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Morphology and social dynamics in heritage management: Darley Abbey Mills UNESCO World Heritage Site

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Morphology and social dynamics in heritage management: Darley Abbey Mills UNESCO World Heritage Site

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Abstract

This paper presents a longitudinal case study (2006-2024) of Darley Abbey Mills (DAMs), a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The research explores the site's development trajectory, social dynamics, and morphology, which unfolded in three stages: "Dilapidation and Decay (2006-2010)" ", Diplomacy and Dialogue (2010-2014)" and "Action and Realisation (2014-onwards)". Three key themes emerge throughout these stages. First, sustainability is shaped by the broader societal, cultural, and economic context. Second, governance and protection involve complex perceptions of meanings and values. Lastly, the site's survival relies on stakeholder interactions to address contemporary heritage conservation challenges. Additionally, this research underscores the significance of power relations, ownership, and pragmatism in the continued management and use of heritage sites. It highlights the need for effective public policies to ensure the sustainability of cultural heritage and consider the impact of human activities on future generations in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Key words: sustainability; power; value; values; pragmatism, heritage, UNESCO

Introduction

This paper charts the evolution and morphology of Darley Abbey Mills (DAM), a UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) located in Derbyshire, UK between 2006 and 2024. During this time, the site has gone through three distinct phases: "Dilapidation and Decay" (2002-2010), "Diplomacy and Dialogue" (2010-2014), and "Action and Realisation" (2014-onwards). The initial research commenced in 2006 and involved a site condition survey. The survey raised questions surrounding the sustainable continued use of the site and whether it could be saved from further dilapidation or dereliction. As investigations took place, it became clear that the Mills was a site of contestation among the various stakeholders and owners, each possessing a different set of values that impacted the site's governance and management and continued use.

Additionally, opportunities and barriers existed to the site's successful continued use or future development. The applied and practical definition of sustainability upon which

success is judged is a fluid concept shaped by the broader societal, cultural, and economic context. Finally, the body of heritage legislation meant to protect historically significant sites and buildings creates obstacles to managing and maintaining such sites. Unless this body of protective legislation is managed pragmatically by local authorities and building owners, it creates a vacuum in which investment ceases and buildings deteriorate.

The Mills Complex

Darley Abbey Mills (DAMs), the associated workers' village, and the surrounding parkland together represent a historically integrated industrial landscape shaped by the transformative forces of the Industrial Revolution. Although the area had been occupied and developed for centuries, most notably through the establishment of an Augustinian monastery, a village settlement, Darley Hall and Park, and earlier milling activity, it was the late eighteenth-century industrial expansion that fundamentally reconfigured the site. This transformation began in 1782 with the arrival of Thomas Evans, who, with the backing of Richard Arkwright, established the Boar's Head Mills by constructing Long Mill. Subsequent development added the Middle, East, West and North Mills, alongside a range of ancillary structures supporting cotton processing, storage and associated industrial functions. Collectively, these buildings formed a coherent and highly organised manufacturing complex characteristic of early factory-based production systems. The scale and operational demands of the mills necessitated a stable resident workforce, leading to the creation of a purpose-built workers' village in 1790. This settlement remains largely intact and includes The Square, Four Houses, Brick Row, Lavender Row and properties along Mile Ash Lane. The construction of a village school in 1826 further consolidated the community's social and institutional infrastructure. Taken together, the mills, village, park and surviving architectural fragments of the Hall constitute an integrated industrial and cultural landscape. This ensemble provides important insights into the spatial, social and economic organisation of early industrial production and underscores Derby's significance within wider national and international narratives of industrialisation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Located within Derby in the East Midlands region of the UK, DAMs (Grid Ref: SK3538) comprises thirty-two buildings and is part of the Derwent Valley Mills (DVM) World Heritage Site. Although located on opposite banks of the River Derwent, the village of Darley Abbey is inextricably linked to the Mills, as many of the houses in the village were part of one of the first model industrial villages where DAMs' workers were housed and educated. Today, Darley Abbey Village is an affluent suburb of Derby, with a population of 7,013 and 3,170 households in private ownership (Census Data, 2021). This paper will demonstrate that residents' views from the nearby Darley Abbey Village, on the reuse of DAMs, are primarily based on perceived levels of disturbance to their lives rather than being grounded in any concern about the historical significance of the Mills. The majority of village residents are not workers at the site. Consequently, there is a dichotomous relationship between the Mills and the Village, linked by history but separated by various factors and motivations (Nomination Document Available from https://whc.unesco.org/uploads/ nominations/1030.pdf).

