



High Peak Borough Council

working for our community

**High Peak Borough Council
Policy and Regeneration Service**



TORR VALE MILL NEW MILLS

DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

JUNE 2005

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1 Torr Vale Mill is a grade II* listed building within the New Mills Conservation Area. It has been vacant, subject to fire damage and repeated vandalism since closure of the last owner's cotton manufacturing business in December 2000. Its location and layout make it largely unsuitable for modern industrial uses and so alternative economically viable uses are required to revitalise the Mill, commensurate with its heritage value and surrounding site.
- 1.2 Since the early 1990's New Mills' town centre has benefited from a number of different conservation-led regeneration strategies, whereby grant aid has been targeted towards the repair and restoration of many of the town's historic buildings. Together High Peak Borough Council, Derbyshire County Council and English Heritage have helped to restore many properties along with several significant buildings at risk. Whilst this joint funding partnership has come to an end, Torr Vale Mill still remains a major historic building-at-risk problem in a condition that continues to deteriorate rapidly.
- 1.3 Due to its rich heritage, the drama of its site and its strategic location in the Torrs Country Park, the mill has always featured prominently within the strategies for regeneration of the town. Since the opening of the popular Millennium Walkway, through the Torrs gorge beside the Mill, its plight has attracted much public attention. Its current condition, deterioration and vandalism have caused the community to raise the site as a major issue within the New Mills Action Plan. Within this document, the community, whilst recognising its current condition, also supports the future potential of the buildings and the site in developing the regeneration of the town centre, through tourism related uses and the retention of such a significant national heritage asset.
- 1.4 Consequently, the sensitive repair and re-use of the building is considered as being of the highest priority in efforts to improve the image of the town and the site has been identified as a 'Regeneration Area' – policy TC13 within the High Peak Local Plan – adopted March 2005. The specific policy is reproduced in full in appendix 1 but briefly supports a comprehensive development scheme that provides:
 - Education use;
 - Office and business use;
 - Leisure and tourism facilities;
 - Residential development necessary to enable the conversion of the mill to mixed use development
- 1.5 The key objective with the mill is to preserve its character as an important listed building and provide it with a viable future. As is so often the case with important historic buildings, it must be recognised from the outset that normal policies and standards will need to be applied flexibly, so as to avoid ruling out any suitable schemes. There is a strong feeling within the New Mills community that a mix of new uses for the Mill should be found which bring new life into the area and which could also create jobs, educational and training opportunities, leisure and visitor facilities.

