

# Heritage Statement

**For the property known as:**

Murray's Mill, 50 Bengal Street, Manchester M4 6LR

**For:** Manchester City Council

**Date:** 19/12/2025

**Reference:** EKA250516



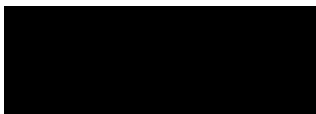
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## 1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a Listed Building Consent application for proposed remedial works to the 40m brick chimney at Murray's Mill, Manchester, a Grade II\* listed heritage asset.

The statement describes the significance of the chimney, outlines its historical and architectural importance, details the proposed works, and assesses their impact on the heritage significance of the listed building and its setting. The proposals are justified as necessary conservation-led interventions designed to secure the long-term preservation of the structure while respecting its special architectural and historic interest.

## 2.0 Description of the Heritage Asset

Murray's Mill is a Grade II\* listed former cotton spinning mill complex located within the historic Ancoats area of Manchester. The chimney forms an integral part of the mill complex and is physically, functionally, and historically associated with the site's original industrial use.

The chimney stands approximately 40 metres in height and is octagonal in plan with a tapered profile, a form typical of early industrial chimneys constructed prior to 1820. It is built in clay brick laid in English Garden Wall bond using lime mortar, with Staffordshire blue brick detailing, a sandstone cornice, and a reconstructed brick head section capped with a modern protective covering.

The chimney is visually prominent and contributes significantly to the character, appearance, and historic skyline of the former industrial area.

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## 3.0 Historical Context

Murray's Mill was constructed between 1797 and 1805 and is widely recognised as the world's earliest surviving urban steam-powered cotton spinning factory. The chimney was a vital component of the mill's steam-powered operation, serving the boiler plant and enabling large-scale mechanised textile production.

The site remained in industrial use until the mid-20th century, after which it experienced decline and dereliction. The chimney was included within the Grade II\* listing designation in 1988, recognising its importance as part of one of the most significant early industrial complexes in the country.

Subsequent conservation and repair works have been undertaken over time, including major refurbishment works in 2016 as part of the wider regeneration of the Murray's Mill complex.

## 4.0 Significance of the Chimney

The significance of the chimney derives from the following values:

### Historic Value

The chimney is directly associated with the early development of steam-powered industry and the Industrial Revolution. It evidences the technological and social changes that shaped Manchester as a global centre of textile manufacturing.

### Architectural Value

Its octagonal, tapering form, brick construction, and detailing reflect early industrial design and construction techniques. The chimney is a rare and well-preserved example of an early urban industrial chimney.

### Evidential Value

The surviving historic fabric, together with later interventions such as steel banding and repairs, illustrates the evolution, maintenance, and conservation of the structure over more than two centuries.

### Setting Contribution

The chimney is a key landmark within the Murray's Mill complex and the wider Ancoats area, making a strong positive contribution to the historic townscape and skyline.

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## 5.0 Description of the Proposed Works

The proposed works arise from a detailed condition inspection undertaken in 2025 and are limited to essential repair and stabilisation measures. They include:

- Replacement of the severely corroded steel hanger band at the sandstone cornice level.
- Localised repairs to the sandstone cornice, including removal of vegetation, reprofiling of spalled stone, and repointing using appropriate lime-based materials.
- Repair and replacement of exfoliated brickwork at the lower levels of the chimney using matching materials.
- Localised repointing using lime mortar where joints are open or defective.
- Replacement of under-specified post-tensioning bands to the lower section of the chimney with correctly detailed steel bands.
- Introduction of discreet ventilation to the chimney capping and base to improve long-term fabric performance.
- All works are repair-focused and do not involve alteration to the chimney's form, height, or appearance.

## 6.0 Assessment of Impact on Significance

The proposed works will result in a low level of harm to the historic fabric, primarily associated with the replacement of later steel banding and localised masonry repairs. These interventions affect elements that are either failing or later additions and do not detract from the chimney's principal significance.

The overall impact on the heritage asset is assessed as less than substantial harm, as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework. The works will preserve the chimney's architectural character, materials, and visual prominence while preventing further deterioration and potential structural failure.

## 7.0 Consequences of Non-Intervention

Without the proposed works, continued corrosion of the steel restraint bands, deterioration of masonry, and lack of ventilation would result in accelerated decay of historic fabric, increasing the risk of structural instability and unplanned failure. This would lead to greater loss of significance, potential emergency interventions, and increased risk to public safety, contrary to the conservation objectives of Section 16 of the NPPF.

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## 8.0 Justification and Public Benefits

The proposed works are necessary to address identified structural instability, corrosion, and material decay that pose risks to both the asset and public safety. Without intervention, further deterioration would lead to greater harm to the significance of the listed building.

Public benefits arising from the proposals include:

- Securing the long-term conservation of a Grade II\* listed structure.
- Enhancing public safety within and around the site.
- Preserving a key historic landmark within Manchester's industrial heritage.
- Supporting the continued sustainable use and regeneration of the Murray's Mill complex.
- These benefits clearly outweigh the limited and justified harm identified.

## 9.0 Planning Policy Context

In accordance with Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, great weight has been given to the conservation of this Grade II listed heritage asset. The proposals have been designed to minimise harm, which is assessed as less than substantial, and are justified by clear public benefits, including the long-term conservation and safe retention of the chimney.

The proposals are also consistent with local planning policy objectives that seek to protect, conserve, and enhance the significance of listed buildings and their settings.

Any harm arising from the proposals is assessed as less than substantial and is limited to localised repair and replacement of later or failing elements. In line with Section 16 of the NPPF, this harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposals, which include securing the long-term conservation of the chimney, reducing risks to public safety, and sustaining its contribution to the historic environment.

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## 10.0 Conclusion

This Heritage Statement demonstrates that the proposed remedial works are necessary, proportionate, and carefully designed to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Murray's Mill chimney.

The proposals will safeguard the significance of this important Grade II\* listed structure, ensure its long-term stability, and maintain its contribution to the character and historic identity of the site and surrounding area.

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