

Heritage Statement
in connection with
Albion Mill, Bury

Prepared By

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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This statement supports a proposal to carry out alterations to Albion Mill, in Bury to change the roof, add rooflights and install new windows.
- 1.2 Albion Mill has some significance as a non-adopted building of local interest, being the product of 2 different phases and being part of a wider complex.
- 1.3 The proposed alterations have been designed in a manner that will respect and safeguard the significance of the mill in its capacity as a non – designated heritage asset. The proposed scheme has the potential to enhance the area through the works to enhance the visual amenity of the area without impacting on the key drivers of significance.
- 1.3 On this basis the proposal is deemed compliant with both national and local policy.

2 INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Format

- 2.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared to assess proposals to carry out enhancement works to Albion Mill consisting of external alterations. The mill has been identified by the local planning authority as containing some heritage significance, therefore the impact of the development upon any significance of the site requires consideration.
- 2.2 In essence the Heritage Statement assesses heritage significance and guides proposals for change in a manner that conserves significance. The approach adheres to the principle of 'intelligently managing change', which lies at the heart of national planning policy for conservation of the historic built environment.
- 2.3 The statement has been prepared in accordance with the general guidelines set out in the Historic England publications 'Informed Conservation'¹ and 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance'² and in particular responds to the heritage policies outlined in Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023). The legal context is set by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990. In terms of local planning policy, Policy EN1, EN1/1, EN1/2 and EN2 of the Bury UDP are of relevance and need to be given the appropriate weighting.

The Author

- 2.4 Ian Rowan is a qualified Planning & Conservation Officer. With a background of over 35 years in Planning, Regeneration & Conservation, Ian holds a Masters degree in Environmental Planning and a Post Graduate Diploma in Conservation & Regeneration, and has specialised in Conservation Planning for the past 20 years.

Methods of Research and Investigation

- 2.6 Inspections of the site were carried out in March 2024 to assess its physical nature. Background research has also been conducted to ascertain all relevant contextual matters appertaining to the proposals. The scope of this research has, in accordance with the NPPF, been proportionate to the nature of the proposed works, with particular emphasis placed upon identifying and conserving heritage significance.

3 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Site Location

- 3.1 The proposals site is located on Albion Steet approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile west of Bury town centre. A site location plan is given below.

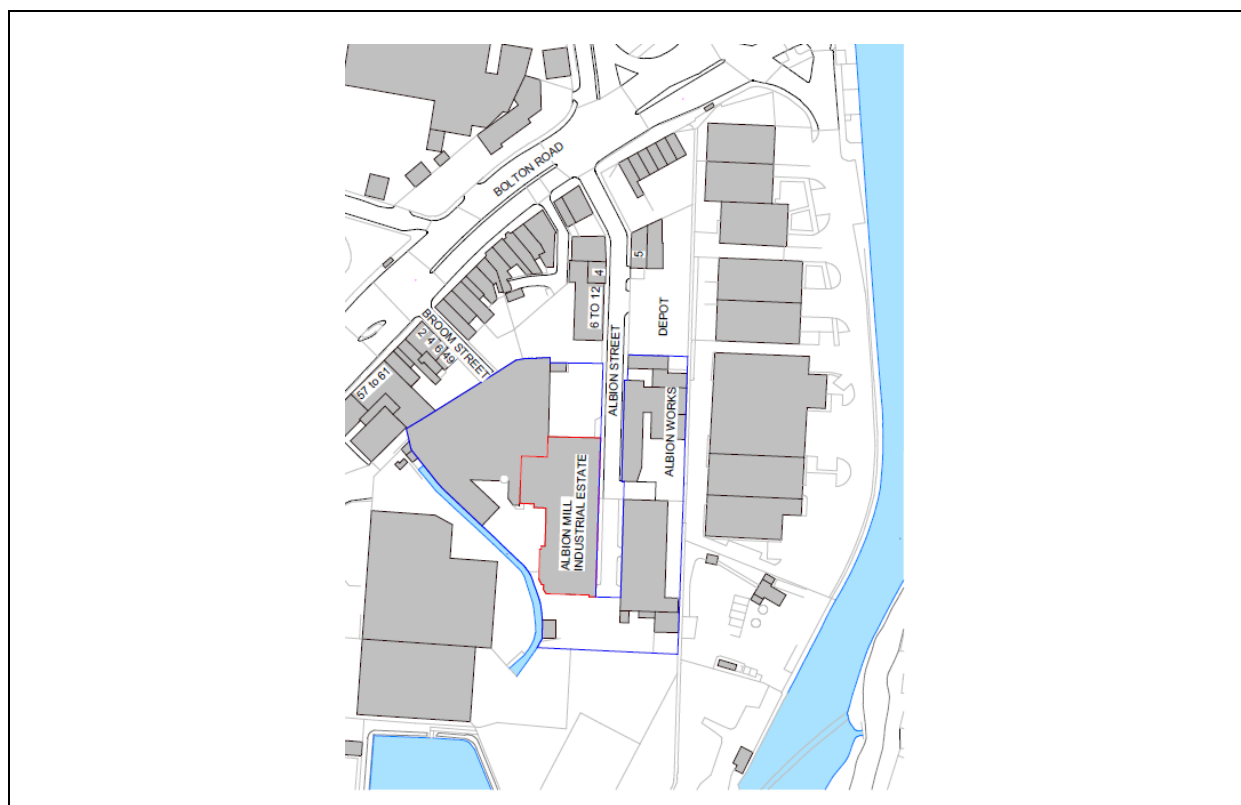


Figure 1- Location Plan

Site Description & Brief History

- 3.2 The site comprises a former textile mill on the outskirts of Bury town centre. It retains much of its external fabric, and is predominantly 4

storey with basement, built of brick under slate. Historic maps showing the development of the site from the 1840s to the present day follow in figures 2 – 7.



