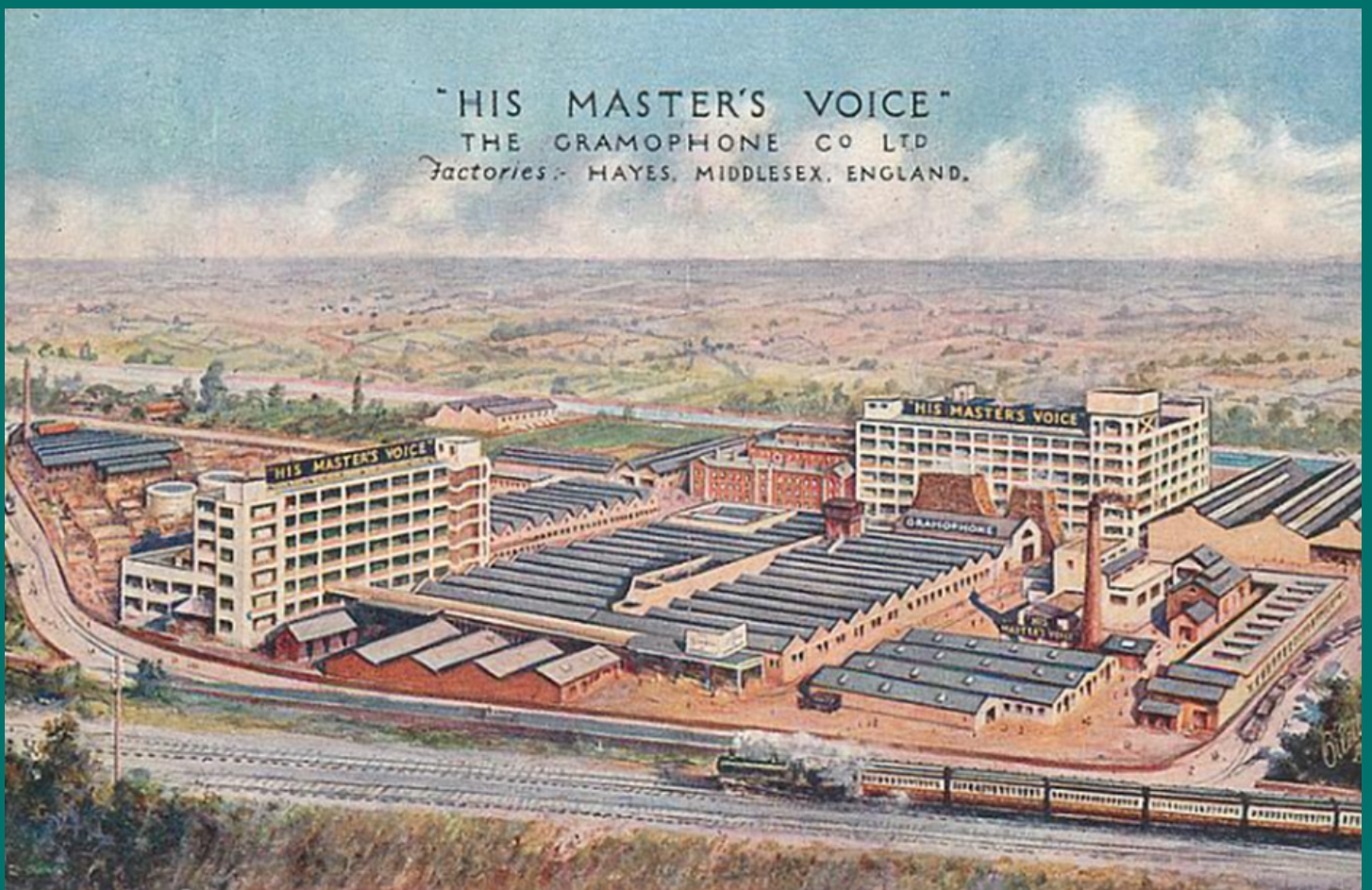


CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

THE OLD VINYL FACTORY



HILLINGDON
LONDON

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01.

Introduction



View along Material Walk

The Old Vinyl Factory

The Old Vinyl Factory conservation area is located to the south west of Hayes High Street within an area of Land Bound by the Grand Union Canal to the north and the Great Western Main line to the south. It until recently was an industrial area connected to the record industry. As with many developments of the early 20th century there are some areas of terraced housing adjacent.

The extent of the conservation area is shown on Map 1.

