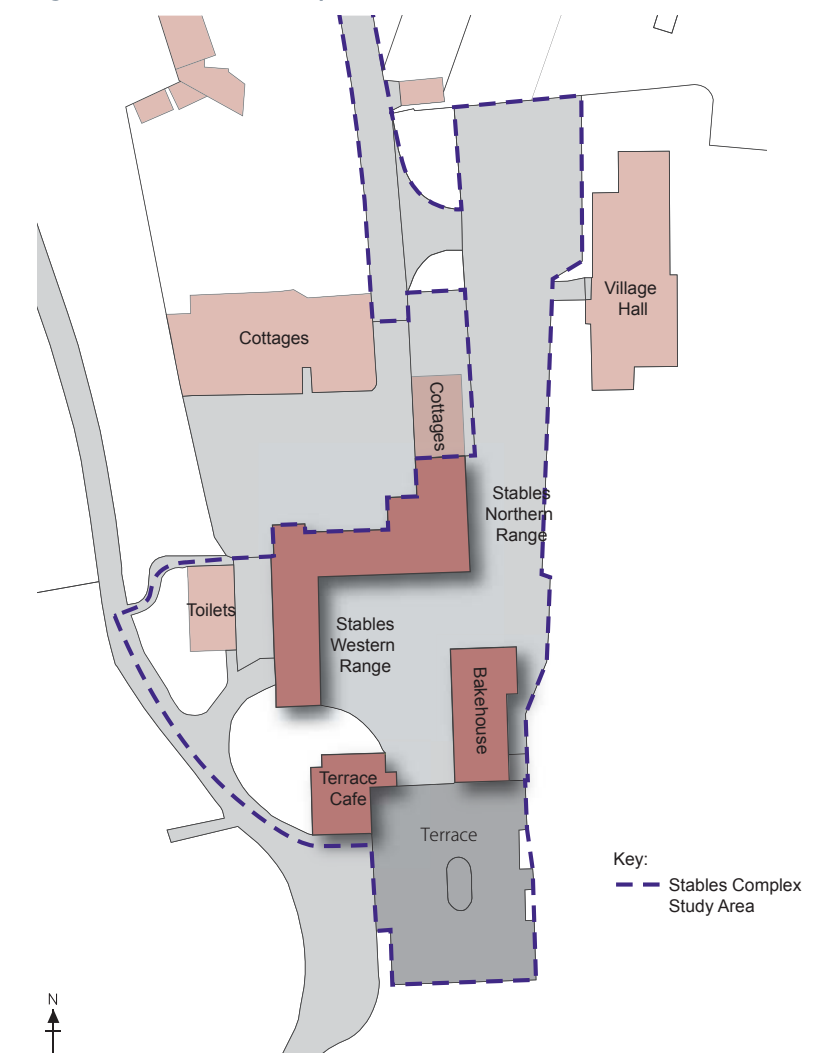
There is a possibility that the timbers in the North Range came from one of the buildings constructed by William West within the former priory precinct after 1541 but the existing North Range is likely to date to the rebuilding of Darley Hall in 1727 and may reflect architectural elements of the Hall that were removed or covered during the alterations and re-frontage of the house by Pickford in the 1770s.

The changes undertaken by the Evanses in the 19th century saw the rebuilding of the West Range to accommodate the carriage arch and drive, the re-orientation of the stables into the existing yard and the insertion of high quality fittings within the stable bays.

The final major phase of development was the installation of a garage and boiler heating system for Mrs Evans' 1912 Daimler and accommodation for the chauffeur above.

The roof timbers, horse bays, lime ash flooring, exterior and interior doors, boiler and pipes, together with architectural evidence of alteration and development, are therefore significant in illustrating the historical development of the building and the status in which the stables (and their occupants) were held.

Figure 5: Plan of stables complex



4.2 Key Significant Features

The following summarises the key significant features of the surviving historic buildings and landscape, a fuller description can be found in the Conservation Plan.

The Stables

The stable range is significant in terms of illustrating the historic development of Darley Abbey. The horse stalls within the Stables, including all historic features, troughs, partitions, hay feeds, feed chutes, tethering rings, glazed tiling, stone set flooring, ventilation, doors, door fittings and windows, are good examples of high quality equine architecture. Key features include:

- The horse stalls, tackroom and groom's room and their features and fittings in the Northern and West Ranges of the stable block;
- The lime ash floors in North Range of the stable block;
- The roof timbers in the North Range;
- Other fixtures and fittings in the Stables, including the horizontal sash windows, stable and coach house doors in the West Range;
- The structures, fittings and features relating to the early use of the Stables as a garage.

