



**THE ARCHAEOLOGY CO.**

Dale Mill, Milnrow  
Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

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March 2021

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## **Non-Technical Summary**

This report was compiled to assess the potential for the survival of archaeological and historical heritage assets on the subject site prior to any redevelopment. The site was developed as Church Street mill in the early – mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. This remained the case until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century when the majority of the buildings were demolished, with the exception of 53 Dale Street. The latter was gutted by a fire in 1992 and substantially rebuilt. A further building was erected on the west side of the site in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and demolished by 2012. The site has a high potential for archaeology relating to the construction of the mill and the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## 1. Introduction

The Archaeology Co. were instructed by to carry out an archaeological desk-based assessment of a former mill site at Dale Mill, Milnrow. The site was a former woollen mill, which later changed to cotton. It was demolished in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The survey was carried out by Steven Price BA (Hons.) MA MPhil PCIfA, an experienced archaeologist with a wide knowledge of archaeological techniques and surveying.

The Desk-Based Assessment has been produced in accordance with Condition 11 of planning reference 16/01540/FUL, which states:

*No demolition or development shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works. The works are to be undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The WSI shall cover the following:*

*1. A programme of archaeological survey to include:*

*o historic building survey (English Heritage level 2/3)*

*o a targeted watching brief during stripping out works*

***o an archaeological desk-based assessment***

*o -informed by the above, evaluation through trial trenching*

*o informed by the above, more detailed, targeted archaeological excavation and recording.*

*2. A programme for post investigation assessment to include:*

*o detailed analysis of finds*

*o production of a final report on the significance of the archaeological interest.*

*3. Deposition of the final report with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment*

*Record and Rochdale Local Studies Library.*

*4. Dissemination of the results.*

*5. Provision for archive deposition of the report and records of the site investigation.*

*6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the approved WSI.*

*Reason: To record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible and in accordance with the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. Reason for pre-commencement condition: Any works to the site may interfere with the any archaeological evidence present.*

## **2. Aims and Objectives**

- 2.1 The purpose of this desk-based assessment is to gain information from existing historical records, cartographic sources and site investigation to determine the nature of the potential archaeological resource within a specified area. An assessment can then be made of its value in context and recommendations made, to determine future strategy/mitigation and management of the resource. In the case of development/re-development, it will also define the impact of any proposed development on recorded archaeological and historical resources on the periphery of the development area. In this case the assessment shall also inform the location of archaeological trial trenches for evaluation.

## **3. Location and Site Visit**

- 3.1 The site is situated on the northeast side of Dale Street, to the southeast side of Milnrow centre. The site is bounded to the southwest by Dale Street and the rear of the houses along it; to the north west by Chapel Gate; to the northeast by the rear of the properties to Major Street; and to the southeast by the rear of the properties on Dale Street and Schofield Street. The postal address is Dale Mill, 53 Dale Street, Milnrow, OL16 3NJ and the National Grid Reference is SD 92837 12644.
- 3.2 The site does not lie within a conservation area, being c. 350m to the northwest of the Butterworth Hall Conservation Area. The site is an entry on the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER No. 5308.1.0), which records the site as Milnrow Mill (Church Street Mill). The listing records the site as it was in 1981, when the mill still stood. It reads:

*Multi-phase spinning mill site. The spinning mill building dates originally from the mid-C19. 3 storeys and 13x3 bays. Stone built. Rectangular windows with stone lintels and sills. Timber internal structure. The second main phase dates from 1907 when an extension was added. This is of 5 storeys and 18x5 bays and is built of red brick. "1906 Milnrow" legend on the added red brick tower. The engine house also dates from the mid-C19, as per the "1846" plaque stone. The warehouse is stone built and has 3 storeys and 8x3 bays. "1863" plaque stone. Timber internal structure. Single-storey late C19 offices. 6x1 bays. Boiler house attached to engine house. Workers' housing on Major Street, includes octagonal stone chimney. Dale Street, two-, three- and four-storey stone buildings with red and yellow brick additions of 1907. Still used for cotton spinning. In Major Street above mill, two rows of... 2-storey stone-built cottages, separated by octagonal brick chimney. "Church Street Mill (Woollen)" on map.*

After the majority of buildings were demolished the record was updated, stating:

*The majority of the buildings on this site had been replaced by the end of the C20, and the western part of the site has recently been cleared again (by May 2012). No. 53 Dale Street is still extant – possibly the former warehouse and office? Site visited 21st March 2017. As described above; most of the site has been cleared and the only buildings surviving front onto Dale Street. All the windows are boarded. Planning permission submitted for conversion plus new apartment blocks (LPA ref. 16/01540/FUL); a heritage statement was submitted with the application. GMAAS recommended an archaeological condition for the application (CGM6281). Fair condition, vacant. Below-ground archaeological potential: medium. Part of the demolished mill complex site has remained undeveloped.*

