

Victoria Mill

Lower Vickers Street

Miles Platting, Manchester



SEPTEMBER 2023

HERITAGE STATEMENT
Report EH287/01

Victoria Mill

Lower Vickers Street

Miles Platting, Manchester

Heritage Statement

for AH Developments Ltd

DATE ISSUED:	September 2023
JOB NUMBER:	EH287
REPORT NUMBER:	01 Version (1.1)
PLANNING REF:	Pre-application
GRID REFERENCE:	SD 85902 99271

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Heritage Impact Assessment
Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment
Historic Landscape Survey
Written Scheme of Investigation

Geophysical Survey
Trial Trench Evaluation
Archaeological Excavation
Archaeological Watching Briefs

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Eden Heritage Ltd was commissioned by AH Developments Ltd to compile a Heritage Statement to inform proposals for the creation of up to ten (10) apartments with associated internal and external alterations at Victoria Mill, Lower Vickers Street, Manchester (National Grid Reference SD 85902 99271). Victoria Mill is a Grade II* listed building (National Heritage List for England (NHLE) Reference 1197924) which has already been converted to apartments and office use. The current proposals entail the conversion of part of the lower ground floor to apartments; these areas form part of the last remaining section of the mill to be converted.
- 1.1.2 The purpose of the Heritage Statement was to assess the heritage significance of the Grade II* listed building, Victoria Mill, and to assess the impact the proposals may have on the property and its setting, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

1.2 Location

- 1.2.1 Victoria Mill is located on Lower Vickers Street, in the Miles Platting area of Manchester, being approximately 2km to the north-east of the city centre. The mill is situated on the north side of the Rochdale Canal, and to the south of Oldham Road (Figure 1).
- 1.2.2 Apart from the Rochdale Canal, the mill has lost its historic landscape character, with the site now being surrounded to the north and south by modern housing, with a modern business park present on the north side of Varley Street. There is a childrens play area immediately to the south-west of the mill, constructed on the site of former industrial buildings (Figure 2).

2 Heritage Planning Policy Context

2.1 Heritage Assets

- 2.1.1 The term 'heritage asset' is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as 'a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest' (MHCLG 2021).
- 2.1.2 Designated heritage assets protected by statutory legislation comprise scheduled monuments, protected wrecks, listed buildings and conservation areas. Nationally significant archaeological sites, monuments and structures are protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979). Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas are protected under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act (1990).
- 2.1.3 Non-statutory designated heritage assets, comprising registered parks and gardens and registered battlefields, are protected under national and local planning policy only. This is also the case for the remainder of the archaeological resource, including entries into a Historic Environment Record (HER) or local listing, as well as previously unknown features which may be recorded during the course of data collection in respect to a given development proposal.

2.2 National Heritage Policy

- 2.2.1 National planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was revised in July 2021. At the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favor of sustainable development. Sites of archaeological or heritage significance that are valued components of the historic environment and merit consideration in planning decisions are grouped as heritage assets; 'These 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' (MHCLG 2021, Section 16.189).
- 2.2.2 The framework states 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' (MHCLG 2021, Section 16.194). 'Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation' (MHCLG 2021, Section 16.194).
- 2.2.3 NPPF draws a distinction between designated heritage assets and other remains considered to be of lesser significance; 'great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be)' (MHCLG 2021, Section 16.199). '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: grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens should be exceptional; assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional' (MHCLG 2021, Section 16.200). Therefore, preservation in-situ is the preferred course in relation to such sites unless exceptional circumstances exist.

- 2.2.4 With regard to non-designated heritage assets, Section 16.203 states that 'In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect 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'. However, it should be noted that 'Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be subject to the policies for designated heritage assets' (MHCLG 2019, Section 16.194).
- 2.2.5 The NPPF states that local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible (i.e. copies of evidence should be deposited with the relevant Historic Environment Record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository). However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted (MHCLG 2021, Section 16.205).

3 Methodology

3.1 Scope of the Work

- 3.1.1 In order to assess the heritage significance of the proposed development area, a rapid desk-based assessment of readily available sources was undertaken, in order to provide the historical context of the site. This assessment was undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) in *Standards and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* (CIfA 2020) and *Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK* (2021).
- 3.1.2 The assessment of readily-available sources was undertaken online, at Manchester Central Library and through a consultation with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (GMHER), in order to provide some historical background for Victoria Mill.
- 3.1.3 A site visit was also undertaken to assess the character, form and setting of the building, of any surviving features and structures associated with it, and of the wider setting. An assessment was also made of the locations of other designated heritage assets located in close proximity to Victoria Mills, as identified from the National Heritage of England (NHLE) list, in order to consider any potential impacts to their setting and significance.
- 3.1.4 In order to assess the heritage significance of the site, guidance provided by Historic England (2008) has been followed. Under the values presented within the NPPF this significance can be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. These values are broadly similar to the four principle values described in Historic England's *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (2008). This provides a useful methodology for assessing the significance of heritage assets and has been utilised within this assessment. The four principle values which contribute to overall significance are:
- **Evidential Value:** Evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity;
 - **Historical Value:** Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present;
 - **Aesthetic Value:** Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place;
 - **Communal Value:** Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or from whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal values are closely bound up with historical (particularly associative) and aesthetic values, but tend to have additional and specific aspects.
- 3.1.4 The heritage significance of Victoria Mill is discussed detail in Section 5, along with an assessment of the possible impacts on heritage significance by the proposed development.

4 Baseline Assessment

4.1 Current Heritage Status

- 4.1.1 Victoria Mill is designated as a Grade II* listed building (first listed in November 1988), meaning that it is regarded as being a particularly important building of more than special interest (5.8% of listed buildings are Grade II*). The description reads:

“Cotton spinning mill, now disused; a double mill built in two phases in 1869 and 1873. George Woodhouse, architect, for William Holland. Red brick with yellow brick dressings; roof not visible but probably slate. Fire-proof internal structure. U-plan formed by two large rectangular spinning mills, joined by a central engine house. Symmetrically planned about a central stair turret wrapped around the chimney with engine house (rebuilt in 1902 on conversion to rope drive) and boiler house to the rear, in the centre of a narrow courtyard formed by the two mill ranges to either side of the stair tower, a three-window range, that to left with former internal engine house marked by partially blocked round-arched window; the right hand range obscured by a brick shaft of 1920. This central block is flanked by the two spinning mills, each a six-storey, 11x10 bay block, with stressed angle pilasters (extended as privy towers to N elevation). Italianate detail of spinning mills, which have segmentally headed windows to five storeys, and coupled round-headed windows to the upper storey, arcaded with shafts and continuous sill band. Two-window towers towards centre of each mill appear to be later additions. Interior not inspected, but constructional system almost certainly transverse brick arches carried on cast iron columns. Ancillary buildings survive to NW of site, but former blowing rooms and offices, which were built parallel to the front of the mill across a narrow yard, and a range of ancillary buildings to the SE are no longer extant. A very large double mill for its date, which makes striking use of a distinctive industrial architectural vocabulary (especially in the economical design of combined stair tower and chimney). An excellent example of the development of a specifically industrial architecture, and of the work of George Woodhouse”. (NHLE Ref. 1197924)

- 4.1.2 The site is not located within a Conservation Area or in a Registered Park and Garden.
- 4.1.3 An assessment of the National Heritage List for England has identified that there are no other designated heritage assets in close proximity to the site that need to be considered with regards to potential impact to significance and setting; the nearest listed building is the Corpus Christi Basilica on Varley Street to the north (NHLE Ref: 1270661).

