

Historic Urban Textile Mills: Conservation and Conversion

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Historic urban textile mills: Conservation and conversion

“The expert meeting in Berlin will discuss historic mill complexes in towns and cities, aiming to identify an **urban industrial typology** to facilitate the description and valuing of these complexes, and good practice criteria to provide orientation in conversion processes.”

To identify:

1. the historic urban spatial structures of textile-industry complexes
2. good practice in converting historic textile mills
3. global, transcultural, and living heritage

Historic urban textile mills: Conservation and conversion

1. What kind of urban structures characterize the textile mills?
2. How are these urban structures conserved (or not) and converted?
3. Leading further:
What is discussed as good practice in conservation and conversion?
How might we critically reflect, conserve, and use the various meanings, knowledge, and global networks embedded in local heritage sites?

Leipzig
Terrassa
Lissabon
Prato
...

Euskirchen
Düren

Manchester
Bradford
Lille
Gent
Winterthur
Krefeld
Łódź



Historic urban textile mills: Conservation and conversion

Historic urban textile mills are part of the city and contribute as such to urbanism and urban design.

However, the urban structures and buildings of the mills show a paradoxon: They are embedded in the urban fabric and share traditional elements of urban design and architecture, but also differ through scale, order, and appearance.



Historic urban textile mills: Conservation and conversion

Urban industrial types:

- Urban block
- Flagship composition
- Production hall

Defining structural and infrastructural elements (TICCIH study):

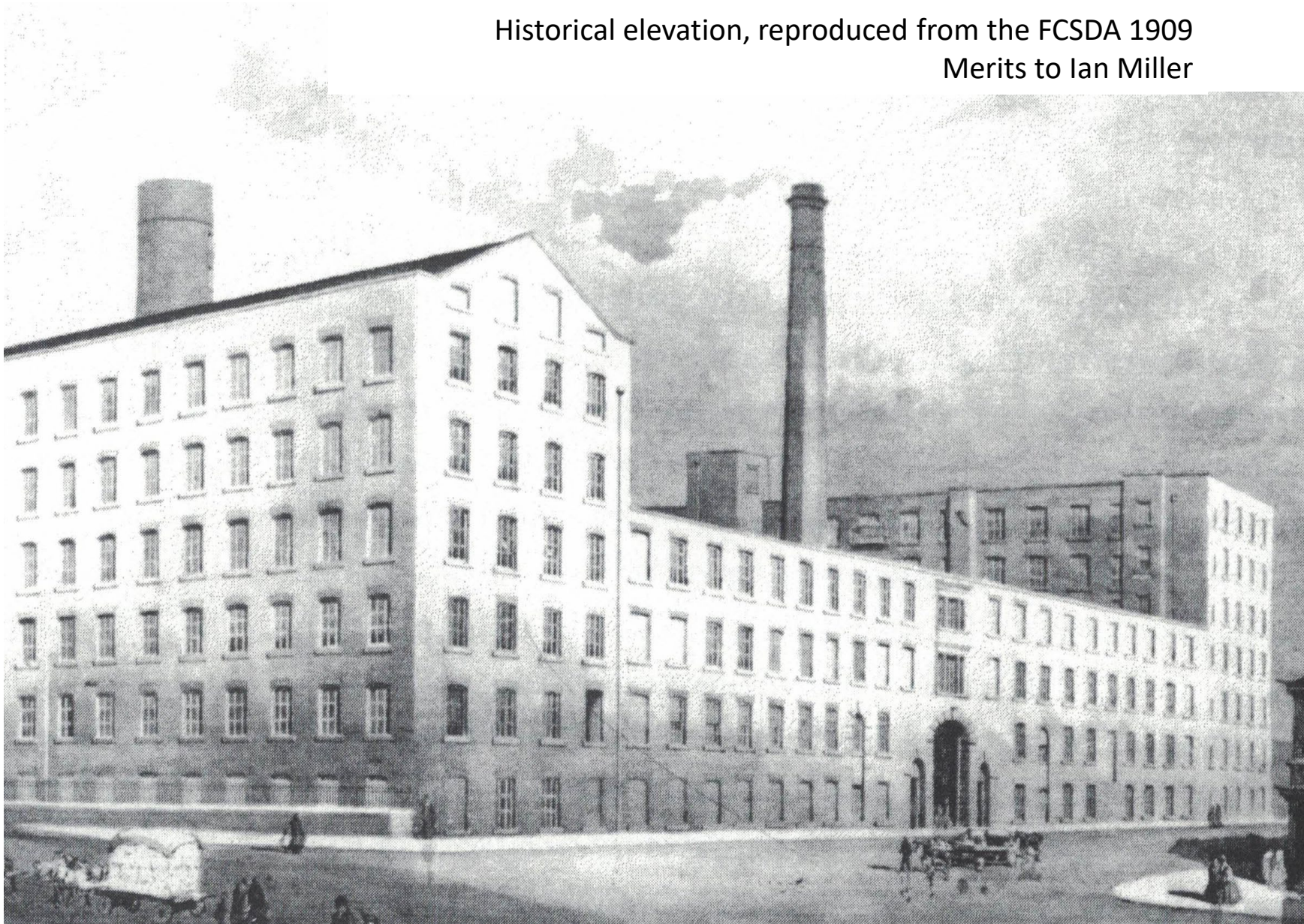
- Multi-storey mill, roof, weaving shed
- Power systems and transmissions
- Sprinkler systems, gardens and other specific elements

