Development Brief
for the redevelopment of

VICTORIA PARK ESTATE
& SURROUNDING AREA
MACCLESFIELD

March 1999
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In April 1998, Macclesfield Borough Council decided to demolish the deck access, system built block of 543 flats at Victoria Park and to redevelop the site. Victoria Park Estate was built in 1967 and no longer meets the requirements for modern day living. It is anticipated that demolition will commence in early 2000 and will be substantially complete by the year 2002. The primary purpose of the Brief is to provide planning guidance for the redevelopment of the site of the housing estate in conjunction with other uses. The Borough Council has a longer term aim to relocate the Highway Depots from Commercial Road and Hibell Road and guidance on future uses of those areas is provided. Arighi Bianchi, owners of the retail furniture showroom adjoining Victoria Park Estate, wish to expand their retail showroom and provide additional car parking and the Brief considers this requirement further.

1.2 The Borough Council owns the Victoria Park housing estate, integral shops and car park and, as landowner, will provide a separate implementation strategy for this area. This will deal principally with the timing, phasing and method of demolition of the Estate, the terms and conditions of the sale of the site to developers, including registered social landlords, the amount, type and design of social housing and the housing nomination rights to the Borough Council. A separate Development Brief is necessary because the role of the Borough Council as Planning Authority is separate from that of the Borough Council as Housing Authority and landowner.

1.3 In March 1999, following a six week public consultation period, the Borough Council approved the Development Brief as Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Brief will form the basis for advising prospective developers and will assist in determining planning applications.

2 OBJECTIVES OF THE BRIEF

2.1 The objectives of the Brief are:

- to determine the after uses for the site of the Victoria Park housing estate and associated uses
- to promote the redevelopment of the Borough Council Highway Depots at Commercial Road and Hibell Road
- to accommodate the expansion of the Arighi Bianchi Retail Showroom and car parking
- to provide guidance on the built form of redevelopment, taking into consideration the setting, adjoining uses and buildings and other development constraints
- to achieve a high quality of design and materials reflecting the urban context of the site
- to improve access and circulation for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly access to the town centre
- to bring these matters to the attention of the public.
3.1 The Brief covers the site of:

- Victoria Park housing estate (4.8 hectares)
- Integral shops and car park
- The Bull Public House
- Arighi Bianchi Furniture Showroom (0.5 hectares)
- Commercial Road public car park (0.2 hectares)
- Borough Council Highway Depots and associated highway margins (1.2 hectares)
- Thorp Street Mill and commercial properties (0.2 hectares)

3.2 The location of the area covered by the Brief is shown in Plan 1. Plan 2 shows the site in detail. The total area covered by the Brief is approximately 8 hectares.

3.3 The area covered by the Brief lies on the eastern edge of Macclesfield town centre and is bounded on the northern side by Hurdsfield Road (B5470), to the west by the Silk Road (A523T), to the south by Buxton Road (A537) and to the east by Victoria Park. The Silk Road and railway line physically separate the site from Macclesfield town centre. The River Bollin flows alongside Thorp Mill and separates the two Highway Depots. Topographically, the land slopes downwards westwards to the River Bollin.

3.4 Victoria Park housing estate was built in 1967 and comprise 543 flats in a deck access system built complex. The housing density is about 110 dwellings per hectare (45 dwellings per acre). The flats are three to seven storeys high and have dominated the area: in townscape terms they are an incongruous feature. The flats mask views of trees in Victoria Park in the mid-distance and obstructed into views of the Pennine Hills in the longer distance.

A small shopping centre was built as an integral part of the housing estate. However the shopping provision has declined in recent years and there is only a hairdressers, off licence and hot food takeaway left. A former Kwik Save supermarket was recently converted to a community centre.

The Bull Public House was built at about the same time as the housing estate and stands separately from the flats. It is an unattractive, two-storey flat roof building. Within the housing estate are areas of open space and trees and two children’s play areas. Around the perimeter of the complex are strips of open space and amenity tree planting.

