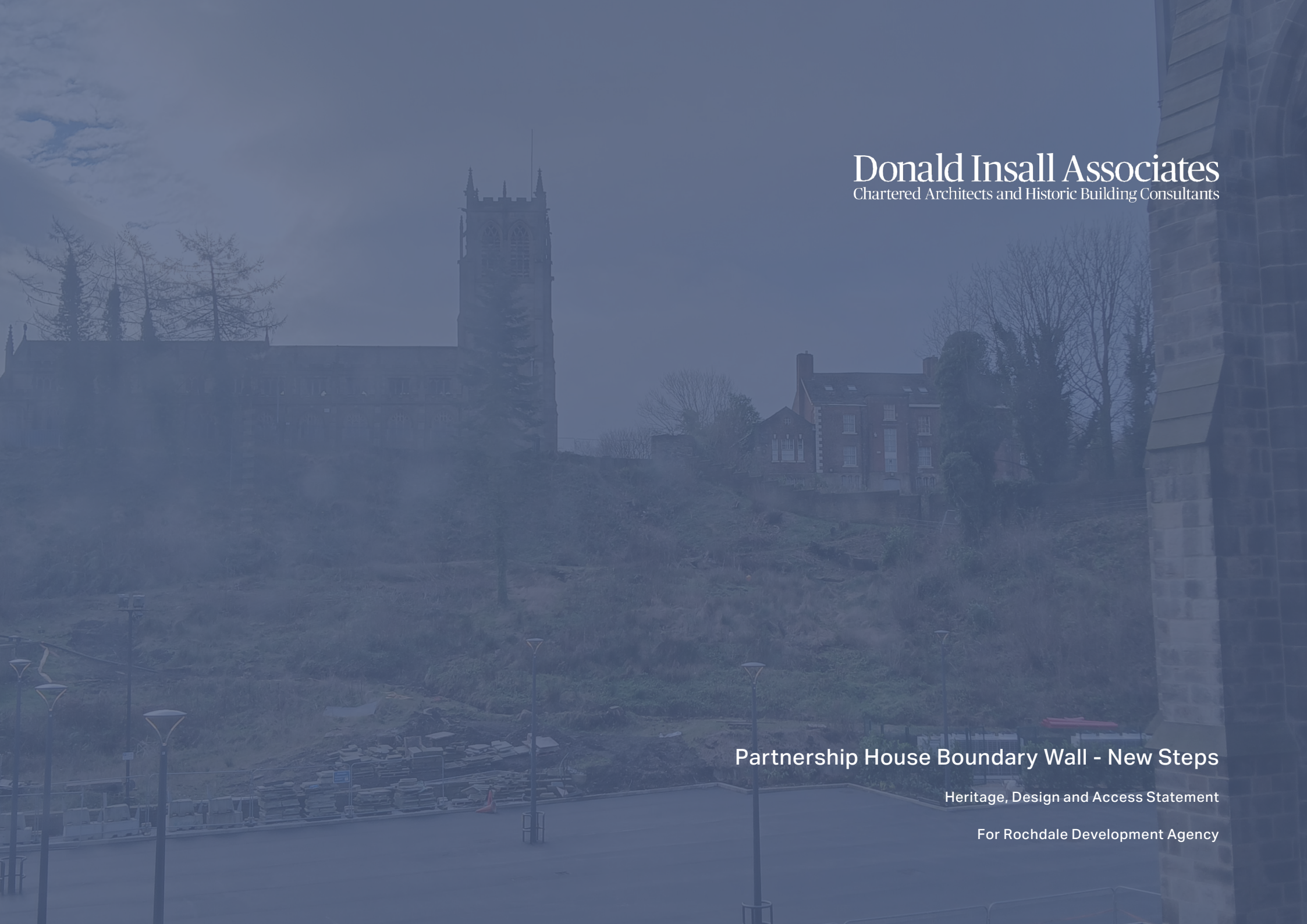




Donald Insall Associates

Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants

Partnership House Boundary Wall - New Steps

Heritage, Design and Access Statement

For Rochdale Development Agency



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1.0 Summary of Heritage, Design and Access Statement

