

Oldham HMR Pathfinder Heritage Assessment

Hatherhaw & Fitton Hill Executive Summary

May 2007



Lathams

CONTENTS

1.00	INTRODUCTION	1
2.00	OLDHAM HMRP AREA	3
3.00	OLDHAM	5
4.00	HATHERSHAW & FITTON HILL	7

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.00 INTRODUCTION

Background

Oldham and Rochdale Partners in Action have commissioned a series of heritage assessments of the Oldham Rochdale Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder (HMRP) area, one of nine Partnership areas where the housing market has been identified by the Government as weak and in need of fundamental change.

The aim of the Partnership is to enable the delivery of a high quality, sustainable urban environment which addresses the problem of concentrations of poor and outmoded housing. An extensive series of actions that will reverse decline and reinvigorate the housing market are planned, which will involve strategic interventions in a number of neighbourhoods, including that of Hathershaw and Fitton Hill.

A combination of refurbishment, demolition and new building is being used to replace dated, unpopular housing of all types and periods with modern sustainable accommodation, supported by other initiatives such as Neighbourhood Renewal and New Deal for Communities. The aim is to deliver over a 10–15 year period a clean, safe, healthy and attractive environment in which people can take pride.

Recognising and building on the heritage value of the existing communities is a key component of the overall strategy for renewal. This is why the Partnership supports the need for heritage assessments which can be used to inform spatial planning and development decisions at a variety of levels, from the masterplanning of whole neighbourhoods to the reuse and refurbishment of individual buildings. Consultants were therefore appointed to carry out intensive assessments of the four ‘first wave’ neighbourhoods in Oldham, Rochdale and Middleton, within the context of an extensive assessment of the Oldham–Rochdale HMRP area as a whole. The same team were subsequently commissioned to examine the heritage of the Hathershaw and Fitton Hill neighbourhood.

Approach

The extensive assessment was required in order to establish an overview that would give an initial impression of the heritage of the HMRP area, its value and level of survival. Research and fieldwork were brought together so as to encapsulate in writing those attributes which, in heritage terms, define the identity of the three component towns: Oldham, Rochdale and Middleton. The aim was to explain why the towns are as they appear today and to provide broad recommendations as to how significance could inform the decisions of the Partnership with respect to the Borough as a whole. Included in the report — and summarised below — are the consultants’ findings on the HMRP area as a whole (section 2) and Oldham (section 3), albeit modified to include specific reference to Hathershaw and Fitton Hill.

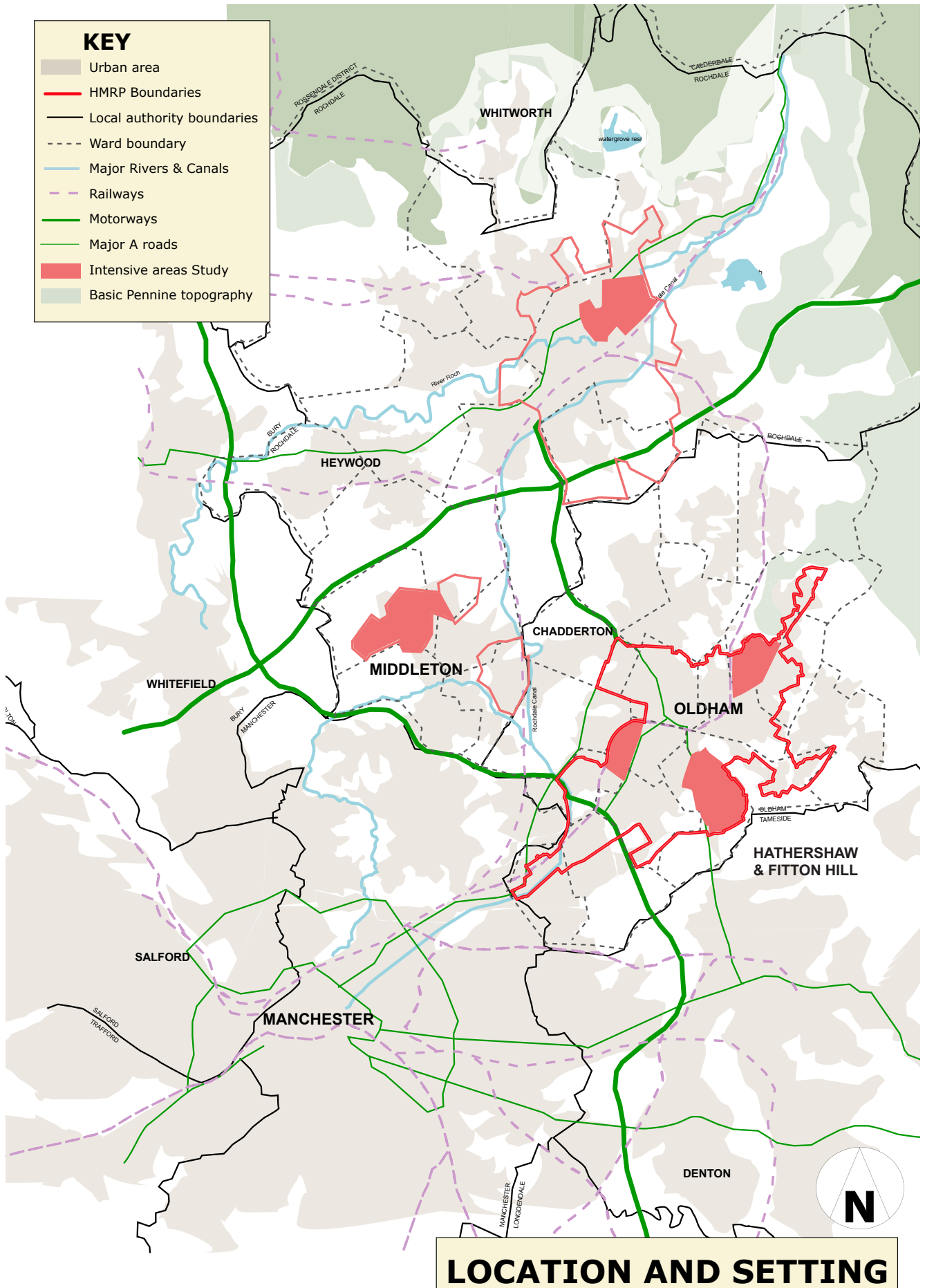
Intensive assessment defines the heritage value of Hathershaw and Fitton Hill in a way which can inform the regeneration of individual areas, streets and buildings, even where clearance has already been agreed in principle. Research and fieldwork underpinned an objective assessment process which led to the categorisation of buildings, features, streets and spaces in a way which will enable the heritage assessment to be used as a practical development control tool.