3.5 On the western edge of the site, adjoining the Silk Road, lies the Arighi Bianchi furniture showroom which serves a sub-regional catchment. The showroom is a Grade II* Listed Building. It is four storeys high and the front wall, facing the Silk Road, is built of cast iron and glass. The official list describes the showroom as formerly forming part of a silk mill and dates from about 1883. Arighi Bianchi state that they started business in the Commercial Road Silk Mill in 1883. In 1892 the new four-storey showroom was built adjoining the Silk Mill. There have been recent single- and two-storey extensions. Access to the showroom is via Commercial Road, King Street and Buxton Road.
3.6 To the north of Arighi Bianchi showroom lies the Commercial Road public car park with 64 car spaces. The car park serves both visitors to the store and town centre car parking. A considerable amount of on-street commuter car parking takes place in Commercial Road.

3.7 The Borough Council Highway Depots lie on the northern edge of the area. The two sites comprise the former gas works and are in a contaminated state. Details of the contamination are held by the Borough Council. The River Bollin separates the two areas of land. Alongside the River Bollin there is a footpath and cycleway linking the town centre with the Middlewood Way footpath/cycle networks. The eastern part of the depot gains access directly to Commercial Road, whereas the western area has a separate access to Hurdsfield Road. Adjoining the depots are Thorp Street Mill and other industrial premises. Thorp Street Mill is a Grade II Listed Building, dating from 1825, and was recently converted to offices.

3.8 Surrounding the area are various uses which are listed below.

- To the south and on the opposite side of Buxton Road lies a mix of commercial properties and housing. A number of properties in Buxton Road are listed buildings.

- To the east lies Victoria Park, a formal park with bowling green, football pitch and play equipment, provided for the town’s benefit by the Brockethurst family. Beyond the park lies Fence Avenue, lined with Edwardian villas, overlooking the park, and the Kings School.

- To the north east lies a small industrial estate and to the north lies Hurdsfield Road, a predominantly residential road with a small number of shops in the vicinity. To the north of Hurdsfield Road lies a Tesco Superstore.

- To the west lies the edge of Macclesfield town centre which sits on top of the escarpment.

3.9 There are significant views of the site from several strategic locations:-

- Macclesfield town centre on the edge of the escarpment

- Victoria Park

- The Silk Road (A523(T)), Buxton Road (A537) and surrounding roads

- Macclesfield Railway Station and railway line.
4 DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 The Development Plan for the area comprises the Cheshire Replacement Structure Plan (approved in 1992) and the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan (adopted in December 1997). In addition Circular 6/98 Planning for Affordable Housing is also a material consideration. The Cheshire Replacement Structure Plan provides a general policy of restraint for the Borough of Macclesfield. The Replacement Structure Plan is due to be superseded in 1999 by Cheshire 2011. The Structure Plan encourages housing developments to be close to local shops, community facilities and a primary school and be well related to public transport. Sites which are particularly close to these services will be suitable for development at higher densities. Sites allocated for housing should together provide for a range of sizes and types of dwellings.

4.2 The Macclesfield Borough Local Plan was adopted in December 1997 and provides the most up to date planning policy for the area. An extract of the Proposals Map is shown on Plan 3. Victoria Park housing estate is shown as a predominantly residential area, reflecting the existing use of the area. At the time of the preparation of the Local Plan the demolition of the housing estate was not anticipated.

4.3 The Bull Public House, Community Centre (converted Kwik Save Supermarket) and car park are shown as a local shopping centre (Policy S4(9) applies). The Local Shopping Policy seeks to maintain a level of shopping provision commensurate with the role the centre plays in the community. The Shopping Centre has been in decline with only a hairdressers, off licence and hot food takeaway remaining. The shops and community centre are an integral part of the Estate and will be demolished. It will not be necessary to replace the local shopping function. The Bull Public House is a freestanding building and its future is considered later.

4.4 Arighi Bianchi’s showroom and the Commercial Road public car park are shown as lying within the predominantly residential area.

