



Port Street – Avro party wall interface, Manchester

30 January 2025

Heritage Statement

Introduction

Heritage Architecture Ltd have been commissioned by Select Property Group to provide a Heritage Statement regarding proposals associated with the approved development known as One Port Street (planning ref: 132489/FO/2021).

As part of their Party Wall Agreement with the adjacent Grade II* Listed Building “Avro”, Select Property Group are contractually required to build a retaining wall adjacent to the listed wall which will retain the pedestrian footpath adjacent to the podium block at One Port St. As part of the works, and as required by the agreement, the applicant is also required to provide a flashing detail to the head of the proposed retaining wall to prevent water ingress between both structures; this requires Listed Building Consent.

Heritage Significance of the party wall

The Avro building is a Grade II* listed former mill building. Historically the boundary of the building/ site to the north was abutted to a sawmill and the blocked-up openings within the gable end of the Avro building today would have connected the two parts of the site (see Figure 1). By the 1970s the area to the north of the Avro site had been cleared and the existing boundary wall to the west of the Avro building is considered to date to around this time (see Figure 2).

In 2017 application reference 115402/LO/2017 was submitted for the conversion of the Grade II* listed building to apartments. As part of the Listed Building Consent application, a Heritage Statement was submitted by Creative Heritage Consultants. Within this report it stated the following about the boundary wall:

The freestanding brick wall that separates the Brownsfield Mill courtyard from the former timber yards site to the north lies along the line of a historic boundary. There has been some concern about the structural stability of this wall in recent years due to its height.

Examination of this wall on site explains the importance of what is shown as a thin line on maps – there is a significant change of level here, with the north side of the courtyard being at Great Ancoats Street level and the land adjacent being canal wharves historically and thus at canal level.

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The wall that stands today is not however the original retaining wall. Map evidence and photographic evidence, whilst demonstrating some inconsistency that makes it difficult to pinpoint an exact date of construction, show that this wall is the gable end of mid 20th century industrial sheds.

A closer look at the brickwork reveals construction in English Garden Wall bond like Brownsfield Mill itself, but using 20th century factory-made bricks. The pilasters or buttresses on the courtyard side align with put-log holes on the north-facing face, indicating the lines of purlins to the shed roofs. The quality of the mortar joints suggests that this wall was built 'overhand' from the timber yard side. It was built to a consistent height above the ridges of the sheds, probably to prevent human access onto the roof and into the valley gutters.

The courtyard wall is part of the story of the development of Brownsfield Mill and neighbouring industrial sites, and contributes to its setting, but it is of itself of low significance.

Figure 3, below, illustrates the various sections of the boundary wall to the site as it exists today. It will be clear that whilst the section of the boundary that is made up of the GII* listed gable wall of the Avro building is of high significance, the section of the wall to the east, which forms the courtyard to the listed building, does contribute to the setting of the building and is of low significance.

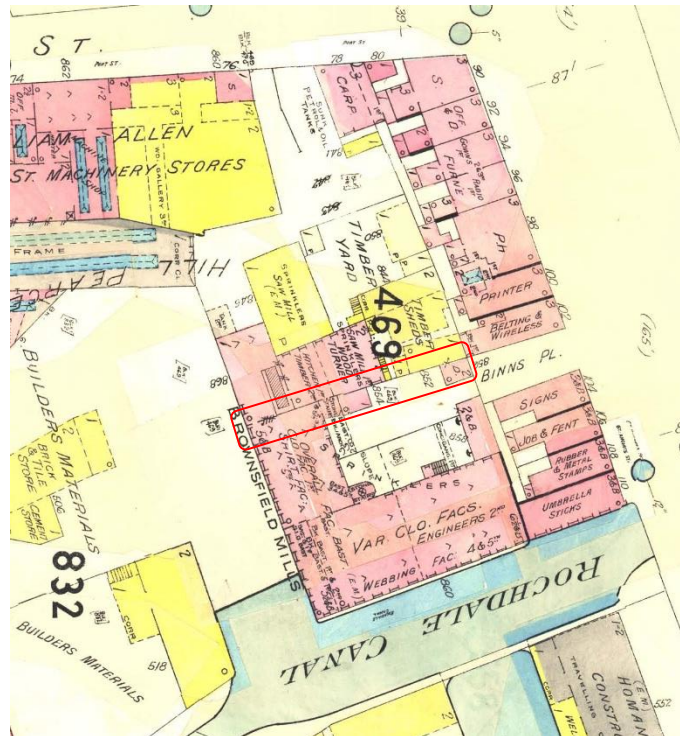


Figure 1: 1928 Goad Map illustrating the former openings between the Grade II* listed mill building and the saw mill that used to abutt it to the north (outlined in red), demonstrating the multi-phased nature of the existing party wall

