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Hallmark Developments (Northwest) Ltd

Land adj. 209 Spotland Road, Rochdale

Heritage Statement

15 August 2022

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Professional Planning, Development & Heritage Advisors since 1992.

Our professional staff are Members of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) or the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA)

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Job Number: 17.1122

Project: Former Dexine Rubber Works

Client: Hallmark Developments (Northwest) Ltd

File Name: Land adj. 209 Spotland Road: Heritage Statement

Document Preparation/Checking Record:

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Issued by:	Julian Austin BSc MPLAN MRTPI	Associate Director	15.08.2022

Document Revision Record:

Issue No.	Date	Details of Revisions

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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 for the redevelopment of the site on vacant land between Spotland Road and Coldwall Industrial Estate for the erection of a two storey office/industrial unit.
- 1.2 The site was part of a wider area which has already been redeveloped (see application 20/01193/FUL) whereby an existing mill building was demolished (the former Dexine Rubber Works), 10 industrial units were developed alongside 2 semi-detached dwellings and other associated works. The site lies within the Spotland Bridge Conservation Area (a designated heritage asset). There are no designated heritage assets within the site.
- 1.3 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 (undertaken on 9th August 2022).
- 1.4 As part of the previous applications relating to the wider former Dexine Rubber Works, the applications were supported by Heritage Statements and an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment prepared by Paul Butler Associates. As part of the condition discharge process a Level II Archaeological Building Survey of the mill was undertaken by Paul Butler Associates. An on-site archaeological investigation was also undertaken by the University of Salford, these are discussed further in section five.

Structure of the Statement

- 1.5 The remainder of this statement is structured as follows:
- Section two includes a description of the application site's location and an overview of the surrounding area;

- Section three provides an overview of the proposed scheme;
- Section four summarises the relevant heritage planning policy guidance context;
- Section five provides a summary of the application site's archaeological and historical background;
- Section six provides an appraisal of the potential impact of the proposed scheme on identified heritage assets.
- Section seven concludes the statement.

1.6 This statement is not intended to be a full or complete record of the site. The report should be read in conjunction with the previous heritage and archaeological reporting relevant to the site which was approved as part of the redevelopment of the former Dexine Rubber Works.

1.7 The proposed scheme is supported by a series of drawings prepared by Solid Void Architects.

2. The Application Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The site is situated on Spotland Road to the west of the River Spodden. It is currently vacant land and approximately 0.05 hectares in size. It is surrounded by new 2 storey office/industrial units as part of the previous application to the southeast. Adjacent to the site are two storey terraced houses to the east and a two storey commercial building to the west. Rochdale town centre is located 1.5km to the southeast. The site is located within the Spotland Bridge Conservation Area.



Figure 2.1: Aerial View of the site

- 2.2 In the surrounding area, there are a number of designated heritage assets. These include 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 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.

Conservation Area Designation

- 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 2.3 below.

