



HERITAGE STATEMENT & IMPACT ASSESSMENT LONDON MILL, ASHBOURNE ROAD, LEEK

Alfa Mohuha Ltd
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report accompanies an application for a full planning permission and listed building consent to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council for the redevelopment and restoration of the grade II listed London Mill,Ashbourne Road, Leek.

The applications are:

Full Planning Application:

Full planning application for the change of use of the grade II listed former silk mill and the relocation of an electricity sub-station.

Listed Building Consent:

Listed Building Consent for the alteration and repair of the grade II listed former silk mill.

The site has been vacant for some time. The building is not wind and watertight and parts of the roof cover to the west of the building are missing, and there is evidence of sustained damage from rainwater; some sections of the brick masonry has been damaged by frost and movement, there is localised damage to the west end of the building and some localised collapse of floorboards; there are localised areas of missing slates, leading to pigeon infestation and damage from adverse weather. Investment is urgently needed to ensure the long-term viability of the building.

Mel Morris Conservation is in full support of the application for conversion to residential use. We have worked on many residential and mixed use conversion schemes in mill towns, including the conversion of grade II listed mills in Manchester and Oldham, and the conversion of lace factories in Nottingham, under two separate regeneration initiatives which Mel Morris managed - the Lace Market Conservation Area Partnership Scheme, and the Alfreton Road Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme. The Lace Market scheme incorporated educational use (Nottingham College - Adams Building), mixed use housing with clubs and restaurants, and single-use residential, whilst the Alfreton Road/ Gamble Street lace factories were largely converted to student housing.

There is a real opportunity to see this conversion as a catalyst to the regeneration of this part of Leek which has stagnated for over 20 years. There is no alternative economic use being put forward. Residential use will always provide the best return. The viability of the use has been assessed by the new owner and it is not contrary to planning policy. Where there is no enabling development involved, and none that could be included in the scheme, the application is a straightforward matter of judgement of impact and weighing any heritage harm versus public benefits.

Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been set out to address the significance of the grade II listed London Mill,Ashbourne Road, Leek, and to identify the impacts of the repair, restoration and re-use of the listed building.

The building sits on the north side of Ashbourne Road at grid reference: 398919, 356420.

This report starts with a summary of documentary evidence, an analysis of the building, and significance. Elements of the building has been discussed as a series of topics, so that impacts can be clearly understood by the decision maker and the conclusions on pages 21-23 draw together all of these distinct elements.

The heritage consultant has been an integral part of the design team, reviewing and contributing to the discussion over the proposals. The resulting scheme has, therefore, taken heritage and the significance of the listed building and its setting into account from the outset.

London Mill was built in 1853. The datestone on the front pediment records its construction date. Archival information is, however, short on detail. There are another row of mills in Leek called London Mills, which are located on London Street. Unravelling the history of the two sites from the documentary record is a little complicated.

The information on the history of Leek's mills is relatively poor, compared with other studies in mill towns, such as Greater Manchester. The Ashbourne Road mill was assessed by Lathams on behalf of SMDC in 2016 and Jon Phipps wrote a report on the building, although the internal assessment was not particularly detailed. Jon has given me authority to use his report and quote from it.

A very detailed study of the mill is not possible without looking at original source material. The first place to start would be the Brough Nicholson Hall archive, which is in the Staffordshire Record Office. Unfortunately, the archives are currently closed whilst they are being relocated. The archive catalogued under D4241 (1815-1979) was deposited by Mr. J. E. Ratcliffe, Company Secretary to Brough, Nicholson & Hall. Some elements are closed to public inspection until 2029. However, many details are available to view, including, for example, plans of sprinkler systems from 1924 for all floor levels. Record D4241/ 4382 incorporates minutes, registers, ledgers, trademark certificates, etc. Other sources include the William Salt Library, which is also closed (see bibliography). Leek Library has a few publications which have been consulted.

A detailed study of the history of the mill is, therefore, limited in scope in this Heritage Statement to a review of secondary sources and the building itself.

Statutory Designations

London Mill was listed on 18th April 1991. The list description for the building is as follows:

'SJ9856SE ASHBOURNE ROAD 611-1/7/13 (North side)
18/04/91
London Mill (Formerly Listed as:ASHBOURNE ROAD London Mill inc.
Area Railings to S & Chimney Stack immediately NNE)

GV II

Silk mill. Dated 1853. Brick with slate roof. EXTERIOR: 4 storeys, 19-
window range (8-3-8) with advanced pedimented central bay stressed
with stone quoins. Clock in apex of pediment with date each side. Central
doorway in shallow pedimented architrave with acroteria. 20-pane iron

windows, some with central opening lights, with flat-arched stone heads
and stone cills. Overhanging eaves. Some renewed or inserted loading
doors in right-hand gable return. Cast-iron fire escape stairs and doors
in upper right-hand bay and in lower gable return, possibly later C19
additions. INTERIOR: has high first floor, possibly built to accommodate
Jacquard looms. Cast-iron columns support single longitudinal beam.
Truncated chimney detached to rear also dated 1853; engine and boiler
houses to rear, but power transmission system largely secondary, with only
slight evidence for original system.

Listing NGR: SJ9891956421'

Neither the chimney stack nor the ancillary attached buildings, mentioned in the list description, survive. The site of these buildings is no longer in the ownership of the current owner. The red line, which is the application site represents the ownership boundary.

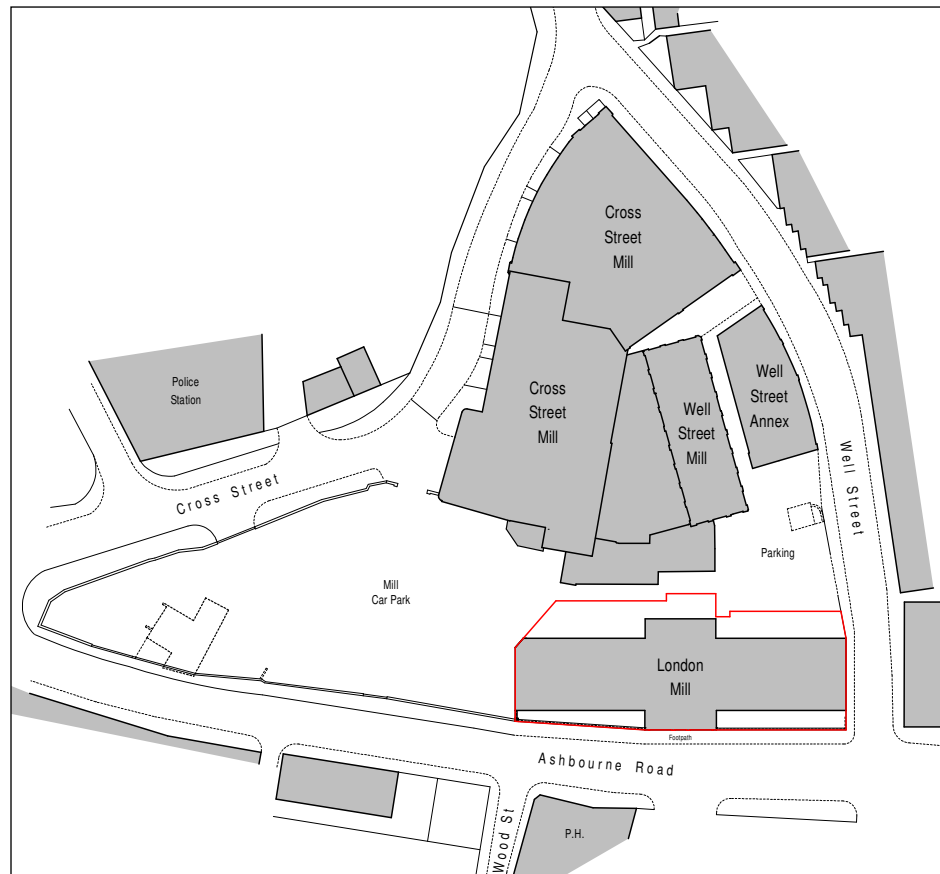
Documentary Information

Although we cannot firmly establish who built the mill in 1853, the sale of the mill in 1861 is recorded in newspaper articles. We know that it is this London Mill, rather than the mills on London Street, because the descriptions relate to adjoining streets.

The plot is recorded on a plan of Leek dating from 1838, as a field or open space, when it was annotated as being occupied or owned by 'Mr Lowndes'.The fact that it was being sold in 1861 only 8 years after it was built, and that the sale was by the mortgagees, does suggest that it may have been a speculative venture which had failed.

The Harrod's Directory and Gazetteer of 1861 lists just 'Miles Simpson, Silk manufacturer' on London Road. His is the only entry for a silk manufacturer on London Road, as distinct from London Street. He seems the most likely candidate for constructing our building. Miles Simpson is recorded in the 1851 Great Exhibition catalogue as displaying 'specimens of the leading classes of raw silks, from France, Italy, China, Bengal and Turkey, selected by Durant and Co.' but Miles Simpson had become a bankrupt and his business was wound up in 1857. His letter to The Staffordshire Advertiser in 1856 about a fire in the boiler room of his factory makes for interesting reading. He is recorded in Debow's 'Commercial Failures in Europe' dated 1858 with liabilities of equivalent to 570,000 US dollars and assets equivalent to 117,000 US dollars. The 1851 Great Exhibition catalogue identifies him as 'of 4 Milk Street Manchester' and 'of 5 Aldermanbury, Postern, London' (also identified in the 1856 electoral register as his residence, where the entry for Leek describes him as 'Freehold silk mill and house – London Street').

There are two contemporary descriptions in the 1861 sale, set out in the Staffordshire Advertiser, slightly different in detail, after it was unsold at the first auction, so very useful for that reason.The first auction date was 14th February, and it remained unsold, so the owners must have quickly decided to put the building into a much larger sale on 7th March, which was more widely advertised, as the adverts extend across all silk manufacturing districts and as far afield as London.



1. Current Site Layout plan (Sammons Architectural Ltd).

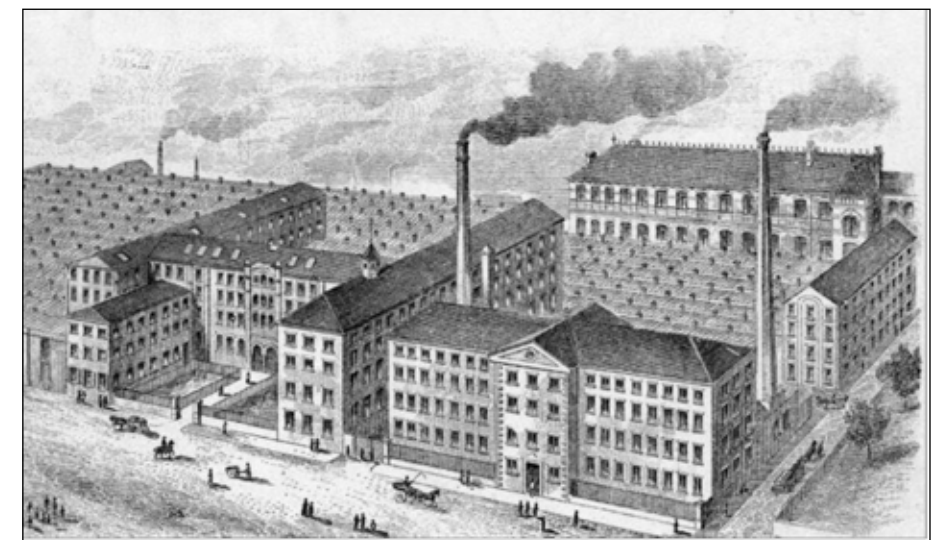


2. 1925 Ordnance Survey map of the 'London Mill Site' at 1:2500 scale. This clearly shows how over time the small gaps between the buildings were in-filled with various structures.



3. Town Plan at a scale of 1:500 (Ordnance Survey - first edition 1879). The town plan clearly shows how the building is angled at the north-west corner, and the alignment continues in the attached single-storey structure, in order to provide access to the properties to the rear of London Road. The significant changes in level were accommodated at that date by external staircases to the north of the building. The location of the octagonal chimney stack and the Boiler House is clear running along Well Street. By comparing this plan with the current layout (top left - fig. 1) we can see that the land ownership has been truncated but not in a particularly logical way, as there is no access between the east and west sides of the building.

4. Right - detail from a Brough Nicholson and Hall brochure showing a melange of buildings from different locations - Hope Mill from Hope Street is positioned to the left of London Mill.



Staffordshire Advertiser Saturday 9th February 1861

“FREEHOLD SILKMILL, LAND, and COTTAGES LEEK.

To be SOLD by AUCTION by Mr HILLIARD, at the MILL, called LONDON MILL, situate in LONDON-ROAD, LEEK, in the county of Stafford, on Thursday, the 14th day of February, 1861, at twelve o’clock noon precisely, subject to conditions to be then produced :-

All that substantial and newly-erected SILK MILL, situate in and fronting London-road, Leek, with the LAND and COTTAGES thereto adjoining, with the Steam Engine, Shafting, and Boiler thereto belonging.

