

# Rochdale Reimagined Workbook

## Site 02 : The Retail Park





# Rochdale Reimagined

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

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

## About Rochdale

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

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

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

## What is a Heritage Action Zone?

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





Site 05 : Bell Street

Site 04 : Fashion Corner + Waterside

Site 03 : Champness Hall

Site 02 : The Retail Park

Site 01 : The Railway Station

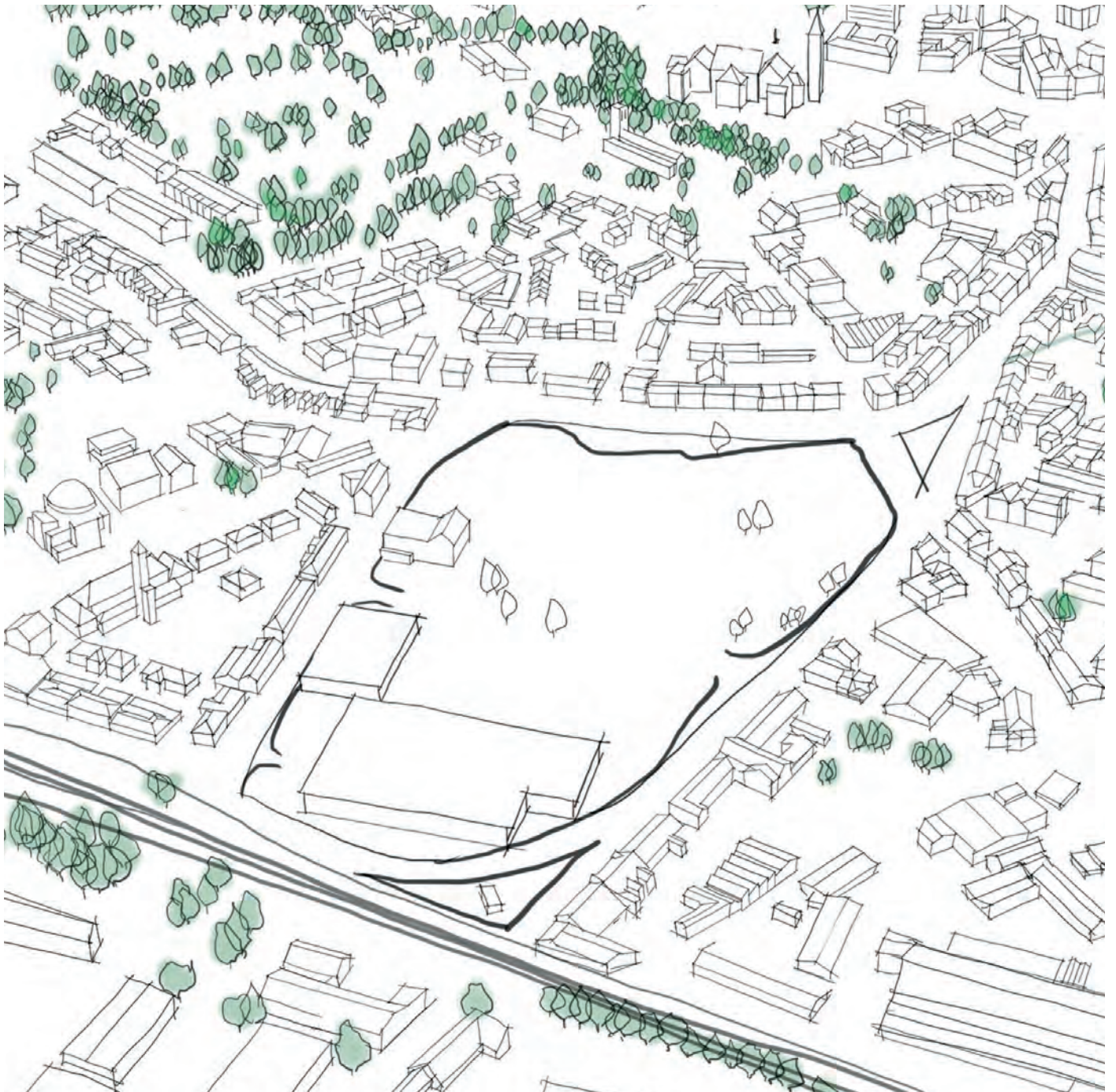


# The Retail Park

The Central Retail Park occupies a large site between the southern end of Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area and Maclure Road Conservation Area which includes Rochdale Railway Station, St. John's Roman Catholic Church and the Rochdale Fire Station which is now a museum.

