

Sykeside Mill
Haslingden

A history and photographic survey

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Introduction

A photographic survey and desktop study of Sykeside Mill was undertaken for Ivan Wilson, Architects, Clitheroe, prior to delisting and demolition of the mill. It had been seriously damaged by fire and had stood derelict for a number of years prior to the survey. Both survey and study were undertaken by Mike Clarke in March/April 2002.



The mill on fire in 2000.



Aerial views of the mill in 1968 (above), and c1950 (below).



Business history

The earliest part of Sykeside Mill was built in 1836 by James Stott, one member of the partnership of Stott & Smith who were to operate the mill until 1907. Thomas Smith (1795-1875) and James Stott (1796-1880) each married a daughter of Thomas Kay, a domett manufacturer who lived at Turfcote, Haslingden. Domett is a cloth with cotton warp and woollen weft loosely woven. Thomas Smith later resided at Turfcote, James Stott living at Sykeside House which still stands on the opposite side of the road junction to the north of the mill site.

Stott and Smith began their business manufacturing dometts at Dearden Clough, Edenfield, and moved to Sykeside Mill in 1836. The mill was built on land originally owned by Thomas Kay. Stott and Smith also owned Camms Mill, Helmshore, where their products were fulled. The business was severely affected by the collapse in 1878 of their bankers, Messrs J & J Fenton & Sons of Rochdale and Heywood when it was owed £27,074. Thomas Smith was also a personal creditor for £8,079. Because of this, the business seems to have been reorganised, as several of the mules offered for sale in 1907 dated from the early 1880s. It may have been at this time that the firm added the production of flannelettes. It is also possible that the Stott family withdrew from active participation in the business around this time, Thomas Smith's two sons, George Ashworth (1836-1906) and William Henry (1847-1916), taking full responsibility for the mills' management. It was probably the death of George Ashworth Smith in 1906 which resulted in the firm being wound up.

Both the Smith and Stott families were actively involved with the development of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Haslingden and the local Mechanics Institute. Mr G A Smith was also Mayor of Haslingden in 1901 and 1902.

In 1905/7, Sykeside Mill was taken over by John Warburton Ltd, cotton spinners & manufacturers. The firm had been founded in 1859

and was based at Waterside Mill, Haslingden. John Warburton (1832-1894) came from Edenfield and trained at a cotton waste manufacturer at Bury before founding his firm at Waterside Mill. His daughter, Matilda, married Vernon Stott (1856-1938) who was a grandson of James Stott. The Warburton business was reconstructed in 1905, at which time it became associated with Highams of Accrington. Highams may have provided the finance for the purchase of Sykeside Mill and for its conversion to the production of condenser cotton products such as sheeting and blankets, though Vernon Stott may have had shares in the original Stott & Smith business which would have made the purchase easier. Highams became a private limited company in 1907, going public in 1947 and acquiring the remaining minority interest in John Warburton Ltd soon afterwards. By 1970, Sykeside Mill had some 18,296 spindles on its condenser mules (Taylor Lang) and ring frames (Platt Bros) and 357 automatic Northrop and Sulzer looms (these figures may also include Waterside Mill). At this time they were producing bedspreads, flannelette blankets and raised sheets. The mill was closed in September 1970, production being moved to Waterside and Accrington. The records of John Warburton Ltd are held in Oldham Archives.

The mill was then taken over in July 1971 by A Wills (Manchester) Ltd which by 1979 had become R & S Mills Ltd. The firm, which produced curtain fabrics, already had branches in Waterfoot (printing), Bury (dyeing and bleaching) and Oswaldtwistle (weaving). Synthetic yarns were used instead of cotton waste. At least two fires at the mill were reported in the local newspapers, in 1979 and 1984, before the mill closed in the 1990s. Further fires, in 2000 and 2001, destroyed much of the three-storey buildings.

The Buildings

The history of Sykeside Mill is, to some extent, the history of textiles in the Rossendale Valley. The Valley was an important centre for the woollen trade even after the widespread introduction of cotton into Lancashire. In the late nineteenth century it was situated between the cotton spinning area around Oldham, Bolton and Rochdale, and the weaving area of East Lancashire. Consequently it was ideally situated for the waste cotton industry, a section of the Lancashire cotton industry which was centred in Rossendale. Both the woollen and waste cotton trades produce similar types of cloth, such as sheeting and blankets, so little training was required for operatives as they moved between the two sectors.

The mill itself also reflects the development of technology within the industry. The earliest buildings are the two three-storey blocks dating from the late 1830s. At this time weaving was undertaken within multi-storey buildings, the single-storey weaving shed developing as the problems with the vibration associated with power looms increased as the speed of operation increased in the mid-nineteenth century.

The first mill was probably built in the late 1830s for Stott & Smith, who were woollen manufacturers. They also owned Cams Mill in Helmshore which was a fulling mill, and the new mill was probably used for spinning and weaving. The earliest buildings included two three storey random stone buildings. The date 1839 is cast into a rainwater downspout hopper on the north face of the northern building, though this could relate to the mill's extension. This building may have been used for spinning and weaving, the southern building acting as a warehouse and also housing a steam beam engine in its western end. A 30HP steam beam engine could have been in use in 1838 and an engine with a 22 inch diameter cylinder was in recorded in 1880. The two buildings were connected by a boiler house, a wagon-type boiler surviving on the site in 1880, though by then it had been replaced by a double-flue Lancashire boiler.

