

# Marketing Brief

## Marketing Brief for Blakenhall Gardens

### Introduction

This brief has been prepared to establish a framework to guide the production of proposals for the redevelopment of Blakenhall Gardens. It sets criteria which prospective developers are expected to meet, in order that the redevelopment will fulfil the high expectations placed upon it.

The overall aim of the City Council and the ABCD Board is to create an exemplary sustainable, mixed use, inner city district which is integrated fully into its surroundings, which provides facilities which help the wider neighbourhood to prosper, and where a diverse community can live in high quality homes in a safe, legible and attractive environment.

The objectives of this brief are to ensure that the desired high level of environmental quality is delivered by setting standards for the design of housing and other non-residential facilities, for the movement of people and vehicles and for the design of the public realm.

### The site and its recent planning history

Blakenhall Gardens is a municipal housing estate built by Wolverhampton Council in the 1960s. It lies approximately one mile south of the city centre. It has a frontage on to Dudley Road, which is a major arterial route to the south of Wolverhampton, and is elsewhere bounded by Bromley Street, Upper Villiers Street, Park Street South, Haggar Street, and Chapel Street. See illustration 1.

Before redevelopment, the area consisted of a number of street blocks very similar in use and configuration to those which still surround it to the east, across Dudley Road, to the south, across Chapel Street and Haggar Street, and partly to the west, across Park Street South. See illustration 2. They were long and narrow, with a grain running northeast to southwest, and comprised of mostly terraced houses, mixed with industry of various kinds, churches, pubs, shops, and various other uses.

In the redevelopment, everything in the area except the church of St Luke on Upper Villiers Street (a fine polychromatic Gothic Revival church from 1861) and its church hall was comprehensively demolished. The pattern of street blocks was removed and replaced by a single superblock named Blakenhall Gardens, on which were built six highrise blocks of flats, and a precinct of shops on the Dudley Road frontage with flats above. In addition there was built St Luke's C.of E. Infants School and a pub, the Glassy Inn. Subsequently, the lease of one of the six highrise blocks, Phoenix Rise, has been purchased by Focus HA, and recently three others have been demolished. The remaining blocks are in the process of preparation for demolition.

Since 2001 Blakenhall Gardens has been part of the ABCD New Deal for Communities area. The ABCD masterplan prepared by consultants specifies that all of the highrise blocks and the shopping precinct are to be demolished, and replaced by a new, high-quality, mixed-use development. Since then a programme of emptying the five City Council-owned highrise blocks of residents has been continuing.

An Options Appraisal for this new development was carried out in 2004. This produced four alternative proposals which were the subject of extensive public consultation. A preferred option was selected by popular choice, which was subsequently further developed. Its main constituent parts are;

- Shops facing Dudley Road with apartments above
- A Neighbourhood Centre
- A Town Square on Dudley Road
- Car parking for general public use behind the shops
- Perimeter blocks of houses
- A public green space overlooked by the houses, called Blakenhall Green
- A new St Luke's Primary School

It is expected that this preferred option will form the basis of the successful development proposal. However, this development brief excludes the new school and the neighbourhood centre, and covers an area of 3.55ha on which will be built the remainder of the development listed above. The school and the neighbourhood centre will be built separately.

### **The physical and social context of the site**

The present emptiness of Blakenhall Gardens is an anomalous exception to what is a very busy and vigorous inner city area. The majority of the surrounding area is residential, most of it in streets of byelaw terraced houses. The community here has a large proportion of Indian descent, and this ethnic profile is reflected in the number of Sikh and Hindu temples nearby. Two of them are immediate neighbours to Blakenhall Gardens; Guru Ravi Dass Temple on Dudley Road to the south, and Guru Nanak Temple on Bromley Street to the north. There is a third, Guru Teg Bahadur a short distance away on Upper Villiers Street.

The large numbers of people who attend the temples, particularly on holy days and other festivals, generate a large demand for car parking space, which is not met on site. This causes considerable congestion on the streets on occasions.

