



THE ARCHAEOLOGY CO.

Cobden Mill Court, Ramsbottom
Heritage Assessment

January 2026

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Steven Price of The Archaeology Co. to accompany a planning application for a retrospective scheme at Cobden Mill, Ramsbottom. The building was constructed as a cotton mill in the early 1870's and was converted to apartments around 2016. A heritage assessment which considers the impact on the building and its setting is required to accompany the planning application.
- 1.2 This statement has been prepared in accordance with the policies and procedures of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in addition to an examination, analysis and assessment of available historic records and cartographic sources and consultation with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record.
- 1.3 This statement includes:
- A description of the application site's location;
 - A summary of the application site's archaeological and historical background;
 - A summary of the heritage planning policy guidance context, and;
 - An assessment of the relative archaeological potential of the application site and the impact of the development upon it
- This statement is not intended to be a full or complete record of the site.

2. Site Location and Setting

- 2.1 The site lies on the north side of Kay Brow and to the west side of Square Street. The postal address is Cobden Mill Court, Ramsbottom, Bury, Greater Manchester BL0 9GG and the NGR is SD 79179 16634. The building is not listed but is an entry on the HER (No. 3882.1.0) and lies within the Ramsbottom Conservation Area.
- 2.2 The conservation area appraisal notes that "Ramsbottom's physical character and historical development is related to its situation on the sides of the Irwell valley; the rivers and streams of the surrounding West Pennine moors provided the water for textile processes and the power for the town's early industrial development. The

urban form of the Conservation Area is focussed on the dense, compact central area around the Market Place, with more suburban development to the south and east. The sloping site of the town has influenced the distinctive pattern of terraced streets built in the late 19th century both along and across the contours. ... Surviving mill buildings provide a robust, canyon-like character to some streets, such as Garden Street. The density of the central area is relieved by a few open areas, either formal around the churches, or informal, for example, Bridge Street Riverside”.

- 2.3 A further 56 HER entries lie within 750m of the site. The closest is the former stables / coach house (HER No. 9483.1.1) to the south side of Kay Brow, to the west of the site, south of which is the Grade II Listed Barwood House (HER No. 9483.1.0). The latter is a late 18th century house built for the calico printer Henry Kay and owned in the early 19th century by the Grant family. The former is part of a group of buildings named as Barwood Lea on the 1st edition OS mapping. To the east of the site, on the opposite side of Square Street, is the site of the former Orchard Mill (HER No. 15993.1.0), constructed in around 1870 as a cotton mill and later a chemical works, but since demolished. Immediately north of this is the site of the former Meadow Mill (HER No. 3884.1.0), also a cotton mill and north of this was a further mill, known as Crow Works (HER No. 15992.1.0).

3. The Heritage Planning Policy Context

- 3.1 The proposed scheme should be assessed against National Planning Policy Framework which replaced Planning Policy Statement 5. The NPPF represents a significant overhaul of the planning system for the historic environment. Whilst the changes are intended to be evolutionary rather than revolutionary, the fundamental principle of conserving heritage as a precious, fragile and finite legacy remains at the heart of national policy.
- 3.2 At the core of NPPF is the principle of supporting appropriate development that delivers the long-term viability of ‘heritage assets’ (defined in Annex 2: Terminology as: ‘a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as

having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions') while conserving their significance for the benefit of generations to come.

4. Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 The Ramsbottom area remained rural until the late 18th century when, in 1783 it began to grow. Ramsbottom offered a plentiful supply of pure water fed by streams from springs below Holcombe Moor, essential for bleaching and dyeing, which was soon taken advantage of. Peel and Yates took lease on the Old Ground in the area around Bridge Street, Bolton Street, Smithy Square and Square Street. The firm built new factories and offices for their expanding calico bleaching and dying works. The following few decades saw further businesses move into Ramsbottom, setting up spinning mills and Calico printing works. In 1802 Samuel and Thomas Ashton built housing for their workers having built a large spinning mill (BC 2011).
- 4.2 The Grant brothers were intimately associated with the rise of the town. The Grants settled in Bury, where they worked in the mills, travelled as chapmen and opened a shop. William Grant & Brothers had factories at Nuttall and Ramsbottom, and John Grant was living at Nuttall Hall. William and Daniel Grant were the inspiration for the Cheeryble Brothers characters in Dickens' Nicholas Nickleby (Farrer & Brownbill 1907). In 1821 Charles Grant built a large calico printing works on the west bank of the River Irwell, to the south of the site. Called The Square, its unusual enclosed design included a moat, a defensive plan that reflected the unsettled industrial relations and commercial sensitivity of the time (BC 2011, 9).
- 4.3 In 1841, William Grant and his brothers owned the plot of land on which Cobden Mill would later be built, as shown on the tithe plan. The site contained a large reservoir and the land surrounding it was occupied by John Gray. Cobden Mill appears to have been constructed in the early 1870's, with the first mention being in 1874 in the Manchester Courier (03/03/1874). In 1877 several adverts were placed for "about 700 cubic feet of Pitch Pine Logs – apply Cobden Mill, Ramsbottom" (Bury Times 06/10/ 1877).

