

Albert Mill, Lower Darwen

Historic Building Survey

September 2020



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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

An archaeological building survey was required prior to the demolition of Albert Mill, Lower Darwen. The work was carried out on behalf of Bluestone Archaeology by Steven Price of The Archaeology Co.

The original mill was built in 1744 to the southeast of the present building. What is now 'Albert Mill' was built as part of the Eccles Brothers' major extensions to the mill complex in the 1840's, as a spinning mill. The 'Old Mill' was demolished in 1885 and the larger weaving shed (what is now 'Lower Darwen Mill' was erected.



1. INTRODUCTION

Steven Price of The Archaeology Co. has been commissioned to perform a level
2/3 historic building survey of Albert Mill, Albert Place, Darwen BB3 0QE. It is a
requirement of condition 14 of Planning Permission Consent 10/19/0632 that:

No works to the application site, including any clearance/demolition or preparation works shall take place until the applicant, or their agent or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works, which shall first have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

REASON: To ensure and safeguard the recording and inspection of matters of archaeological / historical importance associated with the building / site; in accordance with the requirements of Policy 39 of the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Local Plan Part 2.

The works are for the "Demolition of existing building and erection of 3 industrial units".

- 1.2 This procedure followed the advice of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework. This came into effect in March 2012 and requires that "Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also 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" (NPPF 2019, 141).
- 1.3 Bluestone Archaeology has commissioned Mr. Steven Price BA (Hons), MA, MPhil, PCIfA of The Archaeology Co., to carry out the historic building recording. Steven Price is a Practitioner of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists with over 15 years' experience of surveying and recording buildings of many types.



He has carried out numerous standard Level 2 and 3 surveys for this type of property.



2. SITE LOCATION

2.1 The site lies between Queens Mill to the northeast and Lower Darwen Mill to the southeast. To the west of the site is the River Darwen. The site is accessed via Albert Place, which itself is accessed from the B6231 and lies in the centre of Lower Darwen. The postal address is Albert Mill, Albert Place, Darwen BB3 0QE and the National Grid Reference is SD 68702 25051.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Buildings are an important part of the historic environment as they provide information on historical technology, social structure and lifestyles. The alteration of such buildings may remove evidence of their past uses and occupation and make it more difficult for future historians to understand and interpret them. The aim of the survey was to preserve 'by record' the information that may be lost as a result of demolition or alteration. This was achieved by recording and analysing the plan form, function, age and development of the building and by the provision of a written, drawn and photographic archive for future reference.
- 3.2 The purpose of an Historic Building Recording, according to the CIfA (2014) is to "examine a specified building, structure or complex, and its setting, in order to inform a) the formulation of a strategy for the conservation, alteration, demolition, repair or management of a building, or structure, or complex and its setting or b) to seek a better understanding, compile a lasting record, analyse the findings/record, and then disseminate the results".
- 3.3 The objective for this project was to seek a better understanding, compile a lasting record, analyse the findings/record, and then disseminate the results.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 An appropriate record has been made of the building to Historic England level 2/3 standards. Floor plans and a representative section are required. The floor plans have been modified from those supplied by the architect after being checked on site. The section was drawn on site. The drawn record shows all features of interest that have been recorded photographically, as well as showing other features of historical significance that may not be directly affected by the proposal but which are necessary to put those features in context.
- 4.2 Construction techniques and sequences were appropriately illustrated or described, if visible.
- 4.3 The archaeologist on site identified and noted:
 - Truss positions and form;
 - Any significant changes in construction material this is intended to include significant changes in stone/brick type and size, coursing, etc.
 - All blocked, altered or introduced openings;
 - Evidence for phasing, and for historical additions or alterations to the building.
- 4.4 Drawing conventions conform to Historic England guidelines as laid out in *Understanding Historic Buildings A guide to good recording practice*, Historic England 2016.
- 4.5 Photographs were taken with an Olympus E600 Digital SLR camera (12 Megapixels) in RAW format. All detailed photographs and general shots contain a 2-metre ranging-rod, discretely positioned, sufficient to independently establish the scale of all elements of the building and its structure, where it was safe to do so.
- 4.6 The photographic coverage includes:

- General photographs of the interior and exterior of the building/complex, along with photographs of the site/setting of the building.
- The overall appearance of principal rooms and circulation areas.
- Detailed coverage of the building's external appearance. In the case of a building designed by an architect, or intended to be seen from a certain point of view, it is important to have regard to the builder's intentions and to record the effect of the design or of the building's placing.
- Any external detail, structural or decorative, which is relevant to the building's design, development and use and which does not show adequately on general photographs.
- The building's relationship to its setting, and to significant viewpoints.
- Internal detail, structural and decorative which is relevant to the building's design, development and use and which does not show adequately on general photographs. Elements for which multiple examples exist (e.g. each type of roof truss, column or window frame) have been recorded by means of a single representative illustration.
- 4.7 A plan showing the location from which the photographs have been taken has been produced.
- 4.8 A photographic register listing all photographs taken has been produced. For ease of use each set of photographs have been numbered sequentially 1, 2, 3, etc.
- 4.9 The site was visited on the 11th September 2020. Detailed notes were made of the structural details of the buildings and photographs taken. Measurements were taken with hand held and electronic 'tapes' which enabled the floor plans to be produced.
- 4.10 The project was carried out in accordance with the recommendations of *The Management of Archaeological Projects* 2nd ed. 1991 and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings and Structures* 2014.

5. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The manor was granted by Henry de Lacy to Robert Banastre, baron of Makerfield, to hold by the service of one knight in 1165. It was in the possession of the Marsey family until the early 13th century. It then passed from the Marseys by sale to the Blackburns of Wiswell. After the death of John de Blackburn his widow remarried several times and at her death was succeeded by her three daughters. The second daughter, Agnes, passed her third part of the manor by fine to Thomas de Arderne in 1339. This part remained with the Arderne's. Half of the Arderne share seems to have been alienated to Talbot, for in 1445–6 John Bradshaw, Edward Charnock, Hugh Bradshaw and Joan relict of Nicholas Ainsworth each held a fourth part of one-third of the manor, Edmund Talbot holding the remainder (Farrer & Brownbill 1911).
- 5.2 Lower Darwen Mill was the first mill in Lower Darwen, built in 1744 by Thomas Eccles (Shaw 1991). This was a spinning mill using Hargreaves spinning jennies, initially powered by hand, although in 1779 a mill race and water wheel were built. The 1820's saw the first inspection of mills in Lancashire by order of the Quarter Sessions at Preston. The report on the mills at Lower Darwen reads as follows;

Joseph Eccles Two cotton mills at Lower Darwen. There are about 50 persons in each of these factories. Half an hour is allowed for breakfast and an hour for dinner. The interior walls are white washed once a year. Both factories are dirty and in one of them the air is very impure in consequence of the Boghouse being situated near the staircase and to the entrance into the rooms in the same manner as those in the mill Livesey and Rodgett, Kingstreet, Blackburn."

5.3 The mill passed from Thomas, to his son Joseph and then to Joseph's children, Thomas and Richard Eccles. The brothers were responsible for major extensions in the 1840's to Lower Darwen Mill, including the rebuilding of the spinning mill and the addition of a weaving shed with power looms. A mill lodge was built in Duchess-Street. It is said that the mill was one of the first to change from water to steam in this area and probably Lancashire (Schofield 2017). The 1849 OS map shows Lower Darwen at this time, with the mill an irregular rectangular shape aligned northeast – southwest. At the southern corner of the mill the mill race is shown, leading southeast to the mill pond.

- 5.4 Thomas and Richard Eccles are recorded as owning Darwen Lower Mill in 1855 (History, Geography and Directory of Mid-Lancashire) and 1877 (Commercial Directory and Shipping Guide). The riots of the period against the introduction of new machinery missed the mills of Lower Darwen, possibly due to the good relations between masters and the workers (Schofield 2017).
- 5.5 On February 1854, a fire broke out in the stables adjoining the mill. The flames were prevented from spreading to the nearby cotton warehouse, the cotton from which was removed. A much more serious fire occurred three years later on the 17th February 1857. The fire broke out in the blowing room in the upper part of the "Old Mill" which was three storeys high, at three in the afternoon. When the engines arrived they were able to stop the spread of the fire before they could reach the other parts of the mill. However, the roof of the mixing room had fallen in. The lower storeys of the mill were saved but a large quantity of cotton was damaged by both fire and water. The origin of the fire was thought to be by a spark in the beater of the lapping machine. The morning after the fire the work went on as usual, so that no loss of time by the workforce occurred. The estimate of the loss sustained was £800 (Schofield 2017).
- 5.6 The "Old Mill" was demolished in 1885 and was replaced by a weaving shed of 416 looms with a separate engine room and a boiler house plus a preparation block. Over six hundred people were employed by the mill at this time. In 1897 following the failure of the mill, William Birtwistle took over the company which began trading under the name of T. and R. Eccles, the first mill in his Allied Group. He cleared out the machinery with 20,183 spindles and 183 old looms being sold. The weaving shed of 1885 was extended and spinning was ended, with the building turned into warehousing (Schofield 2017). Neither the race nor the pond are shown on the 1894 OS map. However, a small branch is shown coming from the brook and running into the southwest end of the mill.



The building to the southeast is named as "Lower Darwen Mill (cotton)", and lies adjacent to the site.

5.7 A third Weaving shed was built in 1905-06 this bringing the number of looms up to 1080. The 1911 OS map shows little change, although here the chimney is shown, being square and to the east of the site. The site is shown much the same on the 1931 OS map. By 1912 there were 1122 looms producing plain and fancy cotton goods. During the 1920's and 30's the mills followed the pattern of boom and bust of the Lancashire cotton industry. Power was changed from steam to electric, other lines were introduced, such as jacquards and artificial silk. The 1939-45 war saw the mills closed for some time, they reopened in 1945 but they were gradually reduced. By 1951, only 544 looms remained. The Birtwistle Group used the mill for training, but the decline continued. The mill finally stopped production of cotton goods in 1971, after almost 200 years (Schofield 2017).

6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

General Description

6.1 The building is aligned roughly northwest – southeast. It is two stories high and nine bays long by 4 bays wide and constructed of uncoursed sandstone rubble. A stair tower projects from the southeast elevation. The building is in a very poor condition, with no roof. Only the southeast and southwest elevations were accessible. This was due to Queens Mill connecting to the northeast side and the northwest side being close to the river, with the opposite bank overgrown.

Exterior

6.2 Southeast elevation (Plates). This forms the main nine bay frontage of the mill. Rock pitched face quoins run up the southern corner of the building. At ground floor level in bays 1 and 2 is a large loading doorway. A metal roller shutter has been fitted, but the stone segmented arch lintel above is still present. The left jamb also has rock pitched face stone, whereas the right appears to have been rebuilt. In bay 3 is a blocked window, which appears to have a doorway inserted into it, also blocked. The sandstone lintel of the window is still present, with a concrete lintel of the door beneath it. Bays 4 to 7 each contains a tall portrait window with sandstone cill and lintel. Bay 8 contains an inserted doorway with concrete lintel and is the present entrance t the building. Bays 1 to – 8 at first and second floors have tall portrait windows, some still retaining the timber 6 light casements, although the glass has long since perished. The window in bay 8 at first floor level has replaced a former doorway, the blocking evident below the cill. Bay 9 is the projecting stair tower. In the centre of the face at ground floor level is a blocked personnel doorway with sandstone jambs and lintel. To the right is an adjoining blocked window. A series of three blocked doorways lie to the right side of the face. The first lies between ground and first floor level, the second between first and second floor level and the third between second floor and roof level. All of the doorways are block with brick, with the exception of the topmost, which is blocked with sandstone. Joist holes level with the base of the door, and to the left of them, have been filled with brick, showing a removed platform, likely a fire escape.

