

Planning Brief

Unity Mill
Pole Acre Lane, Woodley



March 2010

Economic Regeneration Service
Communities Regeneration and Environment Directorate



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING BRIEF

Unity Mill, Pole Acre Lane, Woodley

1.0 **OBJECTIVE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide planning guidance for the future use of the Unity Mill site.
- 1.2 This brief has been prepared by the Economic Regeneration Service, Communities Regeneration and Environment Directorate, Stockport Council.

2.0 **BACKGROUND**

2.1 **Location and Context**

The Unity Mill complex is located off Pole Acre Lane, Woodley (see Plan 1 in Appendix).

The area in which it is located is semi-rural in character and on the fringe of the built up area between Stockport, Hyde and Denton. The mill is situated in an isolated location between the Peak Forest Canal and a main railway line. The main access is off an unnamed and unadopted street from Poleacre Lane, leading from Hyde Road.

2.2 **Opportunities**

The mill buildings overlook the Peak Forest Canal and are within the Peak Forest Canal Conservation Area. A conservation area character appraisal, carried out by the Council in 2008 in accordance with English Heritage guidance on 'Conservation Area Appraisals' (2006), identifies the mill as a key unlisted building which contributes positively to the character of the conservation area.

The mill complex is included in the Council's local list of buildings of local historic, architectural or other special character interest. The buildings have been empty for some time and there are opportunities for new uses.



3.0 SITE INFORMATION

3.1 Site Description

The site area is approximately 1.46ha (see Plan 2 in Appendix).

The site is occupied by a four storey main brick mill building, constructed in the 1860s as a textile mill for the cotton industry. The building has rectangular windows with stone cills and brick arches and has a gabled slate roof. Other features include :

- a possible engine house to the rear of the mill building.
- an octagonal brick chimney and a possible boiler house.
- an office block at the front
- a disused bowling green at the front.

An overgrown canal wharf is located at the rear of the site.

The site is vacant and surrounded by security fencing. Group 4 Securities currently monitors these premises.

The site is bounded:

- to the north by a wooded area and open fields
- to the south by woodland and an area of housing off Davenport Drive
- to the east by open space, a railway line (Manchester/Sheffield), Poleacre Lane and an area of housing
- to the west by the Peak Forest Canal and woodland.

3.2 Existing Land Use

Up to December 2002 the site had been used for the manufacture of products for the food, animal feed and brewing sector. Manufacture ceased there in 2003 and the mill has been empty since then.

3.3 Ownership

The site is in private ownership.

3.4 Planning History

There are no outstanding Planning Applications or Enforcement Actions relating to the buildings or site.

Application (Ref. DC024375) for Certificate of Lawfulness for established use (Sec 191): The Council certified on 24th November 2006 that on 2nd October 2006 the use of Unity Mill for Class B2 (General Industrial) purposes was lawful as such permitted change of use rights conferred by the GDPO 1995 would allow Class B1 (Business) use or Class B8 (Storage & Distribution) use limited to 235 square metres

3.5 Public Utilities

It is assumed that main services are readily available and that details can be obtained from the appropriate statutory provider. It is the responsibility however of the developer to satisfy themselves in this regard.

4.0 SITE FEATURES AND CONSTRAINTS

4.1 Building Condition

As the site is secure it has not been possible to carry out a survey of the condition of the buildings. A full condition survey will need to be carried out by the owner to inform the future development of the site.

4.2 Historic Background

The mill buildings are considered to be of archaeological and historic interest and are included in the Greater Manchester Sites and Monuments Record (Ref MGM 3239). The mill is thought to have been constructed in the 1860s for spinning cotton and was formerly known as Trianon Mill. By the 1890's the mill was converted to a rubber works¹ then back again to a textile mill. The site has been used for the manufacture of products for the food, animal feed and brewing sector until it closed in December 2003.

A former canal basin behind the mill is also recorded on the Greater Manchester Sites and Monuments Record, Ref MGM 14973 and is thought to have been built to serve the Hall Lane Colliery, established pre 1829. The wharf was later associated with the Mill. Although the canal bank is overgrown the outline of the basin is extant and the opportunity should be investigated in conjunction with the Council and British Waterways to restore this historic feature and facility as part of any future redevelopment scheme for the Mill.

Adjoining the southern boundary of Unity Mill site, south west of the mill building, is the site of the Coal Pit Fields. Now an overgrown wooded area this site is also included in the Greater Manchester Sites and Monuments record (Ref MGM 14974). The site is shown on the 1871 OS Map and is another feature of the area's historic growth and development associated with the coal mining, textile industry and the canal which could provide a source for recreation and an opportunity for heritage interpretation.

¹ Source : 'Stockport : A History' (Peter Arrowsmith 1997)

4.3 Ground Conditions

The site was initially used for cotton spinning and weaving and evident on the 1871 OS sheet is a gasometer and crane, located west of the building and facing the canal. Later, as evident on the 1910 OS sheet, the mill was used for the manufacture of rubber. The gasometer and crane have been demolished and since the 1950s the mill site had been used for the manufacture of products for the food and brewing sectors until production ceased.

