MANCAT Rochdale Road Phase 2
Proposed Conversion and Restoration of Retained Baths

Design Statement

Introduction

Manchester College of Arts and Technology (MANCAT) has instructed Walker Simpson Architects to prepare a renewed full planning and Listed Building Consent application in respect of the retained Harpurhey Baths, for an extension to the Sixth Form College and Library which was built on the site of the demolished section of the former Baths. The College shall offer extended opportunities for education to help improve literacy, numeracy and lifeskills in the local community.
The proposals follow the great success of the new College and Library that have received a significant range of International, National and Regional awards bestowed on the project for Architectural, Heritage Sustainability and Design excellence

The design proposals shown in the application have been developed through a series of useful consultation with English Heritage, the Planning Conservation Officer and Planning Officer, in association with MANCAT, Heritage Architecture, Walker Simpson Architects and Arup.

The accommodation shall provide education and training opportunities for post-16 pupils and the community. The proposed development includes: -

- The retention and full renovation of the three storey main entrance building and stairwells.
- The retention of the interior volume of the first class male pool for use as a hall
- The demolition of the second class male pool and rebuilding to form a three storey teaching block with massing to reflect the original.
- Taking down of 1 and 2 storey elements.
- New lift, 2-storey link and bridge
- Enclosure fencing and gates.

A key aim of the project is the retention and refurbishment of significant features of the building with selective demolition and new building sympathetic to the massing of the original.

This document describes the design concept for the proposals and includes an analysis of the building and its significance, standing at the crossroads of Moston Lane and Rochdale Road and its relationship with the new sixth form college and library.

The Site

The retained baths building represent the section remaining following selective demolition for the construction of the new sixth form college and library.

In the original design the main public frontage of the Baths was restricted to the entrance block located at the corner of Rochdale Road and Shepherd Street. The restoration and rebuilding works will link in with the recently completed new building and retained chimney to form the Harpurhey campus.

Retaining the Victorian Heritage of the Baths

A detailed series of discussions have been held with English Heritage, the Planning Conservation Officer and Planning Officer to determine to what extent the existing Grade 2 Listed Baths buildings can be restored and retained as an example of the Victorian history of the neighbourhood. A structural report has been prepared by Arup engineers along with a building fabric assessment carried out by Heritage Architecture. The main building elements are set out below: -

Main building elements to be retained and replaced

Baths Entrance	the existing 3-storey entrance building to the Baths shall be retained and fully restored to form teaching and display areas at ground floor forming a link to adjacent accommodation and with office space on the upper floors. The existing main staircases shall be retained and lead to upper levels and with the introduction of a fully compliant lift providing barrier free access to all floors.

First Class Male Pool	the internal structure of the first class male pool will be retained, comprising white glazed facing brick to the walls, steel truss roof and lining. The roof glazing will be replaced to current standard but to match in appearance the existing. Roof slates will be relaid incorporating enhanced structure and insulation. Supporting steelwork which is in poor condition will be retained but strengthened. This being carried out from the outside so as not to impact on the Internal features. South and east walls will be faced external with facing bricks to match existing and to follow the form of the existing walls. Internally the balcony will be rebuilt to the west end with two short returns incorporating salvaged brackets, all to form a viewing gallery. Care is taken in the retention of existing features and the sympathetic treatment of refurbished areas. The south elevation facing the community garden is to be altered with new glazing to allow views on to the garden and opening onto an external performance space. This building will become the College's Exhibition and Performance Hall.
Second Class Male Pool	it is proposed to replace this with a new building that will respect the existing massing and volume of the original building. This will include the gables at each end along with the elevation pattern along Shepherd Street. The new structure to form a three storey block comprising studios (linked to adjacent Hall) and changing facilities at ground floor and teaching accommodation to the upper floors. To accommodate the second, the structure for this new element will be set back from the gables, enabling this retained form to be expressed.