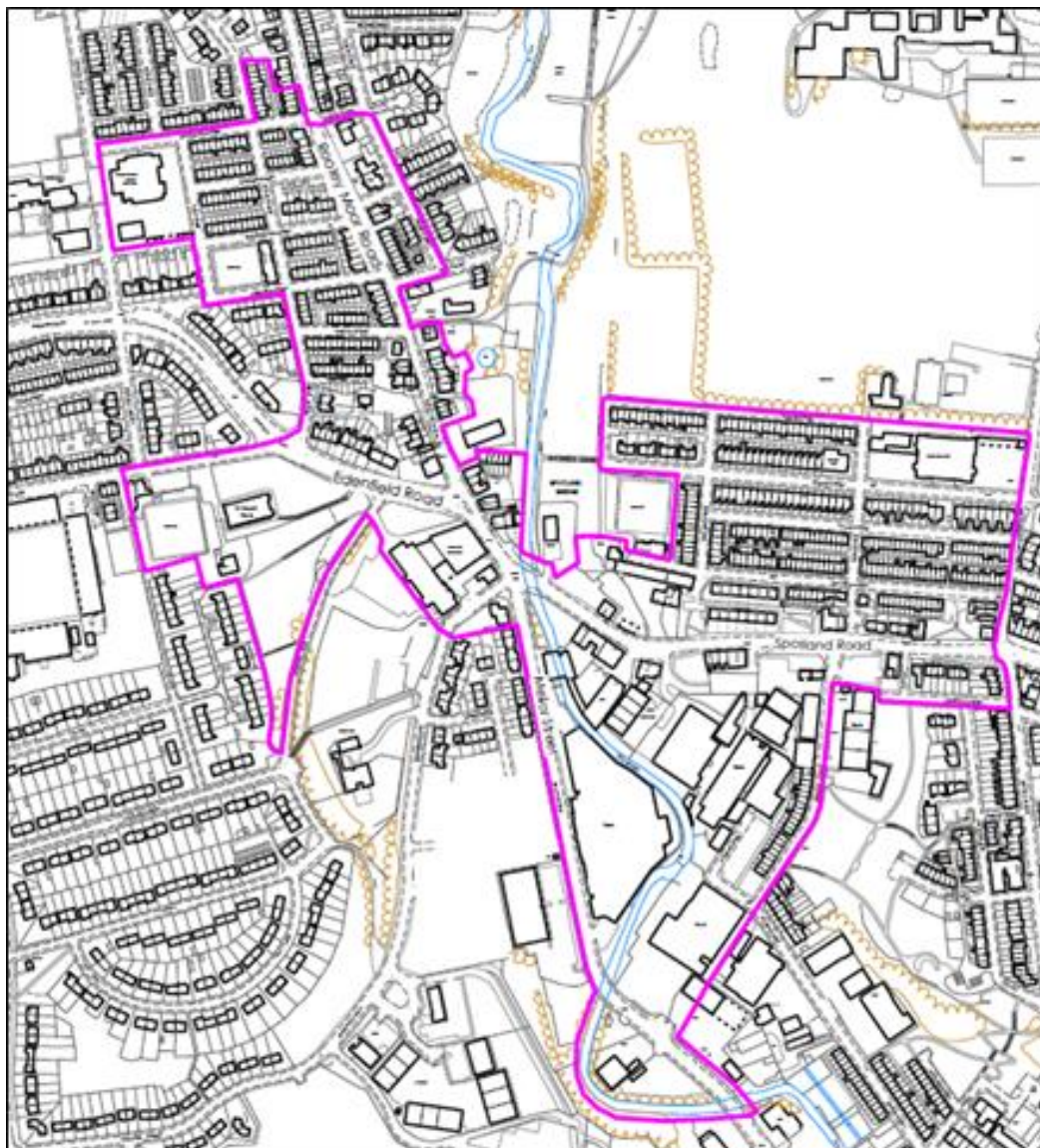


Figure 2.2: Map of Spotland Bridge Conservation Area

Site History

- 2.4 A planning history search for the site was undertaken on the 10.08.2022. As there is an extensive list of planning history for the site, the most relevant applications have been highlighted.

07/D49910: An outline planning application was approved, subject to conditions on 28.01.2008 for the erection of 2 apartment blocks incorporating 114 apartments, 44 town houses, the retention of Nos 201 to 2011 Spotland Road and the conversion of existing north and south mills and lodge to create 44 apartments and 1811 sqm of commercial space.

08/D51277: A planning application was refused on 20.10.2008 for the demolition of all existing buildings, erection of 100 town houses and one commercial building (class B1 and D1) with associated car parking and hardstanding areas. 08/D51558 A resubmission of this application occurred and was subsequently refused on 18.02.2009.

10/D52989: An outline planning application was approved subject to conditions on 02.12.2010 (for access, appearance, layout and scale) for the construction of 96 residential units, including the part conversion of the mill, the conversion of the engine house and gate house and the demolition of ancillary buildings associated with the mill.

15/00463/HYBR: A full application was approved subject to conditions on 08.12.2015 for the conversion of the mill building into 22 flats including demolition of all remaining buildings and partial demolition of mill chimney and outline application (including access) for the erection of 80 dwellings.

18/00727/HYBR: A hybrid planning application was disposed of (part outline and full): outline application (including access) on 09.09.2020 for the demolition of the former mill buildings, the erection of up to 47 dwellings and vehicular access; full application for demolition of the former mill buildings and the refurbishment of the existing steel framed industrial building including vehicular access and service yard.

19/00804/FUL: A full application (part retrospective) was approved subject to conditions on 12.11.2019 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.

20/01193/FUL: A resubmission of the previous 19/00804/FUL was submitted and approved subject to conditions on 18.03.2021 for a full application (part retrospective) on 26.11.2020 for the demolition of on-site buildings including the existing mill building, the erection of 10 industrial units (E and B2 use classes), together with the creation of a service yard, car parking and substation; the erection of 2 dwellings (4 bedroom semi-detached units), together with the creation of parking areas for existing units and parking for proposed units and the alteration of the existing access.

Site Photos



Fig 2.3: View of the site (opposite) on northern side of Spotland Road



Fig 2.4: View of the site from Spotland Road looking south east.



Fig 2.5: View of the site from side road (entrance to industrial estate)



Fig 2.6: Further view of the site from side road.