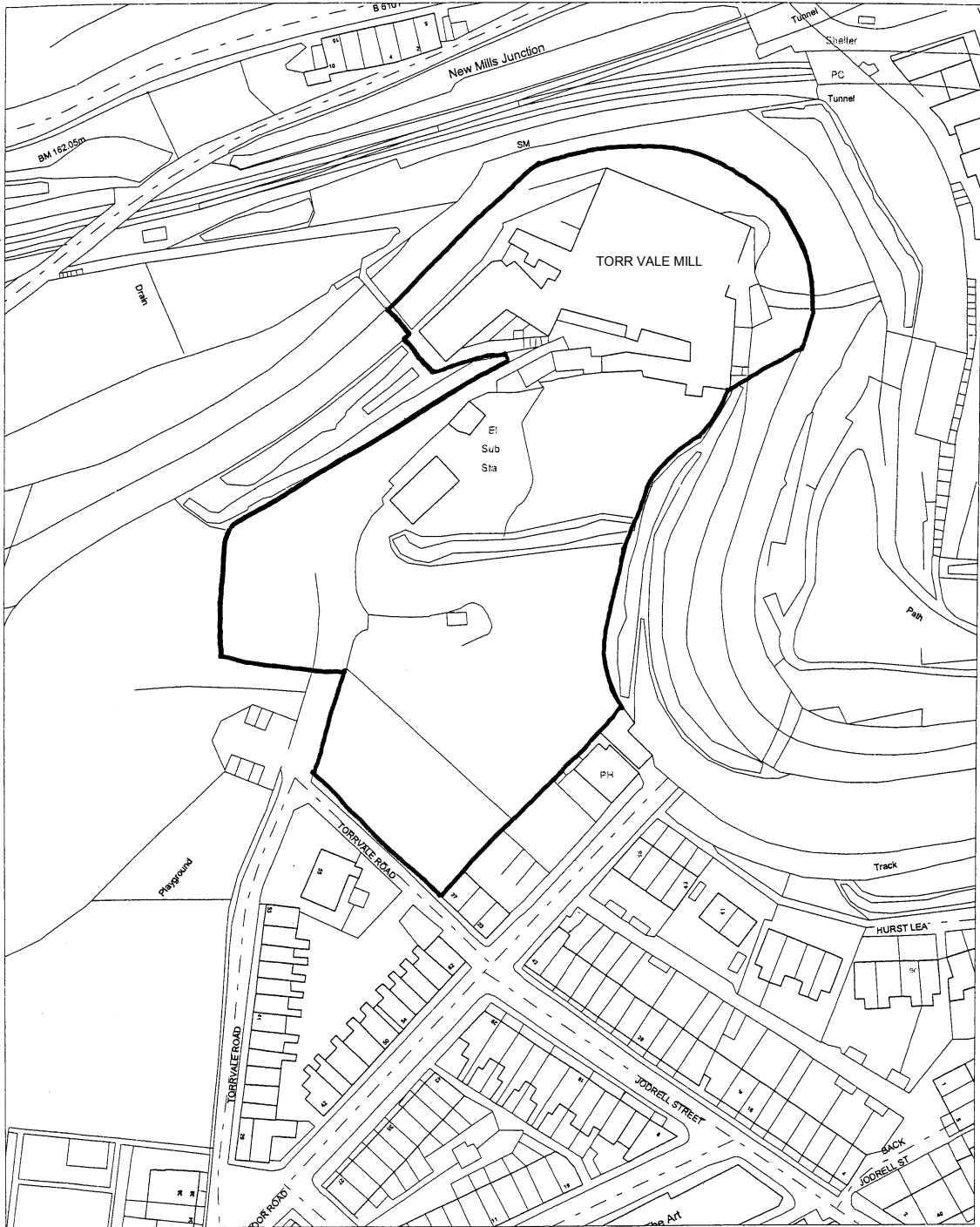
1.6 This brief is a revision and update of a previous brief first produced in 1999, shortly before the Mill closed. Since this date the Torr Vale Mill Regeneration Partnership was formed and secured funding from, amongst others, English Heritage and the two local authorities to commission consultants to undertake a feasibility study into the viability and physical suitability of various uses in the Mill. As part of this, a Conservation Plan was prepared which examined the detailed aspects of the building's historical and architectural significance and set down specific policies designed to protect the significance and character of the building. The work, concluded in January 2001, included the following:

- Conservation Plan
- Feasibility Study: (Options Appraisal and Viability Assessment)
- Draft Business Plan for the Preferred Option
- Report on potential community users

1.7 Since the completion of the commissioned studies attempts have been made by the owners and the local authorities to find development solutions which would regenerate the Mills. To date, these attempts have not succeeded and have been hampered by a major fire in 2001, which destroyed one complete building containing 20% of the floor space on the site.