The council is not aware of any abnormal ground conditions but a site with long and varied industrial uses may have resulted in some contamination legacy. Textile mill processes may give rise to contamination from the use of chemicals in the past during the textile manufacture processes. It is therefore the developer's responsibility to conduct detailed ground surveys to ensure suitability and stability of the site for any development.

4.4 Access and Parking

The site is situated in a semi-rural location at the edge of the settlement of Woodley, approximately 550m from Woodley Railway Station, 500m from the nearest bus stop and 1.25km from Woodley Local Shopping Centre.

Access from the strategic road network (A560, Hyde Road) is via Poleacre Lane and an unnamed and unadopted road. Poleacre Lane, which also serves a small residential area is sub-standard in nature, notably along its western section which operates as a one-way road (eastbound). The unnamed road is also sub-standard in nature, being single-track for the majority of its length and passing over a narrow railway bridge. When the site was occupied all vehicles including articulated lorries and tankers, accessing the site used Poleacre Lane and the unnamed road and it is understood that there is a history of problems associated with traffic generated from the site.

A high-frequency bus route runs along the A560 Hyde Road and provides direct access to Ashton-under-Lyne, Dukinfield, Hyde, Bredbury and Stockport Town Centre. Other less frequent bus services provide access to Romiley and Brinnington. Direct access by rail can be gained to Woodley from Manchester, Hyde, Romiley and Marple, although such services are not frequent.

There are no dedicated cycle routes within the vicinity of the site.

Having regard to the nature of the current highway network and transport facilities and local, regional and national guidance and policies, notably those contained in PPG13, Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the UDP Review improvements to the site's access arrangements and transport infrastructure / services in the area will be required.

When the mill was operating, parking facilities for up to 60 cars were provided within two laid out car parking areas at the front (eastern elevation) of the mill. Additional space was also available to the rear of the mill.

4.5 Existing and Adjacent Buildings

Unity Mill is of historic significance and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Peak Forest Canal Conservation Area. The mill complex is also included in the Council's list of buildings of local historic, architectural or other special character interest. These factors will need to be taken into account in any consideration of an alternative use.

The Council will require prospective developers to carry out an assessment and analysis of the significance and uniqueness of the mill buildings and curtilage features to inform the design process. This should be carried out prior to submitting an application for development, adaptation, refurbishment or repair works. Prospective developers should liaise and consult the Stockport Council Conservation Officer at an early stage prior to preparing detailed proposals and submission of an application for development. The English Heritage publication 'Informed Conservation' provides further guidance.

4.6 Peak Forest Canal Conservation Area

The Mill and associated buildings lies within the Peak Forest Canal conservation area which was designated in 2000 and extended in 2008.

The Peak Forest Canal was built originally to transport limestone from the quarries in the Dove Holes area of Derbyshire to Marple, Ashton and then onto Manchester via the Ashton canal. Construction was commenced in 1794 and completed by 1801, except for the flight of locks at Marple which presented a major financial problem to the promoters of the canal until the necessary capital could be found. The canal would have attracted and influenced the location of the Mill here as coal and raw materials could be brought in and factory produced goods transported away.

The special character of this Conservation Area is derived from the following elements (Peak Forest Canal Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2008, Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council):

- *Use of locally quarried materials for canal structures,*
- *Buildings and structures related to the canal and its industries: canal warehouses; managers houses; lime kilns and dispatch buildings; toll house; smithy; lock keepers cottages; locks; bridges viaducts and aqueducts; tunnels*
- *Stone boundary walls and retaining walls at embankments*
- *Stone mileposts, cast iron bridge number plates and waterways furniture*
- *Suburban, semi-rural and rural stretches providing the setting for the canal*
- *Constantly changing views, narrow in urban areas, opening up with panoramic landscape views in rural locations, river and dense woodland of the Goyt Valley*
- *Stone walls trees and hedgerows serving to delineating the boundary of the canal and towpath*
- *Views and vistas of outstanding quality throughout the conservation area*

- *Soft edges provided by mature trees hedgerows and embankment vegetation*
- *Gardens and buildings directly fronting the canal*
- *The canal's role as a wildlife corridor*
- *Buildings of architectural merit dating from the 18th and 19th centuries associated with the development or location of the canal*
- *Archaeological evidence for previous canal structures/industries including former mill sites and Marple tramway*
- *Canal marinas, wharves, ponds etc.*
- *Strong association with the pioneer industrialist Samuel Oldknow*
- *Idiosyncratic 'Oldknow Vernacular' manifested in early 19th century buildings*

The appraisal is downloadable from :

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/services/business/regeneration/consheritage/conseruationareas/peakforest>

The Council endeavours to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas by the special control of development in accordance with Policies contained within the Stockport Unitary Development Plan.

The mill was identified in the character appraisal as a key unlisted building making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Peak Forest Canal conservation area. This mill can be seen from the canal towpath and public footpath running north and east of the site.

Conservation area designation automatically entails control over the demolition of unlisted buildings, strengthens controls over minor development and gives special protection to trees within the conservation area.

