

Rochdale Reimagined Workbook

Site 05 : Bell Street



Rochdale Reimagined

Rochdale Reimagined is a project which looks at new ways to use historic buildings and spaces in Rochdale. Last year the project was completed by students of Manchester School of Architecture and this year it will be completed by students from three primary schools in Rochdale.

If you are reading this booklet then you are one of the school children who has been chosen to reimagine Rochdale and you will be working in a small group as your own “architectural practice” on one of five sites in the “Heritage Action Zone” in Rochdale. It is your job to dream up something amazing for these old buildings and vacant sites to make your town centre a vibrant place for everyone.

About Rochdale

Rochdale is a place that boomed during the industrial revolution, while the town was first mentioned almost 1000 years ago in the Domesday Book, it is a settlement shaped by the needs of manufacturing. Rochdale is on the border of both Lancashire and Yorkshire and that is reflected in the building materials, while red brick embellished with hard gritstone is mainly used around the town centre, you can equally see many buildings built using Yorkshire stone. It is situated in the valley of the River Roch which proved to be a great asset to manufacturing, with the slowly climbing Rochdale Canal following in 1804 and the railway in 1839.

The town is distinct; the structure of the landscape means that key buildings are clustered into the compact town centre, focussing upon the river. The magnificently Gothic Town Hall, the mediaeval parish church St Chads, the Riverside Offices, bus station and shopping centre are situated within the valley, while the skyline is dominated by a line of great tower blocks called the Seven Sisters.

Rochdale town centre has been undergoing impressive regeneration in recent years with the opening of the new council offices, new transport infrastructure including the Metrolink trams arriving in the town centre, while investment into public spaces including re-opening the river and historic bridges has brought new life to the town. A new market opened recently and more and more independent businesses choose Rochdale for their home base. The regeneration programme is continuing with the impressive Riverside Centre to be opened in 2020. Despite these significant changes there are parts of the town centre that have continued to decline or face challenges; these include Rochdale’s historic high street and one of the main gateways to the town centre, Drake Street.

What is a Heritage Action Zone?

The sites which you will be looking at are in an area that was awarded “Heritage Action Zone” status in 2017 by an organisation called Historic England. Heritage Action Zones are areas of historic interest which have been selected for a targeted regeneration project. Historic buildings which have deteriorated through decades of neglect will be restored and put back into use, and unsung places will be recognised and celebrated for their unique character and heritage, helping to instil a sense of local pride.



