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Date: 30th March 2022

Dear Chris

RE: Jersey Street Bridge, Ancoats: Archaeology

Many thanks for consulting with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) at an early stage in the application process for the proposed demolition of the Jersey Street bridge in Ancoats, Manchester. I understand that the scheme will propose the 'demolition of a redundant bridge and associated works required to facilitate the creation of a new at-grade new pedestrian and cycle route with enhanced public realm'.

The proposal site lies in the Ancoats Conservation Area, and the redundant Jersey Street bridge is a non-designated heritage asset that is recorded on the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER 6476.1.0).

The bridge was required originally to carry Jersey Street across the Prussia Street Arm of the Rochdale Canal, which had opened by 1820 and extended north-westwards as far as Portugal Street. A second branch, known as the Bengal Street Arm, continued south-westwards from the Prussia Street Arm as far as Bengal Street to serve Beehive Mill and other industrial premises along its short route. Bridges on Jersey Street, Poland Street and German Street were built over the two canal arms. The Jersey Street bridge is shown on the detailed Ordnance Survey Town Plan of 1850 as a draw bridge, although the Town Plan of 1891 shows the Jersey Street crossing of the canal arm to have been widened, which evidently necessitate the replacement of the draw bridge with a fixed structure. The canal arms were infilled during late 1960s / 1970s, rendering the three bridges redundant. The parapets to each of the bridges survive, atop shallow humps in the roads that denote the arch of the canal bridge below.

The proposed scheme will culminate in the removal of the redundant bridge, coupled with landscaping works along both sides of Jersey Street. This will require some ground-breaking works with a potential to damage or remove any below-ground remains that may exist beyond the actual bridge, although the detailed sequence of historic mapping for this area indicates that there is no archaeological interest along the north side of Jersey Street that requires further investigation. On the south side of Jersey Street, however, immediately to the south-west of the canal bridge, is the site of the former Jersey Street Mill (HER 13698.1.0), which is of considerable archaeological interest; there is no potential for any earlier archaeological remains to exist. It is uncertain whether the proposed works will impact on the site of the mill, although it seems possible that the landscaping works may uncover the northern wall of the former building. Any such impact could be offset by maintaining an archaeological watching brief during ground-breaking works in this part of the scheme area.



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In view of the localised nature of the proposed works, and the extensive information on the development of the area that is held on the HER, GMAAS is pleased to advise that a detailed archaeological assessment is not required to support the planning application in this instance, although it would be advisable to prepare a Heritage Statement that considers the contribution of the historic bridge to the character of the Ancoats Conservation Area and any harm of the proposal to the setting of the designated area.

GMAAS will advise that a Level I historic building investigation of the bridge is carried out prior to its removal and, pending the conclusions drawn from that rapid study, a watching brief during the ground-reduction works across the bridge. This work may inform one of the Research Objectives for the Industrial Period set out on the current North West Historic Environment Research Framework: *'How well do we understand the evolution of rural versus urban bridge construction?'*.

In summary, GMAAS is pleased to advise that the below-ground archaeological resource within the proposed scheme area is understood sufficiently to negate a requirement for an archaeological assessment to be prepared and submitted with the planning application, although some limited further archaeological investigation, including a basic survey of the canal bridge, will be required as a condition attached to planning consent.

Yours sincerely



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