



University of  
**Salford**  
MANCHESTER

## **Archaeological Desk-based Assessment**

Land Off Abbey Hey  
Lane, Gorton,  
Manchester

**Client:**

Southway Housing Trust

**Planning Ref:**

119149/FO/2018

**Technical Report:**

Katie Harvey

**Report No:**

2018/25



**Site Location:** The study area lies on Abbey Hey Lane in the Gorton area of Manchester

**NGR:** Centred on 389140 396500

**Project:** Abbey Hey Lane, Gorton, Manchester

**Planning Ref:** 119149/FO/2018

**Internal Ref:** SA/2018/25

**Prepared for:** Southway Housing Trust

**Document Title:** Land Off Abbey Hey Lane, Gorton, Manchester: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

**Document Type:** Desk-based Assessment

**Version:** Version 1.0

**Author:** Katie Harvey  
**Position:** Archaeologist  
**Date:** May 2018

**Author:** Ian Miller  
**Position:** Assistant Director of Archaeology  
**Date:** May 2018

Signed:



**Copyright:** Copyright for this document remains with the Centre for Applied Archaeology, University of Salford.

**Contact:** Salford Archaeology, Centre for Applied Archaeology, LG 19–25 Peel Building, University of Salford, the Crescent, Salford M5 4WU

Telephone: 0161 295 4467  
Email: i.f.miller@salford.ac.uk

**Disclaimer:**

This document has been prepared by the Centre for Applied Archaeology, University of Salford for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be used or relied upon for any other project without an independent check being undertaken to assess its suitability and the prior written consent and authority obtained from the Centre for Applied Archaeology. The University of Salford accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than those for which it was commissioned. Other persons/parties using or relying on this document for other such purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify the University of Salford for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. The University of Salford accepts no liability or responsibility for this document to any other party/persons than by whom it was commissioned.

# *Contents*

---

Summary	1
1. Introduction	2
2. Method Statement	4
3. The Setting	5
4. Archaeological and Historical Background	7
5. Gazetteer of Sites	21
6. Significance of the Remains	22
7. Impact of the Development	26
8. Further Investigation	27
Sources	28
Acknowledgments	30
Appendix 1: Figures	31
Appendix 2: HER Data	42

## Summary

---

In May 2018, Salford Archaeology was commissioned by Southway Housing Trust to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment of a plot of land off Abbey Hey Lane in the Gorton area of Manchester (centred on NGR 389140 396500). The assessment was required to identify, as far as possible, the nature, extent and significance of the archaeological resource to inform the proposed development of an extra-care facility comprising 106 apartments, car parking, landscaping and boundary treatment (Planning Ref: 119149/FO/2018). Delivery of the development proposals will necessitate ground-breaking works to depths in excess of 1.2m below the existing ground surface with a potential to damage or remove any buried archaeological remains that survive across the site.

The proposed development area does not lie within a conservation area, and does not contain any designated heritage assets. Historical mapping shows the study area to have been occupied completely by Gorton Mills, which was constructed in 1824 adjacent to the Stockport Branch of the Ashton-under-Lyne Canal. Since its origin the mill complex underwent various modifications and extensions throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, until it was demolished in the 1930s. Part of the site was redeveloped subsequently for residential apartments, which is likely to have disturbed any buried foundations of the mill and any other archaeological remains across parts of the study area. However, it is concluded that there is some potential for other parts of the site to retain remains of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century mill buildings, particularly the northern and north-western parts of the site, across the footprint of a boiler house, chimney and flue, and part of the engine house for the original beam engine that served the first mill of 1824.

The requirement for any further archaeological investigation of the site will be decided in consultation the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service, in their capacity as archaeological advisor to Manchester City Council, although it may be anticipated that further, intrusive, investigation will be merited in advance of development. This would be required in the first instance to establish whether any buried remains of archaeological interest survive *in-situ*, and could usefully comprise a series of evaluation trenches targeted on the footprint of the mill's former steam-power plant, including engine and boiler houses and associated flue system and chimney. Should significant archaeological remains be encountered during the initial evaluation trenching, further excavation may be required to offset the harm of development to the sub-surface archaeological resource, in line with the guidance provided by the National Planning Policy Framework.



# ***1. Introduction***

---

## *1.1 Planning Background*

In May 2018, Salford Archaeology was commissioned by Southway Housing Trust to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment of a plot of land adjacent to Abbey Hey Lane in the Gorton area of Manchester (referred to herein as the Site). The aim of the assessment was to identify as far as possible the nature, extent and significance of the archaeological resource in the Site so as to enable informed recommendations to be made for the future treatment of any surviving remains. This information was required in order to inform and support a planning application for a proposed development (Planning Ref: 119149/FO/2018).

The proposed scheme allows for the erection of a part three-, part four-storey extra care facility (comprising 106 apartments and ancillary cafe/restaurant and hair and beauty uses) with associated car parking, landscaping and boundary treatment. Delivery of the proposals will necessitate ground-breaking works that have some potential to impact upon below-ground archaeological remains.

## *1.2 Government and Local Planning Policies*

### *1.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*

The significance of the archaeological resource identified within this report has been assessed as recommended in *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Local Communities, March 2012).

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies and outlines the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is defined by three principles: economic, social and environmental. Of the 12 core planning principles underpinning decision making, conserving 'heritage assets in a manner appropriate to the quality of life of this and future generations' is one.

Section 12 deals specifically with this historic environment (paragraphs 126-41), and local planning authorities should consider:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

Paragraph 128 states that local planning authorities, when determining applications, should require the applicant to describe the significance of any affected heritage assets. This should be sufficient so as to understand the potential impact on their significance and this should be done using the appropriate expertise where necessary.

Paragraph 135 indicates that the effect of the proposal on non-designated heritage assets (designated assets are covered in paragraphs 132-34) should be taken into account. Paragraph 141 requires developers to record and advance understanding of heritage assets to be lost, in a manner appropriate to their importance and impact.

### *1.2.2 Local Development Framework*

The NPPF outlines the need for local planning policies to create local plans and frameworks to implement the NPPF at a local level. Manchester adopted a Core Strategy in 2012, which is scheduled until 2027. The heritage strategy is outlined in *Objective 6: Environment*, which summarises the approach the local authority will take in determining planning applications which may affect the historic environment.

Policy EN3 states:

‘Throughout the City, the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the city centre.

New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.

Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encourage where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.’

Manchester City Council is advised on archaeological matters by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS), which has been consulted during the preparation of the present assessment.

## 2. *Method Statement*

---

### 2.1 *Research*

The assessment considers the potential impact of the proposed development upon any buried archaeological remains within the Site, and comprises a desk-based study and site inspection. The production of the assessment followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) standard and guidance for undertaking archaeological desk-based assessments (CIfA, *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment*, 2017).

The desk-based assessment made use of the following sources:

- Published and unpublished cartographic, documentary and photographic sources;
- The Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record, maintained by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service;
- Information held by Manchester Archives in Manchester Central Library;
- The National Heritage List for England;
- Salford Archaeology's extensive library of archaeological work carried out in the vicinity of the Site.

The aim of the research was to provide the relevant historical and archaeological background relating to the development of the site. The available sequence of historical mapping was the principal source of information, as this provides evidence for the development of the Site since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### 2.2 *Site Inspection*

The aim of the site inspection was to relate the findings of the desk-based study to the existing land use of the Site, in order to identify any evidence for surviving below-ground remains.

### 2.3 *The Document*

The following presents the historical and archaeological evidence for the Site. A gazetteer (Chapter 5) of sites of potential archaeological interest identified within the Site and this information, along with map regression (*Appendix 1*), is used to assess the significance of the remains (Chapter 6) and potential impact of the development (Chapter 7). A strategy for further investigation is outlined in Chapter 8, based on the assessment presented in the previous chapters.

## 3. *The Setting*

### 3.1 *Location, Topography and Land use*

The Site is located off Abbey Hey Lane (centred on NGR 389140 396500), situated in the Gorton area of Manchester. The Site boundary extends north to Abbey Court apartments, and west to houses off Hawthorn Street, Carberry Street and Holybush Lane (Fig 1). The site encompasses 1.3ha and comprises landscaped ground with some small areas of hard-standing (Plate 1). A footpath along the western boundary of the Site represents the line of the infilled canal.



*Plate 1: Recent aerial view showing the Site boundary*

### 3.2 *Geology & Topography*

The underlying solid geology of the Site, as mapped by the British Geological Survey at 1:50000, is comprised of Chester Pebble Beds Formation - Sandstone. The overlying drift geology is comprised of Glaciofluvial Sheet Deposits, Devensian sand and gravel (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk>).

The Site lies at a height of approximately 78m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), falling gently to the east and rising to the west.



### 3.3 *Designations*

The Site does not contain any designated heritage assets, although it is situated 500m north-east of the Gore Brook Valley Conservation Area. This Conservation Area is centred on a semi-rural area that encompasses properties fronting onto Sunny Brow Park, and land around Far Lane and Tan Yard Brow. Listed buildings within the Conservation Area include: Brookfield Unitarian Sunday School (HER 8430.4.0); Brookfield Unitarian Church Lodge (HER 8430.2.0); Brookfield Unitarian Church Peacock Mausoleum (HER 8430.3.0); and Brookfield Unitarian Church (HER 8430.1.0). Other listed buildings include small clusters of cottages along Far Lane (HER 11636.1.0) and High Bank (HER 8423.1.0), Spring Bank Farmhouse (HER 8634.1.0) and a former tannery (Tan Yard Brow, HER 8635.1.0).

In total, there are 12 listed buildings within a 1km radius of the Site, and whilst development will not have a direct impact on these designated buildings, their setting will require consideration in development schemes. Indirect impacts on the settings of the listed buildings in the wider study area have not been subject to detailed assessment in this report, although given the character of the buildings that occupied the Site previously, and the distance from the Gore Brook Valley Conservation Area and listed buildings in the vicinity, it is unlikely that the proposed development will impart any harm to the setting of the designated heritage assets.

## 4. *Historical Background*

This section of the report is based on cartographic and documentary research, and provides a framework to the present study, working chronologically through the periods listed below. Each section details evidence of archaeological remains and the potential for their recovery. Key sites are summarized in the Gazetteer of Sites (Chapter 5).

Period		Date Range
Prehistoric	Palaeolithic	Pre-10000 BC
	Mesolithic	10000 – 3500 BC
	Neolithic	3500 – 2200 BC
	Bronze Age	2300 – 700 BC
	Iron Age	700 BC – AD 43
Romano-British		AD 43 – AD 410
Early Medieval		AD 410 – AD 1066
Late Medieval		AD 1066 – AD 1540
Post-medieval		AD 1540 – AD 1750
Industrial Period		AD 1750 – 1914
Modern		Post- 1914

*Table 1: Summary of British archaeological periods and date ranges*

### 4.1 *Prehistoric Period*

#### 4.1.1 *Archaeological Evidence*

The current understanding of any activity in the Manchester area during the prehistoric period is very poor, although it is reasonable to suggest that the Castlefield in the city centre may have been conducive for late prehistoric settlement on account of the natural topography and its riverside location. However, physical indications for any such settlement are, at best, fragmentary and arguably the best evidence was yielded from an archaeological excavation that was targeted on a plot of land adjacent to Liverpool Road in Castlefield. During the course of this work, two Mesolithic flints, one Neolithic/Bronze Age waste flake, and a single fragment of late Bronze Age/Iron Age pottery were recovered, although none were found in securely stratified deposits (UMAU 2002).