3. The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The plans prepared by Solid Void Ltd and submitted as part of the application sets out the design proposals for the scheme. The design approach focuses on providing a high quality commercial environment, which responds to the local context and has a beneficial impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 3.2 The site recently formed part of the wider site approved under planning permission 20/01193/FUL and was identified for use as overspill parking. The proposals will see the reinstatement of built form onto this site, the two storey building will continue the scale and form of the adjacent terrace, creating a bookend to this row of properties with a contemporary yet sensitive design approach.
- 3.3 The design of the external elevations has carefully considered the rhythm of openings within the wider terrace with the first floor windows arranged in a uniform manner to the front elevation. At ground floor, recessed brick panels are proposed with projecting snapped headers in a contrasting red brick. This will create architectural interest to the elevation whilst ensuring the rhythm of the façade is maintained. At the western end of the building, double height curtain walling that wraps around to the side elevation is proposed. This further elevates the design quality of the scheme and will create a strong contemporary focal point within the streetscene whilst also 'bookending' the row of properties. The afore mentioned design features are continued to the rear elevation, where a service opening is also proposed.
- 3.4 Externally, the proposed materials will include red brick walls, up and down lights, PPC grey aluminium curtain walling and grey uPVC windows. The roof will consist of natural blue slate roof tiles and on the southern elevation, 5 velux style rooflights will be installed.
- 3.5 Internally the development will combine a workshop / industrial unit at ground floor in addition to a welcome space and meeting room. At first floor, office and meeting spaces

are proposed. New landscaping is proposed to the external areas surrounding the building, the building will be served by two car parking spaces within a rear courtyard.

- 3.6 The full proposed designs can be viewed on the drawings prepared by Solid Void, submitted as part of this application.

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.

The 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. In this instance the development plan currently comprises the 'Rochdale Core Strategy - October 2016' and policies of the 'Rochdale Unitary Development Plan - June 2006' which were saved beyond October 2016. The relevant provisions of these documents are discussed below.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 4.3 The principal legislation which covers the historic environment is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 4.4 Listed Buildings are buildings of special architectural and historic interest which make up England's historic environment. They are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and alterations or demolitions require Listed Building Consent from the local authority before they can proceed.
- 4.5 A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance (Section 69 of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (published July 2021) is the overarching planning policy document for England and provides guidance about how to implement the legislation which covers the historic environment, *the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*. Within Section 16 of the NPPF – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment – are the government’s policies for the protection of heritage.

NPPF Chapter 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

- 4.7 The NPPF builds upon the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and requires at paragraph 194 that *'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting'*.
- 4.8 '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'*. 'Setting of a heritage asset' is also defined by Annex 2 as *'The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.'*
- 4.9 Paragraph 195 of the NPPF advises that *'Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They 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 199 of the NPPF advises 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of the highest significance (including grade I and II* listed buildings), should be wholly exceptional.'*
- 4.11 Paragraph 201 advises that *'Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss'*.
- 4.12 Paragraph 202 advises that *'Where a development proposal 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, including securing its optimum viable use'*.
- 4.13 Paragraph 203 states *'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 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'*.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 4.14 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was published in March 2014 and collates guidance previously published in a number of separate documents. The guidance in the PPG has been taken into consideration in formulating development proposals for the Application Site.

- 4.15 With regard to Heritage and 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... 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

- 4.16 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.
- 4.17 Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets: Published in October 2019, this Historic England advice note covers the NPPF requirement for applicants to describe the heritage significance in order to help local planning authorities to make decisions on the impact of proposals for development that affects heritage assets.
- 4.18 Historic England Historic Environment Good Practice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment: Published in March 2015, this document provides guidance on assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise and heritage recording.
- 4.19 Historic England Historic Environment Good Practice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition, 2017): Published in 2017, this document provides guidance for managing change within the setting of heritage assets, including historic sites, areas and landscapes.

- 4.20 Historic England Technical Advice Note 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets: Published in February 2016, this advice note illustrates the application of the policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for planning permission and listed building consent.

Local Planning Policy Guidance: The Development Plan for Rochdale

Rochdale Core Strategy Development Plan Document (October 2016)

- 4.21 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)

- 4.22 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/15 'Demolition of building 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

- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 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.
- 5.8 Utilising the historic map regression provided with previous planning application reports it is evident, that at the time of the 1844 OS map buildings first appear on the site, 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 west.
- 5.9 Spotland Bridge Mill was erected on the wider site to the south east 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).

5.10 The 1892 OS map shows a dense collection of buildings on the site forming part of a longer row of buildings on Spotland Road north of the mill and this remains through to the 1928 map.

