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Planning, Development & Heritage Consultants

Hallmark Developments (Northwest) Ltd

Site of the former Dexine Rubber Works,
Rochdale

Heritage Statement

30 October 2020

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Job Number: 17.1122

Project: Site of the former Dexine Rubber Works

Client: Hallmark Developments (Northwest) Ltd

File Name: Heritage Statement

Document Preparation/Checking Record:

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Document Revision Record:

Issue No.	Date	Details of Revisions
I	11.06.19	Amended following client comments
II	26.06.19	Updated to reflect scheme changes
III	29.10.20	Updated to reflect Oct 20 scheme

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Paul Butler Associates on behalf of Hallmark Developments (Northwest) Ltd. The statement has been provided to accompany a full planning application on the site of the former Spotland Mill (also previously known as Dexine Rubber Works) for a mixed use development and refurbishment works to the existing industrial units. The proposed scheme is a re-submission of application 19/00804/FUL, which approved the following in November 2019:

Full application (part retrospective) for the demolition of on-site buildings including the existing mill building, the erection of 12 industrial units (B1 and B2 Use Classes), the refurbishment and minor alteration of existing industrial buildings together with the creation of a service yard and car parking; the erection of 4 dwellings (2no 4 bedroom semi-detached units), together with the creation of parking areas for existing units (39 spaces) and parking for proposed units (74 spaces, including 2 disabled units) and the alteration of the existing access.

- 1.2 The amendments being sought under this application can be summarised as follows:
- Change in the siting and external design of the commercial units however the overall height is unchanged.
 - Removal of residential plots 1 and 2 onto Spotland Road.
 - Closing off existing access on Spotland Road adjacent to numbers 201-205 and provision of new access (and car park) east of number 211.
- 1.3 Since the approval of the previous application, the existing mill building has been demolished. The chimney was previously removed following approval in 2018.
- 1.4 The site does not contain any known designated heritage assets, however it was built upon from the 1860's, with the former mill dating from around 1870. Prior to demolition a Level 2 Building Survey (Paul Butler Associates, 2019) of the former mill was completed to record its historic interest.

- 1.5 The site also lies within the Spotland Bridge Conservation Area (a designated heritage asset).
- 1.6 This statement has been prepared in accordance with the policies and procedures of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) following a visual and photographic survey of the site, in addition to an examination, analysis and assessment of available historic records and cartographic sources held at Rochdale Library and Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service. The University of Manchester Archaeology Unit also previously undertook an archaeological English Heritage style Level II building survey of the mill and extant buildings in 2007, including a detailed history of the site, which has been used for this report (Hradill et al. 2007).

Structure of the Statement

- 1.7 This statement includes:
- A description of the application site's location;
 - A summary of the application site's archaeological and historical background;
 - A summary of the heritage planning policy guidance context, and;
 - An assessment of the impact of the proposal upon the Spotland Bridge Conservation Area; and,
 - A conclusion
- 1.8 This statement is not intended to be a full or complete record of the site. The statement should be read in conjunction with the Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement and other supporting reports submitted with the application.

2. The Application Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The site is bounded by Spotland Road to the north, Primrose Street to the east, Spodden Street to the south and the River Spodden to the west, c. 1.5km to the northwest of Rochdale town centre. The former mill building is one of the five sites recorded on the Historic Environment Record as within the Spotland Bridge Conservation Area, which included 2 listed buildings, 2 buildings and a monument. The National Grid Reference of the site is SJ SD 88758 13676.
- 2.2 The former mill building is not listed but is an entry on the Historic Environment Record (HER No. 5060.1.0). The former Bus and Tram Terminus (HER No. 693.1.0) lies on the other side of the River Spodden, dating from 1904. Spotland Textile Finishing Works (HER No. 5061.1.0) lies to the south, on the other side of Spodden Street, although outside of the Conservation Area. The site of the Alexander Drew Mill/Mellor Street Mill (HER No. 5063.1.0) lies to the southwest of the application site and the 1904 Bridge over the River Spodden (HER No. 16122.1.0) lies to the south. The Grade II Listed Spotland Bridge New Mill (HER No. 5064.1.0) lies to the north west of the site, erected in 1834.
- 2.3 The site lies towards the eastern boundary of the Spotland Bridge Conservation Area, which was first designated in July 2007 and later extended in July 2013. There is no Conservation Area Appraisal available on the RMBC website, however the area covered by the designation is shown in figure 2.1 below.