- 6.3 Southwest elevation (Plates). This elevation is I4 bays wide with tall portrait windows in each of the bays, each with a concrete lintel. The exception to this is the first bay at ground floor level, which is blank. In the second bay, the window recess extends higher than the lintel, suggesting that it has been shortened. To the right is the face of the projecting stair tower. This is contains a small square window at each level. Those at first and second floor have a projecting sandstone cill below the present cill, showing them to have been altered.
- 6.4 Northwest elevation (Plates). This elevation is mostly obscured, although where it is visible, the tall portrait windows are present, with the six light timber frames shown. A fire escape is present running from the 8th bay at second floor level.

Interior

- 6.5 The ground comprises a large open space with vaulted brick ceiling aligned northwest southeast. A row of stanchions runs down the centre with simple capitals. In the northeast wall a lift shaft has been inserted, to the right of which a large blocked transmission window is evident, with blocked hatch in the ceiling above. To the southwest a wall has inserted between bays 2 and 3, with a loading doorway and personnel doorway within it. Three blocked windows line the southwest wall and the remains of a false ceiling are present. Above this false ceiling the brick arched ceiling can be seem to run northeast southwest. To the western corner a large hatch is visible in the ceiling. The stair tower is accessed via a doorway in the north end of the southeast wall. A set of stone steps leads to the first floor.
- 6.5 At first floor level the stop steps lead to a short landing, with a blocked window in the northwest wall. The main floor is again a large open space, although to the southwest offices have been inserted. The brick vaulted ceiling is again



aligned northwest - southeast with the exception of the southwest end, where for these two bays the vaults are aligned northeast - southwest. A row of stanchions again run down the centre of the building. In the northeast wall is the inserted lift shaft once again. To the left of it is a brick projection, also present at ground floor level. Here, however, a blocked opening is visible in the southeast side. Directly adjacent to this, to the right, is a large cast iron bracket high on the wall, with a recess for a wheel to the right side. A crude hole has been inserted in the ceiling above this. To the right of the lift shaft is a large blocked transmission window. To the left side is a bracket with blocked recess blow, showing the position of the wheel. A further pair of brackets flank the window, the rightmost also having a recess for a wheel. Above this area, in the ceiling, is a blocked hatch. The offices to the southwest are built c. 1m higher than the original ground floor and accessed by modern steps. The staircase wall are constructed of modern brick and the offices themselves of modern timber partitions. Due to the condition of the timber floors, they were not accessible.

6.6 The second floor was accessed via the stair tower. This was in a very poor condition and inaccessible. The roof had collapsed for the most part and it was overgrown with plants. The stanchions running down the centre of the space were visible and were much thinner than those on the floors below. In the northeast wall a transmission window was visible, smaller than that on the first floor. The stair tower continued up to roof level. Here the poor condition of the flat roof was evident.

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7. ANALYSIS AND PHASING

- 7.1 The building is part of the spinning mill and is shown on the 1849 OS map, which may suggest it was the spinning mill built by Thomas and Richard Eccles in the 1840's. It was built as a part of the larger complex, rather than as a standalone building. This is evident from the transmission windows in the northeast wall, showing that the power was transmitted from the northeast building (now Queens Mill). The engine and boiler houses were likely also attached to this other building, as suggested by the location of the chimney.
- 7.2 The power entered the building from the northeast and was transfer up to the other floors through the ceiling of Albert Mill. Brackets on the northeast wall show where the drive shafts were located as well as wheels transferring the power. No brackets remain on walls or stanchions showing the power transfer across the floors themselves.
- 7.3 The location of the 'Old Mill' is unknown, although from the mapping evidence it is suggested that it lay to the southeast, below what is now "Lower Darwen Mill". This is shown as a small roughly rectangular building on the 1849 OS map, whereas by 1894 it is much larger, suggesting that it had been demolished and replaced.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The original mill was built in 1744 to the southeast of the present building. What is now 'Albert Mill' was built as part of the Eccles Brothers' major extensions to the mill complex in the 1840's, as a spinning mill. The 'Old Mill' was demolished in 1885 and the larger weaving shed (what is now 'Lower Darwen Mill' was erected.

9. ARCHIVE

- 9.1 The results of the survey will form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current Historic England guidelines ("The Management of Archaeological Projects", 2nd edition, 1991), the "Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage" (UKIC 1990), and current CIfA "standards and guidance for the creation, compilation, transportation and deposition of archaeological archive" (published October 2009). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the CIfA in that organisation's code of conduct.
- 9.2 The written, drawn and photographic archive will be placed with Lancashire Archive (with reference DDX 3172) within a reasonable time of completion of the project. This shall comprise a bound copy of the report, a PDF/A copy, and the photographs saved as TIFF files on CD. A copy of the final report will also be deposited with the Lancashire Historic Environment Record as a PDF. A digital copy of the report and photographs shall be deposited with ADS through the OASIS database. Should the results warrant it, a summary report, or detailed article on the work shall be submitted for publication in a regional or national journal, appropriate to the significance of the results and findings of the project.