Both three storey buildings were extended, probably shortly after construction as the random stonework is similar. The northern building originally had five bays and this was extended westwards by a further three bays with similar windows. The single-storey shed was probably built very shortly after the three-storey blocks were extended in 1839, the date being taken from detailing on the downspouts on the north side of the northern block. The roof-line of the single-storey shed intersects the windows of the first floor of the northern block. It is difficult to ascertain whether these windows have been partially infilled or whether they were built at the same time as the three-storey block. Consequently it is difficult to state definitively the phases of construction. However, both the western end of the extension to the northern three-storey block and the western end of the single-storey shed are of water-shot construction, as opposed to the random stone elsewhere, suggesting that they were erected at similar periods. Both this and the northern three storey building use water-shot stonework at their western end, as opposed to the random stonework elsewhere.

The construction of the single-storey shed also dates from the period when automatic mules were widely introduced. They were often installed in multi-storey buildings, but such mules were too large for those on this site and so they were also installed in the single-storey shed. The central wall may indicate where the shed was divided between mule spinning and weaving. A number of counter-shaft carriers were fixed to the shed roof beams, and there were indications of others. Some were suitable for transverse line-shafting driven from the shaft running centrally through the shed and could have been used for power looms. Others were parallel to the main shaft and could have been used by the mules. During modernisation, probably post-1971, some columns supporting the shed roof had been removed and replaced by RSJs in order to provide a wider space for modern machinery. Such alterations made it difficult to identify the operations associated with particular areas in the twentieth century.

The southern building originally had five windowed bays, though it also incorporated an engine house at its western end. The western end wall is of random stonework, suggesting that all the walls of both three storey buildings were originally built using this type of construction. The southern building was extended eastwards, the extension incorporating the archway which allowed for loading and unloading in the dry. Although the stonework is similar, the windows of the extension are slightly different in size,

suggesting that this extension was undertaken at a different time, possibly later, to the extension of the other building. A photo of c1900 shows the upper windows as infilled, but they were later reopened.

The plan produced by the Poor Law Guardians in 1880 does give definite details of the use of individual areas when the mill was used for woollen production. The three-storey blocks were used primarily for warehousing, though the ironwork which survived the fire in the southern block does suggest that some machinery was installed here. The single-storey extension to the south of this block was used for preparation of the waste cotton and dates from 1907.

The mill continued as a woollen mill until 1907. The catalogue for the sale of machinery at this time suggests that the mill was re-organised around 1880 as several machines date from the 1880s. The Poor Law Union 1880 valuation plan gives the usage of the various parts of the mill at this time.

The steam power for the mill was originally a beam engine in the western end of the southern three-storey building. The drive was probably by gears to a main line-shaft running along the centre of the single-storey shed. An horizontal engine replaced the beam engine, possibly during the reconstruction of 1907. The foundations in the engine house wall for the flywheel bearing survives, but it is difficult to say whether the drive was by shafting or if electric power was introduced. The other engine foundations have been removed, possibly during a further phase of electrification, and a concrete floor supported by RSJs installed in the engine house.

John Warburton Ltd purchased the mill in 1907 and converted it to spinning and weaving hard cotton waste. The cottages to the south of the mill were demolished at this time and a single storey extension erected. The flat-roofed office block was built shortly after the Second World War, and the lift shaft on the southern face of the northern three storey building may date from the same period. The brick extension to the engine house may also have been built at this time allowing the mill to be converted to electric power. Later extensions included the boiler house behind the office block and the two single storey extensions to the south of the weaving shed.

John Warburton Ltd was subsequently taken over by Highams Ltd and the mill closed in 1970. It was then taken by R & S Wills Ltd. Haslingden by-pass was built c1980 and the cottages which lined the northern access road to the mill may have been demolished during construction.