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1** The **North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (RSS)** forms a statutory part of the Council's development plan and therefore due regard should be paid to the policies it contains.

In particular Policy EM18 states, in part, that "in advance of local targets being set, new non residential developments above a threshold of 1,000m² and all residential developments comprising 10 or more units should secure at least 10% of their predicted energy requirements from all decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources, unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable"

In addition RSS Policy DP1.5 requires that *"All new development should be genuinely accessible by public transport, walking and cycling"*.

5.2 Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 2 Green Belts (Department for Communities and Local Government, January 1995 as amended March 2001)

PPG2 outlines Government policy relating to Green Belt land-use objectives and sets out the presumption against inappropriate development. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness. There is a general presumption against inappropriate development within them. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Para 3.8 of PPS2 states that the re-use of buildings inside a Green Belt is not inappropriate development providing:

- (a) it does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it;
- (b) strict control is exercised over the extension of re-used buildings, and over any associated uses of land surrounding the building which might conflict with the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it (eg because they involve extensive external storage, or extensive hardstanding, car parking, boundary walling or fencing);
- (c) the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction, and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction; and
- (d) the form, bulk and general design of the buildings are in keeping with their surroundings.

5.3 Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004)

PPS7 sets out the Government's planning policies for rural areas, including country towns, villages and the wider, largely undeveloped countryside up to the fringes of larger urban areas. The Government's policy is to support the re-use of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside where this would meet sustainable development objectives. Re-use for economic development purposes will usually be preferable, but residential conversions may be more appropriate in some locations, and for some types of building.

5.4 Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 15 Planning and the Historic Environment (Department of National Heritage, September 1994)

PPG15 is the primary national policy guidance for development in conservation areas and provides national policy guidance on the demolition of buildings within Conservation Areas (paragraphs 4.25-4.29). The general presumption is in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character

or appearance of a conservation area. The Secretary of State expects that proposals to demolish such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings. These criteria are set out in paragraphs 3.16-3.19 of PPG15 and include :

- assessment of the condition of the building, the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to the value derived from its continued use.
- evidence that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses or find viable new uses and these efforts have failed. This should include the offer of the unrestricted freehold of the building on the open market at a realistic price reflecting the buildings condition and demonstration that preservation in some form of community ownership is not possible or suitable
- assessment of the merits of alternative proposals for the site to show that redevelopment would produce substantial benefits for the community which would excessively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition

5.5 Stockport Unitary Development Plan (Review) Adopted 31 May 2006 (UDP)

Green Belt Policy

The site lies within the Greater Manchester Green Belt and therefore any development proposal will be subject to policy GBA1.2 Control of Development in the Green Belt. Under this policy there is a presumption against the construction of new buildings within the Green Belt unless it is for the following purposes:

- (i) agriculture and forestry (unless permitted development rights have been withdrawn);
- (ii) essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it;
- (iii) limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings (in accordance with Policy GBA1.5); or
- (iv) limited infilling or redevelopment of Major Existing Developed Sites identified on the Proposals Map, in accordance with Policy GBA1.7 (nb the Unity Mill site is not identified as a Major Existing Developed Site)

Additional guidance is set out overleaf :

Residential New Build in the Green Belt (GBA1.2)

Any proposal for residential new build would need to demonstrate very special circumstances that outweigh any harm to the Green Belt caused by the new development. Such special circumstances might include :

- there is no other appropriate use for the site
- evidence that there is no other viable non residential use for the site

- the potential for the scheme to deliver wider sustainability gains
- the development is necessary to conserve and ensure the future of the locally listed building
- the design of the development would enhance local distinctiveness and the character and appearance of the Peak Forest Canal Conservation Area.

Given the need for very special circumstances to be demonstrated, if planning permission is granted, including permission for residential new build, it would be a departure from the development plan. Government Office would need to be notified of any such approval and may decide to call-in the decision for further consideration.

Residential conversions in the Green Belt (GBA 1.6)

Under Policy GBA1.6 changing the use or conversion of buildings of permanent and substantial construction will be permitted provided that the building:

- (i) would be used for economic or other purposes other than wholly residential ones
- (ii) would maintain openness and would not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt and
- (iii) would safeguard or improve the appearance of the rural environment.

In addition all buildings should be structurally sound, well related to their surroundings and capable of:

- (iv) accommodating the new use without the need for major rebuilding or extension
- (v) being provided with adequate curtilage without adverse impact on the Green Belt and
- (vi) being satisfactorily accessed and serviced without adverse impact on the Green Belt

In the case of buildings which may be used by bats, barn owls or other protected species satisfactory investigation must be carried out into the possible presence of such species and where, appropriate measures must be implemented to ensure that legal obligations are met and that any damage to habitats is minimised.

Any proposal for wholly residential development would need to demonstrate that there is no viable non-residential use. Because Unity Mill was most recently used for employment purposes developers will be expected to demonstrate that there is no viable employment use if the proposal involves any alternative use(s). This should include a demonstration that reasonable efforts have been taken to market the property for employment uses for a period of at least 12 months.