TORR VALE MILLS, NEW MILLS

PLAN 1



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Scale 1:1250

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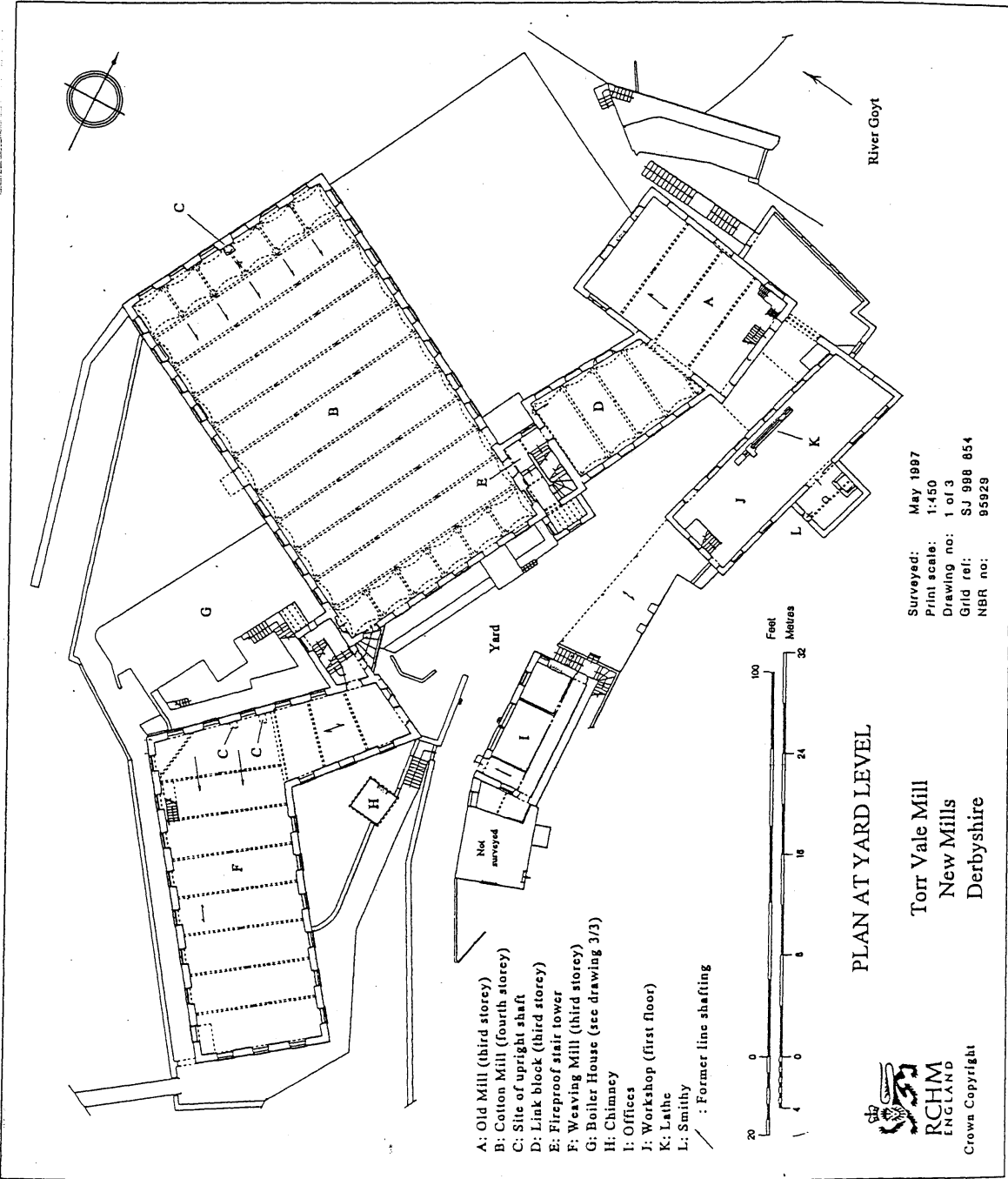
2 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The Site

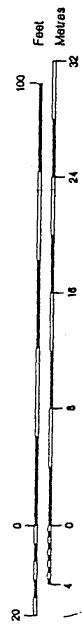
- 2.1 Torr Vale Mill occupies a dramatic location within the meander of the River Goyt at the bottom of the Torrs, a sandstone gorge close to the centre of New Mills (See Plan 1). It is the last extant mill in the Torrs. A study was carried out in 1997 into the historical development of the buildings by the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England (RCHME, now part of English Heritage). The study concluded that the site has been in continuous use from the 1790s until its closure in early 2000. This is thought to be the longest period of continuous use of a cotton mill site in England.
- 2.2 There is approximately 0.3 hectare unused and undeveloped land adjacent to and to the South of the Mills which has been in the same ownership, and an area of approximately 0.1 hectare used for car parking for the Mills. The Council regards all of this land as essential to enabling the Mill's overall development.