2.00 THE OLDHAM–ROCHDALE HMRP AREA

The Oldham–Rochdale HMRP area lies within the Metropolitan Boroughs of Oldham and Rochdale. Within the region are the densely settled towns of Rochdale, Oldham, Chadderton, Middleton and Royton, and former villages such as Failsworth, Shaw and Crompton, all characterised by a period of rapid industrial growth which began in the late 18th century and continued into the 20th. It is a diffuse landscape whose character is shaped by an often dramatic interaction between topography and development, crisscrossed by Motorways and major roads yet in many places still rural. One can be within a few kilometres of the centres of Oldham, Rochdale or Middleton and yet in the wild and open Pennine environment which provides the backdrop for their shared and separate heritage.



06-45 *Maple Mills (centre with chimney), Belgrave Mills (left) and Earl Mill (right) with distant views of the Pennines, as seen from Oldham town centre*



Location Plan showing Oldham, Rochdale and Middleton in context with HMRP boundaries and intensive study areas highlighted

3.00 OLDHAM

The Oldham HMRP Area embraces virtually the whole of the town of Oldham as well as the outlying though now connected settlements of Hollinwood and Failsworth, and a large part of Chadderton. Moorland hamlets such as Watersheddings and Sholver are also included. It is a diverse, complex and extensively built-up area which extends from the low ground of the valley of the River Medlock some 10km northeast to the Pennine Moors, and approximately 3km each side of Oldham town centre.

The significance of Oldham lies in the way in which its fabric illustrates the social and economic development of the town in the period from c.1850 to 1914, and to a lesser extent beyond. It was the multi-storey mills, each with their mill lodges, the forest of mill chimneys, and the associated rows of uniform red-brick houses, that gave Oldham its special character, and which in many ways still does. Also, the way in which such development was shaped by the topography of a landscape which was not an obvious site for what would become the most important cotton spinning town in the world, other than for the combination of coal and technology which gave rise to the urban landscape of Oldham today.

Having studied and analysed the heritage of Oldham, it is recommended that, within the context of the limitations of the process of extensive assessment:

- (1) An intensive heritage assessment should be undertaken to inform any masterplanning or detailed implementation plans being developed for areas considered for Housing Market Renewal, particularly if these involve the Werneth–Coppice area, the periphery of Alexandra Park, Glodwick, and Greenacres–Clarksfield area.
- (2) Close groupings of mills and housing within areas considered for Housing Market Renewal should be presumed to be of historic value unless intensive historic assessment demonstrates otherwise. Housing of limited architectural or historic interest should be understood in relation to the way it works in terms of the setting of the mill and the wider townscape. Such understanding should be used to inform the design of any replacement development.
- (3) The planning and design of any intervention within areas considered for Housing Market Renewal should respect any historic street patterns and property boundaries that are known to exist, or which are revealed via the process of intensive heritage assessment.
- (4) There is an extreme presumption in favour of the retention of any listed buildings which lie within or adjacent to any areas of Housing Market Renewal. The settings of all listed buildings should be assessed as a part of the process of intensive heritage assessment with due regard to the recommendations of PPG15.

- (5) In formulating proposals for change in areas of Housing Market Renewal, there should be a general presumption in favour of the retention of churches, pubs, clubs, schools, retail premises of note (e.g. Co-operative stores), and similarly distinctive buildings, pending the outcome of intensive heritage assessment.
- (6) No mill which is capable of continued and sustainable use (or re-use) should be demolished, though this does not preclude the selective removal of parts of any complex which has been extended and altered, subject to intensive historic appraisal and — where appropriate — the preparation of a conservation plan.
- (7) A detailed survey of all surviving mills within the HMRP area should be undertaken with a view to establishing the extent to which this important aspect of the heritage of Oldham has been lost or is being progressively eroded. Such a survey should also aim to identify any mills which warrant consideration for listing, with a focus on early mills (pre-1860) such as notable later examples.
- (8) Subject to a formal appraisal process which accords with current English Heritage Guidance, consideration should be given to the designation of the greater part of the Werneth–Coppice area as a Conservation Area.