Provision of Affordable Housing (HP2.1)

Under Policy HP2.1 the Council will seek to negotiate with developers to ensure the provision of a proportion of affordable housing for local needs in new residential schemes, including allocated sites, windfall sites, conversions and renewals of existing or expired permissions. Affordable housing is required to provide housing for people on low or moderate incomes who cannot afford to rent or buy their own home in the Borough in current open market conditions.

In negotiating with developers the Council will have regard to the proximity of local services, facilities and access to public transport; the site's suitability and the economics of its development, taking into account any demonstrable constraints; and the need to achieve a successful housing development which would create a mixed and inclusive community, and would integrate well with neighbouring housing areas.

Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (NE1.2)

The site is adjacent to a designated site of biological importance which follows the canal corridor and former wharf. Proposals for development must demonstrate that there is a justification overriding any harm to the nature conservation value of the site. In addition policy NE1.6 deals with development liable to cause harm to legally protected species (eg bats, great crested newts, common otter, badgers, floating water plantain, habitats of water voles, kinfisher and certain other birds).

Land for Active Recreation Policy (L1.1)

The site contains a bowling green which should be retained for active recreation purposes. As the site is in the green belt the land is considered unlikely to be built on in the event of any development at the site. The council would seek to ensure its continued use as a bowling green or other active recreation.

Strategic Recreation Route Policy (L1.8)

The mill fronts the Peak Forest Canal which forms part of the Cheshire ring of canals. The towpath is shown as a Strategic Recreation Route in the UDP proposals map and is subject to protection under policies L1.7 and L1.8.

Landscape Character Area Policy (LCR 1.1 and 1.1a)

Unity Mill lies within an identified Landscape Character Area, Area E, Tame Valley. These areas cover the whole of the Green Belt in the Borough together with adjoining open land and some parts of the urban area within river valley boundaries.

Listed Buildings (HC2, HC2.5)

The mill complex is included in the Council's list of buildings of local historic, architectural or other special character interests based on local interest and is a valuable architectural and heritage feature therefore policy HC2.5 applies.

'Development proposals affecting buildings or groups of buildings of local historic, architectural or other special character interest will not be permitted unless:

- (i) the proposal safeguards the character of the existing building(s) in its (their) settings; or*
- (ii) there would be no ensuing loss to the visual character and amenity value of the site and no detriment to the visual quality, setting and interest of the local area.*

There will be a presumption against demolition and redevelopment unless the proposals meet the requirements of item (ii) of this policy and would result in no net environmental loss.'

Conservation Areas (HC1, HC1.1, HC1.3)

Development proposals will need to take account of the location of the Mill complex within the Peak Forest Canal Conservation Area which is subject to policies to safeguard the special character and appearance of the conservation area

The presumption in all conservation areas is that the existing building work stock will remain, unless there are justifiable reasons for demolition and development on a cleared site.

Full applications must be made for planning permission, listed building and conservation areas consents. These should include detailed plans and elevations of any proposal in its setting, together with precise specification of all materials used. The design of any new buildings must be in keeping with the style, size, and massing of adjoining buildings or with the essential character of the conservation area. Alterations and extensions to existing buildings should be designed in sympathy with the architectural character of the buildings to which they relate.

The existing landscape framework of the area should be respected in the design of new planting scheme. Where there are existing trees, a tree survey is required as part of any planning application to show the impact of development on the existing landscape.

Policy HC1.3 states that development proposals within a conservation area (or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area and/or views into or out of the area) will not be permitted unless:

- (i) The siting, scale, design and materials and landscaping are sympathetic to the site and surroundings.
- (ii) The proposal safeguards important open spaces, views, skylines or other features which contribute to the appearance of the Conservation Area

- (iii) The application is accompanied by sufficient details to show the proposals within their settings and the likely impact on the conservation area.

Recording of Archaeological Evidence (HC3.3)

Unity Mill is registered on the Greater Manchester Sites and Monuments Record (paragraph 4.2). Where a site and building is expected to reveal material of archaeological importance the Council will require prospective developers at an early stage to liaise and consult with the planning archaeologist at the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit (GMAU) and the Stockport Council Conservation Officer prior to submitting an application for development. Developers may be expected to fund archaeological investigations or recording to inform the design process prior to submitting an application.

5.6 Additional Guidance

The Commission of Architecture and Built Environment (CABE) and English Heritage Document 'Building in Context-new development in conservation areas' advocates a high standard of design when development takes place in historically sensitive areas. Any development is expected to:

- ii) relate well to the geography and history of the area and to the lie of the land
- iii) sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it
- iv) respect important views
- v) respect the scale of neighbouring buildings
- vi) use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings

5.7 Permitted Land Uses

Existing B1 (Business), B2 (General Industrial), and B8 (Storage and Distribution) uses are acceptable in this location in accordance with the established use for the site (see para 3.4).

The context for assessing residential new build and conversion to residential uses is set out in 5.3.

Careful consideration will need to be given to the impact of any proposals for alternative uses and developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances that clearly outweigh any harm if inappropriate development is to be acceptable.

