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Design & Access Statement

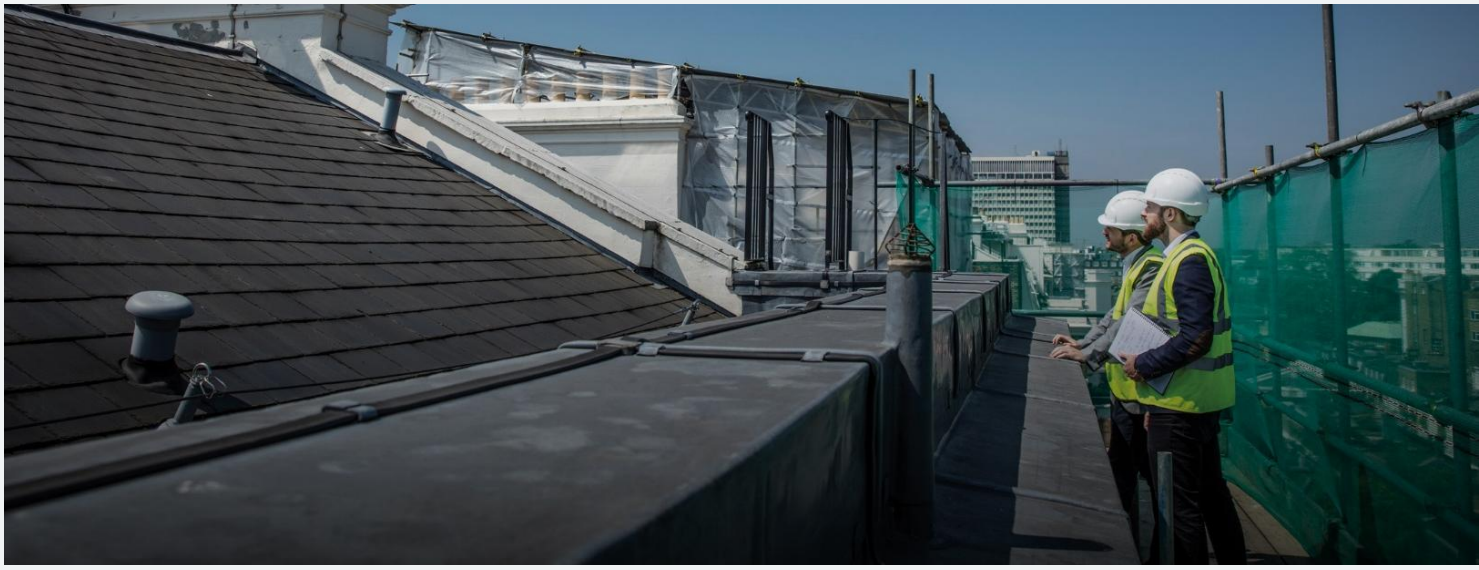
For the property known as:

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

For: Manchester City Council

Date: 27 August 2025

Reference: EKA250516



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1.0 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement supports an application for Listed Building Consent relating to proposed remedial works to the Grade II* listed 40m brick chimney at Murray's Mill, Manchester.

The purpose of the works is to address urgent structural issues and ensure the long-term preservation of the chimney, which forms a significant part of the historic mill complex – recognised as the world's earliest surviving urban steam-powered cotton spinning factory (dating from 1797–1805).

2.0 Site and Heritage Context

Murray's Mill is a heritage asset of exceptional importance, listed at Grade II*. The redundant chimney is a prominent feature of the complex and contributes to both its architectural character and its historic industrial setting.

The chimney is octagonal in section, tapering from 4.58m at the base to 3.63m at the summit. It is constructed in English Garden Wall bond brickwork with lime mortar, incorporating Staffordshire blue brick detailing, a sandstone cornice, and a reconstructed head section capped with a polymeric roof covering (installed during the 2016 restoration works).

Previous remedial works have included repointing with lime mortar, brickwork repairs and Helifix crack stitching, installation of post-tensioning bands, replacement of lightning protection, and reconstruction of the head section (2016).

3.0 Proposed Works

Based on the findings of the 2025 inspection report, the following works are proposed:

1. Replacement of the corroded cornice hanger band at +39.15m AGL with a new segmented steel band, bonded to the lightning conductor system, fully coated, and with galvanised fixings.

2. Stonework repairs to the sandstone cornice, including removal of vegetation, repointing with hydraulic lime mortar, and reprofiling of spalled blocks with a compatible stone repair system.

3. Brickwork repairs to the lower 3.6m of the chimney, including removal of exfoliated brickwork (approx. 4 areas) and replacement with matching brickwork.

4. Localised repointing (approx. 2m²) using lime mortar to address areas of defective or missing pointing.

5. Replacement of the 19 post-tensioning bands to the lower 25m with properly specified carbon steel bands (75x10mm minimum), bonded to the lightning conductor system.

6. Improved ventilation measures, including provision of a 150mm ventilation hole with weatherproof cover to the capping, and installation of a louvered opening to the chimney base door to enable airflow through the interior.

4.0 Design Justification

The design approach is one of conservation-led repair. The works respond directly to identified defects while respecting the original form and materials of the chimney. Key principles include:

- Minimal intervention: Only defective areas will be replaced or repaired.

- Material compatibility: Use of lime mortars, Staffordshire blue brick, and conservation-grade stone repair to match the historic construction.

- Reversibility where possible: Structural band replacements are in line with conservation practice and designed to be maintained in future.

- Visual sensitivity: Works will retain the chimney’s character and silhouette, ensuring its continued prominence in the Manchester skyline.

5.0 Access Considerations

The proposed works relate solely to the chimney structure and do not alter public access to the site.

- Construction access will be via temporary steeplejack ladders and rope access techniques, in accordance with ATLAS and BSEN safety standards, minimising the need for intrusive scaffolding.

- Public safety will be ensured by exclusion zones during works, preventing risks from falling debris.

- Future access for inspection and maintenance will be facilitated by the improved banding and ventilation, reducing the likelihood of rapid deterioration.

6.0 Conclusion

The proposed works represent a sensitive and essential programme of conservation-led repairs. They address urgent structural risks, stabilise the sandstone cornice, replace failing steelwork, and ensure the continued preservation of the Grade II* listed chimney at Murray's Mill.

The works are necessary for the long-term conservation of the structure, are sympathetic to its historic character, and will secure the future contribution of the chimney to Manchester's industrial heritage.

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