Dudley Road is a busy, typical inner city, linear shopping centre, which extends both to the north and to the south of Blakenhall Gardens. It is a main bus route, and carries a large amount of traffic. It is perceived as the front of the Blakenhall Gardens site, where the site connects with the rest of the neighbourhood. Dudley Road is the subject of a major enhancement scheme which is due to begin in February 2006, see later section. The Duncan Street Surgery is located on Dudley Road, immediately north of Bromley Street, and two blocks further north is Blakenhall Community Centre, which will be replaced by the new Neighbourhood Centre.

Despite the amount of largely unused space in Blakenhall Gardens, there is a perceived absence of public open space in the neighbourhood. Phoenix Park, a large park, which is the subject of a major improvement scheme, is 400m away along Dudley Road to the south. Blakenhall Recreation Ground is 300m away along Lower Villiers Street to the north. There are two small areas of green space adjacent to Blakenhall Gardens which are the result of demolition; an area on Haggard Street and an area on Bromley Street. Neither is contained within or affected by this brief.

To the west of Blakenhall Gardens, beyond Park Street South, is an area of industry with low permeability, which creates an unresponsive boundary. It is this belt of industry which currently separates St Luke's Junior School from the Infant School in Blakenhall Gardens. However, this is susceptible to change in the future, and half of one block of industrial land immediately across Park Street South, known as Cross Street South, is about to be developed as new ecohomes, following a successful tendering process based upon a brief which specified high levels of sustainable design. It is due to start on site in spring 2006

### **Urban design considerations**

The overall intention is to create a grid of streets which re-establishes the urban grain which was interrupted by the 1960s redevelopment. On this grid will be built a pattern of outward-facing perimeter blocks, which will define, enclose and survey the public realm. See illustration 3. In this way there will be achieved a public realm which is legible and safe, and which will reconnect Blakenhall Gardens to the rest of the district. High quality architectural design is required in accordance with Government guidance PPS1 and the design policies contained within the Wolverhampton Revised Deposit UDP (2004)

In addition to the grid of streets, two public spaces are proposed; one which is local to the redevelopment itself, and one which, although within the redevelopment, relates to the wider Blakenhall. In the centre of the redevelopment is to be located a public green space of at least 0.4ha, which is positioned so as to be overlooked by the greatest number of houses possible. We have called this Blakenhall Green. On the corner of Dudley Road and Bromley Street, in front of the shops, is to be located a public space which we have called Blakenhall Square, with an area of 0.15ha. It is the intention that this will be an accessible, enjoyable and memorable space which will come to be perceived as the popular centre of Blakenhall. It will be directly connected to Blakenhall Green via a pedestrian route between the shops.

### **Landscape design**

Proposals must include an objective driven landscape strategy for the whole of the new development. The strategy will inform design policies for the new streets and open spaces, the specification of materials, the selection of plant and tree species, the provision of signage and street furniture, and the maintenance requirements for all areas, both hard and soft. It will also cover the creation of suitable microclimates, implications for community safety, the lighting and drainage of public spaces, and the irrigation of plants. Its policies will take account of, and add to, the local distinctiveness of the area and its community. It will integrate fully with the policies for sustainable design in other areas of the development, and with the policies for adaptation and mitigation of climate change.

### **Movement of motor vehicles**

All of the streets in the new development are to be designed to carry vehicular traffic, at slow speeds, to create a permeable and legible network of routes which gives access to all frontages. The existing junctions of Bromley Street and Chapel Street with Dudley Road are to be widened and improved, in order to increase visibility and therefore safety.

While ease of vehicle movement within the development is to be optimised, the street layout is to be designed so as not to create any new vehicle access through the development from west to east; that is, connecting Park Street South to Dudley Road. This is so as not to generate any further movement of traffic through the area, other than that which already travels via Bromley Street and Hagger Street.

### **Movement of pedestrians and cyclists**

The development is to provide a highly permeable, legible and safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists, which will encourage people to walk or cycle to destinations wherever possible. In particular, the safe movement on foot or bicycle of children going to and from the new St Luke's School, in all directions, is to be facilitated.

### **Residential design**

The majority of the development will be residential, composed of predominantly family houses, with some apartments. The houses are to be of a mix of types to be determined by the developer, based upon a market analysis of housing need in the immediate locality. Apartments are to be of 2B3P or 2B4P types.