Architectural representations:

- Towers & chimneys
- Facades
- Entrances

Urban block

Historical elevation, reproduced from the FCSDA 1909
Merits to Ian Miller



Urban block

Urban block:

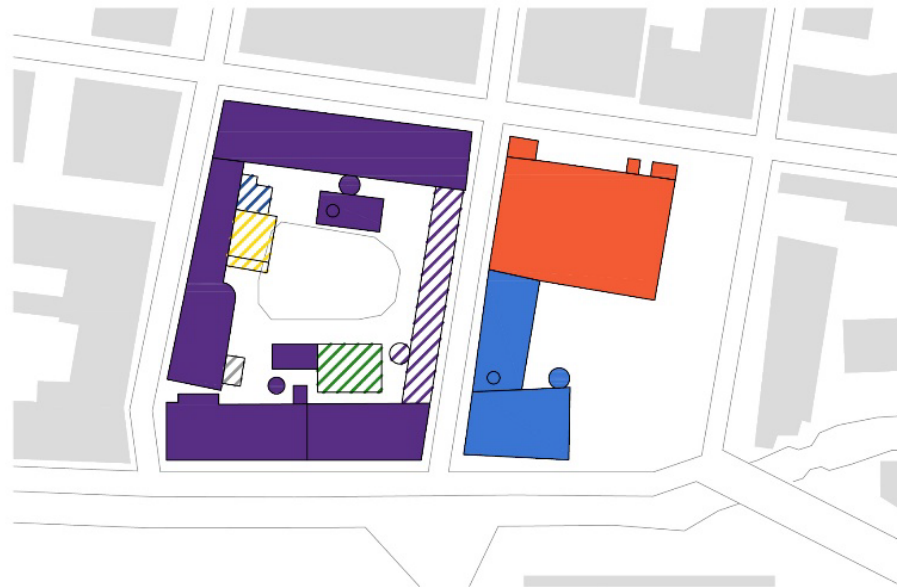
Collection of functional buildings under a common management or ownership, in which individual buildings or parts of buildings are used to carry out different operations in manufacturing a product, such as cotton yarn. The mill complex follow and form urban street blocks with inner courtyards.

(Merits to Marc Watson)

Murrays mills consists of four wings (1897-1806) corresponding to the urban street block and an inner courtyard. Further extensions are located across the street.