The Bakehouse

The Bakehouse, once part of the service wing of the Hall, is not a building of exceptional architectural quality or historical interest, but its significance lies in being part of the collective value of the Darley Hall complex and association with the Evans period of occupation.

The Billiard Room and Terrace

The Billiard Room and Terrace are all that survive of the former Darley Hall (demolished 1962). The Terrace, although substantially altered, offers key views across the park as they may have been seen from the house. The wall to the rear of the Terrace is a modern construction and is not of significance. The Billiard Room was a later addition to the Hall, but still gives some indication as to the scale and architectural form of the former building.

The Park

Darley Park is one of three associated historic designed landscapes within the World Heritage Site. Although many of the trees were replanted in the later 19th century, the overall design of the Park has been little altered since it was laid out in the late 18th century. Key significant elements include:

- The leat, which is shown on the 1708 map and may relate to an earlier monastic mill, as well as the later paper mill;
- Possible archaeological evidence of the Roman road;
- Any surviving archaeological evidence of the remains of the monastery;
- The earthwork remains of medieval ridge and furrow and associated headlands;
- All mature trees dating to the original layout of the Park in the late 18th century. The parkland oaks (some of which may be earlier than the 18th century design) should be considered of high significance;
- The exotic trees planted within the park and shrubberies by the Evans in the later 19th century, which are illustrative of Victorian tastes for newly discovered and unusual trees. A number are nationally important as the largest of their species or are particularly good examples of their type, notably the mulberry tree and the weeping single leaved ash, a nationally rare species;
- The structural remains of the walled garden and associated features;
- The Plant Heritage National Plant Collection of Hydrangeas and Viburnums within the former walled garden, one of four such designated collections in the UK, and significant in terms of the modern, later history of Darley Park; and
- The wildlife in the meadow, scrub and woodland along the leat and riverside.



5. Key Challenges and Opportunities

The following briefly examines some of key issues and opportunities facing the Mills and Stables. Further details can be found in the Mills Options Report, Stables Options Report, Mills Conservation Plan and Park & Stables Conservation Plan (Atkins 2010).

5.1 Condition of Buildings

Many of the buildings in the Mill complex require substantial and extensive repairs to secure their long-term survival; the Stables also require major repair and conversion. As well as the buildings, the public realm throughout the Mill complex is in very poor condition.

The Long Mill is on the National Heritage at Risk Register and it is recommended that West Mill is added to this Register. It is also recommended that the entirety of the complex is placed at the Local Derbyshire at Risk Register. These recommendations reflect the poor condition of many (but not all) buildings and the increasing levels of vacancy.

The Manager's House, West Mill and Long Mill all require immediate attention and temporary urgent works. Should the current rate of decline continue then the Darley Park Stables, North Mill and the Proto-Fireproof Building will require similar works in c. 12 months, they may need to be added to the Heritage at Risk Register at that time too. The short term priority is therefore to deliver urgent temporary works to secure the external envelope of a number of these buildings to prevent their rapid decay.

The poor condition of the buildings and public realm is a very serious threat to their survival and hence significance. It is also a major barrier to investment and re-use. Without investment and without viable long term uses the buildings will decline further. Enabling new uses and encouraging investment must therefore be a priority.

5.2 Conserving Significance

Clearly, delivering viable uses for the Mills and Stables is a fundamental issue that must be addressed if they are to be conserved. There is therefore a need to convert and adapt the buildings for modern uses. This process must however be undertaken sensitively and, in accordance with National Planning Policy in PPS5, should seek to conserve the significance of the buildings (see Section 4 for an overview and the Conservation Plans for fuller details).

A certain degree of compromise will however always be required between the design & use aspirations of a developer and the requirement to conserve the significant fabric and character of the building in line with legislation and national and local planning policy. These issues will have to be resolved on a case-by-case basis and through a process of negotiation between the developer, Derby City Council and in the case of Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings and their settings, English Heritage.

There are however many hundreds of examples of good practice around the UK which demonstrate that it is possible to deliver sensitive and viable schemes for buildings such as the Mills and Stables.