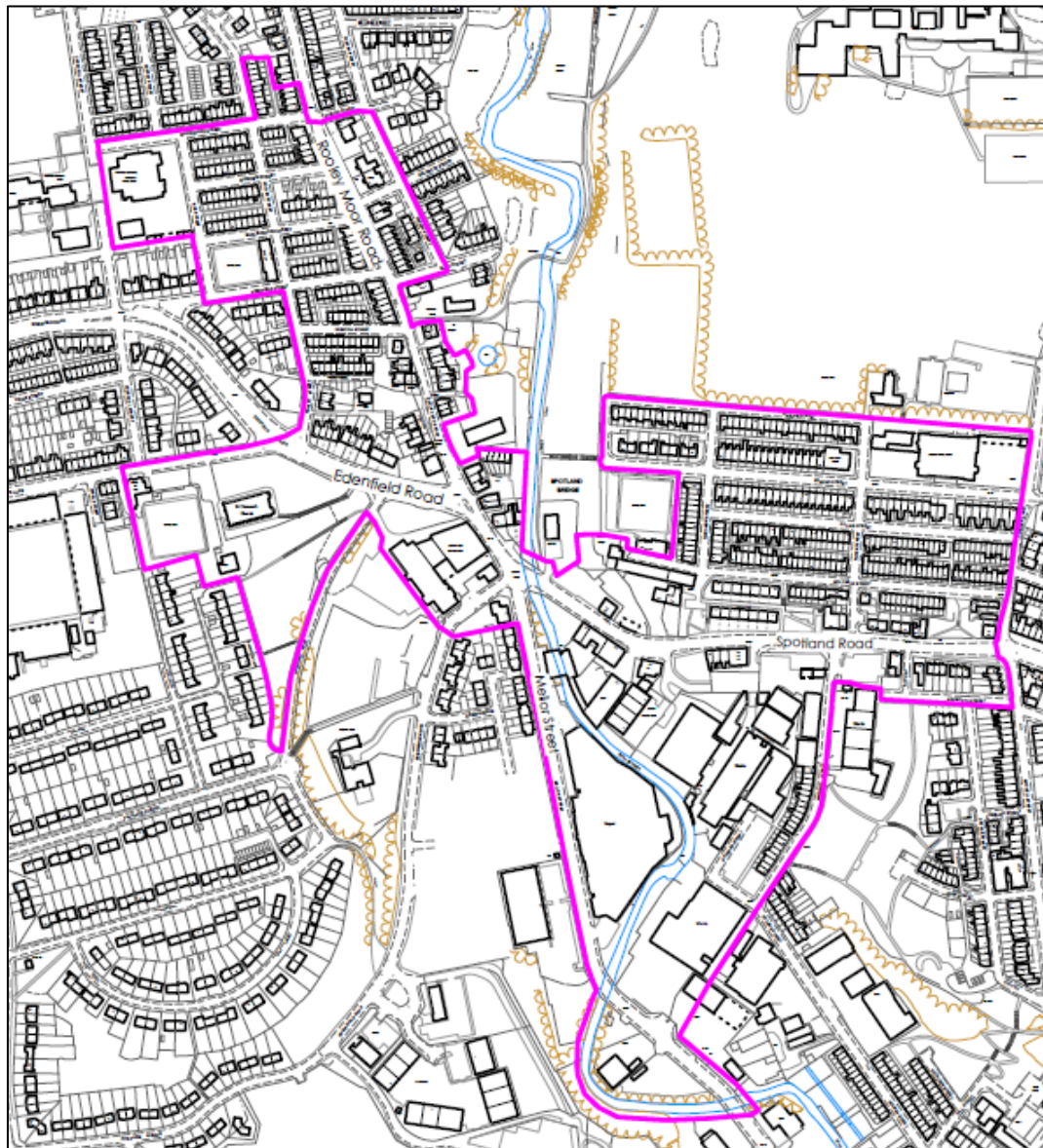


Figure 2.1: Map of Spotland Bridge Conservation Area

- 2.4 The former mill and associated buildings have recently been cleared following the approval of planning permission in 2019 and the site is being prepared for re-development. The photos below illustrate the current status of the site.



Figure 2.2: Photo looking east across the site to properties fronting Primrose Street.



Figure 2.3: Photo looking south east towards rear of site, with Holmes Street in the background.



Figure 2.4: Photo looking south across the cleared site, the existing commercial unit is within the right of the view.

3. The Proposed Scheme

- 3.1 The Design and Access Statement prepared by AJ Cocker Associates and submitted as part of the application sets out the design objectives underlying the proposed scheme. The design approach focuses on providing a high design quality mixed use environment, which responds to the local context and has a beneficial impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 3.2 The proposals comprise the redevelopment of the site with a mixed-use scheme including 2 semi-detached residential units at the southern end of Primrose Street. The dwellings will be constructed of facing brick, with areas of detailed brickwork and reconstituted slate roofing material.
- 3.3 10 new commercial units are proposed (units 9-18), which will comprise single storey clad structures. The existing warehouse located to the rear of the former mill will be retained and refurbished.
- 3.4 The proposals also involve the closing of the existing access to the east of 201-205 Spotland Road and a new enhanced access proposed via the existing access route to the site (west of 225 Spotland Road). New car parking for the units is proposed throughout the scheme including a car parking court to the east of 211 Spotland Road. Along the Spotland Road frontage a series of new boundary treatments are proposed to complement the existing surviving masonry walls.
- 3.5 The justification for the design approach is provided within the Design and Access Statement submitted as part of the application.

Pre-Application Consultation with the Local Authority

- 3.6 Prior to submission of application 18/00727/HYBR the Project Team undertook pre-application discussions with the local planning authority. As part of pre-application

dialogue¹ Paul Ambrose (Senior Planning Officer) informally expressed that the demolition of the mill based on its significance to the Conservation Area would cause less than substantial harm and that it will be necessary to set out the public benefits of the scheme for consideration.

- 3.7 Following the consideration of Application 18/00727/HYBR comments were received from senior officers at the Council expressing a preference for an element of commercial use to be included within the proposals. This submission (as with the previous application 19/00804/FUL) addresses these comments by proposing commercial development.

¹ Email dated 14.03.2017

4. The Heritage Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 The heritage planning policy of relevance to the proposed scheme, and which provides the context for its assessment, is set out within national and local planning policy guidance.