This Conservation Area was previously known as Botwell: Thorn EMI as it was designated in 1989 when Thorn EMI owned the site. However, now it is known as The Old Vinyl Factory due to redevelopment branding.

Background to Designation

On 19th June 1988 the London Borough of Hillingdon proceeded to designate the conservation area. This was undertaken to protect the significance of its historic associations with Gramophone and Record manufacture and associated works and how this evolved through time. The site tells the important storey of a new industry from its beginnings to the massive technological changes at the end of the century. This appears to have been part of a wider review also looking at the other nearby industrial site of Botwell Nestle Conservation Areas. No appraisal document was produced at this time.

The extent of the conservation area is shown on the analysis Map.

What does Designation Mean?

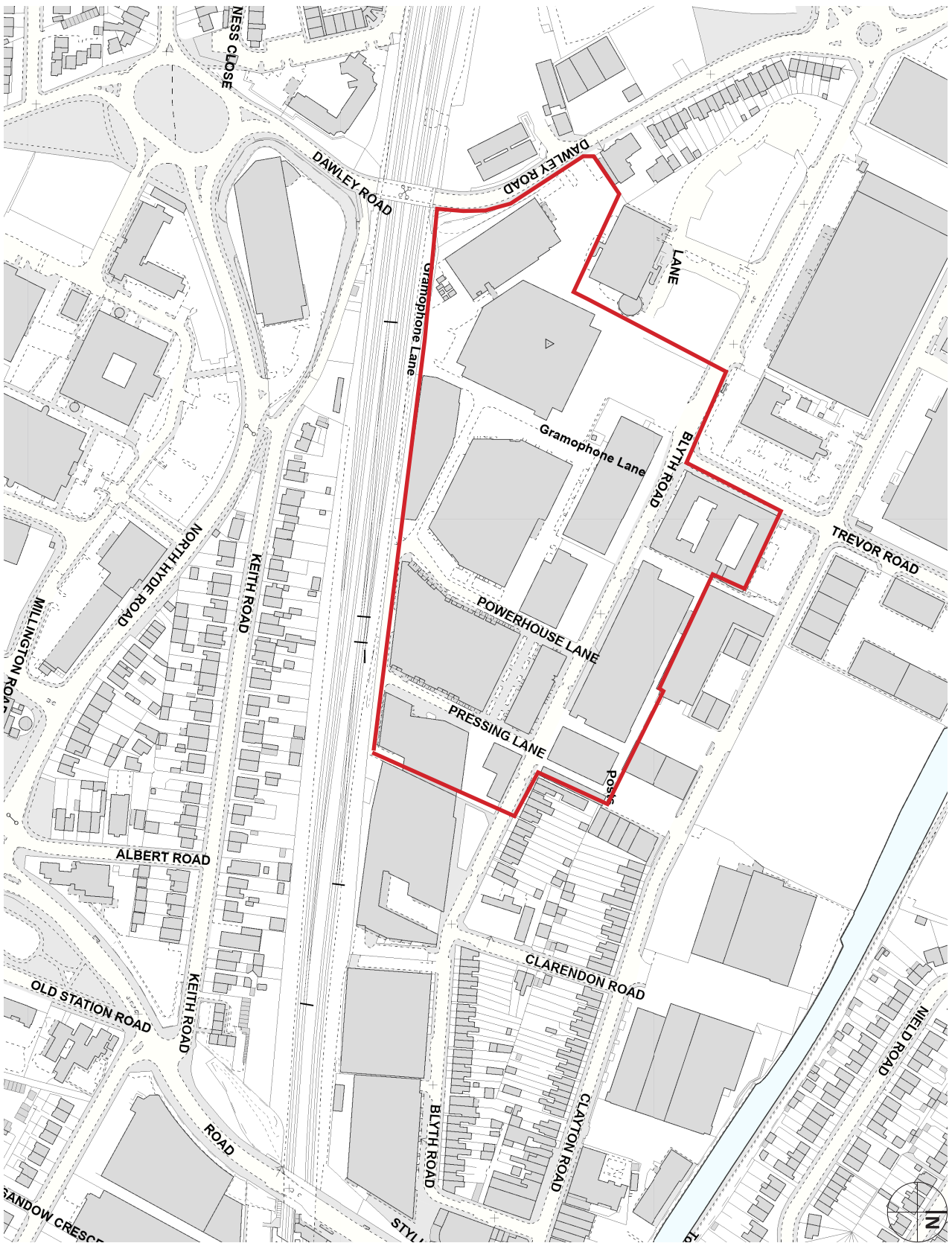
A conservation area is defined under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Local planning authorities have a duty to designate such areas as conservation areas. Section 71 of the Act requires local planning authorities '...to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement...' of these conservation areas. Once designated, proposals within a conservation area become subject to local conservation policies set out in the Council's Local Plan and national policies outlined in part 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF).