1.1 Introduction

Donald Insall Associates was commissioned by Rochdale Development Agency in July 2022 to assist in the restoration of Broadfield Slopes, The Esplanade, Rochdale, OL16 1AQ. A contractor was appointed to implement the approved scheme (23/01393/FUL) and subsequent consent was granted for temporarily dismantling and rebuilding the Partnership House boundary wall to enable site access.

Consent is now sought for the construction of new steps to the gated pedestrian opening within the boundary wall, due to a change in ground level adjacent to the gated opening.

This report should be read in conjunction with the detailed Heritage Assessment submitted as part of the approved scheme which gives a detailed assessment of the significance of Broadfield Slopes and its setting. A description of the area subject of this application is outlined in Section 2, with an assessment of its significance in Section 3. The requirements for the works are outlined in Section 4 and Section 5 provides a commentary and justification of the proposals according to the relevant planning policy and guidance.

1.2 The Structure, its Legal Status and Policy Context

The boundary wall between Partnership House and Broadfield Slopes is considered to be curtilage listed by virtue of its historic relationship with Partnership House (former Vicarage/Rochdale Museum) and its attachment to the Wall to North West of Church of Saint Chad (Grade II). It is also located within the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area and on the boundary of Broadfield Park (Grade II Registered Park and Garden). The statutory list descriptions of relevant heritage assets are included in Appendix I; extracts from the relevant legislation and planning policy documents are in Appendix II and summarised below.

1.2.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the legislative basis for decision-making on applications that relate to the historic environment. Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Act impose statutory duties upon local planning authorities with the aim to protect the special interest of a listed building or conservation area.

1.2.2 The Local Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan applicable to the Site is the Rochdale Core Strategy (adopted in 2016). This establishes a commitment to conserving, enhancing and supporting

use of designated and non-designated heritage assets that aids local image and identity and contributes to the visitor economy.

1.2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2025)

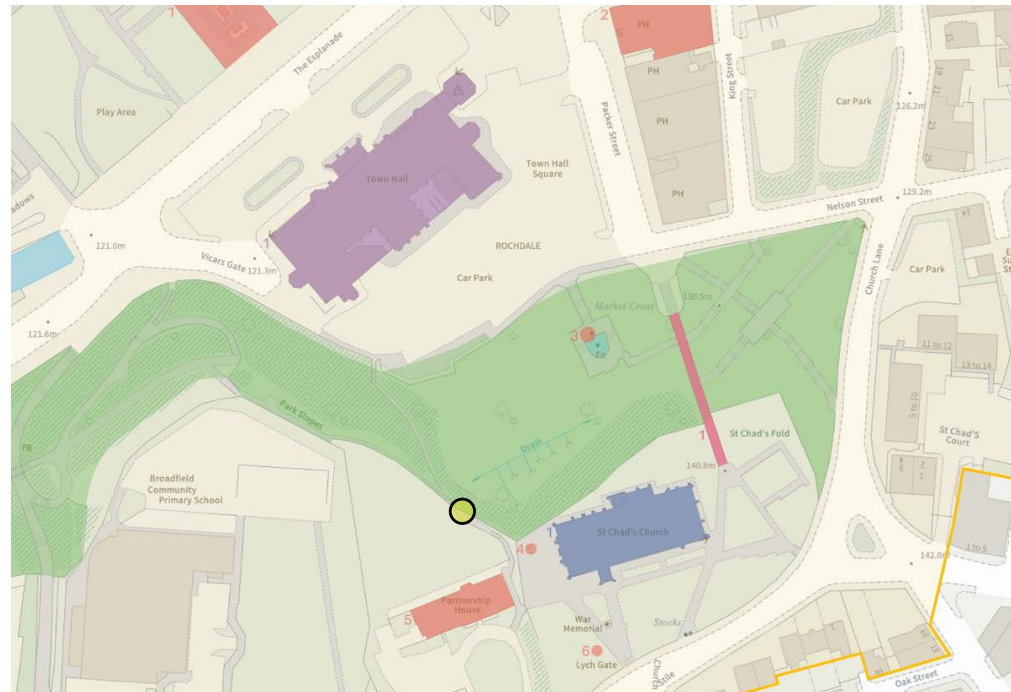
The courts have held that following the approach set out in the policies on the historic environment in the National Planning Policy Framework (2025) will effectively result in a decision-maker complying with its statutory duties. The Framework forms a material consideration for the purposes of section 38(6). At the heart of the Framework is 'a presumption in favour of sustainable development' and there are also specific policies relating to the historic environment.

