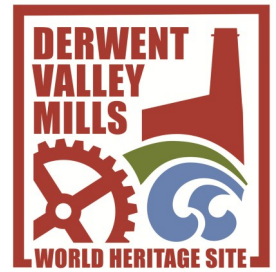


The Upper Mill

1771—Listed Grade I



The upper mill, in its original form, contained 11 bays with external dimensions of 28.5 metres x 7.9 metres; it was five storeys in height. It was built of coursed gritstone and was lined with a skin of brickwork. It was entirely traditional in its construction, with timber beams and roof members and sash windows. A water-colour representation of the mill indicates that it bore a cupola for the mill bell on the roof at the southern end. In the late 1780s the mill was extended by 4 bays and an additional power source added. It is a simple functional structure with few concessions to architectural style save for the original main entrance - what Richard Arkwright called the "First door" - which has a



Watercolour by William Day

fine Gibbsean doorway, and the mill windows which have slightly arched wedge lintels with voussoirs; the central bays project forward slightly on the elevation which faces towards Cromford.



Gibbsean Doorway

A fire in 1929 removed the two upper storeys of the building after which it was re-roofed in asbestos sheet and returned to use manufacturing colour pigments. Recent research suggests that the mill was, from the beginning, powered by an overshot wheel with water brought to it by aqueduct. Such an aqueduct would have passed narrowly above Richard Arkwright's "First door", quite spoiling the effect of the fine masonry; but given the choice, it is entirely characteristic of the man at this stage of his career that the power source was considered more important than the architecture.



Upper Mill before the fire of 1929



Upper Mill from Mill Yard



Upper Mill from West



Cromford Mills awaiting repair