

Development Management
Rochdale Borough Council
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Our ref EKPS/221201/JK

Neo
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Manchester
M1 4ET

Submitted via the Planning
Portal

www.euankellie.co.uk

07 September 2023

Dear Sir or Madam,

Application of Full Planning Permission: Fieldhouse Industrial Estate, Fieldhouse Road, Rochdale, OL12 0AA (Planning Portal Reference: PP-12342098)

On behalf of our client Bizspace, please find enclosed an application for Full Planning Permission for the Demolition of units D8, F13 and F14-15 within the Fieldhouse Industrial Estate.

Background

The application site relates to the Fieldhouse Industrial Estate, which comprises of a large collection of industrial buildings of varying size, age and construction surrounded by hardstanding. Amongst these is a brick-built former Victorian Mill, which features on the Council's local list of non-designated heritage assets. The southern end of the estate is populated by a series of smaller buildings that have been assembled over time (See **Figure 1**) and which include the following:

- Unit F13 – linear in plan and topped by a pitched roof, this single-storey, brick-built structure adjoins Units F12 and F14-15. The building measures 211sqm in size (See **Figure 2**, overleaf).
- Units F14-15 – A mid-twentieth century building that has a square footprint and provides 870sqm of floor-space over two floors (See **Figure 3**, overleaf).
- Unit D8 – This single-storey metal-clad building runs alongside the site's eastern boundary and tapers in footprint at its southern end. It is topped by three dual-pitched roofs and covers an area of 721sqm (See **Figure 4**, overleaf).



^ Figure 1: Aerial Overview



^ Figure 2: Unit F13



^ Figure 3: Unit F14-15



^ Figure 4: Unit D8

All of the units described and shown above are considered to be in 'general industrial' use (Class B2), however they are in a poor state of repair and have become surplus to requirements in the context of the wider Bizspace estate and the operations that are undertaken there.

In August 2022 prior approval was sought from the Council (ref. 22/00361/DEM) for the demolition of Units D8, F13 and F14-15. However, this was refused in September 2022 for the following reason:

"The buildings have been identified as unsafe and uninhabitable. Insufficient information has been provided for the reason building units F13 and F14 - F15 are considered to be unsafe and uninhabitable. Additionally, no details have been provided as to whether it is practicable to secure safety or health by works of repair or works for affording temporary support. As such the application fails to comply with paragraph B.1 (a) of Schedule 2, Part 11, Class B of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)."

The Proposed Development

[illegible]

^ Figure 5: Demolition Plan

The demolition works are required to keep the wider Bizspace estate in a safe and workable condition and to enable other existing occupiers to use the available space more efficiently. More specifically, the Building Condition Report submitted with the application confirms that the buildings in question are currently in a state of partial collapse, with a summary of the structures provided below:

- **Unit F13** has already partially collapsed and is in a condition where further collapse is imminent. Collapse could have catastrophic consequences, with part of the building supporting a live gas main and the building also being next to a road. Repair is not viable given that the building is already partly collapsed and it has been recommended that demolition is undertaken as a matter of urgency.
- **Unit F14/15** is in a very poor condition with a failed roof covering, which is flooding the floors below. This flooring has caused the concrete frame to spall and expose rusting reinforcement, many of the terracotta blocks have spalled and have fallen into the space below.
- **Unit D8** is a dated industrial warehouse, which has been fire damaged.

Images demonstrating the poor condition of the Units to be demolished can be seen in **Figures 6-8** below, and also within the Appendices that support the Building Condition Report.



^ Figure 6: Unit F13



^ Figure 7: Unit F14-15



^ Figure 8: Unit D8



Heritage Statement

Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Paragraph 203 relates to the effects of a development on non-designated heritage assets and states that a balanced judgement will be required, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The three buildings that are the subject of this application are not listed, nor do they sit within the setting of any listed buildings. Furthermore, they do not form part of, or lie in close proximity to, a conservation area.

One heritage asset is, however, located within the applicant's wider ownership, with 'Fieldhouse Mills' identified on Rochdale Borough Council's local list of non-designated heritage assets. This entry is understood to represent the group of historic buildings within the wider estate that were formerly associated with the Mill Complex operated by 'Bright and Sons'. A copy of the Entry into the Historic Environment Record (ref. 5068.1.0) can be found within **Appendix 1** of this Covering Letter.

