

# Oldham Rochdale HMR Pathfinder Heritage Assessment

## ALT Final Report

March 2008



Lathams

# Contents

1	INTRODUCTION .....	1
2	METHODOLOGY .....	5
3	PLANNING & REGENERATION CONTEXT.....	13
4	THE ALT AREA .....	20
5	BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	41

## APPENDICES

- A Project Brief
- B Consultation Report (See Separate Cover)

## MAPS (SEPARATE)

- 01 Historic Framework
- 02 Historic Development
- 03 Heritage Value

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# 1 INTRODUCTION





## 1.01 BACKGROUND

Lathams: Urban Design in association with the Christopher Garrard Consultancy, Richard K. Morriss & Associates, and CgMS have been commissioned to undertake a series of heritage assessments of the Oldham Rochdale Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder (HMR) area, one of nine HMR Pathfinder areas where the housing market has been identified by the Government as weak or dysfunctional. The aim of the HMR Pathfinders is to enable the delivery of a high quality, sustainable urban environment which address the problem of concentrations of poor and outmoded housing. An extensive series of actions that will reverse decline and reinvigorate the housing market are planned. This will involve strategic interventions in a number of areas, including the Alt area of Oldham.

Recognising and building on the heritage value within the existing communities is acknowledged by the HMR Pathfinder — Oldham and Rochdale Partners in Action — to be a key component of the overall strategy for renewal. The HMR Pathfinder therefore supports the need to produce heritage assessments which can be used to inform spatial planning and development decisions. To this end a select list of suitably qualified consultants was invited to submit tenders to carry out intensive assessments of five intervention areas — including Alt — within the context of a previously completed extensive assessment of the Oldham HMR area as a whole.

Tenders were invited in May 2007, with follow-up interviews and the award of the commission in June 2007. A project steering group comprising representatives of the HMR Pathfinder, Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC), Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC), Rochdale Development Agency (RDA) and English Heritage (EH) first met with the Lathams' team on 20th June 2007, at which time a project plan and an outline reporting structure were agreed.

The project developed through a cycle of research, fieldwork and lead officer meetings, and public consultation events. A first draft of the report was presented and discussed with the steering group at a meeting on 5th October 2007. Following this, the report was circulated to a wider group of Council officers and the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit (GMAU). Formal comments led to its revision and the issue of a draft for final comment in December 2007. The whole assessment process built upon previous assessments carried out by Lathams across the Oldham Rochdale HMR Pathfinder.

## 1.02 BRIEF

The brief for the project was based on a model brief developed by EH for the assessment of the historic significance of areas of housing renewal (EH, 2005). A copy is provided as Appendix A. This set out the key objectives of the commission, namely to:

- 1) Identify the nature and extent of the heritage asset within each of the neighbourhoods to be assessed.
- 2) Demonstrate how this is reflected in present day character.

- 3) Identify those areas where the heritage asset retains its integrity and those where loss has occurred.
- 4) Establish the significance of the heritage asset and the extent to which this varies across each of the improvement areas.
- 5) Place this significance within the broader heritage context of Oldham.
- 6) Discuss the findings with those organisations, public bodies and community groups who are directly involved in the Pathfinder and associated initiatives.
- 7) Make recommendations on how the significance of the heritage asset and its component parts can be successfully integrated within the programme of housing renewal.
- 8) Identify the need for further assessment and recording of the heritage asset in advance of and during any future redevelopment.

The aim was to define the heritage value of the five other intervention areas — including Alt — so as to inform the regeneration of neighbourhoods, streets and buildings, even if clearance has already been agreed in principle. It was not the remit of the assessment to place heritage issues in the context of the wider concerns of the Pathfinder programme. Rather, the remit was to provide information that can be integrated with social, economic, environmental and other factors to assist the HMR Pathfinder to make informed decisions concerning appropriate levels of intervention in the built environment.

It was however required that, due to the timing in relation to the housing renewal process, each report should include a heritage impact assessment of any emerging programme of renewal. This would include possible options for the minimisation of the negative effects of redevelopment on areas or buildings that have been identified as being of significance. General observation and comment would — where appropriate — be made on ways in which the significance of the area could be integrated with the future programme of housing market renewal.

### 1.03 SCOPE, NATURE & STRUCTURE

The report begins (Section 2) by setting out the methodology that has been employed in developing the heritage assessment. It explains how the extensive assessment of Oldham provides the context for the intensive assessment of individual neighbourhoods. The nature and scope of the intensive research and fieldwork is summarised, and the assessment process and criteria explained, with specific reference to the situation in Alt.

Section 3 provides a summary of the planning and regeneration context within which the assessment has been undertaken. The chapter concludes that an important aspect of all local regeneration initiatives is the preservation and enhancement of the existing heritage. This will ensure that links with the past must be maintained and tied-in to new proposals.

Section 4 deals with the Alt area, the analysis of which stems from a detailed description of its historic development, with specific emphasis on the process of change during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This leads to an understanding of how this development is manifest in the area as it appears today, as evident in attributes such as views, urban morphology, architectural design, building materials and technology. From this stems the identification of which parts are of significance, and thence an assessment of the impact of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan for Alt, as currently represented by a Draft Preferred Option for Change. Recommendations as to how conflicts between the demands of heritage and the pressures of development may be reconciled are presented, along with an assessment of the need for further research.

The report ends (Section 5) with an extensive bibliography, which provides information on all sources consulted in the process of developing the assessment.

Appendices provide copies of the project brief (A) and a report on the public consultation process (B).

Where necessary, the report should be read in conjunction with Sections 4 and 5 of the final Oldham heritage assessment report dated September 2006.

## 2 METHODOLOGY





## 2.01 INTRODUCTION

The extensive assessment of the Oldham HMR area provides the context for the intensive assessment of the Alt area. It is only through understanding the characteristics of the heritage of Oldham as a whole that the value of buildings, streets and spaces within the bounds in specific areas can be fully understood, to which end a three stage approach was employed:

- Research
- Fieldwork
- Assessment process

The stages of research, fieldwork and assessment were also employed in the detailed study and analysis of the Alt area. However, the intensive assessment process took a more iterative approach with research informing fieldwork and vice versa, as well as the testing and revision of initial conclusions via discussion with members of the steering group and a process of public consultation.

## 2.02 MEANING OF HERITAGE & HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Throughout this assessment, the terms ‘heritage’ and ‘historic environment’ are used in the context of the meaning given in the English Heritage second stage consultation document *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*, published in February 2007:

- **Heritage:** All inherited resources which people value for reasons beyond mere utility, with cultural heritage being defined as “Inherited assets which people identify and value as a reflection and expression of their evolving knowledge, beliefs, traditions, and of their understanding of the beliefs and traditions of others”.
- **Historic environment:** All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible or buried, and deliberately planted or managed flora.

These definitions recognise that heritage and the historic environment are about a lot more than old buildings or those which represent creative originality, fine architecture or craftsmanship. They are about places that have a distinct and perceived identity, as well as values concerning the worth or importance ascribed to qualities of places old and new, now and in the future. Values relate to ways in which people derive sensory and intellectual stimulation, the meaning of place and collective experience or memory, the potential of place to yield evidence of past human activity, and the ways in which the present can be connected through a place to past people, events and aspects of life.



### 2.03 RESEARCH

Desk-based research into the historic development of the Alt area was carried out, use being made of a variety of sources that were readily available in Oldham Local Studies Library and Lancashire Record Office, supplemented by published books, reports and other secondary sources. Primary information included:

- Primary records held in the Oldham Local Studies Library (OLSL) and archives including pre-Ordnance Survey mapping, trade directories, local authority records and photographic archives.
- Detailed information held by the Greater Manchester Sites and Monuments Record (MSMR).
- Information held by the National Monument Record (NMR).

A key component — and necessary precursor to fieldwork — was an extensive map regression exercise. All 25 inch to the mile (1:2500) County Series and the National Grid first edition OS maps of each area were obtained in GIS format and examined in detail. The outcome was the mapping of each and every building in and around the study area in terms of its approximate date of construction. Older maps dating from the early nineteenth century were used to understand the level of development in the 1840s, as encapsulated on the first edition of the 6 inch OS map which was surveyed in 1843. Comparison with contemporary mapping also enabled a full picture of the extent of the loss of heritage in the post war period to be gained. This was particularly important in understanding where modern development had replaced older development as opposed to making use of previously undeveloped land.

### 2.04 FIELDWORK

The assessment process involved two main stages of fieldwork.

An initial stage of fieldwork was carried out in parallel to the early stages of the desk based research, prior to the completion of the map regression exercise. The purpose was to gain an overview of the character and attributes of the Alt area as it stands today. Two people explored the area, photographing it on a street-by-street basis and noting in broad terms attributes such as building form, landmark buildings, views, trees and greenery.

Following an initial review of the outcome of the first stage of fieldwork in the context of what had been learned from the desk based research, and — most importantly — the completion of the intensive map regression exercise, the second stage of fieldwork was instigated.

Two individuals who had not been party to the first stage of fieldwork revisited the Alt area, noting in detail those attributes which were of architectural, historic or townscape interest. From this exercise — and the associated archaeological appraisal — stemmed a series of initial conclusions as to the significance of each of the area. These findings and their implications were presented to the project steering group and, following

comment and discussion, used as a basis for a public exhibition and consultation exercise (refer 2.08 below).

## **2.05 ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL**

The archaeological aspect of the report is intended to form an introduction to the historic character of the Alt area. It is not an exhaustive study of every corner of the area but a short survey intended to bring out the patterns which have shaped the modern landscape. It is also an attempt to introduce some of the processes from the past which have shaped the development of the Alt area, and its surrounding landscapes and neighbourhoods. This is not a history of dates and events but a narrative description of the emerging human landscape of the Alt area.

Sections 4 and 5 of the extensive Oldham Heritage Assessment of 2006 provide the context for the appraisal. They begin by concentrating on periods long forgotten, although analysed and discussed in specialist literature. The underlying philosophy is that the periods from the end of the last ice age some 13,000 years ago have contributed to structure the landscape, and whilst much of the early evidence of past activity has been swept away, present day place names and in some areas the vegetation, indicate the potential survival of evidence from past times.

The text draws heavily on standard works and surveys, in particular the Victoria County History of Lancashire, recent histories of Oldham including map evidence from the 17th century onwards and in particular the work of local historians and archaeologists on the recent research frameworks project (Brennand 2006, Brennand 2007). As an introduction the text is intended to provide access through the bibliography or cross references to more detailed study to allow the communities of the HMR neighbourhoods — including Alt — to make their own connections to present day circumstances.

This introduction is also intended to provide a baseline study of the patterns of landscape development in the Alt area, to stimulate debate and to inform conservation and planning decisions. It provides an historical context for the survey of standing buildings, going some way to situating them in a deeper historic context than simply that of architecture or contemporary historic association, as well as addressing what constitutes an historic sense of place in what — on first glance — seems an unremitting modern (i.e. post 1800) environment.

## **2.06 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

Underlying the identification of significance is a considered assessment process, the aim of which is to as far as possible apply reason and objectivity to the understanding of the historic value of each of the intensive study areas.