All are to comply with the requirements of the City Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance Note no.3 on residential development, and the houses are to be designed to Lifetime Homes and Secure by Design standards. The requirements for sustainable design are scheduled separately.

The tenure of the dwellings provided is to be divided approximately as follows.

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| • Housing for rent and/or shared ownership | 30% |
| • Housing for sale                         | 70% |

Dwellings of different tenures are not to be concentrated together, but are to have a degree of dispersal throughout the development, with rented accommodation in groups of no more than 8 dwellings. Shared ownership dwellings should not be concentrated in one location but should rather be pepperpotted throughout the development. The provision and location of affordable housing will form part of the agreement under Section 106 of the TCPA 1990.

The objective is to achieve a mixed and balanced scheme with no difference in quality between market and affordable housing. Developers are encouraged to work in partnership with housing associations to deliver affordable social housing on the site. Whilst there is no prescribed housing association, developers will be expected to work with one of the Councils' five preferred partner housing associations.

The residential development will comply with the requirements of the Government's Planning Policy Guidance No.3, and will have a net density of between 40 and 50 dwellings per hectare.

Car parking for residents is to be provided, at an average ratio of 1.5 spaces per dwelling. For the houses, the parking spaces are to be located on the perimeter of the block, as near as possible to the house and visible from it. There will be no parking courtyards within blocks. Because of the requirement to bring the houses close to the street, it is anticipated that not more than a small proportion of the spaces will be provided within the curtilage of the house. Car parking spaces for the flats will be within the parking zone at the rear of the shops. See illustration 4.

### **Secured by Design**

'Secured by Design' principles should be applied to this important development to ensure appropriate visibility and public lighting with emphasis on integrating access, secure parking and amenity open space with sensitive and varied landscape treatment. However, 'Secured by Design' principles also need to be balanced against the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance, the DETR's 'Places Streets and Movement' and the Urban Villages Forum planning and design guidelines. It would be desirable for secure locations to be provided for cycles, buggies, etc. in the design of buildings.

### **Sustainability in design**

The intention of the City Council and ABCD is to create a redevelopment of Blakenhall Gardens which demonstrates exemplary levels of sustainability at every level; in planning, in land uses, in transportation, in social equity, in community provision, in residential design, and in construction.

The detailed design of the development should embrace a density which makes economical use of land, and encourages the creation of a community large enough to support a range of local facilities. It is also to be integrated with the surrounding district so that residents from both inside and outside the redeveloped area can move comfortably and safely through it, contributing to community stability.

Land uses are to be mixed, in order to generate a diverse economy that can be responsive to local needs, and which generates a mixture of people in the area for different purposes at different times, helping to sustain the area's vitality. The inclusion of landscape and other features which will lead to the increase of local biodiversity in wildlife and vegetation are to be actively encouraged.

The redevelopment is to be planned so that the use of alternative modes of transport to the motor car, particularly those that promote sustainable transport and social inclusion, is encouraged, in line with the Government's Planning Policy Guidance no.13. Attention should also be given to compliance with the City Council's Safer Routes to School programme, and to the West Midlands Local Transport Plan's City Cycle Strategy and Walking Strategy.

The creation of an inclusive community that is mixed in age, ethnicity and income is to be encouraged by the provision of a wide range of dwelling types in a variety of tenures, all of equal excellence, providing equity, choice and diversity.

The provision of community facilities in the adjacent school and neighbourhood centre on the adjacent site, in addition to those which already exist nearby, will contribute to the formation of a community that is healthy, well educated and fulfilled, leading to an increased degree of community prosperity and stability.

The residential part of the development is to achieve a minimum BRE EcoHomes assessment of very good, and should aspire to excellent, across the seven examined categories of energy, water, pollution, materials, transport, ecology and land use, and health and wellbeing.

Buildings are to be designed so as to minimise energy loss, and will achieve a minimum SAP rating of 100. The construction process as a whole will encourage the use of materials which are from renewable sources and which have low energy demands, maximise the use of local labour and locally produced materials, make use of recycling opportunities during demolition and construction, and pursue ethical procurement policies by not supporting unsustainable business methods or oppressive regimes.

