

Bury But Better 2009

 urbed

BURY COUNCIL



Historic Core

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The historic core of Bury lies in-between the railway and Haymarket Street. This is the oldest part of Bury town centre and most of it lies within the conservation area. Silver Street is the original street from Manchester and was lined with buildings when the area around Kay Gardens was still fields.



Market Place is the original centre of the town where the road to Manchester met the road from Bolton to Rochdale. To the north of this junction Castle Armoury stands on the site of the original Bury Castle. This was a fortified manor house from the 14th century and parts of its foundations can still be seen on Castle Street. The Armoury is a Victorian building the design of which was influenced by the castle that used to sit on the site. The southern part of the area includes buildings from a variety of historical periods. There remain some Georgian houses on Bank Street and St. Mary's Place. However, most of the area is Victorian including the Art Gallery, the former Technical School (Arts and Crafts Centre), Textile Hall, St. Mary's Church and a number of bank buildings.

This quarter also contains the East Lancashire Railway which includes the Bolton Street Railway station. This is part of a wider complex stretching from the transport museum in the north to the Buckley Wells sidings and sheds where the ELR's trains and engines are restored and maintained.

Facing page: Bury Castle Armoury;

This page:
left: Historic Core location plan;
below: Public House on Bolton Street;
bottom: historic plans of the area (1850, 1894 and 1931)





2003 Bury But Better Vision: The strategy proposed that the area be developed as Bury's Culture Quarter and that it *'should continue to be developed, particularly making better use of its landmark buildings and attractions such as The Met, the library, Museum & Art Gallery building, the Arts & Crafts Centre and the Castle Armoury. Improvements to the existing built fabric are recommended rather than radical change.'*

The strategy proposed:

- Further development of the Met Arts Centre;
- Improvements to the Museum and Archive service;
- A new home for the Lancashire Fusiliers Museum within the town centre;
- The refurbishment and development of the Arts & Crafts Centre as a visitor attraction;
- The conservation of the historic built fabric; and
- The introduction of signage and interpretation.

Progress since Bury But Better: Significant progress has been made in the area. The Council has developed a Culture Quarter Strategy, which aims to make the area into one of the town's visitor attractions. That strategy identifies sites for public art particularly at the gateways into the area. There are also plans for signage and street furniture to be created by artists and financed through S106 contributions. Links are also made to the Bury in Bloom campaign.

A conservation area appraisal was published early in 2007 that describes the historical development of Bury town centre and provides an analysis of the architecture and environment including character areas, significant buildings, building materials, architectural features and the condition of the public realm. The conservation area was extended in 2005 to include the transport museum and the shops along Bolton Street.

It concludes that, although the overall quality of the conservation area is very good, there are a number of threats including insensitive alterations to the historic fabric, poor quality street furniture, general street clutter and vacant upper floors. It recommends that the updated masterplan proposes some town centre living and small-scale offices on vacant upper floors. It also suggests selective redevelopment of some of the poor buildings on Bolton Street to help consolidate this area.

Silver Street has become a focus for Bury's evening economy and over the last five years concerns have grown about drink-related antisocial behaviour and violence.

The key projects in the area are:

- The East Lancashire Railway is the 17th most visited tourist attraction in the North West with over 100,000 visitors a year. Since the original 2003 masterplan the ELR has extended its line to Heywood in Rochdale and improved Bolton Street Station including a real ale bar. In 2008 LOCUM Consulting were appointed to develop a 10 year strategy.
- There is a possibility that ELR could once more play a wider commuter service. This could either provide a train-tram commuter service to Rawtenstall or develop a heavy rail service from Manchester Victoria through Heywood and Bury to Rawtenstall.
- The Bury Transport Museum originally opened in 1972 and expanded to become the ELR in 1986. The main museum closed in 2003 on health and safety grounds. In December 2007 the ELR was successful with a HLF bid and work has just started on the museum, which is due to re-open in Autumn 2009.

Facing page (clockwise from top left): Bury Town Centre Heritage Plan; facade detail; The ELR; the 2003 masterplan for the area; Silver Street

Projects

- 4a. The completion of The Fusilier Museum and the refurbishment of the Arts and Crafts building.
- 4b. Implementation of the Cultural Quarter Strategy including public art and public realm improvements.
- 4c. Improvements to Bolton Street as a gateway to the town centre with the redevelopment of poor quality buildings.
- 4d. Reuse or redevelopment of Lester House with active uses at ground floor level and offices or housing on the upper floors.
- 4e. The Reuse or redevelopment of Craig House for office or residential use.
- 4f. The promotion of Castle Armoury as a landmark development site prominent on Peel Way. This is likely to be a hotel but could be another use provided that the scheme has an active ground floor.
- 4g. Public Realm Improvements to Kay Gardens and Market Place. In the case of Kay Gardens this would reconfigure the garden and create an urban square.
- 4h. Improvements to East Lancs Railway including the reopening of the Transport Museum, further improvements to the station and the Buckley Wells masterplan implementation.

- The ELR is developing a masterplan for Buckley Wells to open up the site to the public to see the restoration work on their heritage trains. The ELR trust has secured monies to refurbish the Bury Transport Museum and to start developing the Buckley Wells site as a heritage visitor attraction. This will include new track layout, restoration of the listed locomotive works, erection of viewing sheds, a new station and a heritage trail. Buckley Wells will be linked to Bolton Street Station by a rail shuttle service.
- The basement of the Art Gallery has been refurbished as a base for the Museum and Archive service.
- The Arts and Crafts Centre is being refurbished with Heritage Lottery Funds to create a home for The Fusilier Museum. This work is on site and is due for completion in 2009.
- The Territorial Army's use of the Castle Armoury is likely to cease in 2010. The frontage of the building is listed with a large space to the rear.
- Craig House and Lester House will be vacated by the Council following the completion of its new offices as part of the Townside development.

Updated Vision: Good progress has been made on the original 2003 masterplan and there is no need to change the direction of the strategy. The Council is making good progress on the Culture Quarter proposals, on the conservation area scheme and on the control of antisocial behaviour. All of these initiatives are endorsed by the updated strategy. This includes the reuse of vacant upper floors in the area for offices and housing.

The updated strategy places particular emphasis on Bolton Street. This is an important gateway to the town centre and risks becoming more



run down as The Rock pulls the town centre eastwards. The strategy proposes work to improve the public realm of the street with improvements to existing shop units and potential redevelopment. The role of the street will be as the entrance to the East Lancs Railway with specialist shops and a mix of small offices and housing. The masterplan also takes on board the improvements to the ELR in their entirety.

The most important opportunity to arise in the area since the original 2003 masterplan is the Castle Armoury. The masterplan proposes the redevelopment of the rear section of the Armoury to create a landmark building with a presence on Peel Way. The most likely and appropriate use is as a hotel. In planning terms the site should be identified as a development opportunity appropriate for a range of uses but there is the potential to add to the heritage/museum/leisure economy. The ground floor should include active uses and should be designed to relate to the space on Castle Street.

Craig House and Lester House will be vacated by the Council following the completion of the Townside scheme. These will create two development opportunities but also represent a potential risk to the area if they are left empty. There is interest in reusing Craig House as offices and this also has potential for redevelopment. Lester House is in a poorer condition and redevelopment seems a more likely option. If this were to happen it should be within the envelope of the existing building. The masterplan also takes on board the improvements to the ELR in their entirety.

Facing page: 2008 masterplan for the area

This page: Oxford castle