As well as addressing the conservation issues facing the Mills there are also a number of opportunities to enhance the complex. These include:

- removing inappropriate modern buildings and infill structures;
- removing low quality internal partitions in some buildings;
- removing unsympathetic replacement windows, fittings and features;
- conserving and supplying access to the attic in the Long Mill; and
- addressing the low quality of modern road surfaces, traffic management (speed bumps) and signage.

Attic in Long Mill



Former stables in the mill complex



5.3 Location

In many respects the location of the Mills and to a lesser extent the Stables is both an asset and a constraint. The City edge location, distance from commercial centres and limited vehicular access (see below) could all work against the need to regenerate the area. However, the location has many positives. The riverside position of the Mills complex, in particular the stunning south facing frontage at the rear of the West and Long Mills, is a major asset; as is the parkland edge location at the Stables. The association with Darley Abbey is also a positive as this area is viewed as one of the most attractive and desirable locations within the City. The presence of Darley Park and the pedestrian & cycle connections to the city centre are also positives. These may soon be improved through the provision of the proposed 'Greenway'.

It is clear that whilst the Mills and Stables can be considered as a tertiary location in terms of the city centre, they have the very real potential to be developed as a 'destination' in their own right – marking a new place within the City for business, leisure and cultural activity. Harnessing the full potential of their location, whilst minimising the impact of the negative issues, is a key challenge for the Mills and Stables.



5.4 Vehicular Access

The Mills are very constrained in terms of vehicle access. The bridge from Darley Abbey village is narrow and weight limited. The roads leading to the bridge through the village are also constrained and have limited capacity. Additionally, there are potentially long-term structural issues and flood risks associated with the bridge in its current form. Clearly, the primary access to the Mills cannot be from the west.

From the east the Mills are accessed along Haslam's Lane from Alfreton Road and the A38. Haslam's Lane is an unadopted private road. It is in poor condition and liable to flood. Given the serious restrictions from the west, providing better access along this route to the Mills is a key issue in terms of supporting the regeneration of the complex. An improved road must be a priority and it must be signposted as the primary route to the complex, to reduce traffic through Darley Abbey Village.

There are however potential issues associated with improving Haslam's Lane as it may encourage additional rat-running in Darley Abbey village and through the Mills complex. Currently, the village and complex are blighted at peak periods by through traffic avoiding the A38. This issue will need to be addressed in so far as that is possible, as part of any future schemes. A traffic management scheme is therefore important. However, some localised increases are inevitable.

Vehicular access to the Stables is also highly constrained. This may limit potential uses and future schemes will need to reflect these issues in their proposals.

5.5 Car Parking

Car parking at the Mills complex is currently haphazard and not organised or planned on a site wide basis. The long-term regeneration of the complex will require the formalisation and organisation of car parking across the site. The quantity of car parking will always be restricted by the historic nature of the site. There is no significant opportunity for new off-site car parking due to the active nature of the flood plain to the east. It may however be possible to negotiate some form of overflow arrangement at the rugby club.

The Stables are served by an area of informal car parking to the north which also serves the village hall. Formalising this space and developing arrangements for sharing the space with the village hall will be important aspects of any future development for the Stables.

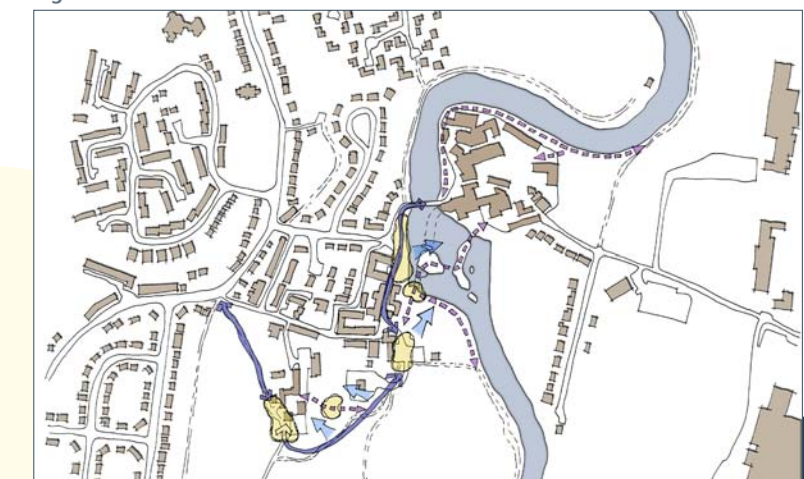
5.6 Links to the local area and the City Centre

Whilst the Mills and Stables have limited vehicular access and parking they are reasonably well served in terms of pedestrian and cycle links to the local area and city centre; these links will be enhanced if the proposed Greenway is implemented.