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10. COPYRIGHT

10.1 Full copyright of this commissioned report and other project documents shall be retained by the author of the report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations

- ADS Archaeological Data Service
- CIfA Chartered Institute for archaeologists
- NPPF National Planning Policy Framework
- OS Ordnance Survey

Sources

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Maps

1849 OS map Lancs. Sheet LXX

- 1894 OS map Lancs. Sheet LXX.8
- 1911 OS map Lancs. Sheet LXX.8
- 1931 OS map Lancs. Sheet LXX.8



Appendix 1: Figures



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- Figure 7: Ground floor plan
- Figure 8: First floor plan
- Figure 9: Section
- Figure 10: Ground floor photo location plan
- Figure 11: First floor photo location plan
- Figure 12: Second floor photo location plan
- Figure 13: Photograph Register



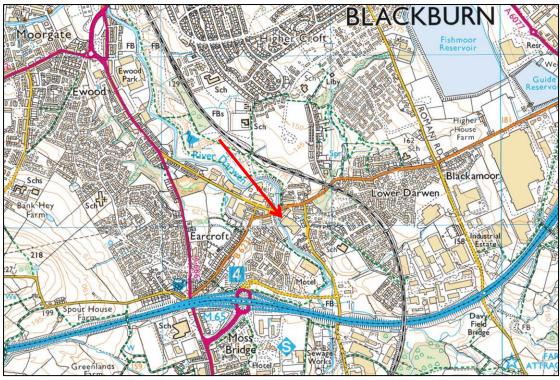


Figure 1: Location Plan (OS Licence Number: 100057911)

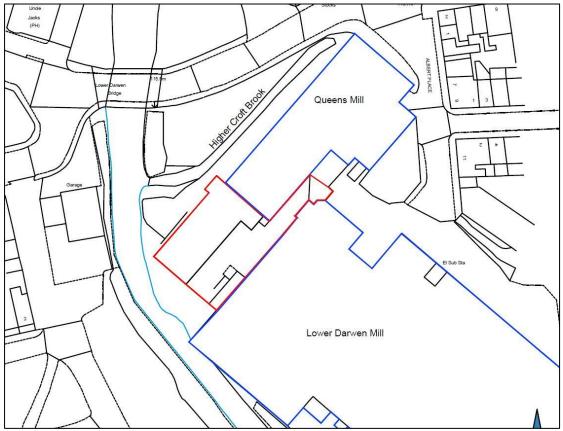


Figure 2: Site Plan (Courtesy of client)





Figure 3:1849 OS map Lancs. Sheet LXX (Courtesy of Lancashire Archives)

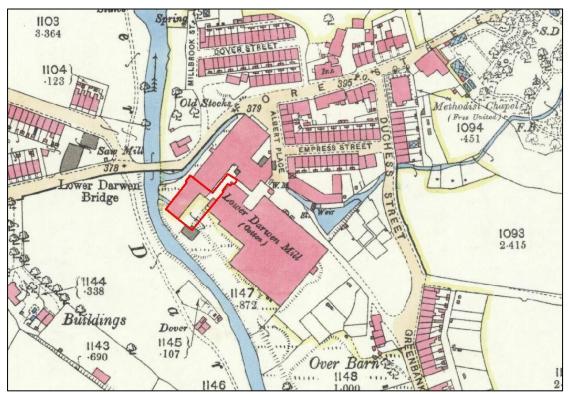


Figure 4: 1894 OS map Lancs. Sheet LXX.8 (Courtesy of Lancashire Archives)



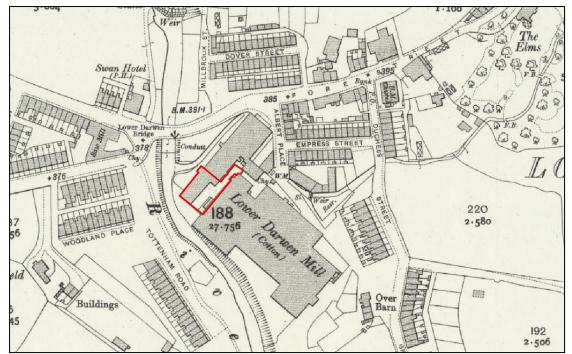


Figure 5: 1911 OS map Lancs. Sheet LXX.8 (Courtesy of Lancashire Archives)

