



Werneth Freehold

A masterplan for  
Housing Market Renewal

# Renewal



A report for...  
Oldham Local Strategic Partnership and North West Development Agency  
by...  
URBED  
with S333, WSP, King Sturge and Comedia

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# WernethFreehold

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# 1. Introduction



This report has been produced as part of the Oldham Beyond, an 8 month study to develop a vision for the borough of Oldham. It has been undertaken by a team led by URBED and with Comedia, S333 Architects, King Sturge, and WSP engineers. The study was undertaken between August 2003 and May 2004 and was launched in April 2004. A major part of the study was an extensive consultation process based around the Oldham 'Think Bubble', an inflatable room that travelled around the borough collecting the views of the people of Oldham.



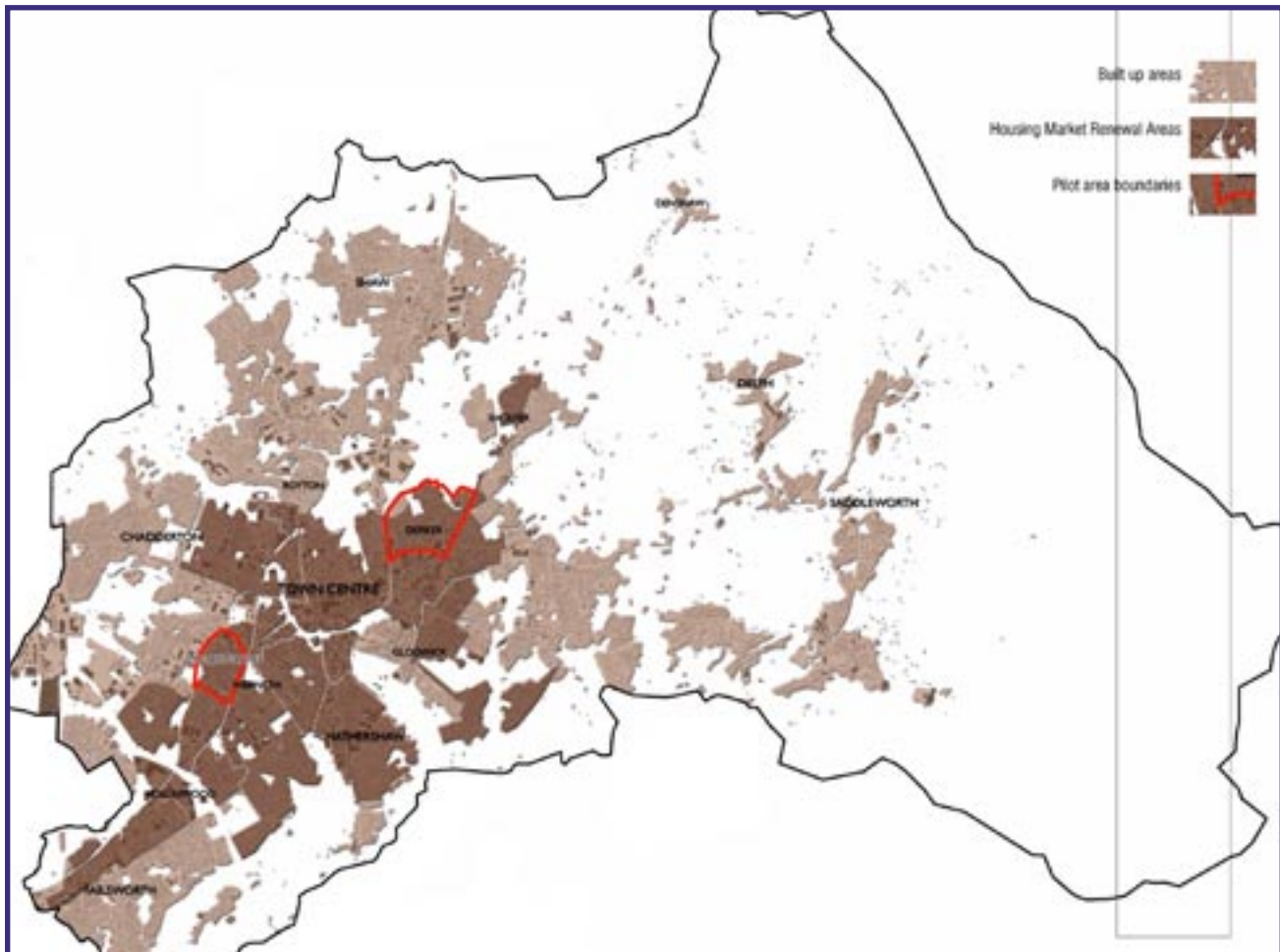
Nested within the overall vision there are three 'demonstrator masterplans'. These were undertaken by the team to demonstrate the practical impact of the themes emerging from the overall vision. One of these plans looked at Oldham town centre and another at a series of smaller projects across the borough. This report details the plan for the Werneth / Freehold area. This served the dual role of demonstrating an approach to Housing Market Renewal – which is one of the most important themes to be addressed by the overall vision – and providing a practical masterplan that was used by the Oldham/Rochdale Housing Market Renewal Team in their successful submission for HMR funds.



## Housing Market Renewal

The Housing Market Renewal (HMR) Initiative that has become a central part of the national regeneration agenda in the last few years. Until that time much of the work on urban regeneration had been concentrated on economic and social issues and had focused largely on social housing areas. However a study by Birmingham University Published in 2001 along with work by Anne Power of the London School of Economics highlighted the issue of the decline, and the sometimes dramatic collapse, of private housing areas, mostly in Victorian terraced neighbourhoods. The Communities Plan therefore set out a two-pronged strategy to accommodate housing growth in the Southeast and to address failing housing markets in the North.

As part of the latter nine Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder areas were designated and invited to bid into a budget of £500 million undertake strategies to bring about the transformation of areas of low demand housing. These pathfinders stretch as far south as Birmingham and Stoke and as far east as Hull. However they are concentrated in the Northwest where there are pathfinders in Manchester/Salford, the East Lancashire towns and in Oldham/Rochdale.



Within each of these pathfinders a housing market renewal areas has been designated. In Oldham this includes 40,000 of the borough's 90,000 homes and has been subdivided into 17 areas (see map above). Each of the pathfinders is looking at strategies that can be applied across the areas but are specifically charged with submitting pilot areas scheme for the first round of funding. Oldham/Rochdale are putting forward four areas and in Oldham the areas are Werneth/Freehold and Derker (outlined in red on the above plan). A plan for Derker has been prepared by Paul Butler Associates and the Werneth/Freehold plan has been prepared as part of the Oldham

Beyond study as described in this report.

It is significant that the Housing Market Renewal Areas are called 'Pathfinders' and the initial projects are called 'pilots'. This is because there is not yet a widely agreed remedy to the problem of failing housing markets. There is a view that the small-scale interventions of the past may have bought some time but have not solved the fundamental problems. As the regeneration minister Lord Rooker said in September 2003, there is now a belief that '*bold surgery*' is required. There are some that would argue that what is need is less housing and more open space. Indeed Lord



Rooker said in the same interview *'what we should have done is take out every other street to open up the place and improve the environment'*. There are others, such as Anne Power, the leading academic authority on housing market renewal who suggest that this could exacerbate problems and cause market failure to spread into surrounding areas.

These debates have been central to our work in Werneth / Freehold and are explored in this report. We have had the advantage of being able to set this work within the wider *Oldham Beyond* study and to explore the interaction between housing markets in different parts of the town and the overall effect on the economy and success of the borough. This work is set out in the overall Vision report in a series of recommendations for a Smart Communities approach to planning in the borough. This would see a consolidation of housing around transport nodes and existing centres and the reduction in densities elsewhere.

As a result of these debates we are not recommending a reduction in the number of houses in Werneth/Freehold which with the arrival of Metrolink will become an important transport node. We do however propose a significant increase in open space. We are also not suggesting a policy of comprehensive redevelopment, although we are proposing that 40% of the area's housing stock be demolished. Some have suggested that these proposals should be even more radical and it is true that we have sought to balance a range of views including those of the local community. However we believe that radical need not always refer to physical change and that the proposals set out in this report are designed to bring about a transformational change in the housing market of the area and to create a replicable model for other parts of the borough.

## Our approach

We were concerned that the strategy for Werneth/Freehold should be undertaken in partnership with local people. We were fortunate to be able to build upon the work undertaken by the HMR team in the months before the study commenced. They had organised a series of consultation events with local people and had a core group of active community representatives. We were able to work in a very intensive way with this core group to develop proposals for the area that could then be used as the basis for wider consultation.

We therefore organised a three-day Design for Change event in the area on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th of September 2003. This was based on the Design for Change technique that has been developed by URBED with the Glasshouse Foundation to involve local people in masterplanning. The exhibition produced as a record of this event is included as Appendix 1 of this report. The



event involved a group of around 30 people including local residents along with council officers, members of the HMR and SRB teams and local housing Associations.

This exercise produced three options and developed a remarkable level of agreement on most issues (except for the future of the mill). These three options were drawn up and presented back to the wider community in an exhibition over two days on 9th and 13th October. This included the exhibition boards (Appendix 1) and people were asked to comment on which the plans they liked and to comment on the image boards that described how the area might look in the future. The results of these questionnaires are included as Appendix 2 of this report.

Following the exhibition the team developed a preferred plan and a set of proposals for the regeneration of the area.

These were displayed at a workshop with council members in October 2003 and at a series of meetings with the Housing Market Renewal Executive. As a result of these discussions the proposals were amended and developed into those described in this report.

The report is in six chapters (including this introduction). In Chapter 2 we describe the Werneth/Freehold area and in Chapter 3 we develop a strategy for the renewal of the housing market in the area. This is developed into a masterplan described in Chapter 4 and specific proposals on sustainability in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 then draws a series of conclusions with particular focus on the borough-wide vision.

We have also undertaken a significant amount of background work on the housing market of Oldham. This is published separately as a housing working paper.

## 2. The Werneth/Freehold area

Oldham  
beyond

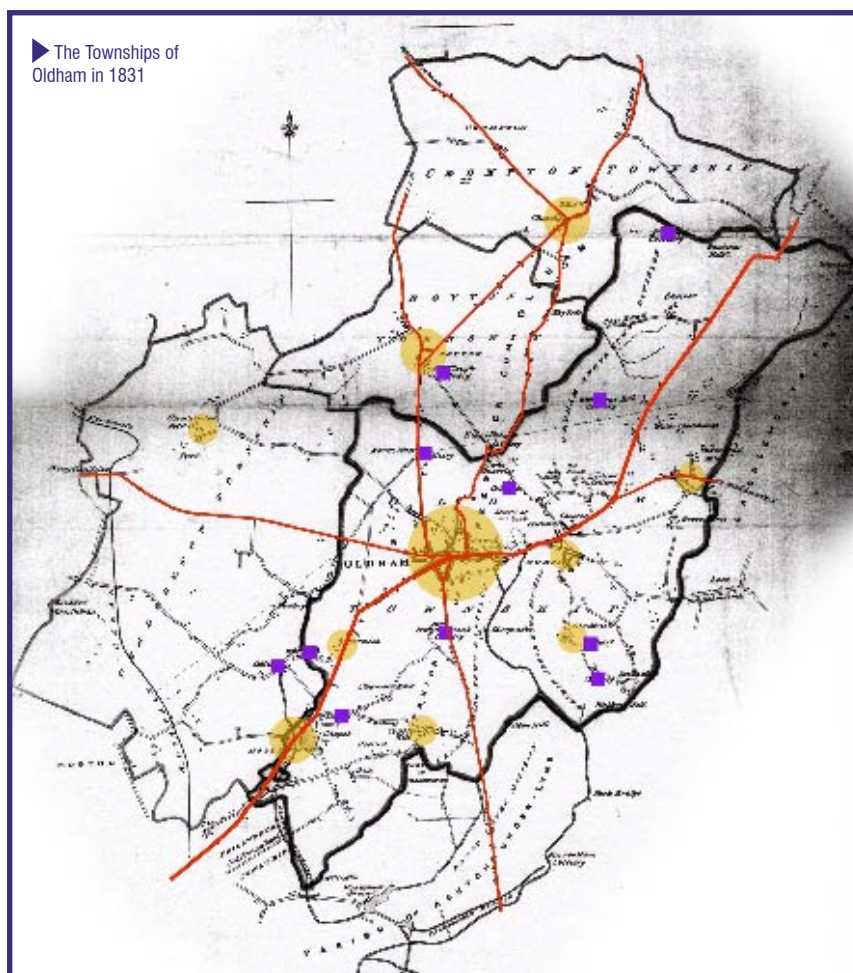
We have undertaken a series of studies of the area (some of which were undertaken as part of the September 2003 workshop). In this chapter we set out the results of this analysis which has informed the masterplan. The Werneth/Freehold area is a tightly knit area of predominantly terraced housing between the Manchester Road and the Oldham to Manchester Railway line. There are currently 1,883 properties in the area including 1,300 terraced properties, around 300 council properties, most of which are flats.

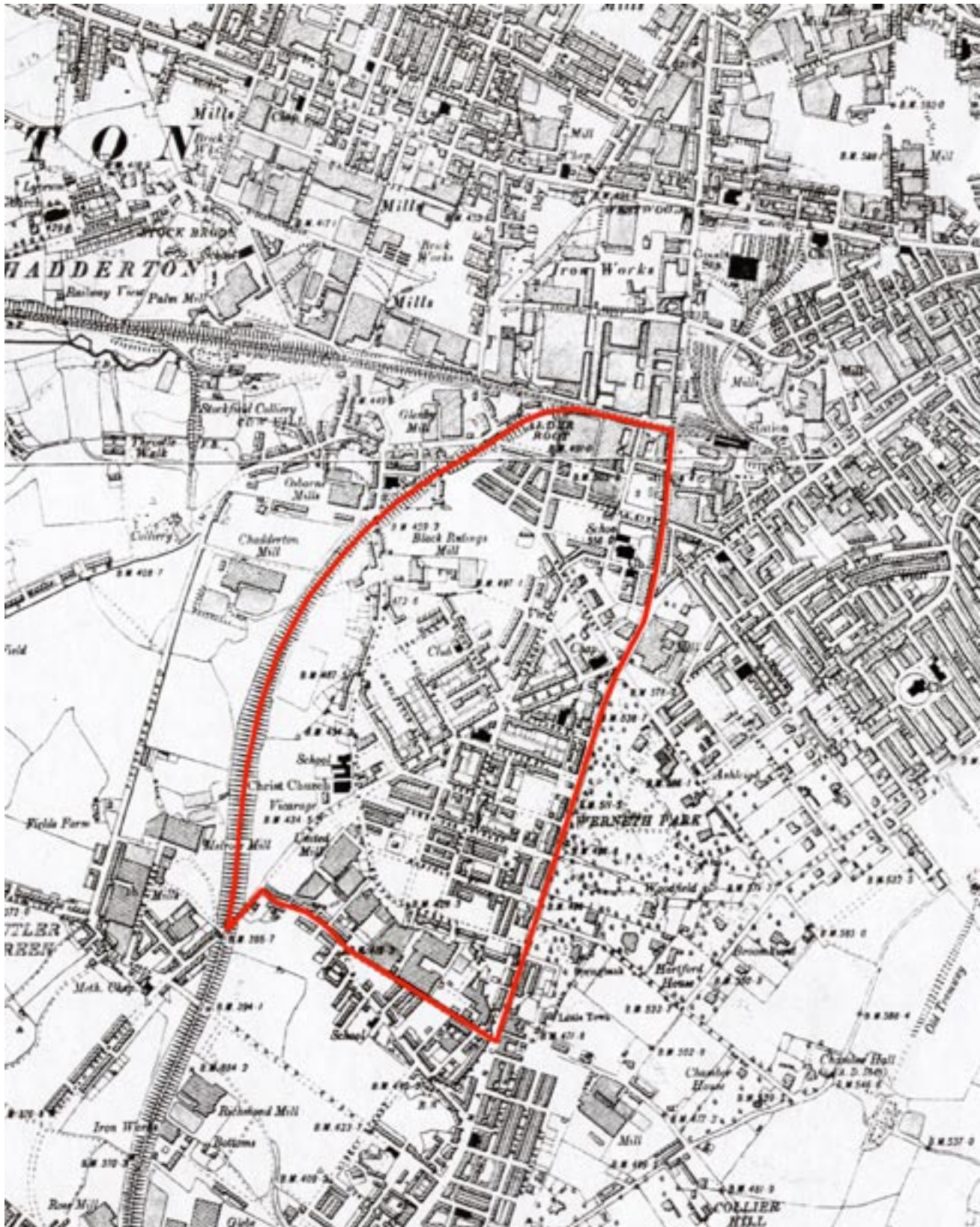
The area covers roughly half of the Werneth ward, which stretches across Manchester Road. The eastern part of Werneth is more affluent and is dominated by Werneth Park which is one of Oldham's two great Victorian parks. To the west of the railway line the area is bounded by Chadderton and there is again a sharp increase in property values. To the north is a predominantly industrial area in the area that was once Platts of Werneth, the main company manufacturing cotton machinery in the town. To the south is a further area of densely packed terraced housing on either side of Block Lane.

### History of the area

Werneth started life as a small village on the road out of Oldham towards Manchester. On the 1831 plan to the right Werneth is marked as little more than a small collection of buildings at the junction of what is now Suffolk Street and Manchester Road. The Royal Oak pub on Manchester Road may have been part of this original village.

The village sat within fairly intensively developed farmland scattered with farmsteads (including the site of Hartford Mill) and the houses of merchants from Oldham. In addition to Suffolk Street, Block Lane dates from this period, indeed at the time it was the boundary between Oldham and Chadderton. The farmland was also scarred by early industrial activity including brick pits







and collieries. There were two collieries on the edge of Werneth Village around what is today the junction of Oxford Street and Block Lane.