The starting point for the assessment process was the recognition that, in heritage terms, significance is a clear statement of the values that make a building or place important. In other words, why it is considered to be of architectural, historic or group (townscape) interest and hence potentially warrant retention. Such an assessment of significance is an essential precursor to the evaluation of the impact of any proposals

for change within the bounds of any of the HMR neighbourhoods, including the Alt area of Oldham.

Individual buildings, features, streets, places and areas are assessed in terms of conformity with the following criteria:

- 1) Evidence of first build, layout or inception dating from before 1840–50 and surviving in anything like its original form or state.
- 2) Intrinsic architectural, historic or associative interest of comparative merit at the level of an individual building or place, or which in more general terms serves to define the historic character and identity of the study area.
- 3) Identifiable historic relationships between housing, mills, factories (works), parks and other significant buildings, structures or spaces which are of heritage or landmark value in terms of the urban landscape.
- 4) The way in which generally simple and unremarkable buildings (or groups of buildings) relate to each other and the wider urban landscape, thereby creating townscapes of heritage value in the context of the study area.

Satisfaction of any one of these criteria leads to a presumption of significance, subject to the completeness of execution and extent of survival of any individual building, groups of buildings, terraces or streets in the context of the Oldham HMR area as a whole. This is notwithstanding the fact that there are many instances in which these criteria interrelate and overlap, and hence the necessity for each instance of significance to be explained in a way that would ensure that any conflicts between heritage and development could be understood, analysed and resolved.

## 2.07 CATEGORISATION OF ELEMENTS

In order to ensure that the heritage assessments can be practically used as a tool to inform individual developments, and the formulation and implementation of the spatial planning of HMR neighbourhoods, a system which describes and differentiates all elements of the urban landscape in terms of their heritage value has been devised:

- **Protected:** buildings or features (including curtilage structures) which enjoy statutory or local listing, or which positively contribute to the special architectural or historic interest — as manifest in character and appearance — of a designated conservation area; there is a strong presumption in favour of retention and the protection (or enhancement) of their setting.
- **High value:** buildings or features which are possible candidates for statutory or local listing, and where retention is presumed.



- **Clear value:** buildings or features of clear architectural or historic interest (but not at this time candidates for special designation) and where — notwithstanding any overriding social or economic issues — there should be a presumption in favour of retention. This is unless it can be demonstrated that redevelopment would result in a net increase in heritage value as a result of the enhancement or recovery of significance, as manifest in the character, appearance or setting of nearby buildings, or the area as a whole.
- **Townscape value:** buildings which, although of little architectural or historic interest in themselves, combine with others in a way which creates the character of historic streets and spaces or the setting of protected, high or clear value buildings via attributes which could — if retention is not possible — be recreated by sensitive redevelopment, taking account of the relationship between existing buildings, streets, topography and other elements of the urban landscape.
- **Indeterminate value:** buildings which may contribute positively to townscape character or heritage value and may therefore be of clear significance but which require further investigation in respect of their value, extent of survival or — where appropriate — practicality of retention.
- **Little known value:** all pre–First World War buildings which are not significant or of group–townscape value as well as those later buildings of slight interest which, although retention is desirable, could be redeveloped without loss of heritage value, subject to the quality of any replacement.
- **No value:** buildings, features or spaces where redevelopment or demolition can be assumed to be acceptable in terms of heritage value.
- **Negative value:** buildings, features or spaces which have an adverse impact on any aspect of the significance or heritage or townscape value of the area and where re–development or removal is positively encouraged.

Spaces of positive heritage interest were also identified along with spaces which have a negative impact on the value of the heritage or the townscape of the area. The lines of significant transport routes are also identified, along with historically important boundaries which should in some way be respected in the pattern and design of future development. Any element not designated as positive or negative can be taken as neutral:

- **Positive spaces:** areas between buildings or features which by virtue of their shape, layout, attributes, past usage, etc. should be retained or reflected in any future proposal for development or redevelopment (specific instances are discussed where appropriate).
- **Negative spaces:** spaces which detract from heritage value, either in terms of their impact on the setting of buildings or structures which are listed or of clear heritage merit, or in terms of the image and identity of the wider area as a whole. The redevelopment of these spaces should be encouraged.

- **Old roads or tracks:** surviving lines of roads or tracks which existed c.1840–1850 (as shown on first edition OS or tithe maps), and which — in spatial terms — are of primary importance to the distinctive character of the area as a whole and where retention is recommended.
- **Newer roads and tracks:** surviving lines of roads which date from c.1850 to c.1919 (or later, if significant in the context of the area generally) and which — in spatial terms — are of primary importance to the distinctive character of the specific neighbourhoods or localities; retention within the framework of any future development is recommended.
- **Water:** canals, drains, reservoirs and other water features of heritage value, including indicative lines of lost features of known value e.g. canal branches, with individual elements of clear heritage value highlighted.
- **Railways:** surviving lines of railway systems and associated infrastructure with any individual elements of clear heritage value highlighted.
- **Boundaries:** surviving boundary lines which can still be read in the urban landscape and which lend character to the area, and which it is recommended should be in some way retained or reflected in any redevelopment.

Key views within and beyond the area which form a part of its character, and which should be considered in the planning and design of any new or replacement development have also been identified.

This categorisation of historic value is represented graphically on Map 03 which should be read in the context of the detailed summaries of each identified instance of significance (refer sub-section 4.07).

## 2.08 CONSULTATION & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A methodology for consultation and community involvement was agreed with the client steering group at an early stage in the project. Exhibition material showing the draft analyses and assessments were presented at a series of events, with that for Alt taking place on 23rd August 2007.

The response to the draft assessment was generally positive, with considerable interest shown in individual buildings and sites by a number of visitors to the exhibition, a number of whom shared memories, information and photographs. A full report on the consultation process and its outcome is included as Appendix B.

## 2.09 LIMITATIONS

It must be understood at the outset that the process of researching and understanding the value of any heritage asset is an ongoing task, and that there rarely comes a point when decisions and views can ever be truly considered final. There is always the possibility of more information which might turn up and change perceptions and understanding, especially as regards the detailed history and development of individual

buildings. The most important are identified under the heading of Further Research Strategy which comes at the end of the assessment of the Alt area (subsection 4.08D). This is an important point to stress, as only the most limited access has been gained to the interiors of any building within or around the bounds of the study area.

Nor has the investigation of archival sources in respect of any one building been exhausted. Examples of information that could in the future be pursued include:

- title deeds, leases and other property-specific information,
- electoral roles and rate books,
- records relating to the Finance Act 1910 and the extensive building-by-building survey records held in the National Archives at Kew,
- further archival plans and associated information held by Oldham MBC in respect of development and building control matters dating back to the advent of bye-laws in the 1860s,
- photographic and other visual evidence that may reside in the hands of private individuals, and
- the testimony of people who have lived and worked in the area for many years, or may have pursued individual lines of research out of personal interest.

In this context it is hoped that the heritage assessment will encourage others to investigate further and where appropriate, add to or modify its findings.



### **3 PLANNING & REGENERATION CONTEXT**



### 3.01 INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Communities Plan, published on 5th February 2003, provides the Government framework for a major programme of action that aims to tackle run down communities across England. One of the key areas forming the basis for the action programme is the tackling of low housing demand and dysfunctional housing markets. Nine Housing Market Renewal pathfinder areas have been identified by the government to address these issues. Oldham, in partnership with Rochdale, has been identified as one of the nine Pathfinder authorities.

Through the combination of demolition, refurbishment and new building, the intention is to replace outdated, unpopular housing with modern sustainable accommodation and improvements in local services in order to create a better living environment. The Market Renewal Programme and other initiatives such as Neighbourhood Renewal and New Deal for Communities will work over a 10 to 15 year timeframe to deliver clean, safe, healthy and attractive environments in which people can take pride.

National and local planning policy and guidance works in accordance with the objectives of the Sustainable Communities Plan in order to achieve regeneration of urban areas with the aim of providing better living conditions in which communities can grow.

### 3.02 LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Planning matters in England are controlled and regulated by law through Acts of Parliament, primarily the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990*, the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, the *Planning and Compensation Act 1991* and the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*. The Acts are supported by a variety of Orders, Regulations, Guidance and Circulars, some of which amend the primary legislation. A new Planning Reform Bill was announced by the Government in November 2007.

The *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* is designed to enable a more flexible and responsive planning system for England and Wales, introducing a simpler and more flexible plan-making system at regional and local levels. Under the new system — which has yet to be fully implemented — each Government Office region will have a regional spatial strategy (RSS) and each local planning authority a Local Development Framework (LDF). These will eventually replace existing regional planning guidance and local development plans. Planning controls in the Alt area are administered by Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC — the local planning authority), which falls within the North West governmental region.

### 3.03 NATIONAL POLICY, GUIDANCE & RELEVANT REPORTS

In respect of the heritage assessment being undertaken, the key national policy, guidance and relevant reports are:

- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development (Feb. 2005).

- PPG15: Planning & the Historic Environment (Sep. 1994 r. 2001, 2005 & 2007).
- PPG16: Archaeology & Planning (Nov. 1990).
- Heritage Protection for the 21st Century (Mar. 2007).
- Housing Market Renewal (Nov. 2007).

#### **A PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development**

PPS1 states that the protection and enhancement of the historic environment is a commitment that the Government endeavours to deliver, especially as “the condition of our surroundings has a direct impact on the quality of life” (para.18). Therefore, the planning policies and planning decisions of planning authorities should be based on “up-to-date information on the environmental characteristics of the area” (para. 19).

In order to deliver sustainable development, PPS1 states that planning authorities should promote regeneration of urban areas in order to provide a better quality of housing, improve facilities and help create opportunities for the people living in the communities. Through improvements in these areas a better living environment is achievable, which can have positive effects on the well being of the community.

#### **B PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment**

The historic environment is seen as an irreplaceable record, which forms the character and individuality of different settlements and adds a great deal to improving our quality of life. Therefore the protection of all aspects of the historic environment is seen as a key policy objective of the Government, which can help encourage inward investment, as “environmental quality is increasingly a key factor in many commercial decisions” (para. 1.5).

There is a considerable range of historic features that require preservation, including the architectural set pieces such as churches, civic buildings, and grand houses, and the less obvious historic features including the spaces between buildings, which are often inseparable for the built form. “For example, the pattern of roads and open spaces and the views they create within historic townscapes may be as valuable as the buildings” (para. 6.2).

#### **C PPG16: Archaeology & Planning**

PPG 16 deals with archaeological remains on land and how they should be recorded and preserved once discovered. Archaeological remains play a vital role in educating people about our past, whilst also helping to develop our sense of identity.

It is not possible to save all aspects of our past, however, where nationally important remains are discovered (whether scheduled or not), and would be affected by proposed development, PPG 16 states that there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation. Where development proposals will affect archaeological remains worthy of retention, early discussions (preferably pre-application stage) between the developer and planning officers can help ensure sympathetic designs are used, for example foundations that avoid disturbing the remains. The preservation of



archaeological remains in situ (in their existing position) will always be the preferred option.

When detailed planning applications are put forward in areas where archaeological remains are thought to exist, developers should also consult the local Historic Environment Record (HER) to gain further information. Following this, survey work can be carried out (both desk based and field work) to determine the exact importance of the archaeological remains, and the preservation procedures required.

