



A community-led bid to save a Chorlton landmark

A proposal by Chorlton CLT and Brook Finch to save The Picture House | February 2021

Cover Letter

We are delighted to present our development proposals for the redevelopment of Co-op Funeralcare building (The Picture House) in Chorlton, Manchester.

We believe that our proposals for this opportunity reflect our desire to deliver a high-quality, community-minded scheme, which balances the preservation of its heritage, local planning requirements, along with the right team to execute the purchase, funding, and delivery of the project.

This is a critical point in time for the Chorlton community, especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and the shared belief both at a local and national level to “build back better”. We believe that the redevelopment of this landmark building under these plans can act as a catalyst for a much-needed social hub in the district centre, providing an open, accessible space and the opportunity for local businesses, talent and families to thrive.

Our proposal offers the ability for the Co-operative Group to leave a major legacy in the local area by enabling us to save and bring back into use a building that remains a heritage asset, forming an important part of the social and built history of Chorlton - the location where the Bee Gees first publicly performed together.

We hope that you will find that the following proposals demonstrate that our team has the ability to realise the true potential of this site which includes bringing new life to The Picture House whilst celebrating its heritage.

Sincerely,

Chorlton Community Land Trust (CLT) and Brook Finch

Section 1

Our Vision

The Picture House will create a new landmark attraction to help revitalise the heart of Chorlton and boost local community well-being.

We will secure the building as a multi-purpose, accessible meeting place for our community by blending commercial principles with community values.



Our Objectives

The Picture House will deliver the following benefits to the community and the local economy (See Appendix 3 for the Method Note that underpins these figures):

1. Boost footfall in Chorlton District Centre by 10% over the next five years

Equivalent to 3,000 visitors per week

2. Create 50 new jobs in Chorlton

Generating £1.6m additional economic growth per year for the local economy

3. Accommodate five new business in Chorlton

Increasing business rates by £150,000 per annum.

4. Create homes for 65 new residents

Creating £50,000 of additional Council Tax revenues per annum while supporting another ten jobs in the local economy.

Our values

We will achieve these objectives by committing to the following values:



Using community investment to ensure community-led oversight of the development and management of The Picture House



Encouraging local businesses, artists and residents to actively use and have a stake in the facilities



Ensuring accessibility, sustainability and quality in the design and operations of the scheme.

Embedding our values

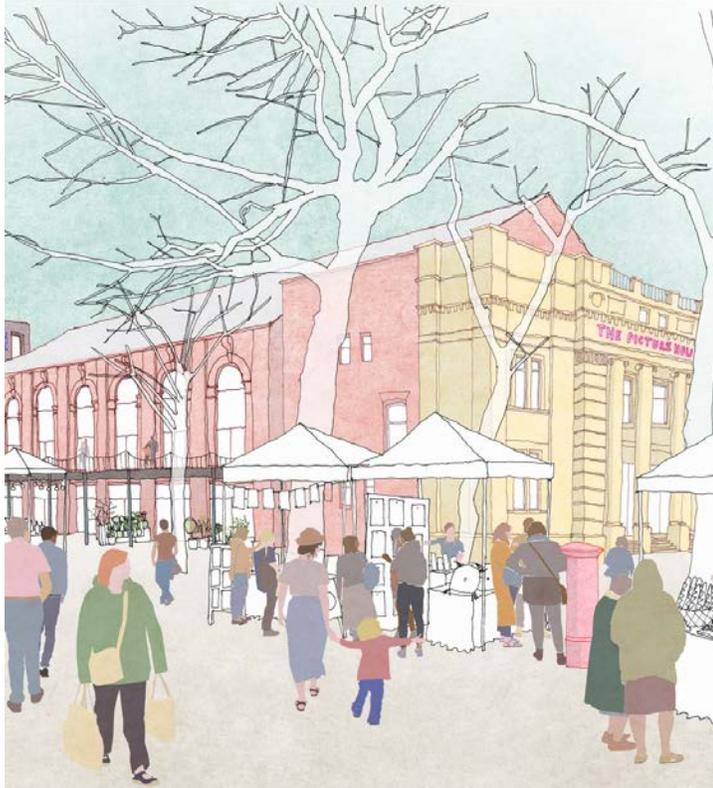
The unique structure of Chorlton CLT as a community-led organisation alongside our development approach will ensure we embed these values in our practice.