The Three Eras of Darley Abbey Mills 2006 - 2024

Dilapidation and Decay: 2006-2010

DAMs' significance as heritage sites of national and international importance resulted in their being surrounded by what may be termed an 'umbrella of conservation', which forms an integral part of DVMs. This umbrella consists of several layers of statutory protection (Listing, Conservation Area designation, and World Heritage Site status) that, when combined, provide the highest level of protection available within the English Town Planning system. Table 1 outlines the listed building status structures that compose DAMs.

{INSERT TABLE 1}

However, despite this umbrella of protection, by 2006, many of the buildings on the site were in poor repair. All Grade 1 and Grade 2* buildings were placed on Historic England's Buildings at Risk Register. The Mills are important historical artefacts and are externally recognised as such. There is a consensus that the Mills should be protected to the highest level possible, and this protection should ensure that the site has an assured future. Landorf's (2011) work demonstrates that the surrounding legislation and management plans underpinning the management of World Heritage

Sites (WHS') should create a sustainable framework for the historic built environment. Nevertheless, the umbrella of protection and WHS designation do not guarantee continued use or sustainability (Gaillard & Rodwell, 2015). As the research progressed, it became clear that the future sustainability of sites like DAMs relied upon someone identifying a financial value in the area rather than the site's future depending solely on its architectural or historical significance.

During this period, the site was under multiple ownership. The location could not be repaired or developed under a unified strategy—instead, the economic necessities and types of usage (largely engineering-based) witnessed much of the site becoming dilapidated (see Images 1 and 2); this was exacerbated by the global financial crisis of 2008.

{INSERT IMAGES 1 & 2}

Between 2006-2010, there was an increasing concern by Derby City Council, English Heritage and the Georgian Society that the site was destined to become derelict. Images 3 and 4 reflect the general condition of the area during this period and illustrate lack of maintenance and occupation. During this period, the main priority for the then multiple owners – located on- and off-site - was the survival of their companies and livelihoods rather than the buildings in which their businesses were housed.

{INSERT IMAGES 3 & 4)

Diplomacy and Dialogue or Chance and Opportunism: 2010-2014

The Mills came under single ownership of Patterns Properties in 2010, highlighting a pivotal moment in the site's survival. The period from 2010 to 2014 was a time of consolidation, where small-scale interventions exemplified 'aspirational urbanism' (Douglas, 2014). During this time, Patterns Properties undertook a series of repairs to the buildings, signs were placed on building facades, and minor adaptations allowed small and creative industries to inhabit the facilities. Furthermore, there was significant interaction with strategic stakeholders, which included Patterns Properties, Derby City Council's planning services, Darley Abbey Society and local residents, to develop a plan and explore funding opportunities connecting the sustainable future of DAMs with

local, regional, and national development priorities. This period involved active diplomacy, with stakeholders collaborating to establish a strategic vision for the site to ensure its future despite differing priorities and values (see Young 2016). After reviewing this paper, a colleague suggested it was more about chance and opportunism than diplomacy and dialogue. We will leave this for the reader to decide.

{INSERT TABLE 2}

As shown in Table 2, the stakeholders of DAMs include local civic and heritage pressure groups, local and regional governments, individuals, tenants, and owners. These stakeholders have differing views and contestations about the value, purpose, and future of DAMs. The period from 2010 to 2014 was characterised by dialogue and the implementation of small-scale projects and maintenance programs. Furthermore, the recognition of DAMs as a site of historic importance became a direct reflection of global (UNESCO) and local meanings and values linked to economic development, as well as what society historically, aesthetically, and ontologically privileges (Harrison, 2015; Liburd & Becken, 2017; Soccali & Cinà, 2020), which was influential in shaping the debates that occurred among stakeholders. The significance of this is reflected by Harrison (2015:24), who identifies the core of heritage management as:

> …a series of diplomatic properties emerge in the dialogue of heterogeneous humans …engaged in caring for and attending to the past in the present.

Dialogical models of heritage (Ablett & Dyer, 2009; Jones et al., 2017) reinforce the multiple interpretations that heritage is open to. Harrison (2015:25) acknowledges that they help us begin to reveal ontological politics surrounding heritage. This idea of direct implication between ‘the real’ and the ‘political’ (Pellizzoni, 2015) links to a shift towards an ontological turn in social theory (Escobar, 2007). Recognition of heritage as political and the divergent conflicting ontologies surrounding heritage is far from new (e.g., Tunbridge, 1984; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). Researchers such as Zhu (2015) draw attention to what constitutes ‘legitimate heritage’, questioning the role and appropriation of authorised heritage through WHS designation and local authorities' imposition of value systems. Additionally, hegemonic values are highlighted in studies that focus on shifts in emphasis, such as Feria’s (2012) work, noting a move from

protection to the valorisation of heritage in the context of territorial and economic development.