Closer to the Site, a stone axe (HER 1470.1.0) that has been dated to the Neolithic period was discovered in the Gore Brook during the development of Manchester-Sheffield-Lincoln Railway in 1892.

#### 4.1.2 *Archaeological Potential*

There are no known prehistoric remains or finds from within the Site or its immediate vicinity, and the potential for buried archaeological remains deriving from this period is considered to be low.

## 4.2 *Roman Period*

### 4.2.1 *Archaeological Evidence*

The first military occupation of Manchester was established during the governorship of Agricola (AD 77-84), and commenced with a five-acre wooden fort, known as *Mamucium* (Bruton 1909). The site of this encampment is marked today by Camp Street in Castlefield. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, the fort was developed in association with a substantial extramural settlement, or *vicus*, which expanded in both a northerly direction, and along the line of Chester Road to the south (Grealey 1974, 11). Roads from the fort linked Manchester with Ribchester to the north (following the modern course of Deansgate), Castleshaw, Slack and York to the north-east, Wigan to the north-west, Northwich and Chester to the south, and Buxton to the south-east.

The Site lies approximately 0.5km to the north of the modern Hyde Road (A57), which follows the alignment of the Roman road from Manchester to Buxton. This road is thought to have been in use from 79 AD to approximately 390 AD, although may well have persisted into the medieval period. However, there is no known evidence for any Romano-British activity associated with the road in the vicinity of the Site.

### 4.2.2 *Archaeological Potential*

Notwithstanding the proximity of the Roman road, the potential for Roman remains to survive in the Site is considered to be very low, reflecting the intensive development of the area since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## 4.3 *Medieval Period*

### 4.3.1 *Archaeological Evidence*

There is very little archaeological evidence in the region as a whole that represents the period between the end of the Roman occupation and the Norman Conquest. One of the few known features that has been attributed to this period in the area is the Nico Ditch, a 9.7km linear earthwork between Ashton-under-Lyne and Stretford that passes through Gorton. It is thought to have been constructed some time between the early 5<sup>th</sup> century and the Conquest in 1066, and may have been intended as a defensive fortification or as an administrative boundary, although excavations carried out by the University of Manchester Archaeological Unit between 1990 and 1997 concluded that the ditch was probably a boundary marker (Nevell 1998, 41).

The name Gorton may be derived from the Old English ‘gore’ meaning muddy, and ‘ton’ meaning farm or homestead, suggesting early medieval origins. However, physical evidence for human activity in the Manchester area during this period is scant, and there is no such evidence known around Gorton.

Following the Norman Conquest of 1066, William I assigned most of the land between the Ribble and Mersey rivers to Roger of Poitou, who retained the manor of Salford demesne, but divided his other newly-acquired land into several chiefdoms (Kidd 1996, 13). The largest of these was the landholding centred on Manchester, created by the grant of extensive lands in the hundreds of Salford, Leyland and West Derby to Albert Grelley (Tupling 1962, 116).

The earliest documentary reference to Gorton occurs in a list of townships, which in 1227-38 paid a tax known as the 30th, presumably because they paid 1/30 of the annual value of their produce. Gorton paid 14s and 8d (France 1989, 27). Gorton was also included in a survey of the manor in 1322, which references 15 houses and a flour mill, the latter powered by the Gore Brook. The population of Gorton during this period has been estimated to have been approximately 60 (France 1989, 1).

The Lords of Manchester leased Gorton to the Booth family in 1433. The land in the hamlet of Gorton was described as having 24 messuages, 500 acres of land, 40 acres of meadow and 500 acres of pasture. By 1473 John Byron held the vill of Gorton paying a rent of £30 11s to the Lord of Manchester (Farrer and Brownbill 1911, 275-9).

In 1612-13 tenants were given the right to purchase the land that they farmed, which freed Gorton from the Lords of Manchester. By 1641 the population of Gorton was approximately 320 (France 1989, 29). In 1666 there were a total of 46 hearths in Gorton contributing to tax; none of the houses had as many as six hearths liable, suggesting that Gorton remained an agricultural community during this period (Farrer and Brownbill 1911, 275-9; UMAU 2007).

#### *4.3.2 Archaeological Potential*

The potential for medieval remains to survive in the Site is considered to very low, reflecting the intensive development of the area since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### *4.4 Post-medieval and Industrial Periods*

#### *4.4.1 Archaeological Evidence*

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, south-east Lancashire as a whole was predominantly an agricultural area of isolated settlements and market towns, with the growing town of Manchester at its centre (Williams with Farnie 1992, 3). Throughout the century, new industries developed and agriculture played a minor role in Gorton's economy. By the 1780s, the national demand for textiles, particularly cotton, began to rise, resulting in a dramatic increase in mill building that transformed Manchester into a centre of the factory-based cotton manufacturing industry of international repute (Baines 1835). This was facilitated by the mechanisation of spinning through inventions such as the spinning jenny (1767), water-frame (1769) and mule (1779). The successful application of steam power to textile manufacturing in the 1780s allowed larger, steam-powered mills to be concentrated in urban mill towns (Miller and Glithero 2016).



Factory-based mills produced an abundance of good quality yarn, but weaving had not been successfully mechanised by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Significant improvements were made to textile machinery in the 1820s, which saw the development of the powerloom for weaving (Williams with Farnie 1992, 74). Subsequently, weaving came to be organised in factories, first by the addition of powerlooms to spinning mills and later by the construction of dedicated weaving sheds alongside spinning blocks. The first of these purpose-built integrated textile mills appear to have been developed during the 1820s.

This process of industrial development was facilitated greatly by the introduction of canals, which provided the first efficient means of transporting bulk loads of goods. The first true industrial canal in Britain was that built by the Duke of Bridgewater, which was completed from his mines at Worsley to Manchester in 1764, the terminus of which was at Castlefield (Hadfield and Biddle 1970). This economic climate was linked to a rapid growth in the town's population; in 1773, an estimated 22,481 people lived in Manchester, but this figure had more than tripled to 75,281 by 1801 (Lloyd-Jones and Lewis 1993).

The Manchester and Ashton-under-Lyne Canal is of particular relevance to the present study. This canal was proposed in 1791, and was intended to provide a link between Manchester and the collieries in the Ashton and Oldham area. The canal was authorised by an Act of Parliament in 1792, and construction commenced immediately under the direction of Edward Banks. The canal had been completed between Manchester and Ashton by early 1797, although the terminus basin at Piccadilly had yet to be constructed. It seems that James Meadows, the canal company agent, had been overseeing the construction of the canal up to that point but, in June 1798, Benjamin Outram was appointed by the canal company as engineer (Keaveny and Brown 1974, 14). In August 1798, the company appointed F Bellhouse to erect a warehouse at Ducie Street, and Outram was instructed to arrange for one or more cranes to be erected on the public wharves at the canal terminal. In the same year, Samuel Oldknow, chairman of the Peak Forest Canal Company, entered negotiations with the Ashton Canal Company with a view to purchasing land at the canal terminus. This was coupled with the intention of linking the Peak Forest Canal with the Ashton Canal in Ashton, thereby providing a direct link to Manchester from the limestone quarries in Derbyshire. The Ashton Canal was finally completed in 1799, and several warehouses were established at the terminus in Piccadilly Basin (Hadfield and Biddle 1970).

#### *4.4.2 Archaeological Potential*

The study area appears to have gone through much of its development during this period, as a result of the industrialisation of Manchester, stimulated by the boom of the textile industry, and an associated exponential growth of population. As a result, any buried archaeological remains on the Site are likely to date from this period.

#### 4.5 Development of the Site

The development of the Site can be traced reasonably well from the sequence of available historic mapping, the earliest of which is that produced by William Yates in 1786 (Plate 2). This map shows that Abbey Hey Lane was an established thoroughfare and depicts a number of structures on or in the immediate vicinity of the Site (Plate 2). Yates' map also shows that the area was still sparsely populated during this period, as several fields are depicted between the blocks of buildings, reinforcing the rural character of the site's location.



*Plate 2: Extract from Yates' map of 1786, showing the approximate position of the Site*

The next available survey of the area is Hennet's map produced in 1830, which shows a large, L-shaped structure to have been erected on the Site (Plate 3). This almost certainly represents the earliest elements of Gorton Mill. Hennet's map also shows that the Stockport Branch of the Manchester to Ashton-under-Lyne Canal had been constructed, which ran adjacent to the western boundary of the Site. The Stockport Branch was opened in 1796 and was a distance of 4 miles (France 1989, 3). The canal connected Gorton and other villages to Manchester, and greatly facilitated the transportation of goods. Large industries were strategically established along the canal route.

By 1933, the Stockport Branch canal was no longer used by commercial traffic. The canal was officially abandoned by the British Transport Commission in 1962, and subsequently filled in (Plate 4). The canal route has been resurfaced and is currently a public footpath, which retains some of its original features (Plate 5).



*Plate 3: Extract from Hennet's map of 1830, showing the approximate position of the Site*



*Plate 4: The disused Stockport Branch of the Manchester and Ashton-under-Lyne Canal, prior to infilling*