The use of renewable resources is expected, as in the passive and active employment of solar energy, and in the recycling of grey water. Encouragement will be given to the creation of a Combined Heat and Power system, which may include not only the redevelopment, but also the school and neighbourhood centre, the new Cross Street housing, and possibly local temples.

Evidence is expected of how the design of the new development, both the built and landscape elements, will be able to respond to climate change over its lifetime. The development will be expected to continue to provide a quality environment, both internally and externally, without the requirement for energy intrusive “active” systems such as air conditioning. Consideration should be given to the use of “passive” systems such as Passive Stack Ventilation etc at the design stage. Consideration should also be given to the inclusion into the development of an attenuation type Sustainable Drainage Scheme.

A CD based toolkit on climate change and construction is included in the information on the CD Rom.

### **Street design**

The design of streets in the new development is to be positively addressed, in order to produce a high quality public realm which will be safe, legible and attractive, for people to live in and move through.

Highway width is generally to be 5.0m in width, with pavements on each side of the street containing buildings, of minimum width 2.5m. Car parking spaces, both for residents and for public use, are in addition to these, and are to be distinct from the highway. Materials for highway, car parking spaces and footpaths are to be carefully chosen to ensure that a high quality is achieved and maintenance costs are minimised. Traffic management measures are to be taken to ensure that vehicle speeds are kept low. Specific provision should also be made for cyclists to permeate the development with particular reference to ensuring convenient access to the school.

The new streets will be adopted by the local authority following completion.

Houses are to be a minimum of two storeys in height. Houses at the corners of blocks are to be architecturally emphasised, preferably by being taller and/or closer to the street, and are to articulate the turning of the corner. Consideration should be given to the introduction of variations within a theme to corner buildings, in order to increase legibility.

Buildings are, in all cases, to be brought close to the back of pavement, in order to enclose the space of the street, and to maximise surveillance of the street. Any setback from the back of pavement is not to exceed 3m. All building entrances are to face the street and connect directly with it. Where buildings are set back from the pavement, boundary walls of an appropriate height are to be provided in order to separate public space from private space.

Trees of appropriate species are to be planted in all streets, to give shade, variety and colour. Consideration should be given to the differentiation of species between different streets, in order to increase identity, and ensure climate change resilience.

An indicative drawing of a street section is provided. See illustration 5.

### **Existing trees**

Existing trees on the site are to be retained and incorporated into the new development wherever possible. A tree survey has been done by Scott Wilson, which is included on their drawing D102139/T007/001.

### **St Luke’s School**

At present St Luke’s Infant School, a building contemporary with the 1960s redevelopment, occupies a corner of Blakenhall Gardens next to the church. The Junior School is 600m away, separated by the industrial estate. The two schools are halves of the same institution, which has one head teacher.

It is the intention to reunite the two schools into a new extended community school building. The DfES has given approval in outline for the new school, which will be built on a 2.3ha campus. The site includes the existing Infant School site, on the Park Street South part of the area. When the new building is complete, the existing Infant School will be demolished. Construction of the new school building is likely to start in the Spring of 2007.

The new school is not part of this development brief, but will be adjacent to the development. The two developments need to be considered together so that design, access and other linkages are co-ordinated. The campus and the school will be planned so that access by foot and cycle can be obtained from both the western and eastern directions. Access by vehicle will be from Park Street South or Bromley Street only.

The school will be adjacent to Blakenhall Green. Whilst the school campus will be enclosed by a boundary fence, it is the intention that the building will contribute to the definition of the Green which will be convenient for the use of pupils. It is also the intention that the proposed multi-use games area, children's play area and some indoor facilities (such as the main hall) within the school campus will be available outside school hours for use by the community within a managed arrangement. The pedestrian and cycle access to the school from the development should be located so as to enable this.

### **Phoenix Rise**

Phoenix Rise is the high rise housing block which is leased from the City Council by Focus HA. Negotiations are taking place with a view to the acquisition of the block which is still occupied. Once tenants have been rehoused it is intended to demolish Phoenix Rise. Although there are a number of matters to be resolved between the parties the eventual site of Phoenix Rise could form a later phase of the Blakenhall Gardens development or be part of the new school site depending on timescales.