Figure 2 – 1840s Ordnance Survey Plan

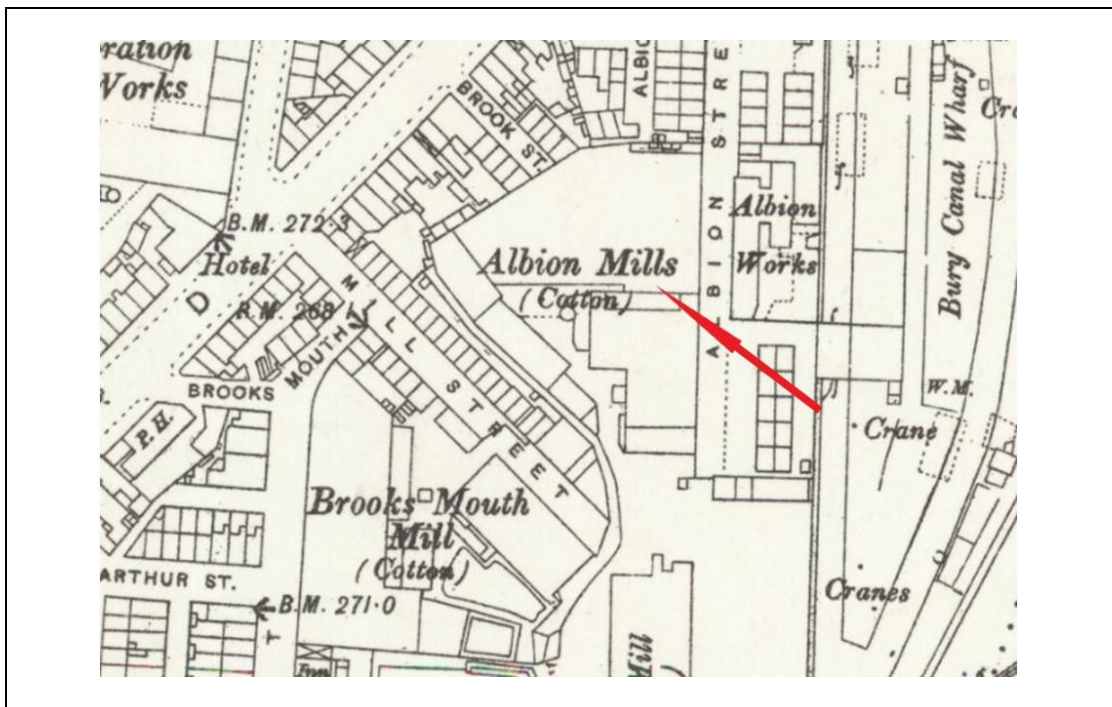


Figure 3 – 1880s Ordnance Survey Plan

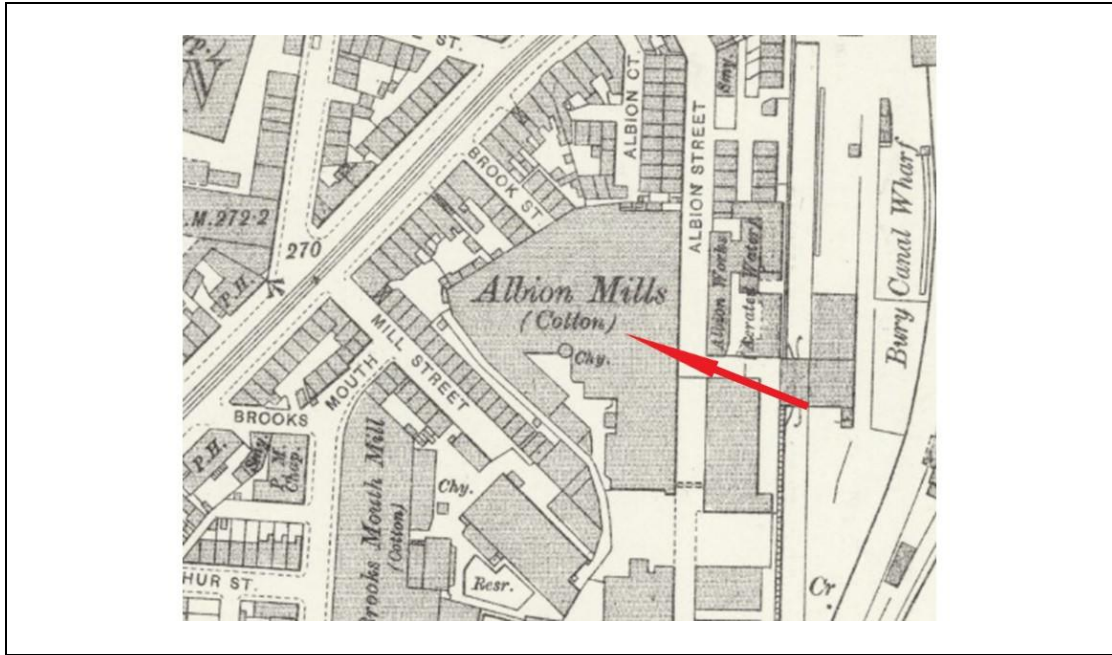


Figure 4 – 1900s Ordnance Survey

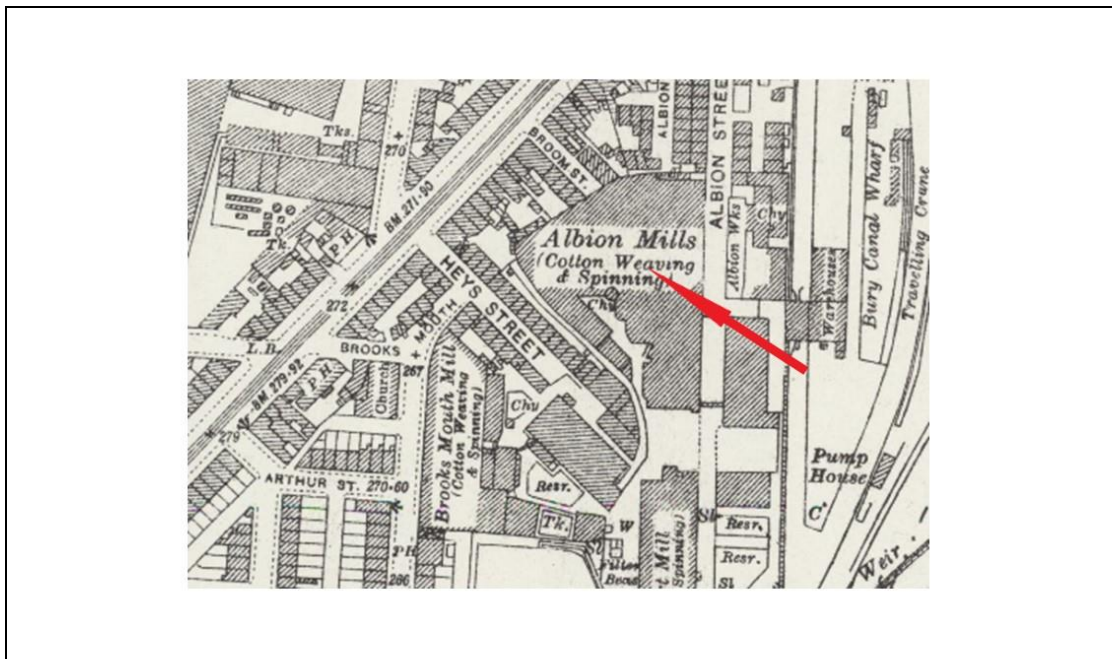


Figure 5 – 1920s Ordnance Survey Plan

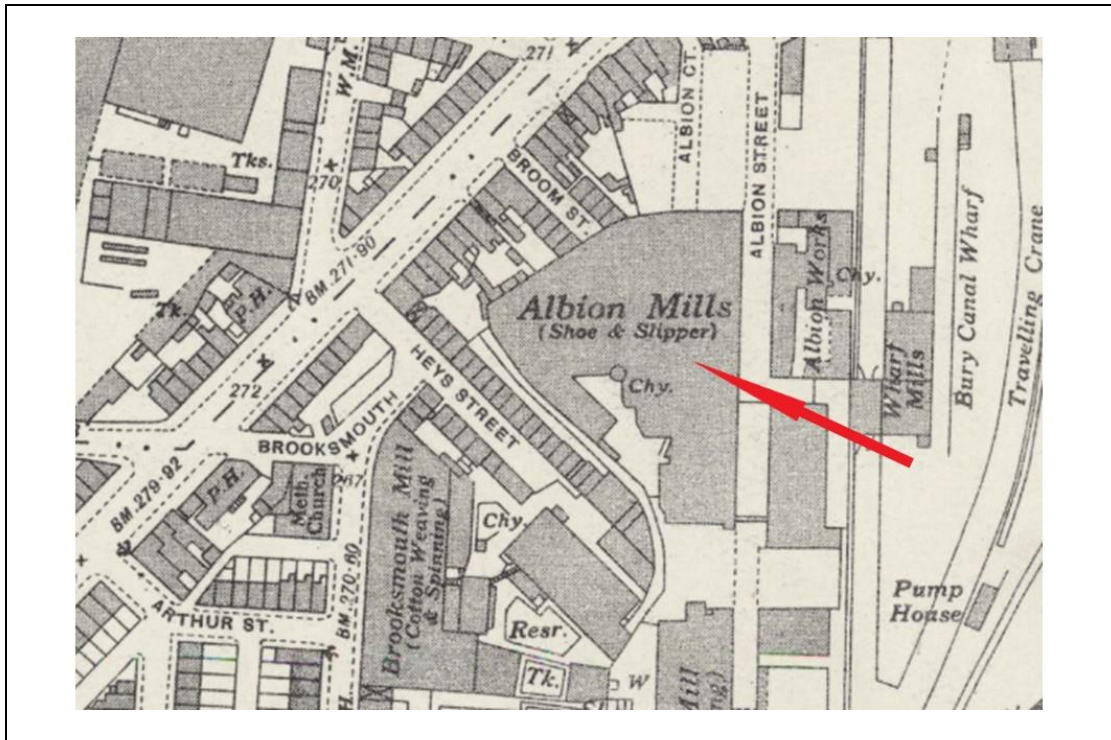


Figure 6 – 1930s Ordnance Survey Plan

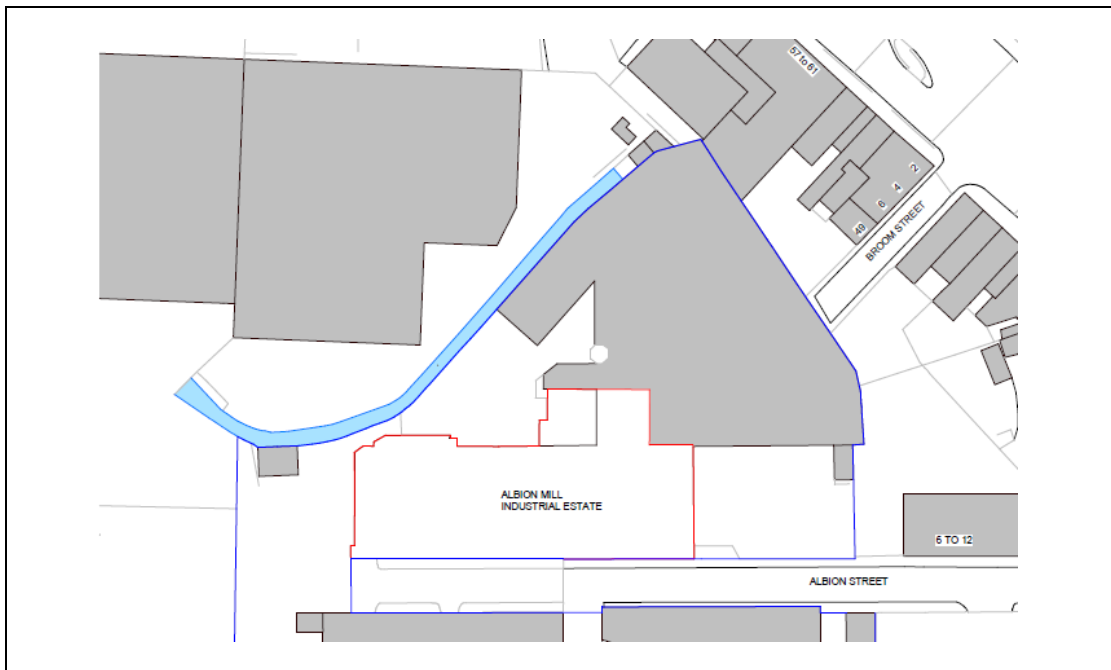


Figure 7 – Current Ordnance Survey Plan

- 3.3 Albion Mill was likely constructed in the late 18th or early 19th Century. It is predominantly 4 storey, double depth plan, with a 4 storey double depth extension to the south in the later 19th Century. North light style single storey sheds were also built at a similar time, along with associated boiler and engine house, these additions not forming part of this application. An element of the northern single storey has been removed in the 20th Century.