- 4.1.4 Victoria Mill is also recorded in the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record as 'Victoria Mills' (HER Ref: 2061.1.0). The description provides some additional information to the site, with the construction date of the earliest phase conflicting slightly with the listed building entry:

"Site vacant on OS map of 1848, shown as cotton mill on 1910 and 1931 OS maps. The first mill was built in 1867 and a second was added in 1873. Both mills are brick built and have six storeys (plus a basement), and 12 x 6 bays. Concrete roof to both mills. Rectangular brick-arched windows with stone sills, taller on the ground floor. Double brick arch on top floor. Engine house, wheel house, boiler house and the tall circular chimney with an embellished stone top are all located centrally between the two blocks, as are the offices. Embellished brickwork to the eaves of both mills. One stone-arched entrance. The remains of former auxiliary buildings can be seen on the west and east sides of the main blocks, possible weaving sheds and warehousing. Site visited February 2017: the boiler house has been demolished and there are no ancillary buildings surviving. Fair condition, partly occupied. Site of power system features is undeveloped".

- 4.1.5 The HER has provided information on previous heritage reports that have been produced in relation to proposals to Victoria Mill, these are summarised below:

- 4.1.6 *Historic Building Appraisal: Victoria Mill, Miles Platting, Manchester (2006)*: an historic building appraisal of Victoria Mill was undertaken by AHP in 2006 to inform future applications for listed building consent. The report included information on the historical development of the site, a description of the buildings and its townscape setting. The report concluded that Victoria Mill is a fine example of a large-scale 19th century cotton spinning mill that was first constructed between 1867 and 1873. It suffered serious fires during the 1890s and early 1900s, which led to the construction of a new engine house, rope race and boiler house. Various additions were made to the mill during the early 20th century to provide facilities such as fire escapes and toilets. The mill closed in 1960 and stood empty for nearly 30 years. Listed building consent was granted in 1989 for the conversion of the mill to offices and apartments; this work included the demolition of the remains of the offices and ancillary buildings, and the removal of the 1902 engine house, boiler house and rope race. Internal works included the subdivision of spinning floors for offices and apartments, the insertion of suspended ceilings, new lifts and circulation, new single-glazed windows and entrance doors, with the surrounding land being laid out for car parking (AHP 2006).

- 4.1.7 *Victoria Mill, Miles Platting, Manchester: Heritage Statement (2016)*: in October 2016 Archaeological Research Services prepared a Heritage Statement to inform proposals for the conversion of part of the mill to residential use. The assessment noted that the mill had already been extensively modified internally, although original jack-arch ceilings were noted to survive. The report concluded that the heritage significance of Victoria Mill was drawn largely from its historical value (its original large-scale construction, an example of a late 19th century cotton mill, and the surviving jack-arch ceilings). Whilst it was recognised that the conversion of part of the mill to residential use would require the

subdivision of the original spaces, provided the jack-arch ceilings and cast iron pillars remained, the proposals provide a positive opportunity for a viable future for the building (ARS 2016).

- 4.1.8 *Victoria Mill, Miles Platting, Manchester: Heritage Statement (2017)*: Paul Butler Associates prepared a Heritage Statement to support proposals for the conversion of part of Victoria Mill to residential apartments on the lower ground floor of the south-western part of the mill. The report concluded the the proposals would incorporate original features, and original fabric would remain exposed through sensitive design. It also considered that the proposed conversion to residential use, as has already occurred within the building, would have a positive impact on the character of the local area, and would help to secure the long-term future of Victoria Mill. A programme of historic building recording was recommended prior to the commencement of works associated with the conversion of the lower ground floor and affected parts of the ground floor (Paul Butler Associates 2017).
- 4.1.9 *Victoria Mill, Miles Platting, Manchester: Historic Building Survey (2018)*: as recommended in the report by Paul Butler Associates produced in 2017, an historic building survey was undertaken of parts of the lower ground floor and upper ground floors at Victoria Mill prior to proposed conversion to residential use. The survey noted that the building had been substantially altered, but retained several original features (Paul Butler Associates 2018).

4.2 Historical Context

- 4.2.1 The history and development of the cotton industry in Manchester has been widely written about elsewhere (for example see Williams and Farnie 1992; Nevell 2008; Kidd 2011 and the previous reports relating to Victoria Mill), and need not be repeated here, however as noted by Nevell, the physical manifestation of this industry was represented by more than 172 textile mills, built in Manchester between the establishment of the first factory in 1781 (Arkwright's Mill on Miller Street) and the last mill, built in Miles Platting in 1924). Of these, less than 30 survive, and these are not representative of the chronological spread, construction and motive power of the Manchester mills as whole. The first generation of late 18th century cotton spinning mills were mainly located to the north-east, south-east and south of Manchester, along the rivers Irk, Tib and Medlock. By the mid 1790s, this distribution pattern was changing, as was the scale and power of the mills themselves. The district where this change began was Ancoats, which for much of the 18th century was a rural area north-east of Oldham Road and Piccadilly. The completion of the Rochdale Canal in 1804 attracted early mill builders, as raw cotton and coal could be transported, with water from the canal being used to power the steam engines (Nevell 2008, 95).
- 4.2.2 Prior to the construction of the first phase of Victoria Mill in 1867 (or 1869, different sources give different dates), the site on which it would be erected was largely rural in character, although in the middle of the 19th century, there were several rope walks, a glass works and chemical works in close proximity, all possibly taking advantage of the Rochdale Canal (Figure 3).