#### **D Heritage Protection for the 21st Century**

This Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) White Paper was presented to parliament and will form the basis of a new legislation announced by the Government in November 2007 (the draft Heritage Bill has yet to be published), which will in turn necessitate the revision of PPG15. The White Paper reinforces the view that heritage value is not just about buildings being listed or unlisted, and that there are many structures which although not statutorily listed or within conservation areas, still have a major role to play in defining the heritage of local communities. It promotes local listing, encouraging all local planning authorities to prepare lists and include associated policies in their Local Development Frameworks. Local listing is therefore an issue which in the near future will have to be addressed by Oldham MBC.

#### **E Housing Market Renewal**

This report was prepared by the National Audit Office (NAO) for the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and published in November 2007. It examines whether the HMR programme is on course to meet its objective with specific reference to delivery, and its impact on local housing markets and communities. A key principle which is stressed by the report is the need to ensure that proposals and plans for intervention are based on — among other things — a consideration of the heritage value of the structures and spaces that make up the physical environment of the area concerned.

### **3.04 REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE & STRATEGY**

#### **A Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (RSS13) Mar. 2003**

In order to bring about urban renaissance of the cities and towns of the North West, the North West Metropolitan Area (NWMA) has given priority to the development and comprehensive regeneration of large areas of the region, as stated under Policy UR1 of the RSS. Oldham is designated as a Regeneration Priority Area. Policy UR6 also states that a comprehensive approach to housing renewal, clearance and urban regeneration is needed, especially in areas such as Oldham.

The RSS also states (p.15) that “In the past, the tendency of the North West has been to trade environmental degradation for economic prosperity, leading to numerous, critical environmental problems which detract from the Region’s image and longer-term prospects.” It is a key objective of the RSS (p.16) to “secure a better image for the

Region” and “to ensure active management of the Region’s environmental and cultural assets”, with policy ER3 emphasising the need for an holistic approach to conservation. The heritage of the mill towns in Greater Manchester is specifically noted, with policy ER4 making clear the potential of conservation-led regeneration in such areas “to contribute to the physical, economic, educational and cultural life of the North West” (p.102) and the importance of focused investment in regional image-building.

RSS13 was originally published as Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) though subsequently adopted at the RSS for the North West, pending eventual replacement by the North West Plan.

## **B The North West Plan: Draft Submitted RSS for North West England Jan. 2006**

A draft replacement RSS for the North West region was submitted to the Government in January 2006 and published for public consultation in March 2006. An independent Panel of Inspectors was subsequently appointed to conduct an Examination in Public of selected issues arising out of the draft RSS. Their report — which is not subject to public consultation — was published for information in May 2007. The Secretary of State has not, at the time of writing, published the Proposed Changes which will be taken forward to public consultation and the expected publication of the final North West Plan in Spring 2008.

Like the current RSS13, the draft replacement RSS makes regeneration and the creation of sustainable communities a main priority, in which good quality housing has a major part to play. Policy L2 states the importance for local authorities to have a firm understanding of the local housing markets in order to “support housing market restructuring and renewal” (p.30). Policy L3 goes on to point out that certain areas should be identified for comprehensive regeneration through clearance, renewal, refurbishment or a mix of these, depending on local circumstance. The Panel does not recommend any changes to these policies.

Policy MCR4 specifically identifies the HMR Pathfinder in Oldham and Rochdale “as an opportunity for wide ranging change in the economic and housing roles of these areas, the renewal of communities and the investment in new infrastructure” (p.72), words which are retained in a rewrite of the policy recommended by the Panel.

Heritage issues are dealt with by Policy EM1 of the draft RSS, the nature and content of which are reported by the Panel as having been the subject of much debate between a large group of parties including English Heritage and Natural England. The Panel has therefore recommended that this policy be rewritten and substantially expanded, reflecting an integrated approach to the protection of the Region’s environmental assets, including the historic environment:

- Plans and strategies should be founded on a sound understanding of issues such as distinctiveness and significance, with priority given to “conserving and enhancing areas, sites, features ... of international, national, regional and local ... historic environment importance” (p.184 of the Panel report).

- Where schemes affect the historic environment “developers and/or local authorities should first seek to avoid loss of damage to the assets, then seek to mitigate any unavoidable damage” (p.184).

Part C of the recommended revision to the draft policy deals specifically with the historic environment. It reinforces the need for conservation and protection, and supports conservation-led regeneration in areas rich in historic interest, with specific reference to the Pennine textile mill town heritage of Greater Manchester (p.186).

### **C Growth Strategy, Moving Forward: The Northern Way Sep. 2004**

The Northern Way is an ambitious economic strategy driven by the three northern Regional Development Agencies and their partners, aimed at bridging the £29 million output gap between the north and the rest of the country. A key component of this strategy is to create a vibrant economy with an excellent quality of life. Oldham falls within the Manchester City Region part of the strategy, in which one of the key objectives is to create sustainable housing markets, including within the Oldham area. Affordable housing is recognised as a crucial to the economic prosperity of the north of England, to which end the strategy supports housing-led regeneration and the aim of providing a choice of good quality houses in successful, secure and sustainable communities.

## **3.05 LOCAL POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

Oldham MBC, as the local planning authority, has the power to make decisions about whether to allow proposals to build on land or change its use. The *Town and Country Planning Act 1990* requires that all planning applications should be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Under the terms of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*, the development plan comprises the Regional Spatial Strategy combined with the development plan documents which taken as a whole make up the adopted Local Development Framework (LDF).

A Local Development Scheme (LDS) setting out the content and programme for the LDF had been published by Oldham MBC, the most recent version of which was adopted in March 2007. The LDF will in time replace the current development plan, which in addition to RSS13 comprises the Oldham Replacement Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted in July 2006. This latter document identifies the sites where it is proposed to permit housing, employment and shopping, and includes policies to guide decisions relating to any proposed development which requires planning permission. The policies contained in the UDP have been ‘saved’ until 2009 or until they are replaced by one of the new development plan documents, meaning that planning decisions will for the time being continue to be guided by the UDP.

The UDP reflects in detail the policies contained in RSS13, as well as the policies and guidance of the Government, including those dealing with housing and heritage, a key aim being to bring about regeneration of urban areas in the Borough whilst preserving and enhancing the built and natural environment.

### 3.06 OTHER REGENERATION INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMMES

#### A Alt Neighbourhood Plan

Development of a Neighbourhood Plan for Alt is ongoing, having by mid-2007 reached the stage of a series of draft Preferred Options for Change, prepared by Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners in association with the local community. The Plan represents a concerted yet realistic attempt to:

- Improve the quality, range and choice of housing on the estate, in order to encourage people to live there,
- Enhance the quality of life for residents by investing in the environment.
- Tackle some of the social and housing management problems, including anti-social behaviour.

The currently preferred option for the Neighbourhood Plan is described and discussed in section 4.08A.

### 3.07 CONCLUSION

The policies contained in the adopted UDP for Oldham take account of national and regional planning guidance which highlights the importance of comprehensive regeneration schemes in the most deprived areas, the aim being to create sustainable communities and improved living environments. Policy and guidance also makes clear that an important aspect of such initiatives is preserving and enhancing the existing heritage in order that links with the past can be maintained, and where necessary integrated within proposed development. Hence this assessment.



## 4 THE ALT AREA



#### 4.01 INTRODUCTION

Alt is an suburb on the fringes of Oldham, one of a number which typifies the expansion of the Borough during the inter and post-war periods. Although not conceived or built on the scale of estates such as the nearby Fitton Hill, it shares the same characteristics: low-density housing arranged in a semi-formal layout incorporating a generous provision of greenery, sitting adjacent open country beyond the historic limits of the township of Oldham.

The emerging framework for change — set out in the Alt Neighbourhood Plan (refer 3.06) — aims to transform and modernise the area by way of a combination of new development (i.e. expansion of the estate), demolition and redevelopment, as well as a range of environmental and home improvements. New and improved routes and connections are proposed, along with the development of a new community hub. Alt is an area of Oldham where significant change is anticipated over the coming years.

Set out in this section of the report is a detailed assessment of the heritage value of the Alt area which, drawing on the principles set out in the August 2005 English Heritage publication *Guidance on conservation area appraisals*, considers the significance of the area under the following headings:

- 4.02 Location and description.
- 4.03 Statutory designations.
- 4.04 Historic origins and development.
- 4.05 Archaeological potential.
- 4.06 Character and appearance.

All aspects of the analysis are drawn together in a unified overview and summarisation of significance (4.07). There follows a series of recommendations covering the relationship between the heritage assessment and the emerging framework for change, possible new listed buildings, archaeology and the need for further research (4.08). It therefore concluded (4.09) that — in heritage terms — HMR and associated programmes have the capacity to be of positive benefit to an area which typifies the expansion of Oldham in response to the post-war demand for more and better housing.

