

Cox's Mill, Cheddar

Andy Fish



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Back in June I spent a few days just outside Cheddar. Whist driving past Cox's Cave at the bottom of the gorge, I noticed that Cox's Mill Hotel, a converted mid-19th century flour mill that had been empty for approximately 15 years, had fallen into disrepair in recent years and was now beyond economic repair, had been demolished.

Fortunately, the turbine that was inside the former mill is still extant. The hotel site will now make way for a public open space and car parking. Simon Townsend, Cheddar Gorge and Caves operations manager told a public meeting back in 2019 the premises was "an eyesore" and was becoming unsafe, and it is hoped the changes would enhance the Lower Gorge, the views and the area around Cox's Cave, and the Queen's Row shops.

The owners, Longleat Estates Ltd, won permission to knock down the hotel in 2020. Unfortunately work on the scheme was held up due to the Covid outbreak. The next stage of the redevelopment will see improvements to the water course and the creation of a water feature.

During the second phase the public square will then be extended. Longleat Estates Ltd will then look to restore the water turbine from the hotel's basement and install an Archimedes' Turbine with the potential to generate hydroelectric power. The final part of the scheme will be to build a visitor centre next to the public square, including possible tourist accommodation and activity spaces.



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