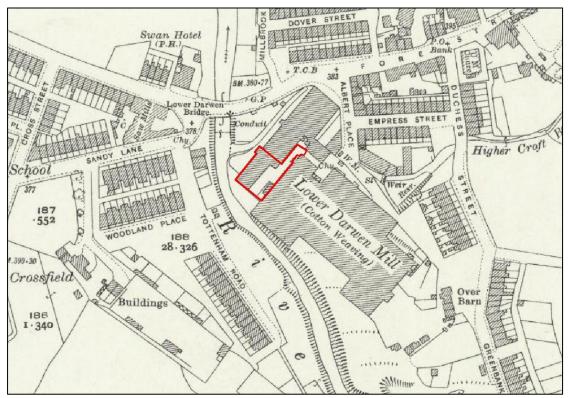
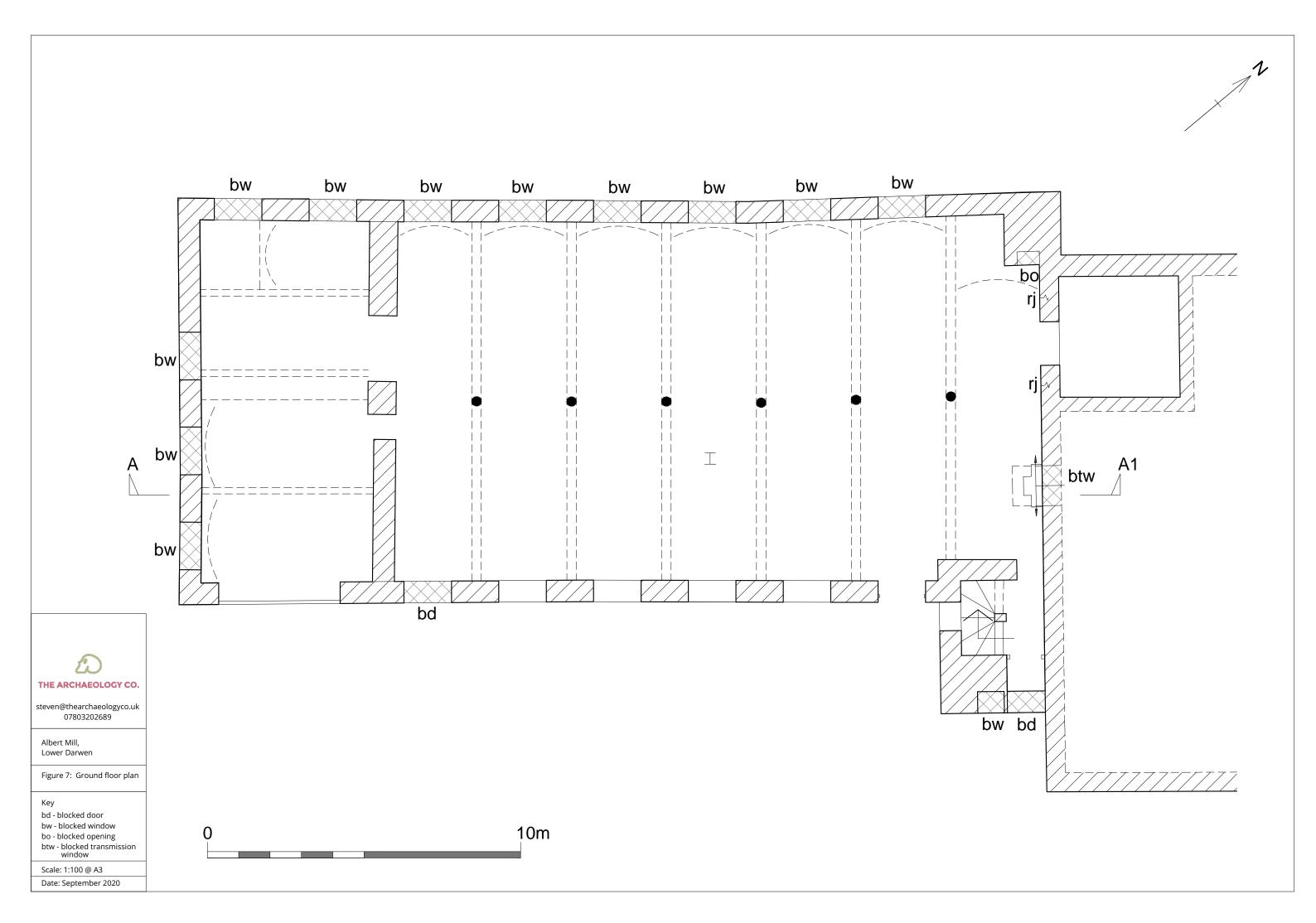
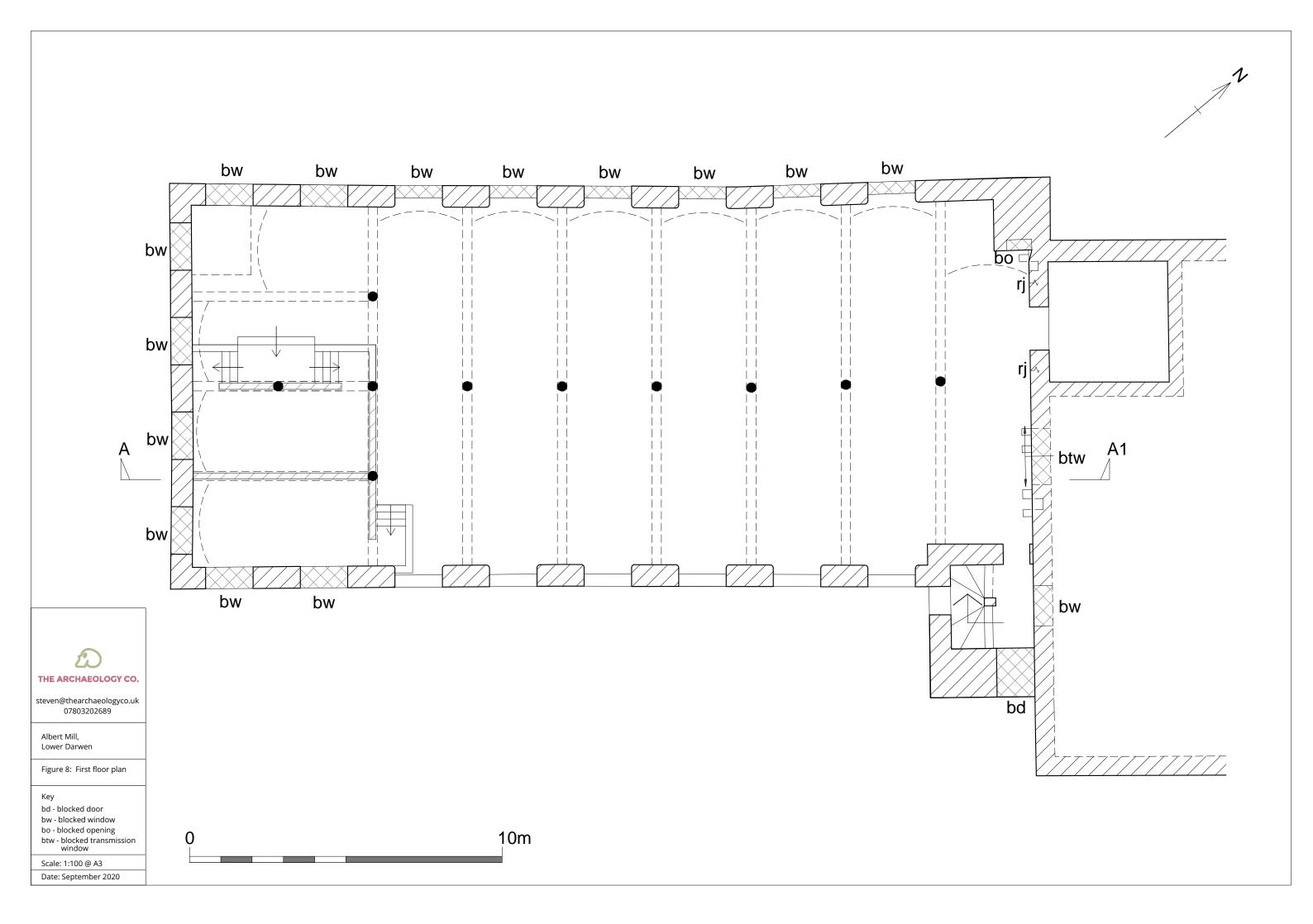
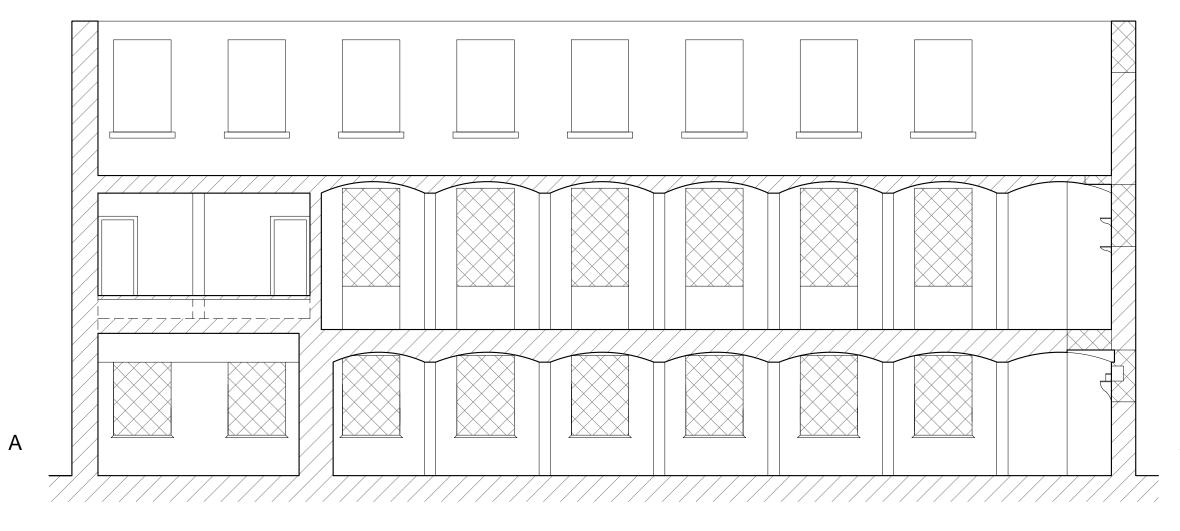