- The Chorlton CLT will retain ownership of the freehold and agree leasehold arrangements which ensure the local community can influence how the building is used.
- Chorlton CLT will issue shares in return for investments made by individuals who will also become members of the organisation.
- The Chorlton CLT Board will be accountable to its member shareholders through annual elections and regular open meetings.
- Chorlton CLT have developed a strong relationship with an aligned developer and will have a say in agreeing the operators of the Picture House building.
- The CLT will work with other local groups to ensure the Picture House contributes to the vibrant growth of our community and provides opportunities to support healthy, active living, promotes local art and recognises the historic connection to the Bee Gees.

Community Provision

Our vision for The Picture House is for it to be targeted centrally on the local community. A community ethos will underpin the operations such as the food hall while also recognise it will provide a strong commercial footing for the development. To this end, Chorlton CLT will be involved in the negotiations with operators to ensure this is embedded at the outset.



However, there is also a commitment to ensure there is space and opportunity for community activities on an affordable basis. This will be based on three primary offers:

- Our plan is for the foodhall to be closed one day a week, as is typical of other venues. On this day, the intention is the space would be offered for community groups / local charities and groups where there is need for a larger space.
- Beyond this, the intention is to allow other spaces in the development to make provision for charities / community groups to use on a very affordable basis, where groups have the means to contribute.
- The leasehold arrangements would potentially allow Chorlton CLT to retain control of the pitched roof of the Picture House, which gives the CLT the opportunity to install a Solar PV scheme. Through discussions with Greater Manchester Community Renewables, they have advised us that we could viably develop a 50kwh scheme should the roof be in suitable condition. This would be pursued through a community energy scheme in which the community could invest in and participate further through energy awareness projects associated with the scheme.

Our proposal will save the historic former cinema, which was the scene of the Bee Gees first-ever live performance.

Through creating a multi-purpose space, the development will encourage art, music and performance that celebrates the building's history and the Bee Gees legacy.



Building back better | A co-operative recovery

Our proposal not only aligns with the original Greater Manchester Co-operative Commission Report, published in January 2020, but it also meets the renewed commitment issued by the Commission in light of the pandemic.

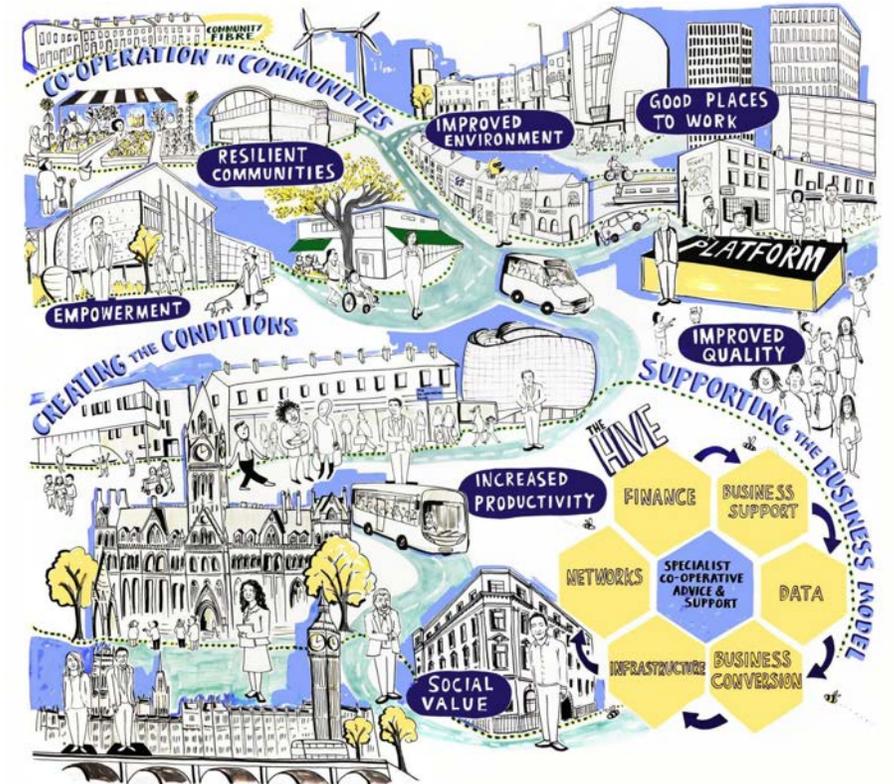
Specifically, our vision for The Picture House directly supports the wider ambition released by the Greater Manchester Co-operative Commission that co-operation and community-led models will allow Greater Manchester to build back better – creating a fairer, sustainable and more resilient economy.