National Planning Legislation and Policy Guidance

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

- 4.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning Act states that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. This establishes the Development Plan as the primary decision making document when considering planning applications.
- 4.3 In this instance the development plan currently comprises the Rochdale Core Strategy (adopted in October 2016) and the saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan for Rochdale (adopted in June 2006). The relevant provisions of these documents are discussed below.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.4 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in February 2019 and sets out the government's objectives for achieving sustainable development. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which ensures that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way.
- 4.5 Development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Development Plan should be approved without delay. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, permission should be granted unless:

- The application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the proposed development; or
- Any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

4.6 Paragraph 8 confirms that there are three dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. To achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be pursued in mutually supportive ways through the planning system. These three dimensions are all of relevance to the determination of an application for the proposed scheme. The scheme comprises a high quality designed mixed-use scheme and will provide significant benefits. It will provide economic benefits through job creation and the provision of new homes; social benefits through the provision of a mix of house types to meet a local need; and, environmental benefits through the redevelopment of a brownfield site and the efficient reuse of land, which will also act as a catalyst for the redevelopment of other underused land and buildings in this part of Rochdale. The benefits associated with the scheme are set out in detail in the supporting planning statement.

4.7 In relation to determining planning applications, the NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a golden thread running through planning decision making.

4.8 Section 16 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment' and policies 184-202 of the NPPF sets out the heritage context. The NPPF states that Heritage Assets are '*an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations*'.

4.9 Paragraphs 189 and 190 requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting; sets out that 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; and, states that local planning authorities should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

4.10 Paragraph 192 sets out three considerations which local planning authorities should take account of in determining applications.

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

4.11 Paragraph 193 notes that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 194 follows that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building should be exceptional.

4.12 Paragraph 195 identifies a series of criteria that must be met where substantial harm to or total loss of significance will be caused to a designated heritage asset, or that it can be demonstrated that substantial loss or harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss. Paragraph 196 states that where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

4.13 The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly on non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be

required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. (Para 197)

- 4.14 Paragraph 200 states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance; and, that proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.
- 4.15 Para 201 advises *'Not all elements of a Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 195 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 196, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area as a whole'.*

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 4.16 With regard to assessing substantial harm, National Planning Practice Guidance advises: *'Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.'* (Paragraph: 017 Reference ID: 18a-017-20140306).

Historic England Guidance

- 4.17 Historic England has published guidance to assist with the management of the historic environment. This assessment has been prepared having regard to the following Historic England Guidance.

Historic England Advice Note 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets

- 4.18 Published in February 2016, this advice note illustrates the application of the policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for planning permission which affect heritage assets.

Local Planning Policy Guidance: The Development Plan for Rochdale

Rochdale Core Strategy Development Plan Document (October 2016)

- 4.19 Rochdale's Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document was adopted on 19 October 2016. The plan contains various core strategic objectives which seek to support and encourage economic growth, residential development and investment within the borough over the plan period. The proposed development is therefore supported in principle by the strategic economic development policies of the plan. Heritage policies of the core strategy of relevance to the proposed scheme include:
- P1 'Improving image' which states that high quality design will be required in all new developments. New development will improve the image of the borough by promoting the development and re-use of under-used land and buildings, maximising the potential for heritage assets to provide a sense of place and image; and, creating people-friendly, safe, vibrant, uncluttered public areas.
 - P2 'Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage' which advises that the borough's heritage will be protected by conserving, enhancing and utilising other non-statutory heritage assets of local interest; using heritage assets positively and

intelligently to strengthen identity and image and support the visitor economy, particularly in development and regeneration schemes; and, prioritising the conservation of heritage assets at risk from decay, giving special attention to designated heritage assets in this regard.

Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for the Borough of Rochdale (adopted June 2006)

4.20 The Rochdale Unitary Plan is part of the adopted development plan for the area and is a key document for decision making regarding the site. The Plan was produced under a now-superseded system of development planning and its extant policies are 'saved', which means they will continue to be used for development control purposes until replaced by the Local Development Framework currently being prepared. Heritage saved policies of the UDP of relevance to the proposed scheme include:

- BE/16 'Demolition of buildings in conservation areas' states that when considering proposals for the demolition of unlisted buildings in a Conservation Area, the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area in which the building is situated will be considered. Consent to demolish will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that the building cannot be beneficially used and all possible efforts have been made to find a use for the building. It is also a requirement to provide plans for the development or appropriate treatment of the site following demolition, which must enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area.
- BE/17 'New development affecting Conservation Areas' states that development proposals will be permitted that preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area. The following principles, where relevant, will be taken into account: a) Its relationship to existing buildings, the site and its surroundings; b) Its design - including elevations, roof form, materials, finishes and detailing; c) The retention, replacement and restoration of historic features and details of buildings, and - in the public realm - walls, paving and street furniture; d) The retention and enhancement of landscaped areas, trees and natural features; e) The design of new

shop fronts (and replacements and/or alterations to those existing) should reflect the character or appearance of the conservation area, consistent with the provisions of Policy BE/5; f) The design and siting of advertisements, new street furniture, paving and other highway surfaces and related structures (e.g., lighting and signs); and g) The design and siting of car parking and servicing facilities.