5.8 Unacceptable Uses

A1 (retail)

6.0 GENERAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

- 6.1** Any development will be required to accord with the relevant policies contained in the **Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review** adopted on 31st May 2006 and the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (RSS) adopted September 2008. The following are particularly relevant:

DCD1-Design and Character

DCD 1.1 Design Principles

DCD 1.2 Design Appraisals

DCD 1.3 Access for People with Access Difficulties

DCD 1.4 Landscaping of New Development

DCD 1.6 Public Health and Safety and Security in Developments

Landscape, Countryside and River Valleys

LCR1.1 Landscape Character Areas

LCR1.1a The urban Fringe including the River valleys

Natural Environment

NE1 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

NE1.2 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance

NE1.3 Development and the Natural Environment

NE1.6 Species Protection

EP1 Environmental Protection and Improvement

EP1.2 Treatment of Derelict and Vacant Land

EP 1.3 Control of Pollution

EP 1.4 Light Pollution

EP 1.5 Development on or near Contaminated Sites

Green Belt and Agriculture

GBA1.2 Control of Development in Green Belt

GBA1.6 Re-use of buildings in the Green Belt

Heritage

HC1 Conservation Areas

HC1.1 Demolition and Tree Felling in Conservation Areas

HC1.3 Special Control of Development in Conservation Areas

HC2 Listed Buildings

HC2.5 Development Affecting Buildings of Local Interest

Protection of Archaeological Sites

HC3.2 Field Evaluation and Development

HC3.3 Recording of Archaeological Evidence

Leisure

L1.1 Land for Active Recreation

L1.8 Strategic Recreation Routes

Housing Provision

HP1 Housing Provision
HP1.2 Phasing of Housing Development
HP2.1 Provision of Affordable Housing

Economy

E1.1 Location of New Industrial Development
E 1.2 Location of New Business Premises and Offices
E 4 Employment Uses outside employment Areas
E 4.1 Industrial, Warehouse, Storage and Office Premises outside
Employment Areas

Strategic and Sustainable Transport

ST1 Sustainable transport
ST1.4 Walking
ST1.5 Cycling

Transport and Development

TD 1.1 Achieving Accessible Development
TD 1.4 Parking in Developments
TD 1.6 Accessibility and the Design of Development

Minerals, Waste and Energy

MW3 Energy Efficiency

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)/Documents (SPD)

In addition to the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review the council has produced a number of supplementary guidance notes to help inform development proposals. Particularly relevant to this brief are:

- Sustainable Design and Construction (SPD) adopted 31 May 2006.
Providing guidance on design and construction
- Provision of Affordable Housing (SPG) adopted 28th January 2003

Any development shall be designed to the highest standard to the satisfaction of the Local Authority Development Control Officers, and shall be constructed in accordance with the current Building Regulations to the satisfaction of the Local Authority Building Inspectors.

6.2 Design and Access Statements(DAS)

Any outline or full application for planning permission for a proposed change of use will require a Design and Access Statement to accompany the application unless the change of use will not involve building works or other operational development

The Council has prepared a short guidance note 'Stockport Guide to Design and Access Statements' which can be viewed at:

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/services/environment/planningbuildingplanningpolicy/developmentmanagement/applyforpermission/preparingaccessstatements>

The DAS will be specific to the application. The guide advises on what it should include for the design component and access components of the development that a developer/applicant will need to address.

The Access component of a DAS is particularly important for a building or space where there is access by the public, as such schemes are required to comply with the provisions of the Disability & Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). Further information can be found at:

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/services/environment/planningbuildingplanningpolicy/developmentmanagement/planningpolicy/disabilitydiscriminationact?view=Standard>

Further general information on Design & Access Statements is available through the following web-links:

- CABI Design & Access Statements: how to write, read and use them:
<http://www.cabi.org.uk/AssetLibrary/8073.pdf>
- Circular 1/2006: Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System:
http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/715/Circular0106DCLGGuidanceonChanges to the Development Control System_id1500715.pdf
- The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (England) Order 2006:
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/uksi_20061062_en.pdf

7.0 DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

7.1 Conversion to Residential Uses

Green belt issues relating to the principle of conversion of the mill to residential uses and for residential new build are addressed within para 5.2 and 5.5.

In addition UDP policy HP1.2 applies to proposed residential development when there is an over-supply of new housing provision. Over-supply is considered to have occurred when the number of new dwellings granted planning permission exceeds ten times the borough's regional housing requirement of 450 dwellings a year. Policy HP1.2 is currently in abeyance because there is not an over-supply of new housing.

To be considered suitable for any development, including any element of residential accommodation the site must be genuinely accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. This is a requirement of both local and regional policy. The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate the site is accessible and as stated above it is envisaged that improvements to the transport infrastructure and services in the area will be required. Further guidance relating to access requirements is included in para 8.7.

In times of over-supply, planning applications for housing development outside the urban area are not permitted by policy HP1.2 unless there are very strong positive regeneration benefits and the location is sustainable. Although converting the site to residential uses may satisfy the regeneration criteria outlined in HP1.2 it is not in an accessible location as defined by that policy.