Following the outbreak of the pandemic and the Mayor’s launch of Build Back Better, Greater Manchester’s response to coronavirus, the Co-operative Commission has been working with Greater Manchester Combined Authority to ensure that every opportunity is taken to find co-operative and collaborative solutions to the many challenges faced.

In their additional report, they have identified that community-led models as key to the recovery and wish to promote community-based initiatives through community share offers, which underpins Chorlton CLT’s financial contribution to the development.

This comes off the back of the original Co-operative Commission Report which identified one of its five key changes as “an increase in community-led, placed-based approaches to community ownership and economic development”.

We believe our proposal for The Picture House will both support the original city-wide ambition to grow the community and co-operative sector, but also directly contribute to this latest commitment to “build back better”.



Section 2

Our Partnership

Why our partnership? | Chorlton CLT and Brook Finch



Community-led model

- As a community benefit society, Chorlton CLT shares the Co-operative Group's commitment to **benefit the wider community** and supports the ambition of its campaign to save **endangered spaces** throughout the UK.
- Working in partnership with Brook Finch, we have created a team that has experience of delivering similar local, community-led schemes allied with **commercial knowledge and expertise**.



We are Chorlton

- The response from the community has been overwhelming. **Over £400,000 was pledged** in late 2019, confirming our view that this is the right development for Chorlton and one that local people are willing to contribute to and fight for.
- Chorlton CLT and Brook Finch can **realise the community vision with this development**.



A legacy of co-operation

- Working with us will deliver a meaningful legacy from the Co-op's longstanding presence in Chorlton. Our plans will **respect the building's history and secure its future**, whilst delivering what the community has told us it wants and needs.
- Any surpluses made by the CLT from this project will be reinvested into local community projects and affordable homes, **delivering a positive legacy for years to come**.

Chorlton CLT

Chorlton CLT was established as a Community Benefit Society in April 2019, with the objective of maximising the community, social and environmental benefits of development projects in Chorlton.

In addition to our interest in the Co-op Funeralcare site, the CLT is involved in the 120-home development of Ryebank Fields, a site owned by Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). The CLT has been instrumental in the evolution of the proposals from executive homes to a more socially and environmentally responsible plan, which has now been enshrined in a Development Framework. Chorlton CLT is now working with MMU on the strategy for marketing the site and is in position to collaborate with a developer partner for the delivery of the project.

Through fundraising and proactive collaboration with landowners, private, public and third sector organisations, social investors, community groups and residents, we aim to give the community a meaningful say and a stake in the future of Chorlton.

Our long-term aspirations are to deliver and manage affordable accommodation in Chorlton for local people. This ambition can only be realised if we are able to create long-term revenue streams to fund future investment, such as those that could be achieved through the redevelopment of the Funeralcare building.

