

SITE ON CORNER OF MELLOR STREET AND COLLEGE ROAD, ROCHDALE

DEVELOPMENT OF A DRIVE-THROUGH RESTAURANT

PLANNING STATEMENT

MARCH 2022



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	CONTENTS	PAGE
1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	THE APPLICATION SITE	4
3	PLANNING HISTORY	6
4	THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	7
5	NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK	9
6	LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES AND GUIDANCE	11
7	ANALYSIS	14
8	CONCLUSIONS	18

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.01 This statement is submitted on behalf of the applicant, Rochemont Ltd, with regard to the planning application submitted in respect of the regeneration of the vacant brownfield land on Mellor Street in Rochdale for a drive-through restaurant with associated landscaping, parking and access works.
- 1.02 This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted application documents which are as follows:
- Application Form and Certificates
 - BE Ecological Appraisal
 - BFE Phase One Report
 - ECUS Archaeological Assessment
 - GS Topographical Survey
 - IWD Plan Ref MSR002b
 - PWA Retail Sequential Test
 - SCP Transport Statement

2 THE APPLICATION SITE

- 2.01 The previously developed site is 0.13 hectares of vacant previously developed land and is edged red in the aerial view on the cover of this statement. Views of the site looking east from the crossroads with College Street and looking north from Mellor Street are provided below at Figure 1:

Figure 1: Street Views of the Site



- 2.02 The site is allocated in the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan as being located within a Mixed Use Employment Area, and stands to the north west of the retail and fast food uses of Aldi, Subway and Papa Johns with industrial buildings across the river to the east (with the large Asda beyond) and a former mill building and scrap yard across the road to the south west. A run of four terraced properties lies to the south east, one of which has been utilised as a hairdressers on the ground floor.
- 2.03 The site is set within a sustainable and accessible location, as it is close by to local amenities and sources of frequent public transport. The town centre of Rochdale lies a short walk to the east, as illustrated on the below plan at Figure 2 where the site is denoted by a green circle:

Figure 2: Position of the Site



3 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.01 Based on the information available on the Council's online system, the site does not appear to have been subject to any relevant previous planning applications.
- 3.02 As part of the preparation for the scheme, the applicant engaged with the Council via a pre-application enquiry ref PREAPP/00114/20 and has made sure that the issues highlighted in the advice letter dated 11 February 2021 are addressed in Section 7 of this statement and in the specialist reports contained in the accompanying application package.

4 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.01 The proposal seeks full planning approval for a drive-through restaurant with associated parking, landscaping and access arrangements, as illustrated on the proposed site layout plan extract provided below at Figure 3:

Figure 3: Proposed Site Layout



- 4.02 In essence, the scheme seeks to regenerate the site by providing a complementary use to the adjacent retail offer, utilising the existing access point off Mellor Street and providing landscaping along the road frontages along with parking for 15 cars including one disabled bay.

- 4.03 The appearance of the unit takes its leads from the nearby retail stores as illustrated in the visuals provided with the application, one of which is provided below at Figure 4 and shows the façade facing Mellor Street:

Figure 4: Appearance of the Proposed Development to Mellor Street



- 4.04 In regard to employment opportunities, it is anticipated that the development will create 10 full time jobs and 14 part time jobs.

5 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 5.01 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.02 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of July 2021 sets out a commitment to achieving sustainable development at Paragraph 7, with Paragraph 8 establishing that there are three overarching objectives, namely:
- Economic – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
 - Social – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being;
 - and
 - Environmental – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 5.03 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF confirms that the three identified objectives are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the objectives.

- 5.04 NPPF Section 7 seeks to ensure the vitality of town centres, with Paragraph 88 referring to out of centre proposals and stating that preference should be given to accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre. The separate report produced by PWA provides the necessary information in regard to satisfying the need for a sequential test.
- 5.05 Section 12 of the NPPF confirms at Paragraph 126 that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 5.06 It is firmly considered by the applicant that the scheme represents the development of a brownfield site within a sustainable urban area of the town which adheres to the aims and objectives of the NPPF, with the scheme being of a high quality of design and complementing the numerous nearby existing retail and food-related uses.
- 5.07 The proposal is therefore entirely appropriate in regard to the requirements of the NPPF.

