



© Manchester Life Development Company



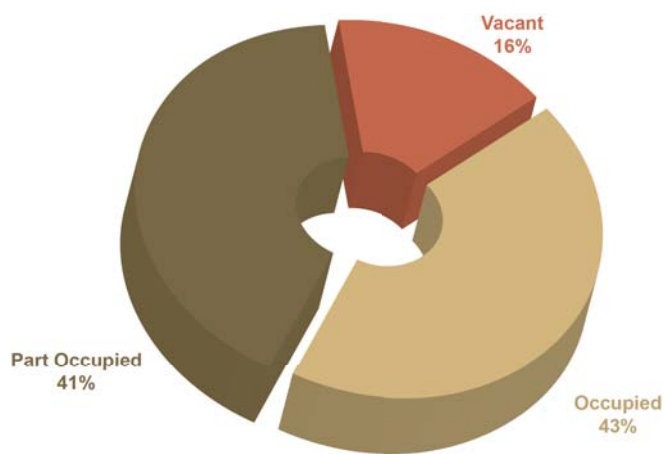
© Urban Splash

A newly completed apartment in the repurposed Murrays' Mills (left) and a view across one of the floors in Brownsfield Mill (right) at an early stage in its refurbishment to apartments. These flagship schemes are proving crucial to the repopulation and regeneration of Ancoats as a new focus of growth in Manchester city centre

Historic Textile Mills of Greater Manchester: Survey Review and Heritage Audit Executive Summary

- The total floor space in historic textile mills across Greater Manchester is approximately 3,759,800 m² (40,473,164 ft²), including a proportion that has been adapted for residential use. Of this estimated total, some **1,158,220 m² (12,466,974 ft²)** appears to be **vacant or under-used**, equating to approximately 31% of the total commercial/industrial floor space in mills across the county. These figures may be compared with those calculated for historic mills in Lancashire, where an estimated 848,212 m² (9,130,078 ft²) of a total 4,295,307 m² (46,234,300 ft²) of floor space was under-used or vacant in 2012-13;

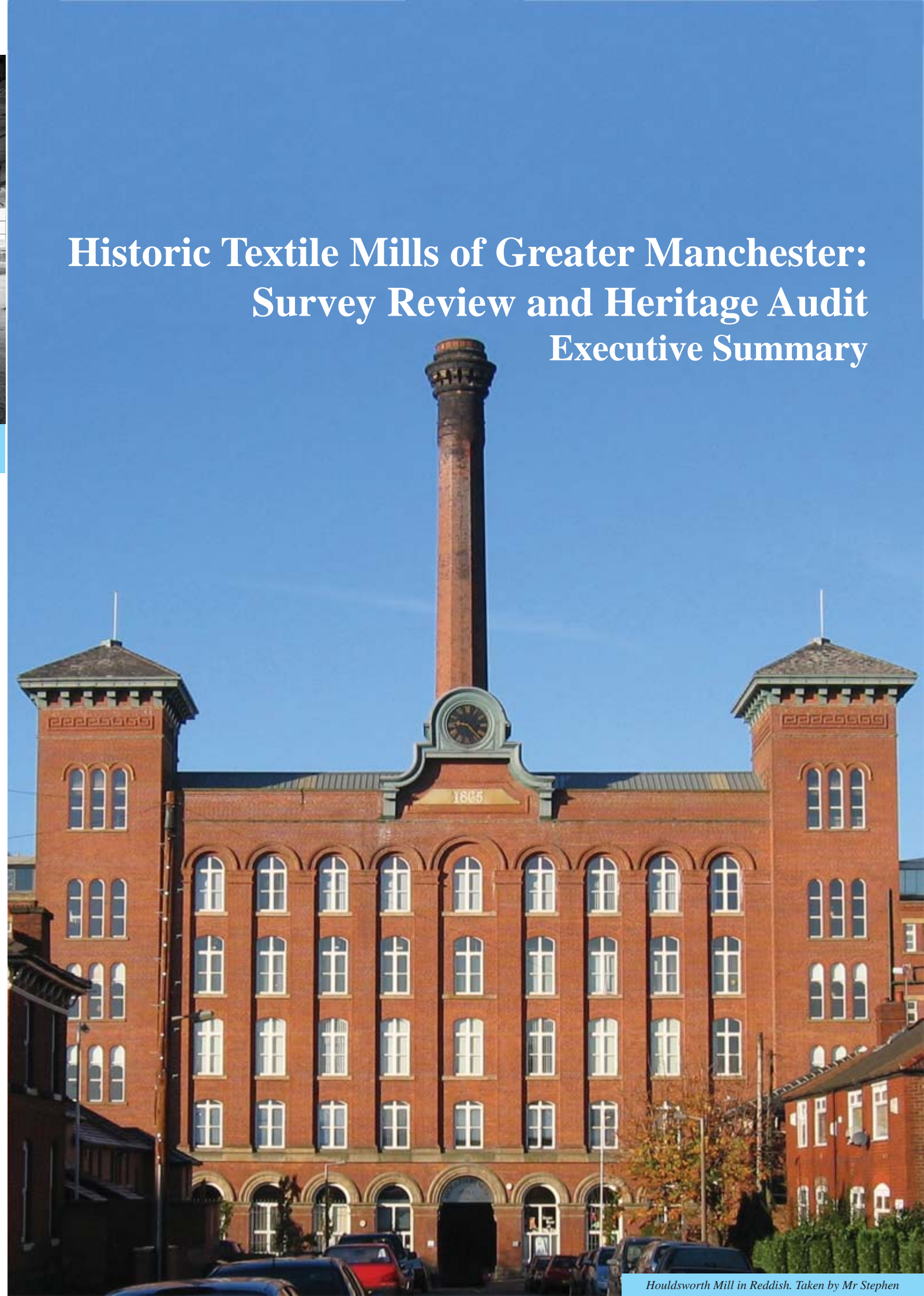
- The occupancy rates varied between the nine boroughs in Greater Manchester, with approximately **82%** of the floor space in mills in Oldham in **economic use**, compared with 47% in the borough of Wigan. However, several empty mills with large floor plates are in the process of refurbishment for residential use, with a particular focus in Central Manchester. In Ancoats, the repurposing of historic mills has enabled a thriving new community of residents to become established in this depopulated district, providing a model for the regeneration of Manchester's satellite towns.