Biographies of key personnel can be found in Section 5.

For more information visit www.chorltonclt.org



Brook Finch

The partnership of Martin Brook and Garry Finch was formed in 1997 to create Brook Finch Developments Limited. They emerged from humble beginnings renovating Victorian-era housing to developments including Grade 1 listed building refurbishments, luxury apartments, contemporary offices and the delivery of 12 high specification homes in Chorlton-cum-Hardy which involved an extensive façade retention element.

Brook Finch has also successfully negotiated a land acquisition from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) based on a quality-of-design proposal which delivered 14 new family homes in Ancoats, called Residenza. Most recently Brook Finch have completed a series of barn conversions in Poynton

Brook Finch have a successful history in delivering high-quality developments which help to enhance the surrounding area - a reputation they are proud to hold.

Biographies of key personnel can be found in Section 5.

For more information visit www.brookfinch.co.uk



Development Approach

Chorlton CLT has decided that the best vehicle for delivering the above vision would be for it to purchase the freehold from the Co-operative Group while simultaneously granting a long leasehold interest to Brook Finch.

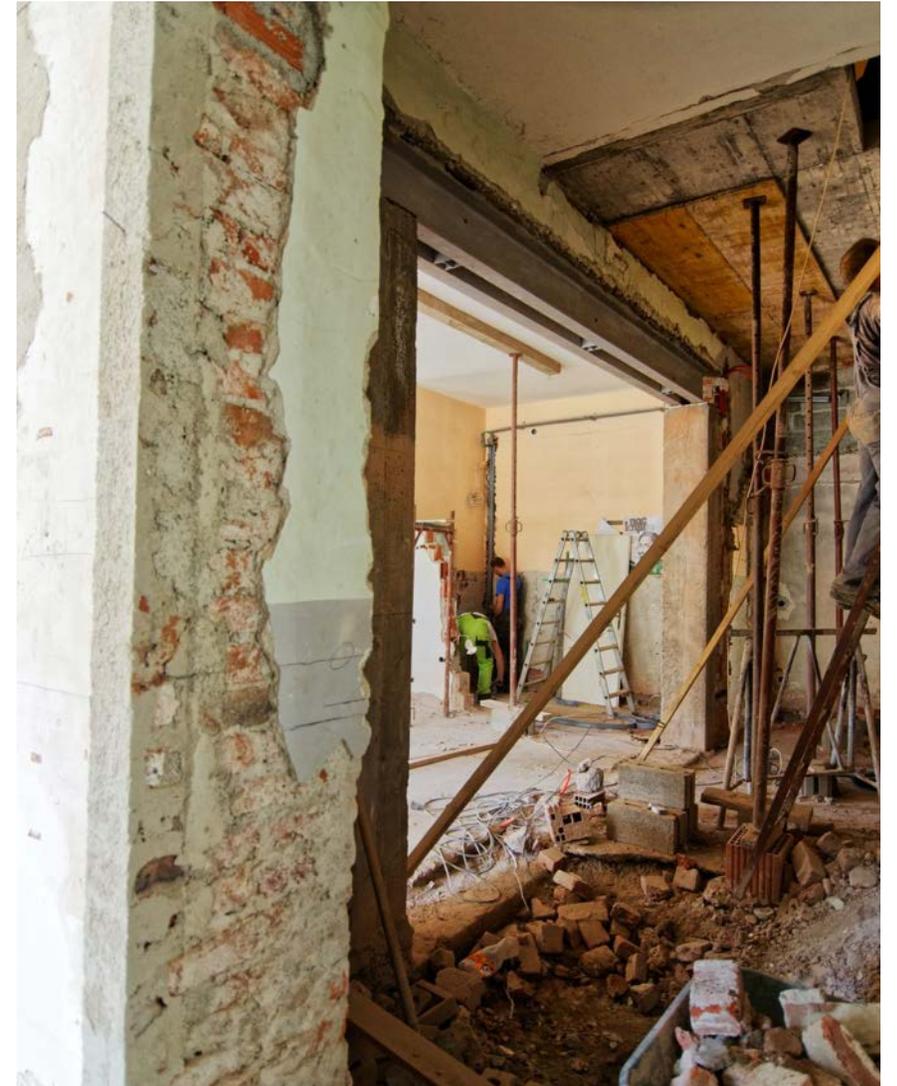
The purchase price would be partly funded by the CLT through its community investors and partly from the sale of the long leasehold. The lease would be at a suitable ground rent to provide a return to the CLT's community investors, and covenants in the lease would ensure the development of the building is in line with the CLT's vision and control over its future uses.

