

3 THE APPLICATION SITE

Introduction

- 3.1 This Chapter provides a description of the site and its surrounding context. More discipline specific descriptions of the site and surrounding area are provided within each individual Chapter and associated appendices.

Application Site and Context

- 3.2 The application site comprises approximately 2.48 hectares and can be described as follows (refer to the Site Location Plan **Figure 1.1**)
- Land south of Fairfax Road – comprises surface level car parking, the Longfield Centre, Prestwich Library and the Longfield Suite, the Fairfax Group Practice Medical Centre, Rectory Lane and areas of public realm. This part of the site is broadly bound by Prestwich Metrolink station to the east, St Marys C of E Primary School and residential properties to the south, Bury New Road to the west and The Radius and Fairfax Road to the north.
 - Land north of Fairfax Road – an “L” shaped area of existing surface parking bound by Fairfax Road to the south, the Metrolink line to the east, existing properties on Highfield Place to the north and existing properties on Highfield Road and Our Lady of Grace Roman Catholic (RC) Church to the west.
- 3.3 The site is located within Prestwich Village centre and approximately 5.6km north of Manchester City Centre and 6.2km south of Bury Town Centre.
- 3.4 There are no existing watercourses directly in or within the vicinity of the site. The site is entirely located in Flood Zone 1 which is defined as having a less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of flooding and is therefore at the lowest risk of fluvial flooding. However, the Environment Agency flood map for planning service identifies there are small areas of the site’s northern extent which are subject to low-medium risk of surface water flooding.
- 3.5 There are no designated heritage assets within the site boundary. There are a cluster of Grade II Listed Buildings located c. 290m southwest of the site. These are associated with the Grade I Listed Church of St Mary. There are also a number of non-designated heritage assets (or ‘locally listed’) located adjacent to the site boundary (Wilton Arms Hotel (Istanbul Grill), The Railway and Naturalists public house, Barclays Bank and Our Lady of Grace (OLOG) RC Church). The site is not located within or adjacent to a Conservation Area however, the nearest Conservation Area is Poppythorn Conservation Area which is

located approximately 78m north east of the site (at its closet point located beyond the Metrolink tram line) and St Mary's Conservation Area which is located approximately 130m south of the site.

- 3.6 The site is not located within or adjacent to any statutory or non-statutory designated ecological sites. The nearest statutory designated site is Ashclough Site of Special Scientific Interest ("SSSI") located c. 5.1km northwest. The nearest non-statutory designated site is Prestwich Clough, a Site of Biological Importance located c. 370m south of the site.
- 3.7 There are no Tree Preservation Orders designated on or adjacent to the site.
- 3.8 There are no statutory landscape designations in or within the vicinity of the site including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, nor are there any Public Rights of Way within or adjacent to the site.
- 3.9 Part of Bury New Road (A56) is located within an Air Quality Management Area ("AQMA"). The Bury AQMA has been designated for potential exceedances of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) annual mean and 24-hour mean for particulate matter (PM) air quality objectives.
- 3.10 The local traffic network includes Bury New Road which is a well-trafficked route in the Borough which is situated immediately adjacent to the west of the site. In addition, there is a Noise Important Area (NIA) (ID: 1743) situated immediately adjacent to the west of the site on Bury New Road. Approximately 430m north of the site, the local highway network connects to Junction 17 of the M60 motorway network.

Surrounding Area and Accessibility

- 3.11 The surrounding area is typical of an urban town or village centre providing a mix of retail and other commercial uses and residential neighbourhoods. Just outside of the application site boundary is The Radius development which provides high rise apartment living of up to 10 storeys with ground floor retail uses including Superdrug and Costa Coffee. There are also some standalone retail buildings such as Marks & Spencer (M&S) Food and Farmfoods.
- 3.12 South of Rectory Lane is the St Mary's C of E Primary School beyond which is an established residential neighbourhood with existing amenities such as Aldi, Prestwich Church Institute and Men's Club and the Red Lion public house.