Buildings

- 2.3 The mill buildings now occupy about 4000m² on up to 5 floors. The part destroyed by fire (Building F) contained another 1000sq m. The buildings are grade II* listed. Most of the surviving stone built buildings date from the second half of the 19th century, and there are significant structures on the site from the original 1790 mill. In addition, there is potential for surviving below-ground archaeological deposits relating to the site's earliest history.
- 2.4 A detailed description of the buildings and their historic development is to be found in the RCHME study. The yard level layout of the complex is shown in Plan 2 and, for convenience, the same notation will be used as the RCHME report. In summary, the main buildings on the site are:
- Old Mill (A)
 - Cotton Mill (B)
 - North East Shed (C) – now demolished
 - Link block between the Old Mill and the Cotton Mill (D)
 - Belvedere (E)
 - Weaving mill (F) – now demolished
 - Stair 1 (G)
 - Boiler house chimney stack (H)
 - Range of ancillary buildings (I to L)



- A: Old Mill (third storey)
- B: Cotton Mill (fourth storey)
- C: Site of upright shaft
- D: Link block (third storey)
- E: Fireproof stair tower
- F: Weaving Mill (third storey)
- G: Boiler House (see drawing 3/3)
- H: Chimney
- I: Offices
- J: Workshop (first floor)
- K: Lathe
- L: Smithy
- : Former line shafting



PLAN AT YARD LEVEL

Torr Vale Mill
New Mills
Derbyshire

Surveyed: May 1997
Print scale: 1:450
Drawing no: 1 of 3
Grid ref: SJ 988 854
NBR no: 95928



- 2.5 In addition to the extant buildings at the yard level, the RCHME report details a number of surviving elements from earlier stages in the site's development. These include the structures involved with the former water powered mills such as the weir, headrace channels and tunnelled watercourses.
- 2.6 The fire in July 2001 gutted Building F and as a consequence all but a fragment of one of its lowest floor gable walls was demolished. The fire exposed the extent of asbestos in the adjacent old boiler-house and it too was subsequently demolished.

Trees

- 2.3 The area of unused land (approx. 0.3 hectare) referred to above is entirely covered by a Tree Preservation Order (Reference HPBC TPO 34), which refers to several ash, sycamore, lime and chestnut trees standing on the site. Developers should be aware that formal consent from the Borough Council would be required to carry out any work to these trees

Ownership

- 2.4 The mill is owned by Torr Vale Mill Ltd., c/o Chemquip Ltd., Wharf Road, Whaley Bridge, High Peak, SK23 7AD. All contact must be to the following:

Daniel Cunningham
Torr Vale Mill Ltd
C/o Plants of Whaley Bridge Ltd
13 –19 Market Street
Whaley Bridge
High Peak
SK23 7AA
Tel 01663 732100
Fax 01663 719969
Email Daniel.Cunningham@chemquip.co.uk