4.5 The industrial premises in Thorp Street are shown as lying within an existing employment area (Policies E1, E2 and E3) where the following uses would normally be permitted.

- **B1** (Offices, research and development and light industrial uses)
- **B2** (General Industry) and
- **B8** (Warehousing)

The Highways Depots lie in a proposed mixed use allocation (Policy E6) and the following uses may be permitted:

- **B1** offices and commercial uses
- **B2** General Industry, small scale warehousing and storage, retailing and visitor accommodation and tourist attractions.

The Policy also provides for use for housing and open spaces but it is considered that such use would be inappropriate in this location, given the nature and location of the site. Any scheme for the redevelopment of the Highways Depot area should make provision for an extension to the River Bollin walkway, incorporate an attractive landscape frontage to Hurdsfield Road and be of a high quality design.
Plan 3 Extract from the Borough Local Plan
4.6 In April 1998, the Government published 6/98 Planning for Affordable Housing. The Circular advocates that large housing schemes should include a mix of house types and tenures, and encourages mixed and balance communities which are sustainable.

4.7 The Borough Local Plan Built Environment Chapter contains policies which are relevant to the Development brief. Policies which are particularly relevant are:-

- **BE1** promotes high standards of design, reflecting local character and form
- **BE3** states that development adjoining a Conservation Area will only be permitted which preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Conservation Area
- **BE16** states development which would adversely affect the setting of a Listed Building will not normally be approved, and
- **BE18** provides guidance on alterations and extensions to Listed Buildings.
- **PPG15** Planning and the Historic Environment provides more detailed guidance.

5 DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

5.1 **Plan 4** shows potential constraints to development mainly:

- Flood risk area associated with the River Bollin
- The line of the Macclesfield Trunk Relief Sewer
- The area of contaminated land
- Listed buildings and the Buxton Road Conservation Area boundary
- Areas of open space and groups of trees to be retained or replaced
- A public right of way from Fence Avenue to King Street
- The route of the Middlewood Way footpath/cycleway alongside the River Bollin
PROPOSED LAND USES

Redevelopment of the Victoria Park housing estate, integral shops and car park

6.1 The proposed land use for the housing estate (shops and car park) site is predominantly housing, reflecting the Local Plan notation. Redevelopment of the site for housing will be treated as a windfall housing site. The planning policy on windfall housing sites (Policy H5) states that the Borough Council will negotiate for the provision of 25% of the houses for affordable housing. In this particular case it is intended that this should be provided as subsidised affordable housing, rather than low cost market housing. However, as landowner, the Council’s requirement for subsidised housing will be determined taking into account the number of tenants requiring to be rehoused on the site together with other Council housing needs. The social housing requirement is explained fully in the Housing Implementation Strategy, published by the Housing Department. In accordance with Circular 6/98, it is desirable that there should be a mix of house types and tenures.

Open Space and Tree Retention

6.2 The linear open space and groups of trees along Commercial Road are an important part of the street scene in the built up area. Planning policy is to retain the open spaces and tree boulevard. Some trees may be replaced where the species are either unhealthy, inappropriate for housing development or are too close to the existing flats and therefore may be affected by the demolition.

6.3 The open space triangle at the junction of King Street and Queen Street is an important amenity area to be kept open. Trees on the site are also of important public amenity. The area acts as a positive buffer between commercial vehicular activity and the proposed housing.

6.4 Along the Buxton Road frontage there are a number of individual trees and small groups of trees. Visually, they form a continuation of the trees in Victoria Park and provide a tree line along this approach road to the town centre. In designing the street frontage to Buxton Road, the Council will require the retention of those trees which make a significant contribution to the street scene as part of creating a varied and interesting frontage to Buxton Road. Trees at the junction of Buxton Road and York Street are of public amenity value and should be retained. It is also desirable to retain the trees fronting Fence Avenue. Within the estate there are some individual trees which are worthy of retention if practicable in terms of the proposed layout.