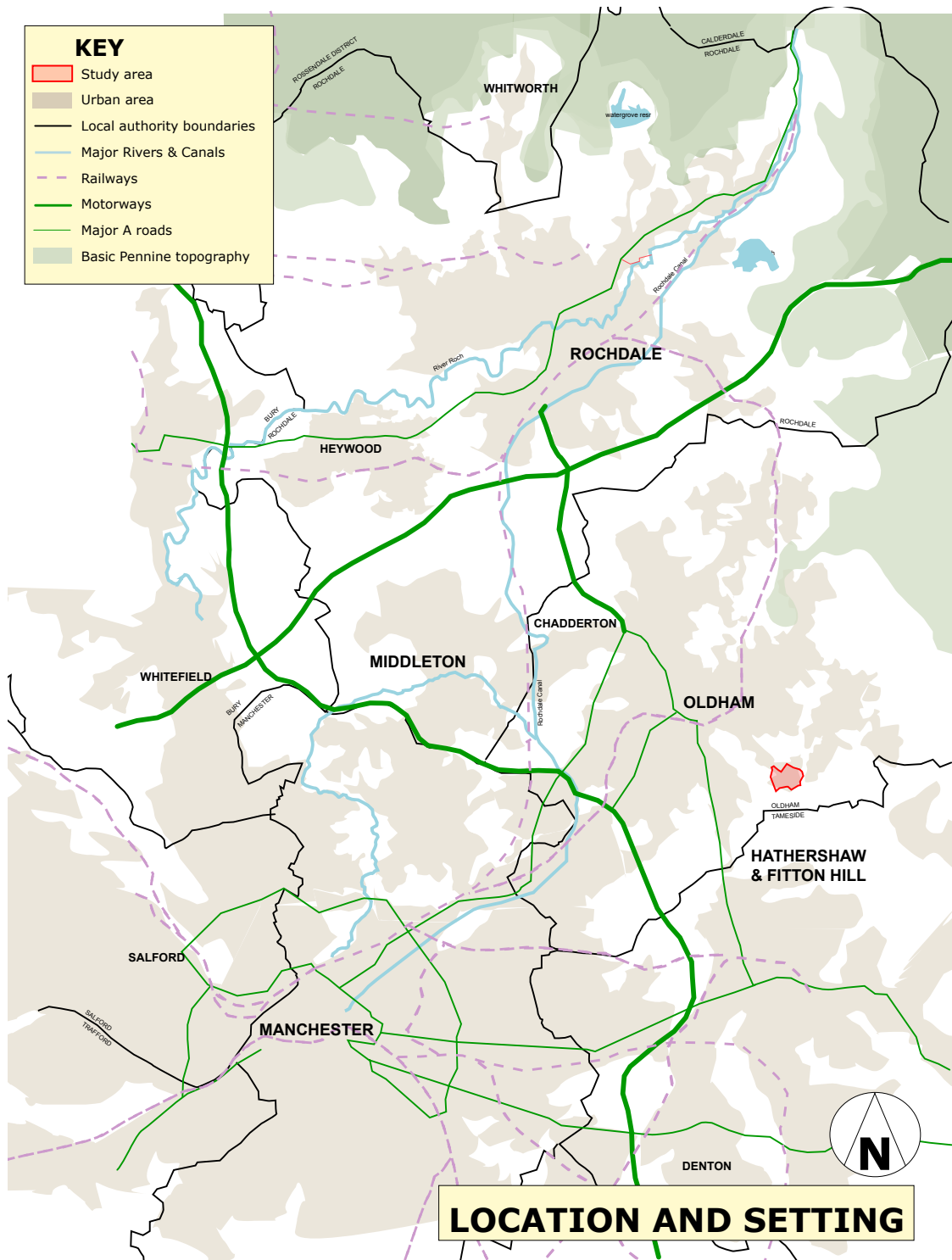


Figure 1: Location of Alt in relation to Oldham Rochdale HMR area



#### 4.02 LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The Alt estate lies some 2.5 kilometres southeast of the centre of Oldham, its northern boundary fronting Abbey Hills Road (B6194), a relatively new back road between Oldham and Ashton-under-Lyne. Its eastern boundary follows the line of the rear gardens of houses on Alt Lane before skirting south round the gardens of Alt Fold Avenue and Agecroft before turning north across open land to join the lines of the Furness Avenue and Whitby Road. The estate sits at the head of the flat-topped spur formed by the convergence of the steep-sided valleys of the River Medlock and Glodwick Brook, some 180 metres above sea level.



*Inward-looking nature of the Alt estate (Agecroft)*

Alt is an inward-looking place with little sense of connection to the surrounding rural landscape, save for glimpsed views through gaps between buildings e.g. from the southwest corner of Cherry Avenue. An appreciation of its farmland setting can only be gained when heading south from the estate along the old tracks of Alt Land and Norbury Lane, or when crossing the Medlock at the point where Abbey Hills Road skirts the remnants of the old hamlet of Pitses. The openness of the surrounding countryside works in combination with the steepness of the topography to intensify the sense of containment and disconnection, as well as a tangible feeling of being isolated from the urban environment of Oldham generally.

Fragments of an older past can still be found within the predominantly post-war fabric of the area, on Alt Lane and around its point of junction with the similarly ancient thoroughfares of Roundthorn Road and Holts Lane. All traces of the old settlement of Alt — which lay in the vicinity of modern Alt Fold Drive and Summerfield View — were obliterated by the building of the modern-day Alt Estate and its subsequent expansion.





*View out from the southwest corner of Cherry Avenue*



*Open countryside to the northwest of the Alt estate*

#### 4.03 STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS

There are no listed buildings or other statutory designations within the Alt Area. However, 1–7 and 9–15 (Antique Cottage) Holts Lane on the northern periphery of the area are listed Grade II; Alders Farm and its barn, and nearby houses to the south of the Alt Estate are also listed, though these are somewhat distant from any proposed development. There are no designated conservation areas in proximity.



*Cottages at 1-7 Holts Lane: Listed Grade II*



*Cottages at 9-15 Holts Lane: Listed Grade II (includes 'Antique' Cottage)*

#### 4.04 HISTORIC ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Alt is located in the historic parish of Ashton-under-Lyne. Historically part of the Salford Hundred, the area did not become part of Oldham borough until the 20th century. The favourable topography of the old settlement (above the river) and the nearby find of a Bronze Age flint adze suggest that the area may have been occupied in prehistoric times. During the Roman period the land was probably cleared of timber for cultivation, but by about AD 550 woodland regeneration suggests a reduced population and a decline in the climate. The land was once more cleared, probably between AD 610 and 740, and finally in about AD 850 (Nevell 1992, 12–15).



*Hamlet of Alt (Alt Fold) c.1900 (OLSL ref. L01765)*



*Sketch of the hamlet of Pitses (Welcome Inn to the left)*



*Alt Sunday School (later Methodist Chapel), demolished 1965 (OLSL ref. L01024)*

At Domesday in AD 1086, Alt was probably a manor (an estate held by a lord who had jurisdiction over his tenants exercised through a manor court) within the parish of Ashton. It is first recorded in the 1200s when Thomas, son of William of Alt claimed land in Palden; the name may derive from the Old Welsh for *allt hill* or 'village amongst the hills' (Mills 1976). The Old Welsh name of *allt* suggests the area had an existing population, a community that had survived the Anglo Saxon colonisation of the area in the 7th century AD. The name may also refer to Alder trees in the manor, locally once called owlers.

The hamlet of Alt was — as stated above — situated at the junction of Sommerfield View, Alt Lane and Alt Fold Drive. Originating in the medieval period, was a second hamlet at Pitses, located at the junction of Holts Lane and Abbey Hills Road. James Butterworth the Oldham historian described it in the early 1800s as 'being surrounded by pools of water'. Butterworth (1771–1837) was born and lived in a cottage sited within

what is now the garden of the mid to late 19th century Croft House on the corner of Abbeyhills Road and Alt Lane (the cottage became an Alehouse called The Plucked Hare).

During the medieval period Alt was in the township of Ashton (the *township* or *vill* was the basic economic unit in the countryside before the industrial revolution, the area containing all the essential resources needed by an agricultural community including a water supply, woodland, arable and pasture and a mill). In the 13th century, lands in Alt were held by the monks of Kersal when it was described as a moiety (half) of Paldenleigh. Abbey Hills just to the north of this may be a distant memory of their tenure, although the earlier Wabbow Hills suggests a local surname. Throughout the medieval period the Alt area was probably arable land farmed in strips as part of an open field system, though it may also have included some pasture.



*Welcome Inn and cottages on Holts Lane 1908 (OLSL ref. L02426)*

The first hamlets may have been largely timber buildings, though during the 1600s there was a great rebuilding throughout Ashton with many houses rebuilt in stone or brick. A timber framed farmhouse at nearby Lower Fold may survive from the earlier period.

Coal mining in Alt has been known from the early 1700s with pits in Alt and Fairbottom, whilst the name Pitses may indicate the presence of early coal pits. These are shown on the 1st edition OS in 1848 close to Way Mark and Antique Cottage in the hamlet which later became Pitses. Peat was also dug; a collection of cottages on the corner of Roundthorn Road and what is now Liney Drive is named on old maps as Turf Pits. There was a Sunday School at Alt Fold (mentioned by Butterworth in 1823), which sometime after 1848 became a Methodist Chapel.





*Houses at 50-52 Alt Lane*



*Looking north along Waltham Street on the Abbey Hills Estate*

Other than minor development in the vicinity of Pitses — including the building of the Welcome Inn (which may have replaced The Plucked Hare) — and on Alt Lane, there was little change in the area until well into the 20th century. By 1922 the new Abbey Hills Road from Glodwick had reached a point just beyond its junction with the also new Manor Road, with Pitses and Alt still served by the old road running between the Moorhey area of Oldham and the industrial settlement of Park Bridge. A few detached and semi-detached houses were built on the east side of Alt Lane, mainly in the 1920s and 30s but including the distinctive semi-detached pair of 50–52 which dates from some time between 1894 and 1909.



*The Whitby Road elevation of the Manor Inn (1936-37)*

The first major change to the area came in the 1930s with the building by Oldham Borough Council of the Abbey Hills Estate, laid out on Garden City principles on land north and south of Abbey Hills Road, which was then extended to meet Lees New Road, completing the modern-day route to Ashton. Its roads were named numerically,





*Alt estate from the air*

starting at 10th Avenue (now Bainburgh Clough and Sherbourne Close), the estate being built right-up to what was then the administrative edge of the Borough of Oldham. Construction of the estate and the extension of Abbey Hills Road necessitated the demolition of Abbey Hills House (formerly Wabbow Hills). The Manor Inn — built by the Oldham Brewery in 1936–7, occupies a part of its site.

Boundary changes in the 1930s led to the administrative area of Oldham being extended east to the line of Holt Lane and Alt Lane, and south to what is now the rear gardens of Lawn Close and Cherry Avenue (all of the area beyond the Abbey Hills Estate had hitherto come under the jurisdiction of Ashton-under-Lyne). This meant that in the late 1950s the Council was able to extend the development of the area, building the Alt estate and its associated schools, playing fields etc. Development did not however encroach upon Alt Fold, though this ancient area was entirely cleared in the late 1960s (the last Baptisms at the Chapel were in 1965) in order to make way for the privately developed houses of Alt Fold Drive. The estate was one of a number built on open land on the edge of Oldham, necessary to re-house residents of town centre districts which were earmarked for slum clearance.



*Alt Fold Drive*



*Looking west towards the mills of Hathershaw*



*Green with bungalows on the north side of Cherry Avenue*



*Shops on Furness Avenue*

The housing of the Abbey Hills Estate was built to a lower standard than earlier Council housing, add to which it was unpopular due to its isolated location. Families left and the estate became run-down and neglected. Improvements were carried out between 1976 and 1978, though in 1988 nearly all of the 1930s houses south of Abbey Hills Road were demolished (the only survivals are those fronting the main road). The land was turned over to developers and new houses built in their stead, with the surviving lengths of road renamed.

**Map 01** shows the historic pattern of communication and settlement overlain on successive editions of extracts from 25 inch County Series and 1:2500 post-war OS maps. **Map 02** shows the approximate dates of the construction of all buildings seen on the ground today, as well as a number of other features.

#### 4.05 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

Below ground archaeology is most likely to survive in the form of the house sites, specifically related to Pitses and Alt hamlets. Evidence of industrial archaeology is less likely in areas of the former coal pits at Pitses. Should development take place in the

vicinity of the hamlets there is the potential to determine their origins and aspects of their original form.

There is also some potential for earlier archaeologies, due to the comparatively large open areas between houses within the Alt estate.

Above ground, the potential lies with the houses of the Alt Estate and the contribution architectural evidence can make to revealing the history and lifestyles of communities which are often referred to as the 'silent majority' (Brennand 2007, 144).



*Picket fences and hedges (Cherry Avenue)*



*Three-storey flats on the north side of Alt Lane*

#### 4.06 CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

The Alt Estate lies on the relatively flat spur which separates the steep-sided valley of the River Medlock from that of its tributary, Glodwick Brook. Inward looking and detached from Oldham proper, the estate sits in a surprisingly rural environment, with glimpses out towards the high Pennines to the east and the massive mills of Hathershaw to the west.

##### A Spatial qualities

A pattern of almost parallel roads curving to roughly follow the line of Alt Lane defines the layout of the estate. Roads link a series of rectangular greens in a way which lends the estate a sense of formality, a characteristic which is emphasised by the continuous frontages of the houses and their direct relationship to the roads. The majority of buildings are in residential use (mainly houses though some flats), while there is a small parade of shops on Furness Avenue and school buildings to the east. Houses are arranged in short terraces or semi-detached pairs, set in their own gardens, often behind picket fences and hedges. Blocks of flats are surrounded by grass. The estate is spacious and generously planned.

