

Richard Arkwright's Factory Village

Arkwright established his industrial settlement in Cromford over a period of 20 years. The first significant house-building was in 1776 in North Street, followed soon after by the three-storey houses towards the top of Cromford Hill. From 1776 until 1789 Cromford was owned by Peter Nightingale, and it was not until Sir Richard had purchased the estate that the pace of development accelerated. Nor is it possible until that time to discern any element of conscious planning in the community's development. The village continued to grow under the stewardship of Richard Arkwright junior, and by the time of his death in 1843 it had acquired the size and shape it was to retain until well after the Second World War. It is fortunate that most of the modern housing development in Cromford has taken place in areas which are largely separate from the historic community.



The Market Place

c.1790

The Market Place provided the heart of Arkwright's community. It extended right across the road and pavements and included the area to the East. The main bulk of the development within this part of Cromford dates from c.1790. The market which Arkwright started in 1790 was an integral part of his strategy for the development of Cromford and was fundamental to the success of his pioneering achievements. In order to attract the families which were to provide his workforce, it was not enough to supply good housing. It was also necessary to ensure that there was a regular supply of provisions, and this was achieved by attracting traders to the Cromford Market and building the new commercial premises which would retain them.



The Greyhound Hotel, Market Place

1778 - Listed Grade II*

Unambiguously the principal building of the Market Place development, a dignified pedimented, three-storey building, constructed in sandstone with a Roman Doric doorcase and raised quoins.

The Greyhound provided lodging for visitors to Cromford and was used as the location for festivities organised by Sir Richard for his workforce. The Arkwrights also used it for business. It was here in the public room that Richard Arkwright junior instructed Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire to leave her answer as to how she intended to repay the money she owed him.



The Arkwright Stores, 39 The Market Place

1780s - Listed Grade II

One of a row of six houses, converted for retail use in the 19th century. Constructed in coursed gritstone with slate roofs. The two bowed shop windows are a rare survival from the early 19th century. Originally it had a slate roof.



The Market Place, nos. 28-36

c.1790 - Listed Grade II

Three-storey gritstone houses built as part of Sir Richard Arkwright's Market Place development with later inserted shop-fronts. Originally they had slate roofs.



The Market Place, nos. 20-26

c.1790 - Listed Grade II

A rare example of a single-storey range of Georgian shambles. The range is constructed of regular coursed gritstone with a hipped slate roof. A similar structure once stood in the other corner of the Market Place where the Cromford Community Centre now stands.



Willersley Castle, Willersley Lane

c.1790 - Listed Grade II*

Architect: William Thomas. Interior by Thomas Gardner of Uttoxeter.

A mansion house located on rising ground and set in a Grade II landscaped park. It was commissioned by Sir Richard Arkwright, who died before it was completed. It is constructed of ashlar sandstone. The central facade is defined by projecting turrets. Contemporary observers described Willersley as "an effort of inconvenient ill taste" and "a great cotton mill". The Arkwright family occupied the castle until after the First World War. In the grounds of the castle the stable block and home farm buildings (though not the farmhouse, which predates the Castle), by Thomas Gardner of Uttoxeter, survive though in an altered form. It is now in the ownership of Christian Guild Holidays.



Lodge to Willersley Castle, Willersley Lane

c.1792 - Listed Grade II

Thomas Gardner of Uttoxeter

A picturesque lodge to Willersley Castle. It has an ashlar facade; the remainder is coursed rubble.



The Fishing Lodge, Mill Road

c.1796 - Listed Grade II

A small gritstone structure standing by the ruins of the 15th century bridge chapel and created from an earlier range of farm buildings. The fishing lodge was fashioned by Richard Arkwright junior to function as a dwelling for his water bailiff. By the early nineteenth century it was in use as a workman's cottage. It is a copy of the fishing lodge on the River Dove made famous by Isaac Walton and Charles Cotton. The inscription over the door lintel reads "piscatoribus sacrum" - sacred to fishermen.



Rock House, Mill Road

1776 Listed Grade II

Built by Peter Nightingale for Richard Arkwright, it became his home during his time in Cromford. It was extended in the 19th century. A three-storey brick and ashlar house constructed on a cliff, it overlooks the Cromford Mills in stark contrast to Willersley Castle which, though constructed in an elevated location, is entirely hidden from the mills and almost entirely from the village. It has been converted to flats.