By the 1890s (plan to the left) Werneth had been largely absorbed into the expanding town of Oldham. The driving force for this expansion was Platts of Werneth, a huge industrial complex around Werneth Station in the northern part of the area. Platts were for a time the largest manufacturers of machinery for the cotton industry in the world employing some 15,000 people. The owners of Platts lived for a time in Hartford House in the southern part of Werneth Park and were responsible for promoting a planned neighbourhood to the north of the park.

The Werneth/Freehold area grew up in a much less planned manner. Edward Street started to develop as an extension of the larger properties around Werneth Park. However with the opening of Oxford Street, the land at either side was built-out as terraces for the workers of Platts, Black Ridings Mill and the industry to the south. The 1890 plan captures the area mid way through what would have been a rapid period of development with the entire area and indeed the land to the south and west completely developed with tightly, packed terraces by 1914.

Black Ridings Mill was redeveloped and Hartford Mill was built after the First World

War. This continued in operation as a spinning mill until the 1970s. Littlewoods subsequently bought the building and used it as party of their mail order business. They stopped using the building in 1998 and sought listed building consent to demolish the building. This was however thwarted by the current owner who purchased the building from Littlewoods.



## Urban design analysis

### Urban form

The plan below is called a *Figure Ground* plan. This is a plan that shows only the buildings of the area and takes away all other detail. It was the first plan undertaken by the community as part of the workshop. The Figure Ground plan lays bare the structure of the area and is useful in illustrating the following urban design characteristics:

**The footprint of development:** The footprint of buildings in the area is the amount of land they cover. It is one way of showing the density of development in the area, although of course this also depends on the height of the buildings. The plan shows



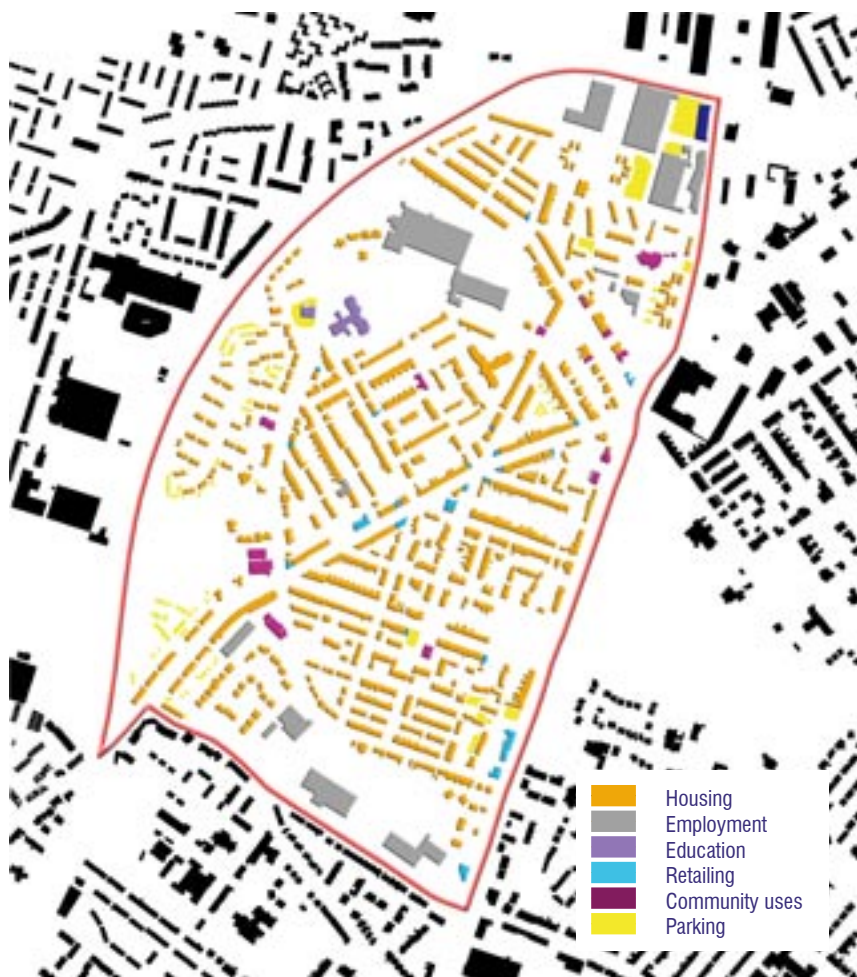
that Werneth/Freehold has a reasonably dense footprint. In the terraced areas the footprint covers around 40% of the land area which is considerably higher than the suburban areas next to the railway line or indeed the council housing to the west of the railway.

**The enclosure of space:** The figure ground plan illustrates where public space is properly enclosed by buildings. In successful urban areas – and indeed traditional suburban areas – streets and public spaces are enclosed by the front face of buildings which follow a ‘building line’. This means that the buildings create the ‘walls’ to the streets and provide a clear distinction between the public space of the streets and the private space within blocks. When this happens streets show up clearly on the Figure Ground plan. This can be illustrated by comparing the Werneth/Freehold area on the Figure Ground Plan with the housing area to the west of the railway line. In the case of the latter it is very difficult to tell from this plan where the streets are. In urban design terms Werneth has very well enclosed public spaces except in the council housing areas. The community generally welcomed this level of enclosure and saw it as a real strength.

**Grain of development:** The third aspect illustrated by the Figure Ground Plan is the grain of development in the area. Success-

ful urban areas tend to be ‘fine grained’ by which we mean that there is a great deal of variety in the type of building and the type of development. An urban block in a traditional town might for example contain 50 buildings, all built at different times and designed by different architects. This creates a timeless feel. Werneth lacks

this when compared to a traditional town because the area was built originally over a relatively short period of time. However it does have more grain and variety than many terraced areas. A careful study of the area highlights subtle variations between houses, this however is too subtle to show up on the figure ground plan.





Overall the figure ground plan shows Werneth/Freehold to have a strong and coherent urban structure with a relatively dense footprint of development, clear enclosure of space and some grain. Some people regard these issues as negative attributes of terraced areas. Yet they are characteristics associated with successful towns, cities and even suburbs throughout the UK and the world. They therefore represent a structure that we can build upon.

### Land uses

Having looked at the form of the buildings, the next step is to explore their use. The plan to the left shows the land uses of the area. This illustrates that the predominant land use in the area is housing as one would expect. There is however a strong mix of other uses in the area. These include the employment areas to the north, around Hartford Mill and south of Suffolk Street. There are also a large number of small shops in the area – admittedly many of them suffering. There are also a range of community facilities including community buildings, churches and mosques. This mix of uses creates activity in the area throughout the day when Oxford Street in particular can feel quite lively. This mix of uses is however underthreat because of the decline of the area and will need to be preserved and protected during the HMR process.

### Public realm

We turn now to the public realm of the area. This includes all of the public space in the area – excluding private gardens, fenced off areas. The public realm is the stage on which the public life of the area is played out. In a traditional urban area the public realm includes the streets, squares and



parks of the area and very little else. The public realm should be easy and pleasant to walk around but should not allow people into vulnerable areas such as the backs of houses. Indeed there should be a clear distinction between the public and private realms and where possible there should be a building between the two. In most of Werneth/Freehold the public realm corresponds to these principles. The one exception in the terraced housing areas is the back alleys which are public spaces but are poorly supervised and which give access to the backs of housing. It is no coincidence that these tend to be the areas that experience problems. This can be easily solved with 'alley gating' that converts alleys to private realm.

Poor definition of the public realm is the main problem of many modern housing estates. These are designed so that there is public access to both the fronts and backs of housing making it vulnerable and difficult to understand. Indeed in many council estates of the 1960s and 1970s virtually all of the outdoor space is public realm. This is the case with the flats in the northern part of the area as well as some of the council housing to the west of the railway.

### Open space

The public realm is made up of two elements; the streets of the area as described below and its open space. The plan to the right shows the open spaces of Werneth/Freehold. This is dominated by Werneth Park to the east of Manchester Road. This is a fine and well maintained Victorian park that includes extensive recreational facilities. It is valued as a resource by the people of Werneth/Freehold. However the other areas of open space in the area are



limited. There are a number of small pocket parks and play areas throughout the area, normally on sites where terraces have been cleared. These however are poorly equipped and do not serve the majority of the community. There is a small piece of open space at the junction of Tamworth Street and Edward Street which has existed since

the area was built. This however is overgrown and the amount of bushes means that the space is poorly supervised and the source of anti-social behavior.

The other major area of open space is the playing field of Freehold community school. This was built on the former mill





pond and is on a raised plateau area. It is now fenced off and so is not available to the wider community and appears to get only limited use by the school.

In the northern parts of the area and particularly to the west of the railway line there is a lot of informal open space. This is mostly green space with trees and provides very little for local residents. This is sometimes referred to as SLOAP (Space left over after planning) which is perhaps a more accurate description of its value.

### Street Hierarchy

The other element of the public realm is the streets of the area. The plan to the right shows the street hierarchy of the area based on the plans drawn by the community as part of the workshop. Like the figure ground plan this shows a number of urban design aspects that are important to the success for the area.

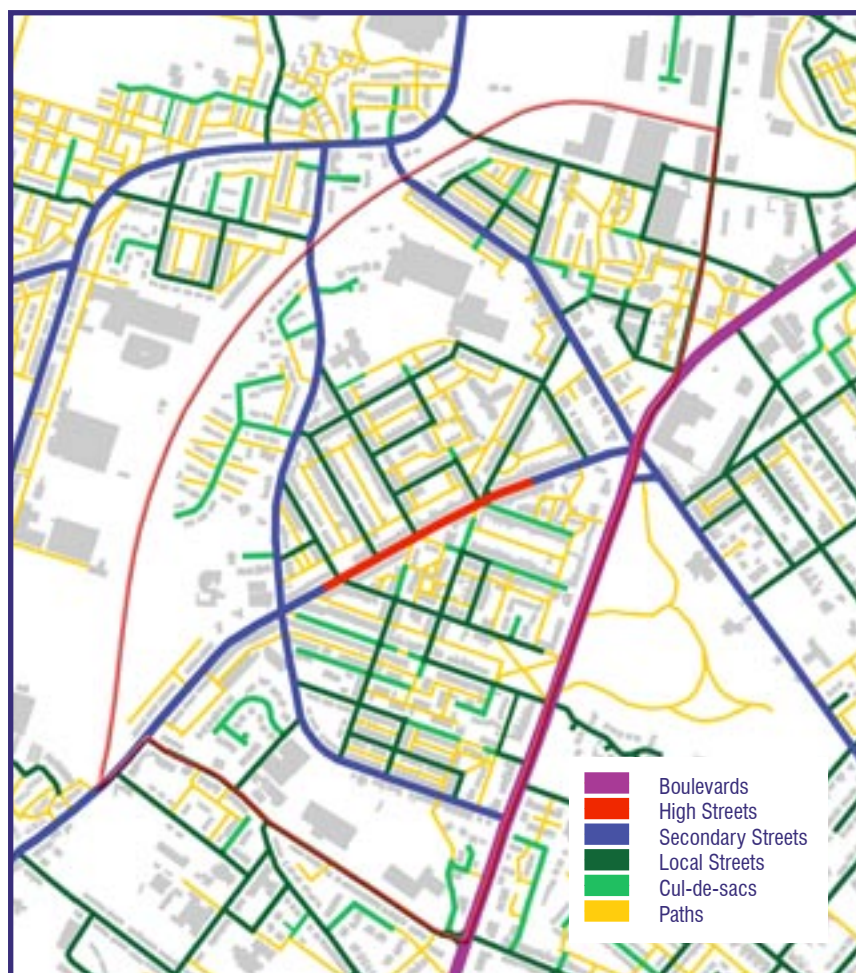
**Permeability:** The ease with which people can pass through an area by a variety of routes is an important part of an urban area's success. Traditional urban areas tend to have a range of alternative routes between two given points. Contrary to what one might expect, this increases the amount of life and activity on streets rather than dissipating it. In contrast to this many modern housing estates are based on a series of cul-de-sacs so that there is only



one route between two points and this is often a long way around. In these areas there is very little activity on the streets because people tend to drive rather than walk. This has the effect of making the area feel less safe and undermining the viability of local shops and facilities. As the plan below illustrates, Werneth/Freehold is gen-



erally very permeable to the east given the number of routes that are available to walk through the area. there are however some important barriers to permeability. These include the railway line which can only be crossed at three points. There are also no links through the industrial area to the north and only one through the employment area





to the south. Werneth/Freehold is therefore cut off from surrounding areas on three sides which contributes to the feeling that the area is set apart from the surrounding areas which have fewer problems.

There is a further problem of permeability caused by the Mill. This cuts the area in half so that there is only one route - Tamworth Street linking the northern and southern parts of the area.

**Road access:** This severance between the north and the south of the area is made worse because Tamworth Street is one way running north. The only way to drive south through the area is therefore to use the junction between Oxford Street and Manchester Road. This is symptomatic of problems with car access throughout the area. Because of problems in the past the area has been made a maze of one way streets and road closures. So while the area is very permeable for pedestrians, for people in cars it is as difficult to navigate as an estate of suburban cul-de-sacs. The plan on the previous page shows the local roads in light green where they have been made into cul-de-sacs. This is important because, outside town centres, pedestrian-only public realm tends to feel unsafe and underused. This serves to cut off the Werneth/Freehold area to an even greater extent.



**Street Hierarchy:** The street network of most successful urban areas has a clear hierarchy of different types of streets depending on their role and importance:

► **Boulevards:**

These are the streets that carry the most traffic. They tend to be wide and tree-lined and defined by medium sized - buildings. Because traffic is unable to stop they tend not to support shops unless they have a lane which is separated from the main flow of traffic. In the UK we have not been very good at boulevards and they tend to degenerate into hostile dual carriageways.

► **High Streets:**

The most important level of the hierarchy is the high street. This accommodates through traffic and buses but is also the main focus for shops and community facilities. High Streets tend to have a strong mix of uses, the street is wide (although not as wide as a boulevard) and the buildings are tall reflecting the importance of the street.

► **Secondary Streets:**

Whereas high streets take through traffic, secondary streets take traffic into each neighbourhood. They therefore take some traffic but not as much as high streets. The street includes some shops and facilities and much more housing.



► **Local streets:**

These are the most numerous type of street and serve the function of giving access to the front door of properties on the street. These streets tend to be narrower and the buildings lower and predominantly housing.

In most urban areas the different levels of the hierarchy are based on the number of connections to a street. The more side streets there are connecting to main street the more important it tends to be and the more likely it is to become a high street. The situation with the street hierarchy in Werneth Freehold is confused. The community agreed that Oxford Street and Edward Street were high streets and Manchester Road was a boulevard. However historically Manchester Road was the high street - indeed it still is in places like Failsworth. Oxford Street and Edward Street were originally secondary streets and very good ones at that. The problem is that now Manchester Road has become a boulevard, the area has been left without a high street. Oxford Road has risen to the challenge and now performs high street functions for at least part of its length. However whereas before Manchester Road served both parts of Werneth, Oxford Street is only serves the local area - causing the area to become inward looking.

# 3. Transforming the market



There have been two major questions that we have needed to address during the course of this study; what we should knock down and what we should build in its place. We address the second of these questions in the next chapter in which we describe our vision for the area and the masterplan that has been developed through the Design for Change process. However before doing that it is important to describe the strategy that has been developed in order to bring about the transformation of the area. This looks first at the level of demolition that we are proposing before looking at proposals to address the housing and property that will remain and a procurement process for developing the new build areas.



## The level of demolition

The amount of housing that should be demolished has been a central question for this study. There have been a strong view expressed to us that the majority of the area should be demolished because the terraced housing does not have a future and because the market will only be transformed with radical, bold change. Set against this has been a view from the community that is prepared to accept significant demolition but wishes to maintain the area as a viable community. A particular issue has been the future of Hartford Mill in the centre of the area which most people would like to see demolished. We deal with this separately.

As part of the community workshop we asked local people to undertake a hard and soft exercise to identified the parts of the area that should be demolished.



The results of this process are set on the following plans. These show a remarkable level of unanimity except in the treatment of the mill. All of the groups suggested the demolition of the St. Johns Council housing area as well as the Reedham Walk council housing in the south of the area. They also agreed on the need to redevelop the Hathersage road and which, together with St. Johns created a significant development site stretching from Manchester Road to the railway and the proposed Metrolink station. The groups also agreed in suggesting the demolition of Northumberland House and the associated council housing. Together these community plans suggested the demolition of around a third of the area. This has been used as an input into decisions about the level of demolition together with the following issues:

## Preserving the community

As we described in the conclusion to the last Chapter, Werneth/Freehold is not a state of collapse and is saveable as an area and a community. While it is a community that clearly has problems, we believe strongly on the basis of our contact with local people that the community is also the area's greatest asset. The ward of Werneth is roughly 50% Asian and 50% white and the consultation events that we have organised have been similarly diverse. Werneth/Freehold does therefore appear to us to be a multi-cultural area of the kind that we

nwwd to encourage in Oldham. It therefore has the potential to be a powerful symbol of Oldham's renaissance. This potential will be undermined if the community is dispersed by comprehensive redevelopment. It is URBED's experience, borne of working with tenants groups across the UK that communities take years to recover from comprehensive redevelopment even when it is done sensitively. This means giving people the right to return and phasing the development to avoid the need to decant people off the estate. The fact that much of the community in Werneth/Freehold is in private accommodation makes this impossible. The community would be undermined by the process of acquiring and emptying property, because much of the new property will also be private, guaranteed return is difficult and timescales are likely to mean that people will need to be decanted out of the area when experience shows that many will not return. If we agree that the community is a valuable asset of the area it follows that we should take care with the amount of demolition that is proposed.