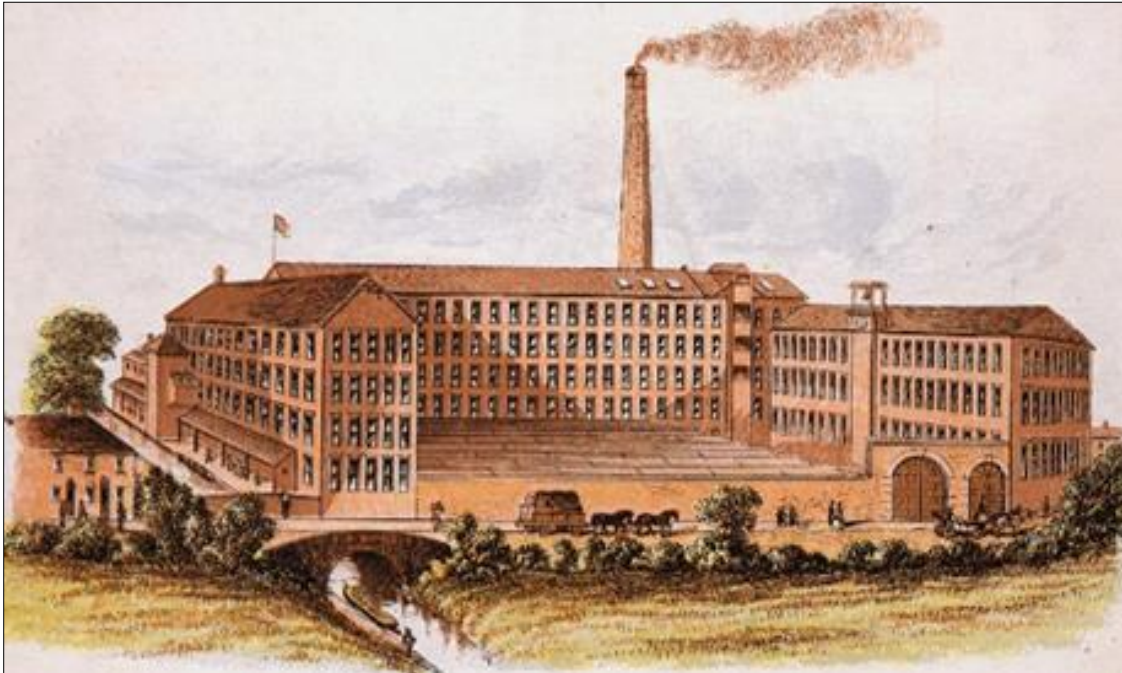


*Plate 5: Stockport Branch Canal, resurfaced as a public footpath*

Gorton Mill (Site 1) was designed by the architect James Lillie and was constructed across the Site in 1824. It lay adjacent to the canal, which provided a source of water required by the steam-power plant (Plate 6). It was of fireproof construction, and was intended as a steam-powered integrated spinning and weaving mill, designed to house 26,264 spindles and 886 power looms. The mill went into production in August 1825 (France 1989, 41), although additional spinning blocks were added to the complex through the 1820s and early 1830s. According to an insurance plan produced in 1895, the earliest component comprised a five-storey block that was aligned broadly east/west across the centre of the Site, at a right-angle to the canal, with a beam engine placed transversely across the western end. Another four bays had been added to the eastern end of the spinning block by c 1826, creating what became known as Little Mill. Another spinning block, four-storeys high and 20 bays long and aligned broadly north/south and abutting the south-facing elevation of Little Mill, had been added to the complex by 1830. Overlooking Abbey Hey Lane, and enclosing the eastern side of the weaving shed, this spinning block became known as Abbey Hey Mill. Another new spinning block, which was similarly 20-bays long but only three-storeys high, was added in 1833. Known as Canal Side Mill, this enclosed the western side of the weaving shed.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1843 shows the footprint of the mill buildings occupying the area of the Site in the mid-1840s (Plate 7; Fig 2). By that date, the mill complex contained approximately seven buildings including an octagonal chimney, 56 yards high, which was erected in 1838 (*The Ashton Weekly Reporter, and Stalybridge and Dukinfield Chronicle*, 1871).





*Plate 6: An engraving of Gorton Mills on Abbey Hey Lane, produced in the 1840s*



*Plate 7: Ordnance Survey map of 1843, showing the approximate position of the Site boundary*

By 1832, the mill employed 711 people which included 190 girls under 18, 220 females over 18, 137 males under 18 and 156 males over 18 (*ibid*). The Factory Act of 1833 laid down that all children between nine and 13 employed in textile factories were to receive two hours of schooling each day. To implement this provision a school was opened in Gorton Mills in 1837.

Newspaper articles record that Gorton Mill stopped operating in 1840 and nearly caused ‘desertion of the village due to unemployment’ (*The Ashton Weekly Reporter, and Stalybridge and Dukinfield Chronicle*, 1871). The mill reopened in June 1844 under the tenancy of John Rylands & Sons, who had secured the leasehold of the site in 1843 (Farnie 1993, 12). John Rylands & Sons became one of the most influential firms of textile manufactures in the region, with factories in Gorton, Wigan (Gidlow Mill), Swinton (Dacca Mills) and Manchester (Longford Mill), and a large finishing works in Heapey, near Chorley. Gorton Mills were the firm’s first independent leasehold, and played an important role in the success of their business empire. A newspaper article records John Rylands of Gorton Mills advertising three wagon-shaped boilers of 30 horse power each and four wagon-shaped boilers of 25 horse power each in 1843 (*Bolton Chronicle*, 8<sup>th</sup> July 1843), suggesting that one of Ryland’s first decisions upon taking over the mills was to renew the steam-power plant.

At a meeting of factory operatives votes of thanks were passed to John Rylands & Sons for not running their engines more than ten hours per day following the 1848 Ten Hours Act, which limited the working day of women and young persons to ten hours.

In 1864 John Rylands bought the mill from John Chapman. During 1865 John Rylands enlarged the mill, installed new machinery and endeavoured to make the buildings fireproof (France 1989, 41). A private telegraph connected the mill with the firms’ offices in High Street (*Manchester City News*, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1865).

In 1877, the mill was damaged by a fire. According to a report published in a local newspaper, ‘the fire occurred in the Abbey Hey Mill, which is five storeys high. The ground floor and second floor are occupied respectively as weaving and carding rooms. In the next floor are 10,080 throstles and two roving frames containing 80 spindles each, and there is a smaller room adjoining which is used as a carding room. Above this are two rooms, the larger one containing 8,320 mule spindles, and the smaller 2,400 spindles. Upwards of 1,300 persons were employed upon the premises at the time...’ (*Manchester Guardian*, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1877).

The next available map of the study area is the Ordnance Survey map of 1893 (Fig 4), which indicates that the Gorton Mills complex had been expanded further during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The detail provided by this map supports other historical documents, the most informative of which is a plan produced by the Phoenix Fire Office in 1895 (Plate 8). This shows seven multi-storey blocks, a large weaving shed, two boiler houses (containing a combined total of nine boilers) and four separate engine houses, ancillary buildings, and a detached chimney set on a plinth on the mill yard.

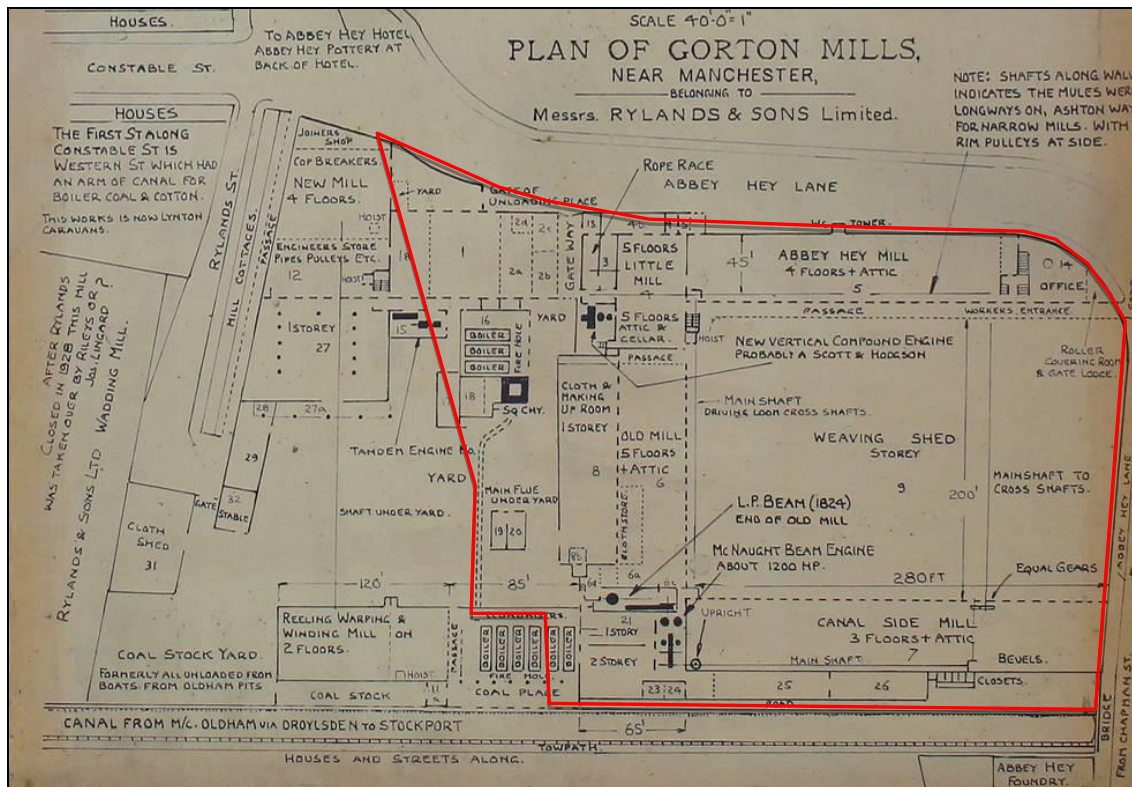


Plate 8: Site boundary superimposed approximately onto a copy of an insurance plan of Gorton Mills produced originally in 1895

The next edition of Ordnance Survey mapping, published in 1908 (Fig 5), shows Gorton Mill with broadly the same footprint, although a few ancillary buildings appear to have been added to the northern side of the mill complex. This layout is replicated on the Ordnance Survey map of 1922 (Fig 6), which shows the footprint of the mill complex as unaltered. However, this period saw a depression in the textile trades, and many local mills were forced to close. This was exacerbated by the miners' strike of 1926, which led to the temporary closure of Gorton Mills for seven months (France 1989, 14).

It has not been established precisely when Gorton Mills closed entirely, although it had been demolished by 1935; the next edition of Ordnance Survey mapping, published in 1951 (Fig 7), shows that the Site had been cleared of all buildings.

During the 1960s, six blocks of residential apartments of varying sizes were constructed on the former mill site, although these were demolished sometime after 1997 (Plate 9); a Google satellite image from 1997 shows the location of the flats (Plate 10). It is likely that the foundations for the demolished Gorton Mills with the footprint of the new flats may have been disturbed during their construction.





*Plate 9: View of the apartment blocks along Abbey Hey Lane taken in 1964*



*Plate 10: Ordnance Survey map of 1997, showing the approximate position of the Site boundary*



## 4.6 Previous Archaeological Work

No intrusive archaeological investigation has been undertaken in the immediate vicinity of the Site, although a geotechnical ground investigation was undertaken in support of the current development proposal in 2017 (GeoAssist Ltd 2017). This comprised the excavation of a series of trial pits, which revealed that the subsoil profile of the Site comprises grass/topsoil to depths between 0.10m to 0.30m over made ground that is very variable in nature and extends to depths ranging from 1.70m to greater than 5.0m. The investigation concluded that the made ground derived from structures that had occupied the Site previously, with indications that there are areas where substantial structures survive intact as buried remains across the site.

## 4.7 Site Visit

A site visit was carried out in May 2018 to relate the findings from the archaeological research to the modern landscape, and thereby inform a discussion of the potential for archaeological remains to survive *in-situ*. The desk-based study concluded that one of the identified sites of archaeological interest had potential to retain some physical remains, namely Gorton Mills (Site 1).

Site 1 lies within the entire area of the Site boundary, and comprises an area currently occupied by landscaped grassland and car parking (Plate 11). The hard surfacing appears to have been raised very slightly above the surrounding street level, offering some potential for buried foundations to survive *in-situ*. Several large trees occupy areas in the north-east and north-west corners of the Site (Plates 12 and 13). It is possible that tree roots may have caused some damage to buried archaeological remains. The ground surrounding the trees in the north-west corner is slightly undulating, which is likely to have been formed by root action (Plate 14).



Plate 11: Entrance to the Site from Abbey Hey Lane, facing north



*Plate 12: Trees situated in the north-east corner of the Site, facing north-east*



*Plate 13: Trees situated in the north-west corner of the Site, facing south-west*





*Plate 14: Trees situated along the north-west edge of the Site. The ground beneath the trees slightly undulates*

## 5. Gazetteer of Sites

---

The following gazetteer provides a list of the non-designated heritage assets identified within the boundary of the Site. This has been compiled from Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER) data, coupled with a study of the historical map sequence. A list of heritage assets within the Site boundary listed on the Historic Environment Record is included as *Appendix 2*.