Our overarching duty which is set out in the Act is to preserve or enhance the historic or architectural character or appearance of the conservation area. A conservation area appraisal aims to describe the special historic and architectural character of an area.

A conservation area's character is defined by a combination of elements such as architecture, uses, materials and detailing as well as the relationship between buildings and their settings. Many other elements contribute to character and appearance such as the placing of buildings within their plots; views and vistas; the relationship between the street and the buildings and the presence of trees and green space

This document has been produced using the guidance set out by Historic England in their document, Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1 (second edition) 2019. This appraisal will be a material consideration when assessing planning applications.

No appraisal can ever be completely comprehensive. The omission of any particular building, feature, view or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.



MAP 1. Botwell: Thorn EMI, Hayes Conservation Area

Locally Listed buildings

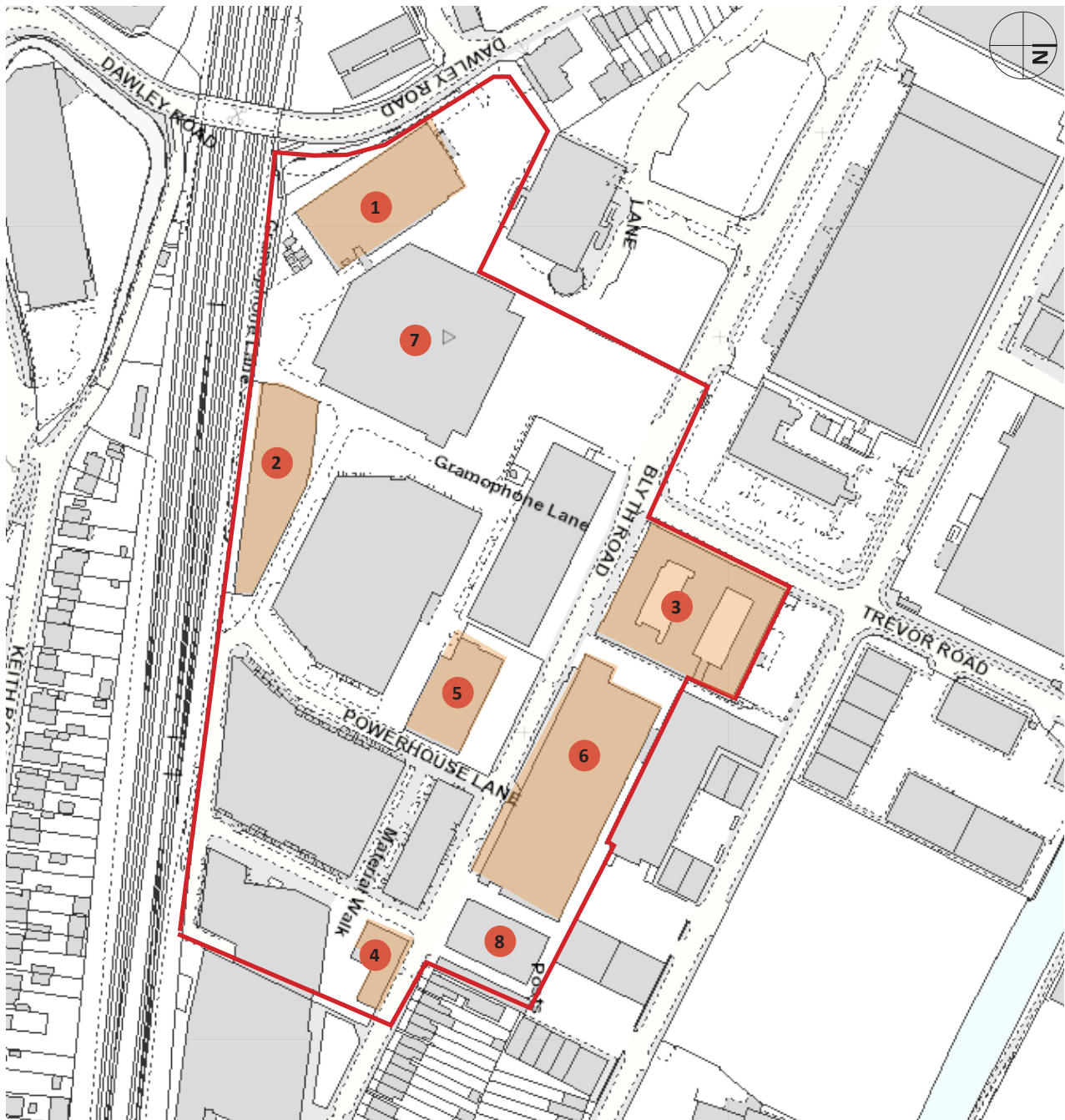
- 1 The Shipping Building
- 2 Record Store building/Phoenix House
- 3 Former HMV office/Jupiter House
- 4 Pressing Plant/Apollo House
- 5 Power House/Neptune House

