

Whitchurch Silk Mill

Whitchurch Silk Mill in Hampshire has received a confirmed grant of £1.7m from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the *Preserving the Fabric* project.

The project will see urgent repairs to the Mill's bell tower, roof and wheelhouse, and essential conservation to the late 19th and early 20th century winding, warping and weaving machinery, so that the Mill can continue to weave silk. An educational programme and new exhibition and learning spaces are also planned to make the building more welcoming to the visiting public.

The building will be made accessible to all by installing a lift to the middle and top floors. The shop building adjacent to the Mill will be extended to relocate the café at street level to make the most of passing trade, while a new generation of weavers and tacklers will be trained to ensure the skills necessary to operate this working mill survive.

Preserving the Fabric will cost approximately £2,200,000, of which £1,300,000 will be spent on conserving and improving the buildings. We have asked HLF for 78% of the total cost, and will raise the remaining 22% (£400,000) ourselves. During 2015/16 we successfully raised £200,000 from special events, the local community's generosity, and charitable trusts. The Garfield Weston Foundation and the Linbury Trust have given us grants, leaving us to find £35,000 before we can start work. And so, fund-raising continues in earnest.



Whitchurch Silk Mill is a Grade II* listed textile mill built in 1815 on the River Test in the small Hampshire town of Whitchurch. It was in continuous use until 1985, when it was saved from inappropriate development and refurbished. It opened to the public in 1990 under the management of Whitchurch Silk Mill Trust. It is one of only four working silk mills in the country and the only one open to visitors, who can see silk being woven on historic machinery.

For more details, see the mill's website whitchurchsilkmill.org.uk