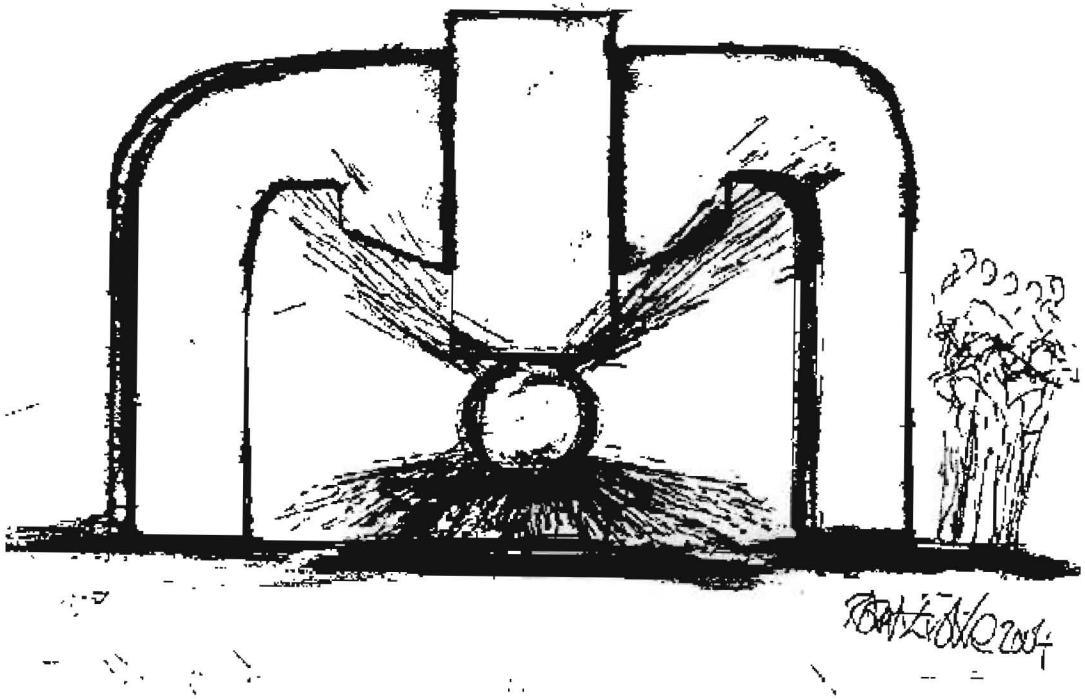

Dransfield
PROPERTIES LIMITED

PLANNING
ACK'D
REPLIED
RECD - 1 FEB 2010

NEW DISTRICT CENTRE
HIGHER OPENSHAW

DESIGN STATEMENT

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Design Statement





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Design Statement

INTRODUCTION

The Applicants and their Professional Team recognize that PPS1 advocates that good design is an important aim of the development process and is also acknowledged that a design statement development has evolved from the initial concept, through consultations with Urban Strategies, Sheppard Robson and New East Manchester to the current status. The Professional Team has also had regard to the existing urban grain of the area, relevant government guidance, development plan policies and supplementary design guidance.

Good design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process and should be encouraged everywhere. Good design can help promote sustainable development; improve the quality of the existing environment; attract business and investment; and reinforce civic pride and a sense of place.

The proposed scheme comprises of a mixed use development incorporating a leisure unit, non food retail, office space and a new foodstore to service the District Centre. The entire design approach has been developed following discussions with many stakeholders including the police, the general public (through public consultation), Lovells, the Urban design officer, and New East Manchester Ltd.

This report has been produced in accordance with best practice utilizing the Cabe Design Review documentation and other policy guidance.

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1 SITE LOCATION

Openshaw is located to the east of Manchester City Centre on the Ashton Old Road (A635)

Openshaw District Centre is an elongated centre on Ashton Old Road, close to the border with Tameside. The name Openshaw means "unenclosed woodland", but through industrial growth these rural areas were transformed with the horizontal turnpike roads, opened in 1731 and further development. Canals followed in 1797 with the branch to Stockport from Clayton dividing Openshaw from Higher Openshaw. Openshaw grew dramatically as industry expanded with the introduction of Steam Hammers and Steam Engines with ironworking/car productions taking the place of farming, hatting, weaving and bleaching.