3 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF USES AT TORR VALE MILL

Introduction

- 3.1 The overriding principle in assessing any proposals affecting this site will be to preserve the character of the complex as a historic mill of special architectural and historic interest. All of the buildings (including surviving structures from the site's earlier development) within the curtilage (and which have been there since before 1948) are deemed to be included as part of the listing. Consequently, Listed Building Consent will be required prior to making any works of alteration, demolition and extension to these buildings.
- 3.2 The following section sets out the potential alternative uses for the mill in the context of the High Peak Local Plan - Adopted in March 2005, which presents the policy context for future development. On matters relating to historic buildings and areas, the Plan has been drawn up in the context of government advice contained in Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 15 "Planning and the Historic Environment". Other relevant local plan policies for the site are referred to throughout this brief.
- 3.3 In order to best protect the mill's future, it is essential that the widest range of potential alternative uses are considered and that none be ruled out on account of inadequate servicing space within its curtilage. Consequently, the Borough Council will insist that it is critical to the proper future planning of the mill that development proposals take in the whole of the land to which this brief relates. It follows, therefore, that support will not be forthcoming for any proposals to break up this land or which involve the separate development of the land currently either unused or used for car parking.

Future uses

- 3.4 The Mill has an established use for manufacturing industry. The original mill was water-powered, and there may be the possibility of introducing a water turbine to generate electricity and to act as a focus for associated uses. A summary of the relevant local plan policies with respect to the various uses follows. Throughout this section, however, it should be born in mind that the eventual preferred solution would provide a comprehensive mix of uses.

Employment

- 3.5 The mill is within the built-up area of New Mills, and so planning permission may be granted for a variety of uses appropriate to its location, which will generate employment, including hotels, assembly and leisure (Policy EMP.6 – Industry and business within the built-up area boundaries). Possible employment uses include:
- flexible workspace/offices;
 - new high-value technologies;
 - small arts/crafts businesses/studios;
 - ‘Agenda 21’ businesses based on hydropower.
- 3.6 Torr Vale Mills is not designated a Primary Employment Zone, in which land and buildings are safeguarded for employment use (Policy EMP.4 – Primary Employment Zones). This allows greater flexibility over the uses permitted.
- 3.7 The mill is not within the New Mills town centre - as designated in the adopted Local Plan, but separated from it by the river. However, physically it is adjacent to the town centre and closely related to it.

Tourism

- 3.8 This use would be actively encouraged in order to boost visitor numbers to the town. Tourism uses, including visitor accommodation, are encouraged throughout the High Peak (Policy LT9 –Tourist attractions and facilities). However, it must also be borne in mind that any attractions or facilities at Torr Vale Mill should respect its relatively peaceful location within the Torrs. In addition, although Torr Vale Mill is in New Mills town centre and has good pedestrian access, any tourism development should be provided with adequate parking within the site to avoid uncontrolled car parking.

Recreation and leisure

- 3.9 Recreation may also be an appropriate use (Policy LT1 – Recreation facilities within the built-up area boundaries), provided again that the facilities are appropriate to the site’s location and historic character. Possible leisure uses include catering and restaurants. However, proposals for nightclubs or discotheques are unlikely to be supported because of the potential for disturbance to residents by noise, fume or traffic (Policy TC9 –The Evening Economy). Security aspects are also likely to be significant, in view of the relatively isolated location of the Mills (Policy GD7 – Crime prevention).

Residential

- 3.10 Residential use on this site will only be granted if it can be justified necessary to enable the conversion of the mill complex to a comprehensive mixed-use development. There is certainly potential for residential uses in the reconstruction of the fire-damaged building F, and a 24-hour presence would be an advantage in terms of security. The residential conversion of the main mill buildings, however, presents difficulties in terms of the resulting impact on the character of the listed building. The issue of the compartmentalisation of the open plan floors in the main mills is considered in detail in the Conservation Plan, which does not support the sub division of the large and spacious internal floor plans.
- 3.11 In considering proposals for residential development within the mill or on associated land the Council will expect any developer to justify residential levels in line with the policy statement issued by English Heritage entitled ' Enabling Development and the Conservation of the Heritage Assets'. This document sets out the criteria for the assessment of enabling development, which the Council and English Heritage will adhere to in considering applications for residential development within this site.
- 3.12 Given the nature of the site, its condition and heritage merit the Council recognises that the delivery of a viable mixed-use scheme will be marginal. As such it is unlikely that the Council will be asking for a Section 106 contribution for affordable housing or open space. However, the onus will be on the developer to justify that the delivery of these is beyond the economic viability of the project.

