

Imperial Mill Outbuildings
Blackburn Lancashire
Level 1 and 2 Historic Building Recording
April 2024



Report

Historic Building Recording – Level 1 and 2

Site

Imperial Mill Outbuildings, Blackburn, Lancashire

Client

Cassidy & Ashton

Planning Authority

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Planning Ref

10/24/0259 & 0261

10/24/0294 & 0303

Grid reference

SD 70040 28614

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Timescales Used in This Report

Prehistoric

Palaeolithic	450,000 – 12,000 BC
Mesolithic	12,000 – 4,000 BC
Neolithic	4,000 – 2,200 BC
Bronze Age	2,200 – 700 BC
Iron Age	700 – AD 43

Historic

Roman	AD 43 – 410
Saxon/Early Medieval	410 – 1066
Medieval	1066 – 1485
Post Medieval	1486 – 1901
Modern	1901 - Present Day



Executive Summary

This report has been prepared to support two planning applications (Ref. 10/24/0259 & 0261 and 10/24/0294 & 0303). It outlines the form, function and development of four rear buildings and extensions and two front extensions attached to Imperial Mill on Gorse Street in Blackburn centred at NGR SD 70040 28614 (the 'site').

The rear outbuildings represent a steel-framed structure, a brick-built annex, boiler house and engine room extension to the rear of the mill. The front outbuildings represent loading bays. The former textile mill is a Grade II listed building constructed in 1901.

Blackburn was the site of an important Roman river crossing. Although its precise origin date is unknown, it is likely that a community was present here by the early medieval period. By the early post-medieval period, Blackburn had become an important centre for the woollen cloth trade. The Leeds and Liverpool canal was built in 1810 to facilitate this trade and consequently numerous factories were erected along its banks, including the Imperial Mill in 1901. One of the outbuildings was designed as part of the original building and others arose in the following decades as the mill's fortunes fluctuated. Overall, this report has indicated that the mill's outbuildings had five phases of development.

A Historic Building Record (HBR) has been produced to fulfil a potential planning condition. Preapplication advice recommended a Level 2 HBR for the rear outbuildings and a Level 1 HBR for the front outbuildings. It is predicted that a historic building recording will also be needed for the main mill building in the future. These archaeological works are undertaken in preparation for the conversion of the mill into a mixed-use residential and commercial building.

This report has contributed to the following questions outlined in the North West Regional Research Framework (NWRRF):

Ind29: How can we establish a typology of modern buildings, particularly of the twentieth century, and how does this vary within the region?

Ind54: How can the methodologies of textile mill surveys be applied to other monument types?

Ind58: How have industrial buildings adapted to new technology and processes?



1. Introduction

- 1.1.1. This report has been researched and prepared by Rocket Heritage & Archaeology Ltd on behalf of Cassidy & Ashton in advance of development at Imperial Mill on Gorse Street in Blackburn centred at NGR SD 70040 28614 (Figure 1). The archaeological work is required as a condition of Listed Building Consent. Based upon preapplication advice, a Level 2 Historic Building Recording has been undertaken (with additional elements from a Level 3 recording).
- 1.1.2. This document has been prepared to support planning applications (Refs. 10/24/0259 & 0261 and 10/24/0294 & 0303).

1.2. Location and Description

- 1.2.1. The site is located at the Imperial Mill, Gorse Street, Blackburn, BB13EU, centred on NGR SD 70040 28614 (Figure 1). Blackburn is a town in an unparished part of the Blackburn with Darwen borough in Lancashire. The town is located approximately 6km east of Preston and 23.5km north of Manchester.
- 1.2.2. Imperial Mill is a Grade II listed building (NHLE 1273825), which was designated in 1974. The building has important regional significance, which is derived from its historical and architectural special interest. The four-storey mill is constructed out of red brick and is laid out in a general T-shape.
- 1.2.3. The single storey outbuildings to the rear sit either side of a rear south-east wing of the mill, which formed the engine room, and have been numbered for ease of description (see Buildings 1 to 4 on Figure 2). The western buildings are open and sit within a gravel and macadam yard (Buildings 1 and 2). The eastern buildings are fenced off within a grassy overgrown yard (Buildings 3 and 4). The outbuildings to the front sit centrally against the mill. One is two storeys in height and the other is single storey (see Buildings 5a and 5b on Figure 2). Immediately to the south of the mill is the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. To the north of the mill is the River Blakewater, to the west is Gorse Street and to the east is a grassy/scrub area. The site is surrounded on most sides by commercial development except for a small row of terraces on the south-western edge of the mill (likely built for the mill) and to the south-west across the canal where there is some residential development
- 1.2.4. Elements of the mill and weaving shed are still in use by the Lancashire Saw Company. However, the majority of the mill, including the buildings subject to the recording, are redundant and in varying states of dilapidation. As the mill has stood empty since 1980 the buildings have been subject to varying degrees of vandalism. Internally there is little remaining in Building 3, and it is clear that it has been utilised for fly tipping for a considerable period.

2. Archaeological and Historical Background

- 2.1.1. A Heritage Statement was produced by Cassidy & Ashton in February 2024 in support of the application. The historical background below summarises and expands on the findings from this report.

2.1. Roman

- 2.1.1. Blackburn sits at the site of an important river crossing on a Roman road (Margary 7b) linking Manchester (Mamucium) to Ribchester (Bremetennacum). It is not known if a settlement predated the road or developed as a consequence to it (Lancashire County Council 2005: 16).



2.2. Early Medieval

- 2.2.1. The earliest spellings of Blackburn come from the medieval period when it was referred to as Blacheburne and Blacheburn. Etymological evidence indicates that Blackburn may have Anglo-Saxon origins as it appears to be a topographical description meaning 'black stream' (Lancashire County Council 2005: 17).
- 2.2.2. Later traditions suggest that one of the earliest churches in the region was founded at Blackburn in AD 598 (Ibid.).
- 2.2.3. It is apparent that the town became important in this period, as is contributed to the name of the Blackburnshire Hundred. Hundreds were an administrative and territorial division introduced by the Anglo-Saxons between the 7th and 8th centuries throughout the kingdom of Northumberland, often surviving into the 19th century (Ibid.).

2.3. Medieval

- 2.3.1. Blackburn is first recorded in the Domesday Book, where it is described as a royal manor both before and after the Norman Conquest (Open Domesday; Lancashire County Council 2005:17). It had an early market as antiquarian sources indicate that a market cross was erected here in 1101 by John de Lacy (Baines, Harland and Hereford 1870: 77). A church appears have been built (perhaps replacing an earlier Anglo-Saxon edifice) in the 11th or 12th century in the Romanesque style. It was rebuilt again during the reign of Edward III and underwent alterations during the time of Henry VIII (1540). It was demolished in 1820 to make way for the present cathedral (Lancashire County Council 2005: 17; Bailey 1916: 167).
- 2.3.2. The manor was granted to Henry de Blackburn who split it between his two sons. Half of the manor was eventually passed to John de Lacy who, in turn, granted it to the monks of Stanlaw Abbey and later became part of the Whalley Abbey endowment. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries this part of the manor was granted to the Archbishop of Canterbury (Lancashire County Council 2005: 17–18).
- 2.3.3. Due to its riverine location, a number of water-powered corn mills were established during the medieval period. There were at least two mills, if not four, with one recorded as being established by the abbot of Stanlaw and Beatrice de Blackburn in 1271 (Ibid: 18, 20). This mill became known as the town's mill and was principally used for crushing oats in the 18th century (Ibid.).
- 2.3.4. Blackburn's significance may have declined in the 12th century as the regional centre became Clitheroe, the seat of the de Lacy family (Ibid.: 17).

2.4. Post-Medieval

- 2.4.1. Blackburn likely continued to serve as an ecclesiastical and market centre for the parish into the post-medieval period. Already by the end of the 16th century it had acquired a national reputation for its woollen trade (Lancashire County Council 2005: 18, 29). From the middle of the 17th century, the town was known for a cloth called Blackburn checks, a fustian cloth made from a mixture of linen and cotton. Starting in the 18th century, Blackburn Greys became more popular. It was a plain cotton fabric that was shipped to London for printing (Ibid.: 29). Calico production also accelerated in the late 18th century as a response to printing competition from Manchester and the patenting of the spinning jenny by a local inventor (Ibid.: 30).
- 2.4.2. The post-medieval settlement pattern continued that which had established in the medieval period of a landscape of dispersed farms (Ibid.: 18–20). Nucleation began to occur, however, and was encouraged by the growing importance of the weaving industry. Weaving communities began to arise within 6-miles of



Blackburn to supply the town's clothiers. These communities were made up of rows of vernacular stone-built cottages specially fitted with rooms for handlooms, cellar loomshops or rear annex loomshops (Ibid.: 23). Sometimes these communities arose from farmer's folds, which acted as community foci in the 18th century (Ibid.). It has been suggested that by 1800 there were approximately 20,000 handloom weavers established within a 5km radius of Blackburn (Ibid.: 24; Beattie 1992: 17).

- 2.4.3. The urban fabric of Blackburn also began to expand beginning in the 16th century with the establishment of a grammar school and prison (Ibid.: 23–24). Wealthy cloth merchants began to establish their high-status homes on King Street and their genteel tastes prompted the establishment of a theatre by 1775, assembly rooms by 1803 and public gardens by 1822 (Ibid.: 30). Yate's map from 1786 shows buildings concentrated on Darwen Street, expanding south to Darwen Bridge and west along King Street to Wooley Bridge (Plate 1). The site was located in a sparsely settled area between what was Blackburn and Harwood. Only two buildings are shown on the banks of the river in this area at the time.