The Framework requires that proposals for change give 'great weight' to the conservation of heritage assets (paragraph 212), that harm to the significance of heritage assets requires 'clear and convincing justification' (213), and that such harm is outweighed by public benefits. Harm is to be categorised as substantial (214) or less than substantial (215).

The Framework requires local planning authorities to look for positive opportunities for new development within conservation areas and within the setting of heritage assets. Proposals that preserve positive elements or enhance/better reveal their significance, are required to be treated favourably (219).

2.0 Site Survey Descriptions

The Partnership House boundary wall is located to the south-west of the Broadfield Park Slopes construction site, to the north-east of Partnership House, and to the north-west of Saint Chad's. The south end of the boundary wall is attached to the Grade II listed Wall to the North West of Church of Saint Chad. The area of wall where the pedestrian gated opening and new steps are located is not the area connected to the Grade II listed Wall to the North West of Church of Saint Chad, and is located further north along the boundary wall. [Plates 2.01 - 2.07].



2.01 Location of new steps to boundary wall, in relation to local heritage assets

 	Conservation Area Boundary
 	Grade I listed
 	1. Town Hall
 	Grade II listed
 	1. War Memorial
 	2. Former Post Office, corner of Packer Street and Fleece
 	3. Market Cross
 	4. Wall to North West of Church of St Chad
 	5. Rochdale Museum, The old Vicarage
 	6. Sun Dial to South of Church of St Chad
 	Broadfield Park
 	Grade II* listed
 	1. Church of St Chad
 	Non-designated heritage asset
 	1. Church steps

 Location of new steps at pedestrian gated opening within boundary wall.



2.02 Before - View from Rochdale Town Hall looking south towards the Partnership House boundary wall



2.03 Before - Closer view of the Partnership House boundary wall, looking south towards Saint Chad's



2.04 Before - Area of boundary wall proposed to be dismantled and rebuilt following construction works



2.05 Before - Junction between Partnership House boundary wall and Grade II listed Wall to the North West of Church of Saint Chad



2.06 Before - View from top of boundary wall looking north back towards Rochdale Town Hall and over Broadfield Park Slopes



2.07 Before - Pedestrian gate proposed to be carefully removed and reinstated following construction works

3.0 Assessment of Significance

3.1 Partnership House (The Old Vicarage / Rochdale Museum, Grade II) and Boundary Wall (Grade II)

This residence of 1723, modelled on a London townhouse and extended in 1820, has lawns to the front and rear that contribute to the green setting to the immediate west of The Slopes. In particular, the long boundary wall to the rear garden winds along Broadfield Park Slopes and provides an attractive feature of visual interest. The wall as per its currently alignment appears to be present on maps by the mid-19th century [Plates 3.01 and 3.02]. Now vacant, however, many of its windows are boarded up and the gardens are overgrown, which detracts from the conservation area. Prior to the commencement of the Broadfield Slopes project the wall was heavily overgrown and obscured from view from within Broadfield Slopes.