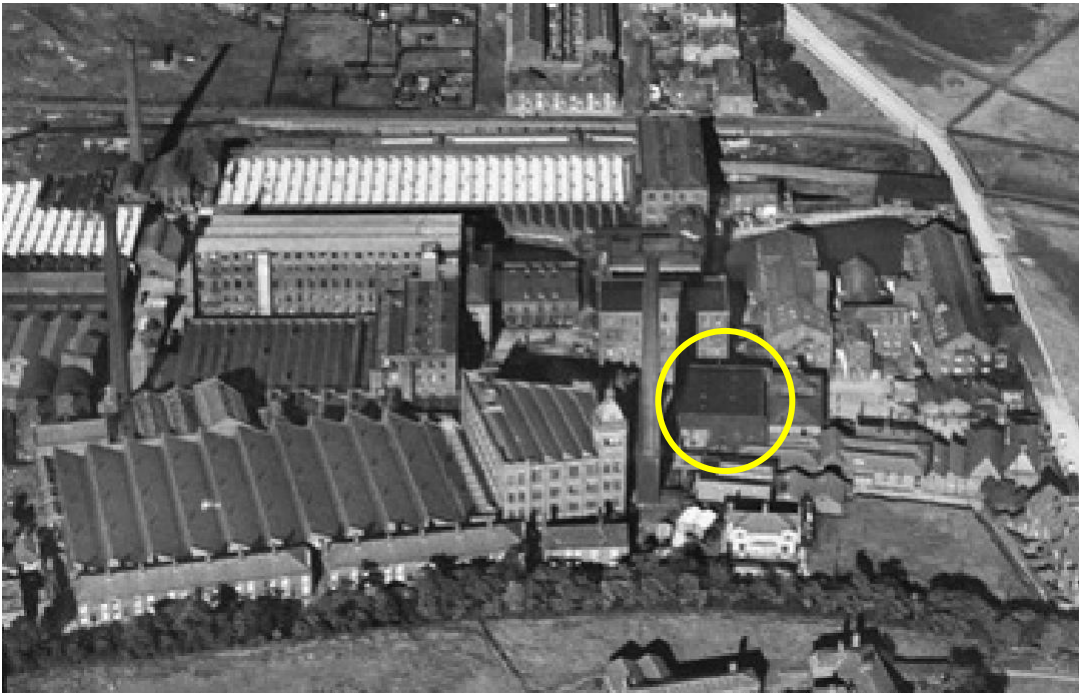
The first buildings within the Fieldhouse Mills complex appear to have been constructed in 1833, by Jacob Bright (1775 – 1851). The site operated as a cotton spinning business and was the headquarters of Jacob 'Bright and Company'. These initial buildings, however, have not survived and are no longer in-situ at the site.

Jacob retired in 1839, with the business continuing under his sons, John, Thomas and Jacob, using the name 'Bright and Sons'. The business prospered which, from the mid-19th century onwards, enabled operations at the site to expand (to include carpet weaving) and new buildings to be erected. These structures are evident on the 1851 map (see **Figure i** within **Appendix 2**), which include the 'Wooden House' and another adjoining structure that today border two of the units earmarked for demolition (F13 and F14-15). It is understood that these buildings were originally constructed for residential purposes, before being brought into the ambit of operations at the Mill complex. Both structures have, however, been subject to several alterations over the course of their history, which is reflective of the fact that they have been functional, working buildings for over 170 years that have needed to adapt to changing technologies and working practices.

Two large Spinning Mills (Spinning Mill 1, to the west of the Site, and Spinning Mill 2 further east) and their associated sheds still occupy the Fieldhouse estate today. These building date from the late 19th / early 20th century, with the former marked '1900' on its tower. Both buildings remain relatively intact, with Spinning Mill 1 displaying a level of architectural interest that is derived from its relatively ornate tower feature and brick-arched windows with keystone headers above.

Units F13 and F14-15 appear to date from no earlier than the first quarter of the early 20th century, given that they do not appear on the 1893 map for the Site (see **Figure ii** within **Appendix 2**). Something akin to the present-day footprint of F13 is visible on the 1910 map (See **Figure iii** of **Appendix 2**), although it seems to form part of a longer building that incorporates an arched entrance. Additionally the map does not depict the chamfered southern end that is visible today. It is evident from **Figure 2**, that different brickwork has been used at this southern end, which suggests that this part of the building has indeed been altered during its history.

