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PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

LAND AT SANDBROOK PARK, ROCHDALE
(PHASE 2)

March 2024

Northern Trust Company Ltd

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1.0. Introduction

Northern Trust Company Ltd (the applicant) is applying to Rochdale Borough Council (the Council) for planning permission for the proposed development of the current vacant land within the existing Sandbrook Park Estate.

The proposed development incorporates land south of Block B2 within the existing industrial estate within Sandbrook Park. The development now proposed includes the provision of four buildings to provide 9 self-contained units providing a total of 16,614 sq ft (1543 sq m) of flexible accommodation in various sizes. The purpose of the development is to provide flexible, smaller scale accommodation, in a range of sizes, particularly to attract start-up and local businesses. It is therefore proposed that the use class of the buildings is for E(g)(iii), B2 and B8 inclusive, in order to provide additional flexibility and to provide wider opportunities for local businesses. The brief has evolved through extensive research into current market needs, taking account of the current occupancy of the existing development at this location and other planned developments. This statement sets out the planning history of the site and provides a brief outline of the relevant planning policies followed by a description and assessment of the proposed development in context with the relevant local and national planning policies.

2.0. The Site & Surrounds

The site is within Sandbrook Park Industrial Estate, utilising a vacant piece of land north of the existing offices. The land is typically a level site of approximately 1.33 acres in size. Currently, the site consists of grass scrubland.

3.0. Planning History

Historically the site appears to have been vacant land within Rochdale. There is one previous application that are of relevance. The scheme to the north which was also built out by Northern Trust (Ref: 19/00310/FUL) for the Erection of 4no' industrial buildings comprising 14 business units (within use classes B1, B2 and B8) including car parking, access, and associated works.

4.0. Planning Policy Context

In accordance with section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations demonstrate otherwise. The development plan in this instance is made up of the following:

- Rochdale Core Strategy 2016

4.1. Rochdale Core Strategy

The Core Strategy for Rochdale borough was adopted on 19 October 2016. It's the lead document in the Development Plan and represents the most appropriate and up-to-date

planning policy within Rochdale. This forms a key part of the development plan for this application and the relevant policies are identified below:

SD1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
 SP1 - Rochdale Boroughs role in the city region
 SP2 - The Spatial Strategy for the borough
 SP3/R - The Strategy for Rochdale
 E2 – Increasing jobs and prosperity
 E3 – Economic Growth Corridor
 E5 - Encouraging the visitor economy
 C2 - Focusing on regeneration areas and economic growth corridors / areas
 P1 - Improving image
 P3 - Improving design of new development
 G1 - Tackling and adapting to climate change
 G2 - Energy and new development
 G7 – Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity
 G8 - Managing water resources and flood risk
 G9 - Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land sustainability
 T2 - Improving accessibility
 DM1 - General development requirements

Saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policies:

G/D/1 – Defined urban area
 G/S/1 – Hierarchy and role of centres
 EC/9 – Sandbrook Park
 EM/7 – Development and flood risk
 EM/8 – Protection of surface ground water

4.1.1. Emerging Plan

As the emerging Allocations Plan is in advanced stages of adoption it is important to review the draft plan and consider the relevant policies in regards to the application. The Allocations Plan proposes areas and sites around the borough to build or develop up to 2028. It provides details needed to demonstrate how the spatial vision, strategic objectives and scale of growth outlined in the Core Strategy will be delivered. The Allocation Plan will support the currently adopted Core Strategy and will replace the saved UDP plan documents.

Whilst the emerging Allocations Plan is not yet adopted, and as such does not form part of the development plan, it is at an advanced stage and as a result should be given due regard as a material consideration in the determination of any planning application.

The following policies are relevant to the proposals:

1. AL/EMP/8, Sandbrook Business Park, Rochdale

4.2. National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was first published in 2012 and was most recently revised in December 2023. The revised Framework sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. A presumption in favour of sustainable development remains at the heart of the Framework (paragraph 10).

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that there are three overarching objectives to sustainable development, and that these are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways:

- *An economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy;*
- *A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and,*
- *An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.*

Paragraph 11 states that for a presumption for sustainable development means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

Section 6 of the NPPF considers the conditions required to build a strong, competitive economy. Paragraph 85 states that:

“Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.”

There is an evident focus on the needs to support economic growth and employment creation through new development, facilitated by the planning process.

5.0. The Proposed Development - Assessment of the Proposals

This section of the statement identifies the main issues and considerations of the development and demonstrates why the proposals are acceptable in principle and sets out the case for the development of this site. This will deal with the principle of the development followed by site specific issues and design considerations.