- 4.2.3 The Ordnance Survey map published in 1848 continues to show that the site of Victoria Mill was largely undeveloped apart from gardens associated with small dwellings to the east side of Newton Brook. This map clearly shows the various rope walks either side of the Rochdale Canal, the various locks on the canal, the industrial sites of the chemical works, tannery and coal pits to the north-east, as well as the terraced housing which existed along and off Oldham Road to the west (Figure 4a).
- 4.2.4 As already noted, the first phase of Victoria Mill ("A" mill) was constructed in either 1867 or 1869, depending on which source is consulted, for William Holland & Sons Ltd, to the designs of George Woodhouse (Hartwell et al 2004, 382). Slater's Directory of Lancashire, published in 1869, contains an entry for William Holland, cotton spinner and doubler, at Victoria Mill, Miles Platting, therefore the earliest phase was certainly in existence and operating at that date. By 1873, the company was recorded as William Holland and Sons in a Post Office Directory, indicating that his sons had joined the firm.
- 4.2.5 The second phase of Victoria Mill ("B" mill), which is believed to be the south-western block (AHP 2006, 6), was constructed in 1875, creating two large blocks joined by an engine house, with the most striking feature being the tall central chimney stack set on an octagonal plinth (McNeil and Nevell 2000, 10).
- 4.2.6 William Holland died in 1892, and his obituary made reference to two fires at Victoria Mill. One of these fires is documented in the order records of Platt Brothers of Oldham which supplied a new machinery to William Holland in the early 1890s. The order refers to machinery "*to fill the mill now being rebuilt*". In 1898, W. Holland was acquired by the Fine Cotton Spinners and Doublers Association (FCS&D) (Grace's Guide 2023), but continued to operate under the name W. Holland and Sons Ltd (AHP 2006, 7), as indicated by a trade directory of 1890 which includes "*William Holland and Sons, cotton and worsted spinners and doublers and sewing cotton manufacturers, Victoria Mills, Miles Platting*" (Slater' Directory 1890).
- 4.2.7 The Ordnance Survey maps of 1891 and 1893 show the double mill with a range of buildings running along Lower Vickers Street, with further apparent mill buildings to the north-east and south-west (now gone). The building to the south-west was also built for W Holland, but in this case as a worsted woollen mill; it was known as Albert Mill (or as AHP note, "C" mill) (AHP 2006, 9). By this date, the former open, rural landscape shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1848 had been infilled with terraced housing and industrial concerns alongside the Rochdale Canal (Figure 4b and 5a).
- 4.2.8 In the early 1900s, WC towers were constructed on the corners of the front elevation, and fire escapes were installed on the canal-side elevations; these are visible in historic photographs and drawings included in the AHP report of 2006.
- 4.2.9 Albert Woollen Mills is annotated on the Ordnance Survey map of 1922, located to the south-west side of "Victoria Mills (cotton)"; this map clearly shows the, in general, regular character of the

terraced housing which surrounded the mills to the north-west, west and to the south side of the Rochdale Canal (Figure 5b). By 1934, a new building relating to Victoria Mills had been constructed on the north side of Lower Vickers Street (Figure 5c); this is referred to by AHP as “D” mill, which was constructed in 1924 and was the last cotton mill to be built in Manchester (AHP 2006, 9).

- 4.2.10 A plan of the mill dating to 1954 is reproduced as Figure 4 in the AHP report of 2006 (Manchester City Building Surveyors Ref: 15844). This appears to show the lower ground floor of Victoria Mill, with the north-east part being labelled as “A” mill and the south-western part being labelled “B” mill. If this plan is showing the lower ground floor, which is the subject of the current proposals, then it appears that the same floor in each mill building was, at least at this date, open plan, although the south-east side of “B” mill shows divided spaces labelled as stores, joiners shop and electric shop.
- 4.2.11 By the middle of the 20th century, it appears, based on the cartographic evidence, that some of the terraced housing to the west of Victoria Mill may have started to have been removed, as the Ordnance Survey map published in 1956 shows gaps at the south-west end of Lower Vickers Street (Figure 6a).
- 4.2.12 In 1960, Victoria Mill was closed and the site was sold, and it appears that at least part of the building was utilised as a warehouse in 1968 (Figure 6b). The building, however, remained empty and was subject to vandalism. In 1988, Victoria Mill was listed at Grade II* and around the same time Millview Developments acquired the site. Planning and listed building consent was granted for the refurbishment of the building for new uses in 1989, with the work completed in the early 1990s. The former “A” mill was converted to office use and “B” mill to residential use. This work included the demolition of the 1902 engine house, boilers and rope races in the rear yard, the removal of the fire escapes, WC towers, 1949 hoist tower, roof extensions, carding rooms and remaining office buildings. Parts of the building were not included in this renovation work (the basements, part of the 4th floor and the 5th floor in the office side of the building) (AHP 2006, 10).
- 4.2.13 Modern satellite photography shows that Victoria Mill is surrounded to the north and east by car parking, to the south-west by a children’s playground and to the north by modern housing (Figure 7). It is clear from this image that, apart from the presence of the Rochdale Canal, the historic townscape in which the mill was formerly set has been lost, including any ancillary buildings that were formerly associated with it, as shown on the historic mapping.

4.3 Site Description

- 4.3.1 A site visit was undertaken on 13th September 2023 to inspect Victoria Mill and its surroundings. For ease of reference when describing the exterior and interior of the building which are the subject of the current proposals, the locations of some of the photographs referred to below are shown on Figure 8 (the numbers represent the plate numbers which are included within Appendix I).

- 4.3.2 Victoria Mill is a large double former cotton spinning mill, orientated north-east to south-west along the north side of the Rochdale Canal. It is best viewed in relation to the Rochdale Canal, but clear views are possible from Varley Street and from Lower Vickers Street (Plates 1-6). It consists of two six-storey mills, plus basements, linked by a central block, which historically contained the engine house, creating a symmetrical principal elevation which faces onto Lower Vickers Street. The dominating feature of this elevation is the tall chimney which has a stair turret wrapped about it (Plate 4). It is U-shaped in plan and is constructed of red brick with sandstone and yellow brick dressings, in the Italianate style.
- 4.3.3 The lower ground floor of each block (the location of the proposed development) is partly obscured by the presence of the Rochdale Canal, showing that these areas are below the level of the canal. In the south-western block ("B" mill), the openings have recently been cleared out, so it is possible to observe the arched brick tops of the windows (Plates 8 and 9). The south-west elevation of "B" mill has double height windows, although the existing fenestration is modern (Plates 10 and 11).
- 4.3.4 The north-east elevation of "B" mill faces onto the courtyard which separates the two blocks (the courtyard is visible on Plate 7 as seen from the south side of the Rochdale Canal). The lower ground floor currently has four large doorways with brick arched heads; works currently being undertaken have revealed that some of the bricks utilised in the building are stamped "Whinney Hill Plastic Winil Brick Co. Ltd Accrington" (Plates 12 and 13). At the northern end of this wall there is an inserted doorway, above which is a transmission window that has been infilled with glass blocks (Plate 14).
- 4.3.5 The south-east elevation of the central link building between the two mills faces onto the courtyard between Mill "A" and Mill "B" (the south-east wall of Area 2, Figure 8); this section is of five bays but does not have the same fenestration arrangement as is present in the other elevations (Plates 15 and 16), indicating that this part of Victoria Mill was utilised for a different function, i.e. it contained the engine house. At lower ground floor level there is a doorway with shallow brick head at the western end. To the east of this there is a projection to the wall, with a vertical construction break to its right-hand side which provides evidence for two construction phases (Plate 16). There is a large window and smaller window at lower ground floor level, both with stone cills (Plate 17); there is evidence for reconstruction in the brickwork, particularly around the eastern window which may relate to the rebuilding following fires, or to the former presence of an additional engine house that was added in 1902, but demolished in the 1990s (AHP 2006, 8 and 13). A stone string course above these windows and the doorway separates the lower ground floor from the ground floor above.
- 4.3.6 The south-east facing elevation of Mill "A" (Area 3 on Figure 8) has three doorways and two windows (with stone cills), all with shallow brick arched heads. As with the other courtyard facing elevations, there is a stone string course which separates the lower ground floor from the ground floor above (Plate 18). Above the northern bay of this elevation there is another transmission opening which has been infilled with brick (compared to the glass blocks of the one in the north-east elevation (shown

on Plate 14). The brickwork around this transmission opening is different to that of the rest of the elevation indicating it is a later insertion (Plate 18).