Heritage Asset Designations

- 3.4 The building does not have a heritage designation but Bury Council have included it on a non-adopted list of locally important buildings.

Photographic Survey

- 3.6 There follows a selection of photographs showing the relevant features of the site.



Plate 1 – East and North Elevation



Plate 2 – East Elevation



Plate 3 - East Elevation



Plate 4 – East Elevation



Plate 5 – South Elevation



Plate 6 – West Elevation (Partial)



Plate 7 – Southwest Elevation



Plate 8 – Boiler House, Engine House & Chimney

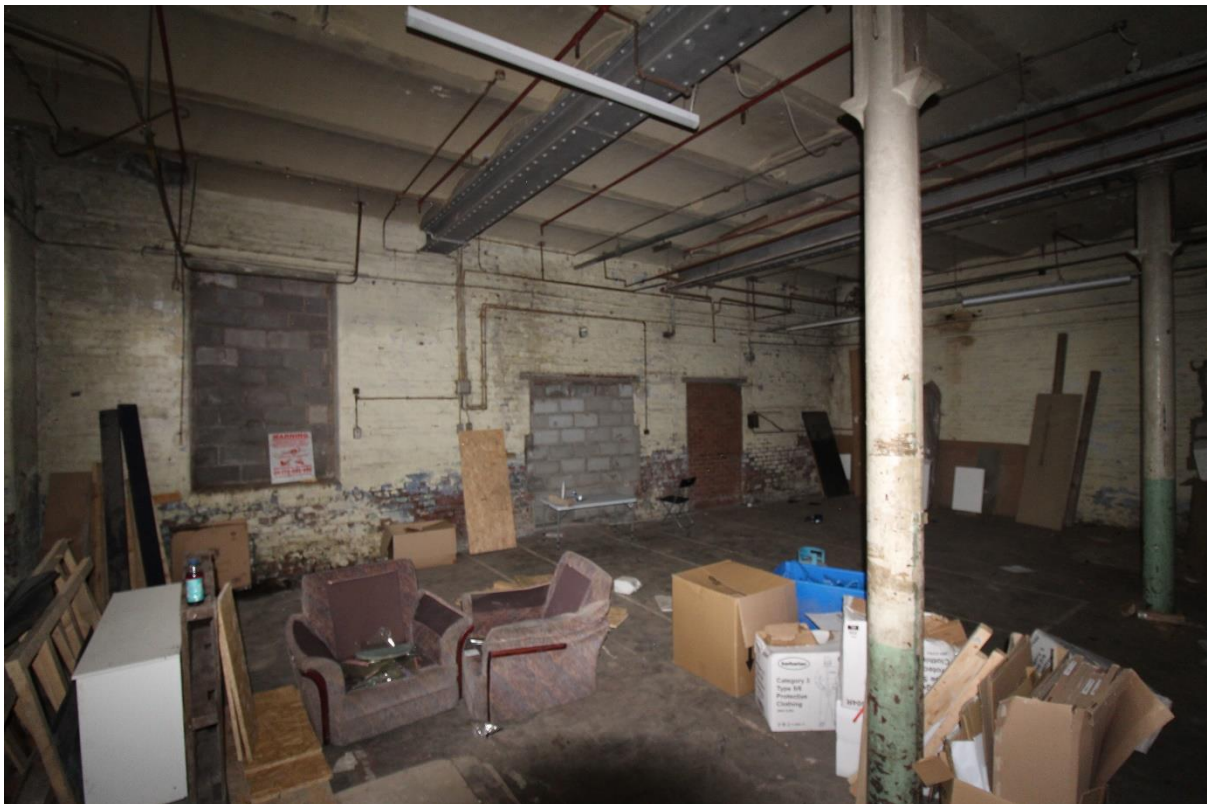


Plate 9 – Ground Floor Later Extension



Plate 10 – Original Range



Plate 11 – Privvy Tower



Plate 12 – Ground Floor Original Range

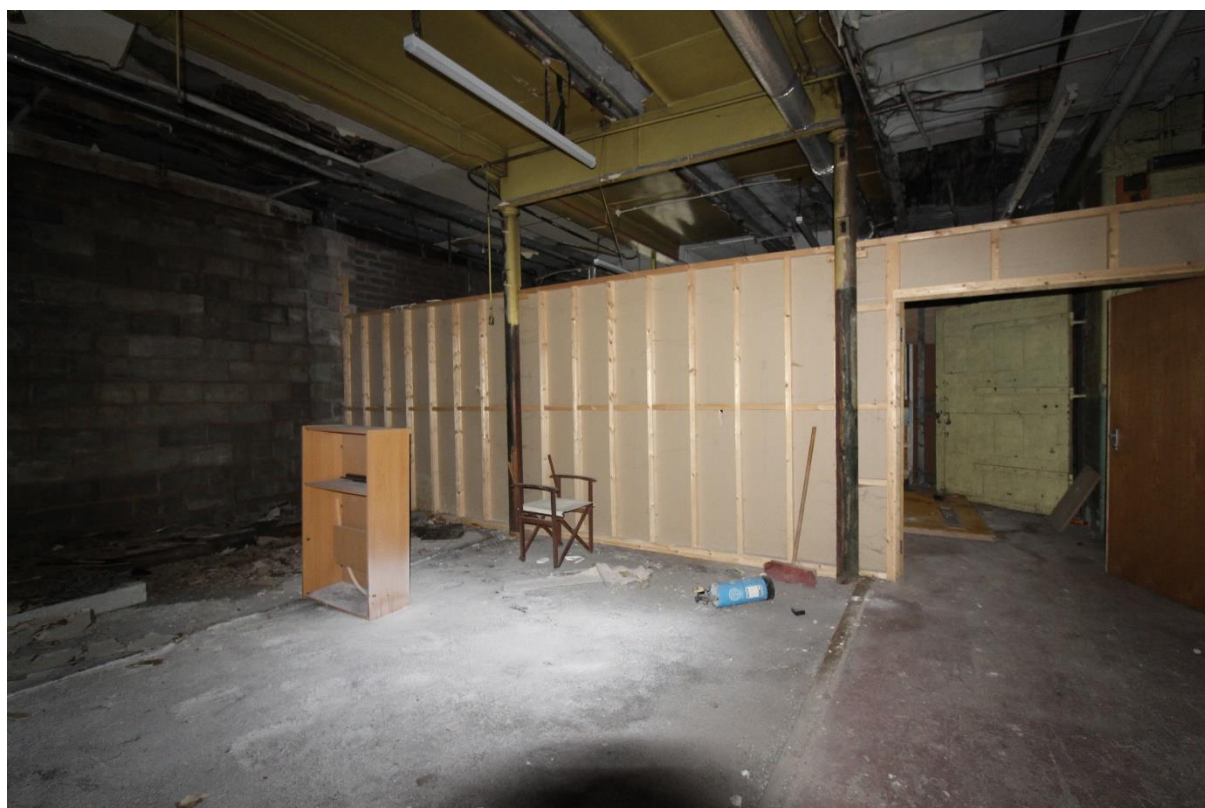


Plate 13 – Single Storey to North



Plate 14 – North Light Partial



Plate 15 – Stairs from Ground Floor



Plate 16 – 1st Floor Original Range



Plate 17 – 1st Floor Original Range



Plate 18 – 1st Floor, Extension



Plate 19 – 1st Floor, Engine House



Plate 20 – 1st Floor, Boiler House



Plate 21 – 2nd Floor Original Range



Plate 22 – 2nd Floor Original Range & Extension



Plate 23 – 2nd Floor Extension

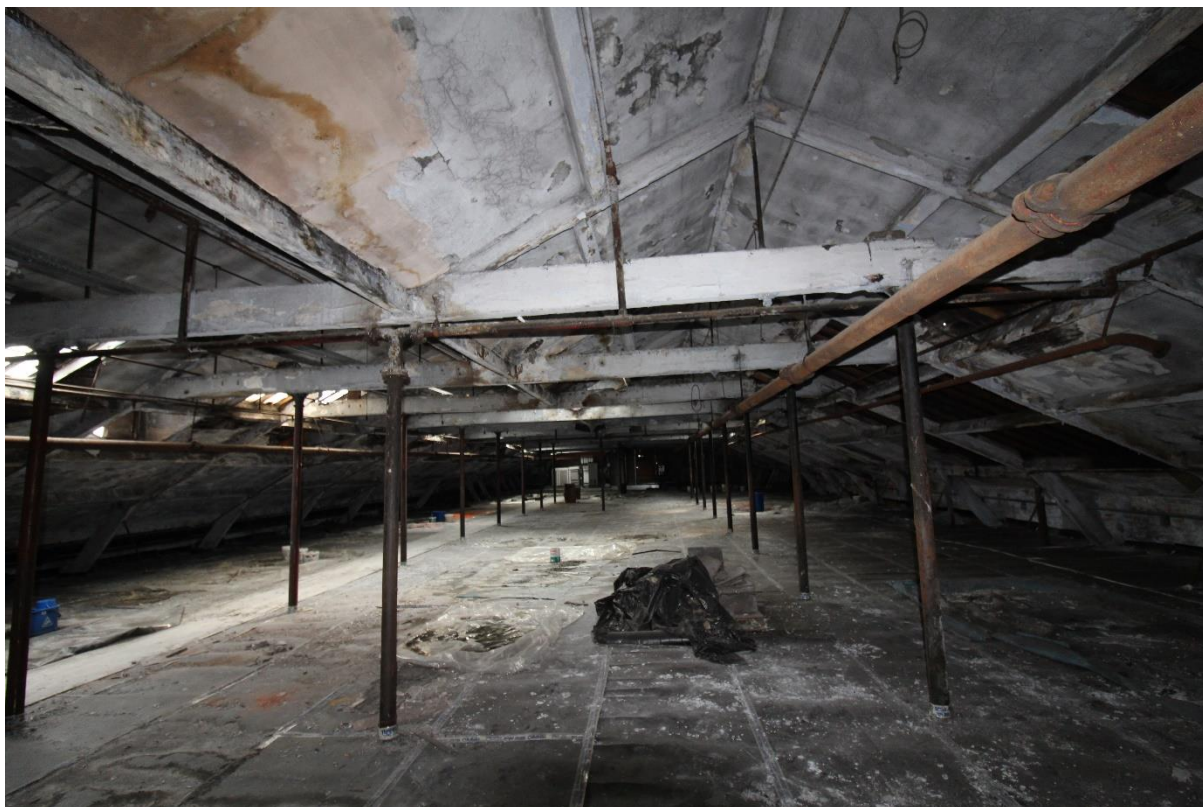


Plate 24 – Loft, Original Range

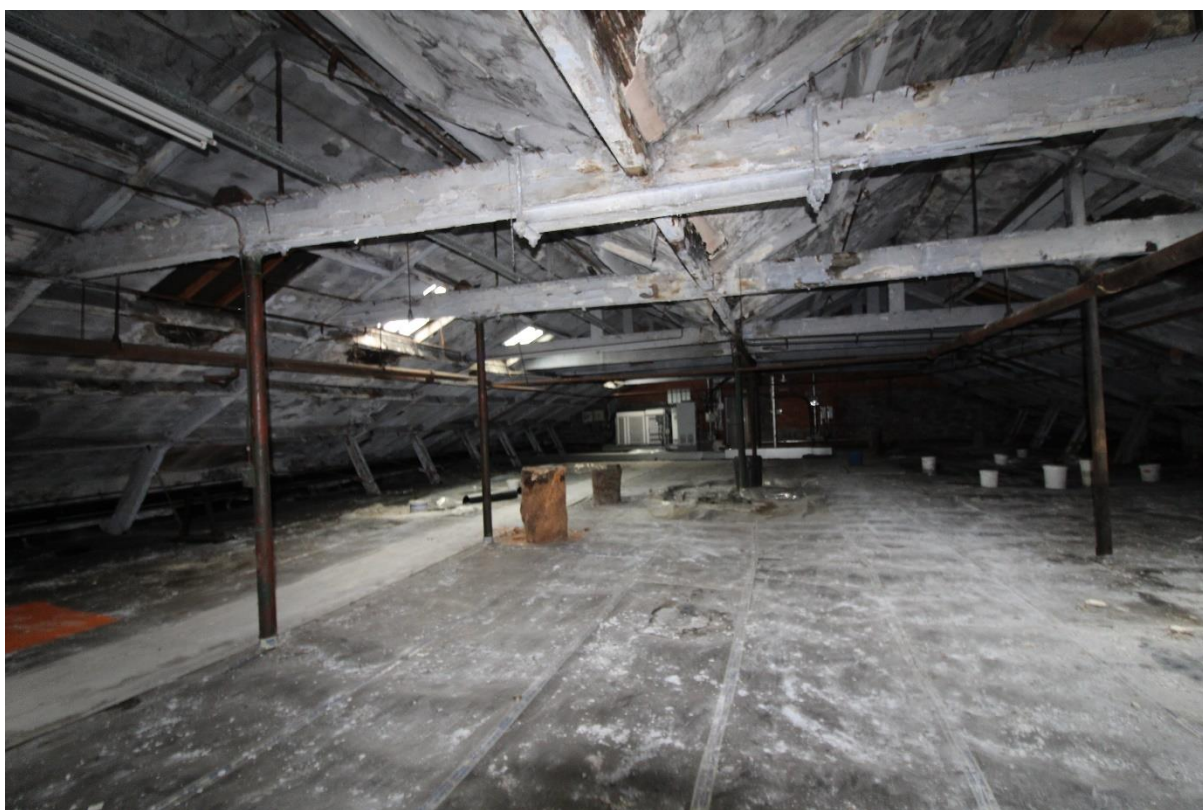


Plate 25 – Loft, Extension



Plate 26 – Loft Lights



Plate 27 – Loft access



Plate 28 – Original Entrance

4 Heritage Appraisal

Introduction

- 4.1 The following heritage appraisal adheres to guidance published by Historic England (2008) and relates specifically to the requirement contained in Paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), given in extract below:
- 4.2 *"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. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. 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."*
- 4.3 The appraisal begins by identifying the potential range of heritage values attributed to the site in its spatial context, before evaluating these values and expressing them concisely within a 'statement of significance'. This statement is then used as a basis for assessing the design of new proposals and ensuring that conservation of significance has been prioritised.

Heritage Values

- 4.4 The following appraisal of heritage values is concerned with identifying those heritage values which establish heritage significance and which might be affected by emerging proposals for change. The values are distilled under the following headings: *evidential value; historic value; communal value; aesthetic value.*

Evidential Value

- 4.5 Historic England (2008) suggests that "*Evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.*"