- 3.3 The HER records 57 entries within 750m of the site, including 53 Dale Street, or "Milnrow Mill (Church Street Mill)" which lies on the site itself. The Grade II listed 45 & 47 Dale Street (HER No. 5202.1.0) and 49 & 51 Dale Street (HER No. 5193.1.0) lie directly adjacent to the site, at the corner of Dale Street and Chapel Gate. The latter are late 18<sup>th</sup> century houses, whereas the former are early 19<sup>th</sup> century

houses. The majority of the HER entries are from the Industrial period, recording the growth of the town during this period. For example, to the south of the site, on the other side of Dale Street is “Reservoir, Dale Street (site of)” (HER No. 11025.1.0), believed to have served Providence Mill (HER No. 5305.1.0), which lay c. 300m to the northwest. C. 25m to the southwest of the Dale Street Reservoir is the late 19<sup>th</sup> century “Gas Works (site of)” (HER No. 11026.1.0), which lay on the site of former tenter fields, also associated with Providence Mill. The site lies some 300m to the southeast of the Medieval “Milnrow Town Core” (HER No. 5357.1.0), c. 700m north of the Medieval “Lady House Settlement” (HER No. 5358.1.0) and c. 350m northwest of the Medieval “Butterworth Hall Village Core” (HER No. 5359.1.0). From the prehistoric period, a “Axe Find (Neolithic)” (HER No. 2678.1.0) and the Iron Age “Ashfield Lane (Stone Head)” (HER No. 9053.1.0) were both found c. 700m to the south of the site.

- 3.4 The underlying solid geology, as mapped by the Ordnance Survey Geological Survey, consists of the Lower Coal Measures (Westphalian A) of the Carboniferous period and a band of Milnrow Sandstone. The predominant drift geology comprises glacial sands and gravels, with areas of boulder clay in the north and east, and smaller bands of alluvium (Bullock 2009).
- 3.5 The site was visited on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021 when a walk-over survey was performed and photographs taken. The site contains the remains of ‘Dale Mill’, at 53 Dale Street (the former warehouse), which was gutted by fire in 1992 and substantially rebuilt. The rest of the site contains a tarmac road running from the Dale Street onto the site, which turns to run east, behind the present building. The rest of the site is overgrown. The land is sloped down from north to south, and to the northern boundary the land slopes up steeply to meet the rear of the properties on Major Street.

#### **4. Archaeological and Historical Background**

- 4.1 The current understanding of prehistoric activity in the Northwest during the prehistoric period is poor, often sporadic and based on chance finds. Although

physical evidence is fragmentary there is growing evidence that prehistoric settlement and other activity took place on well drained sands and close to watercourses and mosslands (Wilson & Nevell 2004). There are no prehistoric finds on the site itself, although a Neolithic stone axe (HER No. 2678.1.0) was found c. 700m south of the site, as well as a possible Iron Age carved head (HER No. 9053.1.0) not far from that.

- 4.2 No Roman finds have been found on the site itself, and only one in the surrounding area. This was a Beehive Quernstone (HER No. 720.1.0) found in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century c. 700m to the south of the site. Within the area generally it has been inferred from coin distributions that a Roman road ran east – west along the high ground of the River Roach, running from Littleborough to meets the Manchester – Ribchester road (Wilson & Nevell 2004).
- 4.3 There is little physical evidence of the Medieval period in the area, with the majority provided by place-names. During this period the site lay within the township of Butterworth, within the large parish of Rochdale. Butterworth was Old English for "the enclosed pasture-land (*'worth'*) that produces good butter" (Mills 1976). Butterworth is documented in the 13<sup>th</sup> century although may be older (Wilson & Nevell 2004). There are several other 'worth' place-names in the southwest Pennines. These places have been suggested to be evidence for late Anglo-Saxon enclosures used for livestock farming which went onto to develop permanent settlements (Kenyon 1991, 137 in Wilson & Nevell 2004).
- 4.4 The township of Butterson was divided into two sections, the Freehold side and the Lordship side. In 1190 the Lordship side, held by Hugh de Eland, was given to Gilbert de Notton in marriage with his daughter Margery. It later passed to Sir Robert de Hoyland and then to the Saviles, with numerous additions. At the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the whole was sold to a large number of purchasers, most of whom were occupying tenants (Farrer & Brownbill 1911).
- 4.5 Milnrow's post-medieval history is defined by the early domestic woollen trade and the later shift to industrial cotton production in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From the late 1790's Manchester became the hub of the regional canal system, with the



Rochdale canal a part of this. The early cotton mills occupied a niche, supplying a huge demand for yarn from the cloth manufacturers, which had expanded in the 18th century (Williams and Farnie 1992). Local mill owners saw the potential of the River Beal, and harnessed the water power to drive the machinery in their new mills. This led to a rapid growth in the population of Milnrow (Hignett 1991).