Harpurhey Baths Phase II
Regeneration Case

Context
Harpurhey Baths is located in North Manchester, an area with many strengths and opportunities. However, North Manchester's neighbourhoods also face an array of challenging and interrelated economic, social and physical issues. Harpurhey is one of the 1% most deprived wards in England according to the most recent Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007. The North Manchester Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) developed in 2003 seeks to establish principles and objectives to address these issues and the regeneration of the area over the next 10 years. The SRF seeks to promote the provision of high quality, well-managed public services including education and cultural facilities in accessible locations.

The Baths building sits within a cluster of shops and services known as North City Centre that serves the Harpurhey neighbourhood. The Strategic Regeneration Framework has identified investment in North City Centre as a key trigger to drive forward the regeneration of the area and the former Harpurhey Baths forms an important part of this service cluster. North City Centre has seen major investment and development over the last 5 years and the refurbishment and reuse of the former Baths will form an important element in the completion of the strategy for the area.

History
Between 2003 and 2005 Manchester City Council worked closely with their developer partner St Modwen to develop a new, higher quality Council market adjacent to the pre-existing Asda store and created space for 120,000 sq. ft of new retail space. The land value of the former market site was invested by the City Council in a new Leisure and Surestart Childrens Centre to replace the existing Victorian swimming pool that was closed in 2001. Public realm areas were renewed and a CCTV system installed. In 2005 attention then turned to the derelict former baths with the intention of developing a facility in partnership with MANCAT that would maintain the public use of the site and meet the pressing need for more post 16-education provision in the local area. The Sixth Form College opened in September 2005 and public library opened in January 2006.

The Sixth Form College provides new opportunities for post-16 education that did not exist in the area before. The college is fully subscribed attracting students from the immediate local neighbourhood who would previously have had to leave the area to study as well as young people from surrounding areas. This gives an additional benefit of an opportunity to integrate young people from different areas that would not have occurred before. It stands out as a beacon in educational terms and although it is not possible to judge its long-term impact on the aspirations of young people in the local area yet: it is expected to be significant.

In the first six months since the opening of the library visits increased by 180%, active membership by 155% and items loaned increased by over 100% when compared with the same period in the previous year at the two former branch libraries in the area. The library is used for a wide range of activities in addition to

the traditional library services from live music to tai chi classes and is a key community information resource.

The development forms a key part of an integrated regeneration strategy for the area that combines high quality service delivery with improvements to the physical environment and community involvement and consultation.

The whole centre is now regarded as a community asset and is playing a key role in turning round the image of the area and contributing to improving the stability of the local housing market in surrounding neighbourhoods. The College and Library is a destination attracting service users from a wider area to Harpurhey; an neighbourhood with a tarnished reputation that would previously have been avoided.

Contribution to Regeneration Objectives
The proposals for the remainder of the baths site will contribute to the objectives of the regeneration strategy in a number of ways.

Economic Development
The provision of additional facilities will support a key employment area and the delivery of the service clustering strategy for North City Centre. The improvements to the area have already generated around 200 new jobs; the proposals give the opportunity to extend this benefit further. The project will also contribute to the strategic approach of promoting a mix of shops and services within the Centre contributing to its vitality and viability.

Education
By providing additional space for post-16 education the facility will further broaden the learning opportunities for aspiring young people to pursue their education in North Manchester bringing the benefits of an active student population to the area. Although the approach to regeneration and education focuses on strategic issues and aims not to be simply buildings led the importance of high quality physical premises should not be underestimated. The North Manchester Sixth Form College is one such quality building that inspires confidence, aspiration and achievement and the opportunity to extend this facility to the same high quality standards should not be ignored.

Community Character and Cohesion
North Manchester needs to celebrate its landmarks to provide visual cues and cultural reference points. The positive impact it can have on the experience of being a resident of North Manchester and on visitors to the area is important to the strategy for regeneration of the area. The Harpurhey Baths is a key physical landmark that has a long social history associated with the area. The proposed reuse of the building provides an opportunity to bring a historic character building back into meaningful use within a public domain that will celebrate and reinforce the history of the area. The proposals include space that can be used by the local community for events to promote community spirit and cohesion. It further provides an opportunity to bring another building with a high level of quality in design and construction to the area thereby improving the image of the area for residents and visitors.