### Council housing

One of the controversial issues to arise from the community's discussion of demolition was the fact that they were prepared to demolish 25 year old council housing but only some of the 100-150 year old terraces. There were a number of reasons for this including the fact that much of the council housing was made up of small flats which are not popular, are perceived to have a high turnover and are seen as a destabilising influence on the community. The council housing areas were also felt to be poorly designed and the public areas were seen as more dangerous. It has since been confirmed by First Choice Homes



that they would not object to the demolition of the council stock in the area (with the exception of Northumberland House described below). The demolition of the council stock therefore has a number of advantages in that it is already in public ownership and given that there is capacity elsewhere in First Choice's stock to relocate tenants the acquisition would be relatively cost effective. This assists in creating development opportunities sufficiently large to attract private developers.

### Northumberland House

The exception to this is Northumberland House which provides accommodation for 44 elderly people (although only 19 units are currently occupied). Northumberland House has been the subject of a successful PFI bid too undertake comprehensive refurbishment and has therefore been taken out of the demolition areas. The council housing to the south of Northumberland House is also in demand and has been taken out of the demolition area.

### The demolition of terraces

We have worked with the HMR team to undertake a visual inspection of the terraced housing in the area. This has been an external inspection based on a judgement about the condition of the property, the quality of construction, the architectural quality and the level of occupancy. On this basis it is possible to identify approximately 10% of

the properties in the area that appear to be unfit. These however are spread throughout the area and the only real concentration is in the Hathersage Road area identified by the local community. The problem is that if you raise the threshold for demolition, you take in perhaps 80% of the remaining property leaving maybe 10% of housing that is in particularly good condition. This would need to be confirmed by a detailed housing condition survey but we would nevertheless suggest that a decision on what to demolish based purely on condition would be difficult.

### The costs of acquisition

Because the housing market in Werneth is not moribund there are significant costs associated with acquisition for demolition. At present properties in the area are likely to be worth £20-25,000. The problem is that this amount of money will not buy very much elsewhere in Oldham. Displaced residents will therefore either have to be accommodated in social housing or find a mortgage to buy a property elsewhere or a new home in the area. It is clear from the Chapter 3 of this report that the Pakistani community has little tradition of social rented housing and is likely to be resistant to giving up the ownership of property. Many of the older residents of the area own their home outright and are in no position to take out a mortgage. It is therefore likely that compensation will be required as well



as current value meaning that demolition will cost up to £35,000 per property. Demolishing the 1,300 terraced properties in the area would therefore cost more than £45.5 million and this before any subsidy required for new housing or public realm works. We do not believe that this is the best use of HMR resources.

### Local shops

Werneth/Freehold has a surprisingly good range of local shops, which are an important asset in the area, even if they are in premises that need refurbishment. These shops are critically dependent on their local catchment and can be affected by even quite modest demolition. The comprehensive redevelopment of the area



would therefore be very difficult for local shops to survive – although pubs tend to be more resilient.

### Hartford Mill

At the centre of the area stands Hartford Mill. This was built as a spinning mill and was once a major employer in the area. It was then used by Littlewoods for a number of years before being sold to its present owner. It is now derelict and a major blight on the area. Residents complain of the building being poorly secured, used for drug-taking and the target of vandalism. It is however also a listed building and the present owner is not prepared to sell. It is clear to us that Housing Market Renewal will not be successful with the mill blighting the area in its current derelict state. It is therefore vital that the future of the mill is resolved and there are only two options for this – demolition or refurbishment.

The problem with demolition is the listed status of the mill as one of the first mills to use reinforced concrete. Demolition will

therefore require listed building consent and this will not be forthcoming if there is a viable route to reuse the building. This was tested four years ago when Littlewoods were looking to sell the building. At the time it was considered just about possible to prove that there was no viable use for the building although this conclusion was undermined when the current owner came forward. Today proving that development is unviable will be even more difficult given the announcement of the Metrolink Station adjacent to the mill, the advent of Housing Market Renewal and the experience of converting mills in other areas.

Perhaps the most relevant example of a mill like this being reused is Listers Mill in Manningham, Bradford. This is an area that is very similar to Werneth, is a bigger building and does not have the advantage of a Metrolink station, yet is being converted to housing by Urban Splash. During the course of this study Urban Splash have been introduced to Hartford Mill and would also be interested in principle.

► Listers Mill in Manningham, Bradford, currently being converted to housing by Urban Splash

The demolition of Hartford Mill will therefore be very difficult. The acquisition of the building is likely to involve a contested Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) which would go to public enquiry. Once this hurdle was crossed, Listed Building Consent would be required for demolition which would almost certainly be resisted by English Heritage. On the basis of the above analysis, we believe that there is little prospect of being able to persuade English Heritage that the mill is incapable of viable reuse. The process is therefore likely to drag on for a number of years with very uncertain prospects for success.

An alternative route would be to accept the reuse of the building. This may also require a CPO however this could be done on the basis of a reuse scheme that had the support of English Heritage. It would also be possible to explore routes such as a Listed Building Repairs Notice. This would require the owner to bring the building up to an acceptable condition. If the building owner were to do this it would be an acceptable result. If the owner does not, the council would have the right to do the work themselves and charge the owner. In cases where the owner have not paid, other authorities have seized building in lieu of payment.

Because Housing Market Renewal cannot happen with the mill in its current state, we believe that the demolition route is too much of a risk. The only prudent option is therefore refurbishment. We have therefore recommended that the council starts to respond proactively to the current state of



the building with a Repairs Notice and by setting in train measures to pursue a CPO. We have therefore included the refurbishment of the mill in our masterplanning proposals in the next chapter. We believe that the conversion of the mill is likely to be viable provided that there is grant funding available and that the building can be made available at a reasonable cost to a developer. This has been confirmed in discussions with potential developers. However if at the end of the process it becomes clear that conversion is not viable, it would be possible to proceed with demolition.

#### Development parcels

The other determinant of demolition has been the need to create viable development parcels of developers to undertake viable new-build development. In discussion with the HMR developer panel, it is clear that the market is looking for redevelopment sites that are sufficiently large to create their own environment and which have a frontage onto Manchester Road – hence visibility. We have therefore consolidated

the two clearance areas suggested by the community into development parcels that meet these criteria. This means that all of the terraced housing on the northern part of Edward Street is proposed for demolition along with the housing between Reedham Walk and Suffolk Street. These two areas create 16.4 hectares of developable land.

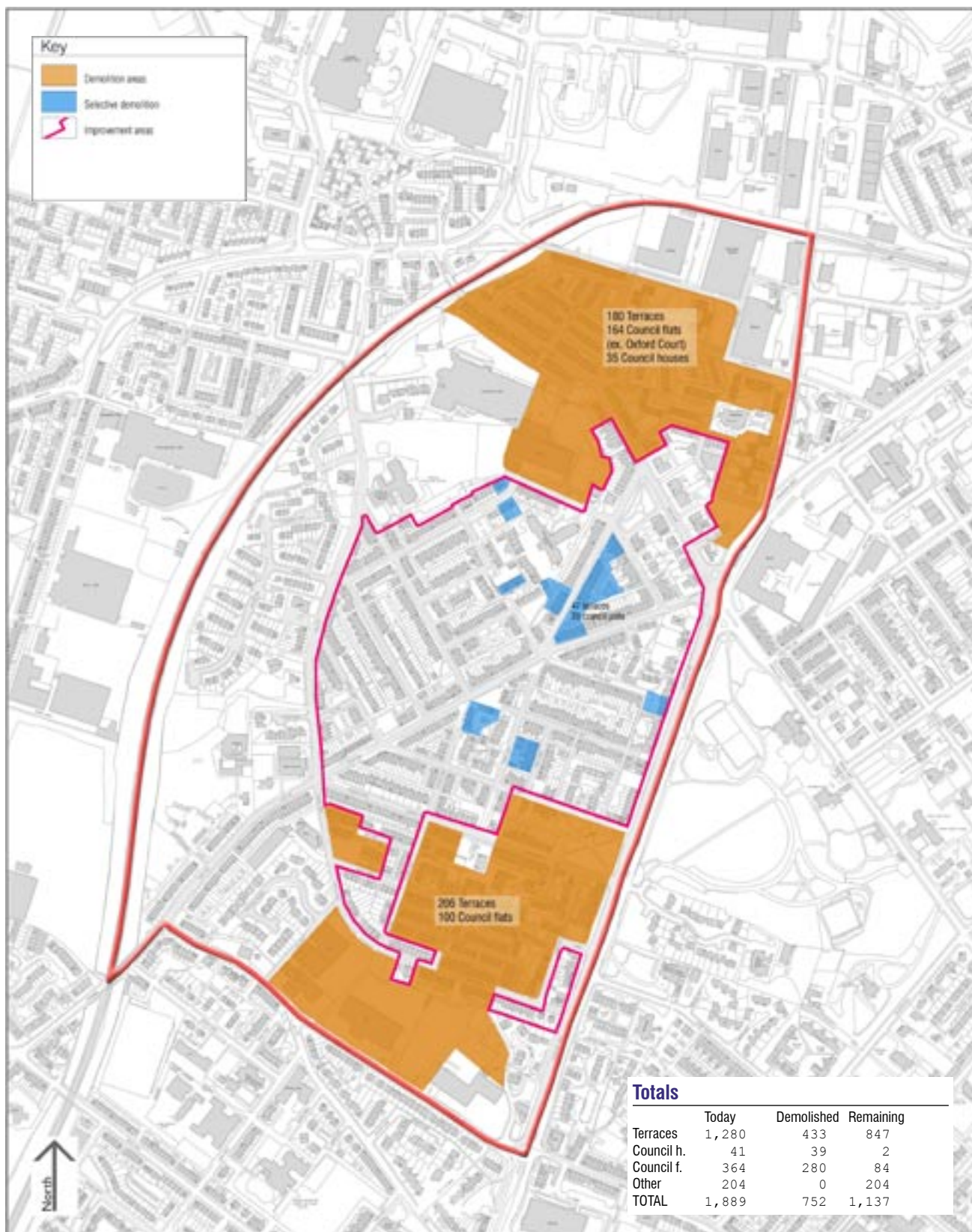
#### Development Strategy

We are therefore proposing to demolish some 752 properties in the area as illustrated on the plan opposite. These properties comprise of 433 terraces, 280 council flats and 39 council houses. This would leave 847 terraced houses in the area, meaning that we also need to develop strategies both for new-build and for the refurbishment of the terraced property. However the overall aim of the strategy is to kick-start the housing market in the area. To do this we are proposing a four-pronged approach:

#### Redevelopment

The proposed areas of demolition have been designed to create two significant redevelopment land parcels as described below.

► **St. John's:** The northern parcel runs from the Featherstall Road / Manchester Road junction in the east to the railway line and Hartford Mill in the west and from Suthers Street in the north to across Edward Street to include the engineering works to the east of Hartford Mill and to extend to Milne Street. This area covers 7.4 hectares and involves the demolition of 397 properties, 199 of which are council stock (excluding Oxford Court that is already scheduled for demolition). This creates an attractive development site that has a



prominent frontage onto Manchester Road just at the point where it bends on the approach to Oldham. This means that the new development has the potential to terminate views in either direction on Manchester Road. It also stretches through to the railway to the West allowing access to the proposed Metrolink Station. At the centre of the area is the former St. John's Church which is on the highest point of the area and was once surrounded by a residential square. This has the potential to create a distinct character for the area.

► **Suffolk Street:** The southern area has grown from the core redevelopment area of Reedham Walk. This has been combined with the employment areas to the south of Suffolk Street that are being acquired by the council. In order to make a continuous area the terraced housing area between Reedham Walk and Suffolk Street has therefore been included in the demolition area although this does contain some good quality terraced housing. Because of the character of Suffolk Street and the quality of some of the terraces we have retained some of the frontage properties. These are not difficult to incorporate into a new masterplan for the area and will in our view add to the character of the area. This development parcel therefore covers 9 hectares and involves the demolition of 306 properties, 100 of which are council units. This area has a significant frontage onto Manchester Road and potentially has good links both to Werneth Park and to the more successful housing areas to the south. These advantages are exploited in the masterplanning proposals in the next chapter.



◀ New urban development by two sets of developers in Harlow, Abode by Copthorn Homes to the left and a scheme by Barratts to the right.

These two development parcels should be designated as clearance areas and a strategy put in place to acquire the housing. This will inevitably involve the designation of a CPO however we would also anticipate that much of the property will be possible to acquire by agreement. This process will need to be very carefully managed. The compensation package for residents is beyond the remit of this study. However in order to protect the community as much as possible it will be important to offer residents the opportunity to return to the area if they wish. In order to do this it would be important to phase the development so that new property is available prior to the majority of the demolition. We therefore believe that the commercial sites to the south of Suffolk Street provide an important opportunity for an early start prior to the main demolition works. This will create an area of mixed housing to accommodate people wishing to stay in the area.

#### **Appointing a development partner:**

These development parcels need to be brought forward in partnership with development partners. There are now well-established routes for doing this which involve the Housing Market Renewal team undertaking a competitive appointment process to appoint a development consortium led by a private developer in partnership with a RSL. We are aware from discussions with the HMR developer panel that there are a

number of developers who would be very interested in tendering for this opportunity.

There are a number of options for the structuring of this process. There have been problems elsewhere where a developer/design team has been appointed to undertake the development because the council loses detailed control over design and programming. It is also difficult to choose between a consortium with very good designs but a poor financial package or track record and a strong and deliverable financial bid that is weak on design. This is particularly worrying in areas where developers start to water down the design content once they are appointed. We would therefore suggest that the Council/HMR team appoints a development partner and established a development partnership to undertake each of the development parcels. This development partner would be selected on their own merits and the development partnership would then commission the design team.

In order to avoid all of the team's eggs being in one basket and to introduce variety and innovation as well as spreading risk we would recommend that the two main development parcels be developed by separate development partners. Both of the sites are large enough to provide a viable development package. This would help to overcome the concerns of some local de-

► The Northmoor Home Zone in Longsight where an approach similar to the 'Bad Tooth' policy has had a dramatic effect.



velopers that the package tendered would be too big for them to compete against the larger developers.

### Other development areas:

In addition to the two main development areas we have identified some additional areas of demolition required to improve the street network of the area. These amount to some 47 terraces and 20 council properties. These demolitions are separate from the bad tooth proposals below and are required by the overall masterplanning concept. The main area of demolition in the eastern side of Tamworth Street. This currently takes all northbound traffic through the area since there is no exit from Oxford Street to the Manchester Road junction. Tamworth Street therefore carries a large volume of traffic as well as buses and was recently the scene of an accident when a child was killed. We have therefore proposed the redevelopment of the eastern face of the street to allow the street to be widened. We have also proposed some limited demolition around Northumberland House to allow the street network to permeate into this area. This is important because it will provide the main route from the heart of the area to the Metrolink Station. Other demolitions allow Chester Street to link to Manchester Road and create the opportunity to create some new retail units on Oxford Road to relocate shops that are currently in sub-standard property.

### Bad teeth

The next element of the strategy is a fund to deal with voids in the area. This was the strategy that has had the most effect in the Northmoor area of Longsight in Manchester. In this area local housing associations such as Manchester Methodists have been buying up property as it becomes vacant. They have then taken a decision about whether to refurbish the units (including knocking neighbouring properties into one unit) or to demolish and rebuild. Unlike the parcels described above this redevelopment has been small-scale infill, sometimes just one property.

Having pursued this policy in Northmoor over a number of years, the housing associations now own more than 300 properties. The policy has only been discontinued because property values in the area have risen to the extent that the associations cannot afford to buy voids and because there is now a market for these voids through estate agents. This is exactly the outcome required in Werneth and has been achieved in Longsite outside Housing Market Renewal. We are therefore proposing that a similar fund be established in Werneth and that this should operate in the improvement areas designated on the above plan. These areas include around 847 terraces and we would suggest that the fund be enabled to purchase up to 150 of these. This will help support the housing

market and create a safety net to ensure that the area does not go into collapse (which could result from the disruption of the HMR process).

The bad tooth acquisitions will need to be dealt with quickly once the property is acquired. The options are to refurbish the property, to group it with neighbours that may also be available to knock properties together, to redevelop individually or to combine into a larger redevelopment area. However given the corrosive effect that 'tinned-up' voids have on an area, we would suggest that properties need to be held vacant for as short a period as possible. This will mean that individual properties and small groups need to be dealt with rather than more comprehensive redevelopment. There is therefore a need to develop proposals for new housetypes that can be built on the footprint of the terraces of the area while creating more space in order to facilitate this small-scale redevelopment.

### Refurbishment

The remainder of the terraced property in the area (some 700 units) should be subject to improvement works. From our visual inspection of the area it is clear that a proportion of this property is already improved. However quite a lot of the property will need spending on external fabric and internal amenities. It is also proposed that all of the property should be subject to energy efficiency measures as part of a EU Concerto funded package of works. This is likely to include insulation, new high performance windows and energy efficient lighting. It could also include the replacement of boilers with district heating powered by a neighbourhood Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant or even mini-CHP engines as boiler replacements in each



home. It is also proposed to incorporate photovoltaic panels on the roof of terraced blocks.

There are three possible routes of funding this work:

► **Traditional housing improvement grants:** One route would be to provide housing improvement grants to householders. There are well-established procedures for doing this that involve the householder making a contribution to the costs of the work. There are other routes involving external works where work is undertaken by the council with the householders permission but without a financial contribution. We believe that this process has limitations because the people most likely to be able to contribute are those who area already prepared to invest in their property.