- 4.6 Milnrow retains much evidence of its earlier domestic textile production with numerous weavers' cottages, many altered, characterising the historic core of the settlement and lining the route of Dale Street. Nos 45-51 Dale Street are four such dwellings (O'Flaherty 2016).
- 4.7 The OS map for 1851 shows the site with Church Street Mill to the northwest side. Dale Street is lined with buildings but the rest of the site was undeveloped. By the 1891 OS map the Church Street Mill is shown as "woollen mills", and had been extended to the east, to create an L shaped plan. A further extension to the southwest ran up to the rear of the Dale Street houses. Fronting Dale Street was a large building, possibly a warehouse, between the rows of terrace housing. Church Street Mills was listed as a woollen manufacturer in the "Cotton Mills of Rochdale" from 1891. It was owned by John Schofield and Sons recorded as having "350 looms, flannels" (Graces Guide).
- 4.8 By 1910, this warehouse building had been reduced in size; the western end having been demolished by approximately half, creating a wide entrance to the site. The mill had also moved to cotton, rather than wool. The Rochdale Times records that the former Church Street Mills was occupied by the Milnrow Spinning Company in 1914 (RT 08/04/1914). The situation remained the same over the 1930 and 1938 OS mapping, although where the former warehouse had been demolished, it was rebuilt upon with a narrower building. By the 1950's the mill was known as Milnrow Spinning Mills.
- 4.9 Following the 20th century decline of textile production, 53 Dale Street (Dale Mill) was converted for retail use in the early 1980s. Stuart Anders became the owner in 1982 and opened it up to six retail outlets. The building was gutted by fire and rebuilt in 1992. The retail operation closed in 2005 (MEN 25/08/2005) and has since

lain vacant. Milnrow Spinning Mill was demolished and the land redeveloped for commercial uses in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. By 2000 there was a large unit located to the west side of the site, directly behind 47 – 52 Dale Street. This newer development was also demolished by 2012 and the site now lies cleared as brownfield land (O'Flaherty 2016).

## 5. Analysis

The site was first developed with the Church Street Mill (later Milnrow Mill), in the early – mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The mill was expanded in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and occupied most of the site. This remained the case until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century when the mill was demolished, with only 53 Dale Street (known as Dale Mill) surviving. This however, was gutted by a fire in 1992 and substantially rebuilt. A large unit was also erected to the west side of the site by 2000, although this was also demolished by 2012. Due to the substantial development of the site in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, there is unlikely to be any surviving archaeology from before this period.

## 6. Assessment of Archaeological Potential

**Prehistoric:** Although the surrounding area has revealed traces of prehistoric activity, the potential for the site itself to contain prehistoric archaeology is low.

**Roman:** Although the surrounding area has revealed traces of Roman activity, the potential for the site itself to contain Roman archaeology is low.

**Medieval:** The site lay outside, but close to the medieval core of Milnrow, as well as Butterworth Hall Village and the Lady House settlement. The surrounding field boundaries are shown to be fairly regular and rectangular, suggesting they were formed during the post-medieval field enclosure (Adkins et. al., 2008; Baker & Butlin 1973) although those towards Butterworth are less regular, suggesting an earlier date (ibid.). As such, the potential for the site to contain Medieval archaeology is low.



**Post Medieval:** The site may have been used for agricultural purposes prior to the construction of the mill, although this construction likely destroyed any evidence of such from the period. The potential for the site to contain Post Medieval archaeology is low.

**Industrial:** The Mill was erected in the early – mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and dominated the majority of the site. The mill was demolished in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and a further constructed erected on the western side of the site, which may have impacted the archaeology in this area. However, the potential for the rest of the site to contain archaeology from this period is high.



