

Heritage Access statement

I am writing as a trustee on behalf of Cheddleton Flint Mill Industrial Heritage Trust.

The lime kiln and flint furnaces date from the late 18th century and are grade 2 listed. The lime kiln was originally built to take advantage of the drop of several metres from the level of the canal to the mill yard and was probably built for agricultural purposes shortly after the canal was cut. The two calcining kilns must post date the lime kilns by a few years. They served the mills from the time of their conversion to flint grinding, up until the early 20th Century. They were built to enable flint to be softened prior to grinding in the mills.

They are an integral part of the site and the history of flint processing.

The lime kiln was built alongside the embankment of the Caldon canal. It consists of a long brick vaulted passage, with a draught opening on the east side, connecting with a vertical brick kiln space. The structure of the kiln is of irregular weathered sandstone boulders. The two main calcining kilns are built up against the lime kiln with their draught holes facing north. They are built of closely jointed, dressed and coursed sandstone blocks. Two buttresses of canted stone courses support the north face.

Steps ascend the kilns on the east face and it is here, where the kilns join together, that bulging in the stone work has occurred. Voids can be seen through the cracks in the mortar and movement of the stonework has occurred. Investigation by Couch showed that the bank in which the kilns are built comprises loose waste material including ash and flint waste from the calcining process.

This means that the area affected is currently fenced off for safety.

Couch Engineering came up with the solution to protect and conserve the kilns. They propose that three stone buttresses are built on the east side of the kilns, against the bulging walls. This would prevent further movement of the wall and strengthen it. The attached plan shows the detailed proposals.

The solution would be one in keeping with the mill's story, one of 'make do and mend' with whatever materials were to hand. The buttresses would become part of the story and would may have been the solution that former millers came up to prevent the kilns from falling down. All other earlier elements of the development and building of the kilns, the

lime kiln, the steps, the calcining kilns would still be visible but would be accessible to the public, for their story to be told.

The kiln's historical importance and the need to conserve them, is reflected in the grant of £30,000 which we have been awarded, from the Institute of Industrial Archaeologists.