5. Archaeological and Historical Background

- 5.1 Although no significant finds have been found in the immediate study area a quern stone of unknown Prehistoric date (HER No. 722.1.0) was found to the south of the site, close to the present cricket ground. Mesolithic and Neolithic activity has been documented around Rochdale, chiefly on the higher ground. From the Mesolithic period the most notable discovery was of a Mesolithic workshop on Blackstone Edge. (Marshall n.d., 6-7). Worked flints have been found in the Littleborough area and 'Fishwick' records another twenty-five sites around Rochdale where Neolithic flints have been found in quantity. Recently two collapsed stone circles have been discovered on the moors above Rochdale on Hamer Hill. Both are made of local stone and probably date from the Bronze Age. In 1832, a bronze torque was found by workmen in Calderbrook and believed to date from the late Iron Age (Fishwick, p5). Further Bronze and Iron age evidence exists in the form of several axe heads found around Rochdale, as well as burial mounds, including Hades Hill barrow, excavated in 1895 (Marshall n.d., 8).
- 5.2 A possible Roman road runs over Blackstone Edge to the north-east of the town, although its purpose and origins are unclear. A known Roman road that connected Manchester to Aldborough is known to run to the east of Rochdale. In 1804, an iron box was unearthed at Underwood containing a number of bronze coins of the later empire. The arm of a silver statue of Victory, along with numerous other coins of the Roman period have also been found in the area (Farrer & Brownbill p187-201).
- 5.3 During the Saxon period Rochdale was frequently invaded by the Danes. Initially penetrating the area and settling, as some local place-names confirm. Athelstan became the first true King of England when he gained victory over the Vikings at the Battle of Brunanburh in 937, and his kingdom for the first time included the Danelaw and effectively ended Danish control of the area. A castle, from which nearby Castleton has its name, but of which there are no traces, was one of the twelve Saxon forts probably destroyed in the frequent conflicts that occurred between the Saxons and Danes in the 10th and 11th centuries (Samuel, 679-686).

- 5.4 Initially after the Norman Conquest, the parish of Rochdale appears to have been a single Lordship. The church of Rach (Rochdale) is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 and the area is recorded as the Manor of Recedham. Prior to the Norman invasion of 1066 the lands around the area of Rochdale were held by a Saxon Thane named Gamel, one of the twenty one Thegns of the Salford Hundred, who was free from all customs except six; his holding was originally accessed as two hides or twelve ploughlands (Farrer & Brownbill 187-201). At the time of the Domesday Book entry, the lands in the area of Rochdale were held by Roger De Poitou, who later fell out of favour with the crown and was stripped of his property. By 1178, John De Lacy Constable of Chester held the manor of Rochdale and divided lands in the area amongst his retainers. De Lacy also founded the Cistercian abbey of Stanlaw and endowed it with some local land. More gifts of land followed when the abbey was subsequently moved to Whalley in 1295 where it prospered for the next 250 years. The year 1311 saw the death of the last male heir of the De Lacy family and the manor of Rochdale along with the manor of Clitheroe passed to the Dukes of Lancaster and eventually reverted to the crown. In 1625 Charles I sold the manor to trustees for the Earl of Holderness, who immediately sold it to Sir Robert Heath, the Attorney General. He first mortgaged the manor then subsequently sold it to Sir John Byron in 1638. The manor remained in the Byron family until the poet Lord Byron sold it to James Dearden in 1823 (Farrer & Brownbill p187-201).
- 5.5 By 1251, Rochdale had received a Royal Charter and the town Rochdale grew into the centre of the woollen trade in the North of England. Great changes occurred during the 16th century with the confiscation of Whalley lands during the reformation producing new landlords. According to an act of 1565, Rochdale was one of the towns in which the aulnager was to have a resident deputy. Manufacturing and mining industries grew in importance with the Lower Coal Measures extending over the southern and central portions of the parish, with some patches of the Middle Coal Measures around the town of Rochdale. Camden in 1582 described it as a 'market town well frequented'. Some idea of the importance of the parish can be ascertained from the hearth-tax returns of 1666, which record a total of 1,267 hearths, with the largest house having 10. At the time of the Civil War, Lord Byron declared for the King, joining him at York and taking part in the battle of Edgehill. He was later created Baron Rochdale for his services to the King but after Charles'

defeat he was subsequently declared a rebel and died in exile in 1652, his land confiscated to the Commonwealth (Fishwick p.27). The vast majority of the people in Rochdale sided with Parliament and some early Royalists, belonging to the local gentry appear to have reached peaceful agreement with the Parliamentarians early in the conflict. The protestation of 1641-2 was signed by almost 2100 inhabitants 'none refusing' (Farrer & Brownbill p187-201). The manor was then leased to Sir Thomas Alcock of Middlesex and was managed by several stewards until the Byron family regained the manor after the Restoration.

- 5.6 Coptrod house (HER No. 2742.1.0) was built in the 17th century, to the south of the site, Around 1724 Daniel Defoe described Rochdale as 'a good market town, and of late much improved in the woollen manufacture, as are also the villages in the neighbourhood' (Farrer & Brownbill p187-201). The town continued to grow being unaffected by the Jacobite invasion of 1745 and was noted in the early 18th century for its many wealthy merchants. Rochdale rose to prominence during the Industrial Revolution as a major mill town and a centre for textile manufacture. The Rochdale Canal connecting the town to Manchester in 1804, was one of the major navigable broad canals of the United Kingdom and became a major highway of commerce during the 19th century used for the haulage of cotton, wool and coal to and from the area.
- 5.7 By the time of the 1844 OS map the site is shown to be vacant, and, although the area was beginning to show signs of industrial development, the area was largely rural. Spotland Bridge Dye works was built by this time, to the west of the site, along with Spotland Bridge Brewery to the northwest.
- 5.8 Spotland Bridge Mill was erected on the site by 1863, although this has since been demolished. Slaters directory of 1871 – 72 records Spodden New Mill as being on the site, with Mr J Walker as the proprietor. The listing records Mr Walker as "Woolstapler and woollen waste dealer" and Hradill et al. (2007) have argued that the mill was erected around 1870. The mill was built at least three stories high, along with the engine and boiler house to the southwest. The engine house contained a Woolfe Compound high pressure

beam engine, and the boiler house was adjacent to it, opposite the chimney (Hradill et al. 2007).