The Central Retail Park is sited on the former Canal Basin where goods were bought in and out of Rochdale.

The site has potential for new homes and could be a high quality urban neighbourhood at a key gateway location into the town which addresses the links to Rochdale's historic high street and one of the main gateways to the town centre, Drake Street.

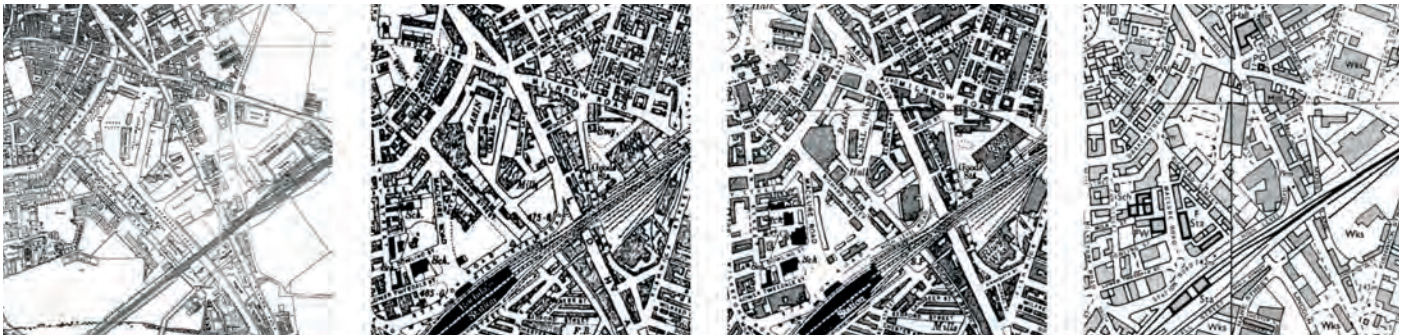


This drawing is a birds eye view which shows the retail park and its surroundings from the sky.



# History

The development of the canal basin around 1800 was a very important moment in the history of Rochdale and prompted the development of the town on the south side of the river. The Basin remained a transport hub for about 150 years, until the canal's closure in the 1950s. The use of the Rochdale Canal declined from the late 19th century, as the competing railway network expanded, with the last barge travelling along the whole Trans Pennine route in 1937. The Rochdale Branch Canal was closed in 1952. The waning of Drake Street's importance may have started around the time the branch canal closed. During the 1960s the branch canal and the basin were filled in and many buildings demolished. By the 1980s, most of the site had been redeveloped with large retail sheds, although pockets of older buildings remained for a time. At present half of the site is vacant and waiting for redevelopment.