##### B Architecture, materials and construction

In terms of architecture, there is little of note and no real landmark buildings, other than — at a local level — the two pubs on Abbey Hills Road. The 1950s housing is





*Return gable to flats on Thorn Road*



*Rendered houses with concrete entrance canopies on Lawn Close*



*Typical block of houses in the Abbey Hills estate*

modest and low-key, though not unpleasant. Return gables and concrete canopies add a degree of articulation. Pale brick, render and clay plain tiles are the predominant materials. Surviving on the northern edge of the study area, i.e. fronting Abbey Hills Road, are four blocks of four houses dating from the 1930s Abbey Hills Estate. These are slightly more sophisticated in their architecture, having a symmetrical design with returned gable ends and arched heads to the front doors flanking the central tunnel-back entrance; they are similar houses on the opposite side of the road.





*Bye-law housing on Alt Lane*



*Inter and post war housing looking south along Alt Lane*



*Details of 50-52 Alt Lane*

Older houses on Alt Lane comprise straightforward, bye-law terraces of red brick and stone, notable in a local context for their rarity. Likewise the older buildings on Holts Lane.

All remaining houses on Alt Lane are typical inter and post-war detached and semi-detached properties, built by private developers, the notable exception being the semi-detached pair at 50–52. Architecturally, this is the most striking building in the area, its deliberately asymmetric façade of red Accrington brick relieved by bands and details of buff-pink terracotta and unusual full-height buttresses at the corners. Its architect or builder is unknown (the house is in what until the 1970s was the Borough of Ashton-under-Lyne as opposed to Oldham).

### C Greenery and green spaces

Grass verges, the greens, open space — most notably the grassed area known as The Orchard — and a reasonable provision of street trees make for a green, leafy suburb with the surrounding fields and glimpses of the wider landscape emphasising the importance of greenery.



*Grass verges and street trees to Buckfast Avenue*



*The Orchard from the corner of Cherry Avenue and Apple Close*

### D Survival and condition

The 1950s portion of the Alt area remains relatively intact, i.e. as built, and on the basis of a cursory external observation, the greater part of the housing stock appears to be in reasonable condition, other than notably poor levels of maintenance evident in some areas. The southern part of the old Abbey Hills Estate has been entirely cleared, save the four blocks fronting Abbey Hills Road, though a memory of its existence survives in the retention of a portion of the street layout and the modern-day street signage, e.g. Buckfast Avenue Late 10th Ave. No above-ground traces of the old hamlet of Alt are evident, save the small albeit insignificant patch of green which survives at the junction of Alt Lane and Summerfield View (the Lane which formerly served the Methodist Chapel), and the naming of Alt Ford Drive. **Map 01D** shows the extent to which older areas of building have been lost.



*New and old street name on the Abbey Hills estate*

#### 4.07 SIGNIFICANCE

Alt is, in the main, characterised by the semi-formal layout and planning of the 1950s housing and the way in which this relates to greenery and — to a lesser extent — the surrounding rural landscape. The estate is however physically, perceptually and historically almost entirely detached from the development of Oldham generally, and as such its sense of leafy enclosure and inward-looking areas of green do little to distinguish it from similar areas of post-war housing e.g. Kirkholt in Rochdale or Hollins in Middleton. Notwithstanding isolated older buildings, it is the layout and planning of the 1950s housing which defines the character and identity of the Alt area.



*Looking southwest along Alt Lane at junction with Summerfield View (Alt Fold was to the left, the Methodist Church to the right)*



*What was the hamlet of Alt Fold (compare with c.1900 image)*

The special architectural, historic and townscape interest (significance) of the Alt area is summarised graphically in **Map 03**. All buildings have been assessed in accordance with the criteria set out in Section 2.06 of this report, before categorisation in accordance with Section 2.07, to which reference should be made for their definition and implications:

- Protected.
- High value (not used).
- Clear value.
- Townscape value.
- Indeterminate value (not used).
- Little known value.
- No value.
- Negative value (not used).

The lines of significant roads and street patterns are also identified.

Brief reference is made in the assessment of significance to local listing. However, it is recognised that Oldham MBC does not currently have in place a local list or supporting



planning policies; mention of local listing is made in the context of the DCMS White Paper *Heritage Protection for the 21st Century* (refer also sections 2.07 and 3.03).

### **A Listed Buildings**

Buildings which enjoy statutory listing are by definition of significance (i.e. of special architectural or historic interest at a national level) and thereby inherently of value at the level of the Alt area (refer 4.03 for details). There are on the edge of the area 8 protected properties: 1–7 and 9–15 Holts Lane.

### **B Individual buildings**

There are few individual buildings of interest within or immediately around the Alt area, with even those of older date (i.e. the terraces on Alt Lane) being in terms of the contemporary development of the area as a whole being of no known interest. Only the semi-detached pair of houses at 50–52 Alt Lane can be said to be notable in terms of its architectural interest, and hence of clear value on the basis of its design alone.

Although modest in scale and design, the Manor Inn is notable for the strong form of its roof and deep, projecting eaves, as well as the fact that the simplicity of its architecture relates well to the surviving houses of the Abbey Hills estate. The building is also a local landmark. Having interest on two counts makes it of clear value. While of little interest on the basis of its architecture, the late nineteenth century Welcome Inn is of clear value due to the fact that it represents a long history of inn-keeping on or near its site, add to which it also serves as a local landmark.

Croft House on the corner of Abbey Hills Road and Alt Lane has a plaque which proclaims its date of construction as 1882. It is however of little architectural or historic interest. Likewise the surviving remnants of the Abbey Hills estate which are now shorn of any real context, albeit they are straightforward and decent properties. The short terrace 17–23 Holts Lane adds to the setting of the earlier listed cottages adjacent, and hence are of townscape value.

### **C The Alt estate**

Although not of any interest in terms of its architecture, the spacious and semi-formal qualities of the Alt estate does create a sense of place, in marked contrast to the almost anonymous winding cul-de-sacs and less structured layouts of more recent housing nearby. Trees and greenery add to the distinctive qualities of the area, especially those which have reached or are nearing maturity. The Alt estate also has value as an interesting social document and hence should be photographed and recorded before any buildings are cleared.

### **D Topographical features**

The old line of Alt Lane and connecting lanes and tracks is a fragmentary survival from the old rural past of the area and hence a memory which should be preserved as a part of the framework of the area. Likewise the 1950s road pattern which — as noted above — creates much of the identity of the area.



## E Summary

The significance of the Alt area lies in:

- The status of 1–7 and 9–15 Holts Lane (Antique Cottage) as Grade II listed and hence **protected** buildings.
- 50–52 Alt Lane which is of **clear value** due to its architectural interest.
- The Manor Inn which is of modest architectural interest while at the same time a minor local landmark, and is hence of **clear value**; the Welcome Inn is also a landmark building, and having some historic interest is also of **clear value**.
- 17–23 Holts Lane which are of **townscape value** due to their role as a part of the setting of the adjacent listed buildings.
- The surviving remnants of roads and tracks visible on maps dating from the 1840s — particularly Alt Lane — as well as the 1950s road layout of the Alt estate; both provide an overall framework for its identity.
- Mature and semi-mature trees throughout the estate, as well as the grassed verges and open spaces such as The Orchard.

All other buildings, features and spaces are of **little known** or **no** value.



#### 4.08 RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of understanding the significance of the limited heritage of the Alt area in relation to the Alt Neighbourhood Plan and associated programmes is primarily to enable an appreciation of how one might inform and enhance the other, and thereby help reinforce local distinctiveness and identity. This means evaluating the impact on the historic environment of the area of the draft Preferred Options for Change, prepared in association with the local community by Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners.

##### A Draft Alt Neighbourhood Plan and strategy for integration

The draft Alt Neighbourhood Plan: Preferred Options for Change proposes a number of interventions, most notably:

- Demolition and new development on the site of Alt Primary School, and of a large proportion of the land south of Furness Avenue
- New development on open land to the north of Cherry Avenue and south west of the western portion of Furness Avenue
- Environmental and home improvements across the rest of the estate
- A new community hub and improvements to the Orchard Open Space
- New and improved routes aimed at creating and reinforcing links and connections.

It is in this context that the impact of the emerging framework for change on the heritage of the area needs to be assessed, with particular reference to the demolition of any existing buildings.

The draft Alt Neighbourhood Plan is in broad terms compatible with the limited heritage value of the Alt area. Significant pre-1850 road lines are retained, and the few buildings of clear value are retained, albeit these sit just outside the intervention area; enhancement of the Orchard and the new community hub clearly has the capacity to reinforce the identity of the area. It is therefore recommended that the assessment of heritage value as illustrated by **Map 03** is used to inform decisions on the location and nature of development, in line with the principles set out in Section 2.06 of this report, thereby avoiding localised conflict between heritage value and future change:

- The general structure and character of the existing street layout within the clearance area south of Furness Avenue should if possible be retained, with future development proposals designed to respect the straightforward, orthogonal nature of the existing built form, and avoiding the meandering lines of secondary roads and cul-de-sacs which typify much current new build housing.
- Existing mature and semi-mature trees where possible be retained, with the re-design of the estate incorporating in some way the qualities of spaciousness and greenery which characterise its present identity, albeit adapted to suit car parking, pedestrian access and security issues.

Decisions on the retention of buildings outside of the boundary of the intervention area are recognised as beyond the remit of the Alt Neighbourhood Plan, though it is recommended that Oldham MBC seeks retention of the Manor Inn and the Welcome Inn via the mechanism of the planning process, noting that redevelopment of the latter would be governed by the statutory requirement to take account of the setting of the listed buildings adjacent (likewise the redevelopment of 17–23 Holts Lane).

As a matter of general principle, no building or structure should be demolished without having been comprehensively photographed, with hard and digital copies of all images deposited — along with drawings, reports and any other available information — with Oldham Local Studies Library.

## **B Statutory and policy designations**

No buildings are recommended for statutory or local listing, and no recommendations are made in respect of conservation areas or other heritage designations.

## **C Archaeology**

Development of open areas as well as areas of known archaeological potential as noted in 4.05 should be subject to assessment and evaluation under the terms of Planning Policy and Guidance note (PPG) 16 *Archaeology and planning*, with particular reference to the former settlement sites of Alt and Pitses. In addition:

- Consideration should be given to research agenda proposals (Brennand, 2007) that emphasise the potential contribution that a record of the Alt estate could make to the history of domestic life.
- The opportunity for community involvement in recording the remains of the old sites of Alt and Pitses should be explored, and consideration given to the erection of information boards which commemorate their history and archaeology.

## **D Future research strategy**

In heritage terms, it is felt that there is little need for any further research at an area level, save there should be a presumption in favour of at least a desk-based archaeological assessment of all redeveloped sites as and when they are cleared or disturbed by major development. No existing buildings warrant any further research, though additional study could be undertaken as part of a programme of community involvement in the recording of Alt and Pitses.

## **4.09 CONCLUSION**

Although the Alt area is not without interest, the majority of buildings and features are of little or limited heritage value. However, some old and recent roads, spatial characteristics and greenery do help define local distinctiveness and identity, along with a small number of buildings which in a purely local context are to be treasured. Impact assessment has confirmed that the understanding and identification of these various strands of heritage has the capacity to inform the development and implementation of



the development framework presented in the draft Preferred Option, which in general terms sits comfortably with the findings of this assessment. It is therefore concluded that — in heritage terms — the opportunities afforded by the draft Alt Neighbourhood Plan and associated programmes have the capacity to be of positive benefit to an area which represents in a modest way the post-war social history of Oldham.