- 4.3.7 The areas of the current proposals are for convenience divided into four areas (Areas 1-4) as depicted on Figure 8. The interior of Area 1 on the lower ground floor was accessed at the time of the site visit via a doorway in the south-west elevation (Plate 11). This part of Mill “B” has a concrete floor and the north-western wall is of concrete blocks. The ceiling is constructed of concrete with metal beams, all of which is supported by round cast iron columns with moulded tops (Plates 19-21). Along the south-east wall of Area 1 there are seven large windows with shallow brick arched heads, and sloping brick cills. Each of these openings were blocked up when this part of the building was the subject of the historic building recording in 2018, but they have recently been unblocked and cleared out to expose the semi-circular recesses behind that allow light to come in from the top of the level of the Rochdale Canal on the opposite side of the wall (as shown on Plate 9). The walls of the recesses have been plastered or whitewashed, with the semi-circular tops capped by stone (Plates 22 and 23). The southern end of this wall is angled to respect the earlier Rochdale Canal; this section has one visible blocked window (Plate 24).
- 4.3.8 Area 4 also has a concrete floor, with the same form of cast iron columns supporting metal beams, although the concrete ceiling in this part of the lower ground floor appears to be older than Area 1, with embedded metal bars visible (Plates 25 and 26).
- 4.3.9 Area 2 is located in the central building between the two mills. This section has been considerably modified, with concrete block walls having been inserted, internal sides of the south-east facing elevation rebuilt, and a new concrete ceiling inserted (Plates 27 and 28). Within this area of the lower ground floor there is a large rectangular feature which has been modified and now contains evidence for stonework, brickwork and concrete blocks (Plate 29); it is unclear what this feature represents, but it may have been the base for some form of machinery in the engine house.
- 4.3.10 The lower ground floor in Area 3, which is located in Mill “A” has been subdivided with concrete blocks, with Area 3 forming only part of the original layout (Figure 8). The floor of this part of the mill is of concrete, but the columns which are present are more decorative than those in Areas 1 and 4, and the original brick jack arches survive (Plates 30-33). The south-east wall of Area 3 has the same form of large windows with recesses behind as noted in Area 1, although these remain blocked internally in this part of the building (Plate 34).

4.4 Setting of Victoria Mill

- 4.4.1 As part of the site visit, an assessment was made of the setting of Victoria Mil. The setting of a heritage asset is ‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced’ (Historic England 2017, 2). The setting 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 (MHCLG 2021, 71).

- 4.4.2 The size and scale of Victoria Mill, with its prominent chimney stack, means that it is a landmark building in this part of Manchester, although it is best viewed and experienced from Varley Street, and in relation to the Rochdale Canal, rather than from Oldham Road to the west. The historic setting of the building has been lost through the demolition of the terraced housing that formerly surrounded it, and through the removal of the other mill buildings to the south-west, north-west and north-east. The best views are from the bridge on Varley Street, from along the footpath along the Rochdale Canal, or from the play park and Lower Vickers Street to the south-west (Plates 1-5).

5 Statement of Significance

5.1 Assessment of Significance

- 5.1.1 Significance (for heritage policy) *“is the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting”* (MHCLG 2021, 71-72). The heritage interests referred to in national planning policy broadly relate to the ‘heritage values’ referred to in Conservation Principles which are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal (Historic England 2008).
- 5.1.2 The significance of Victoria Mill has already been recognised through its designated as a Grade II* listed building, meaning that it is a particularly important building in England, that is of ‘more than special interest’, and therefore has high historic interest.
- 5.1.3 Victoria Mill has high architectural and artistic interest through its scale, massing and composition, through its Italianate style, through the detailing utilised (use of stone and yellow brick for the dressings), and as, as the listing description notes *“an excellent example of the development of a specifically industrial architecture, and of the work of George Woodhouse”*. George Woodhouse is noted to have been one of the most successful specialist mill architects, whose work also included the two large and architecturally distinctive mills at Gidlow Works (Williams and Farnie 1992, 98). Internally, within the areas proposed for conversion, architectural detailing is provided by the decorative cast iron columns in Area 3.
- 5.1.4 The mill buildings have high archaeological/evidential interest, as they provide tangible evidence for a large-scale, double-mill, cotton spinning establishment in the area, one of many that have not survived. It is an example of the largest type of textile mill to be built, but were only a viable proposition for the most successful textile firms (Williams and Farnie 1992, 95). The buildings also contain physical evidence within the fabric for alteration, loss and reconstruction, so that the development and adaption of the structures can be seen and, in some cases, interpreted. The historic plan form of the lower ground floor can be noted through the survival of the columns, fenestration and doorways.
- 5.1.5 The site will also have high communal interest/value, as a landmark building for the Miles Platting area of Manchester, and for those who now reside, work or utilise the parts of the building which have already been converted.

