

Save Hulme Hippodrome Ltd
Report for Consultation

Subject: **Junction Green Overview**

Date: May 2023

“This is Hulme, we do things differently here”

Background Documents:

- The Design Code for Hulme (1994)
- Bringing the Hulme Hippodrome Back to Life, URBED (1993)
- Business Plan, Hulme Community Garden Centre (2019)
- Hulme Hippodrome from 1901 (2023)

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Junction Green area is located south of the city centre and south of Stretford Road entirely in the Hulme ward. The name ‘Junction Green’ has emerged in community discussions around the future plans for the area.
- 1.2 Possibly the first urban regeneration programme for Hulme was around 1914 when the last of the unhygienic blocks of back-to-back houses were demolished by the council’s Unhealth Dwellings Committee, leaving terraced houses with their better ventilation and daylight. Manchester had previously banned the building of any new back-to-back houses from 1844 onwards using Police Act powers.
- 1.3 During the 1960s the entire overview area was subject to a major ‘slum clearance’ programme covering in all around four square miles, where almost all of the housing was demolished but certain ‘community buildings’ were left standing in the flawed theory of providing a continuity of community identity. This programme created the problematic Hulme Crescents just north of the Junction Green area, and removed much of street pattern that bisected the Junction Green area, notably Preston Street and Clopton Road.
- 1.4 During the 1990s these fundamental design errors were addressed and remedied, starting with the City Challenge programme in 1992, and working to a well-regarded Design Code for Hulme, which was documented in 1994 and adopted widely elsewhere as well as across areas of Manchester. It did many things well, including for example reconnecting the Zion Institute (now Z-Arts) to the street pattern with the 1990s reinstatement of Stretford Road.
- 1.5 However, the ‘1990s tide’ of regeneration in Hulme somewhat missed out the Junction Green area, leaving the 1960s incoherent street pattern changes and adjacent heritage buildings unresolved.

- 1.6 One of the successes of the 1990s programmes is the Homes for Change and Work for Change ecosystem of flats and artistic work studios adjacent to the Junction Green area. Its focus of the creative industries fits with the grain of Hulme - it isn't corporate - and provides a seedbed for new talent, for experimental ideas, for tolerance of diversity and acceptance of different ideas. In many ways this ecosystem, or cluster in economic terms, is a microcosm of the 1970s and 1980s cultural creativity within Manchester which (alongside sport) raised the city's international profile in ways that are still effective today.
- 1.7 This Overview is an initiative of the non-profit campaign Save Hulme Hippodrome Ltd to try to spread any benefits from the future productive uses of the building into the surrounding area - to be a good neighbour - and to create synergies and coherence to a long-overlooked area of the city.
- 1.8 The Junction Green area has a great potential to grow a rich ecosystem of community-based creative industries and social enterprises, feeding into adjacent areas such as Knott Mill with its focus on somewhat more corporate creative industries and professional services.
- 1.9 There is a consensus that the urban dynamics of the relationship between Hulme and the city centre is one of difference, notwithstanding the 1990s footbridge over the Mancunian Way. However with an estimated 8000 people living within a 600metre walk of Junction Green, and with an emphasis on active and sustainable travel, on 15-minute cities, the future of Junction Green is not predicated on it being a major visitor attractor - indeed it would be very out of character and inauthentic.

2.0 Site Context

- 2.1 The Junction Green area (see plan attached as Appendix 1) is bounded by Rolls Crescent, Old Birley Street, Chichester Road and Wilberforce Close and Rolls Crescent Primary School. It includes the Hulme Community Garden Centre (HCGC), Niamos, Claremont elderly care centre, and two significant derelict heritage buildings - The Junction pub and the Hulme Hippodrome complex.
- 2.2 The built environment is in poor repair and with incoherent cul-de-sacs and secluded footpaths. It is a place to pass through but other than HCGC it is not a destination. Most footfall is as a short cut from Stretford Road to ASDA. Kim's Kitchen is similarly one of the few destinations adjacent to the area. For obvious safeguarding reasons the primary school is only a destination for children and families and not for casual visitors, with necessary fencing accordingly. Similarly the Claremont elderly care centre has to have controlled access and boundaries. The Junction Pub and the Hulme Hippodrome are both iconic examples of urban dereliction, at odds with the rest of Hulme.
- 2.3 This Overview accepts these site constraints and seeks imaginative design solutions based on sustainability principles, environmentally and commercially. There is significant scope for improvement in both the street / footpath pattern and with these iconic heritage buildings.

2.4 The UK government works with the Mayor of London's definition of a Pocket Park as being an area, usually grassed, of between 200 and 4000 square metres. Within Junction Green it is possible to identify three pocket parks (shown as A, B, and C in the Plan in Appendix 1), or potentially to regard the areas as combined to make one linear pocket park.