Nationally Listed buildings

- 6 Machine Factory/ Enterprise House Grade II

Unlisted buildings

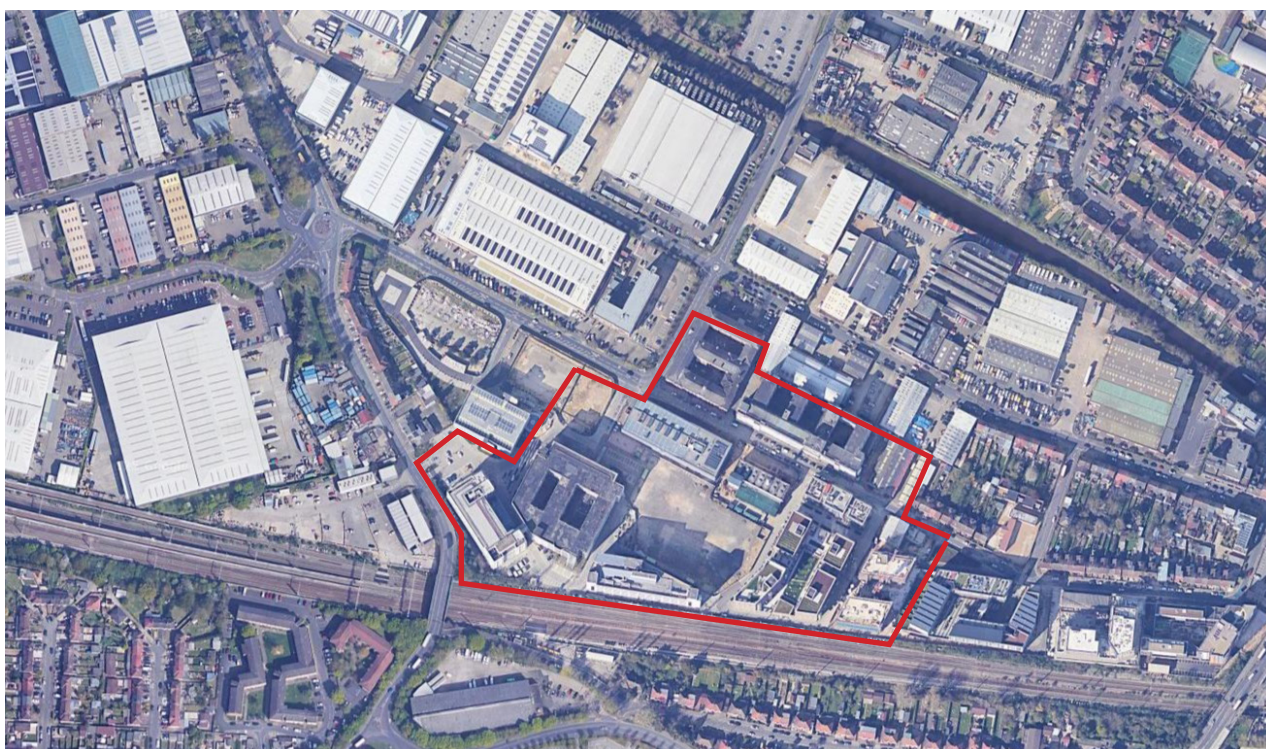
- 7 Cabinet Building
- 8 General Medical Building



MAP 2. Map showing locally and nationally listed buildings

02.

Location and
Setting



Aerial photo of the site and surroundings with the Conservation Area boundary

Location

The Old Vinyl Factory Conservation Area is on low lying land between the Grand Union Canal and Great Western main line. The town centre of Hayes is located to the north east over the canal. The industrial area is bound by two other main roads (Dawley Road and Station Road) which cross the canal and railway in essence containing the area. To the south of the railway and to the north of the canal are large areas of inter war housing.

