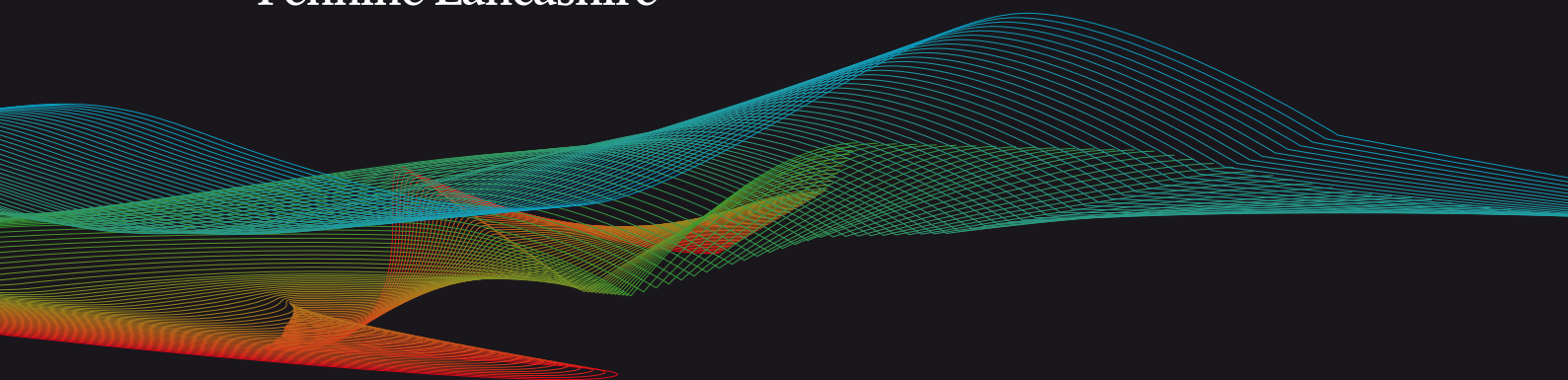


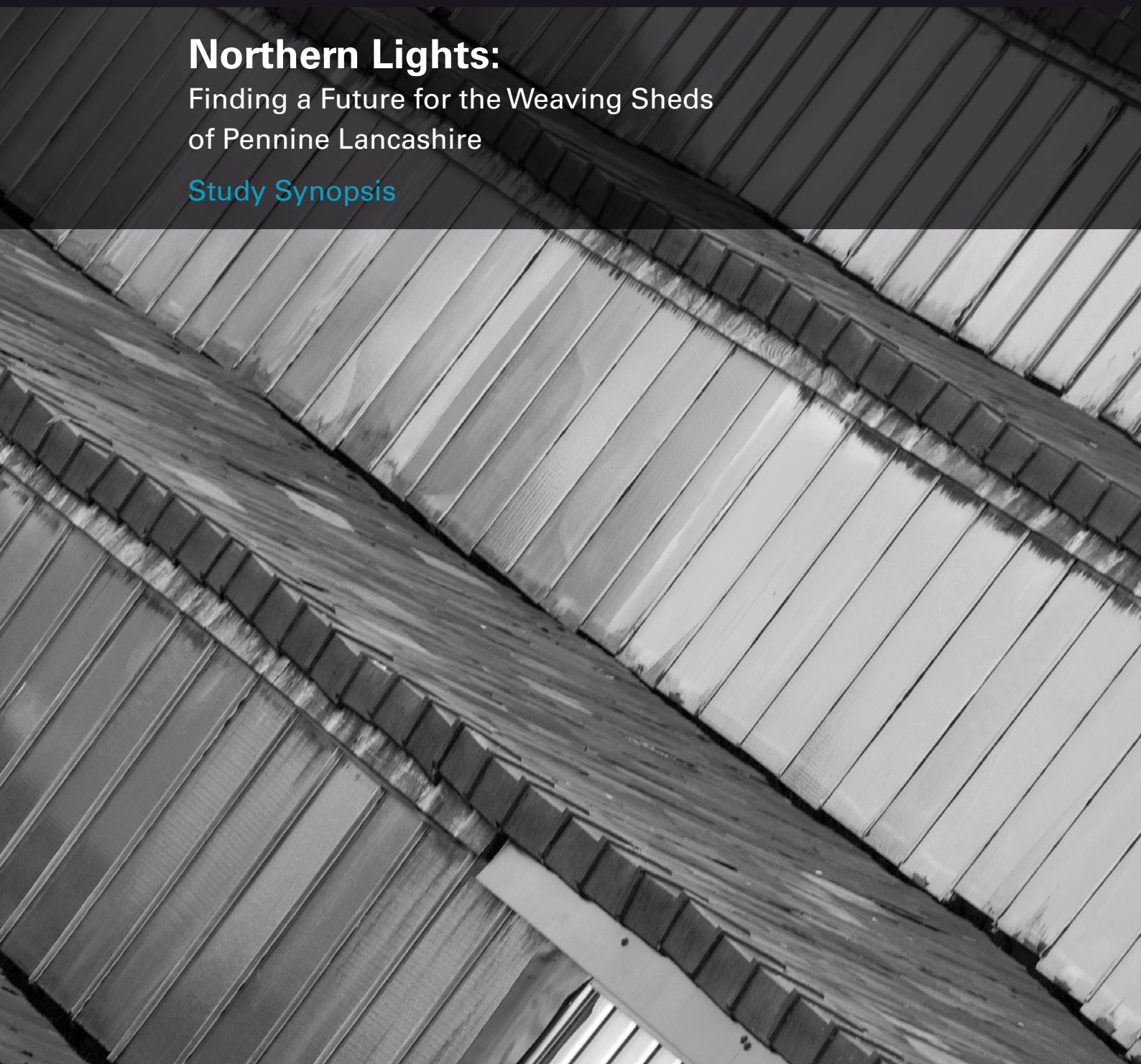
Pennine Lancashire



Northern Lights:

Finding a Future for the Weaving Sheds
of Pennine Lancashire

Study Synopsis



Northern Lights:

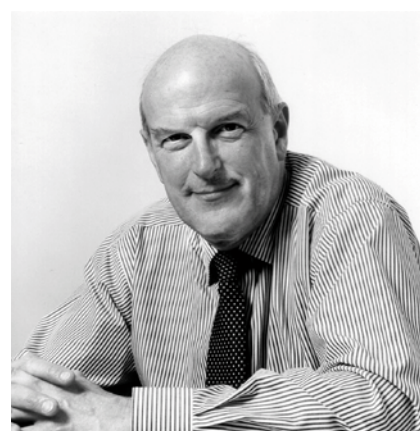
Finding a Future for the Weaving Sheds of Pennine Lancashire

Foreword

The weaving sheds of Pennine Lancashire are a unique reminder of the innovation, energy and vitality of the region's distinguished industrial past. They also have the potential to be a part of its future.

Weaving sheds are a distinctive element in the landscape and intrinsic to its character, yet of all the region's important historic buildings, they are especially vulnerable to demolition. They suffer all too often through ill-considered resort to the bulldozer. But, as you will see in this booklet, with imagination and ingenuity these fine buildings can be brought back into viable new uses that not only retain their character but also afford new and interesting places for people to live and work.

So, before a death sentence is served on yet another weaving shed, we hope you will spare a few moments to read this short booklet. We think you will find it an eye opener. Summarised here are just a few examples of successful conversion, and some of the inspiring ways in which weaving sheds can be recycled to contribute again to the wealth and well-being of this area. You will see too that re-use can be economical, offer good value for money, and reflect in the twenty-first century some of the attributes of nineteenth century inventiveness, thriftiness and zeal that made Pennine Lancashire one of the most extraordinary manufacturing districts in the world.



Sir Neil Cossons

Former Chairman of English Heritage,
current Chair of the Royal College of Art
and the Weavers' Triangle Working Group



A Pennine Lancashire industrial legacy

The 18th and 19th centuries witnessed the transformation of the economy of Britain and the rapid growth of our industrial manufacturing. At the heart of this growth was the spinning and weaving of cotton.