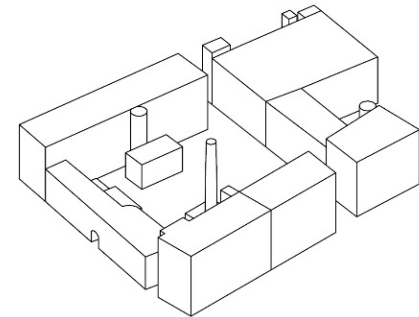
Urban block

Murrays, Manchester



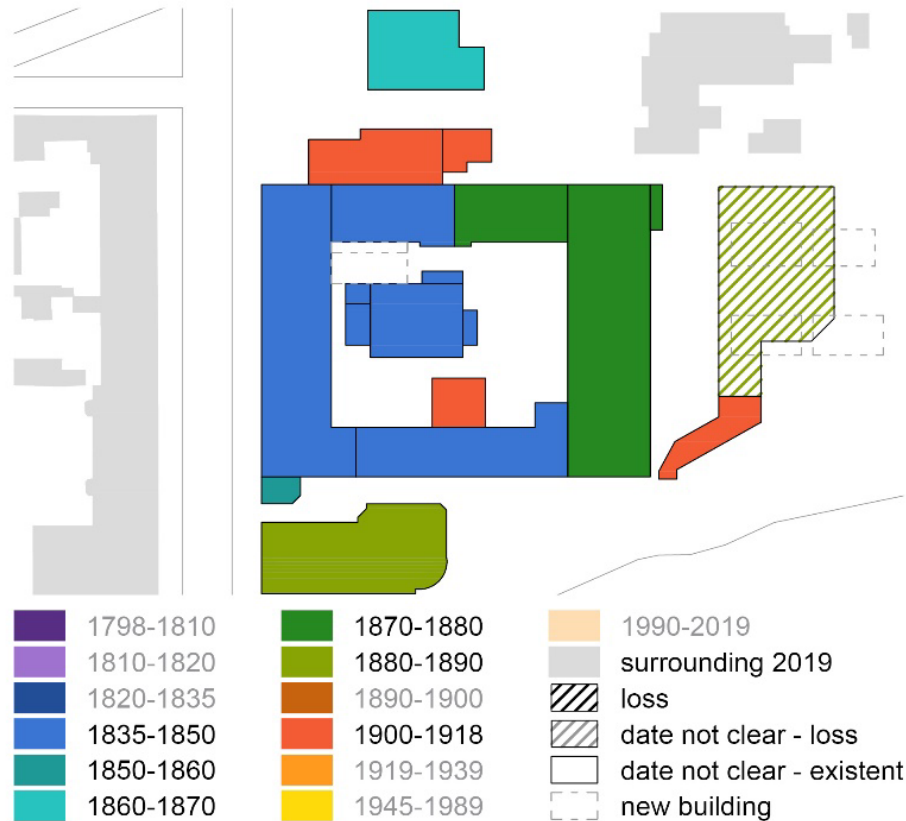
1798-1810	1870-1880	1990-2019
1810-1820	1880-1890	surrounding 2019
1820-1835	1890-1900	loss
1835-1850	1900-1918	date not clear - loss
1850-1860	1919-1939	date not clear - existent
1860-1870	1945-1989	new building