Plate 1: William Yates's map of The County Palatine of Lancaster published in 1786

- 2.4.4. The first factories began to be established on the outskirts of Blackburn in the late 18th century. The first factory was a cotton spinning mill at Wensley Fold in 1779 followed by another at Spring Hill (later Factory Hill) (Ibid.: 28). A water-powered spinning mill and printworks was established at Waterfall in 1780 and a carding mill at Lower Darwen in 1774. These mills were accompanied by printworks and bleachworks. These encouraged further residential development as workers cottages were established around them (Ibid.: 28–30).
- 2.4.5. Blackburn's population grew exponentially in the 19th century, like most of the towns in Lancashire. In 1844 the site was located on the outskirts of the developed area of Blackburn, immediately adjacent to the parliamentary and municipal boundary of Little Harwood (Plate 2). The municipal boundaries expanded as the towns of Witton, Livesey and part of Little Harwood were incorporated in 1877 and the rest of Little Harwood and Lower Darwen were

added in 1879 (Ibid. 31). In 1901 the parishes of Livesey and Witton were added to the borough of Blackburn, more than doubling it in size (Ibid.).



Plate 2: Extract of Ordnance Survey map published in 1848 (Reproduced with permission from the National Library of Scotland)

- 2.4.6. The construction of the Leeds and Liverpool canal, located immediately south of the site, began in 1770 but the stretch through Blackburn was not completed until 1810. Its construction helped link the town to Yorkshire, facilitating both trade and communication (Ibid.: 36). This canal could now provide water as well as coal from the Wigan coal field, that could fuel larger spinning mills (Marsden and Co., Ltd. 1901: 4).
- 2.4.7. Due to its cotton industry, Blackburn continued to prosper and expand into the 19th century when it became the primary centre for power loom weaving in Lancashire (Ibid.: 37). An Ordnance Survey map from 1893–1894 shows that there were already eight cotton mills located along the canal. Development had reached the west side of Gorse Street (including Gorse Bridge Mill) but the east side, where the site is located, remained undeveloped (Plate 3).

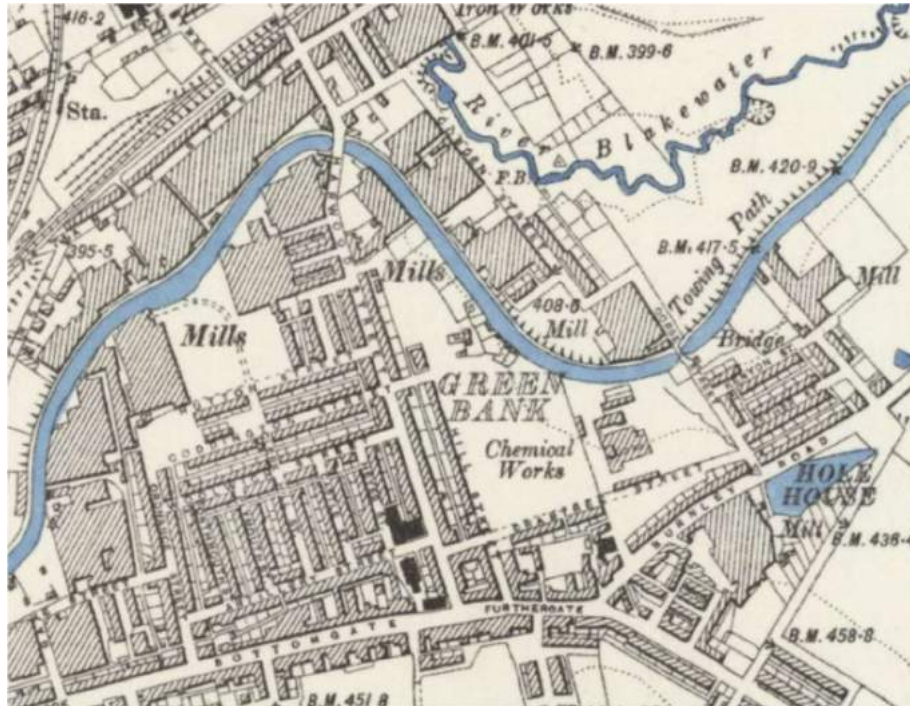


Plate 3: Extract of Ordnance Survey map published in 1895 (Reproduced with permission from the National Library of Scotland)

2.5. Modern

- 2.5.1. Centralising practices meant that spinning began to be concentrated further south in Bolton and Oldham. This led to the closing or conversion of spinning mills into textile weaving facilities. By 1900, Blackburn had established its reputation as the world's centre of cotton weaving with over 130 mills in operation (Ibid.: 41). The industry reached its peak just before the First World War, which prompted a steady decline that continued into the 1970s.
- 2.5.2. The Imperial Mill was established during the decline of cotton spinning in Blackburn. A contemporary brochure for the opening of the mill noted that it had been 40 years since the erection of the last spinning mill in town (Marsden and Co., Ltd. 1901: 1). Despite this, investment in a new spinning mill was apparently thought justified, as the creation of a mill along the Leeds and Liverpool canal would cut transportation costs of yarns coming from South Lancashire. In addition to the canal, the mill could also take advantage of the close proximity of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway to the north (Cassidy & Ashton 2024a: 5; Marsden and Co., Ltd. 1901: 1). The Imperial Mill was uniquely funded on a joint-stock principal and Sidney Stott was appointed as its architect (Ibid.). It was touted as being located near Oswaldtwistle, where James Hargreaves is said to have invented the spinning jenny which revolutionised the textile industry and gave impetus to the Industrial Revolution (Marsden and Co., Ltd. 1901: 1-3).
- 2.5.3. The four-storey mill was erected in 1901 at a cost of £12,000. It was envisioned that this mill, containing 70,000 spindles, would revitalise the spinning industry. The building can be seen on an Ordnance Survey map published in 1912 (Plate 4). Upon its foundation a brochure was published with a contemporary photograph, plan and description of the mill (Plate 5 and Plate 6). This mapping evidence, in conjunction with the contemporary floor plans for the building, indicates that the boiler house (Building 3) was part of the original design of the building.

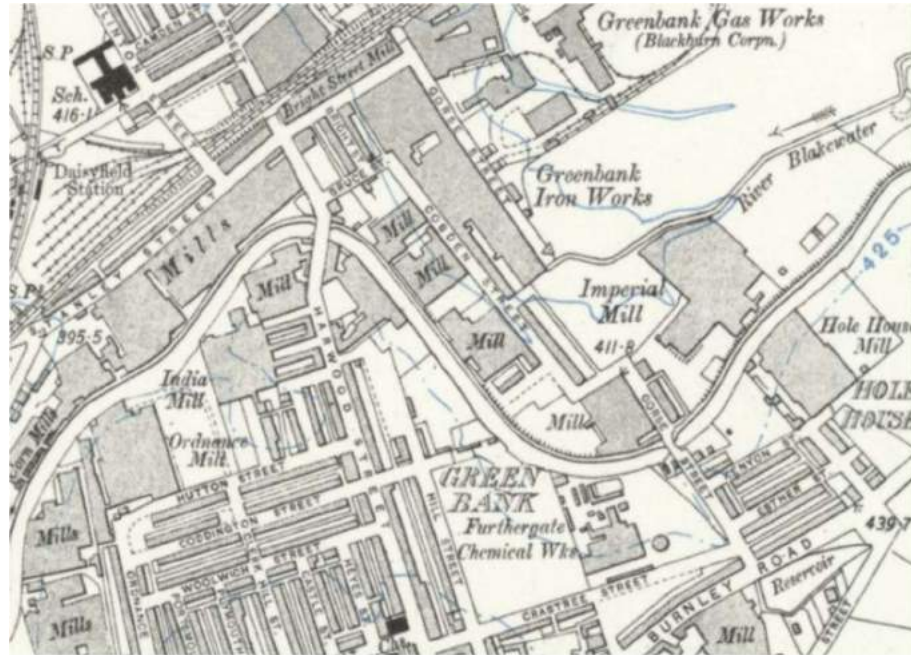


Plate 4: Extract of Ordnance Survey Map published in 1912 (Reproduced with permission from the National Library of Scotland)



Plate 5: Historical photograph of the west and south elevations of the Imperial Mill looking north from the canal. Photograph taken c.1901 (Marsden and Co., Ltd. 1901: i)