► **Community Land Trust:** We therefore believe that there is value in looking at more innovative approaches to investing in the terraced housing stock. This we suggest could take place through a Community Land Trust (CLT). This would be a community-owned cooperative body that is able to invest in the terraced stock of the area. This investment would be used to undertake the improvements set out above in

return for which the Trust would acquire a stake in the property. This could be structured in such a way that the owner retained a stake equivalent to the current value of the property, which they would have a guarantee that they would realise if they sold the property. The Land Trust would rely on its investment, and indeed HMR increasing the value of the property generally. This would allow the CLT to recover part or all of its investment if the owner moved on and in the interim to use its holding as capital to secure finance for further improvements. The details of the deal would need to be worked out in detail to ensure that it was sufficiently attractive to homeowners. This is likely to include the equity guarantee as well as the opportunity to benefit from the uplift in values. Given a property currently worth £20,000, this would work with the CLT investing up to £20,000 in the property. HMR might then set a target for average values of improved property in the area to reach say £50,000 (if this is not achieved it would be unlikely that the developers described above would be prepared to come into the area). The resident and CLT wopuold have a guaranteed 50% stake in the property with both benefiting from future uplift in values. The CLT would be able to use its asset base and the recycled capital to invest in further property as

well as investing in the upkeep of the area. This process would be controlled by local residents as owners of the CLT who would thus have a further stake in the area. It would create a virtuous circle in which the success of the CLT would protect and further enhance local values to the benefit of residents and the finances of the CLT. This is described in more detail in Appendix 3.

► **Energy Efficiency Measures:** As part of the Concerto bid finance would be available for improvements to the terraced housing outside this funding route. This would be made available as grants to homeowners or as a package of works done for them. There is also the possibility of finance being available through a power company such as Scottish Power as part of their carbon credit system.

#### **Public realm improvements:**

In addition to the above we are proposing a programme of environmental works to the public realm of the retained terraced areas. This would be based around the creation of Home Zone streets along with improvements to lighting, alley gating, planting, parking provision and play areas. This is described in more detail in the next chapter that describes our masterplan vision for the area.

# 4. Masterplan



In this Chapter we describe our masterplan vision for the Werneth / Freehold area. This is based on the strategy set out in the previous chapter in terms of the redevelopment areas, the areas of improved terraces and the public realm improvements. It also grows out of the analysis of the area described in Chapter 4 and in the community design exercise undertaken as part of the community workshop in early December.

## The community's masterplans

As part of the workshop we undertook a masterplanning exercise with local people. The outputs of this are described on sheets 6-9 of the exhibition (Appendix 1). The masterplanning process involved the community undertaking a series of analysis plans of the area as described in Chapter 4 and a 'hard and soft' exercise as described at the beginning of Chapter 5. Thus enabled then to create a plan of the neighbourhood with the demolition areas blanked out. Working in three groups they prepared a series of possibilities collages of the images that represented the type of area that they would like to see. The results



of this exercise are illustrated below and some of the images that they picked out are used to illustrate this Chapter of the report.

The groups then started the masterplanning exercise by reconstructing the street network of the area. In doing this they were asked to decide which streets in the area should be classified as high streets, secondary streets and tertiary streets (based on the hierarchy described in Chapter 4). They also looked at ways of reconnecting the street network to Manchester Road and to the surrounding areas because they agreed unanimously that they did not want it to remain the warren of one way streets and dead ends that it is at present. The results of this exercise are illustrated in the three plans below.

The groups all agreed that Oxford Street and Edward Street should be 'high streets' that would take through traffic where the shops would be concentrated. There was also reasonable level of agreement over the secondary routes with the groups suggesting that Tamworth Street and Warwick Street should be the routes into each part of the area. The groups made the remainder of the streets into Home Zones as described below. They were also keen to remove most of the footpaths and back alleys through the area through the use of alley gating.

▼ **The possibility collages:**  
Throughout this chapter the images used are a selection of those picked out by the community for these collages



The groups then considered the mix of uses in the area, the location of shops and other facilities as well as the amount and location of open space. These elements were used to develop plans which in turn were used as the basis for a series of plasticine models to show the height and density of the area. The three models generated by the community as part of this process are also outlined below. These have a strong degree of agreement and the feedback from the exhibition where they were displayed

show that they have a reasonably wide level of support in the community. The main issue relate to level of demolition and, of course, the future of the mill as described in the previous chapter. However there was a strong level of agreement about the type of area that the community wished to create. This was based very much on their experience of visiting Hulme and Northmoor which caused them to opt for a medium density urban neighbourhood based on a strong and permeable network of streets.

▼ **The Plan produced by Group One at the workshop:** The main features of this plan are the retention of the mill and the creation of a strong route from the heart of the area to the Metrolink Station



▼ **The Plan produced by Group Two at the workshop:** This demolished the engineering works to the east of the mill allowing much better connections between the north and south of the area. They also proposed a green link to Werneth Park.



▼ **The Plan produced by Group Three at the workshop:** This demolished the mill and used the land to create a new residential neighbourhood based around a series of squares and pocket parks.





### Our masterplanning vision

In developing a masterplan for the Werneth area we have developed the plans produced at the workshop. Our first step was to produce a plan that sought to combine the elements of the three community plans (left). This has then been developed over a number of iterations and in discussion with the HMR Team into the final masterplan described below.

The masterplan for the area is illustrated on the facing page. This is based on the following vision for the area:

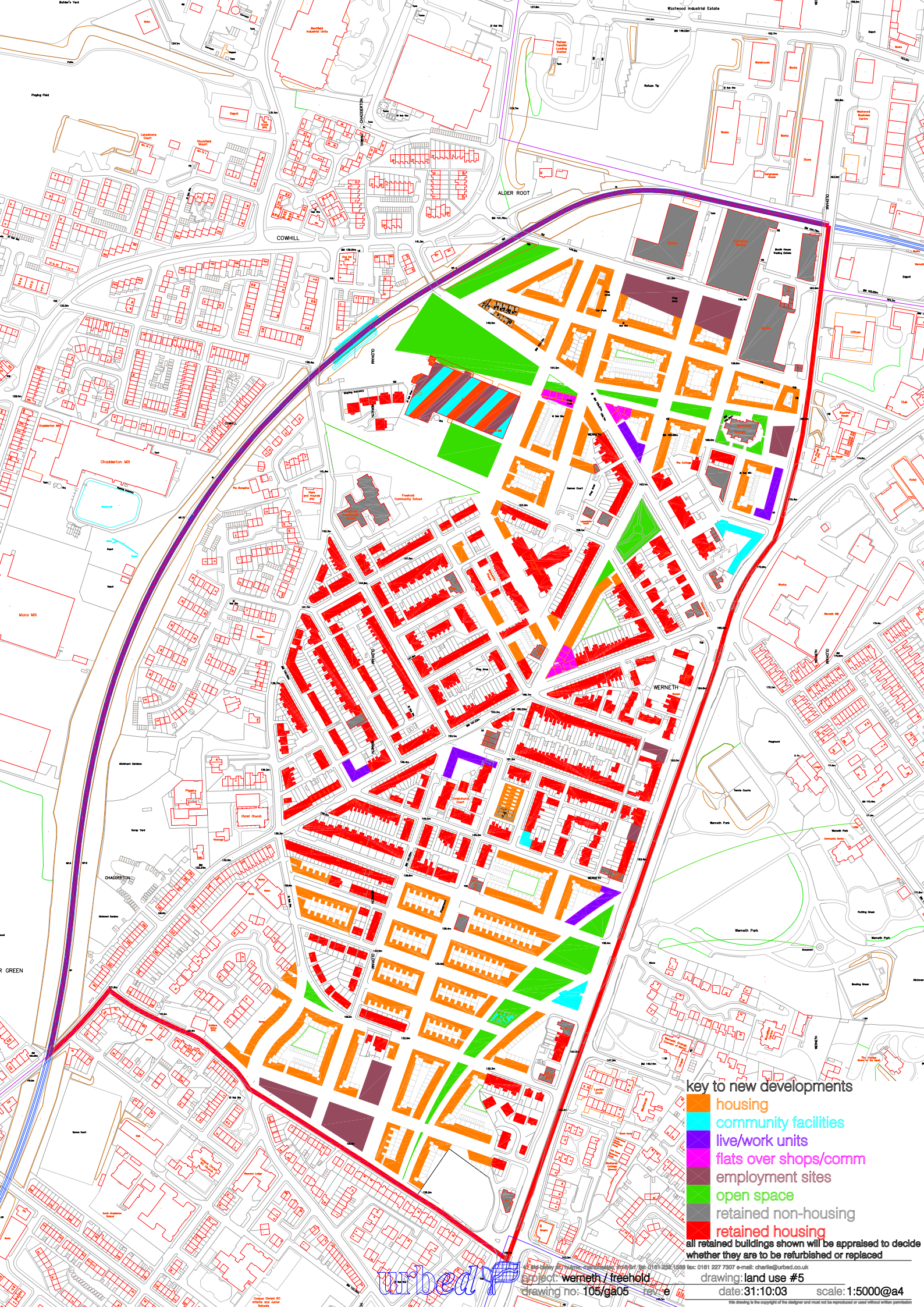
◀ This plan was produced following the workshop as an amalgamation of the community aspirations. It also takes in the land south of Suffolk Street that became available

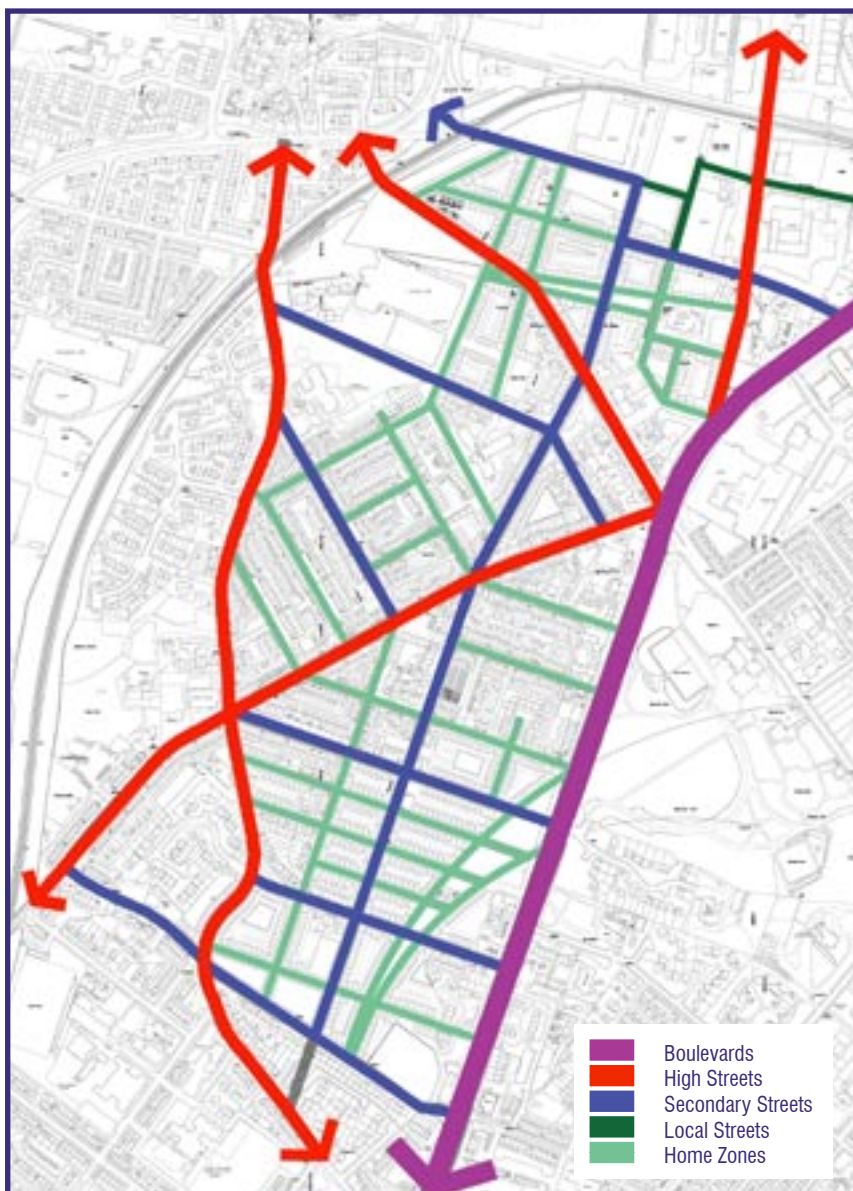
*Werneth will be developed as a thriving, multi-cultural, mixed-use neighbourhood around two lively high streets – Oxford Street and Edward Street with attractive, walkable routes to the Metrolink station and a landmark frontage to Manchester Road. The area will include a mix of housing of different ages, tenures and architectural styles and there will be a healthy housing market for all of this housing. People will choose to stay in Werneth as they become more affluent and other people should be attracted into the area. The public realm will be an attractive mix of home zones and lively streets with a variety of parks and recreational space and excellent links to Werneth Park.*

The masterplan is based on the redevelopment of the St. John's and Suffolk Street sites described in the previous chapter together with the complete reorganisation of the road network and the creation of an extensive area of Home Zone. This involves the following elements:

### The proposed street hierarchy

As we described in Chapter 4, URBED's masterplanning process is based on a strong hierarchy of streets. This, as described above was the starting point for the community planning exercise and





is likewise central to our masterplanning approach. The streets thus creates the framework that give form and structure to the plan and are based on the following principles:

- ▶ There should be a clear hierarchy of routes with the design of the street reflecting its place in the hierarchy.
- ▶ The network should be permeable with the majority of streets connecting at either end to other streets. In the analysis plan in Chapter 4 the dead end streets are shown in light green and the purpose of the plan has been to eradicate these as far as possible.
- ▶ All routes should be attractive for both pedestrians and vehicles. Pedestrian only routes like back alleys should be avoided as far as possible because they tend to become dangerous.
- ▶ All routes should be defined by the front face of buildings and buildings should have their main doors and windows onto the street so that the streets are supervised. We should avoid any streets of public routes to the rear of properties.
- ▶ Traffic calming should be achieved through street design, rather than extensive highways works (such as



chicanes and speed humps). On street parking should be permitted on most levels of street.

We have therefore developed a street hierarchy as described below and WSP have developed typical designs for each level of the hierarchy:

### **Boulevard:**

In line with the themes emerging from the Oldham Beyond Study we propose to make Manchester Road into a boulevard as per the drawings from WSP. This would be part of the main approach to Oldham from the M60 and is of wider relevance than Werneth. However it will be very beneficial to Werneth. The current dual carriageway road has been designed for the free flow of traffic. Pedestrian crossings are limited to Pelican crossings and traffic light controlled junctions and on the rest of the route there is a hedge of thorns along the central reservation. The Manchester Road used to be a high street lined with shops and pubs and served to unite the two halves of Werneth. It is now a barrier that cuts the HMR area off from the rest of Werneth and from the park. It is proposed to turn the high street into a Boulevard similar to Princess Parkway on the southern approaches to Manchester. This includes tree-planting and public realm works to reclaim the street from traffic.



### **High streets:**

The most important element of the hierarchy is the high street that performs the dual function of carrying through traffic and being the focus for community life. Originally this was Manchester Road and Oxford Street and Edward Street were secondary routes. However now that Manchester Road is no longer able to fulfil this function we are proposing to promote Oxford Street and Edwards Street. They are able to do this because they carry significant amounts of through traffic as well as bus routes and have some shopping. It is also proposed that Block Lane should be a high street because of its importance as a through route. These high streets should be the subject of a series of street improvements to reinforce their role as illustrated on the plans from WSP.

### **Secondary Streets:**

These are the routes into each part of the area. They must therefore take a moderate



level of traffic and so cannot be designed as Home Zones. These streets traditionally support some corner shops and are the main location for community facilities such as churches. The proposed street hierarchy designates Warwick Street, Tamworth Street, Cambridge Street, Suffolk Street, and Lincoln Street as secondary streets. It creates a new secondary as a continuation to the north of Tamworth Street and also upgrades Miln Street because of its importance of a link to the Metrolink Station. Secondary streets will be designed along the lines illustrated on the WSP plans.

### **Home Zones:**

All of the remaining streets will be designed as Home Zones. This will involve taking out all of the road closures and making all of the Home Zone street two way and accessible at both ends. The street will then be designed with shared surfacing, street trees, bollards, on-street parking and seating to slow cars down to a walking









pace when they can mix with pedestrians as per the drawings from WSP.