- 3.13 West of the site is Bury New Road, which is a key arterial route into Manchester. Bury New Road accommodates a range of independent retailers and further north is Tesco and Junction 17 of the M60 motorway.
- 3.14 North of Fairfax Road is Our Lady of Grace RC Church and beyond that is Highfield Road, Highfield Place and allotments.
- 3.15 The site occupies an accessible location, in close proximity to an extensive range of services, facilities and public transport infrastructure provided within the Village centre.
- 3.16 The Prestwich Metrolink sits immediately adjacent to the east of the site and is accessible via Rectory Lane. The Metrolink services which operate from the stop comprise the Green Line (Bury – Altrincham) and Yellow Line (Bury – Piccadilly), and provide direct access to Manchester stations, including Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Victoria. The tram service operates on a 12-minute frequency throughout the day, with journey times of 15 minutes to Bury and 20 minutes to Manchester Victoria station.
- 3.17 The site is also well serviced by bus stops with the Longfield Centre (Stop B) immediately adjacent to the site. The 66 bus runs from the Longfield Centre to Eccles Interchange. The Longfield Centre (Stop B) is located to the west of the site along Bury New Road and serves the X43, 97, 94, 98, 95, 90, X43, 66, 97, X41, X43, 98, 66 bus services. These run to various routes around Greater Manchester including Bury, Eccles, Pendleton, Shudehill, Manchester City Centre, Salford, Simister and Higher Crumpsall.

Planning History Summary

- 3.18 The majority of the planning history associated with the application site, has consisted of minor applications for advertisement consent, change of use and minor alterations to the existing Longfield Centre. A summary of these applications is enclosed at Appendix 2 of the Supporting Planning Statement (Asteer Planning, January 2024) which accompanies the planning application.
- 3.19 However, the redevelopment and regeneration of Prestwich Village centre has been proposed since the early 1990s in various formats. Two significant regeneration schemes have been proposed:
- An outline application submitted by Hollins Murray Group in 2009 (references 51465 & 54978).
 - Proposals submitted for the redevelopment of the Longfield Shopping Centre in 1991 and 1992 (references 27452, 26636 and 25292).

3.20 Further details of the above proposals are detailed below.

Hollins Murray Group Applications (2009 – Applications references 51465 & 54978)

3.21 Application reference 51465 proposed the following:

“Demolition of existing buildings and construction of a town centre mixed use development comprising uses with floor areas of up to: Food retail (6040sqm), non food retail (2218sqm), restaurant (385sqm), library (1287sqm), offices (3360sqm), residential (3 units), hotel (70 bed), new Longfield Suite entrance (540sqm), plant areas (421sqm), parking spaces (384) and highway infrastructure works and extension of Rectory Lane.”

3.22 The outline application, which reserved all matters, set out parameters for a mix of uses across the site, comprising retail, restaurants, a hotel, library, apartments, offices and car parking.

3.23 Application ref 51465 was approved in September 2009, with the permission extended in 2012, under reference 54978 in 2012 for another 5 years.

3.24 From a desk based review, it is understood that the proposals were never implemented and the planning permission has now lapsed.

1990s Applications

3.25 Capital Holdings Ltd proposed the refurbishment of the Longfield Centre in 1991 and 1992. In May 1991 the following planning permission was granted (reference 25292):

“Refurbishment of the Longfield Centre including new shops, re-roofing and servicing arrangements”.

3.26 A revised application was approved in December 1991 (reference 26636), with a further revision refused in August 1992 (reference 27452). From a desk based review, it is understood that the proposals have not been implemented and the planning permission has lapsed.

3.27 As noted above, further detail on relevant historic applications is included within the accompanying Supporting Planning Statement prepared by Asteer Planning.

Summary

3.28 The application site extends to approximately 2.48 hectares and comprises land to the south and north of Fairfax Road including The Longfield Centre, Prestwich Library and The Longfield Suite, The Fairfax Group Practice Medical Centre, areas of surface car parking

and Rectory Lane. As well as being in close proximity to the M60 motorway, the site is well served by sustainable travel infrastructure including the Metrolink and existing bus Infrastructure which provides connections to Bury, Manchester City Centre and across the North West.