- 4.4 In 1878 the Cobden Mill Company was listed as running 165 looms, although by 1880 the Ramsbottom Industrial Manufacturing Company Limited were recorded there (Bury Times 21/02/1880). A strike occurred at the mill in 1885 (Bury Times 22/08/1885) and by November that year it was put up for sale (Bury Times 14/11/1885). Mr Stephen Dugdale appears to have bought the works, recorded as the owner in October 1887 (Cotton Factory Times 14/10/1887).
- 4.5 In 1890 Bow Mills Co. of Dukinfield sued Stephen Dugdale and Co. of Cobden Mill for the sum of £13 13s. 6d. for goods sold and delivered (Manchester Courier 11/02/1890). The mill was offered up for sale once again in 1891, and the machinery auctioned off. This included "659 power-looms, 8 warping mills, 3 slashing and sizing machines, 4 cop winding frames, 2 plaiting machines ... there were only one or two bids made, the highest being £100, by the Ramsbottom Industrial Co-operative Society, the owners of the building" (Ramsbottom Observer 24/07/1891). The 1892 town plan shows the site, although little information is given. The mill is shown as a large sub-rectangular block, with a separate unit to the corner and the chimney shown to the south wall.
- 4.6 By 1901 Star Manufacturing Co. Ltd. was recorded at Cobden Mill (Cotton Factory Times 29/11/1901) and the 1910 OS map shows little further detail from the previous mapping. By 1922 the mill was up for sale again, including the:

"motive power plant, machinery and utensils therein ... The buildings are stone built and contain a total floor area of upwards of 5,00 sq. yrd., comprising Weaving Shed containing 664 Looms. Preparation Mill, 3 stories and Attic high, 119 ft. long 51 ft. wide, with 42 Looms on Ground Floor; Two Story Buildings forming Boiler House and Size Mixing Room over, Lofty Engine House, Two Story Buildings forming Economiser House and Weaving Shed, containing 39 Looms on the Main Shed Level, Chimney, etc. The Steam Power Plant includes: - Lancashire Steam Boiler, 30ft. x 8ft. 6in., by Yates and Thom (130lbs. pressure), with Leach's Mechanical Stoker, Green's 126 Pipe Economiser, Horizontal Compound Condensing Steam Engine with H. P. Cylinder 15 ½ in., Low Pressure Cylinder 31 ½ in., 4ft stroke, flywheel for belt drive"

(Burnley News 25/11/1922, 8)

- 4.7 During World War II Cobden Mill was used by two businesses; William Eccles towel weaving was on the ground floor, supplying towels to the hospital and army, and Kurt Engles' Temple Manufacturing Co. produced wire on the floors above (RHS 2016). A break in to the Temple Manufacturing Co occurred in 1945, when someone smashed a window on the roof to gain entry and slashed several of the warps (Ramsbottom Observer 12/10/1945).
- 4.8 The weaving shed was demolished in 2005 and parts of the mill converted to accommodation in 2002 and 2005, with the main mill building converted and the gate house built around 2016.

5 Statement of Significance

- 5.1 The buildings date from the early 1870's as the surviving part of a cotton mill. The building was constructed at a time when Ramsbottom was growing as an industrial town, and several mills were constructed in the area.
- 5.2 The Historic England Publication "Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets" (HE 2019) suggests three areas of interest for assessing a heritage assets significance. These are to be described, following which the level of the general significance of the heritage asset should be assessed, with the particular contribution of any described features. The three areas of interest are:
- **Archaeological interest** if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
 - **Architectural and artistic interest** which are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.

- **Historic Interest** which is an interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

5.3 **Archaeological interest**

The building is a former mill building, converted to accommodation. It was not surveyed prior to the conversion and appears to hold much evidence from its previous use. As such it has a high archaeological significance.

5.4 **Architectural and artistic interest**

The building is a stone built three story mill building with tall rectangular windows and loading tower. Due to the sloping ground, the mill is only visible from Square Street, onto which it backs, and Railway Street, which gives a good view of the east elevation. The west elevation is only visible from the entrance off Kay Brow. The east elevation is visually dominant, lying across the flat car park. The building has a medium architectural significance.