The Mill is four storeys high, and 150 feet long by 30 feet wide, and contains four rooms, varying from 10 to 12 feet in height, with transept in front for warehouses, and a back one for any other useful purpose; containing two water closets for males and females in each room.

The Boiler House with Workshop connected, is built apart from the mill, with a large reservoir above, supplied by rainwater from the roof of the Mill.

There is also a well 30 foot deep, with an unfailing supply of water, together with pumping apparatus connected, worked by steam power. The chimney is about 150 feet high.

There is a stone staircase from the top to the bottom of the Mill, and each room has a warehouse connected therewith, and is independent as a separate mill, and suitable for any manufacturing purposes.

The Land connected with the Mill contains 160 feet in length and 80 feet wide, thereby giving scope for the erection of other buildings, or extending the Mill.

And there will also be SOLD by AUCTION the same day, and immediately after the sale of the Mill, a quantity of MACHINERY, &c, now in the said mill, and suitable for Throwsters and Sewing Silk Manufacturers, &c.

The machinery may be viewed two days before the day of the sale, and catalogues had, on application to the AUCTIONEER, Leek.

The Mill and Freehold Property may be viewed at any time between the hours of ten and four, by applying to the AUCTIONEER.

Further information and particulars may be had on application at the offices of Messrs. REDFERN and SONS, Solicitors, Leek.

Staffordshire Advertiser Saturday 16th February 1861

“Staffordshire. – FREEHOLD SILK MILL, with possession.

MESSRS. H. BROWN and T. A. ROBERTS will SELL by AUCTION, at the GEORGE HOTEL, LEEK, on Thursday, March 7, at four o’clock, in one lot, by order of the mortgagees, a substantially-built FREEHOLD SILK MILL, erected in 1853, and known as London Mill, situate in London-road, Leek, and comprises on the ground floor counting-house, weaving-room, about 150 ft. long and 30 ft. wide, affording accommodation for forty looms; engine-room, and soaking-house. The first, second, and upper floors each contain a light warehouse, a weaving-room, 150 ft. by 30 ft., and other conveniences. The several floors are approached by a wide stone staircase; in the rear, with entrance in Wells-street, is a yard, in which is a lofty octagon shaped chimney shaft, boiler-house, workshop, with large reservoir for rain water, capital well, with excellent supply of water, a large garden, affording space to extend the mill, also two cottages. Let to weekly tenants. The fixed machinery, which is in good working order, will be included in the purchase, and comprises a 12 horse high pressure steam engine, and shafting to the various floors: a wrought iron cylindrical boiler, 12 ft. long, 5 ft. diameter, as fixed and gear.

Possession will be given on completion of the purchase. May be viewed, and printed particulars and conditions of sale, with plans, may be shortly had at the George and Roebuck Hotels, Leek: the Macclesfield Arms, Macclesfield: the Lion and Swan Congleton, and in London of JOHN BAKER, Esq., Solicitor. 3, Cloak-lane, Cannon-street; and of the Auctioneers, Messrs. H. BROWN and T.A. ROBERTS, 22. Throgmorton-street, Bank, who will forward same to applicants.”

These descriptions are referred to later in this report, when analysing the map evidence and the building itself.

London Mill on the Ashbourne Road was incorporated into the Brough Nicholson and Hall Ltd. site, probably following the auction in 1861 although some secondary sources say ca. 1863. It appears to be the first building they acquired on this site after part relocating from a smaller mill on Union Street, and, with its additional land (‘160 feet by 80 feet’), it provided a clear opportunity for expansion. At that time, in 1863, the company was known as J. and J. Brough, Nicholson & Co. By the later 19th century, the mill can be seen incorporated into their company business card, which show etchings of all their premises in the late 1800s. The company traded from London Mill for nearly a century before selling it to Job White & Sons Ltd. in 1962.

Job White and Sons are best known for the Compton Mill site, which they also owned. By 1964 the firm, one of the largest manufacturers of knitted headwear in the country, was employing some 600 people, over half at Compton and the rest at London and York mills, which it had acquired from Brough, Nicholson & Hall, and at Hope Mill in Macclesfield Road.

The company of Brough Nicholson and Hall Ltd., established by this name in 1891, went through a number of name changes over the years. Staffordshire Past Track identifies that Brough Nicholson and Hall ‘were manufacturers of “sewing silks, braids, bindings, trimmings etc”’, and were prize winners at the Great Exhibition in 1851, and several later European exhibitions.

The Victoria County History (vol.VII – Leek and The Moorlands) has a synopsis of the firm’s development. The business was founded by John Brough, a silk manufacturer in about 1812. After his early efforts, his sons, Joshua, James and John took over the mantle. The brothers had a factory built on Union Street in 1844 and later took on partners, Joshua Nicholson and B.B. Nixon to became J. and J. Brough, Nicholson & Co. in 1863. Soon after a warehouse was built on Cross Street c1865, close to Hope Mill on Fountain Street. In less than ten years this mill had been acquired and extended to twice its original size. The partnership was employing 630 workers in 1891. Following a series of changes in the partnership due to deaths and retirements, the firm became Brough, Nicholson & Hall in 1891. The partners soon embarked on a new scheme of development involving the extension of the Cross Street building, and the building of a new mill on Well Street in 1898 (known from 1900 as Royal York Mill). Around this time the firm also took over the Cecily Mills in Cheadle. In 1968 many of the firms’ buildings were demolished, and in 1983 Brough, Nicholson & Hall sold their only remaining premises, Cross Street Mill, to Berisfords, the Congleton ribbon firm.’

The mill opposite London Mill on the junction of Well Street, Portland Street South and Ashbourne Road (Royal York Mill - unlisted), which was also owned by BNH, still has these initials emblazoned on the Well Street frontage and the name of Brough Nicholson & Hall was carved into the door lintel of London Mill, where it’s ghosted outline can still be seen, although it has been partly covered with a cement render.

Photographic Evidence

There are various historic images of the mill, as seen from adjoining streets and from aerial photos, which provide a little more useful information. There are also photographs from the County Archaeology photograph collection held at Staffordshire Record Office visible on Staffordshire Past Track.

A photograph of ‘Bode’s Cycle Shop’ on Ashbourne Road dating from the early 1920s (Neil Collingwood - Staffordshire Past Track – ref.641928-87) shows the west end of the mill, without the present fire escape staircase. Aerial photos from 1930 and 1934 (Britain from Above) also show the mill without the western staircase. An image dated October 1934 - EPW046316 – reveals that there is a cast iron staircase on the Ashbourne Road elevation but none on the west side.

Aerial photos from different directions also reveal that the northern hoist / or lift over-run was not visible in October 1934. There was, however, a chimney or projecting feature with a ventilated cap to the west side of the rear north ‘transept’. This may have related to the presence of a stove in that part of the building. This feature ‘chimney’ had a pedimented cap and is recorded in the etchings of the mill by BNH.

An archive film (Staffordshire Film Archive) dated 1901 shows workers coming out of the front doors to London Mill.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRoW4yx9EIE>

Context - Silk in Leek (abridged from the Victoria County History and Shire publication - The Silk Industry)

Raw silk was imported in its initial processed form in the country of origin, as ‘books’ or skeins. Following import, it then underwent several processes – winding, cleaning, spinning, doubling and throwing.

On arrival at the throwing mill, the silk was graded and washed with white soap (the ‘Soaking House’ referred to in the 1861 auction). Once dry, the silk skeins were placed upon ‘swifts’, star-shaped skeleton reels, set on axles, and these were often at the top of the mill, running along the length of the mill where the first process took place to wind the silk. The frames were usually placed in the top floors because, being lighter, less power was required to turn them than to turn the throwing machines, which had to be situated closer to the main power source.

The next stage of the process was ‘cleaning’ which was described by a Congleton throwster as a process by which ‘cleaning machines wind the silk from one set of bobbins to another. In this part many children are employed whose nimble fingers are kept in continual exercise by tying the knots that break’.

The next stage was ‘spinning’. This was quite different from the process of spinning cotton. In the silk industry, spinning raw silk actually meant that the single threads of continuous filament were twisted up to eight turns per inch, rather than multiple threads joined together, as in cotton spinning.

Once the single threads were twisted to the required degree, between two and four threads were doubled together. This was carried out originally on hand-operated doubling wheels. Power-driven wooden doubling frames were displaced by metal frames. In 1851 Frost of Macclesfield invented a spinning and doubling machine which combined the two functions into one machine.

The doubled threads used for the warp in the weaving process now required to be twisted again, but in the opposite direction to the earlier twisting process. This produced silk thread called ‘organzine’. It was only after Thomas Lombe

introduced the Italian throwing machines at the Derby Silk Mill that ‘organzine’ could be produced in England. Until then, the ‘organzine’ had to be imported. The ‘organzine’ machines were circular and up to 19 feet high with a diameter of 12 to 15 feet. They occupied two floors of the Derby Silk Mill. These wooden machines were superseded in the 19th century by smaller metal machines.

Thomas Wardle, a leading Leek figure in the industry in the 19th century, stated plausibly that the twisting of sewing silks came to Leek from Macclesfield. The first clear evidence of silk working in Leek dates from 1672. John Wood, a silk weaver of Derby Street, died that year possessing silk worth over £300, 'shop goods' worth £100, including ribbons known as galloons, and looms and wheels worth £4 1s (L.J.R.O., B/C/11, John Wood (1673); Leek Par. Reg. 191.) The wheels possessed by John Wood in 1672 may indicate that he was twisting his own yarn. Joseph Myott of Church Street, described as a silk weaver in 1728, had a twisting alley next to his house in 1734 (S.R.O., D. 3359/Badnall, abstract of title of Ric. Badnall to property at Clerks Bank, pp. 1–3). It seems, however, that the twisting of mohair rather than silk predominated in Leek for much of the 18th century.

The Victoria County History records that in 1732 Leek joined with Manchester, Macclesfield, and Stockport in petitioning against the renewal of John Lombe's patent for his silk throwing mill in Derby; the petitioners included manufacturers of silk and mohair yarn and twist and twiners of mohair, cotton, worsted, and probably linen thread. The improvement of communications in the later 18th century and the ban on the import of silk goods in 1765 encouraged the development of the Leek silk industry. Buttons were the staple of Leek's textile industry until the later 18th century, consisting of moulds covered with various threads including mohair and silk. Button making declined with the growth of the metal-button industry in Birmingham at the end of the century, but the production of ribbons increased. Five ribbon manufacturers were listed at Leek in 1784, two of them also making buttons and silk twist, and there were four other makers of buttons and twist, two of them also producing sewing silk.

By the 1790s there were 2000 people employed in the trade with Leek (Industrial History of Staffordshire, Thomas Sherlock, 1976, and Buchanan, R A. 1980. Industrial Archaeology of Britain. Allen Lane, London). The reduction of import tax on raw silk in the 1820s, combined with an increased duty on foreign manufactured fabrics, meant that mill construction in the early nineteenth century gained momentum (Sherlock, 1976).

The industry remained predominantly domestic or quasi-domestic until well into the 19th century, with manufacturers giving out the raw material to 'undertakers' to be woven or twisted and then receiving the finished products at their warehouses.

Anthony Ward & Co., a firm dating from the early 19th century, had 10 power looms in Albion Mill in Albion Street, which was completed in the late 1820s (Reps. Asst. Hand-loom Weavers' Com., Pt. IV, 344.); Sherlock, Ind. Arch. Staffs. 175 and pl. facing p. 55) and is one of the earliest surviving purpose-built mills in Leek. In 1818 there were c. 200 ribbon weavers working engine looms and c. 100 working single handlooms. In addition, there were between 50 and 60 broad-silk weavers, producing handkerchiefs, shawls, and silk varying in breadth between 18 in. and 1½ yd. There had been upwards of 100 such weavers in 1815, but since then prices and wages had fallen.

The increasing use of steam power in silk weaving meant the growth in the number of factories and the decline of domestic working. In 1818 there was only one factory, and that had only a few looms. There were seven mills in the town by 1835, but it was not until the later 19th century that factory working became fully established. Weaving was organized by undertakers owning a number of looms and employing journeymen and apprentices.

Even in the mills using steam power, twisting was still carried out by hand in 1863, only the winding engines being powered.

The industry reached its peak in the North West in the 1850s. The throwing branch was at its greatest in this decade. In 1851 around 5,000,000 pounds of raw silk was imported, as well as considerable quantities of waste silk which was used by the powerlooms. The Great Exhibition of 1851 acted as a stimulus but the boom was nearly at an end nationally.

The Cobden-Chevalier Treaty of 1860 was disastrous for the British silk industry as it allowed French woven silks into Britain duty free, whilst insisting that English silks exported to France paid a duty of 30 per cent. British manufacturers found it difficult to compete. The industry declined and reached rock bottom in 1924 when only 800,00 pounds of raw silk was imported. In 1925 the government imposed duties which gave some protection and imports of raw silk slowly began to increase again and in the 1920s and 1930s there was a late revival of silk throwing.