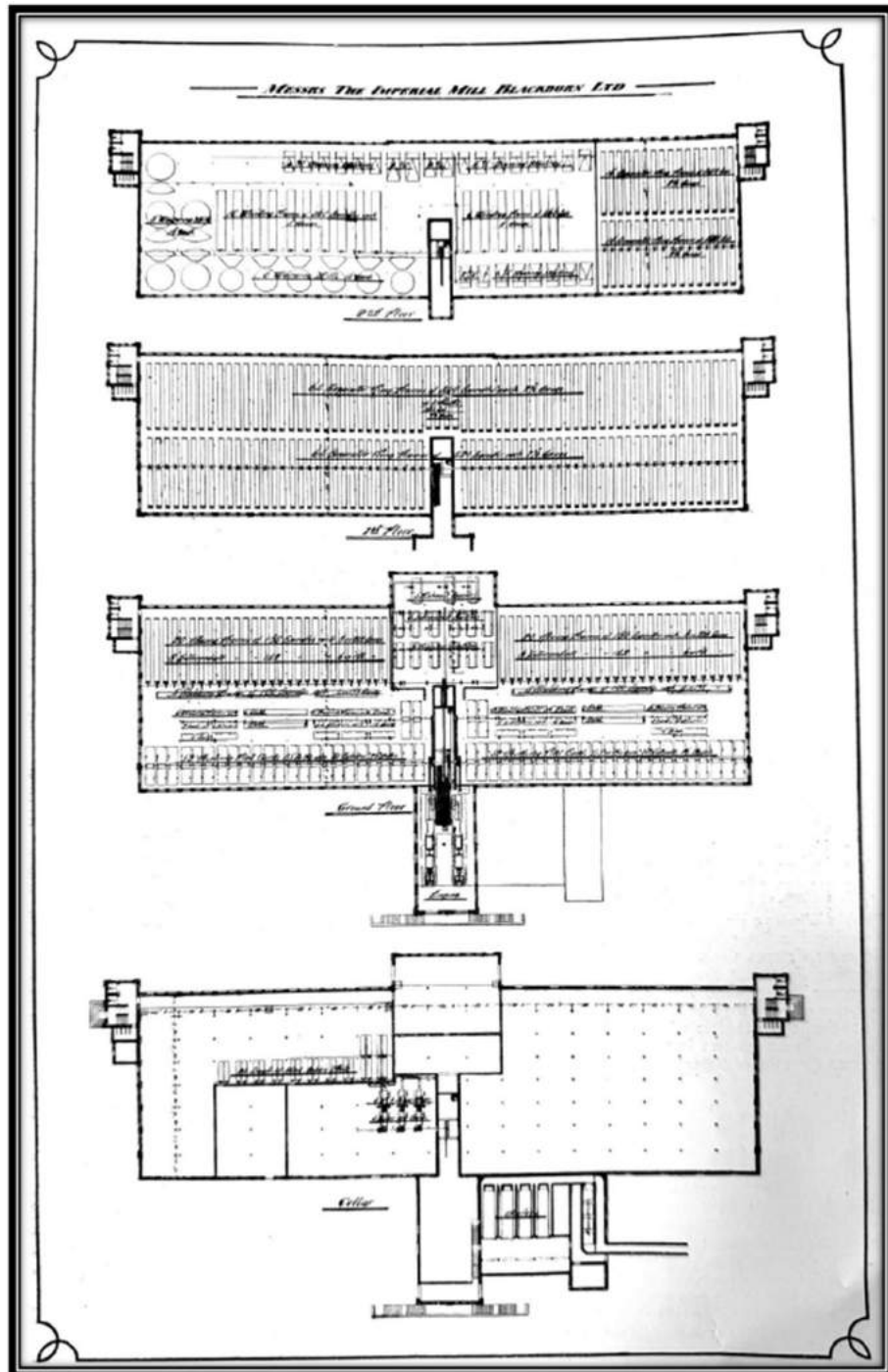


Plate 6: Plans of Machinery Rooms c.1901 (Marsden and Co., Ltd. 1901: 13)

- 2.5.4. The business faced fluctuating fortunes. Although it managed to make a profit in 1933, it struggled throughout the 1930s and had a temporary boom linked with demand created by the Second World War. Mapping evidence indicates that between 1912 and 1931, brick-built annex (Building 2) was added to the rear of the building (Plate 4 and Plate 7).



Plate 7: Extract of Ordnance Survey map published in 1931 (Reproduced with permission from the National Library of Scotland)

- 2.5.5. The introduction of synthetic fibres, however, in the 1960s tolled the factory's death knell. The factory continued to operate for over a decade but finally shut its doors in 1980 (Cassidy & Ashton 2024a: 13).
- 2.5.6. The building was then acquired by Lancashire Saw Mill and then in 2023 by the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council (Ibid.: 14). Ordnance Survey maps show the steel addition being added to the rear some time between the 1950s and 1980s, perhaps as a storage shed for the Saw Mill which took over and continues to occupy the first floor of the mill (Plate 8 and Plate 9).



Plate 8: Extract of Ordnance Survey map published in 1956 (Reproduced with permission from the National Library of Scotland)

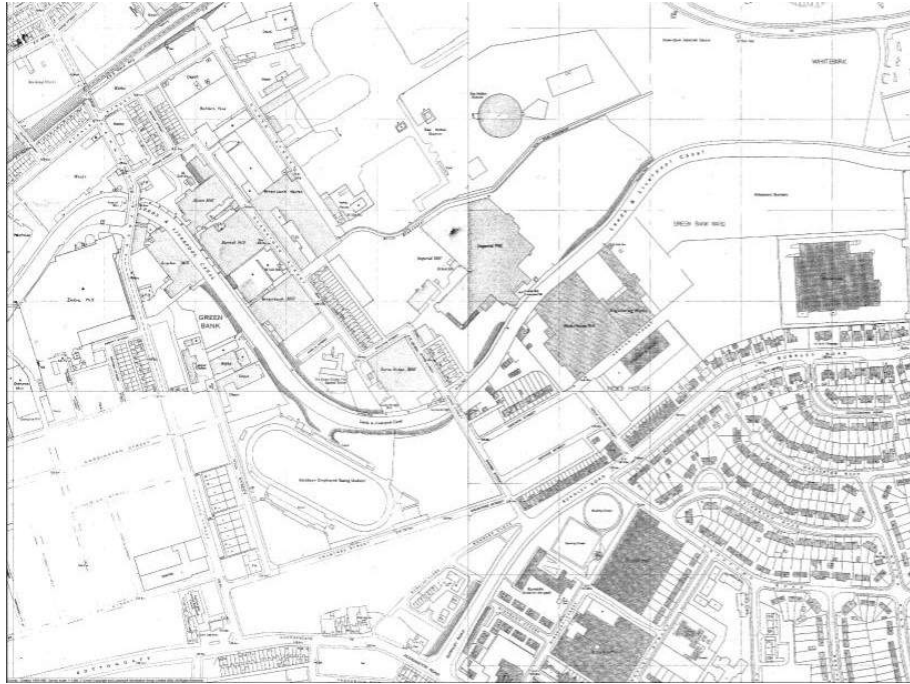


Plate 9: Extract of Ordnance Survey map published in 1978-1987 (Landmark Information Group)

3. Aims, Objectives and Methodology

3.1. Aims and Objectives

3.1.1. The aims of the project were, in accordance with Historic England's Understanding Historic Buildings (2016):

- To further the current understanding and knowledge of the existing structure through analysis of the built structure at the location of the specified areas to be recorded.
- To mitigate against the loss and alteration of historic fabric through the production of a formal photographic historic building recording.
- To identify, interpret and record the fabric, construction, and development of the building at the specified areas.
- To provide a permanent project archive of the existing building and ensure its availability within the public domain through deposition within an appropriate archive (see section 11 for details).
- To disseminate to the public the knowledge gained via deposition of a copy of the report with the HER
- The key objective of the work is to record the upstanding structures that are indicated on early maps, and record and interpret indications of the demolished buildings.

3.1.2. The results of the building recording also seek to address research questions as set out in the North West Regional Research Framework (NWRRF):

Industrial

Ind29: How can we establish a typology of modern buildings, particularly of the twentieth century, and how does this vary within the region?

Ind54: How can the methodologies of textile mill surveys be applied to other monument types?

Ind58: How have industrial buildings adapted to new technology and processes?

4. Methodology

- 4.1.1. The building recording was undertaken in line with a WSI approved by the Historic Environment Team at Lancashire County Council (RHA 2024). The work conforms to the requirements of current national and local policy (including National Planning Policy Framework (DLUHC 2023)) and with Level 1 and Level 2 of the Historic England Guidelines (Historic England 2016).
- 4.1.2. All work was carried out in compliance with the codes of practice of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2022) and complied with the CIfA Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures (CIfA 2020), as well as the aforementioned Historic England standard. The work was also undertaken in accordance with Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) (Historic England 2015a).
- 4.1.3. A digital photographic record was taken of the external features of the buildings at a minimum of 10 megapixels. Photographs included a visible metric scale where possible. Some photographs were provided by Cassidy & Ashton for Buildings 5a and 5b as they had images of the roofs, which could not be accessed for health and safety reasons during the site visit. A selection of photographs are presented throughout this report and their location is indicated on Figure 7 in Appendix A. Measured plans and elevations can be found in Figures 3-6 in Appendix A.

5. Results

- 5.1.1. The site survey and photographic recording was undertaken on 28 March 2024 by Liz Murray. Weather conditions were clear and bright. A structural engineer report indicated that all four outbuildings are in a poor state of repair and potentially dangerous (Cassidy & Ashton 2024b). Due to health and safety concerns, only external photographs were taken.
- 5.1.2. The buildings have been assigned a number for descriptive purposes. These are labelled on Figure 2 in the Appendix.
- ### 5.2. Building 1
- 5.2.1. This structure, which abuts Building 2, is a relatively simple sheltered loading bay attached to the southeast elevation of the mill. The southwest end of the structure is open to allow for the access and egress of vehicles (Plate 10).



you



Plate 10: Southwest elevation of Building 1 looking northeast

- 5.2.2. The structure is made from rolled steel joist uprights and roof supports with steel cross bracing that support the remnants of a covering of corrugated asbestos sheeting with occasional Perspex roof lights. The south corner has a steel hoop ladder which provides access to a small mezzanine floor (Plate 10).
- 5.2.3. The building is located between two loading bays that provide access to the cellar floor of the mill (Plate 11 and Plate 12). The structure is a relatively modern addition, not being present on historic mapping until 1978.