Unit F14-15 is visible on the 1939 map (see **Figure iv** within **Appendix 2**), but also on aerial photography from 1926 (see circled, overleaf, in **Figure 9**).



^ Figure 9: Aerial image of Fieldhouse Mills, dated 1926

The exact uses of both buildings is unknown, but it is possible that F13 was a loading shed given its former proximity to sidings from the Facit Branch Line. More broadly, this building, and F14-15 would have been constructed to support operations within Spinning Mills 1 and 2, where the bulk of the manufacturing took place. Neither F13 or F14-15 incorporate any architectural features of merit and it is evident from the photographs submitted alongside this application that both have been much altered during their history, via a series of unsympathetic alterations. Fundamentally though, both buildings are in a very poor condition and on the verge of collapsing.

The majority of the other buildings within the Industrial Estate, including Unit D8 (to be demolished under this application), comprise of more modern warehouses that date from the second half of the 20th century. Unit D8 is clearly visible on the 1959 map but does not feature on the 1947 version (see **Figure v of Appendix 2**). It is of corrugated metal construction above a brick base and in a poor condition (as confirmed within the Building Condition Report that forms part of this application). Whilst Unit D8 was constructed during a relatively prosperous time for Bright and Sons, in terms of employment numbers, it is considered to be wholly unremarkable as a structure and holds little historic value given that there are many other examples of warehousing from this era that survive today. As such, Unit D8, along with its modern contemporaries elsewhere within the site, are not considered to be of any historic or architectural significance.

The significance of the Fieldhouse Mills complex as a whole is principally derived from its 'historic' and 'communal' interest. The Bright family, who managed the Fieldhouse estate for more than a century, are synonymous with the growth of the cotton industry in Rochdale and employed thousands of local workers within the Mill Estate up until 1980. John Bright (1811 – 1889), the son of Jacob, was a highly influential politician, whilst Jacob Bright (Jnr) (1821 – 1899) was also a Member of Parliament and Mayor of Rochdale. This significance is, however, attributable to the site as a whole and is arguably embodied most by the two remaining Spinning Mills. Much of the key manufacturing took place within these buildings and their height, size, design and prominence made them focal points to the surrounding community. These two buildings, alongside the Wooden House, are considered to be the most significant of the buildings that still remain today.

It is, however, considered that all three buildings will be unaffected by the proposed demolition works. Whilst buildings F13 and F14-15 are physically in close proximity to the Wooden House, their demolition will not

diminish the modest significance of the latter given their differing eras of construction and function (the Wooden House and adjoining building originally stood alone for more than fifty years following their construction).

Units F13 and F14-15 are ancillary structures that are only considered to present a very limited degree of significance, in so far as they form part of a wider group of (more significant) Mill buildings and provide an indication of how the wider Mill site might have operated and evolved over time. Notwithstanding this, it is difficult to gain a clear understanding of how the Mill would have functioned from reviewing these buildings today, in their present condition, given the extent to which they have been adapted over time and given their sparse / damaged interiors.

Overall, it is considered that the very limited historic and communal significance associated with Units F13 and F14-15 would be readily outweighed by the benefits associated with demolishing these dilapidated buildings, which will enable the wider Site to continue operating in a safe and effective manner. Thus it is considered that the development is in compliance with nation policy contained within the NPPF and with local policy contained in the Council's Core Strategy (specifically Policy P2).

Relevant Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the 'Development Plan' unless 'material considerations' indicate otherwise.

At the local level the relevant policies are those set out in Rochdale's Core Strategy, which was adopted in October 2016.

Policy P2 (Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage) states that the borough's heritage will be protected by... conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets, both statutory and non-statutory, which include engineering heritage, including mills, canals and railways.

Policy E2 (Increasing Jobs and Security) of the Core Strategy states that the Council will ensure a sufficient supply of suitable land, buildings and infrastructure in the right places to support the creation and retention of successful businesses and increase the number and quality of jobs to create a more prosperous lower carbon economy. To do this the Council will:

- Protect those existing employment zones and employment (B1 - B8) sites outside employment zones which are most suited to continued employment use. Uses other than employment will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that they would be more appropriate.

It is clear from the survey commentary and accompanying photography contained within the Condition Report that the buildings to be demolished currently make no meaningful contribution to the employment offer within the Industrial Estate or the Borough as a whole. Furthermore, the Report goes on to demonstrate that it would not be viable to try and renovate each of the buildings.