- 5.9 The 1884 Borough County Rate Book for Rochdale gives an account of the building at this time. It lists Mr Walkers Spotland property as consisting of; a Mill, Boiler House, Chimney, Power, Stables, Wool Shed, Power Warehouse, and Sheds. A new stone built boiler house was erected around this time (1884 – 88), added to the southwest elevation, next to the boiler house number 1. This contained a Lancashire boiler. In 1888 the Spotland New Mill (also called the Spotland Works) moved away from wool production towards cotton production, with 36,000 ring spindles installed. The mill first appears on the 1892 OS map, alongside the earlier Spotland Bridge Mill. The stair tower is visible in the northern corner and the boiler house is also present on the southwest elevation. A set of steps are also shown, giving access to the engine house and the octagonal chimney appears to be shared by both mills (Hradill et al. 2007).
- 5.10 The mill appears again on the 1908 OS map, where it remains the same as previously. More housing had been erected to the south, on Primrose Street and Spodden Street. The Cotton Spinners and Manufacturers Directory for 1917 records “Walker, J. G. Limited Larkfield, Wellfield and Spotland New Mills; 74,000 ring spindles, 8/36, American; Warps, Beams, Cheeses and Bundles” (Hradill et al. 2007).
- 5.11 The mill appears again on the 1928 OS map, where it is shown unchanged. The mill continued to produce cotton through the 1930’s although by this time the cotton industry was in decline. Despite this, the northeast extension was built, housing showers, toilets and changing room areas. The decline continued however and in 1941 the mill was purchased by Dexine Patent Packing and Rubber Company. The mill was reduced from three stories to two in the 1940’s and Dexine demolished the Spotland Bridge Mill and other earlier buildings around the site (Hradill et al. 2007).
- 5.12 In recent times the surviving mill building had remained vacant and the site attracted anti social behaviour. The mill chimney was demolished in 2017 following planning permission being approved for its removal, this was followed by planning permission in November 2019

for the demolition of the mill and redevelopment of the site. The mill was demolished in early 2020.

6. Heritage Assessment

- 6.1 Published on 19 February 2019, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The NPPF builds upon the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and requires applications affecting the significance of any heritage asset to be accompanied by an assessment of the asset's significance, including any contribution made by their setting, in addition to consideration of the potential impact of the application on the significance.
- 6.2 Significance is defined by Annex 2: Glossary of NPPF as: 'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting'.
- 6.3 Whilst the historic buildings on the site no longer exist, the proposed scheme involves development within the Spotland Bridge Conservation Area. Therefore, with regard to the potential impact of the development proposal on heritage significance, the assessment must consider the impact the development proposals will have on the Spotland Bridge Conservation Area.

Impact of the scheme on the Heritage Significance of Spotland Bridge Conservation Area

- 6.4 The impact of the proposed re-development upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area must be considered. In order to make an assessment of the impact of the scheme on the Conservation Area it is first necessary to identify what is significant about it. The Spotland Bridge Conservation Area - boundary appraisal and consultation document (published July 2013) states:

"Spotland Bridge is a rare example, unique within the Borough, of a townscape that displays the development of the Lancashire textile industry over hundreds of years and includes good individual examples such as Spotland Bridge New Mill, listed (Grade II) as "a good example of an early 19th century non-fireproof mill..." and for the ancillary earlier and

later mills on the site that illustrate technological development. This is further complemented by the 1870s fireproof Spotland New Mill (Dexine); a woollen Mill converted to cotton production. Together they cover much of the history of mill building. Along with archaeological remains, weaver's cottages, workers' housing, St Clement's Church and Edwardian transport development, they form a full and rich industrial townscape for Spotland that encapsulates social as well as industrial heritage...

The special historic and architectural interest of the existing conservation area lies primarily in the textile mills of Spotland Bridge New Mill (listed Grade II), its Edwardian addition and Spotland New Mill, and the former tram sheds and bus depot on Mellor Street. Taken together, the mills cover much of the history of mill building. The special interest of these buildings is complemented by a series of smaller buildings spanning the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including the Old Post Office, an interesting group of small industrial buildings close to the Spotland Bridge river crossing. Information arising from the consultation also indicates that 207-211 Spotland Road (in front of Dexine) could be early (if not the earliest) examples of housing built by the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society in 1861 and are adjacent to a co-op store in an industrial context."

- 6.5 It is clear that the significance of the Spotland Bridge Conservation Area lies in its industrial heritage and documentation of how the textile industry developed to create modern Rochdale. As such Spotland Mill, may have been considered to make a contribution to the character and heritage of the area, however with the mill now removed this contribution is diminished.
- 6.6 The scheme that is proposed following demolition of the mill will have a positive and energising impact on the surrounding area in that it will bring forward economic and social activity to an area of land in need of regeneration. The proposed redevelopment of the site comprises a well-designed scheme including semi-detached houses, and commercial units. The scheme will greatly improve the appearance of the site given its previous dilapidated condition.