Cotton manufacture required a damp and humid climate, abundant fast-flowing water for power and steam, good transport links and skilled labour, all of which were to be found in Pennine Lancashire.

As the industry grew, a new type of building emerged – the North Light Weaving Shed. These new buildings for weaving were single storey and allowed large numbers of power looms to be housed on a well-lit open floor.

By the end of the 19th century, Pennine Lancashire was the cotton weaving capital of the world, and the legacy of this is evident in the weaving sheds that survive and contribute to its distinctive landscape today.



Many weaving sheds were built alongside the Leeds-Liverpool Canal

Queen Street Mill
Textile Museum,
Burnley

Overlooking a
weaving shed in
Whitefield, Nelson

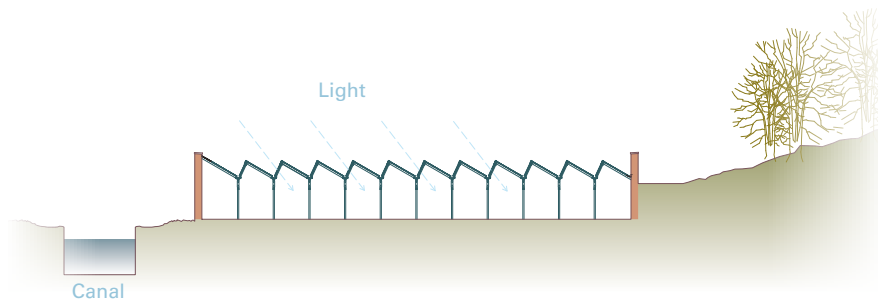
A typical weaving shed

Weaving sheds are usually large buildings, with many more than 1000 sqm. They have very deep floor plans often completely filling the sites on which they are built, due to their flexible form, and having no windows in the external elevations.

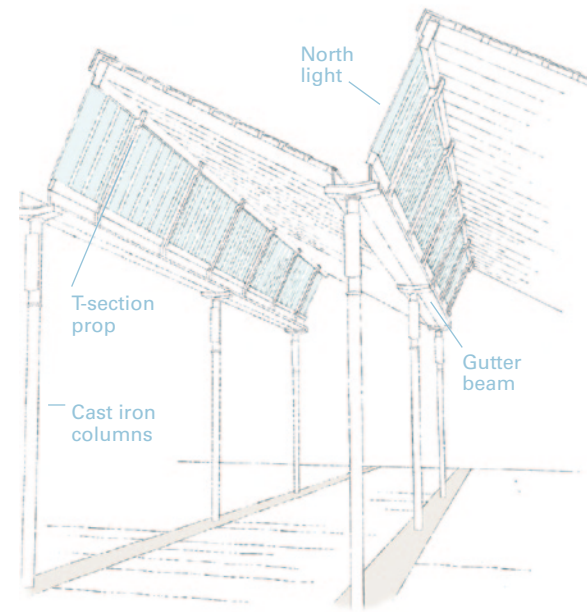
Weaving sheds were constructed using a standardised system of simple structural components: cast iron columns, 6m long gutter beams and raking T-section props holding up the roof ridges.

The sheds were aligned so that the rooflights faced predominantly to the north, giving excellent levels of natural light for working on the complex looms with a minimum of direct sunlight.

Their external walls were built of local stone, often partly set into the slope of their sites, and their floors of stone slabs were laid on beaten earth. This construction kept their internal floors humid, which was essential for the weaving process.



A cross-section of a typical weaving shed site



The main components of a weaving shed



Successful Conversions

The original purpose for weaving sheds has long since been lost, and subsequently many have either fallen into disuse or been demolished. However, there are exceptions.

A large number of sheds have proven convenient for other functions such as storage and trade workshop space. And what's more, there are examples of exciting, resourceful refurbishment schemes which demonstrate that these buildings can also be put to a range of more imaginative uses.

Some owners have already seen the potential of their weaving sheds and converted their buildings in a variety of ways to meet the changing requirements of modern life and work. They have taken advantage of the character of the weaving sheds, the ease of their conversion and their relatively low costs to create outstanding new developments which are both viable and appreciated by their users.