Site	Significance of Setting	Significance	Potential
Prehistoric remains	<i>Regional</i> The surrounding area has revealed a few artefacts but represents only a background level of prehistoric occupation	<i>Regional.</i> Artefacts found from the period will add to the body of information about the prehistory of the north west	<i>Low</i> It is unlikely that any prehistoric activity will be found on the site.
Roman remains	<i>Local.</i> The surrounding area has revealed a few artefacts but represents only a background level of Roman occupation	<i>Regional.</i> Artefacts found from the period will add to the body of information about the Roman activity in Greater Manchester	<i>Low</i> It is unlikely that any Roman activity will be found on the site.
Medieval	<i>Regional.</i> Material culture for this period in Manchester has lagged behind other areas due to deficiencies in knowledge of local consumption and production.	<i>Regional.</i> Artefacts found from this period will add to the growing body of evidence and building remains will help show the sites early development.	<i>Low</i> It is unlikely that any medieval activity will be found on the site
Post Medieval	<i>Regional.</i> Material culture for this period in Manchester has lagged behind other areas due to deficiencies in knowledge of local consumption and production.	<i>Regional.</i> Artefacts found from this period will add to the growing body of evidence and building remains will help show the sites early development.	<i>Low</i> It is unlikely that any post medieval activity will be found on the site due to later activity
Industrial	<i>Local.</i> Church Street Mill was erected in the early - mid 19 <sup>th</sup> century when Milnrow was already growing and developing on its earlier domestic textile production	<i>Local</i> The archaeology found will likely relate to Church Street Mill.	<i>High</i> The works were recently demolished and although a later building was erected on the west side of the site, the remainder of the site has been untouched.

## **7. Recommendations**

Site has the potential for well-preserved archaeological remains of the former Church Street Mill building. The condition already requires archaeological trial trenching informed by this report. As such the areas of greatest archaeological potential are shown on figure 2. This shows the surviving 'Dale Mill' (53 Dale Street) as well as the location of the late 20<sup>th</sup> / early 21<sup>st</sup> century building, demolished by 2012. This shows the area with most potential to be directly behind Dale Mill. The exact number and size of the trial trenches shall be agreed in the subsequent WSI for that stage of the project.

## **8. Copyright**

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

CIfA – Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

GMAAS – Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service

HER – Historic Environment Record

OS – Ordnance Survey

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## **Maps**

1786 Yates map of Lancashire

1850 OS Map Lancashire Sheet 87

1893 OS Map Lancashire Sheet 88.1

1908 OS Map Lancashire Sheet 88.1

1928 OS Map Lancashire Sheet 88.1

1939 OS Map Lancashire Sheet 88.1

# Appendix 1: Figures



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Figure 4: 1893 OS Map Lancashire Sheet LXXXIX.6

Figure 5: 1910 OS Map Lancashire Sheet LXXXIX.6

Figure 6: 1930 OS Map Lancashire Sheet LXXXIX.6

Figure 7: 1938 OS Map Lancashire Sheet LXXXIX.6

Figure 8: Photograph of site from 2000 showing the modern construction to the left

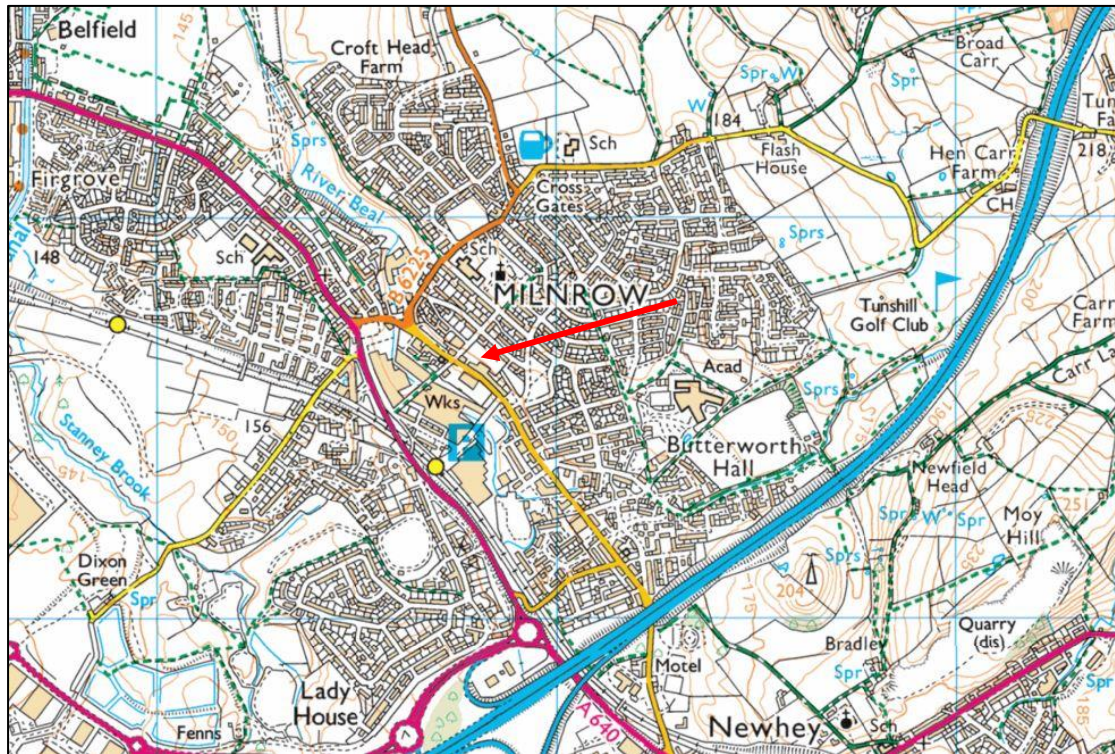


Figure 1: Location Plan (OS Licence Number: 100057911)