6.5 The Council’s policy on children’s play space provision is set out in policy DC38 of the Borough Local Plan. In certain circumstances, the Council is prepared to consider financial contributions towards the improvement of an existing area of open space in lieu of on-site provision (Policy IMP1). In view of the close proximity to Victoria Park, the Council’s preference is that a commuted sum should be paid for new equipment and upgrading Victoria Park in lieu of on-site provision.
Redevelopment of the Borough Council’s Highways Depots

6.6 The Borough Council’s depots will need to be relocated prior to their redevelopment. These sites, which could also include the commercial properties in Thorp Street (excluding but respecting Thorp Street Mill), could be redeveloped for a range of uses including:

- **B1** offices and commercial uses
- **B2** general industry
- **B8** small scale warehousing and storage, retailing, leisure, visitor accommodation and tourist attractions and car parking.

In accordance with Policy E6, it will be necessary to make provision for an improvement to the Middlewood Way footpath/cycleway, incorporate an attractive landscape frontage to Hurdsfield Road and development should be of high quality design, reflecting its prominent position from major roads. Development should not dominate surrounding properties in scale or massing. Any future use of the site should not harm the residential amenities of the occupiers of nearby housing. Since part of the site lies within the floodplain, discussions with the Environment Agency will be necessary.

Arighi Bianchi Furniture Showroom

6.7 Arighi Bianchi are considering further extensions to their premises, particularly on the northern side of the showroom, extending into the customer car parking. Originally, Commercial Road Silk Mill stood adjacent to the Grade II* listed building, located on the northern side of the showroom (see photo). This was a lower three-storey building believed to be constructed of materials similar to the Listed Building. The design and materials of any proposed extension will need to respect and be subservient to the outstanding showroom facade. Views expressed by English Heritage and the national Amenity Societies will be an important factor in judging proposals.
Proposed Increase in Car Parking

6.8 To meet the requirements of Arighi Bianchi, it is proposed that about 0.4ha (1 acre) of land may be provided for car parking. The site will lie between the rear of Arighi Bianchi and the present site of The Bull Public house on the east side of King Street. The car park may take the form of a decked, two-storey structure, but as it will stand adjacent to a listed building, its design will require imagination and respect to its neighbours. Particular attention will need to be paid to the elevation visible from Buxton Road, The Silk Road and the Railway Station. Creating an attractive street scene will be crucial for this prominent part of the site.

6.9 Commercial Road car park will be retained as a public surface car park. However, this will have to be reviewed in the light of future provision of car parking within the area as a whole. Improvements will be sought to the car park, particularly to the boundary, as part of improving land in the public realm up to the Silk Road and the Thorp Street area generally.

The Bull Public House

6.10 The site of the Bull Public House and curtilage could be redeveloped for housing as part of a comprehensive scheme. If the owners decide to retain the public house then any proposal for redevelopment should minimise the potential for nuisance with the proposed housing, avoid conflict with the group of trees on the Buxton Road frontage, be domestic in scale and appearance, should not exceed the current floor space, provide car parking in accordance with the Borough Council’s standards (see Policy DC7 and Appendix 11 of the Borough Local Plan) and should utilise existing access points.

River Bollin Corridor and Middlewood Way Footpath

6.11 A footpath, which forms part of the Middlewood Way, runs from Waters Green alongside the River Bollin to Hurdsfield Road. It is intended that both the footpath and the River Bollin Corridor should be upgraded to make the area more attractive. These improvements can take place independently of the redevelopment of the depot sites. Funding for the enhancement works will be sought from various sources.