/// **Junction 12** is a thriving retail centre located just off the M65, in Brierfield, Pendle. This light and airy conversion provides an attractive environment for shoppers.

/// **Higherford Mill** in Barrowford is a hub for creative industries. A successful refurbishment programme by the Heritage Trust for the North West provides studio space for local artists in the converted weaving shed.

/// **Farmhouse Biscuits** in Nelson is an example of a thriving food manufacturer whose commercial business is partly based in a converted weaving shed.

/// **Pace** is a digital TV technology company located in Saltaire. The staff restaurant is an outstanding example of how a weaving shed can be dramatically transformed. Pace has also made good use of a weaving shed as office space.

These projects demonstrate that by applying a little vision and some design creativity, weaving sheds can be repaired and altered for a wide range of exciting new uses.



Artists' studios at
Higherford Mill



Farmhouse
Biscuits,
Nelson



Pace
Offices,
Saltair



Pace
Café / Hub,
Saltair



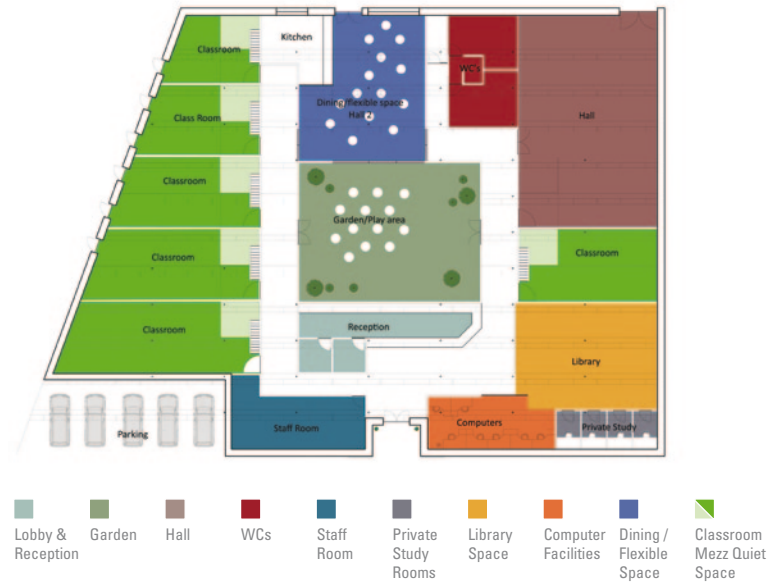
J12 Shopping
Outlet,
Nelson

Potential New Uses

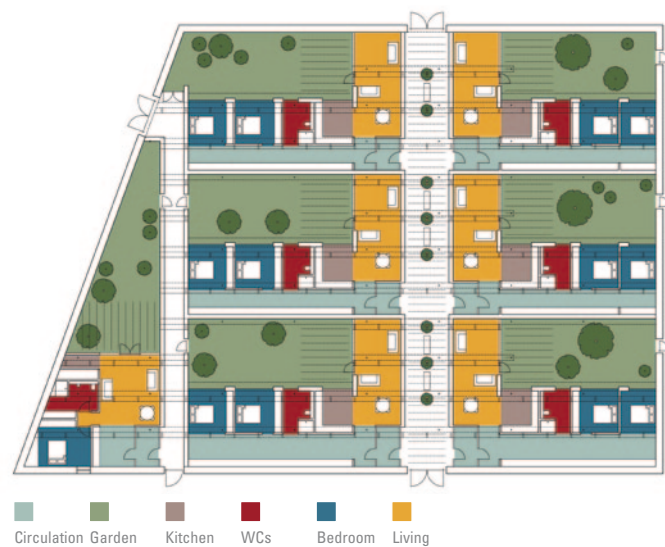
Many other options are also possible including:

- /// Schools
- /// Homes
- /// Student accommodation

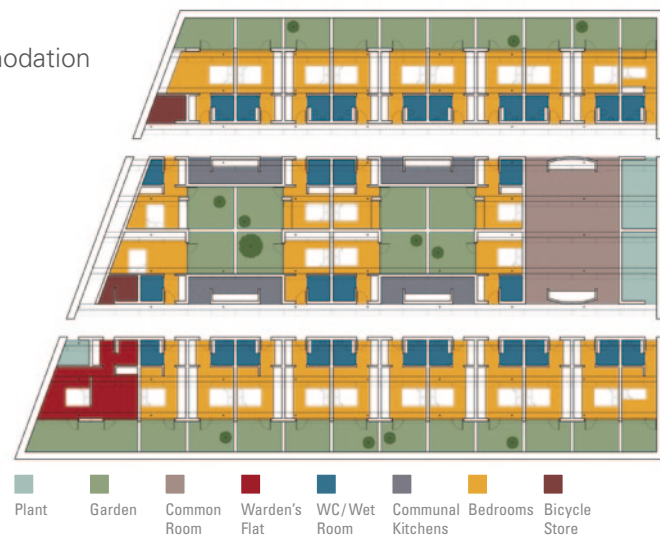
School



Homes

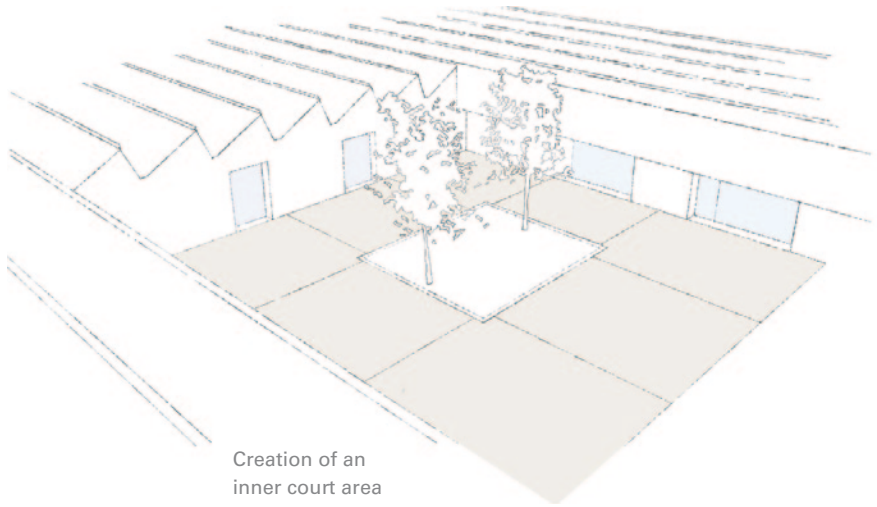


Student accommodation

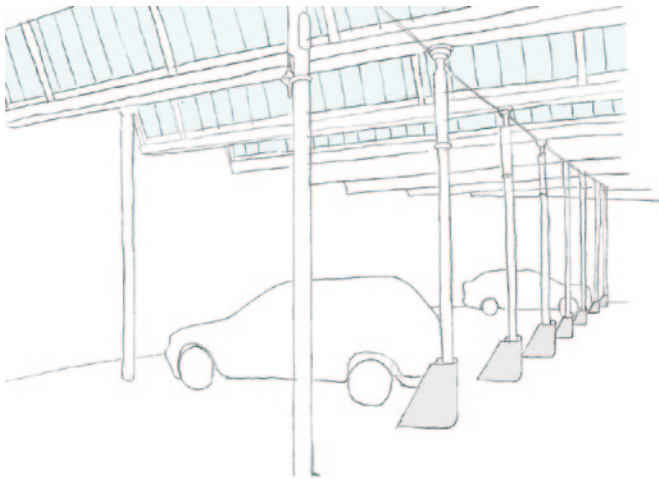


These examples of actual and possible uses illustrate how the potential design and technical problems of reusing north light weaving sheds can be solved.