There are however opportunities to enhance access and to address some local access issues, these include:

- Provision of waterside footpaths as part of any future flood defence or landscaping schemes at the mills;
- Provision of a new link from the Stables courtyard to the eastern part of the park;
- Provision of footbridge to the Mills complex either from the south below the weir or from the north of current road bridge (land ownerships allowing);
- Works to improve the pinch point outside the Abbey public house in Darley Abbey; and
- Development of a water bus service from the city centre

Fig 6 Possible Links



5.7 Public Transport

Currently, Darley Abbey is served by a limited bus service which operates Monday to Friday on an hourly basis. Whilst this may be adequate for current markets it would not serve a regenerated Mills complex.

The weight limited bridge from the Mills to Darley Abbey means that any bus future service would need to terminate or turn round at the complex. This is unlikely to be attractive to an operator.

5.8 Flooding

The Mills are situated in the flood plain and are categorised as Flood Risk 3. Under national planning policy (PPS25) this could limit future uses to less vulnerable uses such as offices, retail, workshops etc. The flood risk would also require developers to supply safe exit routes during flood events.

These restrictions could reduce the mix of uses at the site and increase costs, both of which may affect its viability. It is therefore important that the mills retain an appropriate level of flood protection and that future schemes take into account the potential flood risk and the need to secure safe exit from the site if a flood event occurs.



5.9 Current and Future Uses

Currently, the Mills complex provides c. 14,500m² of accommodation for a range of different uses including light industry, retail, residential, garages, workshops, creative industries, professional services and leisure / sport. There are however high levels of vacancy and one of the major occupiers went into administration in January 2010.

The high levels of vacancy and the relatively low returns achieved from the current uses are one of the key reasons why the buildings in the complex are, in many cases, in poor condition. Reducing vacancy levels and enabling higher value uses is therefore critical to safeguarding and conserving the complex.

The Stables have no current use. The former Billiard Room is a popular café and a small part of the Bakehouse is used for storage. Possible future uses for the Stables complex have been explored in the context of the wider market. Possible mixes of end uses include offices, niche retail, food production, restaurant / café and some form of community / interpretation space. The exact mix of uses will depend on local market demand and the aspirations of Derby City Council and any partners. All uses will however require planning permission and Listed Building Consent.

Future uses, at either the Stables or Mills, could include an element of interpretation relating to the history of the area and the wider World Heritage Site. However, until the role of the Silk Mill in the city centre is clarified the scale and focus of any such role remains unclear. What is clear however is that Derby City Council's Museum Service are not looking to acquire any part of the Mills or Stables complex for the purposes of a museum or heritage centre and consequently any interpretation / heritage activity will need to be led by other bodies in partnership with the relevant owners.

5.10 Ownership

The Mill Complex, including the roads and bridge leading to it, are privately owned by a range of individuals and companies. The scope for public sector intervention and funding is therefore limited.

Many of the properties are now also for sale on the open market and ownership regimes may change rapidly in the near future. This may present issues and opportunities relating to investment and the re-use of the complex.

The Stables are wholly owned by Derby City Council and there are no ownership issues.

5.11 DDA Access

Balancing the legal requirement for disabled access with the need to conserve the fabric and significance of historic places is a challenge that faces all schemes. The detailed design of future schemes will need to address this challenge in an imaginative and sensitive manner; it is however not a major issue at the strategic level.

5.12 Conclusion

Darley Abbey Mills and Darley Park & Stables are a key part of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and an underappreciated asset for Derby. Currently, they are generally run down and underutilised, although there are some well used and well cared for areas within the Mills complex. Many of the buildings are deteriorating and there is a very real risk that some will be lost. Given the international importance of the buildings, doing nothing is not an option. The transformation of Darley Abbey Mills and Stables could deliver major conservation and economic benefits for Derby and the rest of the World Heritage Site. There are however major obstacles that need to be addressed, including flood risk, vehicle and pedestrian access, planning policy restrictions, condition of the site, urgent repair requirements, dereliction etc. The following chapters set out how these issues could be tackled over the coming years.