Retail

- 3.13 Limited retail use is likely to be possible where this is seen as an ancillary use related to tourism and leisure uses (Policy TC.5 – Small shops). Major retail development (over 500m² floorspace) would not be feasible in this location because of the difficult access for both shoppers and for HGVs supplying the store (HPLP Policy TC.3 – Large stores).

Other uses

- 3.14 Assembly uses, including conference venue, meeting rooms, youth facility, cultural centre for the theatre/performing arts, and industrial heritage centre are likely to be suitable for this location, providing that other criteria such as noise, traffic, lighting and design are met.
- 3.15 The use of Torr Vale Mill as a training/education centre is also likely to be an appropriate town centre use.

4. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BUILDINGS AND SITE

- 4.1 This section mostly addresses those physical alterations to the buildings which are likely to require Listed Building Consent. Some of the works will additionally require planning permission (see Section 5 below). In the context of this brief, the following advice is intended to give potential developers general guidance. It should not be inferred that the lack of reference to any particular aspect of the buildings means that it is of no importance. Further guidance in the form of policies towards details such as internal fittings and working details, are given in the Conservation Plan.

Demolition

- 4.2 The overall importance of the Mill is such that demolition would be strongly resisted in respect of most of the buildings on this site (Policy BC.11 - Demolition of Listed Buildings). There will be a strong presumption in favour of retaining all of those buildings or structures which make a positive contribution to its character as a historic mill.
- 4.3 It is considered desirable to remove the brick and asbestos weaving shed to reveal more of the adjoining historic buildings but also to provide some external space which is at a premium on what is a very constricted site. There may be other minor buildings and structures where demolition would be acceptable as part of an overall scheme which benefits more important adjoining buildings.

Alterations and extensions

- 4.4 Proposals to alter or extend the Mill should be sympathetic in scale, proportion and materials to the existing building and should not detract from its character or setting. A detailed and accurate survey of the building which clearly shows the proposed changes will be required as part of any application. (Policy BC.9 – Alterations and extensions to Listed Buildings).
- 4.5 There will also be a strong presumption against any significant external alterations to the same buildings referred to above where this would involve destruction of surviving historic fabric although proposals to repair and/or restore historic joinery would be welcomed. Any extensions to the buildings would be assessed against the effect on the character of the existing buildings. Generally, all facing materials should be sympathetic in colour, texture and finish, to the character and appearance of the original buildings and surrounding area (Policy BC.1 – Facing materials). Although the precise specification of materials will depend on the proposals put forward, this is likely to involve natural coursed stone walling and natural slate roofing.
- 4.6 With respect to internal alterations, these are considered in far more detail in the Conservation Plan. The buildings are fundamentally simple and utilitarian, comprising (in the main mill structures) large open floor spaces. Features such as windows, floor and roof structures, doors, staircases and evidence of power transmission, however intrinsically simple, are important parts of their character

and will need to be retained wherever possible. For any additions which are considered to be acceptable, their detailed design would be assessed by the degree to which they could be reversed, that is, removed to leave the existing historic fabric undamaged.

- 4.7 Some of the buildings are of a non-fireproof construction with timber floors. Early involvement with Building Control Officers is therefore recommended to discuss structural loadings, methods of fire containment, sound insulation, means of escape, etc. English Heritage have produced some useful guidance notes on some of these issues – see Section 7 for a list.

