

Working to improve and heat a historic mill

Farfield Mill, Sedbergh

Formerly a textile mill, the historic Farfield Mill is now a hub for creative enterprises. The four-storey building near Sedbergh includes studios, exhibition spaces, shops and tea room. Historic buildings like this, however, do come with their challenges. The traditional stone walls are over half a metre thick. The sash windows are single glazed, many of the doors are draughty and the traditional pitched slate roof requires repair.

Actions taken

Following an energy audit arranged through Cumbria Action for Sustainability, Mill staff successfully obtained funds to:

- Replace incandescent/halogen lights with LEDs.
- Install more efficient kitchen appliances, swapping out gas for electric, resulting in reduced carbon emissions from the tea room.
- Fill in gaps in the accessible areas of pointing, reducing draughts and damp.
- Draughtproof some of the external doors and windows.
- Top up the loft insulation and insulate the loft.

“The audit helped us understand where we were with the building. It was useful as the technologies available had improved since we last looked at the issue [of energy]. It flagged up things we hadn’t thought of, like insulating the loft hatches. It has also been really useful to refer to the audit in applications for funds.”

“The auditor was incredibly helpful and patient, he understood the limits of what we could achieve and never sounded too preachy.”

Joanne Mowbray, Director of Farfield Mill

Plans for the future

The charity that runs the Mill tries to be as sustainable as possible whilst acknowledging that maintaining and heating a heritage building can be difficult with a limited budget. “There are 24 artists based here” notes Joanne, “but at times this winter it has been too cold for them to work in the buildings.”

The key objective of the Society is the preservation of the building with its historic and architectural heritage. “We would like to make improvements to the building that will prevent deterioration of the building fabric and reduce carbon emissions.

Our longer-term plan is to replace the gas heating with a heat pump system. If we can improve the building weatherproofing and insulation first that will reduce the size of the heat pump system needed. So, we are trying to raise funds for measures such as new doors, adding secondary glazing and possibly insulating some of the internal walls or floor. This should make the building much more comfortable in cold weather. Our other plans include EV charge points and eventually solar PV on the roof, however, this needs to wait until the roof has been repaired.”



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