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Oldham Enclosure Award and map *Inclosure Common and Wastelands in Township of Oldham* 1804 LRO AE 6/12

### 5.04 ORDNANCE SURVEY

Electronic (GIS) versions of the 1: 2500 (25 inch) County Series maps surveyed c. 1894 (first edition), 1909 (second edition) and 1930–38 (third edition), corresponding to extracts from Lancashire sheets 97/11 and 97/15.

Electronic (GIS) version of the 1: 2500 National Grid Series maps surveyed c.1955.

First edition (in hard copy) of the 1: 10560 (six inch) County Series surveyed 1848 (Lancashire sheet 97).

## **APPENDIX A**

## INVITATION TO TENDER

### HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – OLDHAM ROCHDALE HMR PATHFINDER

OLDHAM ROCHDALE HMR PATHFINDER  
OLDHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL  
ROCHDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2007

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Developing mixed, inclusive and sustainable communities as part of housing market transformation is central to the aims and objectives of the Oldham Rochdale Pathfinder. Delivering high quality urban environments through new development whilst recognising and building on the heritage value within our communities is also a key component of our overall strategy.

Initially, the Pathfinder concentrated its interventions in four “Wave 1” neighbourhoods. To inform its decisions in these areas the pathfinder has already commissioned and published:

- An extensive heritage assessment of the entire Oldham and Rochdale Pathfinder area in order to establish an overview of the surviving heritage asset, its significance (heritage value) and level of survival (i.e. zones where it is wholly or in part complete and those where it has been eroded).
- An intensive heritage assessment of the “Wave 1” areas of Derker and Werneth/ Freehold areas in Oldham, and East Central Rochdale and Middleton (Langley) in Rochdale.

The four “Wave 1” neighbourhoods will remain a high priority for investment. However, the Pathfinder has also identified seven neighbourhoods (known collectively as “Other Intervention Areas”, or OIA’s) which will form an additional focus for investment. These neighbourhoods are:

#### Rochdale

Kirkholt  
Inner Rochdale

#### Oldham

Sholver  
Alt  
Clarkwell  
Primrose Bank  
Hathershaw and Fitton Hill

An intensive heritage assessment of the Hathershaw and Fitton Hill O.I.A. has already been carried out. **The purpose of this commission is to carry out**

## **individual intensive heritage assessments of the six remaining Other Intervention Areas.**

This brief provides the background to this commission and outlines the methodology by which the assessments will be expected to be carried out.

Tenders are being invited from a select list of consultants known to be capable of providing a robust evaluation of the heritage value of the Pathfinder area. We are looking to appoint an experienced team/consortia who will have clearly identified and referenced specialisms in heritage and conservation within a regeneration context, together with additional competencies in community and stakeholder consultation.

We look forward to receiving your submission.

**THE CLOSING DATE FOR YOUR SUBMISSION IS 12 NOON ON FRIDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2007**

**THE BUDGET CEILING FOR THIS COMMISSION IS £75,000 inclusive of all expenses.**

## **2.0 CONTEXT**

### **Housing Market Renewal**

'Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future', published in February 2003 established the Government's policies for addressing weaknesses in the housing markets in the North and Midlands of England. The Government, originally through the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), has established the Housing Market Renewal (HMR) Initiative to help tackle neighbourhoods with the greatest concentrations of poor and outmoded housing, together with some of the highest indices of broader local deprivation issues. Nine Pathfinder Partnership areas have been identified, one of which, known as Oldham and Rochdale Partners in Action.

In Oldham, the Pathfinder covers an extensive part of the inner urban area of the Borough extending from Sholver in the north-east, on the edge of the Pennine moors to Failsworth in the south-west which lies in close proximity to Manchester. This densely developed area is characterised by extensive areas of surviving Victorian and Edwardian housing of a variety of types, but most notably workers housing, and several large inter war Council estates.

In Rochdale Borough, the Pathfinder is split between the borough's main two towns, Rochdale and Middleton. In Rochdale it covers the communities of East Central Rochdale, Wardleworth, Newbold, Sparthbottoms, Deeplish, Kirkholt - a large social housing estate - and also the Oldham Road corridor to the south of the town centre. In Middleton it covers East Middleton, and the former Council estates of Hollins and Langley.



Oldham and Rochdale Partners in Action views the HMR initiative as a unique opportunity to deliver the scale of market restructuring necessary to create thriving, inclusive and sustainable communities. To achieve this, the Pathfinder Partnership submitted its initial Prospectus to the ODPM in December 2003 and secured two years funding of £53.5 million in March 2004. These resources have allowed the implementation of strategies for the four “Wave 1” neighbourhoods involving an extensive series of actions, including the replacement of obsolete housing with modern sustainable accommodation through demolition and new building, or refurbishment, that will reverse decline and reinvigorate the local housing market.

In August 2005 the Oldham Rochdale HMR Pathfinder submitted its Scheme Update to the ODPM. The Scheme Update presents the Pathfinder’s strategy for intervention over the period 2006/07 – 2007/08, and defines the strategic objectives (outlined in Appendix 1). The first three strategic objectives are the Pathfinder’s core objectives, which aim to address the structural problems in the housing market. A further three objectives reflect the fact that housing market renewal is ‘not just about housing’ and seek to address three significant issues that will impact on housing market performance.

Identifying and building upon the heritage value within existing communities is recognised by the Pathfinder as an important component of the overall strategy for renewal, hence the requirement for a heritage assessment to be carried out where HMR intervention is likely.

## **Planning Policy Context**

It is essential that this commission is informed by, and is broadly consistent with, the current framework of national, regional and local planning policy. The key elements are as follows:

- National planning policy guidance, most notably PPS 1 (Delivering Sustainable Communities), PPS 3 (Housing), PPG 13 (Transport), PPG 15 (Planning & the Historic Environment); <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1143104>
- Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (RPG 13) - Government Office North West (GONW) (2003) [http://www.nwra.gov.uk/downloads/documents/dec\\_06/nwra\\_1165414305\\_Final\\_Version\\_of\\_RPG13\\_-\\_March.pdf](http://www.nwra.gov.uk/downloads/documents/dec_06/nwra_1165414305_Final_Version_of_RPG13_-_March.pdf)
- Emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (RSS) (2006) [http://www.nwra.gov.uk/downloads/documents/dec\\_06/nwra\\_1165321319\\_Submitted\\_Draft\\_Regional\\_Spatial.pdf](http://www.nwra.gov.uk/downloads/documents/dec_06/nwra_1165321319_Submitted_Draft_Regional_Spatial.pdf)
- Moving Forward: The Northern Way (2004) <http://www.thenorthernway.co.uk/>
- Oldham Metropolitan Borough Unitary Development Plan, (adopted 2006) [http://www.oldham.gov.uk/udp\\_2006\\_master\\_copy\\_full.pdf](http://www.oldham.gov.uk/udp_2006_master_copy_full.pdf)

- 'Oldham Beyond' Borough Masterplan (2004)  
[http://www.oldham.gov.uk/oldham\\_beyond\\_vision.pdf](http://www.oldham.gov.uk/oldham_beyond_vision.pdf)
- The Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (Adopted 2006)  
[http://www.cartoplus.co.uk/rochdale/text/00\\_cont.htm](http://www.cartoplus.co.uk/rochdale/text/00_cont.htm)  
<http://www.cartoplus.co.uk/rochdale/rochdale.htm> (note - this is the link for the proposals map)
- Rochdale Borough Renaissance Masterplan (2005)  
<http://www.investinrochdale.co.uk/upload/rochdale%20masterplan.pdf>

### **3.0 OLDHAM AND ROCHDALE – AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

#### **Oldham**

The character of much of the HMR area in Oldham retains a strong influence of its origins as a 19<sup>th</sup> Century mill town that experienced particularly rapid growth between around 1840 and 1914. The typical industrial communities of mills surrounded by workers housing, shopping parades, schools, public houses, and municipal buildings survive extensively across the area albeit often much altered by subsequent phases of development. The Coppice area which developed as a predominantly middle class suburb is notable as is Oldham Garden Suburb, and Alexandra Park which is on the register of historic parks and gardens.

There are designated conservation areas at Oldham Town Centre, Alexandra Park, Garden Suburb, Failsworth Pole, Old Town Hall Chadderton and Victoria Street Chadderton.

#### **Rochdale**

The inner urban areas of East Central Rochdale, Wardleworth, Newbold and Deepdish have 19th Century origins, mainly developed as densely packed terrace housing before 1914, with accompanying industrial and commercial development. Sparthbottoms to the south and west of the town centre developed at the same time, but in a more dispersed pattern with housing tied to industries and utilities established in the Roche Valley. Poor environmental quality in these areas is to a large extent determined by the age of the building fabric although lack of open space in the original development is also a significant factor.

Kirkholt, to the south of the town, was built as a planned community with its own local services mainly to rehouse those displaced by clearance from inner Rochdale in the early 1950's. In this case environmental problems are as much a reflection of the relatively low density, street layout, and neighbourhood planning concepts adopted at the time, as the quality of buildings.

Two major areas of post war social housing lie to the north west of Middleton. The Hollins Estate was built in the 1950's as social housing on elevated site. The larger Langley Estate of just under 3000 dwellings, was built as an overspill estate by

Manchester City Council in the late 1950's to early 1960's, and remained in the City Council's control until passing to present Bowlee Housing Association.

#### **4.0 OTHER INTERVENTION AREAS - LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION**

This commission involves six of the defined "Other Intervention Areas". All but one of the OIA's consists of an estate originally developed for social renting. The exception is Inner Rochdale which consists of a mix of industrial, retail and private residential uses. A brief description of each area is set out below:

##### ***Kirkholt, Rochdale***

Kirkholt consists of a large mixed tenure estate of some 3,432 dwellings built in the 1940's and early 50's. The estate contains a mix of houses and flats of differing styles. A substantial number of the dwellings are social rented (some 2,000). The estate is located off Queensway, a major route giving access to the A627M, and hence the M60/M62, and Kingsway Business Park. However, although well located in terms of access to the motorway network, the estate is neither well connected to the surrounding urban area nor well connected internally with the numerous cul-de-sacs inhibiting movement.

An exercise is currently underway to develop a "Vision for Kirkholt". This is being led by officers from Rochdale Boroughwide Housing in conjunction with consultants Mouchel Parkman. Public consultation has recently been carried out on "Ideas for Change" – A draft vision for Kirkholt presented in the form of a spatial plan. Further consultation and engagement will be required as the Vision is refined and implemented.

##### ***Inner Rochdale***

The Inner Rochdale area comprises mixed employment, housing and retail uses and is located some 500m south of Rochdale town centre. The area is bisected by the Rochdale canal and a railway line. Rochdale railway station is located within the area. Oldham Road is a major arterial route into Rochdale town centre from the south and passes through the area.

The housing in the area is dominated by terraces many of which grew up around the old industries that adjoined the canal and railway. There are a large number of employment uses and businesses throughout the area.