Plate 11: Interior north corner of Building 1 looking north from exterior



Plate 12: Southwest elevation of Building 1 looking north

5.3. Building 2

- 5.3.1. Building 2 is a single storey brick-built structure with a sectional concrete and steel joist flat roof construction (Plate 13 and Plate 15). The building is not original to the mill but was added at some point in the early 1930s.
- 5.3.2. The structure is situated immediately to the east of Building 1 and runs from the 'loading way' tunnel under the engine house to the mill wall and is one room deep and five bays long (Plate 13). Due to health and safety concerns, the building was not accessed and therefore the interior rooms cannot be described here.
- 5.3.3. Adjacent to the mill building appears to be a door access above which is a three-pane window at roof height that repeats in the next bay. The shelter structure of Building 1 now covers these windows, making them redundant and suggesting that the construction of Buildings 1 and 2 was not contemporaneous.
- 5.3.4. The exterior section of the southwest elevation of Building 2 has three bays (Plate 13). The north bay contains a doorway with a timber door and stone lintel. Above is a ventilator window with horizontal timber shutters and a concrete sill. The middle bay contains a boarded doorway with steel girder as lintel. The south bay contains a floor to ceiling opening with a steel girder as lintel.



Plate 13: Southwest elevation of Building 2 looking northeast



Plate 14: Ceiling and unattached door in Building 2. View looking northeast from exterior

- 5.3.5. An obvious change in brickwork demonstrates a recent alteration to the building which includes a recessed section bearing a sliding timber door under a modern steel lintel. Whilst this has been neatly keyed into the structure on the NW side, it has a more irregular join on the southeast edge. The most southeasterly bay of the building appears to be a single self-contained room. What was presumably space for a timber door(s) is now vacant, although the door now appears to be within the room leaning against a half height cinder block wall that runs the width of the room (Plate 14).
- 5.3.6. The southeast elevation of Building 2 contains a single window with a stone sill and timber lintel (Plate 15).



Plate 15: Southeast elevation of building 2 looking north

5.4. Building 3

- 5.4.1.** Building 3 was the boiler-house for the mill, as attested to by historical sources (Marsden and Co., Ltd. 1901). Due to changes in ground level, the building sits below the ground floor level of the main mill building, a high stone retaining wall to the immediate southeast denoting the location of the canal above. It is built in red brick with an English Garden Bond.
- 5.4.2.** The building is an L-shaped, single storey, parapeted flat-roof structure which adjoins the northeast elevation of the engine-house of the mill (Plate 16 and Plate 17). The flat roof contains the steel framed remains of three northwest-southeast aligned ventilation canopies that appear to have had louvred shutters to each end and a corrugated steel or asbestos roof (Plate 18 and Plate 19). The example on the north-eastern edge is longer than the other two and would have been located over the boiler flue.
- 5.4.3.** As previously noted, none of the internal fixtures and fittings remain extant, whilst the building is in a state of advanced dilapidation.
- 5.4.4.** The location of the boiler-house between the mill and the canal demonstrates that it took advantage of the nearby water supply.
- 5.4.5.** The southeast elevation of the building has five bays, followed by a southeast projecting wing with a further two bays. Of the first five, the bays are separated by cast iron stanchions that support the steel framed roof structure. The first and last bay have half-height brick walls with squared stone coping, whilst the middle three bays are now open. Timber framing still partially attached to the stanchions suggest however that there were windows or ventilation louvres in

each bay. Above each stanchion is a brick column with the brickwork to either side, above each bay, having a stepped design to the parapet, that mirrors that on the main mill building. The projecting wing contains two window openings with stone sills, both now boarded (Plate 20). The parapet and coping is missing from most of this wing.

- 5.4.6. The northeast elevation of the building has six bays, outwards from the mill these are four window openings, a doorway and a final window with the room formed by the southeast projection (Plate 19). For lack of other explanation, it is likely that the southeast projection from the boiler-house was a pump-house containing both the boiler and fire pump (Marsden and Co., Ltd. 1901), the only access to the room appears to have been internally within the boiler-house.
- 5.4.7. It is known from historical sources that the boiler house was capable of containing five Lancashire boilers, although it is not clear whether it was ever filled to capacity. The boilers were located on the northwest side of the room, whilst economisers were located in the northeast side of the room between the boilers and the flue that led to the chimney. Neither the flue nor the chimney remain extant. The building has clearly been vacant for some time. There are overgrown piles of detritus and modern rubbish visible within the interior (Plate 21 and Plate 22). There are no remaining traces of the boiler beds or the other internal features of the building.



Plate 16: West end of southeast elevation of Building 3 looking west



Plate 17: East end of southeast elevation of Building 2 looking north



Plate 18: East end of southeast elevation and roof of Building 2 looking north



Plate 19: Northeast elevation and roof of Building 2 looking southwest



Plate 20: East window opening in southwest elevation of L-shaped popout of Building 2



Plate 21: Interior of Building 3 looking north from exterior



Plate 22: Interior of Building 3 looking west from exterior

5.5. Building 4

- 5.5.1. The building is single storey and annexed to the engine house located on the roof of the boiler-house (Plate 23). It is constructed of red brick in an English Garden Bond and appears to be of the same parapeted flat roof design as the boiler-house. Whilst a projecting stone string course provides the sill for the window openings in the same style as the engine-house. The window reveals contain a stepped brick design that matches that of the boiler house parapet. There is a single window to the southeast elevation and a further two window

openings on the northeast elevation. The lack of a door suggests it was only intended to be accessed from within the engine house.



Plate 23: Southeast and northeast elevation of Building 4 which sits atop of Building 3. View looking west

5.6. Building 5a and 5b

- 5.6.1.** Buildings 5a and 5b sit against the northwest elevation of the mill (Figure 2; Plate 24). Building 5a abuts the mill. It is two storeys in height, built of red brick in an English Garden Bond with an upper yellow brick stringcourse above the windows and a lower yellow stone stringcourse below the windows (Plate 25). It is flat roofed with a parapet with dressed stone coping. The structural engineer report indicates that this building has a timber roof deck (Cassidy & Ashton 2024c). The corners have decorative brick pilasters (Plate 26). The ground floor of the southwestern elevation has a metal loading bay door (Plate 24). The first floor of the southwestern elevation has three bays with floor to ceiling eight-pane timber casement windows. The northwest elevation has nine bays with eight-pane timber casement windows (Plate 25 to Plate 27).



Plate 24: Imperial Mill with Buildings 5a and 5b on left. View looking northeast



Plate 25: Deck of Building 5b and northwest elevation of Building 5a. View looking southeast from roof of adjacent extension



Plate 26: East end of northwest elevation of Building 5a. View looking east from roof of Building 5b



Plate 27: Roof deck of Building 5b with northwest elevation of Building 5a. View looking southeast from roof of adjacent extension

- 5.6.2. Building 5b is attached to the north of Building 5a. It is single storey in height and also built out of red brick with no decorative yellow brick stringcourse. It instead appears to have a stringcourse of red brick headers. It is flat roofed with a parapet with dressed stone coping (Plate 25). The structural engineer report indicates that this building has a brick-built barrel ceiling deck (Cassidy & Ashton 2024c). The southwest elevation has a metal loading bay door (Plate 24). The northwest elevation is now almost wholly covered by extensions to the north but appears to have nine window openings which have mostly been boarded (Plate 25).

6. Discussion and Conclusion

- 6.1.1. The front and rear outbuildings, with their variety of construction techniques, give evidence to the mill's ongoing occupation and changing business needs since its initial construction in 1901. Unlike other earlier stone-built mills along the canal, Imperial Mill was built out of red brick with yellow brick and stone stringcourses (Ashmore 1982: 182). It was designed by the prolific mill architect Sir Philip Sydney Stott of Oldham, his trademark being the twin projecting bands towards the top of the chimney (chimney no longer extant, but clear on historic photographs) (Plate 5). The building work was carried out by Jonathan Partington of Middleton Junction and the steam heating by the executors of John Baldwin of Blackburn (Marsden and Co., Ltd. 1901).
- 6.1.2. The mill and its outbuildings share a similar appearance to other Stott and Son buildings including the Pear Mill, Stockport; Coppul Ring Mill, Chorley; Broadstone Mill, Reddish; Goyt Mill, Marple; and Butts Mill, Leigh. These buildings are all built of red brick and feature horizontal bands of yellow brick, a projecting tower, and parapets.
- 6.1.3. Imperial Mill was situated in a very strategic location. Ordnance Survey maps show that it was located between the canal to the south and railway to the north. This would have made the transportation of goods to and from the mill cheaper and also provided a reliable source of water for steam power. The contemporary brochure remarks on the fact that no reservoir was needed and there was no cost associated with carrying water to the site, therefore saving the company money in the long run (Marsden and Co., Ltd. 1901).
- 6.1.4. This building recording has indicated that the outbuildings associated with the mill likely had five phases of development (Figure 3):
- Phase 1: 1901 (Building 3)
 - Phase 2: 1901-1912 (Buildings 5a and 4)
 - Phase 3: 1912-1931 (Buildings 2 and 5b)
 - Phase 4: 1956-1987 (Building 1)
 - Phase 5: 1931-Present (New entrances in Building 2)
- 6.1.5. Phase 1: Contemporary plans show that Building 3, which served as the boiler house, is original and was constructed at the same time as the main mill building. It was described as having the capacity to hold five Lancashire type boilers measuring 30 x 8 feet, although at the time of construction only four were installed (Plate 28; Marsden and Co., Ltd. 1901). The boiler house also contained Green's economisers, consisting of 384 tubes (Ibid.). These were used to improve the efficiency of the boilers. The boilers, like the engines and mill gear, were constructed by the firm Yates and Thom based in Blackburn (Ibid.). Building 3 also likely contained the pumping house, described in a contemporary brochure. This house consisted of a boiler and fire pump and likely sat in the eastern end of the building (Ibid.). The pump house contained a fly wheel steam pump designed by George Mills and Co., Radcliffe and was located adjacent the canal where it could source water (Plate 29). Its purpose was to supply the boilers and provide a secondary supply of water to the mill's sprinkler and hydrant system (Ibid.). Today only the red brick walls, roof ventilators and decorative columns hint at Building 3's original appearance. It is probable that the roof was replaced at some point, perhaps when ventilation canopies and Building 4 were added.
- 6.1.6. Phase 2: Building 5a was also likely original or near contemporary in date to Imperial Mill, due to its similar decorative style. Building 5b may have been a later phase, however, as it lacks the decorative yellow stringcourse decoration of Building 5a and the main mill. Their modern metal loading bay doors on the southwest elevations indicate that more recently they have been used for the



loading and unloading of goods. They may have originally had this purpose as well as the contemporary brochure indicates that there was a loading way for lorries on the north side of the building (Marsden and Co., Ltd. 1901).