Multi-phase layout, urban structure, image © Oevermann 2019

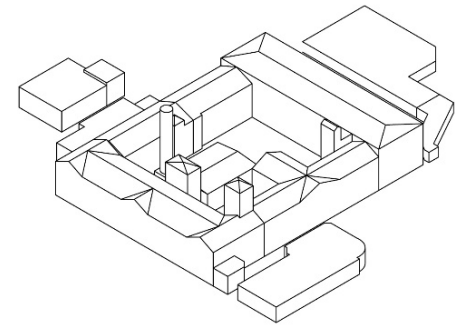


Urban block

Geyer, Łódź



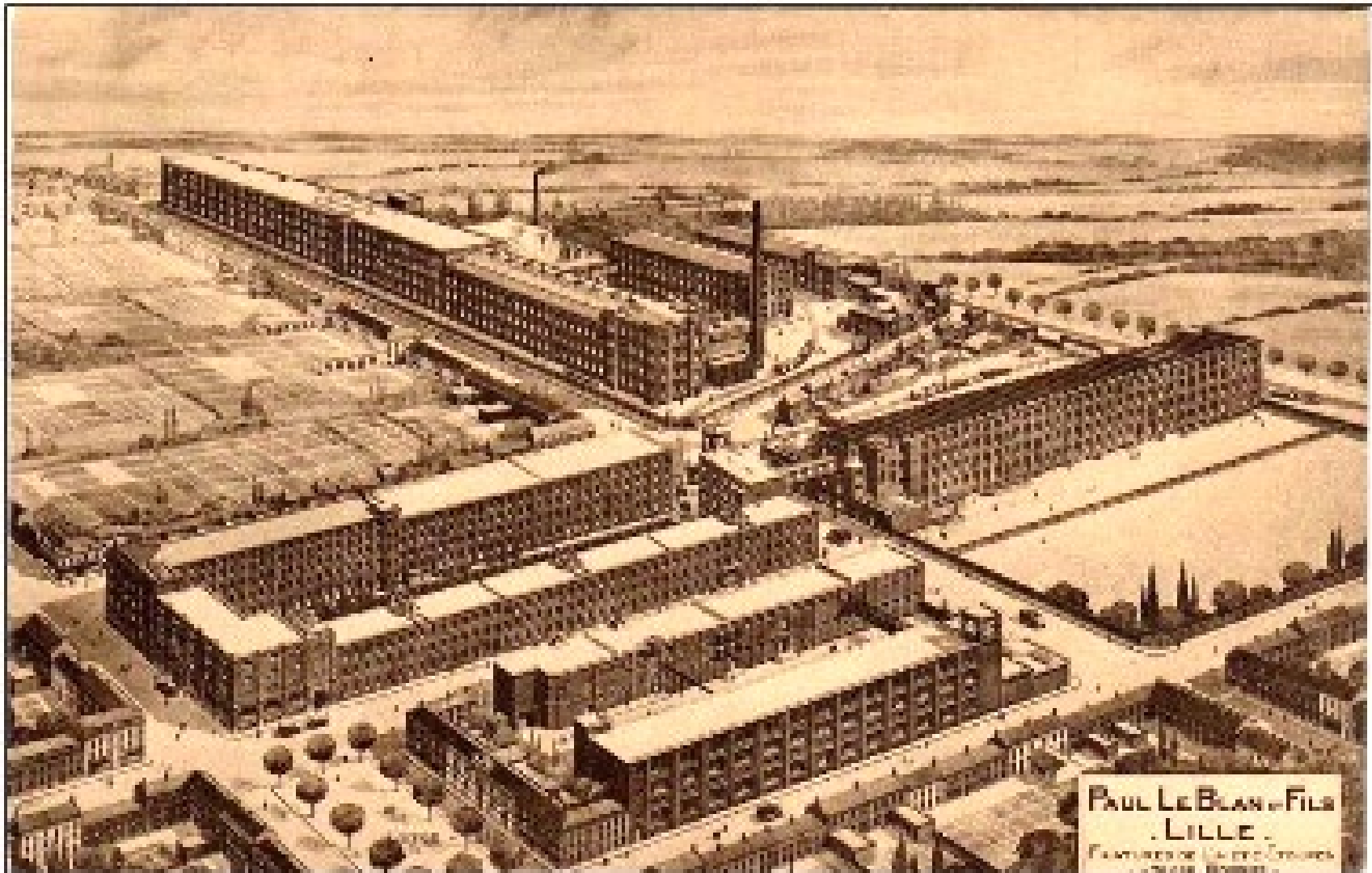
Multi-phase layout, urban structure, image © Oevermann 2019