3.2 The Church of Saint Chad (Grade II*) and Wall (Grade II)

The most significant building on the southern side of Broadfield Slopes, the church itself dates from the 13th century (although with substantial later alterations and additions) and acts as a key landmark building. Its heightened tower, significant for its association with Crossland (Town Hall), adding interest and depth to both short and long-distance views when looking across the Slopes from the north of the Town Hall. Its churchyard contains several Grade II listed features and combines with the front garden to the Old Vicarage adjacent to form an attractive green space that overlooks the abutting green spaces of The Slopes (Packer Spout Gardens) and Saint Chad's Gardens. From Packer Spout Gardens there are attractive views up towards the church and its stone wall (part built of flagstones and claimed to be Saxon in origin (Grade II)), which complements the flagstone Church Steps that rise up towards an opening in the same wall.



3.01 Growth of Rochdale, William Swire, 1824 (CLHA)



3.02 South of the River Roch, Ordnance Survey, 1851 (surveyed 1848) (NLS)

4.0 Client Brief and Requirements

4.1 Understanding the Brief

At the start of 2025, a contractor was appointed to deliver the Broadfield Park Slopes project, approved scheme (23/01393/FUL). Following a review of the site access and egress methodology, a further consents application was made and permission was granted for the temporary dismantling and subsequent rebuilding of an area of the Partnership House Boundary Wall (25/00224/LBC), to form construction access onto the Upper Slopes during the site works. In accordance with this permission, on completion of the site works the boundary wall has been rebuilt like for like.

As a result of the site works, the level difference between the two sides of the boundary wall has increased. The ground level to The Slopes side of the wall has been lowered, to tie in with the newly constructed pathway. Given the level change, steps are now needed to make up the difference in level at the location of the pedestrian gated opening.

4.2 Description of the Proposals

The requirement for further development in the area is limited to the need for steps located at the pedestrian gated opening, to make up the difference in ground level. The steps have been constructed using stone reclaimed onsite, are in keeping with the boundary wall, and span the width of the pedestrian gated opening.

Use of the steps will be limited, given that the pedestrian gated opening will be closed at all times and access between The Slopes and Partnership House is not required on a regular basis.

Construction of the steps is required to resolve the ground level difference between the land to the rear of Partnership House and the new pathway within the Broadfield Park Slopes site.

[Plates 4.01 - 4.09].



4.01 Before - Pedestrian gated opening prior to removal and reinstatement



4.02 During - Visible change in ground level



4.03 After - Pedestrian gated opening following construction of new steps



4.04 After - View looking west towards gated opening and new steps



4.05 After - Closer view looking south towards gated opening and new steps



4.06 After - View looking south towards gated opening and new steps



4.07 Before - Section of wall including pedestrian opening prior to dismantling



4.08 During - Dismantled section of wall including pedestrian opening where gate temporarily removed



4.09 After - View looking west towards gated opening and new steps

5.0 Commentary on the Proposals

5.1 Impact on the Heritage Assets

The construction of steps to the pedestrian gated opening is necessary to maintain access owing to the difference in ground level following the construction of the Broadfield Park Slopes upper pathway.

The impact on the wall as a curtilage listed structure has been mitigated through the considered design approach to the form and materials of the steps. This includes the use of stone reclaimed onsite so that they are as in keeping with the existing wall as possible, and the steps span the width of the gated opening.

As a consequence the steps are not an incongruous addition and any harm caused to the significance of the wall would be at the very lower end of 'less than substantial'.

5.2 Policy Justification of the Proposals

The steps are required to address the change in level brought about by the construction of the upper pathway which forms part of the wider Broadfield Slopes restoration. Whilst some very much 'less than substantial' harm has been identified through their addition this would be more than outweighed by the public benefits that securing the long-term and optimum viable use of The Slopes and wider Broadfield Park as a key accessible community space in the heart of Rochdale town centre would bring. This would enhance numerous heritage assets including the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area, Broadfield Park and assets within it, the revitalised Town Hall whilst better revealing the boundary wall to Partnership House and redefining the relationship between the park and the assets to the south including Saint Chads church and its wall. Furthermore, the revitalisation of the Slopes as an amenity asset with a clear character and identity and addressing issues of anti-social behaviour and safety would draw significant benefits to the local community – reconnecting two halves of the town centre.