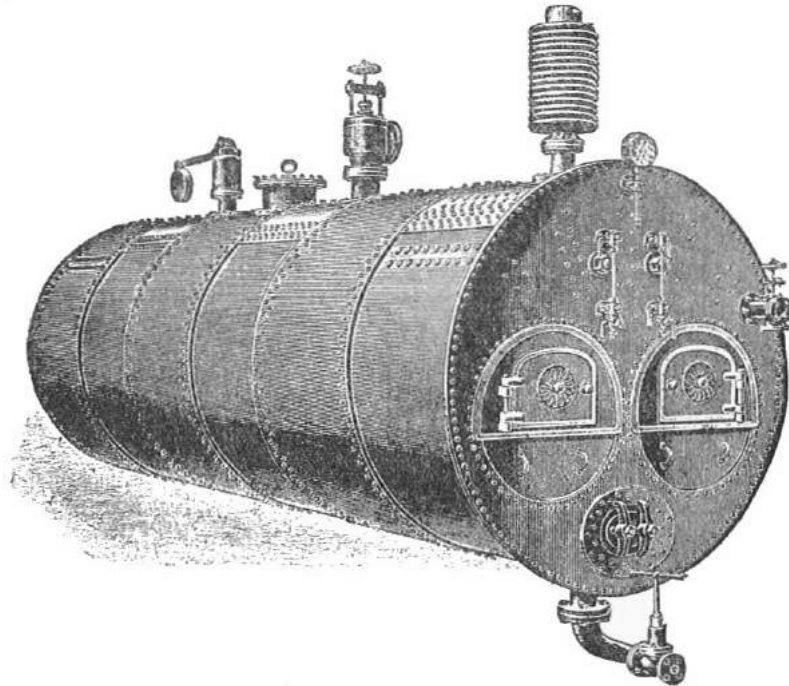


Plate 28: Example of a Lancashire Boiler (Kennedy 1912)

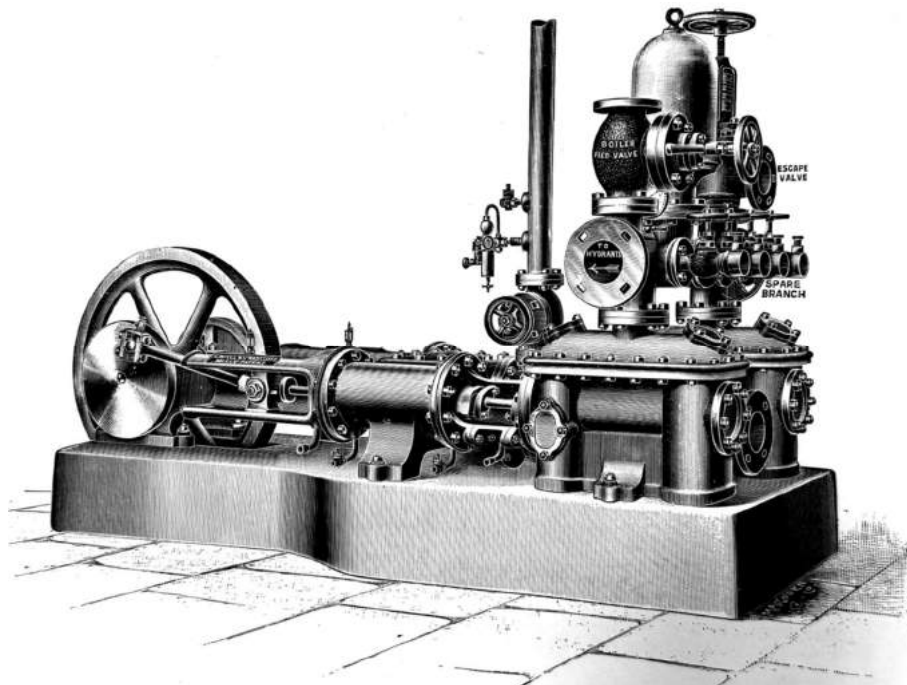


Plate 29: Example of pump designed by George Mills and Co which once stood in Building 3 (Marsden and Co., Ltd. 1901)

- 6.1.7. Building 4, sitting aloft Building 3, may not have been built at the same time as the mill and its boiler house but is still likely near contemporaneous in date. This

is surmised by its appearance, which mimics the red brick and yellow brick string courses of the main mill building. The interior could not be accessed but it is thought to be an extension to the engine house since its sole access is provided through this building.

- 6.1.8. Phase 3: Mapping evidence indicates that Building 2 was constructed sometime between 1912–1931. Also built out of red brick, it has had numerous interventions. The interior could not be accessed, and it is unknown what the original function of this building was.
- 6.1.9. Phase 4: Between 1956 and 1987, Building 1 was erected likely to facilitate the loading of goods from the cellar. Its materials and appearance attest to its recent construction.
- 6.1.10. Phase 5: Sometime after the construction of Building 2 in 1931 two new entrances were inserted in southwest elevation, as indicated by the renewed brickwork here.
- 6.1.11. The four buildings vary in their significance. Buildings 3 and 4 are contemporaneous or near contemporaneous and have historical significance for their import in supporting the engine house of the mill. They have architectural significance for their similar materials and decorative styles, which give them a visual relationship with the main mill building.
- 6.1.12. Building 3 in particular underlines the growing concern for health and safety in factory buildings, as it contains a plethora of windows, roof ventilators, and supplied an elaborate fire safety system throughout the building.

6.2. Research Framework

Ind29: How can we establish a typology of modern buildings, particularly of the twentieth century, and how does this vary within the region?

- 6.2.1. The only building that we know the definitive function of is Building 3 and as such it can contribute to a comparative study of boiler and pump houses which were once ubiquitous across Lancashire. The restrictions on access, however, and internal stripping of these buildings mean that comparisons can only be made to form and relative location. Historic England has produced some monographs related to particular typologies, including farm buildings and textile mills. As a centralised organisation within the industry with oversight responsibilities, it is well positioned to produce and fund such typological studies.
- 6.2.2. The outbuildings recorded within this report are part of a flamboyant type of Edwardian mill perfected by Stott and Sons with surviving parallels prevalent across Lancashire. They often contain Italianate decorative features.

Ind54: How can the methodologies of textile mill surveys be applied to other monument types?

- 6.2.3. Historic England published a survey of textile mills in Lancashire in 2018. This publication, however, does not list the Imperial Mill in Blackburn. The historic building recording (as well as the future one on the mill building itself) can therefore expand these findings and underline the fact that such publications should be continuously updated.
- 6.2.4. The standing building remains of many textile mills, as well as the abundance of archival resources, make it a building type that can be studied successfully in detail. It provides an example of the work that could be done in future for other kinds of mills and factory buildings.

Ind58: How have industrial buildings adapted to new technology and processes?



- 6.2.5. Lancashire's early textile industry started as a collection of independent textile workers who independently produced and sold cloth. In the 17th century, the 'putting-out' system was introduced, where a merchant provided raw materials to workers who were paid for the finished cloth they returned. This system was then replaced by a factory-based system in the late eighteenth century thanks to the rising demand for cotton. "This capitalist system was characterised by the acquisition of a centralised building (the factory) and (water- or steam-powered) machinery by an entrepreneur or cooperative, who paid largely unskilled workers to produce a standardised set of products" (Historic England 2018: 11).
- 6.2.6. Mechanised cotton spinning began in the region in the 1770s following the development of waterpowered silk-making processes and the invention of the spinning jenny (Ibid.: 18-19). Water powered cotton mills were quickly adopted across Lancashire. They came to be based in urban centres with the advancement of steam power, as cities and towns could more readily supply labour and coal (Ibid.: 20).
- 6.2.7. Being utilitarian buildings, both water powered, and steam powered spinning mills have a form that reflects their function. Cotton mills typically had rooms for the preparation of the raw cotton, carding, and spinning (Ibid.: 21-22). Mills were designed to house the specialised machinery that was developed to undertake these processes. Engine houses and boilers rooms began to be built within or as an extension to the mill. Boiler houses required monumental chimneys which became a characteristic feature of mills (Ibid.: 26-31). The chimney at Imperial Mill is no longer extant. Chimneys became taller in the 19th century, showcasing the increasing demand for power. Contemporary documents and photographs show that Imperial Mill's chimney, which was once attached to the boiler house (Building 3) was substantial. The boiler room is L-shaped in plan and is roughly 426 square meters, having capacity to hold five Lancashire type boilers and a pumping machine.