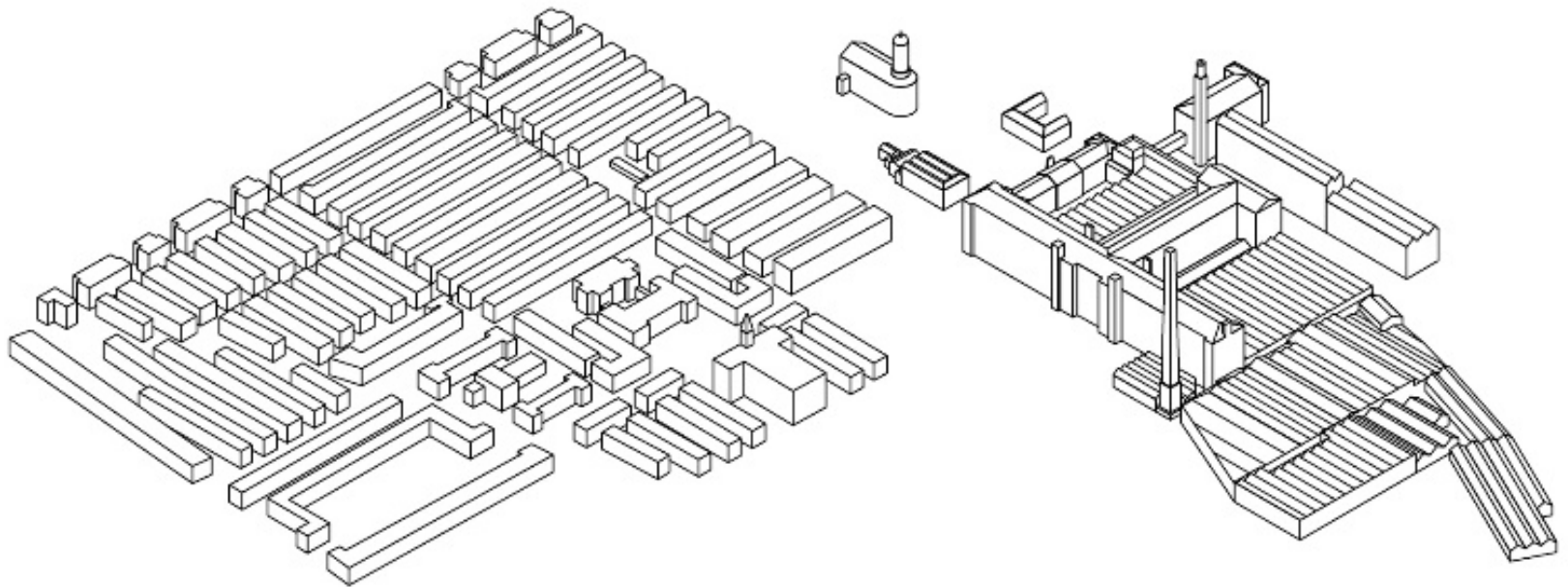
Urban block in transition

Le Blan, Lille

© Collection Groupe Mémoire de Lille-Moulins,
after 1930



Flagship composition



Urban structure of Saltaire, Bradford © Oevermann 2019

Flagship composition

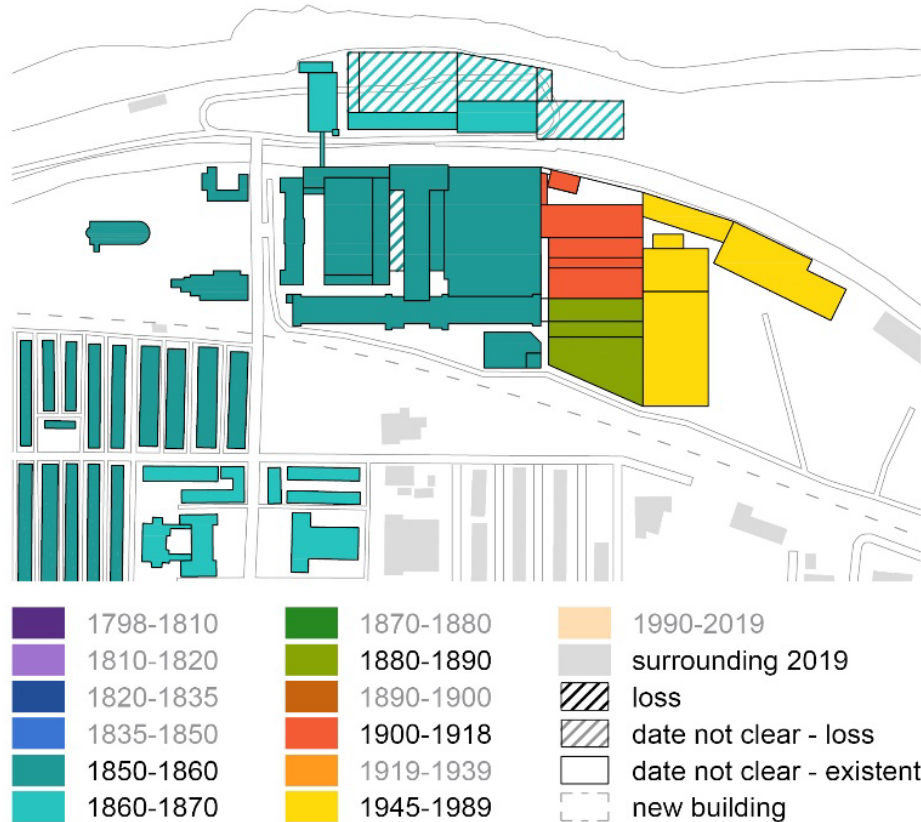
The flagship composition describes a mill complex which is designed to impress within a townscape or landscape by defining the end of axial streets, dominating and yet complementing its surroundings, which might be a company town. Furthermore, there are mill complexes consisting of large additive compositions with strong architectural representations towards the urban surround. Form might over-ride functional needs.