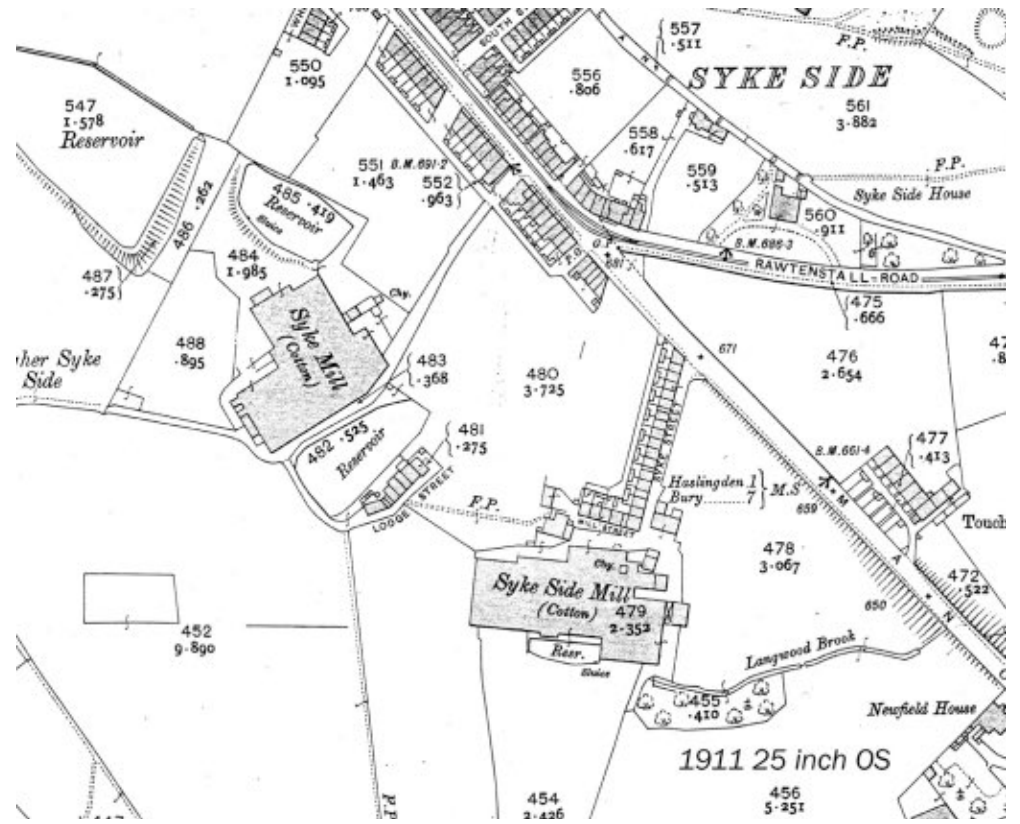
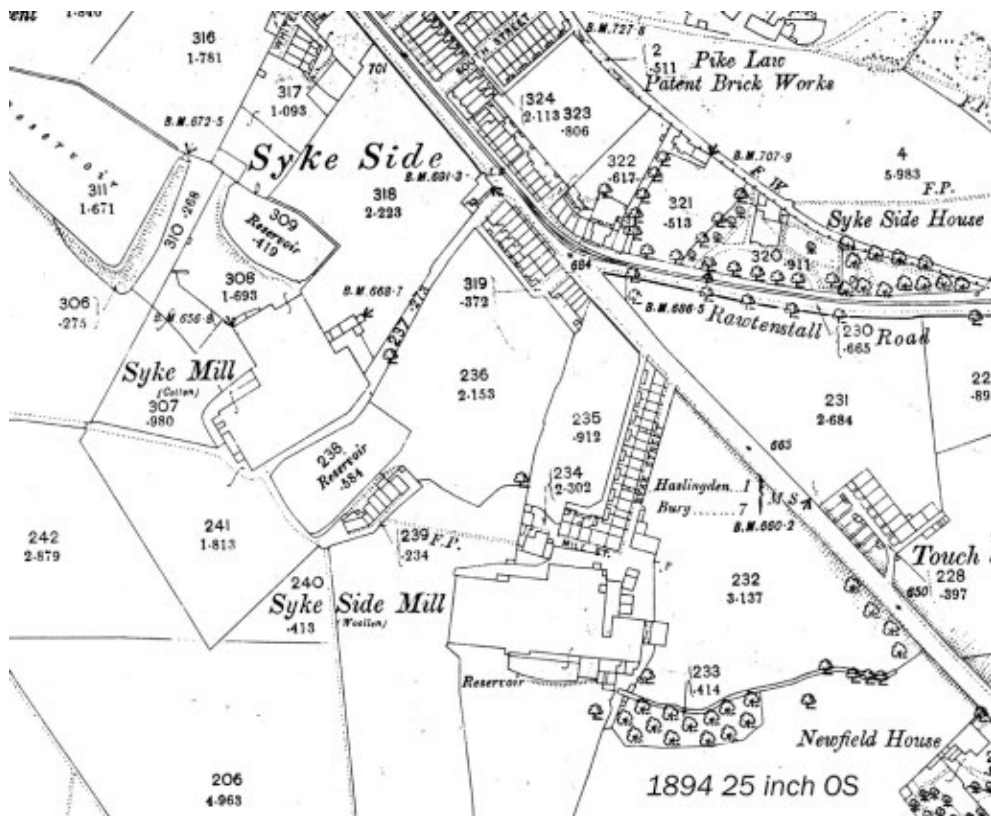
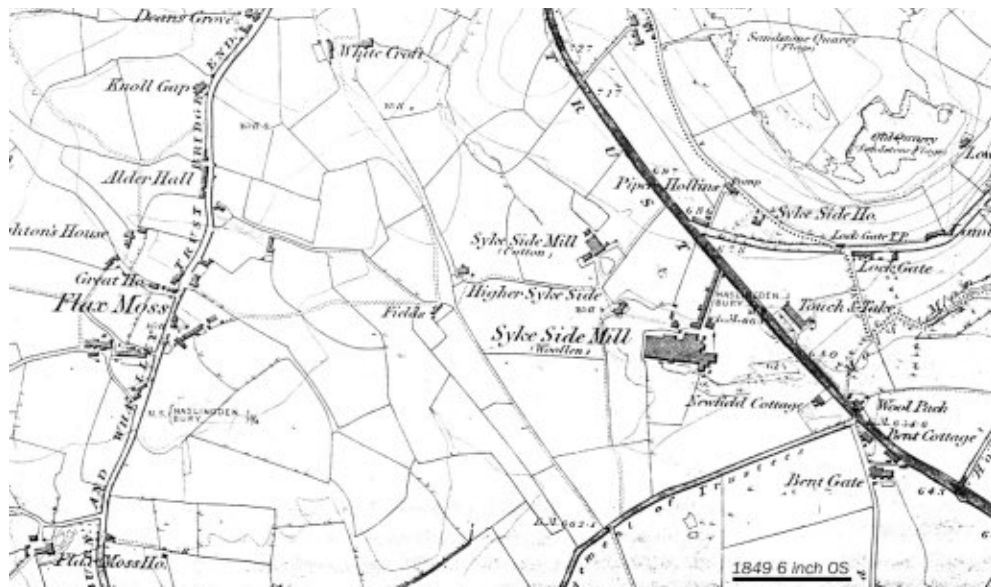
Sources

Lancs R.O.: Haslingden Poor Law Union Valuation, 1880, PUH 5/2.

Machinery sale catalogue dated 6 & 7 March 1907.