- 4.6 The mill offers reasonable physical evidence of an altered early 19th century mill. It retains much of its original fabric, whilst also having some early additions worthy of note. Of particular interest the original front of the building is readily interpretable, as an industrial former mill. There is no particular evidence externally of the original entrance to the mill, there being evidence of an entrance to the extension in the southwest corner, see plate 7. There is also a 2 storey privy tower at this end of the building. The deep window openings provide evidence of the building period, albeit many of the, have since been replaced with more modern windows.
- 4.7 The boiler house, engine house, chimney and north lights are later additions to the complex, most likely in the later part of the 19th Century but yield evidence of the original power and ventilation of the complex, and the north lights, presumed weaving sheds, provide evidence of the versatility of the complex being a spinning and weaving complex. The building is constructed in the main in an English Garden Wall Bond of 5 stretchers over headers, whilst the north elevation has been overclad with corrugated steel. The roof is a double pile dual pitched slate roof, running the length of the building, hidden at the north and south end behind a gable parapet.
- 4.8 Internally much of the plan form of the building provides evidential value. Whilst this has been altered to some extent by insertion of stud walls, these are easily interpretable as modern reversible additions and as such do not erode the internal evidential value to any great extent. The location of the spiral staircase provides evidence of its original construction. The later extension is readily interpretable, the early parts of the mill containing cast iron columns and timber beams, the later part being cast iron columns and steel beams. At ground and 1st floor the original external wall is retained to the south, including what is presumed

the original entrance at ground floor, see plate 28. The engine house is not relatively interpretable internally.

- 4.9 There is no evidential value in terms of any remains of the mill workings internally, however, given the presence of columns and timber beams, are synonymous with internal mill layouts, some value is yielded. The loft space retains its plan form as a large open space, however, there is no evidence of the original external wall, and rooflights have been added. The roof trusses provide some evidence of the original construction of the mill, being used from the late 18th and still being used in the mid – 19th Century to enable deeper mills to be created, also facilitating bigger machinery.

