



Swinton Town Centre **Redevelopment**

Development Brief

Introduction

Swinton is located five miles north-northeast of the large town of Rotherham with a history of deep coal-mining, glassmaking, canal barge-building, engineering and famous for the manufacture of ceramics of international importance. The town itself is situated on a hillside and is well served by the road and rail networks. The Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation canal also runs through the town and is used for the carrying of freight and pleasure craft.

It is expected that the redevelopment of the area identified in this brief will enhance the offer of the town centre to both Swinton residents and visitors, increasing the quality of the civic facilities, the impact of the public realm and also provide varied housing to suit the needs of a range of potential customers wishing to move home within the area or to set up home in Swinton for the first time.



The proposal

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council wishes to improve the vitality and viability of the town centre of Swinton, introducing additional residential accommodation in close proximity to the centre together with a civic and community offer complemented by an enhanced retail offer in the form of a limited number of new units and refurbishment of the existing parade.

So that all potential options can be explored, it has been decided to invite interested parties to present proposals which meet as far as possible the aims outlined in this brief. Though the proposals must ultimately prove to be viable, creativity is encouraged with a view to the redevelopment forming the catalyst for transformation in Swinton Town Centre. The overall site is extensive and the quality of design and materials used is expected to encourage a ripple effect of improvement in the vicinity.

Aims and objectives

As part of the wider vision of the redevelopment of the town centre, consideration should be given to how the following can be incorporated into any design. These will be key drivers in the assessment of the suitability and viability of submitted proposals though the provision of housing will be the priority:

Residential – all units should be to dimensions in accordance with the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide (SYRDG) and provide a varied offer of accommodation, see below for more detail of the identified housing need in the area.

Different size retail units to complement those already in situ – the lack of sufficient retail units in the town centre of Swinton was identified in a previous 2009 study. An enhancement of the town centre shopping facilities is desired with a view to increasing overall footfall. Retail units to have separate residential accommodation above.

Parking – sufficient to serve the remastered town centre and the newly provided residential accommodation.

Public Realm and Landscaping to meet Planning requirements – please note the existing green space information below. A positive contribution to, and improvement of, the visual quality of the area. To create a revitalised public open space area.

Provision for a Library – of approximately 200 sq m plus ancillary office space of 20 sq m. It may be possible to move into the building to the rear of the existing library and this can be considered as an option.

Refurbishment of community centre/Civic Hall – to fit in with the overall redevelopment, to enhance the aesthetics of the scheme overall.

Refurbishment of the externals of the Council owned retail units – to fit in with the overall redevelopment of the Town Centre.

Apprenticeships and job creation – the development to act as a catalyst for the provision of apprenticeships and the creation of jobs in the local area.

A link to the SYDRG can be found below:
http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/corestrategyexamination/downloads/file/371/reb12_south_yorkshire_residential_design_guide_2011



Location and site description characteristics

The overall site is comprised of two sections, shown on the attached plan A edged red and identified as Site One and Site Two.

Site One comprises 5.38 acres/2.18 hectares and is constituted of a number of Council owned buildings, a car park and associated amenity and infrastructure that is currently operational. The former swimming pool, District Office and Health Centre identified on the plan have now been demolished. The area hatched in red houses a parade of Council-owned commercial lock-up shop units with residential Council flats above. The aim is that these are improved and retained.

Site Two extends to 1.535 acres/0.62 hectares and was the site of the former Charnwood House, a residential elderly person's home which has been decommissioned and is in the process of being demolished.

The total site lies at the heart of the settlement of Swinton and, since the early 1970s when it was an Urban District, has been occupied by functional civil and municipal buildings. Topographically, the site is flat. It lies alongside the main road affording good links to all areas of the Borough and beyond via roads and bus links and the nearby train station.



Neighbourhood

Swinton is a well-positioned site in the north of the Borough of Rotherham with direct bus links to all major local conurbations and a main-line train station with routes to Sheffield, Doncaster, York and Leeds.

It has a popular town centre and is well-served by a range of retail outlets and other facilities making it a desirable place to live. A number of the outlets sit around a small, well-used shopping precinct which forms part of the subject site.

Opportunities

To create a focal point through the innovative re-design of this key part of the town centre.

To improve the Conservation Area through the use of sympathetic but creative design and by the employment of materials which complement the personality of the town and its buildings.

To enhance the existing retail offer, making it sustainable for the future.

To meet the identified housing need in Swinton Town Centre.