- 6.7 The layout of the proposed dwellings creates new frontage activity to Primrose Street, with the semi-detached units on Primrose Street reflecting the typology of the local area. The proposed dwellings will have a positive relationship with existing buildings surrounding the site.
- 6.8 The dwelling heights will be in keeping with the surrounding residential environment which consists primarily of two storey dwellings. The new dwellings will be constructed of brick with areas of detailing around the doorways, and brick headers above the windows. Roofs will be constructed of re-constituted slate. Further details on the materials and finishes will be brought forward through the detailed design and condition discharge process and will be complimentary to the prevailing built form and as such, appropriate for this location.
- 6.9 The proposed commercial units will be low rise and feature materials typical of this type of development in the surrounding area. Units 16-18 will create built frontage to a section of the site which had been derelict for a long period of time presenting a low quality environment to the streetscene. The remaining new units will be largely screened from views on Primrose Street by the existing built form. The commercial element of the scheme is of an appropriate layout, scale and design which is in keeping with the industrial nature of the area. The proposed materials for the construction of the new units will be agreed via the discharge of conditions process and will need to be appropriate to the character of the area having regard to the proximity to nearby industrial units of a similar style located to the east.
- 6.10 Across the site new landscaping and boundary treatments will work with the topography of the site to assimilate the new development into a landscaped setting, whilst also improving the visual appearance of the site especially on the Spotland Road frontage which at present displays a fragmented appearance. The redevelopment and new boundary treatments will drastically improve the character of the streetscene with the new boundary treatments bringing uniformity and coherence to the current empty spaces between buildings.

- 6.11 The proposed residential and commercial development will improve the visual quality of the existing environment, re-instate the urban grain of the area whilst being sensitive to the character of the surrounding uses.
- 6.12 The development is therefore able to meet the requirements of Saved Policy BE17 'New Developments affecting Conservation Areas'.

Public Benefits

- 6.13 In considering the impact of the proposals on the designated heritage asset (the Conservation Area), the proposals are considered to result in less than substantial harm to the heritage significance of the Conservation Area, an assessment Council officers agreed with by virtue of approving application 19/00804/FUL which is not significantly different to this scheme. With the demolition of the mill and chimney already having taken place, the new development has the potential to improve the quality of the surrounding environment.
- 6.14 In accordance with paragraph 196 of the NPPF, where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to a Conservation Area, 'this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use'.
- 6.15 There are an array of public benefits that would arise from the scheme and these are set out in detail in the supporting planning statement. The public benefits include:
- Securing direct investment into the local community through the provision of jobs during the construction stage and spending in nearby facilities by future residents/employees.
 - Creation of employment floorspace and associated jobs for local people.
 - The encouragement of further investment into the Spotland area.
 - Provision of a variety of uses that will have a positive impact on the regeneration of the area.

- The delivery of housing which responds to an identified need for new housing on brownfield land.
- The housing will meet an identified need for accommodation in the borough of Rochdale and the mix will contribute to the creation of a sustainable community.
- Redevelopment of the site with a scheme of high design quality which responds to the character and appearance of the conservation area and will re-instate the urban grain. The proposals will provide a significant visual improvement to the existing quality of the site.
- Increased surveillance to a site which currently presents opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour;
- The re-use of a brownfield site which will reduce pressure to build houses on greenfield and Green Belt sites.

6.16 The events at planning committee for application reference 18/00727/HYBR (March 2019) are also noted with interest. At the committee, elected members were minded to overturn an officer recommendation for refusal. This motion, coupled with the strong support in the local community (a petition with 101 signatories in support was presented at the March 2019 committee) gives a clear indication that the general public have a desire to see the site positively redeveloped. In the subsequent planning application, 19/00804/FUL, only public representations of support were received in response to the application.

6.17 Evidently there is clear support locally for a viable, positively designed scheme to come forward which can regenerate the application land. Fulfilling this public desire would constitute a substantial public benefit and when this is considered alongside the substantial public benefits outlined above it is considered that this outweighs any perceived impact on the Conservation Area. Coming to a balanced conclusion it therefore entirely possible to consider the proposals to be in accordance with paragraphs 196 and 197 of the NPPF.

Summary

6.18 In summary, the scheme is considered to be a high quality design response to the site which successfully reflects the character and appearance of the Spotland Bridge

Conservation Area in a sensitive manner. The development will improve the current condition and visual appearance of the site and preserve the character of the Conservation Area. On this basis the scheme is judged to comply with relevant provisions of the NPPF, Core Strategy Policy P1 and P2, and Saved UDP Policy BE/16.

- 6.19 Furthermore the benefits of the scheme in terms of re-developing a long standing vacant, brownfield site is supported by the local community and this community support weighs heavily in support of the principle of the proposals. The benefits of the proposals are considered to clearly and decisively outweigh any perceived harm to the Conservation Area.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared to consider the potential heritage impact of a development involving the redevelopment of the application site with a mixed-use development.
- 7.2 The report highlights how the proposed development layout has been sensitively designed and reflects various elements of the conservation area such as the dense layout and compact residential properties. The proposed scale and design is considered to be appropriate for the area and references the surrounding townscape combining with contemporary elements to provide a high quality design which can significantly improve the condition of the site and preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area more widely.
- 7.3 The statement goes on to demonstrate that there are a series of public benefits that can be considered to outweigh any harm attributable to the scheme. For these reasons the proposed scheme can be considered favourably against provisions of the NPPF, Core Strategy Policy P1 and P2, Saved UDP Policies BE/15 and 17.