<b>Site Number:</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Site Name:</b>	Gorton Mill
<b>NGR:</b>	389140 396500
<b>Designation:</b>	Conservation Area
<b>Site Type:</b>	Buildings (Site of)
<b>Period:</b>	Industrial/ 19 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>Description:</b>	‘H’-shaped block of buildings fronting Abbey Hey Lane, as shown on 19 <sup>th</sup> -century mapping. Known buildings comprise spinning blocks, warehouses, weaving sheds, engine house, office block, external staircases, octagonal chimney and school. Gorton Mill is shown on available Ordnance Survey maps from 1840-1922 as operating as a cotton mill. However, the mill was constructed in 1824 and is an early example of an integrated spinning and weaving mill. All the original buildings were demolished during the 20 <sup>th</sup> century.
<b>Assessment:</b>	The majority of the mill complex lies within the Site boundary. Redevelopment of the site during the 1960s only partially covered the Site. Therefore, the foundations may survive <i>in-situ</i> as buried remains, although this awaits confirmation.

---

<b>Site Number:</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Site Name:</b>	Stockport Branch (Manchester to Ashton-under-Lyne Canal)
<b>NGR:</b>	389090 396488
<b>Designation:</b>	Conservation Area
<b>Site Type:</b>	Canal (Site of)
<b>Period:</b>	Industrial / 18 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>Description:</b>	Stockport Branch of the Manchester to Ashton-under-Lyne Canal as shown on 19 <sup>th</sup> -century mapping. The canal opened in 1797 and ran adjacent to the site boundary. The canal was in decline by 1922, but was not officially abandoned until 1962 when it was filled in. Many of the canal’s structures survive.
<b>Assessment:</b>	The canal has been filled in and resurfaced as a footpath, and lies immediately beyond the Site boundary.



## 6. Significance of the Remains

### 6.1 *The Policy Context of Heritage Assets*

The archaeological resource of an area can encompass a range of assets, including below-ground remains, earthworks, and standing buildings. Some of these remains may have statutory protection, such as Scheduled Monuments or Listed Buildings. Others do not but may nevertheless be of archaeological significance. Under both national and local planning policy, as outlined below, both statutory and non-statutory remains are to be considered within the planning process.

The NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012) sets out the Secretary of State's policy on planning and includes a section on the conservation of the historic environment (including historic, archaeological, architectural and artistic heritage assets, NPPF paras 126-141), and its wider economic, environmental and social benefits. The NPPF emphasises the significance of an individual heritage asset within the historic environment and the value that it holds for this and future generations in order to minimise or avoid conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the planning proposals. The NPPF draws a distinction between designated heritage assets of national importance and heritage assets that are not designated but which are of heritage interest and are thus of a material planning consideration (paras 134 and 135). In the case of the former, the presumption should be in favour of conservation; in the case of the latter, where this is warranted by its significance, the developer is required to record and understand the significance of the heritage asset before it is lost, in a way that is proportionate to the nature and level of the asset's significance, by the use of survey, photography, excavation or other methods.

The NPPF states that non-designated assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments should be considered in the same manner as designated sites (NPPF para 139). Regarding this policy a lack of formal designation does not itself indicate a lower level of significance; in this instance the lack of designation reflects that the site was previously unknown and therefore never considered for formal designation. Wherever possible, development should be located and designed so as to avoid damage to archaeological remains, ensuring that they are preserved *in-situ*. Where this is not possible, or appropriate, the developer will be required to make suitable provision to ensure that the archaeological information is not lost, and in many cases to secure the preservation of the remains.

The Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) act as archaeological curator for the Greater Manchester region, and provides archaeological advice to Manchester City Council.

## 6.2 *Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria*

One accepted methodology for assessing archaeological significance is the Secretary of State's criteria for the scheduling of ancient monuments, outlined in Annex 1 of *Scheduled Monuments: identifying, protecting, conserving and investigating nationally important archaeological sites under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979* (DCMS March 2010). These criteria have all been utilised in this assessment and are listed below:

- Period
- Rarity
- Documentation
- Group Value
- Survival/Condition
- Fragility/Vulnerability
- Diversity
- Potential

## 6.3 *Baseline Significance Conditions for the land within the Site*

### *Period*

There is no firm evidence for any occupation of the Site until Gorton Mill was built in 1824, although Yates' map of 1786 does show some buildings in the area, which may have extended into the Site. However, any such post-medieval remains are likely to have been destroyed by the construction of the large mill complex that occupied the site from 1824. It is therefore likely that any surviving remains will date to 1824 onwards. The potential for any remains predating this period is considered to be very low given the intensive development of the site since 1824. However, previous excavations in Greater Manchester have yielded evidence for some medieval activity, and the potential for medieval and post-medieval ground surfaces to survive, probably as agricultural soils, cannot be discounted in isolated parts of the Site.

### *Rarity*

Gorton Mill (Sites 1) has been identified as an early example of an integrated spinning and weaving mill and may be of regional importance as very few have been investigated archaeologically in the vicinity of Gorton. In this respect, any surviving physical remains of the former mill buildings, particularly the early steam power plant (engine and boiler houses), will have a significant rarity value.

### *Documentation*

The general development of the Site can be traced reasonably well through cartographic sources from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Further detail, including information about the layout and character of the steam-power plant within the Site, may be gained from further documentary research, but this is unlikely to modify the outcome of this assessment.

### *Group Value*

The site of potential archaeological interest within the Site that has been identified from the historic mapping sequence to represent an example of an early integrated spinning and weaving mill built during the period of Manchester's intensive development from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Any buried remains that survive across the Site are likely to represent various elements of this large former mill complex and, as such, will have a group value.

### *Survival / Condition*

The extent to which any remains survive and their condition is presently unknown, although map regression analysis suggests that the foundations of some of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century mill buildings (Site 1) within the Site may survive *in-situ*. The construction of residential apartments across the southern part of the Site in the 1960s is likely to have removed any foundations of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century textile mill, although there is potential for the foundations of large elements of the mill complex, including engine and boiler houses, to survive undisturbed across the northern part of the Site.

### *Diversity*

The archaeological interest identified in this assessment relates mainly to Gorton Mills and it being an example of an early integrated spinning and weaving mill. The potential archaeological resource of the Site is not considered to be significant due to diversity.

### *Potential*

There are no known prehistoric sites within the Site, and the potential for remains derived from this period is considered to be low. The potential for Roman remains to survive *in-situ* within the Site is similarly considered to be very low, given that there is little evidence of Roman occupation in the immediate vicinity of Gorton. There are no known remains from the post-Roman period through to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and whilst the potential for significant remains of medieval and post-medieval date is considered to be low, there is some possibility for isolated and fragmentary survival of medieval / post-medieval ground surfaces to survive in parts of the Site.

The greatest potential for buried archaeological remains lies in the industrial period, and specifically Gorton Mill dating to 1824.

## 6.4 Significance

Based on the information gained from the desk-based research, it can be concluded that the Site as a whole is of archaeological interest, as there is evidence that the buildings that once occupied the site formed Gorton Mills (Site 1), an early example of an integrated spinning and weaving mill, with some potential for earlier activity that is likely to have been of an agricultural nature.

Physical remains of early industrial sites have been recognised as a legitimate avenue of research. This was articulated in the current Archaeological Research Framework for North West England (Newman and McNeil 2007; McNeil and Newman 2007), which identified several initiatives that should be prioritised for archaeological research of the industrial and modern periods, including:

*‘Initiative 7.1:* Routeway or route corridor studies looking at the technological and social archaeology of roads and canals especially, urgently needed to investigate their impact as engines of change for both the landscape and culture;

*Initiative 7.21:* An overview of the impact on the historic landscape of the new towns of the Industrial Revolution and the new monument types developed within them;

*Initiative 7.44:* Build upon the archaeological investigation of warehousing undertaken thus far in the region to examine warehousing in all towns and establish regional distribution patterns and typologies’ (McNeil and Newman 2007, 139-156).

Since the publication of the Research Framework, a considerable body of significant data has been generated from the archaeological investigation of former textile mills, enabling a variety of plan forms and construction details to be identified. Excavations at Oak Mill on Spencer Street in Chadderton, for instance, have recorded the foundations of an 19<sup>th</sup>-century mill site and its associated engine and boiler house. Very few early integrated spinning and weaving mills have been subject to archaeological investigation, however, and the buried remains Gorton Mills, pending their survival, have some potential to contribute to an enhanced understanding of this monument type. Furthermore, very few sites have been excavated within the Sites local area, which may be of interest to the local communities.

Using the above criteria, and particularly rarity and survival/condition, the Site may to contain non-statutory remains of at least High Local, and potentially Regional Significance, pending the extent to which the buried physical remains survive *in-situ*.



## 7. Impact of Development

---

### 7.1 Impact of Development on Below-Ground Remains

Delivery of the development proposals will necessitate ground-breaking and landscaping works across the Site, with potential to impact on buried archaeological remains. None of the sites of archaeological interest identified within the Site are afforded statutory designation, and are thus not considered to necessarily merit preservation *in-situ*. However, former Gorton Mill (Site 1) is a non-designated heritage asset that has been determined to be of high local, and potentially regional significance, pending the extent to which buried remains survive *in-situ*.

Should well-preserved archaeological remains survive *in-situ*, then they may merit preservation by record, where they will be directly affected by development. This is in line with the guidance provided by the NPPF, which advises that ‘where the loss of the whole or a material part of a heritage asset’s significance is justified by a development, the developer should be required to record that asset and advance understanding of its significance, and to make this evidence publicly accessible’ (NPPF para 141).

## 8. *Further Investigation*

---

### 8.1 *Further Investigation*

The construction of extra care housing apartments has some potential to impart localised damage to buried archaeological remains. Where appropriate because of their significance, mitigation will need to be undertaken through an archaeological record (NPPF 2012, paras 141)

The requirement for any further archaeological investigation of the site will be decided in consultation the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service, in their capacity as archaeological advisor to Manchester City Council, although it may be anticipated that a programme of intrusive investigation will be merited in advance of development. This would be required in the first instance to establish whether any buried remains of archaeological interest survive *in-situ*, and could usefully comprise a series of evaluation trenches targeted on the footprint of the mill's former steam-power plant, including engine and boiler houses and associated flue system and chimney. Should significant archaeological remains be encountered during the initial evaluation trenching, further excavation may be required to offset the harm of development to the sub-surface archaeological resource, in line with the guidance provided by the National Planning Policy Framework.