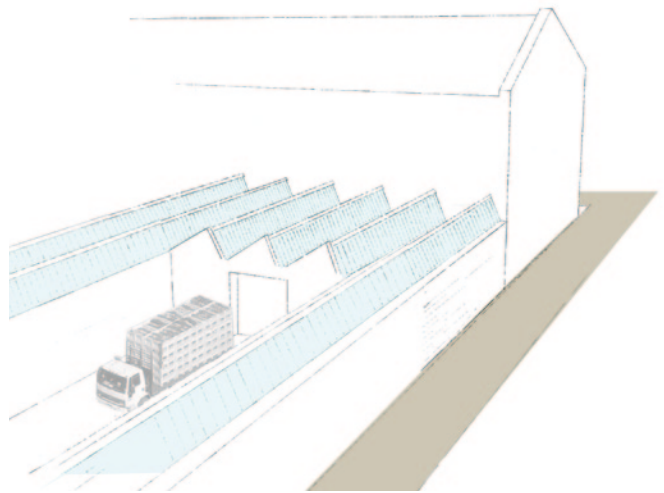
Creating sub-divisions, improving fabric performance, reserving and environmental improvement, for example, can achieve high levels of sustainability, increase working heights, create new external spaces and accommodate access and parking.



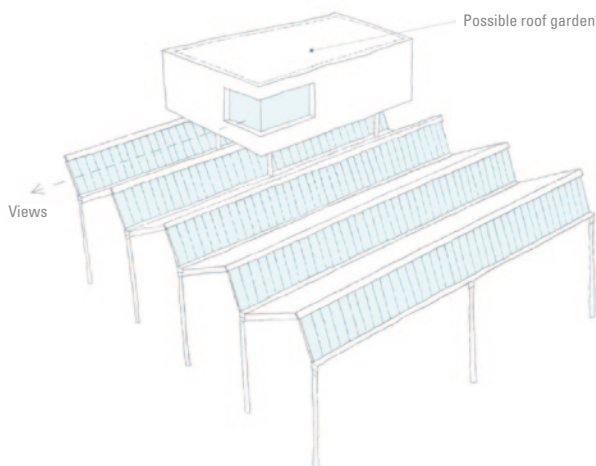
Creation of an inner court area



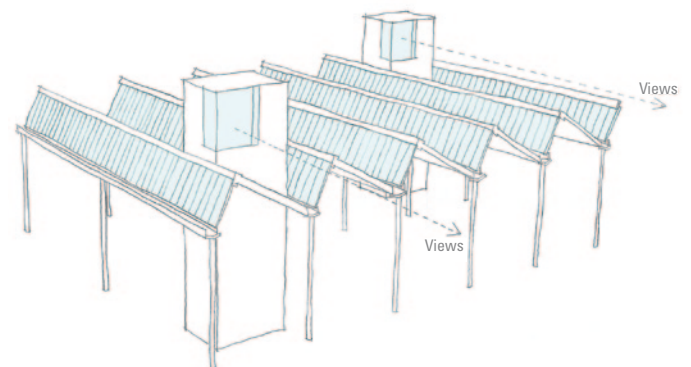
Use of column protectors



Sections of roof removed to form a service yard and improved access



New-build on stilts. Minimal damage to existing fabric



New-build tower pods that sit over the roof. Potential for elevated views over and out of the sheds

Financial viability

As well as being physically practical, the conversion of weaving sheds to new uses can also be financially viable. Indeed the Northern Lights study includes robust financial appraisal and confirms that for most uses, the conversion of a weaving shed can cost the same as or less than an equivalent new building. With flexible and supportive local planning policies this viability can be further enhanced, with shorter development periods and fewer development constraints and obstructions.

For owners without the necessary resources to complete a large weaving shed development in a single phase, or where their building is partly occupied, the form and layout of weaving sheds makes their incremental development possible, allowing progress to match the available funding.



Higherford Mill,
Barrowford

The study

The complete Northern Lights study, of which this document is a brief summary, can be downloaded in PDF format free of charge from the following websites:

Lancashire County Council
www.lancashire.gov.uk

Regenerate Pennine Lancashire
www.regeneratepl.co.uk

For advice about a specific site we recommend you contact the planning and conservation officers in the appropriate Council.

Acknowledgements

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Pennine Lancashire**

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NORTH
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Farmhouse Biscuits,
Nelson

Conference facilities
at Higherford Mill,
Barrowford