5.2 Assessment of Impact

- 5.2.1 The proposals will involve the conversion of parts of the lower ground floor of Victoria Mill to residential use. The majority of the buildings which make up the site have already been converted to apartments and offices, with Areas 1, 2, 3 and 4 on the lower ground floor forming remaining parts of the building which have not been developed.
- 5.2.2 The proposals will involve the subdivision of internal space to create the apartments, however the existing columns, exposed brickwork and ceilings will be sensitively utilised within the design (where practical), so that the industrial origins of the buildings will still be evident. The large windows in the south-east wall of Area 1 will be consolidated and tanked (as they are located adjacent to the Rochdale Canal, and below ground level), but will be utilised as part of the design, so will remain visible. It has not been possible to note from historical drawings or photographs the original or historical character of the fenestration of these windows. The current window frames within the rest of the building dates to modern redevelopment. Some photographs taken in the 1980s, visible to view on the Manchester City Council Local Image Collection website (Manchester Local Image Collection 2024), show that the arched-headed windows on the floors above were generally six-paned with slender glazing bars. These frames are visible in photographs of the building included within the AHP report (Appendix 3, AHP 2006) taken prior to redevelopment in the 1990s.
- 5.2.3 There will be some requirement for new openings in the walls which face into the central courtyard. The south-west facing elevation of Area 2, which faces into the courtyard (Figure 8), forms part of the original engine house for the mill, and therefore the distribution of openings is different to that of the two main mill buildings. In 1902, a new engine house was constructed against this elevation, although this has been removed but evidence for it survives in the form of the remains of a crane, and some possible alteration to the original elevation with a possible doorway having been inserted, but subsequently converted to a window (the eastern window shown on Plate 17). The proposed openings in this elevation of Area 2 will be positioned in line with those on the upper levels to maintain symmetry, and the same form of shallow arched heads will be used, with bricks being reused where possible. There will be no impact to the transmission windows which are present on the upper ground floor, or to the remains of the crane within the courtyard area.
- 5.2.4 The proposals do not entail any works to the south-west, north-west or north-east elevations, therefore the current appearance of the buildings will remain. The opening up of the lower ground floor windows along the Rochdale Canal elevations will be beneficial, as those in Mill “A” are currently blocked and are not easily seen from the footpath.
- 5.2.5 There would be no impact to the setting of Victoria Mill as there is no intention for any new building elements, or features which would intrude or degrade views of the site, particularly those from the Rochdale Canal.

- 5.2.6 In conclusion, the proposals would have a beneficial impact to Victoria Mill through the conversion of parts of the lower ground floor which have remained undeveloped, allowing the large openings along the Rochdale Canal to be brought back into use and utilised, removing any evidence for decay or dereliction. There would be some removal of historic fabric through the creation of new openings in the elevations which face into the courtyard, and the possible removal of the large rectangular features in Area 2, but these removals can be mitigated through the historic building recording which has already been undertaken in 2018 (Paul Butler Associates 2018) and through the photographs included within this report. The new openings will be created in line with those at the upper levels, maintaining the symmetry of the fenestration, and will be of the same form with the use of the same building materials used for the historic examples.
- 5.2.7 Internally, the historic brickwork, cast iron columns, brick jack arches and large openings along the Rochdale Canal will all be retained and utilised within the design of the apartments allowing the industrial character to be maintained.
- 5.2.8 It is considered that there would be no negative impact to the significance and setting of Victoria Mill, as the historic, archaeological, architectural and communal interest, as outlined above, would remain, and the setting would be unaltered apart from the positive changes to the appearance of the lower ground floor windows along the Rochdale Canal when they are exposed and reinstated.

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Ordnance Survey Map, published 1896, 6" to 1 mile scale, Lancashire Sheet CIV

Ordnance Survey Map, published 1922, 25" to 1 mile scale, Lancashire Sheet CIV.7

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APPENDIX 1: SITE VISIT PHOTOGRAPHS



Plate 1: View looking north-east up the Rochdale Canal showing Victoria Mill with its prominent chimney



Plate 2: View looking north-east up the Rochdale Canal showing the south-west elevation of Victoria Mill



Plate 3: View looking south from Varley Street showing Victoria Mill with associated car parking



Plate 4: View looking north-east up Lower Vickers Street showing the north-west and south-west elevations of Victoria Mill, with the modern play area in the foreground built on the site of Albert Woollen Mills



Plate 5: View looking south-west from the footpath along the south side of the Rochdale Canal showing the north-eastern block ("A" mill) in the foreground



Plate 6: View looking west from the footpath along the Rochdale Canal showing "B" mill, the lower ground floor of which is proposed for conversion



Plate 7: View looking north from the south side of the Rochdale Canal showing the north-eastern block ("A" mill), with the lower ground floor shown to be lower than the canal as can be seen in the courtyard between the two blocks

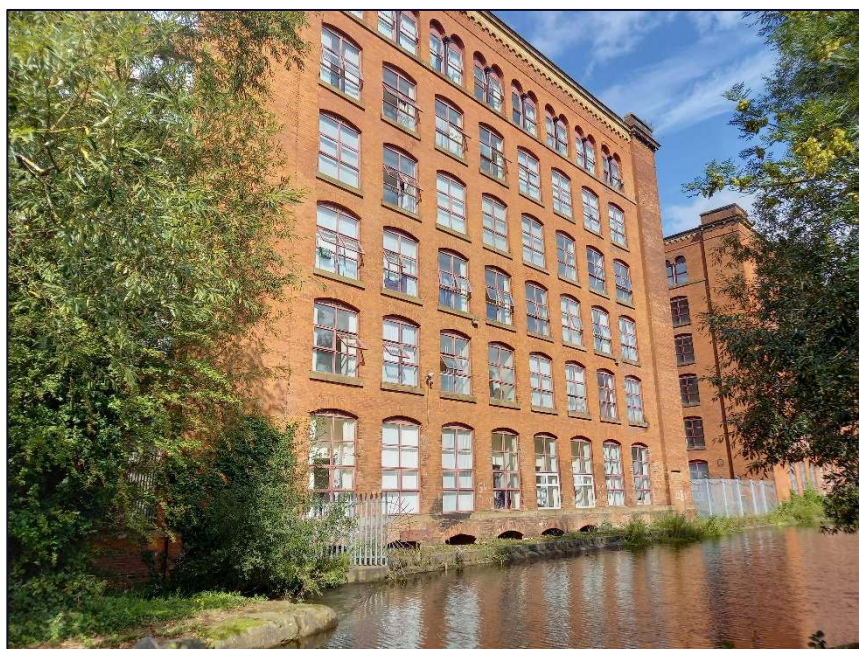


Plate 8: South-east elevation of the south-western block. The tops of the openings which light the lower ground floor are just visible in line with the canal



Plate 9: South-east elevation of the south-western block showing the recently cleared out openings which light the lower ground floor



Plate 10: South-west elevation of the south-western block which faces onto the children's playground



Plate 11: Detail of some of the two-storey door/window combinations in the south-west elevation of "B" mill



Plate 12: View looking south-west showing the lower part of the north-east elevation of "B" mill



Plate 13: Frogged brick removed as part of current work. Stamped “Whinnney Hill Plastic Winil Brick Co. Ltd Accrington”



Plate 14: Northern end of the north-east elevation of “B” mill showing the transmission window on the ground floor (above the lower ground floor)



Plate 15: View looking north-west from the south side of the Rochdale Canal showing the south-east elevation of the link structure between the two mill buildings

