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Date: March 2025

Our ref: 24.3338

Your ref:

Heritage Assessment

Heritage Assessment – Residential development consisting of 9no' 4-bedroom dwellings with associated parking and landscaping: Land At , Schofield St, Heywood, Rochdale, OL10 1DH.

Introduction

This assessment evaluates the potential impact of a proposed nine-house residential development on land off Schofield Street, Heywood, adjacent to a former three-storey cotton mill recognised as a non-designated heritage asset. Notably, a single-storey section of the mill near Schofield Street has been demolished, and the remaining structure is in a dilapidated state, with plans for future demolition by the current owner.

Significance of the Non-Designated Heritage Asset

The former cotton mill represents Heywood's industrial heritage, contributing to the local historical narrative. Despite its non-designated status, the mill's architectural and historical values are acknowledged, though its current deteriorated condition diminishes its significance.

Policy Context

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):** Paragraph 203 of the NPPF emphasises that the effect of a proposal on a non-designated heritage asset's significance should be considered in planning decisions, requiring a balanced judgment based on the asset's significance and the degree of impact.
- **Rochdale Borough Council Policies:** The Council aligns with the NPPF, recognising non-designated heritage assets as elements of local historic value. Their approach involves assessing such assets' significance and ensuring developments contribute positively to local character and distinctiveness.

Assessment of Impact

The proposed development entails constructing nine residential units adjacent to the former mill. Given the mill's current state—dilapidated and unfit for use—and the planned demolition by its owner, the development is unlikely to cause harm or detriment to the mill's remaining significance. Instead, the project offers an opportunity to enhance the site's visual appeal and contribute positively to the area's regeneration.

The location is Heywood and is within the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, historically part of Lancashire. It lies between Bury to the West and Rochdale to the East approximately 7m north of Manchester. The site itself sits within the Urban Core of the Town, on Schofield Street, approx 250m to the southeast of Heywood town centre. To the north of the site is the A58 between Bury and Rochdale and to the south is the M62.

The site lies to the south-east of Heywood town centre and was probably used for agricultural purposes until the early nineteenth century, when it was developed for industrial use. A steam-powered cotton mill occupied the northern part of the site from the 1820s, and a rope walk was established, subsequently, along the Schofield Street frontage.

Part of the cotton mill was demolished in the early twentieth century, and its site redeveloped as a small engineering works, while the rope walk survived intact until recently. Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council has recommended that a Heritage assessment of the application area is prepared to inform and support proposals for development based on the proximity of the adjacent former cotton mill.

18 sites of archaeological interest have been identified within a 250m radius of the study site, of which four sites lie within the boundary of the Application Area. None of these sites have legal designation as Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, or Registered Park and Gardens, and none are considered to be of national importance, thereby meriting preservation in-situ. Of these four, only one site survives as an extant building, comprising the three-storey surviving portion of Gooden Lane Mill. The mill building is the most significant heritage asset identified and may survive from the early nineteenth century during the period of Heywood's industrial expansion. The remaining three include the footprint of the rope walk, the below ground remains associated with the reservoir and other mill buildings and the row of terraces located at the northern end of the Application Area.

LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

Location:

Heywood lies some 5km to the east of Bury and 6.4km to the southwest of Rochdale and is situated a short distance from the southern bank of the River Roch. The study area is situated on the south-eastern fringe of Heywood town centre, and is bounded by Schofield Street to the west, Mount Street to the south and Manchester Street to the east, with a range of industrial premises defining the northern boundary. The site is occupied presently by several former industrial buildings.

Topography:

Topographically, Heywood is situated at the junction of the Pennine uplands and the Manchester Plain. The uplands of Rossendale and the Central Pennines rise to a height in excess of 450m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to the north and east of the town, whilst the heavily urbanised lowlands of the Manchester Plain lie to the south and east.

Geology:

The underlying solid geology consists of the Pennine Lower Coal Measures (Westphalian A) and millstone grit of the Carboniferous period. The predominant drift geology comprises glacial sands and gravels, with some alluvium.

Heywood formed a chapelry within the medieval township of Heap. Settlement was centred on Heywood Hall, a manor house that was built in the thirteenth century and occupied by the Heywood family (Farrer and Brownbill 1911). It is probable that the economy of Heywood during this period was based largely on agriculture, supplemented by the cottage-based production of woollen goods (Baines 1835). In the fifteenth century, Heywood was described as a sparsely populated rural area, which consisted of 'a few cottages' (Lewis 1848, 501-5).