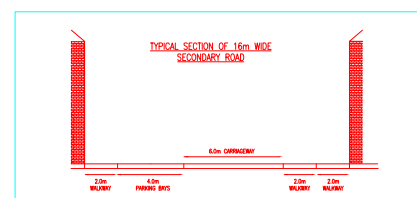
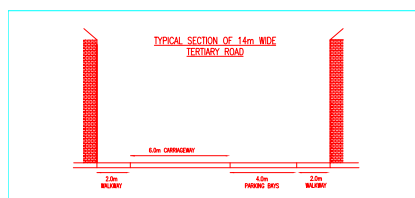
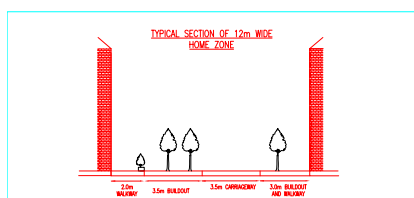
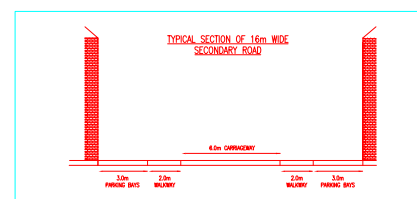
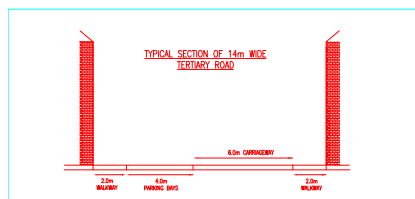
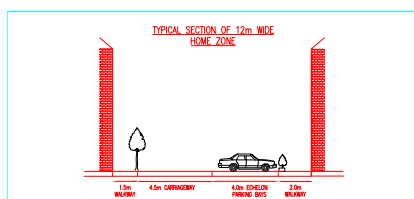
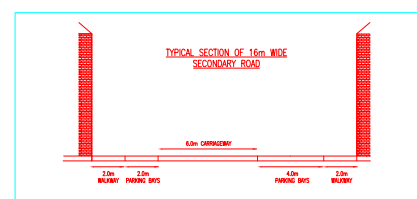
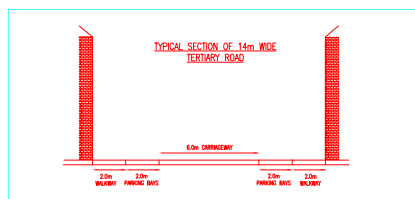
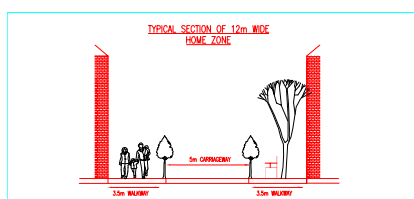
### Back alleys and footpaths:

The masterplan is based on the creation of a series of perimeter blocks with public external space and private space to the rear of properties. The back alleys undermine this system by allowing the public to the rear of properties. We are therefore suggesting that all back alleys should be gated to make the alleyways into private realm.

### Mix of uses

The plan to the right shows the mix of uses proposed as part of the masterplan. Clearly the main use in the area is housing, how-

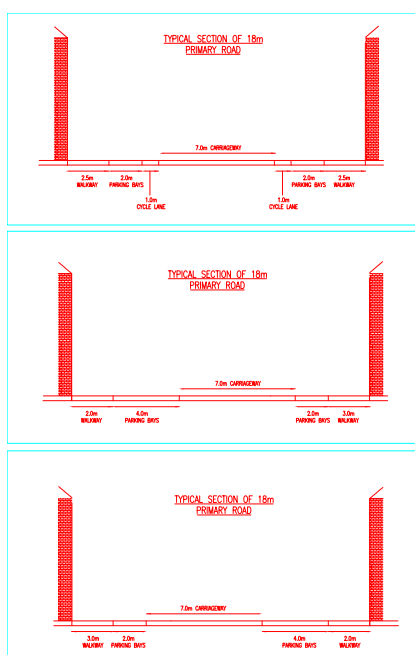
▼ WSP have prepared a series of proposals for the design of existing and new streets in the Werneth/Freehold area. These are included in Appendix 4





ever we have sought to distribute a range of other uses through the plan to create activity throughout the day and to provide local facilities. These are focused on two main nodes of activity – the existing six-way junction on Oxford Street and a new five-way junction on Edward Street. The reason for the importance of these junctions is their accessibility because of the number of streets that link into them. They are therefore an ideal location for shops and other facilities. The main non-residential uses in the plan are therefore:

- **Retailing:** We have preserved the existing retailing on Oxford Street around the six-way junction. The shop



unit on the corner of Tamworth Street is proposed to be redeveloped as part of the widening of that street. We have also created some new retail units on Edward Street to replace the shops in the blocks planned for demolition. The existing pubs and the corner shops elsewhere in the area are also retained. Overall the plan includes 1,559m<sup>2</sup> of retail space

- **Community facilities:** We have retained the existing community facilities throughout the area including the Pakistani community centre that is within the Suffolk Street redevelopment area. We are also proposing community use as part of the reuse of the mill as described below as well as a new mosque fronting onto Manchester Road.

- **Employment uses:** We have introduced new employment space on Spencer Street in the south of the area and also on Suthers Street in the north. This includes 7,766m<sup>2</sup> of space that would most likely include workshops and starter units. There is also the potential to include workspace in the mill conversion.

- **Live/work units:** We have included 2,655m<sup>2</sup> of live/work accommodation. This is accommodation that can be used both as a home and a workspace/retailing (in fact it is very similar to a traditional corner shop). This type of accommodation has been developed successfully in Bolton and is part of the cultural industries strategy in the wider Oldham Beyond strategy. This live/work accommodation is positioned adjacent to shopping areas and would allow these areas to expand if the demand existed. If this does not materialise they would go over to residential units.



### **Hartford Mill**

We have undertaken a design exercise on Hartford Mill and on this basis we believe that it can be viably developed. The Mill is currently on a sloping site so that to the east it is four storeys tall but to the west it is six storeys. The masterplan clears the housing to the north of the mill so that together with the existing open space to the south it becomes part of a park. A new street is cut through to the east of the mill that would become its main entrance. This would enter the building at third floor level. Above this would be residential accommodation and below would be a combination of workspace, community facilities (such as Sure Start) and parking. These uses

would be on floors below the ground level to the east and would look out onto the parkland to the north and south.

In order to make the mill usable for housing we are suggesting an atrium through the building that is wider on the upper floors. This would let light into the interior of the building and make the space suitable for residential conversion. This would accommodate around 100 apartments plus 6,500m<sup>2</sup> of other space. The use of this other space is to be determined however it could incorporate Sure Start as well as community facilities and a significant amount of workspace. We have also assumed that there will be up to 80 car parking spaces in the lowest part of the



building with additional parking between the mill and the railway. As part of the study we have had a number of discussions with developers about the potential for the conversion of the mill. On this basis we are confident that there are developers that would be prepared to look seriously at the scheme. This however is likely to involve some subsidy which is likely to be available from either English Partnerships or the Northwest RDA.

### The open space framework

The aim of the masterplan has been to maintain housing densities in the area while at the same time increasing the amount of open space. The main change that we have made in the final version of the plan is to substantially increase the level of open space in the area. The masterplan includes significant new areas of open space as follows:

- **Werneth Park:** The most important piece of open space in the area is Werneth Park to the east of Manchester Road (this of course is excluded from the open space measure). It is already clear from consultations in the area that local people value this amenity. There are three entrances to the Park on Manchester Road. The most important at from the Oxford Street/Edward



Street/Manchester Road traffic lights. The other is at the southern end of the park. This southern entrance we have linked to a major new open space within the scheme as described below. It was suggested by the community that we might create a green bridge over Manchester Road to link the area to the park. We have looked at this and believe the expense not to be justified particularly since it would worsen the environment at road level. Give the proposed boulevarding of the road we believe that it should be easier and more pleasant to cross the road at grade so that we can make it easy to access the park via the existing pedestrian crossings.

- **New neighbourhood parks:** We have created two new small neighbourhood parks within the area. The first is a piece of open space between Edward Street and the mill. This is an area that provides a setting for the mill and which could accommodate a range of activities. This park links to a green avenue leading up to the former St. John's church. A second new park is created in a crescent of space in the southern part of the area. This extends the existing area of open space on Manchester Road to bring the character of Werneth Park into the heart of the area.



- **Tamworth Street Park:** The existing park at the junction of Tamworth Street and Edward Street would be retained and improved.
- **Multi-use games area:** The games area currently being created next to the community centre on Milne Street is also retained.
- **Play areas:** The two local parts would include NEAPs (Neighbourhood Equipped Play Areas). There would also be a series of LEAPs and LAPs through the rest of the area.
- **Home Zones:** The Home Zone streets will be designed so that they can operate a amenity space for the residents of those streets. These should provide opportunities for social interaction, children's play etc...
- **Private space:** The new perimeter blocks that we are proposing have within them communal space for the use of the residents of those blocks. All of the new housing also has private outdoor space including balconies for the flats and gardens for the homes. As described below the new forms of terraced housing that we are proposing also incorporate roof terraces.



### Urban form

The masterplan has been designed as an urban neighbourhood based around a clear grid of streets as described above and a framework of open space. The proposed new development has been designed to enclose the public realm and to create a strong distinction between public and private spaces. We have also sought to create a layout that is distinctive and creates a series of attractive spaces, vistas and focal points.

### The St Johns Neighbourhood:

The northern area is based around the local landmark of St. John's Church. This stands on top of a hill and the masterplan recreates the residential square that once surrounded the church. The vista that once existed up St. John's Street to the church tower is also recreated as a linear open space, which connects the church to the shops in the heart of the area. This space

creates a new heart of this northern area on Edward Street before the open space opens up again in the park around the mill. The form of the neighbourhood in this area is created with two intersecting forms one stretching from Featherstall Road to the railway and the other from Suthers Street to the mill. The 'book ends' of these forms are marked with higher buildings containing flats, which rise to five storeys. The predominant height of the blocks around the heart of the area is however 3 storeys and the block on the hill around the church are two storeys so that the church tower can stand out as a landmark. This area covers 7.4 ha and involved the demolition of 379 properties (excluding the Oxford Court tower block). The proposals include 263 homes and 166 flats. If Oxford Court were included this means that we are proposing less housing than there is currently in the area and at densities of 58 units/ha.

### The Suffolk Street Neighbourhood:

The neighbourhood in the southern part of the area is designed to recreate the best aspects of the terraced layout of the area but with much more open space. As described below we have generated a series of houstypes that could be developed on the plot dimensions of the terraces. This would allow us to retain the existing street network which has a number of advantages. It is first of all cost effective because it

avoids major service diversions. It also enables us to connect to the surrounding streets that are going to remain and will make it easier to commence development in a phased way prior to all of the terraces being demolished. However the failing of the terraces is a lack of open space which has been created in the crescent shaped park described above. This area would be predominantly two and three storey with three storey predominating along the park edge. This area covers 9 ha and currently includes 306 properties (although the southern part of the site is currently in commercial use). The masterplan proposes 472 properties in this area, which represents a slightly lower density of 52 units/ha.

### New housing development:

Overall the masterplan includes 691 houses and 295 flats giving a total of 986 properties. This excludes Hartford Mill that is likely to accommodate another 100 units. We therefore potentially have almost 1,100 new units in the area compared to a demolition total of 752.

### Density:

The reason for the increase in the number of units in the area is the addition of the sites to the south of Suffolk Street which total 4 ha as well as the properties in Hartford Mill. We have undertaken an



analysis of the density of the development. This suggests that the density of the proposed St. John's development at 58 units/ha is exactly the same as the density today. In the southern part of the area the density today is 61 units/ha and the proposed density is 52 units/ha. We have therefore reduced the density of this part of the site. These density figures are almost entirely a result of the proportion of flats in the scheme. Flats are an important part of the urban design of an area such as this because they allow accommodation to be built into corners as well as allowing some higher buildings.

### Housing Mix

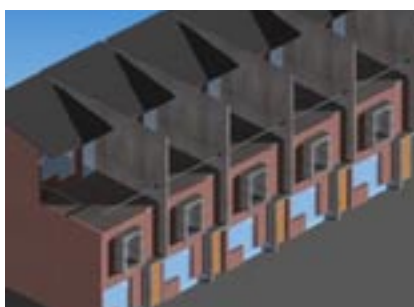
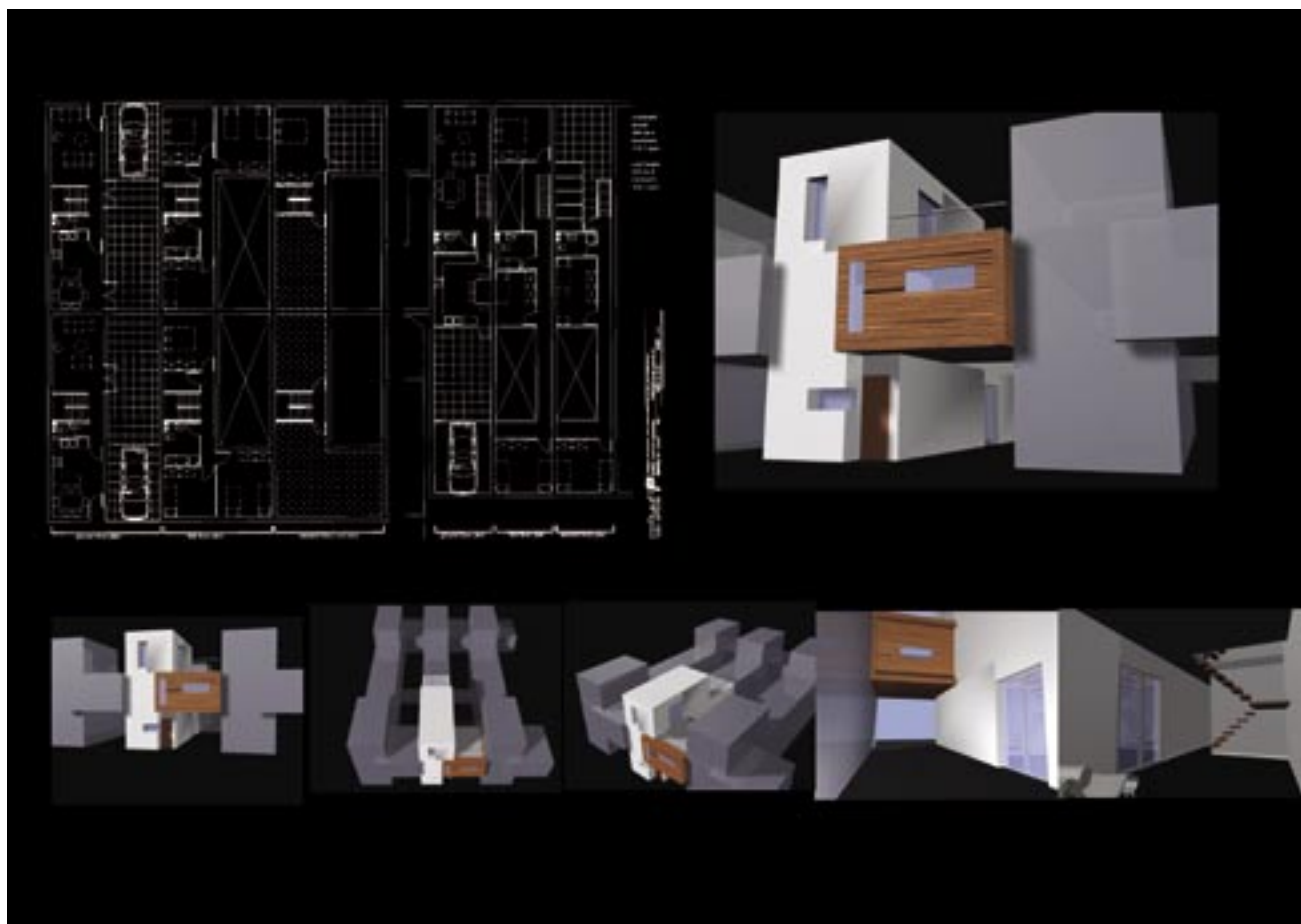
The concept for the housing mix is to supplement the two-bedroom terraces that currently dominate the area to create a balanced housing mix. This mix is therefore concentrated at either end of the spectrum with about 25% of the units being one and two bed flats and 75% being three, four and five bedroom houses.

The mix includes approximately 250 flats (excluding the mill) compared to 280 flats that we are proposing to demolish in the area. There is therefore a net loss of flats overall. However there has still been some concern expressed at the number of flats that we are proposing. The justification for this is the changing demography of households. Nationally 83% of all new

households are single people, which is what is driving a huge market for flats (or apartments as they tend to be called) in Manchester. It is likely that the situation in Oldham is not this extreme. Nevertheless it is reasonable to assume that there will be significant demand for flats provided that they are attractive.

It is true that the demographic of the Asian community is different to the national average and the household size in Werneth is larger than the average for Oldham. Nevertheless we have been told as part of the consultations not to assume that all Asian households are extended families wishing to live under the same roof. It is just as likely that family members will live in different homes in the same street or neighbourhood. The family members have very different housing needs including demand for flats from the younger adults.

The housing units take a number of forms in the plan as described below. However the predominant housing type is the three bedroom five person home which make up just over half of the mix. We then have around 12% of properties as four bedroom homes and 10% as five bed units.



These illustrations show some of the ideas developed by URBED as part of the Werneth/Freehold masterplan. As described in the text this has explored the implications of developing large homes of the sites and plot depths occupied by the existing terraces. These plans need a great deal of further development but could form part of the masterplan. The photograph top left on the facing page shows a similar housetype in Amsterdam.





## Housetypes

There are a variety of housetypes proposed as part of the masterplan to meet different conditions proposed on the site. We believe that the development of these housetypes is one of the areas where there is the potential for innovation. These housetypes include the following units:

- ▶ **New terraces:** As described above, one of the objectives of the masterplan was to retain the existing street structure of part of the area. We have therefore been exploring a family of that can be built on the plots of former terraces while achieving substantially larger floor areas to accommodate 3, 4 and 5 bedrooms. The advantage of this type of unit is that it can be used in a variety of circumstances including the 'bad tooth' programme. These new terraces are 'L' shaped with the section of the 'L' stretching back into the site containing much of the accommodation. The short section of the 'L' makes the street frontage and sails over a car port which provides off street parking. To the rear of the car port is a courtyard that expands in the three bedroom version into a small back garden. The units also have a roof terrace at second floor level and the larger units extend to a third floor. These units have very generous internal proportions and have been developed partly in response from an Asian market



to prioritise internal space over external space. There are many examples of this type of housing in Holland and the quality of what can be created in terms of living environment and lighting can be very high.