In any event, the wider Bizspace estate will continue to function as an employment site, with the demolition works having no direct effect on employment numbers. Indeed the demolition works would actually have a positive impact in so far as they will allow the estate to operate in a safer and more efficient manner.

For these reasons, the application is considered to be in compliance with Policy E2 of the Core Strategy.

Supporting Plans and Documents

The following information has been submitted via the Planning Portal in support of the planning application:

- Planning Application Form and Certificate A.
- Demolition Plan (Rev A) Fieldhouse Industrial Estate

- Building Condition Report Rev: 0 – Roger Hannah, 23 March 2023
- Existing Elevations – Drawing No. 3392 05 Rev: A
- Proposed Elevations – Drawing No. 3392 06 Rev: A
- Asbestos Demolition Survey Ref. HCA02246 Version 1 – Home Counties Asbestos Ltd., 17 April 2022
- Asbestos Demolition Survey Ref. HCA02250 Version 1 – Home Counties Asbestos Ltd., 06 April 2022
- Method Statement – ST Demolition and Groundworks Ltd. 03 August 2023
- Preliminary Roost Assessment and Nocturnal Bat Survey Report – e3p ref: 80-955-R1-1, dated 10 August 2022.

Payment of the required Planning Application Fee of £532 (comprising application fee of £468 and Planning Portal administration fee of £64) in line with the Town and Country Planning (Fee for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visit) (England) Regulations 2012) has been made via the Planning Portal.

We would be grateful if you could confirm receipt of this planning application and confirm in writing that it has been successfully registered and validated.

Please do not hesitate to contact me by 'phone (07300 806 110) or by e-mail (james@euankellie.co.uk) should any matters arising from the application require clarification.

Yours faithfully,



James Ketley MRTPI
Associate Director
james@euankellie.co.uk

Appendix 1: Historic Environment Record for 'Fieldhouse Mills'

HER Number: 5068.1.0

NGR: SD 8985 1472

Marked on both OS 1848 and 1851 maps as a cotton mill. Integrated site. Good range of buildings. Spinning mill No.1: '1900' on the tower, 4 storeys, brick built, 12x4 bays. Mainly brick-arched windows. Spinning mill No.2: late C19, 4 storeys, brick built, 10x4 bays. Late C19 weaving shed, brick built with a slate roof, since modified. The warehouse is late C19, 2 storeys, brick built, includes offices. The main office building is at the entrance to the site. It is of 2 storeys, brick built and late C19. A well-conserved site. At present only the weaving shed is occupied, by Laboratory Sales (UK) Ltd; the other buildings are vacant.

The above buildings have replaced the original mid-C19 structures on the site.

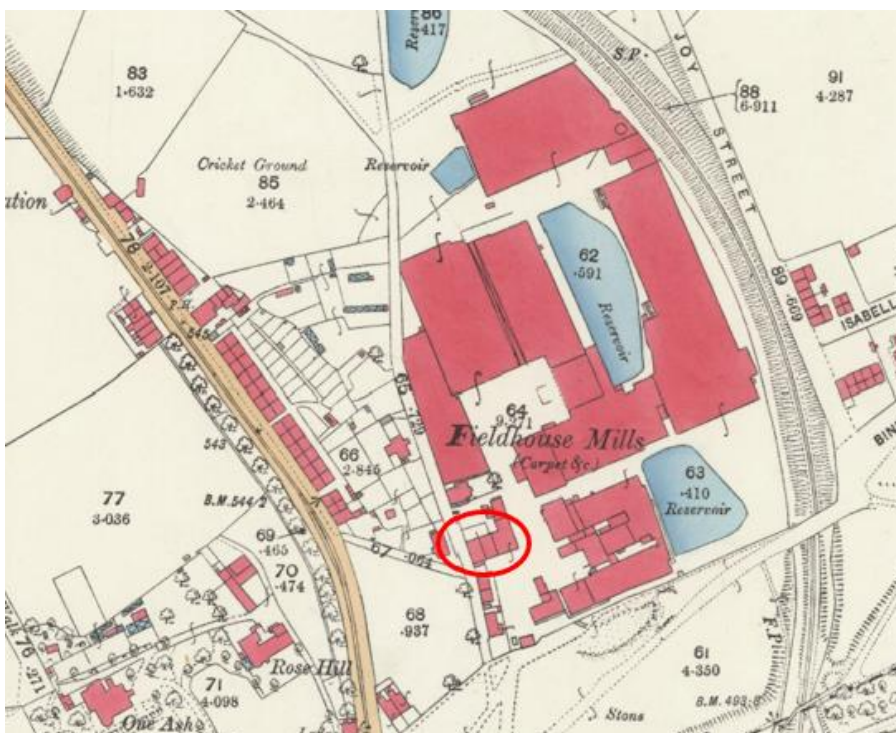
Yates & Thom engine of 1910. 1200 hp at 80 rpm. Still in situ 1958.