5.1. Principle of Development

Policy EC/9 Sandbrook Park of the UDP remains a saved policy within the adopted Core Strategy. In light of the above the site is situated in an area allocated for employment growth under the adopted Core Strategy. Policy E3 aims to encourage commercial development, and thus the proposed nature of the project aligns with this objective. The emerging draft Allocations Plan continues to allocate the site for employment purposes (site ref. AL/EMP/8) and will replace Policy EC/9 of the UDP.

Policy E3 (Focusing on economic growth corridors and areas) promotes the development of Sandbrook Park for B1a offices and commercial development. While this application includes elements of E(g)(iii) (Formerly B1) usage, its primary focus is on B2/B8 use classes. This is deemed to align with the objectives and focus of the Core Strategy Policy E2 (Increasing jobs

and prosperity). The proposal will help to support economic growth and prosperity of the Borough and build on the success of the existing development at Sandbrook Park. In allowing a variety of small scale uses to be accommodated, the site will provide greater opportunities for more local businesses. Also, within the core strategy it mentions key sites to be allocated for employment development through the emerging Allocations DPD will primarily be for offices, manufacturing and distribution (B1a, B1b/B2 and B8 uses respectively).

Moreover, drawing from our hands-on experience in the vicinity and interactions with local agents, it is apparent that the current demand predominantly leans towards flexible, general industrial units, as opposed to exclusive office developments. Accordingly, given the site's land use allocation and the established use of the site the principle of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable and complies with the aims of the Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

5.2. Site Layout

The site is located within the existing Sandbrook Park Business Park on a piece of vacant land. Northern Trust own and manage the rest of the business park.

The spatial dimensions of the site to a large extent dictate the layout and on this occasion the site is sectioned into two parts both served with their own access. The northern parcel is accessed on the northwestern edge and consists of Block A, comprising 3 units totalling to 3,300 sq.ft, and Block B featuring 4 units with a combined area of 6,600 sq.ft. This parcel Employs a courtyard style layout, with shared areas and parking strategically positioned between the blocks. This maximises the use of the site and provides a central focus with buildings orientated around common service areas which increases security, attractiveness to tenants and makes smaller units economically viable. This parcel's car park accommodates 25 spaces, including 3 designated for disabled use. Located on the eastern edge of Block A is a cycle shelter and motorcycle space area.

The southern parcel is accessed on the southwestern edge of the site. This parcel includes two blocks, Block C & D. Both Blocks are identical hybrid units comprising 2068 sqft of warehouse space, 750sqft of office space, and finally a 615 sqft mezzanine. This parcel takes a different style approach when compared to the northern parcel. The units' front elevation faces Sandbrook Way, while the rear elevation faces northeast, creating a more secluded area apart from the existing estate to the west. This parcel accommodates 25 spaces, including 2 for disabled use. Located outside the rear elevation of Block D is a cycle shelter with another one located north of Block C. Shared common areas and parking are situated in front of the rear elevations of the buildings.

5.3. Building Design

The design, scale and appearance of the buildings is both in keeping with surrounding properties and appropriate to the proposed use. The buildings will be faced with profiled metal cladding and facing brickwork, to add detail and interest. Materials and colouring will match the existing buildings on Sandbrook Park. The proposed buildings would be of a similar size, scale, form, design and siting to existing buildings and as such the impact on the street scene and

visual amenity of the area would be limited. The small scale of these units, separation distances and the topography of the site means that the activities will not cause any undue noise and disturbance to neighbouring residential properties. Therefore, the proposals are in accordance with Core Strategy policies DM1, P3 and the Framework.

The unit sizes are dictated by market forces and the size of the site. The buildings are of similar scale and maintain homogeneity and association to each other and the adjacent land uses. The scheme has been designed to make best use of the space available in regard to land use, market forces and local business need.

The heights of the buildings and levels are restricted by proportion and likely usage, maintain a small-scale appearance, and reduce any detrimental effect on neighbouring buildings. This remains similar to the existing industrial buildings in Sandbrook Park and the wider business park area as a whole. The ridge height of the blocks is expressed below:

- Block A- Upper eaves 5.4m, lower eaves 4.5m (Mono Pitch Roof Design)
- Block B- Upper eaves 6.1m, lower eaves 4.5m (Mono Pitch Roof Design)
- Block C- Ride height 7.7m (Dual Pitch Roof Design)
- Block D- Ridge Height 7.7m (Dual Pitch Roof Design)

On the northern parcel which includes Block A & Block B the front elevations include loading doors, signage, windows, and glazed doors into the office areas. Internal offices are generally kept to the front elevations which allow glazing to be the used to articulate, add interest and brighten elevations and increase site security. Both accessible and standard toilets will be adjacent to the offices to optimize space utilization and maintain separation between warehouse and non-warehouse areas.