As such the proposals accord with the statutory duties set out in Sections 16, 66 and 72(l) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework and the requirements of the Local Plan.

Appendix I – Listed Building Descriptions

Broadfield Park

Grade II Listed Park and Garden
List Entry Number: 1001522
Date first listed: 24-Apr-2001
NGR: SD8951612988

A public park designed by Messrs Stansfield and Sons, and opened in successive phases between 1870 and 1874. It was designed to form a setting for Rochdale Town Hall and was extended in the 1930s. The park was formerly known as 'Rochdale Park', or simply 'The Park'.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Broadfield Park and Sparrow Hill Slopes were laid out on former glebe land acquired by the Rochdale Corporation in 1860, and were designed by Messrs Stansfield and Son, Landscape Gardeners, of Todmorden (Wrigley and Sons 1871). By the 1890s Broadfield Slopes had been added to the park and were laid out to a design by, and at the expense of, Mr J Ogden Kilnerdeyne (Souvenir of Rochdale). By 1910 Broadfield Slopes had been extensively remodelled, with a new entrance from the Manchester Road (Derek Lovejoy Partnership 1998). The site of St Chad's Gardens was presented to the town in 1893 but was not laid out until 1925 to a design by the Borough Surveyors Department (ibid). Parts of the western sides of Sparrow Hill Slopes and Broadfield Slopes were destroyed as a result of the widening of the Manchester Road in the 1970s.

The site remains (2000) in use as a public park in the ownership of Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING
Broadfield Park lies to the south of Rochdale Town Hall on a spur of the River Roch and covers an area of c 6.8ha. Broadfield Park is a complex site which incorporates three distinct areas: the formal layout of Broadfield Park on high ground to the south-west of Rochdale Town Hall; Sparrow Hill and Broadfield Slopes to the west of Manchester Road; and The Esplanade, and Packer Spout and St Chad's Gardens lying between Rochdale Town Hall to the north and St Chad's church to the south.

The formal area of Broadfield Park lies on a plateau and is bounded by Sparrow Hill (formerly Vicarage Road) to the north, Vicar's Drive to the east, St Albans Street to the south, and to the west by the footpath which runs between this part of the park and Sparrow Hill and Broadfield Slopes to the west and north. There are terraced houses to the south of this part of the park, while to the north is Sparrow Hill Primary School, the Broadfield Hotel, and the vicarage of St Chad's church. The boundaries of this part of the park are marked by a low stone wall which forms a retaining wall on the northern boundary. The western boundary was marked in the late C19 by an iron fence, now replaced by concrete posts and wire although the central iron gate survives.

Sparrow Hill and Broadfield Slopes lie to the west and north-west of the formal area of Broadfield Park. These two areas are bounded to the south by St Albans Street, and to the east by the footpath which separates it from the formal area of Broadfield Park. To the west this part of the park falls steeply to the Manchester Road (A58). The Slopes continue to the north, separated from the

main area of the park by Sparrow Hill. The southern boundary of this part of the park is marked by the boundaries of Sparrow Hill Primary School, the Museum, and part of St Chad's churchyard. To the north the land falls steeply to The Esplanade. The park boundary is formed by a 1.2m high retaining wall to the north, a retaining wall and banking to the west, a 1.5m high wall to the south, and a low wall to the east.

Packer Spout and St Chad's Gardens at the north-east tip of the site are bounded to the north by Nelson Street, to the east by Church Lane, to the south by St Chad's churchyard, and to the west by Broadfield Slopes. This part of the park is bisected by a flight of 122 stone steps which connect the church with Town Hall Square. Packer Spout Gardens is bounded by a low stone wall to the north and east and by the high stone wall which surrounds the church.