Bibliography

Baggs, A P, Cleverdon, M F, Johnston D A & Tringham, N J. 1996. Leek: Leek & Lowe, in A History of the County of Stafford: Volume 7, Leek and the Moorlands. Victoria County History, London

A Brief History of Brough Nicholson and Hall, Ltd. c. 1958, William Salt Library (ref. pbox/LEEK/108)

Article on the History of the Leek Silk Industry by W.S. Brough, 1907 (Staffordshire Record Office - D538/C/1/40)

“The Silk Industry”, Sarah Bush, 1987, Shire Publications

The Spirit of Leek: 3 – The Textile Mills, Cathryn Walton & Lindsey Porter (Landmark Collector's Library, pub. 2002)

Industrial History of Staffordshire, (Thomas Sherlock, 1976) Sherlock, R. 1976, David & Charles, London.

The best place to see and understand the history of silk making is Macclesfield Silk Museum. Paradise Mill is a working silk mill museum.

Other Archive References

Agreement of partnership in business of silk manufacturers and wholesale dealers in silk 1869. Parties : Joshua Nicholson/Benjamin Nixon/W. S. Brough/Arthur Nicholson/Edwin Brough/John Hall (Staffordshire Record Office - D4241/5/1)

Agreement on dissolution of partnership – 1881 (Staffordshire Record Office D538/C/1/96) and D4241/5/2

Article and advertisements for BNH 1924, (SRO - D4640/A/6/1)

BNH - Machinery account (London & Hope Mill) – 1921-1930 (SRO - D4382/1/1)
BNH – Sprinkler plans undated (No. 1 Installation – York and London Mills) – (SRO – D4241)
BNH – sprinkler plan Dec 1924 (London Mill Room No.14 No.4 Floor) – SRO - D4241/7/4/8
BNH – sprinkler plan Dec 1924 (London Mill Room No.5 No.1 Floor) – SRO - D4241/7/4/3
BNH – sprinkler plan Dec 1924 (London Mill, Room No.10. No.2 Floor) – SRO - D4241/7/4/5
BNH – sprinkler plan Dec 1924 (London Mill, Blocks 11, 11A & 11B. No.3 Floor) – SRO -D4241/7/4/6
BNH – Jan 1925 sprinkler plans - Gravity Tank, Tower & Trunk: main connection to No.1 Installation valves (SRO - D4241/7/5/1)
BNH – Jan 1925 Plan of auto & non-auto centrifugal fire pumps & connections ?No.1 Installation valves (D4241/7/5/2)
BNH – Jan 1925 Plan showing details of existing tanks & reservoirs & town's main connections (D4241/7/5/6)
BNH – Dec 1924 – schedule of sprinklers (D4241/7/4/1)
BNH – London Mill wages 1903-1904 (SRO - D4241/4/3)

<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/26d7107f-bb4e-42cd-b9f9-cccdf861a333>

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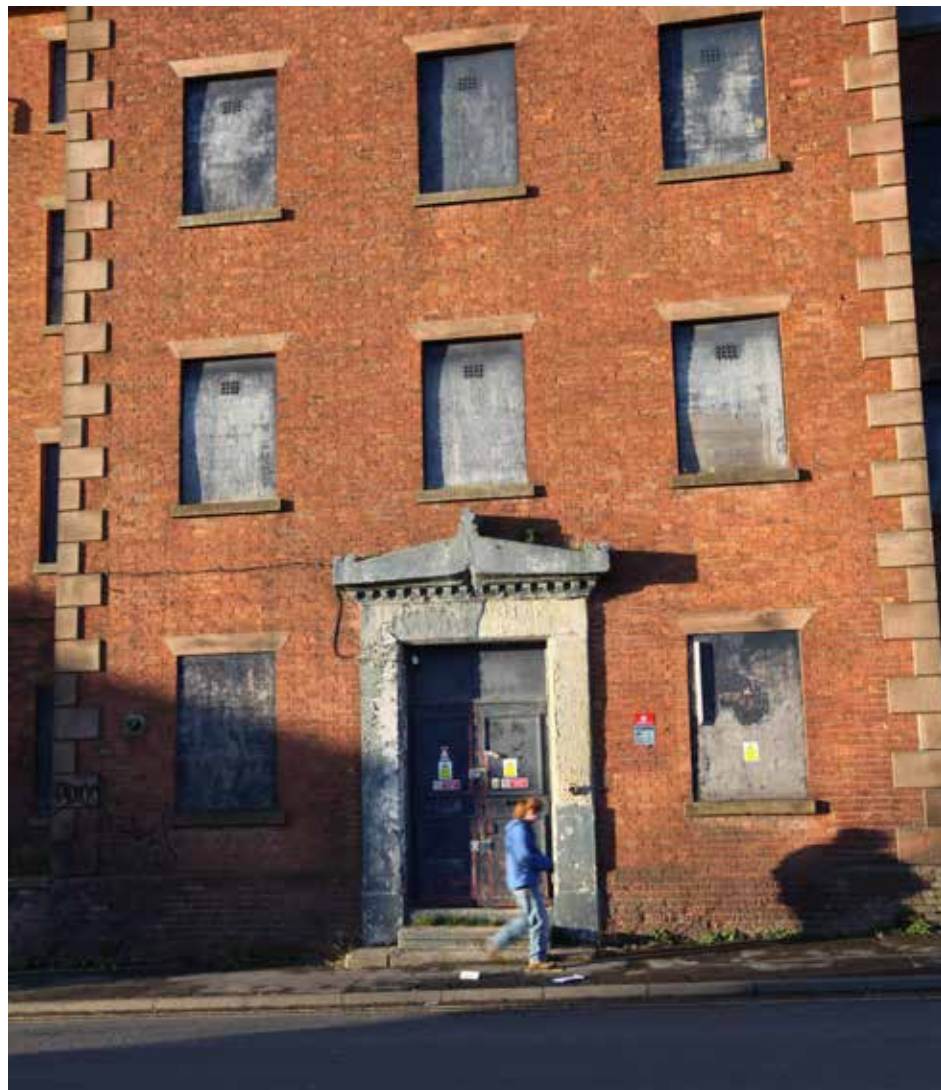
ELEVATIONS

UNDERSTANDING THE BUILDING - Description

Exterior

The building is four storeys, with the fourth storey having shorter windows. The main elevations to the Ashbourne Road and Well Street are built in a Flemish bond brick, and the windows have stone wedge lintels and projecting stone cills. The elevation to Ashbourne Road has 19 windows (divided into 8-3-8) with an advanced pedimented central bay. The central, advanced 3-window bay has raised stone quoins with ornate stone corbelled and bracketed kneelers and a raised coped gable with moulded stone copings. This bay contains the main staircase and at ground floor level it contains the remains of what may have been the 'Counting House' described in 1861. This projecting 'transept' has a brick plinth with a moulded canted brick coping. Low level brick plinths with a canted brick detail are also found on the Well Street and west elevations.

The main elevation to Ashbourne Road has a central projecting pediment with a central, triangular stone panel comprising a central roundel for a clock face, which is missing, and, to either side, the date 18 – 53. carved into the pink gritstone. The Lathams report describes this as rendered, which it is not.



5. Central projecting three-windowed range to Ashbourne Road, and principal stone doorcase, with Greek motifs.



6. Central pediment with carved datestone in pink gritstone and roundel for a former clock face.

The main doorcase to the mill, which is directly onto the street and approached via a short flight of stone steps, also has an usual, shallow triangular pediment, with a Greek influence of acroteria and a dentilled moulding. The doorway is recorded in various historic photographs and there is early film footage of workers coming out of the mill via this doorway in 1901. Although it has been partly covered in a cementitious render, and the original stonework has been defaced, the lintel over the doorway has the incised name of 'SON & HALL' and below that 'MILLS', which can still be seen, and could be better restored / with the full name revealed once again.

The flanking 'wings' of 8 windows each are separated from Ashbourne Road by a brick boundary wall, with railings. This appears to have always been the case and is recorded on the 1879 Town Plan. The railings may be later alterations, as stated by Lathams, although the original pattern is not known.

Windows mainly alternate between fixed cast iron and cast-iron with central pivoting lights. At the eastern end of the building is an external fire escape staircase. This is relatively ornate and is cast with ornate brackets which have the initials AS Co. probably the name of the cast-iron manufacturer, not the mill owner. It appears in aerial photos of 1930.

The north and west elevations of the building are built in English Garden Wall bond brickwork (four rows of stretchers to one of headers), with stone wedge lintels and projecting stone cills. The north elevation too has a projecting transept with a central pediment, built entirely in brick, with a large brick roundel for a clock face (now infilled in brick) and stone shaped kneelers and raised stone coping. The kneelers are extended out with corbelled brickwork to this pediment. Bearing in mind that this was built on a site with no other buildings at that time, the clock face would have been visible to inhabitants of Leek for a considerable distance. This bay has unequal windows, three and a blank section of masonry where there is now a goods lift, but was probably the location of the water closets.



7. Rear transept with former clock face (bricked up) and smaller windows for water closets. Lower down the elevation is the painted face of the former internal wall to the engine room. The modern brick, goods lift over-run is relatively modern (post 1934).

The building was originally connected to single-storey buildings, that to the north-east was the Boiler House and, to the north-west, there may have been the 'Engine Room' and 'Soaking House' as well as a 'Workshop'. The precise layout may be interpreted from plans of 1924 for the sprinklers, which are in the SRO archives. There are still ghosted lines of former doorways on the north elevation, where the building once connected with the single-storey rear range, but the relationship is not fully understood.



South Elevation (Ashbourne Road)

INTERNAL FLOORS

Interior

Structure

The 1861 description of a building with interior spaces 30 feet wide by 150 feet long can still be experienced today. The original construction of the first three floors of the building was a series of central cast-iron posts supporting a central axial beam, which is scarfed at intervals along its length. This beam then supports joists which span from the brick wall to the central beam. Many of these floor joists are still in-situ, but there have been modifications to the structure.

Ground Floor

The ground floor space retains the majority of its central axial beam but there have been four very large transverse beams added, off the centre-line of the mill, which have removed two sections of this central beam. They may be repairs. The eastern end of the axial beam is also truncated and has been plated with a casting bolted through on both sides and the western end of the beam continues and terminates in the wall but has additional support in the form of a steel RSJ / post, RSJs and two additional short sections of axial beam.

The cast-iron posts run like a forest and at ground floor level there are almost twice the number than the floors above. They roughly, but not entirely, alternate between plain cast-iron posts and those with flanges, which are bolted to the axial beam. There is one post with much larger flanges, which was probably inserted when the ceiling was modified.



8. Ground floor - cast-iron columns looking west



9. Internal screen at ground floor level - this has been modified but may be the remnants of the Counting House.



10. Pitch pine transverse beams with replacement flanged cast-iron columns to ground floor ceiling.

The purpose of the additional transverse pitch pine beams is unclear, but they may have been added to support an additional specific weight from localised heavy machinery. At this point one of the cast-iron posts has been re-located in order to create a cast-iron shoe to support the central axial beam and attach it to the transverse beam. Box-section cast-iron castings have also been added to connect these two transverse beams and there is an intermediate box-section casting. There are two additional cast-iron flanges hanging beneath, one with a 'hook' and one without, but with drilled square sockets, both of which may have supported line shafting.

Some of the cast-iron posts have drilled holes at upper level which would have supported brackets for line shafting, but there is no line shafting left in the building.

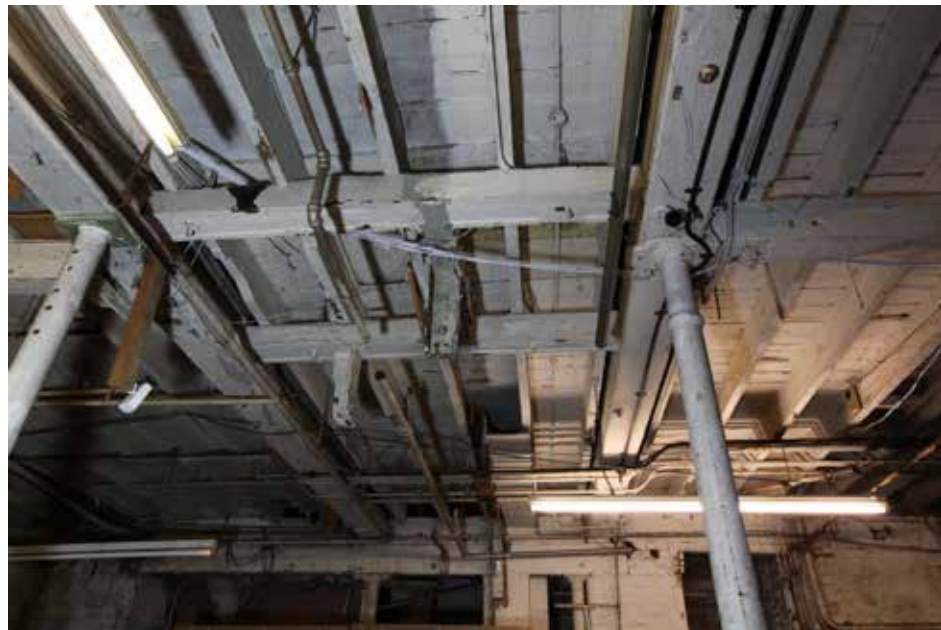
At ground floor level within the northern 'transept' there are two smaller cast-iron columns supporting a secondary load-bearing beam. These are roughly on the centre-line of the transept. One of the columns has a decorative collar and the other is plainer. There have been a number of modifications and inserted and altered masonry, surrounding a goods lift and former toilets, so that it is not possible to say precisely how this was originally configured, other than to say that the toilets were originally located in the eastern side where the lift is now located, and the small windows which once served these toilets, are still visible externally on the floors above.