5.11 The adjacent 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). It is understood that the buildings which previously occupied the application site were demolished by the 1970s.

5.12 The application site forms part of a wider landholding which encompasses the development of the former Dexine Rubber Works. A significant amount of heritage and archaeological reporting has therefore been carried out in relation to this site. This includes:

- Heritage Statements (previously prepared by Paul Butler Associates)
- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (Paul Butler Associates, June 2018)
- Level II Archaeological Building Survey (Paul Butler Associates, November 2019)
- Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation (University of Salford, January 2020)
- Archaeological Evaluation Report (University of Salford, January 2021)

5.13 The archaeological trial trenching reported in the January 2021 reports, sets out that the aim in the first instance was to establish the nature, condition, extent and date of any

archaeological remains via the excavation of five trial trenches, targeted on the footprint of former buildings of potential archaeological interest associated with the 19th-century textile mill and workers' housing.

- 5.14 The trial trenches were excavated by Salford Archaeology in December 2020 and January 2021. Due to issues surrounding site access and the placement of live services, it was only possible to excavate two of the proposed trenches. The results obtained from these trenches demonstrated that, whilst much of the site to the north has been heavily remediated, there was a good level of below-ground preservation of some of the 19th-century housing formerly located on Primrose Place. Four half-cellars, with surviving upstanding walls, associated coal chutes and staircases, were excavated and were found to be in good condition.
- 5.15 The programme of evaluation trenching enabled a complete and detailed record to be compiled of the buried archaeological remains that survive within the development area. The mechanical removal of the modern ground surface from other parts of the site undertaken by the construction works contractor has demonstrated that areas beyond that part of the site that were subject to archaeological investigation do not contain any further remains of archaeological interest. It was thus concluded that there is no merit in carrying out any further archaeological investigation of the site in advance of development.
- 5.16 Having complied with the conditions of the previous planning consent, the applicant excavated the land of the current smaller application site to assess what the ground conditions were like. This process found that either there were no cellars / foundations or that the cellars / foundations had been removed as part of the previous demolition works. The applicant has advised that none of the original foundations / cellars remain on site and having overseen the excavation of the whole site are satisfied that this is correct. This also correlates with the conclusions of the trial trenching investigation which states that there would be no merit in undertaking any further investigation of the site, this included the application site at that time.

6. Heritage Appraisal

- 6.1 Published in July 2021, 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 The historic buildings on the site no longer exist and it has been established via the previous archaeological studies and on site works that there are no archaeological remains beneath the site. The proposed scheme however 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 on 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 historic industrial heritage and documentation of how the textile industry and associated buildings developed to create a rich industrial townscape. The existing site does not contain any buildings following their previous demolition, however the site would have once formed part of a dense collection of residential properties along Spotland Road. At present the site does not contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, the site reads as a cleared gap site and this exposes and isolates the adjacent terraced properties within the streetscene - these would have once been in the middle of a collection of buildings. The resulting appearance is one of a disjointed and incomplete urban grain.

- 6.6 The proposed development seeks to re-introduce built development onto the site and proposes a contemporary two storey building which will contain a workshop and office space.
- 6.7 The scale, form and massing of the proposed development is complimentary to the adjacent terraced row and this ensures that a positive visual relationship is achieved to all elevations. The proposed materials and detailing will also be complimentary to surrounding buildings, the proposed recessed panels and projecting snapped header details draws reference from the former public house (now funeral directors) to the west. The palette of materials proposed is also typical to the character and appearance of the conservation area and ensures that the proposals remain sensitive to the style of buildings and materials found in the locality.
- 6.8 As noted earlier, the high quality design and use of a double height curtain walling on the western end of the building, elevates the design quality of the new building and creates a strong contemporary focal point within the streetscene which bookends this row of buildings in a sensitive manner. The redevelopment of the site will drastically improve the character of the streetscene and by re-enforcing the urban grain, the site will no longer look like a previously cleared gap site. The new building will bring uniformity and coherence to the currently empty space on the street, thereby having a positive impact on the character of the Conservation Area.
- 6.9 We therefore conclude that the proposed 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 buildings and spaces. The development is therefore able to meet the requirements of Saved Policy BE17 'New Developments affecting Conservation Areas', Core Strategy Policies P1 and P2 and Chapter 16 of the NPPF.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared in accordance with national and local heritage policy guidance and provides a description of the heritage significance of designated and heritage assets within proximity to the application site. This Statement confirms that the proposals will not detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and will result in a positive impact.
- 7.2 We would not regard there to be any reasons in conservation terms, why the application for Planning Permission could not proceed to approval.

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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