Site 05 : Bell Street

Site 04 : Fashion Corner + Waterside

Site 03 : Champness Hall

Site 02 : The Retail Park

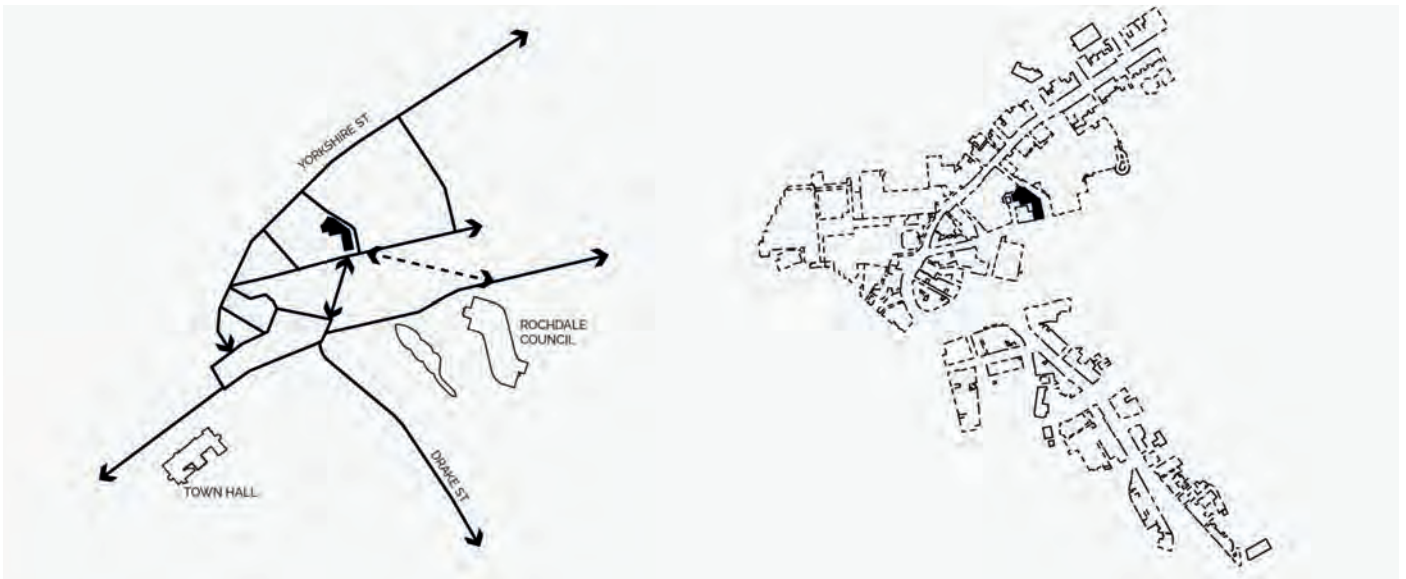
Site 01 : The Railway Station

Bell Street

This site is located in the heart of the town centre. The site directly faces the new Rochdale Riverside scheme and links with Yorkshire St the main shopping area. The building that used to be located on the site was demolished around 1980s and the site has been vacant ever since.

The challenge of this site is to re-design an area of land bounded by Bell Street and Baillie Street, to design an attractive public realm scheme that links the new Rochdale Riverside retail scheme with the existing town centre.

This public space should welcome people into the town and provide something fun and exciting as well as a place to sit and take in the views.



These diagrams show the links to some surrounding buildings.



These drawings show what the site looks like now from different views.

History

Bell Street was laid out between 1824 and 1851 and was right in the middle of Rochdale's industrial core. The buildings on the east side were demolished for the Wheatsheaf Shopping Centre that was built in 1990 by Chapman Taylor Partners, which has sheer brick walls to Bell Street. Bell Street site is a vacant site next to the shopping centre that is bordered by three historic buildings, a warehouse and shops. The building that used to be located on the site was demolished probably in the 1980s and the site has been vacant ever since.