6 LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

The Adopted Development Plan

- 6.01 The current planning framework at a local level utilised by Rochdale Borough Council is comprised of the saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) of June 2006 alongside the more recent Core Strategy (CS) of October 2016.
- 6.02 The site is allocated as lying within a Mixed Use Employment Area and in the Defined Urban Area in the UDP, with the following policies of CS considered to be of most relevance to the scheme:

Policy SO1 'To deliver a more prosperous economy'

Policy E1 'Establishing thriving town, district and local centres'

Policy E2 'Increasing jobs and prosperity'

Policy P3 'Improving design of new development'

Policy G7 'Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity'

Policy G9 'Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability'

Policy T2 'Delivering sustainable transport'

Policy DM1 'General development requirements'

- 6.03 A brief summary of the aims and objectives of these policies is provided below.

Policy SO1 'To deliver a more prosperous economy'

- 6.04 This strategic policy seeks to increase the number and range of jobs and employment levels in the town, an objective to which the scheme firmly adheres by making use of a currently vacant parcel of brownfield land to provide a total of 24 jobs.

Policy E1 'Establishing thriving town, district and local centres'

- 6.05 Policy E1 aims to focus retail, leisure, cultural, office, residential and other development to promote the viability and vitality of all the borough's town centres to maintain them as thriving and sustainable centres and the preferred shopping and leisure destinations for people living, working and visiting the borough. The policy does however allow for out of centre development when there are no suitable sites in, or on the edge, or well connected to, the town centre, district centres or local centres and the proposal would cause no significant overall impact on the existing centres vitality and viability. This is the case for the subject scheme which is adjacent to an existing food store and other food uses.

Policy E2 'Increasing jobs and prosperity'

- 6.06 This policy establishes a desire to ensure a sufficient supply of suitable land, buildings and infrastructure in the right places to support the creation and retention of successful businesses and increase the number and quality of jobs to create a more prosperous lower carbon economy. The explanatory text for Policy E2 recognises that land and premises suitable for all types of businesses in accessible locations is essential to ensure the creation of more jobs and increase prosperity in the borough.

Policy P3 'Improving design of new development'

- 6.07 Policy P3 requires all new developments to adhere to high standards of design, including respecting context where it is positive and having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general. The policy also aims to provide an appropriate mix of uses and consider the needs of all sections of society.

Policy G7 'Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity'

- 6.08 This policy states that no development should result in a net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity interest in the borough, and that overall development in the borough should result in a net gain.

Policy G9 ‘Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability’

- 6.09 Policy G9 sets out a general aim to reduce all forms of pollution, contamination and land instability in the borough.

Policy T2 ‘Delivering sustainable transport’

- 6.10 This policy has an objective to reduce the need to travel and make best use of the existing transport infrastructure by a series of measures, including making best use of the borough’s transport assets.

Policy DM1 ‘General development requirements’

- 6.11 Policy DM1 expects that all development proposals to adhere to a number of criteria, including that they: are of high quality design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area; are compatible with surrounding land uses, both in terms of its impact upon those uses and the impact of the surrounding land uses upon the amenities of future residents/users; do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy; mitigate against any impacts due to noise, air, dust, light and odour pollution, traffic generation or inadequate access, where such mitigation is identified as being necessary; and provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring, and servicing arrangements taking into account of the proposed use and location. The subject scheme has been designed to take into account all of these requirements.

7 ANALYSIS

- 7.01 In essence, the brownfield site stands in a sustainable and accessible location and seeks to provide an appropriate use which is ideally suited to its position in the town. As such, the development is supported by planning policies at both a national and local level. The primary issues presented by the proposal as listed by the Council in the pre-application enquiry referenced earlier at Section 3 of this statement are analysed below.

Principle

- 7.02 Policies SO1, E1 and E2 of the CS are essentially focussed on providing increased employment opportunities and as such lend support in principle to the development given that it lies within a mixed-use designation in the UDP and will serve to create 24 jobs.
- 7.03 The comments made by the Council in respect to a sequential test based on the NPPF are duly noted, and accordingly the application includes a report produced by PWA Planning which concludes that *“Having considered the availability of sites within a town or district centre as defined Rochdale Borough Core Strategy, it has been concluded that there are no sites adequate in size for the development proposed, which requires not only land to accommodate the proposed development but also the logistics behind the desired location.”*
- 7.04 It is also considered that the planning approvals issued for the nearby Aldi, Subway and Papa Johns uses in the same UDP allocation demonstrate an acceptance of the form of use proposed.
- 7.05 Accordingly, the principle of the development is shown to be appropriate and in line with the relevant local and national planning policies in regard to Policies SO1, E1 and E2 along with the NPPF.