7. Archival

- 7.1.1. The digital archive will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) following the standards for deposition and the guidelines of ADS and Lancashire County Council's Museum Service and Record Office (2022).
- 7.1.2. An Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigations (OASIS) record has been created for this project with the identification number **rockethe1-524387**. Once approved by Historic Environment Team at Lancashire County Council, the final report will be uploaded to this website.



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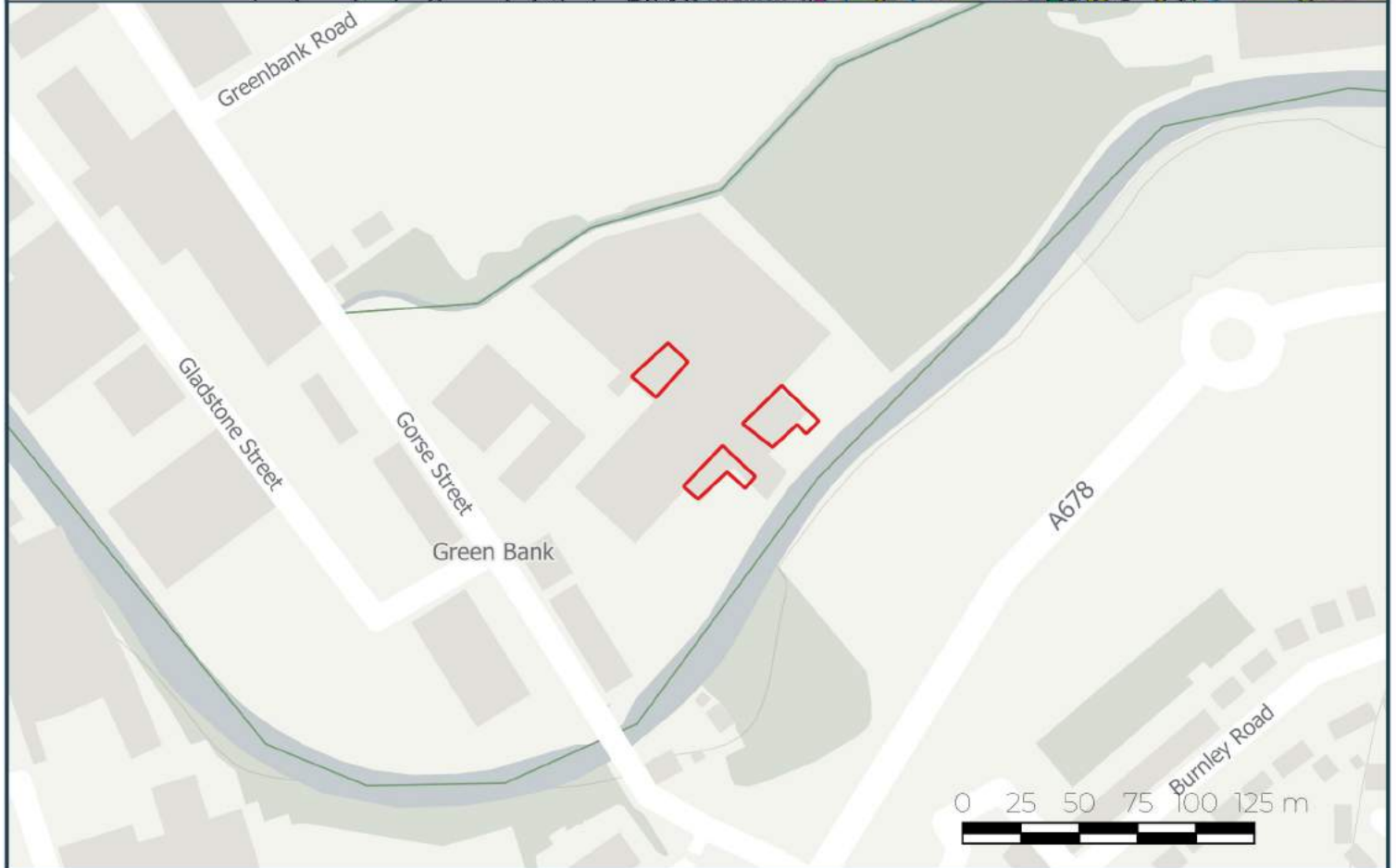
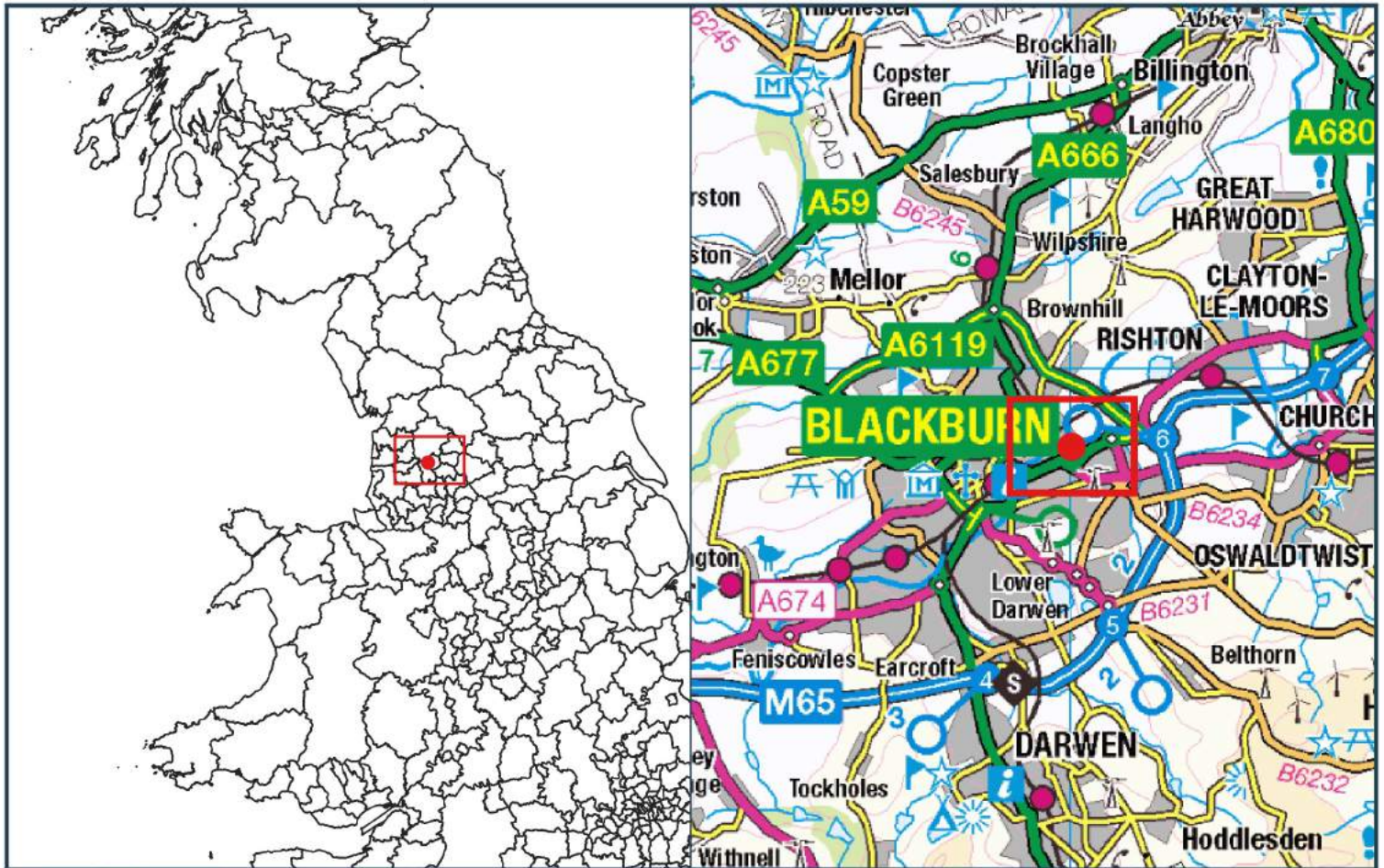
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Appendix A: Figures

