

# Re-inventing Radcliffe

## Inner Radcliffe Vision and Development Strategy

In 2003 Bury Council commissioned a team led by urban designers URBED to develop a vision for the inner area of Radcliffe. This leaflet describes the outcome of the study. It is published as a basis for public consultation.

Establishing a vision for Radcliffe is part of the review of Bury's Development Plan.

Radcliffe grew on the back of collieries, mills and later the paper industry. Employment in these industries has now all but disappeared and while new employment has been attracted it is on a much smaller scale. What is the future role for Radcliffe now that the reasons for its growth into a town have disappeared?

URBED's work on the renaissance of towns like Radcliffe suggests that their success depends on two issues:

- **Wealth creation:** where people earn their money. This means a combination of new jobs and people travelling to work elsewhere (such as Manchester city centre).
- **Liveability:** whether it is a good place to live which relates to housing, schools, the environment, etc.

The future success for Radcliffe lies in a combination of these, which, over time will increase the prosperity of the town while encouraging local people to stay and newcomers to move in. This increased population will help support local shops and facilities as well as making better use of the vacant sites around the town centre.

As part of the study URBED organised a very well attended workshop in Radcliffe. An important issue to come out of this was the need to improve Radcliffe's poor image. While this impression may be true within the Borough of Bury, Radcliffe has a number of assets such as the river, the canal, the Irwell Sculpture Trail and the Outwood Forest Park, which contribute to a positive external image. The strategy seeks to use these assets and develop future projects to put the town back on the map, and secure a prosperous future.



## Radcliffe today:

The first part of the study looked at Radcliffe today. This included the physical environment - the steets, buildings and spaces of the town, the demand to develop in Radcliffe, the health of the town centre and the ease of access. These can be further described:

**Urban design:** URBED have looked at the form of Radcliffe and how it has developed over the centuries. Figure 1, for example, shows how fractured the town is with the town centre being little more than an island of buildings surrounded by large open spaces.

**Market demand:** Surveyors King Sturge have looked at the demand for development in and around Radcliffe town centre. They concluded that there is healthy demand for new housing with the potential for town centre living. There is also demand for small industrial premises as well as for non-alcohol focused leisure facilities, restaurants and a bingo hall. There is very little interest in providing new offices, a cinema, a hotel or health and fitness club facilities.

thriving market. National retailing trends and the success of nearby town centres like Bury means that this can never be recreated. However, it is possible to improve the look of the centre, to reinvigorate the market and to attract other uses. Bringing new people in to live around the centre and concentrating on convenience shopping has the potential to create a new role for the town.

**Town centre health check:** Radcliffe town centre is not doing well. There was a time when it was a bustling centre full of local shops and a

**Transport study:** TPP Highway Engineers have looked at the accessibility of the area in and around Radcliffe town centre. They looked at the bus and tram services as well as the way that traffic is channelled through the town. Overall they concluded that Radcliffe has very good transport links but that the By-pass had tended to isolate the town centre exacerbating the decline of the shops.



Figure 1: This plan shows just the buildings of inner Radcliffe and illustrates the fractured character of the town with large areas, particularly along the By-pass separating the town centre from the surrounding neighbourhoods.



# INDICATIVE Masterplan



## The Radcliffe High School site

The study recommends that a new school be built on the East Lancashire Paper Mill site. Proceeds from the sale of the two current High School sites would go towards the cost of a new High School on the East Lancs. site. The Radcliffe High school is an attractive site and we have proposed a housing layout that extends the Abden Street neighbourhood. As part of this we have created a new road link across the canal to Bolton Street to relieve traffic pressure and to open up new canalside housing sites.

## The St. Thomas' Estate

The study suggests the redevelopment of the St. Thomas' Estate. This is not a popular area and cuts off the centre from the Metrolink station. The suggested housing layout is based on the streets that once existed in the area and include the creation of a new civic space defined by buildings around the civic suite. The proposals for the St. Thomas' Estate would need to be the subject of detailed consultations with residents.



## Church Street West

The study supports the conversion of the former Radcliffe Times building as a base for CITE, the public art commissioning agency. A new footbridge over the river is also suggested at this point. The strategy suggests improving the Piazza with a landmark building. The Bridge Tavern Pub would be transferred to a new ground floor bar.



## Bus station & Transport

It is proposed that the bus station be removed and replaced with individual bus stops distributed around the town centre. As part of this the pedestrianised section of Blackburn Street would be reopened to local traffic and buses. The Piazza would remain as a pedestrianised space with through traffic using the existing line of Stand Lane to the rear of the Bridge Tavern pub.