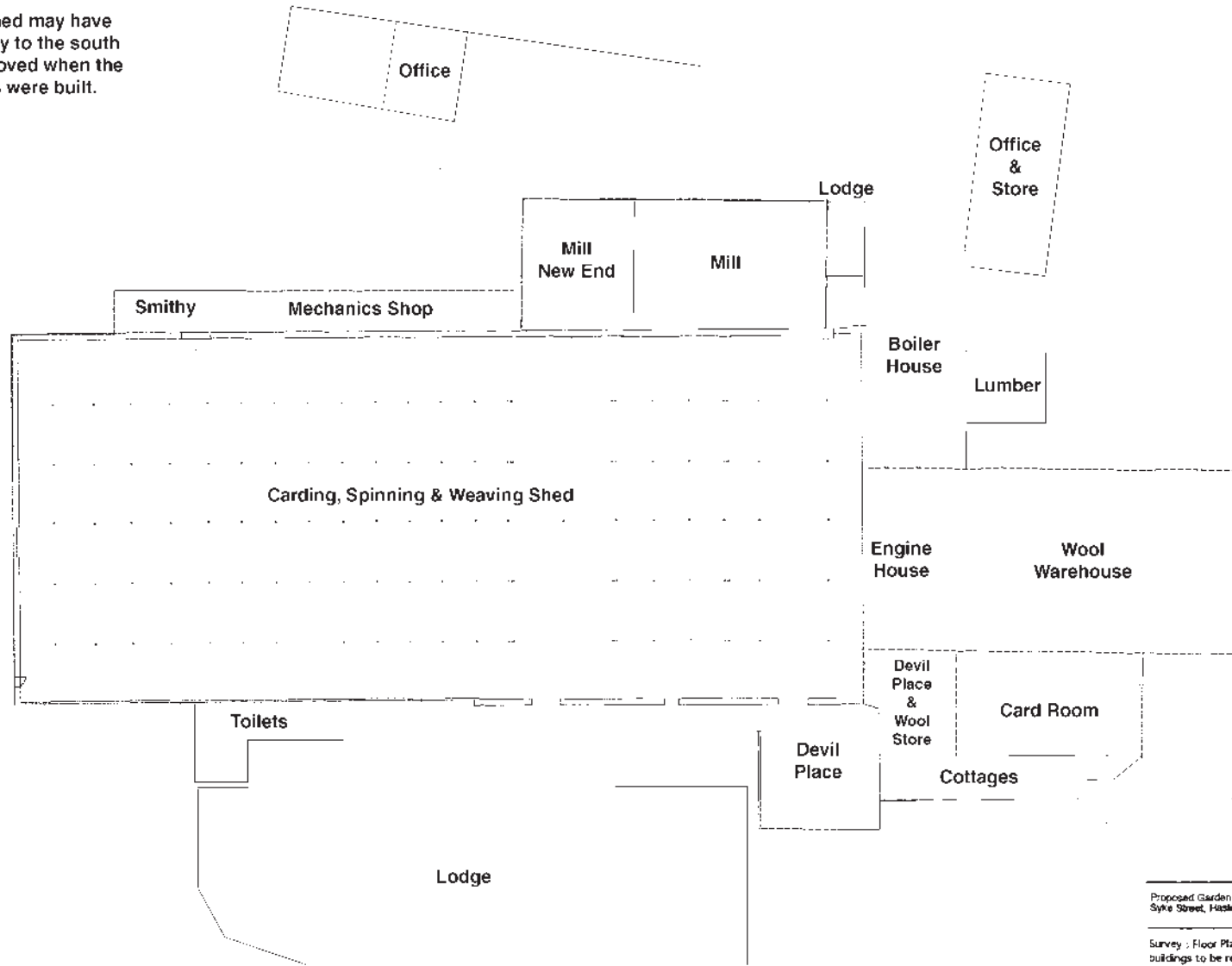
The mill yard and house in the 1920s.



Historic OS maps of the site:
 Six inch, 1849, top left.
 25 inch, 1894, bottom left.
 25 inch, 1911, top right.

Site in 1880

The weaving shed may have had an extra bay to the south which was removed when the new extensions were built.



Proposed Garden Centre at Syke Side,
Syke Street, Haslingden, Rossendale

Survey : Floor Plan Layout of
buildings to be retained.

| | | |
|----------|------------|-------|
| Drawn by | 8.04 /S.03 | Rev |
| Date | 9/01 | Scale |
| 1:200 | | |

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SYKESIDE MILL: March 2002: film A



General view from south across by-pass.

Negative no. 01A



View across weaving shed from the west showing the two three storey buildings beyond and the corner of the modern extension on the right.

Negative no. 04A



View from south showing engine house window on left side of rear three-storey building and location of date from former cottage and 1907 commemorative stone.

Negative no. 02A



View across weaving shed from the west showing the two three storey buildings beyond and the corner of the modern extension on the right.

Negative no. 05A



View across weaving shed from the west showing brick lift shaft on front three storey building and extension to engine house on rear three storey building.

Negative no. 03A



Date stone from cottage which was replaced in 1907 by single storey stone built extension.

Negative no. 06A

SYKESIDE MILL: March 2002: film A



Date stone from earlier house and commemorative stone erected in 1907 during mill extension.

Negative no. 07A



View along the south wall of the 1907 extension with date stones next to the doorway.

Negative no. 10A



Inside of 1907 extension looking northwards to wall of rear three storey building and showing an infilled window on the left.

Negative no. 08A



View from the north side of the archway under the rear three storey building.