UDP policies may be superseded by policies in future Local Development Framework Development Plan Documents (DPDs) such as the Core Strategy which is due for adoption in 2011.

If the site is considered suitable for housing the Council will negotiate to achieve 35% of the dwellings as affordable housing in line with policy HP2.1.

7.2 Business, General Industrial and Storage&Distribution

The mill complex has been empty since 2003 and there is no record of planning permission for the last known industrial use(s). An application has been granted for a certificate of lawfulness for a B2 general industrial use (paragraph 3.4). On this basis the following uses can be considered:

- B1 business use;
- B2 general industrial
- B8 storage and distribution

B1 business use includes

- a) Offices
- b) Research and development of products and processes
- c) Light industry.

Proposals to support the economy such as providing affordable, quality refurbished floorspace or managed workspaces and flexible, affordable accommodation that would allow small specialist industries such as high tech, music and arts and craft based industries could be considered.

7.3 Other uses

Proposals to take advantage of the location within a semi-rural and landscape character area close to recreational facilities such as the Peak Forest canal gives opportunities for other proposed uses for this mill to be considered:

C1 Hotels (subject to sequential test)

C2 Some types of Residential Institutions

Care and nursing homes should be located 'within reasonable walking distance of local facilities (Policy CDH1.3) and this site does not fulfil that criterion.

D1 Some types of Non-Residential institutions

8.0 **DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT**

8.1 **Materials**

External materials for any new build should be of good quality, hard wearing, visually appropriate and sympathetic in terms of colour and texture to the character of the existing buildings.

8.2 Conversion of Mill Buildings

Dating back to the 1860s the mill complex has been adapted and extended to accommodate growth of the mill over time. There is possibly an engine house and a boiler house to the rear. The octagonal brick chimney is a local landmark and should be retained.

The existing outbuildings and the twentieth century southern extension of the mill are of no special interest but any physical alterations to the older mill buildings which would harm the special local interest are unlikely to be supported.

The adaptation and sympathetic conversion of the mill building would represent the most desirable design solution in terms of historic building conservation and sustainable development. Proposals to alter the mill should be sympathetic in scale, proportion and materials to the existing building and should not detract from its character or setting.

Conversion of the mill to an appropriate new use is likely to require reconfiguration of the internal spaces and early consultation with Building Control Officers to discuss methods of fire containment and means of escape is recommended.

8.3 Building Recording and safekeeping of features of architectural/historic interest

The mill is included in the Greater Manchester Sites and Monuments Record (Ref MGM 3239), paragraph 4.2. The Council will therefore require prospective developers to liaise and consult with the County Archaeologist at the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit (GMAU) and the Stockport Council Conservation Officer at an early stage prior to preparing detailed proposals and the submission of an application for development (see paragraph 5.5)

To understand the historic significance and inform proposals for re-using the buildings developers will be expected to fund a level 3 archaeological/building investigation survey in line with the guidance produced by English heritage prior to submitting an application. A full description of the level of survey required can be found in 'Understanding Historic Buildings-a guide to good recording practice' published by English Heritage 2006 and can be viewed at the following web site: http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/Understanding_Historic_Buildings_1.pdf

Developers will also be required to consult with the Council's Curatorial and Design team at an early stage in order for the Council to assess the opportunities for architectural salvage and recycling. Any materials /items of architectural or historic interest likely to be affected as part of an approved development will be

identified in consultation with the developer so that arrangements can be made for appropriate transfer to safe off-site storage and/or re-use.

8.4 Setting of the Peak Forest Canal

The canal-side location of the mill is one of the characteristic features of the Peak Forest Canal Conservation Area (See paragraph 4.8). The Peak Forest Canal was used to transport coal, manufactured goods and building materials and influenced the location of canal side industry by allowing coal to be delivered to steam powered mills. Based on the historic OS maps which show a Canal Wharf (see para 4.2), Unity Mill was built with access to the canal for deliveries. Any scheme to re-use the mill should therefore give consideration to the opportunity to restore the canal wharf in order to give recognition to site's historic development and its visual relationship to the Canal.

8.5 Visual Impact

The mill has an impact and relationship to the surrounding landscape, forming a prominent landmark viewed from the surrounding fields, the canal and the canal tow-path. It compliments views of the landmark Houldsworth Mill, Reddish, in the distance. A visual impact of any new development associated with the conversion of the mill will need to be fully appraised, in shorter and longer term views, taking into consideration its location within the conservation area, the locally listed status of the building, its location within the Tame Valley Landscape Character area and within the Green Belt.

8.6 Existing Open Spaces

Existing open areas to the south-east of the mill and the bowling green should be given appropriate consideration. The bowling green should be retained for active recreation purposes (see paragraph 5.5, Land for Active Recreation Policy). As the site is in the green belt the land is considered unlikely to be built on in the event of any development at the site. The council would seek to ensure its continued use as a bowling green or other active recreation in any proposed scheme.