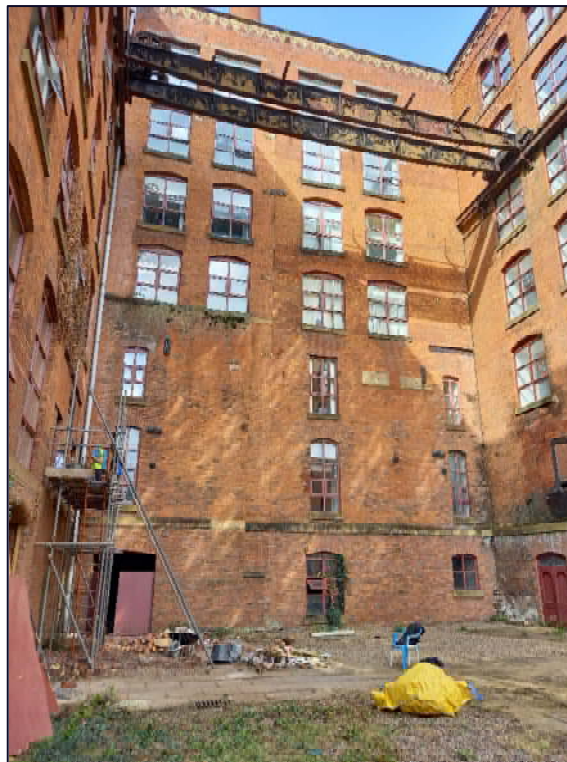


Plate 16: South-east elevation of Area 2 which faces onto the courtyard



Plate 17: Detail of the two windows in the lower ground floor of the south-east elevation of Area 2



Plate 18: South-east facing elevation of Mill "A" which faces into the courtyard



Plate 19: View looking south-west showing Area 1 with concrete floor, metal columns and concrete ceiling



Plate 20: View looking north-east showing Area 1



Plate 21: View looking south-east towards the canal showing the area between Area 1 and Area 4



Plate 22: View looking east towards the canal showing the south-east elevation of Area 1



Plate 23: Detail of one of the lower ground floor windows with semi-circular recess. These are set below the top of the side of the Rochdale Canal



Plate 24: Southern end of the south-east elevation of Area 1 showing the angled wall and blocked window, lower ground floor



Plate 25: View looking north-east showing Area 4 on the lower ground floor



Plate 26: Detail of one of the columns in Area 4



Plate 27: View looking north-west showing the mixture of building materials in Area 2



Plate 28: View looking north-east showing an internal wall in Area 2



Plate 29: View looking south showing the rectangular feature within Area 2 that has been modified and now includes stonework, brick and concrete blocks



Plate 30: View looking south-east in Area 3 showing the concrete floor, decorative columns and brick jack arches, lower ground floor



Plate 31: Detail of one of the cast iron columns with decorative capital, Area 3



Plate 32: View looking north-west showing one of the columns and a concrete block internal wall in Area 3



Plate 33: View looking north-west showing Area 3



Plate 34: Blocked window openings, south-east wall of Area 3

APPENDIX 2: FIGURES

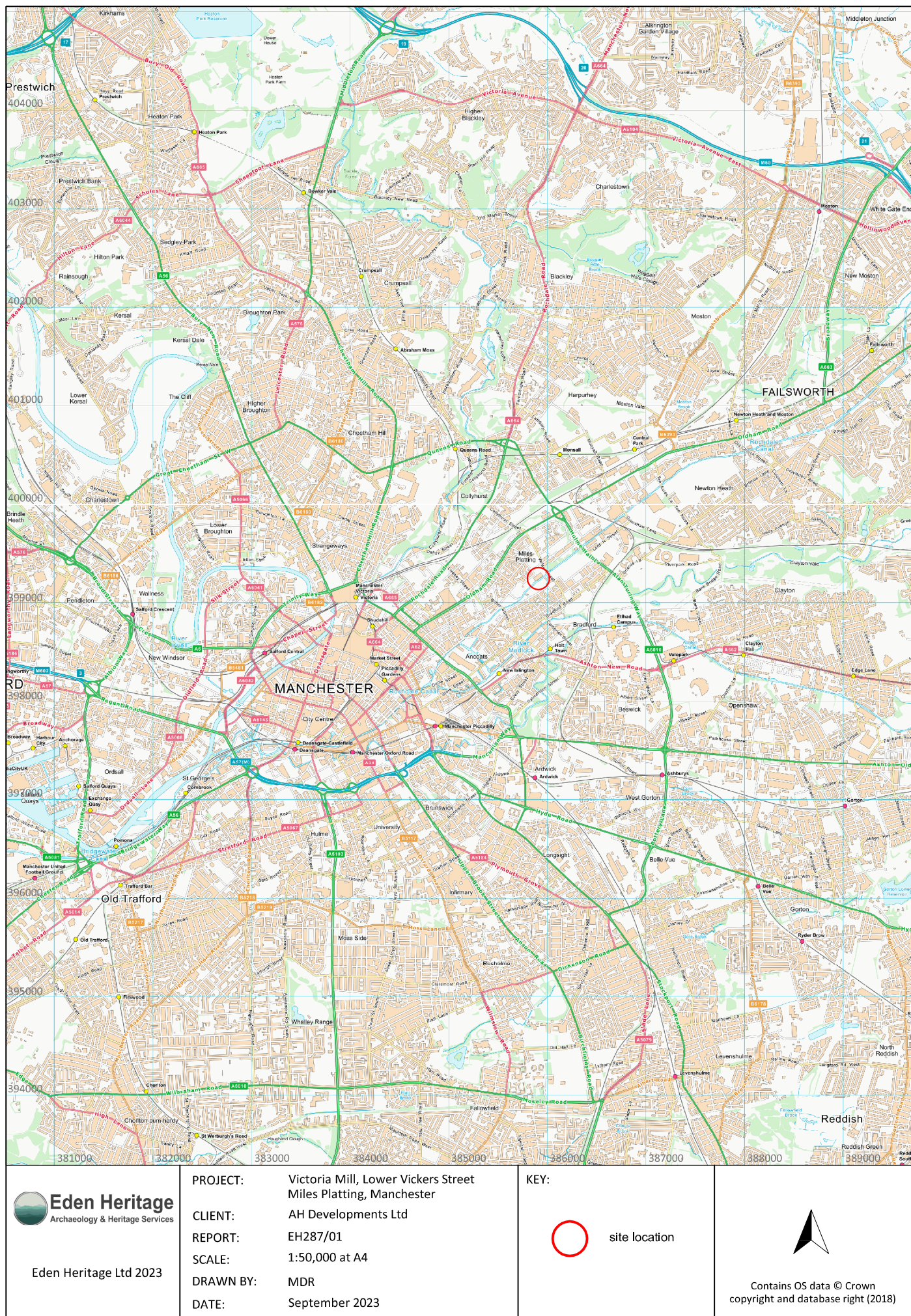


Figure 1: Site location.



 Eden Heritage Archaeology & Heritage Services Eden Heritage Ltd 2023	PROJECT: Victoria Mill, Lower Vickers Street Miles Platting, Manchester CLIENT: AH Developments Ltd REPORT: EH287/01 SCALE: 1:10,000 at A4 DRAWN BY: MDR DATE: September 2023	KEY: site location	 Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018)
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Figure 2: Detailed site location.