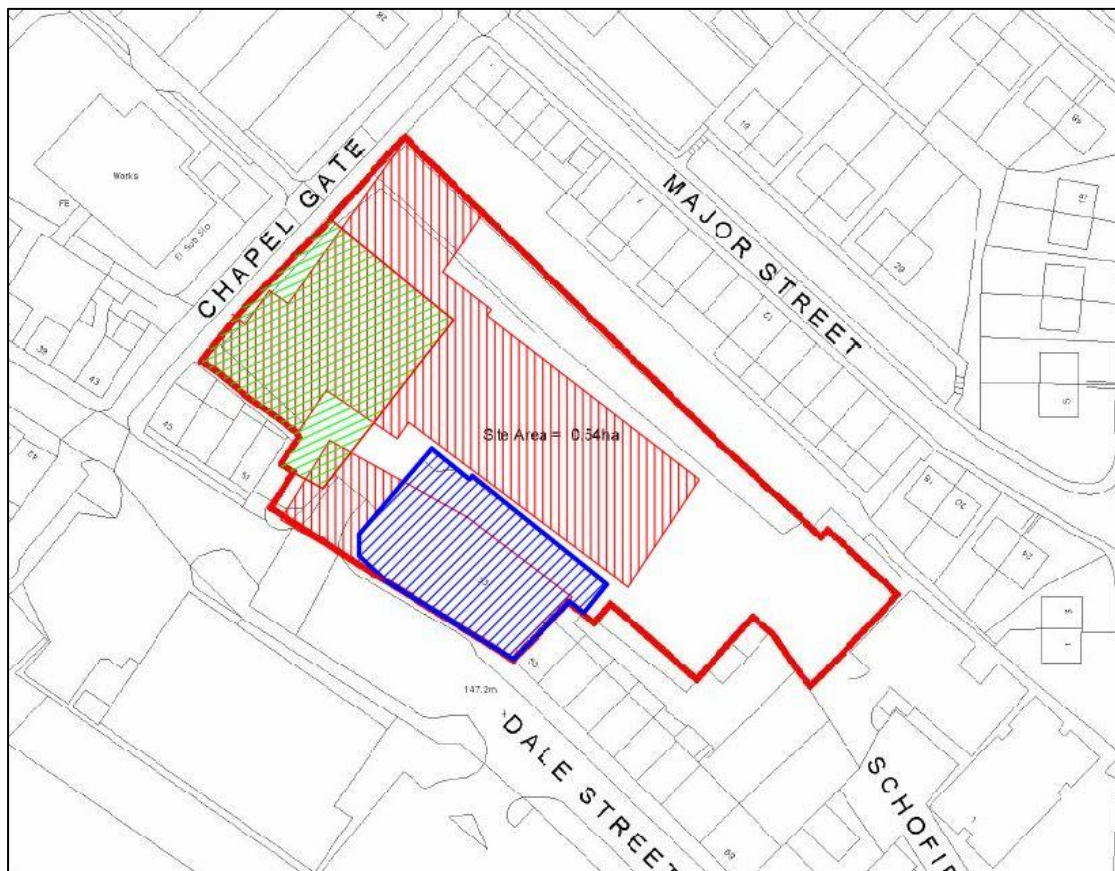


Figure 2: Site Plan (courtesy of client) showing Dale Mill (blue), location of former modern building (green) and location of the former Church Street Mill (red)