### **The Glassy Inn**

Negotiations are ongoing with the owners of The Glassy Inn for its acquisition by the Council. If necessary, the Council will use its compulsory purchase powers to secure the ownership of the property. At present it is not certain whether its site will be included within the development or within the school and neighbourhood centre development. The proposed layout plan therefore identifies the pub site with a red dotted boundary.

### **Phased development**

The development has been considered in two phases in order to be able to make an early start on that part of the site which is currently vacant, to be followed later by that part which requires either relocation of occupiers or purchase of interests to be concluded.

The first phase will be within Zone A (see illustration 6);

Shops replacing those in the existing precinct, flats and/or offices above, public car parking behind them, and the Town Square can be built while the precinct continues in use. Temporary vehicular access to the precinct will be necessary to replace the existing access. Part of the new housing could be built within this phase.

The second phase will be within Zone B;

This requires the completion of the first phase of replacement shops in Zone A, and the obtaining of vacant possession of the shops and pub in the precinct, allowing the demolition of the precinct; the rehousing of the remaining tenants in Cross House and Ranelagh House, allowing their demolition; and the completion of the purchase of the Glassy Inn PH. These will allow the release of further land for the construction of possible additional shops and flats and/or offices, public car parking behind them, all of the houses, the grid of access streets, and Blakenhall Green.

### **Design of shops and apartments and/or offices above**

The provision of retail units, including a possible restaurant, is an essential part of the redevelopment and regeneration of Blakenhall Gardens. A number of businesses in the existing precinct have requested a relocation to the new development.

In the first phase of shops development, there is likely to be about 2,700m<sup>2</sup> of ground floor space, with the priority being to replace the existing businesses in the precinct, in units either of the same size as existing, or larger.

If there is demand for a second phase of shops development, there could be a total of 900sm of ground floor space built, divided as appropriate into separate units.

All entrances to shops will either face directly on to Dudley Road, or on to Blakenhall Square. Shops on Blakenhall Square will be entered via a covered arcade which encloses the square.

Servicing to all shops will be from the rear. There will be a service zone, suitably screened from the adjacent area of public car parking, which can incorporate both parking space for one vehicle per shop, and space for delivery and refuse collection vehicles. Vehicle movement in this zone will be one way, with no necessity for turning. See illustration 7.

All buildings facing Dudley Road and Blakenhall Square will be predominantly three storeys with a minimum of two storeys high. Two floors of apartments and/or offices will be built above the shops; apartments may be of 2B3P and/or 2B4P types. They will have access via separate secure staircases which are entered from Dudley Road and Blakenhall Square. Apartments will in all cases have habitable rooms which overlook Dudley Road and Blakenhall Square.

### **Improvements to Dudley Road**

Changes to the design of Dudley Road are proposed by the City Council and ABCD, with the primary aim of improving the safety and convenience of pedestrians and road users. See plan titled Dudley Road Improvements. The highway between Bromley Street and Chapel Street will be designed so as to accommodate parallel parking bays, a pedestrian crossing connecting to Blakenhall Square, and bus stops, new paving and lighting, and street furniture. (Ref. to Scott Wilson plan). The junction with Bromley Street will become traffic light-controlled.

The frontage pavement along the development site, between Bromley Street and Chapel Street will be left to a later stage to be coordinated with the frontage development and square to avoid damage – it is important that public realm improvements and associated design and use of materials are co-ordinated.

### **Public car parking**

Between the rear of the shops and the residential development will be a zone of car parking dedicated to general public use, which will provide spaces for approximately 100 cars and additional provision for the parking of cycles. An indicative drawing of this is provided, see illustration 7. It is intended that these spaces will be public places of quality, which will be safe and pedestrian-friendly.

Materials for highway, car parking spaces and footpaths are to be carefully chosen to help achieve this quality, minimise maintenance costs, and ensure sustainability. Tree planting of appropriate species is to be provided to give shade, and to visually divide the car parking zone into smaller increments. Safe and legible pedestrian routes crossing the car parking zone are to be provided, and traffic management measures are to be taken to ensure that vehicle speeds are kept low.

There is to be no public car parking on the site in front of the shops on Dudley Road, except for that provided on the highway as part of the improvements described above.