There are few formal open space facilities in the area. There are two schools - St. John's RC primary school and Deeplish primary school. Religious buildings include St. John's RC church and four mosques.

The shopping facilities in the area are dominated by central retail park off Oldham Road, which accommodates five large retail units. There are a number of local shopping facilities throughout the area.

There are a number of major development proposals within the area, many of which have the benefit of planning permission. These potential developments will have a significant impact on the function and character of the area.

Rochdale Development Agency (RDA) is currently developing an Area Action Plan (AAP) for the area. The AAP will form part of the statutory planning system. Formal preparation started in March 2007. The heritage assessment will form part of the evidence base for the plan.

### ***Sholver and Alt , Oldham***

Sholver and Alt, like Kirkholt, consist of high levels of social rented stock. The main area of Sholver lies in an elevated position off Ripponden Road to the north east of Oldham town centre, whereas Alt lies further eastwards towards Lees in an area of open land formed around Abbyhills Road. Both estates are somewhat isolated from the surrounding urban areas.

Sholver is the most extensive of the two estates and is separated into two halves – Top Sholver, which is mostly social rented stock, (with older terraced dwellings on the Ripponden Road frontage) and Bottom Sholver which is at a lower elevation and consists mainly private housing developed on land formerly occupied by social rented housing.

Top Sholver is in most need of investment and comprises around 690 council-built properties, of which around 19% have been sold. Lower Sholver includes 146 council-built houses interspersed among private homes built during the 1990's; around 18% have been sold under the right to buy.

Alt comprises around 530 council-built properties many developed around areas of open space.

Both social rented estates include areas of relatively monolithic house types and a combination of open areas and high density housing. Both areas consist of social rented stock positioned adjacent to, but disconnected from, relatively new private housing developed on land formerly occupied by social rented dwellings.

An exercise to identify options for change is currently underway for both estates under the auspices of the Alt and Sholver Partnership Board and led by officers from First Choice Homes Oldham (the Council's ALMO partner). An initial series of options for both estates has recently been published, with the selection of a preferred option programmed for May 2007. A process of refining these options through masterplanning work will be carried out over the remainder of the year, during which the selection of a preferred development partner will take place.

### ***Primrose Bank and Clarkwell, Oldham***

Parts of both the Clarkwell and Primrose Bank areas form part of the "Gateways to Oldham" PFI4 bid currently being progressed by Oldham Council. The project aims



to tackle decency and regeneration issues on estates owned, in part, by Oldham Council.

Primrose Bank is a mainly social rented estate situated on Ashton Road within walking distance of Oldham town centre. The main area of the estate was constructed in the 1960's and consists of a mix of deck access flats, maisonettes and houses. Adjacent to the main post war stock is an area of pre-war larger properties essentially forming a periphery to the estate. The total stock count within the PFI bid area at Primrose Bank is 387 properties.

Clarkwell estate was constructed in the 1960's and is located on the Rochdale Road gateway within walking distance of Oldham town centre. The estate consists solely of 1 and 3 bedroom flats and maisonettes. The total stock count within the PFI bid area at Clarkwell is 89 dwellings, plus a tenant's hall and a single retail unit. The wider Clarkwell area falling within the boundary of this commission includes a mix of terraced housing and terraced housing.

An "Outline Business Case" setting out the case for PFI4 funding and appraising options has now been submitted to the Government by officers from Oldham MBC. A decision on the success of the bid is imminent.

## **5.0 OBJECTIVES**

The main aim of this process is to produce an intensive heritage assessment for each area and for that assessment to define the heritage value in a way that can inform the regeneration of each neighbourhood – its streets and associated buildings. Even where clearance has been agreed in principle, there may be historic buildings and spaces that should be considered for possible retention, whilst historical evidence can help in the design of new development and in the identification of areas of archaeological potential.

The key objectives of this commission are therefore to:

- To identify the nature and extent of the Heritage asset within each OIA forming this commission;
- To demonstrate how this is reflected in its present day character;
- To identify those areas where the heritage asset retains its integrity and those where loss has occurred;
- To establish the significance of the heritage asset and the extent to which this varies across the area of improvement;
- To place this significance within the broader heritage context of the towns;
- To discuss the findings with those organisations, public bodies and community groups who are directly involved in the Pathfinder initiative;
- To consider the implications of the significance of the heritage asset and its component parts for emerging proposals within each OIA and make recommendations on the successful integration of such assets; and
- To identify the need for further assessment and recording of the heritage asset in advance of and during any future redevelopment.

## 6.0 PROCESS

Oldham Rochdale Housing Market Renewal (HMR) working together with Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC), and Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) is commissioning a heritage assessment for each of the following six OIA's:

### Rochdale

- Kirkholt
- Inner Rochdale

### Oldham

- Sholver
- Alt
- Clarkwell
- Primrose Bank

The deadline for receipt of all draft assess assessments will be Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2007 **AT THE LATEST**, with final reports to be received by Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2007. The successful consultant will need to demonstrate that they possess sufficient resources to complete this commission within this timescale. It is expected that the six assessments will, at some point, need to be run concurrently. However, it is accepted that it may not be possible to start all at the same time. As a guide, therefore, any prioritisation should be as follows:

### Tranche 1

Inner Rochdale  
Sholver  
Kirkholt

### Tranch 2

Alt  
Primrose Bank  
Clarkwell

Within the overall budget, each of the six areas will require a different level of resource to complete the assessment. It is expected that Inner Rochdale will require the most intensive use of resources. **Tenders should separately detail expected costs for each neighbourhood.**

The successful consultant will be required to utilise the existing methodology developed through the various assessments detailed above. Central to this methodology is a system that describes and differentiates all elements of the urban landscape in terms of their heritage value, as follows:

**Protected:** buildings or features which are listed (including curtilage buildings), scheduled as ancient monuments or which lie within a designated conservation area, and where statutory protection creates a strong presumption in favour of retention and the protection (or enhancement) of their setting.

**High value:** buildings, features or spaces which are possible candidates for listing or which lie within areas recommended for Conservation Area designation (subject to formal appraisal), and where retention is presumed.

**Clear value:** buildings, features or spaces of clear architectural or historic interest (but not candidates for special designation or listing at this time) and which should be retained, unless it can be demonstrated that redevelopment would be of greater benefit to the character or setting of adjoining buildings or spaces or that there are overriding social or economic reasons which preclude retention.

**Townscape value:** buildings which, although of little architectural or historic interest in themselves, combine with others in a way which creates the character of historic streets and spaces via attributes which could — if wholesale retention is not possible — be recreated by sensitive redevelopment.

**Indeterminate value:** buildings, features and spaces which contribute positively to townscape character or heritage value and may therefore be of clear significance but which require further investigation in respect of their value, extent of survival or — where appropriate — practicality of retention.

**Little known value:** all pre–First World War buildings which are not significant or of group–townscape value as well as those later buildings of slight interest which, although retention is desirable, could be redeveloped without loss of heritage value, subject to the quality of any replacement.

**No value:** buildings, features or spaces where redevelopment or demolition can be assumed to be acceptable in terms of the heritage value.

**Negative value:** buildings, features or spaces which have an adverse impact on any aspect of the significance or heritage or townscape value of the area and where re–development or removal is positively encouraged.

In progressing this commission, the successful consultant will be expected to examine all the relevant sources of information that will inform the historical understanding of the improvement area. These are likely to include:

- Local Authority Historic Environment Record or Sites and Monuments Record;
- Local History Library. The key objective is to obtain a range of historic maps for the improvement area to understand its development over time. These are likely to include the Ordnance Survey map series (scale 1:10,560, 1:2,500, 1:1,056, 1:528 or 1:500, where available), tithe, estate, parish, town, board of health plans, etc.;
- *The Buildings of England* ('Pevsner') county guides, *Victoria County History*, commercial directories, local histories and other available sources;

- Oldham Rochdale HMR Pathfinder Heritage Assessment – Oldham Final Report;
- Oldham Rochdale HMR Pathfinder Heritage Assessment – Rochdale - Final Report; and
- Oldham Rochdale HMR Pathfinder Heritage Assessment – Executive Summary.

Consideration of the above will inform a ground survey. By drawing reference from the English Heritage characterisation methodology the consultant should identify the distinct character areas that make up each area.

Factors that need to be considered in determining the character areas include the historical origins and principal stages of development, areas of archaeological potential, urban morphology, the range of building types, the layout and scale of the buildings, architectural character, use of materials, design of spaces and the original social composition of the area as reflected in the status of its buildings. An assessment should also be made of the condition of each character area, its coherence, what has been lost and which elements remain vulnerable.

Where a programme of intervention is being promoted, an understanding of the key physical attributes together with the mapping of surviving architectural features including external fenestration, roof covering, doors, windows and boundary walls can be used to ensure the area's historic character is sympathetically maintained. Conversely, where clearance and redevelopment is being considered, the area may still retain heritage assets that can be successfully used as an anchor and focus for new development.

When undertaking an intensive survey it will often be necessary to walk every street within the character area although simple and repetitive structures can often be dealt with in a summary fashion. It is a requirement that walking surveys be carried out by people working as a pair to optimise the rigor and thoroughness of the survey and for health and safety reasons.

If the opportunity arises it may be possible to briefly examine the survival of interiors especially within public buildings, but a programme of systematic internal inspection is not envisaged.

By examining existing documentation and holding interviews with the organisations and public bodies who are directly involved in the programme of housing market renewal, the consultant should seek to establish the possible impact of the emerging strategy and development proposals on the surviving heritage asset. It is also important to understand what the local community values about their historic environment and why.

Those areas where industrial, commercial, civic, recreational or transport activity are prevalent should also be identified by type and date. All aspects of the landscape, no matter how modern, should be mapped and described.

A Geographical Information System (GIS) will provide a simple and cost effective method to present the findings of the study, to incorporate the results into the



decision-making process and (at an appropriate stage) to make them publicly available. Careful consideration will need to be given as to the way in which this is implemented, data sources, etc., in order that the maximum benefit is obtained. It is important that information provided through a GIS is compatible with systems in each of the commissioning bodies. Following appointment, the commissioning partners will wish to discuss the systems used, the data already available (current and historic mapping, and information held by the Local Authority Historic Environment Record/Sites and Monuments Record), as will their requirements for digital data exchange.

## **Community Consultation and Involvement**

The overall objective of the consultation with residents, businesses and other local stakeholders is to ensure that local views fully inform the intensive assessment and that the final documentation contains a rich mix of views and opinions. The methodology used needs to reflect a transparent process with clear evidence to show how the final recommendations were arrived at.

The assessment process should embrace the following principles:

- Dialogue with residents/community groups that is honest and open with clarity about the purpose of the assessment and the parameters of influence
- All responses recorded and analysed accurately and professionally
- Demonstrable links between the consultation findings and the final recommendation. Where findings have not been able to influence decisions, explanations and reasons to be given.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of community engagement to be an integral part of the process

The minimum requirements of the consultation to include:

- Two stakeholder workshops in each OIA forming this commission;
- Appropriate engagement of main Community groups and/or stakeholders in each OIA forming this commission.

The successful consultant will be encouraged to take opportunities to integrate consultations on the heritage assessments with consultation activities associated with on-going masterplanning exercises.

Prospective consultants will need to demonstrate they have the capacity and expertise to effectively engage and consult with a wide range of groups and individuals.