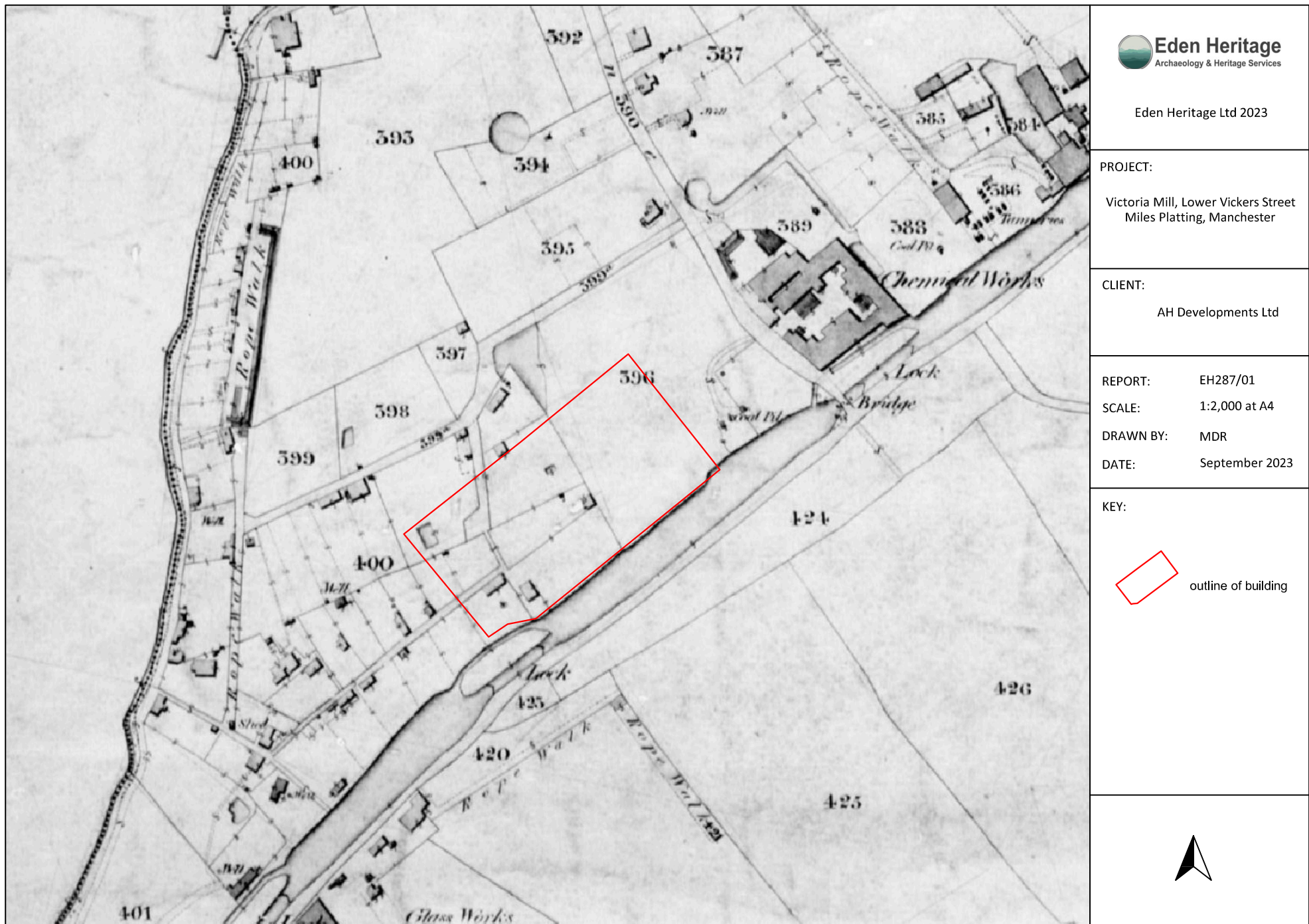
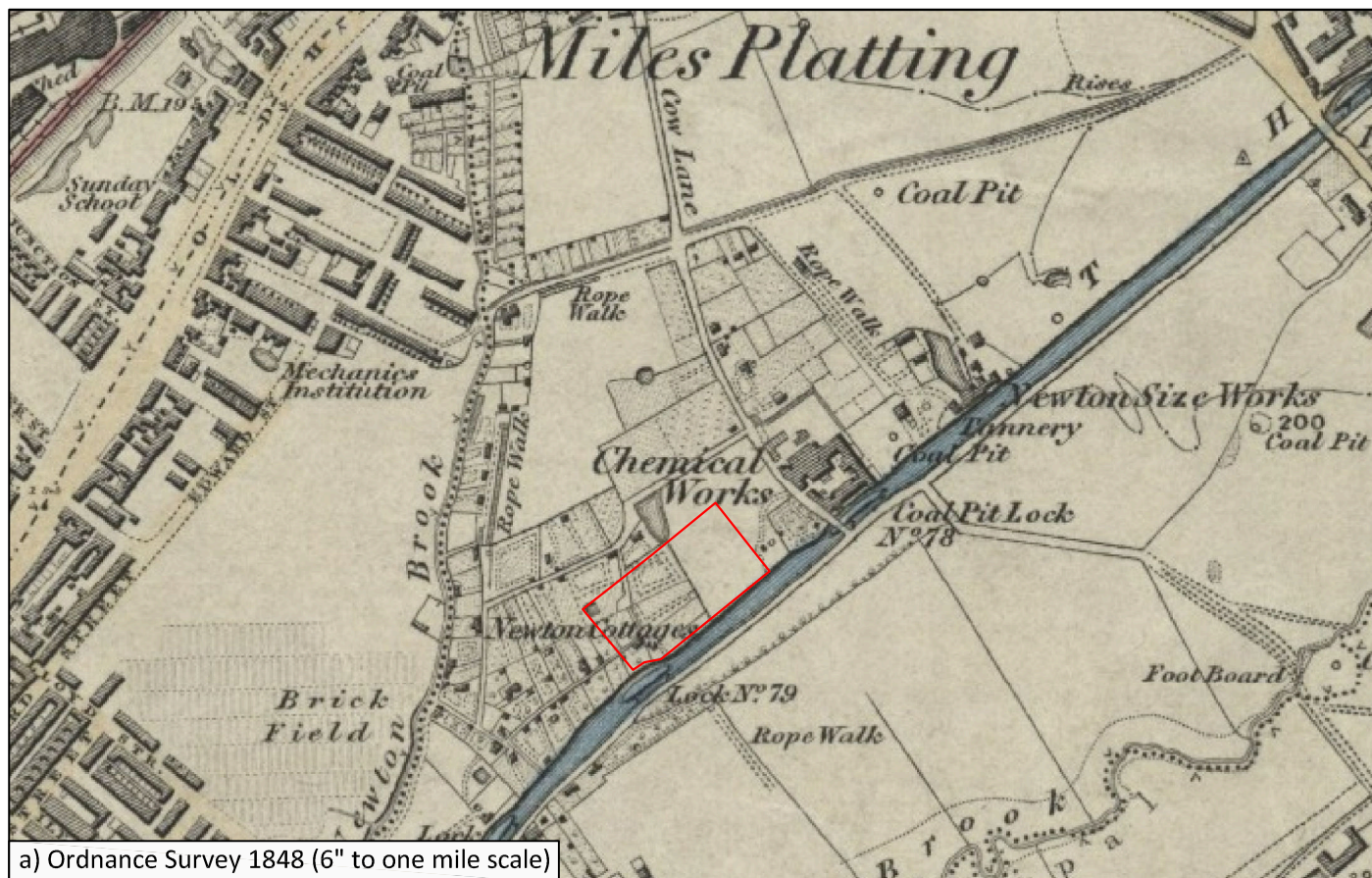
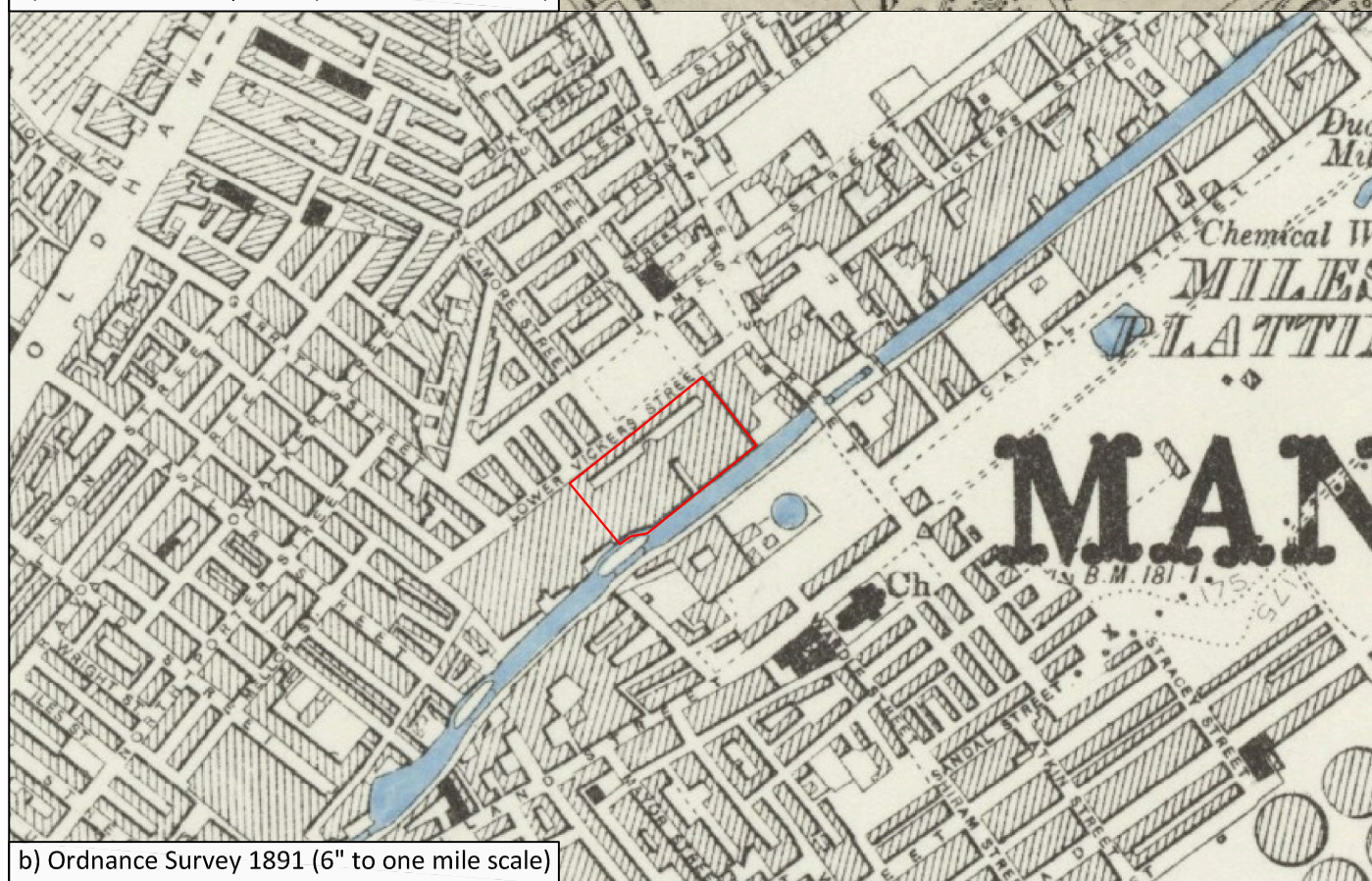