Post-medieval expansion: Heywood expanded dramatically in the nineteenth century as a consequence of industrialisation. The textile industry in particular emerged as a trade of especial importance to Heywood in the mid-nineteenth century. Coal mining was also an industry that became important to the local economy during this period, when pits were opened in Hooley Clough by the Lord of the Manor of Rochdale.

In 1881, Heywood became a municipal borough, with an estimated population of 25,000 (Farrer and Brownbill 1911). By the end of the nineteenth century, as a result of the Local Government Act of 1894, which formally dissolved all the townships, the municipal borough of Heywood became a local government district of the administrative county of Lancashire.

BACKGROUND TO THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY AND ROPE WALKS

The Textile Industry: by the sixteenth century, the textile industries in south Lancashire were beginning to flourish. Woollen cloths made from fleeces were being produced on the Pennine slopes to the north and east of Manchester, including the area around Heywood, and coarse linens were being woven, and bleached and dyed, from locally-grown flax and hemp on the plain to the west (Winterbotham 1998, 22).

During this period, Walloons fleeing the Low Countries and Huguenots escaping persecution in France sought refuge in England. They brought their looms and their weaving trade and specialised in making complicated threads and tapes. They settled initially in the south, in Canterbury and London, but soon transferred their trade to the Manchester area, a move presumably stimulated by the lack of regulation and guilds (Wadsworth and Mann 1931, 102).

This workforce, using complicated and expensive Dutch looms, gave to the area a skilled and industrialised workforce, and perhaps unwittingly helped to establish an industrial discipline needed with the turn to factory production that was to have a dramatic impact on the whole region.

By this time, the weaving of pure woollens in south Lancashire had started to decline in favour of mixed fabrics classed as smallwares and fustians, whilst the market for linen remained buoyant. Linen yarn formed the warp for both fabrics, and whilst worsted was usually selected for the weft in smallwares, cotton became frequently used in fustians; the earliest known reference to cotton in the region dates to 1601, when it was mentioned in the will of George Arnould, a Bolton fustian weaver (Wadsworth and Mann 1931, 15). Fustians were produced in a network of towns with Manchester at their hub, and the town became the principal commercial centre for the region (Winterbotham 1998, 40).

It was against this background that Heywood developed and expanded in the nineteenth century as one of the many satellite towns around Manchester engaged in the manufacture of textile goods. Heywood, situated on the River Roch, and with an abundance of local coal, was well suited to the new industry, and the first cotton-spinning factory, Makin Mill, was established in the town in 1770 (Haynes 1997).

The earliest factories were water-powered, and several were erected on sites in the Cheesden Valley (McNeil and Nevell 2000, 35). The industry developed only slowly in the Heywood area during the early nineteenth century, with only ten mills in 1817, although by 1833 the total had risen to 27. However, Pigot describes Heywood in 1834 as a 'flourishing village' with 'upwards of 30 large cotton mills in the village and its immediate neighbourhood' (Pigot 1834, 277).

Heywood's textile industry expanded more rapidly following the improvement to the local transport network, primarily with the construction of the Heywood Branch Canal in 1834 (Hadfield and Biddle 1970), and, more importantly, the Lancashire and Yorkshire railway in 1848 (Nock 1969). The resultant 'extraordinary growth of the cotton trade' in Heywood during the mid nineteenth century led to 'an influx of strangers causing a very dense population' (Lewis 1848). Indeed, Edwin Waugh, the Rochdale-born poet, was able to describe Heywood in the early 1880s as 'almost entirely the creation of the cotton industry'. In 1881, the newly created Municipal Borough of Heywood included 67 cotton mills and weaving sheds, together with 75 cotton waste and other textile warehouses, and 67 engineering works, the bulk of which produced machines for the textile industry.

By the late nineteenth century, Heywood established itself as a centre for the production of low-grade cloth from cotton waste, a process which differed only in the preparatory phase from normal cotton spinning and thus required little conversion for the existing mills. However, the limited amount of waste available restricted the trade and thus the size of the individual mills (Williams with Farnie 1992, 15). Nevertheless, in 1905, Plum Tickle Mill in Heywood began operation as the largest mule-spinning mill in the world under one roof (Haynes 1997).