Site visited 16th March 2017. Some boarded windows noted. The west weaving shed is clad and appears to be fully occupied. However, most of the spinning blocks and indeed the rest of the complex appears to be vacant. Fair condition partly occupied. Below-ground archaeological potential: medium. Demolished parts, including possible power system features, appear to be undeveloped.

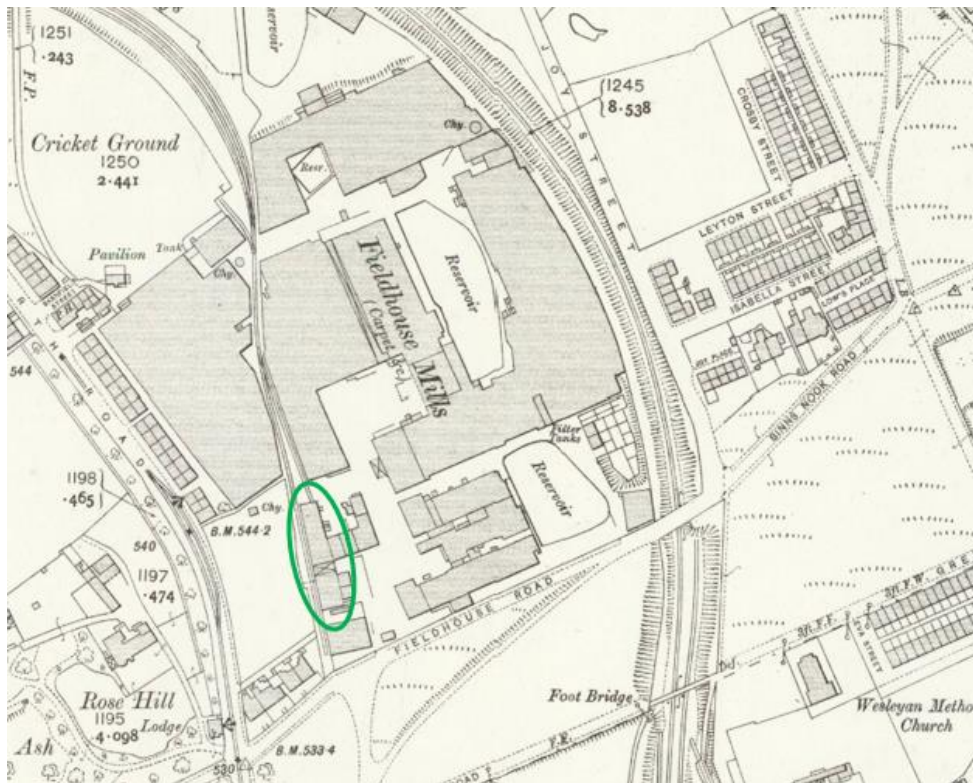
Appendix 2: Historic Maps



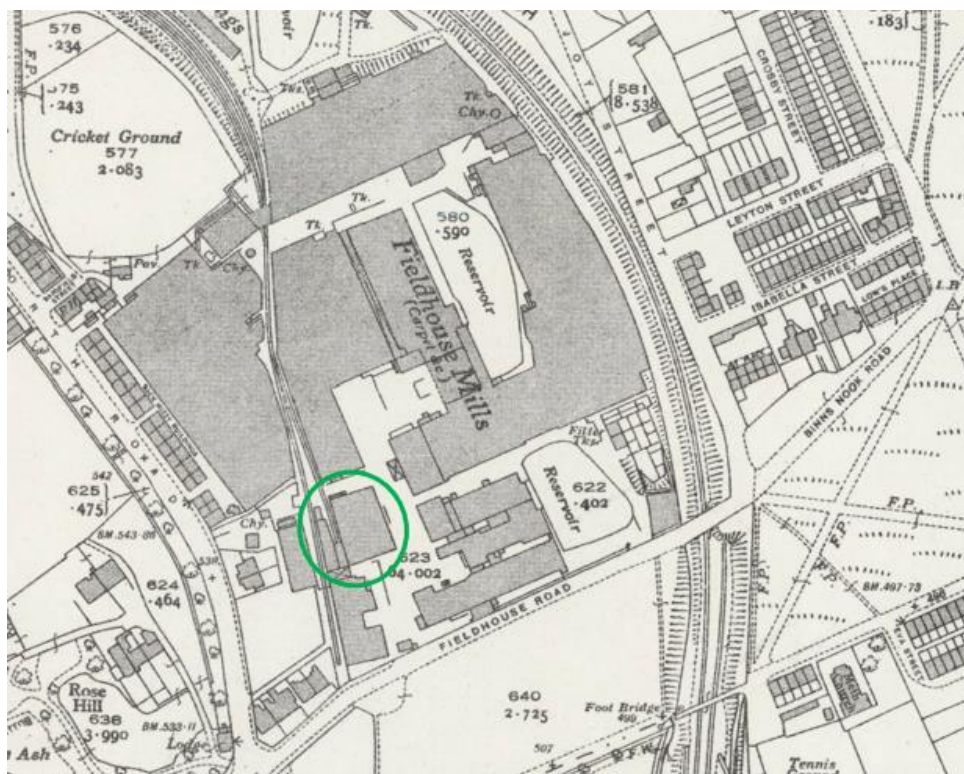