Setting

- 4.8 The setting of Torr Vale Mill is an essential part of its character. This is characterised by the functional, industrial character of the buildings, the irregular layout and variety of the buildings reflecting the site's long evolution, the drama and isolation of the gorge, its vegetation and the importance of views down to the mill from the town. Aspects of proposals such as car parking and landscaping should be designed so as to avoid harming the setting (Policy BC.10 – Settings of Listed Buildings).
- 4.9 The Mills complex lies within the New Mills Conservation Area. Planning policies for development in Conservation Areas, including demolition, reflect and support the policies set out above for Listed Buildings (Policy BC.7 – Conservation Areas and their settings, and Policy BC.8 – Demolition in Conservation Areas).

Access

- 4.10 Access is likely to be a critical factor in assessing the suitability of future uses. The mill has good pedestrian access. Footpaths run alongside and overlook the building, and link to the footpaths running through the Torrs and to two long-distance footpaths, the Sett Valley Trail and Goyt Way. However, access for disabled persons is restricted by the steepness of these paths. The mill is less accessible by cycle. Nevertheless, provision should be made in any development for safe and secure cycle parking facilities (Policy TR.12 – Cycle facilities).
- 4.11 The site is well located for public transport, both rail and bus. However, access for motor vehicles is difficult, and improvements will be necessary before any development is brought into use. The Highways Authority states that *“access to the site is from the A6015 Albion Road via fairly narrow residential streets with significant levels of on street parking. The junctions between Torr Vale Road, Jodrell Street, Wirksmoor Road and Albion road are all of limited geometry and visibility. The two lengths of Torrvalle Road are unadopted and unmade. The eastern part carries the route of a public footpath.”*
- 4.12 The Highways Authority suggests that *“any redevelopment which results in a material increase in generated traffic will have an adverse effect on all these features which would have to be addressed. It may be necessary to consider a*

variety of physical improvements (eg. making up of Torrvale Road, off-street residents car parking, etc) together with traffic management measures (eg. traffic calming/junction modifications, one way traffic orders, etc) to help ameliorate the effects of the development on the free and safe traffic movement”.

- 4.13 A Traffic Impact Assessment is advised for large commercial development, and this will also apply to a mixed-use development using most of the floorspace at Torr Vale Mills.

Parking

- 4.14 Any development should adequately meet the parking standards (Policy TR.5 – Access, Parking and design). Torr Vale Mill has only very small parking provision at present, and so planning obligations may be sought to ensure that sufficient parking, manoeuvring and servicing space is available to meet these standards. This is likely to require the use of the land now within the curtilage of the mill and adjacent to it to the South.

5 PLANNING/LISTED BUILDING APPLICATIONS

- 5.1 High Peak Borough Council as local planning authority will consider planning and listed building consent applications having regard to this Development Brief, the Conservation Plan, the policies within the Local Plan, and National Government Guidance (PPG 15) as well as other relevant considerations.
- 5.2 Procedurally, if the Council is minded to approve proposals, it is required to give notice to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister which, on taking the advice of English Heritage, has 28 days to call in the proposals for the First Secretary of State's own determination. Consequently, the Council will encourage the fullest possible joint pre-application consultation with English Heritage and any other interested parties in order to ensure a co-ordinated response to enquiries from the private/commercial sector.
- 5.3 All consents, in addition to a full detailed set of drawn proposals, must be supported by the following additional documents:
- Impact and justification statement on the heritage aspects of the scheme
 - Traffic Impact Assessment
 - Enabling development justification
 - Project costs to justify non-contribution to affordable housing or open space

6 GRANT AVAILABILITY

ENGLISH HERITAGE

- 6.1 Subject to full assessment of financial need, certain repairs to the historic fabric of Torr Vale Mill may be eligible in principle for consideration of an English Heritage Buildings and Monuments Grant. Preliminary enquiries should be addressed to the Head of the East Midlands Conservation Team, English Heritage, 44 Derngate, Northampton, NN1 1UH), since there are complex issues involved in assessing the financial need and satisfying the eligibility criteria for public funding.
- 6.2 If the costs of grant-eligible repairs exceed the resources available from English Heritage, this does not preclude making an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, providing all the relevant criteria can be satisfied. Advice on the issue of 'additionality' should be sought in the first instance from English Heritage.