- ▶ **Row houses:** In a small part of the site we have explored the possibility of a unique housing form which stretches the full width of the site. This is used on the small site between Warwick Street and Dorset Street where the block is currently too small to accommodate two sets of terraces. The row house is built in two parts with a front door on Warwick street, an internal courtyard and a corridor leading to a smaller section of accommodation to the rear. This could be occupied as one large home or as a home with a 'granny flat' or teenager annex and could even be used partly as a home and partly as a workspace.
- ▶ **Perimeter block homes:** Much of the housing on the site is built as perimeter blocks. These are made up of simple homes with 5m frontages built either to back of pavement or with small (1-2m) front gardens and 5m back gardens. Unlike the new terraces these units would not accommodate in-curtilage parking. This is therefore provided in the courtyard with overflow parking on-street.



- ▶ **Perimeter block corners:** One of the problems with perimeter blocks is the need to close the corners. This is normally done with flats however this would have resulted in too large a proportion of flats in the mix. We have therefore created a housetype that is able to turn these corners. This is based on a unit created by Places for People housing association in Hulme. This is a three storey family home with a small courtyard and a roof terrace (similar to the new terraces). These units have proved the most popular in the scheme in Hulme and we believe that they will work very well in the Oldham market.
- ▶ **Flats:** The flats in the scheme are used to take up corners where there is not the potential to accommodate houses. Because of the variety of these sites the flats are mostly specials.
- ▶ **Live work accommodation:** We have included a small amount of live work accommodation in the mix. These are two and three storey terraced units with an open plan ground floor and accommodation on the first floor. The idea is that the ground floor can be used to run a small business or indeed operate as a shop with living accommodation above. If this does not work the accommodation could be converted to open plan living space.



# 5. Sustainability strategy



This briefing sheet sets out the current proposals to integrate energy efficiency and renewable energy into the masterplan for Werneth/Freehold. These concepts are proposed for delivery as part of an overall energy strategy for the area. To help fund these proposals the Housing Market Renewal team is participating in a European 'Concerto' funding bid with partners in France, Spain and Republic of Ireland. Discussions are also being initiated with industry partners who will be key to delivery of the energy strategy. These include property developers, energy utilities and local agencies.

## Proposed Energy Strategy



Tackling climate change requires local action in Oldham to reduce the amount of energy we use - by improving energy efficiency - and to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels - by switching to 'renewable' sources of energy such as solar, wind and wood fuel.



The strategy will also tackle a number of other issues:

► **Innovation:** the selection of a combination of measures that present new challenges for developers, local authorities and utilities. For example, the retrofit of district heating to existing terraced housing. It is also proposed that a small number of flats and houses form a working demonstration for 'blue skies' technology such as DC electrical supply and LED lighting systems.

► **Future-proofing:** Putting in place gas, electricity and heat distribution networks that allow for future changes in the energy supply and enable renewable energy systems to be delivered more cost effectively. This also has implications for building design, with the need for south facing roofs for solar arrays.

► **Capacity building:** The strategy will also explore the potential for Oldham to develop local expertise in delivering building fabric improvements and installing renewable energy systems. This could include the fabrication of products such as standard solar photovoltaic modules.

► **Education:** The strategy includes a proposal to establish Hartford Mill as a sustainable energy technology centre with the aim of bring together a number of activities under one roof. These might include demonstrating new technology, providing educational facilities, establishing manufacturing and installation enterprises, as well associated training facilities.



### Potential Benefits for Oldham

The energy strategy could bring a range of benefits to residents of Werneth/Freehold and the Borough of Oldham:

- ▶ Reduced heating and electricity bills;
- ▶ Improved quality of life for residents of retained housing;
- ▶ Increase in the value and improvement in the appearance of properties;
- ▶ Opportunities to create skilled employment;
- ▶ National demonstration project for innovative technologies and solutions;
- ▶ Environmental education facilities for the wider community.

There is potential to establish a new local company to install and maintain the energy



services and maximise local employment. A Community Land Trust could also be established to raise finance on the basis of increased property values.

### Energy Services

The strategy aims to deliver a package of innovative energy services for the neighbourhood. The proposal is to deliver these through a partnership between:

- ▶ **Scottish Power:** The utility will part-fund works to improve the building fabric of the 19th Century terraced properties through its Energy Efficiency Commitment. They will also part-finance and manage the district heating system and the photovoltaic mini-grid. Heat and power billing will inform households about their new sources of energy;
- ▶ **North Manchester EEAC:** It is proposed that the Energy Advice Centre would move to new offices in Hartford Mill and would play a number of roles during the HMR development process:

Innovation - researching new technologies, specifications and suppliers



Market testing - assisting housing developers to market test new specifications

Training - capacity building to develop the skills of local installers

Services - main point of contact for local energy services

- ▶ **Property developers:** construction and marketing of high specification houses and flats as new-build and as part of the Hartford Mill refurbishment;
- ▶ **(Proposed) Community Land Trust:** A trust is being examined as a mechanism for using the expected increase in local property values to part-finance improvements to the existing housing stock.

This will enable effective co-ordination of the proposed measures and will help minimise risk for each partner. It will also enable additional funding streams to be accessed such as the Energy Efficiency Commitment of major utilities and the DTI solar photovoltaic market development program.

## Matrix of Proposed Measures

Property	Energy efficiency	Energy Supply	Issues to Address?
Freehold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Building fabric improvements works to raise thermal efficiency to SAP 80-90 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- new roofing</li> <li>- internal/external wall insulation</li> <li>- High performance windows</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Bulk purchase and distribution of efficient lights and appliances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Roof integrated solar photovoltaic arrays linked into neighbourhood mini-grid (2-4 KWp per household)</li> <li>● Retrofit district heating network and new electrical distribution network</li> <li>● Demonstration of ridge mounted wind turbines</li> <li>● Combined heat and electrical metering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Financing and specification of fabric works</li> <li>● Minimising disruption to households</li> <li>● Acceptability of communal heating systems</li> <li>● Financing and management of district heating and solar minigrid</li> </ul>
Hartford Mill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Building fabric improvements works to raise thermal efficiency to SAP 80-90 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New roofing</li> <li>- Dry-lined insulation</li> <li>- High performance windows</li> <li>- Introduction of atria for daylighting</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Efficient lights and appliances form part of standard specification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Neighbourhood 'energy centre' supplies heat to the whole area, repowering old engine house and re-using stack</li> <li>● Explore gas-fired CHP or wood fired heating</li> <li>● Roof integrated solar photovoltaic arrays linked into neighbourhood mini-grid</li> <li>● Combined heat and electrical metering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Financing, installation and maintenance of heating plant</li> <li>● Provision of metering and billing services</li> <li>● Establishment of wood fuel supply from local 'recycling centres'</li> <li>● Financing and specification of fabric works</li> </ul>
St Johns (New-build)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SAP 110-120 fabric performance with improved daylighting and solar gain</li> <li>● Focus on detailed design principles to ensure that units deliver predicted performance</li> <li>● Efficient lights and appliances form part of standard specification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Properties connected to district heating network and new electrical distribution network</li> <li>● Roof integrated solar photovoltaic arrays linked into neighbourhood minigrid (2-4 KWp per household)</li> <li>● Combined heat and electrical metering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Acceptability of communal heating systems</li> <li>● Financing and management of district heating and solar mini-grid</li> </ul>



# 6. Conclusions



In this report we have set out a set of proposals for the Werneth/Freehold area that we believe have the potential to transform the area both physically and in terms of the housing market. As we said at the start of the report it has been developed as a demonstrator as part of the Oldham Beyond study and has the dual role of producing practical proposals for the Housing Market Renewal Prospectus and drawing more general lessons for the Oldham Beyond Vision.

## Lessons for Oldham Beyond

While Werneth/Freehold is not an area that is free of problems it has huge potential to be a model neighbourhood for the regeneration of Oldham. This is an ethnically diverse neighbourhood where the community appears to live together in reasonable harmony and where there is clearly a strong commitment to the area and its future. We believe that this community is an important asset on which the regeneration of the area can be built and it is important that the HMR process is planned to make the most of this asset. In this way Housing Market Renewal has the potential to create a model for the regeneration of other parts of Oldham.

There are however limits to the extent to which the model may be replicable. One of the area's greatest potential assets is the planned Metrolink Station on Block Lane. Without this it is certain that there would

be no developers interested in the mill and the process of reviving the housing market would be that much harder. It has not been our responsibility to prepare costings for the bid but it is clear that the strategy set out in this report will cost many tens of millions. While there is commitment to roll out HMR into other parts of the borough it is not sustainable for this level of resources to be available for all 17 HMR areas. Even though it is true that not all other areas will require this level of resources, the success of HMR depends on creating a sustainable model that can be rolled out in other neighbourhoods across Oldham. This must involve kick starting the housing market in a way that can lift values generally and which can spread to surrounding areas.

There are some reasons to be optimistic in this respect if Werneth/Freehold can change attitudes towards terraced housing by showing how it can be made into an aspiration place to live. This is what has

happened in Northmoor in Longsight where the success of the area has caused values to rise in surrounding streets even when no work has been done. There are however also dangers because one of the causes of housing market collapse is over supply of property. There is a danger that bringing too much cheap property on stream too quickly could undermine the market for terraced homes thereby making the situation worse in other HMR areas.

The response to this should not however be to reduce the amount of housing provided. It is however important to differentiate the new housing from the remaining terraces. This is the purpose of suggesting a mix dominated by larger units. The terraces would thus continue to provide a first rung on the property ladder. It also suggests that new housing should not be over-subsidised to avoid house prices that come too close to the terraces. If developers are concerned about values it is worth waiting until values rise rather than subsidising prices. Most importantly it is vital that the HMR team establishes systems to monitor the housing market to pick up the early signs of problems if they arise. Urban change and markets are hugely complicated and it is not possible to predict with absolute certainty the outcome of any particular initiative. This why monitoring is vital.



# Appendix 1



## Werneth/Freehold Exhibition



# Werneth/Freehold

## Design for Change

### Contents

1. Programme
2. Principles
3. 1890 Plan
4. Urban Form
5. Public realm
6. Possibilities
7. Group 1
8. Group 2
9. Group 3

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This report describes the output of the Werneth/Freehold *Design for Change* event. The event was an opportunity for the community in Werneth/Freehold to shape the future of the area.

The event was run by URBED as part of the Oldham Beyond project, which is developing a vision for the whole of Oldham. As part of that URBED's team is focusing on a number of specific areas one of which is Werneth/Freehold. The area was chosen because it is one of the two areas in Oldham that has been selected for Housing Market Renewal.

The URBED team is working with Oldham Council and other agencies to prepare a bid to government that needs to be submitted later this year. The first step will be to produce a 'masterplan' for the area. The workshop was, therefore, designed to help local people and agencies to understand the issues facing the area and to work on masterplans for the area.

The event ran over three days and was based on a series of techniques and activities that URBED have used in many other areas. The first day allowed groups to really examine the area and discuss which areas should be improved and which should be demolished. The second day involved a visit to some places that Werneth/Freehold could be like and the third day involved a masterplanning exercise culminating in a series of Plasticine models. This report pulls together the results of this work in a way that can be fed back to the community in order to agree the way forward.



# Programme



## Tuesday 2nd September

- 9.15am Arrivals and coffee
- 9.45am Introductions + Aims
- 10.30am An introduction to urban design principles:
  - Streets are important
  - Spaces are important
  - Activity is important
- 11.00am Walking workshop
  - A walking tour of the estate in groups looking at the good and bad things about the area.
- 12.30pm Lunch
- 1.15pm Here's one we prepared earlier...
  - The redevelopment of Hulme in Manchester
- 1.30pm An introduction to the masterplanning exercise
- 1.45pm Group work
  - Figure ground plan, open space, land use, street networks,
- 2.45pm Thinking about 'hard' and 'soft' areas
- 3.00pm End of day 1



## Wednesday 3rd September


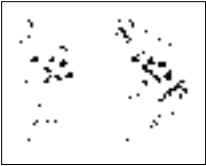

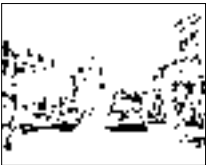
- 9.15am Arrivals and coffee
- 9.45am Depart for Manchester via Victoria Mill, Ancoats
- 10.45am Arrive Hulme
- 12.30pm HfC theatre for lunch + coffee + debrief
- 1.30pm Leave hulme go to urban splash sales centre
- 1.45pm Arrive sales centre
- 2.15pm Depart for return journey via Deansgate, Whitworth Street, Hulme Street, Whitworth Street, Ducie Street
- 3.00pm Arrive back in Werneth



## Thursday 4th September

- 9.15am Arrivals and coffee
- 9.45am Possibilities slideshow
- 10.15am Possibilities collage
- 11.00am Masterplanning work in groups:
  - Hard + Soft
  - Streets
  - Activities
  - Building blocks
  - Plasticene model making
- 12.30pm Lunch
- 1.00pm Continuing working in groups
- 2.15pm Presentation of your work
- 2.45pm Next steps
- 3.00pm End



**Urban design principles**

**1. Streets are important**




a. **The Importance of Streets:** The street is at the heart of all successful urban areas. Streets are both routes from A to B and places where community life takes place.

b. **A framework of streets:** All streets should end in other streets – in other words no cul-de-sacs. This is because:

- ☐ **Street network** – It creates a framework of streets to give shape and structure to the area.
- ☐ **Legibility:** It makes it easier to find your way around and understand the area.
- ☐ **Permeability:** It provides plenty of routes around the area reducing congestion and journey distances.

c. **Urban hierarchies:** Not all streets are equal. They have different character and perform different functions: Healthy areas have a high street, a number of secondary streets and lots of good residential streets. Boulevards you can do without.

- ☐ **Boulevards:** These carry through traffic such as bypasses and motorways.
- ☐ **High Streets:** These are the focus for districts. They carry traffic but are also where the main shops are along with neighbourhood facilities like churches and services.
- ☐ **Secondary streets:** These are local shopping streets with a mix of shops and housing.
- ☐ **Residential streets:** The places where most people live, they don't have such a mix of uses and are focused on places for local communities.

**Urban design principles**

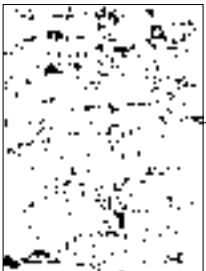


**2. Spaces are important**

a. **The urban block:** The street network creates the sites for buildings. The buildings should face outwards onto the street with private gardens and courtyards at the back. This is the basic building block of virtually all urban areas.

b. **Quality space:** There are a series of rules for streets. Designers often think that this is about bollards and fancy paving. However it is more about the following:

- ☐ **Building line:** A reasonably continuous line followed by the front of all of the buildings
- ☐ **Street Wall:** The buildings creating a reasonably continuous wall and not letting views to 'leak out' except where you want them to.
- ☐ **Scale and proportion:** The shape of the street created by the buildings - known as the enclosure ratio. Urban streets normally achieve a ratio of at least 1:3 (this means that the street is three times wider than the height of the buildings)
- ☐ **How the building meets the ground:** The way in which the buildings sit on the ground and whether there are steps front gardens shop fronts etc...
- ☐ **Active frontages:** On high streets and secondary streets you need a reasonable amount of shops and windows on the ground floor to enliven the street.

c. **Identity:** The things that make an area special – landmarks, vistas and focal points that create a sense of place.

**Urban design principles**

**3. Activity is important**

a. **Critical Mass:** The amount of development - the number of people, houses and other uses in any area. This creates activity, makes the areas feel safer and supports local shops and facilities. This is called density and is normally measured as the number of houses per hectare – A suburban area would normally have 20-30 houses per hectare and an urban area at least 60 houses per hectare.

b. **Urban Grain:** In a historic urban area blocks will often be developed with 20 or 30 buildings built at different times by different builders. This creates the variety and richness that we like in traditional places like Chester. In modern developments one developer and architect will often develop the whole block or even a series of block – this is described as 'course grained' and is seen as a bad thing.

c. **Mix of uses:** The inclusion in the area of a mix of housing, shops and employment so that there is activity locally and people can walk to shops and local facilities.

Werneth/Freehold

Design for Change

2

Oldham beyond

# Principles

The workshop started with people listing their favourite places - listed below. The workshop was then introduced to a range of principles that underly many of these places (listed to the left).

## Favorite places...

Warrington  
 York (especially the Minster)  
 Chester  
 Gallery Oldham  
 Bolton Town Hall  
 The 'Gerkin' (City of London)  
 Liverpool  
 Bangor Wales  
 Hillgate Stockport

## The field trip

An important element of the workshop was the 'Blue Peter moment' - Here's one we prepared earlier. This used the redevelopment of the Hulme estate in Manchester as an example of an area that has been rebuilt using these principles. This included both the new housing areas and the Britannia Mill conversion by Urban Splash (to show what could happen to Hartford Mill).



