

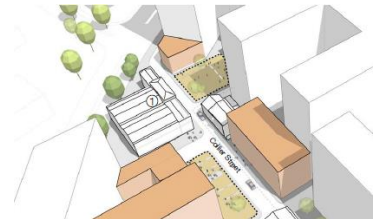


Keith Myerscough has presented conference papers on the social history of commercial swimming. He has written peer reviewed articles and book chapters on individual Natationists and swimming clubs in Lancashire. Keith began his career as a teacher of physical education within the State School sector before moving on to manage the UK's first basketball/netball facility in Stockport, Greater Manchester. He returned to teaching in the FE/HE sectors in 1999. Keith took early retirement from his post as a Senior Lecturer in Sport Studies at the University Centre, Blackpool in 2014.

1st March 2021

Industrial Heritage (Part 3)

Collier Street Baths: Past, Present, Future



Source: Salford Council, 'Greengate – Salford Regeneration Strategy', February 2018

MANCHESTER AND SALFORD BATHS AND LAUNDRIES COMPANY. — (Provisionally Registered.) —
 Capital, £35,000, in 7,000 Shares of £5 each. Deposit, 10s per Share.
 Chairman, WILLIAM NEILD, Esq
 Deputy Chairman, E. R. LANGWORTHY, Esq
 PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE:

His Worshipful the MAYOR of MANCHESTER

Sir Elkanah Armitage	Alexander Henry, Esq
Thomas Ashton, Esq	Joseph Heron, Esq
Mr Alderman Barnes	Oliver Heywood, Esq
Richard Watson Barton, Esq	Thomas Hilton, Esq
Thomas Bazley, Esq	Henry Houlsworth, Esq
Marshall Brooks, Esq	James Kershaw, Esq, M P
Samuel Brooks, Esq	Ivie Mackie, Esq
Edmund Buckley, Esq	James Murray, Esq
George Dewhurst, Esq	Robert N Phillips, Esq
James Dugdale, Esq	Sir John Potter
James Dunn, Esq	William Slater, Esq
Wm Fairbairn, Esq, F.R.S., &c	J A Turner, Esq
Samuel Fletcher, Esq	James Watts, Esq
Robert Gardner, Esq	Edward Westhead, Esq
Jeremiah Garnett, Esq	Joseph Whitworth, Esq
J C Harter, Esq	

BANKERS.
 Messrs. Cunliffe, Brooks, and Co., King-street, Manchester.
 SECRETARY.
 Mr. Hugh Fleming, 6, York Hotel Buildings, Manchester.
 SOLICITOR.
 Mr. William Heron, 24, Kennedy-street, Manchester.

Application for shares, in the subjoined form, must be made to the Secretary; or to the Solicitor to the Company, Mr. William Heron, 24, Kennedy-street, Manchester.

To the Provisional Committee of the Manchester and Salford Baths and Laundries Company.

Gentlemen,—I request that you will allot to me _____ shares of five pounds each, in the above company; and I hereby undertake to accept the same or any less number you may allot to me, and to pay the deposit of 10s. per share thereon, and to sign the deed of settlement when required.—Dated this _____ day of _____ 1855

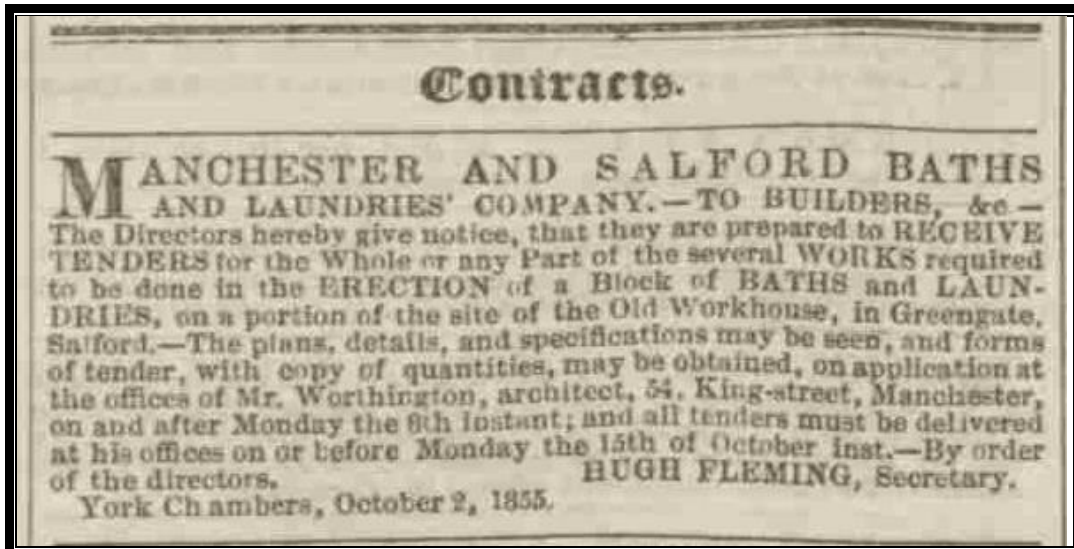
Name in full _____
 Place of Business _____
 Residence _____
 Signature _____
 Name, Residence, and Profession of R. ferec }