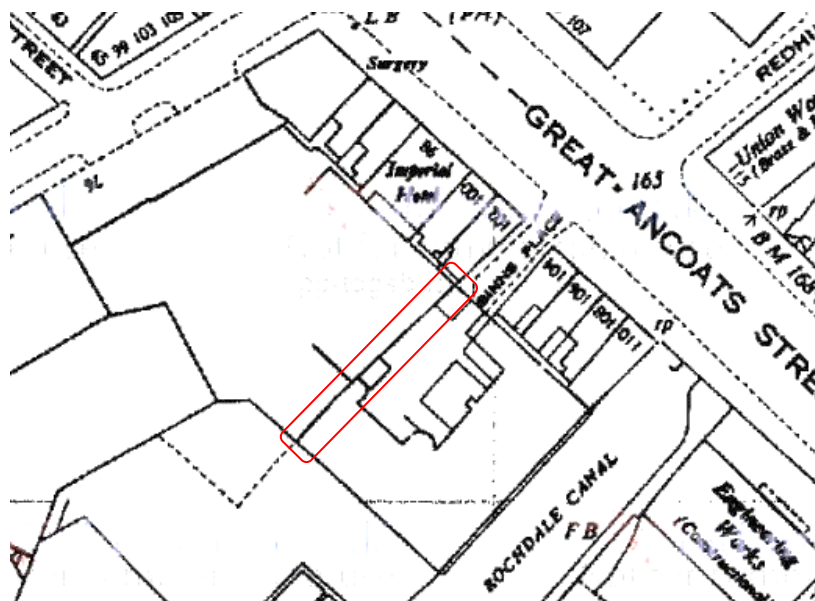


Figure 2: 1970s OS map illustrating the clearance of the development to the north of the site. It is around this time that significant alterations to the party wall boundary would have been made.