Little remains of the proud town that once thrived on the industrial revolution and previous years have seen a decline in Openshaws fortune and presence. Despite recent investment within the centre, Openshaw still lacks many of the facilities that would be expected to be found in a District Centre of a major city With many operators strategically placed to invest in Openshaw, the proposed site is of significant importance to the commercial vitality and the character of Openshaw and arresting and reversing any further decay

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2 RETAIL HISTORY

Openshaw centre comprises one of the sixteen district centres as identified in the Manchester UDP. It has, however, also long been recognised as a centre which has suffered from historical under investment when compared to nearby competing centres (e.g. Sportscity, Droylsden etc), and a centre which is currently failing to fulfil its role and meet the requirements of its catchment.

This opinion is informed by a number of independent studies, which over the last 4 years, in turn have considered the quality of the centre, the improvements which could be made, and the studies (which have been undertaken on behalf of a number of bodies) provide a valuable sequential appraisal of the performance of the centre. Together they form the background context to the Dransfield proposals and have guided the nature, scope and detail of the scheme.

The individual studies are to be considered in the planning retail statement but the list of the individual studies that have taken place since 2002 can be are as follows;

1. Ashton Old Road Corridor Study undertaken by Lambert Smith Hampton on behalf of New East Manchester (June 2002)

This study was commissioned by New East Manchester to critically appraise the Ashton Old Road corridor, with specific regard to the merits and function of Openshaw District Centre, and to advice on the strategy for future improvement.

2. Outline Retail Capacity Assessment prepared by GVA Grimley on behalf of Dransfield Properties Ltd (October 2003).

This report was undertaken on behalf of Dransfield Properties Ltd, who were at the time in preliminary talks with the Council/NEM in connection with the Alstom

Works site. The report sought to undertake a preliminary appraisal of the amount of new retail floorspace that Openshaw could potentially support. It was prepared as a discussion document prior to any application and was submitted to the City Council and their consultants.

3. Manchester Centres Study prepared by CBRE on behalf of Manchester City Council (February 2004)

This Study was commissioned by the City Council to undertake a 'qualitative' appraisal of the retail centres within Manchester so as to provide a baseline understanding of how the centres are performing and where future development should be focussed.

4. Openshaw Retail Need Study prepared by NJL Consulting on behalf of New East Manchester (November 2004).

This report independently reviewed the work that had been undertaken to date, primarily the City Council/CBRE study (3 above) and the Dransfield/GVA Grimley exercise (2 above). The report largely echoed the findings of these previous studies, concluding that there are major qualitative problems in the centre (environment, vacancies, crime, lack of quality retail units etc), and that there is demand from retailers who want to be in Openshaw, but that the type of units currently available, do not meet operator needs.

5. Openshaw Development Options Study prepared by Shepperd Robson on behalf of New East Manchester (December 2004).

In the light of the generally accepted need for new development and retail floorspace within Openshaw, NEM commissioned a townscape and masterplan study to understand how the potential redevelopment proposals and new

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floorspace could be best accommodated within Openshaw. The Study specifically addressed the Dransfield proposals for the site and concluded that the broad arrangement which set back the building line from the Ashton Old Road frontage would create a focus to the centre and maximise the scope for pedestrian flow and linkage.

This differed from the approach that had been adopted within the Dransfield proposals which up to that stage were hard up to the Ashton Old Road frontage.

NEM urged Dransfield Properties to incorporate the findings of the Shepperd Robson study into their proposals for the site.