5.5 **Historic interest**

The building was constructed in the early 1870's, at a time when several mill buildings were being constructed in the town and the town began to grow. Although it has been altered internally, the building still has a medium historic significance.

5.6 **Contribution to the Conservation Area**

The building is visible from Railway Street from a distance but is visually prominent in this area, lying across the modern flat car park and set up on the side of the hill. As noted earlier, the conservation area appraisal notes that the "surviving mill buildings provide a robust, canyon-like character to some streets", and this is the case here to Square Street. The building is a positive contribution to the conservation area.

6. Analysis and Proposals

- 6.1 A total of seven Velux windows have been inserted into the roof. The roof was replaced in 2016, when the building was redeveloped into accommodation, and three dormers also inserted. Images from Google Streetview show that in 2015 a central band of skylights were already present along the centre of the roof. It is likely these that were referred to in the newspaper article from 1945 when someone broke in through a window on the roof. As such, the Velux windows have no impact on the heritage significance of the building or the conservation area, replacing a larger skylight which was already present.
- 6.2 The Juliet balcony has been installed to the top of the loading tower on the east elevation. This is completely transparent and barely visible without paying close attention. It has no impact on the heritage significance of the building or the conservation area.
- 6.3 The gate house was constructed in 2016 following the demolition of the earlier buildings. The remains of the chimney are still present in the wall to the east. Prior to the gate house construction, the wall of the mill ran the entire length of the building, up the neighbouring property as a two story wall (see plate 10). This section was fully demolished and rebuilt. As such, the additional two story extension added to the gate house has no impact on the heritage significance of the building or the conservation area.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The works to the building are deemed to have no impact on either the heritage significance of the building nor the conservation area.

8. Statement of Indemnity

- 8.1 All statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report, however such facts and opinions may have been derived.
- 8.2 The author will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

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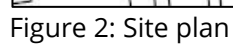
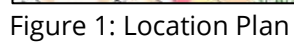
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Appendix 1: Figures