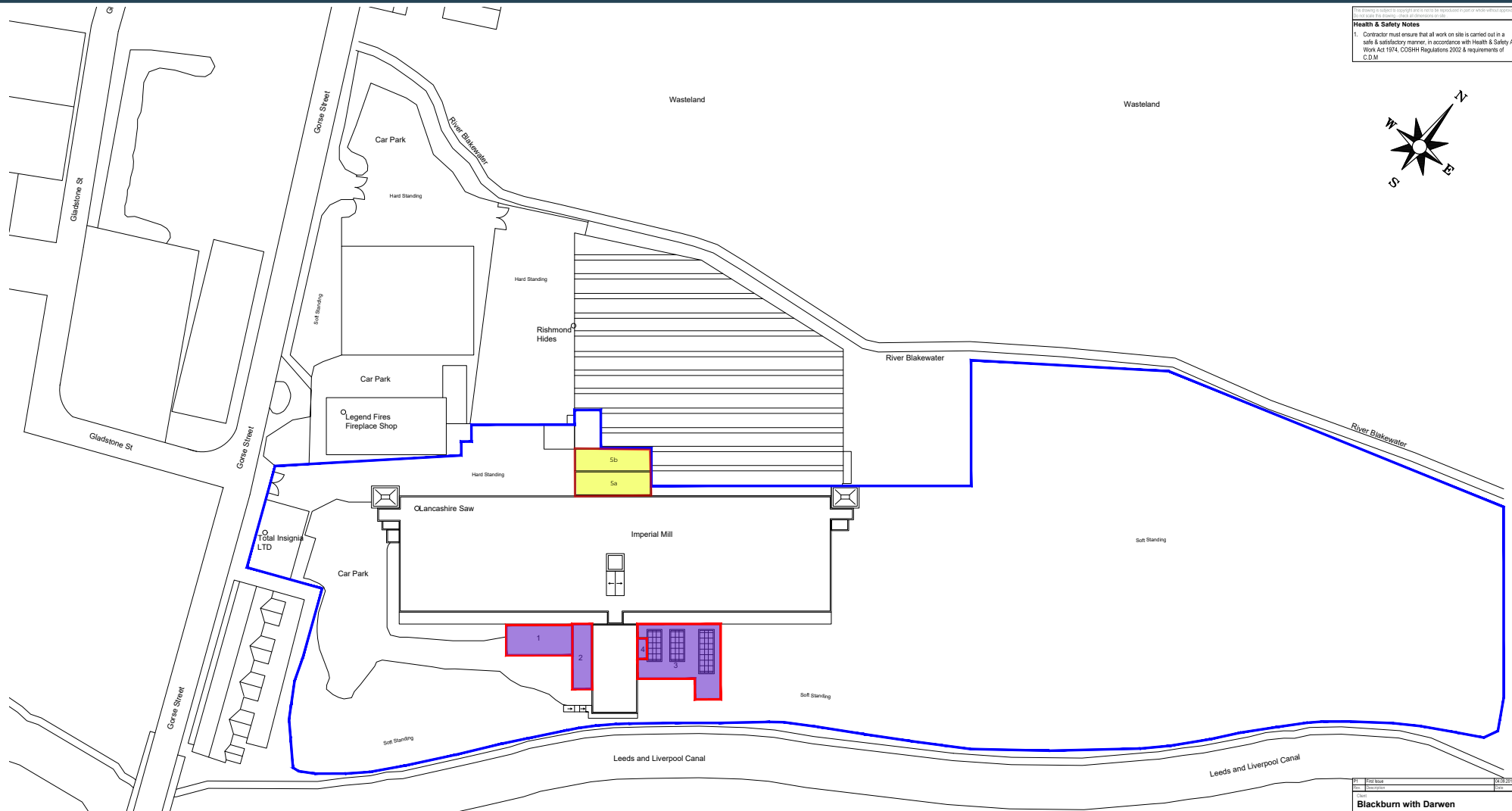




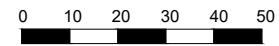
Title:
Figure 1: Site Location
Address:
Imperial Mill Outbuildings, Corse Street, Blackburn



Health & Safety Notes
 1. Contractor must ensure that all work on site is carried out in a safe & satisfactory manner, in accordance with Health & Safety At Work Act 1974, COSHH Regulations 2002 & requirements of CDM.



- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Legend | Site Key |
| Areas to be demolished. | 1 - Steel Structure |
| Application Site | 2 - Masonry Annex |
| Ownership Boundary | 3 - Boiler House |
| Areas of roof replacement. | 4 - Engine Room Extension |
| | 5a - Loading Bay |
| | 5b - Loading Bay |



Client		Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	
Project		Imperial Mill Gorse St, Blackburn BB1 3EU	
Drawing Title		Proposed Demolition Plan	
Drawn by	JA	Checked by	MT
Date	ISSUE	Scale @ A1	07/02/2024
1:500			
Sheet No.	12430	Drawn No.	L03
Proj No.		Proj No.	P1
<small>Architecture • Building Surveying • Town Planning</small>			
<small>17 Park Cliff, Preston, Lancashire, PR1 2SE</small>		<small>01772 205 206</small>	
<small>10 Clarendon Road, Colindale Avenue, Colindale, W9 1ED</small>		<small>02042 022 022</small>	



Figure 2: Proposed Demolition and Roof Replacement Plan
Address: Imperial Mill, Gorse Street, Blackburn, BB1 3EU





- Phase 1: 1901
- Phase 2: 1901-1912
- Phase 3: 1912-1931
- Phase 4: 1956-1987
- Phase 5: 1931-Present

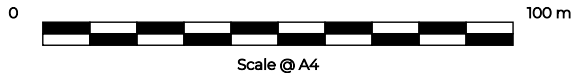


Figure 3: Phase Floor Plan
Address: Imperial Mill, Gorse Street, Blackburn



- Phase 1: 1901
- Phase 2: 1901-1912
- Phase 3: 1912-1931
- Phase 4: 1956-1987
- Phase 5: 1931-Present

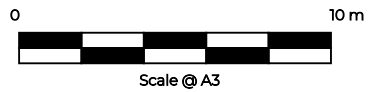
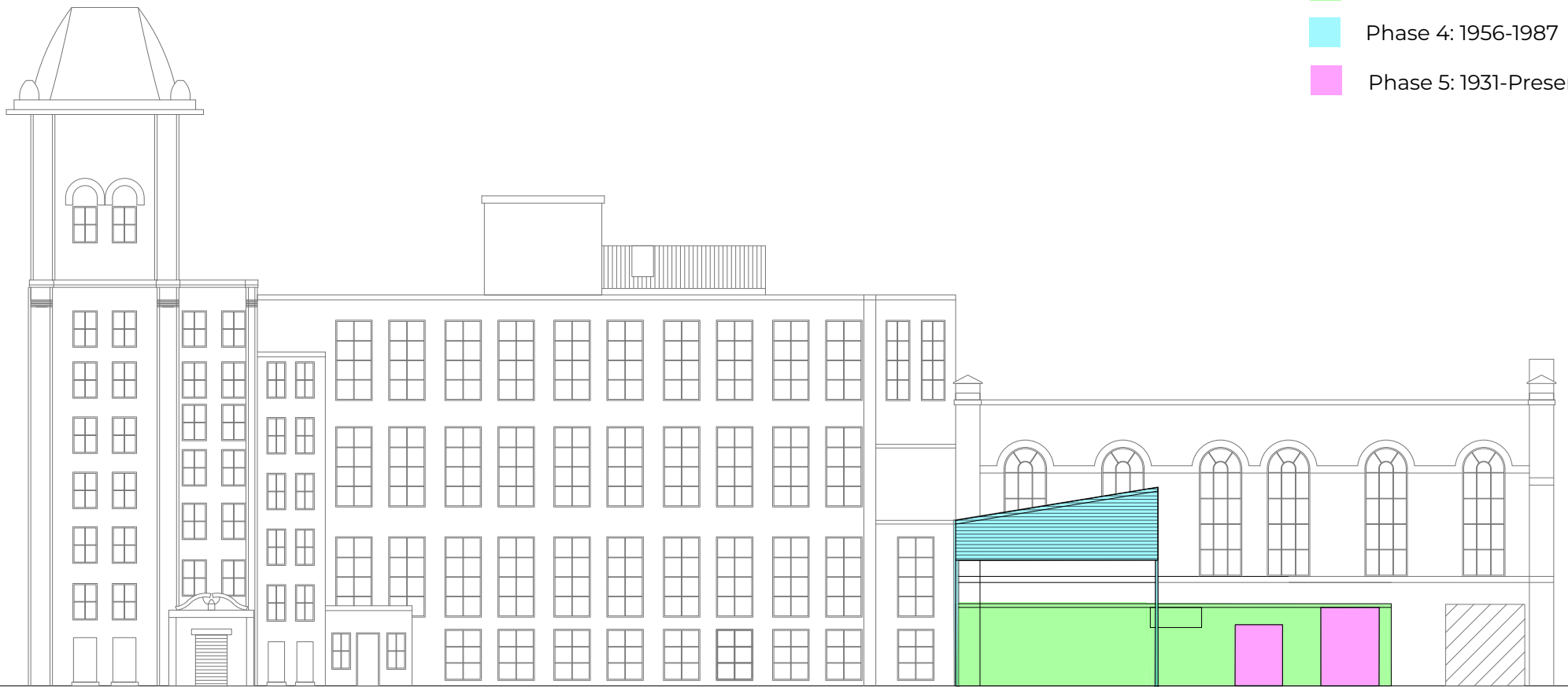
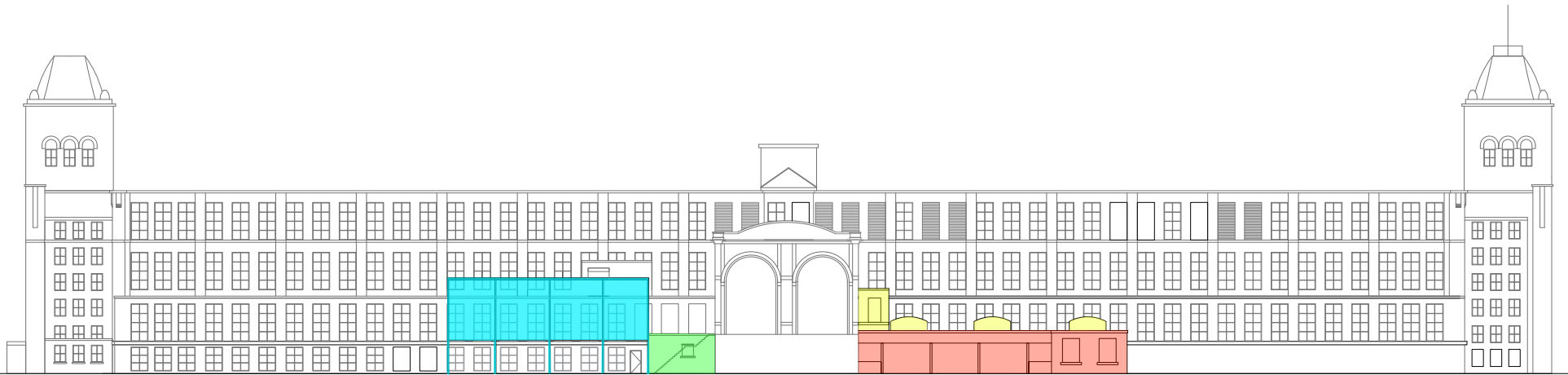


