



## Making Marple Better Together

Planning Services  
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council  
Place Directorate  
Stopford House  
Stockport SK1 3X

12<sup>th</sup> April 2024

For the attention of Mark Burgess  
Planning Application Ref. DC/091420

Dear Mark

**Demolition of existing Marple Library, Marple Clinic and Marple Police Station buildings and erection of leisure and community building (Use Class E, F1, and F2) with associated parking, landscaping, drainage, pedestrian and highways improvements and other supporting infrastructure at Marple Library Memorial Park Marple Stockport SK6 6BA**

Re the above application, Marple Civic Society makes the comments below with an awareness of the acute logistical problems faced by the Hub Team resulting mainly from the project's funding mechanism, and an awareness that much has been achieved in less than ideal circumstances. We hope that they will be regarded as helpful, constructive and in some cases potentially deliverable.

### Layout and Circulation

1 There are many minor issues with the external works layout but of key importance is that, although the entrance has now moved to a point where it is no longer actually visible from the car park, it still looks as if the designers are regarding the alleyway as the main pedestrian route from the south side of town. The car park is a very poor and compromised layout and hacking a pedestrian dominant diagonal footpath across it will lose around 6- 8 parking spaces and will still not create a pleasant route.

2 It seems to us that a building whose main entrance now addresses the park, should really have a major access from the park. Is it possible to consider a route around the east and north side of Hollins House, so that the entrance can be seen from 30 metres away rather than from 3 metres as would be the case at the moment ?

3 It is probable that the majority of Hub-bound motorists will use the car parks on the south side of town, so a well thought out direct and convenient pedestrian route straight to the front door,

avoiding the carpark and bin store, substation, and miniscule planting areas, would greatly improve the amenity of the approach. It would also enable vehicles, including ambulances and minibuses, to park temporarily close to the entrance. This would be important for elderly and infirm people, and others being dropped off as close as possible by car.

4 It appears that a link is proposed between the Hollins Lane car park and the Hub car park but is not resolved clearly on the site plan. The Transportation Assessment shows what appears to be a slope for pedestrians and mobility scooters but it is not apparent on the site or any other plans whether this actually connects into the footpath system in the main Hub car park. It is however included as a separate entity within the red line of the application site.

5 We note that there is a single passing place for vehicles on Memorial Park Drive. Could consideration be given to the provision of another bay on the east side of the drive right opposite the Scout Hut ? Cars will be turning the corner into the car park at this juncture, (intervisibility may not be so good), dropping people off to the Senior Citizens Hall and Scout Hut etc. There appears on the site plan to be a gap between existing trees where it may be possible to create one.

6 The possible location for a future band stand shown on the site plan is cause for concern. Spectators would crowd on to the path, blocking the way for pedestrians and mobility scooters; and would be too close to the children's playground in noise terms. Traditionally band stands are circular in form to allow spectators to congregate on all sides. A position closer to the more formal war-memorial features of the park might be more appropriate.

7 We are pleased to note that a separate toddlers playground, neglected in previous site plans, is to be tacked on to the existing older children's playground. There is no footpath leading to it, and young children may not wish to gain access to it through the part for older children because they would feel intimidated by them. This is very important for parents and grandparents who would be supervising them. Could an alternative less obtrusive site for a toddlers' play park be found separate from the main one ?

#### Elevational Design

8 The form of the building with a series of pitched roofs is now established after consultation. However the red and red-brown colouring is more typical of the urban environment of Stockport. We would advocate that an external material closer to the colour of natural stone rather than to brick would be more appropriate on the edge of, and within sight of, the Peak District, and would provide the relief sought by users of Memorial Park, from the urban environment.

#### 9 Heating

Acknowledging the budgetary constraints on the proposal the Society asks whether consideration be given to the use of ground source heat pumps rather than air source being a less visible and perhaps more appropriate in an open site.

The application documents list twelve occasions when the Council carried out local consultations with stakeholders and the public. The Society asks that this welcome process continues throughout the passage of this application, through to the approval of conditions.

Marple Civic Society