Occupancy rates of mills in Greater Manchester



The Grade II* listed Brownsfield Mill in Ancoats, Manchester, during its on-going conversion by Urban Splash to provide 30 residential apartments



Holdsworth Mill in Reddish. Taken by Mr Stephen



The Grade II* listed cotton mill in Miles Platting, Manchester aptly described as 'a building of great presence and a landmark in the area' © University of Salford

The size and complexity of textile mills increased sharply during the second half of the 19th century in response to technological developments in structural engineering and the machinery employed in the mills. Increased specialisation of the various branches of the industry led to a prevalence of multi-story cotton-spinning mills across what is now Greater Manchester, with north-east Lancashire gaining renown as the key centre for the weaving trade.

A survey of Lancashire's mills in 2012-13 estimated that there was over 800,000m² (8,611,128ft²) of vacant floor space



The covered Newtown Mill (also known as Lowry Mill), a locally listed building in Swinton, Salford, houses superior office accommodation © University of Salford

Executive Summary

The successful introduction of the factory-based system to the production of textile goods in the 1770s led to a surge of mill building that signalled the transformation of north-west England from a sparsely populated region to a manufacturing centre of international repute. The earliest textile mills were prevalent along watercourses, often remote from established settlements, reflecting their dependence on flowing water as a source of motive power. The application of steam engines to the industry in the final years of the 18th century led to the birth of the urban textile mill, resulting in the rapid industrial growth of towns, and the creation of the industrial landscapes that still characterise tracts of the manufacturing belt of Lancashire, Yorkshire and East Cheshire.



The industrial settlement of Harle Syke near Burnley, provides a fine example of an historic industrial townscape of the Lancashire weaving district © Historic England

Attaining maturity as a building form during the Edwardian era, surviving examples of multi-storey mills continue to make a hugely significant contribution to the historic character of their locale, in both rural and urban environments. A comprehensive review of historic textile mills across Greater Manchester that was carried out in 2016-17 has provided a valuable insight into the extent and condition of this important heritage resource.

A total of 540 historic textile mills survive across Greater Manchester with an estimated 1,158,220m² (12,466,974ft²) of vacant floor space

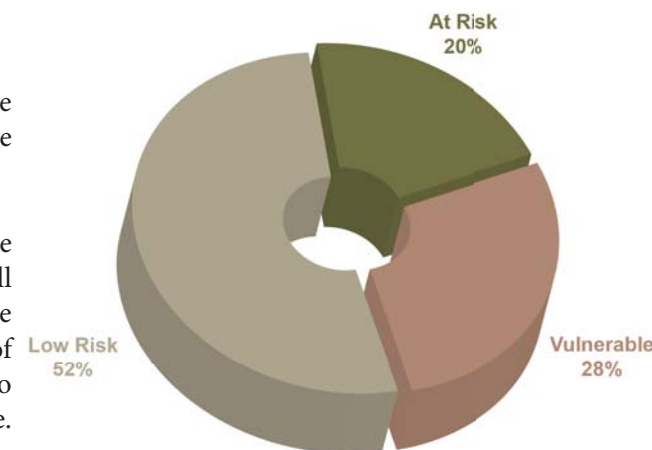
Greater Manchester's Historic Mill's Survey Review

In response to the widespread loss of textile mills following the 20th-century demise of the industry, the former Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) instigated a large-scale mill survey across Greater Manchester during the 1980s, which concluded that 973 mill complexes survived intact. The survey also identified the most important examples, which resulted in the statutory designation of 90 mills as listed buildings.

An urgent need to review the data from the 1980s survey after 25 years of attrition and loss of historic buildings led the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) to submit a proposal to Historic England to review the stock condition of the textile mills across the county. This strategic study followed in the wake of an in-depth survey of the historic textile mills in Lancashire, which identified more than 500 surviving sites. The review of Greater Manchester's textile mills revealed that a similar number of sites survive, with a total of 540 mills being identified across the county.

Summarising other key findings from the review:

- there has been a **45% reduction** in the stock of historic mills since the 1980s survey, with average loss rates varying between the county's nine metropolitan boroughs having extant mills;
- of the total stock of extant mills in Greater Manchester, **20%** have been found to be '**At Risk**' of complete loss, equating to 108 mill complexes, with a further 28% considered to be '**Vulnerable**' to change or loss. Many of the mills in these categories lie in the urban centres of Bolton, Salford, Stockport and Dukinfield, although small clusters also exist in the Pennine valleys in the boroughs of Rochdale and Tameside.
- more than **50%** of the total stock is at '**Low Risk**', with some fine examples of historic mills in urban and rural areas in sustainable use;



Proportion of mills in Greater Manchester that are 'At Risk'



Eckersley's Swan Meadow Mills, a Grade II listed complex in Wigan that is largely vacant with an estimated 40,000m² of under-used floor space. These important buildings are currently at risk