Negative no. 11A



South face of metal framed building at the south east corner of the collection of buildings.

Negative no. 09A



View of the north side of the badly damaged rear three storey building with the boiler house on the right.

Negative no. 12A

SYKESIDE MILL: March 2002: film A



View of the north side of the badly damaged rear three storey building with the boiler house on the right.

Negative no. 13A



View along north face of rear three storey building with brick extension for horizontal steam engine and boiler house on the right.

Negative no. 14A



View of the north side of the badly damaged rear three storey building with the boiler house and c1958 office block on the right.

Negative no. 15A



North facing wall of the front three storey building with the down spout hopper dated 1839 on the left.

Negative no. 16A



North west corner of front three storey building showing fire damage and wall construction.

Negative no. 17A



General view of the mill from the south east.

Negative no. 18A

SYKESIDE MILL: March 2002: film A



View of the mill site from the south.

Negative no. 19A



View of the 1907 extension from the south east with the three storey buildings beyond.

Negative no. 22A



View from the south showing the engine house window centre right and the lift shaft next to the chimney.

Negative no. 20A



View of the rear three storey building from the east with the boiler house and new office block on the right.

Negative no. 23A



View of the 1907 extension and the rear three storey building from the south.

Negative no. 21A



View of the mill site from the east.

Negative no. 24A

SYKESIDE MILL: March 2002: film A



North east corner of front three storey building showing the covered loading bay and the edge of the new office block.

Negative no. 25A



The west face of the front three storey building and the single storey mechanics shop extension on the north side of the weaving shed.

Negative no. 28A



The north face of the front three storey building with the join between the older part on the left and the newer section on the right immediately to the left of the down spout.

Negative no. 26A



The central columns in the weaving shed carried the bearings for the drive shafting. The western column had a different bearing housing shape. The end bearing box can be seen in the west wall of the shed. The guttering was cast iron.

Negative no. 29A



The west end of the front three storey building was built using water-shot stonework as opposed to the random stonework used on the other sides.

Negative no. 27A



View along the west wall of the weaving shed showing some of the counter shaft bearing carriers which were fixed between the beams supporting the roof.

Negative no. 30A

SYKESIDE MILL: March 2002: film A



View from the western end of the weaving shed looking along the central line of columns which held the drive shaft.

Negative no. 31A



View looking eastwards from the central dividing wall in the weaving shed looking towards the wall behind which the steam engine was located.

Negative no. 34A



View looking to the west in the weaving shed showing some of the counter shaft hangers and carriers.

Negative no. 32A



Cast iron carriers for the transverse line shafting fitted between the beams supporting the roof. Additional steel RSJs have also been installed to allow one line of cast iron columns to be removed.

Negative no. 35A



View looking to the west in the weaving shed showing cast iron machinery fixing slots in the floor.

Negative no. 33A



Typical bearing housing in top of cast iron columns in the weaving shed.

Negative no. 36A

SYKESIDE MILL: March 2002: film B



Bearing box, on centre line of columns, in eastern end wall of the weaving shed.

Negative no. 01B



Bearing box, on centre line of columns, in eastern end wall of the weaving shed.

Negative no. 02B



View looking to the north at eastern end of the weaving shed showing the lift shaft built outside of the front three storey building and the location of the chimney.

Negative no. 03B



View across the weaving shed from the south east corner showing old fixings for bearing supports rebated centrally into the roof support beams.

Negative no. 04B



North east corner of the single storey extension on the south side of the weaving shed showing the angled wall which was part of the 1907 mill extension and the brick filled former doorway.

Negative no. 05B



Looking north into the weaving shed from the entrance to the southern single storey extension.

Negative no. 06B

SYKESIDE MILL: March 2002: film B



The east wall of the weaving shed seen from the 1907 extension and looking to the north. The engine house in the rear three storey building was in the central unlight area.

Negative no. 07B



View looking south east in part of the 1907 extension from beneath the engine house.

Negative no. 10B



Bearing housing in the east wall of the weaving shed seen from the 1907 extension for which it provided the drive. The drive was probably connected by a rope drive to the engine.

Negative no. 08B



Looking south east at the intermediate wall in the 1907 extension.

Negative no. 11B



Main bearing housing in the east wall of the weaving shed seen from the ground floor of the rear three storey building. The bearing is almost central within the building and the shaft was probably gear driven from the main engine drive shaft.

Negative no. 09B



Looking north at the south wall of the rear three storey building which formed the north wall of the 1907 extension. A walled-up window can be seen.

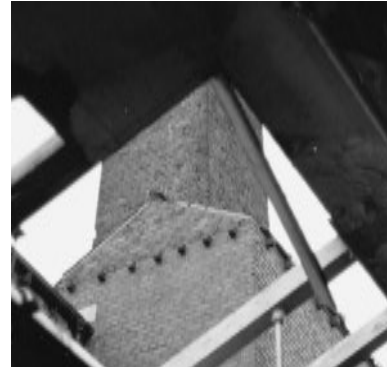
Negative no. 12B

SYKESIDE MILL: March 2002: film B



Looking north west inside the remains of the rear three storey building at the intermediate wall, behind which was the engine, from the 1907 extension.

Negative no. 13B



Looking at the south west corner of the lift shaft from the weaving shed.

Negative no. 16B



Looking at the west side of the lift shaft and a walled-up window on the south face of the front three storey building.

Negative no. 17B



Looking south in the 1907 extension.

Negative no. 14B



Looking north at the archway through the rear three storey building.

Negative no. 15B



Looking north at the south wall of the front three storey building from the weaving shed.