From the formal area of Broadfield Park on the plateau to the south-west of the Town Hall, the ground falls steeply to the west and south. There are extensive views across Rochdale and surrounding open country from the park.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES There are four entrances to the formal part of Broadfield Park. Two entrances give access from the public footpath which crosses the site linking St Alban's Street and Sparrow Hill on the western boundary of this part of the site. A further entry at the north-east corner gives access from Sparrow Hill and Vicar's Drive, and an entry on the southern boundary of the site gives access from St Albans Street.

There are further entrances to the Sparrow Hill part of the park. An entry on the northern boundary gives access from Sparrow Hill, an entry on the eastern boundary gives access from the public footpath linking St Albans Street and Sparrow Hill, a further entry at the south-west corner gives access from St Albans Street, and an entry at the north-west corner gives access from Manchester Road and The Esplanade. These entrances are marked by stone gate piers although the gates are missing.

Two entrances to the southern boundary of Broadfield Slopes provide access from Sparrow Hill, and two further entrances on the northern boundary give access from The Esplanade. The sunken path which runs north/south across the site has its steep sides retained by massive rockwork. There are no entrance gates.

There are five entrances to Packer Spout and St Chad's Gardens (formerly Nelson Street Slopes). Two entrances on the northern boundary give access from Town Hall Square. Both these entrances have steep flights of stone steps leading to the Market Cross and to St Chad's churchyard. A further entrance at the north-east corner of the site gives access from Nelson Street and Church Lane, and an entrance to the south-east gives access from Church Lane. On the southern boundary an entrance gives access from St Chad's churchyard. These entrances are marked by stone piers. The eastern part of this area is closed to public access (November 2000).

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Broadfield Park has four distinct areas. Broadfield Park itself is on a level site and has a formal layout. Sparrow Hill, to the west of the formal area, has serpentine paths and a small

lake. Broadfield Slopes, to the north of Sparrow Hill, has massive earth terraces following the contours of the hill and providing platforms for views across the Pennines to the north. Packer Spout and St Chad's Gardens, to the south-east of the Town Hall, have a formally laid out path system connected by flights of stone steps.

The western part of Broadfield Park has large sunken lawns with elaborate ornamental bedding, at the centre of which is a statue of Alderman G L Ashworth, JP (listed grade II) erected in 1878. The decorative iron fence which originally protected the statue has been removed. The paths are tarmacked with stone steps leading down to the sunken lawns. Three C19 pavilions around the perimeter of the sunken gardens were lost or removed in the early part of the C20 (Derek Lovejoy Partnership 1998). The Jubilee Drinking Fountain (Co-operative Memorial) at the south-west corner of the sunken garden was presented to the town by the Provident Society in 1907. The stone fountain is disused and has lost the four lions which sat on plinths around the centre, and the pinnacle which completed the central canopy. From this point the path runs east past modern timber trellis-work and planting beds and the former site, about 30m from the St Albans Street entry, of a glacial boulder found at Castleton and placed in the park in 1893.

The octagonal stone plinth of a bandstand occupies the central section of the park. The supporting columns and canopy have been removed and only the decorative iron railings survive. What remains of the structure is protected by modern iron railings. The bandstand was presented by Alderman Duckworth in 1893. Two bowling greens occupy the eastern section of Broadfield Park: that at the south-east corner of the park was opened in 1908 when the footpath running diagonally across this

area, the former glebeland, was diverted. The bowling green at the north-east corner was opened in 1927. The bowls pavilions on the eastern boundary of the park date from this period and the single-storey brick building to the south-west of the bowling area close to the St Albans Street entrance dates from the 1970s.