Manchester and Lancashire General Advertiser
 13th January 1855

The *Manchester and Salford Baths and Laundry Company* had been formed in December 1854. Its shareholders were some of the richest and politically powerful members of cotton Lancashire. The company initially planned to build one establishment with the intention of constructing more if their first venture proved financially successful. In so doing, it was their aim to deflect national criticism that had been levelled at Manchester and Salford, in that they had not followed other large towns in the provision of public baths. The company believed that private enterprise could improve the sanitary and moral condition of the working classes.

The first site selected was in the Greengate district of Salford. Known as the Collier Street Baths, the establishment was built on part of the old Salford Union Workhouse site. The land, 3,483 square yards in the most heavily populated district of Salford, was bought for

£3,050. The swimming pools and private baths opened on 27 August, and the wash-house on 1 September 1856.



Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser, 6 October 1855

The total outlay on Collier Street Baths was £12,431. It had 2 swimming pools for male customers; both were 53-feet 6-inches by 25-feet, each pool had 24 'dressing places'. Laundry facilities accommodated up to 40 washers in a washing room, 60-feet by 31-feet. There were 12 women's private (slipper) baths; 5 for 1st class customers and 7 for 2nd class. There were 38 private (slipper) baths for males, 19 for 1st class customers and 19 for 2nd class. The ratio of first to second class facilities followed government guidelines as laid down in legislation. The pricing strategy tended to exclude the poorest inhabitants of the Greengate district, but the charges proved to attract regular customers.

MANCHESTER AND SALFORD BATHS AND LAUNDRIES COMPANY.—GREENGATE ESTABLISHMENT, COLLIER-STREET, SALFORD.—The Baths and Laundries at the above establishment will be OPENED to the public for Bathers on Wednesday, August 27th, and for Washers on Monday, September 1st, 1856.	
PRIVATE WARM BATH.	
Men's extra first-class	1s.
Ditto first-class	6d.
Ditto second-class	2d.
Women's first-class	6d.
Ditto second-class	2d.
LARGE TEPID SWIMMING BATH.	
First-class	6d.
Second-class	2d.
WASHING DEPARTMENT.	
First-class, not exceeding two hours	2d.
Extra time, per hour or any part of an hour	2d.
Second-class, not exceeding two hours	1½d.
Extra time, per hour or any part of an hour	1d.
HOURS OF ATTENDANCE.—Week-days: In summer from 6 a.m., in winter from 7 a.m., to 9 p.m. Saturdays: In summer from 6 a.m., in winter from 7 a.m., to 10 p.m. Sundays: In summer, from 6 to 9 a.m. in winter, from 7 to 9 a.m.	
Manchester, August 22, 1856.	

Manchester Daily Examiner and Times, 25 August 1856



In the first 4 months of the bath's transactions, 27 August 1856 to 8 January 1857, the income was £350. There had been some 7,700 'washers' (use of the laundry) and an estimated 18,500 'bathers' (swimming and slipper baths). Thus, the prospects appeared to be excellent for the company to build further establishments. It was clear that there was a need for such a combination of facilities in Manchester and Salford at this time. The company estimated that the Collier Street Baths would make a profit of about £1,400 per year with a working expenditure of about £800.

The financial success of the scheme was assured, emboldened by the potential for a handsome return on their investment, the company purchased land for two further establishments. The second building was to be constructed on land purchased in the Ardwick district of Manchester; the Mayfield site was 1,644 square yards of land purchased at nine-pence a yard. The third site, on Leaf-Street in the township of Hulme, consisted of 1,847 square yards of land purchased at six-pence per yard.