For Blocks C & D on the southern parcel, internal offices are situated at ground floor level, facing Sandbrook Way. Internal offices are generally kept to the front elevations which allow glazing to be the used to articulate, add interest and brighten elevations and increase site security. The rear elevation faces east and includes overhead doors, fire escape, signage, and the entrance door to the reception area with glazed windows on either side. The reception area, disabled toilets, standard toilets (Male & Female), kitchenette, and ancillary space are situated on the northern edge of Block C and the southern edge of Block D both at ground floor level. Additionally, an open mezzanine deck is situated on the first floor of both blocks, offering occupants flexibility for use across any class under E(g)(iii)/b2/b8. This layout optimizes space utilisation and segregates warehouse space from non-warehouse space, enhancing health and safety for workers.

Please see the associated plans for further clarity on materials and colouring.

5.4. Sustainability

The proposal will result in the loss of a small area of private open land within the existing industrial estate. However, the loss of this area is considered to be outweighed by the economic benefits of the proposals and the efficient use of space that would result.

The remaining soft landscaping areas around the existing and proposed buildings will be grassed, with some planting for ecological enhancements in keeping with the surrounding area and existing landscaping.

There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental. From an economic context the focus is on contributing to building a strong, responsive, and competitive economy. The social focus is on supporting strong, vibrant, and healthy communities. And finally, the environmental role looks at contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

This development fulfils all of these criteria by providing economic benefits in the form of new, much needed, high-quality workspace of this size in a sustainable and accessible location. Social benefits are found in creating space for SME's and independents to work and operate from allowing a more diverse choice of business options in the area and providing space for start-ups and other nonmajor operators. The environmental benefits in this case are clear in the fact that the redevelopment of such provides re-use of currently vacant land and aesthetic improvements over a currently vacant lot.

Furthermore, the location is sustainable as it has suitable pedestrian access and links to a bus route, as well as being in a location that is easily accessible in terms of servicing the local area.

5.5. Health Impact

The proposed development will have a positive impact upon the health of the local community and public realm. The site currently occupies a small area of private open land and as part of the proposals will be developed to provide 9 industrial units offering significant employment opportunities for the local population.

The provision of employment opportunities for both new start-ups, existing businesses to expand and subsequent employees is a significant benefit to the local community and will have a positive impact upon the health and well-being of the local population, both directly and indirectly. The investment such a development will bring during construction and once operational will facilitate valuable opportunities for the local community.

The proposed development will offer flexible floorspace that can be tailored to a variety of different uses subject to the end user requirements. This can appeal to a wide variety of different occupiers and is a significant positive attribute of the proposals, offering significant and far-reaching benefits to a wide catchment. As with the above, this would provide a positive impact upon the health and well-being of the local community.

5.6. External Access

The site would be accessed by the existing Sandbrook Way which runs along the western boundary of the site.

Access to and within the property will meet the necessary requirements of Part M 'Access and Use of Buildings' of the Approved Building Regulations documentation.

Access for both staff and service vehicles is directly off a new access road for each parcel with pedestrian access also being off these roads. The new access arrangements implemented as part of the development has been designed on the basis of a higher number of vehicle movements than predicted with this application. As such this access is considered to be more than adequate for the proposed scheme in accordance with Policy T2 (Improving Accessibility).

Hard standing areas are used generously to facilitate the ease of pedestrian access and vehicle circulating areas are distinguished from car parking areas using different materials. Any large areas of hard standing are required for service vehicles parking and manoeuvring within the confines of the workshop areas, and there are no redundant areas of hard surfacing. Loading areas allow access for vehicles to loading doors and permit parking to load and unload without inconvenience to other areas of the site.

Car parking is provided generally to the front of the buildings for the convenience of the occupiers, with disabled parking to each unit as close as possible to the entrance. A total of 50 car parking spaces are provided on site, of which 5 are disabled spaces. There is no tandem parking.

A Cycle Shelter is located on site, convenient for the occupiers, with adequate space for additional cycle parking to suite any future growth of cycle use and is located adjacent to units 3 and Block C & D.

Paved pedestrian access is provided to the frontage of all buildings and is distinguished from parking areas and hard standings by the use of different materials.

Level access is provided for disabled users from dedicated parking areas onto the paved areas in front of the buildings and into each building. Changes from paved areas to car parking or yard areas will be distinguished by the use of contrasting tactile paving, all in accordance with Part M of the building regulations.

5.7. Internal Access

Access to and within the property will meet the necessary requirements of Part M 'Access and Use of Buildings' of the Approved Building Regulations documentation.

5.8. Drainage

The surface water drainage scheme will be in the form of a sustainable drainage system. Dependent upon ground conditions this will be provided by means of a soakaway. If this is not possible attenuation measures will be put in place to provide controlled discharge to the drainage network. Please refer to the drainage report provided for further information on the drainage strategy and attenuation measures.