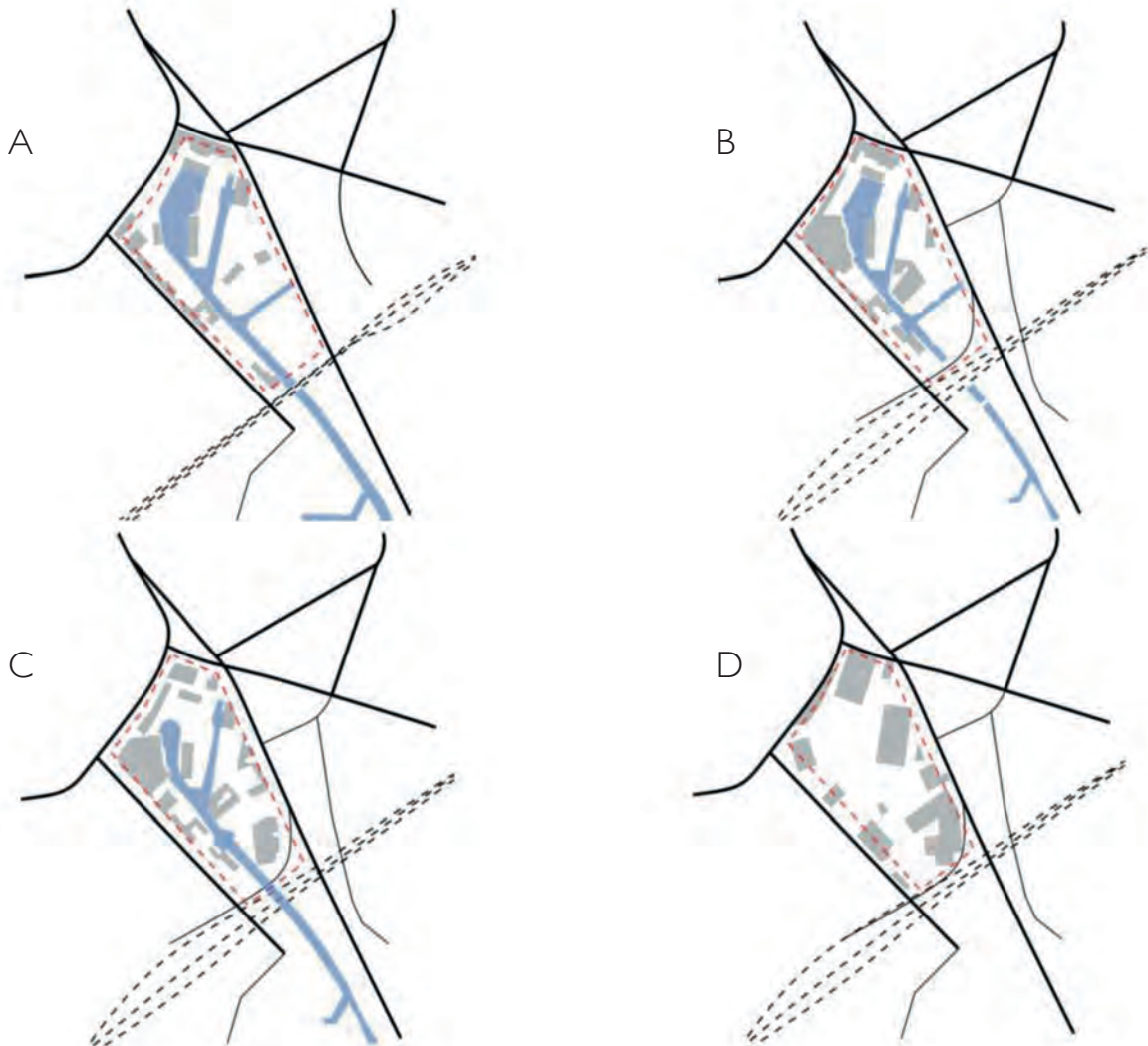


A : 1848-1878

B : 1888-1914

C : 1914-1950

D : 1958-1997



Maps and Diagrams Showing the Site from 1848 - 1997.



This drawing is called a “section” and it cuts through the site to show what is in the background



This photograph shows the retail park and all the buildings close by, we call this the “context”















Housing Masterplan by Olivia and Laura.



Project for new family homes by Constantina and Carmen.



Some of the architecture students opened up the canal again on the site. Do you think this is a good idea? What kind of houses would you design next to a canal?

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Some of the architecture students designed tall tower blocks as well as smaller homes. Do you think this is a good idea? Where would you put tall tower blocks and where would you put smaller homes so that no body is over shadowed?

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Project for bringing back the canal by Subhan.



Project for a tall tower block, houses and green space by Suyeb and Hidayatullah.





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