Negative no. 18B

SYKESIDE MILL: March 2002: film B



Looking south along the west face of the weaving shed showing the water-shot stone-work.

Negative no. 19B



The north face of the house and office remains north of the weaving shed.

Negative no. 20B



Looking south at the north wall of the rear three storey building with the boiler house on the right.

Negative no. 21B



Looking west inside the rear three storey building from the archway.

Negative no. 22B



Looking south through the archway under the rear three storey building.

Negative no. 23B



Looking west at the brick extension to the engine house with the boiler house on the right.

Negative no. 24B

SYKESIDE MILL: March 2002: film B



Looking south west at the north face of the rear three storey building and the boiler house.

Negative no. 25B



Looking southwest at the office block.

Negative no. 28B



Looking south west at the north face of the rear three storey building and the boiler house.

Negative no. 26B



Looking west inside the boiler house.

Negative no. 29B



Looking south west at the east face of the rear three storey building and the metal-framed building.

Negative no. 27B



Looking west inside the boiler house.

Negative no. 30B

SYKESIDE MILL: March 2002: film B



North face of the rear three storey building showing the joint between the two phases of construction. The archway was part of the second phase.

Negative no. 31B



Looking south at the front three storey building along the line of the stone wall which marks the rear of the housing which lined the road leading to the mill.

Negative no. 34B



Looking west at the extension to the engine house.

Negative no. 32B



General view of site looking south.

Negative no. 35B



General view of site looking south.

Negative no. 36B



Looking south at the office building.

Negative no. 33B

SYKESIDE MILL: March 2002: film C



View of the 1907 extension
with the three storey buildings
behind from the south.

Negative no. 01C



General view from the east.

Negative no. 04C



General view from the south
east.

Negative no. 02C



General view from the north
east.

Negative no. 05C



General view from the east.

Negative no. 03C



View from the north west
of the remains of the house
which was converted to an
office with the northern three
storey building behind.

Negative no. 06C

SYKESIDE MILL: March 2002: film C



The water-shot west wall of the northern three storey building with the single storey extension to the weaving shed used as a mechanics' shop on the right and the house converted to an office on the left.

Negative no. 07C



The water-shot west wall of the weaving shed looking north.

Negative no. 10C



General view of the mill site from the west showing the brick extension to the engine house and the brick lift shaft behind the northern three storey building.

Negative no. 08C



The southern single storey extension to the weaving shed possibly built in 1907. The rounded top of the engine house window can be seen centre right.

Negative no. 11C



General view of the mill site from the west with the post-1970 extension to the weaving shed on the right.

Negative no. 09C



View from the east showing the remains of the end wall of the extension to the southern three storey building, the c1970 boiler house and the c1948 office block.

Negative no. 12C

SYKESIDE MILL: March 2002: film D



General view from the south east.

Negative no. 01D



General view from the east.

Negative no. 04D



General view from the south east.

Negative no. 02D



Looking east from the west wall of the weaving shed.

Negative no. 05D



General view from the south.

Negative no. 03D



Looking south in the weaving shed with the intermediate wall on the right.

Negative no. 06D

SYKESIDE MILL: March 2002: film D



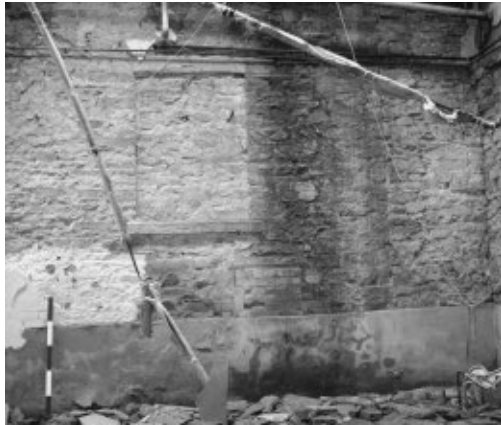
Looking west from the east wall of the weaving shed showing the central line of columns with bearing housing for the drive shaft.

Negative no. 07D



North west corner of the weaving shed showing the water-shot stonework of the west wall.

Negative no. 10D



Looking north at the south wall of the rear three storey building from the 1907 extension.

Negative no. 08D



Looking south at the archway under the rear three storey building with the boiler house on the right.

