

VISITOR CENTRE AT BELPER NORTH MILL

Location: Belper North Mill, Belper, Derbyshire

Client: Amber Valley Borough Council

Services: Feasibility Study



A feasibility study for the extension of the Visitor Centre at Belper North Mill

Project Objectives:

- North Mill in Belper, Derbyshire, is the second oldest remaining fire proof mill in the world. The Belper North Mill Trust has leased space on the ground floor of this Grade 1 listed building to run a small museum and visitor centre.
- The current premises and staffing levels did not allow for any expansion of services offered by the museum, visitor centre or their education centre, and Acorn and PLB Consulting were commissioned to undertake a feasibility study and options appraisal to extend the visitor centre, and what effect this would have on services in the long-, medium- and short terms.

Our Recommendations:

- Acorn undertook a full evaluation of the current situation including an interpretive analysis, site evaluation, market and SWOT analyses, and consulted with key stakeholders including the trustees of the BNMT. It also explored the Mill's position within the World Heritage Site of the Derwent Valley Mills and examined the DVMWHS Tourism Strategy.
- An options appraisal examined five possible ways for using the space in North Mill, looking at alternative layouts and possible new uses, and provided detailed costings of renovations.
- Acorn's recommendations for expanding the space proposed investing in additional staff to increase fundraising capacity in the short term which would fund the extension of space for the museum and visitor centre in the medium term. The final recommendation involved a long term aim of creating a public-voluntary sector partnership, including BNMT, to purchase North Mill outright in order to the restore and preserve the listed building for future generations.