Although physical interventions at the site were limited from 2010 to 2014, this timeframe laid the foundations for a sustainable future. Single ownership of the site by Patterns Properties enabled a shift from manufacturing to service-based, creative industry based companies being relocated to the mill complex. Single ownership also facilitated essential maintenance to be conducted efficiently and effectively. Such approaches provide insight into Pereira's (2007) view that conservation should be framed as a social activity or construction, not merely a technical one. There is a need to recognise that conservation is shaped by many social processes (Amarilla & Conti, 2012). Additionally, Pereira (2007:20) maintains that:

> Conservation practice involves technical and scientific matters and social and subjective ones such as interests, feelings, memories, preferences, and even taste. Consequently, contemporary approaches on conservation stress the importance of negotiation and democratic participation in decision-making processes to define what should be conserved and how, why and whom the preservation is made for.

Avrami et al. (2000) demonstrate the juxtaposition between heritage artefacts and their cultural significance. They assert that it is not the heritage objects and places that hold importance in cultural heritage, but rather the meanings and use values that people attach to these material artefacts and the ideals they represent (Erkan, 2018; Soccali & Cinà, 2020). Thus, 'aspirational urbanism' does not devalue the site's significance. A significant element of the "Diplomacy and Dialogue" between 2010 and 2014 was reconciling stakeholders' values. Building on this idea, Wells (2010:465) notes that:

> A recent movement in architectural conservation emphasises the role of contemporary social, cultural, and personal meanings in valuing historic places and the processes in which sites develop these values over time. This pluralistic perspective recognises that different populations and cultures will have diverse ways of valuing historic places.

The multiple meanings and values ascribed to specific places must be understood as part of the broader sphere of sociocultural processes (De la Torre, 2013). Like all other social activities, conservation is not objective. It is cognitively constructed and shaped by the values and perspectives of individuals, institutions, and communities and is

open to bias. Cultural heritage encompasses every aspect of everyday lived experience. In their various social groups, individuals explicitly or implicitly consider part of their self-definition and identity (Wells, 2010; De la Torre, 2013).

Realisation and Action 2014-Onwards

Since 2014, the Mills have experienced a period of "Realisation and Action," characterised by a shift from their industrial past to a post-industrial economy focused on services and creative industries, along with adequate maintenance and preservation of the site (as evidenced in Images 5, 6, 7, and 8).

{INSERT IMAGES 5, 6, 7 & 8}

The transition from "Diplomacy and Dialogue" to "Realisation and Action" has fostered greater engagement with planning and monitoring authorities and plans for more prominent and visible initiatives, such as developing Long Mill and West Mill into a wedding venue. While fully engaging in the planning system, there is a risk that the conditions imposed on development may be prohibitive regarding adaptation costs. Additionally, the time required for the entire planning and construction process adds a layer of formality and legitimacy to the work undertaken. The long-term sustainable conservation of DAMs depends on identifying a contemporary use that adds economic value to the site and ensures its economic viability. The case study indicates that the "umbrella of protection" does not provide tangible safety for the site unless entrepreneurial efforts support it. It could be argued that through single ownership and the shift from light engineering to a more creative and service based industries use, some form of gentrification within the site took place. Examples of this include landscaping, signage, change of use to winebars, wedding venues, photographers and gyms. The period of "Diplomacy and Dialogue" created a foundation for a smooth transition from "aspirational urbanism" to the more formal projects that emerged during "Realisation and Action." In this context, gentrification can be viewed as a socially perceived, and necessary, phase in the site's evolution. Acknowledging that this remains an ongoing heritage management and conservation exercise is essential.

Throughout the lifetime of this study (2006-2024), many social, economic, and cultural changes have directly affected the development and preservation of DAMs. However,

two critical theoretical areas that require high levels of diplomacy and pragmatism to overcome have been identified through interviews, documentary analysis, and site monitoring. These are the relationships between heritage and conservation values held by local council planning officials and various conservation societies, the requirements of UNESCO, the economic value of the site, and the owners' requirement for the site to become economically sustainable, and how associated, sometimes conflicting, views inform the interplay between stakeholders. However, there are limitations to this concept of diplomacy and pragmatism. In May 2022, the toll bridge that connected Darley Abbey Village and DAMs was closed due to safety concerns. As of January 2026, it remains closed to vehicles, with no confirmed date for re-opening. A temporary pedestrian walkway has been constructed. Despite alternative vehicular access to the site, business owners at DAMs have reported that this has directly reduced the number of customers visiting the site (Slater, 2025).