Figure 6: 1931 OS map Lancs. Sheet LXX.8 (Courtesy of Lancashire Archives)







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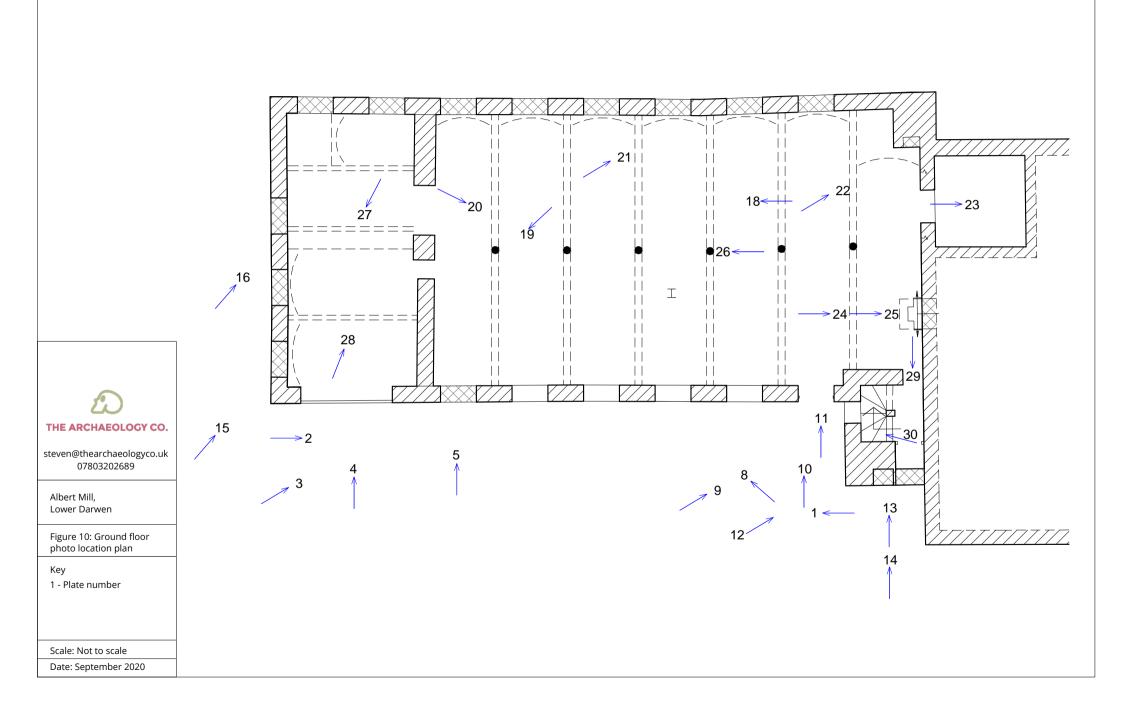
Albert Mill, Lower Darwen