Production in Heywood reached its zenith as a textile-manufacturing town in 1915, when the cotton-spinning mills in the town housed more than 1,000,000 spindles, making the town the fifteenth largest centre of cotton spinning in the region (Williams with Farnie 1992, 44-7). The last large weaving mill in the town was J Smith Hargreaves & Company, towel manufacturers.

As elsewhere in the region, decline in the subsequent decades was rapid, with many of the mills closing and being demolished. Plum Mill and its sister-mill, Unity Mill, were idled in the 1960s under the government reorganisation of the cotton industry. By the mid-1960s, only two spinning mills remained in operation (The Rochdale Directory 1966, 132).

Since then, most of the former cotton mills in the town have been demolished, although the Mutual Mills, a complex of four spinning factories, are Grade II listed buildings, and provide a physical reminder of the importance of the textile industry to the town.

Rope walks:

Britain's domination and expansion of overseas trade during the eighteenth century relied upon vast numbers of sailing ships. The requirement for long lengths of rope for rigging precipitated a concomitant expansion in the rope-making industry (White 1930, 84). For much of that time, ropes were hand-made on a rope walk, which had to be straight and about 1320 feet long (Jones 1996, 314). At each end of a rope walk was a frame and at one of them was a rotating component called a jack, which was turned using a handle driven through a series of gears. Long strands of yarn were laid on the rope walk, attached at one end to the revolving jack and at the other to the traveller, a weighted trolley with a single revolving hook, via the block (Jenkins 1972, 20- 4).

The latter was a piece of hardwood with three grooves, through which each of the strands of yarn passed. This was held by the rope maker, who walked along the rope walk, with the rope forming between the block and the slowly advancing trolley behind, which was pulled along as the twisting shortened the yarn. In this manner, standard lengths of 120 fathoms (720ft) were made. Rope making began to be mechanised from about the late eighteenth century, but examples of the traditional technique persisted into the twentieth century (Jones 1996; Jenkins 1972).

During the nineteenth century, the textile and engineering industries became important markets for rope. It was required in cotton mills as part of the power-transmission train between the steam engine and machinery, and also for twine and cotton bandings used for packaging purposes. In order to serve this developing market, numerous rope walks were established in the textile manufacturing districts, utilising cotton waste as a raw material for the production of rope. Heywood developed as a centre for rope production, perhaps reflecting the town's late nineteenth-century specialisation in the manufacture of goods from cotton waste. Many of the firms producing rope were small businesses, using traditional methods.

Entries in trade directories indicate that there were at least four established rope works operating in Heywood during the late nineteenth century. Slater's Directory of Lancashire for 1882, for instance, lists four rope, twine and cotton band makers in the town: J & J Atkinson at Captain Fold; Richard Gorton at 69 Rochdale Road; Healey Brothers at the Cartridge Steam Ropery (manufacturers of all kinds of rope, twine and cotton bands by steam power, also main driving ropes for mills); and James Nelson at Longfield (Slater 1882, 289). Another directory for 1883 only lists three rope, twine and cotton band manufacturers in Heywood: Richard Gorton (Aspinall Street); Healey Bros (Cartridge Street); and Nelson & Co in Longfield (Barrett 1883, 290).

An eyewitness account, written in 1909, noted that: 'Fifty years ago three ropewalks of the old order were at work hereabouts. From early morn to dewy eve the wheel went round with dull monotony. I can still see the long rows of wooden stumps, about four feet high, with their cross pieces studded with nails, on which the spinner placed the twine as he walked backwards with a big lump of hemp held up to his breast by a coarse apron tied at the back' (Green 1909, 135).

By the end of the nineteenth century, the manufacture of rope in Heywood was dominated by the Healey Brothers. The origins of this firm can be traced to 1843, when William Healey established a small rope works on what is now Brunswick Street in Heywood. Initially, he produced rope on a small-scale basis, operating in the open air using traditional methods. The growth of Healey's business, and the adoption of more productive techniques of manufacture, was linked

closely to the expansion of the textile trades in Heywood. In 1874, William Healey passed on his business to his three sons, leading to the formation of the Healey Brothers Ltd. The brothers all diversified within the rope and twine industry to create their own businesses within the group, which expanded to take control of several rope works in Heywood, together with numerous cotton mills in the region. The business interests of the Healey Brothers had a significant physical impact on the town and placed themselves at the heart of Heywood's historic industrial and civic development. Their principal works, the Cartridge Steam Ropery on Brunswick Street in Heywood, remains in use for the manufacture of rope.