**Likes about Hulme**  
 The Homes for Change (top left)  
 Wide roads  
 Clean streets  
 Courtyards  
 Big windows  
 Variety of styles  
 Park and play facilities  
 Creative use of mills (below)  
 Mix of uses  
 Secure parking off street  
 Town houses  
 Balconies

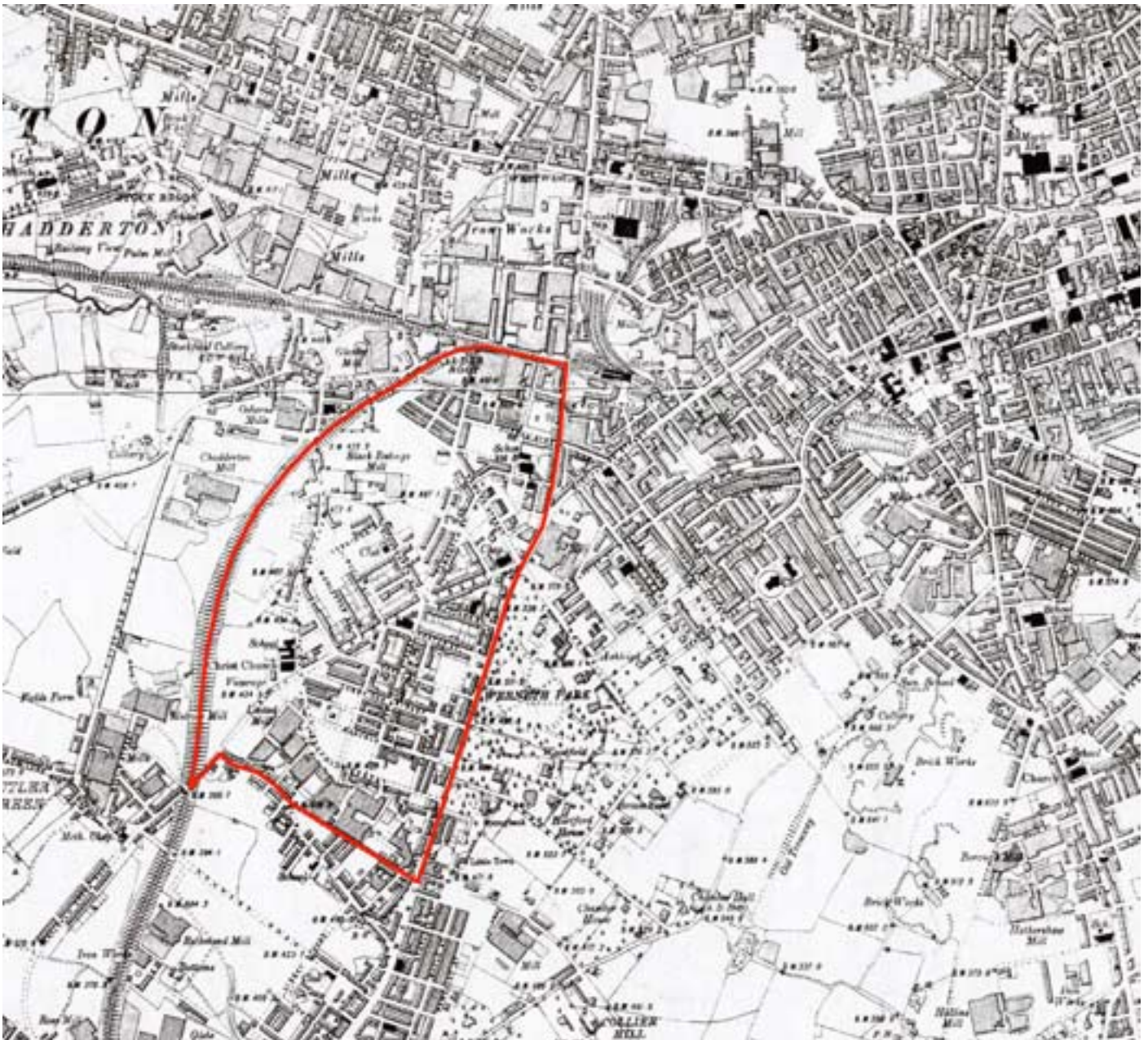


**Likes about Northmoor (right)**  
 The use of the street  
 Lights attached to houses  
 Private feel to streets  
 Two way traffic  
 Retained area's character  
 Retained community  
 Allot gating  
 Nowhere to hide



## 1890 plan

The workshop uses historical plans to explore the original street patterns and built structure of the area.





Werneth/Freehold  
Design for Change

4. Oldham beyond

## Urban form



The workshop explored the urban form of the area through a series of analysis plans of the area. The figure ground plan (below) was the starting point. This colours all of the buildings of the area in black and misses out all other detail. It is useful for showing: a) the density of buildings, b) the definition of space (because if you can see a street or a square on the plan then you know that it is well defined by its buildings) and c) the 'grain' of the area (whether it has lots or variety or is monotonous). In Werneth's case the figure ground plan shows that much of the area has a strong and coherent structure. However, it is surrounded by less well structured areas and is therefore somewhat isolated.

The smaller plan to the left shows the mix of uses in the area. These are predominantly housing (light brown). There are however, a number of small shops (light blue) as well as the industrial areas to the north and south.





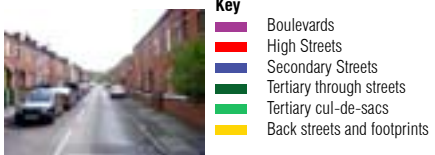
Werneth/Freehold  
Design for Change



## Public Realm

The public realm plan shows all of areas where people can walk unimpeded. The workshop did not have the opportunity to do this but we have completed it since. In a traditional urban area the public realm is confined to streets and public squares as demonstrated by the older parts of Werneth. In many modern estates these public areas include pretty much everything except for the buildings as shown by the council housing areas. In the older areas there is a very clear distinction between public and private areas. One need only imagine that these are the areas where a burglar can walk with impunity to understand the importance of this.

The plans to the left show the public space structure of the area and the street hierarchy. The groups looked at which streets were boulevards, high streets etc... They realised that the Manchester Road had gone from being a high street that united the two halves of Werneth to a boulevard that now divides the two areas.



- Key**
- Boulevards
  - High Streets
  - Secondary Streets
  - Tertiary through streets
  - Tertiary cul-de-sacs
  - Back streets and footprints



[illegible]



Werneth/Freehold  
Design for Change



# Group 1



△ Areas the group proposed for demolition



△ Proposed figure ground plan



△ Proposed street hierarchy



Scale 1:5000

## Group 2



△ Areas the group proposed for demolition



△ Proposed figure ground plan



△ Proposed street hierarchy



Scale 1:5000

## Group 3



△ Areas the group proposed for demolition



△ Proposed figure ground plan



△ Proposed street hierarchy



Scale 1:5000



## Vision: New Buildings

All of the options prepared by the community involve demolition and new buildings. Based on the workshop, the site visits and the possibilities slide show we are suggesting the following principles for this new development:

- It should have a range of housing types including larger houses and also flats
- It should be based on a network of sociable streets (rather than cul-de-sacs)
- It should be 'courtyard' type development with public streets and private inner courts
- It should be of a similar density to the existing housing
- It should provide opportunities for corner shops and community uses
- It should incorporate public open space



The most popular picture at the workshop was Devizes in Wiltshire (above) as well as traditional places like Bristol and London. It was however, recognised that the same principles had been used in new built areas like Hulme.



Britannia Mills



## Vision: Hartford Mill

At the beginning of the workshop the majority of people wanted to demolish the mill. By the end there was a majority in favor of retaining the building provided that it could be refurbished for a mix of housing, workspace and community facilities. This would include the following:

- High quality apartments linked to the metrolink station
- Workspace on the lower floors
- Community facilities such as meeting space and sports facilities
- The area developed around as open space



Mills can be reused for a variety of uses such as Britannia Mill top, converted by Urban Splash to houses. Mills can also be mothballed like Jersey Mill above while plans are being drawn up. The mill that most appealed to the community was Victoria Mill (main picture) that has been converted to housing, workspace, education facilities, a health centre and community space. This was masterminded by the Miles Platting and Ancoats Community Trust.



## Vision: Retained terraces

There was a feeling that while some of the terraces were in a very poor condition and should be demolished, many others were sound and some have been very well maintained. We should, therefore, retain a significant amount of the terraces provided that they could be improved. These improvements to include:

- Work to improve the condition and facilities in the properties
- The improvement of the public realm by introducing extensive Home Zones
- The opening up of the one way streets
- The gating of alleys to secure the rear of properties
- The enhancement of through streets and corner shops
- The creation of small areas of open space and play facilities



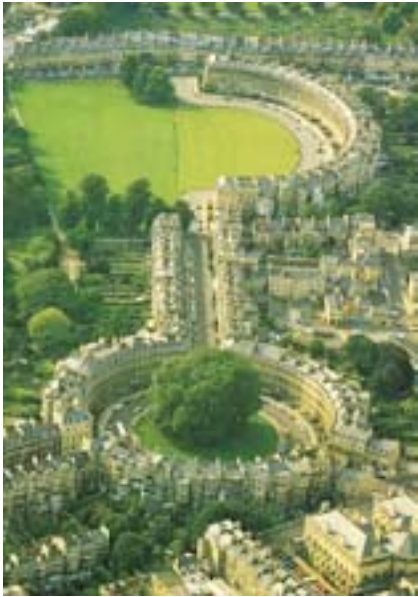
The Northmoor Home Zone in Longsight Manchester



Proposals by Urban Splash for the refurbishment of terraces in Salford



Other pictures on this page are of home zones in Holland where the concept was invented. These include seating, landscaping and even play facilities.

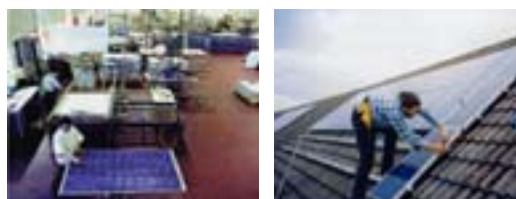


## Vision: Open space

The workshop felt that it was important to increase the amount and quality of open space in the area. This included the creation of a range of spaces from the excellent Werneth park to smaller squares and play areas through to residential courtyards and private gardens. This could include:

- A new large area of open space around the mill
- The refurbishment of the space on Edward Street
- The creation of a series of small areas of open space with play facilities throughout the area
- The creation of links to Werneth Park - possibly a green bridge.
- The creation of secure courtyards within blocks
- The creation of larger private back gardens (but not necessarily front gardens)





Werneth/Freehold

14. Oldham beyond

# Energy Strategy

## Local action on climate change

We are seeking your views on proposals to integrate energy efficiency and renewable energy into the masterplan for Werneth/Freehold. To help fund these proposals the Housing Market Renewal team is participating in a European 'Concerto' funding bid with partners in France, Spain and the Republic of Ireland. Discussions are also being initiated with local partners such as property developers and energy suppliers.

### Proposed Energy Strategy

Tackling climate change requires local action in Oldham to reduce the amount of energy we use - by improving energy efficiency - and to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels - by switching to 'renewable' sources of energy such as solar or wind.

There is also the need for future-proofing - putting in place gas, electricity and heat distribution networks that allow for future changes in our energy supply. This has implications for building design, with the need for south facing roofs for solar energy.

There is also the potential to establish Hartford Mill as a renewable energy centre with the aim of demonstrating new technology; providing educational facilities; establishing manufacturing and installation enterprises; as well associated training facilities.

### Potential Benefits for Oldham

The energy strategy could bring a range of benefits to residents of Werneth/Freehold and the Borough of Oldham:

- Reduced heating and electricity bills;
- Improved quality of life for residents of retained housing;
- Increase in the value and improvement in the appearance of properties;
- Opportunities to create skilled employment;
- National demonstration project for innovative technologies;
- Environmental education facilities for the wider community;

There is also potential to establish a new local company to install and maintain the energy services and maximise local employment. A community development trust could also be established to raise finance on the basis of increased property values.

### Proposed Measures

Property	Energy efficiency	Energy Supply	Issues to Address?
Refurbished	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insulation and high performance windows</li> <li>• Bulk purchase of efficient lights and appliances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solar photovoltaic roof tiles or modules.</li> <li>• Potential link to communal heating network (see below)</li> <li>• Potential for 'micro-CHP' engines to replace boilers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financing of insulation and glazing</li> <li>• Financing and management of solar and micro-CHP</li> <li>• Minimising disruption and cost</li> <li>• Internal or external insulation?</li> <li>• Acceptability of communal heating</li> </ul>
Hartford Mill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insulation and high performance windows</li> <li>• Efficient communal heating system</li> <li>• Efficient lights and appliances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighbourhood 'energy centre' with wood fired boilers supplying heat to mill and new-build housing</li> <li>• Solar photovoltaic modules</li> <li>• Ridge mounted wind turbines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financing, installation and maintenance of heating plant</li> <li>• Establishment of wood fuel supply</li> <li>• Financing of insulation and glazing</li> </ul>
New-build	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Super-insulation and high performance windows</li> <li>• Efficient lights and appliances</li> <li>• Passive design and construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wood fired heating from Hartford Mill</li> <li>• Solar photovoltaic roof tiles and modules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptability of communal heating</li> <li>• Financing and management of solar photovoltaics</li> </ul>



# Appendix 2



<b>Analysis from the exhibitions</b>		
<b>Sheet numbers refer to Appendix 1</b>		
<b>Question one</b>		
Over the last 2 years has Freehold become...	Better	6%
	Worse	66%
	Stayed the Same	22%
<b>Question Two</b>		
If you were redesigning Freehold would you:	Knock Down	22%
	Replace	68%
	Keep & Repair	3%
<b>Question Three</b>		
What do you think of the Plan on Board 7?	Like	39%
	Don't Know	24%
	<b>Dislike</b>	30%
<b>Question Four</b>		
What so you think of the Plan on Board 8?	Like	39%
	Don't Know	33%
	Dislike	19%
<b>Question Five</b>		
What do you think of the Plan on Board 9?	Like	37%
	Don't Know	31%
	Dislike	34%
<b>Question Six</b>		
What do you think the Vision for New Buildings on Board 10?	Like	49%
	Don't Know	25%
	Dislike	14%

<b>Question Seven</b>		
What do you think of the Vision for Hartford Mill on Board 11?	Like	57%
	Don't Know	20%
	Dislike	12%
<b>Question Eight</b>		
What do you think of the Vision for Retained Terraces on Board 12?	Like	63%
	Don't Know	16%
	Dislike	11%
<b>Question Nine</b>		
What do you think of the Vision for Open Space on Board 13?	Like	69%
	Don't Know	15%
	Dislike	6%

# Appendix 3



## **freehold united:** A community land trust for Werneth/Freehold

A community land trust (CLT) is an idea developed partly by the Confederation of Co-operative Housing but is an idea from the US. It provides a community based method of releasing, subsidising and re-distributing equity and as such therefore we feel could be an ideal vehicle to deliver much of the requirements and aspirations of the Housing Market Renewal process.

A CLT is a mutual society which people join and in which they invest part of the equity of their property. The benefit of membership is they are able to benefit from economies of scale or access to funds denied them as individual homeowners to enable the refurbishment of their homes .

The first version of the model developed for the UK in Birmingham was intended as vehicle to enable refurbishment of properties whose costs were otherwise outside the capacity of the home owners themselves but for them exchanging the freehold of their homes for a leasehold the available equity then being able to be used to secure funding to carry out urgent street by street repairs.

As far as we are aware this application has not been taken further, but with the advent of the Housing Market Renewal Programme we believe this is an idea whose time has come.

The CLT is similar to a building society in its original form in that a need is met through people coming together united by a common need to get building work done they could not otherwise afford. The CLT takes this highly successful model from the 19th and early 20th century and gives it new relevance. It also has similarities to Credit Unions, in that services similar to those of a bank are provided but in a way that is accountable through a common bond to the members. We believe that this local focus provides a unique opportunity to create a capitalised vehicle which will exist beyond the life of any one funding regime but be able to continue working beyond that at the same time as being demonstrably by and for a defined community of geography and interests.

### **How would it work?**

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The model we are proposing is that money should where possible be used to create assets. There are 2 ways in which this can be done.

The first is as a way of refurbishing houses without increasing the debt of the incumbent householder. In this instance the CLT pays for the modernisation of the homes and takes a secondary share in the home. Say that the house is worth £25,000 in today's terms, but requires the same again

to refurbish. In this case the work would be carried out and the CLT would own half of the property. If as a result of this work the neighbourhood continues to improve both parties would have an equal share in this future success.

If despite strategic intervention on this scale the values continue to tumble the homeowners share would be preferential and not fall until most (percentage to be decided after modelling scenarios have been picked say 10%) of the HMR investment has been eclipsed, so if values only got to £35,000 despite re-investment the householder would retain most of their original investment while the CLT's investment would only now be worth about £11,000. This would give them an incentive to make common cause with the CLT and the rest of the community while also protecting them through the period of transition to make them feel secure enough to try it and stay for a bit. The world outside would not come into full view until all the HMR investment had been eclipsed as values tumbled which would truly be a mark of failure and would be the sign that any more investment would be putting good money after bad and not a worthwhile.

The second route is similar to this but applies when the home owners home

does not reach values appropriate or the work needed is more costly than is viable – again a figure could be arrived at as a result of putting the whole HMR process onto a footing where commercial parameters are used to make decision even if they are cushioned by the public funding available. In this instance the value of the doomed home would be counted as the homeowners investment in a new home, it would be sufficiently greater than the compensation available to encourage the resident to continue to invest in the area rather than take the compensation and run. It may be worth the full value of that share not being fully redeemable until a cooling off period after moving back in to prevent abuse. Again the destiny of the CLT and the resident would be tied together – here the investment may have to be subsidised to get the residents value up to something useful as demolition and new build could come to £75,000 quite easily but the model as above would still apply.

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### Accountability

The CLT would have to be appropriately registered with the FSA and would therefore need to be partnered in its opening years by an organisation like the Co-operative Bank, Triodos Bank, the Nationwide Building Society, ICOF. The management committee would be made up of local representatives – voted in by the membership, some council representation in recognition that a lot of the land would have been theirs as well as individuals from organisation that would bring appropriate skills and experience to bear on the CLT's business. The advantage of being a membership-based business is that the accountability of the management to the consumers of its service is easy and understandable, well tried and tested and legally easily enforced.