# Area Proposals



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### Coney Green High School

As with Radcliffe High school it is proposed that this site be developed for housing as part of the development of a new school on East Lancashire Paper Mill. It would be an attractive site with views over the canal as well as proximity to the Metrolink station.

### The East Lancashire Paper Mill

This site is currently vacant and the strategy proposes that it could be developed for a mixture of housing, workspace and a new secondary school. The school is proposed for the south eastern part of the site linked to playing fields on the E's site. The existing cricket ground would be retained to form a 'village green' at the heart of the site. One of the reservoirs would be retained for the fishing club and the oldest part of the paper mill would be converted into workspace for small enterprises. The remainder of the site is proposed for housing.

### The Market / Museum

It is suggested that the market be redeveloped as a covered open market similar to Bury Market. This would be on the site currently occupied by the Post Office, which would be relocated to an industrial unit.

This would liberate the existing market site for the development of the Gallery/Museum proposals to create a major cultural facility in Radcliffe including the Ruckreim Gallery, a gallery for changing exhibitions, the museum and a visitor centre/archive and administrative base for the Irwell Sculpture Trail.

However, the second option is a much simpler refurbishment of the existing market building, which would create a space not unlike the original Saachi Gallery in London. The third option could be a space created as the basement and ground floor of a residential block on the market site. This is a model established by the Castlefield Gallery in Manchester.

### The Kwik Save site

The strategy proposes the redevelopment of the Kwik Save site as part of a comprehensive scheme taking in the gallery/museum, bus station and post office building. This area would be comprehensively planned as part of which the Kwik Save could be redeveloped with shopping on the ground floor and flats over. A public space could be created to the east of the museum on the riverbank.





**Radcliffe** will become a distinctive urban neighbourhood linked to the Manchester conurbation by road and tram. It will be seen as a good place to live by the local community and by those looking for a base in North Manchester. It will be focused on a dense, lively local centre that provides for the community's shopping, leisure and cultural needs. It will be known as a centre for the arts and as a base for exploring the Irwell Sculpture Trail.

### Strategy

This strategy proposed by URBED is based on seven themes, which will help establish Radcliffe as a Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood (SUN):

#### 1. Encouraging new housing:

- New housing development in and around Radcliffe town centre should be encouraged.
- This should include the town centre, the redevelopment of the St. Thomas' estate and the existing school sites.
- This new housing should be mostly for sale to rebalance the predominance of social housing in the town centre.

#### 2. Protecting and encouraging jobs:

- Existing employment areas to the west of the town centre and along Milltown Street should be protected and improved.
- The demand for small industrial and workshop units should be accommodated on the lower part of the Radcliffe Paper Mill site that has been retained for employment uses.
- The Pioneer Mill site should be improved but retained for business use.
- Existing successful firms should be encouraged to expand their businesses in the town.

#### 3. Consolidating the town centre:

- The market should be relocated to the former post office site

- The Kwik Save site should be redeveloped for new shopping and housing, taking advantage of its riverside location.

- The market should be redeveloped as a museum and gallery.

- New housing should be encouraged on sites around the centre overlooking the river.

- Pedestrian links should be improved to encourage local people to use the centre.

#### 4. Making Radcliffe a centre for the arts:

- The redeveloped market would include a gallery devoted to the work of the world renowned artist Ulrich Ruckreim.

- It would include a visitor centre for the Irwell Sculpture Trail as well as gallery space for artists.

- A base for CITE along with studio space for artists should be created in the Radcliffe Times building.

#### 5. Links in and around the town:

- A new link should be created from the Radcliffe High School site to Bolton Street.
- A new footbridge should be created across the river.
- The lower part of Blackburn Street should be reopened to local traffic.

#### 6. Creating a model school:

- The two Radcliffe secondary schools should be amalgamated on the East Lancashire Paper Mill site.
- This should specialise in technology and the arts to dovetail with Radcliffe's arts theme in general.

#### 7. Transforming Radcliffe:

- The strategy should form part of a concerted campaign to market and change the image of Radcliffe.
- This should include promotion and press campaigns.
- It should also encourage events and other animations in the town centre to raise awareness.



## SUN Quarter - INDICATIVE Masterplan

### What do you think?

Before finalising proposals for the development strategy we want to know what you think of the proposals outlined in this leaflet. Please use the enclosed reply slip to let us have your comments.



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