8. Bibliography

DCMS – Department for Culture, Media and Sport

EH – English Heritage

HER – Historic Environment Record

GMAAS – Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service

NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework

OS – Ordnance Survey

UMAU – University of Manchester Archaeology Unit

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Maps

1844 OS map Lancashire Sheet LXXXVIII
1892 OS map Lancashire Sheet LXXXVIII.4
1908 OS map Lancashire Sheet LXXXVIII.4
1928 OS map Lancashire Sheet LXXXVIII.4

Appendix 1: Historic Environment Record

Appendix 2: Figures

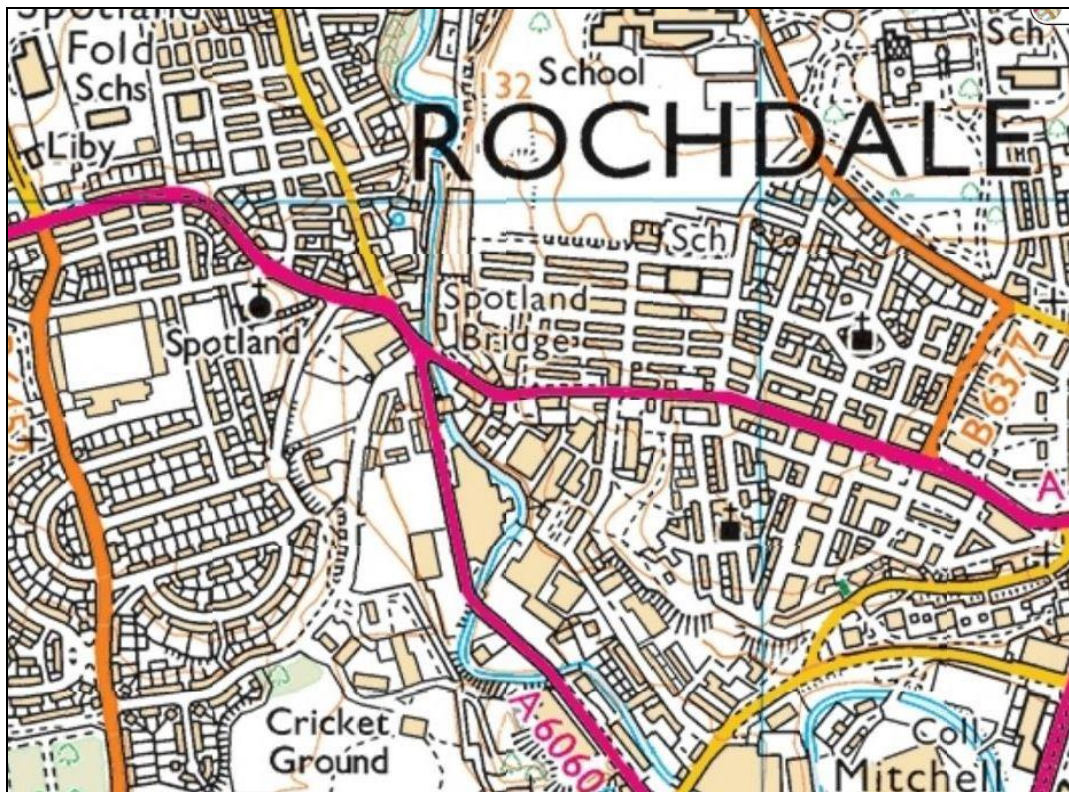


Figure 1: Location Plan (OS Licence Number: 100057911)