Finally, the clearance of any housing of any age should only take place after a desk-based archaeological appraisal, similar to ones which has already been undertaken in respect of the Derker and Werneth Freehold areas.



06-02 Bye-law housing: Forest Street (1900–11) looking north

4.00 HATHERSHAW AND FITTON HILL

The Hathershaw and Fitton Hill area typifies the expansion of Oldham between 1870 and 1914, the final phase of its growth as a major industrial town prior to its consolidation in the 1920s and 30s, and post-WW2 encroachment on the surrounding countryside, though with a number of distinct aspects to its character. It is an area where significant change is anticipated over the coming years.

Location and Description

Hathershaw and Fitton Hill lies south of the centre of Oldham, stretching some 2 km along the busy Ashton Road (A627). Buildings line the majority of the Ashton Road as it drops some 50 m from its summit down into the valley of the River Medlock. Other buildings occupy the upper slopes of the prominent spur which continues the high ground of Oldham Edge, an elevated location which affords a dramatic sense of connection to the wider landscape. There are long views towards the Pennines and central Manchester. This is in marked contrast to the tight, intimate character of much of the urban landscape with its short, closed views relieved only by a small number of local landmark buildings and glimpses of the towering mills. The openness of the adjacent countryside works in combination with the topography to give the area a strong sense of containment, especially so in the case of Fitton Hill which is almost entirely disconnected from the older streets of Hathershaw. Fragments of an older past can still be found within the predominantly Victorian and later fabric of the area.

Statutory Designations

There is one listed building within the Hathershaw and Fitton Hill Study area, the Grade II* Hathershaw Hall on Hollins Road. No other Statutory Designations (e.g. Conservation Areas or scheduled ancient monuments) related directly to the heritage of the Hathershaw and Fitton Hill area.

Historic Origins and Development

It was not until the 1870s that the old rural landscape of large, generally regular fields dotted with coal mines and brickworks succumbed to development. The decade was one of intense development activity. Copster Hill Road was laid out and mills erected to the west of the Ashton Road, with housing to support the growing workforce built on the slopes to the east, including some middle class villas on Belgrave Road. Mills, housing and shops also spread south along the frontage of the main road, though only as far as the ancient parish boundary between Oldham and Ashton-under-Lyne. St. Paul's church dates from 1879.

Consolidation occurred over the 1880s, with further mills being erected on land between Honeywell Lane and the parish boundary. Ashton Road Congregational Chapel and School also date from this time, along with the now demolished Bethesda Independent Methodist Chapel on Broadway Street.

Building activity in the 1890s was mainly confined to residential and retail development with the area to the west of Ashton Road being filled-out with terraced housing, some built by the Oldham Industrial Co-operative Society; further Co-operative housing was built on Belgrave Road.

A small amount of development also occurred on the Ashton side of the parish boundary, including the Hathershaw Hotel. A Board school and a public baths were also built, both now demolished.

The availability of land on the extreme edge of the Borough meant that Hathershaw saw the building of some of the last great mills in Oldham, with the boom years of the early 20th century giving rise to the construction of seven new mills of advanced design, including Bell, Maple and the later Belgrave Mills. A second Maple Mill was erected in 1915, the last to be built within the Borough of Oldham. The period between WW1 and WW2 saw the building of large areas of Corporation Housing, some of it on the sites of demolished mills and old brickworks, as well as a rare example of mill-company housing centred on Belgrave Avenue. Few non-residential buildings were built during the interwar years, the only examples being the bus depot on Crofton Street and the present Methodist Chapel on the corner of Emma Street and Honeywell Lane.

Clearance and redevelopment has since the early 1950s occurred across the whole Hathershaw area. Mills, schools and housing have all disappeared. However, the greatest post-WW2 change in the area came with the construction over the 1950s and 60s of the Fitton Hill estate, the layout of which obliterated all traces of the old landscape, though not the line of the former parish boundary.

Map 03 shows which areas have been redeveloped in recent years, along with the approximate dates of the construction of all buildings seen on the ground today.



06-83 *Maple Mill 02 (1915), the last mill to be built in the old Borough of Oldham and the last to be designed by Philip Sydney Stott*

Oldham – Hathershaw & Fitton Hill

Map 03: HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

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KEY

Buildings (dates)

- Before c.1845
- c.1845 to 1879
- 1879 to 1891
- 1891 to 1906
- 1906 to 1916
- 1916 to 1932-33
- 1932-33 to 1952-53
- After 1952-53