North Street 1776

Listed Grade II*

The first of Sir Richard Arkwright's workers' housing in Cromford. The street consists of two long gritstone terraces which face each other across a broad street, comprising 27 dwellings in all. The accommodation is superior to rural housing in Derbyshire at this date and North Street set a pattern for what was to follow elsewhere in Cromford, though it exhibits a higher standard of construction and design than some of the later houses in the community.



The mixture of leaded lights and sashes on two storeys and doorways which echo classical design features, convey a social pretension which would not have been lost on the skilled workers Arkwright sought to attract to Cromford. Sash windows would have been generally reserved for farmers or the commercial classes in this part of Derbyshire at this time. Provision for domestic accommodation was on the ground and first floors with workshop space on the top floor, characterised externally by distinctive 'weavers' windows'. These workshops enabled members of the family not employed within the mills to earn an income. When these houses were built they were intended for weavers and their families.



Cromford Hill 104, The Hill

c. 1780 - Listed Grade II

A three-storey terraced house constructed in coursed gritstone with a tiled roof. This is one of 83 similar dwellings within the settlement. Unlike the earlier houses in North Street, the houses on Cromford Hill provided purely domestic accommodation with no workshop space. The terrace forms part of a long linear arrangement of different housing forms constructed by the Arkwrights on either side of Cromford Hill.



Cromford Hill 122, The Hill

c.1810 - Listed Grade II

Part of the second generation of Cromford industrial housing. These two-storey terraced cottages, two cells deep, were constructed in coursed gritstone with Welsh slate roofs. This is one of 36 similar dwellings within the village.



Cromford Hill, nos. 37 and 39, Victoria Row, The Hill

1839 - Listed Grade II

Pair of houses within a row of eight built for Richard Arkwright junior to accommodate workers in the textile mills. They were constructed in coursed rubble with render and have cast iron windows with opening casements. They are set back behind front gardens which divide them from Cromford's main thoroughfare, The Hill. The rear elevation has small single-light windows to the upper floors with low lean-to sculleries.



Staffordshire Row, nos. 30-46 Water Lane

Early 19th century - Listed Grade II

A row of three-storey gritstone houses similar in form to those found on The Hill. These are thought to have been constructed for the mill workers even though they may stand on land which was not Arkwright property at the time they were built.



Arkwright's Houses on Water Lane

Early 19th century - Unlisted

These are three-storey, semi-detached houses, stone-built and rendered. Six houses follow this pattern; all are on Water Lane. With their substantial gardens, relatively spacious accommodation and privies, they are believed to have been provided for the overseers or foremen in the mill, Cromford's equivalent of the Darley Abbey and Belper cluster houses - though, of course, they are less innovative in design.



St Mary's Church, Mill Lane

1797 and 1858 - Listed Grade B

Founded by Sir Richard Arkwright as a private chapel within the grounds of Willersley Castle and opened to public worship by his son in 1797, the church was substantially altered and partly gothicised in 1858. It has an extensive system of mural decorations by Alfred Hemming, of 1897, depicting scenes from the Bible. A memorial to Mrs Arkwright (1820) by Chantrey hangs on the north wall of the nave. In the corresponding position on the south wall is a similar plaque dedicated to Charles Arkwright (1850), by Henry Weeks. Sir Richard's remains were moved from Matlock Church to St Mary's and interred in a bricked-up vault within the chapel.



School and School House, North Street

1832 and later - Listed Grade II

The school was built by Richard Arkwright junior to provide accommodation for the young mill workers who, under the terms of new legislation, were to be required to work under the 'half-time system', whereby part of each day was to be spent at school and part at work. The school was extended in 1893. Both the school and the school house are constructed of gritstone with hipped slate roofs. The School House is accommodated in one of two wings attached to the main building.



The Village Lock-up, Swift's Hollow

1790 - Listed Grade II

A two-storey three-bay building constructed of coursed gritstone with a graduated Derbyshire slate roof. It was originally built as a terrace of three cottages early in the 18th century, but in 1790 the ground floor of the centre cottage was converted to a village lock-up. The lock-up contains two small cells with metal doors. One cell retains its original bunk, which is suspended from the walls by chain. The lock-up, the adjacent space and the room above have been renovated by the Arkwright Society and the upper floor is now in commercial use.



Privies to the rear of 56-76 Cromford Hill

Listed Grade II

Sandstone privies built in pairs and roofed with monumental gritstone slabs.



Pigcotes, Swift's Hollow

Late 18th to early 19th century - Listed Grade II

Sandstone **pigcotes** constructed as part of the Arkwright community development. **Pigcotes** played an important part in the cottage economy of a village such as this. They are situated amongst allotments, small barns and workshops.