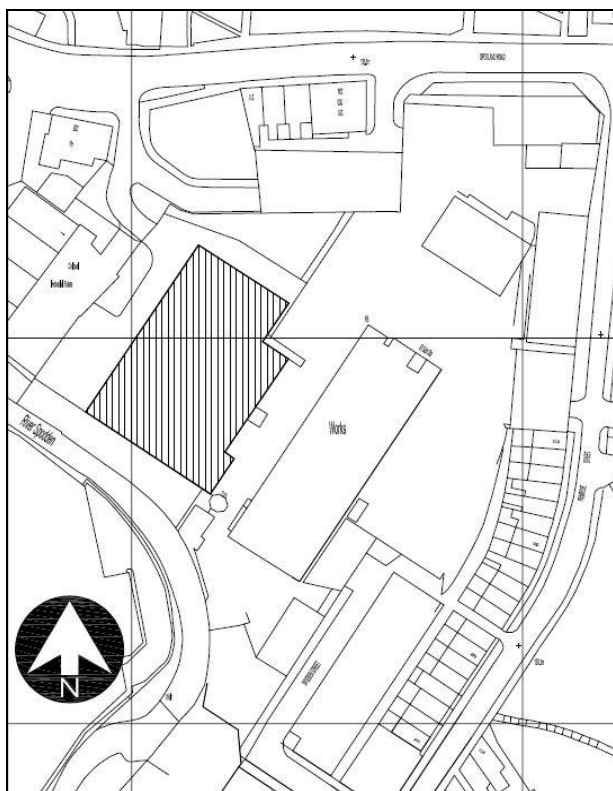


Figure 2: Site Plan



Figure 3: 1844 OS map Lancashire Sheet LXXXVIII

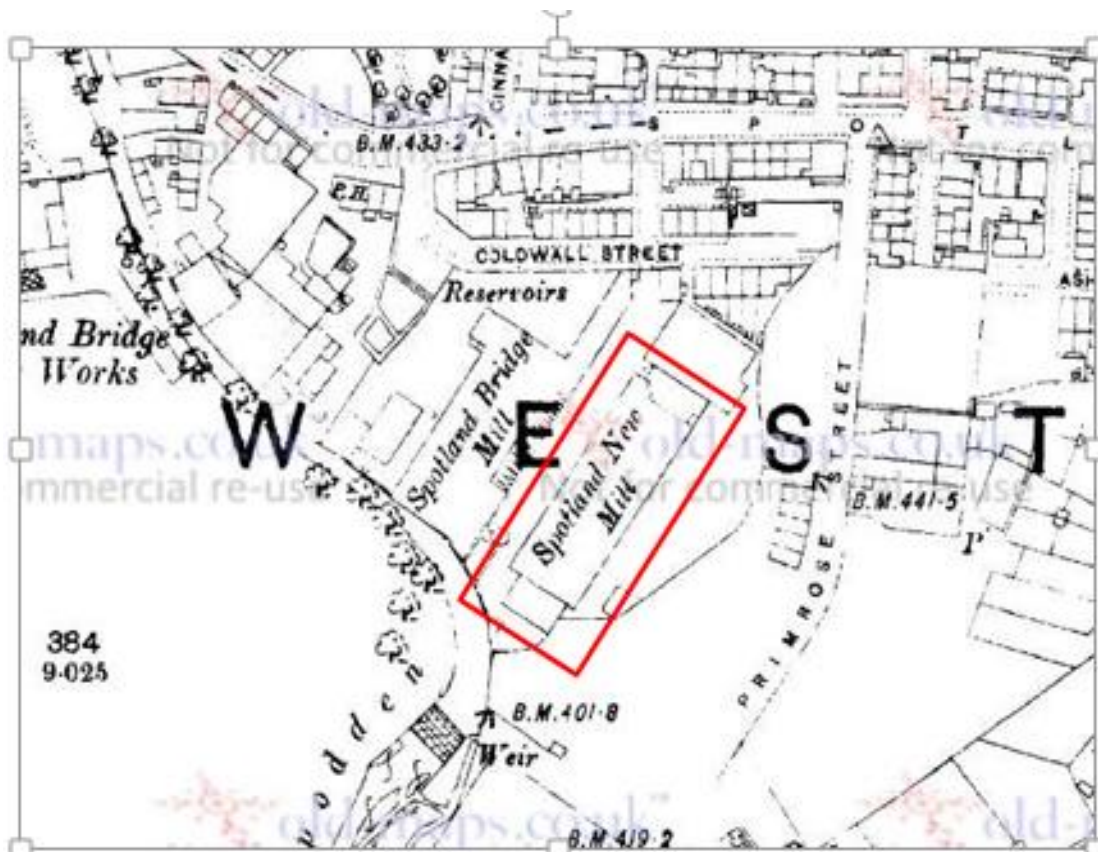


Figure 4: 1892 OS map Lancashire Sheet LXXXVIII.4



Figure 5: 1908 OS map Lancashire Sheet LXXXVIII.4

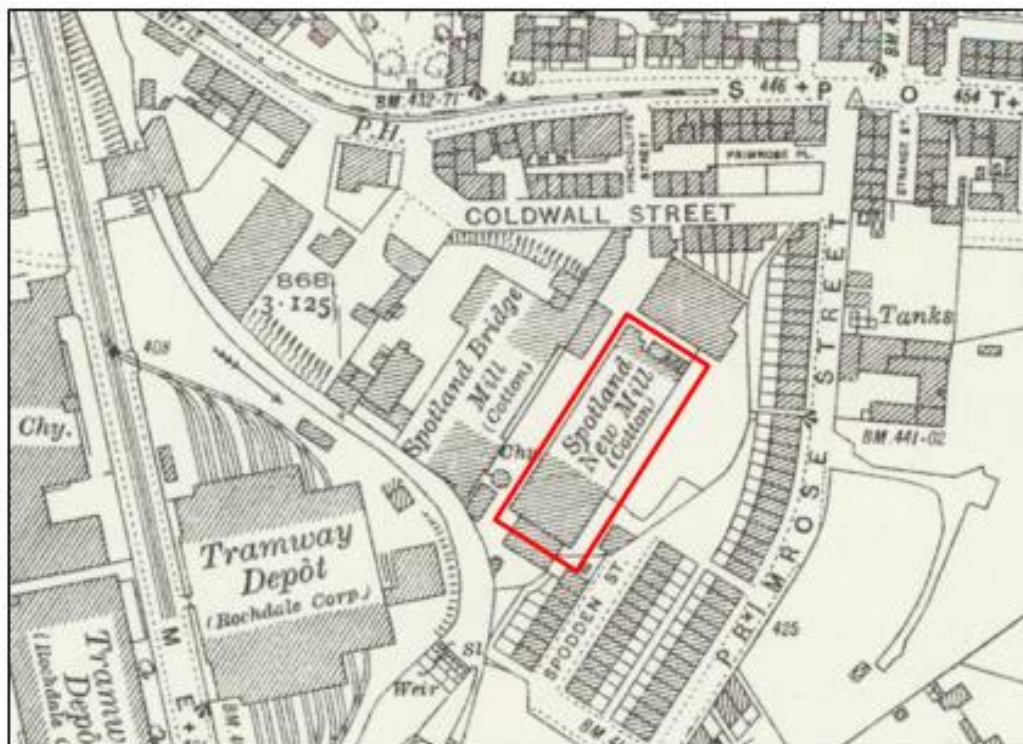


Figure 6: 1928 OS map Lancashire Sheet LXXXVIII.4