Land

- Redeveloped since 1932-33
- Undeveloped e.g. important gardens

Industrial Sites

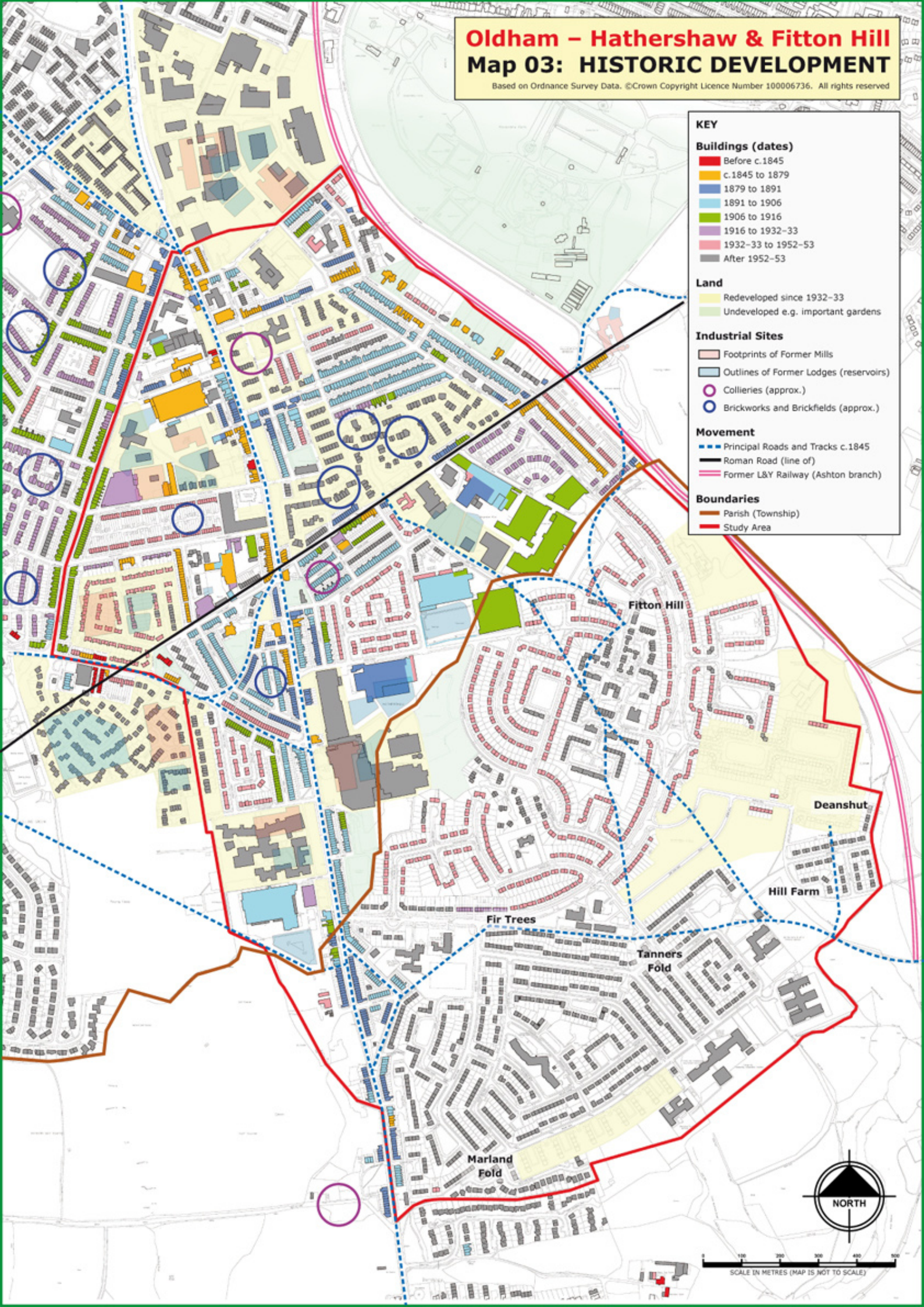
- Footprints of Former Mills
- Outlines of Former Lodges (reservoirs)
- Collieries (approx.)
- Brickworks and Brickfields (approx.)

Movement

- Principal Roads and Tracks c.1845
- Roman Road (line of)
- Former L&Y Railway (Ashton branch)

Boundaries

- Parish (Township)
- Study Area



Fitton Hill

Deanshute

Hill Farm

Fir Trees

Tanners Fold

Marland Fold



0 100 200 300 400 500
SCALE IN METRES (MAP IS NOT TO SCALE)



06-51 *Hathershaw Hotel*

Archaeological Potential

An archaeological assessment based on archive sources, published data and the recent research frameworks suggests the Hathershaw and Fitton Hill has only slight potential for archaeological survival, perhaps greatest for areas of Roman settlement and coal mining, though with some potential for identifying Iron settlement. The potential for medieval evidence is uncertain. However, post medieval and industrial archaeology is likely to survive, including the remains of demolished mills and evidence of industrial sites which have survived e.g. Hathershaw Iron works. Patches of undeveloped land are rare and always of possible interest.

Spatial Analysis

The Hathershaw and Fitton Hill area can be described in terms of the following typology of spatial characteristics:

- Areas of dense, tightly-packed terraced housing arranged so as to define an orthogonal grid of streets. Individual buildings are generally subservient to the whole, defining and containing space. This is notwithstanding small pockets of looser development, and small scale landmark buildings such as corner shops and the pubs on Ashton Road.

- Clusters of relatively low density housing that generally sit as objects within space, and where the definition of streets and places is far less marked, though not entirely absent. These areas take a number of forms including semi-detached villas in their own gardens, post-1919 garden suburb type estates, closes and cul-de-sacs of low-rise housing of relatively recent date, and the curving streets of the Radburn-type layout of the Fitton Hill estate.
- Large areas of land given over to a variety of industrial, commercial and storage uses, often focused on the sites of surviving and former mills.
- Pockets of open land which occupy the space between and adjacent areas of housing and other uses, and which provide the sites for large, standalone — and often public — buildings such as churches and schools.
- Swathes and patches of green space which surround, penetrate, relieve or otherwise interrupt the built environment in all its forms.

Underlying these spatial types is the rolling topography of the spurs and valleys, which often serves to distort the streetscape in a way which sometimes causes the built form to negotiate the slopes in a way which adds interest to otherwise unremarkable groups of buildings. The interaction between the sloping topography and built form also serves to create a number of distinctive views and vistas, both within and out of the area; there is also a wide variety of enclosed and semi-enclosed views which unfold while moving around the Fitton Hill estate.