(Merits to Marc Watson)

Salts mill, which are constructed in 1851 – 1853 gives a clear example including the overall design, the mills symmetry, the impressive volume, and the facade design towards the town.

Flagship composition

Saltaire, Bradford



Multi-phase layout, image © Oevermann 2019



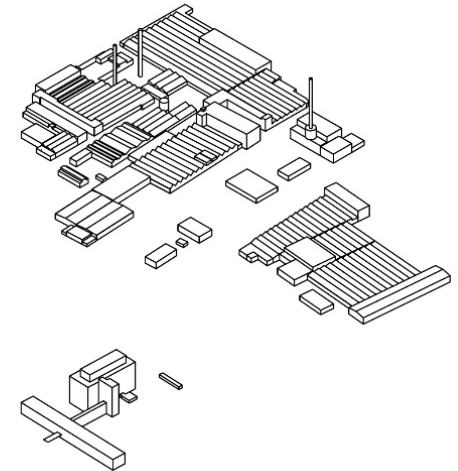
Flagship composition

Verseidag, Krefeld



1798-1810	1870-1880	1990-2019
1810-1820	1880-1890	surrounding 2019
1820-1835	1890-1900	loss
1835-1850	1900-1918	date not clear - loss
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Multi-phase layout, urban structure, image © Oevermann 2019



Production hall

© Industriemuseum Gent, F01364



Production hall

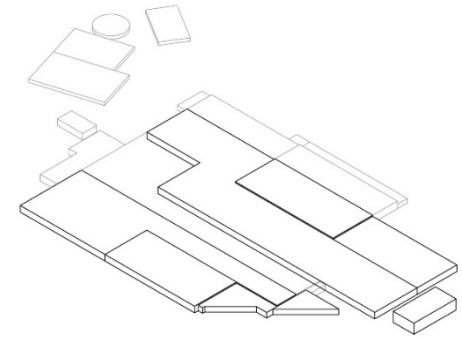
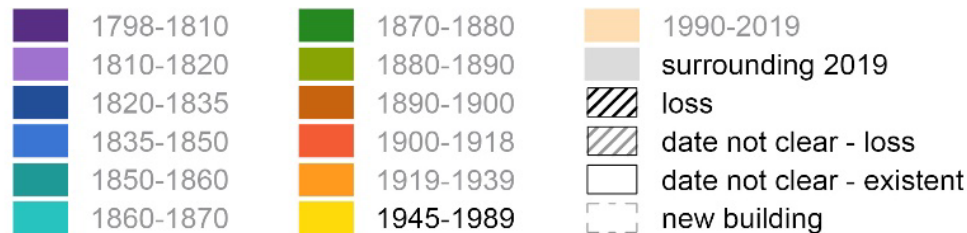
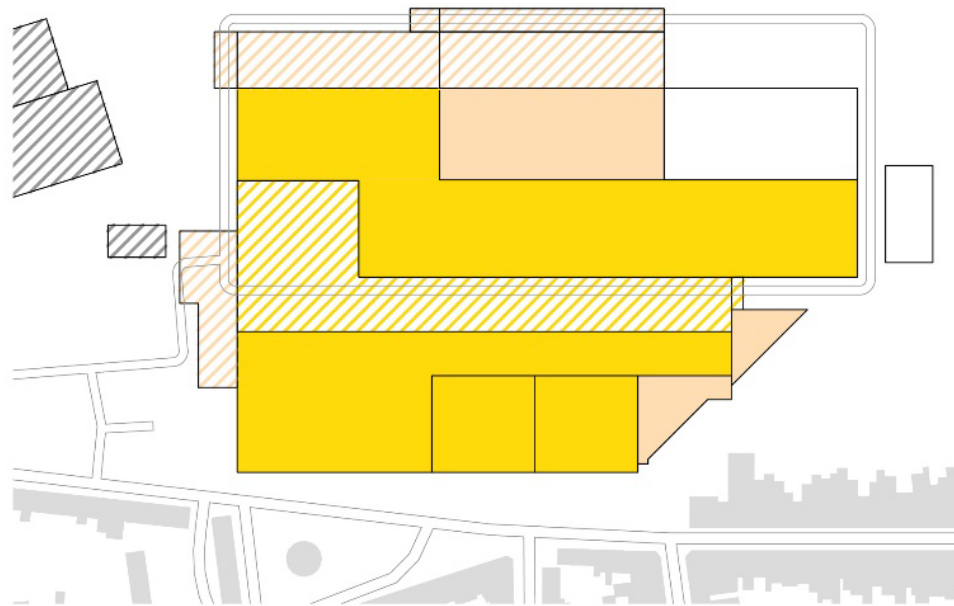
The term production hall is just right to distinguish this type of building from the shed. Everything could be made inside it, once individual electric motors are being used, so it's not a specific textile building type.