8.7 Access

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 (Transport) outlines that consideration of transportation issues should be an integral part of the development process and highlights the need for developments to be accessible by all modes of transport (notably by foot, cycle and public transport) and for sustainable transport choices promoted. This is to ensure that the impact of development is minimised, to reduce congestion and pollution and ensure that the transport needs of all occupiers and visitors to developments (notably those without access to a car) are met. This approach is reflected in Regional Spatial Strategy policy and the emerging Local Development Framework.

When drawing up proposals for the site, developers will need to review the site's existing access arrangements and develop proposals, in conjunction with the Council's Highway Engineer to ensure that the site can be accessed by pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles (including service vehicles) in an acceptable manner. Proposals should also ensure that sustainable modes of travel are encouraged and must also take into account the needs of the disabled. A Transport Assessment, produced in accordance with Government guidance, will need to be submitted in support any planning application relating to the development of the site and a Travel Plan will need to be produced and operated for any new development. Guidance on the production of Transport Assessments and Travel Plans is available from the Department for Transport's web-site (<http://www.dft.gov.uk/>).

As part of the transport assessment, developers will need to assess the impact of the development on the local highway network, assess how the development can be accessed by all modes of transport (this should include full accessibility assessments) and, based on such assessments, identify measures that will be required to mitigate any impact and ensure that the development can be accessed in a sustainable manner. Measures that may be required include the provision of pedestrian and cycle facilities in the vicinity of the site, improved bus stop facilities and improvements to the site access road.

Although the site access road is largely outside the Conservation Area proposals and improvements to the site access road, and surface treatment proposals will need to be in a design and materials sympathetic to the setting of the conservation area and the locally listed mill building. The 'Streets For All North West' (2005) jointly produced by English Heritage and the Department of Transport provides examples of good practice and design.

A key issue that will need to be addressed as part of any scheme to redevelop the site is the suitability of the existing railway bridge as a means of serving a development. A detailed assessment of the bridge should therefore be carried out in conjunction with the Council and Network Rail. Options to be investigated may include replacement of the bridge, altering / upgrading the bridge or constructing a new footbridge to the side of the existing bridge.

The towpath running alongside the Peak Forest Canal could provide an alternative and attractive pedestrian (and possible cycle) route between the site and Woodley Village Centre, although this would require the provision of a foot/cycle bridge over the canal from the site and possibly improvements to the towpath. This could be investigated, in conjunction with the Council and British Waterways as part of any redevelopment scheme.

Within the development, well-defined pedestrian routes should be provided from the site access and parking areas to all main entrances to the building, secure cycle parking must be located in prominent locations and all parts of the development must meet the requirements of Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and supporting Codes of Practice. In addition sufficient space should be provided within the site for the turning and maneuvering of service vehicles.

Signage should be clear and to the Council's approved standards. It will need to take account of people with a variety of disabilities

8.8 Parking

Parking for cars, cycles and powered two-wheelers (motorcycles, mopeds and scooters) should be provided in accordance with the Council's adopted standards. Car parking spaces closest to the mill should be allocated for the disabled and car sharers. Cycle parking should be in the form of long-stay (covered and secured cycle stores) and short-stay (Sheffield stands) cycle spaces.

In addition sufficient space should be allowed for the manoeuvring of service vehicles.

8.9 Landscaping

The handling of the relationships of the new or converted building to the external spaces and adjacent buildings is very important. The opportunity should be taken to create attractive, safe and easily maintained external spaces. They should compliment the building and the treatment of both hard and soft landscaped areas should be such as to encourage their use by both occupants and visitors.

8.10 Security

Secure and safe environments both within and outside the development should be provided. Proposals should take into account the principles of 'Crime Prevention through Environmental Design' (CPTED) which essentially seek to maximise natural surveillance, define public and private open spaces and create a public realm that removes opportunities for crime to take place. In line with Policy DCD1.6 (Public Health, safety and Security in development) of the UDP First Review, developers are advised to consult the GM Police Architectural Liaison Officer for crime prevention advice prior to submitting a planning application and using guidance such as incorporating 'Secured by Design' principles in a scheme. The benefits of crime prevention measures can be maximised by including it in the earliest stages of design.

There is now a requirement for all major applications to have a Crime Impact Statement and more information is available at:

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/services/environment/planningbuildingplanningpolicy/developmentmanagement/planningpolicy/crimeimpactstatement>

An appropriate level of intruder detection and alarm should be provided together with an assessment of the benefits of supplementing with external and internal CCTV provision.

The safety of pedestrian routes should be enhanced by high quality external lighting. Equally, avoiding light pollution is also desirable so that the outdoor lighting should be sensitive.

8.11 Sustainable Design and Construction

Sustainable design and construction is the concept of sustainable development as applied to the built environment and is concerned with issues such as increasing energy efficiency, reducing water consumption and minimising waste produced in construction and through use. The redevelopment of sites provides an opportunity to demonstrate the simplicity, practicality and cost effectiveness of using sustainable design and construction in developments. This can reduce energy and water consumption, make use of recycled, reusable and low energy embodied materials and reduce waste and pollution. The benefits of sustainable design and construction can be maximised by including it from the earliest stages of design.