Historical Value

- 4.10 Historic England (2008) suggests that - *"Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative."*
- 4.11 The building contains illustrative historic value in terms of its links to the cotton industry. After the decline of this industry through the 20th Century, this building is an important link to the past industry. The building conveys a sense of the township that existed as the town grew through the period of 19th Century industrialisation. As an early mill it conveys historical value as it demonstrates the shift from small weavers houses to the larger purpose built mechanised mills and provides historic links to the change in cotton production. The relatively intact nature of the external envelope, provides notable historic value, and the retention of historic columns and beams provides some historic interest.
- 4.12 The privy tower is of some historic interest, the provision of latrine facilities for the staff is of some historic interest as it demonstrates the shift from outdoor latrines to indoor. The reasoning for the shift may not have been philanthropic however, it is likely have been to ensure the millworker didn't have to leave the premises to use the toilet.

- 4.13 The building yields little in the way of associative value. There are connections with Robert Calrow a local businessman, but this is of a low, local interest only. The mill no doubt played a part in the evolution of the town, and in particular the terraced streets that existed around the mill. The loss of these buildings has eroded this value however.

Communal Value

- 4.14 Historic England (2008) suggests that: "*Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.*"
- 4.15 As a building in long term private ownership Albion Mill will yield some limited communal value, however this will be raised by being a premises that could be visited by the public and employees. The best conserved buildings in the area can provide a source of shared community pride and despite its condition, the Mill will yield some communal value for this reason. Its dominance and presence as a historic building in the area helps it stand out as being a source of communal pride and no doubt makes a contribution to the overall visual quality and interest of the place.
- 4.16 Mills can provide a sense of communal value for people who have relatives who have worked in them. Due to the decline in the cotton manufacturing industry as generations pass, the building becomes the last link to the person, and to the industry for which the area was renowned, and are an important part of local community identity. Likewise, they can be a symbol of when the United Kingdom was a powerful manufacturing industry and provide community pride.

Aesthetic Value

- 4.17 Historic England (2008) suggests that: "*Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.*"
- 4.18 Albion Mill has some general architectural value in terms of its dominance on the streetscape. Its size and scale adds visual interest, whilst the deep

window openings demonstrate its early 19th Century origins. Further detailing to the building in its stone heads and cills also provide some aesthetic value. Much of this value is eroded by the changes to the building. The corrugated cladding over gable has a negative impact, and the addition of roller shutters has a negative impact. Blocked up windows and patchwork infill brickwork has also impacted in a negative manner, whilst the general neglect and dereliction has impacted upon aesthetic value, providing a bleak external appearance.

- 4.19 Internally, aesthetic value is provided within the mill, mainly in terms of its arrangement of columns and beams. Whilst utilitarian in their function, they provide aesthetic value as they are iconic within typical mill developments, being of a 2 phase build across the mill. The single storey to the north contains no obvious aesthetic value internally. On the upper floors of the mill, value is yielded through the retention of the spiral staircase, which again whilst utilitarian provides an element of aesthetic value. In the loft space there is little of aesthetic or architectural value. The roof trusses, being of timber offer some limited value, however, this is nothing of any particular unique character.

Statement of Significance

- 4.20 Having assessed the heritage values associated with the site in its spatial context, it is possible to take a more informed approach to the assessment of site significance, giving specific consideration of plans to implement change. In this context a statement of significance is given below.
- 4.21 An appraisal of the heritage values associated with the mill has revealed there is some moderate to high evidential value, mainly contained in the external envelope and the contribution made by the complex as a whole; the whole complex being readily interpreted as a mill complex. The style of building with the deep window openings is of some relative value, whilst the later extension can be easily interpreted. The plan form is relatively easy to interpret, being an open floor plan synonymous with mill development.

- 4.22 Historic value is retained by the links with the building to the cotton industry of the 19th Century, and in a wider sense, how this helped to shape the townscape of the area in terms of development around the town, much of which has been lost around the mill, i.e. the terraced workers housing.
- 4.23 Communal value is acknowledged, as a building that played a part in shaping the town and the cotton industry being integral to this, there will be some moderate communal value.
- 4.24 Aesthetic value is provided by the size and scale of the building, and the style of design with some regimented window openings to the front elevation. Value is tempered somewhat by vacancy and change to the gable end to the north and is recognised at a relatively low level.
- 4.25 In essence the mill retains moderate to high levels of evidential, historic and communal value, with aesthetic value recognised at a low level. Much of this significance is derived from its legibility as a mill building and its links to the textile industry, but this is not of any rare or unique regional or national importance and this is recognised at a local level of significance. Given the condition of the mill, an opportunity exists to repurpose it, and retain its key drivers of heritage significance.

	Evidential	Historic	Communal	Aesthetic
External	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Low to Moderate
Internal	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Low

5 Analysis of the Proposals

General Principles

- 5.1 General guidance on assessing proposed changes to heritage assets is given in Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023). The policy establishes the premise that conserving significance should be a guiding principle when developing proposals for any new scheme. In order to satisfactorily do this, it is first necessary to conduct an appraisal of heritage values and identify the significance(s) of heritage assets before commencing with design work. Part 4 of this appraisal fulfils this need, and the findings of part 4 have informed the assessment of the new scheme. There follows, here in section 5, an objective review of the finalised scheme to verify to what extent conservation of significance has either been secured or compromised.

Summary of the Proposals

- 5.2 The proposals involve external alterations to the building. Indicative plans are shown in Appendix 1 and the proposals are summarised below:-
- Alterations to the roof including removal of the current roof and replacement with an infill section, along with a series of rooflights.
 - New windows and doors to the external elevations

Analysis of the Proposals: National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.3 As discussed earlier, Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the NPPF (2023) considers heritage planning and in essence unifies the overall approach to planning in a way that previous guidance, such as PPS's and PPG's, did not. This ensures that deliberations over decisions relating to heritage assets are made in the full planning context, where factors other than heritage conservation play a crucial role. It identifies the following key drivers in the decision making process:-

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

5.4 In order to establish a clearer, objective assessment of the proposals in the context of the NPPF, the following commentary considers how the proposed scheme aligns itself to the NPPF heritage policy drivers listed above.

5.5 ***The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation*** – the significances of the asset has been assessed earlier in this statement, which establishes the premise that Albion Mill has some moderate to high evidential, historic and communal value, whilst aesthetic value is relatively low. The proposal has the opportunity to bring back into use a vacant, semi derelict mill and reveal its significance to a wider audience whilst conserving where possible the key drivers of significance.

5.6 **Evidential Impact** – The evidential value of the mill will be conserved to a great extent by the proposals. Whilst the roof trusses provide some evidence of the original build of the mill, there will be extant evidential value across the mill complex, the impact being limited to an area of the building never intended to be showcased. The trusses have been surveyed and have been determined to be in a poor state of repair due to long term water ingress. The building and the complex will still be legible from the outside, and the plan form of the building will still be interpreted in terms of the large floor plates. It should be noted that internal roof trusses can be removed and replaced by modern additions without the need for *any* planning consent. Rooflights will be of a modern style, demonstrating a modern intervention and as such will be clearly interpreted as such, preserving evidential value, replacing and adding to

the existing rooflights. The new windows are of a modern material and will be clearly legible as modern interventions, thus conserving evidential value.

- 5.7 **Historic Impact** – The works to the roof will not diminish the historic value derived by the links to the textile industry and the growth of the area, and the shift from small weavers cottages to larger industrial scale buildings. Many of the windows are replacement and the remaining windows are in poor condition, and as such impact upon the historic fabric will be relatively low, and as with the roof works, the illustrative value contained with links between the building and the growth of the settlement will still exist.
- 5.8 **Communal Impact** – this will be retained by the works and there is an opportunity to be enhanced by creating a watertight mill that will be able to be utilised across the entire floorplate and be fully used. Communal links to the textile industry will not be unduly affected, likewise the building will remain a landmark building.
- 5.9 **Aesthetic Impact** – there will be little or no impact. The roof cannot be particularly viewed from any vantage point within a reasonable distance of the site and as such this value will be preserved. The current windows do not particularly contribute to aesthetic value, and a modern window to a traditional style will enhance aesthetic value and it will sit with the neighbouring buildings.
- 5.10 In essence, significance will not be unduly impacted across the building and the complex by retaining key drivers of significance.
- 5.11 ***The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality*** – The site is close to the centre of Bury and as such is in a sustainable location. The mill is proposed to be retained and used as present so there will be no adverse impact upon sustainability.
- 5.12 ***The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*** – The mill will retain most of its external fabric, the changes being windows and roof.

The roof works will not be visible, whilst the windows will be uPVC to a traditional design thus ensuring local character is conserved.