^ Figure i: Extract from Ordnance Survey map of 1851 (note Wooden House, circled red)



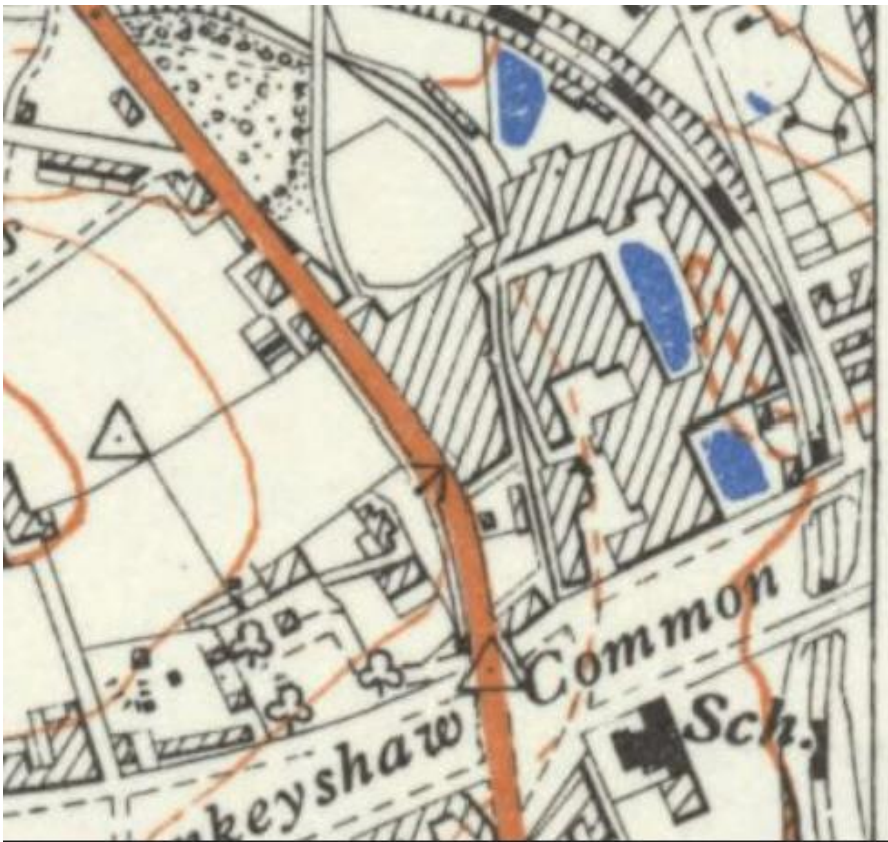
^ Figure ii: Extract from 1893 Ordnance Survey map of 1893 (note Wooden House, circled red)



^ Figure iii: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1910 (note Unit F13 circled green)



^ Figure iv: Extract from Ordnance Survey map of 1939 (note Unit F13 (left) and F14-15 (right) circled green)



^ Figure v: Extract from Ordnance Survey map of 1947