06-56 Co-op butchers shop, reading room and attached cottages on Urmson Street by Wild & Collins (1894)

Taking this combination of spatial characteristics, topography and views as a whole leads to the clear definition of nine separate character zones within the Hathershaw and Fitton Hill area, the boundaries of which are shown on Map 04 along with areas of greenery, landmark buildings, key views and other features. It is the broad definition of these areas which forms the basis for understanding in detail the character of the Hathershaw and Fitton Hill area, and the extent to which this is a product of architectural, historic or townscape interest. An in–depth discussion of each area is provided in the report.

Oldham – Hathershaw & Fitton Hill

Map 04: CHARACTER ANALYSIS

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KEY

Spatial Attributes

- Buildings and Structures
- Greenery and Green Spaces
- Traditional (enclosed) Building Line
- Key Junctions (focal points)
- Development Sites

Landmarks

- Major i.e. Oldham-wide impact
- Local

Views

- Enclosed
- Panoramic

Boundaries

- Character Areas
- Ashton Road Corridor
- Borough Mill Triangle
- Ashton Road East and Belgrave Road
- Hollins Road West
- Hollins Road East
- North of Honeywell Lane
- Honeywell Lane to Urmson Street
- Township Boundary Mills
- Fitton Hill
- Study Area

Local Landmarks

1. Junction PH
2. Copsterhill Primitive Methodist CH
3. Copster Hall
4. Borough Mill
5. Castle (Hathershaw) Mill
6. Hathershaw Mill Entrance Block
7. Ashton Road Congregational Church
8. Crete Street Co-op
9. Hathershaw Board School (Demolished)
10. Community Centre
11. Cheetham's Mineral Water Works
12. Colliers Arms PH
13. Hathershaw Hall
14. Dairy (NDC Offices)
15. Ashton Road Co-op
16. Belgrave Mill No. 1
17. Belgrave Mill No. 2
18. Belgrave Mill No. 3
19. Belgrave Mill No. 4
20. Earl Mill
21. Honeywell Arms
22. Park Cakes
23. Bell Mill
24. Hathershaw PH
25. Church Of The Holy Rosary
26. St. Cuthbert, Fitton Hill
27. Fitton Arms PH
28. Fitton Hill Library & Centre
29. Ace Of Spades PH

Major Landmarks

1. St Paul's, Ashton Road
2. Maple Mill Chimney
3. Maple Mill No. 1
4. Maple Mill No. 2
5. Tower of Belgrave Mill No. 2
6. Tower of Belgrave Mill No. 3



0 100 200 300 400 500
SCALE IN METRES (MAP IS NOT TO SCALE)

Materials and Construction

In terms of materials it is brick and Welsh slate that dominate in the older areas of Hathershaw. Brick is also the dominant walling material in Fitton Hill, though with a wider variety of colours and textures. Earlier buildings use bricks which were made locally, as opposed to later buildings which use a red Accrington brick. A standardised range of stone lintels and sills, and a limited number of patterns of decorative door heads offsets the simplicity of the brickwork. Windows and doors are in the main set back, reflecting the former presence of rebated sash boxes and door frames, and providing shadow and modelling to the facades.

Stone does not generally feature as a walling material other than on older or higher status buildings such as Hathershaw Hall, though there are exceptions. It is however used as a decorative material and where large-scale retaining walls form a part of the character of streets or spaces. There are also isolated examples of stone as a roof covering, rare survivals from the rural past. Stone setts can be seen in many of the back lanes to the bye-law housing and elsewhere.

Post war building generally follows-through with the use of brick, though with concrete tiles, plain clay tiles and other materials used for roofing in lieu of natural slates. There are also isolated examples of horizontal boarding, and on more recent buildings the use of rendered finishes and metal roofs.

Greenery and Green Spaces

Other than a number of pockets of left-over land which have in some instances been deliberately landscaped, there is little planned green space within the Hathershaw area. The greens of the Phoenix Bowling Club and Hathershaw House are the only examples of historic value, though some of the properties on Belgrave Road have large untouched gardens. Allotments on Eve Street represent the remnants of the garden of Brook House, a rare pocket of undeveloped land which is of historic — and potentially archaeological — interest. There is a similar patch of untouched land stretching from Earl Mill to Park Cakes Bakery. Greenery is however an essential characteristic of the Fitton Hill estate, reflecting the ethos of the post-war planning theory and practice.