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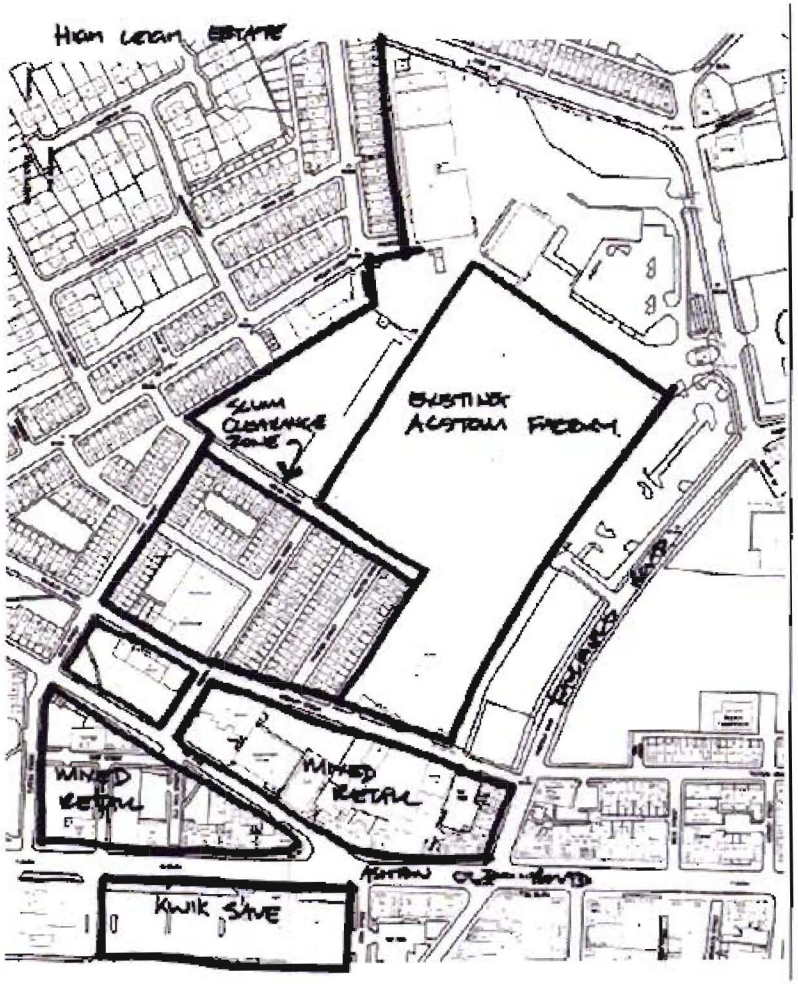
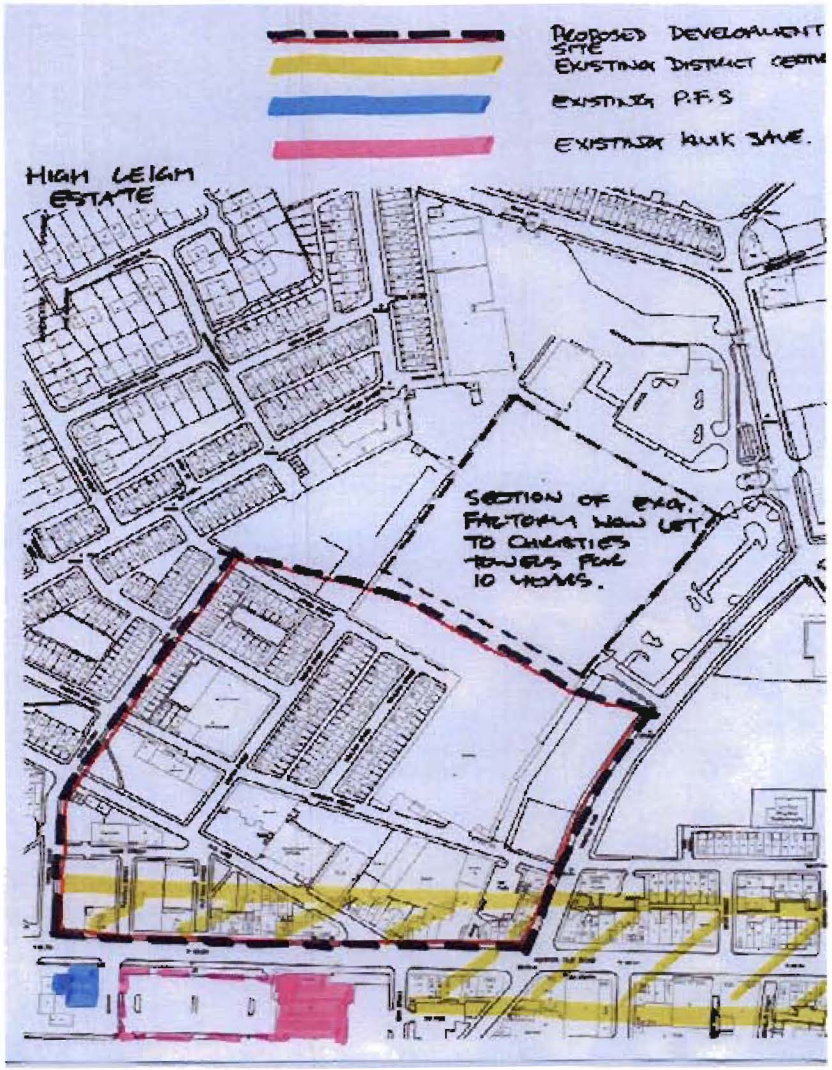