Victoria Park

6.12 Victoria Park lies adjacent to the proposed housing site. Redevelopment will have an impact on Victoria Park itself, particularly where the existing flats abut the Park. Particular attention will need to be paid to ensure that a satisfactory new boundary to the Park is created and that the amenities of the users of the Park is not harmed. Where possible the Park should be overlooked. Convenient and safe pedestrian access should be provided for future residents. Victoria Park would benefit from upgrading. Additional funding will be sought to restore the Park.
7 PRINCIPLES FOR THE BUILT FORM OF DEVELOPMENT

7.1 In considering the redevelopment of the area, the following general principles should be adopted:

• The new street pattern and housing should reflect the character of inner urban Macclesfield and incorporate some elements of the original layout.

• New development should respect the character and setting of the Listed Buildings.

• New development should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Buxton Road Conservation Area.

• New development should respect Victoria park, a formal park provided for the town's benefit by the Brocklehurst family.

• Particular care should be taken to enhance views of the area from strategic and local vantage points.

• Healthy trees which are appropriate in size and type and are of public amenity value should be retained.

• New development should adopt the best practice in seeking to design out crime. Public art features, relevant to the site, should be incorporated.

7.2 In considering proposals for the layout and built form of development, the context of the site needs to be taken into account. Section 3 of the Brief, which describes the site and surrounding area, provides the physical context. The housing site lies in inner Macclesfield, where the predominant housing layout is a linear street pattern and terraced forms of housing. Along Buxton Road there is a variety of house types, with houses fronting Buxton Road. Overlooking Victoria Park, the houses in Fence Avenue are predominantly Edwardian semi-detached villas. There is a strong vernacular built style which should be taken into account. Plan 5 shows the original street layout.

7.3 Layouts also need to accommodate pedestrian movements. Destinations for pedestrians (and cyclists) include the town centre, bus and railway station, bus stops, local schools, local shops and the park, etc., convenient, safe and attractive routes to such destinations need to be provided. Layouts should seek to 'design out crime' and comply with the Cheshire Housing Design Aid for Vehicular Movements.

7.4 The 'L'-shaped nature of the redevelopment site tends to divide into two distinct areas.
Commercial Road Area

7.5 The Commercial Road part of the redevelopment area is a narrow and long site. It lies at a lower level than Victoria Park. Specific factors which need to be addressed in determining the layout of housing are:

- The change in level between Victoria Park and the site. The path along the north west boundary of Victoria Park is at a higher level and it will be necessary to consider the privacy of occupiers of houses built at a lower level. Rear gardens and fences will not be permitted to abut onto Victoria Park.

- Houses should front onto Fence Avenue. If vehicular access from Fence Avenue is desired, there will be only one access permitted from Fence Avenue (shown on Plan No. 6). As a result, it will be necessary to provide a service road alongside Fence Avenue.

- The need to minimise the potential conflict between residential amenity and residents’ parking and the on-street commuter car parking in Commercial Road and vehicles visiting Arighi Bianchi and the commercial properties served off Thorp Street.

- Vehicular access from Commercial Road is to be at the point shown on Plan 6, mid-way between Thorp Street and the Hurdsfield Road junction.

- The open space fronting Commercial Road is to be retained as open space with the cycleway/footpath routed alongside. As a result, there will be no individual vehicle crossings over the area. The open space, which provides a pleasant setting for the trees, may be enclosed but should remain undeveloped.

- Rear gardens should not back onto Commercial Road. Houses will be encouraged to overlook the open space along Commercial Road, facing Hurdsfield Road.

- Views into Victoria Park from the housing area and Commercial Road should be created wherever possible.

7.6 As a result of these specific criteria and taking into account the context of the site, a possible layout would be a series of short cul-de-sacs at right angles to Commercial Road served by an access road. The access road could run along the north eastern edge of the site alongside Victoria Park.

7.7 Care should be taken to introduce interesting elevational treatments for end houses which will border Commercial Road and the access road. Overlooking of the open space will be encouraged. ‘Landmark’ features for the more prominent corners may be appropriate.