Gooden Lane Mill:

The northern end of the Application Area is occupied by a three-storey brick built industrial building, with a single-storey gabled structure attached to its south-western end. The larger building is constructed in hand-made red brick laid in three courses of stretchers to each course of headers and has a slate gabled roof. Its principal elevations lie to the south-east and north-west, with the former divided into seven equal bays and the latter into six, where the westernmost bay preserves a loading door at each level. The openings on both elevations employ plain projecting sandstone sills and tapered segmental brick arches. On the south-eastern elevation there is a plinth of rock faced sandstone, which is not noted elsewhere on the building, and the ground-floor openings have been bricked up. Those of the first floor have been replaced with modern uPVC units, while at second-floor level four of the seven windows retain timber frames of probable early twentieth century date with the remainder in uPVC. The northwestern elevation appears to retain timber-framed windows on all three floors.

The north-eastern elevation appears to be original and includes what maybe a blocked loading door at the centre of the second floor. It also includes the ghost of a two-storey gabled structure and a projecting stub wall at the southern end that suggests this lost building was contemporary with the extant building. The lower third of the elevation has been rendered in concrete and at the centre of the first floor a small, framed aperture may be the remnants of the power transfer system. A multi-phase single-storey structure, also built in hand-made red brick has been attached to the buildings north-eastern corner and may represent the remnants of the mill's power arrangements, although this structure lies immediately outside the Application Area.

The western gable of the three-storey structure has been truncated at an obtuse angle and rendered in cement. Unlike the opposing gable, it incorporated a raised parapet and at the northern corner a full-height projecting stub wall confirmed that this building had originally continued further to the south-west. The building is probably the surviving portion of that shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1844-7 and is therefore a remnant of the original cotton mill. This building is presently redundant.

The three-storey mill is adjoined at its north-western gable by a single-storey structure with a corrugated sheet roof, that preserves along its southern elevation several infilled openings that may have been inserted into what is otherwise a nineteenth century brick wall (Plate 9). The northern elevation and western gable elevation were rendered and partially clad in modern materials but may have preserved elements of an earlier building behind this façade.

Additional Features:

There is no visible indication of the former reservoirs that are shown on historical mapping to the south of the extant mill, although this area appears to be covered in demolition rubble to a maximum depth of 1.5m above the original ground surface. Most of the southern reservoir must lie beyond the southern boundary of the site and has been redeveloped. The north-eastern boundary of the site is determined by the south-western wall of a light industrial building of mid-twentieth century date which occupies the former position of the eastern wing of Gooden Lane Mill.

Along the south-western boundary of the site, the footprint of the rope walk remains as a long strip of asphalt, approximately 3.5m wide and 86m long flanked to the east by a red brick foundation and to the west by a row of upstanding thin section flags that abut the edge of the pavement. The patched appearance of the floor of the rope walk may suggest the survival of earlier floor surfaces beneath the current one.

At south-western corner of the site and beyond the boundary of the Application Area, is a small, detached brick-built structure, possibly surviving from the mid-nineteenth century, and which may at one time have been associated with the operation of the rope walk. The south facing elevation incorporates a large arched doorway that retains some architectural embellishment, and a single window with a stone sill and lintel that has been blocked. The opposing elevation is a mirror of that previously described, although the window is shorter, and the doorway fitted with a plain modern concrete lintel. The building is used presently as an electricity substation.

To the north of the extant mill buildings there was a concrete yard, presumably once used by the mill for loading and unloading produce. A distinct strip of overgrown tarmac running along the northern edge of the yard may have indicated the former location of the terraced block, with a modern housing estate to the south.

Conclusion

Considering the mill's diminished condition and impending demolition, the proposed residential development is not anticipated to adversely affect the heritage asset. The project aligns with both national and local policies by respecting the site's historical context while promoting sustainable development. It is recommended that the design of the new housing reflects the area's character, incorporating materials and architectural features sympathetic to Heywood's industrial heritage whilst incorporating modern and slight contemporary contrasts, thereby ensuring a harmonious and interesting integration into the existing urban fabric.