Oldham – Hathershaw & Fitton Hill

Map 05: HISTORIC LOSS

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KEY

Mills: Demolished

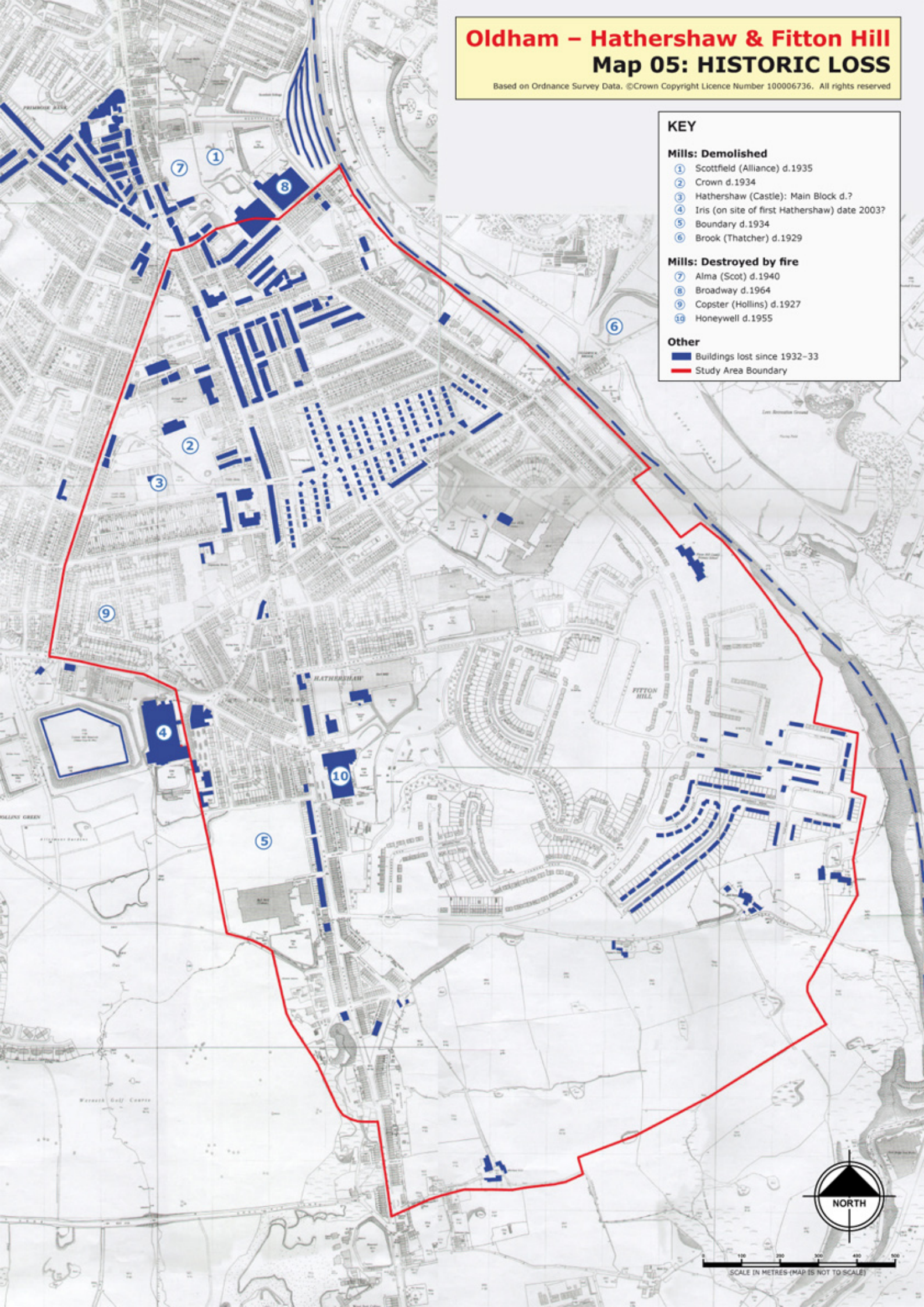
- ① Scottfield (Alliance) d.1935
- ② Crown d.1934
- ③ Hathershaw (Castle): Main Block d.?
- ④ Iris (on site of first Hathershaw) date 2003?
- ⑤ Boundary d.1934
- ⑥ Brook (Thatcher) d.1929

Mills: Destroyed by fire

- ⑦ Alma (Scot) d.1940
- ⑧ Broadway d.1964
- ⑨ Copster (Hollins) d.1927
- ⑩ Honeywell d.1955

Other

- Buildings lost since 1932-33
- Study Area Boundary



Survival and Condition

While analysis and observation reveals a large proportion of the late 19th and early 20th century housing within the Hathershaw area to have survived relatively intact (Map 05), a significant number of pockets of clearance and redevelopment have resulted in the fragmentation of the traditional, tight-grained urban landscape and in some areas the erosion of the underlying street pattern. As regards non-residential buildings, it is the mills which are the most notable survivals, with only one — Maple — retaining its chimney. Religious buildings have also in the main endured. All pre-20th century public houses have survived, along with the purpose-built Co-op.

The greatest loss to the historic environment has been the almost total replacement of the original windows and doors to all pre-WW2 housing, a massive impact on the character of Hathershaw which has eroded its historic and architectural interest. One traditional shop front survives in its entirety (394 Ashton Road), and only the Colliers Arms and Hathershaw Hotel retain a significant proportion of their original external detailing, though mills and other non-residential buildings retain much of their original fabric. The extent of the survival of setted lanes and other forms of traditional paving is reasonably high in comparison with similar areas of Oldham,.

Overview and Summarisation of Significance

Hathershaw and Fitton Hill is in the first instance characterised by the spread of mills and industrial sites which severs the area along the line of the ancient parish-township boundary between Oldham from Ashton under Lyne. Separation is both physical and perceptual, with the Fitton Hill area to the south having almost no relationship in terms of either character or historic development with the older area of Hathershaw to the north. The sense of containment is intensified by the isolation of Fitton Hill from the surrounding countryside and the strip of development which fronts Ashton Road and associated streets to the east.