7.8 The existing public right of way between Fence Avenue and King Street should be diverted alongside the open space fronting Commercial Road. This should be upgraded to a 3 metre wide combined cycle and footpath, providing a route between Hurdsfield Road and the town centre.
Buxton Road Area

7.9 The Buxton Road area is rectangular in shape. It is proposed that York Street should be retained, which will provide a buffer between the proposed housing and Victoria Park. It will also enable overlooking of the park and thereby assist in designing out crime. It is proposed to recreate the former Waterloo Street, running east-west, off York Street which will separate this rectangular site in two. However, there shall be no direct vehicular access between Fence Avenue/Commercial Road and York Street/Waterloo Street/Buxton Road. A pedestrian/cycle link should be provided from Waterloo Street to Commercial Road.

7.10 The building frontage to Buxton Road will be highly prominent and partially faces the Conservation Area on the other side of the road. For these reasons a varied and interesting frontage to Buxton Road is essential. The building mass should be varied in height and building line.

7.11 Further up Buxton Road the building line, while remaining varied, is likely to be set back from Buxton Road. As individual accesses to Buxton Road will not be allowed, it may be necessary to reinstate the former Commongate to provide rear courtyard accesses for properties fronting the main road. These courtyards may be gated.

7.12 Elevations facing Buxton Road should be of good architectural quality; the most appropriate building materials are likely to be brown multi facing bricks under blue slate roofs.

Housing Layout, Car Parking and Materials

7.13 The housing layout should be provided in accordance with the Cheshire County Council Design Aid Housing, Industrial and Commercial Estate Roads, third edition, subject to achieving a layout which is in character with inner Macclesfield. A suggested road layout, which accords with the character of the area, is included in Plan 6. Where long and straight roads are proposed, in accordance with the character of the area, the roads should be subject to traffic calming measures. The road layout should be designed to ensure that vehicle speeds do not exceed 20 miles per hour.

7.14 Policies DC32 to DC37 of the Borough Local Plan provide the development control criteria against which applications for new residential development will be judged:

- **DC32** provides criteria for creating a pleasant townscape.
- **DC33** deals with materials and finishes.
- **DC34** provides criteria for road layouts and circulation.
- **DC35** provides criteria for achieving a high standard of landscape treatment.
- **DC36** sets out the minimum standards for space, light and privacy for new housing development for one and two storey housing. The minimum distance is 21 metres front to front of buildings and 25 metres cistance back to back of buildings, though some relaxation may be considered in the Commercial Road area. Further details are provided in the Local Plan.
- **DC37** provides guidance on the size of rear gardens.
7.15 The development control policies are specifically worded to allow for innovation in their application. In applying the policies, the Borough Council will be encouraging a high standard of design and layout which befits the location and characteristics of the site.

7.16 Car parking should normally be provided in accordance with Policy DC7 and Appendix 11 of the Borough Local Plan (BLP) and the Cheshire Design Aid referred to previously. Since the site lies close to the town centre, railway station and bus station, the Borough Council are prepared to adopt a flexible approach towards car parking provision.

7.17 However the design and layout of the car parking spaces is very important to the success of the scheme. Car parking blocks or garage courts will not be allowed. Car parking on tarmac or gravel in front of houses will also not be allowed. Drives alongside houses will be permitted but the Council will seek imaginative landscape treatment to minimise the visual impact of the parked car.

7.18 Boundary treatment to the fronts of houses and visible positions is very important, particularly for the affordable houses and frontages to Buxton Road. Within groups of houses the boundary treatment should be unified and permanent. Railings will be the most appropriate boundary treatment to the frontages of properties.

7.19 Apart from the Buxton Road frontage, which is considered above, materials and finishes should create a good balance between unity and variety by utilising within a group of houses a limited range of materials and finishes (BLP DC33). Materials chosen for the affordable housing should not seek to emphasise the different nature of the housing. The design and materials of road surfaces, particularly shared surfaces, should be harmonised with those of the buildings (BLP DC34).

7.20 Since there are several views of the area from higher ground, and surrounding roads, a unified roof colour and material are important. The predominant colour for this part of town is blue/grey and the Council will normally require the same colour of slate/tile where buildings are visible from the same vantage point.