- 5.13 Paragraph 209 states the ***“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly 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.”***
- 5.14 As acknowledged from the outset, the purpose of this heritage statement is to determine whether the proposals will have a harmful impact upon the significance of the mill.
- 5.15 It has been demonstrated through the report that the key drivers of significance will be preserved by the proposals. The replacement roof will allow the top floor to be fully used and will remove damaged trusses that are undermining the building. Due to the damaged nature of the trusses, retention is not a realistic option, and replacement roof with a flat roof section will conserve evidential value as an honest intervention.
- 5.16 The works to the mill offer the opportunity to bring a redundant building badly in need of renovation back into full, viable use. Whilst there are some external changes proposed, these are minor such as infilling the valley roof, whilst rooflights will only be visible from Heys Street. The balanced judgement called for in policy 209 would therefore appear to swing in the favour of the schemes.
- 5.17 It is arguable that planning consent is not required for this element of the works. The trusses, as internal elements can be removed and replaced with a different style of truss, whilst the works to the external roof should be considered in light of *Burroughs Day v Bristol City Council 1996* which took the view that works that are invisible except from unusual vantage points to not materially affect the external appearance of the building.

Analysis of the Proposals: Local Planning Policy

- 5.18 Current Planning Policy is provided through Policy EN1, EN1/1, EN1/2 and EN2 of the Bury UDP, given in Appendix 2.
- 5.19 The report has demonstrated that the built environment will be preserved. The works to the roof will not be seen, and will preserve the key drivers of the building's significance as described earlier in this section. Due to the current condition of the windows imparting a negative impact upon the aesthetic character of the building, new uPVC windows will enhance this value. The building will still be readily interpreted as a former mill, conserving the key elements of its significance, and as such, local policy is complied with.

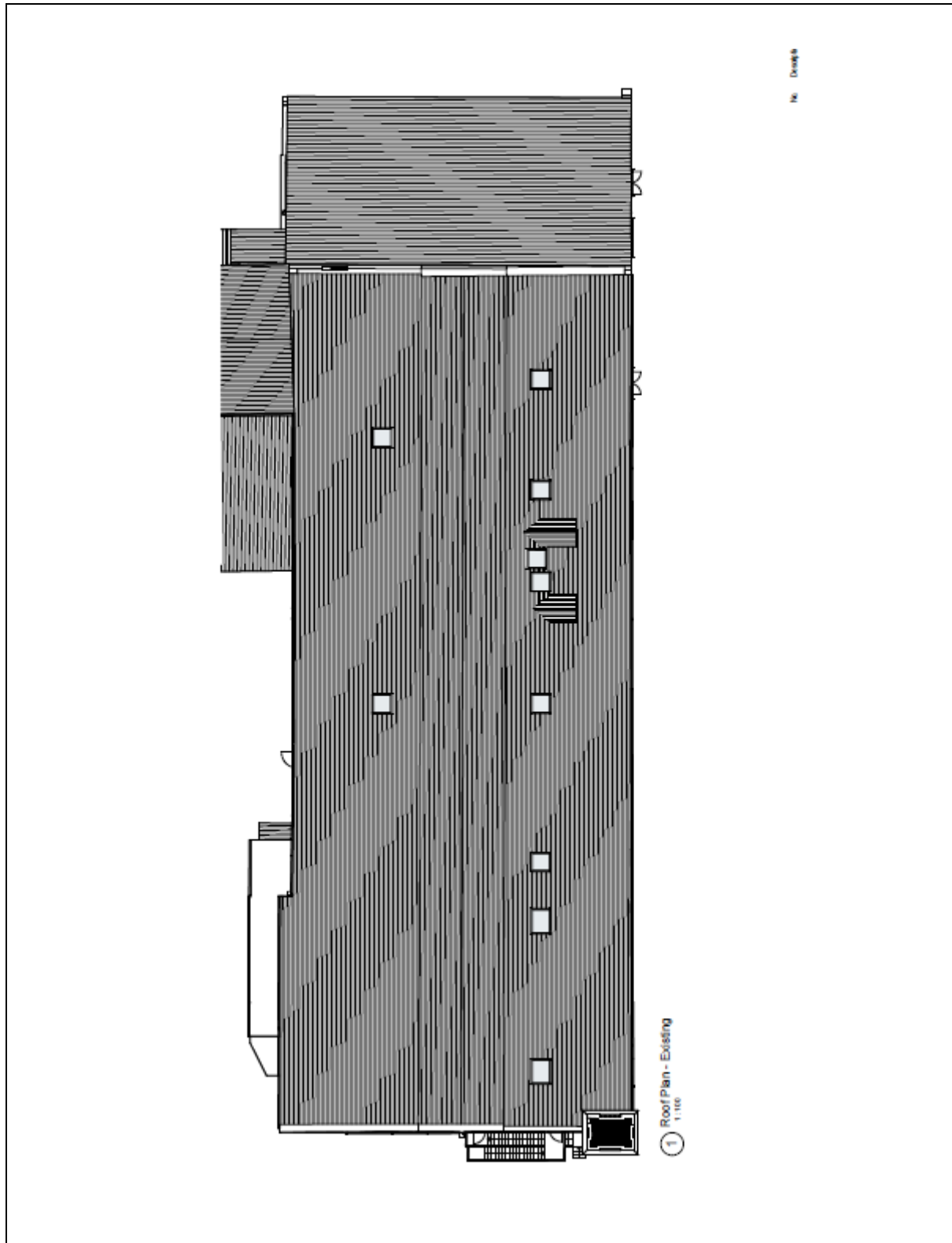
6 Summary & Conclusions

- 6.1 This heritage statement has explored the potential impact of alterations to Albion Street Mill which has been identified by Bury Council to be a building of local importance, although this list is not adopted. The initial findings of the statement are that the Mill retains areas of significance within its evidential, historic and communal values. Changes to the mill are directed to areas of lower significance where change and neglect has previously impacted in a negative manner.
- 6.2 An assessment of the proposed scheme has revealed that its design will respond positively to local character, indeed the works to the roof not being seen from any particular vantage point of note. Whilst it is debatable whether consent is required for this element of work, the roof shape, style and form is not of any rare or unique design, and given its condition, replacement is required which will remove much of its moderate significance. The replacement windows will be of a style and design expected from a building of this nature, and the use of uPVC will be an honest intervention to the building. Given the current condition of the windows impart a negative impact upon the significance of the building, a change of material will retain aesthetic value, whilst being clearly interpretable as later additions.
- 6.3 The design satisfies the guiding principles of the National Planning Policy Framework, and the significance that is extant will still be retained and the proposal provides an opportunity for enhancement.

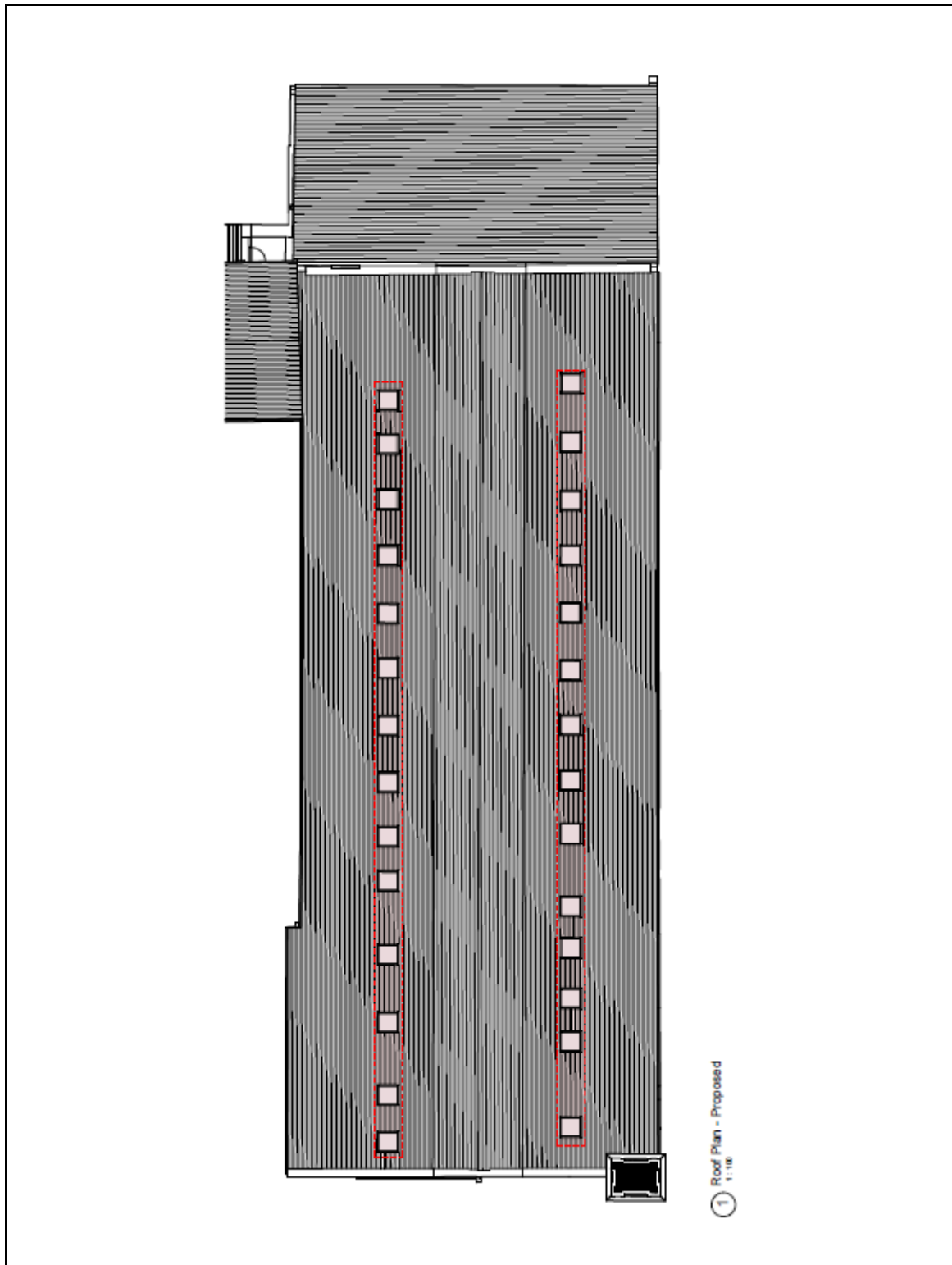
1 Clarke, K, *Informed Conservation*, Historic England 2003