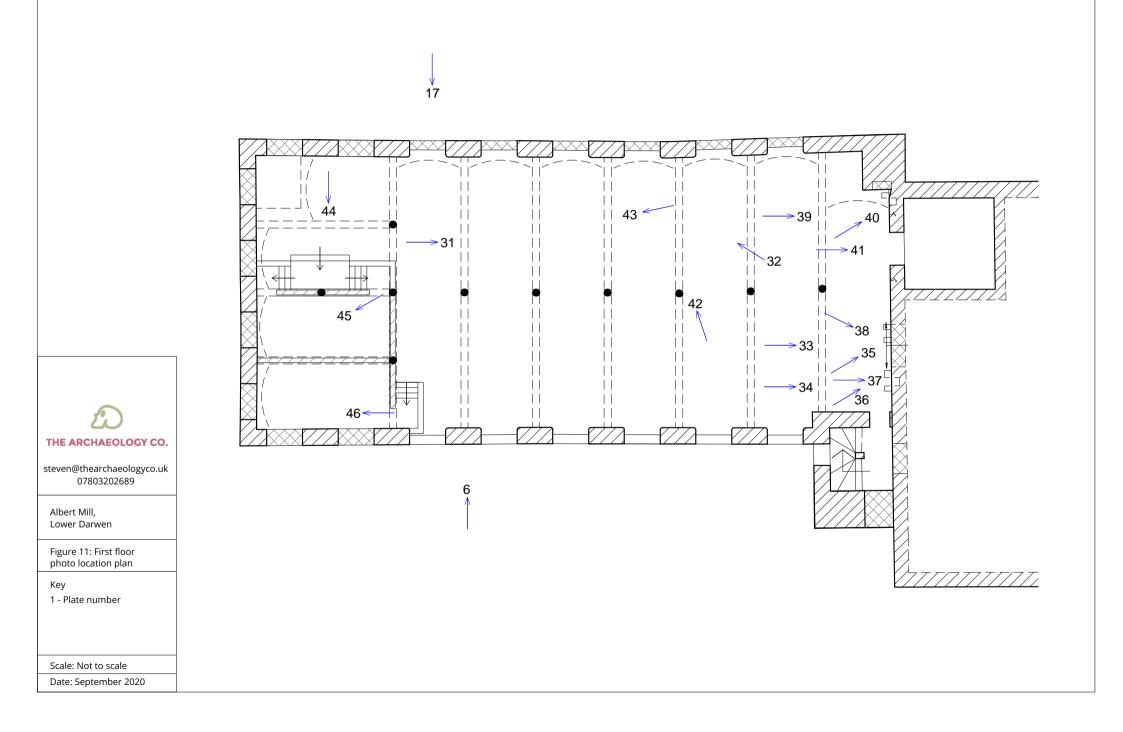
Figure 9: Section A - A1

Key bd - blocked door bw - blocked window bo - blocked opening btw - blocked transmission window Scale: 1:100 @ A3