Visual Amenity

- 7.06 The plans put forward for the scheme adhere to the objectives of Policies P3 and DM1 by demonstrating a high quality of design which reflects the other modern commercial buildings in the locality. The landscaping proposed along the Mellor Street and College Bank Way frontages will also serve to contribute positively to the appearance of the scheme, unlike it must be said the current condition on the land which detracts from the locality.

Residential Amenity

- 7.07 It is noted that there is a small run of terraced properties to the south east between the proposed development and the Aldi store, which also stand opposite the scrap yard and amidst other employment and commercial uses in the wider area, leading to the terraces being very much out of keeping with the general character of the area. The scheme utilises the existing access and positions the building within the centre of the site to ensure that no detrimental impact will occur to the occupiers of any residential properties, thereby ensuring that the development respects the requirements of Policies DM1 and G9.

Highways

- 7.08 The application is supported by a Transport Statement produced by SCP which considers all aspects of the proposal in regard to highway safety, traffic and access perspectives and concludes that the scheme is acceptable in all respects. The development therefore adheres to Policies T2 and DM1 in regard to highway considerations.

Contamination

- 7.09 The Phase One report provided by Brown Fisher Environmental provides all the necessary analysis into the history of the site and recognises the potential for some levels of contamination to be present. It is therefore expected that the Council will follow guidance detailed in the NPPF and utilise a condition requiring the reporting of any contamination found during the of development.

Drainage

- 7.10 It is noted that the Council confirmed in their pre-application advice that there is no requirement for any detailing information to be provided in the form of a flood risk assessment.

Air Quality

- 7.11 The comments made by the Council in the pre-application enquiry regarding air quality are noted, and the applicant recognises that a suitable report into the issue can be conditioned in respect of the construction and operational phases of the development.

Biodiversity

- 7.12 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report produced by Brooks Environmental forms part of the application documents and confirms that no additional reports are required in support of planning.

Rochdale Canal

- 7.13 The comments made by the Council at the pre-application stage are taken into account in the scheme put forward for consideration, which ensures that the location and design of all foundations and retaining structures will not adversely affect the stability of any part of the canal's supporting structure.

Archaeology

- 7.14 The Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment produced by ECUS lodged as part of the application package concludes that the site contains no designated archaeological heritage assets and there will be no direct impact to any designated heritage assets. The assessment also considers that there is a negligible potential of any remains dating to before the post-medieval period to be present within the site. It is however noted that a programme of watching brief undertaken during the groundworks of the site is undertaken, in line with NPPF.

Community Consultation

- 7.15 The encouragement for community consultation included within the Council's pre-application advice is duly recognised. However, the restrictions in place during the Covid-19 pandemic effectively precluded any meaningful consultations, and accordingly the application has been lodged without this having taken place.

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 7.16 At a national level, Paragraph 7 of the NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, with Paragraph 8 establishing the three key issues comprised of economic, social and environmental objectives.
- 7.17 Economic objective - the proposal will be developed through private investment which will create direct, indirect and catalytic economic benefits in the local area through new jobs in construction, wage spend locally and purchasing of materials. The economic benefits from the proposal are therefore demonstrated in regard to sustainability and should be afforded significant weight.
- 7.18 Social objective - the scheme for new development on the site assists with the well-being of the area, and the social role of sustainable development therefore strongly supports the development. The scheme as proposed is the most contextually appropriate solution for the site, thereby complying with the aims of the NPPF.
- 7.19 Environmental objective - the overall layout, design and appearance of the scheme is to a high quality. The erection of a well-designed scheme at the site therefore constitutes sustainable development which is encouraged by the NPPF.
- 7.20 On the basis of the above, the development of the site would be wholly compliant with the aims and objectives of the NPPF which confirms an acceptance of economic development within an urban setting which contributes positively, with Paragraph 124 encouraging the creation of high-quality development.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.01 This statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework, along with the requirements of the policies of the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan and Core Strategy.
- 8.02 The granting of permission for the scheme is consequently entirely in accordance with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as the proposal is in line with the development plan.
- 8.03 Should any issues be identified, or it is considered that further information is required, the Council is requested to contact the agent for the application at an early stage to allow for proactive discussions to take place.