Figure 3: Extract from the plan of Newton in the Parish of Manchester (1846).



a) Ordnance Survey 1848 (6" to one mile scale)



b) Ordnance Survey 1891 (6" to one mile scale)

 Eden Heritage Archaeology & Heritage Services Eden Heritage Ltd 2023	PROJECT: Victoria Mill, Lower Vickers Street Miles Platting, Manchester CLIENT: AH Developments Ltd REPORT: EH287/01 SCALE: 1:5,000 at A4 DRAWN BY: MDR DATE: September 2023	KEY: outline of building	 Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018)
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Figure 4: Extracts from historic 6" to one mile Ordnance Survey maps (1848 & 1891).



Figure 5: Extracts from historic Ordnance Survey maps (1893-1947).



a) Ordnance Survey 1956 (1:10,000 scale)



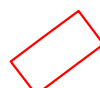
b) Ordnance Survey 1968 (1:10,000 scale)



Eden Heritage Ltd 2023

PROJECT: Victoria Mill, Lower Vickers Street
Miles Platting, Manchester
CLIENT: AH Developments Ltd
REPORT: EH287/01
SCALE: 1:5,000 at A4
DRAWN BY: MDR
DATE: September 2023

KEY:



outline of building



Figure 6: Extracts from late 20th century Ordnance Survey maps (1956 & 1968).



PROJECT:

Victoria Mill, Lower Vickers Street
Miles Platting, Manchester

CLIENT:

AH Developments Ltd

REPORT: EH287/01

SCALE: 1:1,250 at A4

DRAWN BY: MDR

DATE: September 2023

KEY:



outline of building



Contains Google data (2023)

Figure 7: Extract from modern satellite imagery showing Victoria Mill as existing (2021).

Heritage Impact Assessment
Archaeological Desk-Based
Assessment
Historic Landscape Survey

Geophysical Survey
Trial Trench Evaluation
Archaeological Excavation
Archaeological Watching Briefs