Boundaries

See map. From Dawley Road the Boundary follows the railway line. To the east of Pressing Lane the boundary turns north including Pressing Plant/Apollo House to Blyth road. After a slight kink to the west it then moves north to the mid point between Blyth and Clayton Road before swinging west to include the machine factory and the former HMV offices. On reaching Trevor Road it turns back to Blyth Road then west before it heads south to include the Old Vinyl Factory, before a final turn west to include the shipping building and then joining Dawley Road. It follows this south to the railway line.

Topography and Landscape Setting

The conservation area is within the valley floor of the wider Thames Valley floodplain. It has a flat and low lying character. The surrounding tall buildings give limited views out of the area with the land rising to the east and west with bridges constructed to get over the mainline railway.

Geology

The underlying geology of the area is formed by the sedimentary formation of London Clay. This results in the geology being a mixture of Brickearth and River terrace deposits.

Archaeology

There have been nearby Mesolithic and Palaeolithic find spots in the local area including hand axes suggesting human activity since the last ice age. A bronze age axehead and iron age settlements have been found in Botwell although nothing is noted in the HER within the conservation area itself. The Saxon settlement of Botwell is thought to have been to the north-east of the conservation area on Station Road now known as Hayes Town.



View towards Botwell along the railway

03.

Historic
Development

The name Botwell is generally assumed to come from the old English for healing spring or pool although a second point of view is that it is either Bota or Bot's Spring or Pool. It is mentioned relatively early in the historic record in 832 when Archbishop Wulfred of Canterbury was given land in Botwaele (Botwell) by King Wiglaf of Mercia. It is not mentioned specifically in the Domesday book although it is possible to get an understanding of the landscape as part of the description of Hayes within the Hundred of Elthorne. This supported 40 ploughs and substantial areas of woodland. During the middle ages it was an arable

based economy. By 1814 1000 acres were enclosed. Change began with the Grand Union Canal cutting through the parish in 1796. This resulted in an expansion of the brickmaking industry as the brickearth from the area was described as being of exceedingly good quality and could easily be transported into central London. This expanded rapidly with the opening of the Paddington branch in 1805. The railway arrived in 1838 and a station opened in 1864. Despite this the general area had in essence altered little over the previous 1000 years and was still rural farmland.

