

8 OPPORTUNITIES

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Through the Communities that Care (CtC) initiative, a plethora of issues, concerns and opportunities have been identified relating specifically to the Preston Area. Many of these stem from the socio-economic characteristics unique to the area. The CtC Action Plan provides a range of possible initiatives and projects which aim to address some of these problems and issues. Most importantly it provides the context within which the masterplan is being prepared and through which it must be brought forward.

There is a direct link between some of the issues and problems relevant to Preston and its physical environment. Physical intervention, through development or redevelopment of key sites and sensitive environmental improvements, can address some of these issues both directly and indirectly.

Responding to the outcomes of the consultation process and the results of the physical analysis, the key opportunities for physical intervention has been identified and summarised below. These opportunities, which have been developed in response to the comprehensive analysis work and consultation set out above, set out some broad parameters which underpin the preparation and development of the masterplan.

8.2 OPPORTUNITIES

Figure 9.1 shows the major opportunities which exist within Preston for development and regeneration projects. These fall broadly into the following categories:

- Creating a new heart to the community, and a strong east-west link across the existing recreation ground and De Burgh site beyond;
- Creating a new north-south link which links Merland Rise Community Primary School directly to the centre of Preston;
- Development of the De Burgh site.

Within these headings, there are a series of project opportunities.

1. IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN LINKAGE

- Tattenham Corner rail station is currently only accessed by one pedestrian route, which is indirect for many residents, particularly those living in the Waterfield area and on the southernmost roads in Preston. A pedestrian route could be extended to link these areas and improve the accessibility of the station.
- The current road layout of Preston reinforces the isolated nature of the area and an opportunity exists to address this by providing a link from

Preston Lane through to Shelvers Way.

- Epsom Downs is a valuable open green area that is located adjacent to Preston but is currently underused by local residents. Opportunities exist to improve direct pedestrian access to the downs to address this.
- It is important that any new housing on the De Burgh site integrates into the Preston area with direct linkage to the existing street network. Opportunities for this will therefore be maximised.

2. EXISTING SCHOOL PLAYING FIELDS (HEADLEY DRIVE)

This space has been highlighted in the consultation process for possible development. However, there are a few key issues which mitigate against it as a realistic option:

- The site currently provides playing



Existing community facilities do not have a positive relationship to Merland Rise

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Figure 9.1 Preston opportunities plan

fields to Merland Rise Community Primary School which lacks sufficient on-site space. Any loss of this facility would need to be replaced;

- Only two possible sites for replacement exist within a short walk - the existing park and the De Burgh site. However, any land would need to be fenced off for the exclusive use of the school to the significant detriment of local amenity.

It is therefore considered that this site is not suitable for new development within this project. However, this does not exclude the playing field as a potential site for organised, community sports.

3. LOCAL CENTRE

There is a strong need to create a recognisable heart to Preston - creating a critical mass of facilities and providing a much needed sense of identity. The site currently occupied by the community buildings, together with adjoining open space and apartment blocks, creates a substantial development opportunity for this project.

4. A NEW EAST-WEST AXIS

This proposed link already exists as a tarmac path crossing open ground. Whilst well used in the day, the route does not benefit from overlooking and consequently considered by many as unsafe in the evening. However, it is a very important

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link and would become more so when a critical mass of facilities is established as the new local centre on Merland Rise. The avenue is intended to be wide, well lit, tree lined and overlooked by buildings to provide a safer and more attractive route.

5. LONGFIELD CRESCENT

The flats around Longfield Crescent and the environment they create received strong criticism at the public consultation event. It is proposed to demolish or refurbish and/or remodel them and replace/redesign them with new residential accommodation facing onto a formal square. The resulting housing would be a mix of units and tenures

6. ST LEONARD'S ROAD EXTENSION

St Leonard's Road is the main access to Merland Rise Community Primary School running off Chetwode Road. It is considered desirable to create a better and more direct link between the school and the recreation ground and new local centre facilities. New development along this new route would also create new building frontages facing onto the recreation ground, improving the sense of safety by increasing the amount of overlooking.

7. RECREATION GROUND

The recreation ground is at present a very large space, poorly defined, and enclosed by significant lengths of rear boundaries. Although it provides valuable green space, it does not currently fulfil its potential as an amenity for local people. The projects to

create new redesigned development at the new local centre, Cuddington Close/Longfield Crescent area, and the continuation to St Leonard's Road will enhance the space by providing attractive frontages and passive surveillance. The space itself will also be improved by new formal pathways and structural landscaping, designed to create a more attractive park environment. By subdividing the space to create a series of areas which can be designed to have their own character features such as an improved children's play area, kick-about area, sensory garden and picnic area could all be considered.