11. Section of ground floor ceiling with supplementary timber joists.



12. Trap doors to former internal hoist.



13. The cast-iron box-section beams are visible, with additional cast-iron flanges hanging down below the ceiling level. Their function is unknown.



14. The north transept is partially infilled at ground floor level. The cast-iron column (arrowed) may have been added when the transverse beams were inserted, as it appears to be providing additional support to the load from the beam above.

Within the southern 'transept' there is the principal staircase, which is a winder, with stone steps, very worn and made up in concrete, and a timber glazed screen separates a small room from the main mill floor. It is likely that this was the 'Counting House' which is mentioned in 1861.

The eastern end of the building contain an electricity sub-station, which is due to be removed as part of the scheme. This part of the building is isolated at ground and first floor and cannot be inspected at present. Adjacent to the sub-station is a pair of large taking-in doors, which are accessed directly from Well Street, with an internal ramp. These are a later intervention.

Within the floors there is a trap door, which runs through several floors. This would have had a hoist and / or internal derrick but there is no evidence left. At a much later date the toilets were adapted and re-located in order to incorporate a goods lift. The externally projecting lift shaft of the goods lift, which is still in-situ, is not recorded in aerial photos of October 1934, so is a relatively recent addition.

First Floor

The first floor has much taller floor to ceiling heights, at about 12 feet. It has been suggested that this height was purpose-designed to accommodate the taller Jacquard looms. Jacquard looms required a clearance of 11 to 12 feet (up to 3.6m). A series of plain cast-iron posts support the central axial scarfed beam. This in turn supports timber joists jointed along the line of the spine beam. The top of each cast iron posts has a simple neck casting and has a timber trimmer underneath the spine beam, which may indicate additional pads where the beam has been jointed at each scarfed section. There are a few repairs at the western end, where an RSJ has been inserted.



16. Detail of stone winder staircase, with later concrete repair.

15. Below - first floor with 12 feet floor-to-ceiling height and slender cast-iron columns

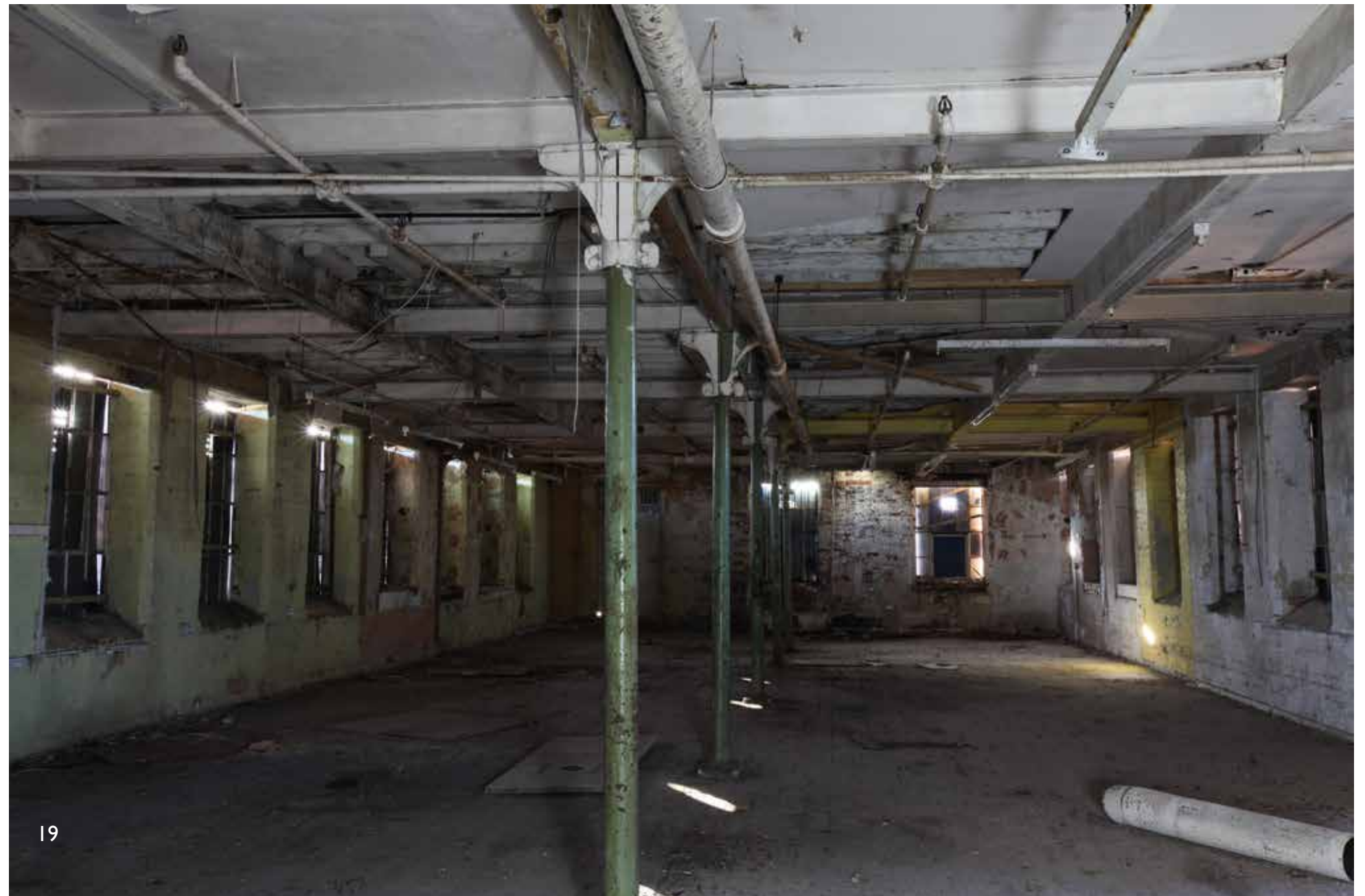


Second Floor

The second floor is open throughout and the ceiling supporting the third / attic floor has been reinforced throughout by attaching flanged plates to each cast-iron column, which support RSJs. The RSJs in turn support additional longitudinal timber beams. The cast-iron posts from the original mill of 1853 still survive, with their plain square bases, and these still support the original axial scarfed spine beam and the original floor joists. All of the overhead beams, both original and later, have been limewashed and / or painted white.

17-19. Second Floor details

Original cast-iron columns are supplemented with metal 'shoes', drilled and tapped into the columns, which carry secondary RSJs. These, in turn, support secondary timber beams.



Third Floor

The third floor is windowed throughout and also has north-light glazing and secondary glazing to the east and west roof slopes. There are a series of I I King post trusses, with struts and each principal rafter supports a single purlin. In addition, there are pairs of longitudinal boxed beams spanning the trusses, spanning most of the trusses. The purpose of these additional beams is unknown. All of the soffit of the raked ceilings was finished in lathe-and-plaster, so that the finishing of processing was clean and tidy. The north and south transepts of this top floors have evidence, in the form of a timber staircase and an enclosed timber partition at high level, of the access to the former clock faces. There is also a riveted iron water tank which has been inserted over the main staircase and was probably inserted in 1924, if not earlier, in association with the sprinkler system.



20. Northlights and King post trusses



22.



21. Possible remains of access to former clock - north transept



23. Possible remains of access to former clock - south transept



24. Surviving cast-iron windows to rear elevation

Yards

The rear yards are the site of former buildings. The yards are almost permanently in shadow and will require careful landscaping to make them suitable for amenity space. It is proposed to incorporate cycle storage and to re-locate the electricity sub-station to this area. As there was a single-storey building in this location, this is considered to be justified. These areas of the building have been heavily altered and are of low value.



25. View of the rear elevation and yard to Well Street. Removal of the Boiler House and Engine House has left some visible scars which will need to be addressed through sensitive cleaning and repair.

Roof

The hipped slate roof of the building, with lead rolls to the hips and deeply overhanging eaves, with plain soffits can be seen in aerial photos of the building. A view published in 'The Spirit of Leek: 3 – The Textile Mills' page 12, shows a crane transporting a load over the Engine and Boiler House to the mill. In this photo a man is standing on a narrow boardwalk and leaning against a set of white painted railings around the northlights which are on both the north, east and west slopes of the roof. The railings and boardwalk also appear in other photos. The remains of the walkway, with L-bar posts are still evident at high level.

Early photos show that there was a vent or chimney with a pyramidal cap and open vents below the cap, located in the north-west corner of the northern transept, which suggests that this was the location of a stove running through the building. This cap has been removed and this is now the location of WCs, at fourth floor level.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Latham report of February 2016 set out a Statement of Significance. That was based on looking at each of four different aspects of significance: Evidential Value, Historical Value, Aesthetic Value and Communal Value.

The report assessed these as:

Evidential Value – low. Latham stated ‘Although the building exterior remains largely intact the simplicity of the interior spaces mean that little has survived inside the Mill beyond the structure, the envelope and the stair cases.’

Historical Value – high. Latham stated ‘London Mill forms an important surviving part of the history of the development of the silk weaving industry in Leek. It is associated with one of the towns dominant silk and textile companies; Brough, Nicholson and Hall Limited

Aesthetic Value – high. Latham stated ‘The exterior of London Mill provides a formal pedimented composition of some architectural merit. The Mill also has associated townscape value forming part of a wider informal composition with nearby mill buildings. In addition the relationship between London Mill and mill workers housing is an important aspect of local visual character. The openness of the internal spaces have some aesthetic value.’

Communal Value – medium. Latham stated ‘Although London Mill closed to textile manufacturing nearly half a century ago Leek still derives part of its identity from its association with the silk weaving industry. The Mill forms a prominent local landmark which remains valued by the community.’

Interest is now set out in the National Planning Policy Framework as: Archaeological, Architectural and Artistic, and Historic. Following these specific criteria, the values / levels of interest have been re-appraised based on a more thorough assessment of the evidence.

Archaeological Interest

Archaeological interest in a heritage asset applies if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

The evidential value is low. Evidence from archival information, from documentary sources, from the building itself, which no longer has any evidence of its power systems and no fittings from its previous uses, is actually quite scarce. In addition, unfortunately, lack of access to the previous, historic extent of the site, which is in separate ownership, and a very shallow access to the rear of the building makes obtaining contextual evidence from any further site investigation very limited in its scope.

It is correct to say that there is some archaeological potential but as part of this application, there are relatively few areas that will be opened up which are not currently visible.

Plan Form and Uses

The 1861 description refers to the ground floor of the mill as accommodating 40 looms. This is where the greatest power was needed closest to the steam-

driven power and these were presumably powerlooms. Notably, the first floor has a much taller floor-to-ceiling height and has been reinforced from below, as built, with additional cast-iron posts and later secondary transverse beams. This suggests that this floor had a very specific use. There is a suggestion in the list description that this floor was intended to accommodate the taller Jacquard looms (invented in 1801 - examples can be seen at Paradise Mill, Macclesfield and Masson Mill, Cromford). All floors seem to have been largely dedicated to the continuous process of silk production from spinning on the top floor, using long machines which supported the ‘swifts’ through to spinning and doubling and weaving on the ground and first floor. There would have been line-shafting through the floors powered from the steam engine. The power transmission is not fully understood at present and would require a visit to the archives when they open to assess the 1924 plans.

A Level 2 Historic Building Survey would be appropriate prior to commencement and it may be appropriate to record evidence as minor groundworks proceed on site.

Historical Interest

London Mill is of **high historical value**. Dating from 1853, London Mill is one of the earliest purpose-built silk factories surviving in Leek. Like many silk factories of its day, it was built without a fire-proof structure, as this was the most economic, and there was considered to be less risk from silk spinning, as distinct from cotton. The subsequent installation of a sprinkler system in 1924 was very late and is of very low interest compared with the 19th century sprinkler systems found in some Manchester warehouses.

The building is important as it demonstrates the vagaries of the silk industry and how volatile the markets were in Leek and nationally. Expansion and contraction, and bankruptcy were relatively common.

Wellington Mill (Strangman Street, Leek) is also dated 1853 but retains its ancillary buildings including engine house, boiler house, dyeing rooms, etc. It is directly comparable as Wellington Mill retains its tapering octagonal chimney. Although converted to residential use, Wellington Mill is more complete. It is, however, located on a back street and has far less presence in the town, so architecturally it has marginally less value.

The north elevation of London Mill has lost all evidence of the ancillary power transmission and all utilitarian structures, as well as its grand and ornate octagonal chimney. The loss of these has reduced both its evidential and historical value.