Values and Value

Despite concerns about the ability of DAMs to find a sustainable future (Atkins, 2010), the site has undergone a slow regeneration, leading to its current improved condition and usage. The site has survived, is being reused, and has achieved some form of sustainability. However, this results from several stakeholders such as Patterns Properties, Derby City Council, Darley Abbey Society, and occupiers of the buildings, envisioning, identifying, and defining economic, historic and heritage value in the site. This is a critical factor in ensuring the sustainable future of heritage sites, rather than just legislation or designation (see Rodwell 2018). As Fredheim and Khalaf state (2016, p.467): 'It is self-evident that no society makes an effort to conserve what it does not value.' However, as seen in Fredheim and Khalaf's (2016) overview of value typologies for cultural heritage, each stakeholder brings a different understanding of value, often at odds with other stakeholders' priorities. Wells (2014, p.1) identifies that differing worldviews continually inform the study and practice of heritage conservation; the result is that a set of diverse value systems is in conflict when interpreting significance, contemporary context, or social value, ultimately defining the sustainable future of historic sites or buildings.

Four major dichotomous value sets can be identified for Wells in the context of historic preservation: age value; design value; expert values; community values. Although Wells' work offers significant insight into the value system, in the case of DAMs, the dichotomy ultimately consists of "values" and "value." What can be observed is that the significance of "values" in the preservation process is redundant unless combined with a quantifiable economic value; without this, "expert" and "community" values remain in the realm of philosophical discussions (Soccali & Cinà, 2020). Despite the stakeholder engagement during "Diplomacy and Dialogue," certain conflict areas persisted between Patterns Property (owners of the site) and the local community, for example local residents objections to planning permission applications which could be interpreted as 'nimbyism'. One consequence of differing value systems and conflicting notions of value is that historic buildings often remain unchanged as stakeholders oppose the various perceived values of age, design, adaptation, or designation in multiple committees, courts, and public inquiries. Often, these values-driven processes take years to resolve while the building or site deteriorates (Grimwade & Carter, 2000). One significant strategic development with DAMs involved turning The Long Mill into a wedding venue; this generated many objections from Darley Abbey residents concerned about noise, antisocial behaviour, parking, and traffic. However, planning permission was awarded despite these objections, therefore, willingness to preserve DAMs outweighed community concerns.

Jordão et al.'s (2021) application of the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) model is relevant here, raising questions about acceptable social impacts and emphasising "change as an inevitable consequence of resource use" (Responsible Tourism Partnership, 2019). De Scheck and Scheck (2016) argued that LAC, linked to the notion of carrying capacity, can positively contribute to historical heritage site management if it is carefully integrated into institutional planning and highlights its potential value as a means of operationalising sustainability and understanding ~~the~~ relationships between existing conditions and those judged acceptable. This requires understanding the values of key stakeholders.

The complexity of critical stakeholders' value positioning in heritage conservation is illustrated in Table 2, which conceptualises interactions, different values, and value propositions. These value positions continue to be a cause of friction in the case of

DAMS, as can be seen from the closure of the Toll Bridge. A role-based proposition indicates that each role (regulator, conservator, interpreter, and steward) is spatially positioned near the four historic preservation value sets (age, design, experts, and community). Furthermore, stakeholders are posited to align with and intersect values and roles based on specialisation perspectives. Wells (2019) further examines the value positioning of heritage conservation stakeholders, emphasising orthodox conservation practice, partially characterised by the Western tradition of built heritage conservation. It is argued that this "illogically assumes that the meaning of a building is in its fabric, ignoring the sociocultural and experiential dimensions of meaning" (Waterton et al., 2006, p. 349).