## **7.0 OUTPUTS**

A full report, as outlined below, will be required for each of the six OIA's forming this commission. The final reports must be clear and easy to read, well illustrated and bound as an A4 document (an unbound copy should also be provided). They

should aim to tell a story in non-technical language and without being overly long. Each full report should also be accompanied by a separate executive summary.

Each reports should contain:

- Author, organisation and date of issue
- Summary
- Introduction – outlining the reason for the project
- Location and description
- Planning and regeneration context
- Historical development – An overview of the history of the area derived from historical research and map evidence. The description should focus on those factors that have shaped the appearance of the modern day landscape rather than a lengthy account of the history of an area. Historical maps and illustrations together with a current map showing the key periods of growth should also be included
- Characterisation – A discussion of the historic character of the improvement area as reflected in the modern day landscape, the nature and extent of any designations including those identified by the local authority, the survival of the heritage asset, its condition, coherence and below-ground archaeological potential. Maps showing the character areas and zones of below ground archaeological potential must be included here.
- Character Areas – An analysis of each character area in accordance with the methodology outlined in the process section above and supported by annotated maps. The discussion should briefly consider historical origins and principal stages of development, areas of archaeological potential, urban morphology, the range of building types, architectural character, use of materials, the survival of historic surfaces, design of spaces, etc. Each section should conclude with an assessment of significance which identifies key attributes, current designations, the degree of completeness, coherence, condition, rates of attrition, sensitivity and capacity for change.
- Assessment of significance – An overall assessment of both the character areas and the improvement area as a whole. This should also be discussed in terms of the broader heritage context of the town or city and draw on the results of the stakeholder consultation set out in the process section above. If appropriate new and proposed revisions to existing conservation areas may be considered.
- Recommendations – An outline strategy on how the significance of the heritage asset and its component parts can be successfully integrated within the programme of housing market renewal. If the latter is already at an advanced stage the proposals should be accompanied by an impact assessment and possible options on how to minimise the possible negative effects of any redevelopment proposals.
- Future research strategy. Areas where further assessment is needed in advance of any future works should be clearly identified. This might include important buildings where an internal inspection should be undertaken to determine the survival of historic interiors and areas where an assessment of the below ground archaeological resource is required before redevelopment.

The section should conclude with an indicative research strategy which sets out the future recording priorities within the Pathfinder intervention areas.

- Bibliography.

The text must be supported by plans, interpretive maps and photographs showing general views and, where appropriate, individual buildings or features of interest.

Copies of the brief and the approved project design shall be included as appendices to the main report.

In addition to those directly involved in the project the report should also be sent to the Local Authority Historic Environment Record or Sites and Monuments Record, the English Heritage National Monuments Record and local community groups with an interest in the area.

Consultants will provide the following:

- 15 copies of the final Document (A4);
- 15 copies of the Executive Summary (A4);
- 15 copies of plans produced to support the masterplan (A3 & A1)
- A copy of all documentation on CD in relevant format such as PDF; and
- A copy of all plans, and any GIS datasets on a CD in a relevant format such as PDF and a professional software package format.

You are required to produce exhibition boards and large plans, and other documentation such as invitations, leaflets and feedback forms to assist in consultation and provide feedback papers on consultation events and stakeholder workshops. Account should be taken of the need to produce draft documents as this commission progresses.

Ownership and copyright of all the outputs defined above will be retained by the commissioning partners (Oldham & Rochdale Partners in Action, Rochdale MBC, and Oldham MBC). The design team/consortia will not have leave to reproduce or make reference to this documentation without prior approval.

## **8.0 SUBMISSION CRITERIA**

This brief provides detailed information on the context for this commission. The information provided below will assist you in structuring your submission

Submissions must consist of the following:

1. A brief written statement (of no more than 4 sides of A4), providing:

- An outline of your teams experience,
- Your understanding of the key issues and context that informs the assessment work; and
- The qualities of your team would bring to the process;

- Your understanding of community engagement in relation to the heritage of local communities.

2. A completed pro-forma (electronic format as supplied), providing information on team structures, project management and costs:

3. Referees of three previous projects, including explanation of these projects and the role played (no more than 1 side of A4 per project outline).

Furthermore we ask you to submit one copy of a document of a recently completed commission so we can assess the quality of your final document production.

Six copies of the submission should be provided (one unbound).

The evaluation of submissions from the practice teams will be based on the following criteria:

- Previous experience - in similar projects where a successful outcome can be demonstrated through implementation with desired results (Weighting - 20%);
- Understanding of the issues - ability to understand and analyse the issues, and particularly to appreciate the Oldham/Rochdale context (Weighting 20%);
- Technical skills - required to carry out and complete the study (Weighting 20%);
- Community engagement/Consultative skills - to constructively communicate with the client, steering group, local agencies and engage with members of the local community (Weighting 20%);
- Methodology and Value for Money - which will optimise outcomes within the study context, timeframe and budget (Weighting 20%).

Following the closure of the invitation to tender period a short-list of practices will be invited to an interview with the selection panel.

## **9.0 PROJECT DESIGN & TIMETABLE**

### **Project Design**

All the work should be undertaken by a professional consultant with proven experience and qualifications in the assessment of historic urban landscapes. Details including the name, qualifications, and experience of the lead consultant and all other project personnel must be included within the project design together with details of anticipated outputs, working methods, programming, and liaison requirements. Prospective consultants should include previous examples of comparable work within the tender.



It should be remembered that a range of specialist skills are likely to be needed including historic buildings and landscape analysis, architectural history, archaeology and if appropriate, ecology. Evidence for these skills should be clearly demonstrated within the submission.

The preferred project design must be discussed and agreed with the client's project steering group before being implemented.

## **Timetable**

The indicative timetable in relation to the selection of commissioned practice is as follows:

- Invitation to Tender brief sent to the short-listed practices by 27<sup>th</sup> April 2007
- Confirmation of intention to tender by 12:00 noon 4<sup>th</sup> May 2007 (please send your confirmation to Len Harris at [len.harris@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:len.harris@oldham.gov.uk))
- Invitation to Tender submissions should be received by 12.00 noon on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2007
- Short-list of practices invited to interview by 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2007
- Short-list of practices interviewed on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2007
- Appointment of successful practice by 6<sup>th</sup> June 2007
- Draft Heritage Assessments complete by end of September 2007 at the latest
- Final Heritage Assessments complete by end of October 2007 at the latest

## **10.0 REFERENCE MATERIAL**

### **National Guidance/ Documents**

Building Sustainable Communities: Actions for Housing Market Renewal (CABE, June 2003) [www.cabe.org.uk/pdf/Housing%20Market%20REnewal.pdf](http://www.cabe.org.uk/pdf/Housing%20Market%20REnewal.pdf)

Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future (ODPM, February 2003) [http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm\\_communities/documents/sectionhomepage/odpm\\_communities\\_page.hcsp](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_communities/documents/sectionhomepage/odpm_communities_page.hcsp)

Low Demand Housing & the Historic Environment (English Heritage 2005) [http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/Low\\_demand\\_Housing.pdf](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/Low_demand_Housing.pdf)

Extensive and Intensive Assessment: A Model Brief for the Commissioning of work to assess historical significance in areas of Housing Renewal, (English Heritage: 2005)

[http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/doc/low\\_demand\\_housing\\_brief.doc](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/doc/low_demand_housing_brief.doc)

### **Local Documents:**

- 'Transformation and Cohesion': The Scheme Update for the Oldham Rochdale Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder (August, 2005)  
[http://www.oldhamrochdalehmr.co.uk/scheme\\_update\\_2005.pdf](http://www.oldhamrochdalehmr.co.uk/scheme_update_2005.pdf)
- Oldham Rochdale HMR Pathfinder Heritage Assessment – Oldham Final Report;
- Oldham Rochdale HMR Pathfinder Heritage Assessment – Rochdale - Final Report; and
- Oldham Rochdale HMR Pathfinder Heritage Assessment – Executive Summary;
- Oldham Rochdale HMR Pathfinder Heritage Assessment – Middleton; and
- Oldham Rochdale HMR Pathfinder Heritage Assessment – Hathershaw and Fitton Hill, Final Draft Report and Executive Summary

Please contact Len Harris (details below) if you require copies of documents relating to the existing heritage studies detailed above.

### **11.0 FURTHER INFORMATION**

Practices are invited to submit any questions regarding this commission to the named person below and/or make arrangements to visit the area up until 11<sup>th</sup> May 2007. Responses to any questions will be distributed to all practices.

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The key contacts for this commission are:

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### **Partnership Arrangements**

This assessment is being progressed under a partnership arrangement involving the following organisations:

- Oldham and Rochdale Partners in Action;
- Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council; and
- Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

### **This Document has been produced by:**

LEN HARRIS

**NB:** This brief is substantially based on a model brief prepared by English Heritage (See the attached notes “Extensive and Intensive Assessment : A Model Brief for the Commissioning of work to assess historical significance in areas of Housing Renewal”, English Heritage: 2005).

## Appendix 1

### Oldham Rochdale HMR – Strategic Objectives and Drivers, 2005

Driver	Strategic Objective
<p>Strong projected net household growth in the Pathfinder area particularly focussed in the South Asian heritage community.</p> <p>A predominance of small pavement terraced properties that do not meet the needs of larger households or the aspirations of newly forming households.</p> <p>Oversupply of socially rented flatted accommodation on estates of a monolithic nature, which is subject to high turnover rates.</p>	<p>1. Create a step change in housing diversity and choice by providing and facilitating new housing and securing a radically better mix of housing sizes and types.</p>
<p>Low property values and low incomes of Pathfinder residents has led to a lack of individual investment in properties which has in turn led to significant levels of unfitness across Pathfinder stock.</p> <p>Poor property condition also tends to create a poor environment.</p>	<p>2. Transform the quality of housing and neighbourhoods in the Pathfinder area and deliver long-term sustainability.</p>
<p>The growth in house values has not been matched by a growth in incomes so a growing number of residents have been unable to afford to enter home ownership. This has increased pressure for affordable options. The economic projections suggest a continuing need for affordable housing.</p> <p>The existing social rented stock is not in the right locations or of the right size for those who may now need it. Social renting as a tenure is less attractive to significant sections of the community so options need to include low cost home ownership.</p>	<p>3. Promote and provide a range of affordable housing options.</p>
<p>Over reliance on low value added manufacturing jobs and low skill levels are resulting in low wage levels, with a resulting lack of choice of homes and inability to maintain homes. Upskilling and economic restructuring need to go hand in hand with HMR.</p>	<p>4. Integrate with, influence and support the economic development of Oldham and Rochdale.</p>
<p>Strong growth projected in the South Asian heritage community but there is evidence of the housing choices of this group being constrained, as some</p>	<p>5. Promote community cohesion.</p>



<p>areas adjacent to areas of high overcrowding are avoided.</p> <p>High levels of deprivation in the Pathfinder which can create an environment in which resentments grow.</p>	
<p>People's choices about where to live are heavily influenced by factors beyond the physical housing, such as crime, fear of crime, harassment, anti-social behaviour, cleanliness/tidiness, and the perceived quality of local education.</p>	<p>6. Help to provide an excellent quality of life in the Pathfinder area – influencing our partners to focus on target areas as suggested by the Kwest research and to support the HMR change process.</p>