As one of the surviving suite of mills associated with Brough Nicholson and Hall, it is an important building and part of the cluster of important mill buildings which form a very strong presence in Leek, and this has arguably a shared historical and group value. The relationship of the Mill with its surviving industrial neighbours, in particular Cross Street Mills (1850-60) and Royal York Mill (1898), exhibits the wide range of building development through the second half of the 19th century. There are several mills in Leek which are unlisted and not recognised for their historic or architectural value, including London Mills, along London Street, and Royal York Mill, on the corner of Well Street and Ashbourne Road.

Architectural and Artistic Interest

The building is largely intact, as originally designed, as seen from the Ashbourne Road, and has a very strong presence in the town. **Architecturally it is of high value** even though it is a conservative design, which has the hallmarks of a late Georgian mill. This sets it slightly apart from the later, more decorative and flamboyant architect-designed mills in the town. The end walls, to Well Street and the car park to the west, have been modified and there is scope for a degree of restoration to the simple, symmetrical classical form.

The fire escape stair to Ashbourne Road is of moderate interest; it is highly decorative, with ornate castings, and may date from the late 19th or early 20th century. The staircase to the west end is of low interest, being a modification which is plain and much later, probably dating from the 1950s.

Contribution of Setting to Significance

London Mill is seen against a backdrop of other mills which were owned by Brough Nicholson and Hall and together these have a group value which contributes to a limited extent to understanding the significance of London Mill. Long views along Ashbourne Road, in arriving from the west, provide that gateway, where the silhouette of the front pediment and the presence of London Mill is seen against the sky. From the west the setting has changed considerably with the demolition of ranges of terraced cottages and the creation of a large car park to serve Cross Street Mills. The visibility of the west elevation has, therefore, increased during the second half of the 20th century. The northern space beyond the north wall of the building has been considerably altered and provides a very limited contribution to the significance of the mill. It holds primarily archaeological interest only, but the loss of the ancillary buildings, chimney, boiler house and engine house has affected the setting to the north and it is more difficult to appreciate the significance of the building now.



26. Cross Street Mill, with York Mill in the background, are both part of the setting of London Mill.

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Alterations and Impacts

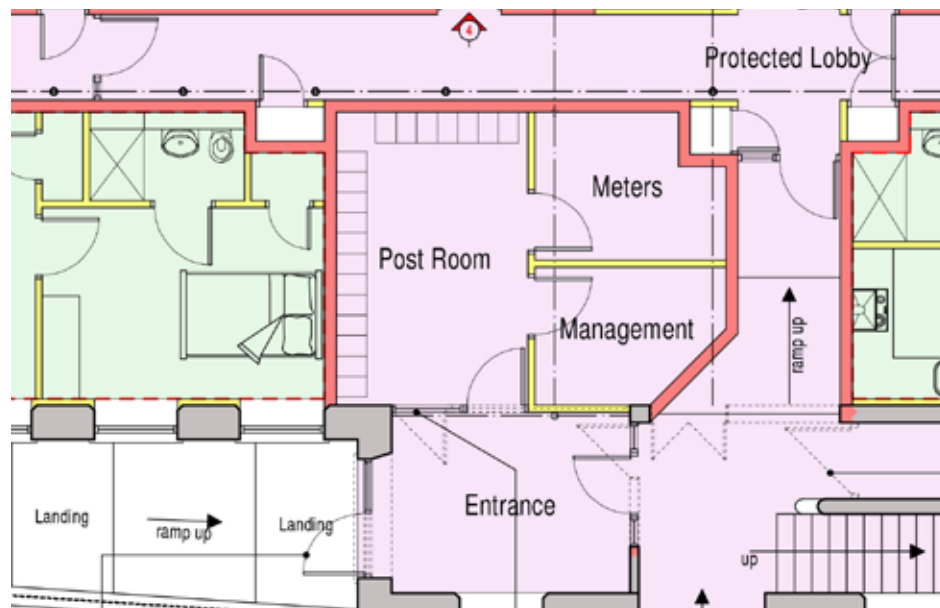
Changes to the Plan

The main impact of the proposed adaptation of the building to residential units is to change it from open plan to a series of small spaces. This will have an impact on the listed building, on its significance, as it removes the evidence of the large floor plates and the visibility of the floor-to-ceiling volumes. The building will no longer be readable and understandable internally as a former silk factory. The actual arrangement of the subdivision of the floor plates from entirely open spaces to residential units separated by partitions doesn't really matter, as once the principle is agreed, the locations of the partitions is less material, provided that it preserves the remaining evidence, windows, cast-iron columns, and distinct features. At attic floor / fourth floor the open character of the trusses is retained in the apartments.

Impact – the impact is moderately harmful. This has to be weighed in the balance under paragraph 202 of the NPPF, as without a change-of-use the building will simply stagnate and continue to deteriorate. The discussion of whether this is the Optimum Viable Use is, therefore, addressed under the conclusions.

Layout and Central Corridor

The best way of laying out apartments is to provide light to both the north and south sides of the building, to light the spaces. This avoids deep, poorly-lit spaces to the units. It does mean, however, that there is a central corridor which has to be lit by artificial light. The layout retains the cast-iron columns, so that the corridor is not down the centre-line of the building but is slightly off-set to one side, an alignment which continues through the whole building. Cast iron columns will be exposed and painted with an intumescent painted finish and from the internal corridor they will be visible as lines of columns, retaining a sense of the building's historic form from the public areas. The upper parts of each column will, however, be hidden by a suspended ceiling, which also accommodates some services.



27. Columns appear within the main communal corridor. The screen to the Post Room is re-used. Some walls are part-removed at the entrance foyer to facilitate access and visibility.

This means that the suspended ceiling can be designed to provide the amount of fire protection needed and sound-proofing, without altering the building, the existing ceilings and joists. The means of escape is taken through the existing staircase and is supplemented by a sprinkler system, which is required to all floors. The old sprinkler system, which was inserted in 1924, and which may have been modified since then, will be removed to remove the excess pipework. All cabling, trunking, wiring and extraneous bits of timber and pipework will be removed. There are no fittings of historic value affected but a schedule of retained fixtures and fittings can be produced once the building is clear. The ceilings of the original mill and the boarded floors will be otherwise left untouched, with their lime-washed painted finishes intact. All fixtures of historic interest, which include the additional columns and castings, will be retained in-situ. This means that the intervention is a light touch, and is fully reversible.

The more conventional approach to mill interiors is to expose the underside of beams and to have large floor plates. That still requires significant interventions to upgrade the floors to provide 60 minutes fire protection. However, in this instance, the approach is different. The intention is to have small, well-lit units, which are laid out in accordance with the Nationally Described Space Standards. Being small, and marketed for single persons, the headroom within each space would feel excessively high at 10 to 12 feet. The first floor, in particular, would feel very strange with this ceiling height. In order to market these units, it is considered that the appropriate response is to lower the ceiling heights with suspended ceilings. This is, therefore, fully reversible. The attic / fourth floor rooms are different, as they are partly top-lit, and these spaces will have a more spacious character, with exposed sections of trusses, off-set from the internal partitions.

Impact – the change to insert suspended ceilings has negligible negative impact.

Lobby

The new lobby will be entered via both the main entrance doors, as existing, which will remain as solid panelled doors, and via a glazed set of doors for an accessible ramped entrance. The existing window to the street which lights the 'Counting House' will continue to shed light into the lobby, supplemented by the new glazed doorway via the accessible ramp. However, fire protected compartments are required at the base of the corridors and the staircase to separate the stairs from the Post Room.

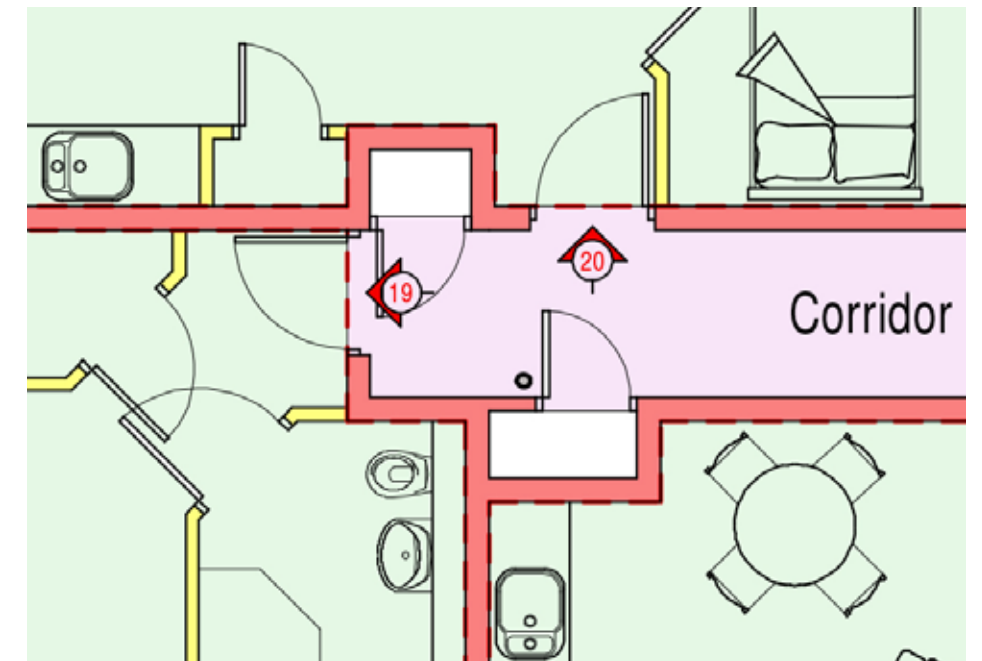
There are some minor modifications required to provide an accessible route through to the main central corridor.

The glazed screen will need to be removed. The screen has been modified in the past. It is intended to re-use part of this screen to provide a glazed wall between the lobby and the Post Room. The existing cast-iron column will remain.

Impact – low negative

Some of the masonry at the bottom of the staircase will need to be removed in order to provide a line-of-sight and accessible routeway. A 'nib' section of masonry will be retained as evidence of the plan form.

Impact – negligible negative



28. Ducts accessed from the corridor are stacked for vertical service runs

Services

The proposed services run through the building in vertical shafts, which are accessed from the common central corridor. This has two impacts:

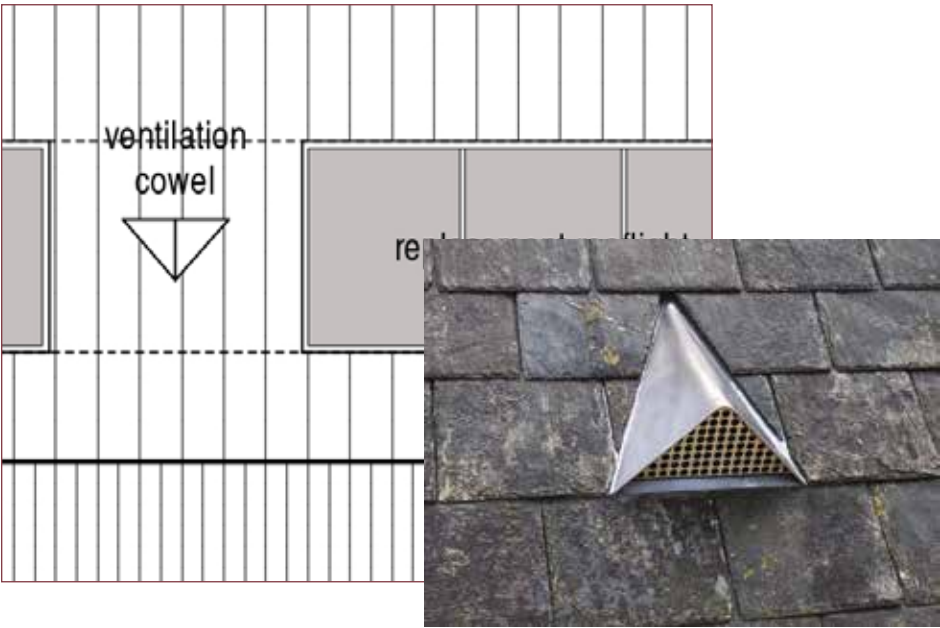
1. Sections of the boarded floor (and concrete floor at ground floor level) are removed to provide a slot for services, at each floor level. This will affect small areas of floorboards, and may require some minor trimming around floor joists, to create large enough voids for services;
2. the vents for certain services emerge from the roof where they are paired from two units per floor and have shared vent outlets, which sit between the panels of rooflights located on the rear roof slopes; these are intended to be purpose-designed lead cowls, rather than in-line slate vents. It is recommended that the precise detail of these vents / cowls be conditioned, as at present the mechanical and electrical installations have not been designed.

Because there is limited natural ventilation in the building, many of the existing windows are fixed cast-iron lights, and the building has to be thermally upgraded for the change of use to satisfy building regulations, the only possible way of providing adequate ventilation is through a Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery system. The ductwork will be contained within the suspended ceiling voids.

Air inlet will be located in the ground floor area close to the internal bin and servicing area, and this will be ducted through the building. This will require a grille in place of a window on the rear elevation – this has negligible impact as there are no surviving historic windows on this ground floor elevation. The precise details of the louvred grille can be designed when M&E is finalised and it is recommended that this be conditioned.