Ashton Road also creates a sense of disconnection between the east and west parts of Hathershaw, with the ancient line of Honeywell Lane–Hollins Road creating a lesser but equally clear separation between north and south. There is however a good sense of visual connection throughout the area, a function of the scale and size of the mills, and the relationship between built form and topography. Otherwise, the Hathershaw area is characterised by dispersed clusters of tightly-knit 19th century housing, between which lie small pockets of industrial or institutional development, and pockets of low density interwar and post-war housing. Industrial development marks the edges of much the area. Non-industrial landmarks and focal points are concentrated on Ashton Road which with its churches, pubs and parades of shops serves to unify as much as it separates, despite the lack of continuity of the traditional street frontage and the heavy traffic. Residential areas are by comparison quiet and somewhat secluded, though the rich network of streets and the long views afforded by the topography maintains a sense of connection to the wider urban landscape and rural landscape.

Taken as a whole, the spatial and historic complexity of the Hathershaw area illustrates in microcosm the rapid expansion of Oldham over the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with urban development overlain on an older, rural landscape of fields, farms and early industry. In contrast, the character of Fitton Hill is almost totally disconnected from the town as a whole, which with its sense of leafy enclosure and inward looking—areas of green has little to distinguish it from similar places.

The special architectural, historic and townscape interest (significance) of the Hathershaw and Fitton Hill area is summarised graphically in the form of Map 06. All buildings have been classified in accordance with criteria which are defined in the report, with detailed summaries provided in respect of all areas, as well as topographical features and negative buildings or spaces.

Reference should be made to Section 6.11 of Oldham HMR Pathfinder Assessment report 02 for detailed information on the heritage value (significance) of:

- 6.11A Listed buildings
- 6.11B Ashton Road, north of Honeywell Lane
- 6.11C Copsterhill Road and connecting streets
- 6.11D Villa Road, Belgrave Road and related streets
- 6.11E Hollins Road and Ashton Road east
- 6.11F Ashton Road to Cardwell Street
- 6.11G Ashton Road, south of Bellfield Road
- 6.11H Belgrave Avenue
- 6.11I Mills
- 6.11J Fitton Hill
- 6.11K Topographical features
- 6.11L Negative buildings and spaces

Circled numbers relate to the number of criteria met in terms of those buildings assessed as being of Clear Value.

Oldham – Hathershaw & Fitton Hill

Map 06: HERITAGE VALUE

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KEY

Buildings

- Protected (Listed)
- High Heritage Value
- Clear Heritage Value
- Townscape Value
- Indeterminate Heritage Value
- Little Known Heritage Value
- No Heritage Value
- Negative Heritage or Townscape Impact