Date: September 2020







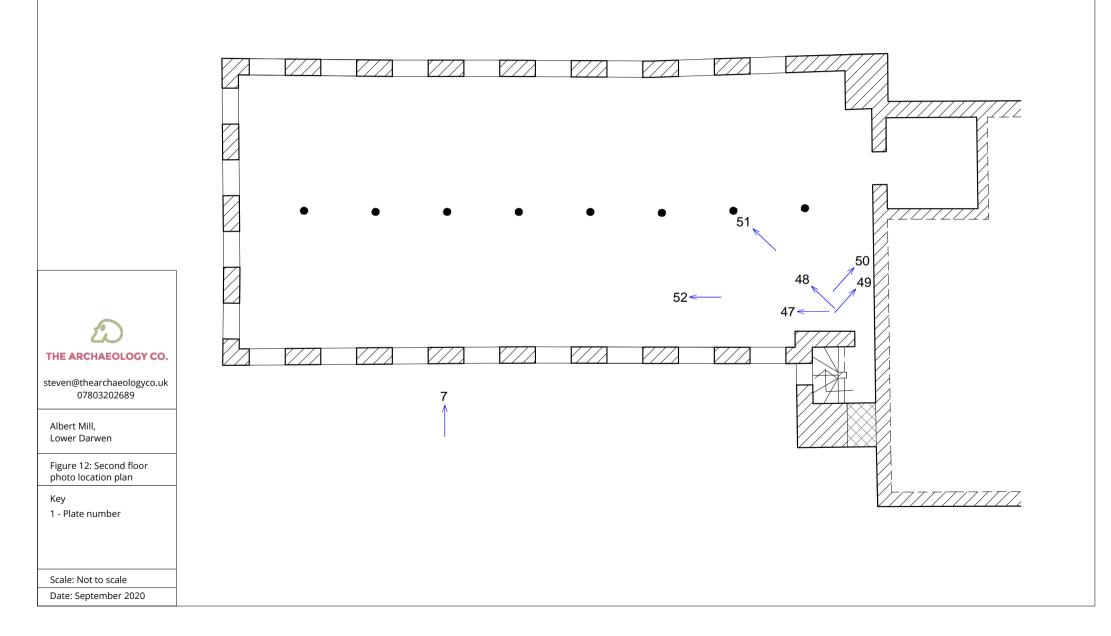




Figure 13: Photographic Register

Plate No.	Digital No.	Description	View to
1	P9118410	General shot showing Albert Mill (right) and Lower Darwen Mill (left)	SW
2	P9118408	As above but with Albert Mill to the left	NE
3	P9118394	Southeast elevation	Ν
4	P9118396	Loading bay to bays 1 and 2	NW
5	P9118397	Blocked doorway to bay 3	NW
6	P9118398	Detail of first floor windows	NW
7	P9118399	Detail of second floor windows	NW
8	P9118400	General shot of Southeast elevation	W
9	P9118401	North end of elevation showing stair tower	N
10	P9118405	Detail of north end of elevation showing bay 8	NW
11	P9118406	Detail of doorway in bay 8 with window above	NW
12 13	P9118407 P9118402	Stair tower Ground floor of stair tower showing blocked doorway and window	N NW
14	P9118404	Blocked doorways at upper floors of stair tower	NW
15	P9118395	Southwest elevation of mill	N
16	P9118409	Windows and stonework of southwest elevation	N
17	P9118463	Northwest elevation	SE
18	P9118411	Ground floor	SW
19	P9118412	Ground floor showing partition wall	S
20	P9118416	Ground floor	E
21	P9118417	Blocked windows in ground floor	N
22	P9118419	Northern corner of ground floor showing inserted lift shaft	N
23	P9118418	Interior of lift shaft	NE
24	P9118459	Transmission window in northeast wall	NE
25	P9118460	Detail of above	NE
26	P9118420	Detail of stanchion capital	SW
27	P9118413	Southwestern end of ground floor	S
28	P9118414	Southwestern end of ground floor	N CE
29	P9118423	Bottom of stair tower showing blocked doorway	SE
30 31	P9118424 P9118425	Staircase First floor	SW NE
32	P9118438	First floor	W
33	P9118426	First floor northeast wall	NE
34	P9118434	Detail of above	NE
35	P9118427	Detail of blocked transmission window and brackets	N
36	P9118428	As above showing brackets and wheel slot to the right	N
37	P9118429	Detail of above	NE
38	P9118430	Hatch in ceiling above transmission window	NE
39	P9118447	Bracket and wheel slot at west end of northeast wall	NE
40	P9118450	Detail of above	N
41	P9118436	Inserted lift shaft	NE
42	P9118439	Detail of stanchion capital	W



43	P9118442	Southwest end of first floor showing inserted offices	SW
44	P9118443	Detail of inserted walls and stairs	SE
45	P9118444	Detail of office interior	S
46	P9118445	Detail of office interior	S
47	P9118451	Second floor looking southwest from stair tower	SW
48	P9118452	Second floor looking west from stair tower	W
49	P9118453	Northeast wall from stair tower	Ν
50	P9118456	Detail of blocked transmission window	N
51	P9118454	Detail of second floor stanchion	W
52	P9118455	Detail of collapsed roof	SW
53	P9118458	Detail of roof	SW



Appendix 2: Plates





Plate 1: General shot showing Albert Mill (right) and Lower Darwen Mill (left)



Plate 2: As above but with Albert Mill to the left





Plate 3: Southeast elevation



Plate 4: Loading bay to bays 1 and 2





Plate 5: Blocked doorway to bay 3



Plate 6: Detail of first floor windows





Plate 7: Detail of second floor windows



Plate 8: General shot of Southeast elevation





Plate 9: North end of elevation showing stair tower

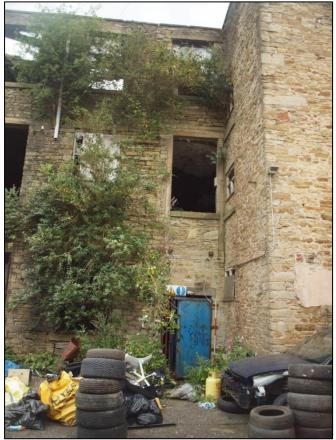


Plate 10: Detail of north end of elevation showing bay 8





Plate 11: Detail of doorway in bay 8 with window above



Plate 12: Stair tower





Plate 13: Ground floor of stair tower showing blocked doorway and window



Plate 14: Blocked doorways at upper floors of stair tower





Plate 15: Southwest elevation of mill



Plate 16: Windows and stonework of southwest elevation





Plate 17: Northwest elevation



Plate 18: Ground floor





Plate 19: Ground floor showing partition wall



Plate 20: Ground floor





Plate 21: Blocked windows in ground floor



Plate 22: Northern corner of ground floor showing inserted lift shaft





Plate 23: Interior of lift shaft



Plate 24: Transmission window in northeast wall





Plate 25: Detail of above



Plate 26: Detail of stanchion capital





Plate 27: Southwestern end of ground floor



Plate 28: Southwestern end of ground floor





Plate 29: Bottom of stair tower showing blocked doorway



Plate 30: Staircase





Plate 31: First floor



Plate 32: First floor





Plate 33: First floor northeast wall



Plate 34: Detail of above





Plate 35: Detail of blocked transmission window and brackets



Plate 36: As above showing brackets and wheel slot to the right





Plate 37: Detail of above



Plate 38: Hatch in ceiling above transmission window





Plate 39: Bracket and wheel slot at west end of northeast wall



Plate 40: Detail of above





Plate 41: Inserted lift shaft



Plate 42: Detail of stanchion capital





Plate 43: Southwest end of first floor showing inserted offices



Plate 44: Detail of inserted walls and stairs





Plate 45: Detail of office interior



Plate 46: Detail of office interior





Plate 47: Second floor looking southwest from stair tower



Plate 48: Second floor looking west from stair tower





Plate 49: Northeast wall from stair tower



Plate 50: Detail of blocked transmission window





Plate 51: Detail of second floor stanchion



Plate 52: Detail of collapsed roof





Plate 53: Detail of roof