The ‘Bear Pit’

1785 - Listed Grade II

The Bear Pit, as it is known among Cromford residents, was constructed in 1785 by Richard Arkwright. It consists of a more or less oval stone-lined pit sunk into the course of Cromford **Sough**, a lead mine drainage channel, across which a dam and sluice have been erected. The dam forced the **sough** water back into a new underground channel which connected the **sough** to the Greyhound pond. By this means Richard Arkwright was able to supplement the water stored in the pond with **sough** water. He used the device each weekend while the mills were not at work so that the Greyhound Pond was adequately supplied when work began again on the Monday morning.



The Greyhound Pond

c. 1785

The principal supply of water for the cotton mills was from Cromford **Sough**. The first mill was powered exclusively from that source until, from the mid 1780s, it was extended and a second wheel added. This wheel derived its water from the Bonsall Brook via an underground culvert



controlled by a sluice in the corner of the Greyhound Pond (adjacent to the present day Boat Inn). It is not easy to date the construction of the Greyhound Pond. It may have been one of the ponds referred to by William Bray in 1783, but he may have had in mind the ponds created on the Bonsall Brook for the corn mill which had been erected in 1780. Certainly, the Greyhound Pond must have been in existence by 1785, when Richard Arkwright incurred the wrath of the lead miners by damming the Cromford **Sough** at the Bear Pit so that he could force the **sough** water into the Greyhound Pond. The culvert Arkwright built for this purpose can be seen from Water Lane to the rear of the Greyhound coach-house and stable-block.

Former Corn Mill, Water Lane

1780 - Listed Grade II

This water-powered corn mill with its attached cottage was built by George Evans in 1780. It is constructed in coursed rubble and squared block gritstone with ashlar dressings; the cottage has Venetian windows. The kiln adjacent to the corn mill was in existence by 1797. The maltings, now the



Cromford Venture Centre, was added in the 19th century. It is interesting to note that the corn mill was constructed within two years of the destruction of the Cromford corn mill to make way for the second cotton mill.



Slinter Cottage, Via Gellia

c.1800 - Listed Grade II

The mill was originally constructed as a lead slag mill associated with a lead smelting enterprise higher up the valley. It was later converted to wood turning and produced bobbins and pulleys for the cotton mills. It is set in an area of great natural beauty dominated by Slinter Tor. The adjacent woodland has been designated an **SSSI** and an **SAC**. The structure still retains a small breast-shot wheel with wooden buckets. The cottage is in the course of renovation by the Arkwright Society.



Cromford Station buildings and footbridge

c.1855, 1860, 1874 and 1885 - Listed Grade II

In 1849 the Manchester, Matlock, Buxton and Midlands Junction Railway opened a line to Rowsley passing through Cromford. The station-master's house and the up line waiting room were built in c.1855 and 1860 in coursed gritstone with slate roofs. The design by G H Stokes bears witness to his work in France with his father-in-law Joseph Paxton in the 1850s. The station buildings on the down line



were built in 1874 and are being restored by the Arkwright Society to create office space, with a long term aspiration for creating a portal for visitors arriving in to the World Heritage Site by train. The Butterley Company erected the ornate footbridge in 1885.

Cromford Bridge Hall (formerly House), Lea Road

17th century with later additions - Listed Grade II

Once known as Senior Field House, it is a 17th century hall and crosswing house with dormer gables - perhaps containing the remains of an earlier building. It is built of coursed gritstone. Some 17th century mullioned windows with transoms survive. In the 18th century wings were added at both ends. The addition at the east end was built in a similar design to the adjacent 17th century crosswing so as to give the overall impression of a symmetrical main front. The main entrance was placed in the middle of this enlarged facade. Most of the windows are sashed and it has a recently repaired stone slate roof. Most of the building is three storeys high. The house was acquired by George Evans, brother and business partner of Thomas Evans, founder of the Darley Abbey cotton spinning mill, in c.1760. It was lived in by his descendants including his daughter Elizabeth Evans, a local amateur artist and great-aunt of the famous Florence Nightingale.



Woodend, Lea Road

1796 - Unlisted

Built by Peter Nightingale, founder of the Lea Cotton Mill as a replacement for Lea Hall, which he found too cold in the winter months. The house, which is three bays in width and three storeys in height, is built of ashlar gritstone with corner and front door quoins. It has sashed windows with stepped lintels. There are 19th century additions; also a separate coach-house with stabling, which has undergone recent alterations. After Nightingale's death it was occupied for a time in the 19th century by the Smedley family who took over Lea Mills.