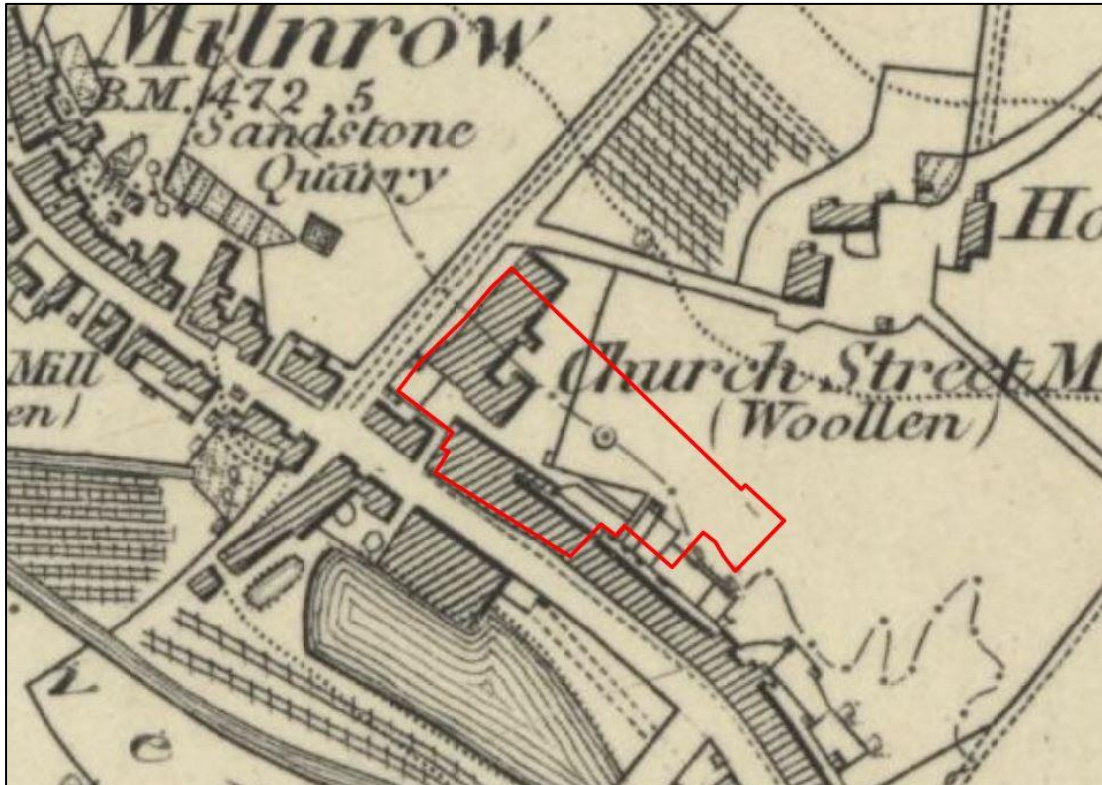


Figure 3: 1851 OS Map Lancashire Sheet LXXXIX

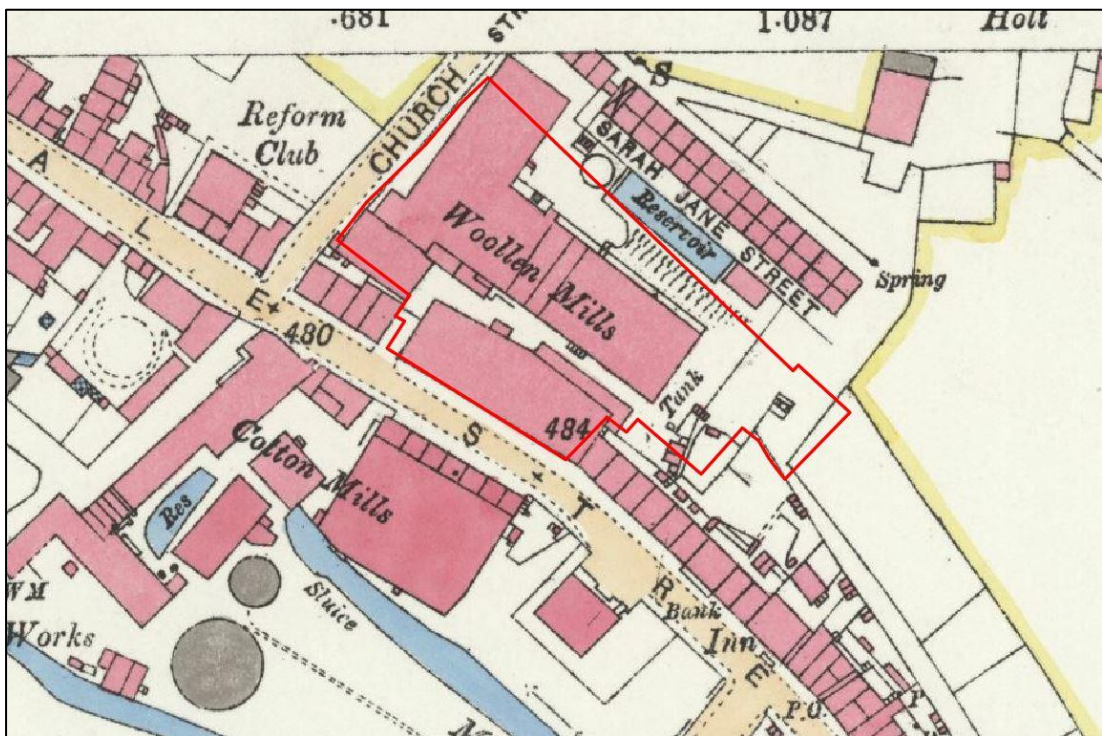


Figure 4: 1893 OS Map Lancashire Sheet LXXXIX.6

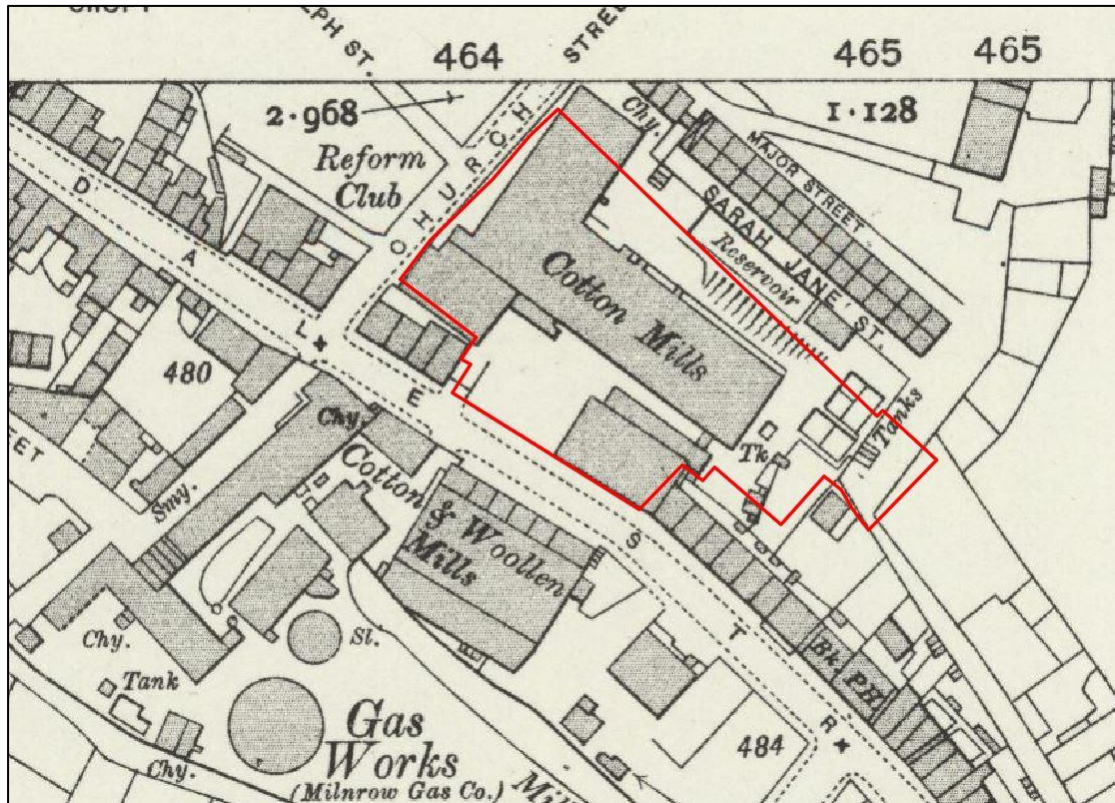


Figure 5: 1910 OS Map Lancashire Sheet LXXXIX.6

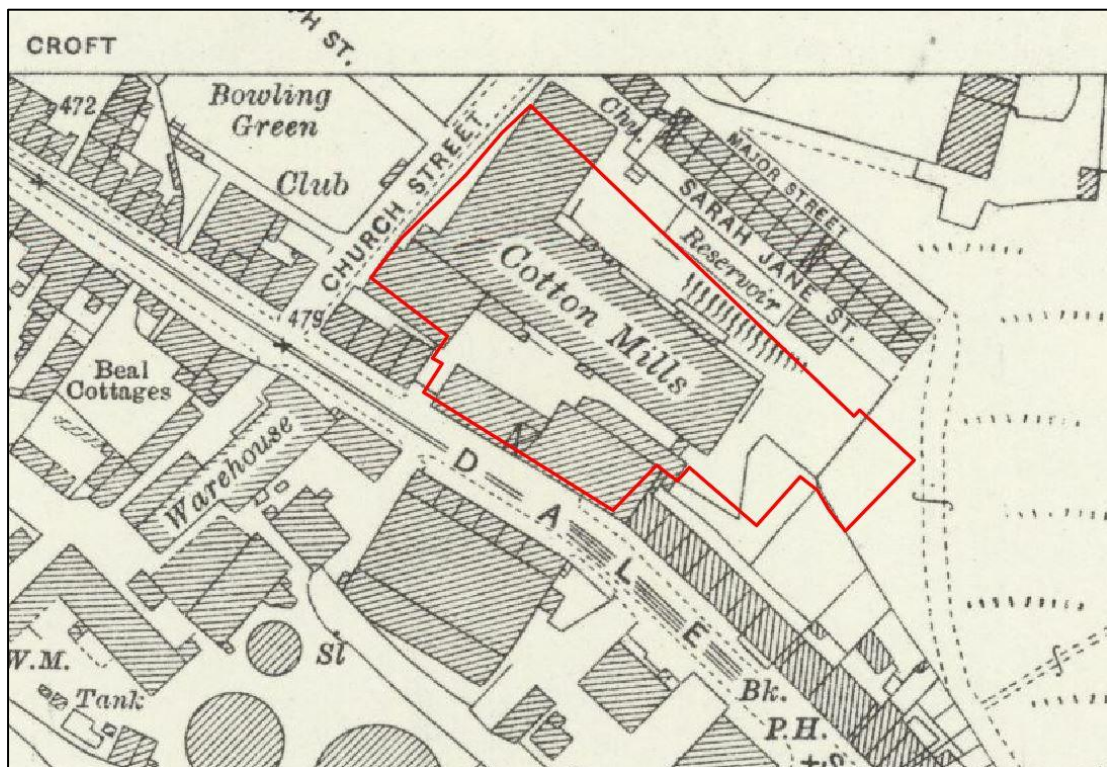


Figure 6: 1930 OS Map Lancashire Sheet LXXXIX.6

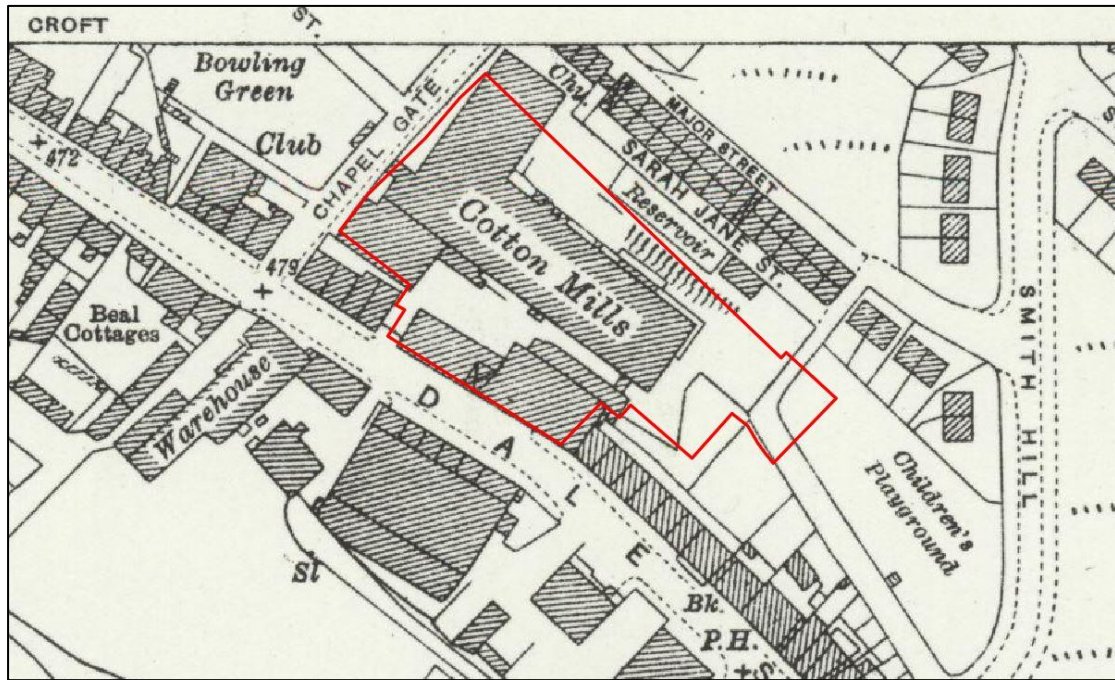


Figure 7: 1938 OS Map Lancashire Sheet LXXXIX.6



Figure 8: Aerial photograph of site from 2000 showing the modern construction to the left (Google earth)

## Appendix 2: Plates



Plate 1: Dale Mill forming south end of site



Plate 2: Dale Street looking towards southwest corner of site



Plate 3: Remains of gated entrance to site from Dale Street



Plate 4: Western end of site





Plate 5: View towards northwest corner of site



Plate 6: View from west side looking east, with Dale Mill to the right



Plate 7: West side of Dale Mill looking south towards Dale Street



Plate 8: West side of site looking east



Plate 9: Centre of site looking east



Plate 10: East end of site looking south



Plate 11: East end of site looking west, with Dale Mill to the left



Plate 12: East side of site looking north showing steep bank



Plate 13: Centre of site looking north



Plate 14: Centre of site looking northeast



Plate 15: Centre of site looking northwest



Plate 16: West end of site looking north