5.9. Highways Matters

The site is in a sustainable location, with bus stops located within an 800m catchment. It is therefore considered that there will be no unacceptable impact on highway safety because of the proposals.

The application is supported by a Transport Statement & Travel Plan and is also considered to comply with T2 'Improving Accessibility' of the Adopted Local Plan

5.10. Parking Provision

The proposal would offer a total of 50 parking spaces, exceeding the requirement outlined in Appendix 5 Schedule of parking standards of the Core Strategy (2016) for properties under use class B2/B8. With a GFA of 1543sqm In line with the parking standards set out within the Core Strategy (Appendix 5), the parking provision for use classes B2/B8 are below:

1. B2 1 space per 60m² = 26 Spaces
2. B8 1 space per 100m² = 16 Spaces
3. E(g)(iii) (Formerly B1) Business Parks 1 space per 40 m²= 39 Spaces

This development provides a total of 50 spaces including 5 disabled bays, allowing flexibility of the proposed units to support future occupiers' requirements. Given the uncertainty surrounding the eventual use classes of the units upon occupancy, flexibility is paramount. Despite the application primarily targeting B2/B8 use classes, there is office space included within each unit of the proposed scheme. While this office space is deemed ancillary in Block A & B, there is dedicated office space totalling to 139 sqm within Block C & D (hybrid units). Therefore, we have allocated some parking in accordance with the Core Strategy B1 (Business Park) parking standards provision. For the remainder of the scheme to ensure ample parking availability, we've opted to adhere to the maximum parking provision for B2 (General Industrial) which requires a higher volume of parking. Considering these factors, the required parking provision for the scheme totals to 28 spaces. The calculation is detailed below:

Use Class	Requirement in parking standards	Total Space	Maximum Parking Requirement
B2	1 space per 60m ²	15,144 sqft 1404 sqm	24 spaces
B1	1 space per 40m ²	1500 sqft 139 sqm	4 spaces
			Total: 28 Spaces

Considering the aforementioned factors, we're exceeding the required parking capacity by 22 spaces, although there are external reasons for this. Northern Trust facilitated an overflow car parking area for the office buildings at Sandbrook Park. This overflow car parking area had 12 spaces and was used daily by workers in the office buildings (see extract below). However, this land has since been developed (Ref: 19/00310/FUL), resulting in the loss of overflow parking for the offices. Therefore, the surplus parking in this proposal accounts for the absence of overflow parking because of the development of the previous scheme. The parking provision provided has also considered the likely number of employees per unit based off the previous phase. Another consideration is although the office space in Block A & B is ancillary, there should be some provision in accordance with its use. In conclusion, we find that the parking provision provided is suitable for the expected number of vehicles after taking into consideration the aforementioned factors.



(Extracted from Google Earth Imagery 2020)

5.11. Residential Amenity

The closest residential properties lie to the northeast of the site, separated by a footpath and a cluster of trees. Given the modest size of these units and the surrounding land uses, the proposed activities are not expected to generate excessive noise or disturbance for nearby residents. Consequently, the proposals align with Local Plan policies G9 (Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination, and land instability), DM1 (General development requirements), DM2 (Delivering planning contributions and infrastructure) and finally P3 (Improving design of new development).

5.12. Summary of Assessment

The principle of development has been established as a result of the surrounding planning history (Ref: 19/00310/FUL), surrounding uses, adopted and emerging Local Plan documentation.

The site layout provides adequate hard and soft landscaping and is derived from the existing layout of the industrial estate, utilising a linear arrangement that is in keeping with neighbouring units. The building design is in compliance with the local planning policy and is in keeping with the existing character of the area.

Access, both internal and external, ensures that the units are accessible to a range of users, supporting the flexibility of the proposals in supporting smaller businesses within the local area, whilst adhering to all relevant adopted building regulation documentation and local planning policy.

6.0. Conclusions

Northern Trust Company LTD is applying to Rochdale Borough Council for planning permission for the proposed development within the existing Sandbrook Park Industrial Estate.

The employment area draft allocation placed on the land contained within the emerging Allocations Plan forming part of the local development plan demonstrates the Council's

intentions to protect existing and facilitate new employment activity, and as demonstrated through this report, there are no adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal.

The proposed development should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The proposal is a positive development that supports local businesses within Rochdale and provides employment opportunities for local residents.

The proposal complies with the National Planning Policy Framework, and the adopted Local Plan. The principle of development has been established, the site is located within an allocated employment area, and is accessible via a range of modes of travel. The design of the proposal is acceptable in terms of the use, amount, layout, scale, appearance, and access. The proposal should therefore be approved without delay.