2 Historic England, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance: Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*, 2008

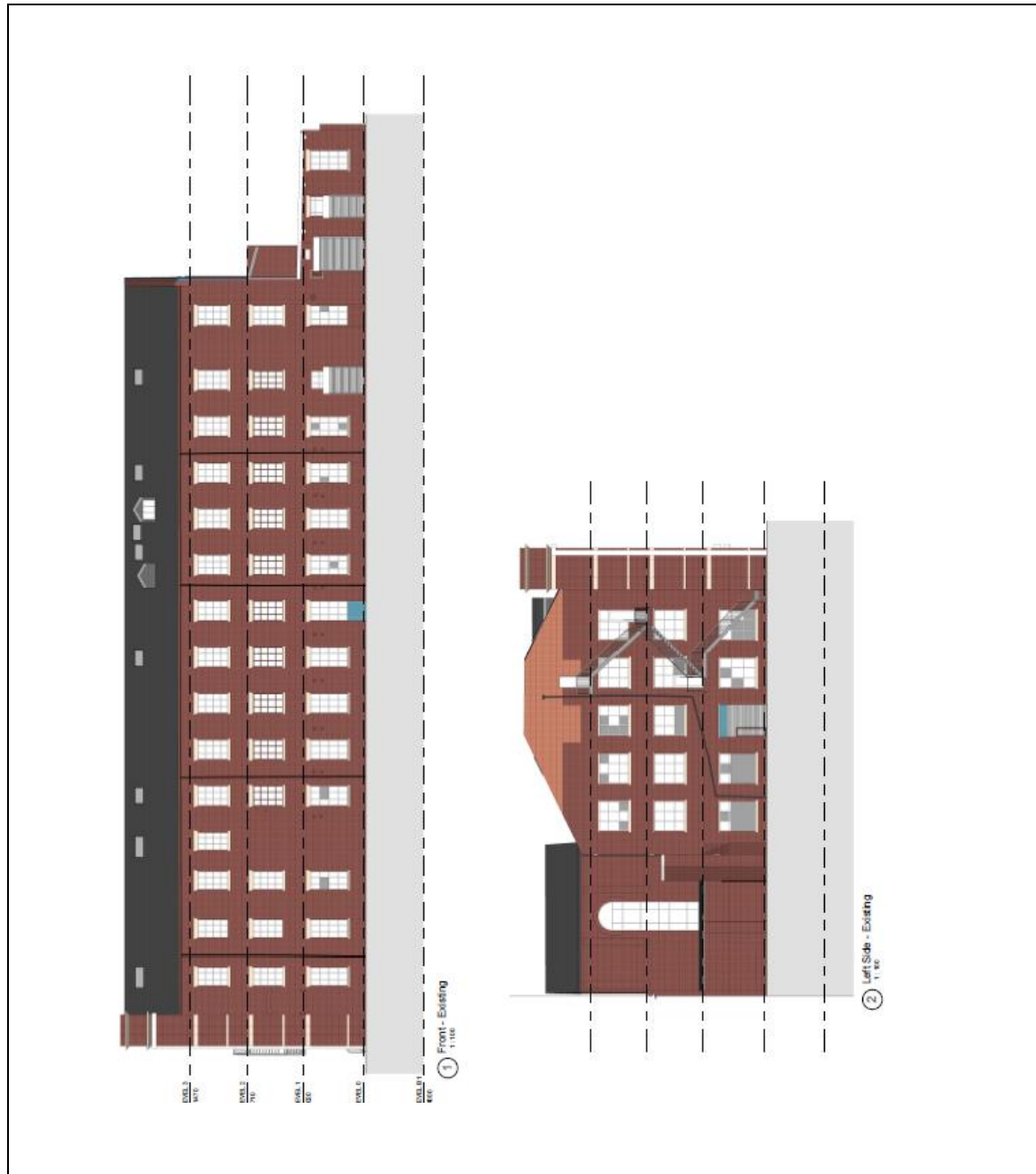
Appendix 1



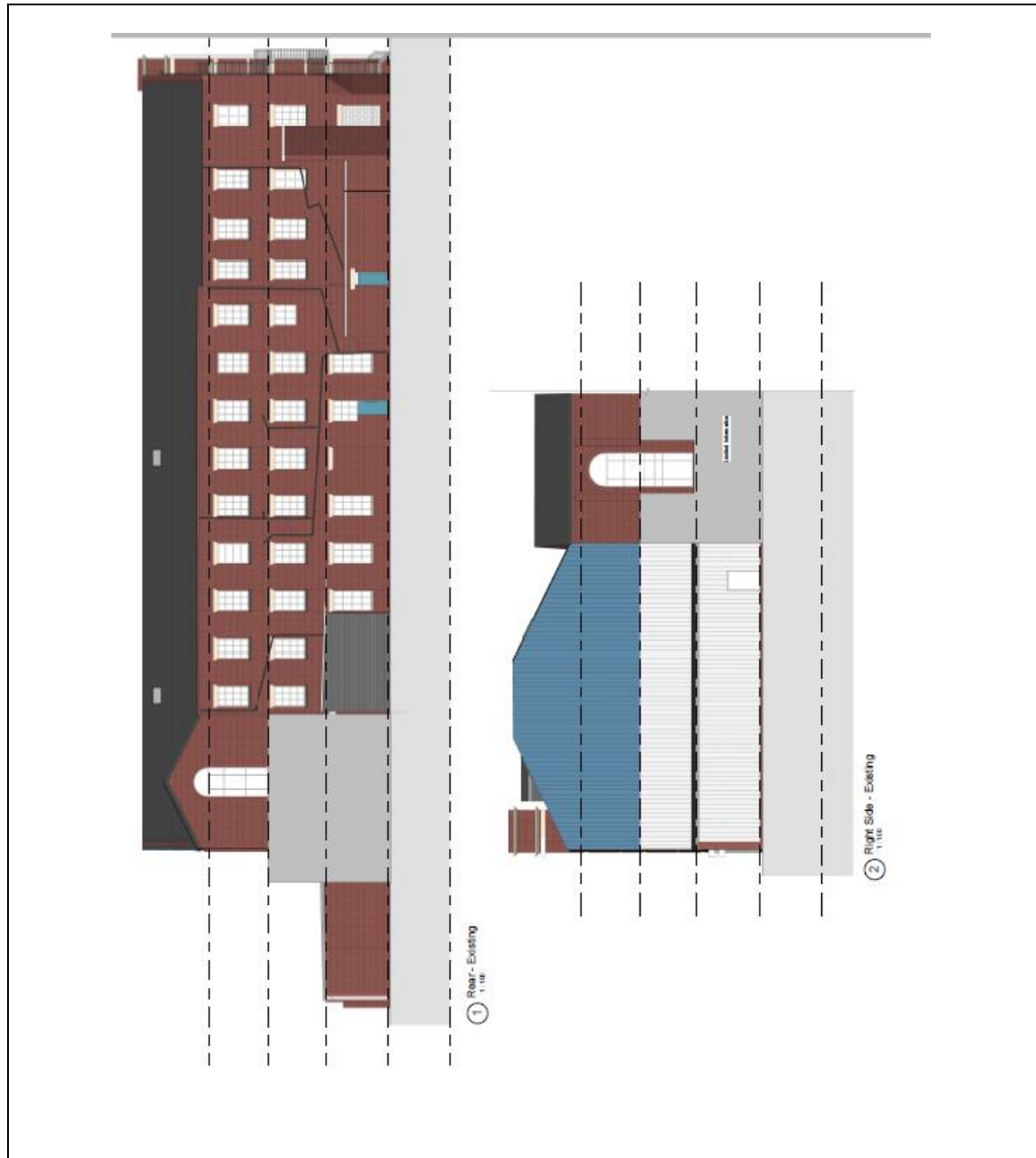
Existing Roof



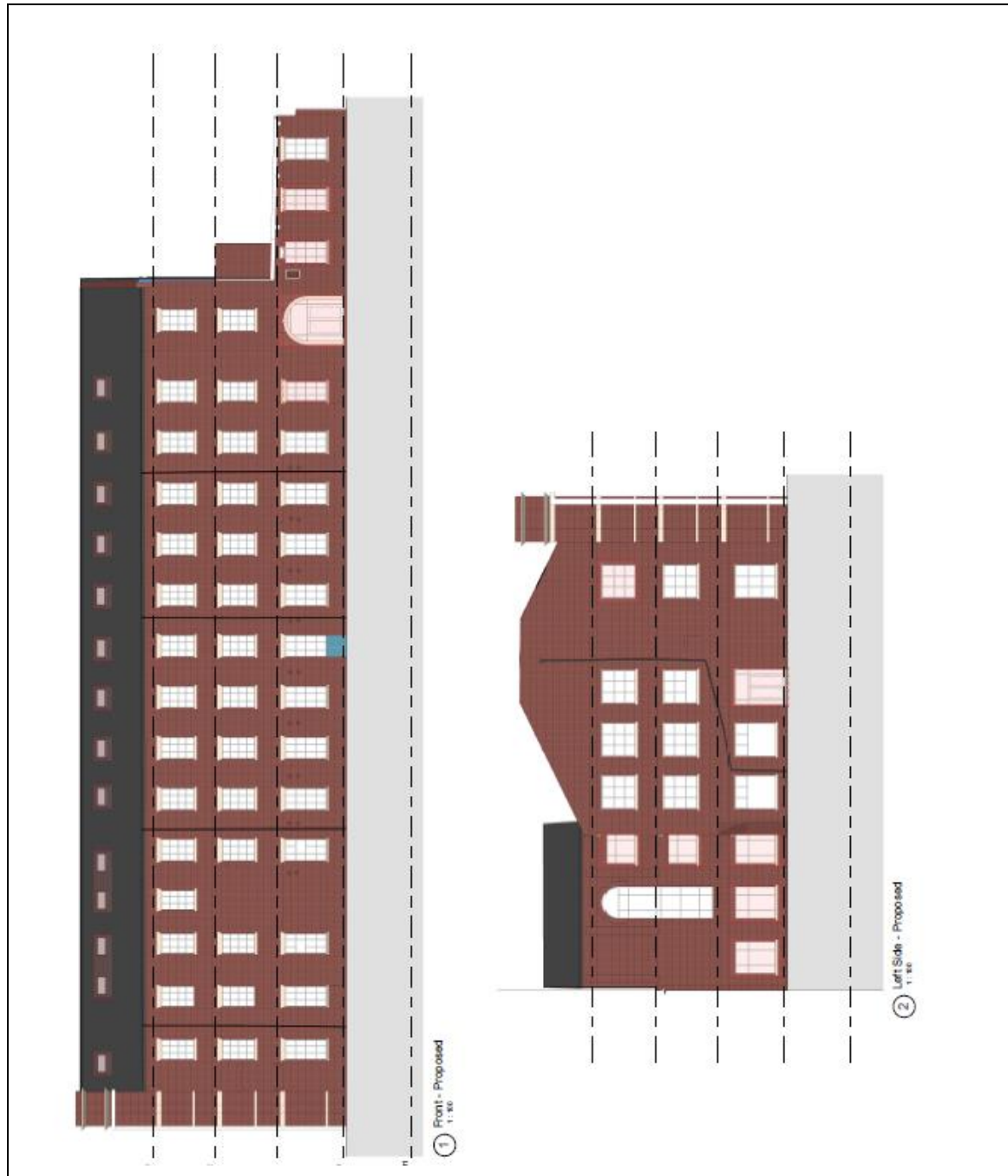
Proposed Roof



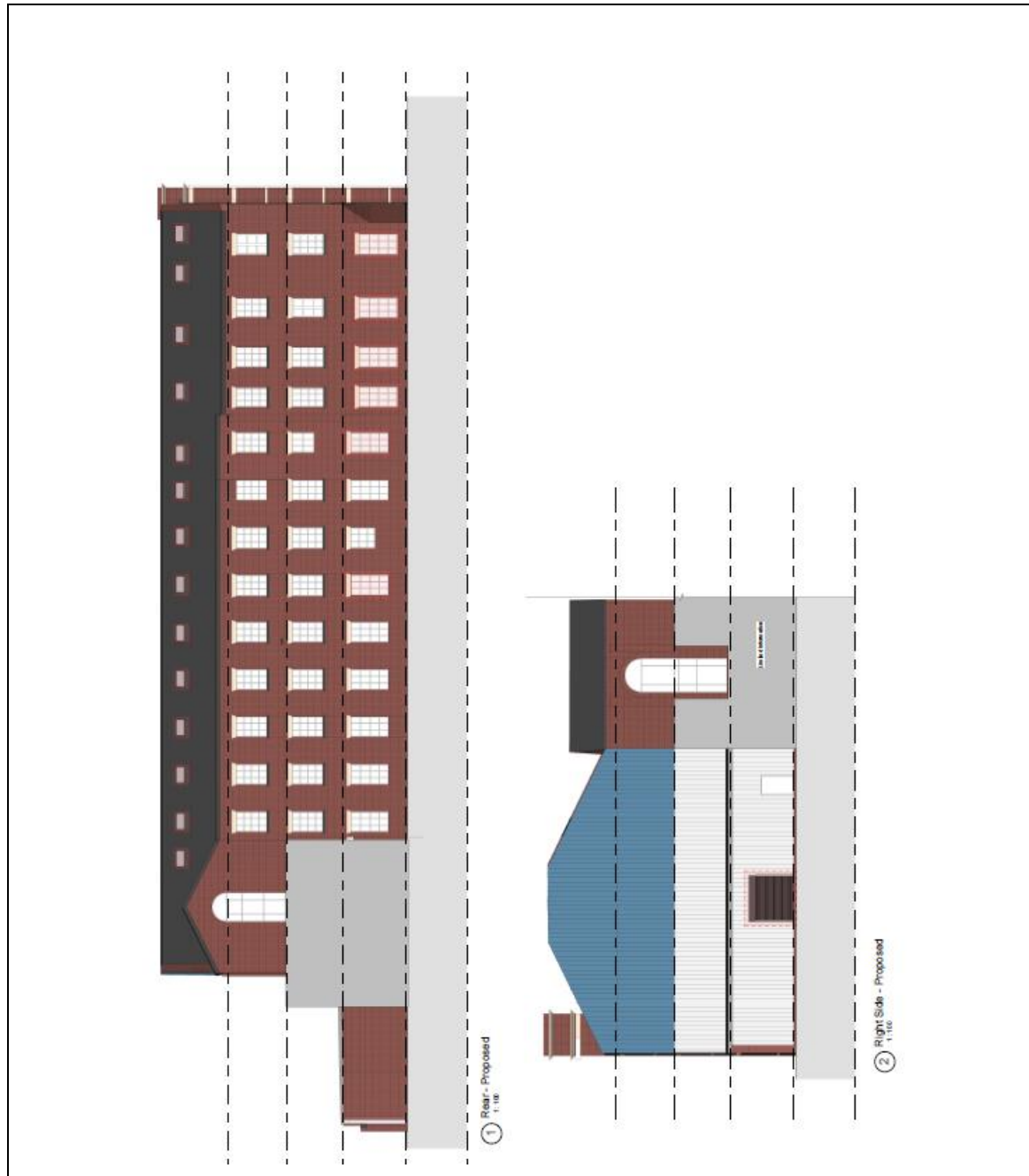
Existing East & South Elevations



Existing West & North Elevations



Proposed East & South Elevations



Proposed West & North Elevations

Appendix 2

EN1 - BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Council will seek to protect, preserve and enhance the character, appearance and amenity of the Borough's built environment.

EN1/1 - Visual Amenity

Development will not be permitted where proposals would have a detrimental effect on:

- public views of prominent or important buildings, especially those in areas of architectural or historic interest;
- the visual amenity both within, or viewed from, areas of environmental interest such as the Green Belt, Special Landscape Areas or the river valleys.

EN1/2 - Townscape and Built Design

The Council will give favourable consideration to proposals which do not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the particular character and townscape of the Borough's towns, villages and other settlements. Factors to be considered when assessing proposals will include:

- the external appearance and design of the proposal in relation to its height, scale, density and layout;
- the relationship of the proposal to the surrounding area;
- the choice and use of materials;
- access and other design features for the mobility impaired;
- the design and appearance of access, parking and service provision;
- landscaping, including the use of natural landscape features, and open space provision;
- the use of lighting.

EN2 - CONSERVATION AND LISTED BUILDINGS

The Council will seek to preserve the Borough's built heritage through the control of development, especially that affecting Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and areas of local historical importance.