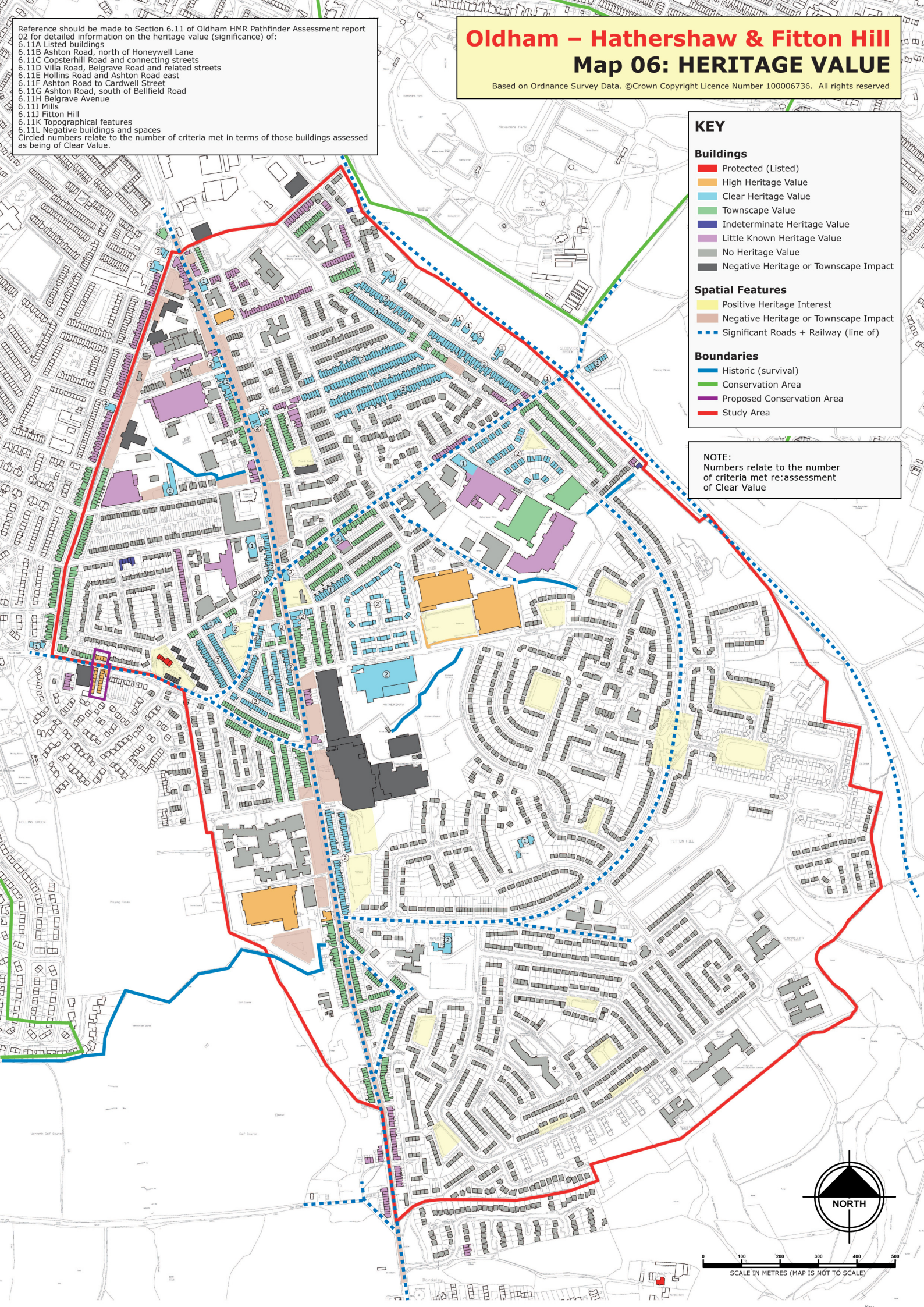
Spatial Features

- Positive Heritage Interest
- Negative Heritage or Townscape Impact
- Significant Roads + Railway (line of)

Boundaries

- Historic (survival)
- Conservation Area
- Proposed Conservation Area
- Study Area

NOTE:
Numbers relate to the number of criteria met re:assessment of Clear Value



Recommendations

The purpose of understanding the significance of the heritage of the Hathershaw and Fitton Hill area in relation to the HMRP and New Deal programmes is primarily to enable an appreciation of how one might inform and enhance the other. However, as area-wide proposals are at an advanced stage, the crucial issue is to evaluate the impact on the historic environment of the Hathershaw and Fitton Hill Spatial Masterplan.

In broad terms, the Masterplan sits comfortably with the significance of the Hathershaw and Fitton Hill area. This is notwithstanding the potential loss of a number of buildings of clear heritage value within the Borough Mill Triangle. However, given that the pattern of development as shown is intended as a guide to future intervention rather than a fixed and immutable proposal, this does not appear to present a problem. Given that most decisions in respect of the areas identified for general environmental improvement are yet to be taken, localised areas of conflict between heritage value and future change could be avoided by ensuring that the assessment of heritage value — as illustrated by Map 06 — is used to inform the location and nature of any redevelopment. This would mean the need to work towards the retention of a number of buildings of clear heritage value.



06-73 Grade II* listed Hathershaw Hall (17th century)

Account must also be taken of any identified townscape qualities within areas of potential clearance, most specifically the way in which traditional building lines enclose and define the street pattern, and the way in which the scale and massing of buildings of townscape value often provide the setting for the buildings of clear or high heritage value. Historically important roads and tracks, and the fragmentary remains of old boundaries should also be considered. The importance of the heritage assessment in terms of some areas may be pivotal, as it clearly suggests a programme which combines sustainable refurbishment with pockets of clearance and small scale infill. It is assumed that the status of St Paul's Church and the Congregational Chapel as landmark buildings are such as to ensure their retention. Intentions regarding the old Mineral Water Works on Hadfield Street are unclear though it is noted that, in terms of the heritage assessment, every attempt should be made to retain this distinctive industrial building.

Use of the heritage assessment in informing the implementation of the Masterplan may also be of value in mitigating the negative heritage or townscape impact of specific buildings or spaces. In this context, enhancement of the Ashton Road is seen as paramount with all negative gap sites having a potential role to play in calming traffic, reducing noise and air pollution, creating a better pedestrian environment, and enhancing the setting of buildings or townscape of heritage value.

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

It is recommended that the following buildings should be further investigated with a view to listing:

- St Pauls Church
- the Hathershaw Hotel
- Bell Mill, and
- the Maple Mill complex, including the retaining wall supporting its lodge.

The area containing Copster Place (just beyond the study area boundary) and associated buildings on either side of Hollins Road is recommended to warrant consideration for designation as a Conservation Area.

Archaeology

In light of the potential survival of rare evidence of prehistoric, Roman and Post Roman archaeology, redevelopment in the Hathershaw and Fitton Hill area should include consideration of the archaeological potential of individual sites under PPG 16. Evidence of industrial archaeology is also likely to have survived and should as a matter of course also be assessed in detail as part of any future development.

Future Research Strategy

In heritage terms, it is felt that there is little need for any further research at an area level, save that there should be a presumption in favour of at least a desk-based archaeological assessment of all former industrial sites. A number of buildings and sites are considered to warrant further research into their historic development, condition and future usage in order that a fuller understanding might inform development proposals. A formal appraisal should also be carried out in conjunction with the recommended designation of Copster Place as a Conservation Area.

CONCLUSION

Although the Fitton Hill estate is not without interest, the majority of buildings and features of heritage value lie within the Hathershaw part of the study area. These take in a number of important mills and other landmark structures, industrial and commercial buildings, and a range of housing types including examples of early social and company housing. There are also spaces, roadways and boundary lines of significance. Elements which have a negative impact on the heritage value of the area are also present. Impact assessment has confirmed that the understanding and identification of these various strands of heritage has the capacity to inform the future implementation of the Hathershaw and Fitton Hill Spatial Masterplan, which in general terms sits comfortably with the findings of this assessment. It therefore concluded that — in heritage terms — the opportunities afforded by the HMR and associated programmes have the capacity to be of positive benefit to an area which typifies the development of Oldham at the time of its pre-eminence as the most important cotton spinning town in the world.