(Merits to Marc Watson)

UCO-Mäistraat in Ghent was mainly constructed in 1948 is such a huge and flat structure. The construction consists of a standardized skeleton with 100 primary and 600 secondary (on-site) prefabricated beams, executed as I-beams in prestressed concrete according to the Blaton-Magnel system.

Production hall

UCO



Multi-phase layout, urban structure, image © Oevermann 2019

Architectural representations: Towers & chimneys

Examples

Listers
1871-1873



Geyer
1901



De Porre
1930s



Images © Oevermann 2019

Architectural representations: Facades

Examples

Mottau & L.
1889-1890



Le BLan-Lafont
1900 (?)



Verseidag
1930-1931 HE



Images © Oevermann 2019

Architectural representations: Entrances

Examples

Poznański
1878-1880



McConnel & Kennedys
1912



UCO
1948



Images © Oevermann 2019

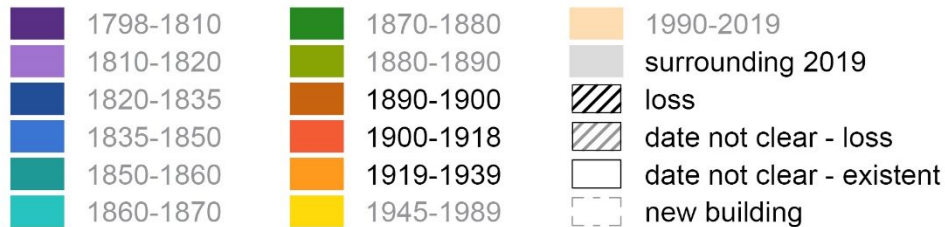
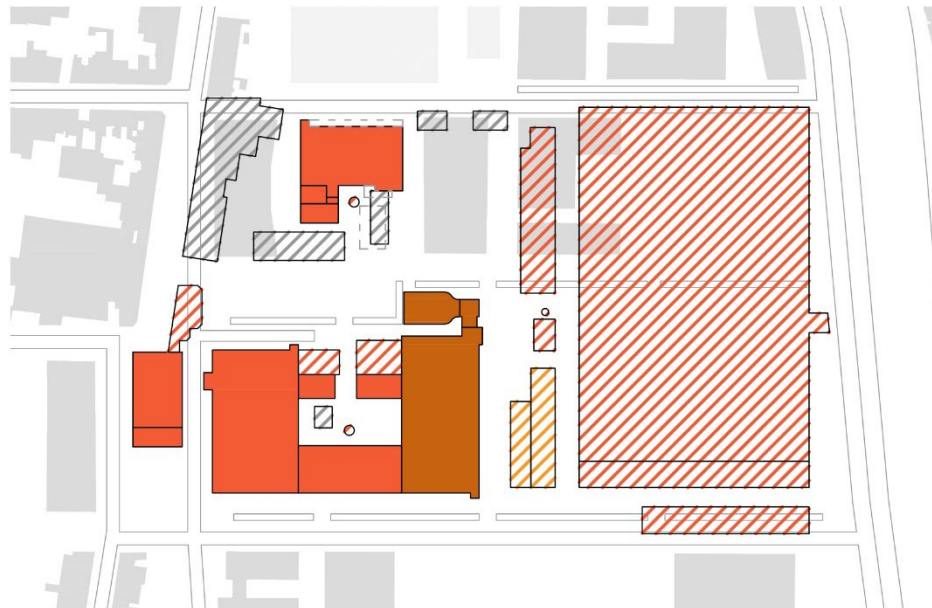
Challenges of conversion

Sheds and shelters, as well as late 20s century buildings are demolished more often, than multi-storey and brick buildings.