Negative no. 11D



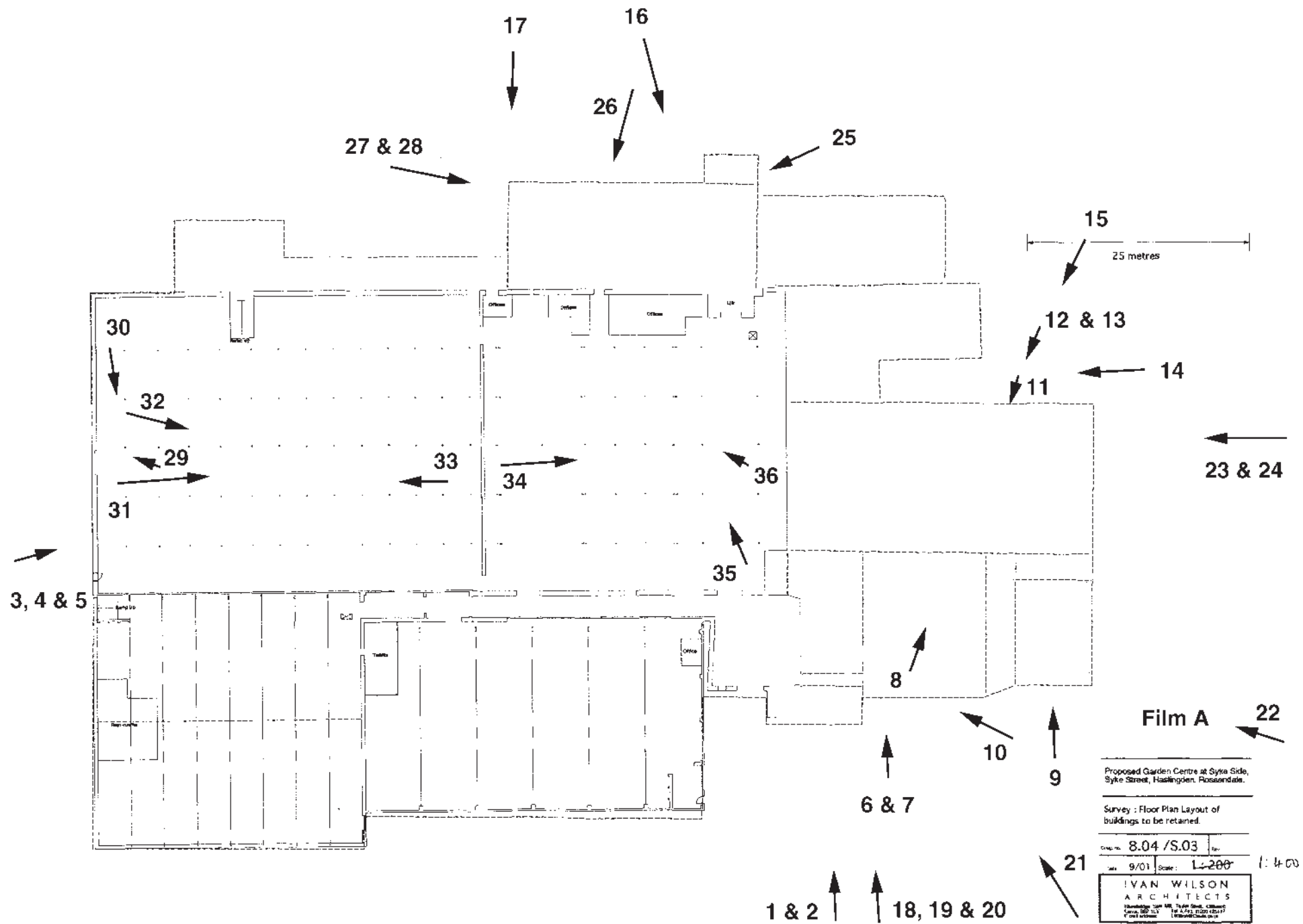
Looking north at the south wall of the rear three storey building from the 1907 extension.

Negative no. 09D



General view looking south west.

Negative no. 12D



Proposed Garden Centre at Syke Side,
 Syke Street, Haslingden, Rossendale.

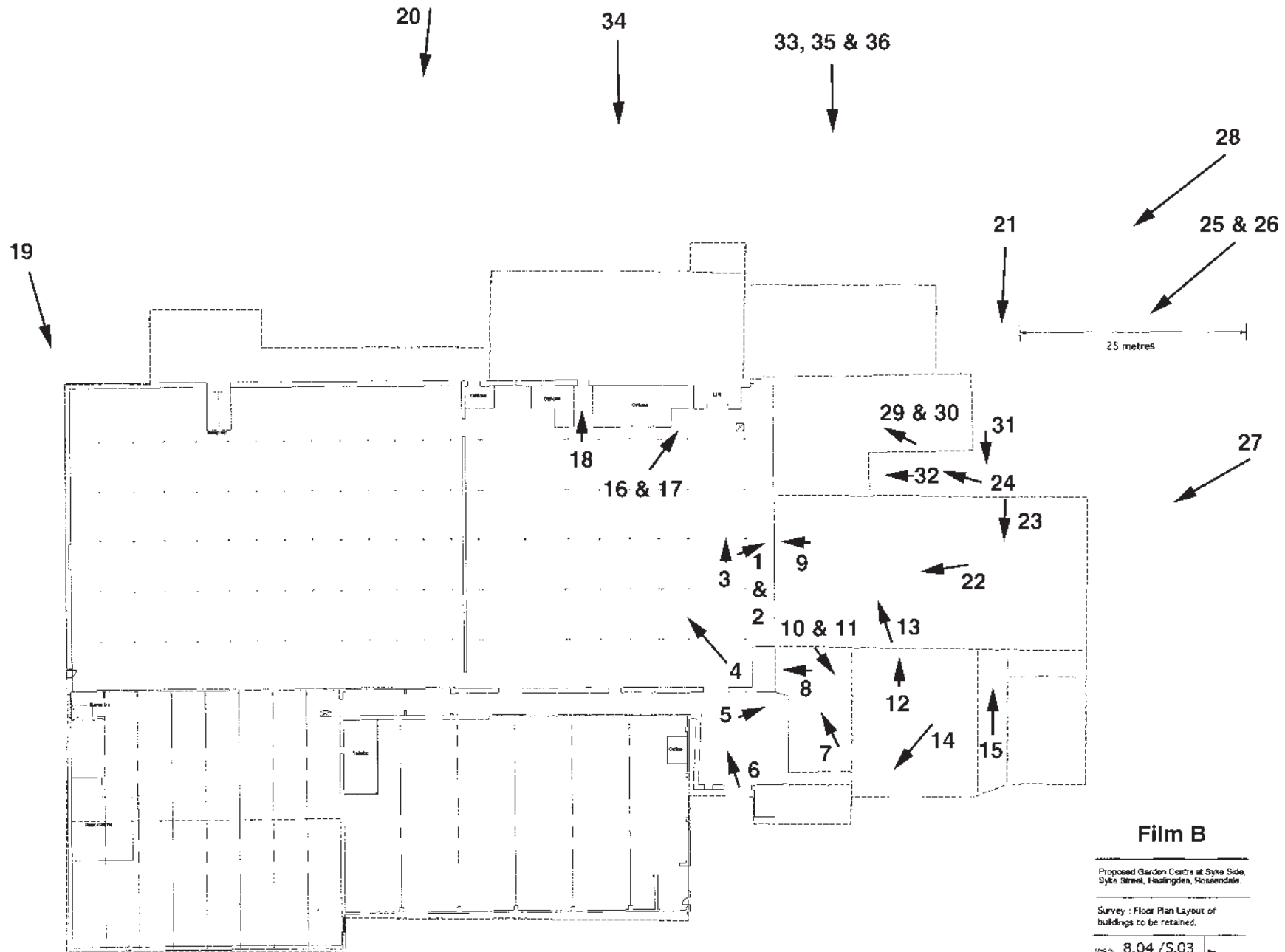
Survey : Floor Plan Layout of
 buildings to be retained.