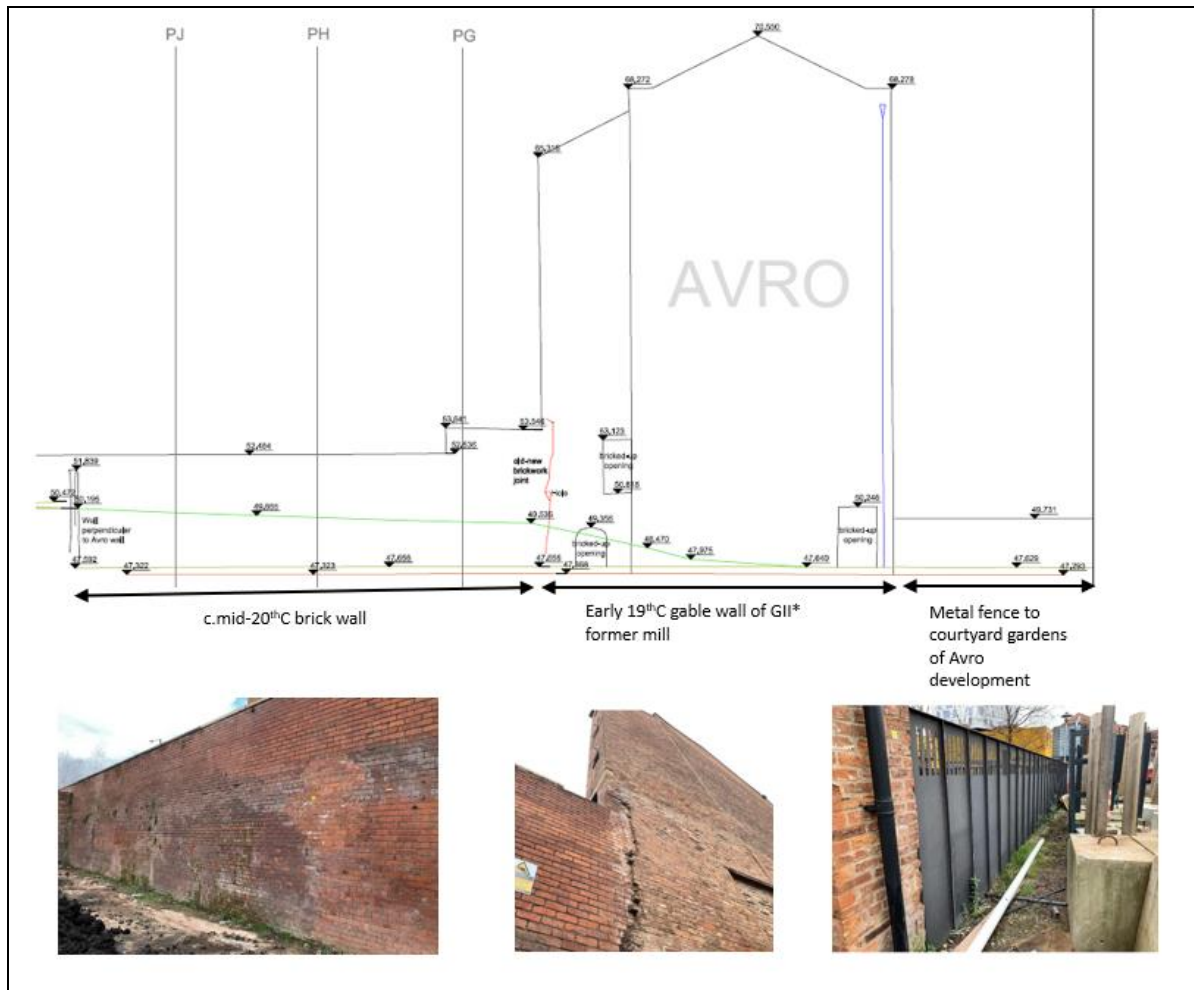


Figure 3: Elevation of the boundary wall as existing illustrating (from left to right) the c. mid 20th Century section, early 19th Century gable of the Avro building, and the modern metal fence installed following the conversion to apartments. The proposals directly affect the C20th brickwork retaining wall only and avoid the early C19th brickwork of the GII* listed building.

Proposals and Heritage Impact

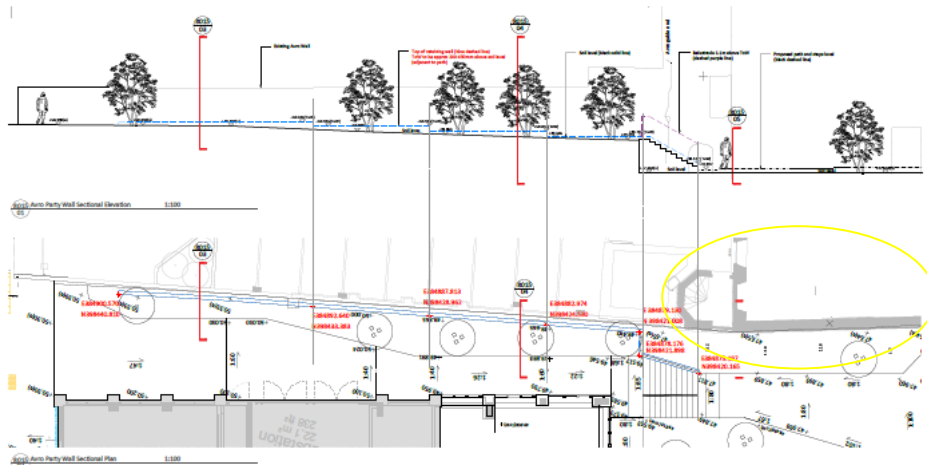


Figure 4: Proposed plan and section of the proposed retaining wall illustrating that it projects forward away from the historic brickwork of the Grade II* listed gable wall of the Avro building (the location of the historic brickwork to the principal listed building is highlighted in yellow).

It is proposed to build a concrete retaining wall adjacent to the C20th section of the listed wall which will retain the pedestrian footpath adjacent to the podium block at One Port St. As part of the works a lead flashing detail to the head of the proposed retaining wall will be chased in, with a secondary layer chased into the nearest mortar joint, to prevent water ingress between both structures. The proposed retaining wall will end before the junction with the early C19th brickwork of the gable wall of the Grade II* listed building (Figure 4).

Due to the nature of the proposed works which will affect C20th fabric, avoid the historic brickwork to the principal Grade II* listed building, and the fact that due consideration to the specification and methodology of installation has been given, it is considered that the proposals will have a **negligible adverse direct impact** on the significance of the Grade II* Avro building. This does not mean that there will be no physical or visual change, rather that the resultant difference would not diminish the value of the heritage assets' significant physical fabric, its setting or significance to any appreciable degree.

As stated within Section 16 the NPPF, heritage assets also derive significance from their setting. The landscaping proposals for the neighbouring Port Street site will incur a clear and definable material benefit to the setting of the listed building, providing both activation and visual amenity, with further benefit derived from enhanced biodiversity. The proposals are therefore considered to provide a **negligible beneficial enhancement to the setting of the Grade II* listed building**.

Consequently, it is considered that the proposals are appropriately balanced and in compliance with the relevant local and national planning policies, with particular regard to para.210 of the NPPF (2024) which states: In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

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