3.0 Junction Green Overview - Urban Design Principles

3.1 Development uses

- The Overview sets out the scope for Junction Green to be adapted to be a more coherent and attractive place for work and leisure, consistent with its proximity to 1970s-built houses (known locally as 'The BBC Estate') and consistent with keeping the listed and heritage features of its iconic and cherished buildings.
- Where possible, active frontages and natural surveillance will be encouraged, aware that new retail outlets are unlikely to be commercially viable in the medium term but that social and wellbeing uses will be encouraged.
- The addition of further residential developments will be constrained by the lack of parking provision and the consequential impact on nearby streets. Non-residential uses such as employment and leisure will be based on active transport principles and local catchment. Within the hierarchy of travel modes, if visitors are arriving from beyond the immediate catchment area then buses and coaches will be directed to Old Birley Street and not smaller side roads, and event organisers will be encouraged to arrange for the permitted use at pre-existing off-road locations up to and including the ASDA car park. Existing on-street parking restrictions in favour of residents will not be relaxed.
- The use of modern acoustic technologies within heritage leisure venues, along with appropriate licencing conditions, will be used to mitigate any neighbour nuisance from excess noise. The egress of visitors will be concentrated on non-residential roads such as Warwick Street.

3.2 Sense of place

- The landmark location of The Junction pub will mark a landmark gateway into the area, and a transition from the Birley Fields nearby area of modern student accommodation.
- The iconic frontage of Hulme Hippodrome will be used to add identity and character to the pocket park, and the frontage of Hulme Playhouse will benefit from improvements to better identify itself as an entertainment venue, consistent with security and crowd safety requirements.
- Specific development proposals are encouraged to be prepared for the revitalisation and future usages of both these buildings using design choices that are consistent with the development principles in this Overview.

3.3 Street hierarchy and connectivity

- The removal of streets from the area in the 1960s remains unfinished business, with dysfunctional cul-de-sacs and obscure footpaths. The north-south and east-west connectivities are highly compromised at the moment. Good design principles will be applied to all developments to promote natural surveillance, a

better sense of wayfinding and clearer entry and exit from key zones within the area.

3.4 Public realm and amenity

- The development of Pocket Park/s within the area as purposeful places rather than as remnant areas will be a priority. Given the inspection covers in place on the grassed area that formerly was Clopton Street it is likely that there will be buried services (gas, water, etc) where it would be uneconomic to divert them. Thus any new plantings in this area will require species which do not make plant roots which would impact on service pipework and similar.

3.5 Height and density

- The area already has an appropriate hierarchy of heights, the tallest building being the Hulme Hippodrome and Playhouse at around ten metres. There is merit in reinstating the third floor of The Junction pub as this would not confuse the hierarchy of buildings and would emphasise the corner site which is encouraged in the Design Guide for Hulme. (See Appendix 2.)

3.6 Legal considerations

- If this Overview, following consultations, is accepted by the authorities it would not form part of the Development Plan for Manchester but it would be 'a material consideration' when planning and development control decisions are being made.

4.0 Economic and Social Benefits

4.1 It is perhaps a cliché but worth repeating nevertheless that the standard advice to a young person seeking their future in the creative industries is, 'find your tribe.' This journey is one of experiment, of skills and knowledge, of growth and of retrenchment, of new friendships and of harsh lessons learnt.

4.2 The clichés can continue - of creating 'lightning in a bottle,' that it takes 'ten years to become an overnight success,' but they speak to a wider truth that there is no formula or spreadsheet that can apply econometrics to the economic and social benefits of the creative industries except either in a very macro sense of national sectors, or in an incidental local sense eg property values.

4.3 Yet, books have been written on the social and economic **consequences** of cultural moments in Manchester such as - Ken Dodd and Morecambe and Wise at Hulme Hippodrome in the 1950s, the BBC Studio at Hulme Playhouse in the 1960s, the estimated 101 musical micro-bands in Hulme and The Factory in the 1970s, and The Hacienda in the 1980s.

4.4 The Junction Green overview is based on creating the conditions for employment growth in creative industries, and doing so within a tolerant and supportive ecosystem that values wellbeing, community, leaning in and giving back.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 Junction Green is an intrinsic part of Hulme, somewhat overlooked to date, and has the potential to play a significant part in completing the modern 'regeneration

story' that in many ways had Hulme as a birthplace. Hulme is an exemplar of every aspect of the contested co-production of cities, with a strength and depth of history seldom found elsewhere.

5.2 The development of Junction Green represents an opportunity that will feed the roots of Manchester's future growth as an ecosystem for new generations inspired by creativity, acceptance and sustainable growth.