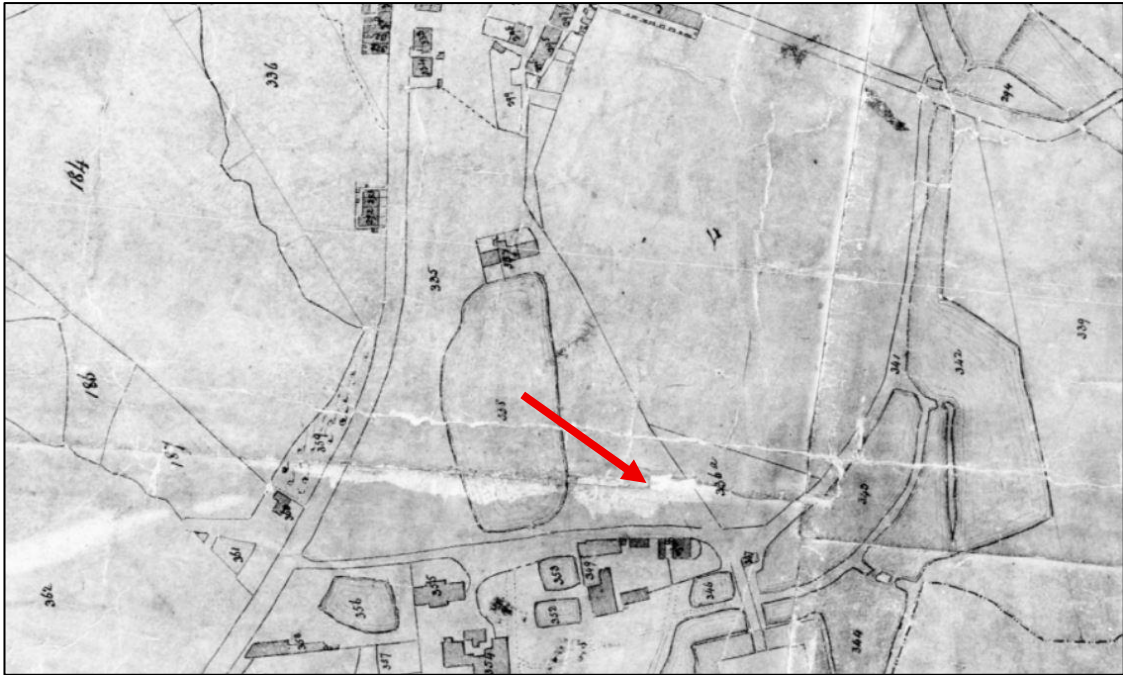


Figure 3: 1841 Tithe plan



Figure 4: 1892 OS Town Plan Lancashire Sheet LXXIX.12.19

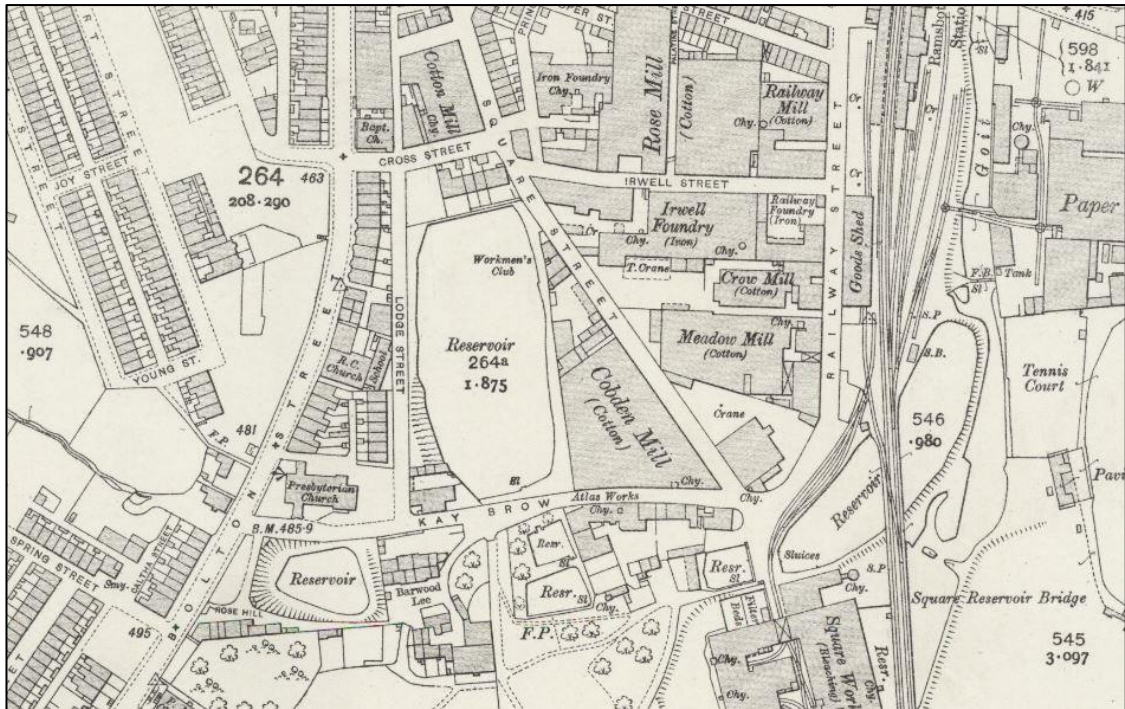


Figure 5: 1910 OS map Lancashire Sheet LXXIX.12

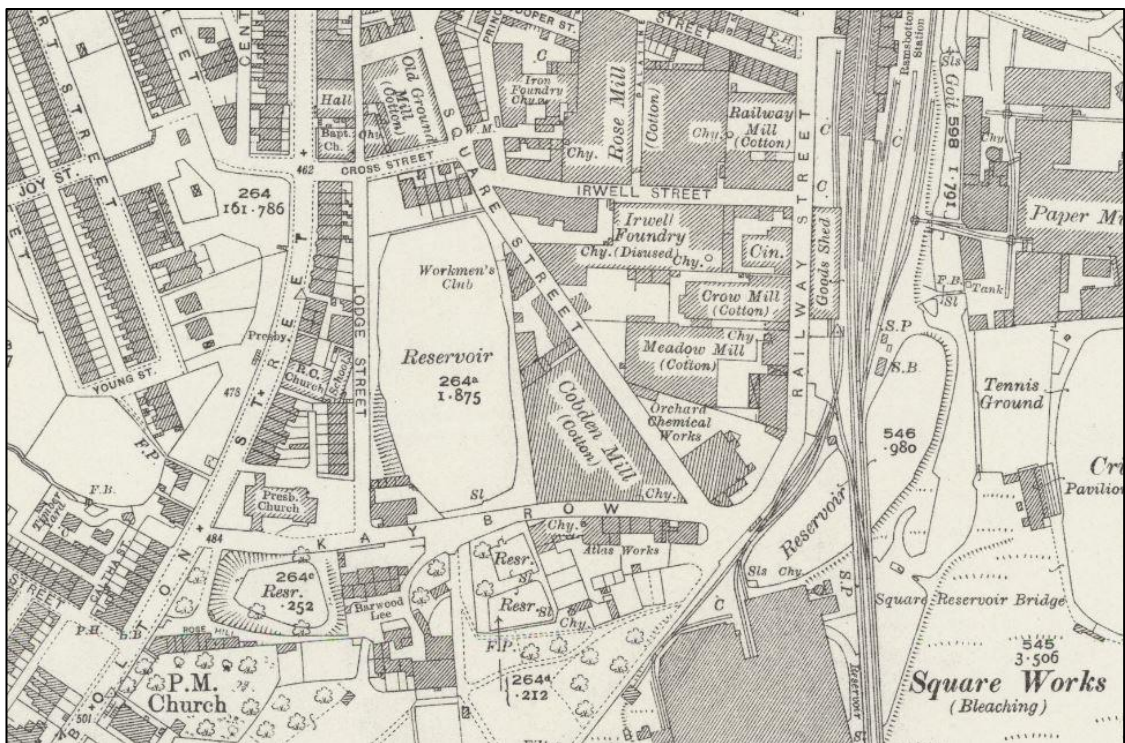


Figure 6: 1929 OS map Lancashire Sheet LXXIX.12

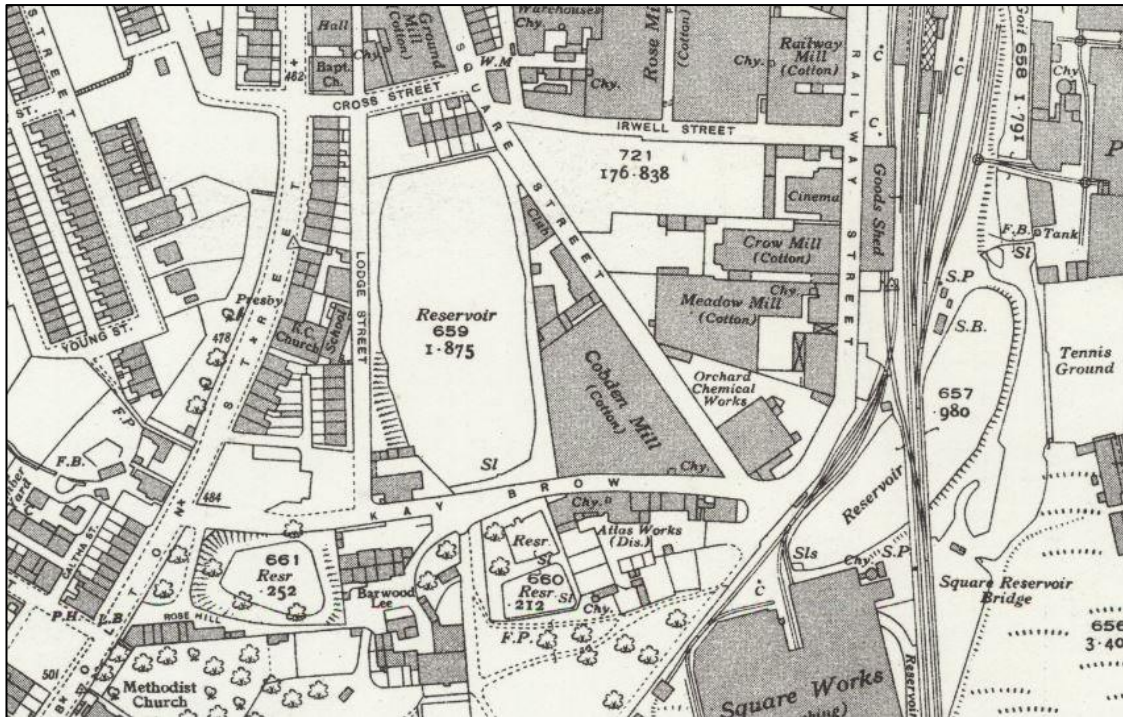


Figure 7: 1939 OS map Lancashire Sheet LXXIX.12

Appendix 2: Plates



Plate 1: View of East elevation of Cobden Mill from Railway Street



Plate 2: Detailed view from car park



Plate 3: Velux windows and transparent Juliet balcony



Plate 4: East elevation and south gable from Square Street



Plate 5: West elevation from apartment car park



Plate 6: Entrance from Kay Brow and gate house to the right



Plate 7: Gate house



Plate 8: Southern rebuilt wall of gate house with remains of chimney to the far right



Plate 9: View north along Kay Brow showing rebuilt wall



Plate 10: View as above from 2009 Google Streetview



Plate 11: View from Railway Street from 2009 Google Streetview



Plate 12: View from Kay Brow from 2015 Google Streetview



Plate 13: View from Railway Street from 2015 Google Streetview showing skylights