1831

Site originally gardens and a bowling green



1835

A new street developed called Baille St



1852

Site becomes occupied by a building



1893

Buildings extended, wollen mill and iron foundry nearby



1930

Street is industrial, consisting of warehouses and offices



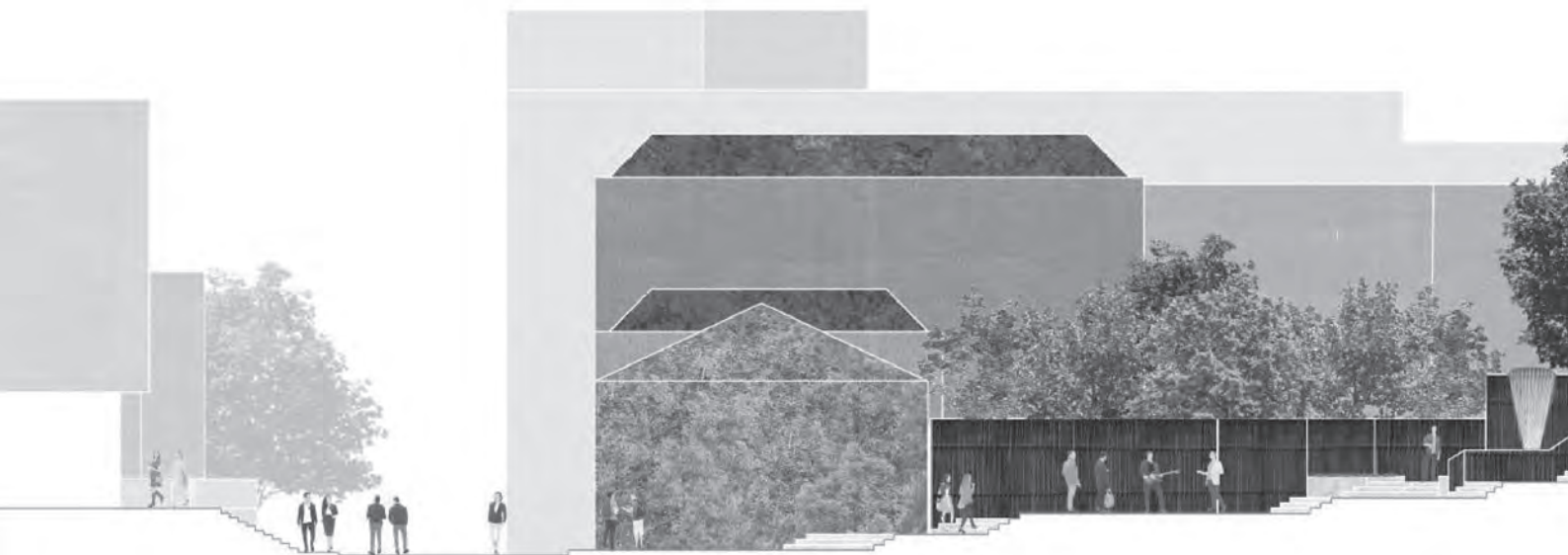
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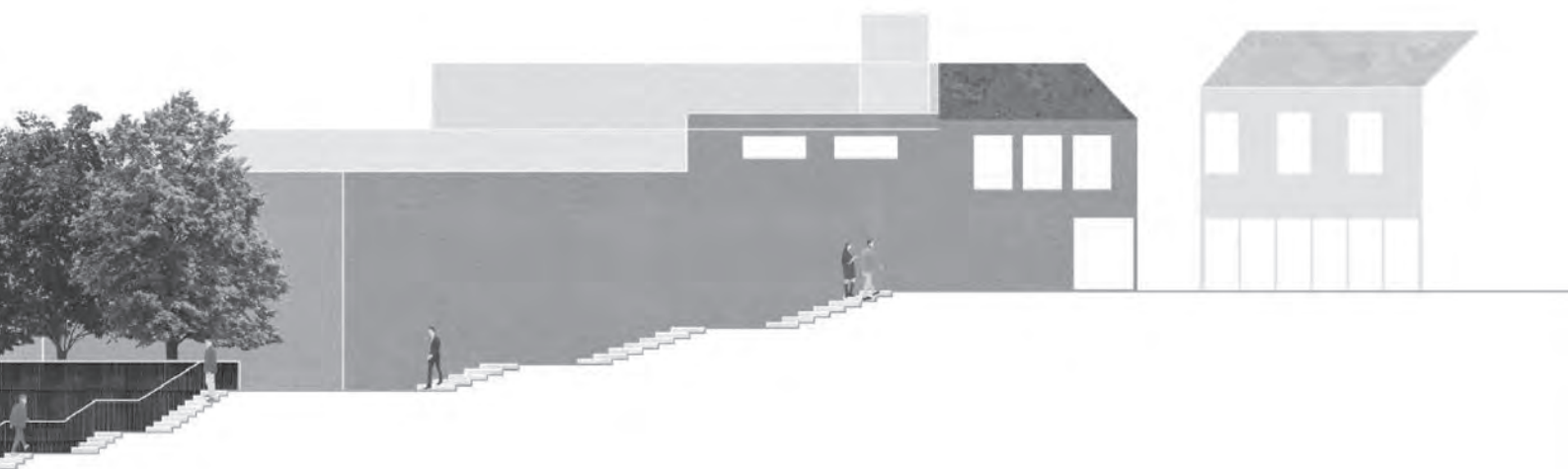
Industry declines and building start to be demolished



These historic maps and this collage show some of the past uses of the site.

This 3D plan shows the site from above with the shopping centre in the background.





This is a "site section" which shows the level changes across the site.



Project for a new play area by Guang and Benny.



Project for a new floor by Yuansui and Jingchun.



Project for a new public square by Jake and Luke.



Project for a new tower on the site by Hugh.



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