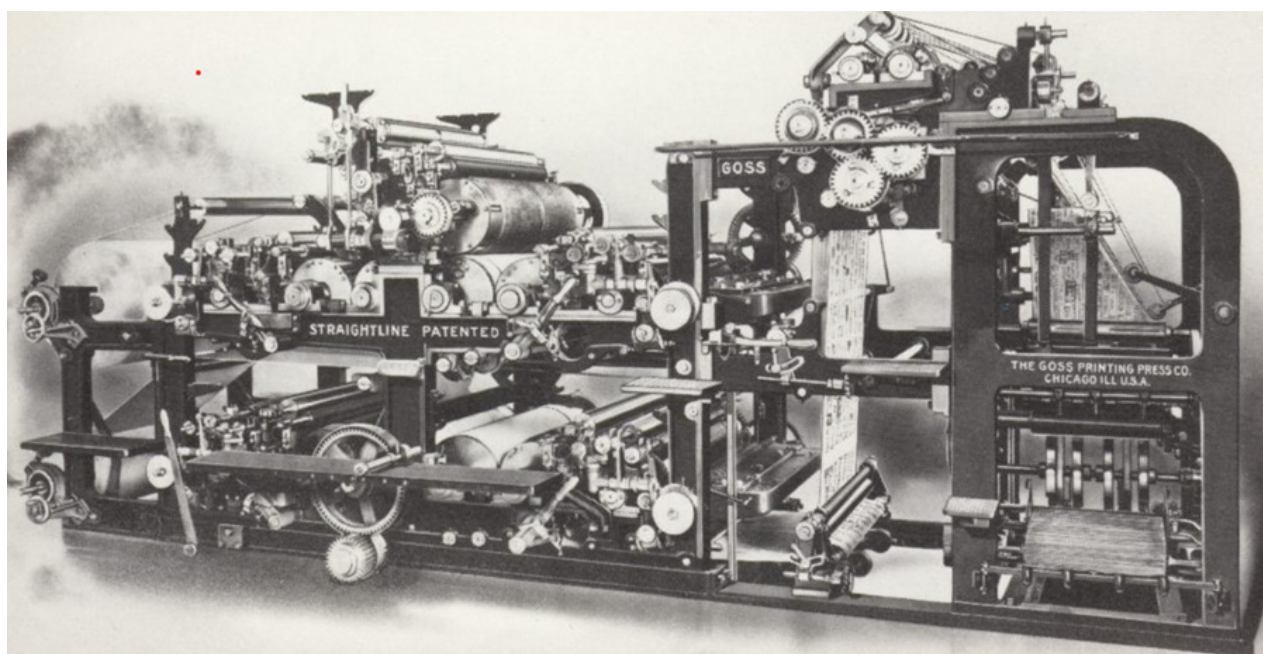


MAP 2. 1894 Map of the site

This character changed rapidly with the foundation of the Hayes Development Company (HDC). In 1899 it acquired land and promoted the area for industry. The first factory, built by the British Electric Transformer Company, arrived in 1901 with the earliest surviving building in the conservation area the Pressing Plant constructed in 1905 for a Chicago printing press company. The Gramophone and Typewriter Company arrived in 1907 with Edward Lloyd (a British Tenor) cutting the first sod and Dame Nellie Melba (Australian Soprano) laid the foundation stone for the Power House). Blyth Road and Clayton Road (named after the HDC's secretary Alfred Clayton) were constructed as the location of early housing for workers. Records, labels and sleeves were all produced in the local area. The first record

was pressed on site in 1908 and from 1910 records were released on the HMV label. In 1911 construction began on the machine factory (Enterprise House) and cabinet building to design and build gramophones on the site.

During the First World War the works were used to produce munitions and aero engines at the Goss Works. Following the war the factories produced everything on site required for the music business including the gramophones, their cabinets and records to play on them. EMI was created in 1931 with the merger of previous companies and the first stereo sound recording was made at Hayes Station. Munitions and radio receivers were produced on the site during the Second World War.