# Sources

---

## Primary Sources

### Maps

Yates, W, 1786 *Map of Lancashire*

Hennet, G, 1830 *Map of Lancashire*

Ordnance Survey, 1:1056, Published 1843

Ordnance Survey 1:2500, Published 1893

Ordnance Survey 1:2500, Published 1908

Ordnance Survey 1:2500, Published 1922

Ordnance Survey 1:1250, Published 1951

### Newspapers

*The Bolton Chronicle*, 8 July 1843, *Second Hand Boiler*, Vol XIX. No 935

*Manchester City News*, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1865

*The Ashton Weekly Reporter, and Stalybridge, and Dukinfield Chronicle*, 21 January 1871

*Manchester Guardian*, 2 February 1877

## Secondary Sources

Anon 1903 'Catalogue of the Old Manchester and Salford Exhibition, held at the City Art Gallery, Manchester, 1904' in *Transactions of the Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, **21**

Baines, E, 1835 *History of Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain*, London

Brennand, M (ed) 2007, *Research and Archaeology in North West England, An Archaeological Research Framework for North West England: Volume 2 Research Agenda and Strategy*, Manchester

Brunton, FA, 1909 *The Roman Fort at Manchester*, Manchester

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. 1994, revised 2017 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*, Reading

Conway, RS, MacInnes J, and Brooke, GC, 1909 'The Roman Coins of Manchester' in FA Bruton (ed) *The Roman Fort at Manchester*, Manchester

Corbett J, 1907 *The River Irwell* (reprinted 1974), Didsbury

Department for Communities & Local Government, March 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, London

- Farrer, W, and Brownbill, J, 1911 *A History of the County of Lancaster: Volume (Gorton 275-279)*. Victoria County History, London
- Farnie, DA, 1993 *John Rylands of Manchester*, Manchester
- France, E, 1989 *A History of Gorton and Openshaw*, Manchester
- GeoAssist Ltd, 2017 *Development at Belamy Court, Abbey Hey Lane, Gorton: Ground Investigation – Geotechnical*, unpubl rep
- Grealey, S (ed), 1974 *Roman Manchester*, Altrincham
- Hadfield, C, and Biddle, G, 1970 *The Canals of North West England*, **1**, Newton Abbot
- Hartwell, C, Hyde, M, and Pevsner, N, 2004 *The Buildings of England. Lancashire: Manchester and the South-East*, London
- McNeil, R and Newman, C, 2007, *The Post-Medieval Research Agenda*, 115-133, In Brennand, M (ed) 2007, *Research and Archaeology in North West England, An Archaeological Research Framework for North West England: Volume 2 Research Agenda and Strategy*, Manchester
- McNeil, R and Newman, C, 2007, *The Industrial and Modern Period Research Agenda*, 133-159, In Brennand, M (ed) 2007, *Research and Archaeology in North West England, An Archaeological Research Framework for North West England: Volume 2 Research Agenda and Strategy*, Manchester
- Nevell, M, 1998 *Lands and Lordships in Tameside*, Manchester
- Tupling, GH, 1962 *Medieval and Early Modern Manchester*, in CF Carter (ed) *Manchester and its Region: A Survey Prepared for The British Association*, Manchester 115-130
- UMAUI, 2001 *Spinningfields, Hardman Street Site, Manchester, Archaeological Desk-based Assessment*, unpubl rep
- UMAUI, 2002 *Liverpool Road, Manchester: Archaeological Excavation*, unpubl rep
- UMAUI, 2007 *Plot 106, Spinningfields, Manchester. An Archaeological Excavation*, unpubl rep
- Williams, M, with Farnie, DA, 1992 *Cotton Mills of Greater Manchester*, Preston.

## Web Sources

Geology of Britain Viewer [4](#)

Grid Reference Finder <https://www.gridreferencefinder.com/> Accessed 25.11.2016



## *Acknowledgments*

---

Salford Archaeology would like to thank Southway Housing Trust, and particularly David Holland, for commissioning and supporting the archaeological desk-based assessment. Thanks are also due to John Roberts and Norman Redhead with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) for their support and advice. Thanks are also expressed to Lesley Dunkley, also of GMAAS, for supplying background data from the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER).

The report was compiled by Katie Harvey, and the illustrations were prepared by Richard Ker. The report was edited by Ian Miller, who was also responsible for project management.