3 SITE CONTEXT

The proposed site is to the east of Manchester City Centre on the land predominately occupied by the former Alstom Factory, as well as numerous properties within the boundary including 80 basic terraced houses within a slum clearance zone and a number of mixed commercial garages, workshops and manufacturing units. Also, in the site is a four storey building in 1960's style architecture as well as public houses, snooker halls, retail outlets and a take-aways all of which reinforces the fact that there appears to be no over arching urban thread between existing structures due to the mixture of uses and architectural styles, which would conclude the area was developed in a piecemeal and unplanned manner. The existing highway pattern is also very unfriendly. To the south of Ashton Old Road is the existing Kwik Save. This is a single storey building with its entrance facing onto a large Car park therefore, not relating back to the main shopping area at all. To the bottom of the car park is a Petrol Filling Station and a showroom, which is currently occupied by HSS. From the junction of Fairfield Road, the urban grain on the South side starts to thin out, therefore, giving no cohesion to the Openshaw area. .

The area to the west of the site known as High Leigh is dominated by residential properties currently the connectivity between this area and the District Centre is very poor due to the large bulk of the Alstom premises, which in effect sits between the two as an island site. The area to the East is mostly residential with some other uses, notably a Sports Hall and light industrial, this is subject to redevelopment as indicated on a major new master plan prepared by PRP Architects for Lovells



4 SITE DESCRIPTION

The development site is approximately 11.2 Acres in size extending from Rock Street in the West to Fairfield Road in the East and from Melba Street in the North to Ashton Old Road in the South.

Once the application site was dominated by the Alstom Factory, which ceased manufacturing in C2003. As a consequence the bays closest to Buckley St fell into a state of disrepair and rapidly deteriorating condition. The remaining better maintained part of the factory has been leased to Christles Towels for 10 Years by St Modwen Developments. The site now partially derelict adds to the air of neglect from which the District Centre suffers. As this is a "gateway" site to Openshaw the neglect and poor condition of this area does nothing to enhance the surrounding area. The decline of the local catchment population has undermined its role but the District Centre's elongated form with no clear focal point, limited parking and poor environment, have all contributed to its demise.

Currently, as described above, this site does little to assist the vitality and viability of shopping in Openshaw due to its depressed state and non cohesive design.

In topography terms the site has two existing overall fall directions North to South and West to East. The existing development of the Alstom Factory has been dealt with by gentle slopes and gradients and the stepping of the buildings internally.

Looking at the frontage of other properties on Ashton Old Road and the surrounding area these can be best described as having a mixed Architectural grain. These range from the traditional construction of brickwork with slate roofs to cladded development such as the existing Matalan. The most recent retail development in Openshaw is the Matalan and Choices unit which opened in 2002 adjacent the existing Aldi unit. This has taken the mixture of architectural styles of the area and produced a scheme that has an element of traditional build