Although Wells' values framework helps chart the role of stakeholders amidst the global politics of heritage, it is clear that it can assist local analyses of heritage in a Westernised, arguably less vulnerable, context. Critical consideration of cultural, political, and social issues that inform the values of the actors involved and the pressures they face in any geographically-located cases is important. From our perspective in this paper, the dynamic nature of morphology and social interactions involved heritage management require appreciation. Thus, alongside Wells, we note the ideas of Pereira (2007, p.20):

> Conservation practice involves technical and scientific matters and social and subjective ones such as interests, feelings, memories, preferences, and even taste. Consequently, contemporary approaches on conservation stress the importance of negotiation and democratic participation in decision-making processes to define what should be conserved and how, why and whom the protection is made for (Pereira, 2007, p.20)

Consequently, for Pereira, conservation should be framed as a social construction, not just a technical one, to recognise that many social processes shape it (see also Amarilla and Conti, 2012). Understanding the juxtaposition between heritage artefacts like DAMs and their cultural significance makes it possible to reflect on the ideas of Avrami et al. (2000) (see also Wells, 2010). They assert that heritage objects and places are significant not only in terms of their cultural heritage but also due to the emotional meanings and uses people attach to these material artefacts and the values they represent. The relationship to buildings is personal and subjective, and decisions are often made based on "heart-over-head". We often anthropomorphise buildings,

giving them personalities and feelings, and worry that new developments will destroy this. However, many historical sites have failed to find contemporary uses because of conflict between stakeholders' embedded value systems. In the case of the Mills, examples of this include the conflict between commercial and economic priorities of the owners versus the embedded age and design value system of planning services and conservation officers. These clashes have resulted in many of the buildings being left in a state of dereliction for decades.

The multiple meanings attributed to “use” and “values” that individuals, organisations, and communities ascribe to particular places must be understood as part of the larger sphere of sociocultural processes (De La Torre, 2013; Soccali & Cinà, 2020). Like all other social activities, conservation is not objective. It is cognitively constructed and informed by the values and perspectives of individuals, institutions, and communities. The notion of cultural heritage encompasses every facet of everyday lived experience. In their various social groups, individuals consider, explicitly or implicitly, part of their self-definition (Wells, 2010; De la Torre, 2013). During the research on DAMs, it was clear that eight major stakeholders influenced management decisions, each bringing a different set of values to the conservation process (Table 2).

While there may be no surprises regarding the stakeholders' status and origins, the group dynamics and their influence on the site's morphology were intriguing. Those with legislative and regulatory power to influence and protect the site lacked the resources (time, money, people) or willingness to enforce the legislation under the “umbrella of protection." Additionally, the owners prior to 2010, lacked resources to maintain or develop DAMs. By 2006, the Mills were in disrepair. Although community-based stakeholders expressed concern about the site, they adopted a laissez-faire approach until they perceived a negative impact on their quality of life and residential environment. Only after a philosophical and practical shift from decisions informed by heritage conservation values to an approach that also included economic value-driven management (maximising importance) did the site's regeneration begin (Sweetnam & Henderson, 2021).

This idea of value-driven management was successfully implemented through a pragmatic approach to conservation that conflicted with the ingrained values of

conservation legislation, dominant heritage discourses, and sustainability concepts, and how stakeholders enacted their roles as 'regulators', 'stewards', and 'conservators'. Early in the longitudinal study of the Mills, in 2006, it became evident that the values and protections associated with WHS status, the listing process, and planning legislation were not safeguarding the Mills. The new owners recognised that the site could generate economic value and become financially sustainable. It was this value-driven economic management that ensured the site's survival. This observation is in direct contrast with Meig and Oevermann's (2014, p, 217) view that: "…case studies have shown that the planning culture that holds sway at a given time and place plays a decisive role in determining how conservation is conceived and practised and thus how heritage is defined and managed."

The case study of DAMs illustrates that during the "Diplomacy and Dialogue" stage, stakeholders recognised their differing values. However, they united around a common goal: the site's preservation. A pragmatic approach was necessary to achieve this, requiring compromise of values. In their work on heritage planning, destruction, and conservation, McClelland et al. (2013, p.583) emphasise the "centrality of values to the protection and ongoing management of cultural heritage" and highlight the shortcomings of a values-centred theory (Mason, 2008) that neglects a broader, more holistic range of values. In particular, they "underlie justifications for the destruction of heritage, either actively or passively, and tend to be revealed most clearly in situations of actual or threatened destruction" (McClelland et al., 2013, p. 585).

Cultural diplomacy is embedded in the governance, status, and power of global NGOs like UNESCO (Meske, 2015; Winter, 2015; Escallón, 2020). This often underpins the values that shape the treatment of cultural heritage regarding status (Öztemiz, 2020), protection (Oevermann et al., 2016), and funding (Ripp & Rodwell, 2016; Escallón, 2020); all of these can be seen in terms of notions of power.