NATIONAL LOTTERY

- 6.3 It is possible that certain proposals yielding a substantial degree of public benefit would be eligible for grant aid from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is important to establish eligibility for grant from English Heritage (from whom initial guidance on all issues of public funding should be sought in the first instance), in tandem with any initial approaches to the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- 6.4 The Borough Council will offer its support for suitable grant applications. Further detailed enquiries should be made to the relevant Lottery distributor - details of which are available from High Peak Borough Council on request.

APPENDIX 1

TC13 - TORR VALE MILL REGENERATION AREA

WITHIN THE TORR VALE MILL REGENERATION AREA IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT SCHEME TO PROVIDE:

- EDUCATION USE;
- OFFICE AND BUSINESS USE;
- LEISURE AND TOURISM FACILITIES;
- RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT NECESSARY TO ENABLE THE CONVERSION OF THE MILL TO MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

PROVIDED THAT:

- THE DEVELOPMENT WILL BE OF A HIGH QUALITY AND WILL BE SYMPATHETIC TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA IN TERMS OF ITS SITING, SCALE, FORM, LAY-OUT, DESIGN, DETAILING, EXTERNAL APPEARANCE AND LANDSCAPING TREATMENT
- A TRAVEL PLAN IS PREPARED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT
- THE DEVELOPMENT WILL INCLUDE PEDESTRIAN LINKS TO EXISTING TOWN CENTRE AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT FACILITIES
- THE DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PROVIDED WITH ADEQUATE PARKING AREAS
- A NEW ACCESS ROAD IS CONSTRUCTED FROM GROVE STREET TO THE MILL
- EXISTING TREE COVER, WOODLAND AND WILDLIFE HABITATS ARE NOT ADVERSELY AFFECTED. IN THIS RESPECT THE DEVELOPERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO UNDERTAKE A TREE SURVEY AND A HABITAT SURVEY AND SUBMIT PROPOSALS FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE WOODLAND AREAS.
- ~~THE DEVELOPMENT WILL COMPLY WITH ALL OTHER RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF THE PLAN.~~

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR A NEW ACCESS ROAD FROM GROVE STREET TO SERVE TORR VALE MILL

PROVIDED THAT:

- THE DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT LOSS OF EXISTING OPEN SPACE/PLAYING FIELDS
- EXISTING TREE COVER, WOODLAND AND WILDLIFE HABITATS ARE NOT ADVERSELY AFFECTED. IN THIS RESPECT THE DEVELOPERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO UNDERTAKE A TREE SURVEY AND A HABITAT SURVEY AND SUBMIT PROPOSALS FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE WOODLAND

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO

High Peak Local Plan, High Peak Borough Council, Adopted March 2005

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 15 Planning and the Historic Environment, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions/Department of Culture, Media and Sport National Heritage, 1994

Torr Vale Mill - RCHME Report, Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England, 1997

Industrial archaeology. A policy statement, English Heritage, 1995

Office floor loading in historic buildings, English Heritage, 1996

Enabling Development and the Conservation of heritage assets, English Heritage, 1999

USEFUL CONTACTS

HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

Conservation Issues

Joanne Brooks

High Peak Borough Council
Municipal Buildings
Glossop SK13 8AF
Tel. 0845 129 7777
Fax.01457 860290
Email Jobrooks@highpeak.gov.uk

Planning Issues

Adrian Fisher
Head Of Planning

High Peak Borough Council
Municipal Buildings
Glossop SK13 8AF
Tel. 0845 129 7777
Fax.01457 860290
Email AdrianF@highpeak.gov.uk

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Louise Brennan

Team Leader,
English Heritage East Midlands,
44 Derrigate
Northampton,
NN1 1UH
Tel. 01604 735400
Fax. 01604 735401