Drawn: 8.04 /S.03

Date: 9/01 Scale: 1:200

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(1:4-00)



Film B

Proposed Garden Centre at Syke Side,
Syke Street, Haslingden, Rossendale.

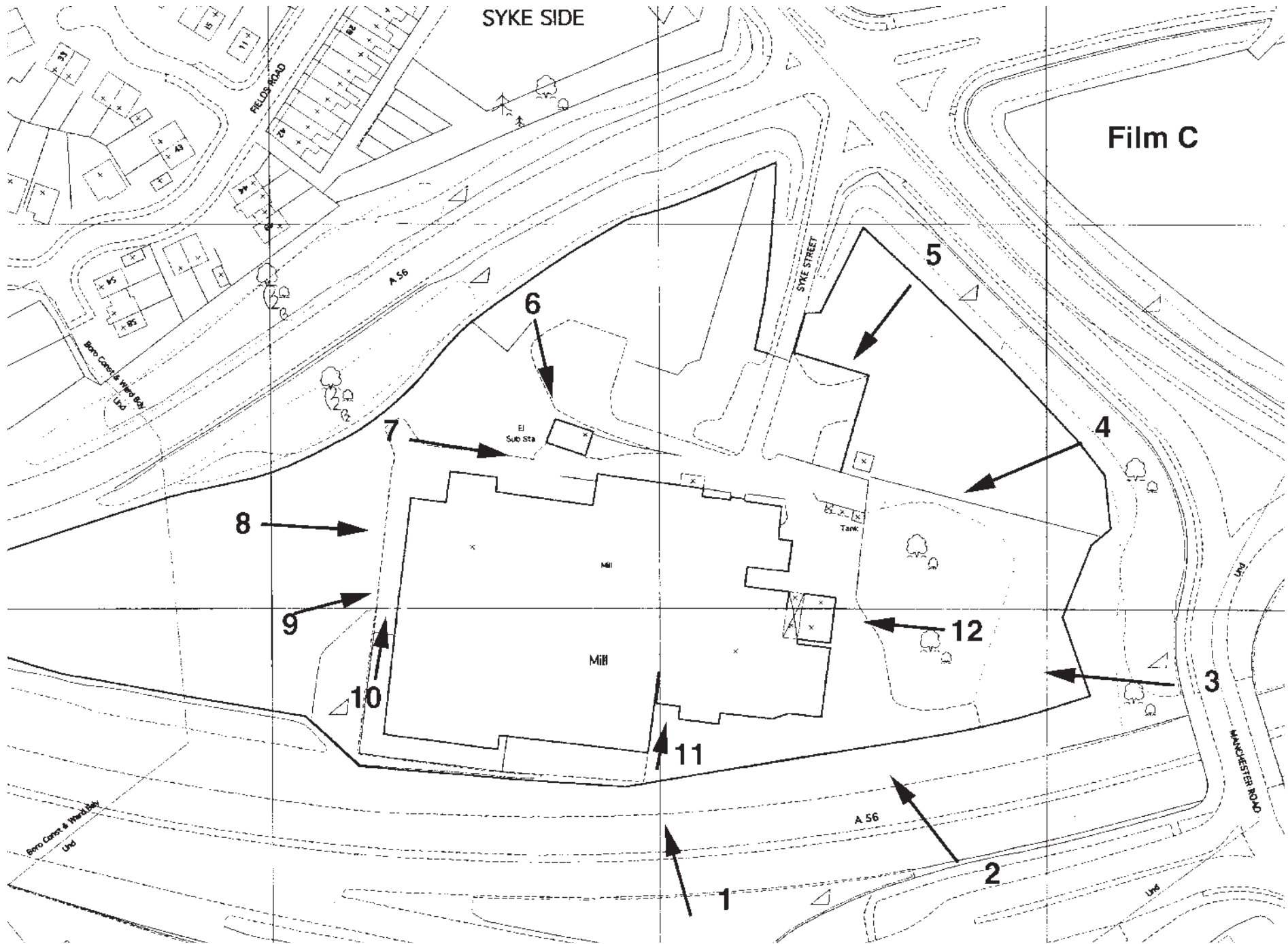
Survey : Floor Plan Layout of
buildings to be retained.

Drawn: 8.04 / S.03

Date: 9/01 Scale: 1:200

1:4 CO

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|---|--|
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SYKE SIDE

Film C

8

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Film D