Sustainable development is a key priority in Stockport Council's Sustainable Community Strategy, Government Policy and Regional Planning Guidance. The Council welcomes schemes which have regard to the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD. Further information and advice is available on all aspects of sustainable design and construction from the Council's Planning Policy Team. The Council will examine carefully any proposals for sustainable development within the context of the general development requirements of the UDP.

Materials specified for the developments will need to demonstrate high standards of visual attractiveness, durability and environmental performance. Consideration should also be given to how these materials could be re-used or re-cycled after their use in the proposed development and what, if any, actions can be taken during specification, selection and installation or use to make the future re-use or recycling easier. Redevelopment sites therefore present both an opportunity and a challenge to achieve imaginative and innovative, sustainable development through good building design.

9.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Developers are strongly encouraged to undertake a pre application engagement exercise with the local community. This can sometimes help identify local issues and possible solutions before a scheme is finalised and a planning application submitted. Forms and Guidance on how to go about this are available from Hygarth House or from the Council website at the following web address:

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/services/environment/planningbuildingplanningpolicy/developmentmanagement/applyforpermission/>

10.0 CONTACTS

Stockport Council

Regeneration Section

Crispin Edwards	Conservation Officer	0161 474 2620
Anna Highfield	Project Officer	0161 474 4571
David Johnston	Programme Manager	0161 474 4551

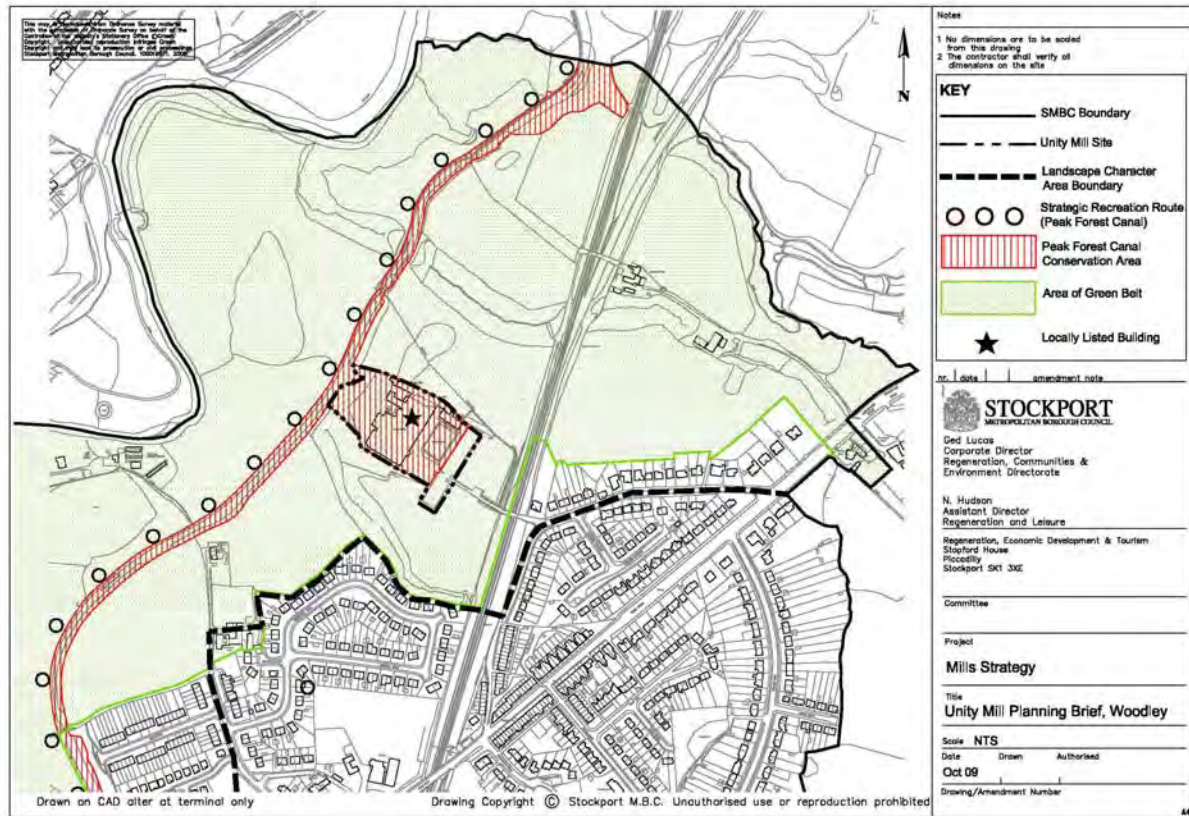
Development Control

Jane Chase	Planning Officer	0161 474 3550
Alex Bond	Development Control Engineer	0161 474 4906
Pippa Brown	Urban Design Officer	0161 474 3531

<u>Planning Policy Team</u>	0161 474 3526
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11.0 APPENDIX

Plan 1 : Unity Mill - Location and Context



Plan 2 : Unity Mill – Site Plan