## Appendix 1: Figures

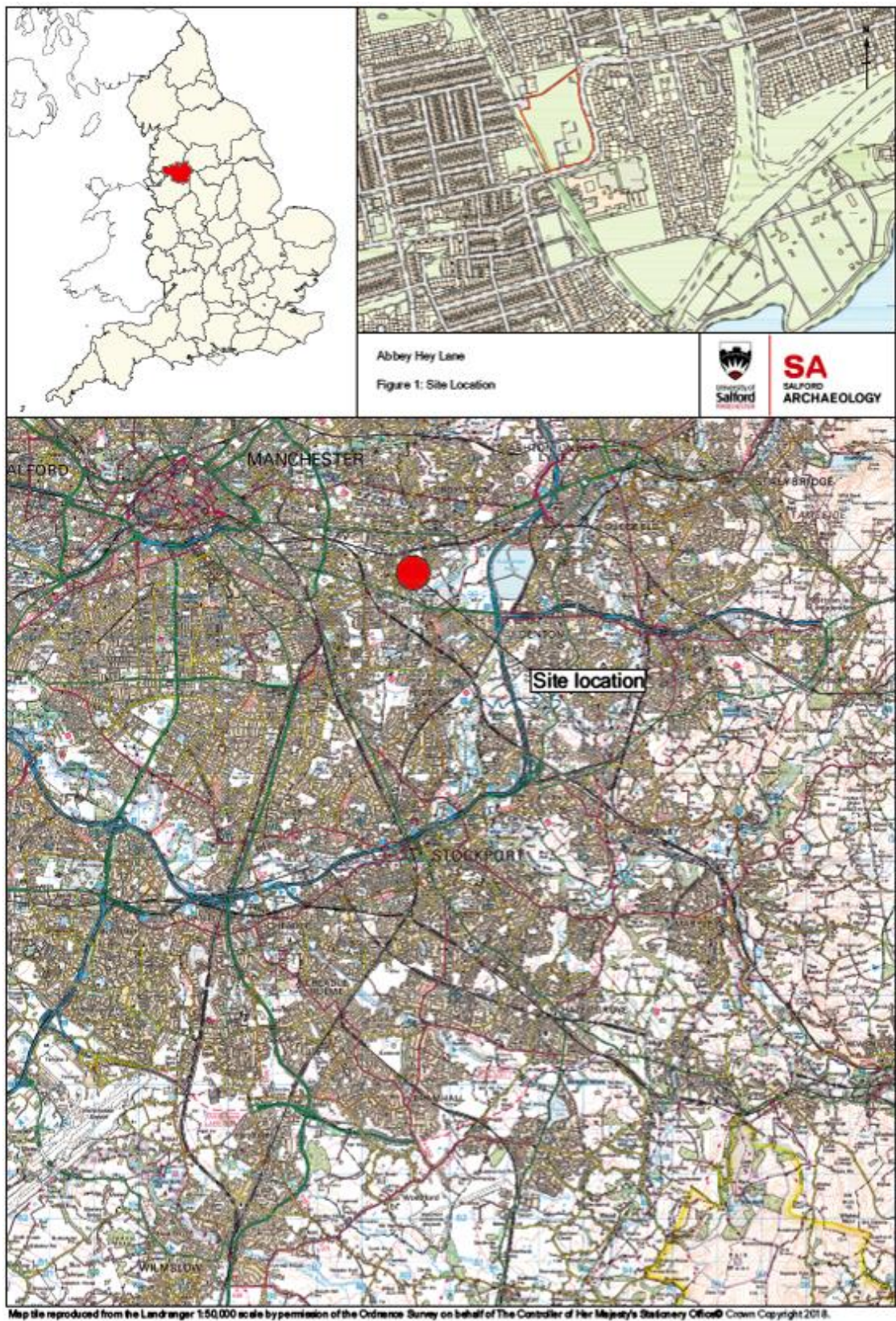


Figure 1: Site Location



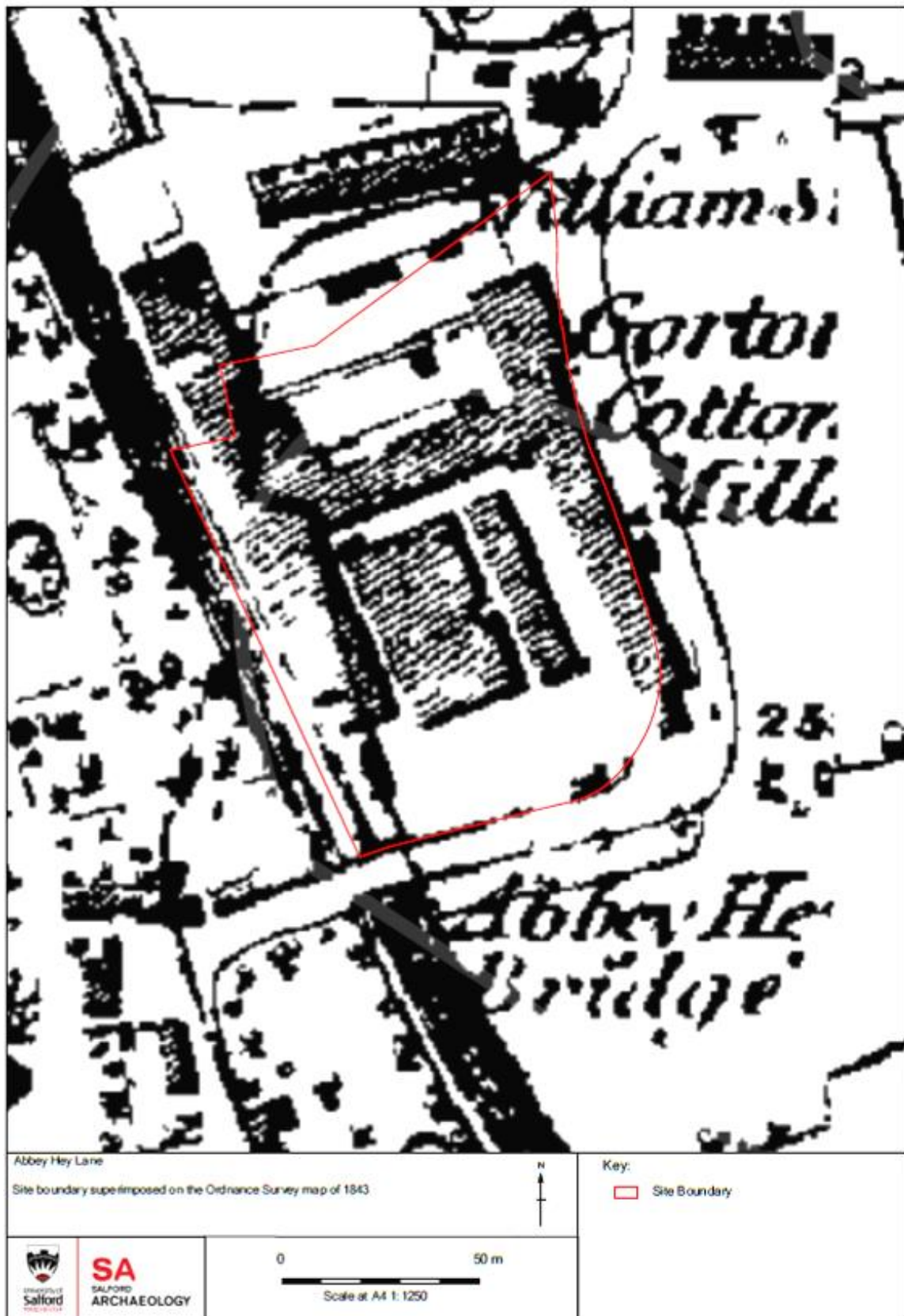


Figure 2: The Site boundary superimposed on the Ordnance Survey map of 1843



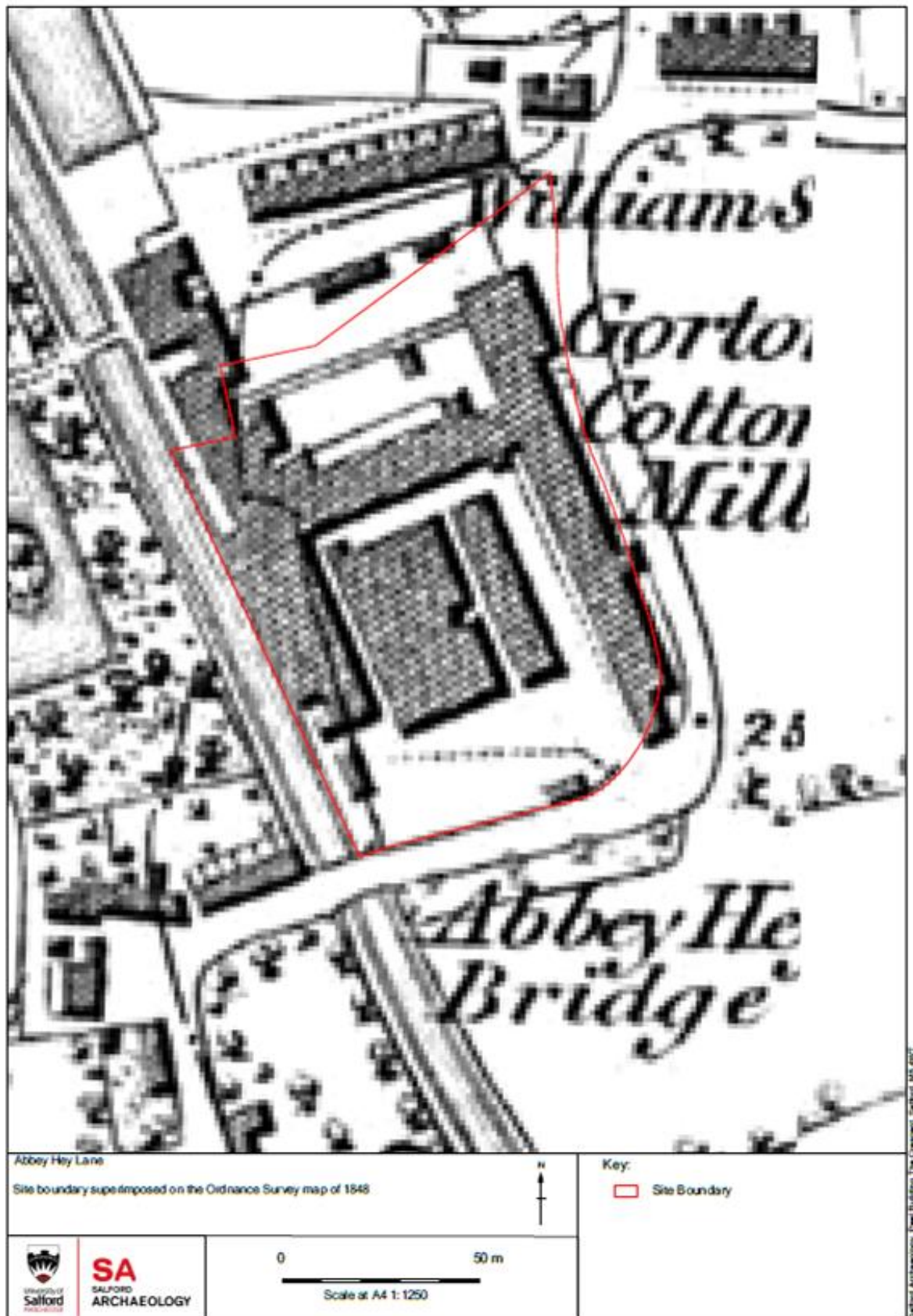


Figure 3: The Site boundary superimposed on the Ordnance Survey map of 1848

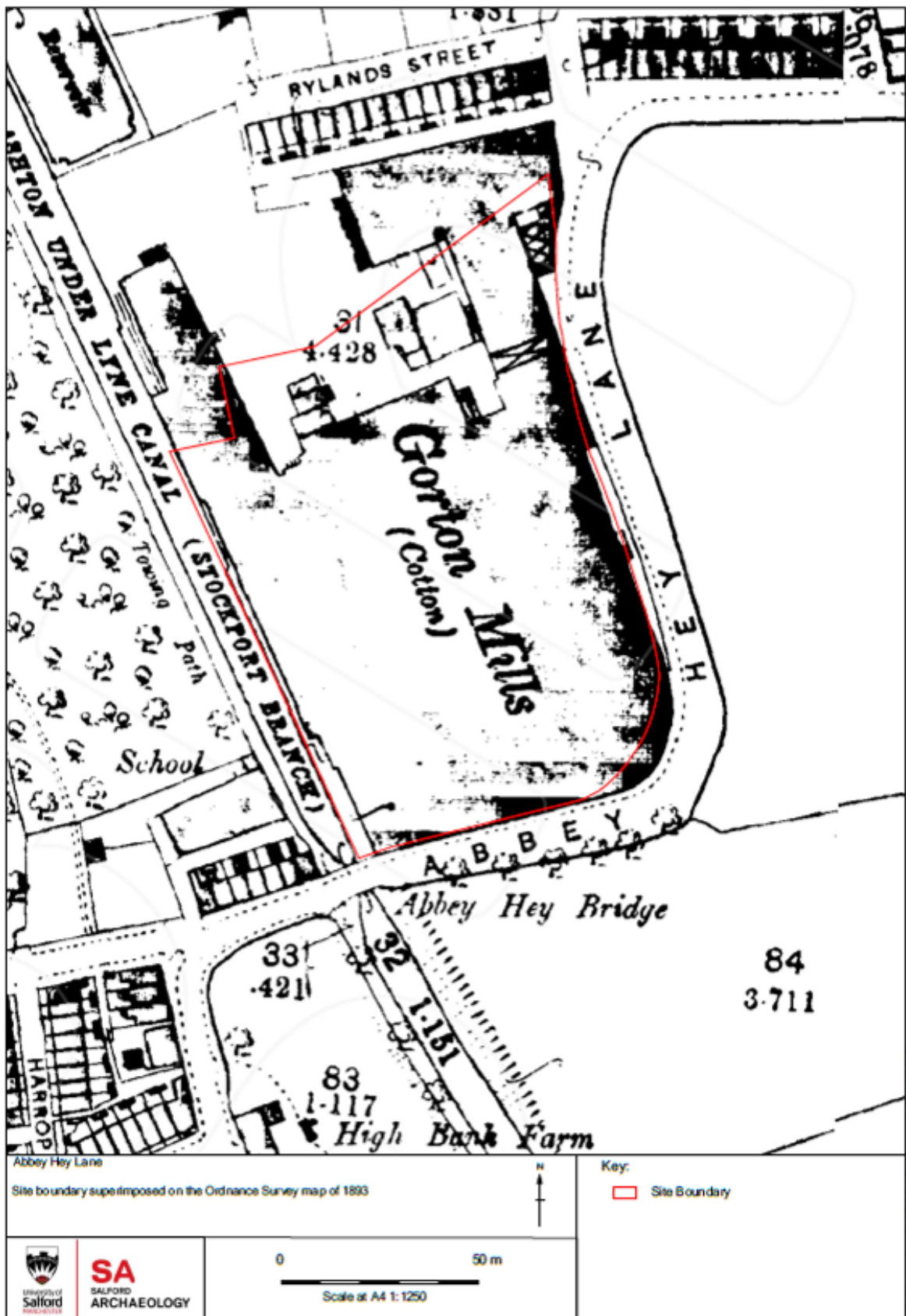


Figure 4: The Site boundary superimposed on the Ordnance Survey map of 1893



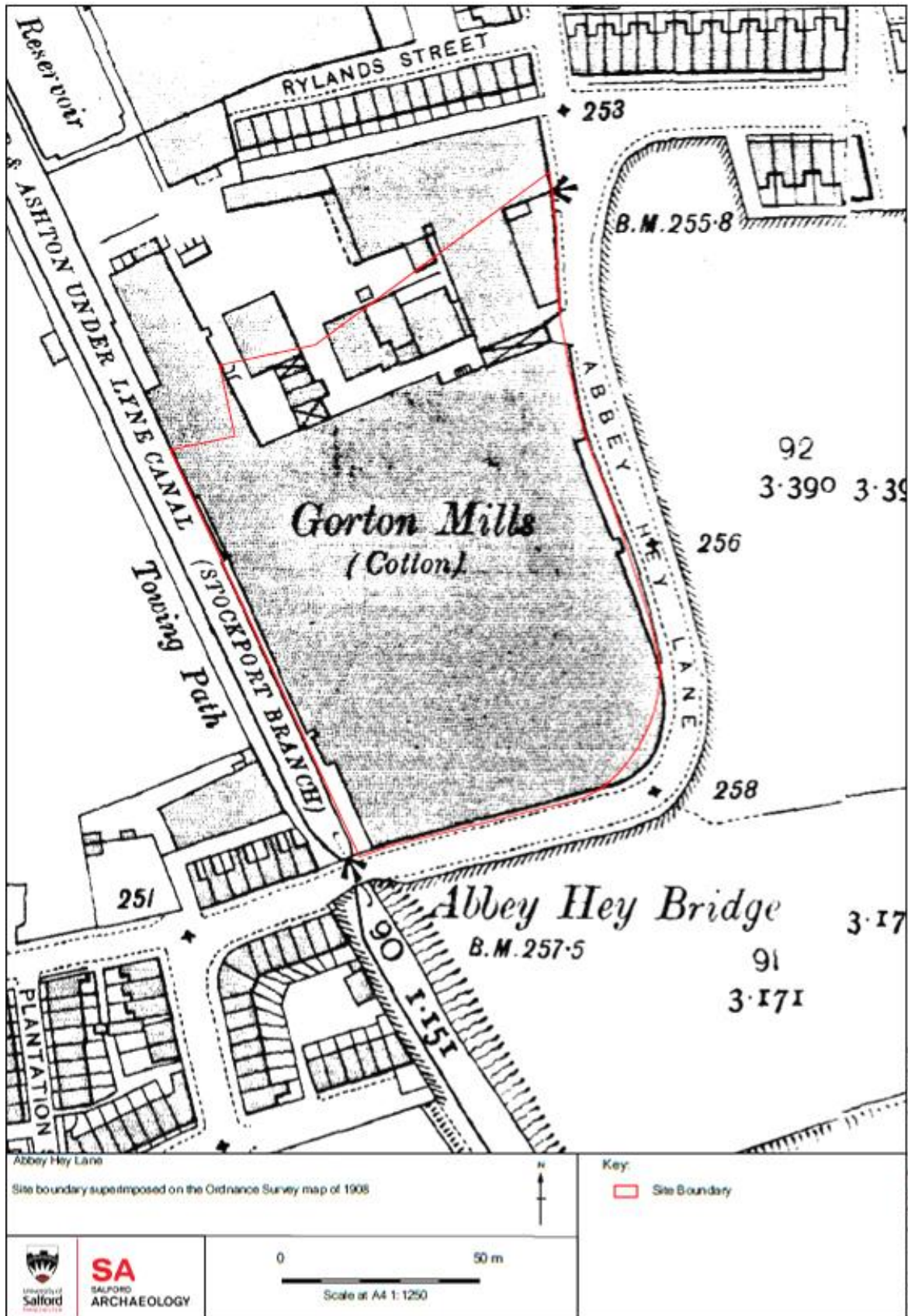


Figure 5: The Site boundary superimposed on the Ordnance Survey map of 1908



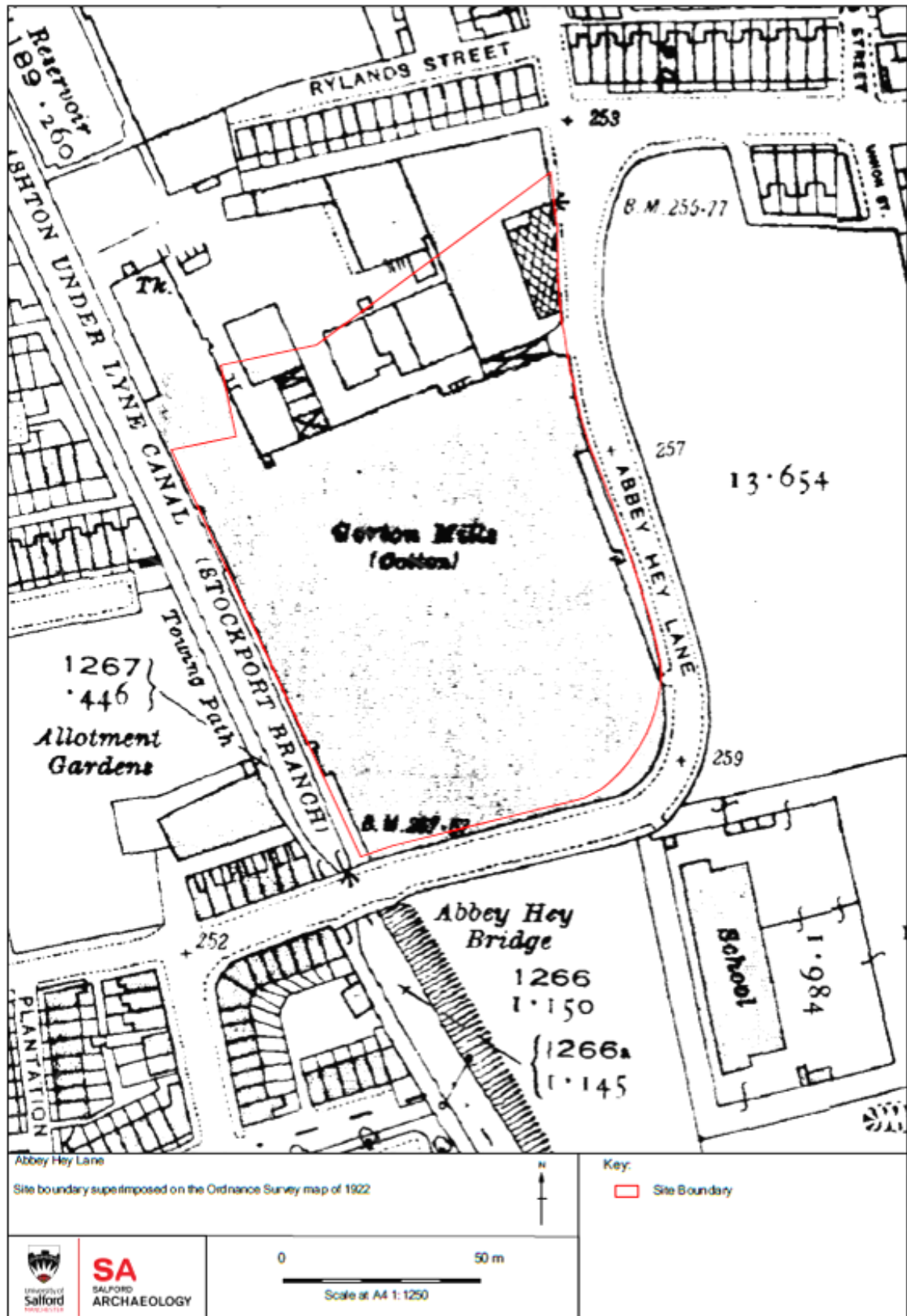


Figure 6: The Site boundary superimposed on the Ordnance Survey map of 1922

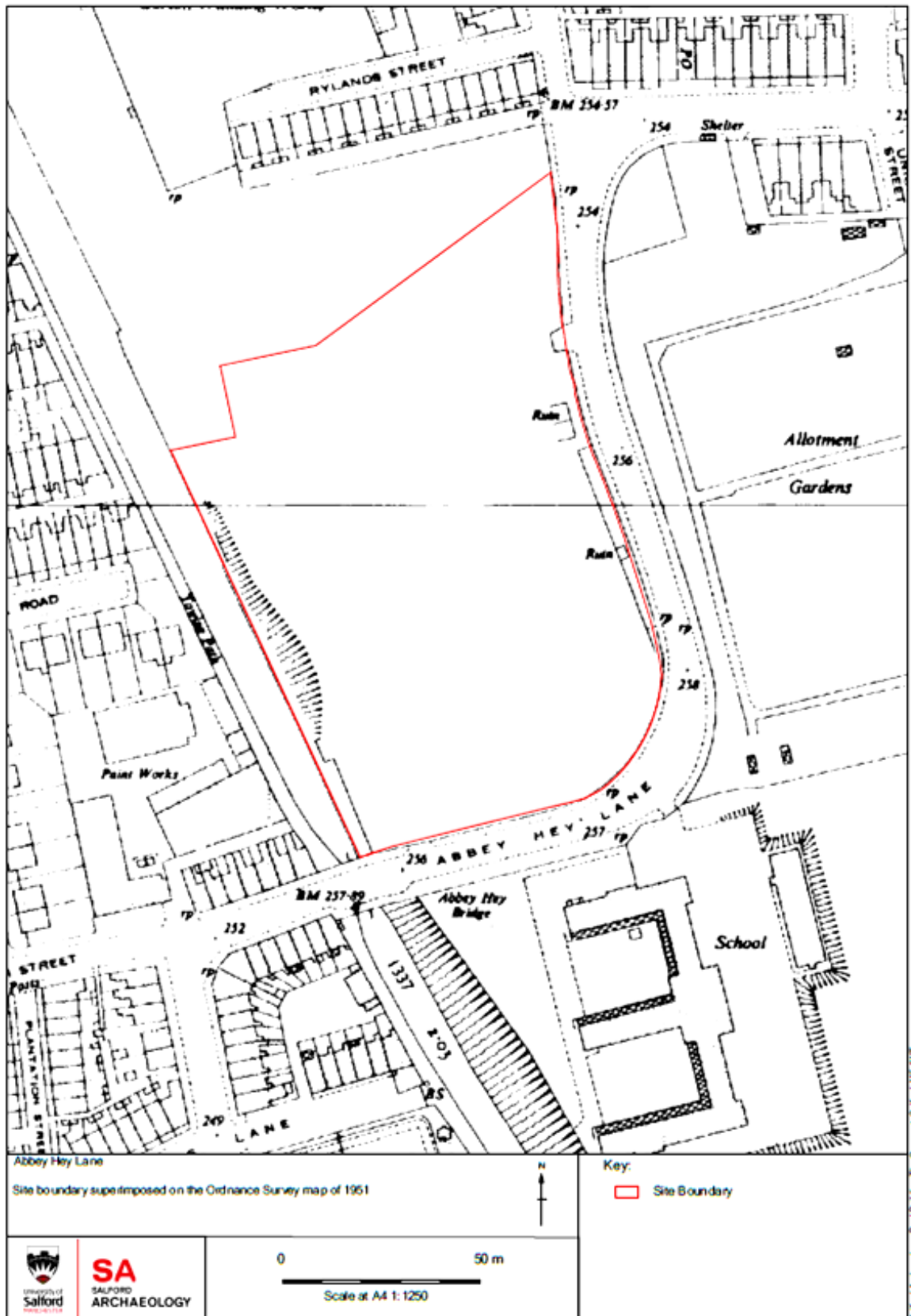






Figure 8: The Site boundary superimposed on an aerial view of c 1997

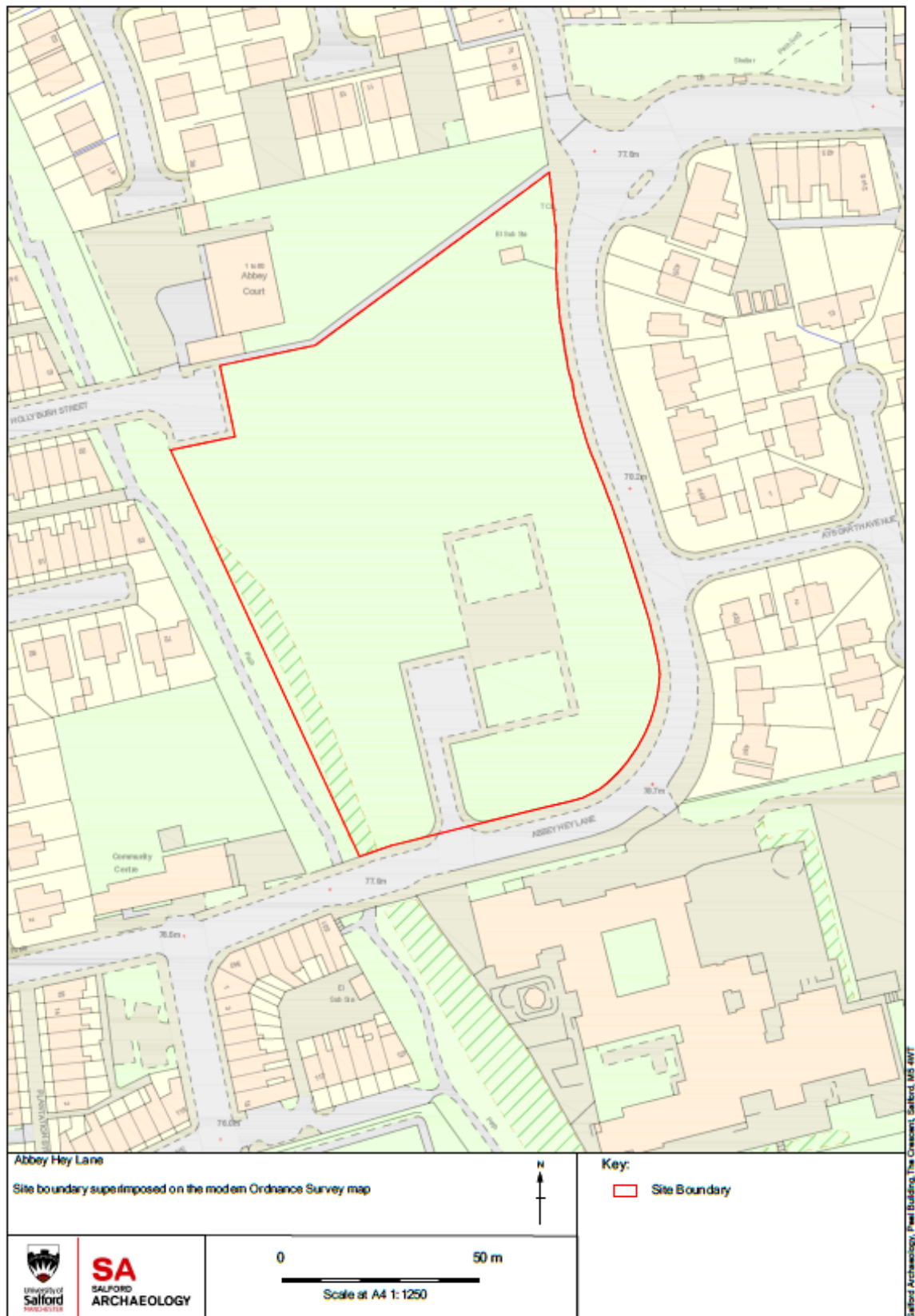


Figure 9: The Site boundary superimposed on modern mapping



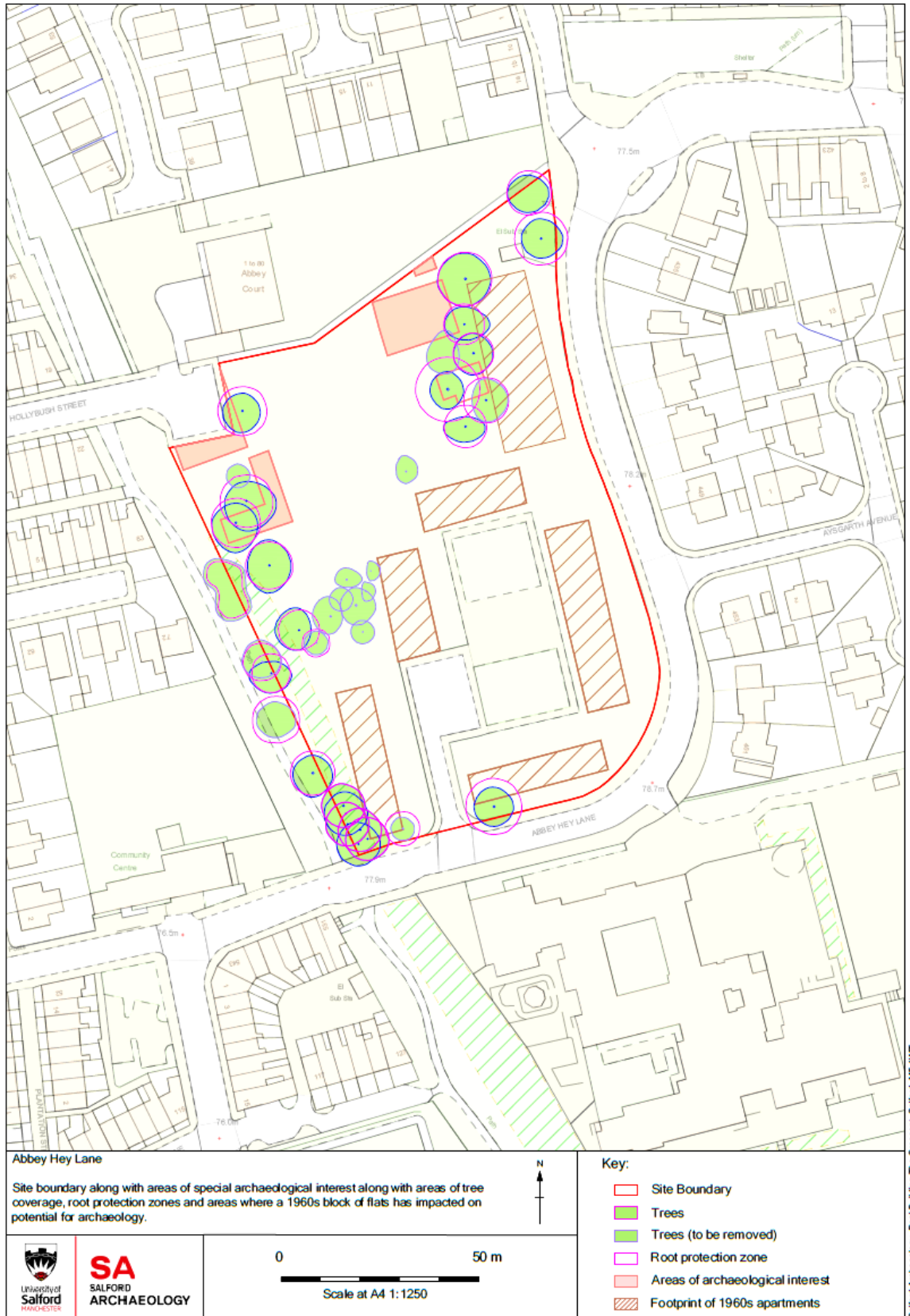


Figure 10: Areas of particular archaeological interest and potential

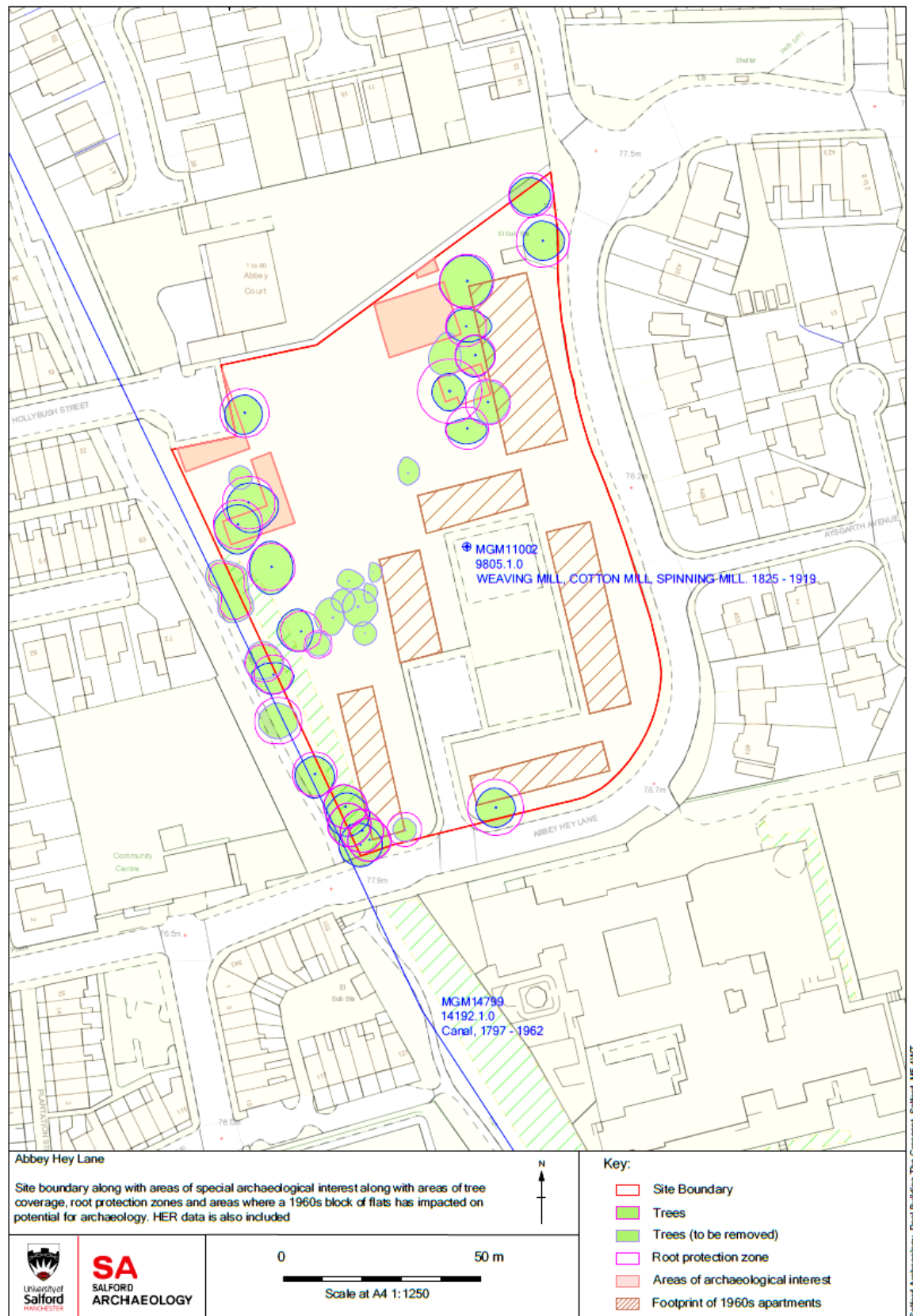


Figure 11: The HER data superimposed on modern mapping, showing non-designated heritage assets in the immediate vicinity of the Site