Goss Printing Press



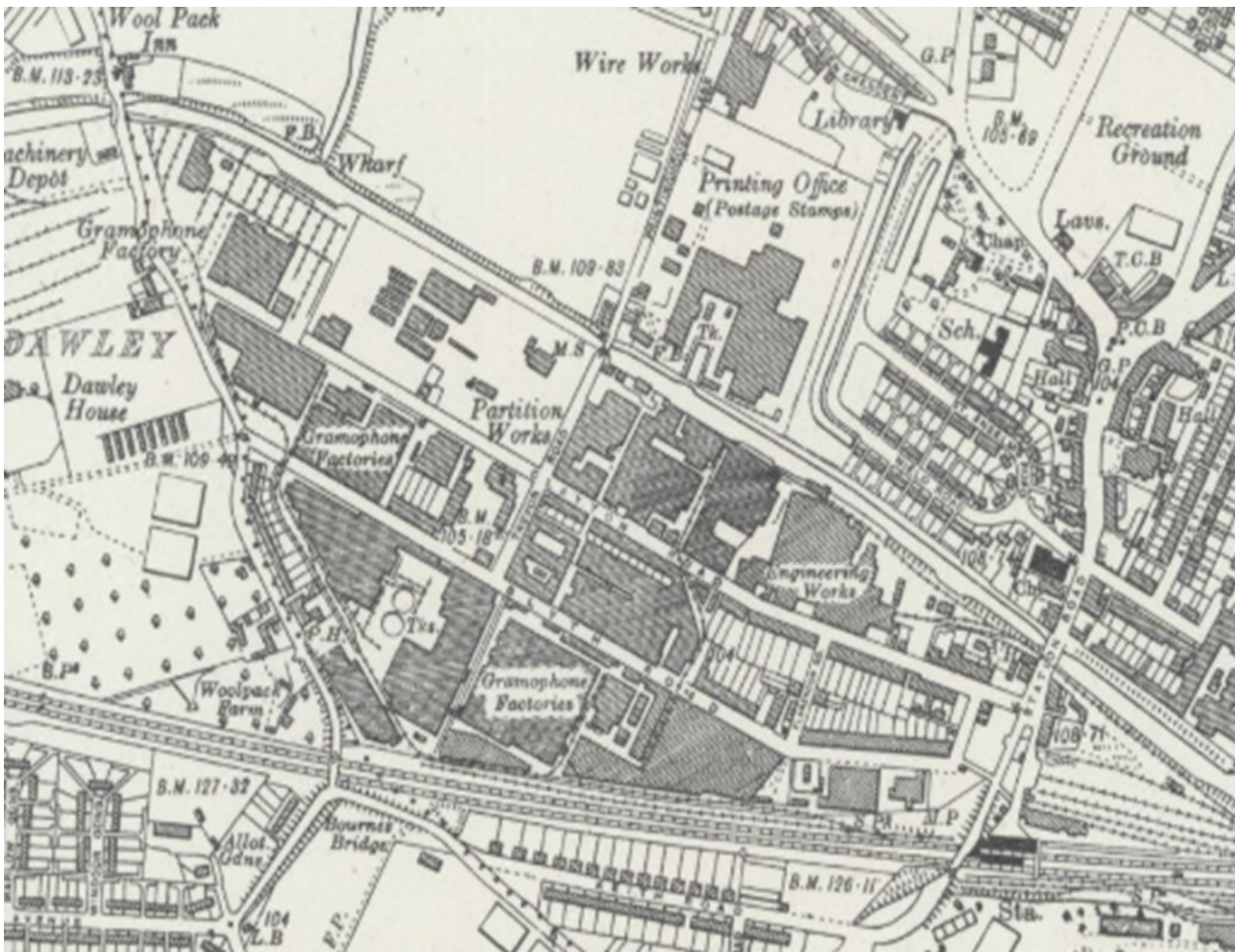
MAP. 3. Map of the site 1912

In 1952 EMI began production of records made of vinyl rather than the more historic shellac compound used for earlier records. Production peaked in the 1960s with 14,000 people working on the site. In 1978 the rise of the cassette player caused vinyl sales to drop. 1979 EMI was rescued from bankruptcy by Thorn Electrical Ltd resulting in the renaming of the company as Thorn-EMI. Production was cut during the 1980s and some buildings on the site were demolished. The site finally closed in the 1990s after 80 years of production. Since the early 2000s historic buildings on the site have been converted to other uses mainly housing.

Several important developments and advances in electronic engineering took place at the site related to the research laboratories:

Alan Blumlein who among other things invented Stereo Sound made the first recorded Stereo film "Trains at Hayes". He had numerous other inventions in relation to sound, television and radar whilst working at Hayes.

Sir Godfrey Hounsfield worked on radar, the first commercially available computer in the UK and invented CT scanner for which he was awarded the noble prize for medicine.



Map 4. 1938 Map of the site



HMV Records Logo

04.

Surviving Historical
Features within the
Conservation Area

Summary of Historic Features

- *Pressing Plant 1905 former Goss Works (Apollo House) , incorporated into EMI site by 1926-27 Unknown Architect.*
- *Powerhouse -1907 (Neptune House) Architect Marshall Robinson (assumed)*
- *Cabinet Building 1911-12 Architect R. Langton Cole. Altered Wallis Gilbert and Partners late 1920s.*
- *HMV Head Office 1912 (Jupiter House) Architect Sir Reginald Blomfield + later extension (Possibly by Wallis, Gilbert and Partners) to Trevor Rd in the early in 1920s*
- *Machine Factory 1912 (Enterprise House) Architect Sir Owen Williams*
- *Record Store Building 1927 (Pheonix House) Architects Wallis, Gilbert and Partners*
- *The Shipping Building 1929 Architects Wallis, Gilbert and Partners*
- *General Healthcare building single storey shed typical of the factory buildings on site which appears to be of an inter war date. Later re-fronted presumably 1980s and extended to the east architect unknown.*
- *Rail lines adjacent to what is now General Healthcare Ltd opposite Pressing Plant.*



Pressing Plant



Machine Factory/ Enterprise House



HMV Head Office/Jupiter House



Power House



Record Store building



Shipping Building

Street pattern and building plots

The historic trackway of Dawley Road Curves north westwards after crossing the railway. Trevor Road appears from mapping evidence to follow an older footpath (seen on the 1864 OS map), which on crossing the canal became Workhouse Lane (now Printing House Lane). The other main streets of Blyth Road and Clayton Road were laid out in the early 20th century as the area industrialised. Smaller lanes Record Walk, Powerhouse Lane, Pressing Lane and Gramophone Lane all are set off Blyth Road using the spaces between the redeveloped factory buildings and newly constructed flats.

The building plots are substantial due to the industrial character of the area and buildings tend to run in long unbroken frontages parallel to the road or the railway. The exception to this is the former Pressing Plant which has a gable to the road which accentuates its character as that of an earlier 19th century style layout with narrower frontages and longer structures going back the full depth of narrower plots. This has been in part lost with the redevelopment to the rear of the site.