An account of swimming at Collier Street Baths in 1857 appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* for 8 January:

'During the warm weather, after the opening, it was one of the most irresistible things ... to see the droves of young men, factory workers and others, who on a Saturday left work, and came and tumbled headlong into the swimming baths, until a place 50 feet by 25 feet was inconveniently crowded. The manifestations of delight, the joyous screams of laughter, must have been seen and heard to be understood; the only difficulty was to get the people out.'

Collier Street Baths promoted 'swimming entertainments' by holding regular feats of swimming in the form exhibitions and competitive races. As early as 1858, Londoner, Professor Poulton, was regularly appearing at the baths in competitive races for prize money. He also entertained spectators with various feats of ornamental swimming that included aquatic acrobatics and eating and smoking underwater. The baths could hold about one hundred paying spectators which at an average charge of six-pence was sure to make a profit for the company. The swimming galas included a variety of races catering for all ages and abilities with the main race often being open to anyone in the country. The main event would be billed as a championship race for a valuable trophy with wagers being made by swimmers and spectators.

In its thirteenth year of operation the Collier Street Baths had become part of a small business empire that was failing. The 1870 annual company report declared that there had been a 'falling off' in the number of customers in each of their public baths. This was due to continued poor weather, high unemployment figures, and the increase in the cost of coal. By 1877 the *Manchester and Salford Baths and Laundry Company* was attempting to off-load the Mayfield and Leaf Street Baths to Manchester, and Collier Street to Salford. Manchester Corporation bought Mayfield and Leaf Street for £19,000 but Salford refused to purchase Collier Street. The baths in Greengate had served its local community for 27 years, opening

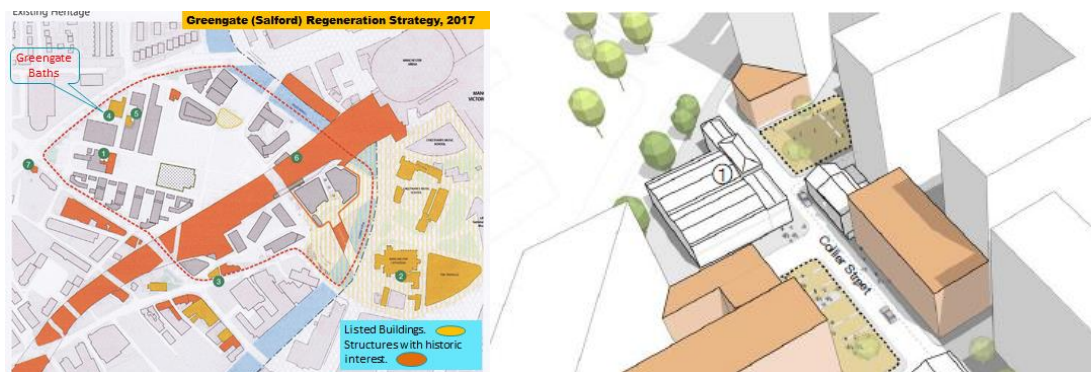


in 1856 and closing in 1883. The establishment was then used as a factory for making and repairing bicycles; then it was used as a warehouse unit until the ravages of time secured its place on English Heritage’s Buildings at Risk Register.



Collier Street Baths is a grade2 listed building ‘at risk’ Source: Image by Mark Watson and Keith Myerscough*

Collier Street Baths is viewed by Salford council as being a key heritage asset. The baths has an historical legacy that is to be linked with future social and cultural regeneration strategies for Salford. The dilapidated condition of the Grade II* public baths offers the council an opportunity to link future developments with the district’s industrial heritage. However, due to the condition of the Collier Street Baths, the strategy for redevelopment has significant limitations. The scheme will restore the establishment’s front entrance whilst building a modern dance and arts studio behind the frontage.



Collier Street Baths: A key heritage asset Source: Salford Council, ‘Greengate – Salford Regeneration Strategy’, February 2018

BATHS AND WASHHOUSES Historical Archive



Sharing memories and historical material relating to the history of Baths & Wash Houses in the United Kingdom

The repurposing of Victorian and Edwardian buildings has gained momentum in the last two decades with the mantra of protecting 'our heritage' for future generations. Established in 2015, *Historic Pools of Britain* advises local interest groups who wish to save their local swimming pool. It is their aim to help local groups to, 'make a significant contribution to the social and architectural history of Britain and play a hugely important role in our communities'.