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### The future

There is not enough money to either replace or do up all the houses in the Freehold area and so a vehicle that will be able to recycle funds and assets is crucial without the proceeds being siphoned off into other projects thus sapping the resolve of the community to make it work in the early stages.

If the intervention succeeds in creating demand in the area and thus starting a rise in house prices then the CLT will own substantial assets against which it can then borrow to finish off the job. The more it succeeds the more it will be able to do subject to any ODPM claw back arrangements. Even if the CLT only succeeds in stabilising things this will still be a substantial asset base that will be at the disposal of the community rather than effectively passed into private hands once the first round of sales of refurbished or new homes has gone ahead as happens in many areas where public funding is used on private housing.

### **Future accessibility to housing**

This brings us onto an interesting opportunity that arises at this point about gentrification. If the process really works it is possible that those who have weathered the last few years will be priced out of the market as the area picks up. A well capitalised vehicle like this would be able to defer certain amounts of its assets on sale of properties in which it owns a share so that it would be able to retain the share and so effectively provide access to housing to another household at a fraction of what the cost might otherwise be.

### **Accountable economic regeneration**

The CLT will not only deliver the outcomes above but if it becomes the strategic landowner as a result of the clearances it provides a unique vehicle for stimulating accountable economic regeneration in the decisions it makes with respect to land disposal for non housing activities. While the council will still have strategic opportunities through the local plan, the finer grain of issues which might otherwise either clog up council officer time or breed distrust and resentment on the ground can be passed on for decision by the CLT through its membership.

### **Conclusion**

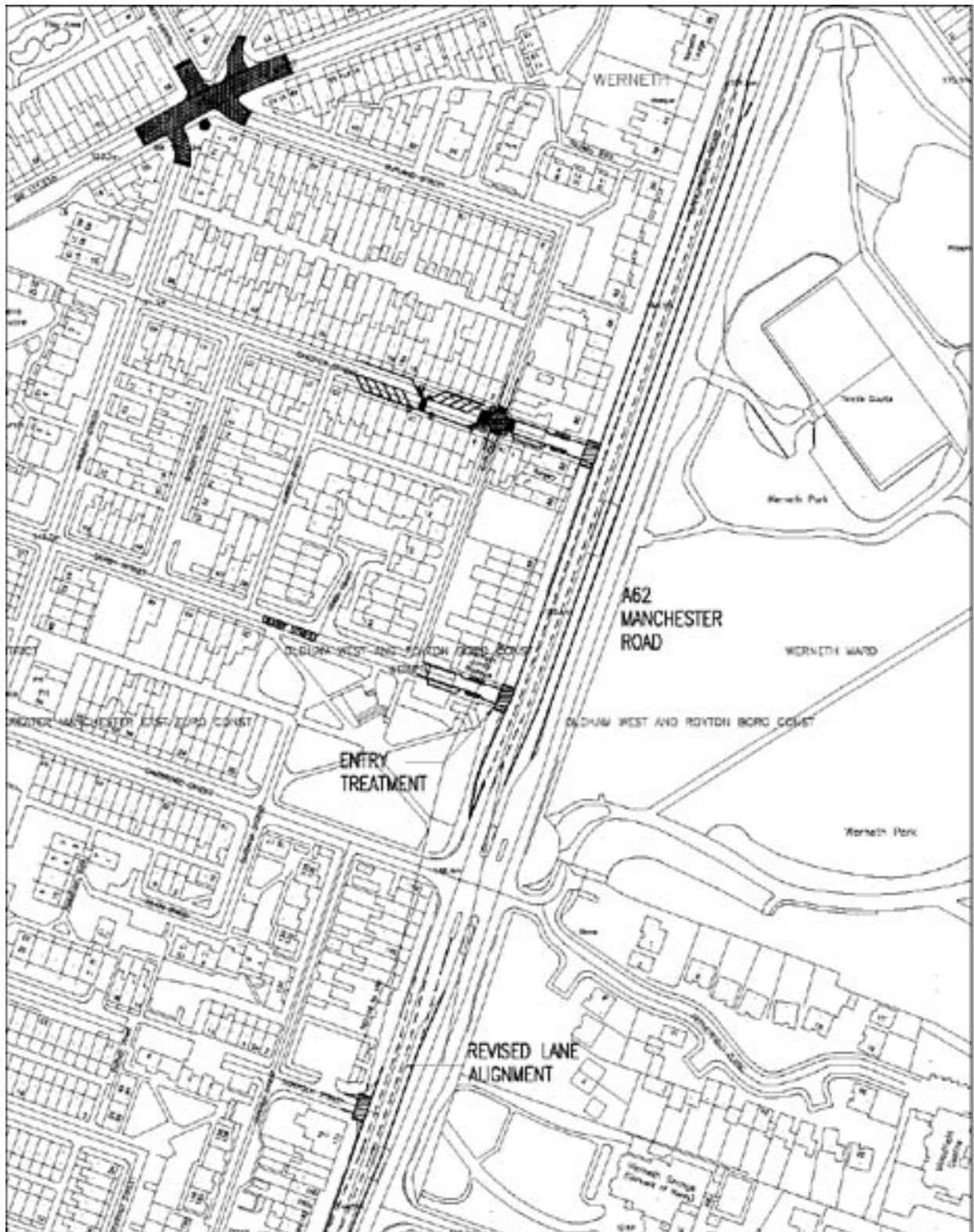
We think that this process takes the potential for yields from property investment to be used as a way of regenerating communities. But in such a way that the process is transparent and accountable with the profits accruing to those by whose commitment they have been earned. This method will also provide a framework which will make the process of deciding where clearance should happen and where it shouldn't easier to see and understand as it will be based on the value of those properties before and after intervention compared to the cost of that intervention. It will mean that the CLT will be successful both as a result of the loyalty of its community coupled with the success of its commercial decisions. There is also the opportunity to provide for the first time a vehicle for building the strength of communities on the same scale that the most successful RSLs manage but for home owners as well as those that rent.

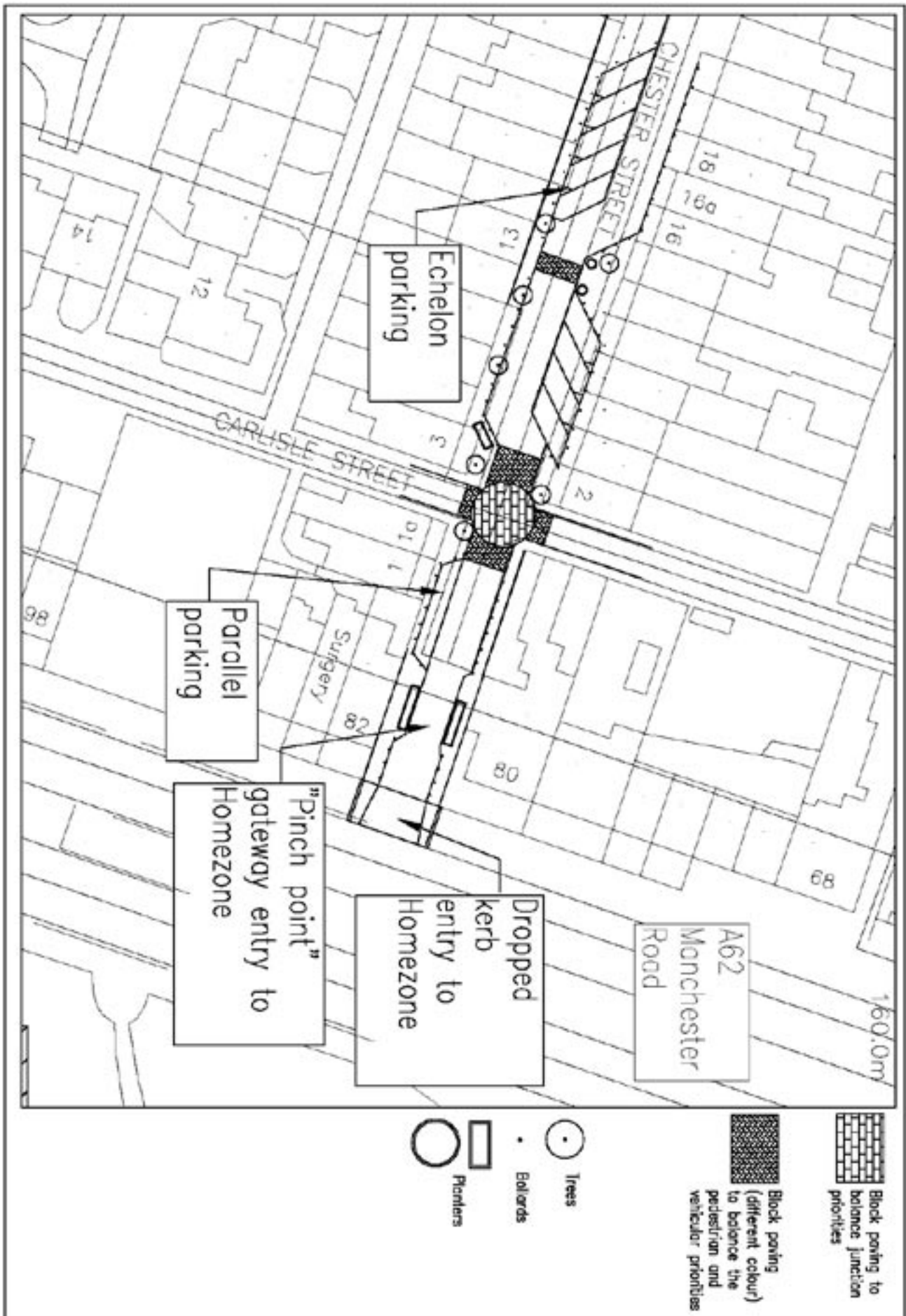


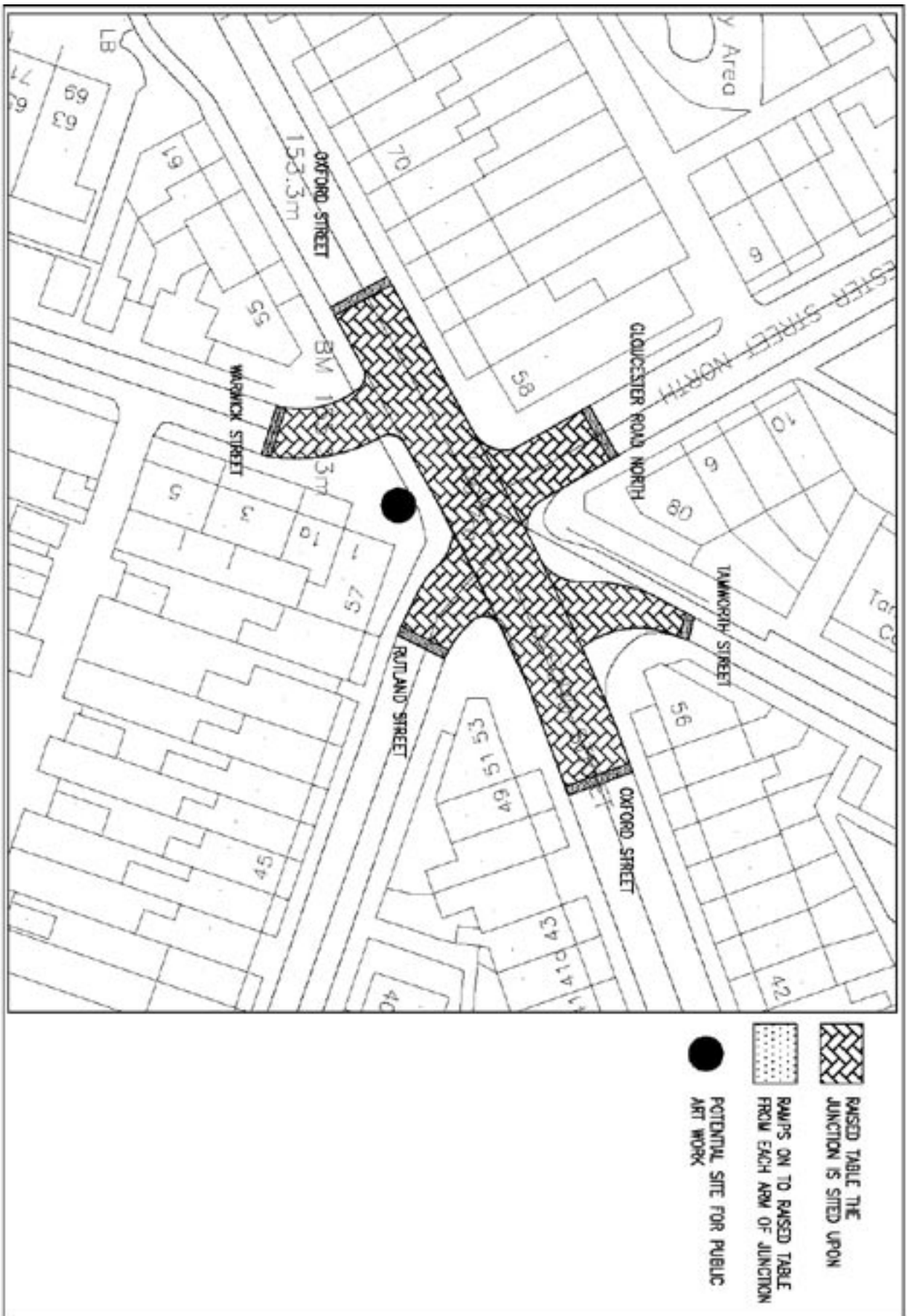
# Appendix 4

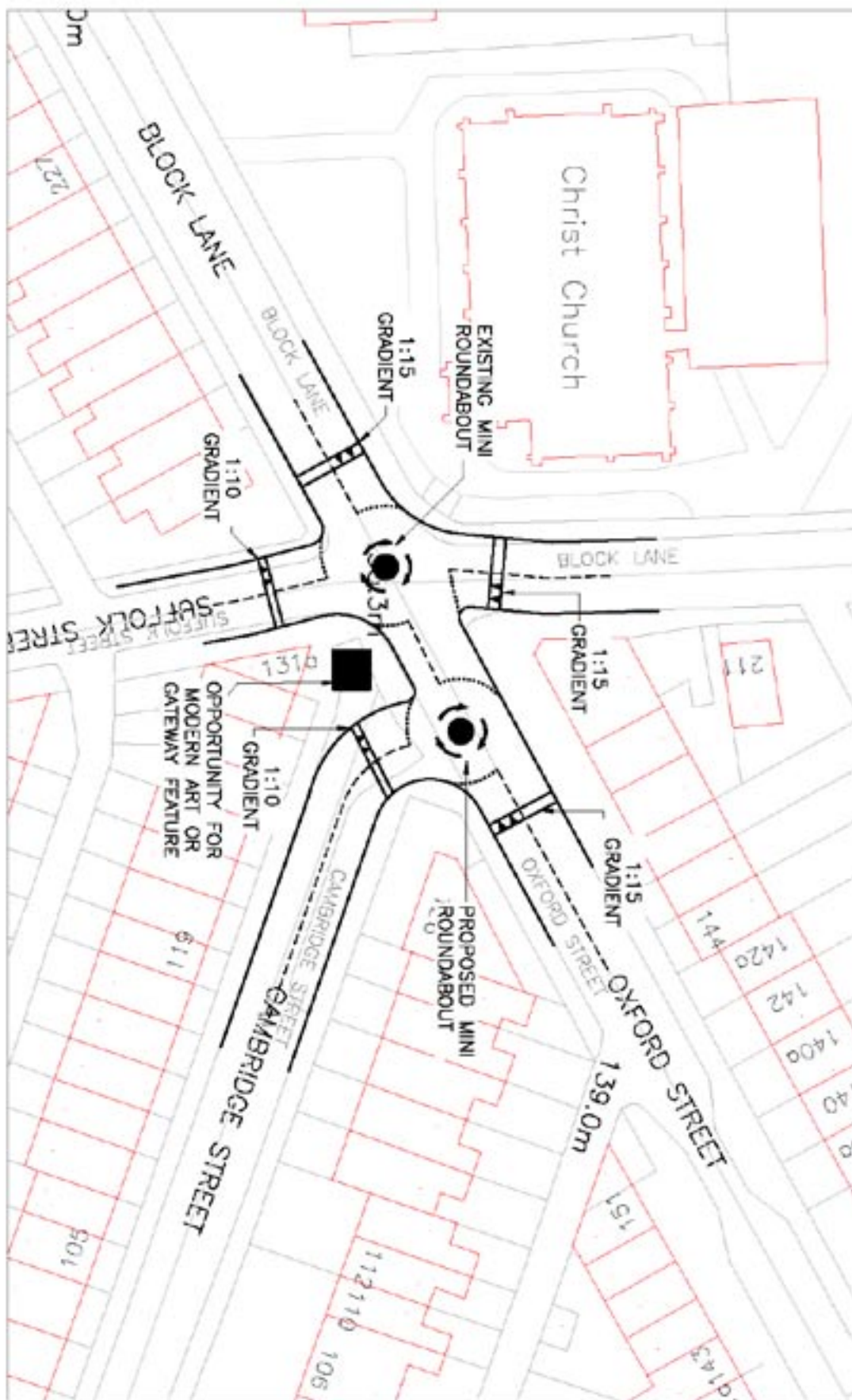
## WSP Plans

Oldham  
beyond









**CAMBRIDGE STREET, OXFORD STREET, BLOCK LANE, SUFFOLK STREET  
DOUBLE MINI ROUNDABOUT**



*Oldham LSP*



Oldham Beyond has been commissioned by the Oldham Local Strategic Partnership in collaboration with the Northwest Development Agency.