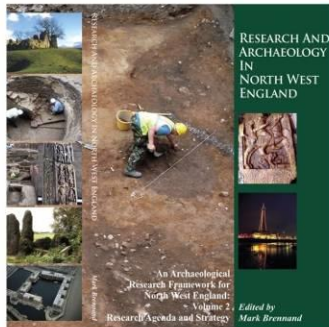
## Appendix 2: HER Data

HER ref.	Description	NGR
<b>Monument</b>		
9805.1.0	Gorton Mill 1825, Gorton Mill, Messrs John Lees & Sons started spinning and weaving in new mill at Abbey Hey Lane. Site chosen because of canal link with coal mines at Ashton and Oldham. Steam engine provided power for looms; 1840 temporary stoppage at mill greatly affected local employment. In 1847 Rylands opened a new shop, for retail goods at wholesale prices to his employees. Tithe Award for Gorton, site Nos. 203/213, described as 'Mill, Steam Engine, Mill Gearing, Gas House' leased by John Ryland, owned by John Chapman. Mill shown on east side of Ashton Canal, Stockport Branch, seen on Abbey Hey Lane – possible name given to mill. 711 employees in 1832. Slump of 1840 closed mill; bought by John Chapman. Shut 1919. Site redeveloped. (AM 1993). Probable social housing was still present on the site in the late 1990s but this has since been cleared.	SJ 89150 96490