Goss works later the Pressing Plant. Enterprise House can be seen towering above Blythe Road houses.

05.

The Character and
Appearance of the
Conservation Area

Analysis

The area is characterised by the substantial industrial buildings of the early 20th century. These buildings and their spatial relationships show how the site and manufacturing process evolved over time in particular the first 30 years of the 20th century. This development led to a closely knit streetscape with substantial buildings enclosing narrow side alleys of main the streets. These tend to have strong horizontal emphasis with the scale and verticality of the buildings feeling particularly oppressive in the closely spaced

area to the railway. The three substantial buildings to the south of the site adjacent to the railway are of a piece and make an important landmark group of inter war bright white rendered modern factory buildings typical of the period with strong horizontal emphasis and to the shipping building elegant detailing. These buildings feature in the George Orwell 1934 poem 'On A Ruined Farm Near The His Master's Voice Gramophone Factory'. Which describes them as "Factory-towers, white and clear like distant, glittering cities" "where steel and concrete soar In dizzy, geometric towers".



Photo of Britain from above 1930

The more historic Edwardian/ Victorian style can be seen in the Powerhouse, Pressing Plant (Goss works) and former headquarters to Blyth Road. These are defined by their use of local brick, detailing to elevations vernacular fenestrations below pitched slate roofs. This can also be seen on the building to the east of

Enterprise House although the facade has been refronted in a modern brick. Enterprise House formerly the Machine Factory although similar in date is clearly of a different style with the concrete structure being expressed rather than hidden and being reminiscent of substantial factory buildings more associated with the inter

war period and in particular has a more international “little Chicago or American” industrial style character than similar early buildings using this construction method. Due to its early date and expression of construction method this building is grade II listed.

The conservation area is almost entirely hard landscaped with small areas of greenery provided by the new flatted developments. These developments are substantial in scale reflecting the large inter war buildings with strong vertical emphasis.



View between new residential building and Power House towards the Cabinet Building



View of new residential building and green space

Focal points views and vistas

Due to the enclosed nature of the site and the substantial scale of the buildings there are no particular focal points within the conservation area beyond interconnected views between the Powerhouse and the former headquarter building. However from a distance the Machine Factory with its water tower and the 1930s building group adjacent to the railway provide landmarks particularly from visitors approaching London from the west by rail. The views down Dawley Road also provide good views of particularly the Shipping Building.

Open spaces, landscape and trees

Due to the compact nature of the site and its industrial character these are very limited and relate to the contemporary blocks of flats with small pocket parks and some greenspace on podium decks.

Streetscape

The streetscape has been entirely renewed except for the small surviving section of rail line opposite the Pressing Plant and a small area of surviving cobbles and brick pavers at this location and there are no other historic surviving features. The redevelopment has been done in relatively high quality materials. (Images)

Boundary Treatments

The industrial character of the site has resulted in almost all of the buildings being constructed to the edge of the pavement. The exception is the former headquarters which has some areas of walling previously topped with railings.



The Gramophone Offices, Hayes



Surviving early factory wall - General Medical Building



Surviving rail track



Surviving historic surfacing

06.

Negative
Features

Negative Features

At present the Pressing Plant/ Goss works and the Powerhouse are at risk and in need restoration. In the longer term more appropriate in keeping windows should be installed to Former HMV office to better reflect its historic character, the wall reinstated to its former height and railings

reinstated to better reflect its historic character and that of the street. Ideally Healthcare work building should have a new facade more in keeping with the historic building opposite and character of the original industrial shed.



Side elevation of the undeveloped Printing Press building



Hoarding around the Power House



HMV Head Office/Jupiter House



HMV Head Office/Jupiter House

Further Reading

Architects of Greater Manchester-
Gramophone Factory, Blyth Road, Hayes,
Middlesex

Manroland Goss Web Systems UK Solutions
Ltd- from the archives Goss Printing Press
Chicago.

Gramophone Factory, Blyth Road, Hayes,
Middlesex - Building | Architects of Greater
Manchester

Old Vinyl I Factory Heritage Impact
Assessment Purcell 2012.

"HIS MASTER'S VOICE" THE GRAMOPHONE
CO. LTD. FACTORIES: HAYES, MIDDLESEX,
ENGLAND - TuckDB Postcards

Appendices

Proposed Locally Listed Buildings

Cabinet Building

A good example of a high quality factory building.



Cabinet Building