Figure 4: Southwest Elevation Phase Plan
Address: Imperial Mill, Gorse Street, Blackburn



- Phase 1: 1901
- Phase 2: 1901-1912
- Phase 3: 1912-1931
- Phase 4: 1956-1987
- Phase 5: 1931-Present



Figure 5: Southeast Elevation Phase Plan
Address: Imperial Mill, Gorse Street, Blackburn

- Phase 1: 1901
- Phase 2: 1901-1912
- Phase 3: 1912-1931
- Phase 4: 1956-1987
- Phase 5: 1931-Present

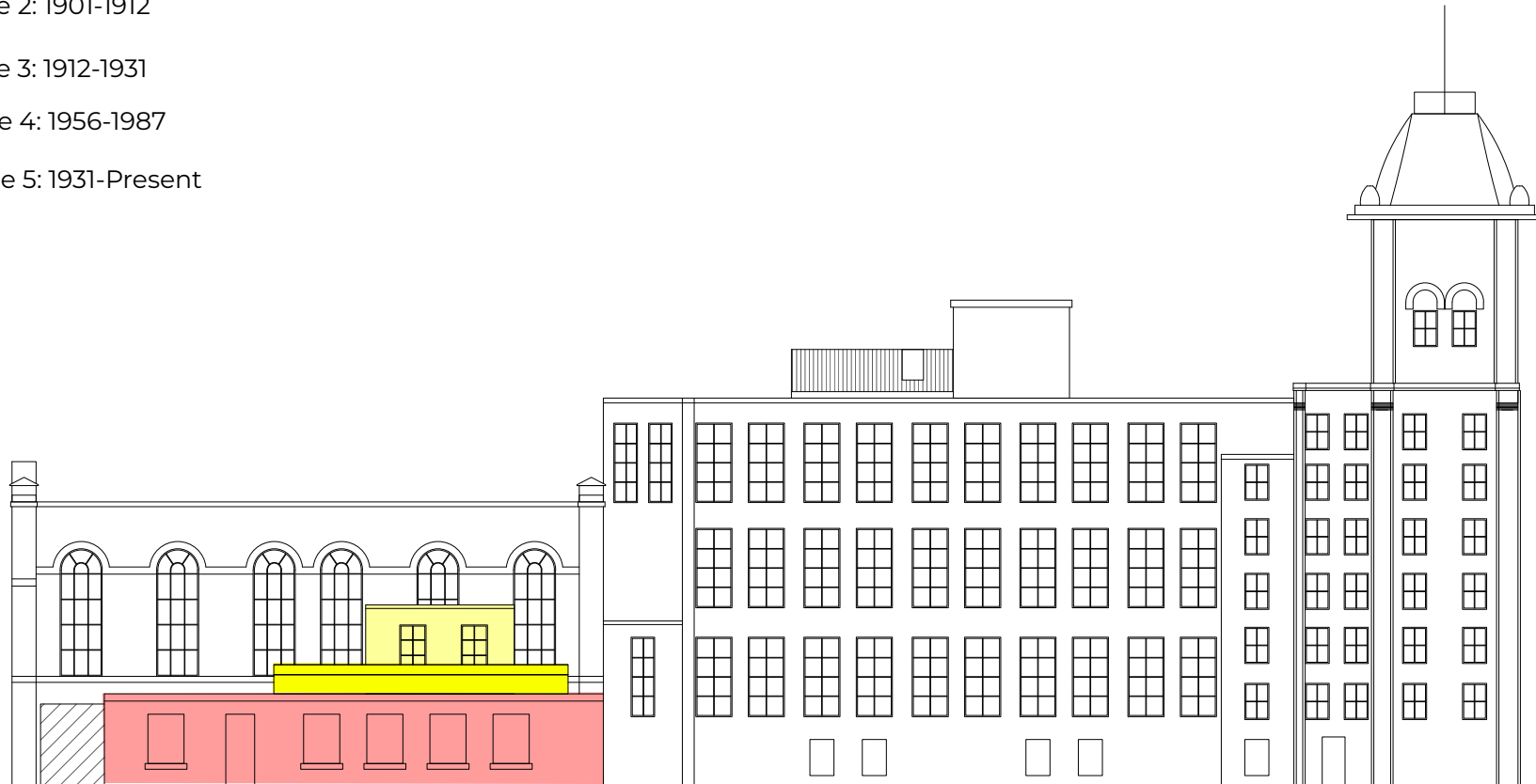


Figure 6: Northeast Elevation Phase Plan
Address: Imperial Mill, Gorse Street, Blackburn

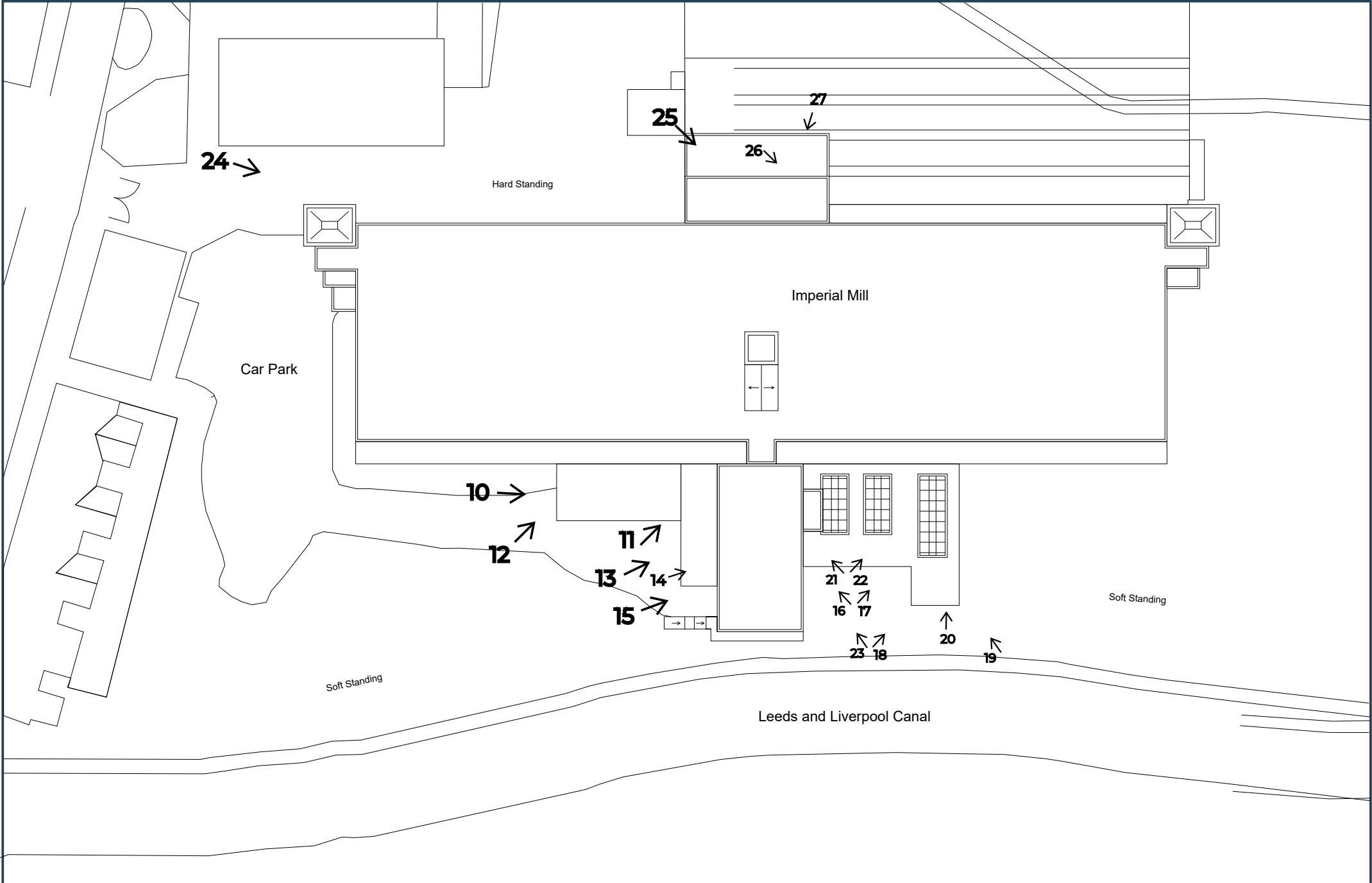


Figure 3: Photography Plan
Address: Imperial Mill, Gorse Street, Blackburn