We believe Brook Finch is an ideal partner given their experience of delivering similar, local, community-led schemes as well as their passion for preserving the heritage value within The Picture House and committing to high-quality design across the site.

Furthermore, they bring a strong commercial understanding of developments of this nature. Based on their track record, we have every confidence in their underlying development appraisal for the site, which provides us with the necessary assurance that the scheme can be delivered effectively while safeguarding community buy-in and stewardship, to ensure it is a success as a community-led development

Brook Finch will deliver the scheme bringing their unique skills and approach to the purchase, financing, delivery of the site, and sales.

This business model has been successfully implemented across other developments going forward, and we would expect no issues in replicating it for this scheme. The proposed structure will be for Brook Finch to form a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) development company to purchase the long leasehold and deliver the project, with directors of Brook Finch as the sole shareholders.



Section 3

Our Design Proposal

Our overarching vision

Our proposal is to retain and reuse as much as possible of the historic main building, restoring it as a local landmark and community asset in the heart of Chorlton. It will provide new facilities that are attractive and accessible to the local community while also attracting visitors from further afield to stimulate the local economy. The proposal also includes a high-quality residential development to the rear, incorporating a proportion of affordable units, to ensure the development is financially viable but still aligns with the CLT's wider mission to deliver suitable accommodation for local people.

Our preferred approach is to redevelop the site as follows:



Refurbish and remodel the existing building to provide a multipurpose flexible space incorporating a market food hall with complimentary businesses and space for community events on the first floor. Alongside a gym and other leisure / retail use on the ground floor.



Clear the garage area to the rear and replace with a high-quality 4-5 storey block of apartments for sale, incorporating six affordable apartments managed by a local housing association.



To enhance the public realm on Nicolas Road to allow for outside seating and a new public space for civic events and traditional markets.



Site context and planning policy

As outlined within the initial bid document to Co-operative Group - the site is located in an area of concentrated community activity; with nearby uses including residential, a school, a public house, shops and a health centre. There is also a current proposal to undertake a major redevelopment of the existing “Precinct Centre” adjacent to the site.

Used as a funeral home since the early 1960s, the site includes the former Picture House cinema (also known as the Gaumont and Savoy), a local landmark built in the 1920s. The building is the location where the Bee Gees first publicly performed together, which means it has cultural heritage value to people around the world. Whilst the building has been heavily altered both internally and externally, many elements and features of the original building remain and structurally the building is in good and reusable condition.

Chorlton CLT’s ambition is to save The Picture House from demolition to preserve its heritage. This is set within the wider proposal for the site which will include demolition of the asbestos roofed garages to the rear to facilitate a high-quality residential redevelopment.

These uses will have a significant beneficial impact on the local area. They will reinforce Chorlton as a destination and the largest of Manchester’s district centres, drawing more trade into the area, providing major attractions and facilities for the local residents and the wider community.

In terms of planning, we have engaged with the Manchester City Council planning team which confirmed the building is recognised as a non-designated heritage asset which they wish to see retained. Our design team is committed to working with the planning team to ensure evolution of a high-quality scheme and planning application that clearly addresses key relevant planning policy.

We have a good relationship with the City and their planning department as do our design team and we envisage obtaining support from them for this considered proposal that responds directly to the aspirations of the community.