To include an element of affordable housing in the scheme in accordance with the usual 25% required by the Council under its Affordable Housing Policy. The Council to be granted an option to purchase the affordable housing element at a suitably discounted rate.



Constraints

Car park area:

The land which is presently used as a car park houses 98 designated car parking spaces and is subject to a reserved right of way – the approximate route of which is shown on Plan B.

Garage site:

There are 15 garages housed within a single block to the rear of the Commercial shop units/flats. Rights of Way reserved are shown on Plan C and access to these areas will need to be maintained in any proposal made,

Former Charnwood House:

There are various rights relating to access, drainage and utilities reserved to the benefit of the land.

Pool and Office Area – No sale, supply or distribution of intoxicating liquors. Also an easement has been granted along the edge of the former swimming pool site as shown on the attached plan D.

Utilities – As the land adjoins housing there may be utilities running through the site and this will need to be checked with the various authorities concerned.

Though the above rights and covenants affect the site at various points, it is not considered they will impact too adversely upon any design. However it is appreciated this will depend on the exact proposals and the Council will therefore be happy to discuss how any restrictions on design or proposal effected by them might be overcome.



Planning policy

The Planning service has confirmed that the site covers the Swinton civic centre area, the majority of which is part of the Swinton Conservation Area.

The allocated use of the land under the adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) includes retail use, a community facility, urban greenspace and residential use. The exact allocations are identified on Plan E, attached.

Housing site H49 estimates 50 units and housing site H50 estimates a further 20 units (Sites and Policies Annexe).

There is also an area of public open space along the Station Street frontage which includes a number of existing mature trees along with other planting and seating areas.

The Planning service has further confirmed that any future redevelopment proposal of the core site will be judged against the current development plan – the Core Strategy and the UDP. Regard will also need to be had of the proposed Rotherham Sites and Policies Document (RSPD) which is due to be adopted by the end of 2017.

The Conservation Team has indicated that the existing complex of civic and community buildings add little to the character of the conservation area. This redevelopment is expected to enhance the area appropriately.



Transportation issues

Vehicular access directly from Station Street should be avoided.

Parking provision, especially if less than currently available, must be confirmed as being enough to meet town centre needs in the future.

Planning would prefer parking to be within the site rather than on the frontage of the development.

There are no adopted highways within the curtilage of the site, as far as we are aware other than in the south eastern corner. This and the adopted highway identified alongside the site is shown shaded blue on the attached plan F.

Rights of Way/Prescriptive rights – there are no recorded definitive rights of way over the site

Design, materials and external appearance

The site lies within the Swinton Conservation Area and the Conservation Team has indicated that the redevelopment of the sites which form part of this brief presents an ideal opportunity to achieve a high standard of design, using materials which tie in with the surrounding area, and to a scale which enhances the existing offer.

Specification and suggested materials information should be submitted with the brief. The detail of this will be agreed at a later date.



Public open space, trees and landscape

The mature trees along the Station Street frontage and to the rear of the detached properties on Highcliffe Drive should be retained wherever possible as they provide a valuable and wholesale amenity within the Swinton Conservation Area.

Any removal will require a detailed tree survey and report, carried out in accordance with BS5837 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction.

Drainage

The designer/developer will be expected to make their own enquiries in respect of drainage.

Housing density

There is a high demand for housing in the vicinity of the site and this includes a need for further family accommodation.

The Housing Needs Survey states a requirement for one and two bed apartments and two and three bed houses in the vicinity of Swinton Town Centre. There is also a requirement for four bedroom executive homes in this location.

Affordable housing

There will be a requirement for 25% affordable housing to be included in the development (in accordance with planning policy and subject to viability). This is in addition to any further Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liability in respect of the development.

Demand information from bids for current affordable accommodation shows that there is a particular need for two and three bedroom houses together with one and two bed bungalows. In addition, a limited number of four bedroom homes and one bedroom flats would be desirable.

Sustainable development

The residential properties will be expected to be built to current building regulations/Code for Sustainable Homes 3.

Demolition

Demolition of the former Charnwood House (Site Two) will commence by mid-August 2017 and is expected to be completed by mid-October 2017. The site will be left in a developable condition and with confirmation that any contamination has been removed as part of the demolition process.

Demolition has taken place previously on Site One and all areas were made good by the demolition contractor in accordance with the contracts and declared free of contamination.

Caveats, noise and contamination

The designer/developer will be expected to make their own enquiries in respect of the potential impact of contamination at the site.