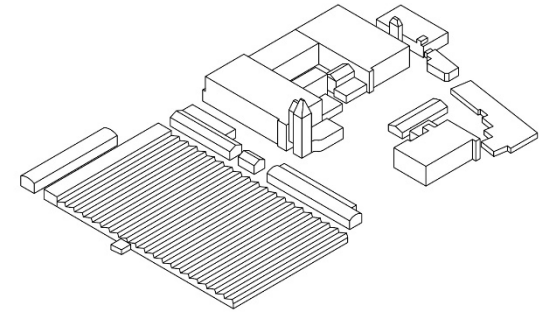
Today, I will not compare and discuss floor plans which represent how the amazing interior spaces of mills are converted – however that is an interesting topic to be postponed.

Challenges of conversion

LeBlan - Lafont

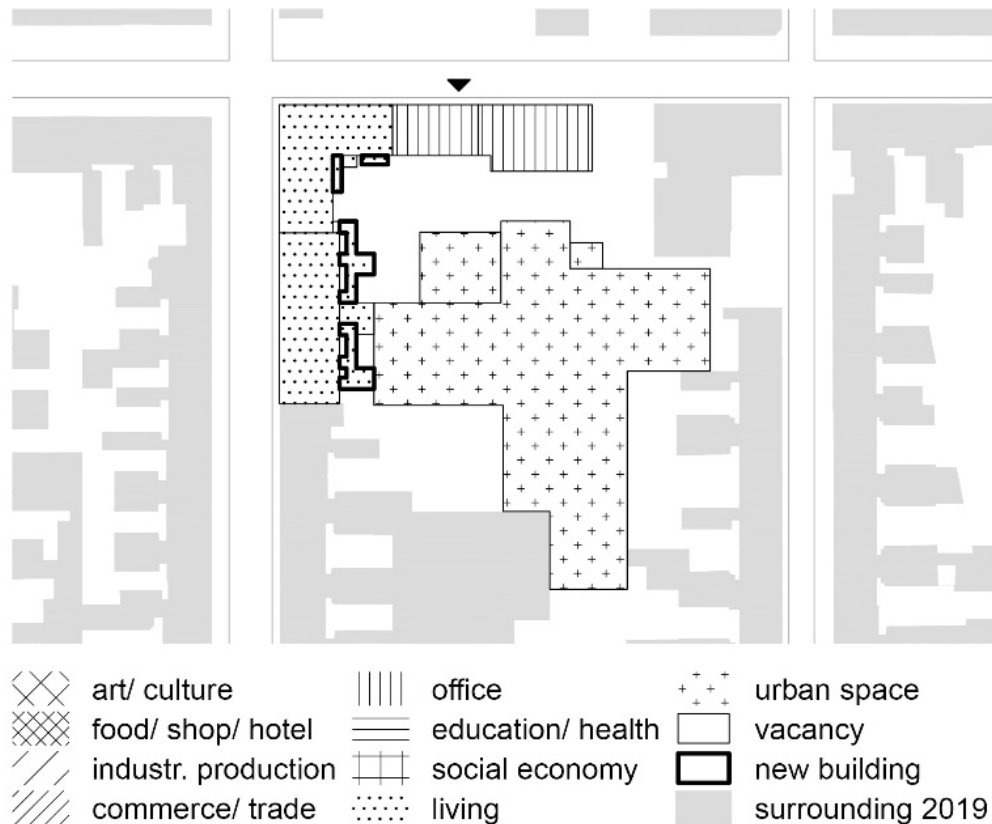


Multi-phase layout, urban structure, image © Oevermann 2019



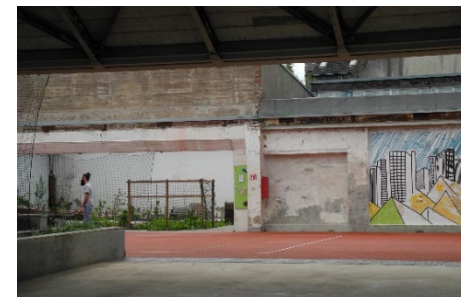
Good practice in conservation and conversion

Mottau und Leenderts, Krefeld



Urban structure, images © Oevermann 2019

The historic shed is converted into a new urban space for the neighbourhood.



Historic urban textile mills: Conservation and conversion

Urban textile mills are part of the city and contribute to urbanism and urban design.

They fit in and shape the urban setting as urban industrial types, their structural and infrastructural elements, and architectural representations.

Although sheds and shelters are more often torn down than multi-storey factory buildings, especially the conservation of these unrecognized elements trigger inspiring conversions.

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Leading further:

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