8. MARBLES POND

Marbles Pond is a significant and well used local amenity. Facilities for fishing have recently been improved and further improvements are planned as part of the CtC initiative. One of the drivers behind these planned improvements is the opportunities fishing presents to help bring young and old together so both can benefit in shared experience. The pond has potentially a very good physical relationship with the De Burgh site and this can be exploited and enhanced.

9. THE DE BURGH SITE

The De Burgh site presents a significant development opportunity. It is important to maximise the value of development on this site as a proportion of the capital received from its sale could fund a range of improvements across the Preston area.

Whilst structurally part of the built up area of Preston, the site presents its longest boundary with Burgh Heath. The consultation revealed that the open character of the site is valued by local people and this long boundary presents an opportunity to retain visual and physical links with the Heath and for any new development to benefit from proximity to this valuable asset.

10. NEW OPEN SPACE

The De Burgh site may also present the opportunity, in association with the managed release and development of pockets of poorly located open space within the wider Preston area, to provide new overlooked open space accessible to everyone.

11. LINKS TO ASDA

Asda is a short walk across the Heath. Whilst a direct link across the Heath on the alignment of Chetwode Road provides the opportunity for good pedestrian linkage to



There is an opportunity to create a more positive frontage to the De Burgh site

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the foodstore, there are no pedestrian crossing facilities on the A240 Reigate Road. With the road widening at this point to accommodate the principal vehicular access to the store, this presents a very significant obstacle to pedestrians. There is also an opportunity to provide a new vehicular route across the heath which could potentially be restricted to bus use only.

8.3 REGENERATION THEMES FOR PRESTON

This masterplan sets out a pragmatic and deliverable development strategy providing a framework through which Preston's many opportunities for physical improvement can be brought forward in a coordinated way. We have identified a number of key themes for Preston's future, which provide the framework for the proposals for physical intervention. The themes are as follows:

Positive public space

Recognising that Preston benefits from large areas of open space, but also suffers from low levels of amenity and poor perceptions of safety, this theme establishes a principle of creating attractive, safe, overlooked public space, which has a high level of amenity value for local people, in terms of the range of facilities it provides.

High quality, affordable community facilities

Recognising the poor quality of the physical facilities which are currently available to the Preston community and the wide range of social and community projects currently being co-ordinated under the Communities that Care initiative, this theme establishes the importance of providing high quality, purpose-built community facilities in the heart of Preston, including youth facilities and community support.

Centralised community hub

with a strong sense of place, and recognising that Preston currently lacks a heart, this theme establishes a principle of critical mass of activities and facilities for the area. The community facilities could be located with a small retail centre in the area between Merland Rise Church, Banstead Athletic Football Club and the sports centre in order to establish a centre of activity that is accessible to all local residents.

High quality, sustainable design -

Recognising that the Preston area will experience a growth in its residential population through the planned development of the De Burgh site, and the realisation of other potential residential development opportunities, this theme seeks to ensure that new development will respect the existing scale and character of the area, and enhance Preston so as to benefit the existing community.

Improved access and linkages -

Recognising that one of Preston's key weaknesses at present is its isolation, which results from poor connections to the surrounding area, including poor connections to some key amenities such as Asda, this theme sets the context for a number of projects to create new links, both for pedestrians and vehicles, to knit the Preston area back into its surrounding Surrey context and enhance access to economic opportunities for local people.



Local young people fishing in Marbles Pond



Some parking areas present an opportunity for improvement

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8.4 ARCHITECTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

Preston presents a number of opportunities for extremely high quality architecture, building materials and details for both the proposed housing on the De Burgh site, for any replacement housing within Preston and for new community facilities.

Set precedents of high quality architecture that should inform any specific design for the De Burgh site are illustrated on this page:



Family Houses in Mews Courts, Abode, Harlow, Essex 2003



Contemporary Town Houses, Abode, Harlow, Essex, 2003



Affordable Apartments, Angel Town, Brixton, 2001



Affordable Town Houses overlooking village green, Oakridge, Basingstoke, 2005



Affordable Family Houses, Oakridge, Basingstoke, 2005



Mews Houses, Greenwich Millennium Village, London 2002



Family Town houses set around a public green, Scalebor Park, Burnley-in-Wharfedale, 2003



Family Houses, Didsbury Point, Manchester 2004



Town Houses, St. James Park, Surbiton, London, 2001



Town Houses, Scalebor Park, Burnley-in-Wharfedale, 2003



Family Houses, St Mary's Island, Chatham, Kent 2003



Town Houses overlooking green square, Ingress Park, Greenhithe, Kent, 2001

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