The service ducts which rise through the building will therefore contain soil pipes and a MVHR system incorporating inlet and outlet ducts. Vents for bathrooms

and kitchens (stale air) and normal extraction is combined with vitiated air which is pulled through the building in ductwork which is approximately 100mm, terminating in roof vents. The details can be conditioned.



29.Ventilation cowl to roof in lead.

Windows

The majority of the windows in the building which survive are cast-iron and historically these were largely fixed, with a few exceptions. A large number of the windows have been modified to insert a pivot-opening light, for improved ventilation. Many of the cast-iron windows date from the 1853 building, but a large number have been modified with later pivot-opening lights and a number have been blocked up at ground level on the north side and where a fire escape staircase was added to the west elevation.

All windows will need to be removed for refurbishment as it is unlikely that they can be retained and refurbished in-situ. Once putty is removed, the cast-iron is cleaned and all rusting metal is properly treated and the windows are re-glazed and painted with a factory-applied paint, they will be reinstated.

Windows to the north elevation – ground floor: Further investigation is needed to the openings, to identify whether these windows were raised or are their original height, prior to producing detailed drawings of the proposed replacement windows. It is recommended that this element is conditioned.

Impact -the restoration of the cast-iron windows throughout the building will be major positive. The finished paint colour can be subject to specialist paint analysis. It is recommended that the

Internal wall faces

In order to comply with Building Regulations for the change to residential use, the internal face of the brick walls will have to be upgraded with a more thermally efficient insulated system. At present, the brick walls are all painted in lime-wash and other modern paints. Whether the walls were originally painted or simply a



30. Detail of cast-iron window with very fine section glazing bars, putty finish, and 3-4mm glass. Windows were actually glazed internally so that it was easier to replace broken panes.

brick finish is not known.

There are several ways of upgrading walls, but we have opted for the second option, Option B below, as this involves no works to the existing internal walls, preserving them, it involves creating a secondary glazing system in-line with the stud wall system (which is necessary because the existing windows are so thermally poor) and is entirely reversible:

Option A: Direct applied 'breathable' insulation using cork boards using an internal wall insulation system such as STEICO insulation system available from Mike Wye Associates.

Option B:Timber stud wall insulation system using 'breathable' wood-fibre boards.This provides enhanced thermal performance and involves installing an appropriate breather membrane against the wall, which extends up between ceiling joists.An appropriate vapour control tape is used at any gaps or junctions



31. Typical example of the condition of the internal wall face - with mutiple layers of paint over lime-wash and trunking.

in the membrane including around ceiling joists etc. Timber studs 75mm x 50mm are fixed against the wall and 75mm thick wool insulation slab such as ThermaFleece Cosy Wool slab is inserted between the studs. An appropriate vapour control and air tightness layer is installed over the insulation and timber studs, extending between ceiling joists etc. All gaps, junctions and joints are properly sealed using appropriate tapes and sealants. Finally, 40mm thick wood fibre insulation boards are fixed to the timber studwork using appropriate fixings (perhaps using Steico Internal tongue & groove wood fibre boards). A lime plaster is applied to the boards. An alternative option is to use non-natural insulation and a plain thistle-plastered finish. This will be assessed on a cost basis but will materially make no difference to the finished internal appearance of the walls. It is, therefore, considered that this element need not be conditioned.

Impact – loss of the physical appearance of the brick walls and the internal face of the window openings has a minor negative impact.

Internal Roof slope

In order to comply with Building Regulations for the change of use to residential, the internal face of the lath-and-plaster roof will have to be upgraded with a more thermally efficient insulated system. The lathe-and-plaster is heavily degraded, and plaster has become detached in certain areas, although it is largely complete. Options are to clean down and retain plaster in-situ, and to thermally upgrade from beneath the existing plaster line, or to remove the lathe-and-plaster and thermally upgrade the roof and then re-plaster using either further lath-and-plaster or plasterboard. There is no option to ‘do nothing’. The acoustic report also recommends upgrading the ceilings to the roof slopes. On balance, it is considered that retention of lath-and-plaster in-situ in its current degraded state is not viable and that the loss of the historic lathe-and-plaster will have to be considered as a slightly harmful impact. It would seem perverse to upgrade the roof, provide new insulation between and below the rafters and then to apply at a new and lower level an expensive lath-and-plaster finish, as this is not the authentic location and will significantly increase the costs of the project. It is suggested, therefore, that the loss of the historic lathe-and-plaster finish be accepted as a consequence of the proposed scheme, and this has been included in the balancing exercise in the conclusions of this report.

Impact – loss of lathe-and-plaster ceilings has a minor negative impact.



32. Example of the variable condition of the internal roof slope, with missing and damaged sections of lathe-and-plaster.

Fire Escape Staircases

There are two fire escape staircases. That to the Ashbourne Road is much earlier and a very distinctive feature of the building in moving through the Ashbourne Road. It is proposed to retain this in-situ, repair the metalwork and re-decorate the staircase.

The second fire escape staircase was added in the mid 20th century, probably in the 1950s. The circumstances of this staircase are quite different, as the staircase actually overhangs the building line. The land to the immediate west of the staircase belongs to another property and is in separate ownership. So, not only is the staircase inaccessible from the bottom, it is not possible to repair the staircase or redecorate it without getting a special permission from the adjacent landowner, which involves partial closure of the car park. The steel which is embedded in the masonry is causing cracks and deterioration of the brickwork. Maintenance and re-decoration will be an ongoing liability. It is the recommendation of Mel Morris Conservation that in view of the low value of this fire escape stair, that it be removed and that the elevation be restored, and windows restored to their former symmetrical appearance.

Impact – the loss of the fire escape staircase to the west elevation is negligible negative. This is balanced against the restoration of the symmetrical pattern of the window openings and reinstatement of stone cills to this elevation.



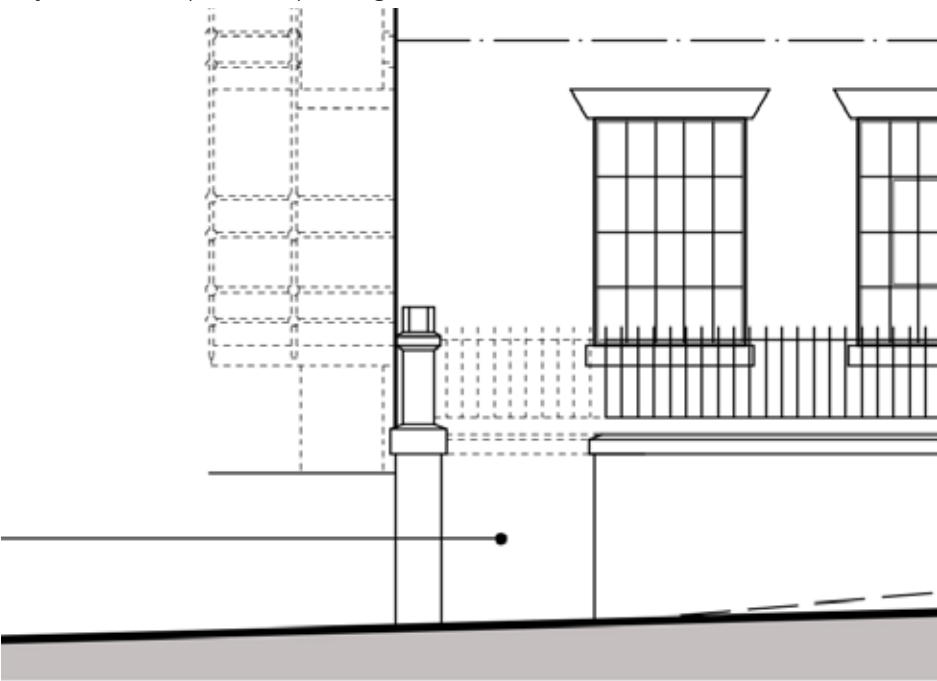
33. The western fire escape staircase is heavily rusted and suspended in mid air, with the bottom flight removed

Passenger Lift and Accessible ramped entrance

The building must be accessible to be viable and, having four floors, the top two floor users are likely to require a lift access, particularly when carrying heavy shopping and furnishing the flats.

The optimum location for a passenger lift is in the location where there has already been disruption to the plan for the Goods Lift. This will be removed and replaced with a full passenger lift, which rises to all floors. It is a standard 8-person lift. It will require a lift over-run, but this can be accommodated in the existing brick masonry over-run, or this can be modified slightly. Full details can be provided by condition, once the engineer’s design for the lift is known.

Impact - the impact of a passenger lift is neutral.



34. Small break in the brick boundary wall for the new accessible ramp

The building will need an accessible entrance, to comply with DDA / the Equality Act 2010. All apartments are designed to be fully accessible. There is currently a single central entrance doorway from the street, which is approached by a short flight of steps. As these steps lie within the pavement, there is no opportunity to create a ramped access at this point.

We have explored alternatives. Option 3b has been selected.

Option 1. The option of using a level entrance via Well Street, where the inside level is closer to the pavement, has been discounted on two grounds – 1. it is too far from the main entrance and could be seen as discriminatory, particularly when seen as an access adjacent to the bin store, and 2. it is impractical to divert the entrance and access to the lift via a long corridor.

Option 2. The option of using a level entrance via the rear elevation, adjacent to the lift has been discounted on two grounds – 1. it is too far from the main entrance and could be seen as discriminatory, and 2. the scheme involves removing the electricity sub-station from the building and re-locating the sub-station to a plot on the applicant's land, within the red line. This provides a narrow gap for access to a cycle store but it is not a realistic or desirable access for those with disabilities.

Option 3. The option of using alternative locations from Ashbourne Road have been reviewed.

Option 3a. The option of using the eastern side of the elevation, has been discounted on two grounds – 1. It is physically impractical, with the presence of the main internal staircase to the mill blocking a clear route to the central corridor, and 2. use of an intermediate window would affect the viability of a whole unit (Unit 7) which affects the overall viability of the scheme.

Option 3b. The solution which has been arrived at is the use of the window to the west wall of the transept, which is approached via the pavement and a ramped access behind the whole of the existing brick wall. This means that there will be a small slot in the brickwork to the street elevation, and that the existing brick boundary wall will be tied into the ramp. The wall will be part free-standing and part retaining wall, as it is now. The brickwork to the front elevation of the building continues down below the pavement level, so there is no structural impact. The landing at the top of the ramp and at the very bottom where it joins the pavement will be paved in yorkstone flags. The ramp will have to be created in a semi-ribbed / ridged concrete, to provide a suitable foothold and some grip, as being hidden largely behind the wall it would otherwise become green and slippery.

Impact – the impact of ramped access from Ashbourne Road on the front elevation is negligible, with just a single narrow gap created in the brickwork. The loss of the window to the lobby has a minor negative impact. It is intended that part of the metal window could potentially be retained and new powder-coated aluminium doors inserted below this window. But full details will need to be designed and it is suggested that this detail should be conditioned.

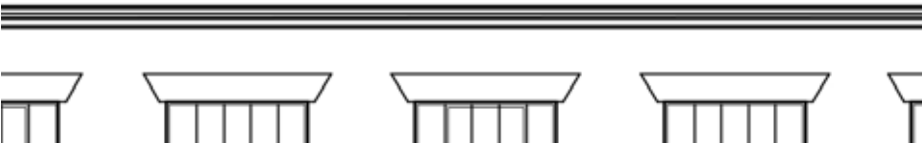
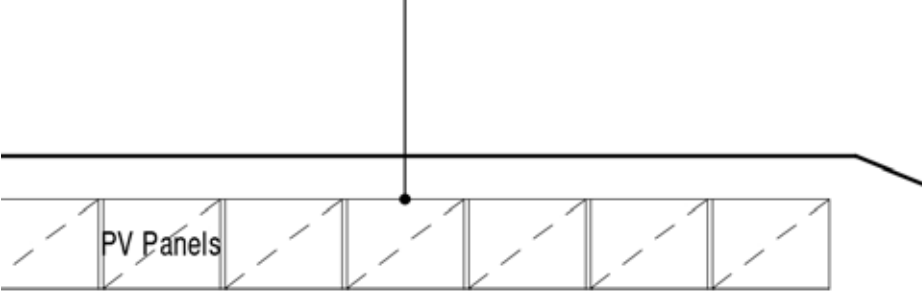
Roof – Rooflights and Photovoltaics

The proposal is to retain bespoke patent glazed rooflights to the north, east and west elevations. These will need to be double-glazed to comply with Building Regulations, which will mean that the existing rooflights have to be replaced in their entirety. As these are in very poor condition, and are probably not original, this has negligible negative impact. In providing a bespoke patent glazed system, the detail can follow the original pattern. However, it is intended that in order to provide fire protection between each apartment that there is some separation between the northlights, which are currently a single bank. It is proposed, therefore, that the slate roof be extended between groups of rooflights to provide this separation.

Northlights impact – the modification to the northlights have negligible negative impact.