Dimensions of Power

Some of the power relations underpinning the morphology and continued use of the DAMs site can be understood through Lukes' (2005) seminal ideas on three-dimensional power, where decision-making, agenda-setting and ideological power held by certain stakeholders can create conflict or influence the outcome of an action.

This model is open to challenge and critique based on how it provides insights into the social mechanisms of power. However, as Hathaway (2016) notes, it does offer an actor-centred analytical approach to the use of power and a framework to explore the evolution and intersection of cultural heritage values. Although Lukes conceives that all three dimensions operate simultaneously, the DAMS case study demonstrates that between 2006-2024, a specific dimension of power could be more influential than another at different points in time.

Dimensions of power and Darley Abbey Mills

Lukes' (2005) first dimension of power, relating to decision-making participation and control, can be understood in terms of the statutory laws and regulations surrounding heritage conservation and the management of the historic built environment. This dimension involves 'thick' expressions of power that force people to behave in specific ways with penalties for non-compliance. It is the visible, 'open face' of power; arguably, it is easy to see who is imposing their control. Consequently, sites such as DAMs, deemed of historical and architectural significance, are protected through several explicit expressions of power. In the case of DAMs, there is a triple expression of power, this includes: the listing process (a total of 19 listed buildings within the Mills site: 9 grade 1 listed; 4 grade 2 star listed; 6 grade 2 listed buildings – see Image 1); the Mills site designation as part of the wider Darley Abbey Mills conservation area; and the Mills inclusion in the UNESCO Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site inscription since 2001. For Winter (2015, p.1006), this can be seen as an example of how UNESCO's 'global reach' becomes embedded and enacted locally.

Furthermore, historic sites are procedurally and legally protected through various Town Planning and Historical Building legislations in the form of enforceable Acts and Guidance Notes. Protecting and preserving the historic built environment is also underpinned by an established set of principles and practices informed by conservation's hegemonic values and ethics. These elements combine to create a legislative power that claims to protect Britain's stock of historical buildings and sites. However, this is open to interpretation as overly restrictive, prescriptive, lacking in consistency (Highfield & Gorse, 2009; Cooper, 2010; Paixão et al., 2013) and unnecessarily bureaucratic (Negussie, 2006; Bendix, 2018). One practical consequence is compliance through inaction, resulting in developers and owners

leaving buildings to dereliction or disrepair, which is the danger of being lost forever (Ahlfeldt *et al.,* 2017). This has generated academic debate over the extent to which conservation legislation can thwart the preservation of a building (Forsyth, 2013) and may even represent 'negative powers of control' (Heath & Tiesdell, 2013). Indeed, it has been claimed that "planners have found it easier to prevent undesirable uses for occupying buildings than to attract more desirable uses" (Heath & Tiesdell, 2013, p. 4).

Across all regions of the UK, there are examples of buildings lost because it has not been possible to find a contemporary function due to failure to gain Listed Building consent or change of use planning permission (Quigley & Shaw, 2010). According to Allison and Peters (2010, p.16), it is necessary to ask if the planning profession should be held accountable "for destroying what it was supposed to be improving." Rush and Rush (2012) have noted that even where legislative regulations in place may be viewed to be appropriate, exercised power in terms of decision-making and control may be affected by overly pragmatic and subjective interpretations of legislation intended to protect buildings from dereliction and obsolescence, lack of resources to enforce or monitor sites, and resistance to prosecute offenders.

Pendlebury et al. (2009) highlight that the management plans accompanying WHS status can harm both sites and surrounding areas. The WHS designation frustrates granting any form of planning permission or development. The foundations of this negative view:

> …is reflected in the tenor of the management plan, where the term 'development' is often equated with 'threat', and there are references to the superficial understanding of the WHS, it is argued, held by developers'. All WHS have a particularly complex set of governance arrangements. We have noted the potential for conflict between the international regulatory bodies and local decision-makers. In the case of urban WHS, this complexity is magnified. (Pendlebury et al., 2009, p.354)

For Byrne (2009, p.261), reallocating funding and support to WHS' is viewed as a 'mechanism of social control' whereby *"*actors on local and regional levels utilise the existence to exert social and political control*…"*.