14192.1.0	Manchester & Ashton under Lyne Canal: Stockport Branch. Stockport branch of Manchester and Ashton Canal, opened in 1797. Commercial carrying on the Stockport branch ceased in 1932. The branch was officially declared dead in 1962. This canal has now been backfilled, but the existing pedestrian underpass running beneath Gorton Bridge and the A57 bridge follow the canal bed. The Act of Parliament relating to this branch was passed in 1793 and the opening was in 1797. The branch had a length of almost 5 miles, became disused for commercial traffic in 1933, and was finally abandoned in 1962.	SJ 89263 94306

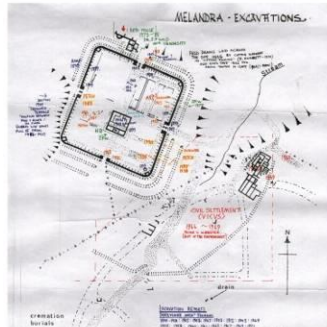
*List of known heritage assets within the Site, recorded in the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record*



### CONSULTANCY



### DESK BASED ASSESMENTS



### WATCHING BRIEF & EVALUATION



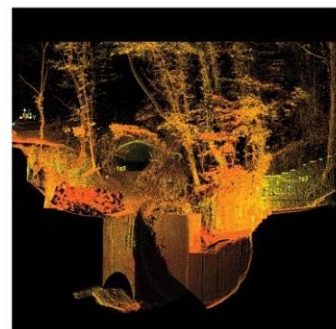
### EXCAVATION



### BUILDING SURVEY



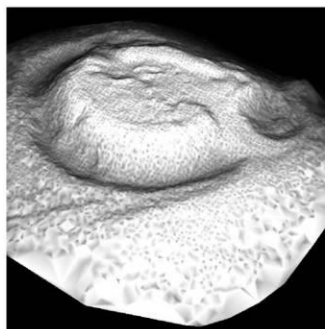
### 3D LASER SCANNING



### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



### LANDSCAPE SURVEYS



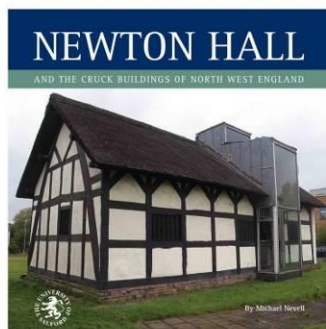
### GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS



### WORKSHOPS & VOCATIONAL TRAINING



### RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS



### SEMINARS, DAYSCHOOLS CPD EVENTS