A footpath which starts opposite Broadfield Stile to the south of the site runs north/south between Broadfield Park and Sparrow Hill Slopes, linking St Albans Street with Sparrow Hill and then continuing north to The Esplanade. The footpath is of York stone and is flanked with trees and shrubs. In the Sparrow Hill Slopes area of the park the ground falls steeply to the west and north and the path system follows the contour of the land. Winding paths enclose areas of open lawn surrounded by trees and shrubs with some terraces to the west and north marked by hedgerows supported by concrete posts and wire fences. There are extensive views out across the surrounding countryside to the north and west.

A modern play area at the south-east corner of this part of the park occupies the position of one of the C19 'Play Grounds' or outdoor gymnasia (ibid). The second gymnasium, the south-west corner of the park, and part of the original western boundary were lost when the Manchester Road was widened in the 1970s. The footpath system in the northern half of Sparrow Hill Slopes reflects the C19 layout but two former footpaths in the west part of the park and a major part of the footpath system in the central and south-west area were lost as a result of the road widening. A pond occupies the north-west corner, at the lowest part of Sparrow Hill, close to one of the main entrances at the intersection of Manchester Road and The Esplanade. The irregularly shaped pond, lined with York stone, was

part of the C19 design but has been reduced as a result of late C20 road widening. The grassed and wooded area along the western boundary of Sparrow Hill was laid out following the road scheme, when the former through road, Vicarage Road, was truncated and renamed.

In the Broadfield Slopes area the three levels of terraces and footpaths running parallel to The Esplanade reflect the extensive remodelling of this part of the park in the early years of the C20. The sunken pathway running north/south from Sparrow Hill to The Esplanade between banks of rockwork divides Broadfield Slopes into eastern and western sections, connected by the 'Victoria Bridge', an ornate iron footbridge. The Rochdale Dialect Writers Memorial lies midway along the central footpath of the western section of Broadfield Slopes. The Memorial, backed by an area of ornamental planting (2000), was erected in 1900 to commemorate local dialect writers Edwin Waugh, John Trafford Clegg, Miss Lahee, and Oliver Ormerod. The statue of John Bright (listed grade II) at the north-west edge of Broadfield Slopes was moved from Town Hall Square to this position overlooking the roundabout in the 1970s when the original landform and looped path system were destroyed as part of the road-widening scheme. The eastern section of Broadfield Slopes is open grass with a central path running down to The Esplanade. The southern part of this area was reduced in the late C20 to create playing fields for Sparrow Hill School.

Packer Spout and St Chad's Gardens lie to the east of Broadfield Slopes. Church Steps, a steep flight of 122 stone steps, lie in the central area of the site and link the Town Hall Square to the north-west and St Chad's churchyard to the south. The garden to the east of Church Steps is arranged around three main interconnecting paths with a central sitting area (this

area was closed to the public November 2000). Paths lead off from the west of Church Steps to an area paved with York stone, laid out in the 1930s, around a drinking fountain and Market Cross. This part of the park rises steeply from the Town Square but former views to the north across the town and open countryside beyond are blocked by mature trees and shrubs.

Tree cover within the park is predominantly sycamore, with some ash, lime, and hawthorn. Elm trees were removed from the park in 1980(8). The vegetation of the park is more extensive now than at earlier periods and many of the views out from the park are blocked by over-mature trees and shrubs.

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Description written: January 2001 Register Inspector: JAR Edited: May 2001

Wall to the North West of Church of Saint Chad, Church Stile

Grade II Listed Building

List Entry Number: 1054859

Date first listed: 12-Feb-1985

NGR: SD 89632 13143

SD 8913 SE ROCHDALE CHURCH STILE

(north-west side)

11/45 Wall to north-west of Church of Saint Chad G.V. II

Wall. Date uncertain. Whitworth stone flags.

Approximately 24m by 1m high consisting of 23 vertical stone posts, grooved on either side to accommodate 22 inserted flags. Was discovered partially buried in 1903 and re-erected by Dr Wilson who considered it to be of Anglo-Saxon origin.