The impact of UNESCO WHS designation and Listed Building status can significantly affect the ability of owners to update and introduce technological innovations that will ensure the long-term survival and usage of Historic Buildings. At the beginning of the longitudinal study (2006-10), DAMs fell into “Dilapidation and Decay” despite having the highest legislative protection level, the mills were only being partially used. It was observed that the community of owners and tenants worked very much in isolation, possessing individual motivations and values that defined their relationship to the site. In conjunction with the perceived implications of not following legislation, a lack of strong community and strategy for the mills led to a period of compliance by inaction. This situation reflected Pendlebury, Short, and While’s (2009) view that the management plans accompanying WHS status can be detrimental to the site and the surrounding area. The designation makes it more challenging to grant any planning permission or development. Lack of official consent for development resulted in no action. Opportunities for decision-making participation were absent.

Second dimension

The second dimension of Lukes’ (2005) theory of power considers a more subtle system of control where decisions are made within a complex system of governance (Ripp & Rodwell, 2016; Escallón, 2020). Examples of the second dimension include the ability of stakeholders to set agendas that impact decisions and, most importantly, the ability to control the environment in which decisions are made. The decision to enforce and identify economic, social and cultural priorities (context) and how legislation and planning guidance notes are interpreted from this subtle form of power. From 2010 to 2014, the future of DAMs relied on practical, pragmatic decisions and power applications. The site came under single private ownership during a backdrop of economic austerity and the continued impact of the 2008 financial crisis. Between 2010 and 2014, the mills experienced unauthorised physical architectural changes that redefined the space by applying remedial repairs, the introduction of signage, and changes in use. This made the site more accessible to the public, consolidated the structure of the buildings, and significantly enhanced the commercial potential for the site. The strategy employed by the owners at this time is an example of both resistance and their financial power in a time of economic austerity. The notion of resistance is well charted within critical heritage studies. It is often seen as a response to the prohibitive nature of legislation (Demovic, 2013), and as in the case of DAMs,

resistance is frequently manifested in the unauthorised adaptation, repair and maintenance of historic buildings (Mondini & Re, 2012; Jasme et al., 2014).

The conservation and planning literature deals with the issue of unauthorised adaptation and repair in terms of enforcement (Marie-Stuart, 2014), impact, legislation (Williams, 2010) and examples of unauthorised adaptations (Mondini & Re, 2012). Still, it does not consider the power relations that underpin these behaviours. Within the case context of DAMs, a myriad of interconnected assertions of power reflect Luke's second dimension. Firstly, the owners have the financial ability to preserve the mills and the power to do nothing, thus putting additional pressure on the authorities to find a solution to keep the site. They also have taken an informed and calculated risk in resisting the authoritarian nature of the legislation to enable the development of the mill's site. The authorities retain the power to enforce and penalise any actions contradicting legislation. Still, they have expressed their power by doing nothing, and this action (expression) concerning Lukes' (2005) second dimension of power has secured the mills' future. One criticism of the second dimension of power can be perceived as secretive or corrupt. In the case of Derwent Abbey Mills, it can be argued that it resulted from diplomacy and pragmatism between stakeholders or even chance and opportunism. As illustrated in Image 3, the Mills were in poor condition, and a significant economic investment was needed. There is evidence that since 2010, there have been several 'aspirational urbanism' projects where buildings have been adapted or repaired without the required planning consent; examples include the signage and paintwork, which was noticed when undertaking the 2015 condition survey. During the interview with the owners, they stated that:

> One theme runs through the site, which will be more creative industries for here. The theme includes the coordinated paint and signage that we are using throughout to provide continuity to the site.

Although there were no planning applications sought for these actions when interviewed, a local government official responded:

> There are always areas of conflict; it is a matter of testing to see what they can get away with. There is a set of agreed standards to which both parties work, but there is a need to be flexible in approach

Significantly, between 2010 and 2014, there was no evidence of community involvement or dissatisfaction with the changes. This is also particularly significant at DAMs if we consider the symbiotic relationship between the Mills and Darley Abbey Village. From interviews undertaken during this period with individual community members and community groups, there was a degree of satisfaction that “at last something was being done” with the site. It was not until late 2014, when planning permission was sought to convert part of the North Mill into a Wedding Venue, that the community became mobilised to resist the decisions being undertaken by the owners and the authorities; this was manifested in objections to planning applications, community meetings and petitioning other stakeholders. In terms of the second dimension, it demonstrated community groups attempting to enact the full extent of surrounding legislation and administrative processes and trying to define the context and environment in which decision-making occurred. During this period, the residents were mobilised in a unified strategy to block development. However, the desire to preserve the Mills eclipsed the values and desires of the residents.