Community Support

Chorlton CLT launched its pledge campaign to raise £250,000 from the community on 30th October 2019. Within 10 days the total had exceeded £300,000, pledged by over 800 supporters. With this, an extended target of £500,000 was set, which we are confident we will reach based on over £420k of pledges we have secured to date from over 1,200 local supporters.

Since the beginning of the year, we have been engaging extensively with our members and wider supporters to ensure the development responds to the needs of the resident population. Given recent circumstances, the majority of our consultation activities have been online, conducted through a number of surveys while also encouraging supporters to provide more extensive and qualitative feedback via email.

These surveys and online consultation exercises which have indicated strong support for the commercial uses e.g. food hall, commercial space as well as the proposed underlying social values that will ensure the development meets Chorlton CLT's overarching vision:

- 1 Using community investment to ensure community-led oversight of the development and management of the development.
- 2 Encouraging local businesses, artists and residents to actively use and have a stake in the facilities.
- 3 Ensuring accessibility, sustainability and quality in the design and operations of the scheme.

Beyond these activities, we have been engaging with key stakeholders in Chorlton including Chorlton Traders Association, Chorlton Alliance (network of networks) and local councillors.



Visual by Hawkins Brown

CLT

Stayin' Alive!

Support the Community Bid for a New Community Asset

- An art, music, film and performance space
- Bee Gees Hall of Fame!
- Local food & drink in a historic setting
- A public square for markets and events
- A new community health centre
- Community co-working space

Save the space and find out more at www.crowdfunder.co.uk/stayinalive



Design Rationale

In order to preserve the heritage value within The Picture House and to respond as closely as possible to the Chorlton CLT's aspirations, the low-rise garage / commercial unit to the rear is to be demolished and replaced with a new build development.

Brook Finch has worked closely with the Chorlton CLT to explore the various potential use classes that can be developed to the rear which have included offices, health centre, commercial and residential.

It is of note that the speculative development of this rear section is the enabling development to facilitate the expense of restoring and redeveloping The Picture House to provide a community-minded asset. As such the health centre option fell away due to the timescales involved in securing commitment from the NHS.

When reviewing our appraisals, the commercial and office functions proved unviable, both from a purely financial perspective and from the position of obtaining funding for the whole project. This has been further reinforced since the arrival of Covid-19.

To that end, our proposal is to redevelop the land to the rear to provide a new build apartment scheme which will include on-site affordable units.

The designs proposed within this document are illustrative for massing purposes only in order to demonstrate the number of units we believe is possible within this site, which in turn enables the wider restoration and conversion of The Picture House.

The detailed architecture will be commissioned through **Calderpeel architects** who are a recognised, and highly respected architectural practice. We believe by commissioning the design through this creative organisation, we will have much greater potential for a successful planning application. However, our vision is that the front elevation of The Picture House will be given special consideration to address the street scene and replace the current main façade.

The residential block to the rear is to be design-led, with amenity space specific to the market demands in Chorlton, we want to explore green / living walls, spacious and well-equipped cycle stores with changing facilities. Finally, the apartments are to be high-quality new homes – we would direct you to Brook Finch's previous schemes in Section 6 for examples of their product quality.

In our pre-planning discussions, the Manchester City Council planning team have indicated that based on outline designs, they would actively consider a residential block at the massing proposed.

Development scope

We are proposing the project delivers the following:

New build



A new build development where the current garages are situation. We propose to deliver 32 apartments consisting of

- 5 x one-bedroom apartments
- 6 x one bedroom affordable (30% reduction against open market value)
- 21 x two-bedroom apartments

The Picture House



To redevelop The Picture House, we have included use classes based on consultation with the community, market-tested with indicative values informed through engagement with commercial property experts.

These include:

- Ground floor retail
- Gymnasium over ground and first floors
- First floor food-hall taking inspiration from Altrincham Market and the Mackie Mayor in Manchester.