Photovoltaics are proposed on the south slope of the slate roof to echo the line of northlights on the north roof slope. This is actually a recommendation of Mel Morris Conservation. We have looked at the visibility of the building, and this roof slope in particular, and have noted that the southern roof slope is not visible from the majority of the Conservation Area. The only location where the southern roof slope is visible is from a narrow field of view along a short section of Wood Street, the main visibility being a 70-metre section of road between Wood Street and Grosvenor Street, where the western section of the roof is visible. It is considered that being a small back street that this has low / negligible impact on views. The southern roof cannot be seen in approaching the building from either direction along Ashbourne Road. The pediment and the east and west facing roof slopes which are located on the southern transept are prominent in views along Ashbourne Road and these will not have PV panels.

The proposal will have a significant number of benefits and will go a considerable way towards providing the sustainability credentials and energy performance, which are required under the revised Part L of the Building Regulations. From 15 June 2022 an important update to the Building Regulations will take place which includes an uplift to Part L. All new homes must produce 31% less carbon emissions than what is currently acceptable in the 2013 Part L regulations.



35. PV Panels on the south-facing roof slope run in-line and echo the location and form of the historic northlights on the opposite roof slope.

Photovoltaics impact – the addition of PV panels to the south roof slope has a minor negative impact on the listed building but the benefits have to be considered in the round. There is very strong architectural continuity to the existing design and a design-led justification, based on the use of banks of roof-lights. The main part of the roof, which is slate, will be visible and the PV panels are located away from lead hips and rolls and lead valley gutters.

External Works

The scheme involves some minor landscaping works to the north side of the building and the introduction of a new electricity sub-station and bicycle storage.

The landscaping works will have to be low-key as the north side lies almost entirely in deep shadow for most of the day. Simple planting that requires little maintenance, a permeable system and planting that will thrive in the conditions are needed. This will need a detailed landscaping scheme in due course and it is recommended that a condition be applied for landscaping works. The precise details of the new electricity sub-station will be the subject of a separate planning application by National Grid. In terms of impacts, there are no interventions proposed to the levels, and all archaeological evidence can remain in-situ.

A new brick wall with railing is proposed which is simple and which create a defensible secure space and defines the boundary, providing a degree of protection for residents using the bicycle storage facility.

Restoration and Repair

The scheme involves restoring all windows, all doors, all roofs, all rainwater goods, and involves stitch repair to brickwork where there is some cracking, and localised repair of masonry with matching bricks. Windows will be restored to the west elevation. The cast-iron staircase will be repaired and re-decorated. The railings will be cleaned down and re-decorated. Brickwork to the north elevation (currently painted) will be cleaned, paint removed and brickwork repaired. The use of DOFF will be trialled before looking at alternative cleaning methods, by way of a planning condition.

The front door of the mill has changed and was recorded in photographs and film footage from the early 20th century. It is recommended that the detailed joinery for the new door should be subject to a condition on the Listed Building Consent so that it replicates the historic appearance.

Impact – this is a major positive impact.

LEGISLATION, POLICY & CONCLUSIONS

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Legislation

Any works to a listed building which have the potential to affect its special architectural or historic interest require Listed Building Consent. In addition, planning permission will be required for a change of use. The local planning authority is duty bound to consider these works under The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

Section 66 General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions.

(1) In considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

The Local Planning Authority must accord considerable importance and weight to the “desirability of preserving the listed building, or its setting” (*Barnwell Manor* [2014] EWCA Civ 137).

Planning Policy

Planning Policy is set out under the provisions of the **National Planning Policy Framework**, set out in Chapter 16 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment. The main paragraphs relevant to this application are 199 and 202:

199. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Any harm to its significance, including from development within its setting, should require clear and convincing justification (para. 200). This is also supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

The concept of setting is considered in an Historic England publication which is a material planning consideration. “The Setting of Heritage Assets - Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition)” was published in December 2017 and provides a checklist and staged process for assessing the impact of development on the setting of heritage assets. This process has been followed in this Heritage Impact Assessment.

Optimum Viable Use

The NPPG is very clear about ‘optimum viable use’ and states:

When is securing a heritage asset’s optimum viable use appropriate in planning terms?

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 196) requires that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing the optimum viable use of that asset.

Where a heritage asset is capable of having a use, then securing its optimum viable use should be taken into account in assessing the public benefits of a proposed development.

Paragraph: 016 Reference ID: 18a-016-20190723

The NPPG makes it clear that ‘securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation’ is a public benefit (Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 18a-020-20190723). This must be weighed in the balance if the LPA consider there to be an adverse aspects of the scheme, including any harm to the heritage asset (under para. 202 of the NPPF).

National Planning Practice Guidance also states that ‘If there is only one viable use, that use is the optimum viable use. If there is a range of alternative economically viable uses, the optimum viable use is the one likely to cause the least harm to the significance of the asset, not just through necessary initial changes, but also as a result of subsequent wear and tear and likely future changes. The optimum viable use may not necessarily be the most economically viable one. Nor need it be the original use. However, if from a conservation point of view there is no real difference between alternative economically viable uses, then the choice of use is a decision for the owner, subject of course to obtaining any necessary consents.’ (para. 015 Reference ID: 18a-015-20190723).

It is our view that there is no real difference, in terms of impact, between residential uses. The overall effects will be the same.

The building is currently used for limited storage but that is not economically viable. It is also our view that retention of the building in some form of dedicated employment use is simply unviable.

The **Leek Mills Strategy (2003)** recommended that the Council prioritise six mills which were considered to be either of more historic value; were most at risk; or were located in key sites or part of a wider complex. London Mill was identified by the Staffordshire Mills Strategy as one of the properties with the greatest potential for re-use for employment purposes. Initial feasibility studies (2012-2014) investigated viability for student accommodation, foyer accommodation, mixed use (commercial ground floor/upper housing and live-work units. However, none of the options was commercially viable and there was a lack of demand by end users for many of the concepts, other than small office use focused on creative and professional sector.

Employment uses may potentially have less impact on the internal spaces, although that has not been tested. Large scale storage will normally require

extensive alterations to listed mills but it is generally accepted to be not economically viable.

There is no potential for car parking on the site, so any employment uses will require occupiers of the building to walk to work / or pay for car parking locally. We consider that is unviable during the normal working day. All recent schemes for the building, of which there have been three that we know of, have involved residential use of one form or another. Looking at the context, the vacant York Mill (in separate ownership), the vacant Well Street Mill (part converted but stalled), and the Cross Street Mills (also in separate ownership and currently arranged in a series of workshop/office suites with car parking, but now on the open market), a pragmatic approach to change is required.

In our view, residential use is the optimum viable use. Apartments are laid out in accordance with the Nationally Described Space Standards and are ample for that reason. It is a sustainable town centre location, with a range of car parks that are easily accessible and available for free parking after the hours of 3.30pm on weekdays. The units are aimed at working professionals. How it is subdivided is, therefore, largely immaterial, based on our analysis. There is a wealth of retirement-living accommodation available in Leek from the Macarthy and Stone development along Buxton Road / Portland Street, Wellington Mill, and the new development of the Compton Mill site. There is less available accommodation for single people or couples who are professional people and leasehold units at buildings such as Waterloo Mill are snapped up like hot cakes. Albion Mill is at the upper end of the leasehold market and Waterloo Mill is more affordable for younger people. Leek is buoyant at the moment and appears to be thriving compared with other regional towns. It is considered that there is a clear market for housing for young professional people.

It is our view that the applicant is taking the risk for the current venture and is not seeking any additional financial support, so that if the scheme goes ahead it will be at his own risk. The Council can secure the repair of the roof and the restoration of the building through planning conditions related to occupation.

The listed building has been vacant for many years and is ‘at risk’, so finding a viable use is essential before it deteriorates further.

Heritage Balance

It is possible for the decision maker to carry out an internal heritage balance; i.e. to weigh up all of the factors when deciding on whether there is overall harm or not¹ and this is what has been carried out in this Heritage Impact Assessment.

There are a number of minor works of alteration, restoration and repair and in these sorts of circumstances it is often appropriate to review the scope of the works as a whole, rather than break it down into a long tabulated list.

The Local Planning Authority could, as an alternative, consider any negative elements as causing 'less than substantial harm' but then consider whether this harm is outweighed by the proposal providing the optimum viable use for a heritage asset.

Condition

The NPPG states 'Disrepair and damage and their impact on viability can be a material consideration in deciding an application. However, where there is evidence of deliberate damage to or neglect of a heritage asset in the hope of making consent or permission easier to gain the local planning authority should disregard the deteriorated state of the asset in any decision (National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 191). Local planning authorities may need to consider exercising their repair and compulsory purchase powers to remedy deliberate neglect or damage. (para. 014 Reference ID: 18a-014-20190723)

In this instance, the building has slowly continued to deteriorate since the last condition survey was undertaken in 2016 and its condition was assessed at that time. The photographs from the 2016 survey show little change. The main issue is the condition of the roof, which is letting in water and the impact of this on the top floors and western end of the structure. There has been some historic movement in the western end of the building and there are long cracks. It is suggested that these were probably addressed in part when this part of the building was repaired with inserted RSJs, but that this is historic and will need addressing as part of the scope of works.

There is no evidence that the current building owner has in any way carried out any deliberate damage or has deliberately neglected the building. In contrast, the owner is seeking, and has sought by way of pre-app., advice to find a new use for the building.

¹ Legal case law – the decision maker may if it so chooses carry out an internal heritage balance, weighing up positive and negative impacts to come to an overall conclusion, but this is not a requirement.

R. (on the application of Palmer) v Herefordshire Council [2016] EWCA Civ 1061 - 'I would accept Mr Reed's submission for the council that where proposed development would affect a listed building or its settings in different ways, some positive and some negative, the decision-maker may legitimately conclude that although each of the effects has an impact, taken together there is no overall adverse effect on the listed building or its setting,' per Lewison LJ at [29] and City & Country Bramshill Ltd v SSHCLG [2021] EWCA Civ 320 '[the Court]...was not saying that a decision-maker must go about the balancing of harm, if harm is found, against benefits in any particular way...The court was simply endorsing the pragmatic and lawful approach taken by the local planning authority in the circumstances of the case.'



36. The building is not wind and watertight and there are gaps at eaves level over the western elevation, and the eaves masonry is in a degraded condition. This section of the roof is open to the elements, with missing sections of slate and battens, and no sign of a gutter.

The condition of the building is, therefore, a material consideration. The building is 'at risk' and the issue of the roof is an economic one. The repair of the roof will require a full structural scaffold, with access across the neighbouring owners land and isolation of a section of the car park, in order to re-roof the building. There is no short-term fix and the whole question of re-roofing the building has to be considered as one of viability and finding an economic use.

The structural engineer has addressed this issue in his report and states: "The West side elevation is suffering from some movement due to various causes, firstly the lower section at ground floor forms a retaining wall and is showing signs of minor historic bulging and bowing. There are also vertical cracks running the height of the building at the two corners of the elevation which are partly

due to the geometry of the splayed corner formed by thermal movement of the masonry. The steel staircase is also corroding within the masonry, the expansive force of the corrosion is causing numerous cracks propagating from the elements.The roof finishes are completely missing to sections of the west end and some rotten timber rafters are inevitable."



37. The north elevation has suffered from some graffiti and the removal of the rear Boiler House has exposed the former internal wall.



38. The more important cast-iron fire escape staircase is in poor condition, rusting, and needs fully blast cleaning and re-decorating.

CONCLUSIONS

This Heritage Impact Assessment has considered all of the many different aspects of impact which are included in this scheme. It does so element-by-element so that these can be clearly understood.

Listed Building Repair and Re-use

The application incorporates a high-level of restoration and repair of the listed building. The re-use of the whole of the listed building will inevitably lead to a high degree of repair and restoration. There are no areas which will be retained as a shell and mothballed. Instead, all of the historic roofs, windows, doors and masonry will be repaired, made-good, or reinstated like-with-like.

Not all aspects of the refurbishment are fully resolved and there is additional work needed which we consider can be conditioned, where additional expertise will refine the details (e.g. a specialist metalwork conservator, and mechanical and electrical engineer for the service design). However, we consider that there is sufficient information in the application to fully understand the impacts.

Impacts

There are a number of minor negative impacts on the building identified in this impact assessment. Taken cumulatively, however, they do not ramp up the impact to major. The impacts are still overall minor on the special interest of the listed building.

There are a significant number of major benefits, which need to be evaluated in the heritage balance. These include: the restoration of all external elevations of the building, the most significant aspect of the listed building, and the restoration of the roof, and the full use of the building to a viable use. The potential for this to be catalyst for regenerating other neighbouring buildings, is very real. Equally, the continued stagnation of this building, which has a very large presence, is likely to be a deterrent for investors on adjoining sites. These impacts are major positive.

Balancing - heritage harm versus heritage benefit

As we have set out on page 21 under 'Heritage Balance' it is possible for the decision maker to carry out an internal heritage balance; i.e. to weigh up all of the factors when deciding on whether there is overall harm or not to the listed building and its setting.

We have identified a few of areas of harm to the internal alterations to the listed building. These are all mainly negligible to low in impact and 'less than substantial harm'.

The principal areas of harm identified in this Heritage Statement are:

- floor plan - moderate harm with the the loss of open-plan spaces;
- loss of fire escape staircase - low harm;
- alterations and interventions - a modified opening to the return wall to Ashbourne Road frontage, new access to Ashbourne Road boundary wall - low harm;
- photovoltaics - low harm.