Third Dimension

Luke's third dimension of power relates to the psychological manipulation of individuals’ views and values using various forms of communication. Between 2007 and 2014, little information was communicated about the Mills’ plight or how their future could be guaranteed. However, since 2014, the production of a heritage-orientated discourse that contextualises and legitimises the developments at the mills has given the site external value (heritage and economic). This discourse also shifted from neglect, dilapidation, functional redundancy of buildings or parts, and decline. It indicated a transition towards a forward-looking, more optimistic approach centred mainly on creative industries. It also marked a shift to a value-driven philosophy of development rather than a values-driven one:

> …we firmly believe that the proposed ‘change of use and subsequent internal and external alterations to Long Mill and West Mill, Darley Abbey Mills are appropriate and sensitive to the buildings' significance, character and statutory listing; and are vital to the future sustainability of the buildings. The proposals seek to reverse many of the previous inappropriate conversion works of the last 50 years and reinstate the buildings original character…This latest chapter of the ‘complex’ proposals will not detract from this character. They will add positively to the future sustainability and conservation of this important heritage

> asset for generations to come. Furthermore, the proposed development will conserve and protect this heritage asset through its future income generation, which will assist in the prevention of the buildings falling into further disrepair; it will ensure that the particular architectural and historical interests of the buildings are both sustainable and preserved. (Derby City Council, 2018:16)

This official statement also signifies a more formalised engagement with regulators and legislators. It is a value-driven discourse also validated by DVMs, the World Heritage Site of which DAMs form a part:

> The Darley Abbey Mills Partnership continues to work towards delivering the aims of the Darley Abbey Regeneration Strategy with the ambition to return the historic mill buildings to economic use (Derwent Valley Mills, 2024)

Interestingly, economics rather than heritage conservation principles underpin the dominant discourse. At the planning approval event, the Planning Committee Chairman believed the scheme was "long overdue" and "an important scheme in our World Heritage Site." Another Councillor supporting the development stated, "We should grab this chance for listed buildings to have a sensible use. Without our permission, someone could come in and use the buildings for industrial purposes.″

Conclusions

This paper draws on observations from a longitudinal case study to examine the developmental trajectory, morphology, and social dynamics of a specific heritage site: DAMs. Three dominant interlinked themes have significantly influenced the site's evolution and management. Firstly, the governance of the site's continued use and protection involves a complex set of ontological perceptions of various value propositions. There is an opportunity to explore the relationship between heritage and development through the lenses of heritage as a commodity and developers as a shared pool of resources. This re-examination highlights how heritage is valued and its implications for conservation and protection. Secondly, the morphology of a heritage site over time reflects a multifaceted notion of power that encompasses contemporary heritage conservation practices, as illustrated by DAMs. Due to the mills' historical, cultural, and architectural significance, they are theoretically protected by various legislative safeguards, and these should ensure the mills' sustainable

future. However, this idea of protection often becomes disconnected from the concept of sustainability, and the restrictive nature of the legislation presents challenges. The punitive consequences of not adhering to the complex parameters of the legislation create barriers for owners, tenants, and even governments when trying to adapt, maintain, or repurpose designated sites. While conserving historic buildings is crucial for preserving them for future generations, these regulations can sometimes hinder contemporary reuse due to their restrictive nature. Thirdly, the social dynamics involved in heritage site conservation significantly impact the development trajectory of built heritage sites. In particular, as Lukes (2005) highlighted, the second dimension of power, disagreement, tension, and conflict, prompts action among stakeholder groups. A longitudinal approach allows for reflection on the influence of social factors on a heritage site, particularly regarding individual roles and values, stakeholder power and agency, and stakeholder interrelations. This latter aspect deserves further research, especially regarding alliances, allegiances, and collaboration based on aligning stakeholders' values and understanding pragmatic site value. Accompanying the issues of reuse, conservation, and protection related to the governance, morphology, and social dynamics of a built heritage site, it is essential to acknowledge that sustainability has gained prominence in heritage discourses. The implications are significant for enhancing our understanding of stakeholders' roles in the survival and management of historic buildings and the effective management of heritage sites. This is especially pertinent given the broader need to ensure the sustainability of cultural Heritage through effective public policies while reflecting on the conditions and consequences of human activities for current and future generations, in line with advancing United Nations Sustainable Development Goals based on resource use principles:

> Sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (Brundtland, 1987, p.1)

In summary, the reuse and management of DAMs encapsulate the essence of this quote. However, achieving this has required an ongoing process of diplomacy, pragmatism, and compromise among all stakeholders involved.

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