### **Blakenhall Square**

This will be a high quality public space, located at the junction of Dudley Road and Bromley Street, which is intended to form a social focus for the neighbourhood of Blakenhall. It will be made from high quality materials, but will require minimal maintenance, and will be specifically designed to create a notable landmark feature on the approach from Dudley Road.

It will be designed so as to both accommodate people passing through, and to encourage people of all kinds to comfortably occupy the space at different times, in different weathers, and for different purposes. To achieve this there will be places to sit, trees to give shade, and lighting that both illuminates the space and which contributes to the memorable image of the place at night time. There are a number of existing trees on the site, and it is expected that a number of them will be retained and incorporated into the square.

It is expected that the design of the square will include the incorporation of high quality public art, in order to enhance the creation and impression of local distinctiveness. This will form part of the Percent for Art policy of the Council. This encourages developers to allocate 1% of the cost of development, under a Section 106 of the TCPA 1990 agreement, to fund suitable and significant public works of art. Proposals should comply with the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance Note no.16 on the provision of public art.

All of the space should be easily accessible, and provision for parking bicycles should be included.

The square will be adopted by the City Council (subject to conditions of the Section 106 Agreement), after completion. The Council wishes to see significant community involvement in the design of the square and the public art, leading to a sense of social ownership of the space in local residents.

### **Blakenhall Green**

This will be a high quality green space, of a minimum area of 0.4ha, which is intended to be an amenity particularly for the new residents of Blakenhall Gardens, many of whose dwellings will face directly on to the green and provide surveillance for it. While it will not contain play equipment for children, it will be designed so as to comfortably accommodate different ages and types of residents at various times, in different weathers. It will have the nature of a miniature park, and be separated from the surrounding streets by appropriate railings.

As with Blakenhall Square, the Green will be adopted by the City Council (subject to conditions of the Section 106 Agreement) after completion. The Council wishes to see significant community involvement in the design of the Green, leading to a sense of social ownership of the space in local residents.

### **Training and employment**

Blakenhall Gardens is located in an area of above-average unemployment, and the Council expects the successful developer to initiate, and to collaborate with the City Council and ABCD in, a programme of recruitment, job training and employment for local residents during the redevelopment programme, which will lead to measurable improvements in locally available skills and the local economy.

### **Ground conditions**

Desk study reports on the site have been written, and are available for inspection. Foundations of the demolished highrise buildings remain, and it is likely that some foundations of the pre-1960s development remain also, possibly with some filled cellars. Evidence of the existence of two ponds is found on old maps.

There is significant tree cover in some parts of the site, and developers will be encouraged to retain mature and healthy trees wherever this is possible.

### **Underground services**

Foul and storm drainage, and all mains services, are available within the adjacent highways, and also within the development site itself.

### **Application requirements**

Full and comprehensive applications only will be accepted for this development. Prospective developers are expected to hold early discussions with the City Council and ABCD on the form and scope of redevelopment proposals. The developer will remain responsible for obtaining all planning permissions, building regulations approvals, and any other relevant permission.

For guidance, the Council will require the following information as part of any application;

- Layout design showing siting and means of access
- Building design, showing massing, building heights, floor plans and elevational treatment
- Cross sections and levels (existing and proposed)
- Transport/Traffic Assessment
- Design Statement (to include means of designing out crime)
- Access Statement
- Landscape Strategy
- Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (to include a Sustainability Appraisal)
- Ground Condition Assessment

The plans accompanying this marketing brief are included for identification purposes only, and the developer will be responsible for confirming all site features and dimensions.

### **Section 106 agreements**

The selected developer will be expected to enter into an agreement under Section 106 of the TCPA 1990, that will cover the following items;

- The provision of public open space – including The Square and The Green, its access, maintenance, management, and commuted sums payable
- The provision of affordable housing
- The provision of, or contributions to, on- and off-site highways infrastructure, including junction improvements and pedestrian routes
- The provision of public art, and commuted sums payable for its Maintenance
- The phasing of development
- Training and employment initiatives
- A contribution to community facilities

### **Schedule of drawings attached**

- Location plan of Blakenhall Gardens
- Historical plan of Blakenhall Gardens
- Proposed layout plan
- Typical residential block layout plan
- Typical street section
- Phasing plan
- Parking section
- Plan of Dudley Road improvements