Rochdale Museum, The Old Vicarage, Sparrow Hill

Grade II Listed Building

List Entry Number: 1025899

Date first listed: 25-10-1951

NGR: SD 89612 13120

Vicarage, now museum. c.1724 and c.1820. Brick with stone basement, stone features, C20 tile and stone slate roofs. Double depth with central staircase plan with later additions to left and right. Two storeys with attic and two basement storeys. Five bays with two bay addition to left and gabled single storey addition to right. Windows are eight-pane sashes with flat gauged brick arches, stone sills and keystones. Square bay window to left addition. Six-panel fielded door, overlight and segmental hood with carved shell and cherub, on enriched console brackets. Wood modillion eaves cornice continues round left addition and over central gable. Stone quoins.

Rear facade c.1820, re-used stone mullioned windows and door surround. Projecting stair bay. Good panelling to most rooms. Entrance hall connects with stair by segmental arch with panelled pilasters, keystone and soffit. Original staircase with open string, column-on-vase balusters and deep handrail.

Said to be built for Samuel Dunster D.D. (Faculty applied for 1724) who "adopted the plan of his house in Marlborough Street, London," William Robertson 1889 The social and political history of Rochdale, being a companion volume to 'Old and new Rochdale and its people' and 'Rochdale past and present' Rochdale: the author

Appendix II - Planning Policy and Guidance

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Act is legislative basis for decision making on applications that relate to the historic environment.

Sections 16, 66 and 72(l) of the Act impose a statutory duty upon local planning authorities to consider the impact of proposals upon listed buildings and conservation areas.

Section 16: [...] in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 66: In considering whether to grant permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority, or as the case may be the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72(l): [...] with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Local Policy

Rochdale Core Strategy (2016)

The Rochdale Core Strategy was adopted in October 2016 and contains the following policies of relevance.

P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

2. We will protect the borough's heritage by:

- a. Conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets, both statutory and nonstatutory, including consideration of their wider settings. Key heritage assets of the borough include:
 - i. Four outstanding conservation areas: Central Rochdale, Middleton and Littleborough town centres and Rock Nook / Summit;
 - ii. Other designated assets such as listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and scheduled ancient monuments;
- b. Conserving, enhancing and utilising other non-statutory heritage assets of local interest, be they buildings, parks, gardens or archaeological sites, including promoting their sensitive restoration;
- c. Using heritage assets positively and intelligently to strengthen identity and image and support the visitor economy, particularly in development and regeneration schemes; and
- d. Prioritising the conservation of heritage assets at risk from decay, giving special attention to designated heritage assets in this regard.

National Planning Policy Framework

Any proposals for consent relating to heritage assets are subject to the policies of the NPPF (December 2025). This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. With regard to 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment', the framework requires proposals relating to heritage assets to be justified and an explanation of their effect on the heritage asset's significance provided.

Paragraph 7 of the Framework states that the purpose of the planning system is to 'contribute to the achievement of sustainable development' and that, at a very high level, 'the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

At paragraph 8, the document expands on this as follows:

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives:

- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

and notes at paragraph 10:

10. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).

With regard to the significance of a heritage asset, the framework contains the following policies:

208. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

In determining applications local planning authorities are required to take account of significance, viability, sustainability and local character and distinctiveness. Paragraph 210 of the NPPF identifies the following criteria in relation to this:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their eco-nomic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

With regard to potential 'harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, in paragraph 212 the framework states the following:

... great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

The Framework goes on to state at paragraph 213 that:

Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;

b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

With regard to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 215 of the NPPF states the following;

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

The Framework requires local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and world heritage sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Paragraph 219 states that:

... Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

Concerning conservation areas and world heritage sites it states, in paragraph 220, that:

Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 214 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 215, as

appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

Other Relevant Policy Documents

Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning (March 2015)

Historic England: Conservation Principles and Assessment (2008)

National Planning Practice Guidance (2019)

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