There are also a number of small changes to the internal layout of the listed building, all of which have been justified and which have negligible or no impact.

These include:

- the provision of a passenger lift;
- the lining of external walls;
- the introduction of new partitions;
- the modification of internal masonry.

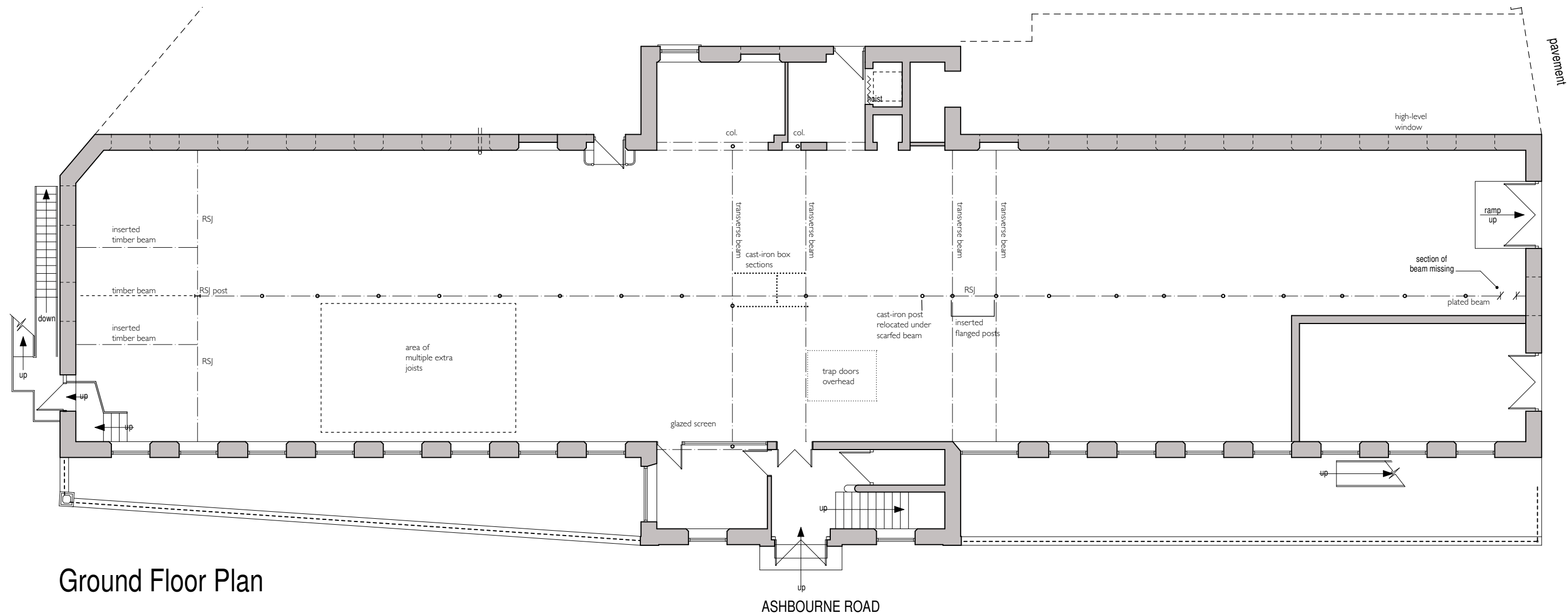
Balanced against these impacts are the following heritage benefits:

- the full comprehensive restoration of the listed building, including the reinstatement of missing windows, lintels and cills, and doors
- the repair of the historic roofs,
- the restoration of cast-iron windows;
- the repair and restoration of all masonry and brickwork,
- the repair and re-decoration of historic metalwork;
- the creation of a viable new use which will enable long-term repair.

On balance, therefore, the net heritage benefits provide a high positive impact in support of the long term conservation of the listed building.

The integration of repair, conservation, restoration (as identified above as a net heritage benefit) and the re-use of the entire listed building in a new and viable use is a significant public benefit, which is addressed in the planning statement. In terms of both legislative requirements and the NPPF the scheme therefore is fully compliant with all aspects of heritage legislation and policy.

ANNOTATED FLOOR PLANS



Ground Floor Plan

Existing Conditions
Ground, First and Second Floor Plan

Date	Sheet	Scale
January 2023	A1	1:100
Drg No.	Rev.	Drawn
2023-2760-01	A	NAW

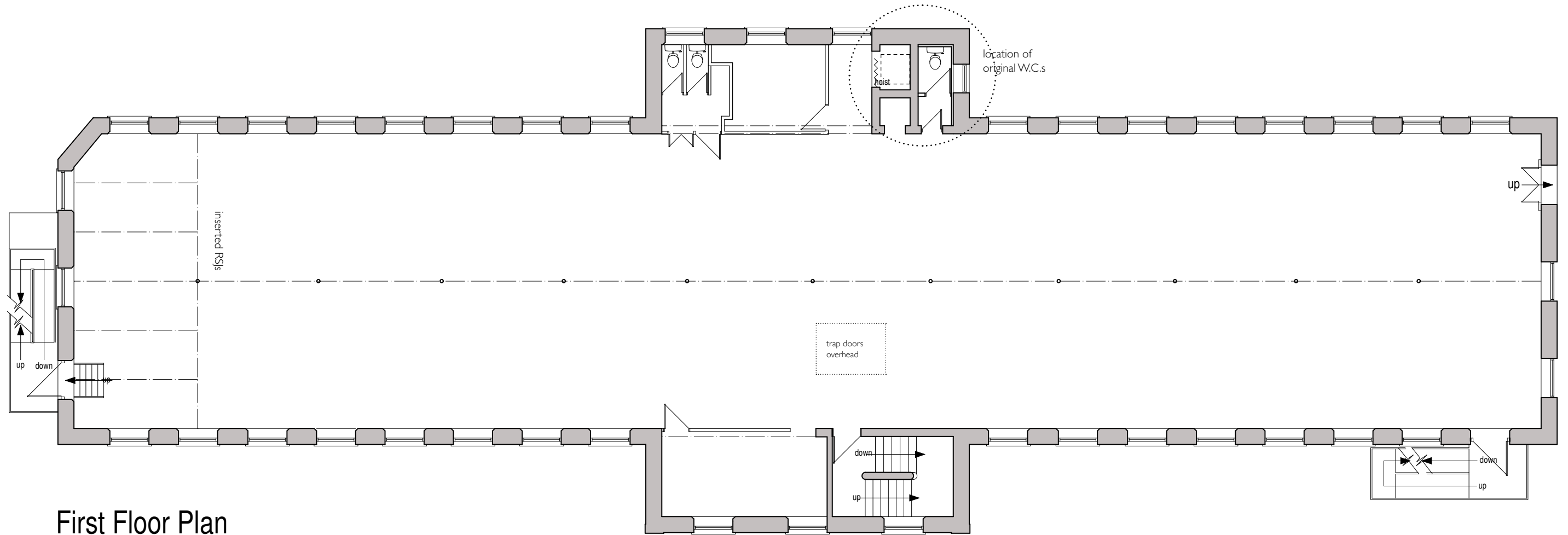
A - 21/02/2023 - OPENINGS AMENDED



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First Floor Plan

Existing Conditions Ground, First and Second Floor Plan

Date	Sheet	Scale
January 2023	A1	1:100
Drg No.	Rev.	Drawn
2023-2760-01	A	NAW

A - 21/02/2023 - OPENINGS AMENDED



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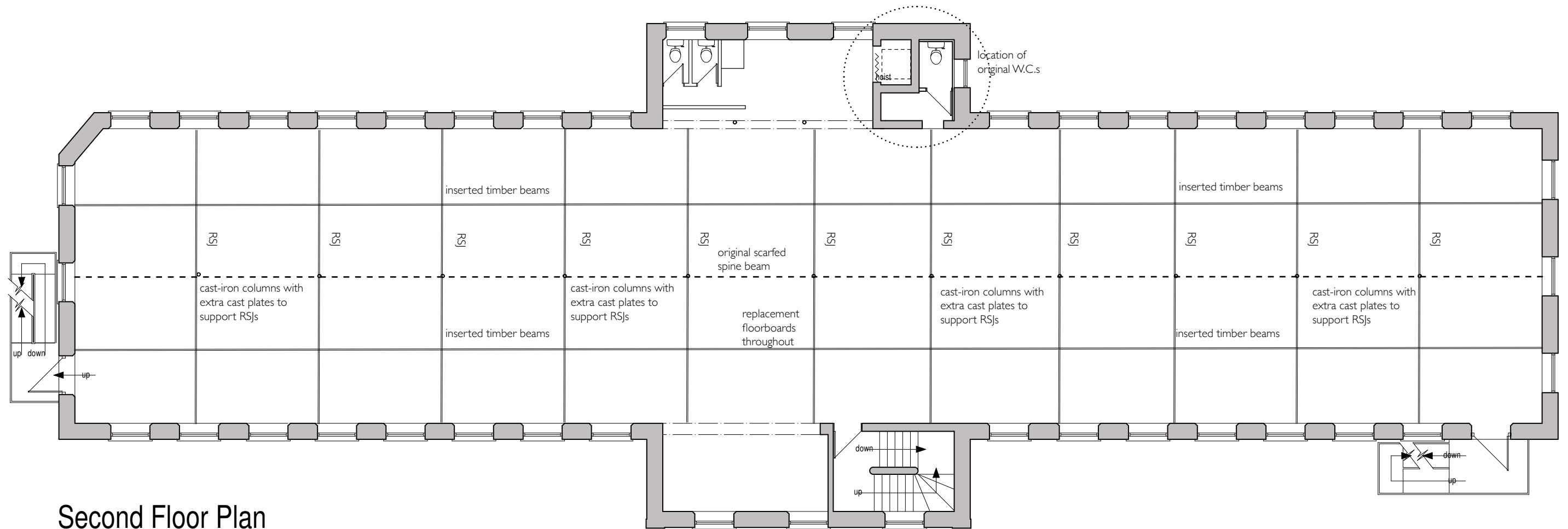
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Second Floor Plan

Existing Conditions Ground, First and Second Floor Plan

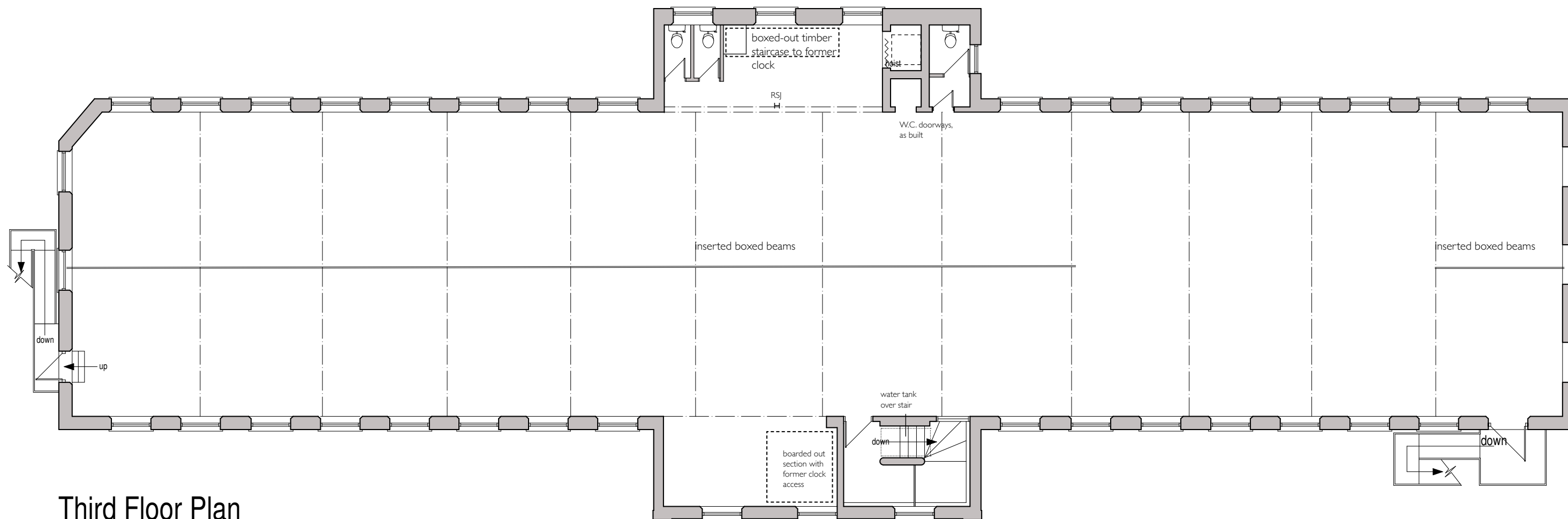
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Drg No.	Rev.	Drawn
2023-2760-01	A	NAW
A - 21/02/2023 - OPENINGS AMENDED		



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Third Floor Plan

Existing Conditions		
Third, Void and Roof Plan		
Date	Sheet	Scale
January 2023	A1	1:100
Drg No.	Rev.	Drawn
2023-2760-02	-	NAW
A -		




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